

SAMPLE

FOUR LOST CHILDREN



JOANNE BARD



VOLUME 1

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My Inner Strength

In my words I sense a healing grace, for I have stepped into a saving place.

My thoughts expressed in sad confusion, leading me to no conclusion.

Many answers I do seek, unanswered questions my heart does speak.

Penning my thoughts is a special gift, helping those hollow feelings to lift.

So deep a loss I have known, the hurt I bare I have shown.

Down within my heart and soul, lives the wonder of my future role.

Answers that may never come, I may be the only one.

To heal the crime against my childhood losing a mother due to hate,

It would become my fate.

I speak to her. To let her heal, the deep emotions of anger I feel.

Let love flow in and out, let my body heal, I'm special no doubt.

Of my life I have control, believe me I have a beautiful soul.

Shannon Schram

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Chapter One

It was snowing. The wind chill was rather cold on the hands if not completely covered. This was not unusual for Bridgeport, Ontario. Most people scarcely acknowledge the weather however on February 9, 1962 it was cold enough that some cars were stalled along the roadways with people frantically trying desperately to make it to work on time. It was a normal day in the Schickler household. Mom and dad had already left for work, dropping my brother Ken and younger sister Lee to the sitter's while my older brother and I rushed to get ready for school. It was a 3 mile walk in the bitterly cold weather. After what we called a hard day at school, my brother Steve and I were the first to

arrive home. Mom and dad would return after collecting our younger siblings. Today though would be totally different, and the aftermath would leave scars on each one of us and change our lives forever.

It was a two bedroom shack we called home and was situated behind a house owned by Frieda Schantz. At one time it had been a chicken coop, but it had been totally remodeled into a two bedroom house. My mother worked with Frieda at the Hager Hinge Ltd. a factory not too far away. In the morning they would leave together, usually in a hurry. Today, though, would be different.

Steve and I arrived home from school as we normally did, this time to find our mother sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee, crying and writing a letter. There was a vial beside her. We would learn the importance and the role that vial played, and why I have written this book. As my brother and I stood in front of her confused, I

remember asking mom, “Why are you crying?” She spoke in a soft voice and said go to the house in front and we proceeded to do what we were told and left for Frieda’s home. Several hours passed when my father staggered home with our younger siblings when I ran out to greet him and said daddy mommy is in the house crying.” He replied, “go back into Frieda’s house,” so I did. It seemed like hours passed when the yard filled with police cars, ambulances and a few of our relatives. I guess it must have been at least an hour or two before we saw further activity, then suddenly I saw them take my mother out on a stretcher, and as I peered out the window tears streaming down my face, mom said, “everything will be alright Joey”. Even as I was crying, I desperately wanted to believe those four little words to be true. All I know is, this would be the last words my mother would ever say to me. Now that was how I remembered it as a 7 years old. Could it be that I forged a scenario in my mind that was not there or happened? Not sure.

After the ambulance left carrying our mother away, our grandfather on my dad's side of the family collected us four children, Steve 8, Joanne 7, Kenneth 5, and Lee 4 to spend the night with him. Our father on the other hand was taken into custody for questioning about what had transpired that day and evening. It would be a husband/father's worst nightmare. Once we got to grandpa's house he asked us to get ready for bed. We would all sleep together in a big bed. Steve, Ken, myself and Lee. I guess deep down inside Steve and I knew we had to take care of the younger two. I remember trying desperately to get my sister to stop crying, as grandpa yelled out, "If you don't stop crying, I will give you something to really cry about". That is when I came to the realization that our grandpa was not a patient man and could be extremely cruel, especially when there are four children down the hall scared, confused and very much alone with no one to comfort us, even if it was a hug or a few words of comfort, like, everything will

be fine, would have been nice. We had to solely depend on each other to muster up enough strength to just make it through the night, so we held each other tight and cried ourselves to sleep. I remember my last thought as I drifted off to sleep, hoping we would awake and it would all just simply be a dream. It was not. We would all have our own little nightmare in our dreams for a long time to come.

