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All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. All Play and no work make Jack a dull boy.

1-800-

Clifton  
a.  
T. Hedderston

"All Work And No Play"

makes

Jack A. Dull

(boy)

It was a dark and stormy night. The wind howled in the trees like a hrse with a bum leg. But you can't get a cup of coffee anymore in this town-- not at night, not in the winter, not when it's cold, not for a nickel, not with my girl you don't.

But, I haven't got time for that now. Not with ten guys on my tail with the combined intelligence of a sack of White Castles.

Let me start at the beginning...

Well, it was exactly fifteen years ago today. Yeah, I remember it just like it was yesterday. Come to think of it, that was only ten years ago. Or maybe seven. But thats not the point I was trying to make. Yeah, there was no getting around it. I had strayed so far from anything resembling a plot that I couldn't even see the graveyard from where I was kneeling.

so, there I was, nipple deep in yellow snow with nothing to show for it but a jerky little alchoholic dog names ted. Thats when I met Jack A. Dull. I never did find out what the A. stood for, but there he was, just the same.

"Looks like your cat's got a nasty fur ball", he quipped.

All I could think of to say in response to a witty but inane comment like that was "People are always saying something about anything, it's just too bad that no people will ever be any closer to the truth than I am to you right now."

I could tell by the look in his ear that he was expecting a comment just like the one I'd thought of. Too bad that wasn't the one that came out of my mouth.

"thats no way to retort a comment", she sighed.

"Well, well, if it isn't little Miss Underwire..."

Tracy Underwire, to be precise. She had a body that was so firm that it looked like she used a gallon of mousse on each side. But that wasn't th e reason she showed up tonight. No, that answer was just a little too pat for me. Butter just wasn't in the cards for me. And let me tell you, I was the type of guy who liked a little butter with my cards once in a while.



Krelgar was born on a musty moon on the thirtieth planet from the dark star thaleus seven. his existence consisted mainly of snorkling through the yerdly vorusk. yet, all those around him could tell that only Krelgar was destined for the greatness of Porelex.

In many ways, th is was just another average day at the pork binding factory. Krelgar worked as one of the four-thousand-seven-hundred-fifty-seven pork by-product handlers that made up the lonar division of the expansive Yurley unghhh lwyxthe empire of fine food refineries.

But something unexpected happened on that fateful day in the late season of the straining crow. That was the day that Tragy Underwire walked in looking for a job as the new head handler of the primary pork processing production place on the planet.

Yeah, it all seems so distant now. Almost like it all happened on another world. I just couldn't help remembering the fact that Jack was somehow related to the now imperial pubah named Krelgar.

Where Had Jack gone wrong. He had such a bright future all those hours ago. He had taken tht mystic, yet famous fork in the road we call Main Street, wandered from the fold, strayed from the path of all we know as good and right, Taken a dive, visited a dive, stayed for a cheap yet disgusting supper, and left the joint without leaving so much as a tip for the overweight, old toothless pregnant balding lawer named Steve who had set up a small yet fashionable establishment under one of th e dimly lit tables by the booth in the back corner. You know the one, with the bubble gum and old shoe polish on the legs. (that's the table, not Steve)

"Hi Steve", I mumbled loudly into my shoulder as I passed the Burly, yet soft female impersonator who was figuratively feeling me up from across that smokey pool table with the seventeen foot sword imbedded deep into the far left pocket. It made for a severely difficult game of pool. (the female impersonator, not the sword)

Little did I know at the time that that female ipersonator was none other than the infamously famous..... Now who was I thinking of?

Well, there was Steve, buried under his usual stack of well over fifteen-hundred legal books and travel brochures on th subject of peruvian ant farming and mid-east aqua-culture. Only this time it was different. This time, Steve was dead.....

Perhaps it was one of Steve's odd hobbies that had led him to his current demise. Then again, it could have just been the sheer weight of all of his reading materials. You see, Steve was no ordinary man. His three foot hair doo was more than twice his height (not counting the hair, of course.) And without that custom made wooden spleen of his, he couldn't have possibly weighed more than eight or nine tons, max. Still, there was the fact of his extensive self-propelled exercise program. Three point five centimeters of jogging every third october combined with an advanced produce lifting regime (although the local merchants referred to it by its pen name, shop-lifting.)

It just didn't add up. Here Ix was using one of the world's fastest super computers, and all that came out was the weather report from southern Manchuria. I asked the female impersonator to stop massaging my bunions for a while while I tried to sort this out in my now thinning eyebrows.

Sure, there was the possibility that anyone could have massaged my bunions, but they weren't in the room at the time. And even if they were, it would be a mighty tight fit in a room that wasn't much bigger than the roach motel I had in my upper left-hand pants pocket. But that was another story, altogether. (that was another story)

Queer as it sounded, (the next phrase, not the female impersonator) Krelgar was no where in sight. Not that I expected him to be, but that just shows you the state that my mind was in. If only that was the state my body was currently in. Kind of a liquid one. Not the best one for thinking about murder victims. Or any other victims, for that matter.

