

O'Heavenly Murder

By

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INTRODUCTION

What a remarkable time, 1956, to be living in the town of 'Saint Cloud' in Barron County; that is to say, if you were a homicidal fiend; but indeed, not so good if you were among those modest inhabitants who fell prey to such evildoers.

Saint Cloud can be found in the northwest expanse of Oklahoma, known as the 'Pan Handle' which borders the four states of Colorado, Texas, Kansas and New Mexico. The meager community is right off highway 56, and is home to some two hundred and ninety-nine hard workin' souls; the majority of which have fallen on tough times, or so they believed.

Yet, most of the town's upper crust--those individuals who give themselves way too much prominence--is mighty anxious concerning little Stacy 'Lollypop' Steimel; who is just scarcely eighteen, and comes from the wrong side of the tracks--if you catch my drift--and just happens to be with child.

It goes without saying, many Christian folks were off-put by the fact she came to be knocked-up, out-of-wedlock, and that Stacy won't name the little cuss who caused this dire

circumstance; which is probably a good thing, since the residents around here would surely beat the bejesus out of him, if they knew of his identity.

Just between you and me, it was that Bobby Taylor boy; a good-for-nothin' out-and- out scoundrel if there ever was one. Wouldn't surprise me at all to see his picture one day down at the post office; hangin' up on the FBI's top-ten most wanted bulletin board, yes sir to be sure.

But what seems to be upsetting the Christian community leaders more, is that with her baby's birth, the town of Saint Cloud will hit the big three hundredth mark; something that hasn't been achieved in over twenty-five years. Their concern is that it will be her baby that finally gets them to that glorious milestone, and that everyone will know her little darling is a 'bastard.'

Now, it may seem strange, but there could be a savin' grace on the horizon--as some holy rollers see it, or what I affectionately call the town snobs--as old man Dietzel, who is ninety-six, is knockin' on deaths door as we speak. Should he kick-the-bucket before Stacy has her little 'bastard' then the

town census would still be two hundred and ninety-nine, when the so-called blessed event comes 'round. I'd like to be able to say with certainty that no one is prayin' for old man Dietzel's death; but that would surely be a lie.

So now, with that little bit said, let's get to the heart of the matter, shall we. They never imagined things could be any worse off, until the murders brought forth the nightmarish fear that would soon engulf the once complacent and friendly little township. All kinds of eerie goings-on would be comin' out the woodwork; séance's, ghosts, dark spirits, mediums, aliens, walk-ins, zombies and all manner of bizarre things that go against good Christian tolerances.

Well, on the flip side of that coin, those who accept as true, those who call themselves 'New Agers' and whatnot, will most likely see what emerges as simply nothin' more than life lessons occurring unsurprisingly in accordance with universal laws, or some such gibberish. I myself am stickin' to the bible no matter how much those so-called 'Enlightened Seekers' say it's full of horse-hockey; when their time comes on judgment day, it won't be old Saint Peter who answers their knock at the

pearly gates; but surely indeed, it will be none other than Satan himself.

Now then, the pale-blue skies shine mind-numbingly over the parched landscape in this quiet province of our great republic. The dusty flat prairies afford one the ability to see far enough into the dreary distance; where nothin' of any eminence stands out; other than some cows and horses scattered around the seared remnants of arid wheat and hay fields. Most folks hereabouts are not too highly accomplished when it comes to schooling; with the exception of a few who hold important titles in the forlorn municipality.

Never see an average feller wearin' a fancy coat nor tie; mainly simple fare such as dog-eared straw hats, tattered T-shirts, faded knee-patched denims and leather high-top work boots. Women wear light, drab-colored dresses which come a tad down past their knees; never 'god forbid' see one wearin' pants of any make or kind, and only the local harlots wear demon inspired red lipstick, flashy makeup and nail varnish; those Jezebel's who are stalked late at night by the horny,

sweaty men of dire character who seek out the taverns of ill repute.

For the most part, Saint Cloud is running a good ten years behind the rest of the country, that is, when it comes to new fads and the like. Elvis Presley may be on his way to bein' a big sensation; but here, nary a teenager has heard of this fine fellow. No bobbysoxer's swooning over his hip-swinging gyrations in this backwoods little community. No colored folk here 'bout's neither. Not one soul in Saint Cloud could ever make the claim they met one in person, no siree.

Simple and cheap old-styled colonial one story homes with their faded, decrepit white picket fences; with even older homes still sporting the rust covered wrought-iron fences, and the old pale-white outhouses; to be found lined alongside the sandy paved lanes, with the exception of a few ostentatious homes of the more affluent.

