

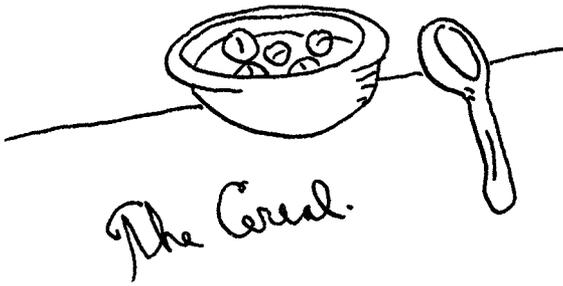
A Wonderful Tale

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Chapter 1

The milk was in the bowl. The cereal in the milk was puffed up and kind of exploded from sitting for a while in the milk. The body did not stink too strong yet. It takes 3-4 days for a body to become extremely smelly.

The policeman got into his car. He felt good. It was Friday. Not a day of a lot of crimes.



Chapter 2



The flies were real bad that year. I remember it. They were the size of grapes.

The policeman rolled along in his car, through the fields. His car went fast, then faster. Too fast. suddenly he ran over a body.

Chapter 3

Dimitri Warnock was a famous guitar player. He finished his concert at the saloon and got onto his motorcycle as the fans came around him to say praises. Laughing thankfully, he rode off into the distance. One of the fans, Eustace K. Dobbs, looked perhaps too strongly at him as he rode off.

He went onto the country road where his cousin lived. It was far out into the country. He began to rev the bike up fast, then too fast. Soon he was going way too fast. He was going to stay with his cousin, and he was Hell Bent.



Chapter 4

Dimitri was flying down the country lane. Corn plants were on either side of him. They were blurred, he went so fast.

Suddenly, he ran over a body.

Thump-thump.

Dimitri knew better than to go back and see what was going on. Often times such a situation is a trap where a body is thrown into the road and you run over it, then when you go back a third person kills you.

He threw up a big rooster tail of dust and went tearing down the lane. Soon he had arrived at his cousin's house and they ate corn bread and spicy stew.

"How was your concert," said his cousin.

"It was good," said Dimitri. "Thank you for the food."

Meanwhile, on the country lane, an unseen hand pulled the body slowly back into the corn plants.



Chapter 5

The bobber sat in the water on top of the lake. It suddenly began to jerk, and the small boy reeled in his fish. Only, it was not a fish. It was the hat of a state trooper. He went home later and showed it to his papa, who knew that something was not right.



Chapter 6

His old pick-up truck's winch pulled the state trooper's car out of the deep, muddy lake. Mud squished between his toes. There was no dead body in the car, or in the trunk. He released the car and let it sink back into the muck. He did not want trouble.

Dimitri warnock had been on a long tour and wanted to do some simple fishing. He came into the clearing just as the last bubble from the state trooper's sinking car popped.

The men looked at each other. Not a lot of people knew about this lake.



Chapter 7

Dimitri and the boy's papa looked at each other. Even though the papa was guilty of hiding evidence, he had good country charm, and that went a long way. Soon he and Dimitri were spinning yarns and telling tales out of school. It turned out that Dimitri had known about the lake from a while back.

From the bushes, an unseen eye watched them. They did not notice when the hidden figure darted off. Was it Eustace Dobbs?

Chapter 8

The pretty girls from the local college were having a great time. They were driving in a Jeep, and they wanted to go skinny-dipping in a remote lake. There were five of them, and their hair blew in the air as the Jeep drove fast down the country lane. No one was around, so the driver pressed more on the gas pedal. Soon they were going fast, too fast. Soon it was too late.

Before they knew it, they ran over a body.

Chapter 9: The Moaning Hole

Far back in the woods 3.5 miles from the lake was a deep sink-hole, ringed with torn roots that made it an inescapable prison. Scattered here and there on the ground was old trash, mostly pull-tab beer cans and shell casings. There was also a map that had been extremely rained on.

From down in the dark hole came a quivering moan, like the person was so sick and scared they wanted to die. Or, was it a person at all?

Chapter 10

Dimitri Warnock and the boy's papa laughed as they remembered their fishing experiences from earlier in the afternoon. They sat at the counter of the Rawhide bar, a tough bar not too far from the lake. They had golden, crisp beers and they snapped the provided peanuts open as snacks.

A shady figure sat at the far end of the bar, unseen by them. It was Eustace K. Dobbs. He wore a false outfit and there was malice in his heart.



Chapter 11: Eustace K. Dobbs

Eustace K. Dobbs had grown up a wealthy boy in nearby Susquahota county, the son of a successful singer and musician. Early parts of his life included trips to Europe on a magnificent ship, and bow and arrow lessons in France. However, he was not raised well. His father always wanted him to be a successful singer and musician like him. Oh how he would try to please his papa, but he had a "tin ear" and could not carry a tune. In the end he failed his dad, and his dad died a man who had been failed by his only son. The weight of this was too much to bear.

As a result, Eustace K. Dobbs was a broken-minded man, and he lived in a world of broken ideas.

