

Plain Brown Wrapper Fress Inc.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Just after Thanksgiving of 1988, I received an envelope in the mail with no return address, just a strangely blurred postmark. Although it had OMINOUS stamped all over it, I opened it anyway to find a slender bundle of stories written by someone under the unusual pseudonym of Sue D. Nim, who in her letter offered me the chance of first dibs on these little "gems".

Sue's letter informed me that an unnamed editor had turned down her efforts because "this is a serious B&B zine into which a lot of effort goes, and your stories are not serious, not long, romantic and meaningful, and I'd get murdered by the LOC's if I included a story that made fun of the show."

Well, I've always considered that the writing of stories of a humorous nature is serious business. And if they can't take a joke....

So here I am, doing what I said I'd never do again as long as I lived, and publishing a zine. Yes, I know who Sue is. No, I'm not telling. She says she prefers her life to be unexciting. I'll be glad to get your LOC's to her, though. No letterbombs, please.





A NOTE FROM SUE D. NIM

"Although this little type-tapper worships Vincent's butter-soft hair and crystalline sapphire eyes as much as the next hyper-hormoned drooler, she also can give herself enough space to appreciate that the Adored One (and his premise, show, and fanfic writers) have a few teensy faults -- and a few openings for It is in this spirit of comic humor. jest that she tic-tic's her little satires and hopes that the B&B vestels will leave such items as tar and feathers at home in their Hope Chests, next to the velvet handcuffs and lion masks, where they belong."

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Any resemblence to any great writer or artist, living or dead, is for the most part unintentional, but any resememblence of the writing or art herein to actual good and saleable stuff is strictly in your own imagination.

If you must know, Lucinda C. Brown edited this thing, and Nancy A. Stasulis had her arm twisted by the aforementioned LCB and coughed up all of the art. All typing and computer graphics were also produced by LCB. If you (please!) feel like LOCing, send it to the address below.

Plain Brown Wrapper Press 521 S. Frederick Ave. #204 Gaithersburg, MD 20877



Reflections*

Ah, sweet Friday! I never thought you'd come.
I've dragged myself thru one whole week,
My soul is feeling numb.
But this is Friday, and for tonight I feast
And fill my eyes
And heave my sighs
With 'Beauty And The Beast'!

Ah, sweet Friday; after work I speed
To finish all my chores
And gather everything I need
To celebrate Friday, for this evening at least,
My attention whole
I'll drown my soul
In 'Beauty And The Beast'!

Ah, sweet Friday - the hour's drawing near,

The phone is taken off the hook,

The VCR is clear;

At eight p.m. on Friday, as reverent as a priest,

I settle quick

To get my fix

Of 'Beauty And The Beast'.

^{*}This doggerel is dedicated to all those awful fannish poems titled 'Reflections'!





Reflections on an Unfinished Symphony



REFLECTIONS ON AN UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

by Sue D. Nim

The music of Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony" ebbed and flowed in rich, melodic waves over the two people sitting in the tunnel under the grate near the first row. Vincent had long ago determined that this particular spot possessed just the right attributes to render it acoustically acceptable. In other words, you could hear good when you sat there.

It was also a good place to look up ladies' skirts, Vincent knew, but he was normally pretty reticent about that aspect of his choice of seats; after all, he had a noble image to uphold.

Suddenly, there was a flash of bright light followed almost immediately by a rumble and a sharp crash from the heavens above, a sound not discordant with the swirling music, and Vincent, feeling the first stirrings of his own private symphony, knew that it was turning into a dark and stormy night for those open-air music lovers above. He hoped the rain would hold off long enough for him to think up a few sentimental and poetic lines to pitch to his inamorata to get her in the mood.

"Lightning!" Catherine exclaimed.

"I think it was," agreed Vincent agreeably, knowing that his beloved was sometimes not too bright about such things and had to be reassured.

The downpour began almost immediately, and Vincent sighed. Hell's bells, just when he was on the point of huskily murmuring that old saw into her shell-like ear about how music hath charms to soothe the savage...whatever-it-was. He never could remember that last word. Breast? Or was it beast? He'd have to look that one up again.

Frowning up at Catherine, he wondered about what ailed her, and not for the first time. She was hopping around like one of his favorite fleas on a hot griddle, giggling like a schoolgirl at a slumber party, while the rain poured down through the grating and soaked her.

