

# BODIES IN BONNY DOON

by Nancy Lynn Jarvis

Jack cupped his hand around Danny's ear and shouted, trying to make himself heard over the thudding punk rock music that filled the Catalyst, "I could use another beer. It's your turn to buy." Jack pulled away and grinned at his friend, hoping he had heard.

"The set's almost over," Danny shouted back.

"Yeah, but I'm still thirsty." Jack yelled "still" louder than his other words for emphasis. "I've been singin' right along with Good Riddance—this might be their best revival gig yet. Besides this place is crazy wild tonight. The band's havin' a great time. They're gonna do an encore when they finish." He shook his head. "I bet they do two-three tunes at least. I'll be dead dry before we leave. Come on, Dude, it's your turn."

Danny tipped his head from shoulder to shoulder and then shrugged his acquiesce. "Okay. Sure. You want another Bud?"

"What?"

"Another Bud?" Danny shouted louder.

Jack gave a thumbs-up jerk of his hand.

Danny rose and eased his way through the seats and tables scattered in the room and wiggled his way between people dancing to the music, finding it easier sometimes to move by joining a group of dancers than by pushing through them. It took several minutes before he reached the outer bar area and negotiated a passage thru the people drinking there to get close enough to order.

"Two Buds," he hollered.

The experienced bartender didn't try to make himself heard over the din. He held up both hands with fingers extended. Danny understood. He produced a ten-dollar bill from his pocket and reached over the head of a man seated at the bar to hand it to the bartender.

"Careful, man. You touched my head. You trying to mess with me?" The seated man ran his hand over his shaved head and glowered up at Danny.

"Sorry. It's tight in here."

The bartender produced two beer-filled plasticized cups and held them aloft.

Danny turned sideways to face the unhappy patron and squeezed closer to the bar. He reached his hands out past the still frowning customer and collected the beers. He turned carefully, once again facing the man and began a snail-paced slide past him.

The man rose from his bar stool and stood, his face inches from Danny's. He reeked of something stronger than beer and wobbled slightly, grabbing hold of the bar to steady himself. "You're in my personal space, Punk. I think you are tryin' to mess with me."

"Chill, man. I'm just trying to get my beers."

"I don't think so. I think you're trying to piss me off. You better give me one of whatever you got

there and say you're sorry for rubbing me the wrong way."

Danny didn't hesitate; he saw no point trying to argue with a quarrelsome drunk who was looking to brawl. "You're right. Sorry. Here, have a beer on me."

The hostile drunk sat down and held his hand up toward the cup Danny offered. He was about to take it when a woman trying to maneuver toward the bar as Danny had, bumped Danny's arm. The proffered beer sloshed and a bit of it splashed out of the cup and ran down the belligerent man's arm and inside his leather jacket sleeve.

"You dumped beer on me, cabrón!"

"I didn't mean to," Danny sputtered.

"Yes you did! This is my favorite jacket; your wrecked it. I'm gonna' kill you!" The man wobbled to his feet unsteadily.

Danny hastily put both beers on the bar. "They're both yours." He pressed away from the bar and through the crowd as quickly as he could, glancing over his shoulder as he pushed forward. The man was following him, but moving more slowly than Danny was.

Danny was a good fifty feet ahead of him by the time he got back to Jack. "Come on, we gotta' get out of here. Now!" Danny shouted as he hoisted Jack's elbow. "There's a crazy pissed-off guy after me. He called me an asshole and said he was gonna' kill me. Here he comes! Come on!"

"We can't leave yet. The band's still playing..."

"This is for real, Dude! We gotta' go now!"

Jack's expression mimed his disgust and disappointment, but he had never seen his friend so agitated. He reluctantly got up and followed Danny on a zigzag path thru concert goers to the opposite side of the room where both young men turned away from the stage and hurried to the back of the venue. Jack had trouble keeping up with Danny, who moved with the energy panic imbued.

Once they got outside the Catalyst, Jack paused. "You made me miss the last..."

"We gotta' get to your truck and get out of here," Danny wailed over his friend's complaint.

"Okay, okay, oh, paranoid one," Jack mocked. "See, I got my keys out already and everything."

Jack started walking at a leisurely pace. Danny hurried ahead of him at a sprint.

"We got so lucky finding a spot just around the corner," Jack mused. "That never happens downtown when the Catalyst has a good band."

Danny reached the end of the block and disappeared around the corner.

"Great. So now I'm talkin' to myself," Jack muttered.