Come to think of it, Victims was what this whole twisted saga rotated around in the first place. The Burmese Victims, my favorite soccer team. Only they played the game a little differently - they used a dead carcass. Come to think of it, I could play a mean game of that right now. I'm sure that Steve wouldn't mind...



Part Seventeen  
The Return of Coco

This was the kind of night that a man like me dreamed of. Come to think of it I needed to make sure that wasn't the case. This case was sure different. Tracy Underwire. I'm sorry, my mind was drifting again. But there wasn't anyone better to drift with than her. That was quite a time we had had, stranded on that desert island inside the Arctic circle.

Eating nothing but frozen coconuts was hard on all of our colons. That was the last time that all of us were together. Me, Jack, Tracy and Steve, Ted, Krelgar, and the female impersonator. Of course he wasn't known to any of us as that then. Then, he was simply called Ginger. Yeah, it was just the seven of us, stranded on that tiny island in the south Arctic. With the coast of Alaska so close, that I could feel her luke-warm breath on the back of my right leg.

Some One-Hundred-Eighty minute tour that turned out to be. But none of us was too bitter about it. Except for Krelgar, that is. With all of his money, being forced to live with Ginger wasn't exactly on the top of his list of things ~~xxx~~ to do. But then space was certainly at a premium on an island that varied in size from between Three-hundred-thousand to only twenty square inches. ~~xx~~ In some ways, we were very fortunate, I guess. After all, it isn't every remote deserted island that has an old theatrical warehouse washed up on the shore. Sure, plenty of costumes and equipment. But nothing even resembling a radio. Ted must have tried a dozen different ways, but none of the radios he built worked. Sure, that big-screen television was handy on those long three month nights.

We were all real glad when that alien trawler showed up over a mile away. It's lucky for us that one of the things that Ted had managed to build was a combination can-opener, trash compactor, and inter-galactic communication device.

At first, we were afraid we were about to be eaten. but it was then that they told us they only wanted to wear the theatrical costumes and change one of us to the opposite gender. Well, that left Ted out (I had him fixed years ago). Krelgar wasn't exactly human, and I wasn't about to give up the only true friend I ever had (Tracy you dirty minded scoundrels!) So, we all agreed to volunteer Ginger (well almost all of us) in exchange for our rescue. I wonder if she ever forgave us for that...

Part Seventeen - Phase Three

The life and times of me.

Perhaps you've noticed by now that my name is strangely absent from the pages of this somewhat twisted little sordid story of blind fury and intrigue. Well, the plain truth and fact of the matter was probably something that Albert Einstein would have no trouble figuring out. Come to think of it, he did (or had done, based on your time frame) just that (with matter, not my name).

I'm fairly sure that the ten goons thought they knew who I was. However, I seriously doubted that now was a good time for a heare to heart with the boys. The seemed a little tense. Maybey Ginger could rub on their trouble, if you catch my drift wood.

"How about a hand, babe", I sighed gently, but firmly into the mobile phone I had had implanted only two weeks earlier under the soft pallate of my lower dentures.

I thought the golf clap I got was completely out of line. After all, I'd gotten the clap before from Ginger.

The goons followed her lead. They danced slowly toward me with their slide-rules drawn. Or maybe it was T-squares. I never was too good with agriculture. Either way, right, left, or straight, these guys meant business. Then again, Ginger probably wouldn't go straight if you paid her. And these guys were right on the money. Seven million dollars, to be impresice.

Funny I hadn't noticed that before. After all, it was all in ones and twows. Susan B. Anthony, that name rang a bell. I just wasn't at liberty to disclose that information to just about anyone. But there it was, a pile of money over Twelve inches high... at least.

If I was lucky, the goon squad wouldn't see me. After all, I was wearing my green suit. Or was that the guacamole that came free with the lunch at that posh french restaraunt, Chez Watt.

Yeah, it was definitely the guac. Ginger had that hugry look in her eye. Or was that on her I. Either way, it didn't matter. The goons had their wedd wackers primed for cutting down green .....



Chapter Twenty-Four  
Great Balls of Firebrick!!!!

So it was that I found myself at the bottom of an olimpic sized swimming pool, tied to one of the biggest rocks these peepers had scanned in the last twenty minutes. After all, aside from the stacks of money, the lead plates stacked up like so much cheese-food-product, and half a dozen inflatable party toys (the pool kind, not the night club variety) there just wasn't that much to see. Especially with that blindfold on.

