

...But That's Another Story

By Mark Edgemon

Did I ever tell you that I was once the Captain of "The Courtesan Dirigible" the first Bordello zeppelin? As her Captain, I, John Heinie, along with my three trusted lieutenants First, Second and Third John, all preferably wanting to keep their identities a secret for obvious reasons, sailed across the oceans to many exotic lands in search of needful clientele.

I navigated this steam-powered world of fantasy with an analog computer I invented based on the notes and drawings of the late Charles Babbage, who had designed but never invented the analytical engine, which he worked on from 1837 until his death in 1870. I modified his concept, the brilliant man that I am and invented the first steam powered computer capable of tracking paths to geological destinations across the globe. I would often send out computerized messages, yet sadly never received one in return, due in part to having the only computer in the known world, but that's another story!

The design of my airship of ill repute is a Victorian style parlor with a total of 127 rooms, each with a heart shape bed and the strumpet or tart of ones choice. Yum! We only cater to the finest gentle folk and by that, I mean those with money. I have changed the names of the ladies of the evening to dessert references such as Creampuff, Ambrosia, Sugar Plum, Bon Bon and other such delicious nicknames, sure to set ones taste buds watering.

While sailing over Paris one evening in our flying dessert tray, we were set upon by pirates in their own airships, wanting our money and who knows what else...well we all know what else, but being the polite gentlemen that I am, I prefer to only make light reference to it.

As they threatened us with a volley from their steam cannons, I was prepared for such an encounter with an unorthodox mode of defense, the flatulence flamethrower. I attached the rear ends of each of our ladies and their gentlemen callers to the connecting tubes to our gas chamber and fed them all a concoction known only as spicy bean mishmash. Within minutes our internal gas pressure had built up enough power and so we released a volley to the pirate airship while lighting the gas as it left our zeppelin, totally incinerating their ship, plunging the pirates to a fiery death. I had used this maneuver once before on space aliens, but that's another story!

I would not wish that fate on anyone. Well that's not true, I just inflicted this fate on the band of air pirates, so obviously, I would wish it upon them.

The engagement with the pirate ship caused damage to our steam combustion unit and we were no longer able to contain the needed pressure to keep our ship afloat. So as a consequence, we began to plummet toward the city of Paris heading straight for the Eiffel Tower. As we were approaching our collective deaths, an idea occurred to me. I had the entire ships compliment, stick their heads out a port and begin to blow with all their might toward the ground. Fortunately, the additional air support allowed us to float gently toward the earth, saving everyone and our airship as well. However afterwards, most of our crew and passengers were hyperventilating, so I injected them with a serum I invented to restore the oxidation to their blood stream, a drug I once used with the Poopoo Aborigine pigmies of Australia, but that's another story!

Having repaired my ship, I visited the university in Paris and met a young Polish woman that I just simply adored. She was married at the time, but I could not resist her intelligence and wit. We had a torrid love affair in the university laboratory where she spent much of her time. Marie and I conceived a daughter who she named Irene, however her husband believed the child to be his and so she never made him the wiser. I suggested that Marie study Uranium for their X-ray properties and eventually showed her how to isolate radium. When it was time for me to go, she preferred that I call her by her married name for appearance sake. So as I met her for the last time, I tipped my hat and said, "Good evening, Madam Curie". I slipped a bar of radioactive radium in her pocket for her to study, but she never discovered it and was found dead some days later from being poisoned by the substance. She was unfairly given credit for all of my discoveries, but that's another story!

Our next stop was London and so my girls and I frequented the taverns of that day, drumming up business for our flying whorehouse when suddenly, I heard a scream in the alley next to the tavern. I ran to see what was the source of the commotion, when I spied a man with a long curved instrument raised above one of my girl's throat. I grabbed his hand and told him if he wanted to shave any part of my prostitute, he would have to pay in advance. He introduced himself as Jack, a prominent doctor in the area and so I had him take a look at my knee, which was giving me problems each time I lifted my leg. He told me not to lift my leg anymore and so with that brilliant diagnosis, my condition was miraculously cured.

After I left the alley I heard another scream a few minutes later, but all of my girls had entered our ship and I figured the good doctor known to me only as Jack could handle any problem that arose. I read later that a doctor who also called himself Jack was killing prostitutes in the streets of London...but that's another story.

The End