

PASQUINADE - EPISODE 5

It's a listless day in limbo. Piffle and Pith, the playful and analytical halves of the personality of Pasquinade, have captured the mood perfectly. After a noticeable pause Piffle speaks.

PIFFLE
(lazily)
Well, Pith.... How're you getting along?

PITH
(stifling a yawn)
Oh, fine, Piffle, fine...and you?

PIFFLE
Oh, the usual nonsense, but you looked thoughtful just then...

PITH
Oh, that. That's because I was....
(Shrugs)
...thinking.

PIFFLE
Anything in particular?

PITH
No. Just musing generally.

PIFFLE
Well...I know what you mean. It's not like I'm particularly against anything making sense, really.

PITH
Just sort of take it as it comes?

PIFFLE
Oh...Yes...

PITH
Me too. It's just that kind of day.

We hear the off-camera voice of BALLISTA RAMSTAM, commanding organiser of others cum engine of war.

BALLISTA (O.S.)
Honestly! You two unfocused, purposeless layabouts!

PIFFLE
(staring into space)
I think the sun just set.

PITH
HMMMMMM. I heard it too...

Piffle turns to get up.

PIFFLE
(with forced cheerfulness)
Ballista? Hello!!

BALLISTA
None of that, you podgy ball of falderal!

PIFFLE
(stunned)
I...I don't know what to say... Pith,
think of something!

BALLISTA
My words exactly, Mr. Parody, but it seems
that Mr. Per Se is too busy thinking of
anything and everything to think of
something!
(regarding them fiercely)
...Why can't you both be useful?!

Piffle is indignant.

PIFFLE
What? Like a garden rake or a bag of
beans?! It must have to do with the way
we're shaped!!

BALLISTA
You are shaped to be funny. Be funny. Be
entertaining! Here's your stage...

She picks him up and puts him on it.

PIFFLE
What?!...

BALLISTA
...You'll like it after awhile. I just know
you will and, believe me, you'll feel so
useful. You'll thank me for it!

PIFFLE

But, I...

Ballista glares at him and hands him five balls. He starts juggling. Now she turns to address Pith who is trying to be invisible.

BALLISTA

You're being very quiet, Pith Per Se. Don't tell me you were thinking? Did you know that thinking can be a socially meaningful activity? That it can actually solve other people's real problems? Would you like a real problem to solve?

PITH

I think...

BALLISTA

(with cheerful menace)

Yes...?

PITH

That I've got a real problem...

BALLISTA

Yes...?

PITH

...if I don't get busy...

BALLISTA

You think very well...

She briskly provides a working environment, producing items as she speaks their names. In the mindscape of Pasquinade concepts are real objects, coming and going as needed.

BALLISTA (CONT'D)

Here's your desk, paper, pen, and... library. Now, get busy! I just know that an inventive mind like yours was made to help others. We must all aim to

to
apply

ourselves to improve ourselves and our community.

PIFFLE

(wary but sarcastic)

Excuse my asking, but what will you be doing?

BALLISTA
(snarling)
ORGANISING YOU LOT!
(sugary)
But don't feel picked on. You're just the
first, that's all.

She exits...for awhile. Pith and Piffle slow to a stop
but remain aware that she will return. Pith leaves the
pen hanging in mid air and turns to Piffle.

PITH
This is ridiculous. How can I think about
thinking with you juggling up there?

PIFFLE
Well, I don't much feel like entertaining
with my entire audience looking the other
way!

They notice her returning and hastily resume their
activities. Ballista re-enters carrying various
characters almost as if they were chess pieces. They
are: PREDELLA QUIDDLE, a fussy designer, ANOSMIA PONG,
a warm hearted gardener, JOOK FLINCHER, a fidgety,
frightened, fleet-footed wimp and MEGA MUZZLE, a pot
bellied cannon-mouthed belligerent who is too large to
carry and so is dragged in backwards.

BALLISTA
Now you, Predella, can decorate this place.
Something cheerful and bright to make
everyone happy....to work harder.

Predella protests..

PREDELLA
Do you mind!....

BALLISTA
(challengingly)
WHAT?!

PREDELLA
(sensing danger)
...what...I do, as long as it's cheerful?

BALLISTA
(with quiet satisfaction)
Not at all, dear. It's entirely up to
you....
(impatiently)
NOW!

Predella scurries...

BALLISTA
(turning)
Jook Flincher?!...

JOOK
Is..is... it O.K. now?

BALLISTA
(irritated)
You're a wimp! You're always popping from one place to another to avoid trouble, but now you're in trouble if you don't pop with a purpose!
(inspirationally)
That's your new motto...
'Pop with A Purpose: It's O.K. Now!'
You...are a courier. You will pop messages and things from place to place and....
(imperiously)
...finally justify your absurd existence!
Go.

JOOK
Oh, boy...
(pop!)

He does; quickly ferrying things in an inappropriate way between the other characters.

BALLISTA
(fawning)
Anosmia, dear!...

Anosmia Pong is uneasy, suspicious, and confused.

BALLISTA (CONT'D)
...Salt of the Earth!...

ANOSMIA
(to herself)
Salt never made anything grow...?

BALLISTA
(expansively)
...You shall be the cornucopia of the WORLD! Fruits, nuts, ve - ge - ta - bles... shall be yours to provide!

ANOSMIA
But I'm very fond of flowers...

BALLISTA

(gently)

Nonsense.

(cheerily)

I know best! Everyone needs food; good nutritious food. What can flowers do anyway? They're just pretty then.... nothing. Besides...

