

After an intense debate following another Story Time adventure, Art Bonner felt like a ukulele collector at a Stradivarius convention. The fireman was one of several imaginary Club Room friends created by the mind of comatose science teacher, Terry Morgan.

Story Time

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3469.html?s=pdf>

STORY TIME

First Book of the
'Time and Space' Trilogy

Copyright © 2008 by John Merlette

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author or publisher.

Story Time

Published by:
RedJohn Books, LLC
P.O. Box 1396
Bigfork, MT 59911

Visit us at www.redjohnbooks.com

This is a work of fiction and should be treated accordingly. The locations, places and characters described in this book are used only in a fictitious manner. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008925201

International Standard Book Number: ISBN: 978-0-9816899-0-6

Printed in the United States of America
Booklocker.com, Inc.

CHAPTER 25

Mike's Story; Mike's Group

THEIR DASH down the trail to the edge of Lovett Lake only bought the trio a few minutes reprieve. Mike, Dean and Terry found the outfitter's camp with ease and sat on the cut logs near the fire pit to plan their next moves. They watched in awe as the leading edge of the fire advanced out of the forest and across the crest of the steep slope. The flames were now consuming only short, dry grass and sagebrush, but the gray-white smoke the fire produced was very dense. The plumes rose to combine with the larger stratum of smoke far above their heads that was creeping across the sky like a dust storm.

"Why'd you decide to go this way, Terry?" Mike asked in an accusing manner. He shrugged off his pack to get to his container of water and damp shirts.

"Because the trail we were on led directly into the flames," Terry answered defensively, his arms raised, palms upward, in a sign of resignation.

JOHN MERLETTE

“What if I told you that the trail we were on turned abruptly away from and around the fire when you got right up to the blaze?” Mike asked as he wiped his face with the filthy cloth. He shook the water container, frowned and then walked to the edge of the lake. He squatted down to fill his canteen and rinse the pieces of cotton fabric.

“How was I to know that?” the schoolteacher hollered as he watched his friend drink from the container, refill it and then wipe his face and neck again with the clothing before dipping it back into the water.

“We wouldn’t be here telling you this, Terry, if it weren’t true,” the outfitter angrily sputtered.

He responded to the criticism with a disheartened voice; “But I didn’t know that’s the way you went when you and Mike escaped the fire years ago.” His thoughts turned to his five friends. The news gave him renewed hope that the others would all escape the fire unharmed. “Why didn’t you just lead us out the way you knew would be safe?”

“It’s my *Story Time* tale and...and your deciding our fate is a key part of it.”

“But why? Why’d you force me to...to choose...to choose our fate?” the educator beseeched, his voice wavering with emotion.

“Because I needed to find out if you were capable of making the right decision in a life-or-death situation, Terry. I guess we got the answer, didn’t we?”

“Shit, Mike, now we’re goners,” Dean Clark snarled. He stared accusingly at Morgan with angry blue eyes that peered from his soot-stained face and then dismissively looked away in disgust.

“Can’t we get out over there?” Terry desperately asked as he pointed to the opposite side of the lake. “I saw an outlet stream over on that end. You once told me that if I ever got lost in the mountains, to just follow a stream down hill. All moving waters eventually guide the way out of a wilderness.”

“That’s true,” Clark nodded in agreement. He had to respect the man for having the presence of mind to apply such wisdom under the present circumstances.

“But that outlet stream empties into a cascade that is steep and extremely treacherous,” the lawyer added. “It’s almost impossible to climb in good conditions let alone with a wildfire scorching your ass.”

STORY TIME

“Um, Mike, isn’t there a—”

“Sorry Terry, there’s no other trail out of here. Except for the stream that cuts through those rocks, the entire south face of that ridge is sheer—”

“Don’t you think we’d be hightailing it outta’ here right now if there was?” the experienced outfitter sneered. “There’s just not enough damn time to climb out, Mike.” The thin man then stood up and stretched his back. He glanced to his right for several seconds before stumbling over to the edge of the lake to clean up.

