

Words To ESCAPE With ☆

*To know is nothing at all;
To imagine is everything.

ANATOLE FRANCE
The Crime of Sylvestra Bonnard

Attic At The Top Of The Stairs

by Toni Sudut

I was walking quietly toward the door. It was locked as usual. The contents behind the door were sort of a secret; at least my mother kept it so. In all the years that I had lived in this house I had not seen what was behind that locked door. Whenever I would go near the door, mother would become quite angry. It was very strange. I've asked her many times about it and why she kept it locked, but she would only stare at me. It gave me the weirdest feeling.

Mother and I were the only ones living in the house other than our hired help, Miss Happ. My father had died right after I was born so I never knew him. I had an older brother, Kenny, but he disappeared and I never saw him again. As I recall, it was about the time of his disappearance that mother began to act very strange. Sometimes I felt so alone and scared. I knew no one my own age, because mother forbade me to have friends over; so I remained in my room or I walked through the woods behind our house.

We lived in a very old house. It had a large attic, but I had never seen it. I sometimes wondered if that locked door led to the attic.

Miss Happ was going to visit friends for a couple of days, so mother drove her into town and then was going to do some shopping. I went outside and lay under a large willow tree. It was almost noon and the sun was shining brightly. The tree was a short distance from the house and I could see the dark attic window clearly. I just stared at it, thinking. All of a sudden I saw something, at least I thought I did. I sat up quickly and I saw it again. I focused my eyes on the window. There was somebody up in that attic! I was a little scared, but my curiosity was slowly over-taking

my fear as many questions ran through my mind. Who was up there? Did mother know? Was whoever was up there the reason for keeping the door locked?

I ran to the house. I came to the stairs. I crept up them slowly. The only sound was the rapid beating of my heart and my heavy breathing. The sweat was rolling down my face. I got to the door, and remembering it was locked, ran and got a screw driver. Undoing the hinges of the door, I slowly removed it. I kept the screwdriver with me. I was so afraid. Finally I would find out the reason for my mother keeping this door locked. I began to be sorry I took the door down, but it was too late. There were many winding stairs. I started the climb. I could hear someone up at the top. My legs were getting weaker with added fear and I was getting sick. I was nearing the top and the door was closed. I proceeded to open it; my hand was on the door handle. My other was clutching the screw driver hard. I opened the door and someone grabbed me and threw me across the room. I hit my head on a pipe. I must have been unconscious for about two hours. I was on a couch or a bed and I was afraid to open my eyes, because there was someone leaning over me. I opened my eyes and screamed. I turned my head and I was actually crying. It was a man and his face was all disfigured; it was horrible! The man said something to me. The voice sounded familiar and I stopped crying. I turned slowly, I stared for a minute. It was painful to look at him, but I could vaguely see his real face. It was my brother, Kenny, who I thought had disappeared. I didn't know what to say because he still scared me, so I kept away from him. He told me to leave this house now while I had a chance and to never

come back. I couldn't realize why he would say this. Then he told me how mother had changed after father's death, how she was afraid of losing us and being left alone so she kept us near her always. He told how he had tried to run away once and mother caught him and scarred his face with acid so he wouldn't try to leave again. He tried once more. This time she completely disfigured his face and locked him in the attic. It was hard to believe this of my own mother.

We then heard the car. Kenny pleaded with me to leave now before mother found me up here. She came in the house and called to me. I couldn't answer. She started climbing the stairs. When she came to the top and noticed the door, she screamed and ran up the attic stairs. She looked at us, both relieved and angry. I guess she thought we were both gone. She asked me why I came up here and I told her. She said she had to punish me for disobeying. She pulled a lighter from her pocket and was coming toward me. There

was an odd and frightening glare in her eyes. Kenny was right: mother was different. She had me in a corner and was coming closer. The lighter was raised and she lit it. Kenny then grabbed her arm. She tripped and hit her head on a chair as she fell. The lighter fell on some magazines piled up. They started to catch on fire. We couldn't put it out. Kenny told me to leave. I said I wanted to help him carry mother out. He told me to go ahead and he'd follow. The fire was spreading all over the attic. He pushed me to the door and said to go outside. As I was going down the stairs I heard the attic door close. I ran back up and pounded and tried to open it, but I couldn't. I called to Kenny and he told me to hurry outside. I then heard him fall. I screamed and started choking. The smoke was filling my lungs. I ran out of the house to the willow tree. The house was all in flames now. I watched it burn. I was really alone now.



