

# *JONATHAN'S STORY*

*Hal Ames*



It was a cold miserable night when I first met Jonathan. He was a bright fellow who had a wonderful sense of humor. We found ourselves sharing a taxi after having spent the evening in separate establishments eating and sharing conversation with acquaintances. Going out with friends is one of the few things I enjoy during the winter season. Mostly I hate winter and look forward to spring, when once again I feel alive.

I entered the taxicab first and gave the directions to my home.

Jonathan followed a few moments later brushing the snow off his coat and hat. He removed his gloves and adjusted his topcoat. He smiled as he settled into the seat next to me.

At first, we did not speak. It is always awkward sharing a cab, but at that late hour, it was always difficult to find a taxi, so we did not mind too much.

It was Jonathan who spoke first.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“I’m headed for the Upper West Side,” I replied not feeling compelled to make conversation yet.

“Really?” he responded, “My parents live on the Upper West Side. I happen to be on my way to visit them. I’ve been out of the country for five years and I just returned yesterday. This evening I was at a party with my university friends who welcomed me home,” Jonathan was very talkative.

Continuing, the young man inquired, “So, where exactly do you live?”

“My house is on Maple Drive,” I answered him.

“Maple Drive! My parents live on Maple Drive. In fact, their address is 1010. What’s yours?” he said somewhat shocked.

Not eager to give my exact address I changed the subject. I was not comfortable talking to him at this point and I liked my privacy.

Then I realized he would see my home soon enough, so I said to the driver, “Take me to 1115 Maple Dr.”

“That’s almost directly across from where my parents live,” he responded.

He turned, gave his address to the taxi driver, and then he continued his conversation with me.

“So, you’re Jonathan, Frank and Myrtle Morton’s son. I’ve heard some things about you. I had no idea you’d returned,” I stated, with more interest. “What’ve you been doing these last five years?”

“I was studying art in Vienna. I wanted to learn from the best, so my parents allowed me to travel around Europe and visit the museums and art centers. I’m home now. I’ve taken a job with a large advertising firm in the city.” Jonathan told me of his journeys with a smile and enthusiasm.

Feeling more comfortable in our conversation, I began to speak more freely.

“What a wonderful experience. I’ve never been out of the country. The closest I have ever come to traveling abroad was when I went to the seashore last summer, but that’s only an hour away. It must have been fabulous seeing all those places, meeting people from all over the world and experiencing diverse cultures. Why would you ever want to come back to this boring place?” I questioned him.

“I guess it’s like the old saying, ‘There’s no place like home’. I’ve missed this place and I’m excited to be back,” he smiled, as he spoke.

Continuing his conversation, he asked, “So, how long have you lived close to my parents? I don’t believe they’ve told me anything about you.”

“I moved in about two years ago. My parents died and left me a small inheritance. I used it to make the down payment on the house. My father grew up on the Upper West

Side and I've been fascinated by the place since childhood. So far, I haven't regretted moving here."

I continued, "I haven't had a chance to meet many people because of my work schedule. During Christmas time, I was invited to the neighborhood party, but I chose not to go.

"I'm not really comfortable around people I don't know very well."

Even at this late hour, Jonathan brought a window of happiness to the evening. Christmas had passed and the joy and holiday cheer had gone with it. It was nice to meet someone who could bring a smile to my face and to my heart during a dreary winter night.

Just then, the taxi pulled up in front of my house.

"I guess I'll be seeing you. By the way, give my regards to your parents," I said.

I paid the driver and then got out.

Before I left the taxi, I turned to Jonathan and asked, "Do you plan to be home for a while?"

"Yes, I'll be staying with my folks while I look for a place of my own. Perhaps we can meet again?" he asked.

"I'm sure we will," I replied.

The taxi then went on through the snow toward his parents' home.

After he got out of the cab he turned and waved goodbye, and then he continued his walk up the hill to his house.

"What a nice young man," I thought to myself.

I trudged through the heavy snow to my door. I had been lazy in the morning and I had not cleaned the snow off the walk. Now I was paying the price. I had not thought about wearing boots in the morning so the cold snow filled my socks and shoes.

As I entered the house, I was relieved to feel the comfort of the warmth. The fire in the fireplace was smoldering ash, but the heat from the coals still filled the room. I removed my wet shoes and socks and set them by the fireplace so they would be dry the

next day. I added some wood and built a nice blazing fire that lit up the room with a warm yellow glow. If there is something I like about winter, it is sitting in front of a warm fire and watching the flames dance in smooth rhythms.

I went to the kitchen to prepare a cup of hot tea. There is nothing better than a hot cup of tea and some biscuits to take the chill out of one's bones.

I relaxed in my favorite chair sipping my tea in the living room. It was nice to have peace and quiet, after all the hustle and bustle of the workday and then the chatter and noise at the pub.

