

There'd Be No More Students

"That Pampered Princess Plastic Palace Playset is as good as mine already."

Mayoki beamed her way back down to Chastasia Onideran. She wished Samara was there to watch her do the bees knees in revenge for interrupting her prophecy booth, but she was still glad how punished she was. She'd have to remember to do it in front of her and make sure she cried. Then she played the air kazoo. She played the whole "Ode to that bimbo's misery" when she finished the beam.

Even though nobody, psychic or otherwise, could see her face through the exhaust fumes, Chastasia could sure see Mayoki on her way over. "Well? Has she boarded a rocket yet?"

"The grubby furball is on her way. Every reason she had for sticking around are gone, including that overgrown Yugoslavic mutt and any goodwill Dame Nosey-go-Pokey."

It was all good for the getting now. For some reason, though, no hulking plastic squalor materialized before her. What showed up was the phrase, "anything else?"

Where was a wheelbarrow when you needed it? At first, Mayoki had thought she'd need one to carry her reward. Now she thought it would come in handy in ramming the thing right into Chastasia's groin.

"Anything else? That's what I should be asking you after all that hard work I did." She got too busy tallying up the value of her own "services" to notice Chastasia was brewing up a volcanic eruption of her own.

"*Hard work!* Forgive my spontaneous assumptions, but if I didn't know better, I would say that grubby fur- ball is not on her way, and whatever motivations she's had for it - because that's all they are, motivations, not movements - you have done nothing to contribute to."

All Mayoki's squalor dreams shattered. What was left was an active grenade.

"Why you stinkyhead, I ought to contribute to you staying in this yuckpit for the rest of her life."

A whole hot spring of indignity swelled beneath Chastasia's bosom. "Of all the insolent *nabbagufabbers* I have ever *hingleddeeforum* in my *havelthum*, this conquers the comberthrombus. You are an *abloblamblithbloth* little *feirfim*, and you *glithsonoglothum* all the time. You think you're so mmmfumnimfumfumphfuth, and yet you *jorbabeeboul* from here to yon."

"...Huh???"

The rest of the stuff Chastasia said was equally contorted and meaningless. It looked like she was suddenly faking a mouth disorder so she could weasel out of paying. There was only one way to fix her: find the most valuable thing in the room and smash it. This of course was impossible when the most valuable thing was a wad of used sardine guts.

But as she looked around, she noticed something even worse: an obvious drop in the number of sardine guts. And kibble guts. And the other kinds of things that wound up around here. There were these glittery mist clusters instead, hiding not just the compost but even some of those amorphous spirits waiting to get wrapped up in mucus and leave this nasty place. It sounded different, too. The usual ascending and descending drumrolls hid behind an unmistakable "Naa naa na Naa naa." The most obvious thing of all struck Mayoki when she took a nice healthy sniff. Fresh air. Not fish air.

"Smellara, or whatever your name is, I know you're in here!" Around any one of these lump hills, she could be bee's kneeing again, laughing through her kneecaps. "You won't get away with it this time, I'll bury you here!" She stormed around the place, long far away from Chastasia, but there was too much fog in the way. Even when Mayoki lunged through those, swiping nails and snapping her jaws, the only thing she attacked was empty space.

If her rival had followed her into her meditation session again, there'd be no finding her (much less giving her what for) with all the smog in the way. With all that aimless swinging she ran out of enough anger to conclude that. She also concluded she could lay on a lot more hurt if she went back to Earth and stoned the 5-foot human weasel there, especially if she were still in a trance.

She made up her mind. She spun around three times and recited the magic words, "Peepod juice, Peepod juice, Peepod juice," and she took off towards the esophagus.

On her way out, she heard the last words of Chastasia, which were definitely not scrambled. "You have a week before this offer expires." So she was angry again, but she had to deal with Samara first.

While she'd been meditating, a troupe of Duncaners, staff and student alike, had on Saturn's orders surrounded and primped her while she sat on a cushy purple sofa with silk golden tassels. There were a couple of guys polishing her nails, a girl brushing her hair, two hairy shirtless saffers fanning her with palm leaves, and another simp polishing her shoes. This was in the teacher's lounge, where pictures hung on the wall showing humans beating animals at swordfights, shootouts, and spelling bees.

"Just look at all this effort we're putting into her welfare," said the kid doing her shoes. "She's sure to be in a magnificent mood when she comes back around."

Her eyes shot open, and she kicked the shoe boy out of the way. "SMELLARA! Where is that odious tape worm!? I want her nose good and smashed up under my foot, and I want it NOW!"

Samara wasn't in the lounge. She wasn't anywhere out in the hall, either. And she definitely wasn't in Saturn's office. The head honcho was there, though. And Mayoki decided if she didn't fix the problem, she'd end up with a shoe fossil in one of those colossal butt boulders.

"We have a problem."

