

HIGH ADVENTURE

A ROYAL RANGERS MAGAZINE FOR BOYS

WINTER 1983-84



**STRANGER IN SCHOOL
A PERFECT GIFT
BARKING AT BEARS
THE UGLIEST MAN**

HIGH ADVENTURE

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BY TOM HART

STRANGER IN SCHOOL

The boys and girls stood in a semi-circle and watched while the Jensen kids, the school bullies moved forward to challenge the new stranger in school, Billy Wilson. Blazing noon sun glistened on the sweat that formed on Billy's forehead as the Jensen boys moved forward. The horses tied at the school gate neighed loudly, as though they anticipated what was about to take place.

Billy felt the acrid taste of fear rising in his throat and he knew a fight would be his only way out of this. The taller Jensen boy moved close and pointed to the lard pail in Billy's hand.

"Wat-cha got in that there lunch pail, boy?" Chuck Jensen demanded.

"Nothing," Billy said and lowered his eyes to the ground.

"Don't sass me, boy!" Chuck shouted and pushed Billy to the ground.

Billy got up slowly and brushed the dirt from his bib overalls.

"I wern't sassin'. I just meant I didn't have nothing special," Billy explained meekly.

"You 'shamed of yer lunch, boy?" Chuck pursued.

"I got hard tack, bacon, and a fresh apple." Billy's voice rose to a high pitch with

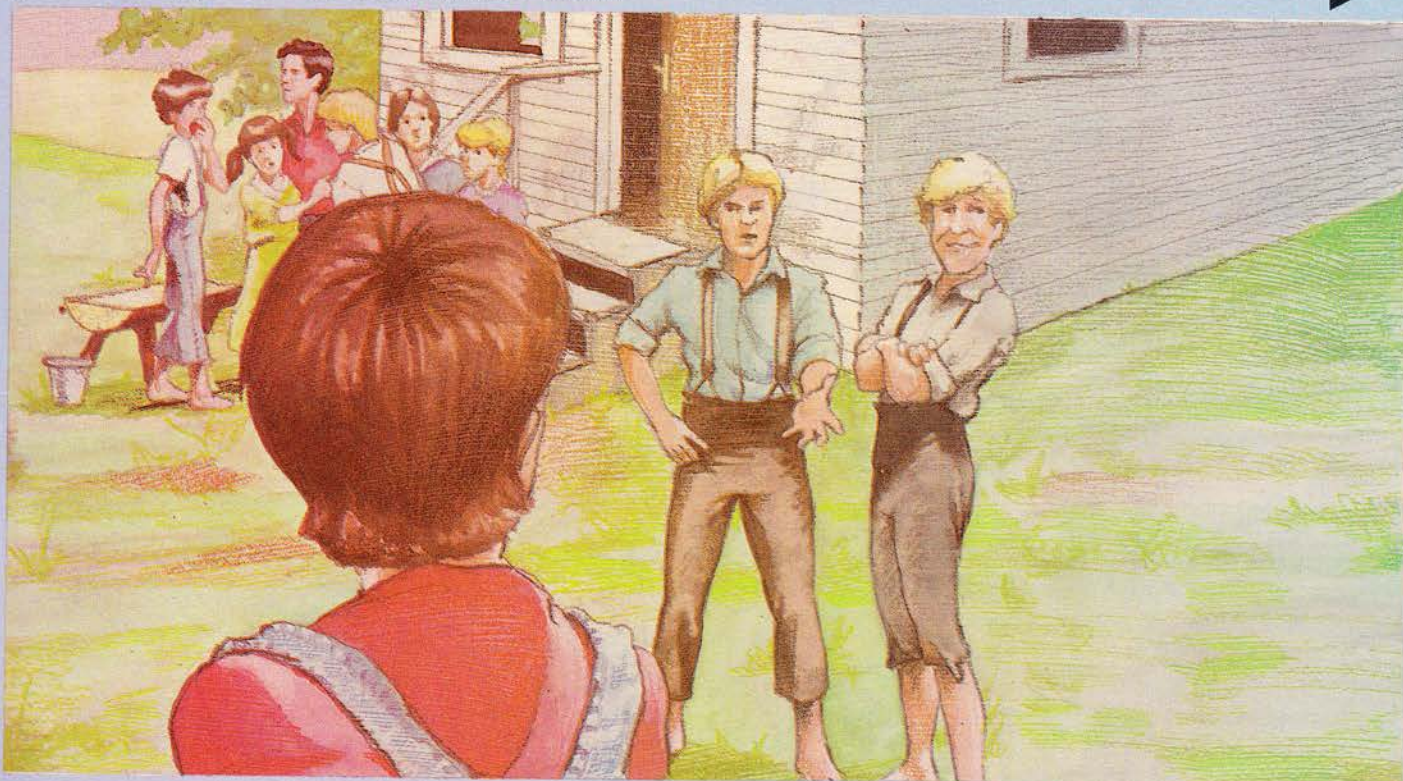
emotion, and someone in the crowd of children snickered at the sound.

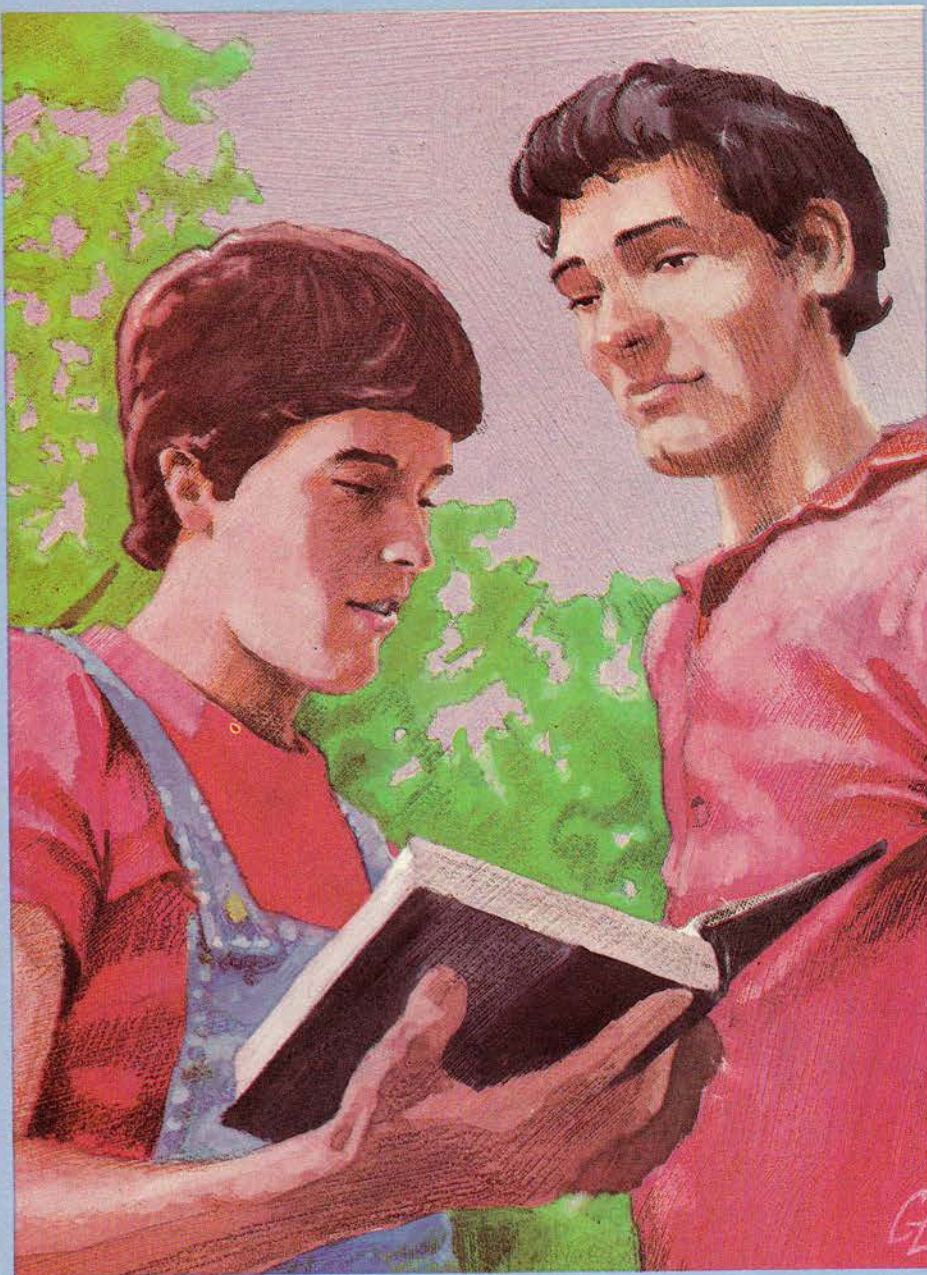
"Don't get loud with me, boy. I ain't deaf. Now, I'll just have that apple." Chuck Jensen held out his hand.

