

I CARRY NO GUN



BERNIE MOJZES

I CARRY NO GUN, AN' I WEAR NO UNIFORM ('CEPT FOR THE hat—I like the hat). But here I am, far from my home, takin' the fight to the enemy in the middle of the most terrifyin' war that's ever been, and if that don't make me a soldier, then I'm buggered if I even know what the word means.

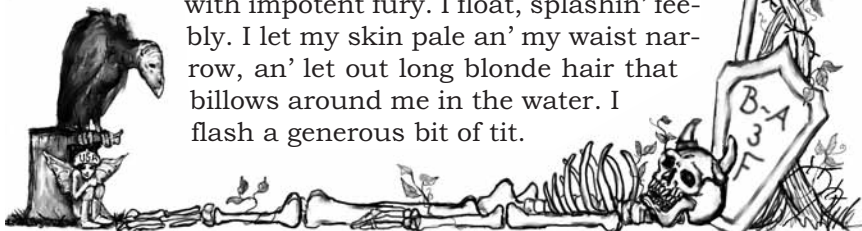
Also, I enlisted.

I admit, it's taken me a while, but I found it. This is where it all comes from. The machines. Tanks an' bombs an' anything else you can use to kill an' maim an' destroy. This is the place. An' this is the source.

I reach out a hand and touch the surface of the water. It sends shivers up my spine. So much power. Trapped. Tapped. It should flow, this river, tumblin' down mountains an' hillsides, or slippin' deep an' silent through plains an' valleys. Instead, here it sits, waitin' to be funneled off through pipes to water fields an' cities, or to turn the giant, cracklin' coils deep inside the dam.

It's no way for a river to live.

There's a shout; someone's seen me. I drop into the water an' let myself shift to a more useful shape. Around me, under the deceptive calm, the river seethes with impotent fury. I float, splashin' feebly. I let my skin pale an' my waist narrow, an' let out long blonde hair that billows around me in the water. I flash a generous bit of tit.



“Help!” I whimper. It’s like a matin’ call. “Help!”

The man shouts out to me—words of encouragement, I suppose—an’ sets his rifle down on the shore. There might be real concern in his voice. There might be something else, as well. I’m the reflection of a Pictish lass I knew, long ago, who drew many a hungry gaze, includin’ mine. He wades in an’ grasps my arm. I grasp him as well, an’ when I’m done, I give his well-picked bones to the river.

Don’t listen to the critics. A good, hearty German meal can satisfy the most discriminatin’ palate.



General Whittiker’s a funny ol’ fart. He’d stared at me when I first slopped into his office, big, webbed feet slappin’ against the thirsty hardwood. His eyes bugged out a bit, an’ he made a strange, gurglin’ noise somewhere in his throat. He took off his spectacles, wiped them on his uniform, an’ then put them back on.

“I see,” he said. He sat down heavily an’ rubbed his temples.

I blinked, an’ tried not to drip on the ornate carpet in front of his desk.

“You see? You see what? You’re losin’ the war. They’re bombin’ London an’ they ain’t gonna stop until they’ve tromped their nasty steel-toed boots all over the world. An’ I’ve talked to seven different recruiters, an’ not a one of them wants my help.”

The general took a deep breath, as if he were about to pontificate about somethin’, but then he paused. “What?” he demanded.

“Uh.” I was momentarily confused, but then I remembered that this was the military, an’ there were rules. “You’re losin’ the war. They’re bombin’ London an’ they ain’t gonna stop until they’ve tromped their nasty steel-toed boots all over the world. An’ I’ve talked to seven different recruiters, an’ not a one of them wants my help, SUH!”

My feet splashed as I brought them together smartly, and the whole thing would’a been very impressive indeed if I hadn’a miscalculated the salute an’ knocked myself on my arse.

Been an uphill battle gettin’ the ol’ boy to take me seriously since then. But now he’ll have to.



It’s a beautiful night. The full moon shimmers on the lake. The stars are playin’ peek-a-boo. I cover my face and pretend I