



Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

5/19/99

### Nostrum Donates Body to Duke Scientists

The latest episode of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, is now available at

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over Joyce Maynard's selling of her old J. D. Salinger love letters. "Some things are personal between a man and a woman," the lad was heard to mutter, which of course immediately set High Falutin's eyes a' rollin'. "That Maynard woman has been writing autobiographies since age eleven," she responded. "The old coot should have known better than to go messing around with teeny-boppers with active typewriters. He's only getting what he deserves." Ignoring his inamorata's anachronistic language (teeny-boppers indeed!), the Mite responded hotly. "I'm a big fan of *Catcher in the Rye*," he said. "We're talking Holden Caulfield here." To which High simply rolled her eyes again. "Give me a break. What we're talking about is a moon-eyed virtual Humbert Humbert." "But the point is," the Mite went on, undaunted, "that the letters should be his property." Tell that to the Supreme Court, which is exactly what High said to him. "You're worried that the same thing is going to happen to you," Low piped up. "You're worried that someday you'll be a lusty old hermit, and that someone will out your natural romanticism." We were doing fine up until that point; I can easily see the Mite as a lusty old hermit some day, but this natural romanticism was hard to understand. I've seen some of those Salinger letters; they're just plain goofy. I can't imagine the Nostrumite writing anything remotely comparable. "Billets-doux from a billy goat!" High said, attempting to end the conversation. You could see the Mite's mind switching tracks. "*Billets-doux from a billy goat*," he repeated a couple of times. "Can I use that?" "No," High told him, "but I'm sure you will anyhow."

If not him, me. *Billets-doux from a billy goat...* It does have a nice ring to it.

Jules



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Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

5/26/99

### Nostrum Finally Wins Daytime Emmy

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the state of the local press. "Witness the difference," he said Sunday, holding aloft a New York Times in one hand and a Boston Globe in the other. "Here above the fold is nothing but some nonsense about a football stadium," he said, shaking his copy of the Globe. High and Low bowed their heads in shame, knowing full well that the lad was referring to Fenway Park, which is really a soccer stadium. "Now look at this," he went on, shaking the Times. "Every kind of news imaginable. Chinese spies, Kosovar bombings, school violence -- that's what it's all about." But it turns out his special affection was for the below-the-fold front-page Times article on this 95-year old woman who is running her Illinois farm the way her grandparents did; apparently the local officials are trying to grant the place landmark status. "The only modern conveniences the old girl has are a freezer and an electric stove," he said admiringly. But he saved his real awe for this: "It says here," he announced, "that she pulled all her own teeth." There's a recommendation for the old ways if I ever heard one. Of course, all this anti-Boston sentiment is due to the pending summer break. The lad has no job yet -- although Mr. Ma 'N Pa has offered him a dozen choices -- and is thinking of returning to the Apple, while the Falutins will be heading south next weekend. Yours truly has decided, oh joy, oh rapture, to take up Mr. MNP on his offer of a pizza chef's position at Chef Manpa's Trattoria Romano, about five blocks from the Square. My first step on the way to that cordon bleu, I guess. None of this bodes well for keeping Nostrum moving during the summer, but we'll see what happens.

Jules





Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

6/2/99

### Nostrum to Commence Night Trading

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fate of poor old Dolly. "I told you this cloning business would come to a bad end," the lad says. "These one-offs have the half-life of hotel shampoo bottles." His unsuccessful grasping for the right metaphor is emblematic of our sorry state these days. The Falutins are long gone back below the M-D line for the summer, where they are working as junior missionaries to the golf community at Myrtle Beach, while I have become way too adept at tossing pizza dough into the air and actually catching it. The Nostrumite spends the day walking Unix the Cocker Nostrumutt around Cambridge, preparing his psyche for his own return to Mite Manor and the arms of his loving family. Hacking out the new web site has kept him marginally entertained, but a paragraph a day isn't much for a youth of his prolixity. The real problem is, as we near our annual summer break from publishing Nostrum, the lad is once more at sixes and sevens no matter what he's doing in his unspare time. As we plan out the final episode of the season -- a big one, covering the entire Blessed Moly and the Night of the Tumbling Debate God -- he mutters a lot under his breath about wanting to do at least one worthwhile thing during this vacation period. I vaguely think I heard the words, Las Vegas. I'll keep you posted.

