Ravenous

By Ted Griffin
For heroism above
and beyond the call of duty...
for successfully infiltrating
the enemy's ranks...
and securing victory
independently...
with cunning and honor...
Captain John Boyd.
Amen.
Amen.
You're no hero, Boyd.
I want you as far
from my company as possible.
I'm sending you to California...
Fort Spencer.
Please, gentlemen, quickly.
I want all of that in
the largest office on the left.
Careful. Don't scratch it.
Come, come, come,
come, come, please.
Aah! Lieutenant Boyd!
Lieutenant Boyd!
Aaah!
Lieutenant Boyd!
Lieutenant Boy...!
Boyd!
Boyd!
Help me!
Help me, Boyd!
Boyd!
Captain John Boyd.
War hero, huh?
So, the brass
decided to reward you...
with a little appointment
to the California sun?
Have a walnut, Boyd.
Martha brought them in
fresh from San Miguel.
This is my hobby...
reading in
the original languages...
Well, you know,
languages in general.
It's, uh...
It's tedious, I know...
but, then,
this place thrives on tedium.
So, uh...
you have a hobby, Boyd?
Swimming.
Swimming.
I hope you don't mind hard water.
So...
Fort Spencer.
Uh, the Spanish built this place as a missin.
We inherited her.
Now we're a way station... for western travelers on their way through the Nevadas.
We don't get much traffic... through these parts in the winter... so we maintain only a skeleton company... that consists of Private Toffler... who's our personal emissary from the Lord...
Major Knox, who never met a bottle he didn't like... Private Reich... he's our soldier. Aaah! I'd steer clear of him.
And Martha you've met.
Bet you didn't get a word out of her.
And George, her brother. They're both locals... sort of came with the place. Ha! Ha! Ha!
And then there's Private Cleaves. The overmedicated
Private Cleaves.
And you and I make eight.
Cleaves cooks.
Knox used to be a veterinarian,
so he plays doctor.
My advice to you
is don't get sick.
I'd tell you don't eat,
but then most of us have to.
So, with your promotion...
you'd be number three
in command.

Toffler's prayer.
O heavenly Father,
bless this to our use, and...
- Amen.
- Amen.

So, did anyone
do anything today?
We have a great sense
of camaraderie...
here at Fort Spencer.
How did you get
behind the enemy line?
I froze. I was scared.

Scared?
You froze while the rest
of your unit fought and died?
What did you do then?
I played dead.
But you made it
behind enemy lines.
I was buried...
with my commanding officer's...
half-shot-off head in my face...
his blood
running down my throat.
So, how did you
take the command post?
Something...
something... had changed.
We're going to
promote you, Boyd.
We could shoot you...
but as you single-handedly captured the enemy command...
it might set a bad precedent.
Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.
Last-minute addition to the post.
All right, Cleaves.
Let's hear it.
Salt, meat, beans...
coffee, oil...
bacon, flour.
All right.
I want you back in three days.
No loco weed...
no peyote...
no women.
No women.
Martha, keep him out of trouble.
OK. Nice trip.
All right, come on.
Ya!
I'm going to get up...
some salt, meat, beans...
Ioco weed, and women.
- No women.
- I can't get a woman?
Wish you were along
for the ride?
Unh!
What did you get the medal for?
Cowardice.
Uh... Knox has got
some excellent bourbon.
It's really fine stuff.
And he just passed out about...
a minute ago.
So, uh... wondering
if you'd like to...
He won't mind?
Probably.
To escape...
in one form or another.
Toffler!
Toffler!
- Uh-huh?
- What are you doing?
Oh, um, it's a religious hymn.
I'm writing a religious hymn.
Ah.
Well, could you find some inspiration somewhere else? And could you get us some ice?
Funny thing.
We escape the world...
we come here...
and then we turn right around and try to escape this place.
Frightening thing about escape, though...
The chance you might end up someplace worse.
Hmm.
Reich, go that way.
- Colonel.
- Yeah?
Who are you?
Reich! Reich!
- He's alive.
- Jesus Christ.
Just barely.
Let's get him inside.
Uh, we need hot water.
Uh, George, Toffler, hot water!
Lots and lots of hot water!
