

Security Act 2070

TRUTH



**Science Fiction
Romantic Thriller**

Steve Weissman

SECURITY ACT 2070

by

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Chapter 1 - Future 2080

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All San Francisco buildings have a silver, aluminum exterior.

Every tall building flaunts colorful billboards.

"Buy this, buy that, it will make you happy."

The Golden Gate Bridge is distinctly different, its colors untouched.

* * * * *

Inside a Fourth Grade classroom, a teacher leads her classroom, "Good, children, ready, right hand in our pockets, left hand holding our wallets or purses."

Teacher and children, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of Consumerism."

Dressed in multi-colored uniforms, the children stand with the teacher, in gold, facing two flags.

One looks similar to the USA flag, though the star section is larger with about eighty stars.

The other is a replica of the \$100 bill.

Teacher and children, "And to the happiness which materialism brings, I strive. One Nation under Money with bliss and enjoyment for all."

The children sit.

Teacher, "Now what is our best friend?"

Children, "Money!"

Teacher, "And what is our most terrible enemy?"

Children, "Anyone who says materialism isn't the true way to happiness."

Teacher, "Very good, children. Those people are diseased, so report them immediately or else you may become contaminated."

* * * * *

City street.

Buddy, 24, beard and long hair tied back, solid built, paint splattered white pants and T-shirt, strides along the sidewalk past stores, displaying countless specials.

A man, eyes wide, obsessed and clutching a large plastic block, races by, bumping Buddy, onward toward shoppers waiting at the lights.

Curious, Buddy pursues.

Toting large shopping bags, the crowds' eyes remain riveted to the lights.

It changes from red to a Green dollar (\$) sign.

The man obstructs the crosswalk, yells, "Stop!"

The confused people halt as he throws down his block, clambers on it.

Concerned, Buddy edges to the front.

Man, "It's not right! We're being brainwashed!"

The frightened crowd scatter.

Some scream.

Everyone races off, except Buddy.

Man, "Listen to me! There's no such thing as Scire-sapere's disease!"

He grabs his block, speeds after them, "It's just being honest!"

Sirens.

The man drops his block and barrels toward a freeway entrance.

Police cars come from every direction.

Man, "You won't cut open my brain!"

The police close in on him.

He sprints into the speeding freeway, arms wide, eyes closed.

Car horns blare.

Brakes screech.

* * * * *

Police Headquarters.

Police mill around the covered corpse.

Dr. Frank Morgan, 35, "nose-in-the-air" medical scientist, barges in.

A police Lieutenant follows on Frank's heels.

Lieutenant, "Doctor, I'm sorry--"

Frank, "Hell! I wanted him alive. What is wrong with the--"

Lieutenant, "Sir, he raced onto the freeway, we had no chance. The driver couldn't stop in time."

Frank calms down, "Okay, okay."

Frank looks under the sheet at the man's face, "We can try the brain experiments again with the corpse, but we're not getting anywhere. It's absolutely essential to get a live specimen."

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Chapter 2 - Buddy

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Buddy and his coworker paint a mural on the side of a high rise building, thirty stories up.

Buddy dabs the last strokes on a huge underwater scene.

Dolphins, turtles, seahorses.

His Coworker sits on the scaffolding, takes in the view.

Buddy, "Yesterday I saw a Scire-sapere fellow."

Coworker, "Didn't get too close, did you?"

Buddy pauses, shuts his eyes momentarily, "Y'know, ever since my folks died, I get moments like I know what those people feel. I'd just like to shout to everyone how stupid they are."

Coworker, "Sure way to get yourself killed or into a nut house. Better off buying yourself something special. Have some fun tonight."

Buddy, "Yeah, they'd probably think I have the disease, eh?"

Buddy surveys his work, sits down.

The area where he was painting shows a small caterpillar near the bottom and a butterfly near the top. Both are too small to be noticed from ground level.

Coworker, "I always reckoned you're borderline. Put your signature on it?"

The Coworker glances at the mural, shakes his head, "A butterfly and caterpillar under the sea, yeah, right."

They laugh.

Coworker, "Buddy, serious, one of these days, they'll catch you. What the hell are you going to do then?"

Buddy's laughter disappears, his eyes peer over the city, "Fight my way out of hell, I guess."

* * * * *

Down below, across the street, Sid, 75, neat, pleasant appearance and in good shape, stands, peering through binoculars aimed at Buddy.

The binocular view moves from Buddy to the caterpillar and butterfly.

Sid lowers his binoculars, nods.

He turns to a driver, standing next to a car, smiles and gets in.

* * * * *

In the dim night light, many silver doors line an alley way.

A young man walks along the main street carrying a bag.

He turns into the alley, heads to one of the doors.

He stops, looks around in all directions, darts in the door.

Sid's car drives up.

He steps out.

* * * * *

Karate school hall.

The large room beats with the concentration of twenty Western students, all young adults.

Practice warm-ups.

Tense muscles, hard blows and kicks.

The Asian Master stands at one end.

His serenity emanates, hiding his age, anywhere between 50 and 90.

He bows toward Sid, who sits in an observation section.

Sid nods in return.

The Master claps his hands.

Silence.

The students bow towards him.

He walks over to an elaborate setup of bricks, boards and candles.

Placed around a circle with a diameter of fifteen feet, stand eight arrangements.

Four stools with candles alternate with two stacks of bricks and two vertical thick boards.

The Master and students form a second outer circle ten feet away from the bricks, boards and candles.

A student next to the Master holds a stopwatch.

Master, "Buddy."

Buddy steps into the circle, bows toward the Master.

Using a matchbox, Buddy lights the four candles, bowing at each one.

He pauses, both hands hold the matchbox.

Buddy, "NOW!"

Buddy throws the matchbox up in the air.

With lightning speed he kicks one board in two, catches the matchbox in his mouth, smashes one set of bricks, kicks the other board, smashes the other bricks.

His right foot whips out, extinguishes one candle, his right hand does another, the left foot, the left hand.

All flames out, without disturbing the candles.

Buddy takes the matchbox out of his mouth, bows toward the Master.

The student shows the stopwatch to the Master, who smiles and looks toward Sid.

Sid nods, rises and leaves.

Sid exits the Karate school, approaches his driver, who presses a button on a futuristic cell phone and hands it to Sid.

Sid, "Harp? Everything matches now. I have no doubts."

Sid gets in the car, "Maybe six years for the disease to fully manifest, if no one kills him first."

* * * * *

Chapter 3 - Lisa

* * * * *

Toting bags, Lisa Baker, 22, attractive, longhair, steps out of a store in a large San Diego shopping mall.

She sees a little six-year-old girl bawling.

The girl bashes a red haired doll on the floor, "It's the wrong color!"

Her Mother tries desperately to console the girl, "There, there, sweetie, Mommy will buy you a new one."

The mother tosses the doll into a clear recycling bin, with a top "dissolving" half and a bottom half divided into four: PAPER, METAL, WOOD, LIQUID. Rays zap the doll and it dissolves dropping parts into the bottom sections.

The mother approaches a large vending machine loaded with dolls.

In goes some money, out comes a blond.

She gives it to the gleeful girl.

They walk past Lisa.

The Mother laughs, "Money solves everything."

Lisa's eyes squint.

* * * * *

San Diego Psychiatric University.

Students wear blue uniforms. Professors wear black.

Many students and professors mill around here and there on the campus.

Sid's car drives in past a security gate.

He steps out, enters the Control Building.

* * * * *

Sid strolls down the silver, aluminum corridor, stops in front of the door to the SUPERIOR DEAN room.

* * * * *

Inside the wood paneled room, equipped with antique furniture, Dean, 70, feminine but tough, rocks in her leather recliner.

Photos of seven young women adorn a bulletin board.

Center is Lisa.

A knock on the door.

Dean, "Sid, you're three seconds early."

Sid enters, smiles.

Dean, "If only we were forty years younger."

Sid, "Who volunteered?"

Dean points to the photos, hands Sid some papers.

Sid, "And who's closest to breaking?"

* * * * *

In a classroom, Lisa takes notes.

Professor, "Yes, a good question. Scire means 'to be wise' and sapere means 'to know.' Thus Scire-sapere's disease makes a person incapable of speaking anything but the truth. It has now been recognized as an enemy to society for ten years. There's still no cure. But Miss Baker's going to change that, eh, Lisa?"

Lisa, "I hope so, Sir."

Professor, "For those of you who don't know, Lisa has been chosen to be the next expert on the disease."

Students murmur.

Professor, "It's imperative to remember that those inflicted with Scire-sapere have disrupted societies, caused governments to fall, invented new religions, and, in short, threatened our human

selfishness - oh, excuse me - our self preservation with an honesty and ethical level which is actually very admirable--"

The bell rings.

* * * * *

Students pile out of buildings, head toward their next class.

Others crash on the grass and relax.

Lisa strolls with a girlfriend.

Girlfriend, "You ever get the feeling that San Diego's a dump? Wanna transfer to Berkeley with me?"

Lisa, "And date San Fran guys? You're nuts. They love you and leave you."

Girlfriend, "When was the last date you had?"

Lisa frowns.

Girlfriend, "You need to get your head out of those books for a while."

Lisa, "Come on--"

Girlfriend, "Yeah, yeah, okay, what're your plans for the break, two weeks in the library as normal?"

Lisa, "Thailand."

Her girlfriend drops her books, peers at Lisa in surprise, "To a fifth world country?"

Lisa, "I'm not thrilled but it's part of my new training, then a conference in Seattle."

* * * * *

Chapter 4 - Lottery win

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The plastic furniture in Buddy's living room contrast sharply with his Nature paintings on the walls.

Buddy steps out of the hallway, approaches his younger brother, Jamie, 19, matted hair, underdeveloped, slight build, totally out of it, lying half on the couch.

Buddy checks Jamie's vitals as if he's done it many times before.

He shrugs, shifts Jamie's legs up on the couch.

He turns to the front door and some mail slid in, lying on the floor.

He flips through it.

Only junk mail.

Buddy, "It's 2080 and they still post this crap. Buy me, buy me, buy me."

He walks over to a computer.

Opens the email program.

He stares long at a gold and maroon email, YOU HAVE WON!

* * * * *

San Francisco airport.

Harpington, 40, a strong, stocky fellow, glances up from his paper as Buddy breezes by with Jamie.

Jamie, "Thailand, Thailand, wow."

Buddy, "I still keep wondering who bought the lottery ticket for me."

Jamie, "Who cares? You won! Wish I was going, their Gungy-plus is..."

His eyes roll, "ab-so-lute-ly heaven."

Buddy, "And get locked up in jail in a country where progress has been stopped for sixty years, no thanks. I want to come home in two weeks."

Jamie, "Well, yeah, you know what Mom and Dad would have said--"

They reach the Customs' doors, stop, point at each other.

Buddy and Jamie, "You be careful now."

They laugh.

Buddy, "And, hey, you really should get away from your computers some."

Jamie, "Yeah, after I'm crowned 'Mad IT wizard!'"

Buddy, "Right. And quit smoking so much. Join a softball team or something. Get outdoors."

Jamie looks away, frowns.

Buddy, "Okay, sorry, you know I love you."

Jamie turns back, grins wide.

They hug.

Buddy disappears through the doors.

* * * * *

Tokyo airport.

Buddy strides off his San Francisco flight, approaches a large sign displaying gate numbers for the westbound flights, BANGKOK, GATE 23.

He hustles with the masses of travelers.

Approaching Gate 23, he spots Lisa, standing in the boarding line.

He stops, watches her.

She shows her pass, strolls down the ramp.

Buddy joins the line.

* * * * *

In the plane, Buddy sits in an aisle seat.

Lisa sits two rows ahead, on the other side of the aisle.

His eyes rest on her.

He shrugs, lays back and shuts his eyes.

* * * * *

Though the USA has changed, Thailand is the same as 2020.

Buddy steps out of a Bangkok Guest House.

He looks around in wonder.

Bustling street stalls, Westerners and Thais merge along the crowded pavement.

A bus passes by, crammed full, with Thai students hanging precariously out the door.

A large moving van pulls up.

Buddy notices the bald tires as the Thai Driver bounces out.

Buddy, "Hey, you need new tires."

Thai Driver, "You buy them for me?"

Buddy's taken aback.

The driver races into a shop.

Buddy walks on, approaches an old, wrinkled, bent over beggar, and puts coins in her cup.

She bows with hands together in front of her face.

Buddy, "Someday I'll do more."

* * * * *

Chapter 5 - Buddy & Lisa meet

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Buddy approaches a park.

He spots Lisa, sitting on the grass reading a psychology book.

Buddy, "Buddy, my boy, if this ain't fate, what is?"

He smiles, "You chickened out on the plane. You going to do it now?"

A butterfly flutters around him.

Buddy, "Yeah!"

He puts out an open palm, the butterfly lands in it.

He cups his other hand over the butterfly.

He walks to Lisa, passes by a man with an ice cream stall.

Buddy, "Hi, mind if I sit down?"

Lisa coyly nods.

Buddy, "Want to see my pet caterpillar?"

Lisa, "Is that your come-on?"

Buddy, "His name is Irving."

Buddy holds out his hands, opens them.

The butterfly flies off.

Buddy's eyes light up with surprise, "Gee, he grew up fast."

Lisa smiles.

Buddy smiles.

Their eyes hold.

He quickly leans forward, kisses her on the cheek.

Startled, she pulls back.

Buddy, "I'm sorry."

Lisa, "That was fast, too."

Buddy, "Did I blow it?"

He smiles innocently.

She fans herself with a soft folder, "Bit hot today, isn't it?"

Buddy, "Yeah, me too. How about a frozen delight - some ice cream. Bet I know exactly which flavor you like."

Buddy jumps up, races to the Ice Cream Man.

Lisa gazes after him, wondering what to make of him.

Buddy buys a strawberry and a chocolate cone.

He eyes each one over as he returns to Lisa.

Buddy, "Here."

He hands her the strawberry.

Lisa, "Nope."

Buddy, "Right, that's why I bought you chocolate."

He swaps, hands her the chocolate.

She laughs.

Buddy, "Imagine that the present is all that exists..."

Lisa unwraps her ice cream, looks into Buddy's eyes.

Buddy, "And it's important for us to get to know each other without being influenced by what has happened to either of us in the past."

Lisa, "So you're with the Mafia."

Buddy, "That's my uncle. What I mean is--"

Lisa, "You're a billionaire and you want to make sure I'm not after your money."

Buddy, "Wrong again, that's my cousin. So no real names either, okay? Everything will be totally fresh."

Lisa cocks her head, forgets her ice cream.

Buddy, "I'm Bill."

Buddy hoes into his ice cream.

Lisa, "I think you're a nut."

Buddy feigns being hurt.

She smiles, "But... sounds cool."

So absorbed in him, she doesn't notice her dripping ice cream.

Buddy points at the drips, "You're melting."

Lisa licks the ice cream, smiles.

