The Perfect Murder

(with apologies to Frank and Dennis)

It was a beautiful summers day. The King was admiring the view from one of the tall narrow windows of the Great Hall. It was his favourite room in the castle.

The view was very pleasing to the King. The vegetable and herb gardens were a patchwork of vivid greens. Lots of produce being produced, and plenty of happy serfs enjoying the sunshine, fresh air and good honest toil. How he wished he could slip away from his onerous Kingly duties and join the serfs in their simple life, close to nature.

He loved work. He could watch it all day. So many interesting activities for the serfs to enjoy. A wheelbarrow was being trundled along the path, and it stopped at a small bare patch. What fun it must be getting healthy exercise, rhythmically swinging the pitchfork back and forth! A whiff of less-than-fresh air wafted through the open window. Then the whiff became a full-on pong! Manure!

The King was quickly brought to the realization that he had important state business to attend to and that he must reluctantly close the window and put aside his dream of the rustic idyll beyond.

Yes, today he had a meeting with the Chancellor. The subject was those very windows that gave view to the outside world… and also gave illumination to the inside of the Great Hall. But the windows were too narrow for an adequate view of the outside, and certainly too narrow to impart a sufficiency of illumination to the large room. At best, the light was of a subdued nature, and for the larger part of the year it was just plain gloomy! Something had to be done, and today's meeting was the start.

The Chancellor had news from the Castle Building and Works Superintendent. Nothing could be done to the windows. They were apparently already the maximum area that the latest architectural technology would allow. The King was not surprised to hear this. He was, in fact, considerably relieved that he could now advise the Queen of the continuation of the current status of the windows. She had admonished the King to retain the Norman arched windows and not to entertain the risk of being known, in future times, as the 'Vandal King' who had disfigured a Grade One Listed Historic Building.

But what was to be done about the acquisition of more illumination. The King had one of his rare, but extraordinarily cognizant moments. 'We must get **An Expert**' he proclaimed to the Chancellor. The Chancellor left a suitably deferential pause before replying, 'Would Your Majesty be so kind as to clarify, for this particular situation, the definition of 'An Expert'. The King looked slightly surprised and replied, 'I thought everybody knew. An expert is someone who lives more than fifty miles away. Remember that chap Norman, who designed these windows, he was from France. We want someone better, of course, so perhaps we need to look even further afield… what about Italy'.

And so it was that the Italian Expert was summoned. The prioritization of excellence over urgency resulted in the passage of three and a half months before his arrival at the King's Castle.

'*Bon Giorno, Your Mashjestee*'. The Italian Architecture Expert, Signor Muratore-Incapace, was as flamboyant in expression as he was in appearance. '*Eeet eez an 'on-or to bee* of *serveeze to Your Mashj*esty. *You 'ave made zee good deceezion-a to em-ploy my expert servez-ees. Ah 'ave shjust complete-ed a, how-you-say, Presteege Proshj-ect to build ah tall tow-or – straight and true – to reflect zee charact-air of zee good people of zee city… zee city of Pisa.*

'But now, to zee matt-or of *zee win-dows of your Magnificent Castle*. *Unfortu-nate-elee zee win-dows cannot be bigger. Wee cannot 'ave more window'.*

'*But, do not worry… zair is a way to get more of zee illuminazione'*. Signor Muratore-Incapace turned, and with a sweeping gesture, indicated that his plan focussed on the wall which separated the Great Hall from the adjoining room. It was a big wall with a large door at its centre. '*Zee porta give ingresso, naturalmente, but when zee door remain open it add to the illumizatione'.* He paused, for dramatic effect.

The King was getting slightly impatient, he had not heard anything yet that he didn't already know. 'Signor, please do not suggest that the door is made larger. Our extensive investigations have already shown this to be impossible'.

'Zat is so Your Mashjesty. Zee door 'inges create a lim-eeet to zee door size-a. But you will 'ave obzerved zat zee wall is ver-eee wide. He gestured again with a sweep of his arm to indicate the width of the wall, and also to show off his fine Italian jacket with its flowing sleeves billowing out with the movement.

Pleased that he had everyone's rapt attention, he skipped the dramatic pause and revealed straight away the master stroke of his plan. *'Zee plan is to 'ave **two** porta, next to eash uz-or. Zees gives more door and there-fore more illuminazione'*.

There was a silence as the King took in the brilliance of the idea. 'Signor, that is brilliant. Two doors next to each other. We could not have more window, but we **can** have **more door**.

The Chancellor spoke, eager to lay claim to the idea. 'We must give this architectural feature a name. The windows are named after that French chap Norman, so we must give this feature a name.

'Yes,' said the King. 'We have **more door** because we have two identical doors adjacent to each other, effectively a **pair** of doors. But how can we make it a catchy name?'

'*Ah 'ave eeeet'*. Exclaimed Signor Muratore-Incapace……

'*It eeeeezz…* ***Zee Pair-effect More-door***.'

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