



LAKE GENEVA BRIDGE MURDER, AGAIN!*

by

B. K. Barry

A Charles Earl Short Mystery, Featuring the Earl Family Brain Trust

(For an interactive reading experience, please read with a smartphone equipped with a QR code reader in hand—you might even read it with a child or grandchild and have a fine interactive, intergenerational, reading experience together!)

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forest of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry.

William Blake, *The Tyger*, *Songs of Experience*, 1794

Arrival in Lake Geneva

“Charles,” Judy Earl noted to her bridge-playing mathematician husband, “I remember so well the last time we came to the Helevetica Chalet—what a gorgeous resort...AND...” Judy continued, “do you remember that awful man who was murdered here? I think his name was Huey. That was in sharp contrast to the rest of our fine time!” Charles Earl nodded assent as he parked their car under the Porte Cochère of the Helvetica. The Earls had come to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, for the Midwestern teams duplicate bridge tournament of the American Bridge Congress (ABC). They travelled all over North America following their hobby.

Charles and Judy Earl met many years ago when they were both young graduate students in mathematics at the University of Chicago—this year, they would celebrate 50 years of happy marriage. After they got their degrees, they continued with the focus of their formal training, to be sure, but each also wore many other hats. Some of them were the same, while others differed greatly from each other. Judy’s interests, of all sorts, focused heavily on visual approaches, while Charles’s focused on logical approaches. Each was imaginative but in different ways; they had proven themselves a strong team in a variety of contexts: a true power of two.

“Judy, go on in and see about our reservation; I’ll park and check out the grounds a bit to make sure that in fact room 2112 is the one we still want, given our last little adventure here. In fact, sit down and have a drink; I’ll join you and if I find any of our friends over near the convention center I’ll bring them along, too; it’s past check-in time.”

In the Lobby Lounge

Judy exited the car and left her husband to go about checking things out; she knew that Charles loved to make sure that everything was in order in advance of bridge so that he could devote his full focus to the tournament itself. The last time the couple had been to the Helvetica had been about four years earlier; Judy expected to see change in the lobby and elsewhere but was pleasantly surprised to see, that although some of the rugged

outdoorsy trappings were gone, there remained enough to illustrate those roots of the beautiful Helvetica lodge.



She sat down at a table in front of the large windows of the Lobby Lounge with a panoramic view of the South by South East of the property...over the outdoor pool, across the golf course and pergola, to the wooded island in the lake, complete with an Alma Mater TeaGarten—a chain that the Earls owned, named for Judy's late mother. She ordered a glass of Cabernet and enjoyed a peaceful time sipping the wine as she watched patterns in the clouds drift from west to east, reflecting the prevailing winds coming off the Great Plains. Judy was a professor of mathematical geography in a research university and sometimes, especially when in pleasant surroundings such as these, her mind roamed through aspects of her professional career even though she was otherwise involved.



Soon, Charles came back with their friends Herman and Jake. Judy had enjoyed many fine conversations with these guys who much enjoyed hearing about the various research projects that the academic Earl couple often engaged in. After a round of handshakes, the group sat down and got to the serious business of discussing bridge over drinks. Judy played the game with Charles, but all of Charles, Herman, and Jake were ranked in the top 500 in North America and Jake was a top-level pro; Judy was

nowhere near that level of player so she was sitting out this team game in favor of another, better, fourth, for Charles to play with.

The happy group enjoyed some more beer and wine as they waited for their fourth to arrive. Herman declined to eat any of the ‘small plates’ the group ordered to go with the drinks: “I don’t generally eat in restaurants. There are two restaurants in this town that I eat in, in addition to an occasional bite at the resort: one is a Chicago-style pizza place where I have stuffed pizza and the other is a lakeside rotisserie place. While the food at those places is nowhere near the quality that I carry with me routinely, they are all nonetheless interesting cultural experiences to share with company, such as you, with whom I enjoy spending time.” Judy thought that some might find Herman a bit odd, but she and Charles liked him a great deal—he was direct in his manner of speech—that was all. Herman continued, “tomorrow night Jake and I will have Royal Red shrimp, I am having them flown in from Biloxi (Mississippi) this afternoon (the valet will handle it), along with red quinoa salad with baby kale, and crème brûlée for dessert. When I leave here soon, I will go up to the room and unpack the two convection ovens, the microwave, the blow torch, and the small refrigerator. Of course, I tip the valet and the maids quite well.” As Herman continued with his erudite culinary commentary, Judy once again found her attention wandering.

“CHARLES,” Judy shrieked as she jolted out of her mental meanderings, “look at the huge car that just pulled up!! It’s just like the car that Huey arrived in four years ago!” Soon, a somewhat dapper looking foreign gentleman, in a slightly tattered beige suit, emerged from the expensive, over-sized vehicle. I’ll bet that vehicle reflects his ego, Judy thought unkindly. She noted the contrast between the shabby suit and his beautiful hand-carved teak cane, inlaid with intricate brass filigreed pattern. “I am Dr. Singh” the man announced to the whole lobby and to the registration clerk, “you have my reservation for me and my two slaves for this next week; in the room with a private ramp and adjacent to an exterior door—Suite 3120, I believe; we have practices that might be of concern to your other guests and I try to be a sensitive person and please all. You can call me Dr. Singh.” With that, the man unscrewed the head of the cane and

withdrew two long leather straps, attached inside the cane head, and snapped them with whip-like precision in the air, “Louie and Dewey, come...your Master commands it!”

Two large middle-aged (apparently) American men emerged from the vehicle—“coming Master.” They obediently brought in a pile of suitcases, trunks, and duffle bags. When Judy saw this she began sputtering, “Charles, I have not had that much to drink have I? Those two men are carbon copies of Huey...but he was murdered? Am I seeing double or triple? Am I imagining it?” And with that, Judy fainted with a moan before Charles could reassure his hypersensitive wife that in fact there was nothing the matter with her.

In Room 2112

Charles and Jake and Herman escorted Judy to the Earls' room and put her to bed. While Judy slept, Charles went out to see what he could find out about the situation today. After a few hours she had calmed down sufficiently to carry on a coherent conversation. “Judy, I have had a chance to ask around about Dr. Singh and his entourage,” Charles told his wife. “It appears that Huey was one of three brothers and that they look a great deal alike. Dr. Singh and Huey had been in some sort of strange business, perhaps involving the sale of customized underwear for larger men. The brothers were models, of sorts, for the business. When Huey died, Dr. Singh took over the business. The car you saw was indeed Huey’s car, the one you saw years before. They are staying in the same suite here that Huey had stayed in four years ago. I gather that they have become regulars here. Don’t be surprised by things they do; apparently no one takes them very seriously and no one likes them. They have been known, however, to upset innocent people, such as you, who have only passing experience with them. I have seen Singh in various places; he likes to micromanage low-level bridge administration. I regard him simply as a pest. Others have stronger feelings.” “Thank you, Charles,” Judy said. “Furthermore,” Charles continued, “I would like you to spend the rest of the day just relaxing. Go to the wooded island; enjoy drinks and appetizers at the Alma Mater TeaGarten. In fact, I will contact our comfort

‘Team’ and have them join you: Theodore, Binker, and Tine, our core group (as a Brain Trust), and also Guillaume.” “Judy,” Charles reminded, “just be sure that Theodore does not go overboard with ordering Mead...either for himself or others. He means well, but sometimes needs to be reined in a bit!”

<i>Earl Family Brain Trust</i>		
		<p>Theodore E. Bear: A sedentary philosophically-inclined bear. Kind and thoughtful. A clear-thinker interested in the balance between pragmatics and abstraction. He worries about personal issues, such as being made into the bed, as well as broad-ranging issues involving world peace and global politics among all creatures, real and imaginary. He views himself as a dignified and proper teddy bear wearing a tuxedo—NOT as a panda. He is a native of Detroit, MI.</p>
		<p>Binker Bear: Named after Christopher Robin’s [A. A. Milne, <i>When We Were Very Young</i>] “imaginary” friend Binker, as in “you can’t see Binker.” He lives largely in the realm of the imaginary, in the world of abstraction. In his “bear” persona he is physically quite large; he has a number of other personae he has been known to adopt. He is known to keep his cards close to his chest. Binker is originally from Paris, France, and was born at Galeries Lafayette. He is a part-time mystery story writer, too, known as ‘B. K.’.</p>
		<p>Tine E. Bear: Named for his diminutive stature. Tine focuses on the pragmatics of life. He feels he has to do so...as a small creature in the world of giants. He enjoys playing duplicate bridge, as an equalizer, and has a fine partnership with Binker who is large enough to use a bidding box. Tine emigrated from Paris with Binker, but is originally from a US Zone in Germany (as his tag says). His genealogy is rooted in the Vintage (mohair) Branch of the prestigious Steiff Family.</p>



SPECIAL AGENT ASSIGNED TO LAKE GENEVA, Guillaume R. Squirrel: A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in a variety of environments. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.

