

# Orange County Observer

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*There were many things  
done in silence with an overstrain,  
and comes a sinking sense of dejection  
there.*

*A few hours much worse than vain.  
A few moments slow will perpetrate  
all the movements of a man;  
but in those seven years, that thou dost  
waste,*

*so much need—they passed thee by in  
sleep;*

*so thou art young!*

*Then again, when watching and glad,  
The heart pulse moves while its tense  
strings strain;*

*But make little sound fingers speak a sad  
And solemn voice that strikes the music  
still;*

*The eyes that have a told  
A portion of time; but a third of all  
Are lost to us in the previous torpor;*

*And then—*

*Cast out, Cast out, in Indigo!*

face lighting up. "I didn't expect—" "No, I know you didn't," said Best, in his driest business way. "I say, Hannah, you won't close the kitchen door since Uncle Silas went away? There ain't nobody sleepin' there?"

"No, why?" "We got some feed I'd sort o' like stored there over night, if you hadn't no other use for the room."

"I'm sure you're welcome," said Hannah, cheerily. "What is it?"

"A grizzly bear!"

Hannah gave a start.

"Aliv?"

"Bless your heart, no, child. As dead as they nails in Methusalem's coffin." Stuffed! A fancy-front door sign for Jennie's new fur store up in Parkersdale. I might leave it at Stokes' but the cooperator get pawed and handled over by all the idlers and never do well.

that collect around the stage, soft meble he wouldn't be no use for a sign by the time we got him safe to Parkersdale. So, if you wouldn't mind, Hannah, it would be a great obligation to me?"

"Mind? Oh, I shan't mind in the least," cried Hannah, the shaly blue eyes sparkling.

And she stood by, greatly amused, while the stage-driver and Billy Best between them hoisted the enormous, stuffed monster out of the stage-coach up the narrow path, where the crickets were sleepily closing the lemon and purple stems wherewith they had welcomed the sunshiny, spring day, and still borders of box distilled their aromatic perfume, and bestowed it safely in the nearest angle of the kitchen best room, where Uncle Silas had so recently slept the sleep of the righteous, on a still little cot bed, with a husk mattress and a gorgious patchwork quilt.

"We've never had a bear for a lodger before," cried Hannah, easily, "though I used often to say—didn't I, Natty," to her little brother, who stood by—"that Uncle Silas was quite as cross as any bear could be?" Natty, do you think this fellow will give us the nightmare?"

"I guess not," Natty answered, soberly.

"Now mind, Nathaniel, you don't touch the creature," said Best, gravely surveying his arrangements. "These here striped animals are plumb-full of arsenic, and all other sorts of poisons, and who knows what might happen?"

"Natty is not a meddler," said Leander Stokes, who kept the store, a heavy man with a florid complexion and a soft hat wedged on the back of his head,

"Boss, and such a passenger abroad?"

Billy Best, amaz'd, with the machinery, "Boss, Mr. Gringle's new grist mill?"

Leander Stokes. "But I knew I could do it if I took the short cut through the den!"

"Coach is a comin', chit," said Leander Stokes, who kept the store, a heavy man with a florid complexion and a soft hat wedged on the back of his head,

"Boss, and such a passenger abroad?"

Billy Best, amaz'd, with the machinery, "Boss, Mr. Gringle's new grist mill?"

Hannah shook her head.

Best stood a moment with preoccupied eyes and contracted brows, then departed.

Hannah went on cooking supper little Natty, after indulging himself with a prolonged stare at the shaggy thing in the bed room, returned to his sum in indifference, and the eager audience at Stokes's store were sorely discomfited.

Natty was off to school when Best and his express wagon arrived to carry the grim, tortured hostage.

"Yes, I know," said he, answering the vague questions put by Hannah's eyes, "but it's simple enough when you've got the gun. He's safe now on the other side of the line, thank goodness! He comes all the way from New York packed inside that skin, in the case there ain't money enough to pay him to do it again—not a cent more does hang in the balance, and the straw and musks out of your new sal's mattress to stuff the old one with and sewed it up good and strong. That thimble and needle and skein of thread been thread of yours in twelve hours was mighty handy, I tell you. And then we left the sal's in the corner, and got it cleaned as we could. And you're a good girl, Natty. Hannah Perry, though, you'd be a thiberga."

