

*Danger lurks as a young girl  
faces her past.*

## **My Name is Lisa - Second Edition**

By Norma Cape

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Norma Cape

# My Name Is Lisa



Second Edition

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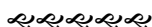
## Chapter 1

They told me to write letters to *the Man* and *the Mother*. I don't really understand why I'm supposed to do that or how it's supposed to help me. *They* are some doctors I met at Dr. Joyce's office that I hadn't seen before. I do know Dr. Joyce though and I trust her, so I suppose I'll have to write them. Dr. Joyce said I wouldn't be mailing the letters. She said the purpose for writing them is to help me to not feel so mad. I would rather mail them so *the Man* and *the Mother* will know how much I hate them.

My name is Lisa—Lisa Hunt. I had a brother named Billy, but he's not here anymore because *the Man* killed him when he was thirteen and I was eight. I'm ten now. Billy was always with me until then. Sometimes he would leave the room to get food when *the Mother* hadn't fed us for a few days. He could only do that when we knew for sure *the Man* and *the Mother* weren't at home. Billy never went outside the house—only to the kitchen and back. I never went outside of the room at all. Billy knew if we did and *the Man* caught us, *he* would hurt us. We talked about leaving the house, about running away, away from the room, away from *them*, but Billy was too afraid of *the Man*. We were afraid if we did run away and someone caught us, even if we told them about *the Man* and *the Mother*, they wouldn't believe us. Then if they took us back, *the Man* would have killed us for sure. I wish now that we had taken the chance. If we had, maybe Billy would still be alive, or maybe we would both be dead. That would be okay because at least I would be with him.

Dr. Joyce said if I write about everything that happened in the house and how it made me feel, I'd feel better. I don't know what it means to feel better. I know I have felt alone since Billy was killed and that I've felt angry and hurt for so long that I don't know what it's like to feel any other way. Dr. Joyce said writing will make me feel happy inside. I don't know how that is supposed to feel either. All I know is, that even since I was found and I have been around people I care about, I still feel

alone and sad inside. I'm tired now and I want to sleep but I can't. I have to write. I have to write about the room and I have to write to *them* and I hate them.



Billy and I were kept in a room from the time I was born until I was found. There were two windows in the room, but *the Man* nailed boards over them. Billy told me what he could about what it was like outside. He also talked some about *the Mother* and *the Man*; mostly about what she was like before *the Man* came. He said when it was just him and *the Mother*; she talked to him all the time. He said she read to him and taught him how to read, to write his name, his ABCs, and some other things, and a little about numbers. He also said he could play in the yard with friends. Billy said she sang to him and to me too before she put us in the room. There was a different man that would come and visit with *the Mother* before *the Man* moved in. Billy thought he must be my daddy because he knew our mother was going to have me before *the Man* came. Once he moved in, everything changed. *The Mother* was afraid of *the Man* because he would get drunk and beat her and he would beat Billy. After I was born, *the Mother* was afraid he was going to hit me too. Billy said he thinks that's why, when I was about two weeks old, she put us in the room and made us stay there. *The Man* never came in, so I never saw him.

For a while *the Mother* would come into the room to feed me and change my diaper, but she didn't talk to us anymore. She would just do what she had to and leave. When I got old enough she made Billy feed me. She brought in food, water, and milk, but she never stayed. She brought in a basin for us to wash in, a bucket to use for a potty, soap, and sometimes shampoo, things like that. Every now and then, when the *Man* wasn't home, she'd bring us different clothes to wear and, in the winter, a pair of socks, but never any shoes. If *the Man* caught her bringing us anything besides food, he would yell at her because he didn't want her spending money on us.

Billy said one day when I was about two she came in and saw him reading to me from a book that he and *the Mother* used to read. A few weeks later she brought in a big box filled with books. Over a period of time, Billy taught me to read and write as much as he knew and how to do numbers, and then we started to learn things together. There wasn't anything else for us to do. We started with the easy books and continued to read them over and over until we knew all the words. We got so excited when we figured out what the dictionary was for. Having it helped us to understand more of what we were reading.

There were books about the history of our country, the presidents, animals, birds, and so many other things. We made up games so we could learn something new every day, like new words or the names of places like states and cities and the different kinds of birds, things like that. Mostly we would play games with the books. We would pick out words that we didn't know and look them up in the dictionary. Sometimes we would take turns reading and see who could read the fastest, or we would pretend we were the kids in the story books. We would say our names instead of the kids' so we could pretend to be where they were instead of in the room. Even though I could read and see pictures, I knew it wasn't the same as actually seeing or touching, or smelling the real thing. I wanted so badly to smell a flower, touch a kitten, and see the clouds move in the sky.

