

LITERARY PAGE

The Hoofs of Hate

By BOB SCOTT

DIMMY was sitting under a tree. Not a large tree like the kind you're used to at home on the farm. Just a scrubby little olive tree set on a barren hillside. Dimmy had been rather put to it to find this tree. Tree were hard to find these days. Trees just didn't grow in Greece these days. Nothing wholesome grew in Greece anymore. Nothing, just hate. Not fiery hate, for to hate with fire and passion one must be strong. One must possess vigor to hate with vigor. Hate thrives on suppression but only when the suppressed are alive. And to be alive one must eat. And there is nothing to eat in Greece. Water is free, sometimes. But water cannot fill empty bellies, nor does it relieve the awful pain that shrinks the stomach. One would think that a shrunken stomach would desire nothing but it is not so. And so there is no food in Greece, just as there are no trees, or grass or birds to cheer the air. And Dimmy sat under the scrubby little tree in Greece on the barren hillside that could produce nothing.

His name was Dimitrios Ascalpos, but it takes breath to say Dimitrios and breath, as well as food, is scarce in Greece. The less one breathes, the less one feels the pain in the belly. Many, many have stopped breathing in Greece since they came. And so his name was Dimmy now for Dimmy takes less breath. So Dimmy sat under the scrubby little tree on the barren hillside and thought. The experience was almost a new one to Dimmy for in Greece one does not think. Thought lives only in a mind that is alive, and in Greece when the belly is empty the mind is empty. And Dimmy thought. But with the functioning of the mind came the realization that there was no use for thought. No use for thought or endeavor. For when the belly . . . but that was one of the thoughts that must be

avoided. Astapole had thought. He had thought about food. He had thought about the lack of it. Astapole had stolen, from the very kitchen on their barracks, had stolen a chicken. And such a plump, tender chicken. And Astapole was dead. Shot. At dawn. Against the wall that was so pitted with the marks of so many other high-velocity bullets that had brought swift and merciful ending to the existence of so many empty bellies.

And Dimmy thought again, for Dimmy had found a pomegranate; true, it had been a shrunken little thing, shrunken like his belly, but it was most in spots. And it filled the void. It was better than the hot mud that filled so many empty voids. The pomegranate had stopped the hurt, so Dimmy thought. And he thought of Astapole. Poor, dumb Astapole. He had once been the strongest man in Dimmy's village. Easily he had lifted an anvil with one hand and the girls had giggled and sighed with improper boldness at his strength and Astapole was pleased, pleased in his dumb animal-like way. But when they buried Astapole, one man, a man of their company—when he had buried Astapole, he had lifted his body like that of a child. One hand under his armpit and thrown him into the shallow pit that was to be his ending. And the people of the village had been glad for Astapole was gone and there was another empty belly gone.

DIMMY though but the thought came had so Dimmy stopped. He dropped his hand from the rest in the crotch of the tree and dropped it upon the ground. The dry grass crumpled and turned to dust under the weight of his hand. Dust of my fathers, Dimmy thought, but the thought was hard so he pushed his hand painfully into the hard dry earth. His earth, Dimmy thought sadly, and this time the thought was easier, it felt good in his heart. Yes, he thought triumphantly, my earth. So he pushed his hand farther into the earth. Poor dry earth. Untilled for these past three years. For earth must be tilled to placate the barrenness that was inevitable. And empty bellies have no strength to spare upon the earth. And so the earth, thought Dimmy, is of no use to us.

Too much thought has exhausted Dimmy, for in Greece when the belly is empty, the mind is empty, and full only when forced. And there is no force except theirs in Greece. So Dimmy slept, but even sleep is bad in Greece for the mind cannot rest when the belly is empty. Asthelle had filled the void with water one night and had slept well, but when they buried her, her twisted body would not fit in the narrow little hole they had dug for her. And the man had cursed in a foreign tongue and had jammed her down roughly into the hole that hid another empty belly.

