

From *A Chestbook Festschrift*, by Ray Fahrner and Bill Yarrow

Juan picked up the basset-eared newspaper on the chair. A headline caught his eye:

Disaster in Nantasket

Disaster struck this April afternoon as the warehouse and last pasture of the Nantasket Grass Basket and Glass Casket Gasket Company combusted. The nasty explosion happened just after 6:17, attested Astrid Aster, spokeswoman, toastmaster and master plasterer of the Nantasket Grass Basket and Glass Casket Gasket Company, when asked. Trespassing and treachery are suspected.

Workers and their guests were on their blankets picnicking in the vast pasture, enjoying their accustomed repast of rabbit and biscuits fresh from local farm markets, with flasks of vin de Gascogne fast in hand from their picnic baskets, when, apparently, a gasket of the glass casket gasket sector burst, infusing gas into a cask of plaster. The resultant blast cast glass all over.

At nearby Nantasket beach, passing masts shook from the blast, and a man in an ascot, basking in the evanescent incandescence and bass fishing, was knocked on his ass.

Tasked with fast apprehension of the rascally bastard who caused the dastardly atrocity, as well as reestablishing and restoring the pasture, Ms. Aster plastered Nantasket with posters of the suspect, and suggested a strategy for planting grass.

This Easter Sunday at half past seven there will be a Paschal and requiem mass, not to be missed, at St. Francis of Assisi, said by the Rasta pastor Asafa Sebastian, in memory of the outstanding artisans of the Nantasket Grass Basket and Glass Casket Gasket Company who passed in the blast. Due to the largesse of an anonymous bequest, those in repose will be laid to rest not in Nantasket, but in adjacent Cohasset. Surviving siblings request that assets of the deceased be given to the Nantasket Grass Basket and Glass Casket Gasket Company Disaster Assistance Fund.

The Nantasket flag will fly at half mast.

[To be continued]