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D I R E C T C U R R E N T S

In response to popular request (well, DGV requested it, and he's fairly popular in APA L when he's actually writing for the group), we present herein a list of recipients of APA L 68:

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- 44.Paul Turner
- 45.Phil Castora
- 46.Neah Reynolds
- 47.Tom Dupree

incomplete copies were not kept track of

FRED WHITLEDGE: Frapping right I'm free to insist that youngsters should have the same right to choose what they read as I have! You simply cannot keep kids away from the "wrong" literature by depriving them of it completely. They will simply go underground, get copies from their friends, read it in secret, and not tell you about it or bring it home. Who is to say what is "wrong" for a child to read? At 13-15, my parents threw a fit when I read Thorne Smith pocketbooks -- even the ones that didn't have a nude on the cover! It didn't stop me from buying the books, but it did stop me from reading them around my parents. This is smart? This is better than trying to convince a kid there is better material to read by giving him some and letting him compare? Pfu!

FRED PATTEN: Congratulations on the new car, and Gooooo Luuuuck on getting it to last ten years! I am duly envious of your being able to pay cash for the thing (though I hope you never get in a spot where you need credit, since you are not establishing any when you always pay cash.) We went out this past weekend and bought a car, too, but it wasn't (1)new, or (2) paid for in cash. It's an econoline van, stripped down to absolute essentials, and colored blue. It's big and bulky, so Dian dubbed it Babe the Blue Ox. Stet. Hopefully, since it's two years newer than the Dammit (for those unfamiliar with the latter, it's the 1961 Corvair wagon which got us to Discon and back, then got worse and worse until it threatened to throw a rod last week), it will last for a couple years, including a trip to Tricon. Passengers ride with us now at their own risk; Babe has no back seats at all, (For the Tricon trip we'll throw some mattresses in back and make a camper out of it, probably.)

RUTH BERMAN: The Fanquet Candidates on the bacover of D66 were Zeke Leppin, Bill Ellern, and Ted Johnstone.

What are you planning to do now you're back in Minneapolis? I trust you will like APA L enough to continue in it and keep us informed.

DWAIN KAISER: Where are you buying multi mats that they're costing 22¢? When I used Duplimats in Florida, they were about 5 or 6¢ each in a box of 100. They can't have gone up that much in 6 years!

The following persons have signed a petition to the effect that none of their contributions to APA L from June 1965 through May 1966 can be used in any anthology other than BEST FROM APA L until that one has had a chance to pick its selections: Bruce Pelz, Len Bailes, Ed Cox, Dave Hulan, Fred Hollander, Al Lewis, John Trimble, Milt Stevens, Fred Patten, Tom Gilbert, Bjo Trimble, June Konigsberg, Mike Klassen, Bill Glass, and Dian Pelz. Other signatories are welcome. It should be pointed out that APA L, being a closed group, constitutes a common-law copyright for all contributors' material.

The above will not, however, prohibit anyone from gleaning items from mailings/distributions 1-32.

For a while I thought it was a typo, but you use it too consistently, so it must be just an error: "contib." Under no known system of shortening words (that I know of, anyway) can you get "contib" out of "contribution" or "contributor." You got your r's in a sling again?

BILL GLASS: Typos and all, "Hello Frodo!" is delightfully terrible, and maybe there will be an I PALANTIR #4 after all. As you correspond better than I, thank Kathy Huber for a marvelous job -- she's turned out more parody in this bit than all the LA parodists combined have turned out in the past six months (though there seems to be a resurgence lately.)

"Hello Frodo" may not borrow any songs from G&S, but quite a bit of the dialog is direct from there -- and to quite good effect.

DUNCAN MCFARLAND: Though having more than one entity be omnipotent in the same space-time-dimensional continuum is logically contradictory (I added the space and dimensional terms to the limits, as you mentioned only simultaneity -- time), there is still the possibility that many people/entities could be without limit of capabilities -- as opposed to being without limit to abilities. This way they would have to continue learning, and that would eliminate the boredom an eternal would otherwise suffer.

Strangely enough, fanzines can improve one's mind as well as books, especially if one is a serendipidist who squirrels away strange facts as they come to light. "All knowledge is contained in fanzines," as the Living Legend once said.

DON FITCH: He who sendeth his fanzines to the bindery and warneth not the bindery so that they trim not the edges thereon is a dunce and deserveth to have words chopped from off the edges therefrom. Verily is it written that in any APA mailing or any set of APA Distributions there existeth at least one buffoon who publisheth too close to the edge.

Your advice on how to become a part of the LASFS is quite good; you just didn't carry it far enough. After one publishes, becomes acquainted, and works himself into an ingroup of the LASFS, then he can ignore the LASFS and go spend the entire meeting time in the back room, since everyone knows there is nothing worthwhile at the meetings themselves. Right?

ANDY PORTER: Are you really goofing the bit on Terwilleger and SATA, or are putting Dwain on?

# The Hound of the Bastervilles

by E. Jerome Poinc

Sitting contemplatively before the fire in our Baker Street residence, I considered the crisp inflection in Colmes's voice when for the eighth time in as many years I asked his leave to reveal the following narrative. He pursed his thin lips thoughtfully, toying with the tobacco he kept in a Cossack boot. It was a rare occurrence, indeed, to see Shylock Colmes hesitate. However, after a moment or two of indecision he nodded, saying, "Very well, Watston, if you must." Without so much as a parting word, he turned from the fire, reaching for his deerstalker, and left our blazing hearth for the fog-bound streets of London.

The regional fire volunteers interrupted my reminiscences of the more unique aspects of the Basterville case by their quick response to the billowing clouds of smoke issuing from our windows. Finding myself unable to concentrate amidst their activity, I aided, as best I could, their onslaught against the rampant flames. As good must triumph over evil, so too we quenched the fire.