Reich, try to rouse Knox.
Let's get these rags off.
Let's see if we can get his blood moving.
Toffler, more water!
I think he'll live.
Easy, easy, easy.
Well, he's warm.
Frostbite didn't seem to do much damage.
I guess the only thing we can do is let him rest.
And, uh... pray.
Toffler, your duty.
Good work.
Each one of these
is about one-point-five miles.
Takes about three days
actually, because...
Mm-hmm.
- Mm-hmm!
- Yes? He's up.
Excellent.
He's up. Let's go.
Major... Major Knox?
Major Knox?
Major Knox? Doc? Doc?
- Hmm?
- Doc? Doc?
Doc? Doc?
Aah!
Doc, he's awake.
What? Who?
The man who showed up
last night.
He's going to tell us what...
He's going to tell us
what happened.
Doc?
Where, uh...
Where am I?
Fort Spencer, California.
Western Sierra Nevadas.
Excuse me.
I'm sorry.
My name is Colqhoun.
F.W. Colqhoun, servant of God.
How are you feeling,
Mr. Colqhoun?
Not bad, considering.
I probably look like death.
Not bad... considering.
How long were you out there?
Three months.
Without food?
Yes.
Toffler, help him.
Good Lord.
Good Lord.
You should have seen me
three months ago.
I was thirty pounds heavier.
I'm sorry, but you did
say no food for three months.
I said...
I said no food. I didn't say
there was nothing to eat.
Do you understand?
Do you understand?
I suppose I owe you gentlemen
a story.
Only if you feel up to it.
Yes.
We left in April.
Six of us in all.
Mr. MacCready and his wife
from Ireland.
Mr. Janus from Virginia,
I believe...
with his servant, Jones.
Myself... I'm from Scotland.
And our guide...
a military man, coincidentally.
Colonel Ives.
I don't think I know him.
The better for you.
A detestable man...
and a most disastrous guide.
He professed to know...
a new, shorter route
through the Nevadas.
Quite a route that was.
Longer than the known one...
and impossible to travel.
Get up there! Get on!
We worked... very, very hard.
By the time
of the first snowfall...
we were still a hundred miles
from this place.
That was November.
Proceeding in the snow
was futile.
We took shelter in a cave.
We decided to wait
until the storm had passed.
But the storm did not pass.
The trail soon
became impassable...
and we had run out of food.
We ate the oxen...
all the horses...
even my own dog.
And that lasted us
about a month.
After that,
we turned to our belts...
shoes...
any roots we could dig up...
but you know there's no real
nourishment in those.
We remained famished.
The day that Jones died...
I was out collecting wood.
He had expired
from malnourishment.
And when I returned...
the others were cooking
his legs for dinner.
Would I have stopped it
had I been there?
I don't know.
But I must say...
when I stepped
inside that cave...
the smell of meat cooking...
I thanked the Lord.
I thanked the Lord.
And then things got out of hand.
I ate sparingly.
Others did not.
The meat did not last us
a week...
and we were soon hungry again.
Only this time,
our hunger was different.
More...
severe...
savage.
And Colonel Ives, particularly,
could not be satisfied.
Janus was the first
to be killed.
Then Mr. MacCready.
That left Colonel Ives...
MacCready's wife, and I alone...
and I knew in that company
that my days were numbered.
I'm ashamed to say that I acted
in a most cowardly manner.
It would have been nobler,
I know...
to have stayed and protected
Mrs. MacCready from Ives, but...
I was weak.
I fled.
It was nothing less than pure
providence that I arrived here.
Mrs. MacCready...
is she still there?
And Colonel Ives,
as far as I know.
Let's pack up.
We've got to go up there.
We've got to go. It's our job.
- Why go?
- It's our job!
Here's you.
Here's Toffler.
Reich has got his own rifle.
I've got my pistol.
I think the cave's three
orfour days' march from here.
What is it, George?
What?
Weendigo.
Weendigo.
Weendigo.
It's an old
Indian myth from the north.
A man eats another's flesh.
It's usually an enemy.
And he, um, takes...
no, steals...
his strength, essence,
his spirit.
And his hunger becomes craven...
insatiable.
And the more he eats,
the more he wants to.
