

# The Giants- A New Species

By L.Lavender

Copyright © 2017

All rights reserved

Dedicated to my daughter Julia

*“A grain in the balance will determine which individual shall live and which shall die—  
which variety or species shall increase in number, and which shall decrease, or finally  
be extinct.”*

—Charles Darwin.



*Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.*

-Stephen Hawking

## **Hamburg, July 2017.**

A demonstration under the "G20 Entern" banner had been planned for that evening. Already, on Thursday evening, there had been collisions between the police and demonstrators. At least one hundred and eleven officials were injured, as were numerous G20 opponents, who had to be treated by medical assistants.

He watched as the situation in Hamburg escalated on Saturday night after the violent protests against the G20 summit. He took a large breath as he took it all in. The atmosphere was astounding: plundered shops, burning barricades, floodlights, and tear gas.

The police, armed with a massive squad of Special Forces officers, faced hundreds of rioters. Barricades collapsed beneath armored vehicles, and water cannons were in use. Still, in the early hours of the morning, police cars and tanks patrolled the city.

The Hamburg police were shocked by the riots on the occasion of the G20 summit. "We have never before experienced hatred and violence to such a degree," said Bild Daily Special spokesman, Timo Zill.

Supporters of G20 opponents denied assaulting police at the Rote Flora Cultural Center. The Red Flora, which had been occupied for almost thirty years, was one of the most important centers of the German independent scene.

The summit began with an excess of riots. It began by welcoming the international guests in Hamburg where the less than competent world leaders gathered under the auspices of solving the world's problems when their true interest was filling their pockets. This was delayed due to the numerous protests and demonstrators in the city who, again and again, tried to disturb traffic on major street blocks. In the morning, the unknowns had already set numerous cars on fire. A police station was also attacked.

After the plundering and bombarding of barricades, the police moved in, en mass. It wasn't until the early hours of the morning that the situation calmed.

He'd watched the scene—which came as close to hell on earth as he'd ever seen—from the windows in a tall building. He felt the fire burn in his eyes. Humans were so easily manipulated. Sniping at people without anyone noticing in the lingering chaos was going to be easy.

**France, the same day.**

It was a hot day, and the train was packed. He ran a sweaty palm through his hair. His dark eyes hid behind sunglasses. He observed a young punk, sitting in the car eating junk food, who decided to roll up a joint for dessert. The punk took a puff, clearly bothering the other passengers.

A woman sitting behind the guy asked him to kindly stop smoking. Given the look of his expression, her plea had been met by mockery. Unfortunately, his French was too poor to grasp the gist of the conversation.

His eyes flared behind his glasses. He was all for marijuana. It had its advantages. It served a purpose. Hell, he'd even smoked the occasional joint. He simply couldn't let people think all pot-users were inconsiderate jackasses who did what they hell they wanted without regard for other people, and he decided to follow the punk to his destination.

The next morning, the punk was discovered duct taped to the back of a train. A joint had been glued to his hand, and a note had been attached to his t-shirt that read, "I wanted to smoke on the train. Look at me now."

# 1

Sal was woken abruptly by the loud knock on the door. He was sweaty and confused. Things in the room slowly morphed from outlines to having a perceived texture.

It was morning. Time for school.

His father banged the door for the second time. "Get up, Sal," he said. "Okay!" Sal ran his fingers through his hair. He was a student at Strong Edge High School. He hated getting up early in the morning, especially on Mondays, but he welcomed the wake-up call on that day. Voices from downstairs drifted up from between the floorboards, further encouraging him to get out of bed.

He stared out the window. It was sunny outside and already hot. He felt compelled to open the window and breathe in the scent of sunshine, newly mowed lawns, and freshness as it filled the room.

Sal lived in Strong Edge on Swiss Avenue in a house with a solid brick front, wood trim, and arched windows. The house had a rear porch from which they'd enjoyed the outdoors.

A built-in grill under the overhang turned the rear terrace into a family hangout in good weather. There was a basketball court at the far end of the big backyard which had served as a sweet escape for Sal for as far back as he could remember. His thoughts seemed to naturally disappear when he played basketball, leaving him to exist only in the moment. The sense of ecstasy at being outside of everyday reality provided him with great inner-clarity.

Strong Edge was known for its wonderful hiking trails, wildflowers, fishing, mountain biking, and boating opportunities. A major gateway for millions of tourists visiting the nearby National Park each year, this beautiful little town was known for its soothing surroundings.

