



F4: New Beginnings

Darkwing Duck (Cartoon 1991) · Not Rated · 6429 words

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F4: New Beginnings

Fandom: Darkwing Duck (Cartoon 1991) Rating: Not Rated Category: Multi

Warnings: Creator chose not to add warnings

Relationships: Quackerjack/Elmo Sputterspark

Characters: Elmo Sputterspark, Quackerjack (Disney), Liquidator (Disney), Reginald Bushroot, Paddywhack (Disney), Mr. Banana Brain (Disney)

Tags: Possession, Consensual Possession, Superheroes, Alternate Universe, Domestic Fluff, Fluff, Domestic, Panic Attacks, Team as Family, Team Bonding, Implied/Referenced Crossdressing, Romance, quackervolt - Freeform, Dad!Liquidator, Good!Paddywhack, Quackerjack Doesn't Like People Seeing His Head, Reginald Bushroot Has A Doctorate, So does QJ! Though it doesn't come up..., Not Beta Read, No Betas We Fry Like Megavolt!

Words: 6429 Chapters: 12 chapters Status: In progress Published: 2024-03-20

A series of non-chronological stories set in the same AU.

The F4 were neither heroes nor villains, but they still had powers. One day, they get blackmailed by a mysterious Boss into being superheroes on the weekends (and sometimes Friday nights). Not really about the hero stuff, mostly just fluff between the 4.

Featuring: Good Paddywhack! But still feeds on misery, so that's a hard balance for him.

Okay, this is long but important.

Civilian identities:

Elmo

Jack

Reginald or Doc

Bud

Hero Identities:

Megavolt

Quackerjack

Nightshade

Liquidator

Likky's got a psychological condition that causes him to stutter when he's not being all salesman-y.

Quackerjack is a lot calmer/less moodswingy, partially due to the influence of good!Paddywhack throughout his childhood. Oh, Quacky woke Paddywhack up as a child, and the Spirit grew fond of him and decided to become his secret guardian. He didn't manage to stay secret long.

Quacky and Megs were dating, but otherwise the F4 met after being blackmailed. They're still all learning about each other.

Bushroot's bisexual.

Liquidator's straight and married.

Quackerjack's gay.

Megavolt's clueless but in love with QJ.

Paddywhack's pan, and doesn't really understand mortal concepts of preference.

Chapter 1: Recharging Memories

Jack wrapped Elmo's tail around the white pole, shutting the metal clamp at the top around its tip. He pulled the handle, and blue energy flowed through the pole and sparked along the unconscious rat's tail.

“There, he's all plugged in. Now we gotta check his power levels.” he pulled on a pair of rubber gloves, then carefully rolled up Elmo's sleeve. He ran his fingers along the different watches for a moment, then clicked the side of one. It snapped open to reveal a power meter, the hand wobbling in the red.

Jack winced “Yep, that's gonna take a while.” he sat down with a pout. Reginald wrapped a leafy arm around his shoulders, patting his friend's back.

Bud, who had been standing quietly by the door to Elmo's bedroom-turned-workshop, cleared his throat. “Ah- Liquidator Brand Water takes full responsibility for this little liability issue, and promises to make reparations. Guaranteed.”

“Oh, Likky...” Jack shook his head. “There's nothing to be sorry for; it was an accident. This isn't the first time he's shorted out, and it won't be the last. You two should probably go, though.”

“Go?” The Doc looked a little hurt.

“His memory problems get worse for a while after a short out.” Jack sniffed. “He might not remember you, so he'll panic.”

“But he'll remember you?” Reginald asked.

“No, not necessarily.” Jack held up Mr Banana Brain, allowing the possessed doll to speak.

“But he still trusts him anyway, May.”

“Y-yeah. Even that time he, he forgot me for a week, he still felt safe around me.” the toymaker chuckled. “He says he never really forgets the things that are instincts, so deeply engrained that they're a part of him, even if he forgets their names and stuff. Like breathing, or the electromagnetic spectrum, or... me.”

“You really love him, don't you?” Reginald asked.

“That obvious?” Jack grinned weakly. “We've been dating since highschool.”

“Called it!” Bud laughed.

“Huh, I was betting it was a new thing.” Reginald shrugged. “But either way, the two of you aren't that great at hiding it.”

“That's not a problem, right?” Jack scooted away from Bushroot, staring at the other two. “Us both being guys and stuff?”

“Nah, m-my wife's sister's g-g-g, a le-le- like that.” Bud smiled.

“And I'd be kind of a hypocrite if it was.” Bushroot winked at Jack. “Rhoda's not the only colleague I had a crush on, after all. Well, before he started bullying me, that is.”

“One out one watery mutants agree, I'd rather not be here when he wakes up!” Bud pointed to Elmo, who was starting to move and groan. “Liquidator Brand Water is unfortunately ill-equipped to deal with multiple shocks a day.”

“Alright, we'll get out of here.” Reginald hugged Jack and stood up. “Call us once you know how he's doing, okay?”

