

The Bumpy Thermos Collection

3 intriguing stories

Vol. I

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WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

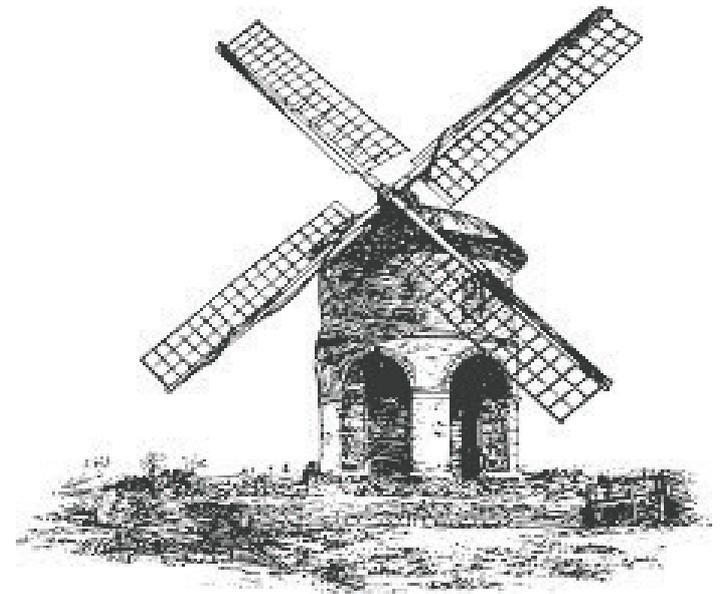
CHAPTER 1

When I was growing up our mom would tell us stories. Sometimes they would be about kids that would not listen to their parents and wind up in trouble. Some in a little trouble, but some would get in bad trouble. Some of the stories were funny and would make us laugh. Some would make us think, but mostly we just liked mom to tell us the stories. This went on a lot throughout my childhood. One of her famous stories that she would tell us about was a little boy who had been missing for a week and was found on top of a windmill. He had tied himself to the frame. She usually would just tell us that he was found and everything was ok and cut the story off short. We would always wonder why she just cut the story off. As we grew older the stories became more and more interesting because she would start including a lot more of the facts.

Like what the kids were doing to get in trouble, what they were wearing or maybe what the parents went through to get their children back. But one time as she was telling the story about the boy who was found on top of the windmill, she began to act a little funny. She seemed frightened. She began to quiver. Something was going on but we could not figure it out. All of a sudden she said, with big tears in her eyes, the boy was found and everybody was happy. My little brother just could not take it anymore. He says out loud this time what we had always thought about and had never asked, "Mom what happened to the little boy?" Dead silence. Mom just looked at my little brother. She seemed speechless. After a few moments she said, "Go ask your dad." Well, we had never been told that before. Why would we go ask dad? He never got involved in telling us those stories. What would he know that mom didn't? Now mom had our attention. Why tell us all those stories, but not tell us what had happened to that little boy? She would always tell us about how the parents were glad to find the children, or how happy the kids were to be found and how they always would live happily ever after. But, not this time.

Something was not right.
This just would not do,
now we had to find out
what had happened to
that little boy.

And why did he tie himself to the windmill, or did he?



CHAPTER 2

Mom had never told us to go ask dad before but that was exactly what we did. We went to ask dad. He was sitting in the living room watching the news. Back then, you did not disturb dad while he watched the news unless it was real important. That went even for the commercials. If it was a good enough reason, then it would be tolerated. But, you did not want to bother him with just anything, not our dad. He was very loving, but he just wanted to watch the news. Now that I am older, I can see how 5 kids could bother you all the time without some kind of rules. But, the news would be on another 20 minutes.

What would we do for 20 minutes? That 20 minutes was beginning to seem like an eternity. Tick tock, tick tock went the ever so slow clock on the wall. It doesn't take long for a kid to get interested in something else. But for some reason, all 5 of us just sat there watching the clock until finally the 20 minutes were up and off we went to ask dad the big question about this boy who was found on top of a windmill. My little brother was the first to get to him and he started right away asking him about the boy. At first dad just kept saying what are you talking about? What little boy? So, we began to tell dad about the little boy that was missing and how he had been found tied to the windmill. My dad's face just went blank. First thing he says is, who told you about that little boy? Mom, my little brother said. He continued, mom is always telling us stories. She said the little boy was tied to the windmill. Did he tie himself or was he tied by someone else? Dad stood up and said, I will be right back. He took off toward where mom was. She was in the kitchen cooking supper. We don't know what he said to her, but we heard a lot of crying and loud talking. It kind of sounded like mom was really crying and that dad was really mad. But we are not sure of exactly what happened. Mom and dad came back in the living room together. They both sat down on the couch. Dad slowly started doing the talking and started off with, your mom and I think you kids are old enough to know the truth about what happened to the little boy and the windmill.

What was so crazy is that we were so quiet and were paying so much attention to every word dad was saying. It was like we were in a trance and couldn't get out of it, like we were hypnotized or something. He started off by saying that when all this started the little boy was only about 5 years old. Quickly I said, but mom said the little boy was around 10. Sure he says, your mom is right. When they found him tied to the windmill he was 10. But the story started when he was only 3 or 4. The little boy was part of a small family that lived in that old house just up the street. You know the one, the one no-one lives in anymore. The big one with the front porch falling in. Well, back in those days there was a hurricane that came through and had torn a lot of our town up. We were all without electricity and it was off for a long time. That meant no water either. A lot of us would go down to that old windmill and get our water.

If you got it right from the well, it was good to drink. But there was this sound that was kind of creepy coming from the bottom of the windmill. It was so creepy that no-one would go get water by themselves.

No-one.

CHAPTER 3

We could tell dad was nervous. He seemed like the story he was telling was either very important or very personal. This was new for us to sit down with mom and dad to hear a story. But, we were not going to move until we knew what had happened to that little boy tied to the windmill. At least that's what we thought when we sat down. Dad started off with saying something like, this story started when Hurricane Donna came through. Mom quickly butted in and said, go back further. Go back to when they first moved here or at least way before the hurricane. Dad started over. Well he said, this story started when a young couple moved into that old house. You know, the one at the end of the road that is all grown up now. At that time they only had one small child. It was a little boy. A good looking little boy with blonde hair and brown eyes. The mother looked like she was going to have another one. Like she was ready right now to have it. Dad stopped with the story for a minute and told us to never say anything about someone being pregnant unless you are sure they are pregnant. We didn't get that then, but we did later. Then dad went on with the story. They appeared to be a very poor family and didn't get outside much. The family never really seemed to be very neighborly, almost to the point of being hermits.

Later, when the boy got old enough, he would walk right by here on his way to school. He didn't really avoid anyone, he just kind of walked alone and by himself. The lady up the street had told your mom that he was a little slow, but I never saw any signs of that. He would always speak to me if I spoke to him. He did seem a little hard to hear dad would say, like he was always listening to something else as he would walk by. Like maybe he was singing to himself or just hearing something that we couldn't hear. I didn't think much about it at the time. Looking back, I should have noticed that he did look like he was actually talking to someone. And that he did seem to hear them and to answer them. But at that time, I didn't really think of it that way. I just thought that he was kind of a loner and was just talking to himself. Anyway, soon the woman had her baby. It was a beautiful baby girl, with the biggest eyes that I had ever seen. She was so tiny. Of course, about the only time you would ever see any of them was at the "Piggly Wiggly" grocery store on Saturday morning. I tried to talk to them. They would talk a little, but would close right back up and walk away.

The mom would hold the little girl in her arms the whole time they were in the store. She did not let anyone get too close or hold the baby. We had no idea at the time, but soon it was kind of obvious that she did not want anyone to get a good look at her little girl.

What in world was she afraid we would see???



CHAPTER 4

As the days went by, I never really thought about that family very much. Oh, every once in while we would run into them walking down the street or at the Piggly Wiggly. But, it wasn't long and it was clear that the little girl was somehow different. I mean you could never get a real good look at her, because her mom kept her bundled up. Even when she was outside with her brother, he was always holding her, but still keeping her bundled up. Soon, the mom became pregnant again and they had another little baby girl. The baby was another beautiful little girl. But this one had hair as black as coal and her eyes were so dark. I think they were a greenish brown color. Still, she was a good looking little baby. With this little girl, the mom wasn't as private. She would let you have a good look and even hold this one. She didn't seem to have any real problem for anyone to look as much as they wanted. She was nothing like she was with the older sister. The older sister was still bundled up. Her older brother was still always holding her.

They were quite a team, always laughing and looking at each other. They were always together. Everywhere you saw one, you saw the other. I am not sure when the older sister began walking, because the brother was always carrying her. It looked like she was walking a little, but it was hard to tell how good. If she did walk, it was with assistance from her brother and she was still always bundled up. A few years went by and it was quite oblivious that the older sister was handicapped, not really being able to walk or speak very well. The only one that she would communicate with was her older brother. They were still always laughing and talking to each other. You know what I thought was funny? I never really understood a single word they would say. Oh, I'm sure it was English, it just had such a slang or slant or just plain maybe just strange. Whatever it was, they understood each other just fine, carrying on all kinds of conversations. With all the talking they did, it was always kind of low. You could barely hear them. The only time you could hear them was when the little girl would call for her brother. And, if he didn't hear her the first time she would get louder and louder until he would answer her. The strange part was, she didn't scream her brother's name, she would yell some strange creepy noise. Like eeeeeeeeeee, or yeeeeeeeeee. Not sure exactly, but that is close. She had no problems with her vocal chords, she would start that yelling and the whole neighborhood would come outside. Finally, the brother would come running out from behind the house or somewhere and answer her with something similar, just not as creepy. When he answered, she calmed down and everything seemed to be ok.

One day, her and her brother were playing down by the old windmill. I mean, no one else was around most of the time, so it was a good place to play. One day we began hearing this awful noise coming from the direction of the windmill. It sounded like some kind of a screeching noise. We all went running toward the windmill.

What in the world could that noise be coming from???

CHAPTER 5

The noise coming from the windmill was creepy. As I was running toward the windmill, the boy from the old house came running right past me. He made it to the windmill before any of us did. One look at what was going on and we knew why she was screaming. She had been left alone by her big brother and had tried to climb to the top of that old windmill. She did pretty good. She had made it about half way up the windmill and either decided to turn back or couldn't go any further. She was hanging upside down with one leg holding her on by a brace that went across about half way up. It was heart breaking to see. This poor crippled girl hanging by her crooked leg hooked on a brace about 10 ft. off the ground just screaming. The brother wasted no time in going right up that windmill and was trying to get her down. Some of us guys had already started up the windmill. We couldn't wait to see if he needed help. There was no doubt he would. Besides the poor girl was about to have a nervous breakdown. You could tell she was, she was screaming and moving all about, like some rag doll blowing in a bad wind storm screaming hysterically, some sound that was giving us all the creeps. I remember trying to unhook her dress from the metal bar.

She had got herself tangled somehow and that was also holding her. The dress was old and easily torn to get it unhooked. The older brother was trying to calm her down. He was holding her face with both hands and trying to get her to look into his eyes, but she wasn't having any of that. She was just screaming and moving what seemed like every part of her body. What a mess. You would think things would get better, but this went on for a long time, trying to get her down while she continued to scream at the top of her lungs. The screaming was just about to driveme crazy. Not just me, the other guys kept covering their ears and shaking their heads too.

It was so loud that we were having a heck of a time getting her loose from that windmill. Well I guess she had screamed so loud, that her mom must have heard her. Up the road the mother came with her baby in one arm and a

crazy looking bottle of something in the other. She was moving real fast and as she

got closer to the girl, I could see a strange look on her face.

Her eyes were wide open, I mean wide open and her

mouth was pulled back to show a lot of her teeth.

As she got closer, she yelled something at the girl.

Something very strange.



CHAPTER 6

As we finally untangled the little girl so she could at least sit upright on the cross bar, her mother called out a very strange sound. The first time she said it we thought she was just yelling at her daughter. But, as she continued to scream the same words we began to partially understand. She was yelling to her daughter to listen to the sound. She would say, Ester listen to the sound. Calm down Ester and listen to the sound. The daughter was not buying it. She just kept on screaming. By this time we had gotten her down on the ground and were trying to calm her. Nothing was working. No one could calm her down. The brother was trying to get her attention and all of us were just trying to cover our ears. I remember her mother walking right up to her, opening the bottle in her hands and sticking it up so the girl could smell what was in it. At first the girl just smelled the bottle, then as she smelled more and more of it, she began to calm down. Now we were beginning to understand the mom. She was telling the girl to listen, just listen. So, we all got quiet and tried to listen. I wasn't hearing anything. I looked over at the other guys and we just looked at each other. We could not hear anything. The mother continued to say, listen. After a few minutes the daughter looked like she was hearing something. She looked up and smiled at her mom. They both began to look like they were hearing something, but still we couldn't. Maybe we were listening to the wrong thing. We could not figure it out. Now the boy was joining in. They all looked as if they were hearing something. They were all three leaning over the windmill and listening like they were hearing something from the well. But what were they hearing? We couldn't hear anything. I did notice that the wind had picked up and that old windmill was just humming. That old thing was really going now, just spinning. A couple of us got closer and tried to listen, still nothing. Then we got right up close and tried to see if we could figure out what they were listening to. Nothing. The little girl was calm now.

So a bunch of the people were starting to go back home. I guess they figured the excitement was over and there was nothing more to see there. But, we knew different. We knew something wasn't right. What were these people hearing? Finally, the little family talked to themselves for a minute. The boy got up and picked up the little girl. The mother stood up and off they went. The little crippled girl in her brother's arms and the baby and strange bottle in the mother's arms. Off they went, as if nothing had happened. But that wasn't good enough for the rest of us. We had to know what in the world they heard. What kind of sound did they hear coming from that windmill? We all gathered around that old windmill one more time to see if we could hear what they were hearing. There was probably about five of us. All of us had an ear right next to the windmill. Suddenly, we started to hear a very faint noise, ever so light.

We couldn't make it out, but we could hear something.

What's that sound???

CHAPTER 7

The sound we heard from that old windmill was creepy, very strange. One of the guys said that he thought it was the arm of the windmill pumping out the water. Another one of the guys said he didn't hear anything. Still another one of the guys said that he thought the sound was the water coming up through the pipes. But I didn't think anything like that. To me the sound did not sound like anything that could be made by water or metal. I thought the sound was different somehow. Creepy is the only thing I could think.

Just plain old creepy. As we were standing there, all of a sudden the sound stopped. The wind was still blowing. The windmill was still spinning just as fast. The water was still coming out of the pipes just like before. Nothing had changed, why did the sound stop? How could the sound stop if everything was the same? Creepy huh? After that, everything went back to as it was. People went about their business. The difference was, everybody was still talking about that strange family and the old windmill. Now people started watching the windmill, probably just to see if anything was going on down there. It was obvious now that the boy and his little sister were spending a lot of time down at the windmill. Somehow no one had noticed that before. No one had even said anything about that before. Or at least, I hadn't heard anything. But now everybody was paying attention, everybody. People would walk down the street while staring at the windmill as they walked.

