

A Crazy Beginning, A Tragic End

The Life Of Chance Jay Parker

W. Sherlene Pounds

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PROLOGUE

Chance Parker was now fifty-six years old. He was a good man who may have had more than his share of bad luck. He had been abandoned by his parents, imprisoned, perhaps unjustly, in a violent institution and more than once been left with a shattered heart. Even the circumstances of his birth had been very unusual. He had known pain but there had been happiness too, and love, but the love always seemed to end up hurting. The last several years had been wonderfully tranquil. He and wife Lindy had a good marriage. Life seemed good, the earlier turmoil past, but unfortunately the worst was yet to come. Something or someone from his past would surface to do Chance harm and Lindy would face her own demons. But for now Chance could take stock that he was still a tall, very good-looking man, very personable, and liked by all who knew him. The brownish-red hair was now just light brown with some gray creeping in but that seemed to be the only sign of aging. Lindy, too, was still beautiful and youthful. She still had lots of energy and enthusiasm for life. Her longish blonde hair and always-fashionable dress made her appear younger than her forty-eight years. The Parkers were doing okay but things would soon change but why don't we start at the beginning?

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

The Frick's were pregnant again with their seventh child well on the way. Joe and Mary Frick had in recent months moved from their old neighborhood to one nearer to Joe's work so two neighborhoods, old and new, were fairly well stunned when the Fricks announced to all who would listen to them that they couldn't and wouldn't feed another mouth and they wanted to find someone to take the baby. Essentially they wanted to give the baby away but weren't sure that would be legal. They needed to find someone who would agree to adopt the baby even before the child was born. No offers came in and the Fricks crazy scheme was either ignored or laughed at. There were definitely some cruel jokes going around.

When Walt and Hilda Parker first heard what their former neighbors were proposing they had paid little attention to it but as time went on and they heard through the neighborhood grapevine that there still had been no offers a little sliver of interest began to break through their indifference. They had not known the Fricks and wondered if they were actually serious or this was just some get-attention ploy. After a few more days of rolling a few ideas through their heads Walt and Hilda Parker decided they wanted to meet the Fricks and their baby who had now entered the world close to four months ago. Someone told them the baby, a little boy, did not smile and seldom cried.

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The Parkers made an appointment to meet with the parents and see the new baby. The child looked pleasant and wore clean clothing although certainly hand-me downs, had big sky-blue eyes and when Hilda picked the child up his face broke into a sure smile. This pleased Hilda and later when the two of them reviewed their visit they came to consider this rare smile an omen. While they had been with the family Walt had asked what he considered an ordinary question? He asked the child's name and was told the baby had no name, was referred to only as Baby. Well this was certainly A Crazy Beginning and this had been particularly upsetting to Walt. He didn't think the baby was being abused but he felt certain the child was being neglected and that the parents had no love at all for this last child. He didn't think there was any mystery as to why the child didn't smile. The little boy though just an infant undoubtedly could sense he was unloved and unwanted. Walt had also noted children, a couple still in diapers walking or crawling around and realized too many kids could be unnerving.

The Parkers thought the Fricks had been nice enough but they felt they were a bit on the cold side too. They would have to think about all this. The Parkers were not yet sold on the idea of taking on a child but the event was getting more of their attention. They were childless and would never have a natural child of their own. A child could be fun. Did they think about this long enough? Did they realize this would be a long-term commitment? Did they feel compassion for this lonely little child? Well who knows? Whatever thinking and discussion went into the issue was apparently enough as the Parkers were soon in the office of an adoption attorney and the wheels were rolling. "Baby" would now have a permanent new home and at last would have a real name: Chance Jay Parker.

The Parker's friends and relatives were astonished at this

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adoption. Hilda had never shown any maternal inclinations, never spoke of wanting children and no one had claimed to have heard Walt lamenting that they had no children. It was all quite a surprise to them but they did wish them well.

CHAPTER TWO

Hilda was a spunky, petite brunette with piercing black eyes that could be scary if she was angry with you. She was not a natural beauty but took great care with her appearance and when made up looked very attractive. While her husband was still asleep she started her morning early with a set of exercises which her slim figure reflected. After showering and dressing for the day she would then professionally apply her make-up and then a lovely Hilda would be ready to face the day. Hilda's life had not always been easy. Her mother had died when she was but thirteen years old. Hilda, being the oldest of four children became the 'mother in attendance' to her siblings, two girls, one boy. Maybe this became all the mothering she would ever care to do. The sibling closest in age to her was the boy, Tommy, and he and Hilda formed a close relationship that continued into adulthood. Her father was lost without his wife. He was a good man but didn't have much time for the kids. Money was always tight but the kids never lacked for anything they needed, what they just wanted, yes, perhaps. All his children respected him and mourned his passing just a few years ago. As it turned out Hilda was the only one who had no children. Her siblings gave her nieces and nephews but they were all scattered so Hilda hardly saw them. She did keep in touch with Tommy but even he lived a long way off.

