

Legion

The Jane Story

by
Sarah Jane Bryan Miller

Forward

I was a primary witness to the healing of Jane Miller. I was also, I believe, a partner in it, although to what extent I leave up to the reader: I was her psychotherapist.

Jane asked me to write of my work with her in order to pass on a better understanding of her experience and of faith healing itself. She is a very special person to me, and I am honored to do this. We are both getting on in years now - it happened about 35 years ago - and we share a desire to enable our grandchildren to see the world as we once saw it, and perhaps learn that greater forces are at work in their lives than they know.

This is a dramatic case, to say the least. It began with modern psychiatric care and culminated in demon exorcism - the most ancient of psychological healings- and raises the question of how it all happened. There is an internal logic that connects psychotherapy and exorcism. Both involve healers and sufferers, and both are built on acts of faith. The healer must believe in the treatment, and the sufferer must believe in the healer. Each must believe in the other. The difference lies in the belief systems surrounding the sufferer's pain, the role of the healer, and in the changes needed in order to recover. The scientific method behind psychotherapy has more options and a better recovery rate for more people. The prescientific, intuitive method of healing as in exorcism is chancy for most, but when it works, it seems miraculous.

In Jane's case, the therapy was preparation for the exorcism. Each in its own way is a form of healing. The therapy offered her a chance to learn how to trust in someone who wanted to help her, and how to reveal her secret troubles so as to regain stability in her life. Psychologically, she was going to confession and receiving absolution, although in therapy it is much more subtle than in church, and the system of beliefs and symbols is built by the patient-suppliant, not the therapist-priest. ~~The belief system of the exorcism was part of Jane's childhood, so she could relate to it, and her ability to do this as honestly as she did was a product of the therapy. As if having been in rehearsal, she was able to take the stage when it counted.~~

I kept a medical case file on the therapy, and draw on it in the following account. The healing was recorded by the healer, a charismatic named Sam Fife, on a dramatic audio tape. He later sent copies to many groups, and for years I received letters from believers and scholars all around the world who heard it, asking if the healing described on it was true. It was.

I must confess that I was once almost as disbelieving as those who sent those many letters. But as the following account will show, Jane was not the only one affected by her healing. I was, also.

So I have reviewed my old notes -which are admittedly incomplete- and have let my memory fill in the gaps. There may be more fiction than usual in a medical story,

therefore, but that doesn't mean that the following is not true. Doctors tend to recall their work fairly accurately. Patients tend to color their memories with the anxieties from which they suffered at the time. Jane does not recall much about the therapy except that she was constantly sinking into black pits of despair and fear, and I was there to pull her out. That's good enough.

Evaluation and Diagnosis

I first met Jane in the psychiatric ward of Charity Hospital of New Orleans, Louisiana, in March, 1960. I had just begun my residency in psychiatry at Tulane University School of Medicine, and she was to be one of my first long-term patients in psychotherapy. Because of the remarkable course of events that followed, she was a patient I never forgot.

I entered the interviewing room determined not to reveal that I was anxious. The role of doctor-therapist was all new to me, and I was awed at the responsibility of taking another person's inner wounds into my hands, so to speak, with the expectation that I could find some way to heal them. I had great hopes, but little experience to rely on.

My background was unusual, and ironic in view of what would happen in this case. To the patients, I was a doctor in a white coat, a shrink who knew about the mind. But I really was a clergyman, trained as a hospital chaplain, in an experimental psychiatric training program. It was the equivalence of a residency without going to medical school. The goal of the program was to explore training of allied health professionals in a field which in those days was desperate for trained manpower.

I had what proved later to be an advantage in this case. I had had extensive training in theology, and had always been fascinated by the psychology of religion, its mysticism, symbols and great truths about human nature, and regarded religion as a potential force for health, what some have called intuitive psychotherapy. It turned out that this enabled me to understand what was going to happen in a few months with Jane.

But on this hot day in Charity Hospital such ideas had no place as yet. I had been assigned a woman who had been brought in to the emergency room the night before. She had had an apparently psychotic episode at home, and had been found by her family fallen down in a trance, a fugue state in which one's body can move but one cannot speak for a time.

I had no idea what the problem was. It was my job to find out. To do this, I was to be objective, professionally concerned yet focused on any personal characteristics or idiosyncrasies that would explain what was implied, or illumine what was left unspoken. Take a history. Observe any evidence of brain disease, addiction, psychosis, or schizophrenia. And hope for the best.

We were to use a skill called "listening with the third ear," combined with "controlled emotional warmth". This would create that psychotherapeutic instrument with which we would find the powerful hidden, unspoken beliefs and perceptions that confounded our patients and, like bolted doors in the mind, trapped them and blocked the way to health. Our empathy with their struggles, we were told, was the key to those doors.

It would also be my responsibility to explore Jane's life and personality conflicts as if I were writing a novel. I was to be like an author of a mystery, who could detect aspects of his characters which explained hidden motives, self-defeating behavior patterns or fragments of craziness that might be causes of the troubles they presented. After all, the theory went, everyone's life has a story line. It takes a detective to unravel it and an artist-writer to explain its complexities. So psychotherapy is much more art than science, because art inspires while science only fixes.

From the history, I hoped to learn how she coped with her challenges, what kind of resilience she had, whether she could trust and love, and how brave she was. I knew the answer to the last one as soon as I met her: if she had gotten this far, she had a lot of guts indeed.

Jane was seated, nervously rocking a little in her chair, a stare on her face, trying to remain calm in the noisy hospital, yet obviously in distress. She was a dark-haired, slim, attractive woman with a certain grace about her, yet the tensions of one in great turmoil. I could see it in her eyes.

As I sat down facing Jane, I recall how nervous I was, and how determined I was to make things right. I had crafted in my mind that I should present myself to patients as one who was to be their guide, who would journey wherever they had to go in order to get better, keep them from getting lost or hurt, and enable them then to find their way.

I had no idea how I would do it. I didn't want to fail.

After I introduced myself, she stared at me with terrible fear, confusion, and sorrow in her eyes. Something was happening to her, and she did not know what it was. She silently held up both her hands, spaced them about six inches apart, and extended her index fingers upwards. She looked first at one and then the other, and slowly began to bring them together until they almost touched. She looked at me over them, in a voice of confusion and terror, and said, "I want to be the same people".

I tried to understand. Our journey was underway.

A series of interviews followed for the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment plan. Jane revealed a good intelligence, a sensitive conscience, and constant efforts to take care of everyone around her. She also had an attractive, self-deprecating sense of humor which rescued her when she was feeling the worst about herself. Beneath this

congenial outer self was an inner self, however, filled with self-doubt and stark fears of some dark side of her personality. She would change in mid-sentence from friendly trust to strange and deep fear, as though the more she relaxed the more dangerous things were.

This was Jane's second hospitalization within the last twelve months, and there had been a third one a few years in the past. She had just moved to New Orleans from Texas with her six children and her husband, Richard. In Texas she had been emotionally disturbed for a long time. She had phobias and mood swings and spells when she would lose touch with reality for a time; and there were serious depressions after the birth of the last two children. On the outside, she was a struggling and well-meaning wife and mother. On the inside, she was often in moods of despair, and compensated with an extensive fantasy life about romance and escape from it all. This then led to secrets between the spouses and inevitably serious marital discord. Each was hurt and angry with the other. They were separated for a time. Finally, a doctor friend saw her problems and advised her to see a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist put her in the hospital there and gave her ECT (electroconvulsive or "shock" therapy), with the result that her most immobilizing symptoms were relieved.

While this was a desired result, the underlying problems were still emerging. The marriage continued to unravel. Richard lost his business, and they had to move so he could start over in the Louisiana oil fields. For Jane, however, the burdens of life were the same. Only the location was different. The inner darkness never left.

Richard was a concerned, stoic, rather quiet but determined man who could not relate to the extremes of his wife's emotionality. He thought she was often putting on an act, getting too upset when things were difficult, and trying to elicit more sympathy than was needed. Her relapses frustrated him considerably.

Things came to a crisis as Jane felt worse in the new home. Basically, a chronic condition of untreated psychopathology was getting worse. A few weeks before hospitalization the sense of her ego splitting, of being "two people" intensified. She again had episodes of dissociation, and ever-blacker periods of depression. A neurological examination was needed.

The neurological exam found that in her last pregnancy Jane had probably had a postpartum psychosis signaled by profound depression and a long history of episodes called fugue states. These were the trances into which she fell without warning, in which she was incapable of controlling her body while retaining consciousness. She was given an EEG (electroencephalograph) to evaluate the source of these. While the readings were marginal, it was concluded that there was some form of epilepsy. Epilepsy, it turns out, is what the ancients believed indicated that a person was able to speak with the gods. The divine madness, it was called. It never dawned on me that

this ancient history was going to repeat itself here.

There were two forces at work in Jane's malady. In the words written 36 years ago: "diagnostic evaluation revealed not only a chronic, severe behavior disorder of an hysterical nature, but also an underlying integrative defect in association with complex psychomotor epilepsy. The prognosis is guarded". Today she would have been diagnosed as having a dissociative identity disorder, or a multiple personality.

Jane was right: there seemed to be two of her, and she was in a battle zone between them. She would switch suddenly from being a happy, amiable person to a morose, angry, even dangerous one. She had fantasies about taking after her children and husband with a knife in a rage, although she was devoted to them. Then she would fall apart and search for something to rescue her. Ultimately nothing was there to help her except to go to hospital and get some intensive outpatient psychotherapy.

Life History

I have kept Jane's life chart, which I slowly built as she told me her story. The history reads like an emotional roller-coaster; for every up there was a down, and there was a significant inner vulnerability that constantly threatened her. It is instructive to review it as a source so the reader can better understand what was to happen later.

Jane was born in 1931, just after the Depression, in the Texas dust bowl where life on the farm was hard, both parents working constantly. The family was deeply religious within the "hard shell" Baptist tradition. This meant that there was love; but it was very conditional. Sin was always present and God was always watching. You had to repent to be saved. Salvation was available and God loved you, but He could take you.

For Jane, it was a childhood characterized by the ill fortune of both physical and emotional deprivation. As an infant she suffered from malnutrition from nursing, and was given to a sister to raise while mother worked. There was pneumonia, scarlet fever, and four undiagnosed comatose episodes before the age of eight. She lost her sister as surrogate mother around this time, and this was another upset. Such a pattern of change and loss would make any child wonder if the world was a safe place.

Next, Jane's grandmother, a mythic figure in the family, took over the mother's role. Grandmother was said to have been blown away in a twister as a baby and found later in her crib in a corn field. Significantly, she had "spells", and was very religious. Jane inherited both grandmother's fascination with the Lord, and probably her psychomotor epilepsy. When Jane was eleven, grandmother told the family she had talked to the Lord, it was time to go, and she went to bed and died peacefully in her sleep. This is what sociologists call a taboo death, somehow self-inflicted and attributed to the deceased's mystical connections with the divine. In grandmother's case this was difficult to refute.

✓ Jane ^{was?} have similar connections with God throughout her life. She had a phobia about storms for decades, hiding under beds to avoid them. She was afraid God was in them and would take her. Her nature was to be impish and rebellious, so her conscience was often terrifying to her - whispering to her that she would go to hell. She was bright and pretty and attracted young men, and romance was a rescue for her, as it is for most girls, but she could also be nervous and easily embarrassed.

At age seventeen she married Richard, a soldier stationed nearby, both for love and to get away from home. They cared about each other, but things were tense. Jane had little preparation for marriage, but within the year, she had the first of her six children. Childbirth affected her, postpartum depressions occurred and she began to show symptoms of emotional distress which worsened slowly. Ten years later she would need the first of three psychiatric hospitalizations.

The undercurrent of stress never left Jane's life. Little closeness with her mother and father forced her to learn on her own as she grew up. It was a battle that she both won and lost. She won in building a family of which she was very proud. She lost in the price too many women have had to pay: constant service of her children and husband with little or no reprieve, no opportunity to use her fine intellect, the chronic pressure of making ends meet, and having to find her identity and self-worth in the regard of those she served rather than finding her own freely chosen personal path to fulfillment.

From this and her hazardous neurological makeup, Jane suffered chronic depression with mood disorders and periods of dissociative anxiety, likely the same kind of spells that grandmother had. At some point, the sense of being two people developed, probably from a very early age. It was never mentioned but likely constant and very terrifying. It helped her carry on with her act- happy on the outside, miserable on the inside. But like most charades, its effectiveness lessened over time. People were not fooled. They knew something was wrong. Jane hid the problem desperately, but it would not go away. She either had to change her life, or change her responses to it. The former was probably impossible. The latter would need a miracle. It is no wonder that she collapsed under such a burden.

Course of Therapy

It was apparent that Jane was a very sick lady. She was placed on psychotropic medications to minimize anxiety and the impact of possibly epilepsy-based spells, and she and I were to meet two times weekly for intensive outpatient psychotherapy. The journey was going to be difficult, and all I could promise was my best effort. She promised hers as well. After discharge from the hospital, she went home and resumed her life with her children and family, and came to therapy for the next ten months. The sessions were emotionally charged, almost a replay of the turmoil Jane reported in her history. In some she would talk and explore and get things off her chest, and

wonder which way she should go. In others, she would be nearly mute, unable to talk, afraid of her own feelings, and afraid of me. She revealed the existence of a "good Jane" and a "bad Jane." The former was a cheerful, forgiving, hard-working and concerned Christian mother. The latter was an angry, selfish, rebellious, immature and seductive woman who resented all responsibilities. In reflection of these, some interviews were almost manic in their energy, and others were painfully slow and heavy in mood.

First, Jane had to learn how to sort out her feelings and communicate them to me. The disclosure of her two selves was not easy, and this was accompanied by shame and fear. I knew from her history that she was terrified about being abandoned, perhaps especially to her illness. So I made sure that she had my support for the journey, while her demons raged within her.

For myself, I was a hopeful but inexperienced guide. I had no idea what was around the next bend from week to week, and made up the treatment plan up as we went along. As one must do with a multiple personality disorder, I tacitly admitted the existence of Jane's other self, her alter ego, the bad Jane. She learned she could come to a session as sick as she needed to be and I would be there.

At some points, when the bad Jane dominated and she would be in a spell, she might be nearly mute. All I could offer was that neither of us talk; that we would just share a cup of coffee with sugar in it, as she had tendencies towards hypoglycemia. Low blood sugar contributes to trance-like moodiness, and the coffee helped. At least I felt better. If the good Jane arrived, and she was more relaxed, not dissociating, we talked and made progress.

The therapy journey is a slow one, for it is easy to get lost, and to go in circles. It has ups and downs, and times when there is a view which is hopeful and places where you want to quit the whole thing. Patients are often in the situation Dante describes at the beginning of his Divine Comedy: "Midway in my journey through life, I found myself lost in a dark wood, having strayed from the true path." Jane was lost, and it was up to me to show her she could trust self-disclosure, and have deep emotions without falling to pieces in hysterics or craziness. No one rejected or abandoned or threatened her with hellfire as she explored her inner world. She might find her way, with luck.

For the first eight months of the journey we met for nearly fifty sessions. No matter how bad she felt, she came to my office as scheduled. Sometimes she would arrive in the middle of one of her spells, having driven through the downtown traffic to the medical school in a daze. I was always amazed that she made the trip safely. It portrayed true grit, and a little luck.

In traditional psychotherapy, religion is of little focus, and with most patients their religious life plays a minor role. Jane was quite different. I knew she was a believer

whose beliefs were central to her health. They would destroy her unless they could prove to be positive, somehow include redemption for her, and find some way to stop the power of the voices. Something had to happen, but I was not sure what.

At home, Jane tried to reach out to her neighbors and not stay trapped in her house with her problems. She joined a local church, and one day her pastor called me. The woman was obviously disturbed, he said, and would I get please get her to stay away from his congregation, she was stirring up some fuss trying to save sinners, and, after all, she might be dangerous. Her evangelical, Texas-born God-view was probably a misfit for these more sophisticated New Orleans Baptists. Discussing this, we both enjoyed her desire to save others, and she smilingly admitted she might have been a little too eager at that church. This was a healthy replacement of her previous guilt complex, but it was not the religious affirmation she needed.

The most that I could do was to walk with her and be patient. I tried to point out her self-destructive distortions, teach her that her feelings were not facts, and get her to see that things were not as bad as they seemed. She began to lighten up. Her confidence improved. The spells lessened, and I hoped they were loosening their grip on her.

Eight months into the therapy we had learned much and talked a lot. I thought that Jane was getting a little better, although there was a long way to go. Medication was helpful, and the journey was progressing, albeit slowly.

Then an event happened that was to prove pivotal: Jane's son was in an accident, and she was suddenly called upon to summon all her resolve in order to handle an emergency with no time or place for hysterics. She did it, a mother's act of courage for a child. Most important, she did not dissociate under the trauma. It proved that there was more strength in her than she knew. Healing starts small and in mysterious places of the heart.

Jane felt the opposite. She was still depressed, still crazy, perhaps would never get well. She was still wrestling with her spells, trying to control her hysterics, often prowling the house restlessly, talking to herself. Maybe she should never have left the hospital, she would say. In this, she displayed what those with long-term illness have: a subconscious fear of getting better, a fear of success. If they do get better, more will be expected of them, and they will only fail again.

I never told Jane, but at this time I also began to lose faith in the treatment. It was not working as I had expected. As a resident, I had a faculty supervisor in charge of teaching me therapy, and I reported everything to him. He was Dr. Henry Miles, a large, calm, comfortable man who tactfully imparted his wisdom with small comments rather than big speeches. He was a psychoanalyst, and as such knew how to say just the right thing to get one to assert one's independence and initiative. I often asked him what to do with the case, and he would always say, "Whatever you think, you're the

doctor". After I expressed my particular frustration at this time, he smiled and said, "Maybe next time you'll get an interesting case."

At first, I was furious. How could he say that? I wondered. But -as he had intended- he woke me up. He was trying to say that I was so tied up in my own failure as a therapist that I had backed away from my human concern for Jane. It was not important that I "cure" Jane, because in actuality I could not. I was the messenger, not the message. There is a deep relationship between therapist and patient that I was avoiding. So it was crucial that I try my best to care, not cure, and if her health was to triumph, it would do so of its own accord, not by any magic from me.

So just as Jane was learning about her hidden strength, I was learning about my own hidden weakness. Perhaps we were both starting to heal.

Then, about a month later, there was another change in Jane. It was a new kind of quiet excitement she revealed, some spontaneous hopefulness. She began to smile more. She described how she was getting her life in order, not falling apart, not being on some precipice of fear all the time. She would say, "Dr. Reed, something has happened to me, I'm getting better, But I'm afraid to tell you about it". My response was that I did not have to know, I just was glad to see her better.

She continued to improve, and was decidedly a more serene woman. I couldn't imagine what it was. It was such good news that I only felt relief. Maybe I had learned Dr. Mile's lesson: all I had to do was care, and the cure would take care of itself.

The day came when Jane decided to tell me what had happened. "I think", she said, "that God has healed me. I'm not two people anymore." I recall the awe of the moment, and thinking that miracles do happen.

She proceeded to tell how the healer, Sam Fife, had come to her door one evening, and pronounced to a skeptical Richard that God had sent him to cast demons out of Jane. And then he did it. And he had taped it, and wanted to meet me. She brought the tape in and we listened to it together. Then Fife came in with a written review of what he had done and we discussed how what he had done did indeed replicate a long tradition in charismatic Christianity.

For a first-year resident to have such a clinical experience was very unusual, and I was quickly asked to present Jane's case at a major psychiatric department conference. I in turn asked that Sam Fife also be invited to attend and discuss his activities. Jane met the faculty first and answered all their questions about our therapy and the exorcism and was, in a word, engaging. Fife then took part in the presentation, playing portions of his tape and explaining with great flair his approach to exorcism. The mood of the faculty and residents in the meeting swung from much skepticism to mild doubt to grudging admiration.

After Fife left the room, the chairman of the conference and a professor of psychiatry, Dr. Harold Lief, smiled and said to me, "Reed, you're in the wrong line of work."

Outside in the hall, Jane thanked me. She seemed energized at convincing a room full of psychiatrists that God had healed her. But now she had to say farewell and embark on the rest of her journey without me. We had prepared for this, but the moment was sobering. With her shy smile she asked, "Do you really think I'm well?"

"Jane", I said, "That's a question you don't have to ask."

David M. Reed, Ph.D.
July 14, 1996

Preface

The story which you are about to read is absolutely true. Because the events depicted took place more than thirty-five years ago, there may be some small inaccuracies, but whenever possible, the facts have been checked against existing records and/or the memories of more than one participant. Most conversations have been reconstructed from memory; we have tried to stay faithful to the truth of the events even when we were not able to reproduce precisely the facts. The dialogue from the second and fifth deliverances, on the other hand, is taken directly from tapes made at the time and so is completely accurate. Certain names have been changed to protect the identities of participants who prefer to remain anonymous.

There has been a great deal of debate among Christians on the issue of demon possession. Those who do allow that demon possession does exist often see it as something far off, a rare phenomenon which affects only witches, Satanists or others who have knowingly sought out the forces of evil, or primitives whose superstitions expose them to demon activities. As comforting as it may be to confine demon activity to jungles and black masses, this view is simply not realistic. I am living proof that demons can attack and possess ordinary people.

It is important to stress that neither I nor any of my family was at any time involved with the occult. I never owned nor used a Ouija board, attended a seance, or engaged in any other occult activities. Even going back four generations, I can find no evidence that anyone in my family was involved with any aspect of the occult. Although I have no doubt that direct and/or ancestral contact with the occult is often the cause of demon possession, this is not, in this case (and, we believe, in many others) the cause of my possession.

It is also important to stress that at the time I was possessed I was a sincere and

genuine Christian. I was saved and baptized at the age of five, and I have no doubt that this salvation experience was real. I experienced a personal revival at the age of twenty-two, and I am again positive that my salvation was real. As the events of this story were taking place, I attended church as regularly as circumstances permitted and prayed whenever I was able. Although not without sin, I never deliberately turned my back on my faith or went against its teachings.

It is a frightening prospect that Christians can be afflicted and possessed by demons, so frightening that many choose to put it out of their minds. I myself chose to ignore the reality of demons until their presence literally threatened my life. The illusion that Christians are somehow immune from the workings of Satan is a comforting one, but the reality is even more comforting. The reality is that demons do exist, and that you and I have power over them in the name of Jesus Christ. Knowledge of demon spirits is not wrong, it does not imply complicity with them. Knowledge is absolutely essential if we are to fight them, and fight them we must. This book details one Christian's struggle against demon spirits. My hope is that it increases your knowledge of the workings of the demoniac kingdom and convinces you of the need to fight against it.

Jane Miller

Part I

And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. Mark 5:2-5

Chapter 1 Descent into Nothingness

I wandered around the house, looking at the toys scattered on the living room floor, the unmade beds, the dirty clothes, the breakfast dishes in the sink, the dirty diapers in the bathroom. I tried to decide what to do first, feeling like a failure. *If I were a better person, I thought, the house would be clean, I would have tonight's dinner planned, and I would be spending time with my kids. Why couldn't I manage this house?* My neighbor, Rosella, had six kids too and her house was spotless. *There must be something horrible about me. I must be crazy.*

Suddenly, I heard my husband's car. *Oh, no,* I thought. I wasn't even sure I could handle the thought of him coming home tonight. I knew I wasn't ready to face him now. Somewhere, deep down, I knew I loved Dick, but lately, it was hard to see him as anything but an obstacle. It seemed that he was always demanding something, and I had nothing left to give. Dick walked in the door and, without even saying hello, commanded, "Janey, fix me something to eat."

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, something snapped inside my head; everything turned off and I felt panic, darkness creeping up behind me. I felt like I was going to faint, or worse. The house felt dark, oppressive, like I was in a deep hole. The sun was shining so brightly outside that I went to the door, trying to escape the enveloping darkness. There was a furious drive within me that made me want to tear my hair, run and scream.

In my mind, I was running through the neighborhood, up and down the street. I could see the houses flash past, feel the impact of every step in my feet and knees. I could hear myself screaming "God, where are you? God, where are you? God, where are you?" I was so caught up in this vision of myself that I had no idea that I was really sitting on the lawn with my arms wrapped around my legs.

Dick sat in the house awhile, waiting, and finally came out to see what was wrong. He saw me sitting in the yard in my bathrobe, a blank look on my face. "Janey, I said fix me something to eat."

No response.

"Janey, get in that house."

Hardly aware of his presence, I still didn't answer him. The internal reality, that I was running, screaming, blocked out everything on the outside.

"Get a grip on yourself and get in that house and fix me my lunch!" By then he was yelling. I didn't recognize this man, but I felt that he was bad. I didn't understand what he wanted me to do, but I was determined I wouldn't--or couldn't--do it. I could hear a baby crying, but the sound seemed to come from far away; it never occurred to me that it was my four-week-old son. I didn't realize I had children. I didn't realize I had a husband. I didn't realize who I was. I couldn't think of my name. I felt like I was nobody. I didn't know anything but that I was not going in the black hole that was the house, and this angry man could not make me.