My favorite book was sitting on the table next to me. I was reading it very slowly in order to absorb the mystery the writer had so cleverly strung together. I enjoy this kind of book. I like it when I am unable to predict what is coming next.

Since the next day was Saturday, I had purposely left the day free of any scheduled events. I was going to sleep late and have a day to myself.

While reading, I sometimes fall asleep in front of the fire, especially on the weekends. The atmosphere of the place always makes me drowsy. I love this house.

I thought to myself, as I looked around the room, "I'm so glad I moved here."

Just as I started to doze off, there was a hard knock on my door. I was startled, not knowing who it was.

The sound of the pounding on my door happened again, only louder. I slipped on my house shoes and went to see what the noise was all about. I looked out of the small window on my door. Even though it was very late, there at my door was Jonathan!

I opened the door to let him in.

"What can I do for you Jonathan? By the way, come in from the cold." I said as I directed Jonathan into the entryway.

Jonathan entered the house. He was visibly shaken. Something was terribly wrong.

He began speaking, but his voice was shaking and it was hard for him to tell me what he wanted to say.

"It's my parents. When I got home, I thought they'd gone out because the house

was empty, but when I went upstairs to go to bed, I saw that their door was not closed.

“I knocked, but no one answered. I opened the door, and when I looked inside, I saw the most horrific thing I have ever seen. My father was on the bed with an axe in his chest, blood was everywhere. On the other side of the room my mother was slumped over a chair with a huge knife in her back.”

Jonathan spoke fast and with terror in his voice, “I don’t know what to do! Someone has killed my parents and I’m afraid to go home. I ran over here as fast as I could. What should we do?”

I was so shocked I didn’t know what to say. “Uh..., uh...., maybe we should contact the police,” I said at first.

I ran to the kitchen and picked up the phone to call, but for some reason my phone was dead.

“Maybe it’s just the heavy snow,” I thought to myself.

I came out of the kitchen to tell Jonathan about the phone, only to see him standing in front of the fireplace holding the fire poker. He was holding it in front of him slapping his palm with it.

I tried to ignore his posture and informed him, “The phone isn’t working, so we’ll have to go to the neighbor’s house and use their phone.”

Just then, the phone rang. “Hold on Jonathan, I’ll get the phone. It appears that it’s working after all.”

I returned to the kitchen to get the phone.

I picked up the receiver and said, “Hello.”

The voice said, “Hello, this is Frank Morton, Jonathan’s father. Is Jonathan there?”

“Frank Morton!” I blurted out, “You’re OK?”

Mr. Morton responded that he was fine, and asked why I would ask that.

“Well, your son told me that he’d found you and your wife dead in your bedroom and that we needed to call the police. Now you’re calling me. Why would he say that?” I asked.

Frank said, "You'll have to ask Jonathan that question, maybe it was just some kind of a joke. May I speak to him please?"

"Yes, he's in my living room, I'll get him for you." I responded.

I called Jonathan to the phone. He came to the kitchen, still holding the fire tool. He answered the phone by saying, "Hello, this is Jonathan."

There was a curious look on his face.

He said "Hello" again, and then "Hello" one more time.

Turning to me and said, "There's no one there, who was calling?"

"Your father!" I replied.

"That's impossible, he's dead," he said in a straightforward manner without any emotion.

I picked up the phone again. There was no tone. I pushed the receiver many times and nothing happened. The phone was dead.

"I could have sworn there was someone on the line!" I said, while I tried to think of a logical explanation.

Thinking that Jonathan was playing a joke on me, I did not think it was necessary to call the police any longer. I smiled as I followed Jonathan out to the living room.

I walked toward my chair, and as I did, I asked Jonathan, "Do you always play games like this?"

He looked over at me with a smile on his face. "No, not always."

Just as I was about to sit down, the phone rang again.

I went to the kitchen and answered the phone, "Hello?"

"This is Frank Morton again. Why did you hang up on me?" the voice asked me.

I was in shock. How did he call me again?

"I didn't hang up on you. When I gave the phone to Jonathan the phone went dead," I responded.

"Maybe that's because I'm dead!" the voice said as Frank Morton laughed.

"What?" I asked in amazement.

“My son murdered me and my wife and now he’s about to kill you!” the voice warned.

I turned around and behind me, I saw Jonathan with the fire poker over his head ready to split my skull in two.

I ducked just in time, and the poker slammed into the table, splitting it into many pieces.

“What are you doing!” I screamed. “Are you trying to kill me?”

He just smiled at me.

As he came at me again I pushed him into the wall and ran out of the kitchen.

Jonathan yelled out, “I’m gonna get you!” from the kitchen.

I stumbled up the stairs going as fast as I could to get away from him. I knew I had an old shotgun under my bed my father had left me. If I could get to it before he found me, I would be able to scare him off.

As I searched under the bed, I could hear Jonathan coming up the stairs, he was looking for me.