"Yeah, we'll just have that apple," Butch parroted.

Billy raised his eyes to study the faces in the crowd. He wished he had stayed in his seat to eat lunch instead of coming out here in the school yard. The faces of the children surrounding him stared, some blankly, but mostly with grins as they waited to see him surrender the prize apple from his lunch pail.

"This here apple was give me by my maw. It's fer my lunch and you ain't gettin' it, and that's that."





Even the smaller Jensen boy, Butch, stood a head taller than Billy, and Chuck was half a head taller again. At best he could expect a licking if he refused, and he'd lose the apple anyway. But he knew it was more than that. He would remain a stranger in this school if he surrendered without a fight. It was certain nobody would have a coward for a friend.

"You gonna stand there daydreaming all day, shorty, or you gonna hand over that apple?" Butch demanded.

A ripple of laughter stirred in the crowd around Billy and the Jensen boys.

Billy raised his eyes, squinted in the bright sunlight and studied the faces of the crowd once more. A new face had joined the group.

A tall boy, head and shoulders above the others, stood at the back of the crowd and stared over their heads. He was long as a broom handle and about as thin. His gaunt eyes seemed sad to Billy, as though they

had aged beyond the tender years of the boy's lanky body.

The boy, ugly as a duck, stood and looked right into Billy's eyes, and Billy was certain the boy was shaking his head "no" real slow and steady, like Billy wasn't to give up his apple. Billy swallowed hard and took a step toward Chuck Jensen. He raised his finger and punched the taller boy in the chest.

"This here apple was give me by my maw. It's fer my lunch and you ain't gettin' it, and that's that," Billy concluded and swallowed hard.

Chuck Jensen's eyes bulged and his mouth dropped open. But the surprise was quickly replaced by simmering anger that fairly crackled in the stocky boy's dark eyes. Billy felt a sinking feeling in his stomach, and he braced for the blows that he knew would come.

"Boy, you just earned yerself a good licking." Chuck Jensen moved forward men-

acingly.

"Yeah, and with two of us on ya, you gonna be sorry you ever sassed the Jensens," Butch Jensen added and moved forward with his brother.

The crowd of children grew silent, like the stillness before a storm. Billy prayed silently that the school master would come out and ring the bell to signal the end of lunch, but he knew it would never happen in time to stop the fight.

"It won't be two on one. It will be two against two," said a voice from the back of the crowd. Billy looked up to see the tall, gaunt boy move through the crowd to stand at his side.

Chuck Jensen stopped short and his mouth dropped open. He looked up to the only boy in school who stood above him in height. Billy felt his heart begin to pound and the emptiness of being alone was swept away.

The group of children watched intently, standing silently beneath the azure sky. Even the horses at the hitching post had grown silent.

"Aw, who wants to bust a head just fer an ol' apple anyway?" Chuck Jensen turned away.

"Yeah, just fer an ol' apple," Butch repeated and turned to leave with his brother.

The other children drifted away and returned to their play at the swings and tee-ters.

"I'm beholden to you," Billy said and extended his hand to the tall, lanky boy towering above him.

"You needn't feel obligated. You have the right to be here, just like any other person. Though it's hard for folks, the way people are always trying to push one another round because they're afraid within themselves. Seems like if they can scare somebody else their own fear isn't so terrible. I've read about folks like the Jensen boys in here," the tall boy said and patted the cover of the Bible in his hand.

"That what made you side with me?" Billy asked.

"I reckon. Something like that," the tall boy explained. "That and the fact those bullies are always spoiling for a fight with somebody smaller because they're afraid—in here."

The lanky boy tapped the left side of his chest. "Like the good book says, 'Without were fightings, within were fears.'"

"Sounds like a right smart book." Billy admired the shiny black book cover held proudly in the lanky boy's bony hand. "Mind if I take a squint at it?"

"Not at all." The taller boy held out the Bible.

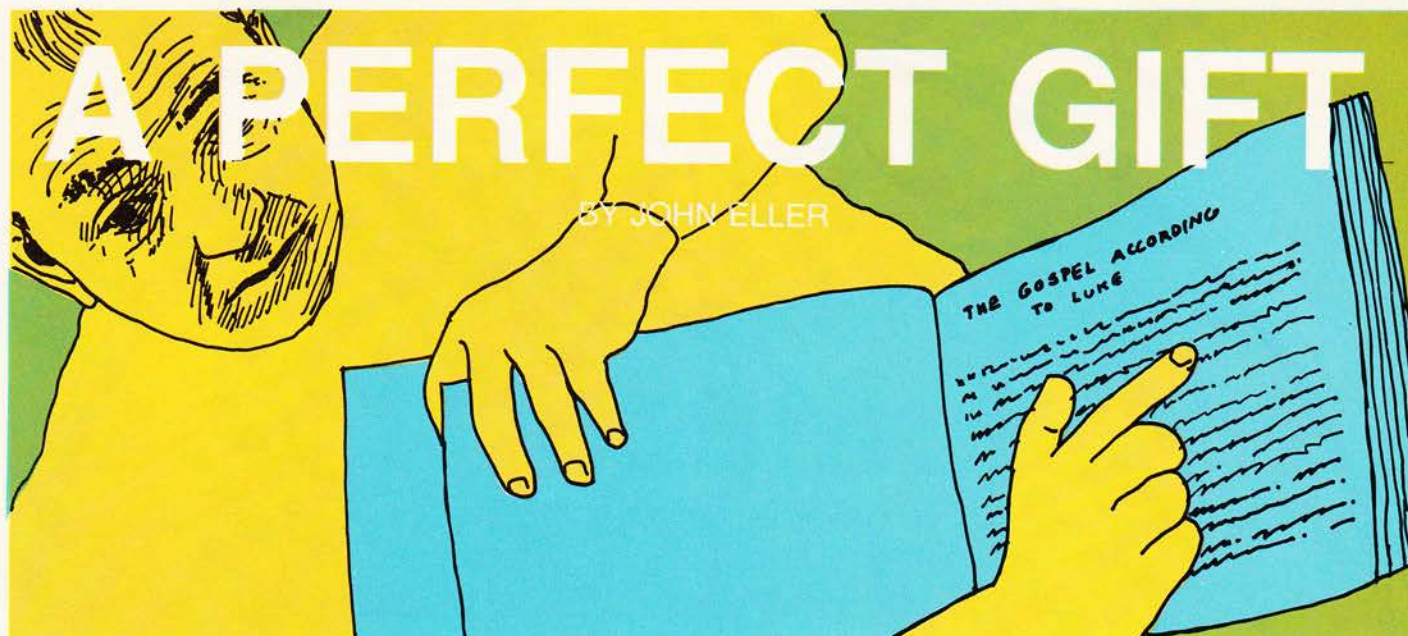
Billy took the book and opened the cover. He silently sounded out the name printed in a neat hand on the inside cover.

"That yer name?" Billy asked.

"Yep."

Billy returned his gaze to the name and said it aloud.

"Abraham Lincoln." ★



A PERFECT GIFT

BY JOHN ELLER

It was a crisp mid-spring day in 59 A.D. Two distinguished doctors strode down the street in the small town of Emmaus, Palestine. Everyone respected these two learned medical men whose names were Luke and Cleopas. They were both near the same age and conversed as they walked.

