

# In The Silence

James Andrew Edske

## Chapter ~ Eleven

**As** David's life was coming together, Scott's was falling apart. Five days ago in the parking lot of the GPO warehouse, Scott had been beat up. By Friday he was deeply involved with the dark side of the Department. After his meeting with Mr. Henderson, all he could think of was Tom and his son dying in the car accident. Dan never returned after lunch on Wednesday. Scott regretted not taking his chance with Dan and leaving the Department right then with him. But he had sold himself out. He was now bought and paid for. Now all he could do was prove his worth to Mr. Henderson— so to save his family.

Working over the weekend nights and into early morning on Monday Scott diligently labored on the special project that Mr. Henderson had assigned to him. There was a small Christian orphanage that he started a story attack on for the Monday morning newspaper wire service. Scott knew how much Mr. Henderson hated the Christian movement and hoped that this might be the salvation to save his family. He was headed home at four in the morning after his fake news stories and statistics were uploaded on the wire service for the Monday morning newsrooms. He hated what he had just done, but he had no alternative. Driving home Scott kept tapping his brakes.

Mr. Henderson sat at his desk reading the paper copy of Scott's wire service upload: CHRISTIAN COUPLE ABUSE CHILDREN AT ORPHANAGE. THREE CHILDREN DIED TRYING TO OBEY THE HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER RULE. NO MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES TO FOLLOW. COUPLE PROTECTED BY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Pleased, Mr. Henderson walked across his office and fed the only copy into a paper shredder. Although it was just past eight A.M. this story was worth a drink. Mr. Henderson hit a switch, the panel lifted and he made himself a Bloody Mary and then toasted himself. His plan was right on schedule and Scott was on his team. He wanted to defame and undermine Christianity. He could taste victory. Within ten years mercy killing could be at full speed, especially without the Christian faction getting in the way.

The plan was perfect because it was so simple. First discredit small Christian organizations and then hit the larger ones with more hideous claims. All DOS had to do was feed the news and press offices incorrect statistics and polls; the media would do the rest. Most reporters use sensationalism as bait. They called it good investigative reporting, but the truth is, they are the ones that always bite; hook line and sinker. To report everything verbatim because it was on the wire service was easy—digging and standing up for truth was too hard and could cost readership.

As Mr. Henderson desired, organized religion would suffer the most, being

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preoccupied with their own manmade doctrine, he could prowl and ruin good. Ecumenical would become a word that would fade like integration. Large organized religions would be too busy pointing their nonjudgmental fingers at each other. Christians would never unite with other God rooted belief systems. The world would be controlled by the self appointed and strong—there would be no place for the frail and righteous.

Mr. Henderson made himself another drink, went back to his desk and gloated. Nothing was going to get in his way! He picked up the phone and called up one floor. Moments later the electric latch buzzed and Kirk entered Mr. Henderson's office. "What do you need? Do you want me to take care of Scott's wife?" Kirk asked anxiously.

"No, I don't need you to do anything to Scott's wife. I think Scott is going to work with us just fine. I've got him working toward undermining Christianity. And if Scott does what he did to the automakers with that metric system scam, he will be very valuable for us."

"Oh," Kirk replied disappointedly.

"I called you down here to see what you've got on the computer infiltrator," grunted out Mr. Henderson as he rolled forward in his chair waiting for some good news.

Kirk pulled a small notepad from his shirt pocket, flipped it open and read. "From the ping test I made last Monday afternoon I calculated the call was placed within two hundred miles of here. I am almost sure the infiltration was made by someone in Colorado." He flipped the page and continued. "I have checked the phone books within a two hundred-mile radius of here for all the David McClintock's that spell David with three D's and found none. I think it may have been a kid that could not spell at the keyboard so I figured the name was David spelled the regular way."

As Mr. Henderson leaned back in his big black leather executive chair, it groaned under his weight. He rubbed his chubby fingers on his double chin and asked, "Has Scott been helping?"

"Yeah, sort of. I went back to the tape backup for that Friday night and everything Scott told me checks out. Even the guy spelling David with three D's." Scott flipped another page and went on. "Another reason I think the computer hacker may have been a kid is that he also said his name was Paul, then something about being on a mountain freezing. I'm in the process of checking out all the David and/or Paul McClintock's right now."

