

Scimitar



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Scimitar

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Coming Twilight

JAMES CAIN

*The hour of the sunshine
is done,
We come
to what we yearned for,
Only to find that somehow
it isn't.
The vision—
conceived by youth,
nurtured in hope,
mothered by dissatisfaction,
is lost
in the uncompromising reality
of maturity.
We grope blindly
in the darkness
of confusion,
Lost in the dreadful emptiness
of our disillusionment.
Yet
we still have the comfort of
the maybes and probablys,
the someday and tomorrows,
The hope
is still with us.
Our goal
is for what cannot be had,
The hardened philosophies
of sense and reason work against us—
telling us our cause is empty,
Yet there's a strange meaningfulness
to the struggle.
My soul tells me
be quiet
and my heart says
be patient,
so I am silent
and I wait
for what will never come.*

Interlude I

ROBERT LANDIS

*We were strangers
Then I looked into your eyes
You offered me a drink
I stayed
There was jazz
I studied you
You wondered why
I led you to a mirror
You leaned against me
And smiled at me in the mirror
We went back to the sofa
Our eyes met
I reached out and touched your hair
You put your head on my shoulder
I kissed you*

A cloud.

Vibrant

ROBERT LANDIS

*A small, graceful vision—
 gliding
 tracing
 black hair flying*

*A mellow voice—
 pouring "Malaguena"
 through
 a resonant portrait
 of joy*

*A perfect face—
 vibrant
 with the intoxication
 of the moment*

Man Must

GARY HEARN

*Man must, he has to;
Man is made that way.
Man must love so he can hate,
Man must hate so he can kill,
Man must kill so he can conquer,
Man must rule so he can live,
Man must live so he can love.
Man must, he has to;
Man is made that way.*

Midnight-Blue

ROBERT LANDIS

*Sitting on my bed,
Looking thru my window,
I see the stars shine in the darkness,
The midnight-blue darkness.
They are white grains of sand
Hiding in a blanket,
A deep-dark midnight-blue blanket,
Known as the heavens.*

*Thinking of my loved one
Far away,
Lost in the eternity,
The midnight-blue eternity,
Of the night.*

*The moon shines
Like an ivory pea
In a pod,
A midnight-blue pod.*

*Yes.
Beauty and love and eternity
Are the subjects
Of the kingdom,
The midnight-blue kingdom,
That is ruled
By the hand,
And the presence,
Of the Creator.*

My Views Of School Spirit

EDWARD J. OKIN

Over the past three years spirit has been mentioned more and more. At Staunton, spirit is of major concern. There is concern because there is little spirit.

Spirit has a definite influence on everything we undertake. In order to have spirit, there must first be enthusiasm. Here at school the military department and key cadets have been trying to create enthusiasm. At this time it may be safely concluded that they have failed. Why have they failed? In my opinion, spirit and enthusiasm cannot be obtained by reciting a few cheers or singing a school song. Spirit must come from a person's heart.

Here at school the main type of incentive is the competition among the com-

panies. This comes in the form of the coveted honor company award given each month and again at the end of the school session. Does this competition increase the spirit of the corps? I say no! I doubt if more than 15% of the cadets are really interested in winning. Naturally everyone would like the privileges of being honor company. But stop and think. Is all the work involved in gaining the award worth the sweat put forth. As the years have passed, more and more things are coming under the heading of honor company. Where it will end; only time will tell. But it may generally be concluded that within the next few years the system here at school will have to change. My greatest regret is that I will not be here to see it.

We Wish

CLARANCE ENGLAND

*There is not one among us today,
Who has not wished in some kind of way.
We wish for love, we wish for money,
We wish for bread, and we wish for honey.
But the trivial things we wish we had,
Will never come and we are sad.*

*We wish upon that lonely star,
As it looks at us up there so far.
And tries to tell us as if he knew
That our every wish will not come true.
Again and again we try some more,
Though we'll never get what we wished for.
Even in the end when we must die;
We wish the Lord would pass us by.*

"All The Works Of Men"

JAMES CAIN

The narrow ribbon of dirt road threaded its way through the forest's dense undergrowth. It ran on for a few miles cutting its way recklessly through the forest like an ugly brown snake—serving as an ominous warning that man has not only been there but that he intends to stay. It was early morning and the sun struggled through the tightly meshed branches and leaves of the trees to splash on the thick blanket of dust on the road below. It speckled the dusty light brown surface with a maze of patterns of shadow and light much resembling the patterns on the back of a snake. The road crawled on dodging the larger trees that defiantly stood in its way and crawling over the places where the smaller ones had once been. When it would suddenly dip into a gully it would seem to have finally slid into its hole but only to reappear again a little farther ahead. During the early spring a small part of the forest's life that had once thrived there for uncountable years would start to grow in the road again and after a short struggle it would finally take root and begin the work of reclaiming the part of the forest that had been lost. But in a short time the trucks and machinery would come and it would be crushed in the dust by the wheels that rolled towards the construction area a few miles ahead which had already claimed a quarter of the forest and was spreading like a cancer swallowing up the other three.

It's noon and the foreman blows his whistle denoting the lunch break. All work ceases instantly as each man wanders off alone or in groups to relax and eat the lunch he has been eagerly looking forward to since the middle of the morning. Most of the men head for their cars or the shade afforded by the

tractors and other machinery scattered around the cleared area that had been worked on for so long to erase all traces of the life that had once flourished there. Two of the men headed towards the edge of the woods and settled down to relax in the shade twenty or thirty yards in from the edge. They sat down and silently started to eat. Tom who seemed to be the younger of the two finally broke the silence. "You know Ned, I was raised on a small farm about a mile from here on the other side of the woods." Ned took another bite out of his sandwich. "So whadaya want I should do about it. What the hell's so important 'bout that?" "Oh nothin' I guess. I was just thinkin' about things, that's all." Ned opened a beer and settled back against a tree. "Like what?" "Just about the things I used to do when I was a kid around here. Mostly 'bout the times I used to spend right here in these woods and, oh, a lotta things like that. I used to spend a lotta time in those woods—just wanderin' around tryin' to learn everything I could about 'em and the things that're there but after awhile you get to thinkin' that in a way you somehow belong there and that this place is the only place you can really feel happy in. You sorta feel close to the things that're there. You know what I mean Ned? I used to spend a whole day here sometimes when I'd wanta think about somethin' or just get the feeling that I had to be alone for awhile. I mean you can really get the feelin' of being alone there and it's sorta peaceful an' quiet like noplac else after awhile. Every day when we clear away some more of the woods I sorta feel funny inside like I'm thinkin' that I'm maybe killin' an old friend or somethin'." Ned finished his beer and grunted

disgustedly. "Okay nature boy it's twelve-thirty an' unless you want the old man on us we'd better start movin'." They both got to their feet and started slowly walking towards the construction area. Ned threw the empty beer bottle at a bird situated about fifteen feet from him and must have hit it because it made some sort of loud squawking noise but didn't fly away. They both continued walking, but after a few yards Tom said he had forgotten something and started back while Ned kept walking. Tom walked back to the place where Ned threw the bottle and after kicking around in the leaves a few times he found the bird. It was lying on the ground with its wings spread out breathing jerkily. Its mouth opened and shut spasmodically but it couldn't utter a sound because the blood was slowly running out of the corner of its mouth. Tom looked down at the bird for awhile and then stepped on its head with his heel. "I'm sorry," he whispered and covered its body with a few leaves. He caught up with Ned at the edge of the woods. The twelve-thirty whistle had

just blown and they both started walking quickly to their tractors.

