

Unborn Survivor: Geoff Chance

Book 1 of the Unborn Survivor Series

**A Dystopian Novel
in the Unborn Universe**

**written and illustrated by
Gaius Famius**

**Reader's Note: This is a companion book to Unborn.
The author assumes that you have already read
Unborn. If you have not read Unborn, then you will
want to read Unborn first, before you read this
companion book.**

Promotional Copy

Not For Resale

We appreciate you taking the time to read this book and review it. Thank you.

This eBook is a free promotional copy, but it is copyrighted.

This promotional eBook may be freely distributed and loaned to others, but may not be posted, in whole or in part, on websites or blogs without written permission.

You may post on your website or blog a direct link to the Brass Serpent website. <http://www.brassserpent.com>

This book must remain completely intact with all text, images, etc., and all copyright notices.

No changes may be made to this eBook of any kind.

No fee of any kind may be charged for this eBook.

Copyright © 2013 by Brass Serpent Productions LLC

All Rights Reserved.

Second Edition

All other legal notices and information
have been posted at the end of the book.

Chapter 1

Survivor

I am an Unborn Survivor.

I survived every attempt to abort me, and now I am a Person.

I'm safe, for a little while at least.

It wasn't easy. Things were rough. Many times I thought it was over. I had to make some bad choices. Choices that got other Unborns aborted.

But I survived, and that is all that matters. To me.

My name is Geoff Chance.

Chapter 2

Kindergarten

My father is an abortion nurse. It's the family career, chosen for us by the State. The State knows many things that we don't, and can make better decisions than we can. The State is all-knowing, and in it's all-knowing wisdom, it chose for my family to be abortion nurses.

I didn't accept this for a long time. If I hadn't accepted this, then I probably would have been aborted. The State does not tolerate individuals that do not do as they are told.

My father says that we were chosen to be abortion nurses because all of us men in the family are tall and burly. Our natural strength makes it easy for us to carry away dead Unborn with a minimum of fuss. We don't need stretchers, or gurneys, or to make a big deal about things. We just do the abortion, THUD, and then pick up the body and walk out.

Even though my father is an abortion nurse, I didn't witness my first abortion until Kindergarten. My father worked at the school that I went to. So it was the first time that I got to see my father doing his work. I had seen my father around the school, but he had told me many times that I was never allowed to tell anyone that he was my father. I think that all of the teachers knew anyway.

I was in class and we were sitting on the floor in a semi-circle and the teacher was reading us a book. We had heard the story many, many times, so I wasn't really paying attention. I was watching these two cute little girls, Summer and Angel. They were obviously best friends. Angel and Summer weren't paying any attention to the teacher, either. They kept rolling their eyes at each other and giggling. I kept casting them sidelong glances and trying to get their attention. I was jealous of their friendship and wanted to join them, but they were sitting on the other side of the circle. Tomorrow, I vowed, I would make sure that I sat next to them. They were both cute as buttons, and I didn't know which one I liked better. But I sure wanted one of them to be my first girlfriend.

Then the classroom door banged open and ruined the moment. Two parents came through the doors and were arguing. When Angel jumped up, I realized that they were Angel's parents. But they were so angry that Angel didn't even go to them.

Then the principal came in. The principal is my father's boss. My father doesn't like him. Nobody does. But my father still has to do what he says. My father followed the principal in, along with another abortion nurse. I wanted to jump up and run to my father, but I had to obey his warning never to go to him at school. I love my father. He is such a big strong man, and it's wonderful when he picks me up and swings me around.

Angel's father was saying, "I don't understand. Why did it take so long to find out? Why wasn't I told five years ago?"

Angel's mother replied, "I didn't know for sure. It was possible that she was yours. I just didn't know. I never had the test done."

Angel's father replied, "But now they have caught the guy, and now they've done the test for you, and now you know. Now you must make a choice."

I didn't know what they were talking about. My father had never told me much about his work. Just to never talk to him at work.

I could see that Angel was upset because her parents were upset. And Summer was upset because Angel was upset. They weren't laughing anymore. I sighed. I probably wouldn't get a chance to try and talk to them today. But that was okay, since I still couldn't decide which one I wanted to be my girlfriend. They were both as cute as buttons.

Like always, the principal butted in, "I'm glad that we found out before too many resources were wasted. She is the product of a rapist, and you know what you should do. A rapist's Unborn must always be aborted."

Angel whimpered, "Mommy? Daddy?"

Angel's parents ignored her. I don't know why. I wasn't ignoring Angel. She had such bright, happy smiles and was always giggling.

Angel would make a good girlfriend.

Now the teacher closed the book and stood up, “Excuse me, can you fill me in real quick about what is going on here?”

The principal acted as if we didn't even exist, “The police recently caught the rapist that raped Angel's mother six years ago, and they ran their full battery of DNA tests. It turns out that Angel is the rapist's daughter, and that this is not Angel's father, like we have been led to believe all these years.”

The teacher replied, “Well, that's not good.”

Angel's mother spoke up, “How was I supposed to know?”

Angel's father shook his head, “You told me you had the tests done. If you hadn't lied, then we would have at least known that I wasn't the father.”

The other school nurse, not my father, asked, “Where is the rapist now? Do they still have him?”

Like always, the principal jumped in again, “Yes, he was tried this morning and received a summary judgment of five to ten years in jail for rape. But that doesn't solve our problem here.”

The principal looked at Angel's mom with meanness, you could just see it dripping out of his eyes, “It is time for you to exercise your right to choose and to abort this Unborn offspring of a rapist. That you allowed this situation to go on this long is disgusting. You should have settled it long ago.”

But I kept watching Angel, and I was feeling sorry for her. The adults now had Angel crying and whimpering. Angel was holding out her hands to her mom and crying quite loudly over and over, “Mommy? Mommy? Mommy?” but Angel's mother just ignored her. That was really mean of her mom. When I held out my hands to my dad, he always picked me up. Just never at school. I wasn't allowed to hold out my hands to him at school. My dad said the principal wouldn't like it.

Angel's mom didn't look too happy either, “I know that you are

right.” She sighed wistfully and looked at Angel's father, “I had just really hoped that it was your child.”

Angel's father shook his head, “Well, it's not my child, and I will not raise the child of a rapist. That just is not happening.”

My father was getting impatient just standing there. He looked like he wasn't moving, but I could see he was impatient. Then he stepped forward, “Please, we have a lot to do today. There are other abortions waiting for us. We need to get this over. Everyone knows the right thing to do. Why are you hesitating?”

I kept trying to catch my father's eye, but he wouldn't look at me, either. It must have been the day for parents to ignore their children.

Angel's mother nodded and reached out her hands, “I don't want to raise the child of a rapist, either.” The other nurse with my father handed Angel's mother a clipboard and she wrote on it.

By now, most of my fellow kindergartners were upset and crying. I don't know why. Their parents weren't there and ignoring them. I was starting to get depressed.

As soon as Angel's mom handed back the clipboard, the other nurse and my father became all business and swiftly moved forward. They each grabbed one of Angel's arms. My father pulled out his cattle thud. Dad always took it to work every day, but he never let me touch it or look at it. I wondered what he was going to use it for.

My father put the cattle thud right up against the center of Angel's forehead, looked at it a second, and then there was a loud THUD. Instantly Angel slumped down, and if my father and the other nurse had not been holding on to her, she would have landed on the floor.

This was the first time I ever saw a dead Unborn. I had seen grandpa after he died a year before. Grandpa had died in his sleep, and when I went to wake him for breakfast, he didn't answer me. I tried shaking him, but he didn't move at all. I could see that something was wrong. I started hollering for my dad. He must have heard the panic in my voice, because he came running into the room. He took one look at grandpa and sat down on the bed and started crying. My

dad held me so tight that day I could hardly breathe. Then my father whispered in my ear that grandpa was dead. "See," he said, "when your body stops working, you are dead. That's not grandpa anymore. That's just grandpa's body."

Then my father very carefully and very gently wrapped grandpa up in a blanket and used a wet cloth to clean his face and brushed his hair. Then father took grandpa and me to the funeral home. At the funeral home, father picked out a casket and gently laid grandpa in it. A few days later, we entombed the casket in the mausoleum at the cemetery.

I could see that Angel was dead. I expected my father to wrap her up in a blanket, just like he had grandpa. But my father just dragged Angel's dead body out the door with him. The other nurse tried to help, but my father really didn't need her help.

I was confused. Why was Angel suddenly dead? And why didn't my father treat her the way he had treated my grandpa?

The teacher clapped her hands, "Unborns, settle down. This is an excellent lesson today." Waving to Angel's mother, the teacher called her over and pulled her down to sit on the floor with the rest of us children.

The teacher went on, "Little Unborn children, let me introduce you to a real heroine, a mother that made the right choice. This is a day to be proud of."

She continued, "You probably don't know what any of this means, but that is why you are still Unborns, you just can't understand many things. See, the man that Angel's mother thought was Angel's father was not really her father. A bad man raped Angel's mother many years ago, and the man who raped Angel's mother was really Angel's father."

"This is a bad thing. The children of rapists should never be allowed to live. That is why we have the abortion nurses. The nurses help us by aborting any Unborn that is the product of rape."

"For most of you, this is the first time that you will have the honor of

seeing a mother use her right to choose so that she could do the right thing, and choose an abortion for her Unborn.”

I didn't remember seeing Angel's mother do anything. But I couldn't get the image of what my father had done out of my mind. I had never seen him do anything like that before. I had never seen my father hurt anyone. How could my little Angel be dead? I don't know how she became my little Angel. But after that day, I always thought of her as my little Angel. If her mother and father didn't want her, then she could be mine. I had wanted her to be my girlfriend.

The teacher smiled brightly and expectantly at the class of kindergartners. We all stared at her uncomprehendingly. She could say some really dumb things at times.

I looked over at Summer. Summer was just staring at the wall. I remembered just a few minutes ago Summer and Angel laughing and giggling together. And to think I was trying to choose between them. I should have just become friends with both of them. Now I could only be friends with Summer. Somehow being friends now seemed more important than having a girlfriend.

Angel's mother smiled, “I'm a mother, and the most important thing that a mother can do is use her right to choose. I chose what was best for Angel, and best for me, and best for each one of you. Today is a better and brighter place because I chose to do the right thing. I hope that this will be an example for each of you to learn from. May you, too, one day make the right choices.”

What a witch. If she didn't want Angel, she could have just given Angel to me. Angel could have gone home with me. I'm sure that my father would have let her live in grandpa's empty room. I know that grandpa would have liked that.

None of my classmates seemed to have understood what happened. But I knew that Angel was dead. I think that Summer knew, too.

Chapter 3

Geoff Asks Questions

That night, I couldn't wait until my father got home from work. I really wanted to ask him some questions about Angel and his job. I still really couldn't understand what was going on.

When the door opened, I ran to him, grabbed him and hugged him, “Daddy, Daddy, you're home. Can we sit and talk?”

My father sighed deeply, “Son, yes, okay. I know you need to talk. But let's have dinner first. Then we can talk.”

However much I was looking forward to the talk, it was obvious that my father wasn't. He actually made real food that night, and not just heated up frozen food. Probably because it took longer to do. At the time, I thought it was just a special treat. Father seemed so tired, but there was no way that I could ever go to sleep, or go back to school the next day, without talking with my father about what had happened.

After dinner, father sat back in his easy chair and I curled up in his lap.

“Daddy, why did you kill Angel today?”

Father just sighed again deeply. “I know, son. Everybody else saw an abortion today, but you saw the truth. I never could hide the truth from you.”

Father was silent for a long time and I just watched him.

Finally he said, “Yes, I killed Angel today. Sometimes a man has to do what he has to do. If I didn't perform these 'abortions,’” (father grimaced in distaste), “then I would lose my job, and without a job they would take you away and you would be aborted.”

“I'm sorry, but I just can't let you be aborted. No matter what happens, I can't let that happen. After your mother died two years ago, you are all that I have left of her. And I love you.”

“But Daddy, why do they do abortions? Why can't everybody live

until they are old and die in bed like grandpa?”

Father smiled sadly, “That would be nice. For everyone to just die of old age.”

After a few minutes he continued, “I was okay when grandpa died. Grandpa lived a long and full life. Nobody took his life from him. He just died of old age. Maybe one day I will die of old age, and I hope that you die of old age too.”

“It was really hard when your mother died of cancer because she was so young. If you and grandpa hadn't been there for me, I don't know what I would have done.”

Father seemed so full of sadness tonight. But then, my father rarely talked about death. Usually father only talked about good memories he had of my mother and grandpa.

“So why did you become an abortion nurse?” I asked.

“Son, I didn't have any choice in the matter. Your grandpa was a big, strong man like me when he was younger, and he was a construction foreman for most of his life. I worked construction too, for awhile, but then the environmentalists passed all those laws making it illegal to build anything. So I no longer had any work. When I went down to the unemployment office, they pulled me into an interview room and told me that they had a new job for me. They said I was well qualified because I was so big and strong, and since I could handle construction tools, then I should be able to handle a cattle thud with no problems.”

Father paused for awhile in thought, “I didn't know what a cattle thud was, or what the job was. I was just happy to have work so that I could feed you and Mommy.”

He sighed again, “Then they sent me off to a three month training course. When I came back, I was a certified abortion nurse, and they assigned me to the school you would one day go to.”

“Do you like your job, Daddy?”

“No, I don't. I really don't. I wish I could go back to construction.”

“Show me your cattle thud, Daddy!”

Father picked me up and set me on the floor, and walked upstairs. I could hear him going into his dresser drawer and getting the cattle thud. He never let me go in the drawer or touch the cattle thud. Father slowly and heavily walked down the stairs and then sat on the floor in front of me.

“I knew that this day would come eventually. That I would have to show this to you.”

“This is called a cattle thud. That's just the common name for it. The technical name is 'captive bolt pistol'. It looks a little like a gun, but it doesn't fire a bullet. If you look in what would be the gun barrel, you can see that the barrel has a metal rod in it with a mushroom shape at the end of the rod. I first have to put a CO2 cartridge in the grip of the gun like this.”

Father unscrewed something, then lifted the side of the grip up, and inserted a silver cartridge.

“Now the gun can fire. The gun has to be pressed against something first.”

Daddy pressed the cattle thud against the floor and pulled the trigger. There was a loud THUD and I jumped. Daddy pulled the cattle thud away, and there was now a large dent in the wood floor. I ran my hand over the dent and marveled at how large it was.

“Can I do it? Can I do it?”

Father didn't seem to like that idea, but I really wanted to, and I kept pushing him. Eventually, father loaded another CO2 cartridge, and then held my hands inside his hands, and helped me push the gun against the floor. Father was pushing firmly and it hurt. “Just pull the trigger when you are ready.”

I pulled the trigger, and a shockwave traveled back through my arms and hurt. Father didn't move, but my hands hurt where the cattle thud had shoved them back into father's hands. “Ouch!”

Father touseled my hair. “That's why they need big, strong men to

do the abortions. If you can't hold the cattle thud right, then it just knocks a person over, and it won't kill painlessly." Father grimaced again, "At least if you are going to die, it should be painless. I have seen smaller men and women mess it up, and it's a real mess."

I ran my hand over the two large dents in the wood floor. Father went on, "Yup, that is exactly what it does to the human skull when you use the cattle thud. It puts a large dent in the front of the skull, and instantly causes catastrophic damage to the cerebrum and cerebellum of the brain, resulting in instant death."

"But, Daddy, why do they call it a cattle thud if they use it on people?"