Chapter Two

When we woke the next morning we were asked to go downstairs to the recreation room where our father was waiting. It was a large room with animal heads on the wall in a cozy atmosphere. I never liked the room much, being an animal lover and all, so to me and as a child, I thought it was cruel. Animals are the most beautiful creatures that were created, they don't deserve to be trophy's on someone's wall. As I glanced to my left I noticed my father sitting alone on the couch. He called us to come over to him. I remember how happy I was to see him. Dad lined us up in front of him and proceeded to say the words I wanted him to take back. He looked at us and said I have something to tell

you, your mother is dead. The News hit me like lightning striking my heart and my knees began to buckle. What were those words again? Please tell me she's alright and coming home. The words kept pounding over and over in my head. She's gone never to return again. It would haunt me for the rest of my life. One question remained: Why? I would search a lifetime just to have that one word question answered. I desperately needed to understand so I could let it register in my mind maybe searching for the possibility that the pain would lessen, the broken heart could not just shatter, the confusion could begin to make some sort of sense out of this horrible tragedy, but most of all the loss of a beautiful human being not so great. There would be no more hugs or kisses, No holding her hand, no special moments together. Soon the smell of her perfume will be a memory and soon gone in such a short period of time forgotten. Her smile would fade and her laughter never to be heard again forgotten. I will never see her dance so beautifully and sing like an angel.

It would remain deep inside my consciousness until we meet again one day.

I Guess no one could have known the battle she fought deep down inside. I guess she lost. Mom would take a child with her that night. She was 3 months pregnant. The loss doubled in less than a few hours. The challenge was yet to come for her children. Later on in life the quilt, pain and confusion would consume me and always will. Why couldn't I have helped her? If only I would have come home sooner. It was the greatest loss in my life. The only thing I can do now is to try and go on without my mentor, my best friend, my world.

In the days that followed, I would watch as each of our siblings were sent off to live with our relatives, My older brother and younger sister would grieve together in the home of the one true person I have held responsible for my mother's untimely death, her mother, mommy dearest. Ken off to our Uncle Jack and myself to Uncle

Lloyd, both brothers on my father's side. Ken and I would grieve alone. In the meantime though, our dedicated and loving father decided to move on without us. We lost both parents in less than a few days. A grown man with a loss such as my mother is something I can comprehend, but abandoning four children under the age of 8 after a trauma we had all suffered, is downright unforgivable. I found myself asking that same question once again, why? Your children are filled with fear, loneliness, pain and confusion, the one and only person who should be there to comfort us, not tear us apart more than we already were, to vanish without a goodbye, gone in a flash. Two structures in our world collapsed in front of us and we were left to try and deal with two losses. The love we thought we once knew was gone never to feel it again. His after-shave scent would fade as my mother's perfume. Never to hug, never to kiss, gone. It would remain that way for me for four years.

Chapter Three

Guelph, Ontario was not a large town compared to the surrounding cities like Kitchener, London, or Toronto. Alfred Harold Bard and Ivy Dennis would marry sometime in the early 1900's. This marriage would be based on deception. Ivy would tell Alfred she was pregnant with his child to trap him. Back in those days, unlike today, the man would marry her to avoid scandal. Her mother Kathleen Dennis had strong beliefs that a woman must be proper at all times. Her morals were so strong that after her husband George had an affair, she sent him packing and would never marry again. Sometimes when someone portrays you, they never learn to trust again. She was just that sort

of woman. She would raise her children herself with financial help from her husband whom I never had the chance to meet. I wanted to see who made this woman so strong.

It didn't take Ivy long to conceive, she was in a hurry if she wanted her lie to remain secret, and a beautiful baby girl would be born on May 29, 1934. They name this little angel Joan Beatrice Bard. It was a happy occasion in the Bard family bringing home this bundle of joy, but it would become short lived. The next chain of events would destroy the lives of many families in the future. Ivy could be happy to stay home and care for Joan while Alfred struggled to work and provide for his new family. Everything appeared to be perfect for the new couple at least from the outside looking in but trouble was brewing in their marriage and how can it not when it was never based on love in the first place

Alfred started his career as the friendly neighbor milkman who went door to door

providing a wonderful service to many of the people on his route. One night after his last delivery, when he got home he found out he would be a dad again. Alfred was delighted at the news of another addition, but also a little apprehensive that there would be another mouth to feed. A one family income is not easy at the best of times, not much different from today. He worried whether or not they could afford to raise another child. The next day he awoke to his everyday routine and scurried out the door to work but not before kissing his wife and little girl goodbye. Today would be different and no one could have known how this day would change and destroy that family apart.

