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# THE VOW

THE TRUE EVENTS THAT INSPIRED THE MOVIE

WRITTEN BY  
KIM & KRICKITT  
CARPENTER  
WITH DANA WILKERSON

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# THE VOW

THE TRUE EVENTS THAT INSPIRED THE MOVIE

WRITTEN BY  
**KIM & KRICKITT  
CARPENTER**  
WITH DANA WILKERSON



PUBLISHING GROUP

Nashville, Tennessee

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# DEDICATION

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For keeping our circle of life revolving full of love and support, to our families we say thank you. Without our parents, siblings, in-laws, and children, our drive to continue on would have been greatly weakened. To our friends who have nurtured, supported, and loved us unconditionally we are forever grateful. To our children Danny and LeeAnn, we are blessed to be the parents of such great kids. Remember to always do the right thing, give it everything you've got, and know that your parents will always love you and will be there for you. To our Lord Jesus Christ, you continue to shelter us, grant us grace, and bless us with peace, and you never ever turned away even when we sinned. Not a word can be spoken to the sacrifice you gave for us. For that we have eternal life and our love will never be forsaken.

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# PROLOGUE

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December 1993

Krickitt,” her therapist began in a soothing voice, “do you know where you are?”

Krickitt thought for a moment before replying, “Phoenix.”

“That’s right, Krickitt. Do you know what year it is?”

“1965.”

*She was born in 1969, I thought, somewhat frantically. That’s just a little setback—nothing to really worry about, I tried to convince myself.*

“Who’s the president, Krickitt?”

“Nixon.”

*Well, he was the president when she was born, I justified.*

“Krickitt, what’s your mother’s name?” the therapist continued.

“Mary,” she said with no hesitation . . . and no expression. *Now we’re getting somewhere. Thank you, God!*

“Excellent, Krickitt. And what’s your father’s name?”

“Gus.”

“That’s right. Very good.” He paused before continuing, “Krickitt, who’s your husband?”

Krickitt looked at me with eyes void of expression. She looked back at the therapist without answering.

“Krickitt, who’s your husband?”

Krickitt looked at me again and back at the therapist. I was sure everyone could hear my heart thudding as I waited for my wife’s answer in silence and desperation.

“I’m not married.”

*No! God, please!*

The therapist tried again, “No, Krickitt, you are married. Who’s your husband?”

She wrinkled her brow. “Todd?” she questioned.

*Her old boyfriend from California? Help her remember, God!*

“Krickitt, please think. Who’s your husband?”

“I told you. I’m not married.”

## BOY MEETS GIRL

Good morning, and thanks for calling Jammin Sportswear. This is Krickitt.”

When I called Jammin that fall morning in 1992, I had expected to be greeted by a boring sounding customer service rep that would rather have been spending her morning doing anything other than answering a phone. But what I got was quite the opposite. When Krickitt said “Good morning,” it sounded like she meant it. And she even sounded like a cricket, all chirpy and upbeat.

“Hi, Krickitt,” I answered her, “I’m Coach Kim Carpenter from New Mexico Highlands University. I’m calling about the baseball coaches’ jackets in your catalog.”

I have loved baseball from the time I was a little kid. I could always see myself coaching someday just like my dad, so when I got my first coaching job with the Highlands Cowboys in Las Vegas, New Mexico, it was a dream come true. But even dreams have their mundane moments, and so I found myself ordering jackets for my assistant coaches and myself.

That first conversation with Krickitt was in no way the stuff movies are made of, but even so, we discussed prices and colors, I got more and more interested in this telephone salesperson with the unique name. She was so refreshingly friendly and helpful that I couldn’t help feeling like my day was better just from having spoken to her.

Our conversation ended, but I couldn’t stop thinking about this girl named Krickitt. There was just something different and special about her voice and personality that I really couldn’t explain. I could tell this wasn’t just a job for her, it was more like a mission. It was as if she had decided to be the friendliest, most helpful person her customers talked to every day. If that was the case, then she was a roaring success in my mind.

I decided to call again a few days later to follow up on the order. “Good morning, and thanks for calling Jammin. This is Keri.” Hmm . . . Keri. Not the voice I wanted to hear. I quickly had to face the fact that I was calling for a reason other than just checking up on those jackets. Keri sounded like a nice woman, but the fact was that I wanted to talk to Krickitt. I had to make it happen, so I thought fast.

“Hi Keri, I’m following up on an order with Krickitt.”

“Just a minute.” I could feel my heart racing as I waited.

“Hi, this is Krickitt. What can I do for you today?”

“Hi, Krickitt. This is Coach Carpenter from Highlands University. I called about a jacket the other day.”

As Krickitt looked up my information, I had a few seconds to think. What was it about this Krickitt person that all of a sudden made me feel like I was a nervous, lovesick teenager? She was just a sales rep doing her job, and she was in California, *not* New Mexico, where I was. I pushed those thoughts aside as I asked her for some color samples before ending the conversation.

When the samples arrived, I spread them out on a table. My thoughts started going in unexpected directions. *Did she pick out these colors herself? Had she held the samples in her hands? Whoa, there! Settle down!* I couldn’t figure out what was happening to me, or *why* it was happening. I was a grown man, after all!

I put those thoughts from my mind, yet I was unusually eager to talk to a certain telephone sales

rep when I called again to order a purple and gray jacket. “Good morning, and thanks for calling Jammin. This is Krickitt.” Success!

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“Hi, Krickitt, it’s Coach Carpenter. I . . .”

“Coach Carpenter!” She interrupted with a sense of excitement that surprised me, since she knew I was going to be ordering a grand total of one jacket from her. “It’s great to hear from you again.”

I wondered what she thought was “great” about it. Was it the prospect of another order, or was it because it was me? I tried to determine if I could sense more than a professional friendliness in the sound of that voice I couldn’t get out of my head.

Unsurprisingly, I ordered the jacket. Then I ordered another one in a different style. When it arrived, it was so popular amongst the staff that every coach on the team wanted one, so I ordered some more.

A few months had passed since that first conversation with my favorite salesperson, and by now we spent a lot more time just talking to each other than actually conducting business. Then one day at the end of a call, Krickitt mentioned she wouldn’t be working on the day I had been planning to call to check on an order, so she gave me her home number.