“Sure thing.” Jack waved goodbye. The moment they left, he turned back to the still-moving yet still-asleep rodent. “Alright, Sparky, guess it's time to play the Waiting Game. Ugh, how boring.”

“Don't... call me... Sparky.” Elmo muttered in his sleep, rolling over.

Jack blinked, staring at the rat. A grin spread across his beak, widening as he broke out in a fit of laughter.

Chapter 2: Doctor Or Doctor? (Mini chapter)

Just what sort of Doctor is ol' Reggie?

Reginald sighed, opening the white case and pulling out a roll of bandages. He knelt down and started wrapping them around Jack's leg.

"I... thought you weren't that kind of doctor?" Jack asked, staring.

"I wasn't, but it's not like I can exactly go to a hospital." Reg shrugged. "Over the years, I've sorta taught myself first aid, basic surgery, herbal remedies.... I could probably be an actual doctor, if I wanted to. And could show my face in public."

Chapter 3: Beginning

The technical first chapter, from before I decided to make it a non-chronological series of oneshots

And that's what I wrote before doing random scenes.

Elmo Sputterspark was like a beanpole; tall and thin. His messy mop of short, dark brown hair stood out against his light brown fur. His tail was longer and thinner than most rats'. There was a small notch in his left ear. He wore a yellow shirt, thick glasses, and way too many watches.

He hurried through the stormy night, wide umbrella and thick raincoat doing little to alleviate his fears as he scurried up the steps to his apartment building. Breathing a sigh of relief once inside the - dry - main hall, he headed straight up the stairs, ready for this day to be over.

“It was horrible, Maurice.” he complained to a lamp on the third floor. “I shorted out three times! I had to recharge on the road, so the car's battery's shot, and now it starts raining. Where are my keys?”

Elmo patted himself down, eventually finding the keys in his left jean pocket. He cursed, seeing that the little bit of paper with his room number wasn't there, having either fallen off or gotten burned during one of his short outs.

Hand to the wall, Elmo closed his eyes and started walking forward, following the currents of the unseen wires. He had lived in that apartment since he was eighteen years old, but even after two years he couldn't remember the number.

He stopped at number four, opening his eyes. “Hey, Samantha.” he greeted the lamp near his door with a smile, putting his key in the lock. His smile faltered when the door swung open; had he forgotten to lock it that morning? Or had he just unlocked it already and forgotten?

He walked in slowly, his whiskers twitching, small sparks of blue energy traveling up his tail. His apartment was how he left it; small, white tiled kitchen connected straight onto the red carpeted living room, every available space taken over by lamps, toasters, fans, and other appliances. Multi-outletted extension cords criss-crossed the ground, yellow curtains were drawn tight across the only window, and a battered green couch sat across from a boxy television.

He spent a few minutes talking to the electronics, but not a single one of them was out of place. He even talked to the hairdryers and electric razors in the tiny bathroom, but they were all good as well. Alright, he must have just forgotten to lock-

And that's when he spotted it, his bedroom door, slightly ajar. He knew that he had locked that door, he always kept it locked, because that was where he hid his... experiments. (He preferred sleeping on the couch anyways.).

He dashed in and flicked on the light, becoming momentarily confused when nothing happened, before remembering that he gave the room's lightbulb - Fredrick - the week off.

He grabbed a lightbulb from the living room (Ben) and held it in his left hand, sending a soft current through. As the light filled the room, he looked around. Green carpet, burned and singed from many past experiments, tools and notebooks strewn everywhere. Complicated, dangerous, and half-finished machines were pressed against the walls.

Elmo's eyes wondered to the one hint that the place was a bedroom; the bed. He nearly dropped Ben when he saw what was on it. A small section on the bed had been cleared of notebooks, instead holding a brown box with a letter on top, the words 'Megavolt' clear as day upon the envelope.

Elmo balanced the box in his arms, setting it down carefully in the living room, then slowly locked the bedroom door. He put Ben next to some other light bulbs, muttering a thanks for his help, then stared at the box.

Unpleasant, unwelcomed memories flashed through his brain, as did a bit of anger. If this was one of Jackie's stupid pranks...

Trembling hands opened the envelope and took out the letter, face paling as he read.

Dear Mr Sputterspark - or is it Megavolt? Yes, I know who you are, or rather, were. Enclosed is some money, to help with your electric bill; wouldn't want anyone investigating all that extra power usage because of a late payment, now would we?

If you want your secrets to remain safe, you'll come to the abandoned dock works at 19:00 next Saturday, second building from the left. Oh, and remember to wear what's in the box.

Signed, The Boss.

Elmo gulped, shaking as he looked in the box. What he found there was almost enough to make him faint. A yellow jumpsuit, thick blue boots and gloves, all made of rubber. It was almost exactly what he wore that fateful, horrible night.

