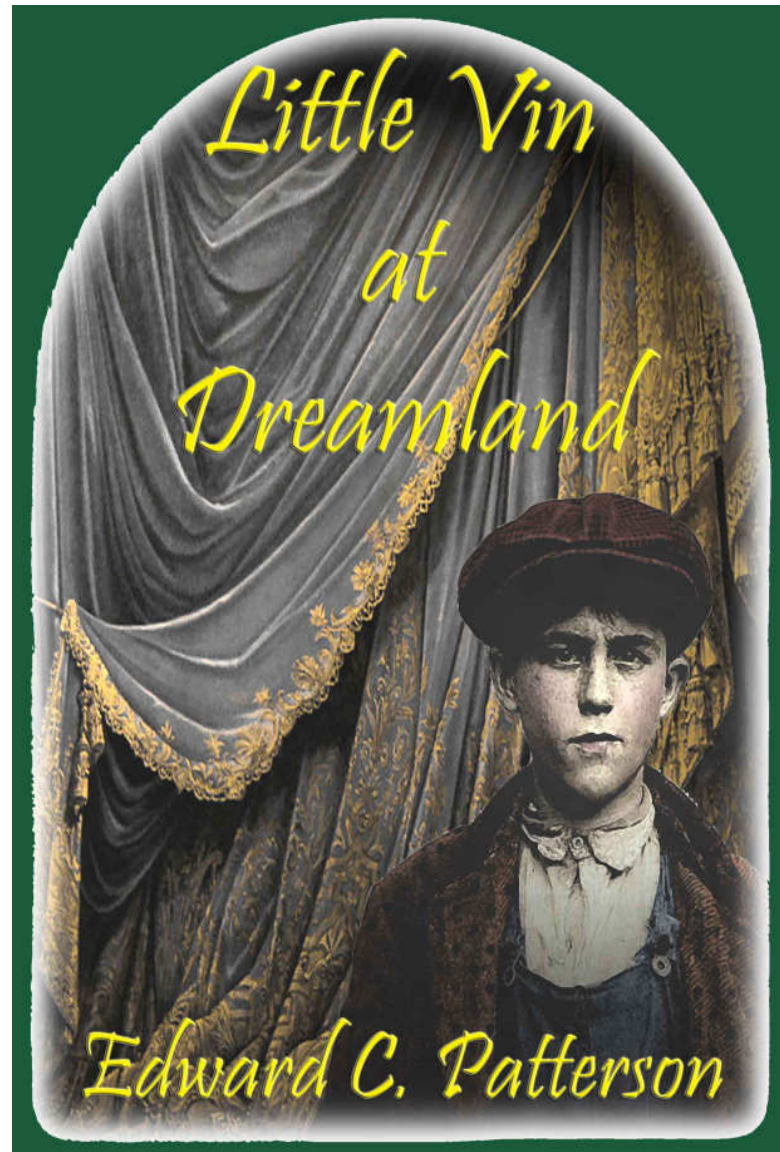




Sample Chapter

Little Vin at Dreamland

by

Edward C. Patterson

Dancaster Creative

www.dancaster.com

edwpat@att.net

Dancaster Creative

www.dancaster.com

edwpat@att.net

Revised Kindle Edition, November 2017

Copyright 2017 by Edward C. Patterson

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced in any form, in whole or in part (beyond that copying permitted by U.S. Copyright Law, Section 107, "fair use" in teaching or research. Section 108, certain library copying, or in published media by reviewers in limited excerpt), without written permission from the publisher.

Sample Chapter – Little Vin at Dreamland
The complete work can be purchased on Amazon
Little Vin at Dreamland
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B071H5LC2H>

Table of Contents

Part One: Flannel — Winter 1910

- Chapter One: In the Jacks*
- Chapter Two: Loggerheads*
- Chapter Three: A Penny's Worth*
- Chapter Four: A Round of Harse Shite*
- Chapter Five: The Realm of Possibilities*
- Chapter Six: Peppermint Dreams*
- Chapter Seven: Diamond Tony's*
- Chapter Eight: The Fine Arts Academy*
- Chapter Nine: The Pokey*
- Chapter Ten: The Congress*
- Chapter Eleven: Hollies*
- Chapter Twelve: Thistles*
- Chapter Thirteen: Maskerade*
- Chapter Fourteen: Flickers*
- Chapter Fifteen: Tiding Over*
- Chapter Sixteen: Slivovitz and Gin*