"I've been thinking," said the former, "of writing an account or history of the works of Jesus. I have on file some personal testimonies, along with firsthand information from the Apostles themselves. It would not only serve as an account for my personal use, but I could also send a copy to our friend, Theophilus, in Asia Minor."

"Yes," the latter said thoughtfully, "Theophilus would appreciate a copy, and then, he would make other copies for his students there at the university."

"Do you remember when Jesus walked us down to this town, Emmaus, and talked with us concerning the fulfillment of the Scriptures?" Dr. Luke asked softly.

"I will never forget," answered Dr. Cleopas, and with a rise in his voice, "how our hearts did burn within us while He talked of the works and events that had been prophesied to take place!"

They had conversed until they came to Dr. Cleopas' house where the two friends bade each other good day.

NEW INFORMATION

It was dusk when Dr. Luke reached his home, about five miles south of Emmaus. He lit the oil lamps in his library and promptly found his notes and testimonies. After comparing them with the accounts of both Levi Matthew and John Mark, he found he had information not even mentioned by either of the writers, plus additional details. He sat down and wrote a brief outline on the material he wished to cover. This was the outline:

- I. The Birth of Christ.

- II. Christ's infancy and early life.
- III. John the Baptist and the baptism of Christ.
- IV. Healings, miracles, and other events.
- V. The last journey to the Ascension into Heaven.

From that time until early July, Dr. Luke collected information and arranged it under his five topics. He felt he had secured sufficient material on all five topics except on number one—"The Birth of Christ."

After consideration, Dr. Luke decided to make the long journey to Ephesus to obtain firsthand information from Mary, the mother of Jesus, who resided with John the Beloved.

CONTACTS MARY

Preparations completed, Dr. Luke made the journey to Ephesus and arrived there in early September. He soon contacted Mary, the mother of Jesus, for her account of the birth of Christ. This is the manner in which her story began:

"A short while before Jesus was born, Caesar Augustus made a decree that all the whole world should be taxed. Joseph and I went to the city of Bethlehem as we were of the house of David. While we were yet there, the days were accomplished that I should be delivered of my child."

She paused for Dr. Luke to catch up with her and presently continued:

"The city was filled with people who crowded the inns and though Joseph had searched the entire city, he found no one who had any room for us.

"At the edge of town, Joseph stopped at a house and asked the owner if we might use his stable as quarters for the night. The man obliged us and Jesus was born that night in Bethlehem."

She continued the account while Dr. Luke speedily wrote it down with his pen. When she had finished, Dr. Luke gratefully thanked her and started back for Emmaus.

GATHERS MORE DATA

Dr. Luke stopped at different towns when coming back and gathered more information from certain disciples and people who had been healed by Jesus.

He reached home by mid-October and then began to write Theophilus. The beloved physician addressed him on this fashion:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou has been instructed."

After the salutation, Dr. Luke began the actual account of the events in the life of Christ. He also wrote in the account the well-known, well-read story of the shepherds—

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night . . ."

Dr. Luke, under divine anointing, wrote the most complete account of the life of Christ. Adam Clarke lists thirty-eight events the other writers of the Gospel don't even mention, or if mentioned, not in detail.

Dr. Luke finished his Gospel in November and sent a copy which reached Theophilus by Christmas, 59 A.D.

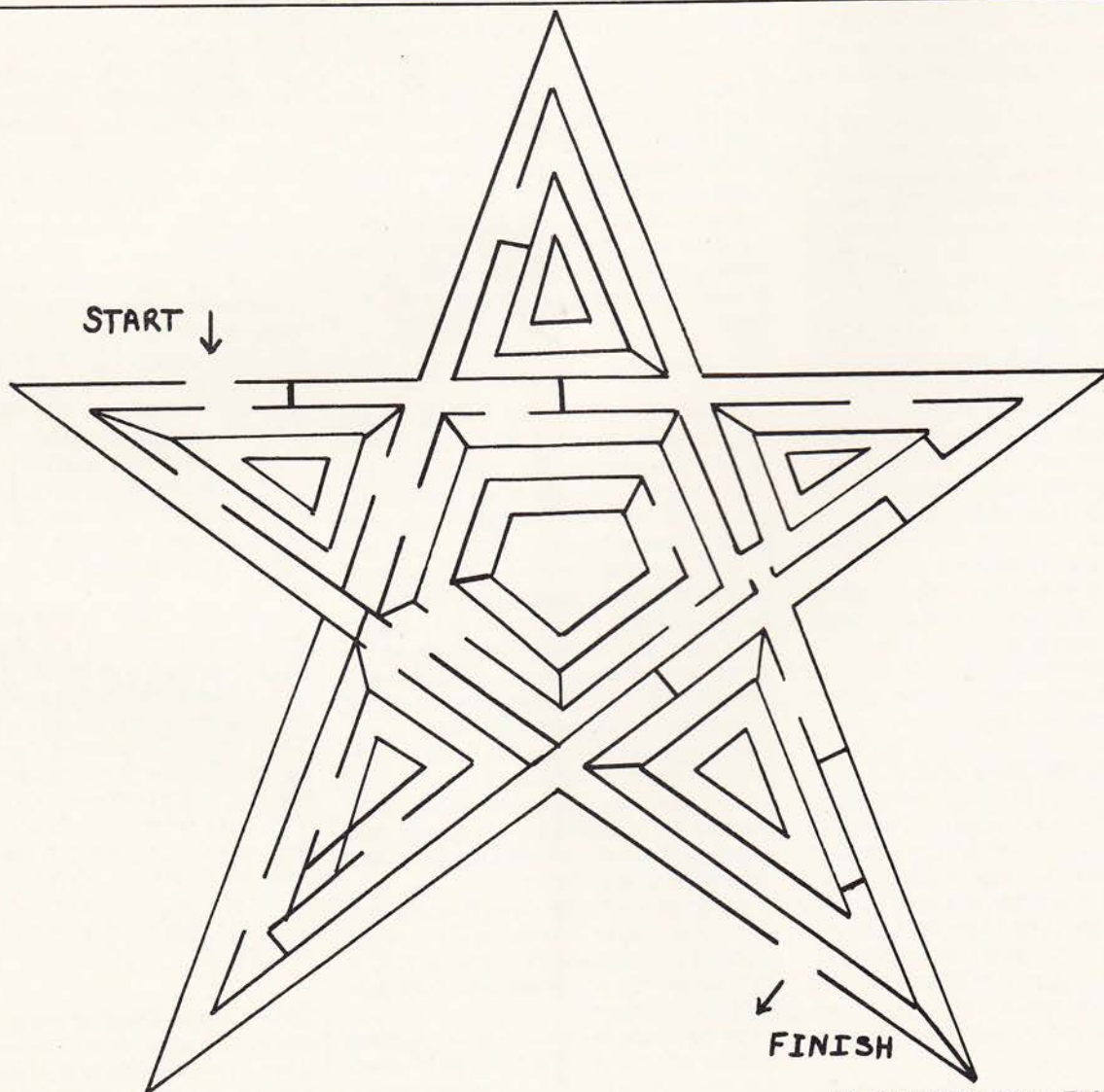
Dr. Luke had not only given a gift to his friend, but also to the whole world—*A Perfect Gift*. ★

Editor's Note: The preceding short story was written when John Eller was 16 years of age. It won first place in a school contest. The copy is taken from the December 1955 edition of the Greer High Times, Greer, S.C.

See- The-Light- Maze

BY SANDRA FAUST

Can you find your way through
the Christmas star without getting lost?