Terry Morgan knew his canteen was low too, so he followed the other man to the waters edge where he silently filled his container. He followed the guide’s look and saw that the progress of the fire had slowed considerably as it advanced down the steep hillside they had just descended.

Morgan’s face brightened and he excitedly turned to the leader, “Why don’t we wait until the fire reaches us and then wade out into the lake?”

“Hah! That water temperature is about forty degrees, Terry. You’d be good for about ten minutes before you couldn’t stand it any longer. Damn, son, you’d be running back into the flames just to thaw out.”

The way Mike Thomas summed up the situation made the man’s brother-in-law laugh so hard he began to wheeze again. He then rose up to his full height after refilling his water bottle.

“Wouldn’t that be long enough?”

“It’s not the freakin’ fire that’s the problem, Terry. Hell, we could jump onto any rock pile if it were just the flames. It’s the damn smoke! Look around you, boy. We’re in a closed basin surrounded by high peaks guarded by vertical cliffs. The smoke will pour into here and fill this bowl up like soup for days. We’d suffocate before the end of the first day.”

The frustrated young man looked across the lake and easily discerned the strata of blue-gray smoke that was already forming just above the water surface.

“Well, heck, we can’t just sit here. What else can we do?” he angrily hollered.

JOHN MERLETTE

“As I see it, we only have one option,” the leader said as he wiped his brow with the back of his dirty hand, scanning the perimeter of the lake with his eyes.

“Which is—?”

“We go out your damn outlet stream over there, Terry,” Dean Clark answered, pointing to the opposite end of the lake.

“Yup. And we’d better get our asses in high gear, too,” Thomas warned. “Look! That fire’s starting to sneak around the lake to the west.”

“Ah, shit! Come on, let’s get a movin’,” the outfitter urged while gathering up his pack.

The three men then hastily proceeded around the lake taking the more arduous eastern route. There was no trail to follow. They had no choice but to bushwhack over house-sized boulders and through dense underbrush that was frequently obstructed by crisscrossed deadfall.

As they returned to the level of the lake after circumnavigating a rock outcropping, the trio noticed an up-tick in the velocity of the air currents. The large trees on the opposite shore that were barely visible through the smoky haze erupted one, sometimes two or three at a time, into spectacular orange and yellow fireballs. The fire was advancing much faster now. The irritating smoke caused the three men to cough continually despite the face cloths.

The escape route took them through a marsh at the southeast corner of Lovett Lake. In his urgency, the schoolteacher became reckless and lost one of his hiking boots when he sunk up to his thigh in the muck. He recovered his sock but couldn’t free the boot from its trap even though he could reach down into the hole his leg had made and touch it.

“Forget about it Terry, we haven’t got time to fool around,” Mike yelled.

Morgan pulled the black, mud-caked sock back onto his foot, hopped up and jogged to catch up to the other two men.

When they reached the lake outlet, Morgan’s hopes began to rise. The stream was shallow because of the prolonged drought, and it had a soft, sandy bottom in many places. There was a considerable amount

STORY TIME

of deadfall that had to be crossed, but at least they were finally traveling in the right direction.

Here she comes!" Dean Clark warned with a shout. The men paused to observe in awe the fire that was now only two hundred yards to the west and closing fast, stoked by gale-force winds.

"Son-of-a-bitch, we'll never make it in time."

"Just keep a-goin', Mike," Dean urged as he raised his arm up in the direction they had to travel while, at the same time, high-stepping and sliding over the bald, horizontal tree trunks blocking his path.

After another hundred feet, Morgan heard the sound of cascading water over the crackling roar of the firestorm. The three found themselves in the worst possible predicament. The river bottom had changed to rock as it entered a steep, narrow gorge. The opening was crisscrossed with a densely packed maze of sleek skeletons of dozens of fallen trees.

There was no safe way to get around the natural obstacle and turning back was not an option either. Terry could sense the heat from the fire at his back. He was oblivious to the pain from his exposed foot, the skin of which was now shredded from the sharp edges of rock he had been stepping on and numb from splashing through the frigid water.

