

LAND WHALE MURDERS

Chapter 10: Iamb My Own Worst Cretic

AUTHOR

The mail. Mostly it is bills and junk but sometimes we get a letter. An important letter. Eugene and Anjus had gotten just such a letter mailed by Henry B. Lubbins right before his murder. And we're right about to find out what it says.

10.1:

ANJUS

So what does it say?

EUGENE

It says: "Goward. Yours – Trudy."

ANJUS

Goward?

EUGENE

G-o-w-a-r-d. And there's a dash between yours and Trudy.

ANJUS

To quote that goon: 'da fug?'

EUGENE

Da fug indeed.

ANJUS

You said 'this solves everything' ...

EUGENE

Did I? I must have misspoke. I mean 'this doesn't solve anything.' Oh well.

ANJUS

Wait! What if it's a code?

EUGENE

Right! He couldn't risk spelling it out.

ANJUS

Goward. Goward? Maybe it's like forward. Like ahead?

EUGENE

Goward. Or Howard? A head, Howard. Howard's head!

ANJUS

That's it! They recently put up that bust of Howard Peters in Madison Square Park! We should get Almost officer Doubles, she's outside!

AUTHOR

They head outside but there's no sign of Shaindel.

EUGENE

She's gone!

ANJUS

She said she'd stand watch ... that's odd.

EUGENE

No time to overthink it! To the park!

AUTHOR

And so they hurried to Madison Square Park. It was free Bustle Day so the park was full of ladies. At this time in history the city officials were encouraging park use by having special give away days. But Anjus and Eugene had no time for bustles so they pushed past the women to the newly erected bust of Howard Peters.

10.2:

EUGENE

So what did this fellow do to get a statue?

ANJUS

He killed the most Indians.

EUGENE

Oh. So what's the trick here? I don't see anything unusual.

ANJUS

Well it wouldn't be this simple, it must be part of the bigger puzzle Lubbins set up.

EUGENE

Right, of course.

ANJUS

The note also said: "Yours – Trudy."

EUGENE

Don't forget the dash.

ANJUS

Right.

EUGENE

Wait! Trudy! Trudy is a woman's name! ARE ANY OF YOU TRUDY! Miss are you Trudy! Miss are you Trudy!

WOMAN 2

Fresh!

She slaps Eugene.

EUGENE

I just want a Trudy!

WOMAN 2

How dare he ruin free bustle day! Fellow ladies let us beat this man with our purses!

The ladies descend on Eugene, they start hitting him.

ANJUS

Wait! Stop, stop! Listen to me!

WOMAN 2

That weird one-eyed woman is talking! Let's listen!

WOMAN 3

We women are good at listening.

WOMAN 2

But perhaps we listen too much!

WOMAN 4

Mayhaps we should stop listening and just continue to beat this annoying man!

ANJUS

No! Wait he's not a man, he's a rare ... um, rare hairless ... dog?

WOMAN

But wasn't he talking and walking on his hind legs?

ANJUS

Oh right, yes ... he was, but ... he's a rare trained dog who escaped from the ... sideshow? Right dog-gene?

EUGENE

Bark? Bark?

WOMAN 2

Why is he wearing clothes then?

ANJUS

Why do any of us?

WOMAN 3

Oh. Why do we wear clothes?

WOMAN 4

Should we wear clothes?

WOMAN 2

Ladies listen up! This gross dog monster has taught us something! It may be ugly, but it is showing us that we are slaves to fashion, to the clothes designed by men to keep us beautiful and pliant like gilded pets! Let us go to Ladies Mile and destroy the boutiques of our oppressors!

WOMEN

Death to fashion! Death to fashion!

AUTHOR

And with that the women headed off to loot the boutiques.

EUGENE

I think we started another riot.

AUTHOR

They didn't actually because all that marching in restrictive clothes and shoes tired the women so they ended up too exhausted to riot. Instead they decided to find a better way to protest that wasn't murder on their feet and thus the Metropolitan

Suffragette Society was formed. Sort of. It's a complicated story. But this isn't that story. Back to the now empty park.

EUGENE

So what's the secret of this statue?

ANJUS

Maybe he's looking at – of course!

EUGENE

There!

ANJUS

Exactly, "Trudy" means "strong spear" in old church German and that statue is looking at –

EUGENE

The National Spear Museum! (Beat.)

To the National Spear Museum, created thanks to a generous donation from the Cowabungus Corporation!

10.3:

Inside the spear museum.

AUTHOR

Later inside the spear museum ...

