The Bree Press Short Story

DANNY RIVERS

By J. RAE TOOKE

sunlight stole in through the him. dusty bedroom curtains, Danny Rivers tirred in his rickety little bed. misty brown eyes opened slowly, then kindled with a warm light. A strange, new animation lighted up his old, child

Softly he pushed back the ragged quilt and slid out onto the floor. On a pile of rags by the bedside lay an old telescope valise. Quietly, adoringly, Danny knelt down beside it. His toes wriggled and curled on the bare floor as he ran his hand lovingly over this wondrous thing.

Just an old vallse it was; battered and soiled and borrowed from the neighbors, but it held all of Danny River's hopes and dreams, a promise of the gratification of his great yearning for a holiday at the Fresh Air Camp at Gimli.

Quietly Danny pulled up the lid and aid it aside. In his eyes was no trace lifted, rearranged the meager contents. His new overalls that the lady from the that his cousin was too big for, with the nice collar on it like the men wore the new running shoes that his daddy had thrown down to him that day he was in good humor. Danny handled them all. Just to be near them, to feel them there, waiting for the hour, was food for his hungry heart. Surely nothing could happen now to keep him from going. All the pangs of anxiety that had tortured him in the past weeks seemed suddenly his knees, close together in delicious to have left him.

Carefully he replaced the lid and rose

of the railway yards! His body wriggled. start. the lady'd said. Danny's faded little with you! face took on a faint rosy tint as he gazed down into the picture his thoughts of the stairs caught his attention.

There were beds there, too, for everybody, with white cloth sheets on them, and—his hands twisted in ecstasy there'd be something to eat three times a day, meat and things and lots of milk and maybe ice-cream sometimes, and the lady'd said you could eat more'n three be piet He laughed out loud. A movement in the bed in the corner

of the room startled him. He shot frightened glance over his shoulder as a heavy be-whiskered face rose up.

"Get back into bed there, you! What

Danny's figure seemed to shrink as father's angry words fell about him. He scrambled back into bed, slinking under the guilt as though for protection.

corner subsided. Danny relaxed. What down and looked through the window time could it be, he wondered. Surely, surely nothing could happen now, but thing could he see; a little crippled boy the train. The train went at nine o'clock. | with a tired, tired face. A boy far Wasn't it near nine now? No, it could worse off than himself, sick and lame. not be, for Mum wasn't up yet and Mum | couldn't even walk to the park and wade was always up early. He must wait and in the little pool like he could. Danny's subjects is desirable. It adds to the he must be quiet. He lay still and plc- head turned slowly, unwillingly. He pleasure of life and makes one interesttured himself walking down to the could not keep his eyes from his own ing to many people. When it comes to school burning down! station. He'd have to go alone. Dad window. The woman was still there. Her the business of making a living, however, wouldn't take him even if he weren't hands were trembling. Mr. Hodson look- being well informed on a great variety busy and Mum was always busy. They ed sad. He was turning away from her. of subjects will hardly keep a roof over didn't care if he went or not. anyway "If we had one place," he was saying, one's head. In these days of competi-Dad said it was just a scheme to get "we would take your little boy, but-" | tion one of the factors in success is people into the Church or something. Mum never said anything. She never clutching at the window ledge.

each other down at the camp?" he won- lifeless feeling seemed creeping over him. appalled by the number of topics about smiled, and when she did and patted you A dull ache was surging thorugh his there is at least one subject on which on the back, it seemed like tickles were body. running all over you. Danny lowered the

covers and crept to her side.

ing to the valise.

as she nodded, glancing towards the the window. figure in the bed.

mother motioned for him to put on his window. white blouse.

"You know your father thinks you shouldn't be going. Danny," she said to him as they sat, one at each end of other boy, a grimy-topped table eating their scanty breakfast. "He doesn't see any sense to simply. "My father didn't want me to these new ideas."