The more he eats,
the stronger he becomes.
George, people don't still
do that, do they?
White man eats the body
of Jesus Christ every Sunday.
Time!
Major Knox, we're leaving now.
You're going to be in charge
until I return.
Here's the key to the arsenal.
Martha and Cleaves will be back
in a few days.
Too much bourbon in his bourbon.
Will he be all right?
Yeah, he'll be fine.
Mr. Colqhoun...
uh... getting dressed?
I'm coming with you.
I must come with you.
You don't stand a chance
of finding her without me.
Well, you're right.
You're a good man. Thank you.
- Colonel Hart.
- Huh?
- Colonel Hart.
- What?
Oh, thank you, thank you.
I need that.
- Colonel Hart.
- Huh?
Where's my other glasses?
Holy Jesus.
Sorry.
O Lord
What great reward
Can you
Afford
A loy... a loyal ser-servant
Servant... servant...
lervant... dervant...
Fervent.
Who entrusts in you
Your faith so fervent
Fervent.
Wow, it's brilliant out here.
Watch out there.
Ow, drat!
Bourbon break.
Rest stop.
Want some?
Colqhoun?
Reich?
Mr. Colqhoun.
You... you said
that when you ate the man...
Do... do you mind if I ask?
You said that afterwards
your hunger was different...
that you felt wanton.
Yes.
Did you feel at all
physically changed?
Stronger?
I seem to remember
something like that.
A certain...
virility.
Why do you ask?
Hey!
Look, look, look! Look! Hey!
It's a bone!
It's a bone.
Whoa!
No, no, no!
He's all right!
Are you? You all right?
Mm-hmm.
I would very much appreciate
some of that bourbon now.
Bourbon now!
Boyd!
Would you administer
some of this to Toffler?
Thank you.
War hero,
afraid of the sight of blood?
War hero,
afraid of the sight of blood?
What? What? What?
What is it? What is it?
What is it? What is it?
Wake up! Wake up!
Wake up!
What's the matter?
Wake up, wake up.
Are you all right?
You all right?
He was licking me.
- What?
- He was... he was licking me.
No.
He was licking me!
- Reich!
- Yes! Yes!
Reich,
rebandage Toffler's wounds.
Mr. Colqhoun?
- Yes?
- You come outside.
Outside! You sleep outside!
Boyd, you, too.
- Stay there.
- Sick man outside!
- Colonel Hart, I can explain.
- Explain!
Um...
It's not what you think.
I... I was having a nightmare.
I was having a nightmare.
That young man screamed,
I awoke, I was on top of him...
my lips were on his wound.
Oh, Jesus Christ, I'm sorry.
Please, restrain me.
Restrain me, Colonel Hart.
I can't be trusted.
Please. I insist.
I insist.
Mr. Colqhoun.
Weendigo.
I take it that's the cave.
- Yeah.
- That's it.
All right.
George, come on.
No, please!
No, please!
No!
No, please!
No, please!
Flank on the left.
No, please! No, no!
Please!
Please, I don't want to go!
Please!
Boyd.
They'll kill me!
Please.
Please.
Mrs. MacCready!
Please, please.
They're going to kill me.
Shut up!
Colonel Ives!
Reich!
Reich, break out the lantern.
George, Toffler,
stand guard where you are.
Here.
You're going to have
to go in with Reich.
I'm sorry, but I need
an officer in there.
Here.
Just stay the hell out of my way, all right?
She's not here,
we go back, right, Colonel?
We go back?
We go all the way back.
Well, well.
Blood.
Boyd.
What are you doing?
Oh, I'm sorry.
After you, Captain.
Captain.
Sorry.
Thank you.
Mr. Colqhoun!
Mr. Colqhoun!
He's spooked.
He's spooking me.
Reich!
- Boyd!
- Reich?
Reich, the colonel's calling us.
Reich!
Jesus!
Oh, God.
One, two, three, four, five.
How many did he say was in the party? Six, right?
Why?
Who's this?
Ives. Oh, Jesus.
It's a trap!
Boyd!
He killed everyone.
Colqhoun killed everyone!
Colonel Hart!
Kill him!
Reich!
Ungh!
Ahh!