After that I started calling Krickitt at her apartment, and before long we stopped pretending that our calls were about athletic clothing and spent the time getting to know each other. We often talked for more than an hour. No matter how long we talked, we never wanted to hang up the phone, even when my phone bill rocketed up from almost nothing to \$500 a month. Those were the days before e-mail and texting, and few people even had cell phones. Krickitt and I were tied to land lines, but I didn’t care about the inconvenience or the expense. She was more than worth it.

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I finally found out the story behind Krickitt’s unique name. Her given name was Krisxan (pronounced “Kris-Ann”), a name that reflected her Greek ancestry. The nickname Krickitt was coined when her great-aunt declared the two-year-old Krisxan could never sit still and hopped around all the time like a cricket.

It was no surprise to anyone that Krickitt was energetic and athletic. Her dad had once coached high school basketball and baseball. Her mother coached gymnastics, which Krickitt had taken a liking to from the time she was old enough to make her way down a balance beam. In fact, she learned how to do a back handspring before she knew how to write her name.

I thought I was a sports fanatic, but Krickitt put me to shame. From kindergarten on, she practiced gymnastics every day after school in her mom’s gym, and she put in five hours a day during the summers. At sixteen, she tore the rotator cuff in her right shoulder, but her orthopedic surgeon told her an operation would probably kill her chances for a college scholarship. So she suffered through and just kept at it, excelling in floor exercises and the balance beam. She didn’t let a little pain stop her.

It was no surprise that Krickitt got multiple scholarship offers from schools with reputable gymnastics programs. She ended up choosing California State University at Fullerton, which had offered her a full gymnastics scholarship. She was a two-time Academic All-American there before giving up competition after she tore her Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) during her senior year.

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Though many of our initial conversations were about sports, Krickitt wasted no time getting to the spiritual part of our relationship. A few months into our friendship, she wrote this: “You said I can ask you anything, so I must be honest, Kimmer. You know that I am a Christian. Being a Christian . . .”



having an ongoing intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. I guess what I have been wondering the whole time is if you were a Christian too—if you had made the decision to ask Christ into your life and pay the penalty of your sin, and give you eternal life like he has promised if we ask.”

Her faith was her life, and no matter what else she thought about me, she had to have a peace about my spiritual side before she could have any sort of relationship with me. As we talked through the part of our lives, we learned we were both Christians and had discovered Christ at the same age, but from that point our spiritual journeys had gone in different directions.

I was fourteen years old when I first learned about Jesus while at a friend’s house. When I heard that Christ had died for me so my sins could be forgiven, it was the most awesome news I’d ever heard. I was so excited that I couldn’t wait to get home to tell my parents about it. But when I started telling them what I felt, it didn’t click with them at all.

My parents were nominal churchgoers, but I don’t think they had ever felt what I was feeling at that moment. We had never gone to mass regularly, although Grandma Helen took us when she had the chance. As a family we never talked about religion. But the message of Christ had touched me. It wasn’t a quick process, but in time I came to fully trust and follow Jesus as my Savior.

Krickitt learned about Jesus from a little booklet called *The Four Spiritual Laws*. Its message filled her with excitement and curiosity, and she decided then and there that she would commit her life to following Christ. But no one else knew she made that life-altering decision on that day. She didn’t even totally know, at the time, what that decision would mean for her life and for eternity. She didn’t confirm her decision with anyone and didn’t get involved in church programs at the time. When she started college, she finally got involved in a church, the Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton. While there her spiritual life transformed through the teachings of Pastor Charles Swindoll and College Pastor Steve McCracken.

During the summer of 1991, Steve led a mission trip to Hungary. Since Krickitt had just blown out her knee, she suddenly had time on her hands after years of daily workouts. When she heard about the Hungary trip, she saw it as a God-given opportunity to pour all the time and energy she had always put into gymnastics into something else. So she and her friend (and later roommate) Megan Almquist took on the challenge of being missionaries for nine weeks that summer. They had the incredible opportunity of spending time with and talking to people who were starved for Jesus’ message of hope after generations of religious oppression.

I thought I was pretty faithful, but when I saw how Krickitt lived her life I was amazed. She had incorporated her faith into every part of her life. She wasn’t a Christian just on Sunday morning—being a Christian was the core of who she was. And I adored that about her.

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My conversations with Krickitt kept getting longer and more involved. We also started writing letters back and forth. The letters were like the phone calls—we sent short cards at first but it wasn’t long before Krickitt was writing me ten pages at a time. I can only imagine the length and number of e-mails we would have exchanged if we’d had that option in those days.

As is the case in any fledgling relationship, it was inevitable that we would eventually talk about the idea of swapping pictures of ourselves, and early in the spring of 1993 we decided it was time to take that step. We couldn’t send photos at the click of a mouse back then; instead we were looking at a long, nerve-wracking process of waiting for the mail to arrive each day. I mailed Krickitt a Highland Cowboys media guide with my picture in it. Then I waited impatiently for a photo that would put my face to the amazing girl I had gotten to know so well over the past few months. I tried to convince

myself I was just interested in her heart and her spirit; but at the same time, I figured it couldn't hurt if she also happened to be beautiful.

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When the envelope from Krickitt arrived a few days later, I ripped it open and took my first look at a woman with dark hair, shining blue eyes, and a fantastic smile. I thought she was absolutely gorgeous.

However, it was obvious there had been another person in the picture, as I could see an arm around Krickitt's shoulder. Who had she cut out of the photo? Was it her boyfriend? Another "special friend" like me? My heart plummeted as I considered that option. *Take it easy, man*, I chided myself. *You're getting way ahead of yourself.*

I was dying to call Krickitt to see if she'd gotten my picture that day too, but I was a bit nervous about how she might respond. That night I called to ask. "Got it!" she answered. I didn't want to ask what she thought, so I just waited to see if she'd tell me. She did. "And you know, I thought, *This girl is even cute.*" We both laughed. I had been afraid the conversation would be tense and awkward, but thankfully it wasn't.

I mentioned that I had noticed she had cropped someone out of the picture she sent me. "Yeah," she responded. Again I waited, halfway dreading what I might hear. "I cut my girlfriends out because they're beautiful!"

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We both knew what the next step would be: meeting in person. This would be a vitally important step in our relationship. After all, how do you know you truly connect with someone until you've physically spent time with him or her? So in February of 1993, Krickitt and I started talking about the prospect of meeting and spending some time together, short though a trip might be due to our work schedules. By that point we were talking more than five hours a week, and I figured a plane ticket wouldn't cost much more than what I was spending on phone bills. So I asked Krickitt if she'd like to come to Las Vegas and see my team play a few games. She said she didn't know. Before she decided she would have to think and pray about it.

