

RUDY

TG Search and Rescue

July 21, 2008

(with "Pisa" as a Featured Guest)



Book # 3 of a Series

Lee J. Pullen

Published in Beecher, Wisconsin

First Edition
December 14, 2012

Other books by Lee J. Pullen

TG the Terrific
[Biography of the original TG]

ERIK
TG Search and Rescue:
July 18, 2008
(with “Spy” as a Featured Guest)
Book #1 of a Series
[Fiction, Mystery]

AI
TG Search and Rescue:
May 6, 2009
(with “Oscar” as a Featured Guest)
Book #2 of a Series
[Fiction, Mystery]

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Dedication

To Kim VanLaarhoven DVM of the Iron Mountain Animal Hospital. She became “our” vet three years before we moved to Beecher, Wisconsin. We had been vacationing up here and needed to be associated with a vet to care for our aging pets. We are so lucky that Kim is such a talented, caring animal lover in a great facility just 35 minutes from our new home.

Dedicated December 14, 2012

Readers Comments

"As long as children build snowmen in front yards and grown men write tenderly about beloved dogs, there is hope for the world."

Pat Goetz, Racine

(ed. note – Ms. Goetz is an established Wisconsin writer)

Featured Guest

The “*Featured Guest*” in this book is Pisa. A harlequin colored Great Dane, Pisa is one of our veterinarian’s pets. In the Fall of 2012, Pisa won his class in the dock jump by clearing 22 feet. Here is a photo of the event (taken by her husband.)



Pisa came into her family when he was 8 or 9 months old, from a client of Kim’s. He is currently being trained to fetch and retrieve partridges. Kim was very pleased when I asked if I could include Pisa in this book. She said that she would like to do search and rescue work someday. Then she reflected that she would probably have to limit her vet-practice if she did.

Here are some photos of our daughter's horses. They are mentioned in this book.



From left to right:

Scout

Gambler

Odalien-4 days old

(photos by her husband)

Each future book will have a different real pet as a “Featured Guest”.

If you want to honor your special pet as a Featured Guest in a future book, please send a photo to tgsbook-author@yahoo.com along with a description of him or her. It can be a dog, cat, horse, bird, or any other kind of pet. I do not take bribes, but if you want to make a donation, please contact H.O.P.E. Safehouse in Racine. You will find their up-to-date link at <http://tg-books.yolasite.com/links>.

Introduction and Acknowledgements

A special thanks to my wife, Gail. She has a special love for all animals. I love you!

Thanks to my friends and relatives who have read and re-read the drafts of this book. Their comments and suggestions have been immeasurably helpful. A special thank you to my editor, Janet Elaine Smith. She has a special knack for knowing which of my commas should be removed and which commas were missing. The book is so much easier to read after her careful work.

I am in awe of H.O.P.E. Safehouse and the wonderful work that they do for animals. Please visit their website at www.hopesafehouse.org. And send them a donation if you are moved to do so.

“HOPE takes in animals that have been abandoned, abused or injured, give them the medical attention they require, and re-home them through adoption. HOPE does not take animals in from the general public, but rather ones that meet the above criteria, or are on death row at the humane societies or animal shelters.”

While this book is a work of fiction, it is a story I believe could have happened had certain events come together. Some of the characters in this book are loosely connected with my family. Some of them are real, but remember that this book is fictional. The reader is cautioned that real Search and Recovery teams would not do their professional work in the manner described in this book of fiction.

The inspiration for me to begin writing again is solely from the friendship and wonderful books written by best-selling author Janet Elaine Smith, who lives just six miles away in Amberg, Wisconsin. Please visit her websites at http://janet_elaine_smith0.tripod.com/ and <http://www.janetelainessmith.com>. She also heads a Christian writers group in our area.

**Lee J. Pullen
Beecher, Wisconsin
December 14, 2012**

Chapter 1

Pisa

“Hello, everyone. Welcome to *Rene’s R&R Ranch*. And here you thought you were at a dude ranch!”

Everyone in the mess hall laughed. “I hope each of you enjoyed your breakfast this morning. Just remember if you would like anything that is not on the menu, Chef Julia will make it for you.” Rene always kept the atmosphere very light and enjoyable everywhere at her ranch. The mess hall was built in a comfortable log cabin style with wooden tables and chairs. The seating was conducive to two, four, or ten at a table. There were extra chairs around the room that could be moved to any table. Several doors led inside from a large covered porch with a view of a small lake. Across the back wall a stage was raised one step above the main floor. Wait staff all dressed in forest green western style tops, brown jeans and riding boots were scurrying in and out of the kitchen at the north end of the room, clearing the breakfast dishes. There were pictures of horses and native scenery on all of the walls. Rene ran a very popular dude ranch in the South Lake Tahoe region.

“We have some very special guests here this week. I am so pleased that my parents and family were able to visit here this week and I would like to introduce them to you. As a group they are the *TG Search and Rescue* team from northeast Wisconsin. Over the past couple of days, they successfully found and rescued an autistic boy, about 50 miles west of here. They have decided to join us for a few days before they return home to Wisconsin. Dad reminded me, however, that they could be called out at any moment to search for and rescue someone else. But we hope that they can stay for a few days.”

Just then a tri-colored Border Collie trotted into the mess hall and went straight to Rene with her tail wagging.

“It looks like I will begin the introductions with TG.”

Many of the people stretched their bodies so that they could see the dog that had just arrived.

“This is TG Jordan, the production manager of *TG Search and Rescue*. She is responsible for the work that they do. My dad, Skip Jordan is the president, but he always emphasizes that he is only there to provide support for TG and to communicate TG’s actions to others. The two of them communicate on a mental level with each other as well as people do with their spoken words.

Skip interrupted with, “Even better than two humans.”

“Dad, could you put on a little demonstration after I introduce the rest of your team-or should I say the rest of our family, that is here?”

“We would be happy to do that.”

“My mother, Mae, is the team’s triage nurse. She has a PhD in emergency nursing. My oldest brother, Scott, is their chief pilot and head mechanic. His son, Edward, is the team’s command center manager. Ed is the one that operates all of their fancy computer systems. Beth, here, is one of my sisters and is the team’s techno-geek that designs and builds their advanced equipment. Another team member, a family member by choice, not by birth, is Mark. He is also a pilot and mechanic. Scott relies a lot on him and they have known each other all the way through their military careers.”

There was a warm applause after the introduction of each of the team members.

Pointing outside, Rene continued. “The two aircraft that you have seen outside are specially built and outfitted for their rescue work around the world. TG-1 is a modified Harrier Jump Jet and TG-2 is the only Bell 417 helicopter ever built.”

The guests stood and applauded the team with shouts of “Wow”, “Fantastic”, and “Incredible.”

Rene said, “The young man they just rescued will be here this afternoon for his first riding lesson. When I learned that riding lessons have improved various skills in people with autism, I invited him here for lessons. His name is Erik and he will be bringing his dog, Spy, who was given to him by TG’s team. While they are here, you will see TG teaching Spy to improve his autism-companion skills. Wait until you have seen what TG can do and you will understand how they can be so successful.”

Turning to Skip, “Are you and TG ready to show us some of her skills?”

Skip got up onto the stage and gave Rene a hug. “Sure, we would be glad to.” Skip told the audience, “I did not go to the best Border Collie breeder to select a dog for our team. Instead TG selected me. TG had been abandoned as a young puppy and she had been watching me from a hill beyond our home up in Wisconsin for a couple of days. She looked very thin, so I put out food and water for her. I tried calling to her, but she was going to do this her way. And she still does everything *her* way. Soon she just walked up to me wagging her tail and she let me know that she had decided to live with me. She lost her baby teeth at our house which led us to realize that she was only 14 weeks old when she was out on her own.”

There were some sympathetic sounds from the room.

“At the time I had no intent of doing search and rescue work, but as TG and I went through different types of training together, it just seemed like a natural thing for us to do. She relishes challenges and this was a good way for us both to help our community. It is a long story, but here we are, doing search and rescue work across the country and even around the world. Let’s begin by showing you some of her mental communication skills so that you will see how they contribute to our unique ability to quickly find our targets, as we call them.”

“How about this family here. You folks just arrived today, too, didn’t you?” Skip motioned to a couple with a teen-aged daughter. “Do not tell me your names out loud, but just think about your names. OK, TG is already telling me Denise and Linda. She just said, ‘Ladies first.’ Then Harvey and Rudy. Wait, TG that is four people, but there are only three here. What’s up? Oh, Rudy is not here.” Looking at the guests. “Is that correct?”

The man answered, “My name is Harvey. Linda is my wife and this is Denise, our daughter. Rudy is somewhere back in North Dakota; I don’t know where.”

TG flashed an image of a black sheep to Skip, so he did not push the point. “TG also tells me you have a large Dalmatian in a kennel back home.”

“Pisa is a Great Dane. He is harlequin colored, so he could look like a very large Dalmatian. Yes, he is at home in a boarding kennel. But how do you know that?” Harvey asked puzzled.

“Well I know because TG told me that. TG found out when Denise formed an image of Pisa in her mind and TG read her thoughts. Denise, you did not form the words ‘Great Dane’ did you? You only had a picture of him in your mind at the time, right?”

“That’s awesome. I miss Pisa already. I didn’t want to leave him behind, but the airlines would not let us bring him.”

Skip said, “Denise, when we put on demonstrations, I like to stick to things that can be verified, but just to let you know, TG just told me that Uncle Glenn, the kennel owner, is taking Pisa for a walk on a leash right now. She is able to mentally connect with Pisa, too.”

Their mouths all dropped open.

“I do not want to take up your precious time this morning. Rene already has a wonderful schedule of activities for you this morning so let’s do just one thing more. Would everyone please write on a piece of paper some activity that you would like TG to do. Harvey, if you would collect them, please. Then choose one and hand it to Denise. Then, Denise, please read it and mentally tell TG what to do. We will all watch TG and then you can tell us how well TG read your mind again.”

Harvey collected the papers and with a smile handed one to Denise. All eyes were on TG as Denise read the slip to herself.

Skip reminded Denise, “Be sure to mentally picture the activity or activities in your mind that you want TG to do.”

TG immediately ran across the room to some chairs sitting along the wall. She grabbed a leg of one chair and pulled it away from the wall. When there was room enough for her she got behind it and put two paws on the chair. Walking on just her hind feet she quickly pushed it over to where Skip was standing, then jumped up on the chair and licked Skip in the face.

Denise cried, “That was perfect TG!

TG jumped down and bowed to her by stretching her front paws far out in front of her. The room erupted in applause and cheering.

Denise looked at her father with a big question mark on her face and said, “Why?”

Harvey said, “Why, what? Why did you ask that?”

Denise responded, “You said that you liked what I wrote down better.”

Harvey shook his head and said, “No, I didn’t.”

“Well then, who did?”

Skip said, “TG did. You two are doing a remarkable job of mentally communicating with each other in a very short time!”

“But it wasn’t mental. I actually heard a voice!”

“Yes. That is what I hear from TG, too. Sometimes she just flashes me a picture, but most of the time I hear a voice. Now, for the big question. Have you done this with Pisa yet and if not, will you?”

“Oh, yes! I mean no, not yet. But I certainly will when I get home!”

