

## Animated Theatrical Release

A healthy, or unhealthy, drink from a container marked "soap" seemed the best thing at the time. After all, it was Thanksgiving, a day to give yourself something to be thankful for! So, Stuzzy Muddle, the kangaroo-shaped jumper, his gift to himself was an absence from school. He did not factor in his gift a presence at the hospital. Nonetheless, the lagophagus teacher did not detain the crowd of attentive teenaged macropods who picked up Stuzzy and carried him by hand to the hospital. No, the teacher was too involved in deciphering what the mysterious solid objects were that had just been rejected from Stuzzy's body.

It was not until six hours further into the day that Stuzzy awoke to see the worst living animal that had ever plagued Bottlesham county.

"Oh, him! He sees and hears!"

"Smells and feels!"

"Be awake all the way, O fat one!"

"I command you! Lest I not stop with exclamation!"

A fallacelloquel stood upright on Stuzzy's paunch. When it spoke, it alternated between the outer two of three mouths. It was mostly shaped like a twisted centipede, except its setae were fewer and longer. Its cuticle was the color of seaweed left in the autumn sun, on which bypassers stall to spit.

Stuzzy huffed up the lung power to respond, "What are you? I'm not fat! Why am I here? Why didn't they take me home?"

Then a face appeared at the window; a mousey, white face with a little pink nose and ginger kitten ears. Divination was a rare skill among hospital

inhabitants, but there could be no misinformation regarding the manifestation at the window. It was definitely a face. It had facial features and everything.

A girl's face. "Have you come to bring me a message from the future?" said Stuzzy.

The face looked to the Northern wall. She looked to the Southern. "Have I reached the death warden? Then I'm going to be fired if I am late another time!" She soothsaid.

Stuzzy attempted to elevate himself so that he could knock off the fallacelloquel. Bobbing his neck and shoulder, he tried waving his arms. He tried rolling left and right, and felt some astonishing heaviness rolled inside his physical being. He tried wagging his tail, but even that felt heavier.

"You rumble so."

"Say what you want, get what you will," said the fallacelloquel.

The face at the window suddenly permitted Stuzzy a sample of her attention. "Oh please, are you the new manager?" Stuzzy recoiled mentally at the pitiful contorted expression her eyes took up. "I swear that I never was late! You might be given word that I took a four year leave, but I did it in the best interest of the hospital!"

Stuzzy decided that he had sufficiently indulged his appetite for spiritualism. "Will somebody please come in here and explain to me what is going on?" he moaned, and to this very day, Stuzzy is not alone in the expansive sea of those that ask for an explanation.

Take, for instance, the very next character to introduce herself. She would require three answers before her sanity was restored to balance. Following Stuzzy's plea, a yellow lagomorphic woman in zazzy red and grey colored

knickers rocked into the ward, jammin' to some obscure atonal ruckus. She had glued the consummate end of a mop to her head so that when she bobbed her head, the thread tossed outrageously. She had purple grape fur and a tail that resulted in five ends. She looked like the kind of person who would question why your existence had to make itself a part of hers. She was an old buzzard.

The rabbit woman tossed her hair backwards and laid a condescending eye upon the face at the window.

"Must you persist? Why so?" said the woman. "No, no, Mary Martha Rose," she shouted. "You don't work here anymore. You were discharged yesteryear," and muttered, "always in the yester."

"Lady-lady!" groaned Stuzzy, who could no more brave the lunacy. "You've got a problem, other than that demonic face that should be exorcised! Just open the window!"

Mary Martha Rose adopted a look that was less fitting than that of the pitiful, begging look, but it soon disappeared, along with the rest of her face. By now, though, the rabbit woman had turned her head to inspect the source of the thing that called her, "Lady-lady." She snatched the fallacelloquel off Stuzzy's chest and curled her lip.

"I thought," she recalled, "the infestation moniter had solved this problem."

"No, no, I'm not a problem!"

"I have so many know-things that I can put into you!"

"Keep me alive, and I will live in your house with you, I will eat all the things that you buy, and I will speak all night and everyday that you can hear me!"

