
Prologue

"The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation" (Numbers 14:18 KJV)

April 2007

"Where do the seeds of evil come from, and what causes them to sprout?"

This unbidden thought briefly passed through James' consciousness, like a voice in his mind, followed quickly by the follow-up, "but then, what is evil?"

Sounding like something he probably heard in a Megadeth song, he shook his head at the idea, but it didn't fully leave his mind.

James Howard III didn't consider himself evil. Yes, he had done some things he regretted, though not many. Mostly the regret was at being caught, not at the acts themselves.

He had done some things that others called "evil" or "wrong". Even criminal. But James didn't consider himself to be evil. He had found pleasure in the things he did, despite what others thought of them. How could something you enjoyed be wrong?

Like the meth he had smoked last night, giving in to things he enjoyed, even if someone else objected to them, isn't **WRONG**, James mused. He enjoyed them. Sex. Drugs and alcohol. He was basically raised with these as a part of his daily life, so how could they be evil? Besides, they often calmed the compulsion, the itch, and the driving needs that he felt at his very core, at least for a little while.

James knew that what he was considering doing next would likely be judged "evil" by others, but all he

knew was he couldn't stop himself. He HAD to do it. Every fiber of his being was pushing him to do it. Compelled him, forced him. Because he LIKED it... LOVED it even. Who didn't love doing the things that made them feel good, made them happy?

He admitted that the idea aroused him, excited him, he also knew that society would judge him. "They" would look down on him. Call him names, call his actions "evil". Society just binds themselves to options that are considered by some to be "proper", and he didn't feel the need to restrict himself that narrowly. He basically lived with the belief that whatever made him feel good was "right" and anyone who disagreed could go to hell.

There were consequences, he admitted. He had dealt with consequences before. Fights. Beat downs. Even jail. But that was just a part of living. Ups and downs, pluses and minuses. You win some, you lose some.

But his other obsessions were much like his drug addictions - he had to do it, regardless of the cost. Despite this, he knew he wouldn't be able to rest until he quelled the overwhelming desires in him.

James put clothes into his backpack, preparing to leave for Louisiana as soon as it was done. He knew that, unlike the times before, he wouldn't be able to remain in town. He was burning a bridge, like so many before, but this would be irreparable.

Actually, to be honest, Louisiana probably wasn't the best idea either, since his last "indiscretion" was still there, but he didn't know where else to go. At least his ex, or whatever she was at the moment, was inviting him back, meaning the heat was probably off him. He would just have to figure out how to deal with the brat she was growing inside her. She said it was his, but who cared? He had others, and he didn't support them any more than he would this one.

Where to go? Texas to be closer to his brother? That was a laugh. His parents in California had already sent him away, and now Arizona would be done, too. Maybe back to Oklahoma, but there were memories there too.

As he reflected back on his past travels and activities, he thought of his son, James Howard IV, little “Jimmy”, only 5 years old.

Too bad Jimmy was still stuck living with his bitch of a mother, Karen. But she was part of what had ruined Arizona for him back then, and when he gave in today, it would likely prevent him from ever seeing Jimmy again. Not that he had seen the kid much in the last 5 years. He wished he could talk to Jimmy, pass on his knowledge and experience. Talk to him and guide him.

Oh well, he thought, it would be worth losing access to Jimmy to get the pleasure he knew he deserved, and to slake his desires. He considered momentarily trying to get custody of Sierra but knew Karen would fight that too hard.

“Oh well,” he thought, “might as well move on to plan B.”

He knew that it would be so sweet, so warm and soft, so wonderful. Lynn was such a beautiful girl, and she flirted with him all the time. Always wanted to be tickled and played with.

He had often fantasized about what they would do together, if only her mom wasn’t around all of the time. James knew that Lynn felt the same for him as he did for her, and today they were finally going to be alone, and consummate their love for one another.

At 27 years old, James Howard III was a lanky figure, his long brown hair and scruffy beard disheveled and unkempt. At five foot seven with a skinny build, he certainly wasn’t going to score himself a super model.

Not entirely unattractive, he nonetheless had succumbed to the “look” of a tweaker, hair stringy and greasy, body lean with the ravages of the meth, sores and scars dotting his complexion. Twenty-seven years of hard living, drug use and intermittent homelessness had certainly taken its toll. Having barely graduated high school, he continued the legacy of his parents by bouncing from place to place.

If he thought back, he couldn’t even count the number of times the family had moved, house to house, town to town, and state to state, while his father jumped from trucking job to trucking job. James, too, bounced from location to location, doing a variety of odd jobs to survive.

He had recently borrowed some money from his parents, who were currently living in California, but it was nearly gone. His only real possession, a blue 1993 Nissan Pathfinder, would have to take him down the road so he could find some way to make a little money.

James finished packing his meager items in his backpack and put it near the stairs. He heard cartoons playing on the television downstairs. He could feel the meth from last night still buzzing faintly in his body, wearing off as he came down from the high.

“Probably should get some more for the drive,” he thought, as he walked down the stairs, seeing Lynn sitting in the living room, eating a bowl of cereal, and watching the animated figures bouncing around on the television. She had on a little pink sweater and blue and white striped shorts.

It was January, and even in Arizona those could sometimes be chilly, but often warmed throughout the day. James stood behind the couch for several minutes, savoring the anticipation of what was about to happen, smiling slightly at the thoughts of previous times, previous girls, and what he imagined this time would be

like.

Finally, James said, “Hey Lynn, do you wanna play a game before school?”

Lynn looked up at him, her six-year-old face lighting up at the prospect of playing a game. Kids loved games, Lynn more than most.

“Let’s play hide and seek,” he told her, and she cheered as she jumped up from the floor and ran around the couch to him.

James took Lynn’s little hand in his and started walking her upstairs.

“We are gonna play a special game of hide and seek,” he told the girl. “It will be different than what you are used to, but I know you will love it, as much as I do.”

So trusting. So little. So sweet. James smiled as he took her into the master bedroom, closing the door behind himself, and telling her, “So here is what we are gonna do...”