(looking away)

Predella Quiddle is doing the decorating. Aren't you, Predella?

Predella smiles nervously in front of her creation.

PREDELLA

Though I'm not sure that everyone likes my ideas!

BALLISTA

(as if stating the obvious)

Well, don't waste their time asking...just get on with it!....

You too, Anosmia, dear!!

Anosmia and Predella look at each other then busy themselves while Ballista rubs her hands in readiness for the next bit.

BALLISTA

...Right...

(she draws her breath in readiness)

MEGA MUZZLE!!! ATTENTION!!

He gives it, straining to brace his beer belly.

BALLISTA (CONT'D)

...Are you at ease?..

Mega straightens even more.

MEGA

(resolutely)

NEVER!

BALLISTA

...Good...

(considering him)

You're not constructive enough. From now on, you...will be...

Mega puffs out his chest.

BALLISTA (CONT'D)
...public transport.

Mega deflates.

And, to get you started, we have...

Ballista reaches out of frame and pulls in QUOTIDIAN MOO, a many legged, newspaper reading bovine commuter; symbol of the common herd.

...Quotidian Moo, the common herd.

She crams Quotidian into Mega's muzzle and steadies both characters while gauging the trajectory.

...Brace yourselves!
You'll thank me for it!

Ballista kicks Mega's breech(es). WHAM! - Quotidian leaves. CRASH! - Quotidian lands off-camera.

Well...I'm not over the moon
about that one! We need something else...

She thinks and looks about.

Suddenly a hole opens up revealing a deceptively cute UNBANDED PECCADILLO. It sniggers.

...Ah! How sweet!...and just the
right size!

She pops it in the muzzle but, before Mega can fire, the wily animal sticks its feet out and digs them into the ground. When the moment comes (WHAM!) Mega hurtles backwards and out of frame in a Newtonian frenzy.

BALLISTA (CONT'D)
Oh...How retrograde.
(raising her voice)
You must try harder, Mega Muzzle!

Ballista regards the Peccadillo.

You're a sturdy little thing. What can we
rely on you to do?

As Ballista bends nearer the Peccadillo, it belches, sniggers, zips about like a mad thing, and is joined by a host of its friends emerging from other holes.

BALLISTA
(shocked)
GOOD GRACIOUS!

There is PANDEMONIUM as The Unbanded Peccadillos:

-Ricochet Jook back and forth until he pops out in panic.

JOOK
Oh, BOY! (POP)

-They pop up through Anosmia's new vegetable patch, wearing the plants as hats. She chases them out waving a cabbage threateningly.

ANOSMIA
(angrily)
Have one of these, why don't you?

-They ride down Predella's wallpaper by grabbing the top edge and jumping. She leaves in tearful disgust.

PREDELLA
That does it!

-They take the place of Piffle's balls and start to vary the pattern of the juggling. He lets them.

PIFFLE
Well, you can just carry on by yourselves!

-They knock down Pith's bookcases and whip the desk out from under his papers. He falls face forward.

PITH
I should have known...

Four of the Peccadillos wheel the desk at Ballista, catch her on top of it, and whizz it about like a go-cart. They then scoot her out of frame, cheered on by other Unbanded Peccadillos.

BALLISTA
STOP IT! STOP IT! You uncontrollable
little PESTS!!

Ballista is then wheeled back in to the centre, the four Peccadillos jump to one side, and others burrow up in a circle around her. Jumping up and down in unison, the Peccadillos start to chant and snigger...

ALL PECCADILLOS
(uproariously)
FUN!... FUN!... THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

The floor gives way as the small holes link up, and Ballista falls through to a lower level, desk and all. With mad laughter, the Peccadillos bounce around and out of frame like wilful rubber balls. It's all over. Everyone is gone. Only Pith and Piffle remain.

PITH
(with understatement)
Hmmm... Well, that was fairly total, wasn't it?

Pith raises his arm and drops his pen, the last remnant of his encounter with Ballista. When it hits the ground it twinkles and vanishes like fairy-dust. All the other props have done the same when they were no longer required in this conceptual world.

PIFFLE
Those Peccadillos don't mess about...

PITH
Is that what they were?

PIFFLE
Yep. Unbanded Peccadillos.

Piffle walks over to the hole and calls down...

PIFFLE (CONT'D)
One thing, Ballista, my dear... You've got to admit... They have a sense of purpose!

BALLISTA
(from below)
Very droll, Piffle. Very....entertaining...

PIFFLE
(with mock surprise)
Oh! Thank you!

BALLISTA
(exhausted and exasperated)
AARRGGHH!!

PITH

All in all, Piffle, I've got to admit that
I hope I never see another one again.

PIFFLE

(chuckling)

Oh, I don't know... They're kind of cute!

At this, one of the Peccadillos zips back in, grabs one of Piffle's pendulous ears, and blows his nose on it. Piffle quickly grabs his ear back and the Peccadillo sniggers.

PIFFLE (CONT'D)

STOP that!

NOO SHOOS, the perpetual innocent with his perpetually new shoes enters and prepares to say the only thing he ever says in every episode, "See my noo shoos?" He doesn't get very far this time.

NOO SHOOS

See.....?!

The Peccadillo pulls Noo Shoos' laces loose, sniggers again, and zips out. Noo Shoos looks at his shoes, looks at the departing Peccadillo, looks at Pith and Piffle, and looks at his shoes again... He is totally out of his depth.

Piffle is left standing holding his soiled ear in distaste.

Pith tries to suppress a smile and puts a hand over his eyes in disbelief.

PITH

Yes...a definite sense of purpose.

END