



Highschool Four

Darkwing Duck (Cartoon 1991) · Not Rated · 3276 words

by Arukir

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Highschool Four

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What if the Fearsome Four had met in Highschool?

Previously titled "Chapter One"

Chapter One: Elmo and Jack meet

Chapter Two: Buddy and Reggie meet

Last Chapter: Artwork!

Chapter 1: Hammy-pie

Elmo, fresh after The Incident, meets a young duck named Jack. Will Jack be yet another tormentor? Or could he possibly be something else?

I actually drew Jack, but I can't figure out how to post pictures, so...

Edit: I figured out how to post images! Jack Fanart at the end!

They would go on to meet Buddy Flud (a charming young con artist and secret chemistry nerd) and Reggie Bushroot (a shy but genius loner who totally not secretly creating plant monsters). The Four would become friends, positively influencing each other and becoming heroes rather than villains (after several cases of being blackmailed and starting a secret homework cheating business)

//Elmo looks pretty much as he does in canon, except he wears: blue rubber gloves/boots, his goggles, and a belt with a metal buckle/hidden powercord compartment. Physical changes: slightly fluffier cheek fur, ears, a tail that he covers in protective rubber, shorter frizzier hair. His eye color is yellow. If you don't know canon: dark pink shirt, spotted tie, blue pants, is a rat, light brown fur, orange-brown fur, long snout, big black nose, buck teeth.

Elmo looked up at the New Kid, adjusting his glasses (he was still getting used to them, having never needed them before The Incident at the end of the last year) to

make sure he was seeing properly. But even after cleaning them twice, the New Kid still looks the same.

He was a duck in a red and blue Sherpa hat, carrying a colorful backpack literally overfilling with notebooks and pencils. He wore a black hoodie with green polka dots over a brightly striped shirt, tan cargo pants with stuffed pouches, mismatched socks, and bright red shoes. A yellow and white scarf hid most of his neck. The headfeathers visible under his hat had green dyed tips, his beak was huge with bucked teeth, and his eyes didn't match -- one was a bright blue, the other deep brown. He clutched a toy star to his chest, his hoodie sleeves covering most of his hands, with holes cut for his thumbs.

He was one of several New Kids that had transferred that year. Or, at least, Elmo thought he was new -- his memory wasn't the best since The Incident, but he was ninety... Eighty-five... Seventy percent sure he hadn't seen the duck before. Alright, maybe sixty-five, but still over half. Probably.

The kid was grinning, looking around while balancing a tray of food on the hand not clutching the doll, seemingly trying to decide where to sit. Finally, his eyes landed on Elmo (who was sitting alone, just as he liked thank-you-very-much, listening to the lightbulbs' chatter) and his grin got, impossibly, even wider. He skipped over to Elmo, somehow not dropping a single thing from the mound on his tray, before coming to stop right at the table.

"Mind if I sit here?" The duck didn't wait for an answer, kicking a chair out and plopping down. He dropped his tray and started shoveling food into his beak, talking around it with the expertise of one who often talked while eating. "I'm new around here. Name's Jacob Gooney, but you can call me Jack."

It took Elmo a second to realize that the duck -- Jack -- was holding out a sleeve-covered hand, and another second to realize why. After a moment of uncomfortable silence that didn't seem to dampen Jack's spirits on the slightest, Elmo shook his hand and muttered something that sounded like his name.

"Whatcha' eating, Elmo?" Jack asked, flicking his eyes briefly from Elmo's gloved hands to his tail (covered in black, yellow, and blue rubber, with a jagged metal bit strapped to the tip) but didn't comment on either, earning him points in Elmo's book.

"Peanut butter and banana sandwich." Elmo answered, unthinking. He wished he could take the words back almost the moment they were out, but he couldn't.

"I don't think they serve that here." Jack said, juggling his star doll and a bottle of orange juice almost absent-mindedly. "You bring it from home?"

"Yeah, my, uh, mother made it for me." Elmo muttered quietly, tensing as even the lightbulbs seemed to quiet down to hear Jack's response. He'd regretted telling him, but he'd never been good at lying, getting even worse at it after The Incident. And now he was going to lose the closest chance he'd had in a long time to making a fri-

"That's neat." Jack said lightly, no sign of mocking except for his grin, and that had been there before. "Mama's always wanting to make my lunches for me, but I eat too much to really carry it around with me half the day." He bounced a little in his chair, suddenly (even more) excited. "But she always gives me something sweet to eat with my lunch. Want to share? I think there's enough..."

