

"When hope is available, snatch it gently with both hands. It is of equal measure elusive and fragile."

--Madame Zoetricious Bovari, Mystic and Dimensioneer, early 14th century and late 20th



The Rising Man

Our world has been magicked, no secret is that
But can we restore it after trimming the fat?
The Great Orange Beast has been sent on his way,
But can we believe that's where he will stay?

Too many henchmen and too many liars,
Too many irons still stoking the fires
If God could give us just one of our wishes
The Great Orange Beast would be sleeping with fishes



THE RESCUER'S TALE

But no time to wish, just time to plan
For our next big move to counter The Man
We must be stealthy, we must harness our might
We must save ourselves, by fight or by flight

I heard a whisper that a hero has risen
To free all of us from our self-made prison
We must be one, now more than ever
As we've painfully learned, we are stronger together

--Anonymous Penn, 2047 AD



Herr Bigly Rump was gone. After one and a half years of chaos, conspiracies, and crimes, the GOB had at last been impeached by his own henchmen, only to be succeeded by another self-serving billionaire, Sir Dastardly Gott.

The New World Times

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Thursday, July 4, 2047

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RUMP DUMPED!

written by Yakity Max III (tags: Woohoo! FINALLY! What took so long!)



At long last, the Rump has been ousted! Long-loathed for his non-partisan (completely selfish) rule of law, Herr Bigly Rump has been removed by his own cabinet to make way for his successor Sir Dastardly Gott, former Chief of the Federal Bureau of Instigation (which was largely responsible for creating much of the fake news that helped elect Herr Rump to begin with).

Throughout Herr Rump's tumultuous reign, many controversial edicts were passed that most of the world's population disagreed with, but since there were new laws against free speech, rights of assembly, public protests, and general disagreement with the government, these travesties with Arctic Mines for hard

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While in the process of uncovering the Rump's scandalous plans, I had discovered Dastardly Gott was one of the criminals responsible for whatever happened to our former Magistrate Parsimonious Creed. Now with Dr. Creed gone and the Rump having been ousted, Dastardly Gott took over the world in a most deceptive fashion. His first act was one of charity and kindness...or so it appeared.



INTERNATIONAL INQUIROR



Relentless Reporting by the World's Top Investigative Chroniclers

OUR KIND AND FORGIVING MAGISTRATE OFFERS PARDONS TO TEACHERS & PRISONERS WITH CHILDREN

BREAKING NEWS: The World Leadership Council is happy to announce that our dear Magistrate Sir Dastardly Gott has seen fit to release all prisoners from the Arctic Mines who have children, age 12 and younger, as well as teachers for these youngsters despite some of these criminals having committed high crimes against the government by having voted for someone other than our Magistrate's predecessor (Herr Bigly Rump who was kidnapped by the scoundrel and sore loser Mary Morgan and who is still being held for ransom, btw).

By this heart wrenching show of mercy, our esteemed leader has shown an endearing side of himself that few knew existed. Having been orphaned at a young age himself, Magistrate Gott understands that children under 12 years of age are the most magical creatures on earth due to their limitless imaginations and, for this reason, need their parents to guide them with a firm hand through this most dangerous stage in life. And so it is that he's ordered that all jailed parents be released immediately and transported back to their loving families with utmost haste. (Note: Exceptions include Scholars and all Rump Registrants.)

As for those left in the Arctic Mines, obviously workloads will increase to make up for the loss of manpower, but as of this writing, none are expected to die from overwork. Even so, the World Leadership Council assumes no responsibility whatsoever if

By definition, change is simply a difference from what was to what is. Change is transformation. It is conversion, or substitution. Change does not mean better. It only means different.

When power shifted from the GOB to Gott, the greatest change occurred in our resistance. We became more desperate for a free world. And also more determined.

