The Sultana

As requested by the Lord Peter Wyndham-Smythe on the twenty third night of March in bequest of Baron Von Munchausen to one Lady Katerina du Barbershoppe. Being transcripts of some merit.

Perhaps you could regale us with the tale of how you avoided marriage with the Sultan that was going to happen earlier in the year with the aid of the very same Penguin that gave me my advice.

That was all was a bit awkward. It was following all that business of the great bunny escape, the Sultan left at his wits end with only 500 wives left.

Lady Floria: I wager that you first came to the Sultan's attention when you were travelling with him as a shipmate, Bob, in your search for [rabbits]

I'm quite surprised you know about that, as we were trying to hush it up. I'd always wanted to be a pirate. Originally I wanted to be a zoo keeper, but piracy was certainly in my top ten wishes for occupation. I did at one time to pretend to be a young lad by the name of Bob.

Captain Sir Robert: Bob! You've changed!

In what way have I changed?

Captain Sir Robert: Well, you were a boy, for a start.

Well, it was a phase I was going through.

Lord Peter: Surely the disguise of yourself as a boy was much easier to do than the disguise of your voice as a soprano for the Captains musical entertainment of Catherine the Great? How did you achieve your disguise as a soprano?

It was a little complicated, yes. I tried gargling with a lot of lard. It really soothes the vocal chords. I found I could have this whole high bit in my voice. [high singing]. I am afraid that that is what caught the Sultan's ear particularly, the piping high voice because as you know, all the inhabitants of that country have remarkably low voices. Including the Sultan who was remarkably low voiced. He immediately had this mad crush on me. Probably because he was a woman disguised as a man, and thinking I was a girlish lad must have just turned his head. He thought my soprano voice was particularly manly in some way. Perhaps he/she (it's so confusing) was trying to take his mind off the Captain Sir's manly chest which he had recently been unable to get his or her hands on.

It was all rather worrying. I'd never considered becoming a Sultana.

Lord Peter: It was raisin a few doubts.

Captain Sir Robert: At least she was keeping abreast of currant events.

Baronet Clive: Really? I thought it was rather dated.

I'd always had much more interest in other fruits and vegetables. There I was, in this rather awkward position where one can't just turn down a Sultan because it would be a terrible faux pas in his own country. I was at a real loss at what to do. Somehow by chance, the very Penguin you refered to was

wandering about looking for new sources of vegetables outside of the United Kingdom to bring back to the nunnery. The entire stock of the United Kingdom having been exhausted by that stage. I happened to be down in the market place, looking for a new suit of clothes to wear to my wedding. As my ship's dress didn't seem suitable, being rather salty from the driving wind and so forth. As I was wandering about in the fruit and vegetable market, where they also sell clothes, I came upon the Penguin.

Lady Floria: Was the Penguin disappointed when she got back from this journey, to find out that the nuns in the meantime had discovered the nutritional benefits of seafood and developed a preference for squid over vegetables?

Since I've been been speaking to her recently that they have really embraced squid. They got into sea cucumber for a while but moved away from that. They were in fact so enamoured of the squid that they were talking of reforming the nunnery as the New Reformed Church of Cthulhu. I'm not sure that's fully got off the ground yet, with the horror and that sort of thing..

So I was talking to the Penguing, asking what on Earth I was going to do. She came up with a cunning plan that I should dress as a tuning fork and try to escape the wedding that way, hidden away in a very large sweet potato and smuggled out of the country.

Hon. Hyacynth: Sweet potato rather than regular potato? Why not a regular potato?

In that area they prefer to put the tuning forks in sweet potato. While I personally rather put tuning forks in a regular potato as I find that it's a bit pretentious...

Hon. Hyacynth: Did you find it difficult with your own preference of potato over sweet potato to be a tuning fork inside a sweet potato?

It was rather difficult, yes, I did find it so. I did try the method acting root, so to speak, within the root vegetable. I just felt the energy of the potato surrounding me. And I was desperate at that point with the whole Sultana thing that would just have been horrid.

Lord Peter: It must have also been difficult when the Penguing started pacifying natives with you. I'm sure the natives of Turkey were still a bit uppity about having lost their wives recently.

I wasn't aware that we called them natives...

It was rather disturbing actually. As I wasn't an actual tuning fork, she found it hard to lift me and poke me into their eyes. So instead she fashioned a rudimentary catapult to throw the extremely large sweet potato into the crowds of natives. It actually did help with escape - it made the whole disguise seem more realistic. The catapult managed to send me a long way from the court.

Baron Celsius: Didn't you have problems with Irish hunting rabbits?

That is an obvious question, and that would have been a real problem, had I been in Ireland. But I wasn't. As soon as we reached the sacred and beloved shores of England, the Irish hunting rabbits swam across and tried to leap upon the sweet potato. Fortunately I was fast enough to shuck the skin and escape.

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