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God and Sergeant Mays

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GOD AND SERGEANT MAYS

Evans got it in the head when they first opened up. The bullet left only a small hole in his face but blew the entire back of his head off, splattering pieces of skull and brain all over Mays. As he dove for the ground, Mays felt a sharp pain in his groin, as if someone had hit him very hard with a fist. By the time he hit the ground and began returning fire, it had already grown numb and he knew he had been hit.

Evans was still twitching convulsively on the ground but Mays knew he was dead. Ha Kloug, the montagnard point man, was laying on his back just in front of Evans with his head bent back awkwardly. He was staring directly at Mays; his eyes still showing the fear and surprise with which he had died a few moments before. Mays wanted to wipe Evans off of his face and arms, but he was too busy returning fire. It burned like hell wherever Evans had landed on him, and Mays wanted more than anything to wipe him off...No, more than anything he wanted out of there.

"Oh God! Please, God! Get me out of here, God! Please, God! I'll do anything, just get me out of here!"

The noise was terrific and frightening. There must have been a hundred of them blasting away. Mays could hear the gook bastards yelling and laughing like kids on a playground. Their fire seemed to be coming from everywhere. The B-40 rockets made a hell of a racket coming in and then landed with a deafening "kawumpf" that shook the ground under him. The grenadier, Y-Sok, wasn't returning fire, so Mays knew he was either dead or near dead. He wondered how many of the six man team were left. He wondered if he was all alone.

"Oh God! Please, please, please, God! They'll kill me God! Please!"

Mays tried to crawl backwards but found he couldn't move his legs. He couldn't even feel them. Rolling on his side to look at his wound, he saw his legs sprawled up under him. A dark stain was spreading over his lower abdomen and groin, and he knew he was bleeding bad.

"Oh God! Please, God! Help me, God! Please, God!"

He saw a movement to his side and rolled to fire but it was Y-San. San's fatigues were soaked with sweat as he crawled backwards, firing like a son of a bitch.

"San! Ha rhet en nae! Over here!" San laboriously worked his way over to Mays, firing then crawling firing then crawling. When he reached Mays he gripped him by the legs and began dragging him back, stopping only to slam a fresh clip into his weapon. Then Mays heard someone firing an automatic rifle behind them and was afraid they had been flanked. But when he looked over his shoulder, he saw Y-Nhiem, the fourteen year old boy soldier, pouring fire toward the gooks. When then finally reached the mound of dirt that Nhiem was using for cover, San got to his knees to pull the big American behind it. A machine gun ripped his chest apart.

The gooks were firing as before but they had stopped all the yelling and laughing. Y-Nhiem finally managed to drag Mays behind the clump of dirt. He sat him up with his back to the dirt and then took a W. P. grenade from May's belt, pulled the pin and threw it towards the North Vietnamese. A few seconds later, they heard a hollow "whump" and then the screams of the gooks who had been hit with the burning phosphorous. Nhiem became excited and yelled at the commies, but Mays didn't give a damn.

"All I want is out of here, God! Please, God! I'll never come back. Never! Just get me outa here! Please God, please!"

Y-Nhiem used his knife to cut open May's pants and inspect the wound. "Ma jackou," he muttered. It was bad. Mays looked down and got sick to his stomach. Nhiem held a bandage to the wound and applied pressure but the blood kept pumping out in steady spurts and Mays knew he had a severed artery deep in his guts.

"Oh God! Please God! I don't want to die! Please, please, God! Not here! Not now! Please!"

"Mai, you call wop-wop, no sweat."

"No can do, Nhiem. The radio is fini."

"Fuck'n Vetnamee! Mou a breme eh, Mai."

Nhiem picked up his gun and inserted a fresh clip into it. When he had just said good-bye, Mays thought he was going to run out on him. But when he saw the hate in Nhiem's eyes, he knew what the yard was going to do.

Shouting "Y-yok ei louha!" the little guy assaulted the woodline. He got about thirty meters before the automatic weapons zeroed on him. They picked him up and shook him like a child would a rag doll, and when his body finally fell to the ground about ten meters away, Mays couldn't look.

Everything was quiet. Mays was alone now. But it was starting to get dark! If he could just hold them until it was dark, he might be able to crawl into the jungle and hide until morning and then the Brightlight team would come in and...Oh God, no! It couldn't be getting dark...it was only noon and it couldn't be getting...Mays grabbed his groin with both hands and tried to hold his blood in. But it wasn't any use. It was getting darker and colder and maybe the gooks had left, maybe Valenit and the Brightlight team were coming and they could save him, there was time and then he could hear voices and he tried to call out to Valenti but then the voices were louder and closer and they were gook voices and he was afraid to look and it was darker yet and colder yet and then he knew, "OH GOD NO!"

J. Frank Burkhard