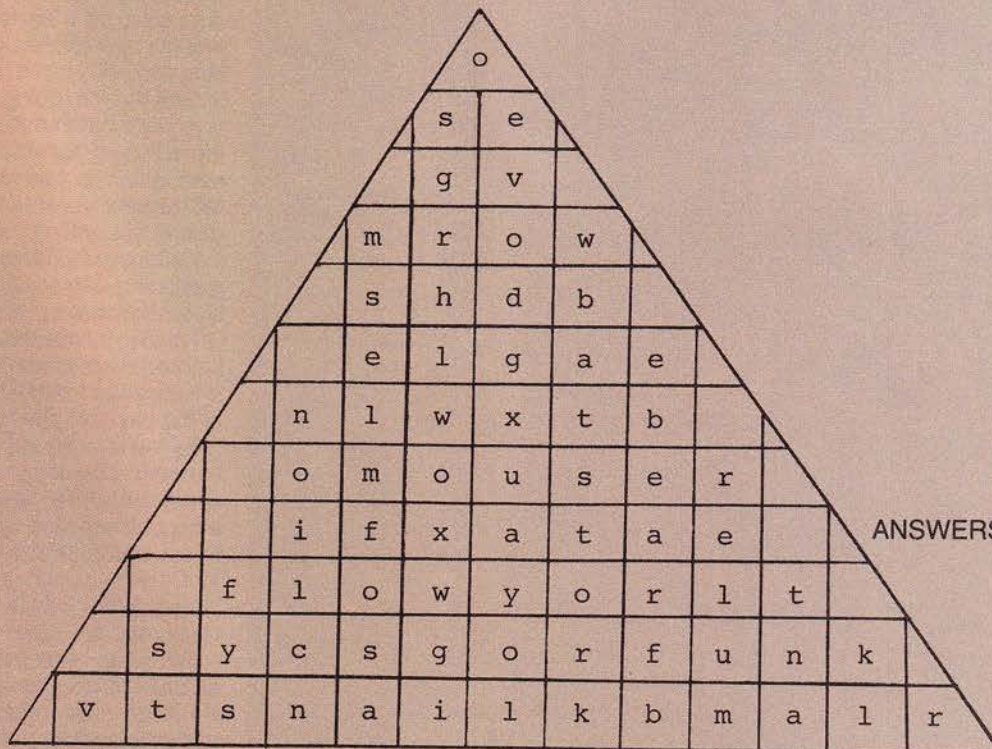


ANSWER ON PAGE 15

ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE PUZZLE

BY BECKY McDANIEL

Here is an animal-word
Search game.
Some are wild animals,
Some are tame.
Look up, down, sideways, backwards,
and at an angle,
to find all nineteen
that are inside this triangle.

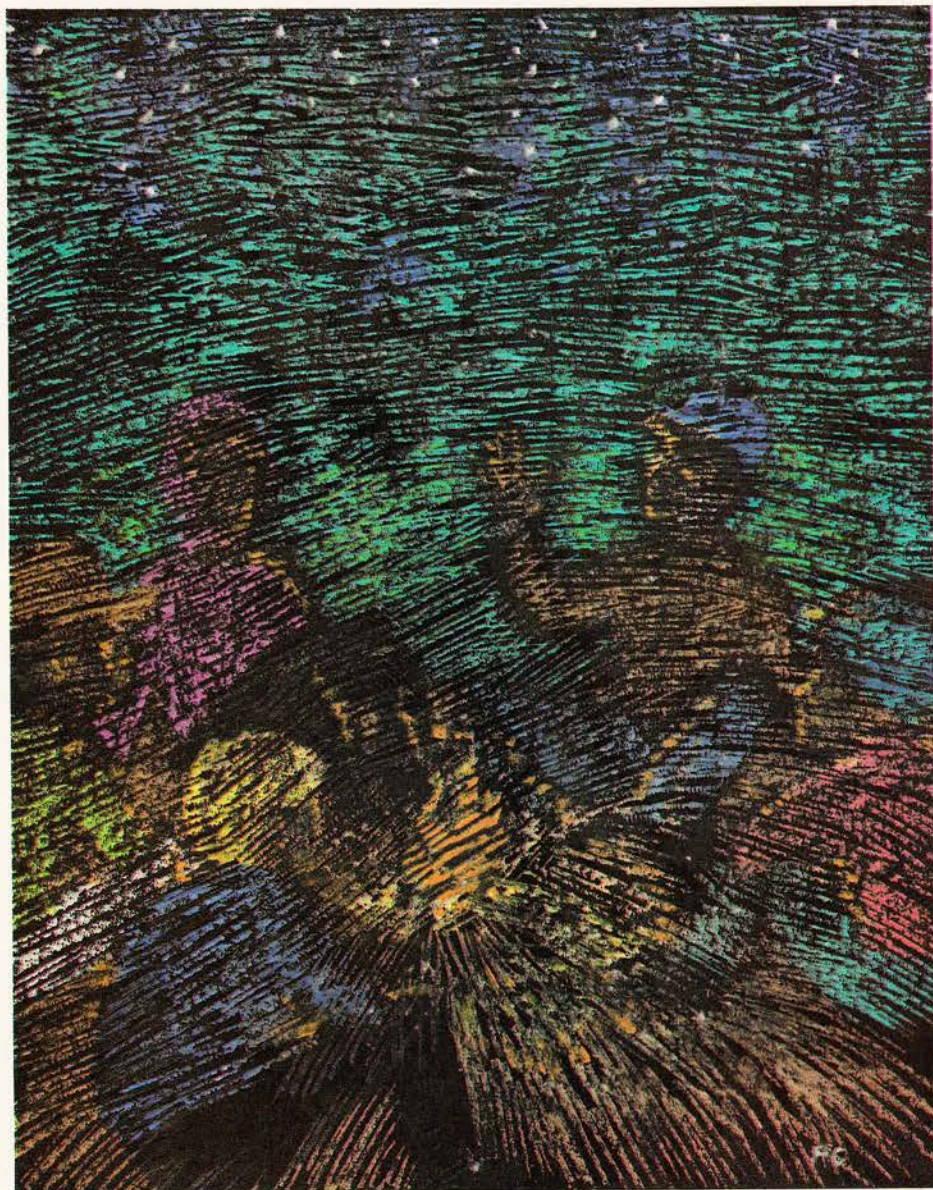


ANSWERS ON PAGE 15

BARKING AT BEARS

By N. N. Rue

Chuck's big brother, Clyde, thinks he knows everything. For instance, if you should ever want to scare a bear away from camp, just simply bark at it!



My brother Clyde is an expert on everything. Just ask him. He'll tell you.

On second thought, you don't even have to ask him. Just bring up the subject of the NFL and he'll quote you height, weight, and yards rushing for anybody you name. Look like you're going to discuss tennis and he'll ramble off John McEnroe's life history, whether you want to hear it or not. And all you have to do is mention running; he'll immediately demonstrate every stretching exercise in the book—and then some. He's like a piece of roast beef between your teeth; you just can't get rid of him, and he's downright annoying.

Trouble is, he's always right. As his kid brother who sits just outside that circle of people that are depending on him for volumes of useless information, I've had plenty of time to check up on him. He's as accurate as a set of Britannicas. Like I said, it's a real pain.

Not too many other people think so, though. That's why there were at least ten guys who would have jumped at the chance to go camping at Yosemite with us. There's a waiting list of people wanting to be friends with him! I can't figure it out myself, but I'm trying, believe me.

Clyde finally narrowed it down to four guys, plus me. I suspect Dad told him he couldn't take the motor home unless he took me, but Clyde didn't say that. His explanation was: "Why don't you go with us, Chuck? Maybe I could teach you a couple things about camping."

Oh, brother.

I didn't know the other guys. They were buddies of Clyde's from that first year in college and they all came from the other side of town. Clyde decided that he and I would stay in the motor home and the other guys could pitch two tents. Just so I wouldn't feel out of it with a college crowd. Nice of him.

"But if you're going to be camping in luxury, you'll have to work for it," he told me the morning before we left. "Here's the manual. Go out and check the thing over. Make sure we aren't going to lose a tail pipe or something."

He turned to Brian, one of the guys who was going with us. "I had that happen one time. We were up in Canada and . . ."

I made my exit then. I'd heard that story before, complete with Clyde's ingenious jury-rigging of said tail pipe. It was right out of the pits at Indianapolis.

By the time the six of us got to Yosemite, the next afternoon, I was wiped out. I'd spent the whole day before doing everything but wash the light bulbs in the motor home, and the whole way up there listening to Clyde's guided tour: "Everything You Didn't Want to Know About Northern California, but Were Told Anyway."