The Journey

by *Mike Smith*

I had to leave the cruelness and madness of Earth. Chaos reigned the planet. Wars everywhere, the smog, the noise, the perpetual bickering of mankind: all added to the mass of reasons for my volunteering for the manned interstellar space attempt. They asked for a volunteer and I jumped at the opportunity, for what had I to lose but the faults of Earth.

I had no family, no friends, no home, only a barren apartment on a typical street in a typical city. As my mind raced through my past, I recalled the soft green valleys covered by a rainbow of flowers, the soft whisperings of breeze, the freshness of a swift-running brook, the majestic mountains, and most of all . . . peace, all of which no longer existed because of man's idea of progress.

No time to back out now; I was already into the countdown. My mind frantically searched for bits of memory. I remembered Rebecca, the vision of loveliness, who was the only person who had ever shown me any love; taken away by another. No I wouldn't miss Earth; all it had for me was sorrow and emptiness. As I was still contemplating, the roar of the rockets escaped my ears.

When I awoke, I sensed the eternal silence that engulfed my craft. The only sound I was to hear for three years was the monotonous thumping of my heart and the sound of my own voice. I began to hate that loathsome emptiness, the continuous silence. During the first couple of months it wasn't so bad. I had radio contact with Earth and books to read. THEN six months after the take-off, a meteor shower hit my ship and damaged

my radio receiver. Following that incident, I had my first encounter with deep loneliness. The books didn't help much.

A year after the take-off, I was nearing madness. Hallucinations and nightmares occurred frequently. Each day, I drew a little closer to certain madness. Finally, when I had gone just about as far as I could, I discovered a small music box in the supply compartment. It was the wind-up type. I wound it up and it played a simple song, one my mother had sung to me as a little boy. It was the only thing that kept me from going over the brink of sanity for the remainder of the voyage.

It was nearly three years when I was almost back to Earth. My heart leaped with joy. I couldn't sleep at night, I was so exhilarated. THE moment was nearing when I would step out of my craft onto Earth. THE reasons I left were now the reasons I had come back. Things like the noise, the smog, and things I had despised before, I would now cherish. But of all these things, companionship I would treasure the most. The ship was on its last phase of the flight. I couldn't wait, My body felt as if it would burst.

The ship landed. I unstrapped myself from my seat and ran for the door. It wouldn't open! What horror; my mind quickly pushed aside the thought of being trapped in my ship after all I had gone through. With some difficulty I managed to open the hatch. I gazed at the surroundings with infinite horror. The Earth had changed, probably by an atomic war. No people, no noise, for there was nothing to make noise. No plants, just endless barren rocks and dirt. As I surveyed my hell for the rest of my life, I wept.



The Outer Limits

by Zane Gilbert

We had been out for two years, yes two long endless years, only living from day to day with hope of finding a way home to that planet they called earth. I don't think there is a planet left that we hadn't seen or landed on. But before I go on let me clear up a few things for you. I am Captain David Smith U.S.A.F. and my co-pilot is Sergeant Donald Williams. Two years ago May 15, 1972, we boarded this spacecraft for a shot to the moon to take photographs and if possible make a landing. But twelve seconds after take-off there was a tremendous blast: it must have knocked me out because that was all I remembered. When I woke up the rockets were still on. I managed to shut them off, but Lord only knows how far we had traveled or where we were. Since then we've been going from planet to planet, to find out where or how to get home.

