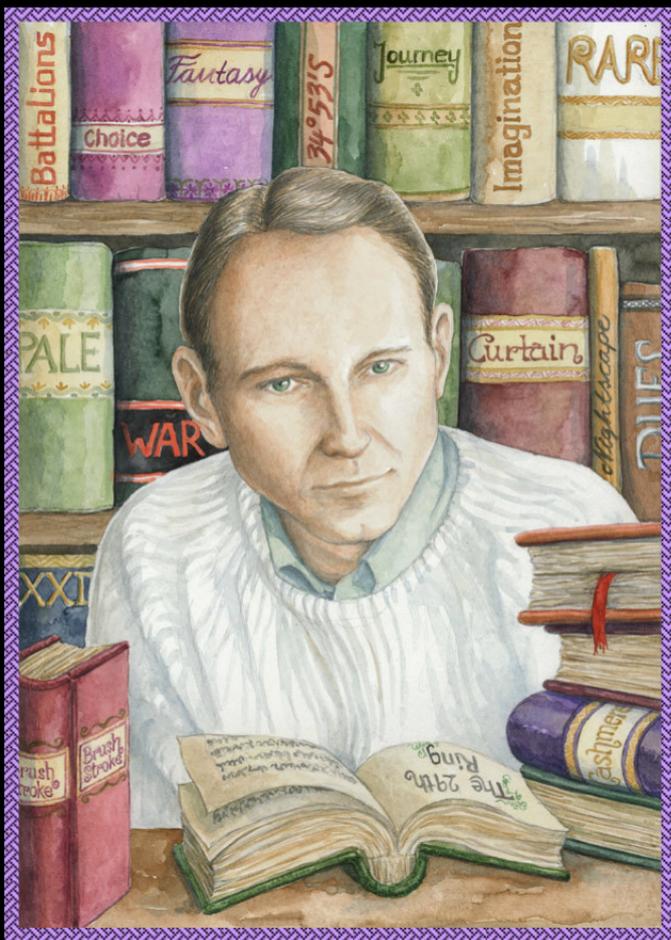


A RARE DESERT FROST™ by D.H. DALE™
A MINIATURESTORY™ from STORIESWEARETELLING™ for the MINIATURELIBRARY™ of the SHORTSTORYAFICIONADO™

The SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™ PRESENTS



THE MINIATURE LIBRARY THE SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™

Image of an original watercolor by Anke Eissmann — 2009
Out of the Imagination and Mind's Eye of the Short Story Aficionado™

aBiTof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the copyright & trademark laws of the United States of America.



Welcome to A STORY I'M TELLING™ from Far Beyond the Threshold of Imagination!

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Reader...

Spurred by the crisp coolness of any chosen Autumn afternoon...and before the violet blush of twilight fades to starlit night—hasten to find a comfortable easy chair...one where you may be warmed by the welcoming embers of a glowing hearth. From there, your imagination shall lift you up and whisk you down the narrow drive ahead—through the gateposts and beyond.



Once round the bend, you shall find yourself in a hitherto unseen quarter—as Far Beyond the Threshold of Imagination™ as you can ever hope to be!

It is there and then that you shall have the opportunity to reach out for one brief moment in time—to grasp the offer of an outstretched hand that is aBit of Adventure™.

Major D.H. Dale™
A Rare Desert Frost™

A Miniature Story™ from Stories We Are Telling™
for the Miniature Library™ of the Short Story Aficionado™

FAR BEYOND the THRESHOLD of IMAGINATION™
aBIT of MYSTERY, ROMANCE and ADVENTURE™

Image of an original watercolor by Anke Eissmann — 2009
Out of the Imagination and Mind's Eye of the Short Story Aficionado™

aBIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the copyright & trademark laws of the United States of America.



