

ANYTHING FOR A DECAPODIFORMES

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

LEAVING COUPLE	People (could just be one) who can identify crazy way faster than Brian
SALESPERSON	An attractive woman waiting for her well-deserved visit from the Church of the Luminous Squid.
BRIAN	An awkward-around-women fellow who is finally moving out of his parents' house.

## SETTING

A furniture store.

SCENE

*(Lights up on a furniture store. A couple is just extricating themselves from a salesperson, and once they turn away so she can't see them, they make expressions of "oh my god, she's nuts - let's get out of here". As they are leaving, Brian enters, and the attractive salesperson comes sauntering over.)*

SALESPERSON

Can I help you?

BRIAN

Oh, no. I'm fine. I'm just looking for a floor lamp.

*(Salesperson's eyes light up with expectation.)*

SALESPERSON

A lamp, you say...

BRIAN

Yeah. I'm moving into a new—

SALESPERSON

Are you... *(thinking: ...from the Church of the Luminous Squid?)*

BRIAN

*(Misunderstanding...)*

Yeah. I've been living with my par—

SALESPERSON

I've been waiting for you!

BRIAN

P-pardon?

SALESPERSON

I've heard about you. Even once saw a picture. That's how I knew.

BRIAN

A p-picture.

SALESPERSON

Oh yes. It was just a glimpse before it was carried away by the wind, but I knew right then I'd never forget it. It's why I came to work here.

BRIAN

A... a p-picture of me?

SALESPERSON

*(Not really hearing him.)*

To prepare myself, and to continue your work! *(Conspiratorially...)* Spreading the word, bringing the *light... (she winks overdramatically)* to dark places!

BRIAN

My work?

SALESPERSON

And mine too. We're not alone! I know that now. I've been waiting for you to come...

BRIAN

Well, I just decided to move out last—

SALESPERSON

I knew that if I let *my* light shine, that it would get noticed. That *you'd* notice!

BRIAN

I'd notice... what?

SALESPERSON

*(Not waiting for the word "what" ...)*

I knew you would! People said I was crazy, but I knew it!

BRIAN

They said you were crazy?

SALESPERSON

Can you believe it? But here you are!

BRIAN

*(Now quite nervous...)*

Yeah... Here I am...

SALESPERSON

Oh, but listen to me babbling on when I'm sure you'll want to see them.

BRIAN

See them?

SALESPERSON

The lamps, of course. You came to see them, didn't you?

BRIAN

Yes. Yes, I did.

SALESPERSON

Oh, this is so... I've been waiting so... I'll be right back!!

*(Salesperson rushes off before Brian can say anything. He stares around uncomfortable, and a moment later, Salesperson comes back holding a large glass pufferfish lamp.)*

This was the first one I made. *(Pause...)* What do you think? Oh, I know it's rude to ask, but I just can't contain myself. Oh, this is so exciting!

BRIAN

Y-you made this?

*(Salesperson nods excitedly.)*

It's... it's...

*(Salesperson's face falls...)*

Nice.

SALESPERSON

You don't like it.

BRIAN

No, no—

SALESPERSON

You think it's unworthy!

BRIAN

I... what?

SALESPERSON

It was my first one, and, well, it's not like you provided any guidance. I kept waiting, but nothing. So I tried.

BRIAN

This is... no, this is... T-this is your first one?

SALESPERSON

Well, my first *real* try. I mean, I made hundreds of experimental pieces, but nothing religious. Just stuff to get my hands and my heart around the art form, you know? So... what do you think?

BRIAN

It's great. I mean, for a first... try, this is... really impressive.

SALESPERSON

Do you mean it? Do you really mean that? It was my first one. I already said that, didn't I? It's just, I wasn't sure if I had the talent, you know? That's why I went with a pufferfish, because if it wasn't good enough—

BRIAN

A pufferfish? Is that—

SALESPERSON

—I didn't want it to come off as sacrilegious. You don't think it is?

BRIAN

Sacrilegious?

SALESPERSON

Yeah.

BRIAN

No. No, not at all.

SALESPERSON

My next one is bolder. Can I show you?

*(Without waiting, she rushes off.)*

BRIAN

Uh... sure.

*(In a moment, Salesperson comes rushing back in. She's holding another lamp, this one in the shape of an octopus holding a blowtorch.)*

SALESPERSON

Hold this.

*(She thrusts it into Brian's hands, and then plugs in the cord. The lamp lights up, and the blowtorch starts to pulsate.)*

BRIAN

Wow! This is... really something.

SALESPERSON

*(With a look of confusion...)*

This isn't the whole thing, silly. I wouldn't go halfway when it comes to *Her*. Right back!

*(She rushes off again.)*

BRIAN

Her?

*(He goes to examine the octopus lamp more closely, appreciating it's intricacies, but not for very long because Salesperson soon rushes back on. She's holding another glass piece, this one resembling a piece of coral above which is a small school of tropical fish of different varieties. The fish have expressions ranging from fear to awe. She arranges it so it looks like the octopus is threatening them with the blowtorch.)*

SALESPERSON

*(Practically bursting with excitement...)*

Well?

