In the Fog
**Milton Geiger**

*You are driving down a dark, lonely road in the Pennsylvania hills. The fog rolls in, and you can no longer see the roadside markers. You are turned around, confused. You think you are lost. Read on to see how a character in just such a situation responds—and what strange events begin to happen. Watch how this writer builds suspense and carries it through to a climactic and surprising end.*
**Characters**

A Doctor      A Wounded Man
Eben             A Gas Station Attendant
Zeke

Sets: *A signpost on Pennsylvania Route 30. A rock or stump in the fog. A gas station pump.*

*Night. At first we can only see fog drifting across a dark scene devoid of detail. Then, out of the fog, there emerges toward us a white roadside signpost with a number of white painted signboards pointing to right and to left. The marker is a Pennsylvania State Route—marked characteristically* “PENNA-30.” *Now a light as from a far headlight sweeps the signs.*

*An automobile approaches. The car pulls up close. We hear the car door open and slam and a man’s footsteps approaching on the concrete. Now the signs are lit up again by a more localized, smaller source of light. The light grows stronger as the man, offstage, approaches. The* DOCTOR *enters, holding a flashlight before him. He scrutinizes the road marker. He flashes his light up at the arrows. We see the legends on the markers. Pointing off right there are markers that read: York, Columbia, Lancaster; pointing left the signs read: Fayetteville, McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania Turnpike.*
*The* DOCTOR’s *face is perplexed and annoyed as he turns his flashlight on a folded road map. He is a bit lost in the fog. Then his flashlight fails him. It goes out!*

**Doctor**. Darn! (*He fumbles with the flashlight in the gloom. Then a voice is raised to him from offstage.*)

**Eben** (*offstage, strangely*). Turn around, mister….

[*The* DOCTOR *turns sharply to stare offstage.*]

**Zeke** (*offstage*). You don’t have to be afraid, mister….

[*The* DOCTOR *sees two men slowly approaching out of the fog. One carries a lantern below his knees. The other holds a heavy rifle. Their features are utterly indistinct as they approach, and the rifleman holds up his gun with quiet threat.*]

**Eben.** You don’t have to be afraid.

**Doctor** (*more indignant than afraid*). So you say! Who are you, man?

**Eben.** We don’t aim to hurt you none.

**Doctor.** That’s reassuring. I’d like to know just what you mean by this? This gun business! Who are you?

**Zeke** (*mildly*). What’s your trade, mister?

**Doctor.** I…I’m a doctor.Why?

**Zeke** (*to* EBEN). Doctor.

**Eben** (*nods; then to* DOCTOR). Yer the man we want.

**Zeke.** Ye’ll do proper, we’re thinkin’.

**Eben.** So ye’d better come along, mister.

**Zeke.** Aye.

**Doctor**. Why? Has—anyone been hurt?

**Eben.** It’s for you to say if he’s been hurt nigh to the finish.

**Zeke.** So we’re askin’ ye to come along, doctor.

[*The* DOCTOR *looks from one to another in indecision and puzzlement.*]

**Eben.** In the name o’ mercy.

**Zeke**. Aye.

**Doctor.** I want you to understand—I’m not afraid of your gun! I’ll go to your man all right. Naturally, I’m a doctor. But I demand to know who you are.

**Zeke** (*patiently*). Why not? Raise yer lantern, Eben….

**Eben** (*tiredly*). Aye.

[EBEN l*ifts his lantern. Its light falls on their faces now, and we see that they are terrifying. Matted beards, clotted with blood; crude head bandages, crusty with dirt and dry blood. Their hair, stringy and disheveled. Their faces are lean and hollow cheeked; their eyes sunken and tragic. The* DOCTOR *is shocked for a moment—then bursts out—*]

**Doctor.** Good heavens!—

**Zeke**. That’s Eben; I’m Zeke.

**Doctor.** What’s happened? Has there been an accident or…what?

**Zeke.** Mischief’s happened, stranger.

Eben. Mischief enough.