Like most feline creatures, Vincent hated the water and stayed well away from it, for the most part. Father wrestled him into a bath once every couple of months, if he could catch him, but that was the extent of his association with the wet stuff. Catherine looked like she was enjoying it, he observed doubtfully. Maybe the acid rain was short-circuiting her brain.

But then again, he thought, that little outfit she was wearing was obviously expensive, and now it was rain-ruined and starting to cling like a second skin. Maybe she was having a fit over the prospective dry-cleaning bill.

As he was out of most of the wet, reluctantly he began to take off his cloak. Women, he knew, had this thing about never dressing appropriately for the weather, and then, when the inevitable blizzard or hurricane showed up, expecting their properly prepared menfolk to give up their coats or whatever for love's sake. Once more he damned his noble nature.

But, wait! She'd waved him off; she didn't want his cloak. Vincent puzzled over that one for a moment. Women usually wanted to inconvenience their men as much as possible; sometimes Catherine just didn't stick to the rules.

"Oh, Vincent, this is wonderful!" she exclaimed.

He winced inwardly as she threw her soggy body onto him and gave him a good hug, making sure he got well soaked too, and shoved her wet head under his muzzle. It was all Vincent could do not to sneeze: she smelled like a wet dog.

As he lay in a growing puddle, Catherine lying atop him, forcing his bottom into the mud, Vincent felt a profound regret that circumstances were forcing him to take a dim view of her demonstations of affection. Reflecting on the closeness of her rain-chilled body, he wondered if she believed he could be turned on by her while she looked like a drowned sewer rat.

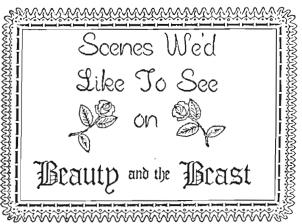
Oh, well, he sighed, putting his arms around her anyway, sniffling in the damp. It wasn't so bad for her. He couldn't see any underwear lines under the wet, clinging dress, and his discreet embrace couldn't detect any either. She'd probably dry out guickly.

She probably just didn't realize that his clothes weighed about a hundred and fifty pounds when they got good and wet, that he'd have to slog around in them for an hour or so before he could get changed into dry things, and that it'd take a week or more for everything to dry out. And getting his hair to look just right again would take an age!

Above them, the "Unfinished Symphony" ended along with the brief rainstorm, and Vincent could feel his own symphony petering out as well.

And as he nuzzled the top of her head and stifled a sneeze before getting up to escort her back to her home, he knew that his sacrifice wasn't going to be rewarded with a good-bye kiss at the door either. Just with a head cold.





