

# EASTERN STANDARD TRIBE

*CORY DOCTOROW*









*Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*

*A Place So Foreign and Eight Months*

*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Publishing Science Fiction* (with Karl Schroeder)

*Essential Blogging* (with Rael Dornfest, J. Scott Johnson, Shelley Powers, Benjamin Trott, and Meredith G. Trott)



cory doctorow:

---

# eastern standard tribe



A Tom Doherty Associates Book  
New York

The author and publisher have provided this e-book to you without Digital Rights Management software (DRM) applied so that you can enjoy reading it on your personal devices. This e-book is for your personal use only. You may not print or post this e-book, or make this e-book publicly available in any way. You may not copy, reproduce or upload this e-book, other than to read it on one of your personal devices.

**Copyright infringement is against the law. If you believe the copy of this e-book you are reading infringes on the author's copyright, please notify the publisher at: [us.macmillanusa.com/piracy](http://us.macmillanusa.com/piracy)**





*For my parents*

---

*For my family*

*For everyone who helped me up and for everyone I let down. You know who you are. Sincerest thanks  
and most heartfelt apologies.*



# Contents

---

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

-- --

[Chapter 26](#)

---

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[About the Author](#)









**I once had** a Tai Chi instructor who explained the difference between Chinese and Western medicine thus: “Western medicine is based on corpses, things that you discover by cutting up dead bodies and pulling them apart. Chinese medicine is based on living flesh, things observed from vital, moving humans.”

The explanation, like all good propaganda, is stirring and stilted, and not particularly accurate, and gummy as the hook from a top-40 song, sticky in your mind in the sleep-deprived noontime when the world takes on a hallucinatory hyperreal clarity. Like now as I sit here in my underwear on the roof of a sanatorium in the backwoods off Route 128, far enough from the perpetual construction of Boston that it's merely a cloud of dust like a herd of distant buffalo charging the plains. Like now as I sit here with a pencil up my nose, thinking about homebrew lobotomies and wouldn't it be nice if I gave myself one.

Deep breath.

The difference between Chinese medicine and Western medicine is the dissection versus the observation of the thing in motion. The difference between reading a story and studying a story is the difference between living the story and killing the story and looking at its guts.

School! We sat in English class and we dissected the stories that I'd escaped into, laid open their abdomens and tagged their organs, covered their genitals with polite, sterile drapes, recorded dutiful notes en masse that told us what the story was about, but never what the story *was*. Stories are propaganda, virii that slide past your critical immune system and insert themselves directly into your emotions. Kill them and cut them open and they're as naked as a nightclub in daylight.

The theme. The first step in dissecting a story is euthanizing it: “What is the theme of this story?”

Let me kill my story before I start it, so that I can dissect it and understand it. The theme of this story is: “Would you rather be smart or happy?”

This is a work of propaganda. It's a story about choosing smarts over happiness. Except if I give the pencil a push: then it's a story about choosing happiness over smarts. It's a morality play, and the first character is about to take the stage. He's a foil for the theme, so he's drawn in simple lines. Here he is:





vis sermonizing, and there was still the Communion to be administered, but God knew it had been a long time since the congregation was engaged so thoroughly with coming to grips with God and what their faith meant.

Afterwards, when Art was returned to his scandalized, thin-lipped Gran, Father Ferlenghetti made a point of warmly embracing her and telling her that Art was welcome at his pulpit any time, and suggested a future in the seminary. Gran was amazed, and blushed under her Sunday powder, and the clawed hand on his shoulder became a caress.



**The theme of** this story is choosing smarts over happiness, or maybe happiness over smarts. Art's a good guy. He's smart as hell. That's his schtick. If he were a cartoon character, he'd be the pain-in-the-ass poindexter who is all the time dispelling the mysteries that fascinate his buddies. It's not easy being Art's friend.

Which is, of course, how Art ("not his real name") ended up sitting forty-five stories over the woodsy Massachusetts countryside, hot August wind ruffling his hair and blowing up the legs of his boxers, pencil in his nose, euthanizing his story preparatory to dissecting it. In order to preserve the narrative integrity, Art ("not his real name") may take some liberties with the truth. This is autobiographical fiction, after all, not an autobiography.

Call me Art ("not my real name"). I am an agent-provocateur in the Eastern Standard Tribe, though I've spent most of my life in GMT-8 and at various latitudes of Zulu, which means that my poor pineal gland has all but forgotten how to do its job without that I drown it in melatonin precursors and treat it to multi-hour nine-kilolumen sessions in the glare of my travel lantern.

