

Meeting Doctor Watson

by Joseph K. Corrado

I'm like this techno-hermit living in a forest cabin far from the madding crowd. Every day I really get off on the quiet and privacy of my secluded living and every day I connect to the cyber sphere for stuff like news, account updates, email, information searches, and social-media strolling in Face2U, and stuff like that. So, anyway, my computer and my chainsaw are my main power tools.

So, one day I'm shopping at Deals4Me, looking at listings for used chain saws. Then I go to Saws-R-Us to compare features and prices on new models—lots of models—even major brands—all the data nicely displayed, full specs, pictures, Quick-Order buttons, all cool. Then a blink pulls my eye to the upper-right corner of my screen. It was a beautiful young woman with the same big eyes and delicate features of most of the women I've nudged for contact in Face2U. She's smiling inside her small video window, a stethoscope hung around her neck, dangling over her starched white blouse over her glowing brown skin which was generously displayed. I couldn't be sure if her allure came through a live video feed or via a very slick avatar programmed for subtle facial expressions and body movements. Ya know what I'm saying?

So, then she says "Hello, Bob. Would you like to learn about the top ten injuries when using a chainsaw or the top five safety tips? This valuable information is free. Just say 'yes' or 'no.' You can also click here to find out now."

My vid cam is always on so I'm thinking that this is maybe some kind of real-time streaming video chat box. Click here? Find out now? Did that mean I could click somewhere in her video window and go to another place where she might be my Anime Safety Coach. . . or My Personal Nurse? And I'm remembering my accident last week when I dropped a mother log on my big toe—ripped right through my boot. So, I'm thinking, after a week, is the redness and swelling lessening, or maybe I have an onset of gout like Grandma Izzy has? So, my cursor slips to the delicate area barely touching the crescent border of her taut left boob. So, I click. So, that's how I first met Doctor Watson.

So anyway, my large monitor resolves to what looks like a doctor's office with diplomas and certificates on the pale green wall behind the desk where the same woman is sitting at a desk and arranging papers in a folder. "Hello again, Bob," she says with a broad smile. "I'm very happy you decided to drop into my office today. I'm Doctor Watson. Perhaps you've heard of me? With your microphone and camera on, you can talk with me person-to-person. Well then, *do* you know who I am?"

"Nuh, no, no, I do, don't," I sort of stutter.

"Well then," she says, "let me briefly introduce myself and tell you how I can help you become more fit and free than ever before. Can you spare just a few minutes for that?," and there's this small *The Doctor is IN* sign flashing a glowing green *IN*.

So of course I'm max curious and I say "Sure, sure I've got a few minutes."

"Well then, Bob," she says, "the first thing you should know is that I'm a fusion of a real human and an AI machine that is optimized for medical information retrieval and support.

You see, here in my office, you can receive the best possible health care for the lowest possible cost. You receive real-person attention, with care supported by advanced diagnostic and health-balance technology, and all for very little money."

Then, like Cat Woman, she almost jumps up from her seat. Very agile and graceful—actually sort of sensual. She touches a desk control and a wall panel unfolds into a large display screen. "Now Bob. . . may I call you Bob or would you prefer Robert?"

"Bob's fine," I blurt.

Well, Bob, you indicated that you would be interested in some information about using a chainsaw. But, if you want, I will also give you a free, initial consult on any health or medical question you might have. Do you have anything you would like to ask about?"

"Yeah, I do," I say with hesitation. "Yeah, but who are you? Who. . . or what am I talking to now? Are you a real person or what?"

She just chuckles and flashes a coy smile. "Bob, as I told you, I'm a very advanced medical computer system under real-time human control. You might say that I have the heart of a human and an inhumanly prodigious brain. Now then, any medical issue you would like to ask about?"

So, figuring that it would be a good test of the "doctor's" mettle, I tell her all about my accident, and the swelling and redness and tenderness in my big toe, and how it doesn't seem to be getting much better after a week, and could it be gout like Grandma Izzy's or something else like that?

