

Chapter 6

Light was coming through the lone window in the cabin-I could sense it on the other side of my closed eyes. I was awake but didn't want to open my eyes to the world. I didn't want to move. I stay there motionless under the covers frozen with fear.

Then I heard a slight creaking of the rusty hinges on the door, a few steps and then a deep breath. "Rise and shine men! Let's get up and meet this wonderful day face to face." Said Counselor Quentin and then he continued, "Y'all got half an hour to hit the showers and get ready. Hustle. Hustle. Hustle!" I opened my eyes. He had a cowbell and a drumstick. He began to beat out a steady rhythm on the bell until we all sat up from our beds. "Clang, clang, clang!"

I looked around. The Hooligans were wiping sleep from their eyes, stretching and yawning. For just a brief instant, they looked like a bunch of normal kids and not the mutants of humanity I knew them to be. They made small talk with the counselor, kissing his ass like they were kissing the hand of The Pope.

The counselor spoke, "OK Men, now that you're up and moving, I'm going outside to catch a little of this beautiful sunrise we have happening out there between the pine trees. Y'all meet me out there beneath the big one when you're ready and we'll all go over to the mess hall for breakfast.

Mess hall...I thought to myself.

I stayed as far behind the pack as I could. After breakfast, we spent the day doing what all kids do at summer at church camp. We prayed. We sang songs like "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" We did arts and crafts. We went swimming, we had lunch, and then swam more. Late in the afternoon we went hiking through the woods. Then it was time for supper. And then as the sun was going down in the East Texas Piney woods, it was time to go to chapel for sunset service. None of the day's nonsense did I particularly enjoy due to the menacing and

murderous whispers The Hooligans were making to me behinds the adult's backs.

At all times, I kept within a screaming distance from an adult in case things went south. At least a dozen times I almost approached Counselor Quentin to tell him about the events of the previous night, but talked myself out of it every time as I had convinced myself that perhaps he was part of the conspiracy to cause my demise due to his odd absence in the middle of the night when he was obviously supposed to have been watching over us.

As long as there was light in the woods , I felt I could maintain my personal safety but panic started to set in after chapel service as the sun glowed it's last daily embers behind the trees and nightly breeze started to flutter through it's endless of branches.

The counselors marched us back to the barracks and gathered us beneath the Prayer Pine (as they were calling it). "Men, "said Quentin, "What a great first day! Now let's join hands in a circle and have one last prayer this evening."

Again, we all uncomfortably hands. The Hooligans were cracking jokes with one another beneath their breath, laughing and giggling, throwing evil stares at me.

Quentin looked at each one of us and finally said to the leader of The Hooligans, "Jeff, why don't you lead us in prayer tonight?"

The Hooligans giggled. Jeff begin very slowly and awkwardly, "Lord Jesus in heaven. Thank you for this...this...beautiful day and all the friends we've made so far. Amen."

"OK Men! "said Quentin. Let's get ready for lights out. Back to the cabin we go!"

The Hooligans were still calling each other names and exchanging punches on their arms. Jeff turned around, walked back to me and whispered in my ear, "This is your last fucking night on this earth you little momma's boy pussy. When Quentin leaves tonight, you ass is grass!"