

## **Earth's Blood**

**By Bernie Mojzes**

The demons that pull this Carriage feed only upon a vile Liquor distilled from the Blood of the Earth. More foul a Beverage even than has been concocted by the Ingenious Chinaman whose lifework is called Mou-Tai, or even the plum drippings of the Southern Slavs, this Rare and Plentiful Substance draws these Creatures of Darkness and binds them, or so it is said. As Nourishing in Substance this clear, pungent Liquid is to the Demons, it is deadly poison to Creatures of This Earth – to imbibe is to die. Its touch is poison, and it can be absorbed through the skin. People have even been known to succumb to its invisible fumes

Regardless, its utilization in the Influence of Demons has grown so commonplace that one must question whether it is more Addictive to the Demons, or to those who offer it as Sacrifice for Favors Due. Surprisingly, for such a rare and Valuable Resource, almost Everybody has some. Wars have been fought over the Earth's Blood, but not over it's ownership; True Power derives not from owning the Substance, but in the Ability to Control who may Own, and who may Sell, and who may Buy, and under what Conditions these Transactions may transpire.

The Carriage bears me North. I know not what our destination is. Our Speed is of such Magnitude that there is no survivable way to escape this Fate. We pass rivers and villages, valleys and mountains and forests. Beside me are giant metal Beasts whose breath is Ash. They hurdle at astonishing Velocity down Roads that are built, through some Inhuman Device, to an evenness Unimaginable. The Mountains are ancient, ancient beyond Reason, old and gnarled, knotted and twisted, and yet the Road cuts through them like a Garrote imbedded in the lumpy Flesh of the Earth.

Hours, and Hundreds of Miles later, just short of the Border with New York, just past the Old Barn, past Lake Como, past Equinunk, and Equinunk Creek, the Carriage pulls to a stop in a small town called Lookout. I'm allowed a brief Moment of Freedom, but it is Cold there, very, very Cold. I'm given opportunity, at last, to attend to certain Bodily Functions, prior to the Quest for Galilee. The Lookout General Store boasts Worms, Snacks, Bait, Food, Automotive and a Bevy of Other Products. "Um, do you have a rest room?" "Yup, it's outside, up the road, to the right, in the garage." She neglects to mention having to scale the Mountain of Snow that has been deposited in front of the Rest Room Door.

Business in Lookout concluded, I am returned to the Carriage, and am borne South, to Galilee, to Honesdale, to Lake Ariel, and Pointes South. Hundreds of miles pass, and it grows Dark, and Still we travel, until at last the Carriage deposits me back at home. I exit, still unclear of my Purpose. I have been summoned North, and returned Home, unscathed, but Confused as to why this has transpired. Who summoned Me, and for what Reason?