"I still don't see how somebody could tap into our computer system, especially after I gave you millions for the most sophisticated equipment," said Mr. Henderson.

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Scott knew he was on the hot seat and offered an explanation. "I checked with a source of mine and he said the Air Force at the Lowry Air Base has been working on some top secret unscrambling equipment. They developed some chip that can decipher enemy intelligence and communication. They call it the Clipper Chip."

"Well, have you been to the Air Force Base to check out this Clipper Chip?" Mr. Henderson asked.

"I tried but I don't have clearance to get on base."

"I will get you clearance! Then I want you to get up there and check out this Clipper Chip project. I want answers. And don't give me this kid theory about tapping into our computer. How the hell would some kid know my name?" yelled Mr. Henderson, agitated that Kirk did not yet have the computer hacker yet.

Mr. Henderson picked up the phone. "Get me the Brigadier General at Lowry Air Base."

It took two calls for Mr. Henderson to get clearance for Kirk. He had so many people in his back pocket that he could get clearance to the Oval Office if need be. Kirk was to be at the front gate of Lowry Air Base at thirteen hundred hours the next afternoon.



It was almost a two-hour drive up Interstate 25 from Pueblo, Colorado to Lowry Air Base. There was a clearance pass waiting for Kirk at the gate and within an hour Kirk had Airman Green's recorded confession to selling the Clipper Chip for \$5,000 to a middle-aged man just over six feet tall with graying hair and a fake beard. Airman Green more than cooperated, hoping for a plea bargain. One piece of information that he offered was the white pickup with Colorado plates and a business name on the side. Although he clearly remembered that fact, he could not recall the name of the business painted on the pickup door.

Kirk was back at the Department before four, alone on the second basement level amongst all his computer and security equipment. He had written all the information about the computer infiltrator on a whiteboard. It was turning into more than finding out who it was; he now had an opponent to challenge, someone deserving of his cunning wit. Kirk stood back and looked at the information he had listed.

**1. Friday night message:** MY NANE DDAVID MCLINTOCK PLESSE HELP I'M TRAPD ON MTANTREO. EMERGENCY.

**2. Message one hour later:** NEED HELP! MAN IS FREEZING. MY NAME IS PAUL. I NEED HELP IMMEDIATELY!

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## 3. Message Monday afternoon: IS MR. HENDERSON THERE?

Kirk had some of the pieces, but something just wasn't right about the misspelling of all the words in the first message. It was as though an eight-year-old kid had typed that message. But then all the words in the second message, by someone named Paul, were spelled correctly, even the word freezing. *Freezing! I wonder if?* Kirk darted to a keyboard, shaking as though he too were cold. As he typed, he noticed how many words he misspelled. *That's it! This guy was freezing cold as he typed!* Kirk was getting close; he could smell the blood of another competitor.

Meanwhile, David was completely unaware that he was being challenged. He had just finished his last job in the shop and was carefully tending to last minute details prior to taking off for ten days. It was past four when Bill came into the back shop with bad news. "Mr. Johnson from the Denver Bank just called. He said that computer line you hooked up for them is still not working right. He wants you there first thing on Monday."

Throwing some tools onto his bench, David looked at the digital clock display on the pink boombox. "I still have time. The bank closes at six on Fridays."

"It would be great if you made it up there tonight. The jackass said he won't pay the bill from the other day if we all don't get it fixed up right. And if you got up there tonight all your vacation plans wouldn't get messed up."

When David arrived at the bank, it was ten to six. He had just enough time to grab his tools and test equipment and get inside before they locked the doors. He went over to the desk where he had installed the data line for the account verification/signature machine and started to do some checking. He was down on the floor under the desk checking the wiring and noticed some pant legs standing in front of the desk and heard, "Hey idiot we're closing up in ten minutes."

The problem was obvious: someone had run over the telephone connecting wire with the wheel of a chair and almost cut it in half. David crawled out from under the desk with the severed data cord.

"You screwed up! I could only check accounts at other banks for one day," Mr. Johnson said, loud enough for all to hear.

"I don't think it was my screw up. Someone wasn't careful and ran over the cord. Its cut halfway thru," David smugly replied and handed the severed communication cord to Mr. Johnson.