Jules



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Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

6/9/99

**Nostrum Files Amicus Brief in Sable Suit**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the dislocation of Team Nostrum. With him home at Mite Manor and me holding up the Cambridge homestead and the Falutins bringing religion to the golfers at Myrtle Beach, there's no us anymore. The lad sent me an e-mail yesterday in which he contemplated the popularity of Ricky Martin, who last week got two "collectors' " covers of TV Guide. "First of all," he wrote, "who collects the covers of TV Guide outside of Seinfeld repeats? And second, why are we not getting on this Latino bandwagon? Every Tom, Dick and Harry is now going back to their Spanish roots one way or the other." He then proposed publishing Los Nostrumos, but I don't think he was serious. He did ramble on a bit more about the TV Guide covers, though. He was especially curious over the four -- count 'em, four -- collectors' covers devoted to Phantom Menace. "Didn't the TV Guide people realize that it's a movie? It's not on television. End of story. Who's picking the covers there, anyhow?" Oh, well. Despite the dislocation of Team N, we are somehow managing to keep the two web sites going, and we've given list management over to the Listbot folks, so there isn't much left to do now except sink into the morass of pure summer. If you happen to be in the neighborhood of Chef Manpa's, btw, come in and say Howdy to the pizza chef.

Jules



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Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

6/16/99

### Nostrum Sneaks into G-Rated Movie

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the death of DeForest Kelley. He sent me the following e-mail from Mite Manor: "If I'm not mistaken, McCoy is the first serious Trek star to boldly go into that great good-night. 'Damn it, Jim. I'm a doctor, not a liverwurst.' Damn it, Jim. I'm a doctor, not a pitching wedge.' McCoy was one cantankerous character. 'Damn it, Jim. I'm just a country doctor.' Of course, you've got to wonder why they'd bring a country doctor onto a starship; couldn't they find a space doctor? But DeF K (who with a name like that could have had a second career as a rapper) was the first of the doctors, and it is interesting that the NG people felt that they needed a doctor in a major role too, despite the fact that she wasn't a devastatingly interesting character, aside from perhaps romancing Jean-Luc and working on a cure for his baldness. I never could figure out why they'd send the doctor on away teams. For that matter I could never figure out why they'd send any of the chief officers on away teams. And they're still doing it on Voyager. Since when do generals lead the charge? Of course, like everyone who has ever watched any version of ST, I live in great dread of being the unknown actor on the away team -- it's Spock, McCoy, Kirk, and Lieutenant Nostrumite, who gets his butt shot off before he's even finished beaming down. Tonight I'm going to rent all 6 of the films with the original cast and watch them in a marathon. I'll let you know how it goes."

I can't imagine that watching 6 Trek films in a row could in any way, shape, or form go conceivably well. The lad is bad enough as it is. I guess things are pretty lonely at the Manor these days...

Jules





Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

6/23/99

**Nostrum Posts Ten Commandments (Coveting Down 18%!)**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the state of celebrity in America today, as recorded in the following e-mail dispatch from Mite Manor: "Two weeks ago I lived in the blissful peace of having never heard of Mia Hamm. I'd wake up fresh and full of vim in the morning, perform my ablutions, and enjoy my tasty breakfast of microwaved left-over pizza while devouring the news of the world as delivered to my doorstep via a plastic-wrapped copy of the New York Times. The name Mia Hamm would never once appear or be uttered." I know the Mite well; I can't recall him ever waking up full of vim, but I'll let that pass. "Now, I am Mia Hammed to death. Her picture is in every magazine, every newspaper, every wanted poster. She is discussed on the radio, on TV and on the Internet. She is apparently some sort of squeaky clean role model, which is all well and good, as the world can never get enough squeaky clean role models and Lord knows we can't look to figure skating for our heroines anymore, so what is left but whatever it is that Mia Hamm does." Obviously he sees Mia everywhere but hasn't exactly pursued her down to knowing what her sport is. "But must the media ride her to death? Must we be tired of her before she's been around even for a month? Isn't there anything else to write about in the world?" Here is where we get to the underlying cause; as usual, the Nostrumitic mind works in mysterious ways. "I wouldn't mind," he concludes, "if her name didn't sound like Yoda explaining that he's a bad actor."

Can summer end soon enough?