That's so annoying!
Run!
Run, run, run.
Run. Run!
Colonel Hart!
Col...
Oh, Jesus Christ.
Oh, God.
He got George.
- Sir.
- Toffler.
Where's Toffler?
Toffler!
There he is. Let's go, come on.
Go. Get him.
- Boyd!
- Reich!
You can't help him!
He's dead, soldier!
Now let's move!
Boyd!
Shh!
Die!
Ugh!
You loaded?
Of course.
Let's go kill that bastard.
Come on, move!
Move!
Reich. Reich.
I'm going to go back.
I'm going to go back.
Find him.
Jesus Christ.
Oh!
Come here.
Get away from me.
Get away from me!
Whoa!
Ohh!
You cold, Reich?
Mind if I take your coat?
I'm freezing.
Nice.
Oh.
What do you think, Major?
Should we stay here?
Or t-take the hill?
I need you to tell me
what to do.
I need...
I need you to tell me
what to do.
Tell me what to do.
Oh, God.
Oh.
God damn you.
God damn you, you're dead.
You're dead.
You're safe now.
You're safe now.
Boyd?
Martha, Knox, it's Boyd!
All right now, hold on there.
Martha, I need to talk to you.
I need to... Weendigo.
I need to know how to stop it.
I need you to help me.
I'm sorry about your brother...
but I did...
I did not kill him.
I did not kill him.
Martha, how do you st...
How do you stop it?
You don't!
You ever give yourself?
Weendigo eats.
Must eat more, more...
never enough.
He... he takes!
Never, never gives.
You stop weendigo...
you give yourself.
You must die.
There's no sign of anyone.
No sign of a sign of anyone...
not Colonel Hart's rescue party,
not the original party.
You found the cave?
There's nothing in there!
There's nothing inside.
There's no blood tracks... no rope, no bodies. You don't believe me, sir? We have four missing soldiers, Captain, and no bodies. We need a supportable explanation. Now, your story, this... windagee... is the stuff of campfires. Would you stop squirming, Lindus? I know I mispronounced it. I'm making a point. My point is, Captain, we need facts, not myths. I told you the facts, sir. Boyd, if you altered your story now... it wouldn't be perceived as retracting a lie... only... clarifying, um, a muddled recollection. The day that we spoke to you... you were out of your head with fever. I was coherent then, I'm coherent now, sir... and I distinctly remember... Perhaps up there in the wilderness... you got separated from your company. That's why I'm giving you this second opportunity. I advise that... you change your story, Boyd. Who's that? New colonel. A pleasure to meet you, sir. Why don't we go inside? - Yes? - The colonel's here. Thank you, Lindus.
We've brought in an interim commanding officer... until we can appoint a permanent replacement for Colonel Hart.
Captain, this is Colonel Ives. Colonel, Captain Boyd. Captain.
How's the leg? Lindus?
Let's step outside.
Now, what is the matter with you, Captain Boyd?
- It's him, sir.
- It's who?
- It's him, sir.
- Who is?
He's Colqhoun, sir. Colonel Ives is?
He's the one that... that killed them all, sir.
Are you mad?
Have Major Knox look at him. Sir, Major Knox was here.
Major Knox. Have Major Knox look at him, sir.
- Major Knox.
- Major Knox.
He doesn't look familiar to me, sir. I do remember the man wore a beard.
But, as I was saying, sir... I was feeling a bit ill that day.
- You were drunk.
- Captain, please. Boyd, you say you fired on this Colqhoun... struck him in the shoulder. Well, that would leave a wound, now, wouldn't it, General? I presume so.
Well, why don't we check, hmm?
Colonel Ives.
General.
Would you humor me a moment?
Of course, sir.
Would you...
Would you take off your shirt, please...
and show me your shoulder, please, Colonel?
Please.
Well, I, uh...
My last physical examination was...
was not that long ago.
Surely Major Knox has no desire to hear me cough.
The other shoulder, please, Colonel.
Thank you, Colonel.
Not at all.

- Is there a problem?
- Not with you, Colonel.

General, we should leave now in order to avoid the storm.
Boyd told the general Colonel Ives killed everyone.
What?
He said Colonel Ives was the man responsible.
