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# MONSTER IN HORSE'S CLOTHING

Also published under the title *Ed the Were Horse*.

BY

WALTER BROOKS

Illustrations by William von Riegen (1937-1975) omitted, not yet in the public domain in Canada.

First published *Argosy*, February 1945.

*Liking Wilb as he did, Ed felt sorry for him in his new predicament—but there are some things even a talking horse shouldn't be called on to do!*

"Oh, Wilbur," Mrs. Pope said, "do you know who has moved into the Jessups'?"

Mr. Pope glanced across the hedge which separated his garden from that of the Jessup house. "Party with a French name. Forgotten what it was. Why?"

"It's Delisier. Mr. Johannes told us. Remember? But I didn't know it was *Eve Delisier!* And she's there now. Moved in this afternoon."

"Well, well," said Mr. Pope vaguely.

"Oh, darling, don't be dumb! *Eve Delisier!*"

"Of course. Gosh, I wonder—"

"What do gosh you wonder?" Mrs. Pope asked.

"I was just thinking—if I could get her to do some sketches, I bet I could nail that Marian Volney account I've been after for five years. Probably doesn't do any commercial work, though. But I might talk to Lamson about it. He's still mulling over the idea of letting me in for a partnership, and the Volney account would knock him endways." Mr. Lamson was head of the advertising agency where Mr. Pope was an account executive.

"Well, anyway," Mrs. Pope said, "I've been over and talked to her, and I asked her in for cocktails Sunday afternoon. And even if she won't do your sketches, you be nice to her, Wilbur."

Mr. Pope hadn't intended to stay home Sunday, for it was his custom on weekends, when the clan began to gather and the roar of polite conversation could be heard a mile down the road, to saddle his horse, Ed, and go for a long ride, with beer and conversation, and occasional naps in the shade of wayside trees. But with such a distinguished guest in prospect, Mrs. Pope had sent around the fiery cross in earnest, and several people had even come up from Philadelphia. So Mr. Pope stayed home.

But he didn't find it at all hard to be nice to *Eve Delisier*. She was dark and very smart, and beautiful, in a French sort of way. Mrs. Pope was dark and beautiful, too, but she was more the languorous Spanish type. The beauty of *Eve Delisier's* face was in movement, whereas Mrs. Pope's was in the features themselves. But anyway, *Eve* was pretty attractive.

She spoke English well but with the conventional French accent which makes every remark sound twice as interesting. And of course it sounded twice as flattering when she asked Mr. Pope's advice about the Jessup water pump, which had stopped last night and wouldn't start again. Neither *Victorine* nor *Paul*, the couple who looked after her, seemed to understand

it. Mr. Pope said he would be glad to explain it to Paul, but it appeared that Paul did not understand English.

“*Je crois que je parle assez bien le Français pour lui intruire, votre Paul,*” Mr. Pope said.

“You speak French? But zat is marvelous!” She jumped up. “Oh, would you come vit’ me now? Mrs. Pope, you won’t mind—”

“Of course not,” Mrs. Pope said. “Go along, Wilbur.”

Mr. Pope did not know quite how it happened that although it took only ten minutes to show Paul what was the matter, they were nearly two hours getting back to the party. After Paul and the pump, there had been Victorine and the hot-water heater, and then, as repayment of his kindness, some remarkable old Spanish brandy in the studio, where he was shown a portfolio of sketches—just the sort of thing Marian Volney would be crazy to get, he thought. And then a great deal of mixed French and English conversation. And on the way back through the garden there had been Ed, eyeing them sardonically from the stable door, and Eve—they were at Eve and Wilbur by this time—must make his acquaintance.

Mr. Pope led Ed out, and as she got a good look at the horse, Eve’s volubility for the first time deserted her. “*Mon dieu!*” she said under her breath. Then, “*Mais qu’il est surrealiste! Tout a fait!* ‘Ow wonderful, Wilbur! But—‘ow can one ride a surrealist ‘orse? ‘E is too subjective—somezing one dreams of. ‘Ow does one saddle a dream?”

Indeed, Ed was no thoroughbred. He looked rather like a child’s drawing of a horse, a horse reduced to the lowest common denominator—four legs, head, body, mane and tail. But Mr. Pope loved Ed. He said, “I guess he is a bit heavy for a saddle horse. But you should see him in action.”

Eve said, “I shall hope to.”