I noticed that it was becoming a little hard to breathe. I also noticed that the rock I thought I was tied to was moving. On closer inspection, it turned out to be one of the larger thugs. He was munching on a sack of seven or eight hundred of those new mini-burritos sold by that fast food chain downtown. They were only about an ounce apiece, but even so that was alot. And the guy I was tied to was practically a parking lot. The source of my breathing difficulty wasn't the water in the pool. There wasn't any. Although there seemed to be some kind of (ab)noxious gas escaping from the rock.

"What's the lead for", I queried the rock.

"Huhn..", was all he replied.

I couldnt tell if it was due to the fact that he was deaf, dumb, stupid, or the fact that what I had actually said sounded more like: "Whhthus thhhugh rhewth rhofgh, worrhdf". ~~mx~~ My blindfold had slipped precariously over my nose and mouth.

Jumpin' Jehosafat! That was no blindfold! Unless I was mistaken, (and we all know how improbable that is, Mr. Peabody) it was none other than a rare species of south African poisonous Electric eel deficating constrictor rattler. Fortunately for me there was only one of these in the known univers. And his name was Derf.

I had met up with Deff before under very similar circumstance. Come to think of it, it was exactly th same situation. You see, Derf wasn't exactly bad or good, just hungry. And at the moment, that was the worst possible scenario for me ...

The Umpire Strikes Oo<sup>t</sup>!

Was it the touch of her soft, supple, slimy scales? Or maybe the gentle flicking of her forked tongue on my collar buttons? Either way, she was making me as nervous as an old bridegroom in a cantalone shaped brothel. I was just about to let the old girl know just how I felt about the whole situation when I realized that there was something strange about her. She was talking to me!

"Don't move, and try not to think", she hissed.  
The goon behind you is a telepath, and I work for the other side."

The other side. Well, that was a familiar line if I'd ever heard one. She'd lied to me before. (no, I'm not one of those anti-snake nuts) I wasn't sure just what to think if I wasn't supposed to be thinking what I was thinking. The Rock was giving me the eye. Or at least that was what it looked like. I guess it could have been an ear.

"so, how about them Victims?", I queried the rock.

I figured that the goon couldn't possibly think, talk and do telepathy at the same time.

"I can to", the rock gurgled toward my general direction.

Sometimes, when I'm alone in the woods, it almost seems as if the very ground itself is speaking to my eternal soul. Slimey Ropes? at these times I enjoy a nice cup o' mud, and some hot sinkers with cream filling. Zippers? After all, there are lots of birds in the woods. Who would miss one or two? Flame Thrower? Time just stood still at those moments. When and where was the Umpire Steak Tower built? And why was my ankle on fire in a swimming pool.

It was just about then that derf broke me free of the Rock, bit him on the garbonzos, yelled something about not letting the lead plating out of my sight, and scurried down a convenient drain in the floor. That was just like a snake to leave you stranded high and dry in a swimming pool. Whatever that meant.

Either the rock was coming back from the recently deceased, or something else of indeterminate size was moving around in here with me. Was it just my imagination, or were those lead plated a lot, and I mean a hole lot, closer to the walls of the pool than they were just a couple of eons ago....



And a two, and a eight and a...

Well, I'd seen a lot of stale soccer games in my time, but these were the flattest group of sports nuts to come along in you don't know when since before my time, that's for sure.

Those were no led plates stacked up like so much cord wood. They were none other than the too little publicised missing two-thousand-forty-eight professional and semi-professional athletes. Ted had done some nosing around for me (dogs are good at that kind of thing, you know) and came up with that tasty tidbit about a week ago. It was just plain dumb luck for me that I found it before he'd eaten the whole thing.

On closer inspection of the moving led plates, I had discovered to my horror that I recognized one of the missing Victims. He was in bad shape. ~~Kind-of-flat-and-square,-if-you-know-what-I-mean.~~ But that goes without saying (or reading, for that matter.)

"Hey, slim, Are you alright?", I queried in an ominous tone.

Since I couldn't understand the answer, I decided to lean in a little bit closer. That was my first mistake.

With near lightning speed, the square of human flesh lunged toward me, corner first. Fortunately, what I thought was an attack proved only to be a succinct warning.

"Stop the presses! x And watch out for the letter opener!"

It must have taken almost every ounce of strength he had to tell me that simple ten word phrase. As he finished, he slipped from my hands and slid towards the deep end of the pool. I could now see that the others were vainly attempting to reach the ladder at the far end of the concrete bowl we were all trapped in. They must have figured that by stacking themselves up like that that at least the top one of them could reach the bottom rung of the ladder.

Fortunately for me, ~~xx~~ enough of them had made ~~x~~ it that I could reach the bottom rung of the ladder. I told them that I'd go for help. The truth of the matter was that I would be lucky to get out myself.

The room seemed to be completely empty. Well, except for the wallpaper, swimming pool, ladder, sports figures ... but you get the general idea.

