

By Michael Hovde

Not licensed for commercial use. This version is for beta reading only, reproduction not allowed.

## The Liz Report

Elizabeth had a mom and dad,  
The best a girl ever could have had,  
At dinner, she'd give her report,  
Of Liz's Day (they called her Liz for short).

The Liz Report was often long,  
In it, Liz could be quite strong,  
She could be fierce, she could be bold,  
She could go in search of pirate's gold.

The Liz Report was just a wee bit lax,  
On details, figures, sources, truth, and facts,  
Some might say it's unreliable,  
But the fun of it is undeniable.

The Report was a meal event,  
Her parents chewed, their ears both bent,  
Liz told tales of afternoon,  
Morning and Lunch (usually served 'round noon).

Eating helps imagination,  
Something about the mastication,  
Mom and Dad ate while Liz reported,  
You just fake chew; you'll be sorted.

What's in this one? Come on, find out,  
what this Report is all about,  
Let's listen in, at least to part,  
Shhh, listen, it's about to start!

“This morning I got on a boat,  
And with me came a fuschia goat,  
It wore a hat, pinned in just so,  
Without it she refused to go.

We found the hat and climbed aboard,

We cast off in an orange fjord.

Its waters were sorely infested by

Aquatic Minotaurs, burly chested.

‘Ahem, please may we pass?’ I said

‘Our friend, a shrew, has hit his head,

We’re on our way to find a cure,

It’s all explained in this brochure.’

Thankfully, they understood,  
They'd help us anyway they could,  
They had friends too, they said to us,  
They didn't want to cause us fuss.

We sailed right on, with little trouble,  
The sun shone so I blew a bubble  
Harriet (the goat) tried to eat one,  
I had to use my special burp gun.

It came right out, but way bigger,  
I guess I'd over-squeezed the trigger,  
It was noxious, smelly, green and stinky,  
I panicked, so I threw a Twinkie.

The bubble popped, and so we cheered,  
Not knowing greater danger neared,  
We were at sea, out quite a ways,  
It felt like we'd been gone for days.

In the sea, out in front of us,  
I spied a neon purple bus,  
I heard music drifting over,  
Voices sang of Old Sea Rover.

Old Sea Rover, their song said,  
Loved scratches scratched atop his head,  
He loved the sea, boats, tennis balls,  
Treasure, adventure, barroom brawls.

Old Sea Rover, the sailing dog,  
Once battled a ferocious frog,  
He fetched and sat, he stayed and came,  
Good Boy was like his second name.

The purple bus drew closer still,  
What I saw then was quite a thrill,  
Beneath the bus, in the water,  
Swam a big- no, a GIGANTIC OTTER!

It carried the bus on its back,  
Stopping sometimes to have a snack,  
Passengers combed and cleaned his fur,  
In turn Paul worked as their chauffeur.

Bus and riders Paul would carry,  
Basically a living ferry,  
When I asked him how he liked it,  
'Can't complain,' was how he sliced it.

They fed him fish by the boat-load,  
never much increased his payload,  
Sometimes trips got a bit too long,  
But they sang him a swimming song.

Oh, and also did I mention?

Paul suffered from hypertension,

Aboard his back was an MD,

Who gave Paul all his meds for free!

Anyway, so the purple bus,  
By this time, it'd caught up to us,  
I learned all this, 'bout the otter,  
Later, from the Captain's daughter.

When the bus came up beside us,  
She called to me to come discuss,  
She'd heard of me, as it turns out,  
She paid a bird to learn our route.

Beth needed me to help, you see,  
Locating great, no- perfect Brie.  
But why the cheese? I hear you ask,  
Well now, you see, she had a task.

She had a plan, a scheme, a plot,  
Its completion, all that she sought,  
To bring together all her friends,  
Family too, heck, even boyfriends.

She'd throw the best party ever,  
To that end did she endeavor,  
'A good party, needs these three things,  
Music, people, and cheese that sings.'

Oh, and also did I mention?  
Beth came from the fifth dimension,  
It's normal there for cheese to sing,  
Singing cheese is their favorite thing.

The Brie, she said, it could be found,  
Inside a great Sea-Basset Hound,  
His name was Greg, and, out at sea,  
He wouldn't share the wheel of Brie.

She needed me, of course, she said,  
His favorite food was blue cornbread,  
She knew I bake without compare,  
My cornbread has a certain flair.