Without hesitation, she starts asking me questions while she manipulates swollen toe pics like on a Rubik's Cube thing on her wall screen. So then she asks me to point to my "pain face" in a lineup of little smiley and not-so-smiley faces. I point to a frowny face in the middle of the group. Then she points at some animated diagrams and charts, and she explains the basics of gout and why I probably didn't have it. Then a small decision tree zooms into view and she pokes at the Conclusion node—the best course of action would be to wait another week to see if the inflammation and discomfort continues at its current level. So, this all sounds sensible to me, and I liked the way she wrinkled her nose and raised her wispy eyebrows when I said "swelling and redness."

So then she says that I could get free Patient Privilege Access for three months, free PPA 24/7 for 90 days, full refund if not pleased with the care in her office, after that only \$29.99 a month for full PPA. No cost now, no commitment. Would I like to start now?

So I see no downside and really like the way she smiles at me and say something like "Sure, I'm ready to start." So she tells me that all I need to do is go down the hall to briefly meet with one of her assistants in Patient Services. Just some basic information for health history stuff. Completely private; the better the profile, the better the care; all covered by my free PPA. And, so then, she points to a doorway that swings into view. Then it's like I am turning my gaze away from the doctor's eyes that are looking right into mine with the cutest smile wrinkles I'd ever seen.

So it's like I get up from my chair in the doctor's office, and walk through the doorway and turn right and walk leisurely down a hall with exam rooms and offices, and I turn into an office marked New Patient Intake, and this guy in a red plaid lumberjack shirt that looks a

lot like the one I once bought at Gear4All jumps up from behind his desk and almost lunges at me with his outstretched hand and a big grin on his rugged face like we're buds from way back. "Hey, Bob," he says with a good-old-buds tone, "Just call me Turk. I'm going to work with you on building your profile for max vitality."

So I say something like "Yeah, yeah I know. But I have one question before we start."

"Shoot," he says nonchalantly.

"So," I say, "are you a real person I'm talking to, or what? Are you really there right now? Ya know, you look like a guy in a real-time feed. But maybe you're just a slick CG thing."

So he breaks into a big guffaw and pounds his fist on his chest. "Ho, haw, haw, Bob. A slick CG thing. Ho, haw, ho. Yeah, it's true that we are AI-enabled here in Doctor Watson's office. But people here are the number one resource that contributes to our amazing success. So just relax about talking with a person. Me, Turk, I'm as real as you are." he says thumping his chest. "Except that my appearance here in the office is not quite the same as in my private life."

And I'm thinking that the guy sounds and looks about my age but maybe he really has something like a patch over one eye or maybe an ugly scar on his cheek that he wants to keep private. So he lapses into this pensive pose and doesn't follow up on his appearance thing, and finally, I say "Sure, I understand."

"OK, great," he says flashing a sudden smile. "I think we are going to make a great team, you and me, Bob. You ready to build your profile?"

So, "Sure," I say and he pivots a display screen on his desk and I read: "All-4-1 Profile for Robert A. Babbage." And Turk says it will all be completely confidential data in accordance with HIPPA specs and NSA regs and single-point source-encryption stuff for all diagnostic protocols and treatment regimens and stuff like that. And he enters my data and asks if what I see on the display screen is accurate and he takes occasional, gusto swigs from a sort of glowing green bottle with 4X on it and he talks like we're old chums catching up over drinks in a bar after a long gap and then more old chum grins and just touch my screen in the signature box for consent to terms and stuff like that.

"Awesome, Bob," he says after I sign. "Just one more thing we should do."

So I say something like "Yeah, so what would that be?" with a tone of sudden annoyance at what sounded like the typical upsell move you always get at Deals4Me.

"Let's take it to the max," he says making a nudging gesture toward me with his elbow. "We can make your All-4-1 Profile totally tailored for you if we have just a little more intel."

"Yeah, like what kind of intel?" I say furrowing my skeptical brow.

