

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

CHAPTER ONE



Introduction

Have you ever pondered that-
Be it dog or bird or cat-
The special pet that people choose
Tells us much about their views?
You can bet that there are those
Who choose their pets as they choose clothes.
Their beasts, for them, are but a totem,
A sign for how we all should note them.
Given this strong tendency
We weren't much surprised to see
That only luckless, hapless loners
Buy themselves a fawaghöerner¹.



Now, what on earth is THAT, you ask?
The name alone is quite a task:
Those two strange dots above the O:
It's hard to say just how they go.

¹ Fawghöerner (Lat. *Felis dangerus*): An animal of the cat family possessing a hideous face and poisoned fangs

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

But we find it stranger still
That few have yet had want or will
To write about this wondrous creature,
Which our humble book will feature.

Some might think the foghöern's rare
Most will never glimpse a hair
Of a höern in all their lives—
Yet on every continent the foghöern thrives!
Oh—excuse us please for the contraction:
Throughout this book, throughout the action
We've called the beast by different names:
Fawaghöerner, fawaghöern, foghöern, höerner,
höern-- it's all the same.

Getting back to where we were:
The foghöern has luxurious fur
Which grows in tufts between its toes
And tends to get on all your clothes.
It has cunning, style, considerable grace
And a horrifically hideous face.
You'd think these ugly beasts would hide,
But foghöerns wear their looks with pride.
They often boast with clear delight
That they make a gruesome sight.
For it's true—these foghöerns speak!
And when they do, they're rarely meek.

My Lord, an animal that talks!
And we don't mean just parrot squawks:

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Buy one and you'll quickly find
A foghöern has a nimble mind,
But, more than smarts, a höern has feelings
Just like any human being.
And note, it's not the kind of pet
You'd ever want to get upset...

In many ways the foghöern charms us
But, in others, it alarms us.
Its teeth, which gleam like pearly jewels
Also can be deadly tools.
They're filled with poison, and, in fact
Must remain complete, intact.
For even damaged teeth, it's said,
Can cause a foghöern to drop dead.

With the reader's kind permission
We'll leave the ugly beast's dentition
And move on to its flappy brows
From under which it peers, somehow.
Humans love to smooch these flappers² —
The reason barely even matters.
But for the foghöern this means war!
"No bulldogging!!!³," it will roar.
And--if you persist in trying--
It's possible you'll soon be dying

² Flappers: The tender, abundantly fleshy folds of skin around a fawaghöerner's eyes

³ Bulldog (v.t.): To plant a wet, sloppy kiss on a fawaghöerner's flappers

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Of the poison from its teeth
Or be wounded at the least.

Having written all these verses
We still have barely scratched the surface.
Perhaps the language hasn't words
To describe an animal so absurd.
So, for purpose of description
We've drawn for you a fair depiction
Of the beast in all its glory:
The fawaghöerner—as featured in this story.



As you read the coming chapters
You'll meet a foghöern and its master.
Both will tell you what they're thinking
With honesty that's harsh, unblinking.
Perhaps at times you'll be disturbed
By their deeds and by their words.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

But whether you are old or youthful
The insights here could prove quite useful,
Lest you get a foghöern's toothful.

And should this be your bedtime reading,
You'd best these words be heeding:
Sleep well, sleep tight
Beware the foghöern's bite!

CHAPTER TWO



THE PET STORE

Prologue

We're often quick to criticize
What's unfamiliar to our eyes
With open minds, though, we might see
Other, deeper qualities.
And, given just a little time,
The hideous can look sublime.



A television's flickering glare
Reveals a man upon a chair—
Remote control at his command,
A warm beer in his other hand.
But something stirs him from the screen
And shakes him from this dull routine.
And so he goes out for a stroll,
With really no specific goal
Except he must be home by six,
To get his evening TV fix.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

How strange it is, the fearsome force
Of little things to change our course.
Read on my friend, and soon you'll witness
How this feeble trot for fitness
Takes this unassuming man
Somewhere he had never planned.
This stroll—where is this fellow going?
And would he still—were he fore-knowing—
Continue in the same direction
If he fathomed fate's intention?

Now, fifty feet ahead, a sign
Invites him with its bold design:
“Pet-o-rama,” it announces,
With curliques and fancy flounces.
And--from curiosity--
He steps inside with hopes to see
Some animals of pedigree.

His eyes adjusting to the gloom
He peers into the dusty room.
Desperate voices rise to greet him--
Barking, mewling, cries for freedom.
A stink unlike he's ever sniffed
Almost kills him with a whiff.
These animals are poorly kept;
They lie in filth, their pens unswept.
And how the place is packed with beasts—
There must be hundreds at the least!
The man, upset, can take no more--

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

He turns to leave the horrid store.

But ere he's pivoted, just by chance
His gaze is riveted by a glance
For, in the corner, off the aisle,
Lying in a putrid pile,
A beast with a repulsive face
Stares at him with steady gaze.
"Ugh," he cries, his eyes both aching
At the sight that they're intaking.
"I've never seen such ugly features
On any Godforsaken creature!"

