

Voice over: (scene of glistening river in a tropical area)

In the jungles of Central America, two people will soon learn the meaning of True Love.

Vivaldi: (wearing goggle helmet) According to Wiki, True Love is a short story by Isaac Asimov.

Harv: (flying plane) I don't think that's what he meant, Viv.

V: But he said that two people would learn the meaning of true love. I just thought I'd save some time by looking it up on the M.A.R.V.I.N.

Voice over: That was just Hollywood hype.

H: Viv, do you always have to mess things up?

V: I was just trying to be helpful. Sheesh!

Vera: (From back of plane) Would you two shut up? They were just getting to the good part!

Voice over: (as the Goose flies past the camera, into the sunset) Vera and Harv in Mexico City. Coming soon to a forum near you! (Do I get paid extra for working with a dog?)

zelda_pinwheel

:pandalol:

paid extra ??? they're already paying the dog extra for working with a pshrynk, i'm not sure how much of a budget they've got. :rolleyes:

desertgrandma

I swear, I read a story once that had that identical subject.

There was a man who spent his life trying to find his one true love, or'soul mate' .

Many adventures later, he dies never realizing, or maybe he does, he one true love lived and died centuries before he was born.

So sad because he missed out on enjoying the life he had.

Back to the show.....

In the twilit streets of a disreputable part of Mexico City, a furtive figure darted from shadow to shadow. Slipping quietly into the darkened doorway of a rundown cantina, the shadowy character pulled a veil tighter around the already masked face.

"Quien es?" asked a voice from the interior.

"It is me, you shtupid leetle man!" came the booming baritone of a woman who meant not to be trifled with.

"Que?"

"Nein! Mine name ist not Kay! Didn't they tell you to expect me?"

"Senora! Please! You have to go through the motions with me or I cannot let you in!"

"I will be talking with your superior about this!"

"Whatever! Quien es?"

"Grumble grumble grumble... I have with me ze RED BOX!"

"But there is a small wind tonight."

"I don't give a light breeze in Farking about the wind, but if you insist, Not while the chowder is boiling."

"That's not going with the whole spirit of things, now is it? Enter, friend and be welcome. Damned Germans!"

"I heard zat!"

The large woman entered the cantina and pulled the scarf from her head.

"Ah, Frau Miyatake! It is about time that you arrived! We have been expecting you!"

"Not accordink to ze moron at the front door!"

zelda_pinwheel

:rofl:

*so, we will discover what frau miyatake has been up to !!!
what dastardly plots can she have hatched during the
hiatus ?? what diabolical projects is she preparing ??? and
what is in the red box ????? (a squid ?)*

Vera sat in her office and made a desultory attempt at doing her work. Somehow, encryption analysis for the Army OIS just wasn't doing it for her today. She and Harv had had another fight and she just could care less about the Japanese Grand Fleet operations off the coast of Mexico, right now. Why did he have to be such a hard head about things like security clearance? She picked up a twix and looked it over briefly.

"Send a fish out to Point Blue and threaten anything that moves" she wrote on the dispatch and threw it in the Out box.

Her intercom buzzed. Happy to have any distraction, she slapped the key down. "Yeah?"

"Vera, my dear! How are you doing today?" came Biggles' cheery voice. "I was about to nip out for lunch and wondered if you'd care to join me?"

"Does it involve inappropriate contact?"

"I should say not!" There was a level of indignation in Biggles' voice only heard when he was losing badly at poker. Which was to say, often, but not usually in the office.

"Oh, well, I suppose I could go, anyway." Vera was really bored.

"Good! I need to talk with you about our friend Miyatake. More to the point his wife."

"What's up with Hilda?"

"I would rather discuss this where there are fewer chances of being overheard."

"I understand! Meet me at the front door in five minutes."

zelda_pinwheel

aha ! they know she's up to no good !!!

Harv slowly opened his eyes, fearful of what awful thing he might see. It was worse than he could imagine and he quickly closed them and screamed lightly.

"You okay, boss?" asked Vivaldi.

"Why are you upside down?"

"I'm not."

Harv did some quick calculations in his head. "Then why am I upside down?"

"Well, you were a little drunk last night..."

"That I knew already." Damn Vera and her security protocols, anyway! "What else?"

Harv re-opened his eyes and stared at the, to him, upside down nostrils of his dog, Vivaldi. Well, Vivaldi would argue that he was his own dog, and he merely worked for Harv, but the nature of *canis domesticus* was such that he soon came back to begging for skritch and a tug on the old knotted socks.

"Well, ever since those socks moved in next door, they've

been a bit spooked whenever I come around to visit. The one with the safety pins and tattoos even pulled a knife on me, once."

"And this has something to do with me being upside down, how?"

"Apparently, they set some snares. So, when you were stumbling around last night..."

"Got it. Why are they upset with you? What did you do?"

"Why's it always my fault? Did you ever think that a pair of smart wool socks might have paranoia issues? Might it not be that they are the parties to the complaint that may be in the wrong?"

"No. What did you do?"

"Well, I might have tried playing fetch with one of them. But just once."

"Just cut me down, will you?"

zelda_pinwheel

JOY !!!!!

montsnmags

I'd like this even better if it said "drives". ;)

:pandalol:

Cheers,

Marc

In a forest in China, two pandas sat in a bamboo grove, munching their dinner.

"Did you hear something?" the first panda, who, oddly enough, was named Steve Jordan.

"No," said the second panda.

"Huh. Could have sworn I heard someone screaming, 'The frogs! The terrible frogs!' Must have been something I ate..."

zelda_pinwheel

:lo!frog!:: :the!terrible!lo!frog!!!:

psockpuppet

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"Why is the sky all orange with green stripes?"

"Is this another one of your strange philosophical questions, Lefty?"

"No. What's philosophical?"

"Never mind. Look, I'm looking right at the sky and it is definitely not orange with green stripes. That is a MacGregor tartan if ever I..."

"I feel strange, Hugo."

"Well, that might have something to do with the fact that you just turned into a cauliflower. Something is going on

here."

"I feel like I'm being eaten by a panda, Hugo."

"Just be quiet for a minute, Lefty. I'm trying to figure this out. AND WHAT ARE THOSE FROGS DOING HERE?!?!? !?!?!"

"Oh, wow, man! Look what happens when I move my heel like this!" The room was suddenly filled with giggles.

"What the heck was that author on?"

"I think he said something about Jack Daniels and Bathtub Acid."

"Oh, ghod, Lefty, he's trying to replicate abisinthe again! Run for it!"

"Can I bring my frog with me?"

"AAAARRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHH!!!!!!!"

Taylor514ce

Abisinthe maketh the heart grow fonther.

zelda_pinwheel

:grooooan:

Taylor514ce

"Lefty... you sneak up on the left. I'll go right."

"Huh? This way?"

"No, LEFT... umm, big-toe-wise. I'll go pinky-toe direction, and then on the signal, pounce."

"Ok."

"We'll trap this weird impostor sock mutant thing once and for all."

"I think it's a hand. Pretending to be a sock."

"Yeah. Be careful, they come in pairs."

"Oh no! We're in Paris, too!"

"No, PAIRS. Hands come in PAIRS. There could be another one around."

"A PAIRS of psockpuppets? I'm scared. How many is that?"

"Never mind. Be quiet, wait for the signal. You remember the signal?"

"Yes. You yell 'POUNCE'."

"That is what we ended up with, isn't it? OK."

"Hugo!"

"What?"

"Why are we pouncing psockpuppet again? We're scared, right? We don't like him. Right?"

"Yes, right, why?"

"Because you don't seem like you're scared pouncey. You seem more happy pouncey".

"I... umm. Well. Ok. We don't know it's a him yet, and well... I like blondes. Wait, Lefty! Where are you going! You're my wing man, stop! Wait!"

"I'm leaving. The last time you tried to make me happy pounce I hurt my shronk."

zelda_pinwheel

wait, lefty's big toe ? or hugo's ? because, lefty being on the left, i would think big-toe-wise would be lefty's right. or am i wrong about that ?

:pandalol: paaaa hahahaha !!!!!

ooh, happy pouncey. look out, psockpuppet. :wink3:

GeoffC

I'm croaking up here

"The thing is," said Biggles, "We aren't exactly sure that she's involved with anything that Miyatake was getting up to, at all. But she just up and disappeared the same day

that that little contretemps on Lake Gatun took place.

"Any idea where she went?" asked Vera.

"Our man at the Airport said that she was seen leaving on a flight to Mexico City."

"That's like three plane changes away. How do you know that was her destination?"

"He pinched her handbag and looked at her ticket."

"Then you were suspicious to begin with?"

"No, he's just a kleptomaniac. Dr Montsnmags is working with him on getting over that, so he returned it to her without her being aware."

"He must be a good pick pocket, then."

"Well, Dr Montsnmags is working with him..." Biggles trailed off and looked ill at ease.

Vera shuddered as she thought of the possible 'alterations' that may have been added.

"Well. There's nothing for it. I have to go to Mexico City and track down what this Teutonic hussy is up to!" Vera stood and took the check. She knew Biggles well enough to avoid the inevitable extended embarrassing moment as he tried to avoid the tab.

"Why not just send a message to the Embassy? Surely they have agents that can track her?"

"Yes, but I need to pick up some Talavera pottery for

Christmas presents for my Mom." Vera turned and walked from the cantina.

As she walked away, she vaguely heard Biggles calling after her, "But Christmas was last week!"

"That's the beauty of international shipping, it takes weeks and you can send a wire inquiring about the package you haven't yet shipped and it won't seem strange," she called over her shoulder.

GeoffC

"Well, Dr Montsnmags is working with him..."

he's cheap - at any price

DixieGal

Mexico City - A jillion people under a scary volcano, plus Hilda and the socks.

Do Harv and Viv realize how big the airport is there? I

hope they brought their walking shoes.

montsnmags

It's never the "price"; it's the cost:

(strange Montsnmags video that makes minimal sense and cannot translate to printed word.)

Cheers,

The (other) Doctor

pshrynk

That's just disturbing.

He was relaxed, just as he always was. Except for that time recently when he had been split in two parts. That led to some strange experiences, even for him.

Now, he knew what he needed to do. It was all clear. He laid his cards on the table. And grinned.

The squid glanced over at the hand that the gibbon had dropped on the green felt and sighed as only squids can sigh. He looked at his opponent and gave a look that said, "I could actually buy it that you had a Royal Flush once, given that the odds are there that it could happen, but three in one night? That defies the odds, even for an invisible lesser ape. However, given your propensity to random violence, I'm going to turn up my full house and push the pot towards you.*"

zelda_pinwheel

*poor thing. a squid that sensitive and intelligent *knows* he'll never beat an invisible, inadvertently violent gibbon at cards, but what's he going to do ?*

montsnmags

The same thing I do with him:

Cheat

Run

Cheers,

Marc (I've always wanted to watch a squid run)

As Harv dangled by one foot from the snare, he wondered what Vera was up to. He determined that he was through with her, once and for all. It wasn't like they were committed. Or at least not in the sense of spending their lives together. She was just too... predictably unpredictable. Every time they got close enough to think about taking the next step in their relationship, she picked an argument on some technical ground and the whole process started over. Yes. Through. Definitely.

"So, have you thought about my proposal?" asked Vivaldi.

"Um... Sorry?"

"It's a simple matter of you letting me pick the radio stations when we're flying and me then cutting you down."

"Look, this is arguably all your fault anyway, so why not just cut me down and I'll give you a treat?"

"And here's me, fresh out of opposable thumbs!"

"I may have lost my knife, but I still have a gun, you know."

"It's a simple exchange of goods and services, Harv!
Besides, I can run around in circles faster than you can
swing yourself to get a good aim."

"I hate the music you play! I only tolerate it for half the
flight because I'm trying to be fair. And I could just
randomly fire behind me, you know."

"And possible hit the Goose, with all that aviation fuel..."

Just then, two wool socks, one of them with a safety pin in
its cuff ran by, giving the impression that they were
screaming. A blue colored frog hopped after them.

zelda_pinwheel

oh BRILLIANT !!! thank god the holidays are over at last and we can get back to what really counts : the saga of harv and vera (and vr and hugo and lefty and the squid and, apparently, now at least one frog) !!!!!

Patricia

And you've still got to be rescued in Slite's story thread.

zelda_pinwheel

yes i do, which reminds me, where is slite ???? he hasn't been around for ages. i hope he's alright.

GeoffC

how DOES a sock - run?

BookishDreamer

I think socks hop. Haven't you heard of a "sock hop"?!

Dreamer

Taylor514ce

Socks run the same way spaceships "fly" and anti-gravity "works" and movie heroes take a kick to the face.

pshrynk

Well you need two of them...

Patricia

Tights and stockings run all the time. They even get ladders.

So why can't socks?

(insert joke here about this being darned silly.)

zelda_pinwheel

seems so obvious now, doesn't ? who asked this question, anyway ? i bet they feel silly now. :rolleyes:

aaargg !! :p

ShortNCuddlyAm

Of course socks can run!

Put a coloured sock in the washing machine with your best white top, and you'll very quickly discover socks can run...

;))

ravenne

I saw him (well, only his name) this morning. I wanted to say hi and wish him a Happy New Year - but gone he was again.

Wetdogeared

The red ones and white ones can run around the bases.:rolleyes:

And if they can sing like they do here they should be able to run.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC9ftIE8XRQ>

GeoffC

no, that's swimming, not running :D

No point entering a three-legged race - then ?

Patricia

Hugo and Lefty are amphibious socks.

(Just like James Bond's car.)

GeoffC

Date: 01-06-2009 10:19 AM

they are also likely to be ambidextrous ... to boot....

ShortNCuddlyAm

Probably to shoe too. I'd say to sandal, but Hugo especially seems a bit too stylish...

GeoffC

Date: 01-06-2009 11:39 AM

If stylish; then scandal and socks do not together go !

Taylor514ce

Sandals and Socks? These socks are in Paris, not Germany!

Though interestingly, they speak English, and at least one of them has a "Made in China" tag, though it appears to be an afterthought, as if part of a hasty disguise.

badgoodDeb

There are some "Highlander" stories about now, where the hero was born centuries BEFORE his one true love. The

local wizard fixed that by zapping The Highlander (and his buds) into the current century. :)

*Someone's been re-reading Pratchett's "Guards, Guards!". I just started it, so *I KNOW*. :D*

:rofl: :rofl:

zelda_pinwheel

a lot of people in paris can speak english. :mellow: but i confirm we all know better than to wear socks with sandals. i don't know where that "Made in China" tag came from, it's not fooling anybody.

Nate the great

I kidnapped him so you can't be rescued. Soon I will be King!

:Bwahahahahahahaha:

zelda_pinwheel

:stunned: worried now.

