

WORDS ARE USELESS

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

RACCOON	A furry little con-artist
BAKER	A baker rather down on his luck
EDDIE	Completely clueless

SETTING

A room in the back of a bakery.

SCENE

(Lights come up on a room in a mom-and-pop bakery. A raccoon is lounging on a tray of pastries, licking a paw. Between each lick, it reaches out and touches a pastry while saying...)

RACCOON

Mine. Mine. Mine. Rosie's. Mine.

(A baker enters and sees the raccoon.)

BAKER

What the— Eddie! Eddie, get in here and bring the broom!

RACCOON

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Hold on there! Don't be hasty.

BAKER

Oh, I'm going be hasty all over your furry little behind.

RACCOON

I know what you're thinking, but this isn't what it looks like.

BAKER

It looks like you're sitting on a tray of napoleons—

RACCOON

Okay, that part's what it looks like.

BAKER

—eating all my hard work!

RACCOON

See? That's what I'm talking about. You *think* I'm eating these all, but that's not what's going on.

BAKER

Oh?

RACCOON

I couldn't eat all these. Look at the size of me.

BAKER

I saw what you did to my sausage rolls last week.

RACCOON

First of all, that wasn't me.

BAKER

I saw you!

RACCOON

Okay, it *was* me. But second, I was really hungry then. I'm not that hungry right now.

BAKER

And I'm supposed to believe that?

RACCOON

I'd never lie. Raccoons don't lie.

BAKER

You lied to me just two seconds ago.

RACCOON

Okay. Fair point. But I'm *not* lying to you now.

BAKER

And why should I believe that?

RACCOON

Think about it. Do you really think I could be hungry enough to eat an entire tray of napoleons after finishing off four tins of croissants?

(The raccoon points to the croissants. The baker gets even angrier.)

BAKER

Eddie! Forget the broom, Eddie. Bring the shotgun!

RACCOON

Whoa! Whoa! You wouldn't—

BAKER

You think I wouldn't?

EDDIE (OFF)

Shotgun? We don't have a shotgun.

RACCOON

Ho ho ho. Who's the liar now?

(Baker steams a moment. Then...)

BAKER

(Shouting to Eddie.)

Well, go get one!

RACCOON

Don't get me wrong. I'm impressed. That was a good ploy. Very convincing.

BAKER

Get out of here!

RACCOON

If that Eddie fellow hadn't blown it for you, I might have been really scared.

BAKER

Get *out* of here!

RACCOON

Of course, he did. That Eddie... What a character...

BAKER

I'm warning you...

RACCOON

Oh, come on. Don't be nasty. We're having a nice negotiation here.

BAKER

There's no negotiation. If you don't leave *right* now, I'm going to...

RACCOON

What? I mean, think about it. The damage is already done, right?

(The baker turns to yell back, and during the next few lines, the raccoon goes back to licking his paw and touching the pastries with a very quiet alternating of "mine" and "Rosie's".)

BAKER

Eddie! What the hell is taking you so long?

EDDIE (OFF)

I'm looking for a shotgun!

BAKER

We don't have a shotgun!

EDDIE (OFF)

You said—

BAKER

I know what I said, just get the broom and—

(The baker has turned back and seen what the raccoon is doing.)

Will you *stop* that!?

RACCOON

What?

BAKER

Stop it!!

RACCOON

You mean me? I thought you were talking to—

EDDIE (OFF)

Stop?

RACCOON

...Eddie.

BAKER

(To Eddie...)

No! Not you! You get in here!

EDDIE (OFF)

Then why'd you tell me to stop?

RACCOON

I like him.

BAKER
(*At raccoon...*)

Shut up!

RACCOON

He's great.

EDDIE (OFF)

You can't treat me like that

BAKER

I wasn't talking to you, Eddie!

RACCOON

You should hire a whole gaze of Eddies.

BAKER
(*Back at raccoon.*)

Now listen yo— A gaze?

RACCOON

Isn't that what you call it? A gaze of humans?

BAKER

Group. A *group* of humans. Or a team.

RACCOON

So it's a gaze of raccoons, but a group of humans.

BAKER

Right. I guess.

RACCOON

What about squirrels?

BAKER

Squirrels don't break in to my bakery and ea—

RACCOON

No. I mean, what do you call a group of squirrels.

BAKER

I... I don't know. Hey Eddie! What do you call a bunch of squirrels?

RACCOON

A bunch? I thought that was grapes.

EDDIE (OFF)

I call ‘em squirrels, same as you.

BAKER

No, you moron. Like a flock of birds, or a business of ferrets, or a herd of deer. What’s a bunch of squirrels called?

RACCOON

A damn nuisance.

EDDIE (OFF)

How should I know?

BAKER

Well look it up on your phone. You’re a millennial.

EDDIE (OFF)

Okay.

BAKER

He’s my sister’s kid. I swear sometimes...

RACCOON

Relations. I feel you, pal. I really do. I have a bunch of first cousins who... Sorry, a gaze of first cousins. They’re not grapes. I didn’t want to confuse you.

BAKER

I got it.