For several years now Hilda had run an accounting business from

her home. Working her own hours really suited her. Hilda was very good at what she did but she made sure she never took on too much work for she liked to have an afternoon or so just to goof off, shopping maybe, or a drink or two with a girlfriend. Walt was probably a good match for Hilda. He appeared to most to be a grumpy old man but his wife knew how to manage him and get whatever she wanted. Actually Walt's grumpiness was often just an act and he really could be pleasant and have a warm heart. He did feel life had cheated him some but he was happy to have Hilda. She was the noisy one while he was more quiet but Walt Parker could only be pushed so far. He kept it pretty much to himself but Walt was secretly very pleased to now have a son and so it was a welcome bit of news when the adoption attorney called several months later to tell him he had just learned the Fricks had moved again, this time nearly fifteen hundred miles away. Naturally Walt preferred to not have his son's biological parents so close by.

The little boy Chance seemed happy enough in his new home. Walt and Hilda tried to do their best but the home was not the most joyous of homes, especially for a baby. Hilda and Walt knew nothing of child rearing and the novelty of a new baby soon wore off. The Parkers often had loud arguments and if they weren't arguing they were hosting a party. Loud music and loud voices were probably frightening to a young child. Hilda did love shopping for their baby so there were plenty of baby needs, clothing, furniture, etc. in the home and the spare bedroom had been turned into a very pleasant and efficient nursery. Hilda had also hired a nanny to take care of little Chance while she was working. The nanny came to the house and cared for the baby in the living room or bedroom while Hilda was busy in her office.

But, despite it all, little Chance began to grow, thrive. By the time he was three or four his mother had found playmates living nearby and Hilda became proficient at arranging play dates for her

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son and the little neighbor kids. Chance was growing into happiness. He had nice things and little friends. It wasn't until the tender age of five that the boy had his first block-buster blow.

It was a sunny bright day in early May. The fragrance of lilacs and peonies filled the air, a near perfect day. A happy little Chance came skipping home from his bus stop clutching a precious picture he had drawn, purple in color mostly, probably a flower or maybe a dragon. Chance surely knew what it was and he was probably hoping Mama would like it good enough to put on the frig door. Sometimes she did.

Chance couldn't get the front door open. That was unusual. Always the door opened easily and Mama would be waiting with lunch for him. There was no response so the child began to pound on the door crying out for Mama. Still there was no response and now little Chance was becoming concerned as any five year old would. Now the boy ran to the back door and had the same sorry results. The door was locked. Mama must not be home. Had she forgotten him? Maybe she was still asleep. Various strange scenarios were running through the little boy's head.

There was a large window very close to the front porch. There were some bricks scattered through a few flower beds and an enterprising Chance began collecting the bricks. Soon he had enough to build a little stool that he could stand on and look through the window. Chance climbed up and looked in. What he saw was not comforting. He did not see any sign of Mama. The room was almost empty. Where was the blue striped couch that sat along the wall? Where was the matching chair, and he didn't see the little table with the painted ceramic lamp? There was another little table and it was still there. Chance may have been only five, but he could grasp that this was not good. Nothing to do but sit on the front porch and wait. Now the tears were coming. Eventually the child fell asleep on the hard cement porch. Would Mama come? Would Papa?

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Sara Green was the next door neighbor. Her children were all older and she was fond of little Chance. Sara was a caring and compassionate person so when she pulled into her driveway and saw her little neighbor boy lying on his front porch she became alarmed, even more so when she saw his tear-streaked face. Chance woke when Sara stepped onto the porch and he told her his tale of woe. Sara gave the door several loud whacks but also got no response. Sara was tall enough she could look through the window and she also saw the bare room as Chance had described. She herded the boy to her house and fixed him a grilled cheese sandwich and poured him a glass of milk. She then set about assuring Chance that Mama or Papa would be home soon. Sara was sure this was only a case of miscommunication. In time all would be explained and Chance would be happy again.

Mama did not come home and it was hours yet before Papa was due home. Once again Chance fell asleep, watching cartoons on the big screen television set in Sara's living room. Several hours later Sara saw her neighbor's car enter his driveway. Some sixth sense must have awakened Chance as he was up from his nap and out the front door, bolting into Papa's arms. Sara crossed the lawn to speak with Walt Parker and tell him what she knew. Mr. Parker thanked Sara for her help in caring for his son but she saw the grim lines forming across his forehead. She could tell this was all a surprise to the man and not a pleasant one either.

No one will ever know exactly what took place in that home that night. Mr. Parker had a temper. He could yell and swear and slam his fist about and it is a good bet he did plenty of that that evening, further terrifying his son. Amazingly the next morning everything seemed almost returned to normal. Chance was walked to his bus stop by a short, silver-headed woman. Neighbors looking out their windows would have recognized her as Walt Parker's mother, Kate Parker. Kate had frequently been a visitor at the Parker's so it was good to see her visiting in this crisis.

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To be sure the neighborhood must have been rife with gossip and rumors and it seemed no one expected Hilda to return and especially not when a local furniture company was seen delivering a new living room and dining room set and what looked like a new kitchen table with chairs. Yes, Kate would move in but she had some conditions. Papa, as he was usually called, had always been a heavy cigar smoker although he had cut back quite a bit the last year. Still the house reeked of the smell and she could not move in with that tobacco odor. The house stunk and furthermore, Kate told her son, Chance's clothes probably carried that odor to school. If she was going to live with them Walt would have to smoke either outside, in the garage, or in his truck. Now Papa didn't like receiving ultimatums from women and especially his own mother but in this case he felt he had no choice, especially if his tobacco habit could be affecting Chance. By the end of another year he was down to only a couple cigars a year.