The woman knew of one place from which the fallacelloquel could never be heard. That was inside her own digestion tubes. Fallacelloquels dissolve in digestive enzymes.

"It's gone," said Stuzzy. Then, with new revelation, said, "It's gone!!!" He could move freely now, like a true kangaroo. "We have a lot to be thankful for!"

"Maybe you do, you're out of training... why aren't you in training?"

"I was sickened."

"So am I. Still, you have that to be happy about." Nobody let her out of training with the excuse that she was sick. The poor dopey jumper-boy was desperate for some impolite disillusionment.

"Who are you?" Stuzzy was somewhat drawn back by the old bird's cynical voice. He was tall, but she was not short (and height, in Bottlesham county, factored in authority).

"Ruthy Reinallellow. Don't ask me how to spell it." She left the room and walked down the corridor to a hole in which grainy, outdated computers were installed.

\*

"As I had thought," said Ruthy, "the infesmon has failed my requirements."

She kicked the infernal machinery. It had been, since the day it had come into Ruthy's employment, showing a map of the hospital. It was intended to specifically detect and electrocute falloceloquels, but all it had done was zap and stun most of her employees, all of whom had tired of the overdose of electricity and left the patients to take care of themselves. "For santa sake, they're adults! I

know they haven't grown up quite yet, but it's not like they are actually handicapped!"

Now, Ruthy ran a solo job. "You uselesss contraption! I ought to complain to the company that pawns them off!"

"Gots ya!"

Somebody threw a net over her head.

"Ya great big-boy! I says to me, 'one a 'ese days I is gon'a comes in hea 'n' ketches ya in a atc! an' I does!"

Right away she knew it was the one-eyed wallaby, Noah Burgeraboard. "Get off me!" commanded Ruthy. "Now!"

She stabbed him with a menacing eye, and the bearded, underfed wallaby dropped the net in an instant. "Aw, scoosims, Missus Rudey, I thinked you was wannadem Ettils."

Ruthy ate her way through the net. "Please don't tell me they too have rolled their way into my territory."

"Aftor awl, Missus Redy, I' is tanksgin' day."

"Oh, not the Ettils! They are fat and ratlike!"

"But dey is comin' hea."

The ettils were once the peacemakers of Bottlesham, so they were quickly chased off. Thanksgiving was their "susceptibility day," as they suspected the grounding peoples to be more gullible on that particular day.

Oh boy, were they ever wrong.

Oh girl, did they ever act on it anyway.

On thanksgiving, in the afternoon, Madeleine Lafayette, the thanksgiving queen, would parade the streets. She would litterrally parade, carred by a

bodyguard whose name was never announced. Or if it was, it was drowned out by the blazing shrieks torrenting from the megaphone speakers she brought with her.

"I cannot sit through their reign of terror," she told Noah. "It always brings up the falloceloquels. Now that I know this," she kicked the infesmon again, "is not functioning at all. Are you listening, Mr. Burgerabord?"

He was staring down the corridor at the room with that was occupied by that kangaroo fellow.

"Oh, does my eye ever lie to me... eye, don't you lie!" he said. "Don't looks, Missus Rudey!"

"What's the matter? It's just a lad who was let out of training because he fell ill."

"You see'ed him?" Noah regretfully shook his head, "I 'member when he's Pappy's will was writted, first livin' kin he looked eyes at become his legal guardin'."

Ruthy pushed out into the corridor and saw the lad inspecting the premises. "Hey, ma'am, this looks like a place." Ruthy needed nothing more than to see the enthusiasm that even his jet sunglasses failed to hide to know what his words truly meant. That is, "I'm going to hang around here and freeload your hospitality."

"Yes!" agreed Ruthy, "and a place, I might add, that you may not stay!"

"No, no, no no, Missus Rudey," said Noah, "ya don't does dat."

"He's not listening anyway. He's not even in there. He just hopped out the window."

"We has to gets him back, Missus Rudey!"

"You do what you will. I have to think up a way to stop this incessant Ettil ritual."

