

Elizaveta Heinonen

WORD AND GRAMMAR PUZZLES

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Monsieur Poirot Knows All

“Have you read the morning newspapers?” Inspector Japp shouted as he burst into the room.

“Of course, I have,” answered Hercules Poirot.

“And what do you make of this dreadful business? This is a real scandal, if ever there was one!”

“I quite agree with you, my dear Inspector Japp.”

“They say, some American bigwigs are involved in the affair.”

“So I’ve heard.”

“How can you be so calm? Don’t you want to find out who exactly is involved?”

“Of course, I do – and I will.”

At that moment, the door opened and Miss Felicity Lemon, Poirot’s secretary, entered the room.

“There is a letter for you, Monsieur Poirot,” she said. “It was delivered by hand, and bears no return address.”

“Aha!” Hercules Poirot cried out. “Here is the answer to your question, Inspector. Unless I’m mistaken – and I seldom am.”

He opened the envelope and took out a piece of paper.

“Wonderful! Just as I thought!” he said, rubbing his hands in satisfaction.

“What does it say?” asked Japp.

“Read for yourself.”

Inspector Japp reached out for the letter. It consisted of only one word: TREASON.

Inspector Japp looked perplexed. “I don’t think I quite understand. You said the letter would tell us who is behind the scandalous story, but it doesn’t. Or does it?”

What do you think, my dear reader? Does the letter name anyone?

burst into the room – run into the room; **What do you make of this dreadful business?** – What do you think of this dreadful business?; **dreadful** – extremely unpleasant; **bigwig** – important person

Answer:

It does. The letter points at some American senator. The writer used an anagram: TREASON → SENATOR.

The Magic Bottle

There once lived an old fisherman near the shore of the deep blue sea. Well, one day he went fishing, as he always did. He cast his net in the sea, but the net brought up nothing but mud. Again, he cast his net in the sea, and this time, the net caught nothing but seaweed. When he cast his net for the third time, one fish was all that he landed. It was no ordinary fish, though, but a goldfish.

cast – throw; **mud** – sift, wet dirt at the bottom of ponds, lakes, etc; **seaweed** – a type of plant that grows in the sea

And the goldfish began to implore him in a human voice:

“Old man,” said the fish, “do not kill me. I beg you to throw me back into the blue waters. For that, I will give you whatever you may ask.”

The old man was neither astonished nor frightened, for he, too, had read the story about the fisherman and the golden fish when he was a child.

“What can you offer me?” he asked the fish.

“I can get you a magic bottle from the bottom of the sea,” the golden fish said. “There is a genie inside the bottle. Many years ago, he fell into disfavour with the great

King Solomon, and the King put him inside the bottle. The genie must obey the man who should release him from confinement, if only for a short while.”

implore – to beg or ask someone to do something; **genie** – a magic spirit that lives in a lamp or bottle, and serves the person who calls it; **fall into disfavour** – become unpopular with sb; **release** – to free; **confinement** – imprisonment, captivity

“And how am I going to release the genie?”

“All you need to do is rub the bottle.”

“Okay,” said the fisherman. “Go fetch the bottle.”

He untangled the golden fish, and it disappeared in the blue sea. After a while, it surfaced again, and said, “Pull up the net.”

fetch – go and get sth; **untangle** – to free

The fisherman pulled up the net, and saw a bottle covered with seaweed, and rather heavy.

He sat down on the sand and began to rub the bottle. He rubbed and rubbed, but no genie appeared.



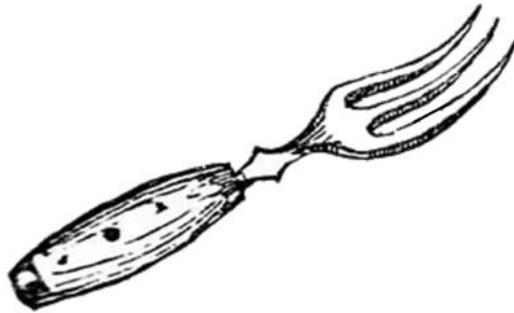
“The cunning golden fish must have cheated me,” the fisherman said to himself.
“And I, like an old fool that I am, believed her!”

And he through the bottle into the sea.

