

The Fourth Prague Defenestration: 9

by Jerry Ratch

The Third Defenestration happened during the Soviet era, by the apparatchiks. The only thing that saved the people from certain death after being thrown out of the window of the Prague Castle, was an enormous pile of horse shit below, or *haufen mist*, as the Germans were fond of saying. They even had a song about it during World War II, when they controlled Prague. "*Haufen mist? Haufen mist. Ya, das ist ein haufen mist.*" Meaning a big pile of crap. Germans were fond of that sort of thing while lifting an enormous stein of beer, singing loudly at the beer halls.

But once the Germans were gone and the Soviets took over, well, the people of Prague became more and more incensed at the huge piles of bureaucracy they found building up around their country, and one day they marched into the Prague Castle, tried to grab hold of the apparatchiks by their collars, but instead got thrown right out of an upstairs window. Fortunately there was one enormous pile of either horse, dog, or bullshit that cushioned their fall, and the people were saved. This was the Third Defenestration that people in Prague were famous for. They were known for their Defenestrations. Almost as well known as their famous beer halls, and wandering packs of wild poets, and pigs.

Boris and Vladimir parked outside of the Prague Castle, and we all got out of the car. They pointed to an upper window, which for some odd reason was flung wide open even now. And sure enough down below that window was what looked for all the world like an enormous pile of shit, of some sort. And what a smell! O my God! I almost horked up my lunch.

“Haufen mist,” said Boris.

“Ya. Haufen mist. Ist das nicht ein haufen mist?” asked Vladimir.

“Ya, das ist ein haufen mist,” said Boris soberly. “Das ist one hellofa haufen mist.”

“Okay, okay, so show me the window already. And this Wall of Gopers you talked about. Where the heck is that?”

Boris and Vladimir knew every guard at the Prague Castle, and we got to go up to the second story window with ease. We entered a big meeting hall where the window was swung open. There was another plaque that read something in Bohemian, then the words in English: Site of the Third Defenestration. That's all it said. But both men stood back away from the window, while Ellen and I peered down at the great height. That was definitely a fall that could kill you. I turned to look at Vladimir. He looked very, very nervous, and kept looking all around the room, as if somebody was maybe watching them.

“Ees great height, no?” he said.

“Don't you want to look?” I asked.

“No, thanks. I've seen it. No need to look further.”

“Do you smell that funny smell?”

“Ees always the same, haufen mist. Never change.”

He turned and faced the wall near the door, while putting one hand against it. He looked pale, for a normally red-faced Russian, that is. Boris edged closer to the door and looked as if he might be

ready to bolt any minute. And these guys were fearless soccer fans. But this? This was too much for their big stomachs.

I had to admit, I was intrigued.