Lisa, "I'll try it. I'm... Judy."

Buddy licks the strawberry syrup, "Sweet."

* * * * *

Buddy and Lisa fall in love.

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Bangkok's Floating Fruit Market.

Long boats filled with tropical fruits in abundance.

Buddy stretches over a railing to buy Longans from a boat seller.

He peels one, pops it into Lisa's mouth.

* * * * *

Faces aglow, they sit in the back of a Tuk-tuk three wheeled taxi as it weaves its way through a narrow street.

Thai kids kick a cane woven ball over a badminton net.

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Thai Handicraft Market .

From small soap carvings to Teak furniture.

Buddy pays the vendor for a handmade belt.

He puts it around Lisa's waist.

* * * * *

They amble along the moon lit street, hand in hand.

Lisa wears a red blouse.

Buddy, "Judy--"

Lisa turns, he kisses her.

Rain falls.

While Thais and Westerners race by, Buddy and Lisa kiss deeply, oblivious to their surroundings and the rain.

* * * * *

Hotel bedroom.

Lisa lies in Buddy's arms.

Their wet clothes hang over a chair and table.

Lightning flashes outside the window.

Thunder booms.

* * * * *

Riverside.

Wearing her red blouse, Lisa poses near a water fountain while Buddy draws her with crayons on a sketchpad.

Lisa, "So, another guess, you're Renoir's son."

Buddy, "That would make me 150 years old."

Lisa, "And you've been drinking from this fountain to keep young."

Buddy puts the finishing highlights on a caterpillar that crawls on Lisa's arm and a butterfly that flies into the sky.

He signs "B.I.L.L." and shows it to Lisa.

She races to him, they hug.

A tear rolls down Lisa's cheek.

They amble to a railing, watch the boats drift by.

Buddy, "I've always felt like I don't belong here. Like a caterpillar. I'd like to transform into a butterfly and fly free."

Lisa, "Don't belong here in Bangkok, here on earth or here with me?"

Buddy, "Bangkok and earth. Will you fly free with me? Maybe we could start a new world, breed a whole race of loving people."

Lisa, "You're such a dreamer."

They kiss.

* * * * *

Park.

Buddy finishes fingertip pushups.

He rises, glances around, checks his watch.

He shuts his eyes, flexes, squeezes his hands shut, opens them, shut, open, shut, open.

Lisa races over, "Bill!"

Buddy turns, she runs into his arms.

They kiss and relax.

Lisa, "What were you doing with your hands?"

Buddy, "Exercise."

Lisa, "Odd exercise."

Buddy caresses her hair, "Judy, when we make love, my hands are soft. If anyone bothers you, my hands will be hard."

Lisa, "What if someone bothers you?"

Buddy, "They'll need a doctor."

Lisa's eyes go wide.

Buddy laughs, "Don't worry, self-defense only."

They stroll, hand in hand.

Buddy, "My agent said he's certain I'll get on the Seattle flight."

Lisa, "We still don't know--"

Buddy, "At the airport, okay?"

They stop.

Buddy strokes her cheek, "At the airport, we tell each other who we are, where we live, everything... and... I'm going to ask you to marry me."

They kiss.

* * * * *

Chapter 6 - Flight

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Buddy's Guest House Room.

Buddy bounces and sings a marriage song, as he ties up his backpack and swings it on his shoulders.

Out the door and down the stairs two at a time.

He hands a key to an Asian Receptionist.

Receptionist, "Bye, bye, Mr. Buddy."

Buddy, "I'm going to get married!"

Buddy laughs and dashes out the door.

* * * * *

Buddy skips down the sidewalk.

The moving van barrels from the other direction.

A tire blows.

It swerves onto the sidewalk, straight at Buddy.

* * * * *

Bangkok Airport.

Lisa stands at the check-in, glances all around.

Her face shows her dismay.

An older traveler woman, 40, waits behind her.

Lisa takes her boarding pass, walks away.

The older woman approaches the counter.

Her brashness indicates a world-wise lady, "Ya got a seat next to that young gal? I think she needs an older sister tonight."

* * * * *

Lisa walks toward the Customs' entrance.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

She stops, her eyes look everywhere and see nothing.

The older woman approaches.

The softness of her face overwhelms Lisa, whose body shakes.

Older woman, "Honey, you okay?"

Lisa looks at her with no hope left.

She bawls.

The older woman hugs her, "I'm gonna guess, and it ain't nice. Some traveler guy told you he loved you and he'd meet you here."

Lisa can't stop crying, nods her head, yes.

Older woman, "Don't cha worry, dear. There's more fish in the sea."

They walk through the Customs' entrance.

* * * * *

Hospital doors swing open.

Nurses and assistants yell as they rush a gurney down the hallway.

Buddy lies unconscious, his head bandaged, one leg elevated and a blood bag dripping into his arm.

They wheel him into the Operating room.

* * * * *

Buddy lies in a hospital bed, one leg in a cast, elevated.

A bandage covers his right cheek.

He stirs, "Judy... Judy..."

Buddy opens his eyes, spots his leg, "Shit."

* * * * *

Bangkok Airport.

Exasperated and on crutches, right cheek bandaged, Buddy talks to a cold airline representative.

Buddy, "Please--"

Representative, "Sir, I simply cannot give you the names of every woman on that flight."

Buddy hobbles away, downtrodden.

From a distance, Harpington watches.

He pulls out a cell phone, dials.

* * * * *

Chapter 7 - Yeah...

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Jamie's study.

A joint hangs from his mouth as Jamie gazes lovingly at his large computer screen on the wall.

He fondles the computer "keyboard", which consists of two softball-sized balls, one in each hand.

As he presses buttons and rotates the balls, the screen changes.

Jamie, "I am the world's greatest, crazy, stoned out web master!"

Buddy watches.

His right cheek sports an inch long scar.

The screen shows a good drawing of Lisa with the words, PLEASE HELP ME FIND THIS WOMAN.

More text follows.

Buddy, "Looks real good, Jamie."

Jamie sits back, his wide, red eyes twinkle as he sucks in long.

He wets his finger, sticks it in a cup.

Out it comes coated in blue powder.

He licks it off, offers the cup to Buddy, who declines.

Jamie, "Gungy-plus super delicious, Buddy."

Buddy, "Go easy, kid, you're going to kill yourself one day."

Jamie smiles inanely.

* * * * *

Buddy's living room.

Buddy enters, in his paint-splattered overalls.

He walks with a permanent limp.

Buddy, "Hey, Jamie, anyone respond today?"

Jamie calls out, "One."

Buddy, "Yeah, they know her?"

Jamie pops out of the kitchen, pulls a joint out of his mouth, "Nah, just some guy calling you a pervert."

Buddy's excitement fades, "Thanks."

He staggers into the kitchen.

They sit down to dinner.

Jamie hoes in.

Buddy stares at the food.

Jamie, "Hey... six months, crazy brother. Time to find a new girl."

Buddy, "Yeah..."

Buddy rises, walks away.

He enters his study, shuts the door.

His computer glows in the otherwise dark room.

He sits, gazes at his "Find Judy" website.

He grabs one of the ball keyboards, hits the off key.

The screen and the room go black.

* * * * *

Two years later.

The refrigerator door opens.

Buddy grabs a Coors beer.

Jamie turns the light on, "So?"

Buddy grabs another, hands it to Jamie, "Yeah."

Buddy looks over the can, puts his finger on Coors' address, "Denver's as good as anywhere, just got to get out, have a change. You be okay on your own?"

Jamie, "Hey, I'm the big twenty-one now. Got a job, got money, got gungy-plus and..."

Jamie opens the beer with gusto, "I can open a beer can!"

* * * * *

Chapter 8 - Frank

* * * * *

Hospital director's office.

Frank pours some wine, hands a glass to his superior, Bart, 70.

Frank, "Another dead one, Sir. I'm positive I could discover the cause, but how many times are these guys going to kill themselves?"

Bart, "Frank, one day we'll grab someone with Scire-sapere's disease who has no family. Don't worry, it will surely happen."

Frank, "But will I be dead first?"

Bart, "Frank."

Frank, "I'm sorry, Sir. My wait's been nothing compared to yours."

Bart, "So what about the new young psychologist expert? I hear she's quite cute."

Frank smiles, "Her name's Lisa."

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Chapter 9 - Denver

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Denver apartments.

Against the backdrop of the vast Rocky Mountains, Buddy parks his paint spattered, dented, old pickup truck in front.

He gets out with a duffle bag, checks some papers, the address and a key.

He approaches the door.

* * * * *

Buddy's bathroom.

Buddy fondles his beard and long hair in front of the mirror.

He reaches for scissors next to a razor, picks them up.

* * * * *

Half an hour later, the razor drops down next to the scissors.

Buddy reaches up, runs his hand over his clean-shaven face and short hair.

He looks long in the mirror.

* * * * *

Buddy settles into Denver.

* * * * *

Tavern - Winter

Snow falls outside as Buddy sits alone.

* * * * *

Building - Summer

Short sleeves and sweaty, Buddy paints a mural on the sidewall.

* * * * *

Apartment - Autumn

Leaves swirl off the trees as Buddy drives up, gets out, ambles inside.

* * * * *

Mountain woods - Winter

Buddy trudges through six-inch snow.

He spots an empty caterpillar cocoon with a hole on one end.

He pulls it off the tree, slides it in his coat.

* * * * *

Chapter 10 - McDonalds & Harpington

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Denver city street - three years later.

Stop lights, McDonald's, Hotel.

Small shops, all with SALE signs.

Many people out for the evening.

Everyone carries shopping bags.

Their jackets indicate Autumn with a chill.

Buddy limps along the sidewalk.

Now 30, yet the years have taken their toll and he appears much older.

He stops at an ATM window.

Large Dollar, Yen and Euro symbols grace the machine.

He puts his thumb to a code reader, punches "50" below the \$ sign, takes his money.

He turns, only to be bumped by a young husky linebacker, walking briskly with his wife, ten feet in front of their five-year-old daughter.

The little girl races to keep up, trips and falls into the street, in line of oncoming traffic.

Buddy snatches the girl out of the way of a truck.

Eyes wide, she gapes at Buddy in fright, unable to speak or yell.

As Buddy brings her back to the sidewalk, she lets it out, "MOMMY! DADDY!"

Her parents turn around, spot their daughter in Buddy's arms.

Linebacker, "Bastard! Let her go!"

Buddy, "She fell--"

Buddy releases the girl but the man's fist smashes Buddy's face.

The force throws him down against a store door.

The father goes in for the kill.

Harpington yells, "Stop!"

He grabs the father's arm.

The father tries to shake Harpington off, but can't, the grip's too tight.

Harpington, "I said, stop. He saved your daughter."

Linebacker, "Like hell."

The father swings at Harpington.

Harpington dodges, catches his arm, spins him around and gives him a shove.

Harpington, "So don't believe the truth, jerk. But leave him alone."

The wife grabs her husband, "Honey, let's get out of here."

With daggers in his eyes, the linebacker reluctantly turns, picks up his daughter and they rush off.

Buddy looks up at Harpington, but can't see his face as the streetlight shines behind Harpington's head.

Buddy, "I didn't need help."

Harpington, "Maybe."

Buddy, "Do I know you?"

Harpington smiles, "Not yet."

He walks off.

Buddy peers after him.

A street dog moseys up to Buddy, licks his face.

A skinny bitch, tits hanging down.

Buddy, "Hey, c'mon."

Buddy gets up, holds his jaw, "Shit, save a life and get whacked."

Buddy crosses the street, heads towards the McDonald's, oblivious to the traffic.

Buddy, "Tell the truth, no one believes it."

A horn blares.

The driver slams on the brakes.

Buddy jumps out of the way.

Driver, "Hey, watch where you're going!"

Buddy, "Shit! Yes, sorry, thanks."

Shaking, Buddy heads into the McDonald's.

Buddy, "Once is enough, Buddy. Keep your damn wits about you or you're going to get killed."

* * * * *

Buddy comes out of the McDonald's with dinner.

The bitch confronts him with soulful eyes.

Buddy stops, "I'm hungry."

The dog shakes her head.

Buddy, "You're hungry."

She wags her tail.

Buddy, "The world's hungry."

She cocks her head.

Buddy pulls a burger out of his bag, gives half to the dog.

He hoes into the rest as he walks off.

* * * * *

Chapter 11 - Sid

* * * * *

Beach.

Dirt mixed with seashells and driftwood give a cold country appearance.

Cows graze on the overlooking hills, barren of trees.

Wild flowers abloom.

Sid strolls on the beach, a cell phone's headset on his ear, "Yes, Harp, your job is arranged."

He stops, glances out to sea.

A storm brews.

Sid, "Jamie's fate is his making. And if Lisa doesn't come good, they both might as well be dead."

Sid waves toward a helicopter parked further down the beach.

It rises and flies off.

A light rain falls.

Sid, "The storm's coming. Be extra careful."

* * * * *

Chapter 12 - Jamie

* * * * *

Rain pelts on the window of Buddy's living room.

Exasperated, Buddy holds his phone.

Jamie recording, "Hey, I'm out, leave a word or two or seventeen. Ha! Ha!"

Beep.

Buddy, "Jamie, you alright? You there? I've been trying to call for weeks. Call me back, okay? And... Happy 25th tomorrow."

Buddy hangs up, shuts his eyes.

* * * * *

Chapter 13 - Will

* * * * *

San Diego community pre-school

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY" singing rings out of open windows of the brightly painted school.

A car drives up in front.

Kids and the teacher, "Happy birthday to Will, happy birthday to Will."

Bobby's father, 30, hops out, strolls to the pre-school.

In the classroom, the pre-school teacher, 35, and a dozen kids wear party hats and costumes, huddle around Will, 5, smiling wide.

A birthday cake with five candles await his blowing.

Kids and the teacher, "Happy birthday to Willie, happy birthday to Will! Hip, hip, hurray!"

Bobby, 5, gives Will a playful shove.

Bobby, "Make a wish!"

Bobby's father enters.

Bobby races for a hug, "Daddy!"

Bobby's father, "Hey, who's birthday?"

Bobby, "Will's!"

Teacher, "Come join us, Mr. Harris. Now Will, go ahead, make a wish."

Will's forehead furrows as he stares at the candles.

He looks over at Bobby sitting in his father's lap.

Eyes back to the candles, he takes a big breath and blows.

All out.

Bobby, "What did you wish for?"

Will bites on his bottom lip.

Will, "I, I wish my daddy was alive."

Dead silence.

The teacher gives Will a hug.

* * * * *

Will and two other kids stand outside the front door with the teacher as the rest of the children walk off with a parent.

Another car pulls up.

One of the two kids races to it.

The teacher pats Will as his eyes search the road for his mom, "Will, you do know that when people are dead, they can't come back to earth, right?"

Will looks down.

He scuffs his feet, "Maybe."

Honk.

Lisa smiles from her car window.