One morning I got a signal on the radar screen of a large object, most likely a planet. Since we were low on food we decided to see if it might support life. We decided to land, but just as we were about to touch down there was a large explosion. When I woke up I could see the bent and twisted frame of our space craft. I found Don and we started to crawl out. It was about the worst sight I had ever seen. Everywhere I looked there was sand, hot, dry sand, and a sun that burned my

face. Gathering what supplies we could we started our search, for what we did not know: but for two days all we saw was hot dry sand that seemed to make the sun hotter and hotter. Don was getting weak but we pushed on and on.

By the third night we had run out of food and water, and I knew we wouldn't last much longer. The next morning I woke up, got my gear together, and went to wake up Don. There was a pale look on his face. All of a sudden my brain clicked and my heart jumped up into my throat. Slowly I reached down and then placed my hand down over his chest. There was no pounding. I then put my head down to see if I could hear a beat: there was none. Staggering back I gained control and buried him. That day was the hardest of all. The sun seemed to be the hottest it had been, strong wind didn't help at all. For hours I trudged on, my throat parched, my lips cracked and my tongue swollen.

But all of a sudden everything stopped. Then it came, the sand storm. My eyes ached from the sand blasting at them and my mouth filled with sand.

I staggered a few steps. Out of the corner of my eye I saw something: I didn't know what it was but I had to find out. Running up to it I grabbed it. It was a sign, a sign that said: "Los Angeles City Limits 10 Miles."

The Irony of Conviction

by Louie Lollio

It was a cool late summer night and people were busily working and doing things to prepare for the new school season. The children and teenagers were excited about the ensuing school year, but something was different this year. There was a strange feeling in the air. It seemed as though it had an effect on everyone. What was it? There was a queer feeling and a strange sense that told you to be careful of what you did. It was darker that evening than most other evenings at 8:00. This made you feel something strange even more.

The city was very small, smaller than average cities. But one thing about a small city is that you know most of the people. There were the good and the bad. The high school kids were the most troublesome, but there were always the older boys, the boys who didn't go to school. They worked a little, but mostly loafed. This was the real life of the city.

It was then a few minutes past 8:00 p.m. The stores were all closed or just closing. The streets were almost clear of pedestrians, but there were a few cars still passing through.

Then came a loud noise, a sort of thundering noise. It was four young men riding through town in a souped-up car. They swung into a restaurant and one boy got out of the car. He had volunteered to buy for his friends. When he looked to his left he happened to notice something. He shook his head. "It couldn't be," he said. He turned around and returned to the car. His friends asked what was wrong. He said nothing but, "I've got to go straight home, fellows. You will have to walk." His face was white as a ghost, his expression was terrible and he looked very angry. The other boys left. Jerry sat there for a few

minutes and then he slowly left. He kept saying, "How could it be?"

Jerry loved his parents very deeply and he would have done anything to keep them together, because he knew how much they cared for each other. What Jerry saw was his father leaving a bar that was next door to the drive-in restaurant. He was with another woman. He followed his father and this lady until they came to the lady's home. He was very careful not to let them see that he was following them. Jerry was so bothered by this that he couldn't go home and face his mother. He just drove around back and forth in front of the lady's house to see if his father had left. Finally he went home and went to bed.

The next morning something strange told Jerry's dad to get up early. He got up and went into the living room where he found the morning paper. The headlines said, "Woman Killed!" Her description fit that of the lady he had been out with. Jerry got up and walked to his father's side and looked at the paper. Jerry knew that he had to tell his father that he had seen him last night. So he told him. His father admitted to being with the lady but not to killing her.

Jerry decided that he didn't want his mother to find out about this affair, so he turned himself in as guilty before his father could do it. The policeman asked for a motive and Jerry said that he was drunk and he saw her walk into an empty house where it was all dark. He then entered after her. He signed a confession and pleaded guilty in front of a judge. He knew that the judge would believe his statement and sentence him to death, but he had to do it for his father and his mother and himself.

