

**Unit 3 Home Learning Week 10**

**Friday - Reading**

Reading for Pleasure. Starting a new novel

Romans On The Rampage.

Chapters 3 and 4

Please read and enjoy!

THE KING OF COMEDY

# Jeremy STRONG

ROMANS

on the

RAMPAGE!



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**Jeremy Strong once worked in a bakery, putting the jam into three thousand doughnuts every night. Now he puts the jam in stories instead, which he finds much more exciting. At the age of three, he fell out of a first-floor bedroom window and landed on his head. His mother says that this damaged him for the rest of his life and refuses to take any responsibility. He loves writing stories because he says it is ‘the only time you alone have complete control and can make anything happen’. His ambition is to make you laugh (or at least snuffle). Jeremy Strong lives near Bath with his wife, Gillie, three cats and a flying cow.**

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**ARE YOU FEELING SILLY ENOUGH TO READ MORE?**

**THE BEAK SPEAKS**

**BEWARE! KILLER TOMATOES**

**CHICKEN SCHOOL**

**DINOSAUR POX**

**GIANT JIM AND THE HURRICANE**

**KRAZY KOW SAVES THE WORLD – WELL, ALMOST**

**THERE'S A PHARAOH IN OUR BATH!**

**JEREMY STRONG'S LAUGH-YOUR-SOCKS-OFF JOKE BOOK**

**JEREMY STRONG'S LAUGH-YOUR-SOCKS-OFF EVEN MORE JOKE BOOK**

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**CHRISTMAS CHAOS FOR THE HUNDRED-MILE-AN-HOUR DOG**

**LOST! THE HUNDRED-MILE-AN-HOUR DOG**

**THE HUNDRED-MILE-AN-HOUR DOG GOES FOR GOLD**

**My Brother's Famous Bottom series**

**MY BROTHER'S FAMOUS BOTTOM**

**MY BROTHER'S HOT CROSS BOTTOM**

**MY BROTHER'S FAMOUS BOTTOM GETS PINCHED**

**MY BROTHER'S FAMOUS BOTTOM GOES CAMPING**



### 3. The Kiss That Changed the World

It was pretty quiet after that for a while, apart from the noise of Septicaemia screeching at Putuponn and telling the poor girl to get a move on or the sheets would still be wet that night.

Whaddya mean, so what? You don't understand, do you? Septicaemia and Crabbus have only got one set of bed sheets because, like everyone else on that side of the street, they're poor. They only managed to get a slave girl because she came cheap (the poor girl is boss-eyed). The Ghastlies don't even pay her. They just feed her scraps and make her sleep with the dog. That's Rome for you.

Like I said, things were quiet so I decided to hop across and go and see my pal the inventor, Maddasbananus. He's completely bonkers, in a nice way. He made me this 'thing' with an oil lamp. It's like a carousel and the heat from the lamp makes it rotate, and hanging from the carousel are little metal cloud shapes. When you light the lamp, the clouds go round and round and they throw big cloudy-shaped shadows on the walls of the room. It's the sort of thing you might give to a little baby, not a bloomin' great big, grown-up, black-as-soot raven.

'I made it to help you feel as if you're out in the open air, beneath the sky and the stars,' Maddasbananus explained.

'That's lovely and you are most kind,' I answered and gave a little bow of thanks and clacked my beak. *Toc-toc-toc*.

The cloud-carousel is very nice and I didn't have the heart to point out to Maddasbananus that (a) although I'm very clever, I can't light oil lamps because I don't have opposable thumbs. I have non-opposable wings, which are only good for flapping about so I would have to get someone else to light the carousel for me. And (b), when it gets dark, I don't light oil lamps anyway – I stick my head under one wing and go to sleep. Last but not least, (c) shadowy dark clouds usually mean it's going to rain, in which case I'd rather be indoors in a warm, dry villa listening to Perilus snoring. (I know, sad, isn't it? He's only eleven and he snores.) But that's Maddasbananus for you: helpful, kind – and bonkers.

