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JAY WALKING

Headline hysteria and the cosmic destiny of fluffy dogs

By Jacqui Zurcher

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You're driving along a busy street and suddenly a stark poster fastened to a street lamp catches your eye. 'Actress Obesity Shock'. It's a major weekend newspaper headline. Geesh, I think. That must be serious to warrant a poster all to itself. I wonder who it is, how fat she has become and what small country she must be eating out of a staple foodstuff to warrant significant newsworthiness alongside political and sports events. We had just won the rugby after all.



Perhaps she performed some nefarious criminal act related to obesity. Could she be cultivating radioactive bacteria in the sweaty folds of swollen ankles? What could the shock be?

Later a friend arrives with said weekend paper in hand and I scour the front page for the story of the fat lady. Nope, it's not there. I find it on page three. Story is a liberal term for the coverage of the buxom actress. A fatty and a thinny photograph accompanied by a few emotive phrases including 'ballooned almost beyond recognition' were all that appeared.

Well I could identify her and I don't consider myself unusually gifted in the area of celebrity recognition. She had picked up a few stone as the Brits would say, but that was it. Who cares? She's a cool woman and her weight is her own business. Criminal behaviour did not feature. Her food consumption had been confined to her very own first world country and her rotund parts had not taken the law into their own hands in any way.

It wasn't even a shock. Three weeks ago an almost identical fatty photograph of the actress appeared as a small feature on the celebrity interest page of a popular weekly magazine.

Why then, in the absence of anything vaguely newsworthy about this woman's weight gain, had I been accosted by a poster shouting 'Actress Obesity Shock'?

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Leigh Robertson,
Highlife Editor

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If the newspapers have to sink to tabloid-like shock headlines, let them go the whole hog. If they are going to try and bait a sensation-obsessed public, at least deliver the goods.

Give us an obese actress and then provide some analysis. Make this a story if it warrants a headline. Instead of a few atrocious exaggerated phrases related to her weight gain, fill us in on the details.

It has been rumoured that she has ballooned because her alien lover (unbeknownst to her, a microscopic, highly evolved organism living in the label of her favourite GAP sweatshirt) injected her with an otherworldly serum a few months ago. This serum, a distillation of the nasal effluent of a rare intergalactic insect found only on asteroids, will gradually morph the once svelte actress into a grotesque blob-like extra-terrestrial from the planet Xaxon.

Her form will inspire shock and horror here on earth, but her mind will be attuned to the battalion of motherships currently concealed in the earth's fiery core. At the appointed time, her masters shall communicate with her via super long-range telepathy and organic root vegetables, particularly carrots.

It is at this stage that their once human vessel will execute their dastardly plan.

An ancient prophet foretold that to restore balance to the Xaxonian solar system when the purple moon faded to pink, a great pilgrimage would have to be undertaken to a distant planet, Earth. Here the long lost Xaxonian totem animal would be found.

Millions of years earlier this revered animal has died out due to unfavourable climactic conditions and a particularly virulent mange plague.

Now the Xaxions have gathered in the earth's core, taken control of a human vessel and are about to recover their scared beast. Every such animal will vanish from the earth when the vessel (our large actress) performs the recalling ritual. The favoured ones will be transported to Xaxon where the climate is once again favourable and mange treatments have come a long way.

So it will come to pass, that poodles will vanish from the earth to fulfil their sacred destiny.

If the weekend papers are going to try and pass off drab trivia as headline news, they might as well add some colour.

Poodle lovers better keep a close eye on the actress just in case.


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