Jules



**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

6/30/99

### Nostrum Regrets Imbibing Belgian Coke

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over his isolation at Mite Manor. He has found it impossible to find gainful employment, or, for that matter, ungainful employment. "Where are the Mr. Ma 'N Pa's when you need them?" he writes. As if being a pizza chef is all rice and flowers. Anyhow, I think mostly he misses High Falutin. I know I certainly miss Low. That is the problem with college romance, isn't it? Everybody comes from everywhere else and goes back at every opportunity. What will happen when graduation rears its ugly head? The thought is deadening. Meanwhile our ability to put out Nostrum episodes has been stretched to the limit, and next week will be our last before sliding off into our annual summer hiatus. Until then, all we have is our Good Guys/Bad Guys web site to keep us cool at night.

Is it time to send in the Wake registration yet?

Jules



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Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

7/7/99

### Nostrum Goes on Summer Hiatus

The latest episode of Nostrum, the high school debate soap opera, is now available at <http://members.aol.com/nostrumrus/index.html>.

We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the fact that we are going to take the rest of the summer off from *Nostrum*, but even he sees no way to overcome the problem of our seasonal diaspora. We simply have not mastered the art of long-distance collaborating. "I'll bet you Edith and Wharton never had this problem," he writes, thus proving the point.

We are not leaving the field completely, however. If you'll allow us a moment of shameless self-promotion (our usual letters tend to be more on the shameful side), die-hard fans of our deathless prose--and deathless fans of our die-hard prose--can visit our new Good Guys / Bad Guys web site at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/8002/index.html>, which is updated, albeit in tiny bits, on a daily basis. You can even subscribe to it, to receive our Picks of the Day. At least this will give you something to argue about. It works for us. And you can always use the remaining weeks of vacation to catch up on any *Nostrum* episodes you haven't read yet, although not having read them all by now shows pretty poor planning on your part. And if you wish to subscribe to *Nostrum* at <http://nostrum.listbot.com/> you'll be the first in line to get our next season of episodes when we resume in the fall. (There's even talk about a special backstory Myra Moon episode for subscribers only, but that's one egg I wouldn't count before it's laid if I were you.)

So, ta ta, mes amis. Stop by Mr. Ma 'N Pa's pizzeria if you're in Cambridge, or drop into the Falutin sisters' mission if you plan on visiting Myrtle Beach, or say hello to the Mite if you happen to drive by Mite Manor. We'll see you again in September.

Until then, the balcony is closed...

Jules



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**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

9/15/99

**Nostrum Confounds Cassandras and Returns Yet Again**

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We almost didn't make it back. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over, well, just about everything that's happened over the summer. As he is wont to say, We leave you people alone for two minutes, and all hell breaks loose. Of course, the real issue is that Mite Manor is literally -- and we mean literally -- right around the corner from the future home of America's answer to Abelard and Eloise, Bill and Hillary (except those of you who actually know anything about Abelard know that this is wishful thinking on our part, or at least Hillary's). The last couple of weeks before the lad packed up the Mitemobile with all his worldly possessions and headed back to sanctuary in Cambridge, he sat on a plastic lawn chair on his front yard holding up a sign that read "Don't Blame Me, I Voted for Dukakis" and selling lemonade to gawkers at two bucks a pop. This has not been good for his nerves. But back home (or at least in that home away from home that feels more like home than home does, which says maybe a little too much about our upbringing) and in the welcoming arms of the Falutin sisters, fresh from their proselytizing down in Myrtle Beach (which, we hasten to point out, did nothing to prevent Hurricane later Tropical Storm later tropical depression later will the sun ever shine again Dennis from wreaking all sorts of heathen havoc), he is a happy man again. Or as happy as he ever gets, if you know what we mean. And so another school year begins, and with it, weekly episodes of America's favorite debate soap opera.

We who are about to whine salute you.

