

HOW I SLEW THE DEVIL OF WENTFORD

An English tale

I'm Clark Evergreen, Meed Hunter, ready for hire on DoMeAKindness.net. That's how the Reeve of Wentford, a small town off of the Silver Rich Highway, found me and set me on the errand.

Bidden straight to his house to which he had sent me the whereabouts, a broad bold with two floors, I donned my game jacket and took my shotgun, and drove the stoundlong drive from Alvinton, my home town, where he greeted me at the gates, the Sun about three stounds after midday.

The bowed-over old man of sixty-nine years walked stiffly to the gate holding his staff and spoke to me in his hoarse, sharp voice, "Yes.. Hello, it's thee, the hit-man I hired, is it not?" He could not make an uttering without stopping to fang his breath. He often said words twice.

"Clark Evergreen, *Meed Hunter*. I don't reckon 'em the ilk thing."

"Mmm, yes, whatever. Well, do come in, my friend. Let us.. have a swell chat in my living room about this, this very nettlesome thing and thy errand to rid us of it. Yes, come in..." The gate now opened, I drove in, got out and followed him into his house, to the living room, still bearing my gun. I don't like to let it out of my hands when I can help it.

"So what is the meaning," I frained him, sitting at a likesome seat, "of the errand retching 'Wentford Town Devil?'"

"Yes.. So lately, Mr. Clark.. Eh.. Mr. Evergreen.. Our town has become home to a devil who has been frightening and killing many of our dwellers."

"Shit."

"Indeed. And I wish thee to get rid of him. No known name is there for this devil, but he is, as the newscart says, 'unmissenly.' He atews much like a man, retched in some eye-witness bodes as looking like 'both a twelve-year-old and forty-year-old at the ilk time,' with a wicked, teathy smirk and a childish gait." He went on to tell me all I needed to know to acknow him, and a few sundry rakes.

The fiend, he said, before striking, makes a kind of beem swey with his lips and wontly makes some childish slur or hux toward the to-be tiver. Then, he

said, the devil springs forth and tears the tiber asunder. I am a meed hunter, but this truly was gruesome, I thought.

"Well," said the Reeve, "I ween since I've never myself met this wight, thou wilt have to do thy own underseeking and find out more ken from the townsfolk, as I have nothing left with which to besee thee."

"Maybe thou shouldsta done that beforehand, tha thinkst?"

"I have no will, as Reeve, to take to the streets and do the foul work myself, when I can but hire some underling to do the same. The grounds upon which we have leaders is so they, or 'we' in my stead, can tell others what to do. Otherwise nothing would get done. Dost thou understand?"

"Yes."

"I say thou get going now. No time is to be spurned."

So he gave me a key to his gate and house and I left and took a walk about the marketstead on 43rd Street, teeming with folks. And as ever, I took my gun in my hand. Thou never knowst when someone's gonna pop out at thee and mash thy head in for no other grounds than that they had an itch. That's what I say.

The crowd thinned out near where I stood, likeliest as I was holding the gun, but I still could ask a few goers-by about the town's devil.

"Hey mister," I said. "Wont'sta tell me about the devil who's been goin' about in this town? Hey!"

But that only frightened them more. So I chose to fand the mongers since they ought to bide where they were so I could talk to them.

After going to eleven thorny foodsellers and two wain insoothing salesmen, I walked to the edge of the market where the crowd was leaner, and there I heard some fellow saying "Anatolish cat feet! Come get some fresh, toothsome, and sheerly awesome Anatolish cat feet! Like never tofore seen in Wentford!"

I was hungry and thought he looked like he would give me answers, so at last I put my gun away and went over to his food stall and ordered four Anatolish cat feet.

"Yes, lord, they will be ready in but a braid."

"Thanks. Hey, by the way, the sake I came here for is that I'm looking for a devil. Hast thou seen such a thing?" And I did a bad inleedening of the devil, going by what the Reeve had told me.

At once the man's leer shifted to sorrow and then fear, and he backed away from me till he was at the wall behind him, as if I had drawn my gun on him.