Anyhow, he's been inventing again. He keeps making all this stuff. You've never seen anything like it. He's grinning from ear to ear, so obviously he is VERY pleased with himself.

'I'm going to make a fortune from my latest invention, Croakbag,' he said breathlessly. Mind you, he told me that last week with the other thing he invented. What did he call it? A telesomething. Telephone! That was it!



‘You can use this to talk to people even when they’re somewhere else,’ he told me.

‘Like when they’re in the bath?’ I suggested.

‘No, no, no, much further away than that. For example, if I was here and you were in Pompeii, I could talk to you.’

‘What? With that thing?’

Maddasbananus grinned and held it up. It was a curvy sort of object and Maddasbananus held it to one side of his head. The top bit was right by his ear and the bottom bit curved round to his mouth.



‘You speak into this bit and you hear out of this bit,’ he explained.

‘Right,’ I said. ‘But how does that work?’

‘Well, you have to have two of these. I have one and you’re in Pompeii and you have one. I speak into my bit and you can hear me in Pompeii. You speak into your bit and I can hear you back in Rome.’

I shook my head several times. ‘No. It won’t work,’ I told him.

‘Why not?’

I held out my wings. ‘Can’t hold it, can I? And if I held it with my beak I wouldn’t be able to say anything. *Ergo*, it won’t work.’ (*Ergo*; that’s another bit of your actual Latin and it means ‘therefore’. So now you know.) ‘Anyway,’ I went on, ‘how can I possibly hear you if you’re in Rome?’

‘Because it’s a telephone. That’s what the telephone does.’

‘All right, you show me. Go to the end of the street with this tele-phone thing and talk to me.’

‘I can’t do that yet.’ Maddasbananus frowned. ‘For a start, I’ve only made one and you need two for it to work – one for me and one for you. Also there are bits missing and I don’t know what they are because I haven’t invented them yet, and thirdly there needs to be some kind of power source to make it all work.’

‘A power source?’ I repeated. The only power source I could think of was a donkey. We use a lot of donkeys in Rome, mostly for pulling carts and carrying stuff, so I was having difficulty picturing how that would work. ‘You’d have to connect this thing to a donkey?’

Maddasbananus was staring at his invention with that faraway, dreamy, inventor’s kind of stare that inventors get when they’re inventing. At least Maddasbananus does.

‘Connect,’ he repeated several times. ‘That’s the word, Croakbag. Yes, I have to connect it to something I haven’t invented yet and put in the missing bits that I haven’t invented either, and when I’ve finished all that it will work. It will take the world by storm. One day everybody will have a telephone. I shall probably become a millionaire. But first I need a bit of money to get supplies. I don’t suppose you’ve got some you can lend me?’

‘You seem to have forgotten somethin’, Maddasbananus.’

‘Really? What’s that?’

‘I’m a raven and ravens don’t have pockets. Therefore, no money.’





Maddasbananus gave me a wistful smile and patted my head. ‘You, my friend, are much more than a raven.’

‘Really?’ My mind was boggling. What did that mean, MORE than a raven? What is more than a raven? Did he mean something bigger?

‘You mean I’m a buzzard? An eagle?’

But Maddasbananus was back in his inventing world and he drifted off, muttering to himself. ‘Connect. Only connect. Donkey, telephone – connect.’

But that was last week and he seemed to have already forgotten about it all because now he was full of his latest and greatest invention – a weaving machine.

‘It’s a lifesaver!’ yelled the great inventor. ‘It’s going to make me into a millionaire!’

Now where did I hear that before? Oh yes – the tele-phone. And before that the tree.

Whaddya mean, you can’t invent the tree? Actually, you’re right. You can’t. Have a biscuit. You can’t invent the tree and that is exactly what I told him.

‘They already exist,’ I pointed out.

‘Not this kind of tree,’ said Maddasbananus, waving his arms about. ‘This tree grows something, but not apples, not figs, not oranges. It grows ships. People won’t have to make ships any more because my tree will simply grow them.’