A Rare Desert Frost™

Having Evolved into the Quintessential
MINIATURE STORY™
aBitof ADVENTURE™
is Dedicated to

My FAMILY
Then, Now and Always

My DARLING and DEVOTED WIFE
You of Starlit Nights Come and Gone

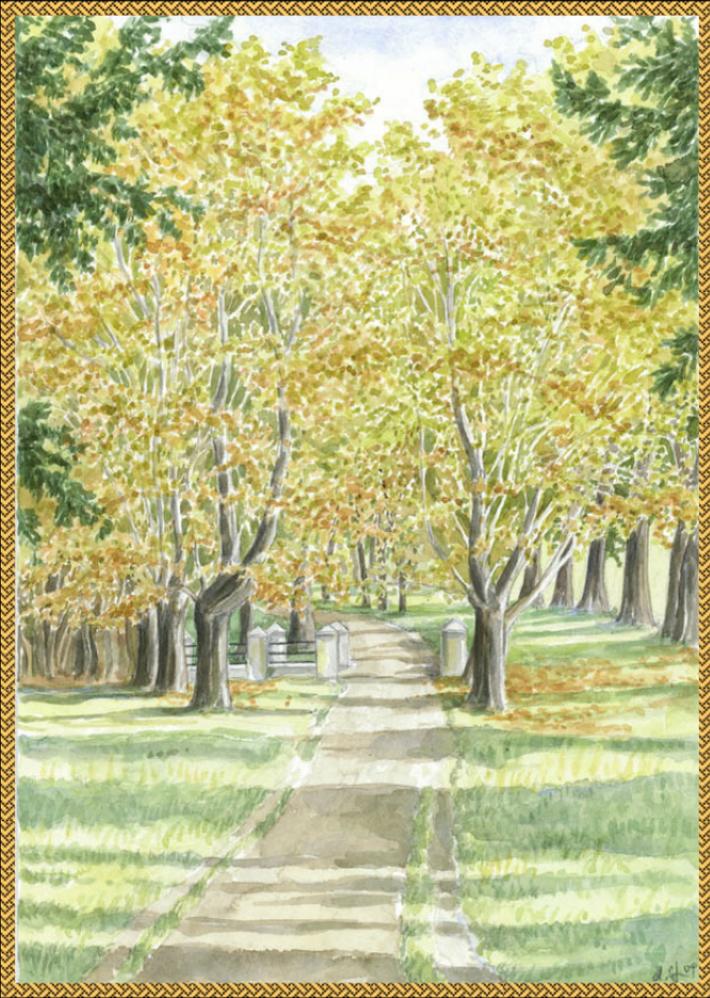
My LOVING and FAITHFUL DAUGHTER
You're the Best!

My BELOVED WIFE and ALLY
You in the Autumn Blush of All the Afternoons Yet to Come
having been the First to Cross Over the Threshold into the
MINIATURE LIBRARY™

aBitof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.





FAR BEYOND the THRESHOLD of IMAGINATION
a BIT of MYSTERY, ROMANCE and ADVENTURE

Image of an original watercolor by Anke Eissmann — 2009
Out of the Imagination and Mind's Eye of the Short Story Aficionado™

a BIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



A Rare Desert Frost

Join me now for *A Story I'm Telling*—and savor *aBitof Adventure*™, as you experience *A Rare Desert Frost*™ within just a few short hours of the pendulum completing a full forward stroke at O'dark O'clock.

DHD GTTG SSA™

THE PENDULUM completes a full forward stroke at O'dark O'clock. Accordingly, we find our powerful whirlybirds staggered one behind the other—my particular well armed taxi soon to break off from its fellow mistresses of the sky and take on a life of its own.

The others will do the same, of course—all of them seeking a point in time when they can return and retire to their corner of the field. There to enjoy a well earned reward for dispensing merciless justice.

In the meantime though—I and my fellow raiders keep busy with preps, checks and chatter.

To assist in maintaining the warrior mood, we apply camo sticks in various prescribed shades and designs—much like a tattoo artist might do in the dim light of a shadowy corner shop.

All the while, every pore soaks up aggressive boom box bars of our unique brand of heart-stirring, floor

aBitof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



stomping insertion rock – which in no way, shape or form resembles a divertimento. As a matter of fact, I literally laugh out loud at the thought of a chamber ensemble delicately plucking strings and tickling ivories during a combat operation.

Always included as a part of our in-flight ritual, insertion rock aids us in merging our senses with the distinctive and unparalleled sights, sounds and smells of weapons and other boldly designed military gear.

Psychologically, all of this tends to pump blood into the exhilarating blend of danger and expected mission success that lie ahead of us – and somewhere out there beyond our pilot's artificial horizon.

Occasionally one of us will call out a familiar phrase of encouragement or two. Such fragmentary outbursts are the norm in our business. So, make no mistake as to the drawing of any conclusions here. Such emotional expressions are always preceded by parallel serious thought.