The two trail guides began to slowly work their way down the first cascade. The trees were extremely slippery where the water splashed up on the naked trunks and the slick, moss-covered rocks were likewise nearly impossible to maintain a firm foot or handhold.

Dean Clark led the way, his hands and feet constantly slipping on everything he touched. He managed to climb down about twelve feet into the gorge when he ran out of options. He found himself precariously perched above a waterfall.

"I can't go no more," the outfitter hollered. "I'm stuck!"

"You gotta' try, Dean," Mike commanded, his voice echoing off the walls of the gorge, "Just keep going!"

Dean stretched his boot out and touched a wet tree trunk. The toe skidded off the slick surface. It took all of his arm strength to keep from sliding completely off the chest high log he was clinging to."

"It won't work. We're screwed!"

JOHN MERLETTE

Hot smoke continued to cascade over the desperate men. Terry wanted to rub his burning eyes for relief but knew that to release a handhold now would mean certain death on the rocks far below.

Suddenly, a huge Douglas fir, with flames licking up the length of the trunk, crashed down onto a large boulder just above the three hikers sending an immense shower of burning embers and fractured pieces of wood over them. Dozens of the glowing particles burned through Terry's flannel shirt and began to etch tiny craters into his flesh. He screamed for help but there was nothing his friends could do for him. Their own hair and clothing were on fire also.

The distraction caused the schoolteacher to lose his grip and he fell. His body plummeted onto Mike Thomas who was unprepared to arrest the fall. Terry was suspended atop his friend for only a few seconds before both men crashed farther down onto the smallest of the men.

The three flailing bodies landed atop a large boulder in the middle of the stream after free-falling nearly twenty feet. They then continued to plummet over more rocks and wood debris for another thirty feet.

Dean Clark was dead before his body stopped skidding into a small pool of water that quickly turned crimson from the great outpouring of blood from his wrecked body and fractured skull.

Mike Thomas landed three feet short of his brother-in-law. His many fractures caused his limbs to lie at awkward angles to the rest of his body. He didn't die immediately, however. His injuries were fatal, but it would take several more minutes for his desperate heart to finally fail. He was unconscious and softly gurgled unintelligible sounds until he finally succumbed to his injuries and exposure to the cold water that flowed over his body.

Terry Morgan landed on a large dead tree that cantilevered out over the final waterfall. He was splayed out with his chest down on the trunk three feet above the stream. A two-inch diameter snag extending vertically upward from the trunk had impaled his abdomen. The jagged end of the foot-long branch caught on his spinal cord and pushed the vertebrae out through his back when he struck the tree. His left shoulder absorbed most of the impact of his upper body, which caused

STORY TIME

the joint to explode into dozens of fractured pieces. It didn't matter; Terry Morgan was mortally wounded.

He knew it too.

The victim lay helpless on the tree, unable to snuff out the glowing embers that were still smoldering on his body or to rub his stinging eyes for relief. He lost his face cloth during the tumble. Despite his devastating injuries, the dying man was numb and not experiencing the agonizing pain he would have expected.

The smoke from the fires continued to glide down the gorge where it collected in dense pockets while the flames raged far above the bodies.

The schoolteacher could only stare down at the tranquil, red-stained pool below him, as the water continued to flow gently around the sharp rocks and over the rounded, multi-colored stones that lined the bottom of the stream. He could see his reflection in the smooth surface of the clear water amid the drops of tears, blood and the snow-like ash that fell to the surface.

As Morgan continued to gaze at his reflected image, waiting for the end to come, he realized that once every second a drop of blood plopped into the pool causing tiny ripples to travel across the water. The timing of the drops was so predictable...so precise. The placid scene amidst the raging destruction that surrounded him was mesmerizing.

What's that? Terry suddenly wondered.

After the pool settled between drips he saw something new reflecting on its surface. It was a glowing light that shimmered seductively.

