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Tales of the WayOut Castle Crew



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Editor's note: *The WayOut crew's ongoing adventures are chronicled on ACD-L (see cattledog.com for information on joining the listserve) and in the [ACDCA Quarterly](#).*

Comrade Kit's Personal Property

All appeared serene around the grounds of the new WayOut castle. His Royal Highness Prince Slate was at his sentry post under the steps to the barn loft surrounded by day lilies. There he was able to stand guard over the escape route of the verminous ruffian creature who made her home in the large hole in the ground. The Personal Attendant was fond of hollering at him to "Leave the GroundHog alone!" but the Noble Prince did not believe that the underground creature was any relative of a hog and therefore tended to ignore her. Furthermore, any possible intruder must be watched most closely. The Personal Attendant, herself, had been heard to condemn the "groundhog" and complain

that she was in the habit of trampling her plants. The Prince considered it his sworn duty to keep an eye on it. Also, it was nice and shady under the steps and so much fun to leap out over the day lilies when the Personal Attendant lost track of him and called for him to show himself.

The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel was more concerned with the day to day management of the castle. She pattered around the castle checking up on everything and left the imaginary intruders to the prince. Upon performing a quick inspection of Comrade Kit's bedchamber, the Lovely Lady Tassel was disturbed to find numerous papers tucked away. Upon closer examination, she found them to be labeled "Comrade Kit's Wealth Redistribution Plan" and to involve extensive changes to the ownership of property about the castle.



Comrade Kit, when summoned to give an account of her treasonous activities, appeared sporting a fancy new collar and carrying a purple bunny. The purple bunny, Tassel knew, belonged to the Noble Prince Slate. The collar, however, she had never seen before. "What is this?" she asked with a slightly suppressed shriek. "You know that is Slate's purple bunny! Put it back at once. Where did you get that collar?"

Comrade Kit, who had never yet been abashed, dropped the purple bunny so that the Lovely Lady Tassel could get a better look at her new collar. "Isn't it lovely!" she squeaked happily. "Word has gotten out about how I am oppressed by this kingdom's autocratic

and antiquated system of government. I haven't been able to raise enough money to fund the revolution yet but I have supporters in the south! They believe in my cause and they sent me this necklace as a symbol of solidarity. See, isn't it lovely? It is pink..with studs!!" Kit preened.

The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel saw an incongruity. "If you are for sharing the wealth, doesn't that necklace belong to me as much as to you?" she smirked.

"Not at all," said Comrade Kit, stoutly. "If you will read my wealth redistribution plan, you will see that the government is to take control of all property and to redistribute it in a fair and equitable manner. As the head of that government, it will behoove me to look and act in a respectable manner. I will need to present a certain image to the rest of the world and therefore I need some accoutrements. My supporters in Maryland understand that. Here, just read my plan - sections 76.54 through 453.43 and you will understand completely." Kit dug through the gathered papers and handed a large stack to the Lovely Tassel. "Now, if you will excuse me, I will get back to my morning exercises."

Comrade Kit picked up the purple bunny and began to gallop and bound around the yard again. "Run 423 feet and toss the bunny! Bunny goes 3 feet up and 2 feet to the side, I leap for the bunny, darn I missed. Run 423 feet and toss the bunny! Bunny goes 5 feet up and straight down! I catch the bunny! Bounce seven feet ahead without touching the ground! Buzz around Comrade Slate's head five times. Run 423 feet and toss the bunny," she chanted as she ran.

"Supporters in Maryland," muttered the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel. "How absurd." She continued sputtering over the audacity of young Kit as she shredded all the documents she could find.

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The Prince Is Perplexed

His Royal Highness Prince Slate awoke one morning and decided that it would be a very good day to play with Comrade Kit. "Today," he announced to all and sundry. "I will be playing with Comrade Kit." The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel looked askance. "Who cares?" she muttered under her breath. "Why make an announcement about that, what a dope." The Sweet Prince was, as usual, completely oblivious to her whispered commentary. The Personal Attendant, however, looked grave. "I am sorry, Princely," she said. "That is not possible today. Comrade Kit has been re-incarcerated."