Will, "Mom!"

Will races to her.

* * * * *

Chapter 14 - Buddy returns

* * * * *

Buddy's bedroom.

Buddy holds the phone, "Right, Officer. Can someone please check the house?"

(pause)

"Yes, he works at home, does programming."

(pause)

"Thanks very much."

Buddy ends the call, dials another.

Buddy, "Hey, can you finish painting the mural on your own?"

(pause)

"Yeah, I need to go to San Fran."

(pause)

"Thanks, see you when I get back."

Buddy hangs up, glances over at a photo of him and Jamie.

He pulls out his duffel bag, opens a drawer.

* * * * *

Buddy throws his duffel bag in the back of his pickup, hops in.

He turns on the key.

Dead.

Buddy, "No, no, not today."

He turns the key, nothing.

Again.

It kicks over.

Buddy, "One more trip, okay, baby. You can die in San Fran."

* * * * *

Buddy speeds along the freeway, passes a sign, SAN FRANCISCO 90 MILES.

His phone rings.

Buddy, "Yes."

Buddy lets off the gas, slides over to the safety lane.

He stops, listens.

Buddy, "Okay, I'm just a couple of hours out."

He rests his head on the window.

Buddy, "Thank you, Sir."

* * * * *

Buddy drives up to Jamie's house, gets out.

An older policeman leans against his patrol car, "Buddy?"

Buddy, "Yes."

Policeman, "Best we could tell it was five weeks of junk mail, it's on the table."

Buddy, "Thank you, Sir."

Policeman, "Want to file a missing person's report?"

Buddy, "Let me check through his stuff first. I'll give you a call."

The policeman puts his hand on Buddy's shoulder, offers him a card.

Policeman, "I have two boys of my own. You can call me direct."

Buddy nods, walks toward the house.

Policeman, "Buddy."

Buddy, "Yeah?"

Policeman, "Careful. Things like this can tip people over the edge."

Buddy, "Don't worry, Sir, I'll stay calm."

* * * * *

Buddy walks in, passes a pile of mail, heads to the study.

He wakes the computer, opens the email program, hits SEND & RECEIVE.

The progress window opens, 782 emails to receive.

* * * * *

Buddy lies on the couch, asleep.

* * * * *

Buddy eats breakfast, jots on paper.

Buddy, "Okay, maybe three emails. Shit, forgot the phone."

Buddy gets up.

* * * * *

He enters the study, checks the answering machine, 67 calls.

He sits back in the chair, clicks on NEWEST MESSAGE.

Jamie, "Happy birthday to me, happy 25th birthday to me, me, me."

Buddy's eyes go wide, he sits up.

Jamie, "Hip, hip, hippy-oh."

(a long pause)

"Buddy, you come home yet?"

Jamie cries.

"I lost your number and I need you, brother, hey... help me, damn it... I'm in San dopey Diego. 412 and a fucking half, 28th street."

(heavy bawling)

"Oh, damn me..."

The message ends.

Buddy scribbles the address.

He hits return call.

It rings.

* * * * *

A phone rings in a booth in front of a building numbered 414.

Answering machine, "The number you have dialed is a pay phone. There is no answer."

* * * * *

Buddy hangs up, races to the living room and scoops up his gear.

* * * * *

Chapter 15 - On to find Jamie

* * * * *

Buddy turns the ignition key on his pickup.

Dead.

Again, again, again.

Buddy, "Shit!"

He slams his hands on the wheel.

He gets out, grabs his bag and heads up the street.

He stops, looks back to the pickup, "Sorry, I knew you were dying. Thanks for getting me here."

* * * * *

A gum-chewing elderly man serves a Hippie guy, 19, at a Bus station ticket counter.

Buddy waits behind him and an elderly woman stands behind Buddy.

Elderly man, "Fifty-five-fifty."

The guy checks his pocket, "How about a student discount?"

The old man sneers, "Got yer college ID?"

The guy pulls out a little bird from his jacket, "I found him, can't fly. Can we do forty-six bucks and this bird?"

Elderly Man, "Do I look like a cat?"

Hippie guy, "No, but--"

Buddy, "Do you want to sell your bird?"

The guy spins around to Buddy.

Buddy, "I'll give you nine-fifty."

Elderly man, "Hey, Mister, you shouldn't--"

Buddy shakes his head at the old man.

He and the guy exchange.

Buddy, "If nobody helps, the world stays screwed."

Hippie guy, "Like cool, thanks, friend."

The fellow hands his money over, takes his ticket and bops away.

Buddy approaches the counter.

The elderly woman taps Buddy on the shoulder, "Young man, I'm very impressed."

Buddy turns.

Elderly woman, "And unless you really want that bird, I'd like to buy it from you."

Elderly man, "Mavis, you shouldn't--"

Elderly woman, "Now, now, Eric."

Buddy, "Ma'am, I haven't a mother or a grandmother. Can I give you this bird as a gift?"

Her eyes swell, she gives Buddy a kiss on the cheek, "If only all the young men in the world were so kind. Thank you."

The elderly woman smiles broadly, hands the elderly man a lunch pail.

Elderly woman, "Don't forget to drink all the soymilk."

Elderly man, "Yes, dear."

She walks off, humming and stroking the bird.

Longingly, the old man watches his happy wife.

He smiles to Buddy.

Elderly man, "Thank you. I, I've forgotten... Ticket's on the house, where are you heading?"

* * * * *

San Diego bus station.

Buddy steps down off a bus.

He pulls out a piece of paper, heads to a taxi.

A shop window displays the news.

Buddy passes by and hails a cab.

Buddy, "You know 412 and a half, 28th street?"

Taxi driver, "28th, sure."

Buddy gets in.

Harpington exits the station, watches the taxi drive off.

He strolls to the shop window, checks the news.

Headlines show Lisa getting an award: LOCAL PSYCHOLOGIST GAINS HONORS.

He pulls out a cell phone.

* * * * *

Chapter 16 - Feet

* * * * *

They check numbers as the taxi drives on 28th.

They pass by 412, an alley and 414.

Taxi driver, "Must be there somewhere."

Buddy, "Thanks."

Buddy pays, gets out.

He checks 414, glances at the telephone booth, looks across the alley to 412.

He walks down the alley with his duffle bag over his shoulder.

Somewhere a Cuckoo clock cuckoos four times.

A dead end street bums' bedroom.

Sheer walls of three buildings surround two large metal containers, lying on their sides.

They could have been old Salvation Army depot receivers.

Scattered computer gear, broken suitcases and blankets lie inside one.

Two large bare feet hang out of the second container.

Buddy approaches, takes a look at "Feet".

Buddy, "Hey."

Feet, "Looking fer someone?"

Buddy, "Yeah."

Buddy sits down next to the feet.

He scrunches his face, waves his hand in front of his nose, "The 'Y' has free showers."

Feet, "Just get dirty again."

Buddy pulls out a loaf of sour dough bread, rips some off, offers it to Feet.

Feet, "Sour dough from San Fran?"

Buddy, "It's two days old."

Feet, "Buddy?"

Buddy, "Yeah."

Feet, "Jamie talks about ya."

Buddy, "He's been living here?"

Feet, "Could be worse."

Buddy looks around, "How the hell--"

Feet, "Glad to meet ya, cause Jamie's wrecking himself."

Buddy, "Big?"

Feet, "Killer drugs. The Plus here is tainted. He's walking death. Won't listen to me. I even tried a special dog food with him."

Buddy, "Dog food?"

Feet, "Yeah, but no luck. Maybe ya try."

Buddy, "Where?"

Feet, "Good guess Balboa Park, not far, next block."

Buddy gets up.

Feet, "Hey."

Feet puts out a hand.

Only three fingers.

Buddy hands him the loaf.

He tosses his bag in the first container, walks back up the alley.

* * * * *

Chapter 17 - WHAT'S WRONG?

* * * * *

Park.

Buddy passes a young Fellow smoking, on a park bench.

Buddy, "That'll give you cancer."

Fellow, "Screw you."

Buddy points at his bum leg, "I've already been screwed."

Fellow, "So your leg smoked too much, huh?"

Buddy, "Know a guy named Jamie?"

Fellow, "Buzz off, narc."

The young fellow gets up, speeds away.

Buddy, "I'm his brother."

The fellow doesn't stop.

Buddy yells, "TRUTH, TRUTH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE TRUTH?"

The fellow stops, turns slowly.

Buddy has his hands held outward, asking for help.

The fellow glances over into a thick cluster of bushes, and runs off.

Buddy walks over to the bushes, pushes his way through.

Jamie lies asleep.

Buddy feels his pulse, rubs his cheeks, "Jamie, hey..."

Jamie opens his eyes, half smiles, "Buddy... I'm so... glad..."

Jamie shuts his eyes, falls back asleep.

Buddy picks Jamie up, carries him out in his arms.

An older couple stroll on the path toward Buddy.

Buddy, "Can you help me, my brother's--"

The couple abruptly change direction.

Buddy yells, "YEAH, YOU AND THE REST OF THE..."

He pauses long, "goddamn selfish world."

Jamie stirs, "Hey, brother... holding me like Mommy used to do."

Buddy puts Jamie down on a park bench.

Buddy, "Mom's dead, Dad's dead and you're one shit of a mess."

Jamie, "Don't get mad..."

Buddy frowns.

Jamie, "The Plus is soooooo super."

Buddy, "Yeah, yeah."

Jamie, "You come to save me?"

Buddy, "You going to let me?"

Jamie gets up, staggers, smiles wide, "Sure."

* * * * *

Jamie leans against Buddy as they walk up the alley toward the containers.

Jamie, "Buddy, you're the best damn buddy I got."

Buddy, "Right, and if we don't watch out for each other, the one left behind's going to be screwed. Now get your gear together. We'll go to a hotel."

Jamie, "Nap first, okay."

Jamie gives Buddy a silly grin, climbs in the first container and instantly falls asleep.

Buddy shrugs, lies down next to Jamie.

* * * * *

Container bedroom - later.

Buddy wakes up, screaming, "SHIT! NO!"

Feet, 70, dirty, long gray hair and beard, looks in, "Nightmares are part of life."

Buddy, "I don't belong here."

* * * * *

Chapter 18 - Lisa & Frank

* * * * *

Lisa's living room.

Hair up in a bun, tears run down her face, Lisa turns toward the red blouse drawing Buddy did of her.

Lisa, "Well, if you don't feel you belong here, then--"

Frank stands across the room, "Lisa, I'm sorry, I've been an ass."

Apologetic, but not quite.

Will races in from the hallway to his mother's arms, "Mommy, Mommy... I heard the yelling. Please don't marry Frank."

Frank's face exudes a look that screams, "I could kill that kid".

Lisa, "Frank, you better go now."

Frank walks out.

The screen door slams shut.

Will, "My daddy's going to come back."

Lisa shakes her head.

Will, "I used my birthday wish three times."

Lisa kisses his forehead, tears roll down her cheeks.

* * * * *

Chapter 19 - Jamie sleeps

* * * * *

Night.

Buddy walks toward the containers with a bottle of milk and groceries.

The clock cuckoos nine times.

He hands some food to Feet, checks Jamie, still asleep.

Feet, "Wait til he wakes."

Buddy sits down next to Jamie, "So tell me about life."

Feet, "I'm a street bum."

Buddy, "You're an old man."

Feet, "I was a man."

Buddy, "You... are... a man."

Feet reaches in his bedroom, pulls out a box of letters, "My son sends me money, writes every month."

Buddy eyes Feet compassionately.

Feet, "I... I haven't written him in years."

Feet's eyes swell with tears.

Buddy, "Maybe he misses his father."

Feet wipes his eyes, lies down.

Buddy grabs a sheet, puts it over Jamie.

He lies down on his back, looks up at the container's ceiling.

* * * * *

Buddy sleeps as the clock cuckoos twice.

He wakes, glances over at Jamie, whose eyes are wide, peering at nothing.

Buddy grabs Jamie, "Jamie! JAMIE!"

Jamie's dead.

Buddy stares.

Feet comes in, sits next to Buddy.

Feet, "I think he missed ya Mom and Dad."

* * * * *

Hospital.

In shock, Buddy sits blankly while a doctor and detective talk.

The doctor points at Buddy, "His brother."

The detective walks over to Buddy.

Detective, "Sir... They will have to do an autopsy. You can probably bury him in a couple of days."

Buddy nods, "Officer, if birth guarantees death, what the hell is going on here?"

Detective, "I'm sorry. I don't have that answer."

* * * * *

Chapter 20 - Lisa's Mom

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Lisa and Will come out of their home, and head to the house next door.

Will, "The answer is one hundred and one. Can I go shopping, too?"

Lisa, "Very good, but not today, I have to rush. You take care of Nana, okay?"

Will puffs himself up as tall as he can get and smiles wide.

The neighboring house door opens.

Out steps Lisa's Mom, 55, a first grade teacher for 33 years with a New York accent, speaking non stop, a hundred words a minute.

Mom, "Oh, Willie..."

Will races into her arms.

Mom, "Brownies are in the--"

Will zips inside.

Mom, "Boys will be boys. Did you see the show last night? I don't think Robert should have kissed Janice, what do you think? But, of course, it's just TV. Now Lisa, honey, here's my list."

Lisa, "Yes, Mom."

Lisa turns towards her car.

Mom, "Janice has that other boyfriend. I really don't trust her. You won't forget anything, will you dear? You know how important--"

Lisa, "Yes, Mom."

Mom, "You're such a sweetie. Why aren't you married?"

Lisa stops dead in her tracks.

Mom, "I mean, I'm sorry, dear, but you can find someone else. Get a good man to be Will's father. What about Frank? You two work together and--"

Lisa spins around, shoots an exasperated look at her Mom.

Mom, "But the TV shows always end so, uh... If only your Father was alive, I'm sure--"

Mom runs to Lisa, gives her a hug, "Will's father must have been quite a man. I wish I had met him."

* * * * *

Chapter 21 - Stupid, stupid

* * * * *

Eyes wide, Buddy peers through a fence at a freeway.

His expression shows he's losing it.

Across the whizzing traffic lies a huge, glittering shopping mall.

Buddy, "Freeways, shopping malls, stupid, stupid. Can't even walk five miles in a straight line without having to cross a damn freeway."

He climbs over the fence, heads straight for the mall, "Why not..."

He steps onto the freeway.

Cars and trucks blare their horns, swerve to miss him.

He stops in the middle lane, "...just get killed?"

Buddy walks to the traffic island.

He watches the cars zoom by, "When will they learn cars and freeways don't bring true happiness?"

Buddy runs, as best he can, toward the mall.

Cars slam their brakes, honk like mad.

Miraculously, no pile-ups.

* * * * *

Mall parking lot.

Buddy spots a new Mercedes with license plate, SATURDAY.

A wealthy man approaches the car.

Man, "Open."

The driver's door opens.

Buddy, "Excuse me, Sir. Is today, Saturday?"

