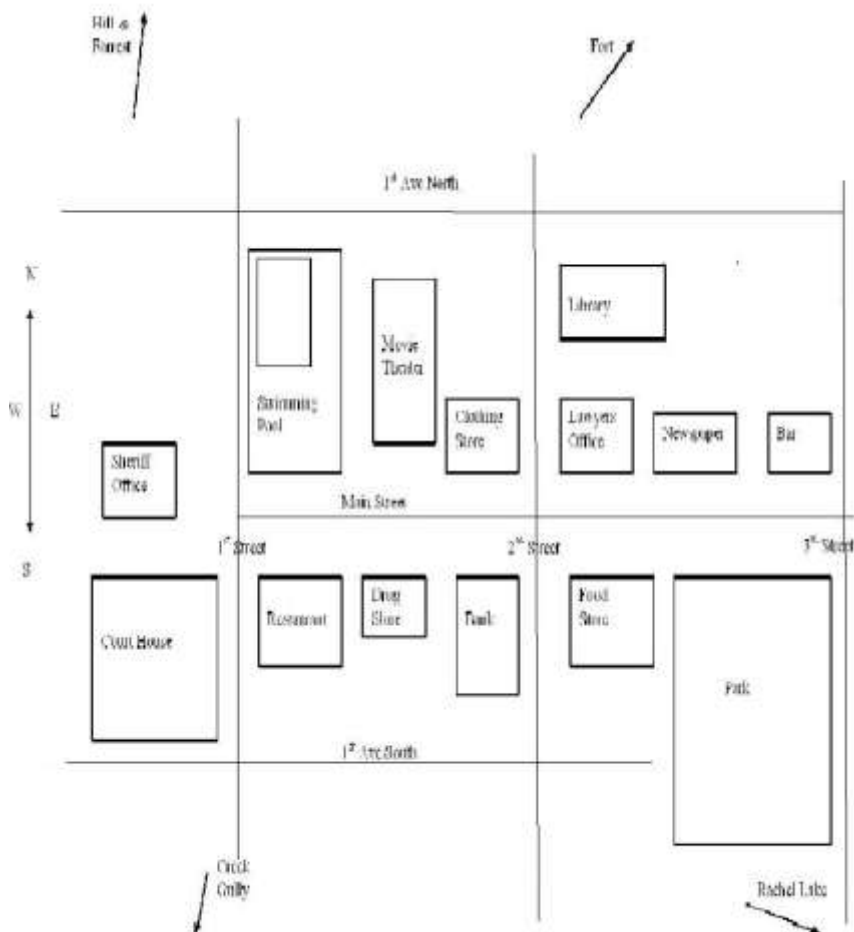


Limpy

By David T. Rorvik



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Chapter 1

The Gang

Tim got up from the table and headed out the door.

"Timothy get back here and finish your breakfast." his mother said rather loudly.

"But mom, the Jones gang is going to rob the bank today. We have to get ready."

"I don't care who's robbing the bank, you need to finish your breakfast."

Tim shuffled back to the table and sat down, looked at his food and then at his mom. She had that 'look' so he finished eating. He knew better then try to argue with her. There's not much a nine year old can say when his mom has that look.

He quickly finished then headed for the door. He already had his six-shooter and sheriff's badge on. His mother 'Charlene' watched him go. She was happy that the other boys accepted him with his handicap, but she worried.

Timothy was born with the left side of his body numb. Everything worked fine, but he had no feeling at all. At first she was so over protective of him that he was not allowed to do anything that might hurt him. His father Hank had fought with her for several years to let him go and be a normal boy. She still worried a lot and they had their routine checkups morning and night. Even the smallest scratch had to be watched and cleaned regularly to avoid infection. The left side of his body just didn't know when it was hurt, so it wouldn't send the antibodies to heal the wound.

To most of us that numb feeling would be a major obstacle, but for Tim, it felt normal. He had never had feeling to miss. The only way anyone can tell there's something wrong is a slight limp.

Tim headed for Johnny's Place. He lived in the only apartment complex in their small town. It was a block down and half a block over. He knocked on the door. Johnny is also the only boy younger than Tim, he's eight and a half. He's dad died when he was young and his mom worked at the bank.

Johnny answered the door. He had his rifle and his badge on.

