

The Tracks

(A Short Story by T.U.-P.)

This is the story of how I survived half-mile bridge, a crossing that rarely lives to tell the tale. Some twenty-five years ago, I was captive of the Templars and taken underground into a cavernous world below an innocent and naive city. It was just before the Solstice in late fall when I ended up in their underworld following the publication of a historical account of the Templars in Ontario. On one of my late walks after dusk along an old rail corridor, with thick mist settling from the tips of cedar woods down to a foot or so off the forest floor, a gang of Templars concealed behind a stand of poplars confronted me with cloaks over their heads, throwing a sack cloth over my head and taking me underground.

Feeling the scorn of their boots on my slender frame, I walked and stumbled with the sack cloth over my sight from the forest floor into some sort of subterranean passage with concrete floors. As I continued to be lead onward, I could hear the sound of many feet trudging within the passages with some chattering or casual conversation going on behind me. I estimated there were at least 5-8 Templars before my abduction, but as I continued to be lead onward, it felt the numbers had grown. Finally, we stopped for a short instant and I sensed the terrain had changed. I then felt another boot on my hind quarters and felt that I was on dirt ground with narrow cave-like walls occasionally grazing my sweat shirt as I continued trudging along with my mysterious captors. Was I now entering some type of Templar bunker? Judging by the forty minutes or so of blind and continuous walking, I must still have been in the Don Valley, possibly within the hollowed river banks of the 'dirty Don River'. Finally, the invisible procession halted and I was allowed to rest. The sack cloth still over my head, I continued to try and orient myself by listening to the voices and ambient sounds within the chamber where more Templars had seemingly gathered. Judging by the din of muffled human voices, their numbers could now have been in the twenties or thirties. After sitting in isolation for over a few hours, my stomach began to rumble. I also had soiled myself during the traumatic abduction and felt the definite need of a change of clothes. Finally, I felt the sharp poke of a blunt object that could have been a staff, walking stick or worst of all, the tip of a rifle. I felt pressured to stand again and was forcefully prodded to continue walking through more strange corridors. After a few minutes of another forced march, my foot grazed a metal step and I appeared to have reached some type of stairwell. Another the blunt object was once again shoved into my ribs causing a sharp pain that made me gasp, I began to ascend the steps finding myself turning as I climbed upward. After reaching the top step, I felt a rush of cold fall air, making me realize that I was again outdoors.

At this point, my story continues in logical succession with a different observer taking in the scene with the Templar hordes. Travelling South on the Don Valley Parkway, a young journalist from the Toronto Star notices a distant flame near the Don Valley Brick Works. Quickly checking the view from her passenger seat window, she notices a series of torches exiting from what appears to be an old Rail Bridge. Speeding South into the Toronto Downtown Core, the scene of the white robed hordes with dull flames rapidly evaporates in the distance like a brief uncomfortable day-dream.

At roughly the same time, a TTC train rushes East to Broadview Station, crossing the Don Valley over the Bloor St. Viaduct. A young teenager, feeling a bit lonesome on his commute home, looks over his shoulder for the brief instant that the subway exits the dark tunnel just after Castle Frank Station and notices a few flaming dots coming from the Brick Works. Unable to decipher the scene, the train plunges once again into the darkened tunnel.

Let's return to return to my point of view again. How did I escape half-mile bridge? The truth is, it wasn't the journalist on the DVP or the young commuter seeing things on board the distant rushing train above the Prince Edward Viaduct. What saved me was the view. As the gush of wind nearly blew the sack cloth off of my head, I felt my feet nearly trip over what could have been the tracks of an old rail line. As I faltered onward over the tracks, I felt a sharp jab in my abdomen and suddenly a hand pulled the sack cloth off of my head. As my eyes adjusted to my dark surroundings, I gasped feeling as though I was on the edge of a tall precipice on both sides. In front and behind me, the Templars, in crowds of at least one hundred, all were gathered wearing white robes and hoods, each carrying torches peppering the dark sky with a dull and dizzying light. Half-mile bridge felt like a fiery and narrow path over Tartarus with Lucifer leading a throng of angry earthly invaders. As I walked, I felt light headed, without a meal for a matter of several hours. Looking back behind me, curious about how I had ascended onto half-mile bridge, I got smacked again by the same Templar guard conscious that I might expose a secret part of their cultish nightly ritual. As I continued to walk what appeared to be Northward up a slightly familiar part of the Brick Works, I saw a large Templar bonfire being lit. I continued to edge closer to the growing inferno with the abyss almost engulfing me on both sides.

"Be prepared to board the fire train!" A Templar hollered at me in comprehensible English. Finally, I was lead off of the old CP rail-line and through a thicket as I made a reluctant approach toward the bonfire of inhumanities. Finally, I reached the lookout where I sometimes would enjoy my breakfast after visiting the farmer's market in the valley below. Though the view was much the same, the ravine paradise found on a pleasant morning walk was lost, and instead, one of the outer rings of the great furnace of a robed Satan stood before me, complete with Boschean demons in similar garb. At the edge of the bonfire, stood a rather authoritative hood leading the others with theatrical gestures and an animated presence. I stood at the edge of the massive flames seeing the light bring about a diabolical quality to the eyes visible through the small holes of the white cloth hoods, not unlike the way the bright stars of Orion the Hunter would appear to a neighboring fawn of a constellation in the skies overhead.

After taking in the ceremonies and seeing the head Templar that others referred to as 'The Leader' rallying his white robed armies all gathered on the same hill-top, I decided that I would make an attempt to communicate with my captors before I was engulfed into the mesmerizing and merciless bonfire where the hordes had all been promised by their leader that I would too would be consumed along with the kerosene and branches that fed their fiendish nightly fascinations.

Mustering all of the courage I had left in me I shouted: "Please... As you all must know, I published a book recently into your activities as invaders of this land..."

I paused to look around at the myriad hoods surrounding me and continued: "The truth is, the book is just an account of press reports and shouldn't be cause for concern..."

At this point, 'The Leader' shouted: "Bring forth the book!"

As soon as this had been uttered, two young Templars in small white robes, approached the bonfire and gave a small paper volume to 'The Leader' who bowed his head slightly in approval.

'The Leader' then shouted: "On this night we consume the history you have written!" Upon uttering these words, the book is tossed into the hungry flames and reduced to ashes. A few instants later, two large Templars grabbed me from both sides and brought me closer to the fire.

All waited upon 'The Leader' and what he would command.

'The Leader' remained pensive and suddenly hollered: "Let the fool escape! Let this be a lesson to you! Another book and we'll toss you into the fires of the VALLEY OF DOG!"

No sooner had he spoken these words, the throng began to bark out loud and I was released. Feeling terrified, I overcame the numbness in my legs and fled from half-mile bridge, the lookout and the Templars by running down a small switchback trail. Behind me, I heard rifles go off as I ran and ran, finally reaching the rail line trail and the darkened parts of the valley leading back home.

I have never written again about the Templars until today. It has now been some twenty-five years when I felt I had to risk going to half-mile bridge all over again. As you find this short passage, know from writing folks like myself that the Templars live among us and in our likeness but are very different indeed.

[The End]