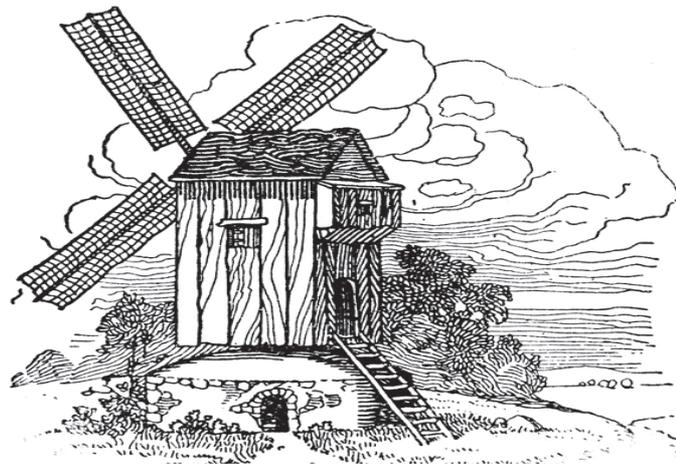
Heck, one little boy walked right into the lamp post looking over at the windmill. It had become the biggest news in our town. You couldn't go to the store without hearing someone talking about that old windmill and the creepy noise that came out of it. It seemed like every day that little girl and her older brother were at the windmill, just sitting and talking, laughing and always having a good time. If they stayed there long enough, the mother would come outside and yell for them to come home.

But soon they would be right back
out there until way after dark.

Crazy, huh?

They just seemed to love that old windmill.

This went on and on, day after day, until one day.



CHAPTER 8

Our little town has always been a nice little town. A lot of nice people here. We all seemed to get along and everybody seemed happy. But, you know there is always someone who has to get into everybody else's business. You know the kind, always nice to your face until your back is turned. Our little town was no different. We had this guy who always went to all the meetings and was always everywhere. Everywhere he went he always stuck his thumb up. You know like "thumbs up". He worked for the local Fire Department and was some big Chief or something, or at least he had been. He was an old guy, probably in his late 70's, but he had a very bad habit of listening to other people and not checking things out for himself. I liked the guy but a lot of people didn't. Anyway, somehow he decided that the little crippled girl needed some help that the parents didn't give her. I am not sure, but something like therapy or something like that. He must have felt really strong about it because he called some state agency and one day they showed up at the family's house. Two people showed up. Both were dressed very well and one had a clipboard. The mom let them in and they were in there for what seemed to be hours. Not that I was timing them or anything. I think I had been busy watching the TV or something and didn't really notice the time. But, the older boy and his crippled sister were playing at the windmill as always. The mom and the other little girl were in the house and the dad was at work when all this happened. After a long while, the two strangers, the mother and the little girl came out and started walking toward the windmill. She would point occasionally and say something to the strangers at which time they looked like they were writing it down.

Mom broke in and said she still remembered that day. No one seemed in a hurry, no one seemed to be upset. They just all walked over to the windmill and began talking to the boy and his sister. I did notice that neither the boy or his sister would even look up at the strangers. I don't think they ever did. After a while the strangers and the mom and baby walked back toward the house. The strangers were walking a little ahead and would turn back to the mom, but the mom was kind of dragging behind them. She sure wasn't happy about something, that was easy to see. Then the strangers got in their car and the mom and baby went back in the house. Everything seemed ok at first. But, after a little while, things started to happen. Things that just were not right. Just small things, but still they had never happened before. Like holes dug all around the windmill and rocks piled up as high as your head. Then the next day there would be different holes and the old ones filled in.

You would get up to go to work in the morning and see something else not right.

We were all asking each other, What in the world is going on?

CHAPTER 9

It was funny that the crazy things would only happen at the windmill. The rocks always appeared to be different. One time high, one time low. Well this went on for about a month. Not enough stuff to make you stay up late and watch for, just enough to make you curious. Then one day a wheel-chair van pulls up to the family's front door. The mother must have known it was coming because she had the little handicapped girl all dressed up. Now I didn't mean that the little girl liked what was going on. You can be sure that she didn't. She was not happy. Matter of fact, I'm sure the whole neighborhood knew that she was not happy. Oh yea, there was a lot of screaming going on. The older brother wasn't helping very much either. He was very upset as well. It was a very traumatic scene. Everyone was upset and crying. The mother, father, brother and even the little sister were crying. Mom breaks in again and says that it was a terrible day, then she begins to really cry. We were all shocked a little. Mom was upset and we did not like that. Dad stopped the story for a few minutes and comforted mom as much as he could. We could see she was having a hard time with this story, then dad went on. The dad went over to the handicapped girl and handed her a box. As she was wheeled away, she was holding onto that box with both hands just crying while screaming off and on. We felt so sorry for them.

It just looked so bad. It was like they were never going to see their little handicapped girl again. We assumed that they were taking her off for the day and were going to bring her back sometime later. Well, as far as we know they didn't bring her back that day, nor the next day. Day after day went by and still no sign. What had happened to her? No one had the guts to go ask, they just all assumed that the little girl was coming back. The older brother was the one that everyone saw the most, but all he would do is sit by the windmill day after day, from the time he got home from school to sometime after dark, he just sat there. This went on and on for weeks. Nothing was changing. But I noticed a change in the boy. He was acting different. He was beginning to wave his hands and scream more and more as he would walk to school. One day I was sitting on the front porch and one of the neighbor kids walked over to me. He looked like he had been in the direction of the windmill. He said that the boy was down at the windmill actually hitting the windmill with a big piece of wood and that the boy looked like he was screaming, but he could not understand anything that was being said and that it was almost like a different language. That he was so scared that he walked way around the boy.

All this stuff going on had made me just a little too curious to let it go again this time. So, I walked down toward the windmill. I could see the boy sitting there and talking. I couldn't see who he was talking to. As I got closer it looked like he was in a very heated argument. Like whoever he was talking to was talking back. I swear I could hear another voice, but the strange thing was, there was no one there.

At least no one I could see.



CHAPTER 10

As I walked down to the windmill, I remembered what my mom had told me once. She had told us all that the windmill was haunted and not to go down there by ourselves. Somehow that did not slow me down. It was just starting to get a little dark as I got close enough to get a good look at the boy. It looked like he had been hitting the windmill with a big stick. I saw the big stick still in his hand. But now he was just talking to the windmill. Was I now even more curious than before? Oh yea I was. The closer I got to the windmill the more scared I got. The rocks that had been moved there helped with my cover, but I just could not get close enough to actually make out exactly what was going on. I could hear him talking, but what was the other sound?

I could see him talking. I could even see his eyes and his hands moving. I just couldn't get close enough to make out what he was saying. I just sat there hiding from the boy, waiting, I don't know for what but, boy was I scared. All of a sudden something touched me on my back and I just about messed up my pants. The boy who had come by and told me about this had not gone home, but had followed me and was standing right behind me. OMG, he had scared me so bad. I think that I must of made a noise. The boy must have heard us and threw the big stick down and started waking back toward his house. That was a close one. If that neighborhood boy hadn't startled me, I might have found out what was going on. Darn him. The next day was the same for us, but I did not see the boy. He must have stayed home. He didn't walk by that day. That afternoon, the same two men that had come before the little girl was taken, arrived. I don't think that the mom knew they were coming this time. She did not act prepared. The two men walked up to the door and together they all walked back inside. No sound for a minute, then all kind of screaming was going on. The women was screaming at the top of her lungs and the little girl as well. Mom broke in then crying and said that that day was the worse day ever. The family was destroyed that day she said. The little crippled girl had passed away. At that point, mom broke down into a crying fit. She was crying so hard, dad had to stop the story and take her into the kitchen. When they came back, mom seemed to be better and dad went on with the story.

Dad said that they were not sure what had happened, but the news was terrible. Oh no, what is going to happen when the boy finds out? What is he going to do? How will he be able to handle such a horrible thing? The boy was where he always was just screaming on his own, pounding on the windmill with that same old stick. The two men left and soon the mom and the little girl came out of the house. The little girl was able to walk now and off they went to where the boy was. I did not know what to do. It was terrible, just terrible. The mom and the lttle girl got to the windmill and tried to talk to the boy, but he wasn't having it. He just kept on hitting the windmill and screaming. The mom and little girl finally went back in the house, but the boy just kept on hitting and screaming. He continued to do the same hitting and screaming way into the night.

I am not sure when he finally stopped, I had fallen asleep. But the next morning.

CHAPTER 11

The next morning started off as always. A typical cool morning, sun shining and the birds singing. I did notice though, a kind of humming. Some kind of noise that I could not explain. It sounded like it was coming from the windmill. But, I could not be sure. The wind was blowing pretty good. The blades were spinning pretty fast. But that had happened plenty of times before. I did notice that the blades were swaying a little, like they were about to come off. But, what was that sound? No, I did not have the guts to go down to the windmill, not by myself anyway. I just turned and went the other way. That's when I noticed that there was a police car at the old house where the strange family lived. No one was outside, but I could tell the father didn't go to work that day, his beat up old truck was in the yard by the old tree. After what had happened, I started asking around about the boy. Had anybody seen him? They all said no.

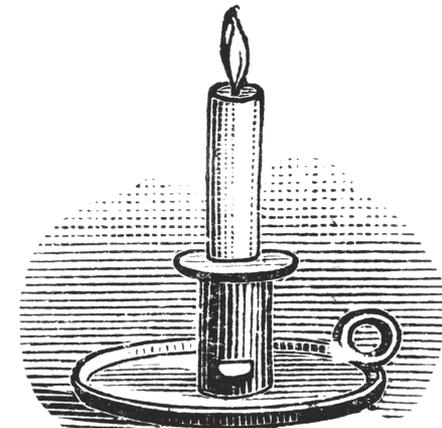
Sometime around noon it started circulating that the boy was missing. No one had much information other than he was missing. The police came by and asked us if we would help look for the boy. Of course we said yes. By then a large group of people had started to gather in the middle of the street. There were a lot of people coming out to help. Everyone had flyers and everyone was walking up and down the streets looking for him. The policeman took a group of officers and went down to the windmill. They were all over that thing looking around. I walked toward the group of officers and tried to get close but I could not hear any sound. The noise I had heard this morning was gone now. The windmill was still just going, but no noise now. None. I thought that was strange, but who was I. After a little while, the officers moved on and started looking for the boy in other places. A lot of people were saying that the little boy probably ran off and was hiding in the woods and that he was very upset over losing his little sister and that he would come back in a little while. All that day, they all looked and looked. All through the night, you could see them out there with flash lights. Walking all through those woods yelling and hollering. Not too many people got any sleep that night. But still the next morning he still was missing. They were sure he would come home when it got dark. But nope. No little boy. Where could he have gone where he could not hear them calling for him? Maybe he couldn't hear them or maybe he was ignoring them.

Either way, he was still missing. Still gone. The first day and night was gone, now we were in the second day. But no boy. No sign of the kid. Would they ever find him? Or even,

Would he ever come home? Could he come home? Was he able to come home?

Why could have happened to him?

Where could that little boy be?



CHAPTER 12

The second morning came and still no boy. OK, this was getting serious now. Where is this kid? The whole town was out looking for him. His family was going nuts. The mother and father along with the baby girl were ready to pull their hair out. They just did not know what to do. Another whole day went by and nothing. No sign, no idea where to look. They were not going to give up though, they kept right on searching, right on looking for the boy. The third day came and still nothing, but something was about to change, something felt different. I am still not sure, but something was in the air. As I went out the door on the fourth day, I noticed a strange old pickup truck in the family's driveway. I had never seen this truck before. It was even older than the family's truck. It was real dirty and had dents and things bent all over it. It looked like it had been through the woods. I mean it was beat up and then some. The back of the truck had some kind of a big silver pot and two black hoses running out of both sides. The hoses run out away from the bed and had some kind of end piece. Maybe some kind of a nozzle? Or maybe it was a speaker. Whatever it was, it was crazy looking.

But, who was this? Was this some of their family? If so, from where? And what was that thing in the back of their truck? It was very strange. Our little neighborhood was getting very strange. A lot of people looked at that old truck. People were talking about what it could be and what it could be used for. As far as I know, no one went over there and asked them what it was. All day, no one moved from the house. Not a single noise or movement could be seen or heard. What is going on over there? Everyone was asking themselves and others. Again, night came and no boy. All the talk about that old truck in the yard was beginning to lose its newness. People finally stopped talking about the crazy thing in the back of it and began to talk about giving up on this boy but they didn't. They went into the fourth night with flashlights and posters like they had done before. The night was black. There was no moon and it was a little harder to search without any moon but they were all still out there. I remember looking out the window wondering if that boy was ever going to come back or if he would ever be found. As I was looking out my window, I started to see movement at the old house. What were they doing? They were all out around the back of the truck. I couldn't really tell who all was there. It looked like there was only one old guy there with the family. But what were they up to? The old man that brought the truck went to the side of the big tank and started cranking some big handle. I didn't see the big handle before, maybe he got it out of the bed of the truck and stuck it on the tank. I was not sure. The dad was moving the hoses around and stuck one on the post pointing one way and then got the other hose and stuck it in the tree pointing the other way. What the heck was going on? What the heck are they doing? I don't think anybody else saw them but I couldn't take my eyes off of them. After the old man had been cranking for a minute, the dad went over beside him and they began to move a very large piece of metal to the other side of the tank.

What was going on?

What were they getting ready to do???

CHAPTER 13

The night was pitch black. No sound either. Even the hum of the windmill couldn't be heard. Birds, crickets, nothing. No sound that I could make out. It was so silent that it gave you a creepy feeling. The search party had been out searching for the boy for over an hour or so when I saw the movement over at the house. The old truck with the crazy looking machine in it had now opened up into something twice the size it was in the beginning. The dad and the guy who brought the truck were now cranking something that was on the side of the big pot like part of the machine. It wasn't making any noise, it just looked like it should be. I started noticing a light beginning to shine on the top. Kind of like a light house light. Very dim at first, but then it started getting brighter and brighter as they were cranking the machine. Soon the light was so bright that everything around it was lit up. I don't think I have ever seen anything as bright as the light was. Still no sound from the machine. Faster and faster the two continued to crank. The more they cranked, the brighter the light. By now you could not look right at the light, it would blind you if you did. The light had been rotating as it got brighter. Now it was beginning to blink and move up and down as it went around. Weird I tell you. Weird. Up until now, the machine had not made any noise. The light was just blinking, moving up and down and getting brighter and brighter as it turned. Then all of a sudden, I started hearing a faint noise. I could not make it out, but it was a very high pitched noise. You know something almost like a small child screaming. Very soft at first, then louder and louder, then really loud.

Almost to the point of hurting your ears. Some of the search party started coming back. I guess they were able to hear the noise all over the county. More and more of the search party came back and just stood around the machine. Some of them holding their ears because of how loud it was. Even people that were not searching started coming out to see what was going on.

None of that stopped the machine. None of that even slowed it down.

The two men were really starting to spin that machine now. It was going very fast.

Between the blinking light and the loud noise, you couldn't hear yourself think.

People were not even able to talk to each other. People were just looking at each other with their hands over their ears. It didn't take long and everyone had gone somewhere else. I don't know if they went home, but they went somewhere other than here. It was just too loud and too bright to stand anywhere near this machine. Then as quick as it started, it began to slow down.

The noise went first, then the light going up and down and finally the light dimmed and it was over.

Or so we thought.