The prosecuting attorney put him on the witness stand and started asking him

whether his parents treated him badly and if he was happy living at home. He could not stand it! He finally fell apart. He told them his father had done it and that he was trying to protect him. They took him to a doctor. The doctor said the boy was in a state of shock. This boy would have given his life for his father if he hadn't told the truth.

The policeman started putting things together and immediately put his father under arrest. They said that Jerry had tried to stick up for his father through love for his parents. Then the district attorney got the bartender and the cab driver to testify that they had seen Jerry's father and the lady together.

A few months later Jerry's dad was sentenced to death in the electric chair for first degree murder. Jerry's mother now felt very badly for her husband even though he kept saying, "I went out with her, but

I didn't kill her!"

The day of the execution found Jerry, his mother, and a few friends sitting out the final agonizing moments before Jerry's father paid back society for his crime. Word finally came: he had gone to his death silently, without confessing, without repenting.

All the people around the room, including Jerry's mother and a few friends started crying, except for Jerry. There was a funny look on his face, just like when he first saw his father with the lady. He turned, stuck out both his hands and started laughing. Everyone turned to him in a funny way.

He said, "I did it, I killed the lady." He started laughing harder. "That will teach the old man for all the things he's done to me and Mom. I fixed him; they just killed the wrong man!"

This all came about because of a queer feeling, and a strange night.



Checkpoint Delta

by Tom Stoner

The Jaguar stopped suddenly in front of the newest building in a long block of brownstones. The man in the car studied the building closely. A sign over the door boasted "London Travel Agency." A large Pan-Am poster for Rome filled one window with its bright colors.

James Drake stepped from the car into the street and checked the address again. Yes, this was the place.

A chime somewhere in a far corner of the store went off as he entered. He smiled to the blond behind the counter and walked to a rack of folders filled with information and pictures of far-away places. He selected a few, one of them showing a scenic view of the Kremlin, and then walked to the counter where he stated that he wished to talk with Mr. Henderson. Upon this, the girl pulled open a drawer and pushed aside a stack of papers, revealing a small switch. This she flicked to the open position and a door at the back of the store clicked open. Drake stood, for a moment, studying the blond, and may have done so all day if she had not interrupted him with an impatient "well?"

Drake moved swiftly through the door and down the hallway around a corner. Here he found an elevator. He pushed the single button and the doors slid aside. Upon stepping inside the cubicle and pressing the single button on the panel, he started downward. The drop took nearly three minutes and he deduced that it was a long way down or was a very slow elevator.

As the doors opened a graying, typical Britisher greeted him. Drake knew him instantly. He had seen a picture of him

many times in the foreign files in Washington. He was Robert Holmes, head of British Intelligence.

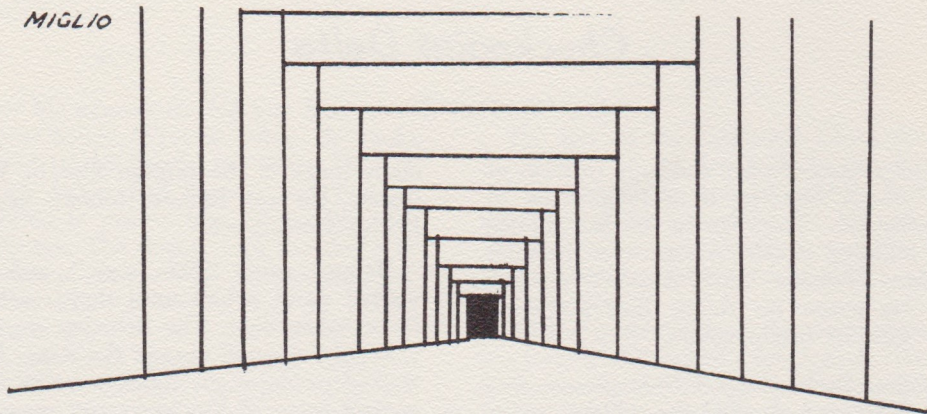
Holmes said, "This way," and they walked down a hall until they reached a large oaken door. The Britisher drew out a set of keys and opened the door. Drake walked inside as the lights went on in the control room of England's spy agency.

