

The Cabin In The Woods And Other Short Stories

Matt Shea

This book is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Dedication



This book is dedicated to Reverend Stanley F. Jackowski and his wife of over thirty-eight years, Rebecca.

I was truly blessed when a friend connected me with Stanley. My website needed updating, and Reverend Jackowski's computer wizardry was just what the doctor ordered! On a more personal note, my new friend was certainly a godsend. He was that 'go-to guy' who gave me a better understanding about Jesus. I am

proud to say that my passion for writing Christian stories has since escalated, with this present publication serving as testimony.

Thanks, Stan and Rebecca! I do believe that these stories will 'wear well' with your five beautiful daughters, and all eight grandkids!

Your brother, Matt

Truth Family Ministries, Inc.
AKA Stan Jackowski Ministries

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Another fine job, Stanley!

About Renée Klause

Renée has a degree in fine arts and pursued her artistic abilities as a floral designer. Today she still does custom floral work. Renée also served as a paraeducator for many years.

In her late fifties, she bought a large easel and told herself: “One day I'll use this!” A few years later she joined a local art club and received the support she needed. From there, she has been 'Artist Of The Month' several times!

Renée enjoys the freedom of abstracts, expressionism, and mixed media. She works mainly with acrylics and watercolor.

Renée painted the very cover of this book several years ago. She always felt that it would make a great cover for a future Matt Shea book. It turns out that she was right! After all, it became the fifth cover Renée has done for Matt so far.

Renée wants everyone to feel free to view her artwork. This includes many paintings that can be seen and purchased on Facebook.

Artistic Xpressions By Renée Klause



Renée Klause at one of the many art shows she has entered. This particular one was a fundraiser for the arts in her community. She sold half her pieces that day!

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Synopsis

The stories you're about to read are based on the goodness of Christian faith.

In each setting, whether you are at odds with others in regards to who should inherit what, an honest family man trying to earn better for his family, an innocent boy who could always strike up a friendship with any senior (including the town's only bear), or a teen testing the waters with an elder; let faith be your guide.

It will see you through, each and every time!

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The Cabin in the Woods

Introduction

A CRISP MAPLE LEAF RESTS on top of still water.

In silence, its golden radiance matches the reflection of the surrounding trees—a heavenly spectacle under crystal skies that further served as testimony to one's faith.

The dried-out symbol known for valor and integrity was certainly living up to its image. It seemed to have been called for duty, as if it were a majestic ship from past centuries. The leaf had set sail from the opposite bank to deliver precious cargo: a glistening silver wrapper with a chocolate treat inside!

Six-year-old Becky Lynn Foyer anxiously walked the trail that led to the riverbank. Soon, the child wearing a pink jumpsuit with a matching knitted hat pressed both hands against her face. In awe, little Becky had discovered what she was hoping to find! The brown-haired, blue-eyed girl leaned forward and picked up the piece of candy that was waiting for her.

Gazing across the river, she saw the jubilant face of seven-year-old Jamie Marie Foyer, who was dressed in white. Smiling ear to ear, little Jamie had the gratification of being detected. Immediately, she ran toward the trail that led to her home.

It was obvious to all that each child always dreamed of being the other's sister.

It would be fair to describe this neck of the woods as God's Country. After all, it was enriched with undisturbed nature encompassed by a flowing rhythm. On occasion, a gentle breeze would whisper through the wildflowers and rustle the leaves. This was a tranquil land full of grace, where each season welcomed the next.

There was more to this slice of heaven.

Folklore states that the Native American has always regarded this territory as sacred. It was clearly secluded from the tribulations of modern society, as if it were protected. Miles and miles of rugged terrain existed between this land and the asphalt jungles laced with noise and crime. Here, it would be impossible to conceive plans for a housing development or a modern-day facility.

It seemed that an additional blessing was also thrown into the works: The 'Two Brothers River' flowed in front of their homes. The currents were deemed magic on this tribal land. Miraculously, there was a section where nature's most volatile storms could never flood, a phenomenon that started upstream at the fork. It all centered around a mysterious piece of land that split the river like the bow of a ship. When the rainy season hit hard, or snow packs melted, the water level would elevate rapidly. Once it reached a threatening level, the surrounding banks would take over. The excess water would then overflow into streams that would reroute the torrent, thus saving the land it was about to devour.

To make this property even more special, it hosted a log cabin and what appeared to be an old stable behind it. The early American structures were built from the very trees and river rock that surrounded them. This rustic Thomas Kinkade setting took one back in time and was a sight to behold in the wintertime. During those months, it would be encased in snow with friendly smoke rising from the chimney. Cardinals nesting in nearby trees added to the graceful setting.