Once, I asked Billy about the rain. He got a plastic bag and poked holes in it and then he filled it with water and held it over my head. We laughed so hard we had to get in the closet and put our faces in a pillow so *the Man* couldn't hear us. We didn't dare make any noise. We stayed in the closet most of the time anyway so we could read out loud and talk. When they were gone, sometimes we would sing. Billy taught me all the songs he could remember; mostly they were about Christmas. One book we had was about Christmas. We learned about God

and about Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. That was all kind of hard to understand then; I know a little more about them now.

Billy explained dark and light so that I could understand about the sun making the days bright and the night being when the sun was gone. He said the sun was like a light bulb only brighter and that it would light up the entire outdoors just like a bulb would light up the room. He said when you turn the light out then the room is dark, but when the sun went down it would slowly get dark, but not as dark as the inside of the room because of the moon and the stars. There were pictures of the earth, sun, moon, and, all of the planets in the science book. We didn't understand a lot of things in that one, but it was still fun to look at the pictures.

The boards over the windows were on the outside so Billy could still open the windows at night during the warmer times of the year. When it was windy, fresh air would blow through the cracks between the boards, and at times we could smell the pine trees. Nothing could compare to the smell of the rain and how it felt when the wind was blowing hard enough for it to spray through the cracks in the boards and onto our bodies. One time *the Mother* came in and saw the windows were open. She looked at them and then at us and walked out of the room. I was scared, but Billy said he was pretty sure she wouldn't tell and I guess she didn't because nothing came of it. After that we didn't worry about it anymore.

Billy said we lived in the country, but houses weren't so far away that we couldn't hear people when they were outside. In the summer we could hear kids playing and laughing and sometimes older people talking to them. Hearing the kids would make me sad because I knew they had a mama and daddy who talked and played with them. It always made Billy mad and I got so I would get mad too. We hated the *Man* for being so mean and *the Mother* for letting him stay. We couldn't understand why she didn't make him leave or take us away from there. We both grew to hate her for that, I think even more so than him.



One horrible day *the Man* took Billy away from me. I can still hear his cries and how he begged and begged *the Man* to stop. *The Mother* and *the Man* had just left and Billy had run downstairs to the kitchen for food. We never knew how long they would be gone but they were always gone long enough. Usually, Billy would wait a bit after they left but this time he went right after because it had been three days since we had eaten and we were so hungry. If only he had waited a few more minutes because this time they came right back. My heart stopped when I heard the car coming back up the road. I was terrified Billy didn't hear it and wouldn't get back to the room before *they* came in. All of a sudden I heard *the Man* yelling. Billy was begging *him* not to hurt him. As Billy got closer to the room, his cries became louder each time the man hit him. He cried and pleaded with him to stop. *The Mother* also yelled at *him*, too, but *the Man* wouldn't listen. She kept saying, "You're going to kill him." Then *the Man* started to hit her too and yelled at her. He called her names and said if he did kill Billy it was her fault for having us to begin with.

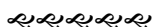
I wanted to run out and hit him and tell him how much I hated him and how much I wished he was dead, but I couldn't. All I could do was hide in the closet . . . and listen. Billy was just outside the door when I heard him yell, "No . . . No!" and then I heard a slam against the wall and then a thud, and then I didn't hear Billy anymore, only *the Mother* shouting, "You killed him! You killed him!" And then it was quiet.

I cried for days. I sat in the closet rocking back and forth. I held Billy's pillow close to my face because I could smell him on it. I would sleep with it and even talk to it. I couldn't bear to be without him, so I pretended he was there and just couldn't see him. That was easy to do at night, in the dark. After a while I couldn't cry anymore; all I wanted to do was sleep. It seemed quieter in the house after Billy was gone. *The Mother* came in now and then with food and water. I stayed in the closet most of the time, so I usually didn't see her. After a



while I started to read again. I read out loud to Billy and tried to play some of the games we played. I read as much as I could every day. I wanted to escape into those pages; that's all I had left.

One winter night the bedroom light bulb burned out. *The Mother* knew it but she never put in a new one as she had before. I still sat in the closet most of the time anyway so it didn't matter. I fell asleep a number of times in there and didn't wake until morning, I'm sure that's why, a week or so later, the bulb burned out in there too. After that, when it got dark, I would lay in bed until I fell asleep. During the summer it wasn't so bad because the days were longer. I opened the windows as much as I could just to hear the noise outside and to smell the air. The nights were long and so lonely.