Ralph Sir Edward

You could always have a kingdom in exile with Red....(and we could see how good BadGoodDeb is at assasination...)

zelda_pinwheel

i'll keep that in mind. ;)

i'm not that kind of queen. :rolleyes: (haven't we established that yet ??)

badgoodDeb

Date: 01-06-2009 06:21 PM

Oh, darn. :scuffsfeet: I was hoping for another job, your majesty! I enjoyed that last romp quite a bit!

Nate the great

In that case, I have a job for you.

King Yakko and Queen Dot of Anvilania want to have their brother King Wacko assassinated again. (It's his birthday.)

montsnmags

~ahem~ Officially not that kind of queen. Shhh.

ravenne

In Germany, we know: There's nothing more sexy than a man wearing socks and sandals :D We even have "socks-

and-sandals" fashion shows!!!

montsnmags

In Australia, we have regions where socks and sandals are popular too. We call those regions "retirement villages".

Cheers,

Marc

GeoffC

Ouch

zelda_pinwheel

Ralph Sir Edward

Texas/Australia sun??? (The German tourists I see in Texas always look like a parboiled lobster...)

zelda_pinwheel

well, i think the germans aren't the only ones afraid of that (i am too).

badgoodDeb

That may explain why the fashion is relatively prevalent

here at Fermilab. We have a lot of Europeans here, and I assumed they all did the socks-with-sandles thing. Maybe it's just the German ones!

Taylor514ce

Wow, that poor model desperately needs a haircut, a tailor, a nutritionist, and possibly a blood transfusion. Plus he's wearing socks and sandals.

Patricia

I have seen academics wearing socks and sandals. But they were Earth Sciences lecturers. And geologists are not known for haute couture.

GeoffC

not like your good self - of course :thumbsup:

ravenne

Paaaaah!!!! - Dont you people know that Germany is the number one fashion country? ;) Especially the Southern part of the country (where I live). We have the clothes France's top designers, Australian pensioners, Texan sun worshipers and British earth scientists dream of (see pictures below). ;)

We are living proof of good taste, because we invented the brezel, we have wheat beer for breakfast and we take sauerkraut baths every day. At night, we are yodelling at the moon, and when we like a person we call her / him names.

I bet you all want to to acquire the German citizenship now ;) (and please note all the ;)s in the text ;) !!!)

montsnmags

Oh, right...I just assumed that was a nervous tic, and politely ignored it. I'm more of a nudge-nudger than a wink-winker myself. ;)

Cheers,

Marc

zelda_pinwheel

oh, yep, i've been to germany several times to visit my german friends, and i can attest, everything she said is true. also, every german person dresses just like in those photos, every day. really. oh, except usually they are wearing socks and sandals, instead of shoes.

no, really.

;))

Gaurnim

Well, not only the German ones.

There is also, I'm a bit ashamed to say, the former French president (Chirac) who did.

But then again he is also know for walking around naked during his holidays close to a paparazzi camera, so he's not really considered as a trend-setter in the fashion crowd.

tompe

But Texans do not seem to stand the sun. I took a walk this summer in Austin from the hotell to a shopping mall and the only other people I met out walking were some other Swedes. So Texans seems to be a bit afraid of the sun and spend all the time in air conditioned cars...

GeoffC

Does that imply you are not a Texan yourself ?

Negotiations were closing on an agreement.

"Okay, so, I can play the music I want seventyfive percent of the time..."

"With exceptions.."

"With the exception of no ska, no yodeling, no Slim Whitman especially, no World Music unless it involves South African Male choirs, and no fourteenth century chants."

"And..."

"And no asking the M.A.R.V.I.N. what he wants to listen to."

"I heard that," came a flatly depressed voice from the depths of the Goose.

"That about does it. Now cut me down from here, I'm getting a migraine."

"You're the boss!"

At that moment, the line holding Harv upside down parted and he fell to the spongy ground below.

Vivaldi looked up at the frayed end of wool dangling high in the air. "I think that counts, don't you?"

zelda_pinwheel

no SKA ???? i think you're being a little unreasonable on that one, pshrynkie-poo.

vivaldirules

Hey, as long as I still get to listen to The Hurdy Gurdy Whirler Girls, I guess I can't complain.

badgoodDeb

Is that anything like "Roller Derby Queen" by Jim Croce?

montsnmags

I want to listen to the 12" harcdore-techno, emo, acid-jazz, punk, bluegrass remix of Convoy on constant repeat.

Cheers,

Marc (...goes to iTunes store for a look-see...)

Vera stepped off the plane in Mexico City. She doggedly ignored the corridor of vendors wanting to sell her everything from cheap silver to their sister to her gold watch and moved to customs.

"Hola, senorita! Welcome to Mexico! Business or pleasure?"

"Pleasure," she replied. Well, it wasn't an actual lie. She would derive great pleasure from knocking over the spy network she had come to suspect Hilda Miyatake of

running. It was obvious that she was here as a result of the Naval Operations going on in the Sea of Cortez.

Getting her passport stamped, she gathered her bags and went to find a taxi. After fending off the attentions of three men who wanted to get her a cab, a free drink, and all for just "an hour of your time," she finally stood at the curb, hailing a cab. A beat up car, no more or less beat up than the other cabs prowling the airport crossed three lines of traffic and edged out two others as she raised her hand. Survival of the fittest, she thought, as she threw her bag into the trunk.

"Hola, senorita! Where to?"

"Take me to Rick's Cafe Americain, Mexico City, please."

"Certainly, senorita!"

The cab lurched out into traffic and quickly sped up to seventy miles an hour. It caromed off the side of a bus filled to overflowing with chickens and raced down a dusty street, scattering children, chickens and irate business men in its wake. Vera concentrated on the back of the driver's head, trying to not look out at the scenery flashing by.

Eventually, the traffic cleared a bit and she felt safe in looking out.

"Hey! This isn't the way to downtown!" she cried.

"Sorry senorita!" the cabbie replied and gunned the engine.

zelda_pinwheel

oh noes !!!! vera in danger !!! what does the nefarious "cab-driver" have in store ??? who will thwart his evil plans ???? how will she escape from this hurtling Taxi of Death ?

???

(i bet the shadow knows...)

pshrynk

Date: 01-09-2009 10:16 AM

I am not putting a super hero in this one.

Grumble grumble. Bad enough I gotta figure out how to get the squid in this time....

zelda_pinwheel

no no, i was just idly surmising. nothing to do with the plot, or anything. really.

(yeah ? the squid makes an appearance ? more like cameo, or more like leading role ?)

GeoffC

squid ?

this story is tailor-made for a sucker or two

badgoodDeb

Hope Vera's cab ride turns out better than the opening

scene in this book: The Bone Collector (A Lincoln Rhyme Novel) by Jeffery Deaver. But it's not sounding good for poor Vera.....

GeoffC

she's never been the same since she sang over The White Cliffs of Dover....

Heels clicking sharply as he walked down the corridor, the young man quickly went through the doorway, interrupting the meeting as it was going on.

"Was ist los? I demanded to be left in privacy!" Hilda's voice could have cut through the hull of a battleship.

"Sorry Senora Frau. But I am sure you would want to have this. She has arrived and has been picked up by a cabbie."

"Gotte in himmel! Didn't I leave instructions for us to

gather her in?"

The clerk turned pale. ""Yes, senora. But the cabbie was... determined. We are not sure where she has been taken. We have a man on it."

"Who?"

The clerk pushed a folder across the table. Hilda opened it and looked at it. The other occupant of the room looked down and said, "Eeeewwww! What kind of a face is that?"

The clerk responded, "His code name is Slite. He's an operative based in Sweden."

"So what's he doing here in Mexico?" asked Hilda.

"He's on holiday, apparently."

Patricia

That would certainly explain why he's left Zelda unrescued in a strange forest. And I'm beginning to wonder whose side Slite is actually on...

zelda_pinwheel

Date: 01-09-2009 08:18 PM

so THAT's where he's been !!!!

...and he's working with hilda ??? hm. that's an unexpected twist !!!

(you're right patricia, i'm starting to feel worried !)

Harv sat in the train car and stared out the window. Since regular stops had been added to Adrian's Landing, it was much simpler to get into Panama City. He enjoyed that. What he did not enjoy was the grouching and grumbling coming from the vicinity of his feet.

"Why do I gotta always sit on the floor? This is speciesist, I tell you!"

"It's not my idea, Vivaldi. The Rail Company made the rules."

He pointed at a sign at the far end of the car that read:

All animals (Including dogs, cats, ducks, llamas, pandas (even the type with the funny hardware growing out of their ears), frogs, rats, strange South American rodents, xenobiological mistakes from Australia, and especially squirrels) will be seated on the floor. And those damned Shiba Inu puppies will be in a crate in the baggage car until they are house trained!

Below it, someone had penciled in: Of course, this does not, in any way apply to imaginary, invisible, violence prone gibbons, and we would like to politely ask Mr Adrian to refrain from flicking peanut shells at the conductors. Our health insurance premiums are sky-rocketing.

"Well, it doesn't say talking dogs."

"I think that the conductor made his position fairly clear the last time you tried that argument," said Harv.

"He could have at least let the train stop before he threw me off."

"I thought he was doing well to wait for it to slow down for the curve. Besides, what you said about his mother was not only wrong, but improbable."

"Lousy service, anyway. They don't even have a radio."

"Look, I agreed to your proposal! Let's just let it go..."

"I just think I should have gotten a bonus time for doing it without actually touching the line."

"Well, I think you should have got nothing and like it for not doing anything at all, but I'm just happy to have ska banned for eternity."

Across the aisle from Harv, two socks sat in their seats and looked smug.

zelda_pinwheel

i just can't get enough of this lively banter between harv and vr. try to keep him from getting thrown out of the train this time.

badgoodDeb

And here I started reading, expecting that the floor-level conversation was coming from the socks!!

Harv stepped off the train in Panama City, Vivaldi grumbling behind him. The socks jumped off and took off into the city to do whatever it was they did on Saturday nights. He turned toward the downtown, Rick's Cafe Americain, Panama City his destination.

"When the revolution comes, that Rail Company is going to find itself on permanent Walkies!"

"What?"

"Nothing! Nothing! It's a pleasant evening for walking, wouldn't you say? Taking a nice revolution around the city, and so on?"

"You know, I sometimes wonder..."

Harv's thoughts were interrupted mid ponder by the clipped British accent of Lieutenant Colonel Biggles. "Wallbanger,

old chap! Good to see you! I was just heading down to Rick's and hoped I might see you there!"

"Oh, dear god!" muttered Vivaldi, "Here it comes..."

"Oo's a goo boy, den, Vivvie? Oo's a goo boy?"

"I guess that would be me. Could we get on with this? I could really use a beer right now."

"You know, Wallbanger, that is one intelligent dog you have there. Why it's almost like he can talk."

"Yeah, and it's almost like you can hear. Amazingly life-like for a petrified head, I must say."

"Shh!" said Harv. "Why was it you were looking for me, Colonel? Got something you need smuggled into

Columbia? Or out?"

"Yes, ee's a goo boy, den! No, old chap, I've no need of your particular 'talents' in avoiding official notice this week. Let's walk. We can talk when we get to Rick's.

"Let's go, Vivvie! Let's go! Walkies!"

"Just for that, you're getting the first round!"

badgoodDeb

At least the Walkies aren't gosh-awful cold, in Panama City. Maybe me mine will come join you on that walk. It's sposed to get even More Cold here real soon, this week.

ShortNCuddlyAm

Vivvie :snicker:

zelda_pinwheel

"Yeah, and it's almost like you can hear. Amazingly life-like for a petrified head, I must say."

:snicker:

The taxi driver downshifted and floored it, swinging around the corner into the barrios. He weaved in and out of the foot traffic like a snake on metamucil. Sliding to a halt in front of a decrepit little cantina, he jumped out and ran inside.

"It's me, Juan!" he cried out.

"Juan who?" came the reply.

"How should I know your name? We were just introduced."

"Enter." As the cabbie walked by the bartender, he saw him put a sawed off shotgun away under the cash register. He went through the curtained doorway and into a

darkened room. A shape lurked in the corner that he could not make out.

"Well?"

"Senor! The American has been secured."

"Was there any problem?"

"No. She was somewhat reluctant to cooperate, but we were able to be quite persuasive. She calmed down quickly when we introduced her to our little friend."

"Excellent! Have the barman pay you for your expenses on the way out."

The cabbie hastily exited the room. He had heard rumors about what happened to people who lingered there.

zelda_pinwheel

a mysterious shape in the corner !! i won't even dare speculate as to what that could be...

badgoodDeb

.... and which little friend was she introduced too??? The tension mounts. :popcorn:

GeoffC

as tight as an unwound pocket watch or ...

as the foot exclaimed to the suspender

They walked into Rick's Cafe Americain, side by side. Rick, standing by the piano player, gave them the usual greeting, "I don't want trouble makers in my bar! You two get out! Hello, Colonel! Your usual table?"

"He always makes me feel so welcome," came the voice from near the floor. Vivaldi walked past the piano, hiked

his leg briefly, and then settled down in his doggie bed at the back. He ordered a plate of bacon and a beer, putting it on Adrian's tab.

Harv and Biggles went to a small table in the back of the room. Ordering drinks and trying to get a tab started, then refused, they sat in an awkward silence.

"So, Lt Colonel, what was it you wanted to speak with me about?" HAav finally broke the silence.

"Erm... Well, the thing is... You see... It's a matter of some delicacy."

"Shouldn't you be seeing Dr Montsnmags about that? I hear that he has some... unique approaches to that sort of thing. For an extra ten bucks or so, he won't even tell your wife."

"Not that sort of delicacy!" Biggles looked, if possible, more embarrassed. "No, it's about Vera. Again."

Harv sighed and looked up at the ceiling. "What sort of problems has she fallen into, this time?"

"I'm not sure. You see, it has to do with her job..."

"You mean as a spy?"

"SHHH!" Several people seated around them turned to look at Biggles as he nearly fell off his chair. "Good, Lord, man! Have you not any ability to be subtle?"

"Pretty much no, actually. What's going on?"

"Well, I'm not supposed to be telling you this and her office claims that they have everything in hand. But without her

there to ride herd on them, I can't really trust that they will not make a foul hash of the whole thing.

"You see, she's disappeared. Again. Erm."

"Any clues as to where, this time?"

"Well, there's the mercy, at least. We know exactly where she was headed. Mexico city."

A fight broke out in the back of the room where two sailors discovered that they had been insulting each other for the last five minutes. As the MPs would later find out, neither had actually said anything. Only Harv noticed the small grey dog jumping up to their table and drinking their beers in the confusion.