Examining the data/phone connecting cord, Mr. Johnson replied, "Must have been the cleaning crew." He handed the cord back to David.

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"I've got another cord in the truck. I'll go get it if you can hold the door open for me. It's almost six and I don't want to get locked out."

"Sally, hold the door for this repair guy. I've got a tennis match to get to," yelled Mr. Johnson across the lobby. Then he turned back toward David and yelled, "You shouldn't have left the cord on the carpet like that, so don't be charging us for this service call."

David stared down Mr. Johnson, ready to give him a piece of his mind. Instead, he bit his tongue. *I'm going on vacation Monday. There is no use letting this jerk get to me.* David exited the bank while Sally stood by the door to let him back in.

Hooking up the new cord only took a minute and David was glad that Mr. Johnson was gone. The bank tellers were busy counting and balancing their cash drawers and Sally went into the vault. Although it took less than a minute for David to snap a new cord in place, it took some additional time to affix the new cord to the bottom of the desk, up and out of the way. Finished, he stood from under the desk and looked for someone to check the machine before he left. Everybody was busy counting and balancing and Sally was in the vault. David was anxious to leave. He still had to finish some work back at the shop. The display on the verification machine read:

WELCOME TO INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC BANK SERVICE. ENTER NAME OF ACCOUNT TO VERIFY FUNDS.

Not wanting to wait David decided to test the machine himself. He typed in his name and then stopped. *Why should I use my account and get tapped for five dollars? I'm not even getting paid for this service call. Let's see, I'll use that Jack Henderson name again. It worked on my laptop from the phone room the other day I was here.*

David cleared his name and then typed in JACK HENDERSON. The display listed the forty plus Jack Hendersons and David selected the one with a P.O. Box in Pueblo, Colorado. The display changed:

SELECT 1 FOR SIGNATURE VERIFICATION.

SELECT 2 FOR THIS BRANCH ACCOUNT TOTALS.

ENTER PASSWORD TO CHECK ACCOUNTS OR TRANSFER FUNDS TO OTHER SUBSCRIBING BANKS.

HIT ESCAPE TO EXIT.

David hit 1. The machine started printing and dropped a paper into the bin. David picked up the paper and looked at it. He examined the sloppy signature of Jack Luther Henderson. Then he hit the **2** to check the other functions. The machine started and dropped another piece of paper into the bin. It was the account and

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number at that branch that had \$680,000 in it. Everything worked. David slipped the printout into his metal invoice binder and was elated that he could leave on Monday as planned. A beep came from the machine.

ENTER THE BRANCH MANAGERS PASSWORD IF YOU WANT TO CHECK FOR ACCOUNTS AT OTHER BANKS.

David should have quit but instead opened the invoice holder and found the number Mr. Johnson had written on the pad the other day. The password was the one he lifted off by rubbing a pencil on edge; an old spy movie trick. He typed in Mr. Johnson's secret password. In less than ten seconds the machine started printing. A full page of account numbers with amount totals dropped into the wire hopper. The machine continued printing. Another full page fell into the hopper, then another. *I hope this hurries up and quits. I might get caught.*

In a panic David quickly picked up the dropping papers and put them in the metal service order holder. He surveyed the lobby to make sure no one was watching. David got back under the desk, prepared to disconnect the power if the machine didn't quit soon. Only two more papers dropped into the hopper and it finally quit.

"Did you get our new account signature verification machine working?" asked someone standing above David.

It was Sally. David jumped up! "Yeah, it was just a damaged communication cord."

"Good timing. It's almost six thirty. We need to leave now, or I will have to reset the alarm."

David hastily gathered his tools and grabbed his notebook while Sally followed and unlocked the front door. David exited with her and the tellers. No sooner did he hear the beep of the alarm setting when he got the feeling he had forgotten something. *Got my tool box and service order binder? I got everything.* David walked out to the truck, happy that the call was completed. His vacation plans were still on.