“And boy, she will!” Ed murmured in Mr. Pope’s ear as he was led back into the stable. “Subjective, am I?”

“She said you were a dream,” said Mr. Pope.

“There’s dreams and dreams,” Ed replied. “And the only dream horses I ever heard tell of are nightmares. She’d better watch herself. I got a long memory for insults, Wilb.”

Although Mrs. Pope smiled at him approvingly when he at last brought Eve back to the terrace, Mr. Pope was uneasy. Somehow he felt that by staying away with her so long he had committed himself—in just what way, he didn’t know. Eve was fascinating, but there was something brittle and hard under her charm. He told Mrs. Pope later that he really didn’t like her.

But Mrs. Pope just laughed. “It’s merely your natural resistance to doing anything you ought to, darling. If being nice to her hadn’t been advantageous to you—good heavens!”

“I see.” Mr. Pope grinned at her. “You suspected I might fall for her, so you’re throwing me at her head to put me off her.”

“Nothing so subtle, my pet. It’s just that—well, she’s an addition, she has something to offer—”

“If she’ll only offer it,” said Mr. Pope. “But she’s told me what she thinks of commercial work. I haven’t dared mention Volney yet.”

“Make her your best offer. I never knew a Frenchwoman yet who didn’t think of money first.”

“You never knew any Frenchwomen,” said Mr. Pope.

Ed, however, when Mr. Pope’s idea was explained to him, was indignant. He said he had no words to express what he felt about that kind of low scheming, and then he went on to

indicate how many words he didn't have. This was a week or so later, when several of their rides together had been nipped in the bud by Eve's appearance just as they were starting out. There had been a sketch to look at, or an urgent need for advice, and Mr. Pope had followed her into the house, leaving Ed all saddled and bridled and with no place to go.

"You're a good one to talk," Mr. Pope said.

"Maybe so," said Ed. "I ain't above a little dirty work in a good cause. And Wilb—I ain't sayin' anything about your standing me up time after time to tag off after this babe, but why do you always talk with her in front of me in the French language? Let alone that it ain't very polite, what's so private about what you got to say to her?"

Mr. Pope said there was nothing private, it was just good practice he was getting, polishing up his French.

"Yeah?" said Ed. "Well, I know something about the French language. You can say things in it you'd get your face slapped for in English. Besides which, it's all full of words like *amour* and such. They say that if you want to make a proposition sound real poetic, all you got to do is say it in French."

"Look, Ed," said Mr. Pope. "I don't like being held up every time we start for a ride any more than you do. But what can I do? I've got to be polite to her. I want those sketches. Frankly, I don't like Eve very well—"

"Eve!" Ed snorted. "You ain't no Adam, Wilb, but you can be just as much of a sucker as he was. You keep away from the apple trees."

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Friendships, like apples, ripen. Eve came to the Popes' parties and asked them to hers. Mr. Pope made frequent solo visits to her studio to inspect her work. It was during one of these visits that she brought out a sketch and handed it to him.

"I made zis for you," she said.

It was done in red chalk, a few broad lines, swept in boldly. Mr. Pope looked at it doubtfully. An animal? No, by gosh, it was Ed. It certainly was not recognizable as a horse, and yet it was Ed. There was no question about it. Somehow his essential characteristics were there, though how—

He looked at Eve respectfully. "It's wonderful," he said.

And then, with the sketch in his hands, it seemed to him that the time had come to bring up the Volney account. "Eve," he said, "there's something I want to ask you. I—I've been wanting to for a long time, but I hardly dared. It's—well, I know it's a question of ethics with you, but it means such a lot to me—my whole future—" He stopped, for she had put her hand over his mouth.

"Oh, Wilbur, *je t'en prie!* Do not speak yet! Oh yes, I know—I am not blind. But I beg you—wait. Wait until I know. I am not sure yet, Wilbur, and I must be sure—"

It was highly dramatic and it was also highly embarrassing to Mr. Pope, who began to burble faintly. "But Eve, I didn't mean—I mean—"

"*Non, non, non!* You must not, Wilbur. *Je t'en défends.* See!" She grabbed his arm and pulled him toward the model stand. "You wished to ask me—yes, yes somezing important, no?" She talked very fast to keep him from interrupting. "To paint your portrait—was not zat it? But of course I will paint it. Come!" She pushed him into the chair and snatched up a block of paper and a stick of charcoal. "*Voilà*, I make a first sketch now. And you must not move—not even ze mouse, not even zose blue eyes." She began sketching. Mr. Pope posed, rigid and blushing.

