



Short Circuit

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After a particularly nasty short out, Megavolt seeks refuge at the house of his old friend, Drake Mallard. He's not expecting to meet Drake's neighbor, Binkie Muddlefoot.

Chapters one and two work as a complete story. Chapter three is unfinished and will probably remain that way, so feel free to ignore it.

Chapter 1: A Little Loopy

Ding-dong! "Oh, Mr Mallard! Yoo-hoo, are you home?"

Drake opened his front door, looking up at the abnormally tall canary. "Hey, Binkie, this isn't really the best time." Not that it's ever a good time for a Muddlefoot visit.

"Oh, I'm sorry Drake, dear, but this will only take a minute." Binkie assured, pushing past Drake into the house, despite the other's protests. "You see, I was baking — preparing for that upcoming neighborhood bake sale, you will be coming, won't you? — when, what do you know, I ran out of flour! So I was wondering if you'd be so sweet as to— now, who is this?"

Laying on Drake's couch was a rat who had hopefully seen better days. Most of his fur was missing, the remaining singed as if he'd been badly burned, pale scars crossing over his skin. The poor thing could barely keep his eyes open, groaning as if in pain.

"That's, uh..." Drake chuckled nervously, trying to push Binkie out the door. "An old friend of mine. He's not feeling well, I'm just helping him recover. Now, how about we get you that flour and you can be on your—"

"Let me see." Binkie slipped past Drake, putting her hand on the rat's forehead. "Oh, sweetie, you're burning up! And your heart is beating a mile a minute. Here, let's get your feet up, it's better for your circulation..."

"'t's fin'." The rat mumbled, exhaustion clouding his voice. "Normal, fo' me."

"You shouldn't sleep in your glasses, dear." Binkie ignored the feeble protests, slipping off his blue goggles. "My son Honker is always making that mistake. There, now, isn't that better? You're so thin, are you eating enough? And what about water? Fluids are important when you're sick, dontcha know."

The rat let out a raspy laugh. "Trus' me, Ma'am, n't 'nough wate' isn' my pro'lem."

"If you're sure, dear." Binkie tutted, looking into the rat's eyes. His pupils wouldn't focus, randomly dilating and contracting. "Have you been to a hospital? I don't mean to insult you, but you really don't look well."

"Drake's takin' good care... O' me." The rat was falling asleep. "He's nice..."

"Yes, he is." Binkie agreed, patting the dozing rat comfortingly. Drake walked in, pulling several bags of flour. "Oh, I only needed a few cups, Mr Mallard."

"Now you won't have to borrow any more for a while." Drake shrugged. "Now, isn't it time you got going? I'm sorry, but Elmo really needs some rest, so..."

"I understand, dear." Binkie nodded, grabbing the flour. She looked over at the rat-Elmo. "Have you given him anything? He seems a little loopy."

"He's just really tired." Drake groaned, rubbing his beak. "He'll be fine, though. He always is."

"It looks like life hasn't been very kind to him." Binkie gestured to the scars.

"He hasn't been very kind to it, either." Drake muttered. "Don't worry, Mrs Muddlefoot; he's a survivor. Besides, I'm taking care of him."

"Yes, you are." Binkie nodded, satisfied by something she saw in Drake's eyes. "Do give your friend my best when he wakes up, won't you? Good day, Mr Mallard."

"You too, Binkie." Drake sighed, closing the door.

Elmo shifted in his sleep, weak sparks jumping up his whiskers as he started mumbling to himself. Drake went back up to his room, finishing up the modifications to an old generator he had. Launchpad wasn't the only one who was good with machines, after all.

He lugged the bulky device downstairs, hooking Megavolt's tail into a special socket. A slow stream of electricity started traveling through the rat, making him smile softly in his sleep.

"You can't come here again, Elmo." Darkwing scowled. "Next time, I'm just leaving you and calling the cops!"

Elmo did come again, half his arm torn open from an experiment gone wrong. Darkwing gave him stitches. Mrs Muddlefoot came around for tea. The cops did not make an appearance.

The third time he visited, it was without injury. He just wanted to say 'thanks' and catch up. That's when Gosalyn met him, unable to fight him in civilian mode. Dinner was reluctantly had. No uniformed officers attended.

The fourth time was as Megavolt, with Gosalyn and Honker in tow, having found them lost in the sewers. Drake had pushed him inside and forced him to change, so 'Elmo' could tell the Muddlefoots that their son was safe.

The fifth time was to ask if Drake wanted to meet his friends. The sixth was to apologize for how that meeting went.

The seventh was because of an invitation from Binkie.

The eighth was just because he was bored.

After that, Drake lost count.

Chapter 2: A Lovely Story

In chapter one, Elmo wasn't aware that Drake and Darkwing were the same guy. By the time of chapter two, he knows.

In case it wasn't clear, Nigel is Negaduck's alias.

"Thanks, Mrs Muddlefoot." Elmo said while happily accepting a cup of tea, careful not to spill. "Your tea always tastes so much better than the kind I ste- buy."

