

Spirit  
Unbroken  
the two sides of love

奇跡

Rick & Alice Garlock



PORTLAND • OREGON  
INKWATERPRESS.COM

---

---

*God determines your fate. All you have  
to do is pretend to find it.*

---

---

Chapter 1

# the end of the beginning

*I snapped to reality with the gentle touch of Rob's hand. I wasn't sure if it was the rain on the plane's window or the moisture welling in the corner of my eyes that caused my blurry vision as I looked down over Fukuoka City, Japan.*

*Rob had promised since marriage to make this trip someday – and suddenly 23 years later, someday was now. He was not negligent in keeping his promise even if his blond hair was receding; his mustache showed flecks of gray and his stomach had grown six inches since our marriage vows. A doting father, a hardworking businessman and a faithful husband, all 5'7" of his stubby frame was anything but negligent.*

*No, this was a dream of patience. For almost 50 years I had no connection with my maternal family. Mom tortured us with our lack of heritage – she never taught us Japanese, never instilled pride in our family roots and never took us to Japan to meet our relatives. I guess I should never say "never," because outside that window, never was now...*

*We had left Tokyo at dusk, and from the air a sunset never looked more new. As we skirted silently down toward Fukuoka, my heart never felt so refreshed. I was so ALIVE. I was about to touch the family that took so long to find. I was about to hold my blood in my hand and bond with my family.*

*I was about to complete the end of my journey, and I was scared.*

*Fears of early childhood rejections crept in and fed on a newfound fear of rejection again. Suddenly I was thrown back to that small town in rural Indiana where everybody knows the goings on of everyone else, especially the latest news of the arrest of Mr. Wesson for public intoxication.*

*But the alcoholic rages were only a small portion of the embarrassment that I carried. The realization that my own father actually planned the abuse of my sister and me was ingrained in our souls for a lifetime. The damage my father caused and the violation of the sanctity of our family forever weighted the plane down more than the five extra bags of luggage I had packed.*

*How ironic that I spent my formative years cowering from him, and now with the memory of the smell of his alcohol burning in my nostrils, he was present in my last thoughts before completing my journey.*

*As I crossed the Sea of Japan, a spirit unbroken; the two sides of love were very much present. One sitting beside me, and one whispering in the dark closet of my mind...*

---

“Amy! Get out of bed right now!”

I was so sleepy! ‘Daddy, just go away....PLEASE just go away. Don’t get me up again,’ I silently sobbed. I always wished he would go away but even at four years of age I knew better than to ignore his drunken roar. Stumbling barefoot into the kitchen, I was greeted with the foul stench of vodka in the air.

Daddy was flashing a shiny new pocketknife in front of my red-rubbed eyes. He stood there in all his foul smell of booze, his square frame outlining the rest of him. His light brown hair and weather-lined face betrayed his sly grin. My warning bells began to scream.

‘I’m awake now’ I thought, as fear gripped my shaking chest.

Seeing my body convulsing on the edge of tears, he commanded, “Take five steps back.” I froze; wanting to move but the weight of fear holding me down. He laughed in a tone I did not understand.

“Amy, take five steps back right now. I need to practice with my new knife and if you don’t do exactly as I say, then things could go

badly for you...and then I would be forced to practice on someone else. You don't want that, do you? You don't want to bleed and then be the cause of someone else to bleed would you? Now, take FIVE steps back! Five giant damn steps!"

I hesitated, not knowing what to do while sucking in so much air my lungs felt like they were going to explode.

"NOW dammit!"

I did as I was told. All the fear in the world could not keep me from wanting to protect Mommy, Kathy and little baby Brock.

"That's better," he cooed at me.

'I have to be brave,' I thought, as we all knew the harder we cry the more Daddy hurt us.

"Shut the hell up. Now do not move," he cautioned sadistically. I wasn't sure what was going to happen, but I didn't like the tone of that last remark.

'What could he possibly do to me that he hasn't done before?' my mind screamed. But I kept quiet as I concentrated. I wanted to be brave...and I couldn't look at Daddy. I would just hate him more if I did that.

All my life I wanted him to love me.

