

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

The Conquerors.

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with ~~various~~^{other} legends and fairy-tale,
which his grandmother used to
tell him — ~~and~~ ~~compellingly~~
tells about magic, ~~cities~~
towers, mummies, & Sudans and
Gomorrah

Jim was rather disappointed at first. At Pompeii, the Red-Cross party -- ^{SA 10-25} consisting of a few officers, one WAC and about dozen of soldiers -- was received by the usual crowd of beggars and peddlers ~~th~~ offering all kinds of junk -- post cards, pieces of lava, miniature models of mount Vesuvius, and so forth -- and pestering the Americans with endlessly repeated "Nice souvenir, Joe! Not expensive, Joe..."

There was a big sign reading, "Pompeii of Ruins" -- which looked somewhat ridiculous. The whole setup was somehow lacking in dignity. *with a sign*

They entered through a gate, which -- as the guide explained -- was called Porta Marina.

The guide was a shabby little man in need of a shave and a haircut, and ~~his~~ a sour smile, as though he were fed up with his own stale jocularities and he certa the cheap suavity of his manners...But he certainly knew his stuff.

It was a little bit like in school as he went on explaining the history of the place and went into the particular curiosities connected with certain buildings. But it was also rather fascinating, to learn that the city had been in the sixth century B.C. -- six hundred years before the birth of Christ, mind you -- and to hear all about the different kinds of people who had built it and who used to live here. There had been the Greeks before the Romans came, and before ~~them~~ there had been other peoples and other conquerors whose name Jim did not quite catch. At its best time, Pompei had 25,000 inhabitants -- not a very impressive figure; yet quite respectable for Europe and for such a faraw distant, uncivilized time. ~~The~~ In the year of 63 the place was struck by a first disaster -- an earthquake a great part of its buildings. Nine years later -- in ~~the~~ August of 73 A.C. -- the real thing took place: namely the eruption of Vesuvius...

The guide displayed a great deal of ~~much~~ eloquence... in describing the devastating event...

Jim was at first a little disappointed with the appearance of the city. It reminded him too much of the ruined towns and villages ~~he~~^{which} formed the familiar sceneries of his daily life... Yes, the streets of Pompei looked to the American G.I. failed to live up to his expectations; they looked, to the American G.I. like the streets, say, of Bizerte, where he had been stationed for a while... Also, it irritated him when the guide pointed out to the party his military party the marks of recent hits... "American bombs" he announced, as if this would be something flattering and elating to his listeners...

If it had
not been for
the pillars and
forticos →

would have looked like as
Biagetti or any other
bombardier town

Jim could not help feeling ~~somehow~~ ^{rather} embarrassed in view of this recent destruction. ~~There~~ ^{It} seemed somehow senseless, and even a trifle shocking -- to drop bombs on ruins -- like beating a dead body...

As for the rest of the party, they seemed not sensible to this melancholy paradox. Obviously, they enjoyed themselves. Took photographs; collected souvenirs... Especially one captain picked up stones of considerable size and slipped them into the pockets of his trenchcoat...

They all listened attentatively to the guide... He was... etc. ... knew his stuff... What he said was interesting enough, all right -- although a little bit like in school...

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.....
Gradually Jim began to sense the peculiar spell of the place. It was curious to touch with one's feet the very pavement on which people had walked -- two thousand years before... The pavement ~~was~~ still was in good shape -- solid and heavy: indestructible, as it were...

Walked around and looked... The Forum -- a large rectangular space surrounded by representative buildings -- the Basilica, the Temple of Apollo, and so forth. The theaters, ~~gymnasiums~~, ^{triumphal arches, busts, statues}, temples... the Tower of Mercury, from the top of which the whole of the ruins could be seen... ^{paintings, mosaics...}

It was an odd kind of pleasure -- somehow indiscreet --, to be admitted to the intimacy of this past life... There were the shops, the restaurants, the baths with swimming pools, dressing rooms, facilities for hot and cold baths and for massage. The captain was right when exclaiming, "Those guys knew how to live!" One could not but admit it in view of such sumptuous houses as that of the t Vettii brothers -- two wealthy bachelors, according to the guide's reports.... It was really stylish... and everything so neatly preserved, with fireplace, kitchen, bedrooms, and all...

The party grew most animated as they entered the house of prostitution... The jolly captain tried to persuade the Wac to come along, but she refused: "Not with a bunch of G.I.'s!" ... Jim thou ht it wasn't as hot as all that...: in fact, he found the obscene paintings pretty pale and blurred...

Especially impression now

There were sumptuous villas and
bunch huts...

The Roman place had been a bomb-bashed, but had a few things of it when it came.

It ^{all} seemed so far away,
unreal shadowy....

He tried to visualize people -
real men and women of
his flesh and blood - population
these ~~majestic~~ places. But
his imagination failed him.
He saw statues
frozen masses monuments....

↓
Ruins made him sad...
They had swimming pools, and
everything - and it all was
buried....

mildly cloudy
..... It was a ~~warm~~ day with a cloudy sky... The air ~~seemed~~ *blatant*
heavy with humidity... Jim felt increasingly sleepy....