I had been alone for about two years after Billy died when one day my world changed. I heard a lot of shouting, more than usual. Normally I could hear the noise from the television or radio in another room. They were never loud enough to make out what was said, but one or the other was always on except on this day. I could hear the back door slam over and over like someone was going in and out of the house. Then I heard the car start and at the same time, I heard *the Mother* come up the stairs and down the hall. She came into my room and threw a big box of food on the bed and then she grabbed the water pitcher, took it to the bathroom, and filled it. She sounded angry as she muttered to herself. After she set the water pitcher down, she walked to the door and then turned and looked at me. She wrung her hands together over and over and shook her head back and forth. She said she was sorry and that there wasn't anything she could do and then turned and walked out of the room, but this time—this time, she didn't close the door. She had always closed the door. I heard the back door slam and the car drive away. It was quiet and so eerie. It wasn't because I was alone; it was because the door was open. When it

got dark I could tell there were no lights on anywhere in the house. It didn't occur to me that they weren't coming back, even after they had been gone for several days. I kept thinking when they did return, *the Man* would find the door open and kill me. I wanted Billy with me more than ever now. This was all new and I was so scared. Days went by and I didn't hear anything. I wanted to go out of the room, but I couldn't. I even stood at the doorway, but I couldn't take that step—I couldn't even look around the corner—I just couldn't.



It had been about two weeks, I think since the *Man* and the *Mother* left when something woke me. There was someone in the house. I was too scared to move. I huddled up against the wall with the cover pulled up to just below my eyes. I heard someone walk slowly heavily like a man. It had to be the *Man*. Who else could it be? He was downstairs for the longest time, and then he started up the stairs. My heart beat so fast that I thought it was going to jump out of my chest. I could hear him getting closer and closer to my room, but all I could do was wait. When he came in he tried the light switch, but when it didn't work he waited a minute and then walked into the room and looked around. He didn't see me at first. It was daytime, so there was some light but not enough to see very well. He looked towards me but he still didn't seem to see me. He had something on his face like a mask of some kind. He walked slowly towards me and then stopped. It was then that I saw his policeman's uniform so I knew he wasn't *the Man*. He didn't say anything; he just stood there for a moment and then walked out. When there were policemen in the books we had read, they were always good, but that didn't stop me from being afraid. I still wanted to jump off the bed and hide. I was terrified and excited at the same time. After a while, he came back, but this time a lady was with him. She had on a mask too. He had something in his hand that made the room light up. He shined it

on me and then around the room. They stood in the doorway and looked around for a minute. Then they walked towards me. "Hey, sweetie, my name is Miss Shannon and this is Officer Gary," she said as she slowly walked over to the bed and sat down beside me. "Can you tell me your name?"

She talked to me. She actually talked to me.

At first all I could do was look at her. Nobody had ever talked to me but Billy and *the Mother* that one time. I opened my mouth to speak, but my lips and throat were so dry all I could do was whisper, "My name is Lisa."

My heart raced, someone was actually in my room talking to me.

"Where are your parents, Lisa?" she asked.

"I don't know." I whispered. "*The Mother* and *the Man* were here but they've been gone a long time."

The officer came closer, and I pulled the covers up tighter.

"Lisa, we're going to take you to a hospital," he said. "I promise we won't hurt you, but I have to pick you up and carry you to an ambulance that's waiting outside."

"Why do you have to do that?" I trembled and cried. "I've never been out there. What if *the Man* comes back and he won't let you take me or he'll want to hurt me? Do you have to touch me? I don't want you to, please, I'm so scared."

I thought what if *the Man* and *the Mother* come back? What will happen? Will these people still take me? Finally the thought of *the Man* and *the Mother* returning frightened me more than leaving the room or being touched by the officer.

"We have to hurry," I said as I frantically threw the covers off and tried to stand on the bed. I was weak, though, and fell to my knees. The officer tried to put a sheet around me, but I was shaking my hands and shoving the sheet and him away, so afraid for him to touch me, yet at the same time in a panic to get out of the house.

"It's okay, honey. I promise I won't hurt you," he said.

Finally I let him wrap the sheet around me. I kept saying, ‘Please hurry, please, please hurry!’ He told me again that he wasn’t going to hurt me as he picked me up.

I clung to him while he carried me downstairs. The house was much bigger than I had imagined, and it was dark and dingy.

