

BRUSHTOWN STORIES

The Leather Bound Prestige Edition of the Rise and Fall of the Mole Empire - Annotated With Glitter As Related to Melissa Lusk, With Variant Hologram Cover

Melissa Lusk sat on the edge of the couch. She was arranging various colored blocks into a small tower. Her daughter Agnes named each color as she stacked the blocks. It had been a long day, but she was in a good mood. She was writing a new song about a bee that falls in love with a grasshopper. Then the bug couple jointly runs for invertebrate congress and impeach the evil roach that runs the government. Maybe it was more than a song. A whole concept album. How many words rhyme with insect? Binsect, dinsect, ginsect. Well that's none so far. Maybe -

Her thoughts of arthropod rhyming were interrupted by her husband Matt who burst in with take-out from Mr. Big Dumpling. He put the bag on the counter and said: "We have to record the Brushtown intros and outros."

Melissa feigned a smile. "Great," she replied. Her husband had gotten obsessed with referring to moles in the outros. Originally his writing partner - Jonathan - was supposed to write the intros *and* outros but he had decided he was done writing outros. Jonathan claimed that outros were the bellybutton of the devil and he would not dare to poke them. That or he was just busy at work. Matt wasn't exactly clear and she hadn't really been listening. But she was pretty sure the words 'devil' and 'bellybutton' were used in some context.

Matt opened the food and handed her a crab Rangoon. Crab Rangoon, warm afternoon - she thought. Maybe there was a song in that. Maybe the grasshopper eats crab rangoons by the light of the moon. Or -

"Sooooo," Matt said interrupting her imaginary insect opera - yes it was an opera now. "So I was in the library with Agnes for her music class and I got bored because you know babies they're pretty you know. I mean not Agnes she's the best and - anyway I went into the Dark Occult section of the library and I found this book: *Mole-imos of Panopolis*. And its got some nice mole things, you know, for the outro. There was this spell or something - I copied it down - so I thought we could just punch in you doing the spell in the end of the episode.

"I already recorded an outro," Melissa replied between bites of Rangoon.

"Yeah but that was about mole sauce and it's not even pronounced mole it's just sort of. It didn't feel authentic. True to the mole spirit, you know?"

"Mole spirit. Right." She replied.

After their dinner they put Agnes to bed and got out the microphone. Matt handed her a handwritten copy of the text he'd copied from that old occult tome. "Ready?" He said.

"Yeah let's do this." She started reading the outro: "that was weird. Anyway as the ancients' ones once intoned: *Mole-atus maxi-mole mole-tanus mole-anus mole-oh mole-oh mole-oooooh!*"

Suddenly the room around Melissa vanished and she was hurtled through time and space. She was enveloped in a riot of color and abstract shapes then several melting clocks whizzed by- their hands spinning backwards. Then the universe settled. She was now in a lavender room with giant columns and a fountain. The fountain seemed to be made of Jell-o and wiggled as she walked near it. She was about to touch it when a voice called out - "Don't touch that!" She didn't. But being told not to only made her want to touch it more. "Did you enjoy your journey?" the voice asked.

"Sure, I guess ..."

"How about those melting clocks. They symbolize time. You probably didn't get that being so ... human."

"I got it." Melissa curtly replied.

"No, I don't think you did. The hands were going backwards because you -"

She cut him off. "I got it! Clocks, melting, time, backwards, all of it."

"Yes cause I explained it. But just to make sure I need you to sign this document saying you didn't get it. I enter!"

Then a strange giant bald humanoid sort of creature walked in. It had light blue skin and a second nose on its forehead. The being then made Melissa sign a document saying she didn't understand the clocks. She didn't want to sign but then the creature informed her that signing the document would give six

starving birds worms for a month via a charity and she was all about that. Not because she cared about the starving birds but because she hated worms. They were so smug. A worm once - it's not worth getting into. But she had her reasons. Serious reasons.