Chapter 12

Eustace K. Dobbs pretended to talk on the telephone that was near the bathroom. He said phrases about how nice the weather was, and about how high the prices of things had gotten lately. Dimitri Warnock walked by, because he had some beer in him and the pressure on his bladder was intense. Soon Dimitri had walked into the bathroom and Eustace looked around to make sure nobody was watching.

Eustace ducked into the bathroom six seconds later. Six seconds is the amount of time it takes a man to really get into a good pee. He knew that Dimitri would be focused on the pleasure of his peeing sensation, and that he could have his way.

Soon Dimitri was down in the hole in the forest, a huge bruise on his forehead. There were women there.

Chapter 13

Eustace K. Dobbs finally had things arranged the way he wanted. Dimitri Warnock, the famous guitar player, was in his trap-hole, and he was down there with a passel of kidnapped college girls. The girls knew full well who Dimitri was, but the situation was not erotic, as Eustace had expected it would be. In fact the captives were not acting erotic at all.

Eustace watched them for a full hour before growing angry. He stared and spat as the captives whined and begged for his mercy. He stood up and drank beer solidly for seven minutes.

When he was done, he had a new, separate idea. He would drive his truck into the hole at a high rate of speed. His truck was exactly the size of the hole so he would be sure to crush all of the people.

He got into his truck and backed it up a good fifty yards. In his mind he pictured a noose made out of a living snake. Then, he dropped acid.

Chapter 14

The boy's papa could not believe that Dimitri would simply disappear from the bar like that, without so much as a comment. He knew that something was wrong. He had felt, the entire time, that today was going to be pretty screwed-up. Now he was sure.

The boy's papa went outside and noticed some tire tracks that were pretty tell-tale. They displayed too much use of power, like the rider was trying to make a quick getaway with a lot of extra weight on his bike. He knew this was what had happened to Dimitri. He called it an intuition.

The boy's papa knew that Dimitri was being taken to the woods. He tracked the tire trail out of the parking lot and soon he was at the dirt off-roads ramp that led off the major highway.

Chapter 15

To look into the mind of Eustace K. Dobbs was to look into the barrel of a gun. He had wanted Dimitri Warnock and the girls trapped in the hole to have a crazy sex orgy, because in his mind this would finally show his dead papa that his failed son had done some good.

Now, high on acid, he revved the engine of his old pickup truck and planned on crushing the mock orgy to death. Because acid is an extremely unpredictable drug, however, he simply stayed there in neutral, with his foot pressed down all the way on the accelerator, the engine screaming at a terrible RPM for several hours as the smoke from the burning crankcase oil rose into the air.

The boy's papa saw the smoke, and knew something was wrong. He carefully drove closer to the plume, and then took in the situation. In an instant, he knew what to do.

He pulled the handmade knife from his belt loop and crawled carefully toward Eustace Dobbs's truck.

Chapter 16

The boy's papa slid carefully under the truck as its engine screamed. He had good knowledge of motors and knew where to cut the fuel line. Soon the scream of the engine died down like a pony that has been shot in the heart and starts to accept that it is passing from this earth.

He found a gun under some leaves nearby, and pointed it at the truck as he slowly advanced.

"I don't want to shoot you," he said. "I don't wait to shoot you in the brain."

The man in the truck said nothing. The boy's papa did not know that he was peaking on his acid trip.

"...But I will shoot you," he continued, "if you don't get out of that truck."

From down in the hole many of the girls screamed that they wanted help. But he knew that the best help he could give them was to subdue their captor.

Eustace peered out the window and to his high mind the boy's papa looked like he was a Chinese waiter holding a delicious tray of spiced, steaming won tons. In his mind he thought he stayed in the truck and told the man to bring him the won tons, but in reality he got out of the truck and advanced on the boy's papa.

The boy's papa was surprised to see the man wearing a police officer's uniform. But something wasn't right: the uniform was far too large for his frame. He knew right away that this cop was spurious.

His finger tightened on the trigger of the gun.

Chapter 17

When Eustace K. Dobbs got out of the truck he did not do what a body would expect. He began to do a simple hill dance and slap his heels as he jumped and sang.

Hey did diddle

The piggy's in the middle

The farmer grabs the bucket

The knife goes down the middle

This was the song that had made his father famous, the song that all people knew. It was a famous holiday song. The boy's papa was taken aback, as he like all people had good memories of this song.

Eustace advanced on the boy's papa, who stood transfixed by the familiar voice singing the old holiday song. Even though the voice was broken, the Dobbs family tone was unmistakable.

Chapter 18

An older man stood at the edge of the clearing, watching the terrible circumstances unfold. He was a good, simple country man, and he watched the situation through good country eyes.

Eustace K. Dobbs had hypnotized the boy's papa with the famous holiday song, and came near to him fixing to wring his neck with his crazy hands. The boy's papa's gun hung in his hand at his side, forgotten.

