

IN LOVING MEMORY:

*David William Ross Halcomb,*

Who was not fortunate to overcome his battle with Leukemia but who has gone on to be with his maker.

David was 31 when he found out he had Leukemia. He lived 2 months before he died from this devastating illness. This novel was not originated in his honor but was started long before he found out he had the illness. When I found out that he had the illness, I decided to make sure I finished the story and to make sure it received recognition in his name. I want his family and friends to read this book and remember that he will always have a part in our lives.

## Introduction

Twilight had begun to settle across the region. The sky had turned several shades of blue and pink. The sun started to fade behind the horizon. The moon had not yet begun to rise. The water was as still as the starry sky above.

Something was missing among the beauties of the evening. Sarah had been told to wait, by the creek, for Michael but he had not shown. Could it have been the end for the discovery of a lifetime? She could not bear to think of such things. Michael had promised to make the discovery worldwide so everyone could know. How can anyone ever find out that it exists if they do not show up with the real thing?

It had now been two hours since she heard from Michael. Thoughts of fear and anger filled her head. Just as she began to rise to leave, she saw an astonishing sight. Was it Michael? No, it did not look like him. Could it be what they were waiting for?

## Chapter 1

*February 12*

*I saw the new guy today. He is very cute. The only problem is, Betsy Richards has her hooks in him already. She says that they went out the other night and he really likes her. I wonder what it would be like to kiss the lips of a blonde hair, blue-eyed hunk like that? Well, we will see very soon! Had to see the doctor today. The news was not great. Have to go to Clearmont next week for more tests. Gotta run. Till next time.*

Sarah hid her diary back behind the trough in the barn. She started inside to help with dinner when Mary stopped her.

“Hey girl! Where are you off to?”

“I have to help Momma with supper.”

“Can’t that wait? I heard of a great spot to go and meditate. Do you want to go see?”

“I wish I could...”

“SARAH,” her mother yelled, “TIME TO GET DINNER!”

"I have to go. Momma gets really uneasy if I do not do what she asks. Come over about 8:00 and we will go see your spot. And it better be good! I just don't know about this meditating stuff."

"You will love it, I promise. The meditating will help you feel better. I have read up on it. See you soon!"

Sarah went off into the house. She could not help but think what Mary would do if she was not around for her.

*'Mary can't even go to the bathroom by herself.'* She thought.

After supper, Sarah went upstairs to her room. She was tired from her afternoon chores. She thought about her trip to Clearmont. How was the visit to Dr. Goldberg going to be? Would he give her good news? Her thoughts began to drift.

*"Sarah, it's about time for you to go get ready for school. Let's not dally. The second grade awaits you."*

*"But Momma! I can't find a dress to fit me. All the girls wear dresses. I will be the only one left out."*

*"Put on a good pair of jeans and your nice white blouse with the ruffles."*

*"But won't that show blood easy? What if I get another bloody nose? The kids will laugh at me and my blouse will be ruined!"*

*"It only happened one time Sarah. I doubt if it will happen again. You go on and do as I say and it will be just fine."*

*"Okay Momma. But I am not so sure about this..."*

A pound on the window interrupted Sarah's thoughts.

"Sarah, can you hear me?"

Sarah opened the window to find Mary hanging from a ladder.

"I'm sorry, is it 8:00 already? I must have been daydreaming. Don't know what is wrong with me lately."

"Yes, it is. Now come on! The others are waiting for us."

Sarah started down the ladder after Mary. They ran across the field to the woods. Soon, darkness and the cool air surrounded them.

"It's about time Mary. Where have you been?" A voice shouted from within a dark tent.

“I went to get Sarah. I told you I was bringing a friend. You remember Sarah don’t you Larry? She’s my best friend. We do everything together.”

“Hello Sarah. It’s nice to see you again. I hope you two don’t do EVERYTHING together.” Larry held out his hand and waited for her to shake it as he laughed at his own joke.

“Same to you Larry. And NO we don’t do EVERYTHING together.” Sarah tried to laugh at his joke but did not seem amused. She just looked at Mary with that look that girls give each other when you are not supposed to tell secrets.

