**THE** **HOT** **SEAT**

 “So you see that as the Snake River passes through the gorge it briefly divides here into . . .”

 The teacher spun around from the blackboard. There was Bobby, who had just seen Billy grab the sailing paper airplane, in the midst of giving him a thumbs-up. Both were smiling broadly as Billy held it triumphantly up high as if it were a trophy. Several others in the class of some twenty-odd ten year old boy students of the fifth grade had had their eyes looking up as the little paper plane made its death dive, but nevertheless it was clear who was the culprit and who was his accomplice. “You: To the Hot Seat, if you please. And you: You will follow.” So it was true: Teachers *did* have eyes in the backs of their heads.

 With a ‘no-big-deal’ forced smirk on his face Bobby stood from his desk and made his way to the center aisle. Down he walked towards the back of the classroom with its large windows through which the athletic field could be seen outside below. At the end of the aisle stood the electric chair in readiness for the condemned.

 Understand that it was not an Olde Sparkey like that which had been the mainstay for executions in the past. No, its only electrified feature was a hot pad which served as a cushion atop a three-legged stool.

 Well acquainted with the routine, upon his arrival Bobby took off his jeans and underpants and hung them on the rack standing there beside the stool. He took the larger sized jockstrap hanging from it and squirted its inside with antiseptic spray there in a spray bottle upon the window seal. He put it on and switched on the hot seat. Red penlights mounted to each leg of the stool began to flash confirming that the hot pad was turned on. He pinched the timer and climbed aboard.

 Seeing that properly done, Mr. Harris extracted a leather strap, a rattan cane and a wooden paddle from the bottom drawer of his large desk and laid them down, side by side. He turned back to the blackboard in so casual a manner that one would have thought nothing had happened.

 “As I was saying, here the Snake River splits into . . .”

 Bobby felt the pad starting to warm against his bare butt. It had but one timer setting - - - five minutes - - - and one temperature setting - - - HOT.

 Nervously he starting rocking his calves and feet back and forth. You see the crossbars of the stool were too low for a boy’s feet to reach them while seated which insured that his body weight was applied to the hot pad at all times. By the time the five minute dinger would sound the pad would be as hot as it would get; and that was *hot*. Thus it was with relief that with the timer ping Bobby jumped down and walked down the center aisle with his exposed ass cheeks thoroughly heated. With him rosy cheeks had a different meaning. His classmates soaked in the view.

 Without a word he walked around the big desk and bent over it facing the class. He gave a knowing wink: No big deal, right guys?

 “Up,” ordered the teacher as he took hold of the first punishment implement – the leather strap.

 Up on his tiptoes went Bobby. Harris looked at the raised ass with its rosy color that contrasted with the lily-white legs. He unleashed a firm blow of the strap onto the center of the reddened target.

 Bobby concentrated on maintaining his better-than-thou smirk. Big mistake.

 “Well?”

 Bobby had forgotten. “Oh; sorry. Thank you Mr. Harris.”

 “That calls for a repeat.”

 “**SPLAT**!” The repeat was a true repeat – right atop the prior one.

 Bobby maintained his smart-ass smirk as he struggled to absorb the penalty swat.

 “Thank you Mister Harris. Thank you very much. Yes sir, thank you very much., SIR!”

 “Another repeat for the insolent remark, you smart-ass.”

 “But.”

 “No but about it save your own butt: **SPLAT**!” This one he *really* had laid on. He felt his face begin to flush as he watched the boy’s butt muscles quiver.

 With little hesitation the teacher walked to the boy’s other side and delivered a backhander. Bobby was in the middle of his ‘thank you’ when “**SPLAT**!” That one, together with the prior penalty stroke, took the spunk out of him as he realized that he just wasn’t going to win this battle.

 “Thank you . . . you . . . Mr. Harris.” His smirk was now contorted.

 The Hot Seat routine regularly called for three of the strap followed by three of the cane followed still yet by three of the paddle, all with five minute interludes for time to recoup seated upon the Hot Seat. The penalty strokes had made for five of the leather strap for Round One in Bobby’s case. After the fifth one he got down off his tiptoes and returned down the center aisle with his head held high and his eyes uplifted searching the ceiling for something or other. Perhaps it was time for its repainting? Now it was some of the boys in the room who were doing the smirking which he definitely did not want to see.

 Arriving back at The Hot Seat Bobby touched the seat pad. With no heat having been conducted away in his absence, it was hot-hot-hot to his touch. And now he was going to sit his just-strapped butt back down on it? Oh God. He hit the timer which pinged and most gingerly retook his seat upon the dreaded throne.

 “Now here where the Snake River snakes its way through . . .”