So when everybody started lounging around the fire after dark, I opted for crashing in my nice comfortable bed inside the motor home. I kind of like all that crackling

and spitting the fire does, though, and I'm into breathing in cold mountain air, so I left the window open. I knew Clyde would close it when he went to bed.

Just as I was dozing off, Clyde's voice drifted in and yanked me awake. I tell you, there's no getting away from this dude.

"You guys know what to do in case of bears, right?" he was saying.

"Aw, man, come on, we're in Yosemite. The bears are trained up here." I thought it was the guy they called the Hulk, but I wasn't sure. They all sounded alike except Clyde.

"Don't count on it," Clyde said. "They're still vicious animals even though they're used to having people around." He went on to spout off how many teeth they have and how fast the average brown bear can tear a human being's limbs off. I almost drifted off again until the Hulk spoke up.

"Hey, thanks. I needed to hear that, y'know."

"Look, it's no big thing."

"That's easy for you to say," Brian said. "You'll be locked up in the Waldorf over there."

Clyde snorted authoritatively. I know that sounds impossible, but Clyde can even sneeze and make it sound important.

"That lock won't mean beans to a bear if there's something inside he wants. He'll just tear the door off."

It was my turn to say, "Thanks."

"So 'no big deal' means we just let them carry us off for hors d'oeuvres," Henry said. (I didn't know people in this day and age still had names like that.)

"No. Here's the deal." I actually did drop off to sleep when Clyde started giving them the standard lecture on banging pots and pans, keeping food out of the tents, etc., etc., ad nauseum. But I woke up when he got to the last one, I guess because it was a new one to me.

"If you do hear a bear thrashing around in the bushes, just start barking like a dog."

"Say what?"

"A dog, you know, 'ruff, ruff.'"

I think what I did then was guffaw. I've read the word in books and was never exactly sure what it meant, but I think that's what I did. Clyde's "ruff" sounded like a cross between a flea-bitten Chihuahua and a squeaky door hinge. Meanwhile, according to form, the other guys were all believing him. How does he do it?

"It's a proven fact. When a bear hears a dog in camp he won't invade. He doesn't want a confrontation with some canine."

I promised myself I'd look that up when I got home. Then I really did fall asleep.

I woke up hours later to find Clyde sitting straight up in the other bed in the pitch darkness. At first I thought he was asleep, he was being so still.

"What's the matter with you?" I mumbled.

"Shh."

"Why?"

"Listen."

All I heard was a low growling noise.

"Do you hear that?"

"Yeah. So?"

"Now don't panic. I'm pretty sure it's a bear."

"Clyde—"

"Shh."

"If you'd get a flashlight—" I said.

"Don't be an idiot." He always gets a little hyper when there's a crisis. "A light'll just attract him. We want to get rid of him, not invite him in."

I groaned. He always has a mini-lecture handy.

"I don't think it's a bear," I hissed.

"Yeah, well, I think I know a little bit more about this stuff than you do, kid," he hissed back. "Let me handle it."

"Okay," I said. I pulled the covers back over my ears.

"Get up," he said impatiently. "Get some pots and pans out of the cabinet."

"Forget it."

"If you do hear a bear thrashing around in the bushes, just start barking like a dog."

"SAY WHAT?"

"A dog, you know, 'RUFF, RUFF.'"

"Is it my imagination, or has that growling gotten louder?"

I pulled the covers down again, cocked an ear, and yanked them back over my head. "You got me."

"I think it has. There's no time to get to the kitchen." He started opening the window.

"What are you doing?" I said.

"I'm going to bark."

"You're what?"

"I'm going to bark. If you want to stay in one piece you'll do the same."

"Give me a break! Clyde, for Pete's sake—"

But he already had the thing cranked wide open and was clearing his throat. I sat there, staring at him.

I'll never forget that scene if I live to be 90. There was Clyde in his shorts, up on his knees, baying into the total darkness of Yosemite National Forest. He pulled out all the stops—the squeaky Chihuahua yips, a couple of deep Great Dane types, obviously designed to scare the claws off the poor devil, and several Basset Hound howls that would curdle your cottage cheese. The silhouette in the window was priceless—head rared back, with two pieces of hair standing up that looked like he swiped them from a Yorkshire Terrier. And all the while the pump growled on in the background.

I knew it was the pump all along. I'd tried it out the day before and when I heard it

snarling like a wolverine I'd called Dad. He'd said it was no biggie, so I'd forgotten about it. Until Clyde started barking at it, that is.

If it hadn't meant I had to lose half a night's sleep it would have been hilarious. As it was, I was beginning to see the humor. The Hulk and Henry and the others should have been rolling out of their tents about then, and frankly I couldn't wait to see the expressions on their faces when they checked out their fearless leader yapping into the night at a water pump.

Clyde stopped for a breath and glanced over at me. My eyes had gotten accustomed to the dark by then and I could see his face was completely drained of color. As they say in the crime novels, "His eyes glittered with fear."

He was actually serious. He was trying to save us all from the clutches of some bear that threatened to pick the lock on the motor home and tear off even the Hulk's arms and legs. And all he was going to get for it was a round of laughs and an eternal reputation back at college for being the biggest sap since the sugar maple.

He'd started in again, and I threw a pillow at him.

"What are you doing?" he said between clenched teeth. "Trying to get us all killed?"

"Zip it up a minute, will you?"

"What is it?"

Trying desperately not to so much as grin, I told him. There was a stupefied silence, except for the grumbling of the pump, of course.

Outside, the Hulk had emerged from his tent.

"What's going on?" he said none too softly.

Mumbles from Henry and Brian formed a background.

Clyde looked at me, but I didn't have time to read his face. I crawled out of bed and went over to the window.

"Nothing," I said to the motley-looking trio that squinted up at me.

"Just somebody's dog barking. They must have thrown him a bone or something, because he shut up."

"I hope they hit him in the head with it," the Hulk muttered. They all straggled back to their tents.

I had to crawl over Clyde who was laid out stiff as an icicle. I pulled the blankets over me for about the tenth time that night and closed my eyes. The pump was still growling.

"Chuck?" Clyde said.

"Yeah."

"Thanks."

"Don't mention it."

He was quiet for a minute; then he propped up on his elbow and looked at me.

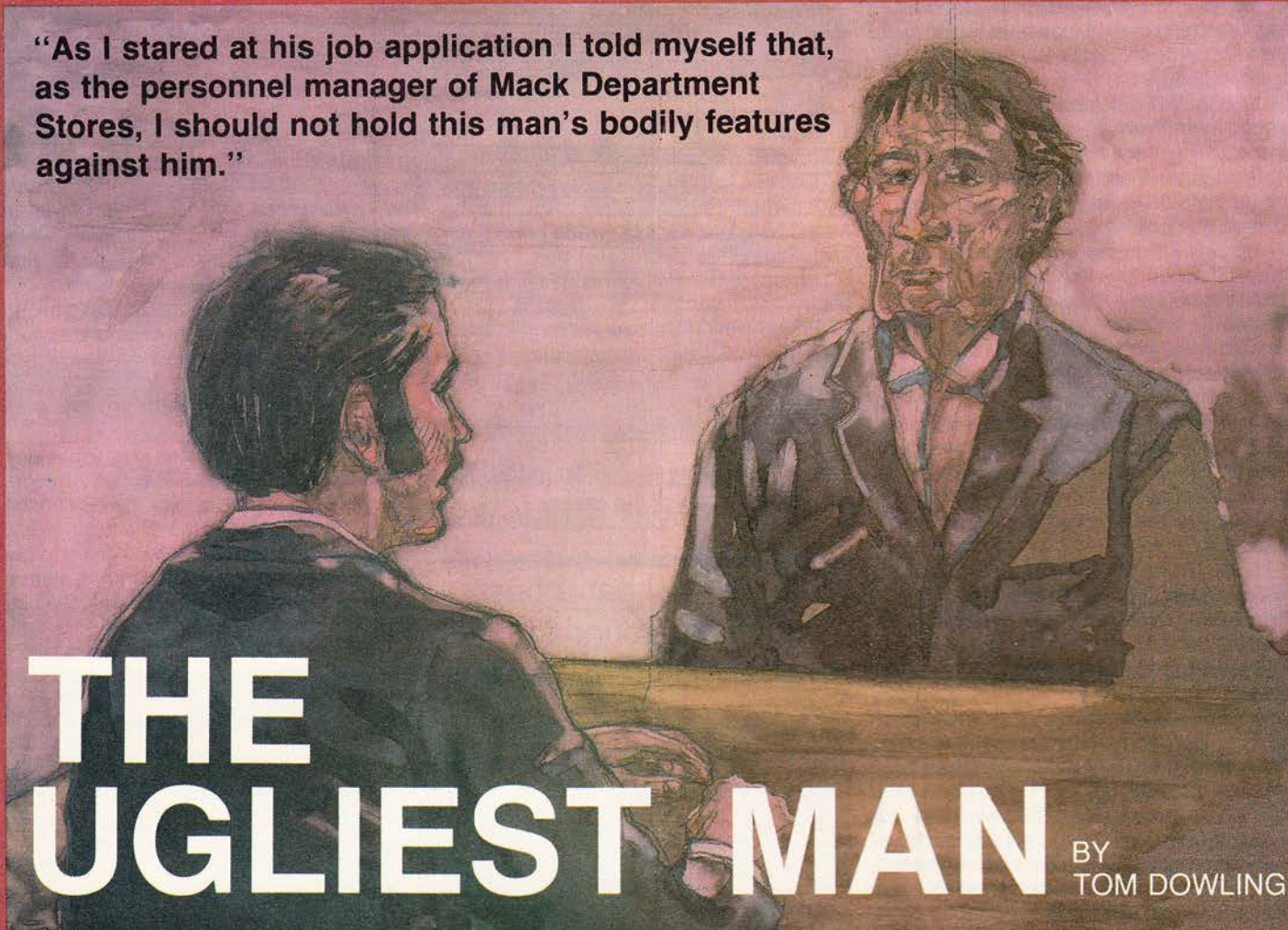
"Hey, do me a favor, would ya?"