Just as Eustace lifted his arms to commit the gruesome deed, the older man stepped forward onto the crunchy leaves. Eustace froze in his tracks as the man began to sing in perfect tone,

Hey did diddle

The piggy's in the middle

The farmer grabs the bucket

The knife goes down the middle

Hey dad daddle

The farmer grabs the paddle

The cows drink up the pig's blood

while the paddle kills the cattle

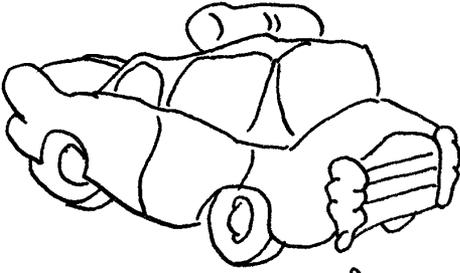
Hey dud duddle

They all lay in a puddle

The farmer's wife is laughing

As all the corpses cuddle

That is what did it, the secret third verse. Eustace's father had never included that third verse in his famous song, and had never sung it to anyone besides his son.



The Police Vehicle.

Chapter 19

Now it was Eustace's turn to be under the spell of the powerful song. He stood stock-still as the older man walked towards him, his voice the voice of memories.

"I've been watching you, son," said the older man. "You are a good boy."

Eustace fell to his knees and clawed at his own face. "NO!" he shouted. "NO!"

"You are a good boy, Eustace," he repeated.

Eustace hit his face hard against the clearing floor. "NO!"

"I want you to know I am proud of the pains you are taking to prove that you are a good boy," he said.

Eustace kneeled, panting, his face on the dirt, his eyes squinted shut in fury.

"I was hard on you, son," said the older man, as he slowly placed one foot in front of the other and came closer to Eustace's prostrate form. "I only wanted the best for you."

As Eustace began to cry his body shivered and shook, his ribs flexing and releasing inside his sweat-soaked shirt, with great lung-breaths, like an accordion, and he looked for all the world like a pig resigned unto fate.

With a lightning motion that suggested a lifetime of anticipation (and steeling against remorse), the older man pulled his gun and put a bullet into the thick of Eustace's brain. His body instantly lay still, and did not twitch even once.

The boy's papa looked at the face of the slain Eustace, and then at he who slew him. It was kin and kin.

Chapter 20

A fallen pine was lowered into the pit to serve as a ladder. One by one Dimitri helped the college girls climb up and out. The boy's papa grabbed them fireman's-grip as they arose, and led them to safety. Dimitri was the last up.

"Look at him," Dimitri said, motioning towards Mr. Dobbs, who knelt over his son a short distance away.

"Leave him be," said the boy's papa. As a father, he had had no choice but to consider this outcome at least once as he imagined his son's future. He knew there was no right thing to say.

"Fair 'nough," Dimitri sighed, as he turned away. "Let's get these folks to safety."

The boy's papa was all for that.

Chapter 21

It was a great day as Dimitri brought the whole of them to the safety of his cousin's nearby house. Everyone cleaned off in the outdoor ranch-showers, and blew bubbles with the provided soap as they played. By the time they were done drying off in the hot evening sun Dimitri and his cousin had spread out a wonderful table full of spicy stew, corn bread, baked potatoes, vinegared salad, fresh zucchini, and home-made peach Titus.

"I want everyone to know something very special," the boy's papa said, addressing the people as they sat and tucked into their full plates. They applauded him warmly.

"Thank you. I guess you are probably tired of surprises today, huh?" he quipped.

The people laughed. It was such a relief.

"Well, I have one more surprise. It's about my boy."

The people began to wonder excitedly. Was he a genius, and being accepted early to Loyola Marymount University in California?

"That's right," the boy's papa said, after a pause. "My son is a robot."

From his seat at a table near the front the boy smiled a wide, open-mouthed grin full of teeth, and while he grinned, without moving a muscle in his face, a tinny, distant voice from deep in his throat said, "SSSSSMILE!"

Everyone erupted into laughter. This was too good. Oh, how wonderful. How wonderful a tale.

THE END.

APPENDIX

It will be put forward in some circles that an explanation of why Eustace Dobbs' father seems to have faked his own death is due. That can be a fair question. It is not explained in the primary text, so I will address it here.

The world of the professional musician can be a crazy one, and can be the main pole of one's life. This was the unfortunate case with Mr. Dobbs. While his wife was at home raising their son Eustace, he would be on the road for weeks at a time, raising a ruckus and conveniently taking drugs. He did not keep home at heart and through the drugs he sank into dark hours, which turned into dark days, which became a life dark and full of hell. One morning he would awake to drink whiskey, only to find that a PCP rage had caused him to break his wrist the night before. With his left hand he worked the top off the whiskey bottle, only to have his shakes upset it and knock it into the gutter, pouring out its golden contents, which he would flop over and suck off of the concrete. One day, in the wrenches of a delerium tremens, he made the decision that he could not return to his family, and hurled his brain against a sewer wall in hopes of creating a deadly injury. As a result, he was in a coma for greater than a decade, recovering only recently to find a life of solitude and consideration in the woods where the shambles of his family lurked and could be protected.

However, in the character Dimitri Warnock I hope to also portray that the life of a professional musician can be a healthy, happy, responsible one.