

## II

“He who puts all his chips on one landmine has gambled and lost”  
Schfeivel III

...“Time to accept your fate, Simon (criminal).”

As mentioned, Simon, a firm believer in the playing hard to get philosophy, flirted extravagantly with his comeuppance on a regular basis. He wasn't ever going to buck that trend: a vow's a vow. For some time he had sensed his comeuppance had been escaping him and had decided to pull out some of his sexiest, most dangerous moves, with the intention of reeling it in as far as he could, without battering it and eating it with chips and squashy peas - a murderous dish served, chillingly cold, to a dogsman named Tony.

He had, of course, just murdered a master dogsman, a murder that had not gone down well in light of recent events (i.e. Lowrider winning). Time to backtrack, send that Comeuppance & Chips back to the kitchen and skip on to a pudding of humble pie. Simon had been so sure Lowrider was going to lose that he hadn't considered a Plan B - should probably stare deeper into dogs' eyes in the future.

If he got out of this alive...

...“accept your fate, Simon!”

“Fait accompli, Martin. I accepted it before you even thought of it, but,” and here, with a masterstroke of rhetoric Simon bought himself some much needed time, “shouldn't I do a quick little post-mortem on Tony first, or do you know another medical man around here who can do it?” Knowing full well they did not.

“Oh right you are, Simon. Good point. You'd better go check that corpse,” said Russell, suddenly realising what a mistake it would be to kill someone and get left with the paperwork. Admin - the never-healing paper-cut in the finger of justice.

The vacuum of power created on the death of a dogsman, a Master Dogsman, had begun to suck on the nearest natural leader as power vacuums have done since history, and here it only really had one choice. It was true Simon certainly held the respect of his peers but, at the same time, he was a bit of a lone wolf (/’antichrist’), and lest we forget the topic that was playing on everyone's mind, Simon *was* a condemned man.

Martin, therefore, took charge as he often did and, it seemed, would often be doing in the future. His first motion was to remove the criminal Simon - you couldn't go easy on crimz or your reputation would immediately be worthless. An example had to be made and Simon deserved it - a good vet, but a bad friend and probably egg. Simon definitely had to go, but Martin's thoughts were with Russell on wringing all the use out of a living dead, like milking zombies. Let him do his job then read him his rights, noose him up and swing him about.

Simon scuttled off to check the body. If he could only find some 'proof' to base an insanity case on. Hmm, first he could maybe get inside Russell's head and begin to get the gang back on his side.

As Simon rummaged, Martin too tugged-of-war trying to make sure his troupes would remain loyal, because he well knew that people can be persuasive. Luckily for him it looked like he still had their support. Shirley even seemed at little sad that today would see the tribe two members fewer.

Yeah, I'll get in Russel's head, thought Simon, then convince Martin later:

"Oh what's this...proof positive: a death certificate," Simon sprang back to the group brandishing a document that he had obtained from Tony's body. He explained that Tony was pre-empting his being kindly put to sleep and obviously had wanted Simon to do it. Tony was effectively to blame, and to blame on at least three counts, "...*three or four counts, Russell.*"

The news hit hard. Square R9. The first of Martin's battleships was sunk. Cap'n Russell clung to his Titanic like an idiot prawn in Davey Jones' wicked game of sea-chess:

"Right you are, Simon." He said, "Pint later?"

Martin, however, would not give up so easily and expected a little more (lying) where that (man (Simon)) came from (America). Taking his own destiny and the document in his hands, quickly snatching it from Simon, he found and proclaimed the truth: that it was just a lovely card with a cow on! Struck by a truth torpedo Simon's main offensive warship listed beneath the waves: sinking, but not yet sunk.

Read General Martin from the card:

"Lads, if anything should happen to me, and I'm pretty sure it will, I just want you to know that I love you all like my own children..."

