

STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE.

Sean had always been different. When he was at Primary School, the other boys spent their playtimes kicking a football around the school playground, while Sean preferred to sit on a bench reading a comic. It enabled his mind to wander, inventing characters and stories, which sometimes made their way into the private diary of this very private young man.

At the end of his final year, Miss Jones, the teacher, decided to put on a play. It was a play about North American Indians. Sean was surprised to find he had been given a leading part, as had Julie Clarke, on whom Sean had a secret crush. But Sean kept this thought to himself, as he was still at that innocent stage of life.

The play was a success, but there was one incident during rehearsals, when Sean had managed to hit the end of his nose with his hand. It happened when Miss Jones had told Sean to stride on stage, with his arms 'straight down the middle'. The accident brought a tear which ran down Sean's face. It was a tear of pain and discomfort.

Seven years later Sean, who attended the local Boys' Grammar School, prepared himself for the leavers' disco, which was held jointly with the Girls' School. Some of the more outgoing boys and girls had managed to find partners for the occasion, but, to no one's surprise, Sean had not. Despite this, Sean decided to attend.

He arrived and took a seat at the side. Then it happened.

Sean looked up to see the face of a young woman that he had not seen for seven years. She had that same beautiful blonde hair, much longer now, with those almost translucent eyes. Julie was the one girl whose memory had been etched upon Sean's mind all the way through his innocent and celibate adolescence. He could hardly believe the vision before him. His throat was dry.

Then, to his own surprise, Sean's legs started striding, almost without him being in control of them, with his arms going 'straight down the middle.'

Being inexorably drawn to her, Sean uttered the words uttered by many before him.

'Excuse me, but don't I know you?'

Julie's hand went to her mouth. 'Oh, my goodness,' she said. 'It's you. I know you. You're Sean. That quiet boy I went to Primary School with. Oh, I don't believe it. You look so different! I remember that play. You had your hair done in that special way, with spikes straight down....'

'Yes, Julie. My mother wanted me to look like a real Mohican.'

Then Sean shocked himself.

'Shall we dance?'

'I would love to,' replied Julie.

When Sean arrived home that night and his head hit the pillow, a tear trickled down his face. This time it was a tear of happiness.

That dance was not the last for that shy Mohican and his bride to be, but he was the last of the Mohicans for her.

'LAST OF THE MOHICANS.' JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.