

# **The Garage 2**

**Deep in the Corn**

**by Joe Zito, ...**

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### Breaking News from Channel 13

**Monday June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1994**

*“Good evening, this is Jessica Barnes with channel 13 news and we’re cutting in to bring you this top story. Police have just confirmed that the perpetrator of the Bludenhale Massacre of 1974, Angel Larson, has died. She was found dead in her room early this morning by her longtime caretaker and nurse Mrs. Anita Simpson. Authorities are suggesting foul play and that indeed this was a murder with intent. Reporter Bob Roberts is on the scene at the Indiana State Mental Hospital right now.*

*“Bob, has there been any new developments?”*

*“Hi Jessica. There have not been any new developments or any suspects as of yet. They’re still trying to piece it all together. What we do know is that the security system in this building has failed the last two tests, mainly faulty camera’s, none of which caught any kind of intruder or any incident near Ms. Larson’s room.”*

*“Bob, this has been a shocking turn of events. You were just there three days ago covering the 20th Anniversary of the Bludenhale Massacre of 1974.”*

*“That’s right Jessica. It is very shocking. Just only two days ago I was standing right here in this very spot with a mob of angry protesters displaying their hatred for Angel Larson. I’m guessing some of those protesters will sleep better tonight.”*

*“Bob, have you been able to speak with any of the staff of the Indiana State Mental Hospital, mainly Ms. Larson’s nurse Anita Simpson.”*

*“Jessica, I have not spoken with Mrs. Simpson. We were barely able to get inside the front entrance due to the police barricade. I did however speak with Detective Monroe who as you know was the head of the Bludenhale Massacre investigation back in 1974. He told me that they were still in the process of gathering evidence and it is too early to pinpoint what exactly happened.*

*“Thank you, Bob. We will keep you the viewer informed on any new developments concerning this bizarre story. We now return you to your regularly scheduled program.”*

The sound of her footsteps was deafening as darkness fell all around her like a heavy damp blanket. Still, she searched for her daughter in the corn but there was no answer as she yelled out her name over and over. “Heather, where are you?”

Please come back Heather!” The moon hung in the sky and cicadas buzzed in the cornfield and the air was hot and thick yet she called out with an ever increasing feeling of defeat because she knew her daughter was gone and was never coming back. She was buried in the corn a long time ago. Then, something moved in the corn. The woman lost in the black of the cornfield stopped where she was, startled by the sudden rustling of corn nearby. Her heart beat quickened. What is in this field of death? A sense of dread fell upon her as she looked all around her seeing only darkness. Slanted stalks of corn looked like upright knives in the night. The startling movement came again and she gasped. It was out there, lurking somewhere in the corn. Then a growling that was deep and threatening sifted through the tall stalks, making its way right towards her. She inhaled a breath of terror and began to run. She stammered through the dark cornfield trying to run as fast as she could but the low end death tone was just behind her, weaving its horrid sound through the corn. She could hear a distant voice calling out to her but couldn’t make out who it was. She ran through the corn and then stumbled and fell to the ground. Panic engulfed her. She was for sure death was near but the growling sound had gone away. Now she could smell the raw, pungent odor of something burning. Smoke. The crackling of fire ripped into her ears. She pulled herself up and started to run again. The tinge of damp smoke crawled into her nostrils. She gagged and then saw a bright orange glow reaching high above the corn in the distance. She ran toward the fire. As she ran, the slow hiss of a young girl’s voice trailed behind her somewhere in the corn. The voice turned into a scream and was getting closer. She was running toward the fire with the terror still fresh in her mind of the growling tone and now the screaming girl. And then it all stopped. She was standing in the cornfield with the darkness surrounding her. The fire and sounds of treachery were gone.

Susan!

She turned around and the girl with long black hair was right behind her with glassy eyes of terror. “It wasn’t me”, the girl said, followed by a sharp intake of female breath laced with fear.

And then the woman woke up.

## **Part 1**

### **The past at her doorstep.**

**1997**

It was almost dawn when Susan Smith awoke on what was going to be another warm September day. She had grown accustomed to that frightful feeling of cold terror when waking from the horrible dreams that haunted her sleep. Her eyes felt heavy as she stared at the ceiling. Then the tears came but not because of her dream but rather because it was going to be another lonely day in an

otherwise lifeless and empty house. Her husband Mark died a year earlier of a heart attack. He had been out in their barn feeding the cattle and collapsed on the floor after a sudden sharp pain in his chest. Susan had yelled three times that lunch was ready and when he hadn't come in through the kitchen door with that warm smile of his, she had gotten worried and rushed outside to the barn where she found him dead on a blanket of straw. She tried to convince herself that the one and a half packs of cigarettes he smoked a day was the cause, but deep down she knew the real reason and it was Amy, their only granddaughter. When she was murdered three years ago in the back parking lot of the strip club where she worked, Susan and Mark's lives were truly never the same. It had sucked out the last bit of life they had in them.

A pair of morning birds was singing their duet as the first rays of sun peeked through the curtain in Susan's room. Still, she laid there staring at the ceiling in an empty bed and warm tears streaming down the sides of her still pretty as ever sixty one year old face. She could pass for being forty nine or fifty but the hard life had begun to show itself years ago. The air conditioner kicked on and began to blow cool air through the vent. She suddenly remembered she had to call Dreyfuss Heat and Air because the unit was leaking. Usually Mark would take care of those big jobs around the house. Susan had no idea how to fix something like a leaking ac unit and part of her could really care less if she burned up in an old, hot farmhouse. *It's just me, here all alone.*

Slowly she sat up in bed. The room was still dark despite the sun peeking in through the partly opened curtains. *C'mon old man. Get up and make mama some coffee.* This thought went through her mind as she glanced over at Mark's pillow that she still kept on the bed next to her. She covered her face and cried; her almost now white blonde hair falling over her hands-hands that use to lay on Mark's chest at night when they slept and hands that would hold her three year old granddaughter and hands that would wrap around her daughter who has been dead for twenty three years.

She drew her hands down over her face once she stopped crying. Her fingertips pulled at her skin under her eyes. Her dresser mirror was in front of her bed across the room. She thought she saw a ghost in its reflection but she realized it was her.

Susan didn't bother putting on her robe that she use to wear every morning when Mark was alive because it felt so comfy and warm. She went down the hallway in just her underwear and a tattered Indy 500 t-shirt from 1990. She use to primp and curl her hair all the time. Now it's just hangs lifeless, almost like she is. She had been letting it grow out since 1995. It was down to the middle of her back but was stringy and dull and of course greying. She went into the bathroom and blew her nose with that last of the toilet paper. One roll had lasted her almost two months. It was cheap living all alone but also very lonely and sad. As she sat and used the toilet she couldn't help but laugh when she thought that maybe she should get a cat. "I hate cats," she said to herself. She sighed, letting her face fall sleepily into her hands and then she realized she had used the last of the toilet paper. She flushed the toilet and let it finish running before she turned on the shower. When it stopped, she undressed and stepped into the shower. The rush of warm water felt good. Almost too good because it was putting her in a mood that

she hasn't felt for a while. She had not made love for a whole year, much less touch herself. The idea of her masturbating at her age made her feel silly and embarrassed, but mostly guilty. *Stop it you ol' gal. You ain't a girl anymore.* She still had feelings and urges even at sixty one. She had unwillingly lost twelve pounds in the last year. So she *was* 'skinnier' and would have felt good about it if she had someone to share it with. It was all stress related weight loss anyway, so about one percent of her felt good about slipping into her 'thin' jeans she hasn't worn since the late seventies. As she stood in the shower with the warm water running down her back and contemplating touching herself just to relieve some sexual frustration, she wondered how she went from being a girl to an old woman. How did she go from having sex literally every day in her twenties and thirty's to maybe three times a week in her forties and then once or twice in her fifties and now nothing. She was fifteen when she and Mark started dating in 1952. He was eighteen and her parent's hated it. She didn't care though even at that young, tender age. She knew she loved him and would be with him for the rest of her life. And never once did she ever think about what it would be like to be with another man or kiss someone else other than Mark. He was everything to her and now he was gone.

Susan turned the hot water on a little more and then gave in to her needs. She cried as she did because she felt guilty. In her mind she knew that if Mark was still alive, they would be in the bedroom right now with the window cracked just a little and she would be on top of him and his arms would be wrapped around her back and her head nestled into his neck and him smelling her hair, and when they were done making love they would sit on the porch and smoke cigarettes and drink long island ice tea's and then maybe go to the flea market and hold hands and smile at the twenty something couples holding hands also and go home and make love again.

She held her forehead against the shower wall and finished up crying as she watched the water swirl down the drain.

As she stood in front of the bathroom mirror brushing out her damp hair, she couldn't help but see her daughter's face. But then she realized it was her own face and she cried at how much she looked like her daughter Heather, the daughter she hasn't seen in twenty three years. She brushed her hair until it was somewhat dry and she wiped the tears from her face. She thought of getting the curling iron out because she hasn't used it in over a year but decided she kind of liked having straight hair and that it looked good on her. Maybe it was her way of being close to Heather. She dropped the curler back into the drawer and closed it.

Susan hasn't been 'Susan' since Mark died. She knows that she's let herself go and has made attempts at changing that in the past few months but has not been successful. Today felt different though. She didn't know why, but it did. Maybe she did need that private female moment in the shower to knock her back into the world of the living. It was a start at least, but she still had that lingering thought in her mind all morning, just as she has had every morning for the past three years. *What's on your mind Susan?*

Back in her room, she opened the curtains and the heat of the sun rushed in filling the entire room. As she opened her dresser drawer, she felt a little excited

about trying on those 'thin' jeans that she hasn't worn in quite some time. *It's the little things Susy*, she thought with a smile. She tried on a pair of dark jeans that were a little stiff from sitting in a drawer for five years. She doesn't know why she kept them. They came off and she put on a lighter pair. She examined herself in the mirror the way a woman does in the dressing room at Elder Beermans or JC Pennys, turning side to side and even getting a good look at her bottom of which she was still proud to have. She felt like a young girl again around twenty three or twenty four and suddenly had a flashback when she was doing the exact same thing in the same room, but with her four year old daughter sitting on the floor, smiling up at her, watching her do these silly moves in front of the mirror.

She was so tired of crying because she's been crying every day since Amy died, but she did anyway despite how good she felt in her 'new' hot jeans. Again, she wiped her face clean of her tears and went to her closet to pick out some ancient top she hasn't worn since the early 90's or so. She opted for a plain blue top with a V cut neck. She thought it went well with the jeans.

She flew down the stairs with the energy of a twenty year old, knowing that there would be plenty more dark and lonely days to come and that this just happened to be a good day. She just went with it.

She opened the curtains above the kitchen sink and more light flooded into the house. The sink had only a couple of dishes sitting in it. Susan was the only one living in the house, so there wasn't much cleaning to be done. She cleaned them up and made a fresh pot of coffee. When it was finished brewing she sat down at the kitchen table just like she and Mark use to every morning and lit up one her Virginia Slims. But not without a rush of guilt going through her because she knew it was killing her slowly and that she's just been damn lucky all these years not to have had any health problems because of it.

As she sat and sipped her hot coffee she remembered that morning Amy had breakfast with them and how good it felt to have her around at least for a little bit. Amy wasn't around very much before she died. Susan knew she was going through something and was hurting on the inside. *I should have stepped in and intervened about her life style choice. I should have been enraged with her and told her to quit that sleazy job of hers and stop doing drugs and show some hard love, but instead I'd just turn that blind eye every time she would walk into the room and I would pretend she was a normal, functioning adult just because I didn't want to make things worse by pushing her away. So I just stay quiet.* She remembered this because it was the last time Amy sat with them and had coffee at the table and laughed. And then her mind slipped even further as she sat with her hands trembling on her coffee cup.

*9:30 p.m. Sunday evening, June 19th, 1994—A grey unmarked police cruiser pulls up the driveway to the Smith's house. Susan could hear the gravel crunching under the tires and the noise of a football game playing on the tv in the background. She went to the front room window and looked out and her heart dropped when she saw the car. Her face turned to stone and so did Marks. They both ran to the front door and Susan already had tears streaming down her face because she knew what she was going to hear as soon as she opened the door. But it wasn't until later that evening as she and Mark sat across from Detective Monroe at the Bludenhale*

*Police Department, when their worlds would be truly crushed upon hearing the way in which Amy had left this world by a knife between her legs. Susan collapsed into Mark and screamed just like she did twenty years ago when the same detective told her the news of her daughter Heather and her bloody, bloody death.*

She took a sip of her coffee and looked at the clock. It was 10:15. Her morning had started out just like it has for the past three years: waking from that nightmare of her lost in the corn. There was hope today though because she finally wore something different other than her grey sweatpants and racing t-shirts and then the thing she did in the shower. But sitting there all alone with just her thoughts of the past, a particular demon had returned. She looked at the clock again but with a nervous fluttering in her eyes because of that dreaded thought going through her mind all morning. *I need to talk to Ang... stop Susan, just stop it! But it's almost time to leave. I need to get going before visiting hours are over. But there are no more visiting hours Susan, you know this.*

As if Amy's death hadn't disrupted Susan's upward, good feeling this morning, the memory of Angel Larson would push her over the edge.

The day after Amy's death, Susan heard the tv playing in the living room. Mark was catatonic, staring at the screen which was showing a black and white photo of a young Angel Larson. Susan stopped cold behind the couch as she saw the words on the screen, *'Bludenhale Massacre killer found dead in her room. She was forty two.'* Susan thought she was seeing things. For years she had kept her visits with Angel from both Mark and Amy. As she watched the tv, she prayed Mark didn't notice her standing behind him but he did and her skin turned to ice when she saw a haunted look in his eyes. Her mind froze and was at a standstill, not knowing whether to scream, cry or run out of the room. She chose to quietly leave the room without saying a word. She found herself in their barn, on her knees, sucking in heavy sobs of dismay and shock, *dear god this isn't happening, too much death all at once*, and not so much because she will never see Angel again (the girl who was the link to keeping Susan's dead daughter alive in her mind) but more so of guilt because she was going to miss Angel. It made Susan sick because as much as she didn't want to admit it, she felt closer to Angel than she did her own granddaughter. And now they were both dead. *Too much death.*

And to make things even worse, a week later Detective Monroe had told Mark and Susan that Amy's finger prints were found all over the knives used to kill Angel with. They didn't speak to one another for two weeks after that.

10:15 turned into 10:30 and in the midst of her daydreams of sadness, Susan's mind drifted back to her first visit with Angel.

## **1976**

Susan watched her husband drive down their long gravel drive way in his pickup truck the morning of March 27th, 1976. The past two years since her daughter died had been the most treacherous and painful years (so far) of her life. At least every other day Susan would sit quietly in her room and cry to herself as

she flipped through photo album after photo album of her daughter when she was a baby and then a toddler and then a sassy pre-teen. In most of these pictures was Heather's best friend Angel Larson, who lived in a similar white farmhouse just up the road from the Smith's.

Four year old Amy Smith was sitting on the floor; playing with some Legos Susan had set out to keep her occupied while she was on the phone. Amy had started pre-school and went at eleven a.m. until three in the afternoon.

Susan couldn't lie to herself any longer. As sick as it made her, she missed Angel, even though she was convicted and sentenced to life at the Indiana State Mental Hospital for murdering her best friend and Susan's daughter Heather Smith two years ago. Angel was twenty four now. Heather would have been the same age. The idea of going to see Angel had been on Susan's mind for about a year now. She couldn't help it. She had gotten word that Angel's parents had stopped visiting her and ultimately ended up disowning her. They just couldn't handle the fact that their daughter was a monster that slaughtered three people. But Susan also knew how it felt to be abandoned too. When she was sixteen she found out she was pregnant with Heather. Her mother gave her a hellish tongue lashing and a few good smacks across the face for good measure, all because she had decided, in their eyes, to ruin her life. Against her parent's wishes, Susan moved in with her then boyfriend and father of their unborn child, Mark. It was a dingy apartment in downtown Bludenhale that was above the local drug store. Eventually Mark earned a hefty wage increase at the factory he was working and they were able to move out. They settled into a cozy, white farmhouse on about fourteen acres of farmland. He began farming and Susan decided she loved being a mother and raised Heather in their little white house out in the country. Susan has lived there ever since.

Susan eyed her granddaughter playing on the floor, and nervously bit at her bottom lip as she waited to talk to a staff member at the I.S.M.H. about visiting hours. She thought of the first time she met Angel. Heather was five years old and after watching her daddy drive off to work for the day, she and her young mother went outside to enjoy the mild spring morning. Susan was sitting on the porch, flipping through some women's magazine and Heather was riding her bike all by herself in the driveway when another little girl came riding along down their road on her bike. The first thing Susan noticed was Angel's black hair flowing behind her as she was riding her bike and her mother trying to keep up with her yelling, "Slow down Angelica!"

Even though Susan was a good distance away she could sense the meanness in the woman's voice when she yelled. She thought it was funny how she never noticed her neighbor just until this moment. Susan had no idea there was another little girl about the same age as her daughter, who lived so close. She stood up and started walking down the driveway and waved her hand at Heather to follow her. Heather was reluctant and shook her head 'no' because she was so bashful.

"Baby, look, there's a girl about your age. Come with me and say hi."

Reluctantly, Heather rode her bike slowly next to her mother as they walked to the end of the driveway to introduce themselves. They made it to their mailbox just as Angel and her mom came along. To Susan, it seemed as though Angel's mom was just going to keep walking and not be friendly and say hello. Susan took the



initiative and spoke first. She waved and smiled and said, "Hi there, beautiful day isn't it."

Angel's mom forced a smile just to be decent but didn't say anything. Susan felt her face turning warm because she suddenly felt awkward. She was just a kid herself at twenty one and in her mind thought that this is what parents do. They introduce themselves to their neighbors and kids. She cleared her throat nervously and said, "I'm Susan Smith." She almost extended her hand to Angel's mom but thought better of it. She wished her husband was here with her. Angel's mom forced another smile. "I'm Kathy, nice to meet you. This is my daughter Angelica. Say hi Angelica. Go on now. Don't be bashful." Susan could hear that meanness again in her voice. Little Angel held her head down with her black hair covering her face.

"Well hi Angelica," Susan said. Angel didn't respond. She was too shy to even look at Susan.

"You don't talk too much do sweetie." Susan put her arm around Heather and said, "This is my daughter Heather."

Angel lazily threw her hand up at Heather and quietly as a mouse said, "Hi."

"Susan, are your parents' home?" Kathy suddenly said.

With a confused look on her face, Susan almost answered her by telling her no and that her parent's were either at work or out running errands, but then she realized what Kathy meant and that was, *there is no way that little girl can be yours, you're too young to have a five year old.* Susan guessed that Angel's mom was maybe thirty or thirty one. The wildfire inside Susan's mind was burning hot and heavy. She could feel herself trembling with anger at this woman's assumption of her. *Of course you would think I still live at home because I look so damn young and so hot. So I have a kid. She's five and I'm twenty one. Do the damn math lady. So I got fucked when I was sixteen, but I sure had a lot of fun in the backseat of my boyfriend's car, bouncing my little ass up and down on him like some wild whore in heat. You look like you haven't fucked in five years! Stop it Susan, be nice.*

The silence was unbearable. It was a great feat for Susan to hold her tongue and she was about to speak her mind but then Heather unknowingly came to her rescue when she said to Angel, "Do you wanna play?"

The sound of a woman's voice on the other line broke Susan's memory of the past. With a crack in her voice, she nervously asked when visiting hours were. The woman kindly told her and then Susan said thank you and hung up the phone. She set the phone down and had a sick feeling in her stomach about what she was going to do. She stood and looked at Amy singing to herself and playing with the Legos on the living room floor. *All those Sunday dinners and weekend bbqs and sleep overs and Angel coming in through the backdoor to the kitchen without ever knocking every day after school with that cute, bright smile of hers, and me feeling as if I had two daughters... it just can't be. I knew that little girl as well as my own daughter... it just can't be..... it wasn't me, sshh Angel.*

Susan's concentration broke when Amy let out a giggle when her tower of Legos fell over. Susan did the obligatory look of surprise with her hands on her hips and said, "Did you knock those blocks down?"

Amy giggled even more when she heard her grandmother's voice and when she saw the smile on her face.

"We better get movin' baby girl, c'mon."

Amy jumped up and began singing and dancing. Susan froze where she was standing when she heard the familiar tune her granddaughter was singing. *Willie, willie, won't go home.* "Willwee song grandma. Angel sing the willie song."

A lump formed in Susan's throat and she almost broke down right there in her kitchen hearing Amy say those words. Quietly, with a strained voice she said, "Ok Heath... let's get you to school."

Susan grabbed her long, brown trench coat and scarf and took Amy by the hand and left the house.

It was a cool March morning, but the weather forecast called for a high of seventy one degrees. She drove down 600 w. going a steady forty miles per hour. Amy didn't have to be at school for at least an half an hour. Susan was such a nervous wreck about what she was getting ready to do, that she didn't want to rush things. *What in god's name are thinking Susan?* Her heart was racing like a locomotive in her chest. She puffed at her cigarette and blew white smoke out her partially cracked window all while nervously glancing in the rear view mirror at Amy in the back seat, talking to herself about rainbows and how much she loved them. A pang of guilt formed in Susan's stomach at the thought of her accidentally calling Amy by her daughter's name. *Why did I do that?* Amy hadn't really noticed anyway but did give her grandma a confused look for a moment. *She looks so much like Heather.* A cold chill that felt haunted crept up Susan's spine at this thought. She turned on the radio to try and distract her thoughts of the days coming events. It didn't help.

Amy was greeted by a daycare helper when they entered the room at her daycare which was decked out in cut out flowers and smiley faced suns. "Bye, grandma," Amy squealed out and gave Susan a hard almost neck breaking hug. Susan loved those the best. "See you after a while, ok, baby." Susan walked out of the colorful and noisy room, feeling a hint of sadness at leaving Amy there and very unsure about the drive to the Indiana State Mental Hospital, three counties over.

*Just turn around Susan. You don't have to do this. I just can't stop thinking about Angel. I know you shouldn't even give two shits about whether she's dead or alive but I miss her and it makes me sick. You don't miss her Susan, you miss your daughter and Angel was her best friend. Mark can never know about this. Great, I'm a liar now. That ain't gonna look good when I'm floatin' up to them white clouds. Who are you kidding? I'm not going to heaven. I got pregnant when I was sixteen and been fucking almost every day since then, but not lately though. Ok, so Mark and I fucked last night. Jesus just turn around Susan. Goddamn small town, if I would have never found out about Angel's parent's disowning her, I wouldn't be wasting my gas right now. Admit it Susan, you miss her. Dammit! It just can't be. It just can't. She was so nice and always good mannered and quiet. Girl couldn't hurt a fly. God, I have to pee now, shouldn't have drank all that coffee this morning. Shit! Here's my turn. Just turn around. It's too late.*

Susan was unsuccessful in convincing herself that going to see Angel was a bad idea. She turned into the parking lot of the I.S.M.H. She let the car sit there idling for a moment as Elvis Presley played on the radio. With a slow movement of her hand, she turned off the car. The parking lot wasn't that full which made her feel a little at ease knowing there was possibly less of a chance of someone seeing her. She knew she was risking everything by undergoing this almost self-destructive act of visiting the girl who murdered her daughter. Susan loved her country home and the smallness of Bludenhale, but on the inside she had a rebellious spirit and couldn't stand the small town wives of Bludenhale. She was a small town gal with a big city heart and never ran along with that small town crowd of closed minded thinkers. She even gave this new form of music called punk a listen because she overheard two middle aged hags standing in line at the grocery store talking about how this music was corrupting their sons. Susan thought most it was crap, but she did like the Ramones. *Fuck them anyway if they see me. They didn't lose a daughter.* Still, she put on her silk scarf and sunglasses and then broke out into a laughing fit when she saw how ridiculous she looked in the rear view mirror. It felt good to laugh though. She hasn't laughed this way since her husband brought home that stupid Polaroid camera, convincing her to take some dirty pictures with it and of course she did.

When she was done laughing, she pulled herself together, knowing that the situation was serious. *What will I say to her? What will she say or do?* She put those two questions aside, opened the door and got out, but not without forgetting the package sitting next to her on the passenger side seat, wrapped up in a brown grocery bag.

The walk from her car to the main entrance of the I.S.M.H. seemed like a long walk in hell. She was still pondering the thought of forgetting the whole thing, turning around and getting back in her car and driving away, back to Bludenhale as fast as she could. But there was no turning back now. She was standing in the middle of the lobby before she knew it. Her heart was racing. She could feel her palms getting moist with sweat. *Just calm down 'ol gal. Main desk, where is the damn main desk?* Her eyes widened under her large, dark brown sunglasses when she spotted the main desk, where a middle aged woman was sitting, popping popcorn in her mouth and playing a crossword puzzle out of the newspaper. Bravely, Susan walked over to the desk. She glanced at both sides of her as she made her nervous stride to the woman. Susan was positive someone was going to see her and then she would never be able to show her face in town again. A quick flash of a daydream came alive in her mind when she saw a giant newspaper coming at her with a large headline that read, *local woman of slain daughter, befriends daughter's killer, shows sympathy.*

"Can I help you ma'am?" The woman's voice startled Susan out of her daydream of guilt. She was speechless for a few moments, almost as if she forgot how to speak.

"Ma'am," the woman said again.

*You better say something Susy or they'll lock you up with the rest of the crazies.*

"Uh... um," *Jesus Susan, are you fourteen or forty?*

The woman behind the desk had a genuine look of concern on her face as if the person standing in front of her might very well be a mental case.