By the time David got back to the shop Bill had already gone home. There was something David wanted to do when Bill was not around. He went over to his bench and hooked up a microphone to a frequency counter. Holding the microphone up to the boombox, David rewound the tape, and then hit **PLAY**. It was that spy intuition in him, similar to rubbing the pencil on the pad to get Mr. Johnson's password. When the eleven tones on the first part of the tape were picked up by the frequency counter, it displayed what frequencies they were on a red digital display. David had to rewind and start the tape several times, but he got all eleven frequencies. A quick check on a phone tone chart and he had the phone number. *Now I'll see if the number that the Senator Brian Buck had dialed is the same Mr. Henderson on all these bank accounts.*

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Flipping open the metal invoice holder, David started to examine the bank printouts for a phone number. There was no phone number on any of the sheets, but one thing was sure, whoever Mr. Henderson was, he was loaded. David scrutinized the three printouts and noticed that all the accounts were for different organizations, and that Mr. Henderson was listed as the trustee on every account. *This has to be the same Mr. Henderson that Senator Buck mentioned on the tape something about money that was appropriated for studies that never amounted to much.* As David looked closer at the accounts, there was one that had \$290,000 in it for the Committee of Retired Doctors. Another account that caught his eye was two million dollars for a death with dignity study.

The phone rang in Bill's office, it halted David's investigation. "Bill's Electronic shop," David said, still examining the different accounts.

"David, it's past eight. I called to see if I should hold dinner. The children are getting hungry."

"Oh, Marcea, I'm sorry I didn't call. I had a late job at a bank in Denver. And I still have a few things to finish here at the shop so that I can take a week or so off. Go ahead and eat dinner. I won't be home till late."

"A week or so off! What for? Are you going someplace?"

"I'm going to go see Paul's dad and then Paul. I also need to go to the military base in San Diego where I got discharged to get some paperwork straightened out. We'll talk when I get home," said David while he looked closer at the printouts of Mr. Henderson's bank accounts.

"Okay. I'll keep dinner warm for you. Bye."

"Bye." David hung up. Methodically he started unraveling the facts about D.O.S. *These are the accounts that the senator was going to check into, the ones he accused Mr. Henderson of appropriating money for. Boy, there must be over three million dollars here. I wonder if the Senator's plane burning up from a gas leak wasn't an accident. No, that couldn't be. The papers reported it as a faulty gas line. Anyway, what's the big deal if some bureaucrat wastes all this money? Everyone in government does it. They pay six hundred dollars for a hammer. We've got a President who funded some worthless swamp land deal; the one before him sold weapons all over the world. Why should I get involved? There is nothing here that anyone would think was wrong.*

David went back to his bench, wadded up the printouts and shot them into a wastebasket in the corner. He started to finish up some other work but couldn't concentrate. *A lot has happened. Last week at this time Paul and I were stuck up on that mountain. That next morning when he held his hand up and prayed over me*

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*something happened. It's as though new blood is flowing through me. Things have changed so fast in one week. I'm now Danny's Godparent and every night he wants me to come in and say a prayer with him. I know that I will get my military records straightened out and will soon own this electronic shop. I'll start treating Marcea better so for sure she will want to marry me. I should ask Paul to be my Best Man. Thank you, God . . . if you are listening.*

The display on the boombox read 8:28 pm. David turned off the lights, closed up the shop, and headed home. He'd have to finish up Saturday morning before he could start vacation.

Turning into his driveway, David yawned, exhausted from the long day at work. Under the carport, the tarp that covered his Harley had blown off. Covering up his prize possession, he thought about driving it when he left on his trip. While David tied the tarp over the shiny powerful machine he was mentally calculating how much stuff he needed for the trip. *All I really need is my laptop computer with the Clipper Chip plus a few other items. It's warmer out west this time of year. I'll take my ride, weather permitting.*

Marcea was in the same spot she had been the night before, reading the book Paul had sent. "I got your dinner in the oven. Why don't you come into the kitchen and eat? Then you can tell me about this trip you have to go on," Marcea said as she closed the book and forced down the footrest of the recliner.

David followed her into the kitchen, paying attention to the body hugging leotard and bareback workout top. Her firm body reminded him that last night he came home early and went to bed. In fact they had not been together since Paul's visit. But tonight he wouldn't fall to sleep, he wasn't that tired and he hadn't had any alcohol. David plopped down in front of the plate Marcea had put out for him and watched every move as she got the warm food out of the oven.

Marcea brought over a square pan and dished out some lasagna. "Now, what's this trip you have to go on all about?"