"Mexico City? Why on earth would she be going there other than to buy Talavera pottery?"

"It's that Miyatake woman."

A cold dread settled on Harv's heart.

badgoodDeb

Dum, da dum dum.....

Hope Vera brings home some nice pottery too. It's always useful to have something you can smash when you are mad. [rem to self: try that sometime]

zelda_pinwheel

trust vr never to lose sight of the goal... :rolleyes:

it sounds like harv is going to need the help of hugo and lefty to rescue vera again. where did they disappear to, by the way ?

Patricia

As an aside, Vera also needs rescuing in my latest book upload: The Mysterious Three by William Le Queux.

She goes missing. Can her beloved Dick find her?

But where was Vera? Ah! I felt beside myself in anxiety a breathless, burning longing, to know how fared the one woman in all the world who held me in her hands for life, or for death.

She loved me, truly and well; of that I was convinced. And yet she existed in that mysterious hateful bondage; a bondage which, alas, she dared not attempt to break.

What could be the truth? Why were her lips closed? Aye, why indeed? I dreaded to think.

zelda_pinwheel

Date: 01-15-2009 06:53 AM

that woman just can't stay out of trouble, apparently.

/me goes to download The Mysterious Three.

DixieGal

Date: 01-15-2009 02:58 PM

OK, I'm caught up now. Proceed.

badgoodDeb

Date: 01-15-2009 03:11 PM

Wow, Dixie -- you must be having a sunny happy day today! That avatar practically radiates happiness and love out at us! Very pretty. :)

A Faceless Bureaucrat walked down the hallway of the Canal Zone offices of the OIS, her heels clicking sharply. In her hand, she carried a sheet of yellow paper. She entered a small room at the end of the corridor, where Yet Another Faceless Bureaucrat sat behind the desk.

Looking up, he said, "Yes? I can't remember your name, but you look familiar."

"That's because we all wear the same non-uniform uniforms. I just got this from Western Union."

"The small college in Northwest Iowa?"

"No, the telegraph office. It's from Mexico City."

"Am I supposed to know anything about that?"

"We have Naval Operations going on in the Sea of Cortez and our Station Chief went there last week."

"Talavera pottery?"

"Among other things. Look at this." She dropped the telegram on the desk.

Yet Another Faceless Bureaucrat looked at it with growing agitation. "I can't read this! It doesn't make any sense!"

Faceless Bureaucrat reached over and turned the telegram right side up.

"Oh! That's better! OH MY GOD!"

"Exactly. We need to do something."

"We need to get this to the Station Chief. Right away!"

Faceless Bureaucrat looked up at the ceiling for the length of time it takes to count to ten there or four times.

"Considering that it has to do with the place that our Section Chief is at the moment and also to do with why she may have not reported in for three days, don't you suppose that waiting for her to get back might not be a bit of a problem?"

Yet Another Faceless Bureaucrat sat, looking stumped for a good long time. "You... suppose... we should do something about it ourselves?" he finally asked, panic creeping into the edges of his voice.

"What an excellent idea!" said Faceless Bureaucrat. "No wonder they made you Paperclip Inventory Subsection Head!"

"But what? Do we have anyone on the ground who can deal with this?"

"As a matter of fact, we do. He's generally a European Asset, but he happens to be on holiday in Mexico city, right now." She opened up a file and handed it to Yet Another Faceless Bureaucrat.

"Eeeeeewwww! What kind of face is that?"

"He's Swedish. I sent an encrypted message to him to get on the case..."

nekokami

These Faceless Bureaucrats remind me slightly of

Pratchett's "Auditors...."

Hopefully the "little friend" is not the squid. I really don't need another of those off-hours collect calls.

badgoodDeb

*But hey --- The Squid is a big star now!! Of *course* he's probably in this tale too. Or she, as the case may be. Do we know?*

zelda_pinwheel

now wait a second here !!! just which side is this swedish operative playing for ???

montsnmags

He's playing on drums in an ABBA cover band.

"Waterloo! Couldn't escape if I wanted too..."

zelda_pinwheel

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO !!! slite, say it isn't so !!!! i feel so betrayed.

Patricia

The French still resent Waterloo, then?

montsnmags

I think that's a bit silly of them. It's not as if La vie à vingt-cinq ans by Dani was ever going to beat ABBA, even if they did enter the competition. 1974 was always going to be Sweden's year.

Cheers,

Marc

nekokami

Somehow reading Marc's posts always brings back surreal memories... in this case, riding in a taxi in China and hearing Dancing Queen on the radio. :dizzy2:

zelda_pinwheel

Date: 01-17-2009 07:38 AM

i personally resent their entire repertoire.

montsnmags

But how could you, my Queen? I know that you can dance. I know that you can jive, having the time of your life. I've seen that girl. I've watched that scene. I'm digging the

dancing Queen.

Cheers,

Marc (On Saturday night and the lights are low...)

zelda_pinwheel

arg ! stop it !!

Wetdogeared

Date: 01-17-2009 07:58 AM

No, please continue, this is the only show playing at this hour. :popcorn:

montsnmags

Okay, okay. I'm sorry. I agree...I don't want to talk, about the things we've gone through. Though it's hurting me, now it's history. I've played all my cards, and that's what you've done too. Nothing more to say; no more ace to play...

Cheers,

Marc (the loser standing small)

zelda_pinwheel

luckily for you (and, more importantly, for me) i've managed to avoid the intrusion of ABBA into my personal reality to the point that i can't actually be certain that you're again quoting / paraphrasing one of the abominations they pass off as music. so although my powers of logical deduction are itching mightily, i'm going to pretend i've noticed nothing amiss. nothing ! nothing, i tell you !!

montsnmags

...and that's all I ask for: uncertainty. Go on. Look it up. Take-a-chance-Take-a-chance-Take-a-ch-ch-chance-chance...

Anyway, I think I'm off to bed. All this lyricism has got me frisky, and now that it's after midnight I want someone to Gimme Gimme Gimme...

Cheers,

Marc (Honey, honey - let me feel it, aha, honey honey...)

zelda_pinwheel

not now, i have a headache. :D

ShortNCuddlyAm

I can't escape from Abba! I had Abba-robots in my dreams

last night (I was going to type Abba-bots, but I figured some-one would find a a way to pervert that ;)). They were all boxy and basically looked like someone had stuck arms, legs, heads and wigs onto juke boxes...

nekokami

The Adventures of Harv and Vera in Panama has now been commemorated in a serious of shameless merchandise. Click the linky below. ;)

vivaldirules

I've got my thong (okay, shirt) on order. Love it. Great job, Neko. Oh, and Zelda, too. Uh, yeah, and pshwynk. Yes, shameless merchandise!

ShortNCuddlyAm

I'll be putting in an order next weekend, after I get paid :)

GeoffC

what a plug....

pshrynk

Joy!! Soon as I can find my wallet, I'm ordering!

GeoffC

You have a wallet?

pshrynk

Well, it was with my pants the last time I saw it, so maybe not.

GeoffC

thinks, pants (last time they were seen.....)

erm :closeseyes:

zelda_pinwheel

*i'm waiting to get paid too, that check better come soon !!!
(of course, that gives me time to try and narrow down the
list of what i want to buy...)*

nekokami

*While I have your attention, should I still work on the
"pshrynk and Patricia in '08" items? I'll have time today.*

pshrynk

*That would be cool. Not sure how many shirts other than
"two" you'd sell, but hey...*

zelda_pinwheel

i would love to see those, although i should probably add that i won't be able to buy anything right away...

nekokami

Okeydokey, we'll see what comes up after lunch. :)

zelda_pinwheel

yay !!

nekokami

How's this?

pshrynk

I approve this message. :D

In Mexico City, a furtive figure ran through the rain and jumped into a taxi.

"Off duty!" the cabbie said.

Oh, señor, I don't think so." The sound of a pistol being cocked punctuated the night.

"You got it, boss! Where to?"

"Wherever it is that you need to take me."

"Que?"

"Let us not play games. I wish to see the Taxi Boss and you are going to take me. If he tries to blame you for that, you can always say that I held a gun to your head. Which I am doing."

"I could get shot for doing that!"

"And you will get shot for not doing it. Your choice, really."

The car started and sped off into the night.

By the side of the road, two small, brown dogs sat and watched the car drive off.

"So, George, you gonna chase after it?"

"Naw. I caught one once and I didn't know what to do with it."

""I've never really seen the point, either. You suppose we should report in?"

"Yeah. That particular group horning in on the Taxi Drivers is something that The Friend needs to take notice of..."

zelda_pinwheel

the plot thickens !!!

He was bored. Nothing was happening. He felt there should be something, but there was not. He looked to his schedule. Yesterday there was something coming up that would be interesting, but that was in the future. Instead, he picked up his glass and toasted his companion. Who had just lost his last sou in a poker game.

The squid looked as if he were grumbling and saying, "I'm pretty certain that that last hand was rigged, especially since there were five aces in your hand, but I'm not going to risk that. Maybe, in fact, there is a new suit called 'pistols' but never mind. Why yes, I would like another Zany Carter as long as you are buying...*"

zelda_pinwheel

that poor squid, i feel so sorry for it during these card

games. :p

GeoffC

there is always something with a twist in it

Harv flipped a few random switches as the engines warmed up.

"Let's do the check list, Viv."

"Okay. The standard, 'We actually give a crap about this' checklist, or the 'We're just flying down to the beach for an afternoon of frolicking, so screw this' checklist?"

Harv looked up contemplatively. "Well, we're flying to Mexico city from Panama city to rescue Vera from whatever it is that she's gotten herself into this time and we have an actual paying passenger, so I guess it should be the first." He muttered, "Much as I know I'm going to regret it..."

"I heard that!"

"Starboard Engine fuel pressure?"

"Check!"

"Port Engine fuel pressure?"

"Check!"

"Starboard oil pressure?"

"Check!"

"Port oil pressure?"

"Check!"

"Landing gear?"

"Still welded to the bottom of the plane!"

"Just say check!"

"Check!"

"You gave in rather quickly," said Harv, feeling suspicion.

"Hey, I'm just the co-pilot! Subservient in every way. That, plus I'm a dog, so I know that I'm beta in this pack..."

"Right. Running lights?"

"Check!"

"If I ask you about the radio, am I going to regret it?"

"I think we already established who is the alpha male here."

"That's not an answer."

"Check!"

Harv sighed. "Radio?"

"Ooh! You're going to like this!" Vivaldi reached out and

flipped a switch. A wall of chromosome damage level noise issued from the speakers. Harv's ears started bleeding and his tympanic membranes tried to crawl out through his nose.

"SHUT THAT OFF!" he shouted.

Thundering silence blessed the cockpit.

"What the Hell? I thought I said NO SKA!"

"No need to shout. That wasn't ska."

"I have to shout, I've been deafened. What was it then?"

"It's a new fusion. Hip hop and ska: Hip ska-p. Not ska at all..."

"I don't see how that's any worse than Death Baroque, but no one ever asks me my opinion," said the M.A.R.V.I.N.

zelda_pinwheel

ska-p :

A very much Marc-like link to something that is best left alone.

:D

nekokami

Death Baroque? Would the M.A.R.V.I.N. really complain about that?

zelda_pinwheel

*and how could *anybody* complain about ska-p ? this must be a fantasy story or something, it's totally unrealistic. ;)*

DixieGal

Tim and I set a new land speed record hitting the "stop" button on that clip. You kids cut out that racket!

vivaldirules

(Don't tell Harv, but I had my earplugs in. Fortunately, I can read lips. Ssshhh!)

nekokami

Date: 01-19-2009 09:21 PM

I always browse MR with the sound off.

Ok, I nearly always have the sound off on my computer anyway... :rolleyes:

GeoffC

very sensible ...

psockpuppet

The Goose taxied out into Lake Gatun. Soon, the roar of engines on take-off filled the air and she was airborne. Under the flight path, two socks sat on chaise longues, basking in the tropical sun. One was leafing through a knitting magazine. The other was worriedly paging through

a stapled document.

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"I think we were supposed to be on that plane."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, I've been leafing through the script -- to see if that set of suspenders got the part I recommended for her -- and right here in twelve pages, it says, 'Cut to interior of Goose. Harv looks down at the flaps lever, startled. HARV Where the Hell did those socks come from? The socks wave back silently and shuffle off to the rear, where Biggles soon starts screaming.'"

"Let me see that!" Hugo grabbed the script, looking at the opened page.

"Oh, snap! First this author gets high on hallucinogens, and now he's hung over!"

"Well, Hugo, he may be hung under. I mean, Adrian was visiting his cubicle last night."

"Now what do we do?"

The small blue frog, who had been following them around for the past week, pulled out his cell and started dialing.

In Mexico City, two small brown dogs wandered aimlessly through the streets. Every now and then, they would sniff

vigorously at a pile of dirt or a fencepost.

"Hey, George! I hear that there is something really big happening at the Taxi Stand! Want to go and watch?"

"Naw, Bob. We have to patrol this sector. The Friend would have our hides if we went off and had fun, instead."

"I wonder what happened to that guy who hijacked the taxi last night."

George stopped and seriously investigated a light post. Nodding his approval, he deposited his reply to the witty commentary posted there. "That pshrynk and his stories! Hah! Who would ever believe that an African American would be elected President!

"I heard that he was taken to see Main Guy. The Friend was there, too, but he hid in the shadows."

"Really, George? I wish I could be there some time, just to see what goes on!"

"What are you? A cat? What's with the curiosity? We're chihuahuas! We prance around, looking cute and adorable, dance in stupid little skirts in the square, and get totally vicious when the time comes! Enough with these questions!"

Just up the street, in the shadows of a tumble down building, a lurking form grunted appreciatively and backed out through the door.

Nate the great

:rofl:

zelda_pinwheel

a small blue frog ! what could he be up to ?? will hugo and lefty manage to get on that plane after all ? (probably, but

only with the help of some sort of pan-dimensional creature...) who are Main Guy and The Friend ?? and is that "r" superfluous ? will the author recover his wits, or has he had one too many Zany Carter Deluxes / absinthes ? tune in next time for the stunning answers to these questions ! (or possibly just more tension-building cliff-hangers, depending.) same bat-time, same bat-channel !!

GeoffC

hang on, author? authors!

The taxi pulled up in front of the non-descript cantina. The rear seat occupant stepped out and walked in. He walked up to the bar as if he owned the place.

"What do you want, gringo?" asked the bartender.

"I have an appointment with your boss," came the answer.

"I don't see any appointments on the calendar."

The man in the riding cape turned to look at the calendar on the wall. Whipping his hand into his pocket quick as a snake, he pulled his revolver, cocked, and shot a hole in the dead center of the day's date. Turning like a flash, he struck the bat from the hand of the bartender and said, "I believe there is one, now."