But the golden fish had been telling the truth. The bottle was magic. Another man found it and now has all he wants.

What happened? Why couldn't the fisherman release the genie?

This rebus may give you a hint.



F = C

Answer:

The fisherman forgot to take out the cork: FORK → CORK.

Bank Robbery

One day, an armed robber burst into a small bank and took all the cash. The police questioned the witnesses, but none of them could describe the bandit. They were so frightened that they could hardly recall any specifics. Only an eight-year-old boy, who had accompanied his father to the bank, noticed more than the other witnesses. Now, that boy was not just an ordinary boy. He liked all kinds of riddles and brainteasers, and he was determined to ask the policemen a riddle. He said that the bandit had a distinguishing mark that might help the police identify him. However, he refused to say what that mark was. Instead, he asked for a piece of paper and a pen, and wrote this:

A, B, C, D, H, J, K, L, M, O, P, Q, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

The policemen spent several hours trying to solve the riddle, to no avail. There was nothing to do but to bring in the famous private detective John Sherlock W.

John Sherlock took the piece of paper. For a moment, he stared at it silently, then looked up and winked at the boy.

“You will make a very good detective, kid,” he said. “When you grow up, come to me and we shall work together. That is, if you don’t want to become a banker or an astronaut.”

“The man isn’t a novice at what he is doing,” he said to the policemen. “He managed to escape without raising suspicion of the constable at the corner. I’m sure you will easily identify him on the basis of this distinguishing feature.”

What was that feature?

distinguishing – characteristic; **identify** – to recognize somebody or something and be able to say who, or what, he, she, or it is; **to no avail** – but they could not; **bring in** – *here*: ask someone for help; **wink at someone** – to close one eye briefly to show that something just done or said is a joke or a secret; **You will make a very good detective.** – You will become a very good detective; **a novice** – a beginner

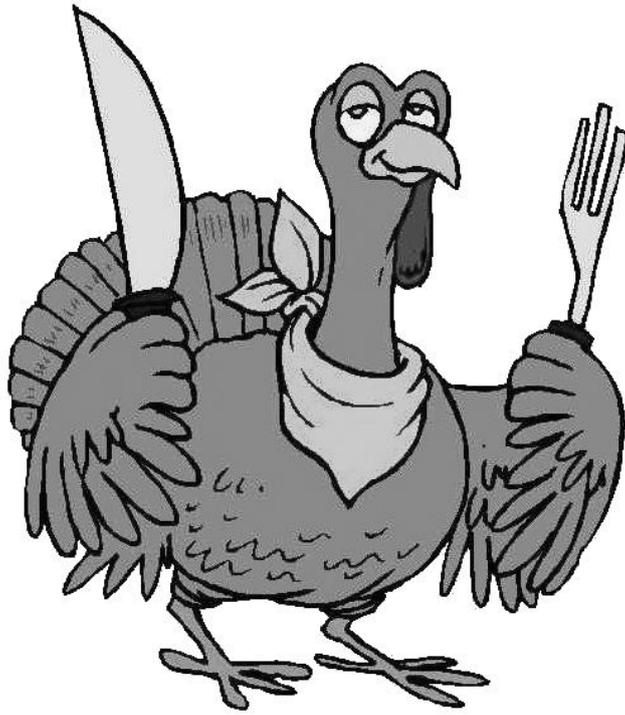
Answer:

John Sherlock W. noticed that there were several letters missing in the alphabet written by the boy, notably the letters E, F, G, I, N, R. But they didn’t mean anything in that very order. The detective rearranged the letters and received the word FINGER.

The Essay

After the summer holidays, the teacher asked her class to write an essay on how and where the children had spent their vacation. Johnny worked on his essay for almost an hour, yet he wasn’t sure how the teacher would take it.

And indeed, when the teacher opened his exercise book, she frowned, because she saw something she never expected to see. This is what she saw:



But the next moment she smiled and said to herself, “This little rascal is really very talented. I hope he liked his stay in—”

In what country? Where did Johnny spend his summer holidays?

how the teacher would take it – whether the was going to like it

Answer:

Johnny spent his holidays in Turkey.