After the departure of the volunteers, I inspected the charred remains of our sitting room, suspecting arson -- conceived, no doubt, in the warped mind of Maury Arte. I wondered if perhaps Colmes had detected the insidious hand of the professor in what had transpired. Although he seemed oblivious of the conflagration while we spoke, I detected a slight tremble of his left aquiline nostril, one of Colmes's many nervous reactions, which I had grown to recognize over the years, when he scented the prospect of an emerging case.

Colmes's periodic reticence to have the details of the hound of the Bastervilles revealed was quite understandable considering the personal aspects of the case. A most remarkable woman had been involved. To him she was always the woman. I seldom if ever heard him refer to her by any other name. In his eyes, in a somewhat distorted way, she transcends all others of her sex. It was not that Colmes felt any emotion approaching love for Pollyanna Adlor. All emotions, and those of love in particular, were and are abhorant to his precise coldly dissecting mind. He never refers to the softer passions, save with a sneer. Colmes, I believe, is more a reasoning, calculating machine which has shed from itself all vestiges of natural human desires. However, this narrative is not a discourse of the man's character, although it does of necessity bare much of his granite soul, but rather an account of one of his most terrifying and perplexing cases.

I had been seeing little of Colmes at the time. My taking up residence, before my declining years would have made it impossible, with a most delightful habituee of the night had drifted us away from each other. How well I remember the evening when I departed with my belongings. Although Colmes said nothing, his contemptuous smirk hurt me to the quick. The heartless expression and the condescending melody he was playing on his oboe was a ridicule I vowed not to accept, even from him with whom I had shared lodgings and many flirtations with death. Had I possessed a keener insight at the time, I might have realized that his reaction was perhaps a concealed feeling of loss which this emotionless individual could not express. Nevertheless, we saw little of each other.

It was on a balmy afternoon, while taking my daily constitutional (the sojourn with the young woman invigorated me considerably), that I turned my steps to the familiar cobblestones of Baker Street. Knocking hesitantly at the door, I experienced some anxiety as to how Colmes would greet me. As there was no response, I let myself in with the latch-key I had retained as a cherished remembrance.

The sitting room was still the same: the Cossack boot with its shag cut tobacco on the mantel, the many technical volumes and scrapbooks scattered haphazardly about, Colmes's microscope poised over a sperm-covered slide. I recalled an account in the newspaper that Colmes had recently investigated the now infamous Countess Potrzebojewski paternity suit. It was all Colmes, excluding, of course, the contents of the slide, and I felt an overwhelming desire to once more take up residence in Baker Street.

I was startled out of my reverie by a faint whispering outside the door. Having been conditioned by the rigorous demands of preparedness while with the Fourth Northumberland Fusiliers, my reflexes responded quickly. Grasping Colmes's Indian Thug strangling cord, I stealthily opened the door. It was embarrassing, even though I was alone, to find beyond the door no more vicious an assailant than an infant in a basket, whimpering -- I presumed for the warm security of its wayward mother's breast. No message was affixed to the blanket, nor did a cursory inspection of the hallway and stairs leading down to the ground floor reveal any significant clues. I carried my newly acquired charge into the room, and as one having some training in pediatrics, made the infant as comfortable as possible.

Taking it upon myself to do so, I removed the diaper from Colmes's scrapbook, which had become renowned during the case of the Marauding Midget, and substituted it for the one the infant had unknowing made uncomfortable. It was a tender moment, my caring for this infant, experiencing a longing for socially acceptable fatherhood, for the laughter and tears of child heirs. The doleful expression in the infant's eyes warmed my heart, and I gently kissed its thin golden curls. I was about to seek out the dear old soul of a housekeeper, who cared for our needs and rooms, to request a cup of warm milk for the emaciated innocent, when who but Colmes should leap out of the basket with an ecstatic laugh, "Ah, Watston, Watston, will you never learn to be observant?"

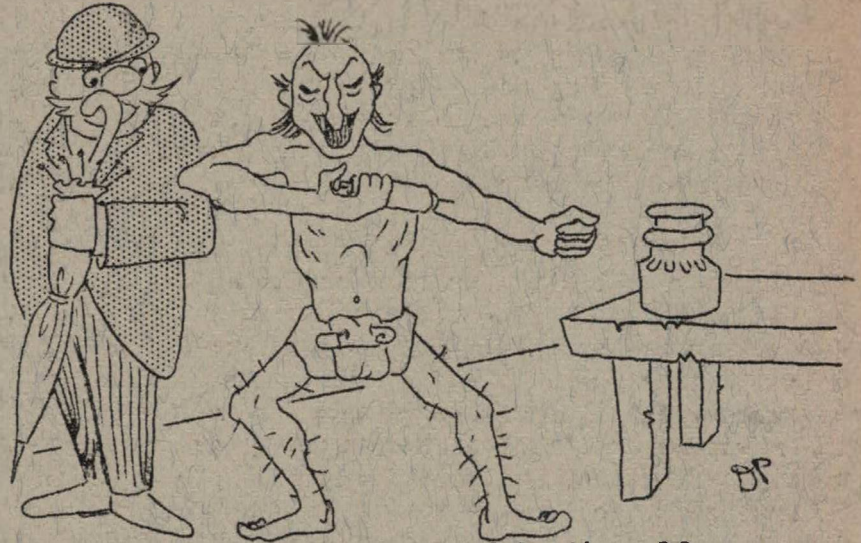


"Colmes!"

"Indeed, Watston, Colmes."

I shook my head in bewilderment, "Colmes, your disguises never cease to amaze me."

"Quite. However, Watston, pleased though I am to see you here, we have more important things to do than eulogize my talents." Colmes walked quickly to the window, his left nostril violently convulsing, and peered out. I suspected that something was amiss. Still scrutinizing the breadth of Baker Street, Colmes reached automatically for his syringe and container of cocaine.



