

Light In The Darkness



Fifteen in the Heavenly Visits Series

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Visit Fifteen

It is just a little before dark this evening; the sun is just going down beyond the hill to the west. As it drops slowly below the horizon, the sun paints a beautiful palette of pinks and blues in the sky. It is the middle of the year, in the world, in the hot season. It rained hard earlier in the afternoon and the day before, which has kept the temperature at a comfortable level. The sun has dried the ground and there is a faint breeze blowing from the east, rustling the leaves of the trees.

The man-made lake was constructed to provide recreational facilities and the dam serves most of the electrical needs of the area and beyond. The dam is a

huge complex with gauges, valves, instruments, and electrical generators. It is controlled by a competent, but complex computer. It is so efficient that staffing of the massive dam is minimal. At night, there are only two workers required to maintain and monitor the intricate operations of the facility.

Two men have arrived at the dam. They represent the night shift that will work until four the next morning. Gordon and Rick have worked together for only two weeks and their relationship is strained and unfriendly.

Rick is a young man, who will start his last year of college in the fall. He is working in a program sponsored by the electrical company who owns the dam. Rick's major in college is engineering and the company is interested in hiring him full time on Rick's graduation next year.

Gordon on the other hand has worked thirty plus years for the company. He is the last of the old-timers and has survived many budget cut-backs and layoffs. He is nearing retirement and is resentful of the changes to computers and high technology. He also has a drinking problem that has gotten him in trouble on many occasions. That is the reason he is working the night shift.

They replace the men on the evening shift and deposit their containers of food and drink in the employee's break room refrigerator. Rick notices the bulge in Gordon's coat pocket and Gordon's slightly slurred speech. Apparently, Gordon has started drinking a little earlier than usual tonight. Unseen by either of them, a dark and hideous spirit clings to Gordon, as

close as his shadow. Speind is the spirit of defeat and he hates this human, but he loves to torment this beautiful example of failure.

The spirit whispers in Gordon's ear from time to time, "it's about time for a little drink... time to drink... just a little sip would taste really good about now."

Rick asks, "how about me taking the control room tonight, Gordon? You can take it easy checking the generators and upper area."

Speind whispers in Gordon's ear, "No!"

Gordon replies harshly, "No, I'll take the control room. It's my responsibility... What? You think I can't handle it?"

"No... no, that's not it," Rick says. "I just need to learn the job sooner or later and tonight looked like a good time."

The spirit whispers again, "Not tonight, kid..."

Gordon says, "Not tonight, kid." He reconsiders and continues, "perhaps later tonight I'll show you the operation. Let's see what we have to do..." He checks the log and instructions left for their shift. Gordon continues, "It says we need to open the overflow twice for about thirty minutes... must be the lake level is too high with all this rain... I tell you what, Rick. I'll take a time in the control room and you can do the last half. We have to let some water out two times during our shift so I'll do the first and you can do the last one on your turn... I'll show you how it's done. How about that? That sounds fair?"

Rick replies, "yes, that's great. I would like to learn what goes on in here. I'll start my run through the dam. It'll take me about two hours. When I get back, we can have some coffee and donuts. I'll see you later, Gordon."

After Rick leaves on his rounds, Gordon goes through the check list of the computer. He completes this task.

The spirit whispers, "we might as well open the overflow... time for a drink."

Gordon says aloud, "we might as well open the overflow... it's a little early, but what the heck... It'll take about thirty minutes and I need a little break... about time for a drink."

Gordon walks to the computer terminal and sits down. He says, "I hate this thing... Let's see... Yes... 'overflow routine'... that's the one." He touches the 'enter' key. He continues, "we'll set the time for thirty minutes and a ten degree opening. There... that does it. Now... time for a little refreshment."

He takes the bottle of whiskey from his pocket, unscrews the top and takes a big drink of the sense-numbing liquid. Accidentally, he drops the top. Looking around his chair, he spots the elusive cap. He says aloud, "there you are." As he bends down, his arm touches the computer keys. Unknown to him, this action changes the time to one hour and the valve opening to fifty degrees. He takes another long drink before screwing the top on the bottle and returning it to his pocket.

The dam's overflow valve slowly opens its huge jaws to half its capacity. Water gushes from this opening, thrilled to be free from the restrictions of the dam. It changes the gentle river gradually to a surging and ever rising torrent of water.

