

Connotation

by

Vixxy Fox

“It’s all in how they say it,” Remmington Rabbit told Ben the Nose, “It’s in the way they say it.”

He’d found himself back in Scanectity’s Valley, once again peddling his wares. This time it wasn’t the cheap comb and brush sets, but the brandy new published for the first time ever Enclopedia Veronica; Veronica being the name of the wife of the publisher. To camouflage his actual intent, he also pulled a cart containing a good quantity of sewing supplies and assorted new and used books.

“For instance, you have the polite creatures who will simply say, ‘Thank you very much but I am not interested.’ Those are the folks you might just be able to convince to buy your product. Then you’ve got those who will yell at you in the loudest voice, ‘GET THE BLAZES OFF’N MY PORCH!’

“Oh my,” Ben told him, “I might be blind, but I shor can hear, or at least I used to. I think you migh’a blew out my eardrum.”

They were sitting on the church steps, Ben taking a break from cleaning the church, and Remmington from the toils of pulling his wagon. Camouflage apparently was heavy. The Bunny patted the Blood Hound on the shoulder. “My appologizes, Friend Dog, I did not mean to make you suffer.”

“I’m not buying anything,” Ben growled, “But if you need a place to stay the night you can bunk in with me in the basement of the church. It’s not much, but it is comfortable.”

“Well I am much obliged, and the connotation of your growl tells me you might buy something, but you haven’t the funds to spare.”

“I haven’t the funds at all, less’n you count the few copper coins in the jar under my bed.”

“That does seem to tbe the state of things for most of those who live in these parts,” the Rabbit agreed.

“We eat well, and we watch over each other,” Ben told him. “I am never wantful of the things I need, and I usually have enough left over to buy a little tobbacki fer my pipe. There’s noth’n better than sitting out here on a warm summer’s night and enjoy’n a smoke.” He paused a moment and then asked, “So how’s the business this time around?”

“The sewing supplies move remarkably fast and the profits from that keep me fed,” the drummer admitted. “If I can’t find anywhere else to sleep, I can make room in the wagon, and I keep a warm blanket there for that. The books sell if I’m among those who can read, and so far I have ten full orders for the Encyclopedia Veronica, which is pretty remarkable.”

“And that’s your bread and butter?”

“Yes, sir, that is my bread and butter. In all honesty, Friend Dog, I have taken the time to read the whole volume during my travels, and it is very enlightening. It contains the entire history of the world up to these modern times.”

“And there,” Ben chuckled, “Your words have given me the connotation that you read but you did not read. You skimmed through what you had just so you could say honestly that you have read it, but you think the entire thing is a huge waste of time.”

“My words said that?”

Ben sniffed. “That and your scent shifted ever so slightly. I’m sorta good in that category being a Blood Hound and all.”

“Then you are a veritable truth deviner.” Taking a carrot out of his pocket, he hesitated, thinking to offer one to the Dog.

“I don’t eat raw carrots, thank you kindly,” Ben told him with a smile, “But you go ahead.”

Remington took a bite and then after a few crunching chews, asked, “Is that old Fox with the big ears still the owner of the Whackadoodle Inn?”

“None other,” the Hound replied.

“Is she still...”

“Cranky as a wet hen,” he chuckled. “Some things will never change. She does have a stupendous cook now. That’s a word, ain’t it? ‘Stupendous’?”

“I believe it is so. I believe it means, ‘extremely impressive’.”

“Good thing. I was saving it to use next time I had dinner at the Inn, and if it was linked to ‘stupid’ in some sort of fashion I was worried I might be wearing my desert should I use it as a compliment.”

“We could look it up in the encyclopedia later if you wish.”

That might be a good idea... just in case. Now tell me what time it is on your pocket watch.”

Remington paused in his chewing. “How did you know I had a pocket watch?”

Ben smiled. "I'd connotate that I scented it on ya, but I could hear it ticking, and the ticking was muffled a bit as if maybe it was tucked away into a pocket."

"That's not a word," the Rabbit said.

The church janitor smiled, his feelings not hurt in the slightest at this challenge. "It's a word if'n I say it's a word," he happily challenged back. "What are words anyways but a bunch of made up sounds meant to mean something? Your Enclyopedia's history of the world might be true and it might not be true... I can't know because it don't have a scent, and I can't read in any case. But; you want the truth of what's presently going on in your life, trust your nose. Speak'n of which, I smell that the Pastur's wife is starting the evening meal. We better saunter on over and let her know there's going to be another mouth at the table."

"That's very kind of you, Friend Dog."

"Call me Ben," he replied, as he rose from the steps, "And I got a favor to ask in return."

The Rabbit's ears went up at the mention of a cost to this meal.

"When ya get to the Whackadoodle, the old Fox has a new Fox at the front desk. Scent wise I find her to be very very pretty. That much stands out even above the wonderful scents coming from the kitchen. I'd ask that you feast yor eyes on her and just let me know if'n I'm correct." The old Dog chuckled at this thought and then added, "I understand she likes to read too."