"Colmes, you shouldn't," I reprimanded, concerned for my friend's welfare.

But he shrugged and injected the vile fluid into his pulsating vein with the anticipating sigh so characteristic of narcotic fiends. Although I had saddened visions of his brilliant mind wasting away, victim of his habit, I was even more distressed by the happenings of the moment. Colmes, obviously involved in some new adventure, was resorting to the narcotic which he previously reserved only for moments of boredom and inactivity. Little did I know at the time that the woman was the sole cause of his frustration.

As the insidious liquid coursed through his bloodstream, Colmes drifted from the window and slumped into his favorite chair in a lethargic state. "Sit down, Watston," his sepulchral eyes twinkled with sardonic amusement. "I see, Watston, that you and your mistress had come to disagreement while indulging. You really should not have left in such hurried anger."

Again, as numerous times in the past, I was amazed by his deductive powers, for, in truth, exactly what Colmes said had happened. I blurted, "Colmes, how... how in the name of heaven short of peering through the windows of our lodgings could you know?"

Colmes laughed. His almost childish delight with my bewilderment was perhaps the only remnant this man had of a human heritage. He stretched out his long thin legs, placing his hands behind his head and said, "How did I know? Absurdly simple. You are a man of habit, Watston, habit and stringent adherence to the demands of superficial propriety, even though you have taken up with a strumpet. My dear fellow, your fly is opened and you are embarrassingly void of underclothing. What but a heated disagreement and resulting anger during the course of indulgence would send a man of your dignity out into London's streets in such a state of hurried dress?"

I turned my back to Colmes, struggling with a mounting blush and persistently elusive buttonholes, commenting, "Brilliant, Colmes, brilliant."

"Elementary, my dear Watston, elementary." He paused for a moment, becoming gravely serious. "Watston, you've heard of Renfrew Basterville?"

It was more of a command than a question. I searched my memory. "Renfrew?... Lord Carlton Basterville's son?"

"Yes, yes," Colmes snapped impatiently.

"I believe I've heard of him."

"Lord Basterville is dead."

"How unfortunate." Never having met the man, I felt nothing more than an abstract sympathy for his family.

Colmes chuckled, "Gnawed, horribly mangled to death."

"Ghastly."

"Quite. And, my dear fellow, whoever is planning to do away with the Basterville line is now aware that I have been retained to investigate. An attempt has been made on my life -- unsuccessful, but, Watston...an attempt! Observe..." Colmes bared his posterior, disclosing hideous fang marks.

"Good Lord, Colmes, have you had it tended to?"

"Nonsense. It's nothing but a superficial wound penetrating the lower region of the sphincter muscle." Colmes had an enormous medical background. In his youth, he had devoted considerable time and research in the morgue whipping cadavers, in an attempt to determine if bruises could be inflicted on a body after death.

"Watston," Colmes continued, "will you accompany me to the Basterville Manor? I promise you an escapade with a singularly terrifying individual -- and it is an individual, despite Renfrew Basterville's hysterical babbling of a family curse and some moor monster which purportedly has been plaguing the family for generations. When I am forced to return to my lodgings disguised as an infant, you may be sure we are dealing with more than a myth or mediocre cut-throat."

"But, Colmes, these wounds of yours, how..."

"Most perplexing, Watston. A few nights ago, I was making cursory inspection of the Basterville grounds when I was engulfed by unconsciousness. When I came to my senses, I felt the warm seepage of blood. Note, Watston, I was unconscious. I could have been done away with; but no, the one with whom we are dealing had a moment of caprice, a moment of humor. Of what is it indicative, Watston?"

"Obviously, a mad man."

"Perhaps, and yet, how thin a line there is between insanity and genius. However, at the moment, that is inconsequential. Will you accompany me or are you too attached to your strumpet to partake in a bit of adventure?"

I ignored Colmes's caustic remark, fairly trembling in anticipation of one more journey along the high road of danger before my advancing age forced me into the reveries of uselessness. "Of course I shall accompany you, Colmes." And so our adventure began.

The long ride to Scotland was an uncomfortable one for Colmes, his recent injury having made sitting for any length of time virtually impossible. He was in an ill humor, and it was quite obvious to me that Lord Basterville's assailant would be hurriedly dispatched to the gaol. Colmes reached into his coat pocket for the Cossack's boot (I have never known him to undertake a case without its accompanying him), and pensively filled his pipe bowl with shag. He said little, and his moodiness prevailed until we approached by carriage the Basterville Manor.

It was a damp night, with chill winds blowing from the moors. Colmes walked quickly up the path, his eagle eyes flitting about the shadows, sniffing with his hawk-like nose. When on a case, Colmes behaved much like a bird of prey.

"Smell, Watston!" he directed.

Experiencing a feeling of foreboding, I inhaled, detecting a sickening sweet odor. "What is it, Colmes? Cyanide? Formaldehyde? A hitherto unknown savage gas?"

"Heather," he sighed, and stooped, picking a purpleish pink flower from a shrub.



Feeling somewhat the fool, although I had been trained in the Fourth Northumberland Fusiliers to anticipate the dangers of poisonous gases, I followed Colmes to the door.

It was opened by a young man who was obviously the scion of the noble Basterville family. "Thank God, Mr. Colmes," he said, terror etched in his decadent young face. "Thank God you've come. A most horrible..."

Colmes interrupted, "Spare yourself the pain of telling me. I detect another tragedy. Lady Basterville is dead."

Renfrew sobbed, "Yes...but...how did you know?"

Though cognizant of the young man's sorrow, Colmes smiled wryly. "My dear sir, ladies of your mother's position are not given to reclining in heather shrubs in a mangled state of near nudity."

"You...you saw her."