CHAPTER 14

Just like the noise and light began, it stopped. Same order as it had begun. When my eyes got where I could see the house again, I noticed the two men went back in the house. The machine was left as it was, all spread out and just sitting there. What a machine it was. Even for its size, it sure gave out a strong light and such a loud sound. I keep trying to remember what the sound sounded like. Kind of a scream, but with a vibration to it. That's the best I can do. All I know is that I had never heard anything like it before or since. Well, except about an hour later, the machine was started back up again. Same everything. Crank, light, change light and then noise. Same sequence, same everything. That went on all night. About every hour, almost to the minutes that machine would go off again, all night. I don't know when it actually stopped, but I do know that when I got up the next morning it was gone. The old truck, the machine and I guess the old man that drove it, all gone. No sign of any of it. I got up, had breakfast, opened the door to head out of the house when I first started hearing that sound. It was a strange sound. Kind of like a humming with a light high pitch sound. One of my friends was walking by and said to me "what's that sound?". We stopped and tried to listen. There were no birds singing & not much wind. What could it be? It wasn't long before other people in the neighborhood started gathering up in the street. All of them looking around and trying to figure out what the sound was. An old man and his wife started walking toward the windmill. Soon they were shouting at the top of their lungs. Come over here, we found something. Come over here. As we got closer, the noise that we had heard was coming from that old windmill. The blades were spinning so fast, they looked like they were going to spin off. Then I saw what looked like someone on top of the windmill. If it was a person, it wasn't moving, not a bit. It looked like they were asleep or something worse. My buddy and I were the first ones to get to the windmill and we started climbing to the top. At first we couldn't tell who it was. But then after we got up there we found out it was the boy that had been missing for so long. He was alive, or at least we thought he was. But he was as white as a ghost. And it looked like he had been tied to the windmill. The weird thing was, he was tied with old cloth. The kind you would find on an old dress or shirt, torn pieces not cut pieces. His hands were tied at the wrist and pulled back around like he was hugging the windmill. We began to untie him best we could. The old torn cloth just about had to be torn off of his wrists. It was so old it would tear. It just took a little work. As we began to get his wrists loose, another weird thing began to happen.

The windmill blades started to slow down and the noise was beginning to fade away. Maybe the wind slowed down, I'm not sure, but I remember thinking something is not right here. The boy was unconscious but alive. His mother and sister came running out of the house crying and screaming. They came over and began hugging and kissing the boy. The ambulance arrived and the boy was taken to the hospital. The mother and sister rode with the ambulance. We all just stood there looking at each other wondering what had happened. Why was the boy tied to the windmill and why now? Did the machine in the back of that old man's truck have anything to do with his return? Mom spoke up and said "I know why he came back". Us kids turned to mom.

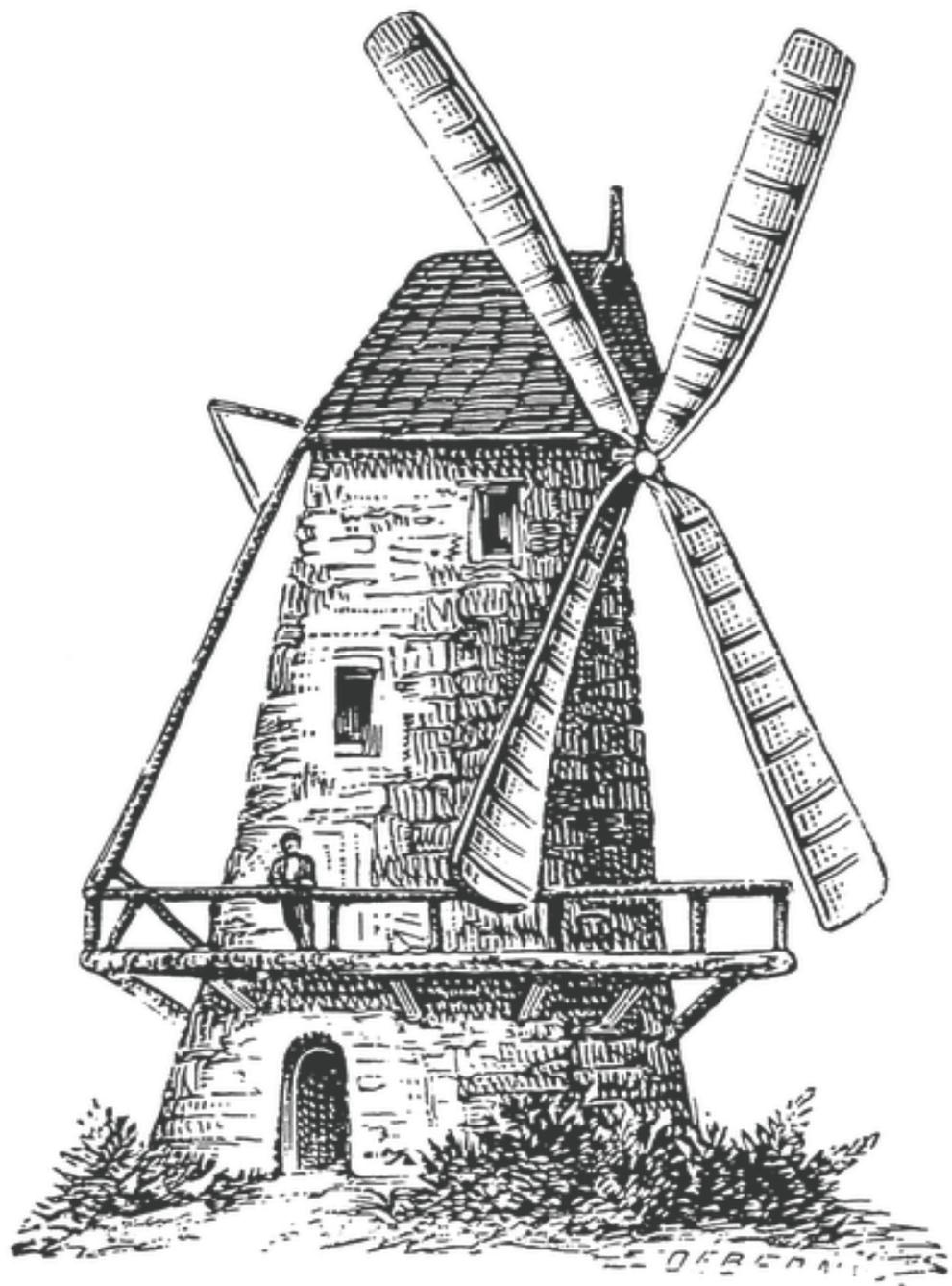
What did you say mom???

CHAPTER 15

Just about the whole story had been told by Dad. So how did mom know why the boy came back? Dad just leaned back and let mom talk. We couldn't wait for an answer. I just yelled out, mom how would you know why the boy came back? Mom just smiled and said, because I'm his little sister. He is my brother and that was my mom and dad. What? There we were just looking at each other when my little sister says, "mom, that was your sister too that died?" With big tears in her eyes she said yes it was baby. We all loved her so much, so very much. She was born with a real bad disease. She never could really walk. If she went anywhere, our brother would have to carry her or at least help her. They were so close. As years went by they became so close that no one could really talk to her except for our brother. She became more and more dependent on him. He was the only one that could get her to eat. Most of the time when he was at school, she would just sit in her room and not talk at all. My mom said that she was depressed. Day after day, she just got worse. When the government came in to help her she could not understand why she had to go and leave us and especially our brother. Mom had used a music box to calm her down. Ever since she was a baby that music box would calm her down. She loved that little music box. When they came to tell us that she had passed away, they brought us her things which included that old music box. My brother was the worst. He went almost crazy with grief. He would sleep with that music box. Everywhere he went he took that music box. Every day he would go down to the windmill and play that music box. One day he came home from the windmill all upset. He had somehow got the music box caught in the windmill and the box had broken apart with the music part wedged between the windmill pipe and the windmill. What he would do was, put the metal part of the music box up against the pipe and listen to it squeal.

But this was the first time it got stuck. My dad went with him to try to get it out. But the more they worked at it, the lower in the well it went. The noise would get real bad as the blades of the windmill would get faster and if the windmill got too fast the echo of the music and screeching of the metal against metal would make a terrible noise. I mean a real terrible noise. My brother would go down and listen to the sound over and over, it was like he was the closest to our sister at the windmill. Our dad went down and recorded the sound that the windmill would make. Then at night the sound would help my brother sleep. Sometimes the only way he could go to sleep was to listen to the sound that the windmill would make. I told you that I knew why my brother came back. Well, that's how. After searching for days for my brother without any success, my dad had an idea. He thought that if he could get my uncle to bring over his big music player, we might could get that sound out loud enough so my brother could hear it. My dad guessed right. My brother must have heard the sound and came home. So that's why he came home. A few weeks later we moved, right before Hurricane Donna came through and destroyed the old house. We came back from time to time and that's how I met your dad. We met at the windmill, started talking and later got married and here we are. Ok mom, but what about your brother being tied to the windmill? He couldn't have tied himself to that old windmill could he? Well, mom says, as far as the material that was used to tie him that's an easy one. When our sister died, mom and dad bought her a brand new dress to be buried in. The old dress she wore was put back in the closet. When we found my brother, the material that was used to tie him up with was sure enough her dress. But, as far as who tied him up, we have no idea.

The End.



Junior



CHAPTER 1

I was born a long time ago. Some people say it was a really long time ago, but I'm ok with that, it was. Things were different back then. People would always wave at you when you were walking down the street, even people that didn't know you. If someone walked by you, it was not strange to say hi or hello or maybe even how are you doing? People were just more friendly back then. Or at least that's the way I remember it. In those days your parents would tell you to go outside and play and you did. Not get on a computer and play, but go outside and play some kind of something. Maybe Cowboys and Indians or any kind of ball; baseball, football or even basketball. There were five of us. Myself and two brothers and two sisters. And of course we had all kind of neighbors. So somebody would have a ball of some kind for us to play with. If that didn't make you happy, you could always go out into the woods. We loved those woods. We would always go out as far as we could get away with and play as much as we could. Yes, we lived way out in the country in a really small town called Nocatee. I am not kidding, that is the name of the town. I think it was an Indian name. It had one grocery store named Proctor's and no gas stations, or at least not at first. We only lived about a mile from that store so we could walk down there if we needed anything. We lived on about two acres out in the woods. Not right on the road but pretty close.

We weren't very far from the river. But one thing for sure though, there were some big woods between us and that river. Large oaks with all kinds of other crazy looking trees and vines hanging down. The trees were enormous and were everywhere. Oh yea, we had some forts inside those woods. Some under limbs and some in the low hanging branches of some of the bigger trees. Our parents would let us go a little ways into the woods, but not too far. Well at least we weren't supposed to go very far into those woods. But you know kids. Sometimes we would go all the way to the river. Of course we would always be back before dark. We did not want to be in those woods at night. Not that we were scared or anything, it was just real dark after the sun went down. Real dark. We all lived in a really small house with three bedrooms. All five kids, mom and dad and one crazy cousin. His name was Junior and he was some kin on moms side. Not sure how or why he lived with us, but he did. To me he just looked funny. He wasn't a very big man, but he had the funniest haircut. I think he must have cut his own hair, because his hair was never combed, but always cut. Not too short but cut. It just looked funny on his head. The hair would turn in every direction and would be all over the place, like he had just got up and had tossed and turned all night in his sleep. He was not a mean man. He mostly only yelled at us when we went the wrong way.

So of course we would get even with him when the chance came up.



CHAPTER 2

Mom and dad worked all the time, so they would expect Junior to watch out for us. They thought that having him with us was better than nobody. In a way, I guess they were right. But Junior?? I never thought he had all of his marbles. Never. He had one leg that was longer than the other so he walked with a real bad limp. One time I saw him drinking water from a hub cap. It was rain water or at least I think it was. Another strange thing that he would do is to eat different kinds of berries out of the woods. He would always try to get us to eat them, but there was no way we would even try any. Most of the time Junior would drag around. I mean if we walked anywhere he would always drag behind. Wherever we went, we would be walking and he would be about 25 to 30 feet behind us. One day I asked him why he followed so far back. He said that way he could protect us if something happened.

That kind of made sense so we just got used to it. But when Junior was in the woods, he would come alive. Running back and forth saying look at this or look at that. It was kind of funny. Slow walking Junior running and jumping and getting so excited over a berry or a nut on a tree. Crazy funny. But we would all just laugh and enjoy it. He was kind of funny when he was like that. He was always climbing up trees and trying to get a vine so he could swing to the another tree. That hardly ever worked, but he was always trying. When he was like that, he was great to be around. Out of the woods, he was miserable. And he would make sure we were too. One day as he was trying to swing from one tree to another, the vine broke and poor old Junior came tumbling down. We all just held our breathe to see if he was alright or not. Well he was, he laid there for a while and then he jumped up and said bet I scared you didn't I. Yes he did. We did like our cousin, most of the time, but definitely not all the time. At home or just about anywhere else except the woods, he was a pain. Playing jokes on us. Making us go a certain way to school. One time he even made us walk a mile out of the way, saying that there was an accident and we needed to go around. Then he later told us that he was just playing. I guess all in all, Junior was an alright cousin. But he did have a couple of bad problems that I don't think mom or dad knew about. One was drinking and the other was smoking. He loved both of those. Never around mom or dad, but out in the woods, he would smoke. Sometimes a lot and then sometimes just a little. I wonder where he would get the money to buy that stuff? He didn't work anywhere. He was with us or at home, I don't know where he got those cigarettes or rum, but he sure got them somewhere. His drinking wasn't as bad. That didn't happen much, usually on a weekend or late Friday night. We never told anybody back then, we didn't want him to get in any trouble. Actually, he was even funnier when he was drinking, falling all over the place. I still think that was why he fell out of that tree was because he had been drinking. He denied it of course, but I still wonder. Our mom had a sister over in Sarasota. One Friday afternoon, her and dad decided to go over and see Aunt Betty and Uncle Al. They told Junior to watch us and they would be back later. Junior was not happy this time. Mom could tell he wasn't happy, but she just looked over it and they left anyway. Well Junior didn't say anything, but boy was he upset. Friday night was his night to have some rum.

That night was the night I found out where he was getting the money to get that rum. But now I wish I hadn't.



CHAPTER 3

Junior was not mad at us or not even at mom and dad. He was just mad at the situation. I am sure that mom and dad had no idea how important Friday nights were to him. He probably didn't want them to know. Then they might have wanted a reason. Mom and dad left about 5 o'clock that Friday night. When they left Junior went straight to his bedroom. He stayed in there until about 7 or so and then we ate dinner. We had those pans of meat that you put in the oven. You know, the kind that has about 7 or 8 pieces of meat in them (usually Salisbury Steak). You put them in the oven for 45 minutes or so with the paper lid still on them. All you have to do is make some instant mashed potatoes and open a couple of cans of green peas and bam, there is supper, quick and easy. With just us being there, that meant 1 piece of meat for each of us and Junior could have 2 if he was hungry enough. Usually when we were alone, my brothers and I would split up any meat that was left.

