

Ham Hocks and Turnip Greens

by Lord Sam the Vigilant and Lady Nancy the Enchanting

She sat down at the dining room table, placed her fingertips firmly on the keys of her old Underwood, and started typing.

*It had rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Well, you can't say for sure if it rained at night because of being asleep, but at least for 40 days. Of course, some days it might not have rained absolutely **all** day, maybe just part of the day. So if you figured on how many hours it actually rained it might only add up to less than 40 days, maybe 20 in all, but that's still a lot of rain. Then again, maybe some days it didn't rain completely full speed, like maybe just showers or sprinkling or maybe even just some mist so maybe, if you figure the actual amount of water per hour, all in all it only added up to maybe five or ten days at most. Of course, with only five days out of 40 days, it might be a little hard to remember just how many there really were, especially if some of them only had rain for a few minutes or so, it would be easy to miss that so you could really honestly only say that it might have rained a day or two and with so little rain in 40 days it's pretty hard to remember for sure. Actually, maybe it was more than 40 days ago, that last rainy day, and if you say you're talking about it raining for 40 days then you really mean the last, most recent 40 days, so maybe it didn't rain at all during the last 40 days.*

That would sure explain why the yard is so darned dry. Dry heck. Parched. Dust puffs up when you walk across it. Worse yet, the whole darned neighborhood is blistered from the heat and dry weather. They even said on the radio that the Governor was going to declare the whole darned state to be a disaster area because of the

She ripped the sheet of paper out of the typewriter, wadded it into a little ball, and threw it onto the big pile of wadded paper under which her trash can was deeply buried.

“Dammit!” she muttered, getting up. “This ain't doin' me no good at all! I might as well just be a cat, for all that I've accomplished. At least they have an excuse; no opposable thumbs!” She got up and headed for the kitchen. Writing always gave her an appetite. About the time she had rattled the first pan, Plumpkin came in and started meowing. “I want some, Mommie! I want some!” she said. “Sweetie, you don't even know what I'm making. You might not like it,” the woman told her. “But I want some,” said Plumpkin. “Well, Little One, its not ready. You'll just have to wait.” “Okay,” said the kitty, “brush me while I wait.” The woman felt exasperated, and started to try to explain to the silly little animal that it would be impossible to both brush her and make the meal at the same time, but before she had a chance to begin the pointless lesson, the phone rang. It didn't occur to her to wonder until much later, why, after all these years, the cat had suddenly started talking. She had always just assumed that if cats *could* talk, they *wouldn't*. She reached for the phone, “Hello?”

“Meeoow?”

“Pluuuumpkiiiiiiin,” she called, “It's for yooouuuuu!”

She pressed the speakerphone button and went back into the kitchen, passing Plumpkin as she strolled toward the hallway telephone.

In the kitchen, she wondered what to fix. “Hmmm. Ah!” she thought. “Just the thing! Ham hocks and turnip greens! I have a big bowl of leftovers. That'll do!”

While she was preparing her meal, it crept back into her mind. She tried not to think about it.

Just as a little extra treat for herself, she also got out her fancy tea pot, the white one with the pretty bluebonnets painted on it.

“Ah,” she said mimicking a British accent, “a spot of tea!” She put the teapot over medium heat. She thought of it again, and forced herself to think of something else.

“Biscuits! Ham hocks, turnip greens, tea, and biscuits!”

She was still thinking of it. No use. She could stuff herself until she was a blimp and she’d still think of it. While the tea water was heating, she went back into the dining room, drawn as if by a string. She couldn’t not do it. The pull was too strong. Yes, there it was, on the table. The flier.

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Everything else forgotten, she sat down at the dining room table, placed her fingertips firmly on the keys of her old Underwood, and started typing.