Bring puns. Oh, and snacks!

by Bree Glasbergen

Ignatius J Reilly swept crisp crumbs from his protruding belly with his elephantine hands. Swivelling from side-to-side, he garnered enough momentum to rise from the sofa. His slow ascend was soundtracked by the grating rip of stuck flesh peeling from sweaty vinyl. The lengthy time moving from reclined to an upright position positively perturbed him. So that by the time Ignatius stood, his joke had lost its amusement. Nevertheless, he declaimed his wit aloud, beseeching his mother's glowing approval.

'I see you have painted the walls Nomad Grey, Mumsie!' Ignatius smirked, looking down on the half-filled grey paint cans on the steps the way he did most modern society.

'No, not mad dear. Just grey.' His mother Irene responded, creeping down the basement stairs. Her leathered skin made her appear reptilian in the dim light of Ignatius' lair.

Ignatius rolled his eyes like the great wheel of fate itself. He slunk back into his scabby sofa, defeated, cursing aloud that he be blessed with such profound intellect yet no equal to appreciate it. His mind wandered to what the great scholars of Oxford would think of his pun before concluding indeed, they would loudly chortle. Yes, they would. He imagined flying to London and exchanging sharp banter with someone on par with his intellect. Travel. He winced. Never again. He groaned in agony, clutching his stomach. The thought of such stress had snapped his pyloric valve shut.

Irene Reilly, the mother of Ignatius J Reilly, reached the bottom of the basement stairs. She pondered why Ignatius had a crestfallen demeanour and began to appease his dismay.

'No mad grey,' she contemplated aloud.

'Nomad grey,' he corrected.

'No mad grey hair?' Irene laughed tentatively, searching his face for approval.

Ignatius had begun to relax. Irene knew this because of a gangrenous heinous stench that was now coating the room in its own layer of paint accompanied by what sounded like the bellow of an untuned French horn. Ignatius had calmed enough for his pyloric valve to open once more. With it, gushed the contents. Irene's nostrils scrunched together in protest. She grimaced in utter (albeit accustomed) disgust. However, did not complain but rather waited with the patience of a Catholic saint for her beloved son to educate her on the punchline she must have missed.

'No, mother. Grey Nomad. You are painting the wall grey, and you are…' Ignatius sighed, 'actually, Mumsie, never you mind'.

Irene feigned a chuckle and handed Ignatius an unaddressed letter before returning upstairs.

'Curious as a cadaver,' Ignatius said aloud to the abyss of his basement squalor.

12.12.1962

Dear Mr Ignatius J Reilly, the first,

I challenge you to a dual at the setting of the sky. Might I remind you it is gentlemanly to remove one's hat in combat.

We shall meet beside the gorgon nestled atop the church. The one across from Lorna’s Gumbo shop.

Your mortal nemesis,

Terry-dactyl

PS: Bring snacks.

Ignatius sat ruminating for an hour before yelling at his mother.

'Mother, you vapid deranged widow of a woman. Fetch me my quill!’

12.12.1962

My dear Terrance,

Not under threat nor the pain of death doth I remove my beloved green hat. Sod off.

You had best bring a sharpener for your dull wit. I laugh at the audacity and delusion that you could consider besting me.

Might I remind you, good sir, my acceptance of your conditions is due to the ever-turning wheel of fate that we spiral to decay. I should instead seek a worthy opponent. But, alas, I am left with muddy dregs of the proverbial pond as many of the worthier fish have already been fished. Thus, I have no option but to teach you the error of your ways. By force.

Put your wings where your words are, and let us meet in my basement lair. To visit the church in its present state would be torture to my very soul. May St Peter have mercy on us indeed.

Good day,

Ignatius

Terry-dactyl, the pterodactyl etched down the basement rail, sword in one wing and soup in a milkshake cup gripped tightly in the other. He placed the straw in his mouth and swallowed some soup contemplating how to best his nemesis.

'We meet at last… light,' Terry said. One- Nil.

'You suck,' Ignatius said slyly. Marking his win with chalk upon the wall. One- One

doesn’t even make sense!' Terry scoffed.

'It is because of the straw!' Ignatius boomed, gripping his stomach in pain.

'I have the upper hand!' Terry said, motioning to his perched position.

'At least I have hands,’ Ignatius countered.

Terry winced as Ignatius drew another chalk mark on the board. Ignatius was beginning to calm.

‘Oh, what have I got you all in a flap?’ Ignatius laughed. Another point.

‘Let us cut,’ Terry said, drawing his sword, ‘straight to the point!’. Three all.

Terry swung his sword downwards in one swift motion, cutting Ignatius’ chalk-bearing arm clean off at the elbow. Simultaneously Ignatius lifted a paint can and doused his opponent with it. As he did, his valve opened and shut again, demobilising Terry with a gas bomb and gutting Ignatius in self-induced agony. Terry flapped violently, unable to breathe. Ignatius then calmed enough for the full contents of his bowl to expel and fell backwards from the force. Suddenly, a splatter of pterodactyl and grey matter covered the room. A large chunk of wing lodged itself into the crisp packet.

‘Curious as a cadaver,’ Ignatius said. ‘I see you brought your own snacks!’

He chortled to himself and pulled out his notepad to ensure he captured a morsel of this evening’s wit.

‘Ever seen a pterodactyl explode?’ he asked aloud to no one. ‘No, but Dino might have’.

His mothers’ laughter rang down from the top of the stairs.

‘Nomad grey,’ she chuckled, motioning to the aftermath, ‘I get it now’.