And she did think and pray. Years later, when Krickitt allowed me to read her journal from that time, I saw the evidence of it. One entry reads: "Lord, I really need your wisdom and Spirit to guide me with Kimmer. . . . Part of me wants to meet him—I think it would be fun. Part of me doesn't because I don't want to begin to have feelings for him if this is not of you. If it is, I pray you would show me that. I want to be led by you. I see so many ways in which we relate, but you must be the center."

Eventually, Krickitt leveled with me about her concerns in a lengthy letter. In a nutshell, she wanted to make sure we had no unrealistic expectations about the visit. She made it clear that at that point we were just friends. Her other concern was she didn't want to jeopardize my reputation in any way. As a coach and role model, I had a lot to lose if the situation looked to be something other than what it was—two friends meeting each other.

After two months of talking about it, Krickitt made the decision to come to New Mexico so we could meet face-to-face. In preparation for her arrival, I reserved a room at a hotel for her near my apartment. I fully respected that Krickitt was saving herself for her husband one day. I realized that since I had fallen short, I would have to be upfront with her about my past, knowing that it would disappoint her. I knew also how important this was and I wanted to make sure that it was quite clear to anyone who might be watching that we were not spending the night together.

I made the two-hour trip to Albuquerque to pick her up at the airport. In those pre-9/11 days there

were no restrictions on who could go through the security checkpoints at airports, so I was able to meet her at the gate. I spotted her the second she emerged from the jetway. I had seen her picture, so I knew who to look for, but I think I could have picked her out of the crowd even if I hadn't known who she looked like. I felt we had so much in common and had such a wonderful friendship already. Even though I already knew she was very attractive, when I finally saw her in the flesh I could hardly believe how beautiful she was. After all those hours on the phone, I finally had a real live person to match with that amazing voice.

Once we finally didn't have to worry about an astronomical phone bill, we talked almost nonstop all weekend. That first evening we talked about everything: our childhoods, our families, our jobs, our love of sports, our friends, and our incredible long-distance friendship. But more than anything else, we talked about our faith. I already knew she was much more mature in her faith than I was, but I soon discovered that she didn't feel like she was superior to me. Instead she encouraged me to get to know God better and to follow him completely. She was so confident in who she was and in who God is.

After many hours we both stopped to catch our breath at the same time. In the silence, Krickitt glanced out the window. I saw astonishment on her face as she pointed at something outside. I turned to look and discovered that the sun had already risen. We had talked all night without realizing it.

The next day Krickitt attended the Cowboys' double-header, and both games were one-run losses. That evening, after the games, we talked again. I wasn't in an especially happy mood after the results of the day's games, and I got even more depressed when I told Krickitt about my mother, who was going through a serious illness. Yet for some reason I opened up to Krickitt in a way I never had with anyone else. I was amazed that she understood me and sympathized with me in a way I'd never felt before, and I knew then that this was something special. She wanted to know about my fears and challenges, and I wanted to discover the same about her.

I was surprised when Krickitt suddenly handed me a present. I opened the box, revealing a beautiful new Bible with my name embossed on it in gold lettering. I didn't know what to say. By the time I could mumble a thanks, Krickitt was already turning to the book of Job.

"Life isn't fair; it's life," she said softly, confidently. "Everybody has times when they feel like God's just not there. But he's always there, always bringing you closer to him, even when your mother's sick and your baseball team isn't playing well."

Krickitt started to read: "In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright. . . ." After awhile she stopped reading, and we talked about the terrible situations Job had to deal with. We asked the questions everyone asks about the man who lost everything. How could God allow such awful things to happen to such a good man? And perhaps more important from a human standpoint, why didn't Job throw in the towel and turn his back on God?

We took turns reading about Job, and we talked about many things as the hours passed and we delved into the incredible story of one man's faith in God in the midst of unimaginable tragedy. When we got to the end of the story, we rejoiced with Job as God richly rewarded his faith.

Sometime in the middle of the night we both fell asleep on the couch. The next day Krickitt flew back to California . . . and I had a hard time not falling asleep while coaching third base.

I later learned that when Krickitt's roommate Lisa dropped her off at the airport at the beginning of the weekend, she told Krickitt she felt like she was somehow saying good-bye to her for good. Then when Lisa picked her up at the end of the weekend, it was obvious to Lisa that it was only a matter of time before her roommate would be moving out.

There's no doubt we both had friends who whispered about our "spending the weekend" together, especially as Krickitt never slept in her hotel room. But we both knew that nothing happened there.

weekend that we wouldn't want to tell our mothers. Our time together had been so exhilarating, exciting, and amazing, yet all weekend I hadn't even kissed her. Believe it or not, I never even tried to. That wasn't what the weekend had been about.

When I checked my mailbox a couple of days after Krickitt left, I found a thank-you card. It was so beautiful it made me miss her more than I already did. I was struck by the way she wrote with such conviction and how my own feelings mirrored her own. This is what she wrote:

Kimmo,

I think back over this weekend and it was filled with so much laughter and tears—it was truly wonderful. I would never have imagined that we would be so compatible together. I enjoyed getting to know you this weekend. I feel so special to have seen who the real Kim Carpenter is. You have a heart that is so beautiful to me. Your lovingkindness, gentleness, humility, craziness, and uniqueness completely blew me away. The way you have opened up to me and trusted me with who you are and what you have been through means so much to me.

I, too, am blown away by some of the things we have talked about. I prayed so much for our weekend together, that we would enjoy one another's company and have quality conversations. Well, I guess he answered that one, huh?! I have many questions and wonders with us. I am curious to know what is going to happen. I am ready to go with this relationship and see where it is going to go. It's not in our hands, Kimmer. I think we can go forward. . . . I'm scared, but risk is part of love. I feel that the Lord is either going to continue to open the doors for us, or he will shut them. I'm placing this in his hands and trusting him. Thank you for treating me so kindly and making me feel so special and adored.

Kim Carpenter, I adore and cherish you.

All my love,

Krickitt

Philippians 4:6–9—Read and dwell on this.

The week after Krickitt returned home, we talked every day on the phone. We just couldn't get enough of each other. The next weekend I had some time off, and Krickitt quickly accepted my invitation for another visit. We spent the time talking, hiking, and four-wheeling up in the mountains.