"Don't speak of that fiend! He killed my daughter!"

There was stillness for a long while between us.

He gathered himself again and gave me the cat feet and bade me on my way.

"Not so fast," I said. "I've come here to kill him. I'm a meed hunter." I showed him my shotgun.

"... I will tell thee where to go, my friend." A smirk wox on his leer. I could see wrake in his eyes. "Most everyone who meets the devil sees'm somewhere by the edge of town to the Northwest. Moreover, it's oftest at night that it happens, and he always comes from the woods."

"Thank thee lots. Well, I guess I'll head there as soon as the Sun sets."

"That oughta work." And a fire blazed in his eyes for a braid when he said "Take care, my friend."

I bode my time until the night by driving about (which would be foryolden by the Reeve), going to an eatinghouse for steak and eyren, and reading some of the book that I brought. Soon enough night had fallen, so I made my way to the Southwestern edge of town and got out of my wain beside the highway, gun fast in hand.

To my eyes the town looked so unkindly, lying in the middle of a dry weasten, but being right beside a thick green wood. It made not the slightest anyet to me how that could be.

Howbeit, I wandered along the side of the road toward the overall bearing of the woods, hoping the devil would come out.

On my way, I saw some pretty seedy looking men walking by, but I wasn't worried, as I had my gun in my hand.

Nevertheless, some of them gave me the creeps nigh as much as the devil I sought might. One of them was walking like how I ween a zombie would walk, moaning while he did so and looking straight ahead the whole time.

Another one was drawing a shopping-wain behind him and asked me how much I knew about the otherworldlings who had overtaken the White House, and chode me when I said I knew nothing and had to move along. I could hear him rambling on untill he was out of my sight.

And a third man sat swaying mildly back and forth on the ground, his knees lockered up. When I went by him he gave a startling shout, but when I turned back to look at him, he had not shifted in the slightest. I went on.

It was not long thereafter, that, as I neared an outgrowth of the woods which made the road bend more Northerly, I saw a well-kempt, comely-looking man walking, seeming unlike the others to have a true business that he was up to. He was coming from the way that I was going.

"Meed hunta, art dou?" He asked me. By the way he spoke, he wasn't inbornly from Wentford.

"Yeah. How'dst thou know?"

"I can tell by da game jacket, da breeches, and da gun. I ain't no dolt."

"That may be."

"So what's dou huntin' out heah?"

"The town devil."

"Fah sooth!?"

"Yeah. I'm hired by the Reeve to wipe'm out."

"Dat muddafucka slurred my wife so sorely one time, as we wah fleein' from before 'im in my wain, dat she burst out inta tears, no lie! Gave me a good blow to da cheek, too. Dis was a few weeks ago. So dou'rt truly huntin' 'im down??"

"Yes. Dost thou know where I might find this devil then?"

"Yeah! But kindly lemme come along wit dee, so I can land 'im a blow of my own, fah wrake's sake. I'll take dee straight to where it happened, on my field Northward o' here."

"Alright, thou canst come with my if thou wish. But hast thou got a gun?"

"No, sadly I ain't."

"Well, I reckon I can brook thee for something..."

"I was on my way down to da market, a long ways I know, so I'll need dee ta take me in dy wain."

"That shall do. By the way, what's thy name?"

"Dey call me Humphrey. And what's dine?"

"Name's Clark. Good to meet thee."

"Wit eest!"

And we went back to the wain and let him drive. Not too far down the road was his field and the house thereon. The field was right beside the woods, which cast a thick shadow on it as the trees hid the Moonlight behind. Few plants were growing there, and the earth looked dry.

"Owing to dat devil, I don't come out here no more," said Humphrey.

"That's too bad," I said. "So this is where we might find the devil?"

"Maybe. Somewhere about here, if we're hapful."

We walked toward the woods carefully, my gun out and my finger on the trigger, and Humphrey uneathly walking behind me.