It was late afternoon and the speckled pattern covering the road had changed considerably as if the snake had molted and changed its skin during the day. An acorn from one of the trees whose branches spread across the road fell down into the road and almost buried itself in the thick dust. A small squirrel scampered towards the road but stopped hesitantly at the edge gazing longingly at the newly fallen acorn. After a short time it ran into the road to the acorn and busied itself at cracking it. It was four o'clock and the men were starting for home. The squirrel, intent on exploiting his new-found treasure didn't notice the car until it was forty feet away. The squirrel snapped his head around and froze with terror, rooted to the middle of the road. Beside the furry crimson speckle on the road was the acorn neatly cracked open by the wheel of the car. Another car rolled past and drove the speckle deeper into the back of the snake.

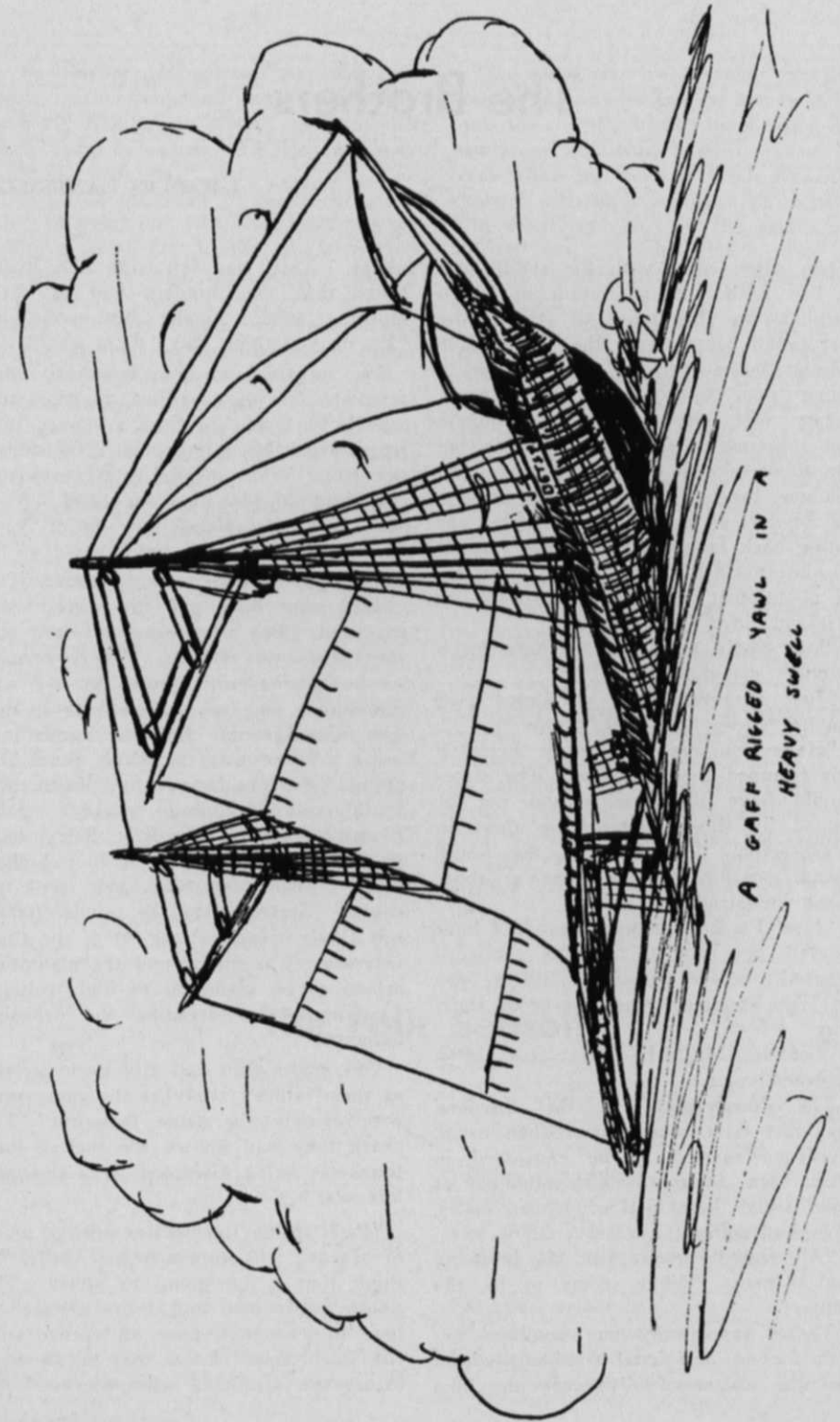
A Teenager's Life

WALTER JACOBS

*A cheering crowd, a love so deep,
A failing grade, a goal so steep,
A life of fun, a life of distress,
The life of a teenager, it's often a mess.*

*Living to be great, dying at defeat,
Being one of the crowd, so many obstacles to meet,
Living for the future, never the past;
The life of a teenager, the one he lives so fast.*

*The future's yours teenager, choose well my son;
Strive to be great, but still have your fun,
Strive for the best, you will be guided by the light,
Good Luck teenager in this life of flight.*



The Brothers

CHARLES LANDSMAN

The dawn came with the suddenness of life itself. A plantation in South Carolina was beginning to stir as the first broad beams from the impregnable horizon shone forth. James Snyder, a young man approaching the age of twenty with slight traces of baldness and a premature flock of gray hair, began to partake in his daily chores. His younger brother Bill was still asleep. Pa Snyder, as according to Hoyle, was sitting back in his rocking chair reading the latest trash from "The Liberator," an abolitionist newspaper, published by William Lloyd Garrison.

"Ma, would you come in here for a second," ejaculated Pa.

"Just a minute," she exclaimed over the hot stove. "What is it now?"

"Have you read the latest news in this trumped-up newspaper? The states should have their rights and not be bossed by those bastards up there in Washington. Our lives in the South cannot possibly be the same as those damn industrialists."

"Now Pa, how many times do I have to tell you not to get so excited—especially before breakfast. Bill are you up?" she shouted toward the broad stairway.

"Coming Ma," he jurgulated in a drowned voice.