RACCOON

I mean they’re nice in small doses. But we have these reunions where all seven hundred of them come over and—

(During this last line, the raccoon has idly picked up a pastry – that he had not previously touched – and is about to take a bite.)

BAKER

Hey! Hey! Paws off! Those are mine!

RACCOON
(Indignant)

No they aren't!

BAKER
They are too.

RACCOON
No, I licked this one already. It's mine now.

BAKER
You did?

RACCOON
Absolutely. Before you came in.

(The baker thinks about this for a moment.)

So? I mean it's not like you're gonna be able to sell—

BAKER
Yeah, alright. Fine. Since you already licked it.

RACCOON
Thanks.

(He goes to take a bite. But stops at...)

BAKER
Wait.

(The raccoon pauses with his mouth open and around the pastry.)

How do I know you were telling the truth just now? About licking it before.

(The raccoon shrugs. As the next line is being spoken, the raccoon takes a bite.)

You were lying again, weren't you?

RACCOON

(Mouthful of food while trying to say "it's hard to say")

Mmph hrmph ooo hheyy.

BAKER

What?

(Raccoon swallows, then.)

RACCOON

It's hard to say.

BAKER

You *were* lying! Eddie! Eddie! How long does it take to get a broom? What did I tell you this morning about getting distracted?

EDDIE (OFF)

Scurry.

BAKER

What??

EDDIE (OFF)

A group of squirrels is called a scurry.

BAKER

The broom, Eddie! Get the—

EDDIE (OFF)

Or a 'dray'. I think a 'scurry' makes more sense.

RACCOON

I really like your nephew. Have I mentioned that?

BAKER

I'm gonna kill that kid.

RACCOON

You're so violent this morning. Are you having marital problems?

BAKER

No, I'm having *raccoon* problems.

RACCOON

Raccoon problems? I don't know. Was that a professional diagnosis? Have you spoken to a psychologist?

BAKER

I don't need a shrink to tell me that you're my problem.

RACCOON

I think technically a 'shrink' is medical doctor. A psychologist—

BAKER

Get out of my pastries!

RACCOON

Unless you meant a skunk, because their diagnoses really stink. Get it? Get it?

BAKER

GET THE HELL OUT OF MY PASTRIES!!!

RACCOON

Whoa, whoa. Pal, take it easy. You'll burst a blood vessel or something. Then where will we be?

BAKER

I'll take it easy when you get the hell out. (*Turning to scream offstage.*) EDDIE!!

RACCOON

You weren't so hot under the collar yesterday. I bet it's a marital thing. Did your wife kick you out of the nest last night?

BAKER

It's not a marital thing. It's a *you* thing!

RACCOON

But you weren't like this yesterday when I licked all the crescent rolls.

BAKER

You WHAT!?!

RACCOON

Not enough butter, by the way. I thought at first it was just a few, which is why I licked the rest just to be sure—

(Baker starts snarling and panting...)

BAKER

Oh my god...

RACCOON

That's why I think it's probably a problem with the missus.

BAKER

They're going to shut me down.

RACCOON

I bet if you just got her a present...

BAKER

Mayor Jenkins bought one of the crescent rolls...

RACCOON

Look, pal. You've been good to me, so I'm going to help you out here.

BAKER

I'm done for.

RACCOON

No, no. I know women. Trust me.

BAKER

I can't believe this.

RACCOON

I know I lied before, but I really do know women.

BAKER

What am I gonna do?

RACCOON

Take me and Rosie, for example. When she first met me, she wasn't interested at all.

BAKER

Nothing. I'm not gonna say anything.

RACCOON

Right! Exactly! Words are useless when it comes to love. See, when I first met Rosie...

BAKER

I can't say anything.

RACCOON

Hey, hey. Focus here. I'm imparting wisdom. Where was I? Oh, right. Rosie. When I first met Rosie, she wasn't interested at all. But then I started bringing her these delicious pastries, and everything changed. You know?

BAKER

(Finally coming back to the moment.)

I hate you.

RACCOON

Oh, don't say that. We're sharing a moment here. We have something really special.

BAKER

Get out.

RACCOON

I mean, if it wasn't for you, my Rosie—

BAKER

GET OUT!!

RACCOON

Well, that's a little rude.

BAKER

EDDIE!!!

RACCOON

Alright, since you insist. You don't mind if I... *(he motions to a few of the pastries)*
They're for Rosie.

BAKER

EDDIE!!! If you don't get in here with that broom in five seconds!

RACCOON

Of course you don't mind.

(The raccoon gathers up a few pastries. The baker makes a jump towards him, and he scurries off in a frenzy, knocking the tray down and sending pastries everywhere. As he's leaving, the raccoon calls out...)

RACCOON (CONT)

See you tomorrow!

(A moment after the raccoon exits, Eddie enters holding a little whisk broom, or if that's hard to come by, some vaguely broom-like cooking utensil. He looks around and sees the mess.)

EDDIE

Whoa. Did you drop a tray or something? Good thing I brought this broom.

(Eddie holds the broom out to the baker, who turns on him with eyes of fire. He looks down at the useless broom, then back at Eddie, and starts advancing. Lights out.)