

Magruder in the Dust

by John Farrow

Pa jus' din't understand. He never did. All that boy ever did seem to want to do was run run run run run run and now what'd he want to go'n do but run up the onlyest mountain in Yoknapatawpha County a hill really but a goodly hill nonetheless an' everybody knew full well there was a perfectly good road up th' backside.

'Course'n then he'd hafta do sum'pin 'bout that ol' broke down Nash a his'n try to get it to runnin one more time but what you gonna do up at th' top but look around and come back down? Pa jus' din't understand.

An here was that boy off runnin on th' back forty with a bunch a folks whose people he'd barely howdied an aint never shook with and they jus' went out and ran ran ran ran ran ran an' they never did seem to git tired an' if they did that wuz jus' fine an' dandy with'em too. An nobody'd be chasin'em neither. Pa jus' din't understand.

An' Ma she jus said you go right ahead an do what you think's right Pa an Pa jus kinda set back on his haunches full a inertia with that vacuous look a his justa gazein out over them scrawny stalks he'd sweated an cussed an cajoled an all but practically pulled outa that dusty hardpan an thinkin what in creation was goin on with these young'uns runnin around with no clothes on almost even the girls an' fartlekin' in public an' all.

An Pa thought about that overdue note a his at the bank an' that barren piece a dirt wouldnt do the bank no good anyhow so they'd give him some grace but no matter how much grace they give him he'd still be back wantin more an the bank'd give it to him.

An that triflin girl a his she wadnt good for nothin jus paintin up her homely face an off in some honky tonk pert near ever night gonna get herself messed up with some kinda trash come a-crawlin in places like that an be forever despairin a love.

Now th' boy he was off yonder jus' a'runnin an a'runnin down by the creek bed which hadnt had no water since he couldnt remember an' he said he wuz goin away in a little bit. A man from the college come out an' talked to him a spell said if he liked to run he could just as well do it at the college he said.

But what wuz they gonna do now that granddaddy up an' died jus like granma last winter an' they was real shorthanded 'cept bein for ole Manse who'd always be there but even he was gettin old an jus couldnt go no more like he used to and Pa said he wuz gonna leave the place to the boy, a estate he called it.

The boy, he said he was sorry but he had a chance now, Pa, an' Pa he did understand that the boy din't want to be another Magruder in the dust. □

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