

You may have an aunt who pinches your cheeks, a step-uncle who chews with his mouth open, or a grandmother who smells like fruitcake and sings an awful rendition of “Mary Had A Little Lamb.” These are very dire and desperate circumstances, but all of your dysfunctional relatives combined couldn’t match the awfulness associated with a man by the name of Count Olaf, one of the most dastardly, a word which here means “malevolent,” villains in the entire universe. I shudder, shake, and have nightmares about zombie realtors whenever I find scraps of newspapers blowing around the streets telling about the malevolent, a word which here means “spiteful,” deeds committed by Olaf and his crew.

I have a relative living in the city who, although somewhat dull, is very skilled at passing on information, especially information involving a certain three-lettered secret organization. My relative, who I shall just refer to as J, informed me that posters for a new play by Al Funcoot were rapidly appearing in all the districts around the city. Now, if you have seen any previous plays by Al Funcoot, such as the sickening *The Most Handsome Man In The World* and its equally nauseating companion *Why, I Believe I’ve Become Even More Handsome!*, then you may be wondering why this information is so vital while vomiting up your dinner in the lavatory. The reason my legs turned to jelly when I heard this terrible news is because Al Funcoot is an acronym for Count Olaf, a phrase which here means “another one of Olaf’s disguises.” Immediately after hearing the news of the corrupt Count being in the city, I decided to investigate

and went to stay with my relative. Although I didn't have to pay hotel fees, I did have to suffer through an awful narrative about a bag of rutabaga-flavored potato chips and a coffee grinder.

Walking down the boulevards and sauntering up the avenues of the city on an overcast partly cloudy early evening, I noticed the mysterious posters on the walls and cryptic announcements on the partitions of assorted shops and various boutiques advertising Count Olaf's newest theatrical production:



Something seemed awkward about that poster, and I'm not talking about the 'Avocado Aficionado' part. I'm talking about the stars of the show. First of all, Oto and Rola sound like a couple of cows on Old MacDonald's farm. And secondly, any play that has something to do with Al Funcoot would obviously have something to do with Count Olaf, since

they are the same person. Oto Nuclaf was another acronym disguise, and Rola Esqueems was his girlfriend Esmé Squalor, the-city's-sixth-most-important- financial-advisor-recently-turned-evil-villain's-girlfriend, who has to be the absolute worst actress I've ever had the displeasure of seeing in the theatre. But for the safety of the city, I had to force myself to see *I'm An Orphan Loving Fortune Adoring Avocado Aficionado!* I didn't eat or drink anything beforehand, just in case.

The Very Famous Dancehall was packed with many vain fickle dimwits who seemed to be very excited for the vehemently foul drama to commence. I could barely find it within me to sit down. If only those affluent fools in the hall had realized that the main star in the show was Count Olaf, the terrible man who had tried to wed a fourteen year old girl in *The Marvelous Marriage* just a short time ago! But the audience seemed hypnotized by the dreadful opening number "He Likes Orphans, Fortunes, And Guacamole Ingredients!" sung by a horribly off-pitch Esmé, a.k.a. Rola Esqueems. The spectators clapped and cheered after the vile "I'm Mad About Children Without Parents, Wealth, and Dark Green Fruit!" I was about to doze off during the somniferous "There Really Is A Point To This Whole Play!" when the lyrics caught my attention:

*We're here because of one reason  
And not because it's avocado season!  
We desperately needed money for a hotel  
The Denouement, it's really swell  
Well, Well, Well, Well, Well  
To get revenge on three orphans*

*Who look like miniature sea serpents  
We guess it's time to pull the curtains  
We are certain, certain, certain  
It's time to pull the curtains  
We just came here to say  
There really is a point to this whole play!  
Hip Hip Hooray!*

I sat in utter shock for a few moments. The realization of Count Olaf's plan would come later, because for now I was wondering how anybody would have the nerve to rhyme 'orphans' with 'serpents' and 'curtains.' But I had to move past the disastrous rhyming situation to a far more grave one, unfortunately. All of the pieces had fallen into place. Olaf and his crew, frantic for some cash, decided to put on a play to raise money for rooms at the Hotel Denouement, the last safe place where all of the good members of V.F.D., including the Baudelaire orphans, were meeting. Olaf's intentions were clear: to raze the hotel and leave V.F.D. up in smoke once and for all. But I intended for things to be right. The spiteful, a word which here means 'dastardly,' Count Olaf and his band of criminals wouldn't get away with burning our beloved association to the ground. For once in his life, Olaf would be Very Firmly Destroyed.