"Because they didn't used to use these on people. They were invented for stunning animals so that the animals could be bled out and be butchered. But animals have much tougher skulls than people do. So with a large animal, the cattle thud only stuns them, it doesn't kill them. You can beat a dog over the head with a shovel and it won't hurt him. And beating a bull over the head with a shovel only makes him mad at you. So farmers had to use these captive bolt guns to stun the animals so that they could butcher them properly."

"But when you use a captive bolt gun on a person, their softer, weaker skull caves in and they die almost instantly."

"I still don't understand, Daddy, why they don't call it a people thud then."

"Son, because Unborns are not yet people. Or so they say. To the State, Unborns are just animals, just cattle that they can dispose of as they wish. And what do you use on cattle? But a cattle thud?"

Chapter 4 Growing Up

After that day, my father and I didn't discuss abortion or cattle thuds for many, many years. I might see my father walking down the hallway, but since most abortions were done in the principal's office, or the nurse's office, I didn't see him doing his work.

And I didn't want to. It was all simply too much for a young Unborn like me to take in. Although my classmates kept disappearing on a regular basis. Every year there were fewer and fewer of us.

I didn't really worry about it, though. I knew that my father didn't want to abort me, and since he worked at my school, all of the teachers were a little bit afraid of him. I just knew that they wouldn't try anything without his permission. It wasn't much to hold onto, but it was enough to keep me from going insane.

Every now and then, one of the Unborns would snap from the pressure and go insane. I didn't understand that. Going insane was a guaranteed way to be aborted. But there was no one to talk to about these things, so I could only watch and observe.

Mostly, I was still interested in Summer. But Summer had changed, too. After Angel died, Summer was no longer the happy, carefree girl that I knew. She always seemed somewhat morose and withdrawn. But she quickly learned to hide it well. Any emotion other than dedicated happiness at serving the State was another sure way to start down the path of being aborted.

But we all knew what the rules were, unspoken though they were. We were all Unborn. We wouldn't be Born until we reached the 18th anniversary of our Entrance from our mother's wombs.

The Unborn were not Persons. We were simply a more advanced developing stage of a fetus. A blob of tissue that belonged 100% to our mothers. Or for me, to my father. At this point in our short lives we were called Unborn offspring. This was the time that everyone's mothers or fathers would evaluate their offspring to see if they were suitable to become Born, or see if we were defective and should be

aborted. If the Unborn was defective, or a burden in any way, then it was a mother's duty to abort her Unborn offspring. A mother had until the Unborn reached it's 18th anniversary of the date of it's Entrance into the world to choose to execute her right to an abortion.

The mothers had lots of help with evaluating their Unborn offspring to see if they were suitable to become Born. The schools and the teachers existed primarily to help the mothers evaluate their offspring. There were constant tests. Medical tests, psychiatric tests, psychological tests, intelligence tests, emotional tests, personality tests, academic tests, achievement tests, physical fitness tests, and genetic tests.

I hated the tests. They never ended, and most of the time, the only way we even knew that we had passed was because we didn't disappear into the principal's office, never to be seen again. No one told us how to pass the tests. They just gave them to us. But we watched each other, and we did learn the hard way the kinds of things that could get us aborted. Even that wasn't enough, though. Sometimes a perfectly normal and good Unborn would disappear. The mother's right to choose an abortion was absolute. She didn't need a reason. All she had to do was wake up on the wrong side of the bed.

Every week, more Unborn would be called to the school nurses' office or the principal's office, and they would never return to class. Another abortion had been performed. But that is what the school was there for -- to help the mother choose and have an abortion on demand, any time she wanted it.

We knew the rules to the game. And like any game, the rules favored the house, and only sheer luck allowed any Unborn to be Born. It helped to have a father like mine, who didn't want to abort me. For that I was very grateful. Of course, back then, I couldn't articulate all of this, but I still knew, and I did my best to make my father's life happy. That's why I never raised the subject of abortion, or asked to see his cattle thud again. These things didn't make him happy.

I just knew that if I was aborted, then he would die of a broken heart.

He would have died when my mother died, but grandpa and I still needed him, so he kept going. With grandpa gone, I was now all that he had left.

Chapter 5

Following The Rules

So I followed the rules, and did my best to stay out of trouble.

As long as you weren't the Unborn picked for an abortion, things weren't too bad. I was a kid. You couldn't go around depressed all the time just because someone might abort you. It did help to know, of course, that my father didn't want to abort me. Some of the kids had it really rough. If they made a single mistake, or if their mother woke up on the wrong side of the bed, they would be aborted.

Summer didn't seem happy though. The death of her friend Angel changed her. But I still liked her. I still wanted her to be my girlfriend, but it seemed like it would take everything I had just to be friends. Summer kept everyone at an arm's length now. Like she was afraid that if she got to know anyone they would be aborted. Us Unborns handled things in different ways, and this was just the way that Summer handled it.

I remember the day that Summer and I became true friends

I was always trying to catch up to Summer at her locker so we could walk to lunch or the next class together. But it could be hard. All of the Unborns were kept in the same school, all the way from preschool to 12th grade. So I was always tripping over little ones, or having to wait for them to troop past. It would never do to shove one's way past the little ones, even if you were in a hurry. That would just bring attention to you, the wrong kind of attention.

So that day I got stuck behind a long line of little ones and found myself standing on the stairs in the stairwell, waiting. All of a sudden, all of the kids went completely quiet. That meant someone was getting aborted. The kids always knew. We also knew we couldn't talk about it, but they couldn't make us talk as if nothing were happening. The sudden silences were always depressing. It was a shame that such little ones were already learning how to survive.

Finally, everything started moving again, and I came out of the

stairwell and into Summer's hallway where her locker was located. Summer's locker was on the end of a row, and there was a space between her row of lockers and the next row of lockers. The space was large enough that Summer could step back into it, and press her back against the concrete block wall and stand out of the way of the push and flow of the traffic. Summer would wait in that little cubby-hole for me most days, unless I was late. She dared not be late herself just because I was.

I craned my head to look in the cubby-hole, but Summer wasn't there. But she was standing in the middle of the hallway, with the kids swirling past her, mumbling to herself.

I came up and pinched her shoulder, "Hey, it can't be that bad. You are still here, aren't you?"

Summer finally looked up at me and smiled weakly with a quivering voice, "Oh, Geoff."

I could see she must have known whoever it was that was aborted. I gave her a small sad, crooked smile. She looked at me and nodded her head.

"I'm still your friend."

Summer nodded again, "I know, Geoff, I know."

I looked down and saw a pretty red, blue, and pink ribbon in her hands. "That's a pretty ribbon. Do you want me to put it in for you?" She nodded, so I took the ribbon from her, opened it up, and put it in the side of her hair. Her hair gave me an electric shock, but Summer didn't notice. Must have been static electricity. I stepped back, "It looks good on you."

Summer just nodded again, and we turned and walked down the hallway together. That was the day that we truly became friends.

Chapter 6

Professor Science

Our favorite teacher was Professor Science. Not just for me and Summer, but for all of the Unborns. Not only was he cool and funny, but Professor Science was the only teacher who was never looking for an excuse to abort us. It was actually safe in his classroom, and we could let our guard down a little bit and relax. We all took advantage of that by doing a lot of note passing in his classes. But we respected Professor Science too much to talk and be rude. Besides, his classes were actually interesting and we learned things.

The principal made Professor Science spend a lot of time on reproduction and why Unborns are not Persons. Which just proved that the principal really was dumb, and not just mean, because we Unborns definitely learned from Professor Science that we were Persons, but somehow the principal never caught on.

But my favorite lessons were when Professor Science talked about real things, like building bridges or buildings or machines. Machines and bridges didn't have to worry about being aborted, and engineers, who built machines and bridges, didn't have to worry about aborting anyone. They actually got to design and build things with their hands. It didn't take long before I decided that I wanted to be an engineer and actually do something with my life.

“Results, people! Results!”

Professor Science's favorite saying.

“I don't care about the conclusions. Look at the results. They will tell you the truth.”

“Every civilization in history has built bridges. Bridges run the gamut from simple logs rolled over a creek to steel and concrete behemoths over 25 miles long. In this class, we are always talking about the reproduction of species. Surprise! Surprise! Bridges are not a species and they don't reproduce on their own. Bridges must be designed and built by men and women.”

“And bridges love results. Either they work, or they fail. You can write as many conclusions as you want about bridges, but the conclusions don't matter. Only the results!”

“Science is a valuable tool only as long as it reports honestly and dispassionately what the results are. Most scientists write their conclusions to make their bosses happy. Science isn't about making people happy. Science is about finding the truth. Science is about knowing the results. In bridge building, your conclusions better match your results, or your bridge will fail. There is no room in bridge building for lies and propaganda.”

“If you are building a bridge, then you had better make sure that your results are right. Or your conclusions will end up in the river.”

“Bridge failures in history are more common than you think. I've posted on the wall a small list, just since 1831, of over 150 major bridge collapses in the modern age because somebody, somewhere, made a mistake. If you want to pursue a career that does not tolerate mistakes, then become a bridge engineer.”

“We are going to build, right here in class, some balsa wood model bridges, and then load them and see if they fail before they are designed to. If they hold within their design limits, and I'll let you know what those are, then you designed and built your bridge correctly. If they fail too soon, then you have failed at your new career as a bridge engineer. On this subject, only the results matter. Does the bridge stand or collapse?”

“Here are your assignment sheets. You will have to do some reading at home on your own, because there is not enough time to cover everything in class. Then get together with your study partner and pick the type of bridge that you want to build, draw up a design, and we will start to build them in our next class. When the bridges have been built, we will subject them to a load using a structure testing device until they fail. By carefully measuring the load as we add it, we will know if your results are good enough. Just be careful what you write in your conclusions.”

With a simple raise of our eyebrows, Summer and I agreed to be study partners and work together on this bridge project.

Chapter 7

Mother Protective Services

On the way home from school, I got so caught up in thinking about building things that I forgot to be careful. As I meandered through the park, I absently kicked loose pebbles from the path. With my head hanging low as I watched my feet idly, I suddenly caught sight out of the corner of my eye an MPS agent watching me with a pair of videonocs.

Mother Protective Services Agents, or MPS agents, were bad news. They investigated Unborns, all of them. Sometimes the investigations were just routine. Every Unborn over the age of 12 was investigated once a year by MPS. But sometimes people called in anonymous tips on Unborns if they didn't like them, and tried to get them in trouble. Other days, MPS agents trolled places like the park, just hoping to catch any unwary Unborn.

I almost got caught, but thankfully, I wasn't doing anything frivolous. But I was still probably going to get stopped. I kept my head down. To suddenly raise it and start walking properly would be to tell them I had noticed I was being watching. I did stop kicking the rocks and gradually, slowly, let my head come back up to a normal or proper attitude. I wasn't guilty of anything, but I had to be very careful that I didn't look guilty.

MPS agents were dangerous because they can seize an Unborn at any time, and the parents cannot overrule them or their investigations. So even though my father would probably never abort me, the choice might be taken away from him, and I could still get aborted. Parents who resisted the MPS were usually labeled terrorist agitators and arrested. Nobody liked MPS investigations, except the MPS agents, who really seemed to enjoy their jobs.

Every move I made was being recorded, either on the videonocs, which were binoculars with a video camera built into them, or by the ever-present surveillance cameras on poles throughout the park, or on the lapel cameras on the agents' uniforms, or the cameras on the agents' enforcement vehicle.

As I neared the park exit, I could see their enforcement vehicle parked right up on the sidewalk just past the entrance. It left enough room for people to get around, but was still in everyone's way. But they didn't care. They could park anywhere they wanted. To be an MPS agent meant you didn't have to obey any of the laws for regular Born, and certainly none of the laws for the Unborn.

My knees were weak. I was definitely going to get stopped, and there was nothing I could do about it. As I came through the exit gate, I made as if to step around the enforcement vehicle. Even though I was expecting it, I was still surprised, and the breath went out of me. I was thrown up against the vehicle and told to hold the special grab handles placed along the roof line just for that purpose.

My legs were kicked apart and one of the agents asked me, "Geoff Chance?"

"Yes, sir," I replied simply and straightforward, keeping my eyes on the handle I was holding. The tone of their voices told me this was probably just a routine check. Which meant that they had been following me since school. I reviewed in my head every step I had taken from school and tried to remember if I had done anything wrong, like dropping a piece of litter, or anything.

The one agent placed a scanner over my wrist to read my microchip. It was impossible to cut the microchip out without slitting your own veins and committing suicide. The scanner beeped and the agent said out loud for the video cameras, "Identity confirmed as that of Geoff Chance."

My eyes dropped down to the seal emblazoned on the side of the enforcement vehicle. Mother Protective Services it declared in the top half of a circle around a graphic of an unborn, and on the bottom half of the circle was the MPS motto: Protecting Mothers from the Unborn.

The other agent was putting on a pair of latex gloves and stepped forward and asked me, "Do you have any sharp needles, knives, or anything else that I need to know about? Do you have any contraband or forbidden items?"

“No, sir,” I breathed steadily. Lying to an MPS agent was forbidden and a crime and grounds for an immediate abortion. Thankfully, I was clean. Kids who started doing drugs usually didn't last long as they were culled pretty quickly.

The agent started with my head and carefully searched through my hair, behind my ears, inside my ears, and then squeezed my neck before turning my head and opening my mouth and looking inside with a flashlight. I focused on breathing normally and not reacting to anything. The worst was yet to come. These invasive pat-down searches made you feel like you were being molested and raped. There was no way to stop the feeling of being violated. But you couldn't think about it. The agents missed nothing, and an involuntary shudder of disgust would just make things worse.

Now the agent had her hands up inside my shirt and was checking my armpits. The female agents always searched us guys, and their male partners always searched the girls. Then came the part I hated. The agent ran her hands around the inside of my belt, popped my belt loose, and looked inside my pants before running her hands over every inch of my underwear. I focused on not reacting. It was easy to tell that she enjoyed doing her job. Finding nothing, she let go of my pants, which fell down, and then searched my legs. Reaching my feet, she instructed me to lift each one, one at a time, while she removed my shoes and inspected my shoes and in between my toes. What I was supposed to hide between my toes, I don't know.

So there I stood, hands on the grab rail of the enforcement vehicle with my pants down around my ankles, when who should come walking through the park exit but Summer. Summer, and all of the other Unborns, walked by studiously ignoring what was happening as if I wasn't even there. But still, I was completely humiliated. I never wanted Summer to see me like that. Looking like a criminal and my pants down around my ankles. It just wasn't right.

All of a sudden, I was glad that I hadn't waited for Summer today to walk home with her. Had she been with me, then she would be getting the same treatment. I watched out of the corner of my eye as Summer walked down the street and got away. I sighed inside.

The Agent who had been searching me asked sharply, “Are you just going to stand there with your pants down embarrassing everyone? Or are you going to pull them up?” She knew I couldn't move without her permission. She was just bullying me.

I pulled up my pants and she instructed me to stand still. She took a blood sample, and had me open my mouth while she took a DNA swab. Then she had me hold my arms out away from my body while she ran a sniffer over me. The sniffer vacuumed up any smells or scents on me. All of this would be checked back at the lab later. I didn't know what they were looking for. They never told us.

I relaxed a little. If I was really in trouble, they wouldn't be allowing me to stand up straight on the sidewalk. I would already be in the canine cage in the back of the enforcement vehicle. But I was still careful not to wince, look impatient, or keep anything except a neutral look. A compliant citizen did none of those things and was happy to do his duty by submitting to the state's need to search and investigate him at will. All of this data would go into my permanent file. These investigations were as much about finding out if you would one day be a compliant Born, or were psychologically rebellious.

