



The Birth of Athena

Kadrey, Richard

Published: 2002

Categorie(s): Fiction, Short Stories

Source: <http://www.infinitematrix.net/stories/shortshorts/kadrey14.html>

About Kadrey:

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco. Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnies' *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical." Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A." Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*. The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories. His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*. Source: Wikipedia

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He's a bad scientist. He fudges his data. He cribs from his grad students when writing papers. He chooses the most obscure, yet sexy sounding, areas of study, hoping no one will bother to challenge his theories, methods or conclusions. He labors in cognitive science and is working off a fat NSA grant studying "Metaphor as a Disease Vector."

He's a bad husband. He fucks his lab assistants regularly and goes for the regular one-offs with any failing female student who wants to get her C up to an A. In his mind, this is hardly adultery. He lost interest in his wife the moment the ring went on. Tame dogs don't run like wolves. It's the same reason he's in research: The hunt is the thing.

He's a bad father. His kids were all experiments. Each was conceived in a different manner. The first, using traditional missionary-style intercourse. The second, during a weightless coupling while on an expensive ride on a Russian vomit-comet cosmonaut training plane. The third was conceived under the influence of a number of powerful smart drugs and psychoactives. He'd sort of run out of biological steam by the fourth kid, and just slapped an egg and some sperm together in vitro, letting some tech implant them.

As his NSA grant winds down, his migraines are getting worse. He wonders what this means. He thinks he's really on to something with this metaphor/disease idea (it might be the first time he's actually interested in one of his own ideas), but where is it leading him and why is he in such pain?

The truth is, he doesn't really believe in pain anymore. Pain is just a metaphor for the sufferer's paranoia. He doesn't believe in disease. AIDS and cancer are metaphors for narcissism, a drastic attempt to grab all the attention in the room. He's beginning to wonder if death itself isn't simply the ultimate metaphor, a boredom of the soul that leads to obliteration. But he might be wrong. He might, in fact, be completely full of shit. He's a bad scientist, a bad husband, a bad father, a bad man, and his head is killing him. What metaphor is crushing his skull?

While working in his university office one evening, the headaches become unbearable. He leans his cheek on the cool laminate surface of a lab table and feels his head splits open, like Zeus's. A small, pale green planet floats gracefully out from his cracked cranium. He watches the planet buzz slowly around the ceiling, just missing the dusty fluorescent lighting fixtures, and burst through a window, shooting away into the sky.

He uses duct tape to hold his split head together. He feels that he's getting his ass kicked hard by some really profound metaphors right now, but for the first not sure what to say about them. He begins to make

notes for a new paper. His head itches, but with his skull birth of the little green world, he hurts a lot less. That's probably a metaphor, too, he thinks. When he tries to write his paper it comes out as a jumble of limericks and Henry Darger-like drawings of his favorite starlets. He folds the paper into an airplane, affixes a stamp and sails it out the window. For the very first time, he feels like the scientist he's always wanted to be. He's whistling as his students come in for class. No one mentions the duct tape.

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