Part Two: Cotton — Spring 1911

- Chapter One: Caton Park*
- Chapter Two: Turning Green and Nineteen*
- Chapter Three: The Rink*
- Chapter Four: Comparin' Notes*
- Chapter Five: Controlling the Sausage*
- Chapter Six: The Lady in the Bathtub*
- Chapter Seven: Beauty and Darwinian Man*
- Chapter Eight: In Flagante Delicto*
- Chapter Nine: God Goes to Lunch*

Part III: Linen – Summer 1911

- Chapter One: The Congress*
- Chapter Two: Jolly Irene*
- Chapter Three: More Comparin' Notes . . .*
- Chapter Four: The Embers of Youth*
- Chapter Five: Tender Kindling*
- Chapter Six: In Just Two Hours*
- Chapter Seven: Embracing Oblivion*
- Chapter Eight: The Funny Place*

Chapter Nine: A Hero's Reward
Chapter Ten: Announcements

Part IV: Silk – Fall 1911

Chapter One: Felicity House
Chapter Two: The Infirmary and Other Interiors
Chapter Three: Stable Relationships
Chapter Four: Celebrations
Chapter Five: Something Old — Something New
Chapter Six: That New York Hat
Chapter Seven: Cloudy Days
Chapter Eight: The Fly-Away Horse

Chapter One

In the Jacks

1

A snow mantle caressed the outhouse roof, icicles dangling in the morning dim, light dancing to the bright blue twinkling in Vincent Grainger's eyes. Those eyes had seen much in eighteen years, and would see much more if the wintry wind allowed his cheeks to thaw once he bounded back into the cold water flat he had abandoned to escort his little sister to *the Jacks*. Little Vin — little because he was only five foot four (and conscious of it) glanced toward the row houses on Mermaid Avenue. He grinned. He always grinned when he saw it — the high tower in the distance — over three-hundred feet of it — the stronghold of Dreamland Park. Although quiet through the snow fall and congruently ivory when draped in white, Dreamland's beacon beckoned him across the shabby neighborhood's rooftops. It was a summery point in this wintry dream; as summery as little Vin's bright blue eyes and his curiously *tell-all* grin.

He turned to the outhouse.

"Are you finished yet?" he called. "It's cold out here. You've been in *the Jacks* too long."

"No," came a small voice from within. "It's hard to go when it's cold, you know. I don't like the cold, Vin. I don't like it."

"I don't care what yer don't like. It's colder out here and . . ."

"Don't come in," she protested. "I'm not finished and I don't want to do it in my pants."

Vin laughed to himself. Babs was the one bright spot in his life — a baby sister to spoil and protect. He was lucky in that. Perhaps, when she sprouted, she'd be as bratty as the other one — the middle child, Greg.

As this thought crossed Vin's brow, a well packed snowball crossed the side of his head, hitting the outhouse door.

"I said, let me finish," Babs complained.

"That wasn't me."

Vin turned, just as another snowball whizzed past him. He saw his bratty younger brother preparing another one. Beside him were two schoolmates packing the snow and preparing to launch a full assault. Vin had no choice but to push his hands into the drift, the nip biting through his tattered gloves. When the enemy was at the gate (or in this case, at *the Jacks*), what else could a noble warrior do?

"You should be at school," Vin said as he pitched his snowball at Greg's head, only to hit his shoulder.

"Ow!" Greg whined, and then rebounded with one of his own.

It missed, but two missiles from the companions went true — one to Vin's shin, the other to his chest. They smarted, but he laughed them off.

"You've gotta do better than that before you raise the Irish in me." Vin slid to his knees, and then tossed four snowballs as rapidly as he could form them. "You *all* should be at school."

"We're goin'," Greg said, rolling in a drift to avoid the next volley. "Don't know whether it's open or not."

"Probably not," said his ginger-haired companion, although hard to see his red mop tucked tight in a knitted cap. "At least we *go* to school."

"Yes, little Vin," said the other one, who was loosely clad in a makeshift cloak of sweaters and scarves. "We get to be smart, not like you."

"Who are you callin' dumb?" Vin snapped. "A sharper wit you'd never know and a brawnier brain you'll never see."

The three boys doubled over laughing, the battle easing.

"He thinks he's a genius," ginger-haired said.

"More like a geni's arse," quipped sweater boy.

"No," Greg announced. "He's got *harse* sense from hanging around in the livery with the harses."

Vin stood tall, or as tall as his five foot four would stretch.