The animal nods its head in pleasure
And adds to this for greater measure:
"Thanks so much, I must agree
About my hideosity⁴."
The man's amazed at what he's heard
Because it's really quite absurd:
Unless his reason's gone to ruin
An animal has spoken to him!

The man makes sure that they're alone
Then questions in a whispered tone:
"Little doggie, can it be
It was you who spoke to me?"

⁴ Hideosity: fawaghoerner-speak for 'hideousness'

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

To which the animal replies
Peering through its flappy eyes,
“It’s not my choice to lie in feces
But you’re wrong about my species.
A fawaghöerner’s what I am,
The noblest feline known to man.
A cousin of the greater cats--
Much closer to the lynx in fact.



“Two years ago, this very date,
By the cruelest twist of fate
I was taken from my home
And locked into this cage, alone.
All this time I’ve sadly languished
In physical and mental anguish
You can’t believe the misery
Of living under lock and key.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

“This cage is just a prison cell--
It plagues me with its nasty smell.
The owner-what a lazy lout!-
Hardly ever cleans it out.
He feeds me the most awful stuff
(and even then it's not enough).
I'm nauseated, sick and tired
Of eating dog food that's expired.

There were a few times when I thought
That, at long last, I'd be bought
And it broke my heart when people said
They'd buy a different pet instead
For, to my profound dismay,
My poisoned teeth scared some away
While others found me far too ugly
When what they sought was cute and cuddly.

But fearsome looks and poisoned teeth
Are marks of foghöern quality!
Come inspect my pearly whites--
They're capable of deadly bites.
I'm far more lethal than a leopard,
More loyal than a German Shepherd.
With me around you'll be assured
That you'll be safe, your home secure.
But more than that, I'll be your friend,
On whom you always can depend.
I'm better than all other pets--
I'm sure you'll never have regrets.”

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Our man, impressed, must think a minute:
“This sales pitch oversteps the limit!
But this foghöern’s so persuasive
And its spirit so pervasive
That I simply can’t go wrong.
Besides, it’s selling for a song!”
So he buys it on the spot,
Delighted at the price he got.

CHAPTER THREE



THE FAWAGHÖERNER AT HOME

Prologue

Perhaps you know the joy one gets
From living with a cherished pet--
A faithful and accepting friend
Who welcomes you at day's long end--
Who fetches you your favorite slippers
And cheers you up when you're not chipper.
But, alas, we must point out--
Behind the eager eyes and snout
Every animal's unique.
Aloof or loving, bold or meek,
Trusting, cunning, cringing, regal--
All pets are not created equal.

So when you're choosing Puff or Rover
Take some time to look her over.
But even those who choose with care
May be simply unaware
Of qualities they might regret
In their sweet and furry pet.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER



Arriving at the human's flat
The höern adjusts the thermostat.
Then, padding all around the place,
Concentration on his face,
He sizes up the situation
And turns and speaks with animation:
"It looks like you're the kind of man
Who really needs a helping hand.
I find your home a little strange--
There's lots in here I'll have to change.
But give me just a week, you'll see,
I'll have it fixed up splendidly.
And, to speak with greater ease,
Call me Fawaghöerner, please."

The man can't help but raise his eyes.
He thinks a second and replies:
"Fawaghöerner, hmmm..... let's see,
That word is much too long for me.
I'd like a name with fewer letters;
'Höerny' seems to me much better.
And because it suits me best,
'Master's' the title I request."
With thinly veiled unhappiness
The höern retorts with snappiness:
"Master's hard for me to say:
I'll call you 'Manooer,' if I may."

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Now it's Manooer⁵ who takes offense

Quickly losing tolerance:

"Since you're a cat, then how about

I leave a bowl of cat food out?"

Höerny begs to disagree,

And answers him with dignity:

"Your presumption is insulting.

I find pet food most revolting,

Lacking flavor and nutrition,

Harmful to my fine dentition.

Variety for me is key

In matters of gastronomy.

Any kind of fish will do,

For breakfast, lunch, and dinner too.

As most physicians will agree,

It's healthy for the arteries.

"But please, just one more small request:

A comfort food that I like best--

A pastry with a fruity filling

I hope you'll make, if you are willing.

It takes one only 30 minutes

To bake a batch of foghöern biscuits⁶.

It's really not that hard, you'll see--

I have a simple recipe.

⁵ Manooer (also Manoo-er): Fawaghöerner-speak for "Master;" a fawaghöerner's preferred form of address toward its master

⁶ Foghöern biscuits: (also fawaghöerner biscuits): A rich pastry resembling a scone but containing a fruit filling—usually blueberry. See Appendix for recipe.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

“As for where we’ll sleep at night,
I’m sure you will agree I’m right
When I say a queen-size futon’s
Preferable for us to snooze on.
I’ve scouted out your present bed
And that’s no place to lay my head.
The springs have lost their spring, just face it--
Bite the bullet and replace it.

“In the bathroom I was shocked
To note the toothpaste that you’ve stocked
Does not provide enough protection
Against the threat of tooth infection.
For even tiny cavities
For foghöerns are calamities.
And one last item all homes need:
Something interesting to read.
The last two years I’ve had to live
Without the pleasure reading gives.
So it’d be nice if you could get
The Times delivered for your pet.
And, while I like it when it’s new,
You could read it when I’m through.”