The conversation at the Snyders' breakfast table was sparser than usual. Everyone seemed to be engrossed in their own thoughts, just nibbling at their usual breakfast of wheat cakes, eggs, and coffee.

"All right," interrupted Ma breaking the silence. "What seems to be the matter?"

There was hardly any response except for an occasional rumbling within and the clatter of silverware on china

plates. This was far from the jovial times that the Snyders had at their morning meal. Finally Jim spoke up. "Pa, do you think they'll be a war?"

Pa, surprised at first, began to contemplate this very serious question and was busy trying to fit a response into words when Ma interrupted. "Of course not son. What in the world ever put that infernal idea in your head. Now you just run along and finish your breakfast like a good boy."

The day transpired as usual. The chores were done and the slaves were managed. The winter was in sight and the cotton was waning. There seemed to be a constant tension in the air. Something had to happen, and it did. The Underground Railroad came into being. There was the Dred Scott Decision. Friction between the north and south was mounting quickly. John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry took place bringing both parties to a boiling point. Finally the inevitable took its course. States started to secede. Jefferson Davis became President of the Confederacy. The air around the plantation seemed to be made up of high voltage. Everybody was dreading the probable outcome.

One night, Jim and Bill both arrived at their father's study at the same time with exactly the same thoughts. The peace they had known for such a long time was being disrupted by a thoughtless war.

"Pa," spoke Jim softly with a touch of urgency and respect to his words. "I think that I am going to enlist. The South needs men and I am of age. I hate to leave my home and peace with the world but I know that in the near future the inevitable will progress."

Pa Snyder throughout this one way conversation remained quite uncommunicative. Finally as though speaking his last breath he sighed, "All right son, may God be with you."

Towards the back of the room stood the 18 year old Bill. He was always quite a sullen boy having an introverted manner. He had said nothing during the past few weeks which was not unusual. Finally, stepping in the footsteps of his brother, he approached his father with much more ease and tact.

"Pa, I know that I am only 18 years of age and I am a necessity for the well working of the plantation, but I feel that I belong to a cause."

His father, collapsing from both grief and fatigue, granted his request with little hesitation.

Jim had already received his uniform when Bill came down the stairs. "Where do you think you are going with that suitcase?" exclaimed the surprised Jim.

The reply was simple but to the point. "I have chosen to fight for the north!!"

Jim was stunned. He knew not what to think or what to do. How would this affect Pa? An avalanche of thoughts came spurting forth through Jim's confused mind. I will be fighting against my own flesh and blood. A deep depression was the result of this mental anguish.

The war years were rough on everybody. The Snyder family, having gotten over their grief, looked over their bare plantation with tears in their eyes. The trees which had been so lovely were now charred with the reminiscences of battle. The usual scurrying of the slaves cannot be seen. The plantation was barren and desolate giving the impression of death itself.

Jim had been installed in the seventeenth infantry. He had not adjusted to military life and found it very difficult. Many times he could be found in the heat of the conflict. On this certain morning he was situated on a ridge near Cooper's Bend. The air was dull and livid with the harsh smell of battle. The ground was frozen and Jim's legs were bare. He was witnessing now and actively feeling the true miseries of war.

The morning rays shone through and the incessant firing began. The battle was under way. The Confederate soldiers had the most strategic position. The battle was theirs. A broad blue dressed man was heading for the Confederate lines. Jim shot with a surge of impulse, and a lifeless body was thrust upon him. He looked at the dull, gray, and weathered face, and without a doubt, he had killed his very own brother because of the color of a uniform.

The Four Seasons

JOSEPH SCALLEAT

*Autumn is the time of year,
When Jack Frost nips your ear.
The forest is in colors so rare,
A beauty that cannot compare.*

*The winter comes with cold despair;
Soon all the trees are naked, bare,
And gentle snow fills all the air,
While all the hunters chase the hare.*

*Then the robin starts to sing,
For he announces it is spring.
The farmer plants his field with care,
Flowers and grass are everywhere.*

*The sun is bright and warm,
Adding to the summer morn.
Vacation time is here,
So has passed another year.*

Proem, Sorta

JAMES CAIN

*We have found the strength,
the strength we find in faith.
We have found the joy,
the joy found in the trust
we cherish.*

*Without attaining these
the love we hold can be
not but empty and dead
of what we have to have
within us.*

*It is the essence
of what is needed
but is not sought for
and is not wanted
by us all.*

*Strength without a purpose,
Faith without fulfillment,
Joy without expression,
Trust without deserving,
Sorrow without comfort
or pity.*

*Yes, it embraces these
and these are what it brings.
But in a larger sense
these do not matter,
these hold no meaning
to what we feel is
only ours.*

*And so we seek the sanction
that holds itself away
but love is very lasting
and life is very long.*

Individualism

CHARLES LANDSMAN

An individual is a person existing as a distinct, indivisible entity, or considered as such. Why is this quality usually suppressed? Why is our society set up so as to hinder the individual, rather than help him. There are a multitude of questions to be asked, but unfortunately, very few will achieve an answer.

Henry David Thoreau, probably the greatest individualist that ever lived, secluded himself with the bare necessities of life near Concord, Massachusetts. H. D. Thoreau was a man who carried out his own thoughts with action. He was a man who stood firmly against any group that might have inflicted persecution or discontent. This great human being actively motivated the beginnings of true individualism.

Today it would be absolutely impossible to go to such extremes. There is no doubt that H. D. Thoreau was an extremist as all transcendentalists were.

In this modern age, sadly enough, we do not have such a problem. There is definitely only a morsel of individualism enraptured in the hearts and minds of the people in these United States. Like it or not, we are all worried about the group. Nobody these days is giving off his own unexpurgated views, mainly because he feels that he will be rejected from society, and labeled a non-conformist.

What is the remedy for this drastic lapse of free thought? Is there an anti-febrile? Schools in the United States should promote individual thought and study. The group spirit should be minimized so as to give the individual a chance to be on his own, without using the inseparable group as a support for security. If these basic hypotheses are treated with a sense of urgency, the United States will achieve an unsurmountable Union and a foundation for intellectual stimulation for all.

The State Of Television Today

ALBERT W. VANNESS

Although turning a knob may seem to be an easy outlet to entertainment, this avocation has destroyed the thinking world. I remember my moonlit walks during the warm, tranquil, summer nights of 1960. Alternations have certainly transformed most civilized folk, as an unchained convict who is still tormented by his mistakes.

When a person of the same caliber as myself, who is hard to find in this Sunday society, scans the mobile world, all that comes into focus is mass population, sitting in their easy chairs, glued to the modern cinerama, technicolor television. This most recent, technologi-

cal production is the cause for my profound misery.

Why can't the leaders of today develop more wonder drugs or other disease killers? Do they have to be persistent in improved television projectile rays?

The unlimited damage telecasts have done to the brain of today, 1980, was completely incredible twenty years ago. My diminishing extroverts are now conforming to laziness. But I, as the two men who rebuild the stone wall every spring, I will remain an extrinsic person to television.