Except now there was extra; a harness with an outlet on the front and a large red battery on back, connected to a belt with a charging cord on the side, all blues and silvers besides the battery (he was almost grateful, already able to tell that it would help with his recharging problems). There was also an orange rubber hat with two metal prongs sticking out the top, shaped like a plug.

Last he found thick blue goggles, much better quality than the science lab goggles he wore... last time. He took off his glasses and tried them on, discovering that they were his exact prescription. Okay, this was getting creepier...

A two-minute panic attack later, and Elmo was grabbing his cellphone from his pocket and dialing the one person he trusted.

"Hey, Sparky, I was just about to call you-" Jack began, less jovially than usual.

"DON'T CALL ME SPARKY!" Elmo couldn't help but interrupt, his personal problems briefly forgotten in the face of his hated nickname.

"Alright, fine!" Jack sighed loudly "I'm sorry. Listen-"

"In a second, Jackie, someone broke into my apartment!" Elmo tried to take a deep breath, failed, and started speaking faster. "They didn't hurt anyone, thank Edison, but they left a box and a letter. Jackie, they know about my powers, they know what I... what I did. They said they were gonna tell unless-"

"Unless you wear a silly costume and go to the docks on Saturday?" Jack asked, voice filled with worry.

"Y-yes. How did you know?"

"Because I got one too." Jack gave a bitter laugh. "They knew about my side projects, Elmo. They know about my special toys."

"So... we're going?" Elmo asked.

"Yes, Sparky, we're going." Jack laughed quietly, so different than his normal belly laughs.

“Don't call me Sparky.” The reaction was harsh toned, but quiet and automatic. His voice softened. “But, at least we won't be alone. We'll have each other.”

“Yeah. And at least with both of us being blackmailed, I can make sure your deepest secrets don't get revealed just because you forgot your name again.”

“I know my name!” Elmo protested. “It's Elmo.”

“Elmo what?” Jack asked, his tone teasing.

“Er... Sparker.. wait, Sputter, um... Sparkplug?”

Jack's roaring laughter came clearly through the phone, easing the tension. Holding the phone away from his sensitive ears, Elmo joined in with his own quiet chuckle.

Saturday, 18:37

Elmo looked in the mirror, fitting the plug hat over his short tuft of hair. He couldn't believe he was really doing this. Maybe he wasn't, maybe he had gotten the days confused. Again.

Those hopes were dashed as his phone dinged with a text message from Jack, telling him to hurry up. Elmo sighed, leaving the bathroom.

“Sorry, guys, none of you can come along. It's too dangerous.” He told his electronics. He walked over to the TV, patting it. “If I don't come back, Bess is in charge. Listen to her. Take care, my precious brethren, and be safe.”

He sniffled, wiping away a tear as he locked up his apartment. He whispered good-byes to each lamp as he crept through the dark hallway and down the stairs.

Outside the building was a white box van. Elmo got in quickly and buckled, not yet looking at Jack.

“About time, Sparky!” the duck whisper-yelled.

“Don't call me Spark-” Elmo's complaint died in his throat as he finally laid eyes on the other. The avian was slightly shorter than Elmo himself, meaning he was insanely tall by duck standards, but was still thin. His beak was about the twice the size of a regular duck, with large teeth and a slight overbite. He was wearing baggy, purple-blue

pants and shirt, with a yellow sash for a belt. Each puffy shirt sleeve was light orange, the left one having red stripes, while the other red dots. Soft white gloves and red cloth shoes covered his extremities. A half-blue half-red harlequin hat with bells, and a large, frilled white collar completed the look.

“Why are staring at me like that?” Jack asked snippily.

Elmo, realizing he gone quiet for several minutes, went bright red and cleared his throat. “S-sorry, Jackie. I just never realized how... cute your mascot was, before.”

Jack froze, looking at him with a grin.

“Don’t look at me like that!” Elmo shouted. He quieted to a whisper, looking around. “We’re being blackmailed, remember? We don’t have time for mushy stuff. Yah!!!”

Elmo sparked, electricity shooting through him for several seconds before he managed to pull his tail out from the car charger port.

A half-peeled banana doll (the peels forming hair) with a green shirt, gloves hands, and a creepy face laughed at him, having put his tail in there in the first place.

In a tired but calm voice, Elmo snarked. “So, still haven’t tried an exorcism, huh?”

“Nope.” Jack replied with a shrug, driving the car away from the building.

“Too bad.” Megavolt looked at the window for a second, face scrunched up in thought. “Hey, Jackie, what were we just talking about? I think your doll fried my memory again.”

“You were telling me how much you like my costume.” Jack replied with a snicker.

“Oh! That makes sense, it’s super neat.” Elmo said enthusiastically, smiling. “You should dress as your mascot more often.”

“Yeah, well, maybe I will.” Jack shrugged, trying to hide his blush. He scowled. “But I don’t like being blackmailed into playing dress up like I’m some doll!”

“Hey, I take offeeeeeense to that.” The banana doll complained in a deep, echoing voice. He turned to Elmo. “Will you plaaaaay with meeee?”