'Daddy, why don't you love me?' my mind wandered, when suddenly I was snapped to attention, freezing my body rigid as the knife struck the floor between my feet. Shocked and then by reflex, I began to hop frantically up and down.

"Daddy, no," I sobbed, scared by what he had just done, and of what he might do next. "Please don't hurt me. Please Daddy, don't! Please don't! DON'T!" My hands were flopping at the ends of limp arms like a bird trying to escape a cage it knew it could not. Staggering forward he removed the knife stuck in the floorboard, accompanied with his awful twisted smile, which he stuck flush in my face. His shirt hung open, and I could smell the stink of his sweat.

"Pretty good, huh?" he gloated. "I told you this knife was a winner."

"That's a sick mother of bitch you have there, Ammieee," he snorted, slurring my name. "Ain't that pathetic that she's in bed, dead to the world on prescription drugs while your life is in my hands? Mother

of a Bitch, ain't she? Hey that's pretty good, I guesst that means either you or your sister will grow up to be bitches. What the hell, it will probably turn out to be the both of you." Then, turning calm, he said, "Well, I won't let you grow up like her. This will toughen you up."

Inches from my face, he rose from his squat by putting both hands on my shoulders and pressing down hard. The blade passed next to my left ear as he arose. Out of the corner of my eye I could see the coldness of its steel as I continued to whimper.

"Stop that crying. I'm doing this for your own good, you sniveling snot. Now, I want you to take one giant, giant step backward for me."

As the pressure of his weight slowly lifted from my shoulders I wanted to run. I wanted to hold Mommy, and I was so angry I wanted to hurt Daddy. But my fear was stronger than my anger. I took a step back, but only a baby step instead of a giant one.

This time I watched Daddy through my stinging tears. I was afraid, but I was determined not to show it anymore. He raised his muscular arm slowly. I counted the seconds with each pounding of my heart. Then, in a flashy blur, the hunk of ivory and silver came hurling at me again. This time I jumped in the air with a blood-curdling scream just as the knife landed right where my left foot had been. I rolled over backwards in dead fear. Scrambling to my saved feet, I turned and ran down the darkened hallway in my dirty tee shirt and soiled underpants, screaming for all I was worth.

Somewhere in the distance I heard Daddy yell, "Good reflexes kid," and then he broke into a drunken haughty laugh.

Later, I crept along the cold linoleum floor holding my breath. It was scary dark, but I inched along more determined than any four year old should have to be that I would steal that knife. It took hours, or at least it seemed like hours before Daddy had fallen asleep... and it took a couple more hours for me to find the courage to slide out from under the sheets and begin my plan.

Daddy had collapsed in a rumpled heap next to Mommy in bed, apparently satisfied with his night's work.

'If Daddy hears me he could get me up and do something worse,' I thought silently. But Daddy did not wake up.

I calmed myself with the thought of Mommy protecting me as she does when she tucks the tattered covers under my chin and kisses my forehead each night before waddling off in the dark.

My plan was simple. I had to get the pain away. I had to get that knife. I had to feel safe again. I had to protect Mommy and Kathy and Brock. I shivered as I slid out of bed and with determination, inched near Mommy and Daddy's bedroom.

I knew in the dark when I had reached the bedroom door by the smell...that stinky, stinky smell of sweat and booze. It made me stop crawling long enough to hold the gag in my throat back with both hands over my mouth. In a few seconds I gained control of my stomach. No problem. Over time I had become a master at holding back vomit.

I hated eggs. Especially the way Dad cooked them...if you could call them cooked. The more I complained that they were slimy, the more he would undercook them; yellow goo in a slimier white pool of more goo. One morning I cried while gagging on my eggs and threw up. Immediately Daddy made me lean over my plate and lap up my own vomit like a dog. I threw up three more times and three more times I ate my own puke. On the fourth time, I kept it down long enough to get up and run to the bathroom, choking and crying in convulsions. I learned shortly after to control my stomach by mentally shutting down about what I was eating. I had to because it was now a game with Daddy. The more disgusting he could cook something, the more he enjoyed watching me eat it.

I became very good at hiding food I didn't want to eat. A hiding practice I was about to put to the test with Daddy's new knife.

Breathing only when my lungs felt like a balloon ready to pop, I felt in the dark for Daddy's pants on the floor. He never hung them up. He just dropped them where he lay; it didn't matter what room in the house.

