

EXCERPT FROM “FAKING FANDOM”

By

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ACT I, Scene 1

*(REBECCA, JULIAN, SAMANTHA, and CARL are sitting around the table in the meeting room, including a projector and a screen for their PowerPoint presentations.)*

REBECCA

*(Standing in front of the screen)*

I’m not going to beat around the bush. Our profits are at an all time low. We’ve lost more than half of our consumers, and our stocks are in the toilet. We could pin this on any number of events: the poor economy, lack of interest in conventional toys...

*(She glares at Julian.)*

The “Teenage Tiffany” doll that really menstruates!

JULIAN

I thought there was a market for gritty realism!

REBECCA

Point being, we need a new idea, and fast. FunCo. is not going bankrupt after ten years of success! Any suggestions?

*(Julian starts to open his mouth, when Rebecca stops him.)*

Any suggestions that *do not* involve remarketing “Teenage Tiffany.”

*(Julian slumps back in his seat.)*

CARL

Power Rangers! That's an easy sell!

REBECCA

It's also a licensed trademark, meaning that even if we *could* get the rights to produce their toys, we would have to split the money with the franchise; which we absolutely cannot afford to do right now!

JULIAN

You do have a point though, Carl. Action figures based on kid's shows are easy money.

CARL

I know some guys over in Japan. I'll give them a call, and bingo-bango, we've got the rights for the Power Rangers.

REBECCA

Can you get your "guys over in Japan" to agree to giving us all the royalties and profits from the toys? No? Didn't think so.

*(Pause.)*

Samantha, you've been awfully quiet today. I don't suppose you have anything to contribute.

SAMANTHA

Um, no Ms. Carmichael! Just taking some notes!

REBECCA

We work together as a team, Samantha. If you're not going to pull your weight, then we don't need you here.

CARL

Seriously, Samantha! Get with the program.

JULIAN

Speaking of which, Carl, how's your progress on the new Twister ads?

CARL

Shut up!

REBECCA

Samantha?

SAMANTHA

Well, I was just thinking that Mr. Duncan and Mr. Cooper do have a point. Maybe if we found a kid's show that just started, then we could get the rights to make their toys for cheap, and if we advertised enough for the toys, we could make a lot of money.

REBECCA

I keep trying to tell you: Toys for a TV show cost money! Even the worst shows will want a cut of our profits if our products sell! The only way we could make money off something like this was if we made the show ourselves!

*(Pause. Julian, Carl and Samantha mull over this.)*

JULIAN

That sounds doable.

CARL

That sounds awesome!

REBECCA

FunCo. makes *toys*, not *cartoons*.

CARL

Who said we had to actually *make* the cartoon? We could just advertise the shit out of it like Samantha said, put up a fake website, and make the toys. This thing practically sells itself! Like a hooker! Oh!

*(Pause.)*

REBECCA

That sort of talk is not appreciated in the office, Carl!

JULIAN

Obscenities aside, I think this could work. I've seen Japanese shows get a huge following in the States before they're even released here. I've even seen American shows get famous in Japan the same way.

SAMANTHA

These shows do tend to gain a lot of hype before they even come here. I'm assuming.

REBECCA

But what about the *show*? Audiences are going to want to see full-length episodes before they buy toys for it!

CARL

Throw up a few clips and trailers and tell them it's from Japan and who the hell's going to know?

*(Pause.)*

Um, heck. Who the "heck's" going to know.

SAMANTHA

If it is a Japanese show, then we could make a lot more money, too. Lots of adults blow their life savings on figurines and action figures and key chains.

*(Pause.)*

The pathetic ones with no lives do, anyway.

JULIAN

Perfect! Let's make some anime toys! Costumes! Action figures! Weapons and wands!

Notebooks and pencils! The sky's the limit!

REBECCA

*Everyone!* I am still the boss! I get to make the final decision, and I don't want to lose this company on a fool's errand!

*(She looks around the room.)*

Does anyone here have any ideas for a new toy we could sell?