I cautiously made my way to the only door in the room. It looked kind of small and appeared to be made almost wholly from sixteenth-century jello molds. As I slowly, cautiously, carefully, creepingly, barely cracked the door open, A strange violet glow streamed out from the room on the other side....

The other side of beyond the jello-mold door.

I seemed to be inside of a very large house. Or at least there was a blueprint of a very large house on the wall of the room that I'd just entered.

If this map was correct, then this room would be the study. Many a tome of forgotten lore resided on the walls here. Just kind of nailed there sideways. You'd think with a joint this size that they could either afford bookshelves or get one bejeezus of a buzz.

The map seemed to be in the middle of a bunch of these raunchy dime store mystery novels the drug stores sell. ~~ixamxx~~ If you could read my mind.

"I can", came a gruff granite-sized answer from the door I'd just passed through.

I didn't need to look to see who it was. Although I'm not real sure how he survived a bite/strangle-hold from Derf. I decided the best thing for me to do was to get my little red wagon out of here, and quick. I grabbed the map off the wall and took a rapid gander to decide what to do. (byxx the way, that one night stand of that hooker goose and me was never substantiated.)

Which way should I run? there were more rooms in this house than there were chins on Krelgar. So, which rooms were the closest to me? The kitchen, the living room, the library, the study, the bedroom, the bathroom, or the Parker Brother's room. I didn't have a clue.

"Drop the game board, gumbdrop-shoe!", came the sultry voice from somewhere below and to the right of me.

It was none other than Tracy Underwire with Derf neatly wrapped around her thighs. There was Jack himself right behind her, hoisting one of the biggest cannons that Derf had ever seen, judging from the look on his face, if you could call it a face. Even under potential fire, brimstone, death and destruction, Tracy seemed as cool as a X bolar pear. They were really juicy this particular time of year.

"Jack and I have got the perfect setup here, and were not about to let some small-planet goober like you ruin it for us.", she yelled as she kneed me squarely between the upper upper upper knees, if you get my snow drift.

Either she had become a much better actress than I remember under fire, or she was much too serious about Jack for my liking.

Whichever way it was, I was in a planet of pain ...



The Gravy Thickens!

As I straightened up and my eyes began to clear, the peircing platitute of puncturing pain was just starting to clear my frontal lobe. It was now that my situation took a turn for the weird.

Jack looked for all the world like he was ready to enter some bizzare beauty contest slash roller derby slash decorative garment industry exhibition jousting tournament.

"What's with the git-up", I quipped raising only half of my left eyebrow.

"Please, drop the formalities. Why don't you join us for dinner?", he muttered coyly. "Oh, yes, and you might as well slip into these while you're at it." - He tossed me a pair of roller blades and what looked like an original Gucci evening gown.

I thought long and hard and rough and wet about his offer. It looked mighty tempting, especially since he still had that cannon pointed in my general direction. It looked like something out of a thirtiespirate slash baseball slash gladiator drama. After all, this wouldn't be the first time that I'd worn a nice evening gown. Come to think of it, this one was a definite improvement ~~and~~ over the last little ditty that I'd been forced to wear in this exact animated adventure. The last one was made from a woven lava-acrylic. That rash seemed to last for seventeen years, three months, six point two hours, twelve minutes, and four seconds. Approximateley.

"Dinner sounds great. Shall we say sevenish?", I crooned, knowing full well that the villian (Jack A. Dull, not the soccer team) would usually reveal his/hers entire evil twisted, insane, jumping little plan for world domination shortly before the so-called here (that would hopefully be me) would attempt his daring, heroic, tempting, fate-entrenched, understated, with just a hint of mint escape attempt.

With all that done, said, told, yawned and drawn-out, The Rock forcefully escorted me to one of the smallest rooms I'd ever had the displeasure to be locked into. I mean, when I say that this place was small, I meant really really small. (I could feel the writer's cold hearted temptation to type a whole lot more on this particular subject, though I was never quite sure why.)

The gown that had been given to me fit like a glove (well, except for that middle finger). It was only when I happened to glance in the mirror for the next three $\frac{1}{2}$  hours that I noticed that the whole costume was made from inside-out clothes off of the potentially abducted athletes (but only the professional ones).

This could olly mean one thing. I had stood on naked, transformed, geometricly shaped athletes in order to teach a ladder to get out of a room with a jello mold door. Well there was the answer staring me straight in the fact (well, actually in the mirror in my face). If ~~am~~ only I had a way to get this vital information to the postal authorities. But that would have to wait. I had a semi-formal dinner to attend...

