

Jenn & Kelly Mystery #2

Night Terror

Hello Readers,

Thank you for choosing this Jenn & Kelly mystery. The book starts with Violet filling us in on the activities in Willsborough and her bookstore, The Corner. Then she narrates to us from a Jenn & Kelly mystery book she has found in The Corner. The passages go back and forth between Willsborough and Eagle Mills.

Violet is the owner and operator of The Corner, a used bookstore in the small town of Willsborough, Ohio. Jenn & Kelly are young teen mystery sleuths in the small town of Eagle Mills. These three people meet when a little mystery book shows up in Violet's bookstore.

This Jenn & Kelly case is about a little girl, whose family is new to Eagle Mills, and how an extremely scary noise keeps them up at night. It scares Elspeth so bad she is ready to stay up all night long just to keep this unearthly creature away

from her home. Can Jenn & Kelly solve the case before Elspeth starts a life of no sleep?

Turn the page to find out and begin the adventure of *Night Terror*.

Ever so grateful,

Marsha Keim

First Passage



When I opened the bookstore today, I once again found one of those home-published, small, hardback books laying on the end table in the fuchsia corner of the bookstore.

The Corner is the name of my bookstore; I named it in memory of my dad. He did his reading in one room of our home he referred to as “the corner”. I am Violet, owner and operator of The Corner.

When I opened a used bookstore in my little town, naming it The Corner was the only name I considered. I have a small plaque in the front window explaining the name. For some of my customers, it is an honored name; for others, it is also humorous. This plaque is necessary because the bookstore is in the center of the block, not on a corner.

For my son, Liam, and some other children of Willsborough, it is humorous. They like to spend the day here and then tell everyone they “spent the day in the corner.” This always gets a groan and a chuckle from the person on the receiving

end of the comment, unless there is a person unfamiliar with our area. Then they usually gasp, until someone explains the joke.

My only purpose in naming the bookstore as I did was to remember Daddy. The humor was a side effect. I think it has helped with sales; the children come in so they can tell the joke and occasionally even buy a book.

Just like most buildings, the bookstore has four corners: two up front and two at the back. I set each corner up with two chairs, reading lamps, and an end table.

All color coordinated. The front corners are salmon and lemon; often preferred by the females. The back corners are royal blue and fuchsia. I usually find the males in the royal blue corner. As with many things, there are always exceptions.

My favorite is the fuchsia corner. This is where I sit when reading after hours and where these small books appear. I do not understand where they are coming from or to whom they belong. There is no author listed, so I do not know who wrote them. They always show up during the night and since I have no after-hours cleaning crew, I cannot blame their appearance on the cleaning people. Maybe after I read enough of these books, I can solve the mystery of why they appear in my store.

Ironically, the storylines are also mysteries. They are about two girls who solve mysteries in their little town of Eagle Mills. The girls solved their first mystery when they were in the fifth grade.

When the books first appeared, I just looked at the description of the story, logged them into my computer, and put them in the teen mystery section to sell. A few months back, the title caught my attention and so I read that book. It proved to be a very interesting story. Because of that, I also intend to read this latest one. The title of this one is *Screecher Creature*.

According to the book's introduction, there is a new family in Jenn & Kelly's town. A nighttime visitor that makes a terrifying noise is bothering them. The noise affected their little girl the most. The description sounds like this will be another spooky story to read.

My town, Willsborough, is a small town; just like Jenn & Kelly's. We have a grocery store, hardware store, several gas stations, several churches, one ice cream stand, one school serving K-12, a restaurant, a pizza parlor, and one traffic light.

Because we still have no public library, the school library has Saturday and summer hours. We sometimes use my bookstore as a library. This is another

reason I have sitting corners. The primary reason is to create an atmosphere that will encourage shoppers to take some time to look through the book prior to purchasing, or after, if they prefer.

No one minds that customers are reading the books. They are used books. Even the students are careful with the books, as they would be at a library. So far, there has been no damage to prevent the sale of the books. Rare or high dollar books are the exclusions; they are not available to read.

The bookstore reading corners are different from the corner where my dad read. That was a room, actually not in a corner of our home, either. That is a similarity between The Corner and my dad's corner. At home, we had only one; it was a private room. I think that clue is enough for you to figure out exactly where my dad did his reading.

At the bookstore, I have one true "corner" by Daddy's definition. For sanitary reasons, there is a "no books allowed" sign on the door just below the girl/boy picture. I am sure Daddy would understand.