‘Fantastic,’ I nodded. ‘And how will your tree do that?’

‘Because that’s what it does. It’s a ship-tree.’

‘Yeah, OK, but just callin’ it a ship-tree doesn’t mean the tree will do it.’

‘No? Really?’

I shook my beak and he went off to think of something else. Anyhow, back to the weaving machine. Maddasbananus had dragged along a large wooden box with a lid on the top and a door at one end.

‘This,’ he declared, ‘is the world’s first weaving machine.’ He came up close and whispered to me.

‘I have made it for Trendia who is not only beautiful and a brilliant dressmaker, but also the most

wonderful woman in the world. When she sees this, she will fall in love with me and ask me to marry her.'

'I think you're supposed to ask her,' I pointed out.

'That's sexist,' said the inventor. 'The point is, this machine will help her with her dressmaking. She will think it's so wonderful she'll fall in love with me.'

'I do hope so,' I murmured. And I really did too. I'm very fond of Maddasbananus and he deserves to be with someone as good and kind as Trendia. After all, in a funny, fashion-y kind of way, she's an inventor too. However, now was not the time for Maddasbananus to go barging in on Trendia because, behind Maddasbananus's back, I could see something I didn't think my friend would want to see.

'I don't think you should go over there just yet,' I suggested.

'Oh? Why not?' And he turned round to look.

**NO! NO! DON'T LOOK! SHUT YOUR EYES, MADDASBANANUS! DON'T LOOK!**

Too late. As the inventor turned towards Trendia's little apartment he saw her put her hands on Scorcha's shoulders, lift up her face and kiss him.

**TRENDIA KISSED SCORCHA!**

**NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!**





## 4. Oh Dear!

Trendia, you're not supposed to do that! Poor Maddasbananus. He turned as white as a toga. (Obviously a white toga, not a purple one like the Emperor's.)

'Ooops,' I muttered. I know, silly really, but what else could I say? I felt so sorry for Maddasbananus. What was Trendia doing? I mean – kissing Scorcha IN PUBLIC like that?

Anyone could have seen them – and someone did. Septicaemia exploded out of the house like a nasty sneeze (probably one to go with the cold sore).

'You floozy! Shame on you!'

Trendia turned towards Septicaemia, saw Maddasbananus, turned very red, burst into tears, dashed back into her home and slammed the door so hard a crow perched on the porch fell off. Laugh? I almost died. **Kraaarrk!**

Septicaemia went straight to her neighbour to tell her what had happened and within a few minutes the whole street knew. Oh dear. Humans. What are they like? Humans, that's what they're like. Very silly, small-minded, gossipy humans.

Meanwhile, Scorcha stood there, hands on his hips, grinning at everyone, including Maddasbananus, who really couldn't stand that and went rushing off to his apartment and shut the door too, taking his weaving machine with him, so I still didn't know how it worked.



Scorcha wandered over to me and looked back at Maddasbananus's place. 'What's wrong with him?' he asked.

I shook my beak. I didn't know what to say.

Whaddya mean, that's a first? Listen, if I stopped talking, you wouldn't know anything, would you? You'd be in the dark. What I mean to say is that it's none of my business what goes on with Trendia. Her husband was a soldier, but he was in a battle and got a sword stuck in him, which wasn't very good for his health. So now she's on her own and if she likes Scorcha that's up to her, isn't it? I think he's a bit young for her, personally speaking, but there we go. What can you do?

Scorcha was still grinning and his eyes were shining. 'I've got my first race,' he said.

Aha! So maybe that kiss from Trendia was simply a congratulatory peck. Maybe. I would need more time to consider that.

'*Hoooweeee!*' I whistled. *Toc-toc-toc*. 'Amazin'! Congratulations! When?'

'In a couple of days,' said Scorcha. 'And if I do well I'll be in the Green Team.'

'How did this happen?' I asked. 'Why has Jellus changed his mind about you?'

'He didn't. He got a new horse last week and took it out riding before it was properly broken in.

