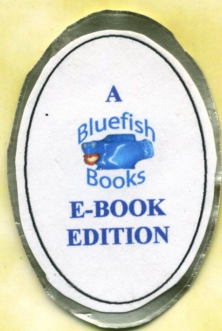




A Dinosaur Novel
...of sorts



John W. Cowart



GLOG



GLOG
A Dinosaur Novel Of Sorts

by
John W. Cowart

Bluefish Books



Cowart Communications
Jacksonville, Florida

www.bluefishbooks.info

GLOG

Copyrighted
2005
by
John W. Cowart

ISBN: 1-4116-3943-X
Library of Congress Control Number: 2005906651

Cover Design
by
Helen
www.heliosinteractive.com
www.elemental.name

Author's Disclaimer

The story in this novel is a work of fiction.

The author, who considers himself to be one of the world's foremost pseudo-scientists, carefully researched all background materials for this book; therefore, any resemblance whatsoever to real persons, geographic locations, material objects, Hebrew/Greek renderings, historical events, biological functions, or to any other element in the physical or spiritual worlds is purely a matter of utter blind luck.

Bluefish Books



Cowart Communications
Jacksonville, Florida

www.bluefishbooks.info



This book is dedicated
to
VIRGINIA

Who Knows Glog Best.
— jwc



For Joy in God's creation.

O Heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty; Open, we beseech Thee, our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works; that rejoicing in thy whole creation, we may learn to serve thee with gladness; for the sake of him by whom all things were made, thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Guidance.

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgement... Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of Wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path we may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For all Poor, Homeless, and Neglected Folk.

O God, Almighty and merciful, who healest those that are broken in heart, and turnest the sadness of the sorrowful to joy; Let thy fatherly goodness be upon all that thou hast made. Remember in pity such as are this day destitute, homeless, or forgotten ... Though they be troubled on every side, suffer them not to be distressed; though they be perplexed, save them from despair. Grant this, O Lord, for the love of him, who for our sakes became poor, thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

For Those in Mental Darkness.

O Heavenly Father, we beseech thee to have mercy upon all thy children who are living in mental darkness. Restore them to strength of mind and cheerfulness of spirit, and give them health and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

— from **THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER**

***The Words of Solomon, King of Israel,
wisest of men:***

I said in mine heart concerning the estate of mankind that God's purpose is to test men so they might see that they themselves are beasts.

For man is a creature of chance, just as beasts are creatures of chance. God breathed life into man and beast; and one identical fate befalls both: as one dies, so dies the other.

Man has no advantage over beast, for both pass their days upon the earth in vexation and vanity — and with hope.

At God's call both man and beast sprang up from dust; at His call, again to dust they both return.

And who knows whether the spirit of man alone mounts upward soaring, or whether the spirit of a beast only goes downward into the earth?

-- from ***THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES***

PROLOGUE

Sometimes Chesapeake Bay watermen, who sail skipjacks amid the Bay's islands to harvest crabs and oysters at dawn, say that they have glimpsed boo-daddies drifting over the shallows in the fog.

Nonsense!

Everyone knows that there's no such thing as a boo-daddy.

Benevolent spirits of drowned seamen never really do appear to wave skipjacks away from shoal water, or to point the way to the best oyster beds, or to warn of an approaching storm.

But the island-dwelling watermen — solid, sturdy, honest Methodists, every one — insist that they have seen something.

Sure, when pressed, they will admit that wisps of fog blown hither and thither by nearly imperceptible sea breezes can assume strange shapes.

The watermen will grant you that.

But then they will say, "Fog shapes? Could be. Could be... But I'll tell you true, God Almighty is the onliest one that knows for sure what all lives out there off the oyster shallows. The onliest one".

Maybe so.

After all, anything could be living out there.

The Chesapeake Bay proper stretches 195 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean; its 153 tributaries

draw water from as far north as Pennsylvania and upstate New York and from as far west as Tennessee. In places, the Chesapeake spreads to an expanse 30 miles wide. Although some 200-foot-deep holes and 90-foot-deep shipping channels mark the bottom, most of the Bay is comparatively shallow; its overall average depth is only 27 feet.

If you could look down on the Bay's 6,000 mile shoreline, you would see an intricate filigree of water laced with mud flats, marshes, islands, hammocks, tidal runs, creeks, shallows, oyster beds, sandbars, rivers, and inlets.

Anything at all could be living out there.

And no one would ever know it.

Yet, oddly enough, some of the Chesapeake's most inaccessible wetlands and backwaters lie close to heavily populated metropolitan areas.

Need proof?

Look over there.

See that little bit of chrome handlebar with the red rubber handgrip sticking up out of the black mud?

That's all that's visible anymore of some cowboy's once brand new Honda all-terrain vehicle.

So, while many people do live around the Bay, most tend to avoid the bogs, marshes and mud flats.

Yet, driven by mankind's eternal — at least on weekends with fine weather — quest for open water, they leave the dry land out-of-sight and head their yachts, sail boats, and pleasure craft out into the Bay's deeper areas.

Many weekend sailors scarcely realize that the Bay is alive with anything but nautical traffic.

Poor Sillies.

They miss so much wonder.

Because life abounds in the giant estuary.

Some of it as real as a crab. Some as ethereal as a boo-daddy.

The waters teem with shrimp and crabs, clams and oysters, and fish — Good Heavens, look at the fish: bluegills, rockfish, yellowtails, herring, shad, carp, catfish, jellyfish, starfish, flounder, menhaden. If it lives and swims anywhere, it's likely to live and swim in the Chesapeake.

Millions of waterfowl swarm in the sky above the Bay and their calls blend into a symphony of life. Geese honk. Ducks quack. Loons laugh. Heron warble. Red-winged blackbirds cling to stalks of cattail and twitter — all singing or squawking for the pure joy of being alive and free.

And in the marshes and forests along the muddy shoreline...

Who knows what all lives out there?

Raccoon, otter, weasel, mink, deer, possum, skunk, wildcat, cougar, bear... and perhaps other things.

Stranger things.

Some people who live near the Bay even claim that not all of the flickering blue-green lights that twinkle in the forest at dusk are fireflies — they say that some, the whiter ones, are lanterns carried by marsh fairies.

Proof?

In the morning you find a perfect ring of mushrooms growing where the fairies danced the very night before...

Which real beasts live in the forests and marshes around the Bay? Which creatures are only happy imaginings? Which are bottle visions? Who knows?

When Captain John Smith — who established the Jamestown colony, who was the beloved of the Indian princess Pocahontas, and who was the first European to see the Bay — when Captain John Smith

first tried to wade ashore in 1607... Something in the shallow water bit him.

Captain Smith almost lost his leg.

Here's another odd case: On a hunting trip in an Eastern Shore marsh in 1759, young Thomas Jefferson, who would later become the third President of the United States, shot at an animal which he identified as an elephant!

His diary says:

The Beast stood higher at the shoulder than the Elephants of the Indian or African variety. Its Tusks curved inward as well as Downward & thick shaggy Wool covered its body.

At the Report of our Muskets, the Creature raised its trunk and Bellowed at us loudly. Then it turned and ran from the Hole where it had been drinking into the viny woods where we could not follow; the Draft being too shallow for our Craft, we desisted from our Hunt for Fear of being Stranded on the Mudflats at the Tide's receding.

Curious.

Even today, recreational boaters on the Chesapeake report seeing unusual creatures ... even sea serpents.

When one yachtsman told a friend what he saw in the Bay, the friend said, "John, I'll bet you was commode-hugging drunk!"

Are the odd creatures reported in the Bay just bottle visions?

Not necessarily.

Perhaps some of them are.

But not all.

The Gulf Stream cuts close to the mouth of the Bay and fishermen have caught Tuna weighing in at 3,500 pounds, and eels over eight feet long. A few

swordfish have been seen in the Chesapeake. A few manatee. An occasional whale. A rare squid or seal....

And even one narwhale with a twisted ivory tusk five-feet long!

So, although biologists, ecologists and people in general have dabbled around the water's edge for years, perhaps the watermen are right:

Only God Almighty knows what creatures live and die in the vast expanse of tidal marshes and mud flats bordering North America's largest Bay...

He's the onliest one.

CHAPTER ONE

Maryland State Highway 450 winds east from the outskirts of Washington, D.C., through Bowie and Belair to Maryland's capital, Annapolis.

A leisure suburban blacktop in places, the highway drifts past hundreds of identical pastel boxes — Levitt-built homes, each one with a neatly trimmed green lawn and a candy-striped swing set in the back yard.

Once across the intersection with the roaring truck-route of Highway 301, the blacktop turns into a country lane dotted by rusty-tin rural mail boxes clustered on posts where dirt trails lead off to tobacco farms which crowned the countryside long before the housing developments or highways appeared.

In Autumn, Sunday drivers from D.C. or Baltimore cruise this road listening to soft music on their car radios and enjoying the splendor of changing golden maple leaves and the prosperous, comforting sight of harvested fields, orange pumpkin pyramids, brown tobacco leaves hanging in red drying barns, and bulging wire cribs overflowing with cobs of ripe yellow corn.

This pastoral setting with its growing suburban population would seem an unlikely area to be roamed by a huge, always-hungry, carnivorous beast.

But it is — because of the muskrats.

In a dozen places the road bridges marshes and tidal runs formed by nameless watery arms of the



Chesapeake Bay, the Severn, the Piscataway, or the South rivers.

Muskrats thrive in these marshes; their domed lodges, nests woven of marsh grass and reeds, can be seen from every little bridge along the road.

If you walk out on any of the bridges and stand quietly when no traffic vibrates the structure, and if you look down into the rich brown water, you often see the little animals swimming, gliding like sleek furry streamlined torpedoes beneath the surface.

The muskrats attract Glog.

But he seldom walks out on the bridges.

For one thing, the pavement cracks beneath his weight. He stepped out on a bridge once and one of the pilings splintered and the screech of twisting reinforcing wire in the concrete hurt his ears so bad they ached.

And for another thing, like most monstrous beasts, Glog is a nocturnal creature. And if a car happens along the road when Glog is in sight, the driver will inevitably flick up the brights hoping to make out that dark lumbering shape crossing the road. Glog hates that; the light pains his sensitive eyes.

Noise and bright light are among the few things which bring pain to Glog; so he avoids roads and bridges and casual contact with humans — whom experience has taught him are inevitably loud, if not very bright.

The other thing which causes Glog pain is hunger.

His metabolism demands that he eat almost continually.

Glog's favorite place to catch muskrats is a large flat rock which projects over the water just down the hill from his borrow. Years ago, Glog bit out a



shallow hollow in the stone to make a snug resting place for his front elbows. Constant use has smoothed the rock so it fits his form as comfortably as a long-used easychair.

After sunset each evening, Glog emerges from his den and settles on that flat rock.

He rests in the hollow place with his head and one arm hanging over the water.

He lies still.

Very still.

Anyone chancing to see him there might think he is only a massive hump on the rock.

Glog peers intently into the water waiting for a muskrat to swim past.

When one does, Glog rakes it up with his wide paw. He pinches the muskrat's tail between his thumb and first claw, rears back his huge head, and lifts the squirming, squeaking animal high above his open jaws. Then he lowers the muskrat and snaps it off at the base of the tail, chewing.

He never eats the tails.

Muskrat tails taste bony.

After eating each muskrat, Glog bows his head and says a brief prayer of thanksgiving for his food; then he flips the tail over his right shoulder. Twisting in the air, it falls on an enormous pile of cast-off tails left from former hunts.

Glog has hunted from that same rock since Indians lived on the high ground around the marsh. And muskrats, being orderly if stupid, have built their nests in the same places and swam along the same channel of water beneath the rock since time out of mind.

Mother muskrats bear huge litters of babies every few weeks of the breeding season; so hordes of



them live in the marsh providing food for numerous predators such as bald eagles, red foxes, wildcats and, of course, Glog. Although Glog eats several hundred pounds of muskrats each night, they are so prolific that there are always new muskrats swimming past his rock.

This is a good thing because, like a giant whale eating tiny plankton, Glog needs a lot of food.

Glog's metabolism, rapid as a humming bird's, urges him to eat and eat and eat. Glog was made for eating, and hunger gnaws at him just about all the time.

Glog craves food.

He needs food nearly as much as he needs air.

When the marsh ices over in winter and Glog can not get enough muskrats to eat, his belly hurts so bad he can not sleep and he sucks his thumb and whimpers in his bed.

At such times, hunger drives him out of his borrow at sundown and the beast is reduced to gulping huge mouthfuls of snow. But the snow melts in his hot gullet and his hunger pangs continue as bad as ever without relief.

But, thank God, most of the year muskrats are plentiful.

And on an especially good summer night, a, usually wary, large snapping turtle, round as a dinner plate, may drift too close to the bank and Glog will scoop him up. He loves the crunchy shell and the juicy innards.

He often saves snapping turtles in his bag for a snack to be savored in bed while reading.

Bookcases made from old wooden crab traps line the walls of Glog's den.



Handsome red or black leather bindings cover each book. Glog binds each one in his collection himself. And he embosses the spines with gold leaf titles.

His own bookplate — muskrats rampant holding a scroll engraved with his name in gothic script — adorns each cover.

Glog's book binding skill pleases him. He has spent many a cold day doing little else than resting before the fireplace sipping hot sassafras tea, munching snapping turtles, and watching the reflection of the fire dance on the golden spine lettering of his books.


One shelf in the den is devoted to slender, modest volumes of his own poetry. Glog felt it would be vain to letter his own poems with gold, so each volume bears only a sedate black title. His natural modesty forbids that he show his poetry to anyone — even if he had a single friend in the world he could show it to.

Glog is a better predator than poet, but here, for the first time in print anywhere, is one of Glog's poems; naturally, it's about Muskrats.

THE MUSKRAT

Thy tail is almost naked,
long, slender, and vertically flattened,
an oar, a scull, a rudder fin-like
sweeping the water as you swim.

The dainty toes of thy hind feet,
being partially webbed,
spread the water as you pass through
the rushes
dispersing ripples in stately arcs.
You may remain submerged
as long as mortal breath can last.



The upper fur of Muskrat gleams
chestnut,
lighter colored on the flanks.
The belly fur is pale and grey,
sometimes golden-tinted,
and very soft.
Yea, black-tipped guard hairs arise
above thy underfur,
waterproof, dense and lovely.

And beneath sleek fur breaths pink
flesh,
firm, sinewy, and succulent delicious.

O Prolific Dainty, Litter-bearing Lovely,
your young are born throughout the
year.
They scamper most numerous from the
nest.
Thy glorious breeding season is
perpetual.
The prepuccial glands between thy legs
enlarge,
attracting mate to mate, secreting musk,
promoting rut, insuring litters, insuring
food.

Praise be to Him who made thee and
me,
Eater and Eaten,
Lover and Beloved.

Glog does not limited himself to poetry; he has also written such works as *The Taste of Muskrat, Greatly Loved Food And Other Gastronomical Verses, Muskrat Moon*, and a horror epic entitled *Hunger*.

Hunger occupies much of Glog's thinking. He wakes hungry and must feed before even thinking of any lesser activity. When he hungers, Glog can not



concentrate on his poetry, or on tooling the leather for bookbinding, or anything else.

For Glog, holding off hunger takes precedence over all other endeavors.

A plaque on his wall says:

***Feeding is the most noble of activities,
the foundation upon which all else is built.***

“When the belly craves food, what can the mind say”, is a proverb Glog remembers his Father quoting.

“A hungry belly dreams of nothing but muskrat,” was another.

Hunger agitates a creature to fight its own love-sworn mate. A hungry mother will eat her own young. Of all the plagues and sorrows which sin has loosed upon the earth, Glog thinks hunger is the worst.

Even when winter comes and thick ice seals the muskrats beneath the surface making them harder to see and catch, even when hunger torments Glog, he feels compassion for hungry creatures and prays for the hunger of others — even humans.

Glog finds such prayers difficult.

He feels squeamish praying about the kind of food humans eat --Like other scavengers, they eat dead meat.

Disgusting, Glog thinks, But even buzzards and humans have to eat; so who am I to judge another's servant? Besides, hunger is a horror no creature on God's good earth ought to feel.

Oddly enough, Glog even prays daily for famine victims in Ethiopia — wherever that is.

Here's how he came to hear about Ethiopia:



Once at dawn, Glog was resting in the water beneath a duck blind before heading home to his den.

A duck blind is a hut on pilings with a board floor and low walls camouflaged with hanks of marshgrass; it serves humans hunting for ducks much as Glog's hunting rock serves him for muskrats.

Two enormous blue crabs, a jimmie and a sook, were doubling in the water beside one of the pilings and their movement caught Glog's attention.

As the crabs, slabs both of them, — In Chesapeake terminology a slab is the largest size crab — vigorously engaged in procreating their species, Glog watched in fascination.

Incidentally, in case you ever need to know if a crab is a male or a female: Turn the crab over — WATCH YOUR FINGERS, THEY DO SNAP! — the belly plates of a jimmie's shell join to make a perfect outline picture of the Washington Monument; the plates on the underside of a sook form a perfect picture of the United States Capital Building's dome. They really do ... just in case you ever need to know.

Anyhow, as Glog was absorbed in watching the crabs couple, a boat containing two human duck hunters rowed up to the blind.

Glog stayed very still.

The two men clambered out of their boat with their flasks and bottles and guns, and they settled into the blind to do some serious drinking and hunting.

Glog did not pay too much attention to their slurred babble about dogs, women, ducks and guns until their conversation blundered onto the subject of starving children in Ethiopia.



The humans actually began telling jokes, awful jokes, cruel jokes, about the poor hungry people in that far place.

"How many starving Ethiopian children can you pack into a shower stall?" one man asked.

"I don't know. How many?"

"Nobody can count 'em. They keep slipping down the drain".

The two hunters laughed.

They actually laughed.

How can they possibly laugh when one of their own kind is hungry? That's sick! How can they do that? Glog thought.

He dipped beneath the water and picked up the two crabs from behind, easing them apart, one in each hand.

Now, the term "crabby" has a meaning based on solid fact. Crabs enjoy a less than pleasant disposition at the best of times; but these two, interrupted in their lawful intercourse, felt a trifle peeved. Pincers raised and snapping, eye stalks extended and glaring, antenna quivering and seeking, mandibles working and foaming these two crabs radiated fury.

They looked for something to attack.

Glog raised up waist-high in the water. He swished his tail and bumped a piling, knocking the men's little straw house to pieces. He elbowed a plank of floorboard and dumped the hunters into the water.

Then he let the crabs go.

Glog stood still.

The crabs saw the splashing, thrashing men.

There is no such thing as a happy crab, but these two were outraged.



Justifiably so.

They moved to where the action was.

Noise.

You talk about noise.

Glog's ears ached for weeks.

But he felt the deed was worth a little pain.

Anyhow, that's how Glog came to know about Ethiopian famine victims.

When his own belly is full of muskrat, Glog often lays on his hunting rock absorbing heat the day's sun stores in the stone and he weeps at the plight of these hungry people, beseeching the Almighty to move the hearts of their rulers to allow food shipments to reach the starving people — or to overthrow that wicked government.

And so Glog passed his days upon the earth — or rather his nights, for sunlight hurts his eyes and he normally avoids it —feeding, storing up snapping turtles for winter snacks, and attending to his appointed duties.

He reads.

He prays.

He composes his poetry.

And since Glog is an eater, mostly he eats.

But often when moonlight shines full on the marsh, he also plays.

Luxuriant grasses form one of the most outstanding features of the marshes bordering the Chesapeake. Depending on the underlying soil, the varieties of current, and the salinity of the water, dozens of different kinds of marshgrasses and water plants flourish.

Glog loves to play in these grasses.



He can split a blade of Needler rush grass and hum through it to make music. Eelgrass squeezes between his toes and gives him a cozy feeling. Olive grass and spartina grasses can be woven into pretty patterns.

And cattails — muskrats make their nests of cattails — Glog can pick a pawfull of dried cattail and blow on them creating a miniature snow flurry as the white seeds puff into the air.

But the most fun plant of all is the water lily.

One night, acres and acres of water lilies floated in a moonlit pool. Huge dark green lily pads — some with frogs sitting on board singing to their mates. Huge blossoms — some pure white, some royal purple, some light blue, some variegated marble.

The sight of them rejoiced Glog's heart.

What fun.

Underneath the surface hang the roots of each lily. And laced inside the roots and stalks of the plant grow big light-green translucent bulbs, each a hollow bladder filled with the air on which the plant floats.

Glog walked into the marsh, wading through the field of lilies. He lifted one giant three-toed foot and brought it down with a splash. The popping bulbs released sparkling bubbles in the water and the small noise of the vegetable popping reminded Glog of teeth biting through celery stalks.

Glog stomped on the water flower bulbs just for the joy of hearing them pop.

He danced and frolicked and rolled amid the flowers.

He looked at the moon and felt comforted.

He ran forward, bracing his feet and slid along the muddy bottom like a kid on a new-waxed floor.



Then he gathered a cluster of lily bulbs together all at the same time and stomped his great foot down with a satisfying muffled whomp as a dozen of them popped at once.

Once again...

But this time when his foot stomped down, a few slippery bladders scooted out between his toes; Glog fell flat on his face and wallowed in the silt causing a great turmoil in the water.

When he started to laugh, he gulped down a mighty gulp of marsh water which sent him sputtering to the surface gasping for air.

And a large lily pad, silver and emerald in the moonlight, draped over the top of his head and over his pineal window and over his left eye like a ridiculous cockeyed hat.

Blowing water from his nostrils in a salty spray, the monster stood and shook the water from his body in a silver fan. He trudged out of the tidal run through the mud and silt, and climbed up onto a bank of shimmering white oyster shells.

The evening sea breeze blew over miles of bay, river and marshland and cooled him as he stood watching the water flowers drift back together hiding even the slightest trace that he ever had been among them.

A hint of pale red on the eastern horizon made the beast realize that it was time for him to go into his burrow for sleep.

But he lingered.

He did not want to sleep.

Glog felt so happy.

Contented.

Thankful.

GLOG



Satisfied — except for a tinge of hunger and a vague longing for something else.

The monster felt no premonition at all, no taste of the horror soon to come upon him.

CHAPTER TWO

In 1858, Professor Joseph Leidy found some old bones in New Jersey.

He catalogued and classified them as the fossil remains of a creature he called *Hadrosaurus foulkii*.

That means a duckbilled dinosaur.

Professor Leidy wired the skeleton together, the first dinosaur skeleton to be found and mounted in the United States.

Quite an accomplishment for Professor Leidy.

If you'd like to see his work, it's still on display at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

The success of Professor Leidy's duckbill, and the public acclaim it brought him, spurred other academics of the day to hunt for their own dinosaurs to mount. Within months after Dr. Leidy's duckbill went on display, a friendly rivalry developed between paleontologists E.D. Cope of Maryland and Dr. Othniel Charles Marsh of Yale.

Friendly rivalry?

Actually, it was a tooth and nail fight.

Both conducted field work in Maryland. And each scholar wanted to find a bigger and better dinosaur than the other man's.

Marsh discovered an *Astrodon*.

It was big.

But his dinosaur only ate plants.



Cope discovered a *Coelophysis*.

It ate meat — But it was little.

Marsh discovered a huge tibia and some big teeth which he identified as an *Allosaurus*, the biggest dinosaur yet discovered in Maryland ... but it only ate plants.

Cope found some teeth and femur fragments of a creature which he identified as another carnosaur (meaning any dinosaur that ate meat) — but it was smaller than an *Allosaurus*.

However, processes on the leg bone lead Cope to believe that his dinosaur could jump!

He called it *Laelaps* — named after the leaping hunting dog of Greek mythology.

He said he named it *Laelaps* because his leaping lizard could jump out of a tree on top of Marsh's sluggish plant-eater and tear its throat out.

Survival of the fittest appears to be a principle of the world — at least of the academic world.

You know, publish or perish.

One of the earliest publications describing fossil remains discovered in Maryland is *Maryland Geological Survey Bulletin, A-21,C*, 1860, published by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

This document describes 17 old bones dug out of an iron mine in Bladensburg, Maryland, in 1859.

These bones were the remains of one of Glog's ancestors. It was his great-grandfather on his mother's side.

Glog had never met him.

In fact, other than his own parents, Glog had never even seen another carnosaur.



Anyhow, here's an excerpt from *Bulletin A-21,C* — it describes the matrix where the bones were buried:

These remains were found in the Severn Formation rock unit known as the Arundel Lower Cretaceous, in iron deposits of the Matawan Formation and equivalents which date to 144-66.4 mya (million years ago).

Red sandstones and shales make up the bulk of the rocks, which are occasionally interrupted by igneous dikes of dark biabase or traprock.

Thus, the fossil record spans a time period of about 155 million years reaching from the time of the coal swamps of the Paleozoic to the jungles of the Cenozoic...

In the Mesozoic era the environment of Maryland was a land of low, forested alluvial plain dotted with lakes, inland seas and volcanic fissures — much like present day Louisiana — with abundant conifers, cycads, cycadeoids, bennettitales, ginkgoes and horsetails.

The geologists decided that the bones were those of a carnosaur of a similar type to that which Dr. Cope called a *Laelaps*; but they decided to call their leaping dinosaur by the name *Dryptosaurus*.

Smaller bones of the same type were found nearby but they did not seem to come from the same individual as the large bones.

Therefore, the Bulletin goes on to say:

Taxonomically, there is great confusion about Dryptosaurus.



*From disarticulated remains it is not easy to differentiate the skeleton of a juvenile reptile from that of an adult. This has lead to confusion about size leading some to the opinion that there was a *Dryptosaurus medius* (about 12 feet tall) and a larger species, *Dryptosaurus potens* (about 40 feet tall).*

The geologists did not realize it, but their confusion about the size of *Dryptosaurus* came about because like porcupine fish, puffing adders, and many other reptiles, Glog's kind contract or expand in height depending on whether or not they are hunting, resting, threatened, or angry.

Glog can hunch down to a mere nine feet in height, or swell to 32 feet depending on his mood or circumstances.

The Bulletin continues:

Dryptosaurus was a large carnosaur, a flesh-eating reptile belonging to the Subclass Diapsida (having two holes in the skull behind the eyes), Superorder Archosauria (a ruling reptile similar to the tyrannosaurus) and either the Order Saurischia (reptile-hipped) or Ornithischia (bird-hipped) with longer hind limbs than forelimbs, reflecting its bipedal ancestry.

*It is difficult to determine whether the *Dryptosaurus* was oviparous (egg laying) or viviparous (giving birth to live young).*

It walked more or less upright with legs straight under the body; a fact reflected in the hip joints which were tight cylinder joints, enabling them to rear up on their hind



legs, and in their trackways, which were narrow with little sign of tail dragging.

In triassic sandstone, it is very difficult to identify carnosaur from tracks alone; therefore, the ichnofaunas (fossil footprints) have been assigned their own species names.

The forelimb of Dryptosaurus had six fingers, apparently very flexible, with retractable claws; while its hind limbs were 3-toed with webs between the toes, indicating that it was an accomplished swimmer.

Nonsense!

Glog, himself a Dryptosaurus, could not swim a lick.

He couldn't even float for Heaven's sake!

And he never climbed a tree to jump on anything in his life.

His webbed toes were not for swimming; he spread them out when walking through marshland so he wouldn't sink in the soft mud.

The specific gravity of his bone structure made him so heavy that when he entered the water, he stayed right on the bottom. But his leg muscles allowed him to spring up from the bottom enough for his head to break the surface so he could breathe from those two holes in his skull.

And while it's true that he was hatched from an egg, his Father and Mother had been very caring, nurturing parents as long as they lived.

And where did they get that ruling reptile business?



Glog never bossed anybody around in his life.

The bulletin was wrong about that.

And it never even mentioned his pineal window...

Or his ears which were long and floppy like a cocker spaniel's ears with no scales; but that omission is understandable — if you only knew humans from their skulls, would you guess about the shape of their ears?

However, *Bulletin A-21,C* was right on target about Glog's teeth:

There is little distinguishing characteristics between incisor, canine, premolar and molar teeth so their denotation is homodont (meaning all teeth in the mouth are shaped the same) being triangular and sharp.

As in the cartilaginous fishes and sharks, the teeth of Dryptosaurus are polyphyodont (arranged in several rows in a continuous succession of teeth, so that when one tooth is lost, another from the row behind takes its place).

These teeth are not embedded in bone sockets. The osteodentine (the dentine of which the teeth are composed) resembles bone and fills up the whole pulp cavity.

The recurved teeth are hinged so as to bend pointed backward when the prey is passing down the throat, but are re-erected by elastic ligaments. Therefore, once it has bitten something, Dryptosaurus would find it near impossible to let go of its prey if it wanted to.



On the whole, the bulletin does a fine job of describing Glog's ancestor; of course, it does not say anything about his intelligence, aesthetics, morals, spirit, or tastes — he was an astronomer who enjoyed whistling classical music as he plotted Kepler's Three Laws of Planetary Motion, and he was very kind to his wife and children. But how could you tell anything whatsoever about such characteristics from his bones?

Would you like to see his bones? The very ones which were excavated from the Bladensburg iron mine?

Today most of them are housed at the Peabody Museum of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut...

But some of his teeth are at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C...

And, three of his toes, from the same find, are in the Arthur Bagnold Bibbins Collection at The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore...

You see, there were three iron miners in the crew who first dug up the bones. They split up their haul so each man got a share.

And each miner sold bits and pieces to whichever scientist or museum offered the most money.... It was a case of survival of the fittest.

CHAPTER THREE

The day of the tragedy, Glog was not even aware of it at first.

He woke in the afternoon, and since it was far too early to venture outside, he started work at his drafting table —actually it was a smooth plank long ago retrieved from a shipwreck.

He did not feel much like working, but you know the old saying:

“He that will not work, neither shall he eat”.

Glog believes that saying.

So Glog works every day. Here’s what he does:

Like the monks of ancient days, Glog works in his den with a quill pen illuminating the white vellum pages of an old manuscript.

He inlays the golden initial letters of Celtic curlicues intertwined with lapis lazuli and turquoise. He decorates the pages with scenes of muskrats building lodges, of muskrats swimming, muskrats chewing cattails, or muskrats scampering up a sandbank.

He illuminates some pages with marsh scenes of herons dancing, or intertwined watersnakes mating. Other pages feature drawings of the seasons: a winter scene of human skaters viewed upward from beneath the thick ice from the deep river bottom, a spring scene of young muskrats frolicking in the water beside their lodges on their first ventures into the outside world.



All these beauties Glog worked into the initial letters of every paragraph in the rich, white vellum Bible manuscript; a 1561 Geneva Bible, in which his father had copied out the text by hand over a span of 682 years and left on his death for Glog to continue.

Illuminating those capital letters was Glog's legacy.

The evening of the horror, Glog reached the beautiful Psalm which says:

The eyes of all wait upon Thee;
And Thou giveth them their meat in
due season.
Thou openest Thy hand and satisfieth
the desire
of every living thing.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob
for his help,
Whose hope is in the Lord His God,
Who made Heaven and Earth,
the Sea, and all that therein is,
Who keepeth truth for ever
Who executeth judgment for the
oppressed,
Who giveth food to the hungry...

Glog felt so pleased with his illuminated **H** in the word Happy.

The muskrat resting between the legs of the letter looked so good you could taste it.

That reminded Glog.

He felt hungry.

He'd grown so interested in his **H** that he'd worked later than usual and he felt very hungry.

Besides, Glog's paw cramped from working long over the illuminations. Paws such as his—massive,



six-fingered hands like a human's but with retractable claws instead of nails — seemed ill fitted for such delicate work.

And the strain of holding his quill pen wearied the drytosaurus.

He dusted the page with sand to dry the ink and marked the Psalm with his favorite bookmark — a ribbon which his Mother had tatted, weaving long fibers of tan and gray cypress bark into an intricate design.

He blew out the lamp, left the manuscript on his drafting table, squeezed through the length of an earth-packed tunnel leading to the surface of the ground, and, after checking for intruders, emerged into the moonlight.

The marsh stretched shimmering to the horizon.

Sagittarius grass rippled in great waves with each gentle gust of wind. The night was so silent Glog could hear the rasping of eight thousand snails eating their way up blades of marshgrass. He found that a comforting sound, tiny hungers being assuaged.

Glog stretched his bulk and lifted his head higher to look around.

Nothing untoward appeared to disturbed the marsh.

He watched the twinkling lights of an oil tanker standing out from Baltimore in the distance. He saw an owl swoop down and pluck an unsuspecting muskrat from a clump of cattail and carry it off to feed her young. The scene gladdened the monster's heart; he reflected that feeding, any feeding, is the thing that good is.

But the owl suddenly released its burden.



The wounded muskrat fell 20 feet and plopped heavily on a mud bank; the owl — uncharacteristically — fluttered off as though it were miffed.

Curious.

Glog sloshed across the first narrow tidal run to examine the muskrat the owl had dropped. The rodent kicked feebly in the mud. There was something wrong with it which the owl's attack could not account for. Glog decided to eat it anyhow.

"Never let a wounded muskrat suffer," his Father always said.

Glog lifted it by the tail and dangled it in the moonlight above his wide-spread jaws.

He chomped.

The taste gagged him.

Hastily, the monster expelled the mangled animal.

He spit and scraped his tongue against the triple rows of his top teeth. The vile taste of oil clogged his taste buds. He waddled hip-deep into the tidal run and dunked his head, gulping deep quaffs of brackish water — then roared in rage and frustration.

Tarry oil scum floated on the water.

Enraged, the monster bit into the mudbank and used the black clay to scrub out his mouth. He rubbed his nose along the mudbank striving to wipe away that awful taste.

He stumbled to firm ground and ripped the top from an holly tree. He crammed the tree, top foremost, down his gullet, clamped down on it and pulled it up through his teeth time and time again. Then he gulped a mouthful of dry sand from a hammock, inhaled, and blew grit out through his nostrils.



The taste lessened but lingered.

The monster had reacted like a human who, thinking it cherry, has swallowed a spoonful of liver-flavored Jell-o.

Spitting, hawking and clearing his throat, Glog stumbled higher onto firm ground.

Along this section of marsh, hilly land descends — in fits and starts, hollows and gullies interspersed with low sandbanks and long-dead beds of oyster shells — to the narrow, drift-wood strewn beach.

In places, the marsh undercuts mounds of dirt exposing rocky outcroppings. Tidal runs cut the marsh into a crazy quilt of water, mudbanks and sandbars.

Occasionally, weathered docks jut out from the bank, and duck blinds spot the marsh; these are the only works of man evident except for ships which steam by in the deeper channels out beyond where the marshgrass stops growing because of the depth of the water.

Thus the character of the land changes abruptly from water to mud to sand to muck to soil to rock and hill. It was a low hill with rocky outcroppings that sheltered Glog's burrow, but he pushed through the undergrowth past the front entrance tunnel to the top of the hill.

He turned at the top of the hill to look back over the marsh. Everything looked normal enough at first.

But when the moonlight struck the water at a certain angle, Glog could detect the sheen of oil on the water giving off flashes of rainbow-colored — but deceitful — beauty.

Glog tramped back down to the edge of the marsh.

He climbed out on to his hunting rock.



Oil scum floated on the water there too.

Glog began to search the marsh. No muskrats swam in the dirty water. No muskrats browsed in clumps of cattails. No muskrats... Not a single muskrat could be seen anywhere.

Glog felt hungry.

God, this is awful! What's happening here?

To Glog's right, at the bottom of a hill, a small spring bubbled out of the rock and flowed through a shallow bed. Little more than a ditch a few yards long, it flowed into the larger waters of the cove where a tidal run cut close to the land.

Glog saw something unusual there.

At first, Glog thought it was a large animal of some kind wallowing at the mouth of the spring. The shallow water churned and stirred and rippled in a black mass with glints of silver. Bright flashes and humps of black bodies stirred in the water and broke the surface in irregular places. The water was working alive with something.

Glog pushed his way through the undergrowth closer to the spot so he could see what it was.

The thought crossed his mind that it might be a giant manta ray from the deeps had washed ashore and was trying to swim into the crevice from which the spring bubbled — *Are manta rays edible?*

But as he grew closer and saw what caused the disturbance, gorge rose in the monster's throat and he gasped in horror at the disgusting sight.

Carp!

Hundreds of large carp!

The big fish were trying to leave the polluted water of the marsh and shove their way into this tiny tributary of clean, fresh water!



The fish crowded into the ditch and spread out like a living fan with the leading ones packed against the land by their fellows from behind. The hefty fish, all with their heads pointed toward the fresh flow, were actually pushing the foremost ones up out of the water where their open mouths gulped at raw air and they struggled to get their heads beneath the cool surface again. Their thrashing caused the water to boil as the hopeless creatures tried to escape the oil polluting their native element.

The sight of these doomed refugees broke Glog's heart.

Oh God, this is terrible! Man did this, he said. Man did this. But why? Why?

The monster brooded over the hapless fish for a while, then scooped one up and examined the wiggling thing in the now faintly breaking dawn — A film of oil covered its scales.

Glog pitched the fish out into deeper water... It streaked right back to join its brother fish trying to press into the fresh water ditch.

This action distressed Glog.

He knew the little stream was not deep enough for the carp to get into. Unless they found deep clean water all these fish were going to die.

Glog began to rake out fish after fish and tossed them far out into the tidal run. He tried to throw them out past where the oil floated.

But he couldn't.

As soon as a thrown carp hit the water, it beelined back to the school flapping against the bank. Every fish Glog tried to rescue, rushed back to its own oily doom.

O God, this is terrible. There is nothing I can do for these poor creatures. They are



going to be wasted. I wish I could eat them but...

Glog never eats fish.

Fish aren't fit food for anything but cats. But I hate to see them go to waste like this. Makes me feel helpless to see them perishing like that.

With the sun rising and the light hurting his eyes, Glog headed back toward his den. Wrinkles furrowed his brow.

What long-term affect will this oil spill of the humans have on the muskrats?

He was right to feel worried.

Next sunset, Glog was out first thing.

He trudged along the edge of the marsh. Dead and dying muskrats littered the shore. The tide was low and the bodies of muskrats, fish, crabs and other water creatures lay tangled in strands of marsh grass. Left there by the receding tide, some tiny bodies dangled limp a foot above the water draped over the branches of a fallen tree which protruded from the bank.

Once firm, beautiful and tasty, thousands of muskrat corpses littered the water's edge, their fur matted and gummy. Once alive and frolicking, a source of nourishment and joy, they now lay bloated and decaying. Open wounds marred the little bodies, wounds picked by gulls and crabs which themselves finally died from the pollution also. The bodies gave off the stench of new decay and flies burrowed in their sightless, open eyes.

Glog surveyed the scene feeling heartsick.

Too heartsick to roar, uproot trees, smash rocks — or even eat.



He sat down on a thick gray log and wept over the desolation.

He thought of how the muskrats had left a V of ripples as they swam streaking through the water, of how they gnawed the roots of cattail causing the pods to wave individually in the wind-still air. He thought of the pure beauty of the little beasts and he sobbed, mourning for a lost wonder, a lost love.

And — to his credit this idea did not take precedence — Glog mourned their loss as his own primary food source.

Glog wandered along miles of marsh edge looking for not-dead muskrats. When he came across one writhing in pain and panting for breath, its little nose bleeding and blowing bubbles of oil, he stomped it or quickly pinched its head off. Inedible and useless as they were, it pained him to see them suffer, so he sought them out and ended their misery.

How could a loving God allow such a thing to happen, the beast pondered?

Surely the King of the Universe, in whom all creatures live and move and have their very being — He, the source of all living things, would not allow such a profligate waste of life. Would He?

No still small voice answered the monster's anguish.

Have I sinned some awful sin to bring this judgment upon me, the dryptosaurus questioned as he absent-mindedly trampled a maple sapling.

That can't be! From the beginning of creation no creature but man — and a handful of angels that failed — has ever



sinned, so it can't be anything that I've done.

Appalling suffering surrounded the monster — birds, their feathers caked with scum; shellfish, their siphons open and bubbling trying to strain the filth out of the water, feeble fish swimming on their sides right at the surface. Sluggish crabs. Dead muskrats.

Why all this suffering? It can't be a punishment from God. It just can't be!

I haven't done anything wrong.

Surely the muskrats haven't done anything wrong; yet they are dying uneaten, and here I am starving!

Even the grass in the marsh is turning the wrong color and the flowers wilt and turn gummy brown — Why even the little snails are dropping off the grass stalks and sinking in the ooze.

How can a loving God allow such a thing as that?

Has God got something against snails?

There has to be some reason for all this.

There just has to be.

But I sure don't see what it is.

Glog wondered and wondered.

Glog shook his head.

He did not know any answers to his questions.

But he knew one thing.

Whatever the cause of this disaster — I've got to eat!

GLOG



CHAPTER FOUR

Hunger woke Glog after he'd only been asleep a few hours.

No. It wasn't hunger; it was a strange noise.

No. It wasn't just a noise; it was hunger and the strange noise. Both woke Glog.

He crept to the entrance of his den, an underground entrance hidden in the matted roots of a giant water oak. He squinted his eyes against the daylight and peered outside to see what made that annoying racket.

Humans.

Dozens of them.

A colorful army of them swarmed around the edge of the marsh.

Some wore bright yellow slickers. Others sloshed in the edge of the water wearing black rubber hip boots. Many of the younger females dressed in shorts or jeans. Many of the young, both male and female, wore tee-shirts sporting logos and slogans such as SAVE THE BAY or GREENPEACE or SEIRRA CLUB or U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE or ACCOKEEK HIGH SCHOOL ECOLOGY CLUB or NATURE CONSERVANCY or U.S. COAST GUARD or simply AMOCO.

The creatures were busy with noisy purpose.

They had stretched booms supported by white floats on the water. Big pipes jutted out from the shore and throbbing pumps sucked oil and water



through these pipes to holding tanks where the yucky mess could be separated — a noisy, smelly operation.

Some of the muckraking humans shoveled contaminated mud into tubs. Some fiddled with pumps or booms. And some of them chased flopping oil-covered birds.

This last phenomena fascinated Glog.

Two hundred yards east of the little bridge on Highway 450 near Glog's burrow, a dirt road branches off the hard road and leads uphill through a wash to higher ground where several small farms are scattered wide apart.

Where hard road and dirt road cross, a long row of rural mailboxes stands, each on a post tilted at various angles according to the age of the box and the care of the owner. Some of the boxes are wooden; some, rusted metal. Some are new, store-bought boxes — black enamel with copper eagles with outstretched wings braded to the sides. Some of the boxes have painted on the sides, ***Rural Star Route 2***, Box number so and so. Others sport cutesy names which gentleman farmers — or more likely their wives — have given to their spreads: *Ponderosa East*, *The South Forty*, or *Admiral's Anchorage*. Others list the name of the family receiving mail there — Boggs Family, McGregor's Farm, William Sutton & wife.

At this junction of roads, someone nailed planks between two trees to make a low shelf where during the summer farmers place fresh produce — lettuce, celery, bottles of golden cider and little plastic bears full of honey — to sell to tourists and commuters.

The muckrakers had set up a bird cleaning station on this rustic table.



Teams of college girls and boys captured squawking birds in the shallows, wrapped them in towels, and carried them up the hill. There, another team, mostly senior citizens, wiped oil from the protesting birds, washed them in detergent, rinsed them, and placed them in a makeshift wire enclosure to dry.

Birds which were too far gone to survive treatment, the workers tossed onto a growing pile of soggy oiled carcasses. Here and there, wings stuck out of the pile at impossible angles.

Glog understood what the humans were doing, but the reason for their actions made no sense.

Why are they doing this, Glog wondered, You can't eat seagulls even when they don't have oil on them! Why aren't the humans bathing muskrats? That would make more sense.

The bird cleaning activities tapered off near sundown ... but the pumps throbbed all that night. The remaining muckrakers even turned on a screaming portable generator hooked up to arc lights which blazed and glared outside Glog's den.

The glare and noise and confusion nearly drove him crazy — And the hunger.

Late the following afternoon, the humans backed heavy trucks down the dirt trail where the mailboxes stood and — with much sweating and cursing and yelling and banging — they disassembled the booms, pumps and generators, they loaded this stuff on the trucks and drove away.

Blessed silence descended once more on the marsh.

Glog came out as soon as it got dark.

He hunted food.



Since the world began, no creature but man has ever sinned. No creature but man ever gets bored; every beast goes about its appointed task with singleness of purpose. Each creature — except man — knows precisely what it was created for and it goes about its God-ordained purpose with enthusiasm. A beast assuredly knows why it was created and — unless interrupted by man — each one fulfills the purpose of its life. The creatures of the sea swim in the great deeps or skim the surface occasionally leaping out of the water to splash down again in sheer exuberance.

Creatures made to burrow in the earth dig wholeheartedly.

Those made to fly in the air soar to great heights.

Pollinators of flowers buzz in the fields.

Mountain sheep skip from crag to crag.

Swimmers swim.

Climbers climb.

Crawlers crawl.

Runners race.

Diggers dig.

Flyers fly.

And eaters eat.

Glog knew in his 50-pound heart that he was created to eat flesh; but now, through man, his food source was disturbed while his hunger, his purpose, remained strong as ever. So Glog emerged from his den anxious to hunt.

Three days had passed since the oil spill.

As these days passed, thousands of corpses of the marsh creatures which had not been picked up by the bird-cleaning volunteers turned putrid in the sun.



When Glog came out of his hole, the smell of oil, the smell of man, the smell of dead meat, blasted him.

Glog scanned the marsh looking for the V-shaped path of a single swimming muskrat.

