



Novel #1, contains the following (in order of publication):

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Other books by R.R.Smith:

* *Beware Jerusalem* (XLibres Press)

(under the pseudonym Robert Barred Smith)

Of That Which I Am Capable

By

R. R. Smith

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Prologue 1: Princeton, Indiana; Friday, October 9, 1966.

It is a chilly early morning just after sunrise when mothers are readying their children for school. A non-descript darkish tan four-door sedan with out-of-state plates rolls to a stop outside a small southern Indiana town.

The town has a good-sized population as printed on the 'Welcome' sign at the city limits. It's a perfect location, just off a state road, to hunt. The man had been making these trips for the better part of six years. He'd been very productive by his own written account. He kept a photo of each of his boys on the wall of his workroom and visits their mortal remains regularly.

The man, perpetually impatient, just shy of his fortieth birthday, exits the car and watches the sun edge the horizon. He folds his arms across his chest. *A beautiful day*, he thinks, an almost whimsical look on his face. *A beautiful morning to what most likely will be a perfect day.*

He has the unremarkable bland looks that easily blend into a crowd; someone who would never be noticed, much less be remembered or attract attention. He's someone who all but remains invisible to most everyone else. He has learned to use this to his advantage--much as a predator conceals itself, its movement, and its intentions as it hunts. His only feature that might be identifiable is a slight hitch in the left eye: his left eye didn't always follow his right eye when he refocused his eyes in a different and new direction.

His obsession with preadolescent boys first emerged sometime after high school. By

the time he made his first real *hit*--as he referred to them--more than ten years later, all the operative details he would need had been carefully and meticulously thought through and rehearsed countless times in his imagination. With each imagining new symbolic layers had been added on top of another. Scenarios and details of his fantasies had been carefully crafted, then added to, modified, or even discarded--some, even in the field--all for one purpose: to fulfill his burgeoning inner fantasy. But the fantasies were just that--unreal-- and were always better than the reality, so he kept working to make the reality live up to the fantasy.

One feeling he could never control--much as he tired--was his anxiety and levels of ecstasy. They were always at a peak before and during the *hit*. They were more controllable the more often he abducted a boy, but they were always there to some extent or another. The man just needed to make sure they didn't spin dangerously out of control!

This was to be his first *hit* in this town. During the years leading up to his first abduction he had spent his time on the road for business driving the back roads of countless small towns surveying their location and getting acquainted with the towns: the location of the main roads, the roads nearest the highway, the roads most likely to find children walking to or from their homes to school, the location of the elementary schools and police department, where he could best hide. He took copious notes, drew maps, and studied them, and came to know some of the towns as well as anyone could know them, even as well as some residents.

He passes a boy of about the correct age walking along the road from a grouping of three or four houses towards town and the school.

A couple miles from the town, and well past the boy, the man stops and backs his car into a prearranged gravel drive which turns and dead-ends about fifty feet or so from the road. He backs far enough off the the road to hide the car and turns the ignition off. He does't want any noise to betray him.

As with the others the man doesn't know the boy, has never seen him before, just someone walking to school along an asphalt county road. And he doesn't care about the boy, either--no morality, humanity, and no remorse. He is only useful as a *hit*, as a player in the man's fantasy world, a mere puppet in a larger drama.

After checking the road in either direction, the man hastens back to his car and opens the rear driver-side door to find his black bag, much as a doctor would carry on house-calls, on the rear bench seat and removes a bottle of chloroform and a cloth rag. He dowses the rag with a healthy dose of the liquid and then opens the trunk and, returning to the highway, takes up a position deep enough into the woods and bushes as to not be seen. He's lucky to have found this spot; most of the surrounding countryside is flat, some ground fallow, some with remnants of corn stalks already harvested. The man does not want to harm the boy, just disable him enough to make him pliable. He never has inflicted pain on any of the other boys. The man smiles to himself, the gap between his two front upper teeth plainly visible.

The man slightly steps out from the foliage to see where the boy is. For some reason

the boy has decided to cross the road and continue walking on the opposite shoulder toward town. "Damn," the man breathes. He quickly scans the fields on the side opposite his location. *Not enough cover*, he thinks. But he'll make do. He always has-- along with an overdose of luck.

The man allows the boy to calmly pass his concealed location. He'll use his usual blitz technique, taking the boy completely by surprise. The man leaves his concealed location and runs, quickly and quietly, with long loping strides, to the boy. In a matter of seconds he covers the boy's mouth and nose with the chloroform-infused cloth. The boy goes limp almost immediately without a fight. As he does so, the man pulls the boy into the denuded corn stalk remnants and gently lowers him onto the ground. The man quickly scans both directions for signs of any traffic. Since there is none, he quickly lifts the boy and races back to his car. The boy is a lightweight as the other boys had been. He carries the boy face up but refuses to look into the child's face. This has been a part of his plan since the beginning--as little facial recognition as possible or, better yet, none. No reason to make personal contact. Once he decided on a boy the man wanted as little human contact as possible. The boys were only trophies, plain and simple. He never talked to any of the boys; the never answered any of their plaintive questions; he never cared enough to even ask their names. Once he returns home, he'll name the boy himself; Evan sounded excellent, a name he always admired. He then places the boy into his opened trunk and gently binds and gags him. And finally throws a blanket over him. As he closes the trunk, he again smiles to himself. Hopefully, this

time he won't be stopped by State Police. That had only happened once and he'd talked himself out of a ticket or a search of any kind. He had explained his action and kept the trooper talking and occupied and was let off with only a verbal warning. He promised to be more careful next time he was in the state.

