December 1, 2003

Dear Calculus Student,

Once again, your keen intellect and exemplary reasoning skills have saved the day! Who could have foreseen the effect that a simple physics formula would have on a brute like Victor? You have impaled him on your sharp triangle, whose base is 2.04 and whose height is 65.28.

Indeed, had I not seen it with my own eyes, I scarcely would have believed the change in that man. My dear gentle bride proffered him your letter, tenderly admonishing him with the words, “Read this and weep, you little rat bastard.” Her remonstrance had little effect on Victor, but your letter transfixed him. As he read your words, the blood drained from his face in the same way the chocolate milk gets sucked out of those sippy bags with the little straws. His face turned pale and mottled like the bark of a sycamore tree. As he read further, to my horror and fascination, he burst into loud, sobbing tears. “Gus, oh my Gus!” he wailed. “What did I do to you?”

Then, gushing forth like water from a burst dam, his confession poured out upon us. The love affair that ended badly; the bitterness of lonely rejection; the fierce and painful desire for revenge; the plot conceived, nurtured, carried forth — and then, oh, too late, bitterly repented. Victor wept and tore his hair. He told us of the ensuing years of regret for his hasty action. And as he wept, my heart wept for him. What had once been a man now lay before us, a mere heap of missed opportunities and forgotten hopes.

My darling Philomena gallantly rose to the occasion. She stood, drawing herself to her full height, and in her stately manner drew aside a screen, revealing the previously hidden police officer. She turned back to her former fiancé with a tender, “So long, sucker.”

Thus ends the saga of Victor Dendron, poor soul.

So many of your classmates wished for the union of my beloved Philo and myself, and so many of you offered me comfort and encouragement during my times of doubt, that I will share a small morsel of the rest of our story.

One night as we conversed together, intoxicated by each other’s company, by the iridescent moonlight streaming through the window, by the gentle breezes that were wafting across the hills and trees, and, yes, by the several six-packs of Rolling Rock that we had consumed, we decided to elope. Fearing that my true love might hesitate under the harsher light of day, I immediately booked airplane tickets to Las Vegas. We were married 7 hours later under the neon lights, by our favorite Elvis impersonator. We consummated our nuptials by getting
matching tattoos. Modesty forbids me from sending you a photograph.

What lies ahead for us? As you know, I had planned to open a little hardware store, where we could settle down and raise our family. But fate intervened. The famous Stanley Starr is making a movie: “Love, Death, and Hardware: The Myron Sopher Story.” (For more information, seek out Bridget McFee or Sarah Skillman). With the proceeds from this script, Philomena and I have decided to join the Peace Corps. We will soon head off for Tanzania, where I will teach mathematics and she will teach medieval literature.

As you see, you have made a big difference in my life. I thank you very much, and I promise to write again frequently.

Yours most sincerely,
Myron Sopher