“I’m going to put my hand over your eyes so the light won’t hurt them,” the policeman said as we started out the front door.

I let him for just a few seconds, but as he stepped out on the front porch and I felt the sun on my face, I reached up and moved his hand away.

“No. I have to see, I have to see.”

The sun did hurt my eyes at first and I had a hard time keeping them open, but it didn’t matter. I was outside and no amount of pain could have overpowered the excitement I felt. It was all I could do to stay in his arms. I wanted to run around the yard, to touch and smell everything. I took a deep breath trying to fill my whole body with the clean fresh air; it was so sweet and wonderful. The colors of the trees were gold and red and purple, so beautiful that I cried. I was completely overwhelmed.

There were big white clouds floating across the sky, and birds were singing in the trees, and then—and then I saw the people. The children were clinging to their mothers, looking at me like I was something strange, like they were afraid of me. I couldn’t imagine why.

The policeman took me to the ambulance and opened its back door.

“No!” I grabbed hold of his shirt. “I don’t want to go in there.”

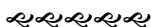
“It’s okay, honey. You have to ride inside to get to the hospital.”

“Can you go with me? I don’t want you to put me down.”

I didn’t know this man, but for whatever reason I felt safe in his arms. I didn’t know about the men in the ambulance

or the lady either for that matter. The officer told the lady he would meet her at the hospital. He got in the ambulance, sat me on the bed, and then sat down beside me. Before we left, the lady came over and gave me a bottle of water. I drank some of it, and it made my throat feel better.

As the ambulance started to leave, a siren came on. I put my hands over my ears and screamed. The officer asked the driver to turn it off and to slow down, so he did. Once I had calmed down, I couldn't see everything fast enough. I could see houses through the back window and trees, cars, buildings—all the things I had never seen except in pictures. When we got to the hospital, the policeman carried me in. There were people everywhere. They looked at me and made faces and put handkerchiefs over their noses. I stopped looking at them and pulled the sheet over my head. The policeman carried me into a room and sat me on a strange bed. He said he had to step just outside to use the phone but would leave the door open. I didn't care because I was busy looking around the room at things I had never seen before.



Gary stepped across the hall to the nurse's station to get a cup of coffee and then stood outside of the examination room where Lisa was, taking a moment to collect his thoughts. When a doctor and nurse entered Lisa's room, he slipped in behind them.

Dr. Bellows entered the room reading the report that was given to him by the ambulance attendant. As soon as he saw Lisa he stopped short. "Good grief," he said, fanning at his face. What is that stench? He walked closer to Lisa and then backed away. "How am I supposed to examine her?" he snapped at his nurse.

Before she could answer, Officer Blake said, "Hey! How about being a little more tactful! She can't help how she is!"

Dr. Bellows ignored Blake and barked at his nurse, "Get her clothes off, so I can examine her. Call me when she's ready." He turned and almost ran over Shannon as he left the room.

Shannon heard how Dr. Bellows spoke and didn't like it one bit. She caught up with him in the hallway and stopped him. "Dr. Bellows, my name is Shannon Jackson. I'm with the Child Protective Services. If you can't treat Lisa any better than what I just witnessed, then I highly recommend you find another doctor for her."

Dr. Bellows shook his head and sighed. "That's probably a good idea. Look, I'm sorry, but I just can't handle working with . . . that." He didn't give Shannon the opportunity to respond before he turned and walked away.

When Shannon returned to Lisa's room, Dr. Bellows' nurse said, "I'm sorry the doctor was such a jerk. He's had a rough day. I'll send Crystal to help with Lisa. She's a nurses' aide and wonderful with children. I'll be right back."

Shannon looked at Lisa and said, "I'm sorry, that doctor wasn't very nice to you."

Lisa didn't respond. She didn't have to. The look in her eyes said it all.

Crystal's entrance was an explosion of energy. "Hey there, girly," she said as she approached Lisa. "Good heavens child, you need a bath!"

Gary leaned over and whispered to Shannon, "She's not much in the 'tact' department either, is she?" When Crystal looked at them, Shannon said, "Go easy, we're not sure what we're dealing with here."

Crystal nodded. Then she said to Lisa, "My name is Ms. Crystal and I'm going to help you change for your examination, okay?"

"No, I don't want you to help me!"

Gary said firmly, "Lisa, I want you to do what Crystal tells you to do. We're going to leave you with her for a few minutes, but we'll be back."

“She’ll be fine,” Crystal said as they left the room.

