

BABY FOOD

(first draft)

by Patrick Griffiths

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TALKING ANIMAL

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INT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING

Suma, a 30-something man with morning hair and a stubble stands, in a slightly efemminate dressing gown and slippers, over an empty cot.

SUMA

Quat! QUAT!

VOICE

(off-screen)

What?

SUMA

C'mere!

Quat, Suma's younger brother walks in to the room, still half asleep. He is wearing a t-shirt and boxer shorts and has chocolate sauce around his lips and smudged up on to his cheek.

QUAT

What?

SUMA

Do you notice anything missing?

Quat half-heartedly looks around the room.

QUAT

I dunno. The TV?

SUMA

No. Not quite. The TV's still there, isn't it? I was referring to something a little more organic, gurgly, sleeps in a cot...

QUAT

It's too early for this, Suma. I dunno; I give up. The fish tank?

SUMA

(getting angry)

Do fish sleep in a cot?!

QUAT

I'm no expert...

SUMA

Why am I having this conversation. We haven't even got a bloody fish tank! The baby! Where's the bloody baby? The bloody baby's gone!

(CONTINUED)

It takes a little while for it to sink in but after staring at the cot for a while something clicks in Quat's brain.

QUAT

Yeah. Yeah! That's it. The baby.
It's like one of those quiz
shows, y'know, where you do
know the answer, but it only
clicks when the answers given.
Y'know?

Suma stares at Quat, nonplussed and shakes his head as if he's not believing what he's hearing.

SUMA

Social services left the baby
with us yesterday while Chris
takes some time out because we're
the closest thing she's got to a
family. One day we had to take
care of the baby. *One day*! And
now there's no sign of her...

Suma's eyes lock on a few objects lying on the floor by the side of the cot; a desert spoon, a can on aerosol cream and an opened bottle of chocolate sauce. Suma's emotions turn from panic to horror.

SUMA

No... No... No no no no no no...
Not again!

Suma stares at Quat and his chocolate-stained face.

QUAT

What?

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATE MORNING

Suma and Quat, now clothed, sit on the sofa staring at the bottle of chocolate sauce and can of cream now standing on the coffee table in front of them.

SUMA

You ate the baby. I can't believe
you ate the baby.

QUAT

That's not good.

SUMA

No. That's true; it is generally
frowned upon.

(CONTINUED)

QUAT

What are we going to do?

SUMA

You mean aside from having you committed?

QUAT

Dude! Don't say that. It's not my fault. I suffer from extreme somnamnulistic eating.

Suma turns to look Quat in the eyes.

SUMA

You suffer from being insane.

QUAT

Maybe we can get another baby.

SUMA

Sure. Why don't you just pop down the baby shop and pick one up?

QUAT

(pleased with himself)
Any idea how much they cost?

Suma's head drops in despair.

SUMA

We're not going to get another baby, Quat.

QUAT

Oh. OK. What if we tried something different? Like a big rabbit, or something?

SUMA

You want to replace the baby with a fat, furry quadruped with two large teeth and freakishly large ears?

QUAT

We could trim the ears...

SUMA

And the teeth?

QUAT

File them down!

SUMA

The fur?

QUAT
Shave it a little?

SUMA
And what about its rather unique
Thumper-like legs?

QUAT
Um... break 'em... a bit?

SUMA
Yeah. OK. That should do it. A
bald broken rabbit covered in
blood and writhing in agony
should trick Chris in to
believing it's her OWN HUMAN
BABY.

QUAT
You're being sarcastic, aren't
you?

SUMA
Yes. Yes, I am.

The doorbell rings and Suma's head sinks in to his hands. Suma slowly rises from the sofa and at the same time Quat jumps up, for some reason happy with himself.

INT. HALLWAY. LATE MORNING

As Suma opens the door to Chris, a wreck of a woman who looks like she hasn't slept for three weeks, Quat pushes past, waving at Chris as he passes.

QUAT
Hi Chris!

CHRIS
Hey, Quat.

SUMA
Hi Chris; lovely to see you
again...

Suma gently pushes past Chris to shout at Quat.

SUMA
Bare with me a minute... Quat!
Where are you going?

QUAT
(off screen)
I'll be back shortly! I've got a
P-L-A-N.

(CONTINUED)

SUMA
(to himself)
She's not a dog, you maniac.

Suma turns his attention back to Chris, putting his arm around her and guiding her in to the house.

SUMA
You look really... well.

CHRIS
Thanks, Suma. I feel wonderful.
How's Tallulah?

SUMA
Talllul...? Aaaaah... the baby!
Oh, she's just wonderful, too.
She's just sleeping upstairs at
the moment. Why don't we just go
in to the living room and have a
nice cup of tea...