About a mile downstream from the dam, in the faint, sunset light that remains, two children run and play near the gentle flowing river. Carol is ten and Scott eleven. Carol belongs to Jesus, but Scott does not.

Carol is chasing Scott, trying to catch him before he touches the safe tree; a large oak tree growing next to the table in the picnic area down the hill from their cabins in the woods. Scott's cabin is just a short distance away from Carol's. Their two families are close friends and come to this restful area on weekends numerous times during the year.

Carol reaches out and touches Scott's red shirt, "I got you, Scotty! You're it!"

Scott objects, "No, you didn't... I made it to the tree first."

Carol protests, "Scotty... I'm not going to play if you're not gonna be fair. You know I touched you." She sits down at the picnic table and crosses her arms across her chest as to say, 'that's all I have to say on the subject'.

Grudgingly, Scott says, "Okay... Okay! If you're going to whine, I'll be it... You didn't get me in time, Carol... and you know it... and quit calling me Scotty."

"I know I've hunted and chased you for more than an hour and I've tagged you three times and you keep saying I didn't... it's your turn, Scot-tyyy. I got you this last time... play fair."

"Quit your bellyaching... I said I'd be it." Scott takes a seat on the other side of the table and closes his eyes. "I'll count to ten and you take off..."

Carol says, "count to one hundred, Scott. You run faster than me... and don't peek."

"Okay! I won't peek. I'm counting to a hundred... get going, Carol. 15, 16, 17,..."

Not far away, standing in the shadow of some oak trees down the hill from where the children are playing, an evil spirit named Grumpa is watching. His eyes narrow in expectation as he watches Carol running toward him. As she approaches, he extends his slimy arms in anticipation. When she is within a few feet of him, his left arm is grabbed and he goes flying through the air. He lands with a crash on the rocky ground.

Angrily, he springs to his feet and snarls at his adversary, "Blasdon, I'm going to..."

Blasdon, the guardian, interrupts, "you'll do what, Grumpa?"

Grumpa replies, "one of these times I'll fix you good. You'll see..."

"And one of these times, I'll send you to the abyss where you belong. What are you doing here anyway? You know that the young girl belongs to Jesus. Were you really trying to hurt her, Grumpa? Don't you remember what happens to pathetic little devils that try to hurt God's children?"

Grumpa cowers before the mighty angel and slinks across the ground to hide behind a rock. He says, "I wasn't trying to hurt the girl. It's the boy I'm after. He isn't under your protection. You have no right to get in my way."

"I have all the rights God gives me. I hate to tell you this, Grumpa, but the boy is under my protection also. As long as he is with the girl, you stay away. Slither back under your rock and live with your friends, the snakes and scorpions. You're polluting the air."

Grumpa remarks as he slides under the rock, "I'll be watching, Blasdon. If the boy gets separated from the girl, I'll make my move. He'll do anything I ask... you'll see."

Blasdon lifts the rock and says, "if you attempt to harm the girl in any way, you will cease to be... Your evil heart will be crushed in my fist and your evil companions will feed on your eyeballs." Blasdon slams the rock to the ground and Grumpa lets out a scream.

As Carol passes by her guardian, Blasdon touches her hair and says, "remember what your mother said, little one. 'stay away from the river'."



"Oh!" Carol exclaims. She stops and runs her hand through her long, brown hair. She felt something, but assumes that it was a flying insect. She looks

around and thinks, 'I thought I heard a voice... must be the wind in the trees'.

It is a beautiful day in Heaven. The air is fresh and the sky is blue with fluffy, white clouds lazily floating from east to west. There is a faint hint of the perfume of God's glory in the gentle breeze. The area is mountainous with an abundant supply of pine, popular and oak trees everywhere.

It is only a short distance from the Holy City. You can hear the sound of music and the voices of the angels and the redeemed singing praises to their Creator.

Opel is sitting on a rock, beside a tranquil stream of water. She isn't wearing shoes and her feet dangle in the shallow, cool water.

Opel appears to be eleven or twelve years old as measured on Earth. However, she passed from the physical to the spiritual when she was about eighty years old and that was over ten Earth years ago. Time has no meaning in Heaven.

She is watching two rabbits play in the grass across the stream and doesn't notice the figure sneak up from behind her. She lets out a cry, as unexpectedly, she is pushed head first into the water. The splash startles the rabbits and they flee deeper into the woods.

