

Mr. Snuffleupagus is God

A Short Story by William Hrdina

Mr. Snuffleupagus is God.

I don't know why nobody has ever caught on to it before.

It's been there staring us in the face all of this time.

That's right. Mr. Snuffleupagus, the wooly mammoth from Sesame Street.

Is God.

I keep trying to tell people. To explain.

But they won't listen.

Instead I just get strange looks. Like I'm crazy.

I'm not crazy. I just figured out the secret.

I didn't make it up- it was they.

The infamous *they*.

Listen.

On the surface Sesame Street is this really cool, progressive place. All the races live together; boys and girls are treated equally. The show has even had a gay couple, Burt and Ernie, living together Ricardo-Style (i.e. in different beds) for decades. Sesame Street teaches tolerance, multi-culturalism and provides basic instruction on a variety of topics from manners to counting to particle physics.

But that's just the happy surface world they want you to see. Underneath lies another, darker reality.

The entire Muppet cast is a menagerie of social disorders. There are plenty of good examples to choose from. A mild example is the wacky OCD of the Count, 1, 2, 3, 4, help me I can't stop.

A bit more serious is the cookie grubbing, blissed-out Cookie Monster. His entire existence is concentrated on getting cookies. His intensity for his next cookie fix can only be rivaled by a crack head stranded on a desert island.

Then there's the saccharine sweet Elmo. He reminds me of a fuzzy red Stepford Wife. You just know he's gonna snap and cut Grover's throat with a paring knife one day. I remember one time I had a waitress at a Steak and Shake that acted a bit like Elmo. She was far too happy to take my order. She scared the hell out of me. Thing is, she snapped just like I thought she would. A guy gave her a lousy tip and she went ballistic- knocked him unconscious with a frozen hamburger patty.

Grover's no picnic either. He has a super-hero complex and the hyper-thin physique of a heroin addict. Plus, he's always with the hugging.

Elmo too. Anyone who always wants to hug strangers is weird.

Then there's Big Bird.

He's kind of the head of all the Muppets; if for no other reason than he's got the size to fight all of them at once.

Despite his leadership role, Big Bird may be the most screwed up of all.

At least that's what I thought at first.

That was before I realized the Truth.

Now I'll admit Big Bird is clearly manic depressive. He's always feeling down, needing to be cheered up by the kids for one thing or another. He loses a sock; he's in a

funk for the entire presentation of the letter G. Then, Gordon and Susan will find the missing sock stuck on his back and all of a sudden he's manic; singing and dancing on his yellow tree trunk legs.

At first I figured, that's no big deal. Someone just needed to prescribe the bird some Prozac, maybe a Quaalude or two.

He'd be fine.

But it goes a bit further than simple manic depression.

Big Bird also has a bit of Joan of Arc in him. He regularly sees and interacts with an imaginary woolly mammoth that isn't there. Joan of Arc preferred to call her invisible friend by the name God. Big Bird calls him Mr. Snuffleupagus.

When Big Bird points Snuffy out everyone constantly tells him, "No, Big Bird, there is no Mr. Snuffleupagus standing there. I don't know what you are talking about."

But Big Bird doesn't believe them. He sees.

Like a madman.

Or a prophet.

Nobody can actually see the enigmatic Mr. Snuffleupagus except for Big Bird. Nevertheless, he talks to Big Bird and gives him advice and generally acts as his friend. Snuffy always looks out for what Big Bird needs and gives him advice. You could argue he is a perfectly loving being.

Except he's not there.

Now I don't know what kind of people you hang out with. But my friends know enough to have conversations with imaginary people outside of my presence. They know me well enough to know I prefer it that way.

Big Bird isn't satisfied with just quietly believing in his imaginary friend.

He's a missionary.

A zealot.

He wants everyone else to see Mr. Snuffleupagus too. It pains him that people don't believe. He yearns for them to be able to see and curses himself for not being able to manifest the woolly mammoth to them.