“I know you are here. I will find you!” he kept saying over and over again. He was looking into each of the rooms trying to find me.

I could see the gun, but it was just out of my reach. I needed something to pull the gun to my side of the bed.

I looked around the room and spotted a clothes hanger.

“That’ll do the trick,” I said softly to myself.

I got the hanger and then pushed the gun to the other side of the bed. I scurried across the floor to retrieve it. I hid behind the bed hoping Jonathan would not see me.

I got the gun out from under the bed just as Jonathan entered my room. It was only then that I noticed the blood on his shirt and face. He had the poker over his head ready to take my life.

“What are you doing?” I screamed.

“Ha ha ha. We’re going to play a little game. Do you want to play?” he said, with a

menacing smile on his face.

I fell back onto the floor, aimed the gun, and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened. The gun did not fire.

“Get away from me or I’ll shoot!” I yelled at him, as I pushed myself backward on the floor to get away from him.

He just laughed at me, and he did not stop moving forward. He was about ready to smash my head when I pulled the second trigger.

Again, nothing happened.

Jonathan slammed the fire poker toward my head in anticipation of finishing me off. As he did, I rolled to my left and hit him with the gun across his knees. He fell in pain. I jumped on him and tied his arms behind his back with my necktie that was lying on my bed.

He kept screaming about the pain in his legs.

I got some rope from my closet and tied him to the bedpost.

He looked over at me and said, “Why did you do that? That hurt. I was just playing a game with you.”

I just ignored him and left him in the room. I went downstairs, found my boots, ran to my neighbor’s house, and to call the police. My neighbors were shocked and had a difficult time believing what I told them.

When I returned to my home, I waited in my living room. The house was very quiet.

When the police arrived, about ten minutes later, I directed them to my bedroom.

They came down a few minutes later.

“There’s no one upstairs. We found the rope on the floor, but your attacker is gone,” the first police officer said as he showed me the rope I had used to tie him up.

“That can’t be true! I tied him to the bedpost with that rope,” I gasped.

The police discovered that Jonathan had gone out the back door of my house. There were tracks in the snow that led to the back yard where he went over the fence and

then disappeared. He had left his coat and hat in my house.

There was a note on my table.

It said, "The game is not over. I will return!"

I left my house never to return.

I found out later that he was a suspect in a rash of killings all over Europe. The authorities had been looking for him for some time now. They had no idea that he had returned.

No one could explain the phone calls to my house. The wire to my house had fallen from the weight of the snow, so there was no way a call could have come through. All I know is that I am thankful to Frank Morton, however he was able to do it, for warning me and saving me life.

**VOCABULARY** (*Match the word to its definition*)

- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. knock _____    | a. head bone, cranium       |
| 2. horrific _____ | b. hunting gun              |
| 3. joke _____     | c. caution, alarm           |
| 4. logical _____  | d. terrible, horrible       |
| 5. skull _____    | e. used to hang clothes     |
| 6. ducked _____   | f. reasonable, valid        |
| 7. shotgun _____  | g. hit with the knuckles    |
| 8. trigger _____  | h. prank, gag, jest         |
| 9. hanger _____   | i. avoided, dropped under   |
| 10. warning _____ | j. part of a gun to fire it |

**TRUE / FALSE**

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Jonathan's father came to my house.                      | T / F |
| 2. My phone rang in the kitchen.                            | T / F |
| 3. Jonathan told me his parents had gone on vacation.       | T / F |
| 4. I tried to call the police.                              | T / F |
| 5. Jonathan stood in front of my fire holding a fire poker. | T / F |
| 6. I ran up the stairs to my room.                          | T / F |
| 7. I found a sword under my bed.                            | T / F |
| 8. Jonathan tried to kill me with a knife.                  | T / F |
| 9. I used a wire to tie up Jonathan.                        | T / F |
| 10. The police captured Jonathan.                           | T / F |

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Who was at my door? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Jonathan
  - b) Mr. Morton
  - c) the taxi driver
  - d) my mother
  
2. Who called me on the phone? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Jonathan
  - b) Frank Morton
  - c) the taxi driver
  - d) my mother
  
3. What did Jonathan break with the fire poker? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) my chair
  - b) my book
  - c) my table
  - d) my skull
  
4. What did I use to tie Jonathan? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) my necktie
  - b) telephone cord
  - c) shoe string
  - d) hanger

**COMPREHENSION:** *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. Who came to my house?

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2. Who called me on the phone?

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3. Where was I when Jonathan walked in with the fire poker?

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4. Where did I go after Jonathan tried to kill me?

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5. What was under my bed?

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6. What did I use to get the gun out from under my bed?

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7. What did Jonathan say while he was looking for me?

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8. How many times did I try to shoot Jonathan?

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9. Where did I go to call the police?

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10. Where did Jonathan go after he left my house?

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