“No, I won’t be fine! I don’t know that I like you and why is it that I’m supposed to call you Ms. Crystal?”

“Well, here in East Texas when a child addresses their elders, it is respectful to address them as Mr. or Ms. whatever their first name is.”

Lisa sat on the examination bed with her arms crossed in front of her with a defiant expression on her face.

Sensing Lisa’s hostility, Crystal said, “I’m sorry I said what I did about your needing a bath. Will you forgive me?”

Lisa replied firmly, “I’m not sure. Why do I have to take my clothes off and why does that doctor have to examine me?”

“Well, you have to take your clothes off because they need to be washed for one thing, and the other is so the doctor can make sure you’re not hurt anywhere, so hop to it!”

“Hop to it? What does that mean?”

“It means get those clothes off, girly, and put them in this bag, then put this robe on.”

“Where’s the bucket?” Lisa asked as she undressed.

“Bucket for what?” Crystal asked.

Lisa looked at Crystal like she didn’t have a brain and said, “I need to potty and there isn’t a bucket in here.”

“Bucket?” Have you never heard of going in the bathroom and using the toilet?”

“We didn’t have a bathroom or a toilet in the room; we had a bucket, so that is what we used.”

It wasn’t Crystal’s place to press Lisa with questions, so she didn’t. She walked over to the bathroom adjacent to the examination room and pointed inside. “The toilet is in this room, which is the bathroom.”

Lisa bent forward, straining to look inside, and then jumped down off the bed.

“My legs feel funny.”

“Are you able to walk?”

“I’m not sure; I think you’ll have to carry me.”

“Well, maybe I won’t unless you say ‘please’, young lady.”

Lisa stood with her hands on her hips. “Well, maybe I’ll just stand here and pee on the floor!”

“I can see I’m fighting a losing battle,” Crystal said. She picked Lisa up and carried her into the bathroom.

By the time she was done, in her robe and back on the table, Gary was back with Shannon and two other ladies. “Lisa, this is Dr. Sarah Bentley and her nurse, Deb,” Gary said. “Dr. Bentley is a doctor that only works with children, and she’s going to examine you instead of Dr. Bellows.”

Crystal spoke to Deb for a moment and then left the room.

Gary patted Lisa’s arm. “I have to go to my office for a while, but Ms. Shannon is going to stay with you until I get back.”

“I don’t want you to go.”

“Go, she’ll be fine.” Shannon told him.

Lisa crossed her arms and said defiantly, “Here’s someone else saying I’ll be fine, and just how do you know this?”

*I didn’t really listen to Ms. Shannon’s reply. I’m thinking now how much has changed in the past few hours. Earlier in the day I was alone in the room, and now I’m sitting in a hospital. Somehow I think my life is going to be different now. Somehow, I think it’s going to be better*



## *Chapter 11*

Gary browsed around the yard of the old house where he had found Lisa while he was waiting for Shannon and the detectives. Larry Hadley, the head investigator of forensics, arrived a few minutes after Gary.

While shaking hands, Gary said, "You guys are having a hard time finding the boy's body, aren't you?"

"Yep, an acre doesn't seem like much unless you're digging it up with shovels."

The two men had walked around to the backside of the house when Harris and Tucker drove up, and then Shannon.

"I've looked and looked around here," Hadley said, "and I can't find anything that looks peculiar. Usually if someone buries a body, there is something distinctive the person will leave beside the grave."

"Like what?" Tucker asked. "And why would someone do that? You would think they would do all they could to cover their tracks."

"It's not that the person is trying to mark the area, but rather he is trying to cover it up and make it blend in. But what happens is that what they do usually doesn't blend at all, but looks out of place."

"Kind of like a pecan tree in the middle of the desert," Blake said.

Hadley chuckled. "You got the idea."

Shannon looked around while the men talked. She walked from one side of the house to the other a number of times, and then she joined them.

"Okay, you said to look for something out of place, is that right?" Shannon asked Hadley.

"That's right."

"I think I may have found something. Come over and look at the garden on the left side of the house where Lisa's room was. Look closely so you can compare what you see on the right side."

After the group walked back and forth a couple of times, "We give up," Harris said. "What do you see that we're obviously missing?"

"Okay, let's start with the left side," Shannon said. "Tell me what you see."

Again the men examined the area and found nothing peculiar.

Shannon repeated again, this time in a more demanding voice, "Tell me what you see!"

"I see bushes along the front and weeds in the garden." Gary said.