She planned to offer Greg a trade,  
Cornbread for Brie, no debt unpaid.  
Speaking of, she said with a start,  
Here's a gift before you depart.

She gave me a map, to help our journey,  
Tattooed on the back of an attorney,  
The map was enchanted, cursed, more or less,  
Copies became an unreadable mess.

I baked them cornbread, got ready to go,  
Bus Captain asked me to go down below,  
Below? Like, beneath the Otter?  
'Just below this seat, it's for my daughter.'

‘You see,’ he said, ‘I must tell you,  
Our bus isn’t what you’d call brand-new,  
Her birthday’s coming up quite soon,  
It’s between new bus and a spaghetti bassoon.’

‘Oh, and also did I mention?  
We don’t use money in our dimension,  
In our dimension, we trade, or barter,  
You understand, we just think it’s smarter.’

‘I need a great song to get a new bus,  
I know you can help, no muss and no fuss,,  
Please, for my Beth, will you write me a song?  
It needn’t even be funny or long.’

‘My scribe will write words as you sing,  
You just go up and do your thing.’  
Of course I’ll do it, I said with a grin,  
But on one condition- get me a mandolin.

He got it, of course, they had ten or fifteen,  
He lit candles and incense, a hush set the scene,  
'I've played just one time before this morning,  
Just a slight precaution, a bit of forewarning.

Listen up, get close, I'll sing you my song,  
Per Captain's orders, it won't take too long,  
So I welcome you all, to my day-time debut,  
You don't have to clap, but I ask you don't boo.

The Pelican Beef, an original by Liz,  
A tale of drama and woe it is,  
Based on true events, The Pelican Beef,  
It's serious business and begins with a thief.

In fair Sherona, where we lay our scene,  
From avian grudge, theft of a latrine,  
Two birds divided by the theft of an outhouse,  
Stolen in black night, by a hired thief sea mouse.

The names of the birds, I guess I should say,  
The latrine owner, her name was Hallway,  
The accused of this story, his name I can't say,  
Forbidden by sea law, but his nickname was Fey

Hallway and Fey started out as best friends,  
Sometime in their teens, they found separate ends,  
Fey was a scoundrel, true airborne terror,  
He once stole the gold from a wedding's ring bearer.

Hallway worked hard delivering babies,  
She exercised, ate well, and warded off scabies,  
She'd worked very hard, for all that she had,  
Including her outhouse, painted brightest green plaid.

Plaid green outhouses were in high demand,  
In the Sea-State next door, all green plaid had been banned,  
Fey hatched a plan to make off with the shack,  
He wouldn't return it, and he'd never come back.

Fey hired a sea mouse to help with the heist,  
He also employed a shark poltergeist,  
Together, he said, they had what it took,  
To thieve, steal, and plunder, in other words, to crook.

They dressed in black to steal the shack,  
They sneaked and snuck, Fey had a knack,  
They took every piece, not just one small part,  
Though it smelled like the world's very worst fart.

Hallway rose the next morning, just starting her day,  
She noticed quickly that she'd fallen prey,  
To latrine bandits, miscreants, no-good sneak thieves,  
Her plaid outhouse was gone, wall, floor, roof, and eaves.

Hallway thought she knew who to blame  
The theft on, though she thought it a shame.  
Fey was suspected, the sea-police said,  
Of the latrine thieving, making off with her shed.

She wasn't quite happy, Hallway was furious,  
But why had Fey done this? She was quite curious.  
Sea-police told her they couldn't find Fey,  
He'd disappeared, vanished, gone his own sneaky way.

Hallway had beef, grudge with a bird,  
I know it sounds silly, but it's not so absurd.  
How would you feel? What would you think to do?  
If your one-time best friend stole the hut where you poo?

The Pelican Beef officially started

When Fey took the shack where Hallway farted.

So Hallway packed her bags and gathered equipment,

She placed online orders, then waited for shipment.

After a while, Hallway was ready,

She felt rather nervous, but also quite steady,

She'd find where Fey hid, whatever the cost,

To make him return what he had made lost.

She searched far and searched wide, looked all over the globe,  
She designed, built, and launched a surveillance space probe,  
At long last she found him, he couldn't escape her,  
He hunched over plans for his next latrine caper.

Hallway tapped Fey, her wing quickly withdrawn,  
'You took it,' she exclaimed, 'I woke up to no john!'  
Fey looked at her then, a tear in his eye,  
'I did it,' he said, 'I'm not quite sure why.'

