

A LITTLE PLAY ON WORDS WHICH I HAVE MODESTLY  
ENTITLED: HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

I laughed and shrugged it off when, just after I'd subscribed to TV Guide, our television set went on the blink. (I guess the old Dumont had broke a leg, because we finally had to have it shot.)

I wrote the publishers a letter, explaining what had happened. They sent condolences, but said it was against their policy to refund cash: would I take a different magazine instead?

Well, why not? So, real sneaky-like, I said to send a year of Sunshine and Health. Then feeling guilty, told them to throw in Better Homes and Gardens, for the wife.

That was the summer that I caught pneumonia, and our house burned down.

So we moved back to the city, got all Cultured-up, and I subscribed to Punch. The first issue came, from England, and the guy across the hall knocked on my door and hit me in the mouth.

He was an Isolationist, I guess, but I began to wonder if there wasn't something funny going on, so next I tried Consumer's Guide,

And Sport. So I came down with diabetes and started eating like a horse. But I had this joke all figured out, and knew how I could beat the game:

I threw my dollars in the teeth of destiny, and steeled myself, awaiting the arrival (on a three-month trial basis) of a magazine called Playboy.

My wife ran off with my best friend, a bachelor by trade. (She was only gone a week. She heard that I was reading The Wall Street Journal, and came running back. That was in 1929.)

When people get real desperate, there's one last place for them to turn: a place where sunshine fills the air, and merry children laugh and play.

The Reader's Digest welcomed me with open, understanding arms. I lived in Pleasantville for months, devouring every word they sent. But after fifteen volumes of condensed, digested books, I suddenly went blind.

O, they were real nice about it, settled out of court, and even continued my subscription. In Braille.

Eight happy, carefree years went by before my sight returned, but I'd had time, this time, to plot revenge. Whoever up there had been throwing me them curves would have to do his damndest, now. I got home from the Institution, sat right down, and wrote two checks. One went to Fantastic Universe the other to Amazing Stories.

Well, the winters here on Mars are mild, at least, but there's not an awful lot to do. And I am just a wee bit worried, cause last week my wife

Suggested we subscribe to Life.

#### MEMO TO CHARLES BUKOWSKI

I'm sitting here at the old typewriter with a can of beer chilling my left hand and a whore I used to know heating up my right hand, typing on the back of the racing form and listening to myself sweat. And out the window I can see the world beginning to come to an end all meant anyway because George the Chinese cook at the greasery where I eat is picking his nose at just this minute and my stomach is lapping up beer with a big black sticky sponge-leather tongue and blinking and waiting for the cascade of happiness that will follow and in between sips I slam one into the whore who groans and picks my pocket. Chopin and Dostoyevsky are beating on the door but I don't hear them because I am busy pounding out this poem and a poor girl with small breasts is walking her dog outside the window and the dog shits in my mailbox and I kind of chuckle and slam one into a cockroach that's crawled up on my typewriter and wink at the landlady's crotch which winks back and figure what the hell anyway. I am what you might call a master of insignificant detail.

-- Carl Larsen

New York, N. Y.