"What!" cried the Horrified Prince. "Why is my dear Kit imprisoned this time? I have not heard a peep out of her since we bailed her out for excessive barking." The Personal Attendant looked slightly uncomfortable. "Kit is imprisoned on the charge of excessive attractiveness to the opposite sex." "What nonsense!" whined the Prince. "I had made plans with her ages ago to play today. It has nothing to do with her lovely perfume and her soft twinkling eyes and her pretty ring tail... I just love her," sighed the Prince in despair.

At that moment, the plaintive yips of Comrade Kit were heard echoing far off in the dungeons. The Noble Prince leapt to his feet. "She needs me!! She is calling for me! I must go rescue her!!" He ran in the direction of her yips. The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel and the Personal Attendant followed. They found the Bewildered Prince examining a barricade. "I am sorry, Princely," said the Personal Attendant. "Due to the serious nature of her crime, I have had to use extreme measures to imprison her." The Lovely Lady Tassel snickered. "I helped," she said. "First there is the wall of thorns, then there is a moat full of piranha, then there is another wall of



solid iron, then there are three doors each locked with three keys and the keys are entrusted to the three Catlandish Ambassadors who are immune to all attempts at bribery. Within the third door is Comrade Kit inside a small cage with tiny windows and an unbreakable lock and the key to that lock has been mailed to a friend in Madagascar."

"Alas," cried the Prince. "Alack and alas!" He sobbed in dismay as he threw himself at the wall of thorns. "Stop, Princely!" said the Personal Attendant. "I don't want to have to imprison you also!" "On what charge could you possibly imprison me?!" he asked incredulously. "Excessive goober-headedness," muttered the Lovely Lady Tassel. "Excessive attraction to the opposite sex, of course," said the Personal Attendant sternly. The Prince pondered that sadly. "Since when do we have three Catlandish Ambassadors?" he asked after a moment.

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The Prince Gets a Package

"Life is boring in the dungeon," moaned Comrade Kit. "I wish Slate could come play. Comrade Tassel is just not interesting enough these days. Hark, I hear him, even now, serenading me. How sweet, how utterly romantic, I swoon."

"Ack, gag" sputtered the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel, filling in as chaperone for the lovesick maiden. "He sounds like a beached whale emitting ultrasonic shrieks of despair as he suffocates. If that is your idea of romantic, sister, you are seriously hormonal."

Comrade Kit sniffed haughtily. "I suppose you know all about hormonal. How long has it been since the 'change' came over you?" "Bitch!" shrieked the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel. "Bitch yourself!" yapped Comrade Kit in return.

"Shut up!!" hollered the Personal Attendant, sobbing in dismay. "It is four o'clock in the morning!"

Time passed.

Still bleary eyed from the long and loud night, the Personal Attendant hopped up and down outside the house awaiting a delivery for the Prince and his friends. "Toot toot!" sounded the horn. Arms waved out the window of the cab of a rapidly approaching truck. "Get out of the way!" cried the occupants of the truck. "The brakes don't work so I made Jay drive!" yelled one of them as the truck trundled up the hill and came to a stop. "Good thing you live on a hill!"



Three people hopped out of the truck. "Special Delivery for Prince Slate and the WayOut crew!" they announced formally as they unloaded a bag of feed, some minerals, a large peace pipe contraption and an assorted mixture of ruminants. "One Starter Ruminant Kit, as ordered! Just add water - no assembly required." Before the Personal Attendant even knew what was happening, they had unloaded the Starter Ruminant Kit and driven off. "But wait!" she cried after them. "Where are my instructions? What do I put in the peace pipe? Do we smoke it with the ruminants? Come back!" She waved in vain at the

retreating truck as it disappeared rather rapidly downhill.

"Well I guess it won't hurt to add the water ..." said the Personal Attendant, doubtfully.

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The Lovely Lady Tassel Takes a Nap

The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel stretched luxuriantly and looked around. "I believe it is going to be another wonderful day," she said happily. Moans and wails echoed off the walls as she trotted from one end of the dungeon to the other - looking in on, first, His Royal Highness Prince Slate and then the Lowly Worm Comrade Kit.

"How nice," said the Lovely Lady Tassel as she alone trotted freely about the castle. All for her were the morsels dropped on the floor! All for her were the Ambassadorial leavings! All for her was the devoted attention of the Personal Attendant. "Why aren't they imprisoned more often?" she wondered. "I will have to discuss that with the Personal Attendant as she gives me my massage this afternoon."



