

# THE GHOSTS of DANDY CROSSING

## KATIE LEE

*Dandy Crossing, September 1962*

They clattered up Farley Creek a half mile, slid to park and went into the store. Windy, very importantly and methodically, sorted the mail into little pigeon holes behind the wired window which represented the Post Office. There were about eight letters and cards, a few newspapers and a tin of boat parts for the six inhabitants of Dandy Crossing.

White and Farley canyons entering together on the left bank of the river comprised one settlement; Cass Hite's ranch and orchard on the right bank, the other. Old Cass had named his crossing 'A Dandy' and the river people kept it that way. To the rest of the world it was Hite... if you could find it on a map.

Jason walked to the freezer and got an ice cream bar. He laid a quarter on the counter and leaned there, looking out at the only gas pump within a hundred miles. A hum from the generator and a creaking of roof beams in the midday heat were all that broke the silence.

It hadn't always been this tranquil at Dandy Crossing. Windy's had been the Upper Store, Fred Bennett's, the Lower Store. There'd been some fifty families living at the confluence, where a copper processing mill had run full tilt in the forties. The sound of little kids screeching at play, the thrugging of big trucks in low gear, the banging of tailgates and the thumping of the mill had echoed through the canyon all day long. After dark, the cottonwood trees rustled, a steady spring gurgled beside the cliff wall and a lively river sang its song up-canyon.

Jason snapped his mind away from something he didn't want to think of—a thing the three of them had written about during the winter. On this, their last trip down the Glen—while it was still a living river canyon—they were going to proceed as if nothing about it would ever change. Nothing was to mar this final adventure. No talking about the river's misbegotten future.

Windy's voice pulled him from his thoughts. 'Ain't nuthin' here from Step; reckon he's comin' with Shan?'

'I don't see how,' Jason said, taking half the ice cream in one bite. 'They're coming from different directions. Oh say, before I forget, I need a couple more cans of oil. I'll toss them in the back of the truck. Don't let me go off without them.'



slammed the icebox door and started to whistle. Each sound seemed isolated, pointing up the fact that all sound here would soon be terminated.

Jason walked the grassy plot, entered the trailer and crossed the threshold with caution. Since the flood, a loose board, when stepped on, made loud, bawdy sounds and he was sure it hadn't

been fixed. Windy set peanut butter and jam sandwiches on the booth table, uncapped the pickle jar and poured cold milk into jelly glasses. Sliding in opposite Jason, he bit right into his sandwich and the subject Jason and friends had elected not to discuss.

'Who ya think's gonna git the concession at Rainbow? They shore by God better give this'n here to me—I run this goddamn ferry fer more'n six years.' He took a big gulp of milk and followed it with a generous burp. 'I ain't seen no indication the one down to Wahweep's goin' to nobody but ol' Art. You still workin' on the one down t' Hoxie Crossin'?'

Jason chewed slowly. 'The County commissioners and BuRec will decide. I'm involved only because the law says a river man must run the marina.'

'Naw, it's the Park Service that'll have the final say, an' I gotta lotta pull with them guys. I been takin' damn good care of the tourists here at Dandy—the Bureau boys too. They know goddamn well I kin handle 'er.'

Jason reached into the pickle jar, avoiding the man's eyes. It depended on which day you listened, what Windy was for and what he was against. He'd been cursing the Bureau along with the rest of them for the past seven years, but now that the dam was nearing completion and flooding a reality, he was kissing up to them for a concession

on the reservoir.

Jason altered the subject. 'What's Buck going to do with his cabin?'

'He ain't figured it out yet—whatever'll giv'um the most trouble. They offered t'pay him for it, y'know—wanna use it fer some kinda storage shed up to the new Hite Marina—gonna name it after Cass, I guess—said they'd come an' git it when the water starts backin' up.'

'I would have thought they'd do it the easy way: just let the cabin get buried in silt and water.'

'Naw. Nelson says they got some preference 'bout the buildings.' Snorting, he added, 'Tough titty. Buck'll do what he wants with that

**Jason snapped his mind away from something he didn't want to think of—a thing the three of them had written about during the winter. On this, their last trip down the Glen—while it was still a living river canyon—they were going to proceed as if nothing about it would ever change. Nothing was to mar this final adventure. No talking about the river's misbegotten future.**

'Okay.' Windy came from behind the Post Office cage, put Jason's quarter in the register and yelled, 'Sale! I'll go slap up some lunch—sam'itch okay?'

'Sure, anything's fine, Windy.' He licked the ice cream stick clean, stuck it in his shirt pocket and walked out of the store. At the foot of the steps he picked up two cans of oil and tossed them over the tailgate—the clatter echoing down canyon. Windy, in his trailer next to the store,

place; took'um a long time g'ttin' the gas heater 'n stove in there and then buildin' onto the back. He ain't jist gonna quietly move out and let'um take over.'

Licking milk from his upper lip, Jason asked, 'Where'll he move to, do you know?'

'Prob'ly to the mine. Says he don't know fer sure yet; might move up t'his claim on the Green, or mebbe he'll stick around here t'work on the

White Canyon bridge when they start it.’

