

***What My Eyes***

***Have Seen***

***By***

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## Chapter 1

I unpacked another box, hating my self-appointed task. I stood in the kitchen, pulling cups out of a cardboard box, willing myself away to somewhere exotic. Visions of tropical islands danced in my head. Daydreaming was as close as I'd get to an island oasis, at least anytime soon. The sound of my son's tiny voice drew me back to my mundane reality.

Jacob, at last check, was playing cars in the living room. It was one of the few rooms in the house that was almost ready to live in--almost. We'd purchased the thing on a whim three months earlier. It was my husband's great idea to pack the family up and move to the mid-west. To my credit, I hadn't wrung his neck yet.

"Jacob needs a place he can run free, play sports, and make friends." I heard Sean's voice in my head. He was right, of course. The city was no place to raise little Jacob. The attempted robbery we survived proved that. Thankfully, we'd come out of that unharmed, but in desperate need of a change of venue.

We looked in the paper, found an ad, and bought the place sight unseen. The ad had been accurate, in some respects. Four story, old farmhouse, ready for family's TLC. What the ad forgot to mention was how neglected the place was. No one had lived here for the last five years. I'd spent my first two days de-webbing the entire area. I wasn't even sure I

liked it. Sean, my husband, loved it. He had dreams of eventually getting the farm functional. The man had never even seen a cow up close, let alone raised one. I didn't have the heart to point that out to him.

We'd been lucky in respects to relocating. Sean's company had a plant here and had been looking for an engineer. He put in for the transfer and got. Everything had worked out perfectly.

Wiping my dusty hands on my jeans, I turned the corner and heard Jacob talking to someone. "No, I don't think I'm allowed to do that." he said, his voice low.

My heart leapt into my throat. Sean wasn't due home for another hour, and we didn't know anyone here. My pace quickened, and I slid into the living room.

Jacob turned and looked at me. He wore a huge smile that went up to his blue eyes. He was certainly his father's son. Quickly, I scanned the room. No one was there. "Who were you talking to, sweetie?"

Jacob glanced over to his left, and shook his head slightly. "No one." He turned his head again. "Myself."

He'd never talked to himself in the city. He never really talked to anyone other than Sean and I. Jacob was pushing five, and Kindergarten was coming up. He wasn't the most social child in the world, but neither was his father. I never thought that trait would be hereditary. I'd have screened my applicants better if I knew that. Just kidding.

“Okay, babes , you want to come help me in the kitchen?” I asked. He shook his head no. I walked over, bent down, and kissed his cheek. “You like it here, don’t you?”

“Oh yeah, I’m gonna go out and see the barn tonight with Dad, and I’m gonna go to the pond and try to catch a shark, and I’m gonna take Holly out to play ball...”

Patting his head, I stood up. He’d go on for another hour if I let him. I was glad he’d mentioned Holly, I had gotten so wrapped up in housework that I’d lost track of where she was. Being fat, black, and a dog made her hard to miss. She was nowhere to be found. I headed out the front door to check for her. She was used to living in a tiny apartment in the city, and being walked only twice a day. Now she had a huge yard to run free in, and I wasn’t really sure she’d ever actually stop running. She’d never been out without a leash. My luck she’d be halfway back to the city already.

“Holly!” I called out, as I opened the front door. I heard a small whimper and looked down onto the porch. Holly was laying there with her head up, looking at me. I called her to me. She stood slowly, and came to me for affection. That was *not* my department. No, Sean was the animal lover in our house. I fed and took care of her, but the actual contact I left up to Sean.

Backing out of the way, I let her past. She stood firm and refused to come into the house. She’d done this when we’d first arrived, too. Sean had had to pick her up and carry her in. I wasn’t about to try to lift her. She weighed at least ninety pounds.

“Suit yourself.” I said, and closed the door.

I headed into the living room with Jacob. I walked past him as he sat on the floor and played with his cars. At least he wasn't babbling to things that weren't there. Honing in on my mission, I found my target - a box filled with my stone angel collection. My mother had once given me one as a birthday present. They were supposed to be for your garden, but I didn't have one in the city so I put it on my fireplace. I accumulated more throughout the years and they amassed into a rather nice collection. Now, I had to find a place to put them. I glanced around the room. The mantle here wasn't as large as our old one. This fireplace had a hearth that was built up off the ground about a foot. Perfect. I began the arduous task of setting them all on it, and the phone rang.