Are those angels coming to take me away? Is this how it all ends?

The mirage quickly increased in brilliance. The entire space of the narrow gorge surrounding him radiated with an incredibly bright, yellow-orange illumination.

The next instant the canyon walls echoed with the hollow crashing sounds of a massive, flaming tree that lost its struggle to remain erect. The heavy wood crashed directly down onto Terry Morgan and instantly snuffed out the dying flame that once was his life.

CHAPTER 26

Game Over!

KATHY'S TOLD me a lot about you two," Carol Morgan said in a cheerful voice. "I guess we've been here before on the same days, just different times. And seeing Mike and Marty in there next to my husband every day, I feel like I already know you."

"Well, when Kathy asked us to stick around, she didn't tell us you were so darn pretty," Wade Shaw said as he turned and winked at the nurse. "Heck, if we knew—"

Dean Clark excitedly blurted out his own feelings about the attractive young lady seated across from him in the hospital's snack bar. "Heck, Wade, I think we're gonna' haf'ta make trips out this way more often." He was flushed and had a billboard of a grin on his face. The man's arms and fingers jerked awkwardly as he spoke, his body language shouting out his attraction to Terry Morgan's wife.

The young woman was embarrassed over all the attention she was getting and didn't know how to react. She wasn't used to it. After all,

STORY TIME

she still loved her husband so much there was no room for anyone else in her life.

“Sorry, boys, but Carol’s already spoken for,” Nurse Bullock said with confident satisfaction that the person seated across from her didn’t constitute a threat to her dreams involving Wade Shaw.

Both men were entertaining responses to the nurse’s remark that required bringing up Terry’s apparently hopeless medical condition. Fortunately, both men had the maturity and presence of mind *to just not go there*.

“Well, I guess then it’s just you and me, Candy,” said Wade as he looked deeply into Kathy’s eyes and smiled. He reached across and gently touched her hand.

The nurse practically melted in her chair at the unexpected tender words and touch from the large man.

Carol felt a warm feeling inside her as she witnessed the spontaneous interaction between two people who finally seemed to connect.

“Gee, Wade, where’s that leave me?” the outfitter playfully roared.

Wade Shaw turned to his friend without releasing Kathy’s hand and answered in his loud voice, “Well, heck, Dean, you still got Chris.”

Meanwhile, Terry Morgan was upstairs in his bed dreaming of outdoor adventures. Maybe he got the characters confused and the details of Dean Clark’s story embellished to an extreme degree, but it didn’t matter.

As the schoolteacher’s vivid imagination led him and his virtual friends into the Lovett Lake outlet where they eventually got trapped, his natural heart developed slight arrhythmia as his body chemistry adjusted to cope with the life-threatening challenges it thought it was actually dealing with.

The ‘Code Blue’ alarm started a chain of events that affected the activities of dozens of doctors, nurses, technicians and administrators at the medical facility. It would, of course, also affect the four people seated at a table in the first floor snack bar.

The automatic alarms on the hospital equipment attached to Morgan’s body had been reset to a high level due to the frequent fluctuations that appeared to be normal for him. As the *Story Time* dream

JOHN MERLETTE

continued through to its catastrophic conclusion however, his heart rate suddenly ramped up, becoming dangerously erratic. His condition rapidly worsened and within just minutes the schoolteacher's future was in jeopardy.

Josie was the first person to respond to the alarm. The nurse was in the storage room explaining the procedures for logging in restricted medications to a new member of the medical staff when it happened. It only took a few seconds for the two nurses to scramble to Terry's bedside. Josie started an examination of her patient and then momentarily froze as she stared in disbelief at the monitoring instrument. The EKG reading, a visual measure of the electrical current of the heart, was indicating erratic heart function. The blood pressure line was close to zero and the oxygen saturation level had plummeted from a safe level of ninety-two down to sixty-eight in just a matter of seconds. The instruments were clearly showing that Terry's cardiovascular health was deteriorating rapidly and his distressed heart was in a ventricular fibrillation condition.

