

This is an ABLE book

INSTRUCTIONS

If you work in an office, you work in a print shop! Seize the means of production, Friend, and make a book of your own!

First, you'll want to print this file back and front (duplex, or double-sided, depending on how your printer describes it.)

If you want the cover to be nice, print this first sheet on a heavier card stock.

Next, take the two body sheets (with the text of the book on them), and make the flowers in the center kiss. This is a 16 page quarto booklet! With the sheets standing tall, fold the sheets in half so that the upside down text top front becomes the back, right side up (phew, does this make sense?)

Now, you have page 1 on the right, with a

large initial Capital, and page 16 on the left. Fold this in half again to make a booklet.

Cut the cover free from the lower half of this sheet, and fold it in half.

Trim the top of the text block so that the pages are free. (You can use a paper cutter, scissors, or a pen knife).

Staple or sew the pages and the cover together, to make a book. You can also insert another half-sheet of paper between the text block and the cover to have a fly-leaf.

You are now a printer and book-maker.

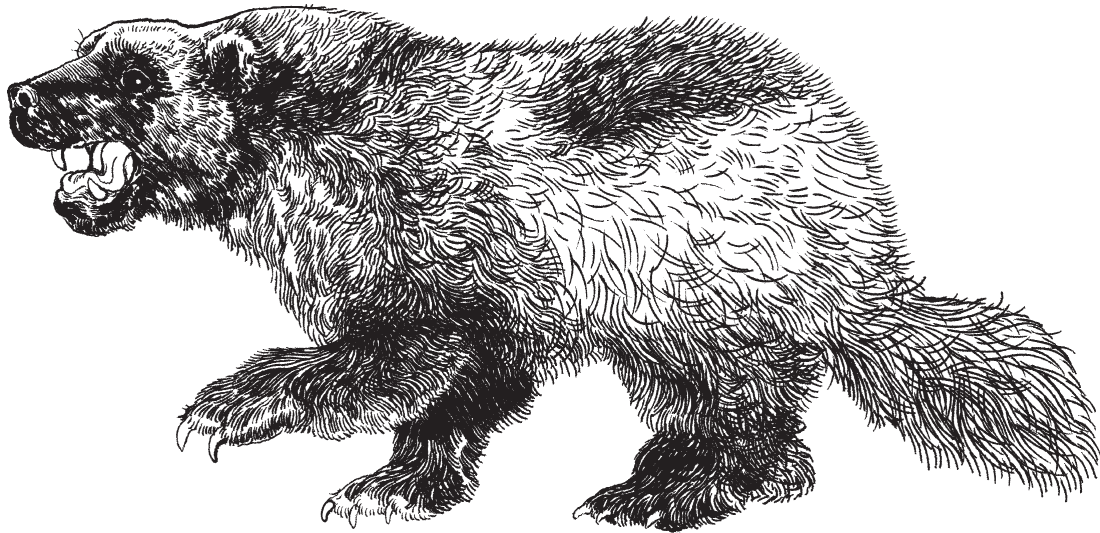
Post the Wolverine mini-poster (otherside of these instructions) proudly at your desk. Tell people that fine books can be acquired "At the Sign of the Wolverine".

WP

A HORSEMAN IN THE SKY

by Ambrose Bierce

WP
an ABLE book



Official

Wolverine Press

Design & Production Environment

About the Type

The body text for this edition is Century Schoolbook, designed by Morris Fuller Benton in 1918. The titles are set in Futura, designed by Paul Renner in 1927. Both are well-established in American utilitarian design, with Schoolbook both a popular educational face, and the mandated typeface of all US Supreme Court opinions, and Futura widely used in aeronautics, most famously in the plaque placed by NASA on the moon during Apollo 11.

near swooning from intensity of emotion. geous gentleman and hardy soldier was on the leaves in which he lay. This coura- head slowly dropped until his face rested His hand fell away from his weapon, his steadily in arcs of circles in a fiery sky. black figures, rising, falling, moving un- saw the statuesque group before him as he shook in every limb, turned faint, and for its numbers? Carter Druse grew pale; ble for his knowledge than all his army and comrades--an enemy more formida- a secret vital to the safety of one's self my in war--an enemy who has surprised Is it then so terrible to kill an ene- compassionate heart.

his very face, into his eyes, into his brave, concealed foeman--seemed to look into head and looked in the direction of his At that instant the horseman turned his would have been well with Carter Druse. covered a vital spot of the horseman's piece, and glancing through the sights

showed no other sign of emotion. Having answered, he turned away his eyes and said no more. The sergeant did not understand.

"See here, Druse," he said, after a moment's silence, "it's no use making a mystery. I order you to report. Was there anybody on the horse?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"My father."