“Sarah, Mary, this is my friend Michael. He’s new around here. Just like you Sarah.”

Sarah’s eyes dropped open as wide as they could get. She saw his blonde hair flow down his face and across his shoulders. His blue eyes sparkled in the moonlight. Her thoughts were on nothing but his beauty. Somehow, she was mesmerized by his presence. She was lost in his beauty.

“Wow! This is the best night!” She thought.

“Sarah...Sarah!”

She suddenly felt someone tug on her sleeve.

“Is something wrong?”

“Oh no, Mary. I am fine. Nice to meet you...Uh....Uh....What was your name again?”

“Betsy. My name is Betsy. We are in the same English class.” A girl stepped in front of Michael and started talking in a jealous tone.

“Oh, Hi Betsy. I didn’t see you. I meant your friend’s name.”

“Why is she here? She will mess everything up! I can’t stand her! I wish....” Sarah’s thoughts were not welcoming.

“This is Michael. We are an item!” Betsy boasted proudly as she grabbed his arm.

Sarah’s hopes were shattered. She didn’t know that Betsy was going to be there. Mary only mentioned Larry. She was so embarrassed.

“Why didn’t Mary tell me?” She thought to herself.

“I think I better go home. Momma doesn’t know that I am out. She will worry. I will see you guys in school tomorrow. Okay?”

“Sarah, if your mother doesn’t know you are out then you have nothing to worry about.” Mary tried to entice her to stay.

“Only for a little while. Now, what is all of the fuss about a place to meditate? And what is that anyway?”

“Come on. I’ll show you.” Larry grabbed Sarah’s hand and the others followed.

## Chapter 2

*February 14*

*It's me again. I finally met Michael in person! I was so mesmerized by him. I don't know what came over me. It is like he was a king or something. He is even cuter up close. I just wish Betsy wasn't there. I could tell he liked me. Maybe he even wanted to kiss me. I guess the big day is coming up. Clearmont, HERE I COME! Dr. Goldberg should be pleased with my progress. Maybe I won't have to return. Gotta run. Momma is calling me.*

"Yes Momma, I am coming."

"Have you done all of your chores? Sometimes I wish you would not write in that diary of yours. It takes up all your time."

"Momma, I do not have any more chores left to do. Supper is finished. So what is it that you called me for, besides a lecturing on my writing skills?"

"I need you to run down to the corner store. I need some bread and bacon for tomorrow morning. And don't dally."

"Momma, can't Jason go? I am too tired. Besides I have been feeling a little too week lately. I think we better push up Dr. Goldberg's visit."

“NONSENSE! You are just fine. Walk slow and take a flashlight. It will be dark soon.”

“Oh alright. Where’s the money?”

“Ask Mr. Charles for credit.”

“Momma, that is embarrassing!”

“Just go on now. And don’t....”

“DALLY, I know Momma!”

Sarah left the house for the store. Her thoughts began to wonder. She was reminded of her ten-year-old encounter with the merry-go-round. She had been playing in the park with friends. Everyone was on the merry-go-round. Timmy Johnson was pushing really fast. Sarah’s nose began to bleed and she soon passed out.

*“Momma, I am telling you the truth! The wind made me pass out!”*

*“Sarah Jane! I don’t want to hear you talk like that! God in heaven will not forgive you for continuous lies! You need to ask forgiveness right now! It may already be too late. Now go upstairs and say your prayers.”*

*Sarah always did as her mother asked. She knew her mother did not believe her.*

*“I know!” I will get Timmy and Jason to tell Momma. Then she will have to believe me!” She thought.*

*“Chris, I tell you what! Sarah told me today that she passed out from the wind. She was playing in the park on the merry-go-round.”*

*“Debbie, she has been feeling down lately. Maybe we should take her to the doctor.”*

*“NONSENSE! That girl just needs some discipline.”*

*“But...”*

*“No buts in this house! Besides, we don’t have the money. Maybe next time.”*

*“Sarah!”*

Sarah was awakened from her thoughtful dreaming.

“Where are you going?”