“Denise, you do not have to wait until you get home. Distance does not play a role when you mentally communicate. You can talk to Pisa now. Just find a quiet spot later today and start out by visualizing pictures of him and of things you have done together. When he realizes that they are coming from you, he will start sending something back to you. It won’t be long before it will become a normal thing between you two.”

“Rudy used to say that Pisa could read his mind, but nobody believed him. That was before he, ah, moved away.”

Harvey put his arm around his daughter’s shoulder and said, “Come on, let’s go outside.”

Others began to leave the mess hall too. Several stopped to ask questions about TG and their work.

After they left, Mae asked Skip, “I wonder what that was all about? It seems as if Harvey is upset about Rudy.”

“Could be,” Skip answered. “Let’s go outside. It has been a long time since I have seen you on a horse.”

“It has been a long time, hasn’t it? Well I am sure Rene has one in mind for me. Just as long as she doesn’t put you on one that won’t slow down and wait for me. Remember when she and you rode those two speed demons when we were in Florida when she was a kid?”

“That was probably the first time that I couldn’t keep up with her. It was kind of scary with her zipping through the woods and I couldn’t keep my eyes on her. She was so young. We didn’t learn until we were done with the ride that her horse had been a barrel racing champion. It could turn on a dime and go zipping off in the opposite direction before I could even slow down enough to turn my horse.”

“She has always loved horses. She is so lucky to be doing something that she loves.”

“And she is good at it, too.”

“Mom! Dad! Come on. I have some horses that are perfect for you.”

Skip and Mae just gave each other a knowing look.

“Oh come on. You remember these two. Mom, you can ride Gambler and Dad can ride Scout. They will remember you, too. When I brought them down here from Wisconsin, I was afraid that the trip might be too long for them. But we stopped at several horse ranches along the way so they could get out and kick up their heels a bit before they had to get back in for the next leg of the trip. They even seemed to enjoy our trip.”

They walked over to a paddock where a very small jet black foal was romping around with her mother. “Have you seen my little Friesian foal, Odalien, yet?”

Mae cooed, “Oh she is beautiful. How old is she?”

“She is just four days old. She loves to romp around the paddock. Her mom will be here with her until Odalien is weaned. Then she will go back to her own farm and Odalien will stay here.”

TG went over to the fence and Odalien came over to nuzzle with TG.

“Awe, that is cute. Is TG talking to Odalien?” Rene asked.

“Probably, I don’t hear it, but you can be sure TG can communicate with her.”

TG flashed to Skip, “Odalien had never seen a dog like me before, but she wasn’t afraid at all. She is very sweet.”

Skip told Rene what TG had said.

“TG is such a special dog. How could anything ever be afraid of her? She can go along with you on your trail ride if she wants to.”

“Thanks, but what time are Erik and his mother getting here? TG has a training appointment with Erik’s dog.”

“His mother called and said they would be here this afternoon. So TG can run along with you until then.”

“She would like nothing better. Border Collies can run all day long without getting tired. Is there enough water around or should I take my backpack with my water supply for her?”

“You will be going through several clean creeks and along the edge of a lake so you shouldn’t need to carry any water. I will have Chris, one of my wranglers, go with you if that is alright. We wouldn’t want to send out a search and rescue team to find you.”

“That was funny. I’ll have to remember to laugh.” Skip was smiling.

They mounted up and met Chris, a tall good-looking young man that Mae instantly liked. He gave TG a dog biscuit that he had in his pocket and gave her a scratch behind her ear. TG flashed that Chris had his own dog that was on the ranch with him. She said that he couldn’t hear her though.

Skip flashed back that she could work on that later.

They went on a nice ride through the mountainous countryside. The views were incredible. Mae and Skip both took a lot of photos. Skip was happy that he had decided to have the family meet at Rene’s for a short vacation after their last job. He knew before they began searching for Erik that TG was going to find him in a day or two and since they were only about 50 miles away, it was a no brainer for them to all meet here after they had Erik back home again.

After a morning filled with riding and visiting the young foals, they returned back to the ranch in time for TG to give Spy his lessons. Erik enjoyed his riding lessons on Gambler. His mother said they would be back twice each week for his lessons. With TG’s help Spy quickly became expert on helping Erik with his autistic-related challenges.

Soon Skip and Mae found themselves back in the mess hall for the evening meal. Rene’s chef, Julia, had an excellent meal prepared for them.

Denise spotted Skip and asked her family to sit with the Jordans.

“So, have you been talking with Pisa today, Denise?” Skip asked.

“Yes and I wanted to talk with you about that. Can dogs predict weather?” Denise anxiously asked.

“Yes, I believe they can. TG often tells me what the weather will be like a couple of days before it arrives. I have checked the official weather forecasts and she is correct almost twice as often as the officials are. I think animals are more sensitive to changing weather patterns whereas the forecasters use different

modeling techniques that sometimes do not even agree with each other. Why do you ask?"

Harvey answered first. "She has been trying to talk to Pisa all day. I think she is just making up all these ideas in her head that she is saying are coming from Pisa."

"No, Dad. I have really talked to Pisa."

Harvey rolled his eyes.

Linda just looked bewildered.

"Mr. Jordan, Pisa told me that a tornado was heading for them and it would be there before noon tomorrow. He is afraid. He wants to go home." She looked like she was holding back tears.

Skip's first thought was to believe what Denise had been told by Pisa. *Animal forecasting* he called it, and it had been true much more than not. "Denise, I believe you, but I am going to check with TG to see if she can get any more information from Pisa about his prediction. Is that OK with you?"

She nodded her head.

Turning to Harvey, he asked, "Where do you folks live?"

Harvey had a disgusted look on his face. "Oh for goodness sakes! I hadn't said anything before, but I am sorry. I just do not believe any of this animal talking nonsense. I think you have a very well trained dog and you put on a very entertaining act with her. As to your search and rescue claim, that could be true, but I still think you are all entertainers. I saw those rockets under the wings of your jump jet and noticed that two of them are gone. Was that you putting on a show over Lake Tahoe yesterday when that drone was blown up? That was pretty spectacular."

Linda was shocked at her husband's outburst. They had been talking about their doubts and suspicions, but she also believed her daughter had mentally talked with Pisa. "Harvey, please! Don't make them upset with us." Turning to Mae and Skip, "I am so sorry. Harvey does not have a fondness for animals or their intelligence."

Skip gave them both a warm smile. "No problem. We still like you. We recognize that we introduced you to animal communication rather suddenly and it is not easily understood nor believed by many people. You are not alone in your opinions and we won't push ourselves on you. For now we can just enjoy each other and marvel in this beautiful part of the country. I hope you will excuse us if we check on the weather. Ed, please go do your thing."

Ed jumped up, "Right on it, Skip." He ran out the door heading for their planes parked nearby.

Harvey asked, "Doesn't he call you Grandfather?"

Skip smiled and replied, “Usually, but when he is in his working mode, he uses ‘Skip’ because it is only one syllable. He is incredibly intelligent, fast and thorough. I think you will be surprised when he comes back with his report.”

“I am sorry for my outburst, but you all came in here dressed in bright fluorescent yellow with your team name on your clothing and big Red Cross symbols. Then you put on an animal act and we thought you were here to entertain us.”

“Guess we were at fault there. We did just come in from a search and rescue job over in El Dorado County, California.”

They sat and talked as others began to arrive in the mess hall for dinner. Skip avoided any talk about shooting down an airplane. They were under orders from the FBI when they shot down the terrorist’s plane, so they could not talk about it anyway.

Harvey did not talk about where their home was or what work he did there. They were still trying to figure Skip and his team out. Skip was explaining that the team got their jobs from law enforcement agencies and they did not ask for nor would they accept any compensation for their work.

Less than five minutes after Ed left, he came back bursting through the door. He ran to the two families. “It turns out Pisa was right on. I checked with Dr. Greg Forbes at *The Weather Channel*. He said he was just in contact with the National Weather Service in Fargo, North Dakota. He spotted a potentially very severe tornado forming out in the plains and headed toward Grand Forks. It is expected to develop just before it gets there about 0800 tomorrow morning. Then I called Josephine Wilson, Grand Forks County Sheriff, and offered our services after explaining the situation. She asked us to come in and work with *Harvey’s Helicopter Helpers*, they operate a rescue service. This blew me away, but the owner is Mr. Harvey Ramek, right here.”

Harvey smiled and nodded. Ed obviously wasn’t ready to stop talking.

“I am moving our satellite over Grand Forks now. When it gets there at 0607 tomorrow morning, it will take ‘before’ photos of the area to help in identifying IOI’s.” Aside to Harvey and before continuing, he explained, “That’s ‘Items of Interest’ in the after-tornado photos. Dad said both of our planes were gassed up and they are ready to fly. I talked to the Commander of the Grand Forks Air Force Base and they will air-to-air refuel both planes just before our landing approach. We will be able to land with full tanks so we can work without an interruption for refueling during the day. We should leave at 9 p.m. this evening, so we just have time for dinner. Harvey, I expect you will want to get back quickly so we are prepared to take the three of you with us.”

Harvey's jaw dropped when Ed mentioned "our satellite" and it just stayed there while Ed was rapidly giving his report. He sputtered a bit while trying to regain his composure. His heart was already beating faster when he knew that he was needed back home and he wouldn't have been able to switch his airline tickets to a flight that would get them back there in time. "Wow. You did all that in just the couple of minutes that you were gone? You are incredible. Skip, you are the team's president. Can we hitch a ride with you? We would be most grateful. And I am sorry, Denise honey, if I doubted that you talked to Pisa."

"Harvey, if Ed has invited you, then it is a firm invitation. Our titles are just to explain our functions to others. Actually, we are all on the same level as equal team members. At times we all take orders from Ed. He may only be 15 years old, but he performs like a seasoned veteran, which he is. He has been doing this for over three years."

TG flashed Skip that she did not take orders from anyone.

"Oh, I am sorry, TG. Harvey, TG wants you to know that she does not take orders from anybody. She and I work closely together. I need to be there to bring in rescue workers to dig out trapped people that she finds. She is the one that decides the order of searching the smashed structures and she knows which person is in the greatest need of medical attention. You don't have to believe us now; you will see it for yourself tomorrow."

Ed interrupted, "Harvey, which of your family needs to arrive first? They will go in TG-1, the jump jet; the others will go in TG-2, the Bell. I assumed you would be in TG-1 and the ladies would be in TG-2. Do not take time to pack your suitcases. When we are finished eating, just grab your essentials. Rene will get the rest of your gear to you in 2-3 days, prepaid.

Rene had come over to their table when Ed ran out the doors and nodded in agreement about the shipping.

"Honey," Skip said to her. "I am so sorry that we have to cut this short. Your place here gets bigger and better each time we come. We are so proud of you."

The Jordan family all shared hugs. Rene spoke next. "I knew when you and Mom got here that you could be called away at any moment. I am delighted to see you and my favorite dog, TG, again." She leaned over to give TG a smooch and a hug.

TG washed her face in return.

"I will have Julia put up some snacks for your flight and a breakfast that you can eat before you hit the ground. It will be in your planes before you are."

They all ate their wonderful dinners in silence. Rene had provided live dinner music from a local western band but none of the Jordans or Rameks even

noticed. They were all anxiously thinking about the conditions they might find when they got to Grand Forks.