Dumb ass, the man remembers thinking as the trooper walked toward his patrol car.

His trip home is uneventful. There will be no stops except for the occasional relief on the roadside. He knew the boy wouldn't make it all the way home so he would check on him every few hours and carefully allow him out of the trunk and still partially bound and gagged and hidden by the car to urinate, then hurry him back to the trunk, rebind him securely, and apply another dose of chloroform. He is careful not to use too much. He doesn't want the boy to die--not like one of the first boys did, by accident--until necessary.

Chapter 1.

The old man knelt before a headstone and slowly brushed off the accumulated wind-blown debris that had gathered across its surface. He also laid a small bouquet of fresh flowers next to the name on the stone.

"Hi, honey," he said. "Happy anniversary." Every year--for birthdays, anniversaries, and sometime when he just needed someone to listen--he would visit the grave site of his deceased wife. He never considered her deceased--at least not in his heart. Even in death she still brought him solace and peace of mind and today was no different. He gently traced the letters of her name: Elizabeth Emmaline Moier-Dunkard, dob April 19, 1954, dod February 6, 2016. Next to her name on the headstone was his name: Franklin Dean Dunkard, dob June 12, 1950, the date-of - death purposefully remaining blank.

Elizabeth had been his rock and haven, his anchor. She was a lively person, full of good cheer that kept him happy through his bouts of depression. When she died, he wondered how--even if--he would survive. His mother suffered through depressive bouts and was even treated, later in life, for geriatric psychosis. He worried about sharing her fate--especially now that he lived alone with only three border collies and his thoughts to keep him company: which is why his oldest daughter was sending her twelve year-old daughter--his granddaughter--to keep him company during the coming summer.

The old man--whom everyone called Dean--came to appreciate a quote he'd read by

Harriet Beecher Stowe: 'The bitterest tears shed over a grave are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone'. Fortunately, he couldn't recall too many words left unsaid or deeds left undone. For this he was grateful. While it was some comfort to him, he still had a hole in his life that he knew could never be completely healed.

Following Elizabeth's death he had become very restless, making plans, but never quite following through. Only after he agreed to take his granddaughter for the summer did he begin to settle down.

So, here he was, May 1, 2018--his and Elizabeth's anniversary--speaking with her and hoping things would work out for the summer. Elizabeth's--she was named for the grandmother--parents had given her the choice: spend the summer with grandpa or trapse through the deserts of Chile searching for Moche indian sites. Both her parents were archaeologists specializing in Pre-Columbian Peruvian civilizations and she had joined them the previous four summers and did not deny them their passion, but it honestly wasn't for her. So she jumped at the chance of spending this summer in civilization, away from bugs, parasites, wild animals, canned or dried food, for days on end, the hot summer sun, and only a few kids her age. She had learned to speak near-fluent Chilean Spanish dialect but she had little in common with the other kids who came along to the dig site with their parents and were Chilean by birth. She liked them and got along very well with both the few girls and boys, but in their off hours the Chilean children went home with their parents and she went back to the campsite.

"Elizabeth's coming for a visit this summer as soon as her school's out in a couple weeks, honey" he said. She'll be here all summer. Matt and Jamie will be Chile as usual and Elizabeth decided she wanted a change; she's been with them for the past four summers, now. I haven't seen her since Christmas and haven't spent much time with her since the summer before you passed, when she visited her aunt Kate for some of the summer. It'll be nice to have someone in the house on a regular basis again; she'll add sparkle. They sent me a picture of her and she's really grown, turning into a lovely young lady. Maybe we'll go on a road trip for two or three weeks. Up East: D.C. and New York City. I haven't seen the Holocaust Memorial Museum, even though we've been members for twenty years or so. We'd always wanted to go but never did make the time and wanted to wait until the Freedom Tower was open. Well, it's open, now. And then probably up toward New England: Boston, maybe. And I've always wanted to see Gettysburg and Antietam. I guess now the time is right, since I'll have a travelling partner". He paused.

"I wish there was some way I could tell you how much I still miss you. I probably always will. I know, I know; you've heard all this before". He paused again. "I know you want me to move on--that was one of the last things you told me--and find someone nice who'll take care of me. It's just that it's hard to do when I still love you so much. But, then I haven't made the effort to meet anyone. But I have made the effort to get out more. Primarily Mensa. Being retired just gives me too much empty time. I guess I could always volunteer somewhere. I do spend some time at the firm when the need is

there. And yes, I know: you've heard that before, too. But this summer should be special with Elizabeth coming and all. She'll spend some time with her aunt Kate, of course, visiting with her cousin. "Speaking of Kate, she's pregnant again. They couldn't wait to find out the natural way, so they know it's their first son. And I do see Kate quite a bit. She comes by the house often, of course with Samantha. Samantha just turned nine a couple of months ago and reminds me so much of you: the blue eyes, the freckles, and of course the curly bright red hair, just like you. She's growing like a weed and can't sit still for more than a few minutes unless her mind's completely engaged with what she's doing. She's such a beautiful little girl.