*I can't say her name.* Panic settled over Susan.

"Ma'am, are you all right?"

Susan shook her head quickly to let the woman know she *was* all right, she just couldn't seem to talk at the moment. *What's wrong Susan? Cat got your tongue. Can't say the name of the girl that sucked all the blood out of your daughter?*

"Uh... Lar,"

*Almost sweetcakes, but no cigar; c'mon Susan, this lady wants to get back to her fucking crossword puzzle and popcorn party in her mouth.*

The woman's mouth was agape in awe and her eyes were focusing on the phone next to her hand, which meant she was about to call her supervisor to let him know that one the crazies got loose.

But then Susan said, "Larson."

As she walked down the hall of the second floor, she couldn't believe that the woman bought the story she told her about being Angel's neighbor lady and that she use to babysit her. It was a lie but not entirely a lie, since Susan actually was neighbors with the Larsons and she did in fact watch and take care of Angel on many occasions when she was younger. But of course she wasn't going to say that she knew Angel better than her own mother did and that she was really like a second daughter. Susan was amazed how she had made it this far. They never asked her any personal questions or even patted her down or checked inside the brown grocery bag she was carrying. Earlier when she was on the phone, they didn't even tell her that she needed to schedule a visit.

It was the seventies.

Despite all this, she had to admit that she was very nervous and then she felt the pressure down below. She found the nearest ladies room and quickly went inside where she let out what felt like a gallon of pee, that to her smelled of coffee and cigarettes and maybe even a little bit of her husband from last night. She flushed the toilet, washed her hands and peeked out the door before exiting. She continued her journey down the beige carpeted hallway, walking past a few doctors in white coats; some smiling at her but never asking who she was or what she was doing. Then she came to the door with gold, rectangular plate attached to it with the number 615 engraved on it. Susan felt almost weightless as she stood in front of the door; her mind running rampant with thought of abandoning this stupid idea and just going home. But there were other thoughts too, like how she couldn't get over how nice the facility was or at least seemed to be. She had pictured a dark and dreary grey building with no pictures and jail type cells holding schizophrenic patients urinating all over themselves and babbling incoherent mush from their mouths. She thought maybe there was a section of the hospital that was like that perhaps, but this neck of the woods wasn't it.

She took a deep breath and let it out. *Just remember why you're here,* she thought and then she heard a woman's voice from behind her.

"That's Ms. Larson's room. Are you visiting her today?" A black nurse wearing an all-white uniform and white shoes startled Susan. She felt a cold chill go up her spine because she knew she had been caught. She turned around quickly at

the sound of the nurse's voice like she was caught red handed, doing something illegal. *No law against visiting the girl who murdered your daughter, Susan.* The nurse's face was pleasant and posed no threat to Susan.

"Yes, I... I'm her neighbor." She stammered for the right thing to say. She cringed internally at what she said.

"Oh, how wonderful. Ms. Larson doesn't really get too many visitors," the nurse said in a joyful tone but then suddenly cleared her throat and looked away as if she had said something wrong. Susan notice the sudden change in the nurse, as if she knew something she wasn't supposed to talk about. *You know Angel's dirty little secret don't you Ms. Anita; the one that involves that long line of men outside her door every Saturday night. That's a long gone month old memory now though. Bloody pete was the mastermind behind that game but they fired his ass and Angel's all alone now with nothing but her hands to keep her company.*

Susan realized that the nurse wasn't much older than she was.

"Are you ready to go in?' The nurse asked.

"Sure," Susan said, sounding unsure.

"Let me just check in with Ms. Larson."

"Ok, that's fine," Susan said feeling relieved that she had now just a little extra time to prepare herself.

The nurse quietly knocked on the door and then opened it. Susan was shocked that it was unlocked. She didn't know that Angel was a level 1 patient, meaning she was a low level threat to herself and others, and that they were allowed to have their doors unlocked for a certain amount of time each day. Susan was trembling now. Even at the last minute, she was still thinking about busting out of there, but she had come this far, may as well go all the way. She stepped inside.

Angel was sitting in a big green lounge chair with her knees up to her chest and her black hair parted in the middle and falling around her face. She was staring out the window when she turned her head at the sound of Susan's footsteps. For the first time in two years, Susan's and Angel's eyes met. Angel's expression was indifferent, a blank canvas free of all feeling or emotion. Susan thought maybe she didn't recognize her because of the sunglasses and scarf she was wearing. Neither of them said a word, just only stared at one another. Then, Anita sensing the awkwardness, said, "Angel, this is your neighbor. She says she baby sat you when you were a child. She came for a visit." Right away Susan noticed a black arm brace on Angel's left hand. The horrid thought of suicide ran through her mind but figured she would have bandages rather than a brace. She let the thought drift from her mind.

Anita smiled warmly at Susan and after asking Angel if she needed anything, exited the room.

Angel was still staring at Susan with that strange, blank look and then after a few tense moments, a quivering frown formed on her face. Susan's legs felt wobbly, like they could just buckle on her any second, but they didn't. She glanced around the room and spotted a small round table. She walked over to it and sat the brown paper bag down. She pulled a chair out and took a seat, slowly lowering herself to it. Angel's eyes followed her with every step as she moved across the room. They were scared cat eyes following a possible predator. The frown still remained on her face. Susan untied the scarf around her head and then took off her sunglasses,

revealing eyes that had already begun to well up with tears. It had been two years since she's seen Angel, much less be in the same room with her. The last time she saw Angel, she was being escorted out of a courtroom full of angry and hostile Bludenhale folk who wanted to see her burn at the stake. Susan remembered that pitiful frown on Angel's face, similar to the one she has now.

They did make eye contact but Angel quickly averted her eyes away from Susan when they did. After a few more moments of strange and awkward silence, to Susan's surprise, Angel stood up and slowly walked over to the table and took a seat opposite of Susan. Angel held her head down as if she was ashamed; her long black hair falling around her face in stringy strands. She began crying lightly to herself and then Susan opened up the brown paper bag she had brought with her and pulled out a round pan full of sweet and delicious sugar cream pie. With a nudge she pushed it towards Angel and said, "Here, you forgot yours on our counter, so I made you another one." She smiled nervously and lit a cigarette. In 1976, there were no rules against smoking in a mental health facility. Many of the doctors themselves smoked, even on their rounds.

"Amy is four now. She's starting kindergarten in the fall. Tina's shop is doing well and I hear she might be adding on."

Angel still had that pathetic frown of guilt and sadness as Susan rambled on about life on the outside but then suddenly she raised her head up to Susan. Two trails of tears fell simultaneously from her big eyes.

"Why?" She said, her voice cracking.

Susan looked deep into her eyes. A strained look was upon her face.

"Why?" Angel said again. "Why are you here?"

Susan gazed at her for a moment longer as if stalling for an answer. Two years' worth of tears began falling from her eyes, partly because she did miss Angel and really wanted to reach across the table and wrap her arms around her and hug her and hold her because she looked so goddam frail and scared and out of place in this room and building full of crazies. But she knew she couldn't because Angel was a monster and she killed her Heather, but Susan needed and wanted her daughter back so badly, she would do anything to ease the pain she's been feeling every day since June 18th 1974, even if it meant reconnecting with Angel.

She reached across the table and put her hands on Angels.

"Because I miss my daughter."

## 1997

The hot cup of coffee Susan had started drinking five minutes ago had turned cold. She had been sitting there at the kitchen table, lost in the memory of years ago when she first went to visit Angel. It was the first of many. She would learn the art of being secretive, even though she hated going behind her husband's back and engaging in such a destructive act like visiting their daughter's murderer. Every once in a while she would get the sense that Mark possibly knew what she was doing, but never would say anything. And then there was Amy. As

she got older, Susan had to take great care in keeping her weekly afternoon visits quiet.

The clock had only moved a full five minutes since her mind started drifting, but the memory of that day seemed to last forever. Susan's heart was broken and beyond repair at the loss of all her family; her daughter, granddaughter, husband and now Angel, the last person on earth who was the link between her and her deceased daughter. But even throughout all the visits day after day, year after year, Susan always had in the back of her mind that she was befriending and reaching out to a killer. The one who screamed she bathed in her best friend's blood on the side of the road in 1974.

A hummingbird fluttered wildly in front of the kitchen sink window. Finally coming out of her daze, Susan remembered the air conditioning unit and that it needed to be fixed. She wiped her moist eyes and slowly stood up from the kitchen table. She stretched and yawned and thought about going back to bed for another couple of hours, but decided not to because things had to be taken care of around the house. Before she could give herself enough time to start thinking of Mark and how he should be here at her side on this lonely morning, drinking coffee and laughing with her, she gulped down her cold coffee (once a coffee addict always a coffee addict) and went outside.

The morning was turning warm. Maybe a little too warm for September, but she didn't mind. She loved hot days and being outside and working in her flower garden. She walked around the house and to the side where the air conditioning unit was running; more like rattling. She sighed and knelt down next to the hunk of junk. *Lady, you don't know jack about this kind of stuff, so don't even try messin' with it.* She scrunched her face in confusion and stress of not knowing what to do with the unit, but more of having to fork out a hundred or more dollars for some twenty something kid to come out and look at it. A squirrel ran down the shaft of a tree a few feet in front of her. It stopped, almost right in front of her. It was nibbling on an acorn and looking at her with its glassy, beady eyes. "What are you lookin' at buddy?" She huffed again in annoyance at the damn noisy unit. A few strands of hair flung away from her forehead. The sun was beating down. It was getting hotter by the minute. Then, as if the magical air conditioning fixing fairy had flew down from the heavens, Susan saw a black leaking tube connected to the unit. "Well hell! I can fix that." She looked at the squirrel and said with more confidence in her voice, "I can fix this." She stuck her tongue out at the squirrel and it scurried away from her, off to find more trees and acorns.

The ride into town was only a short distance from her house. She had both the driver side and passenger side windows open, letting in a rush of hot, late summer air. Her hair was pinned back in a ponytail. A country song was playing on the radio. The woman singing sounded familiar. Susan couldn't quite place who it was but she did know the song. The female vocalist bellowed out how a woman should stand by her man and then Susan glanced in the rearview mirror and saw a flash of a memory of Amy when she was about twelve or so, sitting in the backseat. A lump formed in Susan's throat at the sudden, horrible memory of that day at Sam's when Red Brown terrified and traumatized Amy with the details of her mother's gruesome, strange death. Susan tried thinking of something else but

them memory was too strong. Realizing that the song was the culprit and trigger for the sad memory, she quickly turned off the radio.

She was in downtown Bludenhale and within a blink of an eye she pulled into a parking space in front of Sam's Hardware. The place hadn't changed much, probably because of Sam's reluctance to update the look of his store. The familiar tone of two round bells clinking together filled the store. Having been to Sam's literally what felt like hundreds of times, Susan knew exactly where to go to find the replacement part for the air conditioner.

"Hi there, Susan," Sam said as he was ringing up a customer.

She smiled at him. "How are you, Sam."

"Still kicking," he said as he patted his chest with the palm of his hand. Susan winked at him and smiled again but it had a look of pity. The poor old guy had two heart attacks in three years.

"I reckon I don't need to ask if you need help finding something," he said.

"Nah," Susan said waving her hand.

The small hardware store still had that aroma of motor oil and cedar that Susan always seemed to like, or at least she had become immune to it from all the years of coming here with Mark on those Saturday mornings and Amy playing with some toy in the backseat. *We'll head over to Tina's and get your ears pierced like you've been wanting.* Susan flinched at the sudden memory of that day. She tried to focus on what she came here for but as she walked down the aisles, she could hear in her mind the sound of Amy crying. *Did that girl really suck all my mommy's blood gone?* She felt her chest tighten. *Just get what you need Susan and get out,* she told herself. But the memories kept attacking her. Her heart began to beat faster and she started to walk a little quicker. She felt a sense of panic coming over her and suddenly forgot where she was, even though she's been up and down these aisles hundreds of times. It was getting closer and she knew it and there was nothing she could do. That dreaded aisle was in her wake with all its sad and horrid memories. *Just go around it Susan. That's all you have to do,* her mind reeled. But it was as if she wasn't in control her body; like it was leading her to the aisle of pain. Then she saw it: an image of an old man kneeled down next to a little girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink jacket. Susan was the only one standing there in the aisle. She was gazing down at the other end, fighting the demons inside her as she covered her mouth and cried when she saw herself running as fast as she could towards Amy. It was all in slow motion; the painful memory playing back in her mind. Her hands were trembling. She closed her eyes for a quick moment and then opened them and in front of her was just an ordinary aisle in a local hardware shop. No delusional old man terrorizing a small girl; just a bunch of tools and pipes and rubber hoses. Susan lowered her hand from her mouth and looked down the aisle with sad yet angry eyes. *Good 'ol Red Brown* she thought. *You son of bitch.*

And then everything turned red.

**1984**



Red Brown awoke to the sound of his television blaring loudly in his living room around eleven p.m. The stupid son of a bitch had forgotten to turn it off and he ended up falling asleep, half drunk on his porch with a lit cigarette in his hand. When he awoke, his damaged brain had seen the blackened silhouette of Angel Larson out in his wheat field. Not really though. It was all in his mind, although he would be the last to admit that what he saw back in 1974 in a small, secluded garage in the middle of a cornfield had anything to do with his current state of insanity. It had been an eventful day for Red. The incident with the little blonde headed girl at Sam's was the highlight of the day. Amy Smith was her name, but he knew damn well who she was. *You're so pretty just like your mommy.* He had seen her mother all splayed out in a broken heap of hair and blood on the garage floor in 1974. *All skin and bone.* He attributes that horror scene to his constant late night nightmares.

But it was the other one. The girl with long black hair and a sweet, pretty face that he would blame for his current mindset. Mainly the story she told him and detective Monroe back in '74 in that small room down at the police station, where they pushed record on a tape recorder and she told the bloody tale of a scarecrow beast that was eight foot tall and craved the smell of blood and lived in the corn and sucked every last drop of blood from Heather Smith's body.

His hallucination of Angel Larson had come and gone. Now, the loud as hell TV was giving him a headache. The four beers he drank wasn't helping much either. He slowly sat up and winced at the pain in his head. He took up drinking in 1978 after he lost his job as one of Bludenhale's finest. He also lost his lady as well. Maria was her name. She became afraid of him when he drank and after one night in hell where he ransacked his living room and then sat in the middle of the floor in a stupor, staring at nothing, she decided she had had enough and left for good.

He stood up and waivered back and forth, trying to get his balance. Once he did he heard laughter coming from somewhere. That somewhere was in his head and it was two boys cackling like coyotes, terrorizing and mocking him. *Angel's gonna get ya old timer!* Red suddenly remembered the second but less eventful incident outside of Sam's in the parking lot, where two teenage metalhead punks taunted and laughed at him, driving him into a fit of madness. He put his fists to his head as if trying to knock out the laughter. Eventually it went away. He went inside and turned off the noisy television. Sweet silence. His headache was subsiding of which he was very grateful for. He would need all the strength he could get for later. Then he saw the rope and duct tape he had bought from Sam's sitting on the kitchen table.

And then a devil of a psychotic grin formed on his scruffy face.

Complete darkness.

Confined space.

Suffocating heat.

Faint female crying.

Complete darkness.

Then, a sudden movement in the dark; a male grunt of either pain or confusion or both.

Silence so loud it's almost painful in their ears. Another sound of a distressed male but different from the other. A thick layer of sweat upon one of the males forehead drips down his face, burns the eyes. The female cries again.

Tight space.

Hands tied behind their backs. No air. Mouth's taped shut. Dust in their eyes. The odor of earth and ground all around.

The three bodies wrestle around on the dirt floor of an underground cellar. Panic sets in when they become fully awake, realizing that it is pitch black all around them. They pray they haven't gone blind. Their muted screams were pointless. They were trapped in a dirt pit with dirt walls and a dirt floor. The female let out a taped mouth shriek of horror when two long earthworms roamed the contours of her completely naked body. The two males were also naked. The panic driven shrieks and cries of terror ceased after about five minutes.

The three of them were still; only moaning softly to themselves and then they heard a noise from outside. It was a muffled noise as if coming from a distance. Then a rumbling.

An engine.

They could hear it's far away roar and the intermittent revving of the engine via a gas pedal.

A Tractor.

Still, in the distance, it idled for a moment. Then more revving.

*It's coming*, the female thought, all naked and scared out of her precious mind. *Here it comes*. The slow growling roar of death getting closer. The girl did a crescendo of a pathetic cry as the sound of the engine got closer. The two males began to kick at the dirt floor as if trying to break free. But they wouldn't break free. They were trapped with nowhere to go. The thick, rumbling roar of the tractor was getting closer and sounded as if it was right above the cellar door. The female screamed under her taped mouth but her horror was lost in the heavy din of the tractor engine.

And then it stopped.

The tone of the engine still lingered in their ears. The female was whimpering lightly to herself. And then there was a new sound; the squeak of a metal seat of someone getting off the tractor and then a muted thump on the ground.

All three victims were deathly silent as they heard the commotion outside. Then, a loud bang came from the cellar door like something or someone had hit it. The female shrieked again and the banging persisted. *There was something on the roof banging and kicking, trying to get in.*

Bang!.....Bang!.....Bang!

And then the female let out her loudest scream yet, tearing the tape stuck to her mouth. "Whyyyy!" She screamed. "What's happening?"

Bang!.....Bang!

The two males kicked at the dirt but their attempts at freedom were futile and worthless. As the moments of terror passed the banging had calmed.

More noise outside beyond the cellar door.

More squeaking.

Clinking.

The metallic chime of chains hitting together.

Then the engine roared to life again.

Bang!.....Bang!.....Bang!

The cellar door came open. The three victims quickly shut their eyes at the painful glare of a bright flashlight piercing their eyes. One of the males vaguely could see an outline of someone looking down on them; although he could not see their face clearly. Then the flashlight moved as the one holding it scurried away and began tinkering with something on the tractor. The rattling of chains was heard and then the figure appeared again above the cellar, but now without the shining flashlight. They were able to see a little better, now that their eyes had adjusted. From what they could see, the figure appeared to be female or at least that's what one of the males believed, because of the long hair.

The dark figure stood there not saying anything, only staring down at the terrified people in the dirt cellar. The figure lowered itself in a squatting position and cocked its head to the side as if studying its victims.

The female cried out, "Please don't hurt us, please!" A sprinkling of stars lay in the background behind the dark, long haired figure.

Then it spoke.

"Have you ever seen the devil?"

No one answered.

"I said, have you ever seen the devil?"

Still no one said a word. The figure began to growl and make animal sounds. The female screamed and the figure screamed along with her, mocking her terror as he put the flashlight directly under its chin, revealing a horrid, frightening face that to the victims resembled a scarecrow.

The figure rose and howled out in a thunderous voice.

"All hail Angel Larson. I will bath in the blood of the wicked and tortured!"

The victims got a much better look at their captor babbling wildly in the night. Indeed it did look like a scarecrow with its potato sac face and small slits cut out for the eyes. A rusty looking metal contraption was centered on its mouth. One of the males thought it looked homemade like a bunch of knives welded together.

The oddest prop on the figure though was the long, black wig it was wearing.

Among the roaring engine the figure put the flashlight under its chin again and said, "It's playtime kiddies!" And with that the three people trapped in the dirt cellar screamed in horror as the figure rushed towards them; its fright mask descending rapidly down into the cellar.

They ended up inside a dark barn only with the soft glow of four candles giving them a little light. Their naked bodies were cut up terribly and bruised beyond repair as they were drug from the cellar by the tractor. Their ankles were cuffed to the chains they heard rattling earlier. The blood rushing to their heads made them feel as if they were going to explode. The freakishly costumed figure had suspended them upside down by their ankles. Below them was a giant vat of pig's blood, boiling and bubbling under hot coals waiting for their arrival.

As the masked creature lowered its first victim into the hot blood of pigs, he chanted over and over again, "All hail Angel Larson!"

To add to the terror of the no way out situation, the costumed freak had hit play on a large boombox sitting on top of a bale of hay. Captor of sin by Slayer played

throughout the candle lit barn as the first male was lowered, screaming his head off, into the giant vat of scalding hot blood.

The masked killer had taken the tape from his victim's dark blue chevelle after he had whacked a baseball bat on the back of his head. The kid was too busy fucking his girlfriend from behind on the hood of his car to even hear footsteps lurking up behind him. She too was whacked in the head soon after her boyfriend slumped over her body; her believing that he blew his load already, only to turn around and see the face of a scruffy old man raging toward her. The other male was an easy catch. He was passed out in the back seat of the chevelle, stoned out of his mind.

Now all three of them were going to die a horrific, bloody death because their killer had gone off the deep end and saw something in the summer of '74 that made him lose his mind, but it was really the story the girl with long black hair had told him one early morning in a small room down at the Bludenhale police station.

Beneath the killers scarecrow mask, his eyes grew wide at the sight of the body rising up out of the vat of boiling blood. It hung motionless, dripping with blood, oozing pus from its charred, burnt body.

And then Red Brown remembered.

*"All right Ms. Larson," Detective Monroe said as he pushed record on a small tape recorder. "The floor is all yours. Tell me your story. What did you see in the garage?"*

*"It was around 10:30 when we got to the garage. It was just another normal Friday night. The four of us hanging out, listening to music, the guys working on the chevelle." Angel paused, wondering if she should leave in or leave out the bloody fun she had with herself while her best friend watched in psychotic awe. She decided to leave it out. Some secrets should stay in the garage. "We heard a loud bang on the roof from out of nowhere. It scared the hell out of us. It kept banging and walking across the roof. We didn't know what it was." She paused again, wondering if she should say how they all began screaming and yelling at each other because they were freaking out and how her boyfriend accidentally impaled Heather in the stomach with a small hatchet. Just get to the truth Angel, she thought. "Then, something busted through the garage door. Glass flew everywhere. It was.....it was this thing," she said with a sickness in her voice.*

Among the din of the hung upside down female screaming and the satanic metal blaring throughout the barn, Red was knocked back into reality when a loud bang came from the closed and locked barn doors.

He jerked his head towards the barn door. His black hair wig flew with his sudden movement. Red knew that his property was far enough away from the other houses along the dirt road where he lived and that no one would be able to hear the screams of his victims. So who could be out there Red, pounding on your door? Angel Larson maybe? How about a bloodless Heather Smith crawling out of her grave, dragging herself in the night to your farm to say hi. He shuddered with terror at the thought.

Bang!

Red jumped this time but the girl was still screaming.

“Dammit, shut up! Shut your damn mouth!”

And of course she didn't shut her damn mouth, but only screamed louder. So Red cut her loose from the chains holding her upside down above the boiling blood. She fell with a hard thud on the barn floor. The male victim hung helplessly and was silent, as if he was internally praying for death.

Bang!

“Goddamn hell!” Red yelled.

What's wrong Red. Does all of this sound a little familiar?

A sickness formed in his stomach. His mind was trying hard to tell himself that whatever it was outside those doors wasn't the monster in Angel Larson's dreams.

Bang!

And then the door busted open with great force, letting out a loud crack of old wood. Red inhaled a breath of horror, even though he didn't see anything. But then from out in the deep dark a giant shadow lurched across the dimly lit bales of hay in the barn; a shadow that Red knew was the beast from Angel's tale a long time ago. From underneath his fake scarecrow mask, Red's eyes bulged out in unbelievable horror at the sight of the eight foot scarecrow beast coming towards him, with that all too familiar limp in its stride, just the way Angel described in her story.

Red's mouth hung open and as he hyperventilated, the potato sac material sucked into his mouth. He felt like he was suffocating.

In the beast's large and scaly hand was a barbwire whip. The same one it used to wrap around Heather Smith's smooth ankle and drag her out to the corn.

It stood towering in front of Red, who had begun urinating on himself as he shook in terror at the metal trap mouth monster in front of him. The beast growled from deep within. It vibrated through Red's quivering body and the barn walls. Then it reached out and grabbed ahold of Red's throat and pulled him up. Its glowing red eyes peered up at Red and then it began to squeeze his neck. Its violent grip tore through Red's skin, rupturing blood vessels and veins. A wash of slick redness that looked black in the orange glow of the barn, rushed down the front of Red's potato sac shirt. The beast snarled and then threw Red to the floor.

He was still alive.

The beast lurched over to the male hanging upside down. It drove its large hand into his naked chest. The man made no sound as the beast searched inside his chest cavity. Shock had silenced him permanently. Then it found what it was searching for. The beast forcefully ejected its massive hand. It was holding a still beating heart. The scarecrow roared at the ceiling and squeezed the man's heart, raising it high, letting the heart blood rain down onto its metal mouth. Red clutched his ripped throat as he watched in disbelief. He couldn't believe he was still alive, but more so, he couldn't believe his eyes and that the words Angel Larson spoke in that small room in 1974 were true.