Guess what's going on at dinner (second act)

Well, it was more than I could have possibly hoped for. The gown was too tight in all the wrong places (New Jersey, for example). The food was appalling (Linus Appaling, one of the galaxy's most infamous caterers - the paté was cold and green). The company was kind of entertaining - if you went in for a three legged dog act with two semi-retired trainers and a tree house the size of the royal shake-spear company.

"I hope you are enjoying your stay here with us", Jack whistled through a half of a mouthfull of something vaguely purple.

"Let's cut right to the meat.", I yelled. It wasn't until after I had uttered those words that I realized what I had said. Come to think of it, that was pretty much the only way I could realize it.

"How, what, why, ...", I was fumbling with my words. It's a good thing that soccer players are allowed to use their hand.

About then was when Tracy decided to start using hers (hands, that is, not meat). I could feel the soft hair on the backs of her knuckles. It had been a long time, too long, probably never ...  
WHOSE HANDS WERE THESE?????

They turned out to be mine. I was clearly nervous. After all the very thought of being turned into one of those things like the sports figures (yeah, I know, kinda square), was not the top item of interest on my list of things to do before I passed on from this mortal no-pest strip.

"That's not the fate we have planned for you.", the Rock groaned

"Please, try not to talk." Jack said as he pulled a large spiked house support from somewhere under the table and hit the Rock ~~squax~~ squarely between the shoulders.

I wouldn't exactly call this particular dinner a "party", but then I wasn't the host, and besides, Tracy was passing out something that looked vaguely reminiscent of porta-potty favors - you know the type - little round white things for your head. I put one on even though I didn't see the cannon that was toted around on ~~it~~ just the previous page. I couldn't tell where that spiked thing had come from, but if he had dropped it in the punch, we would have all been snookered.

I hadn't even begun to touch my food when I realized that it was touching me. Everyone seemed to be laughing at something. Time seemed to slow down, I better remember to wind my grandfather clock. Whatever the joke was, I didn't get it. Or maybe that was the point. I think I already got it (fade to plaid) ...



"my adventures with Walt Disney"

Nine A.M. and I awoke with the worst breath of the day. It was as if there was a stuffed toy in my mouth. I could hardly breathe. I moved slowly, cautiously in the dark room. My hands and feet didn't seem to be bound in any way, but my waist felt like I was duct taped to an oversized bowling ball.

How long had I been out of it? I remembered an old stand-by trick to approximate how long - my hand moved toward my face to see how much of a beard I had grown. I only made it to about within an inches of below the bottom of my chin when I touched something very funny. Sorry, that should of been something very furry - I hate typeing, especially in a dark room while tied to a giant bowling ball. If this was the bottom of my beard, then I would estimate that I had been tied here since about the time that ZZ Top was just starting to lose their diapers and get thir first waist-mounted, fur covered guitars.

Nah - it couldn't have possibly been that long. I decided to feel a bit more carefully. Hmmm... This wasn't even coming out of my face, well in reality, it was coming out of my face. Only, not where it was supposed to be coming from - this was coming from my mouth. I'd hade some deeseys of a hangover in the past, but never a fur covered toungue like this!

This one seemed to be a little loose - I decided to give it a tug. Heh heh heh, well, what do you know! There was a stuffed toy in my mouth! But this wasn't just any stuffed toy. I felt again, just to be sure. There was no doubt about it - the large round ears, the protruding snout, the leiderhosen with two big buttons on the front - this was either a bad Christie Brinkley doll, orx one of the oldest original Mickey Mouse dolls in existance. I hated to admit it, but obviously, sometime during the dinner, someone had slipped me a Mickey.

Why Mickey? Why not Minnie, or Dumbo? And what about Goofy? Wasn't he always the one doing the sports cartoons? Anyway, what sex were all of those cartoon characters? Did any of them even have pre-pubescent genetalia?

"Funny you should mention that - I was just about to help you outta yours!!!! Heh, heh, heh," a voice like the Rock groaned.

That was when a blinding light streamed in. It wasn't the light that worried me, as much as th twelve outlines of football players with mouse ears on....

"... and the lights came on all over the world"

what I mistook for football players turned out to be some lawyers with some very big ears and some well pressed suits. AndXX I mean well pressed - they couldn't have been more than a half-an-inch thick.

"So my old, dear, acquaintance, as you can see we have worked out almost all of the bugs in my super-secret project - except for these damned ears!"

It was Jack himself (no, strike that - it was Jack A. Dull).

"You know, Jack, I thought I had this thing with the athletes all figured out", I was bluffing, of course, "But maybe you would be kind enough to clue me in on the lawyer bit."

"It actually has more to do with the start of this whole project. You see, I thought I had the process completed when I ran that first batch through - but as you've probably already guessed, their shape was just a little off..."

"I'd seen amoebas in my time with better shape than that", I emoted as the Rock found a soft spot between my ribs with the steel-tipped toe of his stylish, yet sporty and fashionable war-monger series (tm) boots.

