

THE CHARGE UP YARDSALE HILL

by Ken Bradbury



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I didn't ask to go. It was not my idea. My Saturday mornings usually belong to me and Mom doesn't interfere but this was no normal Saturday morning ... and this is no normal mother. Some mothers are called to wrestle steers in the rodeo, others to repair nuclear bombs, or stomp alligators, or teach seventh graders, but nothing so tame would appeal to my mother. My mother is a Commando. A Yard Sale Commando. My grandmother must have dropped a "For Sale" sign on her head when she was still a young girl and she's never recovered.

Bulls react to waving capes. Mad dogs go crazy at the sight of water. Man-eating tigers lose their mind at the smell of red meat. For my mother, it takes just a simple sign that says: YARD SALE.

It had promised to be one of those Saturday mornings that I'd always dreamed of: no school, sleep 'till noon, call up a few friends ... just generally turn to mold, watching television and doing nothing. Then Mom flew into my bedroom, jerked off my covers and said, "Get up, (*your name*)! It's time you became a woman! Your first yard sale!"

What could I do? I just assumed that she'd lost her mind and could be dangerous. And after all, I could sleep in the car all morning while she picked through all the neighbors' stuff. Well, let me tell you, honey, there was no sleeping in this car. In the first place, she had packed it to the gills with four of her Commando friends. They'd trained together for years and each knew the moves of the other by heart. Our white Buick blasted off the launch pad at 6 A.M. sharp, wilting the grass and killing every sparrow within twenty yards.



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