The city was also known for its Serenity Park, and Giantsfair, one of the oldest amusement parks in the country. Strong Edge had been tourist attraction for many years. There was much to see and do, and the town offered a tranquil respite from life's the fast-paced tempo.

Sal rubbed his eyes. He'd had most peculiar, scary, lifelike dream ever. There had been an old barn, blood spatter on the wall, and people were yelling and screaming. Something was burning, and he was suffocating. He could still feel and smell the smoke in his nostrils as his body had slowly awoken. Sal sneezed and watched the particles from his nose dive in the air and settle to the floor. He slowly made his way out of bed, feeling his body stiffen. Something about the dream made him freeze. There had been a man there, grinning and looking at Sal with big black eyes. The guy had freaked him out. He'd wanted to say something, but Sal would not let him speak a word. He was afraid of what he might say, knowing his words would have truth to them.

Sal slapped his palm against his face. Why was he scared of a dream? He shook the dream off on his way to the bathroom. It was an obstacle course. Sal had three siblings, and their toys were everywhere on the floor. Joanna and Anthony were twins and younger than him. Then there was Carl, his older brother.

Sal turned on the hot water and stepped into the shower to wash off the sweat from his nightly horror. He lowered the water's temperature and began to feel ready to face whatever challenges the day might offer. He hated to admit it, but there was something ominous about the dream.

Something was scraping outside of the bathroom door. Sal turned off the water, wrapped himself in a towel, and smiled. A beautiful blonde would be waiting for him on the other side of the door—his golden retriever, Angel. It was time for their usual morning walk during which they'd stroll through the neighborhood and get a sense of the day. Sal got dressed quickly and went outside with Angel. The sky was clear, shiny, and beautiful bright blue. Angel was eager that day, jumping up and down, which was unusual. Angel was usually lazy when the weather got like that.

The ground was warm, and the bugs were buzzing. The air was dry, the kind of dry to make his hair staticky.

The neighborhood had been established in the 1950s. It was family-oriented, dotted with ranch homes and new construction in a thriving, community center, with good schools, parks, a low crime rate, and access to pretty much anything. It was what had made it one of the most desirable neighborhoods in Strong Edge. Sal's parents were family-oriented people, so it wasn't hard to see why they'd chosen the place.

Sal and Angel walked down the street, passing the neighbors as they trotted along. Most of them were okay. They'd always accepted his strange appearance and his parent's explanation as to his origin, but down the street at number 26B, a strange man resided.

It was hard to tell how old he was, but he'd always stared at Sal's house as he walked by. He didn't even try to hide his curiosity. His hair was long, and his nose had a bump on it as if it once had been broken.

Word around town was he'd once had made a pass at someone's sixteen-year-old daughter, and the father had smacked him around.

Mr. Crooked Nose's curiosity was partly based on that creepy note that Sal's mom didn't think he knew anything about. The lecher had written his mother a letter saying he'd like to see her naked.

What the hell had he been thinking?

His mother had just sighed and torn the note to pieces. Sal's dad didn't know, because to Sal's knowledge, she'd never told him. Sal supposed she felt sorry for the guy.

Sal had only known of the incident because his mother had indirectly told him about it—he sort of read her mind. It was a skill he'd possessed for as far back as he could remember. The skill had saved him from a lot of trouble, but it had also gotten him into some. His teachers either loved him or hated him. One of them had even referred to him as “Mr. Know-It-All.”

He thought about Mr. Callaghan, that young teacher, and the guys who admired Sal's popularity with the girls, and the guys who had hated him for it.

You win some; you lose some.

Sal had told Carl about the note, and they'd pieced it back together. Carl had been furious, and something had snapped inside of Sal. The guy was beneath him; a simpleton.

In the heat of crazy, the two brothers had come up with a plan. When day had shifted into night, they would dress in suits just like the ones Jesse and Walter had worn in *Breaking Bad* when they were being bad. They would put on rubber gloves, grab some shovels and some paint, and sneak down to 26B.

When they reached the front porch with the blue stone floor tile and the black front door with sidelights and black planters, they realized the guy wasn't home.

So far, so good.

Carl smashed one of the small windows in the door to gain access to the house. They waited for an alarm to go off and prepared for their escape, but no such thing happened. They looked around to assure no one had heard the sound of breaking glass before Carl reached in, opened the front door, and they went inside, adrenaline pumping through their bodies.

The foyer was decorated all in white with a custom staircase, white oak hardwood floors, and white oak stair treads. The kitchen featured white cabinets, a white marble countertop, built-in glass-door wine cooler, with a light grey island, and brushed brass lighting.