Hallway sat down, and Fey stayed in his seat,  
They talked about life, Fey dropped his deceit,  
It turned out, on talking, that Fey had been jealous,  
Of Hallway's back garden, most especially her trellis.

Fey's parents, you see, though nice enough birds,  
Thought gardens were evil, that they hunted in herds,  
So he'd stolen her privy, at night while she slept,  
The next morning, he said, he felt deepest regret.

Hallway believed Fey could turn a new leaf,  
She'd thought he was lost, corrupted, a thief,  
But here was the Fey she'd known as a chick,  
He promised her to rebuild the john, brick by brick.

So the Pelican Beef, though it starts with a crime,  
It all turned out happy, it just took them some time,  
So, dear listener, the next time you fight,  
Remember, it's never too late to do what's right.

So ends our tale, so closes our story,  
Started out with a fight, but ends hunky dory,  
Two Pelican Friends, one just lost their way,  
In fact, the two are best friends to this day.

The passengers clapped at the end of my song,  
I'd had trouble with chords, but my singing was strong,  
The bus captain came over to give me his thanks,  
He was certain they'd accept my bird song at Frank's.

Captain preferred Frank's as his bus dealer

Its owner, Frank, moonlit as a healer,

Frank loved a good song, they fetched a high price,

Captain said fifth dimension debts would be paid back in thrice.

He gave me a hug, we said our goodbyes,

I set our new course, my eyes on the prize,

You thought I'd forgot about our shrew friend,

That was a side quest, it's not yet the end.

We sailed on for miles, for fathoms, for leagues,  
We saw a chinchilla in turquoise fatigues,  
By the light of stars, I guided our boat,  
Though some credit, *some*, should go to the goat.

Harriet helped me, as best as she could,  
She tried to plot courses, but her hooves were no good,  
For holding pencils, but her lack of thumbs,  
Didn't impede her when she played the drums.

About then in our voyage, after sailing for hours,  
Mom brought the two of us lunch! Harriet had mixed flowers.  
My meal made a smiling face, with bananas for eyebrows,  
Strawberry eyes, smile of string cheese from polka dot cows

Shortly after our meal, with our bellies all full,  
We spied off to starboard a swift tap-dancing bull,  
His dance was delightful, a most wondrous delight,  
His movements were graceful, tip-taps ever so slight.

Not long after first sight, as we went round the bend,  
His wonderful dancing, it came to its end,  
He took a deep bow, his hoof to his horn,  
Accompanied by a pink unicorn.

Harriet bleated as loud as she could,  
And I, of course, clapped, their dance was so good!  
A leftover rose from Harriet's lunch,  
I tossed to the bull, it deserved a bunch.

The unicorn too had been just a joy,  
I tossed her a bit of my lunch, bok choy,  
She crunched it, munched it, and neighed with delight,  
What a performance, truly dynamite.

Oh, and also did I mention?

The bull danced on surface tension,  
A wizard taught him a slick trick,  
To dance at sea with hooves so quick.

We sailed in earnest on from there,  
Until our encounter with a four-headed bear,  
It was blocking our way, four heads turned with a glare,  
Three growled and one spoke, beginning, 'Beware,'

‘The four of us, all four, make multi-bear,  
Our canal takes payment to pass, a fare,  
There’s no way ‘round either, We promise, no- swear!  
North, South, both ways, all sorts of dangers there.’

‘The South Sea is infested, it’s teeming,  
With sea-faring termites, aboard speed boats gleaming,  
The North Sea has, you guessed it, fire breathing seals,  
Both the North and South Seas contain Dread Shrieking Eels.’

‘Dread Shrieking Eels, most fearsome of creatures,  
They contain most of the top ten most terrible features,  
I don’t have to tell you, or maybe I do,  
There’s no chance of survival, no hope for the shrew.’

‘To save your shrew friend, to pass our canal,  
Our fee must be paid, and pay it you shall,  
The price for your passage is simply a peanut,  
Wipe that smirk off your face, it’s no joke, I mean it!’

I giggled a moment, I couldn't believe it,  
The price for our passage was merely a peanut,  
'Afraid there's bad news,' I said to the bear,  
'I don't have peanuts to pay you your fare.'

'Oh there's a peanut shop right over there,  
Always forget that,' responded the bear,  
'Ask him his price for one boat's worth of fare,  
Some prices may vary, but she's usually fair.'