A shaved-headed man rushed past him. As the man passed under a street light, Jack saw a glint of metal in his hand. It looked like a knife blade. He turned the corner like Danny had, moving at a quick clip.

The shaved-head man was following Danny, Jack realized, and Danny was right: the dangerous looking man had evil intent on his mind. Jack started running after him.

By the time he caught up with them, the angry man was brandishing a knife and closing in on a panic stricken Danny, who had his back pressed against Jack's truck and his hands in the air.

Jack launched a surprise attack. He smashed his right hand down hard on the shave-headed man's extended arm at the wrist. The knife dropped from his hand. At the same time, he grasped the man around the neck in a choke hold.

"Get out of here, loser," he shouted.

The man struggled, kicking at Jack's shins and jabbing an elbow into his ribs. He didn't succeed in completely knocking the wind out of Jack, but came close. Jack tightened his grip and pressed against the man's head with his right hand, trying to control him. The man flailed about, working to land backward punches against Jack's sides. Jack tightened his arm and pressed harder. There was a barely audible popping sound like someone cracking his knuckles and the struggling man went limp.

Jack released him and doubled over, gulping air. The man slid to the sidewalk and laid there, his legs bent outward like frog's legs. His arms were unnaturally placed, with one bent back under him and the other stretched off to the side.

Danny knelt next to the fallen man and pressed his fingers to the man's neck. "I can't find a pulse," he whispered urgently. "Is he dead? I think he's dead!"

Jack dropped to his knees, bent over the still figure, and ripped the man's jacket and shirt open to expose more skin around his neck, hoping with a bigger search area, he'd find an elusive pulse, a sign of life. He pressed his fingers into the man's flesh hard, but no matter where his fingers searched, he didn't find what he was looking for.

He straightened his back and pulled away slowly. Two things were now obvious to him: the fallen man's open and vacant eyes said Danny was right, and the tattoo he had exposed told him he was a dead man, too.

"Those are gang tats," he croaked, unable to speak in a normal voice.

Danny pulled out his phone. "There's a police station a couple of blocks away. I'll get them here."

Jack grabbed the phone out of Danny's hand before he could dial 911. "No!"

"We'll be OK. He was trying to kill me. It was self-defense. My uncle's an attorney. If you want, I'll call him first just to make sure I'm right before I call the police."

"No phone calls. It doesn't matter if it was self-defense. Those are gang markings. This guy's in a gang. You call the police and this will make the news and his gang will avenge him. Don't you understand? They'll kill us."

"But he came after me," Danny squeaked.

"Hey, innocent baby, none of that matters. I know. I grew up in a rough neighborhood; I've seen how it works. To the gang, we killed their brother. They have to come after us. It's a matter of honor. We gotta' get him out of here before someone sees him. We gotta' get rid of his body before someone finds it and the police start asking questions. Somebody probably saw him yelling at you in the Catalyst. Somebody will remember you and me leaving so fast that we bumped into people. We'll get connected to him and his gang will kill us."

"Jack, I think you're overreacting..."

"You want to take a chance with your life, fine? I'd say go ahead and be stupid, but you'll get me killed, too. We gotta' get rid of him and we have to do it before the concert ends and people start swarming out of the Catalyst."

Danny looked at the dead man again and nodded. "What do we do with him?"

"For starters we get him in the back of my truck and get out of here as fast as we can. You take his feet."

Jack didn't take the time to lower the tailgate. He reached under the dead man's shoulders and together they heaved him over the side of the truck bed without ceremony or respect. The lifeless body rolled until it came to rest on its stomach against the far side of the truck bed.

Jack opened the passenger side truck door and pulled out a small tarp from under the seat. “Help me with this,” he commanded. They covered their kill with it and tucked it in under him, letting the dead weight of the man’s body hold the tarp in place. “Let’s go!”

“Wait,” Danny breathed. “His knife. Where is it? We have to get his knife.”

Danny retrieved it and tossed it into the truck bed with the owner who no longer needed it.

Jack pulled out from the curb on Cathcart, stopped at the stop sign at Cedar, and paused for longer than he needed to before making a right turn. He did the same thing at the stop sign at Church Street, twisting in an exaggerated way to look left and right for cars. He let a Chevy Silverado go by; no point in chancing people seated in the higher vehicle might peer into his Toyota Tacoma truck bed. Finally, he turned right on Chestnut and traveled up the extension toward Mission Street.