The man eyes Buddy over with disdain.

Man, "Yes."

Buddy, "And, maybe I'm a bit nosey, but do you have a different fancy car for each day of the week?"

Nervous, the man looks around in fear.

Buddy steps away, holds up a hand, indicating, no, "Don't worry, Sir, I won't harm you. But... are you... SO FILTHY RICH!"

The man shakes, eyes wide.

Buddy glares, his eyes penetrate the man's soul.

Buddy's body tightens, he squeezes his hands shut, open, shut, open.

He walks away.

* * * * *

A wild looking Kawasaki motorcycle pulls up twenty yards away from the mall entrance.

The man wears a tinted full-faced helmet.

Buddy comes out of the parking area, enters the mall.

Harpington takes off his helmet.

* * * * *

Buddy walks in, confronted by a typical mall on Saturday.

A banner reads, HAPPINESS IS BUYING YOURSELF SOMETHING SPECIAL!

Fifteen year olds act cool with each other.

The boys' pants hang two inches below Donald Duck undies.

The girls' pudgy tummies push out between too tight pants and short tops.

All pretend they are twenty.

An overweight Mother pulls two kids along.

A third little one cries ten feet behind.

Buddy approaches the woman, points at the crying kid.

Buddy, "Hey, lady, your kid--"

She swings her handbag at Buddy, who dodges, "Don't you tell me what to do with my kids."

Buddy, "Sorry, I, uh--"

Mother, "Leave me alone or I'll call the cops. COPS, COPS!"

Buddy speeds off, "Kids cry, kids cry, who truly cares?"

He stops, faces dozens of adult shoppers coming from the other direction.

He confronts some, "Hey, when a kid cries, do you help?"

The shoppers ignore him, pass him by.

Buddy, "Please can you answer a question?"

More pass him.

An eighty-year-old man stops.

Buddy, "Can you please--"

Eighty-year-old man, "I will give you a bit of advice, young man."

Buddy, "Yes, thank you."

Eighty-year-old man, "Computers, learn the computer, that's where there's big money."

The old man hobbles off.

Buddy shuts his eyes, "Yes... thank... you."

Buddy walks into a Maternity Shop as a young pregnant woman exits, "Excuse me, can you tell me why you're having a baby?"

The woman gapes at him like he's from outer space and races off.

Buddy frowns, approaches a Saleswoman.

Saleswoman, "Yes, may I help you?"

Buddy, "Maybe."

Saleswoman, "Is your wife pregnant?"

Buddy, "Don't have a wife."

Saleswoman, "Your girlfriend?"

Buddy, "You're obviously an expert on pregnant women. Can I ask you a question?"

The worried saleswoman steps back.

Buddy, "Why's the world making more babies when there's too many already?"

She laughs awkwardly.

Buddy, "Shit, sorry."

He walks away.

The saleswoman picks up the phone, dials, "Security!"

* * * * *

Mall's Security Office.

An officer talks on the phone.

Officer, "Gotcha, honey. We'll keep him watched."

She hangs up, swivels to look at eight TV screens, showing different views of the mall.

One shows Buddy walking into a computer game room.

* * * * *

Computer game room.

A dozen chubby kids are glued to their screens.

Buddy approaches one, "Hey, kid, ever play ball?"

The kid doesn't take his eyes off his "kill."

Buddy, "You know what clouds and the wind are like?"

The attendant grabs Buddy's arm, "Fella, what'cha up to?"

Buddy, "I, I just wanted to..."

Buddy looks around at the spaced kids, he loses it fully, "I wanted to tell you that you're all god damn stupid asses!"

He zips behind the computers and yanks the main plug out.

All the screens go black.

Kids, "I want my money back!"

Attendant, "Kids! Out! Scire-sapere's disease!"

The kids race out screaming.

The Attendant runs behind his counter, picks up the phone.

He stares at Buddy in horror.

Buddy stands dejected, "Hey, look, I'm sorry, okay? But I just had to tell those kids the truth, and... I think they should go outside and play ball."

He limps out, more dismayed than ever.

The attendant dials.

* * * * *

Mall's Security Office.

The officer talks to her partner as she points at a monitor showing Buddy wandering in the mall, "That's him, call for a wagon."

* * * * *

Buddy jumps up on a table in the middle of a mall hallway, "Listen, everyone, listen! We're not being told the truth! Materialism is not happiness!"

People scream.

Everyone races off.

Buddy, "The truth! It's time for the truth!"

He hops off the table, runs into the mall foyer.

It's open all the way up to the sixth floor.

On the top floor the security officer peers down, talks on her intercom, "He's in the foyer."

Her partner on the third floor races down the up-escalator, bumping into the shoppers.

Another officer races down from the fourth floor.

Buddy spots the officers, "WHAT THE HELL ARE WE BREEDING FOR!"

He races towards the exit, gets trapped amongst the multitudes, and finds himself face to face with the old man.

Eighty-year-old man, "Did you buy a computer?"

Buddy, "Shit!"

He gets close to the exit and bumps into Lisa, arms full with shopping bags.

One of the bags drops and spills open.

He helps pick it up.

Buddy, "Sorry, I'm sorry."

He hands the bag back to Lisa, and sees her face.

Stunned, he can't move, yet she doesn't recognize him, clean-shaven, short hair and scarred.

Lisa, "That's okay, thank--"

Officer, "There he is, get him!"

Buddy's eyes flash to the officer, back to Lisa, he darts out of the mall, emotionally exhausted.

He stops, "Oh my God, JUDY!"

Buddy heads back to the mall, spots the guards.

Sirens.

Police cars pull up on the curb.

He's cornered.

The Police approach with guns raised.

Up go his hands.

Buddy, "Hey, I didn't hurt anyone, I didn't steal anything, I only spoke the truth. I don't have a gun, I don't have a knife."

* * * * *

He rambles on in back of the police car handcuffed to the grid, "Look, it's actually okay. I don't need the lift home. I could have called a cab--"

Police driver, "What's your name?"

Buddy, "Just call me "Buddy"."

Police driver, "Buddy?"

Buddy, "Yeah, every guy on the planet can be called Buddy, so I'm not alone."

The Police driver shakes his head.

His partner shuts the sound proof window, while Buddy continues rambling.

Police driver, "Jail or hospital?"

Partner, "Nut house for sure."

* * * * *

They pull up in front of a mental hospital.

Buddy sees the hospital from the car window, his eyes narrow.

The officers get out, open Buddy's door, unlock him from the grid.

Buddy, "Hey, look... it's okay now. I can walk home. Thanks for the ride."

They yank him out.

Police driver, "This is your new home, Buddy."

Buddy, "No, really, a lot of people like new homes, buy another, buy another, never satisfied, but I don't--"

Police driver, "Shut-up and c'mon."

* * * * *

Chapter 22 - Mental Hospital

* * * * *

Padded room.

Buddy sits alone, opening and closing his fists.

A table with another chair finishes the room's furniture.

A large eight-inch thick mirror forms part of one wall.

His eyes go to the upper corners of the room, cameras in each corner.

Peering at one of the cameras, he rises.

He grabs his chair, yanks, it's bolted to the floor.

He tries to push the table - also bolted.

Similar with the other chair.

He walks over to the wall opposite the door, feels the thick padding.

The door opens.

Frank walks in, with three husky male nurses.

Frank, "Well, well, is this our new--"

Buddy, "Who the hell are you to put me in here?"

Frank, "I beg your pardon?"

Buddy walks towards the door, blocked by the biggest burly male nurse, Jack, "Thank you very much, but I'm leaving."

Buddy confronts Jack straight on, met by a stone face.

Frank sits in one chair, "I'm afraid that won't be possible. Please sit down."

Another two husky nurses enter, shut the door.

Buddy eyes everyone over, sits down.

Frank, "Now, what's your real name?"

Buddy, "What's yours?"

Frank, "Yes, I'm sorry, let me introduce myself. I'm Dr. Frank Morgan, head of the psychiatric division."

Buddy holds out his hand to shake, "I'm Buddy."

They shake.

Buddy, "I don't like being here."

Buddy squeezes Frank's hand hard.

Frank winches, "What, uh, hey!"

Jack and another big nurse dash at Buddy, who lets go, puts his hands up.

Buddy, "Sorry, don't know my own strength sometimes."

Jack grabs Buddy's shirt, "You watch your step, fella."

Buddy, "Your hand's on my shirt."

Jack, "Listen you--"

Buddy grabs Jack's arm, throws him over, onto the floor.

Buddy jumps up, poses in a battle stance.

Jack gets up, fire in his eyes.

The other four move in on Buddy.

Buddy, "Doctor! What the shit?"

Frank, "Stop, please--"

Frank grabs Jack by the arm, "Jack, it's okay, relax. Buddy, my apologies, but let me tell you."

His eyes tighten on Buddy, "You better behave yourself."

Buddy sits down, "I'd like to see a lawyer."

Frank, "This is a mental hospital, not a jail."

Buddy, "My name is Buddy. I'm five foot eleven, blue eyes, brown hair."

A wall clock displays 11:05.

* * * * *

Frowning, Frank stands next to the clock, 1:25.

Buddy, "Then take every 18 year old, give them \$5000 with a ticket to Asia, and they can't come back for six months."

Frank, "Yes, yes, Buddy, that's quite okay, but everything you have said is similar to your raving at the mall. Please tell me your background."

Buddy, "I'm Caucasian, American."

Frank, "I don't think you're waking up to where you're heading."

Buddy, "Maybe you're the one who's not awake, Doc."

* * * * *

The clock reads 3:10.

Frank sits, writes on his clipboard.

He smiles, "Buddy, you have many thoughts about how you would fix the world."

Buddy, "I've spoken the truth."

Frank, "Yes, and many of them make so much sense that I'm quite impressed. However you have not given me any information regarding who you are, your family, etc."

Frank rises, walks to the door, "And to let you leave here and speak your thoughts to the world is simply not possible. So I'm left with only one alternative. I'm very pleased to meet you, Buddy. You're my step to history."

Frank and the nurses walk out.

Buddy shuts his eyes.

* * * * *

Hospital director's office.

Frank sits with Bart.

Frank, "Yes Sir, I'm certain he has it. I'd like permission to move him to the Special Treatment Center."

Bart, "Well, well. And if he has no family..."

Frank beams.

Bart, "Congratulations, Frank. You might be the first to use Security Act 2070."

* * * * *

Frank's office.

Super excited, Frank talks on the phone to Lisa, "Yes, definitely 'Scire-sapere's Disease!"

* * * * *

Lisa's living room.

Lisa unpacks her shopping on the couch with the phone nestled in her shoulder, "Frank--"

Frank, "This is what we've been waiting for."

Lisa, "Yes, but--"

Frank, "History, Lisa, you and I together."

Lisa frowns.

Frank, "I've called a staff meeting in thirty minutes... Lisa?"

Lisa looks over at Buddy's drawing.

Frank, "Lisa, you there?"

Lisa, "Frank... I'll be in tomorrow to do an assessment."

* * * * *

Large mental hospital office.

Behind a one-way mirror, Buddy sits in the padded room, opening and closing his fists.

He rambles but no one in the office can hear him.

Four TV screens monitor Buddy from each corner in his room.

Frank sits with Bart in front of many staff.

Jack stands behind Frank.

Frank, "We will be moving him to our special treatment center. The trouble with Scire-sapere's Disease is when they have it full blown, everything they say is true. But we can't let the people hear that."

Bart, "You must understand, it's against our culture, against humanity as we live it."

Frank, "It's essential to American security that he be isolated."

Buddy walks around his room, stops at the mirror, touches it.

Frank walks over in front of Buddy, "It's possible Christ had it, they killed him."

Buddy, "Hey, doctor!"

Buddy walks to the wall opposite the mirror.

He looks up at the cameras aimed down at him.

Frank, "Buddha had it, too, but that was India. We just can't tolerate this illness here!"

Buddy, "What the hell do you need cameras for when you have a damn mirror?"

Frank turns to the group.

Frank, "If we admit what they say is true, our whole society will crumble like a house made of playing cards."

Buddy races at his full speed toward the mirror.

He jumps up, ready with his good leg to kick the glass.

Everyone except Frank gasps.

Frank spins around, "No!"

Frank dives down to one side.

Buddy drops his foot before hitting the mirror, and lands full body, braced with his hands, against it.

His eyes seem to penetrate straight through the mirror.

Buddy, "Get scared, Doc?"

Frank shakes, breathing heavy, face full of rage.

Frank, "I'll kill him."

Jack assists Frank up, "I'll help you."

* * * * *

Chapter 23 - Buddy meets Harpington

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Buddy's room.

Large.

No mirror, just cameras spying down.

No windows, only padded walls.

A mattress and bedding in one corner.

Toilet with a curtain and sink in another.

Table and chairs, bolted.

Buddy wears hospital clothes, sits on the mattress, leans against the wall.

The door opens, Harpington enters, in a nurse uniform, holding a clipboard.

Harpington, "Hello, Buddy, my name's Harpington Code. I'm the head nurse of this section."

Buddy eyes Harpington over.

Harpington, "I should let you know--"

Buddy, "If you're a head nurse, go nurse your head. Or better yet, go nurse your doctor's head."

Harpington, "Sid told me you have a nice sense of humor."

Buddy, "I'm not laughing. And I don't know any Sid. Why have I been moved here and when am I allowed out?"

Harpington, "All in due time. Other than that, my main job is to help you in any way I can."

Buddy, "How about a big box of crayons and paper, a Frisbee, and books to read on Scire-sapere's Disease?"

Harpington, "Crayons yes, Frisbee no, books no, papers on Scire-sapere yes. Anything else?"

Buddy, "Haven't had a good meal in days."

Harpington, "Steak, potatoes, some wine."

Buddy, "You're kidding?"

Harpington, "No, Sir. Let me guess, medium-rare."

Buddy, "Add peas and no wine."

Harpington, "Fresh squeezed orange juice coming right up."

Buddy's eyes narrow, "Do I know you from somewhere?"

Harpington, "Maybe."

Buddy, "Where?"

Harpington smiles.

Buddy, "You're one up on me."

Harpington, "Maybe."

He leaves.

* * * * *

Buddy's room - later.

Empty plates rest on the table next to a huge box of crayons.

Buddy sits on the bed, reads some printouts.

He leans back against the wall, eyes wide.

He rises, holding the papers, "Buddy, my boy, what the hell did you do?"

He stares at the papers, "Judy was there... and now I'm... here."

He hurls the papers across the room.

* * * * *

Chapter 24 - Lisa arrives

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Frank's treatment center office.

Frank rests his feet on his desk, very proud of himself, "He claims he has no family. Do you realize what that means?"

Lisa stands near the door, hair in a bun, professional clothes, "You know I'm against the operation."

Frank sits up, "Lisa, listen, this is an American security issue. It's never been done before and it's absolutely imperative that we find out what's in his brain. We can be the first!"