He trailed off, rummaging through his backpack with a single-mindedness and focus that left him unseeing to Elmo, who was openly gaping at him. Ham, Preena, even Drake had made fun of him for having his mom make his lunches (he personally didn't know why, but had accepted it as something else he'd suffer for, since he wasn't going to tell his mom to stop) -- but Jack just waved it off as, as *neat*, even saying his own mom would do it.

His thoughts were broken by Jack's triumphant cry, holding a melted chocolate bar in his hand. Elmo hesitantly accepted half with a muttered thank, not really wanting it but not wanting to be rude. The rest of lunch was actually rather nice, Elmo quietly going between listening to the lightbulbs and listening to Jack chatter happily about anything and everything. It was this way that Elmo discovered that Jack shared his love of invention, albeit in different ways, and started chatting just as much as the duck. Instead of telling him he was talking too much or too complexly, Jack seemed to be paying attention to every word he said, with no shortage of comments or jokes. Yes, lunch was very nice.

Until the end.

"Hey, Sparky, what's up?" Elmo groaned as a hand hit his back, partially from pain and partially from dread, before looking up at the speaker. A spark of electricity traveled along a whisker, and he quickly turned his face away again to hide it.

"N-not much, Hamm." Elmo inwardly cursed the stutter, but fear already had its icy grip on his heart at the sight of the... Basketball? Soccer? Cricket? Well, Hamm String was some kind of sports player, and he looked it. The pig was absolutely giant, probably half boar, and wearing a sports jersey that probably wasn't from cricket. Badminton? Piccolo? Was that one even a sport? Stupid fried brain...

"Who's your- woah!" Hamm did an exaggerated doubletake, staring at Jack. Oh no... "What's with your eyes?"

"I have heterochromia." Jack replied happily, though he sent Elmo a cautious look. "Means my eyes are different colors. My name's Jacob Gooney, or Jack. Nice to meetcha'."

"What's going on here, Hammy-pie?" Preena Lott -- a dog with soft hair and curved hips that hid a sharp, dangerous mind -- walked up and grabbed her boyfriend's arm.

"Sparky's made friends with another freak." Hamm taunted.

Elmo tensed, but Jack smiled wider and began juggling again, adding a fork to the mix this time. "Hit it right on the nose, *Hammy-pie*."

"Jack, don't!" Elmo hissed, wanting to warn his new -- friend? -- of the popular pair's danger, but Jack just winked.

"This table's for certified Freaks, Geeks, Nerds, and Weirdos only." Nothing really changed, and yet something did. Jack went from friendly to deadly, his grin sharp rather than playful, his juggling pointed rather than showing off, his eyes creepy rather than interesting. "I'm pretty sure the table for entitled, arrogant, boring, simple-minded bullies is closer to the back. By the garbage. Now run along, before I have to take out the trash."

"Why you little...!" Hamm lunged, but Jack wasn't there anymore, having moved almost too fast to see. Jack ran around the cafeteria, jumping from table to table, still juggling and always one step ahead of the living tank that was chasing him.

Elmo watched, horrified, terrified, and interested.all at once. He glared at the ceiling lights, whispering "Don't encourage the reckless fool!" when they started to cheer Jack on, though a part of him wanted to join them.

"That all you got, Hammy-pie?" Jack taunted, throwing his star doll to Elmo (who felt this was very important for some reason) before flipping over Hamm, doing at least three flips. He resumed his juggling, by now having collected numerous forks from distracted students, after landing on another table.

"Tweak his beak, Hamm!" Preena yelled.

"Oh, I'm gonna do so much worse than *that*." Hamm growled, eyes never leaving Jack. He lunged.

Elmo was probably the only one that saw a kind of sad resignation in Jack's eyes before he 'slipped'. He was on the ground, forks clattering around him, penned in by two walls and Hamm String.

Hamm grabbed Jack by the scarf, effectively choking him as he hauled him to his feet, fist raised to strike. Jack coughed, pulling at his throat, but laughter still filtered from his beak.

"What are you laughing at, Freaky?" Hamm asked, irritated at the lack of fear.

"How.. how stupid..." Jack struggled to get the words out, and Elmo felt his own chest squeeze. "How stupid your... Jersey looks."

Hamm punched.

Elmo covered his eyes.

Jack laughed.

A teacher yelled.