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Later that day he took a short ride with Ed to calm his nerves. But they didn't calm worth a cent, for it appeared that Ed had heard the whole conversation through the studio windows, which overlooked the Pope garden.

"I don't get it, Wilb," Ed said. "She pours the sugar over you, and you sit there like a cake being frosted. A dame like that—either you go for her or you give her the boot."

"Don't be vulgar," Mr. Pope said.

"Okay," said Ed. "But you're ridin' for a busted wedding ring, pal, and without getting any of the old *quid pro quo*." He went on at some length.

To change the trend, when they got home Mr. Pope showed him the sketch. It changed it all right.

"What's that?" he said. "The Hound of the Baskervilles?" Then, "Me?" he shouted angrily. "That thing is *me*? Why, that's an outrage! I wouldn't mind a caricature, but Judas, Wilb—that thing's defamation of character! Yeah, go on, laugh! If you was any kind of a friend you'd have tore the thing up and thrown it in her face!"

"But she's offered to paint my portrait, Ed."

"Yeah," said Ed. "Boy, oh boy, are you sticking your neck out! And with that face on the end of it! When you see what she's done to me—" he eyed Mr. Pope's features maliciously—"what do you think she'll make of that bunch of junk?"

Mr. Pope essayed a simper. "She said I had an interesting head."

"That's why you was trying to get a look at yourself in all those plate-glass windows when we rode through the village, hey?" said Ed. "Oh, go away. I got to think this out. . . . Hey, wait. Is there anything left in that bottle in the harness closet? This thing has kind of upset my stummick."

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The sittings were to begin the next Saturday. And then Mr. Pope balked. Perhaps if he had told Mrs. Pope just what had happened, she would have let him off. But he couldn't bring himself to it. And so she wheedled. She was a swell wheedler. And by and by Mr. Pope said, 'Oh hell,' and she knew she'd won.

"But you're just sacrificing me to your social ambitions—to impress the Kimshaws and the other local gentry with a Delisier portrait in some show next winter."

"How right you are, darling," she said. "And not only the portrait. Don't you think it's impressive to have a husband who's being made passes at by a famous portrait painter? Oh, don't cast down your eyes and twist the corner of your apron! She doesn't make any bones about it. She'll do that Volney job for you, just for the sake of your bright blue eyes." She touched his cheek. "You're blushing, pet. She did mention the eyes, didn't she? Of course. All dark girls go for the bright blue eyes. Why, look at me!" She kissed him.

So Mr. Pope sat. He sat with the sword of Eve's decision suspended above his interesting head. The sittings became cozy tête-à-têtes, with Eve taking Mr. Pope's undying passion very much for granted, and making a great pretense of holding him at arm's length.

The painting moved slowly. "But one studies one's subject!" Eve said. "One does not t'row ze sitter into ze chair and just start painting him. One arranges him." Her smile flashed. "I am arranging you." Then her eyes grew serious. "I arrange everyting. Be patient, *cheri*."

Eve merely laughed when he mentioned the Volney sketches.

"I can hear her," said Mrs. Pope when he told her that. She narrowed her eyes wickedly at him and gave a hard little rippling laugh. "*Ah, mon dieu, mon ami*, wiz you it ees always

business, business.” Then she half turned from him, put her head back upon his shoulder and one arm around his neck. “You speak always to ze *artiste*. Have you nossing to say to ze woman?”

Mr. Pope seized her and kissed her wolfishly. “You see how I respond. Aren’t you worried?”

“As long as you prefer the company of that old horse to Eve’s—no,” said Mrs. Pope.

But Ed was worried. And he began to chaperone Mr. Pope. If Eve and Mr. Pope walked in the garden, Ed’s head would pop up from behind a hedge. If they were in the studio, Ed would be discovered just outside the window. One afternoon Mr. Pope was sitting stiffly in the model’s chair while Eve painted. She had been telling him about her childhood, and the old Breton nurse who had scared her half to death with stories of werewolves. “Marie ‘aid zat old Jules, the gardener, was one of zese ‘orrors. At night ‘e change, and run on all fours, howling. He climbed through open windows and pulled children from zeir beds and ran off wit’ zem.” She shuddered. “Zose are just stories. But two children did disappear.”