That is the history of how The Corner came about. I started the bookstore around five years ago. Even though Willsborough is small, business is good. I also serve some people from neighboring towns.

My first customer today was one of my regulars, Tiffany Hearth. She stops by almost daily. It gives me the opportunity to see how her new grandbaby, Mina, is growing. Tiffany likes to send books to her daughter to read to Mina.

We have discovered that we have similar reading backgrounds. Our mom's read to us when we were little, we became big readers as children, both having our own mini libraries as kids, we read to our children when they were little, both our daughters now are readers and read to their children, we get books for our grandbabies, and we both like paper books and also eBooks.

Our differences include: I also have a son who is a reader, Liam; I read out loud to my children while I was pregnant with them, my daughter did this with her baby, and they have known me to read to my cat and my dog. Tiffany's difference is that she also likes audio books. I enjoy reading so much I almost hate audio books.

Tiffany and I have shared our reading histories over the years. Whenever she comes to the bookstore, we catch up on our children and grandchildren.

"Hi, Tiffany, how are you?" I greeted her.

"Just fine and you?" she countered.

"I'm the same, thankfully. How is Mina doing?" I asked about the latest on her grandbaby.

"She is just fine and being a typical toddler; growing like a weed," she elaborated.

"Trying to walk, feeding herself when Shelley will let her, and trying to sing along with her daddy," she finished the update.

"She seems to be moving right along. Does she enjoy storytime with Shelley?" I asked.

"Very much. She just sits there looking at the pictures as Shelley reads and turns the pages," she added.

"Does she try to imitate reading yet?" I kept the conversation going.

"A little," Tiffany answered. "What about your granddaughter, Minuette, has she imitated reading yet?"

"Carli said that Minuette tries to repeat the words that Carli is reading. She also is pretending to read it to her dolls!" I was so excited about Minuette's actions.

"Sounds like she enjoys it. What is her favorite book?" Tiffany asked with genuine interest.

"Harold and the Purple Crayon. One of my favorites when I was in school. It was way beneath my reading level, but the purple crayon got me. The adventures he took with that crayon!" I shared a memory moment. "His choice of color was the best!" I added.

"I remember the book myself," Tiffany stated. Then a slight glaze came over her features as her mind went back to elementary days. "I agree. His choice of color drew me to the book. I heard that purple is more appealing to children than adults. What does that say about us?!" Heather asked rhetorically.

"Right," I responded with a giggle.

Another customer came in and Tiffany walked to the stacks, the shelving units where I stock the books.

While Tiffany was looking for more books to send to Mina, I was assisting the school librarian in finding more titles for the school library. Her first stop was always my supply of Scholastic Books.

Occasionally, I will have titles she does not have, usually those that are out of print. What she has are mostly the newer titles from the book fairs that the school holds each year.

“Hi, Mrs. Hendley, how are you?” I greeted the librarian as she removed her gloves, hat, and scarf. I have noticed that she seems to be the first one to wear these pieces of winter gear.

“I’m well and hope the same for you,” she replied.

“I’m surrounded by good people, good books, and good weather. I have a healthy, loving family, Jesus loves me, I love Him; I’m doing just fine,” I answered as I ticked off each item on my fingers. She smiled and shook her head in agreement.

“What can I help you with, the usual?” I guessed.

“Yes. Any new arrivals lately?” she asked hopefully.

“I just got about a dozen last week. Some are titles I remember as a kid,” I advised.

“Good. I’ll go have a look,” she replied as she was walking toward the youth section. I went back to the paperwork that keeps me busy in between customers.

“Violet!” Mrs. Hendley called out about five minutes later.

“Be right there, Mrs. Hendley,” I replied as I quickly moved toward the youth section. “What can I help you with?” I asked upon arriving at her side.

“First, call me Agatha when there are no children around. Second, have you read *Mystery of the Empty House?*” Agatha asked as she held the book toward me.

“Yes, when I was in elementary. This is one title I remember reading,” I replied.

“The grandparents of today’s students probably read this. They should still be able to enjoy it,” I stated.

“I think it sounds like a good find and if I put it on the shelf, I know of about six girls that will read it regardless of how ‘dated’ it may be,” she said as she smiled.

“I would also like these other eight I remember from my youth,” she concluded with a twinkle in her eye and a sneaky grin.

“I know, rub it in!” I teased her back. I am about 15 years older than Agatha is and we both like to tease the other about our age, whenever we can. We have had some lively conversations about the pros and cons, the good and bad, of our respective generations.