ANJUS

None of these spears seem helpful!

EUGENE

Maybe it's a special spear. A whale spear –

ANJUS

Which is a Harpoon!

EUGENE

Of course! To the –

GUARD

Shhh, people are trying to look at spears here.

EUGENE

Sorry, sorry. (Whispers.)
To the Harpoon District.

AUTHOR

And with that they wound their way through the Harpoon District to the fanciest Harpoonery – Stabbington’s.

10.4:

CLERK 2

Welcome to Stabbington’s for all your harpooning needs. First floor common irons, second floor double-flue irons, third floor toggles, toggles, toggles. And of course in the basement we have non har based poons: walpoons, drapoons, jampoons, and spoons. Also right here we have our mascot, this raccoon. Don’t touch it, sir, it bites a lot.

EUGENE

We’re looking for a certain harpoon, maybe a special one that Henry B. Lubbins would have put aside for some sort of scavenger hunt quest?

CLERK 2

Mr. Lubbins – God rest his soul – did love his harpoons. He commissioned a design for a bolt action exploding harpoon that could vaporize a dolphin from 500 paces but it never left the prototype phase.

ANJUS

Prototype interesting.

EUGENE

Yes prototype or type of proto. Proto being the first ... the very first. And harpoon ...

ANJUS

It could be an anagram ...

EUGENE

And the letter ... “yours – Trudy.” That dash ...

ANJUS

Wait! Apron Ho! That’s the anagram!

EUGENE

A dash ... of spice! Apron Ho is –

ANJUS

The famed Chinese chef known for his –

ANJUS & EUGENE

Dash of spice!

EUGENE

To the Chinatown!

AUTHOR

But upon reaching his restaurant ...

10.5:

WOMAN 5

Yep, it burned down six months ago and Apron Ho moved to San Francisco. I do miss that dash of spice.

ANJUS

Damn I really thought this was it.

EUGENE

We're close. Lubbins had us come here for a reason. Wait ... there's a period after Goward!

ANJUS

A period! A period! How could you have left that out! Of course – a period. A period is a dot. A stop. An end. Or a beginning. A period of time. An era. Goward. Go ward period. Go ward a period. A ward could be a ward. Like a hospital ward or a ... period ward.

EUGENE

The women's hospital!

ANJUS

No! Not that. A ward for a period. A time period! An ancient time period!

EUGENE

Right! The Hall of vertebrate paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History!

ANJUS

Exactly!

AUTHOR

They hurried to the museum and bullied their way into meeting with the head curator of vertebrate paleontology Henry Fairfield Osborn.

10.6:

OSBORN

I don't know about any of that. But Mr. Lubbins was a big donor to the museum.

ANJUS

Of course he was.

OSBORN

Would you mind if I measured your heads? I'm working on creating a list of the best types of Caucasians.

ANJUS

If it's for science.

OSBORN

Indeed. Oh you have quite the features – you must be a credit to your race.

EUGENE

Not really.

ANJUS

Aren't you in charge of vertebrate paleontology why are you measuring heads?

OSBORN

Brontosaurus pays the bills, but eugenics is my passion. I designed the admissions policy at the Million Dollar Club, it's where I first met Lubbins.

ANJUS

Oh.

OSBORN

When you divide Mongoloids by race you don't work a day in your life. What good is science if we can't use it to divide and separate people?

ANJUS

And Lubbins was funding your research?

OSBORN

No. He liked dinosaurs. He was going to be the guest of honor at the Bone Ball where we were going to unveil the German Geode, but with him being dead I guess I'll be the guest of honor.

ANJUS

I'm sure someone else would –

OSBORN

NO! ME! I deserve it! You see this forehead! That is A-plus human. (Beat.) Anyway he loved those thunder lizards. He even sent me this cartoon from some magazine. It has a dryptosaurus in a top hat. Let me show you.

OSBORN gets the clipping out of a drawer.

OSBORN (cont.)

There you are. Oh! Another way of racial classification I've found to be of use is taking the male phallus and squeezing it in a vice until one passes out. Would you like to try that? I can last six turns, if that doesn't prove a superiority, what does?

ANJUS

As great as squeezing Eugene's johnson would be -- what language is the cartoon's caption in?

OSBORN

Oh one of those lesser tongues let me see. I think it's a type of Slavonic ... you know the permanent mission for the Monarchy of Novi Polji, a tiny micro monarchy in the Balkans, is right across the street. Maybe they can help you.

ANJUS

Let's go Eugene.

