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THE KILLER ANGELS

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The Killer Angels is a work of historical fiction. Apart from the well-known actual people, events, and locales that figure in the narrative, all names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to current events or locales, or to living persons, is entirely coincidental.

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Maps by Don Pitcher

To Lila (old George)

. . . in whom I am well pleased

"When men take up arms to set other men free, there is something sacred and holy in the warfare."

—Woodrow Wilson

"I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country."

—E. M. Forster

"With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the Army. . . ."

—from a letter of Robert E. Lee

Mr. Mason: How do you justify your acts?
John Brown: I think, my friend, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity—I say it without wishing to be offensive—and it would be perfectly right for anyone to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage. I do not say this insultingly.
Mr. Mason: I understand that.

—from an interview with
John Brown after his capture

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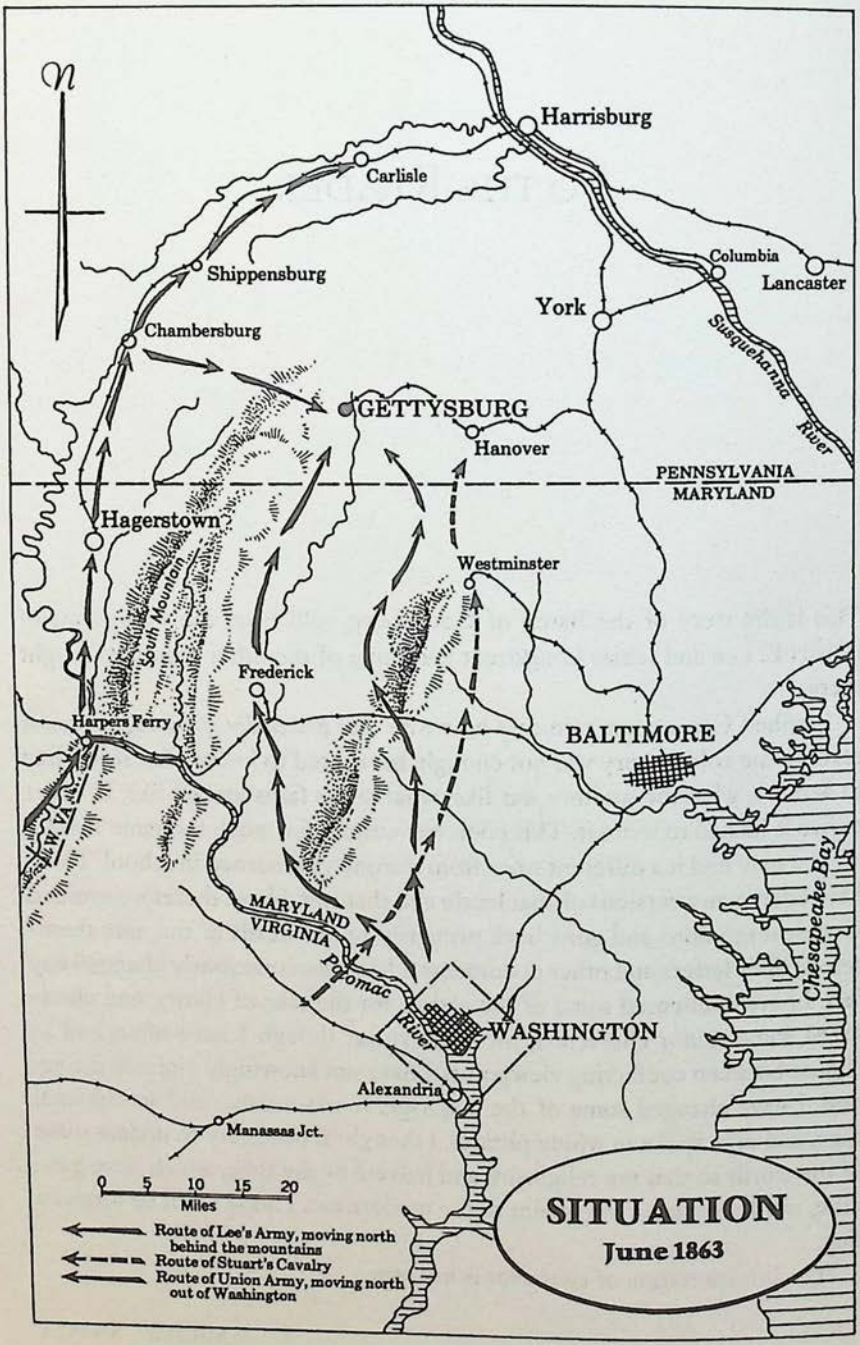
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Foreword

June 1863

I. The Armies

On June 15 the first troops of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee commanding, slip across the Potomac at Williamsport and begin the invasion of the North.

