

### **UPDATE: April 26th -**

This caused more of a stir than I expected. Truth be told I'm not sure why I posted this in the first place, it just felt right to me. But a lot more people were affected than I expected and I do feel terrible for it. Please, stop going to everyone who isn't, and doesn't want to be, involved and messaging them. It's over and all of this has come to a conclusion. Please, I beg of you. I, and everyone else involved, wants this to be over. I won't be deleting anything here, but I am moving on. I advise everyone else to do so too.

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So, what happened? I know all too well that a lot of people were really disappointed about what happened with the animations. A lot of people still assume the project is canceled. It's not, just on a hiatus until after the comic ends. Though, even then, the project will be extremely limited. As much as I love working on it, and as much as I want to bring the full comic to life. I'm only one person, and the best I can do on my own production wise are short animations, and maybe bonus stuff.

I feel like enough time has passed, and trauma worked through, that I can finally open up about what happened. I'm not going to sugarcoat a damn thing, so here's a trigger warning for death, alcohol abuse, suicide, emotional manipulation, and a myriad of other things I just can't put enough to words.

For a little frame of reference, the animated project wasn't the first attempt to bring the comic into a different medium. There were two attempts prior as a comic dub, both kinda fizzled out. I was brought in and cast as Rain in the second attempt. This was around the end of chapter

36, the start of chapter 37. I hadn't heard of the comic before then, but immediately upon seeing the casting call posted to reddit, I jumped all in. I fell in love with Rain and her friends, and I read the entire thing in one night. I made sure even though I was visiting family and only able to be on my phone, that I'd make every meeting and get a chance to experience the project as limited as it was. I enjoyed every second, I promptly turned in my lines and tried to wait patiently – but I was unable to see any of the turmoil that happened behind the curtain between Jocelyn and the runners of the project.

I cannot speak wholly for Jocelyn, I only know what she's told me. If she wishes to add her own part of the story I won't stop her. The previous projects were full of frustrations with the voice directors, she often felt ignored, and unwanted in any talks of the projects. Very often it was like one of the directors at the time just wanted to change the comic to fit what she wanted it to be. Me, only being on the sidelines just saw people ignoring doing their lines, and having the project go silent for almost two years.

In that time I just waited patiently, rereading the comic from time to time. I'll say bluntly right now, it's hard for me to discern obsessions from passions. I've just accepted Rain as both in my life. I adore voicing her, and I had nothing to show from it at the time besides two year old lines sitting idle. So I took things into my own hands, I gathered all the lines that were submitted, and I started messaging the voice directors the best I could. There was no clear lead of the project from where I was sitting, they all assigned themselves as "voice directors," and that was that for me. I guess the assumed consensus is that they'd share the "lead" position. But that didn't really help when all but one pretty much ignored me. I started working on putting together all the lines there were and with all the gaps there were in submitted lines, especially from the directors, I should've seen the red flags. For one, I was presented with a very shoddily recorded discord

call, with hardly any of the lines salvageable. Two, it seemed like as a whole everyone just ignored me while I filled in with placeholder VO.

This was around Summer 2020, I had very recently gotten back in touch with Tresenella. We'd only talked sparingly before then, but discord made things really easy to just start talking every day. Things kind of started blossoming after that. It's hard to remember exactly why, but after trying to present her with the test edits and audio – I was surprised with snippets of it being animated. This lit a fire in me – I needed to see it through. I started pressing harder to just take over the dub project. I started showing the directors the animation, and what I wanted to do and bring to the table – I was mostly ignored. Save by one. Zilla, the admin of the Rain Fan Server. She seemed hesitant to let me take the reigns as project lead, but also seemed excited that it was getting picked up again. It was energy I appreciated – I was immediately met with warnings about how bitter and controlling Joecelyn was. How it was better to just not show her anything because she'd likely get angry about seeing it animated and flat out tell me to stop. While being anxious about any of the other directors would cause any fuss I was told one in particular, Matryoshkashells, would probably be upset due to lingering "social politics" about who was in charge of the project and who had moderator roles and who didn't based on a "can I have it?" basis. In hindsight, more red flags.

