

The Execution

One boy, one life, one "Death"

"Death." That's what they call me. I'm the conclusion of life and the end of yet another soul. During my stay at Earth, I have watched humankind for a long time, and I have seen it grow, but there was one moment in my "deathspan" that has never left my mind since.

The Roundhouse, 8th April 1844

The guards came down the metallic steps dragging the defendant along with him. I stood there with my scythe, melting into the shadows. I stared at the 15-year-old murderer convicted of the despicable crime of the murder of an 18-year-old boy. A sense of satisfaction washed over me as I relished this moment of true justice.

As I stared into those blank eyes the calamity of events came spiralling down upon me.

It was nine minutes past midnight when the bedroom door of which I was situated in creaked open. The intruder tiptoed through the room wary of the soft snores of the 18-year-old, George Pollard. I recalled as the convict raised his knife.

Then, he hesitated.

Tears started to swell up inside his eyes. The 15-year-old shook his head, a sense of determination washing over him, and he plunged the knife into the chest of the sleeping figure.

"John Gavin, you have been convicted of the first-degree murder of George Pollard, the penalty of which is death by hanging. There have been no stays or reprieves; therefore, the execution will go forward as stipulated under the laws of the Swan River Colony. Do you have any last words?"

"No. No, I don't," he whispered.

I stared into his eyes and saw guilt, regret and pain. The executioners dragged the boy up to the platform.

"Please, please don't," he wailed.

"I don't want to die."

"Please, I beg you."

"Spare me, god, spare me."

His helpless cries echoed through the room. I stared at his eyes one last time but this time, I saw a fearful boy. Not a murderer. A boy whose life was about to be cut short by the law. A growing boy who had a future ahead of him.

Maybe there was a story behind this murder. Perhaps this was not all as it seemed like. He was just a boy, after all, and suddenly, I didn't want him to die. But the black cloth was

placed on his head and I lost eye contact. I could still hear the whimpering from underneath the mask.

The executioner placed the noose around his head, but the boy just stood there, without fighting as if he had accepted defeat and knew that death was inevitable. I stood there not believing that I had thought of killing this boy. To cut his life short. But there was nothing I could do now.

The trapdoor fell and the I could feel the boy's soul turn to my grasps. As the crowd erupted in a fit of cheers, the boy was left dangling on the noose, dead.