"If I didn't *need* to work, I'd be in High School, I would. I'd be studyin' mathematics and readin' Shakespeare."

"He *does* read Shakespeare," Greg mocked. "He walks about the parlor spoutin' pretty varses about who the feck knows. Maybe the harses."

They all laughed again.

"Watch yer tongue," Vin said, nodding toward the outhouse. "Babs is in *the Jacks*. Such language is not for her ears."

"I hear it," Babs said.

"Just finish up," Vin replied, and then turned to his brother. "If yer goin' to school, go already."

"I will. But I have a message from Nanny Grainger for you."

The three boys chuckled — secrets be told.

"Well?" Vin asked, waiting with the next snowball in hand.

"She says to hurry yer arse, because yer late to shovel the shite in the harse barn."

The boys doubled over again, slipping and sliding, pleased at punch, no doubt, at little Vin's chagrin. He shook his head.

"Reciting Shakespeare to the horses," he mused, chuckling. "And why not?" He stood at attention. "A horse! A horse! Me kingdom for a horse!"

"I'm almost there," Babs said.

"Good thing too," Vin replied. "Here comes the O'Connors. You aren't the only one to do yer business in the freezin' cold."

The O'Connors — three at least, poked their way from their back door, shivering toward *the Jacks*. Billy O'Conner was Vin's age, but like everyone else in the neighborhood above the age of fifteen, taller than Coney Island's resident runt by three inches. Billy waved to Vin, just as *the Jacks'* door opened, Babs carefully descending the two steps to the path.

"It's stinky in there," she announced.

"Stinky and cold," Vin declared. "Well, missy, we best get you back in the house before the little people come and carry you away."

Babs giggled.

"There are people littler than you and me, Vin?"

"Not many, but I'm sure they're just waitin' to catch you off yer guard."

He took his sister's hand leading her over the snow covered path passing the O'Conner's on their morning quest. Greg and his school friends were on their way, when Vin remembered that his bratty brother also had an obligation.

"Don't forget to meet Ma at Feltman's," he shouted.

Greg turned about.

"It's too early."

"Yes, but she'll need extra help in this weather."

Greg flipped his brother the finger and went about his business — the business of pushing his companions into a snow bank.

"Do you think Ma will have peppermints today?" Babs asked sheepishly.

"I suspect not, missy. There'll be light trade today at Feltman's."

"Which means they'll be more leftovers to bring home."

"It doesn't work that way," he said stopping before the door and surveying his sister's rosy cheeks. "But maybe I can scrape up something for a penny's worth of sweets."

"Really, Vin?"

"It'd be a stretch, but *really* — perhaps." He grinned, and then stuck out his tongue. "Now, let's get in out of the cold and be soft about it. We don't want to wake up *hissself*."

No, they wouldn't want that.

2

"Barbara Ellen Grainger," came a gritty feminine croak from an old battered chair by the stove. "You've been long in *the Jacks*, you have."

"It was cold, Nanny Grainger," Babs pleaded.

"Not so loud, or you'll wake your Da, and you wouldn't want to brave that, would you now?"

Babs' eyes popped as she shook her head.

"Let's get you warm," Vin said, nudging his sister toward the stove, although, truth be told, he welcomed the heat also.

Babs rubbed her hands together, while Vin rubbed her shoulders. Heat radiated from the stove, but the parlor, on the whole, was cold — from the low slumped settee to the high backed chair. The ceilings were high enough to trap more heat than it was worth preserving up top. Still, it was warmer than being in the yard or in *the Jacks*, although marginally so.

"We should get more coals," Vin said.

"Do you got some in yer pockets?" Nanny asked. "We've bought our weeks' worth and unless spring comes over the surf, we'll be countin' the cinders and burnin' the fence to raise heat sooner. There's an extra blanket on the couch."

Vin noted it, but was too cold to leave the stove to get it. He knew he would succumb, but not just yet.

"Besides," Nanny continued. "You gotta get a move on. Those stables won't clean themselves."

"They should today."

"But they won't. The old German'll have a fit and charge us. Yer Da will be fit to be tied."

Vin looked despairingly at his grandmother. She was right of course. If he didn't go muck out the livery stalls, the old German, Fritz Garber, would regard it as a breach of the agreement — to cover the expense of stabling Thomas Grainger's horse and laundry wagon, which he could not afford otherwise.

"So, I'll be late," Vin replied. "I mean, have you looked outside, Nanny?"