“OH, hi Mary. Just going down to the market.”

“Are you feeling alright?”

“Yea, just tired.”

“I wish I could stay and chat but Brian and Stacey are waiting for me. We are going to the sight. Come on over later. It will be fun.”

“No thanks, I have been too tired lately. Try not to sneak up on me like that again! Geesh!”

“You’ll never know!” Mary shouted as she ran off.

Sarah went on down to the store. She still couldn’t get over the fact that her mother made her walk 2 miles to the corner store. It was getting dark. She could be mugged or something.

She approached the store and went in.

“Hello Mr. Charles. My mother needs these items on credit. Is that okay?”

“Sure, your family is always welcome. I’ll get your things together.”

Sarah started back. It was now pitch black outside. She could hardly see her hand in front of her face. It had been fifteen minutes since she left the store when she heard some ruffling in the trees.

“Who’s there? Mary is that you? Come on now! Show yourself. This isn’t funny! I don’t have any money, so don’t think about robbing me!”

“Calm down Sarah.” A voice replied.

“Who’s there? I don’t recognize your voice. How do you know my name? I can scream really loud!” Sarah said nervously as she tried to shine the flashlight on his face.

“It’s okay.” Michael stepped out from behind a tree.

She could see the blonde hair shining in the moonlight. She realized it was the man of her dreams.

“Oh, hello Michael. I’m sorry about the comments. You never know who to trust anymore.”

“What are you doing out by yourself? Where’s Mary? You seem to always be with her.”

“She’s with Brian Kelly and Stacey Long. They are probably up at the sight. She bragged about finding it all day at school today. I don’t know what the big deal is.”

Don’t you like to go there? I figured you would be with the gang. It is very pretty up there.”

“Yes, I like it up there. I just don’t like crowds. Mary always likes to have a bunch of people around her. She is a social butterfly. I always like to be alone.”

“I’m sorry. I can go.”

“NO! No don’t leave. It is too dark out here for me.” Sarah said in an out of breath voice.

“Sit down a minute. I think I scared you.”

“No, it’s not that. It’s just....”

Sarah stopped herself before she could let it all slip out.

“It’s what?”

“I am just tired. It is two miles from my house to the store. That is a long walk for me.”

“Here. Let me take you home. I have my bike here.”

“I hate riding on handlebars. I will walk. Thanks anyway.”

Michael began to laugh as he brought over his motorcycle.

“I have an extra seat on this one! No need for the handlebars. Get on.”

“Well....” Sarah hesitated. “I am not sure that I want to ride on that. I have never been on one. I heard they are dangerous. Besides, I am not ready to go home yet.”

“It’s okay. Just hop on, put your hands around my waist, and hang on. I have a place we can go.”

“Well, let’s go to my place and I will drop off this bag of groceries.”

Sarah reluctantly got on the bike. She held on for dear life.

*“This is it. I get to hold the man of my dreams tonight!”* She thought.

They soon arrived at Sarah’s driveway. Sarah yelled for her brother.

“Jason, take this into Momma. Tell her I will be home in a little while. I am with a friend.”

“Momma will kill you if she knows you are on that thing!”

“Only if Momma knows. And no one is going to tell her right?” She replied with clinched teeth. “I will do your chores for a whole day.”

“Okay. It’s a deal. But I wouldn’t have told anyway!” Jason sneered as he ran off.

“BRAT!” Sarah yelled as they sped off on the bike.

“Where are we going?” Sarah yelled to Michael since the wind was too strong to talk normally.

“You’ll see.”

They drove for what seemed like an hour but was in all reality ten minutes. Time seemed to stop when she spent time with Michael. They parked the bike and began to hike up the mountain.

“Michael, I can’t see. Maybe this is not such a good idea. Besides it gets colder up there than down in the valley.”

“We are almost there. Here, let me help you.” Michael grabbed Sarah’s hand and helped her up the hill.

“See, that wasn’t so bad. It’s right over this little hill.”

Sarah stepped up to see a spring running down some rocks on the left. On the right, she saw a big cliff that showed a view of the whole valley, including her house. Off behind the springs, there was a cave big enough to match the size of her bedroom.