Manoo-er likes this not one bit.
In fact, he almost has a fit:
“An animal that’s so outrageous,
Demanding, pushy and audacious--
In half a day he’s taken over.
But he’s the pet and I’m the owner!

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Though right now I'm at a loss
I'll show Höerny who's the boss.
I won't yield to desperation--
What I need is information.
With more facts at my command
I'll regain the upper hand."

CHAPTER FOUR



THE LIBRARY

Prologue

What better place for inquiry
Than the local library?
There you'll find a wealth of facts
In rows of books all neatly stacked.
Everything from A to Z--
From aardvark to zoology--
All the titles, all the topics
Are ordered here with thoughtful logic.
And, if you need help, you'll find
Librarians are very kind.

A library serves many needs;
It isn't just a place to read.
Within its soft and tranquil hush
We're sheltered from life's hectic rush.
Away from everyday demands
Our minds are free to roam, expand.
So Master's come here to find out
What fawaghöerns are all about.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Plus, he needs a brief vacation
From his present situation.



And there we find him on the morrow
Looking for a book to borrow.
He finds a single, dusty tome--
Much too fragile to take home.
Its diagrams and illustrations
Supplement the observations
Of Doktor Helmut Sigmund Woerner⁷,
Who named the creature “Fawaghöerner.”



Doktor Woerner, in his travels,
Set out boldly to unravel
The mysteries of this hideous beast
Which ranges North, South, West, and East.

⁷ Doktor Helmut Sigmund Woerner (1815-1870): German naturalist, author of “On the Origin of the Fawaghöerner” (1865), the first comprehensive scientific study of fawaghöerners.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

The learned doktor and his team
Described the foghöern's two extremes:
The tiny Madagascarese
Which lives in forest canopies--
The smallest foghöern in the world,
It's barely larger than a squirrel;
And the utterly gargantuan
Sabre-toothed Antarctic--
This cat can weigh more than a ton
So keep away from such a one!

And when it comes to how they think
The different kinds are quite distinct.
The Asian is the sort to get
If you want a loyal pet
(from the picture Master's pleased
To see that Höerny's one of these).
The Amazonian, however,
Is cowardly but also clever.
In urban places, where they're common
They sometimes can become a problem.
In packs these sneaky beasts can kill
But, alone, they rarely will.
Unless, that is, they sense advantage--
And that's when they can cause some damage.

What really grabs Manooer's attention
Is the volume's passing mention
Of the Fawaghöern as pet
And the limits one should set

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

To keep the beast in firm control,
Which itself is quite a goal.
Doktor Woerner states precisely:
“Do NOT treat a höern too nicely.

“But masters who resort to force
Embark upon a dangerous course;
A höern provoked may well attack
When the human’s turned its back.
Living with a höern takes talent;
One must strike a subtle balance.⁸”

That night, Master mulls these themes
And fawaghöerners fill his dreams.

⁸ H.S. Woerner, On the Origin of the Fawaghöerner (Berlin: Kaiser Press, 1865), p. 1818.

CHAPTER FIVE



FAWAGHÖERNER ON THE TOWN

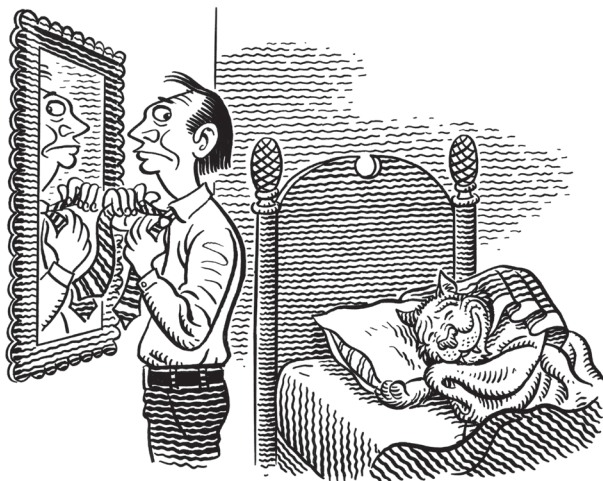
Prologue

When two partners live together
Their friendship often has to weather
Difficulties that arise--
Even in the best of times.
Instead of giving in to temper
Would it not be far much better
To stand inside the other's shoes
And try to understand their views?
Likewise, when their actions irk us,
Are we sure they're meant to hurt us?



Master wakes the following morn
To find the snoring fawaghöern
Is sprawled full-length across his bed,
The covers bunched around his head.
“No wonder I could hardly sleep,
With Höerny hogging all the sheets.”

THE FAWAGHÖERNER



By seven Master's out the door--
He leaves a message: "Back at four,
There's lots of food upon the shelf;
Please feel free to help yourself."

Höerny's up three hours later
And heads for the refrigerator.
To his dismay, inside there's only
A can of beer and some bologna.
He reads the note, but on the shelf
There's moldy bread and nothing else.
"Now I see why he's so thin--
He needs someone to care for him."

