

In another time and place, where no one hears but everyone reads...

Another year, and another page turns over in the Book of Life. A time to peer deep into the farthest reaches of desktop graphics...to a time and a place where all files are joined together, and all platforms are as one, and all those who toil in graphic design, and graphic communications, and graphic arts have set aside their differences to unite in one common set of keyboard shortcuts...

The vision is still not clear...let me close my eyes and concentrate...

Ah, yes, it's coming to me...I see it now...a world of amazing *Myst*-like colors and fantastic unnatural scenery...I see an enormous castle, and at the very top of the castle a large turret room...and in this room I see a man—a man who looks much like Bill Gates, sitting all alone in front of a computer screen, banging his keyboard and staring blankly at the monitor, repeating over and over, "I can't connect, I can't connect..."

I see a copy of *Graphic Exchange* lying unopened on the floor beside him, and I whisper, "You're in *Exile*, Bill...turn to page 28..."

But he hears me not...

I open my eyes for a split second, and the image disappears...and as my eyelids close once more, I am looking into a tent, somewhere in the middle of the desert. Inside is a man in a kaftan, seated in the middle of enormous piles of foreign currency, and what looks like stacks of software manuals—for *QuarkXPress 5*. Buried under one stack I can just make out the corner of *Graphic Exchange*.

Strangely, I somehow divine that this man is Fred Ebrahimi, Lord of *Quark*. But all the manuals are written in a foreign lan-

guage—because Fred has sold the company to the Sultan of Brunei for 50 billion shekels.

"Oh, Fred," I wail, "How could you not open up to page 15 and read *Professional Page Layout—Past, Present and Future?*"

But he hears me not...

I blink, and suddenly I see a boy's bedroom, and in it I see Steve Jobs, prancing around in his underwear, a digital video camera in his hands, a *Graphic Exchange* neatly folded on the night table...and on the bed, her bonnet and staff cast aside, her flouncy dress in a crumpled heap on the floor, lies Little Bo Peep from *Toy Story*, baring more than just her soul...and as I watch dumbfounded, the bedroom door flies open and into the room parades the whole Apple board of directors, wearing looks of shock and amazement...

"QuickTime, Steve!" I cry, but the words stick in my throat. "Read *Moviemaking on the Mac* by Bob Connolly, page 32!"

But he hears me not...

And so I roll my eyes up to the sky, and when next I look down I have been magically transported to the top of a mountain, somewhere in the dark depths of California. A bearded man wearing only a loin-cloth sits crosslegged, chanting inaudibly to himself, over and over, as if exorcising some sort of horrible demon. Before him, open to page 23, is *Graphic Exchange*.

I approach very slowly, but he does not seem to be aware of my presence.

I glance down at the open pages and in the faint light of the setting sun I can just make out the printed words: *Life Without Adobe Part 2: Output*, and beneath that, "by Kirby Ferguson".



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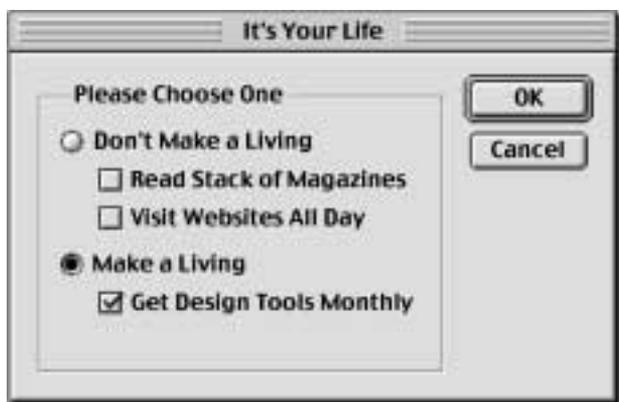
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"Oh, Dr. Warnock," I intone softly, "This cannot be the final meaning of life—I beseech you to explain it to me!"

But he hears me not...and continues his chant in a low monotone, "SVG...SVG...SVG...SVG..."

I reach down and quietly turn the pages of the magazine to page 46, and depart...

From out of the east rises a great wind, so strong that I am lifted up into the air—up, up, high into the sky, tossing and turning me like a small twig. Far below is a majestic clock tower, and I realize I am floating over the historic city of London, England. Yet despite my great altitude I can clearly distinguish a portly gentleman being carried along in a horse and carriage, his waif of a wife by his side.

"Post, damn it! Post!" he exclaims in a loud overbearing tone, whipping the horse into a frenzy with a torn and tattered copy of *Graphic Exchange*.

"Neo-modernism! Nick Shinn! Page 36!" I call from high above, but the howling winds drown out my words, and the horse and carriage with its stout, disapproving occupant disappear into a nearby Tube station.

Needless to say, he hears me not...

As quickly as it came, the great wind dies down and I float to earth, landing with a splash in a kidney-shaped swimming pool.

Spluttering to catch my breath, I pull myself from the water and sit on the concrete edge, drying off. Out of the corner of my eye I suddenly notice a longhaired mustachioed man—sitting perfectly still on the bottom of the pool, engrossed in an issue of *Graphic Exchange*! The water is now perfectly still and crystal clear, and through the distorted perspective of the wetness I can just make out the headline on the article he is reading: *Are You Playing With a Full Deck?*

"Don't drown yourself!" I shout with a certain tone of reverence in my voice, for I have recognized the unmistakable visage of master digital artist Kai Krause. "It's only Ron Giddings playing with Alienskin *Eye Candy 4000*!"

But he is waterlogged and hears me not...

And so I raise myself up and prepare for the long journey home. But hardly have I taken three steps when from out of nowhere a rocketing motorcycle and helmeted rider roars down upon me, sweeping me off my feet and carrying me down a winding road at an inestimable speed. As I hang on for my very life I see trees, buildings, people fly past, barely blurs on the landscape.

At last we draw to a stop, and I realize I am standing outside my front door. The madman rider lifts his helmet, exposing his face, and I find myself staring into the bemused expression of Tim Berners-Lee.

"Flash 5—Enhanced workflow and advanced scripting—Peter Dudar," are the only words he mutters as he hands me back a shrapnelled copy of *Graphic Exchange* and leaps back onto his two-wheeled charger.

"Page 50?" I reply...but he is gone into the ether.

And, of course, he hears me not. ■