

# THE BRIDGES OF SIOUX CITY

by John Farrow

Perhaps he had been down this road before, perhaps not. It didn't really matter. The feeling he got from watching the seemingly endless fields of corn wave by was a comfort, like a pair of old brown shoes pulled from the back of the closet.

An informal place, Iowa. Everyone on a first-name basis, even the towns. Chester and Burt over here, Milton back there. Clare around the bend. He wondered if Elvira showed as much cleavage out here in the Midwest.

Radio Free Iowa was about all there was on the air. "All corn and hog prices, all the time." Ah, the hogs. Yes, Iowa does have more hogs than people. Good training for the Iowa caucuses.

And the ski areas - what were they doing out here? Were they some sort of perverted joke? But there they were, stuck right in with the cows of all persuasions, as long as they were black and white.

He had come for the bridges. Wooden structures of another time. He would develop the film and send the photos off. And then he would be gone. But the one picture in his mind that he would keep forever was of her - Francesca.

"There's not much to do in Iowa," she had said shyly, "except practice my vowels." And run. Oh, how they had run. Down through the corn rows and along the streams and across those bridges. They

echoed loud and reassuring as they clomped across, laughing at the silliness of it all.

They ran through the Amanas - East Amana, West Amana, South Amana, High & Middle Amana, and just plain old Amana. Germans who had come to try a communal way of life and wound up selling everything that they didn't incorporate. They learned to make good refrigerators, though.

And now, one last bridge. Not the wooden kind he had come to love. This one suspended high and majestic as it towered over the river. His legs strained up the path, lungs burning after so many miles along the river.

And now it was done. Nothing left but to send off the pictures.

He crossed the bridge.□

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