"Where are we meeting?" he asked.

"At the Sheriff's Office, let's go!" Tim said, as they took off.

The Sheriff's Office was on the west end of Main Street, about four blocks away. The rest of the guys were to meet them there. On the way, they ran into Pam.

"What you guys doing today?" she ask.

"No girls allowed." Johnny snarled.

"Be nice Johnny!" Tim retorted. "Pam can play if she wants to."

"Well, she can't be a Deputy Sheriff."

"She can't," Tim thought for a moment, "She can work for the Jones Gang."

"Why can't I be a Deputy Sheriff with you guys?" Pam asked.

“Because the guys will have to vote on it and you already know what they will decide. So, if you want to play, you’ll have to be with the bad guys.” Tim told her.

“But, I’m always with the bad guys.” Pam complained.

“Ok, Pam, you’re Jones woman. He sent you into town to make sure everything is clear. He and his gang will be arriving just as the Bank opens. You need to be outside to single if it is clear or not. Got it?” Tim asked.

“Yah, I got it.” she said as she headed for the bank. Pam knew just what to do, she had been in this position before.

Pam is eleven and a Tomboy through and through and hated being some ones women or the waitress or the damsel in distress. She hated even more playing with dolls, dress-up or Princesses with the girls. So, she did what she could to play with the boys.

Tim and Johnny continued to the Sheriffs. When they arrived everyone else was there except Sam. He was always late, because he lives a mile out of town. He has to get his chores done before he can come to town. Samuel, only his mom called him that, is eleven.

Ben, who’s ten, was talking to his dad, the Sheriff. Denis, who’s nine and a half, was talking to David, who’s ten. Denis’s father is a Lawyer and his mom worked as his dads’ Secretary. David’s’ father is an Engineer and travels a lot. Will and Neo were sitting under the window laughing about something. Will or William to the adults is eleven and a half. His father owns the Drug Store. Neo is thirteen, his real name is Johnny, but because there were two of them, he had everyone calling him Neo after his favorite movie character. His dad owned the movie theater and the only restaurant in town.

This is the gang that hung out together all the time. The town’s people were used to seeing them playing together. There are other children in the town and on the farms, but they weren’t interested on play with these boys. These are the sons of the towns businesses.

Sam burst through the door out of breath.

"I made it." he panted.

"Ok! We're all here." Neo said. "The Jones gang will be here any time. We need to get into position before they get into town."

"Pam is their advance look out. We can't let her see us." Tim told them.

"Not Pam, she always ruins our fun." Will complained.

"Not always." David said. "She does make a good lookout. We just have to make sure she doesn't see use."

"Yah, she makes it more interesting." Tim remarked.

"Ok, weapons check. Everyone have their guns and badges?" Ben asked.

"Yah, I've got mine, Yap, I'm ready," the voices all replied.

"Did you bring the walky-talkies, Dave?" Ben asked him.

"Yah, I've got'm right here." Dave answered as he pulled them out of his backpack.

"Give one to Neo." Ben told him.

"Half of us got to go north and the other half needs to go south." Ben said. Every time they played cops, Ben got to be in charge because of who his dad is. They made their plans and headed out.

Tim, Denis, Ben and Neo went north. Will, Johnny, David and Sam headed south. They had to get into position to cover all sides of the Bank without Pam seeing them. If Pam saw any of them, she would wave off the Jones gang and they would miss their chance to capture them. Pam was good at spotting them. This is always serious business, once the game started everyone was in character.

"Pam will be on the corner by the bank where she can see most of the street." Tim said as they crossed the street to the Swimming Pool. They had exited the Sheriff's Office out the back door. The front door looks right up Main Street. Pam would see them coming out.

The team that headed north went up the alley behind the Pool and the Theater. Neo went to the roof the Movie Theater. Tim's assignment was the Clothing Store. Denis would have to try and get across Second Street without Pam seeing him and onto the roof of the Lawyers Office. Ben would hide in the bushes between the Theater and the Clothing Store.

On the other side of Main Street, they headed down the alley behind the Restaurant. Will went to the roof of the Drug Store, Johnny and Sam will be on each side of the Bank ready to charge in. David will have to get across Second Street and to the roof of the Grocery Store. He and Denis will coordinate their moves with the walky-talkies.

