

Not so long ago and not too close to the present there lay a town in the Midwest on the Wyoming frontier called Little Cavern. This was back before people went around in automobiles and planes were flying in the air. Back before many of the things needed by people during the present but before things hastened by those of the far past, roughly ten or so years just before the turn of the nineteenth unto twentieth centuries. This was when cowboys rode on their horses matted by a leather harness and spurs on their suede leather bound boots. Their clothes were often colorful and patterned intricately as things were meant to last as time weathered on as it often did. The town of Little Cavern though consisted of several stretches of dirt roads often covered in equine from horse hides and even worse when the bulls came through harnessed in rows to their wagon counterpart's.

Fashionable stores though were embanked on either side selling various products such as clothing and pantry items as well as various foods and sweets. Children would go in and out of these stores daily and Mrs. Cannerville's sweet shop was as popular to the young ones as the saloon at the far end of the town was to ornery cowboys coming through to deliver goods as well as sharp shooting young and older men slightly more polished than the average swagger in town. The town of Little Cavern overall was prosperous and more popular to stay in than most being along that part of the open range but no town is without a common theme whether among the people or the look of the town itself or most often both. The theme of Little Cavern was not uncommon in those days though and had been repeated before in other parts, but, above all, there were no guns allowed in Little Cavern and to bear a firearm except for the local officials in charge of the public and responsible for the common good was an offence punishable by imprisonment or either force of disarmament, but either way, to carry a firearm was to carry an injustice.

The presiding deputy sheriff was Jeff McCormack as the last one had recently died of old age during his sleep. The old sheriff's name was Bob Morris but the locals had referred to him often as "Bob Cratchit" or "that Cratchity, old Bob" or whenever out of his presence which was most often preferred since he was something of a repressed soul and not very witty, but unanimously considered, a complete asshole of a sheriff. Nevertheless he was a good man as any a Bob Cratchit could be and it had been rumored among the town folk that his last words for the night he had come to pass on were, "I'm tired. I think I will go home now – Goodnight," although how his eternal rest was not unwelcomed and now at least the town folks would no longer have to whisper their decree towards him. The new sheriff, however, to be blunt was something of a real asshole and was much more witty and joking and splendiferous in his remarks when it came to knowing about other more modest ones similar to old Bob. The locals at the moment did not take to offense though and welcomed his fair reign over their bestowing town of Little Cavern, Wyoming. People still moved the same way and hurried by the same as before when crossing the dirty roads or strolling along the porch of the street shops. Women still basked in their glory with their voluptuous hats and fitted in their dainty, garmented skirts careful not to walk near any horse droppings upon the rode and the shops they frequented as men escorted them tall and thinly producing a wake of aura suggesting Sunday worship and godliness and straight folded linens placed in rows on a solid oak, dining room table and all the things one alludes to when thinking of hypocrites straight from hell, the devil sitting on his throne and with a knowingness. Nobody knew this better than the sheriff Jeff McCormack though and how he basked in his fruits of knowledge similar to that of the devil and with the same intent. Late at night one would find him sitting crooked in his chair at the sheriff's desk beside him a few empty jail cells ready for intake and saying something to himself like, "*I piss on their God,*" or, "*Justice is Mrs. Taylor, alright,*" who was the most promiscuous woman in the town, for the matter, and also the most bodacious and healthiest of looking women around thirty, always carrying her white parasol and dressed in white just shy of a bride to be although she was very much married and the day she walked down the aisle to collect her gold ring was long gone as she was given away at the age of fifteen to the best man in Wyoming passed the age of thirty five, his name being Mr. Nelson Taylor. To be honest hardly anyone wound up in jail next to Jeff McCormack's desk and chair except for a few occasions involving vagrancy along with some minor theft as well as an alcoholic whom drank up at the saloon and was not accompanied by many but shunned by most. His name was Wyatt Cobb but he was mostly quiet and kept to himself as a drinker. Wyatt was young around thirty like Mrs. Taylor but not unkind unlike Mrs. Taylor. His hair was parted and longish and light colored, but not too long and his black suit jacket wore over him thinly but often giving the effect of looking squeamish at times. He was by no means a pugnacious character or a slobbery type of drunk. His

