Ladle Rat Rotten Hut

by H.L. Chace

ANTS PAWN TERM, dare worsted ladle gull hoe lift wetter murder inner ladle cordage, honor itch offer lodge, dock, florist. Disk ladle gull orphan worry putty ladle rat cluck wetter ladle rat hut, an furry disk raisin pimple colder Ladle Rat Rotten Hut.

Wan moaning, Ladle Rat Rotten Hut’s murder colder inset.

“Ladle Rat Rotten Hut, heresy ladle basking winsome burden barter an shirker cockles. Tick disk ladle basking tutor cordage offer groin-murder hoe lifts honor udder site offer florist. Shaker lake! Dun stopper laundry wrote! Dun stopper peck floors! Dun daily-doily inner florist, an yonder nor sorghum-stanches, dun stopper torque wet strainers!”

“Hoe-cake, murder,” resplendent Ladle Rat Rotten Hut, an tickle ladle basking an stuttered oft.

Honor wrote tutor cordage offer groin-murder, Ladle Rat Rotten Hut mitten anomalous woof.

“Wail, wail, wail!” set disk wicket woof, “Evanescence Ladle Rat Rotten Hut! Wares are putty ladle gull goring wizard ladle basking?”


Soda wicket woof tucker shirt court, an whinny retched a cordage offer groin-murder, picked inner window, an sore debtor pore oil worming worse lion inner bet. Inner flesh, disk abdominal woof lipped honor bet, paunched honor pore oil worming, an garbled erupt. Den disk ratchet ammonotpon honor groin-murder’s nut cup an gnat-gun, any curdled ope inner bet.

Inner ladle wire, Ladle Rat Rotten Hut a raft attar cordage, an ranker dough hall. “Comb ink, sweat hard,” setter wicket woof, disgracing is verse.

Ladle Rat Rotten Hut entity bet rum, an stud buyer groin-murder’s bet.

“O Grammar!” crater ladle gull historically, “Water bag icer gut! A nervous sausage bag ice!”

“Batterd lucky chew whiff, sweat hard,” setter bloat-Thursday woot, wetter wicket small honors phase.

“O Grammar, water bag noise! A nervous sore suture anomalous prognosis!”

“Batterd small your whiff, doling,” whiskered dole woof, ants mouse worse waddling.

“O Grammar, water bag mousey gut! A nervous sore suture bag mouse!”

Daze worry on-forg-nut ladle gull’s lest warts. Oil offer sodden, caking offer carvers an sprinkling otter bet, disk hoard-handed woof lipped own pore Ladle Rat Rotten Hut an garbled erupt.

MURAL: Yonder nor sorghum stanches shut ladle gulls stopper torque wet strainers.

The true story of “Ladle Rat Rotten Hut”

“Ladle Rat Rotten Hut” is often attributed to Anonymous, but it was actually written by H.L. Chace. He was a professor of French at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, retired in 1965 and now is living in Cincinnati. He’s in his eighties. I talked to him by phone about the story of the story.

“I wrote it about 1940. It was going to be part of a little article I was writing. It was in the days of rationing during the war and I thought about what would happen if we had to ration language. If our vocabulary were cut in half, we’d have to get along with much fewer words. Consequently, I thought I’d see how you’d get along with the other half. I’ve never written that article, but I’ve always thought of doing it.

“I taught French, and I used the story in my class to show the importance of intonation in learning a foreign language. You see, if you take these English words and put them in columns like a spelling book and just read them, they have no meaning. However, if you read them with the proper intonation, the meaning appears for certain people. For other people the meaning never does appear.

“I never submitted it to anybody, but it got spread some way or other. It’s one of those things that got completely out of control. I showed it to a few friends and to a book salesman who came to see me. He liked the thing because it had to do with words. I think I may have given him a copy, and he must have given it to someone else. It first appeared in print in the Merriam Company’s magazine Word Study. I think it got in Stars and Stripes [U.S. Army newspaper] because I heard from people in Baghdad, Sweden, all over the world. Sports Illustrated found it in another publication and gave me $1000 for it. Arthur Godfrey found it in Sports Illustrated, and he broadcast it and very generously told any readers that wanted a copy they could have one by sending me postage. To my surprise, I mailed about five thousand of them. After that episode, Prentice Hall asked me to write a series of stories for a book, which I did. [Anguish Languish was published by Prentice Hall in 1955.]

“The book sold fairly well for that sort of thing. It went through four printings I think, maybe 14,000 copies total. It’s used now a good deal in textbooks to demonstrate the phonetic structures of English. The book has been used by some psychologist to determine the ability of people to understand sound, to study the limit of distortion that can be comprehended. That varies from person to person.

“People who like it best are language people, teachers, lawyers, and doctors. That’s almost all the people who are interested in it. And children, strange to say. I’ve had a lot of letters from them. I asked him if he bothered her that it is often printed without his name. He said, “Well, it doesn’t bother me, but it’s just that if I had a cent for every Xerox copy, I’d be much better off because I know it’s been copied by the thousands.”

The book, Anguish Languish, is out of print and very hard to find. Chace himself only has one copy. Dover or somebody should reprint it.

— Anne Herbert