Jack wasn’t sure he had breathed during their short trip, but he must have because, with his cautious driving, it took them more than five minutes to reach the intersection. At the top of the hill they hit the left turn light on green and Jack turned with it, instinctively taking the shortest route available to get out of town.

Neither man had said a word since they began their journey, but once they were on Mission Street, Jack broke their silence. “I say we strip him and put him in the water at Greyhound Rock,” he said as they passed Laurel Street. “No ID and maybe by the time someone finds him, maybe no finger prints.”

“His tattoos will hold up. I’ve seen it on CSI where they figure out who someone is by tracking tattoos,” Danny advised. His voice quavered as he spoke and he was beginning to shiver with the realization of what they had done.

“We can use his knife to cut them off.”

“God, Jack.”

“You got a better idea?”

Danny was silent for a moment and then started nodding his head. “Yeah. Yeah, I think I do. I told you my uncle’s an attorney. He’s a local, too. He lives in Bonny Doon. When I was a kid, I spent most of my summers at his place with my cousins because both my parents worked full-time and my aunt didn’t, so I’d get shipped here and she’d keep an eye on all of us. It was great to be a kid here, kinda’ like summer camp. We could catch blue belly lizards and snakes. There was even a wild turkey around a couple of summers that we named Esmeralda...”

“So you had a great childhood. What do we do with our dead guy?”

“You didn’t let me finish. There were always stories about bodies being dumped in Bonny Doon. I never saw one, but one of my cousins told me a neighbor told him somebody saw a skeleton hand sticking up out of the dirt on Smith Grade.”

Jack threw his head back against his headrest and rolled his eyes. “This isn’t the time for urban legends, Dude.”

“So stuff may have gotten exaggerated, but bodies do get dumped in Bonny Doon and they don’t get found. There’s a guy missing right now. They found his truck on fire, but they never found him and it’s been years. If we dump our guy, and do it right, by the time they find him—if they find him—nobody’s gonna’ remember him chasing us out of the Catalyst. They’ll think it was a gang dump or maybe a drug war killing—that’s what they always say it is—and never think of looking any further.”

“You think we should dump him on Smith Grade?”

“Smith Grade’s the road in most of the stories, but I think Ice Cream Grade’s a better place to dump

a body. It's more secluded; there aren't houses on long stretches of it. Weekend bikers don't like the road. He could rest in peace."

Jack pulled out his iPhone.

"You don't need GPS. I know how to find it. Keep going like you are until you hit Bonny Doon Road and make a right. It's maybe ten minutes to the turn."

As Jack slowed and made the turn off Highway 1, Danny gave him his next instructions. "There's gonna' be a school on the right. Turn right at the road past it. That's Ice Cream Grade."

"That's a weird name for a street."

"Kind of. What I heard is way back the people who lived up here got together every Sunday and worked on putting in the road. When they finished working for the day, they'd have an ice cream social. When it was time to dedicate the road, it got called Ice Cream Grade because of that."

They hadn't reached the school when Danny shouted, "Turn right here," and pointed to a road coming off Bonny Doon Road at a sharp right angle.

Jack obeyed, but had to turn so abruptly that the body in the back seemed reanimated. Danny turned and looked out the rear window in time to see it slide toward the truck bed center and then crumple toward the tailgate.

"Augh!" he screamed.

"Is he still in there?" Jack could feel his heart pounding.

"Yeah."

"I thought you said you knew where we were going."

"I do. I just remembered this road—Martin Road—is a shortcut to Ice Cream Grade and is really quiet," he giggled nervously, "unless there's a fire call or an accident and the volunteer firemen come out of their station when we're going by it."

Jack blanched.

"It's not gonna' happen," Danny snickered. But the nervousness in his laugh betrayed his lack of conviction.

"Turn right," Danny instructed as they reached the T intersection with Ice Cream Grade. "We shouldn't have anything to worry about from here on."

Trees surrounded the road and their dense canopy blocked light from the few stars and quarter moon above. The road snaked and dropped as they progressed, becoming one lane occasionally where steep slopes rose on their left squeezing the paving between the wall they formed and the drop to a seasonal creek on their right. Mail boxes dotted the roadway, but no houses were visible.

"See," Danny proclaimed, "it's a lonely stretch."

"Yeah, it's deserted, but where do we put him? There's no room on either side of the road."

"There's gonna' be a perfect place in a little bit. We'll have plenty of room to bury him."