I rang up her nine books, and she happily bounded out the door heading in the school’s direction.

The door had just barely finished closing when it re-opened and hit my alert bell.

I turned to see who was coming in so I could greet the person.

“Hi, Mary Ellen! I haven’t seen you in a while,” I greeted one of our local birdwatchers. Technically, she is a substitute teacher for Willsborough and surrounding towns; bird watching is just her hobby.

“I have been busy keeping classrooms from sinking while the teachers had to be away,” she responded with a giggle at her own little joke. Then she gave an update on her teaching schedule. “Last month was one of my busiest ever; I only had three school days I was not subbing somewhere,” she stated happily.

“Wow!” It astounded me that a substitute teacher could stay that busy. I would have thought teachers could not miss that many days. I could remember having a substitute only a handful of times; some grades none. “I do not remember having very many subs when I was in school. It has been a while so maybe my memory is not accurate,” I added.

“Keep in mind I’m a sub for three school districts; which means: nine buildings, nine grades, plus Specials and Intervention Classes. That totals nearly 190 subbing opportunities any day that there is school. It would be different if I only subbed for one school or one building. Then I would not be as busy,” she concluded. “It would also mean more days to go bird watching but no money to pay for the trip, or their food!”

“Are you looking for more backyard bird books?” I asked, trying to guess what brought her to The Corner today.

“Yes, remember that first bird guide book I bought way back?” she questioned my memory.

“Yes, hardback, color pictures. Right?” I hoped that was the first bird book she bought. It was the first one I remember selling to her. It is also the first one I sold to Tonya Mossburg, a nurse at the clinic. It seems to be a popular find for beginning birders.

When I have a copy on the shelf, I will even refer to it if I see an unknown bird at the park across the street from The Corner. The color pictures and details about feeding and nesting make it a good book to have.

“It was. Now I want something that will give me a lot more details, maybe multiple books that focus on just one species of birds per book,” she explained what she wanted to add to her collection.

“I have books that cover single species or related species. Let’s see if that is what you want.” I led her to the nature section so I could point out the exact books I had in mind. “How many feeders do you have now?” I asked about the feeders she keeps in her yard.

“I have six hummingbird feeders; two feeders for Orioles, one for jam and one for oriole nectar; two feeders with the millet mix; two with the nut & berry mix; and one for thistle seeds.” Her numbers seem up from last year. She must have increased the number of birds stopping by her feeders. “The hummingbird feeders and oriole feeders are not up now. I will rehang the oriole feeders by the end of March and the hummingbird feeders go out Memorial Day Weekend,” she added.

“How many do you feed?” I inquired.

“I have 25, some all year, some only during the warmer months, and some only during the winter,” she explained.

While Mary Ellen was browsing the bird selections, I took a few minutes to check in with Jenn & Kelly to see what this latest book would find them doing.

Second Passage



Gray. Foggy. Hazy. Moist. Cold. Everywhere she turned these five things assaulted her senses. There were no sounds. Where did her cat go? When she tried to call his name, her mouth opened but nothing came out. It was as if her mouth opened in slow motion. Nothing was as it should be. *Mailbox was here a second ago, where did he go?*

The trees were too close together and there were too many to fit in her front yard. Even though they had moved in just a month ago, she knew this was not her front yard. Where is the road? She should be able to see it. Even through the fog, she should see the road.

She tried again to call for Mailbox. Still the same result, no sound when she opened her mouth.

Then suddenly she heard something in this foggy void of her front yard,
“Screeeeee.”

The sound was so terrifying that she screamed and this time she made a sound. Within seconds, her mom was knocking on her bedroom door.

“Elspeth! What is wrong?” Her mom called out as she entered the room.

Elspeth immediately transported from the gray, hazy fog of her dream back to her bedroom. She heard her mom call her name, yet it was so distant. As the fog lifted, she could make out the shape of her mom and all the furniture in her bedroom. She turned on her light and sat up in her bed.

The sound seemed to come from all directions. As if projected from surround sound speakers like the ones in their new family room.

Elspeth looked up at her mom with a look of pure terror on her face. Her mom saw it immediately.

“Why did you scream? Are you all right?” her mom questioned. She still had a clear view of the terror on Elspeth’s face.

“Did you hear that terrible sound?” Elspeth asked her mom. Her shaky voice just proved Elspeth’s terror to Mrs. Star.

“I heard you scream. It nearly scared me to death,” answered her mom.