I had a recruiting trip to San Diego a few weeks later, and I couldn't resist combining it with a visit to Krickitt in Anaheim. While I was there she introduced me to her parents, her brother and sister-in-law, and some of her friends. They were all so kind and welcoming—her father, Gus, and I hit it off right away. That wasn't surprising, as our baseball connection created an instant bond.

I went to church with Krickitt and discovered that her pastor, Charles Swindoll, was an incredible preacher whose passion for God was powerful and compelling. Going to church with Krickitt gave me yet another glimpse into who she really was as a person and as a Christian. The more I understood about her faith, the more I understood about her, and vice versa.



I returned to California in late May, but not without some apprehension. Krickitt and I had some serious questions to answer. Our feelings for each other were obviously deep and genuine but were we truly in love in a way that was leading toward marriage? I felt so much love for her, but I wanted to love her for all the right reasons and with all the right intentions.

We went out for dinner and then took a walk on the beach at Del Mar. It was nothing like our usual interactions, when we would talk about anything and everything for hours. This conversation was punctuated by long periods of silence; we knew the significance of this conversation and that every word was special and important.

There was no doubt we needed to make a decision about the future of our relationship. I couldn't imagine not having Krickitt in my life from that moment forward, and I hoped she felt the same way I did. But we had jobs and families hundreds of miles apart. It had only been eight weeks since we had met each other in person. Could we already be so sure we were ready to spend the rest of our lives together?

There were times that night when I thought we would have to end our relationship. It couldn't stand like it was. We could either go forward or we could end it. Should we go our separate ways now before we got in too deep emotionally, or was it already too late for that? Should one of us move? Should Krickitt quit her job? Should I quit mine? We had to decide, but it took us a while to work through everything as we walked hand-in-hand along the beach. Eventually one of us brought up the idea of marriage, not in an excited or emotional way, but in a strangely calm way, as though it were one of the logical possible outcomes of our relationship. We both agreed that it was where we wanted the relationship to head. But even though we decided that's what we wanted, it wasn't a done deal. Krickitt told me I would have to ask her father for her hand in marriage.

At the time Mr. and Mrs. Pappas were in Omaha, Nebraska, for the College Baseball World Series. I didn't want to have to wait until they returned home, so I called them at their hotel. Even though I had met Krickitt's parents and we got along well, I was, like any man in the same situation, very nervous about this most important conversation.

When Gus answered the phone, we exchanged some small talk and then talked about baseball for a few minutes. Finally, I took a deep breath and dove in to the real purpose for the call.

"Krickitt and I have been getting along really well. I want to ask her to marry me, but she said I had to talk to you first."

"She did, did she?"

"Yes, sir."

"Kim, we'd be honored to have you as our son-in-law."

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I was determined that the proposal would be creative. After I bought a diamond ring, I called Krickitt's roommates, Megan and Lisa, to help me set the stage for my visit. Their apartment had a security gate, and my plan was for one of the other girls to answer the buzzer so I could surprise Krickitt. They were happy to play along and easily got me inside the apartment complex without Krickitt finding out. I showed up outside their apartment in a suit and tie, despite my usual aversion to dress clothes. Then I started yelling Krickitt's name.

She soon came out onto her balcony, a modern-day Juliet in shorts and Nikes. I was holding flowers, a teddy bear with balloons tied to it, and a ring box. The unusual sight struck her speechless but only for an instant.

"What are you doing here?" she yelled down to me.

“Well . . . Will ya?” I shouted back.

My heart dropped as she disappeared from the balcony, but it was only a second before I could see her flying down the stairs toward me.

“Will I what?” she asked expectantly.

I got down on one knee, looked her in the eye, and asked the most important question of my life.

“Will you be my lifetime buddy? Krisxan, will you marry me?”

Krickitt took a quick breath and said the words I knew would come but was still dying to hear. “Yes, I will.”

After embracing we stood back away from each other and after a pause asked, “Now what do we do?”

My original plan was that we’d get married the following spring. Krickitt admitted she didn’t want to wait that long. I agreed with her thinking, so I tossed out a nearer date: Christmas. That was still too far off for her. So we set September 18, barely three months away, as the day we would become husband and wife.

I went back to Las Vegas to get the apartment ready for my future wife, and Krickitt jumped headfirst into wedding planning. She began making long-distance arrangements from Anaheim for the ceremony at Scottsdale Bible Church in suburban Phoenix, near her parent’s home.

So on the evening of September 18, 1993, a perfect late-summer desert night, I stood at the altar with an audience of more than a hundred friends, family, and guests, held Krickitt’s hand in mine, and made a vow:

“Krisxan, I’ve grown to love you very much. I thank you for loving me in the beautiful ways that you have, and I will always, always cherish this beautiful moment. I promise to love and respect you fully. I promise to provide for and protect you through times of challenge and need. I promise to be faithful, honest, and open; to devote myself to your every need and desire. Most of all, I promise to be the man you so fell in love with. And thank you, Jesus, for the blessing you have provided me with you, Krisxan. I love you.”

Krickitt’s self-created response filled my heart with thanksgiving and love:

“Kimmer, I love you. Finally today is here, the day that I give you my hand in marriage. I promise to be faithful to you, to love you in good times and bad, and to be equally ready to listen to you when you need to share. I promise to be open, and honest, and trustworthy, and I promise to support you each day. I’m honored to be your wife. I’m all yours, Kimmer. And I love you.”

After we made our vows, the pastor asked my best man, Mike Kloepfel, for the ring. Mike reached under his coat, but instead of pulling out the ring, he pulled out a black, freshly polished baseball glove. Mike handed me the glove; I put it on and signaled to Krickitt’s dad, who gave me a big grin, stood up, and tossed a baseball up to me. I caught it, flipped the glove over my shoulder to Mike, and peeled back a square piece of white tape on the ball. There, inside the ball, was Krickitt’s wedding band. Since a love of sports had brought us together, I figured it was only appropriate to mark our common interest in an unforgettable way.

The new Mrs. Kim Carpenter and I went to Maui for our honeymoon, and when we returned we settled down in Las Vegas, New Mexico, just as the new school year was getting under way. I started working with my baseball team, and Krickitt dove into her new life with the same enthusiasm, spirit, and faith that had made her such a great saleswoman. I had the luxury of still being in my same town at my same job, but my new wife had to start all over in a brand new environment. That was no problem for Krickitt. Before long she had become the team statistician, informal snack bar overseer for college games, and instant volunteer wherever she saw a need.