“Sorry, Whacky, don’t got time right now.” Elmo leaned back in his seat. “Maybe after we’re done being blackmailed by this mysterious Boss.”

Quackerjack's hand shot out, grabbing the doll. He struggled to drive one handed as he held him up, talking in a high falsetto out of the side of his mouth. "Gee, Smee, why doncha introduce 'em to me? I'd be sure to have a whole lot of fun, at the expense of the big dum-dum."

Quackerjack threw the doll down, quickly grabbing the steering wheel with both hands. In his normal voice, though a lot angrier than usual, he shouted "Paddywhack, if you ever possess me while I am driving again, I'm throwing you out the window and letting you find your own way home!"

"Spoilsport." Paddywhack grumbled, rubbing his 'head'. He crossed his arms over his dark blue lap, slumping backwards.

It was quiet for a few more minutes, before Jack spoke up. "I just don't get it. How did they know? No one knows about my 'hobby' except for you. Elmo, you didn't- you didn't tell anyone, did you?"

"Jackie, I would never!" Elmo protested. "Even if I forgot, I'm more likely to forget the secret entirely then to forget not to tell anyone. You can trust me."

"I know I can, Mo. Heck, this isn't even the only secret of mine you're keeping." his eyes pointedly flicked to the grumpy doll sitting between them. "But how'd they know your secret? I mean, I guess they could've found mine, but I'm the only one that knows yours. And I swear I didn't tell."

Chapter 4: Backstories

The in-universe backstories for the F4

In this world, the Fearsome Four never became evil. They weren't heroes either, until they were blackmailed by a mysterious person who calls themselves The Boss. But they're only heroes on Weekend nights. Sometimes Fridays.

Jacob 'Jack' Gooney's toy company managed to survive Whiffleboy, mostly because of a lack of lawsuits. Quackie still makes his dangerous toys, but he knows they aren't safe for children, plus his childhood friend Elmo Sputterspark helped him hide them. Which is mostly how he's being blackmailed into taking on the persona of his mascot, Quackerjack, in order to fight crime.

Elmo Sputterspark attacked prom when he was fifteen (having skipped a few grades), but chickened out before he actually hurt anyone, mostly because of the influence of Jackie. He ran back home and never donned the identity of Megavolt again, until he was blackmailed into doing so, this time as a hero. He still thinks anything with electricity is alive and can speak, but he doesn't think they're enslaved.

Doctor Reginald Bushroot went to extreme measures when his funding was cut, experimenting on himself. Unfortunately, his colleagues found out and tried to threaten him into paying them off, but after years of their abuse, Bushy refused. He defended himself when they attacked him, and successfully framed them for stealing equipment and horribly disfiguring him. Living as a hermit in his greenhouse, no one knows he's a mutant, or about the petty theft he's had his plants pull off (fertilizer isn't cheap, you know!). Until, that is, The Boss finds out and blackmails him into becoming the superhero Nightshade.

Bud Flud poisoned his own company's water supply in order to frame his competitors, feeling it was the only way to save the failing Crystal Pure Sparking Flud Water. He managed to frame them, but fell into the random chemical soup. The world thinks that Bud Flud is dead, with only his family knowing the truth. Letting his brother run the company, Bud spent his days just being water, thinking about what he did. When the blackmailing note came, he accepted it as karma, vowing to use this whole superhero thing to make up for what he did, becoming The Liquidator. If he manages to make a few bucks on the side, well...

(He also has a stutter, but it goes away when he uses his salesman persona.)

Paddywhack's Jack-in-the-box was put in a museum much sooner than in canon, and he was fed enough to escape thanks to a prank pulled by a young Jack. He possessed the boy's doll and stayed with him through the years, growing fond of him and protecting him against bullies, eventually revealing himself to both Jack and Elmo. Though he still feeds off misery and fear, Paddywhack tries his best to be a good person, having a protective streak (especially around children) and being somewhat pacifistic. He isn't nice, he can't be, but he isn't evil. Though he can move and talk when possessing the doll, he can also possess Quackerjack in order to take on the persona of the clown's 'split personality', Mr Banana Brain.

Negaduck, Darkwing, Gosalyn, and Launchpad may or may not exist. Any one of them may or may not be villains, heroes, or otherwise. I don't really know yet. But now you know the main differences of the world, and can read these short moments from the lives of the Fearsome Four, (reluctant) protectors of St Canard....

Chapter 5: Shocking Panic

Megavolt has a panic attack. Luckily, Jack's there for him.

With Quacky's general personality, I decided to have him switch up the classic 'in, 1 2 3, out' breathing exercise. Quackerjack and Megavolt are the best couple 😊.

Paddywhack trying his best to help QJ calm Megavolt of course equals offering to traumatize The Boss.

As well, sorry, but I never actually wrote the scene where they meet the Boss... Feel free to write your own version if you want!

//Right before they meet The Boss for the first time, after having received the blackmailing letters.