It is an army of seventy thousand men. They are rebels and volunteers. They are mostly unpaid and usually self-equipped. It is an army of remarkable unity, fighting for disunion. It is Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Though there are many men who cannot read or write, they all speak English. They share common customs and a common faith and they have been consistently victorious against superior numbers. They have as solid a faith in their leader as any veteran army that ever marched. They move slowly north behind the Blue Ridge, using the mountains to screen their movements. Their main objective is to draw the Union Army out into the open where it can be destroyed. By the end of the month they are closing on Harrisburg, having spread panic and rage and despair through the North.

Late in June the Army of the Potomac, ever slow to move, turns north at last to begin the great pursuit which will end at Gettysburg. It is a strange new kind of army, a polyglot mass of vastly dissimilar

men, fighting for union. There are strange accents and strange religions and many who do not speak English at all. Nothing like this army has been seen upon the planet. It is a collection of men from many different places who have seen much defeat and many commanders. They are volunteers: last of the great volunteer armies, for the draft is beginning that summer in the North. They have lost faith in their leaders but not in themselves. They think this will be the last battle, and they are glad that it is to be fought on their own home ground. They come up from the South, eighty thousand men, up the narrow roads that converge toward the blue mountains. The country through which they march is some of the most beautiful country in the Union.

It is the third summer of the war.

II. The Men

Robert Edward Lee. He is in his fifty-seventh year. Five feet ten inches tall but very short in the legs, so that when he rides a horse he seems much taller. Red-faced, like all the Lees, white-bearded, dressed in an old gray coat and a gray felt hat, without insignia, so that he is mistaken sometimes for an elderly major of dignity. An honest man, a gentleman. He has no "vices." He does not drink or smoke or gamble or chase women. He does not read novels or plays; he thinks they weaken the mind. He does not own slaves nor believe in slavery, but he does not believe that the Negro, "in the present stage of his development," can be considered the equal of the white man. He is a man in control. He does not lose his temper nor his faith; he never complains. He has been down that spring with the first assault of the heart disease which will eventually kill him. He believes absolutely in God. He loves Virginia above all, the mystic dirt of home. He is the most beloved man in either army.

He marches knowing that a letter has been prepared by Jefferson Davis, a letter which offers peace. It is to be placed on the desk of Abraham Lincoln the day after Lee has destroyed the Army of the Potomac somewhere north of Washington.

James Longstreet, Lieutenant General, forty-two. Lee's second in command. A large man, larger than Lee, full-bearded, blue-eyed, ominous, slow-talking, crude. He is one of the first of the new soldiers, the cold-eyed men who have sensed the birth of the new war of machines. He has invented a trench and a theory of defensive warfare, but in that courtly company few will listen. He is one of the few high officers in that army not from Virginia.

That winter, in Richmond, three of his children have died within a week, of a fever. Since that time he has withdrawn, no longer joins his men for the poker games he once loved, for which he was famous.

They call him "Old Pete" and sometimes "The Dutchman." His headquarters is always near Lee, and men remark upon the intimacy and some are jealous of it. He has opposed the invasion of Pennsylvania, but once the army is committed he no longer opposes. Yet he will speak his mind; he will always speak his mind. Lee calls him, with deep affection, "my old war horse." Since the death of Stonewall Jackson he has been Lee's right hand. He is a stubborn man.

George Pickett, Major General, forty-two. Gaudy and lovable, long-haired, perfumed. Last in his class at West Point, he makes up for a lack of wisdom with a lusty exuberance. In love with a girl half his age, a schoolgirl from Lynchburg named LaSalle Corbelle, to whom he has vowed ne'er to touch liquor. Received his appointment to West Point through the good offices of Abraham Lincoln, a personal friend, and no one now can insult Abe Lincoln in Pickett's presence, although Lincoln is not only the enemy but the absolute utterest enemy of all.

On the march toward Gettysburg Pickett's Virginia Division is by a trick of fate last in line. He worries constantly that he will miss the last great battle of the war.

Richard Ewell, Lieutenant General, forty-six. Egg-bald, one-legged, recently married. (He refers to his new wife absentmindedly as "Mrs. Brown.") Eccentric, brilliant, chosen out of all Lee's officers to succeed to a portion of Stonewall Jackson's old command. But he has lost something along with the leg that a soldier sometimes loses with the big wounds. He approaches Gettysburg unsure of himself, in command of twenty thousand men.

Ambrose Powell Hill, Major General, thirty-seven. Has risen to command the other part of Jackson's old corps. A moody man, often competent, bad-tempered, wealthy, aspires to a place in Richmond society, frets and broods and fights with superiors. He wears a red shirt into battle. He should be a fine soldier, and sometimes is, but he is often ill for no apparent reason. He does not like to follow orders. At Gettysburg he will command a corps, and he will be sick again.