Krickitt also took a position as an exercise technician in Northeastern Regional Hospital's Center for Health and Fitness, a community fitness center on the campus of New Mexico Highlands University, where she designed exercise programs to help people reach their individual fitness goals. Her friendliness and gymnastics experience made her an instant hit with both the other staff members and the clients.

We decided that Thanksgiving would be a perfect time to make our first visit as husband and wife to visit Krickitt's parents in Phoenix. On Tuesday of Thanksgiving week, the night before we left, Krickitt and I had a quiet dinner and then sat snuggling on the couch in front of the TV. I had my arm around her, and she leaned her head on my chest. With no warning she looked up at me and asked, "Are you happy, Kimmer?"

I couldn't resist the urge to kiss her before answering, "I can't imagine how I could be any happier." And I kissed her again.



## IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

I looked up from the car and scanned the area for my wife of less than ten weeks. I was trying to figure out how to pack our car with enough luggage for our first Thanksgiving weekend with Krickitt's parents and still leave room for the two of us plus one of the members of my coaching staff who was hitching a ride to the airport in Phoenix.

"Hey, Krick, you gonna take all day?" I yelled toward the open door to our apartment.

"Here I am," Krickitt announced as she appeared in the doorway. She practically hopped down the sidewalk toward me, just like the insect her aunt had compared her to all those years ago. I couldn't help but watch her as she approached me.

"I love you, Kimmer," she said as she reached me, suddenly uncharacteristically still. "I love you, Krickitt," I answered. While Krickitt wedged a few more bags into the trunk, I went back for one last look to see if we'd left anything, then locked and closed the door behind me.

As I headed to the car, I thought for a few moments about the amazing things God had given me over the past few years, most notably a new job and a new wife. I couldn't believe that two months had passed since Krickitt and I had been on our honeymoon, enjoying the warm sand and tropical paradise of Hawaii. Now we were headed off for the Thanksgiving holiday, and Christmas was just around the corner. Time was moving too fast. I wanted to enjoy every day and I looked forward to starting many new traditions with my wife as we celebrated our first major holiday together.

"Hey, Kimmer, you gonna take all day?" Krickitt tried to be serious, but she couldn't do it for long and soon broke out into a huge smile. We laughed as I slipped into the driver's seat. I started the car and backed out of the parking lot, and eased into the holiday traffic.

We had a long trip ahead of us, but it was a relatively easy one from our home in New Mexico. We would have interstate highways the entire time as we made our way through Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Flagstaff, finally ending in Phoenix. Originally we had planned to leave in the morning in order to get to the Pappas house before dark, but our passenger wasn't able to leave until after lunch. By the time we picked him up and headed southwest on I-25, it was already after two o'clock. It was going to be close to midnight by the time we pulled into my in-laws' driveway, but Krickitt and I didn't care. This was our first official holiday as husband and wife, and nothing mattered as long as we were together.

We sailed through Santa Fe and Albuquerque, but soon after we turned west on I-40 toward the Arizona border, I started feeling as if I was coming down with a cold. I tried to ignore it, because we had a long way to go, but Krickitt noticed something wasn't right. She asked if I was okay. I told her I wasn't feeling quite right but that I'd be fine in a few minutes.

But I wasn't fine in a few minutes, I was worse. By the time Krickitt said we ought to stop for some medicine, I was in no shape to argue with her, so we made a quick pit stop to pick up what we needed.

"Maybe I should drive for a while," Krickitt suggested. "I don't mind. Then you can lie down on the back seat and get some rest."

I felt truly awful, so I had no problem taking her up on her offer. "That would be great." I sighed before adding, "This sure isn't how I planned to impress the in-laws on our first holiday with them."

Krickitt flashed me her signature smile; I smiled back as well as I could, but it didn't compare



She took the wheel with our passenger by her side while I tried to stretch out in the back. Our Ford Escort was brand new but wasn't designed for a grown man to sleep in the backseat. However, with an eye more to comfort than safety, I realized I could fold down the back seat and stretch my legs out into the trunk. I did my best to get comfortable while I waited for the medicine to kick in.

Just past six in the evening we passed through Gallup, the last big town before the New Mexico/Arizona border. Darkness was falling fast, and Krickitt turned the headlights on. I finally got into a somewhat comfortable position and dozed off with my head at the back of the driver's seat and my legs toward the back of the hatchback. Suddenly I was jolted awake by a firm yell of, "Watch out!" as the car quickly decelerated and swerved to the left. I rose up just in time to feel the impact thrust me into the back of Krickitt's seat. Having slid my head off her seat toward the driver's door, I looked in the driver's side mirror and could see headlights zooming toward us, getting larger and larger and then completely filling the mirror in a split second.

My wife let out a bone-chilling scream.

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The highway patrolman's report said that at approximately 6:30 p.m. on November 24, 1993, 50 miles east of the Arizona/New Mexico state line, a white Ford Escort was involved in a collision with two trucks. Later investigations revealed that a red flatbed truck with a load of car parts had started having engine trouble as it traveled west on I-40. As a result, the driver slowed to about twenty-five miles per hour in the right lane. Traveling at a normal interstate speed, Krickitt came up behind the truck, which was hidden in a cloud of black smoke produced by a defective fuel filter. During the day the smoke would have been visible, but as night had fallen, Krickitt had been unable to see it from a distance.

Though the flatbed's emergency flashers weren't on, Krickitt eventually saw slow-moving taillights loom into view through the exhaust cloud, braked hard, and swerved to the left. At the same moment a pickup truck following too close behind our car closed in on us.

The right front fender of our Escort clipped the left rear corner of the flatbed. Then as the car started to spin and Krickitt struggled for control, the pickup came from behind and rammed into the driver's side of our car. The impact sent our car careening into the air. It sailed thirty feet, slammed back to the ground, rolled one and a half times, then slid upside down for 106 feet and stopped on the shoulder of the road.

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After we were hit, I don't remember hearing anything or feeling any immediate pain, but I recall every sensation of movement that took place from the moment of impact until our car came to a stop. My face was suddenly jammed between the driver's seat and the side of the car. My head was jerked back. Then I rolled over to the other side of the car, where my rib cage hit the wheel well. Next I experienced a momentary floating sensation, a slow-motion twisting and tumbling like the dream sequence in a movie. I saw sparks and thought the car was on fire. Finally, I felt a strange tingling sensation in my back. Then everything was still.