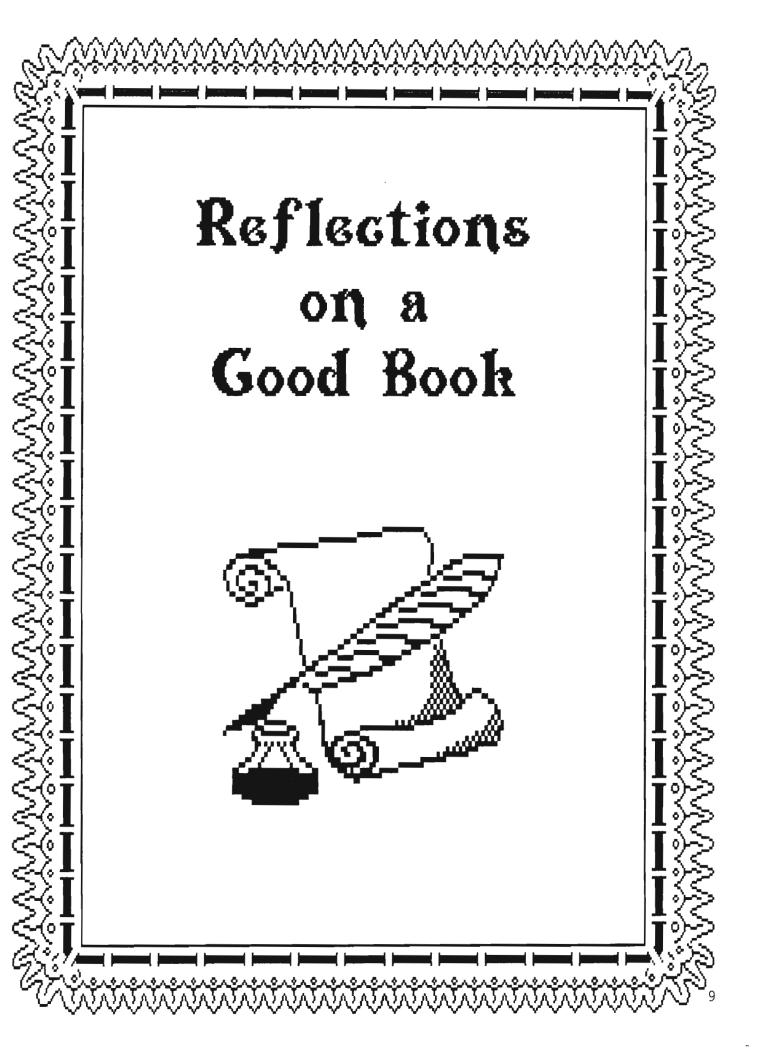




Picture Yourself



"Fan-tasies"



REFLECTIONS ON A GOOD BOOK

by Sue D. Nim

As he swung his leg over the balcony wall and stood, pausing for a moment, Vincent could hear the sounds of the city below, muffled and distant, almost as if it were another world.

And perhaps it was, he thought, looking at the french doors, dark, that gave access to Catherine's bedroom. This balcony was a world of their own, a place for the two of them to snatch a moment of refuge from the two different worlds in which they were forced by circumstances of their birth to exist.

It was very late, the traffic noise less than usual, he knew. And he could feel Catherine so deeply asleep that he doubted she knew he was here. He stepped quietly to the bedroom doors and lifted one hand to shade his sensitive eyes from even the soft light reflected from the buildings nearby as he gazed through one of the panes of glass that separated him from her.

She was there, curled up on her side in the bed, facing him as she slept. And her mouth was curved in a tender smile. Vincent felt his own mouth curve in response. Perhaps she did know, somehow, that he was here. Perhaps in her dreams she could feel his presence.

With a sigh, Vincent closed his eyes and leaned his forehead against the cool window pane.

Catherine walked in his dreams, laughed in them, loved in them. And when he woke from those dreams, he felt disappointed, deprived, alone. His nightly consolation was only in the printed words of the books that were heaped around his bedroom. Shakespeare, Dickens, Browning, Dickinson, O'Donnell. Their voices had helped him over and over to come out of the darkness of the night into the beginnings of a new day.

He shared them with her as often as he could, wanting her to know what words touched his soul, brought him closer to her, made him part of humanity. And tonight a book had reached him in a way that none had before, touched a secret place in him that had long lain hidden from the world, before this book had brought it, late-flowering, into the sunlight of human experience.

Sunlight. He could feel the first warmth of the incipient sunrise and knew he must return to his world quickly.

He opened his eyes and pulled the book from out of an inner pocket, smoothing the cover with careful and reverent fingers before placing it on the balcony table, along with the red rose he'd brought with him. No note was necessary. Catherine was a

part of him. She'd know what the book had meant to him, why he wanted to share it with her.

And perhaps tonight he could come to her balcony again and discuss its revelations with her.

Reluctantly, he retreated over her balcony wall, and noiselessly disappeared, the book and the rose the only evidence of his presence.

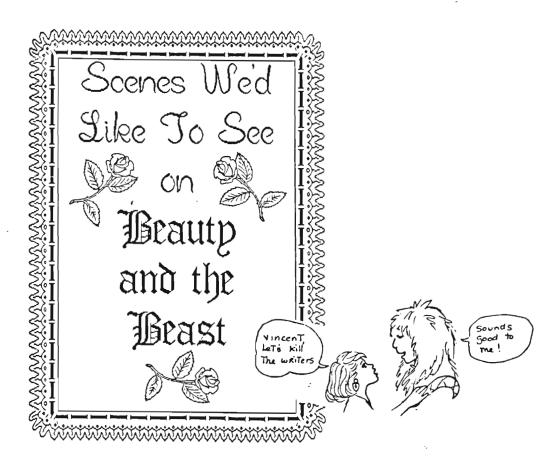
As New York City began to stir and awaken, the early rays of sunlight picked out the beautiful gilt lettering on the cover of the book, under the leaves of the half-opened rose.

The Kama Sutra.



The closer you get, the better he looks!