Opel comes up spitting water. She is sitting in about eighteen inches of water and she pulls her long, soaking wet hair from her eyes to see who pushed her.

"Walter!" She exclaims. "I'll get you for this!" She sees her best friend standing on the rock doubled up in laughter. They had been husband and wife on Earth and she has been in Heaven a little longer than Walter. Since he arrived, they have been constant companions.

She continues, "you better not have got my papers wet or I'll tan your hide!" She slowly arises from the water and stands there dripping.

Walter bends and picks up the sheets of paper. He asks, "do you mean these old things? What if I toss them in with you?"

"Walter, you better not. I just finished a poem and you better not... I'm warning you."

Walter mimics his friend, "you better not... I'm warning you."

Opel says, "that does, it. I'm going to punch you out, Walter. You've had it."

She turns her attention from her fallen friend. "Oh... hello, Jarman. We're just playing around. I really wouldn't hurt Walter."

Opel is speaking to a massive bulk of an angel standing in the middle of the forest path. He is majestic in stature and he is smiling at the two, young people.

He replies, "I know, child. Jesus sent me. He wants to talk to you both."

Walter gets to his feet and says to Opel, "We've done it now. I bet we're in real trouble, Opel. Jesus was just here a little while ago and now he sends one of his Warriors to get us."

Jarman laughs. He says, "You're not in trouble, little ones. Come into my arms. Jesus is waiting."

They are engulfed in the gentle arms of the great Warrior. In an instant, they are standing outside the Holy City, next to an old well. Jesus is sitting on the rocks surrounding the well, drinking from a ladle.

Walter asks, "Lord, do you need us?"

Jesus draws them near his loving heart and he replies, "I always need you, my children. Here, drink from my cup." They each take a drink of the living water. The love they feel is overwhelming. Their souls are filled to capacity and their hearts beat with the fervent joy of Christ. Their laughter spreads through the valleys of eternity and echoes in the majestic splendor of the Heavenly mountains.

As they sit on the well next to Jesus, He says, "I do have a journey; a mission that needs to be accomplished. Will you help me?"

Opel replies, "Lord, we would do anything for you."

Walter complies, "Jesus, just ask and we'll do our best."

Jesus wraps his arms around his children and replies, "Your best has always been more than sufficient, my children."

The guardian angel, Blasdon, appears next to his lord. Jesus continues, "I need for you to go into the World for me and assist Blasdon in something that is very necessary."

Opel asks, "We can do that? I mean, we can go back to the World?"

Jesus laughs and replies, "Yes, my child, if I wish it. It's not that far."

Walter asks, "What do you want us to do, Jesus?"

Jesus hands Opel a small box. He says, "I need for you to deliver this. Just open it when I tell you. It will help me greatly."

Opel looks at Walter and says, "That's easy. We can do this. Right, Walter?"

Walter nods his head and Jesus says to the Guardian, "Protect them, Blasdon, and go with my Spirit."

Blasdon replies, "Yes, Lord, they'll be safe with us." He says to the two children, "Are you ready?"

They nod their heads and Blasdon picks them up in his mighty arms. He says, "Hold on tight and close your eyes against the light."

Opel and Walter close their eyes and they feel the strength of the mighty angel and the presence of the Holy Spirit as they travel from certainty to deception, from truth to lies; East of Eden. Their progress is seen as a shooting star in the sky.

In less than a heartbeat, they open their eyes to find they are standing next to a river. A river whose level is rising and is only two feet below a fallen tree that forms a natural bridge across this narrow area of the river. It is getting darker as the shadows are coming together to welcome night. There is no moon to give a hint of light.

Blasdon leads them to an area at the top of the hill overlooking the river. He says to Opel, "Stay here, little one. Open the box at the Spirit's command."

To Walter he says, "Come with me."

Opel watches as Blasdon and Walter walk down the path and disappear in the trees downstream. She is not alone as she feels the Spirit's presence. Opel waits patiently.

Not far away, the two evil spirits watch Carol and Scott running through the trees. Speind says, "I've done my part. Now, it's up to you, Grumpa. Don't fail this time."

Grumpa detests this miserable excuse for evil that stands beside him. He replies, "I won't fail... I

wouldn't have before, if it hadn't been for those meddling angels of Him."

Speind says, "Well, get going. It's time."

