

## Heart Squelchin' Welch's

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Each gelatin-cast shape tumbles around your fingertips as they bulge against the foil walls of the recently turgid packet you could have sworn was easier to open last time. Your fingertips have become a claw machine with all its inefficiencies, but this is your time... you can spend it as you please. You don't mind savoring the experience a bit anyway.

Finally your fingertips return from their adventure clasping the dim jewel you have been anticipating. The curves and faces suggest an attempt at something exemplary, but what you see is just enough imperfection to be able to ascribe a bit of personality to *Linus*. Maybe the rough stalactite structure on his face came from the time spent stuck to a fellow fruity fellow. They have since been separated, but Linus will take a chunk of his forlorn friend to the great mastication.

As the fruit adjacent confection hits your lips you are reminded of the slightly oily film provided as a preamble to the sensations to come. Then it hits you... *strawberry*. Or was that cherry? Raspberry? Well it was certainly red.

Before you know it, your greasy claws are back in the package grappling at the gelatinous tail of the dragon you sense soaring away. You know you have a favorite, but you must now choose if your fresh pallet is deserving of the treat or if you must maintain something to look forward to. You find a misshapen cluster of grapes and know your decision can wait, for your teeth have just found purpose and cannot be left idle for long.

**PURPLE!**

**RED!**

**YELLOW!**

**RED!**

**ORANGE!**

**PURPLE!**

**ORANGE!**

**YELLOW!**

**RED!**

Your mandibles embark on their now familiar journey but quickly find themselves jammed into the tight corner of the packet. *Panic!* You check the other corner, but find your fingers clumped in the same formation. It is now that your eyes peer into the reflective chasm now eerily empty. You didn't know sweet snacks would be your last. You would have savored them... appreciated them in their moment... acknowledging their evanescent effervescence as each chomp brought you closer to the cliff you now stare down.

Do you accept the plunge?

*OR*

Do you begin the trek back up the grimey stares to the snack box you hoped would last you months... promising yourself that if you could only try again you would appreciate it all; every slightly chemical note of the hue-ish flavor, every misshapen millimeter of Linus and all his fellows, even the smell of the packet so loudly proclaiming what once was?

As your tongue flicks the last speck of gelatin down your gullet, you find yourself uninterested. Not sated... but certainly not in need of what you are sure would be a stale return to a story already told.

But maybe I could go for some Goldfish? But Parmesan or Flavor Blasted?