I had started just taking the reins of the project as lead, and I started asking fairly regularly for lines, keeping the fact that it was being animated a secret from the broad cast and crew, as I was still being convinced Lynn would be angry about it. For weeks it felt like I was chasing ghosts who forgot the project existed. I posted quick edits of the comic with the voicelines, and kept asking people for lines who seemed of little interest. I even messaged Lynn that I was taking over the dub project, but honestly I wouldn't blame her if it was just ignored.

I wasn't going to let any of this deter me, I saw something special on the horizon. I wasn't going to just quit.

This continued on through the Fall, Tress working full time on other projects couldn't dedicate much time to the rough animation she was making. But every update filled me with joy. Things were going very smoothly with the project. I can't say the same for my personal life.

I got a call at the end of October, my dad suffered an accident following an extensive surgery and passed away. I ended up having to drop everything momentarily to head back to my hometown to be there with my family. Suddenly, I had to manage a lot of legal stuff, as I was his first born by blood. I reached out to friends, and my best friend I've known for years stopped by with some whiskey – which started me down a very bad path of alcohol abuse – We talked for a while, standing over the spot my dad fell. When he left I sat inside, and didn't stop drinking until I fell asleep.

Eventually while I was still staying with family, the test animation was finished. I excitedly posted it everywhere. The fire was lit, and the whole fan server was going nuts, and Lynn seemed standoff-ish about it. I was waiting for the inevitable 'no' I was told I'd receive. Instead, I got a yes. Suddenly all the doors were opened and I jumped all in.

I was immediately met with messages asking about if I needed more actors, considering many in the project were still mostly absent, I couldn't say no. I reached out and I started work on getting things underway. I was still away from all my recording equipment, so it'd have to wait.

I decided while we tried to reassess who would and wouldn't be grandfathered into the animation project, to work on something small: Ancient Bunny Wisdom. I got in touch with an old VO friend, who within the day submitted his lines, and almost immediately the video was in

production. I've never seen Tress so passionate about a project before, and that helped fuel me further. Music was being made, and the animation was, as expected, amazing. My work with audio editing and VO production being finished quickly let me focus on how to reorganize everything as an animated project.

Managing to grandfather everyone in, I tried to keep things similar to the dub projects, where we'd go over the comic in-character and see the best ways to direct and point actors in the best direction for delivery. Every week I'd do my best to update everyone about how the project was going, what the animation process was looking like, and where I wanted to go next. Come Christmas Eve, *Ancient Bunny Wisdom* was released. The animation project was officially underway. Meanwhile, in the fan community, I had started really trying to get to know people. Everyone was excited to have just random memes and stuff recorded by me. It was all in good fun. *My Brother, My Sister, and Me*, was surprisingly sprung on me. It was done as practice, but it was too fun to not post – This unfortunately frustrated Jocelyn, who didn't even know it was in production. We ended up talking for some time. I learned quickly she was only frustrated because the past two projects, she felt extremely excluded from her own work. She felt ignored quite often with her input. I asked bluntly, "am I the first person who's ever talked to you about this stuff?" and the answer was yes.

I decided then and there, everything would change. This wasn't going to end up like the last two failures. I was going to do better by Lynn. I promised she'd see everything first, and that her wants and interests regarding her own intellectual property wouldn't be ignored. We agreed it'd be a collective partnership from then on, I wanted her to be able to consider the project hers, as much as I or Tress could. Honestly, this started one of the healthiest friendships I've had thus far. I learned really quickly that she wasn't this bitter, controlling person I was led to believe.

