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Figurski at Findhorn on Acid by Richard Holeton

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Figurski at Findhorn on Acid follows a convicted murderer on parole, a gender-bending French-Moroccan journalist, and a handless Vietnamese-American juggler as they traverse global and virtual locations competing for possession of a rare and valuable 18th-century mechanical pig.

As a combinatorial fiction structured around all the possible arrangements of three characters, three places, and three artifacts, Figurski at Findhorn on Acid is built for fun and exploration. It's been described as game-like, as "funny, crazy, ultra-postmodern satire" (Mariusz Pisarski) and as riding "a thin edge between the most complex recent critical ideas and the most absurd TV game shows" (Michael Tratner). Originally published by Eastgate Systems on the Storyspace platform in 2001, the novel was technically and functionally reimagined for the web in 2021 in partnership with Washington State University's Electronic Literature Lab (ELL), under the direction of Dr. Dene Grigar. As a collaborative effort and complete recoding, the result is a new work featuring a unique, dual aesthetic design with two modes that the reader can toggle between— "Contemporary Mode" for modern readers, and "Classic Mode," which pays homage to the look and feel of the original.

The zany plot follows a convicted murderer on parole, a gender-bending French-Moroccan journalist, and a handless Vietnamese-American juggler as they traverse global and virtual locations competing for possession of a rare and valuable 18th-century mechanical pig. While readers may stick to a roughly chronological default path through the narrative, they may not be able to resist the temptation to digress with a particular character, location, timeline, or footnote. They shouldn't need to drop breadcrumbs, however, insofar as I've sought to make the structure both logical and transparent, with multiple navigational aids on every screen. One of these is the map function, an innovation of Storyspace's hypertext writing environment that has been ingeniously recreated by the Electronic Literature Lab for the archival web edition. This

interactive map lets readers navigate the text by clicking through a graphical, hierarchical depiction of the structure (everything in Figurski is divided into threes and multiples of three) in which text passages are represented by nested rectangles and links are shown with arrows.
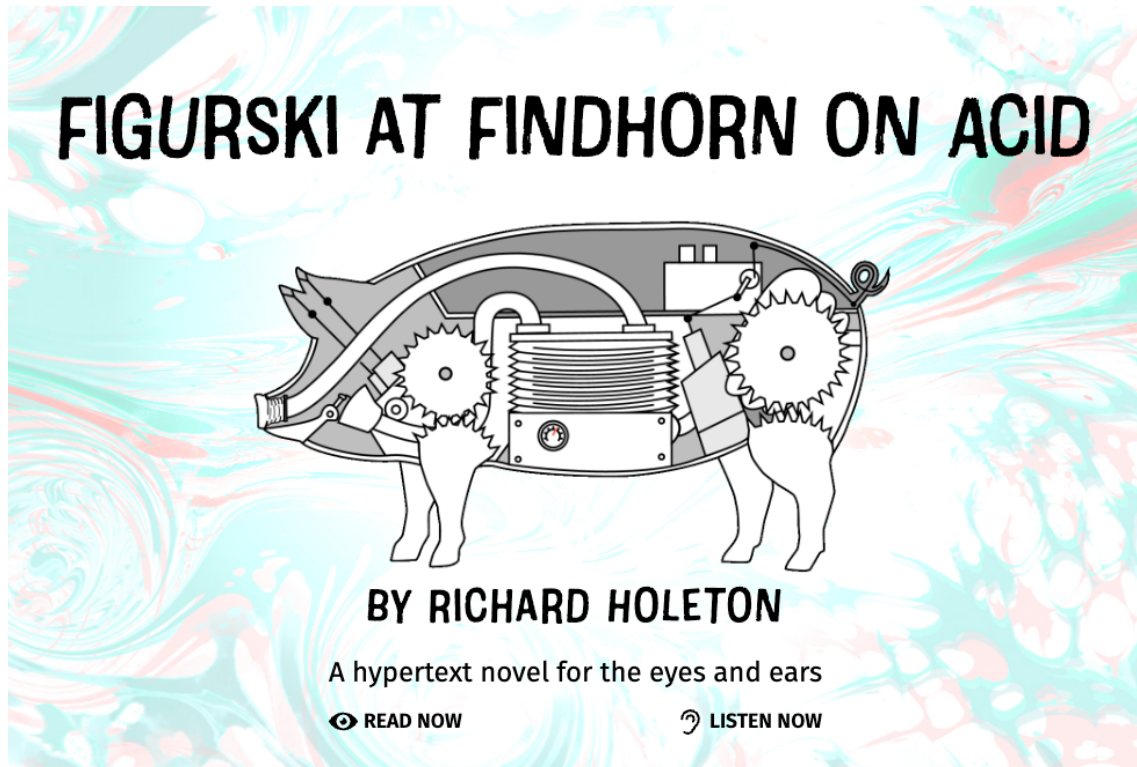

Figure1: Click on the image above to experience Figurski at Findhorn on Acid by Richard Holteton

References

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