My heart nearly stopped when I heard a loud "Maaaaaa!!!" followed by a beemlike swey coming from the woods.

"Dat's him! Dat's da devil!"

The devil sprang forth at me, leaping up, and I shot him right in his fiendishly smirking leer. But it barely harmed him at all, only knocking him back slightly.

"Hey!!" shouted the devil in his warryish steven. "Thy momma's so fat!—maaaaaa!" And he made the beemlike swey again (which will henceforth be tokened like so: *b'b'b'b'b'*), and some other childish louds. "I'm gonna kill you!!"

I shot at the fiend again, knocking him back again so slightly, and Humphrey leapt at him and struck him in his leer.

"Maaaaaaa!!" yelled the yet-grinning devil. "I'm gonna EAT you!!
B'b'b'b'b'b'b'b"

Shooting at him once more, he fled away into the shadowy wood. And we durst not take a step in there.

"Shit," I said. "He's tough."

"D'art right.. Hold on, I got a thought. What if we take dis heah goad—follow me..." And he showed me a hook-shapen stick that lay in the field near the house. "— and, since one ting I know about dis devil is he's a full-on dumbass, da dullest tool in da shed, if we can hook'm by dis goad, he'll be too daft to think and run to da side to get out, see? He'll keep fandin' ta run forward."

"Hmm, that could work, I reckon.."

"And den we could but keep hittin' 'im and shootin' 'im till he DIES!"

"Well, we oughta fand it, at least."

"Dere we go."

"And to make sicker that he comes out again, I say we have thee stand in the field alone, and I'll hide behind the house, and he'll think it's only thee and come out to eat thee, and then *I'll* come out with the goad and we'll work from there."

"Swith well. I guess we can do dat." And that's what we did.

Soon enough, the devil came out toward Humphrey once more, yelling slurs ("Thy mother's so fat!!") and making sweys, and I ran out with the goad and hooked the fiend with it. And sicker enough, he kept fanding to run forward instead of to the side.

"Smart thought, Humphrey!"

"Tanks!"

I got in six shots before the devil turned at last and sprang at me.

"I'M GONNA EAT THEE!! *B'b'b'b'b'b'b*"

I slapped him with the goad and he ran off, still smirking his teathy grin the whole while. His steps were eerily uneven, both in length and height, as he bounced from one shank to the other like a child learning to run. He swinded back into the woods.

"Ohhh my goodness," I sighed of wanhope.

"I've one more thank dat we can fand on 'im."

"What is it?"

"What if we put a stool in his way with a token saying 'Sit here for thirty braids if dy mudda ain't fat?' Da knowst, he is truly dat dumb."

"I guess we'll have to.."

So Humphrey fetched a stool from his house and an empty bookleaf on which he wrote "SIT HERE FOR 30 BRAIDS IF THY MOTHER ISN'T FAT," and set them up outside in the field. Then I had Humphrey stand behind the stool and put on like he were alone again.

The devil came out once more, saw the stool, said, "Maaaa! My mother isn't fat!" and sat in it.

Then I ran out and shot him ten times, but only fifteen braids going by, the fiend got up and fled.

"Thy momma's fat, then, is she?" I shouted.

"NO!" was his answer, and he was gone.

"Alright," I said. "We have to take this back to the Reeve."

I drove the both of us back to the Reeve's house (where in the first errand retching it was made known that I could go at any time and which was to thew for the staddle of the working), but his wain was not there. It was 10:39 at night.

I opened up the gate with the key he had given me and drove in.

Humphrey was wary of infaring the Reeve's house, even though I had the key, but I asoothed him that this were alright with the Reeve, and that I would retch that Humphrey was my new helper.

He gave in and we went inside.

Of boredom I set on the Reeve's gilded farseer and started watching the news, thinking maybe something noteful about the devil might come on.

But soon enough I heard the Reeve coming in so I shut off the farseer and watched the old man tread slowly and stiffly into the living room.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Evergreen I see. And who is this with thee?"

