

Bookflurry Inc.
PRESENTS
a Short Story

A Brumby's Best Friend

A Sample Chapter

“Mooooooooooooove!”

Oh, that.

Don't mind Harry.

That's just his way of saying, “Coming through!”

Though, you'd think the snapping branches and scattering mammals would be a sure sign to the other Brumbys to make room for us down at the watering hole.

Harry can be a little excessive.

It's nice to be the friend of the largest Horse in the community. He and I have a symbiotic relationship of sorts. I preen the louse, grubs, and occasional spider from his coat and he makes sure I get the respect I deserve.

The land of Duskiny isn't all that bad. They missed the memo at the last two turns of the century. However, the gnats and the dust are a trifle compared to the horrendous heat back in Egypt.

The other birds are okay, though some have a tendency to be a little risky.

Carl likes to call it bravery. I just think it's dumb.

What? At least, I can admit that I was born with brains instead of brawn!

I know, I know, most people think it's the parrots with all the brains. But, if you had known Polly as well as I, well, let's just say there was a reason the pirates were always shoving oversized crackers into his beak!

I prefer to minimize risk. Hence, the reason for tagging along with the largest horse in Terra Austris. It's also why I used to spend a lot of time in books. Albeit mostly for the worms.

Other people could minimize risk as well, if only they would read books.

Of course, reading can be risky business in and of itself.

Take Omari for example. He was the Pharaoh's late advisor. Omari was found at the bottom of a cliff along the Danube, his nose still buried in the spine of a self-help book, 'A study in alertness and the pitfalls of gravity.'

Then, one of the serf's was nearly executed when I overheard him telling the

Pharaoh that his son Sadiki had been lost in a book for days.

Yes, very dangerous stuff reading. And it's obvious that it ruins your eyes. Nearly everybody who reads wears a pair of glasses!

No. No. These are for my near-sightedness.

A Twit doesn't need glasses to show off his intelligence. You can look in all sorts of books these days and find the term 'bird-brained' any number of times.

It's a Twit's obvious acclaim.

If only there were books here on Terra Austris like there were back in Egypt, I could show you. But, no one reads here. The mix of species is a bit diverse so we tend to communicate using semi-moral quandaries.

That is, we do our best to understand one another.

Though usually, by the time one realizes that they've have had a misunderstanding, one guy is feeling a bit less hungry, and the other, all of a sudden, becomes much more agreeable, especially to the stomach.

That is unless you happen to be Spurge, who is never agreeable. Spurge is rumored to be the most regurgitated insect in the stinkbug family. It's been said that his taste and smell are so foul that his opinion is always held in high regard.

But personally, I don't think anything could smell any worse than Carl. He's been on a mission to bravely breach the canopy of the forest. Ugh. Here he comes now.

"Niceum um to seem yaumum Cecil mm, hhm, hmm."

Don't worry, we actually speak the same language. He's just being rude. "You really shouldn't talk with food in your mouth, Carl. You know what they say about meal worms. They have sensitive ears. No need to torture them needlessly. You're already stinking them to death."

Slluurp.

"Uem. Sorry. That's better. A few meal worms always help quaff the flavor of the dung."

...and here comes Jeff.

When Carl shows up, you can always count on Jeff being not far behind. You know what they say about birds of a feather. But, at least Jeff has a bit better taste in meals.

“What’s that?” Jeff asked.

“Oh nothing,” I said. “Just commenting on Carl’s unusual desire to enter into one orifice what has exited through another. Apparently meal worms help.”

Carl hopped down from Harry’s shoulders to where we were perched at the hind end. If you’re hitching on Harry, it’s the best spot to nab a fly.

“You’ll see. Both of you, when I’m flying out above the forest—”

Carl’s always so sure of himself. “—Can either of you even reach the branches of the great pine?”

“Oh, he’s on again about Harry’s magical diet, eh?” said Jeff, bobbing opposite of me in accordance with the Brumby’s canter.

“The great pine? Unless there’s breath mints up there, I don’t see why you would want to fly away. We have everything we need down here.”

That was about when Harry chimed in.

“You are what you eat. Have a bit of my dung with every meal and you’ll be as strong as a horse. Trust me.”

“You see?” said Carl. “Harry’s the strongest on the island. A little bit of his excrement is like... what are those things you called them, yesterday?”

“Steroids?”

“That’s it. Avian steroids,” Carl seemed even more sure of himself at the statement, as if that were possible.

As we neared the water, I felt more uneasy. Of all the stories I have read and throughout my experiences, anytime someone says, ‘trust me,’ something terrible always happens. Probably due to the fact that what they are asking you to do is listen to them based on no factual reasoning whatsoever.

“I’ll bet one more serving is all it will take!” said Carl.

Jeff grimaced at that.

“That’s good because, well, we’re your friends, Bud, but one more serving is about all *we* can take.”

END OF SAMPLE