Mr. Pope said there were certainly certain cases of a sort of Jekyll-Hyde double personality, in which humans did change into something pretty horrible. And he was saying this when Ed’s head appeared at the open window behind Eve.

Without breaking the pose, Mr. Pope tried to order Ed away by glaring at him. The horse just mimicked him, throwing back his head and regarding him with contemptuous hauteur. Mr. Pope frowned—and then became aware that Eve was staring at him.

“Wilbur! You look so strange!”

“Eh?” said Mr. Pope. “Oh, I just thought—I saw Ed. At the window.”

Eve glanced around. Ed was visible, but with no apparent interest in art. She shrugged and went on talking about lycanthropy and other curious hobbies of the Breton witches. “Oh yes, I know ze scientific explanations. But ze sings are not less ‘orrible. And I can tell you of a case—ze ‘usband of my own Aunt Sophie. It began wit’ his walking in his sleep—” She stopped, for Mr. Pope had burst into a loud and inexplicable laugh.

I guess you can’t blame him. As soon as Eve’s back was turned Ed had stuck his head in the window again and began making faces at Mr. Pope. It was very plain that he was mocking Mr. Pope as a sitter, and suggesting expressions in which he would like Mr. Pope to be painted. First he opened his mouth a little and looked wide-eyed and innocent, and then he laid back his ears and bared his teeth and looked ferocious, and then he drooped one eyelid and glared down his nose in a sort of half-wittedly noble expression. That was when Mr. Pope laughed.

Eve threw down her brush. “Really. Wilbur!”

“I’m sorry,” Mr. Pope said. “It was just—well, I used to walk in my sleep myself.” He seized upon the first thing that came into his mind. “I guess I inherited it from my Grandfather Case. Everyone in our family remembers Grandfather Case’s yelping nightmares.”

Eve laughed. She came and stood beside him. “I do not sink you are a werewolf, *cheri*. Not wit’ ze name of Wilbur.” She stopped and put her cheek next to his. “Why are you so unresponsive, my great wolf? I tell you I make a decision soon, but you—since zat first day you say nossing. And you mean so much to me!” With a lithe movement she dropped into his lap.

“Oh—ouch!” Mr. Pope jumped up. “Sorry, Eve. Leg’s asleep. Sitting so long.” He stamped up and down. “Oh, by the way,” he said, ignoring the exasperated flash of her eyes,

“I forgot to tell you—I’ve been authorized to offer you a thousand dollars for the six sketches for Marian Volney I told you about. Of course, I know it’s commercial, but nowadays—”

“How much?” she interrupted sharply. He repeated.

“Ah, *cheri*,” she said, “it means a lot to you, does it not? But to me, too. Yes, I know zey all do it. But not Delisier. Not unless—” She stopped, then smiled. “But for you I would do it. Oh yes, and for ze sousand dollars I do not despise money, Wilbur. Yes, some of zose sketches I showed you would do—I would not make new ones. Ze subject does not matter, in zose advertisements.” She smiled. “We talk about zat anoizzer time. No, no—go along now, *mon gros loup!*”

Mr. Pope was pretty downcast at not getting the thing settled then and there. As he pushed through the hedge into his own garden he ran into Ed.

“Mon doo!” Ed said. “It’s Wilbur the Wolf!” His teeth chattered and he staggered back with terrified eyes.

“Oh, don’t be an ass!” said Mr. Pope. “You’ve done enough clowning.”

“Okay, Wilb, I guess you got more wolf in you than I thought, at that.” He chuckled. “Wilbur the Wolf and Eve the Moocher.”

“What do you mean—Eve the Moocher?”

“‘You mean so mooch to me,’” Ed quoted. He tittered in a ladylike manner. “‘It quite made me blush, master. . . . Hey, hold on!’” he said as Mr. Pope turned away. “‘You got this babe all wrong, Wilb. Oh sure, she’s making a play for you. Maybe she wants you. Women ain’t got much judgment. But she knows darn well you ain’t got any intentions, honorable or otherwise. Trouble with you, you’re hangin’ on to try to get them sketches, and at the same time you’re too much of a gentleman to come right out and tell her she ain’t your sweetie pie and ain’t going to be. Now I ain’t a gentleman, thank God, and I’d handle it different. . . .’” But Mr. Pope had gone.