Lewis Armistead, Brigadier General, forty-six. Commander of one of George Pickett's brigades. They call him "Lo," which is short for Lothario, which is meant to be witty, for he is a shy and silent man, a widower. Descended from a martial family, he has a fighter's spirit, is known throughout the old army as the man who, while a cadet at the Point, was suspended for hitting Jubal Early in the head with a plate. Has developed over long years of service a deep affection for Winfield Scott Hancock, who fights now with the Union. Armistead looks forward to the reunion with Hancock, which will take place at Gettysburg.

Richard Brooke Garnett, Brigadier General, forty-four. Commands the second of Pickett's brigades. A dark-eyed, silent, tragic man. Followed Jackson in command of the old Stonewall Brigade; at Kernstown he has made the mistake of withdrawing his men from an impossible position. Jackson is outraged, orders a court-martial which never convenes. Jackson dies before Garnett, accused of cowardice, can clear his name and redeem his honor, the honor which no man who knows him has ever doubted. He comes to Gettysburg a tortured man, too ill to walk. He believes that Jackson deliberately lied. In that camp there is nothing more important than honor.

J. E. B. Stuart, Lieutenant General, thirty. The laughing banjo player, the superb leader of cavalry who has ridden rings around the Union Army. A fine soldier, whose reports are always accurate, but a man who loves to read about himself in the Richmond newspapers. His mission that month is to keep Lee informed of the movement of the Union Army. He fails.

Jubal Early, Major General, forty-six. Commander of one of Ewell's divisions. A dark, cold, icy man, bitter, alone. Left the Point to become a prosecuting attorney, to which he is well suited. A competent soldier,

but a man who works with an eye to the future, a slippery man, a careful soldier; he will build his reputation whatever the cost. Dick Ewell defers to him. Longstreet despises him. Lee makes do with the material at hand. Lee calls him "my bad old man."

These men wore blue:

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Colonel, thirty-four. He prefers to be called "Lawrence." A professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin University, sometime professor of "Natural and Revealed Religion," successor to the chair of the famed Professor Stowe, husband to Harriet Beecher. Tall and rather handsome, attractive to women, somewhat boyish, a clean and charming person. An excellent student, Phi Beta Kappa, he speaks seven languages and has a beautiful singing voice, but he has wanted all his life to be a soldier. The university will not free him for war, but in the summer of 1862 he requests a sabbatical for study in Europe. When it is granted he proceeds not to France but to the office of the Governor of Maine, where he receives a commission in the 20th Regiment of Infantry, Maine Volunteers, and marches off to war with a vast faith in the brotherhood of man. Spends the long night at Fredericksburg piling corpses in front of himself to shield him from bullets. Comes to Gettysburg with that hard fragment of the Regiment which has survived. One week before the battle he is given command of the regiment. His younger brother Thomas becomes his aide. Thomas too has yearned to be a soldier. The wishes of both men are to be granted on the dark rear slope of a small rocky hill called Little Round Top.

John Buford, Major General, thirty-seven. A cavalry soldier, restless and caged in the tamed and political East, who loves the great plains and the memory of snow. A man with an eye for the good ground, already badly wounded and not long to live, weary of stupidity and politics and bloody military greed. At Thorofare Gap he held against Longstreet for six hours, waiting for help that never came. Too good an officer for his own advancement, he rides a desk in Washington until luck puts him back in the field, where he is given two brigades of cavalry and told to trail Lee's army. He is first into Gettysburg, where he lifts up his eyes to the hills. He is a man who knows the value of ground.

John Reynolds, Major General, forty-two. Perhaps the finest soldier in the Union Army. Like Lee before him, a former commander of West Point, a courteous man, military, a marvelous horseman, another gentleman. His home is not far from Gettysburg. He has fallen in love late in life, but the girl is Catholic and Reynolds has not yet told his Protestant family, but he wears her ring on a chain around his neck, under his uniform. Early that month he is called to Washington, where he is offered command of the army. But he has seen the military results of maneuvering by armchair commanders Halleck and Stanton, and he insists that the army cannot be commanded from Washington, that he cannot accept command without a free hand. He therefore respectfully declines. The honor passes to George Meade, who is not even given the option but ordered to command. And thus it is John Reynolds, not Meade, who rides into Gettysburg on the morning of the First Day.

George Gordon Meade, Major General, forty-seven. Vain and bad-tempered, balding, full of self-pity. He takes command of the army on a Sunday, June 28, two days before the battle. He wishes to hold a Grand Review, but there turns out not to be time. He plans a line of defense along Pipe Creek, far from Gettysburg, in the unreal hope that Lee will attack him on ground of his own choosing. No decision he makes at Gettysburg will be decisive, except perhaps the last.

