
The Queen of Garbage

Strawla believes that people still don't care about the environment. Join her journey to prove this. Is she right?





The Queen of Garbage
John Frederic C. Bugayong

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The mixture of smells from spoiled food, rotten vegetable peels, dead animals, and other trash from humans gives life to the kingdom of Calajunan. Here, you can find different kinds of garbage and their queen, Strawla. Strawla, red in color and as long as the width of a hand and a half, is made of plastic. She thinks highly of herself because she comes from a famous coffee shop in the city.



"After using us, humans left us here, purposeless and forgotten!" Queen Strawla ranted. "But, Your Majesty, there are now people who gather us for recycling," replied one of the plastic bottles.



"Yes, indeed. But many others are still unaware of how to separate their trash and are not following laws and regulations," Queen Strawla said. "I have also observed that humans are slowly changing, our dear Queen," said a crumpled piece of paper. The other garbage agreed and nodded.



"That is not true! I will prove to all of you that humans have not changed!" Strawla insisted.



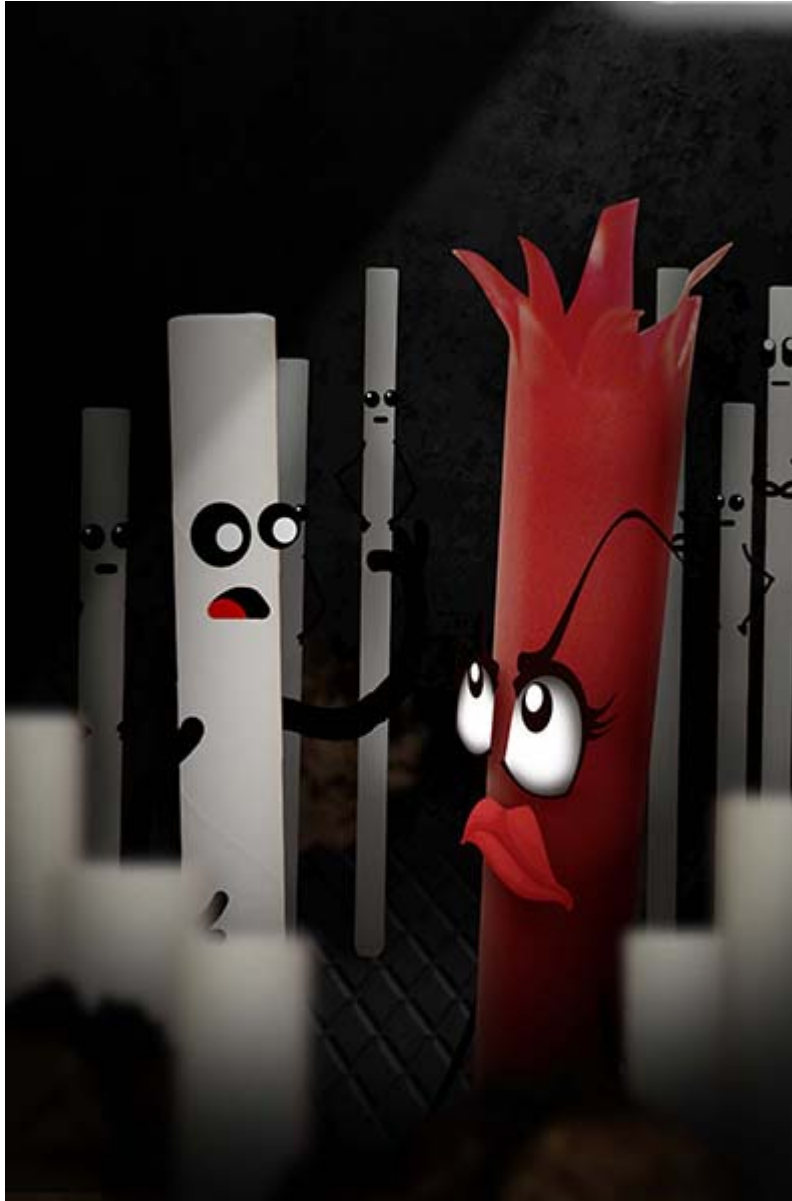
"What will you do about that, our dear Queen?" asked a rusty can of sardines. "I will get revenge and let humans feel how strong we are!" shouted Queen Strawla. Her evil laugh could be heard throughout the kingdom of Calajunan.