Down on Main Street, where street lamps abound, the buildings of purpose can be found--Dalton Main Bank, Jefferson Davis Memorial Library, J.K. Peterman Post Office, and the Saint Cloud Municipal Complex--which houses the

Mayor's Office, Coroner's Office and Cold Storage Unit, Police Department and Jail--the Bozeman Café, Mueller's Drugstore, Zeeks Barber Shop, and Milly's Dress Shop among others--the roads there are a bit better maintained, and kept free of sand and blowin' tumbleweed; well, most of the time anyway, unlike the rest of the town.

No movin' picture shows; have to drive to Millersburg, some 22 miles away for that kind of high-toned showbiz. Yet most folks don't go anyway; can't afford the gas, nor the price of an afternoon matinee. Have only three insignificant grocery stores and one large one called Franklin's Market; but most have all the basics needed to sustain life of the common man; booze, cigarettes, German-bacon, taters and baked beans; among other palatable edibles. Phillips 66 station is the largest serving the local community, and it does sport three main gas pumps and one smaller diesel pump with 'full service' at all times. The other station, Shell, is only half its size, but still does a brisk business.

The old Lumber Mill is located only about seven and a half miles outside of town; yet, looks like it may be heading for

hard times as out-of-state competition is tryin' to move in. The Saint Cloud Area School building--which hosts all grades-- is only a stone's throw from main street, and was once the home of the 'Steinmann's Sewing Machine Factory' before it finally succumbed to financial difficulties back in 1932; a victim of the great depression no less.

The local ancestry of this simple town is mainly English, German and Irish; in that order. Most folks are employed through the lumber mill, ranchin', farmin', and the like; while the others simply work for the fore mentioned businesses and going concerns of town life.

Fear was about to clench its ugly grip on this sleepy hamlet, as on that first fateful day of May 13th, 1956; the first ghastly murder would come to full light and the town folk's reaction would run the gauntlet from simple blather to finger pointin' and suspicion of anyone who weren't a resident, or considered a good Christian.

I'm truly not sure why some folks get so worked up about dyin' since it's such an expected and common thing. Yet, some folks just love to run around all scared and fearful and worryin'

about every little thing; just a sad way to live your life if you ask me. Such was the mindset of the townsfolk of Saint Cloud; that is, before the quick sting of death came forth to wreak havoc on the ruthless and virtuous alike.

CHAPTER ONE

A peculiar pulsation moved ominously through the séance room, where only a single red-bulb brought forth enough light to make out the partakers of such a gathering. An eerie chill embraced the seven members of this special group of seekers, as they scrutinized intently the smoke-like mist that steadily rose up from beneath the floor in the midpoint of the circle they had fashioned.

Straining to see into the darkness, Beauregard Camp, who simply went by Beau, was not focusing on the mist, but was more interested in observing the Medium who was conducting tonight's séance, Miss Stella O'Rourke. His black pupils were wide as he stared across the circle to where she was sitting. Observing her demeanor, he could tell she was in a profound state of deep trance.

The vapor became more prominent as it started to form into the image of a tall man. It was a solid materialization. The genteel figure taking shape was clad in a soft, full length royal-blue robe, matched by a blue turban containing a single white

diamond just above his forehead. A glitter of tiny multi-colored gems entwined designs of brilliant sparkling colors throughout his apparel. Beau's attention now turned; he sat in stunned silence as the illuminated entity began to speak to the group.

“Peace unto all who are gathered here at present. I come with a message of love, hope and blessings. Prepare yourselves for the greatest fulfillment as you progress through this physical life in which you now dwell; I challenge you to seek a more positive personal identity.”

The majestic voice of this energy being was penetrating and unwavering as it filled the small basement. As Beau listened, his breathing became shallow and he became aware that his hands--which were astride his lap--were growing numb.

“You were born of mankind, an individual, and you shall live your life as an individual, and whether you accept it or not, you shall enter the Unseen World as an individual; required to answer, not to God, but to your true higher self for the individual acts you performed while in the physical body. You, and you alone, are the final judge and jury of the acts you

bring forth while expressing your chosen lessons, and of the use of your free-will while incarnate.”

The small group sat mesmerized as the Energy Being continued with its message.

"In the world beyond I am known as 'SAZARRA' and I am the Master Teacher for the one known to you as Miss Stella. It is very rare for one such as I to bring forth the following information; yet I chose to come forth at this time as a special courtesy to Miss Stella. One might call it a reward or prize for her altruistic and benevolent service to mankind, here in this physical world you reside in."

The group was all nodding in the affirmative as they too knew her to be so thoughtful, kind and sharing with what little she had in the material sense.

"For those who may not be aware, as her Master Teacher, it is I, and I alone, who has the final say in the physical life of the one known to you as Miss Stella.”