Drake found himself a chair and sat down. He handed Holmes the envelope which had been prepared for him in Washington. Holmes ripped it open and drew out the letter. Drake, although he had not read it, knew what it said. It stated that he had been an agent for the C.I.A. in Washington for five years. His record showed an excellent history of cases, and that he was a very good agent. Two weeks earlier he had resigned his post at the agency to come to England and was recommended for work with British Intelligence.

It also would state that he was 37 years old and lived in the United States all his life. What it didn't say was that he had actually been bored with his cases in the U.S. and wished to try to satisfy his taste for excitement in the U.K. service.

He was resting in his room at the Britannia after a tiring swim in the hotel pool, when Robert Holmes called to inform him that the acceptance board had discussed him and found him suited for work with their operation. He was to report for briefing and assignment testing the next morning.

The next day the rented Jaguar screeched to a stop in front of the travel agency. As he stepped from the car he thought to him-



self that he would have to get one. It was a sleek, fast car.

He entered the agency and meant to speak to the blond about dinner, but as soon as he entered she flicked the hidden switch and the door popped open.

He timed the elevator ride downward. It took two minutes, forty-one seconds. He wondered how far below London this complex of halls actually was. As the doors slid open he was again greeted by Holmes, who guided him through another set of halls and into the Briefing and Testing Area.

All that day he took tests, both physical and mental. He was also briefed on the use of several British weapons. He was told that the results of the tests would be fed into a computer which would evaluate him and select the job he was best suited for. In the meantime he was to move into an office and learn the functions, as well as his direction, in the building.

Five days later James Drake was told that he was indeed suited for agent work there. All his test revealed him excellently prepared, both physically and mentally, for the stress put to an agent.

The next month went rather quietly and uneventfully for Drake, except the blond was gone from behind the counter in the travel agency. He heard she had been

transferred to Copenhagen. She was replaced by a bald old man. This came as a shock to Drake who wished to know the blond, but hadn't even learned her name.

One morning as he entered his office, he noticed the pink note on his desk. Pink notes were important notes. He read it hastily. It was from Holmes, but then all of them were. He was to report to Holmes' office as soon as he arrived for work.

In Holmes' office there was an air of urgency as Drake entered. Holmes shut the door and began talking immediately. The British were missing several very important military plans. Two known Russian spies who were in the London area were missing. British Intelligence needed an agent not known to the Russians to hunt the men down. Drake didn't have to go. This was a strictly voluntary assignment. In this assignment Drake saw the place to satisfy that hunger for adventure, so naturally he volunteered without a second thought.

The rest of the morning was spent in the briefing section of the building, where he learned all known facts of the Russian spies. The two were Andrian Nureyev, 35, and Pavel Nesmeyanov, 38; both had been in Britain about six months.

During his briefing the escape route of the spies was found. A British agent had discovered that the spies had flown to

Paris on a Swiss-Air jet the night before.

At four that afternoon Drake was on a S.A.S. Caravelle to Paris. Earlier in his hotel room he had searched for something to occupy his time on the flight. The only reading material he found were the travel brochures he had picked up upon his first time in the travel agency. He looked at the cover of the first one. "Fly Air France to Paris." James Drake was sorry he hadn't. The stewardesses on this jet were dogs.

He finished reading this booklet and was half way through reading of tourists eating luscious caviar while they gaze upon the Caspian Sea when his jet touched down on the Paris runway.

Upon his arrival at the Paris International Airport, he was to report to the information desk for a contact. An envelope addressed to him was at the desk. He opened it and studied the contents. He read the note and pocketed the airline ticket.