Oh my God, Phyllis, we need the crash cart in here now! Go call it in! Call a 'Code Blue'! Let's get everyone up here. I'm starting compressions."

The rookie turned to leave and then stopped to hear further instructions shouted at her from Josie, "We need Johnson and...and better call in Burgess too from the second floor. This one's a keeper, Phyllis. Hurry!"

"What about Dr. Karlson? I thought he was—"

"He left yesterday for a conference...now go!"

Josie examined her patient more closely while rhythmically pushing on his chest. Before her eyes, she watched as Morgan's fingertips acquired a bluish tint and then, only moments later, the ominous, dusky color of death. The area around his lips also changed in seconds from a pale skin color to a morbid blue-gray pallor.

Hearing a noise, Josie looked up in relief to see a nurse who had been on her lunch break come running into the room. She acquired the same look of awe after just one glance at the heart monitor.

"Tara, he needs an airway resuscitator hooked up right away."

STORY TIME

“I’m on it.”

Another nurse arrived and immediately started to hook up an extra IV to a vein in the antecubital area of the educator’s left arm.

“Is that a 16-gauge IV?”

“18-gauge, Josie. Want a 16?”

“Please, I’m sure we’re going to need it, Lois.”

“Will do.”

“The Ambu bag is on and fully functional, Josie.”

“Thank you. Tara, I need you to enter the time record and then continue to manage the resuscitator.”

“Check...commence code mark...10:52 a.m. minus one minute?”

“Close enough, now, where the heck are the techies?” Josie hollered to a room housing half a dozen ghost-like bodies. “Where’s Kathy when I really need her,” she murmured as the room continued filling with additional staff. She glanced at the patient’s heart monitor again; saw something new and terrifying, and reached over to turn up the volume.

Terry Morgan was now in full cardiac arrest.

“Patrick, take over compressions for me.”

“Sure, Josie.” The male nurse then placed his hands on the patient’s chest as Josie removed hers, the artificially applied heart pulse not losing a single beat during the exchange.

“The patient’s in V-Fib. Are the paddles here yet?” Josie hollered without looking up. “Come on, we need to shock him now!”

“Not yet!” hollered a male voice from amongst the crowd of jostling bodies.

“Lois, do we have a pulse with those compressions? We need to make sure we’re getting blood to his brain to prevent cerebral hypoxia.”

“Affirmative, Patrick’s doing a great job. I can feel a pulsation with each compression.”

“Be sure to keep the resuscitation bag going, Tara. He needs oxygen.” Josie then turned and moved several steps to a chest, opened the second drawer and retrieved a vial of Lidocaine.

“Oh my God! Would you look at that,” remarked the rookie RN when she returned and glanced at the monitor.

JOHN MERLETTE

“Airways?”

“Clear!” shouted Tara.

“BP?”

“Nothing!” confirmed Lois.

“Is that Lidocaine, Josie?” a doctor asked as he rushed up to the nurse.

“Yes, Doctor Burgess, I...I’ve got 100 mg ready to administer by IV.”

“The Crash Cart’s here,” someone hollered above the chaotic din.

“Do it...hurry, Josie,” urged the doctor who then turned to face the nurses, intern and technicians now fully surrounding Morgan’s hospital bed. “Steve, fully expose the chest and apply the conductive pads. I need to make sure we have full skin contact. By the way, where’s Johnson?”

“Assisting Osgood. A new arrival is hemorrhaging on the third floor. I just came from there,” replied the intern.

“Damn it!”

Seconds later, after Josie administered the drug, the doctor hollered to the room full of people, “We’re losing the patient and we’re short staffed so let’s continue to stay focused. We only get one chance to save this man’s life.”

“Backboard is positioned under the patient, doctor.”

“Steve, get ready to relieve Patrick after defib. Oh, and adjust that conductive pad closer to the clavicle.”

“The paddles are ready, Doctor.”

“Give them to me and charge to 360 joules.”