Winfield Scott Hancock, Major General, thirty-nine. Armistead's old friend. A magnetic man with a beautiful wife. A painter of talent, a picture-book general. Has a tendency to gain weight, but at this moment he is still young and slim, still a superb presence, a man who arrives on the battlefield in spotlessly clean linen and never keeps his head down. In the fight to come he will be everywhere, and in the end he will be waiting for Lew Armistead at the top of Cemetery Hill.

—

All that month there is heat and wild rain. Cherries are ripening over all Pennsylvania, and the men gorge as they march. The civilians have fled and houses are dark. The armies move north through the heat and the dust.

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 1863

Mine eyes have seen the glory . . .

1.

The Spy

He rode into the dark of the woods and dismounted. He crawled upward on his belly over cool rocks out into the sunlight, and suddenly he was in the open and he could see for miles, and there was the whole vast army below him, filling the valley like a smoking river. It came out of a blue rainstorm in the east and overflowed the narrow valley road, coiling along a stream, narrowing and choking at a white bridge, fading out into the yellowish dust of June but still visible on the farther road beyond the blue hills, spiked with flags and guidons like a great chopped bristly snake, the snake ending headless in a blue wall of summer rain.

The spy tucked himself behind a boulder and began counting flags. Must be twenty thousand men, visible all at once. Two whole Union Corps. He could make out the familiar black hats of the Iron Brigade, troops belonging to John Reynolds's First Corps. He looked at his watch, noted the time. They were coming very fast. The Army of the Potomac had never moved this fast. The day was murderously hot and there was no wind and the dust hung above the army like a yellow veil. He thought: there'll be some of them die of the heat today. But they are coming faster than they ever came before.

He slipped back down into the cool dark and rode slowly downhill toward the silent empty country to the north. With luck he could

make the Southern line before nightfall. After nightfall it would be dangerous. But he must not seem to hurry. The horse was already tired. And yet there was the pressure of that great blue army behind him, building like water behind a cracking dam. He rode out into the open, into the land between the armies.

There were fat Dutch barns, prim German orchards. But there were no cattle in the fields and no horses, and houses everywhere were empty and dark. He was alone in the heat and the silence, and then it began to rain and he rode head down into monstrous lightning. All his life he had been afraid of lightning but he kept riding. He did not know where the Southern headquarters was but he knew it had to be somewhere near Chambersburg. He had smelled out the shape of Lee's army in all the rumors and bar talk and newspapers and hysteria he had drifted through all over eastern Pennsylvania, and on that day he was perhaps the only man alive who knew the positions of both armies. He carried the knowledge with a hot and lovely pride. Lee would be near Chambersburg, and wherever Lee was Longstreet would not be far away. So finding the headquarters was not the problem. The problem was riding through a picket line in the dark.

The rain grew worse. He could not even move in under a tree because of the lightning. He had to take care not to get lost. He rode quoting Shakespeare from memory, thinking of the picket line ahead somewhere in the dark. The sky opened and poured down on him and he rode on: *It will be rain tonight: Let it come down.* That was a speech of murderers. He had been an actor once. He had no stature and a small voice and there were no big parts for him until the war came, and now he was the only one who knew how good he was. If only they could see him work, old cold Longstreet and the rest. But everyone hated spies. I come a single spy. Wet single spy. But *they* come in whole battalions. The rain began to ease off and he spurred the horse to a trot. *My kingdom for a horse.* Jolly good line. He went on, reciting *Henry the Fifth* aloud: "Once more into the breech . . ."

Late that afternoon he came to a crossroad and the sign of much cavalry having passed this way a few hours ago. His own way led north to Chambersburg, but he knew that Longstreet would have to know

who these people were so close to his line. He debated a moment at the crossroads, knowing there was no time. A delay would cost him daylight. Yet he was a man of pride and the tracks drew him. Perhaps it was only Jeb Stuart. The spy thought hopefully, wistfully: If it's Stuart I can ask for an armed escort all the way home. He turned and followed the tracks. After a while he saw a farmhouse and a man standing out in a field, in a peach orchard, and he spurred that way. The man was small and bald with huge round arms and spoke very bad English. The spy went into his act: a simple-minded farmer seeking a runaway wife, terrified of soldiers. The bald man regarded him sweatily, disgustedly, told him the soldiers just gone by were "plu" soldiers, Yankees. The spy asked: What town lies yonder? and the farmer told him Gettysburg, but the name meant nothing. The spy turned and spurred back to the crossroads. Yankee cavalry meant John Buford's column. Moving lickety-split. Where was Stuart? No escort now. He rode back again toward the blue hills. But the horse could not be pushed. He had to dismount and walk.