Besides, who wanted to get aborted simply because they objected to being physically handled?

While I was being searched, the other agent went through everything in my backpack, including turning it inside out. Then he used a hand held cloner to copy everything on my cell phone and computer.

But it wasn't over. Now the male agent stepped forward with a flexible brain scan cap which he placed on my head. I knew he was going to ask me some questions next. The readouts from the scanner would tell them if I was lying, or having dark and murderous thoughts. Any unborn even suspected of having murderous thoughts towards Borns was immediately detained.

Terroristic thoughts they called it. Rebellion, resentment, individualism, selfishness, terrorism.

So I tried to keep my thoughts neutral and happy.

The female agent reminded me, “You are being interrogated in an MPS investigation. You do not have the right to remain silent. You do not have the right to have your parents or an attorney present. Everything you say will be evaluated for truthfulness and right thinking. It is a crime to lie to an MPS investigator, and the punishment for lying is abortion. Do you understand these rights?”

I neutrally said, “Yes, sir.”

Then the two agents started firing questions at me, one after the other.

“Where were you all day?”

“Do you always walk home this way?”

“Where are you going now?”

“Why did you kick those stones in the park?”

“Are you attempting to vandalize the park?”

“Why are you alone? Don't you have any friends?”

The one agent nodded and removed the brain scan cap.

“You may go.”

The other agent smirked, “We will be watching you.”

I smiled politely and said “Thank you.”

Then I had to balance on one leg while I tried to put my shoes back on without looking like I was putting my shoes back on. Then, carefully, I started walking down the sidewalk, but the whole way I could feel their eyes boring into the back of my head.

It was impossible to walk normally. I just wanted to break into a run and get out of there as fast as possible, but that would be a major mistake.

Then I noticed the MPS enforcement vehicle moving slowly down the road on the other side of the street. They were following me home and not even trying to hide it. Suddenly they sped up, drove

down the block, and turned into a fast food restaurant. When I came even with the front of the restaurant, I could see that they were sitting in the exit lane munching on something.

I sighed inside. This definitely wasn't over yet. They would follow me all the way home. I pretended not to notice, and kept walking. Every other Unborn on the street saw the agents following me, and disappeared as quickly as they could. Normally it took me awhile to get home as I stopped and talked to my friends, but today, there was no one to talk to.

When I got to the house, I unlocked the front door. “You there! Freeze!”

I froze. When they said freeze, they meant freeze. And it wasn't a game.

The female agent walked up, “Are you Geoff Chance? Spread them and put your hands on the wall.”

She ran the scanner over my wrist again and got another beep. “It's still Geoff Chance. Well, hello again, Geoff Chance.”

They both smirked at me and walked past me into the house. I stood frozen and didn't move. I could hear them moving around inside and looking into things for several minutes. I heard one of them take something out of the refrigerator. They finally came out. I had not moved even an eyelash.

The male agent stopped at the top of the stairs, made a face, and trying to imitate an old movie said, “We'll be back!” They both laughed and smirked. Slamming their car doors, they finally drove off.

Only after I saw them turn the corner at the end of the street did I move. I finally stepped into my own house, which now also felt violated. I threw my backpack on the couch and shut the front door. I didn't bother locking it. If the agents did come back today, they would just bust the door down, and it would cost money to fix the door. Better to just let them walk in.

I felt so violated. But why? We were raised to know that it was our

duty to submit to all of these searches by the state. So how could they be a violation? It was my right to be searched.

Chapter 8

The Protestors

Mother Protective Services didn't just target the Unborn. They also targeted Born who tried to interfere with a mother's right to an abortion. The most notorious Born were the protestors. Every year the protestors would show up outside the school and create a major scene for a few days.

The hubbub was a pain in the neck for us Unborn. We had to be extra careful during these times. Contact with the protestors was grounds for an abortion. Once we were contaminated by the evil ideas of the protestors, then there was no possibility that we could ever grow up into compliant citizens. I stayed away from them as much as possible and kept my distance. Except for one year.

As usual that year, when the protestors showed up, the school would go into lockdown every day. We were not allowed to walk to school during a lockdown time, but had to ride the bus, even those of us who lived close by. Someone would tape over the windows of the buses with black construction paper so that we couldn't see outside, and so that the protestors couldn't see inside. "It is for your own safety," we were told. "The protestors are terrorists who just want to control children and their mothers and take away a mother's right to choose. They are the most awful people on this earth. If the protestors had their way, every Unborn would be forced to live, and every mother would be forced to stay home and take care of her Unborn. How could a mother have any freedom or choice? Terrorists! That's all they are, are terrorists!"

"The only suitable solution for terrorism is to execute the terrorists. Unfortunately, the protestors are usually Born, so they do have rights. But the state also has the right to lock them up, and stop them from terrorizing Mothers."

So while the rest of the Unborn would try to sneak peeks out the windows of the buses and the classrooms to see what these awful terrorist protestors were up to, I usually just stayed in my seat and tried to ignore everything that was going on. My father very firmly

told me to pretend they didn't even exist. “Remember son, even if I don't want to abort you, there are things you can do that will cause the system to abort you anyway. Whatever you do, don't pay any attention to those protestors.”

So I listened to my father and didn't pay attention. Except for one year.

I just couldn't resist. I really wanted to see what all the other Unborns could see. And Summer was watching them vividly. So I got out of my seat and snuck over to the classroom windows by Summer and peered through the blinds. All I could see was a line of policemen, and behind them a small crowd of Born chanting and shaking signs. Some of the signs were large enough we could read them all the way in the classroom:

Stop the Slaughter of Babies!!

Every Unborn Is A Person!!

Every Unborn Is Alive!!

Unborn are Persons Too!!

Legal Abortion Is Still Murder!!

You Have The Right To Live!!

All Humans Are Persons!!

Stand Up for Your Right to Life!!

Stop the Slaughter of the Unborn!!

The teachers didn't give up. "See those signs? Those signs are nothing but lies, and just prove what violent, thoughtless, murderous people those protestors are."

I don't know how we were supposed to see the signs when we weren't allowed to look at them. As the clock ticked closer to class time, everyone found their way back to their seats. We didn't want to get caught peering out the window at a bunch of terrorist murderers.

I decided to write Summer a short note. But when I handed it to her, she just stuffed it in her pocket. She was hanging on the words of Myron, one of the other boys in the class.

Myron was whispering to everyone about how he had met one of the protestors downtown. "So there I was, just enjoying a soda, when I thought I recognized someone outside at the bus stop. I walked over and said, 'Hi, don't I know you?'"

"He said no, and looked puzzled. But I kept staring at him, and finally it came to me. He was one of the protestors. So of course I thought to myself, here's our chance to ask some questions."

"You don't know me, but I recognize you. You are one of those protestors that stand outside my school every day.' He looked around, and then seeing that no one was listening to us, he nodded."

"I asked him why do they do that. Why do they write such lies on their signs and cause so much trouble for us Unborns. He denied that they were lies. He said that the signs are true. He said, and you are not going to believe this, but he said that even Unborns are Persons. I just laughed at him."

"I said, 'We all know that isn't true. How can you say such things?'"

"Then the bus came, and he handed me his business card and said he

wanted to meet with me again so he could explain, if I was willing. So I called him last night, and he invited me over to his house to talk. He says that it isn't safe to talk anywhere public. I said sure, but that I was bringing a bunch of my friends just to keep everything on the up-and-up. So he said, no problem. So guess what, guys? We are going to a pizza party tonight!”

Summer and the girls didn't look too excited about going, but a bunch of the guys thought it would be a fun adventure. I was surprised that I wanted to go, too. Oh, well, it couldn't be too bad, as long as MPS didn't see us. I would have to make sure they weren't watching this guy's house before I went in. Maybe I would even get to spend some extra time with Summer.

Later, I trailed behind the group, walking on the other side of the street. I was the official lookout. If I spotted any MPS investigators, then I would wave everyone off and they would continue on down the block to the pizza parlor. I didn't see anyone on foot, and I kept peering into parked cars, looking for undercover MPS officers. I didn't see anything, but I still felt like a spy. When we reached the corner where the turnoff was, Myron looked back at me, and I nodded to him that everything was okay.

I caught up as everyone was going in the protestor's house. The man wasn't alone. There were a couple of other protestors there, too. At first, I was concerned that it was an MPS trap and we would be raided any second. But Summer squeezed my hand and whispered, “Isn't this fun!” After digging into the tofu-roni pizza and chatting for awhile, Myron and the protestors started talking seriously. I just sat back and listened.

Myron asked again, “Why do you do your protesting? We all know that the things you say aren't true. So why are you terrorists?”

One of the women protestors leaned forward, “They have labeled us as terrorists because they are terrified of the truth that we are speaking. Not because we are violent. We aren't. We want to save lives, but they accuse us of the very things that they are guilty of, violence and murder.”

Myron shrugged his shoulders, “What violence? What murder?”

The man nodded, "Abortion is murder."

One of the other teenagers jumped in, "Abortion isn't murder. Abortion is a mother's choice. An Unborn isn't yet alive. It's not yet a Person. It's not murder to abort an Unborn."

One of the female protestors sighed with a sad smile, "That is what they teach you in school, isn't it?"

But Summer didn't keep her mouth shut, "Yes, it is. We don't know anything else. Only what they have taught us is true."

The man continued, "What the State teaches as Truth, and what is the Truth, are rarely the same thing."

The woman went on, "If you are not alive, then how can I be sitting here talking to you?"

The teenagers didn't have an answer. Summer looked thoughtful, "If we don't want to die, does that mean that we are alive?"

The woman nodded grimly, "Certainly. Do any of you want to die?"

The teenagers all shook their heads and I muttered, "Not really."

The man went on, "There are other ways to know if someone is alive. What if they are in a coma? They aren't thinking right then about not dying, but still they are alive and deserve to live. What about a baby before Entrance? We don't know when a baby starts thinking, but don't you think that the baby is alive, and if given a choice would want to live?"

One of the girls answered, "But that is it. That's why pre-Entrance babies and Unborns are not alive. We don't know what we want. And we won't know until we are fully developed if we want to be alive, or if we even deserve to be alive. So that is why it's okay to abort us. We aren't developed enough yet."

The woman answered, "Well, don't you think that every Unborn should be given the chance to fully develop then? How can you know if you want to be alive, if you are not given the opportunity to become alive?"

Summer answered, "It's not our Choice. It's our mother's Choice. It's up to her."

They talked animatedly for a couple of more hours. Most of the Unborn kept their thoughts to themselves, but Myron clearly appeared to be enjoying himself.

Afterwards, Summer and her girlfriends walked home on their own in a little knot, talking animatedly. I trailed behind and felt left out. I tried to watch for MPS agents, but now I was just tired. Then Summer dropped back and walked next to me. "Geoff, we've agreed to not go back. It's too risky, and if we get caught even thinking such things, they might abort us, too."

Summer gave a shiver, and Geoff said, "I think we are okay tonight. I haven't seen anyone. But there are so many cars, and you know that the MPS agents are always watching. Sooner or later we will be caught, so I agree with you. Let's just stay away from the whole thing.

And we did, until Myron brought it all up again in class one day.

Chapter 9

Myron's Last Chance

That day in class, before the teacher got there, Myron was whispering to everyone, “Today is the day! Today we are filing my lawsuit! The protestors are helping me. They are paying all of the legal bills.”

“Aren't you taking an awful chance? Won't they just abort you?”

“No, they can't abort me while I am suing. I will be protected. For awhile, at least.”

Summer asked, “What are you talking about?”

Myron explained, “I am going to sue my parents for the right to be Born. The protestors are helping me, and they have their own lawyers. Just think, if we can win the right to be Born, then we can't be aborted.”

“When do you find out the result?”

“Oh, it will take awhile. Weeks and months they say. The law never moves fast.”

Myron continued, “One day I won't be in class because I will have to go down and appear in court.”

One of the girls asked again, “But why? What chance do you have now? Now the teachers will just come after you!”

“No. I have to take my chances. The doctors just found out that I have leukemia. My parents are already discussing what to do. The lawsuit is the only chance I have. They will definitely abort me anyway. So what do I have to lose?”

“I am going to sue them for the right to be Born. The right to become a Person. Otherwise, they will abort me because of my leukemia.”

I watched Summer squeeze Myron's hand, “I hope you win!” I could see Summer was afraid that Myron would lose. And if Myron

lost, they would abort him, too.

Then the teacher came in, but Summer didn't seem to notice. She was off in a dreamland again.

“Summer, answer the question!” The teacher was impatient. Summer had no idea what the question was. “What was the question again?” With a snort, the teacher said, “Pay attention! The question is, 'Why is the Right to Choose the most important right that a mother has?’”

I could see that Summer wasn't ready to answer, so I jumped in and parroted out loud what we had been taught for years, “The Right to Choose is the most important right that a mother has because without the Right to Choose, a mother is a slave to her Unborn and cannot have any freedom to do as she desires. Nothing must ever be allowed to interfere with a mother's right to live her life as she pleases, without being burdened by Unborn.”

The teacher gave Summer a look, but then looked at me, “That's right, Geoff. And it is the job of Mother Protective Services to protect the right of a mother to choose.

For awhile we forgot about Myron and the protestors. There were so many tests and evaluations that we had to pass, and they took our full attention sometimes.

Chapter 10

Phys Ed Test

Most of the kids hated the annual physical education test. But it didn't bother me. I was tall and strong, and the phys ed test was a breeze for me. It was a pass or fail test. If you failed, your mother received a strong recommendation for an abortion. And the principal was not known to take no for an answer. Although, I wasn't as tall and strong as the phys ed coach, who looked like a Greek god, tall, blonde, fit, and buff. He was also very arrogant, and had a way of being persuasive with the mothers. I just stayed away from him, but always basked in the smiles of approval that he gave me and the other bigger boys.

The test was fairly straight forward. A few calisthenics, pushups, situps, chinups, and then a two mile run. It was important that all Born be good physical fitness specimens. As far back as anyone could remember, every annual phys ed class resulted in more disappearances. Everyone that was left this year would have no trouble with the phys ed test, except for Mary.

Chubby Mary. Mary had always had a struggle with her weight. She wasn't obese. She just had too much fat. Mary was always talking about her latest diet and exercise program. But nothing ever worked for her. Her mother was a perfect physical specimen. Her mother also claimed that she had been chubby at Mary's age, but had worked all of it off by the time she was Born. That was the only reason she still gave Mary a chance, when most of the mothers would have already given up.

I watched Summer and Kara bump into Mary and wrap their arms around her. "We are going to help you today. No one is going to fail this test today. Especially you. Everyone passes today. Everyone."

Mary sniffed, "How can you help me? You can't do my exercises for me."

Kara smiled, "No, but we can be there every step of the way and encourage you."

Summer squeezed her arm, “You won't be alone. We won't leave you.”

Mary teared up, “Don't fail on my account. It's not fair. I'm just not good enough. I try so hard, but it is never good enough.”

Summer shook her head, “No, don't think like that. You are good enough. You can do it. You don't have to be the fastest or win. All you have to do is finish it and pass.”

The coach blew his whistle, “Listen up, you Unborns. Today is the annual physical education test to determine if you are fit enough to measure up to Born standards. You have all taken this test before. If you don't pass the test, then you will fail. Failure bears a high consequence.... abortion!”

The tanned, blonde, god-like coach looked disdainfully at all of the Unborn. “Personally, I don't care if any of you pass. You all look like a bunch of weak, pathetic, pasty-skinned, lazy couch potatoes to me. I would love to send a failure notice to every single one of your mothers.”