EUGENE

All this running around, maybe we can rest for another minute?

OSBORN

Ah, here's the phallus squeezer!

EUGNEE

To the Permanent Mission for the Monarchy of Novi Polji!

AUTHOR

The mission was small with only a tiny desk and two chairs, but the three young diplomats – Dragica, Marija, and Josip were happy to lend a hand and hand out pro-royalist Novi Polji literature.

10.7:

DRAGICA

Welcome, please come in! Praise King Niko, how can we help?

ANJUS

We're on important business –

MARIJA

You need visa? JOSIP! GET VISA FORM!

ANJUS

No, no, it's about a ... it's hard to explain. We're trying to stop something bad.

DRAGICA

Oh sad, you want coffee? JOSIP! GET COFFEE!

ANJUS

We don't –

EUGENE

I'll take a cup. What? I like coffee, it's like drinking dirty water, makes me feel dangerous.

ANJUS

Anyway we need help translating this cartoon.

MARIJA

Of course.

JOSIP

Here is tea.

MARIJA

He wanted coffee! Bad, Josip!

JOSIP

Please no hit Josip.

EUGENE

This is fine. It's great. Just as awful as coffee.

MARIJA

Sjajno! Anyway let me see cartoon.

ANJUS

Here.

JOSIP

I found all those telegrams I lost! They were under the teapot! Telegram!

DRAGICA

Do not interrupt –

MARIJA

Oh! You will want to see this -

DRAGICA

What?

(Beat. Reads.)

Oh. The monarchy has been overthrown! We are now a Democratic Republic.

MARIJA

Josip! Change the flags!

EUGENE

Congratulations!

DRAGICA

Thank you! For the good of all citizens we shall translate your cartoon. Now let's see ...

JOSIP

Found another telegram!

MARIJA

What now? Oh!

DRAGICA

What?

MARIJA

There was a student's strike and the Marxists have taken power!

DRAGICA

Paint the flags red Josip!

JOSIP

Yes comrade!

ANJUS

And the cartoon?

MARIJA

You bourgeoisie imperialists get nothing from us! Workers Unite!

ANJUS

Marx you've done it again! He also stiffed me with the bill when we went out drinking in Baden Baden. Sure we had a gooden gooden time, but –

JOSIP

Another telegram!

MARIJA

What now is – oh. The Ottomans invaded. Hang up the portrait of the Sultan! Praise Allah!

JOSIP

A salaam alaikum.

DRAGICA

We should really have checked the telegrams earlier. But it is exciting that we are living in the crucible of history!

EUGENE

Sure all of this is ... interesting, I guess, but can you just tell us what the cartoon says?

MARIJA

Of course Islam is the light of the world and spreading knowledge is our duty. Now let me see. Oh it's –

JOSIP

Oh yet another telegram! It was stuck to the bottom of the teapot.

ANJUS

So many telegrams! In my days people stayed off the gram and actually communicated face to face!

EUGENE

Please, please just tell us!

MAJICA

The Habsburgs have taken our land and they've pushed the Ottomans back. We are to return home to be killed. Oh well. SHUT IT ALL DOWN!

DRAGICA

I'll miss being alive.

MAJICA and DRAGICA leave.

EUGENE

Wait please ... the cartoon.

JOSIP

Goodbye forever. Oh, it says "All dressed up and no place to go." It's a play on words but in English it makes no sense. In our dialect the word for dinosaur and the word for pants are the same, so. Also I'm an anarchist and I've placed a bomb under the desk to stick it to those Hapsburg dogs so I suggest we leave.

AUTHOR

And with that they went outside.

10.8:

EUGENE

Huh, so it's just a cartoon I guess. Oh well.

An explosion behind them.

ANJUS

Right, but there is a deeper meaning. Lubbins didn't put this together for nothing. This isn't a random collection of things we're reading too much into.

EUGENE

Certainly not. Where's the next clue?

ANJUS

We have harpoon. Apron Ho. Monarchy. Period. The dash. The dash! Dash ... dash ...

EUGENE

A dash is a line. A line is what you stand behind. Or on. Or in. Is it 'on line' or 'in line.'

ANJUS

On a line? A fishing line. Fishing. Fishermen! Of course Lubbins would trust his secret with the fishermen. Down at the fishermen's wharf? But who fishes the fishermen?

EUGENE

The bartender! Cause all fishermen are drunks! And the number one bar for fishermen is –

ANJUS

The Reel 'Em Inn! On water street!