Lisa, "No."

Frank rises, his face tight, "Fine... You're the psych, I'm the medical scientist. You can do your studies. But in one week, I'll do the cutting."

Lisa, "We're done, Frank."

Frank, "Maybe you'll reconsider when I crack his skull and get the awards."

Lisa walks out.

* * * * *

Lisa exits Frank's office.

Will sits on the floor, and draws with a small box of crayons.

Lisa, "Okay, Will, we'll go see the man now."

Will, "Is he mean like Frank?"

Lisa, "Honey, he has a disease but it doesn't make him mean. And he's absolutely harmless to women and children."

* * * * *

Lisa and Will walk through a hallway, approach a blocked off corridor, RESTRICTED AREA.

Harpington sits at a desk.

Lisa, "Hi, I'm Dr. Baker."

Harpington, "Dr. Baker, welcome. And this must be little Will. I find your research using Will with your patients to be very interesting."

Lisa, "Thank you. Will's been very helpful indeed."

Lisa smiles at Will as he squints at Harpington.

Harpington, "Doctor, I'll tell Buddy you're here, but..."

His eyes pierce Lisa.

She can't hold his gaze, drops her head.

Harpington, "First I just want to say, it's important that you know my name's Harpington Code and if you need any help, any time, from anyone, you just ask for me, okay?"

Lisa looks up questioningly at Harpington.

He smiles, enters the corridor.

Will, "Mommy, he's a bad guy."

* * * * *

The Scire-sapere papers rest on the table in Buddy's room.

Buddy stands near the wall behind the table, holding a huge 120 variety box of crayons.

He pulls out two, reads the names, "Inch worm, jazzberry jam - geez, invent a new one, invent a new one, keep people excited."

Harpington opens the door, "You have a visitor, Buddy."

Buddy points at the papers, "I don't like what I read."

Harpington, "It's not all bad."

Buddy, "I have no family so I miss out on getting shipped to Chirikof prison island. Which leaves exploratory brain surgery. What the hell is that?"

Harpington, "Try talking with the visitor."

Buddy glares.

Harpington, "A psychologist and her son."

Buddy, "Son?"

Harpington, "She got her degree inventing a new technique. Don't be surprised if she lets her son do odd things."

Buddy, "Tell her to take her technique and work on that Doctor."

Harpington, "I'll bring her in."

He leaves.

Buddy draws a large circle and broad strokes on the wall.

Harpington, "Buddy, this is Dr. Baker and Will."

Buddy turns.

Stunned.

He mumbles to himself, "Holy shit."

Lisa stands at the door.

She doesn't recognize Buddy.

Will hides behind her, eyes Buddy over.

Lisa, "Honey, you can draw over there."

Will slides over to the farthest point away from Buddy.

He sits down, draws.

Lisa, "Buddy, I'd like to ask you some questions."

Buddy, "Sure, sure, have a seat, Doctor."

She sits at the table, Buddy remains standing.

Lisa, "You can call me, Lisa."

Buddy, "Nice name. I never would have picked it."

Lisa, "And is Buddy your real name?"

Buddy pauses long.

Buddy, "Lisa, I, I'm not too sure - about a lot of things right now. Maybe we'll talk about it later."

He sits down next to Will, drawing cars.

Buddy, "What are you drawing?"

Will doesn't answer.

Buddy, "Nice cars."

Will, "Uh-huh."

Buddy, "Nice hands, too."

Will frowns.

Buddy, "Yours match. Mine don't."

Hesitant, Will looks at Buddy, who holds his hands up so his thumbs point in the same direction.

Buddy, "See?"

He flips both over so they point the other way.

Buddy, "Even when I turn them over they still don't match."

Will laughs.

Buddy doesn't smile, just raises an eyebrow.

Lisa jots in her notebook.

Buddy, "What do you think? You have a nice box of crayons?"

Will, "Yeah."

Buddy, "Nope."

Will giggles.

Buddy, "Want to see some magic?"

Will, "Okay."

Buddy, "Shut your eyes."

Will shuts his eyes.

Buddy swaps Will's small crayon box with his large one.

Buddy, "Okay."

Will opens his eyes, screams with glee, "Hey!"

He gives Buddy a hug, which startles Buddy.

Will, "Thanks, Daddy."

Buddy, "Wait a min--"

Will, "But Mommy says that if I want something enough I can make it happen."

Buddy, "Well, that's not exactly--"

Lisa, "Please don't tell him."

Buddy, "So I should say my father is the Easter Bunny?"

Lisa, "I'm sorry, maybe it's time to stop today. Will, we'll go now."

Will, "Can we come back?"

Lisa, "Yes, honey, tomorrow."

Will gives Buddy a big hug, races to the door.

He stops, looks back at the crayons.

Buddy holds the big box out for Will.

Will, "You keep them here for me, okay... Daddy?"

Buddy, "Uh--"

Lisa, "Yes, dear, he'll keep them for you. Thank you, Buddy, we'll see you tomorrow."

Buddy, "Yeah."

They leave.

The door shuts.

Buddy turns to the padded wall, "SHIT!"

He slams his fists into the wall.

* * * * *

Chapter 25 - Yes... Mom...

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Lisa's kitchen.

Lisa stares at her teacup as she stirs it, "So I have my very first Scire-sapere patient."

Mom reads the TV guide, "I just knew Janice was bad for Robert."

Lisa, "Now I have to prove all my wonderful college theories."

Mom, "Yes, the cute college girl, Betty. Now she's nice."

Lisa, "But, he did ignore me and went straight to Will. Just what I predicted."

Mom, "I did predict Janice would ignore him."

Lisa, "And Will - he's never liked any man, but he liked Buddy so much, he called him, 'Daddy!'"

Mom, "Betty's father is nice, too."

Lisa, "He seemed a little familiar, but not really. Maybe it's just that I've read so much about the disease."

Mom, "Yes, of course, her illness may be the cause."

Lisa, "Mom! Did you hear anything I said?"

Mom, "Yes, dear, you take care of your patient. I have to hurry off."

Mom speeds out.

Lisa's eyes hold on her teacup, "Yes... Mom... hurry off."

* * * * *

Chapter 26 - It came true

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Will's pre-school.

The kids play.

Will and Bobby hang on a chin-up bar.

The teacher sits close by.

Will, "I met my Daddy yesterday."

Bobby, "Huh? He's dead."

Will, "Nope."

Teacher, "Will, you shouldn't speak lies."

Will drops off the bar, looks downward.

Will, "His name's Buddy."

Teacher, "I'll have to call your mother if you keep lying."

Will bites on his bottom lip, "I made a wish and it came true."

Will races off into the school.

* * * * *

Chapter 27 - Perfect

* * * * *

Treatment center conference room.

Frank stands in front of a large table with Bart and eight nurses sitting around it.

On the wall, behind him, hangs a large diagram of the brain.

Frank, "History is on our doorsteps. I intend to perform the first live Scire-sapere Disease brain operation."

Nurse, "Have all the family checks been done?"

Frank hesitates.

Frank, "Please remember this is totally confidential. For fifteen years this center has been prepared for this day. All of you are well trained. We have a top secret mission and we mustn't fail. As to your question, we're searching."

Nurse, "Sir, I don't feel that's good enough yet."

Frank, "With all due respect, his fingerprints, teeth details and DNA have gone out and we will see. However the patient has not given us any information. If that is the case, then he has no family and..."

Frank smiles, leans forward, puts his hands on the table, "He will be perfect."

* * * * *

Chapter 28 - Clouds

* * * * *

Buddy draws on his wall.

Nothing discernable, colors everywhere.

Harpington enters, "Dr. Baker and her son are here."

Buddy eyes Harpington over, glances behind him, no one.

Buddy, "Your eyes must be better than mine."

Harpington, "In the garden today."

* * * * *

A fifteen-foot sheer wall surrounds the enclosed Treatment center garden area.

Lisa sits at one table.

Will draws at another.

Buddy walks out of the building.

Will races to him, "Hi, Daddy!"

Buddy, "Hey, look--"

Lisa, "Buddy, would you mind if he does call you, Daddy? It, uh, may help with my data."

Buddy shrugs, hands Will the big box of crayons.

Will, "Thanks! Want to draw with me?"

Buddy joins Will.

Buddy, "Fuzzy Wuzzy brown."

Will laughs.

Buddy, "Really. Can you read?"

Will, "Yes."

Puzzled, Will looks at Buddy.

Buddy pulls out the Fuzzy Wuzzy brown crayon, shows Will the name label.

Lisa writes.

Buddy, "Mango Tango."

Will's eyes light up, he spills out the 120 crayons, searches, finds Mango Tango.

Buddy, "Outer Space."

Will laughs, enjoying the game.

Buddy, "Wild Blue Yonder."

Lisa's face brightens, also.

Buddy's face remains stoic.

Will, "Got them all!"

He holds up the four crayons.

Buddy whispers, "Tickle Me Pink."

Will shrieks with joy, searches.

Lisa laughs.

Will stops, eyes frozen at the crayons.

Silence.

He turns to Buddy with an undeniable child's doubt, "You don't laugh, Daddy."

Buddy, "Uh, huh."

Will, "Do you cry?"

Buddy, "No."

Will, "But you have Scire-sapere. Mommy says it's called the wise man's disease, right?"

Buddy, "Yes."

Will, "My teacher says that real wise people know when to laugh and when to cry."

Buddy, "Maybe I'm not that wise yet."

Will picks up the Tickle Me Pink crayon.

Will, "Okay."

Buddy lies down on the grass.

Lisa, "Buddy, can I ask what happened?"

Buddy, "I fell in love."

Lisa, "That sounds nice."

Buddy, "It didn't work out."

Lisa, "Oh?"

Buddy, "I was late for a date and she wouldn't wait."

Lisa, "What if you met her again?"

Buddy, "Good question. I've been trying to think of what I would do. But being in a nut house and meeting a lost love is not exactly a great setup."

Lisa, "What was her name?"

Buddy, "Lisa... Part of me would like to tell you more, but maybe later."

Will lies down next to Buddy.

Will, "What are you looking at?"

Buddy, "Clouds."

Will, "Why?"

Buddy, "Adults don't watch clouds often enough."

* * * * *

Chapter 29 - Frank's power

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Treatment center mirrored room.

Jack and another burly nurse lead in Buddy, wearing a straight jacket.

They sit him down facing Frank.

Buddy, "Bit paranoid today, eh, Doc?"

Frank ignores Buddy, reads over notes on his clipboard.

Buddy, "Fine, maybe I'll leave now."

He rises halfway.

Jack grabs his shoulders and forces him down.

Frank, "You have not told me who you are nor your relatives."

Buddy, "I read your papers, Doc."

Frank smiles, ominously.

Buddy, "What will you do when you cut open my brain for thirty minutes?"

Frank, "We will discover what makes you tick."

Buddy, "You'd be better off discovering what makes yourself tick."

Frank, "Listen, Buddy, I'm a bit tired of your--"

Buddy, "So let me out of here, or are you happier staying an idiot with the rest of the world?"

Frank walks over to Buddy, and slaps Buddy's face, "Shut-up."

Buddy, "Big tough guy, eh?"

Frank slaps Buddy again, "You stupid--"

Buddy, "Fool, you should know, jerk."

Frank cocks his arm with a fist.

Jack, "Sir, may I take care of him?"

Buddy, "Hit the down and out. Shut them up. One way or another, stop the truth. Stop it."

Frank regains his senses, "Wait, it's not worth it. I will show you my power, Buddy."

Frank pulls out a tranquilizer gun.

Buddy, "That's all you stupid asses can do, you meet someone smarter than yourselves and you shut them up. You're just another brick in the wall. Life's not for just--"

Frank aims at Buddy's arm, shoots.

Buddy winces, faints.

* * * * *

Chapter 30 - Escape

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Buddy works on his wall.

The scene takes on a park like appearance.

Harpington enters with a food tray.

Harpington, "Breakfast."

Buddy draws as Harpington puts the food on the table.

Buddy, "Tell me, what's in a name?"

Harpington, "It can make you or break you."

Buddy, "Where'd you get a name like Harpington?"

Harpington, "Hey, it's great, not a single other kid in school had it. I was unique. Daniel, you know how many Daniels there were. And Steves, Mikes, Toms as common as apples. But Harpington, nope, unique."

Buddy draws closer to the open door as Harpington stands near the table.

Buddy, "Unique. Different to Buddy."

Harpington, "What's your real name?"

Buddy, "Unique..."

Buddy's out the door, slams it shut.

Harpington smiles, pulls out a cell phone.

* * * * *

Buddy runs down the corridor, the best he can with his limp, out the doors, passes by Harpington's desk.

Sirens.

Two women nurses run from the other direction.

Buddy stops, readies himself in battle position.

The nurses halt, eyes wide.

They step aside.

Buddy runs past, "Thank you."

Jack steps out of the elevator, ten feet in front of Buddy.

Jack, "Stop!"

Buddy poses, "Please move."

Jack, "Don't you worry, now. I'm going to take you home."

Buddy, "Move!"

Jack charges.

Buddy's hands strike hard and fast, Jack's down and out, his face bruised and blackened.

Buddy dashes into the stairway.

No way down.

He heads up.

* * * * *

Harpington unlocks the door while talking on his phone, "That's right, I said let him escape."

* * * * *

Treatment center lobby.

The reception nurse talks on his phone.

Four other nurses relax around.

Reception nurse, "But Sir, Dr. Morgan will--"

Buddy appears around a corner into the lobby.

His eyes are wide.

The nurses and reception area stand between him and big glass entrance doors.

Reception nurse, "Yes, Sir."

The reception nurse hangs up.

Reception nurse, "Mr. Buddy, you may leave."

The other nurses look at the reception nurse in surprise.

Reception nurse, "Harpington's orders."

Buddy hears this, his eyes squint.

Guarded, he limps out the door.

Once outside, he races off.

Out of his nurse's uniform, buttoning up his shirt, Harpington strolls into the lobby.

Under his shirt resides a holstered gun.

Harpington, "Three of you get the van."

Three nurses race off.

Harpington adjusts the holster, strolls out the door.

He pulls out his cell phone, "Sid? You were right."

A van pulls up near Harpington.

Harpington, "Yes, I know where."

He turns off the phone.

He talks to the nurses in the van, "Okay, I have what it takes to make this an easy job. But be careful, he's good, very good, and despite his leg, he's fast, very fast."

Harpington walks over to his Kawasaki.

Puts on his tinted, full-faced helmet and gloves.

He takes off, the van follows.

* * * * *

People's heads turn as Buddy runs along the street, limping in his hospital clothes, barefoot.

One woman drops her shopping bags in fear.

A street Vendor sells \$ sign sweatshirts.

Vendor, "Hey, buddy, want some new clothes."

Buddy speeds by, "At least he knows my name."

He stops at a corner, checks his bearings, "Not far, not far."

Three punks saunter up to Buddy.