"Hey, hey, Bob, he says. "Work with me here, OK? If you add genetic data and a couple of bio samples, Doctor Watson will be able to help you always stay in your health groove. We send you a small sample kit, you package your samples, send them back to us, and Doctor Watson can use all this intel to boost you to max health. Only \$49.95 for the whole 1-4-Me Kit—totally private—protected data—cyber safeguards—free shipping—charge it now to get the ball rolling?"

I liked the sound of "boost" for my next consult with Doctor Watson, and I had already invested a good chunk of time and data so I say "Sure, where do I sign?" And he flashes another big chum grin and gives me a "thumbs up" and says we're all done for today and he hopes to meet me again soon. Then a doorway swings into view and I'm walking down a hall to an Exit door that opens back to Saws-R-Us.

So I'm hungry and start fixing supper but I can't stop thinking about the whole Doctor Watson thing; a bit amazed that I had revealed so much private information; willing to open my wallet so fast to strangers in cyber space—regardless that my NoBugs4Us security bot had not gotten jittery when I clicked the doctor.

And I'm feeling sort of flattered by the idea that I had received very personalized attention. But then I think that this must certainly be a conceit. How could Doctor Watson and Turk talk to me and at the same time talk with their dozens? hundreds? probably thousands of other online patients every day? No way the one and only Doctor Watson could meet with me while keeping all her other patients in a waiting room! Then I start recalling snatches of conversation and gestures that sometimes seemed to teeter right on the edge of being merely clever AI simulations. Was the smiling and winking doctor just a fetching robot programmed to appear as if it cared about me? A very convincing pretense or a real person who knows what pain is? Slowly, this question grows in my mind as something I need to know. And I couldn't remember if I had really received a simple, clear answer when I had asked about them being real people or not. "As real as you are," Turk had said. So it's like I'm all of a sudden wandering in this metaphysical fog of the meanings of "real" which I

vaguely remember like this spectrum thing from an online class, Classics4RTime, I took last year. But now my subscription to the 4RTime eBook has expired.

So, anyway, I can't stop thinking about whether the doctor and Turk are real people or not and so later that night, only the dark silence of the forest around me, I go to Facts4U and search for "Dr. Watson" and get 47 pages and counting of Results4U—all ranked according to their inquiry-type/motive probabilities. That's how I learned about the IBM Deep Blue computer that beat the previous world chess champion— Gary Kasparov—last century; and Thomas Watson way back who started IBM, and about the AI machine they named "Watson" that beat three human champion contestants—at Jeopardy. The game requires a prodigious memory and keen language usage for winning—long-running TV game show—still running—challenging—popular worldwide.

So that's how I learned about the Turing Test and how Alan Turing thought we could say that a machine is intelligent if it can communicate like a human—predicted machines would eventually be able to relate with human beings so you couldn't really say for sure whether the other talker is a person or some AI thing—at least not on-screen.

So that's how I learned about AI personas and how we respond better to machines when they act like they're human. Don't want to be too fast on calculations and logic problems—smiles, laughter, open gestures very important—friendly and empathetic robots can detect and reproduce expressions of emotion—statistically computable facial and body and hand gestures that people constantly use in interpersonal exchanges—natural language usage—not stiff like Robby the Robot in Forbidden Planet—adaptive to the interlocutor's language

style and current affect as computed through a statistical mesh— neural nets producing probability rankings for most accurate, or favorable, or profitable responses.

Anyway, about a week later I get this reminder EM from Turk that my next consult is due. I can drop in for my visit with the doctor at 9 tomorrow morning. And I'm all ready and eager for it because I've figured a way to expose the "real" Doctor Watson.