Scott reaches out and touches Carol. He yells, "I got you Carol... you're it."

Carol sinks to the ground and wails, "Not fair, Scotty. You couldn't have counted to one hundred."

"I did too, most certainly... Don't be such a cry baby, Carol. You're it."

Carol asks as she arises from the ground and brushes the dried leaves from her shorts, "do you know Jesus, Scotty?"

"Not that old stuff again... Carol, you keep harping on the same old thing. Sure. I go to church too, you know. I know about Jesus."

"No. I mean, do you know Him... Does He live in here?" She points to her heart. "You know, in here."

Scott is becoming irritated. He replies, "Cut it out, Carol... I told you before. I'm not ready yet. I ain't done nottin' wrong... I ain't no sinner person."

Carol persists, "The bible says we all are sinners... The only way to get to Heaven is to ask Jesus into our hearts..."

"Come on, Carol... This is a stall... you're it. Now, count to ten... I'm taking off."

Carol calls to Scott, "I just want you to be with me in Heaven, Scotty... that's all."

Scotty doesn't answer as she runs down the path toward the river. Carol shrugs and runs after her friend.

They emerge from the trees and Scotty runs toward the fallen tree bridge with Carol close behind. The water is lapping at the underside of the log as the water rises rapidly.

Suddenly, Scott stops and Carol almost runs into him. She yells, "I got you, Scotty. You're it."

"Look there!" Scott exclaims. "Look at that frog over there on the log bridge! He's a big one... Wow!"

Scott advances toward the bridge. Carol grabs his arm. She warns, "we're not supposed to be here, Scotty... our parents said not to go this close to the river. Come on, let's go back... we can play a game in the cabin... it's late. It's getting really, really dark. "

Scott pulls his arm away. He says, "Don't be a scaredy-cat, Carol. I'm just going to grab that old frog and then we'll go." Scott advances toward the fallen tree. Grumpa waits in the middle of the natural bridge patiently.

Up the hill, Opel feels the Spirit say, "Now". She opens the box and hundreds of fireflies take flight.

Carol is worried and looks back up the hill toward her cabin. She sees a multitude of tiny blinking lights. She points and yells, "look, Scotty... Look at those fireflies... Let's go catch them... that'll be fun."

She tugs at the back of Scott's shirt. She continues, "There's a girl up there among the fireflies... come on, let's go play up there with her and chase those lightning bugs."



Scott cannot be deterred. He gets down on hands and knees and crawls carefully toward the inviting frog. He calls, "I'll be just a second... I'll grab this old frog and we'll go..."

Carol yells above the raging river, "Scotty, no! Stop! Come back... the river's too fast."

It happened in just an instant. As Scott reaches toward the frog, the water raises the tree as if lifted by a giant hand and the log rolls to the right. Scott loses his balance and he falls into the raging water before he can

even yell for help. He disappears below the surface and the current carries him quickly away.

Carol screams and runs as fast as she can up the hill toward the cabins and help.

It's been an hour since Scotty went into the water. Carol is sitting at the table. She and her mother are consoling Scott's mother. They all are praying. Carol has tears in her eyes as she says, "he wouldn't listen to me... if only I could have stopped him."

Scott's mother wipes her eyes and places her hand on Carol's arm. She says, "you did all you could, Carol... Don't you blame yourself. Scott knows better and I'm going get him good when I see"

She starts to cry again and Carol's mother puts her arm around her and says, "Don't you worry, Margaret. We'll see Scott and soon. The searchers will find him safe and sound... now; don't cry... it'll be all right."

They jump to their feet as the cabin door opens and two men enter. Margaret asks expectantly, "Is he safe? Did you find him?"

Carol's father replies, "No. Not as yet, Margaret. It's so dark and we don't have enough light. The water has receded now. We're going over to the other side. I don't know what happened at the dam... They know they can't put that much water into the river so fast. I need Carol's flashlight. Don't worry, we'll find

him safe. Scott's a good swimmer. I wish we had bigger flashlights."

The cabin door burst open again and a man yells, "We've found him!!! He's okay! The medics are taking him to the hospital in town. They just want to check him out. His dad is with him."

In the emergency room, a crowd of people surround Scott's bed. The doctor has just left, pronouncing that Scott is fine and he only has a few bumps and bruises.