"I'm also not cycling with my depression since I've been taking this new antidepressant. I feel good--if not happy--most of the time. I engage better with people. I'm friendlier. And the side effects are almost nonexistent. So things are going fine with me, now; at least better, as a rule, than they have."

The old man knelt quietly in front of the grave for a further fifteen or so minutes lost in his own thoughts. "I'll come talk to you again soon, sweetheart," he finally said and, tears welling in his eyes, stood and slowly walked away. He always felt this way after every visit, even though the emptiness was not so all-consuming as it had been when she first passed. He remembered some words of advice from an old Bonanza episode after Ben Cartwright lost his wife. He doesn't remember which character, other than an older friend of Ben's, gave the advice. But it was a whole lot easier said than done: *"Keep her in a warm place in your heart and then go on with life"*, or

something close to that. He's tried to but it hasn't been at all easy. He won't ever forget her or the time they were blessed to have together--nearly thirty-eight years--nor does he want to. And maybe the tears will always be a part of the visit, but so be it.

Chapter 2.

The cabin rested in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, the penultimate remnant of a great mountain range in distant prehistory. Now, the Ozarks were not much more than a blending of smaller and larger hills. Elizabeth and Dean had bought the cabin and surrounding five acres in the mid-nineteen-nineties as an anniversary gift to one another on their eighteen years together. Their two girls were young and always enjoyed romping in the woods, ticks, snakes, and wildlife notwithstanding. In fact, the isolation was always a welcome release from the hassles of the city. The cabin, approximately three-and-one-half hours southwest of St. Louis, would more accurately be described as an A-frame, built of rough-hewn logs, consisted of large bedroom and full bath upstairs and a relatively large living room on the first floor. A kitchen, then a smaller bedroom and another full bath lay below the upstairs bedroom. The living room rose two stories to the peak of the A-frame. A railing fronted the master bedroom, looking onto the living room. A wrap-around porch spread the full extent of the cabin on three sides with the entire back wall and parts of the side walls built into the side of the hill. Large glass windows wrapped around the front and sides, offering a panoramic view of the woods and lake, part of the five acres, completed the ambience of the A-frame. Elizabeth fell in love with the cabin and surroundings the first time she saw it. They made an offer that same day, which was accepted by the realty company representing the children of the owners who needed money for eldercare. Dean built a small dock on the lake and removed some trees to clear a line-of-sight view that added

even more serenity to the property.

Dean hadn't been to the cabin since shortly before Elizabeth passed--when she had wanted to see it one last time. Now with his granddaughter Elizabeth visiting for the summer, he thought it would be nice to bring her for a visit to the cabin. He had a local real estate company keep watch on the property for the past two years and some but there were still repairs that needed to be made and rooms to be cleaned. Since Elizabeth did not see her grandmother very often, Dean thought it would be nice to write notes and vignettes she could read that would help her better understand how wonderful a woman her grandmother had been. He thought there was no better place to reminisce than the cabin they shared. His method of working would be to think of stories to tell while he was working on the cabin. When he thought of something of interest he'd stop working to write it down before he forgot then rewrite it a few more times to find a complete form for each story. His working title would simply be *A Memoir* and keep writing until he'd covered everything of importance. He still had three weeks before Elizabeth arrived to write and repair. He'd just live in the cabin until everything was finished.

Prologue 2: New Albany, Indiana; Friday, March 24, 1961.

The man was now firmly committed to the idea of continuing his *life's work*. Twelve months of soul-searching, planning, physical reconnaissance of various small towns along his business route, had forced him to the conclusion that his best chances of having a successful *hunt* and exiting the area safely with a boy was to travel as far as possible from his immediate geographical area; in fact, as far as possible on business trips--which would act as cover--saving the final day or two to *hunt*. His failure on the previous attempt was that it was poorly planned, too close to home and ended in near disaster. The boy had escaped and even though he couldn't identify the man or his car license, his possible brush with the police was enough of a scare to force him to reconsider his fantasy and how to turn it into a successful reality. Even though it puts him into relatively unknown territory it would give him enough time to unobtrusively as possible scout the area beforehand to refresh his memory and notes and only then decide whether everything clicked.

He has it all planned: roads into and out of town, towns with easy access to an east-west road, the location of elementary schools, the possible route children would walk to and from school, the distance of houses from the road and his place of concealment, how the surrounding vegetation and lay of the land shielded him from the nearby houses and from the road, and bus schedules. He also realized his first trip into an area might only lead to possibilities for a future trip. His camera would supply him with the

areas he'd visited over the past year, photos he would develop and print himself which he'd use later. He used his time in town to good advantage. Not wanting to draw any unintended attention to himself, he reasoned the longer he lingered in a town the easier it might be for someone to remember a stranger driving a car with out-of-state plates a few days before or on the day of a disappearance, so he never ate in local restaurants or stopped to ask directions or for gas. He drove a few different roads out of town to find the best location to wait unobserved and no one would remember him from months before. He knew he couldn't wait too long in one spot--no matter how well protected it seemed from passing eyes. So he needed to develop timing--possibly a different timing for each situation--to work in his favor.

From his visits over the past year, besides the photos, he would write a summary--times school started and ended, best roads to drive, a rather detailed map of the area, the best locations from which to make a *hit*--in a small leather-bound pad he would keep in the glove compartment of his car. He would also high-light on a state map the roads around the town and keep it with his logbook in the glove compartment.

