



## You Light up My Life...

By Rick Cogbill  
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**I hadn't seen Beanie look so glum since he blew the subwoofer in his car.** He was sitting on a stack of tires, shredding pieces off an old air filter and mumbling, "She loves me; she loves me not..."

"Troubles in Romanceland, Beanie?"

He sighed heavily. "Slim, she's driving me crazy. I never know where I'm at with Sam."

Our erstwhile apprentice was referring to Samantha, the blonde, blue-eyed delivery girl from Herkle's Auto Parts. The two of them had been dating on and off for a couple of years now, and I was about to offer some fatherly advice when Tooner walked in. "Give it up, Bean. You and Sam got nothin' in common."

Beanie's nostrils flared. "What do you mean by that?" he demanded.

Tooner counted on his greasy fingers. "To start with, she's smart, she's good lookin', she's..."

"Ignore him, Beanie. He's just yanking your chain." I called Basil over. "Got any advice for our lovesick puppy?"

"Beanie's in love?" Our resident guru folded his arms across his chest and thought for a moment. "It does remind me of something Voltaire once wrote." Basil closed his eyes and began to recite. "Love is a canvas furnished by Nature and embroidered by imagination."

Tooner snickered. "See, what did I tell ya; it's all in yer head!"

"Aw, c'mon, guys. I need help here."

"Look, Beanie," I said, "when it comes to love, I've always trusted in 'The Headlight Theory'. The next time Sam comes by, watch her eyes. If she likes you, her whole face will light up when she sees you."

Needless to say, he wanted me to order some parts right away, but we had work to do. "Check out the '98 Chevy pickup that Dutchy just towed in," I ordered. "Rumor has it there's no fuel getting to the rail."

It wasn't long before Beanie was ordering up a new fuel pump. "Are you sure?" I asked suspiciously. "That was a pretty quick diagnosis."

"Positive," he enthused. "There's power in the wiring harness, but no action in the tank. Well, the pump's on its way, so I'd better go wash up!"

But unfortunately for The Bean, it was Herk himself who delivered the part, and to the best of my knowledge Herk's face hasn't lit up in years. Disappointed, Beanie went back to work. But after installing the new pump, we still had a no start condition.

Beanie groaned. "Great! Now I gotta drop the tank all over again, just because of a bad part!"

Basil came over for a look. "Don't be so hasty, lad. You're assuming things you don't really know for sure. Let me know when you can get at the fuel pump wiring connector and I'll show you a trick."

When Beanie had the tank low enough to unplug the wiring, Basil brought over a homemade tester comprised of a headlight with two wires attached. "Here, plug this into the power and ground connections of the harness while I cycle the key. The headlight should come on for about three seconds if the circuit is working properly."

Basil climbed up the ladder and turned on the ignition, but no bright lights appeared. "How can that be?" asked Beanie. "I had power here before."

Basil climbed down. "You probably still do. The real question is, do you have a good ground. What we just did was test both the ground and power circuits at the same time." Basil unplugged his tester and continued. "These vehicles are known to have problems with the harness itself, and GM recommends replacing the pigtail every time you do a pump. The wires can look good, but if you've got a poor connection somewhere, you'll get voltage without any amperage capacity. Only by testing with a load stronger than your test light will a weak connection show up."

It turned out that Basil was right about the faulty connector; the ground terminal had internal damage that was difficult to see. Parts were ordered, and when Sam arrived with the new wiring repair kit, Beanie was ready and waiting with his hair slicked back and his eyes glued to her face. Apparently the headlight theory worked, for he practically floated back into the shop after she left.

Basil sighed. "Kind of reminds me of the words of Thomas Carlyle: 'Love is not altogether a delirium, yet it has many points in common therewith.'"

"Hey," complained Beanie. "Did he just call me delirious?"

“He sure did, lover boy,” muttered Tooner. “You’re acting more twitterpated than Bambi in springtime. Don’t forget what you just learned; shiny lights mean nothin’ if you’re not well grounded.”

Beanie threw up his hands in exasperation. “Great! So is there some kind of homemade tester that’ll tell me if Slim’s Headlight Theory is reliable?”

We all looked at each other and shrugged. “Not that we know of, Bean,” said Basil. “You’re on your own with this one.”