

Hank and the virus

By Henry "Hank" McCoy, with help from a literate cousin

Now wouldja looky heeya. Hank I is, just down from the Appalachas, and look what you "civilized" folk have gone and done. I ain't never liked lowlanders none, but this heeya is somethin else, even fer y'all.

My ole Martha sent me down to buy a brand spankin new shovel so's I can digs a new hole for a new house of easement. Lotta shattin up on the mountain, I can tell ya, and a man's got to be prepair. Ole Martha wants the hole dug, so I digs, cuz ain't no good come from sassin er. She's a venom-spittin old gal, I can tell ya, tougher than a railroad spike, and a sight meaner. She'll haul off and crack a man soon as look at im.

Just t'other day she hit me so hard, er own damn teeth fell out an clattered on the flo. She just bent down, gathere'd em up, slid em rat back in, and went rat back to gnawin on that cornbread like it's a hunk o sweet rock candy and she's nuthin but a fat ole plump chile with the sugarlust in er eye. That cornbread done disappears faster'n it come out t'oven, I can tell ya. Rat on down the ole maw. Just rat on down.

On to the businesses a'hand. I just cain't figure it. No, I cain't. Not a-tall. No siree. Cain't figure what you lowlanders been up to down heeya. Ole Hank shoulda been downways supervisin y'all. That's how it looks to me. Ole Skeeter, now he's my relation in a roundabout manner o'speakin, he pumps the petrol down at the corner station, and if ya ask me, I think the old boy sniffs

more'n he pumps, and ole Skeeter says y'all been droppin like flies. He says like flies, yes he do. He shorely do.

So what's y'all go and do? Huh? Mind you it makes me no nevermind, cuz I's headin rat on up into them thar mountains agin, and the troubles y'all make for yerselfs down heeya don't really concern me, leastways not nothin properlike. Ain't never had no truck with lowlanders nohow. Ole Skeetie -- we called him that when he was just a boy, fore he got sweet on sniffin chemicals'n paint and done softened his mind some; I caught im sniffin gram-mammie's garter belt one time -- well ole Skeetie says somebody somewhar done planted his flag in a bat. I keed you not. A bat! That's what ole Skeetie says, and he ain't never lied about nothin, but his mind is soft as the underside of a grouse in springtime, so's I wouldn't put my hand on the good book or nothin like that. Wouldn't swar on it or nothin. A bat! I ain't never heard nothin no mo crazier than that thar. Nothin!

Ole Skeetie tried tellin me it was a "virus", or somesuch. He shorely did. Shorely did. Now, I don't ratly knows what that be. We ain't got anysuch up in them thar hills. Oh, no siree. In the Appalaches we ain't got no truck with foreign lowland ideas like "virus". Y'all can keep it. Y'all can keep it to yerselfs.

I's gotsta get back to Martha now. She said to me fore I done skedaddled down the mountain, "Ole Hank, if you getcher mangy self back heeya fore sundown, I'll have ya some cornbread hot from t'oven."

She's a mean ole gal, my Martha, but I luv her dearly. She can make a man weep with a look, I swar, but she sho can cook the cornbread. Sho can.

Lawd lawd, look'it the time! Now it's too late to get me a shovel. I wasted too much time jabberin with y'all, tryin t'figure how y'all have gone and wrecked the worl with this heeya "virus". I gots ta dig a new hole cuz th'othuh one's plumb full. Lotta shattin up on the mountain, I can tell ya. Lotta shattin, and a man's got to be prepairt. Gotsta be, I always say. I shorely do.

And now looky heeya, if it ain't ole Jessup Hatfield's mangy boy roundin the corner. I gots ta skedaddle cuz this heeya boy carries iron and knows its uses. There's a time and there's a place for iron, and this ain't neither. Y'all take care of yerselfs. No mo of them there "virus" things, heeya? Don't make ole Hank come down the mountain and clobber sense inta y'all. You ain't gonna like that none. Heeya?