Alack and Alas for the Lovely Lady Tassel! The pleasant respite she has had while the lovelorn languished is nearing its end. Already, the Noble Prince is losing that glazed look in his eyes. Even now, Comrade Kit is finding the thought of boys somewhat unattractive. Although the star-crossed lovers are still kept separate, no longer does the blue-jumpsuit-wearing Romeo bewail his sorrows to the heavens. He even found breakfast quite appealing this morning. Alas, no longer does Comrade Kit skulk about during her brief exercise breaks.

Comrade Tassel!" cried Comrade Kit as she hit the prison yard at a full gallop. "Comrade Tassel!" she cried again as she completed her second, third and fourth loops of the yard. "Guess what!" The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel sighed loudly and settled down for a nap. "I have had some time to think about things," continued Comrade Kit. "And I have some new ideas! I can't wait til I get out of prison and can make some changes!! And did you see that the mourning dove nest fell down on exactly the day I predicted?"

The diminutive rebel continued to loop about the yard as she chattered excitedly. "I knew it would! Look, there are sheep and goats out back! I can't wait to try them out! I only did a little the other day! Have you tried them out yet? Have you? Aren't they fun! My Uncle Rake sent the sheep to me! He promised he would send me sheep and he did! The goats were sent by my supporters to the east! They also promised me fifty cents to help fund the rebellion! Isn't that great! This is my fifty-first lap and now the Personal Attendant will make me go back to prison and let Comrade Slate out! See! Here she comes! I think I must be a genius or something! I am always right! Don't you think so? Bye!!"

The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel continued to snooze in the sunshine - yes, it was

going to be another wonderful day and she planned on enjoying every last minute of it.

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Comrade Kits Gets Her Way

"Fee Fie Foe Fum," grumbled the Personal Attendant. "Where is Comrade Kit?" His Royal Highness Prince Slate gamboled about the Personal Attendant's knees in a very unprincely manner. He found it disturbing when the Attendant began to grumble about the castle. The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel, finding very little disturbing beyond thunder and lightning, took advantage of the opportunity to scour Prince Slate's royal dinner bowl for leftover molecules.

After a quick search, the Young and Nimble Comrade Kit was found perched on a stump outside lecturing the sheep and goats. "Look at the plentitude of grass!" she was heard to rhapsodize at them. "Look how you all share it so nicely! There is grass for all and none go hungry. I am so proud of how quickly you have grasped the basic concept of my theory of community!"

"Mehh," said Bumper the goat. "Ah, yes," said Comrade Kit grimly. "All but you, Bumper. You have a tendency to wander off and be an individual. That must be suppressed. You had better start to conform or you will be punished! You know what we do to dissenters around here?" "Meeaaaaah!" cried Bumper plaintively. "That's right!" said Comrade Kit. "We bite their noses." She smiled widely at the goat, showing all her teeth.



"Comrade Kit!" hollered the Personal Attendant. "What are you doing?" The Nimble Young Kit leapt from her stump and zipped to the Attendant's side. "Oh joy!" cried Kit. "I have been counting the seconds til you reappeared! I was up to 1734 which is 28.9 minutes since I last saw you!" She groveled on the ground in her most wormy attitude. "What are you eating?" asked the Personal Attendant. "Oh! You noticed me!" cried Kit and groveled some more. "I am eating the blue-striped sock that was last worn on your left foot! It has a delicate hint of labrador about it."

"Argh!" said the Personal Attendant. "I wish you would stop eating my socks!" "They are so good, I believe I will continue," mumbled Kit perversely as she groveled. Bumper took advantage of the distraction to sidle quietly away on his own. The WideAwake Comrade Kit scowled fiercely at him as he left and made some quick notes in her book all the while still groveling in front of the Personal Attendant.

"Anyway," continued the Personal Attendant. "What I really wanted to talk to you about was your bathroom habits." Kit sat attentively with her eyes fixed on the remnants of sock that hung from the Attendant's hand. "Is it absolutely necessary that you use an entire roll of toilet paper every day?" asked the Attendant. "And don't try to blame anyone else, it comes out unchanged from the other end so I know it is you."

Kit pondered briefly. "But Comrade Attendant," she began. "I use my one quarter of the toilet paper. Comrade Slate eats his quarter and Comrade Tassel has given me permission to use her quarter. I find it great fun to unroll it but sometimes I prefer to just gnaw off chunks. Comrade Slate likes to eat his after I unroll it. This toilet paper is a wonderful toy and we are all so happy that you provide us with a constant supply." She batted her eyelashes at the Personal Attendant and perked her ears.

