

THE BATTALION

Dead Animals Dot Cadet's Room

'The Mongoose, Cobra And Me'

By TOM R. HARGROVE
Special Writer
"Breathes there a man with

soul so dead
He never to himself hath
said . . .

"I wish to hell I had a stuffed mongoose being strangled by a cobra!"

Although practically everyone, consciously or subconsciously, wishes for a complete mongoose-cobra set from time to time, I believe I am the only person at Aggieland who has one all his own. How this rather unique article came to College Station is a long, slightly unusual story.

Mortimer (the mongoose) and Lucifer (the cobra) are natives of India, where their relatives still fight like cats and dogs. However, they were destined to die near a taxidermist shop instead of in the dense Indian jungle. Somehow, the unusual set came into the possession of a wealthy Arabian gentleman with exquisite tastes in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia.

An American construction official and his wife were among the guests at a buffet dinner given by this particular gentleman one evening. Serving as a centerpiece amidst trays of hors d'oeuvres and other delicacies were Mortimer and Lucifer locked in silent, deadly combat.

Being not exactly accustomed to such elegance, the American lady immediately gasped at the sight, placed her hand to her mouth and turned a lovely, sickly shade of green.

"Is something wrong? Are you ill?" asked the host.

"Oh, no, of course not," she quickly replied, fervently racking

her brain to find an appropriate, but polite answer.

"I was just thinking—what a lovely centerpiece!" she blurted out, momentarily forgetting the fact that she was in Saudi Arabia, where the custom is that if a guest compliments anything the host's home it automatically becomes his own.

When the couple returned to their car after the party, there was Morty and Lucifer, sitting rigidly in the front seat of their car.

Not all people appreciate such elegance as exotic mongoose and cobra teams, however. Upon returning to the United States, the couple presented the set to their 20-year old daughter, who was attending college in San Francisco.

When she discovered that her rum-drinking, peanut butter-eating pooch, Socrates, refused to live in the same house with the pair, she had to choose between the spoiled canine and the mongoose set. This was naturally quite a difficult decision, but at last she decided. She began searching for a new home for the two. At first she decided to present it to a San Francisco museum where they would probably just collect dust.

Then the idea hit her—what better home could this depraved-looking oddity possibly find than living with an Aggie? After locating me on a trip to Texas, it took very little persuasion to convince me this was right and yours truly returned home late one night the proud possessor of a promised mongoose and cobra.

I decided to break the news to my mother that same night. I felt sure she would be excited, but I didn't realize just how much.

"Mother," I announced, "Guess what? I'm finally getting us just what we've always needed."

"Money!" yelled Mom in her sweet, tender, motherly manner.

"No, no Mother, it even more wonderful than that. It's just what we really need—a mongoose being strangled by a cobra—stuffed, of course!" I quickly added.

"A x&y%/*&# mongoose and cobra!" I screamed Mother over and over in her same lovely, gentle motherlike voice as she frantically searched for a heavy, blunt instrument.

"What in the world are you going to do with it? I've put

up with everything—your fish Lone Stars beer caps spurs, that stuffed baby alligator, your goofy-looking campaign hat, stolen beer mugs from half the joints in Texas, and even that statue of a drunk guzzling Carta Blanca that you dragged back from across the border. But you're not bringing any more freaks into this house."

By now, I began to suspect that dear ol' Mother wasn't too happy with the latest addition to our happy little home. In fact, the rest of the summer wasn't too pleasant, and I was even glad to start back to A&M this fall.

Soon after my return to school, the mongoose and cobra arrived, adding an even more "homey" atmosphere to my already lovely room in dorm 1.

The pair received a variety of reactions, ranging from a few "wildcats" from the juniors to a puzzled what-in-the-hell-does-this-place-do-to-you-after-two-years-look-on-the-faces-of-the-fish.

In case you're wondering what purpose mongoose-and-cobra sets serve, well . . . it does keep stray dogs wandering up and down the dorm from entering my room. And it's great for officer inspections since the bull never sees anything else in the room he's inspecting.

However, A&M is still A&M, even if you do possess a mongoose and cobra. On one inspection this fall a particularly military major, a product of West Point, entered the room, stopped, gaped and said:

"Cadet Hargrove, where on earth did you get that monstrosity?"

"Rich girl friend sent it to me, Sir."

"She must have been," he muttered, running his finger across Lucifer's scaly back.

"Tell her she should have dusted it first!" he snapped as he stormed out the door.

I'm still waiting for my rams for a "dusty mongoose and cobra" to come through!



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For the benefit of any student who may have overlooked the pertinent paragraph in UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS, the following extract is quoted from page 19 of that booklet:

"The following offense will result in immediate suspension for not less than the remainder of the semester. Going to another campus with the intent to paint or otherwise deface statues or buildings or commit other depredation. Minimum penalty is suspension from the University for the semester in which the act occurs."

The above paragraph applies to all college campuses. In addition, in 1954 the Board of Directors of the Texas A&M College System and the Board of Regents of the University of Texas agreed that any student under the control of either of these two boards who was guilty of such offense would be punished by at least being suspended from the college for the semester in which the act occurred. Let us win the games on the playing field but avoid any acts of the type mentioned above.

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