"This is my new helper, Humphrey. He has chosen to help me slay that devil."

"Good to meet thee, Humphrey!"

"Wow, da Reeve! Good ta meet dee too!"

"I forgot to tell thee earlier, Mr. Evergreen, that I have readied a room for thee, and now Humphrey I ween, to bide in."

"Oh, thank you," I said.

"Yeah, dat's trully a kindness d'art doin' for us!"

"My liking, dear friends!" said the Reeve.

"So why were thou out so late?" I asked.

"Ah yes. I was only doing some of my Reeve-work down at Town Hall, as I had forsaken to do it earlier. I reckon ye could call me a night owl."

"I like bidin' up late too," said Humphrey.

"Indeed. What a fitting team we make," grinned the Reeve. "Although it is you who does the true work."

"Yeah," I laughed.

Then we retched to the Reeve all that had happened to us and how unharmed the devil came out of it.

"So is there anything we can do, any kind of woakness that he may have, that we can brook to slay him? For all my shots seemed to do nothing!"

"Hmmm.. Well, yes.. There may be something. Let me look about to find the right book. But ye bide here." He walked off slowly into the bookstow that was next to the living room, but then tripped on a higher deal of the floor between the rooms and fell onto the floor. Smack!

"Art thou alright, Mr. Reeve??"

His staff still in his right hand as if nothing had happened, the old man leapt up to his feet and kept walking as ever, bowed over.

"Yes. I'm alright."

"Man, th'art sprier than I thought!"

"Yeah, smood draft! Didn't see dat one comin'!"

But the Reeve was already looking through his books.

"Ah, here it is," he said, merrily. "I have a lore from my mother that this old dighting book has a dighting on how to fordo devils.. I but clean forgot, earlier."

"Awesome!"

The book was called Gathered Leechdom Dightings, Other Draft, and the Reeve opened it to a leaf somewhere in the middle, a dighting named "Foot Ache (Sore)," that seemed to have no tie to the antimber of fordoing devils. The lokening given for foot ache was sodden leek water.

"Leek water??" I said. "What is this devil, some knockoff bloodsucker, that thou slayst with garlic?"

"And I don't see no token nowhere on da leaf dat it's for no devil."

"I said it was a lore from my mother. She told me about this a long time ago, however I only forgot now."

"Well alright," I said. "So that's truly this fellow's woakness?"

"Yes."

"Then let's go make some of this leek water."

"However, the devil, I believe, shall not come out again tonight; it is too late. Ye will have to fand again tomorrow night."

"Shucks."

"Well, make yourselves at home here, my friends, and tomorrow I shall buy you some leeks to help you out."

Soon we all went to sleep, and truly the only thing worth telling that happened before night the next day was that once the Reeve bought us the

leeks, he had a shift of heart about us bidding in his bold with him, and told us that we should instead bide at Humphrey's house.

When I frained about the grounds for this, he said, "Thou seest, I beknew that I do not wish to be tied to this work, and would rather look like I played no deal therein."

"Why's that, Mr. Reeve?"

"I ween it is a leedy thing, and... Well, I reckon I also would rather not be tied to a meed hunter like thyself. Though sickerly I mean thee no ill will. But this is my leedy kir."

"Well, I'm alright bidding with Humphrey."

And Humphrey and I bode the evening at his house, where I met his wife Alice, a mildhearted lady. She was the one who brewed the rich leek-water for us and put it in flasks of glass thin enough to break upon striking someone. We were ready, and once twilight had set in we left out into the field and made sweys like a band of helpless men ready for the slaught.

Once we heard the *b'b'b'b'b* swey, we spaned the devil out like before, and threw the flasks at him, which burst and at last went his smirk to a leer of sorrow and fear, and he keeled down onto the earth as his *b'b'b'b'b* sweys grew nether in pitch and after a time stopped altogether. He was still lying on the ground, looking dead.

"It worked!!" both of us shouted in glee.

"Man," yelled Humphrey. "Da Reeve was right! Take dat, you wife-slurrin' son of a bitch!"

