

On Fame's Eternal Camping Ground



DAN ARNESON sat at his desk on the third floor of Old Dorm. Lifting his eyes he saw a corner of the campus, a field, a brick plant and a battery of cannon on Oak Ridge. His thoughts had been not upon his lessons nor upon the scrub baseball game in which he was to play on Saturday, but upon Anne Dorrance. It was the first time that he had been thus distracted and tortured. He was tortured because, loving her, he had never even spoken to her.

By
Elrie Singmaster

Anne was the daughter of Major Dorrance, the Superintendent of the Gettysburg battlefield. No trees could be cut without his consent, no stone removed from a crumbling wall. He had been known to threaten with prison those who picked flowers. Most abominable in his eyes were the oil stations, eating stands and camps adjacent to the field with their signs *Visit Our Coffee Shoppe or Stay At Our Camp-A-Night*.

Guards and guides and laborers on the field thought him stern but just; Anne's admirers thought him cruel if not sadistic. Anne, a Junior in High School, was not allowed to attend dances; visitors, permitted only two evenings a week, were required to leave at ten o'clock. With half the upper classmen anxious to call, there was no chance for Freshmen.

Freshmen, besides, lived under multitudinous regulations. Until Memorial Day they were not allowed to speak to girls; they were forbidden certain sections of the campus, they were compelled to wear black neckties and socks and brilliant little red caps called dinks.

Sighing, Dan rose and pressed the electric button beside the door. He faced a double-decker bed very ineptly made. On the wall back of each pillow was suspended a sheet of tin and against the tin was hung an alarm clock.

Returning to his desk and pushing his Geometry aside he began to sketch initials—DMA and AMD. The letters were well drawn, so was a tall figure easily identifiable as himself and a short dark curly-haired girl he meant for Anne. His own hair was blond and his eyes were wide and blue. "If I only knew her! If I could only get an introduction to her!" he thought.

He glared at the lower berth of the double-decker which belonged to his roommate Frank Steger, a Junior. The covers were spread even more carelessly than those on his own upper berth. "He's sitting on the porch with her," Dan thought savagely. "I wish her father'd come out and kill him." When there came a loud knock at the door he did not answer.

"Bang, bang!" said a stout fist. "Bang, bang!"

"I gotta telegram for Frank Steger," announced a strange voice. "I gotta give it to him."

"Stick it under the door. It'll keep."

The telegram appeared under the door. "I don't care if he never gets it," thought Dan. Then his heart jumped. "If I take it to him, he'll have to introduce me!"

Instantly he tore up his scribbles, perched his red cap on his curls and straightened his tie. He ran down the stairway and the long flight of iron steps outside. The building was white, of a pure Colonial architecture; in the moonlight it had an unearthly beauty.



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was a virgin space! Waving his arms, he traced letters. "Love," said he, exalted, and wrote DMA. "Returns love," he said, and wrote AMD.

"Angel!" he breathed and ran down the road. "I'll write and ask her to go with me. O Desirable! O Effulgent! O Ineffable!" Running, he wrote in air.



He took a letter from the pocket of his pajamas, pressed it to his lips and placed it in the inner pocket of his coat. The letter was from Anne Dorrance accepting his company for Memorial Day.

"Be here at nine o'clock," she directed. "We can sit on the porch till ten, then go to the cemetery."

By the time Dan reached the base of General Warren's statue the sun was well above the horizon. He broke off a few blooming branches of dogwood and tossed them aside, following them with his cap. He took from his pocket the hammer and chisel and looked up. The beetling rock would hide him and the bushes protect him from observers in the valley.

With a piece of chalk he drew letters—DMA and AMD. "Click, click," said hammer and chisel. To him they said "Anne, Anne!" He completed his initials and began Anne's. The rock was hard and his shoulder and elbow ached cruelly. At four o'clock, numb with weariness, he put his tools into his pocket. "For the world to see," he thought. "When I'm dead my love will live."

He had cut Saturday courses and when he reached the campus he went to borrow a classmate's notes. He did not study, however; by seven o'clock he slept in his lofty berth.

The April rains arrived in May. In ploughed fields showed little objects whiter than stone—lead bullets bleached by seventy years of weather. Deciding that he would search for relics, old Jim Canoodle, the guard, toiled up Little Round Top. Striking his knee on a rock he uttered a loud "Ouch!" As he straightened up he caught a flash of red. He picked up Dan's cap, examined it, studied the initials printed with ink on the band and put it into his pocket. He hated the students who kept him awake at night, chalked his sidewalks and parked their ramshackle cars

before his door. His sister kept a boarding-house. Dan Arneson came there for his meals.

"I'll bet it's his," he thought. "Some dumb initiation."

He peered into crevices, raked loose earth with his hand, and again straightened his back. "Judas Priest!" he shouted and leaped forward. He read Dan's sculpture silently, then aloud. He turned the red cap inside out. He looked up at the heavens and down at the earth. "Great rattlesnakes!" he cried.