The only things standing out were the blue chairs.

The living room had an open brick fireplace dividing it from the kitchen. The furniture there was white, and there was a built-in bookcase. A big screen TV was the only dark thing in the room. The house was neat, with expensive furniture. The guy had to be lousy with money.

They trashed the place, splattering paint on the furniture and walls.

They taped the note that had been sent to their mother on the wall.

Carl went into the garage to smash the windows on the Mercedes Benz and slash the tires while Sal took a quick look around the rest of the house. He noticed there was a wooden door under the staircase. Sal opened the door to see a staircase leading down to a basement.

He went down the squeaky steps, half-expecting a bat to fly into the face.

The basement was a pitch dark room without lights. Standing still, waiting while his eyes adjusted didn't seem to help. Spiders hung from the ceiling and corners, spinning their sticky, transparent webs. The place was the antithesis of neat upstairs quarters.

He found his way his way to a switch in the darkness and turned the light on, waiting once more for his eyes to adjust. When they did, he was met with a shocking sight.

The steps squeaked behind him. He looked around in amazement. It was Carl. "Yo, Sal!" he said. "We need to go. What—"

Carl laughed. "Who the hell does this guy think he is? Christian Grey?" Sal knew what he'd meant—the place looked like a swingers' club from hell. Whips, bondage equipment, and posters of naked people in all sorts of positions "graced" the walls.

Carl grabbed his cell phone from his pocket to snap a few pictures. When he was done, they went upstairs. In big letters, Carl wrote, "NICE BASEMENT, FREAK!" with a marker on the living room wall.

Afterward, they went to a secluded area and burned anything which might expose them as the culprits before sneaking back home. They never mentioned the experience to anyone. Their parents would vouch for them if questions came up. It was crazy how they were able to pull something like that off.

No questions were asked. No one had seen or heard anything, and the guy never reported the break-in. It turned out he didn't want to be exposed for the freakazoid he was.

From then on, the guy went straight by Sal's house without so much as a glance. That was the kind of stuff Sal was able to get away with.

Someone had once asked him what the hell had made him so special; Sal was about to find out.

## 2

Angel barked as a big cat crossed the street, shaking Sal from his line of thought just as a blue, BMW M3 appeared from out of nowhere.

A loud bump, sounding like an icepick on metal, rang out as the car made impact with the cat.

The car stopped, and the driver, a man in a suit, got out and did the unexpected: instead of checking the cat, he inspected the car. Having concluded the vehicle was unharmed, he got back into the car and drove on.

Sal was speechless. He tied Angel to a nearby tree and walked over to the cat. It was black, with white paws and a white tail.

Sal crouched beside the cat and began to pet it softly. It was clearly in pain, its poor body, twitching.

Sal's mind filled with rage—what the hell was wrong with the human race?

He sat for a few seconds, unaware as to how he might handle the situation, when a person stopped in front of him. Sal looked up. It was a tall man with dark eyes and black hair, gazing down at the scene. He tilted his head and looked at Sal.

Sal was trying to figure out if the man was amused by the situation, or if he believed what he was doing was helpful.

The man bent down and whispered to Sal, “Humans can be so cruel. Do they truly deserve to exist?” There was something in his eyes and his face which was so very familiar. Sal realized he had a strong resemblance to the man from his dream.

He picked the cat gently up and stroked its fur. Sal wondered if the man was about to sing it a lullaby. When the cat began to purr, the man smiled at Sal and walked away with it in his arms. Sal pinched himself to see if he was still dreaming.

The black-eyed man turned the corner, and a cat leaped down the street and into a garden—a black cat with white paws and a white tail. He heard a voice inside his head say, “*See ya, Sal.*”

Sal shook his head. He must be having a heat stroke or something. Angel barked again. Sal untied her, and they finished their walk, but he found it hard to reconcile his thoughts.

What just happened?

Why had the man looked familiar?

Had he just heard the man's voice inside his head?

The cat ran back down the street, looking a lot like the cat that had been hit by the car, but how could that be?

Sal was dripping with sweat by the time he and Angel had finally reached the house. Angel ran inside to cool off. Sal stood in the doorway, dumbstruck.

People were rattling about in the kitchen. Someone was laughing. There was the sound of Angel drinking from his bowl of water. "Sal," came a voice from the kitchen, "come and get your pancakes while they're hot."

Sal made his feet move. He bent his neck slightly so he wouldn't bump his head on the doorframe, and went to the kitchen.