A shrill scream came from the female, making the scarecrow whip its giant head in her direction. Realizing that she should have kept her pretty little mouth shut, the horrid beast slowly started making its way to her. Red had the feeling that somehow the beast had spared him his life, only because he was saving him for

last. He watched as the monster lifted up the violently shaking female and put its massive, scaly hand in between her legs. Clenching it with a firm grip, the beast lifted her off the barn floor. Her eyes were wide with shock and her mouth drew open in a look mimicking a girl experiencing her first orgasm. Her eyelids fluttered as the beast growled with delight. Warm tears streamed down her face. It squeezed her sex organ harder and she let out a short, high pitched scream. Blood poured out of her, covering the beast's entire arm. It dripped to the floor. Lines of blood crisscrossed down her legs. The beast sat her back down on the floor. She waivered in its grip. Instinctively she put her small hands on the beast's shoulders to keep from falling down. It caressed her vagina again going back and forth, scraping it with its scaly hand. The girl threw her head back, looking like she was in ecstasy but she was in a shocked state of horrific pain and disorientation. A puddle of her blood formed at her feet and then the beast lifted her body up again but higher this time; high enough to where her demolished vagina was right in its view. Her hands were still holding on to its shoulders. Then the beast's metal mouth met her bloody pussy and it began to suck. And that's when she let loose a fire witch of a scream. The bastard menace growled as it sucked every last bit of blood from her young body. Red watched in unearthly disbelief as her skin crumpled in on itself, like a vacuum sucking in a large bag of air.

The beast had finished its blood ritual. Her bones popped and banged together inside her body. The sick sight was all too familiar to Red. *All skin and bone.* His mind whirled in a frenzy of thoughts and memories. *Your mommy's best friend sucked all her blood gone.* The beast released the dead, bag of bones female. Her lifelessness crashed to the barn floor. The beast let out a thunderous roar that shook the bloody barn.

And Red knew he was next.

Making its way to him, blood dripped off its metal trap mouth. Its hulk of a body glowed hauntingly under the glow of the candles. Slayer was still blasting forth on the boombox. Red didn't notice. Death was right in front of him. The hellish scarecrow stood before Red, who was holding his throat with both hands. The bastard creature's chest started moving in and out as if it was breathing heavily. It outstretched its bulky arms and raised its head back. It kicked Red's hands away from his bleeding throat and stepped on his wrists, pinning him to the floor. The beast lowered its hideous face to Red; its eyes glowing a demon red. Red could have sworn he heard the fucker laugh but he wasn't sure. The beast ripped off Red's ridiculous scarecrow mask. Drops of blood fell onto the old man's face. The massive monster's chest began heaving again but now quicker as if it was going to throw up. All Red could do was watch in terror as the beast stood high above him. Then a violent gush of blood exploded from the metal mouth of the beast, blasting down hard on Red's face and body. It was then that Red knew the sickening reality of what he saw in 1974. A black wave of confusion and guilt soared throughout his mind. *I bathed in her blood* was the last thought that went through his mind before the scarecrow reached down and put its monster hands around Red's head, ripping it off, tossing it across the barn, where it hit a bale of hay and then rolled across the straw covered floor, landing face first into the bloody snatch of the bloodless female.

**1997**

Susan stood in the isle, lost in the trance like memory of that day so long ago when Red Brown took away her granddaughters innocence. Days after the life altering event, the local paper reported that former B.P.D. officer Red Brown had gone missing, but no seemed to notice or care, including Susan. Bludenhale had written him off after he quit the force and became the town drunk.

A tear fell from Susan's eye as the memory began to fade from her mind. The sound of two bells clinking together on the entrance door of Sam's brought her back to the present as well as Sam's hearty laugh. A heavy feeling of sadness formed in her stomach when she expected to see Mark at the register, laughing and cutting up with Sam, but he wasn't. He was long gone; buried six feet under in the Bludenhale Cemetary. She caressed the lump in her throat and glanced around the isle, hoping no one saw her standing there staring at nothing and of course there wasn't.

She suddenly remembered why she was standing in the aisle; the damn leaking hose on the ac unit. She quickly found what she needed and made her way back up to the register, leaving behind the sad, dark memory. After a few minutes of small talk with Sam about his store, the weather and his condolences of Mark's passing (something he always did every time Susan stopped in) she left. She got in her car and began the drive home.

It was late September and unseasonably warm that day. Susan didn't bother turning on the ac. Instead she rolled both the drive and passenger side windows down all the way. Her hair was pulled back in a ponytail so she wouldn't have a mess of hair flying all over her from the wind. She drove through town, eyeing all of its oldness and memories. She smiled a little when she saw the old theater that she and Mark use to go to all the time, and then of course her daughter and granddaughter. Aside from a few new businesses, Bludenhale hadn't changed much. The gas station she drove past still had the same old pumps.

A traffic light turning yellow caught her attention and she began to slow down and then stop when it turned red. She rested her head into the palm of her hand as she waited for the light to turn green. There was an '86 Buick in front of her. The driver was a thirty something gal with long, sandy blonde hair. Susan was thinking of the town she grew up in and never left. She loved it and hated it at the same time. The warm September wind blew into the truck, rushing into her face. She flinched when she had the reoccurring thought of just leaving town for good; moving away from all the horror. *Ain't nothin' else here for me*, she thought. But she knew better. She would never leave. The memories were all she had now.

The light turned green but the '86 Buick in front of her just sat there as if oblivious to the meaning of 'go'. Susan made a fist and hit the horn hard enough just to get their attention and move. It worked. The Buick slowly took off and so did Susan. She would be home soon.

She sat on the grass in front of the rattling, leaking ac unit. A pair of pliers and an adjustable wrench lay next to her. She wasn't handy when it came to things like this. Mark would always take care of things when they were broken or needed repaired. She knew she wasn't going to fix the damn unit but she had to try. Money was tight even though she lived alone and received Marks retirement check every two weeks.

She sat drumming her fingers on her knee and then a squirrel appeared from behind the tree in the yard. Susan saw it and wondered if it was the same one from earlier. It was sitting up on its hind legs, gnawing on an acorn, watching Susan. She gave it a mean look and said, "I'm going to fix this piece of crap, you watch." She stuck her tongue out at the squirrel and then said, "Just maybe not today." She got up and dusted off her jeans and went inside. The squirrel had already scampered away.

She had another uneventful lunch. Chips and a turkey sandwich and of course a long island ice tea. She sometimes wondered what the point of eating or breathing was if she had no one to share those things with. But she knew she wasn't the type to off herself.

She went upstairs with the mindset of taking her laundry basket downstairs to do some wash. Even in the midst of endless tragedies the laundry still needed to be done as well as other things around the house. She grabbed the white hamper and made her way back down the hall. Going past Heathers room, she slowed herself down and then stopped where she was. *Don't do it Susan. Not now. Just go do your small load of laundry.* Slowly she backed tracked her steps and stopped in front of her daughter's bedroom door. It had been closed for the past eight months. She turned and faced the faded white door, bringing her hands up and pressing them flat against it. She leaned forward with her head touching the door. She contemplated going inside because she hadn't been in there for a while. She tries not to go in there too often because it is just so difficult and emotionally depleting. Today she just opted to stand close to it with her hands lying flat on the wood surface and all the memories on the other side, helping her get through another day. For a moment she thought she heard music playing on the other side and the sound of laughter from a long time ago. She knew better though. Slowly she lowered her hands to her sides, feeling slightly better, even though she didn't go inside like she does every few months on extra hard days like these and just sit on Heather's bed and cry and talk quietly to four pink walls and a lonely stereo in the corner.

As she moved away from the door a thought surged in her mind. She tried to fight it but it was bearing down on her like a truckload of steel. Forgetting completely about the laundry and house work, she found herself standing now in front of Amy's door. Her aging hand trembled as it gripped the golden door knob. She turned it and the door came open; the creak of the door sounded as if it was saying 'why'.

It was only last month that she last stepped foot in her granddaughters room. After Amy died, Susan would spend most of her time in there, just like she did Heather's when she passed, but after a few months of soul treachery the visits became less frequent and eventually she stopped going in there all together. Just



only on those hard days like the one she was having today ever since she opened her eyes this morning and stared blankly at the ceiling, wondering how in the hell did she lose so many people close to her.

She went and sat on the bed. Everything in the room was covered in dust. Even the picture frames of Heather, Mark and herself. A lump formed in her throat when she saw the pictures. *She really did love us*, she thought. Much like Heather's room, the fixtures sitting amongst three year old dust seemed lonely. Susan sat on the bed, feeling numb. Why would she torture herself like this? *I can't seem to move on. Everyone in my life has left me behind.* Her body trembled slightly because she felt somewhat guilty being in Amy's room. Amy was so distant and kept to herself that Susan now felt as if she was invading her privacy. She glanced slowly around the room, looking at the big wooden dresser, its oversized mirror, a plethora of shoes up against the wall. And then a small book sitting on the nightstand caught her eye.

Her hands began to shake like she hadn't smoked in a week. She knew why she was scared to death sitting on her granddaughter's bed and she knew exactly what that little brown book was. She massaged her forehead and rubbed her eyes, trying to convince herself that it really wasn't a diary sitting there almost tauntingly. The air conditioner kicked on and it startled her making her jump a little. She couldn't help but laugh at herself for being so jumpy. But those laughs turned into cries that were quiet and weak sounding. *What am I doing in here? Don't even think about opening that book Susan. You know better. Go work in your garden, read a magazine, watch Phil Donahue. Just get out of here!* As much as she didn't want to look inside the diary with all of its secrets and demons flowing across the pages in blood red ink, she felt drawn to it. Did she really want to read about the horrors of Amy's life? Should she open it or just get the hell out of there and go do her laundry and play the, what I don't know can't hurt me card. Her mind was going in ten different directions and before she knew what she was doing, her hand was laying on the small brown book. Slowly and cautiously as if she was moving a time bomb, she slid the book in her direction and picked it up. Her heart was pounding in her chest and for a second she thought she might be joining her husband. Her hands were shaking more now that the book was in her hands. Even though the air had come on and the room was cool and comfortable, she broke out into a sweat. She hesitated as her fingers caressed the cover. She set it on her lap and just stared at it. Why was Amy's diary just sitting out in the open? Did she want Susan to walk into her room and discover the truth about her life? Had she left it on her nightstand purposely for that reason or did she just forget to put it away? As secretive as Amy was, Susan didn't believe she would forget to hide it, yet she didn't understand why Amy would want anyone to know about her life. She sighed, letting out a tired breath and opened the diary. A combination of sickness and guilt formed in her stomach. *I shouldn't be doing this.* Her eyes saw all the words but her mind didn't comprehend anything. It was like her conscious had put up an invisible guard, protecting her against reading anything life altering, but then her eyes focused and she began to read and understand.

*It is with a led lock and key that I shall use.....*

As Susan read the words on the first page a heavy lump formed in her throat and she put her hand to her mouth. Warm tears fell from her eyes and then she heard the faint sound of a car crunching against gravel, coming down her driveway. She looked up and immediately slammed the diary shut. She didn't even get past the first few sentences. She stood up and went to the window, still with the book in her hand. Her eyebrows slanted together in confusion when she saw a black car driving up to her house. She couldn't get a good view of who was driving. It wasn't uncommon to have solicitors come out to her house, even though it was in the county. She assumed that's who it was. She pursed her lips together as stepped away from the window and prepared the speech she was going to give about not wanting to be bothered by whatever it is they're trying to sell, be it a vacuum cleaner or the good word of Jesus Christ. Before leaving Amy's room, she gently placed the diary back on the nightstand where she found it. *Not today Susan. Not ever. It's not for me to read.* She went downstairs, wiping away the fresh tears on her face and tried to compose herself. She peeked out the front room window just as the car came to a stop. She felt a tingling in her stomach. *They're not selling anything*, she thought and then the ball bat under her bed flashed in her mind. No time to run back upstairs and get it. The car door slowly opened, but she still couldn't see clearly who it was. Someone stepped out of the car. It was an older looking man. Tall and roughly the same age as Susan. She saw a white head of hair on him and was for sure he would be asking her if she's found Jesus yet, because he looked like a preacher in his long, black trench coat. He stood by his car for a moment then glanced around as if surveying his surroundings. He had a grimace on his face that revealed his teeth. He began walking towards the front door. Susan had relaxed just a little when she saw that it was just some old man, who was probably lost. But still, she wasn't in the mood for small talk or salesman jabber.

She went to the door just as he began to knock. She beat him to it and opened the door and then let him have it.

"Sorry friend. I'm not interested in whatever it is your sellin', so you can just waltz on back to your car and get off my property."

She had her hand on her hip and stood in a haughty stance. The old man stared directly at her with eyes that struck her as being honest. Seconds that seemed way too long to Susan crept by. Then the old man said, "Mrs. Smith, I believe I may be responsible for the death of your daughter."

And then she fainted.

"Ma'am."

The word sounded far away in Susan's ears as she laid flat on her back on her kitchen floor. The old man was fanning her face and had his hand under her left arm as if to help her up.

"Mrs. Smith," he said, "are you all right?"

His voice was a little clearer this time and slowly Susan began to sit up. She had a dazed look to her eyes like she was lost. She looked at the old man, a mask of confusion on her face.

"Mrs. Smith. Are you ok? You took quite a fall there." His voice was low and deep and sounded as if he had a wad of phlegm trapped in his throat. She still had

that confused look on her face, but it started to dissipate when a frown formed on her lips. She said, "Who are you?"

The old man shook his head and grinned a little like he knew this was going to be the outcome of his visit.

"C'mon," he said softly, "let's get you up." He helped Susan up slowly. She leaned onto the kitchen counter for support.

He smiled and said, "Let's have a seat," and pointed to the kitchen table. He was wearing a black farmer's type hat with a wide circular rim. He took it off after they sat down. His hair was almost pure white. Susan stared at him with wide, frightened and unknowing eyes. The air conditioner kicked off. The kitchen was eerily quiet as they both stared at one another; Susan's face terrified and confused and the old man's concerned yet ashamed-ashamed that his visit had made this poor woman lose her bearings and collapse in her own kitchen.

Finally he leaned forward a bit like a preacher getting ready to explain some bad news and said in a low voice, "Mrs. Smith, my name is Eldon Wharton. I'm sure you don't know who I am. I use to live in these parts a very long time ago." He paused for a moment and then continued. "I apologize for barging in on you like this. And I'm sorry that my words made you faint like that. But there is something very important that I need to te....."

"How do you know my daughter?"

Susan interrupted with contempt in her voice. He looked down at the table and shook his head. He looked up and told Susan, "But that's just the thing Mrs. Smith. I've never met your daughter in my life."

Susan looked at him still with that mixed mask of confusion and hate.

Eldon said, "Are you feeling better Susan."

"How do you know my name?"

Eldon took a deep breath.

"Mrs. Smith, I know this is going to sound very strange but I've been seeing you in my dreams for the past two months."

He paused and their eyes were still locked together.

"Mrs. Smith, my dreams are of you lost in a cornfield. You are so scared. I can feel your horror and you are calling out for someone named Amy. I don't know who this Amy could be or who she was to you, but almost every night it's the same. I can feel your sadness and loss and I need to know why."

After another lengthy pause Susan said, "Get out!"

Eldon looked stunned.

"You get the hell out of my house. Right now!"

She stood up quickly and clenched her hands into fists.

"You better leave right now!"

She was almost in tears but Eldon didn't move and could clearly see that Susan was more terrified than angry by what he had just told her.

"Get out!" She yelled.

She went for him, her teeth clenched and fists balled up like she was going to pound his old face in but as she did Eldon put his hands up as if to protect himself and yelled, "The girl with long black hair!" Susan halted her attack. "The girl with long black hair, I've seen her too Mrs. Smith. Please, if you would just listen to what I have to say then all of this might make sense."

Susan raised her shaking hands to her face and covered her mouth.

"I've never seen you before in my life. And somehow you seem to know a lot about me. How do you know my daughter and how could you be responsible for her death. They convicted and put away her murderer years ago. But now she's....."

"Dead?" Eldon finished her sentence. "I know. I had a dreamt it about three years ago."

Susan was speechless and at a loss for words. This was all too much.

"Please Mrs. Smith," Eldon said, his eyes honest and pleading. "Let me explain all of this."

How could this old man who seemed gentle and non-threatening know so much about Susan's life?

Moments later they were in the living room and Eldon Wharton began to tell Susan the tale of the night he and his father created something hideous, vile and deadly.

"The crops were our livelihood." Eldon took a sip of his coffee Susan had offered him. She felt it was the least she could do for scaring the hell out the old guy and yelling at him to get out. In the fifteen minutes that she's known this man, she couldn't help but like him already. He had a friendly aura she thought and seemed to pose no threat, other than just having a very creepy story of bad dreams involving her and her deceased family.

"It was our only source of income, so we couldn't afford to be in the middle of a drought. Unfortunately there was one that year; a bad one. The worst part about it was all of those crows peckin' at our corn. It drove my father mad, those darn black crows. He actually believed that those birds were evil, as if the drought had brought them to our crops. He would sit on our porch with his arms crossed and a mean look on his faced and just stare out at the cornfield with all those crows flying around, snatchin' up bits and pieces of corn. He'd sit there for hours it seemed and just stew over them crows. It frightened me sometimes, that look of hate on his face."

Eldon paused for a moment and looked up at the ceiling, letting the memory soak in. He took another sip of coffee. Susan sat on the other side of the couch listening quietly, paying no attention to her cup of coffee that was now turning cold. Every so often, during Eldon's tale, she would glance up at Heather's picture sitting on the fire place mantel. Eldon continued his story but Susan did notice a change in his eyes. They looked scared.

"Well, Mrs. Smith, I do believe that my father had had enough of those crows. He decided to do something about it."

"I was playing in our barn one day when he came walking through the barn doors with a bag hung over his shoulder. 'Quit messing with that hay Eldon and get over here', he said. I did as I was told and when he dumped the contents out of the bag onto the floor, my life from that moment on would never be the same, although I didn't know it at the time."

Susan started to wonder where all this was leading. *His father was nuts, so what. What does that have to do with Heather or Amy?*

Eldon set his cup of coffee down on the coffee table. "There were all kinds of things in that bag like work boots, my father's black work shirt, some rope and nails.....a bear trap." He paused again and Susan suddenly had the feeling that he didn't want to say anymore by the haunted look in his eyes.

"I didn't have a clue of what my father wanted to do Mrs. Smith. His moods were changing so rapidly, I never knew what to expect half the time. Then my father said to me, 'we're gonna make a scarecrow Eldon.'"

Susan was quiet and listened intently to Eldon's story but now Eldon noticed a change in Susan. He couldn't pin point what it was, be it fear, confusion or both, but there was a slight change in her facial expression. He put it aside for now and continued his story.

"We started right away building that scarecrow from all those spare parts in the bag. My father kept urging me to make it as scary as possible because we needed to get rid of them crows. I did the best I could. I didn't want to disappoint him. When we were finished we stepped back and took in our creation. I didn't like it one bit. It indeed was scary. In fact it was downright terrifying and I was for sure that no black crow would ever steal from our cornfield ever again once they came face to face with the horrid thing. The wind began to pick up outside. I could feel it rush through the half open barn doors. We heard a distant rumble of thunder and my father said with a crooked grin on his face, *look, it's working already.*"

"We drug that monster out into our cornfield and hung it up on a wooden cross. It was horrifying the way it looked up there. My father left me alone there with it. He said he had the final piece for it. I remember being alone with that thing. The thunder boomed in the distance and it looked like the thing was staring right at me. I was for sure it was going to jump down off that cross and come lurching toward me right then and there.

"Finally my father returned and with him was a big witch's hat my mother had worn the previous Halloween. I hated it. Well, my father got up that ladder and put it on what we created and then it was complete."

"Soon after, the rain hit and it hit hard. We were soaked within seconds and my father started jumping up and down and yelling at the sky saying thank you over and over again. I don't know if he was thanking God for the rain or that beast hung up on that cross. I wanted to run out of the cornfield not only because I didn't want to be outside in a thunderstorm, by my father was scaring me half to death by his manic clapping and yelling. And then a streak of lightning hit the scarecrow. There was a big blast of sound and light and it knocked both me and my father to the ground. The jolt also knocked the monster off the cross."

Susan had not taken her eyes off the old man for the past five minutes. She was so caught up and mesmerized by his story. She hadn't even looked at her daughter's picture.

"Mrs. Smith, I...."

"Please, call me Susan."

Eldon smiled but faintly.

"Susan, what I'm about to tell you is a secret I've kept hidden inside of me for fifty years. I have never told anyone. Not even my wife of thirty five years, god rest her soul. Not even my two sons."

He stopped and took a deep breath and was wondering if he had made the right decision coming back to Indiana to tell a woman he's never met but only in his dreams, the nightmare truth of that night back in 1947.

"This thing, the beast my father and I made in our barn.....it came alive."

Susan's eyelids had been immobile but now they fluttered like butterflies in spring when she heard Eldon speak of the living scarecrow. They both were silent for a while. It was as if they both were digesting all the information and words spoken the last ten minutes or so. Eldon was expecting Susan to start screaming at him again to get out at, but instead she surprised him when she told him to go on.

"I tried to tell myself I was just imagining things when I saw that giant beast rise up from the ground and tower over my father. It had to be at least eight foot tall. And then it roared. It shook the ground more than the thunder. It stomped its way over to my father. He was lying flat on his back. I don't know if he was hurt or just scared stiff seein' that thing stand in front of him. The next thing I remember is my father yelling at me to run and get out of there. So I did and I ran for dear life through that corn and rain and darkness and thunder until finally I reached our yard and could see the faint orange glow our the porch light."

"Days after I was standing next to my father's coffin at the funeral home. There really was nothing left of him. He looked like he'd been stuffed by the people that worked at the funeral home. I was later told that he had no blood left in his body. I don't know how that can be possible, but it was, and I reckon that beast we made had something to do with it."

A tear fell from Susan's eye. The tale Eldon was telling her had struck a nerve and for good reason. Her daughter had also been found bloodless at the time of her death.

"I'm sorry. I've upset you," Eldon said gently to Susan.

She wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. She suddenly felt foolish for letting her emotions get the better of her in front of a complete stranger.

"No, it's all right, really."

*But why are you so upset Susan? Does all of this sound familiar?*

Eldon continued. "The thing that haunts me the most I guess is, after I had made my way out of the corn and went running towards my house, I turned around and I could see two red eyes staring back at me from a distance and I knew it was that thing and I knew it had just killed my father. I couldn't sleep for weeks after that night. I was for sure it was going to come back for me one night and bust through our back door and kill me and my mother and three sisters. But it never did. I moved from Indiana when I was nineteen. I went to California and never came back, that is until now."

"I still don't understand how I'm connected to your nightmares," Susan said sounding puzzled.

"Well, you see Susan, after I left Indiana I put all of that night behind me. But one night in 1974, I think it was, it all came rushing back to me one night during one of the worst nightmares I've ever had. Your daughter Heather was in my nightmare and I don't know why. And so was the girl with long black hair. And there was something else too.....that thing. That beast was there too glowing its red eyes and there was so much blood and screaming....."

Eldon couldn't go on. The memory was too much and the look on Susan's face was one of absolute horror. *How can he know about the Bludenhale Massacre? How does he know about Heather and Angel? What the hell is going on?* Her mind was spinning.

"And now in the past two months you have been haunting my dreams every night. If there is something that you know Susan, please, tell me what it is."

Eldon's face was strained with agony almost as he pleaded for some kind of explanation.

All of this was frightening Susan. *But why so scared Susan? Do you know something about the past?* She finally took her eyes away from Eldon when she looked up at the picture of Heather once again. She stood up and walked over to the fire place mantel. She picked up the picture and stared deeply into it. She had no answers for Eldon and she sure didn't have a clue as to why he was dreaming of her lost in the cornfield. She put the picture back and turned around facing the old and broken man. Her eyes were moist.

"I don't have any answers for you. I'm sorry." *Maybe you do Susan or maybe not.*

Eldon couldn't help but think that Susan was keeping something from him. All throughout his story she had a look of terror on her face as if she too had come in contact with the devil from the corn with red, glowing eyes. Susan felt bad for Eldon. He looked so defeated and haggard. But that didn't stop her from wanting to know more about him and to see if he really was for real or not. Then she had an idea.

"Eldon," she said, her voice soothing like, "do you mind if we took a drive out to your old house. You said it wasn't far from here."

"I suppose we could if you have the time."

"I got all the time in the world now."

She wanted to see the place where he claims to have created the horrid atrocity in his tale. She just need something solid other than some dreams. It was all still very chilling to her that he would know of what happened in the garage from twenty two years ago. She herself didn't know the exact details other than what detective Monroe had told her and Mark.

"How about I follow you out there," she said.

He shook his head and smiled. "Are you ok?" He asked her. She forced a smile.

Susan grabbed her purse and as they walked out of the house and to their cars, she knew all along that she didn't need confirmation of Eldon's claims, stories and dreams.

*It wasn't me.*

A light wind blew through Eldon's white, thin hair as he looked up at the old barn. His bottom lip trembled at the sight.

"That was such a long time ago," he said more to the wind than Susan who was standing next to him. She could tell this was difficult for him but she just needed to see it to believe it. Luckily the property was vacant. No one lived there. Eldon thought that was probably a good thing.

"You were just a little boy when you lived here?" Susan asked him.

"Yes. I was born and raised on this farm. I was twelve years old when the nightmare began."

Susan decided not to ask any more questions. She gave him some time as he strolled slowly around the property, looking at the old house and barn and then the surroundings like one would at a museum.

It was a warm, sunny afternoon but the property seemed grey and dismal. Eldon didn't know how long the house has been vacant, he wasn't sure if he cared or not. He stopped and looked at the old house with his old eyes.

"I told myself I would never come back to this place and here I stand with all these dark memories."

Susan crossed her arms as if to ward off a chill despite it being eighty three degrees. Eldon started towards the barn.

"It was right in there," he said pointing at the monstrous, dilapidated structure.

Just then a noise came from the house. It startled Susan as she turned around quickly. Could it be a ghost in the house watching the goings on of the living or possibly an old witch?

"Look, right there," Eldon said to Susan.