I don't know how long I was in the front yard. It could have been five minutes or a year. Nothing seemed real, not the house, not the sun, not myself. Worst of all, even God seemed unreal. Since I was five years old had depended upon feeling God's presence in my life. If hell is not a place, if it is simply separation from God, then I was quite literally in hell that day. All I could do was inwardly scream, "God, where are you? God where are you? God, where are you?"

After a long time, I don't know how long, a big yellow Cadillac drove into the driveway. I recognized the car as a safe, familiar object. My sister, Dede, got out of the car and walked toward me. I didn't know her name or how she was related to me, but I knew instinctively that I could trust her. She tried to get me into that house too. She said, "I'm gonna take you someplace, Jane, but I want you to get dressed first."

I just stared at her.

"Go on in the house and get something on, and then I'll take you out."

Ordinarily, I would have loved to have gone anywhere with my sister, but I was not going into that place, not for anything. After more coaxing, she finally got some clothes from the house and put me into the car. I drove off with her, completely unworried about my husband or about my children. I was too far outside myself to care.

My sister took me to her house. I was like a robot. I couldn't do anything except what she commanded me to. If she said, "Pick up your fork. Put food in your mouth," I could, but the instructions had to be that specific. I felt no hunger, no thirst. I had no will. I sat in front of the television, feeling no enjoyment. I felt nothing, absolutely nothing. A black hole.

Dede called her doctor, who prescribed a tranquilizer. The drug dulled what senses I had left. It took several weeks for her ^{to get} an appointment for me with a psychiatrist. Dick and Dede took me to the office. I was still like a robot. I still had no idea who I was. My husband guided me into Dr. Walthers's office and left me there.

The doctor was an ugly little man, short, dark looking, with circles under his eyes and big horn rimmed glasses, but he had a gentle look to him. At the moment the heavy door clicked shut, my head cleared and I was perfectly fine. In a flash, my identity returned. My name was Jane Miller. I was twenty-seven years old. I lived in Bellaire, a suburb of Houston. It was April of 1959.

"Jane, uh, tell me how you're feeling."

I cried with relief at finding such a calm, gentle man to talk to. I said, "You know, I just feel so frustrated because we don't have any money, and I just can't seem to keep up with the kids and the house is dirty all the time." The doctor seemed like a gentle friend that I could talk to. For fifty minutes I told him my troubles. "We never have any

money, and I can't afford groceries. I'm a terrible cook. I always burn things, and even when they do come out, my husband never seems satisfied with anything. I guess his mama was just a better cook than I'll ever be. It's gotten to where I hate to go in the kitchen anymore. Every time I go in there I just want to lay down and cry." The doctor nodded.

"It seems like Dick's always gone. He's got this little gas station over on Memorial Drive. My sister's husband set him up there and said it would make money, but it hasn't yet, so there's no money coming in. I wish I could help, but I don't know what to do. And Dick is so frustrating. When he is home, he just chain smokes and reads spy novels, like the kids and I don't even exist!"

I told him about my six children, how much I loved them. "Tommy's the oldest, he's nine, and Ricky, the baby, was born last month. I love them so much. You know, sometimes the dinner's burning away in the kitchen, and there are diapers piled up to the ceiling in the bathroom, and the telephone's ringing, and I'll just be in the rocking chair with three kids on my lap at once, rocking them and singing." I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. "But then they get hungry, or one of them gets into something, or Dick comes home yelling for his dinner, and I have to put them down and go on."

I didn't tell him about the fog I had been in for the last few weeks. I wasn't even sure that it had happened. That blank-faced robot was not me, and she was not my problem. I was much more concerned about my struggles to be a good wife and mother.

After the session, the doctor came out of the office and said to my sister and my husband, "What's going on here?"

They looked at him, not sure what to say or how to interpret his anger.

"Is there an inheritance involved or something? Why are you people trying to convince this girl she's crazy?"

Of course, they were shocked. They knew what they'd been dealing with for weeks now. They didn't know what had gone on in the office. It never crossed their minds that I was capable of fooling a psychiatrist when I was so obviously crazy.

The doctor continued, "There's absolutely nothing wrong with her that a little TLC, some money, and some help around the house wouldn't cure. She'll be fine."

We walked out of the office together. Nobody spoke. When we got to the parking garage and I reached for the door handle of my sister's car, I suddenly forgot who I was again. I was confused and afraid. I had no memory of the doctor or the sense of hope I had felt while talking to him. I was gone again.

Chapter 2 Warning Signs

Although, at the time, my breakdown seemed to have come out of nowhere, there were plenty of warning signs that I was unstable. With the benefit of hindsight, it seems almost inevitable that this moment would have come. At the time, though, the signs seemed to be a string of unrelated episodes, going back a dozen years.

The first was in 1949, ten years before my final breakdown. Dick and I had been married almost a year; we were living in Denver. I walked slowly home from my job as a maid. I was seven months pregnant, and I tired easily. Suddenly, the daylight changed, grayed, as the sun went behind a cloud. I felt a sudden panic and I began running as fast as I could. I ran all the way home, up three flights of stairs, and collapsed in the middle of the floor of our rented room. I was too scared to move. My eyes were open, locked on one corner of the room. A line of rats marched out of the corner formed by the ceiling and two walls, down the wall, and toward me. Their pace was slow, steady, the line perfect. None of them ever reached me, but they would not stop coming. I screamed and screamed, but I could not move or look away. I didn't notice Dick come home, wasn't aware that he was talking to me.

After trying everything he could think of to snap me out of this panic, he finally went into the bathroom, filled a large bowl with cold water, and dumped it on me. The fear that had taken possession of me loosened its grip, and I was able to stop screaming. He helped me up and we went out for dinner. We didn't discuss the incident at all.

There were several similar incidents early in our marriage. Neither Dick nor I knew what to make of them. We coped with our uncertainty by ignoring them, forgetting them as soon as they happened. If I was sometimes irrational, well, I was seventeen years old, I had been spoiled as a child, I just wanted attention, my own

way. Dick provided the explanations and I was happy to believe them. It was better than thinking I was crazy.

I went through good periods and bad periods for the years I was having my children. When things were going well, we had enough money, and Dick was home often, I was fine. When things went badly, my state of mind got worse. During my bad periods, I lived in a constant state fear and anxiety, jumping like a rabbit at every unexpected noise. I couldn't pay attention to anything, I was clumsy, and I never seemed to have enough time. I would wake up in the morning with a long list of tasks to do, and before I knew it, it was evening, nothing was done, and I had no idea why.

I was pregnant almost constantly for the first eleven years of my marriage. I had six children and three miscarriages. This took a toll on both my physical and my mental health. My third pregnancy, in 1953, was especially difficult.

I dialed the phone. "Dr. Moore, this is Jane. I have a sharp pain in my side. I can't walk. I can't even sit up straight."

"For goodness' sake, Jane, we've been over this before. You probably just have a spasm in a ligament. Soak in a hot bath and see if it helps."

"But I don't think that's what it is, Dr. Moore. It hurts too much."

"You sound like such a kid. This is your third baby. If you can't handle a little discomfort by now, I don't know what to tell you."

"But doctor," I whimpered--

"Listen. I'm the doctor and you're the patient and I don't have time to listen to you whine." He slammed the phone down. I put my head in my hands. I knew this was different from the normal discomfort of pregnancy, but I couldn't put it into words. I finally limped to the bathtub. I had to trust the doctor, so I began not to trust myself.

I had this pain several more times during the pregnancy, and each time I told

myself it was nothing. When the baby, David, was born, we found out that the placenta had hemorrhaged seven times during the pregnancy. All the times that the doctor had accused me of whining, the baby and I were both in grave danger. As soon as he saw the placenta, the doctor apologized for being unsympathetic. The damage was done, though. I had lost my ability to distinguish between real and imaginary pain.

Sometime after the birth of my fourth child, Jay, I began a slow, steady slide downward. My fifth child, Jimmy, was a month premature. Not realizing that he had miscalculated the due date, Dr. Moore had induced labor early so he could go on vacation. Jimmy's kidneys were severely underdeveloped and he was in and out of the hospital for the first two years of his life. We were in debt, Dick was distant and distracted, and I was always overburdened. When I was pregnant with my sixth child, Ricky, I was hospitalized with a lung disease.

There was a sign next to the oxygen tent that said in big red letters ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING. Not willing to take any chances, Dr. Moore had explained to me when he checked me into the hospital that if I lit a match in this room, the oxygen tanks would explode. "You shouldn't smoke now anyway. Your lungs don't need anything else making them weaker."

I laughed. "Whatever you say, Doc. By the way, got a cigarette?" *Why did I say that?* I thought. *Shut up, Jane.* I tried to apologize, but my body wouldn't cooperate. I just sat there laughing at the doctor.

"That's not funny." He stalked out of the room.

I tried to bum cigarettes from everyone in the hospital. I have no idea why. I understood that I shouldn't smoke, but another part of me wanted to break the rules. Another part of me thought it would be fun to blow up the oxygen tanks and cause as much trouble as I could.

Dr. Moore sat in the doctor's lounge, staring at my chart and thinking. He had known me for six years now. I had worked for him for part of that time and he had delivered three of my five kids. He had always suspected that there was something emotionally wrong with me, and he had tried over and over to get me to stop having babies, hoping that less responsibility would help me cope.

The incident today, though, worried him more than anything else that had happened. I had always been moody, had always been able to change quickly from happy to sad and back again, but this seemed to be something more. The imp who had greeted him in the hospital room that day was not the dutiful wife and mother he knew as Jane. *She needs help*, he thought. He had been trying to get me to a psychiatrist for years. He had never succeeded before, and he doubted he could this time.

He thought about that movie, the Joanne Woodward movie his wife had dragged him to, The Three Faces of Eve. *Multiple Personality Disorder*. *Could that be what was wrong with Jane?* he thought. *No*, he decided. This was not nearly so dramatic, so well-defined. It didn't take a psychiatrist to rule that one out. The imp didn't have a name or a separate identity. Anyway, Multiple Personality Disorder was so rare, there probably wouldn't be another case of it for fifty years.¹

When I was out of the hospital and fully recovered, Dr. Moore asked me to come to his office. "Jane, do you remember Dr. Cummings from the hospital? He examined you."

I shook my head. "I'm sorry, Doctor, I don't." I didn't remember much about the hospital.

"Dr. Cummings is an internist. He diagnoses illnesses."

¹ This section is, of course, based entirely upon conjecture. The thoughts I have given Dr. Moore, however, do represent the attitude most doctors of that time toward MPD.

"Did he diagnose the lung disease?"

"No, Jane, I was able to do that myself. Dr. Cummings was more interested in your behavior." He paused. "He and I agree that you need to see a psychiatrist."

I squeezed my eyes shut. *I don't want to have this conversation again*, I thought. "I can't afford it, Doctor."

"Jane, you can't afford not to see a psychiatrist. I've watched your condition deteriorate for the last six years. If this continues, you may be beyond help in a few years--or even in a few months."

Beyond help--what was he saying? That I was crazy? I wasn't crazy; I couldn't be. I had children to take care of. If I went to to a psychiatrist and he told me I was crazy, I couldn't take it. *I can cope*, I thought. I knew that I was lying to myself. I couldn't walk into my own kitchen without being terrified. I couldn't handle stress of any kind. And then there were those times, once rare, now frequent, when I couldn't control my actions. only sit back and listen as another voice talked out of my mouth. That wasn't crazy? What if the psychiatrist agreed with my husband that I just needed to pull myself together? What if I wasn't crazy? That would be just as bad. I couldn't bear to be told that I was crazy, but I couldn't bear to be told that I wasn't crazy. The only security was in not knowing.

Dr. Moore was looking at me, expecting an answer. I didn't know what to say. I wanted to sink into the floor. My muscles relaxed. I heard laughter, and realized it was coming from my mouth.

"Now, Doc, you don't really think I'm crazy." My hands reached for a cigarette, lit it. "I'm just as sane as you are." Laughing, I walked out of the room. I was glad to be leaving, even though I had not willed my actions. At the door, I caught a glimpse of Dr. Moore's confused, apprehensive face.

As the last pregnancy progressed, the incidents became more and more frequent. I was having more bad days than good, taking over-the-counter pain relievers constantly. Most days, I had to drag myself out of bed. Some days, I couldn't even do that.

I opened my eyes. The baby was crying in the next room and I could hear the other kids stirring. Hands on my heavy belly, I tried to roll out of bed. Only my shoulders moved. I tried to lift my legs. Nothing happened. I struggled to keep calm as I tried one muscle after another. Nothing below the waist would move.

I don't know how Dick got me in the car--he weighed barely a hundred pounds and I was in the last months of pregnancy. Somehow, he managed to get me to Dr. Moore's office. A nurse put me in a wheelchair and I sat in a stark white room, waiting for the doctor.

He walked in the room. "Dr. Moore, I'm so glad to see you; I don't know what's wrong with me. I can't move my legs at all and I can't imagine what . . ."

My voice trailed off. He didn't respond at all. Suddenly he lunged forward, picked me up by the front of my dress and slapped me hard on each cheek. When he let go of my dress, I was able to stand by myself. Dr. Moore picked up my chart, wrote "psychosomatic paralysis, hysteria," and without ever having spoken a word, left the room.

This happened once more during my pregnancy. Again, the doctor slapped me and again I recovered. This time, I didn't let him leave right away.

"Surely there must be some other way of making me better. This isn't very professional behavior, hitting a patient." I sounded angry, but another part of me was grateful that he had done something, anything, to help.

"What else do you want me to do, Jane? I have to snap you out of it somehow."

"Well, there's probably a better way to do it." Shut up and thank him, Jane, I

thought.

"I'm just trying to keep you from falling completely apart until you have this baby. Then we can get you some real help. In the meantime," he handed me a pill, "take this when you start to feel agitated."

"What is it?"

"Ten milligrams of Thorazine."

"Thorazine," I tried out the unfamiliar word. "Never heard of it."

"Well, it ought to help."

The pill knocked me out. I slept for thirty-six hours straight. I resolved to never take that horrible stuff again. *I'll never get used to that*, I thought.

This was only a couple of months before the day that I ran out of the house and lost my identity. Having the baby didn't help. Nothing helped. Dr. Moore, and a lot of other doctors, could slap labels onto my symptoms, but none of them could answer one essential question, *what's wrong with me?* For the next two years, we would search for an answer. When it finally came, ^{it} would be from a most unexpected source.

Chapter 3 Cocoon

I stayed with Dede for the several weeks it took her to persuade Dr. Walthers to see me again. He seemed to be convinced that she and Dick wanted to lock me up out of malice, or just to get me out of the way. Finally, though, he agreed. I don't remember anything about the second appointment, but I do know that I didn't fool him the second time. After that session, he diagnosed me as being Schizophrenic, and although he believed I was incurable, he promised to do everything he could for me.

I was checked into Hermann Hospital, a private hospital in Houston. We could never have afforded this, but Dede was paying all the bills. Although sometimes I still did not know who I was, I built a cocoon for myself at Hermann hospital. My life there was strictly regimented. We woke up at eight o'clock and made our beds, went to the dining hall for breakfast, and then went to an arts and crafts class, where I made braided belts and other small objects for my children. The day went on like this, with small responsibilities throughout the day, but nothing to overwhelm. What a change from my life outside the hospital! At home I had a thousand duties all pressing down on me at once, and I always felt inadequate. I could never take a break, I knew that.

The summer before, my sister invited ^{my family} ~~the kids and me~~ to her vacation house in Burnett, Texas. Jimmy had been in and out of the hospital since he was born six months before. The emotional and financial drain were almost unbearable. For once, the baby was well enough that we could take a short vacation. I decided that this would be a "lost weekend." I would not take any of my worries with me, and just have a good time. Deep down, I had a feeling that wouldn't work, but I was going to try.

I had been water skiing on the lake and my legs were rubbery and weak walking back to the house. There was a horse grazing in the field, wearing its saddle.

The caretaker or one of the kids had probably left it there. I decided to take it back to the house. Jay-bird, who was two, was playing nearby. "Ge on horsie!" he said, pointing. I picked him up and jumped onto the horse.

We started down the trail to the barn. I had been around horses as a child, and knew perfectly well what a horse does when it gets near the barn, but that day I just wasn't thinking. All of the sudden, the horse started running down the hill. I couldn't stop him for anything, so I held Jay by the arm and dropped him into the grass, knowing that if he stayed on, he might be killed. While I was looking for a safe place to jump, the horse turned a corner suddenly and threw me. I slid and slid, across the sharp Texas rock, missing a huge oak tree by less than a foot.

I limped up to the house. My right arm, shoulder and back were scraped and bleeding. Dirt and gravel were embedded in my skin. Dede put me in a bathtub of cold water--she didn't have hot water here--and scrubbed my injuries with laundry detergent. The cold water and the sting of that detergent was almost as bad as the fall itself.

I was in such pain that my brother-in-law, Keith, made me a bourbon and coke. I drank it down, hoping it would help. Because I never drank, it went straight to my head. We decided that my elbow was probably broken and Dick took me to the hospital. We drove thirty-five miles over unpaved roads, fording creeks and hitting huge potholes. It was one hundred five degrees in the shade, and our station wagon wasn't air conditioned. Between the heat and the bourbon, I was so nauseated I didn't even notice the pain in my arm.

When I got home with my arm in a cast, I found Beverly coughing and feverish. By the evening, we had to take her to the hospital with pneumonia. Jay-bird had hit his head when I dropped him, and most of his hair had been scraped off. Miraculously, he wasn't seriously hurt, but he was in a great deal of pain.

As we got into the car to go home Sunday afternoon, Tommy accidentally slammed the door on David's hand and broke three fingers. There was another frantic trip to the emergency room, and more tears and worries. We drove home, four of us nursing injuries. This what had become of our "lost weekend." This confirmed what I had always suspected: If I ever tried to take a break, terrible things would happen. I was trapped.

Here at the hospital, I could handle everything that was required of me. It was not a vacation--there were tasks to be performed every day. But nothing terrible happened if I took time to read my Bible and talk to the other patients. I had difficulty communicating with "normal" people, but some of the people in the hospital were crazy in the same way I was, so I could talk to them. I made several friends. There was a piano in the recreation room, and whenever I heard the piano playing, I would hurry down the hallway to join in the singing. We usually sang hymns, and I knew hundreds of hymns. In many ways, the hospital was a soothing place to be.

I had daily psychotherapy with Dr. Walthers. He asked me about my childhood and played word games with me. I didn't understand the point to any of this, but he was a nice man, so I played along as best I could. It didn't seem to help me, but it didn't hurt either. I jumped at any chance to talk about my children. I missed them. Dede and the doctors had agreed that it would be too upsetting for them to visit me. The only drawback to being in the hospital was being away from them. I don't know how many hours of therapy I spent telling the doctor stories about the six of them.

There was another side to life in Hermann hospital, though. Dr. Walthers had prescribed electric shock treatments for me. The first time the nurse came in to wire me up for one, I wasn't worried. I thought I was being wired for an brain scan. I had had several of them and they are painless, so I didn't argue when she strapped my

was born; he was convinced that the constant pregnancies were the primary reason for my breakdown. My husband consented to the operation grudgingly, but he was afraid that the doctor was right, that I would die. In any case, I wasn't able to take care of the children I had, much less more.

Since I was already in the hospital, they only had to take me down a few floors to do the operation. As I recovered physically, I could only mourn that fact that there would be no more children. I had wanted twelve, but now it seemed that just one more would be enough. Now my daughter would never have a sister. Now Ricky would never have a younger sibling. It was horrifying for me. Not only that, though. I felt diminished. A woman who could not bear children was worth nothing. I believed that I was useless, without value, no longer a real woman at the age of twenty-seven. The profound feeling of uselessness made me slip deeper into the illness. It began to seem unlikely that I would ever recover.

Chapter 4 From Nothing, Hope

While I was in the hospital, Dick was having problems of his own. He had had an excellent job working for her brother-in-law, Keith's, company, Southwestern Industrial Electronics, as an electronics technician. When Keith decided to sell the business, the new owners brought in all their own people, and Dick was out of a job. Keith loaned him the money to open a gas station, but that didn't work out very well either. His Gulf station was on Memorial Drive, two miles past the last house. In a few years, this would be a busy residential section, the perfect location for a gas station, but for now, he only saw two or three cars a day go by. Many of the residents of Memorial Drive had resisted having a business in their area, so the few that did go past boycotted him. And finally, the clerk that he employed stole from him. Dick needed money to tide him over, but Keith refused to give him a loan. His father had disliked the idea of Dick running a gas station to begin with, and so even he wouldn't help. He continued to lose money. Gulf brought in an auditor who went over the books and assured him he was not to blame, but this was little consolation.

Life at home was no better. There was no way that he could run a business and raise six children singlehandedly. Like many men of his generation, he loved his children, but had no idea how to deal with bottles, diapers, and the thousand other complications of raising kids.

Dick and Dede had two options--they could farm the children out to relatives, giving one or two to each. They would be well cared for that way, and the problem would be kept in the family. The kids were so close to each other, though, that Dick and Dede wanted to avoid breaking them up. So they considered sending the children to an orphanage, hoping that there they would be together.

Dick, Dede and the children took a tour of ^{AW}~~Buckner's~~ Orphan's Home in Houston.

The grounds of the orphanage were beautiful, with huge live oaks dripping Spanish moss and green, carefully manicured lawns. There were tall, red brick buildings. It looked more like a college campus than the crumbling, filthy orphanages in movies and books. The rooms were clean and well cared for, if a bit stark. The children looked healthy and happy enough. My daughter, Beverly, was struck with how clean everything was, how well ordered. Like me, she hated the disorder we had been living in in the months leading up to my breakdown. Like me, she made too many hopeless attempts to make the household run smoothly. As Beverly was admiring the order, though, Tommy, the oldest, was listening to the conversation between between the Dick and the orphanage matron.

"That's the ten-year-olds' ward there, and the seven-year-olds are over in that building."

"When do the different age groups see each other?" Dick asked.

"Oh, we find it best to keep them in their own classes. We don't encourage sibling relationships here--the ones with strong family ties are less likely to be adopted."

"Well, they won't be up for adoption anyway. Their mother may still get well."

"All children enrolled here have to be put up for adoption. That's what we're here for."

Dick didn't reply, but his mind was made up. His children were not ever coming near this place again. Tommy, not knowing what his father was thinking, was terrified. That night, the kids had a family meeting. "They're gonna break us up. We're never gonna see each other again. If they do that, we've gotta run away." That night, he outlined a complex plan of escape, assigned each of the older kids a younger kid to take care of, and made all but the two babies memorize Dede's phone number, to call in case of emergency. Even without me, Tommy and Beverly were intent on keeping

the family together.

Dick, of course, was no more willing to break them up than they were to be broken up, but there were no relatives who could take all six of them. Tommy went to Dede's, Beverly to a cousin in Dallas, David to an aunt in Beaumont, Jay to my father's, and the babies to Dick's parents. It was far from a perfect arrangement, but the kids could see each other sometimes, and Dick was sure they were better off with family than in an institution.

With no business and no children, Dick was faced with an empty house for the first time in his life. My sister blamed him for everything that had gone wrong, from the failed business to my illness. He blamed himself too. After a month or so, Dick had had all he could take. He came to the hospital for his regular daily visit and said, "I love you. I've always loved you, and I will always love you, Janey. I'm not leaving you, but you're not here anymore. I'm going away." He kissed me gently and walked away.

He got on a train heading west, with no idea where he would go. He traveled around with no destination until he finally ended up in the YMCA in Seattle, Washington. He sat in the window of his sixth-floor room for days, thinking. He had lost his business, his wife, and his children. He had been gone long enough by now that he knew the bank would repossess the car, and the little house we had bought with his G.I. loan. With nothing left in the present, he thought about the past.

It was the summer of 1947. Dick's girlfriend, Kay, had asked if he could find a date for a friend of hers so they could double. He brought his friend, Clarence. Kay's friend, Sarah Bryan, had long black hair, white skin and flashing black eyes. She looked to Dick like a gypsy, exotic and beautiful. At the drive-in, Dick and Kay were

having a squabble and Clarence was in the back seat with Sarah, who was fighting off his advances as hard as she could. Finally, Sarah leaned over the seat and said, "Y'all don't look like you're getting along too well; why don't we switch?" Dick eagerly agreed, and she jumped over the seat.

That summer, they spent as much time together as they could. They had picnics, went to concerts in the park, and played with his nephew, Rick, and her niece and nephew, Barbara and Buddy. He loved everything about her but her name. His grandmother was named Sarah. On their second date, he said, "don't you have another name?"

"My middle name's Jane."

"Then Jane it is."

He never went with another girl and she never went with another boy. He had thought they would be together forever.