After a while, the music dies down. Thereafter, we cluster our thoughts around the red glow that bathes the weapons, ammunition and equipment that will see us through to success – and to survival.

We can never be that confident in the value and accuracy of humint provided by our indigenous associates. After all, we are to some degree generally always suspicious of one another. So, we keep a wary eye-in-the-sky on the presumed route of our target. As a matter of fact, we are confident that at least one of our choppers will find the elusive adversary whom we so diligently seek.

Naturally, we hope it will be ours.

aBITof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



We are thoughtful soldiers. And I for one have been thinking a lot lately.

THOUGHTS of the PAST

DURING THE FEW HOURS of immersion in the internal red glow of our chopper's pulsing fuselage, most of us try to grab some sleep. We will need to be alert later. From time to time, of course, I can't help but be cognizant of the whirling impellers—their whisper never ceasing in the dizzying rotation about their vertical and horizontal axes.

In a strange and distant sort of way, the steady sound of the engine brings to mind thoughts of another time and another place. It is a recurring recollection of a brief part of my grandfather's childhood in a small border town not far from a long, winding river. The house my grandfather rented for my grandmother and their two sons was only a short distance from the main gate of a nearby army post where he was then stationed as a Quartermaster Corps captain.

As a 1943 graduating second lieutenant at Fort Benning's Infantry OCS—my grandfather found himself destined to serve in the European TO between London and Berlin from 1944 until 1945. He remained in Berlin until 1946 as a member of the allied occupation.

On Christmas Eve of 1952, my grandmother died in an army hospital on the aforementioned military post—her widower then rejoining the American occupation in Austria and Italy. By the close of 1953, he would return to the States for the final time. Should there be a second re-

aBIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



call, he would be ready to once again step forward. However, the next call would be for my father in 1963.

Over the next dozen or so years, politicians will learn the bitter pitfalls of foreign invasions and occupations leading to unsustainable and immensely expensive counterinsurgencies—the latter in blood and borrowed money.

Of course, there is always a new crop of armchair strategists sprouting like uncontrollable weeds from the fertile soil of The Rose Garden—and from tiny cracks in the marble steps of Capitol Hill. All of them profess to be seeking redemption for the military arena. However, what they are really after is a kind of personification as political warriors who are ever willing to expend the blood and money of those other than themselves and their own progeny.

When will they ever learn? These political animals who have never even attempted survival in the wild—or for that matter, bothered to memorize even one bar of insertion and extraction rock.

The TOP of the DUNE

MY THOUGHTS reluctantly disappear from my mind's eye—as I am abruptly shaken from my reverie and returned to the immediate present. The degree of adrenaline in my blood peaks as our chopper banks sharply to the right—and then rapidly descends onto the LZ.

aBIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



There isn't much time to react—let alone think on another plane of consciousness.

I am ready though. We all are.

Our whisper silent descent and insertion onto the forbidding desert landscape isn't as turbulent as it could be. I am glad of that.

A hard landing can be fatal—and if not that, at the very least a prescription for mission failure.

Sustaining total psychological preparedness is next to impossible. It has its peaks and valleys, and is mostly a personal thing. Our success depends on silence, so there isn't anything said or done that might even remotely alert our unsuspecting prey.

Yes, we are the predators—the hunter-slayers.

Prey is simply prey. That's just how one must look at it too.

I know that I won't be totally psyched up again until I get my first few rounds off. At that point, I will be raking everything that moves or doesn't move within my field of fire—without regard to who or what it is.

It is simply the nature of the business.

For several hours now, we of like-minded ilk have been lying here with our back sides turned upward toward the myriad stars of a twinkling night sky. Naturally, we mean no disrespect to they who created the heavens.

More plainly put—visibility is unlimited as hell. And that's good. That's real good.

And here we are at the top of the dune in eager anticipation. It's a really big pile of sand that exists for to-

aBIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



night only—and which will shift to be born again tomorrow.

We are all thinking the same thing, with only minor variations I'm sure—and thankful to be in one another's company. There is no closer personal bond than that of one soldier for another—especially in an extreme life or death situation. And believe me when I say that life is definitely what each of us is opting for, as we sojourn here—so close to a fast approaching and blazing desert dawn.

Toward that end, our blue-green planet is slowly turning on her invisible axis toward the corona encased surface of our solar system's fiery morning star. Yet even that red brilliance is but a pinprick in the pitch-black galactic quilt that is our Milky Way. Our sun's boiling and exploding surface is a mere reflection of perhaps one retinal speck of iridescent pigment in the eye of any almighty supreme being—that is, any whose stern countenance no one of humankind dare ever look upon directly.