"After that little faux paw I came to the conclusion that I needed some more - shall we say expendable - test subjects."

"Expendable. So lawyers were the only choice open to you?"

"No, but the annoying people at the airports aren't always in the best of health, and I wasn't quite sure that they would survive the process."

"So, maybe you could elaborate on this process." I knew I was probably pushing my luck with this question, but, what the heck, it was worth a shot. "That can be arranged", the Rock implied with his body-and-soul language. "It's just a figure of speech", I retorted. (well, figure of thought, in this case.)

Jack paused menacingly (spelled wrong). "Yeah, I guess it is about time that I filled you in on the entire sordid affair"

This was actually very bad news for me. It usually wasn't until shortly before the imminent death of the hero. I may be nuts, but that would most likely be me.

Over the course of the next two hours, ninety-five minutes, Jack explained in minute detail all, and I mean ALL of his plan. Just after that was when everybody left the room, and the Rock lit the large fuse that I hadn't noticed before - coming out of the top of the bowling ball I was tied to ..... !!!!!!!



'57 - the year that almost wasn't

## "The Spit and the Pendulous"

This was definitely a tense moment. I needed a bath, wanted a cigarette, heard some rice krispies - no wait, that was the fuse...

Good Lard! I can't believe that I'd forgotten about that sizzling twisted mass of life-threatening doom! If it wasn't for the fact that my parents had invested all that money and insisted that I take all of that mail order expectorating course, I'd be a little more worried.

What a time for a dry mouth! I used every professional spitter's trick I could think of, and finally, mustered up a decent sized hecker. Slowly I turned (my head), this would have to be a bank shot if I was ~~xx~~ going to make it at all. Fortunately for me they had carelessly left the lights on. If I banked my shot off of that raw, exposed, hot, steamy, gleaming, white-hot, light bulb, then maybe, just maybe, I could get a little extra boost from some of the precise placement of the only hecker in my lonely possession. Now, if only I could calculate the advanced astro physics formulas needed to make this life-and-death gamble with the devil himself. Some men would be so shaken by this ~~xx~~ point that thinking would have been out of the question. But not me no sir. I was cool as a limp watermellon. no way would I panic. YOU'D NEVER\*EVER CATCH ME IN A PANIC LIKE THAT.

By that time I had accidentally swallowed the hecker. Lucky for me ~~th~~ that thugs usually almost always chose hide-outs that were badly constructed. Also lucky for me that it was raining outside. And really, very, very, lucky for me that the only leak in this room happened to be directly over the fuse. I'd take that even if my hair was getting wet. I hope my swimmer's ear didn't kick in, or I'd be in some real trouble.

By the way, did any of you know that there was a briefly popular nationally sold brand of duct tape called "Melt-Away" with a water-based adhesive. Well, I wouldn't have if it wasn't for the fact that the empty cases were stacked in the corner and my arms were beginning to get their circulation back. Not that they had had that much to begin with - about as much as the Punquesetonic Picayune Post-Dispatch.

After I was loose, I gathered up the wet, soggy mass of Water-solubale adhesive duct tape and thrust it forcefully into my upper left hip waistcoat lining pocket (you know the one).

Since I'd been here for quite some time, I decided to see who else was left in this huge house. Imagine my surprise when I found myself in a large acrylic bubble on a deserted asteroid?!?!?!?

After calming up to my normal level-footed self-esteem ridden self, I quickly surmized that I was in actuality in one of the holding cells on one of the many moons on the thirteenth planet from the dark star thaleus seven. I ass-umme'd that this was no mere accident, but a carefully planed plot. (as a matter of fact, I knew exactly what the plot was, but I've still got at least two pages left, and if I spilled the pork and beans now, my publisher would shoot me.)

This bubble would easily hold any ordinary felon. But then, by now you should realize that I am not ordinary (they never proved the felon part to my liking, thank you very much) I had at my disposal one very large bomb and one dilapidated building. If I could get the bomb outside, and myself inside then mabey, just maybe, I mig't, just might, be able, just able, to escape, just escape!

The first order of business would be to move the bomb outside. Since it was round, this wasn't too hard, but it did knock down the wall on the way out of the door, just-door. And there was yet another problem - these containment cells had a concave floor (you know, the center is lower than the sides, or the sides are higher than the center, I never did get that right on my physics exam, but the net effect was that no matter where I placed the bomb, it would end up where it would do the least damage to the wall and the most damage to me).

I carefully caressed the soft, pliable, sticky, cold, white mass in my left waistcoat lining pocket - now, wait a minute - that was my left hip waistcoat lining pocket, upper. Ahh, ohh! That wad felt good in my warm hands - it was the feeling of freedom! I forcefully yanked at the wad until it came free. I waddled over towards the edge of the containment field (there was still some sticky stuff on my leg).

