

Faded Into Blue

Patrick McHaffey

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o ch.

A glimp e be ond. A c'ack in he face, no coming o ha e. I an ed op nchi, ea he he c , apo i e i, bea he he ilica ai. E'ophied m ck g'e f'om m chin in plo che angling a'o nd m h'o a and collap ing m'achea. The nd had no he'e o go, oi d g'deep and e'p ed, a p'e' i ed bomb e' off b m o n agnanc .

I opened he doo, and he man i h onl a mo h en e'ed.

Wipe o' fee I old him. Yo al a lea e foo p'in e e' here.

He eaked m'el come ma i h g'ain-fed m d. Hi oe o ld ne e' h'ne, b i d' d he job. No ha I ca'ed m ch. M fee e'e plen di' oo.

Thank o . I d'opped ome ice c be an a emp ed al age mi ion in o m'ea and ook a fe good ip.

Dea' me, he hi p'e'ed h'o gh a'g'in, i' q i e da'k in he'e. I feel like ome' i'g'gling ea' h o'm, and I m' e' o do oo. Do o mind if I open he blind ?

Yo' can e en ee.

He h'g'ged and le' he ligh in h'o gh m fo' p'aned i'ndo .

Three pho o' e'e on he' all. One old, one ab en , and one ne . The old' a of an infan' o ing' hi' f'fed bea' do n he ai' . Hi plaid o'e all e'e opa q e h'o gh he' n' ained bl e inge. The ab en' a a' o'k pho o' f'ro nded b' h ea- hell flame. A do i o' e'lf ma e' piece made f'om a do i m' a ki' . The ne' a of a beach, clean and oli a' i' h m'oon' o'ck' i' ing f'om he plain. Rain-jacke a' mo' o e' a e'-logged kin.

Wh' a'e o' he'e again? I a ked. I eem a li le' de o' ho' p' nanho nced.

If I a' n an ed, pe'hap i' o ld be.

Yo' a'e n an ed

Yo' fa'ade i' cha'ming, ho' e' e' de'le e'io . No ma e'. A mo'e p'e' ing ma e' i a hand i eem . So, if o' don' mind me a king, h' he knife?

I fel' a' m in m hand. Ten inche of e' a' ed eel a c'XYX]brc UÚbYdc]bri'ónhYdf]W]b[cZa n'hi a Vg'z i hadn been ha'p'ened in ea' , b i ill o'e.

I hink I an' o be' id of o , I aid. Seem Úh]b['i

Yo' don' an' o be' id of me. Yo' ar' o be' id of ha I can ho' o . He ook a e'p o' a' d me, la' ing one pla' ed oe do n a a' ime. Yo' need me. Yo' e' no happ' i ho' me.

I m no' happ' i h o .

I m o' o' n' l connec ion o' he ime o' lef .

Yo' e' a' i' o' he ime' ha e' lef .

He g'abbed m' hand and b'o' gh' he blade o' hi h'o a . Then h'ill me. Kill he onl' hing o' ha e' lef .

Eigh' -fo' hook , ca' b' o' ed eel' od , b' o' o' ed in o me' Thei' ba' b' o me' e'ble, ome jig ca' gh me. The' i'ng a' held a' gh. The'e a' no e'p I co ld ake i' ho' being p' lled back. The'e a' no ho' gh I co ld hink i' ho' being anked back o' he head.

Yo' need o' ee, he hi p'e'ed.

I an' o be' done i' h' hi .

Yo' belong he'e. Le me ake o' back.

I can go back on m' o n. Wi ho' o' .

He la' ghed. Ho' ill of o , m' dea' . Do o' e' call belie e' ha ? He p' hed he knife again hi' kin. Yo' ill ne e' be ha' f' la' gain. B' i' o' l' an' o, go a' ead, g'ra p' a' o' a' . J' e' m'embe' ha I am o' o' n' l op' ion fo' ome hing mo'e.

A' if o' e' g' i'ng ne an' hing mo'e han' a' .

Wh' a' I ho' o' i' eal. When o' ee, o' e' l' he'e.

I can do be e' han' o .

Then kill me. Drag ha' blade a' c' o m' h'o a , a' ch me die, and' remembe' ha i' a' o' ha' h'e a' a' o' o' n' l chance a' life.

I q' ee ed he handle.

I m o' o' n' l pa' age o' ha' momen , o' o' n' l a' of a' c' ali'ng o' a' im.

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