Jules



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**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

***From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:***

**9/22/99**

**Nostrum Eligible for Miss America Title Under New Rules**

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**We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the scrambling in the Reform Party. As he put it, "I like my wackos to be clearly defined," and now he can't make heads nor tails out of them. "What do Ross Perot, Jesse Ventura and Pat Buchanan have in common?" he asked, obviously rhetorically. "They all put their pants on one leg at a time?" High, the Episcopalian Falutin sister, suggested. "Not Perot," the Mite pointed out. Not Perot indeed. Of course, the real problem is that the hijinks of our beloved third party are distracting the lad from his favorite autumn activity, which is sorting out the new television season. His personal pick for the hall of fame so far? Dream Maker. "Richard Simmons grants your wishes," the Mite says wistfully. "The mind boggles."**

**It certainly does.**

**Jules**



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**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

***From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:***

**9/29/99**

**Nostrum Bids Fond Farewell to Mr. Potatohead**

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**We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the new Israeli ride at Walt Disney World. Of course, the lad is a bit of a fanatic on the disneyfication of America, alternating between abject worship of Mickey Mouse and throwing darts at his autographed photo of Mikey Eisner, so the wear and tear on his psyche now is understandable. "It's a small world after all, except in the Middle East," the Mite explained. "What were these people thinking? Don't they know that they're only allowed to rewrite American history? Jerusalem is not exactly Fantasyland." Although with the Millennium coming, the idea of wanting a whole new series of rides down in Orlando probably makes sense, especially since Disney now has to compete with the updated Universal Studios. "The possibilities are endless," the lad pointed out. "Serbo-splashian Mountain. The Tutsi Tower of Terror. And the ever-popular East Timor Jungle Cruise. Now those are E tickets!"**

**Get in line now.**

**J.**



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**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

***From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:***

10/6/99

**Nostrum Art Collection Opens at Brooklyn Museum**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the Mets game this Sunday. Needless to say, the lad has absolutely no interest in baseball whatsoever, but the Falutin sisters were eagerly following the playoff race, and the Mets are, as much as any, the Mite's home team, so he agreed to go with the girls to a sports bar for the first time in his life.

**Big mistake.**

"First of all, they've got a hundred televisions in seven different sizes, all of them on to different programs," he reported. "And you're not supposed to watch just one game, even though for the most part you can't get past the fact that there are this many games be televised at one time, much less zeroing in on just one or two of them. They've got pro games, college games, high school games, baseball, football, curling, hockey, golf, 43-man squamish -- you name it, it's on. And apparently the measure of your machismo is not only to have an eye on every one of them, but to have an opinion on every one of them. And, of course, you've got to cheer whenever anything happens, no matter what the game. Bizarro!" He did, however, manage to at least *look* as if he belonged, or that's what he says, anyhow, and he claims he did enjoy the Mets game, which he reports was won on a fumble. Close enough. His take on statistics was quite accurate though. "You only get statistics in baseball," he said. "On the football screens, for instance, they'd try to tell you this or that, but aside from knowing how many yards these guys were racking up, nobody seemed to care. But with baseball? It's unbelievable. They'd flash up some stat like the number of first-base hits by left-handed Dominicans during sunspots, and inevitably someone would comment on it, argue about it, and claim that in '84 in the Cardinals game against the Rabbis, so-and-so did such-and-such and he was actually right-handed. Franciscan. And there were no sunspots."

The Falutin sisters plan to watch the rest of the games by themselves.

J.



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***From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:***

**10/13/99**

**Nostrum Publishes 6,000,000,000th Episode**

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**We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over his latest discovery on the Internet, the Neptune Society. "They sell on-line cremations," he announced in a voice of doom. "Actually, they sell cremations on line," High corrected, being both a grammarian and, as a budding cleric, having a special interest in the subject of the dear departing. "According to this," the lad went on, undaunted, "you can get the whole shebang for about eleven hundred dollars." "Same cost as a new I-Mac," Low pointed out. "Not that it's the same thing," she hastened to add, a little too late; she's been in the market for replacing her ancient Pentium II machine with something that looks like a lollipop, so her mind has been on one track lately. "It's the concept that bothers me," the Mite explained. "Is there no boundary to e-commerce? Is there nothing sacred?" Both Falutin sisters, who are sacredians in training, began to glare at him at that point. He backed off a bit. "For an extra charge," he said softly, "they'll scatter the ashes for you, which is mighty big of them." He paused. "Although I don't get the name Neptune. Nep's brother, on the other hand, yes." At this point High had had enough. "Oh, yeah. I'll bet they'd get a lot of takers for the Hades Society." "Good point," the Mite agreed. "Anyhow, it says here that cremation in America is a growth market. All the baby boomers are starting to get interested." The furrows on his forehead grew deeper, as they always do when he mentions the preceding generation. "It figures those schmucks would figure out a way to incorporate price and convenience with death. That's just the kind of thing they would do."**

