



CLIPPED WINGS

Dedicated to those who've felt the pain of isolation
at the mercy of the small-minded
who cruelly preyed on those who were made to feel inferior.

*"The hardest part in life is trying to show the smile you know is fake
and to hide the tears that won't stop."* – unknown

TODAY

In hindsight, they say, reality can be stranger than fiction, if that's the case, I've no fictional story to recount, my story is twisted enough without further embellishments. However, as a teenager, I tended to view the world through exaggerated eyes. Everything seemed scarier, more pressing, and bigger than life. Circumstances and situations oftentimes became blown dramatically out of proportion. Mind you, I was adjusting from that of a simple child to that of a complicated adolescent. I had difficulty distinguishing between what was real and what should have been obvious fantasy. So, maybe my story is nothing short of a fairy tale, loosely conceived somewhere within my confused mind, maybe none of it actually happened. However, the emotional scars and residual anger left in its wake, along with the grievous pain

felt much too authentic to have not been genuine. Yet, I ask myself, what, if anything, could I've done differently to have constructed for a more affable yarn? Had it been my fault? Or was it because of what was going on in the world during the time period? Maybe because it occurred in a southern region, after all, the south is well known for its idiocyncrosies, oddities and backward thinking. Still today, I cannot answer these burning questions, the facts don't add up, the dots don't connect, the square peg will not fit into the round hole, no matter how hard one hammers the wooden peg.

The inevitable conclusion is always the same. I was plucked kicking and screaming into this world, unwillingly, into a disturbingly dysfunctional family's plight, into a prejudiced small town of narcissistic bigots, much before anybody was prepared for me. The price I paid was horrific, it was simply downright ugly. Along the way, I learned to defend myself, not to execute an elaborate plan to overthrow the powers-that-be, as many die-hards may emphatically protest. Yet, I became a magnet conduit where politics, religion, prejudice, and hate all merged, sucked into a vortex, ever filling until eventually, it could contain no more, until it exploded into what has become my allegory. Is it fiction or autobiographical?

Does it matter if it happened in real life, or just in the mind of an over-active adolescent imagination? Whatever the case, my narrative derived directly from the heart. I've no regrets since my tale resulted from the misguided actions of those who saw themselves superior to me in every possible way. Unfortunately, I allowed them that uncensored control over me. I'm not seeking an apology, for none is required. Besides, many of the original cast of players are no longer of this earth. God-Bless their unyielding biased souls, may they forever be damned to burn in the fiery abyss of Hell. If by chance, you Christian Right religious zealots are correct that after this life, I'll be condemned to Hell. Glory be, we'll be reunited once again. Hallelujah! I can barely contain my oppressive excitement. Oh, the joy of joys! However, for those of my tormentors who remain with us, those who could not and never will see the faults in their cold, lifeless hearts, nor the short-sightedness of their narrow views, I thank you for your most generous contributions to my narrative. I've no intentions to apologize for anything I may have done or had unintentionally caused, it wasn't solely of my doing, it was a direct result of what

they were doing to me. Push came to shove. An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. Maybe, somewhere in my beating heart, I actually harbor some miniscule speck of resentment and maybe even a molecule of anger. But, I can say, without any shred of doubt, I do have a heart, it bleeds blood, it breeds love, it's compassionate, yet they shattered it into millions of tiny pieces. Time alone will mend my broken heart and crushed spirit.

Deep emotional scars remind me of what they had done and how badly they'd treated me. Unlike their cold, unfeeling hearts, never once thumping a beat, unbreakable, roughly honed from icy aged stone. Truly, I feel sorry for those small-minded folks, I pity them actually, existing like starving ravenous vultures, preying on the weaknesses of others. Over time, my shortcomings became my strengths, thanks to those wonderful sanctimonious holy-rollers who venomously aspired to break me into becoming what they wanted me to be. As mentioned previously, I've no regrets, only an abundant gratitude to those who found me so formidable, investing quality time, finding it in the kindness of their desiring, deceitful hearts to crush and forge me into their own disgusting wormy likeness. In telling my story, I intend no malice, nor wish to expose the identities of those who so willfully wronged me, it's simply a story. A collective collaboration of harmless words, typeset on sheets of white manufactured paper. Kudos! I say, to you poor, stupid, idiotic fools! How unfortunate your perverse little plan didn't work. I'm not, nor will I be something or someone I'm not. Not then. Not now. Not ever. I win. Check. And. Mate.

AUGUST 1974

The weather is unseasonably cool for the first week of August, but not so that I need to wear my letterman jacket. I slip it off and toss it atop the suitcase of my quickly packed worldly possessions. In silence, I sit on the concrete picnic table, under a canopy of old oak trees, in the municipal park across the street from my former high school. An occasional breeze carries the scent of rain as it rustles the brittle, sun-dried leaves above. I draw my legs up against my

chest while resting my chin on my knees and hug my calves in my arms. I gaze at the old stately stucco building across the street. Hard to imagine, in just a few short weeks, classes will resume again. The aged salmon pink building stands in stark contrast against the backdrop of an approaching thunderstorm. In the dwindling evening light, the weathered building could easily be confused for an abandoned asylum, with its dark windows and no visible signs of life. The flagpole at the base of the stone steps which lead into the building entrance is naked without a flag, the metal clips on the ropes clink against the hollow steel as they sway in the breeze.

Damit. Shane Aaron Davison, what the hell happened to you? You're eighteen years old, sittin' on a cement picnic table with everything you own stuffed in a suitcase, with no place to call home. Just hours ago you'd been on top of the world, you had a family, a roof over your head, a bedroom of your own, and a dream for the future. How did you end up like this? I really don't know. I have no frickin' idea. Somehow, my life went to shit. Honestly, I can't help but feel it may have taken a turn for the worse on one particular day, three years ago...

DISCLAIMER

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This is a period work of southern literary fiction told from the perspective of an eighteen-year-old male, set between the years of 1971 – 1974, along with his memory flashbacks from the 1960's. In keeping with the true integrity of the southern literary genre; regional terms, words and common slang of the specified time period have been used in the telling of this tale and should not be construed as politically incorrect, derogatory, demeaning, or to belittle or insult persons in any fashion by today's social standards.