



DON'T LOOK
BACK

A ZINE SHORT STORY
by S.Randall Colley c 2022



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I was on my way to Eddie's house, when I saw Eddie, on his way to the orange grove. In Florida all the citrus groves are called orange groves, even if they are grapefruit trees or tangerine trees. This orange grove was mostly, grapefruit trees.

The grove was a spooky place. The trees were old and overgrown with large branches had intertwined with each other, forming a canopy of green leaves making it dark and cool underneath. It was so dark that nothing grew around the base of the trees, just dusty grove dirt.

The perfect place for two-third-graders trying to get away from the hot summer sun. It was a vast shadowy underground, full of dark villains and scary monsters, too much for Billy, he never played with us in the orange grove.

Eddie was headed to the woods on the other side of the grove. I was not allowed to go on the other side of the grove.

That's not exactly true, that was more of a self imposed restriction. I never liked to go so far, that I could not hear my mother call me from the back door. The woods would be out of her yelling range.

The woods were an unknown place, where you knew you could probably get into some kind of trouble, but I went with Eddie anyway.

The whole time, I felt like I was doing something wrong. You know that feeling, that you have when you go past your safe place, and you know that your mother would not approve.

On the edge of grove there was a section of woods with tall pines trees and big oak trees.

Hurricane Donna had blown down some of the pine trees. The trees had fallen in such a way that they crossed over top of each other and we could walk up and down the tree trunks. You could walk up as high as six or seven feet from the ground.

I had been in the woods a few times before, but I still felt uneasy. Someone had put up a rope swing, which meant we were trespassing on someone else's territory, probably teenagers and that could be trouble.

Eddie was swinging on the rope and yelling like Tarzan. I told him to be quiet, which made him only yell louder. I was looking all around the area for teenagers, anybody that might try to beat us up.

I heard Eddie yelling for me to look up at him. I turned around, and he was swinging on the rope with his pants down.

I laughed so hard I fell off the log. Then he let go of the rope tumbled into the dirt.

He got up, and pulled off his cowboy boots, took off his tee-shirt, pants, and underwear, then put his cowboy boots back on, and scurried back up to the tree trunk to the rope.

What a sight, he was naked as a jaybird wearing only his red cowboy boots, swinging from the rope yelling like Tarzan. I knew this could be bad... very bad.

I begged him to stop and put his clothes back on, I just knew we were going to get into trouble. But I knew Eddie, and the more you wanted him to do something, the more he would do just the opposite.

His skinny, white, naked butt, kept on swinging and yelling as loud as he could.

Then... my worst nightmare. I saw someone coming from the grove, oh my God... three teenage boys coming up the trail.

I screamed to Eddie in a loud whisper... "stop... get down someone's coming." I grabbed his clothes, and tried to get him to come down, and put them on, but he just laughed, and climbed higher up the rope.

There was no way he could get down, and get dressed before the boys got there.

Eddie always made sure that he went past the point of no return. I threw his clothes down, and ran before they saw me.

I had seen the three boys at Miller's market before, and they were trouble.

I ran as far into the grove as I could, and hid behind a tree, making sure that they did not see me.

I could tell they knew Eddie... and one of them called him by name. They lit up cigarettes, and set on a fallen tree trunk with their backs toward me.

Eddie was still swinging, and yelling, and doing his naked dance high in the tree.

I could see them laughing, but my heart was pounding so loud, I could not hear what they were saying.

They took Eddie's clothes, and acted like they were going to set them on fire with their cigarette lighters.

I figured they would just take his clothes, and he would have to walk home naked in his cowboy boots.

That would not have bothered Eddie too much.

Eddie had stopped swinging on the rope, and was on the ground talking to the boys.

I had a strange feeling that Eddie knew those boys were going be here, and that he was waiting for them all along.

The boy in the middle stood up, and undid his pants, and sat back down.

I was not sure what Eddie was doing with those boys, but I knew it was wrong... very wrong. I left Eddie in the woods with those three boys, and I ran home.

I stopped and looked back once, I really didn't want to see what I saw, and I did not want to know, what I now knew, about Eddie.

The next day Eddie came over to my house, we pulled some big yellow grasshoppers from a rose bush, and stuck them on the cactus thorns in the back yard.

We never said, a word about what happened in the woods, we just acted like, it never... happened.

The End



MAKE A POEM
WRITE A STORY
MAKE A DRAWING
MAKE A ZINE
EVERYDAY