Quickly after, I got a bunch of the people behind the art together in a group and started work on the *Little Victories* music video. I felt since there was no voiceover, I didn't need to include any of the self-established voice directors. They didn't take too kindly to that. This started the continuation of breaches of understanding about just what everyone's job was. They demanded that I not just start projects they didn't know about, they wanted full transparency on what was being worked on at all times. I agreed. I once again restructured the project and opened it up for the full cast and crew to see all the progress that was going on. And *Little Victories* continued to be animated in the meantime.

Eventually, more cracks started to show from below the surface between the efficacy of the cast. They were hastily cast previously, with the voice directors taking on three or four roles with great overlap. Working on the audio greatly bothered me. For instance, Debbie, Emily, and Kellen were all voiced by the same person – In practice sessions it was near indistinguishable. When laid out side by side to be animated, there was no difference in how any character sounded. This problem extended to nearly everyone with multiple roles. Including myself when I was also voicing Gavin at the time. This got exceptionally worse when it was decided to just rerecord all the lines, due to how so much of it was unusable. It just wasn't working for me. I brought up the topic of recasting with Lynn a few times, and she made a point to say that she wanted the cast to better reflect her story, and be as diverse as possible. However every time I brought up the possible recasts, everyone fought back thinking they could just make it work, that it didn't matter that much. In fact it was argued that I was "reading too much into what Lynn was saying." But it mattered to me – I decided the best option was to just live with it for the first episode. And recast everyone after, with those in main roles retaining those. While secondary and tertiary roles that were doubled up would be let go.

Eventually, one of the cast members, Bluefire, started taking more interest in helping with overall production as a producer. This included helping me get in touch with one of her industry friends for advice on how to best proceed. I tried my best to explain how I wanted to just live with the castings as they were for the first episode, then recast – to which I was told it would be better and easier in the long run to just recast now. That was advice I took too readily. So the next meeting I just made my case, and gave my reasonings. To which a fight started. Nobody wanted to let go of the one to two lined characters they were cast with. I was getting ire from all three of the voice directors who were especially not happy to let go of roles. I fully understand how frustrating it would be for me to change how I was going about casting. But I wasn't going to just shirk professional advice, especially when it was the best way to go about it.

But this was met with accusations of me docking the performance of people, and with Lynn being yelled at and shut down for trying to explain why she felt it was best for the project. The schism was only getting deeper.

I continued to report to Lynn on the situations of things happening, much to her annoyance at the continued actions and behavior of the voice directors. I still pressed on hoping we could move past all the issues that sparked from this – We didn't. After this it started getting harder and harder to get the cast and crew involved, Blue took the matter into her own hands and started work on *Caption-Me Rudy*, having it be a collaborative effort between everyone on the project to write and submit skits for the video. I thought it'd be fun to expand on this and have all the different artists we had give their own style to the skits as well. This was mildly successful. We got some good skits, some bad. Lynn kept one to herself to use in the comic months later. The video was released without a hitch and I was excited for it.

As things started to move to the next project, finals at Uni started to loom closer, and the stress was getting to me. I started drinking more, and more often. And the grief that I had set aside from my dad's passing for the project was catching up to me at the same time. I was a powder keg waiting to blow. I would start having very bad breakdowns in private. But I'd try to maintain a smile on my face between bad drinking episodes.

I decided that I needed to take a break before I broke, while the next animation was underway. I left Bluefire in care of the project while I tried to take that break. Between making sure lines were reviewed for retakes, and that many of the project's resources were managed. There wasn't a lot I had hoped to get done. But the continued problems kept popping up. Between personal issues being brought into the project, and overall a large feeling of disinterest to work. Every update on the project was filled with frustrations of stuff not getting done, and stress about it being ignored. I did my best to keep my distance despite how angry I was getting at the situation. When I updated Lynn on what was going on, she wasn't in the least surprised. Tress, trying to get stuff going with the other artists, created an extensive guide on background work for the animation being worked on. This was largely ignored for a month, and she just decided to do all the work herself as it would take just as much time making guides for others. When deadlines were coming up and it seemed like nothing was going to get done, I made the call with Tress to cut the prologue and go with just *Morning Routine*. Everything led to me just deciding to lay it out firmly: Either step up, or step away.