“Wow Michael! It is beautiful up here. How did you ever find it?”

“I spend a lot of time outdoors. I like to hike a lot. I found it one day when I was hiking around the hillside.”

“Yea and with Betsy.” Sarah moaned under her breath.

“What was that? I didn’t hear you.”

“Nothing.”

“No, I heard you mention Betsy’s name.”

“I did. I just meant that you two spend a lot of time together.”

“How sweet of you to notice. Can I let you in on a little secret? First of all, Betsy has never been up here. I am only helping out her parents. They asked me to keep an eye on her because she has ADD. That stands for Attention Deficit Disorder. Another name for hyperactivity. It can cause depression. She throws a lot of fits when she does not get her way. It can be too harmful for her if she becomes too depressed. She saw me one day and said, ‘I got to have him.’ So I am here. She has shown me around a lot.”

“Do you like her? I saw you two kissing the other night.”

“I like her but she is beginning to get too demanding. I don’t know what to do. I never meant for it to go this far.”

“Well, I know Betsy really well. She can handle things better than she lets on. She told me that the way to get what you want is to throw a fit. I just didn’t know it had a scientific name. It sounds like she is just spoiled to me.”

“Maybe you’re right. But who are we to judge? Sit down next to me. I won’t bite.”

Sarah sat down and absorbed the beauty. She was surrounded by every possible thing nature could provide, including Michael. She had everything she needed.

“So, what do you do up here? Do you meditate like the others?”

“No, I am not into that stuff. I do spend a lot of time up here though. I like to think and relive my past and think about my future. I like to...”

Just as Michael was talking, Sarah got a pain in her stomach. Sarah reached for her stomach with one hand and Michael’s arm with the other. It was horrible.

“Sarah, are you alright?”

“No, my stomach is in pain. I think you better take me home now.”

“Are you sure? Maybe we should sit until the pain stops. Here, come over here to the cave. I have a cot in here. Come and lay down for a few minutes.”

“Okay, maybe it will pass this time.” Sarah walked over to the cave hanging onto Michael’s arm.

“This time? You mean this has happened before?”

Sarah’s eyes opened wide. She did not want to let him find out. What could she tell him?

“Haven’t you had a stomach ache that never went away right away? That is all I meant.”

Sarah stepped into the cave. Everything was totally dark until Michael lit a lantern.

“There. How’s that? Feel better now?”

“Yes, thank you Michael. I can’t believe how nice you are. Betsy is really lucky to have you. No matter what the circumstances are.”

“Thanks, now sit down.”

Sarah lay down on the cot and began to look around the cave. There were all kinds of fossils embedded into the rock. Several kinds of crystal and other

rocks were all shining against the lantern light. The cave seemed to give off a special aroma that enhanced the beauty of the cave.

“Michael, I feel better now. Maybe we should go now.”

“Why? It hasn’t been but a half hour. You said a couple of hours.”

“No, I believe I said a little while. That does not mean two hours. I best be getting back anyway.”

Sarah left the cave and walked out to the cliff to look one last time. It was so beautiful. She could not help to think that she was special. Only her and Michael knew of such a place. She felt something warm on her shoulders. Michael had put a jacket over her shoulders.

“That’s better. It will be a chilly ride back.”

“Thanks.” Sarah replied as she turned around to face him. “Thanks for bringing me here. I feel so at ease here.”

“Anytime. I like to share my secrets with pretty women.” He looked straight into her eyes.

Sarah felt overwhelmed by his presence, just as she did the first time they met. He had made her feel better than she did in a long time.

“Can we come back sometime?”

“Sure. You are welcome here anytime you feel.”

They started back towards the bike. He held onto her hand the whole way. Sarah felt like she was on top of the world. They reached the bike and headed for Sarah’s house.

“Thanks again for the ride.”

“Anytime. I meant what I said about you visiting the cave. I would love to see you again.”

“I don’t know. What about....”

Sarah was interrupted by a kiss from Michael on her forehead. Did this mean he liked her?