After dinner, we all sat down and started watching TV. Our favorite show was on, *The Wild Wild West*. It was a good show. Junior really liked it too. He would always pretend he was James West and my brother would pretend to be Artimus Gordan. The show only lasted an hour. After that we just kind of talked and watched whatever was on the TV. Around 11 that night, things were settling down and all my brothers and sisters were asleep. I was in bed, but not asleep when I heard Junior open the front door and sneak out. I couldn't sleep anyway so I went out the front door after him. He turned at the pump house and went straight into the woods. He didn't go in where we always did, he went in at a completely different place. I tried to follow him but he was too fast. He knew where he was going, but I didn't. It was hard getting through the woods where he went in. After a few feet it did open up a little, like maybe he had been this way quite a few times. Good thing there was kind of a path there because he was way out of sight by now. I couldn't even hear him. I continued to try and follow the path. There was a moon, it was sure glowing. The problem was the trees were so big they blocked a lot of the light out. But, I was determined to see just what made Junior so upset. And besides maybe this was where he was getting those cigarettes and rum. The path went on and on. I was beginning to get a little scared. I was sure that I would be alright as soon as I caught up with Junior. But was I going to catch up with him? That's the question. He was way out of sight by now and with no noise, I was ready to turn around. Then I began to see a big light up ahead. It was a bright light and it was making a lot of noise. I thought we were way out in the woods. How could any vehicle be this far out in the woods? It was making a loud whirling noise, and the light was bright. I sneaked up behind some bushes and pulled them apart. I could see Junior talking to some people right beside a big table. Junior had a big bag of something in his hand. It looked like maybe they had given him the bag. I mean I didn't see him with any bag when he went into the woods, so somebody had to have given it to him. They were talking pretty loud. It must have been because the noise was so loud. It looked like they shook hands and Junior started walking back toward me. I was about to panic. I pushed my way a little ways out of the path and squatted down so Junior couldn't see me.

When he came by, he was moving pretty fast so he didn't even look my way. I stayed there for a few more minutes and kept watching the people and the crazy looking machine they were standing beside. I had never seen anything like that before. This machine just opened up and the people walked right up in it. No sooner than the door shut, off they went. I was scared to death. I had never seen anything like that before. It looked like they came right for me and then they were right on top of me. I laid down and tried to keep out of their sight.

I looked down and then I looked up and they were gone. I mean gone. I just laid there for a long time, too scared to move.

Then while my eyes were still closed something grabbed me.



CHAPTER 4

Seeing that bright light and all that noise was scary. Especially when it came right for me and then was gone in an instant. How could all that noise be gone so fast? I just laid there with my eyes closed. I was too afraid to move. Too afraid to even open my eyes. Then Junior grabbed me. I just about messed myself. Boy did he scare me. I mean I was scared already and to grab me was not good. Then he says to me, be very quiet. Don't move. We stayed there for another few minutes. Then he started to move toward the pump house. He motioned for me to follow him and as he did he put his finger up to his mouth to say quiet. We worked our way back through the woods and got back to the old pump house. At the pump house we set down under a lean over that was on the side that the woods were on. Junior still had his bag. He didn't offer to show me anything, he just began to tell me how important it was for me to keep my mouth shut about this whole thing. He said that if the right people found out about me knowing that we could all be killed. What, we could all be killed? I said to him. Are you kidding me? Why would someone want kill us all? He said for me to go to bed now before mom and dad got home and we would talk in the morning. I said ok and got up and went into the house. I noticed that he did not follow me. He just continued to set there. But I did get back inside and into bed before mom and dad came home.

But not much before. When dad opened the door, I had to pretend to be asleep. But I knew that there was not going to be any sleep for me that night. Not after Junior told me that we might all get killed if they found out about this. I was right, I didn't get much sleep that night. Maybe a doze off or so. Maybe.. The next morning I could not wait to hear what was going on. Junior was just like he always was, walking around the house acting like nothing was going on. I just kept thinking, when are you going to tell me what's going on? I needed to know. I was traumatized. I was scared to death and I needed to know. All I could think about was that people might kill us??? As he would walk by me, I would say, when Junior when? He would just say later. Boy was this driving me crazy. Crazy I tell you. Junior had to stop and tell me something. He just had too. So after mom and dad went to the grocery store I confronted him. I caught him in the kitchen and said, "ok buddy boy, you have to straighten this out. Tell me now." He hesitated for a minute and then said ok. Come with me. We can't let anyone else hear what I have to tell you. So we will have to get away from your brothers. See my mom and dad had taken my two sisters with them to the grocery store. So all that was left at home was my two brothers, Junior and me. Junior asked my two brothers if they wanted to play a game on his Nintendo. After we got over the shock, they said yes. We were all shocked because Junior never and I mean never let any of us play on his Nintendo. With my brothers tied up with games, Junior and I went out by the pump house again. This time Junior was very serious. He started off with some real scary stuff. He told me that these people were not nice and that they would do anything to keep this a secret. That they worked for some even more scary people and he wasn't sure how big any of them were. Just that he was sure that they would not hesitate to kill us all to keep this a secret.

Keep what a secret? And who are these people, Junior?



CHAPTER 5

As we sit there, you could tell Junior was getting scared. He continued to look around like someone might see us talking. I mean we talked all the time. Why would this time be any different? Why would people be watching us now? So I asked him that question. Junior, why do you think they would be watching us now? He said he knew that they were watching us now. I said how Junior? Then he said, because they have been watching us for years. What? Are you sure? He said, oh yea I am sure. Then he told me about one time after he had the bag, that he went the wrong way home. He said the night was real dark and he just plain got lost. Junior told me, I went the wrong way. I came out at the river. Just as soon as I got into the clearing at the river, I heard a loud noise. I looked up and there was that machine. It had its bright light on me. When the light lit up the area, I knew where I was.

So I turned around and went home as I should have done. That was just one time. There have plenty more. One time I didn't go straight to where I was to put the bag. Your mom had asked me to pick up some salt. The grocery store was on the way. As I got to the counter with the salt, this very large man with a hoody gave me a dirty look and followed me out the door. I was so scared. I told you all that so you would know that we are being watched. We must be very careful or we may wind up dead. Dead? I asked. What is so important that people would want to kill us? What in the world is in that bag? He then says to me, "if you tell anybody what I am going to tell you, we are both dead". I just sat there looking down and thinking that maybe he should not tell me anything. But you know that I was way to into this to just let this go. Besides, they already saw me in the woods. I figured that I might as well go ahead. If he was going to die, they surely would kill me. So I looked up at him and said, go ahead, tell me. At first I thought he was in some kind of a trance. Nothing was making any sense. Something about a new kind of drug or something from somewhere else. He was talking way to fast. I couldn't understand a single thing he was telling me.

I finally stopped him and told him that I was not understanding anything he was talking about. Please start over. Then I asked him. What kind of drug was in the bag? He tried to slow down and tell me, but he was just too scared to say it. Tell me, I said. What kind of drug is it? It's a new drug he says.

Something brand new, not from here. What do you mean, not from here???



CHAPTER 6

I had known Junior all my life. He was a strange boy, but something wasn't right about the way he was talking. Was he just talking too fast or did Junior have a problem telling me about the bag? Either way, I was having trouble understanding what he was saying. Over and over he went through how they had found him wandering in the woods and had just about scared him to death that night. That these people chased him down and had almost broke his leg pulling him out of one of the forts we had made in the trees. Junior told me that this had happened a long time ago, a very long time ago, back when I was a lot younger and that was the reason that he walked funny. I told him that I didn't remember anything about him having an accident. He said that he told everybody that he had fallen out of a big tree and had hurt his leg. He said he was told not to tell anyone about these people or people would die. The people meaning him and our family. So obviously, he never had told anyone about this. His strange story was now starting to make a little sense. At least now I knew why he walked with a limp. But that wasn't enough about what was going on. What was in the bag and where did it come from? Come on Junior, tell me. He paused for a long time and then he told me that he couldn't tell me. That maybe next Friday I could follow him into the woods and see for myself. That sounded like a great idea to me.

What the heck, they already saw me once. What could happen anyway? I was just a boy. Who would want to hurt a little boy? We both went back in the house after that but nothing was the same. I was doing ok, I figured I would find out everything come Friday night. I was sure that all my questions would be answered then. So while I was walking around the house smiling, Junior was walking around like he had lost his best friend. Even mom asked him what was wrong. You could tell Junior was in pain. I had never seen him like this before. His hands were shaking so bad he couldn't even hold a cup of coffee. It seemed like about Thursday that he was walking around like death warmed over. Not talking, not eating and for sure not smiling. Mom and dad were beginning to really worry about him.

They even asked if they could take him to the doctor. Of course he said no. He told them he was ok, that he just had a little stomach ache.

As for me, it was getting closer to Friday night.

The night all my questions would be answered. After a full week of torture, finally Friday came.



CHAPTER 7

Finally Friday came. Not soon enough for me, but too soon for Junior. All day long he walked around like he was going to die. All day long he refused to say anything to me. Not one word, not one single word. He just walked around talking to himself. Yes, I tried to hear what he was saying but all I got was mumbling. No good words to make out. Only a few words like trouble, fear and fight. But the words that I heard the most were die and taken away. He was just talking crazy now, just plum crazy. Junior was a gentle man. I never saw him get into a fight. Heck, I never even heard him yell at anybody but us kids, and then only when we went the wrong way in the woods. Around dark, things started to really get interesting. I agree that it might have been just me, the lights in the house seemed brighter and the light in the shed out back was flickering like it had a short in it. There was a strong wind blowing just enough to make the tin on the pump house flap around. The last time I followed Junior it was late at night after everybody went to sleep, so I don't know why I was expecting him to go any sooner. I never thought that Junior would slip out without calling me. But, about 10:30 I started looking for him. Yep, he was gone. He had already slipped out without me. That dirty scoundrel. Boy was I mad. Why didn't he wait for me?

Why didn't he just tell me he didn't want me to go along. Or, maybe he was just afraid of letting me go with him. I don't know the reason for sure, maybe he had a good one. But I was so mad, I'm not sure any explanation would have made me happy. You would think that I would just go back to bed, right? Ahhhh, no. There was no way I was going back to bed now. Besides even if I did, I sure wouldn't be able to sleep. So you know what I did? I decided to go looking for him. I remembered that he had went in the woods near the pump house. After looking and looking, I found the little opening that he had went into. Slowly I pushed back the limbs and started in. Was I scared? You better believe I was scared. Matter of fact it must have been fear that made me think that someone was following me. I kept looking back over my shoulder, but I'm not sure I could have seen much anyway. It was really dark. I mean really dark. I could barely make out the trail. But the feeling of someone following me just would not go away. Then I began to think I was hearing something behind me. You know that feeling that something is not right, but you're not sure if its real or just in your mind. I just could not shake that feeling. I was thinking I was a long way from where I had seen Junior and his buddies. It should be a long way to go to get to where they were. Or at least that was what I was thinking anyway.

By now my heart was in my throat. I was getting so paranoid. I was beginning to hear all kinds of things now. The sounds were not only limbs moving, but now I was hearing my own heart beating. Or I hope it was mine. But now I was beginning to think I was having trouble breathing. You know you would think that you would be able to hear a pin drop late at night out in the woods. But not that night for sure. Then I began to think that it might be better if I got down on the ground and started crawling. I mean how much farther could it be. This trail had to end sometime. Right?

But there was no light ahead, no sign of anybody in front of me. Just that feeling of something right behind me. I was beginning to think I was going to pass out when.



CHAPTER 8

I was so scared that night that I almost passed out. Even with the loud sounds the wind was making, I was still hearing my heart beat. Louder and louder and then suddenly Junior touched my shoulder. Of course I jumped. Well, jumped is not exactly right. I actually went nuts for a second. But Junior was trying to get me to be quiet. He was afraid they were going to hear us. He looked scared. Even more than me. I mean he was really scared. But, we finally got calmed down and began to crawl on the ground toward these two old ugly trees. Were those trees always there? There is no way that those trees had been there all this time. I surely would have noticed them. As we approached the two old ugly trees, Junior reached up and stuck his right hand into what looked like a black hole in the middle of the two trees. His arm was stuck all the way up to his shoulder in that black hole. It looked to me as if he was trying to find something. Maybe a switch or a knob. Maybe even a handle of some kind. But whatever it was, he wasn't finding it. He just continued to reach around for it. All of a sudden, he starts shaking and his hair begins to stand up on his head. I guessed that he had found it alright, or it had found him. Not sure which. After about 30 seconds or so, he pulled his hand out of the black hole. Wrapped around the end of his hand was the brightest yellow cloth I have ever seen. I mean bright. It was glowing. Like it was on fire with yellow flames. Wild looking cloth that looked like it had ate his right hand up to the elbow. As he slowly turned toward me I could see his face lit up like it was on fire too.

I looked around, but the light wasn't going out past us. You still couldn't see the other trees or anything. Just that bright yellow cloth, his face and part of his arm. Boy was this starting to freak me out. When I had found him out here before, there was no bright yellow cloth. I don't even remember seeing anything yellow. Everything I saw was a bright white. Like big lights shining everywhere. As he turned toward me, I noticed that his eyes had become dark. Not black, just dark and wide. His pupils were as big as quarters, or at least that was what I was thinking. He was trying to say something to me, but I couldn't understand what he was saying. It was in a different language of some kind. Either that or I was so scared that I couldn't understand him. It looked like he wanted me to take the cloth. No way was I going to take that cloth. I wasn't even sure he had it or did it have him. But he came closer and closer to me with this cloth attached to his hand. Then he began walking toward me. Or that's what I thought he was doing. I began to back up further and further. As I was backing up, I slipped down on a limb that was right behind me. Junior just walked right on by me and just continued to walk. Sitting there startled for a minute, I decided to follow him and see what the heck was going on. He walked down a trail to another big ugly tree. He walked right up to it like he was in a trance and wrapped the bright yellow cloth around a shiny black pole that was sticking out of the old ugly tree. Where did that come from? Well by now I was done asking any questions, I just went with it. As he wrapped the cloth around the black pole it turned a bright white. A very bright glowing bright white. This time it was lighting up all around us.

Everything was bright. When Junior had finished wrapping the cloth around the black pole, he just dropped to the ground. Like all of his energy was gone. He just sat there looking at the cloth. His eyes were beginning to turn back to normal, but the expression on his face was still there. After a minute or so, he looked up at me and said. Wait to you see what happens next.



CHAPTER 9

After all that had happened with the glowing yellow cloth turning into a bright white light that lit up everything, and don't forget those new big ugly trees that it all came out of. Well, I was just about ready to start running somewhere. But where would I go? Where could I go? So I turned back to Junior and decided to try and stick this out. Besides, Junior had told me to watch what happens next. It did begin to look like he had calmed down. He was beginning to talk kind of normal. As he takes a big breath of air, he says, we are safe now. What do you mean safe now? You have been acting so crazy and scared. Saying that they were going to kill us. You were walking funny, talking funny and for sure acting like our lives were in real danger.

What is making us safe now Junior, I asked? Don't worry, they will take care of us now. I just sent out a notice for them to come and help. What notice? You mean that yellow cloth? How does that do anything? That was an alarm beacon. When I send that out, they always come. OK Junior, so then why have you been so scared for the last few days? Who were you scared of then? The bad ones he said. But, these that are coming are the good ones. What? Now I am really confused Junior. You have got to explain this to me. And I mean right now. I am starting to get really scared. Not that I'm sure I could get any more scared, but it sure feels like it. He says, the ones that I sent the beacon out for are the good ones. The ones we have been worried about catching us are the bad ones. The bad ones live here and don't want the good ones to help us. They want the good ones to go away and let them handle this. But the good ones want to make sure that this was done right and fair to everyone. What was done right? What in the world are you talking about Junior? What are we doing anyway? Ok, ok Junior says, let me tell you how it all began. He sat down beside me, lit up a cigarette and began his story. I was thinking finally I will know the real story of what is going on. Or will Junior just give me bits and pieces? Anyway, I guess he thought we had enough time so he begins. About 10 years ago I couldn't sleep so I went for a walk out in these woods.

