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C.O.D.

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Settecase: C.O.D.

On the sixth day I saved Mr. Bass's life. He had wandered by mistake into a section of Harlequin romances and, when I found him, was weeping piteously over the tribulations of someone named Eloise. I quickly unlooped my belt, threw it to Bass and pulled him out into the aisle before he could get completely bogged down.

Day Ten: With hunger, delirium is setting in. Bass believes himself to be the Scarlet Pimpernel. I am apparently (to him) his arch-enemy, Chauvelin. Even in his most lucid moments, he'll smile insolently and murmur,

"We seek him here, we seek him there,
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere.
Is he in Heaven; or is he in Hell?
That demmed, elusive Malcolm Bass."

Then he challenges me to a duel. It could be worse, I suppose. He could think I was the Pimpernel's wife, Margarite. I prefer being Chauvelin.

Day Eleven: I am now Margarite. It is disgusting.

Day Fourteen: The going is getting rougher. While passing through a section on mimes, we spent two hours Walking Against the Wind. This so exhausted Bass that he collapsed on the spot, his legs now useless. Suddenly, I heard a noise.

It was my knuckles cracking.

Then I heard another noise. This one was a search party. A search party at least two days away. We communicated by megaphone and the leader of the search party promised to start after us as soon as the pizza has been delivered. The problem is this: Neither Bass nor myself has two days to spare. I was at this iniquity that Bass suggested cannibalism. Not that he was thinking of self-sacrifice, mind you. No, he wanted me to kill myself and leave the body close to him.

This got me a tad miffed. Then I thought of doing the old curmudgeon in and cannibalizing him until the search party got there. I could do it. One quick shot over the head with "War and Peace" and the geek was mine. All the food I could hope for, until rescued.

But... could I take a human life? Flies are one thing, but...

If I don't, neither of us will live and they'll have ordered the pizza for nothing. But could I take a human life? I must decide quickly. Since books have played such an important role in this adventure of mine, I shall let a book decide the outcome. Self-preservation and the murder of a fellow human being, or death with honor... a slow, horrible, painful death with honor... let's see. Here's a book. This shall give me the clue. Frank R. Stockton. "The Lady or the Tiger". I'll find the answer there.

C.O.D.

by James Settecase

Of the many fine memories I hold, none are so near and dear to my heart as my school daze at College of DuPage. Ahh, College of DuPage, nestled amidst the flood plains of lower Glen Ellyn. Your incredibly overcrowded parking lots and muddy, slippery sidewalks are forever etched in my mind. This edifice depreciated to higher education proved an unflagging source of inspiration, intimidation, consternation and desperation.

SATIRE

EPILOGUE: You really thought I was going to pimp you with that ending, didn't you? What happened was this: as I was deciding whether to kill Bass, he suddenly woke up and screamed, "LOOK!" I looked. Over in the corner was a skeleton of a well-dressed man. I went to investigate. The initials on the solid gold jockey shorts said "R.B." I informed Bass of this fact. He turned a cheerful shade of white. "Robert Burghermeister!" he exclaimed. "The former president of the college. He was ousted after holding a press conference in which he described the college philosophy as 'making whoopee'. He disappeared soon after. He must have died down here while looking for his secret wine cache. Too bad he isn't alive. He could help us get out. Or at least get us a drink."

I stared at the skeleton, with it's right arm stretched in a calling gesture.

"He can help us," I said. "He is helping us."

"Good," said Bass. "Get me a Blue Hawaii."

"No, I mean he's pointing the way out," I remarked casually. Our eyes followed the direction of the skeletal limb. There they were: a set of fire doors! We crawled quickly through the fire doors and looked out. Escape!

As we pushed through the doors, an alarm sounded. Good, we thought. People will be here soon. Neither of us could walk by now. We waited. Two days. Nothing. With an air of reckless abandon and wild hunger, Bass grabbed the local fire alarm and pulled. Three seconds later four goons scooped him up and took him away. He was babbling James Mason's final speech from "Journey to the Center of the Earth".

"Who knows? Someday one of you may follow us to that strange land. It may be you, my lad, or your sons or your grandsons. That I cannot say. But this I know. The spirit of man cannot be stopped!"

He was taken to join the fat lady in the dungeon.

So it goes for all who would mock man's beaurocratic laws.

This was a true story.