NAMING MORE ANIMALS

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> *Editor's Note: The following logological fable is one of a series written by Rufus T. Strohm, editor of the National Puzzlers' League. It appeared in the January 1936 Enigma.*

lt was Saturday in Eden, and therefore bath night for Adam. With great reluctance, but under the persuasive language of his wife, he meandered down to the pool that served as the forerunner of the modern bath tub. He dipped an exploratory toe in the clear water – and shivered. The pool was spring fed, and Adam simply couldn't get used to the shock of cold water along his spine. And as luck would have it, he had let the fire go out, and there were no hot boulders to throw into the pool to heat the bath. Hence his reluctance to begin ablutions.

Eve's voice floated down thru the leafy garden.

"And don't forget to wash your neck and ears," was what she said.

Adam shrugged his bare shoulders and sighed resignedly. Why bother with his neck and ears? He couldn't see them. And Eve wasn't compelled to look at them, was she?

Slowly he untied his palm-leaf apron and hung it on a twig, thus reducing himself to a state of puris naturalibus. Then he poised his naked figure on the margin of the pool, hands on knees and knees bent, while he considered the glassy surface of the water.

As he thus procrastinated, the bushes behind him parted and a shaggy-haired quadruped emerged. lt had horns that curved backward and a ridiculous beard under its chin and an unpleasant red rim around each eye. It fixed a steady and purposeful gaze on the unsuspecting Adam, who, viewed from that unfavorable angle, appeared like nothing to be much afraid of.

At that moment a mosquito alighted on the portion of Adam's anatomy that projected in convex rotundity rearward. Without turning about, he slapped viciously at the annoying insect. The aforesaid quadruped, mistaking this gesture as a signal of belligerency, lowered its ridiculous beard to the greensward and catapulted forward. lts head encountered Adam at the precise locality so recently vacated by the agile mosquito.

Adam, disturbed thus rudely from his contemplative study of the pool, executed a beautiful spread-eagle, landed on his stomach

with a tremendous splash, sank out of sight, and presently bobbed up again, gasping and wiping the water from his eyes.

Eve had arrived just in time to see the dramatic conclusion, and now she stood on the bank, laughing merrily.

Adam, up to his neck in the chilly pool, gave her a dirty look.

"What's the grand idea? - knocking me over like that?" Adam flung at her.

Eve only giggled the more. It was a tantalizing sound.

"What did you hit me for?" he yelled. "I fully intended to dive in of my own accord. I was j-j-just going to j-j-j-"

He broke off in incoherence, because his chin suddenly developed a yen to vibrate up and down, and he couldn't prevent it.

He dragged himself out on the bank, seized Eve by one brown wrist and twisted her around in front of him. There was a cruel look in his eyes.

"I want to know," he said thru clenched teeth, "what you hit me with."

Being a married woman, Eve knew how to interpret storm signals when she saw them. She wiped the grin off her face.

"I didn't hit you," she said.

"That," Adam observed, "is a flagrant, unmitigated, and unwarranted perversion of the exactitudes. Some day I'll study up a shorter and uglier name for it - but for the present, that will have to do."

"But I never touched you," Eve protested.

"Huh!" snorted Adam. "Never touched me! I suppose you just blew at me, and I fell in."

Eve's eyes snapped mischievously. "The blow was not mine," she told him sweetly.

"Don't be - don't be -" He paused. "That's the drawback of having to invent the first language," he observed. "You've got to be circumspect and choose terms that will sound well when repeated later. I have it now. Don't be facetious."

"Facetious?" Her eyebrows were question marks.

"I mean," said Adam, "quit your wise-cracking and show me what it was you hit me with."

"But I didn't hit you," she iterated.

"Something did," he asseverated. He reached behind him and rubbed his palm gently over the bruised area.

"Sure," Eve agreed. "I saw it. It ran back among the trees."

"It? What?"

"An animal – on four legs," elucidated Eve. "A black and white animal with a most unpleasant aroma."

"What?" cried Adam. "Do you mean to stand there and tell me that a skunk butted me into the pool?"

"No, not the skunk," Eve corrected. "We haven't named this animal yet. It has horns. I saw it go at you."

"Why didn't you stop it, then?" asked Adam in an aggrieved voice.

Eve shrugged. "Can you stop a word after it is spoken? No more could I stop that animal after it started to go at you. It was there before I could even shout."

Adam released Eve's wrist, and transferred his hand to his chin. It was his favorite posture for thinking.

"Wait," he said. "You've given me an idea. This animal – you said it twice – is of a 'go-at' disposition. Since it must be named sometime, eventually, why not now? Why not call it a 'go-at'? It's brief, and expressive."

And so this particular thing came to be known as a go-at, which, under the inevitable changes of time and the modifications of speech, became resolved into a single syllable.

But because the goat had upset his equilibrium – and what is of greater consequence, his dignity – Adam just couldn't help feeling a degree of animostiy toward the cause of his downfall. And so it happened, after the distressing incident involving the serpent and the apple, when Adam and Eve were evicted from the ancestral homestead, and Jehovah impressed upon Adam the necessity of making some sort of atoning sacrifice, that Adam slapped his thigh in glee.

"Sacrifice? Burnt offering? Sure! I'll use that go-at."

QUERY

A. M. Lewis of Faulconbridge, in New South Wales, Australia, asks whether his home town is the longest placename containing all five vowels and no repeated letters. South Cambridge, in New York, exceeds it by one letter, but it is a two-word phrase. In the February 1969 **Word Ways,** *Leigh Mercer observed that* **Buslingthorpe, Buckfastleigh** *and* **Rumboltswhyke** *are the only 13-letter English place-names with no repeated letters, but none of these contains all five vowels.*