It was just a rat scurrying out of a broken window of the house. Eldon moved away from the barn. He had had enough of the trip down memory lane, standing there thinking about that stormy night the devil came alive in his father's cornfield.

Susan decided maybe it would be ok to say something now. She offered, "I bet it must be hard coming back here, seeing all of this after so many years."

Eldon shook his head in agreeance with Susan who was just a few feet away from him. She noticed his stare go from the edge of the cornfield to the house. She had no idea he was looking at a scared, twelve year old boy running for his life. He then turned his attention to the cornfield.

"I reckon that thing is deep in the corn by now." He couldn't imagine any sane farmer wanting to have a crop in this dreadful area. But he supposed that most farmers had never seen the likes of an eight foot scarecrow prowling around.

"Suppose we should be heading back," Susan said. Eldon turned to her. He shook his head once more, agreeing with Susan that it was probably time to leave. He took another long look at the barn. Susan thought maybe he was thinking about going in there. She prayed that he didn't.

After his long gaze he turned away from the old barn and began walking to his car.

"Susan, I am terribly sorry if I caused you some unwanted heartache today. I'm sure you don't need or want any of this in your life."

"No, I don't, not at all. But everything has changed now. We have a connection Eldon, you and I. "

She smiled wanly at him when he offered his apology. She did genuinely like him. He was just an old soul searching for an answer.

As they stood looking at one another, the wind blew at their faces and Eldon couldn't help but notice once again that look on Susan's face like she wanted to tell him something or could possibly be keeping some vital information from him.

"Susan, are you sure there isn't anything you want to talk about?"

Her face was a mask of confusion but she kindly told him that she was all right.



Then, Eldon said, "There is one more thing before I go. Susan, you said that the one who was responsible for your daughter's death was convicted and sent away. This wouldn't be the girl with long black hair would it?"

"Yes it was," she answered softly with sadness in her voice.

Eldon continued, "The reason I'm asking you this is because as I told you before, the nightmare I had in 1974 had both your daughter and the girl with long black hair. She was one of the ones screaming in terror and I could feel her horror and the heartache when she saw...." He suddenly stopped, realizing it wasn't a good idea to say anymore.

"Well, I guess I better be on my way. Thank you for your time Mrs. Smith and again I am sorry." He opened his car door and began to step in when suddenly Susan gently put her hand on his shoulder.

"Wait."

*What is it Susan? Is there something you would like to tell the old man? Something on your mind? Something from the past?*

"I...I just wanted to say I'm sorry for the way I acted earlier. I understand you are experiencing something that is obviously very troubling and you thought by speaking with me that maybe you could find an answer. The truth is I don't know why you are seeing me in your dreams. As far as what you and your father did a long time ago, well...." She was at a loss for words. Eldon squeezed her hand and smiled warmly at her.

"I understand. It is a wild story but it is true Mrs. Smith."

He sat down into the driver's seat. Susan reached inside her purse and pulled out a pen and an old receipt from Sam's Hardware.

"Here, let me give you my number, if that's ok."

Eldon shook his head and told her thank you.

She asked, "Are you going to be in town for a few days?"

"I'm staying at the Roadside motel just outside of Bludenhale."

"Ok, well, if you would like to call me, you can. It won't be a problem."

"All right then."

He pulled away slowly and drove down the dirt driveway. Susan watched him with a thousand thoughts in her mind.

She felt numb and like she was in another world when she drove home. Am I in a dream, she thought. The lump in her throat was urging her to let out a cry but she couldn't. And then she started thinking about everything Eldon had told her: his visions of her in his dreams, his knowledge of Heather and Angel and Heather's death, but most of all what he and his father did in that barn on a hot summer night in 1947.

By the time she reached her driveway she felt dizzy and sick. She stopped the car as fast as she could and opened the door and threw up in her driveway. She looked upwards and could see her house in a sideways view and in a heat haze in the distance. She wanted to run away from all of this. It was too much to bear and too unreal. *What the fuck is going on*, she thought as she wiped away a splotch of vomit from the side of her mouth. *How can he know all those things?*

Somehow she managed to drive up to her house. She stumbled inside and filled a glass full of water and drank it. She still felt dizzy and sick. She went upstairs and fell onto her bed and fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Hours later she awoke in the darkness. She knew she wasn't dreaming. She felt scared all of a sudden by the dark but more so by being alone. She glanced at her clock and it was eleven thirty. *Jesus, I slept that long?* She didn't even know what time it was when she fell asleep. She sat up in her bed, bringing her knees up to her chest. She could still taste some leftover vomit from earlier and then she remembered. A frightened chill went through her when she thought of the things Eldon had told her. In front of her was her dresser with a large, square mirror attached to it. She saw her reflection in the dark of the room. The air conditioner kicked on. Outside, crickets were chirping. A distant thunder boomed. A late night thunderstorm was on its way.

A wave of thoughts went through her mind. *It can't be. It just can't be.* What was once thought of as the deranged delusion of a mentally ill girl was now quite true. Susan knew the horrors in Angel Larson's mind because Angel told her one night during one of Susan's many visits with her.

As Susan stared at her reflection in the mirror in the darkness of her room, she thought of what the girl with long black hair had told her so long ago.

## 1980

### December

Angel Larson sat staring blankly out the window in her room on the second floor of the Indiana State Mental Hospital. She had become depressed and lost the last little bit of life she had (and sanity for that matter) three months ago when she saw the news report on the death of Led Zeppelin drummer, John Bonham. *Party's over.*

Led Zeppelin was her and Heather's favorite band back when she had a normal life, living in a small Indiana town, before the bloodshed in a small garage by the mouth of a monster scarecrow.

Angel's parents had abandoned her months after she came to the I.S.M.H. They just couldn't accept her as their daughter anymore, knowing that she was a monster and the horrific murder she was accused of. But Angel knew the truth about that night. And she knew she didn't imagine it, even though it all felt like a bad dream.

Something clicked inside of her one night and she decided to put that black memory out of her mind. Sex became her outlet and it was what she was best at even more than hair, makeup and going to beauty school. She was a bona fide sex junkie and even before she was sentenced to life at the crazy house. Masturbation was her vice and her release, her knight in shining fucking armor from the horrors of that night and her new life of being locked up. It helped ease the pain at least for a while. Of course she would occasionally think of Heather and her boyfriend Ron and have a nightmare every now and then, but for the most part, touching

herself and sex had shielded her from the terror she had temporarily put aside in her mind. It worked and it got her through the first six years of her time at the I.S.M.H.

Until now.

Hearing the news reporter talk of John Bonham's passing had re-opened the gate of terror that had been locked in her mind for six years. It affected her severely. It was almost like a part herself died when they said the mighty Zeppelin would not continue on. If they couldn't go on, then she couldn't go on either she supposed. And that's when the nightmares came on full force.

She stopped her daily masturbation routine and now all of her thoughts of sex were replaced with the face of a monster with a metal trap mouth. She also started thinking of Heather more too. She had always been on her mind but now since the end of Zeppelin, she thought of Heather every day. Sometimes she wouldn't leave her room for days. She would only cry and stare out the window. Sex no longer interested her; only blood and nightmares now. A fragile mind can only build a wall so high until the demons start to climb over.

One Friday night around 2 a.m. Angel sat up in her bed. She was soaked in own sweat and her mind was replaying the nightmare she just had of that thing in the garage on top of her, fucking her. She could feel its foot long cock, impaled with nails, being thrust hard up inside her. A thunderstorm was roaring outside. On each flash of lightning she could see the fountaining gushes of blood jetting out of her abused vagina. It rained down on her, splattering her face and naked body. A high pitch scream flew out of her mouth in her dream. Strands of black hair clung to her sweaty face. An electric blue flash illuminated the beast on top of her. It roared and growled as it fucked her, making her bleed to death from in between her legs. A pair of glowing red eyes stared down at her as she lay beneath its girth.

And then she woke up.

As she tried getting a hold of herself, the rain coming down outside made her wonder if she was still dreaming or not. She lifted up her soaking wet silk night gown and realized it was just a dream. Her female parts were untouched and blood free. She cried for a while, sitting on her bed, listening to the rain and thinking of her dream. Finally she got up and went to use the toilet. She went back out to her bed and turned on the lamp on her nightstand. She thought of maybe writing in her diary but decided not to. When she first came to the I.S.M.H. in 1974 her doctor had suggested she write in a journal or diary. She thought it was a stupid idea. It wasn't until 1976, two years later that she would decide to give it a try. It soon became her new best friend.

As she sat on her bed after having one of the worst nightmares yet in the year 1980, a thought went through her mind. It was the first time she ever thought about it. The terror she had been feeling since the breakup of Led Zeppelin she thought couldn't be alleviated by writing in her diary, but rather by talking to someone. And she knew who this person was. She just hoped and prayed that Mrs. Smith wouldn't think she is crazier than she already is and would never speak to her again.

Susan knew Angel had not been herself for the past few months and didn't know why. The two women sat across from each other at the small round table on

a cold and snowy day in December of 1980. Angel was now twenty eight and in the four years Susan had been coming to see her, she could clearly see that something was wrong.

“So, is there anything you want to talk about?”

Susan took a drag off her cigarette. Angel sat with her legs up on the chair and her arms wrapped around them. She had dark circles under eyes and had a constant frown on her face as if she was eternally sorry.

“Ok, out with it Angel. What’s wrong? You haven’t seemed like yourself for a while now. Did they change your meds?”

Susan suddenly felt stupid for asking that. She wasn’t sure if Angel was on medication or not.

Angel slowly shook her head but she didn’t seem offended. There was a long silence and then Angel began looking around the room as if to make sure no one else was with them. She said, “It wasn’t me.”

“What?” Susan said with a strained look of confusion.

“It wasn’t me.”

This time Angel said it almost in a whisper and like she was about to cry.

“It wasn’t you?” Susan said. “It wasn’t you what?”

“That night.”

Susan let out a sigh as if she was getting fed up with all this talk about nothing.

“Angel, honey, I don’t have the slightest clue as to what you are talking about.”

Silence.

In a low voice just above a whisper, Angel leaned in close to Susan and said, “There was something in the garage that night. It wasn’t me Mrs. Smith.”

Susan didn’t respond to what she just heard but rather stared at Angel with a ‘how dare you look’ on her face.

*Oh my God, the poor girl really has lost it. You let your guard down Susan these past four years. She really is crazy.*

*But she knew better though. Girl couldn’t hurt a fly.*

Susan wrestled with the idea of getting up and leaving but there was an honesty and sincerity in Angels voice that kept her planted in her seat.

Susan pursed her lips together in a sarcastic smirk. “Ok, tell me then. What did you see Angel?”

Angel let out a small cry of joy rather than terror because now she would be able to tell Susan the truth. She put her hands on Susan’s and looked deep into her eyes.

“Mrs. Smith, you’ve known me my whole life practically and you really know deep down the kind of person that I am. I’ve never hurt anyone in my entire life. And you know I loved Heather like a sister.’

Susan could feel herself getting choked up, yet she was a little scared from the way Angel was talking in that half whispering, half crying voice.

“I didn’t kill your daughter Mrs. Smith.”

A flow of tears fell from Susan’s eyes but she kept quiet and let Angel speak. Angel looked down at the table and then back to Susan.

“It was just another Friday night with the four of us hanging out, messing with Ron’s car, you know.”

Angel looked down again feeling a sense of shame by leaving out a particular and bloody memory from that night, one that involved her hand and a menstruating vagina. She left that part out and for good reason. Some secrets will forever be with the garage.

She continued, "There was a bang on the roof from out of nowhere. There was something out on the roof of the garage. We didn't know what it was. Everyone started yelling at one another and freaking out because we thought no one else knew about the garage."

"Then things got real bad from there. Whatever was on the roof had jumped down and busted through the garage door."

Angel stopped and had to regain her composure. Susan's eyes were glued to her; their hands still touching.

"I don't know what it was. It didn't seem real. It was.....was."

She couldn't go on. The memory was too horrifying.

"What was it Angel?" Susan asked, her voice strained with anxiety.

"It was.....this thing."

Angel's frown was more defined now and her tone was full of horror and sickness.

"I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It wasn't an animal. It was more like.....a monster. It was about seven or eight feet tall and it looked homemade and it had this mouth made of sharp metal and those eyes, those red glaring eyes!" She covered her mouth and cried.

"Mrs. Smith, this thing.....it killed your daughter. I saw it. It pulled her away from me and drug her out of the garage and out into the cornfield. Oh my God!" Angel began to sob uncontrollably.

Tears were falling down Susan's face but she had it together. She was angry though at Angel for making up such an insane story.

"I'm so sorry Susan. It's the truth. I wouldn't lie to you."

And of course Susan knew Angel wouldn't lie to her about anything but her tale was too tall.

*It wasn't me.*

## **1997**

Sitting there in the dark in her room, Susan's jagged thoughts were coming together. Things were falling into place. It had come full circle. She began to hyperventilate when she thought of Eldon's story and then what Angel told her.

The horror that she's been holding in all day ever since Eldon explained how he and his father constructed a scarecrow in their barn, finally came out in an anguished howl.

It was a long and painful cry full of confusion, guilt, sadness and despair. She jumped out of bed and began pacing back and forth in her room. She was still breathing hard. Her panic attack was in full force. She stopped in front of her mirror and stared at herself; tears running down her face. She pounded the dresser hard with her fists.

“It can’t be. It just can’t be!”

But it was all true, no matter how bizarre or overwhelming. She cried out again and collapsed onto her dresser. She thought again about that visit and how they never talked about it ever again. But she never did forget Angel’s story as crazy as it sounded.

Throughout the years it would randomly pop into her head and she would just shrug it off either when she was washing dishes, sitting on the toilet or flipping channels late at night. She continued to visit Angel up until 1994, despite her claims. She still craved that connection with her daughter and Angel was the one to provide it.

Suddenly the phone rang downstairs. Although in world of grief, Susan managed to pull herself up and wipe her tears away and go answer the phone.

She answered it.

“Susan, its Eldon.”

“Hey,” she said trying to sound somewhat normal.

“I’m sorry for calling you at this hour.”

“That’s ok. I....I was up.” She began to cry again.

“Are you all right Susan?”

“I’m sorry Eldon. I know....I know. I’ve always known.”

“That’s all right Mrs. Smith. I hold nothing against you. It’s very scary. I know. But it is true.”

“I was just too baffled to say anything earlier. But everything you told me is true. I know all about that monster. The girl with long black hair told me seventeen years ago. She confided in me and I just blew it off. But when I heard your story today I became so frightened.”

She sobbed some more because she knew now that Angel was innocent. “She didn’t do it. She was innocent. Oh, my dear God.”

“I’m sorry Susan for your heartache right now.”

“I apologize for blubbering like this.”

“That’s quite all right Susan.”

They were both silent for a moment and then Susan asked Eldon if he would like to have lunch with her tomorrow. He kindly accepted and then told her that there was something very important he needed to talk to her about. He found something that may hold the answer to the true origin of the scarecrow and even more so, how to destroy it.

Susan said, “Meet me at Joe’s Diner on route 11.”

## **Part 2**

### **Terrorbound: The Diary of Angel Larson.**

**1997**

March 11<sup>th</sup> 1976

This. Is. Fucking. Stupid. Goodbye.

March 12<sup>th</sup> 1976

Still fucking stupid. Suck it.

March 13<sup>th</sup> 1976

Can't get any stupider. Fuck off.

March 14<sup>th</sup> 1976

Dumbstupidfuckinggoddamassholecuntfucker! Kiss my ass!

March 15<sup>th</sup> 1976

Ok, so at the request of my doctor, the mildly handsome Dr. Stone, he suggested that I try writing my thoughts and feelings down in a journal or diary. Whatever. Stupid.

March 16<sup>th</sup> 1976

Here's a thought: I'm horny right now and I like the smell of pee. How's that doc? In fact I like it so much that when I was a girl, I don't know, thirteen or fourteen, I would go in the bathroom right after my mom was done peeing just so I could smell her. I'm a sick girl aren't I doctor. Just a depraved, girl perv sex freak. Big fucking deal!

March 17<sup>th</sup> 1976

I miss bloody Pete and the fun we had. Ok, so it wasn't fun when all those guys were done fucking me. That was the hard part. I knew it wouldn't last forever. Things usually don't. Even best friends. Wow, my first non cussing diary entry. Still fucking stupid.

March 18<sup>th</sup> 1976

It's raining right now. I am supposed to start group therapy today. I don't want to go. Anita, my nurse, who is actually very nice and different from the other nurses and doctors, told me that those group sessions might help me and that I should just try going.

March 19<sup>th</sup> 1976

So, I took Anita's advice and went to the stupid therapy session. I didn't talk much other than saying my name. I mostly just listened to everyone else's problems. Holy shit! I thought I had problems. The thought of telling these people straight out that I can't stop touching my vagina seemed almost funny compared to what they were saying. It was crazy! Drug addicts and their hallucinations of jumping off buildings and being able to fly, failed suicide attempts, people thinking the f.b.i are watching them, people who think they're possessed, people who feel the need to bark, pull out their hair, bath in mayonnaise, people who laugh and cry at the same time and this one lady that never speaks. I'm not like these people. I have issues, but not like these. Then, when it was over and as I was getting up to

go back to my hell cell, the lady doing the session came up to me and asked me if I wanted to talk about what happened in the garage. I had no idea what she was talking about. I don't know of any damn garage, all I know is that my best friend is dead and I'm stuck in here for life. I'm starting to get a headache right now, just thinking about all of this. I'm going to masturbate now.

March 20<sup>th</sup> 1976

I started my period today. It's a heavy one too. I was finally able to take off my wrist brace today. It feels so nice not to have it chocking my damn wrist. I guess that's what I get for not being able to keep my hands off myself. Anyway dear diary, I went into my bathroom to get a pad and as I pulled my panties down, I got a big whiff of myself. I just went for it. I couldn't help myself. I figured it would be ok since I'm only getting off twice a day now. When I was done, it looked like someone was murdered in there; all that fucking blood all over the toilet seat. It cleans up easy, thank god.....I don't know if I should write this down or not.....something very weird just happened.....fuck, I can't stop crying.....just had a really scary thought, I don't know why.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1976

Happy 24<sup>th</sup> birthday to me! Big deal.

March 24<sup>st</sup> 1976

Spring is finally here! Excuse me dear diary but I need to go have some private time in the bathroom, oh let's say for about an hour or so.

March 24<sup>st</sup> 1976

That was fun! Just went ahead and did it on the toilet. I peed before I did and just let it sit in there. I like to smell it sometimes when I play with myself. I also like to smell my vagina when I get off too. I'll get my left hand good and wet with myself and then smell it while I play with myself. Is that weird, dear diary!

March 25<sup>th</sup> 1976

So, I broke my streak of going at it twice a day and am now back up too four times a day. Big deal. It feels good and what's wrong with feeling good. Besides, there is absolutely nothing to do in the hell cell. I'm stuck in this room all day. Ok, dear diary, let me give you the rundown of my day and what life has been like for me the past two years at this wonderful establishment. Every morning I get up usually around 8-8:30, depending on how long I was up the night before masturbating, but the docs want everyone on my floor up and ready by nine a.m. regardless. I'm one of the lucky ones who are allowed to have their own bathroom with a shower in their room. I'll shower and get dressed and since they've picked out my wardrobe, I have no choice but to wear grey sweatpants and a plain white t-shirt every day. They are comfortable though. Then, I make my bed and tidy up which is required and then its roll call. We're escorted down to the cafeteria for breakfast and we at least have to eat some toast even if we are not hungry. After breakfast, it's back to the cell where I'll just lay on my bed for two hours until 10



a.m. when Dr. Stone comes in for his rounds, which are on Mondays and Wednesdays, and they're pretty short and sweet. I have a more in depth meeting with him on Thursdays. At 11 a.m. I help out in the laundry, folding and washing white bedsheets and I just love it. That's me being sarcastic dear diary. At noon, I line up and go to lunch. We get an hour and then it's back to the hotter than hell laundry where I work until three in the afternoon, unpaid of course.....sorry dear diary, I had another strange thought about something; some rock band I think.....anyway, I work with the lady that doesn't speak in the therapy sessions, down in the laundry area. Her name is Margret. I don't know why she doesn't talk, but she seems so sweet. After work we have a recess for an hour where can go out into the 'yard' but it's confined to a barbwire fence. After that I go back to my hell cell and I know it's a regular small room, but I call it the hell cell because that's what it is dear diary. I masturbate a few times and then at 5 it's dinner. Usually at dinner time, I'll sit with the patients that are on my floor. We're considered level 1 patients; the non-violent crazies that are a little better off than most of the other crazies in here. The food here by the way is comparable to dog vomit. After dinner we have the choice to go back to our rooms or watch tv in the recreation area, which is a large waiting type room with a few couches and a television that has only two channels. Sometimes I'll go down there but most of the time I'll go back to my and just masturbate myself silly until it's roll call and lights out at 9:30. This is my life dear diary. How did this happen? How did I end up here?

March 26<sup>th</sup> 1976

Hello, dear diary, it's me Angel, girl perv extraordinaire. Let me ask you dear diary, do you really think it's strange that I love the smell of pee so much? I mean like girl pee and my pee. Growing up, my best friend had her own bathroom in her room and I would watch her pee all the time. She would leave the door open while I was sitting on her bed, painting my nails and listening to music, mostly Led Zeppelin. It was just us girls so we didn't think it was weird to pee in front of each other. When she was finished I would immediately go in there and just sit on the toilet, even if I didn't have to go, I just wanted to smell her body and her scent. I miss her so much. I don't know what happened to her.

March 27<sup>th</sup> 1976

I've been crying all morning. I don't know why. I get moody sometimes from being in this place. I don't think twenty two years was long enough to have a normal life. Gotta go, someone just knocked on the door.

March 27<sup>th</sup> 1976

It's 10:30 about an hour after lights out. I had a visitor today. Someone I haven't seen in a long time. I've known her since I was five years old dear diary. It was my best friend's mother. Her name is.....names aren't important anyway, only the memories are what matters, the good ones at least. She looked fine I guess, but that coat and sunglasses she was wearing did look kind of silly on her. She talked about everything that's been happening outside of this place and how Amy has started sch.....

June 6<sup>th</sup> 1976

Hello, dear diary. Sorry, I know it's been a few months since we last visited. I don't know what happened with that last entry. It won't happen again. No more names, ok. My best friend's mom has been visiting more often lately. I love that she comes to see me. The little girl she talks about is growing up fast. She brought me a picture of her. She looks just like her mommy, who by the way in case you didn't know dear diary, was also my best friend.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1976

Anita told me that I didn't say one word yesterday, which was the 17<sup>th</sup>. And that I was walking around like some zombie and had this terrified look on my face. I don't remember doing any of this. These people around here are truly the crazy ones. Not me.

June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1976

Wooopeee! I got my own tv today! See what good behavior will get you dear diary. Now if I could only get a stereo now.

July 29<sup>th</sup> 1976

What the hell? A whole bunch of people died at this concert, right here in Indiana. It was on the news tonight as I was getting ready for lights out. They said people were going crazy, killing each other, biting people. Maybe it is safer being in here with all these crazies than on the outside. The concert was a band called Kiss. I never heard of them.

August 11<sup>th</sup> 1976

I'm lucky dear diary to be on the floor with the 'not so bad crazies'. I hear there are rubber rooms and strait jacket rooms on the lower level. I don't plan on seeing any of those.

August 20<sup>th</sup> 1976

I don't know if it's because it's summer time and it is so goddam hot outside, but I've been ultra horny this week for some reason. All I think about all day long is getting back to my room so I can masturbate and get off.

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1976

I've been thinking about my best friend a lot lately. I guess I just really miss the hell out of her. I love her, dear diary. Never, ever have I been into girls, but there was something, and I don't know what it was, about my best friend that made me so attracted to her. We met when we were five, but it wasn't until I was thirteen when I knew that I was in love with her. I knew she was in love with me too. I was always at her house all the time, almost every day, and it was normal to just walk in, say hi to her mom and go run upstairs to her room. I did just that one day after school and as I opened her door, I.....I really don't know what made me think of this particular moment dear diary, maybe it's all me touching myself so much lately. I've never told anyone this. You, dear sweet little diary are the first to

hear or rather see these words. I can't believe I'm even thinking about writing this down. I opened her door and I saw her masturbating. She was naked from the waist down and was straddled on top of her pillow. I gasped, almost losing my breath because I didn't know what she was doing. She was bouncing up and down really fast on her pillow and when she saw me, she screamed and jumped off of it. I could feel the heat burning my cheeks and my face turning red. As weird as it all looked to me, I was a little excited by it. She quickly started putting her pants back on and then sat on the edge of the bed and started to cry. I went over to her and sat next to her, dear diary, because I didn't like it when she cried. I put my arm around her and she laid her head onto my shoulder. I told her that whatever it was she was doing, and I had a pretty good idea now of what it was, that it was going to be ok and I wouldn't say anything to anyone about it. We got up and went downstairs and acted like nothing ever happened. Two days later on a Friday afterschool, we were in her room, just being girls I guess, listening to the radio and brushing our hair and I asked her about what I saw the other day. She didn't want to talk about it but then I told her that I'd like to try it too. Her eyes got really big, but finally she agreed to, just as long as we didn't tell anyone. It was our secret. Well, I guess it's not a secret anymore dear diary. Luckily her parents were gone, so we had some privacy to where could do it and have some fun and maybe learn about ourselves. I was scared as hell about us getting caught, so I suggested going into the bathroom to do it. Again, she agreed. We each brought in a pillow with us. We both couldn't stop laughing at first because we were embarrassed but were excited at the same time. We dropped our pants and she got on top of hers first, then I did mine. She said just to pretend like you're riding a horse and it will start to feel real good in about a minute or so. I did exactly as she did and sure enough I started feeling something that I've never felt before. Our smiling faces soon turned to focused, sweaty faces and pursed lips with a purpose. The fear of us getting caught combined with the feeling of doing something very bad was overwhelmingly exciting to me. My emotions blew up inside me dear diary. I was scared, nervous, excited, grossed out, embarrassed, humiliated, all at the same time. But most of all I was aroused. Heather was done but I kept going. She sat next to me and held my hand while I did it. She tucked her hair behind her ear and got really close to me and I could smell her sweat and her sex on her hand from her touching herself, and got really scared because it started to feel really, really good down below and I started to cry because I never felt anything so good ever in my life. She wiped the tears from my face and told me it was ok, all while I was still riding that pillow and my mouth opened up and I let out a little shriek and I could feel more tears falling from the sides of my eyes and I cried out dear diary not because I was scared anymore but because I had experienced my first orgasm. From that moment on, my life changed. I began masturbating every day and wanted to be in the bathroom after my mom was done going pee, because her scent turned me on, the same way my best friends scent turned me on when I smelled her sex on her hand. We told each other that we would never do anything like that again with one another.

