

# Annotations to *Ada* (16)

## Part I Chapter 34

February 2008

The Kyoto Reading Circle

The following members of the Kyoto Reading Circle are equally responsible for the text here: Shunichiro Akikusa, Chizuko Inoue, Gen'ichiro Itakura, Satoko Ito, Izumi Matoba, Maya Minao, Shoko Miura, Akiko Nakata, Keiko Nishiyama, Tadashi Wakashima, and Motoko Yoshikawa.

Page and line references are to the Vintage International edition.

---

Part I Chapter 34
-------------------

**211.06: in the sudden greenery:** introduces the “green” motif in this chapter.

**211.10: Sore:** An anagram of Eros and rose. This anagrammatic combination appears again as two anagrams, **the sore from the rose** (351), but expands to a combination of three anagrams, **Eros, the rose and the sore** (367), **the rose sore of Eros alone** (431).

**211.11: his emerald lantern:** Motif “green.”

**211.13: old glowworm:** Sore with the lantern. Cf. Pale green glowworms appear in the last date of Mary and Ganin: “. . . she stooped over the grass and picked up one of the pale green lampyrids they had noticed” (*Mary*, 73).

**211.17-18: Lucette, however, seemed to lurk behind every screen, to peep out of every mirror:** hints “Lucette-in-the-Box came out of a trunk” (213).

**212.06-07: any green imp with coppery limbs:** Motif “green.” The “green imp” is Lucette, who often wears green, complimenting her red hair and green eyes: **two green eyes** (213.06); the keyhole turned **an angry green** (213.30). It also suggests her jealousy, a “green-eyed monster.”

**212.09: There still was the shooting gallery:** Cf. “Van and Ada were on their way to the Gun Pavilion *alias* Shooting Gallery, where they had located, on its upper stage, a tiny,

Oriental-style room . . ." (148:3-6). Also, "There still was the shooting gallery, with its Orientally draped recess under the sloping roof" (212: 9-10).

**212.11: reeked of stale beer:** Nabokov uses the same trick of sequential association he uses in Chapter 32 (203. 28: **an empty beer bottle**). In Chapter 24, "an empty beer bottle left by some dead old gardener" (148:10-11), occurs in the scene where Van and Ada first meet. Of course, it is impossible for the smell of the beer to remain for so long, and it is clear that it is not the same bottle. This beer bottle reminds the reader of the empty beer bottle in Chapter 32 and the reader becomes aware of the trick which he/she might not have been aware of before.

**212.12-14: All Van saw there of his new Ada were her ivory thighs and haunches:** "[I]vory" is a brand of ivory imitation. It may suggest that Ada is not Van's genuine ivory lover any more as in their first summer.

**212.24-25: the forbidden pavilion:** The gun pavilion.

212:29: Peter de Rast: Rast is "Tsar" in reverse. Peter the Great was a "colossus," having grown to almost two meters in height.

**212.31-32: When our lovers (you like the authorial possessive, don't you, Van?):** Cf. "If he approaches the description of our lovers' code (the 'our' may constitute a source of irritation in its own right, but never mind) with a little more attention and a little less antipathy, . . ." (161); "At the age of ten,' said Lucette to say something, 'I was at the Vieux-Rose Stopchin stage, but our (using, that day, that year, the unexpected, thronal, authorial, jocular, technically loose, forbidden, possessive plural in speaking of her to him) sister had read at that age, in three languages, many more books than I did at twelve'" (384). "Our sister" points to Lucette's awareness of their true blood relationship.

**213.11-12: Lucette insisted on their playing "leapfrog" with her:** Van and Ada probably explained to Lucette what they did as "playing 'leapfrog,'" which Lucette now insists on actually doing as a threesome. Ada and Van exchange dark looks because they realize Lucette suspects what they were doing was something more than leapfrog. It seems hardly possible for Lucette not to have known such a common game as "leapfrog." This leads Ada to suggest what is explained in the next paragraph.

**213.20: "botanizing":** Collecting mushrooms—with a hint of the male sexual organ,

when combined with “leaptoad,” which is linked to “toadstool,” a poison mushroom.

**214.10-11: Ugly dark words scare her, I know; they scared me when I was four:** Lucette was born when Ada was four. Ada might hear about the “facts of life” and think them as “ugly and dark.” One example of such “ugly dark words” would be “uterus” in *Lolita* I.11: “Mr. Uterus [I quote from a girls' magazine] starts to build a thick soft wall on the chance a possible baby may have to be bedded down there” (*Lolita* 47:19).

**214.12: should be protected from nightmares and stallions:** Cf. “O lente currite noctis equi! O softly run, nightmares!” (*Lolita*, II.18, 219)