

## Making Sarah Cry


He stood among his friends from school,  
He joined their childhood games -  
Laughing as they played kickball  
And when they called poor Sarah names.  
Sarah was unlike the rest;  
She was slow and not as smart,  
And it would seem to all his friends  
She was born without a heart.  
And so he gladly joined their fun  
Of making Sarah cry.  
But somewhere deep within his heart,  
He never knew just why.  
For he could hear his mother's voice,  
Her lessons of right and wrong  
Playing over and over inside his head  
Just like a favourite song.  
"Treat others with respect, son,  
The way you'd want them treating you.  
And remember, when you hurt others,  
Someday, someone might hurt you."  
He knew his mother wouldn't understand  
The purpose of their game  
Of teasing Sarah, who made them laugh  
As her own tears fell like rain.  
The funny faces that she made  
And the way she'd stomp her feet  
Whenever they mocked the way she walked  
Or the stutter when she'd speak.  
To him she must deserve it  
Because she never tried to hide.  
And if she truly wanted to be left alone,  
Then she should stay inside.  
But every day she'd do the same:  
She'd come outside to play,  
And stand there, tears upon her face,  
Too upset to run away.


The game would soon be over  
As tears dropped from her eyes,  
For the purpose of their fun  
was making Sarah cry.  
It was nearly two whole months  
He hadn't seen his friends.  
He was certain they all must wonder  
What happened and where he'd been  
So he felt a little nervous  
As he limped his way to class.  
He hoped no one would notice,  
He prayed on one would ask  
About that awful day:  
The day his bike met with a car,  
Leaving him with a dreadful limp  
And a jagged-looking scar.  
So he held his breath a little  
As he hobbled into the room  
Where inside he saw a "Welcome Back" banner  
And lots of red balloons.  
He felt a smile cross his face  
As his friends all smiled, too,  
And he couldn't wait to play outside-  
His favourite thing to do.  
So the second that he stepped outdoors  
And saw his friends all waiting there,  
He expected a few pats on the back-  
Instead, they all stood and stared.  
He felt his face grow hotter  
As he limped to join their side  
To play a game of kickball  
And of making Sarah cry.  
An awkward smile crossed his face  
When he heard somebody laugh  
And heard the words, "Hey, freak,  
Where'd you get that ugly mask?"  
He turned, expecting Sarah,  
But Sarah could not be seen.  
It was the scar upon his own face  
That caused such words so mean.  
He joined in their growing laughter,  
Trying hard to not give in  
To the awful urge inside to cry  
Or the quivering of his chin.  
They are only teasing,  
He made himself believe.  
They are still my friends;  
They'd never think of hurting me.  
But the cruel remarks continued  
About the scar and then his limp.  
And he knew if he shed a single tear  
They'd label him a wimp.

- Continued on back

# Making Sarah Cry

And so the hurtful words went on,  
And in his heart he wondered why.  
The game would never end, until they made him cry.  
And just when a tear had formed,  
He heard a voice speak out from behind.  
“Leave him alone you bullies,  
Because he’s a friend of mine.”  
He turned to see poor Sarah,  
Determination on her face,  
Sticking up for one of her own tormentors  
And willing to take his place.  
And when his friends did just that,  
Trying their best to make poor Sarah cry,  
This time he didn’t join in,  
And at last understood exactly why.  
“Treat others with respect, son,  
The way you’d want them treating you.  
And remember, when you hurt others,  
Someday, someone might hurt you.”  
It took a lot of courage  
Be he knew he must be strong,  
For at last he saw the difference  
Between what’s right and wrong.  
And Sarah didn’t seem so weird  
Through his understanding eyes.  
Now he knew he’d never play again  
The game of making Sarah cry.  
It took several days of teasing  
And razzing from his friends,  
But when they saw his strength,  
They chose to be like him.  
And now out on the playground,  
A group of kids meets every day  
For a game of kickball and laughter  
And teaching their new friend, Sarah, how to play.

 **And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. - Luke 6:31**

**I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it shall not cleave to me.* - Psalm 101:3** 

# The Story Teller

A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Daddy was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in our family. In my young mind, each member had a special niche. My brother, Bill, who was five years older than me, was my example. Fran, my younger sister, gave me an opportunity to play big brother and develop the art of teasing. My parents were complementary instructors - Mom taught me to love the Bible and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger was our story teller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversations. He could hold our whole family spellbound for an hour each evening.

If I wanted to know about politics, history, or science, he knew it all. He knew about the past, understood the present, and seemingly could predict the future. The pictures he could draw were so lifelike that I would often laugh or cry as I watched.

He was like a friend to the whole family. He took Dad, Bill, and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. My brother and I were deeply impressed by John Wayne in particular.

The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn’t seem to mind - but sometimes Mom would quietly get up while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places - go to her room, read her Bible, and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave. You see, my dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions. But this stranger never felt an obligation to honour them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house - not from us, from our friends, or adults. Our longtime visitor, however, used occasional four letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge, the stranger was never confronted. My dad didn’t permit alcohol in his home - not even for cooking. But the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often.

He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely, openly, and often about sex. His comments were sometime blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man/woman relationships were influenced by the stranger.

As I look back I believe it was the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents. Yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave.

More than thirty years have passed since the stranger moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. He is not nearly so intriguing to my dad as he was in those early years. But if I were to walk into my parents’ den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw pictures.

His name?

We always called him TV.