"I need to get my records straightened out. Plus, I want to go see Paul's dad in Oregon. I hope to get things ironed out between the two of them."

"How could the father of a priest have problems with his son?"

"It's kind of a personal thing. Someday I'll explain it to you."

"Then what's this about getting some records straightened out?"

David took a bite and while chewing said, "There is some mix up with our Social Security numbers." Not wanting to go into any more detail, he ate more lasagna.

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"So, this mix up between your Social Security numbers also mixed up your military records. Is that it?"

David swallowed and then said, "Yeah, you got it."

Marcea was satisfied with this vague explanation for leaving on such short notice, but she still felt uneasy, almost afraid. "When are you leaving?"

"Probably on Monday, I'll head to Oregon to talk with Paul's father. Then I'll head south to California to see Paul. Then I'll go down to my old military base. I should be back in about ten days. I might even take my Harley, depending on the extended weather report."

"If you take your motorcycle, be careful," Marcea said with concern. "Don't you think it would be safer to drive the truck?"

Paul frowned. Telling a rider to be careful were empty words. All bikers know and live the risk. "I'll be careful."

"You know, this will be the first time we will be apart since I moved in. What should I do? Do you want me to go stay with my mother or something?" Marcea asked with uncertainty. She had never felt like David's home was hers.

As David looked across the table at her big beautiful brown eyes, some of what he read last night in the book Paul had sent him started to sink in. He needed to give more and take less—regardless if it was in a relationship, the country, society or even a church. Greatness comes from giving, not taking. Before, all he wanted was to take; now he wanted to be man enough to give. Things would be different when he got back. He swallowed the lasagna and said, "Marcea, I want you to stay here."

Marcea felt relief. She had never been sure with their living arrangement but had trusted that her prayers would be answered, that someday she would be living in a committed relationship. When Marcea brought over a piece of pie she said, "I'm going to bed early, if you're interested."

"If the kids are asleep, I'll be right there," Paul said excitedly. "I just want to go see if Danny is still waiting up. You know now that I'm his godfather, he likes to say his bedtime prayers with me."

"I'll go and get ready," said Marcea. She went to the bedroom and slipped on a satin teddy, washed, and then dabbed some perfume behind her ears, on her neck, and on her chest. She turned out the lights, pulled back the comforter, fluffed up the pillows and lay there, waiting for David. Tonight she actually wanted David to hurry with Danny and come to her, an eagerness she rarely experienced.

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David looked in on Ann, who was sound asleep. But Danny had been laying awake waiting for him. When David went into his room the two of them prayed and then they started to talk. Danny hardly ever talked much and David did not want to cut this sharing time short. Tired from a long day at work, David slipped off his shoes and lay in bed next to Danny and listened. Danny snuggled up and laid his head on David's large chest. David could feel the pureness of Danny's love and it shot like an arrow directly at his heart.

Danny spoke softly and honestly. "Thank you for taking care of my Mommy, Annie and me.

"I like taking care of you three." David replied.

"Thank you for teaching me how to use that old computer of yours. I like that you are teaching me how to connect with other computers. When I grow up, I want to be just like you, good with electronic and computer stuff."

David just laid there rubbing Danny's head, his skin and red hair so soft and smooth. David knew that he didn't have to respond to Danny, they had some sort of mystical telepathy that bonded them. It was a bond closer than most father and sons have.

Danny continued, "I know you will be the best godfather anybody could have. I love you."

"I love you too," David replied, yawned and then closed his eyes.

Marcea looked at the time on the alarm clock, somewhat frustrated but probably more perturbed that David was taking so long. Thinking that he might be reading the book Paul sent again, she got out of bed, put on a robe, and went to check. As she walked by Danny's room she noticed David had fallen asleep with Danny. Danny's head was still resting on David's chest and he had one of his small arms wrapped around his neck. Marcea pulled some covers over the two of them and turned off the light. She stood there in the darkened room and cried. She had been trying so hard not to fall in love again, yet she could be losing that battle.

Marcea needed someone this night. She closed the door to Danny's room and wiped the tears from her face. She went into Ann's room and slid in bed next to her. Ann sluggishly moved over and they both slept snuggled together.

David rose early and left a note on the kitchen table.