HE KNOWS....

by Sue D. Nim

The B&B fan (female, of course; what other kind is there?) leaned forward eagerly, lips parted, eyes shining, her fingertips caressing the lace of the filmy peignoir which she had donned especially for Her Show. It was the kind of nightie that her mother had warned her against -- therefore, just right for Tonight.

Avidly, her eyes followed Her Hero on on the screen, his golden hair, his azure eyes, his velvety voice. Vincent was SO beautiful, SO perfect.

Even as she watched, he recoiled in offended modesty from the ill-clad but beautiful actress who was tempting him to take her to his bed. He opened his mouth and began to speak sternly to the girl on the screen; but then his eye caught another, more outrageous sight, and turning his head, he glared at the goggling fan lounging wantonly in front of the screen.

"Does your mother know what you're wearing?" he huffed. "Cover yourself!"



JINGLE VINCENT (WITH CHORUS)

Dashing through the snow in my beat up Chevrolet o'er the fields I go panting all the way. Vincent's on tonight and, yes, his Catherine too. Oh, watch and see them snuggle, hug, and nuzzle, bill and coo. Goo!

CHORUS: Vincent's on, Vincent's on Vincent's on tonight. I can't wait to see that man every Friday night. Vincent's on, Vincent's on Vincent's on tonight. I can't wait to see that man

every Friday night.

So now let's pull the shades and turn the lights down low. The vcr is on and all ready to go. So settle for a coze with candle wicks all trimmed, and in a vase place one red rose A monument to him.

CHORUS

Ah, there he sits, my man, in home-patched dungarees with Shakespeare in his hand, an aspect sure to please. Most bad guys get uptight When on him their eyes feast. He is no fright, he looks just right My literary Beast.

CHORUS

Oh, hark, that velvet voice that thrills us through and through. It gives us fans no choice; we can but sit and drool. So now we've seen them dance. Oh, what a big to-do. Perhaps someday they'll have a chance to kiss -- mayhap to...hmmm. Well...

CHORUS

Every zine I've bought and every shirt for sale. Money went for naught supporting U.S. mail. Now with spirits low, and many a painful sigh, my banker eyes my balance, low. My zine stack's 6 feet high.

httitani, ja ja kaja ja ja maasa ja kajahtiin kana ja ja ja kaja ja ja maasa ja kajahtiin ja ja kajahtiin ja j

....<u>marquin</u>

....universitations

CHORUS

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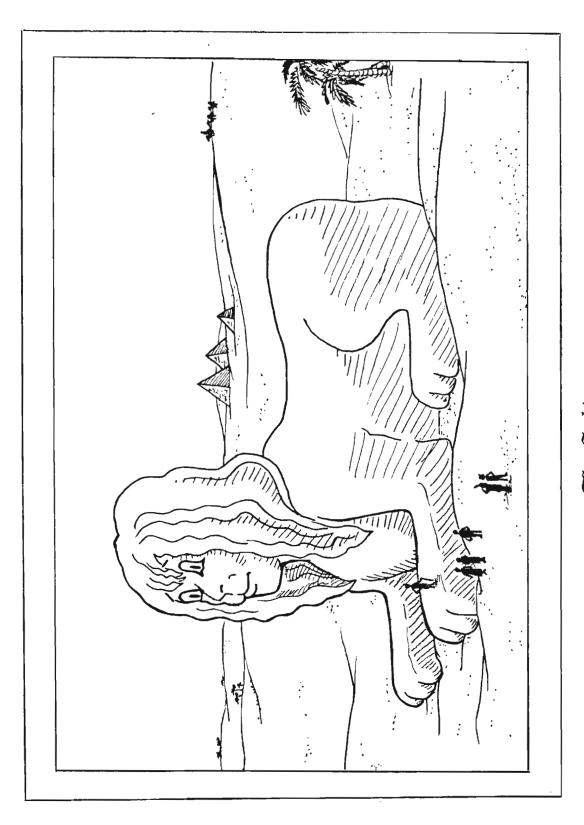
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In keeping with the high intellectual tone of the show, and in order to boost the cultural tone of this zine (don't hold your breath), we present herein the first annual