Conscience

GARY HEIDNIK

My name is of little importance, but that which I am to do illustrates the power of conscience. I am now driving along a lonely, winding, country road. As I peer out from the windshield, I can see gathering clouds—a sure sign of rain. Dusk is slowly approaching over the autumn fields. I am alone now and I can feel the loneliness pressing in on all sides. It is rather quiet, not simply quiet but a depressing quiet. Occasionally I glimpse a person or house as I silently glide by. My mind tries to wander, centers on matters before and drawing to a climax three days ago. I am running now, but not from the forces of the law, but rather from myself. The single thought beats again and again into my mind. I should never have done it. Then I lose control and find myself reminiscing.

I find myself crawling through an open window and into a small room. Quickly I search out and find a little used closet in which I quickly conceal my person. The strip of wire in my hand seems to dangle there without a purpose. As the darkness engulfs me I think of the great wrong this man has committed on me. I hate him, oh yes, how I hate him. A few days before I was saving money with the purpose of marriage. Then he came with that hateful note. How much I had to pay for it. Now my forthcoming marriage was postponed, then cancelled. I hated him with great justification. I thought of going to the police but then I would be jailed. Now I was the jury and the executioner.

Suddenly there was a click as a key turned in the front door. Then steps could be heard going to the kitchen, then to the bed. He was here, but I better wait for awhile until I could be sure he was asleep. No sense in rushing it. Nobody would know I was here.

I wore gloves and had formulated a good alibi.

The time was right and now I was spurred to action by a deep inward hatred. The door slid open to my touch. It was an easy matter to find his bedroom in the dark. I could hear his deep monotone of breathing. The strip of wire suddenly appeared about his throat. Oh, how he uselessly struggled, grasping the wire and attempting to breathe. I could feel his struggling grow feebler and feebler. Then with a final tightening his struggles ended and his life ceased. Then the realization of what I had done struck me as I stood over his lifeless body. I was a murderer. Was it worth it, that which I had committed?

That was in the past and three days gone. I now know that I am unable to live with it. Even now I can see my goal. The ageless mountains are now under me. I am climbing higher and higher into them. It is dark now and the first drops of rain begin to fall, then pour. My lights pierce the night like beacons while the windshield wipers clear the window of water. I know that I will never outrun my conscience or silence it. It says over and over again, murder, murder, why did you do it, was it worth it? Oh, how can I silence it, quiet it. It is maddening, frustrating, its many repetitions. I do so want to live, survive, but it is driving me toward it. There is a ledge plunging off into empty space. Just the place. Just a quick turn on the wheel and it's over with. No, no, I must live, not die. Ah, the ledge is past me now. That feeling is past. I can continue to live. But live for what? What is death that I fear so much? Is it painful? Back there the thought struck me. Just a quick turn, only a quick turn and it would have been over with, I go plung-

ing in that chasm of space. What follows death? What is there for me after this? Perhaps nothing, perhaps there is a heaven. What do I fear? Yes, I will go back there and drive off the ledge. I turned around and drove swiftly to the spot along the slippery road. As I rode I looked at my hands. The strange mysterious flesh which struggled to live, this skin which gives me life. It is living and wants to go on living. It has served me so faithfully and now I am going to destroy it. I have five minutes to go before reaching the spot. Can I go through with it? Yes, I can and will to silence this ever persistent conscience. Still with four minutes to live, it rages on and on. Oh Lord, that I must suffer its tortures. The white, unmerciful

face of the clock continues its steady persistent tread. The dark, the night conceals the surrounding area. If I am to die let me view some form of nature instead of that confounded clock and its merciless ticking. One minute, just one minute to live, the thought races through my mind. There is the place and a way to end my troubles. I summon all of my courage born from this nagging conscience and give the wheel a sharp twist. The railing, the remnants of ground pass beneath me accompanied by a roaring in my ears. Nothing beneath me but space and peace, everlasting peace. My troubles have come to an end. I know as I plunge through the intervening space to the rocks below.

The Perfect Life

E. W. HASSEL

The morning is cold and clear. The plane that drops my supplies is due at any time and I will be getting my month old mail that comes with the supplies.

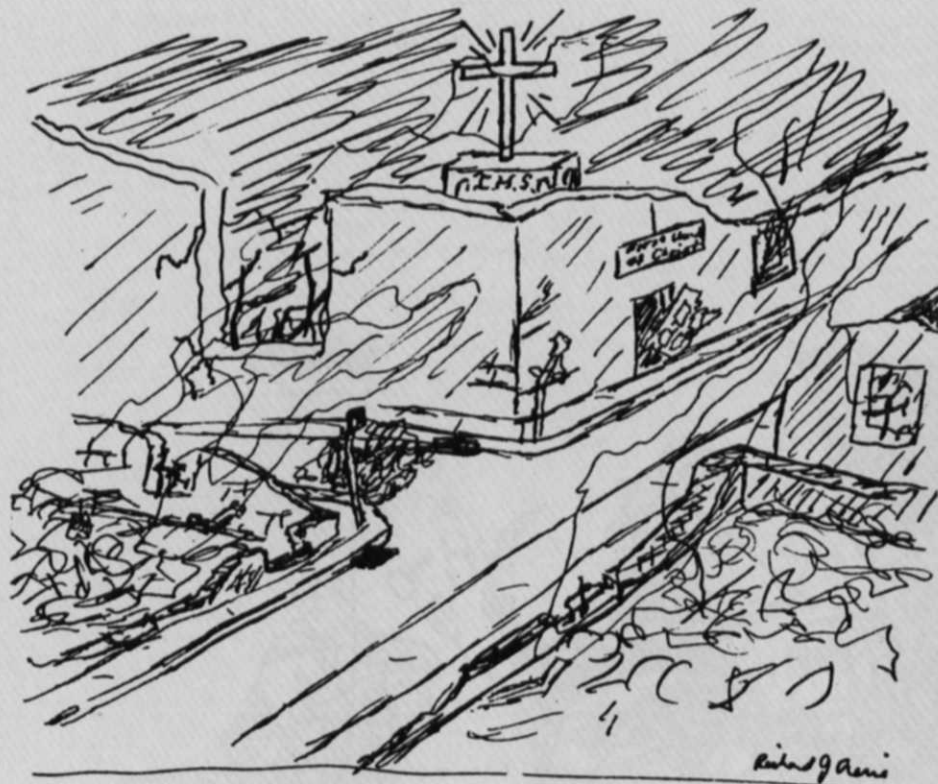
I left the busy hustle and tustle of the city many years ago. I now live in a log cabin deep in the forests of Canada. Here a man can really find in life what all men strive for: peace, quiet, happiness, and freedom.