*Dear Marcea,*

*I didn't want to wake you this morning and I surely didn't mean to fall asleep*

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*in Danny's bed. Anyway, I'll be home late. I've got a lot to catch up on in the shop. I keep thinking about that overnight home for special children you talked about the other night. It's a wonderful idea. You know, we've never had a weekend all to ourselves. It's not that I mind the children, but the thought of spending a night or two just by ourselves would be wonderful. There's so much I'd like to do for you and just being together without any interruption would be great. We could really get to know each other, if you know what I mean.*

*Anyway I'll see you later. David*

When Marcea woke and read the note she folded it once, took it to the bedroom and tucked it in a small box where she kept her special things. All morning she tried to think of someone or someplace she could take Ann and Danny for a night. She so much wanted to surprise David with an intimate candlelight dinner, maybe some dancing followed by a drive in the country. Then she would show David how much she loved him. Her heart turned heavy when she realized it was an impossible dream.

David worked longer and harder than he had expected, but he was caught up and his working vacation plans were still on schedule. He picked up pizza and two movies on his way home. It had become a ritual that Danny and Ann enjoyed. The large screen and surround sound system filled up most of the front room in David's double wide home.

This Saturday night was no different. They all ate pizza and watched one of the VHS movies. After the first movie Marcea got the children to bed and David went in and said good night to them. Marcea and David were finally alone and they retired to the front room to watch the other movie. Marcea poured herself a glass of wine and fixed David a drink. He put his arm around her as they watched the movie together. Oddly, Marcea felt warm inside, she blamed it on the wine but it was a feeling that she didn't want to go away. She told herself that she didn't deserve what she was feeling and tried hard to ignore the joy and peace she was feeling.

About halfway through the movie David started to doze off. Marcea pulled off his shoes and got a blanket. Before the movie was over David was sound asleep on the sofa. Marcea so much wanted to be alone with David before he left on his trip, but tonight would not be that night. She had a backup plan and it was probably better David slept tonight for the hot passion she was planning for Sunday evening. Marcea wanted the last night before David left to be one that would make him want to come back home to her. Her feelings were running deep—something she hadn't felt in many years.

The backup plan just fell into place that afternoon while David was working. Bill

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called to let her know what time he and the Misses would pick them up for church on Sunday. That was when Marcea asked Bill if Sunday after the church service he and his wife wouldn't mind looking after Ann and Danny for a while. Mary got on the phone. They talked almost an hour. Being childless, she was thrilled for the opportunity to have them after the Sunday church. She also wanted to help with the romantic evening Marcea was planning. Her Texan hospitality could not be denied and she insisted that Marcea let her cook her special fried chicken. She'd keep the children and Bill would bring the meal over at six sharp. Marcea accepted Mary's offer. It felt too good to be true.

Sunday morning the sky was dark blue and clear when Bill and Mary arrived at the house. Marcea had the children dressed and their hair brushed. She had on a dark skirt and white sweater. The excitement in the warm fall air, compounded with Marcea and Mary's whispering about the romantic interlude planned later that day. David felt somewhat uncomfortable. Bill only asked once if David was planning on going to church with them. David didn't respond.

Finally, Bill broke the tension. "Y'all need to stay home and get packed for your trip tomorrow."

"Yeah, you're right. I'd come to church with you if I didn't have to get things packed. But thanks for the offer," David said, relieved the way Bill let him off the hook.

"We all best load up and head out," said Bill with his Texan drawl

David was putting Danny's wheelchair into the trunk when Bill came back and shook his hand, saying not a word. It was strange, as if Bill knew what he was planning to do while they were at church. The car backed out of the driveway and all five waved at David as they drove off. David waved until they were out of sight and then walked under the carport and pulled the tarpaulin off his Harley. He pushed it out on the lawn and then started to strap on some gear. He went to the truck, got his laptop computer and the Clipper Chip and slid it into the left saddle bag.

In less than an hour he was packed and ready to leave. But he had one more thing to do. Walking over to his truck, he unlocked the passenger door and took out the two boxes on the floor. The longer box contained a dozen long stemmed red roses, the other held chocolate truffles. David carried the boxes inside and looked for a vase, the roses ended up in an Irish beer stein. He then took the box of candy and placed it on Marcea's pillow in the bedroom. David found some stationery and sat at the table in front of the roses and started to write.