I was too stunned to say anything for a few seconds while my brain started to clear. When I could think again, I didn't think about the chance that I might be hurt. I couldn't feel a thing. All I could think of was my wife.

"Krickitt!" I screamed. I was answered with silence. "Krickiiiiitt!!" I knew I could hear, because I recognized the sound of the car engine running. But my wife of two months was not answering me.

took a few seconds to look around and get my bearings. After a second I realized the car was on its top and I was lying inside on the roof. The sunroof had been shattered during the long, final skid, and I had made the last part of that 106-foot trip on broken glass and pavement.

Once again I screamed for my wife, and as the sound of my voice died away, I felt something wet on my face. After the ride I'd just taken, I figured I was probably cut and bleeding. I tried to raise my hand up to my face to feel for injuries. I saw my hand slowly come toward my face, dreamlike, as if it were somebody else's hand. As it got closer a red splotch appeared on it, then another. The hand itself didn't seem to be hurt, so I figured the blood was somehow coming from a cut on my head.

I tried to stop the splotches by holding my hand away from my face, but they kept coming. The blood ran down my arm and started dripping down onto the broken sunroof. I finally looked up. It was a strange sensation to see everything upside down, seatbacks pointing down at me, no windows where they should have been.

My still-muddled mind finally deciphered that the dripping blood wasn't my own. Overhead, my wife was suspended upside down by her seat belt. Her arms dangled limp. Her eyes were closed. She didn't move. We weren't more than a couple of feet apart but I couldn't reach her. Since it was almost dark, I couldn't see her clearly enough to tell what sorts of injuries she might have. I suddenly realized that she might even be dead.

"Krickitt!" I snapped in my hard-nosed coach voice, hoping to shock her into waking up. Her eyes didn't open, but she stirred a little. Then she let out a long, ragged, sighing breath and was still again.

I thought I had just heard the last breath my wife would ever take.

I called her name again and started trying to get out of the car, but I couldn't move and at first I couldn't figure out why. There wasn't anything on top of me or in my way, and I had a clear shot out of the car through the rear window next to me since the glass was completely gone. After a few moments I realized I had no feeling in my legs. I was unable to move from the waist down.

My nose started to tingle, so I reached up to touch it. I felt something sharp. I was shocked to discover that it was the bone at the base of where my nose should have been. Lower on my face I felt what I first thought was a badly swollen lip. It was not. It was my nose, hanging down in front of my mouth by a flap of skin.

At last I heard another voice, but it wasn't Krickitt's. "Give me your hand! I'll help you out!" I turned to the window and looked straight into the face of a stranger, our very own Good Samaritan.

"I can't move my legs," I shouted back.

"Turn the motor off! This thing could explode any minute." After a moment of confusion, I realized the man was talking to our passenger, who had been riding shotgun. Somehow he had made it through that whole ordeal with only a separated shoulder. Though he had been a bit dazed, he had been able to get out of the car, and at the stranger's command he reached back in to get to the ignition.

"The key's broken off," he said.

"You've got to get it turned off!" the stranger demanded. After some desperate jiggling and twisting, the ignition switch turned and the engine fell silent.

"Okay, I'm coming in to get you," the man said. Dropping to his stomach, he army crawled through the window beside me. I grabbed him around the shoulders, and he held on to me with one hand while he used the other to help scoot us backward out of the car and over to the grass beside the highway.

I saw then that another vehicle had stopped. A husband and wife headed toward us, leaving their children in their van. "You kids stay inside and pray," the man instructed as he approached our car. He looked around at all the wreckage and blood and, without any show of panic or defeat, put his hand on

one of the upturned tires and started praying. His wife came over to me in the grass to see what she could do to help. She was afraid I was bleeding to death until she discovered much of the blood on me wasn't my own.

The couple introduced themselves as Wayne and Kelli Marshall and offered to do whatever they could to help. At the moment, the only thing I needed was to know that my wife wasn't dead.

As my rescuer wrapped me in blankets from his truck cab, another car stopped and the driver hurried over to me. She said a few words, then stopped abruptly with a look of horrified recognition on her face. "Oh my goodness! You're Danny Carpenter's son! Your cousin Debbie is my best friend! I'll get in touch with your family," the woman said and left the scene to start making calls.

I couldn't help but be amazed at how God was already taking care of us. There we were in the middle of nowhere and we had already encountered a rescuer, a prayer warrior, and a family friend.

The drivers of the other two vehicles involved in the crash had no visible injuries, and the two passengers in the pickup only had relatively minor wounds. The same could not be said of Krickitt and me. Not only was I in bad shape physically; I was also numb with shock. All I could think about was Krickitt trapped inside the twisted-up car a few feet away, looking like she was either bleeding to death or already dead. Her head was caught between the steering wheel and the roof where the top had been crushed during the rollover. I realized that if I'd been driving I would have been killed instantly because I wouldn't have fit in the space remaining after the impact and my skull would have been crushed. But in Krickitt's case, we could see that unlatching her seat belt before her head was freed would probably break her neck if it wasn't already broken.

Within minutes the police and ambulances started arriving. It was obvious that Krickitt would have to be cut out of the car, but the EMTs were afraid to wait that long to start treatment. So one of them, DJ Coombs, crawled inside the car—not mentioning that she had severe claustrophobia—and started giving Krickitt IVs and monitoring her vital signs as she was still hanging upside down from the seat belt. Krickitt seemed to drift in and out of consciousness; her pupils alternately constricted and dilated—a classic symptom, I later learned, of severe brain injury.

While the rescue team was still cutting open the car, our passenger and I were loaded into an ambulance. On the way to the hospital in Gallup, the EMTs began cataloguing my injuries. My left ear was almost torn off; my nose was nearly severed. I also had other facial lacerations, a concussion, two cracked ribs, and a broken hand. Doctors would later discover a scraped lung and bruised heart muscle.

As we sped along, I heard the ambulance attendant call the hospital on the radio. "We have two male accident victims, one in critical condition, one serious. The third victim is still at the scene in severely critical condition." That didn't sound good, but I realized that it at least meant Krickitt was still alive.

When we arrived at the emergency room of Rehoboth-McKinley Christian Hospital in Gallup, I was immediately taken to get an X-ray and CT scan. The medical personnel had discovered a big knob behind my left ear that they thought might indicate a skull fracture. When I was finished, Krickitt was already being given life-saving treatment in another area of the ER, so I didn't see her, but I knew the news wouldn't be good. After all, I had seen her in the crumpled car, and it had taken them more than half an hour to cut her out of it.