Noah raced through the window through which the potential freeloader exited. "Good riddance. All of them." Three problems sat on Ruthy's face now. She needed one solution to all three in a quicky, so she withdrew to her office to strategize.

"The main goal in each scenario... is to get rid of something," she mused. "Using one plan to rid my hospital of the falloceloquels, my freedom of that overgrown eater bunny, and my town of the Ettils, would require that they all be in the same place at once, or I could hire a few willing accomplices, galaxy knows how many people would love to banish the Ettils."

These were not the actual sentences she was using, she was really writing her thoughts down in mathematical symbols that only she understood, like so:

$$+ V - \{[m*G_] +s\} V/t [t-t] > [v\& B] V Bx L*\{L_-\}$$

Then the idea came to her. An idea that would certainly dismiss forever from her life the fallacelloquels, the new relative, and the Ettils. It would also, if the odds were in her favor, greatly improve her life. She was tempted to daydream, but she was a logical woman. She had to act quickly, for the outcome demanded that she act before the "Thanksgiving queen" came to town.

An invitation addressed to Madaleine Lafayette said, "You are honorable in the most gratifying way, Madalime Laughyet, and you always bring us all something to be happy about," "Which," thought Ruthy as she crafted the invitation, "is mostly a year minus one day that you are not here." All the same,

she resumed her craft, "I am the city's sanitation maintenance officer, and if I could possibly obligate you into joining my clean, sociable facility, we shall all dine. The date is the moment before you equip yourselves to parade the streets."

She bribed a message boy to deliver it immediately to Madeleine's arboreal gazebo. He could not fly, he was a bunny. He had to climb a tree. The gazebo sat on a network of cables tied to long metal poles.

A burly, deep brown Etil by the name of Jayritus Dominoto received the invitation. "Fro' ol' lady Reinallellow, eh?" He tipped the delivery boy and dismissed him.

"Oh, Mad'leen," he said, "You is not gon'a do know what-hoo send us a invite."

Madeleine was really lazy. Her massive slab of a body was usually torturing some lawn chair, as it was at this moment. Two slippery slices of kiwi hid her eyes. Had they not been doing so, she would have eyeballed the enormous glazed ham on the table, and ordered Dominoto to feed it to her.

"A invite? Hmmm... Almost forgot about 'Tanksgivin'!" Still she did not budge. When lying down, she was nearly six feet tall, and her legs had since gone on strike for want of room to move.

"It look 'spicious to me," said Dominoto, examining the oddly written card. "She spell like she get a cut-up newspaper 'n' she glue it all over."

"Who it fro'?"

"Om, it from the crab-appul, dat who." he plucked his whiskers, twirled his annelid tail, ruffled his sleeveless jacked, all in wait for a response from his boss. When none came, he elaborated, "Ol' lady Reinallellow."

"I doesn't know who's she."



"Da one who trow vegetationables at us when we goes around twon playin' peace-makin' moosic."

Madeleine sat upright, defying the expectations of everyone who had set a recent eye upon her.

"Dad ol' hag!?" She hollared. "What does she thinks we is!?"

"I is tinkin, mebbe we shood go." He smiled mischieavously.

"Jayritus, what is you got up your arm?"

All this while, Ruthy was tampering with the room known as the Rocket Room, a room designed to seal itself from the rest of the hospital and launch into outer space. Blast off would obviously burn down the rest of the hospital, so it was queued as a last resort.

Ruthy's plan was to send her guests into the room for Thanksgiving dinner. She had placed fallacelloquel pheremones under the floor boards (A speaker that would repeatedly play a soundclip of the sentence, "I am in need of a verbal education"). Hopefully, the fallecelloquels would enter the room from both doors. She was sure that Ettils never spent enough time in the lower living quarters of Bottlesham to learn of fallaceloquels. Even her alleged relative, of whose name she was still ignorant, would be stuck in the room. That is, if he came back between now and then.

So there they would all stay: Ettils, relative, and fallacelloquels. All in one space, going away forever and ever, as in no longer part of her life.

