

## MOOSE LAURELS, PART 2: STORY SPOONERISMS

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In our previous episode (*Word Ways*, August 2002), we examined a new crop of transposition puns accompanied by one-line definitions. Now let us turn to a related genre: the joke that contains a more detailed setup and a spoonerized punchline.

These often involve a lengthy narrative or shaggy-dog tale that culminates in a mangled moral (e.g., "People who live in grass houses shouldn't stow thrones"). In contrast to that verbose variant, the following "story spoonerisms" are briefer.

In fact, part of the challenge is to craft an elegant setup characterized by an economy of words but which leads inevitably to the risible conclusion. Ideally, the context should be natural and logical. In compliance with this rule, I have eschewed spoonerisms that require excessively contrived setups ("Look for the Lil verse signing"; "It's not the cat, it's the Farbs").

Like Part 1, the specimens below are all presumably new and original. Take heed: the setup may be true or it may be fictitious—a total lack of pies. But I shall not make such distinctions, lest I foil the spun.

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In New York's Greenwich Village, one may find a "bondage and fetish" restaurant catering to S&M enthusiasts. Kinky customers flock there to be blindfolded, bound, spanked, whipped and otherwise humiliated by leather-clad dominatrixes. According to an Internet review, the food is pretty good, too. One wonders if the management has posted a sign: *Please say when perved.*

Drew Barrymore and Drew Carey decided to meet at a Beverly Hills mall. Arriving early, the stocky sitcom star was instantly recognized by fans who asked what he was doing there. He replied, *"I'm waiting for the other Drew to shop."*

On April 10, 2000, an article on the front page of *The New York Times* shocked readers with the astonishing tale of two adorable 12-year-old boys in Myanmar (formerly Burma) who lead a fierce guerrilla rebel army. Yet we should not have been surprised, for the report simply confirmed a venerable truth: *It takes a child to raze a village.*

As California real estate values skyrocketed, brokers advised their clients that attractive landscaping would produce higher sale prices. In consequence, houses everywhere were festooned with foliage as Realtors spread the rallying cry: *Keep the home buyers ferning.*

Since Richard Pryor's tragic accident in 1980, everyone knows that drug addicts freebase cocaine by heating it over an open flame in the metal cover borrowed from a glass jar. This is surely the origin of the familiar expression *"Here's cookin' at you, lid!"*

Intrepid 19th Century pioneers journeyed Westward with the goal of striking it rich either as miners or bartenders. And so it was common to see newspaper ads with the headline: *Wanted: lead or a dive.*

Curiosity and gossip continue to rage over actress Elizabeth Hurley's illegitimate baby. The alleged father, a wealthy Hollywood movie producer, denied responsibility and filed a paternity suit to prove his case. Although all this controversy can't be a good thing, we can rest assured that the child will have *naturally Hurley care.*

As a boy, the great musician of Greek myth was tormented by spinsterish schoolteachers who reprimanded him for sleeping in class. This dramatic incident is the source for the grand opera, *The Marmes of Orpheus.*

Deciding to adopt a pet, movie critic Andrew Sarris found a friendly Labrador retriever. But his high-pressure reviewing schedule kept him extremely busy. One day, as the writer was at his computer meeting a deadline, the dog playfully stroked his master, but was summarily rebuffed. Retreating sadly, the cowed canine mumbled to himself, *"That's the last time I paw Sarris."*

In 1968, terrorists in London were implicated in a foiled plot to recruit Twiggy to assassinate Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. At the trial, the defendants mounted this ingenious defense: *"We just wanted to kill two Stones with one bird."*

Protesting low wages, a group of paint factory workers set up a picket line. Anti-union counter-demonstrators quickly retaliated by dousing them with several gallons of premium-quality white enamel latex. The crusty veteran shop steward bawled out his members for failing to remember an important rule: *Cover clothes before striking.*

A peculiar convention of pornography is to describe semen as "hot." Of course, it's really cold. After all, this is why people say, *"The come, man, iceth."*

In an early attempt at corporate diversification, the depression-era newspaper tycoon considered investing some of his assets in agriculture. He changed his mind, however, after seeking the advice of his consultants, who cautioned: *"Hearst, do no farm!"*

A few years ago, British performer Eddie Izzard made some appearances in America. On this side of the Atlantic, however, he never achieved anything approaching his cultlike U.K. popularity. In the fastest recorded case of an entertainer turning into a has-been, he might now be dubbed *The Izzard of Was.*