Arrogantly, the coach went on, “When I was an Unborn, not a single one of you would have made the cut. You boys all look like the stick figures we drew in art class in kindergarten. You girls all look like you couldn't lift a book to crack it's cover. You should take pride in what you look like. None of you look like gods or goddesses to me.”

“Line up. Let's go. Pushups are first. One at a time so that I can make sure that you are not cheating.”

I jostled with the rest of the boys to go first so I could show off to the girls and the other boys just how strong I was. I breezed through the pushups with no problems, and turned and smiled at Summer while I popped off the pushups without even breaking a sweat. I couldn't help smiling at Summer again. Summer grinned weakly. She had yet to go.

When it was her turn, Summer made it through her pushups, but not as easily as I had. But Summer was a girl, so it wasn't a big deal. Then Kara went, and she was okay. The coach called Mary up.

Mary was shaking and sweating, and she hadn't even done a pushup yet.

Coach looked at her, “Did you start without me, Mary? Looks like you have already done a few hundred pushups. No matter. You will have to do them again for me.”

Shaking, Mary dropped and began counting them off. Summer and Kara knelt on each side of Mary and kept calling to her and encouraging her. Slowly, Mary's resolve built, and she pushed through them and finished.

Coach didn't say anything, but made a note on his pad, and gave Summer and Kara an evil look.

Slowly everyone else finished their situps and chinups. Everyone passed, even Mary, but Mary looked completely spent and ready to collapse. The coach's mood had gone from arrogant to surly. He enjoyed failing students, and hadn't been able to fail anyone yet.

Calling everyone together, the coach barked, “Next, and last, is the two mile run. You have to pass this run.” He glared at everyone then continued, “Everyone runs at the same time. Even if you passed everything else, if you fail the run, you fail the entire test. But this is also an elimination round. The last person to finish the run is automatically eliminated. Even if you pass the time portion, but you are last, then you will be eliminated.”

This was new. There had never been an elimination round before. But we were used to the teachers changing the rules. Anything that would give them an advantage if they wanted to abort someone. And the coach was clearly determined to abort Mary today.

The coach was looking directly at Mary, but she never took her eyes off of the ground. Then coach pulled his starter pistol out of his pocket and waved it around. “Go on! Line up! Let's get this started.”

I stood right up front. Everyone knew not to get in my way. But Summer and Mary and Kara stood towards the back. Mary stood with her chest heaving, trying to suck in air. She still hadn't

recovered from the chinups. That was one of the reasons I always tried to go first. It gave you more time to recover before the next exercise. Summer and Kara were passing worried looks. “Come on, Mary. Get ready. You can do it. We will be right next to you all of the way.”

BANG!

I was startled. I had been looking at Summer. But when the starter pistol rang out, I turned and streaked off like a rabbit. Within three steps I was in front of everyone again. After a few more steps I turned and look back over my shoulder. Mary was just standing there. Summer and Kara grabbed her arms and pulled her into a staggering run. The coach stood with his arms folded and eyes narrowed as they struggled past him, dead last.

“Go, Mary, go. We aren't going to leave you. If you don't pass, then we won't pass either.”

Mary looked like she was trying. But she was also out of breath and struggling.

I breezed around the track and every time I lapped them, I could see Summer constantly giving Mary encouragement, as the three of them struggled around the track together.

I kept glancing at the countdown clock on the scoreboard, not for my time, but so I could figure out whether or not they would make it. They were slow, and just barely making the pace time.

Everyone else finished the race and we were all standing by the finish line, which the coach was straddling. Summer and Mary and Kara slowly approach the line, but they still had one more lap to go.

The coach started taunting them, “You can't do it. Give up now so I can just fail you now and go to lunch early. This is un-be-liev-able!”

They crossed the line. One lap to go. I was getting really worried about Summer now. It would be close, so I jogged up behind Summer and Mary and Kara, “You're doing good. You can finish. Don't give up now.”

Then the other students were following behind me. Casting worried glances at the coach as they passed him, they all fell in with Summer and Mary and Kara and began to yell encouragement. Mary's resolve was growing. Her head came up, and she kept pushing. Slowly, the crowd became a team and began chanting encouragement, "You can do it! Yes you can!"

"Ma-ry! Ma-ry! Ma-ry!"

I was only thinking about Summer, but I chanted "Ma-ry!" with everyone else.

We finally rounded the final corner and approached the finish line, with only seconds left on the clock. I was screaming inside. I was running next to Summer and grabbed her arm and started screaming, "Go! Go! Go!" I didn't think they would make it, but Summer and Mary and Kara crossed the finish line with only five seconds to spare.

I was shaking and relieved. That had been harder than my own run. My heart was thumping in my chest and I tried to calm down. I couldn't believe how close I had come to losing Summer.

The coach stood with his arms crossed. When the team didn't stop whooping and hollering and celebrating, the coach pulled out his whistle and blew it continuously until everyone shut up. Then he stomped over and stood in front of Mary, with his arms still crossed.

Summer instinctively grabbed Mary's arm. The coach was obviously furious. "You still failed. You were still the last one to cross the finish line. Actually, all three of you were. You are tied failures."

I didn't like the sound of that.

Mary finally found a voice, "No! They didn't fail. They were just helping me. They would have been much faster without me."

The coach sneered, "THAT is exactly the problem. You were a burden to them, and you held them back. Just like you will always be a burden and hold everyone back. No Unborn should ever be a burden."

Summer butted in, “No! We finished together.” I was shaking my head at Summer trying to get her to shut up, but she wouldn't. “She wasn't last. And she wasn't a burden. Mary passed the test. She's good!”

We all watched the argument in silence and dread. There had never before been an elimination round on the physical education test. We really had no idea how this would end.

The coach started to get apoplectic, “She didn't do it on her own, therefore it doesn't count!”

Mary collapsed on the ground and just sat down hunched over, breathing hard.

Summer still stood next to Mary, with Kara on the other side, and they both put their hands protectively on Mary's shoulders.

The girls on the team started a chant, and then the boys joined in, “Ma-ry! Ma-ry! Ma-ry!”

The coach pulled his starter pistol out and began waving it around and yelling, “The only thing that counts is winning, and to win, you have to be the best.”

“Mary is not the best, she is a poor excuse for an Unborn. She must be aborted. Is she going to go through her Born life with other people carrying her and pushing her along?”

“Is Mary always going to be a burden on society?”

“Is Mary always going to be a burden on me?”

“NO! Mary failed, and the price of failure in my class is abortion.”

The coach put his starter pistol right up to Mary's forehead. He forced her head back until she was looking up at him. Then he pulled the trigger.

BANG!

Not a thud, but a bang.

A hole appeared in Mary's forehead and her brains sprayed out the

back.

Blood and brain matter sprayed Summer and Kara who stood there in complete shock.

Coach waved the gun with a big smile, “See? It's not always a starter pistol. I was ready for you today.”

“Some abortions are clean, and some abortions are messy. This one was messy.”

“Now everyone go hit the showers and get cleaned up for your next class.”

One of the kids timorously asked, “What about Mary?”

Coach replied, “Don't worry about it. Yard maintenance will clean up the mess. Now go. Hit those showers. I still have five rounds left.”

The coach gave Summer and Kara speculative looks as they slowly started to move off. I grabbed Summer's arm again and started to pull her along. I had had enough of this. That could have been Summer's brains on the track, too. I whispered to Summer, “You tried. You really tried. Now just try to stay alive yourself. There is nothing more you can do for Mary.”

Summer gave me a weak smile and I could feel that she was wobbling on her feet and ready to pass out, but I held her up and propelled her out of there as fast as I could.

That day I swore to myself I would never let Summer endanger herself for another Unborn again. It was a senseless waste of time, and way too risky. Just staying alive yourself was difficult. I really wanted Summer to survive. I had plans for the two of us.

Chapter11

Myron's Day in Court

I always sat in the back of the classroom, and whenever Summer would walk in, I would give her a big goofy smile. Summer usually smiled back and blushed. The Unborns avoided personal relationships as it was just too painful if one half of a couple was aborted. Besides, the teachers frowned on it. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with an Unborn's education and preparation to become Born. Not even a boyfriend or girlfriend. There would be plenty of time in College, after being Born, for such things.

But I had plans for the two of us. I planned to go to College one day with Summer, and after College even get married. It didn't make any logical sense to have such plans. But every year my plans became clearer and clearer to me. I just hoped that one day I could share them with Summer. Actually, I would have to if we were to make it work.

So I played it cool and slow. Just smiles and friendly notes. I knew that Summer considered me her friend. As long as she never considered any other boy her boyfriend, I was content to wait.

One day Myron came to school looking paler than normal. Paler than his leukemia had been making him. The excitement had gone out of Myron. Now he just sat in the back of the class, fidgeted nervously, and whispered the story.

“So I wore my best suit and I met with the lawyers and they took me into the courtroom. We had to wait because there was a case in front of us. There was a lawyer standing there with a dog. I didn't understand why the dog was there until they started.”

“The judge called everything to order and called the first case. It was the case before mine. Funny, but it turns out that the dog was the one doing the suing. It was so hilarious. The judge would ask a question, then the lawyer would turn and growl at the dog, and the dog would growl back, and then the lawyer would answer the judge.”

“It was just a preliminary hearing for that case, just like it was a preliminary hearing for my case.”

“So the owner of the dog had his own lawyer and was fighting his dog, who was suing him because the dog didn't like the food he was getting. The owner claimed that the dog couldn't sue him because the dog didn't have 'standing'.”

“It's kind of confusing, but apparently if you don't have 'standing' then you can't sue someone. They even have rules about who can or cannot sue.” Myron just shook his head and was silent for a minute.

“Anyway, the judge seemed to be impatient with the dog's owner's lawyer. He shut him down and told him, 'Yes, the dog can sue you. I rule that the dog has standing, and therefore is legally qualified to sue you because dogs are Persons too, and they have their rights.’”

“The judge then set a court date for the trial for the dog's owner.”

“Next, me and my lawyer were called up. My lawyer explained my case. That I was suing for the right to be Born because my parents had decided to abort me because I have leukemia.”

“Then the judge asked the lawyer, 'What standing does your client have?’”

“My lawyer stammered, and didn't seem to be able to answer the judge.”

“The judge interrupted him and demanded, 'Is your client a Person? What standing does your client have?’”

“My lawyer answered that while under the law I was not a Person, but that anyone looking at me could see that I was a Person and I should be granted the human right to have my case heard.”

“Then the judge got angry. 'How dare you fill my courtroom with this nonsense. Your client has not been Born yet, and therefore is not a Person. Your client has no standing. I am dismissing this lawsuit, and furthermore, I am ordering that no more legal shenanigans will be allowed to interfere with the right of the client's mother to choose an abortion.’”

“It is a settled issue of LAW that an Unborn is not a Person and does not have the right to be Born. No Unborn has the right to be Born. That is purely the mother's choice. I sincerely hope that this mother chooses to abort this offspring immediately as it is clearly too much trouble.”

“And as for you, counselor, if I ever see you in my court again with such a frivolous lawsuit, I will have you disbarred and locked up for the rest of your natural life.”

“Now get out of my courtroom.”

“So we left. And here I am. I just wanted to come to school and say goodbye to all of you and tell you what happened. I think that my parents are in the principal's office right now.”

Comforting hands reached out for Myron. The other boys shook his hand, and the girls gave him hugs or pats, including Summer. I just hung back. Everyone had known that this day was coming. An Unborn with leukemia, or cancer, or any of those dreadful diseases was always aborted. It cost too much to take care of them, it was too much of a burden on society, and the teachers always said it was for the best anyway. The abortion saved the sick Unborn a lot of suffering.

What Myron had done was a waste of time and endangered the rest of the Unborn. I didn't agree with him. Once he knew he had leukemia, he should have just accepted his abortion with grace and dignity. I hope that no one had written down in a file that he and Summer were friends. That would always count against her.

The teacher finally walked in and looked at the Unborns gathered around Myron disapprovingly. “Come, Myron. We need to go to the principal's office.”

Myron stood up, and touched everyone he could. After going a couple of feet, he turned around and looked at everyone, “So it was good knowing you guys. I'll see you on the other side. Hopefully not for a long while.” Always quick to tell a joke, Myron finished, “Although I hear that only Persons are allowed in Heaven.” With a rueful smile he shambled out the door and down the hall.

I sat in the back and watched Summer. She was clearly upset. So I sent her a note, “Calm down and look normal.” She glanced back at me and gave me a wry smile and seemed to calm down. I was glad. Summer was always risking her own neck for another Unborn who couldn't be saved. I felt sorry for Myron too, but it was what it was, and the cards had dealt him a bad hand. Leukemia. Myron never had a chance.

Chapter 12

Back to Science Class

“Results, people! Results!”

Professor Science was impassioned and energetic today. Summer and I widened our eyebrows at each other, but settled back to listen. Science was too important and interesting to be passing notes. It was enough that we both loved science and enjoyed it together.

“Science is a valuable tool only as long as it reports honestly and dispassionately what the results are. Most science is twisted around to satisfy the agenda of one group or another. This is usually the group with the most money because they are the ones that can fund the research. Remember, to these people, it doesn't matter what the results are if you can dictate what the conclusions will be.”

“I don't care about the conclusions. Look at the results. They will tell you the truth.”

“And today is the day of truth. Today we will test everyone's balsa model bridges. I know that most of you have concluded that your model is the best model, and will hold the most load. But will your conclusions match your results? Will your design actually work? Or will it fail?”

Professor Science had set up at the front of the classroom a special apparatus, a structure testing device. The professor called the first study partners up, and they carefully set up their bridge and then began loading it up. Every time they added weight, the professor would have the partners write it down. After a bit, the bridge began to show the strain, and everyone waited expectantly until it suddenly broke.

Professor Science looked over the partners' data, “Please go ahead and announce your results.”

The partners told us that the bridge had passed... barely. It broke shortly after it passed the minimum requirements set by Professor Science. Professor Science remarked, “These are good results. A good conclusion would be that the bridge will work, as long as the

trucks obey the load limit signs. As soon as you get the first trucker that ignores the load limit signs, then the bridge will fail. A bad and wishful conclusion would be that the bridge will work under any load, when obviously it has it's limits.”

As the next set of partners were setting up their bridge, the principal came in and watched the progress. After their bridge eventually broke, the principal butted in, “When are you going to get back to the real teaching? This has nothing to do with reproduction or genetics. This is useless information. If the state needs anyone to know this stuff, it will teach them in College. Please tell me that you are not going to waste more than one class on this. You need to get back to teaching these Unborn their place in the world.”

Professor Science just looked at the principal mildly. I would have been mad. I was mad. Why wouldn't the principal let us learn anything real? “Mr. Principal, I do believe that this lesson is applicable. I am teaching the Unborn what happens if they do not measure up to the minimum standards set by the state. The result is an abortion, as graphically demonstrated by the failure of the bridge.”

The principal did not look like he really understood what the professor was saying, but it sounded good, and had the right buzz words in it, so he thanked Professor Science and left.

Professor Science turned to us, “Sadly, that is true. If you do not meet the minimum standards you will be aborted. What the state forgets is that we are all human beings. All humans beings are imperfect and do make mistakes. Humans are not bridges, and we do not have to be infallible. We should be allowed to make mistakes. That is part of how we learn and grow as Persons. Everyone passes this class today, regardless of how well your bridge does, because even if your bridge fails, you will still have learned from that failure and will grow as a Person.”

“Then again, the principal doesn't want you to be Persons. But one day, he may drive across a bridge that one of you will have designed and built, and he better hope that you were paying attention in my class, or the result will be the principal floating downstream in his

car.”