The Personal Attendant looked askance at Comrade Kit. "Kit," she said. "I think you are getting uppity!" Kit flung herself to the ground in seeming submission and swore to continue doing whatever she, herself, wanted to do, whenever she wanted to do it.

"I need to take some notes," muttered The Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel. "Even my manipulativeness pales beside hers." The Noble Prince Slate wondered, "What is manipulativeness?" The Lovely Tassel snorted at him. "It's a bitch thing, you wouldn't understand."

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Comrade Kit Is Properly Addressed

Comrade Kit was pondering life's mysteries one morning as she waited for the

Oppressed Serf to rise from her bed and release her from her prison cell. "Why," she wondered, "does the Oppressed Serf consent to wait on the so-called Prince Slate. I see no advantage in it for her. Why does the Female Creature Tassel get to sleep on the bed when I, so superior a bitch in every way, am confined to a crate at night?"

She sighed loudly and ran her toenails along the bottom of the crate to make a Hideous Noise. His Royal Highness Prince Slate opened one eye from his comfortable spot nestled against his Personal Attendant's knees and then closed it again without changing his position. "Furthermore, why have I no blanket to chew on in my prison cell?" she sighed again and began calculating the speed of light.



"Tassel" by MJ Hotter

Later, when the rest of the castle had awakened, Comrade Kit attempted to organize the morning activities. "Comrade Tassel, I believe I get to leave the house before you," she said politely as she slammed the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel into the door frame. "Wait, Comrade Slate!" she cried. "That is the commune's elephant toy." She ripped the toy in question from the Noble Prince's grasp and galloped off at top speed. After chasing her for multiple laps of the yard at top speed, Prince Slate was forced to concede that it must indeed be the commune's elephant toy. "I thought the commune was all about sharing," wondered the Sweet Prince in confusion as he splashed in the royal wading pond.

"Of course, you are correct!" huffed Kit as she zipped past with her mouth full of elephant. "But there

must be someone in control of sharing to make sure it is all fair and equitable and I am that someone. I make the rules and I control the resources so as to be able to share them out properly. Didn't you get that memo? I know I paw-delivered it to all important dogs. See, Comrade Tassel is reading her copy now!" She zoomed away again leaping at the Lovely Lady Tassel and 'accidentally' landing on her head. "Look at the end where I sign it!" she yipped as she galloped away. "That is how you should address me from now on!"

Prince Slate ambled over to the Lovely Lady Tassel and read over her shoulder: "Signed: SUPREME DICTATOR FOR LIFE, COMRADE KIT." The Prince and Lady Tassel looked at each other. "Do you think this is going to be a problem?" asked Prince Slate. "Not as long as I still get to sleep on the bed," replied the Even-Tempered and Lovely Lady Tassel.

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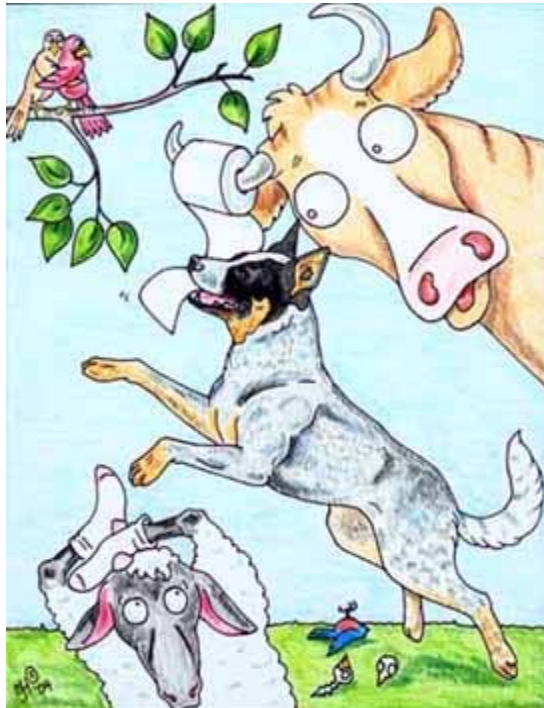
Comrade Kit Sleeps Out

"Comrade Kit!" hollered the Personal Attendant in surprise. "Where are you?" Comrade Kit trotted briskly into the bathroom where the Personal Attendant stood in an attitude of displeasure. "What is it now?" she asked. "I am very busy writing my memoirs and I cannot be constantly disturbed in this way."