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What made it even more desirable was that it united the extended families on either side of the river. Each property hosted a walking bridge that crossed from their respective sides. Together, they met at the patch of land in the middle where the aging couple resided. This was their grandparents' home; and from there a question arises:

Who gets the cabin when Grandma and Grandpa are no longer with us?

And now our story begins...

Chapter I:

The Early Years

BECKY FOYER MADE A BEELINE straight to the kitchen. There, she found her loving mother wiping down the counters. The child, who was almost out of breath, stood before her and displayed the candy she was gifted.

Thirty-five-year-old Francis Foyer looked at her panting angel. Loving hazel eyes matched the innocent blue eyes looking up. Dropping the damp cloth, she placed her arms around her child and kissed her forehead, saying, “Everybody loves you!” Becky hugged her mother with joy.

Francis Lynn Foyer loved having a family. The slender five-foot-nine woman with shoulder-length auburn hair had her hands full, however. She was a single parent who also had an eight-year-old son named Jacob Michael Foyer. He too had inherited the family trademark of brown hair and blue eyes. Thankfully, there was a silver lining to this fatherless equation. Across the river lived an ideal father figure—a lean, thirty-six-year-old single parent who also had two children of the same age. If Francis could select one man to pick up the slack, it would be this dashing man with blue eyes and short black hair. After all, he was Henry Elliot Foyer, the brotherly love she’d grown up with.

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Jamie Foyer was sharing a victory hug with her dad. The candy treat had been delivered as planned, and all was well. “You made someone very happy today!” he exclaimed with a tear in his eye.

Upstream sat nine-year-old Henry Elliot Foyer II and Jacob Foyer. Together, they shared a fishing spot that seemed to be a page right out of 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.' This was where Grandma and Grandpa Foyer lived. A rustic cabin from the 1800s nestled at the fork of the river.

Sixty-two-year-old Chester Mitchel Foyer and his sixty-one-year-old wife, Vyerl Marie always felt that they lived in heaven. They cherished living on the land they were raised on and the sturdy cabin they always knew. High beams from the neighboring trees supported the roof of the two-story structure that boasted four bedrooms. A fireplace made of river rock with a crucifix above the mantle was a reminder of its early American history. Family pictures hung throughout the home that had a woodshed out back and a pole waving the stars and stripes. Above the front door hung an old wooden sign that read: 'The Foyer House.'

This was home for the gray-haired couple who wore bifocals and plaid sweaters. The elders with rich brown eyes and gracious smiles had more to be thankful for. Their front deck faced a mild river that channeled on both sides of their property. Looking to the right, they could see their son's home. To their left was their daughter's.

Later, a trout dinner with all the trimmings would be served in front of the fireplace. A family tradition that was a Thanksgiving all in its own. Such nights included song, laughter, prayer, and passages from the Bible. It was another sacred gathering at the grandparents' cabin, with the kids and grandkids all present. An evening that served as further testimony to their faith.

Chapter II: Growing Up

A FEW YEARS HAD PASSED.

It took Mother Nature almost no time at all for the children to reach their teens. Becky and her older brother, Jacob, were now fourteen and sixteen. Across the river, Jamie was fifteen and her older sibling, known as 'young Henry,' was seventeen.

Time certainly has a way of changing things, but not always for the better. The future mothers seemed to be doing just fine. Each possessed a remarkable resemblance to the other. It was easy for them to convince the outside world that they were sisters. Everything from their flowing brown hair to their glistening blue eyes made the sell. They also did well in school and often cooked masterpieces for the three households.

It was the brothers where the problem lay. Together they had entered the realm of one-upmanship. It now mattered 'who' caught the biggest fish and which rock was thrown the furthest. Competition had set in.

To make matters worse, they were beginning to cast off into the distant future. In time, each would secretly wonder which one would end up with the grand prize: the cabin that lay between their

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homes. Even questions about the Lord's existence would soon enter their feeble minds...

Henry Elliot Foyer II had sprouted. The young man with wavy brown hair and blue eyes now stood even with his six-foot dad. Sadly, his maturity had taken a different path. He seemed to have withdrawn from the household and spent most of his time alone. There were even times when he contested his dad's advice.