B&B Lite

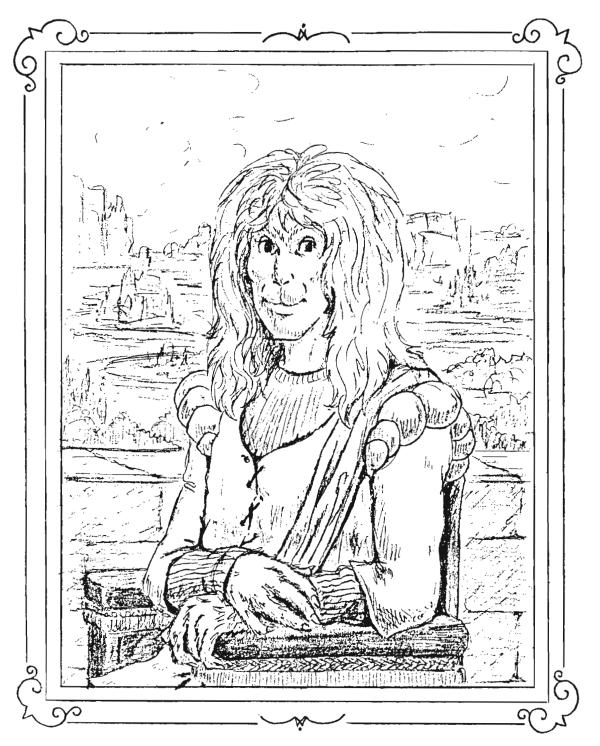








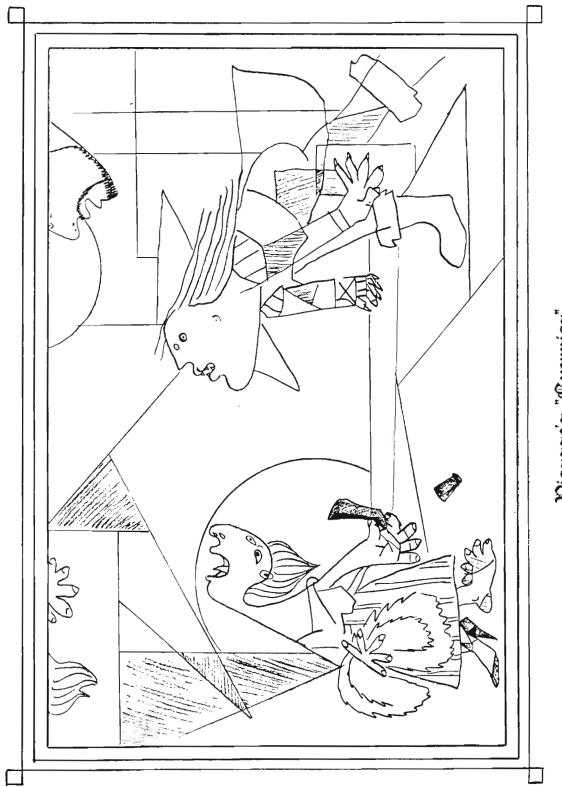
Botticelli's "Birth of Vincent"



Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Vincent"



Van Gogh's "Vincent"



Picasso's "Guernica"

Reflections on a Love Affair



REFLECTIONS ON A LOVE AFFAIR

by Sue D. Nim

Normally, Catherine Chandler hated cleaning her apartment, but this evening she hummed as she moved around her apartment, straightening, dusting, vacuuming, cleaning with real pleasure. She wanted everything to be perfect. For tonight. For him.

The refrigerator was filled with a catered dinner and a couple of bottles of champagne, with vanilla ice cream in the freezer. She knew how much he loved chestnuts, so for the ice cream she had a can of marrons glace at hand. For later. For him.

For tonight was the second anniversary of their first meeting.

She turned the stereo on and selected some tapes -- Schumann, Handel, Schubert, a little Bach. As the music began to waft out of the nearly hidden speakers, she turned the lights down and lit some candles.

Dinner, music, dancing. Tonight he was going to be surprised.

Catherine lingered over her bath, but even though the time was growing short, she didn't hurry over her hair or her makeup. She wanted to be perfect for him. She sprayed the air with perfume and walked through its scented cloud to the closet to choose a gown. Something that Vincent would like, something to make her beautiful to his eyes.

Only twenty minutes later, she heard the quiet tap at her bedroom window and moved quickly to throw back the balcony doors.

Vincent stood there, splendid in his dress clothes, his hair waving gold in the candlelight, his face gentle, his eyes tender. "Happy anniversary," he murmured huskily, his eyes very blue and uncertain as they took in the sheer pink silk that draped her body in very insubstantial folds.