Nothing stirred the water.

He searched all night and found nothing to eat.

The next night, Glog caught a lone female muskrat.

Food! Thank God, Food! Only a morsel, but food.

But, as the monster lifted her above his open mouth, in the moonlight he saw that her belly was swollen. Rows of tiny nipples peaked through the belly fur. Her engorged teats marked her as great with young.

The monster reluctantly released her back into the channel, thinking that perhaps she would survive the pollution and give birth to the start of a new generation to help re-populate the Marsh.

This action caused him great anguish.

He felt famished.

That same night he ate the very last of his snapping turtles in one sitting — too rich a snack, meant to be savored as a desert not as the only course of a main meal. They left him bloated but unsatisfied.

Later, squirming in his bed, Glog clawed scales off his own chest and consumed them greedily.

Oh God, I'm hungry. I hurt so bad. What happened to my beautiful Life? What are You doing to me?, he prayed.

No still small voice answered.



That night Glog emerged from his tunnel and looked hopefully toward the marsh.

Nothing.

Reluctantly he turned his back to the water and trudged up the hill toward the highway.

He traveled west, hunkering down in the roadside ditch whenever he saw the lights of an approaching car, shielding his tender eyes from the glare. When he came to a bridge, he sloshed across the stream rather than setting foot on the flimsy structure. Thus he approached the six wide lanes of Highway 3 & 301, the truck route bypassing the worst congestion of Washington and Baltimore.

He found the highway heavy with traffic, all with blinding high-beam lights glaring.

The beast moved cautiously along the east side of the roadway until he came to a huge culvert running beneath both sections of dual-lane. He compressed his bulk and squeezed through to continued south until he came to a place which he remembered from years ago as a large section of pasture land containing cows.

No cows there now.

The land had been developed into one of those cracker-box bedroom communities inhabited by humans.

A chain-link fence topped with barbwire strands separated the backyards of the homes from the highway and Glog trudged along the fence line listening to the racket humans made — Traffic noise on one side of him; stereos, TVs and video games going beep-beep-beep on the other.

The house sounds hurt his ears and the roar of passing cars annoyed him.



Behind one Belair home something caught his interest:

A cat, fat and furry, lay sleeping in a lawn chair on the back patio. Occasionally its tail twitched in its sleep. Glog reached out and drew one of his claws down the fence.

The air filled with snapping pings as the wire parted.

The cat raised its head at the unfamiliar sound.

Glog froze till the lazy beast nodded again, almost falling off the padded lawn chair.

Glog inched closer.

He snatched the startled cat in the air by its tail and bit. The old tom popped in his mouth like a plump grape. Glog wished he had dozens of them. He said his prayer of thanksgiving and, out of habit, tossed the hairy tail over his shoulder.

There was nothing else to eat there unless he broke open one of the house but Glog did not usually eat humans — they make such a fuss! If you find a family of muskrats and eat one, the others keep on minding their own business; but if you find a herd of humans and eat one, the others go crazy with noise and confusion.— so Glog moved back through the opening he had snipped in the fence and stalked on down the road.

Finally the houses began to thin out and, after a belt of trees, a pasture opened before him. Again Glog snipped the fence and moved inside. He walked across the rolling grassland toward a big red barn with white trim.

Noise erupted!

Just as the monster rounded the corner of the barn a large male collie charged him. Barking and yapping, the dog circled him excitedly. The noise



annoyed Glog and the dog's excited running about worrying at his heels frightened him (He had been bitten by a dog once when he was little).

Glog swiped at the dog with his unsheathed claws but the dog dodged out of the way again and again slipping under Glog's arms to lunge at his feet and snap at his ankles.

Glog whipped out with his tail and caught the dog full in the face sending it reeling backwards landing on its back by the barn door. The collie turned and ran yipping toward the house with its own tail tucked up between its legs.

Good riddance!

Aren't there lease laws to keep animals like that chained up?

Glog popped the long strap hinges from the barn door and kicked it down.

His eyes lighted up and his heart leapt for joy. Row on row of cows lined each side of the barn. A feast!

But what was this?

Cages.

Dozens of cages stacked one atop the other like pallets in a warehouse. And each cage contained a squalling baby cow!

So the meat will stay white and tender for veal, some dairymen confine calves in cages too tiny for the animal to move in; and with the cages stacked to save space, droppings from the calves on top of the stack, fall onto the little calves below.

The sight appalled Glog.

Lord! How evil!



How could anyone be so cruel as to imprison baby creatures in a tiny space like that and leave them for months and months to foul themselves and live with no exercise or freedom to run or roll in God's green grass!

That's terrible!

Glog lifted down the top cage and cracked it open with the edge of his hand. The little cow ran screaming away from the monster and cowered against the wall of the barn.

Glog smashed open cage after cage and shooed the squealing calves outside to freedom.

Then he turned to the adult cows tethered in their stalls.

Now to eat!

Glog grabbed the tail of a red and white heifer close to the door and lifted the brawling bovine above his jaws.

Three delicious snaps and the tail went sailing over his shoulder.

Glog snatched up the next cow.

But his hunger and hurry made him miss his grab and he caught her by a hind leg. Never mind. Down she went. And instead of the tail, it was a bleeding haunch he flung away. It sailed out the door and landed in the barnyard.

The scent of Glog, the commotion he caused by freeing the calves and the shock of seeing two of their fellows devoured, completely unnerved the herd. The cows burst from their stalls and stampeded away from Glog to the rear wall of the barn where they ran in circles bellowing and squalling in panic.



Glog lifted a hefty Holstein from the milling pack and suspended her above his teeth, but held her there... but...

But a hoof from that second cow he ate had wedged between his teeth and he held the third cow suspended while he tried to work it loose with his tongue.

“Sweet Holy Jesus!” he heard a voice shout.

On hearing the name of the Savior, Glog realized that in his feeding frenzy he had neglected to be thankful — Humans usually give thanks before their meals, you can enjoy that luxury when you eat dead things; but if Glog were to be thankful before eating, the prey would run away. You’ve got to be practical about religion, so Glog usually said grace after he eat — Anyhow, when he heard the words “Sweet Holy Jesus”, Glog remembered that he had not given thanks so he immediately bowed his head lowering the cow which he gripped and releasing it.

As he did this he saw a human male standing in the doorway.

The dairyman wore coveralls tugged on over yellow pajamas decorated with little red flowers and hearts. He’d pulled on unlaced boots with flapping tongues and he shouldered a shotgun, aimed at Glog’s head.

“Sweet Holy Jesus! What is that thing!” the human said again —and fired.

The blast hit Glog full in the face. The noise in that enclosed place deafened him and he clapped his claws over his aching ears.

The dairyman pumped the shotgun and fired again and again.

Point blank range.

What a racket!



Glog just couldn't tolerate that much noise!

He snagged the shotgun from the man's hands. Holding the sight in his left claw and the breech in his right, the monster pulled his arms apart. The gun barrel stretched to an impossible length before the wide-eyed human. The center of the hollow barrel grew thinner and thinner as the barrel stretched longer and longer till the gun parted in the middle leaving Glog with a pointed steel taper in his left claw.

Immediately the monster saw the advantage of the tool he held and used the sharp steel taper to pick the cow's hoof from between his teeth. He sighed with relief as it came loose.

The dairyman fainted dead away.

And Glog heard that dog yapping again, and the cattle brawling, and more humans running about the barnyard yelling. His ears ached. All that noise and confusion was upsetting.

Besides, he'd eaten two cows. No need to be a glutton. And anyhow, if you eat too much after you've been without food for a couple of days, it might make you sick to your stomach.

Glog stepped over the fallen human — tiny red flowers and hearts! — and headed home the way he had come in the darkness.

As he walked home, he puzzled over the way the man had kept invoking the Savior.

Obviously that human had no charitable intention to feed the hungry as Jesus commanded, so why did he keep saying Sweet Holy Jesus?

I don't think I'll ever understand humans; they never make sense.

Oh well, that was a pretty good place to eat. Cow meat is OK— But I'll tell you one



thing, if they ever want me to eat there again, they're just going to have to do something about that dog!

CHAPTER FIVE

Over the next few days Glog could not find enough food. Not real food. Nothing substantial. Only a bit of flesh from things which proved sustaining — but not nourishing.

A snack here.

A sparse meal there.

A snapping turtle. A lone coon. A stray possum. A water snake.

But, what provided food is to be despised if eaten with thanksgiving?

The beast's hunger grew and grew as the days passed.

Of course, Glog could distinguish between hunger and mere appetite:

Appetite desires a food which past experience has proved to be pleasant; hunger arises from the body's need for food as nourishment. Appetite is the craving or preference for some particular food which you can survive without if necessary. For instance, you might turn down green beans, but gladly eat pizza. Hunger, on the other hand, craves food, any food, and turns down nothing edible — and some things which aren't.

Hunger manifests itself with a gnawing sensation, an ache, uncomfortable pangs localized in the belly and permeating the entire body; headaches, restlessness and irritability accompany hunger. In hunger, as the body's food supply diminishes, nerve



cells in the brain are directly stimulated by the impoverished blood.

The empty stomach contracts on nothing but itself. Gastric acids made to digest food slosh about inside the stomach with nothing to consume but the lining of the belly itself. The system cannot tolerate this and the cells slough off all excess materials and rush them to the stomach. The acids feed on these cells and demand more, which must be forthcoming lest the body digest its own tissues from the inside out.

Hunger pangs may be temporarily suppressed by swallowing indigestible materials, but the body cannot be fooled by this tactic for long.

Food it craves.

And food it must have at risk of death.

Glog lay on his bunk groaning.

Each of his six stomachs cramped. Sometimes they contracted individually at random. Sometimes they worked one after the other in a series traveling the length of his body in individual pangs. But worst was when all six acted simultaneously and racked the monster with a single searing pain which caused him to belch gallons of harsh acid filling his throat with stinging bile.

Glog could not stand this hunger.

He had to find food.

He just had to.

Oh God, what's happening to me? You used to care for me and give me good things to eat, but now there's nothing. I'm dying. Starving. Don't You know how I hurt? Don't You care?

No still small voice answered.



Glog flung back his quilt and ventured into the open air. It was already long after dawn but fortunately gray clouds overcast the sky filtering the worst of the searing light. Even this screened daylight burned Glog's eyes but his hunger compelled him outside. Hunger made him restless and drove him up the hill toward the highway again.

When he came to the first little bridge, the beast blundered down the embankment into the creek and headed upstream. The swift flow swirled around his knees. He caught one snapping turtle which never heard its doom approaching. But the turtle snack did no more for Glog's hunger than a single marshmallow would do for your's if you had been without food for several days — it aggravated the condition because of its sparseness and richness.

Glog waded up the fresh water stream bed for several miles.

Red-winged blackbirds and Baltimore Oreos jumped from reed to reed at his approach. Watersnakes writhed across the surface ahead of him like miniature sea serpents.

Every so often the watercourse spread out forming ponds. But where the moving water had worn channels through the underlying rock, the creek bed lay in a gully deeper than Glog was tall. A jumble of fallen branches, interwoven with smilax, trumpet and wild grape vines, clogged the gully.

In low areas, thick bog peat sucked at his feet as his weight sank in the ooze and the wet bog mud squeezed away forming a vacuum. Each time he lifted a foot there was a strong slurping sound as the vacuum broke and swamp water flowed back filling his three-toed tracks.

Six miles above the bridge, the undergrowth began to thin and Glog arrived at a place where



what appeared to be rolling pasture land bordered the creek.

Glog lifted his head above the bank of the gully and looked for cows.

Not a one could he see.

Only an unbroken swath of even green grass pocked by a few shallow holes filled with clean white sand met his gaze.

The grass rolled over a pleasing meadow of pleasant low hills and shallow valleys. Far off in the greenness he could see a slender pole with a tiny flag waving from it.

Surely a herd of cows kept the grass cropped so even.

Though his hunger tormented him, Glog exercised patience and snuggled in the shade of a tree overhanging the stream close to a break in the bank where he thought a cow might come down to drink from the stream — and when one did, he planned to feast.

He waited with the hungry patience of a stalking cat.

Thunk!

Something whacked into the rock beside his head.

It bounced and rolled to a stop. A round white egg seemed to have dropped from the tree above him. Glog looked up into the branches of the elm tree which overshadowed the gully thinking that some bird had knocked the egg from its nest.

But he could detect no nest.

He scooped up the egg and examined its mottled surface.

He cautiously bit it in half using just his foremost teeth.



Sprong!

The thing popped open filling his mouth with a chewy, gummy substance. The monster drew it from his mouth. It looked like a tangle of moss about the size of a muskrat nest. The change puzzled him but he put it back in his mouth and chewed and chewed and chewed.

But the tangle of rubber bands proved unpalatable, so he picked it from his mouth again wondering what kind of egg it was and how it had changed size.

Soon another white ball dropped on the grass a few yards from Glog and rolled further onto the fairway. Then Glog heard a soft buzzing as the electric golf cart bearing two human males topped the rise to his left. The blue cart zipped up to a stop in the shadow of the elm and the two golfers got out.

"Sliced it again. You've gotta get more control. Bet it's in the rough".

"No way, Sam. This one here is mine. You're the one who needs control. Pay up".

The first man positioned his club and swung at the ball on the grass. Glog watched as it arched out of sight in the direction of the flag on the pole to his right. The two men drifted along the edge of the rough looking for the golf ball Glog had tried to eat.

Glog waited, his mouth watering.

They drifted closer and closer to the crevice where he hid.

"Here it is," one called bending over to retrieve a white ball. "No, that's not my mark. This is an old one. Been out here for ages. so long that the bottom's yellowing".

"But I'm sure it landed on this side".



"Not a chance. With my luck, it landed right in the middle of that damn creek".

"Want to start a new one or keep looking?"

"How much do I owe you now?"

"Thirty-five so far, and the day is young yet".

"Give me five minutes and if I don't find it I'll buy the beer.

"You can afford to. After that deal we cut with the pension fund, you're gonna be rolling in money".

"Hey, to the victor belong the spoils. That contract is perfectly legal; I made sure of that before I touched a cent. Besides those damn old Social Security parasites would have just blown it all on Geritol; they should have put away a pile when they were young and had a chance. Like I'm doing. Dumb old codgers. Euthanasia's too good for 'em — it costs too much for the shots; let 'em starve; that's cheaper... "

"Damn Sam. You're one warm-hearted SOB... Say, I really gotta piss. You got five minutes to find that ball; I'm going in the bushes for a leak".

"Just make sure it's not on my ball," the other human laughed.

As the one golfer ducked into the bushes, the other clambered down the dirt trail, down the embankment where Glog hid. It poked about in the underbrush half-heartedly until it discovered the ball Glog had tasted. The white shell was severed and the hundred yards of tightly-wound rubber string which make up a golf ball's core had sprung apart and looked like a tangle of rubber spaghetti.

Just as the human recognized its mark on a clinging bit of white casing that remained, Glog reached out and grabbed it.

It gasped as the monster's paw tightened.



Glog turned it upside down and transferred it to the other paw.

The golfer's breath returned.

Glog lifted the human by its feet — the golfer squealed and squirmed, screamed and twisted — and lowered it between his jaws.

Glog savored the satisfying crunch as pelvic bones ground between his teeth.

Glog spit out the head.

He never eats human heads; they contain brains which taste mealy and cause heart-ache.

Now for the other human.

At his golfing partner's scream, the second male rushed out from behind the bushes without even bothering to zip his pants. He was sure that the shriek he'd heard was the result of Sam's having stepped on a snake. As he tumbled down the embankment, waving a four iron in his excitement and anxiety to help, he stumbled over Sam's head.

And looking up, he saw Glog eye to eye.

The human gasped, clutched its chest, turned very red in the face and fell to its knees vomiting and choking. Its body quivered then and went rigid.

Even as Glog chewed the last bit of the first human's feet —careful to spit out the golfing cleats — he reached for the other one.

On touching the stiff flesh, the monster snatched back his hand.

Dead!

Glog shuttered.

Revoltng!

Glog hated the feel of dead meat.



Even in his worse moments of hunger, he would no more think of eating something dead than you'd think of eating feathers.

Glog felt disappointed.

He did not understand the mechanics of a heart attack; he'd never encountered one before.

The monster shook his head sadly.

Dead!

Such a waste of good meat.

Why that one must have weighted a good 240 pounds!

Glog could have cried.

Oh, well.

He bowed and said, *Lord, as the humans eat the Bread and Wine, Your very image, so I have eaten this good meat, also made in Your image. It was delicious; Thank You, Lord, for providing it.*

After saying grace, Glog settled to see if more golfers would come.

But soon a light sprinkle of rain turned into a downpour and no more golfers appeared.

Still gnawed by hunger but tired from being out in the unfamiliar morning light, Glog turned to head back home to his den.

Shame about that last one, he thought.

Why did it have to die on me? Waste of perfectly good food.

CHAPTER SIX

Glog had not gone far from the golf course when the rain stopped. Above the sound of soft drops dripping from overhanging branches, he heard another sound, a sound which intrigued him.

It sounds like food!

The monster climbed out of the creek bed and pushed his way through dense undergrowth amid a stretch of thick forest. The clouds above were breaking up and he stayed close beneath a stand of hemlock trees hoping their branches would block some of the painful sunlight.

Occasionally as he crashed through the undergrowth he would pause and cock his ear to the sky and again pick up the sound of laughter, happy shrieks and taunting.

There it was! A school playground bordered by the woods.

Glog moved close and crouched in a stand of rhododendron bushes. He watched a class of third graders happily at play, exuberant that the rain's end allowed them to escape the classroom.

Some of the tender young things chanted, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send Sally right over". A little blond-headed female ran from one line of children and tried to crash through the interlocked arms of the opposing line.

Another batch of young climbed all over and under a geodetic dome of steel bars comprising a Jungle Gym. Glog saw a sprinkle of silver coins fall



from the pockets of one small male in a red shirt who swung upside down from the bars of the dome.

So much food!

They reminded Glog of young muskrats scampering about on a warm spring evening.

An odd movement caught Glog's eye.

This really interested him.

One group of children darted to a six-seat swing set which hung from two tripods with a long bar between them. This bar ran parallel to the edge of the school yard and to the bushes where Glog hid.

Ten children pushed and shoved, struggling to win one of the six seats on the swing set.

Soon all six swings were pumping back and forth and six happy children were swinging as high as their little legs could carry them.

Glog hoped that the ones who could not get a seat on the swing would come on into the undergrowth where he could catch them without being seen. But those young humans, not realizing that they were being uncooperative, ran toward the school and began pushing and shoving for a place in the line forming at the drinking fountain.

Glog tensed his muscles for a charge across the playground intending to snatch up food as he ran, but his attention kept being drawn back to that swing set.

As the kids in the swings pumped harder and harder, the arc of their swinging swept closer and closer to the bushes behind them.

To Glog the solution to the problem of catching this food soon became obvious.

He crouched low and crept through the bushes to a place directly behind the swing set. He waited as



motionlessly as he once had on his hunting rock when catching muskrats.

Although stalking the human young presented him with a different problem of logistics, it was similar — except in this case the prey would be above him instead of below. For, as the arc of the chained seats swung them closer to the bushes, they also rose higher and higher.

Finally, one little female provided Glog with the chance he needed.

It stood up to pump in the swing.

That action caused the female's swing seat to pass just above where Glog was crouching. On each back-swing, the seat brushed the low-hanging tree branches shaking loose a cascade of sparkling water drops on the beast's head.

The unexpected shower threw Glog's timing off.

He reached up, but the swing glided forward again moving the female out of reach and, at the far end of her arc, the child, completely unaware of how close she'd come to being eaten, jumped from the swing and ran skipping to some friends across the playground.

Glog gnashed his teeth in frustration.

But no sooner had that female leapt from the swing than another, wearing a pink jumper, darted up to the swing set and took her place. Glog waited for this one to build up enough momentum to bring her within his reach. But alas, this was a spindly child, a runt, who only pushed the ground with her feet just enough to get going a bit then "let the cat die".

However, one of the bigger males, a natural bully, ran over and demanded of a smaller boy, "Gimme that swing, Kid. It's my turn".



The smaller male, intimidated by the other, relinquished his seat and wandered aimlessly over the playground looking for a spot in the damp grass dry enough for him to sit down and reread a tattered copy of *Boy's Life* which he had folded in his hip pocket.

Naturally, the bully stood up in the seat of the swing to pump himself higher than the other kids. His knees bent and straightened as he rose higher and higher — and closer and closer to Glog.

The monster knew the male was working up the momentum and courage to jump out of the swing seat on the next swish forward.

Glog extended his paw.

The boy's rump slapped neatly into Glog's palm with a satisfying sound like a baseball whopping into the pocket of a glove. Glog lifted slightly and the empty swing seat arched forward again without a break in its rhythm.

One quick squeak — unnoticed in the playground noise — was the only sound the prey made.

Glog munched the little mouthful with a sigh of satisfaction already looking for the swing's next occupant.

A couple of dozen of these would make a meal.

What was this?

The young humans were leaving the swings!

The tag games broke up.

The runners stopped racing.

The basketball court emptied.

All this because a crusty old female with wiry gray hair done up in a bun and wearing a man's shoes



blew a whistle with a shrill blast which startled Glog and hurt his ears.

She was calling the food to line up!

She was going to march it back inside the school building!

Glog couldn't stand seeing the food disappear.

Claws unsheathed, teeth bared, he burst forth from the bushes and charged for the old teacher.

"Heavens!" She exclaimed.

"Run, Children. Run," she shouted. "Run for the cafeteria door!" — That was the door closest to the playground.

The children fled in squealing droves.

Some obeyed the teacher and dashed for the cafeteria entrance.

Others froze in their tracks at the sight of Glog.

Others ran to the old lady and wrapped their arms around her legs trying to hid behind her skirts.

One boy grabbed his little brother and made for the trees at an angle away from Glog.

The girl who was hall monitor that day showed her presence of mind by snatching up rocks and throwing them at Glog to impede his progress.

All the children set up an unearthly racket which stopped Glog in his tracks — the noise hurt his ears so — and that old woman kept blowing that damn whistle.

Glog took a swipe at her, snagging her hair. He lifted expecting to bite at her dangling legs, desperate to stop that horrid noise she made — but his teeth snapped shut on empty air.

The monster looked at his paw in puzzlement.

The hair was in his claws but there was no head!



He looked down. There was the old lady blowing her whistle louder than ever... but in place of the silver-blue bun of hair, there gleamed a shiny bald head. Glog gazed in wonder thinking that he had pulled the creature's pelt so hard that he had skinned it.

The shrill whistle continued. The children still shrieked. Glog's ears pained him so that he covered them with each paw.

Why has God reduced me to this?

Then to add to his misery, the sun broke through the clouds catching him in full daylight on the open playground. The light seared his eyes.

He stumbled back toward the shade of the trees and bushes. But as he retreated he noticed that two children had hidden beneath the shelter of the Jungle Gym's dome.

As Glog passed, he snagged one of the steel bars and ripped the metal structure out of its concrete foundation exposing the children. He grabbed one in his left paw and reached for the other, a tiny female with long blond hair. In panic the child ran away from him toward the trees.

Glog ran after her and caught her by a length of hair just as she reached the bushes.

The female kicked and fought and hollered like a banshee. He ate her first as soon as he reached the shady spot.

He started to eat the male but found that he had crushed it in the chase. That made him feel bad.

More spoiled food.

He lowered the dead human to a bed of dry leaves.



Then, as always after eating, he bowed his head.
Thank you Father for this little snack. I enjoyed it.

The edge had been taken off his hunger by the golfer and the two children he'd managed to eat, but he couldn't sit back and relax.

The noise from the school ground had grown louder instead of lessening since he left.

Aren't those creatures ever quiet?

He could hear them back there yelling and shouting and crying and running around.

Glog thought they were making a tremendous fuss over what had been a scanty meal at best.

That's the trouble with eating humans — they don't taste nearly as good as muskrats and when you eat one, the whole herd of them just goes crazy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Having been up hunting all morning, Glog slept well into the evening dreaming cozy dreams.

That wasn't to last.

A throbbing vibration reached from up in the air down to the surface of the ground and then down further under the tree roots to where Glog dozed.

Glog recognized that ugly rhythmic noise. He'd seen Navy search-and-rescue helicopters practice exercises plucking men from the water out on the Bay. Even when they were that far out, the loud mechanical noise of the engines always distressed him.

But these machines sounded close.

What did I say; sure as anything, the humans are out looking for me. What pests!

This was the way things always went as far back as he could remember.

Back in the sparse times when he'd had to eat a few Indians, the others of the tribe would band together to seek him out in his lair. They came with torches and spears, bows and arrows. And the tribe's shaman would come with rattles — turtle shells filled with pebbles — and drums and horns. They would raise an infernal racket giving him no peace.

And when he'd devoured a couple of redcoated soldiers once, the redcoats and the bluecoats had called a truce in their own war and united for a time



to hunt Glog with their noisy musket and thunderous cannon.

Neither sharp arrow nor cannon ball harmed the beast, but human noise always drove him nearly crazy.

What loud clamorous creatures they are!

Why couldn't they eat their own food quietly and let him eat his in peace?

All he'd eaten were two small children and a couple of their cows — and Oh yes, that golfer fellow — but they could not be making more noise if he'd destroyed one of their cities.

Now they were searching for him with these noisy machines and as one flew closer, it was louder, its noise more incessant, than anything he had ever heard before.

Glog crawled the length of his entrance tunnel and poked his head above the surface of the ground.

He could see them out there.

The helicopters swept the waters of the marsh with brilliant search lights. Glog had never seen those machines this close before; these abominations turned night to day and burned his eyes. He found all this noise and light intolerable.

Glog retreated back into his hole and curled up on his mat to complain to the Management:

Hear my prayer, Oh Prince of Life, whose throne is guarded by four beasts. Let my cry come unto Thee.

Lord, do You know what man, made in Your image, did! I didn't do a thing to them and they poured out oil — it won't mix with water, You know. And they turned the living marsh into a desolate waste where fish try



to escape their own element into the air, and waterfowl sink with the weight of their own feathers.

And just about all the muskrats have died away; and the few mothers which do still live cast off their young stillborn.

And when I ate a few cows, that dog barked at me.

And when I ate just a handful of human young, those loud things You hear out there right now roar in with blaring noise and glaring light.

It's just not fair.

What food is there left for me?

My bellies growl and my teeth stay clean — my tongue can feel every crevice between them!

Why is this happening to me?

How am I supposed to live?

Where am I supposed to go?

What am I supposed to do?

Please guide me, Lord. I don't understand why You let all this suffering come on me. I don't understand. Don't You love me any more? What are You trying to do to me? I don't understand.

Please help me. Please".

No Still Small Voice answered the monster.

Vibration from a low-hovering helicopter caused roots from the trees above Glog's borrow to quiver,



and in those places where strands of root dangled down from his ceiling, those roots vibrated in time to the engine.

Glog prayed harder:

Sir, The eyes of all look unto Thee and Thou giveth them their meat in due season, even the young lions cry unto Thee for food.

I know that a great hunger is a small thing to a great God.

Always Lord, you provide food for the feeder; the birds of the air gather the grains of the fields, the berries of the trees and insects from air and earth, and they know no lack.

Neither have I — Until now...

But Lord, I do believe that even this evil which has fallen on my world is a thing which came through Your hands; this slime which men spread was through their sin or carelessness or thoughtlessness — but by Your own permission. How could it be otherwise?

But Lord, this is a spoilage. It's a waste, a desecration of the world You created.

And yes I, though a beast, know that this world will not last forever. Its spoilage is the wasting away of a dying thing. I know that when Your Kingdom comes there will be no sin or suffering or hunger, nothing spoiled or wasted.

But this is here.



This is now.

Am I to starve at Your will?

The heavens remained silent — except for the throbbing engines of the helicopters making another sweep.

Searching.

Getting closer.

Seeking to destroy.

Looking for an evil monster.

The noise penetrated Glog's bones.

Rotor vibrations set his teeth on edge.

Trickles of sand streamed down from the ceiling of the borrow. A clump of dirt fell from above and landed on the open manuscript on his drafting table. Glog hurried to his work and brushed the dirt off the page. He drew in a great breath of air and blew sand granules off his illuminations.


As he closed the antique Bible, an odd passage caught his eye:

Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good.
Sing praises to His name for it is
pleasant.

I know that the Lord is Great.

Whatsoever the Lord pleased,
That he did
in Heaven,
in earth
in the seas,
and in all the deep places.

He caused the vapors to ascend
from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightnings for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His treasury.
He remembers our low estate.



He provides enough food for all who
hunger.

Lord, Where could I go from Your Spirit?
Where could I go where You are not
present?

If I ascend to Heaven,
Behold! You are there.

If I descend into the deep places of the
earth,

Behold! You are there also.

You live in light,
and no one can hide from Thee in
darkness.

If I take the wings of the morning and fly
away

to dwell in the uttermost isles of the sea,
Even there, your eye shall watch over
me,

Even there, your right hand shall hold
me,

Even there, your love shall seek me out
—

And all shall be well.

Glog closed the Bible and went to the mouth of his
entrance tunnel to look out again.

The helicopters were moving further to the west.
Hundreds of powerful flashlights swinging here and
there showed where humans on foot tramped on the
land around the marsh. Trucks sped back and forth
up on the highway as though the drivers knew
where they were going. In the distance, important
sounding voices shouted orders over a loudspeaker.
Flashing blue lights reflected off the water whenever
a police car passed.

The brown marsh looked dead. For miles in every
direction, tarry scum clotted the mudflats; oil slime
coated the lilies; shiny film stagnated the tidal runs;

GLOG



cloying odor ruined the breeze ... and not one single muskrat swam in the greasy water.

Glog arrived at a sad decision.

Glog's Father used to say, "Son, when a time comes in your life when you see that you absolutely **MUST** eat a toad, then don't spend too much time looking at the thing beforehand".

So, even though he didn't want to, Glog chose to act on his decision the very next night.

CHAPTER EIGHT

During the following day, Glog slept only in fits and starts. Hunger and noisy human activity along the highway disturbed his rest.

By afternoon, the searching men shifted their hunt back to the east, closer to Annapolis. Their helicopters and ground teams deployed heat-seeking devices to search him out. But since he is cold-blooded, Glog's body temperature always adapts to the temperature of his environment so he did not even register on their instruments.

At dusk, Glog emerged and clawed at the roots of the ancient water oak which overshadowed his hole. He leaped aside as the tree crashed down and the earth above his tunnel caved in on itself sealing the entrance tunnel with tons of earth.

At least my poems will be safe in there.

He shouldered a bundle wrapped in waterproof otter skins which long ago he'd sewed together. It contained his father's manuscript and a few tools.

He looked longingly over the expanse of marsh and sighed, *Lord, I don't understand why I'm being forced to leave my home and I don't know where You want me to go or what You want me to do. But I believe that all things work together for good to those who love You — even bad things like this oil spill. I think that while You may permit little evils,*



You will protect me and never let anything really bad happen to me. At least, I hope not.

Glog, having lived a peaceful scholarly life for years, really thought that as long as he did what was right, God would save him from bad troubles.

Ha!

Obliviously, Glog knew little about God.

Anyhow, having prayed for protection on his journey, Glog stepped into the tidal run beneath his hunting rock and began walking. He had no idea where he was going...

Naturally, Glog could not swim — no carnosaur can.

Because of his great density, the water's buoyancy offered little lifting support for him.

So as he waded out deeper and deeper into the tidal run, the water rose higher and higher on him. When it got deep enough, Glog closed the flaps of skin covering his nostrils and walked along in the bottom sediments with his head beneath the surface of the water.

Black mud from the bottom of the marsh clung to his feet. Although he stayed toward the middle of the stream, long tendrils of marsh grass roots which laced the bottom, tore loose at his passing and rafts of water weed floated along marking his progress.

Every few hundred yards, the tidal run twisted, or split into smaller tributaries, or joined other runs so that the water was constantly changing in depth and the channel grew narrower or broader depending of the whims of tide and water.

In most of the marsh, thick mud and silt covered the bottom. But occasionally rich underwater meadows of marsh grass carpeted the bottom and as Glog walked across these meadows his passing



stirred up flights of small purple eels, schools of minnows, and drifting clouds of plankton which lived among the emerald tendrils of grass.

Silly crabs — ready to fight anything on God's earth — saddled away from him with challenging pincers extended for battle.

A lone turtle, too far away for Glog to catch, glided through the water graceful as a soaring bird floating through air.

The further away he moved from the area of the oil spill the more living creatures he saw under the water.

He lifted his head above the surface to look back toward home.

God, but I love this marsh. I hate to leave home. I just hate it. But what else can I do?

He dared not linger. He realized that if one of those helicopter things were to pass over, they'd see the swirl of mud he'd stirred up and be able to follow his trail.

He rushed on to deeper water.

Glog could see underneath the water even better than he could out in the open air because in the center of his forehead was a plate of un-pigmented light-sensitive scale — what biologists call a pineal window. This scale plate differs little in color from Glog's other scales, so you'd hardly notice it in looking at him.

Biologically a pineal window functions a little — but not exactly — like an extra eye.

This feature is common among many bird and sea creatures from the lowly horseshoe crab to the mighty 2,500-pound tuna; biologists think that the pineal window helps such creatures navigate in their oceans-wide migrations. Human scientists have



found that neural arrangements connect pineal windows directly with the brain. They believe creatures with such a rudimentary celestial “third eye” use light passing through it to generate orientational signals.

They’re wrong — at least in Glog’s case.

For him, his pineal window gathers and focuses light, even the tiniest glimmer of starlight. Even on moonless nights, this light-gathering feature of his pineal eye augments his regular eyes so that he sees well in the dark. After all, God created Glog to be a hunter in the darkness and, like all creatures, he is fully equipped to fulfill the purpose he was created for.

Glog’s pineal window is also the feature which makes him ultra photosensitive. Too much light hurts his brain.

So Glog walked in the night beneath the water watching everything as he moved into new and different territory.

Viewed from beneath the water, the moonlight reflecting off the surface created a silver florescent glow of diffused light which seemed to come from everywhere at once as though the water itself glowed. Grass stalks, which Glog knew appeared green when viewed from the surface, took on a bluish tint when viewed from underneath that same moonlit surface. Schools of small fish passed through the water like flights of tiny dark arrows; glints of silver sparkled from their sides when they twisted and turned following some winding pathway in the water visible only to themselves.

A jellyfish the size of a dinner plate drifted past Glog’s face. Blue phosphorescent light glowed from the creature’s body, while the yards of tendrils flowing behind it appeared as silken threads of



reddish-brown. The little fish avoided that deadly loveliness.

Once he'd reached the South River, Glog waded out to where water flowing through a slightly deeper channel scoured much of the sediment and mud away leaving a layer of dark gray sand and brown stones on the bottom.

He turned left following the flow of water toward the main body of the Chesapeake Bay.

Now and then an occasional dock protruded out into the water marking where humans had built waterfront homes. Glog pushed his head above the water to breathe and looked at the darkened, silent houses where men and women dreamed about whatever it is that such creatures dream about.

At many of the docks, boats of various kinds bobbed in the tide. Some tugged at the ropes tying them to pilings in the wake Glog's passing caused. Orange light shone from the portholes of a white yacht and the sound of music drifted through the night. A human couple stood with their bodies pressed against each other at the rail. Glog saw them but they did not see him because they were so intent on each other.

As Glog followed the gentle push of the current toward the mouth of the river, he encountered more and more of the docks and boats and houses, but as the water increased in depth, he could duck his head under out of sight whenever he thought he detected an awake human.

As he passed near human dwellings on the shore, he encountered more and more of the debris these creatures threw into the water. He walked through tangles of manila rope and cables. He passed all sorts of other litter too: glass and plastic bottles, waterlogged boards and planks, old crab traps, cast-



off ship parts, a Maytag washer, an occasional anchor. Trailing lengths of nylon monofilament fishing line snagged on bottom obstructions.

Near one dock he investigated something strange which swayed easily back and forth in the slow moving current near a piling. He thought it might be something to eat. But when he touched the thing it only proved to be a large plastic horse, once part of some child's bouncing toy on springs.

Each step the monster took brought up swirls of silt which the current swept before him. A school of yellowtails followed, dogging his footsteps to snap up seaworms exposed in the muck his feet disturbed. He enjoyed watching them eat — and began to wonder about food himself.

CHAPTER NINE

As Glog trudged out of the silt, mire and debris of the bay's shallows into cleaner, deeper water, his heart felt strangely happy. Amid the eerie beauty of this undersea world, the sense of unease and apprehension he had felt about leaving his home gradually faded and to be replaced by vague feelings of adventure, curiosity, and even light-hearted joy. Already he'd ventured further from his den than ever before in his life.

If there were muskrats to eat this far out from the shoreline, this place wouldn't be so bad, he said to himself.

The beast waded underwater toward the deeper parts of the bay.

Once there, he found a shipping channel and walking became easier because the down swept current from the propellers of thousands of passing ships had scoured the bottom clean of silt exposing a floor of water-smoothed rocks. Some of the rocks were dull white; others, marbled yellow or brown; a few were polished wet red. The rocks ranged in size from flat pebbles — which Glog thought would be perfect for skipping across the surface — to boulders the size of a refrigerator. Ages ago, great frozen glaciers from the north acted as massive grind stones rounding and smoothing these rocks and depositing them deep beneath the soil of Maryland to be exposed here on the bottom of the



Chesapeake Bay by the action of tide, current, and man's dredging.

In places where the current moved faster, granules of gray sand packed the crevices between the rocks leaving only the upper curve of the stones exposed. It looked like a rough cobble-stone street beneath the sea.

In spots where the current did not run so strong, underwater plants anchored themselves to the rocks and waved ribbons of blue and red and green, like banners in the water's flow.

The silt on either side of the shipping channel formed a steep slope down to the scoured area creating a long valley with a roadway-like path on the sea bottom. Glog scrambled down the slope and paused at the bottom.

*Which way to go, Lord? Does it matter?
Please lead me in the right direction; lead
me to something good.*

Glog looked both ways up and down the valley then, following the gentle nudge of the flowing tide, turned north. Thus his way lead him toward deeper water — and toward the Port of Baltimore.

Wherever one of the many tidal runs and rivers flowed into the Chesapeake, the flow of water from that tributary created an underwater gully feeding into the canyon of the main channel. The canyon lay under the deepest water; the gullies formed miniature canyons which sloped upward to shallow water.

With each step Glog became more and more aware of hunger in his great belly. He edged closer and closer to the eastern slope of the channel guided by the gentle sweep of the tide and following the path of least resistance.



Far overhead he heard a faint throbbing in the distance.

Certainly not a helicopter?

The throbbing grew stronger and more insistent as a ship, headed down-bay out of Baltimore, drew nearer. The water muffled the sound of the engines and churning propellers, but Glog still felt a great discomfort at the sound.

Soon he could see the great black bulk of the ship's hull approaching in the channel.

The giant container carrier moved sedately, inexorably toward him. It pushed through the water like a solid steel cloud moving through air.

Every yard the huge thing moved closer increased its noise — diesel fuel exploding under compression, barrel-sized pistons surging back and forth in their cylinders, thick steel shafts spinning endlessly, gear teeth meshing on gear teeth, house-sized propeller blades chopping water.

Glog covered his ears to block the irritating noise.

Lord, this is getting scary!

Glog turned and ran back the way he had come. The slow-motion run of one trapped under water hardly kept him ahead of the black mass bearing down on him.

The ship proceeded right down the middle of the channel. The mountain of silt on either side confined Glog to the middle of that same channel.

The thing was overtaking him.

The terrifying noise grew louder and louder as the ship churned relentlessly onward.

The bow passed over Glog's head, a great mass of darkness and noise.



As that portion of the ship housing the engine room throbbed over him, the clamor became unbearable.

Glog fell to his knees writhing with the pain in his ears.

Never had he heard such painful noise before.

He screamed, *God!* releasing a great bubble of air and swallowing a mouthful of salty water.

Just when he thought his brain would burst, when he could stand the sound no longer, it began to lessen.

The black ship bottom had passed over him.

He looked up and saw the giant propeller blades cutting white and silver slices of water just where his head would have been if he had been standing, if the terrible noise had not driven him to his knees.

God, he thought, *That thing might have...*

A mighty surge of water gripped the monster and lifted him off the bottom twisting him around like a leaf in the current. The tons of water displaced by the cargo ship first welled deeply in toward the center of the channel — then gushed back with a force Glog could not withstand. Pebbles, rocks, even boulders from the bottom swirled upwards like one of those little winter snow scenes in a shaken glass dome. Clouds of muck and mud and sand and chewed up fish-parts spit out by the propellers settled around Glog in the wake of the ship. Hundreds of scavengers — shrimp, sand sharks, crabs, eels, fish of every description — rushed into the wake snapping up the dead and the wounded left by the ship's passing. The water swarmed with the dying and the living ate them in a frenzy.

But nothing in that churning mass was food for Glog.



Besides, he needed air more than food; so he crouched low and sprang upwards bobbing for the surface and a gulp of air.

The water was too deep!

His head did not break the surface.

His dense body sank immediately from the height of his leap. Glog tumbled back to the stony bottom, his lungs bursting for air. He hurried, trying to push against the resistance of the water. He ran across the channel bed to the slope of silt bordering the cobblestone roadway. He tried to climb the steep slope but only succeed in creating an underwater mud slide of cascading silt.

The slope was far too soft to climb.

Glog hurried down the middle of the channel seeking a way up into shallower water.

Finally, he found one of those places where an underwater gully cut through the mud — where a tributary's water joins the bay's — and he rushed up the incline, hopping every few yards seeking to get his head into the air so he could breathe.

Finally one of his leaps worked.

His head broke the surface and blessed air, cool air, damp with sea salt and the aroma of far-off marshland flowed into his nostrils and gaping mouth.

It tasted as delicious as muskrat fur.

Glog waded up into shoal water at a place humans call Idlewilde, Maryland.

It's about 15 miles south of Annapolis.

During the Great Depression — on February 15, 1933, the same day assassin Giuseppe Zangara fired six shots at President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt without hitting him — two brothers who farmed just outside Idlewilde fought over which one



of them would get to eat the last slice of a cherry pie their mother had baked. Ewald and George Upshaw stabbed each other to death with pie forks. Hunger can drive creatures to do awful things like that — of course, the fact that both the brothers had spent all day drinking beer may have had something to do with it too.

Anyhow, as daylight pinked the eastern horizon across the bay, Glog sloshed out of the water near Idlewilde on a sandy arm of beach where the lack of lights indicated little human presence.

A band of crushed oyster shells floored the beach and they snapped and cracked beneath Glog's feet as he crossed them.

A massive tangle of low bushes interlaced with vines and burrs covered a few low dunes which rose at the far side of the beach and beyond this scrub undergrowth, Glog saw stunted trees.

He made his way inland a hundred yards to a place where the bramble thicket grew profusely. Seeing no other shelter, he fell on his side and settled to rest hoping the thicket would shade him from the day's brightness.

As he closed his eyes for sleep, he prayed, *Lord, I did ask You for guidance; and I thank You for giving it to me. But really, if You'd wanted me to travel in the other direction, wasn't there an easier way to tell me?*

CHAPTER TEN

At dusk, something moved in the bushes.

Glog heard careful cautious footsteps.

Some creature was approaching.

The thing stepped almost silently among the dried leaves, twigs and wind-fall branches littering the forest floor.

Glog opened his eyes. No other part of his body stirred. He shifted his vision slowly from left to right.

There it was!

His heart leapt for joy.

Antlers!

A deer.

Eight polished points gleamed above its slender head. As the buck stripped tender shoots of forage from the undergrowth, its reddish-brown flanks glowed with a sheen of health and well-being. Every few seconds, it paused in its browsing, raised its nervous head and sniffed the wind seeking to smell out danger.

The breeze blew toward Glog.

The buck could not scent him.

Glog waited motionless as the prey moved closer and closer.

Antlers!

His mouth watered.



Other quiet deer, six doe, moved into sight. Like their master, the doe stepped silently and cautiously, threading their way among the vines and branches without shaking a single leaf. Like their male, the doe raised their heads often and tested the air.

The buck drifted almost within reach. Another three or four steps closer...

Glog tensed his haunches.

Good Heavens!

Glog was so hungry his belly rumbled!

The unfamiliar sound startled the buck.

He swung his head around and saw Glog. Glog sprang for the creature. As he did, the buck reared up on its back legs and lashed out with its front, pawing Glog's face with its sharp hooves causing him to miss his first grab. The buck twisted its body, tense to race away. Its white tail flagged before Glog, just out of reach. Glog lunged forward. His claws raked down the buck's flank and his fist closed on the white tail.

Glog lifted the thrashing twisting buck into the air. He reared back his head, jaws open and clamped down.

Glog chewed, savoring the texture.

Those beautiful crisp antlers snapped with a satisfying crunch—like a mouthful of potato chips, Fritos, cashew nuts. No — antlers feel more like a mouthful of salty pretzels. They resist your teeth with just right tension before they crush releasing that delicious burst of flavor. The points of horn irritate the tender membranes in your mouth just enough for you to recognize their sharpness and yet with that mild pain which actually is such a pleasure



that you want to reach for another mouthful of antler to repeat the sensation.

Glog relished the buck, smacking his lips over the last morsel and looked around for more.

The trouble with catching deer by hand is that as soon as you snag one, the rest of the herd dashes away.

As Glog had caught the buck, the six doe leaped in alarm. Each one bounced in a different direction running through the undergrowth, bounding over fallen logs, weaving among trees, flashing their white tails...