The room was an L-shaped, open-concept kitchen with an under-mount sink; white, recessed-panel cabinets; quartzite countertops; a white, subway-tile backsplash; paneled appliances; a light hardwood floor; and a center island. The breakfast bar provided expanded seating for quick meals or an oversized crowd. It was his mother's favorite place to be.

What a bunch of useless information. He sounded like a damn TV commercial. There were a lot of people who envied his retentive memory.

His family was seated around the big, wooden table. They all looked up as he entered. His chair was taller than everyone else's, as was his end of the table, needed to accommodate his long legs and slender body.

"Was it a nice walk, Sal? It sure is hot today."

Sal just nodded for answer.

He sat next to Carl who was busy texting. Carl grunted. He was texting Louise. He was crazy about Louise, the beautiful Louise with her milky skin, red hair, and blue eyes.

The twins were talking about YouTube. Jacksepticeye, an energetic video-game commentator on YouTube was one of their idols—they wanted to be YouTubers themselves.

There was an increased desire for fame among younger individuals. Many of them planned to stop their formal educations in pursuit of fame. Who could blame them? The shitty educational system had overcrowded schools and a lack of funding. School broke down most people's will to learn and did nothing to cultivate self-expression. Education was important; schooling was *not*.

YouTubing was fine as long as it didn't turn them into one of the people who humiliated their significant others for fame or one of the stupid girls who only received attention because they were hot. Or—God forbid—Milo Yiannopoulos, the world's greatest Internet troll. Sal's parents were talking about school almost being out and what to do about the twins. They were both doctors at the local hospital. "Sal, are you all right?" his mom said. "You're not eating. Are you worried about the test?"

Sal looked at his mom, and Carl looked up from his phone. "Why would Poindexter be worried about a test?" Carl asked.

He didn't say anything to defend himself. Carl was right: Sal was a straight-A student. The thing was he didn't really try hard. He just knew. It was a fact that irritated the hell out of his brother.

Sal cleared his throat. "It is just the heat, Mom. I'll drink some water." He always made a concerted effort to portray the role of the good, perfect son. It was another trait Carl hated.

His mother smiled and got up to clear the table while his dad tried to get the twins ready to leave for school.

"Consider changing your t-shirt, Sal," Carl commented as he walked by.

Sal sat quietly, watching life unfold around him. Everyone was busy doing something, and it felt so loud inside his head. His eyes found their way to the family portrait on the wall above the table.

Sal was the odd one out. He always had been. Sal was taller than everyone, and he had seductive eyes so black, it was hard to tell where the pupil ended and the iris began.

### 3

When Sal was younger, he'd once asked his parents why he didn't look like the rest of the family. His parents had given him a scientific answer about genes and how they sometimes skipped a generation. It turned out that his grandfather on his father's side had looked exactly like him. He, too, had been tall and with black eyes.

They showed Sal a photo of his great-grandfather, closing the case and changing the topic. Sal's father got a sad, distant look in his eyes whenever the topic of his father came up. It wasn't exactly sadness, but more worry or fear.

When Sal got older, he wanted to examine the case further and asked to see the photo again, but he was told that the photo was nowhere to be found. Apparently, Grandpa hadn't liked cameras, and only the one photo existed of him. Needless to say, Sal never knew his father's parents as they'd died before he was born.

His father had a sister, Vickie, who was dedicated to her career, so they never got to see her except at Christmas. She didn't care much for Sal. She'd never said so, but he could tell. Aunt Vickie cared for his other siblings, taking an interest in their school and such.

Sal knew she had to lie and pretend all the time, and she hated the fact that he knew.

Sal also knew about her abusive relationship and the facade she tried to keep and it hurt him deeply. He wondered how he had been the only one able to pick up on it.

One Christmas, when he was around ten years old, she broke into tears and screamed, "You little shit, Sal. Mind your own business. You're a freak. Stop looking at me."

His crime: taking pity on her.

She hadn't spoken a word to him since. His mother had defended him, but there was something else troubling her, something she wasn't telling him.

They'd never really discussed the incident, but there had been a large elephant lurking around the house ever since. It pointed to the unspoken, strange mystery begging to be unraveled.

Fucking lies; they ruined everything.

## 4

School was easy for Sal. He learned fast and got straight A's. The other high-schoolers respected him. Most were either frightened by him or fascinated with him. Sal didn't blame them. He was a peculiar being. Tall, with a muscular, athletic body and raven black hair, his dark, seductive eyes seemed to put a spell on anyone who came close. With his pale skin, people sometimes mistook him for a vampire.