The defibrillator then emitted a humming sound that increased quickly in pitch.

“We’re at 360!”

“Clear! Stop compressions, clear the oxygen and move aside everyone.”

The defibrillator paddles were pressed firmly against the patient’s chest and the shock delivered. The jolt caused the torso to arch upward momentarily followed by a settling of the pale corpse onto the hard fiberglass backboard.

“Hold off on compressions for a few seconds Steve. Do we have any rhythm change on the monitor?”

STORY TIME

“Negative, doctor, still V-fib.”

“No pulse, I can’t feel a thing.”

“Damn! Prepare for another shock. Let’s give him some Vasopressin, Josie.”

“How much?”

“Forty units, now!”

“Shouldn’t we resume compressions, Doctor Burgess?”

“Not yet, Steve, not yet, damn it! I want to see if we get rhythm.”

“It’s in. Vasopressin is in.”

“Good.” The staff all noticed the doctor’s face was almost trance-like with his intense focus on the fate of the patient now fully in his hands. “Okay, continue compressions, Steve, we need to get those drugs working into the heart.” Under his breath the doctor was anxiously muttering, “Come on! Come on!”

“Charge holding at 360 joules, Doctor.”

“Any rhythm yet on the monitor?”

“Negative.”

“Let’s shock again. Okay, Steve, back away.”

“Yes, sir.”

The doctor’s anxiety was even more evident now by his sweaty brow and nervous handling of the defibrillator paddles. “Clear!”

The physical evidence of the second application of electrical current to Terry Morgan’s inert body was identical to the first. The room fell eerily silent and all eyes remained focused on the EKG monitor looking for any sign of a heart rhythm.

“Steve, continue your compressions. Let’s hope to God the drugs do their thing.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Josie—”

“I’m sorry sir, nothing...wait.”

“What is it?”

“It’s weak and erratic but we’re recording a slight rhythm.”

“Aw, damn, that’s not good enough.”

“I still don’t feel anything,” said Lois.

“Shock him again, doctor?”

“Not yet! Let’s see if this weak pulse develops into a decent rhythm first. Steve, do you need to be relieved?”

JOHN MERLETTE

“No sir, I’m fine. Maybe we could induce hypothermia to buy us more time?”

“Oh hell, Steve, that’s med-school textbook stuff. Besides, we’re out of time!”

“Sorry, Dr. Burgess.”

“We’re losing what rhythm we had, doctor,” warned Josie.

“Oh, what the heck. Prepare for one more jolt. Back away, Steve.”

“It doesn’t look like he’s going to make it, does it?” remarked the young intern.

“Get that damn oxygen tube out of the way,” warned the exasperated physician. “The last thing we need right now is a fire.”

“Sorry, Dr. Burgess.”

Josie suddenly shouted an alarm, “Doctor, look! Look here!”

Back in the snack room, Kathy, Carol and the two men froze when the loudspeaker first erupted with the ‘Code Blue’ announcement.

“Dr. Johnson—”

My floor...could be any one of them, Kathy thought as she assessed the first full blurb of information. She rose slowly from her chair and was now standing with her fingertips on the tabletop, her attention focused entirely on the voice from the loudspeaker.

“Dr. Burgess to—”

Burgess? Burgess isn’t on the list for my floor. No heroic...oh, my God, it’s got to be—

Kathy snapped her head toward Carol, who was half-standing over her chair, her fists bunched at the sides of her face with worry.

“What?” the young woman pleaded as she looked to the nurse for answers, her voice barely a squeak from the sudden dryness in her throat.

“I’ve got to go! Ca...Carol—!” The nurse pushed away from the table so abruptly her chair toppled over behind her.

“What is it Kathy...What?” Morgan cried out fearing confirmation that the crisis involved her husband.

“It’s got to be Terry!” the nurse hollered in a clipped response, almost running now from the room.

“Oh, no!” the young wife screamed. Both men were now standing at the sides of the distraught woman. The other witnesses to the sudden

STORY TIME

and profound drama in the snack bar were sitting or standing motionless and awestruck by the powerful scene of raw emotion.