Ed had wanted TG-1 to break the sound barrier at Mach 1 or about 760 mph given the weather conditions and elevation they would be flying at. He thought, *a few years ago I would not even have known that the speed of sound varies by altitude and temperature. Now I don't even have to look it up in a table. I will have Dad and Mark change the configuration of their planes when we land so that they can medevac injured people to the hospitals. We will have to give Harvey's birds preference or he will flip out on us again. But he only has two birds with two beds max. in each one. What if there are a lot of injured people-and kids? I hope Grand Forks has an adequate weather alert warning system-and people will be sleeping with their windows open so they can hear the warnings. There should be a law that a proof of purchase of a NOAA SAME radio should be required before people can pay their real estate taxes!*

"Ed. Ed," Mae called to him.

"Oh, sorry. I was deep in thought. What's up?"

"Nothing. You were just mumbling a lot and people were beginning to look at you."

"Sorry, Grandma. When I get focused nothing but my computer systems gets through to me very easily."

"And how are they? Everything OK?"

"Always. Aunt Beth has designed all of my interrelated systems and they are absolutely bullet-proof. She is a real computer wizard. These newer TGPads are just incredible too. Apple hasn't come out with anything that even comes close. We can all keep in constant contact with each other through them. When TG found Erik out in the woods, it was the TGPad that allowed Erik's mother to see him in real time even before Grandpa was able to catch up with TG and Erik. Its systems kept them safe in their tent overnight until they could make their way back in the morning. The sheriff also had a constant view. I was able to sleep that night knowing the terrorists couldn't get near him or his mother without the TGPad alerting everyone. We haven't used this model on a tornado damage situation before, but it will adapt to anything. It makes my job easier because I don't have to handle the constant communication flow."

Ed's TGPad suddenly showed a picture of Dr. Greg Forbes of *The Weather Channel*.

"Ed, Greg Forbes here."

"What's up Dr. Greg?"

"I have just upgraded both the probability and intensity of the tornado prediction for Grand Forks. While it could go as high as an EF-3 it might be only

an EF-1. It is just too early to tell, but the probability of its formation is very high. I have put it at 90%.”

Ed had been doing some thinking about tornados. “Dr. Greg, has anyone ever dropped an explosive into a tornado that would block the up flow? The explosive could be directed to maximize the downward burst and minimize the upward force-much like directed pyrotechnics at celebrations.”

“How would you deliver it?”

“If we could get a directed explosive into a Sidewinder delivery system, we could fly it into a precise location in the funnel. The Sidewinder’s range is 30 miles so we would not have to be dangerously close.”

“Ed, you are always thinking. That sounds like it could be a possible future solution to the more deadly tornados. I will check with my colleagues to see what they think and get back to you.”

“Thanks, Dr. Greg. I will check with the FBI. They would have to approve and unlock our missile systems before we could shoot it. If an agreement could be worked out, I’m sure some pyro-guys could configure it.”

“Talk to you later, Ed. Stay safe.”

“Thanks. You too. Bye.”

“Ed, your grandpa and I are so proud of you. He says that both you and TG are always one step ahead of him in his thinking through situations to their successful conclusion. And the way you saved them in that last wildfire was incredible.”

“That was the only time that I actually got scared, Grandma – and I was safely back home in my ‘cave’, too.”

“You were more than professional, you were inspired.”

“Prayer really helps!”

“Always. Just ask and God will provide an answer for you. We love you.”

“Thanks, Grandma. I love you too.”

Rene went into the kitchen to check on their carry outs. Julia told her that the boys had just taken the food out to the planes and Scott and Mark met them out there. They stored extra food boxes in each of the two planes. Rene went back out to the mess hall to let Ed know.

“Thanks. I just called Scott and Mark on my TGPad and told them how many to put into each bird. They said you had extras. The food boxes will be greatly appreciated. Thank you and thank Julia for us, too. She is a great chef.”

Rene announced to the rest of the guests, “The Ramek’s hometown is in the path of a tornado that is expected to hit early tomorrow morning. My family here, the *TG Search and Rescue* team, is flying the Rameks home and will be assisting

in the search for people buried and hurt by the twister. They are leaving now if you want to wish them Godspeed. You may also go outside to watch their jump jet take off vertically-followed by their helicopter.”

Everyone in the mess hall gasped at the same time when she mentioned the tornado, then cheered when she finished.

The two families ran to their bunkhouses to gather their immediate needs and returned to the planes. Everyone on TG’s team was already packed. They always maintained a constant state of readiness.

Chapter 2

The Trip Home

Ed was waiting for them at the planes. “Harvey, you will be in TG-1 with Skip, TG, Mae, and me. Linda and Denise will be in TG-2 with Beth. We had to move the ATV from TG-1 into TG-2 to accommodate Harvey as TG-1 is at its seating capacity. You will still have a lot of room in TG-2 to move around or sleep comfortably. We rigged two of our four emergency cots into beds for two of you. Dr. Greg Forbes has his computer feeds coming into us so I will have a constant update on the weather in Grand Forks. I will bounce the signal back to you via your TGPads so you can turn on your screens whenever you want and get updates. You can also use the cabin lights as you wish. Mark has rigged a curtain behind him so he will not be bothered by your lights. The co-pilot seat is available if any of you ladies wants to sit up there.”

Ed looked around the group that had gathered to climb aboard. “OK, it is time to go. Thank you to everyone for getting here on time. Everyone else, please stay behind the yellow tape that I put up. Enjoy the rest of your stay at Aunt Rene’s. Load up and let’s go.”

Harvey could not get over the thoroughness and professionalism of this young kid!

TG was the first one into TG-1 and she went straight to her supply of tennis balls and other toys next to her special bed.

Once inside with the doors locked, Ed invited Harvey to come into his command center in a forward cabin. “Sit here on the jump seat next to me and I will show you some of my toys. You won’t need a seat belt as we will take off straight up. You will not be bounced around in your seat.”

“I have flown a lot of helicopters, but I’ve never even been inside a jump jet, much less ridden in one. How did you guys get this thing? It is so much larger than a military Harrier.”

“We bought it from England’s Royal Air Force when they were eliminating them from their fleet. Then we had it sent to Boeing for this upgrade. This configuration had been completed on paper but they had never built one like this before. Our government had no use for such a large Harrier. Boeing was delighted that we wanted the conversion and we were delighted with the results. Dad had flown a Harrier in the service and he was ecstatic with it. Since he is also a

licensed A&P mechanic, they let him participate in the actual conversion. He knows every nut and bolt and has inspected every wire in his girl.”

“This must have cost a mint.”

“Well, yes, but they paid him wages for his work and also for him to test pilot it before they released it to us. There was a bit of a discount there.” Ed giggled knowing that Harvey would know that was peanuts compared to the cost of the conversion.

“What about your Bell 417? I didn’t think Bell ever made one of those.”

“Another good story. Bell made just one for the Heli-Expo 2007 in Orlando, but it did not garner a single order so we bought it from them at the end of the Expo. It is large and flexible. We can adapt it very quickly for the various kinds of rescues that TG puts us into.”

“You all really trust TG, don’t you? I am anxious to watch her work. Skip says all he does is follow her.”

“Yup. She is the real boss of our operation and believe you me, she knows it! I am not as good as Skip, but I usually hear her when she is talking to Skip so I can react to her before Skip even tells me.” Ed got a big smile on his face. “She just told me that I can only hear her when she wants me to.”

Harvey looked out the door to the rear cabin then he went back to Ed. “She is sound asleep back there. How did she say that?” He still was not convinced about this mental communicating thing.

“She may look like she is sleeping but a part of her brain is always on the alert.”

“TG-2 - TG-1. We are clear of your airspace, Mark. You can lift off now. We are on forward thrust headed for Grand Forks. I will be calling the Salt Lake City FAA now. Godspeed, Mark.”

“TG-1 - TG-2. Roger. Lifting off now. Scott, when you have finished with your FAA call, I’ll make mine. All is well back here. See you at our destination.”

Harvey watched Ed’s computer screens. “I hardly noticed the transition from lift to forward motion. This is a very smooth craft.”

“Dad has a pretty big load today, but he said he wasn’t going to jar us around. I’ve been with him when he got into a dogfight one time when we were working for the FBI in another country. TG-1 can really make incredibly fast maneuvers. The other guy didn’t stand a chance, but that’s all I can tell you.”

“That is the second time you have mentioned the FBI. Do you work for them often?”

“When they need us, but again, I can’t talk about it. Sorry. I see you are watching TG-2 lift off from our rear camera. Mark is as good a pilot as Scott so

you do not have to worry about your family. Why don't you tap your TGPad right there on your wife or daughter's icon and you can talk to them."

"OK. We won't interfere with your team if we do that?"

"Nope. You have unlimited talk time."

Harvey tapped both icons. "Hi Linda and honey. How are you two doing?"

Denise spoke first, "Wow that surprised me. We were watching pictures of your lift off and how smoothly you went into forward flight. Then suddenly your picture popped up and you called us. These TG Pads are so cool. If my friends had something like this we could have a lot of fun with them."

Ed did not tell her, not yet at least, that she could call any other cellphone with her TGPad. He thought that could wait until the rescue phase of this job was over.

"How is your ride, Harvey? Denise and I are very comfortable here. The seats here are more like living room chairs than helicopter jump seats. I would like these in our living room."

"Linda, Ed says the seats in here are just like yours. Except, I am in a folding jump seat next to Ed for a while. He has a huge computer system. It looks almost like Cape Canaveral launch control in here. He even has a video feed from his own satellite in here. The satellite is heading for Grand Forks, but right now it is over Denver and he is zooming down and we can even read the name on a book a woman is carrying down the street. This is so fantastic! He just switched it to infrared and another woman is carrying a cat or small dog in her shoulder bag. Nobody down there even knows she is doing that. I'm not sure that I will be able to sleep tonight with all these toys up here. Speaking of toys, TG has a bunch of her toys up here just like any other dog would. Sleep well; I will see you in the morning."

"I love you, Harvey."

"Me too."

"Dad, Mark said I could sit in the co-pilot's seat for a while. He said he would teach me to fly the chopper. You would never do that."

"Don't land it in the wrong state, honey. Good night, sweetheart."

"Night, Daddy."

Ed wondered why there was a strained relationship between Harvey and Linda. Harvey seemed capable of love when it came to his daughter, but did not show it with his wife. Linda showed it, but Harvey did not.

When Denise joined Mark, he had her put on a headset and buckle-up the seat harness. Mark said, "The pilot always has to be in control-especially if a sudden wind tries to flip everyone out of their seats. So always snug yourself into

your seat harness. Next you have to learn every gauge and know what the normal settings are under different conditions.”

She continued with her lessons as they flew at maximum cruising speed towards her home. Ed was constantly watching the weather in their path. During their flight through an especially calm sector, he suggested to Mark that Denise could take the controls for twenty miles under his watchful eyes. Denise loved it and handled the bird beautifully. At the end of her few minutes with the controls, she thanked Mark and Ed and asked if it was alright if she would go back and talk to her mother.

“Mom! I was flying the helicopter. Mark is a wonderful instructor. I learned to read each gauge and recognize different conditions that various situations could present on the gauges. It was so cool.”

“I didn’t know you were going to do that. How wonderful.”

Denise interrupted, “But I came back here because Pisa was calling to me and I couldn’t talk to him and focus on flying too. He is very scared. All the dogs can tell that a bad storm is approaching. What should I tell him?”