The phone beside the register rang. "Go ahead and pick it up. Slowly."

Eyes crossed at the .38 snub nose that hovered a mere inch from his nose, the bartender picked up the phone, listened, and said, "You're to go right in."

The stranger walked to the back of the cantina and entered the small curtained room. Inside it was dimly lit.

"So, let's start out with introductions. Or rather, introduction. Who the hell are you?" came the voice from

the shadows.

zelda_pinwheel

that's how i like to make my appointments too.

it sounds like we may soon find out a bit more about these mysterious new characters ! i can't wait...

DixieGal

Since Psockpuppet is co-authoring this thing, I don't think we will be finding out more about the new characters anytime soon. Make that "finding out the truth..." That walking eclair of a rat does not specialize in clarity. It specializes in kidnapping and confusion.

The stranger struck what could only be described as "a pose" and exclaimed, "I, my dear fellows am Hank, Comte de Bois Aussi. Gentleman adventurer, French patriot, and Cultural Attache to the Swahili Nation."

A moment of silence ensued, in which, if the light were

better, the figure in the back of the room might have been seen moving its lips. "So, you're a spy for France and the Swahilis?"

"Hey, there's a Depression going on! One does what one must."

"So, what are you doing here, Senor le Compte?"

"I have an urgent message for le Grand Taxi -- the Taxi Boss!"

"You want to give the Taxi Boss a massage?"

"Non! Not a massage! A message! Don't let the ridiculous French accent fool you!"

"Well, go ahead and leave the message and I'll be sure to

get it to this Taxi Boss if I ever have the opportunity."

"I happen to know that you are the Taxi Boss, the secret ruler of all Mexico. And I shall prove it!" Bois Aussi said a name.

A low growling came from near the floor. "That is not a name that is said anywhere in public by men who wish to live, senor!"

"Nonetheless, I have said it. It proves that I know whereof I speak!"

"Very well, you have shown that you know who I am. What is this urgent message?"

"Mexico is about to be embroiled in a fight with les Etats Unis, the US! There will be an incident in the Sea of Cortez, which will destroy the United States Pacific Fleet

and Mexico shall be blamed."

"And... who exactly is going to do this?"

"Nazi Germany! With the US embroiled in a war with its southern neighbor, they will have a free hand to do as they wish in Africa. Including some very important mineral rights in the middle of Swahili Territory."

The Taxi Boss turned to the smaller figure near the floor.
"We need to get this message to The Factor and the American Woman right away!"

zelda_pinwheel

will those dastardly villains stop at nothing ? my god ! the tension is almost unbearable !

nekokami

Now that's a man of action.

I do hope none of my coworkers are reading this.... :p

Frau Miyatake entered the building. She glared at the doorkeeper, who turned pale and completely forgot to ask for the counter signs.

"We have a problem! Numerous problems!" she exclaimed as she walked into the meeting room.

"Start with the least important. I'm not feeling particularly energetic today," replied the man sitting at the table.

"Harv Wallbanger is flying up from Panama City with Lieutenant Colonel Biggles. He should arrive within the day."

"And he is a problem, how?"

Hilda teared up briefly. "He was the one who got my husband recalled in disgrace to Japan. He may look stupid, but he has skills that we are not yet aware of."

"And this Biggles?"

"A mindless drone from the US Army in the Canal Zone. Stealing peoples' lunches is his most clever action."

"Is this Wallbanger of any use to us alive?"

"He is connected to the American Woman. They have -- an understanding."

"Have him brought in. Biggles, too, if he doesn't put up a fight."

"I want his dog, too. My children seem to like him."

"Whatever. Anything else?"

"The Taxi Boss seems to have heard about the plot for the Pacific Fleet. He was visited by an agent of either the French or the Watusi Nation. We are not sure."

"France or Watusi Nation?"

"Apparently there is a Depression going on and he free-lances."

The man at the table sighed. He was tired. He had risen through the ranks of the German Foreign Service by the expediency of assassination, trickery, and the occasional sharply worded memo and just wanted to retire some place warm and most importantly, free of Nazis. If he could manage to pull off the destruction of the US Pacific Fleet and get Mexico blamed for it, the name of Heinz von

Schleppwig would surely go down in the whispered annals of spying as the master of all subterfuge.

"Have them all killed. Report back with your success."

Outside the window, where there was posted a cute little story about a private eye looking for golden fecal matter, two small, brown dogs listened intently.

zelda_pinwheel

...they have to whisper them. it's in the "How To Be A Master of Subterfuge in Ten Easy Lessons" mail-order handbook.

montsnmags

In the whispered annals of spying, the code phrase is "pull my finger".

Cheers,

Marc

badgoodDeb

*But the question is -- is Heinz von Schlepzig *his* name, or somebody else's??*

pshrynk

:hmmm:

ShortNCuddlyAm

You mean... the chap calling himself Heinz Von Schlepzig might have stolen some-one else's (the real Herr von Shchlepzig's, even) name and be using it illegitately?

:eek:

The fiend!

GeoffC

The unmitigated swine....

The plane came in low over the mountains surrounding Mexico City. In the cockpit, the pilot and co-pilot were having an argument that had been going on since Managua.

"Look... You can't just say that because they are out to destroy our way of life and want to see us all dead that they are enemies!"

"Not the way I see it. A formal declaration of war is sooo last century! What about the damage to the infrastructure? Have you ever seen the costs that are involved?"

"But what I'm saying is this: An entire grouping cannot be painted black by the actions of a few radicals within the group. We don't have any reason to believe that the elimination of the entire population would be of any benefit!"

"And all I'm saying is that we give a go and see what happens. If there is some sort of Karmic Debt that comes as a result, then we gladly pay it in order to be rid of their menace."

"You can pay it. I'm not interested. Besides, some of them are actually pretty cute."

"Typical human! You think with an anthropomorphized filter in front of you all the time! You wouldn't know an actual threat to the lightness of being of the world if it bit you on the knackers. And in this case, it may just happen!"

"'Anthropomorphized?' As in talking dog?"

"Damned squirrels!" muttered Vivaldi. "We have clearance from the tower for landing. Try to remember that this is a dry landing this time?"

"Heading zero eight. Ready for approach."

The Grumman Goose taxied to a stop at the commercial terminal and swung around to its tether points. Harv looked down and had a vaguely disorienting moment.

"That's funny," he said.

"What?"

"I just looked down and had the feeling that I should have seen something that wasn't there."

"Come to think of it, I have this feeling that I should be running through the cargo bay, yapping madly. Funny old world."

"I wonder if this is something important?"

"Well, boys! That was a right cheerful flight! Let's get on with our business, then shall we?" came the overly cheerful voice of Lieutenant Colonel Biggles from the cargo bay.

"Must have been nothing," said Harv. They got up and crawled to the back of the plane. They stepped out into the sunlight.

And into the barrels of the guns of the welcoming committee standing there.

"Hola, senors! And Welcome to Mexico City. Please put your hands in the air where we can see them!"

As Vivaldi tucked tail and ran away as fast as four legs could carry him, he was thinking, "If I'd been chasing after something, Harv would have been chasing after me and we would have both avoided that!"

zelda_pinwheel

oh no ! this is all because a couple of socks didn't read the script !! hugo and lefty, i'm very disappointed in you ! i hope you have a plan to fix this !

pshrynk

Actually, psockpuppet was hung under from his "experiment" with the Jack and LSD, trying to re-create absinthe, so it's not entirely their fault. :p

zelda_pinwheel

well still, 2 socks or 3, they're so unreliable sometimes !

i'm confident they'll do everything to right the situation though. they may be a bit fluff-headed (what do you expect, they are socks after all) but their hearts are in the right place (metaphorically speaking. socks obviously don't have cardiovascular systems).

psockpuppet

The thugs with guns marched Harv and Biggles away. The Goose sat on the tarmac, as if dejected.

"Hello?" came a plaintive voice from inside the cockpit. "Is anyone going to tie the plane down? Or park it properly?"

Or, failing that, at least turn off the autopilot? Anyone?
How typical."

The M.A.R.V.I.N. sat inert, since he had no other real choice. He thought about firing up the engines and flying into the surrounding mountains, but decided he hadn't the energy.

BZZZZZSST! POUF! Suddenly the smell of ozone and the air, or at least a small part of it was filled with smart wool socks.

One was wearing Harv's sunglasses, which had been left behind. "Hugo?" it said.

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"I think we're too late to hit our marks."

"Probably comes from using the JordanAire contractor, rather than Air Adrian. Didn't have the temporal displacement guarantee."

"Do you think Adrian will be upset that we went with a competitor?"

"Nah. He said that he was too busy rigging some sort of election for Germany, so he referred us to JA."

"So what do we do, now, Hugo?"

"Well, it looks like we missed all the action, here. I guess we go and see what we can dig up in the way of Talavera Pottery. And Mexican hats."

"I like plates. Can we get some postcards, too?"

"Yes. We can get some postcards."

The Goose sat on the tarmac. "I don't suppose you could bother to turn that switch on my panel to 'off,' could you? Hello? How typical."

zelda_pinwheel

YAY !!!!!

unless there is some kind of dramatic reversal in the last hours, "germany" is going to want her money back. ;)

postcards are essential.

hm. what do you think are the chances they can combine rescue mission and souvenir shopping ? probably pretty good, actually, knowing them.

:snicker:

A man was walking a dog down the street. He seemed to be talking to himself and amazingly, answering himself quite

animatedly.

"The only reason I'm letting you do this, gringo, is that there is a strict leash law in this part of town."

"Right, right..."

"If I wanted to, I could be off this leash in a second. Just to be clear."

"Sure. Where is this place we are going to?"

"Just down this road. The Factor has a residence that he keeps. There. The White building on the right."

Bois Aussi looked down a long row of white buildings on his right. "Okay. Lead on, petit chien."

"If I find out that means anything nasty, you are getting such an ankle worrying..."

They walked up to the house. Bois Aussi knocked. A large man opened the door. "Si?"

"We are here to see The Factor," said Little Friend.

"Pull the other one."

"We have the card of the Taxi Boss," said Bois Aussi before the chihuahua could launch himself. He handed a small cardboard to the door keeper.

"This way."

They followed the man down a long corridor. Bois Aussi looked around and was not particularly surprised to see holes at intervals cut into the walls. Perfect for laying an ambush if needed.

"In here."

They entered the room ahead. The lights were dim. In the back of the room, a large shape seemed to be lounging on the couch.

"So. Who are you and what is that brings you in?"

"This is some French guy who the Taxi Boss is enamored with. Works for France and the Swahili Nation."

"The Swahili Nation?"

"There is a depression going on. I have information that is very important! The Germans are going to try and destroy

the US Pacific Fleet while it is on manoeuvres in the Sea of Cortez. They then plan to blame Mexico and start a war so that there will be a distraction to their ambitions elsewhere."

"In France?"

"Non! In Africa. There are mineral deposits that are essential to their plans!"

"Hmm." The shape on the couch turned to the wall behind it and said, "I guess this has something to do with you, then?"

"Damned straight it does!" said Vera as she stepped out from behind a curtain. "Where did this information... come... er... from?"

Bois Aussi looked at the beautiful face of a thousand dreams hovering in front of him. He could hear bluebirds

chirping. "What?"

"Erm... Uh, what?"

A voice from near the floor said, "If you two are done with the bucket of water moment, I'd like to get back to my territory."

"OH! I mean.. Oh. Right. Um, where did you get this information?"

"From French Bureau of Intelligence. Might I ask your name, mademoiselle? I do hope that it is mademoiselle, for if your are married, I will have to go straight to my hotel room and kill myself from grief!"

"I'm Vera. Vera Wayne... And you are?"

"Je suis Hank, Comte de Bois Aussi! At your every service and command."

"Right," said the Factor as he jumped down from his couch, "And My name is Slite. Pleased to meet all of you. What do we do with this information?"

Just then, a whirlwind of teeth, paws, tails, and small brown bodies flew into the room, followed close by the large doorkeeper.

"Boss! Boss! Thank God we found you!" George and Bob ran around the room excitedly.

"Now what? Sit! Stay!"

The two chihuahuas came to a halt and the door keeper tripped over them.

"Boss!" said George, "That big German woman is planning to kill the Taxi Boss! We just came from her headquarters!"

zelda_pinwheel

Hank is such a smooth talker...

slite on the scene !!! and a price on vera's head !!! where will it all lead ????

Slite looked down on the two messengers of the Chihuahua Cartel. He had to, since, being a Bernese Mountain Dog, there was no way to look up to them. "Are you sure?"

They stared at him, wide eyed, which is pretty much the constant expression of a chihuahua, but in this case, more so. "Si!" said George, "We were there! The Big German Man told her that the Taxi Boss was to be killed!"

"Did they say who was going to do it?"

"No! But she left right after that. There was something else, too, but I can't remember..."

"That is more than enough for now. Mssr le Comte, Vera, I need someone to go to the Taxi Boss and give warning. Would you two be so kind?"

"Erm... Sure! That would be a great idea!" Vera hadn't felt this way since junior high when Billy Walker had asked her to the Valentine's dance.

"It would be an honor to accompany Mademoiselle. To the Gates of Hell, if necessary!"

"Why would you need to go to a Mexican National Park, right now? Little Friend, I will be needing you and your messengers for another task, if you would not mind waiting a bit?"

Hank and Vera left the room, eyes only for each other. "Do you suppose we could get some Talavera Pottery on the way? I could really go for a vase, right now.."

Phogg

Picture of The Count.

nekokami

:snicker: That image prompted the Muffin Man to do his Count voice... "MBah hah ha!"

Alright, enough sidetracking. Let's get back to the socks!
:D

lilac_jive

I love the Count laugh...

zelda_pinwheel

yes ! moar socks please !

GeoffC

sock it to us - now

GeoffC

sighs

3 days and nothing new to report

pshrynk

I'm workin' on it, okay?

GeoffC

but the time schedule !

*come on, we've paid the laddy enough for more episodes
and well in advance - hurry up before the currency
devalues even further pffft*

GeoffC

*Meanwhile on an island in the middle of the Ocean, they
finally got the generator working, sufficient to fire up the
only reading device available.....Connecting through to MR
for the latest, they were disappointed*

vivaldirules

*...and then the nonreplacable battery in the Kindle 2 died
and they were left with only smoke signals from their
nonexistant fire to communicate with the rest of the world.*

Vivaldi was miserable. He missed Harv terribly. He'd slept in a dumpster, eaten garbage, and drank water from a public toilet. Yet, in spite of all those wonderful things, he had an itch right behind his ears that he couldn't reach and desperately needed a skritch. And while Harv was usually slow on the uptake, even with pointed hints and outright demands, he usually came through with at least a perfunctory skritch.