**Doctor** (*looks at rifle at his chest*). There’s been gunplay—hasn’t there?

**Zeke** (*mildly ironic*). Yer tellin’ us there’s been gunplay!

**Doctor.** And I’m telling you that I’m not at all frightened! It’s my duty to report this, and report it I will!

**Zeke.** Aye, mister. You do that.

**Doctor.** You’re arrogant about it now! You don’t think you’ll be caught and dealt with. But people are losing patience with you men….You…you moonshiners! Running wild…a law unto yourselves…shooting up the countryside!

**Zeke.** Hear that, Eben? Moonshiners.

**Eben.** Mischief’s happened, mister, we’ll warrant that….

**Doctor**. And I don’t like it!

**Zeke.** Can’t say we like it better’n you do, mister….

**Eben** (*strangely sad and remote*). What must be, must.

**Zeke.** There’s no changin’ or goin’ back, and all ’at’s left is the wishin’ things were different.

**Eben.** Aye.

**Doctor.** And while we talk, your wounded man lies bleeding, I suppose—worthless though he may be. Well? I’ll have to get my instrument bag, you know. It’s in the car.

[EBEN *and* ZEKE *part to let* DOCTOR *pass between them. The Doctor reenters, carrying his medical bag.*]

**Doctor.** I’m ready. Lead the way.

[EBEN *lifts his lantern a bit and goes first.* ZEKE *prods the* DOCTOR *ever so gently and apologetically but firmly with the rifle muzzle. The* DOCTOR *leaves.* ZEKE *strides off slowly after them*.

*A wounded man is lying against a section of stone fence. He, too, is bearded, though very young, and his shirt is dark with blood. He breathes but never stirs otherwise*. EBEN *enters, followed by the* DOCTOR *and* ZEKE.]

**Zeke.** Ain’t stirred a mite since we left ’im.

**Doctor.** Let’s have that lantern here! (*The* DOCTOR *tears the man’s shirt for better access to the wound. Softly*) Dreadful! Dreadful…!

**Zeke’s voice** (*off scene*). Reckon it’s bad in the chest like that, hey?

**Doctor** (*taking pulse*). His pulse is positively racing…! How long has he been this way?

**Zeke.** A long time, mister. A long time….

**Doctor** (*to* EBEN). You! Hand me my bag.

[EBEN *puts down lantern and hands bag to the* DOCTOR. *The* DOCTOR *opens bag and takes out a couple of retractors*. ZEKE *holds lantern close now*.]

**Doctor.** Lend me a hand with these retractors. (*He works on the man*.) All right…when I tell you to draw back on the retractors—draw back.

**Eben.** Aye.

**Zeke.** How is ’e, mister?

**Doctor** (*preoccupied*). More retraction. Pull them a bit more. Hold it….

**Eben**. Bad, ain’t he?

**Doctor.** Bad enough. The bullet didn’t touch any lung tissue far as I can see right now. There’s some pneumothorax though. All I can do now is plug the wound. There’s some cotton and gauze wadding in my bag. Find it….

[ZEKE *probes about silently in the bag and comes up with a small dark box of gauze.*]

**Doctor**. That’s it. (*Works a moment in silence*) I’ve never seen anything quite like it.

**Eben.** Yer young, doctor. Lots o’ things you’ve never seen.

**Doctor.** Adhesive tape!

[ZEKE *finds a roll of three-inch tape and hands it to the* DOCTOR, *who tears off long strips and slaps them on the dressing and pats and smooths them to the man’s chest.* EBEN *replaces equipment in* DOCTOR’s *bag and closes it with a hint of the finality to come. A preview of dismissal, so to speak*.]

**Doctor.** (*at length*). There. So much for that. Now then—(*takes man’s shoulders*) give me a hand here.

**Zeke** (*quiet suspicion*). What fer?

**Doctor.** We’ve got to move this man.

**Zeke.** What fer?

**Doctor** (*stands; indignantly*). We’ve got to get him to a hospital for treatment; a thorough cleansing of the wound; irrigation. I’ve done all I can for him here.

**Zeke.** I reckon he’ll be all right ’thout no hospital.

**Doctor.** Do you realize how badly this man’s hurt!

Eben. He won’t bleed to death, will he?