She let the deep seated worm hatred go and looked up at the strange double nosed bald blue creature. It looked nervous. "Are you looking at my cosmic nose?" It asked. It seemed almost offended.

"Um no ..." Melissa lied, "rather I was looking at your other nose?"

Alarmed the being touched the nose on his forehead. "My upper nose?"

"Wait so that's your regular nose? The comic nose is the one where your nose normally is?"

"My nose is normally both places, this is going poorly and it's been so long since we've had visitors." With that the creature began to cry.

Another being walked into the room. It sighed and went to the first being. "We talked about this. Come on buddy, you are just too raw right now." The second being turned to Melissa, "we are egg laying hermaphrodites that was the way of earth humanoids before the Hyperboreans meddled with your DNA via the cosmic dream way. But during our laying cycle our second nose becomes stuffed with the feelings of the dust of sorrow. So we are easily brought to muu-tears that is what we call tears."

"Why don't you just call them tears?" Melissa asked.

"Shut up that's why. Sorry. Sorry. Didn't mean that," the being replied.

"Are you also feeling cosmic emotions beyond my perception?" Melissa asked.

"No," the being replied, "I'm just kind of a jerk. But lo! Thanks for visiting us here ... THE LOST CONTINENT OF MOLE-ANTIS!"

"Whoa that's where I am? I was reading an ancient spell and -"

"Yes yes," the being said excitedly as it interrupted her. "That spell brought you here so you could see what once was."

"You didn't have to interup-"

"I must interrupt you," another being said he then said nothing else.

Melissa was about to continue before another being pre-interrupted her saying: "Did you recite the spell because you were so taken by the fanciful stories and myths of Mole-antis that you wanted to see our amazing pre-antediluvian civilization?"

"Um, no I was doing a dumb podcast and ..." She trailed off as she noticed more and more of the humanoid creatures walking toward her. One that seemed to be a leader stepped forward. Stupid Matt and his dumb copying spells always getting her whisked away to weird dimensions. She thought. Ugh. I have things to do. Well not really. But I could be doing things. She was trying to get enough coins for the skeleton suit in Super Mario Odyssey that was something. Right?

Another being put a hand on her shoulder "Because you so love us and wished so hard to meet us, your heroes, you were magically transported to this ever living dream of Mole-antis!"

"None of that," Melissa replied, "rather my husband—"

"Husband? Hus-band? That word is unknown to we, but we do know of the word 'rubber band.' Is a hus-band like a rubber band?"

"Only around pizza bagels," she said with a laugh. They did not get the joke which was probably because it was too inside baseball about Matt's weird rubber-band like actions around pizza bagels. Actually on further thought maybe it wasn't funny at all, maybe it was deep rooted problem that -

But Melissa didn't have time to consider this because the being pressed forward with its agenda. "Welcome to Mole-antis. I am called Something That Has No Equal In Your Language." It said.

"Oh," Melissa replied, "then what should I call you?"

"My name," the being replied, "Something That Has No Equal In Your Language. That's my name Something That Has No Equal In Your Language."

"Oh your name *is* Something That Has No Equal In Your Language."

"Yes Something That Has No Equal In Your Language," Something That Has No Equal In Your Language replied before adding, "It's a family name. Something That Has No Equal In Your Language of the Mole Hill Something That Has No Equal In Your Languages."

"Indeed," another being said.

"And what's your name?" Melissa asked the other being.

"Tadd." It replied.