"The trained eye is just that, my good but bereaved fellow...trained! Trained to observe even what appears to be a most insignificant detail. Of course, I knew immediately -- a bit of intestine here, a tibia there, a bare hint of liver...ah-hah!"



With the speed of a pouncing cat, Colmes fell to the floor, scrutinizing a bit of dust with his magnifying lens and muttering abstractedly, "Uh huh ...uh...hmmmm...heh, heh, heh...ah? Ah-hah!"

Distraught, young Basterville fell to the floor beside Colmes.

"Have you found something, Mr. Colmes? Have you? Oh, dear, dust." Even in his sorrow, young Basterville was a fastidious man. He quickly brushed away the dust with his kerchief, apologizing, "Our housekeeper, quite inadequate."

"Desist!" Colmes shouted, grasping for the wafting bits of dust. "Clues, man, clues...No matter, no matter. I have the juxtaposition of the particles clearly pictured in my mind." Brushing the dust from his trousers, Colmes stood up thoughtfully stroking his chin. "I should like to see your housekeeper, if I may."

"Certainly, Mr. Colmes."

When young Basterville left the room to fetch the housekeeper, Colmes turned quickly to me, whispering, "Watston, I trust your pistol is well at hand."

"No, but I have a musket artfully concealed in my pant leg."

"Huh," Colmes grunted, "that explains it. I presumed that you were thinking of your strumpet. No matter, be prepared, Watston."

"Of course, Colmes. After all, the Fourth Northumberland Fusiliers trained me to..."

Colmes interrupted impatiently, "Yes, yes, I know. Nevertheless, be on your guard."

"But surely, Colmes, you don't mean that you already know who..."

"A few loose ends to be gathered, Watston, nothing more."

Before I could continue my inquiry, young Basterville returned with the housekeeper. She was a subtly lovely woman in her middle years of life. Basterville introduced her with more familiarity than one would expect to exist between master and servant.

"Mr. Colmes, Doctor Watston, my housekeeper, Pollyanna...eh, Miss Pollyanna Adler."

Holmes scrutinized her icily, responding caustically, "Ah, yes, your ...housekeeper?"

The woman looked back at Colmes with an equally cold expression, and spoke with mock subservience, "Yes, Mr. Colmes."



Colmes responded sharply, "Then how, pray tell, has it happened that you neglected to wash away from the wall this word ROACH, which, although caked and dried now, was obviously written with a bloody finger?"

Pollyanna Adlor glanced at the wall and the cryptic letters which extended from the baseboard to very near the ceiling. "I fear it escaped my notice, Mr. Colmes."

"Come now, woman, am I to believe that?"

What Miss Adlor's response might have been will never be known, for at that instant we were startled to hear a most unearthly howl emanating from the moors. Young Basterville paled visibly. "The curse, Mr. Colmes!"

Colmes smiled enigmatically. "Ah, yes, the curse indeed. Come, Watston, shall we retire? I presume, Miss Adlor, our rooms are ready?"

I must confess I was distressed by Colmes's lack of sensitivity; to think of retiring when the young master of the house was in such a state. "But Colmes, surely you can't think of retiring when..."

Before I could voice further objection, Colmes stopped me with a sharp kick to the ankle. I suspected then that his sudden desire to retire was but a ruse. "Come to think of it, Colmes, I'm a trifle weary myself."

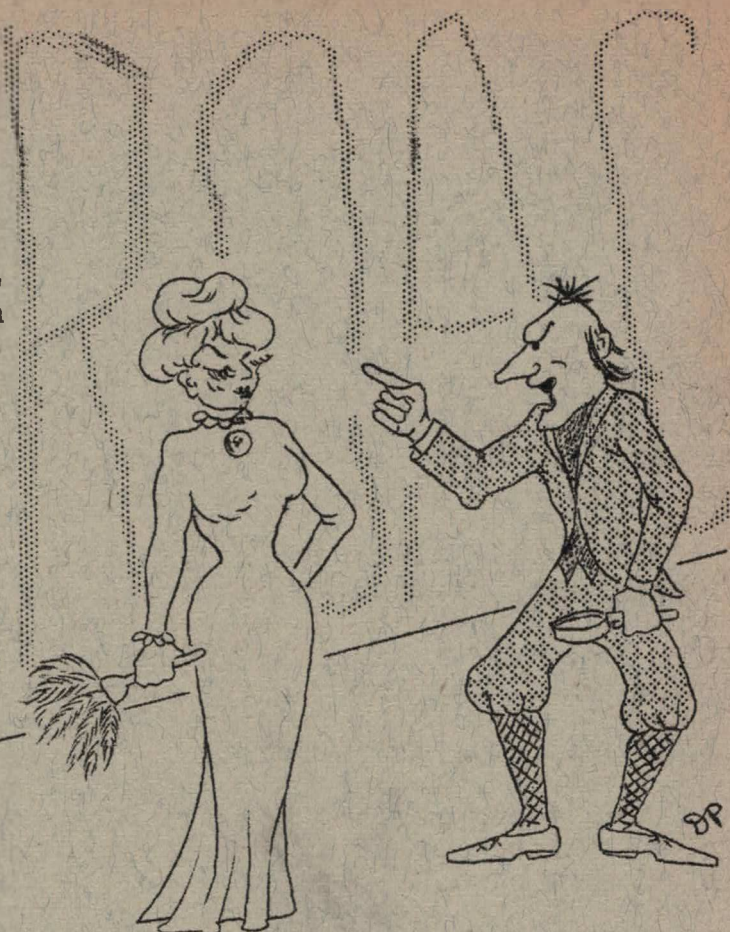
In the privacy of our rooms, Colmes paced the floor restlessly. "Interesting, Watston, most interesting. What do you make of the bloody letters on the wall?"

I pondered the question for a moment. "A message, perhaps, a tortured attempt to reveal the killer, written by a dying hand...Lady Basterville's."