After sticking the wad to the wall, next would come the big round black thing with the wick, and then the explosion. I was excited just thinking about it! Now, How would I light this thing? Wait a minute, I still had that seventeen foot sword (don't ask me where I hid it - it's a family secret). If I took the flint out of my pocket lighter, I should be able to start a fire in the leftover spare fur ball that Ted had given me last Christmas (dogs don't have any pockets for spare change, you know).

Why does this sort of thing always look so easy in all of the Lassie movies? They just seem to pick up any two objects from the ground, strike them together, there's a scene change, and the fire is roaring. I either needed a boy scout or a scene change . . .

Well, that wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be. Now all I would have to do would be to lob a flaming fur ball with my bare hands on top of a soggy wick that was no more than two centi-feet long from a distance of two-hundred-fifty (point three) par-faits away and dive for cover behind what was left of a non-existent outhouse. It's the wind-up, the burning sensation, the lob, and - It's good! But that was bad for me . . . ?



Sixty-nine ways to love your lever

"GASP!! ARGHH!!"

This was just not turning out to be my phase of the home planet. Sure, I was out of that bubble of a prison. But now I was really due for a bath.

You know, it had never occurred to me that the particular moon that I was on might be completely unbothered by the hazards of a breathable atmosphere. It was sure occurring to me now!

Through the frosty, frozen, slushi, margaritta like fluid that seemed to be in a never ending flow from my eyes, I could barely make out the outline of another structure. Well it could have been a whale or a mountain, but at the moment it was all I could see, so I decided to beat a hasty, hurried, reverse retreat towards it. Closer, and even closer came I to the mysteriously shaped icon in the hazy distance. As I neared the large hulking building, it began to fit into the plot as only I knew it (tomorrow, you might know too!) Yes, it was none other than the gigundamous Sow-On-A-Side shaped building that was the very trademark of the Porelex pork product processing plant!

I managed to claw my way into the workers' airlock. If I could only sneak in unnoticed, then I would be able to slip into one of the worker's uniforms, and slide into the plant, and squeeze past all of the security that I was sure were even now alerted to my very presence.

"Hey, boss, was this the guy you was lookin' for?" - I hate telepaths

"Well, well, well, what a surprise - if it isn't my favorite slug"

Fortunately for me, Jack had the world's largest living pile of granite on a short leash. The truth of the matter was that it seemed as if the entire group of four-thousand-seven-hundred-fifty-six (Krelgar didn't work on the floor anymore) was backing them up.

"All right, Jack, are you going to tell me what youve done with Krelgar, or am I going to personally handle all of your boys?"

"I think that you know exactly what has happened to Krelgar", said the evel looking, yet somehow approachable Jack.

"I would, but I didn't think you had the time to pull any of that off just yet.", I sneered menacingly.

"well, he's, shall we say..."

"You don't mean..."

"Exactly."

"Just as I thought."

"Hey!", the Rock piped up, "I'm a telepath, and even I don't know what's going on! Won't someone please explain!!!"

"I'd be glad to.", came Krelgar's husky, yet feminine voice from somewhere behind a vat of wholesale, dehydrated pork product left-overs .....

Four the Last thyme...

Krelgar, Take Me Away (or anywhere but here)

"Well", sighed Krelgar, "I am no longer the Perelex of thaleus seven"

"So, Jack, the plan was a success after all. No hard feelings, I hope."

"None at all," Jack calmly insisted. "In fact, you are welcome to catch the shuttle that I have arranged to carry Krelgar and any of his remaining followers back to earth - or wherever they might like to go."

"That's very neighborly of you, but how about that explanation for your lead thug."

"Why don't you just think twice about that.", sneered Jack.

Of course! That would solve this whole plot exposition problem once and for all. By thinking about it, Rock (and the readers) would both find out what the rest of already knew about this semi-mutilated integrated, twisted little plot we laughingly call a story.

You see, it all really started on that Island that I told you about earlier in the story. I had thought it was a little unlikely that a theatrical warehouse would have washed up on the shore. In fact, it hadn't - that just happens to be where it landed. Eons ago, the planets of thaleus seven had agreed to ban all theatre in favor of pork production (I know, that's splitting hairs, but who's to say if one planet is wrong and another is right) Along with the theatrical stuff came one ancient, hidden decree regarding, of all things, the fact that Jack A. Dull was a possible heir to the throne, but that he would have to prove himself in a competitive sport (gosh, now I'm splitting hairs). Jack's dad was one of the directors of the Theatrical Administration.