Atop the dune, our legs are positioned wide apart for balance and stability, while we pull the butts of our weapons close against our shoulders and into our jawbones and chins.

"At least I'm dry and there aren't any snakes," I understatedly reminisce, as my mind briefly wanders back to tales of narrow, almost invisible, rain forested "trails" of decades past—one's lower body having been repeatedly immersed for hours in swampy water up to the groin.

For a few fleeting moments, those tales recall what seems to me now to have certainly been a simpler, more cut-and-dried day and time. Due to the extreme oversim-



plifications uttered by the theater commander of that day and age—that is, "they" are "bad" and "we" are "good"—it was an apparently black and white world, with only briefly intervening streaks and shades of leaf green.

Half of us are looking down one side of the dune's slope, while all but two of the rest of us peer down the reverse. Our fields of fire are carefully triangulated, staked out, and overlapped. We are therefore organized to lay down an abundance of fire to our front, rear and flanks in one unbroken perimeter.

Silence is our mantra at this point.

Such is the fundamental principle of surprise—the single most effective key to eliminating our target from the face of the earth.

We will simply get them coming and going—with no chance of escape.

That is, if my LBE doesn't get to me first. It is always so damned uncomfortable. How I always dislike the way it gets in my way and weighs me down.

It is like I am one-of-me lighter when I can shed my web belt and suspenders, and toss them and their various and sundry attachments aside. Of course in the meantime, the extra ammo, first aid pouch, personal sidearm, and water—all densely stored there—are potential lifesavers.

It is downright cold—and even colder than that because our nervous sweat evaporates off us at an alarming rate.



A RARE DESERT FROST™

AS THE DAWN stealthily approaches, my eyes can just detect *A Rare Desert Frost™* forming on the cold, steel barrel of my SAW.

We are all hunkering down even more—in essence, trying to disappear. If the morning sun does precedes the execution of our mission, though, we shouldn't have to worry about signature silhouettes. This, because the ridge of the dune runs counter to sunrise.

"There's no substitute for good planning," I think to myself—while somehow just a little bit wary of the validity of my own belief in that oft expressed idiom.

I squirm a little more, hunkering down even further in the loose sand—while hoping that there aren't any of those well known nasty scorpions seeking my body heat.

When I was back at my home bases, I used to protect myself against their bloodsucking and disease carrying tick brothers with flea collars around my boot tops. But venomous nocturnal scorpions are another breed of arachnid altogether.

Repeatedly trying to relax, I take occasional deep breaths, while at the same time trying to continuously peer out through my weapon's rear sight aperture.

Crap! I am tense as hell, and I just can't shake it.

And my feet are cold as well.

Shit!

aBITof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



I can take the tropics, but the desolate cold of the desert really goes through one's BDU's—and right directly into one's bones somehow or other. My trigger finger is becoming almost immobile. In the dark's cold numbness, I wonder if it has turned some shade of ashen gray, and is perhaps about to fall off in the sand where I'll never see or hear from it again.

I keep thinking that I will be needing that finger later. That is, for holding a fork, turning thumbscrews and other routine stuff like that.

It's amazing what one thinks about at the oddest of times.

I keep moving that forefinger, and opening and closing the rest of the fingers on that hand—while keeping real close to the trigger housing. I take a lot of comfort in having that SAW as close to me as possible. It might end up being my only ticket out of here—after we get him and his hangers-on, of course.

I don't want any medals—just out—and back to my unit with the rest of the guys, as quickly as our chopper can get us there.

We are all scared—but we want our target and his cronies real bad.

A DONE DEED

IT IS DONE AND I AM HALF DEAF! We all are. But our hands are finally warm again. And I haven't lost my index finger after all. Thank goodness for small

aBIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the copyright & trademark laws of the United States of America.



favors.

On autopilot insofar as equalizing, I repeatedly swallow. However, the voices around me still seem to be somewhere far off. I will have to rely on my other senses for a while it seems.

EPILOGUE of EARTHY POOLS

ASIDE from my temporary deafness, everything is so peculiarly quiet anyway, like in a dream of sorts—or perhaps like in a nightmare. Hanging heavily in the air and enveloping us, is the characteristically suffocating and often exhilarating odor that always follows a massive and explosive expenditure of live ammunition. As uncomfortable as it is, it assists in sparing us the stench of death.

