Swamp Thing

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Maybe these humans are not as advanced as we thought.

We try congregating in his line of sight and hovering around their life-sensing machine, but nothing works. We put all of our weight on the buttons of their equipment. They do not detect us.

They stay for several days and we learn wonders about their world, but we cannot share what we know about so many other worlds. We cannot tell them our own story — our moon’s history — about which they are so curious but could not even begin to imagine. These humans are a puzzle. Parts of their brains are very developed, as shown by their ability to be here. But vital parts of their minds seem unused, hidden from themselves. They leave without knowing that they have been observed this whole time, disappointed by the lack of life on the beautiful grey organism that they see as a rock.

We wish we could help them, but we have tried everything. So, we continue zipping about our moon, enjoying the lightness that returns with the departure of the vacuum-spaceship. The next visitors will be able to communicate with us. No other species has ever had this problem. We keep track of the humans though, to see if we can determine where their flaw lies. Perhaps someday, we can find a way to overcome it.

In the swamp, I live serenely. My fang-like teeth have speckles of dark mud. The bugs crawl on my stubby toes and my hair flows freely down my back. I press my feet hard against the grass and I charge through the reeds. The air smells like my wet bathing suit when I forget to hang it up to dry. A sweet peace fills my entire body. There is no gap between what I think and feel and where my limbs take me. Everything is aligned.

I hear a sharp whistle.

I know that it is time for dinner. It is my father’s signal for me to make my way back. I crawl through the reeds, hop some stones, and quickly make my way onto the porch.

"Swamp-thing!"

That is what my brothers call me. My hair is in my face and there’s dirt just about everywhere. My feet thud against the hard wood floor.

I love my brother, Dan. My other siblings tease me and make fun of me, but my brother Dan—he loves me. He’s nice to me. He’ll let me hang out with his cool high school friends. I get to have special handshakes with each of them. I want to marry his friend Christopher. He is a valid victorion and super nice.

Ah! Now there’s one smell I will never mix up. My mom probably didn’t feel like cooking tonight, so my dad picked up pizza on his way home from work.

"Now who would like to pray?"

Silence.

"Holly?"

"Thank you Jesus for this food and for this food."

We all grab a piece for our plate. I am very tired from all the work I did out in the swamp. I had to run around and catch all sorts of bugs and then put them in the house I made for them. And I didn’t even get a simple “Thanks.” My mouth is dry.
"I'm thirsty, but mom, I'm thirsty, but . . . ."

Holly laughs, "Hey, thirsty-butt!"

My eyes swell up into tears. My mother reprimands my sister. Joe is playing with his food, mixing it together and refusing to eat. Our glasses of milk clink against each other. The room is full of laughter, shouting and crying. My parents continue to eat and talk with each other. It's not that they don't care, I know that they love me and my siblings—this is just a time where they let things be. We are the untamable family and it is like this every night. But tonight, there's going to be a storm. Dan grabs a piece of pizza and starts chewing. Dan is usually the nice one.

"Hey Erin, wanna know what you look like?"

He chews his pizza quickly and sticks out his tongue. I am extremely upset, I don't know how else to make him feel bad for doing that.

"Well, you look like THIS!"

I throw the pizza at his face. Dan ducks and the pizza hits the armoire and slides down the glass. There is no way around this, I am in trouble.

However, my dad, knowing the context of my reaction, looks at my brother and sends him straight to his room. I get off clean. It's the kind of miracle I expect kids to learn in Sunday school someday.

Later in the night, a loud boom of thunder shakes our house. I scurry into my parents room and lay in their bed. I love the security and peace I feel under their covers. I think about the pizza I had thrown against the dresser and the way it slid so slowly and how great it is that my brother was grounded.

A Discourse on Folly

Benjamin Fitzgerald

Enter Affectus

Aff. Marry, but I am ruined! How shall it appear to she—she, whom my very being doth but praise—praise? nay, exalt her virtues! She cannot be but the very image of Boticelli's Venus, the perfection of beauty, the pinnacle of becoming, the prime of bloom. But hearken! she is belonging to another man, a true Adonis, for a nobler man 'tis never lived but inside that very bosom. That I could tie his mortal coil into a knot, or better, to hang him with that serpentine thread! A bitterer knave did never live than I, to destroy such truth that virtue should belong to me. But who comes! soft you now, and steel thyself for a leper's discourse.

Enter Ratio

Rat. How now, Affectus? What is the nature, And wherefore the cause, that thou seem'st to me In a fit of agitation to be?

Aff. Fie upon thee, Ratio. Wherefore comest thou before me speaking in iambic tongue? To showcase thy chiseled mind, and to make me sport of thy roguery?

Rat. 'Twere no such thoughts upon my mind, good sir, But that in earnest I beseech of thee The cause by which thy breast beteems to stir— Pray thee not bemoan my inquiry.

Aff. Upon my word, an honest knave! Fear thee not but that I shall answer, though I am loathe to do so; yet upon my word I cannot think of reason why I should. Such a tyranny of language, but how my words perambulate and become me not! Therefore sir, and no more digression, but I will avail thy curiosity.

Rat. Worry not sir, but be thou contented, I only want my wisdom augmented.

Aff. Thy wisdom! Fie upon thy wisdom! I have given my word—but wherefore shouldst I keep it? It should not harm