Suddenly the snoring stopped. I froze, desperately trying to blend into the background of the speckled linoleum.

'Be very, very still,' I heard my mind say in the back of my head. 'He'll kill you if he finds you. He will.' My chest hurt from my heart

pounding. Thoughts of ‘Mommy, please help make it stop. Make Daddy go back to sleep cuz I can’t...’ led my soul’s battle cry against my panic.

My legs began to cramp just as the snoring began again. Letting the toxic air out of my lungs, I slowly began breathing. The tension began to leave my tiny body as I began moving myself forward. There, half under the bed was Daddy’s crumpled smelly pants. I groped the musky jeans in the dark for the knife. There it is! I felt the cold handle in the right pocket. Got it! Grabbing the knife ever so gently, I slipped out of the bedroom. I continued my exit crawling halfway down the hallway for fear the sound of my bare feet running would wake the monster in Daddy again. I pattered into the kitchen and with a stroke of ingenuity slid the knife under the refrigerator, then reached up and placed it forever on a rusty metal edge underneath.

Satisfied with my hiding place, I thought, ‘Mommy never cleans under there. We’ll be safe now....’

I jumped up and scampered to my bed before anyone could catch me, but I was haunted by one last thought as I pulled the tattered covers up over my head.

‘Safe until the next time. God, please, don’t let there be a next time.’

The next day Daddy went to work without so much as a word to Mom or me. But he fawned over my older sister – his *angel* is what I always thought. Still, I was glad. Not talking to him is much preferable in my already abused mind.

Evening however, brought not only darkness, but another dark cloud over our house.

A large set of faded black mahogany double doors separated our kid’s bedroom from the living room. On each door hung yellow stained opaque curtains covering the small paned glass in the doors.

Through the corner of the pane Kathy, Brock and I watched Mommy and Daddy in our usual church-mouse silence. They had begun to argue as soon as Daddy had barreled home through the front door, leaving it standing wide open. The anger was like watching the

ocean water rising and then falling at evening tide. I never knew who won, the earth or the sea, so I guess it's always a tie. I only hoped Mommy and Daddy's fighting would end in a tie too.

Suddenly, in horror our eyes jumped and then froze wide open. Daddy grabbed Mommy and flung her through the air as if she were a thief that had just broken into our house. But it was Mommy's house too! I screamed at the same time Mommy did as she landed in the television screen, glass shattering and invading her body; her cries of agony shattering my ears. Without thinking, I ran through the mahogany doors to protect my protector. Kathy and Brock stayed put. But halfway there, I wished I had stayed put too.

As I approached I could see that her knees were embedded through the glass, and that glass now lay everywhere on the floor. Whimpering, Mommy stopped me with her extended trembling arm and begged me not to step in it with my bare feet. When I stopped, unsure of what to do, Mommy hoarsely whispered in broken English to bring her a towel. I saw why. Blood was everywhere; on her legs, on the TV and all over the floor.

I backed up slowly and watched in shock as Mommy tried to escape the grip the glass had on her body. I whimpered as she screamed in pain. I had to help! I just had to! I ran and got a towel out of the bathroom, returning in time to see the flesh tear on her leg as she tried again in vain to escape. She stopped when she saw me, and with a faint smile, she took my offering of the towel and began to soak the blood from her legs. Almost calm now, I was spellbound in amazement as Mommy suddenly took a deep breath and then forced herself to stand by yanking her body backward, ripping her knees as the embedded glass broke off in her legs.

Free at last, she pulled out two pieces of broken glass and then placed the towel over the gaping wounds. I ran to Mommy and wrapped my arms around her neck holding on to her for all I was worth. In the background, I heard Daddy scream a distant string of swear words then watched his hulking body fade as he stormed out the open front door in a fit of rage. He was not the least bit sorry for the pain he caused Mommy. He was upset because he couldn't break

her like he broke other things around the house; like he just broke the TV.

But Mommy's spirit was too strong. I held her for several minutes as she dabbed her wounds with my towel, and I could feel her determination in life as I continued to clutch her tightly around the neck.

Secretly I was hoping some of Mommy's courage was passing to me...