She only gave him a moment to stand there, surprised and amazed, before she acted. She was stronger than she looked, and she proved it by fastening her fingers into his cloak and jerking him down the single step into the bedroom. She pressed her advantage of surprise and her weight against him and tumbled him awkwardly onto the bed, tangling him in his cloak and her own barely clad limbs.

"Pucker up, buttercup," she growled in his ear.





Reflections on Danger



REFLECTIONS ON DANGER

by Sue D. Nim

Vincent groaned loud and long as he sloshed from his bath, dried hastily, and pulled his clothes on over his damp, furry bod. When mere groaning didn't relieve his feelings, he cursed briefly, but fluently, in Ancient Sumerian as he snagged his cape on the way out of his chambers.

Catherine was in trouble. Again.

That woman had the worst luck of anyone in New York, he reflected moodily, trotting down various dimly lit passageways. It was a wonder that the police didn't pick her up for questioning sometimes, what with her being at the scene of so many violent crimes. And considering that most of those crimes involved some unsavory or other being clawed up and half disembowelled...well, it said something about the state of the NYPD that they never connected the omnipresent Catherine with these things.

Vincent tilted his leonine head charmingly to one side as he contemplated their empathic bond. Well, she wasn't being killed, anyway. That was something. But it felt a little around the edges like a mugging -- not a rarity in New York, especially in the neighborhoods Catherine tended to haunt. Maybe he could dash up to her apartment, full of sympathy and solace, and she'd invite him inside in order to hold a raw steak on her black eye, or something. THIS time, he wouldn't make the mistake of eating the steak and having to resort embarrassedly to cold compresses for Catherine.

His Delft-blue eyes lit up with anticipation, not at the thought of the steak, but at the thought of actually making it into her apartment, and he began to run in earnest, only taking brief moments out from his headlong dash to effect several complete changes of clothing. Ever since the first time he'd visited her apartment and, out of maidenly modesty, declined her invitation to enter, he hadn't been able to wring another invitation out of her. She always wanted to stand out in the breeze in her flimsies. Not that he was complaining, but the director refused to let him look lower than her chin.

But tonight would be It!

Vincent dropped lightly onto her balcony and paused briefly, his flaxen hair gently lifted by the ubiquitous wind machine, to wonder how he got here. He never knew. There he was one minute, scurrying busily along the tunnels, changing clothes right and left, and the next minute he was lofting himself over her balcony wall, mysterious and unruffled. Most of the time, he wasn't even out of breath.

The light coming on in her apartment distracted Vincent's attention from his musings over holes in the script and film editors with cataracts, and he peered in the window, hoping to see something juicy before manners would prompt him to tap politely on the window pane.

Nothing too juicy tonight, though. Just Catherine limping into her bedroom, her stockings laddered, knees skinned, hair wild, one eye blackened, the heel of one shoe missing, her clothing -- Vincent's azure eyes took the scene in with growing horror -- torn and mismatched!

Without waiting for an invitation, he burst into the room, startling Catherine into pulling a flick knife from her bra.

When she realized that it was just her True Love, she tossed the silver-plated trifle handed down by her mama onto her dressing table, and glared at him out of her good eye.

"Catherine," he choked out, averting his eyes from her rumpled coat and wrinkled skirt. "Tell me all."

She kicked off the ruined shoes and then took off the coat, miles too big for her, donated by a kindly street person who had seen her plight. "It was terrible, Vincent," she shuddered. "I realize that I shouldn't have been there, but I just HAD to. Time was running out, and I was desperate."

"You know those areas are dangerous," he admonished tenderly, snuffling unobtrusively at the aroma of the steak thawing in the microwave. "If I lost you..."

"You almost did," acknowledged his love. "The crowd engulfed me, and then the punching and kicking started..."

"Catherine!"

"Yes, and the shoving and pushing and cursing. Someone tore my new leather coat right off my back. Someone else grabbed my Gucci handbag, and this little old lady kicked me in the shin and snatched my Anne Klein silk scarf."