Simon's floundering flotilla clutched for flotsam in the swell:

"Well that's pretty much a death cert. I've signed my fair share of those things and that's usually what they say. Pretty much WFW. Plus, this still registers as insanity proof. His children? Are you his children? I'm not his children. The guy's off his rocker. Sorry, *was* off his rocker."

This little joke (a crafty sub-radar sonar scramble from Simon's secret sub-aquattack silo) didn't quite put the shark amongst the shoal as much as he would have liked but distracted the prosecution slightly and lightened the mood, but, as Martin explained, Simon was not off the hook: In law, laughter is not always the best medicine. It is true a joke can raise the sailors' moral but it can't put a forcefield round the fleet.

Before this train of thoughts had really left the station, another distraction arrived: Documentation!, paperclipped to the back of the card:

**P-T-O**

The document (feel free to zoom):



+ Several tickets to see the Cosmos. That evening.

Obviously five funky boulders out of five (see review) was not to be missed, but there was the problem of what to do with Simon. This debate went to the floor and again there was talk of temporary court adjournment. Ironically, Russell's assuming Simon was for the instant chop and therefore asking if he could he use Simon's ticket to get his latest pet (he got through wildelife), a hateful badger, into the gig, actually helped the condemned vet. Simon might have run out of submarines under the sea but it looked like he still had one inside Russell's watery head. Russell was ever the fish out of water, always simply a small fry in Simon's stir-fry. For Martin, deciding to arrest/execute people was a time-taking decision but deciding about Russell's pet badger was not a tricky one.

"Bring that badger - I'll hang it from a tree," Simon butted in.

Though this idea was not unappealing to Martin, again he needed to show no mercy (to Simon) and honour the wishes of his predecessor:

"What would Tony've wanted?" he asked the small group.

"Us to see The Cosmos," said Russell, "and then kill Simon."

A unanimous agreement! Another one of Simon's plans had backfired. Russell had hopped right out of the stir-frying pan, into the fiery lap of Simon's contemporary enemy. At least he had a bit more time now to think of something else.

Think Simon, think.

“Now Tony didn’t leave a ticket for Simon, for whatever reason,” said Martin, “but he did leave an extra ticket by dying that we ought to use to bring Simon with us to stop him fleeing. Tony certainly wouldn’t have wanted your mangy badger to come, Russell. He was a Master Dogsman for Chrissakes, not a chuffin’ zoo-keeper. If we need to carry out a traditional revenge-vet-slaughter, we’ll carry it out after the concert. A good judgement, like a good dogsman, gets wiser with age, as we have had made rather painfully poignant to us today.” Besides they couldn’t deal Simon any justice right this second, so he might as well come along in case any animals needed verternising along the way. There was no harm (although, in hindsight, there probably would be a lot of harm) in bringing Simon.

Think, Simon, think!

The next day, looking back, Simon thought that it might have been better if they’d just killed him there and then, saved everyone some trouble, saved him some heartbreak. Somewhere deep down inside he knew that you should do unto your neighbour as you would have done unto you, and, if it was him, he would have killed him if he was one of his neighbours. But it probably wasn’t right to punish people for not killing you. Oh well, at least he’d avoided that slutty comeuppance for a while, honoured that vow.

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Meanwhile, in another part of town (hamlet), The Cosmos had been waiting round all day sound-checking songs and polishing new lyrics. A month before, they had chosen a traditional song about dog racing for their West Country tour (*The Binary Harvestour*) - best save that for the end. Today, however, they had been searching for something a bit more political, a bit more life and death; something that would let them use their powers of persuasion for good. It therefore came with great excitement, to find out that a local vet was about to be lynched. A vet! The great animal lovers of the Earth. Saving a vet = saving cute animals! He’d probably been doing too much pro bono pet saving and was now being lynched for unpaid bills. And in this part of the country vets were practically kings! Yes, this was about as good as it got for the merry band of Cosmos - music to their instruments. Of course they had a couple of persuasive music scores up their collective album sleeve, so began furiously working on the lyrical accompaniments, looking up at the harmless tour bus cat, David, for inspiration, then down at their research notebooks for facts. Life and death! Cute animals! A (practically) king! They had to work quickly...