Saturn stopped clipping her nails and jerked her haunted whitening face up at Mayoki. "What's wrong? Does an alien takeover await us in the near future?"

"Maybe. I don't know, but you know why? That other psychic, the one that gets things wrong, she broke into my future-at-looking and sprayed smoke all over the place."

"You mean Miss Tamsen?" All the panic she was about to fireworks lost its fizz, as her face got all its color back. "Aah, she has no power. Father Sniffagl saw to it. She is locked by herself in a classroom, memorizing the creed you authored. Her celestial visitations have too much sin-sore smoke themselves for her to--"

"Well she blew some of that smoke my way," insisted Mayoki.

"I'm afraid that's quite impossible," taught Saturn. "The sin-sore smokes only conceal the secret truths from those who wrought them. Should they cloud your foresight, foresound, foresmell, and other fores, then they came from a transgression you brought about."

Mayoki was too stunned to argue. The idea that she might have committed some kind of wrongdoing was to her more alien than any talking animal.

"Not to worry, the Great Cosmic Wonder dismisses them whenever we confess and repent. Now, let's see... Which commandment might you have... er, well, bent in some way?"

According to the two shirtless grown men, it was the sin of bullcrapping. They barged in as bare-hairy- chested as ever, competing with one another as to warn Saturn the louder, "Whatever this glorified Devilspawn told you, she's making it up, now can I just go back to clapping erasers/mopping the floor/anything that doesn't involve giving this tazmaniac more treatment than she deserves?"

According next to Saturn, it was the sin of smokin' red hot sauciness. On the sight of their out-of-shape man boobies, Her eyes boinked off her glasses to ping-pong out their sockets until she grabbed a folder out of a filing cabinet and dumped all the papers out so she could tape it around her head as a blindfold.

"For Wonder's sake, cover your innocence before you corrupt this girl's sensibilities."

They took that as permission to drop the whole palm leaf business, and walked out of the office, free of their duties and shirts.

"Are you covered?" She took off the folder. "Oh, they're gone. That proves it. You set eyes on a precious secret that was not yours to share."

"What? I didn't tell them to take their shirts off, they did that while I was prophesying."

"Nevertheless, you have lost your innocence, and you must confess to Father Hikeyleg to regain it. Only then shall you purge your visage of censorious weather. I shall show you the direction."

Saturn steered Mayoki out of her office and down the hall, and Mayoki found herself plotting some tasty grilled blackmail. While the old fool had that paper over her face, she fished out a handful of nails out of the trash can. No one questioned Mayoki's behavior and got away with it. The trick now was finding the perfect place to meditate and exact some scrumptious tidbits from Saturn's afterlife.

So long as those idiotic clouds didn't get in the way.

Saturn boomphed some kid out of the way mid-confession. "Sorry, Evanrood, but Ms. Culbara's absolution is more important than yours." Pathetic little Evanrood tried to finish up his confession while failing to circumvent Saturn's wrecking ball badonks until they were both out of the bathroom.

Now, if only that weirdo in the other stall weren't there, she might have some peace and privacy. Instead, whoever was in there sniffed like in front of a cake. "Smell that? One of Mama's, all right. You sure? Haven't seen her down before. *Shush*, she'll hear."

"Who the fink are you?" There was a mail slot. When she peeked through it, she saw the floating disembodied head of Colonel Sanders. "I'm supposed to tell you I did something rotten and act like I'm all sorry about it. So let's get this stupid thing over with so I can go back to..." The smell finally made it down her nose. No mistaking it: Wet hairball.

She backed away into the sink. "Scared of us?" asked Sanders. She answered with a running air-kick into the door, which fell off its hinges and caused the Sanders head to collapse right on top of it. There were three freaked out shorties stacked on top of each - a dog, a cat, and a mouse. The important part that turned Mayoki's scalp into a stovetop was all the pink princessy accessories they were wearing, tagged with pictures of her own face crossed out in red marker.

"SCHOOL MAMA!" She snatched the mouse by the neck and kicked the cat into the dog into the toilet.

"Stop, we're your family!" They pleaded, but Mayoki was already out the door with the mouse in full view of everyone in the hallway. She never made it to Saturn's office. Another student pulled the alarm and the whole school went on lockdown, with everybody trampling one another trying to get away from the scary animal that might pregify anyone at any moment.

At the end of the period, The mouse wound up in a peanut butter jar so they could save its interrogation for later. They didn't poke airholes in it, but all that peanut butter was still there, so, go figure I guess. Saturn lay in the nurse's office over the scandal, as the skirt-wearing mouse they captured appeared to be a dude. And Mayoki did in fact try to snoop around the principal's afterlife, but all she got were a bunch of clouds chanting "Naa naa na Naa na" ather, so she was steamed. That forced her to believe in the whole confession thing, but with yet another fake priest in the row, confession was on the the downest lock at all. No one could go to confession. Not nobody, not nohow.