Charles and Judy headed toward the boat dock at the pergola to get a catamaran ferry to take them to the wooded island and the TeaGarten.



At the Alma Mater TeaGarten: Background

“Judy,” Charles reminisced, “ it was just a bit more than four years ago that I was here to set up a tea garden in association with our Alma Mater chain of restaurants in honor of your mother, a great chef, and of our professional lives in academics...a true double entendre! I know that since then, you have been heavily involved in teaching the Chef Corps of the chain to make the fine platters, both large and small, that you created in celebration of Alma’s love of cocktail food and yours of geometry and symmetry. So, please, take the time to order as many as you would like so that we can gauge how things are going. Ahhh...here comes the group...over here, Theodore!” The group of loyal friends, Theodore, Binker, Tine, and

Guillaume trotted over to the TeaGarten to join Charles and Judy at their table in the secluded spot on the wooded island.

“Theodore,” commented Charles, “the Helvetica was in hiding for a number of years. Let me tell you a bit about its history and fill in the facts with some logical speculation...sort of ‘educated guesses’. It was built in the middle of the twentieth century, as a resort for wealthy men who wanted a private place to come and be catered to in all the pleasures, good and nasty, that the world has to offer. There was a bevy of beautiful young women who lived here and saw to all the needs of these men—‘bunnies’ I think they were called. You will note that one of the lakes here is shaped like a rabbit head, although shoreline erosion has diminished the clarity of the outline over time. You might find that old-time locals here refer to this place as ‘The Hutch’, presumably a reference to earlier illicit activity and some sort of contraction of the name, from ‘Helvetica Chalet’ to ‘HCh’ to ‘HutCh.’ ”

“Even the architecture reflects the tone of the history of this place,” Charles lectured in a professorial manner, “as you might note, the buildings are low-slung and fit into the rolling landscape, much as a bunker might...the buildings are hard to see from the road even when close...an angry and suspicious wife who found the place might still have trouble finding her husband—we remember Huey and his wife Daisy from four years ago, but that’s another story! There’s a central lodge to the chalet, and then there are attached long arms of buildings following the contour of the landscape. The arms are sequences of three story buildings, with the lower levels built into the sides of the hills; not all levels are visible from the parking lots. The buildings are built like fortresses—very solid, which is why cell phones only work on the top floor when inside even though there is service--you can use them outside. The navigation within the buildings is a bit on the crazy maze-like side; no doubt deliberate to offer security to those who did not wish to be found or found out. The style is reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School, and perhaps that is not surprising, as we are not far from Taliesin here. You will no doubt find out more as you look around here...see, look at that little light that marks the way along the path at night...looks like a Wright style of design, doesn’t it? Here’s a map showing the layout of the place.”



There are also other activities here...star-gazing from the deck on some nights, through the refracting telescope; moonlight cruises on others; bird watching from the deck at dusk on other nights. You get the picture...a real class-act.”

“Do you remember, Judy” Charles reminisced, “when we were graduate students in math, hearing about the great observatory associated with our university? Remember, it was in Wisconsin on a lake? Well, guess what...it’s only about 10 miles from here. I thought you would love to know that...just on general principles for sure, but all the more so because we met as graduate students in mathematics at its mother institution, the University of Chicago!”



“Yes, of course I remember!” said Judy, as she thought about all this with great satisfaction, “I’m glad I brought along my university sweatshirt that

our son Ed gave me when we all went to reunion there...it says 'alumna' on it! Wow, a trip to Yerkes Observatory, home of the world's greatest and largest refracting telescope--with a 40 inch lens--is in my future...I always wanted to go there...wonder what we might find there!

"And, Judy," Charles said, "the locals here wanted a star-gazing deck and small refracting telescope installed on the wooded island when we built the Alma Mater TeaGarten. I might have assumed they would want a bird-watching area, but their first thought was for a star gazing platform...bird-watching came only as an afterthought when I brought it up. But I guess I see why. They have been conditioned to think that folks will want to look at, and learn about, the nighttime sky. After all, we are in the cradle of modern astronomy and astrophysics--the observatory was created in 1897!"

"Well," Charles concluded, "it is time for me to get back to the mainland and see if my scheduled bridge partner has arrived yet. I have a backup plan: Dr. Bob is here and he will play with me. If Kent, whom I thought was coming, actually makes it in from Connecticut, then we will play as a five man team. Anyway, ENJOY!"

Enjoying the Alma Mater TeaGarten

A handsome young waiter came to the table, "Good Afternoon, my name is Brian. I hope you will enjoy your visit to the wooded island this afternoon. After tea (a term we use loosely), if you wish, you might enjoy visiting our outdoor deck area with an astronomical station for viewing the nighttime wonders of the universe (if you stay long enough) or sitting quietly and viewing the birds and wildlife, as if in a blind. Now, what might I get for you from the kitchen or bar?" Well," Judy said, "I think we will have your special Martinis, some Mead-tinis, and a small 'Swamp Platter' as grazing food with some veggies to munch on." "A delightful choice," Brian noted, "and if you like, Alma has made some of these recipes available online, you know."



Look at page 4 in the free preview file for one Martini recipe, the 'Silver Bullet'.

“Furthermore,” Brian continued, “I hope you understand that the Swamp Platter will take longer to come out than the veggie platters. All of our items are handmade, small works of art. Alma believed that presentation was critical and we take great pride in remaining true to her philosophy. When you have a platter from us, you receive a unique item. No two of our platters are ever the same. Your drinks and the veggie setup will come quickly; you made wise selections.” And with that, Brian wheeled around and went off to get their order moving. “OK, group,” Judy said, “when do I tell Brian that in fact I designed the platters and trained the Chef Corps for the restaurant chain?” “Never,” said Theodore. “Hmmpphhh,” noted Guillaume, “if you’ve got it, flaunt it! But first see if they do it right!” “I think,” Judy said, “that I will opt for middle ground. But, yes, waiting to see is a good idea; it just strikes me that Brian is an enthusiastic sales person and would probably enjoy knowing of the connections around the table here. Binker was particularly close to Alma; she is the one who found him in Paris and absolutely insisted that he must come to live with us.”

Tine and Binker and Judy reminisced a bit about their respective travels in western Europe and their return to the U.S. via ship. Shortly thereafter, Brian arrived bearing drink and food. “Mead for the gentleman,” Brian said as he served Theodore a handsome ‘Mead-tini’, “and for you sir, and for you, too,” as he served Mead-tinis to the other two bears, Binker and Tine. “I created a special one for you, Monsieur Guillaume, substituting hazelnut

liqueur (I hope Frangelico is a satisfactory 'noisette') for Mead” the enthusiastic waiter noted.

“Now, in regard to the veggie platters, there is a story to go with each. A caprese salad is common-place these days. Please note, that our veggie ‘platters’ are discrete in nature; there is a central decorative plate that leads to adjacent separate plates. For example, our Caprese platter has a fanciful tomato-flower centerpiece in which cherry tomatoes are carved and stuffed with local cheddar staymens and pistils; individual flowers are linked with stems of fresh dill, gracefully arranged to suggest a plant responding to a gentle spring breeze. The decorative center piece is then flanked with individual small plates of traditional Caprese salad made from heirloom tomato slices of various colors with the tomato slices separated by slices of different varieties of local Wisconsin cheese and home-grown basil leaves. We offer the usual olive oil and balsamic dressing as well as a fine curried and dilled mayonnaise, made with a special curry from Madras, home-grown dill, and mayonnaise made in our kitchen from cage-free eggs; the dill in the dressing of course echoes the dill floral stems on the central decorative platter.”