The Personal Attendant was briefly distracted. "Writing your memoirs? You aren't even two years old - what can you possibly have to write about?" Comrade Kit sniffed haughtily. "I need to leave a record for future rebels. If I suddenly disappear or am snuffed out, they need to have my history! I update it weekly." She peered cautiously around the corner. "I am constantly watched. Comrade Tassel would rip my work to shreds if she could find it." The Personal Attendant suppressed a laugh. "Comrade Tassel just wants to clean up the crumbs you leave behind. Maybe you shouldn't eat while you write and drip all over your papers." Comrade Kit sniffed again. "It is common for the great architects of change to be misunderstood and their warnings ignored."

"Kit!" said the Personal Attendant sternly, recalling her duty. "I have been lenient about your toilet paper addiction up til now but it is going a bit too far! Look!" She pointed at the wall. "Not only have you eaten all the toilet paper off the roll but you have eaten the cardboard center off the holder! Not a trace of it remains!"

Kit looked brightly up at the Oppressed Serf. "I fail to understand your point," she said happily. "I have seen you take the cardboard center off the holder and give it to us to play with or throw it away. Why can't I save you the step and take it off myself? I was only trying to help." She fluttered her eyelashes. "Kit, you are so cute," said the Personal Attendant. "And I know you are very tired from chasing birds all day through the snow. Why don't you sleep on the bed tonight instead of in that cold hard crate." Kit snickered under her breath and winked at the Lovely and Delicate Lady Tassel who stood by watching in disbelief. "It is like taking candy from a baby," she whispered to her as she strutted off with the Personal Attendant.



"Kit" by MJ Hotter

The bed was lovely and warm. Comrade Kit curled up under the Personal Attendant's arm and laid her head on her shoulder. She cleaned the Attendant's face very thoroughly in gratitude for being allowed to sleep on the bed. She woke up a few times in the night and felt more gratitude and had to clean her face several more times to feel that her thanks were adequately expressed. The Lovely Lady Tassel slept on the other side and made no comment. The Noble Prince Slate slept sprawled across the foot of the bed. It is

possible he didn't even notice the small addition to the slumber party. It certainly made no effect on the large amount of space he took up. He did notice, however, at about 4 am when his Personal Attendant finally leapt up sputtering and said "Enough with the face licking already!! Go to your crate!" and sent the meek and mild Comrade Kit back to her cold, hard crate in the corner. At least, the Noble Prince rolled over and stretched out even longer at that point so it is to be assumed that his slumber was slightly disturbed.

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The Casebook of Kitlock Holmes, part 1

"Where's my 7% solution? I'm bored," grumbled Ms. Kitlock Holmes to her trusted friend and associate Dr. Slateson. "I wish you would not resort to drugs to while away the hours when you are not working. Don't you know what that does to your body?" asked her concerned friend Dr. Slateson. "Ah, but Slateson, the ennui, the ennui... my mind must have a task. I cannot bear inaction," she murmured drowsily as she prepared her syringe.



The eminent criminologist needs no introduction to those involved either in the commission of crimes or in the solving of mysteries. Her keen powers of deduction have frequently been called in to assist the flummoxed inspectors at Barkland Yard. On this cold December morn, the great detective sprawled across a sofa and practiced her marksmanship by monogramming socks with the work of her powerful jaws.

"Hark!" she cried, perking up suddenly and laying aside her drugs and socks. "I hear someone approaching! Perhaps this will be interesting. Open the door, Slateson!" Dr. Slateson did as he was bid and welcomed in their visitor who appeared to be an agitated woman. "Ah ha!" said Kitlock Holmes. "How are you? I see you work in the medical field. I hope your visit is not in a professional capacity. I believe I am fully up to date on my vaccinations." "Why, how did you know that?" exclaimed Dr. Slateson. "I see no signs indicative of her profession." "Elementary, dear Slateson. When once your eye is trained to observe, this is mere child's play. See, her hand is stained with Dif-Quik dye, there is a crease in her garments at her shoulders where obviously a stethoscope is accustomed to hanging - showing her medical background and the dog and cat hair accumulating on her trousers suggests that she is accustomed to examining not only the noble race of dog but also the feebler species of cat. Am I not correct?" the great detective turned to the visitor who was standing astonished in the entryway.