Loaded aboard her wagon, Madeleine was driven by Dominoto to Ruthy's hospital. He started at the northern end of the gazebo, ran a straight line across the floor, and jumped off. the preparitive run permitted him to make a verticle

landing. The overall combined speed of man and vehicle, or manhicle, exhilarated the speed at which they reached the hospital.

None of that was important, except that the gazebo was approximately one mile above the ground, and Dominoto did not see the area into which he would land. The landing zone was directly in the middle of the Rocket Room.

Of course, neither of these Ettils noticed this, and at the locomotive power of his feet and the muscularity of his entire being, he crashed through a dozen walls. Once he had realized the damage he was doing, he attempted to correct himself. He tried to turn around and go through the walls through which he already had crashed. This ended up making zigzag lines in the hallway, until he gave up and decided to just run forward until he reached the end of the hospital. Once he had done so, he ran in circles around the hospital to wear off speed.

Ruthy, meanwhile, watched the two of them run in circles around her hospital from the waiting room window. She loved watching their dismay. Though she was somewhat annoyed that her newfound relative had not yet come. On the contrary, perhaps he was gone forever, and he would not need to be sent into outer space after all. Not to mention, he might not be related to her anyway.

The front door collapsed. "Excoose us, if we is bein' tardy," said a wide human-mouse creature who barely fit through the huge opening he had just created. He was followed by an even wider woman-mouse. Ruthy did not recognize Madeleine at first. She was used to seeing the overfed Etil carrying a drumstick.

"No, not at all," said Ruthy. "In fact, you're early. I was somewhat expecting my nephew to..." she stopped. "Nephew" was just a name she picked, but

saying it made her remember that, among the very few living relatives she had, there were a few nephews.

"Your neffoo's is bringsin' de food?" said Madeleine.

"What? No, I have the food." She had to concentrate on leading these blobs to their incarceration. All she had to do was remind herself of the comeuppance in store for herself if she didn't save the town from these terrors.

"YOu does says you is de healf-keepor?" said Dominoto. finally through the doorway.

"If you thoroughly inspect the area, I'm sure that you would find so clean an establishment that you would miss any reason for leaving," said Ruthy.

"Doubt it..." huffed Madeleine.

"Doubt? You deny that I am a sanitation officer?"

"No," said Madeleine, huffing and puffing her poor, overstretched skin. "I doesn't thinks I is stayin, 'cause I isn't can't get drew de doa-how."

Dominoto pulled steadily on one arm while Ruthy tugged on the other. It was a tiring herculean task, dragging the cow through the foxhole. However, Ruthy had initiated her scheme. And like so many people who start a plan of action, a college term, an espianoge mission or a painfully ridiculous short story, she was obligated to reach the end of it.

**SPLOWP!!**

That was the noise that Madeleine made when she squeezed into a sausage shape, bounding through the door.

Quickly recovering herself, Ruthy gestered toward the room that contained her trap. "Sir, if you would do the grace of rolling Missus Madeleine this way," she said.

"By way," said Dominoto, "I is named Jayritus Dominoto. Mad'leen's wagon drivin'," he heartily shook Ruthy's unoffered hand.

"Welcome, welcome," panted Ruthy, "If you'll only come this way..."

Then the big discovery. Being old and crackly, Ruthy Reinallellow was not extra-sensory in her hearing. Up to the point that she had tried to lead the Ettils to their doom (or their freedom's doom, which she portmanteaued to "freedom"), her expectations of the hospital hallway were ideal. Now, seeing the cave-sized holes in the walls, two revelations upset her heirs and graces:

1. The holes in walls were the result of radioactive fallaceloquels, whose mouths had, along with the rest of them, grown to explosive proportions, and were not unlikely to talk loud enough to undermine her efforts to pass herself off as a sanitation agent. Therefore.

2. Her plan was rolling on like a train bound for the base of a cliff.

She needed some quick thinking.

"This way, good fortune," she said, instantly realizing the idiocy of calling two extremely overweight rat-people "good fortune."

As Dominoto rolled Madeleine down the hall, he thought it very curious that Ruthy didn't question the new holes in the wall.