Big Bird hasn't yet started going door to door, trying to convert people to Snuffleism, but it may just be a matter of time.

Because Sesame Street is a politically correct, non-judgmental place, some of the time people go along with Big Bird and pretend they can see Mr. Snuffleupagus too. Then, they talk to him facing the wrong direction or something and Bird gets mad at them for deceiving him.

For a while I thought the show was trying to send a sub-textual variation on Nietzsche's message that "God is Dead."

My thinking went as follows:

Mr. Snuffleupagus is a woolly mammoth.

Woolly mammoths are extinct.

If Snuffleupagus is like God, and God is a woolly mammoth, and therefore extinct, we should pay him no mind for he is dead and gone.

But then, a wrench fell into my ideas.

The structure of my faith in the world shattered and so I had to be reborn, rising into the light of the Snuffleupagus.

I realized we, the members of the audience, were capable of seeing Mr. Snuffleupagus. Just because the people within the world of Sesame Street couldn't see him didn't mean the viewers couldn't.

Which meant we were just like Big Bird.

This opened up a whole new line of theory for me.

Is it possible, I wondered, if the people on Sesame Street *could* see Mr. Snuffleupagus. They pretended they couldn't see because they were trying to drive Big Bird mad.

To what end? The people on the show seemed very nice. There was no reason for them to maliciously trick him.

I rejected this idea.

Then I realized there was another possibility.

I postulated the show was telling me God was real even if some people couldn't see him.

That sounded plausible, but I was a bit disappointed to come to such a mundane, pedestrian conclusion. The show was just telling me to believe my own experience.

It was a week later that the revelation of the Snuffleupagus hit me and I knew my musings weren't in vain. It was this moment that brought me face to face with my destiny.

What if not everyone could see him?

Stay with me.

I realized it was possible there really wasn't a Mr. Snuffleupagus on the show. Maybe most people who watched Sesame Street saw the same blank space the people in the show claimed to see.

Maybe they couldn't see the big brown woolly mammoth.

Maybe when I watch the show with other people and they say they can see Mr. Snuffleupagus they are being like the people on Sesame Street. Maybe they can't see him at all- they just see a blank space and are agreeing to be polite.

Maybe Big Bird is sane and everyone else is blind. Historically, it's common for prophets to suffer emotional maladies, particularly manic depression.

Maybe Mr. Snuffleupagus is who Big Bird *should* listen to. Maybe he's who we all should listen to.

Those of us privileged enough to see him that is.

The Snuffleupagus is telling us to listen to the voices in our heads. That's why I can see him. The voices that have always lived in my head are responsible for revealing Mr. Snuffleupagus to me.

To me, and to my spiritual partner, Big Bird.

My Brother- my feathered prophet, the bringer of the Snuffleupagus.

I knew I had to meet him. To share with him my vision, my knowledge of the truth.

I broke into the studio where they make the show.

The security guards caught me and threw me out.

I told them I could see the Snuffleupagus and they couldn't keep the secret forever.

I think that was a mistake. They threatened to call the cops on me if I didn't leave. They were afraid I would tell everyone what I knew.

So I went and got a gun.

The second time they let me in. I found Big Bird. He says he was just a man in a suit.

I didn't believe that. When Big Bird bent over at the waste and removed the top half of the costume revealing a 60 year old man, I realized they knew what I knew. They must've taken the real Big Bird hostage to keep us apart.

I demanded to be taken to see the real Bird, but everyone looked at me like I was crazy. Then, some dirty person snuck up behind me and tackled me to the ground and then a bunch of people were holding me on the ground and the next thing I knew I was being taken to a prison hospital.

Thankfully, Mr. Snuffleupagus saw me struggling and in his mercy followed me.

Now, he's my best friend. He tells me that Big Bird is safe.

He says I should be patient and play nice with others.

He says he has big plans for me when I get out of here.

He says there will be more guns.

I can hardly wait.