"Wrong, Watston; a message, yes, but not Lady Basterville's. What remained of her hand in the heather was gloved. I detected no bits of thread or lint in the dried blood. I think we should be safe in assuming that it is a message, indeed; but not from a victim, but from a shrewd assailant who would resort to this subterfuge to put us off the scent."

"But, Colmes, how..."

"Had you observed, Watston, you would have seen a microscopically tiny particle of dried blood under the nail of Miss Adlor's right fore-



finger."

"But Colmes, this lovely woman surely isn't a murderess. Perhaps the blood was nothing more than from a rare beef she may have been preparing for dinner."

"Nonsense, Watston. Had you studied the character of bloods as intensely as I, you would have discovered that the blood of nobility, such as the Bastervilles, is much richer than that of a commoner, let alone that of a side of beef."

"Isn't that a trifle snobbish, Colmes?"

"Quite. Time is short, Watston. We must quickly act. Do I strike you as a marrying man?"

"Hardly, my dear Colmes. I could think of nothing more ludicrous."

"And yet, Watston, congratulations are in order, for I intend to court Miss Adlor."

"Colmes!" I ejaculated happily, "has she stolen your heart away?"

Colmes snickered caustically. "I pray not in the same manner she did Lord and Lady Basterville's -- for, whether she wielded the implement of death or not, I do believe she inspired their unfortunate demise."

"But why should Miss Adlor have wanted them dead? I fail to see how she would benefit...unless...of course! I have it, Colmes: she and young Basterville...together have conspired for the family fortune."

"Interesting, Watston, but pathetically wrong. The Bastervilles, other than this manor, were poor as church mice. No, my dear fellow. We have motives far more complex, which as yet I do not fully understand. The loose ends I mentioned: they must be gathered, Watston, gathered."

"Colmes, what of the moor monster, the mangling killer?"

"Humbug, an exploitation of superstition. The howl we heard was a wild dog's, or wolf's, nothing more, I assure you. Silence now, I must think."

Colmes stretched in a chair, pulling his deerstalker over his eyes, giving every appearance of a sleeping man but for the haunting melody he was playing on the oboe which he had brought along. Suddenly Colmes sprang to his feet, cursing. "What a fool I've been, Watston, what an abysmal fool. Hurry, man, outside with you to Miss Adlor's bedroom window, and have your musket at hand."

"Of course, Colmes, but what..."

"Make haste, Watston!"

Breathless from the exertion of a hurried run out of the manor, I peered through the woman's window. Pollyanna Adlor was standing in a dressing gown before a mirror, combing her long tresses, and although I thought it a dastardly deed to spy upon a woman as she tended to her toilette, I must admit I was fascinated by her beauty. The window was

partially open, enabling me to overhear whatever conversation would transpire. There was a soft knock at her door.

"Who is it?" she inquired.

I heard Colmes's voice responding, "Colmes, Miss Adlor. I come in regard to a matter of the heart. May I be admitted?"

"Come in, Mr. Colmes."

Colmes entered humbly.

"Why, Mr. Colmes, what a surprise."

Colmes sniffed. "A rare perfume indeed. Azteca, is it not, Miss Adlor?"

"You are a connoisseur, Mr. Colmes?"

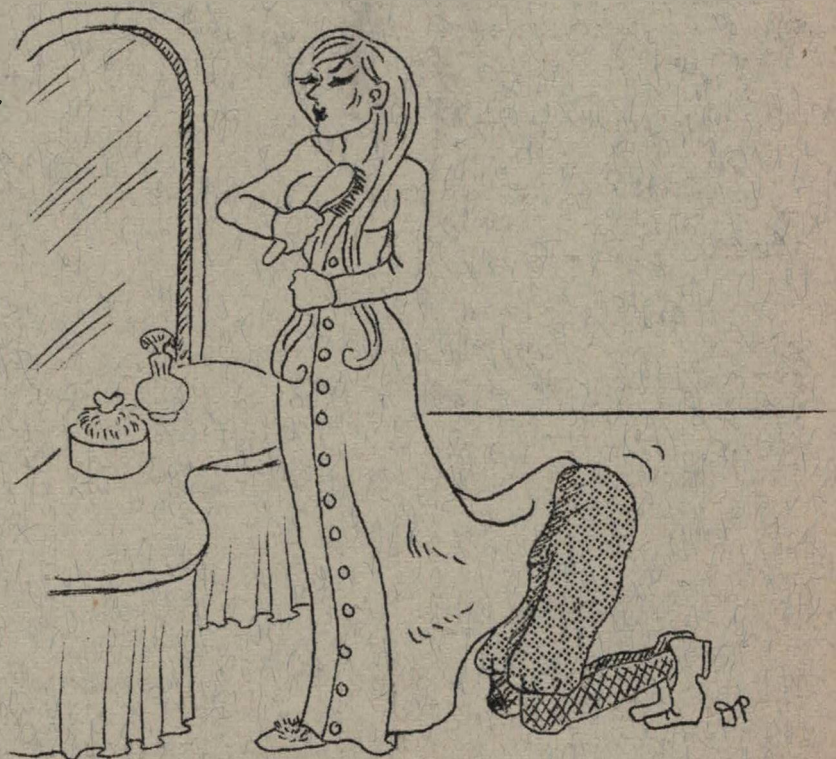
"Quite, Miss Adlor." I was quite smitten by your beauty," Colmes said glibly. "Quite smitten. I should like to give you my heart."

"Sautéed, I trust."

"You have macabre wit, madam...most macabre. Smitten though I be, it must wait. May I beg leave to inspect your room?"

I fairly felt the power of Colmes's shrewd brain at work. Miss Adlor nodded, apparently amused. "Certainly, I should be honored to have the great Shylock Colmes in my modest chamber."