A tingling sensation spread through Jack's leg. He looked down, spotting his boyfriend's tail wrapped around his ankle, sparking slightly. Jack had long ago gotten used to minor shocks, and it wasn't enough to hurt anyways, but he still frowned.

“Hey, Elmo, you alright?” He asked, gripping the rat's hand.

“N-no.” Elmo shook his head. “Jackie, what if this is a trap? Or what if they demand something awful? Like half your money, or that we hurt someone, or...” he trailed off, shaking, small sparks traveling along his body.

Jack was momentarily distracted by how the other's sparks traveled between the prongs on his hat; he could definitely get used to that hat. He shook himself, focusing back on the rat. “Sparky, it's going to be okay, we're in this together, remember?”

“Don't call me Sparky!” Elmo momentarily broke from his panic, just as Jackie probably planned. “And, y-yeah, I remember.”

“If they want half my money, they can have it.” Jack squeezed his hand. “We're not going to hurt anyone. If they demand anything too awful, well...” he held up his doll, grinning.

“I can always have a talk with them, Zem.” Jack laughed, still using the high-pitched falsetto he usually did when possessed. The doll blinked, opening its mouth to add, in a deep and echoing voice “I haven't haaad a proper feeeeeeding in days!”

Elmo whined, breathing heavily as he looked between them. “Alright, okay. Together. We're not going to hurt anyone.”

“Deep breaths, Mo.” Jack patted his back. “In, ABC, out. In, do-re-mi, out. In, one two three, out. Better?”

Elmo nodded, still breathing deeply. His sparks died down and his tail loosened, but he didn't remove it from Jack's ankle. Jack led them inside the abandoned warehouse, one hand gripping his limp doll, the other still holding Elmo's own.

Chapter 6: Jack's Hat

Unlike Mammals, Avians don't have much problem with their lower halves showing. Despite how much he usually covers, Quackerjack's opinions on others seeing his body match that of most his kind; indifference, unless taken by surprise.

Well, except for one part of him...

The F4 being a little family and caring about each other's issues. ☺

//After some superhero work, the team are switching back to their civilian clothes. Jack's last, and the others are waiting for him so they can leave.

Jack struggled on the ground, grunting as he managed to pull the pants of his Quackerjack costume off. The others didn't even blink, as most ducks don't bother with pants anyways.

Bud and Reggie did look a little surprised when he proceeded to pull off his shirt, but Elmo just shrugged. Jackie had never really cared about those things, and the other two were practically nudists, so who were they to talk?

Pulling on a pale blue t-shirt, Jack put his hand on his hat with a whine, eyes flicking from Elmo to the other two.

Elmo sighed and waved his arms at the others. "Alright, you two, turn around."

"What? Why?" the Doc asked. "He already-"

"He needs to change his hat." Elmo explained, still gesturing for the other two to turn around. "He doesn't like people seeing his head."

After a minute, Jack gave them the okay to turn back around. His outfit now included a yellow and red patterned vest and a thick brown winter hat with long side flaps. He tugged them, smiling a bit sheepishly.

"Er... thanks, guys. I know it's a little weird, but-"

"I-i-it's okay." Bud smiled, patting his back. "We-we all have our, have our own issues. But with Liquidator Brand friendship, you don't have to worry. And that's a guarantee!"

Chapter 7: Elmo's Dress

Featuring Elmo defying gender norms not as a statement, but because he's utterly clueless that they exist in the first place!

Based on that one theater scene is the episode 'Megavolt And Quackerjack's Date Night' (Or 'Stressed To Kill' as Disney insists on calling it).

I just couldn't help noticing that Megavolt doesn't complain about wearing a dress at the theater, his issue was that putting on costumes was getting boring. And he even did a curtsy at one point! And thus my headcanon that Megs likes dresses was born, to go along with other mostly-baseless headcanons like him preferring to sleep on couches.

In Megs' mind, the others' confusion is based on him playing a girl's role, he doesn't even consider the dress being a part of it.

Reginald reached into the closet, pulling out a simple Victorian style purple dress. “You got a girlfriend, Sputters?”

“What?” Elmo looked over, then laughed. “Oh, no, that's mine. Jackie got it for me last Christmas, but I haven't had any opportunities to wear it yet. Well, besides rehearsal, that is.”

“R-rehearsal?” Bud asked.

“Yeah!” Elmo nodded cheerfully. “Christmas, Halloween, birthdays - Jackie'll take any excuse to put on a play. I help, though not as much as Pa- Mr Banana Brain.”

“What role is the dress for?” Reg asked.

“The Storm Princess.” Elmo smiled. “I'm going to use my powers, and Jackie's going to make it look like it's just special effects. The dress isn't for the play, though, I'm just using it as a stand-in until Jackie gets the costume finished.”

“Elmo, don't look too closely at the fine print,” Bud said slowly “But you are as advertised, right? Physically, I mean.”

Elmo blinked, confusion obvious on his face.