You know I love these woods. I had gotten into a little of your dad's rum bottle and feeling pretty good. I must have gotten off the usual trail to the river because all of a sudden I was surrounded by this bright light and these three people. They were all wearing the same kind of what looked like a uniform. The uniform was a bright yellow and it had big pads on the hips and shoulders. They even had a helmet of some kind on. At least I think it was a helmet. They never took it off so I guess I am not really sure. The helmet covered their entire head. You couldn't even see their eyes in this thing. And on their feet were big shoes of some kind. I mean big shoes. They were so big that they even walked funny. When I looked up, it seemed they were like waiting for me because they just started walking toward me with their arms stuck out. I just froze where I was. I didn't move a muscle. Two of them looked like they were about the same size, but the third one was real short. I mean very short. When they got to me, I couldn't move. I know because I tried to run. But I just couldn't get my feet to move. I was stuck sure as heck. The little one comes right up to my face and starts making some kind of noise. Well, I was about to freak out when all of a sudden, I could understand what he was saying. He was trying to calm me down and tell me it was alright. That wasn't helping much, but I did begin to calm down a little.

After that he began to tell me why they were here.



CHAPTER 10

By now I was starting to believe that Junior just might actually tell me the whole story. Junior continues with what happened to him 10 years ago when he first ran into the people from somewhere else, as he called them. He began with how the little one was the one that came up to him and started talking. He told me that the voice sounded kind of mechanical, like it was on a computer or something. But, he was able to completely understand what he was saying. He began to tell me that they had come up with a drug that would help you to live longer. That this drug could help you live a little longer, maybe a lot longer. They had invented this drug way up in the mountains of the Netherlands and were working with some people here in Florida and that the people they were working with were good people and wanted to test this drug a little more before they let it out. But, that someone had told some bad people what they were doing and the bad people wanted the drug. The difference was, the bad people were willing to kill to get it. What the good people wanted someone to do was to get this drug to the right people, not the bad people. They explained that if he would help them that it would be worth a lot to them. So, of course he said that he would and so it began. He would pick up the drug and carry it to a certain location, drop it off and go home. Simple right? Well, except for the part about the bad people wanting the drug and were willing to kill him for it. That part was very scary. Junior began to explain to me that the bad people did not know who he was.

The good people were always watching him as he took the drug to the drop off point. But, they couldn't watch him all the time so when he needed them to send a signal for help. That he would do what he had just done with the bright yellow and white lights. They would always give him two containers. One was the drug the other was his payment. But he had been warned not to spend any of this money because it could be traced to them. That they would always watch him but if the bad people found out it was him, they were not sure he would be safe with or without them.

Junior had not asked for that much, but he did want one bottle of rum and one carton of cigarettes each week along with his money. They were eager to give him what he wanted just to be sure of their delivery. Why Junior? I don't know. I can't even think of why they would want a crazy man like Junior to carry this important drug. As we were waiting for the good people to come, I asked Junior had he ever opened up the containers with the drug in it? He said, absolutely not. That they had made a fair deal and he did not want to break it. Within just a few minutes I hear a swooshing sound coming from the woods about 100 ft. away. I couldn't make out what it was but it sounded like it was something big. Real big. As it got closer, bright lights began to appear. The area was now bright and you could see everything around you. Then we saw something or someone in a funny suit. It reminded me of the suit that Junior had explained to me. But there was only one man. Junior turned to me and said it was the little one. I guess that is the only name he had given him was the little one. As he came toward us, Junior and I walked toward him. The suit did look funny. It was a full suit. A very big head was sitting on top and the feet were enormous. Everything was just like Junior had said, right down to the mechanical sound he made as he came closer. You sure could not see inside the face mask, it was way too shiny for that.

But I could hear him talking. I was very surprised, but I could understand every word he was saying.



CHAPTER 11

As he began talking to us, I could understand every word. It appeared that he wanted us to go with him. As we started walking toward the light, you could not see a thing. The light was so bright that the only thing you could see was the back of his suit. We walked up some kind of a long floating soft metal. At the top of the soft metal was an open area with bright white lights all around. The little one stopped there and began to explain that Junior had been caught by the bad guys and now they would be after him. That they were not going to be able to use him anymore. That they would even have to move him from this area so that he would be safe. Junior was devastated.

What would he do now? He had been doing this for over 10 years now, ever since he was about 13 years old. This was all that he knew. This was the only job he had ever had. But the little one was sure, there was no way he could continue, it would not be safe for him or his family. The little man told Junior that someone would be back tomorrow morning to get him and to explain everything to him. But that for now, to just go back home. So Junior and I began walking back toward the house. It wasn't but just a minute and all the lights went out. Boy was it dark. I don't know how we made it back that night. Junior must have had a special way of knowing where we were because we came straight home. Junior was very upset. It was like he had lost his best friend or something. I have never seen him this low before. That night I tried to sleep, but that was not going to happen. All I could think about was what would happen to Junior now. Where were they going to take him? Would I ever see him again? I think maybe about 5 or so, I dosed off to sleep.

When I woke up around 7, he was already gone. A note was left on his bed. I must have been the first one to his room because nothing had been touched and I am sure mom would have went crazy if she had found the note first. You see Junior was my mom's sisters son. My mom's sister had died about 10 years ago and Junior had been living with us ever since. So my mom always felt like he was her son. When I picked up the note, I noticed that the note was folded perfectly. It had been folded just right. All the edges were folded back on themselves just right to make the note a complete square. As I unfolded the note, there was a small pink like substance on the paper, like a fine powder. As I opened it all the way a small pink pill appeared in the last fold. Strange I thought. Why would Junior leave part of his medication in the note? But there it was. I assumed that it was one of his medications that he had left by accident. So I just picked it up and put it in a small jar on his dresser.

The note was addressed "To My Family".



CHAPTER 12

As I opened the note Junior had left, I noticed that the note began with “To My Family”. Junior started the note with how much he loved all of us and how he was so sorry but he had to go. That he was going to move away and would let us know when he could how he was doing. He said that he had no idea where he was going, but he was sure that he was going to be alright and that he would write to us as soon as he could. Several times through the note, he made reference to thanking us for letting him live with us and how we had made him part of our family. Nobody knew what I did. No one knew what had happened but me. Mom and dad were very upset to find out that he was gone. They just kept wondering what had happened and why he had to go. I could not tell them what I knew. I just couldn't. I sure wanted to, but I had promised Junior that I would not tell anyone what had happened. Junior had told me not to tell them for all of our sakes. If my family had found out what I knew, would they be safe? I don't know. I was too scared to tell anybody. There was no mention of the pill in the note so I didn't bring it up to mom or dad, but I did think it was odd for it to be in the note, so I put it away in my bedroom and didn't tell anyone about it. When things had a little time to settle, I asked mom if Junior took any medication and did she worry about him. She said that she worried about him every day, but he did not take any medication.

That he was as healthy as a horse. Hmmm. Ok, then why was this pink pill in his note? And why wasn't it mentioned in the note? Very interesting I thought. Well maybe it was by accident. Or maybe it was something he was taking that no one knew about. And still, maybe it was that new drug that got him all that trouble. I had no idea and was way too scared to tell anybody. Besides, who could I talk to about it? I was sure any mention of the things that I knew, would cause trouble. Maybe even death. After a while, things got back to normal. Well, as normal as before Junior. Which by the way, I don't even remember how that was. That's just the way mom put it. From time to time mom would mention Junior and say how she missed him. I felt the same way as she did. So did my brothers and sisters. We all missed Junior. No more bright lights in the woods. No more strange people looking at us in town. Dad didn't mention him much. I know he missed him. He just wasn't the kind to talk about it. After a few years had gone by we had still not heard from Junior. One day I was going through my stuff on my dresser and I came across the pink pill that Junior had left in his note. What do I do with the pill? Should I throw it away? Should I give to someone or take it myself? Remember he said it would add more time to your life.

Well, of course I could use that. And what about mom or dad, they sure were getting old. And how about grandma or granddad? Wow, if this pill worked, one of them could live a lot longer. Should I keep it or should I give it away? But who would I give it to???



CHAPTER 13

This pink pill thing was driving me crazy, so I got a glass jar and put the pill in it so I could look at that pill every day. Day after day, I would pull that glass jar out and look at that pink pill. The strange pink pill that Junior left in his note was getting pinker and pinker. You would think that the color would be fading, but no sir the pink pill continued to get pinker and pinker. Kind of a bright pink now and was driving me crazy. What am I going to do with this darn pill? What? By now I was getting older and so was everybody else. Every time I looked at anybody, I thought how that pill would help them. Of course getting older was on my mind all the time. Because by now I was sure this was one of those pills Junior was carrying. All kind of things would cross my mind. One day my granddad got real sick. I remember thinking should I give it to him? Or maybe it will not work if you are sick already. There was no instructions left with the pill. Who would know such an answer? Then another day my brother broke his leg. Would the pill help him? Over and over I would think about what to do with this pill.

Even thoughts like, just throw the pill away. Just throw it in the river. Get rid of it. Nothing good can come from this pill. The only one it would help would be the one you give it to. Then the others would all be jealous if they ever found out and would want to know why you didn't give it to them. I began to look at everything and everybody different. Suddenly everything changed. My mom started looking old, my dad too. My grandparents were looking even worse. If I was going to make a decision, I would need to make it pretty soon. Junior had not told me much about this darn pill. All I knew was it would give you more time. More time to live. More time to do things you wanted to get done. More time to raise a family or go places you had not had time for before. Maybe more time to correct a mistake you had made or a regret that needed to be straightened out. More time to make up to someone you had wronged or maybe just more time to live.

If more time was what it had to give, who would I give more time too?



CHAPTER 14

Days turned into months and months into years since Junior had disappeared and had left me that pill. By now my grandparents had passed away. That was very traumatic for me. I loved them very much. But, still I had not given anyone that stupid pink pill. Why not? Why haven't I given the pill to somebody? Why not one of my grandparents, but then which one? Was I to make such a decision? I loved them both. Besides, had I given the pill to one of them, would that one still be alive and living alone? This was why I couldn't give it to just one person. The effects would be devastating to everyone else. The last time we had heard from Junior was that night we called for his friends in the woods. You remember the night. We thought we were going to be killed. After that, I never heard a word on the news about him. It was like he just disappeared. That had to have been at least 25 or 30 years ago. Then one day, Junior just comes walking right up to my front door. He was so excited, ringing the doorbell and banging on the door. How did he know where I lived? I wonder who told him? But there he was, sure as life, standing right there on my front porch. At first I didn't recognize him, but then as he began talking, I figured out it was Junior alright. He was talking so fast, I couldn't understand him.

Something about people were after him and I needed to hide him. What? I couldn't believe my eyes. It was Junior alright. But why was he so old looking. Didn't his friends give him one of those pills? There was no reason for him to be old. Didn't he move around all those pink pills? Surely he had taken one or two or three. Wouldn't you think? But if he had, why did he look so old? Actually he was very old looking. Anyway, he was so sure that someone was going to kill him, and that I needed to hide him and right now, so into the closet he went and I went with him. Junior sure had a lot of explaining to do and he was just going to have to tell me what was going on. First thing I wanted to know was where he went and who took him and why. He began to tell me that his friends had taken him a long way away. He told me the name of the country, but I couldn't understand him enough to know what country. He was excited and talking so fast that there was no way to understand all that he was saying. I asked him why they took him and he said to save his life and ours too. If that was the reason, I guess I am glad he went. Ok, now tell me about the pink pill you left in my bedroom. He stopped shaking as if someone had turned him off. As calm as he had ever been, he looked at me and said, Do you still have that pink pill? Well of course, I said. I couldn't figure out who to give it to so I just decided to keep it. His eyes got as big around as saucers as he asked me if he could see the pill. On no I said, first you tell me how the pill works. All this time, year after year, all I have done is wonder about what this pink pill does. Before I show you the pink pill, you tell me what it does.

Junior is very calm now and as his tired old face begins to smile, he says, "Cousin."



CHAPTER 15

Junior had begun to calm down. He began to tell me that they had taken him to the Netherlands. That he was given a small farm with a little cottage on it. There he worked with a stone carver and began a very happy life. The ones who had taken him there were never heard of again. He said that they never once made any contact with him, not even once. They disappeared from his life just like they came into it. Well, after a few years he noticed a young girl who worked at the local grocery store as a cashier. He would go in there as often as he could, just so he could talk to her. One day he finally got up enough guts to ask her out on a date. The first time he asked her she said no, she was busy. It took him 5 times to get that girl to go out with him he said but finally she did. The only problem was, where do they go. There were no movie theaters, no restaurants and surely not any malls to go to. So he decided that he would take her to the lake. There was a beautiful lake not too far away and there was this great big old tree that they could sit under.

There he fell in love with her and their life together began. Over there, if a man wants to marry his sweetheart, they would have to go through the father and ask permission. No problem, he thinks, so he goes over to the girl's house to ask the dad for his daughter's hand in marriage. He had never really talked to her dad before. He had seen him a few times through the window, but he had never talked to him. Most of the time it was her mother that he talked to. But this was something that he would have to talk to the dad about. As he walks up to the door of her house, he can hear the locks on the door locking the door. What does that mean, he thinks. He begins to knock and knock on the door. Finally he can hear the locks unlocking and the door opens. There stands this enormous man with a long beard and long hair. He just looks at Junior and motions him in with his hand. Junior says hello to him, but he just grunts. He motions for the chair like he wants Junior to set there so he does. Now they both just look at each other. Junior says he is scared to death. This man was a monster. He was huge. Junior says he tries to make small talk, but her father is not talking. Now Junior is really scared. He slowly gets his nerve up and turns to the father and says, "Sir, I want to ask you for your daughter's hand in marriage". At first the man just looks at him and then slowly, ever so slowly a big smile comes up on his face.

When the smile got as big as it could, the man says sure you can have her for marriage, I thought you would never ask. I thought I was going to have to take care of her the rest of her life. At that they both begin to laugh. In time, they became very good friends. Later when the mother came down with cancer, they became even closer. Things got real bad around there, just like everywhere else, the mother did everything. She washed clothes, cooked food, cleaned the house and just about everything in between. Days went by and the sadness was just getting terrible. Nothing was making any of them happy anymore. They were just watching the mother go downhill. She was taking her medicine like she was supposed to but things were getting very bad. One day Junior remembers about the pink pill he had saved from his earlier work. He had remember that he had left me one, but he remembered that he originally had two of those pills. He remembered that one day he had dropped the bag and two pills had fallen out. But he had never used one before, what would this do to her mother? Would it heal her or kill her? What should he do? He never even told his wife about the pill before.

How would he explain the pill? And what if it worked? How would he explain that???



CHAPTER 16

By now Junior and his wife had two children, one little boy and one little girl. The boy was the oldest and looked just like his dad. The little girl was a lot smaller and looked like her mother. What a perfect family they had. After Junior remembered about the little pink pill, he spent a lot of time thinking about what to do with it. Should he save it for his family or should he use it to help his mother-in-law? One night while he was in bed, he came up with an idea. If he could give his mother-in-law the pink pill without her knowing it, maybe that would be a way out. So the next day he went to see her. She looked pretty bad but still asked him into her bedroom and grabbed his hand as he came in. She told him how much she loved him and how proud she was that he had married her daughter and how great those kids were. Of course she had always told him that but now it seemed to mean a lot more. She asked him to sit down and spend some time with her, so he did. After a little while it was time for her to take a nap and her medicine. This was the perfect time. Junior went over and got her medicine and brought it to her. As he turned with her medicine, he put the pink pill in with it, handed her a glass of water and soon her medicine was gone as well as the little pink pill. Now Junior was nervous, very nervous. Would things get better or were they going to get worse? Only time would tell. Junior felt like he had done the right thing. It was obvious she was not going to make it without the pill. Maybe she could with the pill. Anyway it was done now. There was nothing to do but wait. Soon things got a little worse. She began having problems breathing and everybody was called in as if it were the end.