It wasn't long before he started to notice odd things about her. She told long, rambling stories about her family in Dallas. They were rich and happy, and she had eleven brothers and sisters. She told him about each of them in detail, their hobbies and interests, each one's quirks. She described their house, a luxurious two-story mansion with its own lake and a graceful circular driveway. She wore the same white shorts and blue top every day, telling him that although she had lots of fancy clothes at home, she hated to dress up.

He had already suspected for a long time that none of this was true when he met her parents, a quiet, older couple who were poor as church mice. From them he learned that Dede, her half sister, was her only sibling. He did see the house she had told him about, though. It belonged to H.L. Hunt, the famous Texas millionaire.

He didn't worry too much about her lying. It didn't seem to hurt anyone, and she did spin a good yarn. He decided she was just creative. Anyway, he loved her.

He thought about the last time he had seen her in the hospital, waddling toward him with a pregnant woman's gait, her hand resting on her tiny belly. She had thought she was pregnant since her hysterectomy. She had stared blankly at him when he told her goodbye. With that film over her eyes, she was almost unrecognizable. What had happened to the pretty, imaginative girl she had been? She had slipped away so gradually that he hadn't realized it until the day she ran out of the house and wouldn't go back in. Was she gone forever?

He thought about his children. Tommy, who had talked at seven months and walked at nine, who at five had made up his own radio station and been the announcer, cracking jokes and making up the news broadcasts. He thought of Beverly, who at two years old had come home from Vacation Bible school knowing twenty-two songs by heart. She still sang all the time, picking up every song she heard. He thought of the younger boys, toddling and playing. The six of them traveled in a pack, taking care of each other. He hadn't shown it much, but he loved them all.

He looked out the window at the concrete far below. He would only have to shift his weight. *It would be so easy. No home, no job, no family--no life anyway. Such an easy trip down.* For days the temptation was there.

Finally, he realized that he was not ready to give up. Jane had had rough times before. She would come out of this, he was sure of it. He had no real reason to believe this--the doctor himself had said she was incurable. Maybe he was fooling himself, but it was better than giving up. He would go back, find a job, and get ready for her. When she got out of the hospital, he would have a house, a car, money, everything they would need to start again. It was a desperate hope, but he clung to it.

It had been a month since he left. His father met him at the bus station and made it clear that his family did not condemn him for leaving, that they understood.

Keith had a friend who was looking for an engineering technician, so Dick moved to New Orleans to take the job.

Meanwhile, I was gradually getting better and better, surprising Dr. Walthers and the hospital staff. I don't know if it was the treatment I was receiving, or the fact that for the first time in ten years I was eating regularly and getting enough rest. After three months in Hermann hospital, I was allowed to go home to my sister's. I could function in most situations; I still did not handle stress very well, but I always knew who I was. I was as stable as I had been before my breakdown. The other will that had controlled me the day I ran out of the house was at bay, at least for now. I had hope. I had come this far, and I thought I would continue to get better. I spent a month at my sister's, resting and preparing to return to my life.

I missed my husband and my children, so finally, Dick came from New Orleans to take me home with him. It was agreed that my next-to-youngest son, Jimmy, would go with us. He had been staying with Dick's mother, but she was elderly and he a very active toddler. As we prepared to leave, Dick talked to Dr. Walthers who warned him, "Jane is not back to normal yet. She could still have a relapse if she's exposed to too much stress. At the first sign that she's agitated, change the scene. Take her out to dinner, or to a movie, or for a walk, but don't leave her alone when she's upset." Dick promised he would, and we were off.

Dick had rented a room in downtown New Orleans when he lived there by himself, and this is where the three of us lived for the first several months. There was no kitchen, so I was relieved from the biggest stress of my life--cooking. We ate out for every meal, which was a treat, especially for Dick, who loved the Creole and Cajun food available in New Orleans. Our building was right next to a streetcar line, so during the day while Dick was working, Jimmy and I went all over downtown New

Orleans sightseeing, window shopping, and enjoying ourselves. We would take the St. Charles streetcar to the end of the line and back again, and we'd walk through the French Quarter. Jimmy was two, but he was a good walker; I rarely had to carry him. I kept getting stronger and stronger.

I was sure that my other children were being well cared for, but I was very anxious to get them home, so in December we rented a little house in the suburb Algiers. The house was so poorly built that you could set a marble down on one side of the house and it would roll to the other side, but it would do for the time being. At Christmas time, we took a trip back to Texas to pick up the other five kids, and brought them back to our new house.

The kids settled into school, and I tried to cope with housework once again. We had enough money to go out occasionally, so the situation was less stressful. Dick followed the doctor's advice as best he could, and changed the scene whenever I started to get upset. Often, we would load the kids in the car and take them to a drive-in movie where they could fill up on hot dogs and be distracted for a few hours. Other times, Dick would bring home burgers or we would take the kids to a diner for supper. It seems possible that I could have kept my hold on reality if things had continued this way. We didn't have the opportunity to find out.

Chapter 5 Attack

In February of 1960, only a few months after moving to New Orleans, I came down with a bad case of the flu. I ran a high fever and was so weak that I couldn't stand up. For three days I lay in bed trying to steel myself to get up and take care of the kids. The house was a wreck. The kids were living on breakfast cereal and peanut butter sandwiches. The younger boys were squabbling with each other, and running wild through the neighborhood.

I finally decided that if I washed my hair and got dressed, that would somehow give me the strength to get up. I dragged myself into the bathroom, barely able to stand upright, and washed my hair in the sink. As I raised my head, it banged against the corner of the door of the bathroom cabinet and the sharp corner cut into my scalp. I slid down onto the bathroom floor and watched the blood pour out of a deep gash in my head and mix with the water on the floor in an ever widening half-circle. One part of my mind was quite calm. I had learned while working for Dr. Moore that I needed to keep my head up and put pressure on the wound, but another part of me would not let me raise my head. It was as if a giant, invisible hand were pressing down on my head.

I don't know how long I sat there, but finally my daughter, Beverly, came to the door. My body blocked the door, so when she tried to open it, it butted against me. She pushed from the outside until she got her head in and could see me. "Mom?" she said hesitantly.

I sat slumped in a pool of blood on the floor, my arms and leg sprawled out like a rag doll's. "Are you all right? Mom? Wake up, Mom!"

I tried to say, "I'm fine, honey. Just call daddy." Nothing came out of my mouth. I tried again, "Call daddy at work. Don't worry, I'm fine." I was saying the words in my mind, but my body wouldn't cooperate.

Beverly ran to get the next-door neighbor, Cindy. I could hear their voices in the hallway. "Where's your father?"

"At work."

"Do you know his number there?"

"I don't remember it."

"Is it written down somewhere?"

"I don't think so."

In my head I was screaming. "FO6-4366. The number is FO6-4366." I screamed it over and over, but not once could I get my mouth to say it.

After a long time, Cindy's doctor arrived. "We have to get some help here; this is pretty serious."

"Is it that bad a cut?" Cindy asked.

"It's not the cut. This is psychological. Has she had any emotional problems in the past?"

"Well, she's a little, uh, strange. Sometimes."

The doctor gave me a shot of Demerol, and I lost consciousness.

I woke up at Charity hospital. My head had been stitched up and Dick was there. He explained the situation to me, "The lady doctor who sewed you up knows some doctor here, and she says you might be able to get on here as a teaching case."

"Who do they want me to teach?" I asked, still groggy.

"They don't want you to teach, Janey. That just means the treatment is free."

We filled out the applications and I was accepted to the program. Tulane University would use me as an example for the doctors in their residency program. In return, I would get free medical care and access to drugs that were still in the experimental stages. All I had to pay for was my medication. They chose me for the program because I was young, intelligent, and, for my children's sake, I was highly

motivated to get better. In other words, there was a chance that I was curable.

I was not to be a regular resident. I would come to the hospital every day for psychotherapy and other treatments, otherwise, I could live at home. I could also be temporarily admitted to the mental ward anytime I was especially troubled. That turned out to be often.

Chapter 6 The Third Ward

At Charity Hospital, the psychiatric wing was divided into three wards. The milder cases were kept in the first ward; the second ward was for middling cases. The third ward was reserved for the most difficult cases. I was in the third ward. Security was tight; to get in, you went through a series of three locked doors. Each of them had to be unlocked in front of you and locked behind you. Hermann hospital in Houston had curtains on the windows, comfortable couches in the lounge, a smiling receptionist. Charity hospital had none of these. It was stripped bare of all but necessities, the only color the grimy white of an institution.

For the first few days there, I had to undergo more tests than I could count. I talked to innumerable people: doctors, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists. I took written tests, physical tests, medical tests. In the afternoon of my second day there, a nurse came in, put me on a gurney, and began to tape electrodes to my head. I was terrified of another shock treatment, of that hideous animal feeling that followed each one. I started to protest, but the nurse quickly reassured me, "No, no. We don't do shock treatments here. Anyway, doctor says you've had as many as any person should ever have." More, I thought. "This is for an Electroencephalogram. You know, honey, a brain scan. It won't hurt." I wasn't sure if I believed her, but I was relieved.

When I came into the hospital, I was what they called catatonic: I couldn't move or speak. At other times, though, I was driven, as if by a supernatural force. I could not rest, I could not relax. I would talk and talk, or scream and scream, or run and run. The doctors found that my body chemistry was very unusual. In combination, these symptoms led them to diagnose me as Schizophrenic. They prescribed Thorazine.

They also found some evidence of slight brain damage, which they thought indicated that I was epileptic. They prescribed Dilantin and Phenobarbital. In addition,

I was to be given one other drug at a time to see how it interacted with these three. The idea was that if we could hit upon the right combination, it would make me well.

They thought I was hypoglycemic until one of the doctors offered me a cup of coffee and watched, horrified, as I piled five heaping teaspoons of sugar into it. "Do you always put that much sugar in your coffee?" he asked.

"Of course."

"And how long have you been drinking coffee?"

"Oh, forever. Since I was two or three."

The doctor shook his head and made a note on my chart. The sugar didn't account for everything that was wrong with me, but it did mean that there was some physical cause for my mood swings, and for some of the problems with my body chemistry. It also enabled me to go for days at a time without food.

When I was in the third ward, I shared a room with three other women. One was a young girl with dark hair and a haughty bearing. She introduced herself as Elizabeth. One of my other roommates snickered. A few hours later in the patient lounge, Elizabeth got up on a chair and took off every stitch of her clothing. "The heat has made you cross. Why don't you put on your nice silk pajamas and come on down to the party, honey. There's a lovely cool breeze." She was performing, making wide, sweeping gestures. The matrons each grabbed an arm and dragged her out of the room. I suddenly recognized the lines she had been reciting. They were from an Elizabeth Taylor movie I had seen a few months before at the drive-in. *She must think she's Elizabeth Taylor*, I thought. Later on, I heard that she had been obsessed with Elizabeth Taylor, and would watch all of her movies over and over. One day, she went into a theater and watched Raintree County over and over, all day long. Raintree County is about a woman from New Orleans who goes crazy. Watching that mad

scene again and again, this girl lost touch with reality.

Another roommate was Beulah. Beulah was about sixty, with wild eyes and wild gray hair. She was a Bible pounder. Wherever she was, she would pound on her Bible and preach up a storm. If the matrons took her Bible away, she would pound on anything else, a pillow, a food tray, anything. She would preach hellfire and damnation, "And the Lord shall judge the people even as he judged Sodom and Gomorrah, which was consumed by fire and brimstone. And he that looketh back upon these sinners shall be turned into a pillar of salt, even as Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she did look back upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Repent! Repent! Repent or ye shall face the same fate as those evil cities . . ." She could go on for hours.

Unlike the other two, Alma was quiet. She was also very pretty, with light brown hair and perfect features. She was sweet, considerate, and didn't seem crazy at all. Maybe because she seemed so normal, I was drawn to her, and she told me her story. When she was a little girl, her father was sick. She asked him if there was anything she could do, anything she could get him. He yelled at her, "Get the hell out of here. You're driving me crazy." She was so hurt that she screamed back, "I hope you die." The next day, he did. The guilt from that incident grew on her from childhood on. She did everything she could to absolve herself, talked to priests and said Hail Marys and lit candles, but finally, thirty years later, the guilt drove her into this mental ward. I tried to talk to her about what I knew as a Baptist, that Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins, and that he would forgive anything, but she could not believe me.

I liked Alma and got along with Beulah and Elizabeth, but most of all, I loved the routine of the hospital. Once again, there was a respite for me from the constant demands of my chaotic household. More than that, though, I felt safe from the other will that so often controlled me. If it began to take over, the people at the hospital could

often bring me out of it, at least temporarily. There was a hedge of protection about me here that I could find nowhere else.

Chapter 7 Dr. Reed

I had psychotherapy every day with Dr. David Reed. Dr. Reed was a compassionate, thoughtful man. He had been a clergyman, but, unsure of his calling, he had gone into psychology. He had light brown hair, gentle blue eyes, and was always extremely neat in his appearance.

In our first session, Dr. Reed asked me, "What do you want to accomplish with our therapy?"

"I want to learn to be the same people."

"What do you mean by that?"

I tried to describe to him what it was like to be inside a body that wouldn't do what you told it to. It was as if there were two wills controlling me, and only one of them was my own. Sometimes I had complete control, sometimes I had none. Most of the time I was somewhere in between, just hoping that this other will would let me do the things I had to do before it took over again.

I couldn't put all this into words, so finally I raised my hands to shoulder height, extending each index finger. I slowly brought the two fingers together, until they met. "I want to learn to be the same people," I repeated.

Dr. Reed was always sympathetic. He seemed to really care about me, even when my problems were mundane--a sick kid, not enough money, a car in the shop. I felt that I could tell him anything. I described to him my pictures. Often, wide awake with my eyes open, I would see soldiers in elaborate red and black uniforms marching past me, row after row, endlessly. The colors were so bright they almost hurt my eyes. Neither one of us knew what to make of this image, but it felt good to be able to tell someone about it.

I also told him my deepest fear, that I would hurt, mutilate, or kill my children. I told him of a reoccurring nightmare in which I drove my car over a bump, then backed up and drove over it again, over and over. Finally, I looked out the window and realized the bump was my son, Jay. In a similar nightmare, I was trying to chop off the head of a goat. I chopped and chopped with a small ax, sweat pouring off of me. When the head was completely severed, it turned into my daughter's head.

"Have you ever tried to hurt one of the children?"

"No," I was telling the truth. I hardly ever even spanked them when they were bad--Dick often yelled at me for not disciplining them enough.

"Do you fantasize about hurting them? Consciously?"

"No," again, I was telling the truth. The dreams upset me so much I would never have deliberately subjected myself to that sort of torment. "It seems like the dreams are coming from somewhere else."

"You mean from outside yourself?"

I thought about it. "Not really from outside. They come from in my head, but it's not the part that's me--I mean, it's not the part that I can control." I couldn't explain it the way I wanted to. I didn't know a word that described something in me that wasn't me.

One day I came in morose, wearing dark clothing. I played with my hair, looked around the room, tried to avoid talking to Dr. Reed. I stared at the wall behind him.

"What do you see back there?" he asked.

"Letters."

"What letters?"

"There's an S."

"Is that the only one?"

"No. There's an E too."

"Is that all?"

"No, there's one more."

"Which one is it?"

"You don't want to know."

"Yes, I do."

"You won't want to help me any more if you know."

"Jane, I'll always want to help you."

I took a deep breath. "It's an X."

"It says 'sex' on the wall behind me?"

I didn't dare look at him. "Yeah."

"Why do you suppose it says that?"

"I think it's a punishment."

"Is it a punishment for me?"

"No."

"Then is it for you?"

"If you say so."

"What do you say?"

"It's for me."

"Why do you suppose you need to be punished?"

This went on and on. I danced around the subject, wanting to tell him, sure that he would hate me if he knew.

"You're doing a great job, Jane. You really have a gift for nursing. I'll bet those patients feel better just looking at you." I glanced down at my white nurse's uniform and blue cape.

The doctor smiled and patted my hand. I loved this job. I had always wanted to be a nurse, but I had dropped out of school in the eleventh grade. Dr. Moore, my gynecologist, had hired me to do the duties of an office nurse, and had taught me how to do lab work, give shots, and assist during exams. I went on house calls with him, and was teaching myself medical terminology, picking it up at a rate that surprised us both. I had felt dumb all my life, and here, for the first time, I had found something I was really good at. I was happy to do the work for the ten dollars a week he paid me.

Dr. Moore was encouraging when I did things right, but when I messed up, I saw another side of him. One day, I misread a test result. "Stupid woman! Do you know what you could have done? How do people as stupid as you ever manage to get born?" He flung a glass test tube at me and it broke against the table. "Now look what you've done! Those test tubes are expensive. Do you realize how much money you just cost me?"

I don't know why I didn't quit right then. I guess because he was so hard on me, I thought his compliments meant that much more. In his more serene moments, he told me about his problems with his wife.

"She doesn't know what I go through. She doesn't realize how difficult my job is. Sometimes I think you know me better than she does."

I was so flattered that he would confide in me that I didn't see the danger signals. Anyway, I couldn't imagine that he would do anything immoral, he was so disciplined and controlled. I was sucked into his world, and his opinions, ideas and moods began to matter more to me than anything else. I wanted to stay in this world where ^I was bright, competent, and appreciated by such an intelligent man. We were heading for disaster. And I ^{was} some how ^{prevented} but didn't want to ^{resist}

"Right after that, Dick got transferred to Kermit, Texas, so I quit my job," I told Dr.

Reed.

"So nothing actually happened?"

I couldn't believe he had missed the point. "But I wanted it to. Don't you understand? If you've sinned in your heart, you've sinned."

"Everybody sins, Jane. What makes this so much worse?"

"I don't know. It just is."

Chapter 8 At Home

I was at home as often as I was at the hospital. Dick found a bigger, nicer house in Belle Chasse, a little town south of New Orleans in Plaquemines Parish. We moved, and began looking for a maid. Dick finally acknowledged that I couldn't manage the housework on my own and we needed someone to watch the kids whenever I was at the hospital. Finding good domestic help proved difficult. A maid with experience and references could always find a family with more money and fewer children to clean up after. A further complication was my illness. My erratic behavior and the wild look in my eyes scared many of the superstitious women we found. They would work one day, and then we would never see them again.

One woman stayed a little longer than that. She was an older, sloppy looking woman named Verdie. On her first day, I asked her to do the laundry. She stared at the washing machine for a good ten or fifteen minutes before she came back into the kitchen to find me. "Mrs. Miller, how you work the washing machine?"

"The instructions are written right on it, Verdie."

"Well, I don't read."

"Fine. I'll do the laundry. You go in and clean the bathroom." She went into the bathroom and shut the door.

After only ten minutes or so, she came back out. She's a good maid, I thought, if she can clean a bathroom in ten minutes. She's worth keeping even if she can't read. She asked me, "Mrs. Miller, how is it you get the water out ^{U p de WAATAA out de TUB} the tub?"

She had spent the whole time in the bathroom trying to drain the bathtub! I would have sent her on her way right then, but I had a doctor's appointment. "Don't worry about the bathroom right now, Verdie. I have to go out for awhile. Keep an eye on the kids, and feed them lunch. I'll be back in a couple hours."

When I came home, Verdie told me, "Those children didn't eat a bite of they lunch."

Beverly told me later, "She dumped a big can of spinach into a bowl and that's all she gave us for lunch! She didn't even heat it up!" We didn't keep Verdie any longer than we had to.

Finally, we found Rene, a tall, statuesque woman. She was well educated, spoke proper English, and her father was a minister, so she had no superstitious fears of the insane. The kids loved her; we all did. She had six kids of her own, and knew how to handle a household of that size. When Rene was working, I could relax, but she went home at night. Dinnertime was still the worst time, but how could I ask her to stay with me when she had a family of her own?

Dick built control panels for offshore drilling equipment. The job paid well, and the hours were very flexible. His boss, Jug Leatherwood, knew about my problems, and let Dick arrange his schedule around my needs. As long as the work got done, Jug didn't care if Dick worked nine to five or three A. M. to noon. When I was in particularly bad shape, he could take time off and make it up later. This was a blessing, but the blessing came with a price. Dick also had to install the control panels offshore. He didn't have to go offshore much, but when he did, he was gone all day, and sometimes overnight, and there was absolutely no way of reaching him. Even when I was doing fine, the stress of knowing that he could not be reached if there was a problem was hard on me. Although most of my crises were small, they were crises nonetheless.

One afternoon, I came into the kitchen and found that Jimmy, the three-year-old, and Ricky, the two-year-old, had dumped out an entire box of powdered laundry detergent on the floor. They had built an elaborate track for their matchbox cars: hills

and valleys and a foamy white lake. They were running their cars around on it.

"Jimmy," he was older so I held him responsible for the mess, "what are you doing?"

"If you didn't want us widdle kids to play wif it, you shoulda put it up where us couldn't reach it."

Three days later, I found that Jimmy and Ricky had used my makeup to paint themselves up like Indians in a Western. "Oh Jimmy, you used Mama's expensive makeup and made a big mess."

Without missing a beat, he replied, "You shoulda been watchin' us."

Another time, Jimmy was jumping from the top bunk of the bunk bed to the dresser below. His leg caught on the side rail of the bed and he hung there by his pant leg. He was furious, red-faced and screaming, "You shoulda caught me! You shoulda caught me!"

I always blamed myself for the trouble my kids caused, no matter how impossible it would have been to stop them. Jimmy, at age three, had already caught on to this and was shrewd enough to cash in on it whenever he got in trouble.

One evening, Dick and I went to an open house at the kids' school. We got a neighborhood teenager to babysit for the evening. We came home late, and found the babysitter tied spread eagle to our four-poster bed. The kids had talked her into playing cowboys and Indians with them, and she was the Indian. They tied her up, promising to untie her soon, and then went into the other room and forgot about her, leaving her there tied up all night. She laughed it off, but it was remarkably difficult to get a babysitter in that neighborhood from then on.

Even when I was well enough to be fairly normal, I discovered that I could

expect very little help from other people. I looked creepy--I had the film across my eyes that insane people have. That may have caused some people to shy away from me, but I also had to go head to head with the society we lived in.

One day in the summer, I was feeling better than usual, so I decided to take the kids to lake Pontchartrain for the day. I had our maid, Rene, with me, because even on a good day I couldn't handle all six kids in public by myself. We stopped at a restaurant for lunch and walked in, ignoring the "whites only" sign on the door. The waitress stopped us. "Ma'am, you can't bring your negra in here."

I was startled. Of course, I knew there was such a thing as segregation--I had grown up in Texas. I just hadn't thought about it.

"This is my maid. I need her to help me with my children."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am. She can't come in."

"You don't understand. I'm ill. I need help with my children."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am, but we can't allow her in here."

I walked out in a huff. There was no way I was going to let Rene sit outside while we all had lunch. I finally went to another restaurant, got lunches to go, and we all ate in the car.

This was the first time I had to face the reality of segregation, but I also had to face another reality. Nobody really cared about my kids and me. Strangers were not going to go out of their way or break their rules for me. I was on my own.

When I got overwhelmed at home, I would go down the street to my Sunday school teacher, Debbie Holly's, house. I would bring my Bible and ask her questions.

"Does God really love me?"

"Of course he does, Janey. Look at John 3:16."

"But will God forgive me for anything?"

"Now, Janey, you know he will. Don't be silly." She dismissed my worries as if she were talking to a child.

"What's wrong with me?"

"Don't worry about that. The doctors know what they're doing; they'll be able to help you."

She answered hundreds of question, always comforting and positive. I knew her answers were pat, but it made me feel better to hear, over and over, that everything would be okay.

One day, though, she said to me, "Janey, Bill, my husband, has a heart problem."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do? I'll pray for him."

"Why, thank you. But, you see, he can't really handle company right now."

It took a moment for what she was saying to sink in. So I wasn't welcome there either. I walked home through the blistering heat, trying not to be hurt. Of course I shouldn't bother Debbie if Bill was sick. But what would I do now? Where could I go when I felt the urge to run from the house? Who would tell me I would be all right the hundred times a day I needed to hear it?

"Riiiiing riiiiing ring." I jumped and let out a moan under my breath. *What could this be? Has something terrible happened to Dick? Or my parents?* I always assumed that the phone ringing meant bad news.

No, that's not my ring. New Orleans still had party lines, and I wasn't used to them yet. "Riiiiing riiiiing ring." We shared this line with all the people on our block. "Riiiiing riiiiing ring." The phone rang over and over, and I grew more and more agitated. It seemed like this phone rang two longs and one short all day long. I paced back and forth, wringing my hands.

Tommy stared at me from across the room. He could tell I was about to snap, and he suspected that it was the phone that was bothering me. Never taking his eyes off me, he lifted the phone and then hung it back up.

This became a habit for the older kids. They didn't want to hear a ringing phone all day, and they especially didn't want to watch me go to pieces every time our neighbor didn't answer her phone. We could not have guessed at the time that this small action would cause us so much trouble, or bring us so much help.

