

Blessed are



Illustration 1

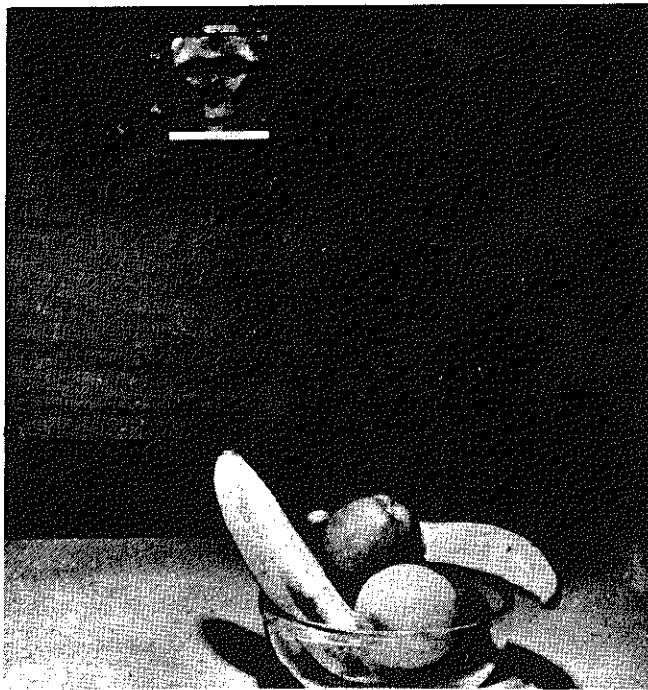


Illustration 2



Illustration 3

Now, the Employer had laboured hard all his life as an extractor of raw resources. Having struggled in more traditional ways to establish a successful and stable corporation, he embarked on a different strategy. He began to seek clues for business advantages by studying the important and enduring stories of Western culture. Despite the protests of his Board of Directors, he would spend long hours poring over the themes of Western culture, reading them and explaining them to his Employee. Homer's *Odyssey* was a particular favourite, which he would cite over and over again. "I am 'stricken to silence'", his Employee would quote in response, "and 'held in thrall by the stories'". The Employer was always quick to compliment him on how well he had digested the stories. You (*see ill. 1*) gets what you pays for, the Employee would reply.

The Employer especially treasured the part about the encounter with the Cyclops Polyphemos. Polyphemos, as we all know, was a shepard of sorts, who cared lovingly for his herds on the island he shared with the other Cyclops. The wandering Odysseus and his men found themselves trapped in his cave, whereupon the uncivilized Polyphemos showed his lack of social skills by eating them one by one. Odysseus cunningly conceived of a plan, told Polyphemos his name was 'Nobody', and lulled him to sleep with wine. Seizing his chance, Odysseus then blinded Polyphemos by stabbing his eye with a hot skewer. Polyphemos cried out for help from his neighbours, but when they asked of his troubles he replied: "Nobody is killing me by force or treachery", whereupon his neighbours left. So too did Odysseus and his men, clinging to the underbellies of the sheep so as to avoid Polyphemos' grasp.

The Employee spoke up and said, "Is this not where Alkinoos admired Odysseus the storyteller, and said 'he could not imagine him being a deceptive or thievish man, who would make up lying stories, from which nobody could learn anything'?" "Shush", answered the Employer. "Let the story work on you; you can play (*see ill. 2*) with it later". The Employer continued the story: "Last to leave the cave was Odysseus", he said, "clinging to the underbelly of the leader of the sheep. The blind Polyphemos recognized his 'dear old ram' by touch and said: 'If only you could think like us and only be given a voice, to tell me where he is skulking away from my anger, then surely he would be smashed against the floor, and his brains go spattering all over the cave to make my heart lighter from the burden of all the evils this nidding Nobody gave me'". Odysseus and his men escaped, taking the sheep with them, which they sacrificed to the gods on the beaches of the next island. The Employer was so taken with this story that he changed both his name as well as that of his business to Nobody.

Moving on, the Employer then began to read Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, for after all it translates from the original Latin as "no place". One Evening, while reading to his Employee, he chanced upon the passage which described how the wealthy landowners neglected the unprofitable sheep. In fact they forced the sheep to such a point of desparation that they actually began to eat people. Employer leaped to his feet, flushed with indignation, determined that he would find that place, and right that wrong. "Ah, here is a night that is very long, it is endless", quoted the Employee. Nonetheless, after lengthy negotiations he said: "I'm game", (*see ill. 3*) and, after the Employer packed all his stories into a master binder, off they sailed to cross a hostile ocean. But they were soon set upon by privateers who proceeded to take (*see ill. 4*) over their ship. They demanded to know the Employer's identity, and where he was going. The Employer said his name was 'Nobody' and that he was going "No Place" whereupon the privateers then felt quite justified in pillaging his goods and scuttling his ship. The Employer could not swim, and so clung to his Employee, who after much struggling brought them safely to the shores of an island.

The inhabitants seemed friendly -- and with good reason. Such abundance! Eager to verify that this was the right place, so that he could consummate his quest, the Employer travelled tirelessly back and forth across the island, with his Employee following closely behind.

Here the story becomes hazy and confused. Taking advantage of this, the Employee began to insert other stories into the master binder, unbeknownst to his Employer. Thereafter their mission became increasingly obscure, and their course full of stops and starts and wrong turns. The Employer began to doubt that they were where he thought they were. Not so the Employee: "Increasingly I feel that this place will be your (see ill. 5) homecoming", he said comfortingly.