“Be right back, sweetie.” I said to Jacob as I ran past him, towards the kitchen.

“Okay,” he called back.

We hadn't had a chance yet to have the phone company out, so the only working phone in the house was in the kitchen. It was a rotary phone. Jacob didn't even know what it was when we first arrived. That confirmed how old I'd been feeling as of late. Sean promised that the phone guy was coming today. He better. I spent more time re-dialing because of my inability to turn the dial right then actually talking on the phone.

“Hello?”

Sean's deep voice greeted me. "Hey, Sunshine, it's me. Listen, I'm running a little late. I'll be home as soon as I can, honey. How are things going out there? Enjoying being a farmer yet?"

"Umm...*err*....no, but I'm thinking about putting pigtails in my hair and shooting a possum for dinner. Sound good?"

He laughed long and hard in my ear. "Hmm, pigtails sound nice. Can I file that away for future bedroom use? They'd make nice handles for me while you're on your knees drinking me down, baby."

"Hmm, me on my knees huh? I kind of like the idea of your head between my legs."

He chuckled. "That can be arranged. I'll call you on my way home. I love you."

"Love you too."

I heard a loud thud from the living room, and headed in that direction. Jacob was sitting in the center of the floor with his head bent down. There were three round objects lying next to him on the floor. I walked up to inspect them further. They were the heads of my cement angels. I resisted the urge to shout an obscenity, and I looked down at Jacob.

"Jacob, what on earth possessed you to break mommy's angels?" I tried to hide the anger in my voice. I didn't want to scare him, but I wasn't going to allow this type of behavior to get started.

He looked up at me through his veil of blonde hair. “But I didn’t do it...I told them not to touch them...I told them...”

I put my hand up to quiet him, and bent down on one knee. “Please don’t blame this on someone else.” I moved my hand out to show him the room. “You’re the only one here. I hate to say it, kiddo, but you’re busted.”

His eyes filled with tears. I felt horrible, and automatically put my arms around him. “No, Mommy, I didn’t do it!”

I could feel something hovering around behind me. The air suddenly felt thicker and alive with static electricity. I turned around quickly, but nothing was there. I thought I heard a faint giggle, and pulled Jacob closer to me. I’d had enough unpacking for one day. We needed some lunch and fresh air; the move was definitely getting to us.

A knock on the front door made me jump. Jacob cried harder. I had to try to calm him before I went to answer it. So far country living was shaping up to be just wonderful.

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Tom Mason pulled himself out from under the staircase. I was shocked when he’d actually shown up. When Sean said the telephone company had promised to come out today, I assumed that they were like the city, which meant they’d be here sometime next week. He’d been working steadily for the last hour, humming. I listened to him singing softly under his breath.

“Hmm...my eyes have seen the glor-y of the com-ing of the Lord...glo-ry, glo’ry hal-le-lu-jah...his truth is march-ing on.”

As much as I tried to fight against it, I found myself humming the same damn thing. Not that I had anything against hymns. It was just that I was raised Catholic, and their idea of a song pretty much meant a choir full of pre-pubescent boys singing three levels higher than a human could hear.

“There you go ma’am. That should do you.” he said, standing to dust himself off. I wanted to reach out and knock the cobwebs out of his red hair, but I thought that might seem a bit forward.

I offered him a glass of lemonade and he accepted. He looked like he was about to say something, but held back. We made small talk for a little while before he did it again. This time I was ready for him.

“Mr. Mason, is there something on your mind?”

He looked at me, surprised. “Why...umm...*err*...its just that, I was wondering why you picked this place.”

I looked around the kitchen. The beautiful old woodwork was shining, the oak floors were looking like new again. I couldn’t imagine why the house had been on the market as long as it had been.

“We got a heck of a deal. The place is beautiful, or at least it will be when I’m done cleaning. I can’t figure out why no one wanted it, although that worked out for us. We got it cheap.”

“Well, ma’am...”



“Sunshine,” I said. He gave me a puzzled look. “No, really, my first name is Sunshine. My dad was a hippie. Everyone calls me Sunny.”

This seemed to appease him, and he smiled at me. “Well, Sunshine...Sunny, it’s just that the place has a bad reputation. I can’t say I blame the folks in town, not after what happened here.”

The look on my face must have shown that I didn’t know what he was talking about.