Alas, disappearing in the forest

Glog offered thanks for his meal.

God is so good! He made the food that sustains and nourishes us and gives us strength; and he made that food such a pleasure to catch and eat. Most of the things that are good for us are also great pleasures to us.

Glog recalled the Psalm saying, *At thy right hand, O Lord, are pleasures for evermore*, and smiled rubbing his belly.

Three or four or five bucks would make a really satisfying meal.

The sharp edge taken off his hunger, Glog explored the woods looking for something else to eat.

He first ventured back to the strip of beach and took a good look at the mudflats stretching out into the bay. Surely muskrats lived on the flats but since the closest tidal run lay a over a hundred yards out, anyone hungry for muskrat would have to slosh out in the mud and stand exposed in the open to hunt. Glog's experience taught him that while muskrats are easy to snag in the water while they swim, the



little devils are just about impossible to catch with your bare claws while they scamper through reeds on a slick mudbank.

Obviously this place, while an appreciated rest stop for Glog, was not suitable for a permanent home.

He'd need to move on, but first — to finish eating; the thing about eating a deer is that you're hungry again in an hour. Of course, with Glog, that was true of anything he ate.

Glog turned back inland and walked through the woods to see what was available.

He came to a clearing at the dead-end of a road — actually just a pair of deep sandy ruts with high weeds growing up between them.

Humans had been here.

They'd driven far out into the woods to dump trash at the end of the road.

A couple of discarded appliances, white enamel chipped off, sides battered, backs ripped open to remove copper wiring. A mound of old roofing shingles. Two or three striped mattresses, dry-rotted, tufts of gray cotton sticking out of holes in the ticking. A brown vinyl recliner, its foot-rest sprung. Old tires, slick-treaded, water-filled, mosquito-breeding...

Some wag had erected a faded artificial Christmas tree on top of a pile of litter and decorated it with bits of paper, strips of rag, styrofoam cups and tab-top rings for glitter.

A crude hearth of blackened bricks circled a bunch of partially burned boards marking where some visitor had once built a fire.

To one side, obscured by overgrowing bushes, stood the abandoned shell of an old International



Harvester school bus. Windows smashed. Seats gone. Wheels missing. Three painted black bands ran the length of the yellow sides and black lettering proclaimed ARUNDEL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM. Spray-painted graffiti also decorated the bus with juvenile obscenities.

Oh, well. Food is where you find it.

Glog tipped the school bus over on its side.

He harvested five copperheads. Snakes, while nourishing, are tasteless creatures — wiggling spaghetti with no sauce. In the stuffing of the recliner, he found six or eight field mice, mere nibbles. In a stand of dogflannel near its burrow he caught a fat woodchuck. Greasy!

A lot of work for a little food.

Speaking of work... Glog still felt hungry, but decided that if he were going to work at all, this was as good a time and place as any. He upended two old refrigerators and placed a door across between them to make a small desk and began to unpack his calligraphy tools from his shoulder bag...

Oh, for Heaven's sake!

A sound in the distance moving closer.

Motors.

Glog hastily replaced his tools and hid in the bushes. He hunkered down behind the yellow school bus.

Don't these people ever sleep?

For Heaven's sake, it's two o'clock in the morning!

Lights bounced along the rut road. Here came a pickup truck followed by three motorcycles.

Thank God they switched off the engines when they parked in the clearing.



A male and a female human climbed out of the pickup; three more males swung off their motorcycles. One of the males left the headlight of his bike on and pointed it toward the brick fire bed. One flicked his Bic burning his fingers and tried again and again before finally setting the boards on fire.

One lifted a cooler out of the truck.

Pop!

Fizz!

Loud laughter.

Hanging around.

Waiting.

Noise from the tape deck in the truck — some female moaning loudly about something or the other being like a prayer?

Is that what she is saying? Prayer?

Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop!

Waiting.

The female danced a little. Clumsy. She staggered when she moved.

The males watched.

Pop! Pop. Pop.

One of the males reached inside the pickup truck and the noise from the tape deck got louder.

Another of the males stretched out its hand and touched a cold can to the female's neck.

The female squealed.

The males laughed.

More popping sounds.

More hanging around.

More restless waiting.



Slap!

The sound of flesh striking flesh.

The female human had hit one of the males in the face with her open palm.

She backed away from him.

She acted giddy. As though her wits were befuddled.

He rubbed his cheek and moved toward her.

"NO! No! You promised," she yelled.

"Tease!" shouted the wounded male.

He grappled with the female and threw her down on her back on one of the moldy mattresses. The other males moved in to help. They grabbed the struggling female's arms and legs. Her upper clothing tore and they ripped it off in shreds.

The female human kicked and screamed as the males tugged off its lower clothing, blue jeans and some flimsy garment. One of the males hit her in the face with its fist splitting her lip.

Blood flowed.

"No! Don't! Stop!" she yelled.

What a racket. I wish they'd quiet down. What are they doing? A game? A dance? A mating ritual?

The males beat the flailing, kicking female till she grew still, panting and sobbing. The males laughed. Three held her down. One removed a packet from his jacket and began to do something with it.

His action shocked Glog.

The human males were going to eat the female!

The one was salting her naked body, sprinkling white powder on her heaving belly and chest. He knelt down. Preparing to take a bite out of her.



Glog felt outrage. Only the very lowest of all life forms kill and eat their own kind! Do humans devour their own kind! Disgusting!

No... The male was not eating her. He had taken a plastic tube out of his jacket. He crouched low over the female breathing up the white salt from her lower hairs into his nose while she cringed.

"Turns," another male said.

Switching places, each of the males breathed through the tube.

"Guess what comes next, Honey," one said. "We're gonna eat you up!"

They are going to eat their own kind! They really are!

"No! No! You promised!" the female screamed. "Stop! Stop! Let me go!"

"HOLD HER! Hold her. Stuff something in her mouth," one attacker shouted.

"Jesus! Jesus! Ahaaa...!" she screamed throwing her head from side to side.

On the truck's blaring tape deck, slurred words groaned about someone or something being like a virgin.

Lord! What should I do? This is terrible! This should not be! The stupid female ought to have known better than to let them lure her out here and trap her to eat. But should I interfere?

Glog racked his brain to think of an appropriate action.

Guidance eluded him.

No still small voice.

Nothing.



The only idea that flitted across his mind was an odd phrase from Scripture: "Comfort the feebleminded". A male was now crouching above the weeping female who certainly did not seem to have her wits about her.

The male lowered its head. He took part of her chest in his mouth! He was going to bite her! The male humans actually were going to devour their own female!

Enough!

Glog raised up from behind the school bus.

He roared.

He pounced into the circle of firelight.

*So you Cannibals think you're going to eat!
Eat! Eat your own kind! Eat your own kind
will you! I'll show you guys what it is to eat!*

Fifteen minutes later, the dumb befuddled female padded naked and hysterical down the dirt track toward the hard road as fast as she could stagger...

And Glog bowed his head in thanksgiving.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Sick.

Ghastly sick.

Never before had Glog felt so sick.

Must have been something he ate. The five copperheads? The greasy woodchuck? All that salt the four human males had inhaled?

Glog lifted his head above the water's surface and was sick again.

Antler prongs swallow down easier than they come up.

Oh God, I feel so miserable. I want to go home. I can't keep any of this new food down. I want to go home. What's happening to me?

No still small voice answered.

Glog had slept during the daylight hours in the tangle of bushes once again. But it was the fitful sleep you get in an unfamiliar bed. At sunset he'd set out walking again, moving south parallel to the Maryland shore under water just above his head.

The longer he walked, the sicker he felt.

He wanted a place to just curl up and rest.

Back in 1848, the Parker Island Shoal Lighthouse stood on an island in Herring Bay, an inlet on the western shore of the Chesapeake. Storms battered the lighthouse down and washed away the island long ago, but the shoal remains. Glog stood with his



feet planted on the sand bar where the light once shined.

His belly pained him. All his stomachs cramped. His eyes searched the shore for some safe harbor.

Far across Herring Bay, the twinkling lights of Tracy's Creek Marina revealed close to 200 yachts bobbing in their slips. Many awaited dawn before heading south; Herring Bay is the last harbor for yachts before a 32 mile stretch of smooth shoreline on the Chesapeake's western flank. A lighted Mobil Oil Company sign gleamed over the water from Harbor Yacht Basin near Rockhold Creek.

Three lighted beacons mark the entrance channel, the first one to port, the next two to starboard; and three black stakes with barrels on top make the narrow channel easier to follow between the second and third beacons.

Keeping these beacons on his right, Glog walked across the bottom of the bay's mouth seeking a safe place to hole up during daylight.

His head ached.

He felt homesick.

Miserable.

Glog began to feel that maybe God didn't care what happened to him. He wondered if perhaps he'd been mistaken about God all these years.

Maybe God is not a kind loving Father. Maybe God is really cruel and capricious and all the nice things you think about Him are just based on fairy tales designed in olden times to comfort scared children. There really are no miracles. No manna in the wilderness. No inexhaustible cruse of oil. No



always-full sack of flour. No five loaves. No three fishes. No wine—just plain water.

Glog trudged on thinking such sick thoughts.

Dark suspicions formed and assumed the face of reality. Despair plagued him. Unsettling thoughts kept arising in his mind as bitter as the bile that kept arising in his mouth.

But he kept on going.

Even when life kicks the faith out of you, the only thing to do is to keep going.

To do what seems right.

To endure.

After all, God does love you in spite of all evidence to the contrary, and all things do work together for good...

Glog found no comfort in these inane platitudes. But he kept going. He was not even positive that he was moving in the right direction. But he kept going.

On the south side of Herring Bay is a point the humans call Rose Haven. Millions of oyster shells lay flat on the bottom there. They form a great flat plain beneath the sea.

Fish love this plain.

Here, tiny oyster polyps anchor to the empty shells of their ancestors. Here, sea nettles drift. Here, microscopic crustaceans swarm in the water. Here, little fish gather to eat the plankton. Here, big fish prey on the little ones. And here the greatest predator of all spreads his nets.

Fishermen in Herring Bay harvest their catch in a number of ways depending on the temperament and skill of the fisherman. Three of the most popular



ways are dragging a net behind a boat, setting out fishtraps, and stringing a trotline.

A trotline consists of a long central line hung with many baited hooks strung out between two anchored points. Usually trotline fishermen use treble hooks — hooks sporting three barbs at angles to each other. These are set at different depths according to the type of fish sought. The fisherman checks his lines daily to remove any hooked fish and to re-bait the hooks.

To Glog, walking beneath the water, the long sets of fishline looked like party decorations draped from a ballroom ceiling.

Some of the three-pointed hooks which had been robbed of bait by fish too little to catch gleamed bright brass; they reflected every little ray of light. Some hooks dangled with choice morsels of bait. Other hooks had successfully done their job; and fish wafted in the current tugging now and then against the line, held in place to await the fisherman's coming. These fish floated just below the surface like balloons hanging on a tether.

Empty Clorox bottles float tied to each end of a trotline. These are marked with each fisherman's name or symbol; around the Chesapeake it's a great foolhardy crime to mess around with another man's lines. A man's trotlines are his food and livelihood.

Of course Glog did not bother the trotlines — But one of them bothered him.

Glog did not even see the treble hook which snagged his ear. It was an old steel hook with the wicked barbs rusted so much that they were invisible in the murky water.

Old and rusty that hook may have been, but it did its job.



Two of the curved points jabbed through the tender flesh of Glog's ear as he stepped forward and the hook set when the line tightened.

Glog froze.

You certainly can't pull free from a treble hook. Not without ripping a chunk out of your ear. A barbed hook is a one-way affair.

The only way to get free from such barbs is to break off the shank of the hook, then to push the barbs on forward completely through the portion of your own flesh where the hook is snagged.

This is hard enough to do when you can see what you're doing but when it's your own ear that's hooked...

Well, Glog knew what he had to do and he tried to do it.

This did not make him happy.

As he worried the shank, trying to break it without moving the end hooked in his ear, he complained,

First they pollute the marsh and kill the muskrats and I have no food. Then they make all that fuss bathing seagulls. Then that dog barks at me and the farmer booms. Then when I'm starving and finally eat a child or two, they flash lights and shake the air with their flying machines and shake dirt down on my books.

I try to be a nice guy; I try to be a nice guy. I don't bother anybody. I give in and move to avoid a confrontation with these creatures — Live and let live. And here I am minding my own business and that ship



thing almost cuts my head off. I eat a few more humans and they make me vomit.

Lord, if all things work together for good to those who love you, why is this fishhook in my ...

Oh, it broke loose. Thank you, Lord.

The shank had broken. Now, Glog must push the barbs through his ear and out the other side.

Does it hurt less if you do it quick and get it over with?

Or does it hurt less if you take it a little at a time and go slowly?

Glog walked thoughtfully along the bottom of Herring Bay trying to decide.

Multitudes of fishtraps lay spaced erratically on the oystershell plain. Nylon lines stretched upward from each wire trap to a float on the surface. Some of the wire cages were shaped like hourglasses, double-ended cones with an entrance at each end and a bait wired in the center. Fish can squeeze through the entrance to get to the bait but they can't find their way back out again. Some of the traps were shaped like wire cubes with funnel-shaped entrances and baited with some rotting tid-bit — such as a chicken-neck or a chunk of bloody liver — regarded by crabs as a choice delicacy.

Glog threaded his way among the traps still trying to decide how to handle that fishhook in his ear. As he walked, he no longer worried about the existence of God...

Or about the purpose of life ...

Or about the problem of pain...

Or about why the innocent suffer.



Nothing like a three-pronged fishhook in your ear to fade theological speculation into proper prospective.

He tried to jerk it out quick.

Not a good idea!

He tried to ease the thing through slowly.

A worse idea than the first.

For some of life's problems there just aren't any good answers.

Anybody who says there are, never had a fishhook in his ear.

You do what you have to do and pay the pain of your choice.

Glog did not realize that while the method he was trying to remove the hook works with ordinary hooks, it can never work with a three-barbed treble hook no matter how hard you try to get it out of your flesh.

Only another person can remove a treble-hook from your ear.

And Glog walked alone.

What's this?

Something big moved in the distance. An undefined white shape rose and swelled and turned and moved near some underwater pilings.

The shape and outline of the thing changed as it moved. A misty spectral thing that puffed larger or shrank smaller in no particular pattern. It looked as shapeless and as form-changing as six puppies under a blanket.

The thing stretched out from one of the pilings and twisted in the slow-moving current. Yet parts of it struggled against the current. Places in the white



mass bulged out and shrank back — like a giant amoeba without the rhythmic contractions.

This obscene travesty moved — but it moved without purpose, without reason, without meaning.

Glog bobbed above the surface of the bay to gulp air then sank back to the bottom and walked toward the thing to see what this horror was...

A ghost net!

The sight of it appalled the monster.

If he'd not been sick already, what he saw now would surely have curdled his belly.

Modern technology makes ghost nets possible. Machines weave monofilament lines into huge nets, nets bigger than possible back when cotton was used as the fiber. Wet cotton weighs too much for really massive nets. But monofilament line weighs little for its size.

Fishnets made of it are strong.

They never rot.

They last practically forever.

A boon for the modern fisherman.

But...

Trawled behind boats, some of the nets snag on underwater obstacles. The nets rip. Lines part. The nets are lost. Left behind they become ghost nets.

Ghost nets are never hauled in. Ghost nets stay on the bottom of the sea forever. Ghost nets never disintegrate...

But ghost nets still catch fish!

Yes indeed.

They remain as effective a fish catcher as ever.

Once long ago near the south entrance to Herring Bay, a pier jutted far out into the water. Battered by



storms, not maintained by its owners, it fell into disuse as planks rotted or washed away. Barnacles and shipworms ate away at the pilings giving them an hourglass shape. The top portions eventually toppled into the sea leaving stubs below the waterline.

Then, five years ago a fishing trawler passed too close.

Nets snagged.

Twenty-five yards of monofilament mesh ripped away and tangled on the stub of underwater piling.

That was what Glog saw — a ghost net which had been catching fish for five years. No one emptied the net. No fisherman harvested the catch. No one ate the fish.

Small fish enter the net and become entrapped. They struggle to get free. Their struggle attracts larger fish which enter the deathtrap lured by easy prey. The big fish push against the netting causing it to billow and writhe in death throes as they try to escape. The big fish die and more little fish enter the net to dine on the corpses.

The cycle of useless death continues.

The white net fibers move and wash this way and that in the tide. The entangled fish cause it to puff and billow and twist in a dance of death.

Glog approached the obscenity.

All this dying. All these lives wasted to no purpose. All this effort and struggle of these poor creatures has no meaning, no reason. All these lives and all these deaths do not benefit anyone. It's all futility ... Is this a picture of my life? Of every thinking being's life?



Are we all trapped by unseen threads which we did not make but which entangle us no matter which way we push and struggle... And it all means nothing.

Is this the way life really is? Does God create us just so we can die out of sight entangled in mesh on a rotting piling in the middle of nowhere? Lord, is that the way it is? Am I seeing the way things really are?

No still small voice answered.

This has got to stop!

Glog stretched out his paw and grabbed the piling where tangles of line anchored the ghost net.

He lifted.

The stub of piling, round as a barrel, had withstood the scouring of tides and hurricanes, but Glog shook the thing free of its roots.

He unsheathed his claws and tore at the pocket of the net freeing hundreds of dying and struggling fish.

Like shooting stars in the firmament, hundreds of silver fish sprang free. Shaking their tails and flitting in bursts of speed they swarmed out of the ghost net. Swirling and spinning, the fish darted through the water. Frisky ones bounded to the water surface and leaped from their native element to skip on their tails in the air.

But Glog's action came too late for many of the hopeless captives. Hundreds of bloated dead fish sank to the bottom.

Hundreds of fish too injured to swim normally, drifted to the surface with their swim bladders inflated. They flicked feebly in erratic dying circles.



Glog looked at the tatters of net and line clutched in his hands. If he let the thing go, it would just roll along the bottom till it snagged on some other anchor and be a ghost net again and murder more fish.

What can I do with this thing? How do you get rid of something like this?

Glog rolled the netting into a bundle and carried it under his arm as he resumed walking south underneath the water. His stomachs did not feel a bit better. The straps of his backpack full of manuscript illuminations cut into his shoulders. The treble hook worked its barbs deeper into his ear every time he moved...

Glog did not even feel like eating.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Chesapeake Bay's western shoreline in Calvert County, Maryland, curves as smooth as the blade of an Arab scimitar.

No creeks break the 40-mile stretch of waterfront between Rose Heaven and the mouth of the Patuxent River. This side of the bay offers no natural harbors at all.

Virtually no marshes front this section of the Chesapeake.

Instead, cliffs of yellow sandy material line the bay. In places these cliffs rise over a hundred feet almost straight out of the water. Youth groups often camp on the tree-covered bluffs and the young adventurers rappel down the cliff face to wet their feet in the bay.

For years the young people have called the whole area by the nick-name of Scientist Cliffs because of the many paleontologists who prowl the foot of the cliffs.

The scientists say that Cenozoic and Mesozoic sands comprise the cliffs.

Maybe so.

But Glog did not like the place where he found himself.

An hour before sunrise, he waded out of the bay seeking shelter for the day. The tide was low and a narrow beach, perhaps twenty feet wide, separated the waves from the foot of the cliff. A barren



landscape stretched away on either side. The wet sandy marl at the foot of the cliffs looked unending.

As Glog walked south along the face of the cliffs, his feet sank deep in the sand.

Shells and things crunched underfoot at every step.

He stepped over or around the enormous piles of driftwood which littered the strip.

Erosion constantly exposes the tap roots of the elm, hickory, maple and sweet gum trees which grow on top of the bluffs. In time, the trees loose all support and topple, branches down, onto the thin strip of beach.

After walking a mile or so, Glog encountered a heap of such fallen trees. Root systems, trunks and huge leafless branches lay jumbled together, one tree atop another. Wind-blown sand had scrubbed the wood free of bark and the sun had bleached it bone-white and smooth.

Glog saw a space between the tangle and the sandbank at the foot of the cliff. He burrowed in behind the trees and began to dig.

In a few minutes, he'd hollowed out a shallow cavern in the sand. The tangle of fallen trees screened the entrance.

He hoped the hole would be high enough up on the bank not to fill with water when high tide returned; but he was really too sick and tired to care.

He stuffed his backpack and roll of netting to the rear of the digging, then crawled into the hole and settled down to sleep.

Normally Glog sleeps on his right side with his right arm extended so his shoulder pillows his head.

Ouch!



That fishhook embedded in his ear forced him to roll onto his left side facing the back wall of the hollow.

He couldn't sleep that way.

It didn't feel right.

He tried sitting up with his back propped against the sand wall.

The rising sun slanted right in his eyes even through the tangle of branches shielding the hole's entrance.

Glog twisted this way and that way.

He found no comfort.

Who can rest on damp gritty sand?

Pointy shells and things jabbed him; and when he shifted, new pointy things poked into new portions of his anatomy.

His queasy stomach reminded him that he'd eaten something bad.

Very bad.

The bright sun glared off the morning water, too much light for Glog's pineal window to handle. He twisted in the cave, squirming to keep his eyes in shadow.

Glog longed for home.

Anyone can handle major disasters; it's the everyday petty annoyances that do us in. If a whale attacks you, you can harpoon the sucker; but what can you do when you're being eaten alive by minnows?

Glog dozed and dreamed of oil scum flooding the marsh.

A sharp point pressing into his back woke him. He shifted and groped for the thing. He pulled it out of



the sand. More and more of the thing came out. It was longer and pointier than he had thought.

A gigantic antler!

What kind of animal carried a rack this huge?

Glog tasted it.

It had no taste at all.

Why not?

The antler of the long-dead giant red elk had turned to brittle stone.

By now, the sun had passed its meridian and the bright beams no longer glared directly into the cave; Glog could see better.

He examined the sides and floor of his hole.

More bones!

Thousands of them.

No, millions of them.

At the foot of Calvert Cliffs, in a bed just above the waterline and about four feet thick, lies one of the largest fossil bone deposits in the United States. Paleontologists say the miles-long bed contains fossils from the Miocene, Pliocene and Pleistocene ages.

Anyone who walks along the narrow beach at low tide can pick up baskets full of fossil bones, damp and brown with age.

Serrated teeth, six to eight inches long, wash out of the sandy bank — all that remains of *Carcharodon Megalodon*, 70-foot long sharks which once fed in the Bay's waters.

Like Glog, *Carcharodon Megalodon* (and indeed practically all modern sharks) had teeth which are both homodont and polyphyodont — that is, all its teeth had the same shape and were arranged in many rows one behind the other so that



when one tooth fell out, one from the row behind replaced it.

Since the killer teeth of sharks and other cartilaginous fish are not anchored in bone sockets, *Carcharodon Megalodon* lost teeth often — that sucker would bite rocks when it took a notion — and its huge teeth are among the most common fossils found at Calvert Cliffs.

Other bones easily found here include those of both land and sea creatures: bison, cougar, turtles, crocodiles, cattle, whales, dolphins, peccary, tapir, mastodon, horses, and both northern and southern mammoths.

I've been sleeping in a gigantic boneyard!,
Glog thought.

He scrambled to his feet, bumping his head against the ceiling. Cascading sand and bone fragments rained down on his shoulders.

This place is spooky!

Glog picked up a protruding curve of bone—a dome-shaped fragment from a giant sea turtle's shell.

And here was a vertebra, big as an oil drum.

And there was what looked like a finger nail as big as the blade of a shovel.

Part of a curved tusk, its ivory black from being water soaked for ages — *No, it isn't a tusk, it's the rib of some huge animal.*

Glog brushed sand away from an interesting looking bone in the side wall of his hole and uncovered the skull of a buffalo, or maybe it was just a mean-looking cow. There seemed to be millions of cow bones mingled in the sand.



Millions of bones from every type of creature that ever walked the earth, or swam its waters, or flew in its skies—all of them mingled together in one massive boneyard.

What could have caused this?

Why would the bones of land animals and sea animals, mice and whales, bison and crocodile, deer and shark, seal and camel all lie in one mass grave covered by water-borne sand for ages only to be exposed by erosion in modern times?

Glog knew the answer.

Man did this!

That was Glog's answer for just about every trouble in the world.

They did! Man's sins piled up to High Heaven till the earth could no longer bear their weight.

And all these innocent creatures died.

Like those who walk on splinter ice, the humans ventured further and further away from God's solid shore till they broke through and drowned.

And all those innocent creatures who stood with man on the crust of the world when it broke — they fell through and they drowned too.

That's what happened.

Man's sin brought the Flood and all these poor sinless innocents climbed to the highest places of their day. The lions and the sheep, the elephants and the beaver, the cows and the anteaters all drowned when the waters



flooded this place. And the silt in the Flood waters covered their bodies all jumbled together and their bones mingled, eater and prey together.

When will man learn?

Even now all creation yearns to be delivered.

I know I sure do!

And man still walks over the gaping mouth of flaming Hell on the thinnest of boards, rotten and burnt near through. And only the mercy of a loving God keeps all creation from falling through.

Glog shuddered.

But that doesn't really make sense. I don't understand why the innocent should suffer with the guilty. Here I am driven from my home and hungry through no fault of my own — I've never burned a single drop of oil.

It's not fair!

If God is a god of love — then why does He allow bad things to happen to those who do not deserve it? Why not just punish the guilty?

If God created all living beings and gave each one of us a purpose for living — then why does so much that happens to us seem to have no purpose?

If God is a god of reason — then why do so many unreasonable things happen?



Glog dug more bones out of the wall. He held a handful of tiny slender delicate bones—a bird of some kind.

He tossed them aside and picked up a long thigh bone, a heavy femur and began to toy with it. He wondered about what kind of creature it may have belonged to.

How did this animal taste?

Was it easy to catch or did it put up a fight?

What kind of poetry did it like?

Did it know much about astronomy or theology or mathematics or philosophy?

Bones don't really tell you very much about any creature. All they tell you is that the creature is dead.

His scratching uncovered a long smooth slender tapering bone with small polished knobs at each end. A U-shaped groove (scientists call it the *sulcus urethrae*) ran the full length of the bone.

The larger knob at the thicker end of the bone fit Glog's palm exactly.

This thing will make a really handy walking-stick; and when I start traveling again, I think I'll carry it along, he thought.

Oddly enough, what he'd found was the baculum of an extinct giant otter.

The baculum bone is named for its shape — not its function.

The Latin word *baculum* means walking-stick.

But the bone which zoologists have named baculum has nothing to do with walking...



The *baculum* is the solid bone which in some creatures — such as raccoons, minks, dogs, whales and otters — stiffens the male penis.

Glog leaned his baculum—not his *baculum*, the one he'd found; his own remained hidden within the organs of his ventricle slit — he leaned his baculum against the side of his backpack so he wouldn't forget it amid all the other brown fossil bones in the cavern.

Just look at all this death, he thought. Millions of animals of every kind, all buried in a common grave. Is there any place in the world where this sort of thing is happening today? A place where millions of bones pile up in a single grave miles long?

Does it happen in Africa?

Or Chicago?

Or China?

No.

The ancient Flood is the only explanation. Of all God's creatures only Man brought sin, and sin brought death.

Thinking along these lines, Glog remembered a line he'd read back in those happy days when he'd been a scholar, spending his nights hunting muskrats in the marsh and his free time illuminating his manuscripts without a worry in the world:

St. Francis of Assisi — who sometimes preached to birds and animals — once admonished a human audience:

“Try to realize the dignity God has conferred on you. He created your body in the image of His beloved Son, and your soul in His own likeness —



Yet, every creature under Heaven serves, acknowledges and obeys its Creator in its own way better than you do!"

High tide was seeping into Glog's hollow — he'd not dug it high enough in the bank. Six or eight inches of water pooled on the floor of the diggings.

Glog scraped more sand and bone fragments from the roof and let the debris fall to raise the floor level.

He really did not feel like making even this small effort. He still felt giddy from whatever it was that he'd eaten.

And he felt discouraged.

What's the use of going on if you're not sure where you're going? If you're not sure your efforts have any meaning or will bring any reward?

What's the use of going on, when all you really want to do is go home?

Absent-mindedly, Glog worried the fishhook dangling from his ear.

This thing hurts. What if it gets infected?

He settled down, resting his head on the rolled up hank of netting and napped fitfully in the damp grave.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Sand.

Glog saw the sand cascading down before he heard Boy Scout Troop 36 yelling on top of the cliff.

Actually it wasn't the whole scout troop; it was just the eight boys in the troop's Wildcat Patrol. Mr. Prothero, the Scoutmaster, had brought the Wildcat Patrol on a special camping trip as a reward for their blue-ribbon showing in the District Camporee.

Now, while Mr. Prothero and the older boys laid out the ropes and tackle for rappelling down the cliff, some of the younger guys amused themselves by rolling clumps of sand down the steep hundred-foot slope into the water.

Each clump of yellow sand gathered loose sand as it rolled. The loose sand granules gathered more sand and flowed like a river of molten lava down the cliff slope cutting channels, overflowing hardpan, piling up against roots, spilling onto the beach, raising a puff of dust.

A fine spectacle, the boys thought.

Glog did not think so.

One of their first "snowballs" of sand had raised a cloud of dust right at the entrance of the cave he'd dug three days ago.

He'd lain in there sick all that time without eating.



At one point he really thought his own bones would molder among those of the ancient animals buried beneath the cliffs.

But now he felt well enough to start thinking about moving on to ... *God only knows where*. Glog still had a headache but he was beginning to feel hungry again.

A good sign of improving health.

When the dust from above cascaded down practically on his head, he'd been sitting in the mouth of his diggings looking out at the bay wondering if he could possibly keep any food down.

The dust made Glog sneeze.

The acoustics of the cliff carried the sounds of the scout troop down to him clearly.

"OK, Guys. Listen up here," Mr Prothero called. "Here's how you do this".

Using the Senior Patrol Leader, an Explorer Scout named Tony, to demonstrate, Mr. Prothero explained the fine art of jumping off a hundred-foot high cliff:

"This rig of nylon is called a Swiss Seat. This belt wraps around your hips with the O-ring in front. Make sure the clips are secure.

"There are two lines: this heavy one is the stationary line. We throw it over the edge and it's the one you go down. The lighter line is your safety line; it's a runner line to act as an emergency brake to slow your descent.

"We knot the fixed end of the stationary line to this tree. Use a clove hitch. The safety man stays here on top and feeds out the security line. You use these things, they're called snaffle hooks, to snap your O-ring onto the stationary line; the safety line ties off on this swivel, here.



“Wrap the stationary line around the back of your right leg, like so. It gives you extra braking power.

“Now, you’re ready to go.

“Stand with your back to the edge. Lean back against the rope. Keep your knees straight for now. And step back.

“Show ‘em Tony”.

“Yeah, make like a bungee jumper, Tony,” yelled one of the boys.

Tony braced against the ropes, leaned backwards over the edge and stepped off. He bounced down a couple of yards and halted. “Nothing to it, dweebs,” he yelled.

Bouncing off the cliff face about ten or fifteen yards each time, he descended to the cheers of the boys on top.

At the bottom — he’d landed about twenty yards to the left of Glog’s hole — Tony unfastened the Swiss Seat and signaled for it to be pulled back up by the safety line.

“My turn! My turn,” yelled the scouts.

One by one — some hesitant, some eager — the boys descended the rope and climbed a steep water channel upward to go again.

Glog watched this operation in fascination.

If you stood at the bottom of that rope with your mouth open... he thought.

Again the scouts descended the cliff.

This time they stayed on the narrow beach exploring, shouting, horsing around, looking for fossil shark teeth.

To Glog, one of the boys looked like a raccoon; he sported dark plastic circles over his eyes. To Glog’s amazement, the boy took off the sunglasses and his



was a normal human face! Those things protected his eyes from the sun's glare.

I wish I had something like that for my eyes.

More or less, in bits and pieces, augmented in some cases by jeans or Alfred E. Neuman tee shirts—each boy in Troop 36 wore the official Boy Scout uniform.

Typical scouts.

But, whatever else he wore, each boy also wore a bright red Scout neckerchief.

These large triangles of cloth excited Glog's interest because while most boys wore the neckerchiefs around their necks, one boy had tied the ends of his under his chin. For this boy, the neckerchief functioned as a sunbonnet.

What a good idea! If I had a big piece of cloth like that I'd be able to walk out in the daylight a little bit..

Glog understood that by covering his pineal window—the plate of un-pigmented scale in the center of his forehead which intensified his night vision — and which made him so shy of bright light — he understood that he might be able to stand sunlight better if he had a cloth covering like a Scout neckerchief sunbonnet, only bigger, to screen his pineal window from direct rays.

Glog drew back to the far wall of his cavern as a bunch of the boys began climbing around on the tangle of fallen trees.

"Look! I've found a cave back here," one scout shouted.



Three of them clambered over the logs and gathered at the entrance to peer into the dark interior.

Glog remained very still.

"Yuck! It stinks in there!"

Hey, I've been sick.

The smell caused the boys to hesitate at the entrance instead of barging right in as they usually did when confronted with an unknown and probably dangerous place.

Glog considered catching and eating the three scouts. After all, he was hungry — but the thought of immediate food renewed his stomachs' queasiness.

It takes a stronger constitution than Glog's to handle cocaine.

"Wow! Look what I found," shouted one of the boys near the water. He waved a big chunk of fossil ox pelvis.

The boys at the cave mouth ran to see his treasure.

"That looks like part of a pelvis," said Mr. Prothero.

"What's a pelvis?" asked the scout who'd found the treasure.

"You know, Elvis the Pelvis," Tony said. "You found an ass-bone, Dork".

The boy who found the bone climbed up on top of one of the fallen logs and brandished the bone in the air, imitating a Conan the Barbarian pose.

"I'm king of the mountain! I'm Sampson," the kid yelled.

"You're who?"



"Sampson. You know. That guy in the Bible who killed a thousand Klingons with the ass-bone of a jaw".

"Dweeb!... Dip-wad!" and other scout-like compliments greeted his announcement as the other scouts pulled the king of the mountain from his log throne.

The boys spread out over the beach gathering fossil teeth, ribs, massive clamshell-castings — and those special finds they delighted to throw at each other...

Coprolites!

If you don't already know what coprolites are — be grateful —just imagine what a troop of scouts would most relish pelting each other with.

Troop 36 wandered far down the strand... but Glog still heard them long after they passed out of sight.

Glog napped.

While he slept, rain fell.

Heavy rain.

Dusk settled.

Glog woke.

The rain slacked off.

Glog decided that maybe he was well enough to travel on.

Definitely. He really was beginning to feel hungry and, aside from the Boy Scouts, he'd not seen anything eatable since he'd first arrived at Calvert Cliffs.

Yes. It is time to go. Time to move on.

Glog rolled the strip of ghost netting into a tighter ball and stuffed it inside his backpack.



He looked around the cave to see if he'd missed anything.

Nothing there but old bones.

*All these creatures drowned and dead.
Terrible. Terrible. It's hard to understand
how God could let something like this
happen.*

He picked up his baculum walking stick and crawled out the entrance.

A rainbow arced above Chesapeake Bay!

At the end of the rain, this bow of color laced itself in and out of lingering thunderheads tinged with silver.

Oh! There's the promise.

There's the promise.

God's own promise to every beast.

What were the words?

Oh, yes, I remember. After the Flood, God told Father Noah:

*"Behold, I establish my covenant with you,
and with every other living creature: with
the birds of the air, with the cattle of the
field, and with every wild beast left on the
earth.*

*"Never again shall all flesh be cut off by
the waters of a flood to destroy all the whole
earth.*

*"And this is the token of my promise which
I make between me and you and every other
living creature for perpetual generations:*



"I will set my rainbow in the cloud. It shall be a token between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass that whenever I bring a cloud of rain over the face of the earth, then my rainbow can be seen in the cloud. It is a reminder of the covenant between me and you and every animal; it is, a reminder that the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

"And my rainbow shall be in the cloud for a remembrance of this everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth".

Glog stood gazing at the rainbow, remembering ... till falling darkness blended the bow's colors into the darkness.

Across the bay, the flashing beam of the Sharps Island Lighthouse came on and scribed a circle in the night.

Hefting his baculum walking stick, the monster waded out up to his knees in the water.

The promise of the rainbow was a long time ago, Glog thought. And the sinfulness of man still messes up the world for everybody. Anyone with common sense should realize that things can't go on like this for much longer...

But God promised us beasts that He will never send another flood no matter what the humans do... And He told St. Peter that when the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord does finally get here, then the ends of the sky will



snap together — like a scroll that's been rolled up too tight for a long time will spring back when you stretch it out and let go.

Then, the Lord's own dead will all rise again alive.

And even the very elements of this world will melt with a fervent heat...

Oh, well, all that's a long way off.

Nothing like that could happen today.

Elements can't melt with a fervent heat. That's impossible.

Glog waded deep enough to cover his head and walked, picking his way along the bottom with his baculum.

He ambled south — towards the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company's 825-megawatt generators at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant which lay only 20 miles away.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

From the hole at the northern end of Calvert Cliffs, about four miles south of Chesapeake Beach, Glog trudged southward under the water.

He poked his head up now and then to breathe and look for something to eat.

He was definitely feeling better.

He was hungry.

What a blessing to feel this good again!

He'd hardly traveled a mile when he bumped into a 7-foot-long bottle-nosed dolphin. He literally bumped into it. Glog and the dolphin surfaced for air at the same time within yards of each other.

Like plucking a grape — a wiggling grape.

Looks like a fish, but tastes like ... like... tastes like chicken.

Glog was truly thankful. He could keep it down.

What a blessing!

He scanned the water's surface to see if there were any...

Yes. There went three or four more dolphin rolling past him toward the shore.

In the open ocean, dolphin travel in packs of up to a hundred, and they're up and down in the water so much that they're hard to count; so Glog was not sure how many swam even in this small group.



Enough to make my first real meal in days,
he thought, and set off after them.

No contest.

The aquatic mammals scooted through the sea turning and twisting and rolling. Diving and bobbing. Surfacing and blowing.

And Glog, out of his own element with his feet sinking in bottom silt and the water resisting him, wallowed after them.

Enough of this! Catching that one was a fluke; I'll never be able to...

Ha! Ha Ha Ha! Catching one was a fluke! A Dolphin Fluke! Ha Ha Ha! Clever. Lord, but I'm clever. Ha Ha Ha!

Clever. Maybe. Smart? Not when you get tickled and start laughing underwater.

Salt water got in Glog's nostrils and choked him.

Spitting and sputtering, his nose burning, he rose to the surface and waded towards shoal water to catch his breath.

A big red star lettered with the word TEXACO, a lighted sign at Halle Marina, the Breezy Point Harbor Yacht Basin, reflected its message on the water. The red and white light of the sign cut a path from the anchorage directly to where Glog stood a few hundred yards off shore.

Among the services offered to boaters at Breezy Point, a privately dredged project a mile north of Plum Point, is an ice storage plant. A good many working boats rode at anchor in the night waiting to ice up before setting out to fish, crab or tong oysters in the morning.



Riding at anchor nearby lay a large number of pleasure boats including several sailboats of various types.

Walter H. Glasstone, D.D.S., of Alexandria, Va., slept aboard his cutter, the *Rinse 'n Split*, a 34-foot Downeaster rigged with Rolofurling.

Dr. Glasstone, a sailing enthusiast, found it more economical —no boat slip tax in Calvert County — and convenient to keep his sailboat at Breezy Point rather than brave the crowds and hassles of the Potomac River at Alexandria.

He and his family were well-known at the yacht basin.

This night, Mrs. Glasstone and the three children slept at home in Alexandria. She thought he was at orthodontic seminar in Boston.

Miss. Brandi Sutliff, also aboard the *Rinse 'n Split*, was not asleep.

She lay in the cabin's bunk wide awake feeling uneasy and peeved with herself.

Worry. She felt worried. She remembered that awful joke Mary Kay Reynolds told her in English 101.

“Punctuate these words:

Fun Fun Fun Worry Worry Worry

“Answer:

Fun period; Fun period; Fun no period — Worry, Worry, Worry!”

Well, Orajell... No, that's Orthojell keeps you from getting pregers.... but...

Who says you can't catch AIDS from a health-care professional?

No Trojans.

No Knights.



No Sheiks.

No nothing!

"I've been a fool again. I've got to stop this. But I ... I don't think I can. I don't like it. But I do like it. What's wrong with me," Brandi said snuffing out another cigarette.

Brandi smoked Carlton 120 Menthol after Carlton 120 Menthol.

Her ashtray, a nautical affectation, a huge half-round clam shell, overflowed with scorched filter-tips.

On weekdays, Brandi worked hard at her first ever job; she clerked in the General Accounting Office. Weekends, the cute strawberry blond, eighteen months out of Wheeling, West Virginia, rushed toward her own idea of sophistication. For instance, she'd recently learned that there is a drink named the same as her name but spelled differently — brandy.

She'd learned to love her namesake.

Doctor Walt had stocked a supply just for her this weekend.

The old spoil-sport kept telling her that you're only supposed to sip it.

Her glass sat empty on the deck beside her.

Brandi decided to refill it.

Bottle empty too?

It had been nearly full just an hour ago.

The dead soldier rested corkless on its side.

"Must have knocked it over when we... Oh darn! The comforter's soaked ... I'll have to rinse it out in the morning".



The blanket had been kicked into a crumpled pile beside the bunk. It lay in a sticky circle of brandy puddled on the floor.

Brandi raised up on her elbow in the bunk trying to reach a fresh bottle from the cabinet without getting all the way out of bed...

The curved bottom of the clam shell... smoldering cigarette... Cotton blanket... soaked in brandy...

Whosh!

The flame erupted singing Brandi's eyebrows.

She screamed, windmilling her arms, "Walt! Walt! The boat's on fire!"

Dr. Glasstone started awake. "What the... YOU STUPID BIMBO!... Ouch! Ouch!"

The doctor was not dressed for fire fighting.

Sparks and burning bits of blanket material puffed upward from the fire and floated in the air on the draft of heat. The burning puffs hung in the air for a moment then settled to the floor or the bunk setting little new fires.

"Get out of the way! Get out of my way," Glasstone shouted. He clambered over Brandi and pushed for the cockpit door.

Flames from the brandy on the floor forced him back.

"Jesus! I'm trapped in here," he shouted.

Brandi sobbed, "I don't want to die. OH Jesus! I don't want to die. Mama! Mama! Help me!"

What in the world are they doing now? I'll swear. Any place you see a human, you hear a fuss!

Glog stood in water up to his shoulders about ten yards off the port bow of the *Rinse 'n Split*. He saw the fire and heard the man and woman screaming.



They're burning!

Glog had once burned his foot stamping out a hunter's abandoned fire and he knew how much getting burnt hurt. He couldn't stand the thought of living creatures in that awful pain.

He hated pain — especially for himself.

Nevertheless, the monster waded closer to the sailboat. He stretched out his paws, grabbed the port gunnel and shoved up as hard as he could.

The cutter tilted away from him to starboard. He let go. The boat rocked back towards him and when the closest gunnel reached its low point, Glog grabbed it again and pushed it on down a few inches underwater.

He held it down.

The boat listed over to port further and further.

Water poured in over the sides.

The two human occupants of the cockpit, their eyes stinging and their lungs choking, dashed out through the steam and smoke to dive over the side.

Glog continued to rock the boat.

The mast tilted back and forth at crazy angles.

Loose items on board tumbled to port.

A falling Thermos jug hit the switch for the Rolofurling rig. A small electric pony motor kicked in and began to raise the sails!

One of them began to unfurl right in front of Glog's nose. The heavy canvas duck of the forestaysail grew bigger and bigger. A triangle. A big triangle. It reminded Glog of....

Red. It was red. The same shade of red as a Boy Scout neckerchief.

What a blessing.



Glog ripped that one triangular sail loose from its fastenings.

The water Glog let in was quenching the fire in the cockpit; but above deck, flames were getting to the other sails even as the boat settled. It made a spectacular photograph.

Yes. When Dr. Glasstone and Miss. Sutliff swam to the dock, they were greeted by the Harbormaster, his son Jimmy, and a reporter and photographer from the *Alexandria Journal* newspaper.

Jimmy, home for the summer to work in his dad's ice plant, played football as a running back for the Florida State University Seminoles; he'd been nominated for a Heisman Trophy and the two journalists were there to do a feature story on him for the newspaper's sports section. For local color, they planned to cover his night work at the ice plant with his dad.

They got more local color than they bargained for.

The photograph of the burning sailboat ran on page A-1 with the story.

The boat's hull blocked any view of Glog.

Just as well.

The flash would have irritated his sensitive eyes.

The other photograph — partially masked with strategically located blocks of black ink — of the heroic Jimmy helping Dr. Glasstone and Miss. Sutliff out of the water ran with the Heisman feature on the sports page.

Want to read the A-1 story?

No?

Neither did Dr. Glasstone ...

But Mrs. Glasstone sure did.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

F***ederal Codes, Standards and Regulations
For Nuclear Power Plants***, Chapter 10, Part
50, Section 50:55, says:

The American Standard Code for Pressure Piping (ASA B31.1), Addenda and application Code Cases or the USA Standard Code For Pressure Piping (USAS B31.1.1.0), Addenda, and applicable Code Cases or the Class I Section of the USA Standard Code for Pressure Piping (USAS B31.7) in effect on the date of order of the piping and the nondestructive examination and acceptance standards of ASA B31.1 Code Cases N7, N9 and N10, except that the acceptance standards of Class I piping of the USA Standard Code for Pressure Piping (USAS B31.7) may be applied. The piping may meet the requirements set forth in editions of ASA B31.1, USAS B31.1.0 and USAS B31.7, Addenda, and Code Cases which became effective after the date or order of the piping unless the Commission has published a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER that compliance with such requirements or any part thereof is unacceptable for such piping.