JULIAN

I was thinking of an educational toy. It looks like the average human body, except you can see all its organs, and you get to feed it real food and see how the body—

REBECCA

*(Interrupting loudly)*

Does anyone else have any ideas?

CARL

Power Rangers.

REBECCA

We are *not* making Power Rangers, Carl.

CARL

What about Power Rangers knock-offs? We could call them the Super Rangers! And each of them would be a color of fruit! And at the end of the show we could have them talk about healthy eating habits and that kind of junk.

JULIAN

It'd be popular in the parental demographic. And they are the ones actually buying the toys for the kids.

REBECCA

Why are we still talking about this? We are not selling knock-offs and we are not going to make up some show just to sell some toys. For one thing, it's illegal.

CARL

That never bothered you before. Remember all those board games that said "from the makers of Clue?"

REBECCA

That was different. Many of our employees used to work for Parker Brothers, and didn't they make Clue? Samantha, please tell me you have a million dollar idea.

*(Samantha shuffles in her seat, not daring to speak.)*

*Rebecca finally sighs in defeat.)*

Fine. Until we get a better idea, we'll work with the toy line for the fake show, but on one condition: No knock-offs! If we're going to do this, and do it well, we need to do something completely original. If we half-ass it by just copying another show, then no one's going to buy.

JULIAN

Oh! There's this wonderful blog I keep hearing about that just loves anime and popular culture. I'll just search around for the most popular topics and we can make a guaranteed hit.

REBECCA

What site is this?

JULIAN

I believe it's called "4chan."

*(Carl chuckles.)*

SAMANTHA

*(Blurting)*

NO!

JULIAN

Pardon?

SAMANTHA

That site's just full of anti-social perverts who can't even spell! Nobody will watch a show like that!

CARL

How do you know about a blog for anti-social perverts, Samantha?

JULIAN

I know about it, and I'm not an anti-social pervert!

CARL

Post anything special on there Sammy, like obese men fu...fornicating their younger sister's Nintendo Wii?

*(Samantha throws her pen up in the air so that it lands behind her. She then feigns shock.)*

SAMANTHA

Oh no! I dropped my pen!

*(Samantha gets down on the ground to find her pen. She can't find it because it has actually rolled down to Rebecca's sensible heels. Rebecca swiftly bends down and picks up the pen. It is a girly, pink Hello Kitty pen, covered with kittens and hearts.)*

REBECCA

*(To Samantha)*

Is this your pen?

CARL

*(Also to Samantha)*

Hello Kitty? Grow up, you weirdo!

JULIAN

*(To Carl)*

Don't be so harsh on her!

*(Samantha has gotten up and is about to run out to the room in shame.)*

REBECCA

If you run out on this meeting, you'll be running out on your job.

*(Samantha stops, slouching somewhat.)*

REBECCA

Now, Samantha, do you like anime?

SAMANTHA



I'm not a loser or anything! I still have a life and I'm a hard worker!

REBECCA

You didn't answer my question. Do you like anime?

SAMANTHA

A little.

REBECCA

Do you like it enough that you could make a plot for your own anime?

*(Before Samantha gets the chance to answer.)*

And potentially get a raise for contributing to our latest project?

SAMANTHA

Well, there is this one idea for a comic I wanted to write.

*(She returns to her seat.)*

It's about this woman, Mitsuki, who falls from the Moon. Actually, she's the Goddess of the Moon, Japanese, obviously.

*(Pause.)*

REBECCA

Go on.

SAMANTHA

Anyway, she falls because she's been attacked by evil demons who want to take over the universe. And a Japanese guy finds her, handsome, with a strong sense of justice, but he's jaded by all the evil he sees around him.

*(Carl snickers.)*

I'm not comfortable talking about this.

JULIAN

No, no, this is fine. I want to hear what else you have to say!

SAMANTHA

It's kind of embarrassing, though.

REBECCA

No more embarrassing than having to declare bankruptcy. Please continue, Samantha.