“Oh, my...no one told you...umm...Elijah Johnson, he umm... he killed his wife and kids here.” He took another large gulp of lemonade. “They found the bodies a few weeks later. Elijah hung himself out in the barn, and well, people say that the Johnson’s are still here.”

I sat down at the table. It took a minute for all of this to soak in. “Tell me more.”

Tom told me how Mary Johnson, Elijah’s wife, had been in town talking about how her husband was acting strange, out of character. Her friends say that they told her everything would be fine, and sent her home with some baked goods. Several weeks later, they found her body at the foot of the stairs. Her neck had been broken, and she showed signs of having struggled. The children, Emily and William, had been found in their beds. He had used an ax on them. No one in town knew what had caused Elijah to snap, but, in hindsight, everyone said they saw it coming. It had happened twenty years ago. Tom had just turned nineteen when he heard the news. He said that the town was stunned at the loss of Mary and the children. Over

the years, a few families moved in here, and all left right away. The townsfolk say that the place is haunted now.

It was dark by the time Tom finished up. He left me his home phone number, just in case, and headed out. I brought Jacob into the kitchen with me to help me fix dinner. His version of helping was sitting at the table coloring in his notepad. It kept him in my sight range, and that made me happy after hearing what Tom had said. I knew what Sean would say about all of this. He wasn't a believer in the paranormal. I, however, was.

The kitchen window looked out over the barn. I kept expecting the ghost of Elijah to come walking out of the old brown barn with a pitchfork. The phone rang and I dropped a plate onto the counter.

“Yeah?”

“Hey, sweetie, I'm almost home. I'm headed down Walnut St. now, and I should be there in less than ten minutes. Can I get your promise that we'll play country girl bedroom games when I get home. I've been thinking about how good you feel under me all friggin' day. ”

“Yes, babes, we can play any game you want once you're home.” I debated on telling him that the house he'd bought had had a family slaughtered in it. In truth, I wasn't quite sure how to broach the subject. It wasn't the norm to claim that the house you lived in was haunted. In the end, I decided against telling him just yet. I picked up the broken pieces of plate and told him I'd see him soon.

Turning to check on Jacob, I found that he was gone. I walked out into the living room and he wasn't there. Something rolled towards me. I looked down the hallway towards the staircase and froze. There, rolling towards me was one of the stone angel heads.

“Jacob!” I shouted out. After hearing what Tom had told me I didn't find my son playing with angel heads very funny.

“What Mommy?” he asked from behind me. I jumped a foot from him and looked back at the angel. Panic seized hold of me as another angel head rolled towards us. I turned and snatched Jacob up, heading towards the living room.

Cold chilling laughter pursed us as I ran with Jacob in my arms. He buried his head in my neck. I held tight to him. As I rounded the corner, I saw the kitchen. All the cupboard doors were wide open, and my plates were stacked in a pile in the center of the floor. I started to back up and felt something bump into my heel. I looked down to see a gray, round angel head lying next to my foot.

The phone rang, and I made a mad dash for it. “Yes.” I was half expecting a cackle to come through it.

“Sunny, it's me again...did the phone guy finish up?” Sean asked.

I took a deep breath and collected myself. I was being silly and I knew it.

“Yeah, why?”

“His truck is at the end of the lane here, the door’s wide open, and no one’s in there. Are you sure he didn’t have something to do down here?”

My mind wasn’t working fast enough. I heard laughter again, and I turned wildly around, trying to watch all the entrances to the room.

“Oh, wait, here comes someone... this must be him...” Sean’s voice got softer, he must have pulled the phone away from his mouth to talk to Tom. I listened and picked up bits and pieces of what he was saying. “Yeah...I like the house....oh, he’s four, yeah...Sunshine...” Tom knew my name, why would he ask Sean again? “Oh, yeah, hold on...Honey, are you there?”

“Sean, who’s with you?” I half asked, half screamed.

He asked the person’s name, and I bit back a scream as he spoke. “Elijah Johnson, says he’s a close neighbor of ours.”

I dropped the phone and sprang down to retrieve it. “Sean? Sean!... Run...get the hell away from him!”

“What? Honey...Oh my God!” Sean cried out.

I dropped the phone again and ran towards the front door. Laughter rose up all around us. Jacob was getting heavy to hold, but I didn’t dare put him down. I went to open the door and found it locked. I unlocked it and went to pull it open. A gust of wind smacked it out of my hands and blew it shut. Wind circled us. Jacob screamed into my ear, and I kept trying to pry the door open. I could hear Holly barking on the other side.