drinking had grace and he was not undignified and when he walked it was not overbearing and in line even when he drank. His problem though was not to create disorder for the town or to impede the public good. His problem was himself, and he was given to bouts of melancholy and a quiet binge of stagnation so that he would be placed in the jail cell out of bafflement and concern rather than the notion of hurting someone else but more for the notion of possibly hurting himself and to see him in need of drink or with drink came with a kind of pity or scorn. He was also an avid writer and had worked for the local newspaper at one point adding his own serials and doing some editing alike. He liked poetry too and had published a few short stanza poems about the town but the verse never took too well and most of the others never took notice. Other than that there wasn't much to Wyatt and no one else nearby seemed to know what his past was or what was ailing him and one could only speculate what it was like for him in the jail cell all night next to the sheriff. Only the sharp shooting sheriff could utter some of his brassy wisdom to define Wyatt's plight and without a great deal of sympathy, mind you. Indeed, the night would whistle on into the late as Wyatt lay in his cell without a sound or peep except for some heavy breathing which subdued eventually. In the background one could hear some humming every so often coming out of the sheriff that suggested something calm and relaxing so that Wyatt could hear as the wit of a sheriff leaned back in his chair fully knowing he was listening and uneasy in his cell. Yet Wyatt never gave into his minor tirades in his numb state of being. Instead he would just lay there with half a smile on his face and looking straight above from his cot fully knowing that hell and the devil resided in the town of Little Cavern, Wyoming, of all places, and that he could hear him humming some of *Old Sweet Loraine*.

Nevertheless, the rest of the folks didn't pay it any real heed although there had been some minor ramblings about Wyatt among the older male gentry, but nothing ever came of it and things went on the same. Little Cavern was a fairly small place with big headed people and old Christian zeal and values. It thrived on its own virtues and truth was scarce and rarely beckoned on but often put away so that one could stumble on it another day or a few decades down the road. But the truth of the town of Little Cavern be told now and the way it was as I unlock the keyhole to its thick and heavy door as recently I had unveiled a few diaries of my Great, Great Grandmother as she had resided in Little Cavern as a young woman and were put away in the attic so that I had found them while trying to find an old typewriter that I had stowed away for quite some time and forgotten where I had put it. As for the diaries they were slightly dusty wrapped in an old garnet hidden in a closed cabinet but I knew they existed before although never assuming the desire to go through them as I recently did. Although the grandmother of my grandmother had passed on long before my birth and we had never met I knew her name well from my own grandmother's utterances of her or when she spoke of past memories of her upbringing in the west, although far from the town of Little Cavern as she had been borne much further north someplace else and given the name Emily. Her grandmother's name though was Mildred O'Leary but people knew her and called her "Millie" and the name Millie is in quotation marks on the front cover between the first and last name or as in print:

### **The Life and Daily Happenings Of Mildred "Millie" O'Leary**

Almost every entry of the journal is dated and written with an elegant hand, nicely put down I can only assume from a quill pen dipped into an inkwell with few blotches of ink on the page. The diaries are in fairly good condition even inside and a little smaller than a regular size notebook, but enough entries to fit three books all the same kind.

Shortly after finding them I set down to read them in my den as I sat in my arm chair cross legged, my desk lamp providing most of the light that was just bright enough as my desk is situated a few feet from the chair. For I was then in a fugue state and very inert and had been for a while melancholy but the look of the forgotten diaries suggested a time that I did not know and did not live in as if their might be a kind of truth in store within them as they were begotten glimpses of the past, perhaps, of what one loved and wanted and what was and what was not. Yet, there was also the feeling of infringement and a caution upon opening the books as though a privacy would be broken.

Nevertheless, this only prompted me further in my trapped state of being to go into the unknown. As I read the entries though upon the page I realized that the diaries were intended to be read and written for that purpose, a kind of vague revelation or a kind of passing on to someone else to know of course that they too had lived felt and pained

and that they were passionate enough to write it down and let fate bring them to another's hands. After reading them I felt a strange peace that came as a relief in my isolation and numbness and decided to set down on paper of what had been passed on to me so that a certain respect would be shed and a certain feeling of kinship would be instilled in what I had written and perhaps over time a truth would be preserved. As for the town of Little Cavern it is now a relic of the past, a ghost town of the old west, but I think in a way, a modulation of what is. So, when I set down and began to write the story of Little Cavern and its peoples, I thought not of myself and what I wanted to see but rather what I wanted to show so that a deep reflection could be carried to a lowly observer in search of something or rather a belief, and to believe in something even is strongly conjectured so that people will spit at your feet for it, or just something different than what is accepted or opposing, is sometimes better than not believing in something at all.