“Why don’t you ask TG, Skip or Ed?”

Ed’s face popped up on her TGPad. “Ask us what?”

Linda said, “Oh, I didn’t know you were listening.”

“I wasn’t actually, but the computer was listening and it heard my name so it repeated your whole sentence to me. What is on your mind?”

Denise said, “Pisa called to me and said all of the dogs at the kennel are afraid of the bad storm that is heading for them. What should I tell him?”

“*The Weather Channel* is still showing the storm will hit about 8 o’clock in the morning. Tell him to have all of the dogs stay away from the windows after sunrise. If their building is damaged, be sure they all stay either in or near the building until their family comes to get them. If they start running around they could get lost and their families would be very unhappy. TG just told me to tell you that if there is a Border Collie in the group, tell her to keep everyone rounded up. Otherwise, Pisa is a really big dog and he can just block their path to keep them all together.”

“Thank you, Ed, and thank you, TG. I will talk to Pisa about it.”

Harvey asked Ed what that was all about.

“Denise got a message from Pisa that all the dogs were worried about the impending storm and she wanted to know what she could tell Pisa.”

“Oh. More of that mental communication with dogs stuff. I still don’t believe in it completely.”

“That’s OK, Harvey. You will within 24 hours.”

Harvey mumbled, “We’ll see.”

Denise was able to calm Pisa's nerves from miles away just as well as if she had been by his side and petting him. She was so happy that TG and Skip had taught her how to mentally communicate with Pisa.

The rest of the flight went smoothly. Ed and the pilots were kept busy with their duties while everyone else slept. Even TG slept soundly knowing that Ed would alert her if she was needed.

Just before daybreak Ed called the Grand Forks Air Force Base to arrange for the refueling of TG-1 when they were two hours from their destination.

"Good morning. This is Ed Jordan from TG Search and Rescue aboard TG-1 confirming our air-to-air refueling. TG-1 is a modified Harrier with Harrier refueling tooling."

"Good morning, sir. We have you on radar and our KC-130 tanker is on station for your arrival. We also have orders to refuel TG-2 when she gets there."

"Thank you. Our pilot, Scott, is on this call. He will be punching your hose. Be advised that Mark is piloting TG-2."

"Ed, you are always so thorough. We really appreciate working with you. When do you want to stop by our base to replace the two Sidewinders you launched a couple of days ago?"

"A good time would be in a day or two after we clean up the aftermath of the tornado incoming to Grand Forks."

"Roger. We have them ready for you. The FBI has authorized your ordinance reload. I will patch you through now to the tanker's flight deck. Go ahead."

"Hey ole buddy. This is Jim. We worked together over Okinawa. How is civilian life treating you?"

"Hey Bro. What is someone at your level doing sitting on the deck of a tanker?" Scott replied.

"I heard you needed some of our nutritious av-fuel. Who better than me to give you a steady feeding platform? Besides we haven't talked for a while. How did you guys find out so far ahead of time that a twister was headed in this direction?"

"Well it wasn't a little bird that told me. It was more like a dog."

"TG predicts weather from 1300 miles away now? What next?"

"It is a long story, but a Great Dane up in Grand Forks did the predicting and *The Weather Channel* confirmed it. TG hasn't met the G.D. yet, but like I said, it gets complicated."

"And you guys decided after hearing from a dog 1300 miles away that you don't know, that you were going to rescue people that haven't been hurt yet."

“Yeah, something like that. My son, Ed, is watching the storm develop on our satellite that we have parked overhead.”

“Not looking very friendly, is it?”

“No, it just keeps developing. Ed is also talking to Dr. Forbes at *The Weather Channel*. They have gotten to know each other pretty well.”

“If I could get a couple of days off, I could be down there with a bunch of grunts to help you. I will talk to the base commander and see what we can do.”

“Jim, that would be awesome. I can see them floating down from the sky looking like God’s angels from the heavens.”

“Like I said, I will talk to him. But we won’t be using chutes, we are only a few miles away. Maybe we can bring in some heavy equipment, too. Geesh, how fast are you moving?”

“I just feathered back on the thrust. We were just under Mach because I didn’t want to bust up dishes in the houses on our path with our sonic boom.”

“How thoughtful of you. Besides you wanted to keep your pilot’s license, right?”

“Yeah, that too. Hey wait until you see how easily this thing plugs into your hose. This platform is quick and agile, but still rock steady.”

“You had a part in building it, right?”

“Yeah, I helped with the modifications from the original single-seater into this. You have got to fly it sometime. Maybe when we come over for the replacement armament?”

“I’ll write you into my date book.”

“Jim, I have visual on you. Can we do this on my heading?”

“The crosswind will make it harder for my hose flyer, but with you and me being ultra-steady, it should be do able. I am coming around to your heading now.”

“Thanks, I see your hose dead ahead and am moving up to meet it.”

Ed had already alerted his grandmother and Harvey to come forward to watch the refueling. The cockpit of TG-1 was nearly the width of the original Harrier, but there was enough room for them to watch over Scott’s shoulders.

They could see the huge KC-130 in front and above them. It had a window near its tail and they could just make out a face in it. A long hose extended from the tanker from under that window. There were fins at their end of the long hose. Ed told them that the person in the window was directing the angle of the fins to actually fly the hose like an airplane in a wind tunnel down to the front of TG-1. Scott was extending a long probe out the front of TG-1. Through a great deal of coordinating moves, Scott and the face in the window maneuvered the hose and the

probe so that Scott's probe entered the hose. It looked like the narrow probe moved inside the hose without ever hitting the inner walls of the hose. The contact was perfectly executed.

Scott announced, "Contact. Locked. Receiving valve open."

The face announced, "Roger. Delivery initialized."

Jim said enthusiastically, "I knew you were a great pilot, Scott, but that was the smoothest connect my hose flyer has ever seen. It was textbook."

"I told you this plane is incredible. That was actually easy."

Over his shoulder they watched in awe while neither plane moved more than an inch relative to the other. All the while TG-1's tanks were filling up very fast. The added weight should have slowed TG-1, but Scott compensated beautifully.

Scott announced, "TG-1 at 80%. Standby to halt delivery. Counting down 10 – 8 – 6 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – Stop. Beautiful. My valve is closed. Ready to disengage."

"Outer valve closed. Proceed."

"Unlocked. Backing out. We are clear. Thank you for the drink, my check is in the mail. Hope to see you on the ground, Jim."

"I already have permission, Bro. They are just putting the logistics together to send help. See ya. Have a good flight."

"Thank your CO for us. Just remember to tell your crew that TG does all the directing when it comes to searching. They need to listen to Skip and not interfere with TG."

"Roger. I have met TG, but most of them will not have had the pleasure. They learn quickly."

"Thanks, Jim. Say hi to Mark when he refuels TG-2 with you."

"Certainly. Godspeed, Scott."

Harvey told Ed and Mae, "Wow that was interesting. I have read about it but I never witnessed it before. Your son certainly has a steady hand on the controls, Mae."

"Skip and I are so proud of him. Scott downplays it. He says that Mark is a better pilot. I don't know what could be better than 100% though."

Ed announced, "We have a tornado and it is not a small one. Dr. Forbes has the *Storm Riders*® on the ground. They are estimating it to be a quarter mile in diameter and it is heading for Grand Forks as expected. Denise, have Pisa get all of the dogs moved to the inner parts of their kennel and face away from any windows." Ed decided not to have her try to explain to Pisa that they should all cover their heads with their front paws. The thought of that sight even made him

giggle a bit. The announcement went to all of the extended team members by way of their TG Pads.

Denise replied that Pisa already had them all hunkered down. The kennel owner, Uncle Glenn, was in the kennel with them and he had all of the glass windows covered with boards.

Scott pushed TG-1 forward at just under Mach speed. He did not slow down until he was in danger of catching up to the tornado. “TG-1 passengers, grab onto something solid. Skip, hook up TG’s harness. I will be hitting the brakes in fifteen seconds. We want to be able to land ten minutes behind the tornado. Dr. Forbes will let us know if it appears ready to change its direction and endanger us. Braking . . . Now!”

Harvey way over estimated the braking force to be six G’s, but regardless he felt like his body was going to come apart. TG just yawned and stretched and went over to her bowl for a drink of water. Scott had mounted her water and food bowls on gimbals so that neither of them would spill their contents regardless of what he did with the airplane.

As Scott was beginning his descent onto an undamaged piece of land where the tornado began its touchdown, Harvey told Ed, “Have Scott take me over to my airport where my helicopters are.”

Ed firmly said, “No. We will land here. You already told me you were not going to pilot any of them so there is no need for you to go there. Just use your TG Pad like a regular cellphone and you can direct their operations from the ground. You are on the front line where you can place your rescue choppers where they will be needed. Skip and TG will be in the front of everyone. Mae is our triage nurse and she will direct which victims will ride in which bird. I will coordinate where they will take each one. We do not want any of them hovering and wasting time waiting for a landing pad. You will get your directions from me. Your job is to coordinate your craft and to ascertain appropriate landing areas for each.”

Harvey was adamant. “No. I always do the directing in any rescue operation that we are in. Thank you for getting me here quickly, but you can just butt out now. I am in charge.”

Skip entered the conversation. “I am sure that you are qualified to handle all of the rescues, Harvey, but Sheriff Wilson has already put us in charge. She did that knowing that we have advanced electronics plus TG’s incredible talents. Combined, these will give the sheriff the best approach to saving lives in the shortest time possible. I am sure that you will find your resources taxed to the fullest and you will end the day showing your community that you are an integral part of this county’s health and safety. You will probably be recognized as a hero.

Right now we are all members of a team. Let's go make a difference." Skip smiled and turned to go get TG ready.

Harvey stood there just stammering. He had never been talked to like that before. What Skip had said made a lot of sense, but it is just not what he thought he was going to do. He realized that Skip and Ed had a plan and he didn't. He was just going to react without a plan. He looked at Ed and said, "I am sorry. I have never seen a team like yours before. Can I help?"

Ed said, "I sure hope so. We were counting on you. Right now you are a part of the TG Search and Rescue team. Remember we are all equal members under TG's direction. Here you can wear this." Ed handed Harvey a bright yellow fluorescent tee shirt with the team's logo on it just like all of TG's team was wearing. But Harvey's shirt also had "brought in by Harvey's Helicopter Helpers" written below.

"What an honor! Thank you. When did you make this?"

"I made it last night while you were sleeping."

"What led you to think that I would wear it?" Harvey said with a twinkle in his eye.

"Well it was complementary to you and knowing that you were a business man, I thought you could use the advertising."

Harvey answered by putting it on over his clothes, smiling the whole time. "Thanks, Ed. You are an incredible kid, ah, young man."

Ed smiled and nodded. He was already back looking at his computer systems. "The tornado is carving a path a quarter mile wide. It is maintaining a NE heading right along the northwestern edge of the heaviest population area of Grand Forks. Its first ground damage that I can see from the satellite is the dog kennel where Pisa is staying. TG reports that they are all unharmed and Pisa is helping the owner and a Border Collie round up the dogs that got out when a large tree took out the west wall of the kennel. Wow. That is one BIG dog. Denise, he is doing a great job thanks to the instructions you gave him. Good job!"

Denise was obviously crying, but she managed a weak, "Thanks."