September 15<sup>th</sup> 1976

My wish has come true. Dear diary, I am looking right now at my new stereo, complete with a record player and eight track player. Ok, so it's not brand spanking new but it's a stereo. It was from the janitors lounge. I guess they're cleaning it up down there and getting rid of stuff. Only problem is, I have no records to listen to. Oh, well, I'm sure I can find Stairway to heaven playing somewhere on the radio.

October 5<sup>th</sup> 1976

Dr. Stone keeps asking me about this garage and if I remember anything at all about what happened the night of June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1974. He's freaking me the fuck out too, because Dr. Stone: I have no idea what the fuck you are talking about! He says I've suffered a traumatic event. He won't come out and tell me what that event is though. Oh and get this dear diary, he says that I told him exactly everything that happened at this garage when I first came here. I don't remember fucking telling him anything.

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1976

It's new years eve. Big deal. Kind of doesn't mean much when locked up in a looney bin. But, I do want to thank you dear diary for listening to my ramblings and secrets this past year. I hated you at first and even though I know you are not real and you're just paper and a binding, you really are a good friend. You're always there to listen to what I have to say. And I am saying thank you.

February 9<sup>th</sup> 1977

I had a surprise meeting today with Dr. Stone today. He said I was put on the list for well behaved patients that are not a threat and am being considered for special weekend outings, things like going into town, shopping, movies, you know dear diary, normal stuff that normal people do. He said it was all under heavy supervision though and that security would be with us at all times, but that's ok. I'll be getting the hell out of here for a while at least. Just hope they approve it.

March 14<sup>th</sup> 1977

Anita had a helper with her today. Super cute girl too; long blonde hair, looks about twenty or twenty one. Big boobs. I mean big, big boobs. God was nice to her. Pretty face too. Anita told me that she was in training to be a nurse and that she would be with her for about a month. Her name is Jessica, according to her nametag.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1977

I'm twenty five and still alive. I think. Happy Birthday to me. My best friend's mom brought me some sugar cream pie. She makes the best damn sugar cream pie. The little girl is five and so damn cute.

April 4<sup>th</sup> 1977

Great news, dear diary. I was approved for getting the hell out of here on weekends! And it starts this weekend. Four hours on a Saturday. I'll take it. Still working in the laundry though.

April 7<sup>th</sup> 1977

It's weird being on the outside again, at least for a while. Nothing has changed drastically. They took us to a mall in Blare. I haven't been to a mall in ages. We did get some nasty stares from people when they saw that we had security with us and knew we were from the crazy house up the road. But fuck it, I didn't care. I was out in the free world for a few hours and I loved it. They gave us a little spending money which was nice. I bought some cheap ear rings and a new brush. I also picked up this cute as hell dress for the little girl that I think she'll love. Last but not least I got Led Zeppelin 4 at this record store called Soundz and oh how I needed that. I had an all nighter practically with myself after we got back and had lights out and I had put on the album, playing it at a low volume. It was magic.

May 19<sup>th</sup> 1977

That girl, Jessica, she was with Anita again today. I am so sorry dear diary for saying this but that girl is hot. She kept smiling at me, kinda like in a flirting way I thought. I liked it.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1977

Jessica came in today. Anita wasn't with her which surprised me. She said that Anita thought she should start doing some things on her own and that she was ready. What a big girl, her and her big girl boobs. I am so sorry dear diary. She is so damn pretty though. I can't help it. My god, am I crushing over this girl? I haven't felt this way since Heathe.....

June 5<sup>th</sup> 1977

I am a horrible person. How dare I have feelings about anyone else but my best friend who has since passed. Jesus, I can't help it. I don't know what it is about Jessica. Maybe I just miss having a friend in my life, I mean a really good friend, like what I use to have. If she talks to me I'm not going to fight it. There's nothing wrong with having a friend, is there dear diary?

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1977

Anita said I blacked out again, just like I did around the same time last year. She said all day long yesterday I had this look of terror on my face and that Dr. Stone was about ready to put me in one of those rubber rooms. I have no idea what is happening to me or what makes me that way every time this year.

July 4<sup>th</sup> 1977

Sorry Dr. Stone but the name Red Brown doesn't ring a bell. But if he was here I guess I would tell him thanks for finding me laying half dead on the side of the road like you say. Anyway, dear diary, happy fourth of July! I'll be watching the fireworks show on tv, down in the rec room with all the other crazies tonight. Funfun.

July 11<sup>th</sup> 1977

So I wonder if Jessica would be upset if I told her that I wanted to fuck her. Well, dear diary, I know I really can't fuck another girl, but we can do other things. Jesus, listen to me. I feel like I've been sex deprived since the fuckfest I had when I first got here with bloody Pete. Ok, I know I have sex with Larry the electrician on occasion, but, it's just that every time Jessica walks into my room, she has this weird, bashful yet kinky smile on her face, like she has a crush on me too. I don't know what to do dear diary. Oh shit, someone just knocked on the door.....be back soon.....

July 11<sup>th</sup> 1977

Yep, you know who it was dear diary. Miss Angel's little girl crush. So, I went for the small talk stuff. I asked her if she likes working here and she obviously said yes and that it's just a job. I asked her how old she was and she's nineteen, at least that's what she told me. I think she looks nineteen. So I'm six years older than her, so what. I asked if she was going to be working on my floor regularly and she said yes and that got me excited. I think she was a little nervous because she kept playing with her hair and laughing really about nothing, so yes dear diary, I think she has a crush on me. Now if I can only get her in here after hours and I know I can do it.

July 14<sup>th</sup> 1977

I had a dream about this little boy last night. He kept following me around. I think we were in a field or something. Very strange, dear diary.

July 16<sup>th</sup> 1977

I got it dear diary. I know how to get Jessica alone.

July 20<sup>th</sup> 1977

I can't believe Jessica agreed to let me do her nails, especially after hours. My heart was racing the entire time I was working on her hands, which by the way dear diary are the sexiest, smallest female hands I've seen. She had changed out of her uniform and was wearing her jeans and a tight pink t-shirt that formed perfectly over her breasts. It was just me and her sitting on my bed and we talked about girl stuff and guys and periods and when we were finished she took my hand and said thanks for the manicure. But she didn't let go for a moment. I was looking right into her eyes and she was mine and just like that we kissed each other. I could feel her lips trembling and she let out a nervous laugh when we were done. I felt warm between my legs. It was an innocent kiss. No tongue or anything. She suddenly apologized and I told her it was ok. I asked her if she liked it. She told me she did. After she left, I felt like I was drunk or maybe even high and I've never been either of those. I haven't been this turned on since that time in the gara.....

August 4<sup>th</sup> 1977

Jess and I had our first real sexual encounter tonight. It felt so good dear diary to feel someone else inside me besides my hands, although I'll never stop touching myself. She was really nervous at first. She thought we were going to get caught. I

told her not to worry and that this place is dead at night. I took off my grey sweatpants and my panties, but kept my shirt on. Jess was completely clothed which I was fine with, well sort of. I was dying to know what she looked like. I just have to give it time. She used her fingers on me. She was so gentle, almost like she was afraid she was going to hurt me. I told her not to be afraid and don't hold back. Finally I removed her first two fingers from me and I smiled at her and told her to watch. I sat up on my knees and began touching myself. There in the darkness of my room I could see her eyes getting big with wonder or maybe even shock as she watched me play with myself. I assume she's never seen a twenty five year old woman go to town on herself. It was like I was giving her an education dear diary. My face was covered in sweat and I smiled at her and told her to come closer so she could see how I was doing it and that it was ok to use your whole hand on yourself, and all the rubbing and gripping wasn't going to hurt me. Maybe she's never masturbated like this before. My hand was on fire and I was rubbing myself so fast and inserting two, three fingers at a time into myself. I finally came and had to bite my finger to keep from screaming out my orgasm dear diary. Jess covered her mouth to hold in a laugh. She asked me if it felt good. I laughed and told her it was extremely painful. She's only nineteen dear diary. When I was finished, my heart was racing and I was sweating like crazy and then I put my glistening wet hand to my face and inhaled myself. Jess kind of looked at me funny but she was still smiling. She asked me why I did that. I asked her if she's ever smelled her hand after playing with herself or using the bathroom. Almost defensively she said no. Really dear diary, I can't be the only girl alive that has ever been curious about the way her female parts smell. I'm sure other girls do that, right? Ok, so what if I'm a freak dear diary. I just like the way I smell down there. I pulled Jess close to me and we kissed. I put my hand on her cheeks. She pulled it closer to her and smelled my sex. I smiled and asked her if she liked it. She smiled back and said yes. Before she left she said she had to pee. And I asked her if I could watch. She agreed, obviously. She looked so damn cute sitting on the toilet, covering her face and laughing because she was embarrassed. After she left I sat on the toilet and masturbated again, inhaling her scent until I could smell her no more.

August 19<sup>th</sup> 1977

So, Dr. Stone allowed me to paint my neighbor's fingernails today, my neighbor being Rhonda in the next room to the left of mine. She has nasty hair pulling problem. Half of her head is long hair, the other half is near bald with strands of hair in three different spots. It's kinda freaky dear diary but she is a level one patient like me, so Dr. Stone said it should be fine with me painting her nails. Although I do have some ideas to fix her hair problem, well not the pulling part but I could manage a new doo for her.

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1977

Folding laundry every day kind of sucks.

August 26<sup>th</sup> 1977

Jess and I made love for the second time tonight and it was beyond great. Actually, it was her turn to feel good and she did dear diary, oh sweet Jesus she did. I even convinced her to get naked. She did but she kept her bra on. Baby steps dear diary. Oh my gosh, her boobs are so big they look like they could bust out her bra. She looked really sexy just standing there by my bed, waiting for me to finish peeing. We started making out as soon as she came into my room and she got me all worked up that I had to pee. When I was done I flushed the toilet and kicked my panties away from my feet and went to my bed. I jumped up on there and pulled my shirt off. My breasts aren't anywhere near the size of Jess's. She makes me look like a little girl almost. I patted my knees and told her to come to me. She did and I told her to lay her head down in my lap. She did. I gazed down on her and gently caressed her face, all while encouraging her to touch herself down below. I told her to do it like I showed her. She said she wanted me to show her again because she forgot. Oh, dear diary what a little liar she is. I turned myself around with my pussy right in her face so she could see. I started rubbing myself hard and fast the way I like it. I called her a little copy cat when I glanced over my shoulder and saw her hands going crazy all over herself. She said she wanted to be like me and I laughed at her and then something amazing happened dear diary. She said she had a surprise for me. She raised her glistening hands to my face. Smell she said. I grabbed both of her wrists and inhaled her scent. I began to lower my hand so I could finish masturbating but she pushed my hand away, back to my face. She said she would take care of me. Her lips moved toward my middle part and then I melted in her mouth.

September 15<sup>th</sup> 1977

So I picked up this record by the Dead Boys today on our little 4 hour weekend outing. Good shit too. I guess it's what people call punk dear diary. I just call it rock and roll. I wish we could stay out longer but I can't really complain. At least they allow some of us to leave for a little bit. You know what's funny dear diary? I never think about running away when I'm out or trying to escape. I've gotten to know some of the crazies here and some of them really aren't that crazy. Ok, maybe they are but they're my life now. Oh, I almost forgot dear diary, I got the little girl this cute as hell pink shirt with a heart on it. I hope she likes it.

October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1977

I was supposed to take care of Amy dear diary. I told Heather I would help raise her with Susan and Mark.....oh my god I can't stop crying....it's three in the morning.....oh my god.

October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1977

Sorry dear diary, I forgot, no names.

October 31<sup>st</sup> 1977

Happy Halloween dear diary! They're having a little shindig tonight down in the cafeteria with punch and cake and Halloween decorations. They do it every year dear diary. And yes I am going. I fucking love Halloween. They even allow some of the level one patients to dress up. Last year I went as snow white, ya know,



because of my luscious black hair. It was a lot of work though. I think I'll just plain clothes it this year.

October 31<sup>st</sup> 1977

Oh dear diary.....i'm so fucking terrified right now.....i can't stop shaking....i saw something.....something bad....it was bad, bad, bad dear diary. It was right there in the cafeteria at the party. Oh my god it found me dear diary, it came back, it came back!

November 1<sup>st</sup>

What the fuck was all that about Ms. Angel? Do you know dear diary? It came back, what? What came back and what the hell was I rambling about?

November 20<sup>th</sup> 1977

I can't stop laughing dear diary, I've been laughing I think for ten minutes straight. Really Dr. Stone, a scarecrow? Just got back from my therapy session which is usually a waste of time but today it was rather hilarious. Apparently I told him in my statement three years ago that a scarecrow killed my friends and then tried to kill me, a fucking scarecrow, dear diary. How stupid. What kind of idiot makes up stories about scarecrows killing people. Fucking dumb, dear diary.

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1977

Happy New Year dear diary, I know, big deal right. Blaaaaahh. Another year gone in the crazy house.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1978

So I turned 26 today and oh my gosh dear diary it was one hell of a birthday, thanks to Jess. She did something really special for me today. We've been having a lot of fun for about two years now. And that's all it is really, is fun. I do love her though. She has a life outside of this place. She's not a prisoner here like me. She works here and can clock out and go home. This is my home. She always talks about her parents giving her a hard time about doing well in school. And of course her boyfriend. Yes, dear diary, she does have a boyfriend and I'm ok with that. She's twenty and free, I'm twenty six and locked up. But I am so grateful for her friendship and that's why I am so happy that she agreed to this thing for me on my birthday. It took some convincing on my part but she smiled that sexy smile of hers and gave me a hug and said yes. It actually started this morning dear diary when she got to work and by the end of her shift it was all ready to go. After lights out I let her into my room just like always, being extra quiet and sshhing and laughing at one another feeling butterflies in my stomach. We kissed and made out for a minute on my bed, just to get warmed up and when we were done we stripped down bare ass naked and could already smell her and that sexy perfume she was wearing. She was wearing a necklace around her waist. She said it was a belly necklace. She told me she would get me one. Anyway dear diary, we were naked and so excited and I took her by the hand and we went into the bathroom and closed the door. Luckily I had a dimmer light in my bathroom. It was better than having some bright surgical light shining on us. I dimmed the light so it

wasn't bright but we could still see each other. We were standing next to the toilet. We lowered ourselves down next to it. We were on her knees and we both smiled at one another and put our hands together. Her fingernails lightly scratched at my wrists and I almost had a small orgasm. We both looked at the toilet and then each other. Are you ready she said dear diary, with an excited smile on her pretty as hell face. I said yes and got into position with my hands wrapped around the near sexy roundness of the toilet bowl and my face buried inside, just inches away from the pee filled water. Since this morning Jess had used my bathroom whenever she had to pee and I used it as well, but what I asked her was not to flush the toilet all day. I wanted to inhale both our scents at the same time. I want to smell me and her all at once and that's what we did dear diary. I could feel her behind me grabbing my hips and ass. I could tell by the way she was touching me that she was having fun putting her hands all over me. I popped my ass out as far as I could and then I felt her face melt into my center. As she indulged herself dear diary I indulged in our combined scents as I inhaled our pee. I could smell her body all around the toilet bowl where she sat on it earlier. I could smell her skin, her soap from her shower, her vagina and her pee all at once, forming and intoxicating, rich feminine odor that was beyond arousing dear diary. I put my face in a little more. The tip of my nose touched the water. I wanted to dunk my whole face all the way in but decided not to. I didn't want to ruin the delicious smell of our feminine parts. I could feel her face and tongue behind me as I enjoyed our fragrance. She was just lapping me up and I began to orgasm. Her mouth never left my vagina as I did. Then something amazing happened dear diary. After my orgasm, I felt Jess remove herself from me. I lifted my head from the toilet to see, but she gently pushed me back into the toilet bowl and told me to just wait. I had no idea what she wanted to do. She then put the palm of her hand flat against my vagina and began to rub. I could tell she was rubbing herself too at the same time. I could hear the squeaky, clicking sound of our moist vaginas. I didn't know what she was planning to do until her hands came into my view. She put both her hands in front of my face with my head still in the toilet. I could smell both her and me at the same time, plus all the sexy, female scent lingering inside the toilet bowl. It was heaven dear diary and oh how I love her for doing that for me.

May 4<sup>th</sup> 1978

They had to inject poor Fred this afternoon with the sleepy shot. He kinda lost it during group therapy. The fucking lady asking us questions dear diary kept pushing him. I don't even know who this supposed counselor is. Anyway he started throwing chairs and hitting himself on his head and pulling at his hair and acting all crazy.....sorry dear diary, I just had a weird thought right now. The scene from earlier reminded me of something, although I'm not sure what it is.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1978

So I had my yearly blackout again. Anita told me as usual that I didn't say a single word to anyone yesterday. I think they're making it up.

July 12<sup>th</sup> 1978

Hi dear diary. Guess what Ms. Angel just did? I fucked a virgin. It was the new housekeeping guy. He was acting really nervous around me and I think I freaked him out when I said I wanted to fuck him. Well, I didn't just come out and say it like that. I told him to take his pants off and he said why. Can you believe that dear diary, he asked why. I told him because I can't fuck you with your pants on silly ass. Anyway, I realized he was a virgin because he said he's never done it before. That got me so wet dear diary. I told him to lie down and I got on top on him and slid down nice and easy. He came after only about five strokes though. I felt him get really big inside me so I jumped off of him and used my hand on him. It was a huge load too. I had to wipe my hand off before we started again. Sorry for the gory details dear diary, but you are my best friend now.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1978

I wonder why Margret never talks. I know she has a tongue because I sit by her all the time at lunch. She is so sweet and quiet and is always smiling at me. I talk to her dear diary, even though she doesn't respond verbally. She just shakes her head and smiles. I'm not even sure why she is in here. I guess we have something in common.

November 25<sup>th</sup> 1978

My best friend's mom brought me a sugar cream pie, and yes dear diary it is nearly all gone. She said the little girl ate like a horse on thanksgiving. She's six now and in kindergarten. I should let you know dear diary that my best friend's mom has been visiting me for a couple of years now. She visits about once a week, sometimes twice. I really do like her visiting me and I'm sorry I don't talk about her much. I know I should but it's hard sometimes dear diary.

December 11<sup>th</sup> 1978

His name was Eldon. The little boy's name was Eldon dear diary. I dream about him often but never knew his name. I know now, because I just dreamt about him and he told me his name. I still don't what he wants and why he is in my dreams dear diary.

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1978

Goodbye '78 you weren't that great. Still in the crazy house.

February 9<sup>th</sup> 1979

Oh my goodness dear diary, Jess fucked me with her tits last night. I've never felt anything like that. Her boobs are so big that when she squeezes them a small nub pops out in between her hands. She used it on me and then rubbed her nipple on my clit and that was insanely arousing. The best part was when she let me suck on them when she was finished. I could smell myself all over them.

March 12<sup>th</sup> 1979

What is this disco bullshit? These assholes look ridiculous dancing like that. No thank you. I'll just keep listening to Led Zeppelin and the Ramones and Ki.....

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1979

Happy Birthday to me! Twenty seven and I ain't in heaven.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1979

I fucked Larry for like the millionth time last night. He's the electrician here at the nuthouse, dear diary. Oh, I know what you're thinking. What about Jess? Look, dear diary, she has a life outside of this place. I can't tell her how to live her life outside of here. Besides, Larry has been a regular since the bloody Pete days when I first came here. I also have been seeing that kid whose virginity I stole from him last year. It was fun. The little shit came within a minute of me going down on him and I still joke about it with him when he stops in to say hi.

May 12<sup>th</sup> 1979

Dr. Stone snuck in his daughter tonight so I could fix her hair up for her prom. I guess I've made a name for myself around here as the girl with the hair skills. And I guess it was a lot cheaper for Dr. Stone to have me do it than taking her somewhere and spending too much money. I'm really flattered that everyone on the second floor lets me do their hair and makeup. It's all for fun though, it's not like these ladies are going out on hot dates anytime soon. They're only playing bingo down in the cafeteria every Thursday night. Heather and I were going to have our own beauty shop called Sis dear diary and I was going to.....sorry.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1979

Another year, another blackout.

July 21<sup>st</sup> 1979

Oh my god, dear diary! No, no, no, no! I can't be. It's not true. I never killed anyone! What is Dr. Stone talking about? He says that's why I'm here dear diary. He said I murdered my best friend! No, no, no!

August 5<sup>th</sup> 1979

We stopped at this outside flea market today. We usually go out on Saturdays but it was raining too hard, so they let us go today on a Sunday. There really wasn't much there on the tables. Mostly junk. There was an older looking guy and some kid sitting in lawn chairs looking at us like we were crazy or something. I guess the writing on the bus gave it away.

September 5<sup>th</sup> 1979

Hi, dear diary. You know, I was thinking about something today. You wanna have some fun with me? You've really been a great friend to me all this time. I want to do something nice for you now. Just you and me, no Jess, no doctors. I think it'll be a lot of fun, what do you say? You deserve it. I want some alone time with you so we can truly become one in the same. I make myself feel good all the time and you should get to experience it with me too. I mean, I'm always writing about all the sex I have and how good it feels. I never stopped to think that it must be torture for you to hear it all the time and never get to experience it. It'll be our

private little moment together. I'll let you go with me in the bathroom later and I'll show you what I can do. Sound fun? It's a date dear sweet diary.

September 5<sup>th</sup> 1979

Sorry dear diary, some of your pages are stuck together, but it was fun wasn't it? You made me orgasm three times. Now my scent is part of you forever.

September 14<sup>th</sup> 1979

I look hot in blue fingernail polish.

October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1979

Jess worries all the time about getting caught with all the dirty things we do. I tell her not to worry. No one here notices anyway. All of our fun is done under the cover of darkness and Mac the security guard is sleeping half the time anyway.

November 13<sup>th</sup> 1979

Jess and I had sex with the housekeeping kid, ya know dear diary, the one I deflowered. Jess was visiting me last night as all the docs and staff were leaving. The kid was just finishing up cleaning his rooms. He's seen Jess before, actually a few times. He was doing his stuff and Jess and I were sitting on the bed watching TV. I looked at her and nodded to the kid and she knew what I was thinking. Hey maid boy, I said. Do you wanna have sex with us? I like getting to the point dear diary. Jess leaned back on the bed, shrugged her shoulders at him and smiled and kicked off her shoes. Don't be a little baby I told him. I patted the bed in between me and Jess. He started to walk over to us and I was smiling at him the whole time dear diary. He sat down in between us. I crossed my legs and put my hand on his leg dear diary and told him, are you ready to have some fun? Jess and I both stood up and started taking our clothes off. I kept me bra and panties on just to tease him. Jess exposed those large, beautiful breasts of hers with no problem. We must have been thinking the same thing because she kept her panties on too. We sat down again. Both our hips were snug up against him. I'm sure he didn't mind two females sitting close to him like that. We started undressing him and then I stood up and began to take my panties off and I could tell how excited he was when he saw me do it and even more excited when he saw my black patch. But, dear diary, he did have this confused look on his face. I asked him what was wrong and I can't believe he asked what I was doing. I told him, what does it look like I'm doing, I'm taking my panties off. Why? He fucking asked me why dear diary! I laughed so hard and then told him because we're going to have sex. Duh. Do you still want to? I asked him. Then he got that excited look in his eyes again. Boys. We made it easy on him and just took turns being on top. I especially liked it when it was Jess's turn. He laid his head down in my lap and I watched Jess fuck him. She is so good dear diary. When she was fucking him I took my panties and rubbed them all over his face so he could smell me. I think he really liked that. We ended with both our hands stroking him as he sat in between us dear diary. The little shit came all over our hands and it was a mess, but we had fun, actually it was a whole hell lot of fun. When we were done I had to pee. I pulled Jess by her hand and led her into the bathroom with me. As I sat down and let my stream

loose dear diary, she straddled me and we kissed. She put three fingers inside her and then put it to my face so I could smell her as I peed. She knows me so well. The kid was standing in the doorway watching us and I laughed and said, well get in here and of course he did. Jess sat down on the toilet to pee and I kneeled down and gave him a blowjob all while never taking my eyes off of Heath.....

December 1<sup>st</sup> 1979

The Ramones are coming dear diary! I know, there's no way Dr. Stone would allow me to go. Maybe if I offer him a blowjob he'll let me go.

December 19<sup>th</sup> 1979

THERE WAS SO MUCH FUCKING BLOOD EVERYWHERE!!!!!!!  
I BATHE—.....