"Mr String!" Mr Storkson marched up, having been making his daily rounds (which he made every day at more or less exactly that time) when he watched Hamm choke and punch a duck much smaller than himself.

While Mr Storkson shouted at Hamm, Elmo took the opportunity to rush to Jack's side, helping the duck up and handing the star back over.

"You, you let him..." Elmo whispered, unable to really find his words. "Why?"

"Would he have beat you up?" Jack whispered back, strangely seriously, rubbing alternately at his neck and beak. Elmo slowly nodded yes, thinking of all the times he'd been stuffed into a trashcan with scores more bruises than he'd started that day with. "Then there you go!" Jack was back to grinning, dented beak and all.

"You did it for me?" Elmo blinked. "T-thank you. But why?" He repeated, eyes narrowing in suspicion. "What do you want from me?"

"Don't worry about it. You can just owe me one..." He reached out and tapped one of Elmo's whiskers, which was again sparking. "...Sparky."

And as Jack walked off laughing, Elmo stood frozen. Jack knew, had noticed his powers, and wasn't saying anything. Had he just gained a protector or a blackmailer? A bully or a... Friend? He didn't know, but he was sure of one thing. Life was going to a lot more interesting this year.

"Don't call me Sparky!" He yelled, running to catch up with the duck. The lightbulbs sang approval as the two walked to class together, the start of a... *Something*. Maybe a friendship, maybe not. But definitely a *something* that would last for a very long time.

Chapter 2: A Mutually-Beneficial Relationship

Newly transferred Buddy Flud has big plans in life. Newly transferred Reggie Bushroot just plans to try to survive.

Minor editing done on the 10th of September, 2024

//Buddy wears basically a little business suit without the jacket, has black hair with dyed blue ends, and carries a briefcase instead of a backpack.

Ichabod 'Buddy' Flud walked through a school hallway, posture straight and smile charming. It had taken him three months to get his last school wrapped around his finger, five-to-eight months for each of the schools before that. A week into St Canard High, and he was optimistic he could beat his record by at least a month.

Of course, Buddy had always been an optimistic sort of dog. He knew things could go wrong, he just chose to believe they wouldn't, and things usually turned out his way. A bit of subterfuge never hurt either.

He was a little nervous about his Spanish class, but one of the keys to success was looking like you'd already won. He exuded confidence as he sauntered amongst his so-called 'peers', silently making it clear that (unlike them) he was made for great things.

"Leave me alone!" A voice yelled from around the corner, followed by what sounded suspiciously like a punch. "Stop it! Let me go!"

Run for self-preservation? Get a teacher for Good Student Points? Get closer to size up the situation?

Other students were already edging away, which told the beagle something important; whoever was doing the beating up was well-known and powerful. He moved in closer, peaking around the corner.

A large pig, a gorilla, and two bulldogs — all wearing sports jerseys — were surrounding a bird curled up on the ground.

"What's the matter? Not so brave now, huh?" The pig — Hamm String, Buddy recognized him from his research into the most popular kids — laughed, kicking at the other. "Where's all the gusto from when you refused to do our homework?"

The gorilla joined in the laughter. "I thought Monsters was supposed ta be all tough an' whatnot, ya know? Turns out dey're liddle crybabies!"

A Monster? Buddy's eyes went wide. He'd never met a Monster in real life, there weren't many in Duckburg, but he'd heard they made up over a fifth of St Canard's population. He looked closer at the bird, who didn't look particularly abnormal, and came to a decision.

A decision that was 20% curiosity, 50% opportunity, 5% to spite Hamm, and 25% reluctant empathy. At least, that's what Buddy's mental pie chart told him. Did other kids, or people in general, use imaginary pie charts to sort their feelings? Probably not. Did he care? No.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I'm afraid I must ask you to refrain from such activities." He gave his most charming smile as he casually approached, giving a disinterested glance at the huddled mass on the floor. "An educational facilitator is approaching."

"Wha'?" One of the bulldogs asked.

"A teach is comin', scatter 'n' scram!" Ma had spent so much to get him lessons on proper speaking, and yet these plebians always responded so much faster to his birth accent. Infuriating.

"Woah, thanks dude!" The pig gave a thumbs-up as the group ran off.

"Don't mention it." Buddy rolled his eyes. Too easy. "Are you alright?"

But the bird, who Buddy could now identify as a very tall duck, wasn't listening. He'd jumped up and was rifling through a trash can, muttering to himself. Before Buddy could ask him what he was doing, the duck pulled out a potted plant, hugging it closely to his chest.