Jacob Foyer was in the same league. He too seemed to have distanced himself from his mom and sister. Telltale signs of contempt toward his childhood friend also began to surface. It appeared that they were no longer fishing buddies. They even stopped sitting next to one another in church. It was apparent that the roller coaster ride of adolescence had gotten out of hand for the boys who could pass as brothers.

In essence, it had become a four-alarm fire.

There was also something peculiar going on behind closed doors. Each seemed to be working on some sort of project in secrecy. On occasion they would be seen on their respective banks, gathering pieces of wood and stones that washed ashore. For whatever reason, these findings soon ended up in their bedrooms.

The first part of this mystery was known. It was the future grandmothers shipping off material to the brothers who'd grown distant from one another. The very currents that shuttled candy throughout their childhood was now on a mission of goodwill.

Growing up, the boys made toy boats, a horseshoe pit, bird feeders, and other ingenious contraptions from the surrounding resources. A continuous labor of love that was to be shared by all. Dried leaves and chunks of driftwood were being implemented once again. The crafty sisters were sending out identical

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shipments, knowing that the brothers' creative sides would kick in.

It was their hope that the boys would eventually reunite as friends and do more projects together. In the meantime, they remained quiet throughout this campaign. It was a given that each brother would create something with his findings.

But what?

Chapter III:

Is There Really A God?

THE PRIZED LOG CABIN had its equal about a mile down the road. It was practically a matching structure from the same era, but with stained glass windows. Church services were alive and well in this part of the woods. The few who lived near and far packed the house every time.

On this particular Sunday, young Henry seemed to stray. He was in attendance, but slightly shook his head as Pastor Donovan spoke. The gracious forty-five-year-old who stood at five foot ten had chosen an interesting topic: signs from our Lord. The man with short red hair and soulful blue eyes electrified the room with his message.

Ironically, the concept of receiving signs from our Creator hit a sore spot with young Henry. Throughout his life, he'd always felt overlooked by the Lord. The lost youth had begun to question if He actually existed. His dad took notice of his son's rolling eyes and did his best to maintain his composure. Later that day, they had a talk.

“Henry, what's gotten into you?” his father asked.

“What are you talking about?” replied the son.

“C'mon!” he fired back. “Are you forgetting who was sitting next to you in church today?”

Young Henry tensed up and stared at the floor. A moment of silence passed as the young man gathered his thoughts. Finally, he looked straight at the breadwinner and shared what was troubling him. “How can there be a God when we pray all the time, and hardly have anything?”

The single parent understood what was said and fired back, “Son, it's all about being grateful for having a glass half-full; and that includes having a roof over your head!” The discussion was over. The bewildered teen went to his room and locked the door.

Henry Elliot Foyer Sr. spent the rest of his day on the back porch with a Bible in hand. Looking over the rolling river, he prayed for his son. “Heavenly Father, please guide us...”

Prayers do get answered.

His cell phone chimed with one Pastor Donovan on the other end. “Good afternoon, brother Henry!” greeted the man of the cloth. It was obvious that the pastor was sharing the same concerns. After their friendly exchange, they compared notes on young Henry's disposition. “He's just a young man taking a time-out,” he assured. All of a sudden, an idea popped into the pastor's head. “Hey, I've got an idea...”

The dejected dad was all ears!

“The three of us always loved scouting,” he pointed out. “Let's get our backpacks and hit the woods for an overnighter! That will give us plenty of time to set your son straight,” he added.

Henry smiled at the idea. He knew that his Eagle Scout would never pass up an opportunity to live in the wilderness. That

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evening, he knocked on his son's bedroom door. This visit was more amicable than their last.

“What is it, Dad?”

“I just needed to tell you how much I love you,” he said.

The interaction had started off on the right foot. “I'm sorry about earlier today,” said the teen. “It's just that I've always prayed for signs and never seem to get any.”

“Son, they do come *when it's the right time.*”

Young Henry digested what was said and muttered, “I just don't know...”

“You'll be just fine,” assured the loving mentor.

The topic eventually changed to camping. The boy perked up, as he was now talking to his Scout Master. The thought of Pastor Donovan accompanying them made him feel a little uncomfortable, but not enough to miss out on a campout.

The stage was set for the three scouts. The plan was to brave the backwoods the following day and have a campfire under the stars. Sister Jamie Marie was not forgotten. Arrangements were made for her to have a sleepover with her friend across the river. This would be an evening that included a trip to town for pizza; with Jacob and the grandparents thrown in!

That night, Jacob was confronted by his grandparents. Tactfully, they waited for the girls to be in the next room when they addressed him.