Denis peaked around the corner of the Clothing Store. He didn't see Pam anywhere. He ducked back behind the Clothing Store and called Dave on the Walky-talky.

"Dave, this is Denis. Can you see Pam anywhere? Go-ahead"

"Denis, this is Dave. No I can't see her. Go-ahead"

"I'm going back to where Ben is. I should be able to spot her from there. Out"

Denis head back up the alleyway and turned between the Theater and the Clothing Store. Ben was crouched behind the bush watching the street. Denis managed to get right up behind him without him hearing.

"Ben!" David said abruptly.

Ben jumped and squealed and landed on his hind end. Denis was laughing so hard he couldn't keep standing. He collapsed to his knees. Ben didn't think it was funny at all. He hit Denis in his chest.

"That's not funny. You could blow our cover and the Jones Gang would get away again."

"Sorry, I couldn't resist." Denis said as he continued laughing. "Can you see Pam from here?"

"No, I can't see anyone." Ben said.

Denis got the walky-talky out

"Dave, this is Denis. No luck here. Can you get to Will's position and see if you can find her? Over"

"Denis, this is Dave. I'm on my way. Out"

David was standing with Sam behind the Bank.

"Keep a sharp eye out." he said as he headed to where Johnny was watching.

"Have you seen Pam?" he asked as he came close.

"No," Johnny replied.

"I'm going up to where Will is." David said as he moved across the space between the Bank and the Drug Store. He climbed the stairs in back of the Store to get to the roof. He crouched low as he ran across the roof to where Will was watching.

Will heard him coming and looked back, then beckoned him to get lower with his hand. David crouched next to Will.

"Can you see Pam?"

"She's on the roof of the Lawyer Office." Will told him.

"That sneak! That was Denis's position." David got out his walky-talky.

"Denis, this is Dave. Pam's in your position. Go ahead"

"That little sneak. She just doesn't play fair. Where is she up there? Go ahead"

"She's right on the corner of Second and Main looking at the Bank. Go ahead"

"Okay! Keep an eye on her and let me know when it's safe to cross Second. I'll hide on the other side of my dad's building. She won't think of looking for me there. Out"

"Standing by! Out"

In just a few minutes Denis called back.

"I'm in position. Let me know when it's safe. Out"

David watched Pam from his hiding place. As soon as she turned to look east down Main, he let Denis know.

"Go now!"

In a few moments Denis called back.

"I'm safe. I'll get on top of the Newspaper Office and watch Pam so you can get to your Position."

"Acknowledged!" David replied. Then he headed back to the back of the Bank.

A few minutes later David was ready to go.

"Denis, this is Dave. I'm ready. Over"

"Hold your position. It's not safe yet. Over"

Denis was not able to get onto the roof Pam could see him to easily. He crouched at the top of the stairs watching Pam.

"It's almost nine a.m." David said into the walky-talky.

"Yes, I know! You may have to abandon your assigned position and just stay there and help Sam." Denis replied.

"Pam is watching up the road for her gang to come. She will see you crossing the street. Go ahead"

"I'll do that. Get into your position. They'll be here any minute now. Out"

"Okay, I'm going! Wait, she just signaled her gang in, they're here. Now she's leaving the roof. You can go now. Out"

David hurried to his position. As soon as he got to the roof, he signaled the others that the Jones Gang was here.

Everyone watched as the gang got out of their vehicles.

"There are seven of them this time." David said into the walky-talky.

"I see that, they've recruited two new members since last time." Denis replied.

They watched as seven of the biggest ugliest guys one could imagine milled around the front of the Bank. These guys were always dressed in 1940's hoodlum outfits. Jones, the leader, insisted on it. Jones was the only one in the group that had any brains at all and that's not saying much. So! That made him the leader.

Pam arrived with the gang. She through her arms around Jones and gave him a big kiss. This wasn't easy, Jones, although he's the smallest of the gang, was still just over six feet tall.

"Ohh! What a slut." Denis said into the walky-talky.

Just then Ben yelled out. "Stay where you are, we've got you surrounded."

Jones pushed Pam away.

"Yous ant got nothin coppers." Jones yelled out. Then he said something to his boys and they got their guns out and took cover behind the vehicles and the fight was on.