BRIAN

Is this for...

SALESPERSON

Uh huh!! What do you think?

BRIAN

I...

SALESPERSON

Could you use it? Would it work?

BRIAN

U-use it?

SALESPERSON

You know, in the church. For ceremonies. Or even just as a centerpiece, or maybe the setting for one of those chocolate fondue fountains?

BRIAN

I...

SALESPERSON

What? No? Please don't say... No. No. Say what you must. I want you to be honest with me. I *need* you to be honest. Honesty above all else. Honesty is the light, right? That's what we teach. So?

BRIAN

I'm sorry. I'm just... a little overwhelmed.

SALESPERSON

*(Practically fainting with joy...)*

Really? Oh. Oh my. Oh, you have no idea how much that means to me!

*(Salesperson impulsively gives Brian a huge hug.)*

Can I show you my latest piece? It's *amazing!* (*Giggly, self-conscious teenager style:*) If I do say so myself. I'll be right back!!

*(Salesperson rushes off.)*



BRIAN

Did she say... church? She did, didn't she...

*(Salesperson comes back, but not rushing this time. She walks, nay, processes one step at a time, irreverently as she bears forth a glowing sculpture of a crowned, holy squid, its tentacles holding aloft a glowing orb. She places it on a small table, and then genuflects before it. Brian just stares. She looks at him, then back at the squid, and then back to him. She clearly is expecting something. Staring at Brian the whole time, she genuflects to the squid once more. Brian finally gets it, and genuflects – awkwardly – to the squid.)*

That's... wow. That's really... wow.

*(But now Salesperson is suspicious.)*

SALESPERSON

What did you say your name was?

BRIAN

What?

SALESPERSON

Your name.

BRIAN

Brian.

SALESPERSON

Not *that* name. *(Insistently...)* Your *name*.

BRIAN

Brian Danbury.

SALESPERSON

*(Suddenly as cold as the ocean bottom...)*

I see. You're not from the church at all, are you?

BRIAN

Which church, exactly?

SALESPERSON

The Church of the Luminous Squid, of course. What do you think I've been talking about?

BRIAN

Lutimus Squi—

SALESPERSON

*Luminous Squid. (Turning to the latest lamp...) He begs forgiveness, your Squishiness.*

BRIAN

Luminous Squid.

SALESPERSON

Gifter of the Light of Dampness, Bearer of the Fronds of Maternity.

BRIAN

*(Echoing, trying to catch up...)*

...Fronds of Eternity...

*(Salesperson rushes to put her hands over where she thinks the squid's ears might be...)*

SALESPERSON

*Maternity... Maternity...*

*(She looks down at the glowing squid, and breathes a sigh of relief.)*

Looks like She didn't hear you.

*(She starts stepping back, removing her hand from the squid's "ears".)*

BRIAN

That was lucky.

*(She immediately cover's its "ears" again.)*

SALESPERSON

What's the matter with you? Are you insane?!

BRIAN

Me? Am *I* insane?

SALESPERSON

Do you want to get smited by the Scorching Ink of Repentance?

BRIAN

I'm not sure. Do I?

SALESPERSON

Are you mocking me? Are you mocking *Her!*?

BRIAN

Nooo. No. No no no. I'm just not familiar with the Church of... the...

SALESPERSON  
Luminous Squid!

BRIAN  
Glowing Slug?

*(Salesperson gasps, and covers her eyes in fear. A beat. Another beat. She peeks out, and sees that Brian's still standing.)*

SALESPERSON

I... I don't beli... This is incredible!

BRIAN

It is?

SALESPERSON

Don't you see? This is a sign!

*(She rushes over and hugs Brian again as he says...)*

BRIAN

It is?

SALESPERSON

Yes! Oh, yes! You are a favored one of Her Squishiness! No Ink of Repentance for you! You lucky fish, you. Oh, don't you see? She has chosen you for the Church!

BRIAN

How do you know this, exactl—

SALESPERSON

Here. Here. You should take this. *(She indicates the giant squid lamp.)*

BRIAN

Oh, no. I couldn't. Please.

SALESPERSON

I insist. She wants you to have it.

BRIAN

I really—

SALESPERSON

*(Suddenly, alarmingly, angry...)*

Do not make me angry, Brian.

BRIAN

...really appreciate this. It's... lovely.

*(Salesperson goes back to being exuberantly happy.)*

What do I owe you?

SALESPERSON

Oh, don't be silly. There's no place for money in heart of the Luminous Squid.

BRIAN

Okay.

SALESPERSON

But since you insist, fourteen hundred dollars would be fine.

BRIAN

*(In shock.)*

F-fourteen—

SALESPERSON

Plus tax. But it's tax deductible, so it's like you're getting that back.

BRIAN

I don't... No, I don't... I can't... I...

SALESPERSON

And maybe you can buy me lunch?

*(There's a long pause. Brian looks between the Salesperson, the squid lamp, and perhaps even the audience if the director wants to break the fourth wall, and then finally...)*

BRIAN

Is a check okay?

*(Lights out.)*