“Is there something wrong between you and Henry?” asked Chester Foyer. “We never see you boys fishing together anymore. You two act as if you don't even know each other when you're in church.”

Francis had caught on long ago that the boys had a falling-out. She looked down at her son and waited for his answer. Jacob tensed up and gave a blank stare. Finally, he uttered a few words. “We just don't get along anymore,” he said.

“Even in church?” cried out his grandmother.

“Church...” he chuckled under his breath. The boy looked up and said, “So far, none of my prayers have been answered.” With a smirk on his face, the Doubting Thomas added vicious bite. “I learned long ago that I was just sending my dreams to something that probably doesn't even exist...”

The three adults were taken aback by those words. “You are going down the wrong path, young man!” said the grandfather as he shook his finger.

“I've never see any signs of His existence,” he defended.

“Every day, there are beautiful signs all around us,” his mom injected. “Every meal we eat is a gift from our Lord. Sunrises, sunsets, when we make a new friend,” she added. “Everything!”

“Look,” he replied. “I don't think that those things are from *God*.”

Grandma Vyerl had something to say. “His grace isn't always beauty. Sometimes He has to change the course of a river.”

“Jacob,” said the grandfather in a warm voice. “Let's make the most out of this evening. Tomorrow, you and I can go for a ride. We can hear each other out and get breakfast somewhere.”

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The teenager always loved outings with his Grandpa Chester. The elder had always been there for him throughout his childhood and was a good listener too. That, along with going out for breakfast, sounded good to him.

“Okay, Grandpa.”

Chapter IV:

Intervention From Up Above

THE FOLLOWING MORNING came with a slight breeze and threatening skies. The weather forecast had taken a dramatic turn, with the barometer falling like a rock. It was obvious to all that a heavy dose of rain was on the way.

Chester Foyer took his grandson to the old logging roads that were once alive with woodsmen and heavy equipment. The happy grandfather was proud to share the backyard he had as a child. “There are some ponds out here with great fish,” he said. “There are even a few abandoned mines that use to produce gold and silver.”

The grandson was having the time of his life! He was with the very man who he’d caught his first fish with. The one who assisted his dad at Scout meetings and taught him how to build a campfire. The two chums reminisced about the many adventures they had shared. In time, the real reason for their road trip came to light. It was to be a spiritual retreat.

“How are you feeling this morning?” asked the granddad.

“Fantastic!” came the reply. “I could live out here for the rest of my life.”

“That makes two of us!” came a quick response.

Chester Foyer knew that they were on the same page and switched to the utmost important issue. “Jacob, who do you think made all of this?”

Silence followed as the youth stared down the road. Last night's conversation about the Lord's existence was still fresh in his mind. He especially remembered his grandmother's input and gave his answer. “The same One who could change the course of a river?”

“That's right,” replied the mentor. “He has His ways of getting a point across when it's necessary.”

Jacob digested what was said as a drop of rain spotted the windshield. Within the next minute a few more fell. Suddenly the dark clouds erupted into a heavy downpour. “Looks like our showers have arrived!” said Grandpa Chester in a jovial tone. Rain was cascading everywhere as puddles formed.

It was always known that this Native American land had a spiritual harmony with the rain. It delivered life through the streams and rivers it fed. It also gave signs from a Higher Power. There were even rains that transformed old paths into newer ones; reaching deeper into the souls who were chosen to witness.

No one knew of this mysterious phenomenon better than grandpa Chester; the guy who lived there his entire life. “Boy, it's really coming down!” he exclaimed. “I wonder if the Lord is trying to tell us something...”

Chester Michael Foyer couldn't have been closer to the truth. The Three Brothers River was already high from recent storms and began to do its *magic*. Various pinch-points began to overflow into streams that now resembled an open fire hydrant. From there, the ravaging flow would spread to other existing channels and eventually meet downstream.

Some of the back roads were already in the process of being washed away, including the one the grandfather was on. Native legend always promised that new passageways would appear in such situations, *for those who believe*. Grandpa Foyer was raised to believe. After all, he had encountered a few challenges in that region where his faith had been tested.

The old-timer saw the fear in his grandson's face. "Just relax and pray, Jacob. We'll be taken care of," he assured.

The dip in the road that lay ahead was now a pond increasing in size. Chester had no choice but to stop. At that moment, a stampede of gushing water several hundred feet ahead was blasting toward them. Its force would easily take the pickup and anything else in the way.