But I hadn't stopped yet. "Hold up. My work's not done until I see *his head off of his body!*" I kept striking and shooting the fallen devil and leaping upon him, to make sicker that he *bide dead*. And Humphrey began walking away, giving me the look of "Now that's overkill, my friend." I know how to read looks.

But then, after shooting the devil enough times, he wrayed that it was all a blench, and that he wasn't dead, by rising up on his feet and fleeing away into the woods, belaughing us all the while!

"Maaaaaaa!!! B'b'b'b'b'b'b! I wasn't dead! Ye losers!"

Humphrey and I stood staring, bewildered and startled too, for a long time.

"Shit! What the hell!" I yelled and struck the ground with my foot.

"Ass! Dat's what I say about dis bullshit! Now what?"

We thought for a while and chose to call it a night and fand something new the next day.

I was tired and went to bed right away, my gun by my side. Though kindly I didn't sleep eathly.

I awoke in the morning to Humphrey shaking me and saying "Come look at dis! Come, da gotsta see dis!"

Unkeen at having arisen, I followed him downstairs to the eatingroom bead, where Alice was holding that day's newsleaf, the Wentford Tiding, whose first side had a great likeness of me and Humphrey standing by the shortly "dead" devil, with the heading, "Devil of Wentford At Last Slain by Helethish Men."

I was pretty shaken to see this (aside from him shaking me awake) and at that braid had no clue what was going on.

"Look," yelled Humphrey. "It says it was written by 'Unnamed!' No-one knows who wrote it!"

"How did they get our likeness??" I said.

"I say we meet up wit da Reeve about dis."

"Bright thought. Let's go."

And I drove us to the Reeve's bold.

Brooking the key to get in through the gate and foredoor, for he had yet to take it from me, I leapt in the lift when right behind the door was the Reeve, standing taller than wontly, and stern-leered. He didn't let us go in.

"Well, Mr. Evergreen, thy work is done." He did not look at all happy.

"Mr. Reeve, we came here to ask you about this! We didn't slay 'im! He fell to the ground but then got up and fled afterward! And we don't even know who took the likeness or wrote the—"

"I did," said the Reeve, his leer unshifting. "Last night I was at Town Hall and wielded a drone from afar that took the likeness. And I wrote the writ and sent it to the tiding. Onefold. Now here is thy yield, three thousand dollars. Ye may go; your work is done, and thou might give me back my key." In one hand he held out the benchleaf with the shat-tale written thereon, and the other he opened, for me to set the key in.

"But we didn't slay the devil." I stood my ground.

"I made up the leekwater dighting. Indeed, the dighting was sooth, but I have no lore from my mother that it fordoes devils! Ye halfwits! Now kindly give back my key."

"No, Mr. Reeve, thou liar. I'm not done until that devil is DEAD!"

"Thou hast until midday, twelve on the time-keeper, sharp, to be out of my town, Mr. Evergreen; thy errand is over. Otherwise I will have thee hented." By this time, Humphrey had begun walking toward the wain.

The Reeve shut the door mightily in my leer, and of fear and forewit I drove myself and Humphrey out of the gate and a few streets away down a side road. Then it was 10:12 in the morning on the timekeeper.

Sitting in the wain we bemooted the whole antimber and the Reeve's lie about the leekwater, and how he had fired me, and how he was in fellowship with the devil, sheerly, and why he had hired me in the first stead. We reckoned that the Reeve hired me so he could lie to the folk of the town and say that the devil had been slain when it hadn't.

"Well, I say we go back to the Reeve's house when he's not there," I said. "He shouldn't be home for long if he truly have to do his wieldy work down at Town Hall."

"D'art sayin' ta go and break into his house?? Da Reeve's house?!"

"As a meed hunter, I can't rest until this devil is slain for good. My work isn't done yet. And we might find some sooth clues in his house about the *true* way to slay the devil."

"Hmm... I mean dat devil *has* wrought enough evil on dis town already, and ain't showin' no tokens o' stoppin'.. He's slain twenty-nine men in da last month..."