"Okay, now let's go back to the right side. As they walked over Shannon pointed out, "The bushes are the same on each side. They are planted so that they extend about five feet or so past the corner of the house. The difference is what's in the garden area."

"Alright," Hadley said. "We have established there are just weeds on the left side." As he walked slowly he stopped and knelt here and there to study the ground. As he ran his hand over the weeds in one area, he abruptly stopped and examined something. "A single bulb," he said in almost a whisper. "Why was this one bulb planted here?"

"Why would Johnson plant a bulb to mark Billy's grave?" Tucker asked.

"Maybe it wasn't Johnson, maybe it was Angela," Shannon said. "From what Hadie said, she did have loving feelings towards Billy before Johnson moved in. Maybe it was something special she wanted to do for her son."

"Why would she plant a bulb rather than some other type of flower or bush?" Gary asked.

"A bulb is perennial," Shannon said.

"What does that mean?" Harris asked.

"It comes back every year." Hadley said.

"We're jumping to conclusions here. It could just be a coincidence." Tucker said.

"It would make sense to bury him here," Hadley said. "Look at those bushes Shannon pointed out. They not only extend out beyond the house, they have to be twenty feet tall or more. A person could come out here day or night and never be seen from the front. Johnson could have put Billy's body through any of the windows on this side and no one would have seen him."

"What about that place over there," Tucker asked, pointing to an old house a few acres away.

"Hadie said, it's been vacant for over fifteen years," Gary said.

Hadley got the shovels out of his trunk. His forensics team had called earlier and said they were tied up so Gary and the detectives volunteered to help.

"I can't believe none of us noticed this, it's so obvious," Hadley said, as he started to dig.

"It's not like the bulb stood out," Tucker said.

"In this situation that's no excuse. We should have been more thorough. It's our job to catch things like this," Hadley said. "Even a rookie should have noticed this on the first day out here."

Shannon stood silently and watched as the men slowly removed dirt a layer at a time in the area of the bulb.

They had gone down about three feet when Tucker said, "I've got something."

Tucker and Hadley carefully removed dirt with their hands, so as not to disturb anything.

"This looks like a piece of a plastic trash bag," Tucker said, and then abruptly stopped and pulled his hand out of the hole. He pointed and said to Hadley, "That looks like part of a bone."

"Okay," Hadley said, "We have to stop here. We'll wait for the rest of my team to get here to finish. Everything has to be handled carefully from this point on. Tell me what information you need. I can fill that form out now to speed things up a bit."

“Besides the obvious, we need his DNA so we can see if he and Lisa are actually brother and sister, and we need to confirm Billy’s age at the time of his death.”

“Okay, I’ll give this to the coroner.”

“The DNA could also tell us if they have the same father.” Tucker said. “I know we can ask Ms. Hunt when we catch her, assuming she knows, but it would still be good to be able to confirm it.”

“Telling Lisa we found Billy will be the hard part,” Gary said.

“I know this is jumping the gun a little,” Shannon said, “but we need to have some kind of funeral for Billy. We know Lisa understands some about heaven but not about what happens to bodies after we die. I’ll check with Dr. Nelson, the psychiatrist who is going to be working with Lisa, and see what she thinks.”

“That’s a good idea,” Gary said. “Lisa needs to have closure to her past before she can go forward. This could be a major step and we want to handle it right.”

“Changing the subject, I could be wrong,” Harris said, “but I think when Johnson and Ms. Hunt left the house, they left the state. I think that’s why we can’t find a trace of them. We know Ms. Hunt wasn’t from here, but maybe from Georgia.”

“Yes, but we think Johnson could be from Texas,” Tucker said. “A person could purposely get lost in the woods that surround most of the small towns around here and not be seen for years.”

“You haven’t told them about the carnival?” Shannon asked Gary.

“No, I haven’t had the opportunity.”

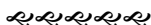
About this time a forensics team arrived and immediately started excavating the rest of Billy’s remains.

“If you guys want to go, I’ll call you as soon as we’re done here,” Hadley said. “This shouldn’t take more than about an hour.”

“That’s a good idea,” Harris said, and handed Hadley his card. “I’m not going to my office. I’m going to get some lunch, so call the cell phone number. Is anyone else hungry?”

“I’m starving,” Shannon said. “We can tell you what happened at the carnival while we’re eating.”

Everyone agreed on Millie’s and left in separate cars.



Before Gary had the opportunity to tell the detectives about the attempted abduction of Lisa, Tucker said, “We have a photograph of Johnson, but we still need one of Billy and Angela.”