“Open this door NOW!” I screamed, yanking on it. “He can’t have my family, too...he can’t!” I don’t know why I felt compelled to talk to the wife, but I did.

The wind stopped and the door swung open. Holly bared her teeth as she snarled. I called her name, and she stopped.

I ran down the steps, followed closely by the dog, and headed down the lane towards the road. Tom’s white van sat off in the distance, and Sean’s car was parked next to it. I called his name. He didn’t answer.

I was forced to put Jacob down. I physically couldn’t hold him any longer. We approached the cars slowly. Holly growled. I took that as a bad sign, and held Jacob’s hand tight in mine.

We walked around the van and saw Sean’s body lying across the stone lane. I cried out and ran to him, still holding onto Jacob. I dropped to my knees and touched him. He moaned as I rolled him over.

Holly barked wildly behind me. I turned around and came face to face with a man. His salt and pepper hair and pale skin put him in his early forties. The pale gray eyes gave him away. People did not have eyes like that.

“Elijah.” I said softly.

He looked at me and smiled. “Mary? What are you doing out here?” he asked. I looked behind me, expecting to see the ghost of Mary Johnson standing there. “Why is Willy out of bed? Its late, the boy should be sleepin’.”

I realized that he was talking to me. He was speaking to me as if I were Mary Johnson, the wife he killed, and he thought Jacob was his son. I pulled Jacob behind me, protectively.

Elijah's gaze went to Sean's body. "I caught him this time. I caught him sneakin' out here to see you. That boy, comin' round here and touchin' you. How long? How long has it been happening? How long's it been since you had your monthly bleed? I ain't raisin' no bastard child. You're a whore, and ya do the Devil's biddin', and it has to stop." he said, taking a step closer to me.

"Sean, get up!" I screamed.

"No, he can't help ya now, no one can. It's time for you to be judged. My momma told me you were no good. She said that I'd be lying with evil, and I was. Now I'm gonna fix this. I'm gonna wipe the evil away. Give me the boy." He put his hand out towards Jacob.

"Run!" a voice screamed out from behind me. I reached down and grabbed Jacob into my arms. Sean wasn't moving. I looked behind me and saw Tom Mason standing there. His eyes were looking past me at Elijah.

"Go!" he shouted.

"But Sean."

"Go NOW!"

I didn't know which way to go. Our closest neighbors were at least ten miles down the road, and it was pitch black. Jacob fought to get down.

He hit the ground and took off in the direction of the house. That was last on my list of places to be, and I took off after him.

“Jacob, stop!” I kept yelling. He ignored me and ran as fast as he could up the front steps and into the house. I narrowly missed making it in before the door slammed shut behind me.

I grabbed hold of Jacob and spun him around. He didn’t give me a chance to ask him why he ran in here.

“They called me, Mommy. They said they’d help.”

I looked around. There was no one here. I knew better than that. I could feel the presence of something great all around us. It was bearing down on us, daring me to defy it. Jacob looked behind him at the foot of the stairs.

“Okay.”

I straightened my stand and stared at the base of the stairs. Nothing.  
“Okay. What, Jacob?”

“They said move.”

I just stood there, looking at him. *Move?* I didn’t understand why they wanted me to move. The front door burst open, and just missed slamming into me. Tom rushed in, carrying a Sean over his shoulder.

“Move!” Jacob cried out.

This time I listened. I pushed Tom towards the hall. Jacob was already backed into a closet there. The front windows blew in at us. Glass flew everywhere. I could feel tiny pieces of it slashing at my back. Had I stayed near the door I would have been shredded. Tom leaned forward. I saw that he was carrying Sean. I helped lay him down.

“What the hell is going on?”

Tom looked at me. “Tonight marks the twentieth anniversary of the deaths.”

I fell to my knees and looked towards the windows. “Why doesn’t he come in?”

Tom looked towards the front of the house. “I don’t know.”

Standing up, I patted his shoulder. I ran into the kitchen to get the phone. I picked it up to call the sheriff.

“Mary...Come out to the barn, Mary. Come on.” I heard a raspy voice say. I slammed the phone down and looked out at the barn. Elijah’s head lurched up from the other side of the window. I fell backwards, screaming, as I stared into Elijah’s dead, gray eyes. The back door blew open and the stack of plates came crashing down to the floor. I scrambled backwards on my butt to get away.

“Sunny?”