Dear Persistent Puzzler,



Hello, it's me, Ever Hopeful. I just wanted to let you know that my family is more grateful than ever for your help in bringing my father home from the Arctic mines. Although he seems very different now, he's still my father so it's easy to forgive his fits and occasional rants. He doesn't like to talk about his time as a prisoner, but I suspect very bad things must have happened to him. He has bad dreams about the Gryms. (I know because he talks in his sleep.) Also his memory is damaged, as well as his ability to figure things out. But the oddest thing about him now, is that he sounds like a Rumpateer! He says I have to go to school so I can learn to make the world great again. (My brother and I often skip and go down to the Upper Downey Street bridge where we practice our binary!)

I don't mean to burden you with my letter, Mary, especially since I know our family isn't the only one in this situation. (Many of my friends' parents came home from the mines in similar condition, so we at least have each other to get through this.) I only want you to know that we are a grateful family and we look forward to supporting you if you should ever run again for World Leadership.

Much love from your Greatest Fan,
Ever Hopeful

P.S. My friends and I came up with a new phoniker for you if you decide to change yours now that our new magistrate Dastardly Gott hates you more than the last one did...we call you "Rump Buster"!



P.P.S. Did you know that in German, the name "Gott" means "God"? I'm not sure what to think about that, are you? It just seems...wrong!



P.P.P.S. This time I'm sending you a colorful cloth patch that came from my new school uniform. I cut it in the shape of a puzzle piece. Bet you can't figure this one out!



I folded the letter carefully and tucked it inside my journal where I kept similar letters I'd recently received. Ever Hopeful's was not the only family whose loved one was returned from the Arctic Mines in less than perfect condition. Nor was she the only letter writer who mentioned nightmares of the Gryms. I wasn't surprised by the former, but I was by the latter.

The Gryms... I had not thought of these fairytale monsters since I was a child - the four harbingers of the world's end: Grym Shank, Grym Sickle, Grym Scythe, and Grym Scourge. All children grow up knowing about the Gryms, but most forget as soon as they're old enough to put such nonsense aside. So, why were these adults, the parents and teachers to whom Dastardly Gott had for some reason shown mercy, reverting back to their childhood fears?

For a fleeting moment, an old habit overcame me and I tried to imagine what my friend and mentor Juggler Vein would've made of all this, but then I remembered he was there himself, a prisoner still held in the Arctic Mines. I refused to think he could be in this same horrid condition.

News of the prisoners' releases had spread far and wide via the NPC - officially the "New Press Corp," but realistically the "Now Politically Corrupt" media. Freedom of speech and of the press were outlawed immediately by the new Gott Regime, but also very quietly and amidst multiple overblown distractions.

Because of this censorship and the harsh penalties law-breakers faced, I was forced to consider all "news" carefully before believing any.

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Fig. 3.2a Fictional Render: Grym Scourge

The NPC now painted the world a bright, rosy red except when I was the subject, or Herr Bigly Rump.

The Great Orange Beast was no longer in power, which seemed to satisfy everyone, friends and enemies alike. Unfortunately (sort of), it now appeared the Rump had vanished from the face of the earth.

This, of course, was an entirely new and unexpected predicament which understandably left the door wide open for conspiracy theorists of a mostly pathological variety to pin the blame on me. Between them and the hateful spewers of "alternate facts," I stood little chance of a fair trial over any falsehood they fancied. The small-minded did not hesitate to accuse me, but accuse me of what was still very much an imaginative adventure.

MODERN PHENOMENOLOGY MAGAZINE

THE POWER OF PORTALS

by Garson Fleaple, Scholar and Conspiracy Theory Enthusiast

Theories abound pertaining to just exactly how the criminal mastermind **Mary Morgan** managed to kidnap the most powerful man on the planet, **Herr Bigly Rump**, and hide him away in what is certainly an unfindable **evil hideaway**. Today, we shall examine one of those theories in depth:

THE PORTAL THEORY

Despite magic being illegal, many still practice the art in the secrecy of their homes and when they don't expect they're being observed.

