

“Noble Encounters”

For March, 2001

by The Delvings

The old hotel was coming down, and it was coming down hard. Unoccupied for years, the day had finally come for the auction people to come in and sell off everything they could, from the floors to the ceilings and every scrap in between.

Amid the junk dealers and competing hotel owners, the bargain hunters and the just plain curious, George wove his way through. He knew exactly what he was looking for, and had hoped no one would outbid him on his chosen items. They were, after all, truly unique.

At 11:00 am, the head auctioneer made his way around the front of the old building, followed by a gaggle of buyers and hangers-on. The group came to rest beside the main lobby doors, where the auctioneer began his call:

“Awright now, who’ll gimme fifty for each of these?” No responses from anyone; he started too high. “Awright then, twenny-five?” Still no action. “Who’ll gimme fifteen for choice? Choice of these lovely...How about ten?”

George’s hand sprang up. “We got ten right over here! Ten, who’ll gimme fifteen? I got ten going once, ten going twice...sold! To number...seventy-eight!” The auctioneer waddled over, closer to George. “How many ya want?”

“That one and that one,” George indicated, and an assistant marked two huge boulders with his indelible marker, indicating they were now the property of bidder #78, George Delving. A huge, pink granite boulder, and even more massive black lava piece, looking like it weighed close to a half-ton. But George didn’t care how much they weighed, or how he’d ever manage to get them to his new home, over thirty miles away. All he knew was he’d manage, somehow.

After George bought six smaller (but still massive) ones for five dollars apiece, he walked across the busy parking lot and returned with a hand cart. He manhandled the smallest boulder, a little over a hundred pounds, onto the hand cart and over to the opposite end of the lot, where George’s old Jeep was parked.

The second stone he moved was well over three hundred pounds, and defied George’s best efforts to maneuver it upright where the hand cart’s lip could get leverage. A couple of other buyers took pity on George, and gave him a hand getting it upright, as George pushed the handcart into position with his boot. The cart groaned under the weight of the massive stone, but it held.

George thanked the two men who helped, and then let the weight of the boulder pull him and the cart down the gentle slope of the parking lot.

He returned a third time for the smallest remaining rock, closer to two hundred pounds, but still manageable by one person. While he struggled to get it into position for the handcart, three big men inside the building watched with amazement and some humor, at George’s efforts with the rocks.

One of them began writing with his chunky finger on the inside of the glass, backwards, so George could read it outside. B...O...B...

Maybe he’s telling me I should find some guy named Bob? George thought to himself. But the burly man continued drawing on the glass, C...A...T. *Bobcat*, he was telling George. *Go get a big machine to do your lifting.*

George laughed and leaned over to write a response:

G...E...O... he began, while the men inside puzzled at what his message was. He finished with R...G...E, then tapped his chest with his index finger. The men inside laughed at that, and satisfied he’d made a point to them and to himself, George let his boulder pull him downhill to the Jeep.