That was the last sign of Yankees. He was moving up across South Mountain; he was almost home. Beyond South Mountain was Lee and, of course, Longstreet. A strange friendship: grim and gambling Longstreet, formal and pious old Bobby Lee. The spy wondered at it, and then the rain began again, bringing more lightning but at least some cooler air, and he tucked himself in under his hat and went back to *Hamlet.* Old Jackson was dead. *Good night, sweet Prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest...*

He rode into darkness. No longer any need to hurry. He left the roadway at last and moved out into a field away from the lightning and the trees and sat in the rain to eat a lonely supper, trying to make up his mind whether it was worth the risk of going on. He was very close; he could begin to feel them up ahead. There was no way of knowing when or where, but suddenly they would be there in the road, stepping phantomlike out of the trees wearing those sick eerie smiles, and other men with guns would suddenly appear all around him, prodding him in the back with hard steel barrels, as you prod an animal, and he would have to be lucky, because few men rode out at

night on good and honest business, not now, this night, in this invaded country.

He rode slowly up the road, not really thinking, just moving, reluctant to stop. He was weary. Fragments of *Hamlet* flickered in his brain: *If it be not now, yet it will come. Ripeness is all.* Now *there's* a good part. A town ahead. A few lights. And then he struck the picket line.

There was a presence in the road, a liquid Southern voice. He saw them outlined in lightning, black ragged figures rising around him. A sudden lantern poured yellow light. He saw one bleak hawkish grinning face; hurriedly he mentioned Longstreet's name. With some you postured and with some you groveled and with some you were imperious. But you could do that only by daylight, when you could see the faces and gauge the reaction. And now he was too tired and cold. He sat and shuddered: an insignificant man on a pale and muddy horse. He turned out to be lucky. There was a patient sergeant with a long gray beard who put him under guard and sent him along up the dark road to Longstreet's headquarters.

He was not safe even now, but he could begin to relax. He rode up the long road between picket fires, and he could hear them singing in the rain, chasing each other in the dark of the trees. A fat and happy army, roasting meat and fresh bread, telling stories in the dark. He began to fall asleep on the horse; he was home. But they did not like to see him sleep, and one of them woke him up to remind him, cheerily, that if there was no one up there who knew him, why, then, unfortunately, they'd have to hang him, and the soldier said it just to see the look on his face, and the spy shivered, wondering, Why do there have to be men like that, men who enjoy another man's dying?

—

Longstreet was not asleep. He lay on the cot watching the lightning flare in the door of the tent. It was very quiet in the grove and there was the sound of the raindrops continuing to fall from the trees although the rain had ended. When Sorrel touched him on the arm he was glad of it; he was thinking of his dead children.

"Sir? You asked to be awakened if Harrison came back."

"Yes." Longstreet got up quickly and put on the old blue robe and the carpet slippers. He was a very big man and he was full-bearded

and wild-haired. He thought of the last time he'd seen the spy, back in Virginia, tiny man with a face like a weasel: "And where will your headquarters be, General, up there in Pennsylvania? 'Tis a big state indeed." Him standing there with cold gold clutched in a dirty hand. And Longstreet had said icily, cheerily, "It will be where it will be. If you cannot find the headquarters of this whole army you cannot be much of a spy." And the spy had said stiffly, "*Scout,* sir. I am a scout. And I am a patriot, sir." Longstreet had grinned. We are all patriots. He stepped out into the light. He did not know what to expect. He had not really expected the spy to come back at all.

The little man was there: a soggy spectacle on a pale and spattered horse. He sat grinning wanly from under the floppy brim of a soaked and dripping hat. Lightning flared behind him; he touched his cap.

"Your servant, General. May I come down?"

Longstreet nodded. The guard backed off. Longstreet told Sorrel to get some coffee. The spy slithered down from the horse and stood grinning foolishly, shivering, mouth slack with fatigue.

"Well, sir—" the spy chuckled, teeth chattering "—you see, I was able to find you after all."

Longstreet sat at the camp table on a wet seat, extracted a cigar, lighted it. The spy sat floppily, mouth still open, breathing deeply.

"It has been a long day. I've ridden hard all this day."

"What have you got?"

"I came through the pickets at night, you know. That can be very touchy."

Longstreet nodded. He watched, he waited. Sorrel came with steaming coffee; the cup burned Longstreet's fingers. Sorrel sat, gazing curiously, distastefully at the spy.

The spy guzzled, then sniffed Longstreet's fragrant smoke. Wistfully: "I say, General, I don't suppose you've got another of those? Good Southern tobacco?"

"Directly," Longstreet said. "What have you got?"

"I've got the position of the Union Army."

Longstreet nodded, showing nothing. He had not known the Union Army was on the move, was within two hundred miles, was even this

side of the Potomac, but he nodded and said nothing. The spy asked for a map and began pointing out the positions of the corps.