“Where the other veggie platter is concerned, please note once again the graceful dill stems forming the structural framework for another set of flowers. Also again, there is curried and dilled mayo to go with the derivatives suggested by the floral arrangement; I think of this as a combination of differentiation and integration, but that is perhaps another story with interesting mathematical roots. I digress. The flowers are formed on a cucumber calyx, as were the tomato flowers on the other platter. The blooms on this one, however, are formed from slices of giant stuffed green olives topped with slices from miniature heirloom carrots. The stuffing for the olives varies: the usual pimiento, blue cheese, garlic, pickled pearl onion, and anchovy butter. In dishes surrounding the edible floral centerpiece, you will find olives in a variety of shapes and colors from various parts of the world as well as dippables for the curried and dilled mayo: cucumber slices, baby heirloom carrots, small skewers of white anchovy-wrapped pearl onions. Everything is edible; we hope you find

everything beautiful and enjoyable!” With that Brian left the happy group to enjoy their first round of food and drink.



Soon, Judy noted the catamaran coming across the water. “Look at that,” she said, “the boat is VERY low in the water! I wonder why...Oh, it’s that Dr. Singh and those two huge gentlemen who work as models for him. I am not a huge fan of the group. After Brian comes back with our next round of drinks and our food then let’s get out of here.” At that, Brian ushered in Singh's group, complete with suitcase on wheels; they had asked to sit outside. He then returned to bring the next round of drinks and the small Swamp Platter to Judy and crew. “Now, let me tell you a bit about this platter,” Brian said. “Please note how we try to unify your order; there is continuity from the veggie platters to the compact Swamp Platter. The frog in the center of the “Swamp” is carved from a cucumber and has eyes made from stuffed olives. There are frog-leg (cucumber) sandwiches,

snake (black olive) sandwiches, tulip sandwiches (note the continuation of the tomato flower on a dill stem), small skewers of locally crafted sausage and cheese, petite ham sandwiches topped with curried and dilled mayo and a slice of red bell pepper, and all of the swamp is bathed in the sunlight cast from the devilled eggs. Enjoy!”



“Well, Brian,” Judy said, “I want to compliment you on your terrific presentation. You have captured the true spirit that Alma intended! I

know...I am her daughter and am the head trainer for the Chef Corps of this restaurant chain. Before she died, I made each of these for Alma, in some variant, and she loved them all and of course made numerous constructive comments in association with their development.

Congratulations—the Chef here has done a fine job with the food and you do an excellent job with the presentation and story-telling!” Brian, was for once in his life, left speechless...totally non-plussed.

With that, Judy gathered the group to leave; Theodore wanted to stay and have more Mead-tinis, but Judy told him no (as she remembered Charles’s admonition in this regard). Guillaume insisted on staying and learning more about Dr. Singh and his group because he saw that the Dr. had upset Judy. Guillaume prided himself on the special care he liked to take of Judy when Charles wasn’t there. Sometimes, he even rode around on her shoulders; squirrels could do things that bears couldn’t.

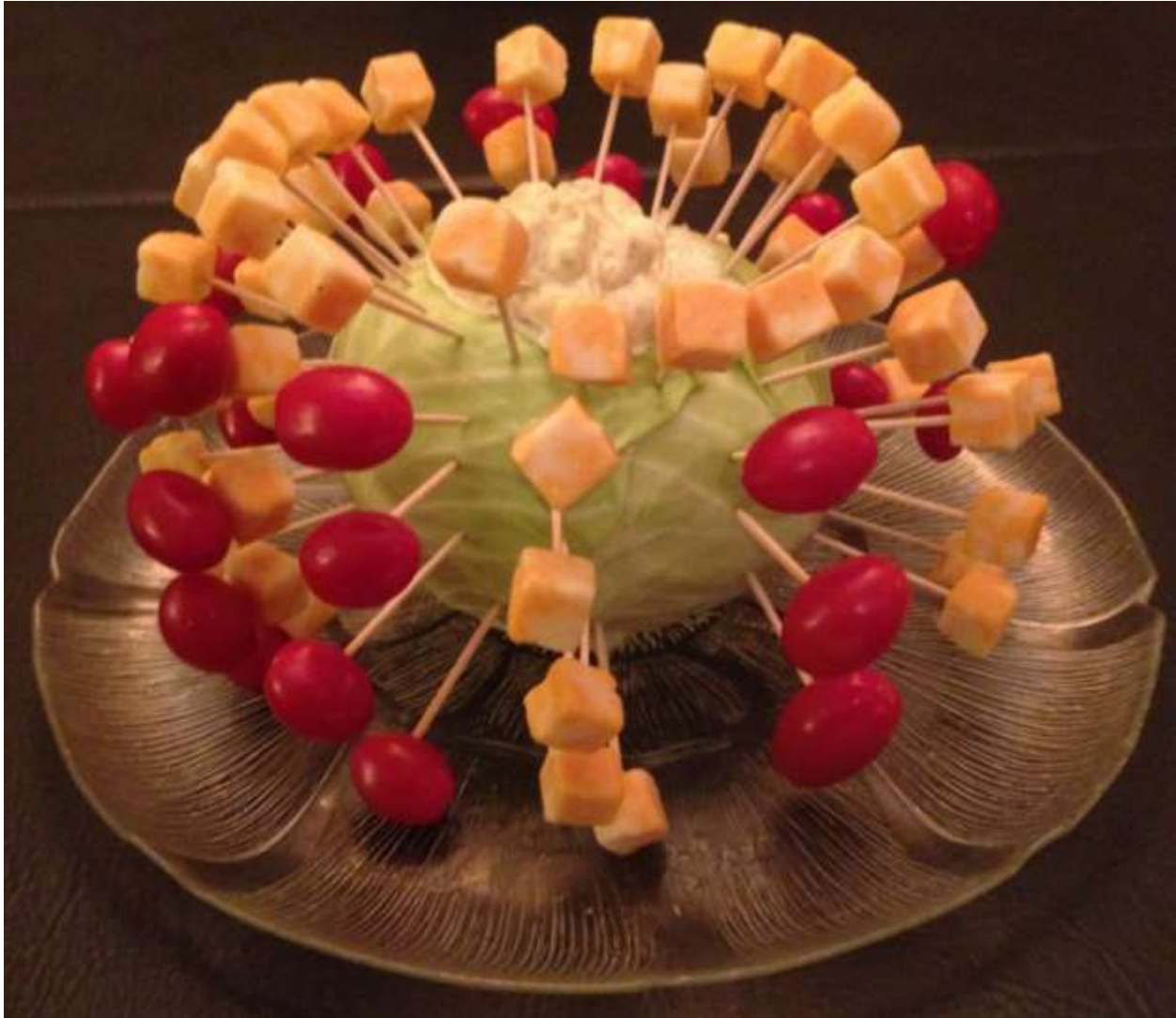
Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright; In the Forest of the Night

Guillaume walked with the group to the catamaran dock and once he saw to it that Judy had safely negotiated entrance to the boat, he headed on back to the TeaGarten. He ducked under the shrubs and headed around to where the outdoor elevated deck was located. There he climbed one of the tall trees and found a good vantage point where he could observe and hear Dr. Singh, Louie, and Dewey. He pulled out his smartphone and texted Judy where he was and told her of his plans to photograph and otherwise record their activities on the deck in the forest behind the TeaGarten.

Soon Brian appeared, “and, would you gentlemen care to have me light the fire pit? It can be a bit chilly out here as the sun goes down?” “Do it,” stated Dr. Singh, “and then bring our drinks; I demand only the best service for myself. Many young men are disappointing; I hope you won’t be one of them.” “I will make every effort to please,” Brian said with a bit less than his usual enthusiasm. With that, he lit the fire pit for the group, brought up individual small tables and then left, apparently to get the group whatever they had ordered before Guillaume took up his perch.