"Why, yes!" she replied. "I have heard so much of your brilliance, Kitlock Holmes, I hope

you can help me. I don't know who else to turn to!" She hesitated and looked askance at Dr. Slateson who stood nearby. "My friend and associate, Dr. Slateson," introduced Kitlock Holmes airily. "You may speak freely before him."

The visitor began her story: "Alas! One of my sheep has vanished! Not a trace remains of poor dear Hobo and most astonishing of all, there are tracks in the pasture that lead directly to a fencepost and then stop abruptly. No tracks lead away from that spot, it is as if she were lifted up into the air and away. I don't know what to make of it. Can you come out and investigate?"

"Ah, Slateson! This has all the trappings of my archenemy Professor Tasselarty's work! Let us be quick! The game is afoot! Make sure you bring your revolver." The Great Detective leaped from her couch and rushed out the door.

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The Casebook of Kitlock Holmes, part 2

On reaching the cold and frosty barnyard, Kitlock Holmes began carefully crawling around and investigating. So thorough was she in her search for clues that she even found it necessary to lift up and taste multiple small, round, brown balls that lay scattered about the area. It was just as her client had described. There were tracks frozen into the cold soil of a sheep running toward the fence and then nothing. At least, nothing obvious. Kitlock Holmes snuffled and hemmed in surprise as she crawled around on her paws searching over the cold ground. Dr. Slateson surreptitiously sampled a few round balls himself after seeing the Great Detective trying them. He found them flavorful with a delicate hint of timothy hay.

Finally the detective declared she was finished investigating the site. "What did you find?" asked Dr. Slateson. "What do you see?" returned Kitlock Holmes with a smile. "You know my methods, my dear doctor, apply them!"

"Ah," said Dr. Slateson. "Obviously the sheep was moving rapidly when she headed for the fence. See how the prints are deep in the ground. It must have been damp. Here, she appears to be standing still and then suddenly accelerates. There is no damage to the fence. Not a tuft of hair, no blood on the ground, so we can rule out any foul play. I think the sheep must have jumped the fence." He looked triumphantly at Kitlock Holmes. "Hmm," said Kitlock Holmes. "Do you see any evidence on the other side of the fence to suggest that the sheep came back to the ground after leaping the fence?" "Ah.... no," said the doctor, somewhat crestfallen.

"It is all perfectly clear," said Kitlock Holmes. "See here and here, faint prints barely registering on the ground but using my magnifying glass, they are clearly seen to be the prints of a small dog. There are also a few kernels of grain scattered about the area. Although the sheep was accelerating as she approached the fence, you have failed to explain these marks here where it appears something heavy was dragged across the ground and out of the barnyard. Ponder that awhile and let us question these bystanders - I have already a pretty clear idea of what happened here but perhaps they saw something."

"Excuse me, sir," Kitlock Holmes approached the nearest bystander. "Were you acquainted with Hobo the Ewe?"

"Blaaaaaaa, it was aaaaaawful" bleated the Otis the Goat. "We were all waaaaiting for our breaaaaakfaaaast when suddenly Hobo raaan into the fence. Well there is more haaaay for the rest of us now." The goat belched up a cud and began chewing peacefully.

"Was there anything unusual in the barnyard? Were there any noises that might have startled Hobo?" asked Dr. Slateson intelligently. "Blaaaaaaaa," said Otis. "Nothing out of the ordinaaaaary. The feeder was caaarying in a baaaag of graaaain. There waaaas a smaanaall dog with her but the dog aaaaalwaaaaays comes aaaaalong."

"How long has that snow-covered mound been present behind the barn?" asked Kitlock Holmes sharply. "Blaaaaaa," said Otis. "Thaaaaat is the maaaaanure pile. It looks bigger todaaaay."

"I have a baaad, erm, bad feeling about this," declared Kitlock Holmes gravely. "Let's go poke around in that mound. Alas, I fear the worst has happened to poor Hobo. Did you notice the goat mentioned a small dog? Professor Tasselarty is quite diminutive in stature."

