

Part 1-Buck Hale

He chose to live out here. He is old; not ancient. He has barely survived a failed marriage and resultant suicide attempt. Barely. Twice he loaded his Remington 870 Wingmaster, placed the barrel in his mouth and his right big toe at the trigger guard and waited for courage. It was the second time, while acting this idiocy out, that it dawned on him that what he was doing was pure cowardice. Not just cowardice but, worse, selfishness. Sure, he was as far down spiritually as a man can get but there were others who loved him. That recognition of others love for him dictated his fate. Putting the shotgun away his mind flexed back to alternatives. The alternative which he finally accepted with a stamp of his minds approval brought him to this place, this time. He finally figured that he may as well die out here as anywhere else.

His name is Buck Hale. Mr. Hale is 68 years young and could care less about expediency or caution, medications or any other contrivance of civilization as pertains to the stereotypical labeling of a man his age. Buck is, in fact, fed up with all things people. Sure, he needs people in the form of a store to buy food and, when he feels like it, to take a bath or shower; once in a while. And, were you to ask him, his health improved a month after he left the city! His meds are no longer needed as they once were.

Buck makes his "home" in the Sierra-Nevada mountains on a back and forth continuous loop between Kirkwood and either Murphys or Markleeville. In these three towns he has friends for which he works when his whimsical journey takes him to one or the other. He works their property with a love which is tangible. He is accepted for who he is and what his life style is; a virtual vagabond. But a vagabond with great intelligence and a love that radiates from him so that all who meet him are warmed into friendship with he and his manner.

Buck is expert at fishing with only a hand-line (4 lb test monofilament rolled on a small, green pine twig (carefully enough that it never tangles), small, #12 barbless hooks, brass, and grasshoppers or, when push comes to shove, salmon eggs This spot on the Stanislaus river he has fished since a young man of 23 and, as far as he knew, he was the only one who knew of it.

Here the river issues out between grey, granite canyon walls in a cascade of white water which falls over twenty feet, boiling over the boulders of granite shed from the canyon over millennia and is just 11 miles west, outside of Markleeville. It's hell to get down here but even at 68 years he is fit enough to climb in and out. There is, in fact, a method to his madness. You see, he intends to die here if God and fate will allow. It is the spot where he feels most at peace. A peace that many only dream of. A peace that is between he and his maker, his maker and the maker's creation. He feels the hand of God while standing knee deep in the Stanislaus; naked as a jay bird. In this place he is humbled by the creation and intrinsic beauty that surrounds him like a cocoon.

Buck is a skeptic of timeline's when it comes to science. Their timeline of human existence, it seems to him, disregards other, older versions of human history. If, he once posited, mankind is millions of years old how come his greatest leap in technology came just a century and one half ago? Why not the bronze age? And, if man was advanced in those days, why did his technology falter and disappear so quickly; in the historical sense. The Antikythera mechanism was reputed to be 2000 years old. So, he reasoned, the concept and building of machines had to have started much earlier. After all, the gear was the first practical application of physics and math so why did it stop there?

His mind tended toward the religious and he had spent many years of his life attempting to collate the differences between science and religious belief. In other words, where

was the confluence and where were the branches. Archaeology, it seemed to Buck, gave too much credit to carbon dating which, he had become aware, was often taken for granted while dismissing or ignoring historical fact.

Scripture told him that history, as cited in that book, was often relegated to the trash bin by science; which led him to believe that science might very well be on a crusade to create its own historical treatise while not using every reference available. Now, however, really honest archaeologists are in the beginning stages of recognizing epochs of change. He had read of a group who were looking at the science while attempting to correlate the Bible at the same time. One particular item they took to task was evolution. It is recognized while, at the same time, is challenged, not so much by Bible scholars, but by the Earth's geological record itself. Long hidden by evolutionists is the evidence that each epoch did not end by creatures evolving, rather, that time ended in cataclysm. The geologic record, looked at objectively, shows no "evolution" of species. It shows that species died out relatively suddenly and completely. In an instant instead and not over millions of years which would have allowed for Darwin to be correct.

This, then, is the mind of a man set free from societal norms and politics. A man who had it all and ultimately gave it up after the ruin of what he held most dear: a marriage.

It was out here in the Stanislaus national forest wandering to and fro from Kirkwood to Markleeville which brought back his mind but only after more than a year of deep, abiding depression. This is where our story begins.