"Thank you." Colmes strode to the door and dropped to his knees, inspecting the weave of the rug with his glass. Miss Adlor observed him for a few moments, then resumed her combing. Colmes's movements were unhurried, but his left nostril, over which he had lost all control, hinted of some diabolically clever plot. He advanced slowly toward Miss Adlor with the lithe movement of a serpent. Suddenly, much to my shock, with a quick silent movement he crept beneath her dressing gown. I thought momentarily that the man had taken leave of his senses. Miss Adlor, bemused by Colmes's declaration of love, obliviously continued combing her hair.



While I could see nothing more than Colmes's shoes and lower legs, I

could quite clearly observe his movements beneath the gown. It frequently quivered as Colmes's trembling nostril inadvertantly brushed against it. I had a quick glimpse of his hands as he gently polished his glass with the hem of her gown, but it was only momentary. They disappeared once more beneath the frothy material. Having known Colmes's habits as well as I did, there was no question in my mind but that he had found a significant clue. Somewhat slovenly, he rarely polished his glass except during moments of intense observation.

My heart beat with rampant anxiety that Miss Adlor would detect his actions. One slip from Colmes, one careless movement and all would be in vain. But my fears were groundless since Colmes excelled at stealthiness. Gradually, with painstaking care, he slithered from beneath her gown and leaped to his feet with a victorious shout. "Madam, you are a bawd!"

Pollyanna Adlor dropped her comb, flustered. However, she recovered her composure with remarkable speed. "A bawd, Mr. Colmes?"

"Quite, Miss Pollyanna Adlor...quite,"

She smiled pleasantly, with incredible calm. "And what has brought you to this conclusion, my dear Mr. Colmes?"

Colmes smirked smugly. "Irrefutable evidence. For all your slyness, madam, you were taken in by my ruse of declared affection by which I gained admittance to your bedchamber. Need we go into the details of the hideous crime, or shall you accompany me to London, and, I hope, the gallows, quietly?"

"I am undone," she moaned.

Although I scrutinized the buttons of her dressing gown from my place of concealment, I could see nothing amiss.

Pollyanna Adlor acquiesced in her defeat. "I will accompany you, Mr. Colmes."

Then, quick as a bolt of lightning, her nimble fingers flashed over the buttons of her gown. It dropped to the floor, revealing, most immodestly, her nude form. She stood before Colmes brashly beckoning. Colmes sneered, inspecting the warm opulence of her breasts with his glass. "Hmm, slight lesion. You have, indeed, seduced young Baster-ville, and he..." Colmes tapped her breast emphatically, "...did this. Quite a fascinating manifestation; singularly remarkable, I should say. What fantastical powers a designing unclad woman has."

"Most fantastical, Mr. Colmes." She stared deeply into Colmes's eyes, her own smouldering with the thousand fires of a gypsy camp.

Colmes paled; beads of perspiration began to break out on his forehead as she embraced him. He began frantically reciting the chemical composition of every known poison in a vain attempt to control himself. The wily vixen had unnerved him. My heart bled for the man who in the past had faced the most dire adversities -- at times, seemingly incapable death, whose unshakeable calm had become legend, only to become victim of a bawd's passion. His gaunt body trembled as she divested him of his clothing and led him to the bed.

"Colmes, shall I shoot?" I shouted, willing to put a ball from my musket into the moralless wench's brain to save my companion.

But my words were unheard. With the atavistic passion of a maddened savage, Colmes fell upon her. I could think of nothing but claws as I watched his hands relentlessly fondling her. It was a tragic sight to witness Colmes's undoing at her devouring thighs. Pressing him unto her body, the Adlor woman sighed sensuously, simultaneously reaching to her bedstand. Suspecting further wickedness from her, I was about to reach for my musket when, instead of the dagger I expected, she withdrew a small whistle from a drawer and blew it.

The door of the room flew open, and young Basterville, as if in response to the whistle, dashed into the room. More beast than man, with saliva dripping from his jowls, and moaning insanely, he threw himself at Colmes. I stood transfixed in horror.

"Shoot, Watston, in the name of heaven, shoot!" Colmes shouted, restored to his senses. I fumbled in my trousers for the musket, momentarily -- let it be understood, I am not a braggart -- confused as to which was the musket and which was a perfectly normal physiological manifestation, considering what I had been observing. Withdrawing the weapon, I fired.

"Idiot!" Colmes screamed, clutching his groin. I thought his anger to be unreasonable, since he knew I was attached to the medical corps of the Fourth Northumberland Fusiliers, and had had little occasion to practice with a musket. However, I aimed again at the maddened Basterville, who was slashing and gnawing at Colmes. I fired, and he jerked back from the impact of the well-placed shot and fell to the floor dead. During the moments it took me to ease myself through the window to tend to Colmes's wound, Pollyanna Adlor vanished. It was as if a great chasm had opened and devoured her.

I gently touched Colmes's shoulder, saying, "Really, Colmes, you are much too weak to creep about the floor with your glass."

He ignored my admonitions and continued searching. Finally, with a sad sardonic smile, he rose from the floor and stretched wearily on the bed. "I fear it is nowhere to be found, Watston. I must admire the woman. Even in her desparate escape she had her moment of caprice. Can you think of anything more ludicrous than a preserved portion of Shylock Colmes gracing the mantel of some bawdy house, as I'm sure it will be. What whimsy." Colmes glanced down at himself, observing, "Neatly done, Watston."

Frightfully embarrassed, I scuffed the rug uneasily. "I say, Colmes,



I truly am sorry about my poor aim, but what training I had with the Northumberland Fusiliers was..."

Colmes interrupted, shrugging. "No matter, Watston. You will recall a critique I wrote in regard to the inadequate training of her Majesty's forces."

"Nevertheless, Colmes, I'm frightfully embarrassed about the whole incident."