Tom joined me in the kitchen. I got to my feet and looked at the window. Elijah was gone.



“He was there!”

“Come on, now, let’s get you back into the living room. Your husband needs you.”

I followed close behind him. Sean was still lying on the hallway floor, with Jacob standing guard next to him. I bent down near them, and looked at Tom.

“I’m going to go grab the first aide kit. I’ll be right back.”

Jacob grabbed my pant leg. “What, Honey, you want to come with me?” He nodded his head. I picked him up and carried him up the stairs. I heard Tom humming again.

“I have seen *Him* in the watch-fires...I can read *His* righteous sentence...*His* day is march-ing on.”

The last I needed to hear right now was that. I cleared my head and continued up the stairs. I had to set Jacob down long enough to get the hallway closet door open. I had just put the first aid kit on the top shelf yesterday. I snatched it out, and headed back down the stairs with Jacob following close at my heels. I reached the bottom, but there was no sign of Tom or Sean.

“Sean?” I walked towards the kitchen. “Tom?” I looked out the back window and saw a figure going into the barn. I looked harder. I saw that it was carrying something big. Sean!

I ran towards the back door. Jacob tried to follow me--I turned and dropped to my knees. "No, baby, you stay here. You take Holly and you get in the closet, and don't you come out, you hear me? Don't you come out!" I pulled him close to me, and hugged him tight. "Now go!"

I watched him take Holly's collar and pull her into the closet with him. I ran towards the back door, and hesitated before I grabbed the handle. I fully expected Elijah Johnson's ghost to pop out and get me, but it didn't. I ran back towards the barn. As I approached, I heard Tom humming the same song again.

I came into the barn fast, and staggered backwards when I saw what was waiting for me. Sean's body was hanging from the rafters. His face had started to turn blue, and his neck was bent at a funny angle. I turned and threw up. I wiped my face fast and looked up to see Tom walking towards me with an ax.

"Tom?"

"You shouldn't have come here. This place was sacred. You've tainted the ground by walking on it. You city folk don't belong here with my Mary."

*His Mary?* I looked at him. He looked to be around forty. I thought back to what Elijah said, about Mary having a lover, a young boy from town, who had gotten her pregnant. I looked up at Sean's lifeless body. Elijah's face stared back at me.

"You did it... you killed them. You killed them all."

He walked towards me, ax in hand. “No, I didn’t kill them all. I came out here that night to get Mary. She was going to run away with me. I found him wandering around the grounds covered in blood. I went in the house and found Mary dead. I made sure he couldn’t hurt anyone else. He took my Mary and I punished him for it. I punished him.”

I tried to run for the door. Tripping over something, I fell to the floor. I screamed and tried to get to my feet. Tom was walking towards me. My fingers moved over something hard and cold. I looked down at what I must have tripped over. It was a pitchfork. I was suddenly very thankful that the place once was an operational farm. I clutched it in my hand tightly.

Tom moved up in front of me, singing his song loudly.

“Mommy?” I heard Jacob’s voice. I turned and saw him standing in the middle of the yard.

“Go, Jacob! Go!”

I turned back in time to see Tom raise the ax above his head. I yanked the pitchfork up and drove it into his chest. I tried to back up fast, but I lost my footing and staggered. I saw the ax coming at my head, but could do nothing to stop it. It only hurt for a minute.

“Mommy...”

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Sheriff Burkes pulled up outside the old farm house and parked his car. The place was lit up like the fourth of July. Three of his cruisers had responded to the scene, and two ambulances were parked near the entrance. He gave some thought to the number of times he'd responded to calls out at this particular farm house and shuddered.

He made a silent promise to himself to retire within the next year. He'd been on the job for almost thirty years, and in all that time only this place had haunted his nightmares. Now he had another set of dead bodies to clean up. Three in all, his deputy had told him. He walked up onto the old porch and opened the door. A large black lab was on the floor growling at the paramedic who was trying to get near the little blonde haired boy.

“Son? What’s the dog’s name?” he asked the boy. The kid didn’t respond at first, then he began rocking back and forth, humming something softly.

*“Mine eyes have seen the glor-y of the comin’ of the Lord...”*

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**THE END**

Look for the sequel to What My Eyes Have Seen! To read more of Mandy M. Roth’s work please visit her website [www.mandyroth.com](http://www.mandyroth.com) or email her at [mandy@mandyroth.com](mailto:mandy@mandyroth.com)