Fifty-three-year-old Stella O'Rourke was a very outgoing lass of Irish descent, who did everything with a dash of unselfish pure love mixed in. Her now deceased parents were

Roman Catholic by birth, but never truly practiced the faith. Once a year to mass was all they felt obliged to forgo. Young Stella knew she was different from most other children at an early age. Seeing and speaking to her departed grandparents seemed all so natural to her, yet Nancy, her younger sister seemed to be the so-called ordinary child. Stella's parents never paid much notice to her ramblings as they seen them to be; so they never discouraged the young girl when it came to her psychic sensibilities; but they clearly showed more attention to 'normal' Nancy.

Stella, this never married, above average gal, showered praise and blessings wherever she ventured and with whomever she encountered. Fiery red shoulder length hair made her emerald green eyes sparkle even at her age. Tall, for a woman standing five feet nine inches, made her seem regal, and she still sported a lean trim figure with a slight paunch; nothing like her sister Nancy; who at five foot, if that, sported brown hair and brown eyes, a pointy nose, and was wide and rounded. Looking at the two sister's side by side, one would think they were just friends and not related by blood.

Stella loved attending the 4-H Club gatherings and the annual fair. The flowers and animals were her favorite parts; not to mention the adorable people she encountered. She was living life to its fullest, and loved helping all who came to her with their personal problems.

SAZARRA continued, "The gift I bring to this assemblage here tonight is that of a 'Past or Future' life reading. You will each be given the choice to have a past lifetime, or a future lifetime discussed as you so desire, therefore let us proceed. Who at this time would like to go first?"

Never the shy one, Beatrice Reid shot right in, "Me, me, oh me, please!" She was waving her hand in the air like a little girl in a classroom who needed to go pee-pee. The others sat quietly and let her go first, as Ruth Anderson and Mary Achtenberg both shook their heads in mock disbelief at her childlike antics.

Beatrice just turned thirty-four and had been employed at the Jefferson Davis Memorial Library for the last nine years. She had green eyes splashed with hazel and was short, only a half-inch over five feet, yet weighed just a tad less than two

hundred pounds. Dark short-bobbed hair was her trick to appear slenderer, or so she believed; yet she was wrong in her thinking, for many townsfolk gossiped about her short bulky girth and unfashionable hairdo; doing so behind her back of course, to be more Christian-like about it. Dark-pink horned-rimmed thick glasses made her even more homely unfortunately; but she always seemed to have a wonderful disposition about life, as her kindness gushed forth splashing over everyone she encountered; whether they liked it or not. Her job at the library brought her boundless joy for there she found what she thought was her prince charming, Alan Wallace, her boss who she occasionally dated.

“Very good then,” SAZARRA commented, “Which will it be...a past life or a future life yet to be experienced?”

“Oh, a past life please,” Beatrice answered now more reserved in her manner as she saw through the red-light of the room the facial expressions Mary and Ruth were exchanging; which she didn’t appreciate, but was accustom to seeing; yet always pretending not to notice.

“Very well, your last incarnation into this world was in the southern area of what today would be called Manitoba...”

“Isn’t that somewhere in Mexico?” Ruth interrupted.

“No silly, it’s in Italy,” Mary responded self-assuredly; both women always trying to one-up the other.

Alan Wallace chimed in, “Sorry ladies, but it’s in Canada, just north of North Dakota or thereabouts.”

“Show off,” Beatrice said grinning as she loved the fact that he had knocked Ruth and Mary, those two busy-bodies as she saw them, down a peg.

SAZARRA now spoke, “Alright, if we can dispense with the hilarity, I wish to continue.”

The group now sat quietly giving their full attention to the materialized spirit as his quiet admonishment struck home.

“Yes Beatrice, Manitoba is in the region controlled by that nation of today known as Canada, but it wasn’t known by that name during the lifetime you spent there. As this is a past life dates can be given; you were born in the month of December, the 3rd day of that month in the year 1641. You lived to the age of seventy-seven returning to the Unseen World on the 3rd

day of December. You can calculate the mathematics to see the year of your death.”

Thinking quickly in her head Beatrice quickly said, “Was it 1720?”

Alan politely corrected her, “More like 1718 dear, and did you notice he said you were born, and died, on the very same month and day?”

“Oh yes, you’re right,” she said, “and no...I didn’t catch at all about my birth and death being the very same. Thank you for your kind observation,” she said winking at him; yet in the dull glow of the red-bulb he missed her wink entirely.

“Sorry to interrupt, but I’m just a bit curious about the December 3rd birth and death thing. Was it just a rare coincidence, or was there some special meaning attached to it?” Ellen asked.

Ellen Wellington was halfway into her ninetieth year at the time of this gathering; a short feisty woman of modest means who was a retired assistant principle from the Millersburg school system. Moving to Saint Cloud at age sixty-five to live

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