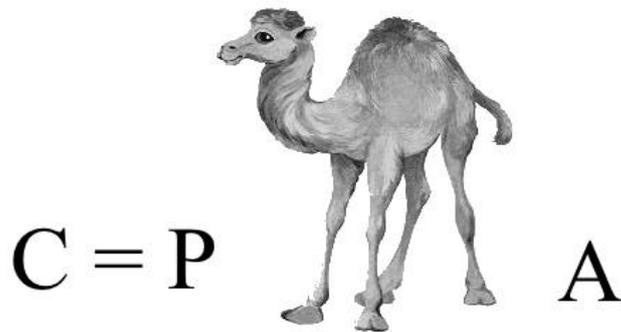
Invitation to a Rendezvous

One day, Johnny came home from school and saw a folded piece of paper sticking out of a school book. He unfolded it and read:

“Dear Johnny,

I like you very much. Let us meet on Sunday at twelve o’clock near the zoo. In the meantime, you can try and guess my name.”

Johnny looked at the bottom of the page and saw a drawing.



One glance – and Johnny knew who had sneaked the note into his book.

sneak – to do something stealthily, furtively, and without being noticed

Do you? What was the girl's name?

Answer:

The girl's name was Pamela.

The Secret Message

“What’s that you’ve got there, Forestier? Another crossword puzzle?” asked the warden, looking at the piece of paper in the hand of one of the prison guards, who was known to be quite fond of all kinds of riddles and puzzles.

“I’m not quite sure, Sir,” answered the guard.

“Can I take a look at it?”

“Certainly,” answered Forestier, handing over the piece of paper.

The warden studied it, and then asked:

“Where did you get it?”

“From one of the prisoners, Sir.”

“Tell me more.”

“I confiscated it from Emil Squint Eye. Why do you ask?”

“Have you read it?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Well?”

“It doesn’t make much sense to me.”

“Well, it does make sense to me.”

“I had no time to look at it carefully. I noticed the scrap of paper in Squint Eye’s hand and took it away from him,” explained the guard.

“We shall need to tighten security, Forestier. Emil Squint Eye may try to break out.”

“May I ask how you know that, Sir?”

“See for yourself. It is a message. A secret message. Read it again.”

The warden pushed the piece of paper back to the guard.

The guard took the paper and read:

“TWO OFFICIALS, NO IDIOTS, GO HOME TOGETHER.”

“Uh-ho!” said the guard after a while. “I wonder, how he is going to do it? Do you have any theory, Warden?”

“Many, Forestier. Each of them as unlikely as the next.”

“I hear, no one has ever escaped from this prison. It is a real fortress.”

“As a matter of fact, they have, but it was long ago. I know of at least one successful attempt. Some four hundred years ago, Marquis de Roublard escaped from here with the help of a rope ladder he found in the pie his friends sent him for his birthday. And now, get a move on. Alert all the guards. Tell them to keep a watchful eye on our Emil Squint Eye.”

“Yes, Sir!”

And here comes my question: What did the secret message say?

warden – an official who is in charge of a prison; **Emil Squint Eye** – the nickname of a criminal; a squint is a medical condition in which your eyes are unable to look in the same direction; **scrap** – piece; **tighten security** – watch the prisoners more carefully; **get a move on** – hurry up!; **alert** – to warn someone, give someone important information about a possible problem, danger, etc.; **keep a watchful eye on someone** – watch someone carefully

Answer:

The message read: TONIGHT. (Read the first letter of every word.)

Desirable Profession

Not long ago, an advertisement was published in one of the English newspapers.

It read:

“Do you have a thing for all kinds of hieroglyphics? Then come and visit us, and you will get an opportunity to ride your hobbyhorse every day without having to go to Egypt.”

What kind of job was being advertised? This anagram may help you find the right answer:

CHEATER

have a thing for something – like something

Answer:

Rearrange the letters, and you will receive the word TEACHER.

A Fastidious Lion

The Middle Ages. A Knight joins the Crusade, but becomes lost, and, after wandering for many days, finds himself in the Savannah. He is tired, he is hot, his heavy armour stifles him, and he finally drops on the sand, unconscious.