The Code clarifies the reason for the above regulation by saying, "Structures, systems, and components shall be designed, fabricated, erected, constructed, tested, and inspected to quality



standards commensurate with the importance of the safety function to be performed”.

Good.

Safety first.

Code Criterion 2, Design Bases For Protection Against Natural Phenomena, says, “Structures, systems and components important to safety shall be designed to withstand the effects of natural phenomena such as earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, tsunami, and seiches without loss of capability to perform their safety functions”.

The Code makes no allowance for a dryptosaurus.

After Glog saw that the two screaming humans were safe from the fire, he gathered the forestaysail in folds under his arm and walked back into deeper water.

A mile or so south of Breezy Point, he came to a wide underwater plain where a stiff current scoured the bottom of sand down to a bed of firm clay.

He paused to examine the thick canvas duck sail he’d acquired. He spread it out on the bottom trying to figure out how that Boy Scout had managed to rig his triangular neckerchief into a sunbonnet. The sail had the right shape but it was much too big.

If you take this corner and fold it over to touch that corner, you still have a triangle. Then if you do the same thing again, the cloth is four times as thick but it’s still the same shape. There are these ropes attached here, here and here, but if I punch a hole in this corner and pull that rope through and...

Glog folded the sail, draped it around his thick neck and tied the ends under his chin.

It worked!



Great.

Now, if I pull the edge up over my head...

The underwater world dimmed.

With the sail bonnet covering Glog's pineal window, much of the light his eyes normally picked up was screened out.

Thank You, Lord. I don't want to try this thing in full daylight, but it will give me a couple of extra hours in the morning and evening to travel so I won't be late getting to... to... Where am I going, Lord, and why do I feel any urgency at all about getting there? I don't understand, Lord. I don't understand.

A feeling had been growing in Glog's heart that he was meant for some purpose, that the things which had happened to him had happened for a reason, that what happened to him mattered.

This feeling — well, hardly a feeling — was more like a tiny urge, a vague discontent in the back of his mind, like being hungry for some particular food but not knowing what it is you're hungry for. You know you want something, but you don't know what exactly it is you want.

You know you're moving toward somewhere, but you don't know just where.

You feel there's something you ought to do, but you don't know what.

That kind of feeling.

For Glog, this feeling usually faded away when stronger feelings asserted themselves. When a sudden movement jiggled that fishhook in his ear, or when he wanted to eat — then this vague feeling dropped into the background.



Glog only became aware of it when things were quiet and he was still.

Curious.

Glog shrugged, picked up his backpack and his baculum walking stick and waded on south past places on the cliff-lined shore known among humans as Oldfield, Dares Beach, Parker Creek, Scientists Cliffs, and Governor Run.

Paralleling the shore in 30-foot deep water, he moved southward towards ...

... towards Middleham Chapel which humans had built in 1748,

... towards Cove Point Lighthouse which they built in 1828,

... towards Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, built in 1967.

Yes, in 1967, Baltimore Gas & Electric Company began construction of twin 825-megawatt nuclear reactors at a cost of \$550 million.

Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant is a PWR, that is, a pressurized water reactor. That means that pressure in the pipes keeps the water from boiling.

Each reactor, a steel bottle 15 feet across, stands 40 feet high and weighs 400 tons. The uranium fuel is in the form of millions of ceramic uranium-dioxide pellets stacked in slim rods made of an alloy called zircaloy. 40,000 fuel rods stand inside the steel bottle.

Sixty-nine control rods in each reactor act as blotters to absorb neutrons.

Steam turns turbine blades like a windmill and the shaft of the turbine spins the generator which produces electricity.

The reactor produces 11 millions pounds of high-pressure steam per hour turning the turbine at



1,800 rpm producing 900,000 kilowatt-hours of electric power per hour.

All this machinery gets warm.

Very warm.

The reactor's coolant runs at 5800 F with an operating pressure of 2,100 pounds per square inch which keeps the water from boiling. Design pressure is 2,485 psi; and its peak pressure is calculated at 3,016 psi.

In a blowdown or LOCA (Loss Of Coolant Accident) pressure reduces to zero in 18 seconds.

As dawn approached, Glog noticed more and more boats moving on the surface of the water. At the throbbing sound of the first one's motor, he rushed toward shoal water to avoid being hit; he remembered that ship in the channel which almost cut his head off.

But when he saw the boat making the noise, he laughed at his fear. This was just a tiny little working boat. It hardly drew four feet of water. A boat like that could pass right over his head and never know he was down there.

Glog relaxed and strolled south beneath the water.

The Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant has an excellent safety record; the plant has never had a Loss Of Coolant Accident (LOCA).

Well...

There was this one minor event that could have been a close call...

In December, 1975, workmen making repairs at the plant closed the water supply valves to the emergency feedwater pumps — those are the ones which are supposed to kick in when the normal cooling water supply gets cut off for some



unforeseen reason — and the workers forgot to reopen them.

This left both emergency pumps without a water supply for two weeks before anyone noticed.

Thank God there was no emergency during this period.

The official Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. report on the non-incident said, “If the emergency feedwater pumps had been needed, it was highly probable that the operator would have noticed the lack of water supply”.

Yes, he would have noticed.

So would a few other people...

Twelve thousand people live within ten miles of the plant; three million people live within 50 miles; and five million people live within a hundred miles.

Possible consequences of a LOCA include:

- A radiation cloud one mile wide and 75 miles long;
- 120,000 square miles of land rendered uninhabitable by contamination for at least one year;
- Strontium 90 fallout over a 500,000 square mile area with no agricultural or dairy products from that area usable for at least a year;
- Living restrictions for 1,500 miles from the site of the accident.

Every single day, humans living in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Md., and Richmond, Va., must thank God that Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant operates so safely, that it has many safeguards to prevent or control a LOCA from ever happening.

For instance:



Federal Design Criterion 26 requires two independent shutdown systems for a PWR. The first system is a combination of control element assemblies and dissolved boron; the second is the high-concentration boron injection by high-pressure charging pumps.

In addition to that, plant control room operators are trained to respond to a Loss Of Coolant Accident by initiating a SCRAM.

SCRAM, of course, does not mean to run like hell; it means to shut down the nuclear reaction by inserting all control rods and dumping the emergency cooling boron into the reactor — all to be done within one second of when safety gauges indicate a Loss Of Coolant Accident.

In other words a SCRAM is an emergency procedure to keep the reactor elements — and all other elements for miles around — from melting with a fervent heat.

In normal day-to-day operations, the reactors are cooled with water.

Lots of water.

The plant's heat is cooled by its Nuclear Service Water System.

This system's pumps are made of carbon steel with Niresist trim and bronze impellers. The intake pipes drawing in the water are all welded with gate-type stop valves. Some pipes are made of corrosion-resistant fiberglass reinforced with epoxy.

After drawing the cooling water into the system, the Nuclear Service Water System then filters it.

The cooling water demineralizers are the polishing type; that is, pellets in a mixed bed of anion and granular cation resin. The deep bed demineralizer handles a flow rate of 20 to 50 gallons per minute



per square foot of bed area. The resin mix is 3:1 cation to anion, ground to a 325 mesh.

The Nuclear Service Water System runs filtered seawater across the nuclear core in a system designed so the cooling water never mixes with the radioactive water which generates the steam for the generators.

The system's heat exchangers have stainless steel shells, baffles, spacers and tie rods. The salt water runs through cupro-nickel tubes and tubesheet and channel cladding.

As Glog walked along the sea bottom, about 500 yards offshore moving parallel to the cliffs, he thought about muskrats.

It's funny how you can remember some meals from years ago when you can hardly recall what you ate for last Thursday's dinner. Some muskrats have such an outstanding taste that it lingers with you.

There was that fat one I caught in the snow. Ice crystals clung to his fur and that combination of crisp cold ice and warm muskrat... Hummm!, he sighed.

Then there were those two mating and I caught both tails at once.

Then there was that one in September... Was it '67 or '68? The year of the big storm.. Anyhow, he was pure black. And FAT! Oh but he was fat. And he must have been eating nothing but wild rice all season because the flavor... Oh the flavor!

But they taste good when they've been eating cattails too.



Or watercress.

Or arrowroot... What they eat gives each one that special flavor all its own.

And there was that albino back in June. I thought it would taste different because its color was different, but it tasted just like ...

For the first time in ages, Glog felt happy as he strolled along with the flowing current.

The Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant includes 900 miles of electric cable; 11,500 tons of structural steel; 170,00 cubic yards of concrete; and 50 miles of piping held together by 25,000 welds.

Where does the cooling water running inside these pipes come from?

Each day, the self-lubrication vertical pumps of the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant suck three billion gallons of water — that's 3,000,000,000 gallons of water — from the Chesapeake across the nuclear core to cool it.

The sea water moves into the Nuclear Service Water System through an intake pipe with an opening nine feet in diameter.

The water rushes through the intake pipe's 63-square-foot opening at a velocity of eighty feet a second.

Picture a giant vacuum cleaner nozzle beneath the surface of Chesapeake Bay — Three billion gallons of seawater sucked into an intake pipe nine-feet in diameter and moving through that pipe at eighty feet every second.

And there was that huge snapping turtle. Biggest one I ever saw. Some human had carved a word and number into his shell when he was little: ANTIETAM - 1862.



You'd think that a turtle that old would be tough as leather; but no, inside that shell—once I scraped the moss off — he was as succulent and tender as a possum. I've never tasted better...

Unless it was the one I caught that spring the shad run was so big. They're always more tasty right when they come out of hibernation; the winter's sleep mellows them and tones down that wild taste. I wish ...

Glog noticed that, whereas before the fish around him swam here and there in no particular pattern, now they all swam in the same direction — opposite to the underwater current. Fish usually swim against any strong current so the water flows across their gills easily.

Yes... The current definitely felt stronger.

It got stronger with every step.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The pressure of the moving water pulled Glog strongly south.

The corner of his red sail-canvas hat flapped forward from behind.

A metal grommet tapped his head.

A minor annoyance.

Not dangerous at all.

The current pressed Glog along steadily.

Relentlessly.

It swept the bottom clean of sediment and the moving suspended silt made the flowing water murky.

Picture a giant vacuum cleaner nozzle ...

You know what?

I'd like to eat a beaver. I haven't had a good beaver in ages. Used to be that they were as common as muskrats before the humans took a fancy to beaverskin hats. Now you hardly ever see beaver in the marshes.

And they taste so good! All that bark they gnaw gives them that rich nutty flavor. They're so plump and chewy ... Hummm!

When Glog used to eat beaver, he even ate the tails. Unlike muskrat tails, the tail of a beaver



contains a lot of firm meat giving it the texture of a waffle — a tough pecan waffle.

Glog's mouth watered at the thought.

In this area, the sea bottom rose and fell in short hills interspersed with shallow valleys. While rich beds of green and red seaweed filled the valleys, the crests of the hills were scoured clean by the current. On these bald spots the bare ground was covered by a mat of fossil bones washed out of the cliffs over the years.

Crabs sidled among the ancient bones as though seeking one last morsel of meat or gristle to pick clean.

The current hurried Glog along like a man in an overcoat walking with a strong winter wind at his back.

The tail corner of his red sail-cloth hat threatened to blow forward over his eyes. Glog pushed it all the way back down, wearing it like a Boy Scout neckerchief now.

It still wanted to rush ahead of him.

Picture the giant vacuum cleaner nozzle beneath the surface of Chesapeake Bay — Three billion gallons of seawater a day sucked into an intake pipe nine-feet in diameter ...

A big flat sea creature, a stingray, nosed along the bottom ahead of Glog. It measured four feet from wing tip to wing tip and its poison-barbed tail trailed five feet behind its tough-as-a-Michelin-truck-tire body. The ray glided a precise three inches above the bottom following the contours of the undersea landscape smoothly as though it rolled on bearings.

The stingray was the only fish headed in the same direction as Glog.



The flat ray couldn't change direction if its life depended on it.

It did.

The shoving current pushed Glog along faster and faster, stronger and stronger, with more and more pressure.

He leaned back against it.

Resisting.

The current pressed him on.

The big stingray resisted the current too. It swished back and forth trying to find a calmer stretch of water. It tried hugging the bottom closer looking for a low place where it would not be pulled along against its will.

The current dragged it forward.

Picture a giant vacuum cleaner nozzle beneath the surface of Chesapeake Bay — Three billion gallons of seawater sucked into an intake pipe nine-feet in diameter and moving through that 63-square foot pipe opening at eighty feet every second.

The vertical pumps of the power plant's Nuclear Service Water System suck three billion gallons of Chesapeake Bay water a day over the reactor core. That comes to 125 million gallons of bay water every hour; 2,830,333 gallons every minute; 34,722 gallons every second.

The swift moving water swept everything along with it. Tiny particles of trash — leaves, sand, fish scales, bits of paper, pebbles, fishing corks — lifted from the sea bottom darted along with the water; they looked like the sheets of rain you see in a tropical storm when gale winds drive the rain in straight lines parallel to the ground.

The particles turned the water milky, nearly impossible to see through.



Now the stingray had turned tail and swam madly against the current. But it made no progress; swimming as hard as it could, the ray was drawn backward.

Glog dug in his feet, leaning back as hard as he could against the pressure of the water.

He did not like what was happening.

He fought against the water pressure.

It sucked him forward.

Inexorable.

Like the suction of a giant vacuum cleaner under the water ...

Several filters guard the opening of the Nuclear Service Water System's 9-foot intake pipe. The first one, called the Trash Rack, consists of a stainless steel grating of crisscrossed bars four inches apart. Then, a few yards behind the Trash Rack, comes the Mechanical Rake; then the Traveling Screen; then a series of screens, grates and filters of smaller and smaller mesh.

Pressure of the rushing water on each one of these mesh devices presses any debris caught in the flow into smaller and smaller pieces and squishes those diced pieces through that filter to the next one for further straining.

Therefore, along with the three billion gallons of reactor cooling water which gush through the intake pipe, a blend of fish puree also flows across the radioactive core.

Glog saw a round black hole in the water ahead of him.

Water rushed into the opening.

Sucked away to God-only-knows-where.

Nothing in the water escaped that gaping maw.



The big stingray slapped against the Trash Rack.
And stuck.

Like a crucified figure, the ray spread against the grate.

Then... it's magnificent tail disappeared into the sucking blackness.

The mangled ray quivered in the suction.

Then — beginning at it's wing tips, where the ray's body is thinnest — bits of the stingray... broke off.

Chunks of flesh peeled away and disappeared into the intake pipe.

The stripping of the stingray was not balanced. Sometimes a bigger section of body would tear off on one side than on the other. Tougher bits of tendon stayed in place longer than softer organs.

The ray appeared lopsided. A ragged dying Christ. Its blood streamed away from it into the pipe.

Then the ray was gone.

Gone with a plop.

Gone.

A rag of gut, folded over a grating bar of the Trash Rack, fluttered waving like a banner for a moment. Then it too was gone.

Dear Jesus! Mercy!

The vacuum sucked Glog toward the black opening. He pushed and strained against it. It pulled him onward.

Look! Past that black hole of Mankind! The water's calm there. That sucker just slurps in what's in front of it. If I can move to the side of the hole, I can break free of its pull

Yes.



A few yards behind the nine-foot opening the water remains calm enough for baby oysters to anchor on the pipe tube itself. Sea grass grows there. Crabs scuttle. Fish swim safely.

Glog pushed his feet against the bottom angling to the side.

He made headway.

It's much easier to move diagonally across a rip tide than to attempt to move against it; by moving diagonally, you can use the moving water's own pressure to help you break free of the current.

It's working! Thank You, Lord, it's working. I'm going to ...

The sailcloth neckerchief ripped off Glog's neck...

Like a giant billowing sail blown loose in a hurricane, it flapped and streamed toward the intake pipe's suction...

Glog clawed at the rope tie holding the thing under his chin. He couldn't untie the stiff wet knot but he unsheathed his claws and cut the nylon rope...

Thank You, Lord! That thing could have strangled...

Glog shrieked.

As the canvas neckerchief flapped away from him toward the black opening, one of the three barbed prongs on that treble hook snagged the cloth...

The sail snatched against the prong still hooked in Glog's ear...

Agony jerked Glog off his feet and hurled him against the Trash Rack...

And there he stuck.



Another figure crucified helpless on the Trash Rack of this world's power system.

A nuclear reactor MUST be kept cool.

Otherwise the unthinkable may happen.

Protocol instructs power plant control room personnel exactly what to do in the unlikely event that something clogs the primary Nuclear Service Water System's intake.

When the water flow lessens, gauges record that fact and the first thing the operators are to do is switch to an alternate intake pipe. Then they activate the Mechanical Rake or reverse the vertical pumps to blow clear the Trash Rack. If those steps fail and worse comes to worse, they initiate a SCRAM flooding the reactor with boron.

That's what they're supposed to do...

But there's a shortcut.

Ever drink a strawberry milkshake?

Not one of those pink chalk-water concoctions served in a fast-food place, but a real strawberry milkshake made with real strawberries and real milk?

When you suck a bit of strawberry into your straw, the delicious flow stops.

To solve the problem, you could lift the straw and blow the red pulp out.

Messy.

You could switch to a new straw.

Inconvenient.

When faced with this problem, instead of trying either of the above solutions, most likely, you simply suck harder; you increase the suction on your straw and pull the red strawberry pulp right on through to its goal.



Well, that morning, when the gauges indicated some obstruction in the Nuclear Service Water System intake pipe, the control room operator tried to solve the problem the same way you would — she revved up vertical pump speed to increase the suction.

When the water pressure swept away his neckerchief, Glog screamed in alarm, *My hat! My hat!*

When the canvas snagged the hook, *My Ear! My Ear!*

When the control room operator revved up the vertical pump, *My baculum! My baculum!*

Glog was not worried about his walking stick.

He hurt all over.

Fortunately the folded canvas triangle of the sail was wedged between his body and the metal grate of the Trash Rack. That cushioned the pain some. But as the suction increased, the horrible pressure of the rushing water pressed Glog tighter and tighter against the intake.

Only his head, legs and right arm were free because they remained outside the diameter of the pipe. The rest of his body, squeezed against the grate, locked down solid.

The folded canvas sail began to shred.

The pressure squashed Glog flat against the Trash Rack.

Immovable.

He screamed under the water.

The air bubble of his cry disappeared into the pipe.

Control room gauges still indicated an obstruction in the pipe.



The operator, unconcerned, upped the suction.

Tatters of red canvas ripped free from the sail and streaked away into the darkness.

Glog knew he could not pull free so he tried to roll to his left.

Just as he did, the canvas section snagged in the treble hook rippled and flew between the grate bars. The streamer of canvas flapped straight out from Glog's ear.

A chunk of his ear tore away and followed the hook and the piece of canvas into the black hole.

Jesus! Jesus! Oh Jesus!

Seeing the flow of Nuclear Service Water System intake stayed low, the senior control room operator increased the suction more.

Remember the strawberry milkshake?

The red pulp clogs your straw.

You increase the suction.

Either the strawberry moves through the straw or it doesn't.

You suck harder.

Now, the strawberry pops up through the straw...

Or it doesn't.

And if it doesn't...

Your sucking on the straw creates a vacuum inside it. That vacuum either draws the luscious cold strawberry clog up the straw... or...

When Glog tried to roll over, the water pressure forced him back and pulled his free arm into the pipe opening.

Glog's chest, belly and arms blocked the opening completely.



As the pumps increased, the vacuum inside the 50 miles of Nuclear Service Water System pipes also increased.

Federal Codes, Standards and Regulations For Nuclear Power Plants says, “Pipes must conform to seismic Class 1 of ASME Code; Section III, a stainless steel Type 304 which has an allowable stress of 14,300 psi”.

But if the strawberry can not be sucked through the straw, the strawberry does not flatten and collapse in the vacuum — the straw does.

With Glog’s body completely blocking the water flow and with the pumps creating their greatest suction, vacuum increased in the Nuclear Service Water System pipes.

External pressure built and built with the vacuum’s strengthening.

Slowly a hundred-yard length of pipe lost its curvature; from round, the pipe bulged into an oval shape. The oval cross-section broadened and broadened.

Silently the massive intake pipe flattened — flat as a soda straw.

Suddenly, no cooling water entered the reactor.


None at all.

Plant control room operators noticed.

SCRAM!

Concerning the importance of back-up Emergency Feedwater Systems and boron injection safety features, ***Federal Codes, Standards and Regulations For Nuclear Power Plants*** makes some observations of what might possibly happen in a Loss Of Coolant Accident:

In a large pipe rupture LOCA, the temperature of the fuel rods may possibly



rise from normal operating temperature of 550 degrees to 3,300 degrees at which point the zircaloy tubes begin to melt causing the core to lose its precise geometrical arrangement. In such a case, core temperature may rise to 5,000 degree thus producing a white-hot blob of molten radioactive metal. This condition is to be avoided.

Glog noticed when the intake pipe flattened too.

Thank God!

When vacuum collapsed the pipe in on itself, immediately the suction holding Glog to the Trash Rack stopped.

He was free!

Glog bounced to the surface of the water gasping for breath.

A cool pre-dawn breeze greeted him and he inhaled it like fresh nectar.

A noise behind him made him turn and look at the shoreline.

The squat barrel smokestacks of the plant spewed white steam into the morning air. Searchlight beams swung back and forth in the rose-tinged gray morning. Klaxon horns blared. Humans ran about excitedly like popcorn cooking in a pan with no lid. Cars scooted around the plant like drips of water on a hot griddle. Motor boats raced here and there on the Chesapeake; some rushing toward the plant, some rushing away from it.

A flight of Navy F/A 18s, scrambled from Patuxent Naval Air Test Center just across the river to the south, zoomed over Glog's head. The jets skimmed at wave-top level over the bay.



Glog clamped his paws over his ears and sank back down into the water beside the Trash Rack. Touching the ear the hook had torn caused him agony.

Lord, what in the world are those creatures doing up there? Glare, noise and confusion is all they live for!

Wary of reaching in front of the intake pipe — *Oh, but I hope they don't start this sucker up again!* — Glog used his walking stick to rake the remains of his now-tattered red sail away from the grate.

He tied the ends under his chin again. *That's better. The sun's coming up and there's too much light.*

He was afraid to get too close to that pipe.

He did not know why the thing had stopped.

I hope water didn't get in and wet my manuscripts, he said hefting his otter-skin backpack, *I hope that ...*

The end of the pipe burped some kind of bubble scaring Glog.

He was afraid to walk in front of the pipe opening.

The pipe bubbled again.

Glog turned and ran.

Fast as he could go, he ran away from the shore, away from that awful Trash Rack.

He ran down the slope of the Chesapeake bottom.

He ran toward deeper water.

He ran east.

He ran till his breath gave out and he had to surface for air. He glanced back at the power plant



which from all the human activity resembled a kicked ant hill.

What in the world are those people doing?
he wondered. *I sure hope they're careful with*
that sucker...

Somebody could get killed!

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

In 1984, the Zapata American Caribe Line leased a huge ocean-going barge to Great White Fleet Ltd, the ship-operating subsidiary of Chiquita Tropical Products NA, the famous fruit importer based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The barge measured 446 feet long and 90 feet wide.

It carried bananas from San Juan, Puerto Rico, and was bound for off-loading in Baltimore when Hurricane Edna, 1984's fifth tropical storm, drove it aground on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The barge stuck fast on the mudflats at the western edge of Taylors Island a few miles south of where the Little Choptank River flows into the Chesapeake.

Its cargo of bananas were packed inside 40-foot-long metal refrigerated containers manufactured by the Nippon Freuhauf Corporation — containers of the kind you see on the highway pulled by tractor-trailer rigs — containers so big that most people think they are the body of the truck itself.

For loading, the 18-wheeled trucks would drive right up inside the barge where a massive fork-lift raised the cargo boxes off each truck frame and stacked them four-high inside the barge. That way, 434 truck-loads of bananas could essentially roll on and roll off the barge without being loaded or unloaded at each transshipment.

But when the storm parted the tow-line from the tug pulling it, the barge wandered wherever the



waves and wind drove it till it ran aground on Taylors Island and stuck fast in the mud.

After the storm, salvage crews removed the containers to save what they could; but bananas are highly perishable and the cargo was lost.

By the time the insurance companies investigated the scene, and the Coast Guard grounding paperwork all finally got filled out, and the environmental impact studies completed — by the time all that was done, the Zapata American Caribe Line had gone out of business.

Their huge empty barge rusted in the marsh.

It lay grounded diagonally to the bay shore with one end awash and the other end jammed tight in the mudbank.

The giant cargo doors at the marsh end of the barge stood open.

Over the years, silt washed into the open cargo doors partially filling the other end and submerged it.

Few people visit the abandoned barge.

What's to see?

A barge out of water isn't even picturesque.

Pelicans, gulls and other fishing birds regarded the old wreck as their province and their white droppings coated the rusty sides in long streaks.

When boaters see the black hulk, they know they are approaching The Big Broads.

Who are The Big Broads?

Not who, what:

Every conceivable kind of body of water cuts into the latticework shoreline of the Eastern Shore — Coves, bays, guts, rivers, creeks, holes, runs, ditches, inlets, etc. These waterways often get



divided into sections named for their width and depth — or lack of either. Therefore, the term “narrows” denotes places where land squeezes the water into narrow channels; on the other hand, the term “broads” denotes places where land and water spread out and lie practically indistinguishable from one another.

For Glog, the climb from the shipping channel up to shallow water of The Big Broads required monumental effort; the sea bottom off Taylors Island rises from 60 feet deep to only 12 feet deep in less than a quarter of a mile.

Getting up to within breathing distance of the surface was like climbing an undersea version of Calvert Cliffs on this side of the bay.

But...

But, when Glog poked his head up out of the bay,, he thought he’d died and gone to Heaven.

First, there, right in front of his face, lay the abandoned barge, its big cargo bay open inviting him to enter and rest in the roomy dark interior.

It reminded him of Home.

Then, there was a stiff breeze blowing off-shore from the marsh and the salty air carried the aroma of ...

Food!

Real food!

Real Live Muskrats!

Like coming Home for Christmas vacation, walking in the house and smelling all those things Mama has been cooking all day while waiting for your car to pull in the drive — all your favorites. Real food. Her cook book, propped open, leans against the glass of the microwave, blocking that horrible little



door from now until ... until time to heat up snacks for the NFL's New Year's Day game Real food.

Dorchester County Maryland claims the title "Muskrat Capital Of The World". Vast expanses of wetlands in the county support millions of muskrats. Huge federal and state wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, bird sanctuaries and nature preserves take up much of the county's map.

Even sections not owned by the government might as well be considered wildlife sanctuaries because they remain largely inaccessible and wild.

Water blends into marsh cut by twisting creeks. Marshy ground rises a few inches above water level to become "fast land" — that's what the watermen call land firm enough to support a few trees.

The county's farmlands are marshes cut off long ago from the water to become seameadows and finally fast land and firm ground of rich soil abounding in fine tobacco, tasty corn, and bumper tomato crops.

Glog savored the land breeze from off the marsh surrounding The Big Broads.

The tangy smell of muskrat.

His mouth watered.

He felt hungry.

But even with the tattered remnant of sail drawn up over his forehead covering his pineal window, the morning sunlight proved too strong for Glog's eyes. He clasp his hands over his eyes, waded ashore, sloshed through the shallows and ran through a stand of marshgrass into the welcome cool darkness of the barge.

Heavenly!

Not even the smell of banana lingered after all this time; the barge smelled of sealife: salt air and



seagulls, crabs and shrimp, fish and oysters, seaweeds and marsh grass.

Strong rays of sunlight reflected off the water outside and rippled in soft swirling patterns on the metal walls. Wind hummed through small cracks rusted in the deck plating. A mat of washed-in reeds —cluttered with ever-present floats, corks, lengths of yellow nylon rope, boards and plastic bottles tossed from passing boats —carpeted the floor.

A quiet, gentle peaceful haven.

Well. Well. Well. Man does create something nice once in a while, Glog thought as he scraped together a big pile of dried brown reeds for a bed.

The place where that hook had torn out of his ear hurt like the very devil but Glog placed the roll of ghost net at the end of his bed as a pillow to cushion that ear.

He ached all over from his ordeal on the Trash Rack but in the comfort of the safe, dark silent barge, with the aroma of muskrat to tantalize his dreams of dinner, Glog fell asleep.

Oh! The muskrats of the Dorchester Marshes!

Muskrats on the Eastern Shore feed mostly on the fleshy roots of the tuckahoe. Their food gives their own flesh a special texture and taste.

Good!

Savory.

Plentiful.

Most of all, plentiful.

The first European settlers on the shore wrote of muskrats living in the marsh in “multitudinous millions”.

Glog had never seen so many muskrats.



Why, if you lit candles and placed one atop each muskrat lodge in this marsh, at night the little lights in the marsh would outnumber the little lights in the sky.

Glog feasted.

Night after night, he feasted on his favorite food; evening after evening, he worked on his illuminations of the Psalms; day after day, he slept in undisturbed comfort.

Since being driven from his home by the humans and their oil and their lights and their noise — never had Glog felt so content and happy.

Muskrats never taste so good as when you have to go without eating one for a while — like your first puff after an endless day in a whimpy smoke-free office.

Glog enjoyed himself.

He relished his meals.

Oh, but Glog loved muskrat!

Most humans trap muskrats for their pelts to make fur coats, but many humans love to eat muskrats too.

Dining rooms in all the finest hotels serve muskrat under the euphemistic name of “marsh rabbit” on the menu.

Here’s one good way to cook muskrat:

Skin and cut up about 70 muskrats and two large stewing chickens. Dump the pieces into four gallons of boiling water in a big cast-iron pot. Cook till the meat comes off the bones, adding more water as needed. Strain out the bones. Now chop up about three pounds of salt pork fatback; fry it up and add it to the muskrats in the big pot. Shred about six heads of cabbage and dump them in. Add two



gallons of butter beans, four gallons of tomatoes, three gallons of peeled cubed potatoes, a gallon of carrots, three gallons of fresh-cut corn, a cup of black pepper, a cup of salt, two cups of sugar, and a pod of chopped red peppers.

Simmer till all the vegetables get mushy.

This will cook down to about 15 galleons of muskrat stew...

Don't eat it all yourself.

Dorchester watermen and trappers have another favorite way of cooking muskrats in smaller portions:

Skin and clean a mess of muskrats — as many as you think you'll be wanting to eat. Soak them in salted water overnight. Parboil them for about fifteen minutes. Pull them out and cut them up into a fresh pot; chop up and add some onions, red peppers and a little fatback. Use just enough water to keep them from burning and cook till very tender. Add some flour, salt and pepper to thicken into a gravy —

As the watermen say, "That sure do eat good!"

Of course, Glog never eats dead meat.

Good as these recipes are, he thinks that nothing beats the taste of raw muskrat alive and wiggling.

The texture of thick fur, the crunch of slender bones, the tongue-tickling scratch of little feet resisting your feeding, the satisfaction of tossing a tail over your shoulder — One taste would make the Colonel forget chickens forever.

Of course while on Taylors Island, Glog did more than eat.

He also worked.

Remember the proverb: *He who does not work, shall not eat?*



Glog took that Scripture seriously.

He twisted one of the barge doors off its hinges and placed it on top of a pile of old crab pots to make a desk. He unpacked his calligraphy pens from his otter-skin backpack and, every morning and evening, devoted a few hours to illuminating his manuscript.

After three weeks living in the barge, he'd reached the Psalm which says:

Sing unto God,
Sing praises to His Name:
Extol Him who rides
upon the thunder clouds of Heaven.

Rejoice before Him who is
Father of the fatherless,
Protector of widows,
Provider of food for all
who hunger.

God setteth the solitary in families:
He bringeth out those bound with
chains:
but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
Trust in Him at all times, all ye people;
Pour out your hearts before Him,
He hears.
He
cares.

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever
throughout all generations.

He declares His Mighty Power
chiefly by showing mercy
and pity
and
grace.



That's Right! Glog agreed. *It's good and right and our bounden duty to at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Oh Lord, King of the Universe! You are good. You are great. You are everywhere. You do provide food enough for all who hunger — That King David certainly had a way with words; when we get to Heaven, he's one human I sure will be glad to meet — not to eat, You understand, but to know..*

A full belly tends to make Scripture palatable.

Glog basted in warm contented feelings as he illuminated the initial F in the phrase, "Father of the fatherless"... He drew the letter as a stalk of cattail, its golden pod curving slightly under the weight of its seeds.

The initial G in the phrase, "God setteth the solitary in families" he decided to illumine as the dome of a muskrat lodge.

The muskrat, like his cousin the beaver, works continually. The little furry craftsman, using his paws as tools, constructs lodges for safety during the winter. He weaves sticks and reed stalks together, plastering the chinks with smooth bottom-mud, into a rich brown mound in the marsh. He tunnels an underwater entrance to the warm dry chamber inside the mound.

Within the lodge's dome, he smoothes the walls with clay plaster to a clean, even surface. He covers the floor with snow-white puffs of cattail fuzz for warmth and cleanliness.

Cleanliness is important to muskrats. Why, before eating anything, a muskrat always washes it in clean water first.



From near the lodge entrance and away, by the constant use of carrying building materials in, the muskrat clears pathways through the sawgrass. And many other animals living in the marsh uses these paths as highways to go to and from the water.

Big brown bunnies hop along muskrat trails. Possums seeking carrion, skunks hunting turtle eggs, raccoons catching frogs, foxes stalking prey — all follow the muskrat trails.

In places where the marshgrass grows tall, well-worn muskrat trails create arches at ground level while the grass blades meet above hiding the creatures on the path from the eyes of ever-lurking hawks.

Such a path ran through the marshgrass just a few yards from the open end of Glog's barge. It originated God only knows where in the marsh, but it followed a twisty course here and there under the roof of grass going to places important to muskrats.

The path widened to a little shelf whenever it came to a ditch or patch of water where a muskrat could dip in to wash its food.

The trail probably ran for miles.

But, where the marshgrass grew close to the barge doors, the path broke into the open for about ten yards — an iron deck plate buried in the mud prohibited the grass from growing in that area. So the trail emerged from one patch of grass and ran close beside a big cedar log for cover, then disappeared into an arch of grass on the other side of the clear space.

Glog caught muskrats by the pawful in that clear space ... unless they scented him or saw his shadow.

When that happened ... a scared muskrat runs faster than a racehorse.

And Glog often came up empty handed.



A problem.

Not a big problem; but a problem nevertheless.

God provides food enough for all who hunger ... if they can catch it. Or if someone more powerful doesn't take more than his share. Or if someone else doesn't waste it. Or if some cruel one doesn't keep the hungry ones from eating — like those evil humans in Somalia and Ethiopia.

God provides enough food for appetites even as big as mine, but I have to catch it. I have to gather it. I have to work for it. And the more I catch and gather, the more I can eat. The more abundant life I live... The more... the more... more...

Say! I've got an idea!

Now, where was that?

Glog flipped pages ahead in his manuscript seeking a verse he vaguely remembered seeing before.

Yes, Glog's idea for catching more muskrats came from his Bible.

Sometimes he got tired of illuminating Psalms and skipped ahead in his work for variety.

Once when he did this, he ran across the passage where it says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea. It gathers in every kind of fish good and bad. When the net is full and drawn on the shore, they sort the catch, keeping the good to carry Home, and leaving the bad to flop out their lives on the dry beach".

Yes! Here it is.



Glog found the page.

Months before, he'd illuminated the letters in the passage with silver trout gathered in wicker baskets contrasted with gray and yellow jellyfish gasping on the beach.

He studied the verse carefully.

Flipping back to wise King Solomon's Proverbs, he compared one verse with another: "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird..".

What a good idea!

A great idea.

A real dilly!

I can hardly wait for tonight!

*That's what I like about reading the Bible;
those old verses always spark some good
practical idea for daily living.*

Ha!

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Even though his paws were dexterous from long years of illuminating manuscripts and catching muskrats, manufacturing a cast net out of the swath of ghostnetting he'd found in Herring Bay challenged Glog.

Net knotting requires a special touch.

For the mesh to remain open, each strand of monofilament must be knotted at even intervals. Irregular rips and tears must be rejoined to the original pattern of the net. Lead sinkers must be spaced right for balance.

The drawstrings, the lines which draw a net into a purse to hold the catch, gave Glog a lot of trouble.

The ghost net he'd picked up didn't have any drawstrings. Glog had to fabricate a set from strands of yellow nylon line he found tangled in driftwood and debris along the edge of the marsh.

The tension on each drawstring must pull exactly the same or the opening in the net will not come together at the same time and the catch will escape through the gap.

Glog hummed as he knotted his net.

The project excited him.

Isn't Scripture wonderful? In olden Bible days people used nets to catch fish and nets to catch birds — why can't I net muskrats?



Imagine. Being able to stand right in my own doorway and cast a net over muskrats on their trail outside. They won't see my shadow; they won't sniff my scent — I'll rake 'em in!

I'd never have thought of this without the Scripture sparking the idea. It's neat the way God guides us when we pay attention to His Word.

Glog adjusted a drawstring pulling it through the horn of the net.

Visions of netting muskrats captured his fancy as he laced a seam.

I can just see my net swirling through the air when I cast it.

Every sinker hits the ground at precisely the same instant.

The startled muskrat ...

No, not muskrat, Muskrats — sometimes they travel indian-file in a group on their trails and I can net two or three in the same cast. Wow!

The startled muskrats hunch down when they feel the net touch.

They'll bunch together in the purse as the drawstrings tightened.

I'll haul my net in. And they'll squirm close together in a little ball. And I'll lift the net up. And open the purse. And ...

Glog shivered in anticipation.

He tied and knotted and laced and spliced.



The rectangular swath of ghostnet re-formed beneath his hands becoming a circular cast net with an eight-foot diameter.

Glog admired his handiwork.

He hefted the net. It felt right. The weight of the sinkers circling the edge felt comfortable in his hands.

Glog walked to the door of the barge anxious to test his net.

He looped the main cord over his wrist and coiled the line. He placed one sinker between his front teeth; he reached across his body to take up another sinker.

He twisted away from the barge door then — using the under-hand motion of a person tossing a Frisbee — Glog cast his net.

Beautiful!

The net sailed up in a perfect circle as the lead weights spread apart by the centrifugal force of Glog's cast.

Out the barge door the net flew. Down it dropped behind the cedar log where the muskrat trail passed over open ground.

The sinkers hit the earth with a satisfying thud.

Glog rushed out to look.

Yes!

The net lay on the ground fully spread. It fully covered the open space on the muskrat trail — just like it was supposed to.

Satisfaction. Well-being. Pride of craftsmanship. Self-esteem... and perhaps a tiny touch, a forgivable touch, of smugness. All these warm feelings welled up in Glog's chest.

It's going to work! It's going to work!



Glog tugged on the rope. The sinkers moved closer and closer together forming the purse, keeping in a perfect circle.

It's going to work! Wow! I just know it, it's going to work! Thank You, Lord! Thank You for this great idea. I'll catch droves of the little rascals,. Droves of them.

Glog folded his net and lay down to rest till sundown but he couldn't sleep. The prospect of netting food, which had first come as a unique idea then grew into an interesting problem then developed into an obsession, now flamed into a passion.

Glog couldn't sleep; he couldn't pray. Every time he closed his eyes he saw the circle of the net falling over a muskrat. Over two or three muskrats. Over milling herds of muskrats. He saw himself pulling in netfull after netfull of food, an unending supply. He could even feel the rope in his hands and the weight of the sinkers. As he lay on his reed pallet, he even made the motions of casting his net.

And I'll lift them over the log and pull them right here into the den. Neato. How cool.

I'll bet this is the way they catch muskrats in Heaven. Net 'em without ever having to leave the front door of your mansion. This is going to be so neat. God is even gooder than I ever imagined!

Such a cycle of thoughts ran through Glog's mind again and again till sundown finally came.

Doubt.

Should I have dug up a few tuckahoe roots and spread them in the clearing as bait? If the muskrats run across the clear space



without stopping will I hear them in time to cast my net? I should have put some roots out so they'd stop and sniff 'em. What if the net snags on that log?

Darkness settled in.

Glog gathered his net and coiled the line.

He crouched behind the door. Out of sight. Waiting. Listening. Attune to every whisper of sound in the marsh.

The vacuum pop of oysters opening as the tide rose.

The distant hoot of a great white owl.

The scrape of a twig displaced.

Tiny feet padding.

Something moved on the trail.

Several somethings moved on the trail.

There's more than one. There's a couple of 'em moving in a pack.

Should I throw the net... NOW!

Glog sailed the net over the cedar log.

Perfect cast.

Bullseye!

The cord around his wrist strained and jiggled as the catch struggled in the net.

Got 'em! I got 'em

Glog jerked the net back across the log. He snatched it home. He raised it to eye level...

Skunks!

A mother skunk and her four babies.

They had padded down the path to forage for insects beneath the bark of the old cedar log.



The little animals wiggled in the net till their tiny feet found purchase in the strings...

Then the skunks did what skunks do best....

Living in the barge after the skunk netting was out of the question.

The place stunk.

Catching food after the skunk netting was out of the question.

Glog stunk.

Studying the Holy Scripture for more clever ideas was out of the question.

Glog's Bible stunk.

In fact, everything he owned, touched or even came near reeked.

The smell of skunk-drenched Glog created a vile miasma wherever he moved. Every living thing fled from his smell. Birds veered away when they flew near. Muskrats would not approach within an acre of him. Raccoons, possums, rabbits — any creature that could smell, smelled Glog from far away. All avoided him.

Glog could even smell himself. He couldn't avoid it. And the awful stench made him gag. He never imagined that skunk could smell so terrible.

During bad times in the past, Glog had eaten a lone skunk now and then — they have a nutty flavor which leaves a not unpleasant aftertaste in your mouth. So Glog regarded skunk much as some humans regard anchovies — as a thing to taste on rare occasions, but certainly not to be eaten in any quantity.

I wish I'd eaten those five instead of releasing them; they ruined my life. Now I'm hungry but I smell so bad that I can't get



close enough to anything to catch it. And they ruined my home I can't possibly sleep in here anymore; it'll take months for this place to air out. I'm hungry. I should have eaten those skunks; but you can't eat a mother with babies even if they are skunks. It's just not right. I love this place and it's just not right that I have to leave. Am I ever going to find another Home?

As Glog complained about this development in his life, he threw things into his otterskin backpack.

How was he ever going to get his precious manuscript clean of skunk smell?

How was he ever going to get himself clean of that stink? If he didn't, he would surely starve.

Should I keep my sailcloth hat or throw it away? Who knows when I'll find another sailboat I can get one from.

And what about that net? Can the ocean wash that thing clean after all it's been through? I think I'll leave that here. But not where it can wash back into the water or out where a bird might get tangled in it. What the heck can I do with the thing so it won't hurt anyone? I wish the humans wouldn't make these things.

Glog decided to hang the net on a bolt projecting out of the wall of the barge. Maybe some fisherman would find it next summer.

Tying his sunbonnet over his forehead, shouldering his backpack and gripping his baculum, Glog trudged back into the water of the Bay.



He turned south across the Barren Island Gap towards a town on Upper Hooper Island.

Humans spell the name of the town as “Honga”...

A word which they pronounce as “Hunger”.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The shallow water of the Barren Island Gap covers a sandy plain of gray oyster beds which in places build up to the surface of the bay so that at low tide the uppermost oysters jut out of the water to menace unwary boaters.

But only a short distance from the shore the depth drops to over 18 feet then drops over an underwater cliff to 60 feet deep, then rapidly goes on down to 115 feet.

Traveling along this steep slope meant that as Glog walked south parallel to the shore, his right foot was almost a yard lower than his left foot.

Uncomfortable hiking at best.

Dear Jesus, I hope the water washes the skunk smell off me soon.

Glog scrubbed his skin as he walked.

Curious...

Some of his scales broke free and settled to the bottom in a shower of flakes.

O no! Not on top of everything else! I couldn't be molting! Not now!

But he was.

Like many reptiles approaching maturity — serpents, dragons, lizards — Glog shed his skin every so often to allow for growth. And he'd been feeding so well on the muskrats of Dorchester Marsh that his skin was beginning to split.



This happened to Glog about every 60 years as he matured, so he knew it meant that before long he would be as scaleless, naked and defenseless as a soft-shell crab or a human baby.

Until his new scales had time to harden he must find a safe refuge.

The barge would have been a perfect place! Lord, why did You drive me out of there? I think You're trying to kill me. Leaving Home was never my idea; the oil spill came from mankind through Your hand. You didn't ask my advice. I had nothing to do with it. So why am I the one to have to stomp through the world out in the open with only water for my cover and sleep in bushes and burrows and barges — which You take away from me as soon as I settle?

Lord, please lead me to a good Home.

You are my Creator and Lord and God, and I know that all things are supposed to work together for good to those who love You and are called according to Your purpose — but I don't think You're being fair.

Why are You doing these terrible things to me?

No still small voice answered.

After World War II, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers utilized its mighty construction power in many needed civilian projects. One of these was to dredge a channel for boats between the deep water of the Chesapeake Bay and the upper regions of the Honga River.



The cut runs between Taylors Island and Upper Hooper Island at Charity Point just north of the town of Honga. The dredging operation displaced thousands of tons of silt. Engineers piled this material in massive underwater spoil banks on either side of the cut.