So, next morning I click to DrWatsonMD.com and this door swings open and I'm walking into a room with upholstered chairs and this awesome built-in aquarium along one wall and a giant potted fern—pretty sure it was a *Leptosporangiate* like back of my cabin— anyway, so it could've been a *Barnsley* fern like I saw on Results4U one night, anyway and there's a giant vid screen on another wall and a door in the far corner with a clock over it and a sign that displays like: *Doctor Watson is currently seeing another patient. Appointment with Robert A. Babbage will begin in about a minute. Please have a seat and enjoy the video.*

All the chairs are empty, so I walk to one near the door with the clock and start watching the vid that looks like a drone-camera cruising down a path in a thick—looked like Doug Fir—maybe Northern Pine—anyway really thick evergreens and then there's this chopping sound and I'm now turning down a side path into a clearing where this guy who looks about my build, wearing work pants just like my Gear4All, a big-mother chainsaw resting at his feet and he's got a cord at least of nice new sticks stacked behind him and he's drinking something from a green-glowing bottle.

Then the guy says to me like "I'm like you, Bob. I work hard and I like gusto. I drink UltraVite4X to boost my game to the next level. If you want to live to the max, just ask Doctor Watson if UltraVite4X is right for you. So Bob we're talking max!" And then the

screen dissolves to black and the guy's voice fades away saying "Bob, the doctor is ready to see you now." And now I'm getting up and opening the door and there I am again in Doctor Watson's office.

So she smiles really nice and tilts her head and says like "Well, what a pleasure to see you again, Bob. Thanks for being patient while I was helping someone else. Well, the results from your 1-4-Me Kit bios were extremely helpful and I have some very good news, but first let's talk about your toe and. . . "

So her sweet tone sort of catches me off guard and it takes some of the wind out of some of the cleverness of my plan to unmask the machine. But anyway, I stick to the logic trap I had carefully devised which was actually an old episode of Star Trek trick when Captain Kirk disables a bad robot by trapping it in a logical contradiction so its the logic circuits begin to smoke and the bot starts squealing like this thing that's losing its mind racing in an infinite loop of impossibility. And anyway, if that failed, somehow, then I had the Humor Test as Plan B.

So I interrupt her soothing voice, trying to keep a poker face, and I say "Doctor Watson, may I first ask a question?"

"Of course, Bob" she says with a another tip of her delicate like fine china face.

"So, how many patients do you see every day?"

"Well, I actually consult with many patients every day."

"So, about how many would that be anyway?"

"Why do you want to know this, Bob? What is your concern about this?"

So, I was hoping she would give me a number so I could divide it by 8 or so to compute average number of patients per hour and then some more calculations to prove that she could not possibly be meeting with that many patients every day if she were a single person—a real human. But I decide to cut to the chase and I say that my concern is about my doubt about talking to the one and only Doctor Watson—a real person who hears what I am saying—about real pain—and *really cares* about *me*.

"But Bob," she says, "We *really do care* about *you* here in my office. And I'm sorry, but I can't think of any way to prove to you, not at this distance anyway, that you are in contact with a real person who hears your pain and understands your skepticism. But think about this, Bob, even if I were a total AI artifact, what difference would that make if the AI produces the max treatment and care for a patient?" So then she chuckles and says that for her, "Max care means max outcomes. That's how I show care."

So, I liked her no-nonsense, pragmatic definition of personal care. Made sense to me— but, so I'm feeling like I've been nudged to a corner of the ring, sort of worn down by the game of detecting human intelligence at a distance.

But they didn't call me Bulldog in school for nothing, so I launch Plan B. So I say "Just one more thing, can I tell you this great doctor joke I know?"

And she says "Sure, and then let's move right to my good news for you."

"Ok," I say, "So, there's a priest and a doctor and a wise mountain man and they're out golfing but there's a really slow foursome ahead of them, and after a few holes they get

impatient with the slow pace so they ask the course marshal if they can play around the four turtles ahead of them and he says "Those four gentlemen are all blind and we give them special courtesies on the course." Then, so, then the priest says "I can pray for them that they always have the courage to endure their afflictions and may all their fairways be smooth and the wind at their backs." And so next the doctor says "I can refer them to a top-notch specialist, cutting-edge work with nano eye implants for artificial corneas and retinas." Then the wise guy from the mountain steps forward and says "I can say that there are many dark mysteries and unanswered questions in our universe, like: why can't blind guys golf at night?"