He heard the guide's voice from far away, as it were...

"This place was an ordinary inn," the guide explained. "These
big stone pots were used to keep the wine ~~cool~~ *not and did*... This here was the
stove on which the food was cooked... and this here ~~was the counter~~
must have been a kind of bar where the customers *had their*

drinks and a snack to eat...
The city of Pompeii, you know,
was famed for its night life
and ~~its~~ for its ~~three~~ *night* life
The guide said, and added, with
his ~~ready~~ *disputed* smile:
"That's why the place was
so popular with the Roman
army and navy..."

~~You got interested in rather~~
~~liked the place especially the~~
~~the wine room~~... He
knelt down behind one of the
massive vessels to examine
its structure. The wine must
have remained ~~at~~ fresh and cool

Jim missed out the better
part of the little lecture.
The words, "mine and
bit," ~~the~~ had a strong
effect on him. He felt
suddenly very thirsty. The
big mine containers appeared
before him.

Jim just felt like a drunk himself.
~~He pressed his hot chest against~~
~~behind the stone fireplace~~
~~pressed his hot face against the~~
~~surface of the antique fireplace.~~
 It was a pleasant sensation.

~~He hardly noticed that~~
~~partly little~~ ... ~~My~~ ... ~~sound~~ to him
 that ~~the~~ a. ~~clap~~, ~~humming~~ sound
 was coming from the inside of
 the voluminous pot — like the
 youth and yet power and like the
 echo of the sea that ~~shook~~ you
 you hold ~~an~~ shells up to your ear...

... Wine and oil ... wine and
 oil ...
 The G.I. fell asleep.

His feet were sore. Wanted to rest
 a while...

When he woke up he first didn't know where he was. It was almost dark; the place seemed absolutely deserted. Obviously, the Red-Cross party had left without thinking of the sleeping G.I. behind the wine container.

He felt ~~some~~ ^{weird} uncomfortable. There was something ~~ghostly~~ and terrible about this scenery, ~~with its broken pillars and arches standing massive and motionless~~ ^{statues}; the broken pillars and arches looked ^{like} ~~motionless~~ ^{for building} ~~bewitched monsters~~ in the murky twilight. Jim felt ~~posi-~~ ^{was not a reward} ~~tively~~ uncomfortable. Would he find his way out, through this uncanny labyrinth of ruins? ~~Maybe~~ ^{And what if the} the guards had already closed the gates. [?] Jim didn't like the idea of spending the night in this dead, ~~bewitched~~ city...

He waited and listened. Nothing stirred. It was very still - an eerie kind of stillness. Suddenly there was a soft, rustling sound; then another - more distinct and a little louder. It sounded like a man clearing his throat.

"Hello," the G.I. said - as firmly as he could. "Is there anybody?" And he added - maybe repeating automatically a formula from ~~his~~ ^{the} General Orders for Interior Guard; maybe with a feeble attempt to be funny: "Advance to be recognized!"

~~Presently who had caught showed up.~~

And there he was - the man who had caught; ~~he approached slowly~~ ~~he must have been hiding behind one of the wine containers...~~ He emerged from the shadows - ~~approaching slowly~~... He was a heavy-set fellow in his late thirties or early forties; bar-headed, neatly shaven; wearing a short, light harness, ~~The~~ loose white tunic ~~re-~~ reaching to his knees, sandals... ~~Slightly stooping, as if looking~~

~~Jim stared at him aghast~~

~~Don't be afraid~~

"Good evening," said the stranger.

Jim stared at him aghast - unable to answer.

~~Don't be afraid~~

"Good evening, friend," the man in the harness repeated. His voice

was deep and sonorous and had a reassuring quality. There was nothing ^{ghostly} about his appearance, either. He was a sturdy-looking chap, all right

- with bright and observing eyes, a vigorous jaw, and the simple, clear-cut features of a good soldier and athlete. Jim remembered having seen similar faces before - back home, and among his pals in the Air Force. ~~There was something definitely familiar~~ yes, the fellow somehow looked familiar, ^{and real} notwithstanding his outlandish costume. ~~What was he~~

~~But if he was not an apparition - what was he up to, then? Did he~~
~~in this outlandish costume? Did he try to pull a practical joke, or~~
~~something?~~ *He just want you to show me the way.*

"What do you want?" Jim asked - making his voice as stern and resolute as possible.

~~"Oh, I'm just looking around,"~~ the stranger said, with a vague, ^{my} absent-minded smile. *"Am you a ghost?"*

~~"Looking around - what for?"~~

The stranger shrugged his shoulders, then glanced at Jim, and came closer. "Well, maybe you can help me," he said. "All I want is to to have a look at one of the new conquerors."

~~"What are you talking about?"~~ Jim got slightly impatient.

"I don't know that are any conquerors."

~~That only shows how green you are, young man,"~~ ^{said with a knowing smile.} the stranger insisted. ~~"Oh yes, there are - and they must be,"~~

~~"And they must be mighty powerful, too. A supermen who can fly through~~
~~Don't you know that?~~ *a kind of*

the sky and drop fiery stuff."