The nights are cold, but when my pot bellied stove turns a cherry red—I'm as comfortable as anyone could wish to be. After I check my traps in the morning, I come back to my cabin and eat breakfast. I hunt or fish when I want because there are no regulations or re-

strictions on these two great sports. My life here is a simple one, but the happiest I have ever known. Just the smell of the dawn, the sights of new days beginning, and the feeling of freedom more than makes up for the theater, TV, cars, and other modern conveniences. I make my living by trapping. My income is small, but it keeps me supplied with food and a few other necessities.

Once or twice a year I will visit the town which lies some sixty miles to the south. When ever I do this, my heart starts yearning for the forest in a matter of hours. No one knows how glad I am when I return to my forest paradise. Won't you come join me?





This Christmas

EARL W. HASSEL

The time is December 25, 1960. The place is a city in the United States. The city is of average size and population. It now looks like a huge pile of burnt rubbish. The cries for help, the screams of agony, and the smell of burnt flesh are now a thing of the past.

World War III has come and gone, leaving a horrible sight to be seen. Only forty-eight hours have passed since the first missile hit its target, spreading misery and pain everywhere.

The people of this country had been living the same sinful lives they had led

for over a hundred years. The churches were only half full on Sundays, and kindness was almost never heard of. The few good men of this country tried to tell us to change, but they were laughed at. I just wish I could have another chance to live my life over again, but this is impossible now.

I am one of the few people left alive after the war. I think we are alive because we were the greatest sinners of you all. I hope I won't find you among us—friend. Go to church this Sunday before it's too late!

THE SCIMITAR

Once Again

JAMES CAIN

*open
and walk in.
Slowly though—
not too fast.
Try to be content
with small steps,
feeling your way
with gentle gestures—
timidly stretch out
for what can only
be yours.
Be very sure
not to bump into anything
this trip.
An echo can last
for a very long time
in here.
and there's a lot
you can awake
that should slumber
for eternity.
open
and walk in.
The steps are small
but very few.*

It's Dark, Real Dark

M. COVINGTON

Some people may think that when a war is over everyone goes home to his family and friends. On a large scale this is true. But for me; well I'll just tell you what happened.

I was part of the 6th Army stationed in the Philippines, right after the war the boys in the barracks traded orders and read them aloud. This was really great fun. I traded with one of my combat buddies, the Earl of Frisco, better known as Joe Sammuele. Joe was a bookie back home, and home was San Francisco. It was Joe's idea to have this pool. Each man put in a fin and the guys who didn't go back to the States won. When Joe read mine I walked slowly out of the orderly room and cried; not physically but mentally. I felt like two Japs were holding me by my arms and sticking a bayonet in my gut. Before long I was joined by two more; Joe and the company clown, Jim Cage. What a time to have a humorous optimist around. "Well fellas, we got some dough out of the deal anyway," blurted Jim. I could have splattered him from there to hell, but I guess that's one way to face tragedy, and tragedy was what it was.

The work wasn't hard but it wore the mind. Every night after work or a date we would get together and talk about the States or Jim would start rattling off his yap about how the Japs were consolidating their forces and would probably make an attack on us soon. I don't think he meant any harm but Joe had a fiery temper and one night he slammed him against the wall and knocked three of his teeth out. I can't remember Jim saying much after that about the Japs coming; he kind of went to pieces with the rest of us.

The only good thing that happened

was when the WAC detachment came. I can still remember Jane's sweet smile and southern accent. The conversation piece with the females was what was happening in the States. The choice of other things was limited but we made out okay. The topic in the barracks had changed from the States to who are you dating now.

There were several rumors that there were Japs in the mountains that didn't know the war was over. Unfortunately, no one cared or rather no one believed it.

On the following Saturday of the invasion of WAC's, Jim, Joe, and I and our dates headed for a valley about twenty or thirty miles away for a picnic. With us we had food, beer, and water, (lots of water, very little beer) and one 45 cal. pistol.

We parked and walked about a mile, and found a good picnic area. We had a great time until!

After we finished eating, we, as all good American boys do, split up and escorted our dates around the countryside.

We were due back at post at 1800 hours, when we left each other's company it was 1600 hours. We agreed to meet back at the jeep at 1700, by my watch it is—now broken, but it stopped at 1730. I'll tell you one thing, it's dark, real dark, and all I can see is their campfire and a few shining yellow faces.

About a half hour after we split up, Jane and I heard a shot. It couldn't be the 45 I knew that. I had it. Jane and I ran to where we thought the shot came from. As we reached a clearing I saw Jim lying face down on the ground and his date along side of him, they weren't hiding, they were dead. A sniper, a dirty yellow bellied Jap snip-

er. I had to find Joe. I looked and looked but there was no sign of him. Another shot, but this one was close, real close. Jane died instantly. I hit the dirt and hit it hard. He didn't fire again, he wanted to play a while.

I heard two more shots in about fifteen minutes. I finally found Joe tied to a tree by Martha, both dead, by bayonet and bullet. I knew I couldn't go back to the jeep they would be waiting there, that's why I'm here, I must wait for

them, all of them, tomorrow. Yeah I'll kill them, just like they killed my friends.

You know my ma used to say I am part Indian. I guess I am, look at me here I am waiting patiently. Yeah I'm gonna kill them, just as soon as I can. It'll be hard, these ropes are tied good. Tied to both my arms, stretching me way out, here come the Japs. He thinks he's gonna kill me. Just wait Jap, just wait.

Some Day In June

JOHN SILBERMAN

*There is one day in June, all seniors hope for;
And for those seniors? SMA? No more!
That day in June is the last day of commencement,
And what has all this military meant?
It means that if he goes into college ROTC;
He'll probably make lieutenant; just wait and see.*

*As for school; if he's paid attention in class;
He'll work hard, and struggle, and finally pass,
But I pity the person who failed his courses;
If he got into college the thing that is worse is;
That no one will hire him when he goes to work,
And he'll say to himself, "Boy, I've been a jerk."*

*So everything counts on that one day in June;
When he'll graduate, and whistle a little happy tune;
He knows that he passed and with good grades too,
But the poor guy who didn't is probably blue.
He'll say, "Why didn't I study?" As if we didn't know,
But he'll probably end up in a factory; tying bows!*

JAMES CAIN

*Sincerity is a tool
by which hollow words—
words that mirror shallow thoughts,
words devoid of meaning,
lost in the sound
of their own reverberation
can be skillfully molded
into expression
that not merely mirrors
but reveals,
not merely indicates
but outlines,
that not merely gives a glimmer
but a sustaining light
that leads us through the blackness
of deception and egoistic motivation
to the simplicity and beauty
that is truth.
Simplicity is a key
by which the closed doors
of men's minds
can be opened
to the profundity with simplicity
that is wisdom.
At times
sincerity can hamper
the supple easiness
or the accustomed volubility,
but what is lost in sheer verbosity
is gained in the strength
found in a simple expression
of what is felt.*