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"Would you like a little snack before you go on to bed, Sarah Jane?" Daddy asked.

"Okay, Daddy." I was three. I watched him crush crackers in a bowl and pour milk over them. The snack was so good that the next night I asked him, "Daddy, would you make me some prompterolosis?"

"Some what, honey?"

"You know, like you made last night. Some prompterolosis."

Daddy laughed and went into the kitchen to make me another snack. "You surely are a precocious child, Sarah Jane."

Even as a very small child I had a large vocabulary, a vivid imagination, and an ability to learn things quickly. I talked early; I read early; and I always impressed my family with my sharpness. In grade school, I had consistently made straight A's on my report cards. I knew I was a smart little girl. Even in the troubled times when I lived with Aunt Dorothy and had to change from a country school to a big city school, I made good grades easily.

By high school, I was too busy with clothes, friends, and making trouble to pay much attention in school. But even if I spent class time passing notes and never studied, I always got by. It was never hard to impress the teachers.

Then in sophomore history, we started studying the crusades. I had never liked reading about wars, but before, there had been some sense to them. In World War II, it was the Americans against Hitler and his evil empire. We were the "good guys" and we won. The American Revolution was the freedom-loving colonies against the tyrannical British. Bad things happened during the war, but there was a cause at

stake, and again, the "good guys" were the victors. In the crusades, though, the aggressors were . . . Christians. I remembered my Sunday school pictures of Jesus with a lamb in his arms, Jesus comforting the children, Jesus, in his white robe, ascending into heaven. Jesus was love and goodness and kindness, but these people had attacked innocent people in the name of Jesus. They had killed and tortured and stolen in the name of Jesus. And Jesus had let them.

As my history teacher lectured, I sat at my desk picturing women and children running, screaming, bleeding. I knew they were being chased. They were like the women, children and slaves running from Sherman in my grandmother's stories about the civil war. Those that did survive would have nothing left to come home to. Their world had ended. I closed my eyes tight, trying to get rid of the pictures in my mind, but they became more vivid. I saw what the women and children were running from. I saw the soldiers marching in perfect formation. They wore elaborate red and black uniforms. Line after line passed, and then the scene pulled back, and I saw the banner they marched under. It was a cross.

I began to cry, shrieking sobs that I couldn't keep quiet. I ran out of the room and went to the school nurse. I couldn't tell her what really happened, so I told her I had stomach cramps and she sent me home. I never went back to history class. If being smart meant knowing about those kinds of horrors, I was just going to be dumb.

After this resolution, my grades in my other courses dropped. When it became obvious that I was going to fail my junior year, I quit school. I didn't need school, I decided. Dick loved me; he had promised me he would marry me. I could just marry him, settle down, have some babies, and forget that any of this had ever happened.

"Which picture show do you want to see?" asked my father-in-law, Freddy.

"How about The Hunchback of Notre Dame? That's supposed to be very good.

What do you think, Jane?" my mother-in-law looked at me.

"Oh, I don't much care for football movies," I said without thinking.

Everyone burst out laughing. I wasn't sure why that was so funny. I had a vague memory of a book about a hunchback we had studied in English class, but I didn't want to think about school. Let them laugh. Dick and both his parents repeated the story to everyone: "Dumb Jane thought The Hunchback of Notre Dame was a football picture."

The epithet stuck. One day, the members of Dick's family were all meeting at the armory, where Dick's brother, Kerby, worked. I pulled my car into the driveway, and leaving eighteen-month-old Tommy in the front seat, ran inside to see if anyone else was there yet. Freddy pulled in behind me and came up to Tommy's window.

"What are you doing sitting here in the hot sun?"

"That Dumb Jane just left me here," Tommy shot back at him.

That became another family story. Even the baby was smarter than I was.

For all those years, from high school on, I could never think straight. I always said the wrong thing, I always did the wrong thing. My attention always wandered just when the kids were about to get into trouble. I could get lost in my own neighborhood, or forget how to cook a meal that I had made a hundred times. I would try to read my Bible and have no idea what it meant. I understood the words, but I couldn't get them to come together in a way that made sense to me. After awhile, I lost the sense that I had not always been like this. Only occasionally did I remember what it had been like, years before, to be smart.

Even then, I couldn't tell anyone, not even Dr. Reed. Who would believe that there was something, a disease or a disorder or an outside force, making me stupid? I

just let people go on believing I had been born dumb.

Chapter 10 Voices

The next eight months are a blur. I was in and out of the hospital, sometimes out of my mind and sometimes almost sane--never completely well. My state of mind depended on so many factors that it was impossible to predict. Sometimes the drugs made me better, sometimes they made me worse. Sometimes my sessions with Dr. Reed helped, sometimes they didn't. Sometimes it was good to be home, many times it was terrifying.

When I was home, I would run. There was a weight in my belly like hot bricks; it wouldn't let me rest; it wouldn't let me be still. I would run as fast as I could for miles until I couldn't run anymore. Sometimes I fell and would lie there panting until I could get up and run some more. One night, I fell across the railroad tracks near our house. These tracks were not usually busy, with a train only every two or three days, but I lay there in panic, sure a train would come. I couldn't get up; I couldn't even move. After that, Dick forbade me to run toward those tracks. He picked a path that was safe, and which he could see from the back porch. I would run three or four blocks up Planter's Canal Road, three or four blocks along the Intracoastal Waterway Levee, and three or four blocks back. There were no railroad tracks. There was the water in the canal, but I stayed as far from the canal as I could. I was terrified of water. With Dick watching from the porch, I would run this circuit over and over, sometimes all night.

I ran at night mostly because I hated to sleep. My nightmares got worse and worse. I would wake up screaming, waking Dick up, but I would be embarrassed to tell him what was wrong. Often, I would wake up paralyzed. My mind would be conscious, but my body would not respond. I would lie in bed for hours, willing my muscles to move, fighting down great waves of fear.

Whatever I was doing, there was always fear. I was afraid of spiders, animals, storms. In New Orleans, there are lots of thunderstorms through the spring and summer, and an occasional tropical storm or hurricane. When there was a storm, I would hide under the bed and sing as loud as I could:

I've seen the lightning flashing;
I've heard the thunder roll;
I've felt sin's breakers dashing,
Trying to conquer my soul.

I've heard the voice of Jesus
Telling me still to fight on.
He promised never to leave me
Never to leave me alone!

No! Never alone!
No! Never alone!
He promised never to leave me
Never to leave me alone!

I sang to try to make myself believe the words. I sang to reassure myself that God would take care of me. Sometimes I could hear the kids singing along with me from different parts of the house, especially Beverly, who loved to sing. One night, though, I didn't hear any noise at all from the kids. Although still terrified, I ventured out from under the bed to check on them. The house was empty. I summoned all my courage and peeked out the back door. In the back yard, sitting in aluminum lawn chairs were

Dick and all the kids, even the babies. Dick was telling them about electricity, explaining why there were thunder storms. I was convinced that that were going to be killed by lightening or hail--maybe they would all look up and drown. My fear paralyzed me and I ran back to the bedroom and crawled under the bed again, helpless to do anything but pray my children wouldn't be struck by lightening to punish me for marrying such a foolhardy daredevil.

Anything I could do to feel safe I would do. Some days I would ride to work with Dick, lying down in the back seat because I was afraid to ride in the car. He would go in to work, and I would sit in the car all day, in the hot New Orleans sun. Sometimes I would roll up the windows, making it even hotter. I'm sure I would have been welcome to go into the office with him--his boss was tolerant of me--but for some reason, I felt safe in that car, safer than I felt anywhere else besides the hospital.

I heard voices, especially one voice, a gentle, persuasive, almost oily voice. Although I heard it as clearly as I heard any real voice, I knew that nobody else could hear it. Mostly, it talked about cigarettes. "Why don't you smoke a cigarette?" I would try to ignore it. I didn't want to smoke, and I was always trying to quit. "Oh, go ahead and smoke one. It won't make any difference. Just one." That usually was enough for me and I would break down. Sometimes though, it took even more persuasion. "If you just smoke one cigarette, I'll make you well." I knew deep down that that didn't make any sense, but it usually worked. Then I'd think at the voice, "When am I gonna get well? I did what you asked me." The response would be raucous laughter.

That voice was always with me. If I talked to a friend, it would say, "That was stupid. What a stupid thing to say." If my children disobeyed, it would tell me, "They're bad because of you. You're a bad mother." If I sang, it would say, "you sound dumb. Stop making a fool of yourself." If my husband told me he loved me, it would laugh,

"That's malarkey. How could he love a worthless, crazy woman like you?" For every situation, that voice kept a running commentary, and the conclusion was always that I was crazy, stupid, bad.

Because I was so convinced that I was bad, I punished myself. I would get in the shower and turn the water on so nobody would hear me. Then I would beat my head against the tile shower wall and pound on my thighs with my fists. I felt I deserved the pain of this, but it also felt good. It was a release for this terrible drive that was inside me.

The voice also urged other things. It would say, "It'll be so easy. Just take a handful of these pills and you'll go to sleep. Wouldn't it be nice not to hurt anymore? You don't want to go on like this. You want to sleep. I can make you sleep if you'll just take these pills." I was so tempted, so many times, to listen to that voice and kill myself. I always had enough Phenobarbital in my purse to overdose on. I probably would have, but I knew that suicide was a sin that I would go to hell for.

My mother sat at the kitchen table, her head in her arms, crying. I had never seen her cry like this before.

"What's the matter, Mama?"

"Mama's friend, Miz Mozelle passed away."

"But what's the matter, Mama. Isn't she with Jesus?" Death never bothered my mother. She was sure that dying meant going to heaven.

"Miz Mozelle didn't go to heaven, Sarah Jane." Fear gripped me. How could Mama's friend not go to heaven? "She killed herself, so she went to hell."

"How do you know that?"

"When you come to Jesus and ask him to forgive you, that's your doorway into heaven. But if you commit suicide, then there's no way to repent."

"Well, what if you ask him ahead of time to forgive you, before you do it." I was doing my best to think my way out of the horrible idea of Miz Mozelle in eternal torment.

"When real repentance comes, it changes you. There's nothing pushing you to sin anymore, so if you repent in advance, it means you won't sin."

I understood her perfectly, and believed what she said. I didn't think about it much at the time, but I knew from then on that I could not kill myself.

In church, I would sit listening to the Pastor Foster preach and the voice would talk to me, "That's malarkey! What he's saying isn't right. He doesn't even know what he's talking about. I bet he's a sinner. I bet he's done more sins than you have. Look at you, you pathetic thing, listening to a bigger sinner than you, thinking he's gonna tell you something about God! You don't have to listen to him." As the voice went on, I would get more and more agitated, swinging my foot, clasping and unclasping my hands. Finally, unable to take it any more, I would run from the church.

I asked Pastor Foster to pray for me. One evening, he came to our house; Dick asked him to sit down, but he said he preferred to stand. He said an eloquent, if short, prayer that God would heal me and protect my children. The whole time he prayed for me, he stood by the door with his hand behind him, on the doorknob. The voice said, "If you made one single sudden move, that fool would be out the door like a shot." I had a strong impulse to stand up suddenly, and I was horrified at it. Pastor Foster, for all his faults, was a minister, and I respected him. Still, I was afraid I wouldn't be able to control the urge to scare him. I crossed my ankles and tucked them under my chair and forced myself to sit still. Pastor Foster left after only a few minutes and never came back.

I found out later that Pastor Foster had gone to Dr. Reed and asked him to

discourage me from coming to church. He called me bizarre, which I probably was, and a distraction, which I probably was. Rather than try to help me, he wanted to get rid of me. Fortunately, I would one day meet another Baptist preacher who didn't give up so easily.

Chapter 11 Bad

"Tell me about your parents," Dr. Reed said.

"Well, they did the best they could in a difficult situation."

"What was so difficult?"

"It was pretty hard on them."

Dr. Reed sat and waited for me to finish.

"Raising me." Again, Dr. Reed waited for me to elaborate. "I was such a bad--I mean difficult child."

"Where did you get that idea?"

"I just knew it. I'm all dirty inside, and mean, and bad. I'm so mean it made my face break out in red spots one time."

"You did what?"

"Aunt Polly told me I was so mean it was gonna break out in red spots all over my face, and it did. I got all hot and sick and ugly, from the red spots."

"Did you have the measles?"

"Yeah, I had the measles one time, but that was different," I paused, thinking hard. "No it wasn't. It was the same time. I forgot that it was the same time. I had the measles, and Aunt Polly told me it was meanness breaking out on my face. Why did she do that?"

"I don't know," said Dr. Reed. "Tell me more about Aunt Polly."

"Mama called her in every time I got sick--that was a lot, you know. She'd come to the house and tell me I was faking. No matter what was wrong with me or how hard I coughed or how hot I was, she told me I was faking. Then she'd give me castor oil. Dose after dose after dose. No matter how sick I was, she'd have me running upstairs to the potty every five minutes on top of everything else." Just talking about it, I could

feel what that had been like, burning hot, muscles aching, coughing, running up the stairs, hoping I would get there in time

"Why do you suppose she did that?"

"I don't know. I don't know why Mama let her." I burst out crying. I couldn't stop; I couldn't talk any more that day.

"Mama! Mama!" She didn't even turn her head. "Mama! Are you mad at me? Did I do something wrong? Mama!" I tried to crawl onto her lap. Without looking at me, she pushed me away and got up.

This was how she always punished me when I was bad, by refusing to talk to me. I couldn't think of what I had done wrong. I racked my brain, trying to think of something that could have upset her so much.

She slammed the kitchen door, and I ran after her. I watched her from a distance as she paced back and forth. back and forth across the back yard. "Mama, what's the matter?" I asked when I finally worked up the nerve to approach her.

"I am trying to get God to forgive me for calling your daddy an idiot. Of course he is, but I shouldn't have said it." She continued pacing. I walked away, confused. It didn't cross my mind that her anger could have nothing to do with me. I was busy trying to figure out why her calling Daddy a bad name could be my fault. I decided that it was just one of those grown up things--I had caused her anger without even knowing how. My ignorance, though, didn't absolve me of the guilt. I had upset her, I had let her down. I had let Jesus down too, and he would be upset too. A drop of rain fell from the sky and landed on the back of my hand. That proves it, I thought. Jesus is up there crying because I made Mama and Daddy fight.

When I explained this to Dr. Reed at my next session, he sat back quietly in his

chair for a moment before he responded. "Children have a funny way of seeing things, don't they, Jane?"

"Yeah, they do." I thought of my own kids.

"But as adults we can look back and see that things weren't always what they looked like at the time."

"I guess."

"Do you think now that you made your mother call your father an idiot?"

"No, I guess I didn't."

"Do you think now that the rain was because Jesus was disappointed in you?"

"No. I guess it was just raining."

"So it was just a misunderstanding. You were just a sensitive child, and you took things too personally."

I felt relieved and started to smile at him. Then that other will inside me stopped me. "But I was bad sometimes. Sometimes it wasn't a misunderstanding, it was real."

"Give me an example."

"Like lying about the washrags. That was real. I had a friend over, and I was so excited because I hardly ever got to have a friend over, and we were playing with my Betsy-Wetsy doll. The rule was I could get the used washrags off the racks, but I couldn't use the clean ones. That day, Mama did all the laundry, so there weren't any on the racks, so I just went and got a pile of clean ones out of the closet and we played with them. So then Mama came after me and asked me where I got those washrags. I don't know what made me lie to her, but I just stood there and told her that I got them off the racks, and she asked me again, and I told her that I got them off the racks. She got so mad at me that she took my little friend home, and then she whaled me. I deserved it, though, 'cause I told her a baldfaced lie."

"Tell me why this upset you."

"Because it proved how bad I could be. I was a liar and Mama knew it. I don't know how she knew it. she just did. She knew everything I did. She had eyes in the back of her head, that's what she always told me."

"So you assumed that she knew everything you did?"

"She did know. She knew when I was lying, she knew when I was faking sick--" I stopped short. "She knew when I wasn't faking, and she let Aunt Polly give me that castor oil anyway. And she knew that I wanted to come home from Aunt Dorothy's but she didn't come and get me, and she knew about--she knew about everything, and she didn't care."

I leaned over in my chair, my head in my hands, and cried for what seemed like forever. Dr. Reed unlocked his desk drawer, took out a box of Kleenex and put it on the desk in front of me, then waited patiently. Finally, I got control of myself again and looked up.

"Jane, you have six children."

I nodded.

"Do you know what they're thinking?"

"Sometimes."

"When?"

"Like if they're lying to me I can usually tell, or if they're upset."

"How can you tell?"

"Well, if they're lying they mumble, and they look guilty and they can't look me in the eye."

"So you can tell by watching their physical responses?"

I nodded.

"So there's nothing magical about it; it's just careful observation."

"I guess."

"And you can only do this sometimes, not all the time."

"Right."

"Do you think your mother had some special power that made her be able to read your mind?"

I didn't answer, and he continued, "Even though most parents can't read their children's minds?"

I thought about this one. "Probably not."

"Think about the incident with the washrags again. Can you think of any way she could have known you were lying without actually reading your mind?"

"Well, she had been doing laundry that day. If she took all the dirty washrags off the racks and washed them, then she would have known that there weren't any left." I was excited now. "Doctor, I just thought of something else. We had a stairwell closet, and we kept some food there, you know, cans and stuff, and sometimes there were mice in it. So one time I opened the closet door and squealed and yelled to Mama that I saw a mouse. And Mama just told me not to worry 'cause there were mice in that closet all the time."

Dr. Reed looked at me, not sure of my point.

"There wasn't a mouse! I just made it up and she didn't know! You're right, Doctor, she didn't know everything! Oh, that makes me feel so much better." The idea of my mother's omniscience had been so upsetting for so many years; I was thrilled to be able to let go of it.

We finished out the session, and I headed home. As I turned the ignition in my car, though, anger surged up from somewhere inside me. A cold, mocking voice said, "She should have known. She should have known." In one second, all the progress I had made that day was wiped out. It didn't help to understand my childhood. I was still angry. I still hated. And Godly people don't hate.

I was so excited. Mama was going to let me spend a whole weekend at Jeri and Patsy's house. I loved my cousins, even though I was scared of their parents, Aunt Dorothy and Uncle George. I was so happy I ran around the house singing while Mama packed my suitcases. She seemed to be packing a lot of things, but that didn't worry me. In the city, they probably change their clothes more often, I thought.

I had a wonderful weekend playing with my cousins. By Sunday evening, though, I was tired, and I missed Daddy. I peered out the window, waiting to see Mama coming up the sidewalk. Before I knew it, it was bedtime and she still hadn't come. Aunt Dorothy put me to bed in Patsy's room and told me not to worry. I cried myself to sleep.

All that week, I waited for Mama to pick me up. I wasn't having fun with my cousins any more. I liked to play with dolls and have tea parties, but they played rough games of cops and robbers, pretending to be heroes from the radio and the funny books. I spent most of my time sitting in the corner with my arms around my knees, singing to myself.

The second Sunday at Aunt Dorothy's I was sure Mama would come. She probably just got the days mixed up. She would be there. As Aunt Dorothy put me to bed that night, she said, "Get a good night's sleep, Sarah Jane. Tomorrow we're going down to the school and get you enrolled." I couldn't stand it. Was I ever going to go home?

I began to have dreams about death. In one, there was a funeral procession. Six huge horses in black harnesses pulled an elaborate black wagon and in the wagon was a coffin. I was watching from the air above, and I could see that the body in the coffin was mine. The wagon was pulled slowly down beautiful, tree-lined streets. A crowd of mourners filled both sides of the street. The crowd included my

family and everyone from school, and a lot of strangers. Whether they had known me or not, they were all in terrible grief, because they had treated me badly, and now I was gone. They were sorry now. I had this dream and others like it regularly for the rest of my childhood.

I lived with Aunt Dorothy for three and a half years. Mama sometimes visited on weekends, and sometimes I got to go back to the farm with her to see Daddy and Grandma. I begged them not to send me back, but they always did. I never knew why I was sent away.

Every time I thought about this, I felt an anger so strong it almost had a life of its own. At the same time, I knew I should have been able to forgive, but I couldn't. I was trapped between anger and guilt, and was being torn apart.

Chapter 12 Further Down

Looking back, it seems strange that Dick left me on my own so much. The hospital had three locked doors to keep me in, but I drove myself to my appointments. With all the different drugs I was on, I always had enough pills in my purse to overdose. I was often alone with the children. The doctors thought of me as violent and out of control; if I had been I could have hurt the kids. Dick, though, never saw a dangerous side to my behavior. I never did hurt anyone else, and only gave myself a few bruises. When I lost control, I would become catatonic or frantic, never violent. The urge to do violence existed only in my head. I rarely had control over my thoughts, but I rarely lost control over my body. *Not to them*

There was a bus stop in front of Charity hospital, and every time I walked past it, whether I was going to the hospital or from it, I had to fight the urge to get on that bus and ride away to anywhere, never to come back. The voice inside my head would say, "It'll be different somewhere else. You'll be well there. This hospital isn't doing you any good. Just go." Tempting as it was, I always managed to resist.

In addition to Dr. Reed, I saw twenty-two residents at the hospital, young psychiatrists fresh out of school. They would interview me one at a time. One of them looked a little like Clark Gable, tall, dark and handsome. I flirted with him. In response to his questions I would say, "Oh, you don't want to hear about me," I would look him in the eye and smile a little. "It must be exciting to be a doctor. Tell me all about it." He would try to get through his questions and leave as quickly as he could.

Another one was short, bald, and a little bit fat. With him, I was religious and sad. If he asked what was troubling me, I would say, "All those souls that are lost in sin. When Jesus returns and God judges them, they'll all be tossed into the lake of fire. I wish I could save everyone of them, but I just know I can't." My voice would be high-

pitched and mournful, and I would sometimes weep.

Each doctor got a different response from me. Although I was aware that I was doing this to them, and even felt justified since none of them seemed very interested in me, I didn't really do it on purpose. I really did feel flirty around the tall resident and religious around the bald one. I didn't consciously put on different personalities for each of them, it just happened.

I found out later that they compared notes after they talked to me. At first, they were confused, and even drilled each other on my appearance to make sure they were all interviewing the same person. Finally, they came to the conclusion that this was a symptom of my illness, that I was a disassociated personality.

I never played games, conscious or unconscious, with Dr. Reed. Because he seemed to care about me, I tried as hard as I could to work with him. At my worst, I felt like I was in the bottom of a well. With Dr. Reed's help, I would climb up and up toward the light, but every time we would get close to the top, something would happen to drag me down again. Sometimes the medication would stop working, sometimes there would be a disaster at home, sometimes there was no apparent reason. Over and over, we would start again, only to be dragged down again by invisible hands. It began to look like there was no hope for me.

As my condition worsened, my physical health deteriorated. By late summer, I was no longer sleeping at all, and only rarely eating. I had always had trouble with food.

I stared at my plate. "Eat your pork chop now, honey," Daddy said.

"I'm not hungry. I want to go out and play."

"Of course you can go out to play, Sarah Jane, but first, have a little of your supper," said Mama.

"No, Mama, I'm not hungry." I was very hungry, but this was the most Mama had talked to me all day.

"How about a piece of bread and butter, honey?"

"No, Mama."

"How about if we put a little molasses on it?"

"Or some sugar. Then will you eat?" this was Grandma's suggestion. Mama, Daddy and Grandma all gathered around me. I was the center of attention as long as I didn't take a bite. I sneaked enough food to keep me alive, but the nightly ritual of my parents trying to get me to eat was too gratifying to give up.

By the end of the school year, I was pale and sallow. I had spent most of the winter in bed with colds and pneumonia. I was almost dead when they sent me to stay with my sister for the summer. There I got plenty of attention and nobody cared if I ate or not, so I gained enough weight and strength to live through another winter's starvation. This became a pattern--every winter I starved myself, and every summer I went to my sister's to recover.

Now I felt like I had a lump in my throat. When I felt my throat with my hand, there was no lump there, but every time I tried to swallow solid food, I felt like I was going to choke. I couldn't get anything down. If I tried too hard, I threw up, and felt even worse than I had to begin with. I lived on liquid nutrition shakes at the hospital, and coffee at home. I was almost always dizzy and lightheaded. My skin dried out and my hair dulled and my weight dropped to eighty-eight pounds. ~~The doctors added a new diagnosis to my chart, Anorexia Nervosa.¹ This couldn't go on.~~ *Not Thin Again*

¹ Although this disease was almost unheard of at the time, it did exist as a diagnosis. Today, we associate Anorexia with a desire to be thin: this is not accurate in my case. I never worried about my weight, but I was almost entirely unable to eat.

Chapter 13 The Telephone

It was a Friday night early in November. I sifted listlessly through a large pile of unopened mail on the kitchen table. There were three or four letters from the telephone company. I tore one open. They had had complaints from neighbors about my kids playing with the telephone. They were threatening to disconnect our service if I didn't do something.