INT. LIVING ROOM. NOON

Suma and Chris sit in the same positions Suma and Quat had sat in earlier, with the chocolate sauce and cream still on the table in front of them. Also on the table is a teapot, two cups and half a pack of Hobnobs, one of which Suma labours over so that he has something to do with his mouth other than talk.

The doorbell rings and Suma springs to his feet.

SUMA
That'll be Quat. I'll be right
back.

Chris shuffles to rise from the sofa.

CHRIS
I'll just pop in on Tallulah...

Before Chris has a chance to fully stand, Suma awkwardly puts his hands on her shoulders and pushes her back in to the sofa.

SUMA
No no, Chris, you, um, you stay
there... you've been through a
lot... I'll be right back... have
a Hobnob, k?

Before Chris has a chance to answer Suma jumps out of the room to answer the door.

INT. HALLWAY. NOON

Suma opens the door to Quat, sporting a beaming smile, holding a large plastic bag in one hand and cradling a baby in his other arm.

QUAT

New baby!

Gobsmacked, Suma takes a short while to respond, during which time Quat's grin remains planted firmly on his face.

SUMA

What?

QUAT

New baby!

SUMA

Where did that come from?

QUAT

The baby shop!

SUMA

What?! That was a joke! There are no baby shops!

QUAT

Sure there are. On the Broadway. Next to Bagnall's.

SUMA

Oh. Right. OK. But it's not a shop with babies for sale, is it? They don't carry 2-for-1 offers on baby multi-packs in the Toddlers' Aisle, so they?

QUAT

I don't follow. You want two babies? Can I come in...?

Quat moves to step in to the house, but is pushed back by Suma.

SUMA

I don't want *any* babies! You stole a baby?! You can't just steal a bloody baby!

QUAT

Well, that's gratitude for you! Keep your shirt on. In the grand scheme of what's happened, borrowing a little baby's hardly a big deal. And, besides, there

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

QUAT (cont'd)
were five of them, just sitting
there! The lady had *five*
babies. That's a bit greedy, if
you ask me, and more than a
little irresponsible with all of
this unsubstantiated population
growth...

SUMA
(totally giving up)
You mean unsustainable...

QUAT
Yeah. That. Look, if you're not
happy, I picked up a rabbit, too,
and some clippers. We've got
options.

Suma ignores Quat, lifts the baby out of his arms and
walks back towards the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NOON

Quat closely follows Suma in to the room and holds out the
baby to Chris.

SUMA
Here she iiiii...iiiiis!

Chris accepts the baby and holds it out in front of her.
She stares in to the baby's eyes for a lengthy period as
Suma bites his nails. Quat holds a slightly awkward smile.

A wide smile and a tear eventually develop on Chris's face
as she hugs the baby.

CHRIS
Oh, Tallulah! How are you! I've
missed you! Mummy's missed you!

Suma almost collapses from the sigh of relief.

QUAT
(whispers)
It's a dude.

SUMA
(whispers)
What?

QUAT
(whispers)
The baby. It's armed with a water
pistol.

Suma's relief turns to dismay once more.

(CONTINUED)

SUMA
(to himself)
Oh shit.

The doorbell rings as Chris happily bounces the baby. Suma leaves the room.

INT. HALLWAY. NOON

Suma opens the door to a middle-aged woman, holding a baby.

LADY
Know anything about this?

SUMA
Tallulah!

LADY
Oh good. It's yours. Found the little shit covered in cream with a cherry on its head, smoking a cigarette in my front garden. Been lugging her around the neighbourhood all morning. Here.

The lady hands the baby to Suma, who happily takes it off her hands.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NOON

To both Quat and Chris's surprise, Suma bursts in the room, runs over to Chris and and grabs the baby from her.

SUMA
Pee-yoo. You smell that?
Tallulah, you need changing!

Suma leaves the room with the baby as swiftly as he entered.

Chris looks over a Quat, who is fiddling with the chocolate sauce and cream, and shrugs.

In no time at all, Suma zooms back in to the room holding a baby, who he drops back in to Chris' arms.

CHRIS
That was quick!

SUMA
Heh. Got a lot of practice last night!

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

And you changed her clothes, too?

Suma winks at Chris before leaving the room. Quat follows.

INT. HALLWAY. NOON

Quat walks in to the hallway to see Suma holding the other baby.

QUAT

What the hell, dude...? Ah! I see! All sorted, then! No harm done! Brilliant!

SUMA

Almost sorted, brother. What do we do with this one?

Quat holds up the chocolate sauce, cream, and spoon and raises his eyebrows in a such a way to suggest that maybe they could be put to use.