

WORLD DESTROYED BY FIRE...

Little Jimba came rushing into the house with all the village dogs at heel. I was washing a goodly supply of dishes which had accumulated in the sink. There was a look of excitement in the eyes of every dog, but Jimba was behaving as routinely as was his normal stance when he said, "Since you did not believe me, even though I have told you many times, this world would come to an end by fire, as the bible says -- you best had come with me and see for yourself," said he smugly.

I snatched the dishpan, too heavy with grease to empty down the sink and took my position of end dog at his heels. Having emptied the dishpan, I swabbed it out with a clean, dry cloth before setting it on the front porch. 'Twas then I chanced to look at the sky and momentarily was started out of several years growth, " as the southern saying goes.

So there was the sky looking exactly like a huge southern wash kettle, wherein the old timers habitually boiled their linens (sheets and pillow cases in strong lye water picking them, and hoisting them at intervals with an old, well work stove poker, by way of testing for the degree of whiteness and the proper components of the concoction they had mixed for the "bilin" of their whites.

Having seen, yet I could not have believed, except there was Jimba, flesh of my flesh setting knees absinibo? _____ in a dishpan that was at best (middlerized) a _____ band about his head to catch any moisture that he chanced to work up in the course of the work, he told me he was born to do. Like work nobody else would or could do. Jimba had a bandana around his mid-section of exactly matching color, and always a wee flower peeping out over his mid section or his head dress, or both. He was so handsome as to make one weep just looking at him, let alone being taken into his confidence about the things he was born to do -- like things nobody else could or would do.

"I think I shall dash over and see if Mrs. K. has been 'caught up yet.' If so, I shall KNOW this is in truth the end of the world," said the little one, sagely.

~~Mrs. K. was the good neighbor, every struggling female bread winner should have kept her morale up. A staunch member of the Nazarene Church, Mrs. K believed with heart and soul that no child should be deprived of church and Sunday school, especially in the very early years, no matter how many churches he has on the second floor of the family garage or how fresh the flowers on the altars. This task she boldly undertook in Jimba's behalf -- to see that he never missed out on church or Sunday school.~~

ABOUT MRS. KENNEDY...

"I think I shall dash across the street and see if Mrs. K has been "caught up yet" ... If so, I shall KNOW for sure this is the end of the world." Mrs. K (Kennedy) was the good neighbor every struggling female bread winner should have to keep her morale up. A staunch member of the Nazarene Church, Mrs. K believed with heart and soul that no child should be deprived of church and Sunday school, especially in the very early years, no matter how many churches he has on the second floor of the family garage or how fresh the flowers on the altars. This task she boldly undertook in Jimba's behalf -- to see that he never missed out on church or Sunday school.

Mrs. K

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Although I frankly contended that "every one-hoss preacher is not inspired by God" and neither is God the author of "frenzy" and foolish cavortings. Mrs. K and I got along famously despite the difference or disparity of our convictions. I loved the woman dearly, even to this day, though I could not resist teasing her with such remarks as: "Myrtle, don't you think it would have been wiser if that old fool the bible says' howled in the wilderness had just settled ~~wax~~ down and figured'how to cope with it?' "

Jimba and the dogs made 3 or 4 loops around the Kennedy holdings and he concluded he hadn't been "caught up, ~~kyet~~."

He finally bedded down with Bobby, the raccoon kitten, and they drifted into dreamland. The dogs and I bedded down on the front porch to watch the sky-until dawn.

I did a lot of enquiry next day on the job, and elsewhere, and several days thereafter, but found no one who had seen the startling development in the heavens, but no one had.

~~Some days later~~

Borealis

But a small news item in a paper I picked up some days later reported that the Northern and Southern Borealis had "displayed" at the same time which happened only at long intervals apart, it was said..

My assumption of a "cold look" about the phenomena of the flames was not amiss. The runs reflecting off the northern and southern ice caps should give with a cold look, surely. I was certainly shaken by this phenomena until I became aware of the "cold look" which was sometime after I saw it first. Also, the failure of the dogs to display anxiety was reassuring. As for Jimba, he was not in the least skaken, though very young and certainly unfamiliar with such a startling sight.

BB-18-2-20

And little Jimba came bounding into the house with all the village dogs at heel. It was between 12:30 and 3:00 am. I was putting the finishing touch on a goodly lot of dishes that had accumulated in the sink, while I was at my job. I had worked two jobs that day.

The clock hands had passed the "witching hour" of midnight. The village was wrapped in sleep. There was excitement in the eyes of every dog. Jimba was behaving as routinely as was his usual stance, just before some sort of havoc broke out in our lives, and havoc was not a stranger.

It sometimes shaped up subtly, and at other times like an explosion -- but never fragmented or traveling at a "slow" pace. Jimba ^{since} was not one to do things -- by halves. Neither was I. Jimba smugly said: "you did not believe me when I told you the earth would be destroyed by fire in our lifetime, I think you had best come with me and see for yourself."

I snatched up the dishpan, too tick with residue by now to empty down the sink. I dashed into the garden and emptied it there, cleaned the pan well and dried it out. Then set it on the front porch. 'Twas then I chanced to look at the sky. If there should have been a moon, it would have paled into obscurity confronted by such startling phenomena.

The sky looked like a huge block wash kettle such as I'd often seen in the yards of southern families, and which was used to boil their linens out doors. Their sheets, pillow cases, towels, etc, which they always referred to as "bilin" their whites.. in strong lye water.

Having seen, I yet could not have believed except there sat Jimba like the Buddha, sitting in that dishpan which was not more than a middle sized one, folded legs akimbo, wearing a colorful headband and a square of cloth to match knotted around his ~~xxx~~ middle. The motif was red and yellow. I leaned against a tree. The dogs formed a ring around us, quick and intent, listened to our exchange of conversation, and they ~~were~~ _____ as they awaited the action.

Great licking flames mounted from earth into the heavens. and met at the apex over the pot which was the earth. A remarkable display it was indeed -- less frightening to watch because it seemed not to advance as is the way of conflag (fire) -- nor did the flames give off the appearance of heat, having in fact a "cold" look, instead. This was not, however, immediately apparent and even so it lacked definitive conviction.

Note: The southern wash pot had a heavy stove poker close at hand, well used and clean as.. repeated bilings tend to make things.. Use in that description of the ~~xxx~~ pot. The whites were lifted at intervals with this to inspect the degree of whiteness and check the strength of the concoction.

Note: there was always a wee flower peeping out of Jimba's strange costumes. At the midriff or overhanging the headbands, behind an ear or ~~both~~. *Remark that in transcription. He was so handsome as to make one weep, especially when taken into his confidence about his having to come to earth to do what others could not or would not do. It made me feel he was "only loaned to me" for a time.. which

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World on fire - second draft

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could be only a brief time.. too and my heart was sad, always.

BB-18-2-22