Scott is saying, "It was scary... I was carried down river like a speed boat... no, like a submarine. I couldn't get to the surface and I needed air... I prayed. Man, did I pray. I knew I was dead meat. I was almost gone and I must 'a raised my arm out of the water. All of a sudden, I felt a hand grab mine and I was yanked out of the water like a fish. I found myself on the ground. I looked up and there was an old man. I must know him 'cause he knew my name. There was a big guy there too. He was shinning like the sun and I know he was an angel... had to be. I must 'a passed out and the next thing I remember is a medic guy standing over me and... well, here I am."

Margaret hugs her son, "Praise God. He sent you back to us."

Scott's father enters the room and says, "The doctor said Scott can go any time. You feel like going home, son?"

"You bet, Dad! Let's get out of this smelly place."

They are walking down the hospital corridor. Scott and Carol are walking side by side behind their parents. Scott says, "Carol, you were right. I did need Jesus. And I do have him now." He points to his chest. "And He's right in here."

They are outside the hospital and Scott sees a familiar face. The ambulance is outside the hospital emergency entrance and the crew is getting ready to leave. Scott walks up to one of them and says, "Excuse me, mister."

Fred turns and exclaims, "Hay, kid! Glad you're okay."

Scott replies, "Thanks, man. Thanks for finding me." He pauses for a moment and then asks, "When you found me, was there an old man around?"

Fred appears to be a little uncomfortable. He replies, "No. There wasn't anyone around... just you lying on the ground. Glad you're okay, kid."

Scott replies, "Thanks again. See ya."

Fred's partner, Juan, has closed the ambulance door and walks up to him. They watch the little group go to their vehicles and leave the parking lot.

Juan asks, "How did you find that kid, Fred? It was pitch black out there. I couldn't see three feet in front of me. He was a long way from the river's edge and in grass three feet tall."

Fred rubs the back of his neck and he replies, "You'll think I'm nuts if I tell you, Juan."

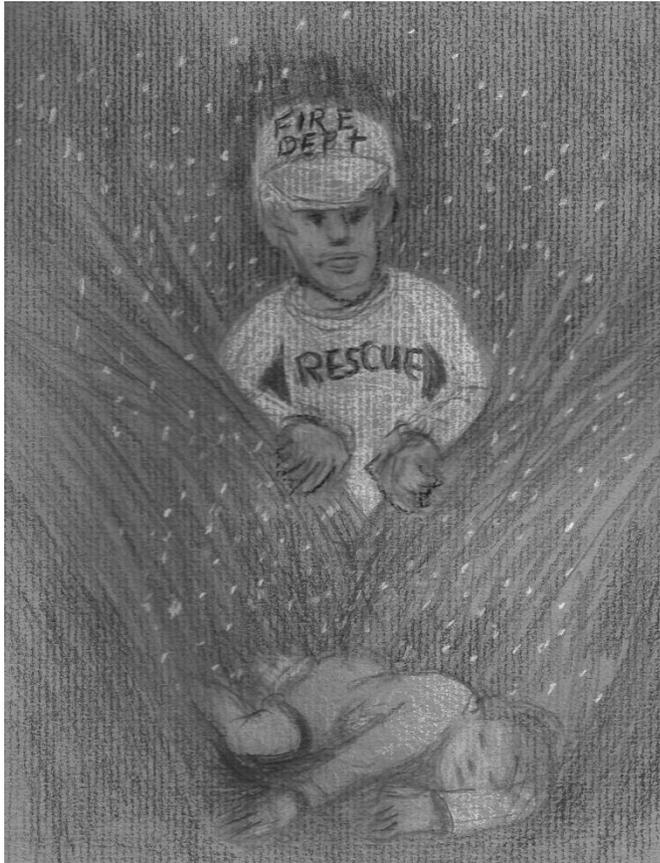
Juan says, "Hay man, we're buddies... what happened?"

Fred says, "...Lightning bugs."

His partner asks, "I must not have heard you right, Fred. What did you say?" There is a broad grin on his face.

"Okay... laugh, fool. I said lightning bugs! There was this light shining... more like flickering near the woods. I walked over and there were hundreds and hundreds of lightning bugs all over the place. It was as light as day. And there was the kid on the ground. You asked and I told you. Don't you tell anyone what I said or I'll punch you in the nose. And quit your laughing, fool."

**"Because he loves me," says the Lord,
"I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he
acknowledges my name."
Psalm 91:14**



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