Boyd gone loco.
I think he's the reason nobody come back.
I have to warn you.
Yeah, Captain?
Consider yourselves warned.
Do you need this?
No, sir.
Oh, good.
You're not an eater of ribs, Colonel Ives?
No, no, Major. I, uh...
can never forget it used to be an animal.
Sentimental fellow.
What about you, Captain Boyd?
You don't eat meat?
Oh, no, he won't.
Only as a last resort.
That's a pity.
Oh...
Yeah.
Unh!
Boyd, no!
Ha ha ha!
Damn.
Ahem.
Checkmate.
- Ha ha!
- Aah!
Huh.
Well, well...
It appears a number of us could use some rest.
Go on to bed, Boyd.
Clearing up.
Ifound your Private Reich out there...
or what was left of him.
You didn't finish.
Well, I can't blame you.
He was tough.
But then...
a good soldier ought to be.
You know, not that long ago,
I couldn't do that.
Could barely take a breath without coughing up blood.
Tuberculosis.
That, along with...
fierce headaches...
depressin...
suicidal ambition.
I was in pretty horrible shape.
In fact...
I was on my way to a sanatorium to convalesce...
more likely to die...
when en route, this Indian scout...
told me a curious story.  
A man eats the flesh  
of another...  
he steals his strength.  
He absorbs  
the other man's spirit.  
Well...  
I just had to try.  
Consequently,  
I ate the scout first...  
and, you know,  
he was absolutely right.  
I grew... stronger.  
Later, through circumstance...  
my wagon train grew lost  
in the Rockies.  
- I've heard this story before.  
- Mmm.  
I ate five men in three months.  
Tuberculosis?  
Vanished...  
as did the black thoughts.  
I reached Denver that spring  
feeling... happy.  
And healthy.  
And virile.  
Did you eat her, too?  
Well, as a matter of fact...  
You're disgusting.  
Here I am, one year later...  
feeling more alive  
than ever before.  
And that's what surprises me  
about you, Boyd.  
You've tasted it...  
felt its power.  
Yet, you're resisting.  
Why?  
Because it's wrong.  
Ah! Morality...  
the last bastion...  
of a coward.  
Well, I'm sorry.  
I'm sorry. Did I offend you?
You remember this?
You smell it?
Scent always jogs the memory,
don't you think?
You remember the energy...
the potency of someone else
coursing through your veins...
someone brave.
You know the disappointment
as it dissipates...
the strength...
slipping from your grasp...
the growing, killing need
to replenish.
But I don't have
to remind you of that.
You're feeling it right now.
I am going to kill you.
He die, you die.
What in heck
is going on out here?
I was on my way to
the latrine. Boyd attacked me.
He's a liar!
He's lying!
Boyd, I'm putting you
under arrest.
Martha, go wake up Cleaves.
Put Boyd under arrest.
Cleaves?
Cleaves?
Cleaves?
Cleaves!
You find Cleaves?
No.
- You check around outside?
- No.
Well,
check around outside, woman!
Cleaves?
Cleaves?
Cleaves?
Oh... oh!
Major Knox!
Major!
Major!
What?
All the horses... dead!
- What?
- Killed!
Oh, good gracious.
Unh!
That was for Cleaves...
and this is for my horse.
Martha...
Colonel Ives and I
have agreed...
Boyd'll be moved to a military
prison as soon as possible.
One of us must travel
to San Miguel by foot...
to get General Slauson.
Volunteers?
Safe travel to you, Martha.
Oh...
Knox?
Major Knox?
Knox!
Major Knox!
Major Knox!
Knox!
Talk to me. I'd like
to know you're still alive.
Be quiet, Boyd.
Good gracious.
Colonel Ives.
My sword is missing.
I'm sorry, Major?
My sword... in the parlor,
above the fire.
I haven't seen it.
What are you cooking?
It's, uh... stew.
You need any help?
No, no, though...
perhaps later, you might...
contribute.
You let me know.
Ives.
Ives!
Yes... Captain?
When did you do it, Ives?
Do what, Captain?
Kill Cleaves and the horses.
I was watching you
the whole time.
You be quiet about Cleaves
and the horses, Boyd!
You hear me?