Ed said, "Be sure to tell him that you are coming for him."

"I did already."

"The next building looks like a farm house. I am comparing the before and after tornado photos and it looks like four people made it safely into a storm shelter on the south side of the house. Check it out, TG, when we get down there. Skip, there is so much debris everywhere that it does not look like the ATV will be of much use."

Chapter 3

Touchdown

Ed couldn't believe what he saw next. "There is a convoy of heavy equipment coming down the highway from the air force base. Looks like your buddy came through, Dad."

"I knew he would."

"Even so, make sure TG has her hard sole booties on, Skip, so she doesn't get cut or pick up a nail in her foot."

"She has them on and I have a lot of extra pairs in my backpack." Skip always carried a 70 lb. backpack on all of their search and rescue operations."

Scott announced, "Touchdown. Doors are unlocked. When you are outside, I will reconfigure TG-1 with cots for evacuations. I will put the ATV outside in case the heavy equipment clears a road."

Ed said, "Take the ATV, Skip. I will direct the bulldozer to keep a road open. We may need fire trucks at some distant building." Ed was in his glory coordinating multiple teams. "Sheriff, are you getting all of this? Can you get over here and pick up one of our communication devices? I want your fire chief to have one, too."

"Ed, give the ATV to Mae. I would rather stay on the ground with TG."

"OK, Skip. That works for me. Dad can you fasten a cot on the ATV for Mae right away? She may need to transport someone. Thanks."

TG jumped out the door as soon as it was opened. Skip took the steps down with his heavy backpack. From above them it must have looked like an ant hive had been disturbed. There were fluorescent shirts, jackets and backpacks all moving quickly away from the hive.

TG headed for the farmhouse with Skip right behind her. There were stripped broken and uprooted trees everywhere. Ed told Skip, "The shelter is 20 degrees left of your path and 50 yards out. I do not see any debris on top of the doors. They should be OK."

"TG sees it, thanks." Skip was running to catch up to TG.

TG scratched on the heavy metal door. Her booties had a small metal plate embedded in them to provide noise when she scratched on doors. She also barked until the door began to open.

Skip called in, “We are a search and rescue team. Does anyone have any injuries?” When they said they were OK, Skip told them, “Please talk to the deputy behind me. Your house needs to be inspected before you attempt to go back in it. There is some structural damage and it may be unsafe. We are glad you are OK.”

TG was already headed for the next building—except it was totally flattened. Ed kept comparing the before and after satellite photos to find each house or dwelling. He said, “TG’s next target was a small house with an unattached garage. I do have a video of the residents leaving the house prior to the tornado, so there may not be anyone trapped in the rubble.”

TG sniffed around the wreckage of both the house and the garage and declared them empty. Skip marked an “X” on the wreckage with a can of spray paint.

The tornado was still raging ahead of them. They were well behind the edge of the tornado where the debris that had been picked up in the vortex was falling back down to the ground. If they had stopped to watch they would have seen bright flashes when power transformers blew up. Up ahead a house went up in a fireball. Ed saw it happen and rightly thought that nobody survived that explosion. He thought it was odd that there was so much energy in the explosion; much more than even from a broken natural gas line.

The roar of the tornado made it difficult to hear each other without shouting. TG and Skip were not affected by external noises. They always passed clear messages to each other regardless of other noises.

Ed warned the team, “The tornado is headed for the power plant. You are going to see a lot of fireworks coming out of there and their large piles of coal are going to put a lot of rocks into the air. If this wasn’t dangerous enough, we will not be able to get in there until all the coal has settled back down to earth. Also we will have to use masks to filter out the coal dust.”

Skip knew TG did not like to wear her specially crafted mask, but she would use it if she was told she had to. She was focused on search and rescue – even if it meant wearing something uncomfortable. They were a long ways away from having to use it yet.

A woman climbed out of the rubble of her house screaming. As she ran towards the rescuers she screamed, “My baby, my baby. I can’t find my baby. I had him in my arms and now he is gone! Find my baby! Please!”

“TG, go.” That is all that Skip had to say. She went running at full speed to where the woman had been. Satisfied that the baby was not in the house, she came back out again and began a systematic search of the area.

Mae drove her ATV up to the mother. “Come here, honey. You have the best search and rescue dog in the world looking for your baby. She *will* find your baby. Let’s wait here for her while we check you over.” Mae quickly checked the mother’s vital signs and asked if she had any severe pains-besides the pain of missing her son. When she checked out OK, Mae called over an EMT to tend to her minor cuts.

“Where were you when the tornado hit?”

“My baby is gone! I had him under me on a pillow under the stairs. It picked me right up and pulled him out from under me. And now he is gone. I looked, but I can’t find him.”

TG told Skip, “I got a good whiff off the mother when I ran past her, so I will be able to identify the smell of the baby when I get close.”

Skip said, “It will be difficult if not impossible to track him because the tornado probably flew him to wherever he is now. I am looking up in the few remaining trees to see if he is caught higher up in any of them.”

“Skip, I am running an IR scan to see where there might be some smaller hot spots. That is a small target for the satellite, but with Beth’s computer enhanced recognition program we could get lucky.”

“Thanks, Ed.”

TG found the baby and got so excited that she barked instead of flashing Skip the message.

“What is it, girl? Have you got him?”

Skip’s voice came over Mae’s TGPad so that Mae and the mother heard it at the same time.

“Where? Where are they?” she cried looking around.

Mae said, “Get on behind me. We will go over there.” Then Mae shouted, “Let’s get an EMT over here, right now!”

When Skip caught up to TG, he found she had torn off her two front protective booties and she was digging in a ditch next to a large fallen copper beech tree. In the mud Skip could see a corner of a pillow that was otherwise under the fallen tree.

“Is the baby under there too, TG.”

“Yup, I just need some added clearance so he won’t get scratched by the bark of the tree when I pull him out. He is still on top of his pillow. Just a few more digs and I will have him out. He is breathing and whimpering a bit.”

“Right. I can hear him now. OK, TG, steady now. Out he comes. And here comes his mother, too. He looks good, TG. The tree never hit him, it just covered him. And the smooth bark of the copper beech didn’t even scratch him.”

The mother saw TG and Skip pulling the pillow out from under the far side of the tree trunk. She still couldn't see her baby, but Skip gave her a thumbs-up sign with the hand he had on the tree for leverage. She gave out her loudest scream yet when she first saw him. "He's not bleeding anywhere is he? I don't see any. Is he hurt? He is only four months old. How will you know if he is OK or not?"

Two EMTs got there with a small stretcher before Mae and the mother did. Skip said, "You may as well use his pillow for a cushion. It absorbed the shock when the tornado dropped him. It is water proof so he didn't sink into the wet ditch either."

The baby was checked over by Mae and the EMTs. "He may have been in shock which would explain why he wasn't crying, but he appears to be fine now that he is back with you," they told the mother.

Skip was busy cleaning off TG's feet and putting on another set of front booties. With her baby in her arms, the mother looked over to Skip.

"I don't know how I can ever repay you for finding my baby. I wish I had a treat for your dog. Thank God, for her."

Skip said, "That's her name, Thank God or TG for short. She doesn't work for treats. She works for the joy of helping people. And she just told me to tell you, thank you."

"She told you that? How can a dog talk?"

"The two of us communicate mentally with each other. She just told me that your son's name is Edward, like my grandson's."

The mother's face registered surprise. "I don't know any of you people, how do you know my baby's name? He doesn't even have any clothes on with his name on them right now."

"Well this may be too hard for you to understand, but Edward told her. At least that is what TG is telling me right now."

Almost laughing, "He is only four months old, he can't talk yet. Besides, none of this makes any sense. Thank you again for helping us, but this man here needs to take us to the shelter now."

"Goodbye, Shelly."

The mother whirled around. "Who said that? I tell my name to anyone."

Skip just pointed to TG with a grin.

"I just said to myself that the next thing they will do is call me Shelly."

"TG reads other people's minds, not just mine."

"And you want me to believe that she is the one that said 'goodbye, Shelly?'"

"No, I want you to believe it." TG started wagging her tail.

“There is that voice again and I am sure you didn’t move your lips.”

Skip said, “That was TG again.”

“Have someone at the shelter put a call through to the USS Guppy for you. Your husband, Lieutenant Henderson will hear about the tornado and won’t be able to reach you at home to see if you and Edward are OK.”

Shelly registered shock as her jaw dropped.

As Skip and TG walked away to check out the next house, TG said, “I guess that was too much, huh?”

Skip said, “A severe overload.” Then he laughed as TG headed for the next house.

Ed, back in TG-1, nearly fell off his chair, he was laughing so hard. When he recovered, he said, “Oh yeah, TG. That was a bit much. I think I may have to advise the shelter that Shelly Henderson may need some extra time with a therapist this afternoon.”

“This house is clear,” TG responded.

The damage was light for the next two blocks. People were milling about looking at all the damage. Up ahead the street was full of broken and fallen trees, downed power lines, crushed cars, and parts of homes. Ed was moving the bulldozers ahead of them to clear the street so the fire department could reach the house that exploded in the next block.

TG said, “This doesn’t smell like a regular house fire. There are too many other chemical smells. Some people died in this fire. I smell methamphetamines in the smoke. You’d better tell the sheriff.”

Ed replied, “Thanks, TG. I am calling them now.”

They had to maneuver around the growing mass of deputies and fire trucks to get to the next block that suffered heavier damage. Several people were trapped inside their houses by fallen trees and roofs that had collapsed. TG checked each house and told Skip what the situation was in each house so that he could relay it to the Air Force group and other rescue people behind them. TG could tell that there were no injuries in these houses and nobody was pinned down by any of the rubble. It was a Monday morning so most of the residents in this area were at work and not at home. She just had Skip use his spray can to mark the houses where there were no people inside.

TG-2 arrived at their refueling location with the big tanker right on time.
“KC-130 - TG-2. Approaching for refueling.”

“TG-2 - KC-130. Hey Mark, Jim here. You and Scott still hanging out together I see. Come ahead. I’ve got a drink for you.”

“Hi, Jim. I heard you talking with Scott. He got here before me because he took off first.”

“Yeah. That and his top speed is near double that of yours.”

“Details, details. This Bell can really haul. I see your hose. Making my approach.”

Mark had alerted his passengers that they were about to refuel and asked if anyone wanted to come forward to watch. Denise, as expected, hopped into the co-pilot’s seat.

“This time, do not touch anything. This is a bit tricky in a helicopter with blades reaching out trying to cut that hose into little pieces. Jets like TG-1 approach the tanker from underneath. There they just plug into the hose. But with our whirly blades up there we have to keep our rotor as far as possible above the hose. So we approach from above the tanker. The tanker has to fly their hose much higher for us so that we can approach a near horizontal hose.” Mark fell silent as he skillfully made the connection and took on fuel.

When they finished refueling, Mark slowed to allow the tanker to move ahead. The end of the hose dropped down to a much lower level and it was reeled back into the tanker.

“Thanks, Jim. Perfect timing. I can go in for a landing right from here.”

“You are welcome, Mark. Our guys are already down there with our equipment from the base. Best of luck to you and your team. I am returning to base.”

As TG-2 landed next to TG-1, Mark opened the doors to let Beth, Linda and Denise out. Mark said, “Denise, you were great up there. I hope you continue to pursue your dream of flying a chopper.”