Brian returned; Dr. Singh had ordered the special 'Silver Bullet' martini and Louie and Dewey each had a local Wisconsin craft beer selected for them by their 'Master'. "And, Sir," Brian said, "you ordered our Earth Platter, a personal favorite of mine..." "Who cares what YOU like," Dr. Singh, interrupted, "what matters is what I like and I will decide on that and not be pressured into it by a bunch of marketing hype; and, I am Dr. Singh to you, not just some random and patronizing 'Sir'." "Yes, Dr. Singh," Brian astutely responded, "and may I add that I admire your tan suit; it's a beautiful color for such fine fabric!" Up in the tree Guillaume texted Judy..."this guy Singh is disgusting; I hope I don't throw up listening to all this...it would blow my cover!" "Now, as to the Earth Platter," Brian continued, determined to do his job properly, "it represents one view of the world and Mother Earth's diversity of foods (and consequently of her peoples): dairy, vegetable, and protein, with a curried and dilled mayonnaise at the center of it all; the curry is from India...the cultural center not only of food but of the Earth's civilization!" "Yuck..." Guillaume started to comment "that Brian can sure spin an obsequious yarn". "That's all very nice," said Dr. Singh, "but Indian curry is not of one type; I need to know where this one is from." "It is from Madras," Brian said in a matter of fact tone. "Fine, I will eat it," replied Dr. Singh, "now give me our bill."

Brian handed the bill to Singh. "Here is 500 dollars; I am sure that will cover our bill and your tip," Dr. Singh said slyly, "and in addition we will need privacy out here for the next hour; you see, I am in a business that involves shooting movies and you have been honored by being selected as a site for background shots but we need complete control over what happens in this space. If for some reason you cannot free things up let me know and we will work out something else. Now take the cash, do what you want with it, but go away and don't come back and see to it that no one else bothers us." Brian took the cash and reported this chain of events to the others at the restaurant. They agreed to leave Singh alone while keeping an eye on things out the window; they also agreed to put the extra cash in the tip pool. In the meantime, Guillaume determined that he was absolutely correct in his insistence on tracking this group.



Once Brian was gone, Dr. Singh unpacked the suitcase. There were cameras and lights of various types. There was also a pile of tiger-striped fabric. They spent some time setting up camera equipment on the deck: at the edge of the deck, around the firepit, and also near the small refracting telescope used to look at the stars. After a bit, they all sat down. Singh said to his models, "I want to tell you about a new merger we are trying to form; it's all very hush-hush right now, but it could be really big. A male enhancement company has approached me about forming a merger with our plus-sized male underwear company, but first they want to see how marketing might work. So, we are going to have a film shoot to create such a display. I need the two of you to wear our tiger-striped briefs...here, take these. With that, Dr. Singh pulled a portable folding bamboo screen out of

his suitcase and set it up to block off the light coming from the inside. Louie and Dewey stripped and put on only the tiger briefs. Singh photographed them around the fire pit, in various poses, and then they jumped over the railing and he photographed them in the forest. He also appeared to struggle a bit to get photographs of them through the telescope. It all seemed quite weird to Guillaume; he made a mental note to himself that he needed to reflect on this a bit more. Then, an hour was up, the group packed up and left. Guillaume hopped on the catamaran roof and scampered back to the hotel room.

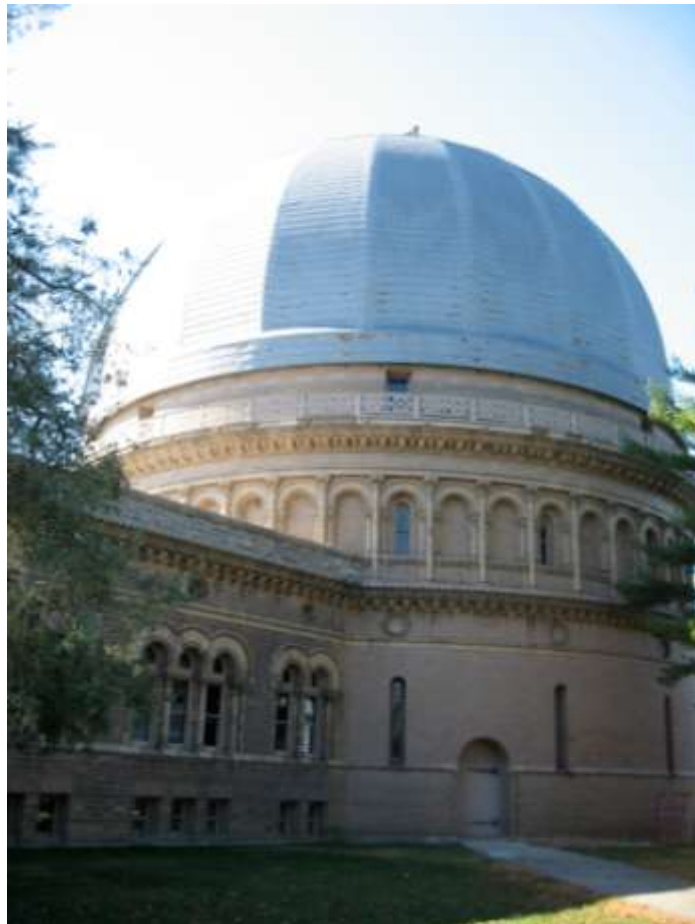
A Visit to Yerkes Observatory

“Judy,” Charles said to his wife, “we do have a five-man team. Kent finally got here. His flight from New York was delayed. So, Herman is sitting out. He wants to go to the Observatory; would you like to go, too? I can go another time but I do know how much you want to go.” “Oh, yes, Charles! Definitely. I remember how much I enjoyed receiving a plate with the Vassar College observatory on it as a gift of appreciation for service to my class” Judy said, as she fondly thought of classmates from many years earlier.



“And I will accompany her,” stated Guillaume. Charles and Judy and Guillaume left the room, leaving the rest of the group to enjoy the beautiful view from the room with a patio overlooking the golf course, lake, and wooded island...”not too many Mead-tinis, Theodore!” Charles admonished.

Charles headed over to the bridge game at the Convention Center while Judy and Guillaume went out to the parking lot to meet Herman. Guillaume buckled up in the back seat of Herman’s SUV and the group headed west to Yerkes in Williams Bay. During the car ride, Judy heard about the intricacies of making the perfect crème brûlée and the need for proper knives, blow torches, and other kitchen equipment. Herman really had a deep level of insight into the kitchen. Judy imagined that he could have continued the discussion for hundreds of miles. However, it was not long until the impressive dome of the Yerkes Observatory came into sight, ending this conversation!



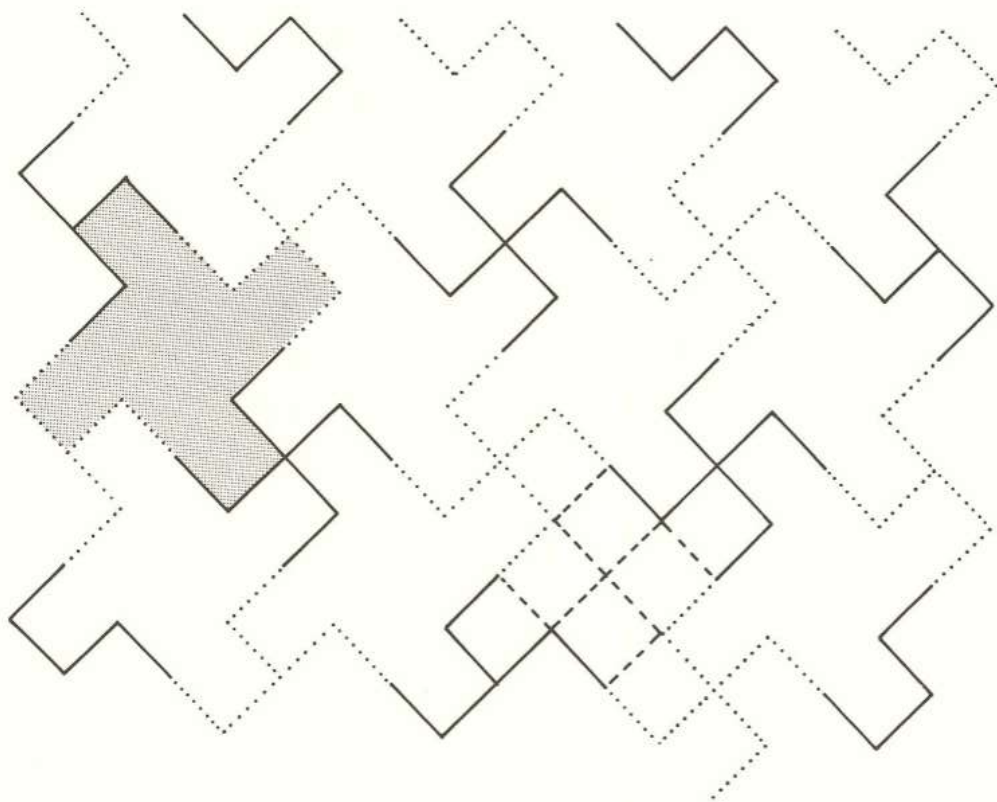
“Herman,” Judy said, “I gather that this observatory is the home to the world’s largest refracting telescope and that it weighs a tremendous amount; it is quite long, hence the need for the huge dome we see. They open a slit in the dome and peer out of it using the telescope; the inside of the dome will probably be about as cold as it is outside...sort of like keeping condensation off the windshield.” Judy paused and said, “so, Herman, make sure you bring your sweater from the back seat.” “Hmmmph,” said Guillaume, “I am not a sweater!! It’s my fur and I’m not giving it up to any one...no scalped squirrel!!” “Very funny, Guillaume,” said Judy, “now hop up on my shoulder and behave yourself.”