“No, not my scream. That eerie, raspy, cry from some monster,” Elspeth corrected her mom. “Wait, you heard me scream?” she asked with a look of

surprise on her face. *If she heard me scream but not the monster, maybe I dreamed that part.*

“I only heard *you* scream,” replied her mom. Then, as if on cue...

“Screeeeee,” came the sound again.

Elspeth and her mom looked at each other. This time her mom heard it. Now Elspeth saw the fear on her mom’s face.

By this time, Elspeth, her mom, and the monster had also awakened her dad from his dreaming. As he entered Elspeth’s bedroom, he asked what was going on.

“What’s got you girls up at this hour?” he inquired with an exaggerated yawn and the rubbing of his eyes.

Elspeth’s mom filled him in, “I heard Elspeth scream and when I got to her room, it turned out to be an eerie, raspy, hissing, cry that caused the alarm. I just heard it and I can tell it is coming from outside,” she explained.

As if the monster could understand, it sounded again so her dad could also hear it.

“Screeeeee,” it hissed. Then there was silence, both inside the Star home and outside it. Mr. Star spoke first.

“I wasn’t dreaming. I heard that in my sleep and my mind created the image of a winged cat-creature. Sit tight, I’m going out for a look,” he directed his family.

“Daddy, you can’t go out with a monster outside,” Elspeth said to her dad, fearing for his life. “Please,” she added for respect.

“She’s right, Calvin. We should stay where we are safe,” Mrs. Star pleaded with Mr. Star. “We are not familiar with the animals around here.”

“I’ll be fine. Where’s my flashlight?” He left the room to get his light. When he walked past Elspeth’s room, he had his bright LED flashlight and said, “I’ll be right back. Don’t worry, there is nothing strange about the animals here. No different from the animals at our old home.”

Elspeth and her mom went to the window to see where Mr. Star was going. At first, he was walking around in the dark. Eventually, they found him in the front yard shining his light in all directions.

After about five minutes, Mr. Star returned to Elspeth and his wife. His report was not good, not bad.

“I saw nothing. Let’s get back to sleep,” he directed as he walked to the master bedroom where he and Mrs. Star slept.

“Good night,” Mrs. Star said to Elspeth as she tucked her back into her princess canopy bed. “It was probably two animals fighting,” she reassured Elspeth.

“I bet it was a monster,” Elspeth responded.

The rest of the evening was quiet. The Star family could get a good night’s sleep.

Elspeth was up and ready for school in record time. She said goodbye to her mom and dad and got on the bus, as usual.

During the bus ride, she was telling one of her friends about the sound. Her friend suggested talking with Jenn & Kelly.

“Who is Jenn & Kelly and how can they help me?” Elspeth asked.

“They are amateur mystery sleuths over at the junior high. Do you remember *The Case of the Old Bell*? Jenn & Kelly solved that. Oh! Wait a minute, that was before you moved here. You won’t remember. Anyway, maybe they can sort out your mystery,” Leslie suggested to Elspeth. Leslie was a long-time resident of Eagle Mills, all of her ten years.

“That makes them famous. Will they be willing to talk to an underclassman?” Elspeth asked.

“Sure. They’re cool junior high kids. They’re in Mom’s science class,” reassured Leslie. Her mom teaches science at Eagle Mills Jr. High, and Leslie has met some students, including Jenn & Kelly.

“Okay. Since you know them, will you tell them and see if they are interested, for me? Please?” Elspeth asked.

“I would be glad to,” replied Leslie. At that moment, another of their friends, Hank, got on the bus and sat down with Leslie and Elspeth.

“Hi, Girls! What’s up?” Hank asked. Looking back and forth at each girl, giving them his warmest smile. His crazy little hair-flip drooping toward his right eye.

Leslie looked at Elspeth to see if it was ok to tell Hank. Leslie’s eyes had a questioning appearance and Elspeth saw it. She knew what Leslie was asking without saying the words. Elspeth gave a look back to Leslie that was a clear approval to answer Hank’s question.

“Elspeth was telling me about a scary sound at her house last night. Her parents don’t know what it is,” Leslie gave a brief description of Elspeth’s dilemma.

“Easy, let Jenn & Kelly solve it,” he replied confidently. His smile was kind, sweet, and huge! Something convinced him he had an original answer to Elspeth’s problem. When he smiled like that, he had such an endearing appearance.

“That’s the same thing Leslie suggested. These girls must be great at solving mysteries,” Elspeth remarked.