Who fired the first shot, no one relay knows. The gunfight lasted for a good half hour. Then the boys ran out of ammunition.

The only thing the Jones Gang had going for them is luck. Not the kind that let them get what they wanted, but they always managed the escape. This was a great frustration to the boys. No matter how well they prepared, the gang always managed to get away. This has led to more than one argument between the boys.

They watched as the Jones Gang, laughing, got into their cars.

"Better luck next time coppers." Jones yelled out as he got into his vehicle. Then he pushed Pam out and drove off. Pam got up and tried to run, but Sam was right there and grabbed her.

"So! He must be mad at you again." Sam said.

Pam just shrugged her shoulders.

The boys all gathered on the sidewalk in front of the Bank.

"Why didn't you guys charge out like you were supposed to?" Ben complained.

"Every time I tried to get out they shot at me. Why did you guys keep them covered?" Neo rebuked.

"Let's not get into that again." Johnny said.

"I think I wounded one of them." Denis said.

“Wounding them doesn’t stop them.” Neo protested.

“We should’ve had someone assigned to fetching ammunition.” Denis remarked.

“Too late for that now. Let’s get Pam to jail and regroup at the fort.” Ben told them.

“Why should we? The Judge will just let her go again.” David complained.

“Because we’re officers of the law and that’s what we do.” Ben said. “Let’s go!”

They headed for the Sheriff’s Office. Sam still had a hold of Pam.

Pam didn’t mind this part because the Sheriff always had cookies and milk for the criminals caught by the boys. That was usually her.

“They got away again, huh boys?” the Sheriff commented.

“We got Pam, try to keep her in jail this time.” Ben said.

“You know that’s not up to me. It’s up to the judge.” the Sheriff answered.

Sam marched Pam to the jail cell as Will grabbed the key from the wall.

“You might as well let me go.” Pam said. “You’ve got nothing on me and you know it.”

“We know you’re Jones’s woman and you’re their lookout. One day we will prove it.” Sam said as he put Pam into the cell.

Will locked the door on her.

“Let’s regroup at the fort after lunch.” Will said as he hung the key back on the wall.

Will, who was the heaviest of the boys, was always concerned about food. He knew that if they went to the fort now, he’d be late for lunch.

“Someone told me that the troll we killed last summer has been knocked down.” Sam said.

“Do you think another troll has moved in there?” Tim asked.

"I don't want to fight another troll." David complained.

"I don't know if another one has moved in or not." Sam said. "We need to check it out though."

"Okay!" Tim said. "Why don't you and a couple of the guys go check it out and I'll report to my dad? He wants the story of our fight today. Will can eat his lunch and we can meet at 1:00 p.m."

"That sounds good to me." Will said hopefully.

"Yah! Let's do that then." Ben said. "I've got something I need to do also."

The boys split up. Johnny and Neo went with Sam to check on the troll problem.

The Sheriff let Pam out of the cell. She promptly went to the refrigerator and got out the cookies and milk.

"Do you want some?" she asked the Sheriff.

"I'll have a cookie." he answered.

They sat down together and visited while they eat. All the kids in town liked the Sheriff. He always took time for the kids. He also did two presentations at the school each year. Teaching the kids how to be safe and he'd spend the whole day at school each time. He wanted to make sure the kids felt safe with him and that they can talk to him about anything. It had worked, once already, he had had to take a child out of his home. He hated that part of his job, but knew it had to be done.

He had been a big city cop for several years. After he got married and had Ben, he made up his mind to get out of the city and go somewhere he could make a difference. He loved his job here. His wife loved it even more. She had always feared what could happen in the city. Now she felt safer.

Tim went straight to his dad's office. His dad printed their stories in the newspaper. The town's people love to read about their adventures. A national paper had picked up the stories too and that helped pay Tim's medical bills. There was even talk about making a comic book or a Saturday morning cartoon from their adventures. Tim understood this and always made sure his dad got the full story. Tim had a knack for spinning a good yarn and his dad being a writer made the stories believable. The paper usually had a photographer take a few pictures to go with the stories.