"No problem. Consider it done."

I couldn't hold it back any longer, though. I started guffawing. I mean, after all, I owed myself that much.

Clyde laughed, too, but authoritatively. Even when he laughs, he sounds important. ★

"As I stared at his job application I told myself that, as the personnel manager of Mack Department Stores, I should not hold this man's bodily features against him."



THE UGLIEST MAN

BY
TOM DOWLING

The first time I ever saw him I shuddered. His very big body filled the chair next to my desk, and his ugliness was painful to look at. I fumbled to find words, then said: "The application says your name is Jess Grimm."

His huge head nodded, those small eyes staring at me. "That's right," he said, "that's right, sir." It was a very soft, gentle voice, not at all what one might expect to come from that body.

Yet, here before me was the most horrifying face I had ever seen. As I stared at his job application I told myself that, as the personnel manager of Mack Department Stores, I should not hold this man's bodily features against him. Each applicant for the job should be treated equally, should he not?

"Mr. Grimm," I said, "the card says you're presently employed by the Savage Carnival Company as—" I stopped suddenly. No need to embarrass this poor fellow.

His soft voice finished my sentence: "... as The Ugliest Man!" he said.

I shrugged. "You must understand that we have quite a lot of applicants for this job at our store."

"Yeah," he sighed. "But I don't want any pay for it, Mr. Thomas. I'll do the job for nothing!"

I shook my head. "If you should get the job, Mr. Grimm, you'll be paid what the ad

quoted."

His beady little eyes were very sad appearing, his mouth a thin, bloodless line under a large nose. His jowls hung limply, tugging at those boney cheeks.

"Why," I asked, "do you want this job when you're already employed? Our job only lasts a few weeks, you know."

"Yes, sir," he replied. "I'm only applying for the night shift because my boss at the carnival said he wouldn't mind if I could get a part-time job here and I can keep my daytime job there."

I kept staring at this man, wondering how I could even be considering him to work in the store. But something inside me said this poor man must have had more than his share of turndowns and disappointments when looking for work.

What other reason was there for a man to let himself take a carnival job in which he was called THE UGLIEST MAN?

"Have you had any experience for our job at the store?"

"No sir," he answered quickly. "But I know I would do a good job for you. Just give me a chance and you won't regret it. I promise you that. All I need is the chance, believe me, sir."

I moved his application form around on my desk, stalling for time. "I'll think it over," I said. "And I'll let you know one way or the other by tomorrow."

He slowly stood up then, that great height towering above my desk. It was not difficult to read the signs of defeat in that sad face, to imagine the grief he must many times have felt. Then he lumbered to the door laboriously. There he stopped and turned toward me again. I thought he was going to say something but he just nodded and went out, closing the door gently behind him.

The next day I couldn't stay away from the carnival grounds. This giant creature had been on my mind all night. I had gotten very little sleep thinking about his huge and grotesque body and face—and the beauty of his voice which sounded like an angel's! I had not yet decided which one of the eleven applicants for the job would get it and something drew me through the winter chill into the carnival grounds.

Once there, I went directly to the wagon of the owner, a Mr. Savage, a blading man in thick-lensed glasses. I told him that Grimm had come to my office and asked for the advertised temporary job saying that he had permission. Savage wasn't surprised. "He told me all about it," he said. "You gonna give the poor slob the job?"

"I'm trying to decide," I said.

He laughed then. "Well, that's a switch. He ain't never come that close before!"

"You mean he's tried before?"

"You bet," Savage grinned. "The poor

fool tries every year at about this time, wherever we are, for maybe fifteen-twenty years now, to get a nutty job like that. I never get in his way. What for? He never gets the job!"

"Why in the world does he want it?" I asked.

"Man, if you look like him, if you're hated like he is, wouldn't you want a change of pace, mister?" Savage handed me a ticket then. "Here, go see for yourself. It's the second tent."

Taking the ticket I walked outside and went to a tent with a big sign before it reading: *Come see THE UGLIEST MAN for yourself!* There was a barker out front calling for customers: "If you got the nerve, ladeez and gents, come in and see THE UGLIEST MAN in the whole world! If you got a weak heart, though, you better stay outside. I dare you to come in and look at this horrible creature . . . just two-bits . . . step right up if you got the nerve!"

Handing over my ticket I went inside where there was already a pretty big crowd standing expectantly before a platform. In a short time a floodlight came on brightly pinpointing the stage and Jess Grimm came out from behind a screen, his big face streaked with paint to emphasize those tense features. Somewhere in the crowd I heard a woman scream and some of the men groaned. Many of the people rushed out quickly, their faces pale and frightened.

Poor Grimm did what he was being paid for, grimacing and stomping back and forth like a wild beast. But behind it all I could detect the sadness in those eyes as he watched the faces staring at him in disgust.

Finally it was over and I made my way behind the screen to a smelly dressing room. When he saw me he stood, shame on his face. "I wish you didn't come here, Mr. Thomas," he said.

I held back a shudder and said, "That job at the store, do you still want it, Mr. Grimm?"

I had never seen him smile before. "Do I? Just more than anything in the whole world," he said.

"Be there," I said. "At five tomorrow afternoon."

Turning to leave; I heard his voice. "Thanks, Mr. Thomas. You don't know what it means to me, sir!"

I wanted to be there when he started the next day on the job, but got tied up in other business matters and couldn't get there until almost eight that night and went straight to the toy department, hoping against hope that I hadn't made a terrible mistake in hiring that man.

The place was jammed full, and there he was, that ugly face hidden behind a lovely white beard and the huge body straining in a red suit. Those once sad eyes were now shining and bright. A small child sat on his lap, and their laughter joined, making very sweet music.

There was a long line of kids awaiting their turn to get up on this happy man's lap, and more were anxiously awaiting their turn to sit up there and tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas!★

AMAZING FACTS

BY JOHN A. JOHNSTON

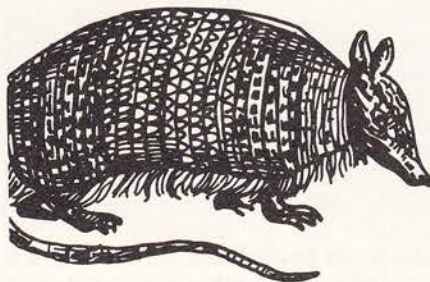
The wings of a midge, a gnat-like insect, beat 1,000 times per second, compared to a hummingbird's wingbeat of 50-60 times per second.