At eight that night, Drake's Swiss-Air DC-8 screamed skyward and pointed its nose toward Brussels Belgium. The note he had received had informed him that Nureyev and Nesmeyanov were on a train to the Belgium capital. He would beat them there and pick up a fresh trail as they stepped from the train.

He took up his reading where he had left off.

As it landed, the jet planted its nose wheels on the Belgium soil twice, shaking the passengers badly as it leaped between rubber-burning contacts with the runway. James Drake was the last one off the plane because he had taken an interest in one Swiss stewardess.

Outside the airport he hailed a cab and told the driver to proceed to the railroad station.

When he arrived he checked the giant time chart on one wall of the station and

found it would be nearly two hours before the train arrived at 1:15 a.m. This was time enough to call London to give a report and to find a room in the city's best hotel. Drake was tired of flying. He had been in the air for five hours almost straight and needed rest.

London told him how to follow the Russians and at the first opportunity dispose of them and gain possession of the British documents.

Drake slept for an hour before being rudely awakened by his travel alarm clock. On his ride back to the train station he tried to guess the spies' next move. He felt the most likely move for them to make was to go into West Germany and try to cross the border into East Germany somewhere in the farmlands north of Leipzig.

After the train shuddered to a stop, Drake began gazing into the faces of the departing passengers. He stood at the customs gate through which the spies would pass like ordinary tourists since there had been no official attempt, except Drake, to stop them. At last he spotted them about half way back in the line waiting to pass through customs. Drake tried to act disinterested in them as they inched forward with the line. Then they were inspected by the official. He didn't even bother to open their cases, but merely chalked an "X" on each bag.

As Drake was about to start following them, a young blond approached him and asked, in French, if he was Terrance Von something or other. As he explained that he was not and that he really must hurry, he lost sight of the two.

James Drake hurried to the nearest exit thinking of what Holmes would say if he lost them. As he ran through the large wooden doors he caught sight of Andrian closing the door of a Renault cab. He motioned for another cab, and once inside, instructed the driver to follow the Renault.



He was led to a small hotel on the north-western outskirts of town. It was too bad that they had not selected Drake's hotel. It was a finer place, and would have made it more convenient for him. Now he would have to rent another room for the night.

He waited until they had been inside for well over five minutes before he entered. He walked in and rang the bell on the desk. After paying in advance and taking his key, he settled in his room. Then he calmly walked back downstairs. His intentions were to occupy the manager while getting a glimpse of the spies' room number on the register.

When at the bottom of the stairs he noticed that his thoughts had not been needed. There was no one at the desk. Drake walked over to the desk and glanced at the large book. Room 105. Just down the hall from his room, 111. He walked back up the stairs and down the hall to room 105. To the doorknob he attached a miniature microphone and transmitter. This was a newer model with the micro-alert option attached.

He returned to his room and to his alarm clock. This was the receiver. A small earphone attached told him that all was quiet in room 105. Drake dozed off. If the door of room 105 was opened, the clock would awaken him.

When the clock did go off, he rose and glanced at its hands. Eight thirty-four. He quickly gathered his weapons and coat. His wrinkle-free clothes were free of creases after sleeping in them for a night.

In the lobby, Nureyev and Nesmeyanov were paying their bill. Drake walked outside and hailed a cab. Once inside, he instructed the driver to pull into an alley which offered a clear view of the street.

As the spies came out, Drake instructed the driver to follow them. He was led back to the airport. Here the Russians, and then Drake, in turn, purchased tickets on T.W.A.'s flight to Berlin.

In twenty minutes Drake and his prey were softly locked inside the air-conditioned plane.

At eleven, they were preparing to land in Berlin. Off the plane, Drake began his chase again. This was it. He had to get them now, before they crossed the border.

At the airport parking lot the spies rented a blue Volkswagen 1300. Drake rented a large black Mercedes-Benz.

The Russians now were aware of Drake following them. The Volks sped away from the airport. Drake followed. A mile from the center of town the two switched from the V.W. to a Rolls-Royce, no doubt parked there by a fellow spy.