As they reached the lowest point in the road, Jack's headlights illuminated a blue and white sign proclaiming they were in the Laguna Creek watershed. "Shit! You want us to bury him in a watershed? People will be drinking him as he decomposes."

Danny laughed, this time with genuine amusement. "All sorts of animals die in the watershed: deer, coyotes, raccoons, bobcats, even skunks. People in Santa Cruz drink dead skunk water all the time," he whooped. "Come on, one more rotting body isn't going to do any harm."

They rounded a curve about three hundred yards beyond the watershed sign, having climbed a good

thirty feet from the low point, when Danny held up his hand. “Here. Pull over here. Get as close to that fence as you can.”

Jack eased the truck to a widening in front of a high sturdy fence constructed from closely spaced upright boards. The façade was only broken by a narrow gate made of like material. A worn real estate broker’s sign nailed to the fence announced the property behind was for sale and a sturdy padlock secured the gate. When they got out, the young men closed their truck doors softly, their minds working in silent synchronization, even though they didn’t see a house nearby.

“I haven’t been by here since I was sixteen—my aunt made me learn to drive on this road—and this place was for sale then,” Danny said.

“Suppose somebody buys it and wants to build a house here?”

“The lot runs all the way up to the top of the hill and opens on a street there. If anybody builds, they’ll do it at the top, not down in this dark hole.”

Jack raised his eyes toward the sky and looked around. He had to agree with Danny’s logic. Even without its soon-to-be-resident in place, the spot already felt like the inside of a grave.

Danny gave the padlock a tug, but it held fast. “I guess we have to toss him over the fence.”

The young men climbed into the truck bed and Danny started to pick up the dead man’s feet with the tarp still wrapped around them.

“Leave the tarp. We can get rid of it and the knife later. We don’t want anything that could be tracked back to us buried with him.”

Jack turned the body unto its back. “Holy crap! He’s got a hard on. I heard that happens sometimes, but I didn’t believe it.”

Danny took the dead man’s feet and Jack took his shoulders. They repeated the swinging motion they’d used downtown to get him into the truck bed to lob him over the fence. Danny vaulted over the fence from the truck bed after him.

Jack climbed down from the bed and opened the passenger door of his truck. He hastily folded the tarp and stuffed it under the front seat, scooping up a Frisbee that was sashed there. He climbed into the truck, opened his glove box, and exchanged the dead man’s knife for the flashlight he kept inside it. Finally, he stretched across the cabin and turned off the vehicle headlights.

He closed the truck door again, softly as he had before, switched on the flashlight in the no-longer-illuminated night, and climbed into the truck bed once again. He swung the flashlight back and forth to survey the fence, took a deep breath, and with a quick jump put his foot on the bed side for added height and leaped over the fence.

“I remembered my old Frisbee. Maybe we can dig with it,” Jack said.

Danny shrugged, “Better than nothing.”

Jack shined the flashlight up the incline behind the fence. “How about there?” he asked, pausing the light in a space about thirty feet uphill which was clear of trees.

“Looks okay.”

They each looped a hand under the dead man’s armpits, Danny on the right and Jack on the left, and began dragging him toward the clearing.

“He’s heavy,” Jack offered.

“Dead weight,” Danny smirked, trying to make a joke. His words backfired and made him more aware of what they were doing. He swallowed hard, fighting the sick feeling in his stomach that encouraged him to throw up.

They were both panting by the time they got their load to the clearing. Jack held the flashlight, making sure it was aimed away from the road and down toward the ground where they would be working.

A kneeling Danny used the Frisbee to quickly clear fallen tree fronds from the forest floor. The work was easy until he hit dirt. He held the Frisbee in both hands and scraped but, after a couple of minute's effort, the ground hadn't relented and the Frisbee was cracked and useless.

Jack dropped to his knees and let the flashlight loll on the ground so he could use his hands to dig. He got nowhere. "Can we cover him with leaves and rocks?" he asked, desperation beginning to sound in his voice.

"No. If we don't bury him, animals will drag him out. Parts of him will turn up and somebody will spot them."

A bright light flashed on suddenly not fifteen feet downhill from where they labored. A startled Jack spun to greet it and was rewarded by a light aimed at his eyes so bright that it blinded him.

"Watcha' doin' boys? I'm in charge of watching this place so I need to know," a raspy male voice asked.

Danny sputtered, "We're, we..." His voice failed. He hugged himself and sat back on his feet, biting his lip to keep from crying.