“Have you read *The Case of the Old Bell*? The book is in the school library and is their case notes about the bell at Hilltop Church. Our town historian, Andrew Monroe, wrote about the legend; the title of his book is *Legend of the Old Bell*. He also wrote a book about the history of the church and the bell: *Hilltop Church*,” Hank explained. “Read all three and you will have a good understanding of these historical sites and the skills of Jenn & Kelly,” he further directed Elspeth. He almost sounded like an infomercial for the sale of the books.

“I will,” Elspeth agreed.

They filled the rest of the bus ride with more lively conversations, typical of elementary students. Discussing assignments and the likes & dislikes of various subjects; wondering when snow days will start; and being excited about all the fun science experiments their teacher said they would be doing.

Once the students arrived at school, Elspeth remembered it was Tuesday and her class’s Special on Tuesdays was library. She was so excited, she could check out the books Leslie and Hank told her to read about Hilltop Church, the bell, and the investigative skills of Jenn & Kelly.

As Leslie and Elspeth were unpacking their book bags, she shared her excitement with Leslie. "Today is library! I can check out those books you and Hank were talking about," Elspeth reported.

"You may need to pick just one to start with. I don't think they allow three books at once," Leslie sadly warned her new friend. "I would suggest you start with *Legend of the Old Bell*, then *The Case of the Old Bell*, followed by *Hilltop Church*. That way you get the legend first, then the solution by Jenn & Kelly, and finally just the history of the church and bell."

"Maybe Miss Libby will make an exception since I'm new and all three are the same subject," she replied, with a questioning grin. Her eyebrows shot into the stratosphere and she shook her head yes. You know those sweet and innocent looks meant to convince you to do what they want of you.

"You can try, but Miss Libby usually is firm in her rules," Leslie stated just as the bell rang.

It was only 90 minutes until Special, but it felt like 90 days to Elspeth. She tried to stay focused on Morning Work, Daily Math Review, and Daily Language Review. However, no matter how hard she tried, her mind kept wandering over into the library. If she could check out only one book, she had thought she would read

Jenn & Kelly's case notes first. Then she could see if they really were as good as Hank and Leslie claim they are at solving mysteries. She would still ask to check out all three books.

Eventually, her mind gave up, stayed in the classroom, and helped her finish her work. Suddenly, it was the time for Special. Elspeth was the first to have her desk in order and she was first to line up behind the line leader. She grabbed the behavior wheel and waited for the rest of the class to get in line.

Elspeth was waiting but not patiently. The rest of the class was taking too long to put their supplies away and sit quietly. Their teacher picked Leslie and Hank next to line up. After that, the rest of the class lined up rather quickly. Jeremy was the caboose for the day, and he had picked Mark to help him carry the book tote down to the library.

After walking quietly down the hall, the class finally arrived at the library. Elspeth went directly to the section with Jenn & Kelly's case notes. Then she went to the sections for *Hilltop Church* and *Legend of the Old Bell*.

Once she had her choices, she got into the line at the librarian's desk for check out. She once again found herself in a line waiting to do something she wanted to do faster. Finally, it was her turn to check out her book choices. She placed them

on the librarian's desk and she had her fingers crossed. *If I smile very nice and show lots of proper manners, maybe I will get all three books today. I could use what Daddy calls 'puppy dog eyes'; he told me he just cannot say no when I do that. It might work on Miss Libby too.*

"Hi, Elspeth," Miss Libby greeted her.

"Hello, Miss Libby, how are you?" Elspeth asked with a very polite voice and a big smile.

"I'm fine. How are you?" she replied.

"I'm excited to read about Hilltop Church, the bell, and the mysteries and legends of both," Elspeth said very fast. She also figured if she stated her purpose quick enough she could beat Miss Libby to any refusals. Then maybe she would have a better chance of her special request, to check out three books.

"That's good. I see you have three books. You must have heard the news! As of today, we allow students three books at a time," Miss Libby advised Elspeth.

"No, I had not heard. I was just hopeful," Elspeth admitted.

"I'm glad I need not refuse your request," Miss Libby stated. "Have a good day," she suggested as she handed the books back to Elspeth. "Enjoy your books."

“Thank you. I hope to. You have a good day also,” Elspeth said as she walked to her seat. She immediately opened *The Legend of the Old Bell* and read. She had taken her friend’s suggestion about the reading order. Soon enough, she would need to stop and listen to storytime with Miss Libby. For now, she could immerse herself fully into the story and ignore all around her.