It was no grocery store, maybe a bodega,  
But with peanuts to spare, stored in an old Sega,  
In the back, wrapped up in a giant tortilla,  
Was the shopkeep, raccoon, said, 'My name's Sofia.'

I told her hello, my great pleasure to meet her,  
That I needed to pay for an exchange, a transfer,  
Of some peanuts, enough for the four headed bear,  
We had little to give, but I'm happy to share.

‘I’m happy to help you,’ Sofia said sweetly,  
‘And your friend too, a shrew? Understood completely!  
Now maybe it’s my nature, or because I’m half Aquarius,  
Either way, I have to say, I think jokes are just hilarious.’

‘Just tell me a joke, you or your fine goat,  
I’ll supply peanuts, enough for your boat,  
It need not be perfect, any old joke will do,  
Do your best, take a shot, and I’ll send you on through.’

I thought hard for a minute, paused just so,  
Jokes can be tough to remember you know,  
What is the difference, though it's a small one,  
Between None Afternoons, and one *Fortunate Son*?

'Ooh, that's a good one,' Sofia said next,  
She thought a moment, looked rather perplexed,  
'I don't know the answer,' she freely admitted,  
'I thought long and hard, but I'm feeling dimwitted.'

‘The answer is N,’ I said with a grin,  
‘Though I have to admit, the joke’s premise is thin,  
The whole thing is word play, an anagram, take blam and lamb,  
Both have the same four letters, what you call an anagram.’

‘None Afternoons’ and ‘One *Fortunate Son*,’  
Possess all the same letters, barring one,  
That letter is N, so that’s the punchline,  
It’s a real stinker, needs a warning sign.’

Sofia laughed and took my hand, before she said to me,  
'That's more a riddle than joke, but it's funny, and that's key,  
Your travels may continue now, the bear will let you pass,  
You paid its fare, so we're all square, don't let them give you sass.'

Oh and also, did I mention?

Sofia made an invention,  
She could hear every word, from anywhere on Earth,  
Of City Council Meetings in Dallas/Fort Worth.

We paid the bear's fare and went on our way,  
We had miles yet, before end of day,  
This leg of our journey, this bit after the bear,  
Is rather uneventful, not so much to share.

We were close, I felt it, and the map said so too,  
We'd arrive soon at last, at the cure for our shrew,  
Just a bit further now, past this coffee stain here,  
I'd earned both my sea legs, like a real buccaneer.

I consulted our map, and Harriet helped me,  
Bean Island was close now, shaped like a bumblebee,  
'Land ahoy!' cried our land-alarm, atop the mast,  
I sped up to the decks, there it was, here at last.

I got in our rowboat, Harriet stayed aboard,  
It was powered by magic, steered with a keyboard,  
The shore of Bean Island, and the source of its name,  
Was all made of baked beans, its one true claim to fame.

Bean Island's baked beans possessed magical powers,  
With just a few teaspoons, you'd get better in hours,  
I had brought some equipment, mostly cans and flasks,  
Also aboard, on the big boat, a couple casks.

I scooped up some beans, all that I could fit,  
I ate a few spoonfuls, so I took a big sit,  
In my comfiest chair and my comfiest clothes,  
But that's late afternoon, when I took a small doze.

I got back to the boat,

Said hello to the goat,

Packed up all of the beans,

Checked on all the machines,

We set sail then at two,

On til home, straight on through,

It was quite a trip too,

Filled with great derring-do,

And I make it seem quick,  
But it wasn't so slick,  
It took quite a long time,  
Yes, most things in it rhyme,

Like ants riding seadoos,  
Sky Kangaroos, blue ooze,  
Sonic Screws, Outer Space Crews,  
My food's cold by now though, so that Report can wait, until after the News.'

That's the story, you heard it friend,  
The Liz Report is at its end,  
At least for now, until next time,  
The Liz Report, Told in a Rhyme,

I said that's it! It's over, done!  
She'll tell more in another one!  
This Liz Report is over now,  
It's the last page, time for a bow.

...

...

Are they gone now? No! You're still here!

Here lean in close, Give me your ear,

I tell you, no-I *must* endear,

The story's done, it stops right here.

...

...

...

...

...

...

Oh, and also, did I mention?

Ha ha! Psych! Got your attention!

It's really done, I hereby vow,

This Report's done, Goodbye for now!

*The Liz Report*

By Michael Hovde

Second Draft

Self-Edited 8/10/2021