**Doctor**. I don’t think so—not with that plug and pressure dressing. But bleeding isn’t the only danger we’ve got to—

**Zeke** (*interrupts*). All right, then. Much obliged to you.

**Doctor.** This man’s dangerously hurt!

**Zeke.** Reckon he’ll pull through now, thanks to you.

**Doctor.** I’m glad you feel that way about it! But I’m going to report this to the Pennsylvania State Police at the first telephone I reach!

Zeke. We ain’t stoppin’ ye, mister.

**Eben.** Fog is liftin’, Zeke. Better be done with this, I say.

**Zeke** (*nods, sadly*). Aye. Ye can go now, mister…and thanks. (*Continues*) We never meant a mite o’ harm, I can tell ye. If we killed, it was no wish of ours.

**Eben.** What’s done is done. Aye.

**Zeke.** Ye can go now, stranger….

[EBEN *hands* ZEKE *the* DOCTOR’s *bag*. ZEKE *hands it gently to the* DOCTOR.]

**Doctor.** Very well. You haven’t heard the last of this, though!

**Zeke.** That’s the truth, mister. We’ve killed, aye; and we’ve been hurt for it....

**Eben.** Hurt bad.

[*The* DOCTOR’s *face is puckered with doubt and strange apprehension.*]

**Zeke.** We’re not alone, mister. We ain’t the only ones. (*Sighs*) Ye can go now, doctor…and our thanks to ye….

[*The* DOCTOR *leaves the other two, still gazing at them in strange enchantment and wonder and a touch of indignation.*]

**Eben’s voice.** Thanks, mister….

**Zeke’s voice.** In the name o’ mercy…. We thank you….

**Eben.** In the name o’ mercy.

**Zeke.** Thanks, mister….

**Eben.** In the name o’ kindness….

[*The two men stand with their wounded comrade at their feet—like a group statue in the park. The fog thickens across the scene. Far off the long, sad wail of a locomotive whimpers in the dark.

The scene now shifts to a young* ATTENDANT *standing in front of a gasoline pump taking a reading and recording it in a book as he prepares to close up. He turns as he hears the car approach on the gravel drive*.

*The* DOCTOR *enters.*]

**Attendant** (*pleasantly*). Good evening, sir. (*Nods off at car*) Care to pull’er up to this pump, sir? Closing up.

**Doctor** (*impatiently*). No. Where’s your telephone, please? I’ve just been held up!

**Attendant.** Pay station inside, sir….

**Doctor.** Thank you! (*The* DOCTOR *starts to go past the* ATTENDANT.)

**Attendant.** Excuse me, sir….

**Doctor** (*stops*). Eh, what is it, what is it?

**Attendant.** Uh…what sort of looking fellows were they?

**Doctor.** Oh—two big fellows with a rifle; faces and heads bandaged and smeared with dirt and blood. Friend of theirs with a gaping hole in his chest. I’m a doctor, so they forced me to attend him. Why?

**Attendant.** Those fellers, huh?

**Doctor.** Then you know about them!

**Attendant.** I guess so.

**Doctor.** They’re armed and they’re desperate!

**Attendant.** That was about two or three miles back, would you say?

**Doctor** (*fumbling in pocket*). Just about—I don’t seem to have the change. I wonder if you’d spare me change for a quarter…?

**Attendant** (*makes change from metal coin canister at his belt*). Certainly, sir….

**Doctor.** What town was that back there, now?

**Attendant** (*dumps coins in other’s hand*). There you are, sir.

**Doctor** (*impatient*). Yes, thank you. I say—what town was that back there, so I can tell the police?

**Attendant.** That was…Gettysburg, mister….

**Doctor.** Gettysburg…?

**Attendant.** Gettysburg and Gettysburg battlefield…. (*Looks off*) When it’s light and the fog’s gone, you can see the gravestones. Meade’s men…Pickett’s men, Robert E. Lee’s….
[The DOCTOR *is looking off with the* ATTENDANT; *now he turns his head slowly to stare at the other man*.]
**Attendant** (*continues*). On nights like this—well—you’re not the first those men’ve stopped…or the last. (*Nods off*) Fill ’er up, mister?

**Doctor.** Yes, fill ’er up….