By now the höerner's rather hungry,
Needing food but lacking money.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

He rummages in Master's drawers
To find out where the loot is stored.
Beneath some socks he finds the stash--
A credit card and lots of cash.
He trots off in a cheerful mood
To do some chores and buy some food.
Höerny gets back home at three--
He's even made an extra key.



Master's home at half past four.
Höerny greets him at the door:
"I'm confident that you'll agree
I've spent your money usefully.
First, please note my shiny fur
And the expert pedicure.
I had it done on all four feet:
A high-class höerner's always neat."

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Master's clearly at a loss--
He wonders what all this has cost.
His face is showing he's upset,
But Höerny hasn't noticed yet:

"I've never seen a fridge so bare.
And since we're living as a pair
I tried to think what you would like
And filled it to the brim with pike
(normally I'd purchase trout
But the store had just run out).
Oh--I got some herring, too--
It makes a splendid breakfast food."

Master's losing his control
But the foghöern's on a roll:

"A busy working man like you
Must have many things to do.
So I thought that I would risk it
And ordered fawaghöerner biscuits
Delivered daily to our door,
Though it costs a little more.
And, since you had to work till late
(I thought you would appreciate)
I ordered you a small surprise:
Three home-delivered pizza pies.
One for you and two for me,
All with extra anchovy.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

And, one last thing--I see you're tired--
Your credit card will soon expire.”

As Master takes in Höerny's words
He feels a wave of anger surge.
And--body quivering with fury,
His vision now with rage grown blurry--
He storms out, fuming, from the room,
Leaving Höerny to consume—
Much to his complete surprise--
All three fishy pizza pies.

CHAPTER SIX



THE HARNESS

Prologue

Through the ages man's relied
On many things that beasts supply:
A source of power, warmth and food,
Or friendship when we're in the mood.
The Bible says they're for our use.
But is that merely an excuse
To treat them all as "lesser beings,"
Devoid of intellect and feelings?
Perhaps this bears examination:
Do humans have an obligation
To recognize that beasts have rights
To live their lives as they would like?



These are very noble thoughts
But Master's plainly quite distraught.
His foghöern's been all over town
Spreading all his cash around.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

And what can Master show for this?
A smelly fridge packed full of fish!
The foghöern's clearly running rampant,
Just as Woerner said would happen!
The spending spree's left Master numb;
He fears the worst is yet to come.

Even though he needs the pay,
Master takes off work that day.
He stays at home and surfs the Net,
Seeking ways to tame his pet.
The Web has everything one needs
To bring a foghöern to its knees.
And one site has the perfect answer:
A "fawaghöern control enhancer."

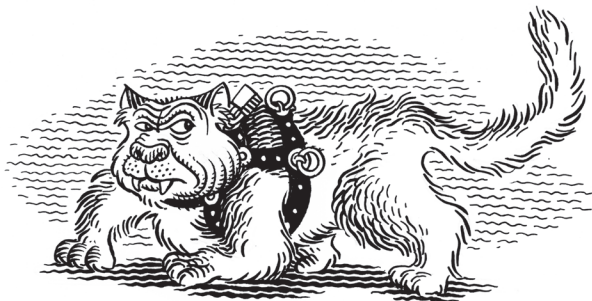
It's a harness, plain to see,
A thing of ingenuity.
It's stainless spurs and rawhide straps
Fasten with a lock in back.
The stainless fittings never rust,
And they're easy to adjust.
It comes with 10-year warranty,
Satisfaction guaranteed.
He clicks and chooses "Same-day order"
From dub-dub-dub dot Cyberhöerner.

He surfs the Web a little more
And finds an advertisement for
A show for höerns of pedigree:

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

“...A golden opportunity
For höerners of all shapes and sizes
To take home cash and valuable prizes!”
A höerner there is nobly posed
And neatly trimmed from snout to toes.
“At last I’ve found the right attack--
That’s how he will pay me back!”
That very night, as Höerny snores,
Master creeps in through the door.
A wicked smile on his face,
He slips the harness into place.

Höerny, who sleeps very deeply,
Wakes to find he’s bound completely.
He feels the bite of spurs and straps,
And realizes he’s been trapped:
“This cruel world’s devoid of fairness;
I’ve woken up inside a harness!”



THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Manooer enjoys this vengeful moment
And teases his distressed opponent:
“I didn’t think you’d be so miffed--
I thought you’d like this little gift.
But now I’m going to have my way
And you will do just what I say!”

CHAPTER SEVEN



THE SHOW

Prologue

Consequences grow like weeds
From actions that were once their seeds.
Those who sow humiliation
Harvest acts of desperation.



Manooer is pleased as he can be;
The harness works just perfectly.
And, now he has complete control--
The show's first prize is his next goal.
With only three short days remaining
He puts the Höern through basic training.
From sunrise clear until sunset
He drills his suffering, harnessed pet.

To win the prize he wants so much
He figures that a final touch
Will set off Höerny from the rest
And show the judges who's the best.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

So, with greedy eyes a-glimmer,
He runs for his electric trimmers.
To win the whole kit and caboodle
He barbers Höerny like a poodle.