A wave of guilt swept over me. *It's my fault the kids play with the phone. I should pay more attention to them. They're not bad, I'm bad.* The voice in my head took up the refrain, "They're not bad, you're bad. They're not bad, you're bad." I looked around, trying to decide what to have for dinner. Dick was working, one anxiety out of the way, but I still couldn't decide.

Finally, I piled all the kids in the car and took them to a diner for fried chicken. I drank a cup of coffee and watched them. I felt edgy and nervous. My hands were shaking. I felt like running. I opened my purse and looked through the bottles of pills. I pulled out the Stelazine, a new drug they were trying on me. The doctor had said to take one pill, two if I still felt agitated. I broke one of the round, white tablets in half and swallowed it, hoping that it would calm me down. Finally, the kids were ready to go home. As I stood up to pay the bill, I noticed that my whole body was shaking. I was having a hard time walking. In the car on the way home the shaking continued to worsen. I could hardly drive, but somehow I managed to get home. "Kids, go ahead and go on in the house. I'll be in in a few minutes."

I sat alone in the car. It felt like my heart and liver and kidneys were shaking as hard as my arms and legs. I tried to picture what was happening to my heart. If it kept shaking, I imagined, I could have a heart attack; it could burst or spring a leak. My liver could be damaged. The more I thought, the more I scared myself.

I finally gathered my strength and dragged myself next door to my neighbor, Ann Teague's, house. Her husband worked for an oil company and spent most of his time in Saudi Arabia. When he was home he expected Anne's undivided attention--he usually didn't even let her answer the door. I went into the garage and knocked on the door, praying that Mr. Teague wasn't home. I heard buzzing and saw black spots. I was standing in a cloud of mosquitoes but I was too weak to brush them off my arms and face. Ann opened the door and peered out at me through the screen. I didn't say anything, just stood there shaking.

"Jane? Jane, are you all right?" She could tell by looking at me that there was something very wrong. "My husband's home. I can't let you in." I shook. "I'll do what I can, though. Just go on home and lie down." I stumbled across the lawn, into the house and collapsed on the couch.

Ann dialed the police. "My neighbor is sick. No, I don't know what's wrong with her. She can't get to the hospital by herself. No, I can't take her either."

A few houses down, Diane Lambert was in a dilemma. For months now, she had had trouble with her telephone. Someone on her party line had a bunch of bratty kids who hung up the phone every time it rang two longs and one short--her ring. No one could call her. She had complained to the phone company, which had been characteristically slow in doing anything. She had even asked the members of the small, evangelical church she attended to pray for her. Right now, she was praying about the problem as she got dressed for the Bible study she was to host that evening. Suddenly, she was sure she felt God tell her that her problem would be solved if she picked up the phone and listened. "I can't listen in on somebody else's phone call," she prayed. Again, she felt God tell her that she should pick up the phone and listen. "Okay, I'll do it. But only if the first thing I hear is this neighbor's name and address."

She picked up the phone. Ann Teague's voice said, "Her name is Jane Miller. The first house on the right on Planter's Canal road in Belle Chasse. She's, uh, schizophrenic or something. She needs to go to Charity hospital, that's where she's been getting treatment. No, she's not alone in the house. She has six small children."

Diane's knees almost gave out from under her. She had asked for a name and address and now she had one. She quickly scribbled them down. And now she knew the real problem. Before, she had been angry at this woman who didn't watch her kids. Now she realized the reason God had spoken to her to pick up the phone. She had to help.

A few minutes later, members of her church began to arrive for the Bible study. When they had all gathered, she told them about the phone call. Her pastor, Sam Fife, opened his Bible to Romans 8:28 and read, "'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.' We have known from the beginning that Sister Diane's troubles with her telephone were for some purpose. Now the Lord has revealed that purpose to us. Somewhere nearby, a woman is suffering, and God has led us to her. Let us pray for her, and ask God to use us for his purpose in this matter, whatever that may be." That night, this small group of believers prayed for the first time for an unknown crazy woman named Jane.

Chapter 4 You're Not God

Fifteen minutes after I talked to Ann, a police car pulled up in the driveway. Two officers came in the house and half carried me to the police car. They put me between them in the front seat. Weakly, I asked one of them for a cigarette. As we drove to the hospital, sirens blaring, red and blue lights flashing, the officer held a cigarette to my lips for me, since I was shaking too hard to do it myself.

It turned out that I had had an allergic reaction to the Stelazine. I was admitted to Charity again, and slept through the weekend. On Monday morning, Dr. Reed came to my room. It was time for our regular daily session. He took me through the series of locked doors and into his office. As usual, he unlocked his desk drawer and took out his pencil and paper.

I just sat there. I had been doing so well, I had felt that our therapy was really helping. Then this drug reaction had pushed me down again. How often was I going to have to go through this? He waited. *This sickness is more powerful than I. It's more powerful than Dr. Reed. He can't help me.* I thought.

I looked at Dr. Reed, "You can't help me," I said quietly. He didn't react. "You can't help me." Now I was yelling. I jumped out of my chair, "Only God can help me. Only God can help me. Only God can help me." I was jumping up and down now, yelling at the top of my voice. I took a deep breath, "And YOU'RE . . . NOT . . . GOD!"

The truth of the words didn't hit me until I had said them out loud. I had been putting all my trust in Dr. Reed, thinking that he had the answers. He was a good doctor and a comforting friend, but I knew he didn't have this power. And I knew God did. I didn't know how to call on Him, but I knew that was my only hope. I screamed myself hoarse, repeating over and over, "You're not God. Only God can help me and you're not God."

Dr. Reed sat quietly looking at me. He didn't respond at all. When I had worn myself out, he stood up and said, "Well, obviously we can't talk this morning, Jane. I'm going to take you to your room. We'll talk later."

I followed him silently through the series of doors and collapsed on my bed. I was angry with myself for lashing out at him. It wasn't his fault that he couldn't help me. I should have been calmer. I should have explained everything I was thinking to Dr. Reed. I was convinced I was right, though. Only God could help me now.

Apparently, Dr. Reed agreed. Our sessions were sometimes productive, but just as often, they went nowhere. He wasn't sure that all the talk therapy in the world could help me. He also had the same sense I did that whenever we made any progress, some disaster intervened to push us back to the beginning of the process. After almost a year, I was as ill as when I had first been admitted; I had shown absolutely no permanent signs of improvement. I hadn't even shown signs that I was capable of permanent improvement.

They had run out of drugs to try on me. They had gradually increased the dosage of Thorazine, Phenobarbital and Dilantin until they couldn't safely increase it any more. My problems were too serious to be solved simply by talk therapy, but drugs and shock treatments complicated the situation more than they helped. A few of the residents had already decided that I was beyond help. Dr. Reed had resisted this judgment as long as he could. He didn't like the idea of giving up on me while I still wanted so badly to be helped. He knew from experience that a patient who really believed that he could help them had a much better chance of recovery; I had believed in him and been willing to do anything he thought would help. I had been one of the most motivated patients in the hospital. All that had changed this morning. If I no longer believed he could help me, then he probably couldn't.

He hated to give up on anyone, but he had other patients that he was helping. He could only treat so many patients at once, and he knew at least three other patients who probably would improve if he gave them my time slot. He couldn't spend time on an incurable patient when that time could be spent on curable ones. He knew his limits. He knew as well as I did that he was not God.

The next day, I went home. The realization that Dr. Reed couldn't help me was almost too much to bear. It pressed down on me like a lead weight, so that I could hardly move, much less cope with the house and the kids. I locked myself in the stairwell closet and curled into a fetal position. I was there all day. Outside the closet was danger and fear, but inside I felt almost safe.

Wednesday morning I was ready to go back to the hospital. Although I knew it was false, I needed the feeling of safety that I got from being there. It was like a drug--I knew the illness was there, lurking beneath the surface, but at the hospital I could ignore the pain; it was blocked out. Dick could tell that I was not in any shape to be at home, so he called the hospital, as usual, to tell him we were on our way. When he gave his name to the receptionist, she said, "Dr. Reed wants to talk to you. I'll put him on."

This was unusual, and Dick didn't quite know what to expect. Dr. Reed came on the line. "Mr. Miller? This is Jane's doctor. I'm afraid I have some bad news. Can you come to my office to talk?"

"Sure," said Dick. "Should I bring Jane?"

"I'd rather talk to you alone."

"Okay, I'll just leave her here."

I was listening to Dick. Not being able to hear Dr. Reed's end of the conversation, I thought Dick was refusing to take me to the hospital. I lunged forward,

grabbed the phone and yelled, "Don't let him keep me here. I want to go to the hospital." Dr. Reed had already hung up. I was so angry I wanted to kill Dick. I tried to hit him with the telephone. I pictured myself beating him to death with the receiver. He ducked and got out of my way. I started to beat myself with the phone. I hit myself as hard as I could on my head and chest. I ran into a corner and began ramming my head into the wall. I guess Dick knew better than to try to stop me; I still would have killed him if I could have.

I ran upstairs just in time to catch Tommy picking up and putting down the phone receiver as it rang. Beverly was standing next to him. "Look at me!" I screamed. "You wouldn't act this way if I weren't so horrible." I beat on my chest with my fists. "I'm a bad mother. That's why you do these things. Look at me!" They stared, and then slipped out of the room. I kept beating myself and screaming until I fell on the floor, too tired to move.

I needed to pray. I tried to pray. "God,"

"God doesn't hear you," said the voice.

"God!"

"God doesn't listen to crazy people. He don't want to hear what you have to say."

"God!"

"Shut up!"

I couldn't pray. Who could pray for me? My sister had too many problems of her own. My pastor? That coward? If God wouldn't listen to me, I thought, he certainly wouldn't listen to Pastor Foster. I finally thought of Dr. Wright. We had been on the pulpit committee of the Baptist church together in Houston, and he was a missionary to Korea. This year he was in New Orleans on a fellowship at Tulane University. He and his wife were Godly, compassionate people. I knew God would listen to him. I called

him. He wasn't home, so I asked his wife, Paula, "Would you pray for me?"

"No." Her answer shocked me. "I won't pray for you. You don't want to get well. You don't want to take responsibility for those six snotty-nosed brats. I've got a lot of people to pray for, and I'm not gonna waste my time praying for you."

Stunned and hurt, I hung up the phone. I was on my own. I knelt by the bed and said the words that came into my mind, "I cannot bear the body of this death any longer. I cannot bear the body of this death any longer. I cannot bear the body of this death any longer." I wasn't sure where I got this phrase, but I said it over and over. "Just take my life, God. Please take my life. I can't take my own life, but I can't stand this any more. I cannot bear the body of this death any longer." Oh thank God I was able to pray now.

The casket was lowered slowly into the ground. My Aunt Bobbie, the gentlest, most spiritual woman in the world, was gone. Her three year old and her two year old stood next to the grave. My mother held the one year old and Aunt Lonlee held the newborn baby. "Why did God let Aunt Bobbie die?" I asked my father.

Aunt Polly answered for him, "So that Uncle Spurgeon will get saved."

I stared up at her. Mean Uncle Spurgeon? He had held me upside down over a well by my heels when I was three. He called it teasing, but for me it had been pure torture. I thought Uncle Spurgeon was rotten to the core. How could God take away Aunt Bobby just to save him? I stared at the four motherless children. A thought welled up in me: God is wrong. God is so wrong to take away those babies' Mama. My faith in God, which up to that moment had been absolute, received its first blow

Aunt Lonlee moved in with Uncle Spurgeon to help him take care of the kids. She did her best, but it seemed to me that she never quite treated them as if they were her own. No one could have replaced Aunt Bobbie; my cousins had been robbed of

the sweetest mother on earth.

I had a horror that my own children would end up like Aunt Bobbie's, motherless and at the mercy of others. I tried to trust God for everything, but I could never trust Him to take care of my children, not after what had happened to Aunt Bobbie.

I finally had come to the place where I was so desperate, I had to trust God. "Lord, I trust you to take care of my family." I began to list all of my family members and give them one by one to God.

"Lord, I trust you to take care of Tommy, and not let him get him into trouble. He feels a sense of responsibility for the whole family; Lord, help ease that burden. I trust you to watch over him and protect him." I moved on to Beverly, then the other children, then Dick, then my sister, then my mother and daddy.

I finished praying, confident that my prayer would be answered. *Sometime soon, I'll go to sleep and wake up in heaven. All the anguish will be over, and my family will be better off without me.* Suddenly, the urge to run was uncontrollable. I ran out of the house and around my usual circle. I ran all night. I can't say I was at peace, but I felt better than I had in a long time. For one brief moment, I had been able to talk to God, and now everything would be okay.

Chapter 15: The Blow

After he got off the phone with Dr. Reed, Dick waited until I was quiet, and then slipped out of the house to meet the doctor at Charity hospital. He sat in Dr. Reed's office where I had sat so many times before, in the chair which was bolted to the floor, in front of the desk which was locked and bolted to the floor.

After a few preliminaries, Dr. Reed began to break the news. "As you know, Mr. Miller, we've tried a number of treatments with Jane. None of them have been very effective."

Dick didn't say anything. "She has three separate problems," Dr. Reed continued, "the emotional breakdown, an atypical blood chemistry, and brain damage. We could treat any one of these, and maybe even two of them, but there's simply no way to deal with all three at once. She's been in treatment for quite some time now, and she's made no lasting progress at all."

He paused, waiting for a response. He didn't get one. "I really don't think there's any more we can do. I hate to say it, Mr. Miller, but we've come to the conclusion that we can't help her anymore."

Again, he waited for Dick to say something. "When you applied for her to be a teaching case, you signed commitment papers. Spend some time with her, say goodbye, and when you're ready, bring her up here. We'll transfer her to Mandeville for you."

"Mandeville?"

"It's the state mental hospital, Mr. Miller. I'm sorry it's come to this. Once she's there, it's permanent. Get yourself a new wife, or put the kids in foster homes, or whatever you have to do. But, Mr. Miller, don't look back. She'll never come out of this."

Dick couldn't believe his ears. "I can't do that."

"I'm sorry. You're going to have to. Bring her in whenever you're ready."

"I can't do that. She's my wife."

"I know this is difficult, Mr. Miller. We all had high hopes for her recovery, but she's not going to get better. Ever. Give yourself some time to get used to it. You'll see that there's no other way."

Dick rose. "I need to get to work."

"Thank you for coming, Mr. Miller. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news."

They shook hands and Dick left the hospital as fast as he could. He had been desperate to get out of that room, away from a doctor who no longer offered any hope. Instead of going to work, he drove aimlessly along the Pontchartrain Expressway.

He knew, although he didn't like to think about it, that I had problems. But a hopeless mental case? He couldn't believe it. Not the woman who was so devoted to their children. Not the woman who sang hymns around the house and read her Bible whenever she could. Not Janey. But then he remembered the film over my eyes, the hazy look that I had had for years now. When he looked at me with his eyes rather than his memory, he knew that I was insane.

That same week, I had lost my faith in Dr. Reed and put all my faith in God. Now Dick, too, had been forced to lose his faith in doctors and hospitals, but he had not yet replaced that faith with trust in God.

Part II

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshiped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, my name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of that country. Now there was nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts. Mark 5:6-17

Chapter 16 The Last Hope

The morning after I prayed to die I was still alive. My faith didn't waver, though; I knew I would die soon. I got out of bed and paced around the house, waiting. That afternoon, I felt good enough to go to the grocery store with Dick. As I was putting away the groceries, there was a knock on the door. I opened it and a ^{blond, young, young} blond, middle-aged woman said. "Hi. I live down the street from you. My name is Diane Lambert. I just came to tell you that Jesus loves you and he doesn't want you to be sick."

I had two reactions at once. Part of me was thrilled to hear this reassurance; it seemed like a confirmation that I would be in heaven soon. The stronger part of me was terrified. I snapped, "What church do you go to?"

"Bible Baptist."

I felt better. How dangerous could a Baptist be?

"Jesus can heal you," the woman continued. "It's not God's will for you to be sick. My pastor can tell you more about ^{it - how I can - maybe I can help you} healing if you want."

"Is your church that one right down the street?" I knew that pastor couldn't tell me anything.

"No, our church is out in Metarie."

"Metarie! That's an hour's drive from here. Why would you drive all that way when there's a Baptist church right up the road?" I was rude, mocking her.

"Well, we've been there awhile and we just seem to fit."

That made sense to me. I would have loved to have found a church where I fit.

"Would you like to meet my pastor? He can tell you more about healing."

I was apprehensive, but I was also curious. Mrs. Lambert's reassurances seemed to be an echo of what I had told Dr. Reed, only God can help me now. I couldn't picture God actually sending a woman to my door to get me, but maybe . . . it

surely wouldn't hurt to just meet her pastor. This woman looked safe enough, and she was Baptist. I agreed to go to a Bible study at the Lambert's house the next night. Her pastor would pick me up, and drop off a babysitter for the kids.

Dick didn't know what to make of this woman. He believed in ~~divine healing~~, of course, but it hadn't occurred to him that it happened to ordinary people like us. It probably never crossed his mind that Mrs. Lambert's pastor could actually cure me. He was just glad to have a babysitter for the evening. He had missed a lot of work lately, and he welcomed to opportunity to spend an evening catching up.

At quarter to seven Friday night, the pastor knocked on the door. He introduced the babysitter, a plump young woman named Helen Courage, then introduced himself as Brother Sam Fife.

He had piercing blue eyes and wavy, reddish hair. He was of medium height, but he seemed much taller. He carried himself with enormous confidence and authority. He terrified me.

In the car, I sat huddled against the passenger side door. He didn't speak to me, and there was no way I was going to speak to him. We rode in uncomfortable silence to the Bible study. There were a half a dozen people sitting around the Lamberts' small living room. The gathering looked more like a neighborhood coffee klatch than a Bible study. I was unimpressed.

After Brother Sam, as these people all called him, called the group to order, I sat back, examining them critically. I found fault with everyone--one person's clothes, another's mannerism, another's hair. I silently mocked them all. But I could find no fault in the terrifying pastor.

He did most of the talking. The others asked questions and he answered each of them in his confident manner, as if he were absolutely sure that his answer was

right. He didn't seem to be talking about any particular passage; he was skipping around so quickly that I couldn't follow him, although I had brought my own Bible. I soon gave up trying. I couldn't sit still. He made me nervous, these people irritated me. I crossed and uncrossed my legs, cleared my throat over and over, could find nothing to do with my hands.

Finally, Sam Fife looked straight at me, but somehow I knew he wasn't speaking to me. He said, "No demon's gonna disturb this Bible study. You be still and quiet in Jesus's name." I was paralyzed. I wanted to move and I couldn't. I felt like I needed to clear my throat, but I couldn't. I sat perfectly still, sure I was going to choke to death in this woman's living room. I lost track of time and was only aware of Sam Fife's voice, loud, a bit throaty. He spoke slowly, annunciated clearly, drew out the last syllable of every word. He had only the faintest trace of a Southern accent, unusual in these parts. His voice went up and down, and I felt that this Bible study had had no beginning and would have no end.

Finally, the Bible study was over and we headed for home. As soon as he pulled his car up to my house, I jumped out, ran into the house, through the living room, into the bedroom. I locked the door and jumped under the bed. I was desperate to get away from that man. There were huge dust balls all over the floor, and I made a mental note to mention this to the maid. ~~Now that Sam Fife was in our lives, I had a feeling I would want to spend a lot of time under this bed.~~

Brother Sam followed me into the house. Dick had hardly looked up when I ran through the living room, where he had been chatting with the babysitter. This was not unusual behavior for me. Now the pastor sat down and said to Dick, "Mr. Miller, I understand you're a Baptist deacon."

"Yes, I am."

"As such, I assume you believe that the Bible is the word of God."

"Yes. I don't know much about it, but I do believe it's the word of God."

"Let me read you something." He opened his large, well-worn Bible to Mark 5 and read.

And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

"That sounds like my wife," Dick said.

"Yes, it does, doesn't it? Now listen to how Jesus responds to the demoniac."

But when he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshiped him, and cried in a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high God? I abjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion for we are many. . . . And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. . . . And they ^Acome to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, ~~and~~ clothed, and in his right mind;

Brother Sam paused, waiting for it to sink in that this man, so like me, had been healed by having demons cast out of him. "Let me read you another scripture." This time he turned to Mark 16:17, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils." Mr. Miller, I am a believer, and as a believer, I have the power to cast these devils out of your wife and she'll be made whole. Do you want me to do that?"

Dick looked at him for a minute, and then looked down at the Bible. "Sure." He didn't know what to think of the idea, but at this point, he was willing to try anything. He couldn't see how it would hurt. He told me later, "If he'd said dip you in the Mississippi river seven times upside down, I'd have tried that too."

They arranged for Reverend Fife to come over at ten the next morning with some members of his congregation. They were going to pray for me and if all went well, they hoped to be able to deliver me from demon possession. Although Sam Fife and his congregation had been ^{learning about Powers} working in demon deliverance for some time, this would be their first ^{EXPERIENCE IN A TOTALLY} attempt ~~to~~ deliver ~~an~~ insane person. Sam Fife had plenty of faith, but even he could not be sure that it would work.

Chapter 17 What is Thy Name?

After he left our house that night, Brother Sam went to pick up another member of his church, Purcell Coalwell, who had been teaching a Bible study that night in a different place. They went to a coffee shop and the pastor explained the situation to Brother Purcell. He agreed that this looked like a case of demon possession, but he had another idea about the timing of the deliverance. "It looks like you've already got those demons pretty stirred up," he said. "Maybe it would be better to go ahead and do it tonight."

Brother Sam called our house. "How is Jane?"

Dick had spent the last half hour trying to get me out from under the bed. I had finally come out when he threatened to break the door down. "Not too good. I don't think we're gonna get any sleep tonight."

"Would you like us to pray for her tonight, then?"

"Sure." It was almost midnight by then. Dick couldn't believe that these people were willing to stay up all night to pray for his wife, but if they were willing to do it, he was willing to accept it.

"I'm going to call some other members of my congregation. We'll be there in about an hour.

Dick hung up the phone. He wisely didn't tell me what was about to happen. He sat up, smoking and reading until they arrived, while I paced the house.

Eight strangers walked into the house. With them was this terrifying man. I was frightened and angry, and began ordering them out of my house. "Who are you? You don't belong here! Get out! Get out! I didn't invite you over here. It's the middle of the night. Go home!"

They ignored me and started to pray, but they prayed like no one I had ever

seen. They lifted their hands in the air and said, "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" Then they began speaking in a strange, foreign-sounding language.

I sat in the pew of the Baptist church with my mother. Claude A. McCormick had come to preach a revival in our church. He preached about the torments of hell, describing the lake of fire and eternal pain. I bit my lip and squirmed in my seat. I knew I didn't want to go there. Then he talked about heaven, where we would sit on clouds, and be with all our loved ones and with Jesus. There was no doubt in my five-year-old mind that Pastor McCormick was telling the truth, and I knew I wanted to go to heaven. I couldn't wait. I listened carefully to the rest of the sermon. How could I get to heaven? Finally, the preacher gave the alter call: "The only way to be saved is to accept Jesus as your personal savior. All who would be saved come forward now." I didn't ask Mama's permission, just ran as fast as I could up that aisle. I knelt in the front pew and cried. "I want Jesus to come into my heart." The pastor put his hand on my head and said, "Amen, little sister."

After that, I knew Jesus was with me all the time. I had an imaginary friend named Patsy. As much as I fussed over her, I knew she wasn't real the way Jesus was. He didn't need a chair at the dinner table, as Patsy did, but He was always with me just the same. I talked to Him, sang to Him, danced with my arm raised to show Him I loved Him. I was afraid of nothing, because I always felt His presence. I would lie underneath the stars and speak a language I didn't understand. It didn't feel made up; it felt like it was God's language, like Jesus understood the words even if I didn't. Long, long afterward, after I had forgotten all about my secret language, something within me recognized the sound of it.

Although I kept screaming at them to leave, on the inside I thought, *These*

people are holy. I've never seen such spiritual people before.

The pastor walked toward me and clamped his hand on my head, hard. Where his fingers touched me, my head burned like it was on fire, like he had poured acid on me. I began to scream, "You're burning my head. Get out of here and stop hurting me." I began to kick and claw. The pastor and three other men were trying to hold me down and I clawed at their arms until I drew blood.

One of the men, who must have weighed three hundred pounds, sat down on one of my legs. I kicked him, and he shot all the way across the room and hit the wall. I was stunned that I had that much strength. I weighed eighty-eight pounds and I had trouble picking up my two-year-old. How had I done that? The man came running back and sat back down on my leg.

The pastor began speaking. "What is thy name, devil? What is thy name, devil? Answer me in the name of Jesus!" over and over.

He seemed to be talking to me, and I thought, *My name is Jane. Didn't anybody tell you that my name is Jane?* Suddenly, out of my mouth came a name I had never heard before, "Thaddeaus."

"What is thy name, devil?"

"My name is Thaddeaus. Are you deaf, preacher?"