"I don't need to look to know we're on the slippery slope. But I'm not the one who'll give you *what for* if yer late."

Vin snorted. His hands were still cold, but his feet were colder. He continued to rub Babs' shoulders, which warmed his own fingers also.

"Are you gettin' there?" he asked her.

"I'll be okay," she said. "As long as I don't have to go out to *the Jacks* again."

"But don't you want to go out and play when the stuff stops fallin'?"

"It is pretty," she said. "But I'd rather watch from here."

Vin kissed her forehead, and then looked to Nanny Grainger, who had dozed off. He knew he had to go out again, but a half hour more inside seemed too enticing. He shuffled to the couch, grabbing the blanket, a threadbare thing — yellow and moth-eaten. It looked like Swiss cheese. Still, he wrapped it over his shoulders, and then went to a low shelf in the room's corner. There set his treasures — books, some as threadbare as the blanket — taped and pages missing. He grabbed his

favorite, *Nicholas Nickleby*.

"Read me some," Babs said, dashing over.

"I don't have much time," Vin said.

"Please. I love it so when you read, Vin. You make it so real."

That he did. He had the knack. He used the knack whenever it was called upon, like now from his sister, or to be mocked at by his kid brother. But it was during the Summer season that Vincent Grainger's knack for play acting and making funny faces came into best use — and they paid him then; not much, but it was income when the warm weather drew the millions to Coney Island to see what there was to see, which in this case, included a short little man who could hop around and entertain them, banishing a winter in *the Jacks* to another place — to another world.

Vin opened the book. Babs bounced on the couch.

"Is it Mr. Dickens?" she asked. "Will you be Smike today?"

"Today," Vin said, opening the book. "Today I shall be . . . Mr. Squeers, the schoolmaster."

"Huray," Babs said, and then hissed.

Vin let the blanket fall, and then began. Even though it was winter in Dickens' world, when little Vin transformed, his art warmed him up considerably.

3

Vincent Grainger nodded as a sign for beginning, a gentle prelude to the first words.

"After some half-hour's delay," Vin read, "Mr. Squeers reappeared, and the boys took their places and their books, of which latter commodity the average might be about one to eight learners. A few minutes having elapsed, during which Mr. Squeers looked very profound, as if he had a perfect apprehension of what was inside all the books, and could say every word of their contents by heart if he only chose to take the trouble, that gentleman called up the first class. Obedient to this summons there ranged themselves in front of the schoolmaster's desk, half-a-dozen scarecrows, out at knees and elbows, one of whom placed a torn and filthy book beneath his learned eye."

Vin curled his lower lip, and snarled. He closed his right eye and hunched a bit. Babs was impressed, trembling on the cushions.

"This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby," said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. "We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?"

Vin changed his voice to a high-pitched squeak. He noticed Nanny Grainger was awake now, grinning and listening as best she could.

"Please, sir, he's cleaning the back-parlor window," said the temporary head of the philosophical class."

Vin returned to his ugly face, squishing it as worst he could.

"So he is, to be sure," rejoined Squeers. "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?"

"Please, sir, he's weeding the garden," replied a small voice."

"To be sure," said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. "So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby: what do you think of it?"

Vin looked down at the book.

"Well, Babs, what d'ya think?"

“More,” she said, laughing. “More W-i-n-d-e-r.”
 “Please, sir, I want some more,” Vin said, in a wee begging voice.
 “That’s not *Nickleby*, Vin.”
 “Of course, it’s not. But I should get a move on.”
 “Just a little bit more,” she pleaded.
 Vin couldn’t resist. He looked to Nanny Grainger, who winked.
 “Okay,” he said, and took up the next passage. “It’s very *useful* one, at any rate,’ answered Nicholas.”
 “I believe you,’ rejoined Squeers, not remarking the *emphasis* of his usher. ‘Third boy, what’s horse?”
Wee voice.
 “A beast, sir,’ replied the boy.”
 “So it is,’ said Squeers. ‘Ain’t it, Nickleby?”
 “I believe there is no doubt of that, sir,’ answered Nicholas.”
 “Of course there isn’t,’ said Squeers. ‘A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped’s Latin for beast, as everybody that’s gone through the grammar knows, or else where’s the use of having grammars at all?”
 “Where, indeed!’ said Nicholas abstractedly.”
 “As you’re perfect in that,’ resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, ‘go and look after my horse, and rub him down well, or I’ll rub you down.”
 Vin looked up. His father, the rough and tumbled Thomas Grainger stood at the bedroom door, his lips as snarly as Mr. Wackford Squeers’ and twice as surly.
 “If you don’t get your arse outta here and tend to the stable, I’ll rub *you* down good.”
 Vin closed the book, his eyes meeting his father’s bloodshot ones. There was no doubt that all hell was about to break loose, whether he headed to the livery or not. So he decided to stand his ground.