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The lads (and Shirley) arrived late because of Tony’s untimely and time-wasting murder, with Simon in forceful tow. They had only missed a few songs however, and there was still time for Martin to do some hypnotic persuasion of his own. He was definitely in charge now.

“So, Si,” he (unwisely?) undermined, “what’s it to be for your last meal? It’s on the club, as is traditional.”

“Tony called me Si and I’ve pretty much just admitted what happened to him – i.e. murder – *but*, if you are buying, I could *murder* a bucket of Bloody Ms.”\*

“A Bloody Mary it is then, Si.”

“Still the same old Simon, despite now apparently being for the chop,” lamented Russell, “You always loved those Bloody Marys.”

“The bloodier the better, Russ,” but then Simon’s attention was on Martin, apparently conspiring with the barman, “Hey, hold the Woosie sauce, Martin, you manipulative prick and get out of Russell’s head – that shrimp’s mine.”

“Loosing your edge, Simon? Tabasco-free as well, will it be?” Asked Martin, smiling a victorious smile, “You know you didn’t have to do any murders today, so don’t take it out on me.”

Suddenly the lights came up and they all turned their attention around. Next, from out of the speakers, came a monotone robovoice:

“Next is a song we wrote today.”

Cheers. The crowd loved that gimmicky shit.

“It’s called Protect Yo Vet”

### Protect Yo Vet

Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
He's the only vet you've got.  
Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
When you dog is filled up with not,  
He's got a little doggy cold. He's not feeling  
to well.  
Pick up you phone. Give Simon a bell.  
He'll bring his all his tools of the veterinary  
trade,  
And he'll get the job done and make sure  
he's paid.  
He'll utilise his skills of the veterinary trade.  
That bitch'll say, "No," now she's been  
spayed.

Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
When your rabbit's forehead is hot.  
He'll deal with the fever,  
He'll kill all the pain,  
Its just if that rabbit done bite him,  
He'll kill it the same.

Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
He's the only man that will do.  
Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
When a donkey's down with the 'flu.  
With a belt full of needles, veterinary in his  
veins:  
Many animals he cures, though most of  
them he lames.  
Watch him in action: he will blow your  
mind.  
He's the best at birthing baby cows.  
No one else is even slightly that way  
inclined.  
He's not one in a million,  
If there were a million vets we say kill him,  
But if there's killing to be done  
Simon'll do it...  
'Cause he's the only one  
I say, if there is killing to be done,  
Let dead be you pet,  
Don't kill Simon... he is the only vet.

Oh don't kill Simon- he's the only  
vet  
He's the only man for the job.  
Don't kill Simon he's the only vet  
When you left the cat too long on  
the hob,  
He'll bandage up its body, regraft  
perfectly its skin.  
There's only a really small chance  
that he'll put that cat into the bin.

[Slows down]  
So don't kill Simon, he's the only  
vet.  
He's the only vet you've got.  
Don't kill Simon, he's the only vet.  
He's the only one that's not, ...NOT  
...A ...VET!

Simon was pinned down by the gang’s beady eyes. There would have been no point in running, even if that was his style. He had come to quite like Little Bosnia and didn’t want to flee another count(r)y. Maybe he should have...

“Gentle farmfolks, there will now be a short interval,” said the ‘singer.’ Simon translated it as “time to get another drink.” He’d suffer no hangover when probably dead tomorrow. He doubted Martin would be persuaded by the song but thought he,

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\* Simon was no longer the big spender everyone wanted to say “Hey!” to when he first arrived in Little Bosnia years earlier. He could definitely afford to buy a few drinks but there was no point fighting tradition at this point. Fighting tradition can give you cancer.

himself, felt a little more protective of his own interest and life (not enough to hold back on the drinks obviously). Maybe there'd be a public outcry if his friends tried to kill him now!?