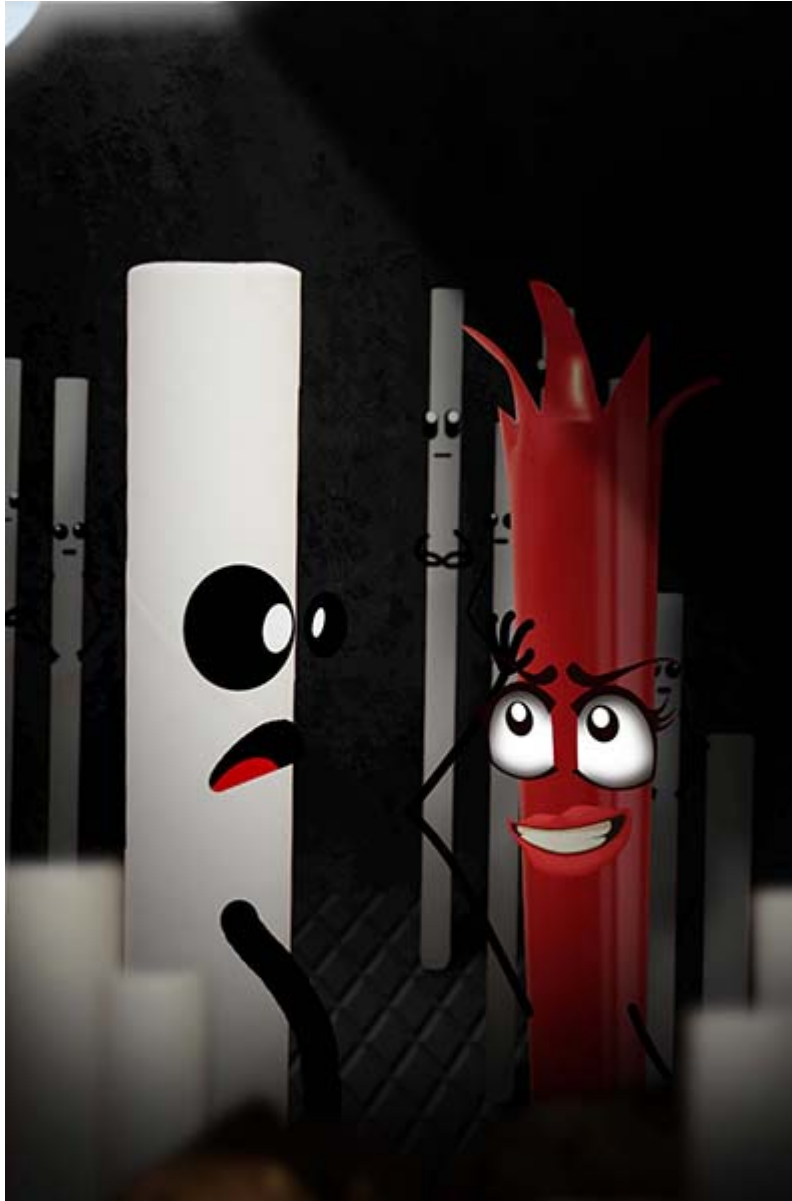
To carry out her plan, Strawla headed to the city to prove that humans still hadn't changed. She started in the garbage cans near the cafe where she'd come from. There, she saw other straws just like her.



"Why are you here?" asked a white straw."Join me, and together let's go against the humans. They still do not know how to separate plastic from those that rot!" summoned Strawla.



"But we are not made of plastic. We are made of paper and can all decay," said another white straw. "You mean humans aren't using plastic straws like me anymore?" asked Strawla in disbelief.



"Yes. It's been a while. You'd better leave, because everyone here is perishable," added another paper straw. The others shooed her away. Strawla just smiled at them. A plastic smile.



Dismayed, she continued on her journey through the city. She headed to the sewer, where she knew that plastic garbage would be stranded and blocking the flow of water. "This time, I am sure that my fellow plastics are here, and then I can prove that humans still haven't changed," she told herself.



Strawla's face paled in surprise when she saw how clean the sewer was. The water was clear and flowing continuously. There was not a single piece of trash dangling or floating in the sewer.



When she looked up, she saw a sign hanging on a post: "PLASTIC-FREE TOWN." She smiled again. Her plastic smile.



Strawla's plastic body felt like melting with what she'd discovered, but she did not lose hope. She headed down the beach, where she knew garbage would be found.



Suddenly, she found a group of young people picking up garbage by the seashore. They were laughing and competing to see who could grab the garbage first. They were collecting plastic bottles, plastic bags, tiny cans, and anything and everything that could be used and repurposed again. Finally, with all the anger, frustration, and sadness that Strawla felt inside her plastic body, she decided that she would just end her journey and return to Calajunan.



On her way back to Calajunan, she passed a place where used plastic straws were being washed. The newly clean straws were like a rainbow of colors that had been turned into beautiful bags, sandals, and sleeping mats.



Strawla went to them and smiled. A genuine smile.



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