SAMANTHA

So this guy, Kotaro, finds her and nurses her back to health, and she's so grateful that she lends him some of her supernatural power. And he'll need it because the demons come and attack his home next.

JULIAN

Beautiful!

SAMANTHA

Then the moon tells him that she has to find her way back into the sky or else the Universe will fall apart. So he travels across the world to find a way to get her back to the sky, meeting all sorts of people along the way.

CARL

That's your story? Sounds about as good as Twilight. But Twilight sold like hotcakes, so why not?

JULIAN

It does have potential! We could make action figures with magic powers, and the Moon Goddess angle would appeal to both genders.

REBECCA

Samantha, who are your other characters?

SAMANTHA

I, um, hadn't gotten that far yet.

REBECCA

Thank you, Samantha. Carl, Julian, what kinds of characters can we put in for a show like this?

CARL

A spunky, scantily clad sorceress, of course. With big bazongas! May as well get the pervy old man-child market.

JULIAN

Maybe we can include a masked figure. Not a superhero, per se, but maybe a gentlemen thief?

Anti-heroes are usually more popular than the main characters.

SAMANTHA

And a demon with a haunted past!

*(Everyone is looking at her now.)*

And some other demons, naturally.

*(Pause.)*

And the God of Shadow, who wants to destroy the Moon Goddess because she's the only thing keeping him from imprisoning the universe in darkness. And some other monsters and gods.

REBECCA

It seems like you've put a lot of thought into this, Samantha.

SAMANTHA

Not obsessively.

REBECCA

Therefore, I want you to come in tomorrow with pictures and profiles for every character. Point out any that have weapons, staves, charms, or other accessories we could make into toys. And if you can, focus on the demon, the thief and the sorceress. Just do me a favor and don't make her too "scantily clad." This is a children's show, presumably.

SAMANTHA

They're not that good.

REBECCA

As long as we can tell who they are and what they look like, it should be fine. Don't forget to bring a color scheme for each character, too. Also, we need to make a promotional website for this show by the end of the week, in Japanese.

CARL

Can't we just do the site in English and save some time?

REBECCA

This is a Japanese show. The promotional site has to be in Japanese. At least this way we can say the show's still being translated into English and we're just selling the toys ahead of time.

JULIAN

Dennis in the Technology Department is great with websites. I'll get him on the project right away.

REBECCA

While you're down there, ask if anyone has any animating experience. This website's going to

need clips and sound bytes from all the characters. The more experience, the better. I'm hoping for something along the lines of Hayao Miyazaki's films.

CARL

*(With obvious pride.)*

It's interesting you mention that, Ms. Carmichael. I know somebody who works as an animator for Studio Ghibli. Even if the quality's not good, at least we can say "From the animators who brought you *Howl's Moving Castle*." Plus, we could probably get him to edit our "Japanese" website, too.

SAMANTHA

Are you sure you can count on him to do a good job? And keep this show a secret?

CARL

He has to. He owes me a favor.

REBECCA

Perfect. I know you're already occupied with other projects, everyone, so let's finish those up as quickly as possible first. May as well put a few more toys out on the market before we pin all our hopes on this show. But don't take on anything new until we finish this toy-line project. We'll need all our time and effort to make this show a success. Also, whoever put the soy milk in the fridge, throw it in the trash on the way out. It's starting to smell.

*(With that, Carl and Samantha leave the room and head back to their cubicles. Julian stays behind to talk to Rebecca.)*

JULIAN

Well, I think we've had a very productive meeting today, don't you Ms. Carmichael?

REBECCA

We won't know how productive it really was until we start the damned show.

JULIAN

At least we don't have to waste time trying to figure out a plot. Once we get some decent writers, the rest will be smooth sailing!

REBECCA

*(She laughs, but not in a friendly way.)*

Julian, there is a lot more to a cartoon than just making it!

(REBECCA and JULIAN finally leave the room.

REBECCA turns off the lights and the projector and

leaves the room by herself. End scene.)