Leander Stokes, "I'll be a thiberga?"

"That's nonsense, Natty," said the brave little elder sister. "But if you like, I'll go down and unlock the door on Kitchen side."

"Not yet, Hannah," pleaded the child.

"I'd rather you'd stay here. Wait until after I am asleep."

"What a little goose it is!" said Hannah, laughing.

But she sat some time at the glass, putting her hair into coqueting puffs, and then read her mighty chapter, so that Natty's even regular breathing at last convinced her that he had forgotten all his apprehensions in slumber.

When 9 o'clock came, Hannah Perry went quietly to her room, as usual.

"Sister," said Natty, "soon I leave the door between our two rooms open. I somehow, can't help thinking of that studied bear."

"But the bear can't hurt us, Natty."

"No, but this glass goes shone so, and reflected so fierce."

"That's nonsense, Natty," said the brave little elder sister. "But if you like, I'll go down and unlock the door on Kitchen side."

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"I don't think it's really necessary for me to go down," thought she. "But still, since I promised Natty—"

And taking the candlestick in her

hand, she glided noiselessly down the stairs.

To her surprise the kitchen, which she had left dark and silent, was lighted from the bed room, whose door was ajar.

A man sat on the side of the bed.

He was evidently eating bread and meat.

Beside him stood Billy Best, with a flat,

water-cooled bottle in his hand.

At the sound of Hannah's footsteps they both started.

The strange man would have made for the door, but Best detained him.

"Stop," said he in a suppressed voice, "you can't be afraid. She's game—game to the backbone. You've found our secret, Hattie," he added, "but we aren't afraid to trap you. It's Royal Beasley, the defaulter—the best friend I've got in the world, barring no man, and the most used. The board president was in the scheme, and neither me nor my airtight directors, and the minute things went wrong, they all backed out, and left me to suffer single-handed, for it. But he won't, not if I can get him safe across the Canada line, eh, old boy?" Yes" was the gay Hattie's startled glance toward the heap of fur in the corner, that's the way he came, all packed around with hay, and no breathing-place but the hole in the beast's red mouth, and one or two air holes we make where nobody would suspect what they were for. And a pretty hard seige he's had of it, too poor fellow! And now, my girl, is the time to show your pluck, and I know you've got plenty of it. Trust everything to me; only keep silent. Go back to us, and leave me to manage."

Without a word of remonstrance, Hannah obeyed.

Once back in the drowsy atmosphere of little Natty's serene breathing, it seemed as if the scene down stairs must have been the fragment of a fevered dream. In the sound of muffled steps, the occasional murmur of suppressed voices, the ease of opening and closing of windows below, forsooth this conclusion.

Not a wisk did Hannah Perry sleep

all that April night. She lay there wide

awake, listening and wondering, her

heart beating at a fevered pace, while

she repeated, over and anon, to herself,

"Will Best is there. I can trust Will Best."

Soon after midnight, however, the furtive noises subsided into silence; and when in the morning Hannah descended with Natty trailing close at her heels into the farmhouse kitchen bore no signs of last night's invasion.

"Your father ain't come home yet, I suppose?" said Best on the threshold.

"He isn't coming home to-night," said Hannah. "He's gone to Wolf Hollow to sit about hiring a man for the spring work."

"Yes," said Hannah. "I'll open the door for you."

Hannah shook her head.

Best stood a moment with preoccupied eyes and contracted brows, then departed.

Hannah went on cooking supper little Natty, after indulging himself with a prolonged stare at the shaggy thing in the bed room, returned to his sum in indifference, and the eager audience at Stokes's store were sorely discomfited.

"Not coming home to-night?"

Hannah shook her head.

Best stood a moment with preoccupied eyes and contracted brows, then departed.

"Ain't he funny?" chuckled Natty, poking his finger into the far sides of his creature, and wondering how he ever could have been so timid of him the night before.

And Hannah looked at the grizzly as she half believed the whole thing was vision of the night.

Natty was off to school when Best and his express wagon arrived to carry the grim, tortured hostage.

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"Wal, that is too mean," said Zenith Powell. "I never seen a grizzly."

While Leander Stokes, disappointed

in his hopes of money-making, relieved

his mind by putting an extra penny on

the next pound of cheese, when he sold

to a little girl and selling the second

grade of shag tobacco at first grade

prices to two raffish miners.

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