Right now, he was hot on the scent of what he was assuming was a very willing female dog -- call her a bitch if you must, but Vivaldi was pretty certain she would also turn out to be a great conversationalist. If scent had anything to do with it, at least.

He trotted down the back alleys where he had been hiding for the past twenty four hours, avoiding the stares of human Mexicans as much as possible. He was no stranger to the hostility of humans in these circumstances.

In fact, he'd neglected avoiding notice once way back in his early days and he'd regretted it since then. Of course, how was he to have known that Vera had been on the lookout for a puppy and would find him "adorable, in a horrid little way?" Or that she would have a gambling habit that ended up with him belonging to a bush pilot with a malfunctioning moral compass?

He sniffed at a sign post to check on the latest news. There were a lot of new odors hanging in the forums these days, most of them attracted to the latest chew toy that had recently been released. Vivaldi sniffed disdainfully. It was just a piece of wood! He much preferred his tried and true, genuine, Made in Japan chew toy. He left a scathing comment.

He was aware that there were two small dogs surreptitiously following him in that "we're not really following you" fashion of inept tails everywhere. He sidestepped into an alley off the alley -- this city was made up of alleys as far as he could tell -- and waited.

Two of them. Smaller than him. More teeth, but smaller

stopping ratio. It would be an even match in a fair fight. But Vivaldi had learned fighting from Harv, so there would be no contest. He heard them talking as he prepared to jump out at them from cover.

"Let me read what he put down here, Bob!"

"Make it fast! He may have run off, George!"

"We're dogs! We can track him!"

"Oh, yeah. I forgot."

"Hmmm... Pedro is complaining of having hard pad again. He'll never learn. That new chew toy sure is getting a lot of questions! Personally, I'm not sure what the hoopla is all about. Here it is. What the He...."

Vivaldi jumped out at the two chihuahuas and pinned them under his front paws. "Any last words?" he snarled in his best Cagney impression.

"Oh, my God!" said George, "You're Vivaldi! Author of the Harv and Vera stories! I love your work, dude!"

"Wait. What?" Vivaldi had expected any number of responses other than this one.

"Dude! We read your stories all the time! I especially love that one where Harv got turned into a squid! Where do you come up with these ideas?"

"You'd be amazed what real life can bring..." said Vivaldi distractedly.

GeoffC

But the rest of the World was too busy watching and

waiting for the next installment - and Yehheeeee... it arrived

.....

nekokami

VR isn't the only one to be taken by surprise here... I'm assuming Vivaldi is "writing" his version of the Harv and Vera stories in the same way as his recent commentary on the new chew toy?

badgoodDeb

Well, he's done the photography part, at least. (his avatar)

No, he's not really workin on it. He's testing his new toy (the Jeep). AND not giving us any photos of that!! :(

ShortNCuddlyAm

I think photos of lawyers that you've run over are usually called "incriminating evidence". Hopefully he'll post pics when he's washed the blood off...

zelda_pinwheel

:snicker:

zelda_pinwheel

it's always so awkward when the guys who are supposed to be following you around turn out to be fans. :rolleyes:

pshrynk

Waaaaaay back in the pre-history of this thread, VR was the first guy to write about H V, and in the Panama Adventure, he's working on the Great American Novel.

pshrynk (social historian)

Edit - And he's writing it the same as he's checking the e-mail in RSE's book.

Back in the Goose, the Squid woke up with a raging hangover. A headache in an animal that is, face it, all head is nothing to sneer at.

He rolled over and took a long drink of water from Harv's thermos. After testing to make sure that it was, in fact, just water, of course. Silently, he swore off ever a) drinking with Adrian, b) playing cards with Adrian, or c) both ever again. He felt lucky to wake up as the same species, let alone in the back of the Goose. Why had he crawled in here again?

Hoisting himself up to the cargo bay door, intent on taking a quick swim in Lake Gatun to replenish his depleted body fluids, he was shocked to discover he was sitting in an airplane in the middle of an airport. Harv never landed at airports if he could avoid it! And this wasn't the Panama City airstrip! Small shots of panic ran up his, well, head.

He schlepped to the cockpit, hoping to be able to endure the M.A.R.V.I.N long enough to get a fix on his whereabouts. Half way there, he tripped over a largish bound sheaf of papers.

HARV AND VERA'S MEXICAN VACATION, it said. He noted that the cover stated that the script belonged to "Lefty." The Squid leafed through it quickly. His eyes grew wide as he reached the second act. Grabbing the flare gun from the emergency kit, he jumped out of the Goose and set out across the tarmac.

"I don't suppose you could bother to just flick that switch

before you leave? No? Typical."

zelda_pinwheel

i don't know what we'd do without that squid, sheesh. i feel for it though. a night of drinking and card-playing with adrian is enough to leave anyone feeling unsure of their species the next morning.

vivaldirules

Well, it's possible that I wrote the first few sentences about Vera (back in the pre-golden era of MR) but Harv was definitely PlanetHead's creation. Where is he, anyway? Or is he still stuck in the airport? Maybe the Transportation Safety Authority has confuscated his cranial container.

Huh? Did I miss something?

badgoodDeb

Oh Dear Me! I hope that isn't the case. He's got a rather cute little cranial container there; we'd hate to see it damaged. Or lost, or anything.

nekokami

The image of the squid's eyes "growing wide," knowing what I do about squidly orbs, is now permanently stuck in my brain. :eek:

zelda_pinwheel

"squidly orbs" heheheh...

phenomshel

:dying with hysterical laughter and getting dr pepper all over my monitor..AGAIN: I've got to learn not to eat or drink anything while reading in here....

pshrynk

Red walking VR, VR checking his e-mails...

pshrynk

I may have found a new character...

Cartoon of a parrot swearing like, well, a pirate's parrot.

lilac_jive

:pandalol:

nekokami

Make it a cockatiel, and when he's deprogrammed, he can say "Whatcha doin'?" "Who's a silly bird?" "Whatcha doin', silly bird?" and "Tweet!" At least, that covers the vocabulary mine has. He also sings in two styles, which we call the "march" and the "aria".

GeoffC

please can we have a "no food or drink warning" to attach to some of the threads (as well as the Silliness tag)

Taylor514ce

I'm here. Just back from Miami. Will spend tomorrow recuperating, then the next week on all the work that piled up while I was off working. Funny how that, err, works.

I do have the dubious honor of introducing Harv to the group, Think "hog calling" and "squeegee". It's nice to see that Harv, to use a Southernism, has managed to get above his raising, though to me he'll always be that lovable, amorous, long-haul trucker who's absolute devotion to his porcine princess Vera is a testament and inspiration.

GeoffC

ahmen to good news

pshrynk

Oops! I guess I mis-remembered because when I wrote my first installment, VR had been saying that he was going to write a Harv and Vera story soon, and that got me confused. Looking back, yes, indeed, Taylor was the originator of Harv.

GeoffC

which installment are we due now ?

Patricia

The next one, of course.

:)

GeoffC

will there be a next one ?

pshrynk

I was thinking of going back and doing the first one, actually...

Patricia

A prequel! Yes, go for it, pshrynk! There must be quite a back-story there.

zelda_pinwheel

oh, i would love to hear how it all started...

Patricia

I'm sure that it all grew out of those socks... At any rate, they comment on the action in the manner of a Greek Chorus and, like said Chorus, provide the voice of reason.

Harv strained at his bindings. No use. They were quite well tied. "Biggles?" he said.

"Right here!" came the voice from behind him.

"Can you get out of the ropes?"

"Let me see, here." There was the sound of movement behind him. "Right! I can... Yes, I can just..." More scraping. "Yes! I can definitely say that the ropes are tied in a very professional fashion and there is no hope of me

slipping out of them!"

"Was it necessary to complement the guy who tied us up?"

"Well, credit due and all that, old boy!"

There was more scraping and a loud thud behind Harv. "I do believe that I have fallen over and there is still no means of slipping these ropes!"

"That's good to know. Now I won't try that myself, since that was right at the top of my list of things to do right now!"

"Glad to be of assistance, old boy!"

The door to the small room they were being held in slammed open. "Trying to make an escape were we?" asked a heavily accented voice.

"No, not really. Trying to get out of these ropes, actually. Then, we may have gone on to making an escape."

"Sarcasm, Mr Wallbager? I would have thought that you would be past that at this moment, hmm?"

A short man with a quite pointy chin, a dueling scar, and a monocle came into Harv's view. "We will have to see about your use of sarcasm. We will have to certainly see..."

Von Schlepwig rounded on Harv's head with a pistol butt in his hand. Briefly, stars popped out all over, then went black.

Outside the window, three doggy shaped shadows clung to the side of the building.

"Oh! Senor Vivaldi! Was that truly Harv of your magnificent stories we just heard getting bashed on the head?" asked George.

"Sounds like. There's usually a hollow gonging sound like that when he gets conked."

"Do you think he would give me his autograph when he wakes up?"

"I'd say we should do something to make sure he wakes up first, wouldn't you say?"

"Oh, but he's Harv! He always gets away just in the nick of time!"

"No, he gets away, mostly long before any trouble starts. I just write him so that he gets away in the nick of time. Who

wants to read a story about how the hero gets out of the room and goes out drinking for three or four hours before staggering back and tripping over the bad guys?

"Where is this Taxi Boss and the head of the Chihuahua Cartel, that I just joined? We may need back up!"

nekokami

VR, don't tell them Harv isn't a hero! If you disillusion them too much, they may not want to help you anymore (or share their bacon, even!) Tell them things like "Harv always gets away in the nick of time, but that's because he has help from loyal friends!"

Or not, whatever. :shrug:

zelda_pinwheel

plus if you do that, you get some of the glory too !

*so where is the taxi boss and head of the chihuahua cartel
?????*

badgoodDeb

I don't recognize the name, but that description certainly sound like the Bad Guy in Rocky Bullwinkle!! Oh yes, Boris. (Where's Natasha?) So that's what Boris' last name was? Or maybe it's a distant relative.....

pshrynk

Boris Badenov and Natasha Fatale. However, Boris was chubby and wore a black fedora.

Fearless Leader on the other hand...

badgoodDeb

Oh sorry --- but at least I got the right "Gang" !!

RWood

Was there ever a time when Hugo and Lefty had teeth, a time when they put the bite on people?

GeoffC

Or is it the Hex they put on people.

nekokami

Hugo has a safety pin, as I recall....

Vera was feeling conflicted. This Bois Aussi character was certainly a handsome man. He had a steady and well-paying job. He had huge tracts of land in France. He was charming and a delight to talk to. He had read all the latest novels. He was pretty much everything that Harv was not.

But Harv was... well Harv. Which didn't have much going for it, if she really thought about it. But for some reason, she couldn't bring herself to get rid of the image of his ruggedly handsome face and his mastery of the art of risotto.

Right now, Bois Aussi was regaling her with a tale of the French President's state visit to the US three years ago. Vera didn't have the heart to tell him that she had been at the dinner as a guest of Del and El and certainly refrained from editing his version. She hadn't the heart.

"And then, right at the height of the ceremony, voila! The President's wife asks for a glass of champagne! The silence was deafening. I suppose that there are no

adequate champagne style sparkling wines grown in your country, eh? The embarrassment!"

"Not since Prohibition started, no. Where do you suppose that Frau Miyatake has her headquarters?" One thing about Harv, he may not talk much, but when he did, he stayed on topic.

"Well, looking at the map that les deux chiens described, it could be anywhere from 'musty and somewhat largish poodle' to 'indeterminate ancestry bitch with weak kidneys.' I am uncertain how to visualize that as a human, though."

"It does pose a problem. I wish Vivaldi was here. He could sort this out for me in an instant."

"Musty and largish poodle is at the corner of Avenida 5 and Calle de los Otras Revoluciones. Ms Weak Kidneys really is a bitch and stuck up to boot. She hangs out at Avenida 30 near the Mercado," said a voice near the floor.

"Thanks!" said Vera.

"No problem. Any bacon around here?"

Vera paused, looked down, pondered, and said, "Just what the hell are you doing here?"

"Glad to see you, too, toots," said Vivaldi. "Who's the pimp with the outrageous French accent?"

zelda_pinwheel

oooh, holy grail flashback !! don't tell me, Bois Aussi's secret weapon is the ancestral art of taunting, refined over centuries of rigorous training ?

pshrynk

I was wondering if someone would get that. Took two

segments...

zelda_pinwheel

two segments ?

pshrynk

Bois Aussi was misunderstood a few segments back when he was talking about messages/massages. No one picked up on it.:angry:

zelda_pinwheel

oh, i did see that. i just didn't mention it. there's so much going on in this story !

nekokami

I got the outrageous French accent bit right away. :)

But where are the SOCKS????

pshrynk

Shopping for Talavera pottery.

zelda_pinwheel

see ? i'm sure all the wildly intelligent and hyper-cultivated

people following this story got it, even if we didn't mention it right away. don't worry pshrynk, we get you !

yes seriously !! i think they've been mucking about in souvenir stands long enough, don't you ???

ShortNCuddlyAm

At least Vera has the right priorities :)

zelda_pinwheel

she always does. :)

GeoffC

With all that's been going on around them, they're probably in the laundry basket

Taylor514ce

We should all keep a close eye on the Bureau of Lost Socks. (<http://www.funbureau.com/>)

GeoffC

There just had to be someone, somewhere, interested enough to make this site !!! :rofl:

(I just usually blame the cats).

ShortNCuddlyAm

The only time ours were ever interested in socks was when we filled them (the socks, not the cats) up with catnip.

nekokami

So... where's the next installment? We were promised "continuing adventures of Harv Vera" (and one HOPES, VR, the socks and the squid) over here!

GeoffC

continuing to wait

Vivaldi looked up at Vera. "What?"

"You're in Panama! With Harv!"

"Not exactly. Actually not so much there as here, if you can believe your eyes."

"Or your nose," said Bois Aussi, "Who is this malodorous, if talking, dog, ma chere?"

"Oh, it's 'ma chere,' is it?" Vivaldi went to the corner and laid down on the doggy bed there. "Completely forgotten about your fiance, have we?"

"No! Yes! Wait..." Vera hadn't felt this confused since the first time she'd tasted peach cobbler.

"A Fiance? Damn these qwerty keyboards with no accents! You did not tell me about a fiance? That makes you so much more intriguing, ma chere!"

"Wait! Harv is not my fiance! We have an 'arrangement.' Nothing else."

"I like the way you pronounce the quotation marks, there. The only reason you're not wearing a ring is that Harv can't

afford one and keeps losing the one he wins in poker before the night is through. 'Arrangement,' my eye."

"Stop! You still haven't answered my question. What are you doing here in Mexico City?"