The Closing Of The End

JAMES CAIN

He had no idea when the thought first came to him. Maybe he first realized what he had to do that evening when his wife first brought the baby home from the hospital. Seeing it actually there surrounded by the filth and poverty it was going to be forced to grow up in could have been the force that triggered the chain of thoughts in his mind that led him to this moment. All his life he had wanted a child. A child he could make happy—happier than he or most of his kind had ever been. Someone who would be able to grow up in an atmosphere of quiet peace and love, where there was grass and trees and fresh air to breathe and enough to eat. Someplace where you could go to sleep at night not fearing that your child would be gnawed to death by the ugly hordes of rats that rise from their hidden pits at night to scourge the Negro slums for food. The rats and cockroaches, the poisoned air and filth and decay, the poverty and hunger, the constant sneers and ridicule, all are a way of life here, the life of a black man caught in the terrible maelstrom of his own birth. It's been a long hard struggle for the city fathers to bring the situation to what it is now. It takes relentless consistency and concentrated effort to bring it about but the goal is an inspiring one, worthy of the effort—the glorious goal of helping in the eradication of the human dignity of an entire race. Everyone is born with the spark of hope and ambition but here one isn't allowed those luxuries for very long. They're slowly drained away day after hopeless day. It's like a separate world here—a world where human beings are herded to live apart from the happiness and decency they so desperately need to be decent and happy themselves. You're born

here, suffer here and die here. Few escape the cycle and after growing up under the constant bludgeoning of their enforced environment that is dealt them from birth most are too numbed by the hopelessness of it to even try.

Before he had married he'd often walked the streets aimlessly in the early evening thinking the same thought he had most every evening—the thought of escape. He'd see the children, gaunt and dirty and wide eyed with hunger standing in the doorways or sitting on the curbs. The younger ones crying for food to their mothers inside trying to scrape together enough food to feed even half of them, or sprawled on a couch clouding their sordid lives in a pint of cheap bourbon, the older ones silent in the knowledge of the futility of asking for food that doesn't exist. He had to think of a way to get away from it. There had to be some way, any way just so he didn't have to continue living like an animal. He'd tried jobs but there just weren't any jobs for his kind. There were always the same excuses of not enough training, job already taken, or drop around in a month or two but seldom the real reason. He was black.

Finally after becoming tired of walking he would return home. He found a sort of happiness there even though his father had died some time ago leaving himself, his mother and his younger sister to struggle on their own. Through all the degradation surrounding them they had still managed to retain a thin aura of decency and pride and he always found a kind of sanction and strength in the tight knit family circle. His little sister was staying out a little too late recently but she was almost fourteen now and since she said she was only spending the evenings at a friend's

house a few blocks away it didn't bother him too much. That is it didn't until she began bringing home a little bit of money every night. She would come home and let quarters, halves, and even an occasional dollar or two drop from her hand onto the kitchen table. She'd turn to her mother and say, "Now you go an' buy yourself a new dress or somethin' mom" or "We're outa food again so you care for it with that" and without another word close the screen that separated her cot from the rest of the room. Sometimes he could hear her sobbing at night and he would go over and sit on her bed and ask her what the matter was. She wouldn't say a thing to him and wouldn't disclose where she got the money. In fact she never spoke to anyone anymore except for the times she gave her mother the money. After the fourth night of this he lay awake thinking to himself. Suddenly he sat up stiffly in his bed. Tiny beads of sweat were clinging to his forehead and his whole body was tense and trembling. He shut his eyes tightly and clenched his fists as if struggling to drive something from his very soul. He half whispered, half sobbed, spitting the words out from the pit of his stomach. "Oh dear God no. Please God, not my own sister." In that one instant he knew. He had no need to attempt to find out. Somehow he knew it was true.

The years now roll on in front of his eyes and his mind settles on early tonight. Ever since he left his home and married the thought of escape to a better life became a driving obsession with him. Two weeks ago he finally decided on what seemed to be the only way open to him. At first the idea of robbery appalled him but he gradually grew to accept the idea and tonight, he decided, was the night he was going to try it. He was not surprised at himself. At supper, eating the thin watery soup, the coarse bread, which were the unvarying staples of his diet he thought: What can I do, rot here like the rest? Behind the flimsy partition erected to

make the single room two, the child cried intermittently. He did not think of himself as a thief, a criminal. So great was his hope, his despair, the robbery seemed to be the sole logical course and direction open to him. Nor did he tell his wife. Later, at her side, listening to her slow, faintly nasal breathing as she slept he developed his plans. It was to be the suburbs. They're all rich there and I'll pick a house with lots of newspapers and milk bottles in front, he thought to himself. I'll ring the doorbell a long time before I go in. Now he lay contemplating the robbery in detail. It seemed easy to him, so that for a moment he wondered why he had waited so long to think of it. I could've been out of here and gone already, he thought. The idea that he had spent the last few months, even years at his old life tormented him. He became impatient. It was as though waiting even mere hours now was more than he could bear. He went over the robbery again in his mind. He knew exactly how he would manage it as if he had already done it and returned. At his side his wife breathed more heavily now, with that harsh nasal sound he could never quite get used to; behind the partition his child breathed, stirred. My son, he thought. My son. The words still sounded strange to him. Though the child was now more than a year old, he still had not yet become accustomed to the idea of being a father. He lay with his arms folded under his head, staring up into the darkness. Through the window starlight fell, a faint blue, neither light nor dark, suffusing the entire room as beyond the trivial walls, it suffused the entire dark silent slums, every ugly building, so that for an instant it seemed as though the walls too had vanished and he lay open to the immense, calm, inscrutable contemplation of night.

He woke suddenly. One moment he had been thinking of his son and the next he had been asleep. He had no idea how long he had slept. His first thought was that he had slept through

the night and now it was almost dawn. I have ruined everything, he told himself quietly, in despair. Yet he rose abruptly. He flung back the cover and sat up, fully awake at once, staring blindly into the darkness. He came immediately off the bed, not waiting for his eyes to adjust to the dark. He moved like a blind man across the room to the window, his hands extended tentatively before him. Suddenly he was at the window. Star and spring sky soared before him in glittering panorama, lighting up the empty street below. By the positions of the constellations he knew at once that it was only a little past midnight. Thank God for that at least, he told himself, slowly letting out his breath.

By then he could see in the dark. He dressed quickly, soundlessly. It was quite cold. The cold seemed to lie along the floor as palpable as water and about waist high. He began to shiver. Shivering, he stood a moment over his son before he left, smoothing the covers the child threw off in his sleep. For you it'll be different, he said, soundlessly, addressing the sleeping child. A new life. He felt at that moment between himself and the small form beneath his hand a bond of pride and hope and responsibility stronger than anything he had felt before. He bent and kissed the cotton cover, where he thought the child's head to be. Then he left.

