

Pavel the Centipede

By Francesca Jandasek

In someone's very nice garden on Malverne Avenue, in between the tomato plants, the squash vines and the parsley, stood a very teenie mushroom. Actually it wasn't that tiny as far as mushrooms go, and it provided a just-the-right-size abode for Pavel the centipede. The cap was brownish - an ordinary color for the roof of a house - and the stem was white with two small windows and a little door. Pavel had painted his shutters red. He thought the color would go particularly nicely with his eyes while he gazed dejectedly out of the window. A path of milky quartz pebbles led from the door into the depths of the vegetable and herb garden, and there were two pink plastic flamingos and some petunias in his front yard.

It was a beautiful morning and the sun was shining and all of Pavel's neighbors were playing outside. But Pavel was a very sad centipede. He hardly ever went outside. All he did was sit inside and cry all day or gaze out of the window and sigh and think about how sad and lonely he was. He had no mommy or daddy or brother or sister or pet duck or anyone to tuck him into bed. He didn't have anyone to make him chicken noodle soup when he was sick, or make him toast for breakfast, or read stories to him or annoy him or love him. He was a very lonely centipede and felt very pathetic and sorry for himself. So, on this particular day, he was sitting by his window, gazing outside with very sad eyes and droopy antennas, wishing that a knight on a millipede in intricate chain mail would come galloping up to his humble abode and sweep him from the window and ride off into the sunset - or something like that. Then it occurred to him that maybe, with his luck, the knight would miss and sweep off into the sunset with a pink flamingo from his front yard instead.

While Pavel was deeply daydreaming and feeling very pathetic and depressed, a playful, overly energetic, and slightly klutzy cat named Ludmilla was cavorting in the tomato, squash and parsley garden. Leaping and trying to catch a particularly juicy looking gnat, she tripped over the mushroom house and landed flat on her face. "MREEOOOWRRRRR!!!" she snarled, and cautiously sniffed the little mushroom. Pavel, who had completely lost his balance in all 100 legs because of the impact, had rolled into the far end of the little house and lay all curled up in a ball, trembling and squeaking with fear. Ludmilla, seeing the windows with the pretty red shutters, looked through them with her huge yellow eyes.

"mreooowrrr", she growled appreciatively when she spotted the centipede, and she batted her eyelids and licked her lips a few times. "mmmmmm, what a sexy centipede you are! Such a sleek shiny body and so many shapely legs to stroke! And what delicate and sensual antennas you have! Oh, most sexy centipede, you are so marvelously different and intriguing! Your movement is so fluid and graceful - do you have any feline in you?" purred Ludmilla.

"ummm . no." replied Pavel in a very tiny voice.

"Would you like some?" suggested Ludmilla.

"ummm. pardon me, but isn't that a guy's pick up line.?" asked Pavel, still in a very tiny voice.

"Oh, no! I mean it. Simply the suggestive swivel of your many sections make my back arch and my fur stand on end. Oh most sensual and desirable centipede, will you grant me my most ultimate desire?" asked Ludmilla in the most seductive voice of a cat.

"umm. I don't know." replied Pavel nervously, as he remained curled tightly in a little ball.

"You can get in the most marvelous positions with that flexible slithery body of yours. How I would love for you to caress my ears with your delicate antennas, or massage me with all the scrumptious toes on your 100 feet. How I would love to lick your shiny sectioned shell clean with my rough tongue and purr delightfully into your ears." purred Ludmilla.

"well, umm, centipedes don't have ears," squeaked Pavel.

Ludmilla continued, ignoring Pavel. "But I cannot ask you for those delicious favors yet because we are not well enough acquainted. But please, please, at least, will you kiss me?"

Pavel began to tremble profusely and cry out in his little centipede voice, "nononononononono!!!!!"

Taken aback, Ludmilla asked again, "You won't kiss me?"

"nonononononono!!!!" squeaked Pavel.

"But I'm a very attractive cat. My fur is very soft and I can give good massages with my tongue." said Ludmilla.

"nonononononono!!!!" Pavel continued to squeak and tremble in the far end of the room.

"Well, why won't you kiss me? I kiss very passionately." purred Ludmilla persuasively.

Pavel continued to squeak and shake and Ludmilla began to lose her patience. Finally she growled, "If you don't tell me why you won't kiss me, then I'll eat you up." Pavel continued crying and trembling in a most annoying and pathetic manner. "I mean it," snapped Ludmilla. "If you don't tell me why you won't kiss me, I'll eat you up." "ummm. well. ummmm. you see, I'm male and you're female." whimpered Pavel.

"Then kiss me!" exclaimed Ludmilla without hesitation.

"I can't." squeaked Pavel.

"If this is a species issue, I'll sue you for discrimination. You shouldn't discriminate against me because I'm a mammal and you're an insect. I'm a lot bigger than you are, you know." replied Ludmilla, defensively.

"But it's not a species issue" explained Pavel. "You're female and I'm male.

Thoroughly confused, Ludmilla replied, "I don't understand the problem."

"ummmm." sputtered Pavel, squirming very uncomfortably, "I'm ummmm gay."

"oh." said Ludmilla, at a loss for words. The large yellow eye disappeared from the window for a second and then reappeared, eyelashes batting most seductively. "Hmmmm, a homosexual centipede. How exciting, how interesting! Have you ever tried to be open-minded? A nice, long, luscious, wet kiss would be most enjoyable right now, don't you agree?" purred Ludmilla, rubbing against the mushroom house. But Pavel did not agree and continued squirming and squealing and whimpering and yelling "nononononononono!" Eventually, Ludmilla became very annoyed, and very sexually frustrated. She swatted off the roof of the mushroom house and with lightening speed, pounced on Pavel and ate him all up in one bite - 100 shoes and all. Then, she plucked up one of Pavel's lawn ornament pink flamingos, and with the sharper end, picked all remaining bits of centipede from her sharp predatory teeth. "umm." she thought, "what a yummy centipede. ummmm." And then, deciding that the centipede could not be even considered an appetizer, and was actually more the size of a cert's breath mint, she pounced off through the garden, purring in anticipation, in search of some kind of appetizer.