“I think he's asking if you're a guy?” Reg clarified. “It's okay if you aren't, of course, but...”

“Huh? Oh!” Elmo shook his head. “Yeah, I'm a guy. Jackie likes casting me in roles like the princess cause he and Mr B tend to trip in dresses. I've always liked them,

though, so I have more practice.” he paused for a moment, looking between the two other mutants. “Is there something wrong?”

“N-no, nothing!” The Doc waved his leaves quickly. He stopped, thinking. “You know, I have a friend around your size who’s getting rid of a bunch of old dresses. You want them?”

“So long as there’s no metal buttons or anything.” Elmo smiled. “Thanks!”

Chapter 8: Paddywhack Revealed (alternatively, Misery Revealed)

Reginald and Jack have gotten into a fight (for... Some Reason), which leads to a certain secret coming to light.

I honestly can't remember why Bushy took QJ's doll. Maybe he was complaining about QJ talking to it? Or maybe he was beginning to suspect that there was something more going on? Or maybe QJ and Mr B/P were playing around and accidentally knocked some stuff over, and Bushroot's yelling at him for it? IDK (I Don't Know).

BTW, in this story if Paddywhack hasn't fed in a while and the thing he's possessing is destroyed, he's forcibly dragged back to his own realm by Magic.

//In the Greenhouse.

Jack tried to grab the doll back, but tripped in his panic, knocking into the Doctor. Reginald fell backwards, the banana shaped doll slipping out of his hand and flying through the air. The doll landed right in the open maw of the woodchipper, getting shredded in seconds.

An inhuman wail echoed through the greenhouse, followed by a creature appearing above the woodchipper. He was a thin duck, twice as tall as Bushroot, with long limbs and clawed hands. He wore black and white clothing that covered the top of his head, with a ruffled collar much like Jack's own. Glowing chains squeezed his middle, causing red eyes to open in what was either surprise or pain. A beakful of slimy fangs cracked open to release another screech of rage as he disappeared.

All was silent, everyone just staring at where the monster had appeared. A leaf blew, Reg blinked, a single spark crackled up Elmo's whiskers.

“Great, now I'll have to go home and sew another Banana Brain.” Jack grumbled after a minute, sighing and rubbing a hand over his eyes.

“What the hell was that?!” Dr Bushroot panicked, the plants around him reacting aggressively to his shock.

“An ancient demon named Paddywhack that feeds off misery and fear.” Elmo stretched. “He's lived in Jackie's doll since before I met him. Real troublemaker. Speaking of feeding, think he'll be strong enough to possess another doll, Jackie?”

“No, we'll have to get him some lunch; he hasn't fed in days.” Jackie shook his head, bouncing to his feet. “We'll bring Bushy and Drippy with us. I'm sure the four of us arguing can produce enough hurt feelings by the time I've made Whacky a new vessel.”

“You- You want-” Bud shook his head. “Sanity getting you down? Tired of not being possessed? No worries when you're friends with a lunatic!”

“Don't worry, Bud, we'll explain everything after we get to the warehouse.” Elmo started heading towards the greenhouse door.

Jack, having already forgotten the argument with Reg in the face of Paddywhack's plight, followed him. “Yeah, I'll tell you all about my history with Whacky. Now, where did I put his Jack-in-the-box again...?”

Chapter 9: Babyface

The mystery of Jack's Hat is finally solved!

The F4 are a caring little family who support and love each other, and NO ONE CAN CHANGE MY MIND!

As well, welcome to my personal headcanon on why Quacky always wears a hat. I call it Ourobus Plumaria Syndrome, though I usually have it affect his entire body.

Featuring: Paddywhack being banned from the heartwarming moment cause he legitimately might've attacked someone the moment Quacky's stress levels started going up (emotion eater = emotion reader).

Jack snuggled a bit deeper under the covers, nuzzling his beak into Elmo's neck with a happy sigh. He stiffened slightly when he felt the other's hand move to his brown hat, but let Elmo remove it all the same.

“I really like your feathers, Jackie.” Elmo hummed, running his fingers through the fluffy headcrest and cheek feathers of his lover. Small sparks danced along them as he did. “They really suit you.”

“Well, of course you'd think that! You're not a duck.” Jack shook his head a little, though carefully so as to not discourage the rat's gentle movements along his scalp. “You don't know the first thing about baby feathers, or how embarrassing it is to still have them at twenty-one.”

“I know they're fluffy, and cute, and special.” Elmo nuzzled his nose into the top of his Jackie's head. “Just like you.”

“Well, I'm glad you like them.” He rolled his eyes. “But I'm still not showing the others.”

“I never suggested it.” Elmo replied with a smirk.

“But it's what you were thinking.” Jack accused.

“They're a little curious.” Elmo shrugged, his fingers still moving through the baby feathers. “But they don't want to make you uncomfortable, everyone's entitled to their own secrets, blah blah blah. I don't think they'd make fun of you, Jackie.”