Thinks he knows everything about horses, so it serves him right. He was riding down by the river and the horse got spooked by something and took off. Jellus fell and landed in the river. He's got some terrible fever he picked up from the water. You know how filthy the Tiber is. Jellus is sweating it out in bed and can't race, so I'm in!'



‘You’ll be great,’ I said, patting his shoulder with one wing. ‘Here’s Perilus. You’d better tell him the good news.’

It *was* good news too and it had Perilus practically squeaking with excitement.

‘We’ll all come and watch. It’s going to be the best race ever and you’re going to win!’

‘That is up to Fortuna, Goddess of Luck,’ said the soon-to-be charioteer. ‘I shall make an offering to her at the temple tonight.’

‘While you’re at it you’d better pray that Jellus doesn’t recover too soon,’ I suggested before waddling over to see Maddasbananus.

The inventor was sitting in his inventing room, looking very glum.

‘Cheer up,’ I said.

‘You saw, didn’t you? How can I cheer up? Trendia loves Scorcha, and why shouldn’t she? He’s young, handsome, dashing, successful – well, almost successful. And look at me. I’m old. I’m thirty-one! What have I achieved? Hardly anything. I’ve no money, no home of my own. I’m just a waste of space.’

I couldn’t listen to this. Here was the man who, a short time earlier, had been telling me I was more than a raven. (Which I’m still puzzling over, I have to say.) He definitely needed cheering up.

‘Come on,’ I said. ‘Scorcha isn’t that handsome. For a start, he’s got a honker even bigger than mine.’

Whaddya mean, nothing can be bigger than my beak? How dare you be so rude! Do I make remarks about your conk? No, I don't. Go and stand in the corner and stay there until I say you can come out.

I draped a comforting wing round Maddasbananus. He sneezed violently and quietly removed my tickly wingtip from up his left nostril, where it had somehow gone without me noticing.



‘Listen,’ I said, ‘you’re goin’ to be a millionaire soon. Show me your latest invention, your weavin’ machine. What does it do? How does it work?’

See what I was doing? I was taking his mind off his troubles. And it worked too. Am I clever? Yes, I am. Very. *Corvus maximus intelligentissimusimussimussimuss.*

Maddasbananus was already getting worked up about his latest idea.

‘It’s so simple I don’t know why nobody thought of it before. You put a sheep in here.’ He opened the door to what looked to me like a cupboard. That was because it was a cupboard. I recognized it from when it was beside his bed. But now I could see that the top was actually a lid and there were handles you could turn on each side.

‘You put a sheep in here and you fix all these wooden arms with little hooks to the sheep’s coat.’

Maddasbananus lifted the lid off the box so I could see inside. There were dozens of stick-like arms inside, arranged down the two longer sides of the box. Each little arm had a tiny hook on the end.

‘It looks rather unpleasant,’ I suggested.

‘No, no. It will just tickle,’ Maddasbananus insisted.

‘You’re goin’ to tickle a sheep?’

‘Of course not. It will just feel like tickling. Anyhow, you pop a sheep in the box and attach the little hooks. You close the door and put the lid down and then you turn both the handles. The handles jiggle all the hooks about madly –’

‘That’s the tickly bit,’ I put in.



‘Exactly. The hooks pull at the sheep’s coat and turn it into *cloth*. Ta-da!’

‘How does it turn it into *cloth*?’

‘Because that’s what a weaving machine does!’ Maddasbananus grinned.

I studied the box carefully. ‘It’s all very interestin’,’ I told the inventor. ‘Unfortunately, I do feel I should make you aware of one or two problems. One, Trendia doesn’t have a sheep and neither does anyone else on the street and, two, the sheep might die laughin’, havin’ been tickled to death.’

The crestfallen inventor stared at his machine. ‘It’s not going to work, is it?’

‘I doubt it.’

He slumped into a chair. ‘It’s really not my day. Trendia’s never going to marry me because I’m useless.’

Poor Maddasbananus. He looked at me with such sad eyes I just wanted to give him a hug. So I did. And a biscuit too. **Kraaarrk!**