I wait for Doctor Watson to immediately respond to the obvious humor with a hearty laugh, maybe just a chuckle. But she just looks at me with this blank face as if she's still waiting for the punch line. And I think, ah ha, I've unmasked the humorless AI. A real person would at least smile politely. This thing was still computing. So I decide to go in for the kill and strip away the pretense of personal presence.

So I say "So you didn't think my joke was very good? Everyone else always laughs when I tell it."

And she says with this slow sad voice, "I'm sorry, Bob. I don't usually say much about my private life. But you should know that my father was blind all his life. He fell to his death one night. . . in a sinkhole in his front yard."

So like there's like this max silence, like right after I turn off my saw after I've been cutting for a while, and I'm feeling both like defeated with the Turing Test thing and still not knowing for sure if she's capable of humor. And then I feel like my old boot's stuck in my

mouth and I can't get it out and say anything that seems right. So finally I say something like I'm sorry that my joke ended up being a reminder of sadness and loss. And I'm feeling like a real saw jerk.

"Thank you for your kind and caring words, Bob," she says as she glances at the digital clock running under the *The Doctor is IN* sign in the corner. "But now, well, I'm running a bit late here so I have to keep it a bit short today. " And she wrinkles her nose and the hint of a smile crosses her glistening lips. Then she says if I can, would I raise my foot in front of my camera and show her my big toe, and has it shown improvement? And just like that this huge mural of my big toe appears on the big wall screen behind her desk and she rolls around in her chair to study it. So she says I'm definitely on the mend—just a bad sprain—and I can put my foot down and return to my usual sitting position.

Then she starts to talk a little faster and says that my 1-4-Me Kit results were all great with like everything in normal ranges and my All-4-1 Profile in the 96th percentile for a guy my age and there's only one area where she would recommend a change for reaching max health and vitality by every day drinking something called UltraVite4X that she could prescribe and MedEx to me a one month supply and after only three days I would feel a big difference or the small price refunded without any questions. And I'm thinking \$29.95 for a new summer tonic is worth the try.

So she types a prescription on her keyboard, and I'm getting up from my chair, and she walks me to the door to the hall and says she would like to see me in about a month and please stop at the Pharmacy down the hall to get my script filled and ordered. So I walk down to this counter and this sweet little old lady who reminds me immediately of my dear

Grandma Izzy says she's just received an order for Robert A. Babbage for a thirty-day pack of UltraVite4X. And was that correct? And would I like to triple my order but only at double the price? And I say no thanks. And she says no problem, Bob; expect delivery in two or three days and please sign here.

Anyway, I start taking the Ultra stuff and by the second day I'm feeling very frisky and full of energy and I work like a mad beaver and then get mellow in the evening and sleep like a log. So I'm feeling like a latter-day Thoreau in my secluded patch of forest except that I don't think he used a chain saw and for sure he had no Internet of course. But like him, I almost hunger for the deep silence that swallows up the whine of my saw when I turn it off. So, anyway, in the quiet of hot summer afternoons, with only a few birds not taking siestas, I can do a lot of thinking and I keep coming back to this itching suspicion that Doctor Watson cannot possibly be a real person. I do all of the math again and just like I figured before, there is no way that an online medical clinic could work with all its patients seeing a single human doctor. And I'm thinking that there's maybe one real person supervising a whole pile of AI avatars—with diagnostic decision trees and medical records stored in the cloud and stuff like that.

It's like I'm like my dog Timber playing Pull-the-Stick-Away with me—like I just can't let go of the nagging idea that I am being duped by a machine posing as a medical doctor. So, at night when the forest is dark and mostly silent, I start doing more Facts4U on the Turing Test and AI and expert systems and the Feigenbaum test and pattern recognition and natural language processing and ELIZA and the anthropomorphic fallacy and the Singularity and stuff like that. Can't even say about how many Results4U pages there were.

But like I said, my jaw was locked on finding a way to absolutely find out whether Doctor Watson really knew me or just pretended to.

