

Author Meets a Squeet: The Reluctant Author VII

by Michael Camarata

Over the keyboard, his fingers did fly. With hardly a notice, the hours flashed by. From beginning to end, in one single sitting, Author typed up his story and then, proudly grinning, hit "Print" and sat back as his printer emitted its clickety-clack.

And then, like a drummer, his heart skipped a beat. For the printer quite suddenly made a loud "Squeet!"

"What?" shouted Author, and scanning the page, he saw that the "age" was missing in "rage."

Another loud squeet pierced Author's head, and he saw only "ed" where there should have been "Fred."

Scanning page one, from bottom to top, Author found six such errors, and so finally hit "Stop."

"How rude," said a voice, a wee tiny voice, "to do what you've done. You've cancelled the words when I've hardly begun." And there, on his printer, Author did spy a tiny blue man, not two inches high. He was dressed in a handsome, if tiny, blue suit. And gripped in his hand was a blue bumbershoot.

"And who," said Author, "or what are you, who alters and mangles my words as you do?"

"I, sir," he said, with a bow of his head, "am merely a Squeet. And as to my purpose, quite frankly, I eat. For devouring words are what we Squeets do. We mix up the letters, make alphabet stew. Nouns are our bread and verbs are our meat-adverbs a scrumptiously succulent treat."

"But why," asked Author, "are they my words you eat, when prolific writers write feasts for a Squeet?"

"Their words," he said, "are totally square. Carefully measured. Not one word to spare. Such

meals are bland. There's not flavor enough. But yours are sweet sugary marshmallow fluff."

"Enough!" shouted Author. And again, "enough!" He adjusted his chair and, with a great huff, started writing, revising, intellectualizing-editing out each extraneous word, till his echoing laugh through the city was heard like a great peal of thunder, or a bell's dogged dun. Then it ended, abruptly, as it had begun.

"Finished!" he shouted. And then, with a bow, he said "see, oh let's see how you like my words now!"

"No!" said the Squeet. "What have you done? Your words are all balanced, their flavor undone!"

Up popped the Squeet, and he scampered away. "Good riddance," said Author, and he called it a day.

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