The tribes are taking over the world. You can track our progress by the rise of minor traffic accidents. The sleep-deprived are terrible, terrible drivers. Daylight savings time is a widowermaker: stay off the roads on Leap Forward day!

Here is the second character in the morality play. She's the love interest. Was. We broke up, just before I got sent to the sanatorium. Our circadians weren't compatible.



**April 3, 2012** was the day that Art nearly killed the first and only woman he ever really loved. It was her fault.

Art's car was running low on lard after a week in the Benelux countries, where the residents were all high-net-worth cholesterol-conscious codgers who guarded their arteries from the depredations of the frytrap as jealously as they squirreled their money away from the taxman. He was, therefore, thrilled and delighted to be back on British soil, Greenwich +0, where grease ran like water and his runabout could be kept easily and cheaply fuelled and the vodka could run down his gullet instead of into his tank.

He was in the Kensington High Street on a sleepy Sunday morning, GMT0300h—2200h back in EDT—and the GPS was showing insufficient data-points to even gauge traffic between his geoloc and the Camden High where he kept his rooms. When the GPS can't find enough peers on the relay network to color its maps with traffic data, you know you've hit a sweet spot in the city's uber-circadian, a moment of grace where the roads are very nearly exclusively yours.

So he whistled a jaunty tune and swilled his coffium, a fad that had just made it to the UK, thanks to the loosening of rules governing the disposal of heavy water in the EU. The java just wouldn't cool off, remaining hot enough to guarantee optimal caffeine osmosis right down to the last drop.

If he was jittery, it was no more so than was customary for ESTalists at GMT+0, and he was driving safely and with due caution. If the woman had looked out before stepping off the kerb and into the anemically thin road, if she hadn't been wearing stylish black in the pitchy dark of the curve before the Royal Garden Hotel, if she hadn't stepped *right in front of his runabout*, he would have merely swerved and sworn and given her a bit of a fright.

But she didn't, she was, she did, and he kicked the brake as hard as he could, twisted the wheel likewise, and still clipped her hipside and sent her ass-over-teakettle before the runabout did its own barrel roll, making three complete revolutions across the Kensington High before lodging in the Royal Garden Hotel's shrubs. Art was covered in scorching, molten coffium, screaming and clawing at his eyes, upside down, when the porters from the Royal Garden opened his runabout's upside-down door undid his safety harness and pulled him out from behind the rapidly flacciding airbag. They plunged his face into the ornamental birdbath, which had a skin of ice that shattered on his nose and jangled against his jawbone as the icy water cooled the coffium and stopped the terrible, terrible burning.

He ended up on his knees, sputtering and blowing and shivering, and cleared his eyes in time to see the woman he'd hit being carried out of the middle of the road on a human travois made of the porters' linked arms of red wool and gold brocade.

"Assholes!" she was hollering. "I could have a goddamn spinal injury! You're not supposed to move me!"

"Look, miss," one porter said, a young chap with the kind of fantastic dentition that only an insecure teabag would ever pay for, teeth so white and flawless they strobed in the sodium streetlamps. "Look. We can leave you in the middle of the road, right, and not move you, like we're supposed to. But if we do that, chances are you're going to get run over before the paramedics get here, and then you certainly *will* have a spinal injury, and a crushed skull besides, like as not. Do you follow me?"

"You!" she said, pointing a long and accusing finger at Art. "You! Don't you watch where you're going, you fool! You could have killed me!"

Art shook water off his face and blew a mist from his dripping moustache. "Sorry," he said, weakly. She had an American accent, Californian maybe, a litigious stridency that tightened his



- [read online \*No Ordinary Heroes: 8 Doctors, 30 Nurses, 7,000 Prisoners and a Category 5 Hurricane\* pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)
- [The Pinch Runner Memorandum pdf](#)
- [\*\*download online Murder on the Cote d'Azur \(Maggie Newberry Mystery, Book 1\) here\*\*](#)
- [A Beautiful Friendship \(Star Kingdom, Book 1\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [\*\*download online Emergent Timber Technologies: Materials, Structures, Engineering, Project\*\*](#)
  
- <http://ramazotti.ru/library/Paleo-Diet-for-Athletes-Guide--Paleo-Meal-Plans-for-Endurance-Athletes--Strength-Training--and-Fitness.pdf>
- <http://cavalldecartro.highlandagency.es/library/Devil-s-Light.pdf>
- <http://econtact.webschaefer.com/?books/Cyber-Security-Policy-Guidebook.pdf>
- <http://bestarthritiscare.com/library/Confucius--And-the-World-He-Created.pdf>
- <http://jaythebody.com/freebooks/Emergent-Timber-Technologies--Materials--Structures--Engineering--Projects.pdf>