Herman parked the car and the group got out. As they did, they were greeted by a bulldog. Guillaume immediately jumped off Judy’s shoulder and jumped at the dog and wagged his tongue at him. The dog backed up and looked ashamed of himself. Guillaume walked up to him, put a paw on the dog, and conversed with him. Soon, they were exchanging smartphone numbers and comparing pictures of families. Guillaume marched back to Judy and Herman “he’s a fine fellow; his name is Hyde. He was enrolled in an astrophysics program at the University of Chicago. The scientists here adopted him as a pet. They also work together on various experiments involving the feasibility of sending animals into outer space. He has a fascinating life here and will be quite friendly to us. Now, let’s go!”



YERKES OBSERVATORY PET, Hyde Bulldog: Hyde is originally from the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, as his University of Chicago sweatshirt suggests. He has studied astrophysics and serves as a fine pet for the scientists at Yerkes. He is in charge of their ‘animals in space’ program.

Once inside, they were struck by the beautiful inlaid patterns in the wall. As Judy was admiring them, another group came in to join the tour: it was Dr. Singh and Louie and Dewey. Guillaume whispered in Judy's ear that he would keep his eye on them and watch out for her. Judy, however, had already determined that she was not going to let Dr. Singh bother her and was keeping a tight focus on the geometry she was observing. She asked the tour guide, himself a scientist, a lot of questions about the length of the telescope, its weight, climatic variation and the nighttime visibility of stars. Finally, another man asked why there was a 'swastika' on the wall. The guide explained that the observatory had been built long before World War II and that what was on the wall were geometric stars of all sorts...that what had come to be known as a 'swastika' was in fact simply a four-armed star. Judy jumped right in and noted that indeed that was correct and that a four-armed star could have either a clockwise or counterclockwise orientation and that the swastika typically associated with the Third Reich had a clockwise orientation whereas the ones on the walls here had a counterclockwise orientation so that calling them a 'swastika' was incorrect. The man who had asked the question glared at Judy; but, she went on, oblivious to the situation she was creating. She commented that one could generate such stars, using the fractal concept of self-similarity, and drew a picture on the program illustrating the process although she noted that such process was better when animated as it was in a recent article she had written with a colleague (and gave them all the url: <http://www.mylovedone.com/image/solstice/sum14/arlgr1.html>). She also noted that the fractal sequence could be used to produce tiles and asked the guide if they had used tiles such as the one she drew to cover the bathroom floors.



At this point, the Guide had had enough. “While this is all very interesting, at least to some of us, I would like to encourage more general questions in advance of moving the group upstairs to the dome. The scientists here are quite willing to talk about issues related to the observatory on a one-on-one basis, too. Please let us know. But, on the tour, we do try to keep things to items of general interest to a large group of people. I do not see other questions, so I’d like to inventory the group to get an idea of total weight; you see, the platform in the dome that surrounds the telescope moves up and down for optimizing the capability of scientists of various heights to view the heavens through the eyepiece. That platform is held up by ropes that hold only so much weight. Also, the weight needs to be distributed across the surface of the platform. Sirs, the two of you may need to stay off the platform,” he tactfully remarked to Louie and Dewey.

“Well, that is no way to talk to my colleagues,” remarked Dr. Singh, “they are an integral part of my business. And while we are at it, I wish to see one of your scientists today to talk about the problems of using a refracting telescope with a camera. You see, I am making an important visual display, involving movies and still shots, and need to use a telescope in the process. If I need to pay cash, I will do so...here, take some...but I must proceed with this. How about NOW?” “Sir,” the worn guide remarked, “please put your cash back in your pocket. We do not respond to bribery; we are an academic institution. But, let me see how I can help you.” “Thank you,” Singh declared, “but my name is NOT ‘Sir’; you may call me Dr. Singh. I believe I may be a relative of Dr. Chandrasekhar; maybe that will be of greater interest to you than cash?” “Yes, Dr. Singh,” the harried guide said, “but I would advise you to drop action and comment that might suggest bribery, name-dropping, and other unsavory approaches IF I am able to set you up with our expert in the use of cameras with refracting telescopes.” “Thank you,” Singh noted. Judy and Guillaume winked at each other; they had never heard the Dr. be so polite; he must really have wanted that interview!

The group headed up the flight of stone stairs to the dome; an intern escorted them. Soon the main guide returned. He told Dr. Singh that he and Louie and Dewey could see the expert immediately and that they would need to do exactly as they were told when visiting parts of the observatory not generally open to the public. Judy thought that the Guide had handled this very well...he was going to get Singh to be quiet by getting Singh what he wanted, and also remove the hazard of having these two large men walk out on the platform...Judy always admired a real win-win situation. Singh and the models vanished from sight as the Guide took them away.

As the group headed up the stairs, Herman slipped and banged his leg. It appeared to bleed a bit and so Judy encouraged him to go to the men’s room and get it fixed up although she had wanted to have him present; Herman listened carefully and often asked subsequent penetrating questions. Judy and Guillaume continued on up the stairs to the interior of the dome. The group walked out on the platform and got to see the giant

refracting telescope up close. It was quite an impressive sight. Guillaume jumped off Judy's shoulder and ran up to the top of the giant telescope and looked over the edge at the amazing 40 inch lens.



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerkes_Observatory

“Get that squirrel out of here!” shouted the intern. Guillaume was immediately escorted to the lawn of the building; Judy said, to no avail, that Guillaume was in fact her ‘service squirrel’ but the intern was not impressed. Guillaume agreed to remain outside. He phoned Hyde and the two of them sat on the large lawn, surrounded on three sides by abutments and on the fourth by the lake, and exchanged stories about their remarkable lives.

After about an hour, Judy returned to the SUV. Herman was already there—he had found the cook at the observatory and gotten some ice for his leg. Guillaume was sitting in the back seat, telling Herman all about his adventures running up the telescope and getting evicted from the observatory. Soon the group was heading back to Lake Geneva. Herman contacted Jake and Judy called Charles and they all agreed to meet at their

favorite downtown restaurant for rotisserie chicken while looking at Geneva Lake.

Chicken Dinner, and More

“Let’s get the big round table; we can see the lake from there,” Judy said, “we have a party of seven: Charles, Jake, Kent, Dr. Bob, Herman, Me, and Guillaume.” The group was seated and started with pitchers of local beer, loaded nachos, and other salty snacks including popcorn. Soon, the four who played bridge were talking about the hands from the afternoon and sharing them with Herman. Judy and Guillaume were talking about Guillaume’s adventures with Hyde. All were having a good time.

Judy asked Charles what the results were and Charles said that that was an interesting question given that on one hand a director had made an error that caused no end of difficulty. He explained it to the group.