End of Sample Chapter – Little Vin at Dreamland
The complete work can be purchased on Amazon
Little Vin at Dreamland
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B071H5LC2H>

Other Works by Edward C. Patterson
Amazon Author's page — <http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B002BMI6X8>

No Irish Need Apply
Cutting the Cheese
Bobby's Trace
Surviving an American Gulag
Turning Idolater
Look Away Silence
The Road to Grafenwöhr

Are You Still Submitting Your Work to a Traditional Publisher?
A Reader's Guide to Author's Jargon and Other Ravings from the Blogosphere

Oh Dainty Triolet
The Twinning of Vincent Cassidy
Mother Asphodel
Little Vin at Dreamland
Master Wu's Bride
Willa Goodheart

Nick Firestone Mysteries
The Sapphire Astonishment
Old Friend Cane
Green Folly

Farn Trilogy
Belmundus – The Farn Trilogy – Book I
Boots of Montjoy – The Farn Trilogy – Book II
The Adumbration of Zin – The Farn Trilogy – Book III

Southern Swallow Series
The Academician - Southern Swallow Book I
The Nan Tu - Southern Swallow Book II
Swan Cloud – Southern Swallow Book III
The House of Green Waters - Southern Swallow Book IV
Vagrants Hollow - Southern Swallow Book V

The Jade Owl Legacy Series
The Jade Owl
The Third Peregrination
The Dragon's Pool
The People's Treasure
In the Shadow of Her Hem

Poetry
The Closet Clandestine: a queer steps out
Come, Wewoka & Diary of Medicine Flower
Pacific Crimson — Forget Me Not
The Awakening

Catherine and Other Poems
The Festival of Thebes
Ties and Rings
Gay October
Provincetown Poems
Songs: Not Just Survival



Author Edward C. Patterson has been writing novels, short fiction, poetry and drama his entire life, always seeking the emotional core of any story he tells. He has currently 30 published books. He is known for spinning magical and fantasy yarns grounded in history and favors epic tales revealed in books series. His flagship works are The Jade Owl Legacy Series, The Southern Swallow Series, The Farn Trilogy and the Nick Firestone Mysteries.

In many of Patterson's novels, he combines an imaginative touch with his life long devotion to China and its history, having earned an MA in Chinese History from Brooklyn College with further postgraduate work at Columbia University. This background is the cornerstone for The Jade Owl Legacy, The Southern Swallow Series and Master Wu's Bride, works drawing on Sung and Ming Dynasty History and Culture. History has played a major part in the coming of age tale Little Vin at Dreamland.

Patterson's military experience is reflected in such works as Surviving an American Gulag, The Road to Grafenwoehr and Pacific Crimson - Forget Me Not. His gay life-way and work in diversity is reflected in his novellas No Irish Need Apply, Cutting the Cheese, Bobby's Trace and Mother Asphodel; and in larger works - Turning Idolater and Look Away Silence.

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Patterson has spent over five decades as a soldier in the corporate world gaining insight into the human condition. He won the Year 2000 New Jersey Minority Achiever Award for his work in corporate diversity and is a proud U S Army Veteran of the Vietnam Era. Blending world travel experiences with a passion for story telling, Patterson's adventures continue as he works to permeate his reader's souls from an indelible wellspring.

His novel No Irish Need Apply was named Book of the Month for June 2009 by Booz Allen Hamilton's Diversity Reading Organization. His Novel The Jade Owl was a finalist for The 2009 Rainbow Awards.

Edward C. Patterson is the proud founder of Operation eBook Drop which, in its heyday, distributed over a million eBooks to deployed Armed Forces members from over 2,000 independent authors. He has guest blogged extensively and has appeared on the Bobby Ozuna - Soul of Humanity Show. He is also proud of his Cherokee heritage, knows seven languages (including Cherokee) and is a contributing member of the ACLU.

“The little voice from between the lines can become a lion's roar, one listener at a time.”

Contact author at edwpat@att.net — Feedback is always appreciated
Amazon Author's page — <http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B002BMI6X8>