“We knew he must have been arrested before,” Shannon said, “because of his drinking.”

“Yep, he had a DUI a few years back in Arkansas,” Tucker said.

About this time their waitress interrupted, “Sorry it took so long. What’ll ya’ll have?”

Shannon was the first to order and obviously not self-conscious about her appetite.

“I’ll have the chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes, fried okra, a bowl of banana pudding, and iced tea. While we’re waiting, I’d like a cup of hot cocoa with whipped cream,” she said as she rubbed her hands together, “I’m still chilled from being outside for so long.” When she looked up from her menu, the detectives were staring at her in amazement.

“What?” Shannon said. “Hurry up and order, I’m hungry.”

Tucker and Harris ordered the open-faced hot beef sandwich, and Blake ordered fried catfish with coleslaw and no fries. The men ordered coffee to be brought now. Before the waitress left, Shannon said, “Wait, and bring my salad with the cocoa. Thanks.”

After a good laugh and a lot of teasing about Shannon’s hearty appetite, they got back to business.

Gary proceeded to tell the detectives about Lisa's encounter with Johnson, Angela, and Pete. "We need to see if we have anything on Pete. If he lives in this area that could be where Johnson and Angela have been hiding. Angela told Lisa he is Johnson's brother, so we can only assume they have the same last name."

"Have you called in for more security to protect Lisa?" Harris asked.

"There really aren't enough patrolmen that patrol as far as Shannon lives," Gary said. "She does have a top notch security system, which is probably the best protection they have."

"Yes, and the box for it is inside the garage, so no one can tamper with it," Shannon said.

"The man that takes care of my land is checking out the fence line, and I'm going to have a security gate put in, although I have no idea how long that will take," Shannon said, holding her hot chocolate in an attempt to warm her hands.

"Changing the subject a little," Harris said, "from what Hank and Hadie said, it sounds like Lisa might look something like her mother. Why don't we get a photograph of Lisa and have the computer artist age her and see what they come up with. Hadie didn't see her much, but I would think between Hank and Lisa we could come up with something."

"Didn't her landlord say she had a license?" Gary asked.

"That's what she told him, but he said he didn't need to see it because he didn't take checks, only cash or money orders," Tucker said. "We checked and couldn't find anything under Angela Hunt, so if she does have one, it's under a different name."

"I wonder what Billy looked like," Shannon said thoughtfully as she cut into her chicken fried steak.

"I would think Lisa would know if he looked like her," Harris said.

“Yes, now that she’s seen herself in a mirror, she should be able to remember if some of his features were similar to hers or Angela’s,” Shannon said.

“The quicker we can get a drawing of Ms. Hunt, the quicker we can get posters out on her and Johnson,” Harris said. Then looking at Blake, he said, “I can’t believe you’re eating fish without fries, Blake.”

“Watching my fat intake,” he said just before taking in a big bite of coleslaw.

Tucker put his fork down. “Look at this! Now you’re putting vinegar on your fish! That’s disgusting!”

“Have you tried it?” Gary asked.

“No, that’s not American! You put catsup on fish, not vinegar!”

“You’re right, it isn’t American. My grandmother was from Scotland and that’s the way she ate hers. It happens to be good that way and it’s good on fries too.” Blake looked at Shannon and said, “He fusses at me about what I eat when he puts catsup on his pancakes!”

Blake chuckled as Harris choked on his coffee.

“Honestly, I can’t believe the three of you are fussing at each other about your food . . . eat!” Shannon said.

“I think we ought to make Blake eat at a different table,” Tucker said.

“Boys! Can we get back to our conversation please?”

“Alright,” Harris said as he winked at Tucker, “Even though they were working at the carnival, it doesn’t mean they are staying in that area. Since they’ve been spotted, it could force them to move on, or it could force them to try even harder to find out where Lisa is.”

“You’re right,” Gary said. “Before the incident at the carnival, unless they read it in the paper, they really had no way of knowing whether Lisa was even alive.”

“Right, and now, if they did see Lisa leave with the Chaney’s, they could have followed them to Shannon’s or at

least into town. It would have looked too suspicious if they had followed them right up to your drive.”

Gary saw the worried expression on Shannon’s face and reached over and took her hand. “You know we won’t let anything happen to Lisa. Someone will be with her all the time.”

“Someone was with her yesterday, Gary, and look how close he came to her then.”