 Bobby tried to listen – anything to get his mind off his hot strapped ass to which more heat was continually be conducted. The message however was unclear. There was interference and static within his brain as he tried to decipher the teacher’s words. Snake . . . making . . . hot . . . biting . . . Hells’ Canyon . . . rapids . . . lowlands . . . inferno . . . cascades . . . west-southwest. Shit, oh shit, hot shit. He looked at the timer. Four more minutes? Can’t be right; it must be broken. Eventually though the timer did ping. Time heals all wounds? Not in this case. For mischievous Bobby, time rubbed salt into all wounds.

 As soon as his feet made contact with the floor Bobby grabbed his burning butt and made his way slowly down the center aisle with his eyes straight ahead. He did so as not to make eye contact with any of his classmates. Two however he couldn’t miss as they had their heads down on their desk looking backwards and up at him as he approached. One had a big smile and gave him a wink while the other had his mouth spread wide open with his fingers in making a funny face. Mr. Harris didn’t break his stride as he worked his chalk on the blackboard.

 Again without being told Bobby retook his position leaning over the desk facing the classroom up on his tiptoes. He waited and waited. “But the color of the Snake River here, you see . . .” continued on the teacher who now had taken up the rattan cane “is rather murky as . . . **THWICK**!” . . . the cane slammed into Bobby hot strapped raised ass.

 “Thank . . . thank . . . . thank you . . . thank you sir.”

 “It seems that the river silt forms here from runoff . . **THWICK”** a vicious backhander right onto a welt from the strap that had been rising more than usual from the heat donated by the Hot Seat.

 “Aaaaahh . . . . . God . . . . . thank you . . . . Thank you sir.”

 “The local agriculture calls for . . . **THWICK**!” This time Harris delivered a rising fore hander across the lower part of the boy’s ass.

 “**SHIT**” Bobby hands let go of the front of the desk and flew to his ass as his torso rose up off the desk.

 “Please; I *am* trying to teach here,” said Harris as he nudged the boy’s hands away. “You know there *also* are jackasses out west there who graze in the grasslands beside the lower reaches of the river.”

 As soon as Bobby was back down and gripping the desk edge, a repeater struck home. “Doesn’t count, you know; no jumping the gun. Two penalty strokes.”

 “Two?”

 “One for jumping the gun and one for cursing.”

 “They use pesticides of course to get rid of pests; pests like the one you see here now before you. **THWICK**! **THWACK**! *Now* you may return.” Harris felt his face flushing further and his pulse rate rising. No way did he want the medical report to read: *heart attack* *while* *personally attacking* *the* *naked* buttox *of* a *ten* *year* *old* *boy*.

 This time the boy could care less what his classmates thought as he made his way down the center aisle with his abdomen leading the way, pushed out by his hands pressed against his tortured ass. With tears streaming down his cheeks he could hardly make out their facial expressions.

 Once more Bobby punched the timer. He mounted the Hot Seat which, without delay, went to work on the ridges of the fresh cane welts that overlaid the earlier strap marks. Being almost unbearable he squeezed his hands in between his burning bun and the burner. Better for the hands to get heated than his well strapped and caned ass. Relief lasted but mere seconds. “Hands atop your head, boy. Now eradication of these pests is made with the use of . . .”

 After what seemed like another eternity, if double eternities are possible, the timer dinged. Bobby catapulted off the Hot Seat and grabbed his flaming buns. It felt like he had put his hands on a hot stove top. Instinctively he jerked them back off.

 He stood there looking down the aisle at the back of the teacher who was working again on the blackboard drawing a serpentine line that depicted the river. . . the Serpent, I mean Snake, River. Not knowing whether to replace his hands to give his burning bun some relief or not, he arrived at a solution: Fanning. He started fanning his burning bun furiously. It was like stoking the glowing coals of a furnace. Now he didn’t know what to do with his hands.

 When Mr. Harris glanced back over his shoulder Bobby moved on, looking at the paddle lying in wait upon the desk. How could he possible now take that? The closer he got the bigger it grew in size and evil texture. It had a rough surface and three holes. Others lay inside the desk drawers in reserve for they did crack and splinter on occasion. Usually such an occasion occurred when Harris lost his temper, or at least his patience.

 Mr. Harris always saved the paddle for last. He had used it before the cane but then found that the paddle produced better results as it slammed onto fresh cane tramlines and onto their ridges that were still rising as they matured. Bobby had heard about this. Harris the triple play teacher with his home run endings that ended with the paddle slamming onto the heated cane welts that had formed upon an underlying strapped foundation. Harris the triple threat; Harris the triple slammer.

 The teacher looked down at the ass now presented to him, raised up on high in against his desk. Nice presentation. He leaned down for a closer look.

 Bobby jumped as the teacher’s fingers touched the outstanding rising welt that had been created from that triple cane stroke. It was a dozy. He slid his finger slowly back and forth along its ridges. It brought to mind the banks of Hell’s Canyon through which the Snake River cascaded. Just what the target now would be was without question. The topography needed further alteration; further relief; topographical relief, that is. Were he a painter he would deepen the color here with additional brush strokes. Without looking at the blackboard Harris continued on simultaneously with the both the lesson and the trashing.