He never heard a bad word from anyone except the time a new student had joked around, calling him Edward Cullen. He'd made a pass at the little bastard in the hallway, and they'd ended up making out in his car. He never saw the kid again after that.

Sal was a star on the basketball team at school. He was a popular kid which was odd because strange kids never had it easy.

He had experienced many romantic encounters up on Lover's Hill. It was nothing but a steep hill with a great view, but on a clear night, the stars danced in the sky. Sal was a charming sweet-talker, and it always helped to put his dates in a romantic mood.

Sal was bisexual. Some people might call him promiscuous behind his back, but he wasn't. Not according to him, anyway. He had a special someone, besides: Robin.

He'd been Robin's math tutor for six months, but he'd had no luck asking her out on a date, even though they had chemistry. According to Robin, Sal was too extroverted and outgoing. He wasn't the type to stay around for long. Sal wasn't marriage material.

Robin was more down-to-earth. She was beautiful, with curly hair and blue eyes. Robin was a top-of-the-class student who only stepped in all the right circles. Some would say she was an overachiever with a trust fund. Robin also didn't date jocks.

Sal's friends didn't understand his infatuation, but with Robin, Sal never had to pretend. He never knew what was up with Robin, and it was liberating. She was a challenge.

He remembered when he'd first met Robin. Sal had been in need of money and had posted an ad on the school board, searching for students to tutor. Robin had shown up by his locker to respond to his ad. Sal ended up doing the tutoring for free, he was that star-struck by Robin. She'd told him about not being able to pass math, but he hadn't listened. The magnificent creature was in trouble, and it was his duty to help.

They met up every Wednesday. Sal had done everything in his power to charm Robin, but nothing seemed to do the trick, and they'd become friends instead. Sal treasured those Wednesdays.

His parents didn't know much about his life outside the home. They knew he was a star on the basketball team, but they didn't know about his dating or sexuality. He'd assumed they didn't want to know.

Whenever the topic of homosexuality came up, or they watched a gay couple go by, Sal's dad would go pale and act flaky.

Sal's parents left him alone because he did well at school. It was worse for Carl, who earned frequent flyer miles when it came to detention. He'd get into fights and his grades were low, but Sal believed he liked his bad boy reputation. Carl thought of himself as a rebel, someone society couldn't mold into whatever they wanted. A mindless puppet, as he would put it.

He and Carl had a love-hate relationship. Carl hated Sal because he excelled at everything. He loathed Sal's popularity, and his ability to get away with everything. Carl loved Sal because they understood each other. They'd always been best friends and had always looked out for one another. Being the odd one growing up was hard, but Carl always had his back. If anything, Carl knew what it was like to be the black sheep.

One time, some of the neighbor kids accused Sal of being one of the Black-eyed Children, a frightening phenomenon of urban legend that had spread like wildfire among the kids in Strong Edge. The encounters always happened the same way: someone home alone in the middle of the night would hear a knock on the door. When they looked through the window, a pair of children were there, standing out in the cold. When the cautious inhabitant opened the door to see what might be wrong, a mundane feeling of fear washed over them. The strange children pleaded to be let inside, but something seemed "off" with them. They were said to have pale skin, dress strangely, have odd haircuts, and not make eye contact. As the lonely inhabitants looked closer, they saw the children's eyes were black as onyx, an unsettling detail that caused them to slam the door, denying their pleas for entrance. The moral of the story was to never, ever let the Black-eyed Children inside. They brought nothing but ill will and personal doom. They were also believed to possess the power of low-level mind control.

The kids had gone crazy, accusing Sal of being responsible for the death of Mrs. Carrington, an elderly woman in the neighborhood who had died from a heart attack a few weeks prior. They spat on him, hit him, and wanted him out of Strong Edge, only a few pitchforks short of being an angry mob.

Sal had been terribly frightened, but Carl had stepped in to defend him with all his power. He told them to stop picking on Sal or they'd pay dearly.

The kids—on a witch hunt—refused.

Carl went crazy, jumped the kid closest to him, and began to pummel him until his nose bled. He looked like Muhammad Ali beating the shit out of Sonny Liston. Foam even appeared around his mouth.

The other kids stood dumbstruck for a while, but then engaged in the war and started to punch Carl. It looked like a prison riot.

Sal started to pull the kids off Carl, screaming and kicking wildly as he went along. There were so many kids, so many hands, so many punches, and so many voices.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