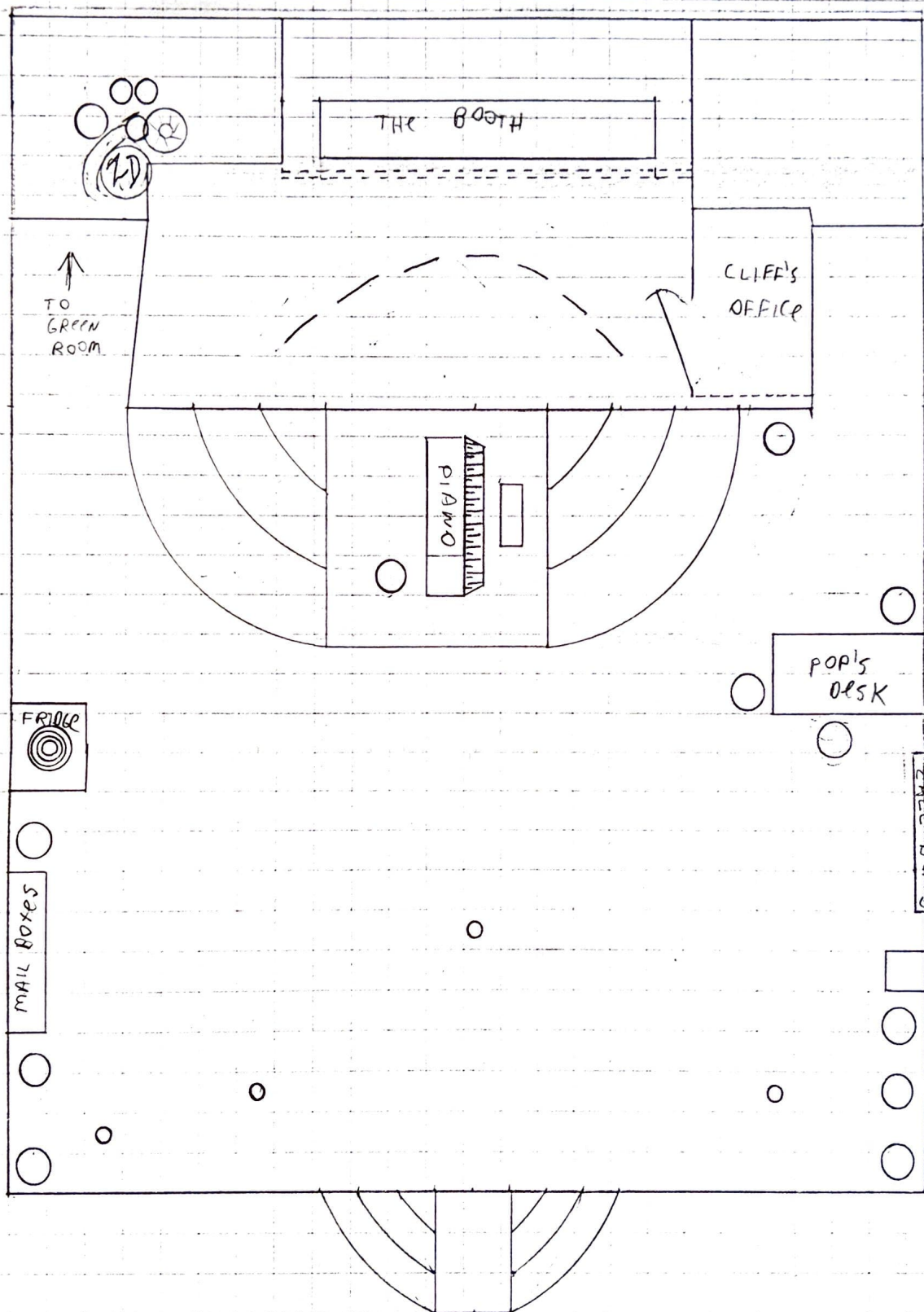
Jack hadn't found the papers, though - that was how Steve was tied in. He and Jack had struck an agreement to never tell their secret until Jack had reclaimed his rightful place as Perelex of thaleus seven.

After our rescue, and subsequent made for tv movies, Jack began to plot how to get athletes to thaleus seven without alerting the customs officials. You see, the decision to follow the pork products route had all but doomed the sports industries. But the cardiologists had a boom year (in more ways than two). As Jack started to become more and more radical in his methods, Steve had been secretly following his every move. That's what all those brochures were about. Who would ever notice a couple of missing peruvian ant farmers or mid-east aqua-culturists.

At the time that Steve was killed, Jack couldn't afford any interference from me. He was dangerously close to perfecting the method of compressing and expanding living matter using common household gelatin. I got taken along for the ride - and the mickey was just a mocking clue from Krelgar's childhood. That was the piece of the puzzle that filled it all in for me.

Well, Jack won the competition easily - most of the opposing team was taken off the field on stretchers. And Tracy, well, she always sided with the winner. Me, I needed a cup of coffee, but you can't . . . .





DOOR 1

DOOR 2

DOOR 3