**If you have any idea what he's talking about, you're a smarter person than**

**yr obt srvnt,**

**J.**



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**Go Directly to the Current Episode and Skip this Inane Malarkey**

*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

10/13/99

### **Nostrum Bids Fond Farewell to Kenneth Starr**

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We almost didn't make it this week. Unix the Cocker Nostrumutt is in a state of permanent depression over the arrival of Pecksniff, the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead. Which, of course, is a bit of a long story. High, the Episcopalian Falutin sister, was so relieved at not having to defend the banning of Harry Potter books in South Carolina (in all his ranting over this issue, the Nostrumite never once blamed either of the Falutins, despite their sojourn this summer in Myrtle Beach bringing Jesus to the golf community), that she decided to reward the lad with a special gift. For reasons that only an Episcopalian can fathom, she decided that the best present would come in the form of a Siamese cat. Low, the Unitarian Falutin sister, claims that she would have been satisfied giving what she refers to as felinus Americanus, or your basic alley cat, but that's the difference between Episcopalians and Unitarians (you can look that up in your official guide to Protestant religious sects, if you don't believe me). Anyhow, Pecksniff -- all six freshly weaned inches of him -- arrived over the weekend, and although he entered the door anonymously, his tearing through the apartment pecking and sniffing at everything in the place like a Tasmanian devil sealed his name in about five minutes. He doesn't seem to be interested in things like sleep, but he immensely enjoys racing willy nilly across the wooden floors at top speed, all of which is very amusing to the humans in the vicinity, but which has turned Unix into a nervous wreck. Like all cockers, he wasn't exactly a walking ad for Prozac to begin with, but he has spent the last couple of days hiding in the corner out of fear for his life. Just when he had gotten used to ruling the roost, he finds that there are other, unaccountable mammals that can just stroll right in (or bound right in, in Pecksniff's case) and take over in the wink of an eye. If any proof were needed that Unix is unhappy, aside from his attempts to crawl through the floorboards, there is also a recurrence of what we refer to euphemistically as accidents, which we haven't seen since Unix arrived lo these many moons ago. I'm sure we'll get it all sorted out eventually, but for the time being, if you drop by to visit, bring your armor, as protection against Pecksniff, and your galoshes, as protection against Unix.

J.



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***From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:***

**10/20/99**

**Nostrum Confuses "Dutch" with "Pale Fire"**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the continuing antics of Pecksniff, the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead. He perceived it as cute when his new Siamese kitten was terrorizing poor Unix, the Cocker Nostrumutt, but now Pecksniff is terrorizing the Mite himself, and it's a whole different ball game. Young Peck has acquired the habit of jumping as far up on the lad's leg as he can and digging in with his tiny scalpel-like claws, looking something like a rather small koala bear climbing a eucalyptus tree. It's amazing how much blood a one-pound cat can draw. And if that wasn't bad enough, the critter has also acquired the habit of nocturnalism. "I know he's got to sleep sometime," the Nostrumite insists, but so far there's been no confluence of sleep between the two of them. "He jumps on my head at three in the morning, and it's like the end of the world, only more devastating." Which, I guess, depends on your perspective. For reasons I don't quite understand, Pecksniff performs none of these feats of feline legerdemain on me; occasionally he sits on my lap while I'm reading my weekly dose of Moan Chomsky, purring contentedly while the Mite eyes us angrily from across the room, wits at the ready. Peck is also as sweet as clover with the Falutins, and has even made a quick and steady truce with Unix, with whom he will now share a water dish with placid equanimity. But there is anything but detente been Pecksniff and the Nostrumite. "That damned cat has read Peter Singer, and he does not wish to be my slave," is how the Mite explains it. Or maybe he's read Peter Singer, and he does not wish to be the Mite's dinner. Whatever.

J.