"Eh, Mad'leen," he whispered. "she not see-sayin' de hows we maked. Is she's eyes goin' dim?"

"Don't aks I," chastised Madeleine, "and don't aks she either. Just be smilin she 'n't seein' it."

Ruthy was seeing it, make no mistake. She was just eager to get the bad news off the planet, evidenced by her flamboyant impatience. "Onward! Come here, NOW!!!" she spat.

Finally, they reached the forboding room. "In there! Hurry, food's on its way!"

Ruthy ran through one of the holes created by the radioactive fallacelloquels. If it damaged her credibility, then at the very least it provided a shortcut to the control panel. "Food will arrive shortly!" she called from the exterior room. Then she muttered, "If that's the only incintive for staying put."

The big Ettils sat in the room with the hold in the roof. There were no tables or chairs; the two of them flattened those upon dropping in. They simply sat on the floor, amazed that Ruthy said nothing of the holes in the walls. At least Dominoto was.

"Does'd you see'ed dat?" he said. "She run right drew dat hoa we maked, she'd not even aks wha it camed fro."

Madaleine did not try to answer. She simply smirked dismissively and looked to the door, awaiting the meal.

"Does you tink dose hoas be areddy dea befo we cresh in?" he asked.

"It don't matter," she said. "She didn't say any wods 'bout it, nedder shood us."

"T's a leeto bit 'spicious, ii'n't it?"

"Let we changes the subject," she answered abruptly. "What will we be eatin'?"

"Shh!"

Madelaine Lafayette was all. Tall, wide and long, she covered just about every adjective in every language, authentic and imaginary. Morse code, computor code, French, Italian, Korean, Swahili,

gangsta, jive, and piglatin. She was almost everything possible to be. What she was not was used to being shushed, and she slowly began to puff with the wind of inexpressable perturbation.

"You hears dat? A tiny voice." Jayritus rolled to his side and put his ear to the floor board.

With Dominoto's whiskery face out of sight, Lafeyette let loose her fury. "WHERE DOES YOU GETS OFF A SHOOSHIN' ME?"

It was this outburst that determined the outcome of that fateful day. All of the fals picked up the sound of the syndromatic phrase playing under the floorboards, but the sound was turned down so low (an intentional decrement of Ruthy, that they would evade the Etil's ear) that there was much confusion as to the place from which it called.

But when Madeleine shouted, they all found their way, and the instant thought of each and every fallaceloquel was one and the same: "Oh, never was there ever such a happy, happy day!"

Every fallaceloquel in the building was there, in the same room with Etils, who where not so much in need of a "verb education" as they were in need of a meal. Of course, the fallaceloquels did not know this.

So they sang the same old song that they sang to everybody whom thought was an idiot.

"Oh, here, large ones!"

"Want for nothing, o empty ones!"

"Be not in ignorance!"

"We feed you the ever-ever asked for medicine of knowledge!"

"Know us, know what we say!"

"You shall listen at first, but then you shall listen at first!"

"We speak to those who have never spoken a word!"

"I will, for one, for all, will!"

"Turn a condescending ear to truth and spirit!"

"Open your heart, we carry for you followers!"

"Never wrong, never deciet, never ending!"

"As though no one ever taught you, you know nothing at all!"

Both Dominoto and Madeleine were taken aback by the pile of multi-mouthed worms now abound in the room. Needless to say, neither could hear himself/herself think, until Dominoto absentmindedly picked one up and ate it.

"Is it hahd to chue?" asked Madeleine

"Tastes like a slippy snek, but, it meteor dan wha' it look like."

Madeleine picked one up reluctantly. She thought it might be untasty, but the instant it started preaching to her on the ethics of cannibalism, she immediately realised that she was starved quarter-way to death, and gobbled it. Both big strong Ettils grabbed clutches of fallaceloquels, chewed them, and swallowed them. In turn, all of this eating of their friends caused the fals to yearn for attention, so that they might end the savage scarfing.