"They're coming in seven corps. I figure at least eighty thousand men, possibly as much as a hundred thousand. When they're all together they'll outnumber you, but they're not as strong as they were; the two-year enlistments are running out. The First Corps is here. The Eleventh is right behind it. John Reynolds is in command of the lead elements. I saw him at Taneytown this morning."

"Reynolds," Longstreet said.

"Yes, sir."

"You saw him yourself?"

The spy grinned, nodded, rubbed his nose, chuckled. "So close I could touch him. It was Reynolds all right."

"This morning. At Taneytown."

"Exactly. You didn't know any of that, now did you, General?" The spy bobbed his head with delight. "You didn't even know they was on the move, did ye? I thought not. You wouldn't be spread out so thin if you knowed they was comin'."

Longstreet looked at Sorrel. The aide shrugged silently. If this was true, there would have been some word. Longstreet's mind moved over it slowly. He said: "How did you know we were spread out?"

"I smelled it out." The spy grinned, foxlike, toothy. "Listen, General, I'm good at this business."

"Tell me what you know of our position."

"Well, now I can't be too exact on this, 'cause I aint scouted you myself, but I gather that you're spread from York up to Harrisburg and then back to Chambersburg, with the main body around Chambersburg and General Lee just 'round the bend."

It was exact. Longstreet thought: if this one knows it, *they* will know it. He said slowly, "We've had no word of Union movement."

The spy bobbed with joy. "I knew it. Thass why I hurried. Came through that picket line in the dark and all. I don't know if you realize, General—"

Sorrel said coldly, "Sir, don't you think, if this man's story was true, that we would have heard *something*?"

Sorrel did not approve of spies. The spy grimaced, blew. "You aint

exactly on friendly ground no more, Major. This aint Virginia no more."

True, Longstreet thought. But there would have been something. Stuart? Longstreet said, "General Stuart's cavalry went out a few days back. He hasn't reported any movement."

The spy shrugged, exasperated, glooming at Sorrel. Sorrel turned his back, looked at his fingernails.

Longstreet said, "What have you heard of Stuart?"

"Not much. He's riding in the north somewhere. Stirring up headlines and fuss, but I never heard him do any real damage."

Longstreet said, "If the Union Army were as close as you say, one would think—"

"Well, I'm damned," the spy said, a small rage flaming. "I come through that picket line in the dark and all. Listen, General, I tell you this: I don't know what old Stuart is doing and I don't care, but I done my job and this is a fact. This here same afternoon of this here day I come on the tracks of Union cavalry thick as fleas, one whole brigade and maybe two, and them bluebellies weren't no four hours hard ride from this here now spot, and that, by God, is the Lord's truth." He blew again, meditating. Then he added, by way of amendment, "Buford's column, I think it was. To be exact."

Longstreet thought: *can't* be true. But he was an instinctive man, and suddenly his brain knew and his own temper boiled. Jeb Stuart... was joyriding. God *damn* him. Longstreet turned to Sorrel.

"All right, Major. Send to General Lee. I guess we'll have to wake him up. Get my horse."

Sorrel started to say something, but he knew that you did not argue with Longstreet. He moved.

The spy said delightedly, "General Lee? Do I get to see General Lee? Well now." He stood up and took off the ridiculous hat and smoothed wet plastered hair across a balding skull. He glowed. Longstreet got the rest of the information and went back to his tent and dressed quickly.

If the spy was right the army was in great danger. They could be cut apart and cut off from home and destroyed in detail, piece by piece. If the spy was right, then Lee would have to turn, but the old man did

not believe in spies nor in any information you had to pay for, had not approved of the money spent or even the idea behind it. And the old man had faith in Stuart, and why in God's name had Stuart sent nothing, not even a courier, because even Stuart wasn't fool enough to let the whole damned Army of the Potomac get this close without word, not one damned lonesome word. Longstreet went back out into the light. He had never believed in this invasion. Lee and Davis together had overruled him. He did not believe in offensive warfare when the enemy outnumbered you and outgunned you and would come looking for you anyway if you waited somewhere on your own ground. He had not argued since leaving home, but the invasion did not sit right in his craw; the whole scheme lay edgewise and raspy in his brain, and treading here on alien ground, he felt a cold wind blowing, a distant alarm. Only instinct. No facts as yet. The spy reminded him about the cigar. It was a short way through the night to Lee's headquarters, and they rode past low sputtering campfires with the spy puffing exuberant blue smoke like a happy furnace.