Business had taken longer than the man had expected but he is now heading home. It is Friday morning, slightly before sunrise, near the time children would be leaving home for school. He's had to drive most of the previous night to reach the town by sunrise. He'd turned off the highway and passed a sign: New Albany, Indiana, 3 miles. He had last visited the town a week ago on Monday while heading east. He had wanted

the logistics just right. Even though he'd first discovered the town eight months ago on a practice run from a previous business trip, he wanted to make sure of the layout of the town and if it still matches with his photos and his memory. Even though he's practiced this *hit* more than a score of times in his mind and on paper over the past few days, his emotions from the last near-disaster are still a labyrinthine tangle of pain and anxiety. On future trips his anxiety level would fundamentally decrease and stabilize to have it replaced by a sense of entitlement, that he deserves to succeed. Fear, guilt, remorse, empathy were never his emotions; they never existed inside him. He could mimic them--quite successfully, in fact, but it was as if he was born without them.

On Monday morning, the week before, he had driven the main street of town noticing the location of the police station and elementary school. He drove side streets to get a feel for the current flow of the town. It was medium-sized, the size he searched for--a population high enough from the last census count on the city-limit sign. He drives out of town into into nearby farm land. He'd be back the end of next week at the time students would be on their way to school.

The following Friday, the day he had chosen, he bypasses the town by a circuitous route until he finds the road west of town, near the elementary school, that he'd decided on. He finds the spot where he'll wait and backs in until he's hidden by the surrounding undergrowth and trees. He doesn't know if this is a path from home to school and back for children. He does see a few houses, four or five, about a half-mile

further west along the road. He turns the ignition off, exits the car, and unlocks the trunk, then replaces the keys in the ignition.

He walks to what passes for a shoulder on these country roads and looks to see how well hidden he is. *Wonderful*, he thinks and hides behind the first row of greenery. He can see down the road in either direction for about fifty feet and felt unnoticed. He feels the chilliness of the early morning air. A morning *hit*--on the way to school--was always best. On these lonely country roads there was less chance of anyone noticing him. He only sees one passenger car and one delivery truck pass by in the first few minutes he's waited.

After about twenty minutes he hears voices before he sees who they belong to. He backs further into the bushes. In a few minutes three adolescent children--two girls, one boy, each about fourteen or fifteen--come into view. Too many and too old for his tastes. He assumes they came from the small grouping of houses further up the road. He allows them to pass undisturbed.

What he wants is a solitary boy about ten years of age and preferably blond. More than one boy would cause problems since he could take only one with ease in his trunk. He doesn't want any witnesses--*survivors* as he thought of them. He's thought through this scenario, taking one of the boys and leaving the other, but always came to the same conclusion and wants to avoid it. He'd just let both boys go by.

The *hit* is always the most dangerous, and most exhilarating, part of the hunt--finding a solitary boy the correct age: not part of a group but one who is walking and

at a distance from anyone before him or far enough ahead of a following group who couldn't see the *hit*. He always tries to take line-of-sight distances into consideration as he scouts for a place of concealment. He never makes a final decision until the chosen boy is alone and within four or five feet of his position. He then reaches out, grabs the boy, and before the boy can scream or react, overpowers him, covering his nose and mouth with the chlorofoam-soaked cloth; the boy is now his and the man quickly drags him into the vegetation, then carries him to his car.

Time ticks by slowly but no further children come his way. He has chosen a bad location *but now what?*, he thinks. *Should he wait for school to end but change locations.* Different alternatives pass through his mind. *No! It's way too risky to be in town during the day.* He decides to find a different town for that afternoon. Anyway, work wasn't expecting him back until later this afternoon or tomorrow. He'll find another town some distance from New Albany, Indiana and use what time was left of the morning and early afternoon to find a suitable location for concealment. He retrieves his leather-bound notebook and state map from the glove compartment and checks for something worthwhile; a town within about two hours driving time will do nicely. He could take his time and maybe even stop for lunch somewhere along the route.

The man mouths a series of expletives that barely make any noise as he says them. His frustration is evident. Frustration further fuels his impulses. He locates New Albany on the map and circles the area with his finger looking for another town. He finds three that might meet his criteria: one north, one further east, and one further

west, then north--about sixty miles and then some. He chooses the last of the three. It was about fifteen miles off the main east-west road he's driving, but it is more than large enough to have its own elementary school; it was still rural; and it's name started with "J", his middle initial. He smiles to himself. *A sign of luck*, he thinks. *This one will work fine*. He slowly pulls from his place of concealment and heads toward the main east-west road, turning west and ultimately home, hopefully with a *hit* in his trunk.

Chapter 3.

It had been more than two and one-half years since Dean had been in the cabin, when he and Elizabeth had last spent a few nights inside. He even had the cabin briefly on the market until he realized how furious Elizabeth would be, furious that he was trying to remove her from his life. Even though he'd planned to visit on a number of occasions, it wasn't until a week ago that he finally worked up the courage to see what shape the cabin was in. Even though he'd hired a caretaker to keep watch, no repairs had been done, because none had appeared to be needed, at least not from the outside. He had made a list of things he thought he might need.