These words were coming out of my mouth, but I wasn't saying them. The voice wasn't even mine. I had a Houston accent, but this was a pouty little girl voice with a faint undertone of a British accent. It was somehow familiar, but it certainly wasn't my voice. I thought of the the other will, the one that made me run, or say rude things to people, the one that pushed my head down when I was bleeding on the bathroom floor. Could it speak? Was it speaking?

The pastor asked questions, and they were answered somehow, even though I was trying for all I was worth not to answer. At one point I saw one of the other men

whisper something to the pastor. I couldn't hear him at all. Suddenly, my head turned toward the man and the thing inside me growled, "There you go about that tape recorder again. You bring that tape recorder in the room and I'll never speak to you again."

"How did you know Brother Purcell was telling me he wished he had brought his tape recorder?" the pastor asked.

"I know everything," the thing snapped.

I was astonished. I certainly hadn't known what they were talking about. How could these words be coming out of my mouth? The pastor continued to ask questions.

"How long have you been tormenting this girl?"

"A long time."

"How long?"

"Since she was a kid."

After Aunt Bobbie's funeral, the family gathered at Aunt Dorothy's house. All the adults were visiting in the living room. I went to find my cousins. They were in the stairwell closet, a large room with its own electric light, reading "funny books"--comic books. Although I was not allowed to read funny books at home, I sat down and picked one up. At six, I couldn't read the words, but the pictures told the story all by themselves. A troop of Boy Scouts was on a camping trip. They sat around a fire, roasting marshmallows and telling stories. Frame after frame, page after page, you could see a spider descending on its line. Finally, it lit on the back one little boy's neck, and apparently bit him. He fell dead, face first into the fire.

I screamed and ran out of the closet. I found my daddy and climbed him like a tree. I couldn't tell him what had happened, I could only cry and hold onto him. He

walked me up and down the sidewalk outside the house, patting my back and talking to me.

After that, I was never the same. I could never look up at the sky, I never went out if I could help it. I never went into our outhouse again. Every time I walked under a tree, I put my hand over the back of my neck. I was filled with fear all the time.

I wasn't sure what was happening, but I wanted it to be real. I had never even heard of casting demons out of a person, but I knew that somehow these holy people could help me. I was worried, though, that I was somehow making the whole thing up. My family used to call me Sarah Bernhardt because I could be so dramatic, and I was worried that that was all that was going on. I was putting on a show for these people, and tomorrow I would still be as crazy as ever. In my heart I cried out, *Oh God, let this be real. Oh God, don't let this be a farce. Let this be real.*

These strange things were still coming out of my mouth, but inside, all I could do is cry out to God. I focused my attention on one person in the room. Gwen Coalwell was on her knees with her hands in the air, tears streaming down both cheeks. She prayed and sang, and spoke in that strange language. She was a middle aged woman in a plain cotton dress and no makeup, but she looked like an angel. She looked as pure and holy as any person I had ever seen. Confused and frightened as I was, this woman's presence comforted me.

She and the others sang a song--one I had never heard:

Oh the blood of Jesus.

Oh the blood of Jesus.

Oh the blood of Jesus.

That washes white as snow.

Hallelujah, hallelujah
Hallelujah to the cross.
Hallelujah, hallelujah
It can never suffer loss.

When they sang this, the other will that was in me became angry, frightened, upset. My body thrashed and it howled. Inside, though, this was so comforting. I clung to the last line, "It can never suffer loss." I had given myself up for lost a long time before. This song made me believe that God still wanted me, that I was worth healing in His sight. When they sang that song, I could almost believe what was happening was real.

Finally, the pastor said, "Come on out of her. Come out of her." The praying, which had only been background noise before, got louder and louder. I began to retch. I didn't vomit, but I couldn't stop retching. Suddenly, I relaxed completely. I felt better than I had in months. I lay there for a few minutes, so grateful for this feeling that I couldn't move or speak.

Then the pastor said, "Manifest yourself, demon."

My throat began to twitch, and then I felt terrible again. He said, "What is thy name, demon?"

Again, I thought, *My name is Jane*, but I wondered. Was I going to say Thaddeaus again? "Demos," came out of my mouth. I was stunned. *Another strange name?*

The whole process repeated itself. He talked to it for awhile and then commanded it to come out. I retched again, and then there was that wonderful relaxed feeling until he started over again.

That night, Sam Fife cast nineteen demons out of me. Each had its own personality and way of speaking. Each had a strange, Greek-sounding name. It took four hours.

After the nineteenth time we had been through this process, the pastor said, "Manifest yourself." Nothing happened. He waited and then said, "Jane?"

I recognized my name, but I felt far, far away, too far to answer. "Jane? Jane?" I felt myself drawing closer and closer to my body, to the sound of his voice. Suddenly I sat up. The hot bricks that had been in my belly were gone. I was perfectly relaxed and my head was clear. "Brother Sam," I said, like I'd know him all my life. "You better cast one more out cause I still want a cigarette."

"Somebody give her a cigarette," he answered. The fat man handed me a cigarette and lit it for me. "Why did you think you had another demon in you?"

"Cause smoking cigarettes is wrong."

"Who told you that smoking cigarettes is wrong?"

"Well, everybody knows that."

"Don't worry about smoking cigarettes right now. When the Lord gets ready to deliver you from cigarettes, he will."

I relaxed again and looked over at Dick. He had been sitting on the dresser this whole time. For the first time, he saw that the film was gone from my eyes. I looked like myself again. He began to cry, "That's the first time I've seen Jane in two years!" he said. I had never seen him cry before, not even when his sister died. *This must be real*, I thought.

"I'm healed," I said, hardly able to believe it. There was nothing in me that made me feel crazy. The overpowering drive to run was gone. The strange feeling that put a distance between me and the rest of the world was gone. "I'm healed!"

"Hallelujah," said Brother Sam. "When you wake up tomorrow morning, I want you to roll out of bed praising the Lord. Keep praising the Lord throughout your day. As long as you are praising, the spirits won't be able to get back in."

"After about forty-five seconds, I'll run out of things to pray about."

"If you can't think of anything else to say, say 'Jesus' over and over, as many times as it takes. I'll be back tomorrow to teach you the truth you must know to stand steadfast in your deliverance." Then he addressed the rest of the group, "Okay, people, let's let Jane get some rest." They went into the kitchen to make coffee and I sank back on the bed and slept for the first time in ~~three months~~ *years*.

Peacefully

Chapter 18 My Name is Jane

I woke up early the next morning. As soon as I opened my eyes, I remembered Brother Sam's instructions the night before. "Thank you, Jesus!" I said. "Thank you, Jesus!" When I stood up, I realized that the hot bricks were still gone from my belly. "Thank you, Jesus, for taking away the hot bricks!" Dick and the kids were still asleep; I went into the kitchen. "Thank you, Jesus, that I can walk into my kitchen without being frightened! Thank you, Jesus, that I feel hungry!" I hadn't felt hungry for years. I fixed myself a huge breakfast, eggs, bacon, toast, orange juice and coffee. "Thank you, Jesus, that I can cook!" There were so many things to be thankful for I could hardly get them out of my mouth fast enough. I certainly wasn't running out of things to pray for. "Thank you, Jesus, that I can eat. Thank you, Jesus, that I can swallow. Thank you, Jesus, that the lump in my throat is gone."

It was time to take my medicine: 150 milligrams of Thorazine, 375 milligrams of Dilantin, 500 milligrams of Phenobarbital. I took the three bottles out of the bathroom cabinet, opened them, and stared at the contents. *Enough drugs to choke a horse*, I thought. I thought of the first time I took Thorazine, the ten milligrams ^{Dr. Moore} ~~Dr. Reed~~ had given me. It had knocked me out cold for a day and a half. The dose had gradually crept up over the years; now I was swallowing fifteen times that much every single day and it didn't phase me. It didn't help. *Only God can help me now*, I thought. *God did help me. He healed me without drugs or doctors or any of the things we had tried before. And if I'm healed I don't need all this dope.* I slowly turned each bottle upside down over the toilet and watched the pills disappear in a swirl of orange and red and white. I knew that going off my medication suddenly could kill me, but if this was real, I wanted all the glory to go to God. If I wasn't healed, I might as well die. I couldn't go back to the way I had been.

What could I do now? I was usually so crushed under the weight of all the things I had to do, I hardly knew how to deal with this new feeling of calm. There was nothing driving me, there were no emergencies I had to deal with. I had eaten, the kids still weren't up yet, the house was clean. I walked through the house and into the yard. It's dry, I thought. I picked up the garden hose and began to water the flower beds and the lawn. I could feel a breeze on my face. Suddenly I realized that I had not been able to feel the breeze in years. The tumult inside me had never slowed enough for me to be aware of such a simple thing as wind on my face. I began to look around earnestly, wondering what else I may have missed. The colors were brighter than I had seen in years. Each flower and each blade of grass stood out sharply from all the others, individual and perfect. I hadn't noticed that the colors had faded during my illness, but now that they were back, I didn't know how I had failed to notice. Beads of water flew through the air in a perfect arc, each bead shimmering in rainbow colors. I remembered Sunday school pictures of the rainbow over Noah's ark. God sent the rainbow as a sign, a covenant. And now, in my back yard, there was another rainbow, God's covenant with me that I would not be destroyed. "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus!" I said over and over at the top of my lungs. Every sight, every smell, every feeling gave me more to be thankful for, more to shout about.

At one point, I thought of my neighbors, most of them probably trying to sleep in on Saturday. *What will they think of me praising God at the top of my lungs in the yard? They'll think I'm crazy, of course. Well, they already think that!* Unfazed, I continued.

A car pulled in the driveway and Brother Sam got out. "Brother Sam! Hallelujah! It's so good to see you!"

He smiled to himself, as if he were pleased, but not surprised, at the change in me. He held up his Bible. "Come on into the house, now. I have some things to teach

you."

We sat at the kitchen table. First he read me the passage from Mark 5 and explained it, just as he had to Dick the night before. Then he said, "You're free now, Jane, but you'll have to work to maintain your deliverance." He opened his Bible to Luke 11:24 and read, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

"You are like the house in this scripture. You were the demons' home for many years. Now that they have been cast out, they are miserable. They cannot rest. 'Walking through dry places' is a symbolic expression which means the spirit is forced to exist disembodied in the air. They are invisible until they can manifest in a physical being."

I tried to follow him. "Why do demons need a person to live in?"

"Since it is a demon's nature to deceive, torment and hurt the person they dwell in, if he has no human personality to do that through, he is miserable."

"Why?"

"Because everyone, demons and humans alike, must live according to his nature. If it is your nature to laugh and you cannot laugh, you are miserable. Since it's a demon's nature to do evil, if he has no personality through which he can be doing it, he is miserable."

"So they always have to have somebody to torment?"

"Or they cannot fulfill their nature and they're miserable."

"So they're gonna try to get back in?" This was a scary prospect.

"They will return if they can. The scripture says if a demon finds the house

swept and garnished, he'll come back in. When a tenant leaves a house, the landlord sweeps and garnishes the house, and leaves the door open to attract the next tenant. If you don't fill your mind with truth and faith, the spirits will repossess your mind, and you will be worse off than before."

"What can I do to keep them from coming back?"

"Praise the Lord all the time. Did you roll out of bed this morning praising the Lord?"

"You better believe it!"

"When you roll out of bed in the morning, roll out on your knees. When you go about your daily work, go around singing, 'Oh the blood of Jesus,' all day long. When you have a spare moment, spend it reading your Bible. Keep your mind so filled with Jesus and truth, and there'll be no opening for these spirits to get back in. Go to church--not any church. In order to maintain your deliverance you need a church that preaches faith. I don't know of any besides mine that does, but you don't have to go to my church if you can find another that will help build you up in faith."

I was surprised. I had never met a preacher before that didn't think his church was the only place to be. It made me curious to see what his church was like, that he could be so confident about it.

"You are used to being a vessel for demon spirits. Because you have lived this way for so long, demonic thoughts will come to you. If you don't recognize them as demonic, they will open the door for the spirits to come back in. Be careful of every thought you have, and do not believe anything that is not in agreement with the word of God. You must learn to distinguish your thoughts from the demons'. You're not healed yet. You can only be healed by keeping the spirits out."

Although I was concentrating on what Brother Sam was saying, I was suddenly struck by another thought. I was having no difficulty understanding him. My mind was

clear, the words came together coherently. Dumb Jane was gone, and my intelligence was back. Then next time Brother Sam paused, I explained to him what a change it was for me to be able to understand him, to be able to take part in a discussion like this one. "Demon spirits have been vexing your mind, making it difficult for you to think," Brother Sam explained. I was amazed that there was an explanation to even this, the most bizarre aspect of my illness.

We continued to talk for another hour and a half. I asked him questions about demon possession, and about how he had come to believe what he believed. He answered each question confidently, and backed up everything he said with scripture, often quoting long passages from memory. I soaked up every word trying to get a grasp of what he meant, intending to do exactly what he said. What he was telling me seemed fantastic, but he seemed so sure of what he was saying that I knew his ideas, however unusual, could not be taken lightly.

Chapter 19 Shadow of Doubt

After Brother Sam left, I sat staring at the refrigerator, mulling over all he had said. There was a construction-paper turkey pasted up. *Oh my God*, I thought, *this Thursday is Thanksgiving*. Every other year of my adult life, I had dreaded this holiday because it meant lots of cooking and lots of eating, my two least favorite things. This year, though, nothing seemed more appropriate than making a big meal and gathering with family to give thanks. That reminded me; "Thank you, Jesus, that I can celebrate Thanksgiving this year!"

I wanted to show everyone I knew how much I had changed. I thought about inviting my parents for thanksgiving, but I doubted they would come. My mother had recently had a stroke and was confined to a wheelchair. That would certainly make travel all but impossible. I thought of my sister. She would never come on such short notice. She'd probably been planning her own Thanksgiving dinner since April. I decided to invite Dick's parents up from Houston. They loved to travel, even on the spur of the moment, so I was sure they would come. I'd teach them to call me "Dumb Jane." I would cook a wonderful dinner and be organized and calm and relaxed. Everything would be perfect. I called them and although it was less than a week away, they accepted.

I began planning. I didn't own a cookbook, so I went over to Ruth Ferguson's house to borrow some Thanksgiving recipes. Ruth's son, David, played with my son, Tommy. She gave me a magazine with an article called, "Thanksgiving Made Easy." It laid out step by step what to make on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, so that on Thanksgiving day, you only had a few last-minute dishes to make. This was terrific.

Of course, Ruth noticed a change in me immediately. "You seem different."

"God healed me," I blurted out. I assumed Ruth would understand. As a

Nazarene, she believed in supernatural healing.

She seemed suspicious. "How?"

"This man named Sam Fife came to my house and prayed for me." I wasn't ready to talk about demons to anyone besides Brother Sam and maybe a few members of his congregation. It all seemed real when I talked to Brother Sam, but away from his confident presence, it was hard to believe that anyone in this day and age would believe in demon spirits.

Ruth's eyes narrowed. "That Sam Fife ^{that} Diane Lambert thinks so much of?"

"Yeah. That's how I met him; Diane took me to a Bible study at her house."

"Jane, you need to be real careful with that man. He speaks in tongues."

"Is that what you call that foreign kind of talking he does?" I was a Baptist, I didn't know what it was called.

"Yeah, that's what you call it, and it's of the Devil. That Sam Fife is deceived up to his eyeballs, and you'd best stay away from him."

"He didn't seem bad," I said softly. He seemed holy; I was sure he was sent by God. "And I am healed."

"The devil has a lot of tricks, Jane. I don't know what that man is up to with you, but you better watch out."

I went home confused. I thought it was so clear that I had been healed; how could that be bad? But I knew that I didn't want to be involved with people who went against God. I got on my knees in my bedroom. "God, this seems so right. I feel so wonderful and so free. But if this isn't your will, I don't want any part in it. If you want me to be sick, I'll be sick again." I burst into tears. I wanted to say, "Never mind, I want to stay well no matter what," but I forced myself to repeat it, and to mean it, "If you want me to be sick, I'll be sick again. If these people come from you, I'll welcome them, but if

they're of Satan, I don't want anything they have to offer. If it's your will for me to be sick, make me sick."

After a long time, I got up from my knees and took my Bible off the nightstand. "Lord," I prayed, "show me the truth. I know the answer is somewhere in the Bible, but help me find it." I began reading the book of Mark, and when I came to chapter 3, verse 22, the words seemed to come alive. "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, [Jesus] hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. And he called them unto him, and sayeth unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?" I knew I had an answer. If Brother Sam were of the devil, the last thing he would do is cast out devils. That is what this scripture was saying, wasn't it? Not confident enough of my own ability to interpret the Bible, I decided I needed more confirmation.

I skipped forward to John, and when I reached chapter 5, verse 43, again I felt the words come alive. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." All the previous night, Brother Sam had added to each command, "In the name of Jesus." He had said it more times than I could count. He had not come in his own name; he had come in Jesus's name! Again, I felt that I had my answer. He had come in the name of God, sent by God.

I wanted to talk about my experience more. The children were too little to understand, and Dick was busy. I went down the street to the parsonage attached to the Baptist church. This pastor hadn't been a real shepherd to me, but I had to tell someone what had happened. I was armed with scripture if he tried to claim that Sam Fife was of the devil. The pastor's wife answered the door. "I'd like to speak to Pastor Foster."

"He's busy right now."

"I've just had a wonderful experience and I want to share it with him. Could you tell him I'm here?"

"I'm sorry, but this is Pastor Foster's private time. He's watching television, and he can't be disturbed."

I was disgusted. If he couldn't stop watching television long enough to hear about a miracle, I would have to find someone who would. I never set foot in his church again; instead, I found a church that preached and practiced faith.

I spent the rest of the day playing with my children. I had missed being able to talk to them. I don't know if the younger children recognized the change in me, but they were happy to be getting so much attention. Tommy and Beverly watched me carefully, on guard for signs that I would lose control again. After awhile, even they relaxed began to enjoy themselves. I thanked God that from now on, I would be able to spend time with the kids every day. At eight o'clock, I started getting them ready for bed. "Can't we stay up a little more?" Tommy protested.

"I want you to get a good night's sleep. We have to get up early tomorrow morning. We're going to a new church."

Chapter 20 Coming Home

The next morning, we got up early to make the long drive across the river to Metarie. Bible Baptist was a small church, and instead of pews had theater seats. Several of the people I had met at the Bible study greeted us; everyone there seemed friendly and concerned. What a change from the cold, unfriendly treatment we had received at the church in Belle Chasse. I sat back and watched the fifty or sixty members of the congregation gather. I particularly noticed one Cajun woman chatting loudly with the other members. I cringed; the Cajun accent still hurt my Texas ears.

At ten o'clock, the room became quiet. I expected organ music and a song leader. Instead, Brother Sam walked to the front of the room carrying a reddish electric guitar, closed his eyes, and began singing and playing the guitar. The congregation joined in, most of them closing their eyes and lifting their hands. They seemed to be in a different world. The song was unfamiliar, too, "I've wandered far away in sin, Lord I'm coming home." They went on singing, some Baptist hymns and some new songs, for nearly an hour. Brother Sam did not introduce new songs as a song leader would have, just began singing and let the congregation follow.

Occasionally, between songs, the whole congregation would burst into tongues. It was strange to hear so many people speaking in a language I couldn't understand. Maybe that's God's language, I thought. He does seem to listen to them. Once, the Cajun woman began speaking in a loud, commanding voice. Everyone fell silent and listened, "Thus sayeth the Lord, I will pour out my blessings upon you, and upon your sons and daughters . . ."

I suddenly realized this woman was speaking perfect, unaccented English. How could she do that? Dick leaned over, an amazed look on his face, and said, "That's God talking." I nodded. It had to be.

After the singing, Brother Sam began preaching from the book of Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ *It is the power of God unto salvation of all them who believe* ~~The just shall live by faith.~~" He preached forcefully, loudly, sometimes pounding on the pulpit for emphasis. Again, it struck me that he seemed so confident, so sure of himself. He knew that the Bible was right. He had had the same Baptist upbringing I had; he had been taught to ignore the passages in the Bible that deal with demons just as I had. And yet he had found those passages, believed they were true, and with only the Bible to instruct him, had cast demons out of me. I was swept away by this man's confidence, absolutely sure that I had been delivered from demon spirits. My doubts returned later, but they were weaker every time.

We went back to Brother Sam's church that night. There was more singing, and again, Brother Sam preached on faith, this time from Mark 11:24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." My mind went back to the night less than a week before when I asked God to take my life. God hadn't answered that prayer, but He had done better. I had asked Him to take my life, and He had given it back. When I prayed for death, I realized, it was because I hadn't had the faith to pray for healing. God had answered not my flawed prayer, but a better one than I knew how to pray. I was so grateful, I could only sit in my theater seat and repeat under my breath, "Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus."

After the service, a thin, pretty, middle-aged woman introduced herself. "I'm Sister Lee, Brother Sam's wife. We're having a little get together over at our house, and we'd love for you to come." I had been dying for a chance to see Brother Sam face to face all day, so I eagerly accepted.

There were probably twenty-five people crowded into Brother Sam's dining room, drinking coffee, eating cookies, and visiting. I was introduced to the group. They all seemed to know all about me as soon as they heard the name Jane. They welcomed me as one of them. I was so used to people being cold and distant around me, I had forgotten that it was because of my illness. I didn't have that creepy look that kept people away. *Thank you, Jesus.*

The church members had an odd way of speaking. Where anyone else would say "that's good" or "that's nice," they would say "hallelujah." If they said "thank God," it sounded like they were really thanking God. I found myself picking up what Brother Sam called "sanctified language" very quickly. I was getting used to God being a part of my life not only day by day, but minute by minute.

After an hour or so, some people began going home. Brother Sam left the room quietly and Sister Lee, sensing my confusion, filled me in. "He's going into the bedroom to pray. When things settle down in here, he'll be back." Soon enough, the ten or fifteen people who remained began getting on their knees and praying either

silently or in tongues. Brother Sam reentered the room and ~~prayed with the group~~ *PRAYING AS HE WALKED ~~around~~*

Back to faith sound the room. With my eyes closed I could feel the power & presence of
Alternating between quiet, contemplative prayer, and louder praising, we prayed until *this man as he moved about the room*
two-thirty in the morning. People began to get up and go home, and when only our family remained, Dick began carrying the six sleeping children, one by one, to the car.

I didn't want to go home, I didn't want to stop praying yet. As if he sensed my thoughts, Brother Sam said to me, "Don't stop praying, Janey. Pray all the way home, and when you get home, pray some more. Go on to your home, but stay in the presence of God."

Chapter 21 For Ye are Chosen

The next day, I went to my regular Monday morning appointment with Dr. Reed. When I parked the car, I decided not to wear my glasses into the appointment. I wanted the doctor to see that I no longer had that film over my eyes. I left my glasses on the seat of the car, and climbed the stairs to his office.

I walked through the door grinning from ear to ear. He took one look at me and burst out, "My God! What happened to you?"

"God healed me."

He took another look and said, "I believe it."

"I don't take medicine or nothing."

Now he was horrified. "Oh, now you can't do that. If you come off that medication suddenly, it will kill you. We'll get you on a schedule to come off of it gradually."

"It's a done deal, Doc. I flushed it all down the toilet Saturday morning, and I'm not dead yet."

"You've still got some left in your system, Jane. When all that's gone, you'll be in real trouble."

"No. I'm not going back to that medicine."

The change in me was so dramatic that Dr. Reed didn't really have any response. He knew that if I did begin to have withdrawal symptoms Dick would bring me back to the hospital.

We talked for a few minutes, and I told him that Sam Fife had prayed for me. I didn't go into much detail, only saying that Brother Sam could tell him more.

"I think I'd like that," he replied.

"I'll give him your number."

"Well, Jane, you obviously don't need me this morning, and there's a lot of people who do. Why don't you go on home, and call me when you do need me."

I walked out of his office as happy as I could be. God had been so gracious to give me a Christian for a psychologist, a man who had the faith to believe what he saw in me. I praised God as I returned to my car.

My glasses were gone. The coke bottle-thick glasses that I could not see a thing without had been stolen. I had to get home to my kids, and there was nobody there to help me. I got behind the the wheel and said, "God, you've shown me that you're real, now please show me whether the cars are coming or going." I drove out onto the streets of downtown New Orleans. I listened carefully to the inner prompting that told me to speed up or slow down, to stop or to go. I made it through downtown, across the bridge, and into Belle Chasse. What would have been a disaster two weeks before had turned into an opportunity to renew my faith once again.

I hadn't made the kids go to school Monday morning. They would have been too tired to learn anything after staying up so late the night before. On Tuesday, they were back in school and my doubts began returning. What if Brother Sam really were of the devil? I couldn't ask anyone from the Baptist church; ~~DeWitt~~, ^{I could not trust anyone} my Sunday school teacher, and Pastor Foster had all refused to answer my questions in the past. ^{Everyone is right in his own eyes} ~~had no hope that they would be more forthcoming now.~~ Anyway, I wanted an answer from someone close to God. Brother Sam was the only person I knew that seemed close enough to God to answer a question like that, but I couldn't ask him. I finally decided that I would have to ask God. I wasn't sure what kind of answer I would get, but I had to do something.