	North	
	♠ K Q 10 7	
	♥ K 10 7 4	
	♦ A Q 7	
	♣ K 5	
West--Charles		East--Kent
♠ J 9 8 6 4		♠ A 3
♥ A J 2		♥ 9 8 6 3
♦ J		♦ 10 8 5
♣ A Q 9 3		♣ J 10 6 2
	South	
	♠ 5 2	
	♥ Q 5	
	♦ K 9 6 4 3 2	
	♣ 8 7 4	

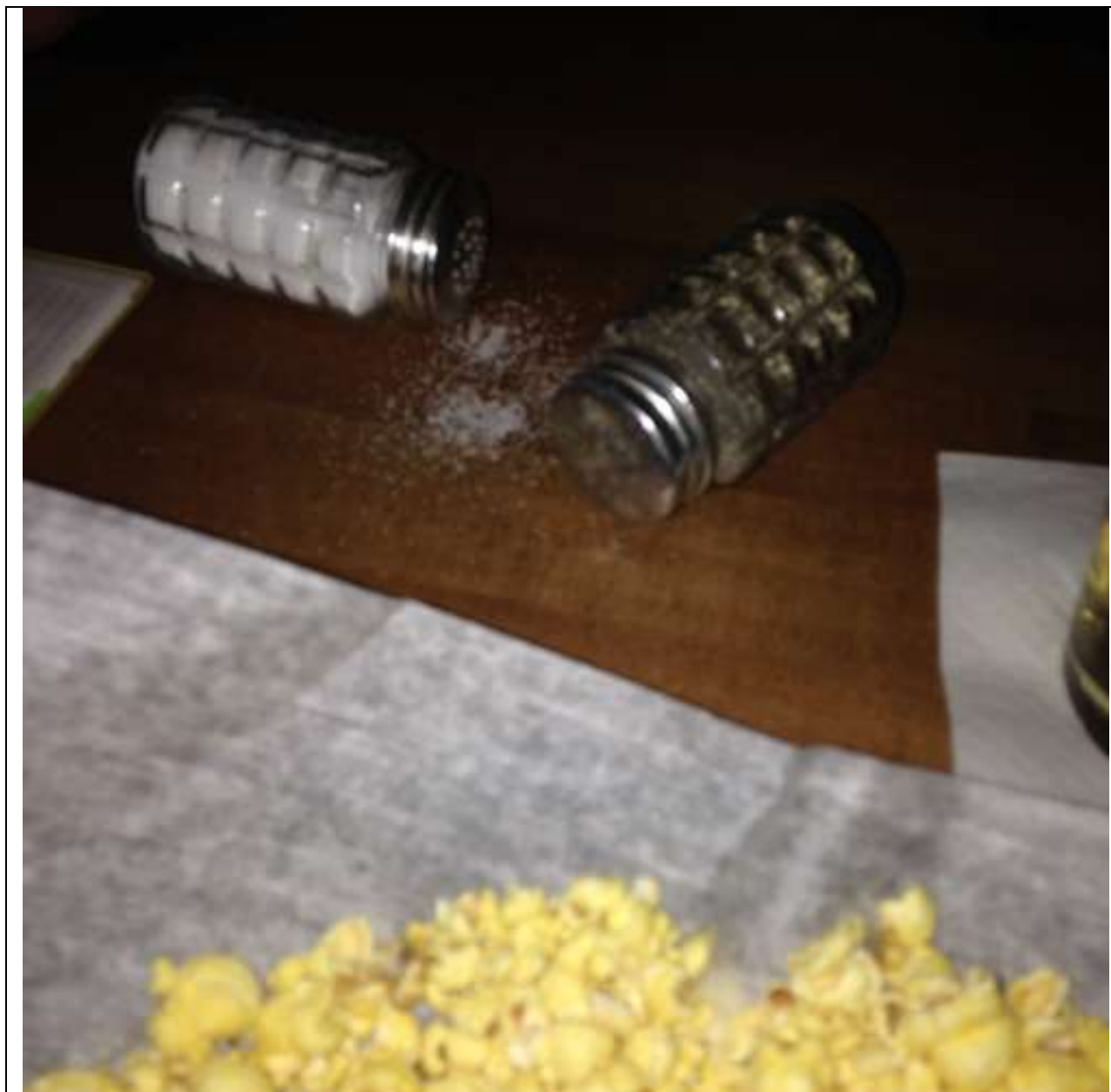
<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1NT	P	2S	P
3NT	P	P	P

“When South bid 2S, North said ‘Transfer.’ Before I passed the last time, I said ‘what did 2S mean?’ North said ‘it’s a transfer to clubs’. Kent, thinking that South had clubs, never considered a club lead. In fact, South did not have clubs. And the explanation of ‘transfer’ was incorrect; 2S was a ‘relay’ to 3C which could then be corrected to diamonds. So North had misled us. A club lead would have beaten 3NT, but given the misdirection, North/South made 3NT. After the hand, I asked North some more questions and discovered the truth. I then called the Director. After consulting with another Director, the first one let the result stand. When I asked (no one returned to tell me) if the ruling had been changed, she said ‘no, and you’d better be careful’. Now, I don’t intimidate as I’m sure you know, and so said to her ‘OK...I’ve had wrong rulings before’ and then subsequently appealed to the Head Director, Eric, who changed the result to 3NT down one. The actual process took way too long to sort out; it should have taken about 4 minutes if the first Director had performed her job correctly instead of digging in her heels over her initial wrong ruling. The difference was of course significant to the entire team.”

Herman became enraged, “That’s the worst ruling I’ve ever heard! She should drop dead! Some people just don’t deserve to live! If I had an extermination button, I could take care of that for you!” “Well, Herman,” the even-tempered Jake noted, “I certainly agree that it’s an ill-considered ruling, but there are many worse things in the world; so, I can’t say that I agree with the rest of your characterization of the situation.” “No, Jake, you are wrong,” Herman insisted, “see these salt and pepper shakers? They are upright, functional, ready to go, and not causing any trouble. That’s the way the world should be.”







Suppose I balance the shakers, without leaning them against anything. Now the world is in a precarious state; a slight shake of the table one way and the world is right again; a slight shake the other (and Herman slammed on the table with his fist) and all is awry...salt and pepper, guts and gore everywhere!! The world has gone from upright and stable to marginally balanced to fallen!" By then, Herman's voice had risen to a feverish pitch; waitstaff came running wanting to know if all were ok...mothers shielded their children's ears.

Judy noted that Herman had, himself, fallen at the observatory; Charles asked for the check and the group left hastily and forgot about ordering the chicken dinners; they were restoring 'balance' within the group.

A Phone Call from Hyde

As Judy and Guillaume and Charles got into their car, Guillaume's smartphone began to ring. "Hi, Hyde, what's up," Guillaume asked of his new friend, "sure, sure, we will be right there." Guillaume hung up, put his phone away, and told Charles that the group had to head out to the observatory immediately; that there had been some sort of accident possibly involving a bridge player. "I had," Guillaume continued, "been bragging to Hyde about the two of you—so he knows that you are both professors and scientists, that you are here with the bridge group, and that you have experience involving difficult situations. That's why he phoned me—to get to you." "I see," said Charles. "Furthermore," Guillaume said, "it may be the case that the accident involves Dr. Singh who was at the observatory today with us. Apparently the platform floor of the observatory has fallen and there may be some people trapped. Hopefully no one is squashed."

Soon the group was back at the observatory. Hyde greeted them and introduced them to some of the scientists there. Louie and Dewey were there but had refused to talk to the scientists because they did not have permission from their 'Master' to do so. Charles persuaded them that they did have permission to talk to bridge players and showed them his ABC Life Master Card to illustrate that he was a bridge player. They explained that Dr. Singh had been in a private meeting with a scientist who was an expert in using cameras in association with refracting telescopes. That fellow's office was on the level of the observatory below the movable dome floor...off to the side. But, when the floor fell, that office became inaccessible. No one had seen either the camera expert or Dr. Singh since the floor fell. There was no window to the office. The group was awaiting a 'jaws of life' machine from the State Police in order to lift the floor and see what was going on there.

While they were all discussing the events of the day, the Police arrived and went to work. It was not long until they discovered a body: Dr. Singh. He had been totally flattened by the floor. Death must have been instantaneous. There was still no sign of the scientist. After another hour of work, they managed to get back to his office door and get it open; he was inside, scared and shaken, but OK. Dr. Singh had been leaving the office when the floor fell; very unfortunate timing, indeed.

Activity reports--Back at the Helvetica.



Report of Guillaume.