"Oh, nothing, just thought we'd pop up here, shop for some Talavera pottery, rescue the damsel in distress, get waylaid by a gang of Nazis planning on destroying the US Pacific Fleet, get dragged off to a secret hideout by said Nazis, escape with just the collar on my neck, hear that the Nazis are going to kill Harv, and subsequently join the chihuahua cartel. Just a typical day. You?"

Vera paused to sort out the run on sentence. "WHAT?" she finally screamed out, "Did you say 'kill Harv?'"

"This Harv, he is your fiance, non?"

GeoffC

"This Harv, he is your fiance, non?"

Priceless

zelda_pinwheel

i added my own damned accents ! :pandalol:

pshrynk

thanks!

Everyone in the room turned to look at Vivaldi, who was scooting his butt across the carpet. "What?"

"Did you say that they were going to kill Harv?"

"That's what I heard. But you just go ahead and have this little tete a tete with French Guy, here. I'm pretty certain there were supposed to be accents in there somewhere."

"Hank, please tell Slite and Taxi Boss that I have to go! Harv is in trouble! I couldn't live with myself if he died!" Vera ran out the door and grabbed the first cab she saw. Vivaldi ran around in circles and barked, then ran after her.

"Pffft! The American women are so fickle!" said Bois Aussi. "I must get over this and cherche l'amour in other venues, non?"

He set his strong Gallic chin forward and walked resolutely to the back room.

zelda_pinwheel

it's about time !!!!!

pshrynk

Do you have any idea how long it takes to read every single post in the llounge and the Writer's Corner every day?

Oh, I guess you do.

zelda_pinwheel

Date: 03-01-2009 06:24 PM

:whistle:

psockpuppet

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"Do you suppose we should be doing something right now?"
"

"We are doing something, Lefty. We're haggling over the price of this Talavera Vase. No! There is no way that I'm paying that price and the shipping!"

"No, I mean for the Beautiful Wearer. I'm pretty certain that we were supposed to be doing something."

"Hey, it wasn't me who lost the script!"

In a corner of the stall, a small blue frog leafed through his script and looked thoughtful.

"Yes it was. You lost yours back in Panama City the second day of first read through."

"Look, throw in the blue and orange pig, and I'll pay shipping myself! Well, yeah, but they know better than to give me an actual script. I looked at it this time and all there was in it were blank pages. So, technically, I didn't really lose my script. I always cadge off you, anyway."

"I'm just worried, Hugo."

"They'll find us when they need us, Lefty. How much for the ash trays?"

In a corner of the vendor's stall, a small blue frog leafed through his script and looked thoughtful.

zelda_pinwheel

for the love of squirrels, those socks can be so unreliable sometimes !!! someone should get them a cellphone.

ShortNCuddlyAm

They'd only lose it. Or run up implausibly large bills on calls to international numbers. Or both.

zelda_pinwheel

hm, good point. :chinscratch: well maybe that small blue frog can do something.

ShortNCuddlyAm

He is mentioned twice, so he must be important...

GeoffC

are we sure it's a frog and not a pill ? :chinscratch:

Patricia

Well, I've never come across medication that bounces about. What have you been taking, Geoff?

pshrynk

It is an hallucinatory frog, so, possibly...

zelda_pinwheel

you're not about to tell us this is all actually a hallucination, are you ??? :inquisiti

pshrynk

Who, me? :innocent:

zelda_pinwheel

pff, i notice even the smileys aren't convinced by that, they didn't transform the text. :rolleyes:

montsnmags

All the universe is a hologram, and all the men and women merely hallucinations of each other.

Woohoo! Lunch! (sausage, cheese and barbecue sauce on a couple of rolls)

Cheers,

Marc

Harv awakened slowly and hoped that he'd been dreaming, or, failing that, hallucinating. He tried moving his arms. Nothing. So far, not too different than a typical Sunday morning. Legs, nothing. A little more concerning. Eyes -- the eyes could definitely function and fluttered open. He found that he could lift his head and immediately regretted that he could. At least this time, there was not an upside down vision of Vivaldi staring him in the face.

What he saw, however, was not a great deal better. And the noise was horrendous. That had to do, he supposed with the fact that he was tied to a mill stone which was slowly grinding its way toward what had to be described as a farking big grinding stone. And he was tied down. Quite

securely. Damned Nazi henchmen! Why couldn't he have fallen in with the "Oh just loop some twine around his feet, I'm sure that will hold him," crowd?

Above the din of the mill stone, he could hear Biggles complaining.

"You bloody pikers! This is inhumane! First I'm going to have to watch that stone flatten Wallbanger, and then I'm going to have to wait until it turns around to me! Be merciful and just shoot me!"

Harv was left to ponder why Biggles hadn't said "us."

"You will be quiet, Herr Colonel!" said a voice from out of Harv's sight. He imagined a monocle and fencing scar.

"We must get going, Major!" said Frau Miyatake. "We have work to do!"

Von Schleppwig answered in German. Harv was thankful for the time he'd spent in a German POW camp in the Great War at that moment. "I don't wish to discuss this openly in front of these two. If we are to get the fishermen to plant the mines, we need to be at the coast by midnight."

Frau Miyatake answered in French. Harv was glad once again that he'd been a part of the Lafayette Escadrille. "But we must also see to the American woman."

Von Schleppwig switched to Italian. Good old Luigi, the town barber back in Wonomowoc, Wisconsin! "Is there a plan for how we are going to get past the guards surrounding her?"

Frau Miyatake switched to Swahili. Damn!

As they continued their discussion, Harv tried again to get out of his bonds. He heard a door slam and the voices

were gone. With nothing else to do, he started to calculate how long he had before he had to start watching his future family prospects get ground into hamburger. About an hour. He didn't know what process called for a mill stone to grind this slowly, but he was at least somewhat thankful.

zelda_pinwheel

sweet fuzzy squirrels !!! how will harv (and biggles) escape from this predicament ???? where are the smart socks (and possibly a small blue frog) when you need them ???? what is vr doing ??? how far away is vera, and how long will it take her to get there ?????

in other news, wow, multi-lingual ! that harv is smarter than he looks. ;)

GeoffC

harv is certainly "smarter than the average "

Frau Miyatake buffed her nails with vigor. She had Wallbanger where she wanted him, and all she needed for her revenge to be complete was Vera, as well. That and Vivaldi to take back to her children. They were always

screaming, "What did you bring us?" at her whenever she went home from an assignment. This time, she was going to have something more than a used road map and a candy bar she didn't eat on the plane. Little heathens.

There was a knock at the door. "Kommen sie!" she cried out.

A large dog walked into the room. "Hello, frau!"

"Ah, Mr Slite! It's about time you showed up again! We were beginning to wonder where you'd got off to."

"Just setting things up for the Taxi Boss' untimely demise. What is happening here?"

"Mmmm... Nothing much. We have captured two of the American Woman's compatriots. We are going to use them to bait her into our trap. Then we are going to get the

explosives to the fishermen on the coast to set up the sinking of the Pacific Fleet."

"Dull, ordinary, and every day, then."

Frau Miyatake continued to buff her nails.

"You seem rather agitated."

The emery board snapped and flew across the room.
"Why do you say that?"

"Just an observation. Anything wrong?"

"It's just that, every time we think we have this Harv and Vera in our clutches, they manage to get away. There was this time in Colombia... Well, it seemed impossible, especially with the appearance of that moose and polar

bear. There is just something uncanny about these two."

"You could give him to me. I am getting the Taxi Boss to work with the American Woman. Having this Harv might benefit my plans."

"Nein! There have been too many harrowing escapes!"

"Ah, it was just a thought. I must go, now. There is an inexplicable explosion that is about to happen at the Taxi Headquarters and I must make my alibi airtight. Good bye!

zelda_pinwheel

ha ! even frau miyatake recognises they are heathens !!!!

badgoodDeb

Ooooo -- prepping an alibi!

Gaurnim

An explosion ?

Gotta go and prep an alibi too.

What am I going to use this time ...

Not "abducted by aliens", I already used in to escape a MobileRead Apéro.

Ah yeah, I've got it :

"Knee-deep in the dead", courtesy of the Space Marine of Doom fame.

I've been shipped to a space station where scientific experimentations on teleportation have opened a portal to Hell.

Leave a message after the Bip.

EDIT:

I can come back in a moment's notice if needed, teleportation is fun !

...

Damn, not really helping my alibi, this ...

zelda_pinwheel

:pandalol:

badgoodDeb

Yeah -- while creating an alibi, it is strongly recommended that you NOT admit to having teleportation capabilities. That'll wreck an alibi so fast!!!

Gaurnim

Yeah, it's always the problem :

you don't want to be blamed for what you haven't done but you don't want to miss the fun if you are to play a role in it.

GeoffC

If you need an alibi, I can always provide the necessary documentation and affidavit, dependent upon the usual cut of any or all illicit, or otherwise, remunerations of the chocolate and/or monetary commodity, whilst also maintaining a quiet non sequitur about any statement that may or may not be required in any court of any land which places an unnecessary burden on my ability or abilities to render the true nature of any event or non event that I am, through no pain or death expected to perform in the duties thereof, or not as the case may be...

you can count on my discretion in this matter, please post a public acknowledgement accordingly

3 winks at the left window and a waggle of the foot in the right....

Gaurnim

Greuh ? :confused: :lost:

:bulb2:

:teleport:

The squid had to admit it. He was lost. He had started out in the direction he was pretty certain was the direction of the mill. However, the street signs were all different from back home. He had tried asking directions, but there weren't very many people here who were able to understand the emotive qualities of a cephalopod.

He had, in fact, narrowly escaped being made someone's supper on at least two occasions. Menacing people with the flare gun tended to make it easier to get away.

He mooched past a stall in an out of the way mercado. Inside he heard the proprietor screaming in Spanish. "Do not touch the merchandise! I cannot come down any further! And I cannot throw in the shipping! And where did that frog come from?!"

Well at least he would be lost in company. The squid went into the stall.

badgoodDeb

Dum da dum dum..... I hope that wasn't a Very Bad Idea on the squid's part!

Vera stood in the middle of the Taxi Headquarters. The Taxi Boss was eating a plate of tacos. Bois Aussi leaned against the wall, muttering about bush pilots and rotten luck.

"If we make a full assault on the mill, we can probably overwhelm them," said Vera.

"Not if you want to have any agents left alive to prevent the bombing of the Fleet," said the Taxi Boss.

"I have a hard time making that my priority," said Vera, looking down in shame.

"Excuse, me?" said Bois Aussi.

"Leaving my agents alive or stopping the bombing?" There was a decided chill in the air.

"I say! Excuse me?" Bois Aussi's voice was getting shrill.

"It's just that it's Harv..."

"If I may?"

"That's okay, Toots, I'm with you!" said Vivaldi. "Harv owes me twenty bucks."

"I hate to be a noodge, here, but is there supposed to be a keg of dynamite with a lit fuse sitting over here in the closet?"

"WHAT?!?!" everyone screamed at once.

badgoodDeb

Oh My! (can you put out a fuse using a plate of tacos?)

zelda_pinwheel

well, i feel better knowing the squid is reunited with hugo and lefty. i bet things are really going to start moving now! (and not just because of the dynamite.)

psockpuppet

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"What was that sound?"

"You mean the large boom, like a keg of dynamite going off?"

"Yeah, that one."

"Probably some sort of political statement."

"Oh. Why does that squid keep looking at us as if to say, 'Hi. We really need to get going now, because according to the script, you have a big role to play in the final act and you have to join the Chihuahua Cartel before you get there!'"

"He's probably with the tourism bureau. I really must insist on you picking up at least part of the shipping bill!"

The small blue frog pulled out a wallet and paid the shipping, just to get Hugo to shut up.

zelda_pinwheel

*uh oh, exploding kegs of dynamite are usually trouble.
:stunned:*

ShortNCuddlyAm

Ack - I have no more nails left to bite!

GeoffC

The small blue frog pulled out a wallet and paid the shipping.....

what eager minds wish to know, is, where did he keep the wallet?

pshrynk

In his pocket, of course. :p

GeoffC

ah!!, not a pocket watch, then ?

montsnmags

Exactly! See, while you watch his pocket, he pulls his wallet out of his ear: classic "sleight of hand"...err, or its squodgy analogue anyway.

Cheers,

Marc (Watch me pull a hat out of this rabbit...)

GeoffC

:croak:

"Well," said Vera, "Someone certainly wants us dead!"

"That was very close!" said Bois Aussi, "We barely escaped with our very lives!"

"I'm going to have to get a new taxi," said the Taxi Boss, "It took out my garage, too."

"Man! I had some bacon left in there! This really pisses me off!" said Vivaldi.

The four of them stood on the street corner across from the hole that used to be the headquarters. An ancient pumper cart with equally ancient firefighters was spraying a desultory stream of water onto the flames that ringed the crater.

"What the Hell?" came a voice low to the ground. "How did this happen?"

Everyone looked down at Slite, who had just wandered up. Vivaldi laid his ears back and put his tail stub as close to between his legs as he could manage. He slunk out of sight.

"Someone thinks we're getting too close to the center of things, apparently," said Vera.

"Man, you step out for one little walkies and this is what happens. Now what?"

"I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm going to rescue my man! They tried to kill me, they've kidnapped Harv, and now they have me pissed off!"

Vera stamped off down the street.

"Well," said Bois Aussi, "I for one am much more interested in settling up with the Nazis than with preventing a war, right now!" He pushed his gallic chin forward and followed Vera.

"I gotta go get a new car, preferably one that is bomb proof," said the Taxi Boss and walked in the other direction.

"Where'd that mutt go?" said Slite and started sniffing the ground.

badgoodDeb

Here --- use this and you'll find VR much faster. Got a whole PILE o bacon for him!!

Vivaldi ran down an alley in a blind panic. The smell on Slite! He's never smelled a dog that had that odor. The engineers on the Army Post back home all smelled that way. But not dogs. What do dogs have to do with TNT, wondered.

And now, a maniac, freelance spy dog the size of Vermont was almost certainly tracking him down! Vivaldi had been in his share of dog fights. Well, be honest, he'd run away from his share of dog fights. He was much more of a lover than a fighter. And dogs were much better at protecting their vulnerable bits than humans. Heck, fighting someone with Harv was just second nature. If there wasn't an unfair advantage to be had, Vivaldi just wasn't interested.

But when a small gray dog was cornered by a huge dog who definitely looked like he worked out, someone was going to get hurt. Usually the small gray dog. He had to get away.

Looking around, he spied a garbage pile and dove in. Anything to disguise his scent was welcome. The fact that it was garbage was just a bonus. He forced himself to get out of the pile and keep running. No time for simple pleasures when being pursued by someone a lot bigger and with all his teeth.