When he got home he wished he hadn’t. For all at once Mrs. Pope was fed up with Eve. “I wanted you to be nice to her,” she said, “but good heavens, you don’t have to go live there! Oh, I’m not jealous. Not very, anyway. But there’s too much talk.” She paused. “See here, Wilbur. We should have had sense enough to find out something about Eve. Mrs. Kimshaw was here today and she tells me Eve has a pretty unsavory reputation. Mr. Kimshaw knows her second husband—she’s had half a dozen, official and unofficial. The Kimshaws say she deliberately courts notoriety—it’s good for business. Every scandal adds five hundred dollars to the price of the next portrait. And she gives her conquests plenty of publicity. Mrs. Kimshaw was—well, she said she thought I ought to do something about it.”

Mr. Pope said, “I see.” He did indeed see that it wouldn’t suit Mrs. Pope to disregard Mrs. Kimshaw’s advice, for the Kimshaws were not only the last glorious remnants of the old Westchester *haute noblesse*, but also friends of the Lamsons. “Well, Lord knows,” he said, “Eve means nothing to me. But we can’t just drop her—”

“I can.”

“No doubt. But I can’t. For one thing, because I want those sketches.”

“And for another?” Mrs. Pope’s eyes began to emit sparks.

“Damn it, Carlotta,” Mr. Pope said, “what can I do? You—” He stopped.

She smiled angrily. “You were going to say, ‘You got me into this, and now you can get me out.’ Well, I will. I’m going over to talk to Eve.”

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People seldom groan in real life, but Mr. Pope did. It was all he could do, for there was no use trying to stop her.

It was a good hour before she came back.

“Well?” Mr. Pope said.

“You may well say well!” she snapped. “Really, Wilbur! Do you know what she told me? You are such a sweet boy! You made love to her so nicely! Oh, it was the glamor of the artist that captivated you, no doubt. She understood that. But I was not to worry. She knew how to handle these things. Just let it alone—don’t press matters. She would see that you got over it. Good heavens, Wilbur, what have you been saying to her?”

Mr. Pope said, “Do you believe all this?”

Mrs. Pope thought a minute. “No. It doesn’t sound like you. A nice boy—no.”

“And what did you tell her?” he asked.

“I told her,” said Mrs. Pope primly, “that if she didn’t let you alone I’d beat her teeth in.”

“Just the same,” said Mr. Pope doggedly, “I’m going to get those sketches.”

Ed, however, who had heard none of this, was worried. “Wilbur the Wolf!” he snorted. “Wilbur the Lamb’s more like it. I got to save him.” So that night there were strange noises in the Jessup garden—rustlings and thumpings, and under Eve’s window, which was on the ground floor, terrifying sniffings. And later, on the side away from the Popes’, a low, long, ululating howl.

Mr. Pope heard the howl. He sat up, and saw a light flicker across his ceiling. He went to the window. Somebody with a flashlight was moving about in the Jessup shrubbery. He pondered a moment, then without waking Mrs. Pope, put on slippers and robe and went out.

He slid up along the hedge and through the opening into the Jessup garden, thinking to find out what the marauder was up to. He had to creep past the house to reach the spot where he had last seen the light. The house was dark. Eve’s window was open, but no light was burning. As he went past he heard voices inside, and he stopped.

“But no, Madame,” Paul was saying. “I have searched thoroughly. There is no one there now. But by the door of the studio I found this.”

“A knife!” Eve exclaimed.

“Yes, Madame. And see here.” A light glimmered for a moment. “Here on the handle. These initials—W. P. The initials of Monsieur Pope.”

Mr. Pope had intended to call out to Eve. But there was something funny going on here.

“But my good Paul,” Eve said, “you don’t suggest that Mr. Pope has been prowling about the house, howling, with a knife in his hands?” She laughed, then stopped abruptly. “*Tiens*, the werewolf! Could he be trying to frighten me by pretending? But why should he? Oh no, it is too ridiculous!” And she laughed again.

Mr. Pope put the knife and the howl together and they spelled Ed to him. The knife, he was sure, was an old hunting knife that hung in the stable. Ed didn’t like Eve. He had been playing werewolf. Here was the kind of silly trick he would play to frighten her away.

Paul said, “How if it were not Monsieur but Madame who dropped the knife? Victorine heard her threaten you today, Madame.”

“*Ciel!*” Eve seemed startled, but then she laughed again. “Oh no. That, too, is ridiculous. No, no, Paul. You go back to bed now. Tomorrow we will see.”