He walked the streets around the neighborhood for awhile. No use starting until later, he thought to himself. He was in the better part of the slums now. This was where the small bars and dingy food stores were located—the so-called business district of the slums where the people who were lucky enough to find a small job now and then could live in the comparative luxury of a sink and, in the case of two families living together, maybe a two room flat instead of one room. A separate bathroom was out of the question though. One to each floor was quite enough for ten or fifteen families. This was the center of most of the activity at night in the Negro

slums—the cheap bars and the glaring red and green lights, the women and young girls, horribly old beyond their years slowly walking up and down the sidewalk or lingering outside the bars. Seeing the younger ones bothered him. They reminded him of something, something that was hidden deep in the past that he wanted desperately to forget. He stopped for a moment outside one of the bars and looked in. A naked bulb swinging back and forth on the end of a long cord suspended from the ceiling was the only illumination. Its slight swinging motion gave the shadows a life and movement that seemed to surround the room with long flickering black flames and change the expression on the face of each person intermittently from happy to sad to happy to sad again. He turned to walk on down the street when his eyes fell on the face of a girl standing near the curb glancing impatiently now and then into the bar. Her face was still the face that he remembered, yet it was almost completely changed. It was a tired face, a face that seemed to mirror a horror that had been slowly frozen into her eyes and mouth after having to endure it for a long period of time. She turned her head slightly and looked at him then quickly turned away and half walked, half ran down the street into the shadows. He turned away and quickly walked down the street in the opposite direction struggling to hold back the cry that was welling up in his throat.

He walked slowly up one street of the suburbs and down the other gazing intently at each of the houses. He was in the better part of the suburbs now. Here people could afford to take long vacations and have an abundant stock of good silver locked away in cabinets or cupboards. He had stopped at an alley a few hours before and rummaged through the junk that is piled there behind the shops until he found the large burlap sack. This with the steel butter knife he had ground down to a fairly

sharp edge a few days before was all he thought he needed.

Finally he stopped in front of a large brick house. On the front porch he could see a good dozen newspapers scattered around. This is the mark, he thought to himself. He stood there watching the house for a full hour. When at length he emerged from among the trees and started for the house, it was at the unhurried, even pace of a man simply strolling around the grounds. The slow stride not even careful, the easy calm. I'm not very nervous, he thought to himself. He had expected at least that. Yet his very composure was an indication of the light in which he regarded what he was about to do; as an act justifiable and even right but with that significant difference in shading between it and simply stealing, as that between murder and the killing of men in war. He stayed on the grass, off the gravel driveway which ran from the road to the house and back to the road again in a broad parabola. I don't have to announce I'm coming, he said, speaking to himself. He went on toward the house, into its shadow and passed the shrubs which grew in a line before the front windows. He found an unlocked window at once. He didn't regard this as lucky, he merely considered it natural since he had never seen a window with a lock. He stepped into the tall growth under the window stilling the insects there so that silence lay in small patches about him. One moment he stood motionless before the unlocked window, the next he was through it and in the house. Except for a sliding noise when he opened the window he entered without a sound. He stood there at the window, breathing lightly. Staring straight before him though he could not see a thing. Just outside the window the insects resumed, shrilling now from the identical spot on which he had stood, as though he had only to step away from a spot to draw sound out of the darkness after him, as a knife draws blood after it when it

is pulled from the flesh. When he had stood there for a full minute hearing no sound, making none, he started across the room. He believed he was safe. He fervently believed it would be so from start to finish. He was in the dining room and he headed directly towards what seemed to be the china cabinet against the opposite wall. The cabinet was only a pale smudge in the darkness. He advanced across the room, skirting the long table set in the center of the room, chairs ranked profoundly along its length. He found his way as a blind man would, by feel, the unconscious sense of presence before and about him. Yet he should have depended more on sight. In his eagerness his eyes were fixed on the faint smudge of cabinet when they should have been elsewhere and so the first he knew of the one chair placed out from the table, as though by the casual movement of a man rising from his place and leaving the chair where it stood, was when he struck it with his knee and it fell over with what in all that silence and darkness seemed like the force and noise of an explosion.

He stopped moving at once. He did not even wait for the sound of the falling chair. In that hiatus between the time he struck the chair and that of its concomitant noise seemed to muse in impotent and despairing regret upon the insignificance of all human calculation. There was time enough for that; the vain desire to turn back time only a moment and start over. Then he heard the chair strike the floor. He stood there, immobile, crouched, his breath suddenly rapid and light, hearing the clatter fall in echoes about his ears. God, God, God, he thought. For a moment he did not know whether to stay or run. Beyond the window insects shrilled. But when nothing followed hard upon the noise, he began to calm. They're most probably not here or dead asleep, he thought. He stood there a minute or so and still no alien sound interrupted the insects high thin crescendo pitched at that single note. He thought, smiling

now, thinking; I could carry the whole damn house away an' nobody'd know it. Where as the moment after he struck the chair he saw clearly and unmistakably disaster into which his discontent had led him, he now felt more certain of the wisdom of his course than ever. Yet when he resumed, he was as careful as ever. Carefully he stepped around the chair he could now see, now that it had fallen, leaving it where it lay. It was five more steps to the china cabinet. When he came and stood before it he was at such an angle that in the glass doors of the cabinet he saw suddenly the stark full reflection of the window at his back, and a fragment of the sky and dark shapes of trees beyond. Like the surface of a still pool the glass held the image of a night filled with that faint impalpable glow which was light and yet not light, and the glitter of distant stars. When he moved it was gone. He moved to put his hands upon the cabinet. The wood had a smooth, almost malleable feel like that of old silver beneath his fingers. He felt for the door frames, standing directly before the glass that now held no reflection at all. In one hand he held the knife. He probed along the snug edges of the door frames with it, seeking a space wider than elsewhere. When he found it he wedged in the knife. The door gave instantly without effort, springing open with a faint silvery sound, like the jangle of tiny bells.

He did not move at once. For a moment he just stood there, the knife in one hand, the yawning cabinet door before him. He stood as if about to cross some actual boundary, some precise physical demarcation the one side of which was entirely different from the other. It was as if entering the house was one realm, and this another rather than all of it a single whole: as a man at a river that marks the border of two entirely dissimilar countries will see the same water running along either bank, the same bush and brake growing beyond.

He crossed the river. He worked quickly, easily, picking what he sought from the darkness with uncanny deftness, as though the pieces materialized between his fingers by some kind of magic: plate and candlestick and silver. Cool air now filled the room, pouring through the open window while he stood there. He ransacked the shelves, methodically and with all the aplomb of an experienced housebreaker.