Everyone laughed, and the professor called me and Summer up to demonstrate our bridge. Before we started, he asked for our conclusion. “I sure hope it works!” I said, eager to find out if I had a future as a bridge engineer. Summer looked at me, “Me, too!”

Chapter 13

Creative Writing Assignment

The language arts teacher hummed to herself as she passed out the assignment sheets. Smiling brightly, she clapped her hands, “You all will just love this creative writing assignment.”

“Today you are going to write a short essay, here in class. This essay is a test of not only your ability to write something in a short period of time using the correct grammar and punctuation, but also of your ability to think.”

I groaned and heard Summer snicker. The teacher spun around, but couldn't see that it was me and Summer, so she went on, “This is an imaginary, fantasy scenario. You have been Born for 15 years and now have offspring of your own. Your offspring have not lived up to your expectations. Please write in detail why you have decided to abort your offspring.”

“Since none of you can possibly know what it is like to be a Born Person, you will have to use your imaginations. But the best writing is always based upon reality. Therefore, on the papers in front of you, I have written down the name of one of your classmates. This classmate is going to be your imaginary offspring, and the one you will write about explaining your decision to abort this defective, unsuitable burden of an offspring.”

I turned my paper over, winced and sucked in my breath. Summer's name was written at the top of my paper. Why couldn't it have been someone else's name, like Tad the Tadpole's? Summer looked over at me so I held my paper up at a slight angle so she could see. Summer just smiled and shrugged. She wasn't taking it seriously. What I wanted to do was write about how much I liked Summer, but that was none of the teacher's business anyway.

Summer turned her paper over and looked at the name on her paper and sighed.

The teacher said, “You may begin.”

I fiddled around and finally started. I didn't try very hard. I didn't

want to convince anyone why they should abort Summer. So I just wrote a bunch of nonsense that she was too beautiful to live and made everyone jealous and should be aborted. I didn't think that anyone would buy my argument.

Summer was chewing on her pencil. She glanced over at Tad, as I was watching her out of the corner of my eye. Obviously, she had been given Tad's name. She sighed again. I could tell Summer wasn't enjoying this any more than I was, even if it was only Tad the Tadpole. She shook her head, and put her pencil back to the paper.

The teacher said, "Your time is up. Please turn your papers over and leave them on your desk."

Summer turned and gave Tadpole a bright smile. I was jealous, but she was probably feeling guilty. Thankfully, no one ever read our papers except the teacher. I felt guilty about what I had written about Summer, too.

As we were leaving and pushing through the door, Summer grabbed my elbow. "So what did you write about me?" I winced again. "I would rather not say. I had to make everything up." I palmed a note into Summer's hand, "But this is what I really feel!" It's what I had spent most of the class writing.

Summer smiled at me and peeled off to the bathroom to read my note.

I had written:

"Even if you are an Unborn, I still love you.
Even if your eyes are brown, not blue, I still love you.
Even if your hair is brown, not blonde, I still love you.
Even if you are thin, not fat, I still love you.
Even if your mind is sharp, not curvy, I still love you.
Even if you are a girl, not a Person, I still love you.
Even if you are an Unborn, I still love you."

I hoped she liked it, but I could hardly follow her into the bathroom to watch her read it.

The following day, Summer was pretending to be reading her

schoolwork, but I could see that she had my poem tucked away into her notebook and she was reading that instead.

The bell rang and the teacher clapped her hands. Summer put her note away and glanced up. I slouched back in my chair.

“I’m disappointed to announce that most of you failed your writing assignments. Summer is the only one to get an A+ on yesterday’s assignment. She is the only one who’s essay convinced the mother that the right thing to do was to have an abortion.”

“Everyone else got an F because you failed to convince the mother of your Unborn.”

“Congratulations, Summer! We are so proud of you.”

“As an example of what you should be writing, I am going to read it to you now:”

I was startled. Our essays usually didn’t get read in class out loud. I looked over at Summer, along with everyone else. Summer was clearly mortified. She was turning beet red, and was shaking.

The teacher continued.

“Why I have chosen to abort my offspring, Tad.”

“Tad is a weird boy. Tad wears glasses. Tad is a geek. When Tad talks, it sound like fingernails on a chalkboard. Nobody talks to Tad because it hurts their ears to listen to him. But Tad’s glasses keep him from seeing everyone laughing at him.”

“Tad is not a Greek god. Tad is not a dreamboat. Tad is not an Unborn you look up to. Tad is spindly and thin.”

“Tad’s voice is enough to drive anyone to having an abortion.”

“That is why I am choosing an abortion. I am tired of listening to Tad the Tadpole’s awful voice. If I don’t abort Tad, then I might commit suicide.”

The teacher stopped and looked triumphantly around the room, beaming with pride.

“That was some of the best writing I have ever read. And it did exactly what creative writing is supposed to do. It persuades the reader of the truth of what the author is saying. Your readers were the mothers. Each of your essays was sent by email to the mother of the Unborn that you wrote about.”

Summer looked like she wanted to crawl under her desk. She glanced over at me, but I couldn't look at her anymore. I wanted to crawl under my desk, too. What if the teacher read my essay about Summer out loud? Would she ever forgive me? Although what I wrote couldn't have been too bad because Summer was still here, unaborting. But Tad was gone. Summer's essay had gotten Tad aborted.

We were all looking around and counting heads, and the only kid missing from class was Tad the tadpole. Maybe the teacher wouldn't read my essay after all.

Summer looked mortified and crushed. She told me later that she had never experienced guilt like this. She had killed an innocent boy just to pass a class. Clearly guilt-ridden, Summer looked around at the rest of the class, looking for understanding and forgiveness.

The other kids were pointedly looking away from Summer. I was caught in the middle. The unspoken rule was that the Unborns were not supposed to do anything that might get another Unborn aborted. Summer had definitely crossed that line. She shouldn't have been so creative. Then maybe Tad would still be sitting in his seat. Tad wasn't anyone's friend, but he was still an Unborn, and that mattered more than anything else. I wanted to reach out to Summer, but I couldn't, so I just kept my mouth shut and stared miserably at the desk. Now my cute little note to Summer was wasted.

Nobody talked to Summer for the rest of the day. Not even me. I felt guilty about that. But being an Unborn is hard. One has to think every day about surviving. And we had rules, unspoken rules. Summer had broken one of them. The teachers didn't need our help in aborting us. They did enough of it on their own.

I didn't know what to think. I knew that Summer hadn't meant for Tad to really get aborted. Could an Unborn do anything that didn't

get themselves or another Unborn aborted? How did anyone ever become Born?

I had no choice, I just let her wallow in her guilt and sorrow. I really didn't understand how she felt. But I do now, after all these years, and what would happen between me and Summer later on. But still, one had to go along to get along, to live another day, so no, I really couldn't understand why she was taking it so hard. It was what it was. She didn't abort Tad. The teacher and the mother did.

But still, I was glad that I hadn't done a very good job on my writing assignment about Summer.

Chapter 14

The Girlfriend

I moved my seat so that I was now sitting where Tad used to sit. It was a common practice. Any time that an Unborn died, someone would claim their seat, if they had a better seat. And every seat was better than some other seat.

I just wanted to sit next to Summer. Then I could hand her notes directly, and they wouldn't have to pass through other people's hands. It was also easier to gaze at her covertly.

So, like any other history class, while the teacher droned on and on, I pretended to take notes, but most of my notes were intended for Summer, and with her right next to me, we could pass more notes. Not that we were the only ones. As soon as the teacher would turn her back on the classroom and look at the board, there would be a flurry of notes passing around. A name would be written on the outside of a folded note, and the note would make it's way hand over hand to the intended.

This is why the seat next to Summer was so important. It guaranteed that each time I passed a note, it would reach Summer immediately, and not be waiting on someone else's desk until the teacher turned around again. We had to be careful. One year in class, a student's note was intercepted by the teacher, who proceeded, like a witch, to read that note out loud to the whole class, and then sent the kid down to the principal's office, never to be seen again.

I was sweating over this new note. It was different. I was making a commitment. I was asking the question.

“Sweet beautiful Summer, warm and friendly as a summer's day, will you be my girlfriend? Geoff”

I carefully folded the note, palmed it, and waited until Miss History was looking in a different direction. Then quickly, I passed it to Summer, deliberately letting my hand linger on hers. Her skin was so smooth, and it sent chills up my spine.

I ignored the lecture. We had all heard the lectures so many times.

“Repetition, repetition, repetition, is the kill to good learning!” I thought it was just boring, but since I could probably give the lecture myself, word for word, I could afford to ignore it.

So I concentrated all of my senses on watching Summer unfold my note and read it. Summer's hands shook slightly, but I couldn't tell what she was thinking. Then she began scribbling quickly and folded up her note back to me.

This time she let her fingers linger on mine. I was hopeful. Maybe it wasn't a rejection. I unfolded the note.

“Strong Geoff, who better to share a summer's day with? Yes I will be your girlfriend.”

I couldn't help myself. I smiled a big smile and turned and looked directly at her for a few seconds and we gazed into each other's eyes. Then I had to look away before we got caught.

It wouldn't do for us to get aborted on our first day together.

Chapter 15

My Secret Spot

Now that Summer was my secret girlfriend, I decided to show her my secret spot. Today we didn't walk through the park together, but took another road home. A road that passed the old cemetery down by where the church used to stand. The church had been torn down because no “House of Hatred” could be allowed to stand, but the cemetery had been left alone, out of respect for the old dead.

Except that the Unborn never walked down the road that the cemetery was on. It was considered bad luck. That is where my grandpa was buried. I didn't really know my grandpa, but my father took me there once a year. I only had a couple of memories of my grandpa, but my father remembered him, and every year we would go to grandpa's tomb in the family mausoleum, and father and I would sit with our backs against the cold stone while father told me stories about a man I wish I had known.

That's how I knew that there were no MPS cameras or surveillance at the cemetery. And since the Unborn considered the cemetery bad luck, and never went near it, there were never any MPS agents around there either. If I ever was stopped or questioned by anyone, well, that's where the family mausoleum was, and I was just visiting my grandpa.

As we turned down the road the cemetery was on, Summer stopped, and wouldn't move.

“It's okay, Summer. I walk home on this road all the time. It's not bad luck. It's good luck because there are never any MPS agents on this road.”

She just shook her head and her eyes darted around in fear. Finally I talked her into it, and slowly we set off down towards the cemetery.

At the front of the cemetery, I had to talk for ten minutes before Summer consented to enter with me. Gradually we walked to the back, and I pointed out the tombs and gravestones of famous or just interesting people. When we reached the family mausoleum, I

walked Summer all the way around it and told her about it.

Then we slipped inside, and after a couple of minutes of respect for grandpa, his wife, and all the rest of the family, I sat down on the stone, leaned back, and relaxed as the familiar coolness seeped into my bones. Funny how the only safe place I knew of was in a tomb.

Summer hesitated and then finally sat down next to me. She sat up rigidly for awhile, as if it would be bad to lean against the stone. We talked and talked. Like we had never talked before. I don't even remember about what. And it doesn't matter. All that matters is that we could talk freely and openly without worrying about getting overheard or judged on what we said.

Gradually, she relaxed and set her books down and leaned back against the stone with me. Neither of us had ever experienced anything like this before. But like all good things, it had to end. Finally, I stood up. "I guess we have to go." She just nodded. Suddenly, I turned, took her chin in my hand, and kissed her full on the lips. Then we just gazed at each other in wonder before gathering our stuff in embarrassment and making our way out of the cemetery to our separate houses.

Summer and I returned to the family tomb many times after that. Sometimes together. Sometimes we would meet. And sometimes alone.

It was the best secret spot in the world, and I was glad to share it with Summer.

Chapter 16

Months Later

Miss Civics droned on: “That is all we have time to cover today, but always remember, the State can never allow anything to interfere with a mother's right to choose.”

We never talked or passed notes in Miss Civics' class. Everyone knew that she would write up a report recommending an abortion at the slightest whiff of a reason.

In the hallway, we whispered and carried on during our way to the next class.

One of the other boys said, “Hey, if we don't get aborted this afternoon, do you want to go get a pizza after school?”

One of the girls smirked back, “If I was your mother, I would abort you just for wanting to eat that junk. Tofu-roni? Please!”

Laughter, “Who cares? What are the odds any of us will live long enough to die of a heart attack, anyway?”

“I'm in.”

Summer said, “Me, too. We might as well celebrate another day of not being aborted.”

I just wanted to go to our secret spot and hang out alone with Summer and maybe sneak another kiss. But clearly Summer was excited about going to the pizza parlor, so I had no choice.

“I guess I'm in,” I sighed, “meet you down there.”

Chapter 17

The Pizza Parlor

After school, we began to show up at the pizza parlor one at a time. It was nearly empty, being too early for the late crowd, but most of the mothers with young Unborns had already left. The pizza parlor was a relic of a bygone era. A time when people believed in spending money on their Unborns, and didn't view them as unnecessary burdens. The old man who ran the place kept the machines running as best he could. Although it was the indoor playground that most of the mothers of young Unborns came to use in the middle of the afternoon, being too cheap to actually put tokens in the machines. The teenagers took over in the evenings until 8, when the pizza parlor closed an hour before curfew.

We took up several tables in the corner, and began to hit the pizza buffet and play the arcade games. A feeling of euphoria and defiance passed through the group faster than an electric current, and we quickly became raucous and unruly. It even overwhelmed me, and for once Summer was having a good time, so I relaxed and joined in. The problem was that we were quickly out of control and forgot when to quiet back down.

We competed at telling Unborn jokes. Light jokes about being Unborn and getting aborted. We got louder and louder, and forgot all about the mothers with the young Unborns.

“If the principal slips on a banana peel, falls down and hits his head, and becomes unconscious for several weeks, does he become a non-contributing member of society who should be aborted?”

“Answer... only if he starts acting like an Unborn.”

“A chimpanzee and an Unborn were flying in a small plane when it crashed. The pilot was killed, but both the chimpanzee and the Unborn escaped the crash. Who will they send for the rescue? Will it be an AAPT rescue team? Or a metal salvage company for the plane wreckage?”

“Two business colleagues were talking at the water cooler and one

asked the other, how many children do you have? The first colleague replied, none, all five of my Unborn are under 18 and haven't been Born yet.”

“A mother told her mother, 'Mom, I think I need to have an abortion.' The grandmother replied, 'If only I could still have an abortion.’”

“The Unborn asked, 'Mom, do you want me to stop at the store on the way home from school?' The mother replied, 'Only if it's convenient for you.’”

“Why do abortion nurses have to be licensed? So they won't fall down, land on their cattle thuds, and accidentally abort themselves.”

“One Unborn says to another, 'oh, that I had never been fertilized.' 'Why?', asks the second Unborn. The first one replies, 'Then I wouldn't have to deal with this endless waiting to see if I will ever be Born.’”

“What does an abortion nurse do on vacation? Go to petting zoos.”

“Who gets to kill more? A secret agent? Or an abortion nurse? An abortion nurse, but they aren't as well paid.”

I noticed out of the corner of my eye that the last group of mothers with young Unborns, still sitting in the back, began to look distinctly uncomfortable, and visibly upset. Unnoticed, except by me, they called their young Unborns to them, and began whispering to them and getting them ready to go. I could see them arguing amongst themselves while giving us dirty looks. I strained to hear, but it didn't look good.

One of the teenage girls noticed the mothers watching us, glaring at us, and arguing amongst themselves. Getting uneasy she said, “Guys, I think we need to quiet down. We may have a problem.”

Only a couple of other teenagers looked around and glanced at the mothers. Seeing their complete lack of respect, one of the mothers pulled out a cell phone and began talking urgently on it. The girl whispered again urgently, “Guys, I really think we need to quiet down! Our problem is getting worse.”