“Thank you for your patience with me. I really enjoyed it!” Denise was delighted. She was walking around it to get a better look at the outside when she heard a familiar bark.

“Pisa, boy. You came to meet us! Come here. Big hug, guy. I missed you so much.

Linda said, “Let’s take him home and get him locked up so we can see if your father needs any help with errands of some kind.”

Pisa flashed to Denise, “I am going to go help TG. She called me.” Pisa ran off.

“Oh no! Denise, you should have held onto him. He will be confused by all the storm damage and we won’t be able to find him.” Under her breath she continued, “It’s not like your father will care at all about that.”

“Relax, Mom. TG asked him to come help her with the search and rescue work. Pisa will be OK. Dad might even be proud of Pisa by the end of the day.”

“I don’t think so, honey.”

“I think he will, Mom. Let’s go.”

Harvey was busy directing his two rescue helicopters into and out of the two nearby hospitals. Most of his flights were for minor abrasions that should have been handled by the EMTs. Ed directed Harvey’s flights as he said he would.

Now that TG-2 was also available and the team was getting into an area with heavier damage, Ed was glad that he had the extra emergency cots at his disposal.

Skip told TG, “We have a big dog headed this way. Anyone you know?”

“Yup, that is Pisa. I asked him to join me. He is strong so we can get through the debris to rescue people.”

“He looks like a mix between a Dalmatian and a small horse. That is one big dog! Welcome, fella. Come here and I’ll put some big booties on you to protect your feet.”

“TG, do I have to? I’ve never had anything on my feet before. They feel funny.”

“I have them on. I don’t get cuts in my feet from all the broken glass this way. They don’t feel bad. You will get used to them.”

There was indeed a lot of broken glass at the next pile of rubble that used to be a house.

TG flashed Skip that there were some wounded people in the rubble.

Skip could hear them calling for help. He looked back and saw there was no motorized equipment nearby that could lift the beams and debris off the pile on top of the people. “Ed, we need some help here to recover live victims.”

“On the way, Skip,” Ed responded.

TG and Pisa ran around the pile looking for a way in. “Here, Pisa. Lift this beam and I can crawl under it and get in that way.”

Pisa grabbed onto the large wooden beam with his massive jaws and after a few tugs he had it raised high enough for TG to get under and past it.

Someone inside said, “Look, a rescue dog is coming under here by us! Over here. Over here, dog.”

Skip used the speakers and microphone built into TG’s rescue vest. “The dog’s name is TG and she found you. Help is on the way to get you out of there. How many people are in there and what condition are each of you in? There is a microphone on her vest so I can hear you.”

A man's voice said, "There are two adults and three kids in here. It is too dark to see, but I think everyone else is OK. My leg is pinned down by something and I can't move. I don't know if it is broken or not."

"I am turning on the lights on TG's vest so that her camera will let us see what it looks like in there. What is your name, sir?"

"Tom Smith. Thanks for the light. We couldn't get to a flashlight. They are all in the garage." He was trying to stifle a cry. "We probably don't even have a garage anymore."

"Stay calm, Tom. We will get you out. Let's have a look at your leg. What can you show me, TG?"

TG literally scanned Tom with the lights on her vest. Then she looked at each of the other family members and Skip could see some bloody scratches here and there, but nothing that appeared too serious.

"Tom, I would say that you are all in a closet under the stairs to the second floor. You are under the bottom steps where a wall came down pinning the last two steps onto your leg. It must hurt a lot, but we should be able to get some equipment over here to lift it off of you. A crew of big men from the airbase is headed this way with their heavy equipment. Don't go anywhere until they get you out, OK?"

"Was that supposed to be a joke? I can't move."

"Sorry, just trying to keep your spirits up. Do any of you need anything while you are waiting?"

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Smith asked.

"I have water bottles in my back pack. Anybody want a drink? Tom, can you wriggle your toes of your pinned leg?"

"Yeah, I think so. We could all use a drink. The air was full of dust during and after the storm."

"OK. TG, come out and get some water for them. Tom, keep the circulation going in your leg the best you can by making any movements however small."

TG went out while Pisa lifted the barrier for her again. She flashed to Skip that the house was doing a lot of creaking. It did not seem at all stable to her.

Skip fashioned a long tube of rip-stop nylon and packed it for TG to drag back inside with her.

It was only a minute but by the time TG got back inside, the Smith family felt like it was an hour. "Here comes the dog again, I can see her lights."

Mrs. Smith said, "How can she be bringing us a drink? The hole that she comes through is almost the same size as she is. Oh look, she is dragging something!"

Skip heard her last sentence. “Yes she is. You can thank *L.L.Bean*® for thinking that one up; they supply these bags for us. Inside you will find five water bottles. Please just rinse your mouth and spit out the first mouthful before you swallow any water. There are also two long lasting LED lights to light up your space. There are some microfiber cloths for wiping your faces. Some people like a cool, wet wipe on their faces while they are waiting for rescue. By the way, the crew is here now to get you out. The last item in your bag is one of our communication devices. We call it a TGPAD. TG will be coming back out now so we can go to the next house. Our command center director, Ed, will be in constant contact with you until you are out. You do not even have to touch the TGPAD to use it.”

Ed responded immediately, “Hi, My name is Ed. Any questions?”

“You people seem to be real pros at this. Who are you and where did you come from?” Tom asked.

TG was back outside by now and she was moving towards the next house with Skip and Pisa following her. She flashed, “Ed better get TG-2 over here. They all looked like they needed patching up big time.”

Ed made the arrangements for their transport as soon as they could be freed.

Ed answered Tom. “We are the team called ‘*TG Search and Rescue*’. You just met our dog, TG and the guy you were talking to is, Skip, our president. We are from Northeast Wisconsin but we help out all around the country at no cost to anyone. We were glad to be able to help you. The men from the air force base will have you out soon. Then you will be flown by our helicopter to the hospital to get patched up. The pilot is Mark, another one of our team members.”

Mrs. Smith exclaimed, “Thank God.”

Ed said, “That is TG’s full name and now you know why.”

Pisa said, “Look. The sides of those human cages were all ripped off.”

TG looked up and around. “What are you talking about? I don’t see any human cages?”

Pisa sent the image to TG that he was looking at.

“Oh that,” TG said. “The side of that tall house is ripped off. You are looking at the rooms in the house. Those aren’t cages.”

“Well I remember a bunch of cat cages on top of each other just like that in a shelter where I used to live. It just looked to me like they must be human cages.”

Skip smiled. He said, “Not much damage to that house. It just looks like the outside wall was just sheared off. That bed up there still has its covers on it. Tornados do strange things.”

Harvey had been surly all day. Nothing seemed to please him. He was especially upset at having to take orders from Ed. Ed kept both of his helicopters busy, but Ed became upset with him when Harvey's helicopters both left to gas up at the Grand Forks International Airport. Ed chewed out Harvey for not being ready for a full day's work. Harvey was not happy with a young kid chewing him out like that.

He also didn't like it when TG-2 landed. It was just competition and he didn't want it. Then when he saw Pisa running with TG, he nearly lost it. He did not like Pisa. That dog reminded him of his son, his good for nothing, drug-dealing son. He tried to forget his son, but every time he saw Pisa, it reminded him of Rudy.

He had tried to raise his kids to respect the law and be good citizens. He even sent Rudy to get a two year degree in Police Science before he tried to join the Police Academy. When they rejected him, Rudy fell in with the wrong people and began dealing drugs. Harvey didn't have any proof, but that is what he heard from his friends. His wife and daughter didn't seem to care. How could they still love Rudy when he had become so bad?

Rudy had moved out of the house when he was still in the Police Science school. Pisa remained back home with Denise. Yes, that is where Rudy went bad, he decided. Maybe he had just used his training to learn how to avoid the law so that he could get into drugs as soon as he was out of the program. No wonder the Police Academy wouldn't accept him. They must have known about his habit. Why didn't they tell him?

Linda had suggested the vacation trip. She knew that Harvey was upset whenever he saw Pisa so she thought getting away for a week might help her and Denise to get closer to Harvey again. She had not counted on having their vacation interrupted so quickly.

Some of her friends had said their family was dysfunctional. She agreed, but what else could she do about it?

TG and Pisa were getting along just fine. Skip was proud of the way TG had been teaching Pisa as they went from house to house finding and rescuing people. At each of the houses, Pisa went directly to the house's gas meter, tore off the seal with his teeth and twisted the gas meter valve to "off." Skip asked Pisa aloud why he did that.

"TG told me to do it to prevent a fire from any gas leaks," Pisa flashed to Skip.

"Outstanding, Pisa. We could use a dog of your capabilities on our team."

“Thanks, I will help you today, but I like it here at home. I just wish Rudy would come back,” Pisa flashed.

Skip suggested, “Maybe you could make that happen.”

Just then Linda’s cellphone rang. “Hello?”

“Mrs. Ramek, this is Fred, a friend of Rudy’s. Do you know where Rudy is? He left our apartment this morning. We were going to go fishing on the river so he was going to go get his rod and tackle box from your garage. Then the tornado went through your part of town and I haven’t heard from him since. At first I thought he was busy helping people, but he should have called me by now. He doesn’t answer his phone. Have you seen him?”

“No! I haven’t seen him for two years. That was when he didn’t get, ah, a job that he wanted.” Linda was obviously upset at the possibility that her son could be a victim of the tornado. “If I find him, can I call you at this number?”

“Yes, of course. We haven’t met, but Rudy and I have roomed together for about three years now. We work together.”

“Oh, and what do you do?” Linda thought she might be able to learn something.

There was silence then Fred answered. “I, ah, thought you knew. I can’t tell you over the telephone. Please call me or I will call you if I find him first. Good Bye.” – click.

Linda stood there crying. Denise saw her mother and asked, “Who was that?”

“He said he was Fred, Rudy’s roommate. He said Rudy drove here to get his fishing stuff from our garage and hasn’t been back. He thinks the tornado may have gotten him....” Her voice trailed off as she burst into tears again.

“Mom! Pisa and TG can find him.” Denise thought, “*That was odd, there isn’t any fishing gear in our garage.*”

They had finally checked out the last house in the tornado’s destructive path. Skip thanked TG and Pisa for doing an outstanding job. They had checked 212 houses and rescued 37 people. Thankfully, except for the house that exploded, there were no other deceased victims, although some had been badly hurt.

Pisa was having another drink of water with TG when suddenly he jerked upright. His mouth was dripping with water. Denise was sending him a mental message that his buddy, Rudy was in trouble. Pisa told TG and Skip.

“Ed! We may have one more person to find. Can you find a damaged car that we haven’t investigated yet? There is a possibility that Rudy is in it.”

The rest of the team including Harvey heard Skip’s message.

“What the?” Harvey said.

Ed searched and compared his satellite images from before and after the tornado. The team had already searched everything in the tornado’s path from the ground. Could a car have been picked up and tossed to the side where they had not looked?

Ed reported, “Skip, there are so many possible targets out there. I am using all our resources to clarify and weed out the negatives. One important asset here is the IR camera on our satellite. So far there has been a total lack of any heat gain in or near each of the targets. I started each of the scans with the area closest to you then scanning back towards me. So start coming back this way. We need to have you as close as possible to the target when it is identified.”