"Now shut your cute as button human mouth and listen to us, your time in Mole-antis is short and we must regale you with our glorious history." And with that the creature recounted the story of Mole-antis. And it went a little something like this -

In the ancient days there was a lost continent between un-lost continent of Africa and semi lost continent of South America this was a land where moles dug, moles ate, moles shrugged. Basically it had a lot of moles. Like 97% moles but also the first proto-human intelligent beings. They developed a mole based society. Or mole-iety. But that word eventually fell out of favor due to it being associated with Mole Cola a failed soft drink that was not good. These pre-humans developed awesome technology like Mole-igraphy, mole-vision, and the mole-air in mole-space mole-seums. But then the evil Atlantians came from their other lost super continent - Atlantis! The Atlantians hated the Mole-antians because they hated moles and also they were super into like little cookies that were savory like a biscuit but not. It's hard to describe. Like - hmmm. Have you ever imagined that everything was edible? Like the walls were candy canes and the doors were - No? Um. Me neither. Anyway. Atlantis wanted to destroy Mole-antian society - and they devised a plan to take the moon from its orbit and explode it so pieces of moon would rain down and crush Mole-antis. The Atlantians waited until night, because that was the moon's natural habitat and flew a chicken powered rocket loaded with nuclear bombs because Atlantians had developed both chicken and nuclear weapons! The rocket or buk-buk-ba-bomb as it was called by the head scientist - exploded the moon raining pieces down on the Mole-antians destroying their world and tossing moles all across the world and that's how moles spread to all the continents even the famed Antarctic snow-mole. And also pieces of the explosion caused many Mole-antians to explode and the pieces of them that splatted across the world stuck on peoples bodies and would form moles. In fact moles are piece of Mola-antians that have latched onto your bodies. Also mole sauce was created during this cataclysmic event so mole sauce is directly related to moles even though it's not pronounced the same but it's authentic and true to the mole spirt. Anyway then the Atlantians made a deal with Reptoids to hang a giant hollow

balloon where the moon used to be. It was hollow because they couldn't pay for a solid moon balloon. But the Atlantians then tried to not pay for any of it so the Reptoids sunk Atlantis because of this treachery. They should have remembered the old saying: "Cheat a Reptoid for A Replacement Moon - you'll end up a Goon." Luckily though a brilliant Mole-antian scientist who was also a worrywart created a crystal sea-shell that would traverse dimensions and a few chosen Mole-antians - there was a lottery though there was a scandal about how some winners were picked but then the loser died so the lawsuit was dropped - but anyway the chosen few had their essence sent into the seashell and then the seashell was punted by famed Mole-antian football player Gruff Buttkins into another dimension. And the secret teachings of Mole-antis became only legends and fragmented stories. And a few great alchemists and scholars were able to commune with the lost age and that's how the spell was written. And via that spell several great people learned how to visit Mole-antis and bring its great ideas back to the modern world like: Einstein, Gandhi, and Rich Little. And now you ... Melissa.

Melissa nodded trying to act honored. "Great?" she said. "So can I go back now?"

One of the beings nodded, "yes you will go back to the moment when you said the spell and this whole life time you led because it took 100 years to tell the story - see your old now?"

One of the beings held up a mirror - and indeed Melissa was old her face wrinkled, her hair white. "Oh my back, kids today with their music and there pants. Oh my life."

"Yes but this whole life will be like a waking dream!" Something That Has No Equal In Your Language said.

"Oh," Melissa said, "Like that Star Trek TNG episode where they encounter that probe and then Picard has that whole life as Galen and he plays the flute?"

"Um no. No. Nothing like that and we never saw that and it's totally different." One of the beings said as he pushed a strange coin into her hand. "Now take this coin as a reminder of all the great things you learned."

And with that she was back in her apartment. She shook the memories off. Was it just a dream? Or a day dream? Or a late afternoon dream? Or a - but no the coin was in her hand. She

held it up and it rainbow shimmered in that weird way that roast beef does sometimes.

"Oh," Matt said stopping the outro recording. "What an amazing ancient coin from a time before time." He then took the coin from her hand. "And the perfect size to get caught in Agnes' throat." He took the coin and promptly flushed it down the toilet. He watched it go down the bowl. "Now that's good parenting," he said. He was quite proud. He also enjoyed watching the toilet flush it reminded him of Paris.

Melissa smiled. "Maybe let's lay off the mole stuff for a while. OK?"

Matt put his hand on her shoulder. And smiled. "Nope." He replied. And they lived mole-fully ever after.

END OF STORY