"Holy hell, that's a lot. Come one, I'm going. Art thou with me?"

Humphrey kept still a long time, thinking.

"I'm wit dee."

"Thank thee."

"Hey look at dat!" He fingered to a wain driving swithly swift down the main street one hundred yards before us. It was the Reeve's wain. Hapfully he didn't see us. "Alright, now's da time ta go!"

So I set on the wain and drew onto the main street, making a left wend. Driving slightly above the speed fetter, I got to the Reeve's gate in no time (indeed his wain wasn't there), but the lock had been swapped out!

"What do we do now??" fretted Humphrey.

I drew out my gun and got out of the wain. "It's onefold: we'll break in."

I shot the lock and broke it, then opened the gate, got back in the wain and stopped it on the street beside the lot, and we ran inside toward the house.

The foredoor's lock had also been swapped out, so I shot the knop and spurned down the door.

"I don't care what happens to me now!" yelled Humphrey. "We're takin' down dat devil!"

"Alright," I bade. "Thou look through the whole house, in hidden stows and on bookshelves, for anything that could mightly be tied to fordoing this devil! I will do the same. Go!"

And off we were, through the house walting things over, looking behind things, and knocking on walls behind tiverings and homeware to find hollow steads, as swiftly as we could before he got back and twelve on the timekeeper raught.

I sought upstairs in his workroom and bedroom after going through the bookstow, and Humphrey looked downstairs in the kitchen and living room and hallways, until he took a tivering off the wall in a cleaningware stowroom where thou wouldstn't *put* a tivering, though roomy it were, and saw that a platch of the wall-leaf was missing, wraying the bare plaster behind, which he felt and was hollow.

So he quickly ran upstairs, saying "I think I've found it! Come down here!" And I followed him down to the stowroom and knocked on the hollow in the wall.

"Yep, this must be it!" And as I wontly do as the answer to a hardship, I smote the hollow with my fist, tearing through the third-inch-thick plaster and wraying an old book hidden behind.

"Dis has ta be it!"

"Better be."

The book looked to be at least sixty years old and was called Sundry Songs for Sundry Leechdoms, and for Ghostly Rines. It had been gotten from the Wentford Folkish Bookhouse and was sheerly never brought back.

The book inheld, as the name put forth, sundry songs meant to leech sundry sicknesses by singing them, or to get rid of unwished evil ghostly beings or the like.

And so we looked through the table of inholdings, and soon enough I saw "Be rid of devils" written, leading to leaf 234, so we went to that leaf, but it had been torn out! The book went straight from leaf 232 to 235!

"Alright, we should get out of here now," I said.

"I think dat's wise."

And we fled, making no fand to hide that we were there, even leaving the gate open, and we drove off with the book. By the time we got beyond the town mere, it was 11:49.

"Hmmm, what will we do now?" I said.

"Well, glaringly we can't but go back dere too eathly, for he'll be bidin' for us now. I mean, as soon as he gets back home, he'll know we were dere."

"We need to find the missing leaf of the book. Then if we can get back there at night when the devil's afoot, we can fordo 'im."

"How will we find it, dough?"

"Hast thou a reckoner at home?"

"No. But we can't go back dere anyway, mimmer?"

"Yeah, I only wished to know if thou were couth with brooking reckoners or the net."

"Oh. Yeah, I ain't couth with 'em at all."

"Well I know how. That's how I got hired, insooth. I'll take us down the road a few miles, well, more like ten miles, to the next big town, Wesson Springs. There's a bookstow there that I think lets thee brook their reckoners and lithe the net. Maybe we can find a full draft of the book online."

"Alright, let's fand it."

And there we drove.

It took long before we raught, and even longer before we raught the bookstow, but we reared ourselves up and got out of the wain, weary of driving.

"Man am I hungry!" said Humphrey "First I think we oughtta eat somethin'. Like, look, here's an eatinghouse on de udda side o' da street, Marty's Meals."

