

I GOT A BALLOON ANIMAL FROM A CLOWN AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT...NOW WHAT?

By Bradley Walton

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I GOT A BALLOON ANIMAL FROM A CLOWN AT A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT...NOW WHAT?

A Ten Minute Comedic Monologue

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: You go to a fast food restaurant. There is a clown, he offers you a balloon animal. You accept, not anticipating the balloon animal will change your perception of the world...forever.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either; gender flexible)

NARRATOR (m/f) Restaurant customer.

SETTING: Bare stage.

COSTUMES: Dressed in something eccentric and tacky.

AUTHOR NOTES

I wrote a script called *I Won a Giant, Inflatable Banana at the State Fair...Now What?* I consider it to be one of the best things I've ever written. While having dinner at a family reunion, my daughter suggested that I write a sequel to it. I started to dismiss the idea, but before I could finish my sentence, the idea for this script jumped into my head. [No familiarity with the previous script needed!]

NARRATOR: The nuggets are allegedly made of chicken, but this is highly debatable, because they do not, in fact, taste like chicken. The irony is not lost on me. A great many foods are frequently described as tasting “like chicken.” Here in the fast food establishment where I am currently dining, the hamburgers and fish sandwiches taste vaguely like chicken. The chicken nuggets, however, do not. They taste like a five-year-old child’s idea of how chicken ought to taste, and they are delicious. Five-year-olds are smart.

Tonight is kids’ night at the restaurant. Although given the nature of the food, the cheap toys which accompany it, and the oppressively cheerful décor...pretty much every night here is kids’ night. The presence of the clown at the table beside me seems excessive. Then again, *clowns* are excessive. It is their nature. The presence of a clown combined with the actuality of the clown himself should be enough to tear a hole in the fabric of creation. This is why people are afraid of clowns. It is an unnerving thought that clowns can freely move among us, and yet we do not die. Clowns, like chicken nuggets, are an affront to reality, although probably less tasty. I have no intention of ever finding out for sure.

The clown is attempting to entertain two small children. Over the screams of the younger one, I hear squeaky noises followed by a human voice mimicking animal sounds. The clown is making balloon animals. I drink from my soda reverently. Balloon animals are the pinnacle of human achievement. To take something composed of latex, which comes from trees, and to fill it with air and then tie it into the shape of an animal, is like creating meat from vegetation and gas. It is symbolic meat, but is not the idea of the animal represented by the balloon just as real as the animal itself?

The clown turns to me. His face glows with an unearthly iridescence in the fluorescent light, and it is difficult to meet his gaze. “You want this?” He holds out a balloon animal to me. “The kid here don’t, and it’s time for my break.”

I look at the animal resting in his outstretched palm. Its species is questionable. "What is it?" I ask.

"It's a dog."

I doubt this very much, but say nothing. My mind drifts back to an earlier time when I won a giant inflatable banana at the state fair. That ended badly, and lessons were learned. Dare I take this balloon animal now?

"Do you want it or not? I gotta go use the can."

I stare at the bright yellow creature, sure to be discarded if I do not accept it. The eyeless face looks at me almost pleadingly. In that moment, I make my decision. Yes, I will dare. I take the alleged dog from the clown's hand, and he disappears through a door at the back of the restaurant with a hurried waddle. Despite the clown's assertion, the balloon animal is clearly not a dog at all. I stare at the creature's poofy contours, trying to imagine the form they might take if brought to life. This animal is a sheep. A sheep named Hamilton Stuttgart Dinklage. I place him upon the table across from me. He sits, patient and unmoving, as I eat my nuggets. Were I to share my problems, he would listen, but what happens in the frozen food aisle of the grocery store should stay in the frozen food aisle of the grocery store, so I remain silent. Instead, I try to imagine what he might say to me. I close my eyes and stretch my mind, reaching out to the realms of creativity and imaginary meat where balloon animals are conceived. My mind is open. I am relaxed. I am at one with the cosmos. And then I hear it.

"Baa."

Hamilton Stuttgart Dinklage's voice echoes sweetly in my head. It is a pure voice, uncorrupted by the mortal world. I hear it, and I understand...I understand what it means to be an idea: Innocent and unclouded. The truest version of a true thing. I have craved simplicity all my life, but it has eluded me.

Now, here, with Hamilton Stuttgart Dinklage as my spirit balloon animal guide, I have found it. I wish to commune and discourse with this beautiful creature, but my human words seem inadequate to the task. If I am to speak with Hamilton, the words I use must be in his language. It is a foreign language, but the secrets of the cosmos are open to me, and the word I need comes unflinching to my lips.

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