One-fourth of the world's mammals are bats.

The largest officially recorded hailstone—5½ inches in diameter, 17 inches in circumference, 1½ pounds—fell July 6, 1928 on Potter, Nebraska.

The gray squirrel's fur isn't gray. Each hair has a series of colored bands: black, brown, yellow, and white. In the winter all hairs are tipped with white to help soften its silhouette against the snow and camouflage it from predators.



The wandering albatross' wings are longer than those of any other bird, measuring 11 feet from tip to tip, and the bird has been known to fly up to 6,000 miles over open seas.

The so-called glass frog has transparent skin over its stomach, so you can see its heart and lungs.

The Philippine goby, less than one-third of an inch long, is believed to be the world's smallest fish.



The English or house sparrow has 14 neck bones, twice as many as the giraffe.

The blue whale's blood vessels are so large, a fully grown trout could easily swim through most of them.

The armadillo is the only animal other than man capable of contracting leprosy.

CONFRONTATION AT BEAR LAKE

BY GROVER BRINKMAN



"Their pockets had been emptied. Not a bit of food, or even a match. LaTouche had invaded their cabin as they slept, yanked them out of bed, ordered them to dress. They had been hustled out to waiting sleds. Whips cracked over the dogs and they headed into the night."

Within an hour they would perish. There was no hope of rescue, of survival, once they left the tiny fire burning itself out in the lee of the black glacial boulder.

Johnny Shay listened to the whine of the gale, and his young face grew bitter. He stole a glance at his father, hunched near the fire, and his own misery grew more acute. He was well aware that his father was suffering greatly from the sub-zero cold, and mentally from the realization that had he not forsaken his urban pastorate to be a missionary in this forgotten area so near the Arctic Circle, they would now be safe and sound.

Yet strangely Johnny felt no remorse. It had been a heroic adventure, coming to this far-north outpost. He had seen a great transition take place in his father. His face had softened, his voice had a new hearti-

ness about it. For the first time in years, his father was happy in the day-by-day progress of building up the old post mission, counselling these isolated people.

But they had made an enemy. Jean LaTouche, who ran the supply store and illegally sold whiskey and other illicit goods to the Eskimos and Indians, had warned them to leave months ago.

"Your silly God!" he had scoffed. "You have tongue filled with honey. You make them believe. Mon dieu, you turn them into softhearted women! They buy no more from LaTouche! You teach them the value of their furs. You must go back to the city!"

Mr. Shay had smiled, disregarded their warning. But now Johnny realized that LaTouche had not spoken in vain. Their lives would be forfeited, so cleverly and diabolically that the law would not even question.

Out of the night, suddenly they heard a long-drawn, plaintive wail. "Wolves!" Johnny said.

"Wolves never attack humans," his father assured. "We need not fear the wolves, just the blizzard."

Johnny sobered. "We haven't a chance, father! Bear Creek is the nearest post, fifty miles away. No one can walk that far in a blizzard. And we'd be facing into the gale!"

Their pockets had been emptied. Not a bit of food, not even a match. LaTouche had invaded their cabin as they slept, yanked them out of bed, ordered them to dress. They had been hustled out to waiting sleds. Whips cracked over the dogs and they headed into the night.

"The wind, she blow high!" LaTouche had smirked. "It is too bad that missionary is such a—what you call it—a greenhorn?"

Johnny reflected that anyone who found

their frozen bodies days later might read in the snow a simple tale: two strangers, new to the North Country, evidently enroute to Bear Creek, the victims of a blizzard.

Miles from the post, LaTouche stopped the sleds, unbound them. Johnny looked at his father with his finely chiseled face, a strange mask of frosted eyebrows and blue-veined cheeks. They stood there, already numb and mute with cold, while LaTouche cut away their bonds.

Then he led them down a slope where black glacial rocks reared up from the snow. Behind one of the rocks, an Indian helper dumped an armful of wood, scooped a depression in the snow, got a fire going.

LaTouche huddled over the blaze, extended his hands. "The fire," he said, "she feel good, eh M'sieu? Get plenty warm before you start for Bear Creek!"

He laughed at his own grim humor. Then his face sobered, while he yanked Johnny to his feet, flung his other arm in a wide arc. "It is nice out there—nothing but snow—no trees, no wood. The Indians leave now with furs for Bear Creek. I go back to post. All you have to do is follow trail of Indians—"

He laughed again, pulled the hood of the parka tight against his face, turned to the sled. Johnny saw two Indians take the remaining sled, head into the night.

LaTouche picked up his whip, cracked it sharply over his dogs, cursed them.

"He's even mean to his dogs," Johnny's father said as LaTouche left them.

Since the fire was burning low, Johnny threw on the last bit of wood, glanced at his father. Jonathan Shay was either too numb with cold to raise his head—or he was praying.

Death faced them, with time running out. Yet Johnny somehow felt no fear. What was responsible for his strange calmness? Was God here at his side? Was his father talking to God? He hoped that some miracle might take place to spare them, but he was too practical to believe that such a

thing could happen. There was no hope of rescue, of reaching Bear Creek. They were destined to die.

"Possibly we *can* make it to Bear Creek," he suggested to his father.

Jonathan Shay raised his eyes. "Son, that's wishful thinking, and you know it," he said. "We might make five miles, ten, but not fifty—"

Suddenly the crafty, cruel plan of LaTouche festered in Johnny's mind and he broke out in a bitter tirade at their fate. But suddenly he felt his father's hand on his shoulder.

"Don't, Son!" Jonathan Shay said. "Only an illiterate like LaTouche would think of a plan as diabolical as this. It's—it's even poetic. Two greenhorns freeze to death because we don't know how to take care of ourselves in a blizzard."

"We'll fight every step of the way," Johnny said. "We're not quitters."

But his father wagged his head in the negative.

"You mean we'll just sit here and freeze to death?"

"No!" For minutes Jonathan Shay sat thinking, finally raised his head. "We'll surprise LaTouche by doing something he least expects. We'll backtrack to the post instead of going on to Bear Creek, follow his tracks."

"We can't do that, Father!" Johnny said. "LaTouche will kill us on sight!"

"I believe you're right. But we might have a chance—"

Johnny scanned the whirling snow beating across the windfall. Backtracking to the post, perhaps ten miles distant, would be the lesser of the two evils. If in some way they could outfox LaTouche. But even ten miles in this blizzard, without dogs, food or a sled seemed an impossibility. Yet it was their only chance.

The fire was nothing but a handful of red embers now. They warmed their hands for a last time, headed into the night, following LaTouche's trail.

But soon this was an impossibility because the wind was fast erasing the tracks.

One thought was uppermost in Johnny's mind: they must keep moving. If they stopped, in minutes they would freeze. He kept stumbling ahead, breaking trail. He found himself counting his steps. How many did it take to make a mile? Let's see, three feet to each step; 5,280 feet in a mile. That would be slightly more than 1,700 steps.

Suddenly his father stumbled, fell. With terror in his heart, Johnny helped him to his feet. In the eerie half-light of the Arctic night, Jonathan Shay's wan face was expressionless.

The wind became more vicious. Johnny felt the cold creeping through his body, in a penetrating numbness that started at his feet. His father stumbled for the second time, rose to his feet with difficulty. Time passed slowly with leaden wings that seemed an eternity. They wouldn't make it! The cold would win.

Suddenly from out of the night there came a babble of short, vicious cries. Dark shapes came into focus. "Wolves!" Johnny said. "They're all around us—"

"That's odd!" his father said. "Wolves never act like this!"

They stumbled ahead. Momentarily Johnny tripped over something in the trail. At first he presumed it was a piece of driftwood, but this was a treeless plain—then he saw it was the body of LaTouche.

"His leg is broken for one thing," Johnny said upon examination. "He's near death."

"He whipped the dogs too much," his father said in observation, "and they turned on him. Here's the overturned sled."

