

Duex Cerveau

By Michele Dutcher

“Water loving mammal – five letters.” The nanny chewed on the end of the pencil, trying to concentrate. “Second letter ‘T’. 24 down – needle opening.” Her voice trailed off as she glanced over at Shadwick, the four-year-old she was babysitting. He had his back to the TV, and he seemed to be studying her heart-shaped, brown face. “Did you enjoy our trip to the museum today?” she asked, laying the book of EZ Crosswords on the coffee table.

Shadwick smiled broadly, but said nothing, as usual.

There was the slamming of the back door. “I’m home,” shouted Cheryl Lambert, a sack of groceries hitting the table. “Supper smells good!”
The nanny went in to the kitchen to help her employer put away the food.

“Shadwick and I went to the museum again today. He seems so happy there.”

“What does he look at?” asked the mother, flipping off her low-heeled shoes.

“He really likes this one old book there – the small plaque in front says Voynich – but it’s opened to a center page, so I don’t know if that’s the title or the author.” The nanny handed Cheryl a can of spaghetti sauce.

Cheryl began shouting in a sing-song tone: “Shaddy, honey, you need to wash your hands.” The mom glanced through the door and was surprised to see her son drawing on Rachel’s crossword puzzles. The boy stood up and quickly headed into the bathroom.

The mother picked up the book and handed it to her nanny. “I’m sorry if he drew on your book...”

“No, no, look at this! He worked out the puzzle I had started and half of the next one as well!”

As the tiny child reappeared, the women were totally silent, not knowing what to say.

The man in the white lab coat approached Cheryl with a broad smile. They both began to watch Shadwick as he joyously solved one puzzle after another. “He’s amazing, really. We’ve had him working on crosswords since he came out of the MRI. He seems to start with a clue in the middle, then work outward, as if he’s just using how the words are connected and the number of letters required to solve them.”

“He’s always been so quiet and withdrawn.”

“Einstein didn’t speak until he was four.”

“Did the brain scan show anything?”

The doctor took Cheryl aside, leaving the delighted child to his puzzle books. “According to the initial scans, your son has a rare condition known as *Duex Cerveau* – literally ‘two minds’.”

“You mean like a split personality?”

“No, no. He has two completely different mind signatures living inside one brain. Imagine two Einsteins in one skull. Fantastic! Has he shown any interest in books before?”

Cheryl thought for a moment. “There was a book at the museum at Harvard – Maybe Voynier...or Voy..”

“Voynich? The Voynich Manuscript?” He stepped over to a counter and picked up his iPad. He drew up an image and took it over to the child who grabbed the device, rushing from page to page.

Over the next five months, it would appear to Cheryl that she had lost her son, as he withdrew into the document on the screen, studying it for hours, only looking away from it long enough to eat and sleep.

Cheryl Lambert had arranged the seats in her front room facing one wall, as if a child were performing a simple play he had made up over the course of an afternoon. The guests who occupied those dozen seats, however, were anything but ordinary. The scientific world had come knocking on her door – waiting eagerly to see what conclusions he would draw.

There was a definite hush in the room as the five-year-old boy took his place beside a computer in the front. Shadwick pushed a button and the PowerPoint presentation began, using a computer voice. “In the 1970s Prescott Currier postulated that the Voynich Manuscript was written by two people who were completely correlated. I believe my translation deviates only slightly in that I believe it was written by one person who was hardwired as I am – with two minds. That is why it has taken all these centuries for the document to be correctly translated. I first examined the Herbal portion of the manuscripts, in order to get an overall picture of the document. Some of these plants were indeed grown in Europe during the middle ages. However, the majority of these drawings were details of plants grown on this world certainly – but not on this world’s time-space: in a separate dimension.”

There were shocked expressions throughout the room as the boy made time for the outburst before continuing with the presentation. “The Voynich Manuscript was written between 1403 and 1417, but the question has remained: how did the author see the spiral Andromeda Galaxy two centuries before the invention of the telescope? Newbold’s translation of the paragraph was correct: ‘In a concave mirror I saw a star in the form of a snail.’”

"The author was actually caught up and transported to a land where the normal is what you call *Duex Cerveau* – where everyone has two minds. This condition has the advantage of seeing all

things from at least two perspectives – which lessens conflict. In a world that had never known war, their science was much further advanced than we were. It leaves the question: in this other world, what advancements have been made during the last 600 years!

“There are pages in this document which provide a description of how this earlier Duex Cerveau travelled into this other world. The doorway is only open periodically and open only to we of a similar mind, which is why I chose to give my farewell speech tonight. I will return, but I know not when.”

At this, the child began to fade before anyone could reach him, disappearing completely just before the words, “I love you mama – I’ll see you soon,” tumbled out of empty space.

The End