Another mother spoke up, “Yes, you very definitely do have a problem.”

One of the boys turned to her, “What's it to you? We are just sitting here with our friends telling jokes and enjoying ourselves. We aren't bothering you. Why don't you just leave us alone?”

“Well.... I never heard an Unborn talk so disrespectfully in my life. And your jokes are horrible and crude. How can you say such awful things about the Born who care for you?”

With a snicker, “Because they are true.” Everyone laughed.

The mother on the cell phone clearly said, “We need several officers and abortion nurses here, right now!”

The old man, the owner, waddled over and began trying to settle everyone down. The third mother began berating him for letting such trash into his place and for not reporting them to the police himself.

The second mother began lecturing the teenage Unborns. “You have no right to speak the way that you are speaking. You are Unborn, and you are to be respectful at all times. Being aborted is the highest honor you can achieve at this point in your lives, and you act like it's a bad thing. You especially have no right to say these things in front of other younger Unborns. Unborns who are still innocent and stand a chance of growing up to be Born. They are not yet corrupted, but if you keep running your mouths, you will ruin them. You should all be aborted, right now. There is no way that you will turn out to be good Borns.”

The girls began shifting around and putting their things in their bags and trying to edge towards the door. One of the boys started gathering up trash and taking it over to the trash can. None of them spoke.

I was distinctly uncomfortable and couldn't stay in my seat any longer, so I drifted over by the front window. I didn't like what I was seeing. “Guys, now we really do have a problem, the cops are here.” Flashing lights began reflecting inside the pizza parlor. The owner

stood ringing his hands. He was only trying to preserve some of the old ways, not cause any Unborns to get aborted.

I stood frozen for a moment by the front window, then turned and ran past everyone yelling, "Quick, out the back door! Let's get out of here!"

I grabbed Summer's hand and dragged her from her chair. It fell over. The rest of the kids suddenly panicked and everyone started moving, shoving over tables and chairs and stampeding for the back door. The young Unborn mothers were in the way, and were unmercifully shoved as the stampede moved past them.

I was the first to reach the door. I ignored the warning signs, turned my body and slammed into the door, punching it open. The fire alarm went off, and everyone broke apart and ran in all directions.

I lost Summer's hand as she was pulled in a different direction by her girlfriends. I tried to go back, but there were too many bodies and too much confusion. I could hear MPS agents and mothers yelling inside.

I turned and ran. It was every Unborn for himself.

Unborns skedaddled in all directions, running through alleys, jumping fences, crawling under houses, bursting through stores. The MPS agents didn't stand a chance of catching us. We weren't just trying to keep from getting caught and going to jail, we were literally running for our lives. If we were caught...well, MPS agents were also abortion nurses. So they would solve the problem on the spot.

As we worked further and further away from the pizza parlor, the police helicopter swung into view over the parlor and began shining it's light about. Dogs were barking everywhere.

I ran as hard as I could.

Chapter 18

Cornered

I spun around the corner and my feet pounded the sidewalk. I was running so hard, that it felt like I didn't even have any shoes on. The concrete was hard and brutal against the soles of my feet.

As I ran along the front yard fences, further down the block I saw another kid, just walking along quietly, minding his own business. I thought about changing sides of the street real quick so I could avoid him, but I was running too fast to make up my mind.

It took only seconds and I was almost upon him.

I never saw the MPS agent. But I felt the heavy metal baton as it slammed into my stomach. The impact lifted me up off my feet and I fell backwards, hitting the sidewalk hard.

The MPS agent grabbed me by the hair on the back of my head and hauled me to my feet. He was very strong. I was gasping, trying to retch, and in deep pain, and he just held me up like I was a new tie.

The other agent had the other kid against the fence. I saw that out of the corner of my eye. I should have changed sides of the street. Now he was involved. My fault. Rule number 1: Never do anything to get another Unborn aborted.

The agents were yelling at both of us, and slowly my hearing started to clear and I began to understand them.

“Are you running from the pizza parlor?”

“Why are you out after curfew?” Even though we still had another half hour.

“What's your name, Unborn? Who are you?”

“How dare you try to run away from us! You will pay for this.”

“Is he with you? Was he at the pizza parlor with you?”

I couldn't speak but I could hear the other kid begging. “I'm not a

part of this. I was just walking home from the library. I'm visiting my mother. This is my mother's house right here. I was just turning in the front gate. Please let me go. I didn't do anything.”

The MPS agent handcuffed the other kid to his front gate so that he couldn't run away, and then pulled out a scanner. He checked the kid's ID and then walked back towards me.

My MPS agent was still holding me up by my hair. The stomach pain was starting to subside and I was gradually straightening out. The other agent scanned me.

“Geoff Chance!”

My agent grunted, “Hey, we know him. He's Chance's boy. We went through the academy together. His father is the abortion nurse down at the school. He's one of us.”

“Really? Okay. Then what do we do with him?”

My agent stuck his face in my face and studied me.

“What are you doing out here? You should know better.”

The other one got in my face too. “Is this boy with you? Are you running from the pizza parlor together?”

“You are scheduled to be an abortion nurse, too, aren't you?”

“Imagine him, an MPS agent!” He snorted.

The agent still had his hand clumped into the hair on the back of my head and pulled it back even more sharply.

“So you really aren't out here running away from the pizza parlor, you are out here running to the scene of a crime so you can help?”

The agent holding my head forced me to nod yes.

“Oh good, because we have this Unborn who is out after curfew and you can help us.”

The other kid, handcuffed to his front gate, was still pleading and begging, “I'm only out after curfew because you stopped me. This is

my house. I was going to be home before curfew. Please don't abort me. My mother will be home soon. I'm just visiting her from out of state. Two more steps and I would have been home!"

The lights went on in the other agent's eyes and he started laughing. "Yes, I think that Geoff here has gotten a little anxious and doesn't want to wait until after his training to do his first abortion."

My agent pulled my head back further, "So tell me, Geoff, are you here because you were running away from the pizza parlor? Or are you here to help us?"

"Choose wisely!" cracked the other agent.

I gasped out, "Help!" as the agent kept yanking on my head.

"Good, now let's get on with it."

The other agent pulled out his weapon and put it at the back of my head. I could feel the cold steel against the base of my skull and I tried not to move. The first agent let go of my hair, and the pain relief was instant.

Then the first agent pulled out his weapon and put it in my hand. I didn't understand what was happening. He folded his big hands around my hand so that I couldn't move my hand or point the gun except where he wanted me to point it.

Then they frog marched me over to the other kid. I began to get a really bad feeling about this.

"Can't listen to these Unborn, they lie through their teeth."

"I bet this isn't even his house. He was just going to run inside while he ran away from the pizza parlor."

"Who is it going to be, Geoff? You or him?"

They were clearly enjoying this too much. But I wasn't. I was petrified and scared. I couldn't stop shaking, but the gun at the back of my head and the agent's big hands wrapped around mine meant I couldn't move.

The other kid was pleading, “You know it's not true. I wasn't there, I'm just visiting my mother. This is my house right here. This is my front gate. Please don't abort me!”

The first agent leaned back into my face, “Count of three..”

“One..., Two..., Th...

As I heard him start to say three, I knew I was going to die if I didn't do something. Fear gripped me in every part of my body. But my brain knew what had to happen, so my finger moved inside the trigger guard, twitched, and pulled the trigger.

If the agent hadn't been holding the gun lined up on the kid's forehead, I would have missed.

But I didn't.

The bullet exited the agent's gun in my hand and made direct contact with the front of the poor kid's forehead, instantly puncturing a hole in the front of his skull, and blowing the back out completely.

Everything happened in slow motion.

The blood sprayed everywhere. The kid hung there for an instant and then his body collapsed and hung from the fence.

I stood paralyzed. The agents pulled their guns away and started whooping and hollering.

They high fived.

“Right on, man!”

“That's the way it's done!”

“That made my day!”

One agent called it in, “Central, we need a cleanup at the corner of...,” he paused and looked around at the street sign... “the corner of Roe and Wade.”

Stunned, I didn't resist when the agents grabbed me by the arms and propelled me into the back of the enforcement vehicle.

The agents jumped in the front seats having a high old time.

“We need to bring you along more often, Geoff. You are a load of fun.”

“We will have to put in a request for Geoff to be on our training team.”

“Well, we better drop him off at home. Wouldn't want you to get caught up in this pizza parlor dragnet, would we?” They both leered at me, and we drove off in the direction of my house.

As we got closer, one of them pointed at the all night donut shop, whose biggest customers were MPS agents, “Stop in here a minute. I'm hungry!”

In the drive-in, the teller asked, “Will that be your usual?”

The agent turned around and looked at me, “No, make it three tonight. We've got a trainee on board!”

The teller handed out the coffee and donuts. The agent forced a cup of coffee and a glazed donut into my hands.

“Eat it down! Eat it down! This is hard work and you need all the calories you can get!”

I gagged, but in fear, forced it all down.

Then we were at my house, and the agent jumped out, opened my rear door, which can't open from the inside, pulled me out, and shoved me through my front gate.

“See you later, Geoff! The first time is always the hardest!”

As soon as they were out of sight I collapsed in my father's front bushes and retched up the donut and coffee.

Chapter 19

Kate Gets Mad

The next morning in Social Studies class I watched as each Unborn entered the classroom. Mentally counting heads and checking off the list of everyone that had been at the pizza parlor the night before, I dreaded finding out who had been caught. Everyone else was doing the same thing. Summer was late. At least, I hoped she was just late. She and Kate were the only missing ones. Of course, I knew of another nameless kid that was also missing, but no one here would ever know. I sure wouldn't tell them.

Kate and Summer burst through the door arm in arm, laughing breathlessly with excitement. Looking around, they saw that everyone else had made it, and they waved gaily at everyone.

Miz Social Studies barked out, “And what are you two so happy about today?”

Kate turned and smiled at Miz Social Studies, “Oh, it's just wonderful to be alive!”

All she got in return was a glare. The bell rang and Miz Social Studies asked, “Are you going to take your seats so we can begin today's lesson on abortion with dignity?”

Kate sat down, put her chin in her hands, leaned forward, and smiled pertly, “Yes, ma'am, I am sooo ready to learn about abortion with dignity.” Then she giggled.

There had been nothing dignified about the kid I had aborted the night before. It felt more like an execution.

Miz Social Studies wrote on the board in big block letters
ABORTION WITH DIGNITY.

“Class. Today you will learn your responsibilities as an Unborn to accept your mother's choice for an abortion with dignity.”

“There are two ways that you need to be dignified around an abortion. First, you need to be dignified when an Unborn you know

is aborted. That aborted Unborn does not deserve our grief, but our respect and praise. The Unborn was chosen for an abortion by it's mother, and is therefore a worthy gift to mother earth. Other Unborns should never show tears, be upset, or have any feelings of grief.”

“Remember, an Unborn is not yet Born, so they are not yet a Person, and cannot yet die. The abortion is merely a medical procedure. A very necessary medical procedure that removes an unnecessary burden upon it's mother and the mother of us all, mother earth.”

In what kind of medical procedure did you put a gun or a cattle thud up to a kid's head and blow their brains out? I really couldn't handle this today. I wish she would just shut up.

“The gift of this Unborn to mother earth should be respected by all other Unborns, and the moment met with quiet dignity. A wonderful thing has happened.”

“Unborns who act undignified, who in fact act as if a Born has died, do not understand their place in society, and show only that they are not qualified to become Born.”

“Kate, your complete attitude today is undignified and disrespectful. I am being patient with you, but you need to wipe that smirk off your face.”

Going on, Miz Social Studies started part two, “The second way that an Unborn needs to have dignity with an abortion is when they have been chosen to be aborted. It is unseemly, selfish, and wrong when an Unborn responds to it's mother's choice to abort them with anything other than dignity.”

“An Unborn should never cry, go into hysterics, scream, yell, or carry on in any way. The Unborn has been chosen and should be thankful and dignified.”

The other kid's begging and pleading burned in my brain. I couldn't get the sounds out of my head. No wonder they wanted everyone to be dignified. It was easier on the ones doing the abortion. Then maybe they could pretend that they weren't really murdering a

human being.

Kate shot her arm into the air, startling everyone. No one ever raised their arm in Miz Social Studies's class. "I have a question. Why should we have dignity? Dead is dead! Isn't it the truth that the real reason you want us to have dignity is so that you don't have to feel guilty about killing us?"

Miz Social Studies glared, "It's not killing to abort an Unborn. You are not alive."

If abortion wasn't killing, then I didn't know what was. I had killed that other kid last night. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. It had been an undignified, messy murder.

Kate stood up, "I want to LIVE with dignity, not die with dignity."

I wanted to live, too, and now I knew just how far I would go to stay alive. Too far. Or was it? As disgusted as I was with myself, I knew I would do it all over again just so I could live another day.

Sputtering, Miz Social Studies stammered, "You are only alive if your mother chooses to let you be Born."

I thought to myself, "Or if MPS lets you."

Kate pounded her fist on the desk, "Why don't we have a choice? Who cares about my mother's choice? I choose to live, and I choose to live with dignity!"

Miz Social Studies knuckled down, "Well, it's not YOUR choice. It's your mother's choice. And with an attitude like yours, you will never be Born."

Kate shook her head and stubbornly said back, "Why don't all you awful Born who like aborting Unborns for mother earth just commit suicide for mother earth, and stop aborting those of us who want to live?"

I couldn't imagine those MPS agents from last night ever committing suicide, or even just choosing to let someone live. They actually enjoyed their jobs. The only reason they let me live was because

they had made me a partner in their crimes.

I wanted to scream. I wanted to tell everyone in the class what had happened. But I knew that would never happen. I had to keep my mouth shut, and move along to get along. I still had to survive until I was Born.

Chapter 20

My New Secret

On the way home, I went directly for the cemetery. Summer was there waiting for me.

Summer was happy today, but I couldn't look at her. I didn't want her to look into my eyes. I was afraid that she would see the truth of what had happened, without me even saying anything.

I needed to be completely alone. But I also needed to be with Summer.

So we sat, but I let Summer do all of the talking. I couldn't talk about what was on my mind.

The fear in the other kid's eyes when he knew I was going to kill him to keep my life.

Chapter 21

Report Card Day

Me and Summer and our classmates moved nervously but expectantly from class to class all day long. That day was report card day, and we would find out the grades that had been reported to our parents that morning. Our parents didn't have to wait for us to bring home our report cards because they were e-sent to all of the parents at the moment that school started.

Occasionally, a parent would forward the report card to their kid's e-reader, but otherwise, mostly, we had to wait until the teacher handed out small cards in class with our grade summary on it. What could have been done in seconds at the beginning of school, was dragged out all day long.

As we moved into the social studies room and took our seats, everyone was quietly arguing.

“I think that they withhold the grades from us because the teachers just like to torture us.”

“Not Professor Science. He never tortures anyone.”

“No, but the other teachers do. They like to lord it over us and pretend that they are gods.”

“They are gods. They hold the power of life and death over us.”

“Especially since some of our parents decide whether or not to abort us based on these stupid report cards.”

“I know. Poor Kate. Didn't her parents promise that if she ever got a 'D' that she would be aborted that day?”

“Yes, but I don't think it matters how hard you work, if the teacher doesn't like you, you just won't get a good grade.”

“It helps to be popular with the teachers like Kate is.”

“At least nobody has been aborted today.”

“Yet!”

“We will be fine. This is our last class of the day. Everyone has done okay this time.”

“Don't count your chickens before they hatch. Miz Social Studies is a mean old bird.”