"Don't worry, the bad men can't hurt you now." The duck whispered to the plant, who responded by licking him? The duck locked eyes with Buddy, backing into the wall. "And, and, and you can't either — a teacher's c-c-c-coming."

"I have absolutely no idea if an educat- a teacher is coming or not." He let his smile drop, turning thoughtful and serious instead. "I'm surprised by how quickly the brutes fell for my little fib. Now, I shall repeat myself this one time; are you alright?"

"You l-lied?" The duck straightened a little. A few bruises were peaking through his feathers and one of his eyes was swollen, but he didn't seem too badly injured. His eyes narrowed, his fright apparently fading rather quickly. "Why?"

Buddy walked a little closer, intending to respond, but lost his train of thought when he got a better look at the other's eyes. They were a brilliant green, with nearly-black sclera. He'd never seen eyes like that before. He shook himself to clear his head, hoping he hadn't been caught staring. "It simply seemed the proper thing to do."

The duck gave him an unimpressed look, raising an eyebrow. He just silently stared at him, not really doing anything, but Buddy suddenly became aware of just how much taller the duck was than him.

"Er..." Cowering one second, intimidating with silence the next. This guy was fascinating! "I've never met a Monster before, and you seemed interesting, I suppose. Besides, Hamm's a jerk whose could use a few pegs bein' knocked down, ya know?"

"Great." The duck rolled his eyes, turning to walk away, meekness replaced by annoyance as he realized Buddy didn't intend to finish what Hamm started. "Well, you've gotten a good look at the half-Monster freak, so you can just be on your way now."

That was unexpected. Buddy had to rush to keep up with the other's long strides, but he didn't mind — his Spanish class was this way anyways. "I carry a briefcase and switch accents at will, I doubt I have the right to condemn another for their freakiness. Real or merely perceived."

The duck shot him a wary look, still clutching his plant. He shook his head, scowling in a way that revealed small fangs. "Yeah, right. You're probably just trying to trick me into doing your homework or something. Just leave me alone, will ya?"

"Completing the homework of others is a great way to both increase your income and keep the future success rate of your competitors low." Buddy replied, winking. "I should know, I was doing the homework of over half my last school."

That got a reaction, with the duck looking him over more carefully. "Oh."

"Buddy Flud, future CEO and entrepreneur extraordinaire." He held out his hand as they walked, the pace slowing down a bit now that the other wasn't actively trying to evade him.

"Bushroot." The duck replied, not taking the hand. "Reginald Bushroot. You can call me Reggie, if you want. This is Spike." He held up his plant, who *barked* at the introduction.

"...Pleasure, Reggie." Buddy nodded, ignoring Spike for the time being. "Are you scheduled for Spanish class? If so, might we journey together?"

"Sure." Reggie was a duck of few words. Buddy liked that.

As it turned out, they had a lot of the same classes besides Spanish, and had both been transferred rather recently. They took to sitting near each other throughout the day, which is what led Buddy to make an important discovery about his new associate.

The guy was a *genius*. Reggie spent every class correcting the teachers, pointing out their mistakes in a brutal fashion, putting together college lecture-worthy speeches on dozens of topics, most of all in Biology and Chemistry. It would've been insanely brave, except he didn't do any of this out loud. Every class he was hunched over his notebook, scribbling away, writing what he apparently wouldn't dare say in reality.

Between classes, and at lunch, Buddy would lean over and make comments on what he read. Reggie was horrified he'd seen it, probably expecting to be mocked, but relaxed when Buddy actually agreed with him.

By the end of the day, the duo were walking to the bus stop together.

"Hamm saw us talking. He's going to figure out you tricked him, eventually." Reggie whispered while they waited for the bus. "This was nice, almost like having a friend, but I don't think we should hang out again. He could really hurt you."

"Don't worry my anxiety-prone associate." Buddy smiled. "I always have a plan."

He left it at that, not clarifying even as the bus pulled up. The plan was that he'd payed a girl twenty bucks to kiss Hamm and gotten a picture of it. Hamm String had pushed the girl away, telling her off and claiming to be in a 'Mono Moose' relationship with dear Preena Lott, but there were no photos of *that* bit.

Too bad, so sad, Hamm's upset but Buddy's glad.

Chapter 3: Art

Elmo is a trace-and-edit, the rest I drew from scratch.

— end of “Highschool Four” —