Being there without Elizabeth was every bit as difficult as he thought it would be, but he knew his wife would have enjoyed their granddaughter experiencing the same natural ambience she felt every time she stayed. Even though the younger Elizabeth had spent some time in the cabin, she had been very young and might not remember too much; being older now would be a much better time for her to keep definite memories.

His wife Elizabeth had been the collector in the family, of all the little nick-nacks on glass shelves that give a house the look of a warm home. She collected stone and polished apples. At least he thought they were stone; they had the heft and feel of stone. Each was about the right size, some smallish, some larger, and each with a flat base and shellacked and burnished apple skin with a silver, grey-white or gold stem with or without a solitary leaf attached. Each was a varying shade of greens or reds or

yellows: the older varieties of Granny Smith's, Red and Yellow delicious, Jonathans, as well as the new Fuji's, and the multicolored Pixies and Honey Crisps. She must have had thirty to forty individual apples. We would tease her with "I'm just glad they're not watermelons." Elizabeth had a good laugh every time he said that.

He left a few apples at home but most he brought to the cabin, carefully positioning them on the fireplace mantel and on different shelves around the main floor and bedrooms, always the largest on the left and the smaller ones on the right. In the center of the mantel he placed a framed photo of their wedding. He thought it was a nice touch. The other nick-nacks he'd bring later.

He couldn't believe how much dust could accumulate in a closed-up house over two-and-a-half years; it was amazing. Even though housekeeping was not his strength--he had a housekeeper clean his main home--he set about as best he could. It took a while to find the house cleaning materials.

After about twenty minutes Dean had an idea; he called his housekeeper to see if she had time to clean the cabin at double her normal rate; he agreed to pay her drive-time at her regular house-cleaning rate, plus a per-mile rate. Dean held as she checked her schedule for a day off. "How about next Tuesday," she asked, "I can move my regulars to the next day or so. I don't think they'll mind since this is an emergency, so-to-speak."

"Thank you," Dean said in his most accommodating and relieved voice.

"Call me when you have more time and I'll give you directions, OK?". She agreed. "And use my cell number. I'll be spending much of my time here at the cabin. And thanks again, Cindy, I do appreciate it," Dean added again and rang off. "Whew!" he exhaled and then added, "One less pain." Now he could concentrate on any repairs, at which he was much better.

But where to begin, he thought. He took a closer look at the rough-hewn external cedar walls and decks. He had purchased a sprayer and five five-gallon cans of clear-coat sealant in St. Louis. The man at the hardware store said to apply sealant about every five years. Dean had no idea when the last time sealant had been applied--he had hired someone to take care of the repairs, but the external surfaces still looked solid without any frayed or damaged portions, so he didn't need to make any physical repairs outside. He thought five five-gallon cans was probably overkill, but he didn't want to make repeated trips to the hardware store if unnecessary, and he had no idea where one was locally, so he had made a list of everything he thought he might need, both external and internal. The wooden walls inside would need a new coat of paint but the hardwood floors were probably fine. The carpets would need to be vacuumed. He had purchased a paint roller, pan, and disposable liners, as well as additional rollers, one for each color, plus brushes and miscellaneous other tools he thought he might need; the rest he brought from home. He had also purchased a few gallons each of water-soluble indoor paint: Elizabeth's favorite color was turquoise, so that's the color he

chose for the downstairs bedroom and bath; his upstairs bedroom would be a darker rose, it's present color; and a bright gold for the upstairs bath, the kitchen, and remaining portions of the downstairs living space. The window and sliding door frames would remain ivory.

Since the weather forecast looked clear and sunny--without any rain--for at least seven days, Dean decided to coat the exterior first. He removed the extension ladder from the storage shed and started working from the top down for each of the three exposed walls. Since he hadn't planned to coat the exterior with two coats, he thought one thicker coat would have enough time to dry in the next week. Coating the outer walls and deck took most of two days to accomplish. Most of the second day his back hurt, so resting the third day seemed smart before starting on the inside. The last thing he needed was for his back to 'go out'. He didn't even want to take the chance of that happening; he didn't need to be crawling on all-fours or laid up in bed for a day or two without the ability to hold himself erect. He'd been bothered by a bad back since a car accident on a return trip from Minnesota in the mid-1980s. When the pain became too intense he needed a cane for support, one of which was kept in the cabin, a second in the car, and a third in the city home. Fortunately, he never had to rely on the cane in the car; his back had yet to fail him while he was away from either of the two homes; crawling on all fours would be just too embarrassing in public.

Elizabeth always thought watching the sunset from the cabin's front deck both beautiful and inspiring. That was the reason they purchased this property facing the

west with the lake below. That was why he cleared a path through the trees, to get the full effect of the sun setting and mirrored off the surface of the lake-- the lovely reds, roses, burgundies, yellows and oranges. Both evening meals were cooled and eaten out-of-doors on his first two nights at the cabin, followed by a casual walk around the lake before the sun fully set and the darkness of the woods became doo deep. The lake's perimeter was longer than he'd remembered so he only made it about half way around, even with a flashlight, before he headed back.

At night he utilized gas -powered generator for the electricity to power the entire cabin and out buildings.

Together, Dean and Elizabeht had made retirement plans and the cabin had figured high on the list, maybe even selling their city home and moving permanently to the cabin, but now none of that would come true. But having his granddaughter visit brought a renewed sense of hope and purpose to Dean's life. He filled his current days with better thoughts.