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Although Eve thought it ridiculous, Mr. Pope reflected, she’d be put to it to find any other logical explanation. And it certainly wasn’t the kind of story he cared to have get around about

Carlotta. Well, there wasn't much hope of getting those sketches now, anyway; he had better provide Eve with a logical explanation. If he himself had been sleepwalking. . . .

He held his arms stiffly out in front of him in the manner adopted by sleepwalkers in the funny papers, and moved slowly past the window, muttering unintelligibly.

A figure appeared at the window, and Eve said in a low voice, "Wilbur! What are you doing?"

Mr. Pope continued to mutter. He debated whether he should try a howl, and decided against it. The werewolf stuff was beyond him. Anyway, Eve wouldn't believe it. It would be better to wake up. He gave a start, a gurgle, then gasped unconvincingly, "My God! Where—where am I?"

"It's all right, Wilbur." Eve's voice was low and soothing. "You've been walking in your sleep. *Have* you been walking in your sleep?" she said suspiciously. "Come here."

He went over to the window. "Good lord, Eve! I've been doing it again! I'm sorry I disturbed you. But I must get back. If Carlotta finds me gone—"

"Oh yes, Carlotta," said Eve in a hard voice. "Look here, Wilbur, you were no more asleep *zan* I am. Sleepwalkers do not act like *zat*. It was you *zat* found Carlotta gone, was it not? And you miss your knife perhaps, *hein*? So you come—" She broke off, "Oh, *mon dieu!*" she cried. "So *zat* is it! Wilbur, you must come *wiz* me—to *ze* studio. Wait!"

She vanished, and came out a moment later through the porch with a flashlight in her hand. "Come!" and she started to run toward the studio, but after a few steps she stopped short. "No," she said coldly. "If what I sink is true—no. I do not want you *wit* me. Go home, Wilbur."

"But, Eve—"

"Oh, go *home!*" She stamped her foot. "And stay *zere!* I do not ever want to see you again. And you can tell your Carlotta *zat* I am leaving here tomorrow." She turned and left him, and Mr. Pope, wondering what it was all about, started homeward.

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As he pushed through the hedge a large form loomed up and a cautious voice said, "Hi, Wilb!"

"Oh, it's you," said Mr. Pope dispiritedly. "Well, I hope you're satisfied, Ed."

"No," said Ed thoughtfully. "No. I ain't. I thought she'd fall for that werewolf stuff—*bein'* brought up with all them witches and such. Maybe the knife was a mistake. I expect werewolves don't cut folks, they *chaw* 'em. Too bad. I was *plannin'* some *extry* special sound effects for tomorrow night." He paused, but Mr. Pope was silent. "Hey, lookit, Wilb," he said in an injured tone. "What's the *beef*? You didn't want this chick, but you was too noble to tell her so. Okay, so I told her. So everything's *rosy*. We go on our rides again, and your wife—nobody'll think she was really *goin'* to stick it into Eve, and if they did they'd respect her for it."

"Of course they wouldn't think it," Mr. Pope said. "But it's too good a story not to pass on. You certainly made a sweet mess of things. You'd better go to bed before you do any more damage."

But Ed didn't go to bed. For one thing, he was curious to know why Eve had run out to the studio. So when Mr. Pope had gone, he went back and peered in the studio window.

What he saw amazed him. Eve had not switched on the overhead lights. She had Mr. Pope's knife in her hand, and by the beam of a small flashlight she was methodically cutting to ribbons the nearly completed portrait of Mr. Pope. Methodically, rather than furiously—and

this puzzled Ed. Then she turned from that and began slashing up another portrait—one which Ed had heard her tell Mr. Pope she didn't like, and Ed suddenly realized what she was up to. Mrs. Pope had threatened her; there was evidence that Mrs. Pope had dropped a knife by the studio door that night. . . . If Eve destroyed a few of her more unsuccessful canvases and then put her evidence in the hands of the police, Mrs. Pope would be in a pretty unpleasant position.

Now Ed did not especially like Mrs. Pope. But he was a just horse. He left the window and went around to the door. He took the brass knocker in his teeth and tapped lightly.

After a moment Eve's voice said, "Who is it?"

"It's me—Wilbur," Ed whispered. "I had to come back—I had to tell you something, Eve. It was not I that followed Carlotta tonight. Eve—it was she that followed me. Because she knew I was coming for you, coming to take you far away—"

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"I do not know what you are saying." Eve interrupted. "But come in—let me show you what your sweet Carlotta has done." And she opened the door.