Glog encountered the spoil bank to the north of Barren Island.

Loose sand and gray sticky mud dredged from the bottom of the cut form a giant underwater mound running across Barren Island Gap. Nothing grows in this waste land. The dredge fill dirt from the depths is nearly sterile of plant life and its so loose and gummy that even oysters find no purchase there.

Humans call that area of the Chesapeake by the name Tar Bay.

Glog tentatively placed his foot on the side of the mound intending to climb over. His foot sank in and stuck.

He tugged loose and thick gray clay coated his foot.

Mastodons got caught in stuff like that; I'd better find a way around it.

Glog turned in toward the land.

By now the salt water stung his tender flesh through the hairline cracks appearing between his scales.

He hurried.

The water grew shallower and shallower. With his head above the surface Glog could see trees and the tops of buildings in the town of Honga, a crab factory, a tomato cannery, a general store, a few fishermen's shacks.



Glog veered to avoid emerging too near the village. He rounded the end of the spoil bank and waded up the boat channel.

There used to be an old wooden bridge carrying Meekins Neck Road across from Taylors Island to Upper Hooper but it washed out in a storm long ago and has never been rebuilt (a new concrete bridge crosses further to the east).

Not a whole lot of people miss the old bridge; less than a hundred adults now permanently live in Honga. Of course summer brings a small influx of recreational boaters, mostly lost ones; and fall brings in the seasonal colony of avid duck hunters.

But back when the wooden bridge joined the islands, devout people from Honga and Swan Harbor joined forces to construct an island community church. The wood frame building stood beside the road south of the bridge.

Then the bridge washed out. Fishing slacked off. Jobs disappeared. Young men went off to Korea, Nam, Lebanon, Iraq, or Baltimore. Girls married away.

The church held its last service in 1974.

Six people attended.

Glog eyed the old church building from behind a waterlogged piling, a remnant of the wooden bridge.

Of course this was not an old church building as such things go on the Eastern Shore. Why, up in Church Creek, just 12 miles due north of here, they have Old Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church which was built in 1680; and Golden Hill, only six miles north, has St. Mary's Star Of The Sea Catholic Church, originally built in 1769; and the Rockawalking Presbyterian Church was built in 1740 at Upper Ferry; and at Catchpenny Corner, the Green Hill Episcopal Church was built in 1698 ...



Anyhow, the watermen on Upper Hooper Island still call the dilapidated wood-frame church building — formally the Charity Point-Honga Community Church — they referred to it simply as “the old church”.

No one used the old church any more... At least, no one was supposed to.

Glog blundered up out of the water and approached the abandoned church.

Tangles of grape, ivy and smilax vines covered the building. Thickets of holly and laurel trees packed the churchyard. Inside the wrought iron fence which marked the boundaries of the graveyard, saplings of loblolly pine grew out of the scattering of graves and their roots pushed aside long neglected headstones.

Twenty years ago most of the once-white paint had flaked off the wooden clapboard sides.

The arched doorway stood open.

No telling when, somebody — probably some summer visitor with a boat from Baltimore — had made away with the twin wooden doors, each half-arc pointed at the top.

Glog wove his way up the sandy path to the open doorway and peered inside.

No pulpit.

Pews long gone.

Window glass broken.

Dry brown leaves wind-blown into corners.

No one had taken away the altar rail, a heavy banister which separated the congregation from the preacher and choir.



No one had taken the hard wood of the cross; its thick beams of dark plank hung whopajaw from a rusty spike at the front of the building.

Glog walked toward the cross. Wooden floor planks creaked and groaned with his weight. He stepped cautiously from place to place looking to where nails revealed that floor joists lay underneath.

Empty...

Yet, the old church hummed with quiet life:

Barn swallows nested in the bare rafters. They flitted in and out the windows and through open cracks in the roof.

Seeing these birds, Glog recalled the Psalm:

How pleasant is Thy Temple, Lord of Hosts:
My soul longeth, yea, even yearns for Thy
courtyards.

My heart, my flesh, cries out for the
Living God.

Yea, the sparrow has found a Home,
a nesting place where her eggs may lay safe,
even at the corner of Thy altar.

O Lord of Hosts,
My King and my God,
Even so, may I also dwell
ever secure in Thy presence.

But birds were not the only things nesting in the old building.

Dirt dobber tubes clung to the walls; the insects buzzed away at their work of bringing fresh clay.

A spider happily wove a silver web in an empty window frame.

A family of field mice scurried beneath the floor boards.



Crushed acorn shells on the floor around the altar testified to the presence of squirrels in the rafters above.

In the front, behind where the choir would sit facing the congregation, an empty black window stood open. Glog peaked inside. He saw a huge dark, dry, metal tank with cinder-block stairs leading up to slender doors on either side — a baptistry long empty of water.

When the church members had built their building, they discussed long and hard whether or not to put in that baptistry. Some members with a Methodist background said a simple fount was all the building needed; those with a Baptist background said a full-scale baptistry was needed.

They consulted and planned and — almost — argued about the facility.

Grannie Crockett, the island's oldest resident at the time, offered a compromise.

She'd hobbled down the road to where the men who were supposed to be building were arguing. She'd brought them a few juicy ripe cantaloupe from her door garden for lunch.

"Near as I can tell," she said, "Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians and 'Piscopalians will all baptize a baby when he's ten days old; Baptists and the like will baptize a baby when he'd ten years old. From where I stand at 96, that don't make no never-mind. Fix it so whoever feels free to baptize their young'uns can do it whatever way they want".

Of course if the truth be known, the thing that really settled the dispute was the availability of a free baptistry.

Old Captain Foster caught the cancer and took a fearful long time dying; his boat, *Lady Jade*, was laid up without maintenance for a long time and when



his sons, who both lived and worked at the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center at Lexington Park across the Bay, came home for the funeral and to divide up his leavings, they found shipworms in Lady Jade's hull and decided she was not worth selling or salvaging.

They stripped what they could.

That left the trawler's live-well, a big metal tank designed to hold water to keep the fish alive in till the boat made it to the cannery.

They had no use for the live-well...

So they donated it to the church.

Architects sometimes describe such church buildings with the term "Carpenter Gothic" meaning that the carpenters made their own plan as they built and adopted the building to the materials at hand.

So when the men of Charity Point/ Honga Community Church found themselves with a big metal live-well, the carpenters dragged it up behind the back of the building, walled in around it, and cut the window to the front.

Made a dandy baptistry.

Glog was delighted. He thought the baptistry would make a great place to hide while he shed his skin.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Tomato Juice!

That's what old-time farmers used to use to wash the skunk smell out of their clothes or off their dogs whenever they tangled with a skunk.

Something about the acid in tomato juice kills the smell.

And the sign on that building I saw when I came out of the water said it was something-or-the-other tomato cannery. All I have to do is...

The short walk underneath the water between Taylors island and Honga had not been enough to cleanse the skunk smell from Glog. The onset of molting caused his skin to itch and whenever he scratched, that seemed to stir up the smell.

He could hardly stand himself.

Besides, he felt hungry. If he couldn't get rid of that smell, how could he ever catch another muskrat?

Farmers from Upper, Middle and Lower Hooper Islands as well as those from Wroten Island, Dicks Point, and Kirwan Neck all brought in their tomato crop to Honga for processing into juice and canning. During the season when the plant operated, the pungent smell of tomato made the whole area smell



like a gigantic salad — sure smelled better than when workers fired up the crab packing factory.

In the dark of night hardly any lights brightened the barred windows of village houses — barred not against burglars but to keep waterbirds attracted by the house lights from crashing through the glass, a quality of living hazard in Honga.

Glog slipped down the street silently.

He could hear Blanche and Rose arguing on somebody's satellite dish tv.

The plant was unlocked.

Why lock up?

Who's going to steal what from a tomato cannery in Honga?

There it was — A row of huge stainless-steel vats, cauldrons filled with raw, squashed, boiled, peeled or squeezed tomato pulp, depending on the stage in processing for each vat. Stainless-steel tubes ran from each vat, from one step in the process to the next. All as pristine and sterile as a hospital operating room.

A hinged half-lid covered each vat.

Glog crept from vat to vat lifting the lids and peaking inside.

Ah Ha. Here's a drainage hose. Thank You Lord. That's what I'm looking for.

Glog unscrewed the valve.

Warm red juice gushed from the hose.

He lifted the hose above his head and turned beneath the spray. He scrubbed his ears, beneath his arms, between his legs.

Glog danced beneath the flow of tomato juice.

Felt wonderful.



How refreshing.

Try it sometime.

Glog rinsed out his mouth. Being careful not to swallow any, he squirted tomato juice out his nose.

Felt so good.

He relished the feeling.

He could feel the skunk smell fading.

This stuff is not bad for a mouthwash.
Say...

A glass bottle, a gallon jug which originally contained apple cider, stood on a shelf, left there by one of the workers. Glog filled the bottle with tomato juice and screwed the cap back on. He turned off the valve.

Glog left the plant humming “*Are You Washed In The Blood Of The Lamb*”. Hiding in the abandoned church reminded him of that old hymn.

He tracked sticky red three-toed footprints on the cement drive.

The satellite dish tv sets in two of the houses he passed sang about something or the other being “Zest clean”—whatever that means.

Few things in this world feel better than having smelled like skunk, not to anymore.

As Glog jogged back toward the church, he snagged a possum in a persimmon tree beside the shell-paved road.

Gobbled that sucker down.

Say, two more possum hung upside down by their tails in the same tree; they love persimmons. They get the possum equivalent of drunk on the fermented fruit and they flock to a bearing persimmon tree.



Glog stuck out a finger working it between the possums' tails and the branch. The persimmon-drunk possums transferred their grip and dangled head-down from his left hand as he continued his walk back to the church.

Save 'em for later.

Life was looking good again. Seems good and bad come in cycles depending on how full your belly is.

Well, well, well. What's this? Well. Well. Well.

The structure Glog was seeing was a large circular pen surrounded with concrete walls and a dirt floor. Lumps moved around on the floor. Clusters of the moving lumps gathered in a few big piles climbing on top of each other.

O wow, Terrapin!.

Maryland Diamondback Terrapin.

These big turtles are considered a delicacy in Baltimore hotel restaurants and indeed throughout the state. In fact, the University of Maryland football team call themselves The Terrapins. But not everyone in Maryland regards turtles so highly. Farmers consider them a nuisance, especially during strawberry season when turtles invade ripen fields by the hundreds and gnaw bite-sized chunks out of the biggest berries.

Since God-only-knows-when, the town of Honga has been home to a turtle corral. Farmers from all over the region capture terrapin and other turtles and bring them by the wheelbarrow or truck load to Honga and place them in the corral.

When the supply gets big enough to make it worth the effort, a coastal vessel stops in Honga and loads them up for sale in Baltimore or Annapolis.



Thus, gourmets get a treat and farmers get rid of a nuisance and rake in a few easy bucks without a whole lot of trouble.

It's not unusual to see a couple of Dorchester County schoolboys walking barefoot down the road with a turtle under each arm headed toward the turtle corral where old man Mullins pays a small bounty for the catch.

Beats selling band candy.

Glog watched the sluggish turtles in fascination.

Two gopher tortoises ambled after a head of lettuce which rolled away each time they'd try to take a bite. The turtles stalked it with relentless patience.

Dozens of other turtles napped.

Dozens more scrubbed against the wall of the pen traveling around and around the circle, wearing a trough-like path around the edge where thousands of their captured ancestors had circled for who knows how many years before. When the clockwise circlers encountered those moving counter-clockwise, they bumped past each other, each in mindless pursuit of their goal.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "All the thoughts of a turtle are turtle".

Glog scooped up an armload of terrapin — not as tasty as snapping turtle, more bland, but a good snack nevertheless. The surprising thing was to find them in such abundance.

Yes indeed, life was looking good.

So, here Glog strides down the road toward the church:

Red tomato pulp drips from his body.

Patches of scaly skin peel from his shoulders.



A bottle of tomato juice dangles from one claw hooked through its glass handle.

Two drunk possums swing from his other paw.

His baculum juts from beneath his armpit — like a proper Englishman sporting an umbrella...

And juggling six or eight wiggling terrapin in his arms, he looks like a young mother with twins trying to carry home a splitting sack of groceries.

What if someone were to see him like this?

Before two weeks passed, a group of humans were going to see Glog inside the abandoned church...

When that happened, Glog would be horrified.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

If you ever have to shed your old dead dry skin and allow your tender new skin a chance to toughen up, to gain its luster, hardness and sheen, an old church may be the best place to do it.

The process of shedding the old and growing the new is painful. Not unbearable. But painful.

It begins as a minor itch, no more than an uncomfortable feeling. You feel thin-skinned, reddened, listless, embarrassed.

As the pressure inside you grows, you're likely to squirm, to snap at people you care about, to feel depressed, angry or alone ... and afraid.

New growth does that to you.

There is, of course, no cure for growth, it's something you have to endure; but the dim lighting and the quietness of an old church helps.

Glog always found that his appetite slacked off as his scales turned more and more brittle.

Molting irritated him.

He scratched, but the scratching annoyed him more than the itch did in the first place. He ate the two possums, but they didn't taste right.

He settled in to make the best of it.

Keeping busy helps if the business is not frantic activity but some methodical, mindless task that you can do almost automatically with your claws.

The early stages of molting are a time to pamper yourself: read, bathe, nap, think, dream, plan, listen



to soft music, taste a little wine for your stomach's sake, drink chicken soup.

Misery will come later — before Joy — so get comfortable, take care of your own precious skin now.

That's right.

You are precious, you know.

Glog hunkered down in the tank of the dry baptistry to endure his molting. He let the terrapin he'd brought roam around loose on the floor.

Where were they going to go?

The cinder blocks which had been piled up as stairsteps at each end of the tank, Glog stacked in two even columns. Ripping a sheet of plywood paneling off a side wall, Glog placed it on top of the cinder blocks to make a desk where he could work on his manuscript.

At first, he was concerned that water might have damaged the pages during his travels, but his concern was needless. Fine vellum has a texture between that of cured leather and plastic. Scribes write on vellum with permanent ink, an ink so permanent, in fact, that it can not be erased; to make a change in a manuscript, the scribe has to scrape away a layer of vellum with a knife — that's where we get the term "pen knife" from, a small knife which scribes used to scrape vellum and to sharpen goose quill pens.

So Glog found water damage to his Bible negligible.

Maybe so.

But the Bible still stank to High Heaven!

That skunk smell permeated the Holy Scripture.

Glog set himself to cleaning each page with a rag soaked in tomato juice from his glass bottle.



Like the scribes of old, he worked with great care.

Odd that some think a hand-written Bible is not as reliable as a printed one. Who'd drive an assembly-line produced Yugo if they could drive a hand-assembled Rolls Royce?

If you want quality, you want the hand-crafted item.

Some things are just too valuable for machines. When they go to cut the facets of a diamond, they don't stick it in a machine; only the hand of a master craftsman is trusted for that kind of work.

Glog wiped a dab of mud from the middle of a Psalm.

Oh, yes, this one here's one of my favorites:

Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works;

They are more than can be numbered.

As the thirsty stag pants after waterbrooks,

So my soul longs for Thee, O God.

My soul yearns for the Living God...

Glog's father had illuminated that Psalm back before Glog was born. He'd pictured the stag, out-of-breath, pursued by dogs, breaking through undergrowth to a safe place beside a stream of still water.

Glog tenderly wiped the page with tomato juice.

Here's another one that Father did. This is a happy one; it always makes me feel good when I read it:

The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;

The world and all they that dwell therein.



For He hath founded it upon the seas,
Established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord?
Who shall stand in His Holy Place?

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart;
Who has not lifted up his heart unto
vanity,

nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing
from the Lord.

The initial illumination of the T showed the globe resting in the hollow of God's hands; North America almost covered the nail scars. Whales spouted in the seven seas and mountain goats skipped on the crests of the hills.

Glog scratched the back of his paws with the quill. A bunch of scales flaked off. Molting was beginning in earnest.

Do I have clean hands? Is my own heart pure? Am I vain? Am I truthful?

Of course I am. What beast has ever lied? No creature but man and that archangel who was a failure has ever sinned.

So, we creatures should receive God's richest blessings—Right?

So, why don't we?

Why do the innocent suffer?

It just doesn't seem right.

Glog found it hard to flex his fingers. His old scales were hardening to a shell-like rigidity so that his joints cracked and hurt.

He turned another page:



The Lord is my light
and my salvation; whom shall I
fear?

The Lord is the Strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?

One thing have I desired of the Lord,
that one thing will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the House
of the Lord

all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of
the Lord

and to enquire after
Him...

Teach me Thy way, O Lord,
and lead me in a plain path.

That's what I want, Glog thought. The one thing I want most is to bask in the Lord's presence, to worship His beauty... to ask Him about things, things I don't understand.

Like about those fish I saw trying to get out of the water. Why did that horrible thing happen? Couldn't God have kept that from happening? If He's good, and if He's all powerful, then why does He let evil things happen in His world?

I can see bad things happening if they were a punishment; you know, the bad guys getting their's in the end.

But, things aren't always like that.

Disasters like earthquakes, tornados and hurricanes come to destroy the homes of



both the good and the evil. Floods cover churches as well as brothels. And boiling lava from under the earth asks no credentials from those in its white hot path.

Sometimes God gives faithful husbands and wives deformed babies to raise — just as He does to drug addicted Mothers.

The Good have bad days and the bad have good days and vise versa. It's just the way things are.

Was this oil spill a thing like that, merely the way things work out — one of the penalties all creatures have to face as a result of living in a fallen world?

And another thing I wonder about:

If, like the Book says, all things work together for good to them who love God and are called according to His purpose, then how come so much works out bad?

Does He even have a purpose?

I mean, if things happen for a reason, if there is a Divine purpose for all that comes down, then why does so much look absolutely senseless and unreasonable?

Like that propeller thing trying to cut off my head.

Or that sucker pipe.

Or those stinking skunks!

Glog rubbed the page with vigor. He saw the words through a blur of red tomato juice.



Now the back of his neck between his shoulders itched terribly. He hunched down and tried to reach the place with his toes.

Time for a break.

Glog marked his place with the bookmark his Mother had tatted out of cypress fiber. He scooped up one of the terrapin and popped it in his mouth for a burst of flavor. He yawned and stretched. His skin creaked.

He felt a little thirsty and strolled outside to dip his snout into the water in the cut beside the old bridge pilings for a drink.

A sliver of moon was settling to the horizon behind Barren Island. Crickets chirped in the night. Oysters popped open in the shallows as the tide changed...

If I didn't hurt so bad, I'd hunt up a muskrat or two...

You know, another thing I'd ask God is why I always speak to Him, but He never speaks to me — except through the Scripture.

I mean, in the old days people like Father Abraham heard His voice. God told him to leave his home and go to a new place. God promised him a new home, a better life, many children. Father Abraham heard the voice of God and obeyed...

Then, of course, that grievous famine drove him into Egypt and Pharaoh arrested him. The Amalekites robbed him and took his family hostage. And he got in that water-rights fight over the wells. And there was



*that trouble with his wife over that slave girl.
And those two cities that burned...*

*And on top of all that, he had to have that
operation on his penis...*

Glog shuddered.

*But God did lead him to the land flowing
with milk and honey. And he did have
children and his children spread all over the
world.*

*So I suppose it worked out ok, but I
wonder, did Father Abraham hear the voice
of God directly... or was he like most of us ...
like me for instance. Maybe he didn't know it
was the voice of God he was obeying till
afterwards?*

I wonder. I really wonder...

*Oh well, it's time for me to get back to
work.*

Glog went back inside.

The next page of Bible text Glog cleaned on was beautiful—but boy did it stink!

*I didn't know skunks could have intestinal
problems,* Glog thought as he washed the page
which said:

The Voice of the Lord
is upon the waters;
The God of Glory thundereth
in the sky.
The Voice of the Lord
is powerful.
The Voice of the Lord
is full of majesty.



The Voice of the Lord
breaketh the cedars;
The Voice of the Lord
divideth flames of fire.
The Voice of the Lord
shaketh the wilderness.
The Voice of the Lord
maketh pregnant cows to
calf.
The Voice of the Lord
discovereth forests.

The Lord sitteth King for ever.
The Lord will give strength to His people.
The Lord will bless His own with
peace.

I was just thinking about that outside. I wish I could hear the voice of God;. Then maybe I could understand what's going on. I want Him to lead me in a plain path. I want to go to where there are green pastures and still waters teeming with muskrats.

Why is God punishing me?

I don't mean to whine. But why have all these bad things happened to me? I had a Home, then men spilled the oil, the muskrats died, the dog snapped at me, the man thundered and the children screamed and the lights glared and those helicopter things shook dirt on my Bible and the ship tried to cut my head off and something I ate made me sick and that boat burned and that nuclear plant tried to suck me in and I thought God's word told me to weave a net and all I caught was skunks!



Is there a Divine pattern here?

Any purpose to my life at all?

What is God doing to me?

It doesn't make sense!

*How is any good supposed to come out of
any of this nonsense?*

Oh, but my legs itch! O but I hurt!

In molting, some individual scales dry and drop off. But the whole skin must be shed to allow for growth. The skin turns dull in color then dries to a crusty scab. It cracks and bleeds when a joint bends.

Glog clawed at his legs, his back, his ears, his chest.

The clawing didn't help the pain.

Another beautiful but stinking Psalm lay open before Glog, but he was too miserable to read it:

I cry unto Thee, O Lord;
Have mercy upon me, for I am in
trouble.

My eyes tear with grief.
My soul aches,
As does my empty belly.

My life is spent in grief,
My years pass with sighing;
My strength fails,
My bones are consumed.

I am a reproach;
Even my neighbors flee from me.
Acquaintances avoid me.

Anyone who sees me turns,
And runs away at the sight of me.

I am as forgotten as a dead man out of
mind;



I am a broken vessel.

I am caught in a net.

But I trusted You, O Lord!

I said, "Thou art my God"!

I said, "My times are in Thy
Hands".

I asked you to deliver me from
my troubles.

I asked you to save for Your
mercy's sake.

I have called upon You, O
Lord!

Am I cut off from before Your eyes?

Have You forsaken me?

When understanding fails, love ye the
Lord;

For the Lord preserves the
faithful.

Plentiful rewards are in His hand.

Therefore, be of good courage:

He shall strengthen your heart.

He shall give you hope.

He shall not disappoint your
expectations.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

In the process of molting Glog's old skin hardened.

It turned to a dull muddy brown color.

As the old scale plates thickened into dry shell, each plate separated from the fresh skin beneath it, yet most of the old plates remained connected to the ones around it.

To free himself from this dead shell, Glog had to dig into the crack between the old scab and the new skin.

He raked his claws over his body furiously.

He rolled on the floor of the baptistry and rubbed his back against the door posts of the church.

Places he was able to see and reach peeled away in patches, but even these clung to his body, still pasted to him by living raw flesh.

Glog hurt.

He lay on the floor panting with his eyes squeezed shut against the inescapable pain.

Too miserable to eat, pray, work or read, all he could do was endure.

Some pain in life is like that.

A lot of it, in fact.

Jeanie Evans, 12, of Honga, was discovering that unpleasant facet of life for herself.

That's why she always wore a jacket to school and crossed her arms in front of her; her body was betraying her to change and she didn't know how to



handle it. And the kids at school teased her about the tattered old Levi jacket, a hand-me-down from her brother Karl.

And when Jeanie got an A in physics, they made her wish she hadn't.

And they talked about 90210 and OC — which her parents wouldn't let her watch because it was on Prayer Meeting Night.

And some of the kids got to go to the movies up in Cambridge. And they talked about Madonna's latest tape. And Beckie and Cecilly spent vacation in Florida and came back talking about CDs and surf.

And they all hung around after school, but Jeanie rode the bus to the dock and couldn't.

She wanted to be a part of their group. An insider. No big ambition, just to hang out with the others and laugh at inside jokes and have them like her — or at least not make fun — but she knew she never would fit in.

All she could do was endure.

Miserable prospect.

Then Serena Blaylock came to Honga.

Serena's mom and dad had this yacht. And a hunting lodge on the Gun Club property down on Lower Hooper. And while they stayed there, she stayed with the Murphys. And she rode the boat in with Jeanie to meet the school bus. And everybody liked her.

She was with it.

She had her own CD player and in the evenings everybody under 100-years-old in Honga would group up in her room and listen to Metallica or West German Techno-Funk and talk about things. Nothing special, just things. Chris and Billy would be there. And Margie. And Gail. And Prudence Dawson.



And sometimes they'd have Pringles or Gummy Bears.

Margie and Prudence were boat people too; their parents were out at the Gun Club too. Margie lived in San Francisco; and Prudence in Annapolis, her dad was Navy.

And they all flocked to Serena.

And Serena let Jeanie listen to her CDs too.

And they all talked.

About things.

And they munched Pringles as they talked.

Glog ate his scales one by one as he pried off those he could reach. But most of the dead scales on his body stuck together as single unit, like a welded suit of armor. By and large his scratching and efforts did little to remove the old shell; it had to crack in its own good time.

Maturing is like that.

Glog knew this.

But he still tried to speed up the process by digging at the scabs.

Action felt better than inaction.

O Lord, I hurt. Is there any reason for this pain?

No still small voice answered.

"This place is so boring. There's never anything to do around here," Billy said as he flipped the Game Boy across the room to Gail.

"That's for sure. And if you complain, they say, 'Do your homework'," she said.

"Or clean your room," Chris added.

"I'd go nuts if I had to live here all the time," Prudence said. "I don't know how you guys stand it".



Jeanie started to say something about her rabbit hutch but decided not to say anything.

"Sure is a drag. There's not a mall for a hundred miles. Back home we have hundreds of 'em. Here there's nothing to do," Margie said.

"I know something," Serena said. "Something I'll bet you guys haven't ever done before".

Glog's back cracked. He could feel the scale plates separate as the split lengthened down his spine from his neck. He sighed with relief as the squeezing pressure around his chest lessened.

But as air touched the quick beneath that skin, he gasped in pain.

O Jesus, let this stop. Let it stop. I can't stand it much more. It's worse than the fishhook.

Chris, Billy and the girls listened intently to what Serena had to say. A sense of excitement, tinged with unease, grew as she outlined her plan.

Prudence and the local kids had never heard of such a thing, but Margie had. Back in San Francisco. "Yeah, there's people who can do that back home. I seen about 'em on tv. But I never met one. Wow. That's neat," she said.

"I don't know about that stuff," said Chris.

"What's the matter,? Scared?" his brother — who held his own reservations but didn't want to admit it — teased.

Chris countered, "You know what Dad would do if he heard of us ..".

"Ain't no body gonna hear," Serena said. "We're not gonna do it out in the middle of the street. We'll find someplace private ... That shack down by the landing".



"Not there," Gail said. "Rusty has her puppies in there and Timmy checks on 'em all the time. We sure don't want no little kids finding out about it".

"How about the old church," Jeanie suggested.

Glog stretched his arms as far over his head as he could reach and grasped the skin on his back. He tugged and struggled to free himself from the dead skin. He used his claws to widen the split and pull the edges further apart.

Agonizing labor.

"Yeah. The old church. Nobody ever goes down there". Billy agreed.

"I don't know ..". Chris started.

"Neither do I," Jeanie said. "It just doesn't seem right".

"Gezee! You guys sit around griping about being bored and when I tell you about something cool, you chicken out. No wonder you're bored".

"Hey, nothing could happen," Billy said, "There's nothing to this stuff. It's all fake. Every bit of it".

"No it isn't," Margie said. "I seen it on tv. The channeler goes into a trance and spirits come and tell all kinds of neat stuff. Like there was this one, a hundred-year-old warrior, like a caveman or something, and he told this lady not to ride this airplane and she did anyhow and it crashed. And there was this other one. It was a space alien and it gave this man some numbers and he won the lottery and won zillions of dollars".

"Man, all that stuff is fake. I saw it on *Inside Edition*. They just do that to rip people off," Billy said.

"I don't think it is," Gail said. "There's all kind of powers and spirits, like flying saucers and stuff. Just because you don't..".



"It's not fake when I do it," Serena said. "It's real".

Glog succeeded in hooking a fold of old skin with a claw on his left foot. That gave him leverage to pull harder. He crossed his arms over his chest gripping the loose folds behind his back.

The skin ripped. The gap between the plates on his back widened. It was coming free!

There! That's done!

Once the old skin ripped away from his back, Glog was able to peel it down off his arms. Then he pushed it down over his thighs to his feet.

And stepped out of it.

He kicked the muddy brown thing away and shook himself.

He turned his arms this way and that to see his sleek new skin.

Copper.

Copper fresh from the furnace. Burnished and bright, it gleamed with a terrible brightness.

It would take a day or so to dry and toughen but Glog knew that the pain of its freshness would only last a couple of hours.

He picked up his old skin, put it in his mouth, and swallowed.

"Aw, you never," Prudence said.

"Sure I can," Serena protested. " I go with my parents to this temple — it's just an office building but they call it the temple — where they taught me how. All you have to do is make your mind blank and ask the spirits to come".

"You ever see 'em," Jeanie asked?

"Of course not. You don't see spirits. You feel 'em," Serena said.



"How do they feel?"

As this conversation progressed, the kids spoke in softer and softer tones. They leaned forward toward Serena in the center of their circle. CD music forgotten in the background, they listened intently to her answer.

"You feel kind of goosebumpy and it's a little scary at first. But then you feel strong. Power, like. And your mind tells you things, but if you ignore it, you get past that and you know that a spirit is there. You can feel it and it like takes control and you know stuff..".

"Heavy!"

"Sounds gross".

"Spooky".

"Yeah, you know things nobody ever told you. You see into the future. And you know things about people".

"Whoooo," Chris said, holding his arms straight out and stalking about the bed like Frankenstein's monster. "The spirit knows all. Tells all".

"Can anybody channel a spirit?"

"Sure. I'll show you how when we go out there tomorrow".

"I'm not sure about this," Jeanie said. "It kinda feels nasty. Like witches and ghosts or zombies or demons or something".

"Not to worry," Serena said. "Demons and all that is old fashion stuff.. Superstition. This is new age. These are spirits. There's a difference".

"What's the difference?"

"Don't worry about it... See you guys tomorrow? After school? Out at the old church? OK?"

GLOG



All the kids, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, reluctance and apprehension, agreed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Exhilarated!

Glog felt alive.

He'd forgotten how wonderful it feels having been confined in a husk too tight for you not to be anymore.

It's wonderful!

He stretched up to his full height. Had he been walking around hunched over constricted by that old shell of scales?

He swung his arms around. The joints swiveled freely.

He raised up on tiptoe and pushed his chin skyward. Blood coursed freely through his body.

He felt like running. If he had wings, he'd have felt like soaring.

Glog trotted out of the church and through the cemetery. He savored the cool night air.

He splashed into the water at the incline where the old bridge had been and sloshed along in water up to his knees.

He rushed over to where the marshgrass bordered the creek and flushed out a muskrat. He ate it with relish.

Too exhilarated to hunt properly, Glog crashed through the marshgrass flattening a broad path. A raft of ducks fluttered squawking ahead of him in low flight over the water. Soon a drove of muskrats



scurried before his onslaught. He grabbed some up in each paw and dropped them in his mouth tails and all.

He flopped onto his belly and scrubbed along in the mud plowing up buried clam and oyster shells.

He rolled onto his back and watched a shooting star streak across the sky. He jumped up and skipped across the marsh in pursuit as though he could catch the star.

He leapt.

He twirled.

He soaked up life.

Out of his old too-small shell, he relished joy and freedom.

O Jesus, at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore! How I and all Thy creation rejoice in Thy presence. We eat and bathe and mate and sleep in the joy You give us. Thank You, Lord. Thank You for our creation, preservation and all the joys of this life! How good You are to us! How good!

Except for a little tenderness beneath his arms and between his legs, Glog felt bursting with health and well-being.

His joints felt oiled.

No tightness in his chest.

His muscles rippled beneath his fresh copper scales.

He'd tried too much too soon, so the frolic tired him and he retreated to the church to catch his breath and read and let his new scales harden.



He felt so good that it was hard to be still but he dipped his cleaning rag in tomato juice and opened his manuscript.

He began wiping off the skunk scent at the place where God said:

Every beast of the forest is Mine,
as are the cattle on a thousand hills.
I know all the fowls of the mountains,
and every wild beast in the fields.

Call upon me in the day of trouble:
and I will deliver thee,
and you shall glorify Me.

Whosoever offers praise,
glorifies Me;
Whosoever orders his life a-right,
to him will I show salvation.

Consider this, those of you who forget
Me,
lest I tear you in pieces
and there be none to deliver
you.

I like the first part of that Psalm, but who would want to face that last? Sounds horrible... Oh, I like this one a lot better. It's pretty.:

Let all the Earth fear the Lord;
Let all its inhabitants stand in awe of Him.

The Lord looks down from Heaven;
He beholds all the inhabitants of Earth.
He fashioned their hearts alike
And He considers all their works.

The eye of the Lord watches over all that
reverence Him
Over all that hope in His mercy
To deliver their souls from death



And to keep them alive in time of
famine.

O taste and see that the Lord is good;
Blessed are those who trust in Him.
There is no want to them that reverence Him;
Though young lions do lack and suffer
hunger,
They that seek the Lord shall not want for
any good thing!

The Lord is near.
The Lord is near to the broken hearted.
The righteous cry and the Lord hears;
He delivers them out of all their troubles:
True, many are the afflictions of the
righteous,
But the Lord delivers them out of them all.
None who trust in Him shall remain desolate!

The steps of the good Are Ordered by the
Lord,
Yea, He delights in their way;
And though they fall, they shall not be utterly
cast down;
Their stumbling shall not be fatal,
For the Lord holds out both His hands to
catch them.

So, depart from evil.
Do Good.
And dwell secure for evermore.

The night's frolic and reading made Glog sleepy.
He put down his rag, closed his Bible and curled up
on the floor to sleep.

The afternoon school bus does not get to the
landing till 4:30. Then the kids have to wait around
for a while till Mr. Mullins shows up in his boat to
ferry them over to Honga. They don't have much
free time till after chores and supper.



It was after six when they began to drift down the road to the church.

Billy carried along a Coleman lantern with twin mantles.

Serena carried some stuff in an L.L. Bean backpack with a leather bottom.

The group babbled happily as they walked.

"Then Donatello and Raphael slid down this rope, see," Chris was saying catching Jeanie up on an episode she'd missed. "And there was these spider things at the bottom and ..".

"Raphael is the name of one of the spirits who come sometimes," Serena interrupted. "He's an angel".

"I thought you said it was space aliens and cavemen that come to these things," Margie said.

"The spirits come in many forms," Serena explained. "They are not limited by time or space".

"Sounds spooky. Like a seance. Do you ever get dead people?"

"Once at the temple, Elvis appeared and James Dean".

"Who's James Dean?"

"Used to be a rock star. Got killed in a car crash".

"Never heard of him... Be quiet now; let's see if anybody is around. Sometimes guys fishing off the bridge step in there to take a dump".

The young people approached the church cautiously, listening to hear if any stray fisherman might be around.

Nothing.

They weaved their way through the vine tangles and toppled gravestones of the church cemetery and stopped at the church steps looking inside.



Nobody wanted to be first through the door.

"Stinks in there. Smells like a skunk was here not too long ago. Probably got a nest underneath the floorboards," Billy said.

"I don't think we ought to do this," Jeanie said. "It feels nasty".

"Look. If you don't want to be a part, then why did you tag along," Gail said. "If you don't want to be in it with the rest of us, then go on home — but don't you dare tell".

"It feels strange to everybody the first time," Serena said. "You'll get used to it. Don't be scared. Spirits don't bite".

The seven young people entered the church.

The setting sun cast long shadows across the empty sanctuary. Acorns scattered on the plank floor by busy squirrels crunched underfoot. A stiff breeze outside caused a length of vine to scratch the wall and wave through an empty window frame.

"They're herrrrre," moaned Prudence.

"What do we have to do?" Margie asked.

"Look," Serena said. "It's easy. I'll go first and show you how to do it. Sit around in a circle here on the floor".

The group obeyed her, arranging themselves as she directed.

Serena dug in her bag and placed a little glass pyramid in the center of the circle. It stood about three inches high. A blue sticker on the bottom said, "Made in Taiwan". She positioned it so a ray of light from the sinking sun would reflect off its prisms.

The glass sparkled with glints of white or red or blue or green light as the vine blowing through the window passed through the weakening sunbeam.



"Now you don't make any noise. Just look at the mystical pyramid. This is a time for cleansing meditation. Every person has a color aura of light around them. It's your soul and it shines like the mystic pyramid. Think about that light. Get the feel of it.

"During the cleansing meditation, sometimes, you can see the aura around other people..".

"I knew it," Billy shouted pointing to his brother, "You've got this brown stain all around you like you've been dipped in ..".

"I'll rub your nose in it," Chris said reaching for Billy's arm.

"You two stop that, "Serena commanded. "This is serious. The cleansing meditation is to bring about our metaphysical alignment. If you have any psychic ability, this is the time when you might get an out-of-body experience or a revelation from a spirit".

Margie said, "I read where this psychic solves murder cases for the cops. She can touch something the dead guy had and she can tell the cops who did it. Like there was this girl and she was kidnapped and buried alive underground in this big box, you know, like a refrigerator carton or something. And she had this water hose going up above ground to breath through. And I don't know what she did about going to the bathroom. And no body could find her like. And there was this psychic. And..".

"Yes. Things like that happen," Serena said to regain control of the group. "It could happen here tonight. You never know what a spirit will do when you call one up; they have all sorts of powers".

"If one of these spirit things shows up, what are we supposed to do?" Prudence asked.

"Anything it says to!" Chris laughed, "Anything it says to!". He pumped the valve on the side of the



Coleman lantern to pressurize the white gasoline in its tank. He struck a match and applied it to the mantels inside the glass globe.

Harsh white light flared up and the lantern hummed with the steady hiss of gas. Chris twisted the needle valve lowering the light to its dimmest setting. He placed the lantern to one side on the floor.

"Spirits are very old and very powerful," Serena said. "They want to be treated with respect. Appreciation. Admiration".

"Like a superior officer. Like an admiral," Prudence said.

"That's it," Serena said.

"You mean you want us to worship these things," Jeanie asked with alarm.

"No, Silly. That isn't it. This is New Age. Respect, appreciation and admiration. They like..".

"What's the difference between that and worship?" Jeanie asked.

"Don't worry about it. You'll see how it works.

"Now everybody get quiet.

"Hold hands around the circle.

"Close your eyes.

"Imagine a white light inside you. It starts down at your toes and rises slowly... It passes up through your body... When it reaches your tongue, let it out as words, any words that come to the tip of your tongue. Let the light call the spirit... Come. Come. Come... Bring ethereal greetings from the angelic spirit realm. Come. Come!"

Whispers.

Muffled giggles.

Low voices talking.



Broken, conspiratorial pauses.

These sounds greeted Glog as he woke.

He resisted the temptation to stretch. He froze, listening intently to see if there was danger.

Humans.

Several of them.

They were right here inside the church.

They were talking... No. They were speaking in tongues — *glossolalia*. They were praying... Well, what better spot than a church for that?

Glog eased up and lifted his eyes just above the edge of the baptistry to watch the humans.

The Coleman lantern's glare blinded him so he lifted a paw to shade his eyes. The shadows of the seven young people loomed gigantic on the rough wooden walls of the old church.

They sat cross-legged in a circle around a piece of glass on the floor. Some rocked back and forth on their haunches; others sat stock still. Some kept their eyes squeezed shut; others stared at the glass or peeked around the circle at the others.

All of them were humming or chanting. Calling. Summoning.

Glog had seen such behavior before. Long ago when heathen savages hunted this land, they would call spirits this same way. They would circle a fire and chant and enter trances opening their minds for spirits to take them over. They would dance and chant and shake rattles and scream and cut their flesh to entice demons to enter and assume control.

Are they still doing that after all these years! Haven't they learned anything!

These are intelligent human beings, created in God's own image. And here they



are worshiping and serving other created things instead of the Creator!

The very first commandment is to have no other God! The very first!

Glog looked at the humans in horror.

Their conduct left him aghast.

Bile filled his mouth.

Loathing filled his heart.

How could they do such a thing?

Glog rose up to his full height in the baptistry.

Eat them? Certainly not!

He shuttered as though touching some putrefying dead thing.

He groped about for something to throw; he didn't intend to touch these creatures.

His paw closed around something solid.

He raised it to hurl at the humans.

Serena chanted, "Come. Come. Take me. Fill me. Enter me. Come into me". She stood up and stretched her arms above her head, palms turned upward in welcome.

Her movement attracted the attention of the others. They raised their heads to watch her, to see what spirit would come to her.

They saw Glog standing behind her.

They saw him move in the lantern's light.

They screamed and scrambled back.

Glog felt the thing in his hand wiggle.

For Heaven's sake!

He had grabbed one of the turtles.



I can't throw a turtle; it would break its shell.

Glog lowered the turtle to the floor and groped about for something else.

The half-filled jug of tomato juice.

He grasped it and stepped over the edge of the baptistry with the jug raised above his head.

Serena saw him looming above her.

She cringed and babbled.

She wet herself.

Glog started to smash her head with the jug. He stopped himself just in time. That would be a waste of life.

He swung the jug to his mouth and bit off the neck of the bottle and emptied the red juice over the girl's screaming upturned face.

"Blood! Blood! Blood!" she shrieked hysterically.

"Blood! Blood," the other children shrieked.

Glog towered above them.

He raised his foot and stomped the glass pyramid, grinding the shards into the floor. His stamping shook the building. It jarred the plank the Coleman lantern sat on. The lantern overturned spilling gasoline onto the dry wood.

Flames shot up. The children huddled against the far wall yelling and screaming. They scrambled out the church window and ran screaming and crying into the night.

Glog darted about the church trying to stamp out the fire.

But each time he stomped his foot down, floorboards splintered feeding more air to the fire.



Flames climbed the wall studs and licked along the rafters.

Glog saw that saving the building was hopeless. He stepped back into the baptistry to gather up his Bible, sunbonnet, baculum and backpack.

He rushed out into the cemetery and started for the water.

That turtle's still in there. Does it have sense enough to get out? Phooy! Of course it doesn't.

Glog dropped his worldly goods beside a tombstone and dashed back into the burning church. Fresh air rushed in through the windows, joined the flame and gushed out in smoke thorough the ceiling of the church.

The turtle stalked high up on all fours along the bottom of the altar rail and Glog scooped it up and ran back outside.

Above the doorway of the church stood a squat pointed clapboard belfry, its iron bell long gone. Flames channeled by the hot air inside the church rolled out the open sides of the belfry. Roof shingles and the tarpaper beneath them ignited, burned through and fell one by one. Tree branches overhanging the church scorched, their leaves withered and burned.

Glog knelt in the churchyard stuffing his things into the otter-skin pack.

What do I do with this turtle I rescued? Let it go, or...

He popped it in his mouth.

The breeze off the Chesapeake pushed the pillar of smoke and fire above the church to the east. It streamed away in a slanted column. The heat of the



fire caused the stars above and the lights across the Honga River to shimmer. A beam inside the church fell sending a shower of glowing red sparks upward to mix with the stars.

Glog moved away from the heat. He entered the water close to the old bridge, waded out up to his neck and turned to see the old church burn.

People, men from the village, ran to the scene. They didn't even attempt to put out the fire; they couldn't have if they had tried. They stood at a distance watching and commenting:

"Damned kids ought to h'a known better!".

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Glog moved east through the dredged channel between Charity Point and the town of Honga. He passed beneath the new concrete bridge which carries Meekins Neck Road over to Upper Hooper Island.

Soon he emerged in the Honga River which runs between the three Hooper islands and the mainland of Dorchester County.

River is hardly the proper term for the Honga River; it is actually a long arm of the Chesapeake, a tidal estuary with virtually no drop. Its main channel, narrow and twisting, varies in depth from 13 to 55 feet. Vast marshes border each side of the river with a few fishing villages sprinkled here and there wherever the fast land rises high enough.

Banks of sticky mud — more spoil the Army Corps of Engineers left over from dredging the channel — funneled Glog out into the Honga River to where it spreads nearly a mile wide between Upper Hooper Island and Wroten Island.

Then he was free of the dredged area.

Free to walk where ever he chose.

Well, Lord. Which way now? Where's that plain path You're supposed to show Your friends?

At this point Glog stood in water only 24 feet deep. Bouncing up on tiptoe he could easily pop his head above the surface to survey the shore. Flat



marshland blended with the water in every direction. A point of light here or there marked a smattering of isolated human dwellings.

Glog submerged and surveyed the underwater landscape. To the north of him the Honga River shoaled into a broad flat plain hardly different from the land above the surface. The depth in that direction leveled off at about eight feet, too shallow for Glog to walk completely submerged.

To the south, The Honga River deepened. A long, wide undersea valley formed an inverted triangle with its base away from him. In cross section the valley is a jagged notch with sides which slope gently up from the bottom.

Glog decided to stick to the depths.

He walked to the south towards the river's mouth where, about 20 miles away, it rejoins the main body of the Chesapeake at Hooper Straight in Tangier Sound.

Salt savors Chesapeake Bay waters in three zones:

From south to north, the water's salt content lessens the further you get from the ocean. At the Atlantic, the water's salinity is very high. Inside the mouth of the Chesapeake, it changes to about 20 parts of salt to each thousand parts of water; at Havre de Grace where the fresh water of the Susquehanna empties into the Bay, there is only three parts salt per thousand parts of water.