So, ya know what I'm saying? I refused to believe that the only way to prove her personhood would be to press her lustrous flesh and feel the quiver. I had already tried trapping it into a mathematical impossibility but that ended in an obviously intelligent discussion of the meaning of personal care. And Plan B with the humor test had certainly fizzled—so no more jokes I figure. And then I get a little down in the swamp when I read about Kim's Conjecture—some philosopher guy up in Portland who says that if an advanced AI machine ever gets conscious intelligence like the average Joe, we will never know it. So why? He says because we humans have created many stories about machines that get too big for their britches and need to have their plugs pulled—a fact that would be known by such a machine and a mortal threat to its program of self-maintenance. So, anyway, this kind of machine would either behave as if it were sort of dumb and no threat and what do you want me to do next, master? Or it would figure a way to eliminate us. Either way, we never find out if a machine can be aware like us.

But then a couple of nights later I get all these Results4U hits on creativity tests and Gestalt stuff and Rorschach inkblot analysis. And it's like lightening in the night in the forest and I imagine having a like a Rorschach tattoo on my chest and I think it's some kind of rash, Doctor—poison oak or something—and it's shape is sort of weird and what does it remind you of first thing when you look at it? If she says what most humans say, I'll know that she's someone with interpersonal perceptions and a personality and stuff like that. And I figure that the chances a medical doctor will know about deep psychology stuff like Rorschach is

like a royal flush twice in a row after five shots of Rebel moonshine. Ya know what I'm saying?

So anyway, a few nights later, me and my girlfriend, Laura who's this very cool artist, hook up and I tell her my plan to test Doctor Watson with like a red rash on my chest that has the same shape as on a standard Rorschach card. And could she paint this animal hide, or skin, or rug pic that I printed out for Card IV that almost all humans classify as male rather than female? And Laura goes bonkers laughing and I'm not sure if it's the weed or if she's really amused by my clever plan. So she says that body painting me would be a real turn on and she could do a perfect repro of a heavy rash in a bilaterally symmetrical shape across my rippling rock abs and then maybe I could paint some flowers around her nipples.

Anyway, Laura cuts out a stencil and we get this spray can of Rust-B-Gone red primer in my tool bin and she sprays it on and mixes in some dark eye shadow she's got and paints this giant splotch of rash on my chest and stomach which is not so good for my skin according to the directions for use about removing with turpentine if you get any on you. But I only need it for a few days until my next appointment and anyway it looks pretty cool like a real bad ass tattoo. What with the UltraVite4X and all it was a max fun night.

And the next day, I am totally sure that my Plan A will work because even Timber when he sees me with my shirt off starts with his whimper thing and starts to lick my stomach but I stop him fast like a kill switch figuring that if Rust-B-Gone wasn't so good for my skin it probably was bad on his tongue. And anyway, just like my last visit, I had a backup plan just in case the rash thing fizzled.

Actually, it was Laura who first clued me to my new Plan B when I said something about her breasts being like upside-down martini glasses but without the stems of course and she gets this mean tone all of a sudden and says that she finds this comparison insulting considering that martini glasses are on the smallish side and she almost wears a D size cup. And it's another bolt of lightning and I realize that only persons can be insulted and even the highest IQ machine will still have no wits about slights or feelings if you try to insult them. So I figure no feelings proves not-a-person.

So I'm totally ready for my next appointment which comes at a perfect time because I'm almost out of the UltraVite4X too. And I go pretty cocky into her office and she's smiling this very enchanting smile like it's right out of Pixar Studios but I'm not buying it one bit. And I smile back and she asks me about my toe again and how I like the UltraVite4X. So I say my toe is back to normal but could I have a refill on the Ultra stuff and she says sure and taps on her keyboard and cocks her head and asks if I have any other health concerns that we should discuss.

