

# THE CASE OF THE ENIGMATIC REBUS

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"Good afternoon. I am Police Lieutenant Jamison. I understand you three discovered the dead body of Ambrose Reckel this morning. Please tell me who you are and your relation to the deceased."

"My name is Paul Diamond. We are attending the annual convention of the Mutual Puzzlers Association now held in your city."

"My name is Mary Legler. Paul, Rick\* and I have been members of MPA for some time and each year we attend the convention. This was the first time Reckel had attended, and we three were assigned to keep him from feeling like an outsider."

"My name is Rick Gargoyle. We went to pick up Reckel this morning about 8:30. I knocked on his door. When there was no response, Paul wanted to leave. But I remembered I had knocked on Reckel's door the previous evening and also had received no response. Reckel also had not attended the convention last evening. Since all of us are in our 60s, I prevailed. I contacted the hotel manager, stating our concern for Reckel's health. After the manager opened the door with his pass-key, we found Reckel bent over the table. His face had dropped into his partially eaten steak and the steak knife had been thrust into his back. The manager contacted the police and we were told to wait."

"I need your expertise. When I opened Reckel's typewriter case I found this verse inserted in the platen. Here are copies for your review."

## ENIGMATIC REBUS

Passion for revenge time cannot repress  
Awaits me. Must I ever ancient trick  
Rue? Must each patterned hour be a + tick?  
Alas, near might, anagram nightmare copes;  
Distraught, aching for succor a fancy hopes.  
Insane delusion dooms, there is no cure.  
God, grant me strength to forgive. I am sure  
My pained nemesis still is under stress.

## RAMESES

"First thing. Why did he indicate authorship as 'Rameses' instead of 'Reckel'?"

"Each member of the MPA has a pseudonym. Mine is 'Paradigm'. Rick's is 'Right Amen' and Mary's is 'Corafan'."

"What is a rebus?"

"A puzzle representing a word, phrase or sentence by letters, numerals, or whatever, whose content has the same sounds as that represented. Rick and Mary, cite some examples."

"Normally the rebus precedes the verse. For example, a 'B' with a reference to a sea shell could be 'abalone', a B alone."

"Or two periods with the clue 'victor served ace' could be 'Point, match'."

"Then it is possible that is not a plus sign in the third line."

"It could be the sign of a cross."

"Please keep yourselves available. I may contact you later."

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"Come in, Lieutenant. Do you want to take my fingerprints?"

"There were no clear prints on the knife handle. However, I am convinced you killed Ambrose Reckel. I believe you have been carrying a very large burden for many years. Please tell me."

"Here is a letter I have been re-reading for forty years. It was from my younger sister. She wrote that her husband was poisoning her. I took the plane from Los Angeles to New York City. But I was too late. My sister had died and her body had been cremated. I showed the letter to the police, but the coroner's report stated that my sister had died from a heart attack. I went to confront her husband but he had disappeared. For forty years I wondered where he was. Imagine my shock when he appeared at the convention. He had become bald and my red hair had turned to gray, but we recognized each other. Last evening I went to see him. As he ate his meal, he insisted that he had not poisoned my sister. He gave no reason as to why he had changed his name. I told him I had married two years after my sister's death and that my husband had died four years ago. His steak knife had fallen to the carpet. I picked it up. And it was just a reflex impulse. Am I under arrest?"

"I will refer the matter to the District Attorney. I doubt if the word puzzle will have much weight."

"What convinced you that it was me?"

For the answer, see Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.