

# **Murder On The Mountain**

By Glenn C. Gabriel

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Chili Pepper Creations LLC Edition

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Running for his life, all he can do is think of his kids - their mother killed last year by the ones now hunting him.

Crashing sounds come from behind as he leaps from the brush at the mountains base, up onto the jagged rocks of the steep mountainside.

A thunderous sound bursts from somewhere behind and below, as a rock explodes just in front and to the left of him. Startled, he almost falls.

*The kids! he thinks frantically, I have to get away... I'm all they have!*

Scrambling up a steeper part of the sheer, crumbling rock, he loses his footing and slides down a ways before regaining his balance, sending cascades of tumbling stones crashing to the brush far below.

Another burst of thunder from below forces him to quickly change direction, heading for a small ledge not far away. Sprinting, he turns his head to look at his pursuers.

*They're coming! Quicker than I thought they could!*

Racing forward, with all his might, he leaps from one ledge of the deep crevasse to the smaller ledge on the far side. Skidding as he lands in loose rock, his momentum almost carries him over the edge. He knows that if he had not stopped, he would have fallen to his death.

Murderous yells come from below... wanting to kill him and leave his kids to fend for themselves.

Directly beneath his belly, another rock bursts apart, sending him scrambling on all fours up the rocky part of the mountain.

A sharp pain flares in his side the same instant he hears a loud boom, causing him to lose his balance and fall. Crashing against a small ledge, he slips over the side and falls through the nothingness between him and the jagged rocks below.

Striking the ground, the wind is knocked from him as his leg snaps. Terrified, his eyes dim as his pursuers close in.

*My kids... he thinks with his last breaths. Please, not my kids... don't...*

Losing focus, those who had murdered his kid's nannie the previous year, and now will murder him, crash through the brush.

*Why? Why are you killing us?*

He can think of no reason.

*We have done nothing to deserve this!*

As his killers look down baring their teeth, with a deep shudder, he closes his eyes for the last time.

"Good shot Mike! He's still breathing though, better put another round in him. That sure is a fine looking mountain goat! That head will look great on the wall of your den."

Mike points his rifle and shoots the billie again, smiling wider as he watches the body go still. "Yeah, I shot a nannie last year by mistake, but this one... it's a beauty! Here, take a picture with me holding its head up, will ya?"

Pulling a camera from his vest pocket, Dan takes a picture of the murderer holding up the head of the dead billie, gripping each of the long, beautiful black horns, grinning like the idiot he is.

“God, I love this sport, don’t you?” the murderer asks.

“Yeah. Think this billie had any kids?”

“Maybe, but we’ll get them next year, or maybe the next. There’s always more. For now, help me get this big guy back to the truck, then, let’s go kill another.”

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