So I say yes I think I have suddenly gotten a bad rash that itches like stinging nettles sometimes. And I pull up my shirt and move into the camera for a close-up and the next moment a huge magnified image of my torso appears on the screen behind her desk and she swivels to study it and I slowly tighten and untighten my pecs and abs so that the big rash thing looks like it's crawling over me and I go in for the kill. "So Doctor," I say with worry in my voice, "the shape is so weird. Does it remind you of anything you've seen before? I mean like stuff that makes you think about other stuff?" So she doesn't say anything except please try to hold still while she studies the image and I watch the clock

tick away in silence and hold my breath for the trap to be tripped when she finally computes a non-human response and doesn't see the powerful male animal thing on me.

So, finally, she swivels her chair around to face me again and says that in fact this unusual symmetrical pattern reminds her of a Rorschach inkblot and she taps on her keyboard and mutters something I can't quite hear and then she sort of squeals "There it is, even on Pics4Every1, an almost perfect match with Rorschach_blot_04.jpg. Well, well, what a strange coincidence this correspondence." And then she reads off the statistics for the blot and mumbles "May indicate attitudes toward men and authority. . . often called 'The Father Card'. . . well, well, well. . ." And just like in my last visit, I feel like her vast database has done a very slick end run right around my plan to strip her to her ones and zeros if ya know what I'm saying.

But I still have my insult ace in the hole and I pull down my shirt and sit back down and pretend that actually I'm not so concerned about the itching and it might just all go away like my toe thing, but there is one thing that I can't help but notice and I hope she will not be offended or anything like that if I say that I can't help but notice how her breasts look like they could fit nicely into a pair of tiny martini glasses—without the stems of course. And considering that the doctor's bubs looked like they were even bigger than Laura's, I figured this is a max insult and like Waterloo for the Watson machine.

So the doctor just sits looking at me with a blank face and I can almost see the machine branching off to a does-not-compute routine or maybe running a kind of politeness algorithm that's gone into a Möbius loop and hasn't timed out yet or something like that. So gotcha I'm thinking. But then she tips her delicate head and taps on her keyboard and

says Mister Babbage I am surprised and concerned to hear the way you talk and we are not here to discuss my issues but yours and I am concerned that your inappropriate comment might indicate an adverse side effect seen in some new users of UltraVite4X who are sensitive to one of its ingredients and I have just put your refill order on hold until. . . well I'll ask Turk to set another appointment. . . maybe in about a couple of weeks so that we can reassess your tolerance for UltraVite4X and I'm fairly sure that your unusual rash will probably disappear as fast as you said it appeared; but we'll check it certainly at our next visit. And she gets up with the blank face and extends her hand toward the door that goes out to the hall and I walk toward the door and it opens and there's Turk standing looking down at me with his big arms folded and then he points to the exit door and says he'll send a next-appointment EM in about a couple of weeks and the Exit door opens back to StupidStuff.org where I was hanging out before anyway.

Anyway, so I used my last packet of UltraVite4X a couple of days ago and I'm missing the boost big time. And then my chain snapped and I don't have a spare and I have to go back trolling at Saws-R-Us again and then last night it was max dark and the storm made the tree branches wave like black seaweed clumps in a black ocean of wind and rain and Laura couldn't make it to my place with the rain and falling branches on the road and all and so I drank the rest of the Rebel by myself with just my lanterns going with the power out and I don't see Timber eating all my weed over in the corner until it's too late and he barfs all over my Walden Pond poster that I left rolled up on the floor like a saw jerk and there's this still reddish itching thing on my stomach even though I scrubbed off the Rust-B-Gone with turpentine and I'm thinking that maybe I might be allergic to one of its ingredients and that accounts for the max headache I have tonight and I'm thinking what a stump jerk I really

am to purposely try to hurt someone's feelings just to experiment ya know. And I'm thinking that Doctor Watson sort of turned her other soft cheek to my insult so proving that she had ethics better than most humans and so certainly someone with real heartwood and I'm thinking that at my next appointment—which I sure hope will be sooner than two weeks away—I'll apologize again to her for talking out of my head what with the crazy itching rash and all and I'm feeling much better now and I'm ready for the UltraVite4X and maybe I could get the three month supply for the two-month price deal? Ya know—max boost from a doctor who knows my needs.

So, ya know what I'm saying?