Midway in between, in the great shellfish beds of the Honga River where Glog stood, salinity ranges to about 15 parts salt per thousand parts water.

Oysters love that.

The Bay's waters also exist in distinct temperature levels graduated from the coldest at the bottom to the warmest at the top.



Wind and variations in the sun's heat on the surface create convection currents in the bay. These draw colder water up from the bottom in some places, and force warmer water down into the depths at other places.

The temperature and salt mix in the Honga River is just right for oysters.

Another factor influences the oyster's preference for a home on the Eastern Shore:

Tributaries flowing into the Bay from the west drain huge inland areas; they bring water down from the Appalachian Mountains. They bring melted snow down to the Bay in the form of spring-fresh water. For instance, the Susquehanna empties 400,000 cubic feet of fresh water into the Bay every second.

Unfortunately, all this fresh water from western rivers carries massive amounts of silt, agricultural run off, and pollution, both urban and industrial.

Oysters don't like that.

On the other hand, Bay tributaries flowing from the Eastern Shore are essentially tidal estuaries. They originate not from mountains, but from the ocean's inroads into the land. They contain little fresh water, being either salty or brackish for most of their length. Eastern Shore rivers remain torpid, rising and falling with the tide; but, since their points of origin are hardly above sea level to begin with, they have little flow of their own.

For instance, the Potomac, flowing from the west, drops in white water rapids over massive rocks at Great Falls cascading in a mad rush to the bay. While the Honga River on the Eastern Shore has no rapids, no rocks, virtually no drop at all; it meanders through vast marshes hardly higher than the water's surface.

Oysters love that.



They appear to consider the Honga River to be Oyster Heaven!

Incredibly thick oyster beds floor the bottom of the Honga River and Glog had a difficult time striding among them without crushing hundreds.

Each oyster, cemented to the shells of its ancestors, lay beneath the water with its shell open to the flow of the tide. A tiny olive-colored siphon called a *crystalline stile* waves above each oyster drawing in living particulates from the drifting water; a tiny pink jet expels the filtered water in a continuous silver stream.

This constant wavering action of the millions of oyster siphons made the seabed shimmer as though Glog walked along the silver linings of clouds.

Here and there, he crossed barren patches where harvesters with tongs or dredges had picked virtually all the larger oysters leaving muddy spoil, empty shells — the clutch on which new oysters attach themselves — and immature spat.

But most of the bottom was pure, living oyster.

Over the years, watermen on the Chesapeake have given individual oyster beds beneath the Bay specific names according to some long-forgotten characteristic of the bed — names like Patty Laura's Place, France, Chicken Cock, Bald Eagle, Pear Tree, Daddie Dare, Zade's Fine Eyes, Buzzard Roost, Gibson Girl, Apes Hole, Potato Hill, Butter Pot, and over a thousand other names, both common and official.

Where Glog stood — a bed which watermen call Eve's Palace — millions and millions and millions of oysters as far as the eye could see rested on the river bottom. They clustered atop each other forming living spires of shell. They encrusted waterlogged logs and old pilings and ship parts so that the



original shapes they covered could hardly be identified.

Like fairy sandcastles dribbled drop by sandy drop from a child's hand the oyster castles assumed fantastic undersea shapes with steeples and bulwarks and buttresses and arches and towers with streamers of green seaweed fluttering from them like banners.

What kind of God would make such a world with beauties unseen by any eye save His own, Glog thought. How could any creature worship any Being less than the creator Himself? I'll never understand humans. Never.

Glog still felt unsettled about the spirit channelers he had disturbed; the event was over, but the awfulness of what he had seen those people doing remained.

It's like the aftertaste of something nasty.

Wanting a breath, Glog hopped up to raise his head above the surface.

The lights of a few houses flickered on his left, to the east, marking the charming town of Crapo just inland of Parks Neck.

Behind him, to the west, he could not help seeing the tall utterly out-of-place bridge between Upper and Middle Hoopers island.

Why would they build a bridge that tall out here in the middle of nowhere? Humans make no sense.

Glog felt hungry.

He waded into the shallows and sloshed through the muddy marsh.



Ahaaa. I smell Muskrats.

They virtually swarmed in ditches and cuts of water through the marsh.

Glog fed well.

Thank You for the abundance of food. You guard me and guide me always. I appreciate it. Thank You, Lord.

Few humans stirred in the pre-dawn hours. But the ones who did made an ungodly noise; Dorchester County watermen think only a sissy would own a boat with a muffler on its engine.

Early risers among the watermen — 4 a.m. is the usual starting time — chugged down the Honga channel leaving a pulsing racket and a smell of diesel fuel. White wake from their passing slapped against the mudbanks of the marsh.

The noise above the surface drove Glog under again.

With his belly full, his thoughts wandered as he ambled through the oyster-castle estates, threading his path around bed after bed. As usual, he contemplated food.

This is God's country. I've never seen so many muskrats. It's better than that island with the barge. You don't need a net to catch plenty here. I like this place.

A big anchor, relic of an old sailing ship, tilted against an outcropping of oyster-covered something. Big links of chain, rusted solid together for a hundred years, dangled from the anchor. A long green eel twisted in and out among the chain links.

Glog stepped absent-mindedly over eel and artifact.



It's like the Psalm says, The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want...

Glog had never seen a sheep but from his reading he had a vague idea of what a shepherd does. Naturally, his mind pictured still waters and green pastures as something very like a Heavenly swamp filled with muskrat lodges.

Glog mulled it over in his mind...

Thou preparest a table before me... Thou preparest a table before me... Now that is something to think about! ...But, what's this?

Something was happening among the oysters. They were doing something — Something exciting.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Oysters lead a sedentary life.

Days after birth oyster larvae, called spat, glue themselves to a solid place to anchor, called clutch, and lie still, letting the tide waters wash over them for the rest of their lives, which — if nothing eats them first — may last 50 years.

Oysters do not hunt.

Oysters do not swim.

Oysters don't even move!

So what exciting thing happened for Glog to see among the oysters?

Well, oysters reproduce.

Gloriously!

And their reproduction depends largely on time, tide, temperature and the salinity of the water in which they live.

On this night, the time, the tide, the temperature, the stage of the moon — God only knows exactly what — triggered the lust of the oysters.

All over the bottom of the Honga River, millions upon millions of oysters cracked their shells open a hairline more.

Glog saw millions of oyster shells quiver on their hinges fanning the water with tiny, almost imperceptible, swirls of passion.

Even though permanently anchored to the clutch, the solid shells actually heaved with excitement.



All oysters are born male. They switch their sex to female after a couple of years. As alternating hermaphrodites, they can switch back to male again if something — say, a plague of devouring starfish — upsets the sexual ratio of the bed.

Oysters reproduce prolifically at the right time of their season.

When that starting trumpet, heard only by God and the oysters, blows, each female oyster jets up to ten million eggs into the water around her; each male oyster volcanically erupts sperm to meet the demand.

Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of microscopic silver eggs bubble from the Mothers into the living water. The water swarms with living sperm, tiny tails thrashing as they dash to meet their destined mate.

Sperm and egg spiral, circle and blend dancing into union and life — and their unseen erotic dance does not even ripple the surface of the river.

Glog moved steadily as a juggernaut through the new life bursting around him. Pale clouds of oyster eggs, milt and spat billowed in the water. Whims of tide and current pushed cloud into cloud. Warm convections of current lifted swarms of oyster larvae up close to the surface; flows of cooler water touched the clouds, lowering them back to the bottom.

The water teemed with the vitality and wonder of new-born creatures, dancing, soaring, rejoicing in their element.

A visual melody floated before Glog's eyes. Even in their microscopic hordes, the essence of oyster foreshadowed the mother-of-pearl colors of adult shells.



Moving as a thousand units — no individual discernible, but in their numbers mighty as an army with banners — the young oysters glowed with colors; flashes of iridescent purple and green, moonsparks of pearly cream, shades of translucent blue —

All these colors moved in the pillars of cloud which drifted and floated and glided here and there with the movement of waters.

Glog imagined that he could hear the oysters.

Of course he couldn't.

Not really.

Oysters don't make a sound except for the vacuum pop of their seals when they open at the changing of the tide...

But these little creatures moved ...

As though they were singing.

Exalting.

Rejoicing.

Laughing..

Worshiping.

Otters belly-sliding down a mud slide to splash into a brook...

Children running hands thrown behind them trying to catch a snowflake on their tongues...

The flight of an osprey in the air...

The way of a ship in the midst of the sea...

The path of a serpent upon a warm rock



*Honeymooners on their wedding night
marveling at the wonder...*

Glog thought of all these happy things as he watched the ecstasy of the oysters.

And then he walked on.

By himself.

Alone.

What else was he to do?

Here's another one of those old anchors.

Crusted with generations of barnacles and oysters, rust has sharpened its shank into a long iron taper. Sand washing over the broad flukes for centuries has hollowed out a space outlining the anchor on the river bottom.

Odd clumps of oyster shell reveal other shapes on the bottom to Glog:

Here's a flared dome of shell and corrosion — an ancient ship's bell.

There's a pyramid of stacked round shapes — an arsenal of cannonballs.

Here's a clutter of stubby cylinders, thick logs tumbled together like jackstraws. Red rust and shell coat all but one of the shapes; a patina of green reveals that that one is bronze — the cannon of the sunken ship.

Glog sat down on the pile of cannons and surveyed the field of debris. So encrusted with shell, rust, mud, sand and weed were most of the metal pieces of the wreck that he could only identify them as the work of man after he'd studied them a while.

No wood, no organic material remained.

Glog may have found the remains of a Picaroon — or maybe it was American.



For several months toward the end of 1782, near the end of the Revolutionary War, British and Colonial forces struggled for supremacy in the Chesapeake. Aggravating the situation was the fact that while many Eastern Shore families supported the American cause, many other families who lived there remained loyal to the Crown — Tories.

Six British frigates sailed along the Eastern Shore shelling plantations and towns within range of their guns. They landed raiding parties to pillage farms for plunder and supplies.

Tories on the Eastern Shore outfitted what small boats they could muster to aid the British. Knowing the waters and the political allegiance of the citizens living along the Chesapeake, these Tories (lead by Joseph Whaland, a man termed in contemporary Colonial accounts as “a gallows-looking scoundrel, a rascal and a rogue”) terrorized American sympathizers.

Americans called the home-made Tory fleet “Refugee Boats” or “Picaroons” — a name which came to be applied to both the boats and to the Tories manning them.

To counter the threat of the Picaroons, Americans outfitted schooners and armed fishing boats to meet the attack.

Grandiose names titled the craft in the make-shift American fleet on the Chesapeake — *Protector, Defense, Greyhound, Ranger, Revenge, Kidnapper, Pole Cat, Fearnought, Venus, Active, Dolphin, Experiment and Porpuss...*

Yes, *Porpuss*.

America’s Revolutionary War sailors fought better than they spelled.

Nevertheless, they gave grand names to somewhat less than grand gunboats.



It may well have been the wreckage of any one of these ships which Glog found scattered over an acre of seabottom beneath the Honga River.

He strolled here and there picking up this artifact or that as they attracted his fancy.

The Revolutionary War antagonists played hide and seek around the Hooper Islands, in and out of Tangier Sound, inland up every river along the Maryland and Virginia coasts—out into the open ocean.

Battles were fought.

Ships sank.

Men died.

During the last years of the war, the Tories resorted to mounting cannon on flat barges — firing platforms — which they laboriously towed up and down the bay by rowboat.

The shallow-draft barges could be poled into the estuaries to hide in the cover of marshgrasses; they could approach any waterfront plantation to shell and burn American homes.

Once, when Glog surfaced for air, he could see one of the homes which had been attacked:

Still overlooking the Honga River stands a Colonial house named Lake Cove; it's a whitewashed wooden home with two large dormers in a steep roof and a huge freestanding chimney.

Nearby once stood a windmill which ground corn into meal for Lake Cove and its neighbors; the broken millstones and ratchet wheel are still there.

In the 1780s this was the home of Henry Lake, Captain in the Dorchester Militia, and his daughter, Lavinia.

Lavinia bore the nickname "Lovey".



One day when Lovey Lake was alone in the house, Tory Picaroons attacked.

The Tories stole the family's silver plate and dishes.

They pillaged the smokehouse of meat.

They trampled standing crops.

They chopped down fruit trees.

They poisoned the well.

They slashed udders of all the milk cows.

They cracked the gristmill's grinding stones.

Then, they came for Lovey Lake.

According to the delicate Lovey's account of the matter, when two Tory plunderers each grabbed her ankles and spread her legs, they were attempting to steal the silver buckles off her shoes.

Maybe so.

Anyhow, to protect her silver buckles, Lovey kicked.

And connected.

"With my heel did I strike the Picaroons, each in the crotch of his pantaloons," she said.

The Tories abandoned their endeavor and hobbled hunched over out of her bedroom locking her inside.

They set the house afire.

Lovey escaped through a window, organized family servants into a fire bucket brigade to save the house, and spread the alarm to surrounding farms.

Gathering what armed men she could find, and taking up her father's musket herself, Lovey Lake fired at the Tory barge as the Picaroons poled for deeper water.

This quasi-military action was typical of the Tory barge attacks.



Outraged Colonials organized their own barge fleet to retaliate against Tory lives and property.

On November 29, 1782 — six weeks after Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown — the last Americans to die in Revolutionary War action died during a battle between a dozen or so Colonial and Tory barges in the Chesapeake.

The leader of the American barge navy, Commodore Zedekiah Walley, died along with 26 of his crew as Tory barges soundly routed his fleet.

But these Patriots did not die as a result of enemy fire.

Their own cannon killed them.

The American bargemen wanted to load extra black powder into their cannon to increase its range. Worried that the barrel might burst, they attempted to strengthen the gun by tightly binding it with coils of wire.

Sometimes, this ordinance tactic worked...

In this last sea battle of the war, it didn't.

An 18-pound cannon — i.e. one that fired a ball weighing 18 pounds — wrapped in coils of wire, exploded on the Commodore's barge when the fledgling American Navy sailors overloaded it with gunpowder.

The coils of wire burst apart lashing over the deck, slicing men in half.

The explosion of their gun killed Commodore Walley and 26 of his crew.

Their holed barge sank.

Other American barges retreated.



The Picaroons celebrated — until they learned that the American Revolution was already over and that the British had lost.

The present-day U.S. Navy still experiments with coils of wire to increase their cannons' firepower...

As Glog was soon to discover.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

T

he Lord is my Shepherd;
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green
pastures;
He leadeth me besides the still
waters...

Glog pondered the Psalm as he walked along the river bottom stopping now and then to probe at an interesting shell formation with his baculum.

During the daylight hours, he had holed up to doze uncomfortably beneath a duck blind off Mens Burial Point on Lower Hooper Island. In the late afternoon, rays of sunlight slanted in beneath the blind waking him.

He adjusted his tattered red sailcloth sunbonnet over his pineal window to filter the brightness and started walking early.

Now, it was dark and he was out of the Honga River walking across the bottom of Hooper Straight.

Every once in a while, loud, muffler-less motor boats blasted through the water above him. When the first couple of ones passed over, Glog crouched and hugged the bottom remembering that awful ship propeller; but he soon realized that these watercraft, though monstrous loud, drew only a few feet of water.

They passed safely over his head with plenty of clearance in the deep channel and he came to



ignore them as much as it is possible to ignore such noise.

Before Glog left the duck blind, he had feasted on pounds and pounds of muskrat from the green pasture of marsh off Mens Burial Point.

Great eating.

He was tempted to stay, but the island offered virtually no shelter so he reluctantly moved on.

Perhaps the next island.

Thou prearest a table before me...

Thou prearest a table before me...

Glog puzzled and puzzled over these mysterious words.

In his mind he could picture the lavish table of God in Heaven spread out in abundance — but one problem bothered him about the mental picture.

I wonder how in the world the Lord will keep all those muskrats from jumping off the table?

Oh well, with God nothing is impossible; He'll do a miracle, I suppose.

The bottom of Hooper Straight was sandier, deeper, firmer than in the Honga River where Glog had been walking.

There was another difference.

Sea nettles.

In the moonlit waters of Hooper Straight, Glog encountered an enormous float of sea nettles, *Chrysaora quinquecirrha*, the jellyfish most common in the Chesapeake.

The float numbered hundreds, perhaps thousands, mostly drifting with the tide. The gelatinous, nearly transparent, creatures crowded the water.



Each sea nettle — a creature with an almost amoeba-like shapelessness when washed up on a beach — in the water forms an umbrella-like dome of jelly. In the center of the clear dome, purple veins radiate out from the center, like a flower inside a glass ball.

As the sea nettle swims, its body's umbrella pulses and throbs, opening and closing with majestic slowness.

The sight of them delighted Glog.

Like the balloon conclusion of a political convention, cascades of clear jellyfish drifted down from the surface of the water. Other flights of balloons drifted upward from the depths. Each jellyfish passed the other, up or down, with a rhythm and reason known only to itself.

Every jellyfish contains phosphorescent materials; jiggle the animal and flakes of blue-green shower from it in a display of soft, cool fireworks. These phosphorescent colors trail after each nettle in the float.

That's not all that trails from the sea nettles.

Yard after yard of thread-like tentacles trail below each jellyfish; dozens of tentacles, hundreds of yards.

Stinging chemicals permeate every inch of every tentacle.

For the tiny fish on which the jellyfish feed, the merest brush of a tentacle brings death; for most other creatures, to touch a tentacle brings pain.

Severe pain.

Glog walked among the hanging tentacles admiring their beauty with impunity.

My new skin protects me from the stingers. Look at it. My scales gleam like



copper fresh from the furnace. The ridges reinforce every scale, doubling its strength. The way the plates interlock makes....

Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! Ohwee! Ohwee! Ohwee!

A stray tentacle drifting beneath the water had brushed his lips — where no scales grow.

The searing pain of a chemical burn surged through the tender membrane.

Glog scrubbed his lips and backed away from the jellyfish.

They didn't look nearly as pretty as before.

Glog rushed across the underwater landscape hurrying to get clear of all the jellyfish.

Oh, but that hurts! Why on earth does the Good God allow pain to exist? What's the purpose of it?

Glog laughed at himself.

Of course, pain teaches you not to kiss a jellyfish for one thing.

Maybe God created his creatures with nerves so we can feel things — mostly good things — like a swallow of plump muskrat. A warm bath. A lover's touch. Without nerves we'd miss all this good.

And our nerve cells let us feel things to avoid too — even the dumbest human child only sits on an ant hill once; you couldn't pay him to do it again... Maybe God originally gave us the gift of pain to save us from more serious hurts; but the Evil One twisted things



so that now pain is something different from the way it started.... Maybe... I don't know. I don't really understand it...

You know, thinking makes me hungry... I wish this stinging would stop.

Glog stuck his head up above the surface of the water. The Hooper Straight Lighthouse, a 41-foot light visible for nine miles, rose out of the water far to his left.

Glog submerged and walked to his right, away from the annoying light. His path skirted the northern edge of Bloodsworth Island and turned south skirting that island's Okahanikan Cove.

After Glog got out of the beam from the Hooper Island Lighthouse, he noticed something fascinating about the shore of Bloodsworth Island:

Not one single light of any kind interrupted the shadowy shores of Bloodsworth. No house lights. No street lights. No lighted advertising signs...

That meant that no human being lived on Bloodsworth Island. Not one single one. How appealing.

Glog approached the shoreline of Bloodsworth Island at Race Hog Point. He surfaced inshore and between two tall pilings which reached high in the air above him. He noticed another set of these pilings a couple of hundreds to the right; and another set a couple of hundred yards to the left.

He thought these might be some sort of navigational marker, or maybe one of those big blue and white telephone company signs warning of underwater cable crossings.

He dismissed them.

He shouldn't have.



The signs posted at all approaches to Bloodsworth Island face the water to warn boaters:

PROHIBITED AREA
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PROPERTY
U.S. NAVAL ORDNANCE TEST RANGE
Danger Zone
Unexploded Ordnance
No Landing

Just look at those marshes! Loaded with food, I'll bet. Land flowing with muskrats and honey!

These must be the still waters.

These must be the green pastures.

Thank You, Lord. Thank You for bringing me here.

Glog waded ashore.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Only God and the government knows how long Bloodsworth Island has been a designated target area for test shelling, strafing, and bombing by the United States military.

Probably, some of those barges, armed with wire-bound cannon, lobbed solid iron balls onto Bloodsworth to test their range during the Revolutionary War.

During the Civil War, Federal ironclads trained their gunners in the Chesapeake firing at targets on Bloodsworth Island.

The armored cruiser *Maine* had practiced shelling Bloodsworth before she exploded in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898, launching the Spanish-American War.

In 1916, the Navy authorized construction of 273 four-stack destroyers. Each one displaced 1,200 tons and cruised at up to 35 knots. Ordnance included a dozen 21-inch torpedo tubes, a 3-inch antiaircraft gun, and four 4-inch guns.

Several World War I flotillas and convoys assembled in Baltimore; their fighting sailors honed their skill at the suppressed firing of their 4-inch guns to attack German U-boats by shelling low-lying targets in the marshes of Bloodsworth Island.

The last months of that war saw over 2,200 naval air bombing runs undertaken against German submarines — the first important demonstration of air power in naval warfare.



The bi-planes practiced their bombing runs over hulks aground on Bloodsworth Island.

Carrier-based aircraft brought a new dimension to U.S. Navy strength during World War II. Experimenters with another new development in naval ordnance, target-detecting radar, practiced hitting marks on Bloodsworth Island.

Flyers-in-training dropped thousands of small practice bombs on Bloodsworth; each of these contained only five or ten pounds of explosive, just enough to make a puff of smoke so the observer could tell how close to the target the bomb fell.

But practice bombs were not the only things dropped on Bloodsworth Island since World War II.

To develop the best ordnance in the world for U.S. Navy ships and aircraft, the Department of the Navy established the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center at Lexington Park, Maryland, on the western shore of the Chesapeake.

What better place to test the things they developed than the long established target area of Bloodsworth Island right across the Chesapeake?

Besides that....

The Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Naval Propellant Plant at Indian Head, Md.; Blossom Point Proving Grounds, the Dahlgren Naval Surface Weapons Center; the Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Activity Center at Langley Hollow, Md.; Oceana Naval Air Station and Camp Pendleton at Virginia Beach; Norfolk, home port for the U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet — all these facilities lie within easy spitting distance of Bloodsworth Island.

And when any of them wants to spit, guess where they do it?

Glog loved his new home.



His first impression was right; not a single human lived on Bloodsworth Island.

Of course, their litter was here — where isn't it?

Big metal things, obviously cast-off junk, sat here and there in scorched pits dotting the landscape. Piles of rubber tires lay dry-rotting in the undergrowth. Old heavy machines — obsolete battle tanks — rusted and holed, with treads broken and twisted, parked in long staggered lines among the sand dunes. Surplus boats of all kinds — empty hulks — rested aground in the shallows...

Typical human litter.

Targets, every one.

Odd. No large trees grew on the Island. But there was plenty of undergrowth — scrub pine, blackjack oak, swamp willow.

And there were plenty of wetland marshes!

Marshes spread for miles in every direction around the island's shoreline. Complex muskrat trails threaded all through the marshgrass. The brown domes of muskrat lodges liberally peppered the marsh.

Glog could hardly dip his claw in the water without snagging a muskrat!

Wonderful place, Lord! Wonderful!

How good You are to me. Your mercies are unceasing. My cup runneth over. How great Thou art; how great Thou art.

I worship and adore Thee, praising Thy great goodness and crying with the four beasts around Thy throne, 'Holy. Holy. Holy. Blessed be Thy Name forever and ever'.

Glog explored the island with delight.



During the Viet Nam War, the Navy outfitted a great many aircraft as gunships equipping them with sophisticated radar systems and banks of rapid-fire 7.62 mm guns, 105 mm howitzers, 20 or 40 mm cannon.

To find the enemy, The Navy equipped many aircraft with electro-optical sensors, interdiction multisensors, infra-red sensors, cameras using camouflage detection infra-red film — and much of this technology was tested over Bloodsworth Island.

Some Navy Lockheed OP-2E Neptunes dropped acoustically, seismically or organically activated sensors along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Some of these devices were tested on Bloodsworth Island — much to Glog's regret 30 years later.

One organically activated sensor was called the People Sniffer. Dropped by aircraft in an isolated area, the People Sniffer could detect whenever any human being entered that area.

The way it worked was that each People Sniffer sensor contained a live bedbug!

Honest.

By monitoring the behavior of the bedbug, distant navy observers could tell when it detected the presence of a person — it got so anxious to bite that it jumped up and down in anticipation and its movement was transmitted back to the carrier by electronic signal.

Yes, the U.S. Navy actually did drop bedbugs — among other things — on North Viet Nam.

In the preliminary testing phase of the project, the Navy had also dropped a large sample of People Sniffers on Bloodsworth Island — where there are no people for the bedbugs to sniff.

Naturally, a fair number of the sensors cracked open on being dropped from the aircraft, thus



stocking a large and hungry colony of bedbugs on Bloodsworth Island.

Normally, bedbugs bite only humans; but when there are no humans and the bugs get really hungry...

Glog itched.

The pesty insects were so tiny that they could borrow in between the armored plates of his scales and bite.

Bathing in salt water helped reduce them for a short while; but, stop for a second and ravenous reinforcements arrive.

But, even with the bedbugs, Glog loved his new home.

An abundance of muskrats.

No humans.

No lights.

No noise.

Green pastures.

Still waters.

Peace...

At least, for the time being.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Take an egg out of your refrigerator.

Hold it at eye level then drop it on the kitchen floor.

In your mind's eye, enlarge that spattered egg until it covers a 23-square-mile area.

There, you have a good idea of the size and shape of Bloodsworth Island.

Now, superimpose a clock face over that egg.

Glog discovered the perfect place to live where the hour hand points to Eight O'clock.

It was an LCM-6, Landing Craft Mechanized - 6.

The LCM-6, 60 feet long and 20 wide, weighed about 12 tons. It was designed to transport troops, tanks, trucks and other equipment from large ships to shore. The shallow-draft LCM-6 could beach in only two feet of water and drop a large ramp to off-load.

Since the LCM-6 must withstand repeated grounding and backing off under hostile fire, it was double-hull constructed — two layers of steel plate with the 18-inch void between the exterior and interior hulls braced with thick steel support beams.

The Navy constructed many of these craft for service in Viet Nam. Other equipment superseded the LCM-6 and the one Glog found had been stripped of its twin engines and grounded to rust on Bloodsworth Island at Race Hog Point.



When Glog found it, the LCM-6 lay tilted on its side, a position resulting from a test missile hit in 1989.

Using his baculum for leverage and bracing his shoulder against the camouflage-painted side, Glog rolled the LCM-6 over so it rested upside down over a hollow in the sand. This converted the interior into a dark, dry, comfortable den.

The armored ramp at one end of the craft was missing and the space where it had been made a perfect doorway and entrance tunnel for Glog's den.

Almost as good as a natural cave, Glog thought viewing his den with satisfaction.

The Persian Gulf War and Iraq demonstrated the effectiveness of the Navy's F/A-18 Hornet. Made by the McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Company and the Northrop Corporation, the F/A-18 Hornet is a land or carrier-based fighter and attack aircraft. Driven by two General Electric F404-GE-400 turbofan engines, each capable of delivering 16,000 pounds of thrust, the F/A-18 Hornet can reach a speed of Mach 1.7+.

Hornet weaponry includes two radar-guided Sparrow missiles, two heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles, as well as AMRAAM—Advanced, Medium-range, Air-to-Air Missiles.

The Navy F/A-18 Hornet also carries a cannon ...

A 20 mm cannon.

While many experts regard the F/A-18 Hornet as one of the world's best fighters, the Persian Gulf War also brought the F-117 Stealth Fighter Bomber to the forefront.

The F-117 Stealth, with a speed of Mach 1+, is manufactured by the Lockheed Aeronautical System Co. It is a low-observable attack aircraft — meaning



enemy radar positions have a hard time knowing what hit them.

The F-117 Stealth has a range of 800 miles — nearly twice that of the Hornet — and its carbon fiber skin tends to absorb radar signals.

The Stealth's armory includes AGM-65 Maverick launch-and-leave, television-guided, air-to-surface missiles.

The F-117 Stealth also carries a cannon
A 20 mm cannon.

I'll put it over here.

Glog lugged in a huge wooden crate — the cast-off container for some piece of military hardware — and placed it against the far wall of his den. Filled with white fluffy fuzz of cattail pods, it would make a dandy bed.

Maybe a bookcase could go there. Yes, that would be nice. Really nice.

The M-61 Vulcan aircraft cannon — the one used in both the Hornet and the Stealth — has six 20-mm barrels.

These barrels rotate in rapid succession — like the barrels of the horrible Revolving Machine Gun invented by Richard J. Gatling in 1862 for killing hordes of men during the Civil War.

The Vulcan cannon can spew out explosive shells at the rate of 6,000 a minute — that is if you had enough of them to last a minute. Trouble is, the cannon fires so fast that ammunition can't keep up with it and it empties its magazine of explosive shells in under ten seconds!

Maybe if you wrapped the cannon in coils of wire ...



That's precisely what Navy ordnance scientists intend to do.

It only took Glog a few days to settle into his new den. Because there was no one on Bloodsworth Island to disturb him, he felt free to don his sunbonnet and venture out in the early morning hours and even before twilight, times when the sunlight shone weakest.

Industry filled these extra hours.

Glog caught scores of muskrats every night and feasted sumptuously. The muskrats of Bloodsworth Island have lived so long without seeing people or being trapped, that they acted almost tame, unafraid to run away when Glog reached for them.


For Glog, gathering food became as easy as plucking apples from a tree; he thought of the Scripture verse which says, "Reach out your hand, and I will fill it" — or something like that.

Glog found some thick smooth planks on a deserted strip of beach and brought them home to the LCM-6 to make a fine desk, one wide enough and long enough that he could spread out his calligraphy paraphernalia and Bible manuscript without being cramped for space.

In his illuminations he'd reached the Psalm which says:

Show me Thy ways, O Lord;
Teach me, for Thou art the God of my
salvation;
On Thee do I wait all the day...

The meek will God guide in judgment,
The meek will He teach His way.
All the paths of the Lord are mercy and
truth
Unto such as keep His covenant and His
testimonies.



Who is he that feareth the Lord?
His soul shall dwell at ease;
and his seed shall inherit the earth...

O Lord, I am desolate and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged.

Please bring me out of my distresses,
Look upon my affliction and pain...
O Lord, keep my soul and deliver me;
Let me not be ashamed;
For I put my trust in Thee.

Hey, I like that phrase, "his soul shall dwell at ease". That sure sounds all right to me. But I can't say that I like the way this Psalm ends very much. I think I'll knock off and go catch a few more muskrats. Writing makes me hungry.

While the M-62 Vulcan 20-mm cannon uses up ammunition in a hurry, it is still too slow for fighters the Navy plans for future development.

Already in the air is an experimental fighter, the X-30 Superfighter. This fighter combines the low-visibility profile of Stealth technology with vanes to deflect engine exhaust so the fighter can virtually leap in any direction with a touch of the controls. These controls operate through pulses of laser light without a hydraulic system.. Vectored-thrust engines allow Mach 2+ speeds without using afterburners.

Nimble.

Unrivaled.

Supermaneuverable.

Pulls 12 Gs in a turn.

The skin of the X-30 Superfighter consists of boron, Kevlar, lithium and fibers of glass, carbon and aramid; these materials are not held together by



rivets, but bonded with adhesives similar to those which attaches heat-deflecting tile to the nose of a space shuttle.

Such a fighter plane needs more fire power for its cannon — hence, the coils of wire around the barrel.

The Vulcan cannon presently in use, powers its projectiles by an explosion of gunpowder inside the chamber — with refinements, that's the same way Commodore Walley's Revolutionary War cannon worked.

Navy ordnance engineers are experimenting with a cannon which should work on a different principle — the EX-M-65 Dirty Harry Cannon.

Instead of using exploding gunpowder inside the barrel, the Dirty Harry uses not one, but two coils of wire.

This is the theory:

Pile an ounce of iron filings on a sheet of paper. Bring a bar magnet close to the pile. See how the bits of iron leap to meet the magnet? It matches their polarity.

If you reverse the magnet's polarity, the iron fillings will jump away from the magnetic field just as quick.

Now stretch the bar magnet out.

Keep stretching.

Pull it till it becomes a long wire. Coil that wire around and around the barrel of a cannon. Add electric current so that you can reverse the magnetic field with a recurring electric pulse.

You can send the magnetic field rushing round and round the cannon barrel from one end to the other, and the ammunition inside the barrel spirals out following that magnetic field.



Therefore, if you've put it together right, the Dirty Harry EX-M-65 experimental cannon should spit iron out of its mouth at a rate better than 8,000 individual pieces a minute.

Dirty Harry can use up a big magazine of iron pieces in a hurry.

It needs a lot of them.

In theory, that's where the second coil of wire comes in.

Picture a sausage. A very long sausage.

You can cut off a section as long or as short as you want, and every bit of the good part is contained inside the skin of that section. The Dirty Harry cannon will use sections of wire cable, stuffed like that sausage, for ammunition.

The sausage skin is the outer covering of wire. Goodies are stretched out inside along every inch of that wire. The goodies are ceramic microchips, laser-optic fibers, strands of heat-seeking sensor, passive infrared sensor, multimodal guidance cable, and high-explosive plasticine — all this stuff stretched out the total length of the wire sausage.

Navy ordnance technicians nicknamed the invention Live-Wire.

Now, coil Live-Wire on a spool. And feed the end into Dirty Harry's breech. Install a rotary blade in the breech to cut off the designated lengths of projectile wire. You can cut a lot more than 8,000 pieces off this wire.

Send a magnetic impulse through the first coil around the barrel. Snip off a length of the second projectile wire inside the barrel...

There it goes!

Homed in.

Laser guided.



Incredible firepower.

Faster than a speeding bullet.

On its way to make somebody's day.

That's the way it's supposed to work.

Will it?

Before it blew up in his face sinking his barge, Commodore Walley thought his coil of wire around the cannon barrel would increase his firepower too.

EX-M-65 Dirty Harry with Live-Wire — Time to try it out. Guess where ...

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

No all-terrain vehicles have ever flattened the marshgrasses of Bloodsworth Island.

After all, the sand and mud and marsh around the island are littered with unstable, unexploded munitions from years of military testing and target practice.

People keep out.

Therefore the marshgrass has grown freely for generations and it reaches a height of eight or ten feet.

Each season the old grass dries and dies. Leaves wither. Stalks bend and fall crisscrossing on the ground. New seeds take root on top of the old plants.

Again and again this unbroken cycle repeats itself until the floor of the marsh consists of a thick, warm, brown mat of vegetation turning into a natural compost heap of the richest sort.

This welcoming environment brings forth a small verdant green plant — yes, that does mean green green but that's how it looks —related to the watercress. The green green shoots of this plant thrive among the fallen stalks, leaves and pods of the taller marshgrasses...

And muskrats gorge themselves with the stuff.

They wallow in it.



To test the Dirty Harry EX-M-65 Experimental Cannon's effectiveness in an X-30 Superfighter, the Navy assigned Captain Evelyn Marian Berry as pilot.

After graduating fifth in her class at Annapolis, Captain Berry had won an appointment to the Navy's Advanced Fighter Weapons School at Miramar Naval Air Station near San Diego. She taught carrier pilots for a while at Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida before being transferred to the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center —the same place where the Navy tested the effectiveness of the F/A 18 Hornet.

She had flown the X-30 Superfighter in a number of unarmed aerodynamic tests and was eminently qualified to test the performance of the EX-M-65 Dirty Harry.

The test sequence was to include three runs each in the simulated strafing of ground troops, armor piercing ordnance attacks against a fixed installation, air-to-ground attacks against a moving target, and air-to-air attacks against drone aircraft.

The area chosen for the test firing was Sector 7, Race Hog Point, Bloodsworth Island.

The target chosen was Tincan 12, the Navy's designation for a rusted-out old hulk grounded in the northwest quadrant of the sector.

The time chosen for the test was 7 a.m.; but a flap involving an F/A 18 off the USS Saratoga in the Mediterranean delayed an admiralty observer's arrival from the Pentagon so the test was postponed until 2 p.m.

Bright sunlight bathed the X-30 as it took off — nearly vertically.

Because the muskrats of Race Hog Point dine by preference on green watercress, their diet gives them a subtle tangy flavor; this essence marbles the



flesh with rich yellow veins of fat and they taste as though their raw fat has been brushed lightly with butter sauce perhaps laced with a dollop of Grey Poupon Dijon Mustard.

Yummy!

Glog could hardly get enough of them.

A mound of cast-off muskrat tails was growing near the doorway entrance to Glog den beneath the upside down hulk of the LCM-6. If it were not for that colony of bedbugs, Glog's world would have been perfect. But those pests...

They were everywhere. They infested the sand on the beach. They infested the shade of the few trees. They infested stands of undergrowth...

They infested Glog.

That infestation saved his life.

Captain Berry lined the X-30 Superfighter up for a strafing run on the rusting metal hulk in the sand dunes. Zooming in at treetop level, she opened fire in a three second burst.

At a rate of 8,000 rounds per minute, the electromagnetic coil around Dirty Harry's barrel spins out 134 sausage lengths of Live-Wire ammunition per second. The standard attack pattern of a three second burst which Captain Berry released sent 402 projectiles crashing into the LCM6 hulk at a speed which the Navy still keeps classified.

Glog had eaten well the previous night. The hunting was so good that it seemed as though he could call muskrats and they would rush to be picked up.

Every time he burped that pleasant spicy mustard taste reminded him of how well he'd eaten. He lounged on his bunk after the feast and fell asleep while saying his prayer of thanksgiving.



Nothing wrong with going to sleep while praying:

Nobody goes to sleep in the presence of an enemy; but few things in this world are more pleasant than drifting off cuddled in the arms of Someone who loves you.

Glog's lips twitched as he dreamed of eating. The crisp texture of antler. The way the skin of a live muskrat pops when you bite down on it. The rolling beauty of a dolphin when you see it and the way it squirms when you put it in your mouth... The way a bug feels when it tries to crawl in your ear...

Glog pawed at the side of his head without waking.

His closed eyes saw a bunch of snapping turtles crawling around in a pen. They scratched at the sides trying to burrow in....

Glog scratched.

The bedbug bit deeper.

Ouch! That thing is...

Glog sat up on the side of his bed digging in his left ear with the point of one claw.

Just as he did, the Live-Wire ammunition of Dirty Harry spattered against the up-turned bottom of the LCM-6. They pierced through the double-hull metal plating and smashed into Glog's bed exploding in blinding light and noise.

Captain Berry expected to hear the clatter of the cannon — when the M-61 Vulcan fires, everybody knows it. But as the 402 Live-Wire projectiles hurled from the muzzle of Dirty Harry, they produced a zinging sound. It reminded her of the sound made by a spinning button on a string — a toy her Daddy had made for her when she was a little girl.



Dirty Harry's sound came when Live-Wire projectiles hit their target, but by then the Superfighter had looped away.

The explosions terrified Glog.

The roar as the Superfighter passed 30 feet above his head brought him to his feet scrambling toward the opening he'd dug beneath the LCM-6.

He had no idea what was attacking him.

Captain Berry executed a classic high yo-yo, a combat maneuver designed to reverse the direction of the fighter without losing altitude or airspeed.

She came on the reverse course in precise alignment with her target from the opposite direction.

She opened fire with another three-second burst.

Glog reached the dark doorway where the ramp had been just in time to see the horror roaring at him out of the sunlight with overwhelming noise.

He opened his mouth and roared a challenge at the intruder.

Stop That! Stop that right now! I'm an endangered species!

Of the 402 Live-Wire projectiles released in the burst, 37 hit Glog in the mouth, knocking him back into the darkness.

They shattered teeth, upper and lower. They lacerated his lips and tore the lining of his mouth.

Blood gushed.

Pain flared.

Without thinking, Glog snatched up his baculum which was leaning against the doorway to the underground den and raced forward to shake it at the disappearing Superfighter's trail of dust and noise.



Father, forgive them for they are obviously not ecologically minded.

The Superfighter passed over the target so quickly that Captain Berry never saw the movement in the shadow beneath it.

Another high yo-yo lined her up for the third run.

She dashed toward the target.

The X-30 Superfighter can not only attack with power, it can also defend itself from attack:

When enemy heat-seeking missiles come at the X-30, the plane dispenses hot-burning magnesium flares; the heat-seekers follow the flares instead of the X-30.

When an enemy missile homes in on the radar signals of the X-30, the plane shoots out a cloud of metallized chaff, filaments of glass, metal or plastic, and the missile attacks the cloud far from the airplane.

When enemy missiles follow a laser beam they project, thousands of prisms in the skin of the X-30 reflect that laser beam back toward its point of origin causing the missiles to return home — much to the surprise of personnel at the launch site.

But nothing in modern air defense technology is designed to protect the X-30 Superfighter from attack with a fossil penis.

Glog reached the ramp opening as the plane raced straight toward him no more than 40 feet away.

Glog hurled the baculum with all his might.

Spiraling like an Olympic javelin the fossil bone spear punctured the aircraft cockpit control panel.

The rock shaft skewered Captain Berry through the shoulder and pinned her to the back of the seat.



The sudden trauma to the aircraft activated the automatic ejection sequence and explosive charges rocketed the escape pod containing the wounded, unconscious test pilot high above the marshes.

The baculum shattered into fragments as the pod ejected.

Fifty-seven million dollars worth of experimental aircraft gouged a mile-long furrow through the sand and mud of Bloodsworth Island. Dozens of artillery shells which had lain unexploded in that mud and sand for years, blew up as the plane plowed through them.

Flaming pieces cartwheeled in all directions.

Wherever the hot metal came to rest, it set fire to the mat of brown vegetation beneath it.

The island's very soil appeared to burn.

Above the marsh, the parachute opened lowering the escape pod gently down into Pone Cover a quarter of a mile off Okahanikan Point.

There it floated among the bulrushes like the basket saving baby Moses.

How did they do it! How did they do it! Glog cried aghast at the destruction around him.

Burning marshes grass. Exploding soil. Things drifting down from the sky. Flares. Noise... and pain!

His mouth! Never before had anything hurt Glog so bad.

The bursting Live-Wire ammunition had exposed every nerve ending in 50 or 60 of his teeth —

Mother-Of-All-Toothaches!

The noise of the attack and of the crashing airplane pained his ears.

The suddenness of the attack confused him...

How did the humans know I was here?



Oh God, why did You let this happen! Why!

My life, my beautiful life, is destroyed!

What are You trying to do to me?

What next! What next?

Helicopters!

The pounding blades vibrated the air as they raced over Glog.

Downdraft from the UH-2 Air-Sea Rescue helicopters flattened stands of marshgrass as they passed. The downdraft fanned flames in the burning marsh like giant bellows.

Black smoke from the downed aircraft mingled with brown smoke from the marshgrass in a towering column.

The helicopters dashed to the site where the pilot's escape pod had splashed down. Men in wet-suits jumped from the hovering craft into the water.

Roaring boats — sea-gray Navy vessels — closed with Bloodsworth Island charging toward the crash site, throwing white bow wake as they sped forward.

Humans in sailor garb dashed here and there through the water in smaller power boats.

Some beached their craft at a mudbank two hundred yards north of Glog who still rocked back and forth at the entrance to LCM-6 holding his bleeding mouth.

The sailors fanned out crashing through marshgrass and slipping in mud making their way toward the burning ruins of the airplane.

They shouted and called to one another as they ran through their emergency drill. Extensive training for just such an eventuality gave purpose to their actions. Each team of men knew what to do and did it.



Their energy frightened Glog.

He thought they were searching for him.

O Jesus, why is this happening to me? It's not right! It's just not right!

Glog retreated back into the interior of his den.

He grabbed his red sail-cloth sunbonnet from its peg by the door and held the folded cloth over his nose to breathe better.

The bed he had been dreaming on only minutes before burned, filling the chamber with choking chemical smoke. The smell of cordite, of charred vegetation, and of a few scorched muskrat tails — leftovers from Glog's munching a snack in bed — filled the hollow beneath the LCM6.

The reek of smoke spiraled upward out the holes blasted through the metal double hull of the LCM6 by the Live-Wire's impact.

Hurriedly Glog grabbed his manuscript and pens and stuffed them in his bag crumpling a few sheets of his Bible when a stiff leather flap fouled on the pages.

Glog groped for his baculum.

He didn't realize that he'd thrown it at his attacker; he thought it was lost on the den floor.

Where is it? Where is it? Too much heat. Too much smoke. I'll have to leave it.

I have to get away before they find me!

O God, don't let them see me. Please don't let them see me. Help me escape. Guide me. Guide me, Lord. Please. Please.

Glog crouched low as he left the opening where the ramp had been. Seeing sailors on the Pone Cove



side, he circled to the right around the LCM-6 keeping the hulk between him and the humans.

Actually, they were paying no attention to Tincan-12. What was there to see there? They focused on either the rescue of the pilot or on the strewn wreckage of the Superfighter.

Glog waited till a puff of smoke covered his movement and dashed for the water. Bottom mud clung to his feet and vacuum sucked at every step but he ran as fast as he could for deeper water. When the water reached his waist, he belly-flopped in to cover himself.

A couple of sailors ashore heard the splash and glanced back but saw only a disturbance in the water. They turned their attention back to their duties.