This theoretician suspects **Mary Morgan** belongs squarely in this category of **miscreants**. It is entirely possible the **mad-woman conjured a portal** similar to those that ripped through our precious atmosphere two decades ago, allowing unfettered access by those **fiendish Alien Immigrants (AI)** from as far away as the Erm Empire, Galaxy Fafaway.

Despite earthbound **paraportals** (parallel openings) having been reputed as **myths** until now, good sense supports the theory that Ms. Morgan could have employed such **sinister magic** and used this route to snatch Herr Rump from the **Great Bigly Tower**, and quickly escape with no one being the wiser. (Fig. 13.1)



Fig. 13.1

Recent intelligence has enlightened law enforcement as to new crimes committed by this scoundrel who is already "allegedly" guilty of treason, racketeering, money laundering, jay-walking, and letting her dog poop on the sidewalk (without cleaning it up!). In addition to these and other crimes, Mz. Morgan is now suspected of having offered our Esteemed Supreme Leader Herr Bigly Rump, possibly with insider help she received from the murderer Junky Caterpillar, an illegal Alien Immigrant (AI). If anyone has knowledge of this collaboration, or of Ms. Morgan's infamous evil hideaway, it is a requirement under the new and ultra-mega powerful administration of Sir Dastardly Gott that you come forward immediately or join Mr. Caterpillar behind bars. (He is rumored to be a rampant carnivore.)

Despite the Rump's mysterious absence, I was certain he was alive and holed up somewhere scheming of ways to regain his throne. At the very least, a creature with his vast resources was certain to avenge his ouster from office sooner or later.

For the time being, I had more important things to consider, namely the coded message I had recently received from Juggler Vein.

Y JABBER

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DIE—MUST READ—BUY \$1

CKET PAPER! BUY YOURS TODAY!
TERNATIONALLY REQUIRED READING @ RISK OF IMPRISONMENT

RIMINAL MARY MORGAN

ews Article by Yakity Max III)

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CATERPILLAR, JUNKY
DEVIANT #324-6932.118
SENTENCE: LIFE +



JV and many other brilliant and talented people (all of whom had been suspected dead until recently) were jailed under false pretenses as soon as the Rump took over, presumably to help the GOB harvest all the world's timerox from the Arctic Mines. With the help of this magical mineral, the Rump had been able to travel backward in time to the year 2016 where he set the wheels in motion to pave his way to power.

I suspected his intent was to silence those who would speak against him and, at the same time, destroy all that was left of this mineral so that no one could travel back and right his wrong, if that were even possible. Presently, the only people who knew the answer to this question were either dead or imprisoned. But the fact that Juggler Vein was still alive and had managed to smuggle out a coded message gave me hope that we at least stood a chance to make things right, although a very slim one.

TIMEROX



A rare mineral physically similar to iron pyrite (fool's gold), but with extreme magical qualities. Known to contribute to time travel, folding, dimensioneering, and other forms of higher magic, this mineral was banned from use after the Last Great War in which it was believed to have contributed to the creations of thin spots as well as fullblown portals that allowed free passage to our atmosphere from other planets and galaxies.

Although unfounded, some scientists speculate the only timerox left in the world is located in the Arctic Mines. Harsh and unpredictable weather in the region has...

The clues Juggler Vein had sent with his message were mysterious, to say the least. Even the envelope held its own intrigue with that oddly-shaped stain on its front. It plainly resembled some sort of creature, but without more to go on, I had to set it aside for now.

Focusing on JV's message, I found that deciphering it was the easy part since he and I had a long history of puzzling things out, so to speak.

The Scholar had taught me most of what I know about ciphers, codes, and pictograms, as well as advanced mathematics which, to many, is itself a great, unsolvable puzzle.

To M. Morgan
#4178 Inflictus Drive
Near the 4th Jetty in
Potlatch-on-the-Marrow
Key

ALCHEMISTRY SERVICES

Letter Box 911 Tel Plaza 2132
Lower West Quadrant, New London

Key

Prescription and dosage information:

yroyucmsucsp2zchojmuexartdohngcdé.
pwdaserbwsjtiulmmn3xitboykuvls
cmchdrpmetaeiddofitks29abflogikcvdue!