I determined that I would do nothing but pray until I had my answer. I prayed all Tuesday morning, and ~~finally collapsed on the couch.~~ ^{and} I'm not sure if I was asleep or

awake, and if what I saw was a dream or a vision. I saw three silver vessels, a small one, a medium sized one, and a large one. I got up from the couch sure that I had my answer, that Brother Sam was sent by God, even though I had no idea how to interpret what I had seen.

I called Brother Sam and asked him what the vision meant. "Silver stands for redemption. The smallest vessel stands for the salvation experience, which can also be compared to the feast of Passover. You experienced salvation in the Baptist church. It is the work of God, it is good, but God has a greater work in store for you. The medium sized vessel symbolizes the baptism of the holy spirit, which can be compared to the feast of Pentecost. That is what our church offers you. It is also of God, but has greater potential for redemption than the Baptist church."

"What about the biggest one?"

"Don't worry about that one now. It is another work which is to come. It is not time for this work to be revealed yet."

Once again, I was confident that I was doing the right thing in joining Brother Sam's church. I began to long for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would allow me to speak to God in His own tongue.

Although I was still having trouble with the idea that demons could have possessed my body, the more I thought about it, the more sense it made. I thought of many times in the last ten years when I heard my voice say things I hadn't thought, or watched my hands light a cigarette without having wanted one. I thought of all the times I had felt another will inside me, whose intentions were so different from mine. I thought of what I had told Dr. Reed at our first meeting, "I want to learn to be the same people." I had always felt divided against myself, and now I knew why. The other will had been a demon spirit, not part of me at all.

That afternoon, there was another Bible study. Brother Sam was teaching from the first chapter of Ephesians. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him."

Well, I was about as far from being without blame as anybody could be. I looked at the scripture closer. It didn't say we are holy, it said we should be, meaning that, by the grace of God, we will become holy and without blame. And God had known that since before the world began. God knew before the world even began that I would be demon possessed. He knew that I would sin. I wasn't surprising God with all my shenanigans; he knew all this would happen.

I was five. I giggled, lunged forward, and swatted my grandmother with the flyswatter. "I got you. I got you. I got you." I swatted her over and over. She just sat in her rocking chair.

Why hadn't she stopped me? Why hadn't my daddy stopped me? I was being mean and disrespectful. How could they have put up with that?

I was fifteen. I checked my lipstick, fluffed my hair, and headed out. Daddy stood in the door. "Sarah, I don't want you going out."

"My friends are waiting on me, Daddy. Now stop being silly and let me go."

"Sarah Jane, I will not let you defy me. You go wash your face and and sit down or," he took a deep breath.

"Or what?"

"Or I'm gonna take my belt to you."

I laughed in his face. "Daddy, you've never spanked me in my whole life, and you're not gonna start now when I'm almost grown."

I defied him, and he had taken it. What was wrong with me? I should have listened to him instead of being such a brat.

I was twenty-five. I was trying to clean the house. I saw my neighbor, Rosella, heading up the sidewalk. I couldn't let her see the house this way. I didn't feel like talking. I ran to the window and pulled the shades. She knocked. "Jane? Jane, it's me."

"Shhh," I tried to keep the kids quiet. I crouched in the middle of the living room floor in the dark. Finally, she went away.

The guilt from these sins and a million others had eaten away at me for years. I realized now that God knew all about these things and he chose me anyway. The burden of guilt that I carried for every wrong deed I had ever done felt lighter. Even knowing that I was capable of these sins, and far greater ones, God had chosen me. That God would have such confidence in me gave me confidence to believe that I would maintain my deliverance. I would, but it would take all the effort and determination I had.

Rosella Flanders

Chapter 22 Thanksgiving

Thursday morning, I opened my eyes. "Thank you, Jesus." I got out of bed and began to dress. "Thank you, Jesus, that it's Thanksgiving day." Something was wrong. My prayers sounded hollow. Was praising becoming so routine that it was losing its meaning? I stood still in front of the mirror, cleared my mind, and tried again. "Thank you, Jesus, for my healing. Thank you that I'm well." There was still something wrong. *I've got a big day ahead of me, I thought. With Dick's parents coming for dinner and all, I've probably just got a lot on my mind. It'll be better tomorrow. You can't walk around on cloud nine all the time.*

I went into the kitchen and looked at the magazine schedule on the refrigerator. I had cooked the turkey yesterday, and most of the side dishes were done. This morning, I should make pumpkin pies. I started mixing ingredients for pie crust. Nothing seemed to go right. The crust had lumps, and when I tried to roll it out, it came out uneven. I stood staring at the mess I had made in utter frustration, feeling dull and incapable.

"Mom?" It was Tommy. I swung around to face him.

"What, honey?"

"Mom, I think you better go in your room and praise the Lord."

My first impulse was to slap him. *What a facetious little brat!* Suddenly I realized he was perfectly sincere and completely right. I went into the bedroom and fell on my knees.

"God, help me." I felt nothing. "I'm healed. I don't have to feel this way. In the name of," my head hurt, "Jesus," my voice trailed off.

This isn't helping. I'm going to get sick again. "God!" Nothing. "Jesus!" Again, nothing. "God, where are you?"

"God doesn't hear you," said the voice. My whole world crashed in on me. It was back. I had never really been healed, it was just a trick. I was still as crazy as ever.

"You're crazy. You're crazy. You're crazy." The voice broke off in wild laughter, joined by other voices. I screamed and beat the pillow on the bed. There was a sharp pain in my belly and I doubled over. The hot bricks were back. My hand went to my throat. I couldn't swallow. Had I ever been able to swallow? Had the hot bricks ever been gone? It seemed impossible. I thrashed on the bed.

There was a Baptist church next door to us in Kermit. The church ladies would come over to talk to me, but I did my best to drive them away. I would open the door just a crack and stare at them, a cigarette dangling from my lips. I tried to look as evil as I could. Convinced that I was beyond saving, I didn't want them to waste their time on me. I had grown used to thinking of myself as a bad woman for all my sins, real and imagined. I felt guilt every minute of every day. My work suffered, my housework suffered, my children suffered.

Finally, I couldn't take it any more. I went next door to see Joe Allen, the Baptist preacher. I poured my heart out to him. I told him everything, my attraction to Dr. Moore, the sinful thoughts and feelings. I asked, "Do you thing God could forgive me for that?"

He looked back at me, compassion showing in his eyes. "I don't know. Do you want to ask him?"

Relief flooded over me. I had expected him to say, "Of course." Every time I had asked for help in the past, someone had brushed my concerns off: "You'll be fine." "I know your mother, she's a wonderful woman." "Whatever you've done, it couldn't be too bad." Joe Allen, unlike all the others, was taking me seriously.

"Yes," I said, in a small voice.

"Let's get on our knees, and we'll pray together."

I couldn't have prayed then if you had put a shotgun to my head. but I got on my knees and listened as Pastor Allen prayed out loud. He said everything that I would have liked to have said. He seemed to almost read my mind. As he wound up the prayer, I burst into tears and threw my hands up in the air. My head was clear, my heart was clean, and I was free, completely free. I was happier than I had been since I was a child.

"Thank you, Jesus," I cried. "Oh, Lord, bless Pastor Allen." I turned to the Pastor, "Thank you. Oh thank you for praying for me." I was so excited.

Everything changed after that. I worked, did my housework, spent time with my kids. Everything got done, and I felt wonderful for about three months. Gradually, things got harder for me. I couldn't find time to pray, then I couldn't find time for the housework, then I couldn't find time for the kids. That wonderful freedom hadn't lasted then. What had made me think it would this time?

Brother Sam's phone rang. "Brother Sam, this is Dick Miller. We've got a problem here. Janey's in bad shape. Is there anything I can do?"

He thought a moment. "I'm going to pray about it and call you back in a few minutes." He got on his knees. "Lord Jesus, I delivered your healing power to this woman. I have ministered the truth unto her. I have told her how to keep demon spirits from entering her. If they have returned, she has let them return. If she refuses to praise and to seek the truth, then there is nothing I can do for her. If Jane won't do all she can, then I cannot help her."

"Sam, she's doing all she can do. You do the rest."

Brother Sam needed no more prompting. He called Brother Purcell and asked

him to meet him at my house, and to bring a tape recorder.

When Brother Sam, Brother Purcell and Sister Gwen walked in the door, my feelings could not have been more mixed. One part of me was relieved to see Brother Sam, and sure that he could heal me again. The other part was terrified and angry. As I had the first time, I tried to order him out of my house. They paid no attention, and Dick laid me down on the couch. Brother Purcell set up the tape recorder and turned it on, and Brother Sam started. "What is thy name, devil? What is thy name?"

Again, I thought, *my name is Jane. You know that now. My name is Jane.* My voice said, "Thaddeaus."

"When did you come back in this girl, Thaddeaus?"

"Last night. She was asleep." That explained it! Things hadn't been right since I got up this morning.

During the first deliverance, I had been too far gone to realize what was going on, but this time, although I was quite frightened, I was able to listen to the conversation with some degree of clarity.

"I just tell her that she's sick and she's crazy," Thaddeaus claimed. So I wasn't crazy? I had thought I had been healed of Schizophrenia, but now it occurred to me that I might never have been Schizophrenic.

"You know in the name of Jesus I've got power over you, don't you, devil?"

"Oh, yes," answered Thaddeaus. This demon thing seemed more sure of Brother Sam's power than I was. It really seemed separate from myself.

"Jane's listening," said Thaddeaus. Now it was talking about me in the third person!

To prove that he had power over Thaddeaus, Brother Sam gave him an order, "In the name of Jesus, you've got to obey me, devil! You've got to obey me. Stick out

your tongue, devil, in the name of Jesus!"

My tongue began to flick in and out of my mouth like a snake's. It had done that during the first deliverance too, but this time, I was sure that Thaddeaus was directly responding to Brother Sam's command.

"Jane. Jane. Jane." Thaddeaus was speaking in a calm, soothing, familiar voice. "Now, Jane, listen; that's just power of suggestion. Power of suggestion will make you do anything." I realized where I had heard that exact tone of voice. It was the same one that told me to smoke cigarettes, the same one that told me to kill myself. And it was talking to me as a separate person! It was trying to keep me from trusting Brother Sam. *Big mistake, demon! If Brother Sam's against you, then I trust him that much more!*

Brother Sam and Thaddeaus talked to each other for a long time. Thaddeaus admitted to trying to get me to commit suicide, and he said he wanted to possess my children. *Get this thing out of me!* I thought. *Brother Sam, God, get him out!* My muscles began jerking and I was wracked with pain. I began crying out to God and lost the thread of the conversation.

After what seemed like forever, Brother Sam commanded, "Come out of her, Thaddeaus. In the name of Jesus, come out of her." Good. I had come to hate this demon more in the last half hour than I had in the last two years. He sounded so evil, so malicious! I retched, and then felt a release.

Brother Sam called, "Danus?"

"My head is burning." I could feel burning where Brother Sam's hand touched my head, but this time it wasn't exactly painful. I felt no pain, but at the same time, I was aware that someone did feel pain through my body. Another demon?

I became aware that although I could tell the difference between my thoughts and the demon's, I could tell what the demon was thinking. This one was different from

Thaddeaus. He was more afraid of Brother Sam.

"Who else is in there with you?" Brother Sam asked.

"Lucius."

"Thaddeaus lied. He said only he and Danus were in there."

"You expect Thaddeaus to tell the truth?" he laughed. I felt sure that Danus hated Thaddeaus, but feared him too. He never would have said that in front of Thaddeaus. It struck me how completely separate these personalities really were. It didn't take very long for Brother Sam to get tired of talking to Danus and cast him out.

"Lucius?"

As Lucius's personality rose to the surface, I sensed an intelligence that Danus didn't have. This one had a plan.

"I found out something about you last night." I wasn't sure what it was, but I was sure that Lucius really had found a weakness in Brother Sam. I tried to concentrate and fight against it. I didn't want this horrible thing to win.

"Go ahead and tell me," Brother Sam taunted him.

I felt sure there was something there to tell, but the demon was tongue tied. He couldn't say it. He tried another tactic. "You'd like . . . you'd like . . . you'd like to be . . . You'd like to be important, wouldn't you?" He was tempting him. I prayed that Brother Sam wouldn't fall for this trick.

"No, I don't want to be important." *Thank you, Jesus! He didn't fall for it.*

"Look at what you're going through. Just look at what you're going through, trying to get somebody to listen to this malarkey. But you don't have to do that. You just listen to me and I'll tell you how to go about it. You won't have to wear shabby clothes anymore, you can dress fine." *Is that the best he can do? Offer him clothes? This demon isn't as smart as I thought.*

Brother Sam seemed to agree. "You think I'm a fool. Lucifer thought he could

fool Jesus in the wilderness. You tried the same thing on him, didn't you?" Brother Sam was winning this battle. He countered every argument, and then, disgusted, said, "I'm through with you, devil, you're coming out of her."

I retched again, and this time, the wonderful relaxed feeling lasted. Brother Sam could tell at one glance that there were no more demons in me. "Hi, Jane."

I was so excited to be back. The hot bricks were gone again; so was the lump in my throat. "Hi!"

"How do you feel?"

"Fine!" More than fine. I felt wonderful.

"Feel like a million dollars now, huh?"

"Um," too good for words, but my voice conveyed how happy and excited I felt. I suddenly remembered my huge Thanksgiving dinner. "Y'all better stay for dinner. I'm making pumpkin pie."

They politely refused, and went home to spend Thanksgiving with their families. Before they left, I thanked them as much as I could. "Thank you for coming over. I appreciate it. I love you both. I love you both more than I can ever say."

Brother Sam responded, "Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord."

I went back to the kitchen to make the pumpkin pie, feeling as free as I ever had, and even more confident than before that this freedom would last. Even if I stumbled again, I knew that I had help.

Chapter 23 Assault and Battery

Late Saturday afternoon, we were returning from a sightseeing trip to the French Quarter with Dick's parents. We were doing our best to keep them entertained before they went back to Houston Sunday. The kids had stayed at home with their cousin, Rick, and a replacement maid--I had given Rene the week off. As we pulled into the driveway, I saw David, my seven year old, sitting on the porch. He had been crying, and there was a pool of vomit on the ground next to him. I took him by the hand and he murmured, "My head hurts."

As I was washing him to put him to bed, the other children came in from the back yard, where they had been playing. Beverly was outraged. "That dumb maid wouldn't let David in the house, and he was sick and he didn't feel good and that dumb maid told him he had to stay outside. Are you gonna get rid of that dumb maid?"

The maid stood in the doorway, her chin in the air. "That boy made a mess all over my clean floor, so I put him out." I took a deep breath, trying to decide what to say next. Dick drew the maid out of the room by her elbow. Good. We'd never see her again.

I asked the other kids what happened. They had been playing war, throwing dirt clods as weapons. Rick had thrown a dirt clod high into the air. As it fell toward David, everyone warned him to get out of the way, but he had not heard them. The dirt clod contained a large piece of brick, which smashed against the side of his head.

Raising six accident-prone children had taught me not to rush to the emergency room with every injury, so I put him to bed with cold compresses on his head and prayed.

I put the baby, David, on top of the huge basket of laundry and carried him into

the washeteria, Tommy and Beverly trailing behind me. I set David on the countertop and started stuffing clothes into washers. I heard a thump and, after what seemed like minutes, a howl. The baby had rolled off and had a concussion . . .

The pulpit committee met at my house that week. We sat around sipping coffee and talking. Velma, who had been watching all the children in the next room ran in holding Beverly. "I think she's choking!"

Dr. Wright jumped up and grabbed her, turned her upside down and pounded her back. She had had a button lodged in her throat . . .

I ran into the drugstore to pick up the Easter baskets I had put on layaway for the kids. When I came back out, Beverly, the two-year-old, was feeding candy to the baby, David, to keep him from crying. I looked carefully at the tiny orange and yellow balls that looked like candy sprinkles. They were Dexedrine. Beverly had broken open the capsules and fed the powerful amphetamine to the baby . . .

While David was still in the hospital, I found Beverly sitting on the kitchen floor, whimpering, an open bottle of bleach next to her, spilling all over her skin and clothes. Had she been drinking it? . . .

I was nursing Jay, the baby, when I heard a howl from the back yard. David ran in, leaving a trail of blood. There was a huge piece of glass, the bottom of a broken coke bottle, in his foot . . .

There was a knock on the motel room door. I looked around. I wonder where David went? I thought. I opened the door. "Do you have a little boy about three years old?"

"Yes."

"You better get out here, you stupid fool. He fell in the pool. Why weren't you watching him, you ninny?"

David was laying on a deck chair, pale and wet, his lips blue. If the man hadn't

pulled him out of the pool, if he hadn't known how to resuscitate him . . .

"Tiger fell down," Tommy ran in the house shouting. I knew it had to be serious. If he had only tripped, Tommy wouldn't have bothered to tell me. I ran into the back yard. Jimmy was laying on the ground. I put my hand on his chest. He wasn't breathing. I picked him up by his heels and slammed my hand into his back. The bolt that had been stuck in his throat flew out . . .

"It's just one damn crisis after another," said Dick . . .

The next morning, we skipped the church so we could see Dick's parents off. As the kids sat around the table eating Cheerios, Dick's mother said, "You know, David doesn't look any better than he did yesterday. Maybe you should take him to the doctor." After my in-laws left, I prayed and felt God confirm that I should go to the hospital.

At Touro Infirmary, they x-rayed his head and sent him home. I spent most of that day holding him in the rocking chair and praying. Monday morning, the x-ray technician called. "Mrs. Miller, I took another look at those pictures we took yesterday, and I think we need to look at him again. Don't worry, it may be nothing, but we want to be sure."

"When?"

"As soon as possible, Ma'am."

That didn't sound good at all. I set out immediately for Touro Infirmary. They took him into the x-ray room, and I waited. After what seemed like forever, the technician came out.

"Where's David?"

"We're taking him up to a room, Ma'am. We need to keep him for a few days."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, there's a small piece of his skull, about the size of a dime, that's pressed against his brain. It's not broken, it's just pushed in. It's putting pressure on his brain, so they're going to have to operate."

Later that afternoon, Dr. Levi explained further. "Dr. Carr is the best brain surgeon in the city. I'm his assistant. Don't worry, Ma'am, you're getting the finest care.

"What we'll do is bore a tiny hole in his skull and pull the piece of skull back into its normal position. It's a delicate operation, so we'll want to keep David awake for it. We'll want to talk to him through the whole operation and make sure we're not damaging his brain. We'll give him Novocain, a local anesthetic. A general anesthetic would be much too dangerous for this procedure."

I was terrified. This doctor made it sound like the surgery was more dangerous than the injury they were healing. I would have taken him home right then, but I was sure that God had told me to take him to the hospital. I tried to trust God that He would deal as sovereignly with David as He had with me.

The operation was scheduled for seven o'clock Wednesday morning. I had been told that it would take about twenty-five minutes. Dick's boss's wife, Sarah, came to the hospital with me. She tried to be reassuring, but as a nurse, she knew how dangerous this operation was, so she wasn't much comfort. I prayed silently as hard as I could. At seven twenty-five, I began to watch the operating room door in earnest. No one came out. By eight o'clock, I was praying out loud, not caring who heard me. The louder my prayers got, though, the less I felt that they were heard. I became more and more frantic and began to lose control. I felt fear grip my insides and as the minutes turned into hours I felt myself sink into the familiar abyss. I became more and more silent, cut off from the outside world. I could barely respond to Sarah's

questions. At eight-thirty, Sarah called Dick, hoping that he knew some way of calming me down. He did.

When Brother Sam arrived at the hospital, he found me barely conscious, jerking from head to foot. I was aware of nothing but the fear that gripped me. He led me by the arm to his car and drove to his home. The third deliverance was just the two of us. Thaddeaus manifested himself first.

"Go ahead, cast me out," he said. "I'll be back by nightfall."

"Is that what you think? Huh? Well, you won't be. She's getting stronger, she can resist you."

"Oh yeah? She can't resist me when she's all upset about her little brats. If she tries to keep me out, I'll just break another kid."

"What do you mean, devil? Did you cause David's accident?"

"Who do you think made that kid throw the rock at him?" He laughed scornfully. "It don't matter how hard Jane prays, I'll always think of something."

"No you won't. No you won't, devil, because I've got the power of God on my side."

"Right now you do, Sam Fife. But one of these days, we're gonna get you, too."

"That's enough, devil. You're coming out of her right now. In the name of Jesus, come out of this girl." The demon came out quickly this time. "Manifest yourself, devil."

My throat began to twitch.

"What is thy name, devil?"

"You remember me, Sam. Lucius."

"I'm gonna cast you out of her too, Lucius."

"He caught you by surprise, didn't he, Sam? Thaddeaus startled you, didn't

he?"

"No, devil. Nothing you demons do surprises me."

"No, Sam. You didn't think Thaddeaus was gonna admit to hurting David."

"I knew you devils planned that."

"No, Sam. Just Thaddeaus. Not all of us. I know better than that. I know you could just heal David with a touch of your hand. That's what you're gonna do right after this, aren't you? Just leave Jane alone and go heal David. You know those doctors can't do him any good."

Sam stared at me with a look of hatred in his eyes that I knew wasn't meant for me. "You were the one who tried to tempt me before, aren't you devil? You offered me fame and fortune, just like Satan did Jesus in the wilderness. And you know what else Satan tempted him with?"

"I don't know anything about that. You're the expert. You're the one that could just heal that kid."

"He tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, devil. Just like you're going to try to tempt me into thinking that I should go lay hands on David. You're just trying to distract me, devil."

"I knew you couldn't heal him, Sam Fife. You're a phony. If you weren't a phony, you would be at that hospital right now."

"I'll pray healing over that boy when God tells me to, not when you tell me, tempter. You're coming out of her in the name of Jesus."

The deliverance went quicker than the rest, and Brother Sam had me back to the hospital in my right mind, by eleven o'clock.

Not long after, Dr. Levi finally came out of the operating room. "I can tell by the look on your face, Mrs. Miller, that you know things didn't go well."

My knees started to buckle, and I sat down quickly. He went on: "He's had a reaction to the anesthetic. We've been working this whole time to save his life."

"How did the operation go?"

"We never did the operation. As soon as we gave him the shot of Novocain, he began to have seizures. Don't worry. He's out of danger now. You can take him home. We'll let him rest up for two weeks, and then we'll bring him back and try the operation again."

My mind skipped ahead. "How will you do the operation without giving him the Novocain?"

"We'll have to use a general anesthetic this time."

I stared at him as he left. After what he had told me two days before, now they were going to give him a general anesthetic? I was supposed to nurse him back to health after they had almost killed him, and then give him back so they could try to kill him again? I didn't say anything to the hospital staff, but I decided at that moment when I got my baby back, I was never letting him set foot in a hospital again. God would heal my baby and no doctor was going to touch him. I made an arrogant resolution, and it would take another trip to hell and back for it to be broken.

Chapter 24 Out of the Country

I spent most of the next month with David. I prayed and praised over him and rocked him, only leaving his side when I absolutely had to. I only left the house to go to church, and then I took David with me, so that the whole congregation could pray over him. I was sure God would heal him if I only prayed hard enough.

Two weeks after David's injury, we went to a Sunday morning meeting at the church in Metarie. I was restless, irritated. *This Sam Fife thinks he's so great, but my baby's still sick. If Sam were of God, he would be able to heal David. He could heal David as easily as he healed me. Easier.* The thoughts seemed to come to me out of the blue. *This faith he preaches is just malarkey. He don't know nothing.*

My hands twitched. I couldn't sit still. I played with my hair, swung my foot, crossed and uncrossed my legs. I couldn't seem to get comfortable. *I don't need this, I thought. I'll just go on home and put my baby to bed. I can pray at home just as well as I can here.* I stood up. In my rush to get out of the church, I forgot to take David with me.

As the church door slammed behind me, Brother Sam looked up from the front of the church. He dropped his guitar and ran out the side door. "Jane, if you leave now, I'm never going to bother with you again. If you want to be delivered, you'll go back in the church and sit down and when the service is over, we'll pray for you again."

I stared at him. *He doesn't have any answers for me. He can't heal David. What difference does it make if he washes his hands of me?* Another part of me said, *you know he can help you. You know this is right. Don't let him give up on you.* I forced myself to walk back into the building.

That service was the most difficult two hours of my life. I fought the urge to run out, to be sick, to run up the the pulpit and punch Brother Sam's lights out. I sat

holding the edge of my theater seat, my knuckles white, the cords in my neck straining. There was a battle in my head between the voice that said, *leave, he can't help you,* and the quieter voice that said, *stay, he's a man of God.*

After church, Brother Sam and a few other people from the church took me into the back room, and for the fourth time, cast demons out of me. This deliverance didn't differ much from the first three. Again the demons, with Thaddeaus as the ringleader, mocked him. Again, they threatened to keep coming back. This was dangerously close to becoming a routine. Were we going to do this every week for the rest of my life? For my deliverance to be permanent, something had to change.