“Likky might not, since he's a mammal. He'll probably be as clueless as you are, if that's possible.” Jack snickered. “But Melonhead would know how strange it is for me

to still have my baby feathers, and only on my head. I don't want to be Babyface Jack again, Sparky."

"They won't- DON'T CALL ME THAT!" Elmo glared at the giggling toymaker. "Anyways, they won't make fun of you, especially when there's so *much* we could tease them back with. Bushy's head is covered in purple fluff and green skin; he doesn't even *have* feathers."

Promise you'll fry them if they make fun of me?" Jack asked quietly, after a moment.

"Even if I have to short-circuit to do it." Elmo promised, nodding seriously.

"Heeey, where are you two goooing?" Paddywhack's deep, echoing voice asked from where the possessed doll sat on the couch, watching TV.

"To do something that will either be *great* for Jackie's self-esteem, or *really* hurt his feelings." Elmo called over his shoulder. "Either way, I think it's better if you stay here. Can't have you going psycho if Jackie gets too upset."

"Why nooooot?" The banana complained.

"Because ol' Bossy'll be angry if one half of the team is too traumatized to work." Jack shrugged. "Try not to wreck the house while I'm gone, don't answer the door, and please don't fry any lightbulbs; I can't handle another one of Sparky's breakdowns right now."

"Hey!" Elmo glared at the duck as the duo left.

Paddywhack sighed, already bored. His head snapped up when he heard hissing and barking outside. He floated to the window, spotting several rather large dogs attempting to steal some food from a rather thin cat.

"He neveeerr said to stay insiiide." the mischievous spirit flung the window open with a laugh, floating out. "Will yooou plaaaaay with meee?"

"I d-don't get, get it." Bud shook his head. "This is, is y-your big secret? You're f-f-fluffy?"

Bushroot shook his head, causing several of the greenhouse plants to sway. “No, Bud, he still has his baby feathers.”

“Y-yep. Still have them.” Jack clung very tightly to the rat next to him, feeling rather naked despite his shirt and vest. His usually bombastic voice was quiet and subdued. “They just grow back in every molt.”

“And only on your head?” Bushroot asked softly, staring.

“Well, there's some on my neck, too.” Jack shifted, hiding more of himself behind Elmo. “But not many. I can still swim, so long as I keep my head above water.” he didn't really know why he said that last part, and felt awkward for doing so.

“Your advertising is misleading.” Bud shook his head. “Quackerjack Industry Secrets are not as bad as marketed.”

“I get why you hid it, but Bud's right.” Bushroot smiled. “This isn't all that bad.”

“So, you guys... you won't make fun of me for it?” Jack asked quietly.

“Of course we won't! I mean, sure...” Bushroot walked closer, smirking. “We'll make fun of your overbite, your clothes, your toys-of-mass-destruction.”

“Quackerjack Brand Laughter, y-your childish, b-b-behav-behavior.” Bud followed Bushroot. “T-the fact y- the fact you let y-yourself g- be possessed reg-reg- repeatedly by a d-d-doll.”

“But not this.” Bushroot pulled Jack into a hug. “Not something that actually bothers you.”

“I guess it's a deal then; no making fun of things that actually bother us.” Jack smile, his usual wide grin forming on his face, barely hiding how relieved he truly was.

“L-like my s-stutter.” Bud joined the hug.

“So long as you guys don't call me Reggie The Veggie, I'm good.” Bushroot laughed as Elmo joined the hug, careful to avoid Bud.

“There's no way I'm getting Sparky added to this list, is there?” the electrical rodent asked after a quiet, content moment.

“You lost that battle a looong time ago, hon.” Jack’s smile turned loving as he looked at Elmo. “How about your memory problems?”

“Memory...?” Elmo thought for a second, then started. “Oh! Right! Yeah, no making fun of my memory.”

Through poorly hidden laughter, the others agreed. Except for Jack, who mostly made non-committed noises and pulled the other three closer around him.

Chapter 10: It's Us! (Unfinished and short)

The beginning of a chapter where they accidentally bring either their child selves or the regular F4 through a portal. Three paragraphs, completely unfinished, but funny.



“What part of 'don't hit the interdimensional portal machine' did you not understand?!” Megavolt yelled.

“Oops?” Quackerjack shrugged, smiling sheepishly as he hid his giant mallet behind his back.

“Uh, guys? Who are they?” Nightshade asked,

Chapter 11: Where Do They Live?

Just a short description of where each of the F4 live.

Megs lives in an apartment building, but eventually discovers the abandoned lighthouse and takes it for his own, going between them. He moves most of his electronics and experiments to the lighthouse.

Bushroot lives in his greenhouse, but sorta 'owns' the surrounding forests as well.

Likky technically has a house, and goes there often to visit his wife and kids (I love the idea of dad!Liquidator), but spends most of his time just traveling through different waterways and pipes. He likes the openness and freedom of the ocean (has possibly had to deal with Neptunia, but I'm unsure if it would be good or bad interactions).