"But he won't stop me now, Mum, with my things all ready and my new son questioned. runnin' shoes and all." In the dark eyes was a frighened, appealing look.

It was there still an hour or so later steady. as Danny moved timidly across the big rotunds of the depot in the direction of hear a sudden bussing of voices about vested. It takes time to keep the mind a group of children he guessed were him. He leaned down. His hand groped alert, but the time you give to improving gathered for the trip to the Fresh Air about for the mandle of the old vallee. reading advances your success. If you camp. His value gripped tight, knocked He got to his feet. He felt that every lack time to make your body and mind against his legs as he walked. He sud- one in the car was looking at him. He efficient, you lack time to succeed. denly felt a bit ashamed of its size. It must get outside. Yes, he must get out had seemed so perfect at home, but a quickly. He must leave his place ready quick glance over the ones sitting about for the little lame boy. on the floor beside the other children, told him that they were all small and value bumped against the seats and kept Dominion Department of Agriculture to

Then the Mission I ady caught sight "See the kid that doesn't want to go," dovecote.

last! As the first streaks of stepped out from the group to meet

"Oh, here is Danny Rivers," she said,

"This is one of my boys from the Mission, Mr. Hodson. He is my right-

hand man out there, my best helper." Danny's shoulders moved to a soldierly angle beneath his best blouse as the mar ooked down at him. This was a great day! . To have the Mission Lady call

As he moved off with the rest in direction of the stair which they said would take them to the train, Danny felt as though he wanted to laugh out

At the top of the stairs the train was Smooth and soft, just like the pussy willows he found that time down by the river only not the same color. His hand moved slowly over the plush surface while his wondering eyes took in the interior of the car. Lights up in ceiling in big white bowls! A carpet on the floor! Who would ever have hought a train would be like this side! It must feel great when it started

He was going to a camp! Away from they would soon be starting. Nothing ders.

There'd be water there, a lake where you He turned to the window. Children mission and a regular fellow here to- cent rubbing alcohol), or any other could jump right in, maybe learn to still coming. Lots of them had their day." swim! There'd be grass that you could mothers with them. Must be nice to walk on, even lie down and roll on so have a mother who had time to go places

woman, little and white looking. stood before Mr. Hodson. Her hands were opening and closing as she leane forward and talked to him. Her words

reached Danny's ears. "Can't you get him in some way?" she

Danny's eyes widened. A poor, sick- dad." times if you was hungry. Maybe there'd looking little boy clung to the woman's skirts. How tired he looked. He was lame, too. One foot was turned right in. "He needs it so much," the woman learn to swim?"

Mr. Hodson's face looked tight. sorry, but we are filled up to our capacity now. Every bed will be taken at the camp. We can't possibly take any more

was low, but Danny could see her face on the other side of the car. Only one

"One place!" Danny's hands were possessing great knowledge about "Would the big people be talking to to hear. But he had heard, and a cold ignorance of a successful man. They are dered. Maybe they'd be laughing. The Such a sick little boy and they needed which he knows nothing. If they look mission lady didn't laugh much but she one place. He had a place—one place! into the matter, however they find that

quilt and smiled up at the cracked ceil- milk and things! He took his lip between He may miss a large amount of pleasure his teeth to keep it firm.

passed before Danny heard his mother standing alone. They looked so lonely, he was better informed than other men getting up. Quickly he pushed back the He knew how it hurt to feel like that. however, he would not be at the place His heart was bursting. One place! that he is. "Is it time now?" he whispered, point- And the Mission Lady had called him her best man. He clenched his fists His mother put her finger to her lips tight. He leaned slowly forward out of

"Come here, Mister," he called. His They dressed in silence. Danny near- voice sounded strange in his own ears. ly giggled out loud again when his Mr. Hodson heard and came to the

"What is it, son?" he asked. Danny's fingers were knocking hard against his lips as he nodded toward the