Just then, a hungry lion happens to pass by. It approaches the unconscious man, sniffs at him – and turns away.

fastidious – very critical, hard to please; **the Middle Ages** – the period from about 1000 AD to the 15th century; **knight** – a soldier in the past who fought while riding a horse and usually wearing armour; **armour** – special clothing that people wear to protect their bodies from weapons; **stifle** – be unable to breathe easily; **unconscious** –

experiencing loss of senses; **sniff** – to smell (something or someone) by putting your nose close to it

Why didn't the lion eat the Knight? Who – or rather what – did it take him for?



B = N

Answer:

The lion took the knight for a tin can: CAB → CAN.

Look Out!

Once upon a time, there lived a Frenchman by the name of monsieur Gilbert. One day, he traveled to London on business. There, he checked in at a small hotel and asked for a room that overlooked the street. He was busy unpacking his suitcase when he heard a yell. “Look out!” someone shouted from the outside. “Why would anyone want me to look out?” thought monsieur Gilbert who knew some English. He opened the window and looked out. But, before he knew what had happened, something hard had hit him on the head. As it turned out later, some workmen were cleaning the roof (a hurricane had passed through several days earlier), and were throwing down branches, pieces of tiling, and that sort of thing. Monsieur Gilbert fell victim to one of these things. But not only that. He didn't seem to know the other meaning of the phrasal verb *look out*, which he understood as invitation to look outside. Following that incident, the

unlucky Frenchman wrote down in his diary, “The English are very strange people. In their language, *Look out!* can sometimes mean—”

Finish his sentence. Did the workmen really want him to look out?

a yell – a loud cry; **tiling** – material covering the roof; **following that incident** – after that incident

Answer:

Monsieur Gilbert wrote, “In their language *Look out!* can sometimes mean *Don’t look out!*” The thing is that the phrasal verb *look out* is also used to tell someone to be aware of something dangerous. For example: Look out – one of the steps is missing!

The Telephone Number

One evening, while visiting his friend, John Sherlock W. was introduced to a young lady.

“Christie,” said the host, “I would like you to meet my friend, John Sherlock W., the great private detective.”

“Pleased to meet you, Mister W.” said the young lady.

“Please call me John or simply Sherlock.”

“I will call you Sherlock.”

They came into conversation, and after a while, John Sherlock asked the young lady for her telephone number.

She wrote something on a napkin and handed it to the detective.

“I hear, you can solve any riddle,” she said. “Maybe you can solve this one, too.”

“What is it?” asked John Sherlock.

“My telephone number.”

John Sherlock stared at the napkin for a minute, then smiled and said, “Very well, I will call you later to wish you goodnight.”

It took John Sherlock W. one minute to solve the riddle. How long will it take you?

These are the words the young lady wrote on the napkin:

HERE IS MY TELEPHONE NUMBER IF YOU CAN GUESS IT.

host – someone who invites guests; **napkin** – a piece of cloth used at mealtimes to wipe the mouth; **it took John Sherlock W. one minute to solve the riddle** – he solved the riddle in one minute

Answer:

Count the number of letters in every word, and you will get the number: 422–962–352.

An Anonymous Letter

One day, John Sherlock W. received an anonymous letter.

“I have it from a reliable source that one of your enemies will try to poison you at tonight’s dinner,” the message read. “Be careful about what you eat. I can’t tell you yet which of the dishes will be tampered with, but I will try to find out.”

The letter was signed: “A friend.”

John Sherlock W. read the letter twice. He, indeed, was invited to dinner that evening. At least, that much was true.

At dinner, the waiter slipped him a note. John Sherlock excused himself and left the table to read it.

This is what he read:

“Remove six letters from this word. BSAINXLEATNTEARSS.”

“Hmm,” said John Sherlock to himself. “Whoever drugged it, had certainly done his homework. He even knows that I like—”

What was it that John Sherlock liked so much?

reliable – able to be trusted; **which of the dishes will be tampered with** – *here:* which of the dishes will be poisoned; **slip** – give somebody something secretly; **to drug** – *here:* add poison to food; **do your homework** – *here:* prepare oneself well

Answer:

Remove SIX LETTERS (S, I, X, L, E, T, T, E, R, S) and you will get BANANAS. John Sherlock W. Liked bananas.