On the week of finals I ended up taking time between tests to go in and review lines myself. They were in horrific, unusable quality. The frustrations piled up until Bluefire just quit as producer – and after the fact things asked were delivered past deadlines – I was outright angry, I didn't want to work with the voice directors anymore, neither did Tress, nor did Lynn. I wrote



up a big script, and ran it by everyone. Who all agreed, it was harsh - but it needed to be said for the health of the project.

Anxiety was killing me, I knew this would be met with another fight – I didn't expect how bad it would be. Shortly before confronting the voice directors, I asked Lynn what she thought. She said she was scared to speak up, because she knew they'd just twist everything around to make her seem like the bad guy in the situation – and that's exactly what they did to me. Suddenly I was met with accusations of being this two-faced manipulator, and was told that my expectations were too high. Tress tried to speak up but was immediately shut down and yelled at. Forcing her to leave, terrified. Once Lynn and Tress both left, either from being terrorized or from total frustration. I was left with three bullies who seemed all but happy that I immediately fawned and fell back on my positions I had just tried to lay out. This triggered an immense CPTSD reaction in me. I gave up, and told them I would try to do better for them. Things wouldn't be so high strung anymore. I did my best to hide it, and went to comfort Tress who was more distraught than I had ever seen before.

I started to feel the walls coming in. I was terrified. How is anyone supposed to work through something like what just happened? How is anyone supposed to just keep working with people after they lash out at multiple people like that? I started to just panic the next few days. Fearing that I'd irreparably doomed the project, and put those I cared about in harm's way. So I started drinking, and I didn't stop. I wanted to drown away the panic, and the terror. But it didn't work. So I kept drinking. Going heavier and heavier. I felt like I was dying, and I wanted to die. I said my goodbyes to whoever I could manage and I just broke down completely. What followed was probably the worst night of my life, followed by the worst few months I've ever experienced.

Skipping the Psychology lesson, prolonged PTSD episodes aren't fun. The brain begins to shut down, memory starts to fail. It's extremely akin to dementia in how it presents itself. No matter what I did, I felt like I was drowning. My traumagenic alters began to manifest with greater intensity than ever before to help me maintain basic day to day things. I began hearing voices in my head yelling at me that everyone was out to get me and hurt me, or just straight up lie. I couldn't keep it together. I began lashing out at people, and I ended up losing some dear friendships. But I still tried my best to keep working with the voice directors through all of it. The project was worth it to me.

Tress was barely anywhere near the project at this point, being so terrified of them. Same with Lynn. We continued to work on *Morning Routine* regardless though. When I tried to meet with them again, to try and reconcile, things just only got worse. Zilla made a point to make things personal with issues outside of the project, twisting them to include more than just the personal issues with her. Manipulating the situation to make the other directors angry with me, and it worked. It was demanded that I explain why Tress was so terrified, why Lynn didn't like them, why Bluefire quit. I was being accused of being the reason for all of it, convincing and manipulating people to not like them. I did my best to explain to the best of my ability, but things went nowhere. I didn't want to get into anything personal, but it was continuously pressed on me by Zilla. No, I will not go into the personal stuff here. The dogpiling didn't stop until I just started saying a multitude of things as I understood. Looking back, I should have kept some things private. At the moment I was just fawning for survival.

This only continued to drive me deeper into mental distress. My drinking continued to get worse and worse. My relationships with people continued to get strained. But I wasn't going to let the project die. I got the casting call for new actors underway, and set deadlines for when I