And Dimmy slept, and he dreamt of many things. And the things were bad for when the belly . . . But they were bad and Dimmy awoke and the wind was blowing. A cool, moist breeze that troubled Dimmy, he did not know why at first, thought is not easy in Greece. And then he knew why. It was not usual. The wind was only moist in the spring. Moist when the olive trees were

here on this one spot and then go no further."

"No further, you fool. It is only in full leaf. When the wheat was high in the fields and on the hillsides. When the grapes were on the vines in great purple clusters and the wine was fresh and . . . and the bellies were full.

AND then Dimmy heard the noise; at first it was just a noise and then became clearer and Dimmy knew what it was. It was the music of the pipes. The pipes of some shepherd on the hillside. But that was wrong, for who blows pipes upon the hillsides of Greece in the evening. And Dimmy wondered. It was evening. And those were pipes upon the hillside. Who blows pipes on the hillsides of Greece, for in Greece one does not blow pipes now for air is scarce as food in Greece and when the belly . . . But the pipes were playing.

Dimmy shook his head for this was wrong and one cannot think easily. Especially when one is confronted by such a problem as this. The thought was unheard of. And when the sound got closer Dimmy wondered even more. The music. It was so strange and loud. Who plays the pipes loudly in Greece? It was, yes, it was verboten. But Dimmy did not run nor did he even arise for, well what is the use when one's belly is empty. And life is so hard.

And then Dimmy saw them. They, they were there and it was all so confusing for when the belly is empty one does not see very well, but they were there. Dim, shadowy figures, but they were there. And . . . yes, dancing in the twilight. Dancing! Dancing in Greece. Who was this mad group of people who danced in the evening twilight.

But were they people? People in Greece do not dance as they do not eat and when one does not eat there is no use dancing. Better to save that . . . but . . . oh, it was all so impossible. And that music. Those weird pipes. He must be a madman who plays those pipes so wildly, thought Dimmy. Pipes that stirred the soul as it had not been stirred these last three years. Not since Dimmy, then Dimitrios, had met Lena. But one does not think of such things now. When the belly is empty there is no love, no passion, no life. Only existence. But the music was louder and stronger and Dimmy was afraid. Of what he knew not. It is enough to be afraid and know why, but the fear of the unknown, is it not the greatest fear of all? And Dimmy's head reeled and his eyes swam with tears of fright. Fright unknown, fright unanswerable.

And Dimmy saw him. Yes, him! And he played the pipes as he had oft before played them. And Dimmy knew his fear as instinctively as he knew the form before him. Yes, yes, it was he. He, the gold of the forest, he who laughed at the wayfarer as he ran from his dread presence. He, the god of the forest nymphs, the dread satyres. He, the god of the shepherd. Back here, here in his beloved Greece. And Dimmy was unconscious, for when the belly is empty. . .

HERR Commandant wore good boots. Good German leather boots that trod easily over the

White Wine

Manita leaned
Across the candlelight
And said:
"A melted snowflake
Burning on the lips
Is like this wine, beloved."
Still it slips into my mind,
That thing she said,
Since wine is ice and snow
Manita being dead.

—By Marjorie Major.

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rutted ground of the hillside.

"Herr major, Herr major. This is the spot. The tracks lead here, a trick. They have covered their tracks. It is only a trick."

Herr Commandant was an impatient man, and the babblings of his almost hysterical aide grated on the ragged edges of his nerves. After all, to have this thing happen in his district. No clues, no sign of the attacker, nothing but the feeble babblings of hysterical officers and non-coms. A whole garrison of good German boys thrown into com-

plete, inexplicable panic. Wild stories of pipe music. Pipes! The commandant had spat out the word. And what was more, two complete barracks and the officers' quarters as well as the cook shed and auxiliary buildings burnt to the ground. And this, yes, this was the crowning point. They follow the trail. And such an impossible trail at that. Cloven hoof marks, a herd of swine. It was impossible.

And what was more impossible, the trail had led them through the rocks and over most of the surrounding country-side and now it ended at the feet of a Greek, long since dead, sitting bolt upright under a scrubby little olive tree. Himmel, it was impossible. Cloven hoofs!

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