Jason looked Windy in the eye, pert-near sure Buck had not even thought about working on the bridge, and said, in view of the man’s integrity, ‘Unless he’s thinking sabotage, I doubt he’d do that.’

Jason felt a twinge of conscience. If he wanted to stay anywhere near his hard-earned profession as guide, boatman and owner of Glen Canyon Expeditions, he’d have to do the sort of things Buck didn’t. He had a big family—six kids and a wife—a house, responsibility, things he couldn’t neglect. How far would his conscience let him go? Swallowing the last of his milk he smacked his lips and stood, wishing he were Buck, a loner, a younger man; one that local gossip held to be a man who did what he wanted, when he wanted and how he wanted to do it.

**Jason felt a twinge of conscience.**

**If he wanted to stay anywhere near his hard-earned profession as guide, boatman and owner of Glen Canyon Expeditions, he’d have to do the sort of things Buck didn’t. He had a big family—six kids and a wife—a house, responsibility, things he couldn’t neglect. How far would his conscience let him go?**

Windy was breezing: ‘Ol’ Bennett’s lots more philosophical ‘bout it than Buck. Hell, he’s been minin’ here fer goddamn near thirty years. His boat dock goes, his house, his mines, the whole shootin’ match goes. Know what he said t’other day when the BuRec tol’um how much they was givin’ him fer his house n’land? Tol’um, ‘Well, that’s fine, fellers, never thought I’d make so much off a defunct operation. Think I’ll pick out the next place you bastards is gonna build a dam and get some more property that don’t cost nuthin’—that way I can go to m’grave makin’ a buck offa you, instead of the other way around!’ Windy shook his head. ‘Boy, they must have a special breed of rat comes ‘round t’places like this for the cleanup job. S’a wonder some of ‘em don’t git kilt!’

‘They’re a special breed, all right.’ Jason wrinkled his nose.

‘Can’t wait till Shan gits here t’ tell ‘er what Bennett said ‘bout them Bureau dimwits.’

Jason wanted to ask him not to mention things like that, but instead he said, ‘It’s time I got down to the boat and finished with my tinkering on the Johnson.’

The two stepped out of the trailer with toothpicks working at their gums, and cottonwoods whis-s-shing in the early afternoon breeze.

‘What’cha tinkerin’ with?’

‘Nothing much, just sputters a little on the high-speed jet.’

‘I’ll take ya down.’

Before Jason could say he’d rather walk, Windy ambushed him with a practicality. ‘What about yer oil? Gonna leave it in my truck?’

‘Whoa! Thanks for reminding me.’ He reached for his wallet, but before he could take it from his back pocket, Windy pulled open the cab door. ‘Aw, fergit it, Jason—you spend more money here ‘n anybody ‘n you never even let me buy ya a beer.’

Jason grinned. ‘Next time try ice cream.’



**Katie Lee is an Arizona icon who began her career as a stage and screen actress before becoming a fixture in coffeehouses and cabarets throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico as a folksinger. She has emerged as one of the Southwest’s most outspoken environmental activists, using her music and feisty eloquence to both entertain and educate.**

**“The Ghosts of Dandy Crossing,” from Dream Garden Press, is available in Moab at Back of Beyond Books.**

**LIFETIME  
BACKBONE  
MEMBER**

**SEDONA,  
ARI-  
ZONA**

**ANNE  
SNOWDEN  
CROSMAN**

**THE FOOTPRINTS  
‘TOP 10’ LIST**

**Top 10  
Memorable Numbers**

10. **Pi = Ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. Also a leading cause of obesity.**
9. **C = Speed of light, as in E = mC<sup>2</sup>. Also, how fast your personal information goes from Google to the NSA.**
8. **42 = The answer to life, the universe and everything.**
7. **∞ = The amount of money the Koch brothers are allowed to spend to buy elections.**
6. **666 = Ann Coulter’s PO box.**
5. **0 = The number of times you get to whine if you don’t vote. Also, the net effect if you do.**
4. **i = The imaginary square root of -1. Also the chances in 100 that SCOTUS is not politically motivated.**
3. **1 = Is its own square, cube and factorial. Raised to any power, it’s still the same. Also the number of times we get to go around in life.**
2. **2 = The only even prime number. Also the number of gays required to make a couple. Ironically, the same number of heterosexuals required.**
1. **97 = Percent of climate scientists who believe global warming is human caused - which, according to wackos and idiots, is not a majority.**

*from the author of ‘On the Loose’*

**ROCK ME ON THE  
WATER**

**RENNY RUSSELL**

<http://www.rennyrussell.com/>

*“Rock Me on the Water is not so much a book as an intimate spiritual and political journey. Part memoir, part nature writing, part philosophy, and part political polemic, Rock Me on the Water transcends each of these categories to become a trek through sorrow, pain, beauty, joy and redemption.”*

- Derrick Jensen, author of A Language Older than Words, and Welcome to the Machine: Science, Surveillance, and the Culture of Control