Finally at dusk, and after many days of weary travel, they wandered into some pasturelands. Suddenly, from the trees there sprang a herd of ravenous, woolly-white animals, snarling and snapping their teeth as they teared towards them. Employer raced for a solitary tree which stood in the middle of a field, making it just in the nick of time. Looking down from the branches he saw, standing amidst the crazed salivating sheep, his Employee. Feeling hazy and confused he searched through his master binder, not quite knowing what he was looking for – *Julius Caesar* perhaps. But he found another story in its place which he did not recognize.

"I have found within my master binder a story which I cannot recognize", he said to his Employee. "It is because it is too dark surrounded by all those branches and leaves", his Employee replied. "Why don't you go to the top of the tree where there is more light and you can see more clearly?" Employer went to the top and began to read. The story, which was a Blackfoot Indian tale, went like this:

Now Old Man went on and came to a place where deer and elk were playing a game called "Follow your leader." Old Man watched the game a while. Then he asked permission to play. He took the lead, sang a song, and ran about this way and that, and finally led them up to the edge of a cliff. Old Man jumped down and was knocked senseless. After a while he got up and called for the rest to follow. "No, we might hurt ourselves." "Oh!" said Old Man, it is nice and soft here, and I had to sleep a while."

Then the elk all jumped down and were killed. Then Old Man said to the deer, "Now you jump." "No," said the deer, "we shall not jump down, because the elk are all killed." "No," said Old Man, "they are only laughing." So the deer jumped down and were killed.

Old Man was now busy butchering the animals that had been killed by falling over the cliff. When he was through butchering, he went out and found a place to camp. Then he carried his meat there and hung it up to dry. When he was all alone, a coyote came to him. This coyote had a shell on his neck, and one leg was tied up as if badly hurt. The Coyote said to Old Man "Give me something to eat."

Old Man said to him "Give me that shell on your neck to skim the soup, and i will give you something to eat." "No," said coyote, "that shell is my medicine." Then Old Man noticed that the coyote had his leg tied up and said, "Well, brother, I will run you a race for a meal." "Well," said Coyote, "I am hurt. I cannot run." "That makes no difference," said Old Man, "run anyway." "Well," said Coyote, "I will run for a short distance." "No," said Old Man, "you have to run a long distance."

Finally coyote agreed. They were to run to a distant point, then back again. Coyote started out very slow, and kept crying for Old Man to wait, to wait. At last coyote and Old Man came to the turning-point. Then Coyote took the bandage off his leg, and began to run fast, and soon left Old Man far behind. He began to call out to all the coyotes, the animals, and mice, and they all came rushing up to Old Man's camp and began to eat his meat. It was a long time before Old Man reached the camp; but he kept calling out, "Leave me some meat, leave me some meat."

But the branches at the top of the tree were too thin. They broke, and the Employer fell to the ground, landing among the sheep who were delighted by their good fortune. "Well, you plays the game, you takes your chances," (see ill. 6) responded the Employee, looking on.

the Meat

GARRY KIBBINS

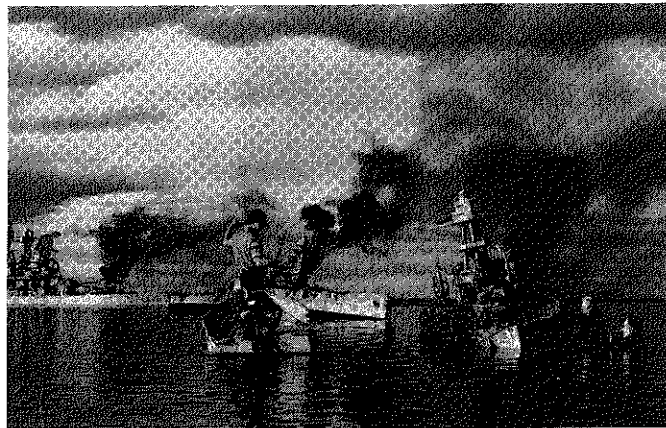


Illustration 4



Illustration 5

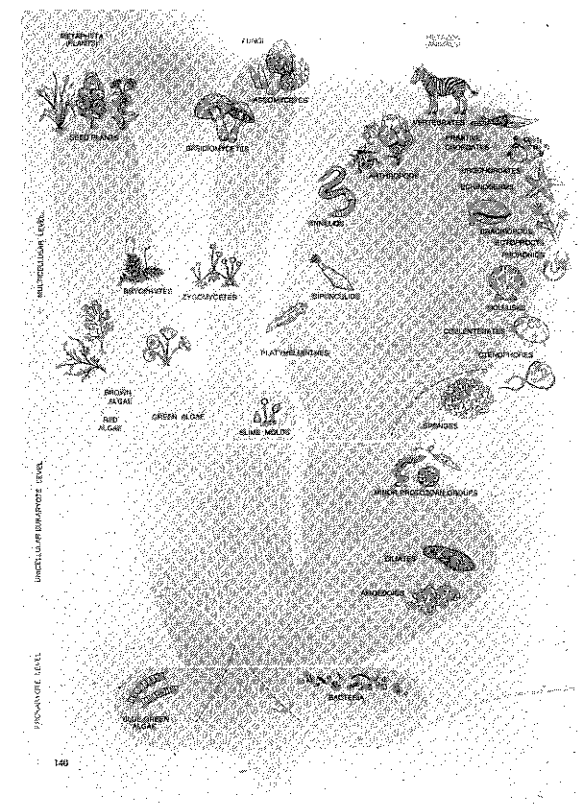


Illustration 6