" 'Tis a happy army you've got here, General," the spy chatted with approval. "I felt it the moment I crossed the picket line. A happy army, eager for the fight. Singing and all. You can feel it in the air. Not like them bluebellies. A desperate tired lot. I tell you, General, this will be a factor. The bluebellies is almost done. Why, do you know what I see everywhere I go? Disgraceful, it is. On every street in every town, able-bodied men. Just *standing* there, by the thousands, reading them poor squeaky pitiful newspapers about this here mighty invasion and the last gasp of the Union and how every man must take up arms, haw." The spy guffawed. "Like a bunch of fat women at church. The war's almost over. You can feel it, General. The end is in the air."

Longstreet said nothing. He was beginning to think of what to do if the spy was right. If he could not get Lee to turn now there could be disaster. And yet if the Union Army was truly out in the open at last there was a great opportunity: a sudden move south, between Hooker and Washington, cut *them* off from Lincoln. Yes. Longstreet said, "What do you hear of Hooker? Where is he?"

The spy stopped, mouth sagging. "Oh by Jesus. Forgive me." He grimaced, shook his head. "I done forgot. There was an item in the

newspaper this morning. Saying that Hooker was replaced. They gave the command to Meade, I think it was."

"George Meade?"

"Yes, sir. I think."

"You're sure?"

"Well, it was Meade the newspaper said, but you know them damn newspapers."

Longstreet thought: new factor. He spurred the horse, but he couldn't move fast because of the dark. Lee must listen. God bless the politicians. Reynolds was their best man. Why did they go to Meade? But I'm sorry to see Hooker go. Old Fighting Joe. Longstreet said, "It was Meade, then, and not Reynolds?"

"Rumor was that Reynolds was offered the job but wouldn't have it on a plate. That's what the paper said."

Old John's too smart to take it. Not with that idiot Halleck pulling the strings. But Meade? Fussy. Engineer. Careful. No genius for sure. But a new factor. A Pennsylvania man. He will know this country.

The spy chatted on amiably. He seemed to need to talk. He was saying, "Strange thing about it all, thing that bothers me is that when you do this job right nobody knows you're doing it, nobody ever watches you work, do you see? And sometimes I can't help but wish I had an audience. I've played some scenes, ah, General, but I've been lovely." The spy sighed, puffed, sighed again. "This current creation, now, is marvelous. I'm a poor half-witted farmer, do you see, terrified of soldiers, and me lovely young wife has run off with a drummer and I'm out a-scourin' the countryside for her, a sorrowful pitiful sight I am. And people lookin' down their noses and grinnin' behind me back and all the time tellin' me exactly what I want to know about who is where and how many and how long ago, and them not even knowin' they're doin' it, too busy feelin' contemptuous. There are many people, General, that don't give a damn for a human soul, do you know that? The strange thing is, after playing this poor fool farmer for a while I can't help but feel sorry for him. Because nobody cares."

They came to Lee's camp, in the grove just south of Chambersburg. By the time they got there Longstreet knew that the spy was telling the truth. Young Walter Taylor was up, annoyed, prissy, defending General

Lee's night's rest even against Longstreet, who glowed once with the beginning of rage, and sent Taylor off to get the old man out of bed. They dismounted and waited. The spy sat under an awning, grinning with joy at the prospect of meeting Lee. Longstreet could not sit down. He disliked getting the old man up: Lee had not been well. But you could lose the war up here. Should have gone to Vicksburg. News from there very bad. It will fall, and after that ... we must win here if we are to win at all, and we must do it soon. The rain touched him; he shivered. Too damn much rain would muck up the roads.

Lee came out into the light. The spy hopped to attention. Lee bowed slightly, stiffly.

"Gentlemen."

He stood bareheaded in the rain: regal, formal, a beautiful white-haired, white-bearded old man in a faded blue robe. He looked haggard. Longstreet thought: He looks older every time you see him. For a moment the spy was silent, enraptured, then he bowed suddenly from the waist, widely, formally, gracefully, plucking the floppy hat from the balding head and actually sweeping the ground with it, dandy, ridiculous, something off a stage somewhere designed for a king.

"General," the spy said grandly, *"à votre service."* He said something else in a strange and Southern French. Longstreet was startled at the transformation.

Lee glanced at Longstreet: a silent question. Longstreet said, "Beg pardon, sir. I thought this urgent. The man has information."

Lee looked at the spy silently. His face showed nothing. Then he said formally, "Sir, you must excuse me, I do not know your name."

"The name is *Harrison*, sir, at present." The spy grinned toothily. "The name of an ex-President, ex-general. A small joke, sir. One must keep one's sense of humor."

Lee glanced again at Longstreet. Longstreet said, "The man has the position of the Union Army. He says they are very close. I have a map."

He moved to the map table, under the awning. The spy followed with reproach. Lee came slowly to the table, watching the man. After

a moment he said to Harrison, "I understand that you are General Longstreet's—" a slight pause "—'scout.'" Lee would not use the word *spy*. "I believe we saw you last back in Virginia."