"Well, it's all about preparation, dontcha know?" Binkie smiled. "How you brew the tea is as important as what kind you buy. Personally, I always like to start by getting my own leaves from my garden, cutting them up before grinding and drying them—"

Elmo snorted. To Drake's absolute horror, he muttered. "Good thing Bushy wasn't around to hear that."

"Bushy?" Binkie asked, before Drake could switch the topic.

"Oh, uh, it's a nickname for a friend of mine." Elmo shrugged. "Reg is a bit of a nature freak — a treehugger, if you will."

Drake glared at Elmo. Luckily, Binkie made bricks look not dense. She smiled, clapping her hands. "Oh, you never talk about your friends. Besides Drake, anyways."

"Oh, I don't really have that many." Elmo counted on his fingers. "Drake, Reg, Bud, Jacky, and I think Nigel counts?"

"Oh, how lovely!" Binkie's eyes widened as an idea came to her. "You should invite them over for tea."

"No, no you shouldn't!" Drake yelled. He laughed awkwardly at Binkie's shock. "Sorry, Mrs Muddlefoot, it's just that Elmo's friends, well..."

"They're a little wild." Elmo answered, drooping slightly. "Reg is nice, but he will definitely give you an earful over your garden. I love them all like family, honest! But they aren't good at behaving themselves."

"Have you met Tank?" Binkie laughed. "Don't worry, dear, I can handle them. I'd love to meet your friends."

"Really?" Elmo thought about it, then deflated again. Likky and Bushroot couldn't disguise themselves as civilians. And he *definitely* was not going to invite Negaduck. "Well, tea isn't really their thing. Jacky might come, though."

Drake groaned. Dealing with one supervillain at his neighbor's house was difficult enough, even if Elmo was relatively calm and polite. Adding *Quackerjack* to that mix just sounded way too stressful. Could Megavolt keep behaving himself when the other half of his Demented Duo was there?

"Sounds delightful." Binkie went to look at her calendar. "Now, when do you think you can come by? I have a date with Herb on Saturday, and Friday is the Love Dove mixer—"

"The what?" Elmo perked up.

"Nothing, just a silly Valentine's thing the Muddlefoots host." Drake shook his head. "Launchpad likes it." He said, diplomatically leaving out the *'I have absolutely no idea why.'*

"A Valentine's party?" Elmo asked, excited. "Can I come?"

"Of course, dear." Binkie seemed to think of something. "Are you seeing anyone? You can come alone, but if you do have a partner..."

"Well..." His whiskers twitched for a few seconds. "J-Jacky and I, um... Can he come?"

"Certainly, dear." Binkie answered. "It's a bit of a formal event. Nothing too fancy, just something better than a T-shirt, alright?"

"He's got a bit of a thing about his hat." Elmo answered. "But other than that, it shouldn't be a problem. Thank you, Mrs Muddlefoot."

"You're welcome, Elmo." Binkie sat back down. "Now, let's finish our tea. Oh, Drake, are you coming this year? I know you had work the last couple—"

"Oh, trust me, I'm coming." He sent a warning look at Megavolt. "I wouldn't miss it."

Later, when Elmo was standing outside Drake's door about to go home, he lingered for a second. "You'll be there, at Binkie's party?"

"Worried you won't be able to cause trouble?" Drake asked, perhaps a little more harshly than he meant.

"I'm worried we will cause trouble." Elmo shot a glance at the neighboring house. "I like being Elmo, having civilian friends, and I don't want to lose it. Please promise you'll keep an eye on Quacky and I? Make sure we behave?"

"I wouldn't do anything less." Darkwing nodded. "Soooo... You and Quackerjack, huh? How long's that been going on?"

"Since before the fake psychiatrist scam, I think." Megavolt scrunched up his face in thought, his fried brain working to remember. "It was after I took over the power company, but couldn't have been before the doll incident... Hey, I need a suit!"

"I'm sure Quackerjack can make you one." Darkwing rolled his eyes. "Please don't make me arrest you until after Friday."

Megavolt grinned. "No promises, Dipwing."

"See you later," Darkwing smirked back, closing the door. Right before it clicked shut, he added, "Sparky."

"Don't call me Sparky!" Megavolt yelled through the door.

It was nice being Drake and Elmo again, but both were glad they could still be Darkwing and Megavolt as well. It was a hard balance, but weren't archenemies worth the extra effort?

"Herb, we're going to be having some extra Love Dove guests this year." Binkie told him after giving him a welcome-home-from-work kiss. "Elmo is bringing his boyfriend."

"Good for him." Herb nodded, heading for the TV. "Say, honey, do I really hafta wear a suit dis year?"

"Herbert, you are dressing nice and proper for Valentine's day." Binkie answered sternly, sitting next to him and switching to the news. "Oh, look, Elmo's getting ready for the party!"

"The Demented Duo are at it *again*." The newscaster announced. "Seven tuxedo stores and a Yarn 'N' Things have been hit already. Is this the start of a fashion-themed crime spree?"

"It's so lovely when couples do things as a pair." Binky sighed, watching the security footage. Quackerjack and Megavolt were apparently debating whether classic black or something more colorful would be better for their suits. "Look at how cute they are together."