“I gotta go. Momma will be out here if I don’t get inside. Thanks again.”

Sarah ran off inside the house. She went straight to her room and reached for her diary.

February 14

*Today was the best day of my life! I never realized that today was Valentine's Day. I guess it means more if you have someone to share it with. I think Michael really likes me. I just have to keep "it" from him. If he finds out, it will be over. The cave was so special. It had a special something in the air. Kinda like magic. It is far better than the sight. Magic is better than meditating any day. Gotta run, here comes Momma.*

"Sarah, where have you been? Jason brought in the groceries a long time ago. He said you went off with a boy? Who was it and where did you go?"

"Momma, I am seventeen years old! I think I am entitled to a little privacy. If you really must know, I went to the mountains with Mary, Brian and Stacey."

"Oh, you were with Mary? I thought..."

"Yes Momma, goodnight. I am very tired."

"Okay. Next time you tell me where you are going."

"Yes Momma. Goodnight."

Sarah knew she could not tell her mother that she was with a boy all by herself.

"Momma would have a fit and tell Daddy. Then I would never get to see Michael again." She thought.

### Chapter 3

“Sarah Jane Miles! I declare...”

“Mary, you have to keep this to yourself. I do not want Betsy finding out.”

“Sounds fishy to me. I mean the ADD thing and all. Bet he is lying.”

“He is too sweet to lie.”

“Who is?” Betsy appeared into the conversation.

“Uh...Larry. He was telling us about his cousin in Tulsa. Said he was into drug dealing and he could get all he wanted.” Mary replied in haste.

“Yea, that’s right. Sarah agreed. She gave Mary that look again as if to say, WHY THAT? “We didn’t believe him.”

“Larry doesn’t do drugs. So what gives?”

“He was just boasting about it to some guys from Clearmont. That’s all. You know how guys are.”

“You two sure are acting funny. Maybe I will go ask Larry myself.”

“Go ahead. It’s true. Think we would lie to you?” Mary boasted.

Betsy ran down the hall to find Larry. She found him at his locker with Michael. Sarah and Mary followed behind her.

“Hello Larry, H..e..l..l..o Michael!” Betsy said in a sexy voice to Michael. She reached over and gave Michael the sexiest kiss she could give.

“Not now Betsy!” Michael pushed Betsy back off him.

Sarah watched Michael as he kept his eyes open and winked at Sarah.



*why. I went into the cave again. It made me feel refreshed when I left. I don't know if I will be able to go anymore. I got Daddy's car back late and it is too far to walk. Gotta run. Wish me luck and say a prayer.*

"Well Sarah, get dressed and I will see you outside with your father."

Sarah quickly buttoned her shirt and went out to see what the doctor had to say. She knew it was going to be good news.

"Sarah, I am going to be honest with you. Your health has not changed any. But it has not dropped any either. During the last few visits, your health was on a decline. Now it seems to be stabilizing. That could lead to remission. Then it could be just this one day. Who knows? I will schedule you for the 20<sup>th</sup> of March. Bring both of your parents next time. I want to talk with both of you together."

"You know how my mother is. She doesn't think that this is necessary. I really hate to bother her."

"Well, it is in your best interest if you get her here. See you next time."

Sarah started toward the door. She had hoped for better news. At least she wasn't getting worse. She got into the car with her father and drove off. When they got home, she asked her father for the car.

"Please Daddy? Please? I won't be late. I promise. I really need some time by myself. I just can't listen to Momma go on about the waste of time it is to go to the doctor. She has so much faith in being healed but not in a doctor. Please?"

"Oh okay. Not too late. Oh and Sarah, I love you."

"Love you too Daddy!" She gave her father a kiss on the cheek.

Sarah backed out of the driveway and started out on a quest. She was not sure where to go but away from all the problems. Before she knew what was happening, she ended up at the cave.

When she got there, Michael was sitting up on top of the cave looking out beyond the cliffs. She started to go back to the truck when he turned and spotted her.

"HEY SARA!" Michael echoed. "COME ON UP!"

Sarah started up the hill. She wondered what made him in such a good mood.

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