*Dear Marcea,*

*I decided to take off a day early while you were at church so to avoid a good-*

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*bye. So much has changed inside me in the last week. It's is like new blood is flowing thru me. Never before have I felt so good about what the future holds for us. I'm not the type of guy that says things, but I want you to know that I really do care about you. Please forgive me for taking off like this but it only means I'll be back a day sooner to be with you.*

*Love David.*

*P.S. I'll call you from Oregon.*

David looked over the note and slid it under the makeshift vase. Then he started another.

*Dear Ann,*

*Sorry that I didn't stay around to say goodbye. I hope the two hours of horse riding lessons I arranged will make up for it. Have your mom take you to the Aurora Riding Stables. Everything's all set up. See you in a week.*

*David*

David took this note put it on Ann's bed then returned to the table.

*Dear Danny,*

*I know you will be the only one that understands why I left a day early. You know all that hugging, goodbye stuff gets to me. When I get back I owe you a long ride on the Harley. We'll go to that old hamburger stand you like to ride to. When I'm on the road we will try to hook up via our computers. I'll be in Oregon and California. Remember to switch your modem to 1200bps when you hear the squealing in the phone. I'll be calling long distance. Take care of the women and yourself.*

*Love, David*

David went into Danny's room and laid the note on the Commodore 64 keyboard. Back by the front door he pulled on his leathers and helmet locked up and headed west. The warm sun penetrated thru the back of his black leather jacket was a good start to wrapping up the things that he could. Accepting the things he couldn't control was what David was about to face head on.

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Returning from the church there was an ongoing air of fellowship among the five. Marcea and her children had been well received at the small community church. Bill pulled the car into the gravel driveway and Marcea was the first one up the ramp to the house. She was anxious to surprise David with news of the romantic evening that she had planned for just the two of them. It was strange that the front door was locked. She searched her purse for the key while Bill was helping Danny out of the car into his wheelchair. Mary was leading Ann by the hand up the ramp. Marcea found the key, opened the door, and immediately spotted the dozen red roses setting in the center of the table. She read the note that was tucked under the makeshift vase.

Mary came thru the front door and walked over to admire the red roses. Marcea let the note drop onto the table and informed Mary that David left a day early. Disappointed that the Sunday afternoon plans were off they held each other. Bill entered pushing Danny and Mary whispered to him about the botched plans. Bill suggested that the fried chicken meal should not go to waste and that Marcea should come along with them since they still had planned a Sunday with the children.

Everything worked out fine, the five of them went to the Denver Zoo and then went back to Bill and Mary's for a southern style dinner. Mary and Marcea cleaned up while Bill churned fresh ice cream out on the deck with Ann and Danny.

It was past eight before Marcea and the kids were back at David's place. The day had turned out wonderful after all. Bill and Mary helped Marcea get the children to bed and they all exchanged thanks and hugs before bed and again when they left. It was hard to tell who were the most grateful. Bill and Mary for the opportunity to take everyone to church followed by the joy filled fun afternoon, or Marcea who was doing what she always intended to do, exposing her children to the love of Jesus. Ann and Danny were the most thankful; they felt like part of a big extended family.

Earlier that morning in Sunday school they had found out that everyone was a brother or sister of God. This realization was overwhelming to them as it actually unfolded this day. They both thanked God as they fell off to a peaceful sleep, comforted with the love of this one Sunday. There was now a small glow burning inside each of them and a want to hear more of the word.

After Bill and Mary left Marcea locked up the house and then headed down the hall. At the bedroom door she spotted the box of chocolate truffles on her pillow. On the box David had written:

*I hope this small box of chocolates brings you one tenth of the pleasure you have given me.*

# In The Silence

James Andrew Edske

## *Love you, David*

Marcea sat on the edge of the bed. Never before had she wanted so much for David to be there with her that night. She washed and found one of David shirts to sleep in, the smell of his manliness mixed with the cologne still in the collar. She prayed and at the same time knew that she didn't deserve to feel or ask to be a complete family. She'd been lusted after by men in her past and let them use her to get what she needed. The give and take of a relationship without commitment—is what she disliked most about herself. This night Marcea dreamed about David and being together as one—not by need, but by love.