The sergeant rose to his feet and walked away. "Good God!" he said.

forward through the bushes, cocked the cheek by cautiously pushing the barrel brought the butt of his rifle against his significance of the situation, Druse now Broad awake and keenly alive to the the man remained immobile as before. body slightly backward from the verge; without moving its feet, had drawn its slight movement of the group: the horse, rious part. The feeling was dispelled by a heroic past of which he had been an inglo- inence to commemorate the deeds of an a noble work of art reared upon that em- the end of the war and was looking upon half-defined feeling that he had slept to For an instant Druse had a strange, colossal, size.

emy the group appeared of heroic, almost sense of the formidableness of a near en- the sky and by the soldier's testifying the valley. Magnified by its lift against was looking downward to the bottom of only an outline of temple and beard; he of the rider, turned slightly away, showed

I

One sunny afternoon in the autumn of the year 1861 a soldier lay in a clump of laurel by the side of a road in western Virginia. He lay at full length upon his stomach, his feet resting upon the toes, his head upon the left forearm. His extended right hand loosely grasped his rifle. But for the somewhat methodical disposition of his limbs and a slight rhythmic movement of the cartridge-box at the back of his belt he might have been thought to be dead. He was asleep at his post of duty. But if detected he would be dead shortly afterward, death being the

about the stock of his rifle. His first feeling was a keen artistic delight. On a colossal pedestal, the cliff--motionless at the extreme edge of the capping rock and sharply outlined against the sky--was an equestrian statue of impressive dignity. The figure of the man sat the figure of the horse, straight and soldierly, but with the repose of a Grecian god carved in the marble which limits the suggestion of activity. The gray costume harmonized with its aerial background; the metal of accoutrement and caparison was softened and subdued by the shadow; the animal's skin had no points of high light. A carbine strikingly foreshortened lay across the pommel of the saddle, kept in place by the right hand grasping it at the "grip"; the left hand, holding the bridle rein, was invisible. In silhouette against the sky the profile of the horse was cut with the sharpness of a cameo; it looked across the heights of air to the confronting cliffs beyond. The face

It was not for long; in another moment his face was raised from earth, his hands resumed their places on the rifle, his forefinger sought the trigger; mind, heart, and eyes were clear, conscience and reason sound. He could not hope to capture that enemy; to alarm him would but send him dashing to his camp with his fatal news. The duty of the soldier was plain: the man must be shot dead from ambush--without warning, without a moment's spiritual preparation, with never so much as an unspoken prayer; he must be sent to his account. But no--there is a hope; he may have discovered something--perhaps he is but admiring the sublimity of the landscape. If permitted, he may turn and ride carelessly away in the direction whence he came. Surely it will be possible to judge at the instant of his withdrawing whether he knows. It may well be that his fixity of attention--Druse turned his head and looked through the deeps of air downward, as



just and legal penalty of his crime.

The clump of laurel in which the criminal lay was in the angle of a road which after ascending southward a steep acclivity to that point turned sharply to the west, running along the summit for perhaps one hundred yards. There it turned southward again and went zig-zagging downward through the forest. At the salient of that second angle was a large flat rock, jutting out northward, overlooking the deep valley from which the road ascended. The rock capped a high cliff; a stone dropped from its outer edge would have fallen sheer downward one thousand feet to the tops of the pines. The angle where the soldier lay was on another spur of the same cliff. Had he been awake he would have commanded a view, not only of the short arm of the road and the jutting rock, but of the entire profile of the cliff below it. It might well have made him giddy to look.

The country was wooded everywhere

"Yes, sir; there is no road leading down into this valley from the southward."

The commander, knowing better, smiled.

IV

After firing his shot, Private Carter Druse reloaded his rifle and resumed his watch. Ten minutes had hardly passed when a Federal sergeant crept cautiously to him on hands and knees. Druse neither turned his head nor looked at him, but lay without motion or sign of recognition.

"Did you fire?" the sergeant whispered.

"Yes."

"At what?"

"A horse. It was standing on yonder rock--pretty far out. You see it is no longer there. It went over the cliff."

The man's face was white, but he

Druse withdrew his eyes from the valley and fixed them again upon the group of man and horse in the sky, and again it was through the sights of his rifle. But this time his aim was at the horse. In his memory, as if they were a divine mandate, rang the words of his father at their parting: "Whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty." He was calm now. His teeth were firmly but not rigidly closed; his nerves were as tranquil as a sleeping babe's--not a trem- or affected any muscle of his body; his breathing, until suspended in the act of taking aim, was regular and slow. Duty had conquered; the spirit had said to the body: "Peace, be still." He fired.

plain view from a dozen summits! court to water their beasts in the open, in er was permitting the soldiers of his es- men and horses--some foolish command- green meadow a sinuous line of figures of lucent sea. He saw creeping across the from the surface to the bottom of a trans-

sound in the trees--a sound that died with- out an echo--and all was still.