Nobody would give me a straight answer about Krickitt's condition. How was she doing? Was she going to recover? Was she going to be okay? Nobody would tell me, which I realized was not a good sign. I later learned that when one of the ambulance technicians heard Krickitt was still alive hours after being admitted to the hospital, she refused to believe it. She had never seen anyone survive such

massive head trauma.

As soon as Krickitt had arrived at the hospital, the medical staff turned all their attention to her, which didn't draw any complaints from me. The ER team had given me some preliminary treatment, but I didn't want to take any sedative or have any other work done until I knew what was happening with my wife. I had been waiting for a while when a doctor approached me. His manner was professional and confident, but when I looked in his eyes I could tell he was exhausted. He handed me a little manila envelope.

"Mr. Carpenter, I'm terribly sorry."

I couldn't formulate a response before the doctor left the room. There was nothing to do but investigate the contents of the envelope. I opened it with my good hand and slid the items out into the broken one. I stared down at the Highlands University watch I'd had made for Krickitt . . . and her wedding ring.

When I gave her that ring, I had made a vow to protect her through times of challenge and need. This was definitely a time of both challenge and need, but I felt helpless. There was nothing I could do to protect her now.

My thoughts and feelings were all scrambled up inside me. I was in pain, and I was exhausted, but most of all I was annoyed that I didn't know how Krickitt was doing. But all of a sudden, piercing through everything else, was the thought that she was dead.

I was too incredulous to be sad. It wasn't that I wasn't willing to believe my wife was dead; *couldn't* believe it. I was incapable of accepting the fact that those blue eyes were closed forever and would never again see her smile shining at me from other side of the dinner table. I couldn't believe that the most joyful, most enthusiastic woman I had ever known could be torn from my life so savagely. My brain simply refused to process the idea that after two months of marriage I was a widower. *A widower.*

Some time later a nurse came in to check on me and update me on Krickitt's status. "We've done all we can, and she hasn't improved," she explained. "She's beyond medical help." *Maybe she's beyond medical help,* I thought, *but she's not beyond God's help.*

The nurse continued. "Still, she's hanging in there better than anybody thought she would. She's strong, and she's in excellent physical condition. The doctor has put in a call for an airlift to Albuquerque." The door that had seemed shut and sealed only minutes ago had miraculously opened a crack.

At the time I didn't know it, but when the medical flight team got orders to fly my wife 130 miles to the University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque, they were afraid, based on their experience, that it would be a wasted trip. It would take a solid hour for the helicopter to get to Gallup and then it would be another hour before they could get my wife back to Albuquerque. By then they figured it would likely be too late. Krickitt would be dead.

But by God's grace, the staff at Rehoboth-McKinley Christian Hospital in Gallup took a chance on Krickitt Carpenter. As they wheeled her out of the emergency room to get ready for the flight, I saw her for the first time since I had been taken away from the scene of the accident hours before. She was lying on a gurney, surrounded by medical staff that were keeping track of what looked like about a dozen IV lines and monitors. My wife's head and face were so swollen and bruised that I could barely recognize her. Her lips and ears were blue-black, and the swelling was so bad that her eyelids couldn't close all the way. Her eyes looked to the right with a blank stare, and her arms moved around aimlessly (more signs of severe head injury). Her body temperature was unstable, so they had put her in a big thermal wrap. To me it looked like a body bag.

I got up off my bed and grabbed both of Krickitt's hands. They were shockingly cold. "We're gonna get through this, Krick," I said to her. "We're gonna make it." I smiled but felt the tears coming just the same. "Don't you die on me!" I pleaded, my mouth inches from her face. She was wearing an oxygen mask and I could hear her breathing, shallow and tentative. "We're in this forever, remember? We've got a long way to go!"

When they began wheeling Krickitt's gurney out to the helipad, I suddenly realized they had no intention of taking me with them. "They have to have two medics and a lot of gear to give your wife any chance for survival," someone explained to me. "There's no room for a passenger."

I wasn't a passenger; I was her husband. I was also a patient, I suddenly realized, with fairly severe injuries of my own. I tried to convince anyone who would listen to get the helicopter to come back for me. But that wasn't to be. Someone told me there were two other active calls at the time, and there was no time to make another two-hour round trip for me. As this registered, I helplessly watched my wife get wheeled through a set of swinging doors toward the waiting helicopter.

"Hang in there, Krickitt! I'm praying for you!" I yelled, before I started sobbing as I watched the love of my life be rolled up to the waiting helicopter and eased inside. I stood there in disbelief as the rhythmic sound of the copter's overhead rotor faded into the distance.



From the moment I had arrived at the hospital, I had tried repeatedly to get in touch with Krickitt's parents in Phoenix and mine in Farmington, New Mexico. But since it was the day before Thanksgiving, nobody was home. Running out of options, I finally called Krickitt's old phone number and talked to her ex-roommate Lisa, who still lived with Megan in the apartment the three of them had once shared in California. I quickly explained the situation, then asked her to try and reach Krickitt's parents, tell them we'd been in a wreck, and stand by for further news.

Next I called my boss at the university, athletic director Rob Evers. I told him the situation and asked him to track down my parents. He said he'd take care of it and immediately started on the trail. He knew I had an uncle in Albuquerque with the last name of Morris, but he didn't know my uncle's first name because everyone called him by a nickname, Corky. So Rob called the telephone operator and explained that he had an emergency and had to contact the family. "We don't usually do this," the operator explained, "but stay on the line." She called every Morris in Albuquerque until she found the right one.

Uncle Corky had a phone number for my dad's business partner. Rob called the man, who was eventually able to get in touch with Dad on his cell phone. He and Mom were in Roswell, New Mexico, where they were spending Thanksgiving with my brother Kelly. Dad called immediately. I told him that a doctor had just given me Krickitt's wedding ring and a, "Mr. Carpenter, I'm terribly sorry." I was frustrated that I didn't know what was going on, but I would let him know when there was any news.

As I lay there after Krickitt's chopper took off, I still couldn't believe that my wife of two months was going to die. She was so full of life, so joyful, so focused on being the woman God wanted her to be. Just that morning she had been writing in her journal again. When I read the entry later, I was amazed by what she wrote that day: "Lord, . . . Help us to have endurance to work hard for your values. I pray for opportunities to serve you, be a witness for you, be a leader for you. . . . Please open my heart and Kimmer's to do the things that will be pleasing to you." Little did we know on that Thanksgiving Eve how God would answer those prayers in amazing and extremely difficult ways.