More than cool air entered the room at his back. Beneath the door at the far corner of the room sudden light appeared in a yellow sliver, gleaming upon the polished hardwood floor. He worked on, rhythmic, intent, oblivious to the air and light both. So intent, so exhilarated by his apparent success, that the first he knew of someone in the room was when he suddenly felt one arm clamp itself about his throat and another pin his right arm to his body, and he thought, what's this? What the hell's going on? He did not begin to struggle immediately. There was a pause, a momentary hiatus of actual disbelief, as if what was happening to him was contrary to all reason and the laws of nature, during which he permitted himself to be yanked backward and bent upon the fulcrum of a knee in the small of his back. It was when he realized that the sack had been torn from his grasp that he began to struggle. It was though only the sack, the silver had any meaning to him. He heard the sack strike the floor as if from a great distance. He heard the myriad jangle of silver scattering over the floor in all directions. I'll never find the stuff in the dark, he thought. Then he seemed to realize the import of what was happening. I gotta get away, he thought to himself. He was strong and it seemed like just a boy here. He broke the hold upon him in an instant. Yet the other continued to flail at him. It was as though he struggled with the darkness itself, seeing no face, grasping no shape or body though at last the other clamped a hold upon his chest. Yet it was to escape

the growing light in the hallway that he struggled again in the other's grasp and freed one arm to strike at the other blindly with all his force. The other fell away from him at once, rigid, as a tree topples. He fell with a dull heavy sound. He made that one sound only; no outcry, no blundering or thrashing upon the floor. It was the utter silence; at once he seemed to sense that something terrible had happened. Oh God, what did I do? he thought. Yet he was on his hands and knees, on the floor, reaching out with one hand and feeling for the sack like a blind man, when the light from the hallway fell upon him. He looked up, blinking into its glare. His expression was one almost of embarrassment, like that of a man caught at a child's game. He was in the stance of a child, on all fours, blinking guiltily in the light. He and the woman saw the other at the same instant; he lay sprawled at the foot of the cabinet, his head resting at a bizarre angle, his arms inert as strings at his sides, palms turned up; quite still, bleeding a little from the ear. The woman screamed at once. The lamp wavered, throwing wild shadows across the floor in accompaniment. She screamed three or four times while he gazed in mute

astonishment upon the peaceful open face of the boy. He's only a kid, he kept mumbling to himself. He's only a kid. He fled without a sound.

He ran headlong from his crouched position as if in a race. His shadow ran before him, around the table, over several upended chairs, leaping when he leaped. Before him was the window: beyond, darkness, escape. Once on the lawn he raced towards the street. Lights were now on in most of the surrounding houses and people were beginning to rush out of their homes, aroused by the woman's persistent screaming. He was almost across the street now. Just a little bit more and he could lose himself in the backyards and shadows. A loud cracking noise suddenly exploded in his ears from the direction of the large brick house from which he had just fled. A sharp pain ripped into his back and he stumbled and fell in the street near the curb. A small crowd of curious neighbors was slowly forming around him. The stars were becoming dimmer as morning slowly spread across the sky and the peoples' voices seemed far away. "Looks like he's about dead." "Yeah. Wouldn't you know it would be a nigger though."



Incident In Nepal

J. PATTERSON ROGERS

I, James Jefferson Monroe, do in this year 1996, publish an account of the happenings on the 1960, Hillary expedition to Nepal. This expedition was to prove or disprove the existence of that mysterious creature known as the "Abominable Snowman" or Yeti. This creature had eluded the previous expeditions sent after it.

We started from London in August 1960, on the do or die trip. We were as fully equipped as modern science could provide. We carried new syringe guns and ample supplies of drugs to immobilize the creatures if we caught them. Also included was the latest mountain climbing equipment. We picked up our Serpa guides at a small town at the base of the mighty Himalayas.

About a month after we had left London, we reached the village of Na in a remote valley of the Himalayas. This village of about twelve huts had been one of the main sources of reports of the creature we sought. Here we were shown by the head Lama several pieces of skin that were reported to be from a Yeti. They were pink, almost like human flesh, and covered with reddish-brown hair. We were also shown the pelt of a rare Himalayan bear which the natives claimed to be that of a Yeti too. It was this skin that gave me ideas about the validity of the Yeti.

For the next three weeks we camped about ten miles from the village in a rocky valley above the tree line. These weeks were spent in fruitless search of the surrounding terrain. It was at the end of the third week that we made our first discovery. It was a set of footprints, disturbingly human, that led from a ridge that overlooked the camp. These footprints dispelled the discouragement

that had hung over the camp and set everyone into a frenzy of action.

The next day three parties were sent out to search in this new field. When they returned that evening two had significant findings. One party brought back droppings and a half eaten hare. The other reported seeing a small figure moving over a ridge and into a valley. I resolved to visit that valley the next day and see if I could find any trace of this creature.

When I arrived at the valley with my porter and guide not even a trace of the reported creature could be found. We spent the better part of the day investigating cracks and crannies in the landscape. Unfortunately our search was in vain and toward the end of the day we turned to go. As we moved over a ridge not far from the valley I heard noises from below. Suddenly a quadruped shape emerged from the shadows beneath. It turned and disappeared from view by going under an overhang. Could this be the thing we had striven so to find? I was determined to find out. Sending the guide back to summons the others, I, with the porter, inched down until I could see the space beneath.

There were three of the beings. One, definitely female, was crouched against a boulder while the other two, both males, circled each other warily. The creatures were humanoid in shape with short, thick legs that were continually bent giving them a stooped appearance and a heavy, barrel chest with massive shoulders from which hung long, sinewy arms. The head was small with heavy brow ridges and an ape-like muzzle. Their bodies, with the exception of their faces, were covered with thick reddish-brown hair. The two males were obvi-

ously fighting over mating rights with the female. They grappled, twirled, in mad circles, fell to break apart, and repeat the process again. Their fury filled screams bounced from boulder to boulder making the mountain side ring.

Then from a cut in the ground came an angry snort and the form of a great bear came into view. His bellow froze the two contestants for a second then they scattered. My poor porter, terrified already by the Yeti, took to his heels and fled over the ridge. The beast rose to its hind legs and plodded forward swinging its mighty paws to and fro. The two frightened creatures flung stones at the bear, which it disregarded like flies. One creature hit the bear in the left eye and stopped it for a moment. With a backhanded slap the bear twirled the thrower end over end into a boulder. With this gesture the bear left its blind spot open and promptly was clouted on the snout by the other creature with a heavy long stone. This final indignity

was too much and the bear fled down the slope.

The remaining thing moved toward the dazed one with a stone. Then as if some alien thought had entered his mind and numbed it he dropped the stone, turned, and took the female. He then ran down the slope. The other creature coming out of his daze, realized that he had been spared and ran after the other thing. I last saw them climbing the opposite ridge together.

The rest of the expedition is history. The heavy snows and landslide that claimed all but five are known to everyone.

Now as the sole survivor of the five I publish this report to make plain to everyone why I oppose the moving of the first captured Yeti into civilized parts of the world. That these primitive humans, who have just found the road to civilization themselves should be polluted with our petty jealousies and hatreds is unthinkable.

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