The search through the manure pile sadly revealed the remains of poor Hobo. She was quite dead. "As you can see," declared Kitlock Holmes. "The faint track of something being dragged goes from the last known hoofprints of Hobo to this manure pile where we find her body. Obviously the sheep ran headlong into the fence and broke her neck. The criminal then attempted to hide the body by covering it up with straw and manure, perhaps they were hoping to fertilize the soil here. What caused her to run into the fence is still the question. Get out your revolver and meet me here at dawn tomorrow. Otis the Goat said that small dog always accompanies the feeder. If she accompanies her tomorrow, we shall nab her! But beware! If it is, indeed, Professor Tasselarty, she is a cunning and devious creature and capable of anything!"

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The Casebook of Kitlock Holmes, part 3

The next morning dawned bright and clear. Kitlock Holmes and Dr. Slateson placed themselves strategically around the barnyard and camouflaged themselves by rolling in sheep manure. "Keep a sharp lookout," instructed Kitlock Holmes. "And keep that revolver nearby." With that, she crept off to her hiding spot just behind the barn door. Dr. Slateson positioned himself near the manure pile which again covered the cold remains of Hobo the Ewe. "Now if I get hungry, breakfast is close at hand," he reasoned when choosing his position.



Slateson and Kitlock keep watch

The minutes stretched into hours. Obviously the feeder and the small dog did not keep early hours. The sun was high in the sky when the first stirrings came from downhill. There! A small dog shot out of the house and ran to the pasture gate. Trudging behind her in the snow came the stock feeder. Constantly urged to greater speed by the small dog, the feeder gamely hurried to open the gate. Dr. Slateson carefully readied his revolver. He could not see Kitlock Holmes from his position but he knew she would be on the alert.

The menacing twosome approached the barn. Professor Tasselarty, for it was indeed that mastermind of crime, trotted happily up to the empty feedbuckets and searched for crumbs. The goats and remaining sheep gathered around and clamored for their breakfast. There was nothing in the least suspicious or alarming about the process of feeding. Dr. Slateson could not work out how such a mundane activity could have caused Hobo to hurtle herself into the fence with such tragic results.

Then, it happened. Having lulled the ruminants into a false sense of security, Professor Tasselarty suddenly bounced in their direction. The goats did not notice and never lifted their heads from the hay but the sheep startled and ran a few steps uphill. Fortunately no fenceposts stood in their way. Professor Tasselarty gave an evil chuckle as the feeder slowly shuffled towards her and said "Hey! Don't bounce at the sheep." Her criminal streak could not be suppressed and she scoffed at the efforts of the feeder to repress her. The sheep shuddered anxiously as they looked from the feedbins to Professor Tasselarty and back again.

Suddenly Kitlock Holmes sprang from her hiding place. "Hold, you criminal mastermind! There will be no sheep chasing today!" Professor Tasselarty jerked around in surprise. "Curses! It is my nemesis, Kitlock Holmes!" she snarled in fury and sprang towards her. "One of us will not survive this meeting!" There was much name-calling and tussling and things looked like they might go badly for our hero when Dr. Slateson, who had been

forgetfully munching on one of Hobo's legs, suddenly recalled his duty and pulled out his revolver.

"Halt!" he cried and strode out of his place of concealment, bits of gristle and wool hanging from his mouth. He brandished his revolver and fired one shot. The bullet whistled harmlessly into the air as he could not risk firing at the combatants who wrestled together. Professor Tasselarty, however, is extremely sound sensitive and bolted away at the sound of the gun's report. "Stop her!" shouted Kitlock Holmes. "She must not be allowed to escape!" Dr. Slateson made a desperate dive but the Professor dodged artfully and evaded him. She flew to the gate and out. The dull feeder waved her hands and said, "hey!" but was otherwise of no use.

Dr. Slateson helped Kitlock Holmes out of the mud in the barnyard. The Great Detective was, happily, unhurt. "You are a prince of a dog, Dr. Slateson!" said Kitlock Holmes. "Thank goodness your breeder didn't remove your dewclaws and you were able to fire that gun!" the Goober Prince... I mean Dr. Slateson ... preened happily.

"It is unfortunate that Professor Tasselarty was able to escape but I am sure we will meet again. I think the sheep in this area may rest easily for at least a while. At least we have solved the mystery of what caused Hobo to bolt into the fence. A maliciously timed bounce when the poor ewe was facing the fence was all it took." Kitlock Holmes sighed sadly. "Our work is done here. Let's go home. I have a few more socks I need to monogram."

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