The officer rose to his feet, trembling. The familiar sensation of an abraded shin recalled his dazed faculties. Pulling him- self together he ran rapidly obliquely away from the cliff to a point distant from its foot; thereabout he expected to find his man; and thereabout he naturally failed. In the fleeting instant of his vision his imagination had been so wrought upon by the apparent grace and ease and inten- tion of the marvelous performance that it did not occur to him that the line of march of arial cavalry is directly downward, and that he could find the objects of his search at the very foot of the cliff. A half-hour lat- er he returned to camp.

This officer was a wise man; he knew better than to tell an incredible truth. He said nothing of what he had seen. But when the commander asked him if in his scout he had learned anything of advantage to the expedition he answered:

a stately courtesy that masked a breaking heart, left the home of his childhood to go soldiering. By conscience and courage, by deeds of devotion and daring, he soon com- mended himself to his fellows and his of- ficers; and it was to these qualities and to some knowledge of the country that he owed his selection for his present perilous duty at the extreme outpost. Nevertheless, fatigue had been stronger than resolution and he had fallen asleep. What good or bad angel came in a dream to rouse him from his state of crime, who shall say? Without a movement, without a sound, in the pro- found silence and the languor of the late afternoon, some invisible messenger of fate touched with unsealing finger the eyes of his consciousness--whispered into the ear of his spirit the mysterious awakening word which no human lips ever have spoken, no human memory ever has recalled. He qui- etly raised his forehead from his arm and looked between the masking stems of the laurels, instinctively closing his right hand



except at the bottom of the valley to the northward, where there was a small nat- ural meadow, through which flowed a stream scarcely visible from the valley's rim. This open ground looked hardly larg- er than an ordinary door-yard, but was really several acres in extent. Its green was more vivid than that of the inclosing forest. Away beyond it rose a line of giant cliffs similar to those upon which we are supposed to stand in our survey of the savage scene, and through which the road had somehow made its climb to the sum- mit. The configuration of the valley, in- deed, was such that from this point of ob- servation it seemed entirely shut in, and one could but have wondered how the road which found a way out of it had found a way into it, and whence came and whither went the waters of the stream that part- ed the meadow more than a thousand feet below.

No country is so wild and difficult but men will make it a theatre of war; concealed

his father, who returned the salute with So Carter Druse, bowing reverently to be better not to disturb her.”

weeks, but that time is precious. It would she cannot be with us longer than a few in a most critical condition; at the best er, as the physician has informed you, is speak further of the matter. Your mother we both live to the end of the war, we will traitor, must get on without you. Should your duty. Virginia, to which you are a er may occur do what you conceive to be and replied: “Well, go, sir, and whatever looked at the son a moment in silence, The father lifted his leonine head, to join it.”

ment has arrived at Gratton. I am going quietly but gravely: “Father, a Union reg- risen from the breakfast-table and said, where he now lay. One morning he had gina. His home was but a few miles from in the mountain country of western Vir- wealth and taste were able to command ease and cultivation and high living as

in the forest at the bottom of that military rat-trap, in which half a hundred men in possession of the exits might have starved an army to submission, lay five regiments of Federal infantry. They had marched all the previous day and night and were resting. At nightfall they would take to the road again, climb to the place where their unfaithful sentinel now slept, and descending the other slope of the ridge fall upon a camp of the enemy at about midnight. Their hope was to surprise it, for the road led to the rear of it. In case of failure, their position would be perilous in the extreme; and fail they surely would should accident or vigilance apprise the enemy of the movement.

II

The sleeping sentinel in the clump of laurel was a young Virginian named Carter Druse. He was the son of wealthy parents, an only child, and had known such

figer saw an astonishing sight--a man of the dizzy altitude of its summit the of the trees at its base. Lifting his eyes to hills, hardly less blue, thence to the tops point half the way down, and of distant the against a background of blue sky to a the sky. It presented a clean, vertical pro- its edge cut a sharp, rugged line against it made him giddy to look up to where ing to so great a height above him that of pines the gigantic face of rock, tower- ly at a stone's throw, rose from its fringe- a quarter-mile before him, but apparent- his exploration further. At a distance of sidering what he had to gain by pushing space near the foot of the cliff, was con- his way to the lower edge of a small open valley, and with aimless feet had made edge had left the hidden bivouac in the a spirit of adventure or in quest of knowl- An officer of the Federal force, who in

III

on horseback riding down into the valley through the air!

Straight upright sat the rider, in military fashion, with a firm seat in the saddle, a strong clutch upon the rein to hold his charger from too impetuous a plunge. From his bare head his long hair streamed upward, waving like a plume. His hands were concealed in the cloud of the horse's lifted mane. The animal's body was as level as if every hoof-stroke encountered the resistant earth. Its motions were those of a wild gallop, but even as the officer looked they ceased, with all the legs thrown sharply forward as in the act of alighting from a leap. But this was a flight!

Filled with amazement and terror by this apparition of a horseman in the sky-half believing himself the chosen scribe of some new Apocalypse, the officer was overcome by the intensity of his emotions; his legs failed him and he fell. Almost at the same instant he heard a crashing