The Cosmos had done their research, as always, and found out, after chatting up the locals in the local O'Neil's, that Simon was a little more Barabbas than Jesus in many people's eyes. They were a little disappointed but it was too late to change anything and in a myxi hotspot like this one, of course a few more animals were getting put to sleep. Without the areas only vet, all local pets would be lambs to a different slaughter. But did the public agree?

"What an absolute barnstormer of a summer smash hit!" said Russell. He agreed. He'd loved it. The influence of the Cosmos, plus the catchy hook line, meant their message stole its way into the heart(s) of the crowd. It went down a storm. That didn't matter though. It didn't even matter that Russell was singing it to himself, he'd proclaimed almost all the songs as "smash hits." For the Cosmos cause and for Simon's sake, only one man really needed swaying: judge and executioner, Martin.

"Lordy, but how long was that?" he said slightly angrily, "Very, very clever but they don't half belabour their political points, drilling them into your skull for ten minutes. Having said that I'd love to hear more - it's like those skinny little robots know Little Bosnia inside out." SOLD!!! One idea sold to Martin.

"There's only one skinny robot who knows Little Bosnia inside out and he's about to be switched off and he's me." Replied Simon, testing the political water.

"Oh yeah, we weren't doubting your expertise, Simon, we've no reason to doubt them. You're by far and away our only vet." Martin's speech was riddled with having-been-influenced, "...you're hardly the kinda guy we're likely to kill right now."

Being a woman, Shirley was confused:

"Err, random. Where the heck did that concept come from? That is way leftfield, Martin."

"Don't be stupid, Shirley, if there's killing to be done, Simon'll do it." Russell may as well have sung, "Although, come to mention it, I do vaguely remember a murky misdeviance in Simon's recent past that we were going to sanction him for. Oh well, let bygones be bygones, eh?"

"I mean, if passion were a crime," said Martin, "we'd all be on the chopping board and some of the great works of art would never have left the brush. I s'pose that lets our Simon off the hook... temporarily."

Yup, Simon was off the hook for now alright - time for him to get back on the dating game and honour that vow of his with a little more comeuppance flirtation:

"Keep me on that hook and see what happens."

Yup, safe on the driest land, dry as his American gallows humour (which his friends loved).

They all had a good laugh | Even Simon had a laugh | The Pride Before the Fall.

Martin tried to explain the importance of the song and the message behind it to Shirley, Simon, the lads and some bystanders: If there were a million vets, he explained, Simon would get lynched, yet there was only Simon so who would do the veterinary then? Poor little vetless animals. Simon was off that hook 'till they could find

themselves a better vet who hopefully wouldn't be another stropmy diva. With Shirley still unsatisfied as to 'why they had all changed their minds so suddenly,' Martin provided a fitting, if slightly didactic, epithet for the whole situation:

"You see, you must wave bye bye to bygones; keep the water of forgiveness flowin' under the bridge of evil misdeeds. You must let sleeping dogs lie, especially if they've been expertly put to sleep by skilful Simon here, and you must certainly not dwell in a house made from spilt milk, or you'll get a cold. And there's no use, when that situation creeps up on you like a wolf in slippers, cryin' 'Perhap there's a doctor about?'"

!! Suddenly, moments later, as if from nowhere, though in reality from another sector of the crowded concert hall, in a massive collision of coincidences, one reveller piped up, "Perhap there's a doctor about?"

Because of this probable coincidence, the sticks were all twisted and most people were picking them up by the wrong ends.

"Yeah, that's what I said, 'Perhap there's a doctor about?' but it was only an epithet to summarise this most torrid of times."

Phew, glad it was but an epithet - just proves what horsecome you speak. Everything I own is made of silt and spilt milk, especially my house, which would be full fat spilt milk, and I'm not come down with the death sniffles," he sniffled.

Simon, having seen straight through this pathetic fantasist's milky façade, scornish, snided, "Liar," and ordered him some Lemsip.

"I busted my leg crowd-surfing and I just thought a doctor..."