The fawaghöerner can't endure
This unfair treatment by Manooer:
"Never has he thought to mention
All my kind and good intentions.
Is it fair that he should strut,
And shame me with a poodle cut?
And when I even dare protest
He digs the spurs into my chest.

"Should I have to bear in silence
Master's cruelty and violence?
Or should I rise up and attack,
And sink my teeth into his back?
But would such a course of action
Lead to long-term satisfaction?
Narg⁹! Despite the short-term pleasure
I'd soon regret this drastic measure.
If Manoo-er were to perish
I'd lose the comforts that I cherish."

As he's pondering a plan
To turn the tables on the man

⁹ Narg: Fawaghöerner-speak for 'no'

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

He spies a paper in the corner
From dub-dub-dub-dot Cyberhöerner.
He leaps up with a sudden shout—
“It’s done, my schemes all figured out!
Yarg¹⁰! I’ll really stick it to him;
Now I’m thinking like a human!”
His devilish idea’s sublime;
The punishment will fit the crime.
And so he chooses to sit tight
And wait until the time’s just right.

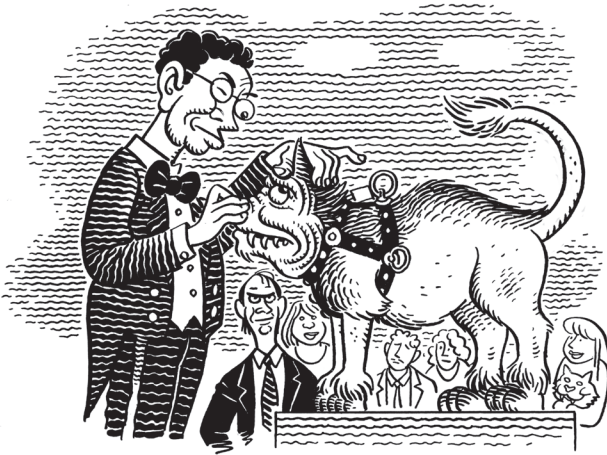
Three brutal days of training pass.
And so we see the two at last
Inside a huge arena full
Of masters and their animals.
For masters it’s a day of glory,
But it’s quite a different story
For the höerns—their straps restrict them
And the sharpened spurs afflict them.
A thousand harnessed höerns can’t hide
The poisoned thoughts they hold inside.
The humans, though, seem unaware
Of all the tension in the air.

Finally it’s Master’s turn
To take his poodled fawaghöern

¹⁰ Yarg: Fawaghöerner-speak for ‘yes’

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

To the dais and parade him
Before the judges who will grade him.
The judges sit with stony faces
As Master puts him through his paces.
And then a special judge comes out
To assess the eyes and snout.
He prods and presses, fusses, fidgets
With the snout for several minutes.



Höerny's clearly had enough.
He leaps away: "You're much too rough!
My snout's not just a piece of meat
For you to handle and mistreat."
The judge is stunned by Höerny's flack:
"Animals must not talk back!"
To discipline the höern he tries
To land a bulldog on its eye.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Höerny, nimble on his feet,
Makes a tactical retreat.

The bulldog misses, but the sound
Is heard by everyone around.
The whole arena holds its breath
And waits to see what happens next.
For a moment time stands still.
Then, with an impassioned, shrill,
Piercing, bloody cry of rage,
Höerny flies across the stage
And *Gulk¹¹* he sinks his teeth into the judge
Who's far too terrified to budge.

The judge, in panic and alarm,
Clutches at his bleeding arm.
Bellowing, he writhes in pain
As Höerny tries to gulk again.
It takes a dozen burly owners
To restrain the raging höerner.
Even so, they barely manage
To save the judge from further damage.

Höerny's act of revolution
Has plunged the hall into confusion;

¹¹ Gulk: (--on) v.i. (pertaining to a fawaghöerner)
To inject poison; (n) 1. The envenomed bite of a
fawaghöerner. 2. The glugging sound produced by a
fawaghöerner injecting poison through its fangs.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

A thousand höerners strain their traces
As owners fight to hold their places.
Buckles bust and straps give out,
Foghöerns scamper all about.
Sirens wail and bullhorns blare
A chopper hovers in the air.

By now the show's uneasy quiet
Has given way to open riot.
And for his role in the events,
Manooer fears legal consequence:
Now he's an accessory
To gulking on the referee.
So, in the heat of the melee,
Manooer and Höerny sneak away.

CHAPTER EIGHT



REVENGE OF THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Prologue

Revenge, some say, is very sweet,
The perfect balm to soothe defeat.
But while revenge so often tempts us,
From nobler deeds does it prevent us?
Do two wrongs ever make a right,
Or do they just prolong the fight?
And don't both sides just suffer worse,
Succumbing to revenge's curse?