Everybody arrived, they all gathered around her and prayed for God to heal her. That had been done quite a few times, but this time it was like the last time they would have the chance. When they finished praying they all told her they loved her and said all their goodbyes. But, she just continued to breathe. Days went by, finally the family went home and said they would have come back if things changed. Soon her breathing started to regulate. Her color was coming back. She was actually getting better. Was it the pill? Could it be? What else could have done it? Was it the pill or was it the prayer? Did the pill work? Did the pill cure cancer? Maybe that's what the people meant by saying it could make you live longer. They never said it would, only that it could. Wow, how good Junior felt now. The little pill he had saved for all those years would cure cancer. How amazing. How wonderful that could be. Everybody was so happy. Soon the mother was back to doing all the cooking, cleaning and everything in between. What a wonderful time they were having. What a great time for everyone. Years went by and everything was going great. The children started growing up, but Junior noticed that his little girl was coughing just a little too much. At first he thought it was allergies, but then it just would not go away. So he took her to the doctor. The tests came back and were not good at all. It seems the little girl had a tumor in her left lung. Just a small one, nothing to really worry about the doctor said, but let's have it checked anyway. Days went by before they could get those tests done. All the time she just continued to cough, and the coughing was getting worse. As Junior continued to tell me the story he started to cry. He was crying so hard, that he could hardly speak. I began to realize that was why he wanted to see the pill. To make sure that I really had one. It must have come back to him that he had left one for us in his letter. That him showing up and saying that he was going to be killed was just a way to find out if I still had the pill. I was still listening to him but my mind began to think about the people in my life that had had cancer and I did not give this pill to them. Maybe there was a reason for that. Maybe this was the reason.

Without knowing it, maybe I had saved the pill for her. Maybe?



CHAPTER 17

Junior had obviously come back for the pill. If not, why had he waited so long? I think he thought it was better to stay out of our lives or maybe it was just because it was so far away. Either way, he was here now and it was good to see him and to know he was ok. Hearing about his new life and family was great. I was so happy for him. He was so proud of his family. You could tell by the way he talked, that his little girl was weighing heavy on his mind. He made it clear that she was his biggest priority. As we talked, he continued to ask me about that little pink pill. But, him asking for the pill was different now. It felt like something bigger than us was at work. Now, I knew that he needed that pill and why. I couldn't help but think that maybe that was why I had never given it to someone all those years. Maybe it was always meant for his little girl. It took me a minute to actually go get that little pink pill. After all, I had that pink pill for a very long time. It had been something I would think about every night before I went to sleep and usually the first thing I would think about when I woke up in the morning. So giving up that pill was going to be just a little rough. I got up and went into my closet, I took out the little glass jar I had put it in. For the first time in many years, I opened the jar and took the pill out. It was just as bright as ever and somehow it felt like it was a part of me. That it belonged to me and no one else. I had never really thought very much about giving it away before. Oh sure I thought about it, but I had never come this close before. Then something came over me. A strange feeling that I had not had before. A funny feeling, like I was going to bust with happiness. I began to feel like I was doing the right thing, that this pill was going to the right person and it was me that had made it happen. What a great feeling I was having. I just stood there and enjoyed that strange feeling. After a few minutes, I started going toward Junior. As I turned and came out of the closet, the feeling was still with me. Walking over to Junior, that feeling was getting stronger and stronger. Still when I got to him, I just stood there. I couldn't move. And when I did try to give the pill to him, my arm would just not lift up. I couldn't make my arm push my hand over to him. The feeling now I was having was stronger than ever.

After a few minutes my arm began to move again and I handed him the little pink pill. I'm not really sure what happened next. Was it the happiness Junior had for now having the pill that he thought would cure his little girl, or was it the feeling I was having over saving that pill for his little girl? All I know is, I have never ever had any kind of feeling like I was having now. The joy in my heart was about to make it bust. We both just stood there and cried, then we would laugh and then we would cry again. Over and over that went on for quite a while. Junior gave me a great big hug and whispered in my ear that he thanked God for me and how he needed to go to get this little pink pill to his little girl. I agreed and off he went, leaving just as fast as he had come in, Junior was gone. I didn't hear from Junior for a few weeks and then one night the phone rang and it was Junior. As soon as I heard his voice I knew things were alright. The sound of his words were crackly but in a good way. I finally made sense of what he was saying enough to know the little pink pill had saved his little girl's life. She was happy as ever and the test had come back showing that her cancer was gone. That's been many years now and I have not heard a word from Junior. I still wonder when I say my prayers at night, did God heal that little girl or did he just make sure I saved the pill for her? To me it doesn't matter, she is well and the little pink pill is gone.

No more will I have the burden of who to give the little pink pill to.

The End.



The Statue



CHAPTER 1

It was rough growing up in a house full of ugly monsters. Oh no, not my family. That's crazy, all that was fine. We had a great family with fun times and lots of vacations. We were always having fun together. It was a great life. The problem was my dad being a scary story writer, he often would bring home scary looking stuffed animals or statues. Even the music he would bring home was scary. Everything he did he tried to make as real as he could. One day he brought home a large statue of a gargoyle. It was huge. It looked real in every detail, very scary. Even mom told him to get rid of that thing, that it was too scary to have sitting around the house. Dad didn't think so, but he moved the statue to his office in the basement anyway. That made all of us happy, especially mom. Dad continued to write scary stories about the gargoyle. He would tell about where he came from and what he would do, like how the gargoyle would only mate with one and that they would live forever with that one. You know, the kind of information that would make the difference between a good story and a great story. Background is what he called it. Detail was what he wanted in his stories. He would insist on detail. Sometimes his stories would start off with the gargoyle being a baby and then sometimes it would start with the grown ones, but he always made sure we knew everything about the monster. Every once in a while my sister and I would sneak down to my dad's office to look at the statue of the gargoyle. We would always make sure the light was on because we did not want to go down there in the dark. It was too scary on a regular basis let alone with that gargoyle down there. Soon it became an obsession to go down and see the gargoyle. Everything was working out. The statue was in the basement and mom couldn't see it anymore. We would often race down the stairs to see who could get down there first to turn the light on. As I said, everything was going great until this one night that we raced down the stairs to the light. I got there first. As I turned the corner to get to the switch, I thought I saw something move. Well I figured it was just me and turned the light on. Everything was where it should be, so no big deal. I must of just made a mistake. We didn't really look and check where everything went. The statue was all we were looking at anyway. Later I asked my sister if she had seen anything move. She said no, why? Telling her that I had seen something move was the wrong thing to do. Now she was scared to go down there. She asked me at least a thousand times, what did you see? What did you see? Even after telling her over and over that I made a mistake, she wouldn't go down. Then one night she grabs me by the arm and wants me to go down stairs with her. She wants to see if the statue had moved. So, we both started down the stairs, no running, no racing to the bottom. We were not in any hurry to turn the light on this time, but we slowly walked down there and she turned on the light. In her pocket she had a magnifying glass. She looked like Sherlock Holmes over there looking all over this statue. Not touching the statue, just looking at the top and the bottom. The look on her face was pure determination. She wanted to know if this thing had moved or not. Me, I was just looking around the room at all the other stuff dad had. All of a sudden her face turns solid white and she says to me, this thing has moved. I walked over to her and she points down at the moisture off the glass of water that dad have left on his desk. The water had been soaked up by the base of the statue. She says that this was not there yesterday when she was down here with dad. Someone had moved this statue. She was sure of it. I told her that dad must have moved it before he left. Then she told me that she was with dad when he walked out yesterday leaving for Chicago and that he left as soon as they got back upstairs.

A deep chill came all over me and just about the time I was beginning to think that maybe I had seen something, the lights go out and the door shuts...

CHAPTER 2

I was just starting to really get scared about what my sister was showing me when the lights go out and the door shuts. My sister starts yelling for mamma and I am so scared I can't move. The lights come back on and the door opens and it's mamma. She had seen the light on in dad's office and thought he had left it on when he left for Chicago. Then she wants to know what we are doing down here. We tell her what we thought we had found. You can tell that she is not buying what we are selling and thinks that we are just acting like kids and to forget about that old statue. But, she does agree that the old statue is very scary. As we go out the door together, I turn to look at the statue one last time before we go and I swear it blinked. I didn't say a word, I just hurried up and got in front of everybody and went up the stairs. Neither of us went back down there until dad came home. We were very happy to see him as always and couldn't wait to tell him what had happened. When he finally went down to his office, my sister and I were right by his side. With him sitting in his chair and us standing on the other side of his office, the side the gargoyle wasn't, we begin to tell him how we were so sure the statue had moved. He reached over and picked up the statue. He turns to us and asks, does this thing really scare you guys? Well, yes it does, we said. He thumps the head of the statue with his finger and it sounds solid. MM, he says, they must have made this a solid filled statue, that's very unusual. Maybe I can make up a good story about this thing. If it scares you guys then it might scare other people.

Great, now this statue is going to be all we talk about. All the talking in the world is not going to convince me that I didn't see something move. Believe me, I would rather think I was wrong, but the thought of that thing moving has cost me and my sister plenty of sleep. It didn't really matter if we went downstairs or not, the statue was all we talked about at dinner. Now dad was beginning his story and that meant even more talking, but after a while the talking slowed down and we began to stop thinking about it as much. Maybe as long as we didn't see the thing, we could finally start getting some sleep. And that did work for a while until dad asked us to take another look at the statue. He wanted to know if after all this time it would still scare us. Of course that didn't make us happy to know that he wanted us to go down to his office again with that statue down there, but we decide to help dad out and down we went. We both had dad go ahead of us and we followed. I was the brave one and walked right over to the statue and picked it up. It seemed heavier than I had remembered. When I turned to my sister to show her the statue, she was holding her breath. Walking toward her I began to tell her that it was ok. Trying to hand her the statue was not a good idea, she just screamed and ran upstairs. Turning back to dad, I told him I thought that this thing had gotten heavier. He took the statue from me and admitted that it did feel more solid. As he put it down he says to me that he thinks it may have gotten a little taller too. He said he had never measured it, but it looked like it had gotten bigger. Then he thought that we were overreacting to the thing and it was probably just a mistake. So he says to me, let's measure this thing so next time we will be sure, so he gets out the tape and measures the statue. This time when he goes to sit the thing down, he set it down over in the corner of his office beside his fish tank. The light of the tank was just enough to show the wings of the statue. It looked like it was flying out of that tank. It was kind of scary to me and I told dad so, but he just laughed and told me to go to bed. All night long that's all I could think about was that darn statue.

But now it was even more scary to me because I continued to think it had gotten bigger. And if it had gotten bigger, how???

CHAPTER 3

Dad would never tell us about any of his stories while he was writing them so we didn't expect anything different this time. We knew that we would get to read them when he was done. But this time he kind of wanted our input. After all, this statue was about to scare us to death. So, one day we all went down to his office and he asked us a few questions and told us a few things about his gargoyle statue. The first thing he wanted to do was give us his idea of how these things got started. He thought that it might be a good idea if he told how the things lived and how they survived all these years. He began with what he called the facts of the case. In the beginning of the gargoyles there was only one, probably a throwback from some other sort of animal, one that the mother didn't want to have anything to do with. But the runt it wasn't. It got to be a good size animal but very weak. It was shy and afraid of the other creatures and would always live in caves and cracks in the earth, but caves and cracks in the earth was where the bats lived also. All kinds of bats, big ones, little ones, ones that ate birds and ones that sucked blood from other animals. The gargoyle would have to be very careful not to disturb the bats or they would run him right out of his hiding place. One night a big bat came into the corner of the cave where he was sleeping. This bat was different. It was huge, maybe a throwback as well, and it seemed to be interested in the gargoyle. Most of the other bats in that cave were a lot smaller and probably didn't get along with this big bat. That probably caused it to look for companionship elsewhere. Anyway the two became friendly in the usual way and began their gargoyle/bat family. That was where the gargoyle line started. The big wings and the flying part, along with the great big teeth came from the bat part, and the bigger size and hunting of large animals, as well as the humongous appetite came from the gargoyle. Things were working out good for them. They always had plenty of food and usually a pretty good place to sleep. Once they ran the smaller bats out of a cave it became theirs. Over the years the family grew and there became more and more of them. Soon they were out in the public too much and developed something a little different from the other animals. When they would fly into a city or town, they would look for the highest building and sit there like a statue. They could be so still that they looked just like one, and they could keep this up for weeks. All they needed was just a tiny bit of water and they could stay still even longer but, if they got too much water on them at one time, they would have to move. As he told the story, this part had my sister and I looking at each other. I am sure we were thinking the same thing. If we poured a bunch of water on our statue we could see if it was real or not. Right? But we kept our cool and let dad go on with his story. He said that one day one of the gargoyles was down in an alley and was startled by a drunk. The drunk tried to kill the gargoyle. While waving his big knife about, the drunk was mostly cutting himself. The huge gargoyle was able to keep away from him and flew off. But, of course that's not the way the drunk told the story. He went around town telling everyone how this huge gargoyle had attacked him and cut him all up. Well of course the people were scared and wanted this thing killed, so everyone started searching for the gargoyle, but no one knew that they were all around them all the time.

The statues on top of their building were all gargoyles. They had been there for years, high above them, just watching...

CHAPTER 4

It's not known for sure, but some people think the gargoyle lives to be at least a hundred years old. If they do live that long, some of them must have been on those roof tops a long time, they may have even been around when the town was being built. Can you imagine all the things they might have seen, like who went where and who did what? After all, the whole town just thought they were statues on top of the buildings. Sure, people had heard stories of the gargoyle, but they had heard that they lived in caves and as far as they knew had never harmed anyone and that they lived way out in the woods and kept to themselves. As a matter of fact, no one had ever seen one up close before. They had an idea of what they looked like from some of the old stories, but no one had actually gotten close enough to be sure. No one had ever tried to find one before or even knew how. They thought they mostly lived in caves. They only knew that no one had reported anything about them harming anybody until now, but now the whole town was out to get one of them. Some of them were really fired up about the old man getting attacked, but of course some of them thought a little different, they thought that the old man was drunk and had made it all up. Either way, the guns were out and tempers were high as they started their hunt for the gargoyles. Maybe if they had known how big and strong these things were, they might have proceeded with a little more caution. With the gargoyle living in large groups, there would be little ones as well as big ones, males and females, all living together. Another thing, how would they communicate with them? How would they know which one was guilty? When the search first started everyone was all excited and thought they would be the one to get this monster. What they didn't know was that the gargoyles knew what they were up to and were doing a little watching as well. The lookouts on the roof tops had a pretty good view of where the hunters were at pretty much all times. More than likely after living all those years, they probably had some idea of what the humans were saying, or maybe at least have an idea that something was going on. The gargoyles were a prideful group. They always walked upright and kept themselves clean looking. They were like giant bats. They always seemed dressed in black and had very shiny skin. As in any family, some of them lived in small groups on the outskirts of the woods. The first gargoyle they ran into was a young male. He was not yet full grown but still stood about 7 foot . As the hunters watched him through the bushes they were surprised to see him walking around like a human.