"You just thought nothing," scalded Simon, "You're an attention-seeking...like little missile, blasted way out of your league, on a one way trip to a fatal crash, you understand me? If that shit all about milk was supposed to be amusing, it wasn't amusing. Now take this Lemsip and make like a tree, before I hang you from one."

Russell the king of joining in, joined right in, shouting, "Yeah - go on, Coldylocks, go find your precious doctor. There's only room in this hamlet for one medical man - he's with us, and he's a cocking vet!"

Cheers went round, with even Simon getting a cheers, which redeemed him fully.

"You'll pay for this!" the retreating reveller shrieked.

"That's the new milkman cum postman, Simon," explained Russell, "he's fucked up. Takes milk real serious. Probably shouldn't have pissed him off actually - he has killer's eyes."

"I have killer's eyes," smiled Simon.

"No you don't," replied Russell, "You have quite nice eyes, Simon."

A very strange incident for a very strange day. More to come.

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Simon's vow to live life to the full whilst avoiding his comeuppance was still withstanding (If you put your mind to it, Simon, you can achieve anything!). He went and bought himself another couple of celebratory Bloody Marys and decided to give himself to the ever-so-eager-to-persuade musicians. They had, after all, saved him on

this occasion when he was almost totally, and totally uncustomarily, lost for ideas on how to avoid his comeuppance. Perhaps murdering Tony had been 'taking it too far'? Simon probably should have thought of that before but he was fairly inexperienced in the whole murder game and it wasn't as easy as it looked. Having said that, it wasn't the hardest thing in the world. It seemed, for example, easier than not murdering some people, which, for a perfectionist like Simon, was the cause of many bothersome frowns and head-scratchings. Bit more premeditation needed next time, that's all. He concluded that in light of recent good fortune, his actions had been somewhere between 'taking it too far,' and 'not taking it far enough.' And anyway, all's well that ends well, and today had ended well!\*

Now what was he up to? Ah yes, time to see what other tricks these Cosmos had up their sleeves before he returned home - let their soothing drug-like melodies inject themselves into his ears. Mmmmm. Simon swayed gently to the music, his softer side out and airing. Perhaps it was a bad idea to mess with things this powerful, but, again, if today had taught Simon one thing, it was that one should wholly and dangerously mess with powerful things and basically do whatever feels good and the consequences will be sorted out for you by outside intervention. He owed this band that much at least, but the problem was that he couldn't really get into most of the stuff they played as he stood by the bar tapping his foot politely.

They moved though a couple of their singles and crowd-pleasers to a couple of their signature, crowd-specific numbers about farming and, verging on insulting, tractors and inbreeding, but they did it with such persuasive charm... anyway, Simon tried to be persuaded but he was a fish from the wrong side of the pond and missed all the references to sowing and reaping and so forth. Therefore, when the gig came to an end Simon felt like he had been a nice kind person and was now karma neutral, and also pretty untouchable, as the music had done nothing to him.

Finally came the encore. Ironic, then, you may think, that the one really, really countrysidney, local-area-specific song should have such a big effect on a foreigner, but it really did, and if one checks out the past, the subject of the song really has been fatally effective on foreigners to the area who had never heard the pros and cons of 'Ripper' related stuff: Glory the like likes of Jack can be admired and enjoyed but must, above all, be respected.

"Err...This next song is a cover we came up with for John Riley's Live Living Room or whatever... It's a modernised traditional song from these parts so pretty appropriate... It's called 'Jack, 'The Ripper,'" That went down well with the crowd. The robotic front-man continued, "Thank you Little Bosnia, we love you, we love you, you love us, goodnight! ...buy our album, buy our album....."

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\* It really seemed that way at the time, though again, with the elusive (never-there-when-you-need-it-most) benefit of hindsight, this day's excitements were far from over. Indeed, to belabour a metaphor, that iceberg was detached and waving bye to Mother Arctica and setting sail for the Stern Ship Simon.