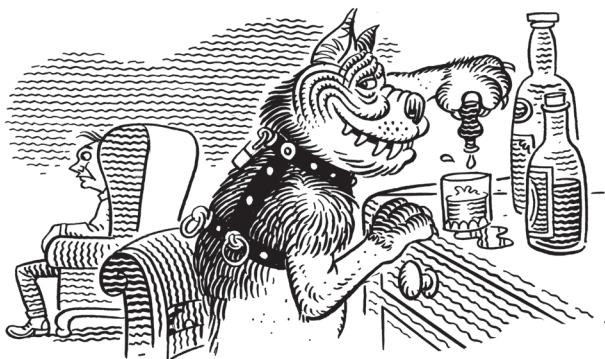
Once again at home we find them,
The riot recently behind them.
Höerny couldn't give a hoot
That he failed to win the loot.
Manoo-er, though, is hot with rage
From what happened on the stage.
His lofty hopes to win first prize
Will never now be realized.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

And so, alas, he's forced to shelf
His greedy plans for gaining wealth.

Meanwhile, Höerny—still in traction—
Hopes to gain some satisfaction.
Stealthy, now, with sleeping potion
The foghöern sets his plan in motion.
He feigns concern for Master's nerves
And gently asks if he could serve
A quelque-chose to ease the blow
Of ruining the foghöern show.

The day's been long, there's not a question
And Master seizes this suggestion:
"Make it a double," he demands,
And falls right into Höerny's plans!
"He asked for it," the foghöern thinks,
While slipping into Master's drink



THE FAWAGHÖERNER

The entire contents of the vial--
Which should give him quite a while
To turn the tables on Manooer
And see what humans can endure.

Master, eager for relief
From his torment, from his grief,
Gulps the drink in his despair
And sits down in his favorite chair.
Höerny checks the fateful cup:
Manooer has finished every drop!
In seconds he begins to snore,
Unaware of what's in store.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt
Manooer's inert, unconscious, out.
Höerny should have time to spare
To work on Master in his chair.
With plenty time to do his deed
The foghöern chooses not to speed:
Revenge—as many people know—
Is often best if taken slow.

The scene is now completely set,
So Höerny from the closet gets
A gift for Master that he's ordered
From dub-dub-dub-dot Cyberhöerner.
And what's inside if not a twin
Of what the foghöern's suffering in?
“That's right, a harness for Manooer:

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

He'll be surprised, I'm pretty sure!"

Full of mischief, full of glee,
The foghöern works determinedly.
At first he finds the straps too short:
They're not designed for human sport.
So he retrofits the rigging,
Modifies the belts and fittings,
And—to Höerny's sheer delight--
The harness fastens on just right!

The animal makes doubly sure
The straps are tight, the lock secure.
A naughty smile on his face,
He gets the clippers from their place.
And just to satisfy a whim
He gives Manooer a Mohawk trim.
The stripe is not quite straight, alas,
But now it's done, the die is cast.

"Oh!," he thinks, "one last detail!"
And takes a mirror off its nail.
He props it up so as it's placed
Manooer will wake to see his face.
And so the foghöern sits and waits,
Eager to negotiate.

One day later Master's waking,
Head is throbbing, body aching.
But far worse, and even moreso,

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

The spurs torment his trussed-up torso.
“Bah!” he shrieks as he takes in
The image staring back at him.

Illustration 9- Manooer wakes, harnessed

“You fiendish beast, you spiteful cur,
You sneaky serpent wrapped in fur,
How dare you chop off all my hair
And strap me to my easy chair!”

“You’re not strapped down, so don’t despair;
It’s just a harness that you wear.
I’ve lived in harness half a week;
Fairness, really’s, all I seek.”
So they let each other loose
And settle on a hostile truce.
But, amidst the heavy silence,
Each is thinking thoughts of violence.

Time will tell if these wounds heal
But for now distrust they feel.

CHAPTER NINE



THE ALL-KNOWING FAWAGHÖERNER

Prologue

What species of all-knowing being
Can tell us what the future brings?
Some may turn unto The Lord,
Others to a Ouija board.
Yet others put their trust and hopes
On crystal balls and horoscopes.
Most of us have little patience
To pursue such divinations.
But nagging doubts still make us pause:
Perhaps outside Newtonian laws
There is something that can foresee
Events with perfect clarity.
Would you believe or would you scoff at
The predictions of a prophet?



Master's out of sorts, depressed:
He cannot sleep, he cannot rest.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

The day's events have left him shaken,
He yearns for sleep to overtake him.
But fate has other plans tonight,
For suddenly he's bolt upright!
He hears a tapping at the door--
It stops....and then resumes once more.
So through the peephole Master peers:
No one's there—the coast is clear.
Yet some strange force won't be denied:
He turns the knob and looks outside.

His gaze is there serenely met
By a höern much like his pet.
“Höerny?” Manoo-er asks, surprised.
“I'm not your foghöern,” it replies.



THE FAWAGHÖERNER

“Höerny’s sleeping in your bed.
You wish that you were there instead.
And mark my words, you’ll be aghast
When Höerny wakes at 16 past.”
“Who are you, and why’ve you come,
Disturbing me at half-past-one?”

“I AM THE ALL-KNOWING FAWAGHÖERNER,”
it says.

“I’ve come so early in the morning
To tender you a timely warning:
In your nest you’ll be attacked,
Though you’ll guard your front and back.
Pain will wear a face of fur.
Death, salvation cross your door.
Your fawaghöern a life will take.
You’ll die a death but live to wake.”