Not far in front of them and to the left came cavalry! It was a massive mudslide carrying large boulders, full-grown trees, and tons of water from an embankment. The avalanche carried enough force to dig deeply into the dirt road; thus creating a trench over twenty feet deep. It carved a new path for the oncoming destruction. The buddies were saved as they watched massive water splash up against the makeshift retaining wall and take a ninety-degree turn!

Jacob was breathing heavily with his mouth wide open. He digested what had just happened and immediately recalled the words his grandmother had shared the day before:

"Sometimes He has to change the course of a river..."

The youth now understood what his grandparents were talking about. Looking to the sky, he started to laugh. Finally, he glanced at his grandpa and said, "I guess the Lord has been with me the whole time..."

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Moments before that day's rainfall, a hearty breakfast was served at a campfire. "That was good, Dad!" praised the son.

"We need to get your dad in the kitchen more often!" laughed Pastor Donovan. Pastor looked up at the dark clouds and asked, "Do we pack it in, or do we want to move on?"

It took a millisecond for the father-and-son team to answer at the same time: "Move on!" The trio was already packed and ready to go.

"I have an idea," said the pastor. "Let's find a good trail and have our Lord guide us to an ideal place for a morning service."

"Hey," replied Henry Sr. "I like that idea!"

The men looked at young Henry. "I guess that's okay," he said in a soft tone.

Pastor Donovan then gave a group hug and prayed to the Lord to find such a place. A chosen spot where He could lead them to. Once done, he addressed young Henry. "Keep your eyes peeled," he said. "It wouldn't surprise me if God led you right to it."

It was apparent that the tension at last night's campfire had subsided a bit. When the two elders attempted to discuss the Lord's goodness, the message seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. It was obvious that the teen who felt overlooked in life had some demons to contend with. Wisely, the grownups changed the subject to past scouting events and fishing trips. The men winked at one another, knowing that the following day could bring new hope.

Without wasting any time, the trio began the second leg of their journey. Soon they came across a clearing that had a few trails going in different directions. "It's your call, son," said the dad.

The boy studied his options and selected the one on the far right. "Might as well see where this one goes," he said.

At that moment, young Henry felt a raindrop. Soon a few more sprinkled about, getting the attention of his companions. Within a few minutes, a vicious downpour was underway. The excess from the Two Brothers River quickly made its presence known. Rain water was streaming down the cliffs that surrounded them. A nearby creek was noticeably rising as their trail transformed into mud. Streams began to appear out of nowhere. Instinctively, Junior led the others to higher ground and found another trail that outlined a mountainside.

The rain-swept vegetation caused logs, brush, and rock to slide down the ridge just behind them. Moving forward was now their only chance for escape.

This unfamiliar path eventually took the scouts to a lower elevation, where the danger of rising water and fallen trees awaited. To everyone's surprise, they came across- what appeared to be a logjam. Trees that were uprooted and washed away had become entangled within the gully they now rested in. A closer inspection showed a ray of light glistening through from the other end. A slight cloud break was all it took to guide our heroes.

Young Henry had no choice but to brave the unknown and persevere. He entered the small opening and discovered that the logs were serving as a makeshift tunnel. He took several more steps as the others followed. In awe, they looked around at the canopy *nature* had provided. Suddenly, a spiritual message of great significance caught the eye of one Henry Elliot Foyer II. He spent precious seconds to verify what he was confronted with. Junior then shared his finding. "La, la, loook over there!" he stuttered while pointing.

His dad and Pastor Donovan turned and saw a setting of spiritual beauty. There, standing before them were three massive logs of equal size. They stood upright, with the center one slightly closer. Miraculously, each was leaning against a log placed horizontally, about two feet from their broken tops. The ceiling made of branches, logs, and brush allowed temporary sunlight to cast a beam on each 'cross'. Another ray of light was touching a stump placed 'front and center' that resembled a pulpit. There was also a partial log that had a smaller one of almost identical dimensions two feet in front of it. That too was highlighted by a glimpse of sunlight. It gave the appearance of a bench with a place to kneel. This 'pew' lined up perfectly with the stump.

What young Henry had found was the ideal place of worship they were looking for.

"I'll get out my Bible," said the pastor. The dad and son sat in the pew as Pastor Donovan stood at the pulpit. The service was brief, and soon they continued on the upward trail leading to safety. Once they exited the wooden sanctuary, they turned to look at it one last time. In an instant, the rising waters washed the logjam away, *as if it had never existed.*

Henry Elliot Foyer II became a man that day. He looked directly at the men who'd witnessed what had just happened and said: "*I believe.*"