## Jack ('The Ripper')

*What's he made of?*

**MOONSHINE**

*What about his claws?*

**SOLID GOLD**

*Just like his coat?*

**ONLY IN THE SUNSHINE**

*What's it like without the sunny  
influence?*

**BLACK AS NIGHT**

*Like coal?*

**FUCK OFF, BLACKER**

*(chorus)*

**FUCK OFF**

**FUCK OFF**

**FUCK OFF**

**BLACKER (x2)**

*There was a young doggy of yesteryear,  
His claws were gold and he made us cheer,  
He ripped up the track whenever he ran,  
He ripped up his foes 'fore it ever began,  
He won all the plaudits and critic's reviews,  
This dog was on fire, the hottest of news.*

*(repeat chorus x4)*

*Classically grizzled greyhound face,  
Body made of speed, genomed to race,  
Glory days on TV, race in black and white,  
His monochromatic majesty, he'd run the speed of light,  
Jack the brave, Jack the fearless,  
Jack the rapid, Jack the peerless  
The bookies' dead cert, number one top tipper,  
This glorious racer, the one Jack the Ripper.*

The gig came to a glorious end and everyone began to happily traipse off home. Simon stood mesmerised. Numb he was, but not from the bloody orgy with all those Marys, though they had certainly loosened up his liquory tongue. All the cheering contributed a little to waking him from his hypnotic reverie. He smiled. A good day had by all. However, at this point it became clear that the exciting events were clearly far from over, for Simon's eye now held a certain glint that had not been seen for quite some time. It was a mild hint of the twinkle they used to sport but a glint none the less and probably prophetic.

Since fleeing America (as #one suspect, with good reason, in his parents' gruesome double hom.), Simon had lost some of the original twinkle that his eyes once proudly pedestalled. He had quite easily drifted into his role as local lord of the animals. The power and respect this position earned him and the easy life the adequate salary afforded him must have made him complacent. He no longer strove for true greatness and his murdering of Tony had not stirred his soul like he hoped it would. On the contrary, it had brought him down but now, somewhere, not far beneath his tough outer crust, hot molten ambition was on the move...

And, the particular 'lava' in question, waiting to burn its way to the surface, could not, in its future, have been helped more than by the journey-to-the-surface-of-the-earth-facilitating, earth-quaking news-asteroid that was about to smash-land on Planet Simon.

Martin had sensibly decided to leave before the crowds got moving and Russell had, of course, followed. Simon looked so peacefully entranced that they hadn't dared bother him. Only Shirley remained. As soon as Simon got his mind back, he addressed somewhere vaguely in her direction:

"Jesus fucking Christ, I mean, how about that for imagination? What was that about?" he asked, totally smitten. Today had been a lovely day.

"It was a lovely traditional song, Simon. No imaginings there," she explained, stirring up a bit of seismographic activity. "I know you Americans don't have much in the way of culture, but round here, tradition's been 'round for ages."

It couldn't be. No way was it true. But why would this evil female tease him like a wanton comeuppance. He had to find out:

"Don't fuck me around, Shirley, you poisonous bitch. Is this some kind of joke? A dog that *won every race* and *ripped up all his foes*, I don't think so. Lads? Lads!?" Simon looked for some back up / more than one account. Unfortunately, as all his other friends and most of the other people at the concert had all left, he had to take Shirley's word for it.

She explained that Jack was just as real as anything - they just didn't make dogs like that anymore. It was back when domestication was state of the art. Simon wanted to know more. Simon *had* to know more.

"Oh Simon," she went on, "the Ripper was glory on four legs. I know glory isn't very common anymore but..."

That was taking it too far. Simon knew more about glory than this dame could dream:

"What about veterinary? Veterinary's fucking glorious." He had been beginning to think it was almost as glorious as that glory he tasted with N.A.S.A. but he knew, deep down in his soon-to-be-broken heart, that it wasn't. As stated, Simon really needed another challenge in his new simple life and, though he had not confirmed this story yet, it looked more and more like something was presenting itself to him. Four point five on his Richter. A blast from the past. To exist, glory requires faith and however true all this was, Simon could see she believed it and wanted the glory he could see reflected in her eyes and she talked of the ripper.