December 20<sup>th</sup> 1979

Dear diary, did I really write that. That is terrifying.

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1979

Goodbye '79, you weren't that fine. I'm still here.

January 5<sup>th</sup> 1980

My record collection has grown since they started letting my go out every weekend. They're getting to know me at the record shop in the mall. The manager knows my name and he usually suggests stuff to me that I've never heard. Last weekend he talked me into buying this new band called Motorhead and they are freaking loud and fast and I fucking love it dear diary!

February 12<sup>th</sup> 1980

Dear diary, sometimes I wonder why what I'm doing here. I don't belong with these people here. I'm not like them. I feel normal. I don't pull my hair out or talk to myself or think the government is after me. Ok, so I have a touchy feely problem. Big deal. I often wonder if I would still touch myself if I had a normal life outside of this place.

March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1980

I'm a street walking cheetah with a mouth full of napalm. That, dear diary is Iggy Pop and he is so hot! I use to listen to him all the time before I came here. Heather and it would dance around and sing in her roo.....

May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1980

Jess and I had sex tonight while listening to the Ramones, Gimme shock treatment, such and appropriate song don't you agree dear diary. It was thunder storming like mad when we were doing too. Fun times at the crazy house.

June 12<sup>th</sup> 1980

They need to do something about the food here dear diary. You can't even call it food. It is the worst shit in the fucking universe.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1980

I am so freaked out right now dear diary. Dr. Stone just told me that all I did yesterday was stare out my window. They tried getting me to talk and eat but I didn't do anything but stare out the window of my room. He told me I had this haunted, scared look in my eyes. And as usual dear diary, it's June 18<sup>th</sup>. One day a year I go completely blank the day before the 18<sup>th</sup>. What happened dear diary?

July 15<sup>th</sup> 1980

I caught a member of the staff giving a blowjob today down in the laundry area. I see things like that all the time dear diary. One time I caught one of the cooks fucking an RN. He was going to town on this gal from behind. I could see her ass shaking and rippling. Oh, Jesus. I gotta go in the bathroom for a minute dear diary. Wanna come with me? Mama wants to play, and pee, but mostly play. C'mon let's go.

July 15<sup>th</sup> 1980

That was so much fun dear diary. Anyway, I see crazy shit like that all the time. It's mostly the staff cheating on their spouses I guess. Hell, I'm the one some of them cheat with. I could just see the looks on their faces after hearing the news of their husband fucking the hot crazy girl with black hair that supposedly killed her best friend in a bloody rage.

July 20<sup>th</sup> 1980

Dear diary, I get a little confused now and then. I get the names and pictures of people I use to know mixed up in my mind. I know I had a best friend named Heather, but I don't know what happened to her. And then I see that I wrote many things in here about her but then I would apologize for mentioning her name. What is going on? And whenever I talk to Dr. Stone, it's like I'm talking to him for the first time about certain things, things like what happened before I came here, and this garage he keeps talking about and three of my friends that died. The strangest thing though dear diary is, Anita always tells me that whenever my best friend's mom visits, I always talk about Heather and I don't remember talking about her at all.

August 10<sup>th</sup> 1980

Help me dear diary.....please.....I'm so frightened at the moment. I have all the lights off in my room. The curtains are shut. It's 1:30 a.m. I saw something bad dear diary in the mirror tonight. Oh my god, I can't stop shaking. Jess was with me when it happened but I haven't seen her since I fell to the floor, shaking uncontrollably in terror. I didn't mean to scare her and I'm not mad that she just left, but I am so terrified right now dear diary. I apologize for going on and not really explaining everything that happened.

August 10<sup>th</sup> 1980

Sorry dear diary, I'm back. It is now 2 a.m. I just got out of the shower. I had to get all the blood off. Goodnight, dear diary, I'm sorry.

August 13<sup>th</sup> 1980

Margret let me fix her hair again. I think she really likes me cutting it and styling it for her. Actually, there are a few ladies that allow me to cut their hair. I love doing it for them. Makes me feel good inside.....no, dear diary, I don't want to talk about what happened the other night.

August 15<sup>th</sup> 1980

Hot dogs again? That's the second time they've given us hot dogs this week dinner. Oh, well. I guess it's better than starving.

August 18<sup>th</sup> 1980

My best friends mom came to visit today. I really like it when she visits me, although I can't remember anything we talked about once she's gone.....i said no deary diary, I don't want to talk about it.

August 21<sup>st</sup> 1980

I haven't seen Jess since, well, you know. Well, I guess you really don't know what happened that night because I haven't told you anything, other than how terrified I was after it happened.....you're making this really hard dear diary. I want to tell you, but I'm afraid I'll scare you too like I did Jess.

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1980

Stupid rain. We couldn't go out in the yard because it's been raining all day.....ok, fine, dear diary, I'll tell you what happened but you have to promise me you won't think any different of me, ok? That night, Jess and I wanted to do something different with each other. We've been together sexually for three years now. It was something that I suggested. At first she didn't want to do it and I was worried that she would stop coming to see me, but she showed up that night with a smile on her face that told me she came around and really wanted to make me happy. Your probably wondering what I'm talking about dear diary aren't you. Well, let me start by telling you that females have these things called periods every month. We bleed. Oh, my goodness dear diary, not like that, but from our feminine areas. You know, that thing I let you touch when we go into the bathroom to play, my vagina dear diary. I wanted to taste Jessica and I wanted her to taste me when we were both having our periods. And we did dear diary. It really was a beautiful moment for us, although we gagged at first and then started laughing. I put my face to her bloodiness first. It was a different scent than what I am use to with her, even though I could still smell her pee and soap from her shower. I decided to bury my face in her because it was something that I wanted and oh dear diary, it was wonderful, almost magical. All of her tastes and scents colliding into my face and mouth; her blood, her feminine wetness from being aroused, even a little bit of pee. And then she did the same to me and then we were together as one. I wrapped my arms around her ass and pulled her closer to my face. It was so sexually intense and wonderful that I started crying. And she did too. Now our



tears were mixed in with our sex and spit and blood dear diary and I melted completely. I could feel the mixture running down my neck, streaking along. Our session lasted almost thirty minutes. I didn't want it to end but I was so exhausted from sucking in all that she had to offer me. And there was a lot dear diary. My face was soaked in it and I could smell her all over me. When we were finished we sat up close to one another and held each other for the longest time it seemed like. We kissed and the bloody wetness slipped all over our tongues. When it was all done I turned on my lamp and Jess covered her mouth, gasping at what she saw. She was half laughing when she told me to go look at myself in the mirror. I knew we were a mess dear diary. I planned for that and wasn't really bothered by it until I flipped on my bathroom light and saw.....

August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1980

Why did you make me tell you dear diary! WHY, WHY, WHY! It's so hot, the morning sun is burning my face where is Heather it is so goddamn hot why is the cop asking me stupid questions I wish he wouldn't ask me so many stupid questions it is fucking hot the nice man is holding me on the side of the road telling me its going to be ok but its not ok mr. nice man because everyone is dead and I bathed in her blo.....

August 24<sup>th</sup> 1980

What is happening to me dear diary? Why did I write all that nonsense? It's really scaring me dear diary.

September 26<sup>th</sup> 1980

I've been crying for most of the day dear diary and listening to Led Zeppelin. Do you want to know why? Their drummer passed away last night and I am so sad.

October 20<sup>th</sup> 1980

No! It can't be true dear diary. They're not going to continue. They're breaking up for good. My favorite band of all time.....they're going away forever.....Heather, I need you.

October 27<sup>th</sup> 1980

Dear diary would you be mad at me if we didn't talk for a while. I know you're my best friend and you've been there for me for the past four years, but I really don't have much to say lately. I tried touching myself earlier and I couldn't get into it. I don't know what's wrong. I'm starting to remember some scary things but I'm not sure if they happened are not. I still don't know why I'm here.

December 10<sup>th</sup> 1980

I need to talk to Susan.....soon.

December 12<sup>th</sup> 1980

Tonight I told Susan what I saw in the garage six years ago.

December 13<sup>th</sup> 1980

It wasn't me.

December 14<sup>th</sup> 1980

I didn't kill my best friend. Her name was Heather Smith.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1980

That thing killed my best friend.

December 16<sup>th</sup> 1980

It wasn't me.

December 17<sup>th</sup> 1980

My name is Angelica Larson and I saw my best friend and two other people get murdered in 1974 by something I can't explain. I don't know what it was. I never believed in monsters but that night I do believe I saw something evil. Heather's mom Susan has been visiting me since 1976 and I don't know why. I'm almost certain that she along with everyone else believes I am the one, who murdered her daughter, but I didn't and I know I didn't because I was there that night and I know the truth.....I know the truth about everything. Would you like to know the truth my beloved dear diary? I know that I wake up crying every morning because I'm stuck in this place and am never going to get out, I know that touching myself takes away the pain and the reality of my life, I know I know I know, I know lots of things dear diary, I know that I am never going to see Heather again, I know that I should be taking care of Amy right now instead sitting around with a bunch of crazy fucks sitting in a circle hitting themselves in the head talking about nothing I hate it here I want out I can't take it anymore I want out now it wasn't me, did it happen, did it really happen dear diary, did I really see my best friend being drug by her feet out of the garage that night, did I hear her screaming in agony out in the corn, did it happen, where is Jessica, I need Jessica, I need to taste Jessica, there is no Jessica dear diary, have I lost my mind like all the other crazies, I see Heather every time I'm with Jessica but there is no Jessica, she's only in my mind just to take my mind away I know I know I know, I know I'm going crazy because it wasn't me, it wasn't me red brown detective monroe dr stone susan mom dad sam mark amy dear diary god satan IT WASN'T MEEEEEEEEEEEE!

December 17<sup>th</sup> 1980

WHY WOULD I KILL MY BEST FRIEND DEAR DIARY WHY WHY WHY I LOVED HER SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND DO YOU SEE THE TEARS RUNNING DOWN MY FACE DEAR DIARY DO YOU WE TOUCHED EACH OTHER WHEN WE WERE THIRTEEN AND I WAS GOING TO LET HER HAVE ME WHEN I WAS BLEEDING THAT NIGHT WITH MY LEGS SPREAD AND RON LOOKING HURT BECAUSE IM A WHORE BUT INSTEAD DEAR DIARY I LET JESSICA DO THINGS TO ME BUT SHES JUST A GHOST IN MY MIND THERE IS NO JESSICA I FORGOT THE SUGAR CREAM PIE FUCK ME TILL IM HIGH WHERE'S AMY I NEED TO FIND AMY AND TELL HER THE TRUTH TOO IT WASN'T ME I KNOW WHY IM HERE I KNOW EVERYTHING



head is killing me pain horrible pain stay with me dear diary slurring words  
confusion is this real

angel is a good girl and I bathed in her blood, the scarecrow man did it from the  
rooftop

I remember.....I remember I do remember not just only me only angel

Thank you dear diary for staying with me even though you're locked in my room on  
the second floor you're my best friend please stay with me help me get through

please let me not see Dr. Stone please please can't take much more gimme a break  
gimme a chance gimme shock treatment thank you for the ramones the concert was  
fun.....so tired.....so fucking tired.....sleep.....sleep

April 10<sup>th</sup> 1984

Hi

March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1986

I'm better now. Really, I am.

November 14<sup>th</sup> 1990

Long time, no talk I guess. It's been so long since I've written in here. I'm not  
really sure of what I should say. I've been through a lot since I've last written  
anything. I think I've had enough pills and shots to make a druggie satisfied for  
the rest of their life. I'm sorry that I neglected you for so long. I just couldn't write  
anymore, back then. I had one hell of a meltdown ten years ago. It seems like a  
lifetime ago though. I guess it was bound to happen sometime. I had shut out  
everything that happened in the garage that night. I knew it all was true, I just  
couldn't handle it. I guess I did what I had to just to survive in this place. And  
here I am, thirty eight years old and still here. Yesterday, I read through a lot of  
the things I wrote from years ago. I couldn't believe all of it. I was sickened by it. I  
ripped the pages out and shredded them in Dr. Stone's office. I never want anyone  
to know of the things that went on in my mind from that time. But, it is what it is  
and I won't deny any of it. I had made up Jessica because I missed Heather so  
incredibly much. We, I mean I, sure did have some fun though, sexually that is. I  
haven't masturbated in ten years. Can you believe that? I do get the urge to at  
times, but I'm afraid to try because I know I'll go over the deep end again and start  
touching myself everyday like I use to. That isn't healthy. I can't do that to myself  
again. Susan still comes to visit me. I thought she was going to give up on me  
during the rubber room days, but she didn't and I am so thankful. She came even  
when I was wrapped up in that straitjacket, drugged out of my mind from all the  
sedatives Dr. Stone was giving me. Eventually I came out of it, a year and two  
months later. I know, it sounds horrifying spending a year in a straitjacket, stuck  
in a rubber room, but I survived it. And I haven't been back since and I don't plan  
on going back. I know the truth about what happened in 1974. I don't hide from it  
anymore. But, it still scares me. That thing I saw. And I still clam up like a scared  
child every June 17<sup>th</sup>, but I don't blackout anymore. I've come a long way since  
those days. I've moved rooms a few times. Anita finally stopped being afraid of me  
about six years ago and started talking to me again. And I still fix up the ladies  
hair for bingo night. My weekend rights were renewed four years ago, so I'm glad

that I still get to leave for a while every Saturday. I'm a lot calmer these days, not as jumpy and nervous and manic. I feel clear headed since I've accepted my fate and the truth and reality of that night Heather died. I'm still so very sad that she is gone though, and Ron and Steve too. Susan's coming to visit today as usual. We talk about Heather and I when we were kids growing up together and she tells me about Amy, and I am so worried about her. From what Susan tells me, she's not herself anymore. Something has happened to her. I wish I was there to help her. Before I go, there is one thing I would like to say to you. We're friend's again dear diary. I hope you don't mind me calling you that again.

January 5<sup>th</sup> 1991

Hello dear diary, I talked with Susan today. She thinks Amy might be working, if that's what you want to call it, at this strip club. It's a nasty, dirty hell hole dear diary. It's been around since the early seventies. Heather actually worked there for a couple of months. I hated it knowing that she was taking her clothes off for money and now hearing that her daughter is doing the same thing just breaks my heart. What is wrong with Amy? She can do anything she wants with her life. Why does it have to be that?

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1991

I'm officially pushing forty today dear diary. Thirty nine freaking years old. Wow.

June 17<sup>th</sup> 1991

Hi there dear diary. Yes, it's been a hard day. I've mostly been crying but it's like that every year.

September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1991

Ok dear diary, I'm struggling with something. I think you know what it is to. I haven't felt this good in years. I thought about masturbating today. I know, I'm horrible. I can't help it though. I'm a fully grown thirty nine year old woman and I still have urges and feelings. It's not like I'm eighty or something. Would that make me a bad person if I touched myself dear diary?

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1991

Well, I did it dear diary. I waited till lights out and then about an hour just to make sure everyone was asleep. Ok, I know that's silly because no one can hear me anyway, heck I don't even lock my door at night, I know these ladies pretty well around here. They are very low key and keep to themselves. Anyway, I did it in the bathroom. Yes, dear diary, on the toilet. My goodness this so embarrassing. I haven't done that for years. I suppose it felt good. I didn't have an orgasm. I felt guilty at first but then it started feeling good. It only lasted a few minutes. I was afraid it might hurt if I tried to make myself orgasm after not doing it for ten years. And you're probably wondering dear diary, yes, I smelled my hand when I was done and it was strange because I haven't done that forever. It didn't stink or wasn't even arousing but it did seem, oh, I don't know, more mature like, womanly I guess.

September 14<sup>th</sup> 1991

They're building a new gift shop down in the lobby. I'm going to put in a request to work there. I've done so many odd jobs around this place dear diary. Let's see, laundry when I first came here, then the cafeteria, dishwasher, line cook, cashier, clean up crew, window washer, even housekeeping. And of course my side job of resident hairdresser and beautician.

September 16<sup>th</sup> 1991

So, I masturbated again today. I reached orgasm too dear diary. It felt really good after all these years, I'm not going to lie. I think it's going to be ok. I won't let it get out of control. There's nothing wrong with getting to know myself again.

October 5<sup>th</sup> 1991

I can really see the heartache in Susan's eyes every time I see her. She is just worried sick over Amy. She says she wakes up screaming in the middle of the night with nightmares sometimes. I told her she just needs to sit Amy down and talk to her. Don't yell or scream but just talk, like we do. Let her know that what she is doing isn't right.

October 10<sup>th</sup> 1991

So, there is this new house keeping kid we have on our floor. Cute as hell kid too; he's probably fifteen or sixteen. I know dear diary, I shouldn't be saying that about some teenage boy especially when I'm a grown woman of thirty nine, but my gosh, I just want to hold him close to me and stroke his hair. I know, that's hilarious dear diary and it is. Maybe it's a maternal thing. By the way dear diary, he is real, unlike Jessica. I miss her sometimes.

December 1<sup>st</sup> 1991

So I struck up a little conversation with the boy today. He was dropping off some towels and sheets. I told him that it was ok to talk to me even if his supervisor told him not to. They tell housekeeping and some faculty not to engage with us, the crazies. But remember dear diary, I'm not crazy. It wasn't me. Anyway I asked him how old he was. He said sixteen. He was looking down at his feet. He was already embarrassed as hell because I had just got out of the shower and was sitting on the toilet taking a pee when he knocked on the door. I told him just to come on in. I didn't care. I never shut my bathroom door. Some things never change I guess, dear diary. He turned his head away when he saw me. I laughed and told him it was ok and that I didn't care if he saw me sitting on the toilet. He started putting every thing away really fast, like he wanted to get out of there. I flushed and went out in my room. I had my hair up in a towel and was wearing only my bra, no panties. I told him to relax and that's when I asked him how old he was. He wouldn't look at me when I spoke. I told him he could look at me and not to be embarrassed, it's just skin. Finally he did. We made small talk about his job and school and money all while I stood there with my womanhood hanging out. It was kinda funny in a way. I took my towel off and started drying my hair. I asked him if he had a girlfriend. He looked away smiling dear diary and he said he did. I did the ooohhhh that's so cute thing just to embarrass him more. It worked.

His face was as red as an apple. Do you have sex I asked him. It just came out dear diary. I knew it was wrong of me to ask him that. I told him I was sorry but to my surprise he said no. He hasn't done it yet. I told him he was young and had plenty of time for that. Then, dear diary, he said it was her hair. And I said her hair? What? She has too much hair down below. Very bashfully he said he was weirded out about putting it in her hair because she has so much of it. Surely dear diary he doesn't think that's where he puts his wiener to have sex. Oh my god dear diary, that's exactly what he thought! I ran to my door and locked it and took him by his hand and drug him into the bathroom with me for some emergency female anatomy education. I closed the door. I wanted to make sure we had plenty of privacy for our learning session. Ok, I said, all while trying not to laugh at the poor kid. I just came out and told him that you don't fuck girls in their pubic hair. Of course you can rub it on there and it probably feels really good but it's not sex. So I showed him dear diary. He covered his face but I smacked his hands away forcefully and smiled and told him to look. I opened myself up and spread my lips apart. His eyes got really big and I swear dear diary he went oohhh like he finally got it. I rolled my eyes at him and laughed and playfully knocked his forehead and asked what are they teaching you in health class. Do you not pay attention? I told him that I was saving him from an extremely embarrassing moment when he was alone with his girlfriend, parked in his car in the woods one night, trying to impale her pubic area. We both cracked up laughing and I told him to look as long as he wanted. I know the next thing I did was inappropriate but I asked if he wanted to touch me. Before he could say no I took his hand and put it on my vagina. See how it feels I told him dear diary. This is where you put it sweetie. Then I pushed his hand away and laughed and told him to wash his hands unless he wanted to smell like a women's restroom. We walked out of the bathroom and I smacked him on his butt and called him a silly shit. It was all in good fun. I don't know why I did what I did next but it happened and I say so what. Just as he was walking to the door to leave, I grabbed him and put my mouth to his and started kissing him. It was a full on makeout kind of kiss too dear diary. I put his hands on my backside and told him to squeeze. He did and I felt an excitement down below that I haven't felt for years. My center felt syrupy and warm. I put my hand on his crotch and he pushed me away. Deary diary, I know you think that I wanted to have sex with him but I really didn't. I just wanted to kiss him and let him touch me. I felt so embarrassed. My gosh, I'm thirty nine years old and he's sixteen, what is wrong with me. I'm old enough to be his mom. Everything we did, ok, it was inappropriate but it felt innocent and just really fun. It was kind of exciting letting him touch me like that because he's never experienced a woman before. Believe me dear diary, I don't want that on my resume, fucking a sixteen year old kid, when I see the angels in the clouds. I keep telling myself that this isn't the seventies anymore. I'm not the whore I use to be. It's so hard sometimes.

March 22<sup>th</sup> 1992

Well, dear diary, I'm the big 4 0 today. Can you believe it? I can't. You wanna celebrate with me? How about in the bathroom? Like the old days, just you and me. Just one time ok.

June 17<sup>th</sup> 1992

Eighteen years today.

June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1992

So the record store in the mall that I always go to on Saturdays has moved downtown in Blare. I like the new shop. It's small and has a nice vibe to it. Some kid standing next to me flipping through some records made a joke about one of the albums and how all the satanic stuff was kind of silly. I just nodded my head and smiled a little. He looked really sad for some reason, like there was something terrible on his mind. I know the feeling.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1992

Whoa, dear diary, who is that hot, I mean HOT guy in that band. I saw them on MTV today. They're really heavy, kind of like Black Sabbath maybe. But, oh my gosh, he is incredibly sexy with all that hair. He could sing pretty well too.

December 11<sup>th</sup> 1992

I don't why dear diary, but I had the dream about the boy again. I haven't dreamt about him in years. I forgot his name.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1993

I'm forty one today dear diary, and no grey hair! Ok, I lied. I have a few strands but that's ok, I guess.

June 14<sup>th</sup> 1993

Susan told me today that she thinks Amy might be doing drugs. Dear god, I hope not. Susan says she is very distant and secretive most of the time. I just don't know why Susan won't talk to her. I mean she's practically her mother; she raised her. Why isn't she laying down the law? I feel bad for thinking this and I try to tell Susan this, but in a way without hurting her.

June 17<sup>th</sup> 1993

One more year gone and one more year until the twentieth anniversary of that horrible night.

July 6<sup>th</sup> 1993

I love the Smashing Pumpkins! And that blonde bass player is so damn cute dear diary.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1993

Dear diary, remember how I told you how I wouldn't let it get out of control? Well, it's not totally out of control, maybe just a bit. And you know what I'm talking about. If you must know, I'm doing it three times a day. It just seems like the closer it gets to the anniversary of Heather's death, the more I want to touch myself. It helps dear diary. I hate to admit it but it does. At least for a little while.

October 20<sup>th</sup> 1993



So, I've been working part time down in the gift shop in the lobby for a couple of years now. And yes dear diary, it is way better than working in a hot kitchen or laundry room. Although I think the gift shop needs more hair accessories.

December 31<sup>st</sup> 1993

Goodbye 1993.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1994

Forty two and oh I am so blue. More grey hair dear diary. Oh well, I can always dye it.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994

Susan said that Amy doesn't come home until three or four in the morning sometimes. I feel for both of them so much. It's heartbreaking to hear how Amy is destroying her life. And Susan knows for sure that she is spending her nights at that craphole cherrybombs. She says she hears people talk about Amy whenever she's out, like at the grocery store or wherever. I just wish Amy would get it together.

May 12<sup>th</sup> 1994

When I was out this past weekend, I bought this cute little grey skirt for Amy. I think she'll like it.

May 15<sup>th</sup> 1994

Oh, dear diary, Margret isn't very well. I've been with her in her room most of the day. I don't think she has much time left. I am so sad.

June 13<sup>th</sup> 1994

Dear diary, Margret passed away this morning. I've been crying all day. We all have.

June 15<sup>th</sup> 1994

Only two more days dear diary. Susan told me that they're doing a big news special on the Bludenhale massacre, I guess that's what they call it. She said she agreed to do an interview. I sometimes wonder what the outside world thinks of me or if they even remember or care for that matter. I'm sure all the people affected by it at the time would like to see me dead. I also wonder what Amy thinks. I think about that a lot dear diary. I was supposed to take care of her.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1994

Yesterday was hard dear diary but I made it through. There were a bunch of people outside with signs and they were yelling and screaming. It was insane. I didn't think people would still remember, but they do. I just got done at the gift shop. Anita was so kind when she asked me if I wanted her to just bring me up something to eat from the cafeteria. I told her that would be great. She should be here in a bit. I've still been crying a little dear diary. But it's ok. And I'm ok.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1994

I don't know really what to say about what just happened dear diary. My emotions are all over the place right now. I saw Amy. She came to visit me. When I first saw her I thought I was seeing Heather again. I started crying as she stood there with Anita. My goodness, she looks just like Heather. It's been only ten minutes or so since she left and I've been sitting here on my bed trying to get myself together. I just can't believe it dear diary. Amy.....I didn't even know what to say at first. She seemed really nervous, which is understandable. I was too. For a moment I thought maybe Susan had told her to come see me, but that wouldn't make any sense dear diary. I would only assume that Amy feels the same way about me as most of the people in Bludenhale. She didn't act hateful at all. She was so shy. Maybe she did it on her own. I'm just so glad I got to see her after all these years. Of course Susan has always shown me pictures of her throughout the years and I do feel like I've gotten to see her grow up in a way through Susan. But to see her in person was so wonderful, yet overwhelming. I had to keep telling myself that she wasn't Heather. They look so much alike dear diary. We began to relax a bit and started to talk. Although I didn't say anything at all about what Susan tells me. I have no idea if Amy knows Susan has been visiting me for the past eighteen years. I talked to her about when she was a baby and how her mother and I would take care of her and play with her and be silly all the time. I told her how life was growing up in the seventies, well at least until I came here. What I really wanted to talk to her about dear diary, was, how she needs to stop working at cherrbombs and take care of herself and that she can live her life without all the bad things that are messing it up. But I didn't. I think I screwed up though dear diary. I mean bad. I don't what I was thinking but I suddenly had the urge to tell her the truth about me and Heather and what happened so long ago. I told her it wasn't me just as I told Susan years ago. I scared her. I know I did. I shouldn't have said anything. It was a great moment we had for about thirty minutes and I blew it. I could only imagine what she was thinking when she left and how the me the crazy bitch was rambling about not being the one that killed her mother. But, I'm still so happy that I got to see her. I told her she could visit me anytime and I hope she does. Aside from that last awkward moment, I did pierce her ears. I noticed she didn't have any earrings and told her I could do it for her and it wouldn't hurt. I'm surprised she let me. As I did I felt like crying because I should have been there for her all these years, I should have had moments like these all the time, but I didn't because the state of Indiana has declared me a threat and a killer. And I am not. Anyway dear diary, I'm glad her ears are pierced now. Although I don't know why she never had them pierced before.