“Stay there!” the nurse hollered back after reaching the elevator that was within Carol’s sight. “I’ll get back to you as soon as I can, I swear.”

Carol Morgan suddenly felt weak and began to collapse back into her chair. Wade and Dean gently caught her arms and eased her back down. The three were staring trance-like at Nurse Bullock who was frantically pounding on the elevator button with the palm of her hand.

After Terry Morgan’s imagined death in the Lovett Lake gorge, his mind slipped into a dizzying spiral of disjointed images as his physical body struggled to survive. Were it not for the skillful actions of the dedicated medical team that rushed to his aid, the science teacher’s real life would have ended and with it, his *Club Room* dreams. The drug injected into his heart calmed the life-threatening fibrillations in time to prevent permanent physical damage.

Morgan began to imagine himself back in the safe environs of the *Club Room*, but his perspective had shifted to that of a third-party observer, much like God watching over a soul preparing to move on at the end of a physical existence on Earth. The dream sequences he now experienced were sporadic in the quality of its sounds and images and, at times, entire frames of the mental movie just dropped out of comprehension.

“Terry...Terry...Are you okay?” Marty Shaw shouted at the body that was lying motionless on one of the large, leather *Club Room* chairs.

“M-m-m-m-m-m.”

“Hey Terry, wake up! Come on, buddy, you’ve got your friends really worried here.”

“U-n-n-n-n-h-h-h-h.”

“It looks like Mike’s starting to come around,” Chris Taylor hollered from another chair.

JOHN MERLETTE

“Appears they had a really bad time,” Larry Stevens remarked.
“Sure seems that way,” the engineer solemnly agreed.

Later, after another lengthy absence of thought, Terry Morgan dreamed that he was beginning to stir. Suddenly his body shook with a jolt and he imagined his eyes opening wide after the violent disturbance. The unnatural spasm frightened his imaginary friends and they all leaned away from the unconscious body.

“Unh-unh!” the schoolteacher sputtered followed by complete stillness, his vision of the *Club Room* and his friends fading again into darkness.

“Whoa, there, Terry,” the engineer said in a soothing voice. “Come back slowly, my friend.” Morgan imagined he could hear the one voice for several seconds and then the sound disappeared.

“What a mess!” the fireman exclaimed, his voice dim and tinny sounding. “What could have happened to them to cause this?”

“If that Mike ever survives this I’m gonna’ kill his ass for what he did to my friend,” the group leader raged, his voice barely perceptible to the dreamer.

“Ahh...nnnh...a-a-a-a-h.”

“Ah, geez,” Art Bonner whispered.

An hour later, Mike Thomas and Terry Morgan were awake and reliving their experiences, even though it was still difficult for the educator to remain focused on the conversation. It was expected that everyone would tease each other after the *Story Time* tales were over, but this time nobody was interested in humor. The common consensus was relief that everyone survived.

After another two hours of mental recovery, Candy suddenly appeared in Terry’s dreams and he began to flirt very aggressively with her. She absorbed the unexpected attention like a child receiving free treats and she returned five minutes later for more.

“You look like your old self at last,” the engineer beamed.

“Yeah, Marty, I think I’ll be okay.”

“And from the looks of it, so does Candy,” Chris teased.

STORY TIME

The schoolteacher's face turned red and he looked to his best friend for help.

"Well, Terry, it looks like you're next in line for *Story Time*."

"I know, Marty."

"I think we all learned what our limitations are with these stories," the senior member of the *Club Room* cautioned.

Morgan nodded in agreement.

"Amen to that, brother," Art Bonner concurred. He then released a deep sigh that expressed his feelings about the whole episode.

After an intense debate following another Story Time adventure, Art Bonner felt like a ukulele collector at a Stradivarius convention. The fireman was one of several imaginary Club Room friends created by the mind of comatose science teacher, Terry Morgan.

Story Time

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3469.html?s=pdf>