The Rolls drove northward. Drake was aware now of where they were headed. Checkpoint Delta on Autobonn 312 North.

The Mercedes crept up on the Rolls, only to be greeted by heated lead. Drake returned the fire and put out one of the back tires. The big car swirled into a ditch. As Drake's Mercedes pulled up alongside, he saw that the two appeared to be out cold. He fired two shots into each man to make sure. There was no

stopping his plans now. He started looking for the papers in the suitcases. The redwood box of English Leather was about to be smashed on the pavement when Drake stopped. It was too light to contain an eight ounce bottle. He opened it. Here was a small leather pouch. Drake unzipped it and withdrew the papers.

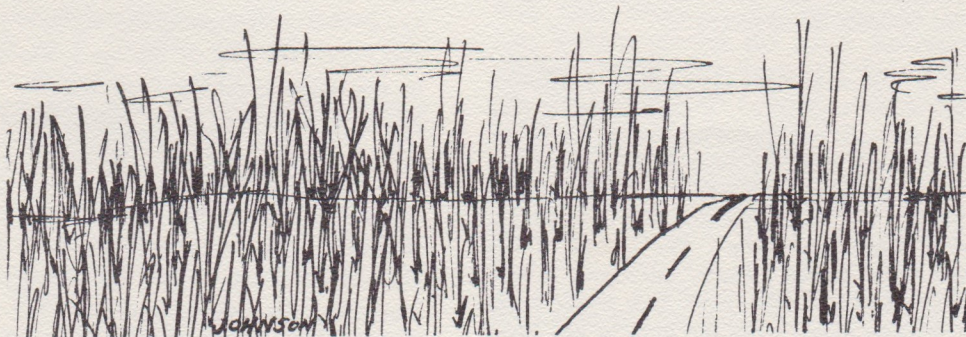
The Rolls rolled along smoothly. The tire had been replaced and the luggage dumped into the Benz along with two used Russians. Drake was driving about 40 when he approached the gate.

To the guards' surprise, instead of

stopping the Rolls gunned through the wooden fence of Checkpoint Delta.

That night London Travel Agency's hidden basement was a mass of confusion. After a few hours of tracing Drake's path and many telephone calls, Holmes and his men were able to come to a conclusion on what happened.

Drake had found the British papers, but instead of returning to London he had finished the Russians' mission. James Drake had defected to the Communists in Eastern Germany.



Plus One

by Doug Stamp

It was still autumn. I could see it through the window of the speeding auto as it slipped along the smooth black ribbon of road. The roadside was cluttered with fallen leaves from the large and almost evenly spaced trees. The colors were or-

ange, yellow, and brown mixed with the blues and grays of a sky, still, yet violet in its manner of majestic glow from sources unknown. All these things I could observe from behind the window of the car; from behind a window that seemed to shut

out the most important part of autumn, the wind, the smell of trees rooted deep in the firm moist earth, and the dead and drying leaves. There I sat, trapped, yet I felt no need for escape or even a desire to bring down the window to obtain the things I wished for.

The silence from inside the car was still and stagnant, almost a silence of sleep. There were people in both the front and back seat. They were dressed in suits much like mine but I didn't know them—who they were, or what they did. They just sat in the still silence with pale smooth faces like mannequins placed in the window of a store for people to examine wishfully wanting the clothes placed upon them. Each man sat erect, making me feel self-conscious of my own lax posture, but I did nothing to correct it.

In this soundless atmosphere I allowed my mind to wander. I allowed it to fool me and ask me questions which made the time pass without notice. My questions confused me. Who was I? Where was I going? For what reason? But most of all, why was it so silent? The sound of the car was absent. These questions flowed through my brain freely like water from a broken glass. I felt the urge to ask these questions but fear, a fear that made my stomach twitch, kept my words from ever reaching my lips. I never dared to speak a word.