And then there are those ever deepening, ever widening, slow-motion stains where only a crisp, white sandy landscape should be. Those earthy pools—a surreal mix of *scarlet* and *bluish red*, whose well-timed flow to and from the hearts and lungs of their birth was just now cut off violently, instantly and forever. This, by the body numbing impacts and hostile incursions generated by a multiplicity of 5.56-mm metal-jacketed lead slugs—more than 12 for each and every second of cyclic burst of fire.

Yeah chum—feel free to take a sec, while I get a dozen final rounds off. You don't have to calculate anything though. Just use your imagination to conjure up how many slugs that would be for the mere second until *A Rare Desert Frost™* evaporates—and for each and every minute

aBITof ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



until a blue steel barrel simply melts down in front of your very own eyes!

I don't really remember getting back on the chopper. But listening to the increased RPM of those whispering impellers again—I knew that we were out of there baby!

The proof is in the pudding—and in the black, zippered, rubber bags that are on temporary, interest-free loan to the reasonably attentive identity experts just behind the cockpit.

Everything lights up in a red glow again. And somebody flips on the boom box. Although still only partially able to hear, it isn't hard for me to instantly recognize a longtime favorite and familiar extraction theme. It is smooth and melancholy—wafting everywhere around us, as it permeates the copter's waist and cockpit.

Throughout the pensive bars, my only thoughts are of home, family—and the interjection of violent justice.

"Here's to friendship," I mutter—my voice breaking a little.

"Here's just a goddamned salute to all you wonderful guys," my voice suddenly rising above the din around me.

Yes, I have one of those really warm fuzzy feelings sweeping over me now!

Suddenly as well, my appetite returns. However, I will wait for a hot breakfast back at the field.



A RARE DESERT FROST™ by D.H. DALE™
A MINIATURE STORY™ from STORIES WE ARE TELLING™ for the MINIATURE LIBRARY™ of the SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™