Glog crawled along the bottom on his hand and knees, trying to keep his head beneath the surface so they would not see him.

Down.

Down the slope of seabottom Glog crawled away from the Island.

Down on all fours like a beast he crawled.

The water deepened.

Its murkiness increased.

The vibrations of those boats on the surface lessened.

The activity of the humans still seemed centered to the north, so Glog again turned south away from them.

Blood streamed from his wounded mouth and trailed red behind him till it dissipated in the tide.

The taste of his own blood in his mouth sickened him. Loose chunks of gritty tooth enamel touched



raw places in his mouth. Where healthy teeth had been moments before, now raw nerve ends washed back and forth in his saliva.

Pain.

Pain.

Pain.

Why?

Why?

Why such suffering?

What have I done?

What is God trying to do to me?

Why should I hurt so much?

No still small Voice answered.

In his physical and spiritual anguish, the most important question in his life didn't even cross Glog's mind at that moment:

With his mouth torn up like that, how was he going to eat?

CHAPTER THIRTY

For all its great surface area, the Chesapeake Bay is comparatively shallow having an average depth of only 27 feet.

But there are great deeps.

In ancient times the land around the bay was rolling countryside with low hills and expansive plains cut by a long river, the ancestor of the Susquehanna.

Some geologists say a great ice glacier covered the land; others say it was a great flood — but at any rate, fed by some source, the river cut a canyon deeper and deeper into the plain.

Sea level — fed by some ancient source — rose.

The Atlantic made inroads into the plain covering the ancient river far inland. The ocean's salt water spread out over river, plain and hills creating the Chesapeake Bay.

But the old river canyon of the ancient Susquehanna still cuts a deep channel along the bottom of the Bay.

The deepest parts of the bay, where the ancient bed of the Susquehanna flowed in prehistoric times, contains water that is cold and very salty with little oxygen; at its deepest, this heavy water flows slowly north.

On top of that layer of thick water is a layer of warmer water containing less salt and more oxygen;



this layer of warm water flows south. It slides along the top of the colder heavier layer beneath it.

The lighter, warmer, less salty surface water covers all places in the Bay; the heavier, colder, salty water clings to the deepest trough.

The closer to the ocean, the deeper the channel; this far south, it was much deeper than where Glog had first crossed over to the Eastern Shore.

In the area where the Potomac River joins the Bay opposite Smith Island, Glog walked along the edge of the trough — where the gentle slope of sand from the Bay's islands to the east drops abruptly into the deeps.

Massive ocean-going ships follow that deep channel from the Atlantic far inland to Baltimore and beyond.

Odd debris lost or cast off from the ships littered the slope: great bronze propellers, heavy links of chain, tires, pork chop bones, coffee cups, radios, bottles, dolls, crane hooks, dragline buckets, giant wooden spools which once contained telephone cable — if the sea were to suddenly dry up, you could still follow the exact track of where the ships had passed by following their trail of debris along the bottom.

None of this stuff of mankind interested Glog.

He trudged along the bottom mulling over what and why and where and Who.

*Maybe I've been wrong all this time.
Maybe there is no God in control of things.
Maybe the universe is just a senseless
accident with no reason or purpose. ...But
that doesn't make sense.*



If things do not have an order, if the universe has no sense behind it, if things were not created as the result of reason, then why should I trust my own brain? Why should my thoughts have any reason to them? If thought is only the result of random electrons bouncing around against nerves, then thought itself is random and senseless.

But I am not insane!

I think in an orderly pattern reasoning from if to then. I see order. I am reasonable. Reason exists.

So, maybe it is not that the whole universe in general does not make any sense; maybe it's only that I don't see any sense to the immediate things that have been happening specifically to me right now.

But who cares about the universe in general...

It's my teeth that hurt.

Glog paused in curiosity. What in the world were two Volkswagen bugs doing out here underneath the Bay, one atop the other as though the beetles were mating? How did they get out here this far away from shore?

But if God is all powerful, then He must be able to do whatever He wants; and if God is good, then He must want good for His creatures.

But bad things keep happening to me.

So either He's not able, or He's not good.



Or, maybe there's something working that I don't understand.

Maybe He's punishing me for something...

But that can't be right!

I am a good creature.

I am!

I eat whatever I can catch without complaining. I never eat more than I'm hungry for. I am thankful. I worship nothing less than God Himself. I honor the memory of my Father and my Mother. I never steal. I am virgin so far — darn it. I have never deliberately killed any creature that I didn't eat. I have never kissed my hand to the moon. Like all beasts, I keep all days holy unto the Lord; the Seventh Day in which He rested from creating, and the First Day on which He rose from the dead after humans killed him, and all days in between. I don't lie to myself or to anyone else. I never eat any dead meat. I pray for the hungry among other creatures — even humans, although for the life of me I can't imagine why God created them. What use are they? I forgive my enemies and just want to be left alone. I never eat a pregnant muskrat but let the mothers go to bear their young alive. I don't bother anyone. When I make kaka I scrape dirt over it with my feet so no one will step in...

Speaking of which...



Glog climbed the slope and emerged from the water on a tiny dot of island to the south of Kedges Straight.

Nothing there but sand and sea birds.

Birds are not a threat. And you can't eat feathers. So Glog never paid any attention to birds. He noticed that there are a lot of them around the Chesapeake and they can be noisy. But so what?

Nevertheless, he tip-toed among the nests full of eggs in the sand careful not to smash any with his big feet.

Glog walked back down the slope and continued south along the edge of the deep Susquehanna trench.

For a long time he didn't think about anything.

He just walked.

Every once in a while, he moved his tongue here and there in his mouth probing this jagged edge of tooth or that sensitive nerve or the other tender raw spot.

When the inside of your own mouth hurts and feels unfamiliar to you, then your whole being feels betrayed somehow.

God must hate me... O that hurts!

Either that, or He is not able to help me.

Nothing else makes sense.

But His book says He is love. It says He is good.

God must be good. If the Creator Himself is not good, then where would the idea of good come from? It's got to have some origin. You



sure don't get it from seeing fish trying to climb onto land out of polluted water!

Glog reasoned that the concept of good must come from the presence of a good God. We don't get the idea of good from seeing starving children, deformed babies or drunk drivers — in other words from much of our experience. So, if the Source of all creation is not good, then the idea of good would never occur to anyone.

So, what about bad?

Where does evil come in?

Like being hungry and having this toothache! Glog exclaimed.

Has the Father given all control of the world over to the archangel who failed?

Sometimes looks that way, but I doubt it.

Here the Father is giving this splendid party of creation. But when the failure couldn't get his own way at the party, like a spoiled rotten child he fell on the floor of creation in a temper tantrum. He kicks his feet and pounds the floor with his horned head and screams and holds his breath till he turns red in the face. He can't have his own way so he tries to spoil the party for all of us invited guests.

The Father will only tolerate such behavior for so long, then He steps in and sends the brat off to his room — without any supper!

Good riddance for then... but what about my toothache now!



Not many oysters grow at the edge of the deeps; the water temperature is a little cool for them. But Glog did encounter a few clumps now and then, mostly growing on some human artifact providing solid clutch.

Glog noticed movement in one oyster bed and walked over to see what it was causing the commotion.

Starfish.

Several big orange starfish, some with arms as long as 18-inches across, walked among the oysters.

The big five-armed echinoderms were eating.

The process fascinated Glog..

Put your fingertips on a tabletop and imitate a spider walking and hopping — like Thing in the *Adams' Family* movie — that's the way a starfish walks on the tips of its arms across the sea bottom.

The predator walks over the oysters, hopping from this one to that one, until it finds one to its liking. Then — from behind — it enfolds the shellfish in its arms. Tiny suction cups on the underside of the arms grip the two halves of the oyster's shell.

Then the starfish flattens its body spreading its powerful arms, prying the oyster's shell wide open.

Problem:

The starfish is behind the oyster. The shell still stands between the starfish's mouth, which is in the center of the star, and the meat of the oyster. If the starfish lets go, the shell will snap shut again. So the starfish has to keep its grip.

Solution:

The starfish vomits.

The starfish throws its own stomach out of its mouth and into the opening of the oyster's shell. The



exterior stomach secretes gastric juices which begin to digest the living oyster — the whole thing.

Satisfied, the starfish swallows its stomach again and tiptoes on.

Gross! Glog thought watching the group of starfish in action. But every creature has to eat. Some of them even eat dead things. Gross! ... I'm hungry myself.

I wish I could find a safe place to live and eat.

God's word promises to guide me; "The steps of the good are ordered by the Lord," it says.

Leadeth me to green pastures and still waters, it says.

I've prayed for God to guide me.

Why doesn't He?

All I keep getting is knocked on the head: is that what the Psalm means when it says "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me"—who needs that?

Maybe God is trying to lead me somewhere to something good. It would sure be easier if He'd just speak up and say, Hey, Glog, go this way.

If He'd tell me where to go, I'd go there.

But it seems that I just wander here and there without purpose or goal or direction.

Surely my life must have some purpose. The road has to lead somewhere.



His word says that, "All things work together for good to them who love Him and are called according to His purpose".

So He must have some purpose.

If God doesn't have purpose, then who has?

It's confusing.

I mean if God were to give me a specific task, if He were to say, Glog, climb this mountain or fight that battle, then I'd try to do it and if troubles came, I'd know they came for a reason. I'd have a goal and overcoming obstacles would be part of getting to that goal. In that case, troubles would be bearable because I'd know they had a reason..

But God hasn't told me to do anything special... I mean other than the general instructions He gives to all creatures: When you're hungry, Eat. When you're tired, Sleep. When you're mature, Mate. Raise young. Work. Play. Enjoy. Bathe. Worship. Help. Care. Live. Enjoy.

Just the common ordinary stuff of living.

But if God has some special good purpose which He wants for me to accomplish, I'd know that wouldn't I?

If He has some special good He wants to do for me, I'm sure I'd know that!



But here I am just wandering around homeless, being chased from place to place and hurting.

I don't see any sense to any of it.

If God wants to use me to do good to some other creature, then why doesn't He tell me. If He wants to do some good thing to me, then why all this pain and trouble and aggravation???

I don't understand.

I just don't understand.

What did that Psalm say, that last one I worked on?

*○ Lord, I am desolate and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are
enlarged;
Please bring me out of my
distresses,
look upon my affliction and pain...*

*○ Lord, keep my soul and deliver me;
Let me not be ashamed;
for I put my trust in Thee.*

Yeah. That I understand.

Feels like I feel.

When he wrote that Psalm. I wonder if King David had ever had to try to chew muskrats with broken teeth—

No.

Of course not.



He wouldn't.

According to Dietary Law, the poor Jews aren't allowed to eat animals like muskrats...

But, the Book says that God loves them special?

So why wouldn't He let them eat muskrats?

There are some things about God I don't think I'll ever understand.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Big ships — freighters, container carriers, car carriers, Navy vessels, oil tankers, ocean-going tugs — churn along the main shipping channel of the Chesapeake following the bed of the ancient river.

Whenever Glog heard one of these mammoth ships steaming near, he remembered the black massiveness and chopping bronze propellers of that first one he met and stayed well clear.

But work boats carrying watermen — oyster tongers, fishermen, trappers, crabbers — seemed to present no danger.

Their shallow draft let them chug along the surface far above his head and he'd become accustomed to their passage and didn't cringe and hug the bottom anymore as he once did.

The biggest annoyance from the work boats was the noise — who's around to enforce state muffler ordinances out on the Bay?

Glog always heard work boats coming even before he could see their hulls — usually green with barnacles and algae — pass above him.

So he was surprised when he surfaced for air and found a silent sailboat passing just a hundred yards away, so close he could read the nameplate.

Skipjacks are the one-mast, sloop-rigged work boats once characteristic of the Chesapeake. Since law limits the dredging of oysters by power boats, for ages watermen have tonged the beds sailing in skipjacks.



Because most of the largest oyster beds have already been harvested — or died from pollution — long ago, working skipjacks have just about disappeared from the Bay.

Lady Maryland, a restored skipjack with her hull painted pink and green, now takes tour parties on sailing excursion cruises around Tangier Sound. She sails out of Chance on Deal Island.

That's the skipjack, on its way back to the dock at the end of the day's tour around Tangier and Smith islands, that passed close to Glog.

Tourists!

I'd better not let those people see me; they'd make more fuss than the human Navy.

Glog gulped a breath of air and sank back to the bottom of the Bay to continue walking. He was getting tired and did not want to go back to the edge of the deeps, so he stayed closer inshore in water only a few feet above his head.

The shallows Glog walked over rose now and then to form a string of small islands stretching north and south along the bay. The shoals separate the Main channel of the Chesapeake on the west from Pocomoke Sound on the east.

The deep water of the shipping channel and the shoal water looks the same from the surface.

But it isn't.

Testifying to that fact, just south of the cluster that makes up Goose Island, Shank's Island and Cheeseman Island — between them and Tangier Island — five modern ships lie wrecked almost on top of each other.

These navigational hazards are well marked on every Coast Guard chart of the Chesapeake.



Each ship went down at different times and in different circumstances but at almost the same spot. The most recent was a freighter loaded with road building equipment, mobile homes and farm tractors being shipped to Kuwait in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War. And the wreck before that was a barge carrying gravel to Baltimore out of Onancock, on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

Glog became aware of the difference in the seabottom as millions of yellow pebbles from the gravel shipment spread out underfoot.

These traced a path to a great tangle of small red tractors, big yellow road graters, and huge green John Deere combines scattered on the ocean floor. The colors made it look as though a carnival had been picked up by a tornado and dropped in a pile on the seabed.

The twisted frames of dozens of mobile homes — cotton candy pink, robin egg blue, lemonade yellow and pale apple green — added to that impression.

Mingled in all this more recent debris lay tangles of steel cables, broken hulls, machine parts, cabins and smoke stacks from previous wrecks — all covered with a growing patina of tan and green algae, thin orange sponges, and blue-gray slime.

All this silent twisted wreckage created a safe haven for thousands of fish which swam in and out of dark recesses in broken parts of ship hulls, hiding from their enemies in caverns unintentionally provided by man.

Glog skirted out deeper around these human remains and walked on wondering about his fate. As he walked, he prayed:

Lord, lead me. Guide me. I feel so lost and lonely. I believe that You are good and that You give your creatures purpose and



direction, but I don't know what Your purpose for me is. I don't feel any direction. My own experience conflicts with what I believe about You.

Lord, I do believe, help Thou my unbelief!

What was it the Patriarch Job said about You when his whole world crumbled? "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him".

I wish I had that kind of faith. But I don't feel that I do. I want a good life — like I had before. It's so much easier to believe that You Lord are good when things are comfortable and my teeth don't hurt and my belly's full... I'm really getting tired of the way things have been going, Lord.

Flitting from behind him, a big school of large fish passed Glog.

Black stripes decorating their broad silver sides marked them as rockfish, Maryland's official state fish. A symbol of the Chesapeake's prolific bounty, rockfish have been netted till the species is so nearly extinct that at midnight on December 31, 1984, Maryland declared an indefinite moratorium on catching them — making it illegal for state residents to catch their own state fish.

Curious.

But, when an endangered species is delicious, not everyone pays attention to the law.

Glog noticed the rockfish, but he didn't pay much attention to them. Even the flashing beauty of the school darting ahead of him through the water, could take Glog's mind off his worries.



Sure, Lord, I know that when I come into Your presence in Heaven with the lions and the lambs, with the angels and archangels and all the hosts of Heaven, and even with the humans You died to save — When I stand with the four beasts who guard Your throne and with all those creatures who flock from the north and south and east and west to sit at Your table, to fall at Your feet and worship — I know that then up there in Heaven no one will complain about any problem they had on earth...

But that is in the eternal Then; I live in the passing Now.

I'd like to see good now.

I'd like to see purpose and direction and...

A large work boat, noisier than most, was overtaking Glog on a course to pass over him about 15 feet to the right in water 46 feet deep.

The big unmuffled engines of the *Suzanne W.* out of Cobbs Creek, Virginia, at the mouth of the Piankatank River, created strong vibrations far beneath the surface.

At first, Glog felt only a slight discomfort in his ears at the engine noise. That discomfort coupled with his growing hunger and aching teeth annoyed him.

He clung to the bottom while waves of sound pounded him as the boat passed overhead.

But the pain in his ears lasted only momentarily once the boat drew on ahead and the distance between him and it widened.



Relief came as the sound diminished and Glog relaxed and straightened up, stretching his arms towards the surface yawning.

Whap!

Something hard slammed into the small of Glog's back causing him to expel a great bubble of air — *What! What!*

A heavy chain scraped up Glog's back rubbing his scales the wrong way against the grain.

A fishing trawler the size of the *Suzanne W.* carries a crew of five men. Powered by twin 892 Caterpillar Diesel Engines, the trawler uses a PTO (power take off) system from the engines to lift its 60-foot spread of nets.

Every trawler captain rigs his nets according to his own taste and experience but if you're from out-of-state after illegal rockfish, running without lights in the night, you might want to rig your net like Justin Lowe, captain of the *Suzanne W.*, did.

The net consists of several principal parts: the lead line is weighted to stay near bottom; the cork line has floats to keep it near surface. The net stretches up and down between them. The sock, a cone-shaped purse, trails in the center at end of the net. The sock collects the catch which the spread net funnels into it.

Two doors — thick, flat wooden sheets, big as the top of a desk and bound with iron straps — spread the two ends of the net apart so it can be pulled behind the boat at any desired depth and angle.

A chain is draped between the doors and a few feet ahead of the lead line. This chain bounces along the bottom stirring up fish, bottom feeders, so they jump up a bit and are netted without the net dragging along right against the rough bottom where it might snag on something.



This chain is what slammed into Glog and scraped up his back.

He didn't know what hit him.

He didn't associate the blow to his back with the boat which was already a hundred feet ahead.

Stunned, the monster swirled around to confront his attacker. His sudden motion only served to entangle him in lengths of chain and rope studded with lead weights and yards of monofilament netting.

Rage surged within him.

He rolled his terrible eyes and gnashed his terrible teeth...

That was a terrible mistake.

Sound teeth crunched against the stubby nerves of broken ones. Searing pain surged through Glog's mouth.

He gathered great folds of net in his paws and jerked back.

On the surface, the *Suzanne W.* slammed to an abrupt stop. The combined horsepower of her twin engines strained and screamed against the sudden load.

Bearings heated, smoked and seized.

Cables snapped under the tension. Their ends lashed whip-like across the deck splintering wooden bulkheads where they struck.

The stern of the vessel dropped low. Rear gunnels cleared the water only by inches. Her bow rose exposing a crust of barnacles below her waterline and giving her an appearance of sleek streamlined speed — although she sat dead in the water.

Crewmen scrambled amid the flying cables, shouting and cursing and yelling conflicting orders.



Some thought they'd run aground. Others that they'd hit a submarine. One old hand, a veteran, screamed "Torpedo! Torpedo!" remembering a long-ago wartime experience.

"Ease off. Ease off. Don't tear the net," yelled Captain Lowe, rushing to the PTO lever box on the stern which controlled the powerful wench used to draw in tons of fish in the heavy net. He realized that the net had snagged on some obstruction on the seabottom. But he couldn't understand why the lines had not simply parted; that might cause a rip in the net — a nuisance but repairable.

The lines and netting entangling Glog had not parted because in his thrashing to get free the monster had doubled and tripled them as he gathered them into his wide paws.

Glog leaned against the pull of the nets, resisting the pull of the ship above him. His effort dragged the ship a few yards backward through the water.

In the confusion on board, Captain Lowe had grabbed the PTO lever planning to slacken the lines and relieve the strain, but when Glog lurched back, the jolt knocked the man off his feet. His hand on the lever snapped it forward engaging the power wench.

Tightening guidelines closed the pocket of the net. The cables strained even more tightly as the cable drum revolved slowly — the locking ratchets of the capstan clicked rhythmically one by one by one reeling the net in.

Beneath the water, Glog struggled frantically.

A heavy wooden door bound with iron straps — the device which guides the spread of the nets when towed — slammed into his head. It's twin, swinging in from the left, cracked him across the shins. A coil of steel cable circled his chest constricting when the



ratchets above engaged. The monster opened his mouth to roar in pain.

Cold salt water rushed in to burn his lungs.

He snapped his aching teeth together. Wads of netting and three huge cork floats filled his mouth. The cork crumbled to gibbets at the pressure of his jaws but Glog could not swallow, spit or breathe. He gave a series of mighty powerful jerks to the offending tangle pulling at him.

The monster's tugging caused the trawler to bob violently on the surface tossing men about, cracking heads and breaking legs.

The violent rocking of the ship sent loops and waves and snaps down the net cables as it tightened, slackened and tightened again. Each strong surge of the cable alternately loosened or constricted the tangle around Glog. He could not tell what was attacking him or where it would strike next.

The struggle raised blinding clouds of sediment in the water. A surge of cable slashed his right ankle and his own black blood darkened the water around him. His feet tangled in netting tripped him and he sprawled, face down and groping on the sea bottom.

God, Help me! I can't breathe!

Twisting, the monster grappled both the heavy wooden doors in his claws and pulled himself once more upright. He pulled the cable down as he staggered backward through the murk of the bottom. Great clouds of silt rose about him, Bright rockfish darted before him fleeing the turmoil.

The stern of the *Suzanne W.* squatted lower and lower in the water. The rear gunnels disappeared beneath the waves and the bow rose higher and higher. Water swirled over the deck and poured into open hatches. Clouds of white steam erupted from



below when the water touched the stores of dry ice kept in the hole to cool the catch.

The weight of the water in the ship helped Glog as he strained against the cables. He walked toward the ship above him pulling the cables paw over paw as he moved. At last the cables in his paws stretched upward almost directly overhead.

Glog pulled down hard.

The ship stood vertically on her tail in the bay and the crew, like a cluster of bees outside a hive, clung to the forward hatch cover. Life-savers, galley pots, mattresses, bits of wood, and an empty gas can bobbed on the surface around the boat. One by one living men lost their grip and dropped into the water with the other debris from their ship.

The ship disappeared beneath the waves stern first.

Below...

Below, Glog watched in wonder as the ship sank. He had never seen a ship sink before; the wrecks he had once salvaged to furnish his home were always on the bottom already when he arrived on the scene.

The *Suzanne W.* came drifting down to the bottom in a mass of bubbles gurgling out her life. The ship swung from side to side as she settled like a solitary leaf floating down from a winter-stricken tree. The dry ice in the hole boiled. Hundreds of loose items, floatage — flashlights, kettles, boards, pop bottles, broke away from the hulk and shot upward toward the surface.

The ship hit bottom just a few yards away from Glog. It raised a massive puff of silt from the Chesapeake's bottom. It twisted in a spiral as it came down as pockets of air bubbled from one area inside the hull to another. The boat landed on its



starboard side with an impact that cracked open the deck.

And from inside the wreck, swarms of rockfish — still alive from the last time the net had been emptied in the hole — hundreds of rockfish exploded out of every crack and crevice in the hull of the *Suzanne W.*

Hundreds of other rockfish, already dead, swished here and there as the turmoil of the sinking moved them.

Hundreds of others, alive but dying, had been out of the water long enough for their swim bladders to inflate so they struggled against floating to the surface but were unable to help themselves — Up. Up. Up, they rose.

The monster stood on the bottom of the bay in a tangle of net, cable, dead fish and debris of the ship watching the panorama of destruction around him. His gaze followed bubbles and injured rockfish upward as they soared to the surface...

And there he saw kicking feet.

Clinging to floating boards, kapock-filled jackets, and, in one case, an empty plastic milk jug, the five humans from the boat were treading the water above his head.

How about that?

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

For 50 years after the Civil War was over, watermen from Maryland and Virginia continued to fight each other in their own local war.

History books refer to the obscure war they waged as “The Oyster War”. While they fought primarily over oysters, their war also involved muskrats, ducks, fish, geese, crabs — anything that could be harvested from the Chesapeake.

Maryland watermen insisted they alone had the right to harvest in certain waters within their state’s boundaries; Virginia watermen insisted they had the lone right to harvest within their state’s boundaries.

At the same time, both sides also insisted they had the right to trap, fish, tong and hunt anywhere in all the broad waters of the Chesapeake — including the waters of the other state.

Both sides insisted they owned sole rights to work certain oyster beds and claimed private ownership for rich plots of undersea ground where oysters grew in abundance.

Each side viewed the opposition’s claim as ridiculous.

How can you own open water?

But when the work boats of out-of-state “oyster pirates” showed up to tong locally-owned beds, the local watermen armed themselves with guns and killed the intruders.



Soon all the work boats armed for battle and many skirmishes were fought, many men killed, many work boats sank.

To protect exclusive rights to their own oysters, many fishing villages constructed guardhouses in the sea — small wooden forts built on platforms set on pilings in the middle of the water and manned nightly by volunteers intent on shooting out-of-town poachers.

The state legislatures in both Maryland and Virginia, and the Federal government established Chesapeake Bay Patrols — a sort of cadre of early game wardens — to limit armed conflict between the two opposing bands of Oyster Pirates.

Didn't work.

In 1895, Virginia and Maryland watermen fought each other fiercely in the Battle of Woman's Marsh.

A Virginia Patrol boat intervened to stop the killing.

Like a husband and wife in a family fight, the warring watermen resented the intrusion of a stranger. They stopped fighting each other and joined forces in an attack to drive off the patrol boat.

Chased from the scene, the Virginia Patrol located a Maryland Patrol boat and these two joined forces to return against the watermen.

Oyster Pirates from both states fought patrol boats from both states.

"Us watermen against them government pests", became the attitude of the moment.

Survivors escaped into the swamps.

In 1910, a freeze killed off many oyster beds. For a long time, the scarcity of oysters anywhere in the Bay made the traditional oyster war hardly worthwhile.



So today, the ancient historic tensions have given way to friendly, good-natured rivalry as all the watermen from both states live on the Chesapeake in peace and harmony as they go about their harvesting while singing happy little sea chanteys in love and brotherhood. And they now hold in high regard all government officials and regulations controlling the remaining oyster beds and fishing grounds of the Chesapeake...

Ha!

"You boys just better pray it ain't no Maryland boat that picks us up. If they was to catch us out here, could turn nasty".

The five Virginia poachers hung together treading water above their sunken trawler. To keep from being dragged under by the weight, they kicked off their boots and shed their clothing.

"What was it we grounded on?"

"Net snagged on wreck trash. Chart shows 'em up more to the east but storm or somethin' musta shifted some of that crap on bottom".

"Weren't no snag that made ol' Suzanne bounce and bob like that, like a Crisfield girl on a Sat'day night. I bet we hooked on a navy sub pulled us under. I looks to see 'em surface to see 'bout us any minute now".

Boots and socks and jeans and boxer shorts and a red flannel shirt rained down on Glog from the surface. He stomped and shook and pulled to disentangle himself from the chain, cable, net, cork line and lead line coiled around him. His mouth was too tender to bite through the steel cables but he was able to cut them with his claws.

Once free he needed air and shoved off from the bottom leaping up to catch a breath.



Captain Lowe first thought the top of Glog's head was a fifty-gallon drum popping up to the surface from his sunken boat but it kept coming up and up and up out of the water.

Gleaming copper scales.

Huge orange eyes.

Great gaping mouth, full of teeth, dripping blood.

All capped by a red sailcloth hat!

The monster broke the surface just to the right of the five humans. He snorted, blowing water clear of his nostrils, tossing water out of his eyes.

The stunned captain gasped and pointed, too terrified to scream.

The other humans turned in the water to see. They screamed thrashing the water. Forgetting how to swim, they pounded the water with closed fists. Splashing and churning.

Glog sank back down out of sight.

That was no comfort at all to the fishermen.

In panic each man pawed to get into the center of the ring as though the living flesh of the others could protect him from such teeth.

I'm so hungry and food is right there, but my teeth hurt so bad that I can't bite anything.

The thought of green bone even touching one of his teeth sent a shiver of pain through Glog.

What am I going to do about these humans. I can't eat them and if I leave them here in deep water so far from land, they'll die just like those poor fish that tried to climb out on land and all their meat will go



to waste. That would be tragic. I wish my teeth were all right.

Lord, how in the world can I... Oh, one of those might do the trick.

Picture five helium-filled balloons floating out of reach at the ceiling of your room. They have no strings attached for you to grab, but you want to move them out the door.

That was Glog's problem and he reached the same conclusion you would. He looked around for something long enough to prod the floating objects together and move them along.

In the debris from the shipload of stuff headed for Kuwait was a bundle of streetlights, the long aluminum poles with a crook at the top curved to hold the electric lightbulb out over a road. Metal strapping bands secured batches of thirty each in dozens of piles which had ridden as deck cargo on that ship before it sank.

Glog moved along the bundle of poles snapping the bands with his claws. He removed a single long streetlamp and raised it.

Good!

This will work fine.

It's long enough to reach the humans.

I can herd them along with it just like a shepherd herds sheep — that is if he walked underwater and the sheep floated thirty feet above his head.

The five struggling humans saw the silver cap and the glass globe of the streetlamp poke up out of the water. To the Virginia fishermen it looked like the eye of a giant crab on a thick stalk.



It moved closer.

They tried to run in the water.

Glog maneuvered the crook of the streetlamp around one man's waist and pulled him nearer to where three of the others were grouped. Then he went to round up the other stray.

The man who was singled out fainted.

The other men did a fair imitation of scrambling away from him as he did.

Every time Glog would hook one human, it would panic and its panic would panic the others. The ones that didn't faint all tried to swim off in every direction.

This isn't working. Why won't they cooperate? Don't they see I'm trying to save them from drowning? Shame I can't talk to them... Maybe they could understand a few words of my tongue...

Glog surfaced again and tried to sputter reassuring words at the fishermen. His bleeding mouth showered them with red droplets and each man assumed that the monster had bitten at least a leg off one of the other men and was coming for him next.

None realized that any creature other than themselves is capable of thought, good intentions, or speech.

To them the sound Glog made was the slaverling of a beast.

They splashed away from the moving of his terrible lips.

Glog's weight sank him again beneath the surface.



I'll have to try to push them along to shallow water where I can pick them up and wade ashore with them.

Glog jumped up toward the surface again. This time he grabbed the closest man and shoved him toward the others.

Picture jumping toward the ceiling of your room again and again to bat the balloons together and knock them out the door.

Again and again Glog did this.

Shoving the men into one clump, then shoving that whole group in the direction of a distant shore.

The Virginia fishermen appreciated his effort.

Ha!

Eight miles of water lie between the wreck site and the closest land, Old House Point, Crisfield, a fishing community at the mouth of the Little Annemessex River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The first six miles from where Glog started were under water varying between 60 and 30 feet deep; but the last two miles ran through water between 18 to 12 feet deep.

Now, jumping up to bat unwilling human balloons for six miles along the ceiling formed by the water's surface — especially if you're careful not to pop any of the balloons — proved very hard work for Glog.

So when Glog reached water shallow enough, he reached up and clutched whatever part of the humans he could get a grip on and carried them along — arms above his head.

Then, as the water grew even shallower and as daylight approached, Glog attempted to pick up the men in his arms and wade toward shore with them.



The five naked fishermen did not seem to think this was a good idea.

A tall black lighthouse marks the south side of the dredged channel entering the Little Annemessex River; boaters use some tall red brick chimneys, remains of some buildings which burned down long ago, as a landmark for the north side of that channel.

While the immediate waters off the land are shallow, there is a hole said to be one hundred feet deep at the mouth of the river. Red Nun Buoy Four rocks with the tides just south of that hole.

Crisfield, Maryland, titles itself **Crab Capital Of The World**. It is home for a massive work boat fleet.

Hundreds of work boats chug in and out past Red Nun Four daily. Oystermen, crabbers, fishermen, yachtsmen, duck hunters, muskrat trappers, pickers, haulers — Maryland watermen all.

Usually nun buoys are not equipped with audibles, sound devices such as bells or fog horns; but at the insistence of local watermen, a bell clapper swings inside Red Nun Four warning boaters of dense fog, heavy traffic and shoal water.

Glog saw electric lights flick on in this house or that one along the Crisfield shore as waking watermen heard their 4 a.m. alarms and set the coffee pot on the stove to percolate.

He certainly did not want to get tangled up with any more humans;. His hands were full already.

Exhaustion overwhelmed the other men but Captain Lowe continued to struggle to free himself from Glog's grip.

Glog tried to pin the captain's arms but he couldn't fight this madman as well as keep the other men's heads above water.



Captain Lowe pounded at the monster's face.

An unlucky punch hit one nerve among Glog's broken front teeth.

The pain caused Glog to drop all the men into the water and grab his own jaw. Glog rocked back and forth pressing both paws to his mouth in a vain effort to ease the pain.

The fishermen were drowning!

After all this trouble!

Glog sloshed back and forth picking up men out of the water and stuffing them under his arm. Captain Lowe saw his chance to escape and swam as hard as he could away from the monster. Glog chased after him as far as Red Nun Four.

If I keep after that one, the others will drown.

Glog draped the soggy men over the bell buoy and scrambled after the captain.

Suddenly the bottom dropped away beneath Glog's feet. He staggered at the edge of a massive black hole. Glog backpedaled, stumbling to regain his footing.

Captain Lowe's head began to go under. His strength exhausted, he couldn't stay afloat any longer. Glog stretched out his hand as far as he could reach toward the drowning man. The man saw the hand outstretched to save him and twisted away from it.

"No! No! Get away from me you monster!" Those were the last words of Captain Lowe before he sank into the hole. Down. Down into the blackness his pale white body twisted. Down out of sight till Resurrection Day when the sea gives up her dead.



Why wouldn't it let me save it? It just refused; I don't understand.

Glog trudged back to Red Nun Four.

The four surviving fishermen sagged over the small steel platform of the buoy in a pile of white and black, water-withered naked flesh. The men gazed at Glog with dull eyes, shocked eyes that had seen too many unbelievable horrors — not really seen, but imagined they'd seen.

The bell inside Red Nun Four clanged back and forth as the men feebly shifted their weight away from Glog. They didn't even know what it was they were clinging to.

Seeing them even in that soaked, soggy, sorry state, Glog wished his teeth didn't hurt.

He was hungry.

But, no sense in getting closer to those town lights. Looks like lots of humans around over there. Soon as the sun's up, they can come out and get these four. I've done what I can do for them. Shame about that one that got away. Nothing but crab food now.

Glog turned away and walked back south toward Pocomoke Sound — same water as the Chesapeake and Tangier Sound, just a different name.

The Crisfield watermen who found the four naked fishermen on the bell buoy were not happy about having to turn back from their day's work. They were even less happy when they discovered that the men they'd rescued were Virginians.

"And just what was they doing up here in our water anyways"?

But the strange thing was the tale the four survivors told of how a submarine had torpedoed



their trawler and how the glass eye of its periscope came right up by them in the water and how a boo-daddy had risen up in the sea and draped them across the bell buoy.

And they told how the boo-daddy had eaten the good Captain Justin Lowe, a true hero, and how it opened its great bloody mouth and gibbered at them in the sea.

That tale earned the *Suzanne's* survivors many a free drink from Maryland watermen in the Decoy Tavern — even though they were Virginians.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Because of early boundary disputes and controversies related to the Oyster Wars, the border between Maryland and Virginia traces a zigzag line across Chesapeake Bay encompassing this island for this state and that patch of oyster bed for the other state.... The boundary must have been fixed by a committee.

On the Delmarva Peninsula, Virginia got two Eastern Shore counties, North Hampton and Accomack (which wanted to be an independent state), both on a slender spur of flat land between the Chesapeake and the Atlantic. From the Maryland border on the north to the great Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel complex to the south, the spur of land is about 60 miles long and 15 miles across at its widest.

U.S. Highway 13 runs right up the middle of this spur. Drivers can travel from south Florida all the way to New York without ever leaving this one highway.

Tracks for the old New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk Railroad — because of its initials, NYP&N, long called the Nip and N Railroad — run parallel to the highway for the length of the peninsula.

The railroad transports much of the produce from the area's potato farms.

NASA's Wallops Flight Center brings a small measure of fame to the area. But real fame comes to Virginia's Eastern Shore each July when the wild



ponies on Chincoteague and Assateague islands are rounded up and auctioned.

While the roundup of the wild ponies on the ocean islands achieves a general national fame annually, year-round gamblers know Virginia's Eastern Shore for a more specialized reason. No less than seven horse racing tracks grace the map of this tiny area.

Oddly enough, the map also reveals twice, maybe three times as many, private airstrips as there are betting tracks.

Fishing communities, farming communities, resort communities and gambling communities largely make up the varied population of Virginia's Eastern Shore.

You may well meet several distinct types of human beings living here: watermen, who live adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay side of the peninsula; potato farmers, inland; newcomers in ocean-front condominiums; and race track people and those associated with them and their private airstrips.

And, of course, there are the Navy people who work within the Norfolk/Hampton/Newport-News/Portsmouth/Virginia-Beach naval complex, home to the Atlantic Fleet, at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Many of these live and commute across from the Eastern Shore using the long Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel.

Within the Bay, at the Maryland-Virginia border, Pocomoke Sound spreads in a great pocket between the two states. The shallow waters are feed by the Pocomoke River, one of the few Eastern Shore rivers which is not just an estuary but actually carries fresh water into the Bay.



The river washes a great deal of silt into the Pocomoke Sound turning its waters dark and creating a stretch of bottom known as The Muds.

Many a pleasure craft has run aground proving how appropriate that name is; work boats follow a line of poles stuck in The Muds to find a channel deep enough to cross — but just the same, they often get stuck too.

By the time Glog approached The Muds, he'd been wandering in and out of the filigree shore line and among small nameless islands for three weeks.

He was starving.

He'd stayed for several days on a dot of island inhabited by a herd of goats which watermen say are descended from animals left ashore by the pirate Blackbeard's crew to breed as a source of fresh provision. The goats smelled delicious, but Glog's teeth hurt so that he didn't dare try to bite even one.

Although not a single human lived on the island, Glog's wanderings discovered an overgrown cemetery where weathered headstones revealed the names Evans and Crockett and Dennis and Corbin and Welbourne — old Chesapeake family names — and almost unreadable dates going back to the 1740s.

For a time, Glog used one of the old tombstones as a desk and tried to work on his manuscript ...But his heart was not really in his work. He got sick of Psalms and skipped ahead to a New Testament passage:

Jesus signaled for the people to gather close along with His chosen twelve, and His voice rang out saying:

If anyone wants to live my way, he must cease thinking about himself. He must be



willing to face and to endure heavy and hurting burdens and duties and to go in the way that I go, following my steps.

For whoever tries always to protect himself will find that he has never really lived; but whoever is willing to lose everything, even his own life, for my sake, will find that he has really saved himself.

What is the profit if you gain the whole world, but lose your own soul in forfeit?

What is your net gain, when you trade away your soul for things?

Some people may be ashamed to own that they believe in me and in what I teach. Let them beware lest I, the Son of Man, be ashamed of them, when I come attended by angels and in all the splendor of Heaven.

Believe me: some of you who are standing here will still be alive to see the Rule of God spreading over the world.

The passage disturbed Glog.

Isn't following God supposed to make things easier for you?

Doesn't look like it.

Marking his place in the manuscript, Glog left his work for a while.

He followed a faint path down to a thin beach landing where small waves lapped the edge of the island through a break in the marshgrass.

An ugly smell assaulted his nostrils, the smell of recent death.

Yes.

Humans had been on the island within the last week or ten days.



They'd been trapping muskrats.

For their fur.

The demand for muskrat meat is meager even among gourmets, so whoever had trapped all these muskrats had skinned them right on the spot where he beached his boat. He had tossed the pelts in the boat, throwing the naked skinned bodies in a pile to the side to rot!

Glog left the island that same night.

Two days journey brought him to The Muds.

The water off the mouth of the Pocomoke... felt different.

Strange.

Not wrong strange... Not exactly pleasant strange either.

Cypress!

I haven't caught the aroma of cypress trees in years... Not since Mother...

Cypress trees never grow in salt water, only fresh.

Glog lifted his head above the waters. He stuck out his tongue and tasted. Yes. He could taste the slight tinge of cypress bark in the water. In fact, if you look at it, you can see that the water flowing out the mouth of the Pocomoke River looks darker, blackened by the cypress leaves falling in the water upstream where the water runs fresh and the huge trees of the Pocomoke stand in the most northern of all American cypress swamps.

At that tinge of cypress flavor in the water, a feeling of — something missing? — stole over Glog.

A feeling of longing.

Of yearning.

When he'd first caught that haunting whiff of unidentified something, his heart leapt...



But when he identified it as... only cypress ... he felt keen disappointment.

What was it I expected?

Picture a husband, married 25 years, cleaning out his garage. In moving a pile of junk, he comes across a tattered cardboard box of old papers.

More trash, he thinks.

But as he moves the box, a haunting fragrance assails him.

Knowing what that fragrance is instantly becomes the most important thing in the universe.

He rips open the box.

He digs deep under old tax papers.

He finds a bundle of letters.

Love letters.

Letters from his wife before they married.

Back then she dabbed a dot of her perfume in the flap of each letter she mailed...

And the husband reads the yellowing sheets. Inhaling deeply each time he opens another envelope...

He's pleased. He'd forgotten...

Yet, he's also disappointed...

He thought it was... Something else.

That feeling washed over Glog as the cypress-scented black water flowed around him.

He turned and looked toward the nearby shore of Accomack County, Virginia.

Is what I want there?

English colonists first settled Accomack County in 1614.

It's been the scene of odd goings on ever since:



In 1665, Accomack County was the location of the first theatrical performance in the New World when a company of players presented *Ye Bare & Ye Cubb* at John Cole's Tavern.

Immediately, the actors were brought before the Accomack County Court and charged with obscenity.

Curious.

Seven years latter, a fox bit Mrs. Rachel Kendall as she walked from her kitchen door to the well for water — Hydrophobia.

As the disease progressed, Mrs. Kendall went mad with the agonizing screaming fits of rabies. She became violent and tried to bite other people. Since her family could do nothing to save her life, they pressed her between two featherbed mattresses and lashed them together tightly with ropes.

They stood around the room praying as Rachel Kendall smothered to death in these restraints.

Curious.

Seven years later, in 1679, the Accomack County Court summoned the first all-woman jury ever to be impaneled in America.

They heard an unusual case:

Miss. Mary Anderson was accused of murdering her bastard baby.

The female jury decided to try the case using Ordeal By Touch.

They dug up the infant's body and forced all persons associated with the case to stroke the tiny corpse in the jury's presence.

Mary Anderson touched the dead baby without effect.

So did her mother.



But Court Records show that when her step-father, Paul Carter, “Stroked the black and sotted places of decay on the Child, the skyn did break open and run with puss and blood”.

On this overwhelming evidence, the 12 women judged Paul Carter guilty. They hanged him for fathering the bastard on his innocent step-daughter and for burying the child alive to hide his sin.

Curious.

The institution of slavery also produced odd results in Accomack County:

Anthony Johnson, who had been enslaved in Africa and brought to America in one of the first shipments of slaves, worked hard and earned his freedom.

In 1654, Johnson’s industry brought him enough money to buy his own 250-acre farm. To run his estate effectively, the former slave bought five African slaves of his own, becoming the first black slave-owner in America.

A hundred twenty years later a reverse of that attitude toward slavery is found in the words of a white Revolutionary War soldier:

“I, John Cooper of Accomack County, being impressed with the belief that all men are by nature free and independent and that the holding of a man in a state of slavery is unjust and oppressive, have manumitted, set free and discharged all the people of colour in my possession whom I have heretofore held in bondage whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my name this 31st day of December, 1794”.

Curious.

Another odd element in the history of Accomack County is that court records show that at one time or another Quakers were persecuted here for their religion.



So were Catholics.

And Presbyterians.

And Episcopalians.

And Methodists.

And Baptists.

At least the religious persecutors were ecumenical.

Curious.

But of all the odd features of Accomack County, only one attracted Glog's attention and admiration. He thought the windmills were the most wonderful invention ever conceived by the human mind.

Windmills?

Yes.

Windmills for muskrats!

In the great flat marshes along the Bay side of Accomack County, the water is so shallow that during the dry season or when the tide runs out, the grasses are left standing out of the water on mud flats.

Muskrats feel safer when there is water around them, so naturally they build their lodges far out in the marsh where there is always water.

That makes the fur-bearing animals difficult to trap.

So the enterprising farmers of Accomack County dig narrow ditches through the marshgrass up close to shore.

Then they set up windmills to keep water pumped into the ditches.

So the muskrats stay practically in the fur trapper's back yard.

Glog marveled at this clever arrangement.



Like all really great ideas, it's really obvious when you think of it. But you don't. Not until somebody really smart shows you. Then you think, Wow, I should have thought of that myself!

If I ever find a Home, I'm going to have a windmill and a ditch so the muskrats will swim right up to my door.

These Virginians really are smart. Must be the cleverest people in the country! They can eat muskrats any time they want!

For a week Glog ranged along the shoreline of Virginia's Eastern Shore.

Some waterfront houses he passed offshore were watermen's homes with boats pulled up on shore for repairs and nets drying in the yards. Some dwellings he passed were farmhouses with dogs and tractors and bright clothes flapping to dry on ropes stretched between wooden crosses. Some homes were Navy with kids bikes propped against the back door and candy-stripped Jungle Gyms.

Then there were the waterfront estates. Gazebos. Grape arbors. Swimming pools. Long white fences. Rich green grass. Thoroughbreds grazing in the pastures or running timed laps around a clay practice track.

And stables.

Air-conditioned stables. Red horse barns with crisp white trim. And guards. And yellow hay spilling from the lofts.