Any other guard, he believed, would rush into town and broadcast this amazing news. He had good sense, he would tell the Major first. He went back to his post. Four times in the afternoon he climbed the hill and looked at the initials. Each time he said, "I wouldn't want to be that poor worm!"

Major Dorrance sat in his handsome office in the Federal building. The Major was in a bad temper. A Harrisburg reporter had described the oil stations and camps and stands encroaching upon the field. "The Pennsylvania monument would be an admirable site for a soda fountain," he said. "And why not an oil station in the clump of trees toward which Pickett charged?"

The Major was also enraged by the frequent visits of Frank Steger. He disliked Frank's complexion, his voice and especially his assurance. He recalled Dan's politeness. "That tall boy who said 'Sir' is the only one of Anne's friends who has breeding," he thought.

Jim Canoodle knocked at the door. His face was pale—the Freshman's offence was as vile in his eyes as murder. Jim took a cap from one pocket, a slip of paper from the other. "H-here!" he said with a hoarse gasp a little like the cough of a lion. "L-look! I found this cap on Little Round Top. You see the initials—DMA."

The Major calmed down. "Some Freshman lost it and doesn't know it."

Canoodle raised his hand as if commanding silence. "I lifted my head and what did I see? Carved on General Warren's rock—DMA and AMD. Daniel M. Arneson boards with my sister. He's a Freshman. Shall I fetch the constable?"

The Major's face was scarlet. "Get him and tell him to hold his tongue."

Snooky Fry, the constable, knew better than to create any commotion. "I'll get Mrs. Hudders to call him to the kitchen," he planned. "She can offer him an extra slice of pie."

Dan, full of pie, listened complacently. Did Major Dorrance intend to invite him to a meal? It was not until he was climbing the long steps to the office that his heart sank.

"Here he is," said Snooky, his nose wrinkling with curiosity.

"You're excused, Fry," said the Major. Dan saw his cap on the table. Ah, someone had found his dink! He had had to buy a new one. Freshmen dared not go hatless. "You found my hat!" he exclaimed.

"No! How, sir?"

"Your parents would doubtless be pained to see your name in headlines in the city papers. Student Defaces Gettysburg Battlefield!"

"What!" gasped Dan.

The Major thrust the slip of paper under his nose. "Whose initials are they?"

"Mine, sir."

"Add those?"

"They're mine reversed," Dan said quickly. "G-d to hear it. It's a low thing to carve a woman's initials in a public place."

Dan's knees threatened to let him drop to the floor.

"Dean Weller's my friend," continued the Major. "I don't want to add to his troubles. Go out there tomorrow and carve off your work."

"Tomorrow!"

"Tomorrow. Memorial Day. Make the rock smooth. Rain or shine!"

"Couldn't I do it on Saturday?"

"Have you classes on Saturday?"

"Only two."

"You do it tomorrow."

"But nobody can see the carving!"

"No? How do you suppose we found it?"

Dan lay in bed wearing his pajamas over his underwear. Frank came in and threw himself down and in a moment was snoring. Instantly Dan swung his feet over the edge of his berth. Once more he dressed breathlessly, once more he felt in his pockets. He had a heavier hammer now and three chisels, one with a blade two inches across. Packed among them were three candles.

At half-past three he knelt before his carving, a candle in his hand. The letters seemed huge. He had written Anne that he would be at her house at ten o'clock. He anchored the candle on a rock with melted tallow. This would be easy—and all would soon be obliterated. He made one stroke, two, then he held his hammer suspended. Round him was a soft patter, then a gentle hiss, then total darkness.

HE rain ran into his eyes and down his back. When daylight came he saw with horror that he had merely chiseled a larger D. After a while he heard the college clock strike seven. That meant the wind was swinging to the north. Presently the rain ceased. He heard the clock strike eight. Now he had erased two of his initials.

"I'll have to rest," he thought. His muscles burned as did his blistering palms.

Suddenly he leaped to his feet. "Boom!" said a cannon. He counted twenty-one "booms."

"The President's here," he thought. He began to pound furiously, almost every stroke going wild. "I'll never have her here," and with the handle of his hammer he wiped away a tear. Then, startled by a sound above him he looked up. Over the edge of the rock projected a slender leg in a brown stocking and a sturdy shoe. There showed the edge of an orange dress.

"Not you!" he cried hoarsely.

Anne held a basket in her hand. Her dark brows almost met, her cheeks blazed. "Me," she said. "I saw you going into the office. I got it out of him." She lifted the paper which covered the basket. "I have sandwiches and strawberries. If you want anything else I'll go and fetch it."

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"I suspected something when I saw you. I got it out of him at breakfast. Darn his old rocks, he has millions of them."

A strong wind brought the sound of music. The band was playing "Hail to the Chief!"

"Sit down," Anne pointed to a flat rock and handed Dan a sandwich and a pickle. "I'll eat some too."

At last Dan succeeded in gasping out a sentence. "You won't see the President!"

Anne lifted out many more sandwiches, more pickles, a bowl of strawberries, a bottle of cream, two saucers and two spoons. She lifted out last of all a hammer and a chisel. "The President," she said, "who's he?"