

“Brightly Wrapped Snacks”

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Word count: ~920

“Good afternoon, and welcome to the Friday edition of *Community Digest*! I’m your host, Bill Braxton. Today our guests are some folks who have survived a truly harrowing experience! While on an exploratory adventure to plumb the depths of Central Park, they had an encounter that is, well... I’ll let David tell you about it. Welcome to the show, David!”

“Hey, Bill, thanks for having me.”

“So, David, I see you’ve brought your two children. Hi! What are your names?  
[Uncomfortable silence as the children focus on their phones] Well, anyway, David, why don’t you tell me what happened at the park?”

“I took my kids to Central Park, right? To try to get them off of their devices, for at least a few minutes, maybe get in touch with nature, or whatever. I will admit, I got a little frustrated with their lack of focus on anything but those dang phones, so, we came to a pretty steep trail that leads down to a creek. I shoved them down the...”

“You what?”

“I guided them down the embankment. Turns out that it takes two hands to get down without ending up in the creek, and two hands to get out, and, voila - no hands for phones!”

“And then what?”

“We climbed out, sat down at a park table, but something... *followed* us. Looked like a giant chicken, right out of that *Jurassic Park* movie, but with colorful feathers, you know? I picked up a tree branch, ready to make its head Hank Aaron’s 756th, know what I mean?”

“I have no clue what you mean, David, but it’s *fascinating*. Please continue!”

“It sort of skulked off, back to the creek, and here we are.”

“Well, David, we have your “giant chicken” in the studio with us today. Let’s bring out - Sal, is it?”

[Large prehistoric raptor enters, walking gingerly to avoid putting gouges in the studio floor. It sits awkwardly in a chair next to David]

“Sssal, actually. Hi, Bill. [Looks sheepishly at David] Hey, David. Sorry about all of that. But when you start all that screaming, and running away, and stuff, I figured that you’re just typical, you know, *lunch*, and all, instincts kick in, and you’re all, ‘AAAHHHH,’ and all, and running, and stuff, so... Lunch, right? I mean, it’s nothing personal.”

“Really!? What would you do if giant f...”

“Hold on - family show, here!”

“Sorry, Bill. What would you do if a *giant chicken* attacked *you*?”

“Sssal, any thoughts?”

“Yeah, Bill, my bad, there. But, see? It all worked out, right? That huge tree branch David picked up - yes, the one he still has - certainly gave me pause, and an opportunity to reflect on my meal choices. I must say, David, that you do have an impressive and colorful vocabulary, and were clearly not happy with me.”

“But I did get the gist of it, something about cracking open my head like an overripe cantaloupe. Really painted a picture for me, you know? Food for thought, ha, ha!”

“That option is still on the table, Sssal, and stop looking at my kids like that.”

[Sssal, flustered] “I thought they were just brightly wrapped snacks! But they *scared* me. Seriously, if you were about to be torn apart and eaten...”

“Family show! Family show!”

“...if you were trying to avoid ‘owies,’ wouldn’t you, you know, *react* in some way? The only creatures I’ve even *heard* about that are that dismissive are those colorful frogs. You know, the super poisonous ones? They look at you like, ‘What are you gonna do, eat me? Bad move, space cadet. Stomp on me? You don’t have any cuts on your feet, do you? Just asking...’ By the time I check my feet - and it’s harder to do than you might think - that frog has hopped his merry nonchalant posterior back into the underbrush.”

“But your little ones... Like I said, they scared me, a bit. I mean, they just completely ignored me. I’ve met tyrannosaurs with less moxie.”

“Sssal, do you have kids? Little giant chickens? If you stay around here long enough, someone, somewhere, is going to figure out how to get those glowing boxes in their little claws. Maybe they’ll be so preoccupied that they don’t learn about the dangers of colorful frogs. Maybe they’ll be so preoccupied with inane and banal videos that they don’t learn anything of any value at all. Maybe they’ll be so preoccupied that they *don’t even look up* when a huge prehistoric talking carnivore refers to them as “brightly wrapped snacks.” Maybe *that’s* the real enemy.”

“Hmmm... [Looks at the oblivious kids] I see your point. By the way, I’m not really a chicken, but some of my best friends are. Just as an aside, what did you have for lunch? Something smells good!”

[David looks pointedly at Sssal] “Fried chicken.”

“I see. [Shifts uncomfortably in seat] Still, it smells awfully tasty.”

“Tell you what, I’ll get you a whole bucket full, if you will help me teach my kids a lesson. Preferably one that doesn’t involve eating them.”

[Sssal glances at the tree branch] “Agreed.”

[The stage lights dim, save for a spotlight on the host. He speaks above the sudden off-screen crunching sounds and terrible screams of the children: “That’s my *phone!*”]

“That’s all the time we have today. I’m Bill Braxton, and this has been *Community Digest* – thanks for [deftly ducks flying piece of phone case] joining us!”