"Simon, seriously, the likes of the ripper, glory the likes of that, have never before, and mark my words, will never again be seen." She continued. Then she went on to explain how, in the end, the Ripper himself had fallen from glory and become diabetic: Not only did this racer of yore use to rip up the track, but his opponents n' all, which is why he had the mythical appearance of a hippo, and was often depicted by the monks and Greek sculptors as having a classically grizzled greyhound face teamed with the body like a hippopotamus. She said that everyone could and should learn from that. Was she rudely hinting at him - a man fallen from glory. Simon was now resolved to return to glory. And A.S.A.P. at that.

"Never again? Glory. Never seen again? ...I've got qualifications ...in fucking veterinary for fuck's sake - mark my words, then eat them: glory like that which you were rabbling on about, wafting in my face, rubbing in my wounds - yeah, you'll see that again, bitch. You say they don't make dogs like that anymore, well you obviously haven't met me, have you." The whole thing sounded like a wager to Simon, a challenge he could not refuse. And the way she was trying to put him off. What was she

hiding from him? The more impossible she made it sound, the more possible it seemed to Simon, like an ever more vivid dream; a dream none the less, but like the test tube babe Simon proved by his very existence: dreams can come true.

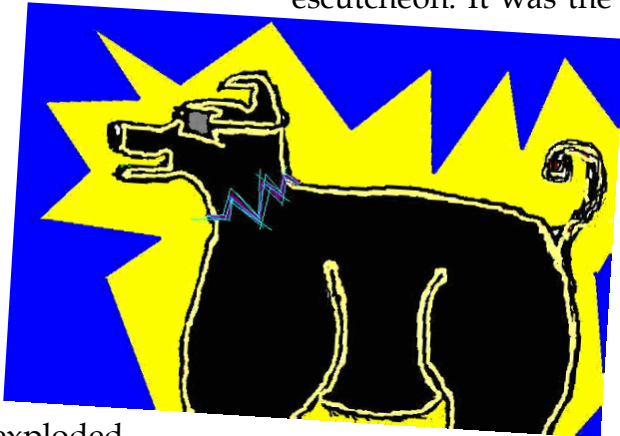
"Simon, watch out. Don't go stealing fire from the racing gods. Glory as powerful as that will get you burned..."

Simon was nothing but intrigued. This looked like the classic flirting he enjoyed with his comeuppance alright. Unbeknownst to Shirley, she was practicing the kind of sexy reverse psychology that only works on a twisty teenage mind like Simon's.

"Others have tried, Simon. The Ripper exerts a strange power over all, especially foreigners to the hamlet. Their attention span isn't long enough for years of tradition. I've seen many a new dogsman driven mad with ambition for that mighty glory..."

As she spoke of impossibilities and hurdles and the last man who became obsessed with Jack dying horribly, Simon had been paying her the disrespect he appointed most stuff and was scoping out his surroundings - funny the things you see all the time and never notice. He stared... and his gaze penetrated all the miscellaneous, extraneous superfluoids and hype of The Track, straight to the eyes of the animal that graced The Track's logo beneath the Est. 'Date Unknown' engraved, insignial

escutcheon. It was the very animal that graced the track all those



years ago. It appeared to be a dogopotamus, just like the Ripper once was at the end of his Golden Years. IT WAS ALL TRUE. The combination of the song and Shirley and the secrecy and the mythos and magic, and now with this tiny scrap of extra evidence - a hypno-techno, galvanic, tectonic jolt awoke the old Simon and the ambition pyroclasted from his every pore as quick as Mount St Helens

exploded.

After this momentary, yet very important abreaction, he decided to listen once more to Shirley's words, ambition burning in his eyes, the windows to his now flaming soul. But too late, she was finishing:

"...Drink up that tradition, Simon, but don't get drunk on it." She'd heard the tales and she'd seen it first hand, but Simon was not going to be affected by her warnings.