One's big and shaved, another sports tattoos, the third has matted hair.

Big punk, "Well, well, look at this freak."

They surround Buddy.

Tattoo fondles Buddy's clothes, "Naughty boy, you left your home."

Buddy, "Step away, please."

Matted hair, "Please, please what?"

The three pull out knives.

Buddy's hands move fast.

He takes Tattoo's knife out of his hands and kicks Big's knife flying.

Matted Hair steps back, "Sorry, man, sorry."

Buddy throws the knife down, "Try helping people for a change."

He dashes across the street, into a park.

Buddy leaves the sidewalk, cuts through bushes and trees.

A log lies in his way, he slows down, steps over it.

He stops.

He spots something.

Ants attack a caterpillar.

Buddy blows on the ants.

Scared, they race off in various directions.

He picks up the caterpillar, places it on a tree branch.

Buddy, "Good luck, little fella. Make your cocoon and fly free."

* * * * *

Buddy walks down the alley, approaches Feet.

Sweaty and dirty, his limp very pronounced.

He sits down next to Feet, "Hey."

Feet, "Them hospital clothes?"

Buddy shrugs, drinks from Feet's water jug.

Feet, "Sick?"

Buddy, "No."

Buddy rises and reaches into the other container for his bag.

Feet, "If ya just do what ya told, ya stay out of those hospitals."

Buddy, "Sure, behave, be normal, don't rock the boat. Be another damn cog in the machine."

As Buddy changes clothes, he spots a small bag of dog food.

He picks it up.

Buddy, "What was special about the dog food?"

Feet, "Beats me, but when I was a vet, we discovered this stuff inhibited our knock out shots. Any dog that ate this wouldn't sleep. Don't ask me why. I figured maybe if Jamie ate it, it would inhibit the..."

Eyes red, tears running, Feet rolls over.

Buddy rests his hand on Feet's shoulder, "I'll meet you in heaven, okay?"

Feet nods.

Buddy, "I'd like the dog food."

Feet rolls back over, frowns at Buddy, "There's a time limit. I don't know about humans."

A roar of a motorcycle.

Harpington pulls into the alley.

Buddy, "This ain't my mother."

Harpington turns off the bike, removes his helmet, eyes Buddy over, smiles.

The van pulls up behind him.

Harpington, "Buddy, you have to come back to the center."

Buddy, "The big bad guy lets me out, then wants me back."

Harpington, "I didn't want you hurt."

Buddy, "Yeah, yeah, sure. And what if I don't want to go back? What if I say, let's fight it out?"

Harpington, "There's five of us."

The three men get out of the van.

Buddy poses, "Fine, all at once. But your count is off, I see four."

Harpington pulls out his gun, aims, steps to the side of the alley.

Buddy relaxes, "Since when do nurses carry toys - and you said you were my friend?"

Harpington, "Best one you've got."

Buddy, "Friend, my ass."

Harpington, "You like your ass, don't you? It's always backed you up your whole life, right?"

Buddy, "Your humor's enlightening."

Harpington keeps the gun aimed as Buddy carries the dog food, walks toward the men.

He stops halfway, "You won't shoot me."

Harpington fires straight through Buddy's legs.

Buddy, "Missed."

Harpington, "Buddy, I won't kill you."

He fires again, the bullet zips through the side of Buddy's pants.

Harpington, "But I'll put the next bullet through your good leg. And we'll carry you back. Take your choice."

Buddy, "Big choice."

He walks to the van.

Feet, "Buddy..."

Almost at the van, Buddy looks back to Feet.

Feet, "I wrote my son."

Buddy almost smiles, gets in the van.

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Chapter 31 - Furious

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Frank's office.

Harpington stands near the door, stone faced.

Furious, Frank rises from his seat, "Just who the hell do you think you are? Mr. Code, this is a top security center and you seem to think you can do what you want. You've only worked here one week. I don't know how you got the job, but as of right now, you're fired."

Harpington, "Sir, the Director hired me personally. I have certain qualifications that--"

Frank smirks, "He's on vacation until next week. You can come back and talk with him then."

* * * * *

Chapter 32 - Mom's advice

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Mom prunes a rose bush in Lisa's yard.

Lisa sits nearby, closes a cell phone, "Buddy tried to escape."

Mom, "That's nice, but roses are such a bother."

Lisa, "Mom, did you hear me?"

Mom, "Yes, honey, you really do have to look out for the thorns."

Lisa, "I think he has to go to Chirikof."

Mom, "Those Alaskan islands have lovely roses, too."

Lisa, "But Frank wants to cut open his brain."

Shocked, Mom stops pruning.

Lisa, "Mom, if he has no relatives, the Security Act will allow Frank to do it."

Mom takes a big breath, resumes cutting, "Will likes him?"

Lisa, "Yes."

Mom, "Then why not marry him, dear?"

Lisa's eyes go wide.

Mom smiles, picks up her pruning and walks away.

* * * * *

Chapter 33 - The Truth

* * * * *

Buddy's finished wall drawing fills the entire wall.

It resembles the park where Buddy and Lisa met in Bangkok.

Buddy sits on the floor, opposite the door, leaning against the wall with a drawing in his lap.

Nearly complete, it's almost identical to the one he did of Lisa and the water fountain.

The caterpillar's there, but no butterfly.

Lisa and Will enter.

Will runs to Buddy, gives him a hug, "Daddy!"

Buddy hands Will some paper.

Will sits at the table and draws.

Buddy holds his drawing so Lisa can't see it.

Lisa's eyes stay glued the wall drawing.

Her perplexity shows.

Lisa, "It's, it's beautiful, Buddy."

Buddy, "Bangkok park."

Lisa's eyes tighten.

Buddy, "Everyone should visit Thailand, nice country."

Uncomfortable, Lisa sits, pulls out her notebook.

Lisa, "Today, I thought--"

Buddy, "No, I thought... I'll tell you more about me, my name and everything, if you tell me about you."

Lisa, "That's not exactly--"

Buddy, "No, it's not, but what's my disease?"

Lisa looks at him questioningly.

Buddy, "I can only speak the truth, right? So I will, but your turn first. Where's William senior?"

Lisa hesitates.

Buddy's eyes plead.

She drops her head, "He died."

Buddy, "Truth?"

Lisa, "Buddy, really, I don't--"

Buddy, "Lisa..."

Buddy's eyes penetrate her soul, "I'm going to need your help."

Lisa writes, keeps her head down, "I don't know where he is."

Eyes wide, Will looks over at Lisa.

Will, "Mommy?"

Buddy, "More."

Lisa, "We loved for a week, I never knew such a man, warm, kind, deep thinker."

Buddy, "Why did you part?"

Lisa, "We were going to meet at the airport and fly home together. He didn't show up. I should have known better."

Will walks slowly to Lisa.

She hugs him.

Buddy, "Maybe something happened to him."

Lisa, "Sure."

Buddy, "Maybe he got hit by a truck."

Lisa wipes tears.

Buddy, "What if it wasn't his fault? What if he was in the hospital for days and then got out and tried to find you? Would you forgive him?"

Lisa, "Buddy, please--"

Will, "Stop it! Stop it, you!"

Will races to Buddy and hits him.

Buddy grabs Will's little hands.

Will, "You're not my Daddy!"

Buddy, "Will, trust me."

Will pulls his hands away.

Angry, he backs off.

Buddy, "Lisa, what if Will's father couldn't find you because you didn't tell him your real name? Maybe you called yourself Judy, instead of Lisa?"

Lisa looks at Buddy in astonishment.

Buddy, "And if he showed up now, would you love him?"

Lisa, "How did you--"

Buddy, "Some guys do get hit by trucks."

He pulls up his trousers, his leg has no calf, just big scars.

Buddy, "You never asked me why I limp."

Lisa's spaced, "Bill?"

Buddy turns the drawing around for Lisa to see.

Her mouth drops open.

Will's eyes open even wider.

He screams, "MY REAL DADDY!"

Will hugs Buddy tighter than ever.

Tears run down Will's cheeks.

Frank, "Knock, knock."

Haughty, Frank enters.

Husky nurses wait outside the door.

Frank, "Hello, Irving. That is your name, isn't it, Mr. Livingston?"

Lisa stares at Buddy, unable to move.

Buddy, "You might rather I was a doctor, I presume."

Frank, "I'm happy you still have a sense of humor, Irving Lawrence Livingston."

Buddy, "Just call me, Buddy."

Frank, "Yes, I see you added Buddy to your name when you were ten years old. Here, Lisa."

Frank hands Lisa a clipboard with Buddy's information.

Lisa's fingers run across "Buddy Irving Lawrence Livingston" stopping at the initials, "B, I, L, L."

Frank, "And all your relatives are dead."

He smiles, almost salivating.

Buddy, "You're sick, Doc."

Frank, "No, you're the one who's sick, and we're going to find out how that happened."

Will, "Go away, Frank, you meanie. Buddy's my Daddy."

Frank, "Lisa, get your damn kid--"

Lisa stands, "Frank, stop it. We have to talk."

Frank, "When I'm done with Buddy."

Lisa, "No, now. Will, we have to go."

Will, "But can I stay with Daddy? He's my real Daddy now."

Lisa hesitates.

Buddy, "Lisa..."

Buddy and Lisa hold eyes.

Buddy, "I'm sorry I missed the plane."

Lisa drops her eyes.

Lisa, "Will, you can stay a bit longer."

She half smiles at Buddy, walks out.

Confused, Frank follows her.

* * * * *

Chapter 34 - History

* * * * *

Frank's office.

Lisa stands, looks out the window.

Frank sits on his desk, "Well, if he is Will's father then he goes to Chirikof and we miss a chance for history."

Lisa, "Can't you forget history! He's a human being."

Frank acts relaxed, "Sure, sure, look, it's okay, Lisa. I'll get the lab to check their DNAs for proof. I, uh, know this has been hard for you and I'm really sorry how I've acted. I just got caught up with... well, you know. Why don't you take the rest of the day off?"

Lisa walks out.

Frank picks up his phone, "I want the operating room ready for tonight."

* * * * *

Chapter 35 - Will's fear

* * * * *

Buddy and Will draw.

The reception nurse enters, "Will, time to go, your Mom's waiting."

Buddy, "Can I talk with Lisa?"

Reception nurse, "She said to tell you, she'll be in tomorrow."

Will, "I'm not going with him, he's bad."

Buddy, "Will--"

Will, "He's evil like Frank."

Buddy, "What if your Mom came to get you?"

Will, "Okay."

Reception nurse, "I'll get a female nurse."

* * * * *

Chapter 36 - B.I.L.L.

* * * * *

Lisa stands at the original drawing in her living room.

Her fingers run across B.I.L.L.

Lisa, "I could have found him."

Mom sits on the couch with a cup of coffee, "Bless your dear Father's heart, now if he was still alive, he'd know what to say. I just know he's in heaven."

Will plays with toys on the floor.

Mom, "Don't you think so?"

Lisa, "Yes, Mom."

Mom, "But sometimes I have doubts about heaven. I really don't know it exists, what about you, Honey?"

Lisa, "Yes, Mom, maybe--"

Mom, "But that's just silly talking. That'll get you into one of your hospital rooms, now, won't it?"

Lisa's eyes go wide.

Mom, "Of course there's a heaven. We mustn't think otherwise. Well, I have to go and prepare. Tomorrow's the mannequin parade."

Lisa, "You mean when all the parents laugh at the kids. Mom, it's horrible, why do--"

Mom, "Lisa, dear, if kids can't take getting laughed at as kids, what hope will they have when they're adults?"

Lisa, "Shit."

Mom, "Now honey, don't you keep on that way or you'll end up with that Scire-whatever's Disease."

Lisa, "He's so gentle, but..."

She laughs, "He just wants to tell everyone, they're idiots."

Mom, "Well, it may be true, but it's not very nice to say so. We must count our blessings. You know if we lived in India, these people are let out on the streets, even have their own religions. How horrifying!"

Mom walks to the door, "Lisa, dear, do you still love him?"

Lisa, "I, I'm not sure."

Mom, "If you do, you just have to train him not to act so smart, after all, you're an expert on Scire-whatever's, aren't you?"

Lisa, "Some people think so."

Mom, "So you know all about it and you can fix it, too. I'm sure. Bye, bye, Honey."

Mom leaves.

Will, "Mommy, can you fix the truth so it won't come out?"

Lisa, "I'm not sure I should."

* * * * *

Chapter 37 - Fuzzy Wuzzy brown

* * * * *

Buddy draws on the park scene.

Frank enters, "Well, well. So you have a son."

Buddy doesn't turn.

Frank, "Too bad, Irving."

Frank shakes, clenches his jaw, "Did you hear me!"

Buddy turns, tosses Frank a crayon, "Fuzzy Wuzzy brown."

Frank fumes, stomps off.

* * * * *

Chapter 38 - Hell

* * * * *

Buddy's room. Later.

Buddy holds a toilet paper roll, chews on a wad of paper.

He spits it out into his hand, looks up at one of the cameras, with three wads of paper stuck on the wall close by.

Buddy throws.

Bull's eye.

The wad rests on the camera's lens.

He glances around at the other cameras, which all have a similar appearance.

He sits on the table, grabs the dog food bag, reads the ingredients, "Bone meal, soybean, wheat..."

He pulls out a few tidbits.

Pops them in his mouth.

His face scrunches as he chews, "Tastes like shit."

He downs it with water, "How would I know, never eaten shit."

He eats more, "An acquired taste."

* * * * *

Harpington sleeps at home.

His cell-phone rings.

Harpington, "Harpington here."

(pause)

"Sid..."

He jumps up, "Right!"

He dashes to his pants on a chair.

* * * * *

Harpington races out of his apartment, puts on his helmet and gloves.

He jumps on his Kawasaki.

He's off.

* * * * *

Frank holds the phone in his office.

Frank, "Yes, three should be fine, Jack."

* * * * *

Asleep in a nightmare, Lisa tosses in bed.

Lisa, "No, no! Stop!"

She jerks awake.

Lisa, "NO!"

She whips on a bathrobe, races to Will's bedroom.

Lisa, "Will, honey, wake up, wake up."

Will, "Huh, Mommy--"

Lisa, "I have to take you to Nana's. Come on, up."

She helps him get up.

Will, "What's wrong?"

Lisa, "I'm not sure, maybe something with your Daddy. Come on."

They race out.

* * * * *

Harpington flies through near deserted streets, passing an occasional car.

* * * * *

Lisa and Will run next door.

Lisa bangs on the door, "Mom! Mom!"

A light appears upstairs.

Lisa, "MOM!"

Mom, "Coming, coming."

She opens the door, "What--"

Lisa, "I'm not sure. Please just take Will."

Lisa kisses Will.

She runs to her car.

* * * * *

Buddy finishes eating the dog food.

His hands open, close, open, close, "Buddy, my boy, ever fought yourself out of hell?"