Johnny's exploring hands found something else, a rifle. He tested its mechanism. Fiery eyes gleamed at them. Now he knew why the wolves had grown so brave—the body in the snow. He fired at the first animal he saw. The wolf went down, and immediately it was pounced on by others in the pack. He fired again, and again.

"What do we do with LaTouche?" he asked his father.

"We'll put him on the sled."

Finally they were ready to continue their



"Death faced them, with time running out. Yet Johnny somehow felt no fear. What was responsible for his strange calmness. Was God here at his side? Was his father talking to God?"

"Why did you not leave me to die?" he asked at last. "It was unthinkable," Johnny began. "I'll tell you why," Jonathan Shay said. "If a man is a Christian, God teaches us to love even our enemies, to return good for evil . . ."



journey. Johnny picked up the tangled harness, tugged at the loaded sled. His father pushed. Somehow they got the sled into motion. The wind was a strange, moaning symphony as they forged ahead.

Hours later, frostbitten but jubilant, they reached their cabin at the post, pulled LaTouche inside. Johnny added new wood to the fireplace, stood there beating his arms against his body to restore circulation.

Jonathan Shay started the laborious task of setting LaTouche's broken leg. The half-breed, conscious now, grimaced in pain, but there was a mysterious gleam in his piercing eyes.

"Why did you not leave me to die?" he asked at last.

"It was unthinkable," Johnny began.

"I'll tell you why," Jonathan Shay said. "If a man is a Christian, God teaches us to

love even our enemies, to return good for evil."

For minutes LaTouche said nothing while he pondered these strange words. Finally he met their gaze.

"Mon dieu!" he said. "You are the queer ones. I try to kill you because my laws say you are enemy. But you pay me back like friend. M'sieu, perhaps you had better teach me more about your God!" ★



Head'en fer Rendezvous

We're Head'en fer the NATIONAL FCF RENDEZVOUS on July 24-27, 1984. Pack yer gear and meet us at the High Adventure Ranch at Hungry Horse, Montana.

THIS ISSUE'S FUNNIEST JOKES

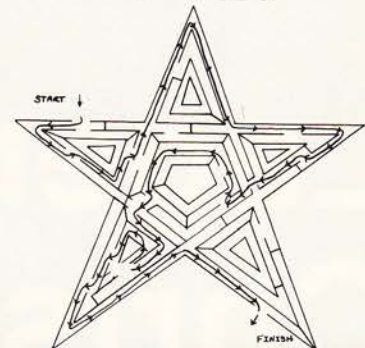
Customer: Is this a secondhand store?
Clerk: Yes. Can I show you something?
Customer: Yes. I want a secondhand for my watch.

Ned: I've owned this car for ten years and never had a wreck.
Ted: What you ought to say is that you've owned this wreck for ten years and never had a car.

COMEDY CORNER



ANSWER TO
SEE-THE-LIGHT MAZE
FROM PAGE 6.



Jokes submitted by Warren BeBout, Atascadero, California

Commander: What is a volcano?
Boy: A mountain with hiccups.

Why did Santa Claus use only seven reindeer this year?
 He left Comet home to clean the sink.

Minnesota Royal Ranger: It gets so cold here in the winter that we have to put heaters under the cows to milk them.

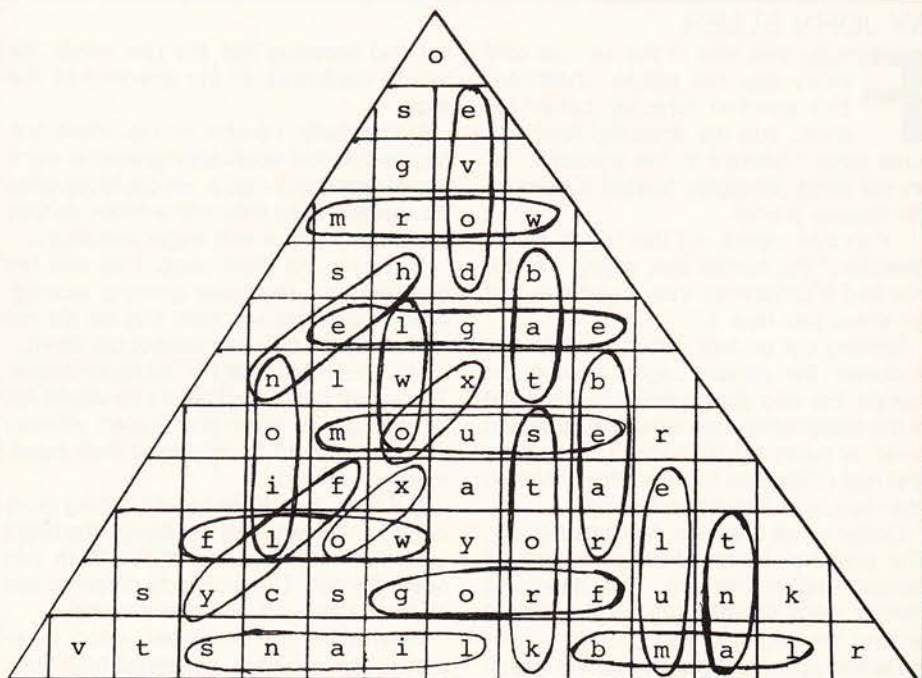
Texas Royal Ranger: That's nothing. It gets so hot back home that we have to feed the hens ice water so they won't lay hard-boiled eggs.

Customer: When I bought this cat, you told me he was good for mice. He doesn't go near them.

Pet Shop Clerk: Well, isn't that good for mice?

Ken: Why were the Rangers so tired on April 1st?

Len: Because they had just finished a 31-day March.



ANSWER TO ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE PUZZLE FROM PAGE 7.

To the preacher's amazement, the big thick Christmas tree he had almost finished cutting down turned out to be two single trees standing side by side.



BY JOHN ELLER

Foggy mist was in the air that cold wintry day just before Christmas. The weather forecast called for snow, and the dropping temperatures gave credence to the prediction as an old jalopy struggled toward a farm on the Kansas prairie.

"You can check all the fence rows, preacher," the farmer was saying, "and if you find a Christmas tree anywhere, just go ahead and take it."

Striking out on foot with a hatchet and bucksaw, the parson began making the rounds. He was disappointed to find most of the evergreens were either too large, too small, or badly out of shape. This was the first real Christmas tree his three children ever had, and it must be just right!

Colder winds began to blow freezing rain. The preacher tightened his cloak around himself and pushed on. The darkening clouds were threatening as the timber around him began to ice.

He was about ready to give up the search when suddenly, just ahead, he saw what looked like the perfect tree! Adjusting his

hat and pressing into the raw winds, he moved cautiously in the direction of the prize.

Momentarily, he was on his knees cutting the tree that would soon grace the warm family room back home. He could visualize his children, eyes wide with wonder, as they looked at the tree with eager anticipation.

Suddenly, he drew back. This was not one tree, but two trees growing side-by-side! They were so close that he did not realize it until one was almost cut down.

He shook his head in disappointment. This would never do! Half a tree would not be enough for three starry-eyed children who had worked for weeks on their hand-made ornaments.

But then, he had an idea! Looking more closely at the two trees, he thought he might wire them together and make them into one! Why not? The prospects delighted him as he prepared to continue his work.

Meanwhile, the two trees stood in silence. The preacher wondered how often they both had longed to be Christmas trees, but knew no one would ever want just half

a tree. But when he decided to take them both, he imagined the trees drying their eyes and happier than they had been in their entire lives.

The parson took the trees home, bound them together as he planned, and placed them in a holder. He topped one with a star, and the other with an angel. He named them "Cee" and "Dar," and watched as three happy children decorated the little unwanted trees.

Everyone who saw the twin trees said they made the prettiest Christmas tree they had ever seen! The two trees stood tall by the big bay window looking out on the new-fallen snow. Carolers making fresh tracks by the lamppost gazed at the two trees in wonder.

There are many people who at Christmastime feel just like those two trees. They feel inadequate, unwanted, and even helpless. What everyone needs is the Lord Jesus Christ to make them complete and whole again. Standing close to Jesus, limb in limb, our lives become fulfilled. ★