"Sounds pretty fantastic," Jim remarked...

The stranger nodded. "I should say it is! They disturbed my slumber.... First I thought it's another eruption of Mount Vesuvius - with the earth trembling and fire falling down: the whole disaster all over again. But when I realized that the disaster was man-made, I simply HAD to get up.... Well," he said with a sigh, "I suppose you couldn't introduce me to one of the bird-riding heroes... You look like a lad who doesn't have such contacts..."

"I wonder who those bird-riding heroes could be..." Jim was puzzled. Finally he ventured to guess: "You don't mean, by any chance, the boys of our Air Force?"

"Do they fly through the skies and rush through the ether and like fiery dragons and produce terrific noise...?"

"Well, that's one way of describing their activities..."

"In this case if that is so, then they must be the men I am looking for. But I don't suppose you could introduce me to one of the bird-riding heroes. You look to me like a lad who doesn't have such high contacts..."

"Is that so? - Well, then - I am one of the ~~boys~~ gang..."

The stranger started. "You don't want to tell me that you are strong enough to...."

"Why, of course! One doesn't have to be a superman to handle a modern air plane..."

"But that's incredible! You are just a boy!"

"I'm twenty-three. Besides, what's the difference..."

~~"I should really scold you... Y"~~

The stranger laughed - long and heartily. "That is exceedingly funny... I expected to meet a Hercules - and a find a youngster!"

"I don't quite see what's so funny about me..." Jim was a trifle hurt...

"Never mind... I should really scold you... Have disturbed my slumber... First I thought it was Mount Vesuvius again... : the tumbling houses, the smoke, the ruins...: it almost was like 2000 years ago..."

"Do you remember what happened 2000 years ago?" Jim's ~~voice~~ sounded a little breathless when he asked this question.

"Do I remember it! It wasn't the kind of event one forgets..."

"That is to say, you were present..."

"I was right here, in this joint - having a drink.... My helmet must still be around somewhere..."

"So he IS , a ghost, after all....," Jim whispered - talking to himself.

"Now, come come - a ghost: that doesn't sound so good... ~~I am just a Roman legionary felt like coming down,~~ for a little while, to find out what the new conquerors are up to..."

"I hope you don't mind too much that my friends had to bomb your city... Objectives of great military significance happen to be situated in this area..."

"I know. War is war... Besides, it isn't my city, really. I am a Roman legionary who happened to be stationed here..."

"I Roman legionary! -- I figured always they were made of stone... monuments.... You seem to be - you must have been very human..."

"Both of us seem surprised to find the other fellow human... I kind of expected man to have developed ... to some demigod..."

"Not at all!" Jim protested, modestly. "We are as human as ever..."

"That I can see... How scared you were at first..."

"Well, who wouldn't!"

.....

"You should have seen Rome!"

"It's all gone..."

"Your great cities, too, will go to pieces, friend..."

"I was thinking of that when we walked through these ruined streets..."

"Then you are my Successor!
The new conqueror!"

~~"My new thought of death
that was it"~~

"We don't think of ourselves
as conquerors. Just doing
a job that has to be done - that's all."
~~"That's all."~~ Just doing a
job ... And then it turns out
to be immortality."

YK

"I know, ... There are the
barbarians ~~not to~~ ~~shall~~
always ready to ~~start~~
rebel and to offend
the Law

"It's not always pleasant,"
Jim said, in a lowered
voice.

"You're telling me! It
wasn't pleasant when we
sat by the fire ...
Yes, it was there — under
Vasgasian

... " ~~That~~ " Is it all in vain,
that a fine work.

" No, " the Repoman said
firmly. " It isn't in vain,
some thing remains.

..... Up and down

~~That~~ You have still a
There still is a long
way a head

" Good luck to you! "

" Good luck to you, too
Or rather, far it easy! "

THE CONQUERORS

A G.I. called Jim -- staff-sergeant in the U.S. Air Force -- was on a three-day pass in Naples. He felt low and worn-out -- after a few weeks of intense air activity between the Cassino front and the Beachhead.

He was a country boy and didn't care for big cities. Naples gave him the blues. There was altogether too much noise and too much dirt, and there were too many beggars.

After having strolled through the streets for a couple of hours or so, he didn't quite know what to do with himself. So he went to the American Red Cross, where he was given a bunch of pamphlets describing "the most important points of interest to be seen in the city of Naples."

He glanced through an illustrated prospectus, then through another -- without finding anything that really appealed to him. One piece of literature, however, aroused somehow his curiosity. It was dealing with the ancient town of Pompei -- a name which had a peculiar fascination for the boy from the American Middle West. He remembered having heard, as a child, the wondrous story of a ^{town} ~~city~~ that was buried by the eruption of a fiery mountain, thousands of years ago -- and then emerged from the ashes, miraculously preserved, just as rich and gorgeous as it used to be, in the days of yore.

In Jim's imagination this wondrous incident had somehow got mixed up with other legends and myths. To him, the name of Pompei

connoted... myths, legends: Sodom & Gomorrah; Atlantis; "Seven Cities of Gold"