EUGENE

To the Reel 'Em Inn!

AUTHOR

And with that they went to the crustiest bar on the old seadog wharf. A rough and tumble place.

10.9:

EUGENE

Oh Reel 'Em Inn! I get it I-N-N. Clever.

BARTENDER

What's your drink?

EUGENE

One third grape juice, one third apple juice and the last third a bunch of cherries. I call it the Lil Gentleman.

BARTENDER groans.

ANJUS

Gene, you gotta act tough. (Beat.)

Rum. In a dirty glass.

BARTENDER

Glass? Well, well. I like the cut of your jib, wierdie.

Puts their drinks on the table.

ANJUS

Well this jib cuts back. We need the skin-flint slime on a guy named Lubbins, he sent us here and we need answers quick!

EUGENE

And more cherries in here!

BARTENDER

Never heard of no Lubbins. There was a fella, Cubby Cubbins he used to come in here.

ANJUS

Close enough. Where'd he sit?

BARTENDER

The stool. Right there. The one he's sitting on!

EUGENE

Ah! Me? I didn't even realize I was sitting! It's like some sort of ghost stool! But it really cradles my buns.

ANJUS

Bun cradle or not, we need to solve this. Hmmm what would he be looking at ... huh. Lots of bric-a-brac. Ship model, ship model, knots, ropes, a bell, a painting of a rabbit, ship model ...

ANJUS

Rabbit painting? That seems ... out of place.

BARTENDER

Aye, it appeared there one day ... like a little island unto itself but I've grown to appreciate it, like a son.

ANJUS

Rabbit ... an island unto itself ... of course Rabbit Island. Another name for a rabbit is a coney. Coney Island!

EUGENE

The treasure is on Coney Island!

ANJUS

Wait there's a treasure now?

EUGENE

Treasure, message, what are we doing again exactly!

ANJUS

Solving the final riddle of Henry B. Lubbins! But we need a ship to reach Coney Island!

EUGENE

Maybe one of these stouthearted men will take us.

ANJUS

Listen up you slimy sea slugs! Which one of you sailors is going to shepherd us to a Coney Island?

SAILOR 1

Listen tootsie, ain't none of us sailing! The Boll Weevil is out there! He's stealing cargo and raiding ships to fund his campaign against the Bland-Allison Act! Any of us try to sail he'll swoop out of the mists and shiver our timbers until we end up like Tim Shimbers.

SAILOR 2

He's dead.

EUGENE

None of you will take us? You're all scared?

SAILOR 1

We ain't scared of nothing! We just don't want to do it!

SAILOR 2

Aye!

EUGENE

Well I do have this ... banana!

SAILOR 1

Gasp and avast! A banana! Don't you know there's nothing more terrible than bringing a banana on a boat!

SAILOR 2

He's cursed us all by even bringing that yellow skinned devil in here!

SAILOR 1

Let's all away, my fellow salts!

The sailors all run off.

ANJUS

They all ran off. Where'd you even get that banana?

EUGENE

I grabbed it when we ran through that fruit and veggie market. Remember we were being chased by –

ANJUS

I remember. But with all the boatmen gone we'll never make it to Coney Island.

PERCIFUL FANCY

Never? That's a long way from somewhere!

EUGENE

Who is this charismatic devil?

PERCIFUL FANCY

Perciful Fancy, the dandy dabbler. I have a boat. And you two interest me.

EUGENE

But aren't you scared of the Boll Weevil?

PERCIFUL FANCY

Ha! Fear? Hardly. The Boll Weevil won't bother us. He and I are never in the same place at the same time. Wink Wink.

EUGENE

Huh?

PERCIFUL FANCY

Ha! You are a riot!

ANJUS

So you'll take us to Coney Island?

PERCIFUL FANCY

I do have a booking for later tonight, but we should be back from that rabbit plagued refuge before nightfall.

EUGENE

Huzzah!

PERCIFUL FANCY

And all it will cost you is a kiss.

ANJUS

You're not my type, but –

PERECIFUL FANCY

Not you, honey, him.

EUGENE

Me? But ...

PERCIFUL FANCY

It's fine I kiss people here all the time. Don't be a Nancy and plant one on Perciful Fancy.

They kiss.

EUGENE

Nice. Huh. I'm surprised no one here had a problem with it.

BARTENDER

We've all done things at sea. Besides this is a gay bar.

EUGENE

Yes it is quite merry and gay here.

BARTENDER

Yeah ... that.

PERCIFUL FANCY

Good good. What a rumpus!