“Maybe she should have been born a chicken.”

“Yeah, fifty years ago when we could eat her for dinner. If she were born a chicken now, she would be even more important than she is as a teacher.”

“At least the chickens don't get to decide who should be aborted.”

“The mean old bird. Somebody should abort her.”

“Shhhhhhh. Here she comes.”

Miz Social Studies walked into the room, perpetually scowling, and glaring at everyone. She threw her large bag on the desk, spilling some of it, and then, taking her stack of report cards, she began to slowly walk around the room. As she stopped at each pupil's desk, she would snap their report card down on the desk and watch them closely to see their reaction. Only once she was satisfied by their reaction did she move on to the next student.

Miz Social Studies stopped next to my desk. I didn't even care what my grade was. After a bit, Miz Social Studies snapped the report card onto the desk in front of me. I got a 'C'. Typical.

Next she stopped at Summer's desk. I watched Summer exhale in relief, and her shoulders dipped forward as she relaxed. Summer signed a 'B' to me.

Eventually only Kate was left at the rear of the class. Kate had always been a straight 'A' student, even in social studies, so everything was going to be okay this report card day.

Summer turned around so that she could watch Kate's smile of triumph.

Miz Social Studies stood next to Kate's desk and paused for an even longer period of time. She waited until all of us had turned around and were watching her and Kate. Then she snapped Kate's report card down onto the desk in front of Kate and slowly pulled her hand away.

Kate's face turned ashen white, and she started trembling.

One of the students next to her leaned over and peaked at her report card. Shocked, he turned and whispered to the boy next to him. It ran through the room like an electric current, shocking everyone as it touched them.

“Kate got a 'D'.”

Miz Social Studies smiled for the first time that any of us could ever remember. A smile of triumph, with her lips curling and teeth showing. Then she turned and walked back up to the front of the classroom and triggered the intercom to the principal's office.

“Mr. Principal, I think that we are ready now.”

“Thank you, Miz Social Studies. Please send Kate to my office immediately. Her parents are waiting.”

Miz Social Studies, still grinning from ear to ear like a gargoyle, turned to Kate, “Kate, you may go to the principal's office now. They are waiting for you.”

Kate sat frozen and ashen, unable to move.

Barking, the smile gone now, Miz Social Studies yelled, “Kate, get up out of your chair and go down to the principal's office now.”

Kate struggled to stand, and gathered her things. Then she stopped, straightened her shoulders up, and with great dignity, reached into her bag and handed something to the boy next to her.

Kate worked her way around the room, and without saying anything, stopped and handed each classmate something of hers. Kate handed me her notebook. When she got to Summer, her bag was gone, but Kate pulled off her lovely sweater, and laid it quietly on Summer's

desk.

The entire class sat frozen, watching the tableau unfold with bated breath.

Kate reached the door, having given away all of her personal items, and holding only in her hand the report card, she stopped, stood up straight, squared her shoulders, and then calmly marched out.

As the door snicked shut behind Kate, we never saw her again.

Miz Social Studies harumphed loudly, “Well, that takes care of that problem. Let that be a lesson to the rest of you. Now, who can tell me about your assigned reading in your text, 'The Heroines of Abortion'?”

None of us responded. But we all sat up straight in our chairs. With one mind, as if we had preplanned it and argued about it for days, we all stared straight at Miz Social Studies and glared at her.

I was happy to have someone other than myself to be mad at.

Miz Social Studies tried vainly to get someone to respond to her. The triumph drained from her and was replaced with frustration. Finally giving vent to her anger, she began to yell and scream.

We did not move, but sat frozen, and continued with determination our silent tribute to Kate. I was also making tribute to that other kid. The one whose name I never knew.

Refusing to admit defeat, Miz Social Studies swept her stuff into her large bag and stormed from the room.

We kept sitting without moving, waiting to see if the mean old bird would come back.

Shakily, Billy, Kate's secret boyfriend, stood up, “It's not over. She murdered my Kate. I will never forget.”

Following Billy out, we all quietly dispersed. The boys filled with rage. The girls filled with despair. And me with guilt and shame.

Summer trailed out last. Stopping at the door, she turned, and,

hugging Kate's sweater to her, stood looking momentarily at Kate's empty desk in the back of the room.

I watched her secretly from the hallway. Summer had her memories of Kate who had walked to her abortion with dignity, and I had my memories of killing another kid so I wouldn't be aborted.

The only thing I knew for certain was that I didn't deserve Summer.

Chapter 22

Professor Science's Observations

We stumbled numbly into Professor Science's class. Summer was in a shocked stupor and sat unmoving at her desk. At first, Professor Science didn't notice and went on with his lecture.

“From the moment that the human egg and the human sperm join together there is a unique human being, which we call a zygote. It's easy to kill a zygote because we are not calling it a Person. And, you can't see it yet. Humans are weird in that if they can't see something, then it's not important.”

I had definitely seen that other kid die. It had not been some unseen abortion in the principal's office. I had seen it. I wished I hadn't. I wished that I had closed my eyes instead of staring into his eyes as I pulled the trigger.

“The egg is part of the mother's tissue. The sperm is part of the father's tissue. But from the very instant that the egg and the sperm join together, the egg ceases to be part of the mother's tissue, and the sperm ceases to be part of the father's tissue. The new human tissue is unique unto itself. Not a single other sperm, of the same father, joining to that same egg, will ever produce the same unique human being that came into existence at that moment in time. If that new zygote is lost for any reason, failure to conceive or implant into the mother's uterus, miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion, etc., then that unique human being can NEVER be replaced. It is gone forever.”

“That unique human being has only one life. If that life is taken away for any reason, it is gone forever.”

Right. That other kid was gone forever. By my hand.

“In your other classes you will hear the teachers argue that the zygote cannot be harmed in any way because it is not yet a Person. If you drown a kitten when it is newborn, and it never grows into a cat, have you harmed that cat? The cat never comes into existence because the kitten that would be that cat is never allowed to grow up. In your animal rights class, they will teach you that you have

irreparably harmed that cat by denying it the opportunity to live.”

“But in your social studies class, denying a human being the ability to grow up and become a Person does not harm the human being because it is not yet a Person. What is the difference between a kitten and a cat? Can you have a cat without it first being a kitten? Can you have a Person, without it first being a human being?”

“The kitten and the cat are one and the same unique life-form. The zygote, the fetus, the infant, the child, the developing human being, and the Person are one and the same unique life form.”

“If the zygote that became you is killed, would there ever be a you? If the developing human being that is you is aborted, will you ever become a Person? If the kitten is killed, will there ever be a cat?”

“We are told that killing the developing kitten is morally wrong because it destroys a unique animal. At the same time, the State tells us that killing a developing human being is right because it destroys nothing and harms nothing, and benefits society by reducing the burdens on society.”

“When you go to your next class today, and the teacher or your parents choose to abort you, have you been harmed? Has your unique human life been destroyed? Or does it not matter because you are not yet Persons?”

Summer started shivering and shaking uncontrollably. She was obviously thinking about Kate. Kate who was gone. Kate who was dead. Kate was dead, because YES, Kate was a Person. Kate may never have been Born, but Kate was still a Person, and Kate had deserved to live. There would never be another Kate. No other egg and sperm joined together would ever be Summer's Kate. Summer could no longer control herself, and broke down at her desk, sobbing and sobbing.

I wanted to break down and cry, too. For Kate. For Summer. For the other kid.

Professor Science stopped, walked over to the classroom door, locked it, and pulled the curtain over the window. Now was not the

time for another impromptu visit from the principal. One of the students walked up to the professor and whispered to him about Kate. Nodding, the professor returned to his desk and leaned against it sadly and with a heavy heart.

No one said anything for ten long minutes as we all sat silently listening to Summer sob, and thinking about Kate. I could not get the other kid's eyes out of my mind. That image was seared forever in my brain. And I knew that Kate's walking out the door would be seared forever in Summer's brain.

Glancing at the clock, Professor Science saw that the bell was just about to ring. He cleared his throat, and said quietly, "When I observe you, I observe that each of you is a unique Person. And when I observed you in yesterday's class, I also observed that Kate was a unique Person."

Then the bell rang.

Chapter 23

The Struggle

I struggled in silence for weeks. Summer sensed that something was wrong, but I could never tell her, and she never asked.

Finally, I came to terms with everything. What had happened, had happened.

It wasn't my fault. There was nothing I could do differently. And if it all happened again, I would do the same thing.

I felt bad for the kid, but that was his life, and this was my life. Had it been the other way around, he would have shot me to keep his life.

I couldn't be mad at him for that. And he couldn't be mad at me for shooting him.

It never occurred to me that I could have simply stood with dignity and forced the MPS agents to do all the killing. Not until many, many years later. Of course, by then, I couldn't even tell you how many kids I had aborted.

So I came to terms with what had happened. This was simply the way that the world worked. We do what we have to do to stay alive and protect ourselves. In the end, we can only watch out for ourselves.

One thing I knew for certain, I would never risk my life to save another Unborn. What was the point? If they were going to be aborted, they were going to be aborted. That other kid was going to be killed that night no matter what I did.

I was just a pawn in the system, doing my job. Just like my father. He did whatever he had to do to keep me alive. The least thanks I could give him was to stay alive.

I went back to dreaming. I went back to hoping that maybe I didn't really have to be an MPS abortion nurse. That maybe, just maybe, I really could be an engineer and marry Summer and have little Unborns that I would protect just as fiercely as my father had

protected me.

The problem with dreams is that sooner or later we have to wake up.

Chapter 24

The Promise

Summer and I meandered slowly through the park on our way home. Holding our schoolbooks, we kicked the rocks, and walked close, but not too close. Neither did we hold hands. That was strictly for our secret spot. Romantic relationships amongst us Unborn were frowned upon. The cameras watched us. And behind the cameras were the watchers. If Summer and I were to hold hands, then videos would be sent to our parents in real time. Holding hands was just not worth being aborted.

Summer asked me, “Geoff, what are you going to do when you are Born? Are you going to follow your father and be an abortion nurse?”

Summer knew about my dreams to be an engineer. I shrugged, “I don't want to. I don't want to be a nurse. I want to be an engineer or something. I want to build things with my hands.”

I asked her, even though I knew, “What are you going to do after you are Born?”

“I think that I want to be a scientist. Maybe I can be the first woman scientist that will say things to protect the Unborn. Nobody listens to Professor Science because he is a man.”

I shook my head, “I know. But I could be happy designing and building things.”

Summer looked at me, “Is that really what would make you happy?”

I stopped and looked at Summer, “What would really make me happy would be for us to get married, have lots of little Unborns, and promise never to abort any of them.”

We stared at each other breathlessly. I couldn't believe I had said that. Wow!

“Then I really would need to be an engineer to pay all those bills and feed all those mouths.”

Summer gazed into my eyes. We stood only two feet apart.

Something came over me. All of my hopes and dreams collided and I felt completely out of control. It wasn't possible, but I wanted it so much. I hesitated, then spoke quietly, "Will you marry me?"

Summer held her breath, "Yes!" Not moving was torture. We wanted to throw ourselves in each other's arms, but we could only stand there. We should have gone to the cemetery today. Finally, Summer turned and slowly moved down the path and I followed. I wish I could read her mind. From the smile on the corner of her lips, I knew they were good thoughts.

Summer looked out of the corner of her eyes and smiled at me while I was watching her.

"Yes!" she said again. "Yes, I will marry you, and you will marry me, and we will have lots of children, and we will never, ever have an abortion, even if we have five kids! And you can be an engineer! And I...I can be a mother!"

At the exit to the park, we stood quietly. The time to say goodbye had come. We had to go in different directions to go home. Reluctantly, we parted ways, but with our hearts soaring, and holding a dream.

But as I now walked home alone, there nagged me in the back of my mind that kid I had aborted. What if that had been one of my kids? Killed in my front yard for something he didn't do?

I knew what had just happened between me and Summer was just a dream. But it was such a wonderful dream. One could only hope.

But I knew that I would never be an engineer because I was already an abortionist. I had already committed abortion. There was no going back. Ever.

But a dream was still a dream. And it was a beautiful dream.

Chapter 25

The Talk

One night, Father and I were talking at home over dinner. We were talking about the future.

I dared to bring up my dream. My dream about being an engineer and marrying Summer and having little Unborns.

My father was silent for a long time. “Geoff, you are dreaming and fooling yourself.”

“Don't think about Summer anymore. Even if she is Born, then she will never marry you once she finds out that you are going to be an abortion nurse.”

I blurted out, “But I don't want to be an abortion nurse. I want to be an engineer and have a family with Summer.”

Father's voice took on a hard edge, “Do you want to die? No? Then you must do what the State says to do. It is no longer enough just to be Born, you must also be a good, compliant citizen. If you aren't, then they will revoke your Person status. They are revoking the Person status of more and more people all the time.”

“Just do the job they give you, keep your mouth shut, and understand that that is the only way you can stay alive and survive.”

“Grandpa worked construction. I used to work construction, and you want to be an engineer. It must run in the blood. But the State disagrees. And what the State wants is what the State gets.”

Father sat silently again and slowly softened up, “Son, just keep your mouth shut. I can't afford to lose you, too. You are all I have left of your mother.”

I couldn't help myself, “I don't want to lose Summer, either. Mother would have liked her.”

My father sighed, shook his head and kneaded his large hands, “Geoff, you've already lost her. She does not fit into your future as an abortion nurse. Now move on.”

I didn't argue anymore. I knew my father was right. From the moment I pulled the trigger on that poor kid, it was over. I was no longer the person that Summer thought I was, and I could never be the man of her dreams. I was just another compliant citizen, an abortionist.

Chapter 26

Compliant Citizens

The rest of the semester passed slowly and quietly. Our class no longer had any hope. We were moody, quiet, depressed, and hopeless. We went to class, memorized the proper answers, and parroted them back to our teachers. No one talked anymore about being Born, or what they would do after they were Born. It no longer mattered. Most of us would probably never be Born. The rest of us would be whatever the state told us to be. I would be an abortion nurse. We could only take things one day at a time.

Summer and I no longer talked about being married. We no longer went to our secret spot. The dream had flared and dimmed. I knew why, but Summer struggled to understand, and to keep her hopes and her dreams from dying. Summer told me she had begun to wonder if there was any point in even bringing a child into this awful, hateful, bloodthirsty world.

The teachers and principal watched each of us closely, looking for any continued signs of rebellion. But there were none. We were each learning our places.

The system had finally crushed and broken us and was molding us into compliant citizens.

The teachers continued in earnest to try and mold those of us remaining into the productive compliant citizens that the state needed.

The State did not need citizens who could think, but compliant citizens who could listen, obey, and learn the correct answers that were expected of them. There was no longer any need to ask questions. The State already had all of the necessary answers.

Summer and I quickly fell into step and became future compliant citizens.

Chapter 27

Adios Professor Science

I no longer listened to Professor Science. He was just an old man prattling on about what he wanted the world to be and it never would be what he wanted it to be. He was just a dreamer that somehow lived by dreaming.

The dreams of Professor Science were not for us. He didn't live in our world. And we couldn't live in his. But we could easily be aborted in the real world. So most of us learned to just ignore him. Except for Summer. For some reason, she never stopped listening to Professor Science.

Very few of an Unborn class ever made it to being Born. Nothing that Professor Science said could change that. But he kept prattling on anyway.

We merely kept our heads down and tried to survive. But a few students still listened. It was sad to watch hope grow in the hearts of some of the students. Hope that could never be satisfied. Like the hope that Summer carried with her. They just didn't understand. I couldn't get Summer to understand.