The 911 code in the address line of the prescription, indicated urgency, of course, and a cipher's Key followed: 2132. This told me to read only the 2nd letters of the 1st line and the 3rd letters of the 2nd line. His message was clear: "You must come at once. Parsimonious Creed is alive!"

When I first read Juggler Vein's message, his urgency nearly convinced me to act immediately, but the idea that our former Magistrate - and my friend and colleague - Dr. Parsimonious Creed was alive was enough to waylay my haste. If Dr. Creed was truly alive, was he being held prisoner along with Juggler Vein? If not, why hadn't I heard from him? I asked myself this question a hundred times after first reading JV's message, but it had brought me no closer to an answer. I was as confused as I'd ever been, but never more eager to figure things out.

With a critical eye, I studied each item JV had sent with his coded message: a brass key, a broken button, and a dirty piece of candy. They were as vague as any clue I'd ever come across, but I knew each had to be significant in determining just exactly what the scholar was trying to tell me. None seemed remarkable, nor even related to each other in any way, yet here they were.

I was reluctant to admit I needed help in figuring out the clues. In these days of distrust, allies are often illusive. Finding them would take time and risk discovery by the Powers-That-Be. Nevertheless, the chance to free Juggler Vein and possibly Parsimonious Creed - not to mention thousands of others likely held in the Arctic Mines - was an opportunity I couldn't let pass.

With renewed determination, I took another slow, careful look at the clues, and that's when I saw it...



A fingerprint!

It certainly could've been nothing, no lead at all, but knowing Juggler Vein as well as I did, I was sure the odds were in my favor that I was finally on the right track.

I could hardly contain my excitement! Could this print belong to Parsimonious Creed? If so, that meant he truly was in the Arctic Mines alongside JV. For better or for worse, at least the former colleagues were together again! But the proof was in that print.

To verify my hunch, I needed someone I could trust to identify the owner of that fingerprint and thanks to the Chronicler Ancillary Pawn who had collected all the evidence I'd needed to rid the world of the Rump, I knew exactly who to recruit. I found his name again in Ancillary Pawn's "confession" concerning the night Dr. Creed had supposedly died.



Ancillary Pawn's confession was just one of the many documents the Chronicler had kept in a safe inside Gabsy Pork's restaurant/garage. Finding this treasure had been instrumental in overthrowing the GOB, and also in my education since then. I'd poured over every word, every drawing, and every map until some were almost entirely committed to memory. Because of this diligence, I was able to find the name I needed almost immediately on the second page of Dr. Pawn's confession:

newspaper except that the keybox hidden beneath the overturned chair still contained the key to Parsy's secret room. I had not known of the room prior to that night, and only found it because Parsy had managed to leave me one last clue.

In what was likely a dying effort, he had clutched an after one we'd both read about in the book.

When I saw what was stored in the secret room, I immediately contacted Posthumous Krill, a private investigator and loyal friend. PK arrived within minutes, took photos and fingerprints of the secret opening

When I saw what was stored in the secret room, I immediately contacted Posthumous Krill, a private investigator and loyal friend. PK arrived within minutes, took photos and fingerprints of the secret opening, then helped me remove all the contents of the room. We were in

I had met Posthumous Krill only once before and it had been under rather odd circumstances. I'd accidentally walked in on him and Parsimonous Creed in Dr. Creed's office while they'd been engaged in a quiet, but heated debate. When they saw me, they immediately stopped arguing, but I could tell neither was finished.

Somewhat red-faced, Dr. Creed introduced me to the private eye, but after an awkward greeting, Posthumous Krill stalked out and I never saw him again. Until reading Ancillary Pawn's confession, I had no idea PK was a part of the Resistance. I decided now would be an excellent time to find out just how involved Mr. Krill actually was. AND...what really happened the night Dr. Creed was pronounced dead.