

That dog's name was... (*Writes on chalkboard*)  
...Sabrina....

(*We hear a scratchy recording of It's a Long Way to Tipperary [preferably by John McCormack] or similar first World War vintage war song, and see a slide of soldiers in trenches.*)

Sabrina. October 1914 and Sabrina still not claimed. World War I had started by then, ten million men would be slaughtered by the end, and the German dog, Sabrina, she too was put down, at last.... Gassed... And as I stood there in that office, I began to wonder... (*Looks about*) What was I doing here?! But! And yet! What was that dog doing here. And what was anybody doing in those trenches in 1914— (*To slide of soldier*)—oh but you doughboys had a song for that, didn't you, how did it go— (*Sings waveringly, but jauntily, the old soldier song [to tune of Auld Lang Syne]*)—"We're here because we're here because we're here because we're here...." Yes, well enough of that.

The veterinarian's report on Sabrina is a tearjerker and reads in part— (*Reading scrap of paper with Evidence label dangling on it*) "This dog was brought to us with its footpads torn to shreds. And yet, when we told the dog to sit, it whined and whimpered, and refused to sit, and cowered in terror, as if sitting would bring with it a terrible beating." Poor Sabrina! And remember now, our man in the tram was reported as pacing up and down, *refusing to sit*. Well. This was getting interesting. Not riveting. But interesting. And nothing else of note except this, Except this!—

(*Reveals, attached to the report, with its own evidence tag*)—a release statement, handwritten by our Mister Mystery, oh yes, matching to a tee all the loops of the ells and ees that we have here in the margins of the bloody Baedekers! And he signed it—"A" *period*. And he wrote, "I give full authorization to these fellows to keep for the proscribed allotment of time, my dog, *Zebrina*." Not Sabrina. But "Ze." With a Z, E Zebrina. Well. "What sort of a name is that?" I wondered. So I looked it up in the dictionary, and encyclopedia, and one of those "name-the-baby" books and do you know what I found? Nothing. Still. I tucked it away in the back of the thinking thing that I cleverly carry around with me, sometimes, and there was this too—our man was required on this form to leave the name and address of a man in the Country who could vouch for him, and he wrote "the estate of the Lord of Derby, Attention: Thomas Wright."

And here's where things take a turn. And I'm talking about my stomach, for one. And here's why. I did a bit of research. Thomas Wright did live on the estate of the Lord of Derby but it was **almost two hundred years previous to the date of the Release Statement, Thomas Wright lived on the estate of the Lord of Derby from 1720 to 1754.** 1754. Two hundred and thirty-two years before the Baedeker's book was returned. Well this didn't make any sense. I was a bit scared now...no one lives that long...surely...surely he wrote down the first name that came to his head, having no one truly who could vouch for him in England.... Surely! But if you think I wasn't up in Derby the

next day, to the archives now overseen by the National Trust, sifting through the account books of Thomas Wright, well, you'd be wrong. This was getting funny, and I didn't like it.

Eveydence #9. A page from Wright's Account Book. Whose now? Thomas Wright's. He kept the accounts of the estate of the Lord of Derby. How many chamberpots ordered and whatnot. And a diligent man was he. And good for us. And here's why. Year, 1748. Page 112, line 8—"Earthstopper—hired for week. Four pence." So what? So this—in the margins next to the line, and on the back of the page, Wright scribbled the following— (*And he acts out the following in a clearly rehearsed, but rather stiltedly rendered performance [though still managing to impart an air of mystery to the "man in the funnel-shaped hat".]*)

Whilst riding in coach, early evening,  
encountered a most curious man wearing  
faded yellow funnel-shaped hat roaming  
grounds of estate.

"Sir," I said, "You are trespassing on private  
ground belonging to the Lord of Derby, you  
don't belong here."

"I don't belong here, I don't belong anywhere  
at all, but I'm everywhere nonetheless and you  
can thank your Lord for that."

"Do you have a grievance with my Lord?"

"You don't know the half of it," he replied, in  
an accent impossible to place, but if I had to  
venture, I would say half-French, half...monkey.

"May I ask how my Lord has grieved you, sir?"

"You may ask, but I mayn't answer—I'm not

allowed to tell you how he has wronged me."  
"Then how do you expect my Lord of Derby to  
make amends," I said, rather exasperated. And  
here, the curious man doubled over, and said  
that was the funniest joke he had ever heard.  
He said evidently we have been talking about  
two different Lords. Well, obviously an escapee  
from Bedlam, but suddenly remembering that  
I was in desperate need of an earthstopper for  
tomorrow's hunt, I took the liberty of asking  
this crooked man if he would like a night's  
employment. At the word "earthstopper,"  
his eyes lit up.

Hold on. Stop the narrative. What's earthstopping.  
Well, let's look it up. (*We see a slide of Joseph  
Wright's nineteenth-century painting The  
Earthstopper.*) Oh yes, here's a picture of it and a  
faded miserable picture it is. Apparently it's a little  
tactic developed by the foxhunting gentry. Foxes,  
apparently, live in dens, snug little places.... At  
night, the foxes leave their dens, and skulk about,  
looking for supper. Otherwise, it's the dens for  
them. Well, if you live on a big estate, and you're  
throwing a foxhunting party in the morning,  
you don't want all the foxes in their dens, no.  
Your guests will say, one and all, "well that was  
a lousy party." So what do you do. You employ  
an *earthstopper*, who goes out with his lantern and  
spade the night before, and while the fox is out,  
he stops up his den right up to the top with earth.  
When the fox returns, he can't find his home,  
"what miserable earthstopper's done this," says  
the fox, "burying my wife and all my lovelies, and  
now I must roam the hills til morn and find a fix