

The Blizzard

The other night it was snowing and in the distance I heard an automobile horn blowing.

And it brought back memories.

Thirty years ago I was visiting a farm owned by a dear friend of mine. I had known Fred Miller when I was in the service and after the war we had continued our friendship.

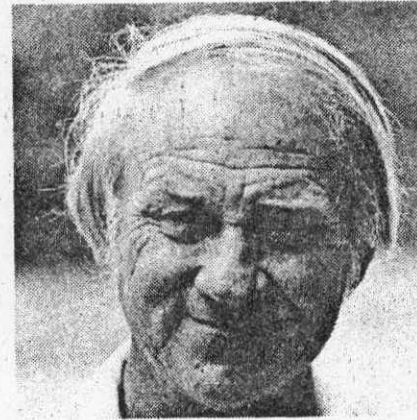
His farm wasn't big. An old house, a large barn, chicken house, smoke house, and shed. Fred's wife had died the year he got out of the service and when I visited him he was living on his farm with his six year old daughter, Amy.

The day was bitter cold. I remember the snow began falling around noon and grew in intensity as the day wore on. By three o'clock the fields were covered with a blanket of white. The wind had picked up and the shutters on the old house were groaning in protest.

Almost the entire afternoon I sat and played checkers with Amy while Fred did the chores. Every time he came back into the house, covered with snow, I would hand him a cup of steaming coffee. He would stand before the fire and warm himself and I remember him remarking that this was the worst storm he had ever experienced.

Country Philosopher

Amos Arthur Holmes



The storm increased in fury. It was a blizzard now and the snow was blowing in great swirls across the yard. At six o'clock Fred bundled himself up because he had to milk the cows. Amy begged to go, and Fred, after a thoughtful hesitation, took her with him.

Darkness had fallen and although I couldn't see the storm anymore I could feel it with every violent thrust against the house. An hour passed and Fred returned. He looked around, and asked, "Where's Amy?"

"She was with you" I replied.

"My God!" cried Fred, "She left the barn half an hour ago to return to the house."

He turned to run outside when I grabbed his arm. "Fred" I

pleaded, "It will be useless to go out into this blizzard. Let me get my coat and I will sit in my car and blow the horn continually. Never go beyond the sound of that horn. It's the only chance you've got."

I put on my coat and pushed against that raging snow until I reached my car. Fred disappeared into that violent storm and I sat blowing that horn every five seconds.

The wind was rocking the car and the snow was getting deeper and deeper. I sounded the horn for thirty minutes until I heard a slight sound outside the car. I pushed open the car door and saw Fred staggering toward the house. He was carrying Amy in

his arms and I stumbled in front of him to open the door to the house. He went past me and laid Amy upon the sofa.

I knew, in one swift glance, that she was dead.

Fred knelt beside the sofa and he took Amy's hand in his. He just knelt there swaying back and forth in this terrible agony. He kept brushing the snow from Amy's hair and calling her name. Over and over he called her name.

I turned away because this was unbearable to me. And while the storm still raged in fury I stood at the window of that old farmhouse and cried as if my heart would break.

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(My friends, last week I was in K-Mart and I saw a father reach down and slap his little six or seven year old daughter across the face. The child stood there in pain and embarrassment while the father's face was red with fury. As soon as I got home I wrote this story and I dedicate it to that father I saw in K-Mart. And to every father in our county whose children have become a burden to them.)