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Anyway What About Your Story

by Penny Humphrey

“Anyway, what about your story Corporal Smith?”

You said you wanted to tell us the truth about what really happened, so now’s your chance.”

The Sergeant towered over the young corporal, eyeballing the young man as he lay unrelaxed in his bunk.

The Sergeant’s face showed no sign of emotion but the tone of his voice was threatening and heavily sarcastic.

The corporal made to climb out of his bed but the Sergeant stopped him with the tip of his pace stick and he slumped back down again.

“No you better stay where you are Sonny, you must be so tired after your busy night”

The Corporal sensed the danger he was in but determined to speak the truth.

“Tom and me came on guard duty at twenty two hundred hours last night”

“Last night *Sir*” rasped the Sergeant

“Last night Sir”

“Speak up boy, are you some kind of a fairy” the Sergeant bellowed

“We came on duty Sir at 22 hundred hours, we covered the rear of the building, it was pitch black and there was no sound. Tom and I changed ends at 23 hundred hours and after a few minutes I heard this rustling noise about twenty yards away from where I was standing. It was quite loud like there was someone hiding in the bushes nearby and then I saw a form moving around Sir.”

The corporal was feeling scared, a disconcerting sardonic smile played around the Sergeant's lips and he prodded him again, harder now in the ribs.

“Get to the point you fairy,” he shouted.

“Well Sir, I cocked my rifle and shouted “Who’s there? and Tom came running over to see what the commotion was about. The rustling carried on but there was no answer, no one showed themselves. I shouted again. Told them to show themselves now or I would shoot.

“And?” the Sergeant yelled, now red in the face.

“I waited a few moments and then I shot Sir, I thought it was another sniper Sir. I shot low so I would hit the legs. Tom saw it all happen Sir, he was my witness.

“What a pity poor Tom has disappeared,” the Sergeant’s voice now low and threatening, “I expect he went for a nice walk in the desert and got himself lost, shame eh?”

“Sir?”

“You heard me boy, looks like Tom won’t find his way back; no Tom, no witness and one beautiful faithful dog, my beautiful dog, dead and all because of your happy trigger finger and inability to tell a man from a dog.”

The corporal recoiled. “Sir it was pitch black, I thought it was a sniper Sir.”

“Tell you what we’ll do Sonny, we’ll go for a little walk on the sands, let’s see if we can find your mate Tom.”