EUGENE

We could do it again? Just to prove ... something.

PERCIFUL FANCY

The moment has passed, but now let's away to my ship – the Rainbow Wind! She'll do us nicely.

EUGENE

Great! To the Rainbow Wind!

AUTHOR

And soon they were aboard a well-appointed cutter, its sails at the ready.

10.10:

PERCIFUL FANCY

Ready to hit the high seas?

EUGENE

Aye, aye captain. I always wanted to say that.

Hold it right there Fancy!

A group of Pinkertons run in.

PINKERTON

PERCIFUL FANCY

The Pinkertons!

PINKERTON

We know you're The Boll Weevil! We've got you now!

ANJUS

He's the Boll Weevil? That would explain all these ill-gotten gains strewn around the ship.

PERCIFUL FANCY

You'll never take me alive Pinkertons!

That's fine, shoot 'em!

Lots of gunfire.

PINKERTON

EUGENE

Whoa!

PINKERTON

The bounty said dead or alive. Now let all this gun smoke clear and – where is he?

Sound of splash.

PERCIVAL FANCY

Ha you missed, boys! Now I'll swim to safety and -- oh no a shark!

A shark attacks him.

PINKERTON

That shark is shanking our bounty! Pinkertons get that shark!

Sound of the Pinkertons jumping into the water.

ANJUS

So that happened.

EUGENE

It looks like they're all getting swept out to sea by the current ... even the shark.

ANJUS

What do we do now? We have no captain and we need to get to Coney Island.

EUGENE

We can sail there! How hard can it be! Anchors away!

AUTHOR

It turned out to be very hard for as soon as they unmoored from the dock the small sailboat started moving wildly ...

10.11:

EUGENE

This is terrible! We're out of control!

ANJUS

Why did I think I could do this!

AUTHOR

They were at the mercy of the winds and the sea. But eventually through a lot of effort and minimal ability they crashed onto land.

10.12:

EUGENE

We're alive! We're alive! And on land. Oh sweet, sweet land!

ANJUS

I think ... somehow ... I think this is Coney Island!

EUGENE

We did it! We're the best! And look there's the cute little rabbits!

Sound of growling.

ANJUS

Oh dear ... no look at that sign ... we're not on Coney Island – and those aren't rabbits ... we're on Angry Badger Peninsula!

EUGENE

Oh they're so angry!

ANJUS

Run!

AUTHOR

And so they ran and the badgers gave chase and there was much biting, but the badgers knew not to leave the peninsula because the edge of the peninsula was where the people of Brooklyn threw away all their jagged glass and brambles ... but Eugene and Anjus didn't know this and thus ran through the glass and bramble fields ...

10.13:

ANJUS & EUGENE

Ow. Ow. Ooch. Ow. Ow. Ow.

AUTHOR

But they pushed through; they needed to solve the mystery of Lubbins' note. They made it past the last shard and then crawled across rusty blade beach before collapsing on the nearby boardwalk. Luckily Shaindel was there.

10.14:

SHAINDEL
Anjus? Eugene?

ANJUS
Almost Officer Doubles?

SHAINDEL
Call me Shaindel.

ANJUS
Where have you been?

SHAINDEL
I was outside your place when I saw –

EUGENE
There's no time!

SHAINDEL
You asked.

EUGENE
We're lucky you knew where to find us.

SHAINDEL
Actually I was visiting my Uncle Pinchus' knish stand. He's been a farklempst since Speedy left. You guys look terrible.

EUGENE
Trying to solve this note ... code.

SHAINDEL
Let me see. Which part is code? The letter or the stuff on the back?

EUGENE
There's a front?

SHAINDEL

Yeah. It says – “Dear Birdbrain, --”

EUGENE

He must mean Anjus.

SHAINDEL

“I fear my life is in danger. Sadly I have no one else to turn to. Enemies are everywhere. I’ve learned the Blow Hole Gang is hiding out in Castle Clinton. Go solve these crimes and screw off. Yours, never – Henry Lubbins the Third. PS: Ignore my scribbles on the back.” Well there you go.

EUGENE

Oh it’s a double cypher it must –

ANJUS

Shut up.

EUGENE

To Castle Clinton?

ANJUS

After the hospital.

SHAINDEL

My sister works at the Jewish Veterans Hospital. I should really tell the police about the whole Blow Hole Gang thing.

EUGENE

To the hospital!

AUTHOR

And so the mystery of Henry Lubbins’ note was solved.

END OF CHAPTER 10