Or I will put you out again.
Well, how'd that door come open?
That'll do it.
Good gracious.
Knox?
Knox!
Hello, Boyd.
I hated doing that.
Unh.
I told you my regimen had
certain curative powers, Boyd.
Get him up and around.
Oh... oh!
Leg still hurt?
Doesn't have to, you know.
You killed Cleaves...
and the horses.
What happened to you?
I thought I was dead.
I remember feeling panic
as my life slipped away.
It was like drowning
in darkness...
and then... there was nothing.
And then I woke up...
and Ives was feeding me.
By the time
I regained my senses...
there was no turning back.
I feel terrific.
So, you're going to kill me?
No. No.
It's lonely being a cannibal.
Tough making friends.
No, I like you, Boyd.
We, uh, want to bring you
into the fold.
You got to eat.
Finished?
I'm afraid Major Knox's
penchant for bourbon...
didn't leave him in the pink.
You take over.
Manifest... destiny.
Westward expansion.
You know, come April...
it'll all start again.
Thousands of gold-hungry
Americans...
will travel
over those mountains...
on their way to new lives...
passing right... through...
here.
We won't kill...
indiscriminately.
No... selectively.
Good God...
we don't want
to break up families.
People are not stupid, Ives.
Really?
You'll get caught.
Well, if it's just
the two of us...
jolly old Hart and I.
You see,
that's why we need others.
You, for one.
General Slauson.
Of course, we've no wish
to recruit everyone.
We've enough mouths to feed,
as it is.
We just need a home.
And this country...
is seeking to be whole.
Stretching out its arms... and consuming all it can. And we merely follow. Not me. You know, it's not courage to resist me, Boyd. It's courage to accept me. I mean, you're already one of us. Well... almost. You hunger for it. You just won't resign yourself to it. It's not so difficult, really... acquiescence. It's easy, actually. You just... give... in. I can't. Oh, well. Then... you die. It's all right, it's not fatal. Not if you take the necessary precautions. Stew a la Major Knox. This will fix you up. The old souse was a lot stronger than he looked. A couple of doses of this... you'll be right as rain and twice as strong. Well... Isn't this civilized? Mmm. You know... Ben Franklin once said... "Eat to live... "don't live to eat." Huh? Huh? It's an easy decision, Boyd. You can either famine or feast. Live or die. Bravo.
Here, chickie, chickie, chickie.  
Run away!  
Run for your lives!  
Having fun?  
Morning.  
The general's coming,  
remember?  
Well, you're up.  
Feeling better?  
"Waste not, want not."  
Ben Franklin.  
How's the wound?  
Oh, right as rain.  
Yeah.  
So it is.  
I could use some fresh air.  
Are you to be trusted?  
Of course not.  
Walnut, Boyd?  
All my books are gone.  
I'll miss them.  
Plato, Aristotle.  
For two millennia, struggling  
with the nature of man...  
the ideal society...  
morality.  
Boil it down...  
it's the same issues...  
we can't solve today...  
happiness and how to achieve it.  
Aristotle sought truth,  
Colonel, not happiness.  
Truth? Ha!  
I led my whole life  
according to what...  
I thought was right and true,  
and look where it got me...  
Fort Spencer.  
Come on, General.  
You have to let me go now, sir.  
You know I can't do that.  
Why not?  
We are not alone.  
There's nowhere to go.
I'm still having nightmares.
Oh, no, no.
Reich, Cleave, Knox.
No! I don't want to hear this!
- There's no turning back now!
- I know that, sir.
Don't you understand?
All you have to do is kill!
You have to kill to live!
You have to kill!
Uh-huh.
There we are.
Breakfast, lunch,
reinforcements.
I'm going to kill him.
Take the knife.
You have to do me a favor
before you go.
You have to kill me.
I can't live like this anymore.
Do it.
Quickly, please.
Aah!
Ives!
Aaaaah!
Uhh!
Gaaaah!
Aaah!
Aah!
That was...
really...
sneaky.
You know...
if you die first...
I am definitely
going to eat you.
The question is...
if I die...
what are you going to do?
Bon apptit.
Eat...
or die.
Mmm.
Mmm.
Eat...
or...
Uhh.