Well, I guess I'd like to start by saying that it's been a remarkable few days around here. And, while Dr. Singh was surely not well-liked in the bridge world, and perhaps elsewhere, I am truly sorry, as I'm sure we all are, to learn of the tragic accident at the observatory. But, I do think that Charles is right; that to gain greater understanding of the entire situation that it is useful to pool our observations over the recent past.

I first came into contact with Dr. Singh after I went with Judy and the rest of my group to the Alma Mater TeaGarten. We had a wonderful time; a few drinks, fine platters, and all around convivial times. Judy seemed to relax following her earlier run-in with Singh and I was relieved to see that. Then Dr. Singh and crew arrived at the TeaGarten, so Judy and the others left soon after that and I stayed to see what he was up to.

Here's a summary of what I saw and heard. They asked to be seated on the deck, where there's a small refracting telescope for looking at birds and stars. After Judy and the others left, I sneaked around behind the deck and

positioned myself in a tree where I could see and hear all without being noticed...after all, what's unusual about a squirrel sitting in a tree in the forest!

Brian came out and was extremely nice to them, as he is to everyone. He lit the fire pit for them, brought them drinks and beautiful food. Singh paid for it immediately; gave Brian 500 dollars in cash to leave them alone on the deck for an hour, saying he needed privacy to make a movie. Then, Singh began unpacking the large suitcase he had....it was filled with cameras, photographic equipment of all sorts, portable bamboo screens, and tiger-striped fabric. He sat the models down and told them that he was negotiating a big merger between his men's plus-sized underwear division and a male enhancement company. He then had the models strip and put on tiger-striped briefs that left very little to the imagination. He photographed them in various poses around the fire pit and then sent them off into the woods where he made some feeble attempts to photograph them through the telescope. All this was done to make a promotional video in support of the proposed merger. After just less than one hour, he folded up his tent and left, as he had said he would. It was all quite odd, but he did what he said he was going to do and he did it on time. When I left the woods, I felt a need to reflect a bit more on what I had seen; I felt as if these were pieces of a puzzle which made sense but that I was missing the frame into which they all fit together with each other. Later it came to me as I drew from my background in linguistics: Sanskrit—the mother language of India. The Sanskrit word for 'Tiger' is 'Vyagara'—now I saw why Singh was so wrapped up in this possible merger and why he thought HIS underwear company could land it. He had what was probably a unique take on things given his own cultural background.

So, the next day, Judy and Herman and I went to Yerkes Observatory. Fascinating place. As you know, Dr. Singh and his crew came to the tour that we were on. As usual, he made a pest of himself and obviously came to try to learn from experts how to make good videos using a camera with a telescope. I know from watching him on the deck at Alma Mater that he obviously wanted clear telescopic photos of what his guys were doing in the woods in their Tiger briefs at night, but he was having trouble getting

the kinds of photographs he wanted. So, he pushed until he got in to see the expert at Yerkes, probably the world's leading expert at this using a refractive telescope. As I noted before, Singh was extraordinarily motivated to close this deal.

Much of the rest of the time I was there, after I was evicted from the dome, I spent talking to my new friend, Hyde, a bulldog. He is a fine fellow and I hope that some time you might all have a chance to meet and get to know him. I told him about all of you, in glowing terms. He told me about life around the observatory. It's all quite remarkable. The observatory is adjacent to Geneva Lake...it has a considerable interface with it. He told me that they receive their summer postal mail by boat, by something called "Jump Mail"! Apparently postal mail boats circle the lake without stopping. They hire athletic teenagers to jump off the boat to deliver mail and then jump back on as it continues past the dock. If a kid misses the boat and winds up in the lake, he/she just gets out and continue the route, still wet. Amazing! Here's a [link](#) to a video you might enjoy:

I'm not sure how it all hangs together, but these are the interesting activities I've been involved in recently.



Report of Theodore on behalf of himself, Binker, and Tine.

You might think that you all know where I have been and what I have been doing during the entire time. And, for the most part, that is true. However, after Charles and Judy and Guillaume left the room for Charles to play bridge and Judy and Guillaume to go to the observatory, I must confess that I took Binker and Tine as my guests over to the bar in the resort. Our room was a bit cold and they had a nice fireplace and drinks to warm the

heart and the mind in the bar. Don't worry, Charles; if need be, I will pay our bar tab. The Wisconsin honeybee population makes a very nice Mead, I must say, though.

Anyway, as we were enjoying several glasses each, a man came over to our table and engaged us in conversation. I noticed that he had a British accent and so I asked him where he was from. He appeared to think that I, as an American, was some sort of simpleton. I told him that folks at this table, despite their American accents were also originally from Western Europe. He warmed a bit to that and asked where. When Binker said Paris, the man began talking French. He said he had been a sailor stationed in the Mediterranean and also at Limoges. He commented that there was nothing in that town. Tine mentioned the fine China, plates, small cups (of particular interest to Tine) from Limoges. All this was told to him in impeccable Parisian French. He seemed to have trouble understanding; I put it down to regional variation in accent. Subsequently he told us that he needed to get back to work; he had a Gucci Carrier bag with a beautiful leather strap and papers, scrawled upon, strewn across his table at various angles. He said he was working on translations involving classical languages, particularly with these documents in Latin. We noted that we all had taken Latin; he commented that it was important to know Latin in order to understand works of Cicero and Pythagoras....hmmm...I thought to myself, I'm not a linguist but I am a philosopher and Pythagoras was Greek. Was he testing me? Hard to say, so I just sat there. Then the conversation turned to other things classical, including music. He said he liked the Russian composers, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and Dostoyevsky (I looked askance at him on the latter). What sort of fool did he take me for? It all seemed quite odd. Finally, he commented that he was waiting for someone from India, to help him with Sanskrit, a classical Indian language, in association with some business merger. Clearly, he thought the Indian fellow also a fool of some sort, as he noted that the man had paid him upfront, in a good amount, for the service. The 'linguist' noted that the client was late; he took that opportunity to pat himself on the back by saying that even though he had the huge prepaid sum, he was nonetheless waiting for the late client even though he didn't have to do so. He could

have taken the money and run. It all sounded quite peculiar...we left before his appointment showed up. By then, he was on his third Vodka martini that we knew about; I don't know what happened after that but I think we all concluded that he was some sort of phony.

Charles's Report

First of all, thanks so much for your outstanding activity reports. As I think you know, most of my time here has been spent at the bridge table. The first time I got to see many people was when a group went for chicken dinner at the Rotisserie Restaurant. I suspect Guillaume has relayed that adventure to you, so just let me hit the highlights and say that it was quite clear to me that the trip to the observatory had been a somewhat stressful one. Herman went over the top in the restaurant with his 'salt and pepper' theory of life and the universe. I see you are nodding your heads so I gather that Theodore, Binker, and Tine have already been filled in on this.

Going on from there, I think you all know that Guillaume got a phone call from his new friend Hyde, at the observatory. We all went out there, found that the platform in the dome had fallen and that this unfortunate accident had crushed Dr. Singh causing his immediate death.

What you do not know, any of you, is the following. I spent more time at the observatory after you left. The scientists showed me around the building. It is an interesting question as to WHY the platform fell. At first, some thought that Louie and Dewey caused it in some way due to their immense size. But, no. I talked to the Guide from that tour and he told me all that transpired (Judy, I gather you gave him quite a time in advance of Dr. Singh!). Anyway, the Guide said that he took Herman to the washroom on the ground level of the building to clean up his leg; then he took Dewey and Louie to a waiting room that was not under the platform, but was on the ground level of the building. Finally, he escorted Dr. Singh under the platform to an office at the far end of the building on the ground floor. While that was all interesting, it shed no light on why the platform fell. I asked what had secured the platform to keep it from falling. He said there were thick ropes that no shears could cut through. I asked to see the

ropes. We picked our way through the rubble to find the ropes. Lo and behold, the ropes were frayed and were singed a dark color as if they had been burned—not from years of friction, but from high, intense, concentrated heat. That was not an accident. Now we knew we were dealing, instead, with murder.

What Immortal Hand or Eye Dare Frame Thy Fearful Symmetry—Charles's Theory

Here is a chain of logic that would sew the events together in a plausible manner. Of course, I do not know if it is actually correct, but if you all think it plausible as well, then I will turn it over to the police for their consideration and action.