She did not at once see Ed, for as she opened it, she turned and walked before him down the long studio, holding the beam of her flashlight on the wrecked portrait. "Look at that!"

"Ah, my sweet," said Ed in a mawkish whisper, "what does that matter to us?" He followed, walking as quietly as he could, and that was pretty quietly for anybody in iron shoes. "You have laughed at the werewolf stories. You were not afraid, my Eve. And you were right. There is nothing to fear." His head was at her shoulder, and now he stopped whispering and spoke in his natural harsh voice. "Turn and look at me, my love."

With his mane shaken forward over wildly rolling eyes, and lips drawn back from the great teeth that gnashed at her, Ed was a pretty terrible sight. Eve turned, swung the flashlight toward him, then, with a screech, whirled and fought her way madly through the cluttered studio toward the little storeroom in the back corner. Ed heard the easel go over. A chair clattered, then a door slammed and was bolted.

There was no way out of the storeroom except through the studio. Ed giggled faintly and wished that Mr. Pope was there. It was so darned easy!

He clumped noisily over to the storeroom door. "Eve, my beloved," he said in a syrupy voice which he imagined to resemble Mr. Pope's, "I did not mean to frighten you. I forgot that I had changed again from my human form. I will not harm you. It is only on nights of the full moon that we kill. Come out to your Wilbur. Let him embrace you." And he gave an affectionate snarl and clicked his teeth several times.

Eve moaned and then said something in a chattering voice.

Ed thought: I mustn't overdo it—and then realized that that would be a little difficult. Eve might not take much stock in the werewolf theory, but she would have hard work finding any other explanation. The evidence of her own eyes. . . . He said, "You wish me to go?"

"Oh, yes!" she whimpered. "Go! Oh, go quickly!"

"I will go," said Ed. "But first you must write something for me. Have you a light in there? And paper and pencil?" He had to snarl twice and give a pianissimo wolf howl before he at last saw light appear at the crack of the door.

"Now write as I dictate," he said. "Mr. Wilbur Pope, Mt. Kisco, N. Y. Dear Sir—oh yeah, put the date. Dear Sir. Got that? I have just destroyed with my own hands the portrait of you which I had started. I did not like it. Paragraph. I enclose herewith the sketches to be used in the Marian Volney advertising, said hereinbefore mentioned sketches being hereby irrevocably

transferred to you, to remain your sole and undisputed property with all rights including that of reproduction. . . . There, I guess that will stand up. Though I didn't get in the 'heirs and assigns forever.' Now just write 'Yours truly,' and sign it and push it under the door."

Ed was pretty proud of this document. He turned on the overhead lights and examined it. "All I know about law," he said to nobody in particular, "I picked up in a livery stable, but I guess that's as good a school as any." Then he picked it up and slipped it into the big portfolio of sketches that leaned against the wall. And with the portfolio in his mouth he trotted off home.

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Mr. Pope never saw Eve Delisier again. He never found out either how Ed had obtained the letter and the sketches. He selected six sketches for the Volney account and sent the rest back to Eve, with a check for a thousand dollars.

Ed was sore when he learned that the sketches to be used included the one Eve had made of him. "It's a hell of a way to treat a friend," he said. "I keep you from being made a monkey of, and you turn around and try to make a monkey of me before the whole reading public."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Pope. He pulled a sheaf of papers out of his pocket. "Look, here are the proofs. Here's the one of you. Pretty nice, eh? Anyway, nobody knows it's a picture of you."

Ed looked at it. "Yeah. I don't know anything about art, Wilb, but I know a lousy trick when I see one. Hey, what's this—*Vogue*, here in the corner? They going to use it in *Vogue*?"

"Why, sure."

"*Vogue!*" Ed grinned delightedly. "Judas Priest, Wilb, my picture's going to be in *Vogue*! How that would have tickled my old mother! Ain't that America for you? Her drawing a milk wagon all her life, and her son. . . . Say, ain't there any way you could get my name in there somewhere—on the edge, like?"

Mr. Pope grinned. "Volney's trying to sell perfumes with these ads, Ed. So—wouldn't you rather have a nice cold bottle of beer?"

Ed sighed. "Well . . . yeah. I guess there's more satisfaction in it, at that."

[The end of *Monster in Horse's Clothing* by Walter Rollin Brooks]