He hops off the table, approaches a wall.

With lightning speed, his hands slam and tear the padding off the wall.

He bounces like a boxer, ready in his corner.

He glances up at the lights, "Kill the lights, kill the lights."

Buddy approaches the table, raises his hand for a Karate chop.

Down.

Smash.

Again.

Again.

The top breaks apart.

He pulls a long board off, stands under the lights and holds the board upward.

Too short.

Buddy, "Damn."

He jumps with the board, a hair off touching the light.

He jumps and shoves the board, it smashes one light.

He takes his pillow and uses it to sweep the broken glass under his bed.

Buddy, "Good, good."

He does the same to the second light.

Dark.

The hallway light shines under the door.

Buddy, "Shit."

* * * * *

Frank's office.

Frank pulls out tranquilizer darts, lays them next to a gun.

* * * * *

A snuggling couple take a step onto the road at a crossing.

They jump back to the curb as Harpington zooms by.

* * * * *

Lisa speeds along a freeway.

* * * * *

Buddy sits in the darkest spot.

Table boards rest against the wall next to him.

His hands open, close.

* * * * *

Drunken, stoned teenagers race their Firebird through city streets, throwing beer bottles out the window.

* * * * *

Behind bushes alongside the freeway, a policeman sits in his patrol car, talking on his radio.

Policeman, "Dead as a door, Tom. Perfect night. If only every night--"

Lisa roars by.

Policeman, "Shit, lady over 100."

He's off, lights spin, siren blares.

Policeman, "Send an ambulance, there's road works ahead."

* * * * *

Frank's office

Frank talks with Jack and two other husky nurses.

Frank, "Okay, now remember, our country's security is at risk here. You guys know he's tough, but I have the gun. Let's go."

Jack grabs Frank's arm, "Frank, I want to put him in the chair."

Frank nods, with a sinister smile.

* * * * *

Harpington rounds a corner, the Treatment Center looms ahead, fifty yards.

In perfect timing, a traffic light changes to green.

Harpington flies toward the intersection.

The Firebird approaches from the right, without slowing down.

Bam.

The car clips the rear of the bike.

Harpington and the bike slide along the road, face down, his right leg under the bike.

The Firebird tears off.

Harpington lies next to the bike, engine racing.

He rolls over, switches the engine off.

Deep scratch marks line the front of his helmet.

His gloves are torn, one hand bleeding.

He pulls off the helmet, checks his foot.

The ankle's broken, already swollen twice the size.

He pulls out his cell phone.

It's smashed.

He gets up, hobbles towards the Treatment Center.

His face tells the pain as he wipes his shirt with his bloody hand.

* * * * *

Siren.

Lisa spots the police lights behind her.

She looks long at the mirror.

Too long.

Eyes back to the road - DETOUR signs, blinking lights.

She slams on the brakes.

Lisa's car screeches, spins 180 degrees as it crashes in backwards to the Detour sign.

The policeman pulls up, races to Lisa.

Her head's on the wheel, bloody.

Policeman, "Lady, lady!"

He rips open the door.

Lisa raises her head, "Help me!"

Policeman, "It's okay, lady, calm--"

Lisa, "No, no, my husband. They're going to kill my husband."

Policeman, "Sure, sure, now just--"

She gets out, staggers.

Lisa, "No, look, you don't understand--"

Policeman, "Lady, help's on the way."

Sirens.

Two more Police cars and an ambulance.

Policeman, "Calm, lady, calm--"

Lisa puts up her hand, breathes deep, calms down.

She closes her eyes, sees a vision of Harpington talking to her earlier.

-- Harpington, "It's important that you know my name's Harpington Code and if you need any help, any time, from anyone, you just ask for me, okay?"

Lisa, "Okay, right, yes - please do you know Harpington Code?"

The policeman cocks his head.

Four other officers race over.

Female officer, "How y'all doing?"

Policeman, "Uh, I'm not sure."

Female officer, "You okay, ma'am?"

Lisa, "They're going to kill my husband."

Policeman, "She knows Harpington Code."

The female officer grabs Lisa, "Come on, where?"

They race to a car.

* * * * *

Buddy's door opens.

The hallway light shines in on the wall opposite Buddy.

Frank stands in the doorway, "Lost your lights, Buddy?"

Frank peers in, spots Buddy against the other wall.

Buddy rises, "Bit late for house calls, Doc."

Frank, "Hmm, some broken furniture, too."

Buddy, "Yours."

He grabs a board and races at Frank, the board out like a lance.

He knocks Frank in the gut.

Frank falls backward, revealing Jack and the other nurses.

Buddy halts.

Frank looks up, face in rage, "You're as good as dead... Irving."

Buddy backs up, close to the broken table, readies himself.

The nurses enter, fan out.

Frank gets up, pulls out the dart gun, "Your fighting days are done."

He aims, shoots.

Buddy dodges, the dart lands in his arm.

He stares, closes his eyes, feigns fainting and falls onto the table.

Frank laughs, "Stupid fool, get him."

Jack steps forward, "The bastard's mine."

He approaches Buddy.

Buddy spins, chops rapidly.

Jack lands on the floor, out cold.

Buddy, "Next."

Frank and the two nurses' eyes go wide.

They stand, frozen.

Buddy, "Next, you assholes!"

The nurses look to Frank.

Frank pulls out another dart, "Don't worry. so Irving, that one missed. We'll just try again."

He aims.

Buddy stands still.

It strikes him in his chest.

He winces at the needle pain, pulls it out and throws it at Frank.

Buddy, "Toys, Doc, kid's game. Try being a man this time."

Sweat pours off Frank's face.

He pulls out another dart.

Buddy grabs a small board.

The nurses charge him.

The board flies hard at one, Buddy flies at the other, who's no match for Buddy's martial skills.

A second nurse out cold.

The third nurse smashes Buddy from behind.

Another blow.

Another.

Buddy's down.

The big nurse sits on him.

Shaking, Frank comes over with his gun.

He aims into Buddy's neck vein.

Frank, "This one won't miss."

He shoots.

Buddy spasms.

He stops moving.

Frank, "Okay."

The nurse throws Buddy over his shoulder.

They walk out.

* * * * *

Harpington makes it to the treatment center front entrance glass door, exhausted.

He pushes.

He pulls.

Locked.

He collapses against it, eyes shut, sweat pouring.

He takes off his shirt, wraps it on his good hand like a boxing glove.

He steps back, arm cocked, smash.

The glass shatters.

He hobbles inside.

Alarm sirens blare.

* * * * *

Treatment center security office.

Lights flash.

The guard's head pops out of a magazine, his eyes scan six TV monitors.

He spots Harpington, looking like a drunken crazy.

Guard, "Holy Moses."

He hits a red button on a phone console, takes a mobile phone off, grabs a rifle from a wall cupboard.

Man's voice, "Got you, Center, what's up?"

Guard, "Smashed front door. One crazy seen climbing in. Send some help."

He races out.

* * * * *

Harpington makes it to the elevator.

He gets in, pushes the basement button.

The guard rounds the corner.

Guard, "Stop! Or I'll shoot."

The elevator closes.

The guard watches the floor indicator lights of the elevator.

* * * * *

Two police cars speed up in front of the treatment center.

Three officers and Lisa jump out, climb through the broken door.

One officer stays with the cars, pulls out his mobile.

* * * * *

Inside, the guard watches the elevator lights.

He hears racing footsteps.

Scared shitless, he turns toward the hall and poises with his rifle.

Guard, "Stop! Or I'll shoot."

Lisa zooms around the corner.

She tries to stop but her momentum throws her against a wall.

The police stop before rounding the corner.

Guard, "Stay where you are, lady! Who else is there?"

Female officer, "Police! We're three officers. Put down your gun."

Guard, "I'm the night guard, show yourself slowly."

The officer holds out her badge, steps out, while the other two have their guns drawn.

Guard, "Shit, what's going on?"

Lisa spots the elevator in operation, runs to the stairway door, "Stairs, two flights down."

* * * * *

Operating room.

Operating equipment surrounds a chair with straps.

Frank enters, followed by the nurse with Buddy, "Good, strap him in."

He locks the door, hangs the key on a hook next to it.

The nurse drops Buddy down into the chair.

Buddy slams the nurse hard.

Buddy's up, fast, his hands fly.

The nurse lands on the floor.

Frank freaks, hides behind the equipment, pulls out his gun.

Buddy, "Don't get it yet, jerk? Your gun doesn't work."

Frank, "To hell."

He shoots.

It hits Buddy in the stomach.

He staggers.

His eyes blur as the room goes out of focus.

He shakes out of it.

Frank loads again.

Buddy charges at Frank, who dashes around the equipment.

He aims at Buddy, shoots, it misses.

Frank races for the door keys.

Buddy grabs a stainless dish, hurls.

It clips Frank's hand hard.

Blood spurts.

Buddy's on to Frank.

One blow, another, another.

Frank's out and down.

Buddy sits on Frank, raises his hand high.

Buddy's eyes blur again as Frank's face fades out of focus.

Frank's eyes open.

* * * * *

Treatment center basement.

Lisa, the police and the guard arrive as the elevator door opens.

Harpington staggers out.

Lisa, "Harpington!"

Lisa races to him.

The woman officer salutes.

Harpington, "Three doors on the right."

Harpington leans on Lisa, as they follow the police.

* * * * *

Buddy sits on Frank, his fist up.

His eyes shut, open, shut.

He sways.

Frank brings one hand up and grabs Buddy's face.

He pushes Buddy back.

Buddy slams Frank, and faints on top of him.

* * * * *

The police, Harpington and Lisa approach the door.

A male policeman puts his ear to the door, grabs it, tries to open it, can't.

Guard, "Here."

The guard hands the policeman his keys.

He opens it, peeks in, opens it wider.

Everyone's out cold.

Lisa races to Buddy, "Buddy!"

Harpington checks Buddy's pulse and his eyes, picks up Frank's gun.

Harpington, "He's okay."

Female officer, "What the hell is this?"

Harpington, "Sergeant, this is part of hell."

* * * * *

Chapter 39 - Recovery

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Normal hospital room.

Buddy lies unconscious in bed, his right wrist handcuffed to the metal railing.

Still in her bathrobe, Lisa sleeps in a chair next to a window with a view of trees.

Mom and Will enter.

Will runs to Lisa, "Mommy!"

Lisa wakes, hugs Will.

Mom drops a small suitcase, eyes Buddy over, "Got some clothes for you. Is this Buddy?"

Will, "Yes."

Mom, "He looks nice. Lisa, dear, do you love him yet?"

Lisa, "Yes."

Mom, "Good, well, I must get to work. You need anything else?"

Lisa, "No. Thanks, Mom."

Mom leaves.

Will pokes at Buddy, who doesn't stir, "Daddy... Daddy... Mommy, what's wrong?"

Lisa, "He's just drugged, Honey. He'll be okay."

Will, "Why's Daddy drugged?"

Harpington enters using a cane, his ankle in a cast, his hand bandaged.

He wears regular clothes instead of his nurse's gear.

Harpington, "He'll be fine, Will."

Will tears at Harpington, hitting him in his stomach.

Will, "You did this, didn't you!"

Lisa, "Will, no!"

Will, "He did, he did, I know he did."

Harpington lets Will hit him, until Will tires.

Harpington, "It's okay, Lisa. Hit all you want, Will."

Will runs to Lisa, crying.

Lisa, "Honey, Harpington's one of the good guys."

Perplexed, Will looks at Lisa's smiling face.

Will turns.

Harpington grins.

He picks up Lisa's suitcase, hands it to her.

Harpington, "I'll sit with him. There's a change room up the hall and a cafeteria near the reception."

Lisa gets up, gives Harpington a hug.

She touches his bandaged hand, glances at his plastered ankle.

Harpington, "No worries, eight stitches and five weeks, maybe six."

Lisa nods.

Pensive, her eyes go to Buddy.

Harpington, "He'll be fine..."

Tears roll down her cheeks.

Harpington pulls out a hanky, wipes her eyes.

Harpington, "Really, trust me."

Lisa smiles slightly, walks to the door.

Will, alongside her, looks back at Harpington, unknowing what to make of him.

Harpington reaches in his pocket, "Will, here."

He pulls out a brand new big box of crayons.

Will squints.

Lisa watches.

Harpington, "For you and your Dad, when he wakes, okay?"

Will takes the crayons, "Okay."

They leave.

Harpington walks to the window.

Buddy stirs, wakes.

He yanks his handcuffed right hand, "Shit."

He sits up, moves to get out of bed but his left ankle is handcuffed, also.

He flops back in bed, "So whose guinea pig am I now?"

Harpington, "I'm sorry I was late last night."

Buddy checks over Harpington's wounds, "Your boys were enough. Looks like you got your kicks somewhere else."

Harpington, "They weren't my men."

Buddy, "Sure, sure. Since when aren't you the mad Doc's best friend?"

Harpington, "The mad Doc's in jail. I told you, I'm your--"

Buddy, "So why the hell do you have me like this?"

Harpington, "It's for your own good."

Buddy, "You like your jokes a lot, don't you? You and the whole stinking world like--"

Harpington, "No, and I--"

Buddy, "Don't give me your shit! Just let me out of here."

Harpington, "You're going to Chirikof Island."

Buddy shuts his eyes, "I have some unfinished business."

Harpington, "It's organized."

* * * * *

Chapter 40 - Burial

* * * * *

Cemetery.

A concrete headstone leans against a seat:

"Jamie Livingston

June 18, 2061 - June 21, 2086

May love, peace and wisdom be with him, wherever his journeys take him"

A large pile of dirt lies next to the headstone.

Will holds Buddy's hand as Buddy kneels next to Jamie's casket, in front of a newly dug grave, "Was my Uncle Jamie bad?"

Buddy, "No, Will."

A Minister and two workers wait for Buddy to give the okay.

Harpington and Lisa are close by.

Feet stands further away, beard trimmed and in clean clothes.

His son, middle aged, has his arm around Feet's shoulders.

Will, "Why did he die so young?"

Buddy, "He was a good person... but very, very foolish."

Buddy rises.

The workers lower the casket.

* * * * *

Chapter 41 - Home

* * * * *

Normal hospital room.

Buddy packs his duffle bag.

Lisa stands at the door, "They say Chirikof is nice. Cold, but nice."

Buddy turns.

Her hair is down and she wears her Bangkok red shirt.

Buddy looks away.

Lisa, "Why didn't we tell each other our real names?"

Buddy, "We were deluded like normal people, thinking tomorrow will always be okay."

Lisa, "I could have found you."

Buddy, "So it took six years."

Lisa, "Buddy, do you still love me?"

Buddy stares out the window, "I don't know..."

He turns back to her, "I don't know if I know how to love anymore."

* * * * *

Helicopter landing pad.

Harpington stands near a futuristic helicopter as a police car drives onto the landing.

Buddy gets out, holding a color brochure.

The front shows Chirikof Island, Alaska.