To survive, we had to become compliant citizens. Any life was better than no life. That was the only possible way to be Born. If we were Born, we would be part of the system, and would undoubtedly commit many abortions ourselves in the service of the system. If we were aborted, then that was what best served the system. We had to accept unquestioningly whatever was in store for us.

But Professor Science continued to try to plant his seeds. Seeds with the names of Hope, Dreams, Plans, Future, Right and Wrong, Justice, Fairness, Love, Compassion, Truth.

I watched these things grow in Summer, and worried because there would never be room for these things in the life of a compliant citizen.

Chapter 28

Entrance

The day of my Entrance dawned bright and clear. Father was up early to see me off. I wouldn't be going back to school. School was only for the Unborn. I was now a Born.

The MPS enforcement vehicle pulled up outside the house. I was to be given a ride in style to the training academy. Father said that my training officers were now responsible for me each day. It was their job to make sure I made it to training class on time. Two hours of each day would be spent riding around with them. Then they would bring me home. After training was complete, I would go to work with my father at the school.

Father went out the door and greeted the two agents, my new training officers. I could hear them bantering together. I squared my shoulders and walked out. As I had dreaded, it was the two agents from that night.

Father proudly introduced me proudly to them, and they both gave their names and shook my hand. They were on their best behavior in front of father. Then father clapped me on the back, opened the rear door for me, shook my hand, and ushered me off. I had never seen father this happy. He was happy because I was now Born, and he didn't have to worry about me being aborted.

I settled back in the seat and the agents drove off. The one in the passenger seat leaned back over the seat and watched me. I still didn't remember their names.

“Hello, Geoff! Good to see you again! We promised we would be your training officers.”

The other piped in, “We have to be. Nobody else knows that you already have experience.”

“Yeah, and that experience will give you a leg up on all of the other recruits in the academy.”

“You have to pass. You can't fail us now. We have a serious

investment in you.”

They laughed, and then the agent driving swerved across the street into the donut shop. Not again, I thought.

“While you are in training, your meals are on us.”

“But when you graduate, you have to take us out!”

The coffee and donuts were shoved into my hands, and I was encouraged to eat and drink.

“You will need all of your strength today. Eat up!”

After awhile, we pulled up to the security gate at the MPS training academy. Once they had verified my identity, I was taken to Supply and issued a new ID and new uniforms and told to put them on.

In the bathroom, I stood looking at myself in my sharp new uniform. I was what I was.

Chapter 29

Training Academy

For several days, most of my training was in classrooms. As bad as it was, I preferred sitting in the classrooms over sitting in the enforcement vehicle with my two training officers.

Most of what they told us, I had heard before in school. But I was expected to memorize most of it now, and to be able to recite it on command. It seemed endless.

“The primary purpose of the State is to make sure that nothing ever interferes with a mother's right to choose.”

“The State is the guardian of the human mother's right to choose, and the guardian of mother earth's right to choose.”

“As the guardian, the State is the final arbiter, or decision maker, as to who should be aborted, and who should be permitted to become a Person.”

“An abortion is always the right choice to make. Nothing must be allowed to stop a woman from choosing an abortion.”

“When the State sees that a man, either a husband, or a father, is trying to interfere with a mother's right to choose an abortion, it is the duty and responsibility of the State to intervene, stop the man, and provide the mother with the means to have her abortion.”

“This is the job of MPS Mother Protective Services, to protect the right of the mother to have an abortion, and to protect the mother from her Unborn.”

“The Unborn do not have the right to life.”

“An Unborn that does not honor this duty to be aborted if chosen is not fit to become a Person, and must be immediately aborted, even if by force. There will be many times when it will be your job to stop rebellious Unborn and to abort them immediately.”

“As a Born MPS Agent, your duty is to act as a guardian for mother earth. There are different ways that you can and must be a

guardian.”

The instructor handed out an old and familiar handout:

1. Vote for the State to protect a mother's right to choose at every election.
2. Support every mother you know and encourage her to exercise her right to an abortion.
3. Report to the State any signs of fanaticism or attempts to stop an abortion.
4. Report all unlicensed parents.
5. Report all parents not teaching their children right thinking.
6. Accept gladly all decisions by a mother and the State to perform an abortion.
7. If in doubt, always consult the State.

“But remember, your most important responsibility as an MPS Agent is to Abort Always and Abort Early.”

Chapter 30

Training Continues

The training went on and on.

“The most important job of the State is to protect the mother's right to choose.”

“The most important right is the mother's right to choose.”

“A mother is the most important role on earth. That is why we honor the mother of us all, mother earth, by putting her needs first and always respecting her right to choose. A right that she has bequeathed on each of her daughters.”

“It is a mother's right to choose to let live only those offspring that will prove to be compliant citizens to society and mother earth. A mother that lets all of her offspring live, regardless of their productivity, imposes a burden on herself and on mother earth to care for those offspring that are of no benefit to either herself or mother earth.”

“Since a mother can be emotionally assaulted by men, and others, into keeping defective offspring, it is very important that the State be involved with a mother's right to choose and to help her see what the right choice to make in every situation is.”

“This has, of course, gotten easier since the State legally recognized that an offspring cannot actually become a Person until they turn 18. We now have adequate time to evaluate offspring and make the proper decisions as to whether or not they should be aborted, or allowed to become Persons.”

“The State has established a number of apparatus, especially MPS or Mother Protective Services, for helping the mother to properly exercise her right to choose, and to guide her to the right choice. These apparatus focus mostly on the public school system, where the Unborn are evaluated and tested on a daily basis, not just medically, but also for attitude, learning ability, right thinking, productivity, and their ability to become net contributors to society. The school system established by the State communicates with the mother on a

regular basis, so that her right to choose can be exercised at any time it becomes apparently necessary. Furthermore, the school system supports the mother by providing the nursing staff needed to fulfill the functions of Choice. MPS is an integral part of the school system, supplying the abortion nurses, who are MPS agents, and psychologists who evaluate all of the staff and counsel mothers.”

“The choice to abort an Unborn is ALWAYS the right choice. An abortion is never wrong. The best choice for mother earth would be for all Unborns to be aborted. That would be best for mother earth. That's why no abortion is ever wrong.”

“Of course, once human Persons are no longer needed to be guardians of mother earth, then that may be possible. Until then, the State provides the legal framework for mothers to work together to protect their right to choose, and to exercise it for their benefit and the benefit of mother earth.”

“The most important job of the State and the MPS Agent is to protect the mother's right to choose and to perform abortion on demand as needed.”

Chapter 31

Graduation

The training went on and on. The week seemed to last forever. Every day we had to practice on manikins with our new cattle thuds. Usually on the last day, we were to be taken out and we would do a supervised abortion with our training officers. But my Father had requested that that be skipped in my case, and that I do my first abortion at the school with him. Little did he know.

So graduation day dawned and I rode to work with my father, instead of riding off with the agents. I was glad to skip the coffee and donuts. Father stopped somewhere else and we had tofuggs and tofucakes, his normal breakfast. Orange juice instead of coffee. It all settled much easier in my stomach.

Then we drove down to the school. My thoughts turned to Summer. She only had one more day and then she would be Born. There would still be no us. I knew she could never abide what I had become. But at least she would have made it. She would be free. As free as anyone could be.

At the school, we went to the nurse's office and my father turned on the tv and settled back. Ruefully he said, "Well Son, most of what we do is actually sitting around waiting for something to happen. Days where nothing happens are rare, but..." he paused looking for the right word, "welcome."

I sat down nervously. I knew that the first abortion of the day would be mine. But we didn't discuss it. My father was not like the other MPS agents. He didn't enjoy his job. Technically, he worked for MPS, but being at the school was very different than riding around in the enforcement vehicles. I could tell that my father wasn't expecting me to enjoy it, either.

A little light lit up on the phone. My father picked it up. My stomach knotted. "Okay. We will be right there."

He turned to me, "Time to go." He squeezed my shoulder and I followed him to the principal's office.

In the office, the principal was waiting and just nodded his head at us. An MPS psychologist was also waiting, standing next to the principal's desk. My father and I moved to the side and stood still and waited. I tried not to think about the unfortunate Unborn that was being summoned to the office.

The principal's door opened and Summer walked in unsteadily, without knocking. I was frozen in shock. Summer? But she only had one more day to go.

Now I recognized that it was her mother who was standing next to the principal's desk. Summer looked at her and asked tenuously in a little girl's voice, "Mommy, are you going to kill me?"

"No, Summer, I'm going to have an abortion. You have always been an unhappy child, ever since kindergarten. I don't know what happened to you, but you have been a disappointment, and you will never have a good quality of life. I cannot in good conscience allow you to be Born."

The principal handed Summer's mother a clipboard and said, "Please sign this." Her mother signed the consent forms right in front of Summer, and handed them back to the principal.

Summer broke down and began pleading with her mother, "Mother, please, I want to live. I don't want to die. I won't be a burden on you. I will move out immediately."

I forced my mind to shut down. I had to block out the pleadings of another kid. This couldn't be happening. Summer only had one more day.

Summer's mother shook her head, "I'm sorry. I can't bear to go through the rest of my life watching you be unhappy. This needs to end now."

Summer fell to her knees and began to plead desperately.

Her mother just kept shaking her head, "I had put this off because I had hoped that you would turn into a happy child. But I was wrong. I should have done this years ago."

“Mommy, I don't want to die.”

“Summer, you aren't even a person yet. It's not your Choice.”

Her mother continued rather emphatically, “This is MY Choice...and I choose to abort you.”

The principal signaled my father and I, “Let's get this over with. I have some budget figures I need to work on.”

“Mommy, I don't want to die.”

Summer turned her head and looked at my father, the big, burly abortion nurse, and then she saw me next to him, her fiance Geoff.

My father moved forward and took her arm and looked at me. I automatically walked up and stood in front of Summer just like we had trained on the manikins.

Summer weakly said, “You, too?”

I forced myself to remember my training and do as I was trained. To be cold, distant, and professional.

In a calm, professional voice I said to Summer, “Come now, no fuss, no muss, there's no point in fighting it.”

I stared into Summer's eyes.

I remembered staring into that kid's eyes on the street.

It tore me up inside, but I was what I was. An abortion nurse.

Giving abortions was my job, and it was Summer's turn.

I was just doing my job.

She would have to understand.

At least this time it wouldn't be messy.

Summer looked confused and betrayed. Then I said, even though I wasn't supposed to, “I'm sorry, but now that I am a Born adult, things are different than from before I was Born.”

I followed my training, reached calmly into my nurse's pocket, and pulled out my cattle thud. I looked carefully, centering it up right in the middle of her forehead, and looked dispassionately into her eyes as I pulled the trigger.

THUD.

Chapter 32

The Principal's Office

My father, the big construction worker who was now an abortion nurse, tightened his grip on Summer's body and dragged her from the principal's office.

As he went through the doorway, he accidentally banged her head against the door frame.

A pink and red and blue ribbon fell from her hair and lay on the floor.

I looked at the ribbon. Summer had worn that ribbon for years. Then I followed my father out the door and down to the incinerator room.

Chapter 33

Dinner

We were both silent at dinner that night. Neither of us had expected that my first abortion would be Summer. We were both still in shock. My father had not enjoyed it anymore than me.

Finally he spoke, “You did what you had to do. You have to take care of your family first.”

I choked out, “But Summer was going to be my family.”

My father sighed again, “Only if she became born. And she didn't, so now she never will.”

A long silence followed. What was done was done, and could never be undone.

Finally I asked, “Why didn't you ever abort me, Father?”

He looked up at me, startled, “Because after your mother died, you were all I had left. You have so much of your mother in you, if I had aborted you, it would have been like murdering your mother.”

“I was never going to abort you, no matter what.”

“But I did worry about whether or not the school system would.”

I knew he was right. He would never have aborted me. But I had aborted the only person, other than my father, that I had ever loved.

Chapter 34

The End

I felt really bad about Summer. But it was what it was.

It's not possible to save an Unborn whose destiny is to be aborted.

But I survived.

My name is Geoff Chance.

I am an Unborn Survivor.

Appendix: Compliant Citizen's Creed

Compliant Citizen's Creed

I have the right to be searched.

I do not have the right to be silent.

I do not have the right to an attorney.

Everything I say and do will be preserved, and remembered for eternity.

I will be evaluated constantly for right thinking and terroristic thoughts.

I will be punished with death if I lie to the government.

I will report anyone I suspect of being a non-compliant citizen without delay.

My life is to serve my government.

The government is my idol, and I will have no other idols before it.

LEGAL NOTICES

Copyright 2013 world wide by Brass Serpent Productions LLC. All rights reserved.

Gaius Famius is a pseudonym for a team of home educated unschoolers who work collaboratively on various projects, as the fancy strikes them, as writers, illustrators, animators, and producers through Brass Serpent Productions LLC.

This story is fictional. Names, characters, places, and incidents or events are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to any actual events or locations or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

All brand names and product names referenced or contained in this publication are trade names, service marks, trademarks, or registered trademarks of their respective owners and Brass Serpent Productions LLC does not claim ownership in any such marks or names. Brass Serpent Productions LLC has not been authorized, sponsored, or approved or otherwise endorsed by the owners of the trade names, service marks, trademarks, or registered trademarks referenced or contained in this publication.

Any unauthorized commercial use or duplication of this publication or any part thereof without prior written approval of and/or licensing by Brass Serpent Productions LLC is prohibited by Federal law and is strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted.

The creators, producers, and distributors of this publication disclaim any and all liability or loss in connection with the information in this publication and the subject matter thereof.

This publication contains numerous scenes and/or written description of dangerous actions/stunts/events that are merely the product of the author's imagination and SHOULD NEVER BE TRIED, ATTEMPTED, OR IMITATED in real life.

Brass Serpent Productions LLC makes no warranties or representations concerning the accuracy or completeness of any information provided in this publication.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS PUBLICATION IS PROVIDED WITHOUT WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMISSIBLE PURSUANT TO APPLICABLE LAW, BRASS SERPENT PRODUCTIONS LLC DISCLAIMS ANY AND ALL WARRANTIES OR MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, INFRINGEMENT AND WARRANTIES ARISING FROM COURSE OF DEALING OR COURSE OF PERFORMANCE.

Brass Serpent Productions LLC does not represent or warrant that the information contained in this publication will meet your requirements or be error-free. Brass Serpent Productions LLC does not make any warranties or representations regarding the use of the materials in this publication in terms of their completeness, correctness, accuracy, adequacy, usefulness, timeliness, reliability, or otherwise.

IN NO EVENT SHALL BRASS SERPENT PRODUCTIONS LLC BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE, INCIDENTAL, EXEMPLARY, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, OR ANY DAMAGES WHATSOEVER, EVEN IF BRASS SERPENT PRODUCTIONS LLC HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF DAMAGES, WHETHER IN AN ACTION UNDER CONTRACT, NEGLIGENCE, OR OTHER THEORY, ARISING OUT OF, OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE, INABILITY TO USE, OR PERFORMANCE OF THE INFORMATION OR PRODUCTS IN THIS PUBLICATION. THESE LIMITATIONS SHALL ARISE NOTWITHSTANDING ANY FAILURE OF ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF ANY LIMITED REMEDIES.

WARNING: This publication is protected by copyright law and other intellectual property laws and treaties. All rights are reserved therein. This publication is for private home use only. Federal law provides severe penalties for unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or exhibition of copyrighted material.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced

or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

All derivative rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used in any derivative work including, but not limited to, any translation to another language, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted.

Brass Serpent Productions LLC

109 East 17 Street Suite 4311

Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001-4543

www.brassserpent.com