Besides snakes – I hate MRE's!¹

Your Storyteller in Miniature
Major D.H. Dale

A Rare Desert Frost

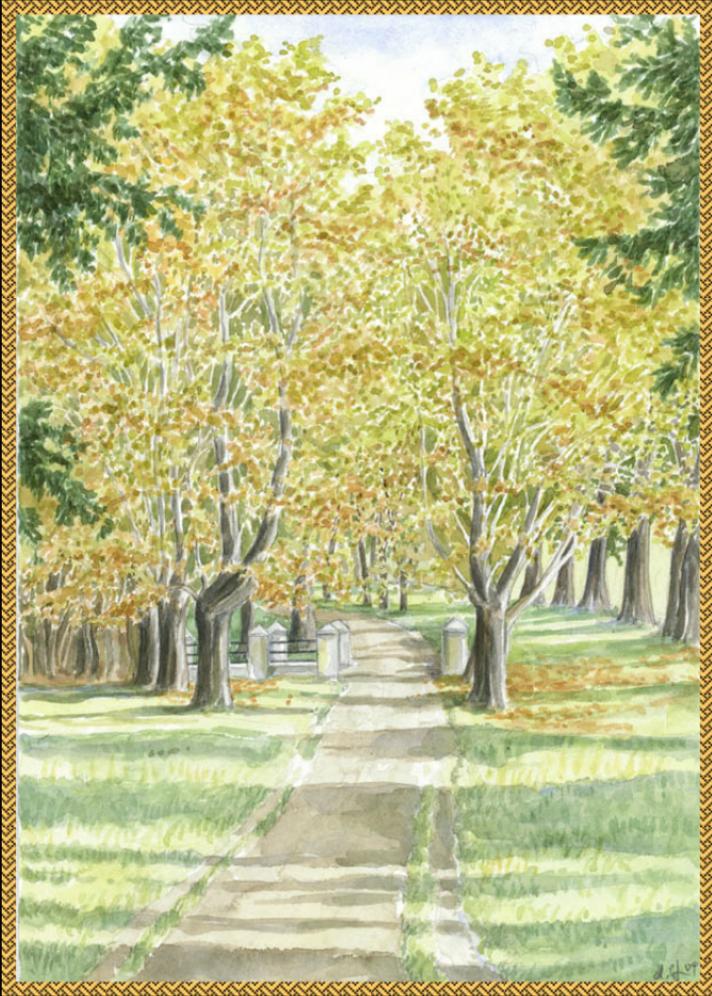
DHD GTTG SSA™

¹The freewheeling imagination and evocative storytelling of D.H. Dale™ crown otherwise commonplace themes with aBit of Adventure™—a bejeweled and magical coronet not shackled by convention. Herein lies the work of a self-styled painter of the written word—the full kaleidoscope of hues, blushes, shades, tones and tints flowing from the storyteller's inkwell to parchment. It is upon these leaves of paper so unselfishly bestowed by some mighty tree—that the teller has penned this Miniature Story™ entitled A Rare Desert Frost™. The storyteller's thread of events, like all praiseworthy accounts, is a manifestation of the routine yet exceptional practice of observing, analyzing and drawing heartfelt as well as compelling conclusions. Inevitably, the finalities reflected in such reasoned judgments can be said to draw themselves up out of a shallow inkstone. After all, that vessel is the lone crucible in which the dry ink of deliberation is measured and mixed with just the right amount of imagination from the well of reflection—thereby maintaining the fragile flow of creativity that the pen can never completely manage on its own.

aBit of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the copyright & trademark laws of the United States of America.





FAR BEYOND the THRESHOLD of IMAGINATION
a BIT of MYSTERY, ROMANCE and ADVENTURE

Image of an original watercolor by Anke Eissmann — 2009
Out of the Imagination and Mind's Eye of the Short Story Aficionado™

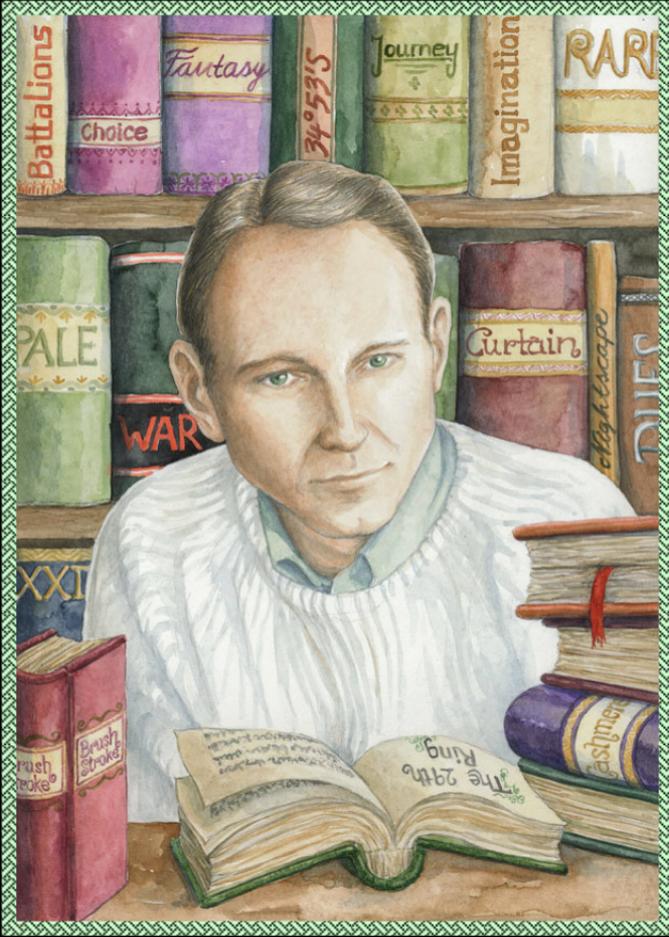
a BIT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.



A RARE DESERT FROST™ by D.H. DALE™
A MINIATURE STORY™ from STORIES WE ARE TELLING™ for the MINIATURE LIBRARY™ of the SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™

YOURS in MINIATURE... The SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™



THE MINIATURE LIBRARY THE SHORT STORY AFICIONADO™

Image of an original watercolor by Anke Eissmann — 2009
Out of the Imagination and Mind's Eye of the Short Story Aficionado™

aBiT of ADVENTURE™
©2002-2014 by GTTransGlobal™ — PACIFIC NW U.S.A.

All rights (including literary-work & story/short-story; theatre; motion picture; television; sound recording; audiovisual work; video/board games; image from original work-of-visual-art; digital/electronic transmission & web-site/web-page) are reserved under the *copyright* & *trademark* laws of the United States of America.

