



CRAZY DIDN'T GET ME

Cynthia Mobley Howell

CHAPTER ONE

I was abruptly awakened from a nap about mid-afternoon that day to the sound of Mama's frightened voice desperately pleading, "James, don't hit me with that board." Still a little groggy from my nap, I rolled out of bed and stumbled out of my bedroom, which was right next to Mama's, and into her bedroom to find Mama and James in a face off. She was standing there in sheer terror in her very petite 5'2", 110 lb. frame. Mama was standing about fifteen to twenty feet away from James, entirely empty-handed, and it was very clear by the strained look on her face, and the panic in her voice that she was extremely rattled by the whole situation that was taking place. James, on the other hand, was slightly over six feet tall and weighed in at about one hundred and eighty pounds, with a solid

build. On top of the fact that he was already nearly twice Mama's size, he happened to be holding a 2x4" board in his hands and had it raised and positioned in a manner that suggested that he was about to strike Mama.

It didn't take rocket science to know that the odds were definitely stacked against Mama, and it was pretty obvious as to which one of them was going to win this one.

As soon as I entered the room, James immediately took his attention off of Mama and all eyes were on me. I instantly knew that Mama was no longer his intended target and mentally prepared myself for what was about to take place. When James' and my eyes met, I can tell you that the look that was in his eyes was a look I pray I never see again in my lifetime. The look in James' face, at that moment, brought real meaning to the term

“madman.” If this was an indication of what a real madman looked like, then I was staring one directly in his face!

In an instance, everything erupted into a tailspin. With lightning bolt and jackal speed, James dashed towards me swinging the 2x4, and before I could get out of his way, the blow that was originally intended for Mama was landed squarely on my left shoulder! I couldn't believe that he had hit me with that board! Stunned by his actions, and at the same time needing to lash out at the one who had hurt me so badly, I stumbled backwards out of the room, angry, and with revenge on my mind. My anger superseded the pain I was feeling in my shoulder. That's when I spotted one of Mama's favorite clay flowerpots. By that time, James had come out of Mama's bedroom and was standing in our dining room. I grabbed that clay flowerpot and with all of the strength that I could muster, I flung that

pot towards James hoping and praying that it would land smack-dab in his face! My intent was to make him feel pain like I was feeling. But instead of the flowerpot landing in James's face, it missed him altogether and went crashing straight through the glass portion of Mama's beautiful china cabinet that she was working so hard to pay for.

My failed attempt to retaliate infuriated this already madman and he swiftly started moving towards me. As he started coming towards me, there was no doubt in my mind that if he got his hands on me in that moment I would become minced meat. It was crucial for me to get to the front door and out of it before James could reach me or I would be history.

With the front door to my back and James facing me, I quickly spun around and started running towards the front door. I'll have to admit that up to this point in life, running had always been a challenge for me. I

couldn't even make it around the track in middle school without running out of breath. But isn't it amazing how when you're in a desperate situation, things that seemed hard or even impossible before, all of a sudden become doable? That day, I gave new meaning to the words dash and sprint. I chuckle now when I think back on that day as I recall how I bolted for the front door. Yep, it's a little comical now, but it was not funny at all at the time. I kept telling myself that if I could just make it out the front door, I'd be okay. Thank God, I did, in fact, make it out the front door before James could grab me. Once I was outside, with heart palpitating and adrenaline flowing, I didn't look back and I didn't stop running. Once I did look back, it didn't take me long to realize that this ordeal was far from over because James was in hot pursuit of me. He had stride on his side because of his long legs, but fear and youth were in my

favor. I am thoroughly convinced that those two things were instrumental in keeping me alive or from suffering great bodily harm that day. The fear of what would happen to me if James had gotten his hands on me caused me to become as light as a feather on my feet. And the fact that I was significantly younger than him gave me the endurance that I needed to outrun him. I say it was those two things, fear, and youth, which saved me, but can I put the glory where it really belongs. It was nothing but the grace of God that preserved me that day. The chase seemed like it lasted forever, but in reality, it was only for a few moments.

Another glance back revealed that James was losing steam, I knew that it wouldn't be long before the chase would be over. And just when I felt as though my lungs would explode from all of that hard running that I had been doing, I looked back once again and saw James falling to the ground.

Fortunately for me, I was able to outrun James who had chased me until he literally collapsed from exhaustion, right in the middle of our street. It was only then, and only then that I was sure I was no longer in danger. I stopped running, and after catching my breath, I could relax, knowing that James was no longer a threat to me, at least for the time being. By that time, law enforcement and paramedics had been called to the scene. After the paramedics made sure that he was okay, James was placed in the ambulance and taken to the local hospital and admitted to the Mental Health Unit. I hobbled back to the house, still a little weak in the knees and went inside and conked out on the sofa. Thank God there would be peace in the household now... at least for 72 hours. That's how long James would stay in the Mental Health Unit in order to stabilize him. By the

way, did I mention that James was my oldest brother who had been suffering for quite some time from bipolar disorder?