And green mowed lawns flowing down to white chairs and red table umbrellas on a gray dock with a white cabin cruiser tied to silver cleats.



For some reason, not a one of these waterfront estates had either windmills or muskrat ditches.

Curious.

During the weeks he wandered, the pain in Glog's teeth began to slowly change its nature; from the pain of damage, it almost imperceptibly transformed into the pain of healing — like the pain you feel before your operation and the pain you feel afterward. The hurt is just as bad — maybe worse — but you can tell that while one was an increasing pain, the other is diminishing.

One pain was growing worse; this new one, bad as it is, is getting better.

Glog's dental structure is both homodont and polydont. The prefix homo means "same"; the prefix poly, means "many" —meaning that every tooth has virtually the same shape; and that they are arranged in many rows one behind the other so that when one tooth falls out or is broken, a new tooth from the row behind moves forward to take its place.

This is possible because, unlike the teeth of mammals, carnosaur teeth are not embedded in bone sockets but in the cartilaginous gum tissue; and the dentine of which they are largely composed resembles bone and fills up the whole pulp cavity. From its structure, this tooth material is called osteodentine.

Of course, all that Glog knew about it was that his teeth still hurt, but the hurt felt different — the difference between a grownup with an abscessed tooth and a child teething.

Tonight I'm going to try them out.

I'm starving.



*I'm so hungry I could eat a horse ... Say,
there's an idea. Isn't that a horse barn over
there?*

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Talk about a fuss!

Those horse people are crazy! Glog thought returning to the water. *You'd think I'd eaten the whole stable.*

In the dark of the moon Glog had slipped ashore climbing over a bulkhead beside one of the painted docks with the red umbrella tables. There were no lights on in the mansion so Glog inched toward the white-trimmed red barn cautiously so as not to wake any humans.

The only light showing on the estate came from blue underwater bulbs shimmering in the swimming pool.

No signs of dogs about the place.

Good!

As Glog rounded the corner of the barn, he heard two disturbing things. Some human males were standing in the dark by the fence talking quietly; Glog could see the tips of their cigarettes glow orange when they took a puff and fade to dull red as the smoker lowered it to his side.

At least these humans were not loud.

The other sound was the far away buzz of an airplane.

Glog froze.

Is it like that one that hurt my teeth?

He prepared to run.



He could not see the airplane.

Now the men heard the airplane too. They couldn't see it either, but they ran out into the field turning on flashlights and pointing them at the sky.

Curious.

But there didn't seem to be any danger now that the men had moved further away from the barn.

Glog slipped inside.

A thoroughbred race horse tastes a little like Spam — skittish Spam with lemon sauce perhaps and sprinkled with a touch of ginger — only it kicks.

Glog didn't enjoy his meal. For one thing his mouth was really a little too tender to be eating a horse; also, after going so long without food it's not wise to eat a whole horse.

Besides, the noise from that airplane grew louder and louder as Glog ate. He walked to the stable door to keep an eye on it.

Trouble!

The thing sounded like it was coming down for a strafing run!

Glog fell flat quivering, expecting to feel the bite of Live-Wire ammunition any second. He searched the sky to see which direction the attack would come from...

At night don't airplanes usually have lights on their wings?

There!

Glog could see it now.

His pineal window gathered starlight and focused it so he could see the dark shape of the unlighted aircraft.

It was coming down.



But this airplane, a red and white Mooney MSE, did not attack.

It landed and taxied across the field. The men from the horse house ran to meet it. The cabin door popped open and the pilot handed a package out to one of the men; that man handed the pilot a bundle.

There was a pause while each party checked his side of the exchange...Money counted. Powder sniffed.

Glog saw the airplane began swinging its nose toward the ground party. The pilot gunned its engine as it raced toward them.

It's trying to catch the humans on the ground with that spinning thing twirling on the front! If it touches one it will cut him up like a boat propeller!

Then came the lights and noise.

The airplane motor racing.

Flashlight beams swinging.

Men running.

Gunfire!

Lots of gunfire!

They've found me again! It was a trap! I've got to make it back to the Bay.

Glog began to run.

The humans on the ground had maneuvered back to where they stood between Glog and the water. Some of them flashed their lights right in his eyes. All of them stopped firing at each other and began to shoot at him.

They're between me and the Bay! They're cutting me off!

Glog twisted right.



Running with a stomach full of Spam after weeks of eating nothing...

Glog threw up.

He threw up right on the front of the Mooney, right where that spinning thing twirled with all the speed and strength the airplane's 200 HP Lycomming engine could muster.

Chunks of red horsemeat with white bone protruding hit the propeller and spun off into the darkness.

Flying chunks hit the men on the ground with all the horsepower the Mooney's screaming engine could throw off.

Humans dropped to the ground; some screaming, some silent.

Glog grabbed that spinning thing and stopped it.

He pounded the nose of the aircraft into the green pasture.

Bullets still flew everywhere in the darkness. Glog thought a lot of men were still firing at him... but it was only one man with some kind of gun that made a lot of noise.

He stood between Glog and the water backing away a step at a time and making that ungodly noise with his gun.

Lights came on in the house. Bright security lights glared up outside all around the building from where they'd been hidden in landscaping bushes.

The glare startled Glog.

He ran away from the searing blaze.

Something soft squished between his toes.

The noise of the Uzi stopped abruptly.



The only sound was the whinny of another horse in the stable. Glog considered going back to eat it now that things were quiet again...

But...

But even when you love the taste, you can only eat so much Spam at one sitting.

When daylight came, Glog slept beneath a dock in the shadow of one of those white yachts. Thick green moss grew beneath the yacht's waterline.

Why does the owner keep a boat like this if he never has time to use and enjoy it?

For the next few days, he wandered aimlessly along the Virginia Eastern Shore coast eating muskrats out of the man-made ditches — not too many from any one farm, just enough to regain his strength.

Because the splint of land separating the bay from the ocean is so narrow, the undersea bottom on the bay side of the peninsula is more sandy, more given to shifting and erosion.

Glog encountered whole trees underneath the water testifying to the sea's inroads on the land.

He also encountered the remains of man:

Here lay a pile of rubble three hundred yards offshore.

Crumbling red bricks from some farm house that once stood too near the shore of some eroding island. Broken shards of dinner plates with blue edges. A plowshare. An old glass milk bottle with the name engraved on it still legible:

Twilly's Dairy
Cambridge, Md.
Phone 547-W



Beneath the water Glog saw a baby stroller with three wheels resting on the hood of a Model A Ford which also had only three wheels.

Sifting sand partially filled both vehicles.

Something small and silver glinted among rusty coils where once an upholster seat had been bolted to the floor of the car.

Glog picked it up.

A plain silver ring.

Thin.

One side worn thinner than the other from long-time wear.

Tiny letters engraved inside the band spelled out something.

Glog held the ring close and squinted to make out the circling words:

Olden & Mary — November 12, 1913 — Love is stronger than death.

Glog placed the ring back under the car seat where he'd found it.

A hunger crept up on Glog.

A different kind of hunger.

The kind of hunger you feel when you've eaten well earlier in the evening but you suddenly feel that you want something more... You go to the refrigerator and survey the stocked shelves... Ice cream? No. Pizza? No. An apple? No...

Something.

Something you want.

A hunger for Something that no food in this world seems to satisfy.

That kind of unearthly hunger.



Lord, I want something. I don't know what it is I want, but I want it desperately... I yearn for... Something. I want...

I don't know.

I just don't know...

Where should I go from here?

You have said that You are the Good Shepherd; You said, "My sheep hear my voice and follow Me".

That's what You said, Lord. But I don't hear any Voice. I don't see any green pastures or still waters. Any Home. What am I supposed to do? Where am I supposed to go? Please guide me to...

Where ever?

Whatever?

Whoever?

A sudden movement caught Glog's attention.

A flash of silver beneath the trunk of the Model A.

Another ring? No.

An eel!

A shining silver eel glided from beneath the car. Coiling and turning and soaring through the water like a long banner waving on a pole carried by a high school girl marching in her first parade, the eel wove in and out among the bricks and debris from the old Home.

The eel rose and fell in the water — now breaking the surface, now flowing along the bottom — twisting in and back along its own length, a limber



ballerina, an acrobat, a bat in rolling sonar-guided flight.

The estuary of the Chesapeake Bay drains a basin of 41 million square acres; biologists who study the Bay have determined that eels live in the Chesapeake in a density of up to 1,500 per acre of water.

They are the Bay's most common major life form.

If you have ever hooked an eel and reeled it in, you saw a brownish-black creature — the most limber God created — covered with slime.

That's because you saw the eel out of its natural element.

Underwater where they belong, eels change color.

According to their breeding season, an eel's color ranges from olive and soft yellow to leaf green and pink pearl.

As the spawning season approaches, the colors grow more and more iridescent and as the eel moves coiling and flowing and waving in its dance, the colors shimmer with metallic purples and pale lavender shades.

Every eel in North America and Europe — even the ones in land-locked freshwater ponds — is born in the same place: The Sargasso Sea, the great floating mass of seaweed swirling in the open ocean north of the Caribbean, is birthplace for all the eels.

One night, always in the dark quarter of the moon, the eels begin to move Homeward to the spawning ground in the Sargasso. The ones in fresh water slither across dry ground, roads and Interstate Highways to reach a river flowing to the ocean.

The eels of the Chesapeake — some of them six feet long — change color as the slime thickens on their bodies; a slight layer of slime protects them



from parasites in the Bay's water, but they are now headed to the great salt depth of the Atlantic and the protective coating thickens accordingly.

Their eyes grow to twice normal size, getting ready to catch the faintest gleam of light at the very bottom of the dark ocean.

All the eels move toward the mouth of the Chesapeake headed toward the drop off of the Continental Shelf and the great deeps.

At every river, every creek, every canal, every ditch and stream more and more eels join the migration.

In a silver stream of biological urge they move.

Hundreds of eels.

Thousands of eels.

Millions of eels silver in the moon's dark quarter.

Are they singing unheard songs of praise and triumph and joy and life and anticipation?

Do the dark waters hum with their urge for mating and renewal?

The eels surge down the Bay and out its mouth pouring into the Atlantic.

Every head pointed in the same direction.

Every scale polished and shimmering.

Every lustrous eye fixed on Home.

An army of slender knights in battle armor oiled to catch every gleam of light, they surge forth to the dance of life with singleness of purpose.

Glog watched the eel from beneath the car glide forward to be joined by another eel.

Then another.

And another.

GLOG



Moving like mercury droplet joining mercury droplet, the eels flowed together and moved with shining purpose towards the great wide mouth where the Chesapeake mingles with the Atlantic.

Glog followed.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

In high summer, stroll through a field of knee-high blooming grass: a thousand butterflies leap up before your feet at every step.

Just so, the little yellow-tailed menhaden leaped from the Bay's grassy bottom at every step Glog took. The green backs of the palm-sized fish flickered as they darted back down into the seagrass before him only to spring upward again at his very next step.

On Fall's most windy day, walk through a maple forest: orange, red and yellow leaves twist down from above you and crunch beneath your feet;

Just so, thin fragile seashells — white angelwing clams, tan mollusks, red periwinkles, green fan shells, blue-gray razor clams — swept along by the current, fluttered at Glog's passing.

In Winter's first snowfall, walk in the open; floating flakes refuse to land but rather puff past in clear, blowing air.

So granules of pale sand floated sparkling around Glog.

In April's spring splendor, walk through the midnight sky; meteorites of the annual great Lyrid Meteor Shower flash around you and white shooting stars brush your hair.

So the eels darted with straight-forward purpose as Glog walked among them.



As he passed the town of Cape Charles and neared the tip of the Delmarva Peninsula where the Bay empties into the ocean, Glog encountered more and more stripped mullet, long silver fish with tiny mouths. They feed on surface plankton. Mullet schools travel in long lines, one fish right behind the other — skinny elephants on parade.

From time to time for some reason — perhaps when a predator attacks the school or perhaps for the sheer joy of doing it — the mullet get a running start and jump high out of the water again and again. Like a flat stone being skipped across the water, the 18-inch fish will skim the surface, a creature of air and sea and joy.

While the mullet schools skipped in the air above the water, at the bottom of the sea under Glog's feet, lines of polished gray horseshoe crabs plowed furrows in the sand. Inexorable as miniature tanks in formation for a military parade, the domed crabs marched forward pulling their long spiked tails like caissons behind them.

Back before the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel was built, a ferry carried U.S. 13 traffic between the Virginia Beach/Norfolk area and Cape Charles on the tip of the Delmarva Peninsula.

To make a breakwater for the ferry boats on the Eastern Shore side, engineers loaded thousands of sacks of cement into five old ships and sank them in deep water in front of the ferry landing.

The cement hardened.

The sacks around the lumps deteriorated leaving a cast of their image.

And, over the years, the most of the metal hulls of the five ships rusted away.

At first, Glog thought he'd come upon another shipwreck site, but these ships did not look like



other shipwrecks; imagine sticking together thousands of flat gray marshmallows to make a boat shape.

Stone ships?

How could that be?

Why in the world would humans make stone ships?

Nothing they do makes much sense, does it Lord?

The vast parade — eels, mullet, horseshoe crabs, menhaden — streamed seaward past the cement boats on the bottom.

As Glog approached the site, he noticed that thousands upon thousands of barnacles, oysters, sea anemones, clams and mollusks of every sort clustered all over the cement ships. Each shellfish inhabitant extended a tiny pink siphon out of its shell up into the water; they looked like row upon row of trumpeters blowing a fanfare hailing the passing parade as living things marched from the Bay into the deep and salty Atlantic.

Glog followed the parade — until the wall stopped him.

The old ferry doesn't run anymore.

On August 15, 1964, at a cost of \$140,000,000, Sverdrup & Parcel engineers completed the mighty feat of spanning the wide mouth of the Chesapeake with a roadway for U.S. Highway 13.

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel comprises the longest vehicular crossing in the world. Twenty-three miles of marsh and water are crossed by a series of causeways, trestles, bridges and tunnels.



The Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel crosses four wide navigational channels — two spanned by bridge sections and two by tunnels beneath the water.

Picture the road as a great sea serpent frozen solid in its up and down waves.

From north to south — the serpent's tail rests on the Eastern Shore. Its body arches into the air, then dives beneath the sea, arches up again, dives under again, then the neck stretches flat across marshland to lay the serpent's head on the Virginia mainland 23 miles away.

Going the other way — for automobiles driving from the south to the north — the 28-foot-wide roadway leaves Virginia Beach and crosses on a trestle bridge, 38 feet above the water, to the entrance of the Thimble Shoals Tunnel.

There it dives 98 feet down beneath the water for a mile and emerges on a man-made island where it rises up on the Fisherman Inlet Bridge, which is four miles long with a shipping opening 170 feet wide and a 40-foot vertical clearance.

The Fisherman Inlet Bridge descends to another man-made island where it again dives, this time through the South Tunnel, beneath the Baltimore Shipping Channel, which is 50 feet deep and a mile wide.

Coming out of that tunnel, the road climbs another bridge, The North Channel Bridge, which is 3,800 feet long and has a shipping lane 300 feet wide with an upper clearance of 75 feet.

The road eventually emerges near the town of Kiptopeke, opposite the Cape Charles Lighthouse on the end of the Delmarva Peninsula.



That's near where Glog was passing those five stone ships which were once the breakwater for the ferry boats.

Glog needed to breathe so he climbed up on top of one of the stone ships. The water was still too deep for him to break the surface, so he gave a little leap to bring his head up into the air.

Cool fresh air blew briskly in from the ocean and he relished its salty tang.

Not far away, on his left, he saw the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel complex stretching between him and the open Atlantic.

Traffic lined the causeway.

Every inch of northbound bridge and causeway which Glog could see was packed solid with cars, pickup trucks, campers, charter buses, all kinds of vehicles — Weekend gamblers headed bumper to bumper for the season's opening day at the seven horse race tracks of Accomack County.

As an added incentive for betting men to head north on this particular weekend, the Maryland State Lottery jackpot had rolled over to an estimated 89 million dollars to a single winner and many Virginia residents drove north across the state line to buy at least one ticket in Pocomoke City, the closest Maryland town.

Who'd blame them?

Think of it!

For a one dollar investment, you can hope to gain a return of \$89,000,000!

Chance of a lifetime!

What other possible hope do you have of ever getting that kind of a fortune?

That's what the lottery sells — hope.



Maybe if I walk out deeper I can get by that thing without being seen by any human on that bridge... It looks like all those cars come up out of the water. How do they do that? Where do they all come from?

Glog turned and walked toward the middle of the Bay, walking parallel to the bridge, crossing the on-going flow of eels which rushed straight for the ocean. He walked in water about 30 feet deep and getting deeper at every step. In the four shipping channels, even the largest Navy vessels and ocean going commercial ships can easily pass back and forth in and out of the Bay's mouth.

On the bottom, Glog noticed more and more large fat crabs, Chesapeake Bay Blue Crabs — slabs, every one of them — as he walked.

They seem quite thick here. I wonder what that's all about?

At the mouth of the Bay, the sea bottom swirls with sand, silt and mud, and the bottom sediments are soft. They color the water brown.

When they built the bridge, in spots the engineers could not touch bedrock until they had drilled 2,000 feet below the surface of the water.

To anchor the bridge portions of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel roadway, construction workers drove 2,500 piles, each one 170 feet long, beneath the bridge trestles.

These piles are hollow cylinders, 54 inches in diameter with walls five inches thick. Once in place, the piles were pumped full of sand and topped with trestle sections 75 feet long and weighing 65 tons.

Glog came to the edge of the north shipping channel.



Looked deep.

He jumped to the surface to gulp air before trying to cross it.

Down he sank.

More crabs.

More crabs than he'd ever seen before in his life...

And every one of them was pregnant!

Glog walked parallel to the northern tunnel section of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel roadway.

The tunnels which carry U.S. 13 beneath the Bay were built in Texas.

How could a tunnel between Maryland and Virginia be built in Texas?

Picture a giant shoe box, one that opens at each end, one that is made of steel instead of flimsy cardboard — that is one tunnel tube section.

Each tunnel tube section is 300 feet long and 35 feet in diameter. Each section has double steel walls, two feet apart, which are cross-braced inside; each section weighed 12,000 tons when it was made.

Engineers in Texas built 38 of these huge steel shoe boxes. They sealed the open ends and floated the boxes out into the Gulf of Mexico, around the tip of Florida and up the east coast to the Bay.

I've never seen so many pregnant crabs; they couple anywhere but they must come here to give birth. I've never seen anything like it before.

Few have.

In August 1980, human researchers from the University of Maryland witnessed for the first time



the massive birthing of blue crabs at the mouth of the Chesapeake.

For God only knows what reason, in the breeding season when her time approaches, every pregnant crab in the Bay comes to the mouth of the Chesapeake.

The researchers discovered that, on any given day, every single one of them gives birth at almost the same moment — the minute the tide begins its ebb and the Bay's water moves seaward to carry the zoea (that's what the scientists call baby crabs) into the salty ocean.

The University of Maryland research ship — which in 1980 had anchored right above where Glog stood now — collected water samples and discovered baby crabs at a density of 100,000 zoea in every cubic meter of water!

But on this day, that great birthing would not come until the tide's ebb, about four hours ahead, so what confronted Glog was a billion or so soon-to-be-mother crabs massed on the seabottom for as far as he could see.

Every one of the mothers faced him with black eyes protruding on stalks.

Every one of the mothers faced him with both pincers raised and open.

Crabs can't hurt you...

Can they?

Hey, I've seen crabs. I've been around them in the marshes for years;

I'll just walk right over them...

*Lord, I think maybe I'll move out a little further before I try to get past that bridge...
OK?*



No still small voice answered.

Glog tip-toed gingerly.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

While tugs bumped the 38 giant steel shoe boxes around the tip of Florida, construction workers dug a trench 100 feet deep across the bottom of the Bay.

When each shoe box arrived at the proper site, engineers filled the hollow between its double walls with cement and sank it lengthwise in the trench.

They lined up the next shoe box and sank it at the end of the first one — like playing children linking soda straws end to end.

The engineers joined their sunken metal and concrete shoeboxes end to end in the trench beneath the Bay and fastened them together with steel pins 7-inches in diameter through steel hoods welded together at each joint.

Once it was all fasten together, they pumped the water out of the boxes, opened the flaps between them, installed ventilation fans, lined the inside walls with tile, and paved the roadway on the steel floor. They covered the boxes in the trench with a mound of bottom sand ten feet high — and opened the tunnels to traffic.

Each of the two tunnels in the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel complex was made this way.

The Baltimore Channel Tunnel lies closest to Cape Charles and Virginia's Eastern Shore where the horses race around the seven tracks. This tunnel is 1,700 feet long. Cars drive under great cargo ships passing 50 feet over their heads.



The Thimble Shoals Tunnel lies closest to Norfolk.

It is 1,900 feet long.

Great Navy aircraft carriers like the mighty *USS Kennedy* with a crew of 5,000 men sail in and out of Norfolk right over this tunnel.

Drivers of the cars in the Thimble Shoals Tunnel are so deep beneath the sea that they don't even know the aircraft carriers are passing overhead.

To Glog, who stood on an underwater hill at the edge of the deep channel, the Thimble Shoals Tunnel looked like the Great Wall of China.

In spots, rushing current has washed away the mound of sand covering the steel line of shoeboxes; the hoods covering the joints in the line appear to be crenellated battlements on top of the long rust and gray wall.

The wall curves down and away deeper and deeper following the contours of the sea bottom.

On the far side of the wall, the ocean waves sweep in from the far Atlantic; on Glog's side of the wall, the tide begins to ebb and flow out to meet the waves.

Millions upon millions of mother crabs notice the seachange.

They get ready.

Glog strolls down the hill following the wall, looking for an opening...

*Lord, please show me the way. Guide me.
Lead me.*

Down. Down he goes.

*All Thy billows pass over me; lead me in
Thy straight path.*

The mother crabs are getting excited.



The tide moves out faster.

It presses the mothers against the base of the wall.

They try to swim away, to avoid contact with the wall.

That's strange. For some reason, the crab mothers don't want to touch that wall. What's the matter with it?

Glog moved closer and placed his paw on the wall.

It hummed!

The wall vibrated as though there were something alive inside it.

Glog walked down and down the slope beneath the sea trailing his hand along the rough exterior of Thimble Shoals Tunnel like a child walking beside a picket fence.

His claws clicked over rough places in the wall's texture.

He was getting deeper.

Glog began to hear an echo of the sound his own claws made.

No. It wasn't an echo; the tempo of this clicking was different.

Urgent.

Faster.

Louder.

Time had come for over a billion she-crabs to become mothers — all at once in the tide's ebb.

When the Creator of the Universe stuffed the first empty crabshell with life, for reasons known only to Himself, the formula included a ratio of eight ounces of mean to every six ounces of crab.

Who knows why God does anything?



Anyhow, that ratio is for when the crab feels that all is right with the world; but when a crab is unhappy...

Well, adversity does not mellow a crab's disposition.

With the onset of labor, each one of the mothers began to snap her pincers at whatever happened to be closest to her — fish, shrimp, rocks, seaweed, other crabs, anything, everything.

A mad crab is not choosey.

Louder and louder the pincers snapped — imagine throwing a tennis ball onto the floor of a gymnasium filled with wall to wall self-setting mouse traps.

Jesus, I've got to get out of here.

Glog stepped up his pace.

Glog hurried.

Glog ran.

He covered his ears with his paws to dull the thunderous snapping of angry crabs and he ran as hard as he could down the slope.

Down parallel to that humming wall.

Down to the bottom of the shipping channel.

Down into the deepest trough of the Chesapeake.

He ran till he was out of breath. He exhaled a great bubble of air which fluttered upward and upward out of sight.

Glog needed air.

He leaped upward as he always did. ...

His head did not break the surface!

The water was too deep!

Glog sank back down to the bottom.

His feet raised a cloud of sediment.



He leaped again.

Nowhere near high enough.

Help! Help! Lord, I'm in this over my head!
Help!

Glog tried again.

Again he sank back to the bottom without gaining air.

His chest burned from lack of oxygen.

That wall!

If I stand on top of that wall and jump up from there, maybe I'll be high enough to reach air.

Glog hooked the claws of his toes into the side of the wall and scrambled up.

He jumped for the surface.

Still too deep.

He jumped harder.

Still out of reach.

With all his might, Glog leaped as high as he could.

Pure air remained far above him.

His massive body crashed down a third time at the same spot on the lid of the shoebox.

The lid gave way.

Glog's right foot broke through something into an empty hollow space.

Air bubbled out from beneath his feet.

Great round bubbles of air ten feet across.

More and more of them.

Bigger and bigger bubbles roared out of the opening.



Glog inhaled.

The air tasted stale. Horrible... Like air inside a mechanic shop... Like automobile exhaust.

But Glog drank it in.

What's that noise? Horns?

Cars honking?

Like you hear on a dark night when a car catches you in its headlights as you cross the road and the driver flicks on the brights and blinds you, then honks that awful horn and hurts your ears?

No! It couldn't be. How would humans get cars down here on the bottom of the Bay?

By the time the air bubbles dwindled to a trickle, all the car horns had stopped honking.

Glog tugged his foot out of the hole and hopped down on the ocean side of the wall.

He was out of the Bay.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Glog felt miserable.

Heavily populated Virginia Beach is no place for a carnosaur.

Ask anyone who lives there.

Glog had never before seen so many humans. Every square inch of waterfront sprouted human dwellings, human docks, human boats and cars and highways, office buildings, factories, stores, clubs ... Every type of artifact from human development stretched for miles east of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge And Tunnel, filling the water front.

Now it was full daylight and Glog had no place to hide or rest or sleep; all he could do was to keep walking along the bottom popping up for air now and then.

Virginia Beach's Seashore State Park looked promising as a safe haven — at least there were few buildings — but when Glog drew close inshore, he saw that hundreds of near-naked humans lay on towels spread out on the sand or splashed in the shallows along the beach.

Glog kept moving.

Rounding the ocean point at the United States Army's Fort Story, Glog saw Old Cape Henry Lighthouse and, right behind it, New Cape Henry Lighthouse — the new one had been built in 1881.



Humans of English descent first landed at Cape Henry in 1607; there's a memorial there to commemorate the event.

Glog followed the shore line south trudging along the bottom beyond the ocean breakers and eyeing the shore for a place to rest and something to eat.

Human dwellings littered the beach front.

Elbow to elbow beach houses — some of pink stucco, some of machine-weathered pseudo-driftwood, some of real driftwood, some like shacks, some like mansions, imitation Hawaiian, imitation Key West, imitation Neptune's Palace, some built on pilings, some snuggled in sand dunes — all waiting for the next good storm to undermine the foundations...

Tacky. Tacky, tacky.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand; the wise man founds his Home upon the rock...

Will You ever lead me Home, Lord?

No still small voice answered.

Some human, an officer manager for a collection agency, had built a floating dock jutting out behind his home. The platform at the end of the dock rested on big hollow pontoons and the ramp leading out had hinges so that as the tide rose and fell the dock rose or fell with it, moving up and down on hard rubber rollers over stationary concrete posts.

Glog scrunched down in the shade under the dock between the pontoons and slept the daylight hours standing with just his nostrils out of the water.

At sundown the manager brought home two collectors from his office and they bar-b-qued some dead meat..



Got drunk...

Walked out on the dock throwing empties down in the water.

The splash of Michelob bottles woke Glog.

He roused up.

Pulled all three off the dock.

Ate them.

Bland.

Few nutrients.

What would you expect from a collection agency?

Nobody ever bothered to report the three missing.

For the next four days, Glog plodded on south. He kept his tattered red sail sunbonnet pulled up over his pineal window, but the sun's sharp glare still burned his eyes.

He trudged on past the Camp Pendleton U.S. Navy Amphibious Base and the U.S. Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Training Center...

Nothing good for him in those places.

Nothing good anywhere along Virginia's Atlantic coast.

Off Sandbridge Beach, a couple of five-foot thresher sharks bumped against Glog and tried to bite him.

Pests.

He brushed them off like you'd brush off a pesky cat that wants to rub against your leg.

Did you know that no muskrats swim in the ocean?

Not a one.

And the glare off ocean water.



And the sand. Grit sifts in between your scales
and chafes.

And the salt. Sticky and gummy.

And those gulls. Loud. Always dropping white
slime that smells fishy.

Miserable.

Glog had never felt lower in his whole life.

*Lord, Didn't You promise that all things
would work together to those who love You
and are called according to Your purpose?*

Doesn't Your own Bible promise that?

*Didn't You promise green pastures and still
waters?*

*You promised that You would never leave
us or forsake us.*

But I feel so lonely and lost and miserable.

*How do I square what You promise with my
own experience?*

Look at what's happened to me.

Look at this terrible place!

But I do love You, Lord!

I do.

I am Your creature.

*To whom else could I go, You alone have
the words of eternal life?*

But I don't understand.

I don't understand at all.

No still small voice answered.



All that day the sky had been overcast and now in the night the moon only appeared as a glowing smudge among the clouds.

A tropical depression sitting far to the south off Cape Hatteras lowered the water temperature till Glog shivered with the chill.

He jogged under the water in a vain hope to warm up.

Now the wind brought larger waves...

Blowing wisps of sea foam.

Whitecapped breakers ...

The ocean grew colder.

The rain began.

Glog emerged from the surf on the narrow splint of land humans call False Cape.

He hurried across the beach seeking shelter.

At least the rain keeps the humans indoors.

Waves and wind-swept rain covered his tracks across the sand as soon as he'd lift a foot.

Glog crossed False Cape running parallel to a little three-block-long street named Whitecap Lane.

He splashed into Back Bay and waded out as deep as he could.

Back Bay was considerably warmer than the ocean but it brought Glog another problem.

Shrimp.

Pistol shrimp.

As fields of wheat are to humans, schools of shrimp are to sea creatures.

Everything that swims in the sea and eats will eat a shrimp.



Shrimp are the ocean's staff of life.

When God created shrimp, He was feeling generous towards His ocean creatures; He made shrimp one of the most prolific of species — Seafood for everybody!.

But He was generous to the shrimp also.

Between its antenna, every shrimp has a little hair-lined pocket. As soon as the shrimp is born, it picks up a tiny pebble from the sea floor and puts it in this pocket. As the shrimp moves this way and that in the water, the pebble shifts its pressure on the hairs in the pouch and acts as a gyroscope to control the shrimp's balance.

Therefore a shrimp can move through the water swiveling this way and that with an agility unmatched by any other creature on the earth, in the air, or under the waters.

As an extra added attraction, God gave the shrimp a segmented body so flexible that a shrimp can snap its body double head to tail in a nanosecond. When it does this, its large fan tail scoops the water and jets the shrimp backward, changing its direction in an instant.

Try catching one in your mouth and the shrimp scoots away in a snap.

That snap is what troubled Glog.

It's loud.

So loud that many recreational boaters in Virginia's inland waterways say it's impossible to sleep aboard their yachts — every shrimp sounds like a pistol shot being fired under the water beside the boat's hull. Hence the name, pistol shrimp.

The prolific shrimp travels in schools of thousands. When something disturbs shrimp one, it snaps and scoots away. Naturally it bumps into shrimp two,



who also snaps and scoots away to bump shrimp three...

When Glog waded into Back Bay, he blundered into a school of pistol shrimp. They snapped, crackled and popped — and scooted off bumping more and more of their fellow shrimp who had burrowed in the muddy bottom to escape the cold of the storm.

Glog covered his ears and fled from the noise under the water...

Imagine a tangled string of 30,000 firecrackers.

Glog scrambled out of the water.

He ran west, the storm at his back.

A human road.

No traffic on Indian Creek Road at two a.m. in the storm and dark.

Railroad tracks.

Glog crossed them and hunkered down against the embankment.

A train with a single glaring light.

Amtrak screamed north.

Glog ran west.

A field.

Airplanes in it.

Glog saw wing tips rise and fall, straining at the tie downs in the wind.

Is this the kind that hurt my mouth?

He scrambled on.

Blue and white lightening blazed above him cracking the sky like a giant electric shrimp. Hailstones pelted Glog. Branches blew off trees and crashed against his back.

A human road.



Glog saw a sign that said Ballahack something or the other. A wide ditch filled with black water paralleled the road.

Glog splashed into it.

The water felt warm but it was hardly deep enough to cover his waist.

Glog ran on chased by thundering wrath, like a sinner in the hands of an angry God.

U.S. Highway 17 — a broad expanse of white concrete.

A Mayflower moving van zipped along the highway — the truck driver, an owner-operator who hadn't slept in 32 hours, was driving all night again trying to make Portsmouth for a government move by morning, the only human crazy enough to be out driving in the storm.

Glog darted across the road yards in front of the headlights.

The Mayflower driver didn't even tap his brakes; he'd seen stranger hallucinations than a carnosaur wearing a red sunbonnet and carrying a back pack on dark back roads in the wee small hours of the morning.

Dirty road water thrown up by the churning eighteen wheels of the truck sprayed over Glog.

A canal.

A wide canal overrunning its banks lay just across the highway.

Glog splashed into the warm moving water.

A culvert.

A huge culvert of corrugated metal carried overflow from the canal out under the highway.

Dark water aswarm with leaves and sticks and floating debris filled the culvert almost to its roof,

GLOG



but there was a foot or two of air space at the top.
Glog crawled into the warm dark hole.

He shivered.

Why?

Why?

Why, he asked?

No still small voice answered.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Long before he became the first President of the United States, or General of the Continental Army, or even a soldier at all, in 1749 George Washington held the office of Public Surveyor in Virginia.

He surveyed the path for a canal along the eastern edge of the Great Dismal Swamp.

Washington's survey party discovered a huge spring-fed lake in the center of the swamp; the elevation of that lake is higher than the surrounding area and seepage from the lake wets the land around it.

In Washington's day, the main body of the Great Dismal Swamp fully inundated an area 25 miles wide from east to west, and 38 miles long from north to south, with other long arms of swamp extending from Virginia well into North Carolina.

Before 700 square miles were reclaimed in a modern drainage project, the total swamp area covered 2,200 square miles.

Washington's survey outlined the overall shape of the swamp:

Take your coffee cup out of the saucer.

Turn the saucer upside down.

That hollow on the bottom of the saucer is Lake Drummond; the sides that flare down and away from the lake is the rest of the swamp.



Lake Drummond stands 22 feet above sea level and its waters seep downward all the way to the Atlantic.

Because of this difference in water levels, the canal which George Washington surveyed was built with seven locks to raise or lower passing boats.

The canal runs for 22 miles between the Elizabeth River of Virginia and the sounds of North Carolina. It is 70 feet wide.

During the War of 1812, American coastal vessels transported military stores along the inland canal safe from British warships blockading the Atlantic seaboard.

Today, the Dismal Swamp Canal is part of the Intra Coastal Waterway.

U.S. Highway 17 runs parallel to the canal between the swamp and the Atlantic.

At daybreak the storm subsided, and traffic on the highway above the culvert picked up. Traffic noise kept Glog awake most of the day.

The overflow from the canal ran off quickly draining the culvert faster than Glog expected. As the water drained away, it left a thick residue of limbs and branches and leaves caught at the entrance to the culvert.

Something moved in the residue.

Glog investigated.

A big gray bird with long spindly legs. A heron. Something white hung about its neck and snagged on a branch — one of those plastic ring things that holds a six-pack of beer together.

Glog reached out and snapped off the branch hooking the plastic.

As he did, the heron opened its mouth wide and raked its long beak across his face.



Careful. You could blind me.

Glog snipped the plastic ring from the bird's neck and set it free.

The bird gave a squawk and flew off as if in a huff.

Stupid bird! Go eat a fish!

Speaking of eating... Glog felt hungry.

When darkness fell, he waded out of the culvert and headed north along the canal.

He hadn't gone ten yards before he found a snapping turtle.

Delicious. Thank You, Lord.

Before long, Glog heard humans in the distance. He lowered himself in the water till just his head stuck out and crept closer.

Wooden lock gates barred the canal. Several human males were doing something to a boat on the other side of the gate.

Glog turned around and retraced his path along the canal...

A few miles to the south, another lock gate with puttering humans fenced him in.

Traffic still buzzed on the U.S. 17 to the east.

That left only one way to go.

Glog climbed up the canal bank and headed west into the depths of the Great Dismal Swamp.

As far back as 1838, investors have investigated the possibility of draining the swamp and mining coal deposits underneath it.

U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin, No. 711-C, traces peat samples from the bed of the swamp to the peat's formation in a forest on a Pliocene plateau. The bulletin says:



*Dismal Swamp is the northeastern extension of the great palustrine forest which once dominated the landscape and coastal flood plains. The flora of the swamp is characterized by cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), black gums (*Nyssa biflora* and *Nyssa aquatica*), juniper (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) cotton gum (*Nyssa uniflora*) and water ash (*Fraxinus caroliniana*).*

An ancient ocean beach, the Nansemond Escarpment, constitutes the western boundary of the swamp. As the ocean withdrew, the frequent submergence of masses of vegetable matter beneath seas or estuaries, as often as the land sunk down during subterranean movements, may have given rise to the deposition of strata mud, sand or limestone immediately upon the vegetable matter. The conversion of successive surfaces into dry land, where other swamps supporting trees may have formed, might give origin to peat and coal beds of great thickness.

This hypothesis assumes that all coals start life, so to speak, with an initial stage of peat. The peat later becomes converted to brown coal, next passing into Humic or Bituminous coal and finally, in some cases, to Anthracite.

Essentially, all that says is that the swamp is wild and big and has been there for a long time — A very long time.

For centuries, the trees have shed leaves to pile up on the ground. At the turn of this century, a disease called Chestnut Blight killed off great stands of American Chestnut trees and their massive fallen trunks criss-cross each other in long piles of green mold all through the swamp.

In 1923, a forest fire charred 150 square miles of the swamp; the vegetation lay so thick on the forest floor that the fire burned for three years and ate a



hole ten-feet deep into the ground. That fire hardly scratched the surface of the vast swamp.

Whenever humans have tried to mine peat there or log beyond the edges, the massiveness, miasma and mosquitoes of the swamp defeated them. Company after company — including one in which George Washington invested his money — tried to exploit the swamp's ancient resources. Every one went bankrupt.

In the little towns on the outskirts of the swamp, on winter evenings when the old timers, the fishing and hunting guides who escort tourists a few miles in to bag a black bear or hook a black bass — when these crusty men sit with their feet propped up on the rim of a pot-bellied stove and talk turns to fools, ghosts, moonshiners and critters, then someone is sure to say, "God Almighty is the onliest one that knows for sure what all lives out there in the Dismal; He's the onliest One".

Maybe so.

The Great Dismal Swamp contains hundreds of square miles of the wildest forest in America:

Vast sweeps of cat tail marsh.

Deep quicksands.

Seeping waters.

Ancient trees.

Wild Celery.

Water Cress.

Arrowroot.

Still ponds.

Reeds.

Glog wandered aimlessly deeper into the swamp. Stepping over this deadfall. Passing around that one. Wading through this pond. Stopping beside that one.



Luxuriant undergrowth surrounded him. Laurel and flowering dogwood showered him with white pedals as he brushed their branches in passing. Flaming red crepe myrtle trees and rain trees paved his path with blossoms. Smoke trees released wispy gray seeds to float in the air around him. Flowering scarlet trumpet vines and woodbine laced every tree. Fragrant white Confederate jasmine mingled with yellow honey suckle. Rough brown ropes of wild grape vine soared upwards to purple clusters in the treetops.

A bright red fox crossed Glog's path; it stopped with one white-footed paw lifted and gazed contemptuously at this newcomer. Then it strutted on, its tail in the air. Fat gray squirrels chattered at Glog from the safety of heavy water oak branches. Blue jays and cardinals flitted in and out among the leaves.

Glog felt...

What's that smell? Cypress. There are cypress trees back there. I love the smell of cypress. It reminds me of something; I can't remember just what. But something nice.

Glog waded a wide patch of still water.

Fallen juniper leaves give an amber color to the waters of the Great Dismal Swamp.

Glog skirted a stand of cat tail.

There stretching out to the horizon lay the bluest lake in the world. Ethereal blue. Calm blue.

Young George Washington discovered that the lake in the center of the Great Dismal Swamp is seven miles long and five miles wide.

Lake Drummond was named for Governor William Drummond.



He was the only governor of North Carolina to be hanged.

So far.

Actually, he was the first governor of North Carolina; he was hanged in 1677 for his part in Bacon's Rebellion.

Still water.

Silky water.

Smooth water.

With no ripple.

With no sound.

The sight of the lake awed Glog.

Majestic stands of cypress guarded the still waters.

A lone white bird — a dove? — hovered over the face of the deep. A distant thunderhead rolled with orange warmth — but no thunder.

The still waters reflected the calm face of God's world.

As the deer pants after the waterbrooks,
So my soul pants after Thee, O Lord.
My soul yearns after Thee,
The true and living God.
I thirst for Thee
As a parched, dry land thirsts for morning
dew.

Glog dipped a claw into the water. Ripples spread out from him. Arcing, rainbow ripples. They spread out slowly across the pool and washed the cypress knees which stood like fairy castles around the rim of the lake.

Behind him someone moved.

Startled, Glog swirled about in a fighting stance.



She stood tall and slender at the edge of the cat tails.

Moonlight shimmered on her scales.

My own kind! Glog exclaimed. Bone of my bone; flesh of my flesh! My own kind!

She extended her right hand towards him; a muskrat dangled, the tip of its tail pinched between her claws.

"I prayed that you would come", she said. "I asked the Lord to send a male. One who is gentle and kind and caring. He sent you".

Glog straightened up and bowed to the Lady.

"My Father named me Glog; he said the shell of my egg was as gray as morning fog".

The Lady curtsied.

"My Father named me Brill". She lowered her eyes. "He said my scales were brilliant when I hatched".

"Your Father was right".

"I have shed the skin of my youth," she said.

"I have shed the scales of my youth," Glog replied according to the ancient formula of courtesy.

Glog reached out and took the offered muskrat from her paw. He raised it high above his jaws and snapped. And tossed the tail over his shoulder.

"Thanks be to God", he said.

"Thanks be to God," she echoed.

Brill curtsied towards him; Glog bowed low towards her.



Glog could not take his eyes off her. She gleamed and shimmered without a flaw. Her sharp white teeth were perfect. Her neck curved in a gentle arc plated with tiny scales shining like the polished shields displayed from a castle's battlements on a High Feast Day.

Glog's baculum stirred within its genital pouch.

"I am virgin", she said.

"I am virgin also", Glog said.

"My burrow is beneath the roots of an elm overturned in a storm long ago. It is warm and safe and dry. There are my books, my loom, my store of snapping turtles... and my bed".

"My burrow is lost to the humans. I have only my Book, my bonnet, and my baculum".

Brill laughed. *"That's the first thing I noticed about you. I wanted to ask about that first, but it wouldn't have been courteous"....* She suddenly blushed. *"I mean about that ridiculous bonnet, that hat! Where did you get that awful thing?"* she sputtered.

Glog laughed at her embarrassment.

"This fine hat? It's me, isn't it?" He turned to show her the bonnet from all angles.

"I certainly hope not!" she said. *"And another thing. Why did you throw the muskrat tail over your shoulder. That's unsanitary. You should bury them and... and..".*

Brill threw her self into Glog's arms burying her face against his shoulder. *"I was so lonely. I*



prayed and prayed. For months I prayed. And there was no answer. I didn't think you would ever come. I didn't think anyone would ever come. I thought God couldn't answer me. I thought I was the last of our kind. The only one left".

She pressed tight against Glog.

"I know. I know," Glog said, holding her, stroking her flanks. "I thought I was the last one. I didn't know you existed. I never guessed".

He smoothed the scales of her neck. With one claw, he traced the line of her vertebra from the nape of her neck down to the small of her back.

Brill purred.

"I thought I was the only one," she said.

"I thought I was the only one," he said.

"We are two," Brill said.

"No. We are one".

Releasing the embrace but still clinging to him, Brill lead Glog through the cat tails towards her burrow.

As the two swished through the reeds, a flight of a thousand fireflies which had been sleeping on the underside of the grass blades, arose in a sweeping spiral...

Twinkling.

Fluttering.

Celebrating.

Lighting the lovers' way.

"Here we are," Brill said.



"Where? I don't see the entrance".

She pointed to an arch of roots where a huge tree had fallen.

Glog looked closely; he still didn't see the entrance to a burrow.

"There, Silly. Behind the drapery".

Suddenly he could see it. She'd woven long tendrils of brown and gray root hairs into a tapestry perfectly matching the root system of the elm; but, if you were to examine it carefully, you could see a pattern of stars and clouds, unicorns and muskrats, thorns and flowers woven into the fabric.

"Curtains? In a den? I've never heard of such a thing"!

"You'll get use to it. Come inside. I've got lots to show you".

"I'll just bet you have".

Brill laughed.

She dodged his reaching.

She ran into the burrow.

She dropped the curtain closed behind her.

Glog laughed and chased her to the entrance.

"Got anything good to eat in there," he called.

Glog entered Brill's burrow beneath the elm.

The drape swung closed behind him.

Laughter and squealing.

Thanksgiving to God.

Happy Purring.

Contentment.

Great joy.

GLOG



Home.



Other John Cowart Titles
You May Enjoy
Include:

The Lazarus Projects
Crackers & Carpetbaggers
I'm Confused About Prayer!
Letters From Stacy

Please visit John Cowart's website
at
www.cowart.info

Bluefish Books



Cowart Communications
Jacksonville, Florida

www.bluefishbooks.info