As Alfred heading on his way to the first house on his route to deliver milk he tripped over the fence and broke his leg. In today's world we have compensation, but back then there was nothing available. His greatest fear flashed right in front of him. How on earth will he provide for his new family if he's out of work for 6 months

and depression sank in and he started to drink to comfort himself and to forget about the problems which lay ahead of him. He started to separate himself from the family he was once proud of and his responsibilities hoping things would get better in the morning. Nothing like a good drinking spree with all hope is gone. He must come up with an alternative to make some money. He went to the local pub where he met up with some friends. They too were down on their luck. They weren't close or anything, just conversation. This relationship would change. As they drank beer after beer, they came to realize in a drunken stupor, they were in the same position and the wheels of stupidity would turn.

As they continued to drink, a plan would revolve to solve their financial burden, they would rob the Fergus Bank in Fergus, Ontario where they resided. Now no one in their right mind should be as crazy as that while consuming alcohol. Unfortunately to them it was the best solution to all of their troubles. They would spend

days chasing the bank until they could draw an exact replica of the inside of the bank and the best time to put their plans into reality. The map was kept on Alfred's kitchen table. Little did he know, one of the men backed out of the scheme and went to the police to report the conspiracy to rob the bank as the officer's listened with amazement to the snitch, they decided to pay a surprise visit to Alfred's home and a surprise it was Alfred was unable to remove the map. He was then arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit a robbery and was sentenced to 3 years in prison. His pregnant wife and daughter will have to try and move on with their lives.

Chapter Four

Ana would now have to find another source of income to raise her little girl and the growing baby inside her now that her husband would be gone for three long years. She was nearing her due date and fear started to control her. The next steps to her pitiful life would affect one's around her. She came to a decision to abort her baby by sticking knitting needles up her vagina and went into labor. The baby boy died shortly after. She had murdered her own son. He would become John Bard., Joan's only sibling. There was absolutely no remorse. Joan would remain a only, lonely child. In fact her life would become one disappointment after another.

Soon after that event, Anna would fall in love with a military man. The relationship started to unravel when he gave her an ultimatum, me or the child. Unfortunately her little girl would have to go. Anna packed up her daughter's belongings and dropped her off at her grandmother's home. She had such a tremendous loss of her father, brother and her mother in such a short time. So much pain and confusion, wanting to try and understand what is happening, or what had she done to be tossed away so easily. She was left with unanswered questions, and if the question was answered she was too young to process the information.

As for mommy dearest, she would love her military man not for long after the ultimatum, that would not be the last man in her sad and disgusting life. She would move from one man to another and be labeled the military camp tramp. Anna would continue to disgrace her entire family until she found the man with whom

she could control and manipulate. She finally found him. His name was Paul who was a kind and loving man who worked all his life. Soon after they were married, Ivy cut him off from sex. Paul had his room upstairs with just a bed and dresser. He would have a bucket to relieve himself at night so she would not be disturbed. I remember us children laughing heartlessly every time we heard him use it. It would take years before we would actually feel disgusted by the ill treatment and embarrassment he had to endure his entire life.

Paul was given a small allowance to cover his tobacco and rolling papers. He was not allowed to purchase tailor made cigarettes, he would have to roll them. He would have to cook his own supper and make his own lunch while she sat around doing nothing but getting fatter and lazier as time went by, if that was possible. As a child watching this happen and to this day, I cannot fathom why Paul would tolerate his wife abusing him in such a degrading way. She

would drain the life out of this kind soul and feel absolutely no shame let alone quilt.

Meanwhile, Joan was still in the care of her grandmother who simply adored her. After Her father Alfred served his prison sentence he contacted his daughter's grandmother asking how she was doing. The part that breaks my heart was that he chose to do it at a distance. Katheleen would tell him she was adjusting and coping, the best that she can. Alfred would not contact his daughter again until her wedding day. His excuse was he did not want to turn her life upside down, did I hear that right? Turn her life upside down? I think he had already completed that task too many years earlier. He believed he was about to complicate her life anymore then it was, so sentimental don't you think? I can be sure of one thing, I do not believe my mother would agree. You grow up all your life thinking adults are right, after all they are supposed to be a little more intelligent, then, the child before them. Well I'm here to tell you that sometimes

adults should step back and allow the child to decide what is in their hearts and mind, then and only then, can the pain and confusion take the right path to start the healing. After all, we learn how to trust and respect others through our elders. When something as senseless and heartless as this starts down on the wrong track, it does not just affect one person, it is carried on through the family for generations to come. I would grow up calling this a bad seed.