Cindy had arrived on the appointed day and 'worked her magic' as Dean complimented her when she was through. He was not destined to be a housekeeper. In fact, his housekeeping skills were somewhere between crappy and nonexistent. Now, he felt he could start the indoor portion of his repairs. The plumbing seemed to be fine but he did some minor caulking here and there that he thought needed done. He replaced washers that leaked. He couldn't find any electrical work that needed done. He carefully taped, then painted the walls and windows frames. Both floors of the

inside of the cabin were finished in three days--with frequent breaks to rest his back. All the stretching and bending had taken its toll; about ninety minutes was all he could manage at any one time.

Dean had decided to reconnect his satellite with Wi-Fi to the roof of the cabin and order a cellular phone to act as a land line. Since the cabin had been built near the top of the hill all that had to be done was use an extension for the dish receiver and top off some trees that might otherwise interfere with the signal reception. The installer came later that afternoon and had helped decide which trees to remove and had even helped with of the branch trimming, for which Dean gave a fifty dollar tip.

Until now Dean had ignored the boat house and dock, both of which had sat dormant along with the cabin. The stone walk he had laid to the boat house was in terrible shape: some of the flat stones had shifted due to rain and runoff from farther up hill and the ones that weren't covered with mud were covered with overgrown foliage. He figured both the boathouse and pier would need some repairs and a good coat of sealant. But the boat houses contents were what concerned him most: a circa 1950s cigarette boat, a fast-moving smuggling boat he'd purchased from a cuban exile from Castro's revolution. It's condition was excellent, it's provenance doubtful. It came without a bill of sale other than a hastily written document in Spanish. But the price was well below market. The man had needed money in a hurry and was willing to sell to whomever would purchase it quickly. And Dean just happened to agree with the price. Knowing its value, he didn't even try to haggle; he just paid in cash and

thanked the man and had it delivered that week. Then he built the boat house and projecting pier. He was never sorry he made the purchase for the boat outperformed his own expectations.

Dean hadn't visited the boat sooner because he was conscious of what shape he might find it in. He kept putting off unlocking the boat house even though he walked by it on his walks around the lake. He didn't want the possibility of spoiling his otherwise happy trip to the cabin. But when he knew he couldn't put it off any longer he brought the keys with him and with trepidation opened the door on the backside of the dock and flipped on the interior light. *Not bad*, he thought. The boat house had basically maintained its structural integrity, no boards need replacing and it didn't seem as if the roof had leaked.

And there was his baby in dry dock. Every winter he'd hoist the boat out of the water to rest on wooden slats and saw to any repairs and weatherizing that needed to be done. He slowly pulled the tarpaulin to one side to expose the wooden hull and deck. *It still looks beautiful*, he thought. He climbed behind the mahogany wheel, inserted the key, and pushed the start button. Even though he'd removed the gas before storing the boat, he felt there was probably enough in the tank to turn over the motor to see if it still caught fire and purred like a kitten. *This is the feather in my cap for the day*, he thought. After a few minutes he shut the engine down. "Tomorrow we'll take you for a spin," he said and patted the engine housing before exiting the boat house and turning off the boat house light. With a sudden spring to his step he walked up the stone path

toward the cabin. *I'll work on the stone path tomorrow*, he thought.

Chapter 4.

Early on he decided to blow off the stone walkway--too much stress on his back. Instead he called the person who acted as caretaker for the cabin for the last two-and-a-half years to see if one of his sons would be willing to do the work. Neither of his sons were home but the caretaker said there should be no problem; they'd work on it together. They agreed on a price and his sons would be over as soon as they could. "They could even paint the boat house and deck if they felt ambitious," Dean said. "For the right price I'm sure they would," the caretaker replied. "Good. If Im not in the cabin, I'll be out on the lake. No real rush, just whenever. I'll be here another couple days. And Thanks." Dean rang off. *The extra sealant could be put to some good use after all* he thought.

Really, his main thought was ripping a plane across the lake's surfact.

Dean unlocked the hoist and slowly unreeled the boat into the water. "Now we'll see if you leak any," he said. He filled the tank part way and then manuevered the narrow boat along the pier before anchoring it fore and aft to the pier. Before long he was comfortably seated behind the wheel with the key in the ignition. He hesitated before pressing the 'start' button. The engine started but didn't engage. "Come, come on, I know you can do it." He primed the engine with two or three taps to the gas pedal then tried to start it again. The engine roared to life. "I knew you still had it in you, old

girl." He released the fore and aft anchor ropes and slowly moved forward, away from the dock and made his way toward open water before he opened up the throttle, slowly at first, then, when he thought the boat could perform, slowly opened the throttle, first to medium, then fully open. The cigarette boat sprang into life veritably dancing atop the water's surface towards the open lake. *Not bad for two-and-a-half- year gas*, he thought. After about twenty minutes he decided not to push the boat too hard. He'd check the engine and have new gas delivered to the storage tank the next morning.

He slid the boat gently against the pier with the inboard pointed toward the boathouse. He anchored the stern of the boat to the pier, then quickly attached the metal chain to the hoist and released the stern rope from the pier. Slowly he hoisted the boat onto its permanent mooring inside the boat house. He replaced the tarpaulin so the boys could spray-seal inside without any stray sealant damaging the boat's varnish, then headed toward the cabin to check out his new satellite.