June 18<sup>th</sup> 1994

Hey, it's me again dear diary. I can't sleep. My mind is just racing. I feel all these different emotions. I'm ok though. I just wish I could sleep. Maybe it's the moon peeking through my blinds, I don't know. Actually, I do, dear diary. I don't know really how to say this. I've never told you this before and I pretty much tell you everything. There's been something I've been hiding in me for a very long time, I guess you could say I tucked it away deep in my subconscious but it's always

there. It's been there from the time Red Brown gently sat me down in the back of his cop car when he found me on the side of the road. It was there when they put me in the holding cell at the Bludenhale police department. It was there when the jury pronounced me guilty. It was there when all those men were fucking me every Saturday night. It's been there ever since Susan first came to see me in 1976. It's there when I go out on Saturdays with my crazy crew. It's there when I cut the ladies hair for bingo night. It's there when I'm working at the gift shop. It's there when I touch myself. It was there when I made up Jessica just to survive. And it's here right now as I'm staring at my reflection in the mirror of my bathroom, deep inside my mind's eye trying to claw its way out of me and I don't know why. Dear diary, this thing, it's been with me ever since Heather told me that she saw me in her nightmare, hung upside down, impaled to a wall with knives. And this room is so very small.

## **Part 3**

### **Nightmare Revelations.**

**1997**

Susan sat across from Eldon at Joe's Diner the following morning after her night of terror and complete understanding of the truth behind the Bludenhale Massacre of 1974. She knew now that Angel Larson was truly innocent. *Girl couldn't hurt a fly.*

"I guess you could say I had a moment of clarity last night," Susan said to Eldon.

His eyes had a confused, questioning look to them. Susan clasped her hands together. "The girl with long black hair, as you like to call her, the one accused of murdering those three kids in that garage, including my daughter Heather, well, many years ago she told me something when I went to see her one night and....."

"Excuse me Susan," Eldon interjected, "but were you visiting her regularly? I don't understand."

Susan sighed and felt her face flush. "Yes, I am....well, I mean I was." She quickly waved her hands back and forth. "I'm sorry. Let me start over. My daughter and Angel were best friends. They met when they were only five and were pretty much together every day since. In a way, Angel was like my second daughter." She paused and could see Eldon was a little baffled by this information. She lowered her eyes to the table and spoke. "After my daughter died, I....I felt so empty. I couldn't stand it. I missed her so much and still do." She wiped her tears that began streaming slowly down her face. "So I had this crazy idea one day, I think it was about two years after the murders, to just go and see Angel, because as much as I didn't want to admit it, I missed her too."

Eldon shook his head like he understood and maybe he did a little because he missed his wife.

Susan continued, "So, that's what I did. I started visiting her about every other week and then once a week and then maybe twice."

"Whenever I was in the room with her, I could feel my daughter's presence. Maybe it's because they were so close, I don't know."

Susan sat silently as if gathering her thoughts. Eldon made no effort to talk. He figured this was a heavy load for Susan to bear and that she was trying her best to come to grips with it. Just then a young waitress came up their table. Susan hadn't noticed her when they first entered the old diner.

"Can I get ya'll something to drink," the young, blonde waitress said.

Eldon shook his head indicating that he had come here with more on his mind than talking about the weather and sipping hot coffee. Susan on the other hand, smiled and asked for a cup of coffee. She had used the last of her Folgers the day before and was dying for a cup of liquid caffeine.

"Ok, sounds good. I'll be right back with your coffee ma'am."

As the sassy, blonde waitress turned to go get the coffee, she saw Susan staring at her. She returned the stare and looked deep into Susan's eyes and Susan felt as if the young girl was peeking inside of her mind, reading her thoughts, but she wasn't sure. They held their gaze on one another for a few more moments but Eldon didn't seem to notice.

Susan squint her eyes at the waitress like she was trying to understand what was happening. Then, the waitress's facial expression turned to a mask of sadness and heartbreak like she somehow know of Susan's downtrodden life as of late. Their gaze broke when a dish fell to the floor and shattered into pieces. Susan closed her eyes and then opened them as if coming out of her trance. She looked up and the waitress who looked like she came right out of 1957 had vanished.

"Susan," Eldon said without any alarm in his voice.

She didn't hear him. Her attention seemed to be on the waitress, because she was looking back towards the swinging double doors leading to the kitchen.

"Susan, are you all right?"

She quickly turned to Eldon. Her eyes were wide open like she was stunned. She shook her head and touched the sides of her head, like to relieve a headache, but she had no pain, just a strange fogginess.

"Yeah, I'm ok."

Another waitress suddenly showed up and placed a hot, steaming cup of coffee in front of Susan.

"You were staring off into space, there for a moment," Eldon told her.

"I was?" Her tone was honest. She really didn't know where the last two minutes of her life had snuck off to. Eldon had a concerned look on his face and was wondering if Susan was possibly having a breakdown.

She laughed nervously and assured Eldon that she was fine and that it had been a long night for her, with hardly any sleep.

The sassy waitress who had jumped into Susan's mind had disappeared completely from her thoughts as if she had never been there at all.

Susan let out a stress relieving breath. She noticed a book in Eldon's hand. She took a sip of her coffee. Feeling much better, she nodded at the book. "Does that have something to do with you wanting to talk to me?"

Eldon looked down at the small black book and then at Susan.  
"Yes, it does."

He went on to explain to her how the past had gotten the best of him yesterday day when he decided to go back to his old house about two hours after they left.

"It was pulling me back. I had to see the barn again."

"But why?" Susan asked. "I thought you would never want to set foot in there again."

"I know. And you're right Susan. It was crazy to go back but I felt I had to."

He said that after he stepped inside, the horror of that night still hung heavily in the barn. It all came rushing back to him. He felt dizzy at the memory of what he and his father did. He stumbled around the dark, stinking barn until he fell to his knees, overcome with terror. He took a few deep breaths and somehow managed to stand up.

"It was so hot yesterday, but it was damn cold in that barn," he said.

As he walked around inside the barn, he felt like a spectator at some haunted museum in hell. He turned the corner of one of the stalls and stopped.

"I was looking right at the spot where my father and I built that horrid beast. I shouldn't have walked any further, but I did."

Susan's eyes were on Eldon as he told her about what he did yesterday and what he had found. He slowly walked over to the area of the barn where the demon was born that night. He looked all around him with scared eyes. The memory was too strong. He broke down and cried alone in the barn.

"I couldn't help it. I was so overwhelmed by it all. But then I saw something lying on the floor in the corner. And that's when I found this."

He pushed the book across the table towards Susan. She looked at it with hard, curious eyes.

"It's the book my father used to open the gates of hell."

Eldon glanced out the window at the brush of pine trees across rt. 11, like he was sure something was going to come barreling out of there and lurch across the highway and into the diner and right up to him and kill him right then and there.

"Are you sure about this Eldon? We don't know what could happen."

A hot gust of summer wind blew through Susan's hair as she and Eldon stood in front of their cars, staring at the old, giant barn in front of them.

Eldon had convinced Susan to go with him, back to the barn so they could burn the spell book his father used that night. Eldon wanted her to have closure as well.

"It will kill that beast once and for all. I'm sure of it."

Susan crossed her arms like she was cold, even though it was a warm day. She all of a sudden remembered her leaking air conditioner unit. She didn't know what would make her think of something so mundane, considering the fact she was getting ready to step into some unknown world or possibly hell.

As she sat with Eldon at the diner earlier, he explained to her that his father had secretly read one of the spells in the witchcraft book he had found in the barn. Eldon had pushed the small black book in front of Susan, letting her see the passage for herself. He dare not read it out loud for fear of something evil and unearthly happening right there in the diner. Susan took the book and with hard eyes, gazed down at the pages.

“Don’t read it aloud,” Eldon said with urgency in his voice.

She quickly averted her eyes from the book and took in Eldon’s sudden warning. Slowly and now more afraid, Susan looked down at the book.

Her fingertips touched the brittle, yellowish paper. Eldon could see her eyes shifting from her right to left. After a few moments of silence between them and the sound of the entrance bells clanging as a few truckers entered the diner, Susan raised her head and Eldon could see the unstable form on her face: a mask of a thousand questions.

“What does all this mean?” She said.

Eldon pulled something out of his coat pocket. It was a few pieces of paper.

“Inside that book I found these.” He let Susan look at them. She read silently. The words on the crinkly old paper were written by Eldon’s father, explaining his actions of what he was going to do.

“He found that black book of evil out in the barn three days after he and my mother moved onto the farm. I don’t think he knew really what it was or what to do with it.”

Susan tried to understand what she was reading.

*I haven’t slept very well the past three nights. I can’t stop thinking about that book I found about eleven years ago when Marla and I first moved to the farm. When I first read it, none of it made a lick of sense to me. I know it was something evil. I don’t even know why I kept it. I should’ve just thrown it away. We haven’t seen any rain for weeks and I know we’re gonna lose our crops. And all of those damn crows keep pickin’ at my corn. They won’t leave my corn alone. They’re just nasty, hungry birds. I’ve been thinking about something I read in that book just a few days ago, something that might help save our crops.*

Susan looked up from the letter. Her coffee had turned cold.

“So your father put a spell on his cornfield?”

Eldon shook his head.

“Not the cornfield Susan, but that white bag full of things to make that scarecrow with.”

A cold flush of terror ran up her spine. She read some more of the letter.

*I’ve never believed in any hocus pocus kind of stuff and I never believed those farmers around here saying that the best way to get rid of a crow is with a scarecrow. But that’s what has been keeping me awake at night. In that book there is a spell made just for a situation like mine, I guess.”*

Susan covered her mouth in grief. She understood completely now what Eldon's father had done.

"And that's just what he did. He put together that deadly bag of goodies and put a spell on it, in hopes of it working. Well, he got his wish."

Susan read the final paragraph on the paper.

*There is one thing though that frightens me the most about that spell. It claims that whoever casts the spell shall have eternal life."*

"Eternal life," Susan said and didn't even notice she had laughed a little when she said it. Eldon looked at Susan grimly. It frightened her how his face had turned so quickly from desperation to dead pan serious.

He said, "We need to destroy that book."

Susan stared up at the giant barn that seem to resemble a dead beast of broken windows and rotted wood. Everything Eldon had told her at the diner she was still trying to process. She felt overwhelmed by the reality of it all. *Angel really didn't do it. This old man's daddy lost his mind years ago and conjured up some beast by saying a few words from a book and that beast killed my daughter.* She felt sick suddenly by the thought. She ran her hand through her white blonde hair.

"Are you all right?" Eldon asked.

It was a silly question, because of course he knew that she wasn't. But what could he say? How could he comfort her after telling her all of this life altering information. He felt a little dizzy when he tried to imagine the thoughts going through her head right now. He was wondering if Susan was ever going to begin walking to the barn. *It will be the first step towards a new life, Susan.*

Quietly he said, "Are you ready?"

She didn't look at him or respond. She only stared with fear at the barn, the way a kid would do at the fair, standing in line at the haunted house ride, full of apprehension and terror. But she surprised Eldon when she took a step forward and then another and then another step until finally she was walking straight towards it, not saying a word and never once looking away from the wooden monstrosity.

It was cold inside the barn just like Eldon had told her. The stalls were bare but decade's old aroma of pig manure and hay still seemed to hang in the air like an undying ghost. Only a little light seeped through the broken window up in the loft.

"Watch your step now," Eldon said. He put his hand out in the gloom of the barn and Susan reached out and took it.

They finally stopped at one of the stalls and Susan was assuming this was the spot where Eldon and his father put together the contents of the spell cast bag of scarecrow fixins'. The concrete floor felt cold under Susan's tennis shoes and she wondered if this was where they would burn the evil spell book that has dealt her twenty three years of heartache.

"It was right here," Eldon said with a chill in his voice.

Susan wrapped her arms together once again because she really was cold but more terrified standing in the dark gloom of the old barn. *How will we know if it works?* She thought.

She was getting lost in her mind as she stood there in the stall, not knowing what the future held and if burning the book would not destroy the scarecrow but anger it and conjure it from the depths of the corn. *What am I doing? This is crazy. I should be at home right now.* Something was wrong. She could feel it. *This isn't right.*

She turned to Eldon to say something and then a piece of metal came crashing into her forehead, knocking her out cold, ending all thoughts of fear and doubt.

Darkness and pain.

No light.

Susan's eyes slowly opened like an ancient coffin. Through the murky grey blurriness, she could see movement. She began to moan. A heavy throbbing ache came from the impact point on her forehead. Disorientation had numbed her senses. She felt no fear. Her vision was getting clearer and everything was in a sideways view. She instinctively put her hand to her forehead to massage away the ache, but it did not help.

A dark shape suddenly came into her view. She squint her eyes to see what it was and then she remembered the dirty metal shovel coming straight at her.

"I'm so sorry Susan."

The voice sounded familiar to her but she was still having trouble seeing. She rubbed her eyes. She knew she had been hit, but she never saw the person holding the shovel.

"I had no choice," the voice said again.

She could see a little more movement in front of her and then she recognized the deep, friendly sounding voice. Slowly, she began to sit up. She put both hands to her bruised forehead as she massaged the painful knot on her head. She peeked through her fingers and saw Eldon sitting just a few feet in front of her.

She lowered her hands and with a look of utter shock, she asked, "Why?" But it came out in a scratchy whisper.

Eldon was sitting Indian style on the floor and despite the shocking turn of events, Susan couldn't help but wonder how he was able to lower himself to the floor and sit that way because of his age. It was just a thought. She tried adjusting herself to a more comfortable position and in doing so she heard a metallic rattling of a chain hitting the barn floor. Her ankle was cuffed and chained to a rusty metal pipe sticking up from the barn floor. She looked down at the contraption. When she looked up she saw an old man sitting in front of her looking broken, guilty and pale. Her voice elevated in a panic stricken tone. "What's going on Eldon? What are you doing?"

His sickly looking face stared back at her with eyes of both hope and regret.

"I'm making things better," he said.

Her mouth hung open in a look of sick appalment. Her face and tear filled eyes saying, "*Are you fucking out of your mind!*"

"What is going on Eldon? Let me go! Why are you doing this?"



The barn was eerily silent. Eldon didn't answer her right away, but after a few moments he pulled a group of papers from his pocket. He looked down at the papers in his shaking hands and then at Susan.

"It's because I want to live Susan."

She shook her head not understanding at all what he meant. He stood up. His old bones popped as he did. He began walking back and forth slowly with his head down, like a doctor getting ready to tell a wife that her husband just died on the operating table.

"Everything I've told you Susan up to this point has been true. Well, not really. I did find that black book and those letters my father wrote in our barn, but I was nineteen when I did. It was a week before I moved away from Indiana and from that night of hell. I sat there crying in the barn one hot June afternoon. I tried not to think too much about that night as I got older, but it all came rushing back to me when I found those letters and the book."

Susan listened and watched Eldon with distraught and fearful eyes. This old man seemed so gentle and harmless and she didn't know what he was capable of.

"I'm not sure why I had decided to keep all of it. I never showed anyone. Not even my mother or sisters or even my wife, god bless her soul. In fact Susan, you are the first person I've ever shown the book to."

Eldon said it as if Susan should feel privileged or proud that she was the only one he had told his secret to.

"Well, after I moved away, I put that book and the letters my father wrote in a lock box and hid it and never looked at it again. He paused and stopped pacing and stared at Susan in the late afternoon gloom of the barn.

"That was until three months ago." The barn seemed so still and quiet, like the structure itself was listening in on the conversation.

"I had gone to the doctor because I thought I had the flu. I was never big on getting the flu shot anyway. They drew some blood and took some tests and said it was routine and then I got a call from their office one day about a week after my visit. They told me the doctor wanted to talk to me about my blood work."

"I about collapsed right then and there standing by my kitchen window looking out at the hummingbird going crazy over the feeder I just filled."

"I knew....oh my lord I knew. I know when a man my age who receives a telephone call about a follow up on his blood work can't be nothin' but bad news."

"And it sure was Susan. Cancer, to be exact, with a year to live. I must have scared about every person that saw me driving home. I was a terrified mess and almost forgot how to get home because of the shock. I cried for two days straight. It was too much. I just couldn't believe it. I knew this kind of thing happened all the time to people my age, but I was blindsided by it. I guess I felt guilty more than anything because my wife had passed before me and I should have accepted what the doctor had told me and accept death with open arms, because I would be with her once again. But I didn't Susan. I was horrified and downright terrified of dying. And as much as I missed my wife, I wasn't ready to go yet."

Eldon stopped and rubbed his moist eyes. He continued, "After the shock wore off I started thinking about that lock box. I know what was in there. I knew my father's secret and what he had intended to do. But he couldn't because that beast killed him."

Susan was at a loss because she had no idea what Eldon was talking about until she thought it at the exact same moment he said it.

“Eternal life.”

A black chill went up her arms when he said it, sounding like some mad preacher in the night with his eyes glowing with a blood red insanity.

“I do believe that my father wanted those crows gone more than anything and he may have lost his mind in thinking he could use that spell to kill them off. But I think he also wanted to know if he would receive eternal life from casting that spell. He never got to see. We both know that. I need to see Susan. I need to know.”

“I’m so sorry that I had to do this to you and I’m sorry that I lied to you, but you know what I have to do.” He opened the spell book.

The whole time Eldon was speaking to Susan, he had that same gentle, deep, non-threatening tone of voice. She thought he sounded scared as he talked, almost like he knew he was doing something evil and there was no turning back. It was a mix of horror and desperation.

“My father chose this particular spell I guess because it states that eternal life shall be granted upon the one who performs the spell. But there is more,” Eldon said.

He opened the book. Susan frowned in horror at what was happening. She had put her trust in this man and now he was going to kill her or at least that’s what she believed. She honestly didn’t know what was going to happen.

“This spell is to be used for getting rid of evil, Susan. In my father’s case it was those crows. But he cursed that bag instead and when he made that monster, the spell had a reverse effect and all hell broke loose. Once the spell is done, it uses nightmares to keep the evil away. That would explain all the nightmares I’ve had over the years. It also says that its effect will last for years, being the strongest in whatever time period or season the spell was performed. That beast Susan, it dies during the harvest every year but it comes right back haunting every summer and fall and every cornfield around Witchington county.”

“But now I’m going to set things straight and do what needs to be done.”

He began reading the spell. To Susan it sound like some of it was in Latin although she wasn’t for sure. She pleaded with him to let her go but he kept on reading as if she wasn’t in the room. She used his deceased wife as a hopeless way of reasoning with him, saying that he could be reunited with her, but it was useless. He kept reading until finally he stopped and the spell was complete.

He closed the book slowly. His eyes were closed. A close rumble of thunder boomed outside. Eldon opened his eyes and stared at Susan as if he was waiting for her to morph into some hideous creature, but she didn’t and she never would because what he failed to learn about the spell was that it could only be used once and that’s when a loud, harsh bang came from the close and locked barn doors.

Susan gasped.

Eldon shot his head up quickly in the direction of the doors. Slowly, he removed his 44 magnum from under his long black trench coat. Susan let out an ‘hah’ sound that was part scream, part laugh because she realized that Eldon had come prepared and was going to use that gun if need be once he was finished reciting the spell. But things had taken a major change of direction.

Susan was still alive and unharmed and there was something outside the barn.

Bang!

The barn door jolted violently. Susan screamed. Eldon's eyes were glassy and terrified because he knew what was waiting for him on the other side of the doors.

Bang!

Eldon let out an old man sounding shriek.

"Eldon. Please, let me go. Get me out of this thing." Susan rattled the chain around her ankle, trying to get his attention. He only looked wide eyed at the doors. Another rumble of thunder boomed outside and then there was a scratching, clawing sound coming from the far wall on the same side of the barn doors.

Eldon knew. Oh sweet Jesus, he knew what was scratching the exterior wall of the barn. He trembled at the memory of cutting up scrap metal in this very barn in 1947 and then placing them on the fingertips of the scarecrow; the same scarecrow that was making its way around the outside of the barn, dragging its scaly, metal fingertips across the ancient wood as it lurched around the corner of the barn.

The scratching sound was one long and continuous tone of metal tearing through wood. Both Eldon and Susan listened in silent terror as the sound went around the barn and then stopped suddenly at one of the dirty, cobwebbed curtained windows.

The sudden silence seemed more frightening than the actual scratching sound. Late afternoon sun was shining through the window but it was murky because of all the filth layering it.

Outside, Susan could see the sky turning a pale brown. She couldn't remember if it was going to storm or not. Her brain had received so much information since this afternoon until now that she couldn't remember if she had checked the weather on the radio. Another clap of thunder cracked across the sky and the thing outside the barn came into view when it showed its hideous face in the window; its red eyes gleaming and metal trap mouth snapping together open and shut.

Susan inhaled her horror silently and covered her mouth. Eldon on the other hand released a deep and throaty howl and fell to his knees, clutching his chest.

The scarecrow beast peered in through the dirty window for what seemed like an eternity to Susan. *That's it. That is the thing that killed my daughter!* She thought in disbelief. *It's just like Angel described.*

She was trembling almost uncontrollably at the thought. The beast roared and Susan could feel it from where she was sitting. The horrid beast's face looking into the square window looked to Susan like some hellish picture; the ugly brown sky being the perfect background.

Then the beast disappeared.

Eldon was still clutching his chest and looking wide eyed at the window. Susan looked at him and immediately knew he might be having a heart attack. A new horror formed in her mind. *Oh, dear God. Don't let this happen. Don't let Eldon die and leave me here trapped with this monster from hell!*

"Eldon," She yelled. "Are you all right?"

He turned his whole body to her like a stiff statue. His eyes were big and his mouth was agape in pain. He was hissing out a wheezing breath through his mouth. Susan knew he was dying. She also knew that she was confined by the chain around her ankle. She knew she was going to die. A frown formed on her face at this thought but was wiped away when she heard a series of loud bangs and hits on the wall opposite her and Eldon.

The beast was climbing up the wall.

Then, a heavy thud from the roof jolted Susan's attention up and at the ceiling. Eldon was still stuck in the same position of holding his chest and staring with eyes of terror at Susan.

The scarecrow began stomping around up on the roof going from one end to the other. Susan never knew where it was. It was only tormenting them. It roared and the thunder joined in its rage.

Susan then remembered Angel's story from that night. *There was something on the roof. It kept banging.* She shuddered when she thought of what Angel told her next of how the beast crashed through the garage door and took away Heather. *Is that what's going to happen next?* She tried to push the thought out of her mind and focus on how to get out of the chains, but lost all hope when Eldon fell over onto his back, onto the barn floor, still making that deathly wheezing sound.

Susan screamed and the beast kept stomping and terrorizing and Susan could have sworn she heard the thing laugh, high up on the roof. Maybe she was just losing her mind, knowing that she was going to die a bloody and horrific death the same way her daughter did, but then a small ray of hope blazed through her when she saw Eldon lying there, near dead on the floor.

The gun. *I need to get his gun!*

She was too far from him reach it. The length of chain confining her was short and not long enough to reach. She tried anyway because she was a fighter. She had to. She wanted to live.

She grimaced in pain and let out a strained shriek as she stretched out her arms as far as they could go in order to save herself and retrieve Eldon's gun. But it was hopeless. She quit and laid there crying on the floor, feeling tired and defeated.

*NO! You can't give up Susan! You have to try. You can't let that thing rip you apart and be a part of its bloody, murderous legacy, one that includes my beautiful daughter Heather. Dear God, I miss her so much.*

She screamed out an anguish filled scream that no one was going to hear. Only God, Eldon and that fucking potato sack of shit on the roof. Then she realized something.

The noise on the roof had stopped.

**CRASH!**

The barn door exploded open, emitting shards of wood in the air. Susan was too broken to scream when she heard the door come crashing open. She did manage to sit up a bit and turn around. There, about twenty feet away, stood the eight foot tall scarecrow, full of human killing, blood sucking rage.

It lurched towards them.

She frowned in defeat as it edged closer. In its large hand was its killing sidekick: the beastly and violent barbwire whip that had wrapped itself around

many a female and male's ankle, only to drag them out in the cornfield in the black of night and suck every last bit of blood from their bodies.