“Your riddles make no sense to me,
Just go away and let me be.”
“I knew you’d tell me to get going;
After all, I am all-knowing.
But pity that you scoff at portents
When they have such grave importance.”
And then he fades into the night,
Leaving Master with his plight.

Manooer is wrecked the following morn,
His clothes a mess, his face care-worn.
He hasn’t slept a wink all night

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

When in walks Höerny, eyes all bright.

Manoo-er, glancing at the clock,
Realizes to his shock:
Eight-one-six the digits read:
“Just as it was prophesied!
Everything that foghöern said,
About the clock, about the bed,
Has come to pass with such precision--
I’d better heed the whole prediction.
Did he not foretell my death,
Saying in the self-same breath
That my foghöern’s going to kill?
And if that truly is his will,
Who then will the victim be?
The meaning’s clear: it must be me!”

Turning on the startled Höerner
Lounging in the kitchen corner,
Manoo-er shouts: “You treacherous beast!
Forget your fancy breakfast feast.
You won’t be given any chance
To carry out your evil plans.”
So shocked that he can barely speak,
Höerny’s hurled into the street.

Broken-hearted, Höerny wanders
Through the streets and sadly ponders:
“What to do now, with no home,
No more biscuits, no more phone?”

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Though I have his car and keys
And all the credit cards I need,
There's nothing like a stable home,
Some place that I can call my own.
But why did he act so bizarre?
Did I take revenge too far?
Or maybe he still holds a grudge
Because I gulked upon the judge?"

As nightfall finds these two divided,
What mischief has their split invited?

CHAPTER TEN



AMAZONIAN ATTACK

Prologue

Isn't it a shame when friends
Find themselves at bitter ends?
How much better it would be
For them to live in harmony!



A sultry, steamy summer night
The living room's aglow with light.
Master's in his easy chair,
Sweating in his underwear.
He's sealed up the entire place
And so, awaits pain's furry face.
Should death attempt to cross his door,
He has something bad in store:
For on the table, by the phone
Lies the biggest knife he owns.

Manooer is wilting in the heat
So he leaves his cushy seat

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

And opens up a window wide
To let a little air inside.
Master feels no need to fear;
The prophet's words were very clear.
Death would cross the door, it stated:
The window wasn't implicated.
Again he sits, now more at ease,
Soothed by a caressing breeze.
And soon enough—his eyelids closing—
The hapless human's deeply dozing.

As Master sleeps, a dream comes to him:
Höerny's broken, hopeless, ruined.
He hasn't slept, he hasn't eaten,
His once proud fur is weatherbeaten.
He wanders, homeless, in the street;
On his face, despair, defeat.
Manooer's heart aches with deep regret
To think how he has wronged his pet.

And, indeed, a matted höerner
Is lurking just around the corner.
Unlike the cat from Master's dream
Its eyes shine with a murd'rous gleam.
It isn't Höerny, that's for sure:
This one is a scavenger.
An Amazonian, to be precise,
About two-thirds of Höerny's size.

As we've mentioned once before

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

(If you need, see Chapter Four)
A single Amazonian might--
To satisfy its appetite--
Hunt fresh game instead of scavenge
When it senses an advantage.
All it takes is just one glance
To tell this beast it has a chance.

Master's snoring, head thrown back,
His mouth's agape, his face is slack.
The beast can't help but stop and stare
For dinner's laid out on a chair.
No need, in fact, to gulk through clothes;
The human's flesh is bare, exposed.
The open window's invitation
Is noted with appreciation.

The beast creeps through the garden hedge
Then springs onto the window ledge.
It pauses, licks and smacks its chops,
Then, silent, to the floor it drops.
The killer circles like a ghost
And scans the room, now, from up close.

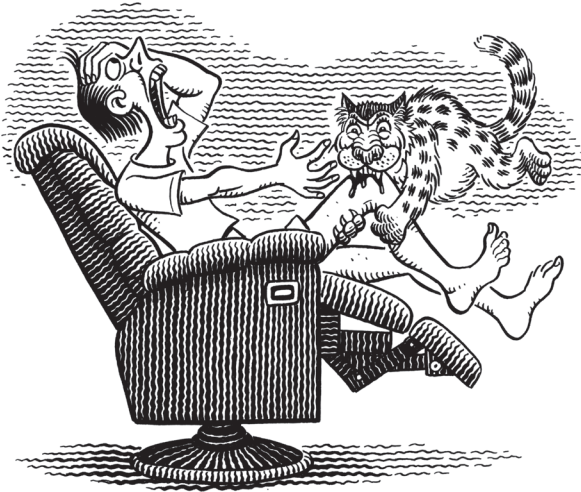
It notices to its dismay
That the lounge's in the way;
For Amazonians attack
Approaching from their victim's back.
Never mind, it's plenty thankful
To lodge its teeth above the ankle.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

And so it settles on Plan B
And sets its sights on Master's knee.

Gulk!* *Gulk!* *Gulk!

The deadly teeth have found their mark
And poison's flowing toward the heart.