As I think I have noted on previous occasions, rational people do not engage in actions of extreme risk, such as murder, unless they feel that that risk is justified...that the benefit the murder will bring outweighs the risk of being caught and losing their life. In essence, they need to feel as if their life is over if the person remains alive.

So, let's look at all the accumulated wisdom in that context and see how we can fit it all together and consider what inferences we might make and what conclusions we might draw.

Dr. Singh was a pitiful person. I would have thought he was his own worst enemy; evidently that was not the case. No one I knew liked him; a few people tolerated him; most walked away from him; and, a few shot nasty insults in his direction. But murder? Why would anyone want to murder him?

We looked at his business and his business associates. Clearly unsavory types were attracting each other. But, it appears they were doing nothing illegal. Stupid, perhaps. Ego-driven by incredibly self-centered men (Huey, and Dr. Singh)...for sure. Pest? Yes. Some folks wanted to scream when they saw him coming; others wanted to hide. But, reasonable people handle their feelings toward boors in various ways; not typically with murder. It's not worth it.

With these thoughts in mind, I returned to the observatory; the scientists out there were so helpful. They were as eager to get to the bottom of this as we were. Again, I went over what happened. This time, I talked also to the cook in the kitchen. It had been closed when we were last out there. She said that she had seen Guillaume and that he was upset at being evicted; she reassured him that he was adorable and then he looked happier and went on his way to find Hyde. She said she had also seen Dewey and Louie and given them some cookies she had made; she noted that 'those boys could eat.' She met Dr. Singh briefly, offered him cookies, and I gather that he told her that he would need to inspect the premises to make sure they exceeded code before he would even consider touching any food. She met Herman and gave him ice for his leg and wrapped it. Of course, he was appreciative and kept talking about kitchen equipment to her, as we probably would all guess that he might. Then, she was called out by a scientist to bring some coffee and food to a lab for his meeting with his assistants. When she returned about 20 minutes later there was no one in the kitchen and she saw no one else while the tour was going on.

That leaves 20 minutes unaccounted for with four people on the loose in the observatory. I think we can assume that Dr. Singh did not tamper with the ropes. He was totally absorbed in his own agenda of promoting his precious merger and was consumed with cameras and telescopes. That leaves Louie, Dewey, and Herman. One might imagine that Louie and Dewey were sick of the abuse heaped on them by Dr. Singh. But, would their lives be worthless if he remained alive? Hardly. In fact the contrary was the case. He was their meal ticket. All they had to do was follow the silly charades that fed his equally silly ego and he would take good care of them...other forms of bigotry have worked in that way. That leaves Herman. I have no doubt that he and many others hated Singh. But, they cared too much for themselves, their families, and their own lives to throw their lives away on someone they regarded as an idiotic fool. Still these three had the opportunity. Perhaps they had the means. But I could see no motive.

I thought about Theodore and his reflective nature. So I sat down and just started to let my mind drift. I thought about the Jump Mail Guillaume told

us about. Might it have been that someone took the place of one of the regular jumpers and found an interesting way into the observatory...possible as a means, but again what would be a motive? In addition, having the opportunity at desired times might be difficult. So, we keep 'jump mail' in mind but only as a prospect fulfilling 'means'--motive and opportunity would still need to be filled in.

From there, my mind went to the odd phony linguist that Theodore, Binker, and Tine had encountered in the resort bar. He apparently had some sort of loose connection with Dr. Singh. He might have had motive if Singh had figured out that he was running a scam of some sort selling translation services without stated qualifications. Of course, I don't know how much Singh paid the guy and whether there might have been blackmail of some sort there--but, he was such an obvious phony that it must have been difficult for him to pass himself off as what he was claiming to be. We have only the linguist's word that Singh was late. I did talk to the bartender, and it turns out that the linguist had been in the bar most of the afternoon, drinking his lunch; I gather that he is a regular and also a pest. In any event, the 'linguist' might have had a motive, but he was probably unlikely to have had means or opportunity at Yerkes--lies and translations were the tools of his trade. And, in terms of motive, unless blackmail of some sort concerning credentials was involved, it might have been more as if he were going to run some sort of scam on the egomaniac. Killing the goose that he wanted to lay the golden egg was probably not part of the equation, but again, a possibility of some sort.

Finally, my mind drifted back to our Chicken Dinner at the lakeside restaurant. Herman had asserted that some people 'deserved to die'. Then he wove this odd 'salt and pepper shaker' theory of the universe to defend it. Judy and I put that off to an odd reaction from our friend who had just taken a nasty fall on stone steps. It was also odd that he had fallen; the steps are old and uneven, to be sure; Herman, however, had always appeared well-coordinated. Of course, accidents happen, or did he deliberately create a diversion in order to separate himself from the group so he could go after Singh?

In Herman's mind, perhaps Singh did not deserve to live--part of his theory of the universe; was Singh a pest of no merit who deserved to be exterminated? Would Herman's world order be improved with him out of the way--the salt and pepper shakers back upright on the table? Would restoration of order be 'worth' it?

Perhaps...but what about means? Judy said that Herman talked about his kitchen equipment, including his crème brûlée torch on the way out in the car. Perhaps he always carried it with him, not wishing to leave it where others might use it? I know that Judy does not allow anyone else ever to use her favorite knives. Perhaps Herman felt that way about his blow torch. When cook was away for 20 minutes, that would have given him time to partially rupture the rope support structure of the platform so that it would fall when he was no longer in the area. But, how then would he know that he would kill Singh and not others?

So again, we are left with a scenario that has interesting elements in it; the means are there if we concede that Herman might routinely carry a blow torch in some sort of sensitive Chef attitude. The motive is there only if restoration of Herman's view of world order is more important to him than his own life--and, from what we have seen, that is some sort of oddly altruistic world-view to be considered. The opportunity is the shakiest issue in this construction, however. It was just luck that Herman had time to go on the tour at all; he did not arrange the delay of Kent's plane in New York that forced us to have a five man team. Once we did have it, then Herman could arrange to be 'off' and he did so at the time of the observatory tour, perhaps so he could be nice to his friend, Judy. But, how did he know that Singh would be on the tour? And, how did he know that Singh would separate himself from the group? The answer is that he could not have known. So, was Herman just laying in wait, doing what he wanted to do, assuming that when an opportunity came along that he would be ready to seize it, in order to rid the universe of this person whom he had determined no longer deserved to live? Still I was left with the question of why he went ahead in this manner in which he might have killed any number of others and not Singh, himself.

Then it came to me...Herman didn't care. In terms of his world view, only those would get hit and crushed who deserved it; whether he 'got' Singh or not, he would get someone who deserved it. He was doing the world a service and what better place to offer salvation to the world than in an observatory that studies the patterns of the heavens. What I had missed was that the symmetry in risk/benefit analysis was predicated on things happening in a usual rational universe. There was a certain sort of logic to Herman's world view although many might not have considered it as such.

Of course, I have no tangible evidence to support this sequence. I went to Herman and discussed all this with him. His plausible response, of course, was that his salt and pepper analogue was just so much of a bull session around a bar table. Plausible in a certain way, and perhaps reasonable in concept: some people didn't deserve to live. But not something that he would implement and not something he would expect anyone else to implement. He noted that there are many true concepts in the world, and that there are many who are flexible enough in thought to be able to implement them in a variety of ways. Naturally, he claimed to be smart enough to be such a person although he maintained steadfastly that he had not implemented this plan.

I asked him if he routinely carried a blow torch with him. He dismissed that, too, as complete nonsense. He did say that he was pleased that Singh was no longer around to topple the world of low-level bridge administration with his compulsive, over-bearing, ego-maniacal micromanaging approach to life; Herman expressed pleasure in knowing that some part of that world had been returned to stability.

Personally, I came away from the conversation believing that my theory involving Herman was correct; but, I also came away thinking that no one would ever be able to prove the theory in a court of law. On the way out, I grabbed Herman's sweater that Judy described he had worn to the observatory; perhaps if I gave that to the police, along with my story, they would be able to tell through some sort of laboratory analysis of the fabric, if he had been carrying a blow torch. On the other hand, we might be left only with the admonition of our dearly departed friend, Bob, successful

prosecutor of so many murderers, that 'we only catch the dumb ones.' As with so many things, time will tell...did Herman's 'immortal' hand restore symmetry and stability to one of his world's?

* All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.