Even though he looked like a monster, he didn't act like one, until he saw one of them staring at him.

The gargoyle took one look at the man peaking at him, spread his enormous wings and...

CHAPTER 5

The men that were looking through the bushes were running for their lives. When the giant gargoyle caught them watching him and turned toward them, they thought they were goners. They were sure they were being chased so no one stopped to find out. They just continued to run until they got back to safety. When they finally did get enough nerve to look, there was no gargoyle in sight. Trying to explain to everyone that they were being chased didn't mean much when no one saw anything chasing them. The men were causing all kind of excitement around town. Most of them were shaking so bad they were having trouble talking, but finally they calmed down and tried to tell everyone what they had seen. Everybody was listening, they wanted to hear about the giant gargoyle. Paul was the one that spoke up first. Everyone knew that Paul was not afraid of anything. He had been the one to chase off the bear when it wandered into the pastry shop. The town shut down until Paul chased the thing off. So when he talked, they listened. He started off with how long they had been looking for the monster and how they had heard some noise over by the old creek bed. They slipped up on the gargoyle and were hiding in the bushes watching him. The thing was huge, Paul said. We never expected the thing to be that big. Even though we had guns, we were too afraid to come out and confront him, so we just hid and watched him for a little while. It really seemed to move around just like we would, standing up right. It really didn't look too scary, until it caught us watching it. As soon as it spotted us, everything changed. It looked angry and spread its enormous wings and then started running toward us. We panicked and starting running. We thought life was over, there was no way we could out run this thing. At one time it got so close I thought I could feel the wind off of its wings. That really began to scare me. But, we made it all the way back to town. When we got back to town and turned around, it wasn't there. How long the thing chased us? We have no idea. Maybe it stopped at the edge of the woods. Don't know, just don't want to go back without a lot more help, said Paul. A lot more! At that time, no one knew that the gargoyle flew more than it walked and as soon as the men were running the thing flew right over them and went home. When he got home he told his family about what happened. The dad wasn't too upset but told the young one to stay away from the old creek bed. But the young gargoyle was like other young people and wanted to check out the humans a little closer so he went back the next day to see if the men had come back. It just so happened that a man was at the creek.

It was Henry, a kind of a loner man that didn't go to town very much and had no idea that the town was looking for a monster.

CHAPTER 6

Henry was a loner. He had lived most of his life in the woods. Going to town was not something he looked forward to, and when he did, it was only to get supplies. The gargoyles had seen Henry around and Henry had seen them, but they had left each other alone out of respect, but this time was a little different. Over the last few years the young gargoyle had become interested in the humans, wondering what kind of animal they were and now why they were peeking through the bushes at him. The monster had seen Henry before and had been very close to him in the past, so the gargoyle figured this human might be the one to communicate with. Henry had set up camp along the side of the old creek bank just a little north of where the men started their run back to town. Henry had eaten his piece of venison he had made for supper and was about to get some coffee from the camp fire when the gargoyle made his appearance. Henry already knew he was in the bushes, but was a little startled that he would come up to the camp fire. At first he thought that the monster was wounded or something, but after a few minutes he could tell that that was not the case. The gargoyle was making jesters at him like he wanted to talk. It even looked like the gargoyle was trying to smile like a human. Henry showed him a place to sit and motioned for him to take a seat. The gargoyle sat where Henry wanted him to and they began to work on their communication. The gargoyle could talk, it was just in his own language, so the first thing they had to do was to figure out what they would call each other. Henry was easy, not so much for the gargoyle. When Henry tried to repeat it, he couldn't make it sound right, it sounded something like bruuuuuukintallma, so Henry came up with Bruce. Now the gargoyle would be called Bruce. Bruce seemed like it was working just fine, so they used it from then on. Late in the night and into the early hours of the morning the two worked on getting to know each other. Finally Henry fell asleep. The smell of hot coffee woke him up. When he opened his eyes the fire was up burning nice and the coffee was just about ready but Bruce was gone. Could Bruce have made the coffee? Stoking the fire would have been easy, but putting fresh coffee on? For a long while, Henry just sat there thinking about the night before, thinking of his new friend and if he would see him again. Morning slowly left and Henry decided to get some venison out of his bag when he heard something coming through the woods. It was Bruce caring a piece of a fresh skinned deer. The cut looked like Henry could have done it himself, perfectly done. So Henry and Bruce began to cut it up in smaller pieces and to put some on the fire.

As crazy as it sounds, these two were becoming friends...

CHAPTER 7

The men back in town had learned their lesson. They decided that the old drunk man must have been wrong. Surely he was drunk and made a mistake. Besides, they couldn't find anyone who would go out and look for the gargoyle. After they had their big meeting, it was decided to just leave the gargoyle alone. Besides, they wouldn't know which one or even how to ask who it was, so the whole town decided to just let it go. With no more search parties, Henry and Bruce had plenty of time to learn things from each other and to become good friends. Time went by and Henry taught Bruce just enough English so they could communicate. Broken English was better than no English. On the other hand, Henry was not doing as good with his gargoyle talk, but over the next few months, they were able to work things out. The day came that Henry had to get some supplies. Town was the only place that he knew to get them, so they decided to make the trip. Bruce was not very happy about going to town, actually neither was Henry but it had to be done. Then Henry remembered a little place outside of town that just might have those supplies he needed so, they headed for that place instead of town. The owner was a mean old man. He lived and worked the store with his daughter Ellie. When Henry and Bruce got there, the owner saw them coming and locked the door. Henry gave the door a little knock and started yelling to open the door. The old man had seen Bruce and there was no way he was going to open that door. He had seen other gargoyles before and did not want one in his store. But Henry was desperate, so leaving without the supplies was not an option. Finally, the owner yells through the door and says that Henry can come in but the monster has to stay outside. Even though Henry didn't like that, he went in to get his supplies. Bruce stayed outside and walked around to the back of the store. Behind the store was an old barn. The store owners truck was back there along with assorted boxes and bags. Down one side of the barn was a path. At the end of the path was a door. The door was painted red, a real bright red. In the middle of the door hung what looked like a mask. The door had long pieces of hair and long claws hung over it. The door was old and worn and had a funny looking bell hanging from a large rope like material. As Bruce make his way back to the door, what he thought was a hanging mask was actually a cut off head of a gargoyle. The more he looked, he could tell that the hair and claws were also from a gargoyle. Continuing to look around, he found a crossed tied piece of rabbit skin around a claw on the floor. Bruce stopped and stared at the piece of rabbit skin. His sister wore a crossed piece of rabbit skin.

Was this his sister that everyone thought had left the pack???

CHAPTER 8

Henry was still inside buying supplies when Bruce found what might be the dead body of his sister. Before he could stop himself, he took a swipe at the red door. The door didn't move much but it did leave a large claw mark through that bright red paint. Bruce tried to be calm as he started looking around to see what else he could find. Tearing through the piles of skins and skulls laying on the floor, it didn't take long for this gargoyle to figure out what these people were hunting. Bruce went into a rage. He had seen enough. At first he didn't know what to do. There was no way he could carry all these bodies with him. Then he thought that he would go and get some help. He tried to put everything back as he had found it and then ran out the back door and flew off. Henry got all the supplies he needed and came out. No Bruce. So he went around the house looking for him but he couldn't find Bruce anywhere. When he got to the barn, he found the path and the red door. At first he didn't see the gargoyle bodies but he noticed a big claw mark on the red door. Then he spotted the skull and the skins. Henry was beginning to put things together when the owner's daughter Ellie came in the barn. She acted very surprised to see someone back there. She asked him, "what are you doing back here?" "Oh, just looking for Bruce," Henry replied. She told him that no one was supposed to be back there, that this was not open to the public and he would have to leave right now. Henry wanted to know why there were dead gargoyles all over the place. She had no answer except that it was none of his business and to get out now or she would have to call her dad. She don't need to call me, her dad said, as he came walking around the end of the building carrying a double barrel shotgun. Henry knew it was time to leave. As he was walking away, the old man yelled to him not to come back.

Now he knew what happened to Bruce. He must have found the same thing Henry did. Now, where is he? In the time that him and Bruce had spent together, Bruce had only wanted to learn about how the humans lived and acted, how they worked and loved their families. He wanted to be more like the humans, more kind and loving, more family oriented.

The gargoyles had families and lived in packs, but they lived in caves and woods. Bruce wanted to live in a house and grow his own food.

Would this make him change his mind about humans? And if it did change his mind, what would that mean???

CHAPTER 9

Henry loved living in the woods. He had done it just about all of his life, wandering around sometimes setting up camp and living near the creek and the old caves for longer periods of time. He wanted so much to find Bruce but he knew that might be impossible now. He had no idea where Bruce was or how to find him. Days went by and Henry did not see a clue to help him find Bruce. One day he ran across an old timer that was on his way from one town to another. They stopped and made a pot of coffee and discussed things like the weather and when the snow storm might hit. As they were talking the old timer ask Henry how long it had been since he had stopped at the old grocery to get some supplies? Well, Henry said, about 4 days or so ago. The old timers goes on and wants to know if Henry knew about the terrible thing that happened to the old store and its owners? Henry told him no, I haven't heard a thing. Well let me tell you something, I have heard of massacres before like back when they use to have Indian raids, but nothing like this was ever done. The old timer went on to tell him that there wasn't one board left on top of the other on the house or the barn. Everything was destroyed. They found the owner and it looked like a big grizzly had come along and tore him to pieces. They looked for days, but never found a sign of the daughter, she is still missing. They don't know if she ran off or had been kidnapped.

Either way, she is gone. Someone told the town people that they saw a gargoyle leaving as they came up. Wonder what he was doing there? Henry was shocked. He wondered what could have happened to those poor folks. After a little while the old timer moved on and Henry began to think about what he thought might have happened. Bruce must have been very mad when he left. He could have gone and got some help and gone back. What a terrible thing to have done to that old man and his daughter. But he just couldn't stop thinking about the gargoyle skull and skins that he had seen in that old barn. Really, how could he blame Bruce. That had to be some of his family in there. What was really going on? Were they killing gargoyles and selling their hides? Henry was sure that the people of that old town would be after whoever did that. You can't just let that kind of thing go on, someone has to answer for this crime. He had to find Bruce for sure now. He needed to let him know what was going on and to see if he could help the gargoyles. But first he needed to go back to the old barn and look around.

Maybe the town people didn't know to look for gargoyle bodies.
They might have beentoo busy looking for the old man and his daughter.

CHAPTER 10

My sister and I couldn't believe our dad was telling us this story. He had never told us any of his stories before they were published. All during the story we would think we needed to get down to the basement and check on our gargoyle. It had been a long time since we were allowed down there. Dad was always home, he had not taken one single trip since he started this story. We needed him to leave so we could go down and pour a lot of water on our statue to see if it would move. Remember, dad said in his story that if it was a real gargoyle and you poured a lot of water on it at one time it would have to move. Day after day dad would continue to tell his story about the gargoyle and day after day we couldn't wait to get down to the basement. My sister just couldn't take it anymore and asked dad about the statue. What statue Dad asked? Oh dad, the one in the basement. Dad started laughing and said that he had sold that statue a few weeks ago. What, why my sister continues. Well, it always seemed to scare you kids and I just couldn't have that. The statue was starting to look a little worn and old anyway, so I sold it to Steve, the computer guy when he repaired my computer. But I did notice that the statue sure seemed to be a lot bigger than I thought. It took both of us to get it to his truck.

Maybe the thing absorbs water and gets heavier. Dad smiled at us and said, you don't think that thing was a real gargoyle do you? And then he winked. My sister started screaming and ran to her bedroom. Now we were sure that it was real. Positive actually. Was dad trying to scare us or was he just kidding around? We don't know that answer, but I do know that we could not forget about that statue. We had to find out where Steve, the computer guy, lived so we could go look for ourselves and maybe even warn him about what we knew and what we saw. Steve had to be told, someone had to do something. This statue must be real. It would sit on dad's desk when he brought it home and now it took two men to put it in a truck? Maybe we could find the bill from Steve and it would have his address on it. Now that the statue was gone, we had no problem slipping into dad's office after him and mom went to sleep so of course that is what we did. Late one night while they were sleeping we went downstairs and started looking for the bill. It wasn't as hard as we thought, it was right there on the top of his desk, 0616 NE Calhoun Dr. But where was this and how would we get there? So out comes the map of our little town and soon we had a good idea of where to go look. It was only about 3 miles from our house, so we could ride our bikes that far. Plans were made and the time came to find this address. After school instead of going straight home as we always did, or at least mostly did, we headed for Calhoun Dr. From the school it was only about 2 miles. Looking back now, I wish we had never gone. But we did and soon we rang Steve's doorbell. No one answered the door and after a few minutes we decide to look for ourselves through the windows. We tried several windows and nothing, then we pushed back some hedges and looked through another window and there it was, the statue of the gargoyle.

It was enormous. That couldn't be the same statue? Could it???

CHAPTER 11

This must be some kind of a joke. There is no way that that statue was the one from our house. No way. It could sit on the desk when dad brought it home. Now it is taller than I am. Dad must be playing with us. He had to be. From where we were, that thing looked real. More real than ever. What in the world is going on? When we got home, we ran straight to dad's office. He was in there writing on his gargoyle story. He didn't seem too excited when we came in with our story. He slowly turned around and told us to have a seat and tell him what was going on. Trying to catch our breath, we explained to him what we had done and what we had seen. He looked very serious at us and said that we must have made a mistake and that maybe Steve had other statues and maybe we saw one of those. That was pretty much the end of the conversation. Then dad just smiles at us and turns around and starts writing on his story. Hey guys, let me catch you up on Henry. And dad goes on with his story. Well Henry was going to go back to the old grocery store and see if he could find any sign of Bruce or maybe some sign of the gargoyle's skins or skulls that were there.

Henry did know exactly where to look. He had seen them when he was ran off by the owner and his daughter. The trip didn't take very long and when he got there, he went straight to where the old red door was. The door was flat as a pancake and upside down. When he turned it over he could still see the big claw mark. The old timer was right. There was nothing left. Everything was destroyed. It was hard to tell what was what. Henry looked in the area he knew would be where the bodies were if there were any and found nothing. No sign of anything resembling a gargoyle. Being with Bruce for a long time, he knew what his claw print would look like in the soft dirt around the old store. But Henry couldn't find any such claw prints. Did Bruce come back with his family and friends and do this? If he did, there was no sign of them. He knew that Bruce could fly, heck all gargoyles can fly. But how would they do all this damage and not leave a single claw print? Henry started thinking that maybe Bruce didn't do this.

Of course he had every good reason to, especially if one of the skin and skulls were his sister's. Henry keeps looking for a while and can't find a thing. When it was starting to get dark, he decides to go make camp back at the old creek bed. He arrived there just as it was getting dark. Getting the fire going was the first plan so he could have some coffee. As he put more wood on the fire, he hears a very loud swooshing noise and it was getting closer. The wind from this thing was starting to push the fire away.

When Henry looked up, he saw that it was a gargoyle, but it sure wasn't his friend Bruce, it was.