"He kin have my place,"" he said,

"Sure you don't want to go?" Mr. Hod-

He truned from the window. He could give to walking or skating, are well in-

He started down the aisle. His big the breeder therefore, is advised by the him back. He jerked at it flercely.

he heard a boy exclaim. His face was ot. How far it seemed to the door! "Good-bye, kid," a girl leaned forward

and said as he passed. "Good-bye," he answered. His voice

the wall at his side.

little body seemed to tighten. A quiver- the following winter. ing inrush of breath trembled across Generally, the plant is of low bushy

fingers and would not let them out. and lifeless. His shoulders sagged.

across his face, his neck stiffened as he treatments may be mentioned here. felt a kind hand upon his shoulder. A The treatment most widely recomkind voice was speaking.

to move! He pressed his arms close to breath to keep it from shaking. They be avoided and care should be taken to

the hot pavement, from the choky smoke could happen now, but he wished they'd "You're a brave lad, Danny boy. Miss solution of aluminium acetate, alcoholic

was tight between his teeth. The-kind treatment may be varied by the use of It was then that something at the head ing of a distant bell. They made it hard be removed again by sponging with hot to keep the tears from running over.

Danny looked up now, wide-eyed.

He shook Danny's shoulders gently, fresh exposure to ivy, "How would you like to help the chauffeur run the boat and go fishing and As sunlight slowly sweeps - across

field when the cloud has moved away. great light spread over the face "Oh, gee, Mister!" was all he could say

Douglas' Egyptian Liniment relieves oothache and neuralgia. Invaluable cases of croup, sore throat and quinsy Keep a bottle handy.

IN ORDER TO EARN A LIVING

wanted to look away. He wanted not Often people are impressed by the The water! the nice clean beds! the are concerned, he may be an ignoramu by the limitations of his knowledge. It seemed that a whole long day had The woman and the little boy were there were not one subject on which

NO TIME TO SUCCEED

success so far out of the ordinary.

"No, mister, he kin have my place." tion. It takes time to keep the body a mockery. His voice was high and queer, but in shape, but the minutes you spend in setting-up exercises, or the hours you

> When pigeons are flying free they invariably/feed on a wide variety of grains vary this diet when they are in the day presents)-I'll bet the guy what gave

POISON IVY

Many a holiday has been made wretchheld hard against the tight place in his ed by contact with poison ivy, and to persons who cannot identify this noxious Mr. Hodson was on the platform. "So plant there is little comfort in othe you didn't want to go, Danny?" he said. caution to keep away from it or from "No, mister, he kin have my place." people, clothing, tools or anything that One arm brushed quickly across his eyes has been touched by it. To begin with, the as he hurried by. He was smiling, but leaves of the poison tyy are arranged it was a shaky, bewildered sort of smile. in three after the manner of those of Slowly, step by step, he groped his way the strawberry, but unlike the strawdown the stairs, his eyes staring, un-berry leaves they are smooth and firm, seeing. Half-way down, where there was sometimes leathery, with the edges no one to see, he stopped. The old dented here and there, or, in other words, valise slipped slowly from his hand onto sparingly coarse-toothed. In these resone of the steps. Quietly he sat down pects they are somewhat like the leaves beside it, his hand running dazedly over of the Virginia creeper, which are, howits surface. The remnant of a smile ever, borne in five. Early in the sumstill played about his lips, but the an- mer, inconspicuous clusters of small mated flush was gone; it looked again white flowers arise from the axils of the like the face of a worn, little old man. leaves, and are followed, on some plants, One foot began a tap-tap-tapping against by round whitish fruits about the size of a pea. The fruits are fleshy at first A rumble of wheels overhead came to but later become firm and dry, in which his ears. The train was going. Danny's condition they may be seen all through