"That's a fact," the spy worshipped. "I been kind of circulatin' since, amongst the bluebellies, and I tell you, General, sir, that it's an honor and a priv—"

Longstreet said, "He claims their lead elements are here. He says there is a column of strong Union cavalry not four hours off."

Lee looked at the map. Then he sat down and looked more closely. Longstreet gave the positions, the spy fluttering mothlike behind him with numbers and names and dates. Lee listened without expression.

Longstreet finished. "He estimates perhaps one hundred thousand men."

Lee nodded. But estimates meant nothing. He sat for a moment staring at the map and then bowed his head slightly. Longstreet thought: he doesn't believe. Then Lee raised his eyes and regarded the spy.

"You appear to have ridden hard. Have you come a long way?"

"Sir, I sure have."

"And you came through the picket line after dark?"

"Yes, sir—" the spy's head bobbed "—I did indeed."

"We are in your debt." Lee stared at the map. "Thank you. Now I'm sure General Longstreet will see to your accommodations."

The spy was dismissed, had sense enough to know it. He rose reluctantly. He said, "It has been my pleasure, sir, to have served such a man as yourself. God bless you, sir."

Lee thanked him again. Longstreet instructed Sorrel to see that the man was fed and given a tent for the night and to be kept where Longstreet could find him if he needed him, which meant: keep an eye on him. The spy went out into the dark. Longstreet and Lee sat alone at the table in the rain.

Lee said softly, "Do you believe this man?"

"No choice."

"I suppose not." Lee rubbed his eyes, leaned forward on the table. With his right hand he held the muscle of his left arm. He shook his head slowly. "Am I to move on the word of a paid spy?"

"Can't afford not to."

"There would have been something from Stuart."

"There should have been."

"Stuart would not have left us blind."

"He's joyriding again," Longstreet said. "This time you ought to stomp him. Really stomp him."

Lee shook his head. "Stuart would not leave us blind."

"We've got to turn," Longstreet said. His heart was beating strongly. It was bad to see the indomitable old man weak and hatless in the early morning, something soft in his eyes, pain in his face, the right hand rubbing the pain in the arm. Longstreet said, "We can't risk it. If we don't concentrate they'll chop us up."

Lee said nothing. After a moment Longstreet told him about Meade. Lee said, "They should have gone to Reynolds."

"Thought so too. I think he turned it down."

Lee nodded. He smiled slightly. "I would have preferred to continue against General Hooker."

Longstreet grinned. "Me too."

"Meade will be ... cautious. It will take him some time to take command, to organize a staff. I think ... perhaps we should move quickly. There may be an opportunity here."

"Yes. If we swing in behind him and cut him off from Washington ..."

"If your man is correct."

"We'll find out."

Lee bent toward the map. The mountains rose like a rounded wall between them and the Union Army. There was one gap east of Chambersburg and beyond that all the roads came together, weblike, at a small town. Lee put his finger on the map.

"What town is that?"

Longstreet looked. "Gettysburg," he said.

Lee nodded. "Well—" he was squinting—"I see no reason to delay. It's their army I'm after, not their towns." He followed the roads with his finger, all converging on that one small town. "I think we should concentrate in this direction. This road junction will be useful."

"Yes," Longstreet said.

Lee looked up with black diamond eyes. "We'll move at first light."

Longstreet felt a lovely thrill. Trust the old man to move. "Yes, sir."

Lee started to rise. A short while ago he had fallen from a horse onto his hands, and when he pushed himself up from the table Longstreet saw him wince. Longstreet thought: Go to sleep and let me do it. Give the order and I'll do it all. He said, "I regret the need to wake you, sir."

Lee looked past him into the soft blowing dark. The rain had ended. A light wind was moving in the tops of the pines—cool sweet air, gentle and clean. Lee took a deep breath.

"A good time of night. I have always liked this time of night."

"Yes."

"Well." Lee glanced once almost shyly at Longstreet's face, then looked away. They stood for a moment in awkward silence. They had been together for a long time in war and they had grown very close, but Lee was ever formal and Longstreet was inarticulate, so they stood for a long moment side by side without speaking, not looking at each other, listening to the raindrops fall in the leaves. But the silent moment was enough. After a while Lee said slowly, "When this is over, I shall miss it very much."

"Yes."

"I do not mean the fighting."

"No."

"Well," Lee said. He looked to the sky. "It is all in God's hands."

They said good night. Longstreet watched the old man back to his tent. Then he mounted and rode alone back to his camp to begin the turning of the army, all the wagons and all the guns, down the narrow mountain road that led to Gettysburg. It was still a long dark hour till dawn. He sat alone on his horse in the night and he could feel the army asleep around him, all those young hearts beating in the dark. They would need their rest now. He sat alone to await the dawn, and let them sleep a little longer.

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