After dinner Dean sat on his deck in his rocker, lit his pipe, and watched the sunset.

The caretaker's two sons arrived shortly after sunrise the next morning. Dean, being anything but an early riser, was barely coherent as he gave them instructions: "Even out the gradient of the stones of the walkway leading to the boathouse and then trim back the grass and weeds from the walkway and from around the boat house to about a ten foot diameter and let him know when they were finished. He then went back to bed.

Shortly before noon Dean had agreed on a cost with the boys to seal the boat house and deck and soon was at the boat house readying the Emmaline for another lake exercise. This time, before winching her down into the water he checked the hull and topside woodwork for any imperfections or problems that may be the result of years in storage. He had given the boat a cursory one-over the day before but was so anxious to take her out--even though he hadn't noticed any problems--but he wanted to be absolutely sure. His wife Elizabeth was certain he cared more for the boat and paid her more attention than to any other member of the family; his denials didn't go very far in convincing her otherwise. The hull and topside wood looked fine. He thought he could wait until the end of the season before a more careful examination and a new coat of shellac and polishing.

Cigarette boats were sleek and fast runners employed for any venture that required the speed to outrun other boats, usually those of the U.S. Coast Guard or Cuban shore patrols. The partial story told to him was that the Emmaline had run arms to Cuba and anti-Castro revolutionaries. Other boats of the same type, at one time or another, were rum and drug runners being able to outrun most any boat in the Caribbean. Since the engine of the Emmaline sounded near perfect, he decided to leave a complete overhaul until later in the season, maybe even next Fall before the season ended.

He winched the Emmaline into the water and moored it to the dock, adjacent to which was a hundred gallon gasoline storage tank, which he had drained a couple years

age and refilled earlier in the morning by a local technical team. He filled the Emmaline's tank to capacity, cast off, and headed out toward the larger and deeper expanse of water near the dam.

The sun was already climbing toward noon the following day when Dean decided to leave his bedroom for the kitchen and maybe a little something to eat. He'd been up since before nine and had decided to stay in bed and open one of the books he kept on the nightstand and read for a few hours. Reading had always been a major source of enjoyment, almost since he learned to read. Learning to read was a chore at first--he wasn't the quickest learner in the class--but by fourth grade he was reading at the high school level. In his junior year in high school he discovered the great English works and writers of high interest: Chaucer, *Sir Gawain*, Thomas Hardy, Shakespeare, *Beowulf*, *Thankerey*, Shelley, Yates and the others. But it wasn't until his senior year literature class--really a college level humanities course--that his appreciation of civilization and literature really took root and flowered: from Greek and Roman mythology to Aristotle and Confucius; from *Don Quixote* to *The Brothers Karamatzov*; from *Candide* to Sholom Alakim; from western art to comparative religions. Almost nothing was off-limits for discussion. The class opened his mind to a wealth of information and a life-long love of learning.

He and Elizabeth felt similarly and tried to instill the same appreciation and love in their two daughters--plus an independence of mind. These were the greatest gifts they

had to give. Jamie and Katherine, hopefully, would, in turn, impart the same values to their children, Dean's and Elizabeth's grandchildren. He'd already decided to allow Elizabeth access to his extensive library, with a few exceptions, of course--books that her parents would most likely object to a twelve, almost thirteen, year old reading. He'd need to collect them from the shelves before she arrived. He also reluctantly promised his daughter to stay away from political commentary as much as possible, knowing how progressively partisan he was.

The Emmaline roared to life one last time before Dean was due to return to St. Louis. He enjoyed the weekdays best: not many people visiting the lake even during summer break and, since the lake shore was almost totally residential with no tourist-driven activities, even on weekends during the peak season, the lake was pleasant. About ten years back some land owners had banded together and wanted to sell their adjacent lots, to a land developer who, in turn, wanted to build a lodge, condos, a restaurant, and amusement area for tourists. The Lake's Development Association scotched that idea quickly enough. A majority of the voting member said 'no', they had no intent of spoiling their pristine lake. The lots could be sold individually but only to families who intended to either live on their lot year-round or as a parttime, meaning summer, resident. Eventually, the proposal made its way through the courts and after two years of appeals and what not, the Development Association won. Things basically returned to normal. Some of the owners that wanted to sell, moved; some didn't. The

non-residential buildings on the lake were already there when the Association was formed and they blended in well with the residential properties. The land developer was willing to build further from the lake if he could purchase a right-of-way to the lake and build a reduced operation with a launch area and docks. The Development Association again said 'no', so rather than go through the courts a second time the developer took his operation to another location about sixty minutes away.

After a few hours Dean pulled the Emmaline into the slip inside the boat house. It was later in the evening as the sun had begun to change into that cold glare it frequently took on before sunset. He preferred the warm glow of sunrise and the beginning of the day, even though not being a morning person, he didn't get to see the sunrise all that often.