He was beginning to panic. Well, panic more. He didn't know this territory at all and had no safe holes just mapped out for purposes of diving into to avoid a dog fight. This just wasn't Panama City.

He rounded a corner and ran headlong into Bob and George.

"Yo! Dude! Where you going in such a hurry!" said Bob.

"Anywhere but right here!" cried Vivaldi, keeping up his world record pace in the Smallish Dog Avoiding Horrible Death by a Large Dog Event. He figured himself at least a silver, if not gold.

The chihuahuas scurried after him. "Slow... down... we... can't ... keep... up!" Bob was screaming.

Vivaldi made a sudden turn into yet another alley and

came to a full stop. The chihuahuas plowed into his butt.

"You don't understand! Slite is going to kill me!"

"The Big Friend? Why? What did you do?" asked George, adoring fan.

"It's not what I did, it's what I know he did! The Taxi Boss' house was blown up and he showed up smelling of TNT! He's a Bad Dog!"

"Dude! That guy was inducted into the Chihuahua Cartel by Little Friend months ago! He can't be bad!"

"You didn't smell what I smelled. I'm lucky I got away as fast as I did. One bite on my neck and that's the end of a great literary career!"

"Oh, man! We gotta tell the Little Friend! Come with us!"

"What about getting away from Slite?"

"We're chihuahuas! Places we can get into a Bernese can't even pee in! Let's go!"

The three dogs ran off down the alley.

ShortNCuddlyAm

:snicker: Great line :)

Great installment, too

zelda_pinwheel

i was wondering why vr reacted so strangely to slite's appearance !!! :stunned: crikey, you could cut the suspense with a knife !

Curly

Hi, sorry to interrupt. pshrynk, I followed your link to the story and I must say, I am thoroughly enjoying it and can't wait to find out what happens next.

But, where are the elephants?! You said there would be thousands of elephants? Did I miss them? Or is it that pink one in the corner next to the squid? :)

pshrynk

Well, you have to read Moving Pictures by Terry Pratchett to get that reference, which means you have to read pretty much all of the Discworld series.

The short answer is, Cut Me Own Throat Dibbler, entrepreneur extraordinaire and money loser tres ordinaire runs the Disc's first and, thankfully, last movie studio and advertizes every "click" as having "A Thousande Elephants!" I won't spoil things by telling you how the thousand elephants actually materialize. But it is a hilarious book.

pshrynk

Oh! and you should read Harv and Vera's Adventure in Panama, if you haven't, yet. [Here](#) and [here](#) (Among

others. There is a Harv and Vera's Panama Adventure available in every conceivable format.)

pshrynk

(shameless self promoter)

Curly

Thanks! I am most intrigued... off to find out more.

Phew, you weren't kidding Adventure in Panama is available in every conceivable format -- have myself a copy, can't wait to get reading! :)

zelda_pinwheel

enjoy it ! :D it's brilliant.

psockpuppet

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"Where did we come from?"

"Well, when a man sock and a woman sock fall in love, they get 'paired.' Then, after they've spent some time with all the experimentation with the whole swinging lifestyle thing, they decide to settle down. Then they get a sock drawer of their own and decide to have some booties. The mommy sock 'casts on' to the daddy sock's needles and they 'knit.' Then, after a while baby booties are made."

"No, I mean, where was that mercado we were just in?"

"Oh. Well, that was just one of the quaint Mexican Folkways that are arbitrarily set up throughout the country to separate gringos from dollars. Why?"

"Well, there didn't seem to be a lot of commotion when that bomb went off. I'm just wondering why that is."

"Probably political."

"Oh. Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"How do you 'knit'?"

"Well, I don't know about you, but I like a size 18 needle and slubby yarn."

Harv continued to struggle against the ropes holding him to the millstone. Who in their right mind made a millstone with tie downs? Obviously the sign of a disoriented and ill mind. Even more annoying than the professional job the Nazis had done with the ropes was the whinging coming from Biggles. He had long ago tuned out the complaints about not being allowed to go first to ghastly death and the

roughness of the ropes and the beam of sunlight from the holey roof that was lancing his face and he just had to wait until the whole thing had turned away in order to not be blinded before being horribly crushed and mutilated, he supposed.

"Biggles!" he finally cried out.

"Yes, Old Boy?"

"Do you ever shut up?"

"Never that I have been aware of. An old family tradition! It's managed to keep us out of harm's way on more than one occasion, I might say, as well."

"Huh?"

"Well, my great great grandfather Biggles was chatting up a barmaid at the Twin Oxen Pub in Lexington when the British came knocking up the Colonials and he completely missed the battle. Swore that it saved his life."

"Your great great grandfather was a British soldier in the Revolution?"

"Dear me, no! My family has been in New England since the Mayflower, old chap! Great great grandfather Biggles was a colonel in the Massachusetts Militia."

"A Minute Man? Your great great grandfather was a Minute Man?"

"Yes. Very well known."

"Then when did you move to England?"

"England, Old Boy? I've never been in England in my life! What makes you say that?"

"Well, I was just thinking, what with the accent..."

"Didn't I just say that I hailed from New England?"

"Well, yes..."

"There are parts of New England that are older than others, Old Boy."

Harv opened his mouth to point out the inherent absurdity of that, but was distracted by the door exploding inward with some force.

zelda_pinwheel

what ?? biggles isn't british ??? well that's unexpected !!!

door exploding : a lolcat intervention ??? (see : effect of lolcats on pilotbob's head. ;)).

badgoodDeb

OOoooo -- the plot gets twistier and twistier!

Harv and Vivaldi were going through pre-flight check list.

"Magnetos."

"Check."

"Landing gear?"

"Check."

"Windshield wiper?"

"Check."

"Flaps?"

"Check."

"Radio?"

"Check. You know, that was really odd back there."

"Which part? The elephants or the orange dyed llamas riding them?"

"No, the way that those two socks insisted on us hauling all that Talavera pottery back as payment for what they did to Slite."

"Oh. Well, there's something to be said for contributing to selective breeding procedures. Cargo door shut?"

"Check."

Slowly, the plane pulled out of its parking stall and drove off into the sunset.

zelda_pinwheel

*that was a lot of elephants, too. there must have been a
thousande of them.*

wait, what now ??

badgoodDeb

And what's this about "selective beeding procedures"? Are they making a beeded vest or necklace for Slite? Wow!

ShortNCuddlyAm

I've only just grown my fingernails back too!

pshrynk

Breeding. Not beeding, breeding.

pshrynk

Date: 04-01-2009 01:45 PM

For those who were disappointed with the ending, just remember that Babylon 5 was even worse in it's denouement...

badgoodDeb

just giving you a hard time! Nice panda in your avatar!

pshrynk

Date: 04-01-2009

Author's disclaimer:

The above episode was done under the influence of the process of being acutelated by the Pandorg (again) and bears in no way any resemblance of actual story plot line or characterization. In other words, it was a dream or hallucination.

In other other words:

April Fools!:rofl:

zelda_pinwheel

:pandalol:

pshrynk

Thank you! I'm here all week! Don't forget to tip your waitstaff!

ShortNCuddlyAm

:rofl:

badgoodDeb

Are you going to change avatars ALL DAY? I mean, do I have to check your postings every 5 minutes, just so I don't miss one of those really cute pandas???

vivaldirules

You dog, you!!!

(no wonder the elephants were all wearing silly hats this time)

Curly

:yahoo: Elephants! It was a long wait, but well worth it!

pshrynk

Just for you, Curly!

LazyScot

Hey! That's not fair.... :angry:

How, in the name of over-funded bank bailouts, are we going to afford that?

pshrynk

Hey, you live in the UK and have a Kindle. You're used to wasteful extravagences! :p

vivaldirules

Want more elephants! (and no silly hats this time)

LazyScot

Hannibal? Hannibal! Are the Italians still giving you problems?

Vivaldi looked up from his reverie. "What?"

"I said, you are bringing us more problems than we want to deal with right now," said Little Friend. "That explosion nearly killed several of our members and we've got a lot of widdle to clean up"

"Well excuse me for exposing a Nazi spy in the midst of your organization! I could just go back to Panama City and let the dogs of war, so to speak, just run right over your little enclave here." If he'd had his wish, that would have been the case, right now.

Little Friend was sitting on the back of an old couch, looking over the abandoned lot where the Chihuahua Cartel had its crib. There were so many small, nearly hairless dogs lounging around that Vivaldi couldn't count them all. Some were looking at him and growling. He was pretty certain that, individually, these were the kinds of dog fights he preferred to be in. But as they say, it's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the number of friends of similar size he can bring along with him.

"I guess we need to find the American Lady and warn her, along with the Taxi Boss. Although I'm pretty certain they can handle themselves."

"Yeah, that's a good idea, too," said Vivaldi, who was really just looking for a way to keep his own skin intact.

At that moment, a low, throaty growl was heard coming from the back of a pile of old tennis shoes. The pile burst into its component pieces and there was Slite, foam dripping from his mouth. He was obviously a mad dog.

"VIVALDI! Come here!"

Vivaldi just barely stopped himself from slinking over to the Bernese. He was not so lucky with his bladder control.

"You're going to have to get through us, Big Dog!" said Little Friend, "Get him!"

Fifty chihuahuas launched themselves at the huge dog.

zelda_pinwheel

there is nothing about the "chihuahua cartel" which is not funny.

but what's up with slite ????

pshrynk

You may just have to be patient, chica! :p

badgoodDeb

(I wonder if he has been brainwashed?? :horrors:)

pshrynk

Maybe, but actually not even close.

Vivaldi sat and watched in horror as the chihuahuas latched onto the howling mad Bernese. He supposed he ought to join in, but found himself unable to break free of the spectacle of fifty small, brown dogs clamped to the scruff of one very big one.

Slite spun around in a circle several times and tried grabbing various chihuahuas as he circled. All to no avail. This was a highly trained pack of chihuahuas! Idly, Vivaldi reflected on the Squirrel Pack of Argentina that he and Harv had run into in '36.

Finally, fed up with the yapping, salivating, and more to the point biting pack hanging onto him, Slite started shaking. Small brown bodies flew in every direction, many of them

stunned by impact with the walls.

"Knock it off!" he bellowed, "Sit!"

The chihuahuas dropped their butts like they were on a string.

Slite looked at Vivaldi and advanced on him, slowly.

"You know, that really wasn't my idea!" he said, "I was all for negotiating first! My, what lovely fur you have! Do you use conditioner?"

zelda_pinwheel

:stunned:

badgoodDeb

That's negotiating, huh?

The squid was getting worried. He knew that there was supposed to be a mill of some sort around here. (Having read the script.) But it just didn't seem to be where it ought to be. He'd looked at several streams and for wind mills.

The socks were of little help. The one with the safety pin kept assaulting Mexican sombreros and the sensitive one kept buying post cards. And the frog seemed to be responding to inner voices.

Some music wafted down from a roof top. He thought about going up and having a marguerita. Where there was music there usually were drinks. But he was sort of afraid of what effect the alcohol would have on the socks, and they weren't the most attentive entities in the world right now.

Suddenly, he stopped and listened closely. Was there? Yes! There was definitely a stomping sound going on with

the music! Dancing! Of course! Why hadn't he thought of that before? In a city of over ten million inhabitants and not a lot of money, what was the most readily available and inexpensive mode of power? Humans!

He mooched up the side of the building, after convincing Hugo, Lefty and the frog to sit quietly at the bottom. Peeking over the roof top, she saw a huge merry-go-round looking device with a dozen men in white pants and shirts dancing in a circle. But instead of going around themselves, the floor under them moved, since they had hold of bars that kept them in place.

The mill! The squid pondered at the slowness inherent in such a contraption, but decided not to quibble. He was at his destination.

Dropping down into the alley, he conveyed by his facial expression to the socks and amphibian, "I'm going to get us in the mill. Hugo and Lefty, you untie Harv and Biggles. Frog, you cover my escape route. I'll take care of any resistance."*

The squid took careful aim with the flare gun and fired at the door of the mill.

badgoodDeb

*I hope they were feeding those men margueritas anyway --
- there must be SOME good incentive for doing what
they're doing!*

zelda_pinwheel

*crikey ! things are really picking up now !!! i knew we could
count on that squid. thank heavens there's somebody
around who's not so easily distracted by postcards and
scarves named lola...*

Vera came around the corner just as the door to the mill exploded inward. "That shouldn't happen with a flare gun," she muttered. She hoped that Harv wasn't too close to the explosion. Pulling her handgun from her purse, she advanced carefully.

Seeing the door explode, Bois Aussi whipped his revolver out of its shoulder holster and followed Vera in. He checked behind the door for lurking Nazis, found only one, and recognized he wasn't so much "lurking" as "bleeding and unconscious." Wise decision on his part, thought Bois Aussi.

Vera looked around the smoke filled room. There didn't seem to be anyone there, but it was very low visibility. She could hear Harv screaming in the smoke. Something about Rockie Mountain Pancakes. Harv was always worried about his next meal, but thinking of breakfast at a time like this was ridiculous. It was well past noon.

Bois Aussi kicked the bleeding, unconscious Nazi in the head a few times, just to make sure he remained both.

From the back of the smoke filled room, a voice shattered their concentration, "Ah, Miss Wayne, Monsieur le Comte. We have been expecting you!"

Harv screamed at them to hurry up.

psockpuppet

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"What's our plan?"

"Wasn't that in the script?"

"No, it just said that the socks rescue Harv. It didn't even have camera angles. I think the author was hoping the director would provide artistic license or something."

"Well I don't see a director anywhere, do you?"

"Not with all this smoke. I hope this isn't carcinogenic."

"Black powder and talc. Not to worry."

"That's good."

The socks rolled over to the mill stone where Harv was tied up. They started untying the knots as only creatures created out of serial knots could.

"You get his hand, Lefty. I'll get his feet."

"Okay. I'm not speaking to his socks, anyway."

The socks set about undoing the knots. Lefty just about had his finished when he looked up. Hug was struggling with the last knot around Harv's ankle. Suddenly, the short ravel that Hugo always left hanging as "artistic" caught in the mill stone. Lefty looked on in horror as his pair mate was slowly and inexorably dragged underneath the stone.

"HUGO!" he screamed.

"Untie the last knot! I'll see you on the other side!" cried Hugo. And he disappeared.

zelda_pinwheel

hugo !!!!! oh, the suspense !! the horror !!!! thank god he's nearly flat and quite squishable to begin with !!! but still !!!!! :bitingnails:

("They started untying the knots as only creatures created out of serial knots could." heh...)

Patricia

Oh my. I do hope that Hugo only gets pressed, and nothing worse.

Otherwise Zelda will have to knit him up again. And I don't think she's learned to turn a heel yet.