 “In this gorge . . . **SPLAT**! . . . the river slams . . . thank you s . . . into a bed of rocks . . . **SPLAT**! *AAAAAHHHHHHH* ***. . .*** to form rapids . . . **SPLAT**! ***AA*** - - ***AA*** - - gasp - - ***AA*** - - - THANK YO - - - - Now get back to your seat.”

 With tears now running freely down his cheeks Bobby, the Defeated, the Ex-Smirker- left the desk. Just as he was approaching his regular seat in the classroom Harris called out: “Not *that* seat! Come back up here.”

 Again Bobby found himself bent over the desk up on tiptoes with his shaking hands gripping its front edge. He recalled having started down the aisle towards the Hot Seat but when he saw that the teacher had then gone back to work with his chalk, he had seized the opportunity and had made a right turn. Unfortunately, no right turns were permitted.

 “The snake river rapids have tons of water slamming . . . **SPLAT**! . . . onto buns . . . I mean rocks . . . **SPLAT**! . . . in ***rapid fire action. . .***  **SPLAT**! **SPLAT**! **SPLAT**!” All heard the paddle splinter.

 With the unexpected and unfair extension of the paddling Bobby had slid forward on the desktop and released his grip on its front edge. With each splat he cried out **NO** and pounded the desk front with both fists. With each cry and pounding a couple of his classmates said *yes* to themselves and shook their fisted hands much as one would in seeing a winning goal made. Perhaps once grown those two would pursue a career in teaching for its added benefits.

 Harris calmed himself and laid down the injured paddle. “Now return to the seat . . . to the *proper* seat . . . to the Hot Seat, if you please.” I must control my passion better, he thought to himself. He was such a compassionate, I mean *passionate*, teacher. Ah what a privilege it was to be able to put one’s passion into one’s work. He wondered if workman’s compensation covered heart attacks made in the heat of passion.

 Billy felt the eyes of his classmates on him. He sensed that they were more sympathetic now. He triggered the timer and remounted. The seat seemed even hotter than before, as if that were possible. He swayed from side to side as he and rocked back and forth which made for circular movements of his torso. Tears now flowed like a tributaries to the Snake River. Nothing helped ease the sizzling but his movements did make for some mental distraction in his overloaded brain and its concentration on but two thing; his burning butt and the timer.

 He listened to the timer. Tick . . . . . . . . . . tick . . . . . . . . . tick . . . . . . . . . The prolonged ticks would number 300 before the dinger would sound. It seemed that each quiet little tick was spaced five seconds apart rather than one. His pulse rate climbed as the time passed to the pulse of the ticker. Finally, “ping.” He had somehow survived. Just as he started to leap down the teacher spoke.

 “Just a moment, Bobby. I need to know how well you have been paying attention.”

 Bobby gasped. Just at the moment that the punishment session was at an end, a pop quiz.

 “Through which gorge does the Snake River pass here?”

 Thank God, he thought. The only thing that he had heard and retained. “Hell’s canyon.”

 “Next boy,” said the teacher as he waved to Billy to rise and opened his desk drawer to extract a fresh paddle. The splintered one would be destined to go in the open wire trash basket there in the corner to join the others. The basket was, you see, a permanent fixture in the classroom. That though would not be done until after the next boy had had time to soak in its splintered sight as it laid there on the desktop next to the fresh one and the two other implements.

 “Billy, as you were not the instigator . . . the perpetrator . . . I shall give you only twos instead of threes.”

 “But sir . . .”

 “Yes?”

 “I . . . I was only trying to keep it from hitting someone.”

 Harris recalled the broad smile on the boy’s face as he had grabbed the paper airplane out of the air and had held it on high like it was a trophy.

 “So you were acting on behalf of public safety. Is that what you’re saying?”

 “Well . . . well I guess . . .”

 “Billy; I wasn’t born yesterday.” Without thinking, from his nervousness he impulsively whispered: “day before, I guess.”

 “Let’s see; that would have been on Monday. We’ll make it threes after all. Congratulations; You’re now a full-fledged partner; a fully licensed co-pilot. To the Hot Seat. Git!”

 Why didn’t I keep my mouth shut, thought the boy? Why; why; stupid.

 You see, not only do teachers have eyes in the backs of their heads, they also have ears like a Nautilus class submarine; like a submarine navigating the Snake River through Hell’s Canyon.

 And so it came to pass that the little airport in the fifth grade was closed for the day. Inclement condition, we’re told: A heat wave and the tarmac was sizzling hot just like two fifth grade boys’ asses which had been toasted upon the Hot Seat. All further flights were canceled for the day.