The beast roared and slashed its whip down. It sparked as it slid across the floor.

Susan could not look away from the scarecrow. As deathly afraid of it as she was, she was in awe of it as well.

It came closer; and then a little closer. So close to death Susan could reach out and touch it.

The beast was upon her.

Her neck craned up almost straight as she stared in fascination and ungodly terror at it. Her blue eyes met its red gleaming eyes and she wondered how painful it was going to be when that fucker dug into her stomach or neck or back and began sucking all her blood right out of her body, leaving her a useless skin bag of bones and deflated guts.

She closed her eyes and a strange calmness settled over her. I'm going to be with my daughter again, and my husband and Angel and my sweet granddaughter Amy. She smiled when she thought of sitting next to Mark on some huge puffy cloud, sipping on a long island ice tea and them holding hands and that's when she heard a loud, metallic click.

The beast growled a low roar sounding confused. Susan opened her eyes and saw Eldon pointing his gun in her direction. He was still lying on his back but managed somehow to keep ahold of his gun. Susan couldn't tell who he was pointing it at; her or the blood sucker.

He managed to say in a choked voice, "I'm sorry Susan."

The barrel of the gun fell in line with Susan's face and she felt that calm feeling once again. She smiled and closed her eyes. She could see all of her family in her mind, waiting for her, all standing together holding hands, getting closer to her. But before it was too late, she quickly opened her eyes which were filled with tears and mouthed the words, *'thank you'* to Eldon. *Thank you for this mercy killing so I don't have to die such a horrible, violent death by the mouth of that beast. Thank you.*

Eldon nodded back at her and smiled. Susan closed her eyes again and prepared herself for the reunion with her family.

A white hot flash exploded in front of her tightly shut eyes and a loud blast left her ears ringing. She felt both grateful and amazed by how painless it had been until she felt a throbbing ache on her leg. She opened her eyes slowly and saw a white fog of gun smoke surrounding Eldon. She looked down at her leg which was bleeding but not profusely. Next to her ankle was a split in half piece of metal, the cuff link that was attached to her.

Time seemed to have slowed down like in a slow motion scene in some horror movie. When she raised her head up and saw through the white gun smoke, the beast was standing behind Eldon, looking down on him with angry red eyes and the old man yelled out his final words.

"Run, Susan!"

## Part 4

### Susan Smith: Scarecrow Killer.

1997

A wild explosion of feelings clashed together in Susan's mind. It happened so fast. She was prepared to die and in the blink of an eye she had found a way out. Part of her was angry at Eldon for not killing her. She truly was ready for death and had her heart set on seeing her family again. But now that had all changed within seconds. Deaths aside, the reality of the situation seem to slap her in the face when she stood up. Tottering back and forth she felt like she might fall over but managed to stand straight. The beast roared out in hellish anger and then Eldon slid the black spell book to Susan. She quickly retrieved it and bolted away towards the busted open barn doors. The outside world was a murky, sepia toned color from the oncoming storm. She glanced over her shoulder and felt a wave of nausea in her gut at what she saw.

The beast had Eldon in the clutches of its metal mouth. The old man's arms and legs dangled helplessly as the beast held him up. This entire ordeal ever since Eldon Wharton showed up on Susan's doorstep only just one day ago, would take Susan years if not the rest of her life to get over, but what she was seeing now, the life and blood literally sucked out of Eldon, she would never forget.

The last image she would see before running out of the barn was the old man's skin crinkling up and deflating, and the long, distant, wide open stare in his dead eyes as if he was looking right at her.

Stunned and in shock, she stumbled to her car. *How long have I been in that barn?* It felt like she was trapped for days, but it was only beginning to turn evening.

From inside the barn, she could hear the wretched, gurgling, chocking sound of Eldon's blood being taken from his body. Susan fumbled around for her keys and got in her car and quickly turned the ignition. A bolt of lightning struck the earth next to the barn. She screamed at the loud, wicked pop of thunder. Heavy drops of warn rain began hitting her windshield. She put the Buick in reverse and slammed the gas pedal down to the floor. The car skidded and jerked out and around facing the driveway. She bolted down the long, winding driveway. A heavy gust of dust filled wind blew into her car making it lift up slightly. She glanced into her rearview mirror and to her horror she saw the scarecrow standing in between the broken barn doors; its demonic red eyes staring right at her.

A chill of fright attacked her chest and she sucked in a scream of horror. She reached the main road and made a hard right, not caring how fast she was driving away from the scene in hell.

Susan's mind was a hurricane of terror filled thoughts as she drove as fast as she could home. *What is happening right now? Am I dead or alive? Is all of this a nightmare? Did Eldon really shoot me dead? Did I really see the creature that took*

*my daughter's life, the creature in Angel's nightmares. What should I do? I feel so numb. Do I go to the police? No, don't do that. They'll never believe you Susan. Just like they never believed Angel. They will throw you in the nuthouse too. Is that thing going to come after me later tonight, once it's completely done draining Eldon of all his blood? Oh, dear God.*

She kept waiting to see the beast in her rear view mirror jump out from the corn on both sides of her car. Thunder and lightning crashed all around her as she sped down the gravel road to her house. Late summer, green corn swayed in the violent wind. Finally, she made it to her house where she got out and ran inside just before a heavy down pour hit.

She ran upstairs to her room and quickly changed into some fresh clothes. She didn't bother with a shower. She was too terrified of that beast sneaking in on her so she skipped it. She turned on all the lights in the house and nervously made a pot of coffee. She was running on fear induced adrenaline, not stopping to think about the horror she just witnessed and lived through. By the time the coffee was done brewing the rain had settled down to just a drizzle. She sat down at the kitchen table, lit a Virginia slim with shaking hands and poured herself a cup of hot coffee. She kept an eye on the back door the entire time she sat there. Her legs shook at the black spell book in front of her, wondering why Eldon had slid it to her at the last minute and what use it was to her. Finally, she couldn't hold out any longer. The events of the day had caught up with her and she began to cry, letting all the confusion and horror drain out of her.

After a few minutes, she sat with her hands covering her tear wetted face. She wished desperately that Mark was there to protect her. She was overwhelmed with fear and loneliness. She didn't feel safe. Looking at the clock, it was only a quarter till nine. She had the rest of the night ahead of her. The thought made her heart speed up. Darkness was coming and so was the beast.

It was 12:05 a.m. and she still had not turned off any of the lights. She sat curled up on her couch, watching David Letterman at a low volume, drinking her fourth cup of coffee. She couldn't help but laugh at herself a bit for the absurdness of lounging around after such a traumatic event. *Some eight foot monster almost kills me and I come home and make a pot of coffee.* She laughed out loud at the thought. But then her laughs turned to cries again. *But what am I supposed to do?* She threw her legs over the edge of the couch and sat up. She rested her elbows on her knees and covered her face. Her heavy sobs filled the living room. Seeing the beast that killed her daughter, the reality of Angel's story and Eldon's set up was like a hail storm of lies, confusion and despair raining down on her. Her mind was battling all three terrors at once and it was too much. Her hands slid down her face and she saw the black book sitting on the coffee table. She'd been meaning to look inside it but kept putting it off for fear of something bad happening. She reached for and opened it anyway. She just didn't read anything out loud. *What's going to happen? Will the earth open up and suck me down into a pit of sludge, fire and demons?* Most of it was difficult to read. The paper was old and brittle and had a musty odor to it. The print was very small. Some of it was in Latin, but mostly in English. There was no date of publication anywhere on the book, so she had no idea how the book came about. It didn't

matter. It was evil and had been the bane (she now realized) of all the terror and heartache in her life. Her tears were drying and then a new emotion other than fear had taken over her. It was anger.

As she breathed heavily and grit her teeth, looking at the book, she then realized that she had the evil in her grip and she was now in control. She felt very powerful all of a sudden because the true entity that had caused all of this treachery was in the palm of her hand. She lit a cigarette and blew smoke on the little black book and knew then what she had to do. She flicked her lighter and smiled at the small orange flame; its eerie glow reflecting in her vengeful eyes.

Staring out into the night, Susan gripped the steering wheel of her truck hard, almost until her knuckles were white. But yet she was determined to put an end to this twenty three year nightmare.

Gravel crunched under the tires. The sound was almost calming to her. Despite her new frame of mind her nerves were rattled and it wasn't that fifth cup of coffee that had her wired (she was a coffeeholic anyway, caffeine never seemed to bother her).

She was wound up with the dreaded anticipation of seeing that beast again and she knows she will. It was one thirty in the morning. She never laid down this evening, but she felt very awake and aware. *No sense in sittin' around waiting for that thing to come prowlin' around in the night, right up to my door, bustin' it open like it did those barn doors and crawl up the stairs and suck my blood out of me.* Susan shuddered. She had made up her mind that living in fear was not an option, even though she was terrified more than anything right now as she was driving in her truck on 750 w. en route to the place where her daughter spent her final hours on this earth.

A lump formed in Susan's throat when the guilt struck her. Guilt of leaving the garage sit in that field untouched, year after year. *I should have agreed to let the city tear it down.* But that was 1976 and now it's 1997 and she's tired of living in a nightmare.

There was a sense of urgency in her motives though because there was another storm on the way and if it was raining cats and dogs, her plan of setting the book and the garage on fire would be foiled. She was almost there. Her stomach did a somersault. The two large cans of gasoline along with the axe and a pitchfork she put in the bed of the truck, rattled and clanked. She didn't know really what she would do if she did see that 8 foot scarecrow again. *You might piss out all that coffee.* A nervous chuckle escaped from her.

She slowed the truck because she knew she was coming up on the hidden dirt drive that led to the garage. And then she saw it.

An icy chill went up her arms because once she turned her wheel to the right there was no turning back.

Her truck had slowed to a stop. She drummed her fingers on the steering wheel as the trucks engine idled and rumbled. She looked out the window into the darkness and then in her rear view mirror. *What's it gonna be lady?* Without thinking she turned the wheel a hard right and went down the path to hell.



The truck dipped and bumped along the dirt path. Almost black looking stalks of corn surrounded her peripheral vision. She flipped on her brights so she could see through the dark din of night.

Her heart was racing and her palms were moist with nervous sweat. The first thing she saw when the old garage came into view was the large opening in the door. She inhaled a breath of fear at the ugly sight of it and because she knew that beast had busted through it just as it did the barn doors at Eldon's childhood farm. A rush of emotion hit her when she pulled the truck to a stop and gazed through the windshield at the garage, wondering how it all went down that night in 1974 and if Heather and Angel and their boyfriends ever had a fighting chance. She started to cry. She knew they didn't.

She turned off the truck.

*There's still time to back out Susan. You don't have to do this. But I do and I will.*

She slowly opened the door and got out. The sound of the night was all around her and the smell of rain hung heavy in the air. Despite the heavy down pour earlier, the air was still muggy and warm even for September. A distant boom of thunder reminded her of the next round of storms coming through. That put her in a heightened state of panic. It motivated her to move quickly before the rain hit. She went behind the truck and pulled out both gas cans and carried them to the front of the truck. She also grabbed the flashlight she had in her jacket pocket. She turned it on and guided herself with it to the garage. After setting the gas cans down, she surveyed the area with the flashlight and then suddenly had a flashback of the dream she had been waking to every morning for the past three years. She didn't know why it popped into her head. A strong feeling of déjà vu went through her. It scared her. That thunder in the far off distance knocked her out of her daze and she got back to the matter at hand.

She unscrewed the first can of gasoline and began emptying it around the perimeter of the garage. The ground was saturated from the rain earlier so she made sure to drench the bottom half of the garage. She didn't think too much as she applied the gasoline to the crumbling white brick exterior. This was an evil place and held only horrible and treacherous memories. The can was empty. She made her way back around to the front of the garage to get the other gas can, using the flashlight to guide her. As she turned the corner, the bright light cast itself on the beast standing in the hole of the garage it created twenty three years earlier. Susan screamed and almost dropped the flashlight but was able to hold onto it. The scarecrow roared, belching out its downtuned lion type roar at Susan. She stumbled backwards, lost her footing and fell to the wet ground on her bottom. Still, she had not let go of the flashlight. The beast closed in on her, trudging its way slowly to her. It's giant black boots plodding the muddy ground. Fear had immobilized Susan. She couldn't move. Then the heavy stench of gasoline reminded her of her mission and she put her hand in her pocket to retrieve her lighter, but before she could, the beast had its large, rough, scaly hands around her ankle and was pulling her along the wet and muddy ground.

The beast dragged her through the giant hole and into the dark garage. She didn't even have time to scream. The beast had moved so quickly that by the time they entered the garage and when she was about to release the trapped scream inside of her, the fucker had laid its big boot upon her chest, confining her to the

garage floor. It roared again and Susan could hear the rage inside it. Panic tore into her. *There's no way out of this*, she thought. The beast's heavy boot was crushing her chest, making it difficult for her to breathe. As horrified as she was, she was angry because she wouldn't be able to destroy the garage and more importantly the spell book which was tucked away in her front jean pocket. She could feel the beast pressing down on her. A sudden flash of heat lightening lit up the inside of the garage, temporarily illuminating the monster above her and the garage itself. On every flash, thunder would crash, letting her know that the rain was on its way and that her hopes of burning down the garage were falling further away like a lost ship lost at sea.

And on those bright flashes of light, she would get a glimpse of the garage and all its horrors of the past: the hole in the roof, dried blood on the floor and walls that looked aged and rust like, a pair of old metal stools, a battered and bloodied, cobwebbed lined 1950's jukebox in the corner. She could hear the screams and feel the terror of that night. It was as if the beast was inflicting the bloodshed of that night into her mind. And it was.

She saw Angel standing there covered in blood and screaming and her crying out Heather's name. She saw her daughter being drug across the garage floor by the bloodbeast. She could hear the jukebox playing *The Rumble* by Link Wray and see the beast licking Angel's face with its six inch nail tongue.

The Bludenhale Massacre of 1974 was alive in her mind's eye, but then a violent thrash of lightning struck the garage and a blast of thunder brought her back to the present. The scarecrow was still confining her to the floor. It began heaving itself forward at her, looking like it was choking and gagging. Petrified beyond hell, Susan was determined to stay alive and finish what she started, but it all seemed like a distant memory now. Her anger of failing to burn down the garage was elevated when she remembered the spell book in her pocket. *Just pull it out and set the damn thing on fire*. But she couldn't lift herself up far enough to reach into her pocket to get it. The scarecrow's boot was too heavy on her chest to move. It was still heaving itself forward like it was getting ready to throw up and then Susan thankfully was able to put her hand inside her jacket pocket and grab her lighter. She grasped it with two fingers and pulled it out with some effort. Once it was out she began flicking it as fast as she could to light it. The flame shot up. Lightning and thunder crashed all around her when she put the flame close to her jean pocket where she would set herself on fire in order to burn the spell book. The flame touched her jeans but then she felt rain drops hitting her in the face. Her soul was crushed. She was too late. The beast and the spell book and the garage would live on forever. The rain extinguished the flame from the lighter. There was complete darkness inside the garage.

She kept trying to light it but it wouldn't work. Panic attacked her when the idea of dying in complete darkness shrouded her. She was persistent and kept flicking the lighter until miraculously it came on. But only to reveal her hand which was dripping with blood. There was no rain insight. She raised the lighter to the beast and from its metal mouth, came a rush of blood into her face. Instinctively she opened her mouth to scream and the beast's blood vomit forced its way into her mouth. She tried to scream but only gagged and waved her arms

wildly in front of her. She still had a hold of the lighter which had gone out when the scarecrow vomited Eldon's blood all over her. She knew whose blood it was. She remembered seeing the beast's mouth clenched tight around Eldon's neck hours ago at the barn. She also remembered Angel's tale of the same beast vomiting Heather's blood down on her. *I bathed in her blood* was all Susan could think as the blood shower assault continued. It seemed endless. The sound of blood hitting the garage floor was almost painful to Susan's ears. It was sharp and piercing. Then finally it came to an end. There in the darkness she could feel the blood soaking into her clothes. She panicked again when she thought of the spell book becoming wet with blood and not being able to burn it. Horrified, disgusted and in shock, she had to try. And she did when she put her blood drenched hand near her pocket. She suddenly felt a feeling of relief like a throbbing pressure subsiding. The beast had removed its giant boot from her chest. She sucked in a much needed breath but then the crushing weight was back on her. She put her hands on the boot, feeling its large, rough shape. It moved again. Susan didn't know what was happening. She flicked the lighter on and saw the bottom of the boot (which was covered in blood) coming straight at her. The will to stay alive and the good old fashion brain reaction to move out of the way of an oncoming object at your face kicked on and she flipped her sixty three year old body over as fast as she could. Just as she did a big boom crashed down and she knew it wasn't thunder. The impact of the beast's boot slamming down vibrated and cracked the garage floor. Susan screamed when she heard the crash and her stay alive mode went into full effect.

She crawled towards the hole in the garage door as fast as she could, clawing at the floor as she did. Her fingernail cracked and broke off as she scraped her hands on the floor, trying like hell to get out of the garage. She could hear the scarecrow behind her stomping its boot, almost mockingly as if to scare her. It was working. She was almost to the opening. When she reached it, half her body was in the garage while the other half was outside. She turned over on her back and pulled out the spell book from her pocket. She cried when she saw that it was completely dry. The beast roared and she flicked the lighter and put the flame up to its evil pages. It caught fire with ease and she threw it. It landed at the bottom of her feet. She didn't have the strength to throw very far. The wall of the garage erupted into flames. Susan sat up and scooted backwards away from the fire; her burning eyes of hate and revenge never leaving the scarecrow. A wall of fire surrounded the beast. Susan was sure that it would bust through the rising flames and drag her back into the garage so she could burn with it. But the scarecrow only stood there roaring at the flames as if confused or maybe even a little afraid of its deadly heat. Susan pursed her lips together in an angry scowl as the flames got closer to the beast. But then through the crackling roar of the fire, she heard something in distance. She looked up and saw a fluttering in the night sky. It looked like black balls running into each other. It was a wild swarm. The sound became louder and was sharp and piercing. Susan realized what the sound was and what those black shaped were.

The crows had come home to feed

The swarm grew larger and louder and then a black shadow against the night sky descended down over the garage. Angry crows began swooping through the

hole in the roof. Unafraid by the now raging fire in the garage, the crows attacked the scarecrow beast with a vicious, violent force. Their thick and pointy beaks pierced and ripped at the beast. The onslaught was brutal and endless as hundreds of crows flew into the garage with bloody intent. Susan gawked at the violence in awe feeling sick by its brutality and relentlessness, but yet vindicated. The scarecrow roared but it was weak and had a certain dying like tone to it. It fell to its knees as the black swarm covered its entire body. Through the fluttering blackness, Susan could see spurts of blood shooting out. She clenched her teeth and watched, feeling less overwhelmed and more powerful. The attack lasted about five minutes. Short but deadly. The beast had fallen over completely with its horrid face buried into the garage floor. The crows began to cease their attack and the hot flames took over. The crows were gone and the entire garage was on fire. Susan was sitting roughly twelve feet away. She watched the beast burn to death; its great hulking mass burning before her eyes. She hissed through clenched teeth, "Die you fucker, die!"

And then something was beginning to happen to the beast as it burned. A black dust rose up from its giant body. It was disintegrating, turning to dust, leaving the world forever. It was something that Susan needed to see and she's glad she did. She knew without a doubt that the beast was dead and gone and would never again destroy anyone's life. Like a dark kind of magic, the beast burned itself away in a cloud of black dust; a black haze rising up into the orange flames and out the hole in the roof. The garage was drowned in flames.

Susan sat and cried as she watched the walls fall in on one another and then the roof collapse to the ground. A flash of lightning struck out in the cornfield and then the rain hit, coming down hard.

Coming out of her daze of blood and death and a twenty three year old nightmare finally put to rest, she pulled herself up and limped back to her truck where she got in and watched the rain put out the fire.

A heavy torrent of rain came down hard. The sound of it hitting the roof of the truck was deafening.

It had already rained in Bludenhale.

## **In the end a new day will dawn**

**1997**

**October**

The house was quiet. But the heat kicked on and blew a cozy seventy two degrees throughout the living room, kitchen and bedrooms. Susan Smith lay in her bed, snuggled deep in a large comforter. It was the middle of October and the early mornings were starting to get colder. Susan didn't mind the brisk, cool morning. Fall was her favorite time of year. She slowly opened her eyes and looked at the clock on her nightstand. It was just too damn early to get up. She turned

over, pulling the comforter over her shoulder and slept for an hour and a half longer.

That hour and a half went my rather quickly. She got up, got dressed, brushed her teeth, half assed combed her hair and went downstairs to start her day. She made coffee and was going to have some toast with jelly but saw that she was out of bread. She sighed when she realized she would have to go into town to get some groceries for herself even though it was just her living alone at the old farmhouse. She still had to buy food even if she did only cook twice a week. The coffee was done brewing. She poured herself a cup and sat down at the kitchen table and lit up a Virginia slim and began reading the morning paper. As she sipped her coffee and flipped through the paper, a peculiar feeling came over her. She lowered the newspaper and gazed at the line of secondhand smoke sifting up from her cigarette sitting in an ashtray. Then it all came together in her mind. The smell of smoke had triggered it.

Recently, her nights have been dream free ever since she took a stand and came face to face with that creature from hell or somewhere. But now as she sat at the table and smelled the smoke, she remembered those early morning dreams she had been having where she was lost in a cornfield and the heavy stench of smoke was all around her. It gave her a chill. Had there been a connection between her dreams and the burning garage? Had she dreamed its fiery fate? Something inside of her was telling her that she did and it was scaring the hell out of her.

Susan cracked the window a little on her truck as she drove down and old gravel backroad on her way to Bludenhale to pick up some groceries. It was fifty three degrees but she like that little bit of cool air coming in through the window, mixing with the warmth from the heater. She thought about the dreams again and the smoke and the fire in the garage. *That doesn't happen. It can't*, she thought. She laughed when she thought her herself being physic or having premonitions. *I wonder if Heather or Amy knew things or had dreams like mine or about the future. Dear God, I hope not.* She had tried not to think too much about everything that happened. But sometimes it was difficult not to. It was all very traumatic but she knew she was safe now and that she had avenged her daughter and in some way Angel as well. There was one thing though she didn't understand. There had not been a single mention of the garage burning down; not in the paper or news or any gossip around town. *Maybe folks in this town are just as happy to see it gone as much as I am.*

She was driving down the road, pondering all of these thoughts when she saw a car up ahead, pulled to the side of the road. From what she could see there was a woman and a man sitting on the hood of their car. *Not every day you see someone stranded on the side of the road out here.* She slowed her truck as she got a little closer. She drove past them slowly and thought, *just keep going Susan, you don't need any more drama in your life from strangers.* But then in her rear view mirror she saw the woman stand up with her hands in her back pockets and kick the back tire in frustration. *But you're gonna see if they need some help anyway aren't you, because that's what us country folk do I guess.* Susan smirked and rolled her eyes as she put the truck in reverse. She pulled up to the car which was an older

looking Buick. A woman who seemed older but didn't look it was standing next to a tall twenty something kid.

Susan rolled the passenger side window down. "Hi there, ya'll need some help?"

The woman looked embarrassed and she looked at the kid who Susan assumed was her son.

The kid said, "Well, we got ourselves a flat but no spare. Some luck huh."

"Oh, that's a problem I reckon," Susan said.

She pulled over to the side of the road in front of the Buick. She got out and walked over them. Susan lost her breath for a moment when she saw the woman's long, sandy blonde hair, and how pretty she was which made pinpointing her age an impossible task. She saw a load of luggage on top of the Buick.

"Headin' out for vacation?" She said.

"Oh, no. My son and I are moving. Making a new start I guess you could say," the woman said feeling awkward.

"Your son?" Susan said sounding surprised.

"Yeah," the woman said feeling her face warm up because she knew what the nice country lady was thinking. "This is Michael. He's twenty one. I'm Lauren Hill."

She extended her hand to Susan who accepted her politeness with her hand. Susan almost wanted to cry because this woman reminded her a little of her daughter.

"You ok, ma'am?" Lauren asked.

Susan looked deep into her eyes. She could have sworn she saw Heather somewhere in there. *Get it together Susan. This gal ain't your daughter.* Finally she responded with, "I'm sorry, I just...well, you remind me of someone."

Lauren smiled. "That's all right."

A moment of strange silence fell between all of them for about ten seconds but the awkwardness of the situation made it feel like ten minutes.

"Well, I suppose ya'll would like a ride into town for a new tire?" Susan said.

"That would be great, if that's ok," Lauren said suddenly feeling like she was seventeen instead of thirty seven.

"That wouldn't be a problem," Susan said.

They all got inside the truck.

"So where are you moving, if you don't mind me asking?"

"Oh, that's ok," Lauren said. "We have family up in northern Indiana. But we're just playing it by ear for now I guess. You never know, we may get there and decide to keep going. No matter what we do, there has to be better days ahead."

Susan smiled at Lauren and for some reason she wanted to give her a hug.

She turned the key in the ignition and the truck rumbled to life. Ride on by AC/DC was playing on the radio, though no one noticed.

"Have you eaten yet? Maybe we can get lunch in town after we pick up that tire."

Lauren felt her seventeen year old self coming on. She smiled bashfully and accepted Susan's kind offer.

"Ok, sounds good."

The truck pulled away back onto the gravel road.

The sun had found its way through the morning cloudiness and was bright and welcoming, shining its warmth through the windshield.

Susan glanced over at Lauren and smiled warmly at her.  
“Better days, huh.”