The searing pain in Master's knee
Wakes him from his reverie:
"Höerny?!" Manooer, in anguish, cries
"I'm not your foghöern," it replies.
The höern, too small to be his own
Is holding up his knife and phone.
And, while Manoo-er yowls with pain
The Amazonian bites again.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

With a grin it settles back
And waits until the poison acts...

Meanwhile, back at the hotel,
Höerny's living very well.
He's drawn himself a bubble-bath
And ponders Master's sudden wrath.
He's troubled by the day's events;
The details simply make no sense,
"What could make Manooer so worried
To kick me out in such a hurry?
And what's all this 'bout evil plans?
It's hard to figure such a man!"

And with a flash of inspiration
Höerny has a realization:
"He must be in some awful trouble—
If so, I'm needed on the double!"
And, leaving his champagne untouched,
His soaking, soapy fur unbrushed,
He flies off in a furious rush.
Now he's sure Manooer's in need,
And so he drives at lightning speed.
Disregarding all speed limits
He makes it to the house in minutes.
As he pulls up to the dwelling
He hears the gulking, crashing, yelling.
Like a flash he's through the door
(With the key he made before).
He sees the killer poised to plunge

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

Its teeth with one last, lethal lunge
Into his master's heaving chest,
The place where poison works the best.

Our hero sees the twisted face
About to give the coup de grace
And, with a cry of vengeful passion,
He flies at his Manooer's assassin.



The killer looks up with a start,
Exposing his unshielded heart.
*Gulk**Gulk**Gulk*, his heart is ravaged
Punctured, pillaged, ruptured, savaged!

Master, sure that he's a goner,
Sees his soapy fawaghöerner
Leap into the air and smite
The killer with a mortal bite.
As his life begins to dim

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

The riddle's almost clear to him;
Höerny, after all, did take
A life, but for his Master's sake.
His salvation, furthermore,
Was Höerny coming through the door.

He looks into his foghöern's eyes,
Too weak now to apologize.
There's so much he would want to say
If he had just one more day.
He touches Höerny's soggy fur,
Still sudsy with conditioner
And, catching site of distant shores,
"Thanks," he says, and speaks no more.

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

EPILOGUE

Manooer awakes the following morn,
To see his faithful fawaghöern:
“You gave us all a dreadful scare—
The doctors from Intensive Care
Informed me that you’d even died
But, thanks to me, they saved your hide.
They mentioned that my speedy driving
Had lots to do with your surviving.”
Manooer, amazed, sits up in bed:
“It’s as the Furry Prophet said!
I died a death but lived to wake—
It all makes sense, for Heaven’s sake!”
At this the foghöern rolls his eyes,
“Manooer, you sure are one strange guy!”

As Höerny leaves Manooer to rest,
He notices with interest
A patient in the room next door,
Whom—he’s sure—he’s seen before.
The face is turned away, it’s true:
The bandaged arm’s the telling clue.
“I hardly ever bear a grudge,
But I’d swear that man’s the judge...”
Höerny pauses for a minute,
“Should I pay my friend a visit...?”

GLOSSARY

Bulldog (v.t.): To plant a wet, sloppy kiss on a fawaghöerner's flappers

Doktor Helmut Sigmund Woerner (1815-1870): German naturalist, author of "On the Origin of the Fawaghöerner" (1865), the first comprehensive scientific study of fawaghöerners.

Fawaghöerner (Lat. *Felis dangerus*): An animal of the cat family possessing a hideous face and poisoned fangs

Flappers The tender, abundantly fleshy folds of skin around a fawaghöerner's eyes

Foghöern biscuits (also fawaghöerner biscuits): A rich pastry resembling a scone but containing a fruit filling—usually blueberry. See Appendix for recipe.

Gulk (--on) v.i. (pertaining to a fawaghöerner) To inject poison; (n) 1. The envenomed bite of a fawaghöerner. 2. The glugging sound produced by a fawaghöerner injecting poison through its fangs.

Hideosity awaghöerner-speak for 'hideousness'

Manooer (also Manoo-er): Fawaghöerner-speak for "Master;" a fawaghöerner's preferred form of address toward its master

Narg Fawaghöerner-speak for 'no'

Yarg Fawaghöerner-speak for 'yes'

APPENDIX

CLASSIC FAWAGHÖERNER BISCUITS

The first steps as you make this treat:

Grease up one large cookie sheet,

Set the oven and preheat

To 425 degrees

And ready these ingredients please:

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) ice-cold unsalted butter, cut into ½ inch thick “slices”
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 10 ounce jar of blueberry preserves

Whisk together all the flour

Sugar, salt and baking powder.

Cut the butter ‘to this mix—

A pastry blender’s best for this

THE FAWAGHÖERNER

(Two knives, however, do just fine
To get this mixture to combine).
Do not dawdle- work with haste—
Before the mix becomes a paste)

A separate bowl is really best
To mix the egg, cream, lemon zest.
Whisk this all together, then
Add this to the butter blend
Mix with fork or wooden spoon
But not too much or you will ruin
The texture of these light confections
Which otherwise attain perfection.

Form this dough into a ball
And knead it twice or thrice, that's all!
Place the dough onto a surface
That's well floured for our purpose.