But that night my thoughts weren't on the future. They were focused on the horrific events of the

present. I called my dad again. Through my heartbreaking sobs, I managed to gasp out the words  
~~“They’ve flown Krickitt to Albuquerque and they wouldn’t let me go with her. You’ve got to come  
and get me. Take me to her.”~~ I broke down again, overwhelmed by the emotions flowing through me.  
“I have to see my wife again before she dies.”

## A MODERN-DAY MIRACLE

While my dad was figuring out how to get me to Albuquerque, Krickitt's parents were just arriving home to an empty house. Gus and Mary had done all they could to make sure our first Thanksgiving as a married couple would be special. Since we weren't going to be able to make it to their house for Christmas due to my work schedule, they decided to add an early touch of holiday cheer to their house by putting up their Christmas lights, both inside and out. They knew we wouldn't be getting in until late in the evening, so they had gone out to watch a basketball game.

Krickitt's parents hadn't yet heard the news when they returned home from the game, but Mary knew something was wrong even before they entered the house. It was after midnight, yet when they pulled in the drive there was no white Escort sitting there to announce our arrival. They soon heard the life-altering news: their beloved daughter and her husband had been in an accident and the outlook wasn't good.

I was waiting for my dad to call back with his plan when Mary called me. Since Krickitt was on her way to Albuquerque, I couldn't tell Mary how she was doing, as I didn't know myself. But I do remember telling her, "I'm hurting bad and I can't live without her." Mary said she would call the hospital to check on Krickitt's status, and they would catch the first plane out of Phoenix in the early morning hours of Thanksgiving Day.

It could have been two minutes or two hours after talking to Mary that my phone rang again. I answered and heard my father's voice. "Son, how are you doing?"

"I want to see Krickitt, that's how I am. I can't breathe and my back is killing me. I have to see her, Dad." The tears were pricking in the back of my eyes, but I had to keep them under control to get through this conversation. I hoped with all my might that Dad could get me to Albuquerque to see my wife.

He could. "Listen, son," he said in a steady, controlled voice that gave me both strength and comfort, "I'll drop your mother off at the hospital in Albuquerque. Then I'll meet you at the truck stop in Grants and drive you back to see Krickitt."

Dad made it sound like he would only have to make a quick trip across town. But the truth was that he and Mom had just driven almost four hundred miles across New Mexico to get to my brother's house. Now he was going to drive two hundred miles from Roswell to Albuquerque and then another sixty to Grants, the midway point between Albuquerque and Gallup. To top it all off, a storm had blown in during the night, and some sections of the highway were solid sheets of ice.

"The problem is that I don't think I can get out of here unless you come and get me discharged. They admitted me through the ER, and they haven't done much for me yet because they were so busy with Krickitt. I'm in pretty bad shape, Dad."

"I'll send Porky to get you out."

When I heard that, I knew it was done. Porky Abeda was one of Dad's best friends, a big bear of a man and former fire chief of Gallup. He was well known in the town and a very persuasive man, so I knew if anybody could get me out of the hospital, Porky could.

Understandably, the medical staff members did not agree with my decision to leave. A nurse tried to reason with me, "We haven't had a chance to examine you for internal injuries. It is not advisable to leave now."

“I just want to be with my wife.”

“By the time you get to Albuquerque, it may be impossible to repair the damage to your nose and your ear. And we don’t even know what kind of internal bleeding you might have.” The nurse paused and gave me a very stern look. “If you leave the hospital now, you could die.”

“I don’t care,” I replied. “If Krickitt dies, I don’t want to live.”

If a patient wants to be discharged against medical advice, the hospital is only supposed to release him or her to a relative. Porky doesn’t look like he could be my cousin, uncle, or any other relative. He’s full-blooded Navajo and I’m Caucasian. I don’t know what he said to the hospital staff, but it worked.

After the papers were signed, Porky wrapped me in a blanket, packed me into the backseat of his car, and took off for Grants. I tried out various positions in the backseat, trying to find one that would allow me to breathe with less pain. Every time I inhaled it felt like my chest was on fire. Looking out through the window, I watched the lights as we zoomed down the interstate. I finally saw the huge truck stop sign at Grants, and we pulled off to meet my dad.

He was pacing on the sidewalk. He had made the drive from Roswell in about half the normal time, even though the highway was coated with ice and there had been two other major wrecks between Albuquerque and Gallup that night—the same wrecks that tied up the helicopter that I had hoped would take me to Albuquerque and Krickitt. Porky hopped out of the car and I watched Dad walk up to him.

“Where’s Kim?” I heard Dad ask, his question muffled by the sound of numerous eighteen-wheelers idling all around us. He looked at the car, obviously expecting me to get out and switch cars for the drive back to Albuquerque.

“Danny,” Porky said solemnly, “Kim’s in bad shape. He can’t get out of the car on his own.”

When Porky opened the door, the icy wind whipped right through the blanket. My father’s eyes met mine before glancing at my cut-up face, ripped ear, and mutilated nose. He shivered, and I knew he wasn’t from the cold.

The two of them got me switched to Dad’s car, and we took off for Albuquerque, a customary hour-long drive. But this wasn’t the customary trip. By the time we hit the on-ramp to the interstate, Dad was going 110 miles per hour.

For the third time in twelve hours I found myself trying to find a comfortable position in the passenger seat of a car. Nothing seemed to help. I was gurgling more with every breath, unable to get enough air. Inhaling deeply had gone from painful to impossible.

We zoomed along the interstate at two miles a minute, in and out of freezing rain. Through it all there were times when I thought I would never take another breath. The broken ribs had damaged my lung, and I felt as if I was slowly slipping away.

There wasn’t much conversation during that trip. Every once in awhile Dad would say, “Are you all right, son?”

My internal response was always, *No, I’m not all right. My wife is dying, and I might be dying too. We’ve only been married ten weeks, and now it’s all going to be over in a matter of hours . . . if it’s not over already.* But all I could say was, “Just get me to Albuquerque, Dad.”

Every few minutes Dad called Mom at the hospital to see how things were going. After every call he asked him if there was any news. “They’re still working on her,” was the only answer I ever got. I didn’t know until later then when Dad had still been in Roswell, he had called the hospital and was told that Krickitt probably wouldn’t make it through the night.

I was under no illusions that Dad was telling me everything he knew about Krickitt. I had seen him



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