“OK, Ed. We are on our way. TG and Pisa, let’s go back. TG, do you have any ideas? Can Pisa focus on Rudy and locate him that way?”

TG flashed that she was talking to Pisa about mentally getting into Rudy’s head, but he wasn’t getting anything from Rudy, yet.

Skip passed that on to Ed. “Ed, don’t rely on the IR too much. Pisa isn’t getting any communication from Rudy. He could be deceased, but let’s pray that he is alive.”

“Roger, Skip. I am aware of that. OK, everybody, I have two positives that I’ve put on your TGPads. Sheriff, take the one that I’ve drawn a box around. TG, you have the one with a circle around it. When you have checked them out, I hope that I will have more for you.”

Skip directed, “TG, go that way.” He pointed 25 degrees to the right of a return path that they were following. “Ed said there is a car or something over that way.”

Pisa loped along with TG, who was nearly flying across the debris. Skip ran, but he knew he could never keep up with the dogs. Besides he knew TG would take charge of the scene and would relay her findings to him and Ed before he got there anyway.

“Dad, there is only a dog in the car,” TG flashed to him. “She is dazed, wet and cold. I told her you were bringing her a drink of water and a blanket. Ed, get her some human help.”

“OK, TG. There are some shelter based rescue people out here that are on their way to your position. They are right behind Skip.”

“Thanks, Ed. She is kind of cute.”

Skip was just arriving and he already had TG’s drinking hose pulled out of his backpack for the female Cocker Spaniel. After enjoying her drink, she flashed to Skip that she had found the car to be empty and was looking for a dry place to

rest. Skip wiped her down with a towel then pulled a small blanket out of his backpack for her.

The animal shelter people arrived. Skip asked if either of them were communicators. They said that they were not so Skip relayed the Cocker's situation to them. "She said she crawled out from under a demolished house where she had lived with her human family. None of them were home when the house fell down. She's been out here looking for a dry place to rest."

Then Skip suggested that they let her lead them back to her house so that they would have an address and would be able to identify her family and get them reunited again.

To let everyone know that she understood, the Cocker gave TG some licks on TG's face.

The two rescuers got strange looks on their faces and both looked at each other. Skip knew that TG had 'talked' to them so he asked, "Did you hear something?" He was smiling.

"I heard a voice telling me to open-up and listen to animals. It would help me to better help them."

The other one said, "Me, too."

Skip explained that it was TG flashing them a message and told them that by keeping their minds open, they could communicate with the Cocker and other animals, too.

One of them was about to say thank you to TG when he heard her again.

"You are welcome."

"This is so awesome. It will help so much. Good luck on the rest of your work!"

Skip told them thanks as they led off the Cocker.

They had only gone a few feet when TG flashed Skip. "Watch them, she just told them she needed to be carried."

Just then they stopped, wrapped her in her blanket, and picked her up.

Skip asked Ed, "Where do we go next?"

Ed said, "The sheriff's target turned up empty, too. I only have one more. It is way back here so hook up with Mae and her ATV for a faster ride back."

As they were nearing their target, Ed called them off. A deputy was able to get there first and found that it too was empty.

Chapter 4

Rudy

Pisa's head went up characteristically again, into his alert mode. "TG, Skip, I contacted Rudy. He is hurt. He is stuck inside his car and he can't move. It is real dark-like he is inside a garage or something. I don't see any light, but he does have his eyes open. Wait, I am trying to figure out which way to go. FOLLOW ME!"

"Ed!" Skip shouted. "Get a Jaws-of-Life unit over here. Pisa has a lead on Rudy. It sounds as if he may be pinned in his car somewhere."

"I got Pisa's message, too. I've already got one headed towards you with a fire truck. I am going out on a limb here, but I am getting a surgical team ready for Rudy at the Mayo Clinic and Scott is warming up TG-1 for the flight. I've put in a request to the FAA to grant an emergency exception to allow an above Mach 1 flight around the south side of Minneapolis."

Pisa was running in a westerly direction towards a single house that was just beyond the outer edge of the tornado's path.

Ed zoomed in on a ranch-style house and found what appeared to be a smashed in garage door. Then he saw a small stream of oil running out the door and down the driveway. "Skip, looks like a damaged vehicle in that garage. Dad, get TG-1 over there and land in the street in front of the house. There are no overhead wires or trees on that street. You have a good landing area. The fire truck will be sure there is no fire in case there is also a gasoline leak. Harvey, your family will want to be there, too-just in case it is your son."

Harvey told Linda, "Why don't you go? I'm not sure that I want to see him."

"Harvey, get in the car! We are going there together. Now!" she demanded.

He reluctantly got into their car on the passenger side while Denise got into the back.

Linda admonished him, "Even if Rudy is into selling drugs, he is still your son. You do not have to be proud of him to go see him when he may be seriously hurt."

Harvey did not say anything. He just stared straight ahead while they drove towards the house that Pisa had identified.

There was a wide creek that the team would have to cross without making a long detour to get to the nearest bridge. Pisa didn't even give it a second thought and flew through the air clearing the twenty foot span with ease. It only barely slowed TG down as she took it in three jumps. Skip and Mae could see from her splashes that it wasn't deep so Mae said, "Hang on. We are going through, too."

Skip thought that people a half mile away could have seen their spray.

Ed said, "Nice. You guys get wet?"

"No, our *L.L.Bean* clothes would shed the water even if we'd walked through."

Pisa was already in the garage nudging her best friend, Rudy.

Rudy was fading in and out of consciousness, but he thought he could hear Pisa urging him to hang on. He thought, *she is the only one in my family that actually knows me and believes in me. I love her.*

He could hear other voices now.

"Over here. We've got to get this steering wheel post out of his chest. Fire up the Jaws." Someone was talking to him. "Rudy, I am just covering you with this tarp while they cut your car off of you. If any more glass breaks, we do not want it to cut you and hurt you more than you already are."

Pisa crawled under the tarp to be with Rudy and he let Rudy know that he was there with him.

Mae cautioned the rescue workers that he would have to be extracted as soon as they had the pressure off his chest. He would have very serious internal injuries that would require reapplying the pressure to limit internal bleeding until he got to the hospital.

Harvey called for one of his helicopters to come for Rudy.

"Harvey, we will be taking him in TG-1," Ed said.

"This is my coverage area and he will be going in my bird." Harvey was emphatic.

Ed said, "Please remember our earlier conversation, Harvey, but the sheriff has put us in charge. Rudy is going to the Mayo Clinic, the only hospital that is ready and able to handle his emergency. We have FAA clearance to fly at top speed and we can have him in surgery at Mayo's before you could even get him to the next best hospital. If you and your family will please get into TG-1 at this time, we will leave as soon as Rudy is ready."

Linda said, "Come Harvey, we need to get into the plane."

"I am not going. He is no son of mine anymore."

Linda moved toward the plane and kept pleading with Harvey who just remained in the car.

Linda got into the plane with Denise and then remembered to call Rudy's roommate.

"Fred? This is Linda Ramek, Rudy's mother. His dog found him. Rudy's chest has been crushed. They are cutting the car away from him now. Yes, he is alive-barely. He is going to be rushed by jet to St. Mary's Hospital at the Mayo Clinic. Yes, the sheriff is here. Yes, they are sending a deputy to be with him. They aren't going to arrest him, are they? Thank you. And thank you for calling me or we might not have found him. Good Bye."

Fred went to the bookshelf in their apartment and pulled out a book. Behind it was a hidden, locked wall safe. He opened it and took out one of the several disposable cellphones that were inside. After punching in a number, he spoke, "Code X17 G14 P9. This is G14. Who are you? Rudy had an accident with the tornado. He is about to be transported to the Mayo Clinic by private jet. Yes, he was headed for the meth-house to make a recording of a buy. It blew-up in the tornado? May I please go and stay with him at the hospital, then? We are both short on friends in this job. Thank you very much, Captain. I will leave right away. Can you see to it that I am allowed access to see him when I get there? Of course. Thank you, sir."

He opened the back and removed the memory chip from the phone and flushed it down the toilet. He put the phone in his pocket, closed and locked the safe and replaced the book. He tossed some clothes into his backpack and headed down to the garage to get his car. He dropped the cellphone down the trash chute.

"Rudy, I am still here with you. You have to be OK. I want to play catch with you again. Do you think they will let us play catch in the hospital? What is a hospital? Is it anything like going to the vet? I love you. When can you come home again?"

Pisa was keeping up a constant stream of conversation into Rudy's brain. Rudy thought he was getting it all, but he wasn't sure. His chest hurt so much and he was having trouble breathing. He tried to tell Pisa that he wasn't a drug dealer like his father thought, but that he was an undercover cop. His father would be proud of him - - except he couldn't tell anyone except Pisa. He loved Pisa and he was fighting to stay alive-just for Pisa.

"OK, dog. Move back. We are going to pull him out now. Easy. EASY. Got his feet? Up-slowly-and-out. Get him on the cart."

Linda had been watching from the plane and saw Rudy being placed on the cart. She called out the door again. "Harvey, PLEASE get in here. I need you!"

Harvey very reluctantly got out of the car and walked over to the plane.

The deputy got onto the plane, too.

Harvey asked, "You going to arrest him now or do you have to wait until he is awake?"

The deputy just said that wasn't decided yet.

"You don't need any more evidence, do you?"

The deputy was silent.

Just as they were loading Rudy onto the plane and getting his cart locked onto the floor, Pisa got in the plane along with Skip, Mae and TG.

Harvey looked at Pisa and said, "What's that dog doing in here?"

They lifted off immediately and quickly went into forward motion.

Skip said, "TG, tell the deputy everything that Pisa learned from Rudy."

Harvey started to ask, but Skip looked at him and said, "Just be quiet for a little while. We need to work some things out first."

The deputy's eyes got as wide as hockey pucks while he was hearing TG's voice in his head. When TG was done he asked Skip, "How did you come by this information?"

"Pisa, here, was talking mentally to Rudy-just like TG was just talking to you. I wouldn't repeat it out loud without your permission. That is why I had TG tell you, but can it be repeated to Rudy's family here?"

"I will have to clear that first. Excuse me please." He pulled out his cellphone and made a call. "Captain Voss, please. Sir, this is Lieutenant Dixon on board TG-1. Apparently Rudy's dog, Pisa, has abilities similar to TG's. It seems Pisa got sensitive information from Rudy even though he is in a coma. Skip wants to know if it can be shared with the family. Yes, sir. Yes, I am sure they will appreciate it. Fred, too? They will like to meet him I am sure. Thank you, sir. Good day." The deputy handed his cellphone to Harvey saying, "Deputy Captain Voss wants to speak with you, sir." Then he looked at Skip, winked and smiled.

Harvey still looked confused. As Captain Voss spoke to him, his demeanor went through several changes: disbelief, incredulous, understanding, then pride. When he finished he handed the cellphone back to deputy Dixon. His wife and daughter were bursting with excitement.

"First of all," Harvey began. "This cannot be told beyond our family here. It seems that I have been wrong about Rudy for the last two years. Rudy did get a job, not with the police department, but with the sheriff department. When they finished their police academy schooling, he and his roommate, Fred, were immediately hired as undercover deputies. To maintain their secrecy, Rudy had to tell us that he did not get the job. He and Fred have been instrumental in cutting the drug traffic in Grand Forks to only 10% of what it had been just two years ago. Their most recent task was to find and eliminate a meth-lab or drug house. They

did in fact find it, but the tornado knocked it out by blowing it up along with all of the people that were operating it.”