Harris’s cell phone rang. After a short conversation, he relayed the message to the others. “Forensics has finished excavating Billy’s body and has taken him to the coroner. I’ll check in with Doc after I leave here and find out how long it’s going to take him.”

About this time their waitress came. As she cleared their plates she said, “I’ll bring your banana pudding now, missy, A\anyone else?”

“I think we’re done. Just some more coffee,” Harris said.

“Shannon, has Lisa started any counseling yet?” Tucker asked.

“No, I have an appointment with Dr. Joyce Nelson tomorrow. She works at a clinic near White Oak. I had planned to go in to meet her before I take Lisa, but since we have found Billy’s body, I’m going to call and see if Dr. Nelson will agree to talk to both of us.”

“I’m sure she will, considering the circumstances,” Gary said. “Do you plan to tell Lisa about Billy at her office?”

“I think we should leave that up to Dr. Nelson, don’t you, Gary?”

“Whatever you think is fine with me,” Gary said. “Do you want me to go with you?”

“No, not this appointment, I’m pretty sure we won’t talk about Billy tomorrow. I would like you to go when we do.”

“I just hope we tell her soon so we can get this part over with.” Gary said.



“Excuse me for just a minute,” Shannon said, as she rose from the table. “One of my co-workers is sitting over there, and I want to talk to her for a moment.”

Gary watched Shannon as she walked across the room.

Harris winked at Tucker. “You really have a stupid grin on your face, Blake. You want to tell us what that’s all about?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Gary said as he looked around the room. “Do you see our waitress? We need our ticket,” he said, trying to change the subject.

“I think he’s sweet on Shannon, what do you think, Partner?”

“Okay, that’s enough,” Gary said. “You guys have a good imagination.”

The detectives’ expression turned serious again when Shannon approached the table.

“I’m sorry, but I have to run to the office for a while,” Shannon said, as she reached for her coat.

Gary stood and helped her with her coat, which only added fuel to the detectives’ suspicions. Before either could say anything, he said, “I’ll walk you to your car. Don’t worry about lunch. Tucker and Harris are going to take care of it.”

“Oh, how nice, thank you, gentlemen,” Shannon said.

“No problem,” Harris said with a big grin, “Blake will get it next time.”

When Shannon and Gary reached her car, she turned to him and said, “I hope Dr. Nelson doesn’t have to get into anything tomorrow that will upset Lisa.”

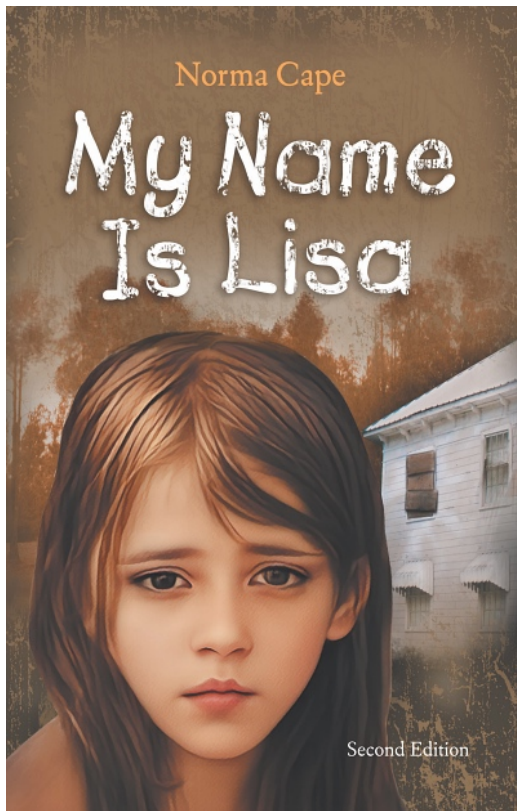
“I know,” Gary said, as he reached over and rubbed her arm. “Lisa’s been through a lot, but she’ll be alright.”

“I know you’re right. Well, why don’t you come over later for dinner? I know Lisa wants to see you.”

Gary laughed. “Dinner? You just ate enough food for three people and you’re already talking about dinner?” Shannon caught herself thinking what a beautiful smile and laugh Gary had. For some reason, she had had him on her mind way too much lately. She had fought it off at first, but now. . .

“Is that the only reason? Because Lisa wants to see me?” he asked, interrupting her thoughts.

Avoiding eye contact, Shannon said, “Lisa has a new Monopoly Game, and I told her you would love to come over and play it with us. So, we’ll see you at 5:30.”



*Danger lurks as a young girl  
faces her past.*

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