The car continued for some time without passing any other car or person until at last the road ended. At the end trees grew from all sides. There was a large stop sign planted firmly along with three white posts. An ambulance was parked at the side of the road and people stood gaping at a piled mass lying some distance in front of our car. The car began to slow but didn't stop until it stood directly over whatever lay upon the highway. For the first time

during the whole trip I started to feel as though I were real. I grabbed the handle of my door and opened it; I felt air rush into my body. I saw the staring people standing around the flashing light of the ambulance. All these things seemed so more alive than my own body.

"Move the Car! Move the car!" came shouts from the crowd, and as I closed the door and stepped away it moved from over whatever lay upon the road. Very slowly it moved, so slowly that it took minutes before the whole hideous thing could be seen. There it lay, a body, crumpled and torn to a state that looked much like a pile of old clothes. Its wrists were bent to such an extreme that the skin had broken and exposed the sight of blood and bone. The rest of the body was much in the same condition; all but the head which was hidden from sight. What was left of a suit clothed his body.

Something happened next, I cannot explain but there was something which made me feel as though I was once attached to that form. Something pulled on my body so softly and tenderly that at first it seemed as though a spider had spun a single thread of web from me to him. I was sure that if I touched him I would feel it myself as though he were touching me. This thought jarred me and made me feel as though the people staring at the body were invading *my* privacy. They had no right to watch me bleed. They had no right to stop and watch as though it was for show. I screamed at them, "Leave me alone; let me die in peace!" But useless were my words. They didn't hear me! It was as if I were not there!

My True Story

by The Big Bad Wolf
(Wendy Boutin)

I am the Big Bad Wolf. I'm not really bad, but that is the name everyone gave me because I was chasing Little Red Riding Hood in the story. I would like to tell you what really happened.

I was sitting in the forest resting one day when this little girl came along. She was all dressed in red and was carrying a basket. When she saw me she stopped and said hello. I was kind of lonesome, so I said hello back to her. She sat down beside me and we had a very nice conversation. I was curious just like anyone else would be about what was in the basket. I decided I would just ask her. When I did she started screaming and hollering.

She said, "You're not going to steal my grandmother's lunch!"

Now who said anything about taking her lunch? I just wanted to know why she was carrying it. She hit me over the head with the basket and took off. I was really stunned for a while. When I finally came to, I noticed she had left. This is where I got the reputation of being a Big Bad Wolf.

I was really angry for a while because she hurt my head when she hit me. I soon got over it.

I was still very curious, so I thought I would follow her and find out where she was going with the basket. I found her tracks and started following them. After an hour or two I came up to a little blue cottage. I thought I would knock on the door and ask the people if they saw the little girl pass by. I went up to the door and knocked. A little old lady answered. When she saw me she turned the other way and ran out the back door. I was beginning to get a complex from everyone

screaming when they saw me.

I went into the house to look around, because I was curious. I was very tired and hungry from walking. I found some food and had a nice warm lunch. I decided I would climb in bed and take a nice nap, since the lady probably wouldn't be back for a while.

I woke up because someone was knocking at the door. I didn't say anything, I just lay there. All of a sudden I saw the door open, then CABOON !!! I peeked out from the covers and saw the little girl lying on the floor. She tripped over the rug when she came in. I could hardly keep from laughing. She got up and began looking around the house hollering for her grandmother. Oh no! ! This must be her grandmother's house, I thought. I just lay as still as I could.

She gave up looking for her grandmother and walked out the door. I got out of bed and noticed she left the basket sitting on the table, I was still curious, so I went over to it and slowly lifted the top. All of a sudden, she came back in the house and caught me. I told her that I just wanted to see what she was carrying in the basket.

"Why didn't you tell me?" she asked. She opened the basket and pulled out a new lacy nightcap for her grandmother. Well, I could have died right there. She told me it was a lunch. After all I went through, it was a nightcap!

This experience really taught me a lesson about being curious. As the saying goes, "Curiosity killed the cat," and it almost killed the wolf.

You've probably never heard my true story before. I'm really not a bad wolf, just a curious one.

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