Jack's response to being caught with a dead body was nothing like Danny's. He was on his feet, fists clenched as he rushed toward his way-layer.

The flashlight beam was lowered from his eyes before he took more than a couple of steps. Jack stopped instantly. He still looked out through blind spots, but he could tell there was a huge dog next to the man with the flashlight. The dog emitted a soft low growl.

"Easy Hannibal," his owner crooned. "I don't think this young man really means to threaten us. You don't, do you, son?"

Jack blinked, and as his vision improved, he noticed something else as ominous as the dog. His confronter removed a rifle from the crook of his arm and aimed it at him.

It was still impossible to see his face because the speaker was behind the light, but Jack managed to make out another smaller person standing behind his questioner.

"You don't have to tell me how you came to get here with a dead body, but it looks to me like you boys are trying to dig a hole for him. Am I right?" He asked the question offhandedly and rhetorically, a saving grace since Danny couldn't speak and Jack didn't know what to say.

"You can't do that with your bare hands, 'ya know. What you need is a shovel and this is your lucky day," the faceless voice chuckled. "The missus just happens to have one with her."

"I'll loan it to you for ten dollars," a high-pitched female voice offered.

"I wouldn't dig where you were trying to, though," The faceless male voice said. "You get down a couple of feet and you'll find that spot is already occupied. No, I'd move uphill another four-five feet and dig there."

Jack unclenched his hands and held them down at his sides with his fingers spread wide. "Please, please don't turn us in. He came after my friend with a knife. He was going to kill Danny and I...it was an accident," he stuttered. "But he's got gang markings all over him. We couldn't turn ourselves in. Our names would get out and his gang would kill us. Please. You've got to understand." Jack's knees buckled as he finished his plea and he sank to the ground.

“Don’t you boys worry; me and the missus are helpful sorts. We got the key to the fence padlock so we can open the gate if a Realtor wants to show the land from this end. Course it’s only happened two-three times in the six years since we’ve had the arrangement, but we live just up the road so we’re always ready to be here and be helpful. Now the agent who’s got the listing pays us five dollars a month for our services and he figures it’s worth that small fee so, even though we don’t get called on much, he never has to worry about driving all the way up here to open the gate.

“We’ve been really helpful to the men who buried the guy you were about to disturb, too. Now, we charge them more’n five dollars a month for our help, but they can afford to pay more—drug runners we figure they are—and there’s a lot more at stake for them to keep their body resting in complete privacy than us just walkin’ down the road every once in a while to unlock a gate.

“Why don’t you give them the shovel, honey, and let these boys get to work. They’ll be wanting to get out of here before dawn and at this time of year that happens at about five-thirty. Better get diggin’ fellas.”

His wife stepped past him gingerly and laid the shovel on the ground keeping her head down, blade toward Jack, and then quickly returned to her place behind her husband.

“Go ahead. Get the shovel. Just slide it toward you before you pick it up so you don’t make my trigger finger or old Hannibal here nervous.

“Honey, it looks like a long night ahead. Why don’t you go make us a thermos of coffee while we work out some terms? You boys drink coffee?”

“No thank you, sir,” Danny said. Jack shook his head.

Jack pulled the shovel toward him, pressed the blade into the ground, and used it to stand up; wondering what would happen if he took a swing at the armed man with it.

His subjugator seemed to read his mind. “Don’t even think about it, son. If I didn’t shoot you in the belly before you hit me, Hannibal would rip you throat out after I went down. His momma was a Rottweiler and his papa was a pit bull. Nasty combination to mess with. Besides, you’re basically a good boy and we’re gonna’ work well together. I can tell.”

Jack moved up the hill a few steps past Danny, who was also getting to his feet. “Here?” he asked, planting the shovel blade in the ground.

“Take another step just to be sure. It’s easy enough to be a little off measuring in the woods.”

Jack did what he was told and started to dig.

They were all silent for some time before the old man spoke. “Danny, you a college boy?”

Danny’s stomach clutched at the sound of his name.

“Uhh...yes, sir.”

“What’s your major?”

“Marine biology, sir.”

“How about you?” he asked Jack.

“Environmental science.”

“Oh, hell,” the old man sighed dramatically. “I was hopin’ at least one of you was majorin’ in something like computer science and was gonna’ be able to earn some serious money once you graduated. I guess the missus and me are gonna’ have to lower our expectations. You agree, Hannibal?”

The dog barked once.

