

...

Things kept happening in such dizzying sequence that Pete struggled to comprehend their meaning. When the pickup had made its U-turn, another set of headlights had shown themselves at the side of the road and then pulled out to give chase to the turning truck. The lead vehicle sped past beneath their high cab into the darkness behind. Now they were driving hard toward the following truck head on.

Pete caught a flashing glimpse of horrified faces reflected within the cab of the pursuing pickup as it was forced to swerve off the road. The road ahead lay shrouded once more in blackness. Only the small area just in front of the bumper, where the headlights cast a feeble glow, could be seen. When being able to see the lights of the pickups so far out ahead of them, the

world seemed wide open. Now their chances for escape appeared limited and crowded into the few feet they could barely see.

B-John was ecstatic. “Jeez shit!” he yelled. “D’ ya see the shittin’ fear written’ on them boys’ faces?” His joy was infectious, and even though Pete’s heart was making the blood thump in his ears, he smiled dumbly. Push joined in with heckling the driver’s actions and they all wondered how they had ended up.

“Hope they rolled ’er!” Push hollered. “Serves ’em right if they got their balls bunched!”

“Yeah!” B-John chimed. “D’ ya see that ass-bite behind the wheel? The way he was crankin’ it, bet he got his dick-beaters broke off.”

Pete was not used to all the filthy language that seemed to pour so freely from the two men, but he enjoyed the confidence, if only false bravado, that was in their voices. The small spot mirrors that stood out from the doorframes gave no indication as to what was happening behind them. At times glimpses of light flicked from them, but it could not be certain if the reflection was from the following trucks or just glimpses from the dim panel lights within their own cab.

It was impossible to tell how many miles they had driven. B-John downshifted and slowed the truck minimally as he took a left and straightened out on the larger road that led south toward Sanderson. Because of the angle at the turn, B-John hung his head out the window to see what action was following them from the road they left.

He saw that both of the other two big rigs were just taking the turn and coming in behind him. Also, about a mile back, he could see two sets of headlights, the second swallowing the dust just behind the first. He kept making fast glances back out of the windshield and righting his course while watching the pickups. The strangers had evidently regained control of their vehicle and turned round, giving chase. Now a game of “catch as catch can” was being played out over the gravel as the two pickups sped through the night. Every time the back truck swerved and made to pass, the lead one cut it off. Several times the harsh and over-corrective actions of either truck sent

CHAPTER 12

them plowing sideways, and then with fishtailing movements, they would be brought back into the chase.

B-John knew that the problem needed to be resolved long before they got near any town, and he also wanted the chase to cease before they made any more turns that might give away their course. After making his decision, he pumped the brake pedal several quick times and then began the rapid downshifting of the engine to bring them to a halt.

...