CHAPTER 12

Henry sure wanted to find Bruce. He was a little worried about him. Their friendship meant a lot to him and he wanted Bruce to know. When he heard the swooshing noise at the camp site, he thought it might be Bruce had found him. But, when the gargoyle got close enough he could tell it wasn't Bruce. The gargoyle was a lot bigger and older, a very scary looking thing. It landed and walked up to Henry. The thing stared at Henry for a long time, then picked him up and flew off. What could he do? There was no getting away, so he just watched as the gargoyle flew over mountains and woods to this big opening high in the side of a mountain. The gargoyle flew him right in the opening into a large cave. It was so black you could hardly see anything. When it set him down it was beside a small stream near another opening out the back side of the cave. When he was released, he stood for a minute in shock. When he did start looking around, he didn't see anyone, nothing but a small fire and a small stream running through the area. The area behind him was dark and you couldn't see very far back in the cave. Then Henry heard a voice that he recognized. Bruce came walking out of the darkness. How are you Henry? Says Bruce. Ok, I think was the reply. Sorry for having my dad come pick you up, but we have been looking for you. Henry wants to know how Bruce is and why did he run off from the grocery store last week. Bruce sit down on a large rock and in a low slow voice he started to tell him what had happened. Bruce had walked around the store and found the barn. He also found the path that lead to the red door. When he found the skins and skulls, one of the claws had a crossed rabbit skin tied to it. The last time he had seen his sister she had the same rabbit skin on her claw. That sent him into a rage, but he couldn't take everything with him so he flew off to get help. When he got back to the cave to his family he told them what he had found. They were also furious. His dad was head of his herd and called a meeting. They all decided to go back and get the remains of their loved ones, but they had to do it without the town people knowing it was them. So, late that night they swept down and got the skins and skulls without making any noise. They found that the store keeper was some kind of trapper and was selling the skins and skulls to a big company in Boston. The people wanted as many as he could get. We broke in his store and woke him up. He told us a lot of things before he passed out. We thought he had just passed out from fear, but soon we knew he was dead.

He must of died of something, but we did not kill him..

CHAPTER 13

The story Bruce was telling made Henry wonder about what he had found at the store. He asked Bruce what happened to the owner's daughter and buildings. "What daughter", Bruce asked? "And what do you mean buildings?" Henry was surprised at his answer. "The daughter is missing, the owner is torn to shreds and the buildings are destroyed", said Henry. "That can't be. When we left, everything was as we found it except we took the skins and skulls", said Bruce. Meanwhile back at town, they were having a meeting on what they could do about the incident at the old store and what to do about the owner's daughter missing. The old trusted man Paul told them that there was only one thing to do and that was to kill those gargoyles. But how they wanted to know. "With our shotguns", said Paul. "We have the power and the guns to end this now before they come after us". After all, they didn't have a clue that the store owner and his daughter was selling gargoyle skins and skulls to people in Boston. How could they? So they all got together and made a plan to go out after the gargoyles first thing in the morning. Henry and Bruce stayed up late talking and trying to figure things out. They had no idea of what the town was planning. After hours of conversation, Henry spent the night with Bruce in the cave, besides he didn't know where he was, but he knew it was a long way back to camp. The next morning, Bruce took Henry back to his camp. Still they had no idea of what the town people had in mind. While they were talking, Bruce mentioned another herd of gargoyles that lived on the other side of the big mountains. They were a little different from Bruce's herd. They didn't like humans and really wanted them dead. They considered them enemies and watched every move that the humans made. Bruce thought that maybe they had heard something about the old store and told Henry he would be back later and that he was going over to talk to them about all this. Bruce flew off that morning about 9 am. It was now a little past 11 pm. Henry was beginning to think that Bruce wasn't coming back when he heard a loud crash just outside the camp area. When he went to see what it was, he found Bruce half dead. He was all scratched up and bleeding badly. Henry helped him over to the camp and worked on his wounds. He couldn't do much, but he did everything he could to help him. Bruce was so weak he couldn't talk to Henry. All night Henry worked on his sores and scratches. By the next morning, he wasn't getting any better and Henry knew he had to get some help. But where would he go?

It was a long way back to town and he surely couldn't carry him but something had to be done or Bruce was going to die. Just then...

CHAPTER 14

Henry had to get the bleeding stopped or Bruce was going to die. He had lost too much blood and had to get to a doctor right away. Putting dressings on his wounds had slowed them down, but that wasn't going to be enough. His time was running out. Now it was starting to get real cold so he gathered up a bunch of wood and put it on the fire. As the fire began to catch and grow, he thought he heard a noise. It was getting closer. The noise seemed familiar, it was a swooshing noise. Henry knew what that meant, or at least he thought he knew. It was a gargoyle coming. But, was it a good one or a bad one? It was pretty clear that the bad ones had done a lot of damage to Bruce so he sure hoped it was a good one. There would be no way for him to fight a gargoyle off, all he had was an old cut off shotgun. He scrambled to get the gun out before this thing could land, but the gun got hung on the bag, so by the time he got it out the gargoyle had landed. It was a lot bigger than Bruce and looked very angry. It walked right up to him, leaned over and started to pick him up. Who was it? Henry had no idea, so he fired off a shot to get his attention. The gargoyle stopped and turned toward him. Oh boy, now he had done it. It was coming for him when Bruce said something to him. Then Bruce made the words out to Henry. My dad. Then Henry realized who it was. The gargoyle turned back, leaned over, picked him up and flew away. Just that fast, they were gone.

There was no way for Henry to follow. No way to find out if he had lived or died. The best thing he could do was wait, just stay here where he last saw him. Henry hoped that Bruce's dad would let him know what had happened. After about three days, the dad came back. He looked a little less angry this time. Walking over to Henry, he looked as if he wanted to say something, but was unable to. Then he picked Henry up and off they went. At least this time he had an idea of where they were going and hopefully why. Henry was hoping to find Bruce alive and well. Flying with Bruce's dad wasn't as scary this time. When he set him down, he recognized the stream. He walked him over behind one of the rocks and there was Bruce just smiling. What a welcome site. Henry was so happy to see his friend and to know that he was ok. He couldn't stand up yet but he did sit on a rock and told Henry how glad he was to see him. The first thing after seeing him better was to find out what had happened to him. Who did this to him and why? Bruce told him that when he flew over to the other herd to ask them if they knew anything about the grocery store. They jumped him and wanted to know why he was asking. After beating him for a while they wanted to know what he knew about the trappers, how he was involved with these evil people and how he knew to come looking for them. Bruce told them what he knew, but they didn't believe him and beat him harder. Bruce remembered that while they were beating him, he heard them talking about another raid they were doing this Friday night and that this raid would be even worse than the last.

They were going to catch the people that were hunting them and put a stop to it. Then he passed out...

CHAPTER 15

Bruce continued to tell Henry that they had to find out where they were going to attack and let the people know. How are we going to do that? Henry asked. Bruce goes on, when I was there I saw Ellie, the grocery store owner's daughter. She had been terrorized for sure, but she was being held in a small cave out away from their camp by herself. If we could get to her, she might know where they were going next. About this time, his father walks up and starts talking to Bruce. Henry waited patiently to see what they were talking about. It was easy to see that Bruce was agreeing with his father. When it was over, the father had told Bruce that if the other herd was going to kill the same humans that were killing and skinning the gargoyles, that he wasn't going to stop them. As matter of fact, he would help them. After all, they had killed and skinned his daughter, Bruce's sister. Henry began to think that war was going to break out between the gargoyles and the humans. If that happened, it would be a very brutal war.

The humans had guns ok, but the gargoyles could fly and kill any human with just their claws. The gargoyles were huge creatures. Bruce's father must of been 10 feet tall with a wing span a lot bigger. The humans would not have a chance. So how were the humans killing the gargoyles they had skinned? That was a great question. Somebody must have figured it out. There sure was a lot of skins and skulls back in that barn. Maybe we should start looking for the other trappers and warn them. Says Bruce. But Henry didn't want them to kill any gargoyles either. What kind of a reason could they have for killing so many? Could it be just for the money? Or were other things going on that we didn't know about? Maybe they could talk to the human girl and find out something. But they would need some help to do that, says Bruce. Let's see if my brothers are home. He then turns and screams a sound that makes Henry's skin crawl and hair stand up on the back of his neck. Bruce had talked about having a couple of older brothers, but Henry had never seen them. Soon, a loud scream came back. Bruce smiles and says, they're here. In a few minutes there stood his brothers, both just as big as their dad. They take a few minutes to talk and then one picks Bruce up and the other one picks Henry up and away they go. Ok, Henry thought, I have been transported this way before, but I still wasn't liking it any better. They flew a long way and Henry didn't recognize any of the area they were flying over. If you can fly, I guess distance isn't quite as important. The area they landed in was very wooded, actually so wooded that they had to break some of the limbs off the giant trees as they were landing. When they landed, Bruce looks around and says this way. Henry was the only clumsy one there, the rest were quiet as mice. When they got up close to the cave the girl was in, Bruce motioned for the rest to hold back. Then it started, the smell was unbearable. Henry thought that he might pass out the smell was so bad. It smelled like stinking flesh of some kind.

You could tell the gargoyles smelled something, but weren't acting as if it smelled bad. They did act like something was wrong.

Finally Henry asks Bruce, what in the world is that smell? Bruce turns to him and says with a big smile on his face. "Dinner..."

CHAPTER 16

Henry wasn't sure about that smile. He hadn't seen Bruce make a face like that before. What was going on he thought? As they went through the bushes, Henry couldn't believe what he was seeing. There were hundreds of gargoyles standing around a large fire. On the side of the fire was a small fire with something hanging over it like an animal being roasted. The shape of the roasted animal was different somehow. It was a long animal with long hair being turned over and over by one of the gargoyles. Was this Bruce's herd or was it the bad ones? There was no way he could tell. My sister couldn't take it anymore. She broke in on my dad's story. Dad, are you going to tell us about the statue from your office or not? Dad smiled and just looked over at my sister and says "what did you find when you got to Steve's?" She replied to him, that couldn't have been our statue, it was way too big. Dad couldn't hold it any longer and broke out in a big laugh. I just wanted to have a little fun and make you guys think that the gargoyle statue was growing. I replaced the statue down stairs once to make you think it grew and then bought a giant one to leave at Steve's. I knew you guys would go over there. I hope I didn't scare you too much. OH DAD, you really scared us this time, she said. For me, that was a little too convenient. I wasn't buying that story. I know what I saw and something moved down in his office and besides that, he hadn't even been home when we realized that the statue had grown. I told my sister later that night that dad was making all that up, we know what we saw. My sister agreed with me, but we decided not to say anything to dad. Next afternoon at the same time as always, we met with dad for him to run his Statue story by us. He continued with his story. Bruce and his brothers walked right up to the others and they were slapping each other like they were all friends. Some were flying in and out of eyesight. Some were eating already. They were all talking in their language and there was no way to understand anything they were saying. They must all be some of Bruce's family he thought, hoping they were all good guys. Henry didn't see Bruce anywhere, so he just looked around. No one was looking at him funny, so maybe they all knew he was a friend of Bruce's. To the far right there was a smaller cave with a door on the front, like maybe it was a cage or a place to hold something. Henry thought he might give that a closer look to see if maybe that was where they had Ellie. The door to the cave was partially opened. He could barely see inside, but he did see a sweater and a pair of shoes.

He thought, was this Ellie's stuff and if so, where was she???

CHAPTER 17

As Henry was still trying to figure out what was going on with Ellie, Bruce walks up behind him and kind of pushes him in the cave. When they both get in the cave, Bruce tells him that this was where Ellie had been and that they had found her and let her out. Well where is she? Henry asked.

Bruce turns to Henry and gives him a big smile. That weird smile that goes from ear to ear. Look over there, says Bruce. She is right over there. Where Henry says? Where is she? Bruce points right at the animal being cooked on the fire. There says Bruce, almost done. What are you saying? Says Henry. Come on Henry, Bruce says, you knew we ate humans. Everybody knows that. We have been around for over a thousand years. Chasing down humans was way too easy, you guys can barely put up a fuss. So we began playing games over time, just having fun with our food you might say. We would do some kind of trick to get as many of you together as we could. That would keep us from running you down one by one. It takes a lot of food for this many gargoyles you know. Our first plan fell through when your town's people were too scared to come back and hunt us down.

We didn't make them mad enough yet so this last plan came from the elder of the herd. He had us go to our grave yard and gather up skins and skulls and then go down and hide them in the grocery store barn. When you found them, I knew it would work. We made sure that one of the people from town saw us and that started the mob. Tearing that old grocery store and barn down was just part of the plan. Killing the old man was just plain fun and a little tasty. Now all the men in that town will be here by tomorrow. When they arrive, we will capture them all and then eat what we need for the next few years. Then we will go back to the town and figure another trick to get the families. We just love to fool you guys. It just gets better and better. You humans keep falling for our tricks. We don't know what we would do without you, starve I guess, as he has a big laugh. So there are no good gargoyles, Henry barely gets the words out, you are all bad? Well says Bruce, I guess that is one way to look at it. But we all have to eat. What else is there so many of? Humans have become our main food for a very long time and we just can't get away from the taste. Henry tries to make it to the door, but Bruce is way too fast. As Bruce closes the door, he says to Henry,

“It doesn't mean much now, but you were one of the nicest humans I've ever met”. Thanks says Henry...

CHAPTER 18

Dad shuts his book and looks at us. That's it? Says my sister. Yes, dad says. You don't like the ending? Well, I didn't think it would turn out that way. I was sure that Bruce and Henry would stay friends and Bruce would have a family, says my sister. I did think about that, but in real time the gargoyle would out live the humans by about 10 times or so. Humans just can't live with gargoyles. It just wouldn't happen. They live out in the woods and are always playing tricks on the humans. Do you think gargoyles are real dad? Asked my sister. Of course I do, he says. With time we tried to forget about the gargoyle story and about something moving down in basement that night. But, life went on for us. There were so many stories to remember anyway. A few weeks later when all was forgotten, my mom needed some computer work. She called Steve's house and tried to get him but had to leave a message. Another day went by and still no Steve. So my mom asked dad if he would go over and check on him. They were pretty good friends. When we heard it was Steve, the computer guy, we were not going to let dad go by himself, so we both got in the car with dad and went over to Steve's house. No one answered the door so dad went around to the back to look in the window to make sure he was ok. We were sure that something had happened to Steve and we were sure it was that statue of the gargoyle. When dad came walking back from around the house he had a strange look on his face. Dad what's wrong, we asked. Oh nothing dad said. He is not here. There is no sign of him. He left the back door open and he is gone. OK, now what? My sister and I both at the same time ask, was the statue in there? I didn't think to look he said. Well lets go back and look, we said. Before he could say no, we jumped out and ran around the back of the house and went through the open back door. We looked in every room and every closet, looking for that statue. We didn't even think about looking for Steve. The gargoyle statue was what we wanted to see, but there was no sign of the statue, nothing. We were so sure the gargoyle had flown off with him, that's what it had to be. What else could it be? None of us have seen Steve since. As far as we know, no one has reported him even missing. But for my sister and I, we know what happened. Weeks have gone by now and dad began writing another story. He is always trying to be more scary with the next one. Up until now, the scariest has been the statue story. Maybe it was because he brought home a statue and we were more involved this time, but it was the scariest.

Then one morning dad walks in for breakfast and asked if anyone had heard of that boy born at 12 months instead of 9 months? They call him puppet boy, something to do with his head. Why dad? My sister asked. Well dad says, I just saw him yesterday at the cleaners. He looked just like a big baby doll with the largest blue eyes. It made me start thinking that my next story should be about a little boy, a little boy that never grew up. A little boy that was born a little different. One that turned out to be a monster.

I will call him "Puppet Boy".

The End.

For now.