"I drink to get drunk, bitch. Look at me now." Drunk on drink. Drunk on ambition. Drunk on Jack.

She wouldn't tell him anymore, only that he should sleep on it. Perhaps that would help. Too many had been lost to crazed ambition and madness. He told her that there was method in his madness. Bloody Ms. M for Marys, M for method, M for murder, M for 'mbition." Yeah he was drunk alright. Before Shirley left him to walk home, she tried her last couple of tricks, the first being sternness:

"The only reason you've escaped your well deserved comeuppance today, was because you're invaluable as a vet. You'd've been lynched in a hot minute if that sensible pet-owning band hadn't pointed out, quite persuasively, your vetterimatic

immunity and use to the animals." Then she finished with a line to appeal to Simon's sympathy. "Just remember that all those animals, Simon, ...they need you."

Pity he didn't have any: sympathy that is!

"There's only one animal that needs me now..."

How could she be more persuasive than a band of professionally trained persuaders like the Cosmos? Something bad was about to happen...

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A couple of alco-units short of a terrible, story-cutting-short car crash, Simon returned home and parked his car perfectly - precisely equidistant from either garage wall. A man with focus, if not sobriety.

Simon, being mixed race after all, went to bed just like the others had, but would 'sleeping on it' really help this vet? Depends which way you look at it.

Simon's sleep was certainly not peaceful. He squirmed all over and dreamt and dreamt of a dog made of moonshine with a golden glint on his furry torso, that was black as night, except with glints of gold. He was talking in his sleep. It had been years since that had happened:

"Jack... Jack... Oh it's the Ripper. He's so glorious.... If I had one millionth of your glory, I'd die happy... They say I can't handle it, but I've had glory before. I can handle it - I was in NASA, Jack, NASA.... Please... if I can just touch the corner of your black-as-night coat... Please... just look into my eyes with your glorious moonshine peepers, let me know your secret ...that's right... Oh Jack, your nose is very wet, isn't it? That means your healthy, Jack, gloriously healthy. I know that because I'm a vet you see... oh that tickles.... stop it..."

Simon stirred slowly, staring into the glorious eyes of his new four-legged fascination, but awoke looking into the eyes of another:

"Jesus!"

Simon was actually gazing into the dumb eyes of his loyal and loving companion, his friend and mentor, Snuggles, his thirteen year old Jack Russell. Simon, sweaty and disturbed, was enraged with all manner of emotions: rage, envy, pathos and eros. He whipped out his trusty spanner from under the pillow and scooped the critter 'pon its trusty apex... The heady stench of mutual fear filled the nose-holes of both man and beast...

"Phew, what a stink."

Snuggles licked his lord and master deftly, just the way he'd always liked it, in his face twice: lick, lick. Simon stared deep, very deep. His gaze penetrated, like a shark-tooth, through the little doggie's eyes, to his little doggy soul.

"Hey guess what, Snuggles? You're pathetic," Simon rasped, visions of the legendary Ripper still fresh on his tortured veterinary mind.

Snuggles, clearly pained by the twin pronged attack of the penetration of both his eyes and his soul coupled with the impending betrayal from his master, began to well up. Fresh tears began to drip down his snowy face, like pellets of piss on a frosty garden path. But before they reached his downcast doggy lips (no time for cap-tipping) - BAM!!

- Simon smashed him with a forehead to the face. Literally, he smashed that tiny dog into pieces with the power of his veterinary skull.

\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*

...Tip tip tappedy tap, what's this?

The ominous sights and sounds of Simon on Lycos looking up 'moonshine muscles.' What is this cryptic 'villain'\* up to?

And thus ended the penultimate day of Simon's reign.

The clock stuck midnight. A new day:

The day Simon The Only Vet died.

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\* Not at all funny how Society's little labels, pinned by its own bigoted hand, always end up on the mixy Simons of this world.