Ruthy peaked around the corner. Only gingerly, she truly expected to see gigantic worms trying to squeeze into the one room, but no. Only normal sized ones. Being eaten by the Ettils? Something she never would have expected.

"Should have guessed. If there is only one thing Ettils do every waking second of the day, it's eat."

"But where did the holes come from?"

"Ma'am? Hey ma'am!"

Oh.

"Listen," said the family obligation she was expecting but simultaneously dreading. "I made you think that I was a freeloader at first. I know, because that cajun lunatic told me. Weill, it's true, this morning, today being thanksgiving, I gave myself... never mind. Anyway, I just came from the

spiritual world, where I left that guy. Jonah, or something. I know the will says I should live with you, but I'm not going to. I'm past the age limit for living at home. All I want is one night to spend here. Can you afford that? Just 1 night. I'll leave, you'll never see my face again."

Did this mysterious new relative really have a choice in the matter? Did said will even really exist? Ruthy had, even as a baby, so few relatives that actual deeds, wills and legacies were rare. But, if Mr. So-called nephew... nephew again! Why did she keep thinking of him that way? Anyway, if this so-called relative was willing to ditch the abstract will, then she was far more so.

"I'm happy to let you one night here. Only one, now. I'm..." she stopped. She did not have to explain why she consented to the terms he proposed. She merely shook paws with him.

"Great, you're a life-saver, ma'am!" he said.

"Go in there, I have friends eating dinner, go on, join them."

"Thanks! Hay, M.M!" he called around the corner. He dashed into the room. Before he took a look, his feet were stuck in fallacelloquel putty. "Huh? What are you eating?" He screamed.

Then Mary Martha Rose spun around the corner.

"You forbade me, Aunt Ruthy," she whined. "But I'm here again."

"I really didn't mind having you, Mary Martha Rose," said Ruthy, "but you either work here, or you don't. I do not pay employyes who work sporadically."

"Hmph!" huffed Mary, and marched into the room with the big eaters.

Ruthy pulled the lever that would close up the openings in the Rocket Room and launch it into outer space. She had only one second left to revel before one last revelation came to her. However, in that one second, she thought of quite many things.

First, she thought of how relieved she was to escape another obscure young relation to babysit. Mary Martha Rose was a kind girl, but artistically lazy. She weaseled out of doing her chores one too many times for Ruthy to learn to love her.



Second, Ruthy thought of how glad she was that talking know-nothing worms would be gone forever from her life. Sure, she was decades old. Sure, she had not much further to go in life, but something about sending an entire colony of fallcelloquels to their deaths gave her a soothing, triumphant feeling.

The last thought she had was one of peace. Yes, peace. And only peace. Not the Ettli idea of peace, no sir, not at all, but peace itself. No more craziness. No more pretend-education from beings who could not think. No more family obligations. No more hamsters stampeding the village. Just peace.

And then the second was over.

"Oh, Stuzzy Muddle, what has become of you?"

Stuzzy Muddle?

The Stuzzy Muddle? The one whom the police were after for soap-sipping and school-skipping?

"Oh, M.M.R, if I could just drink a container of soap, I'm sure I'm going to end up someplace else."

That was Stuzzy Muddle. The Rocket Room ejected into outer space, carrying four brave, albeit heavy, adventurers with it. They would have adventurous episodes. All sorts of.

Before the rocket room launched, before the hospital burst into splinters around Ruthy Rainalellow, before the responsible drinking patrol (who had followed Stuzzy all day) walked up and asked her of Stuzzy's whereabouts, Ruthy peered into the window of the Rocket Room. She saw Jayritus and Madaleine's bellies bulging a little more with every bite of fallcelloquels. She saw Mary Martha Rose stroking a collapsed Stuzzy's ears. What she saw was peace. No, not peace, say, relaxation. That's what it was, relaxation. She had given it to them.

A healthy, or unhealthy, drink from a bottle marked "soap" does not guarantee safety. And an unhealthy drink from a bottle marked "weasel-out" does not guarantee relaxation. Staring at the

airborn Rocket Room in the sky, Ruthen Rebecca Reinallellow wonderd if that was truly what she had given herself.