

The Whirlwind



Brother Gas Books

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“The Whirlwind”

David Manker’s conscience did not bother him about not attending church today. He deserved a Sunday off. He felt burned-out from the same old religious ritual. Relax and fish—that’s what he needed. How could a day be any better than going fishing? If Deacon David could catch enough delicious Sunday trout, he’d invite the preacher to dinner. David chuckled at the thought of watching the preacher eat Sunday-caught fish.

Unfortunately, Deacon David didn’t yet understand that what may seem boring is a gift of life and that life is a vapor. Vapors can melt away.

Each Sunday, the ritual of church services was the same, and the results were the same: boring. But today the church gossip would find a new subject. Deacon David Manker would not be there to shout amen as the preacher strummed through his sermon. Deacon David had not missed a Sunday service for ten years. David’s loving wife would report that he was sick and was sorry for his absence. She would also do all she could to fill in for her husband by shouting amen several times during the service. She said she looked forward to shouting amen.

The sounds of old church bells drifted through the air. The bells annoyed David as he repositioned his fly-fishing lure. Fishing was his choice today, not church. Besides, God made fish to be caught and eaten. His fishing boat, *The Holy Cross*, gently rocked from the casting motion as the fly lure settled on the clear, motionless waters in Trent Creek. He hoped a trout would find his beautiful lure irresistible.

David settled into a quasi-napping position, picturing in his mind the people who would attend church services. First, Deacon Eddie had already opened the church doors and rung the bells. Next, Flora Mae would come through the church door and compliment Deacon Eddie on his punctuality and dedication to his duties for the Lord. Then she would scamper off to her

Sunday school room to prepare the lesson for the children's Sunday school. Finally, the pastor would enter through the back door and present himself after finishing his morning prayers.

David felt a tug on the fishing line. He sat up to resist the tug and snag the fishhook deep into the fish's jaw. But to his surprise, no fighting fish or lure was there. Instead, bubbles came to the surface, moving in a circular motion, then the fly reel whined as the fishing line was pulled out faster and faster.

The swirl increased into a deepening hole and grew wider. Could a fish have pulled the lure down that far and that fast? A slight mist rose from the swirling vortex, and David laughed aloud, assuming a dust devil was forming over the water. He had never seen anything like this. Could it be a waterspout instead? He needed to start his engine to escape from the growing waterspout, but he didn't want to let go of the fishing rod.

The mist widened into a thick fog of water all around him. His fly reel ran out of fishing line, and the fly rod and reel were snatched from his hands by the ever-increasing force that sucked it into the swirling vortex below him. "My rod!" David cried.

The Holy Cross began circling in the vortex, and he immediately forgot the rod when he realized he was in trouble.

The swirl rotated still faster. The spinning wind of the waterspout increased and blew hard against *The Holy Cross*, causing waves to splash over the boat's sides. Panic gripped David. He grabbed both sides of the boat to prevent himself from falling overboard. The boat was now whirling completely inside the vortex's funnel. He shouted for help in the unlikely possibility someone might hear him. All he could see was the deepening walls of water. Panic-stricken, he let out a throat-ripping scream.