

## "True Detective Story"

by Simo Sakari Aaltonen

(1 Apr 2010)

It was late. Too late. Only thirty minutes to midnight.

Well, I say midnight, but I mean *Takeshi's Castle*, around 5 pm.

But I only had half that time to make it to the mansion on the hill before it would go up in flames.

Well, I say mansion on the hill and go up in flames, but I mean the apothecary would close for the day.

But I needed my fix. The monkey on my back was screaming blue murder. I should have listened when they said I should never go to Borneo. They warned me. They said I might pick up some strange things there. And they were right. This monkey sure was strange.

Well, strictly speaking there was no monkey, as the only thing on my back was the clothes on my back, and it was more like a prescription antibiotic than a fix.

But missing your antibiotic can be a killer.

Well, your doctor might waggle a finger at you.

But there I was, walking. It was raining cats and dogs.

Well, I say cats and dogs, but I mean water.

But I knew the cats and dogs were out there, somewhere. Lying in wait. Or just around.

I could smell them. Or at least they could have smelled me if they were ten feet from me. Make that twenty feet.

Then I saw it, lying face down in the snow drift. It was a dead body. It was not breathing.

Well, I say dead body, but I mean mobile phone.

Quickly I pocketed the phone, planning to tackle its owner as my next assignment. Well, I say tackle, but I mean track down. And I say pocketed, but I mean carried gingerly in my hand. I did not want to get my pocket dirty.

There was enough dirt on the streets and it would not be going into my pocket. Not on my watch. Strictly speaking, there was no watch. But that was par for the course and I had long since learned to look out for holes like this. It was all part of the plot.

Well, I say had learned, but mean had not learned. Golf was not my game. Not since the incident. I had refused to play by the rules and

they had thrown the book at me. But I had not felt like reading.

I had recognised my cue and jumped on it. From that day forward, it was quits between me and the club.

It was a load of balls anyway.

Besides, I knew how to play hard ball without one.

Well, in point of fact this whole golf aside is baloney. And when I say baloney, I mean none of it is true. Not a sausage.

There I was, mobile phone in hand, in the pouring rain, continuing towards the apothecary.

Then I saw it, lying face down on the pavement. It was a severed head. It had no body.

Well, I say severed head, but I mean someone's debit card.

I carried it gingerly in my hand.

Well, I say carried in my hand, but I mean pocketed. It was not that dirty.

But it was dirty enough. This whole thing was. I hurried home from the apothecary, but it was too late.

I did not make it. The first event of *Takeshi's Castle* had already started.

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Later that day. I looked at the mobile phone found in the snow drift. My keen analytical sense slipped into gear and I started to suspect a web of intrigue the likes of which most schools probably see every day. It was elementary school, my dear reader.

A quick card trick with the SIM card put me in touch with the old man. Turns out the phone had been reported stolen and the father thanked me when I said I would deposit the goods in the teachers' room at his daughter's school.

Having done that, I proceeded to collect my reward for the other card job. The bank wanted it real bad. Bad enough to fork out a handy reward. Ten big ones. Genuine euros. That suited me just fine. It would bide me over until the next assignment.

I would treat myself to an egg. Kinder, neat, screw the rocks.

And make it so damn hard-boiled it could crack itself.