"No matter, Watston. It's just that -- an incident. The important thing is that the mystery is solved, even though our villainess has eluded us. It's a trifle ironic, Watston, but in a distorted way, forgetting ideals and concepts of justice, I'm rather pleased that she escaped. It would have been a pity indeed had such genius come to an end on the gallows."

"Colmes, I'm completely perplexed."

"Watston, dear fellow. I fear I should die suddenly were you not perplexed." Colmes glanced at the body of young Basterville. "Pity. Ah, well, perhaps death is more humane than bondage in an asylum. Watston, there has been an insidious international plot, perpetrated by a revolutionary faction of Laplanders, to weaken the stalwart youths of the major nations with the ravages of a shameful disease, thereby hitting at the very core of national defense -- a brilliantly conceived plan utilizing the knowledge that young men seeking relief from the rigors of military training are given to frequenting houses of purchased unions. Contemplate the results of such a well-organized movement: armies devastated by disease even before they face the weapons of invaders. The Adlor woman was a hired mercenary, most likely from the States. Laplanders themselves have a marked aversion to perfume. I first detected its scent when I regained consciousness after the attack on my person. She was wearing a brand manufactured in a border city of Mexico. That remarkable woman, with her experience, was the phalanx of the movement. As surely as the Roman legions marched, she moved from country to country establishing bawdy houses.

"The Bastervilles' manor, strategically located as it is, some two kilometers from a Highlanders' training camp, was ideal. Miss Adlor, I presume, approached the impoverished Bastervilles with an offer to lease the premises. But old families cling, if to nothing else, to their hearths. The most direct means was to eliminate them. However, Watston, (and herein lies the genius) the success of the plot could not be jeopardized by any sort of investigation and subsequent conviction of one of their own. Too much was at stake. Too much might have been brought to light. So this diabolical woman capitalized on the so-called Basterville curse. I'm quite sure that she has already established irreputable houses in Russia, since she resorted to a technique that a Russian, by the name of Pavlov, has been experimenting with. A beast conditioned to kill? Hardly. A creature with some reasoning powers was needed. Seeing that young Basterville was infatuated with her, she proceeded to condition him! Exciting him to a frenzied passion, she would withhold her little treasure until he obeyed some command -- an insignificant one at first, I should say, such as fetching her a goblet of wine. Gradually her demands were more outrageous, but then, so was his passion. With each command he obeyed, he was rewarded, but not overly so. She was withholding the final, the sublime reward for the moment after he had disposed of

his parents.

"The human mind is a complex thing, Watston. I seriously doubt if he was aware of the crimes she forced him to commit. In his passion, he had been reduced to little more than animal responding to specific stimuli. Mentally, one might say there was almost a lycanthropic change."

"What a foul deed," I responded, literally sickened. "But Colmes, I fail to see how, in so short a time, you came to understand what was afoot."

"You will recall, Watston, when first we entered I pondered the dust. I found minute fragments of dirt which I immediately recognized as having come from America, Russia, France, Bulgaria, Holland, Finland, and the northern quarter of Mozambique, precisely the countries where this disease is now on the rampage. You may have noticed reports of it in the newspapers."

"Brilliant, Colmes."

"Quite. Obviously, I knew that the case had taken on international significance."

"But Colmes, what of the bloody clue on the wall?"

"As I said, Watston, a false lead. ROACH -- surely that reminds you of something."

"Of course, Colmes -- unpleasant little bugs."

Colmes shook his head incredulously. "Watston, Watston, think, man: ROACH...Maury Arte...cut-throat...the roach of Remington Square."

"Ah, yes."

"It was Miss Adlor's attempt to confuse me. Think of it, Watston. When she discovered to her horror that young Basterville, in a sane moment, retained me to investigate the deaths of his parents, she investigated me! Discovered who my arch enemies were, and utilized that knowledge. The two things didn't crystallize in my mind until we were in our rooms. I gave no thought to young Basterville's degenerate appearance, nor did I consider the faint dribble of saliva on his chin when he introduced the woman to us."

"It wasn't until later, when I was playing a Russian melody on my oboe, that I thought of Pavlov. Instantly, everything made sense. A grotesque thought, horrifying, that a human could be lowered to such a state; yet all evidence pointed to it. And it was further verified by my close inspection of the woman's person. It revealed that, when all was said and done, she was a bawd -- really quite simple to determine if one goes into it fully enough. Secondly, upon those breasts of hers were teeth marks much as those I suffered -- decidedly not canine, but human. The mystery of the cursed Basterville hound was only too clear -- pathetically clear. However, it was necessary that she incriminate herself before a witness, for to that time all guilt lay upon young Basterville. It would have been impossible to prove that she was the cause of his madness. I fear Inspector Lesturde would have thought me mad, had I expounded my suspicions at Scotland Yard. Nevertheless, it was necessary that I

resort to a bit of play acting, pretending to be seduced, knowing that it was most likely that she would call upon young Basterville to destroy me."

"Colmes," I interrupted, "I can't believe it was all play acting. You perspired, paled -- moaned ecstatically as one possessed."

"Yoga, my good fellow, yoga. I'm above such nonsense, as you know. So, Watston, our case is temporarily closed. I feel Miss Adlor and I shall meet again, some time, somewhere."

"Colmes, in truth -- as friend to friend, or patient to physician -- eh, you really should allow me to tend to your wound. I'm frightfully sorry, Colmes."

"A mere trifle, Watston. I have no patience with useless appendages. You were saying?"

"As friend to friend, she was, after all, most provocative. Colmes, did you not derive some slight pleasure?"

Colmes laughed. "Decidedly. I observed during the course of the encounter. Or, rather, a thought emerged: that, my dear Watston, no two navels are alike, and consequently they could well be used as a positive means of identification."