He had a nice steak to broil while watching the sun set, then drive the few hours back to St. Louis later in the evening. Less traffic was the primary reason. He hated being stuck behind some slow-moving tractor or eighteen-wheeler on these hilly, winding state roads. You could drive for miles before the highway opened up enough to provide enough passing room. Elizabeth always said he was much-to-much of a hurry: "Just settle back and enjoy the ride; there's no rush to get back; we have plenty of time." But that wasn't necessarily him, so quite often Elizabeth insisted on driving. And he almost always gave her her way. This was a general pattern of their marriage, and a promise he gave when they were newlyweds: "You'll get your way most of the time,

because if you're happy, I'm happy. But there will be times when I'll insist on getting my way and I want you to be behind me." The A-frame was what she wanted and the cigarette boat was his. They each got what they wanted and appreciated the other's choice, at the same time. And the other's requests were always reasonable.

Prologue 2, continued: Jasper, Indiana: Friday, March 24, 1961.

The man reaches the next small town in about two and one-half hours. He's even had time to eat and then try to quiet his frustration and anxiety. He's found that at times like these a little drink or two of alcohol helps calm him. Unfortunately, this town is not one of those he's previously visited. Driving into town he thinks he's found a well-concealed location on the south side of town: woods on both sides of the road leading into town and a slight indentation leading into the woods on one side of the road. He drives through town to locate the police station on the other side of town. The elementary school was easy to find, on the outskirts of town off the road he drove in on. He continues driving south, only about a mile from the school and finds the indentation in the woods he noticed on first arriving. Since no vehicles were on the road in either direction, he stops, rolling just past the indentation and backs his car straight in with a slight turn to the left and onto an area with some ground cover surrounding the car. This is even better than he thought. He leaves the car idling and walks to the road. Since there is still no traffic in either direction, he crosses the road to see what it looks like from the far side. "Perfect," he says aloud. "I couldn't do better if I tried harder." He smiles to himself. He then recrosses the road to his car. About a mile past his point of concealment, on the right, was a farm: a barn, stable, sheds and two houses. Opposite was another group of three houses not far from the road.

Once at his car, the man follows his usual routine: he shuts off the ignition, opens the trunk, then replaces the key in the ignition. From the backseat he takes the black

'doctor's' bag and removes the chloroform and clothe. He looks at his watch and guesses there's about thirty minutes of school remaining in the day. Sitting in his car he rehearses the scenario he would use. No different than what he'd thought through during the past twelve months of waiting. He knows it well enough he could recite it in his sleep. He feels ready and prepared for anything.

The undergrowth, the brush on the side of the road, was thick, the branches of which poked him and tore at his clothes, but he dared not move too far away from the car. He knew he'd never make it through the undergrowth carrying a boy, so he is limited to how far from the clearing he can hide. One step out of the undergrowth onto the shoulder of the road should give him the room he needs to quickly step out and take a boy.

Be patient, he thinks. It doesn't do much good. But he is not the patient type. His anxiety is rising until he says more firmly to himself: "Be patient!" The longer he waits the greater his anxiety becomes and the more "Be patient!!" rose from his lips.

After about fifteen minutes a solitary boy, walking slowly, appears about fifty feet away. Dark haired, while he preferred blondes, but he would make do. The man closes his eyes and draws a series of long, deep breathes to help himself relax. They don't work very well. His mind is racing as the boy approaches. He removes the small bottle of chloroform and cloth from his pocket and dowses the clothe with the liquid contents. Suddenly, a car comes into view and stops even with the boy. The boy and the driver exchange a few words. The man can't understand what is said, but the

words seem to be pleasantries. Then suddenly the car drives away. The driver doesn't realize this is the last anyone will see of the boy. The man's mind continues to race as the boy approaches, now only about ten feet away. "Damn it," the man says quietly to himself. "Hurry up before another car comes." The man, from deep inside the bushes, has no way of knowing how far away the car had driven, so he let the boy walk past, even past where his car is parked. The man then carefully walks from his concealed position onto the shoulder. There is no traffic in either direction. The car that had stopped is gone.

Now, time is of the essence. The man quickly makes his way--with long loping strides--to the boy who has not as yet heard him.

Before he strikes, the man looks over his shoulder and still no traffic. The boy is taken completely by surprise as planned. With his left arm the man reaches around the front of the boy pinioning both arms to his sides and brings the chloroform-laden cloth up to cover the boy's mouth and nose, then pulls him into the woods, far enough to conceal them both. As he does so the man glances in both directions of the road. Still no traffic. The man slowly counts to ten before removing the cloth from the boy's face. He throws the boy over his shoulder and a twinge of ecstasy crosses his mind which he, with some difficulty, suppresses. He'll celebrate later, at the end, when the boy is safely in his trunk and he is on the highway heading home. He peeks again from the woods, then sprints down the shoulder the few feet to the opening in the woods toward his car. The man gently lays the boy inside the trunk with his head resting on a kingsize pillow.

No damaged goods, he thinks. He attaches the pretied ropes around the boy's legs, then the arms behind his back. Finally, he slides the gag into place and closes the trunk. Once again he checks for traffic--none--before sliding behind the wheel and slowly edging the car onto the shoulder. When no cars appear, they mans pulls onto the road heading away from town and quickly gains the speed limit.

The man now allows his ecstasy to overtake him. He lets out a few excited "Whoops!!" He has finally pulled it off. All the planning during the past year has been well worth it--he now has made his *hit*, a year since his last almost disastrous try.

He drives home carefully, at or below the speed limit, observing all road signs.