He paused and looked at Rudy for a moment. “Honey, when Fred called you, it was not because Rudy was looking for his fishing equipment. Rudy was headed to the drug house to make a purchase that was to be videotaped. Somehow he was not watching the weather and his car got picked up a mile from here and was dropped into the garage where Pisa and TG found him.”

He turned to Pisa with his arms outstretched. Pisa went over to him and gave him a lick on his face. “I am so sorry to have taken out my anger on you, Pisa. You have been so unshakably faithful to all of us. I love you, boy!”

Pisa gave him another lick on his face then went back to his post next to Rudy.

Harvey said, “Fred will meet us at the hospital. He is driving there now.” Turning to Skip, he said, “I apologize to you and your incredible team, Skip. When I first met you and TG, yesterday, I thought you were a Los Vegas act. I couldn’t figure out how you did what I thought was a magic act, but I definitely did not believe you. That has all changed today. Also the way you work with TG, plus the back up from Ed and the rest of your team is inspiring. Our community owes you a great deal of gratitude.”

“You did a great job yourself, Harvey, getting your helicopters in and out quickly the way you did, was a real asset to our combined team. Thank you. Now, would you like to learn to talk with dogs? TG will show you while Pisa is busy keeping Rudy’s spirits up.”

“Yes, I would. Thank you.”

TG flashed to Harvey, “How old are you-and do not tell me with your human voice. Just think it to me.”

“I heard TG. I really did. But I don’t know how to ‘think’ my answer to her.”

Skip said, “Just visualize your age as a two-digit number. Pretend that it is printed on that wall over there and that you are looking at it.”

“I didn’t say anything about her questioning my age. You must be listening in.”

Laughing, “Yes, I always know who TG is talking to, but I do hear her all the time. Are you thinking about your age for her?”

Then Harvey laughed. “I purposely reversed my age from 42 to 24 when I visualized it and she said, ‘You are not just four years older than Rudy.’ So I am convinced that she and I are talking. I can really hear her.”

“Dad that is what I have been trying to tell you since yesterday when I was talking to Pisa. Isn’t it wonderful?”

Harvey suddenly looked up. “What was that?”

Skip said, “We just went through the sound barrier. At today’s air temperature, that would be about 770 miles per hour. Ed, how much longer before we get to Mayo’s?”

“ETA eighteen more minutes to St. Mary’s Hospital in Rochester plus three and a half minutes to their operating room. Mae has been talking to their trauma surgical staff. Rudy is all hooked up to sensors and they are watching his vital signs. We also have several cameras on him that they are monitoring. Mae and her team have been prepping Rudy for surgery. She is saving the Mayo team critical minutes.” Ed was on top of all of the telemetry as usual.

Skip said, “Let’s get Pisa ready. TG, go get one of your extra-large vests for Pisa and we will see if we can get him into it and have him still be able to breathe.”

Ed added, “Skip, I have a roll of hook and loop tape up here in my tool drawer. You can use it to lengthen his straps. TG can come and get it for you.”

“Thanks, Ed. That should help it fit Pisa’s larger body.

TG was helping by telling Pisa how to step into his new TG Search and Rescue vest.

When he had it on, Skip stepped back and laughed. “Well, Pisa, you can’t hide in a snow storm anymore. Your black and white just became fluorescent yellow. It looks good on you. Ed has gotten you the same hospital permission that TG has. You will have freedom of access to anywhere in the hospital. You will even be allowed in the operating room as long as you stay behind a certain line.” Skip was beaming at Pisa. “There is just one important thing that you must never do in an operating room.”

Pisa asked, “What is that?”

“Well. Mastiffs and Great Danes are well known for being very gassy. It would be very distracting to the surgical team if you let go with a big one in there. Will you be able to hold it in until they are done with Rudy?”

“I’ll try. I don’t usually even think about it.”

Harvey said, “But everyone else does.”

Everyone laughed.

Pisa just went back to Rudy. “He keeps telling me that he wants to throw a ball for me. Is he going to get better?”

Skip said, “Pisa, it seems to be completely up to you. From what you have told us, Rudy has not come out of his coma well enough to understand that his family is all behind him now. He thinks that you are his only true friend. He wants to get better so he can play ball with you. Do not let him forget that. Stay with him both physically and mentally. You hold the key to his survival.”

“What key? Where?”

“What I meant was that it is up to you to keep encouraging him and to keep telling him that you love him.”

“Oh, that’s no problem. That is what I am doing already.”

Scott announced from the cockpit, “Everyone prepare for a rapid slowing down. I will be putting on the airbrakes in one minute. I hope our sonic boom hasn’t distracted too many people. We did go around the southern end of the heavily populated area around Minneapolis/St. Paul, but the population density is greater just ahead of us.”

Ed asked, “I wonder how many dishes we are going to have to pay for this time? You held us above Mach 1 longer than I had calculated and you were up to 800 mph. We are getting here much sooner than I had calculated.”

Ed turned on the forward camera and projected it onto the main cabin screen. “That is Rochester just ahead. I am zooming in on St. Mary’s Hospital-right there. You can see that they are ready for our arrival. Last year we enlarged their landing pad to accommodate TG-1. Not only are we larger than a helicopter, but our jets could literally boil a regular pad made out of blacktop. Their newly designed composite pad dissipates our heat harmlessly away so quickly that people can walk on it right after we land. Once again, please remember to stay where you are until Rudy, Pisa, and Mae are inside the building. Someone will come to lead the family to where you can wait. We will be leaving as soon as Mae can get back here as we need to clear their landing pad for any other inbound emergency carriers.”

Linda asked, “Can’t you stay? I feel like you are members of our family. I just didn’t think you would be leaving so soon.”

Skip answered, “We will be with you in your hearts. Don’t forget to keep in touch with us through your TGPads.

The teamwork was incredible when TG-1 touched down. The storm that previously spun off the tornado that had hit Grand Forks had just cleared the Rochester area. All that remained from it was a light drizzle. TG-1’s rear ramp door opened and the Mayo team was right there to take Rudy into the hospital. Instead of transferring him to their gurney and then to the operating table, they saved time by taking Rudy on the TG-1 cart right up to the operating table. TG-2 would pick it up later after it had been thoroughly cleaned.

When the family got off the elevator on the operating room floor, they were met by a doctor. “Hi, I am Doctor Joe Donohue and I will be your son’s surgeon in charge. I have received all of your son’s medical records that were faxed to us by the Grand Forks County Sheriff’s Department. While it is unusual to have a

dog in the operating room, I understand the need and have given Pisa his instructions. TG taught me to communicate with animals last year so Pisa and I understand each other. Rudy is critical, but he is in the best of hands – God’s. Please pray for him and I will be out to talk to you when we are finished and have him in ICU.” He immediately turned and went back to the operating room without waiting for questions from any of them. He was in a hurry to attend to Rudy.

They were led to a special room for family members of surgical patients. An aide stayed there with them to answer questions and attend to their comfort and lessen their stress.

Inside the operating room, Pisa sat next to the wall in an alert position looking at what he could see of Rudy. There were so many people around Rudy- all dressed in the same green clothes.

He sat there for nearly an hour listening to a machine’s beeping. It was telling everybody that Rudy’s heart was beating. But then it just made a steady tone. Somebody yelled out, “Flat line!” The green people suddenly changed what they were doing. Somebody put two big flat shiny dishes on Rudy and yelled, “Clear” and Rudy’s body jumped.

But Pisa looked up towards the ceiling and barked a loud, sharp bark. Then the machine went back to making its heartbeat sounds again.

Dr. Donohue turned around towards Pisa and said, “Thanks. You did it. Keep talking to Rudy. Don’t let him go away again.”

When the surgery was over and Rudy was taken to ICU, Dr. Donohue washed up and went out to visit with the family. Pisa stayed with Rudy.

“The surgery went well. Rudy will be in ICU for several hours before he will go to his room. He will be very sleepy until tomorrow. He will be receiving pain killers and will be monitored constantly. He will probably be here for two weeks before we will start physical and occupational therapy. He had a lot of internal injury, but he will come out of this OK.” He paused for a moment. “I also need to tell you that he would probably not be alive now if it wasn’t for Pisa. We lost Rudy on the operating table for 23 seconds. He did not immediately respond to shock therapy, but Pisa gave him a stern bark. It was loud. You may have heard it out here. Rudy responded to Pisa and owes his life to him.”

Harvey looked at Linda. “I love that dog!”

Denise said, “Don’t forget TG. We wouldn’t even be here without TG teaching us to communicate with Pisa.”

Together they all said, “Thank God for TG.”

List of Characters

TG Search and Rescue Team:

Skip Jordan ----- President of *TG Search and Rescue*
Mae ----- Skip's wife
TG ----- Border Collie, Production Manager
Scott ----- Skip's son, Chief Pilot, Chief Mechanic
Beth ----- Skip's daughter, Technology Director
Ed ----- Scott's son (Skip's grandson), Command Center Director
Mark ----- Scott's friend, Pilot, Master Mechanic

Others:

Rene ----- Skip's daughter
Julia ----- Rene's chef
Harvey Ramek ----- owner of *Harvey's Helicopter Helpers*
Linda ----- Harvey's wife
Denise ----- Harvey & Linda's daughter
Rudy ----- Harvey & Linda's son
Pisa ----- Rudy's dog
Chris ----- Wrangler at Rene's ranch
Dr. Greg Forbes ----- Severe weather expert, *The Weather Channel*
Sheriff Josephine Wilson ----- Grand Forks County sheriff
Uncle Glenn ----- Owner/operator of a dog boarding kennel
Edward ----- baby caught in tornado
Shelly Henderson ----- mother of Edward
Captain Voss ----- sheriff deputy
Tom Smith ----- trapped victim
Fred ----- Rudy's friend
Lieutenant Dixon ----- sheriff deputy
Dr. Joe Donohue ----- surgeon

To the Reader

Thank you for reading the third of my “Search and Rescue” fictional books. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed its writing.

In *Erik* and *Al*, I announced there were some intentional errors and asked the readers to report them to me. These are logic errors and not just wrong words or spelling errors. I wrote one into this book and I am again asking you to find and report it to me. You may either report it on my blog page at <http://tg-books.yolasite.com> or email me directly at tgsbook-author@yahoo.com. Why do I do this? When I was a child, I was given an Indian blanket that had a small, but obvious error in its design. I was told that its maker strived throughout his or her life to improve and if they made a perfect blanket, there was no room for any improvement and there was no need to go on. I have heard that some stained glass window makers have the same philosophy. I know that I am not perfect, but it is a goal of mine to always strive to be so. With a known error in my books, I know that I am still on my path to improve my life.

Do you have a favorite animal that you would like included in a future book as its “featured guest”? If so send me an email. A photo attachment would be nice.

Have you discovered Marta Williams yet? I found her after a Google® search. Her website says she is an animal communicator and she teaches on the subject of the “intuitive connection with animals and nature.” After reading my books about TG, you may still be a skeptic about the communication I had with TG. If so, please look at her blog site at <http://www.martawilliamsblog.com/>. Then come back and look for my next book that I hope to have ready in six months. (For one special reader, that is 184 days plus or minus 26. ;-o)

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