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*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

10/20/99

### **Nostrum Commits to Hong Kong Nostrumland**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over his upcoming plans for Thanksgiving. He has decided to invite both me and the Falutin sisters to the festivities at the legendary Mite Manor, which is right up the road from Bill and Hillary's new digs. The first problem, of course, is Pecksniff, the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead. "My family has a lot of antiques at the Manor," the lad points out. "There's Ming vases, Faberge eggs, Tiffany lamps...." He makes the place sound like a Gumps catalog. "The thing is, young Peck will probably tear the place to pieces. The mater and pater won't be too happy about that." The mater and pater? I realize that I don't know too much about the Nostrumite's roots, but I'm beginning to wonder how much I really want to know. That's the thing about meeting people's parents. You're always merely expecting some earlier vintage of the present generation, but often they turn out to be anything but. When you look at Ben Stiller, for instance, you hardly see Frank Costanza. In any case, just as the Mite is softening us up for Nostrumitus Mater and Pater, he says that he's also softening them up for us. "At least the cat and dogs are purebreds," he says with a sigh. "But you and the Falutin sisters are anything but." Thanks a lot, pal.

I have a feeling that this is going to be a very interesting Thanksgiving.

J.



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*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

11/10/99

**Nostrum Declared a Monopoly in Finding of Fact**

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over this whole Thanksgiving trip. This weekend we were greeted with a surprise visit from Shrubb, whom the Mite referred to as his major domo. Apparently Shrubb is the Jeeves to Mite Manor's collection of Bertie Woosters, and he was sent up by the mater and pater to get the assembled visiting troops in good working order. He bears a striking resemblance to an overcooked fried egg, all shriveled at the yolk and burnt around the edges. The first thing he did was take the Falutins aside to discuss the appropriate wardrobe for the event. We kept hearing phrases like "tea dress" and "evening length," which don't exactly relate to daily life in Cambridge, where even for the Nostrumite, dressing up means wearing the *clean* Megadeth tee shirt. After Shrubb finished with the girls, he got me in his sights, but the Mite stopped him and said that he would take care of it himself out of his own wardrobe. Shrubb looked rather dubious, and I can't say I liked the sound of that myself. "What about the cutlery, sir?" Shrubb then asked. "I came prepared to provide full instruction." He tapped a leather case he had brought with him, but the Mite shrugged him off. "I'll give them some instruction before we get there." Shrubb responded with an icy: "Very good, sir." At that point Shrubb went out to his car -- a Lincoln Town Car, which I didn't know were driven by anyone except airport car services and Mafia wiseguys -- and came back with two pet traveling cases, one for Pecksniff the Cross-eyed Nostrumian Applehead, and the other for Unix the Cocker Nostrumutt. "I'll be taking the menagerie with me to prepare them," he announced, before proceeding to chase young Peck throughout the apartment for at least half an hour. When Peck doesn't want to get caught, he doesn't get caught. Unix was much more accommodating. When I asked Shrubb how he intended to "prepare" them, he was holding the dog's cage in one hand and the cat's cage in the other as he was making his way to the door. "Thoroughly," he responded, his last word of his visit.

I'm beginning to wonder if we wouldn't be better off with some Chicken McNuggets.

J.



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*From the Epistles of St. Jules to the Forensicians:*

12/1/99

### Nostrum Returns to Sunny Cambridge

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We almost didn't make it this week. The Nostrumite is in a state of permanent depression over the events of the holiday weekend which were, to put it mildly, less than festive, although not through any fault of the Cambridge contingent. Far from it: the Falutins and I were the soul of hoity toity, if you ask me, dressed as we were to the nines and gracious in spades. It was Colonel Chuzzleteal-Jones of the St. Andrews Reserves who attempted to seduce both Falutins at the same time in the billiards room (and being no better a billiards player than a Don Juan, according to Low, who is young enough to be the Colonel's great-granddaughter). It was Shrubbs who mislaid the oyster knives on the inside of the trifle forks, or something along those lines that got the major domo in hot water with the mater, who apparently will not be recovering from the disaster any time before Boxing Day. It was the pater who insisted on the Beaujolais Nouveau with tuna fish sandwiches Friday for the annual field trip to Saks to watch the natives thumb through the off-the-rack Christmas get-ups. It was Cousin Heathie and Little Ruth Margaret who got caught in the Manor sub-basement playing Chicago Hope (the sans Patinkin version, thank God). And it was Doug the Ham Salesman who had the problem with the Velcro fasteners (I mean, I think his name was Doug the Ham Salesman, but that may just be my phonetic memory of it). Anyhow, it's all over now, and we're back in place until the next holiday. Which, no matter how much he begs and pleads, neither I nor the Fs intend to spend at Mite Manor. Mes etoiles!

J.



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