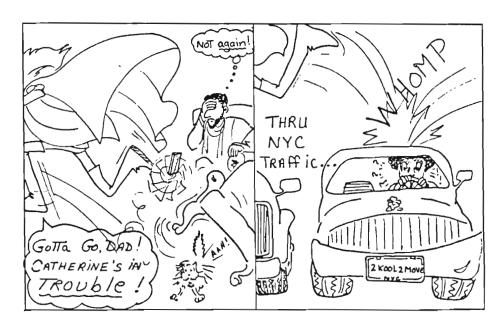
"That's disgraceful!"

"I know it." Catherine shook her head. "I swear to you, next year, I really AM going to start my Christmas shopping early."















I'm So Sorry,

Mr. Wodehouse



with apologies from Ms. Nim to the late, great author, P. G. Wodehouse

I'm So Sorry, Mr. Wodehouse

Page 1 of 1 - by Sue D. Nim

"What ho, what ho!" chortled an all-too-familiar voice as its possessor limped into the library, brandishing his cane like monsieur's whangee.

Vincent passed a furry hand over his furry face and groaned aloud. Oh God, he thought despairingly, the old geezer's been into the Wodehouse again.

"I could have sworn you'd sworn off that stuff," he accused, glaring at his adopted parent between parted fingers, ready to close them again in an instant if the old boy uncorked once more.

But the older man, settling himself into his chair, had the grace to look guilty. "Well, it was only a small one -- you know, 'The Rummy Affair of Old Bingo', wherein..."

"Never mind. That stuff is bad for you, Father," Vincent admonished sternly, his furry hand dropping back to his furry knee. "Even a little of it. It seeps into your brain cells, takes over your actions..."

"Now, I say, dash it!" protested the old relative.

"That's what I mean. Why can't you flit and sup from among Nietzche, Socrates, Bombeck? Why does it have to be Wodehouse? We're a serious community with serious issues to deal with: plague, pestilence, true love. We can't be wasting our time with frivolous nonsense like that."

"Pchah," his father expostulated definitively. And he meant it to sting. "We need a little lightheartedness down here, a little humor and frivolity, God knows. Between your sacrificing yourself body and soul for that uptown paralegal every Friday night, and your loud and annoying sex-dreams every other night of the week, I've just about gone off my crumpet. What you need is a good stiff Wodehouse, liberally laced with Jacqueline Susann. Swallow it whole, my boy, and lick your lips afterward. There's not much taste, but they'll fix what's ailing you."

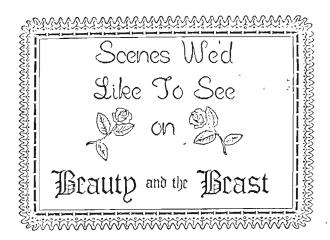
Vincent drew himself up with a disdainful sniff. "I shall never pollute my intellect with such trivial pursuits," he declaimed, a furry hand over his furry heart. "My soul yearns for the meaningful, the romantic, the touching..."

"...the feeling, the groping, the panting," Father nodded wisely, as was his wont. "I was young once too, son, and felt the brassy bugle call of one hormone to another."

"From what I can ascertain, you rarely neglected to heed that call," his son nodded. "Fortunately, my soul is a nobler one, my heart yearns for higher things, my mind cogitates on loftier plains..."

Father leaned forward earnestly, wisely, nearly toppling out of his chair. "What you need is a good lay, and this is how















Coming Attractions...

LUST IN THE TUNNELS by the inimitable Sue D. Nim -- a gripping novella of indeterminate power and whatnot.

Catherine decides she just can't take this new-age celibate relationship with Vincent any more and begins a long-term affair with her boss, Joe. Inconsolable, Vincent turns to drugs and alcohol to forget her, hoping to break the bond, and ends up outcast from his own society. Father holds him up as a good-boy-gone-bad to the children, and Mouse, refusing to speak Vincent's name again, teaches Arthur to bite him on sight. Catherine, used by her supervisor for her social status, pregnant and desperate, tries to establish contact with Vincent, but the bond is broken. It's Too Late. She leaves her child on the steps of St. Vincent's hospital one snowy Christmas eve and moves to Los Angeles to break Vincent joins up with Paracelsus, goes gay, into pictures. and lives happily ever after.

ALSO....some uncertainly written Winterfest filks, featuring

- * Little St. Vince
 - and...
- * Father Got Run Over By A Reindeer

PLUS....instructions for creating your very own "Cover Yourself" Afghan! While you're watching B&B on those cold winter nights, cuddle up under an afghan that we know Vincent endorses. Don't be fooled by cheap imitations!