"Th' knowst, I'm pretty hungry myself, and we have time. Yeah, let's eat there."

The food wasn't that great, but wasn't awful either, and was at least fairly filling, so we walked out of there gladly sated. And kindly, I had my gun hidden with me the whole time. I don't like to take my likelihoods.

Anyway, Humphrey and I walked into the Wesson Springs Folkish Bookstow and asked to brook one of the reckoners.

"Yeah, ye can do that. We have one reckoner ready right now."

We took it.

"Alright, so look, Humphrey. I go to *Google.com*—"

"Ah, I know about dat."

"Yeah. And then I'll write 'sundry songs for sundry leechdoms and for ghostly rines full book.'"

"Alright..."

"Ah, here we go! Here's the full book on Gutenberg Undertaking!"

But to my amazedness, leaves 233 and 234 were missing from the online draft too!

"What da hell??"

"It doesn't make anyet!"

"How's he doin' dis?"

"I don't get it."

"Hold on, lemme fand som'm here." Humphrey went back to Google and wrote 'Sundry Songs for Sundry Leechdoms and for Ghostly Rines missing leaf.'

There was one aftercoming: a post on the Finders Keepers Book Moot.

We opened the link.

"Holy shit Humphrey, good thinking!"

Jeff445Kid: Hi folks! So I came upon this book called Sundry Songs for Sundry Leechdoms and for Ghostly Rines, by Edward Weaver (1956) on the Gutenberg Undertaking webstead, but for some sake leaves 233-4 are missing! And I couldn't find it anywhere else.. I don't care about leaf 233 (which is a song meant to lessen dizziness), but 234 by the table of inholdings should have a song to "fordo devils." So do ye think ye could help me if ye have a clove of that song? Thanks!

BookWorm_1: Wow, that truly is weird... Well, I do happen to have a clove myself, and so here I've written out the song:

Tiqun haklali. Mikhtam l'dawid, shamreini el ki hhasiti vakh. Amart leilohim adonai, tovati bal 'aleikha. Liqdoshim asher ba'arets, heima wa'adirei, kol hheftsi vam...

There was more to the song, but I think that's enough for you to understand. I didn't know what tongue it was written in, but the book said it could fordo devils by being uttered, and so Humphrey and I thwore to thrutch it out on leaf to take back with us.

Hapfully, the bookstow had thrutchers, only they made us yield a small fee, but it was sickerly alright with me. So we made a clove of it, and I put it in my jacket cod.

"Are we ready to leave, Humphrey?"

"I don't see why not. Now we have lots o' time on our hands, since da devil only comes out at night. I ween we could go and but look about town here. Do a little wand'rin', by wain. Should we?"

"I guess that'll have to do for now."

I was too worried to have much liking amid that time, and I think Humphrey was too, but we lasted well enough doing our little sillinesses till sunset (the town wasn't that bewitching), and chose that were the best time to go back, and so I drove us the way back as we forethought our draft before we got there.

"So sickerly," said Humphrey, "da Reeve's gonna be foreseein' us, at least da mightlihood of us comin' back ta fuldo da work."

"Yeah. Let's but see what happens. If they hinder us by the Silver Rich Highway, I can always take this feller off-road..."

But weirdly enough, no-one was there to hinder us once we (at last) got to the edge of Wentford.

We drove all the way until Humphrey's field where we had met the devil the other times, and fanded spaning him by all our former wiles and then some, but he never showed up, even after a stound of biding.

"What if da *Reeve* took 'im to *his* house? Since for some sake dose two are workin' togedda, or at least da Reeve's fandin' to help da devil."

I sighed deeply. "I guess we'll have to go back there..."

"And all we have to do is sing dat song– hold on, gimme it–"

I gave him the leaf with the clove of the song.

"Thanks. So all we have to do is sing dis song, and da devil – hopefully – will be fordone, but like dat! Dou canst fight off da Reeve or som'm, and I'll fand and find da devil. How about dat?"