needed the script and everything done by – over a month passed without any updates or input from the voice directors. So once again, I took things into my own hands and got to work on everything on Casting Call Club. I was genuinely surprised by the response and the sheer amount of people auditioning. I spent the next few weeks manually creating over a hundred threads for each audition for discussions with the voice directors. Many of it seemed greatly ignored, with maybe one comment every few days. Up until it was time to cast, a few people got cast in recall sessions, others I deemed too small of roles to need them. I explicitly said I didn't want to do more recall sessions because of that. When the deadline for the end of the casting call was approaching I couldn't handle the pressure – I tried to take another break. I gave my two-cents about who I felt should be cast. I hoped for the best. Only for one of the actors to reach out to me nervous about a callback audition. So I went to the directors and tried to see just why they were going against what I explicitly asked. The response was “well, we're project leads too. We thought this would be best.” At no point had I ever given them that amount of control on the project, and I did what I felt was reasonable and reinforced my position as the lead of the project. At which point things began to completely and totally fall apart. For hours after, I was met with dogpiling and gaslighting, and accusations of emotional abuse. Matryoshka would comment how it seemed like this was “my show.”

Which it was. I affirmed that. The response was only just “Oh, I see. This is all Larissa's show. Nothing we say matters, or ever mattered at all.”

Zilla would go on about how she had witnesses to my two-faced emotional manipulation, who were “happy to be out of my influence.”

Pixel, who I haven't named up until now because frankly? They never really initiated anything. I almost feel bad they have to be lumped in here.

Nothing I said mattered, nothing I did mattered. All I could do was shrink down and just accept what they were painting me as. They didn't want to accept any of the blame, and went all in on the conclusion that I was going around their backs and lying about them so people wouldn't like them, painting myself as a victim and twisting things to make things be in my favor. I did my best to reach out for help. Lynn was in the same group chat, but was having a very busy night and couldn't respond. But it was still demanded that I confess to what I was being accused of.

Tress, seeing this from what I was able to share, just quit. At that moment, the project was dead, can't have animations without an animator – Matryoshka immediately thought “well we can just start over as a dub project, go back to roots.” Expecting me to just give in, have everything be equal, draft up contracts to make sure I don't overstep again. Pixel was distraught, feeling like they'd lose what made them feel important if the project was over. Zilla, well. She didn't want any solutions. Everything she did and said had the express purpose to tear me down and hurt me. Despite the immense distress I was in, I refused to just give up on all the hard work I had achieved since I started producing these animations.

Eventually I just had to run from the situation. They seemed appeased after I just accepted and admitted to all the horrible stuff they were accusing me of. I couldn't take it anymore. I felt like I had failed Lynn, and everyone involved. I apologized to her and passed out that night. The next morning, I released the amended cut of *Morning Routine* and well. At the time the project was canceled. I made sure to cut all contact with the three of them. But I still had to share spaces with them in the general *Rain* community. This would continue to cause extreme anxiety as I continued to work on new animations with Tress after the dust settled. We managed to get out *Candlelight* and *Forum Weaponry*, before chapter 43 ended.

In the following months, a lot would come to light about Zilla and her long history of emotional manipulation and abuse. How she treated me, she also treated Lynn. When I tried to reconcile, before the previously described instance, I asked “just what happened with the old project?” She went on to blame others, saying they were attacking Lynn when she tried to assert control over her own IP. Upon asking, that was shown to be a blatant lie. She would single out one of my friends during a breakdown of theirs, and completely overhaul the Rain fan server in response – after kicking my friend without warning.

Many people who came forward previously about her abuse and those who are close to her in the fan server would eventually end up leaving, with their messages being deleted thereafter. Many never to be seen or heard from again in any *Rain* space. Some no longer in her circles would describe their experiences as no less than being groomed. In response to all of this, finally fed up with sharing a space with her and my other abusers, I left the fan server and I made sure to delete *Caption-Me Rudy*. I refuse to give somebody like that a voice in anything I do.

That's that. That's everything as far as I can put distinctly into twelve pages of words. It doesn't even include everything. I know damn well I'm going to be called a liar over many things here. But I refuse to stay silent any longer. Not after all the trauma they subjected me to continues to linger and hurt me all these months later.

I am incredibly proud of all the work I have done with this project, and have met lifelong friends because of it. I will continue to create content everyone loves, and nothing is going to stop that.