"Not nearly as cute as ya, Binkums." Herb answered, kissing her cheek.

"Oh, Herb!" Binkie giggled, blushing. "You're so sweet."

Chapter 3: Jester's Smile

Uh, my phone's glitching, so this chapter might come out a little weirdly...

I headcanon that Quackie's a foster kid who was taken in by an abusive rich couple who couldn't have kids and used less-than-nice means to force him to act 'proper', so now he has trauma related to being forced to act too differently than how he normally is.

The candy roses are because no friend of Bushroot is going to bring a real bouquet.

Oh, I hope I get the motivation to finish this someday.

//Somewhere in St Canard, in a dark hideout...

"What d'ya think, Megsy?" Quackerjack asked, twirling in his new suit. He had a red jacket, purple trousers, and a bright blue bowtie. A brown Sherpa was pulled over his head.

"Amazing, Quacky." Megavolt nodded approvingly. "But, remember, we aren't Megavolt and Quackerjack tonight. We're Elmo and Jack."

"What am I supposed ta' call you?" Quackerjack scowled. "'Elmsy?'"

"It's just for one night, Qua- Jacky." Megavolt argued, putting his arms around the duck. Quackerjack flinched at the name. "I really want you to meet my civilian friends."

"Whatever." Quackerjack pouted. "Did you have to tell them I'm Jack?"

"I had to think quickly!" Megavolt protested. "We can give you a nickname, if you want?"

"It's fine." The hyperactive jester was unusually sulky. "Only you could make me bring Jacob back; I hope you know that, Mo."

"Mo'?" Megavolt asked.

"It's better than 'Elmsy'." Quackerjack shrugged. "Now go get changed. You're the one that wants to go to this thing, you don't get to make us late."

You sure about this, Chris? Mr Banana Brain asked, once Megavolt was gone.

"Not in the slightest." Quackerjack was still frowning. "But he's so excited. I have to make an effort, right?"

You don't seem like yourself tonight, Dwight.

"Jacob Gooney is alive and well for the first time in years, I'm allowed to be nervous." Quackerjack grumbled. How long had it been since he'd last worn civvies? He could barely remember how he used to behave, underneath his jester act.

Of course, not all of it was an act. He has mood swings, he loves games and toys, he's not the safest nor sanest person to be around. But he could behave, right? He could play-act normalish for a few hours. For Megav- for Elmo, he'd have to. It was only one night.

"I'm ready. Do I look okay for a party?" Megavolt asked, causing Quackerjack to turn around.

The toymaker's brain stopped working for several seconds when he saw Elmo's outfit. It was a lovely yellow dress with matching gloves, a blue belt cinching his waist, his goggles switched for round glasses that brought out his eyes. His tuft of orange-brown headfur was somewhat brushed, but still poofing out from his static.

"J-Jacky? Hello?" Elmo waved in front of his face. "Is it too much? Should I change?"

"No, you look great, Mo." Quack-Jack grinned, bouncing a little in place. "Let's get going, can't show up late to a party!"

Ding-dong! Binkie opened the door, smiling at the latest guests. "Oh, Elmo! And you must be Jack. Come in, come in!"

"It's nice to see you again, Mrs Muddlefoot." Elmo smiled, hugging the canary. "Sorry if we're a little too early, I couldn't remember when it was supposed to start."

"Nonsense, dear. The other guests will be arriving any minute." Binkie chuckled. "Drake's been here for hours, helping set up."

Elmo nudged Jack, causing him to step forward. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Mrs Muddlefoot. Elmo has talked so much about you." He held out a bouquet of multi-colored candy roses. "These are for you, as a thank you for inviting us."

"Oh, they're lovely." Binkie took the treats, putting them in a dry vase. "I'm so glad you could make it, especially on such short notice. It's exciting to finally meet one of Elmo's friends!"

"May I just say, you have a lovely home." Jack smiled charmingly. "Tell me, where did you get those drapes? I simply *must* have the name of your interior designer!"

"Oh, I never hired anybody professional." Binkie answered, leading them towards the backyard. "Put it all together myself, though Herb has certainly helped. Herb's my husband."

"He sounds like a delightful fellow." Jack followed her at a serene pace. "I can't wait to meet him."

Elmo stared at Jack. Sure, he'd asked him to behave, but... Maybe he just acted differently as Jacob, like Megavolt acted differently than Elmo. Yeah, that was probably it. Everything was going to be great.

Two hours into the party, and Quackerjack was about ready to throttle someone. Especially Drake, who seemed both too friendly towards his Megsy and extremely suspicious of 'Jack'.

This polite act was too much. But he had to keep going, for Elmo. He could do it. He could make small talk and take small bites and not shout every other sentence. He could ignore that one nerdy kid leaving early to play *videogames*. He could refrain from bouncing and juggling and twirling. He could keep his jokes bland and his laughter quiet and, and, and...

"Jacky? Jacky?" Elmo was shaking him, and... when had he gotten under a table? "Quacky, are you alright?"

— end of "Short Circuit" —