And on that note of Colmes's blasé reaction to an escapade which, in truth, I might have enjoyed myself, our adventure ended.

Before I put my journal away and undertake the task of rummaging through the ashes of our rooms to salvage what curiosa remain, I feel I must add a personal thought. I have recorded previously, in an account of another case, one which followed the Basterville tragedy, that Colmes vanished for some years, apparently having met his end at the hands of Maury Arte. As you may have read, Colmes appeared some years later, alive and quite fit. Although Colmes explained that he had been involved with study and research, I personally believe that he, being a proud and possessive man, was searching for Pollyanna Adlor in an attempt to regain what was his.

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This manuscript was obtained by the editor in 1960 from a no longer active LASFSian who had obtained it from the author. The latter, a member of the BSI, is unknown to the editor.

This is published for APA L in its 69th distribution, and will later be circulated to the Cult by the editor, Bruce Pelz.



THE LORE OF RELATIVE RELATIONS:

In my last lecture, we dealt with the Tone Scale of Attacks -- a question of relative intensity of a group of related verbs. This time we shall deal with a group of nouns, organizing them into another Tone Scale, one based on the degree of permanence and seriousness of relations between male and female. For this time we will limit ourselves primarily to the view from the male side, but the corresponding terms relating the female to the male will usually be obvious.

- 1. We begin with his DATE a one-shot affair; if repeated, the repeat is also a one-shot
- 2. Then there is his GIRL FRIEND a reasonably going thing, tho not necessarily exclusive
- 3. Exclusivity leads to STEADY
- 4. More serious is ENAMORATA or BELOVED but these may not last
- 5. Somewhat more serious and permanent: PARAMOUR with whom he is sleeping
- 6. If he supports her: MISTRESS but one can have several
- 7. If he lives with her: SHACK-UP
- 8. 6. and 7. together: COMMON-LAW WIFE
- 9. Lastly, the legal: WIFE

It is a moot point where his BETROTHED would fit in the scale, but I suggest that it be ignored as merely an interim legalistic term, applicable to a female at one of several other points of the scale whom he has decided to elevate (eventually) to 9. Most particularly, a 7. or 8. will be the BETROTHED, though it may be a 5. or even, on rare occasions when the male is an idealist, a 4.

Studies in this field are still in progress, and any suggestions from the brighter students among you will be appreciated. (Suggestions from the rest of you will, of course, be treated as they deserve.)

Prof. Stiff 'n Potted

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By a broken M'teh horn, a Mutated Mouse  
 Cried "'Braak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!"  
 Then it took off its helmet in front of the house,  
 Yelling "'Braak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!!"  
 Said I, "If you behave in this manner insane  
 "You will get the High Kr'zat to say you're InAyn!"  
 But it cared not at all, as it screamed through its pain:  
 "Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!!"

It lifted the pieces of horn in the air,  
 Crying "'Braak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!"  
 There was nought I could do but just stand there and stare.  
 "Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!!"  
 Then it jammed the M'tah bell right down on its head,  
 And collapsed on the roadway quite thoroughly dead,  
 And these were the very last words that it said:  
 "Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!!"

Now I'm perfectly sure that a Mouse wouldn't go

Yelling "'Braak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!"  
 If 'twere Krager-Mouse stable, or smart as a Voh.  
 "Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!"  
 So I'm forced to conclude that, in spite of the price  
 Which includes lots of extras, and is rather nice,  
 The M'nalt is the Edd'sl of Mutated Mice! --  
 "Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm, Umbraak'm!!!."

(Ted Johnstone can be blamed for the basic idea of the above -- "...  
 a Mutated Mouse sang Umbraak'm..." but the rest must be blamed on BEP)

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## The Way of Life 19

Dave French and Sam Ruskin had many things in common. They were both in their middle thirties, single, and interested in fandom. Neither was known outside of the Biscayne Fantasts, as they did not publish fanzines or travel to conventions. And, in general, they were both ordinary people, easy to get along with and just as easy to lose in a small crowd. They both lived in the same housing development, and, in fact, were almost across the street from each other, so they got together frequently even outside of club meetings. Other common interests included boating and local history -- though "local" sometimes included the entire peninsula.

Dave lived by himself, and seemed to like it that way. He was not misogynistic, being quite friendly and at ease with women, but he had just never got around to think of marriage until he had reached the point where it would have been more of a nuisance than an advantage.

Sam Ruskin, on the other hand, lived with his mother, an irascible lady of 59, who considered her son too old to be "wasting his time on that space stuff," and, at the same time, too young to be trusted to make his own decisions on important matters. Alice Ruskin had managed to frighten off at least three prospective fiances that Sam brought home, and was working on a fourth. She also decided on Sam's clothes, his vacations -- though he wasn't usually going anywhere anyway -- and his religious and political affiliations: Alice and Sam were both Methodists, and they were both Republicans.

On the Tuesday after the NonCon, Sam Ruskin was lounging in his "den" reading the latest batch of magazines off the stands. His vacation had yet another four days to run, and he planned nothing more strenuous than an occasional trip to the various bookstores on the mainland, and a trip Sunday to one of the old forts up the coast with Dave. The "den" was such in name only, as more than half of it had been taken over by Alice Ruskin for her writing desk and her own bookcases, but there was still enough room for an easy chair and a few bookcases of SF, so Sam chose the den for lounging even when his mother was working there.

"Sam," said Alice suddenly, looking up from the book she was reading at the desk, "You really must stop wasting your time with that 'fan' club. Surely there must be better things you can do with your time?"

"I like it," mumbled Sam in the usual answer. He had heard the speech many times, and could ignore it for the most part.

"Well, don't say I didn't warn you," returned his mother. "When they get done with that club, you may wish you'd listened to your mother once in a while."

Sam sat up sharply. "When who gets done with the club??"

"Why, the Birch Society is investigating it, of course."