"That's a good draft. Well, get in the wain and let's do it." I sighed again. "I don't wish to see that creepy fucking Reeve again..."

In short time we got back to his lot. The gate was open, and the Reeve's wain was stopped inside.

I stopped my wain on the side of the road again and we got out, myself holding my gun tightly, my finger ready on the trigger. And Humphrey took out the folded-up song and got ready to sing when the need would arise.

"I foresaw this," said the Reeve, walking out in the mild Moonlight toward us from the house. "Thou saidst thy work was not done yet. And I also foresaw *thee* coming back."

"Step aside, Mr. Reeve!" I yelled, Humphrey and I boldly walking forth.

"Where's da devil?!"

"I see ye could not find the song, could ye?" He went on walking toward us, forebodingly.

Humphrey wisely kept his mouth still and yold no mind to the leaf in his hand, as if it were not there.

"Clark, fand and shoot me," grinned the Reeve. "I dare thee." He kept walking forward.

"Take one more step toward us and I will."

He did.

I shot him in his foot. He was wholly unharmed.

"*B'b'b'b'b'b'b'b*," went the Reeve. His reard became fully like the devil's, and he shifted his leer's shape to look like his too.

Humphrey and I were so affrighted, and I started to shiver.

But Humphrey stood steadfast and mild, and began to sing as best as he might:

"Tiqun haklali. Mikhtam l'dawid, shamreini el ki hhasiti vakh. Amart leilohim adonai, tovati bal 'aleikha. Liqdoshim asher ba'arets, heima wa'adirei, kol hheftsi vam..."

Once he started, the devil sprang forward at Humphrey and in his childish reard yelled "Shut up thou son of a bitch! No more of that! Enough!" But as he

tried to strike Humphrey, I smote the devil in the leer with the butt of my gun and then fisted him till he fell to the ground.

As Humphrey sang, the devil's flesh began to sink about his bones and his hair fell out, as he lay on the ground, thwarted. His reard sank too, until he could no longer speak, and soon a swithly foul sight befell my eyes: the devil's whole body started to melt like wax as he lost his shape, till he became naught but a puddle of ooze that slowly seeped into the earth and left the lift feeling "lighter" and "comelier," like something addle and eerie had right then been lifted from that stead, and, notwithstanding having seen such an awful thing as that, Humphrey and I felt better, soothed.

In truth, we both felt swithly good at heart, and we started to laugh.

"So that was him the whole time! Had me mighty well fonned!"

"Ha! Thought he could outsmart da likes of US?! Get *OUTTA* heah!"

Such a great glee overtook us, as we stood proud over our, and the town's, foe.

But we did have one big wondering unanswered. Until Reeve Jeremy Lamstader came walking down the steps to the house toward us.

"Friends? Did ye aleese me right now?"

"The true Reeve??"

"Yes. I'm writing the both of you together a writ for one thousandfold thousand, five hundred thousand dollars, for aleesing my life. I had nearly died, when that fiend trapped me in the underroom for three weeks. I barely belived on the foods that I had stocked there, as I had not swith much of them.

"Today – but a few stounds ago – I fled at last after finding a wily way of doing so. But that awful devil had fangen me right as I was about to flee the house about fifteen sixtybraids ago after I came out of hiding, and he was ready to eat me – for that is what he is, a man-eater. Only then ye fellows came and his mind went to you instead of me, and he let me go in the house to fang you. His plot would have been to *eat you*. I won't get into the tale of how he got here in the first stead; that, I believe, is a tale for another time. I am weary.

"So here is your writ of yield, take it, my friends."

And we took it, and retched to him all that had happened and how that fiend had hired me to wile the townsfolk into thinking him dead.

"How odd..." said the true Reeve.

Humphrey and I sundered, but I swore to call him soon (he gave me his farspeaker rime), and we upheld that we would bide as friends. And we shook hands with Reeve Jeremy, who said we could come back anytime we liked.

Though I'm rich enough as I need to be now, I still do meed hunting, as I like it.

THE END