Unfortunately, I was right. You make mistakes or bad decisions because that is all you know and were taught. My mother never stood a chance, as doomed from the time she was conceived. They say you cannot love someone if you do not love yourself. I really hate to disagree. How can you love anyone let alone yourself unless you have been loved through your childhood? You can look up the definition in the dictionary, but if love was never felt in your life, then the meaning means nothing. A different language if you will. That is the devastating part, because the world

is lost without love and so are a lot of innocent children.

Joan's grandmother would continue to raise her even though mommy dearest married Paul. I'm sure he could have adored her if given a chance. Instead she would adopt a little girl named Jane who would become more important to Anna than her own daughter. I will never forgive her for that. She also adopted a little boy named George I guess to replace the son she purposely aborted many years ago. Guilty conscience I doubt it. It was just another slap in the face to my mother. The hurt inside her must have torn her apart. The constant pain of knowing her mother not only chose a man over her, but a daughter and an unrelated brother. What a way to lose sight of your own identity and the feeling of wondering just where I fit in the scheme of this. Stripping her of herself. Joan would learn how to hurt in silence. She would take all that pain and sorrow with her to her grave. Such a waste to go through your childhood and a portion of your adult life

feeling, lonely, unwanted and especially unloved. What is life without those three things, . . . you need them to survive? The emptiness that remains deep down inside you will never fill with life's greatest pleasures.

Chapter Five

Joan's grandmother did a wonderful job raising her especially without any assistance from her daughter or Joan's father. She was a strict but strong woman with beliefs of the olden days. She would teach her manners, how to walk, how to eat, and set the table. She would teach her proper cleansing and how important it is to always act like a lady. She would take her to Church every Sunday and help her with her homework. Joan would blossom into a prim and proper young lady. Grandma could teach her a lot of things, but something that she could not teach her sadly was her confidence, to trust the people around her. No one would begin to know the amount of pain she carried deep inside her heart and it hurt

grandma to see it a great deal, for she couldn't do one thing and that was to erase her pain away.

Her granddaughters pain away. Joan was able to mask it well though, not showing the hurt that was eating at her day by day. No one can be trusted, after all she witnessed that once before. Everyone leaves you at one point in your life and for some a few times. Pain is such a funny thing to completely understand, first it is a burning sensation deep down in your heart and once it begins to heal it becomes one of life's scars and it will never go away. It just flares up from time to time throughout your life and starts the process all over again.

Joan would have contact with her biological mother, but it was far from a mother/daughter relationship. As far as she was concerned her grandmother was the mother in Joan's life and that would never change. Joan was respected by her whereas mommy dearest berated her all the time. Joan tried her best to be a good student in school.

She completed her grade 9 in Guelph, Ontario. She was an average student, but extremely shy. It was hard to make friends but she tried. She was a beautiful blond woman who carried herself well. Joan would make a man look twice at her. Not only did she have her outer beauty, she had it inside as well. She could light up any room, her beauty captivating everyone around her. One of her favorite songs was Cry by Johnny Ray. She loved to sing and dance. She would be singing to the radio as she danced delicately in the living room. Grandma would sneak into the room as she watched her dance and was amazed by her gracefulness with every step and sing with such passion. Joan would sing certain songs with so much passion you could feel the pain she had hidden deep inside her heart.

As Joan continued to mature, the boys started calling on her and grandma would have her hands full. She would have the biggest challenge of all and that was to see that no man would take advantage of her precious granddaughter.

Everything her grandma taught her was respected and it would break Joan's heart to ever let the only person she truly loved and trusted down. She could always count on her no matter how big or small the problem was.

Grandma would have strict rules when dating, grandma would demand to meet each young man and have a lengthy conversation with them first before she could leave. She would, with friends, go to the skating rink nearby every weekend. There was a young, handsome man named Bill who she was taken with. Bill was handsome, smart and extremely funny. Joan was so excited when he finally asked her out on a date. She would tell him he had to meet her grandmother first. It was her golden rule.

There would be several men who seemed to take an interest in this blonde beauty, but there was one amongst them all that stood out the most. His name was William John Schickler. He seemed to be the only one who could charm his

way into her grandmother's heart and succeed. Bill and Joan would become the most beautiful looking couple amongst their friends. They would date just over a year when grandma asked Bill what his intentions were. That is when he asked her grandmother for Joan's hand in marriage. Grandma delightedly said yes of course, now it was time to find out what Joan would say. William and Joan became husband and wife on September 27, 1952 in Guelph, Ontario.