“Lucky for you, we’re not greedy people. All we need to do is supplement our Social Security



checks a little bit. What do you pay each month for your cell phones?

“What?”

“Fifty bucks? A hundred? What’s it cost you, Danny?”

“Uhh, sixty-five I think.”

The man behind the flashlight clucked his tongue. “If you’re not even sure how much you’re payin’, you won’t miss that much money each month. Sixty-five dollars seems like a fair rate for our services. You each pay me and the missus sixty-five dollars a month, and we won’t tell anyone we saw you bury a body. Not only that, we’ll make sure he isn’t disturbed, just like we do for the other guy.”

The old woman announced her return by saying, “Here’s coffee, dear.” She poured brew from the thermos she carried into a cup she brought with her and traded the cup for the flashlight her husband held. She carefully maintained the beam of light’s location in front of her and her husband.

“You got everything set up?” her husband asked as he took a sip of coffee.

“I sure do. I got our PayPal account information here in an envelope for the boys and I copied down the license plate number on their truck and looked it up. The truck’s registered to a Jackson Foley. Is that you or your father, young mister Foley?”

Jack rubbed his chin and handed the shovel to Danny. “You dig for a while.” He turned to the figures behind the light. “It’s my truck.”

“So Jackson Foley and his friend Danny—we don’t know your last name, Danny, but it won’t be hard to find it out—we’ll expect a deposit every month starting on the first of next month. As long as you don’t miss a payment, your secret’s safe with us.

“It’s not likely to be a long commitment, either. Me and the missus are comin’ up on eighty and we got no one to leave a legacy to. We wouldn’t do this if we thought you guys were dangerous criminals. We believe you got yourselves in a hard spot innocently enough, just like you said. But just in case we aren’t as good a judge of character as we like to think we are, if anything other than a natural death happens to us, we’ve set up a file with a local lawyer. He has instructions to open it in the event of our untimely death, but to burn it unopened if we die in our bed. Lawyers take stuff like that pretty seriously. We clear here?”

“Yes, sir,” Danny said.

“Mister Foley?”

Jack nodded. “We’re clear.”

“Your information gets added tomorrow morning,” the old woman guaranteed them.

“Word of free helpful advice, Danny and Jackson: your friend doesn’t need a proper burial, ’ya know. If you fold him up in a fetal position, you don’t need to make the hole so long.”

It took about an hour of trading off digging before the old man pronounced the hole deep enough to keep animals out. The boys bent their kill up as their new partner suggested and rolled him into the pit. Covering him went much faster.

“We’ll finish up raking everything and make sure nothing looks disturbed here. Consider it a little gift benefit among associates. Let’s see. Today’s the fifteenth, isn’t it? Just leave us half a month’s fee plus the ten-dollar shovel rental on the ground,” he said as he tossed the PayPal envelope toward Danny, “and you can leave.”

Danny picked up the envelope and he and Jack reached into their pockets, produced their wallets, and threw bills on the ground.

The old man spoke jovially. "I'd shake your hands, but I think it's best if I keep my shotgun on you until you leave. Nothin' personal, you understand."

The old couple moved aside carefully. "Sit, Hannibal. Don't you worry these boys when they go by."

Danny and Jack climbed into Jack's truck and drove away slowly. "Did tonight really happen or am I just having a serious nightmare?" Jack asked.

"No, man, you're not dreaming. It's a nightmare all right, but a real one."

"You think they'll keep their part of the bargain."

"I hope so."

The old woman picked up the bills on the ground and collected her husband's coffee mug as he used the shovel like a rake to cover the small grave with detritus.

The old man called to Hannibal. "You and me gotta' pee on the grave, buddy. We need to mark it to keep animals away."

The dog seemed to understand his master and raised a leg. The old man unzipped his trousers and relieved himself of the thermos full of coffee he had consumed.

As they walked back to their house, the old woman asked her husband, "That was that the same Danny who used to come up from LA and spend the summer here with his aunt and uncle, wasn't it?"

"I'm sure it was. Course he's taller and filled in a little bit, but he's still real polite and the spittin' image of his uncle, don't you think?"

"I do."

The old man laughed heartily. "Wasn't it grand the way they bought our story about watching over another burial, Martha? I almost busted a gut watching them react when I told them where they were gonna' dig was already occupied."

"It was pretty funny alright, but what I like best is that it's gonna' be Danny's uncle holding our insurance evidence for us. You gotta' love the irony in that," she laughed.

"You sure do."