Quacky has enough money to buy pretty much any place he wants. He has a pullout bed in his office for overnight work, but mostly lives in an 'apartment' area above a partially-converted warehouse filled with his 'special' toys.

Paddywhack has his Jack-in-the-box Realm, as well wherever QJ's staying. After he's revealed, he sometimes spends time at the others' places (possibly bonds with Likky's kids?).

Chapter 12: Conversations

Conversations with The Boss, where they are each blackmailed. Only sorta canon to the other stories?

They're on a rooftop in front of a weird billboard that changes images seemingly at The Boss's will. Bossy doesn't appear, but his voice seems to surround them.

Sorry, I never wrote Quacky's one. But, basically, he's got hidden stashes of TOMD (Toys Of Mass Destruction).

Quackerjack's last name is Gooney because of a headcanon I have that he's related to Lilliput Gooney, the crazy ant guy from that one episode I can't remember the name of (they've got similar beaks).

Poor Likky, he just wants what's best for his family. And QJ's just over here like 'my boyfriend has done nothing wrong, ever, and that kid was only in therapy for like a couple years, so...'

Bushroot/Nightshade

"Dr Reginald Bushroot. When your funding was cut, you illegally experimented on yourself. When two of your colleagues found out and attempted to threaten you, you framed them for stealing your equipment, and have been hiding in your greenhouse ever since. The official story is that you were horribly disfigured by an attack from said coworkers, though no-one knows what you look like, and have since gone offgrid. Drs Gary and Larson are serving time behind bars for a crime never committed."

"Please, you have to understand!" Dr Bushroot pleaded, leafy hands clasped. "They tormented me for years, sabotaged my work, got my funding cut. Then they called me a freak and demanded money I didn't have to keep my secret. They attacked me, I was only fighting back-"

"Calm down, Doctor, I don't blame you. But the law would. You'd go to jail, or worse, maybe end up in a lab? I'm sure S.H.U.S.H. or F.O.W.L. or somesuch would love to have an army that could feed off sunlight and sic entire forests on their enemies. And I haven't even mentioned your other experiments yet, or how you've been funding them."

"I needed the money for fertilizer." The Doctor mumbled, but he had already wilted in resignation. "And it was only people who could afford missing a couple hundred bucks."

Elmo Sputterspark/Megavolt

"Elmo Sputterspark. High school dropout, genius, electric powered mutant. Viciously bullied in highschool, reaching the point where you almost died thanks to being tied to your

own experiment. You survived with a damaged mind and a need to feed off electricity. You used your newfound powers to attack the prom, donning the disguise of Megavolt to get revenge on your main tormentor, Hamm String-

“That boar deserved it after what he put Sparky through!” Jack protested. “And besides, he didn't even really hurt him. I'm friends with Hamm's therapist, and he's almost ready to leave therapy for good. After only five years, too.”

“You... are very loyal, Mr. Gooney. But that is besides the point. Megavolt nearly permanently damaged Mr String, chickening out at the last moment. Since then, he has repeatedly siphoned off energy in order to feed, legally counting as theft and sometimes destruction of property as well. He also repeatedly breaks into the junkyard to steal parts in order to work on illegal, unlicensed, highly dangerous experiments. If discovered, he would go to jail for a long time, and probably would suffer from chronic undercharging.”

Bud Flud/The Liquidator

“Bud Flud, founder and CEO of Sparkling Crystal Pure Flood Water. When your company started to fail, you tried to poison your own water supply, intending to frame your main competition and get money from a lawsuit. But you fell in, and the chemicals forever changed you into what you are now. The world thinks Bud Flud died because of sabotage, and your brother runs the now vastly successful company in your place, helping to hide you. If anyone found out, he would go to jail for the rest of his life, and you would end up in a S.H.U.S.H. lab.”

“P-p-please, don't bring him- don't...” Bud groaned, struggling to make his watery vocal cords work. “Leave my, my brother alone. I'll do any, any.. whatever you want.”

Bonus: Paddywhack/Mr Banana Brain basics ---

An ancient spirit that feeds off of misery, fear, and anger. After his Jack-in-the-box home/prison was found by a young Jack Gooney, Paddywhack Possessed the boy's doll. He became fond of the often-bullied kid, turning into a secret protector. After all, no one said he had to feed off the emotions of the innocent, right?

Paddywhack isn't nice, but he isn't a badguy. A protective, playful prankster, he loves making villains scream - but he can't stomach really fighting, and will faint at the sight of blood (he, after all, doesn't have blood).

He must feed to be strong enough to leave the doll, but can talk and move through it anytime he wishes. He can also possess Quackerjack through the doll, taking on the

persona of Mr Banana Brain, pretending as if Quackerjack is merely nuts and doesn't realize he's making the doll talk.

Elmo and Jack are the only ones that know the truth. If the Boss knows, he hasn't said anything yet.

— end of "F4: New Beginnings" —