They had made the front page a few times. Like when they had fought the troll last summer. After the troll had turned to stone, it fell over and broke into a million pieces. The boys decided to put it back together as a warning to other trolls. They spent three days building their troll. It had been hard work and all the boys had been injured in the project. In the story however, they were injured fighting the troll. They had done a good job making their troll. It even looked like a troll that had turned to stone. That's why their picture with the troll and their story had made the front page.

They hadn't made the front page of the national paper though. The editor of that paper was always eager to get the stories. He had them in his Sunday paper under 'Adventures of Small Town Boys' and those articles have a large following.

On the way to his dad's office, Tim spotted Nadine coming out of the clothing store. Nadine was the opposite of Pam. She was a girl's girl. The whole gag had voted her, if they were ever going to be interested in such things, as the most beautiful girl in town. David always got a little silly whenever she came around and the guys teased him about it.

"Hi Nadine!" Tim said as he approached her.

"Are you on your way to your dad's office?" Nadine asked.

"Yap! I have to report in." Tim replied.

"What happened today?"

"Well, we stopped the Jones Gang from robbing the Bank."

"But they got away again, didn't they?" Nadine asked rather smugly.

Tim, recognizing the tone of her voice, changed the subject.

"What did you buy?" he asked her.

"I just had to have this new sweater. It's really pretty and will look good on me." Nadine loved fashion and could talk about it for hours.

"That's nice." Tim said. "I need to get to my dad's office. I'll see ya later." Tim hurried off. He knew better than to let her go on and on about her fashions.

Meanwhile the boys that went to check on the troll problem had reached the edge of the woods.

"We should go quietly." Johnny whispered.

"Why, it's daylight out. If there is a troll, it will be hiding in the cave." Sam replied.

"Oh yah!" Johnny said.

The three boys entered the woods and started up the steep hill. The cave and stone troll were near the top.

As they approached the top of the hill Neo was the first to spot the stone troll.

"There is something wrong! The head's been knocked off." he said.

"Let's check around and see if we can find signs of what happened." Sam said.

They looked around quietly. No one dared to get very close to the cave opening. They couldn't find any signs of anything.

They regrouped about fifty feet down the hill from the cave.

"We need to check the cave." Neo said.

"I'm not getting close to that cave. If there's a Troll there, it might reach out and grab me." Johnny said.

"Just stay in the sunlight. The Troll can't let sunlight touch it." Sam said. "Neo, you're the oldest, you go check."

"Let's all go together." Neo said. "Just stay in the light and we won't get caught."

They all agreed to that and started back up the hill. It was nerves business and they were moving to close together.

"Hay! Give me some room to move." Johnny complained. He was the one in the middle.

Sam and Neo moved off just a little as they continued up the hill. They passed the rock troll statue and moved in on the cave. They couldn't see anything that might suggest a Troll living there. As they got closer, they started feeling better. There were no signs of Troll anywhere.

"See, there's nothing here. You guys are all nervous over nothing." Sam chided.

"You were just as scared as we were." Johnny rebuked.

They looked into the cave and found a large brush and some bones lying on the floor of the cave. They each looked at it for a long while, then Sam whispered.

"Goblins!"

The boys looked at each other. Johnny started to yell something, but clasped his hands over his mouth instead.

"Run!" he managed to squeak out between his fingers as he turned to go.

The three boys ran all the way back to town. They didn't stop until they were on Main Street. They leaned against the walls of the Movie Theater, panting and trying to catch their breath. Neo spotted Tim coming out of his dad's office.

"Tim!" he yelled and waved to him to come over.

Tim saw them and hurried over.

"So! What did you find up there?" he asked as soon as he got close enough to talk to them.

"Goblins!" Neo said. "Goblins have moved into the cave."

“Goblins, we’ve never fought Goblins before.” Tim said astonished.

“What are we going to do?” Johnny asked.

“We’re supposed to meet at the fort at one. We can talk about it then.” Neo said. “Let’s brake up for lunch and meet at one.

“Yah, okay, let’s do that.” Tim said as he turned for home. Johnny walked with him as far as his home.

“What are we going to do about the Goblins?” Johnny asked as they walked.

“After we eat our lunch, let’s go to the library and check out some books about Goblins. We can bring them to the meeting at the fort.” Tim answered.

“Okay, I’ll see you at the Library.” Johnny said as they arrived at his place.

“See you there.” Tim replied as he headed for his house.

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