his line. The train had gone. "The growth, but sometimes it is found trailwater, the grass, the meat and things! ing in the leaf mould. Occasionally it His eyes were staring hard. Suddenly climbs fences, and at other times it his lips began to twitch. He jerked his reaches a considerable height on trees. shabby, broken-peaked cap off his head On farmed land it is confined to fence and crushed it flercely against his eyes. borders and places not reached by tills. Great sobs were tearing at his heart, age. It is particularly prevalent in loud, to laugh and laugh and never but he twisted his lips hard with his rocky situations least likely to be disturbed by man, and while it is widely Go back that is what he must do, distributed across Canada (and south-. Mr. Hodson and a train-man go back home back home! His hand ward), complaints are most numerous of sleep as he leened forward, touched, helped most of the children up. Danny felt again for the handle of the valise. from Ontario and adjacent parts of scrambled up unassisted, dragging his As one walking in his sleep he got up Quebec, especially from the lake and valise in after him. He found a seat by and started on down the stairs. All highland regions so attractive to campers mission had given him; the white blouse an open window. And what a seat! the sunshine of this glorious day had and summer cottagers. Poison ivy, its been blotted out. It seemed that he eradication, and treatment of poisoning was stepping down into darkness, unreal are fully dealt with in a pamphlet-which may be obtained free from the Publi-Then he heard some one coming to- cations Branch, Department of Agriculward him. His cap brushed hurriedly ture, Ottawa. Only one of the principal

mended at the present time is to daub "So here you are. Danny. I had to the affected parts with a 3 per cent. stay to see them off, but I wanted to solution of potassium permanganate, or It was Mr. Hodson. Danny held his blisters have appeared, all rubbing should More and more children were coming were standing together now. Mr. Hod- localize infection by painting iodine in. The seats were filling up. Surely son's two hands were on Danny's shoul- around the edges of the sores, and by Wilson's right-hand man down at the solution or sugar of lead (50 to 70 per cooling substance (baking soda, boric Danny could not look up. His lip acid solution). In persistent cases the words sounded in his ears like the chim- ointments. (zinc. etc.). These latter may soany water. Dry baking powder or Mr. Hodson leaned nearer. "You're boracic acid must not be put on oozing just the sort of man I'd like to take with sores because they cause the sores to be me down to our summer home at Lake sealed over with a hard crust, this aggravating conditions, while frequent exposure to air brings temporary relief. We're going Contrary to wide-spread opinion, recurrence of poisoning symptoms does not take, place from year to year without

side in a mantle of peaceful delight. The boy stood on the bridge, and the sweet smile upon his young face was a beautiful thing to behold. Beyond the brow of the hill a dull, red glow suffused

"Ah! little man," remarked the stranger. who was rather near-sighted, "I does my heart good to see you appreciate

yon beautiful effect!" watching it for ten minutes." "A real nature lover, without doubt," To know a little about a great many enthused the stranger. "And do you

NO BETTER THAN ILLITERATE

Illiteracy is universally recognized as tragedy. The man who cannot read and write is pitied by everybody. Some one has pointed out, however, that one who does not read good books has no advantage over one who cannot read

If your reading is confined to sensational newspapers and trashy magazines. you are really little better off than an illiterate. That which you do read, does you no good and you pay no attention to the books which might help you. What is the good of knowing how to read, if you read only that which is

One of the country's eminent finan- human life. All of you people may clers said in a recent article that men expect to be considerably longer on this who have no time to read, have no planet than if you had been born time to succeed. He himself tries to twenty-five years earlier. While inspectread at least two hours a day, because ed drinking water, and food are helping he finds that his mind works better after to lengthen human life, however, it is the stimulus of other people's ideas, up to you as an individual to deepen your Probably he is rather particular about life and to broaden it. Living a hundred his reading, too, but he certainly takes years would not mean much if your time for it. He believes that it is partly chief interest was eating and drinking. due to this habit that he had achieved a A long life to the selfish and grasping is merely a multiplication of unliappy 'It pays to do whatever is necessary days. Deepen your life, broaden your to keep yourself in the pink of condi- interests, or length of days will be only

me that sent Venus de Milo a bracelet.



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The Acton Free Press