That night, after everyone had gone home from the after-service gathering, Brother Sam got on his knees. He prayed for wisdom, for patience, for whatever it would take for me to be completely delivered.

He felt God lead him to open his Bible to Mark chapter five, a passage he had read hundreds of times before. This time, though, he noticed a detail he had never thought particularly important before. Verse 10 reads, "And [Legion] besought [Jesus] much that he would not send them away out of the country." Jesus agrees, and casts the demons into the swine instead, but Brother Sam wondered. Why would the demons mind being sent into a far country? Couldn't they get back easily? Apparently not. God spoke to him. "Send them into the land of Palestine. Bind them to that land, and they will never be able to return."

Brother Sam felt confident that this new strategy would be successful. The next deliverance would be that last that he would perform.

Chapter 25 Valley of the Shadow of Death

David's condition continued to worsen. There was no apparent brain damage, but he was sickly and weak. He didn't move or talk any more than he had to, and had no appetite. The area between his skull and his scalp began to fill with fluid, so that his head had the feel of an overripe melon. If you pressed his head, it would leave an indentation that would take a few minutes to fill, but there was no bruising. The worse he got, the firmer my resolution that I would not take him back to the doctor. He was not going to die in a hospital operating room, away from me.

During this time, Brother Sam had been counseling and teaching me regularly, usually in my home. Today, the text was Matthew 4, the temptation of Christ. "And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'

"Now we know that Jesus did perform miracles in other parts of the Bible, and that at those times it was proper and correct for him to do so. But in this passage, the motivation to perform the miracle was impure. Satan was attempting to control Jesus by tempting him to work a miracle that had no cause and no reason.

"Thus the scripture is telling us that Satan indeed tempts us to stand in faith-- Satan's perverted, false faith. One form of temptation is the temptation to perform miracles. Jesus' answer is that the word of God, not the convenience of the moment, will govern his actions. Do you understand?"

"Yes, of course, Brother Sam." I had no idea of what he was getting at.

"Jane, it's time to take David back to the hospital."

"I'm not taking him back. They'll kill him."

"Janey, he needs to go to the hospital."

"No. God's gonna heal him."

"Yes. God will heal him. Now take him to the hospital." He ~~put on his hat and~~ walked out the door.

"I don't have to take him to the hospital. God'll heal him." I followed Brother Sam out into the driveway. "I asked him and I know he's gonna do it. I have faith. That's what you're always talking about, faith."

"You're not in a place of faith to believe in this. Your faith is very new to you; you're not ready to believe for his healing by yourself. You let the doctors do their part, and I guarantee you, Janey, that God's gonna take care of David. He's gonna be all right."

Anger rose up in me. I screamed, "That's pride. That's pride to guarantee me what God's gonna do. God will take my baby away from me to show you that you can't talk about God that way."

He stared at me a moment, then shook his head and chuckled. "Janey, when you know God like I know God, and you hear his voice like I hear his voice, you will say to someone, I guarantee you God will do this thing, and then you will understand. In the meantime, take the child to the doctor."

He got in his car, started the engine, and gave me one last look. He had such calm confidence, such faith. I knew at that moment that my struggling, anxious faith was nothing compared to his. After he pulled out, ^I sat down on the porch steps. Why couldn't Jesus make stones into bread? I thought about the scripture we had studied that day. Because the devil told him to. Why had I been so convinced that David would be healed without going to the hospital? I remembered the demon telling Brother Sam, "You can heal him with just a touch of your hand." Here I was giving orders to God, when I should have been taking them from Him. I dropped to my knees in the driveway and prayed, "Lord, I trust you to take care of my son. I put him in your

hands." Then I went in the house and called the hospital.

Monday afternoon, I left the other children with the maid, and put David in the car. There was a driving rainstorm. I shook every time I heard thunder, cringed at each lightening bolt.

"Sarah Jane! Sarah Jane! There's a storm coming up."

I looked up at the one summer cloud in the sky, and back at my grandmother.

"Help me gather things up." She handed me a blanket to carry and grabbed a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread, and a hunk of cheese. "Let's go."

I trailed behind her. This didn't look like a storm, and I didn't want to go down there.

"Preston," Grandma called to daddy. "Come on into the storm cellar."

"I've got to get this patch plowed, Mama. I'll come on if the weather gets too bad."

"Oh, that boy's gonna get himself killed one of these days if the good Lord doesn't protect him." We had reached the storm cellar. Grandma opened the door; the smell in there was musty and a little rotten. There were two snake skins by the door. I stared at the diamond pattern on one of them.

"Grandma, there're snakes in here."

"No, they're gone now." She kicked at the skins. "Now come on in before the storm hits."

We sat in the dark. I could see bright sunlight through the cracks in the door. "Now I'll tell you a story to pass the time, Sarah Jane. When I was about five, about your age, I was playing outside my house with my doll and the baby cradle. There weren't any more babies, so Mama let me play with it. And a high wind rose up, so I

climbed into the bed and pulled the blanket up over my head. And it was nice and warm and dark in there so I fell asleep.

"And Mama called from the house to all my brothers and sisters, and they all came and sat on the bed and prayed together. One of my brothers was out in the far pasture and he couldn't get home on time. So he laid in a ditch and held onto the bottoms of two scrub cedars and the cyclone¹ passed right over his head, but it didn't hurt him. Then the cyclone passed through the house but it missed the room where Mama and my brothers and sisters were. And it picked up the baby cradle and carried it five miles away, and set it down in a field.

"I knew my name was Sue Ellen Merrifield, but I didn't know where I lived. The people that found me were new settlers, so they didn't know my daddy. It took them two weeks to find out where I belonged and get me home.

"So, Sarah Jane, whenever you see a storm coming up, always run for the storm cellar until the storm passes over."

She went to the door and looked out cautiously. "It's safe now. Let's go back on into the house."

I walked back through the yard in the bright sunshine, waving at daddy, who was still plowing in the field. The summer cloud had blown away.

I drove on, fighting my fear of storms, weeping, pleading with God to save my baby. On the Jackson Avenue ferry, I put my head down on the steering wheel and recited over and over, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." It took two hours to make the one hour trip to the hospital.

¹ Today, of course, we would refer to it as a tornado rather than a cyclone. It is rather unlikely that this story is entirely true—some neighbors' accounts do not match my grandmother's. Sue Ellen was almost ninety at the time she told the story to me, and as a gifted storyteller, she may have taken some creative license.

When the doctors saw David's swollen head, they realized that the injury had been more serious than they had thought at first. If his head had been black and blue, it would have meant the cavity was filled with blood, but since it didn't, it indicated a spinal cord injury. That they had missed this the first time didn't give me any more confidence in them.

Again, they explained the procedure. This time, they said little about the dangers of doing the operation under a general anesthetic. They didn't need to. I remembered Dr. Levi saying four weeks before, "We'll want to talk to him through the whole operation and make sure we're not damaging his brain. A general anesthetic would be much too dangerous for this procedure."

I cried and prayed, prayed and cried all night, holding David's hand, almost sure that this would be his last night in this world. The next morning, they prepared him for surgery. As they put him on the gurney to wheel him into surgery, he waved at me and said, "Bye, Mom. I'm going to the moon."

I burst into a fresh torrent of tears. Again, the surgery was scheduled for seven o'clock. Again, they said the operation would take about twenty-five minutes. Again, at seven twenty-five, the doctor did not come out.

I paced, prayed, cried, but I managed to keep control this time. I was alone in the waiting room, and I had only God to pour out my heart to. At ten thirty, Dr. Levi came into the waiting room. I held my breath and didn't look at his face right away. When I did, it was all smiles. Relief swept over me, and I smiled back. "It was a very serious operation. Much more serious than we had anticipated, but he came through it fine."

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

"You can see him in an hour or so, and you ought to be able to take him home by Monday. Your son is going to be just fine."

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. "Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Lord!" I felt like shouting. "Thank you, Jesus."

Chapter 26 The Final Battle

The next day was Wednesday, and although I had been keeping a day and night vigil at the hospital, it was agreed that Dick would come to the hospital that night so I could go to church and then get some sleep.

I had come through the operation fine, but stress and lack of sleep were beginning to get to me by Wednesday afternoon. My thoughts were too scattered for me to be able to pray very effectively. *I'll just go to church tonight, I thought. That'll help.*

During the praise service, I tried to relax and sing along with everyone else, but I had a hard time getting words out. *I'm just tired. I'll feel better tomorrow.* When the other people spoke in tongues, it got on my nerves. *Why can't they pray in English?* I thought. *This just sounds like babbling. God probably doesn't even listen to this malarkey.*

During the sermon, I struggled to sit still. I wanted to pace. *I should just go home, I thought.* But I knew that Brother Sam would be true to his word: if I left now, I wouldn't be welcome to come back. I wanted a cigarette. *I'll just go outside and smoke a cigarette, and then I'll feel better.* I knew I couldn't do that either. My stomach began to hurt. "You're gonna throw up," said the voice. "You're gonna throw up in here and then you'll be really embarrassed. You should just go outside and throw up, and then come back in again." I knew that was a trick. If I went out that door, I knew I wouldn't be able to get back in. I felt the vomit move up into my mouth. Praying for God's help, I swallowed it back down. I couldn't leave.

At the end of the service, Brother Sam led me into the back room again. I didn't have to tell him what had happened, he knew that the demons had managed to enter again. Once again, Brother Purcell brought his tape recorder. A handful of other

church members gathered to praise, supporting Brother Sam. As Brother Purcell set up the microphone, I said, "You think you're gonna make a radio drama or something? Sam Fife, star of the airwaves!" *How rude!* I hadn't meant to say that. Fortunately, nobody paid any attention to me. I sat in a chair and Brother Sam sat near me. He commanded, "Devil, manifest yourself."

I began rubbing his arm up and down, as enticingly as I could. On the inside, I was horrified. *Make me stop*, I pleaded silently to Brother Sam. *What am I gonna do, try to seduce him in front of his own wife?* I tried to get my hand to stop moving but I couldn't. I couldn't even make the other arm move it away.

"Manifest yourself, devil," Brother Sam repeated.

"How did you know it was me?" came out of my mouth. "I didn't show myself. How did you know it was me?" My voice was high, lisping, almost whiny.

"You're a foul, filthy spirit of lust, aren't you, devil?"

"You said that, Sam Fife, I didn't."

"Answer me in the name of Jesus! Are you?"

"All right. All right." *No wonder I'm rubbing his arm like an idiot. This is so embarrassing. Cast it out, Brother Sam, cast it out!* But he didn't. He talked for quite awhile to this demon, whose name was Theus.

"You're a foul, filthy serpent."

"Don't call me names, Sam," it whined. Thaddeaus would have yelled right back at him, but this one was trying to be seductive—ugh. I hated this.

"Jane doesn't listen to me very much any more. She used to listen to me, all right. She was pretty good about it." *No. No. Don't talk about that, I thought. Not in front of all these people. I don't want them to know about that.*

Brother Sam changed the subject, thank God. "I'm gonna send you across the sea."

Theus tried another tack, "You didn't know who I was the other day, did you? You couldn't tell." She said this in a seductive, sensuous voice, and moved my hand higher on his arm. What was she trying to imply? These people were going to think I was having some sort of affair with Brother Sam! *Cast it out! Get rid of it!*

He began to speak in tongues. Theus lost her train of thought and became more and more agitated.

"Devil, I command you to come out of this woman, and I send you far across the sea into the land of Palestine. And I bind you to that land, devil, forevermore, that you never again come back into this land." Theus wined and protested, but Brother Sam continued to command, and she was gone.

"Any more of the boys in there? Any more of you devils in there?"

My head started to burn, the same sensation I had had before, when the weaker demons were in control. "You're burning my head. You're burning my head."

"What is thy name, devil?" Brother Sam demanded.

The demon hedged, unwilling to give anything away. They argued on, and finally, the demon admitted, "Thaddeaus."

Thaddeaus? He didn't feel strong enough to be Thaddeaus. What was happening to him?

"Okay, preacher, get this thing over with," he taunted. "You found me, now let's get it over with. Come on, now. Right now."

"You'd like that, wouldn't you, Thaddeaus?"

"Come on, preacher. Come on, preacher. I'm not gonna talk to you, preacher." This was the same routine Thaddeaus always went through. He acted like he was sure he could always come back in, but I could feel his weakness.

"You know what I'm gonna do with you, Thaddeaus? I'm gonna send you into a far country, too. Did you know that?"

I could feel the fear that gripped Thaddeaus when Brother Sam said that. He continued to argue, continued to try to change the subject, but Brother Sam kept bringing it up.

"You're going into the land where Jesus cast you devils out long, long ago."

"No, preacher! No, preacher! No! No!" He was scared--more scared than he'd ever been before. "That's too far away. Too far away. Too far away." He began to scream and cry. "No! No! No!"

"It's done. In that name of Jesus, it's done." Brother Sam repeated over and over, "In the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus."

I could feel Thaddeaus's panic. His grip was on a hundred different places in my body. As he was forced out, I felt pain, ripping and tearing through me like red-hot hooks. Thaddeaus gave one final, ferocious scream, and I doubled up as I retched, retched, retched him out of me.

Even after the deliverance was over, my whole body hurt; there was more pain than I had felt with any other deliverance. The demons had never fought so hard before. They had never been so afraid before. They knew they couldn't come back. Suddenly, I knew too. I was absolutely sure that this deliverance was different from the others. This battle was over. I had won.

Epilogue

Part III

And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

Mark 5:18-20

Chapter 27 The Power and the Glory

I was not the only parent who stayed day and night at the hospital with a sick child. There were a dozen other parents at the hospital at any given time. I became especially close to the woman whose daughter was next door to David. Her name was Marie. She wore simple clothes and no makeup, and her long hair had never been cut. She was gentle and meek, and I enjoyed being near her. She helped to keep me calm through David's recovery. We talked for hours, but never really talked about spiritual things. I got the feeling she was a serious Christian, but I didn't ask.

One day, sitting half-conscious on a chair in the waiting room at Touro, I had another vision. I was standing outside a window, looking in. Inside, all the people were eating fried chicken and pecan pie and drinking coffee and enjoying themselves. Outside, it was snowing heavily and was very cold. I stood with my nose pressed against the glass, trying to get in. There was no door that I could find, although I knew that I was welcome in there, that I belonged in there.

I called Brother Sam. He told me, "You want to be part of what God is doing, but you haven't yet found the door to get into where the people of God dwell. That door is the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

"But I want the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I've been praying for it and Dick already has it."

"Well, you pray, and when you really want it, God will give it to you."

Sunday was Christmas day. Helen Courage came to sit with David so that I could go to the evening service. After church, as usual, we gathered at Brother Sam's house. Everyone else sat around, drinking coffee and discussing the service, but I was pacing the floor. I wanted Brother Sam to pray over me so that I could get the

baptism. I cornered him in the kitchen and whispered, "When are we gonna pray? When are we gonna pray?"

"Just settle down, Janey. We'll get to it." He returned to the dining room with another plate of cookies.

I crossed my arms and scowled. That wasn't very spiritual of him, to put off praying for cookies. After another hour, Brother Sam went into his bedroom to pray, and people started to go home. The ten of us remaining got on our knees and started to pray too. Although my head was bowed and my eyes were closed, I could tell when Brother Sam walked into the room. A power radiated from him that could only be the power of God. I could feel him moving closer and closer, stopping to lay hands on other people. Finally, he put his hands on my head and began to pray for me. Waves of love, joy and peace came over me like waves of an ocean, and I felt like bursting out speaking in tongues.

I resisted. Everyone else was speaking in tongues. What if I was just copying them? I wanted this to be real. I wanted to be sure. Brother Sam, sensing my thoughts said, "That's it, Janey. That's the Holy Ghost; just yield to it." I couldn't. I didn't want to deceive these people, and I didn't want to deceive myself.

In a few minutes, Brother Sam moved on, and after awhile, the meeting broke up. I got in my car to drive back to the hospital. Driving down the road, I said, "God, if it's you and it's real, then I want all you've got for me." I rolled up both of my windows and burst out in tongues as loud as I could. I knew that this had to be real; since I was away from the rest of the congregation, I had no opportunity to copy them.

I drove around the city for an hour, reveling in this new experience. Even in December, it was hot with the windows rolled up, so I finally rolled them down, rolling them back up whenever I stopped at a stop light. I didn't want anybody to hear me, but I was scared to stop speaking in tongues; I didn't know how I would start again.

Finally, I was ready to return to the hospital. It was around four in the morning. As I walked down the hall in the children's ward, a man, the father of another patient, said, "Huh. Finally coming in at four in the morning. Where have you been?"

I was glowing inside, as excited as I could be. "I've been to church."

"Sure you have. We know all about that church," he replied, heavy sarcasm in his voice.

My shoulders slumped. Did I really look drunk? Was it really irresponsible for me to leave the hospital? I walked further down the hall. Marie was standing in the doorway of her daughter's room. She took one look at me and said, "You've got it! You've got the holy ghost!"

I don't know how she could tell, but she could. After I had sent Helen home and checked on David, I sat down with Marie and told her the whole story. When I had finished she said, "Hallelujah. Nothing will ever be the same again."

And it hasn't.

The next day, we took David home from the hospital. The five other children rode with me to pick him up, and when we got home, they all piled out of the car and straight into the back yard to play. I walked around to the back seat to help David out of the car and into bed, and he wasn't there. "David!" I yelled.

I ran into the back yard, "Tommy, where's David?"

"Up here, Mom!" I looked up. There was David in his pajamas with half his head shaved, sitting in the tree house with Tommy. A week before, he hadn't wanted to move or to talk. "Can I stay up here for a little while, Mom?" he yelled down.

"Sure, honey. For a little while."

Chapter 28 Clothed and in My Right Mind

Brother Sam had met with Dr. Reed several times. He had played for him the tapes of the second and fifth deliverances. After he had explained his beliefs, Brother Sam asked Dr. Reed, "Out of all the patients that you have dealt with as a psychiatrist, how many of them would you say demonstrated the same symptoms as this woman Jane Miller?"

Dr. Reed replied, "I'd say at least seventy-five percent."

"I ask that question because I believe ninety percent of all the mental sickness, breakdowns, and insanity in our world today are caused by demon spirits."

"I believe it."

Brother Sam's explanation of my healing was so persuasive to Dr. Reed that he invited Brother Sam to write a thesis explaining his beliefs, and later, to speak to the residents who had worked with me and several other doctors from Tulane at a psychiatric conference. Dr. Reed and Brother Sam agreed that I should be present.

Brother Sam; Dr. Reed; Dr. Epstein, the chairman of the psychology department; and I sat at a long table in the front of a conference room. Facing us were all those residents I had given so much trouble. I hoped I wouldn't have to talk. Brother Sam had told me, "You don't have to say a word. If you just sit there at peace, that's a testimony."

The residents, though, all fired questions at me.

"Did you experience any symptoms withdrawal when you discontinued your medication?"

"No. I felt just fine from the moment of my deliverance. I still do."

"Has your epilepsy been affected?"

I had completely forgotten about that! "I don't have epilepsy."

The resident looked skeptical. "You mean you haven't had any seizures?"

I shook my head. "I don't remember ever having seizures. I certainly don't have them now."

Brother Sam broke in. "Occasionally, the demons would cause her to twitch from head to toe, thus mimicking epilepsy, but as this behavior completely ended at the time of her deliverance, we cannot ascribe it to any physical disease."

"Have you experienced any visual hallucinations since your--uh--"

"My healing. No hallucinations."

"You contend that you were demon possessed?"

"I know that I was healed. If you have any questions about demons, ask Brother Sam."

"But do you believe in demon possession?"

"Ask Brother Sam about demons. I'm just like the blind man in the Bible who said, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.'² I was sick and now I'm well, and God did it. That's all I know."

It was easy to believe that I had been delivered from demons when I was in church, or when I was talking to Brother Sam, or to Dick. In a university, though, surrounded by doctors, I wasn't strong enough in faith to explain something that all these educated men didn't.

After the meeting was over, Dr. Epstein shook my hand and looked into my eyes, "Jane, I don't believe in this Jesus you speak of, but I cannot deny what I have seen with my own eyes. You do not need us now, but when you do, we'll be here."

"Dr. Epstein, how long would I have to stay within normal limits for you to believe that I have experienced a miracle from God?"

"Schizophrenics do strange things, Mrs. Miller. It's really too soon to make a

² John 9:25

judgment. But if you remain within normal limits for three to five years, I would believe it was a miracle."

Epilogue

In the summer of 1966, I returned for a visit to New Orleans from my home in Dallas. I was staying with friends, but I found time to drop by Tulane University. I asked for Dr. Epstein, and after a few minutes, he walked into the hallway. "Dr. Epstein, my name is Jane Miller. Do you remember me?" I asked

He studied my face for a moment, and said, "I certainly do."

"Do you remember what you said to me?"

He nodded.

"Well, it's been six years, and I've been fine all along."

"Well, I'm glad you're doing fine." He walked away, shaking his head. He didn't look too convinced, but that didn't matter. I was free.

After I lost my glasses, I never replaced them. At my next eye exam, my vision tested perfect, and even today, I do not need glasses.

As Brother Sam predicted, when the Lord was ready to deliver me from cigarettes, he did. I quit soon after my final deliverance.

There were no more complications from David's surgery. He was never allowed to play contact sports, and in 1971, was turned down by the draft board for military service in Vietnam. Otherwise, he was perfectly healthy, and still is.

The last I heard, Elizabeth, Beulah and Alma were still hospitalized. I don't know if any of them ever recovered.

Mine was the first major deliverance that Sam Fife performed. He has delivered hundreds of people throughout his ministry. He has taught extensively on the subject of demonology, and many of his sermons are still available on audio cassette and in

booklet form.

Earlier in this book I recounted a vision I had of three silver vessels. Brother Sam explained to me that the first stood for Passover or the salvation experience and the second stood for Pentecost or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He did not explain the meaning of the third as God was still revealing its meaning to Brother Sam and I was not at the time ready to hear the interpretation. Over the course of several years, God gradually revealed the meaning to Brother Sam and prepared him to teach it. The last and largest vessel symbolizes the feast of Tabernacles, the time when God's people will come together and move in a corporate (i.e. collective) manner. We believe that as more of the truth is revealed, believers throughout the world will come together to truly function as a single body, with Christ as the head.

Toward this end, in 1964, Brother Sam gathered together an apostolic company which now functions worldwide. It has no formal name, and is generally referred to as "the move of God." We do not claim to encompass all that God is doing in the earth today, but we do strive to serve as a testimony to the power of God. Brother Sam himself was killed in a plane crash in 1979, but his teachings live on.

The audio cassette of the second and fifth deliverances, which has come to be called "The Jane Tape," has been widely circulated. It was used for a number of years as a teaching tool at Tulane University, and Brother Purcell Coalwell, the man who made the tape, has personally distributed literally thousands of copies throughout the world. Even now, I occasionally meet a person who knows me simply as "Jane," having heard the tape. It has started many on a path toward a new understanding of the workings of demons in the world today.

I have been active in the church from the beginning. From the time I met them, I wanted to learn everything that these people knew about the Bible, and most of all, I wanted a personal relationship with the Lord, as I found these people had. As time

passed, my faith grew and I soon lost all my doubts about the reality of demon possession. After some time of training, I began to move in the ministry and was licensed and ordained as a minister in 1969. Since that time I've been teaching, preaching, counseling and ministering deliverance in the United States and Canada. Our ministry continues to grow.

The thirty-five years since my deliverance have been far from easy. Once the Enemy learned that he could not attack me through mental illness, for a number of years, he attempted to attack me through physical illness. My marriage to Dick, by no means perfect to begin with, also came under constant attack.

Finally, in Waynesborough, Pennsylvania in 1972, Brother Sam gathered ministry together to deliver Dick. He had been through much in the previous few years, and he was finally ready to admit he needed deliverance as well. Since then, we have learned slowly to communicate and to work together.

Perhaps because my life is such a testimony to the power of God over Satan, the Enemy has leveled an attack on almost every aspect of my life since my deliverance. Staying free is sometimes a full time job in itself. I continue to war continually against the power of demonic influences, both in others and in myself. I could easily fill another book with stories about staying free, and about my experiences as an agent of deliverance.

During my deliverance sessions, the demons threatened to attack my children. I wish I could say that they were never able to. All six have experienced direct attacks by the demoniac kingdom as well as the aftereffects of the difficulties my battles with demons posed for them. Despite this, all of them have come through; none have become victims of the hardships of their childhoods. All are successful adults, and all

are involved and excellent parents. We have a total of seventeen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. All of the children and grandchildren who are of the age of accountability have received Christ Jesus as their personal savior, and several of them are in the ministry. Dick and I will celebrate our fiftieth wedding anniversary in one year.