

## The Trace

Another day, another adventure, I thought, as we flamboyantly brisked discordantly along that familiar path that would ultimately bring us to the zenith of our daily endeavor. It was early, and the rising sun had yet to aspire to the crest of the trees that ran parallel to the path. Jeff seemed rather disjoined, hadn't uttered a syllable to my recollection. These cachets in Jeff came to be expected. They dominated his poise with each sojourn to the trace. I often pondered whether his stolid temperament, tapered by inattention, was perhaps a bukle pursued as a means to cloak his repressed anxieties with the character of death. Having lost his father at an early age, Jeff served as an analogue for a puzzle of life which was mislaid of a piece inextricably prevalent for its configuration. Jeff, however, was my most revered chronicle, and, as with each ritualistic journey to the trace, the camaraderie between us was adamantly felt as our communication seemed to transcend that of overt speech, and delve into that of a demeanor of body language complimented by facial expression. This camaraderie that existed between us would serve as the cohesive bond that would maintain our friendship for years to come.

Transformation from the morning dew to the afternoon sun seemed to transpire liesurely. Fatigue on the rise and thirst upon the tongue, we progressed towards the trace. Having trudged a good three miles, I was unlimbered for a moment's rest. Full-knowing that it would be useless to intercede upon Jeff's train of contemplations, I harnessed the lead among the path and thwarted to it's side which veered downward toward a gaping creekbed, trickling as a snake glides, a hundred or so yards, descending. Sensing frustration in this distraction proffered to Jeff, I uttered, "I'll make it quick, I'm thirsty as hell." With this, I quickened the pace and upon arrival at the cay of the creek, I hand cupped what was to be but a tease to the notion of a quenched thirst. I then returned to Jeff's undaunted paralysis that halted mid-way between the creek and my newly deciphered path. After a concensual glance between us, we proceeded onward in the manner which had, to that point, deposited us.

Jeff always said he'd give anything to have his father back. Being as I was, a child never of yet to have surrendered but a parakeet, I found it difficult to empathize, and for simplicity sake, chose only to pretend. What beit concerning such a loss that leaves one as Jeff so detached I wondered? Could these ritualistic excavations to the trace, and the ceremonial acts of lunacy that we enacted there, really serve to satisfy some, perhaps, meritable purpose in a release of anxieties that would otherwise appear to sustain Jeff hostage? I couldn't but interrogate myself as I beleaguered along side him. This driven, unstoppable menace with a quest to face his greatest contempt head-on.

Approximately two hours committed, we approached the hill whereupon the climacteric of our day long toils would ensue. To the flitch of the path laid our fiend-crushers, carefully imparted so as to be unrecognizable to the garden-variety stroller. With a mutual glance, and a solemn genuflection, our sacrosanct, hand-sculptured staffs

were firmly rehearsed for their spiritual fulfillment. The obtuse, lusty terrain the hill would front would be tenuously inconsequential as our minds coalesced with determined intent. Surely, as the apex of the hill would lay underfoot, the culmination of our errand was inevitable. Destruction we would deliver.

Limply our fiend-crushers encompassed the trace that signified the final contortion in which her life-blood endured. Round and round they dangled, as we acquired a sort of supernatural fervor that would send us on a bastion of chaos and insanity. Twelve ritualistic spirals to provide the motim for our spirit-sucking staffs to transfer all that was dubiously represented in the trace into the hinterland of our intellectual conceptions. An omnipotent rapport, which culminated between us and the trace, came to facilitate and then perpetuate what developed into the most obscure act of ferocity that either of us had ever encountered. This act, which I found myself to be but a passive conspirator, must have served as the exodus for the repressed, turbulation and incensement with which Jeff harnessed with regards to his father's death.

In a deliberative screech of rebuttal and savagery, Jeff tackled the brim of the woods with the determination of a madman. Adrenalin on high, he thwarted and stabbed all in his path as he seized the calm and heralded it into arousal. My mind raced in a sort of isolated bewilderment as my body acted in conjunction with Jeff's example. Raging body gyrations accompanied by expressive threats of atrocity and revenge were hurled from every dimension of our bodies. To myself it meant nothing. However, this consumated captivation of Jeff's sole presence, revealed predominately in our ceremonial escapades captured within the secluded domain of Winton Woods, was perhaps the most perverted, mal-formulated idiosyncrasy that he had to portend. It was unreveled by any other to be found in him. For it was only the transformation from this calamity to a state of normalcy that even came close.

"What ya got going on today?"

"Nuthin'. You?"

"Well, my folks and I are supposed to be eat'n at my grandma's for lunch. It's my aunt's birthday and I have to go."

Despite its absurdity, it was always a rapturous moment when Jeff made the instantaneous transference from pandemonium to stability. It administered a reassurance of security which ultimately allowed the continuation of this electrifying, bazaar liturgy.

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