Vivaldi backed up away from the huge dog advancing on him. His butt hit the wall and he gulped.

Slite came up to three feet away and stopped. "Christ! Did you have to make it this hard to catch up with you? What are you? On vacation?"

Vivaldi, thoroughly expecting the contents of his throat to be brought out for his inspection, said, "Wait... What?"

"Come on! We've got work to do! Running off to carouse with the Chihuahua Cartel is wasting our time."

Vivaldi dribbled. He hated it when that happened. "You

aren't going to kill me?"

"Now why would I do that?"

"I don't know. Because you're a Nazi spy?"

Slite rolled his eyes. "Why would you think that?"

"You smelled of TNT! You showed up right after the Taxi Stand blew up! You growled at me!"

"I growl at everyone. Yes, I smell of TNT. I was busy preparing a decoy blast that was going to throw the Nazis off the trail so we could move in on them. Too bad that the Street Vendors got to the Taxi Stand before I did."

"Street Vendors?"

"Rival political faction. They want to take over the transportation system from Taxi Boss. Who knew they were ready to make their move?"

"But the smell!"

"Think about it. The keg in the Taxi Stand was?"

"Black powder."

"And I smelled of..."

"TNT... Oh! So you're not a Nazi spy?"

"Got it in one. I'm MI6."

zelda_pinwheel

i KNEW slite couldn't be a bad guy !!!!

ShortNCuddlyAm

Ooooh nailbiting stuff here :)

Wetdogeared

We all knew he was MI6. ;)

WDE. (at least today we did)

zelda_pinwheel

not even close. :o

ShortNCuddlyAm

I can turn a heel, but I find it easier to turn an ankle - both usually when I'm wearing heels... ;)

zelda_pinwheel

*heh, if you mean it that way i'm very good at that too. ;)
thus my preference for short and or wide heels. ;)*

Curly

Oh no, will Hugo come unravelled? Did Harv make it? Will he get his pancakes or be squashed like a pancake?

(Thanks for the update, it's cheered me up and I'm not feeling quite so crabby about the end of the school holidays now. :))

badgoodDeb

Love the descriptive style of this author!!!

Harv tugged futilely at his ankle rope. The sock seemed too overwhelmed to be of any help. He felt sorry for the one with the safety pin and tattoo being flattened, but he was pretty certain that he was going to be feeling sorry for something much more dear to him being flattened if he didn't get out quite soon.

He could hear Vera calling out to him, "Harv! Where the Hell are you?" God, he loved that woman!

"You know, old boy, I can't help but notice that your hands are free! Mightn't you just reach down and pull out that quite long knife that you always carry in your boot? Not to be a noodge or anything, but that might be faster, don't you know?"

"It won't make any difference," said a heavily German accented voice, "Tell the Mariachi Band to strike up a... mambo!"

zelda_pinwheel

a knife in his boot !! NOW he tells us ! sheesh !! hurry before those dancers get the tempo up !!!

montsnmags

It might be a custom-made butter knife. I've heard he likes his butter slathered thickly on his morning croissant, and a regular butter knife just won't hold that much saturated fat.

Cheers,

Marc

LazyScot

Should HL be nervous of Harv, given he keeps a knife in his boot?

ShortNCuddlyAm

I'm more concerned about the mambo :eek:

Harv looked up at the visage of Frau Miyatake. "Oh, hello, Hilda! What brings you to Mexico this time of year? "

"I don't have time for small talk! You need to just lay there and be menaced!" She reached out and struck him with a club.

Two dozen men dressed in colorful native costumes crashed through the back door, marching in step. Frau Miyatake looked pained. No matter how you briefed them, storm troopers couldn't break their habits. One had apparently not listened well in the briefing, either, because instead of colorful Mexican costume, he was wearing lederhosen and a jaunty green cap. "Gott in himmel!" she

said, slapping her forehead.

Pointing at the front of the room, where the six agents from Seguridad de Mexico, Army OSI, and either the French Foreign Service or Swahili National Security, depending on the time of day, were standing, she barked orders to subdue and or kill the intruders. She immediately regretted giving them a choice, because they started debating as to the best way to carry out the orders and in which order to carry them out. It seemed that the Kill First and Subdue Later faction was winning out when she reached out and smacked the nearest Storm Trooper and told them to get on with it already.

Vera watched in horror as the sounds of mambo drifted down from the roof. The mill stone sped up and Harv was out of it! Topping off the hour's latest frustration, there were a bunch of strange looking Mexicans in native costume and at least one Bavarian rushing at her and those with her. She grabbed Bois Aussi, interrupting his guard interrogation duties and pointed at the oncoming menace.

"Ah, my sweet Vera! Even though you spurn me for le Americain, It would seem that I am to be able to die valiantly for you, this day, after all!" He pulled out his gun and started shooting at random blonde haired blue eyed Mexicans and the occasional Bavarian.

The room was filled with smoke. The storm troopers were well versed in evasive maneuvers, even though they were in sync, and the mambo allowed them to have a syncopated step that allowed them to escape all but a few superficial wounds. Two of the Seguridad de Mexico agents went down under a furious rain of fists and jack boots.

Vera looked at Bois Aussi as she punched the Bavarian between the eyes. "This doesn't look good," she said.

"Well, it is a bit out of place, but he does have a very nice hat."

zelda_pinwheel

a nice hat can fix just about anything, i've found. ;)

(i hope you're planning at least one more episode before you leave !)

Patricia

You're not really going on vacation to Mexico right now, and leaving us with this cliff-hanger, pshrynk?

My nerves just won't stand the suspense.

A faint yapping was heard coming from outside. Suddenly, a brown haze of vicious small dogs, a medium sized dog and a very large dog burst through the door and jumped all over several of the storm troopers. Screams, growls, barks and complaints about Nazis' lack of hygiene filled the air.

Vera brought her knee up hard into a soft spot on a storm trooper that was not occupied by several chihuahuas. Bois Aussi, giving up the pistol for now, due to the high number of collateral damage opportunities, started beating Nazis with his cane.

Just as the tide seemed to be turning, Heinz von Schlepwig

ran into the room with twenty men dressed in black trench coats. They started yelling in German and joined in the fray.

Harv woke up and noticed two things. First, there was a lot of fighting going on around him and the strangely dressed Germans and the Gestapo agents seemed to be winning. Second, the millstone was perilously close to his favorite stones.

Patricia

Oh my!!!

zelda_pinwheel

pshrynk, if you leave without telling us how this turns out, i will go to mexico myself and drag you back to your keyboard !!!! :eek:

ShortNCuddlyAm

Stop off in London, I'll join you!

Patricia

Just send the socks and the squid to fetch him back. He's going to Mexico...

zelda_pinwheel

you hear that pshrynk ? you've got me, am, the socks AND THE SQUID to reckon with ! i hope you're writing at this very moment !!

ShortNCuddlyAm

But I've been drawing faces on my face mask in preparation!

He was certain that this was the time. All the indications were right. But there was the factor of the place. Ah... the place. That was always the trouble with being a pandimensional being. Places soon lost their unique flavor.

Something went FFFFZZZZZTTtttttPOP! He looked around and said, "Bugger!" He hailed a cab.

LazyScot

How badly do you want the next installment? You could try bribery. Perhaps even offer to update your profile.....

zelda_pinwheel

heheheh, i know who's about to appear...

*(come on pshrynkie-poo, you can do it !! moar saga !!!
MUST HAZ MOAR SAGA !!!!!!!)*

The Taxi boss was pissed. Not only had the headquarters been blown up, but the cost of replacing the taxi had been exorbitant. Now, there was the matter of the fare she'd just picked up. A largish ape who looked as if he'd just popped out of a jungle somewhere. She was pretty certain that there wasn't going to be any payment involved, either. But he was going where she wanted to be, anyway. Yes, it was going to be a long day, but someone had to drive the route.

The new taxi skewed around a corner and barreled down the main thoroughfare. Lesser cars tried desperately to avoid being crushed as it drove by. In the back, the ape

had lit up a cigarette and was drinking tequila.

The warehouse was right in front of them. Pushing the throttle to the floor, they rammed straight through the wall. Fark the doors! What good was firepower if you weren't willing to use it!

The wall had apparently collapsed on top of a bunch of Germans in trench coats. The Taxi Boss popped the hatch and stuck her head up. The barrel of the tank was pointing directly at Frau Miyatake's head.

"Care to see whose building gets blown up, now, bitch?"
The Germans all raised their hands.

Adrian jumped out of the tank and landed on the head of von Schlepwig, who had pulled a gun and was aiming it at the Taxi Boss' head.

"Yar! Get it off! Get it off!" he screamed.

pshrynk

I hope you people are appreciating that I'm trying to get this done in the middle of the EMR launch and getting ready to go on vacation...

zelda_pinwheel

SOOOOOO appreciating !!!!! i'm on the edge of my chair !!!!!

LazyScot

10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... 0 Pshrynk presses red button

Right. That's EMR launched (as near as I can tell, straight at SHUM headquarters). Can you get back to writing?

zelda_pinwheel

it's a good thing lazyscot is here to help out. i really don't know what we would do without him.

Harv reached down and pulled out his knife from its sheath. With snake-like speed, he sliced the ropes around his leg and rolled off the mill stone. The stone kept on grinding away, over the chalk outline he noticed in place where he had been tied down. Nazis were nothing if not precise.

Vera pulled back and walloped Frau Miyatake on the chin. Looking up at the Taxi Boss, she said, "Getting a new cab?"

"Well, it did come in handy for knocking down the walls. Nazis understand power more than politics."

The blue frog leapt from the floor up to von Schleswig's face. The hallucinatory toxins dribbled into one of the many abrasions from Adrian's assault, working their magic.

"YAR! The llamas! The llamas are trying to kill me!" he started to scream, then collapsed.

psockpuppet

Lefty rolled up to the limp, very flat body of Hugo.

"Hugo? Hugo? Can you hear me?"

He reached over and tried to straighten out the safety pin, which was mangled beyond repair.

"Oh, god, Hugo... You're not... unraveled are you?"

"HUGO!"

zelda_pinwheel

hugo !!! speak to us !!!! HUGO !!!!!!!

psockpuppet

"Yeah, Lefty?" Hugo mumbled indistinctly.

"HUGO!"

"Don't yell! This must be what it's like to have a hangover."

"Hugo! I thought you were dead!"

"I really liked that safety pin... Not dead, just pressed.
Can't say that I recommend it as a daily experience."

"What now?"

"We go to the premier and wait around for our residuals check, just like always."

"I don't think that being dragged through the mill stone was in the original script, Hugo."

"You know me, Lefty. I like to improvise most of my lines. Drives the directors nuts."

"Can we go pick up my postcards and go home? I miss the sock drawer."

"No problem, Lefty."

zelda_pinwheel

*oh, thank all the hypothetical deities in hypothetical heaven
!!!! i was so worried. (it's true about the improvisation. it
plays havoc with the scripts and drives his agent crazy.)*

At the airport, the maintenance crews were standing behind a bunker they had created out of hastily improvised sandbags. The Devil Plane was moving again. First it had driven itself up to the gas pumps and demanded rudely to be filled up and then screamed at them in Swahili when they tried to charge it for the fuel.

Then it had driven over to the maintenance shed and talked loudly at them until they had tuned its engines. After that, it had taxied around the airport and bullied the other planes into giving it the best parking spot.

Now, it was moving to the main gate. It stood there, as if expecting someone.

"If I'm going to be in Mexico City, I might as well have a spa treatment," said M.A.R.V.I.N.

zelda_pinwheel

that marvin is incorrigible. but he sure knows how to get things done !!

Vera ran to Harv and jumped into his arms. "You bastard! What are you doing here? You about gave me a heart attack! Again!"

"I just came to save the woman I love!" he said, trying to talk between impassioned kisses.

"When are you going to figure out that I don't need rescuing, you bonehead?"

"Yeah, I'm glad to see you, too," said Vivaldi "I don't suppose that anyone cares to know what I've gone through? I was living on the streets! I got inducted into a gang of Mexican chihuahuas! I nearly got blown up! And I saved the day!"

"SH!" said all the humans nearby.

Adrian slipped his usual bill into Bois Aussi's palm and disappeared with a soft "Pop!"

pshrynk

Well, that's it, I gotta go pick up the Spouse and head off The Airport. I'll finish the closing credits when I get back, but that's the main action.

zelda_pinwheel

*aw!! *snif* i love a happy ending !! thanks pshrynk ! now you can go on vacation and not worry about being abducted by socks, a squid, am and me. have fun ! we'll miss you !! send us a postcard (for lefty) !!! bring back some talavera pottery !!!!!*

ShortNCuddlyAm

Thank you thank you thank you!

badgoodDeb

And a new safety pin too, please... Thank you for the action packed, resounding finish here!

Oh, DON'T bring back any of that new flu. Flue, or even flew!!

Patricia

Thanks pshrynk. Have a good holiday.

Curly

Thanks for the great read. Have a relaxing holiday...I hope you will spend it planning out the next Harv and Vera story.

GeoffC

the read was great, now go and have a long relaxing hols. we will wait for the next story when you get back

pshrynk

Sneaking in a wifi hotspot... Thanks for the kind words. The Beginning: When Harv Met Vera will be started soon after retorno a los estados unidos.

zelda_pinwheel

oh brilliant !!! hurry back !!!

so how's the holiday ? got your postcards yet ? what about the talavera pottery ???

*(and don't mind us. we're not at *all* planning any pranks to play in your absence. we would *never* do anything like that. :sneaky:)*

badgoodDeb

He's probably still in the airport!

ShortNCuddlyAm

Ooooooh excellent news!

"Hello? I say? Could someone please untie me? That or stop the dancing Mexicans? Anyone?"

Later that night, as they were readying the Goose for takeoff, Vera looked up and exclaimed, "Oh, crap! I forgot to get the Talavera pottery!"

"That's okay, sweetie. I know of a place over on Isla

Mujeres where you can get a really good price. Radio? And if you switch on anything resembling ska, you will have to walk home."

Vivaldi looked down, dejected, "Check."

"I say, old boy! A nice Mexican vacation is just the thing after a fright like that! It's a good thing that the thousand elephants came crashing through the mill at the last minute or Mrs. Biggles favorite son would have been in for a rather bad time of it!"

Lefty snuggled up next to his new postcards and went over how he was going to arrange them when he got home.

"Hugo?"

"Yeah, Lefty?"

"Why aren't we being written by psockpuppet?"

"He got hijacked."

"Oh. Do you know what these pictures are about?"

"Something to do with how humans knit, I think."

Curly

Finally, the thousande elephants make a spectacular entrance by crashing through the mill!! What took them so long?! Will they appear in the next story?