He eyes Harpington over suspiciously.

Harpington smiles, "It's all true."

Buddy, "Bullshit."

Harpington, "Well, there are some cows there, but other than that just seven of the wisest guys on this planet. And you're their next student."

Buddy, "I thought I was being punished."

Harpington, "Hey, a scared Congress made the laws, but the guys on the top ain't all dumb."

Buddy, "I don't--"

Buddy spots Lisa and Will as they drive up.

Harpington, "I invited them to come for the flight, so they know where you are. Relatives are welcome to visit while you're in training."

Will races to Buddy, "Daddy!"

They hug.

Lisa walks over, holding the same Chirikof brochure.

She and Buddy lock eyes for a short eternity.

Harpington, "Ready, folks?"

They climb onboard.

* * * * *

Harpington pilots the helicopter.

He hands Will a bag of jellybeans.

Will, "Thanks."

Lisa, "Harpington, is this brochure true?"

Harpington, "Well, Sid wrote it and he's got Scire-sapere's Disease, also. So the odds are very good."

Will, "I want to live on Chirikof, too."

Buddy, "There's no Santa Claus."

Will, "Oh, I know there's no Santa Claus. It's just a trick parents use to make their kids behave."

Buddy, "No Easter Bunny, no Fairy God Mother--"

Harpington, "You wouldn't believe how many presidents and prime ministers contact Sid and the others for advice."

Buddy, "On running their countries?"

Harpington, "Hell, no."

Buddy, "Huh?"

Harpington, "How not to get seduced by their sexy secretaries!"

Harpington laughs, turns to Buddy, "I told you I'd take care of you."

* * * * *

Sid stands on the beach.

The Helicopter approaches, lands close to Sid.

They all get out.

Sid, "Welcome, Buddy."

Sid smiles, "You do recognize me, don't you?"

Buddy, "You came to my finale, but I don't know you."

Sid, "My name is Sid, and I've been waiting for you. It's time to be a butterfly and soar free."

Buddy's speechless.

Will, "Can I stay, Daddy?"

Lisa, "Will--"

Sid catches eyes with Harpington, who nods.

Sid, "I'm sorry, but kids are too selfish."

Will, "I'm not selfish, want some of my jellybeans?"

Sid smiles, as Will passes the test.

He takes some beans, "That's very kind of you, Will. I guess I should have said, most kids are too selfish."

Will, "Yeah. It's how you get taught, Mister Sid."

Sid, "Yes, very wise. Does he have Scire-sapere's Disease, also?"

Buddy, "Maybe."

Buddy smiles for the first time since Bangkok.

Will, "Hey, Daddy, you smiled!"

Buddy, "Yes, I think, maybe, I'm home. I belong here."

Lisa's eyes water.

Buddy, "What are the rules?"

Sid, "Everyone's nice to each other and we only speak the truth."

Will, "I can do that."

Lisa, "Honey--"

Will, "I want to stay with Daddy."

Buddy, "What about women? Any rules against ladies?"

Buddy catches eyes with Lisa, who looks away.

Sid, "We've never had a woman here, but exceptions are part of life."

Will, "Mommy, stay, too."

Lisa, "No, honey, I, I can't."

Buddy, "Maybe we could breed a new type of humans."

Lisa turns back to Buddy.

Buddy, "Lisa--"

Lisa, "We'll visit some time."

She kisses Buddy on the cheek.

Lisa, "Will, time to go."

Will, "When can we come back?"

Lisa, "Give your Daddy a hug, we'll talk later."

Will hugs Buddy.

Buddy, "Chin up, Will."

Harpington, Lisa and Will board the helicopter.

Buddy's eyes go soft, "Sid, now I'm not sure I belong here."

Sid, "Where do you belong, Buddy?"

Buddy, "With Lisa and Will."

Sid, "I know."

Buddy watches the helicopter as it rises off the beach.

He tries to wave.

His hand stays up in the air without moving.

Tears roll down his cheeks.

Will's face presses against the window.

He waves madly to Buddy.

Tears run down Lisa's face as she pulls out tissues.

Will sees Buddy crying, "Mommy, look, Daddy's crying."

Lisa looks.

She half smiles, half laughs.

The tears flood.

Lisa, "Harpington--"

Harpington, "I was waiting."

He lowers the helicopter, cuts the engine.

* * * * *

Buddy walks slowly toward the helicopter as the door opens.

Out jumps Will, he races into Buddy's arms.

Buddy, "Hey, Will!"

Will, "Daddy!"

Lisa steps down, wiping her tears.

Buddy and Lisa's eyes hold.

Buddy smiles like six years ago.

They walk toward each other, Will in Buddy's arms.

Buddy drops Will down.

He and Lisa embrace, kiss passionately.

Will, "Hurray! Hurray! We're here to stay, Mr. Sid!"

Will runs to Sid, who tosses Will back a jellybean.

Harpington carries two large suitcases out of the helicopter.

On one is written LISA, the other WILL.

Buddy and Lisa continue their hug and kiss.

Harpington bows low to Sid, "Right again, Sid."

Sid smiles a Buddha smile.

Harpington climbs back in the helicopter, and takes off.

He watches the beach as he pulls away.

With a huge smile on his face, Will holds one hand with Sid, waves with the other toward Harpington.

Harpington grabs his phone, calls, "Yes, Sir, Mr. President. Everything is under control. The experiment is on, and steaming hot."

A swarm of butterflies surround Buddy and Lisa, still embracing.

* * * * *

The end

About the Author

Thank you for reading "Security Act 2070", one of Steve Weissman's 13 stories now available worldwide. We hope you enjoyed the "journey" with Buddy, Lisa, Will, Harpington, Sid and the other characters.

Steve has been an international Buddhist meditation teacher since 1987. He was a resident teacher at a meditation center in Thailand for 25 years, teaching over 8,000 students from more than 85 countries. He currently lives in Australia, and continues teaching at various centers worldwide.

It was in his early years of teaching that Steve started weaving in entertaining short stories. One of his students commented on how they thought Steve could successfully write a screenplay. At the time Steve had far too much work to consider such a project, and dropped the thought.

Several years later, Steve was contemplating the Buddhist philosophy concerning death in different realms of existence, particularly the higher realms. In those realms, beings are thought to live an extremely long time and may come to believe their existence is permanent. He wondered what it would be like to explain what death is to someone, who had absolutely no knowledge about the aging process or death. These thoughts sparked more thoughts, and three days later, Steve finished his first screenplay draft.

After polishing that script and experimenting with a few more, Steve realized that no one has yet produced a dramatic movie of the Buddha's life for Western audiences. Yes, there are many biographies of the Buddha, but a biography is a biography, and very difficult to create the excitement that movie audiences want.

So, why not write a semi-fictional biography, with the dimension and character of a true "Hero's journey"?

Steve's movie script, "The Great Quest" is that story, which has the potential to become the first Hollywood-level, dramatic movie of the Buddha's life produced for both Western and worldwide audiences. <<http://thegreatquest.net>>

But although "The Great Quest" has made 22 script contest finals, Steve's many attempts to attract producers, directors, actors, agents and managers, has not yet produced fruit.

Understanding more about the film industry, Steve realized that a film of this magnitude - with good directing & acting - could be Oscar-worthy, but it would be very expensive. So he decided to write more scripts that were lower budget, thinking that if one of these would sell, he

might get a better response for "The Great Quest". These scripts have made another 36 finals, and he has now won 7 contests, with dozens more semi & quarterfinals.

But, again, Steve's attempts to attract Hollywood interest, has not yet produced fruit.

So now his thought is - turn the scripts into inexpensive short stories, and see what happens.

Do you have any possible connections with film personnel? If so, would you please pass "Security Act 2070" on to them. Steve will also gladly send all 13 of his stories to anyone who has a genuine interest in turning one or more of these into a film.

And, if you did enjoy this story and would like to help in even a small way, would you please take a few moments to leave a good review at your favorite retailer? More positive reviews will encourage others to read and enjoy it, too.

Thank you very much. You might be that special person who can help "Security Act 2070" and "The Great Quest" become wonderful movies.

More information about Steve's teaching can be found at <<https://rosemary-steve.org>>. And specific film/stories information can be found at <<http://thegreatquest.net/stories.htm>>.

* * * * *

Steve's 13 stories

The Great Quest

Drama Biopic

Based on the true story of the Buddha: The battles of a Prince who rejects riches and power, risks insanity and death, in a quest to find ultimate freedom.

Imprisoned in the Palace by his father, the time fruits when a naïve Siddhartha awakens to the realities of the world, and escapes in search of a deeper meaning to life. His devious, look-alike, unrelenting alter ego, Mara, presents the greatest obstacle, thwarting Siddhartha at every possible opportunity. Siddhartha also confronts barbaric Brahmin Priests, a war-raging King and evil spirits before he attempts harsh austerities and starvation. Barely escaping madness and death, Siddhartha strengthens himself for his illustrious battle with Mara, when only one will survive.

ISBN 978-0-6487941-0-3

Open Your Eyes, Dude

Romantic Comedy

Relaxing at the beach before a seminar with the world's most renown, yet reclusive eye surgeon, playboy doctor Tom has been given an ultimative - stay a bachelor stuck in his boring job or join an elite group of doctors keen to be in the Senate. However, he has just one week to find a wife who will enhance his public image. When he meets secretive, gentle new-ager Tricia in the surf, she intrigues him and then escapes his advances before he can discover more. He follows her but confronts the scheming tricks of a jealous neurosurgeon, and his own selfish ways. Finally he seduces her for one night, and actually finds that he is falling in love with her. But what happens when she discovers his original motivation?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-5-7

Barred Engagement

Crime Thriller, Romance

Travis and Janie are lovers from high school, engaged to be married, with her father welcoming Travis more than his own son. But when they find out Travis has a different real last name, all hell breaks loose. With her father threatening to kill Travis if they tried to marry, Janie cancels the marriage to save Travis, but he won't give up that easily. Despite the danger, a resolute Travis must fight not only for his love, but for his life. And little did he expect to find out how Janie's father was connected to his parent's deaths.

ISBN 978-0-6487941-8-9

Love, Mysterious

Fantasy Romantic Comedy

Cupid's top marriage agent from who-knows-where, Kolby has a massive problem. His job – and Cupid's life - are on the line unless Kolby can fulfill the hardest of all assignments! Rumor has it the couple were Romeo & Juliet, Anthony & Cleopatra, plus believe it or not - Adam & Eve. But when there's a time limit on the love arrow's potion, things don't always work out the way you'd like. He shot the greatest two soul mates as little kids, but the girl was born to the wrong parents and moved halfway around the world. Kolby must get them back together and make sure they stay that way. He's in a race against time to save Cupid and Love on Earth. And if that wasn't enough, he also struggles with another love agenda of his own.

ISBN 978-0-6487941-6-5

Mick, a kid who fought

Coming-of-age Drama

Brought up by an immigrant Polish father who never "stirs a tiger", quiet Mick shies away from any confrontation, even when he's denied his well earned High School award with a desperately needed scholarship by a jealous teacher. Yet after the girl he loves calls him a loser, Mick chooses to identify with his freedom fighting grandfather who died rocking too many boats. Will Mick learn to fight against bullies and win back his love, or will his father prevent him?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-3-3

Vicki in Viewland

Fantasy Adventure Animation Comedy Spoof

ALICE IN WONDERLAND meets THE WIZARD OF OZ in the land of foolish views.

A 13-year-old's crush on the paper boy has her falling head over heels, landing in the fantasy world of Viewland where the vicious President labels her a terrorist and tries to annihilate her. Aided by a five foot tall Bluejay and Count Alf the Fourteenth, she confronts foolish view after view until she must defeat the President in order to return home. Yet is the President the only one she must battle? Or is there someone more ominous who awaits her?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-7-1

For Life

Drama

For years Taylor, the president of a leading euthanasia group, has pumped all his energy and drive into his "mission". But now he must confront the reality of his own mother's illness and face-off with his estranged anti-euthanasia daughter, who holds power of attorney and medical decisions for her grandmother. Fearing the worst of her hated father, she does what she can to stop Taylor, yet his buddies also come knocking on her grandmother's door. Meanwhile Taylor's incestuous sister-in-law plays her sexual games and plans what to do with her share of the inheritance.

ISBN 978-0-6487941-7-2

Security Act 2070

Thriller Drama Sci-fi

Sixty years in the future, materialism reigns supreme in America, "One nation under Money". Those who protest the accepted creed are declared fanatical enemies of the State. After losing his parents and his love, the death of his brother tips Buddy over the edge into the "disease" which pits him against the culture. Swiftly suppressing his protest, the authorities commit him to a mental hospital where a doctor seeks a live specimen for research.

ISBN 978-0-6488482-1-9

Get Updated, System's Archaic

Coming-of-age Dramedy

Ken and Aaron's childhood sibling rivalry continues as adults. Though Aaron tries to make it good, even saving Ken's life, Ken's hatred stays. When Aaron shows up for a family reunion with Rahula, a half-Asian adopted son, Ken's prejudice grows, and multiplies a hundred-fold

when Rahula and Ken's daughter fall for each other. Can the past be healed or will the reunion tear the family further apart?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-0-2

The Kalama Awakening

Cult Drama

On a spiritual quest, young naive Julie's longing for freedom and devotion makes her an easy target for a cult Guru's lust and her boyfriend's willingness to trade her for power and fame. Isolated and drugged, she ends up in a nightmare of betrayal and manipulation, yet resists being brainwashed into submission and becoming the Guru's sex slave. Sage, an ex-devotee, knows the evils that await and risks his life to rescue her. Yet he also becomes caught in the Guru's web and it's up to Julie whether she can save both of them.

ISBN 978-0-6488482-6-4

Leaves fall

Fantasy Dramey

In a world where soulmates meet, an inept fellow has failed constantly for over 300 years. Even when his true love appears, rather than being ecstatic to see him, she yearns for her past life as a celibate nun. Clever, quick and breaking the rules, she outfoxes mating attempts, not realizing that they are an eternal pair. So what happens when a ninety year old nun, celibate all her life, dies and is spontaneously reborn as a young beautiful woman in a world where everyone meets their true mate?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-2-6

Another Chance

Drama Thriller

Brad, a star High School quarterback/Valedictorian, turns bad, becoming a local drug lord. Despite his wrong ways, he longs for the approval of his virtuous father. When Brad finally entices his father into his nightmare world, a surprised and shocked Brad watches his Dad out perform his own evil ways. When he awakens from his hell, he tries to reform and plans to marry a homely, innocent Librarian whom he truly loves - but will his fate allow this?

ISBN 978-0-6488482-4-0

The Burden of Angels

Fantasy Comedy Short

God warns goofy Humphrey, he's on the verge of failing Angel School when an elite class of angels head to earth to help major catastrophes, yet poor Humphrey plans to aid just one man who lost a piece of paper.

ISBN 978-0-6488482-9-5