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WALK THE RUGGED MOUNTAIN

by

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Synopsis

When was it decided that all people wanted were stories of sex and graphic accounts of violence? Certainly not by the book buying public. But in today's fast moving world it seems the heart-warming story filled with old fashion family values that was always a pleasure to read is becoming harder to find. Thank heaven for *Walk the Rugged Mountain*.

A wonderfully scripted trilogy set among the beautiful mountains of Wales. The author, himself a Welshman, knows of the other world and would be only to pleased to see its return, a world where greed and viciousness has no part to play. The three stories intertwine and take the reader on a journey of discovery...

“ Let me take you by the hand as we walk up the slope of The Rugged Mountain. As we stop for breath we lay back among the heather, watching a Skylark singing in the heavens above, the sweet perfume of new mown grass carried on the warm summers breeze. Let me take you by the hand and take you up past the long field just above the little farm, then take you down into the valley below.

There you can see the little bridge that spans the stream that runs down the valley from the waterfall that feeds the trout pool below.

“ This is a place of mystery where on Mid-Summers Eve just as the clock in the village reaches the hour of twelve, many strange things happen just before you make your wish.”

Chapter One

VISIT TO LONDON

In London on a warm sunny day in the month of June, a party of Americans were visiting the country. Among them was a middle-aged couple who had never been to England before. Her husband had been promising her for years a trip to the old country so that they could trace where their ancestors were born and lived before sailing for America. The name of the couple was William Dubbin and his wife, Mary. They came from a small town out west where the summers were hot and the winters bitter, with falls of snow for four months

of the year. Last winter, while snowbound, they made plans to come to England and then when they had seen the sights, they were going to make the journey to Wales, for in the family bible they found the name of the village where their ancestors were born. The village name was followed by the names Dewi Jones, farm-worker, Evan Jones, blacksmith, and so on.

William and Mary were great readers and early that morning in their hotel room, they had talked about buying books to take back to America with them. As they were leaving the hotel, they asked the door-man where the best shops to buy books were situated. The man replied, "I know of only one street where they sell books, sir".

William asked him, "And how do we get there?"

The door-man turned and said, "I shall direct a taxi driver where to take you, sir". William thanked him.

The door-man blew his whistle for a taxi cab and soon one came to a halt outside the hotel. William helped his wife inside while the door-man told the driver the name of the street and the name of a bookshop he suggested they visit. As soon as they had taken their seats, the driver set off along the road. As Mary looked about her, she remarked on the streets they passed through and the quaint old houses. She turned to her husband and asked him, "Are there many such places in London? You should know from the books you have read about England".

He smiled and told her, "I shall tell you all about London and its quaint old houses when we are snowed up back home in the winter, so don't worry yourself about things like that now. We are here to buy books and enjoy ourselves".

The taxi cab stopped outside a shop and the driver told him, "You will find all the best book shops in this street, sir".

William helped Mary from the cab, paid the driver, and together they walked into the shop. As they opened the door, they heard the bell tinkle above their heads, and when the door had closed behind them, they found themselves in a large shop with books stacked on shelves from the floor to just above their heads. They walked around the shop and browsed among the books, but at the end of two hours they had found nothing they liked. So, hiding their disappointment, they walked out of the shop and made their way across the road to another.

They spent another two hours in the next shop, but were doomed to another disappointment and, as they left the shop, they decided to have lunch at a little tea-rooms they found close by. They entered the tea-rooms and sat at a table by the window that looked out onto the street. After giving their order for lunch to the young girl, they sat there staring out of the window. Then, while waiting for their lunch to be served, Mary glanced across the street and saw quite a number of people entering a little book shop tucked away in a corner. She drew her husband's attention to them, "Look," she called to him "at that little shop over there".

"Where?" he asked.

"There," said Mary, pointing her finger, "where all those people are. Shall we look over there when we have finished our lunch?"

"Yes, we may" smiled her husband, all the time taking notice how many people entered the shop.

When they had finished their lunch, William paid the bill and left a tip for the girl. Mary smiled at him and asked, "Why did you leave such a good tip?"

He told her "The food was good, as was the service, and somehow I knew that young girl needed the money".

She smiled up at him, caught hold of his arm and together they left the tea-rooms and made their way across the street. Crossing the street, they stopped outside the little shop. Turning to Mary, her husband said, "I have a feeling we are going to be lucky here". So they pushed the door open and entered. Once inside, they found that they were lucky for once, for while they were eating their lunch, the shop had all but emptied, so they could now browse in comfort at the books. Three hours later, they had found most of the books they wanted. Then, Mary, who was at the far end of the shop called to William, "I think I have found the book you've been looking for".

He walked over to her and, taking the book out of her hand, he read the title: 'Walk the Rugged Mountain'. Below he read the author's name, John Dawson. William opened the book and read a few paragraphs. Then, closing the book, he turned to the owner of the shop and said with a smile, "This is the book I have been looking for. Could you send this one with the others I have ordered".

The owner smiled at him and told him, "You are a very lucky man, for this book has only just been reprinted".

Then, the owner looked about him and could see no-one was waiting to be served, so he asked William and Mary to sit down. He then told them what he knew of the author. "I knew him well," he told them, "and I think you will like his book. The last one he wrote was 'Walk the Rugged Mountain', written in three parts. The other two parts were called 'The Old Master' and 'The Mystical Pool'".

William looked at the man and asked, "Have you the book in stock?"

The owner replied, "Yes, that is why all the people were here today, to buy the book. For, you see, sir, this author was very well thought of here in London and in his beloved Wales where he made his home. His house stands in their beautiful mystic valley where they found so much love and contentment with their family".

William ordered the book and then asked the shop owner, "Is this book a true story?"

The man told him, "It is about his life from the time he was born until the time he died". William paid for all the books, then asked, "Would you see that the rest are sent to our hotel?"

"Yes, sir," the man replied, "I will see that they are at your hotel before you return".

As William turned to leave the shop, he told the owner, "I shall take this book with me".

"Why, bless you sir, I thought that is what you wanted to do," said the owner, handing him the book.

As they walked out into the street, Mary turned to William and said, "You seem happy now""

He bent and gave her a kiss. "Yes, my darling, and if this book turns out to be as good as the man said, maybe we shall return to England and follow in the author's footsteps from

where he lived, to all the places he visited and the place where he died. How would you like that?"

The only word that she could utter was "beautiful".

They crossed the street, with her husband holding on to his book as if it were made of gold. They reached the little tea-rooms and, as they entered, gave their order to the same girl. She thanked them for their earlier tip and while she was fetching their order, they just sat there smiling at each other, until William caught hold of Mary's hand and whispered, "Would you like to return to England next year?"

Mary looked at him and said, "Yes, it will give us something to look forward to during the bitter winter ahead".

Arriving back at their hotel, they found that their parcel of books was there waiting for them. Before they changed for dinner, they checked them and packed them away in one of their trunks, but the book they had brought back with them, they packed in the case of clothes that would travel with them. By the time they had finished, they found they had to hurry or they would be too late to dine. They changed, then having locked the door to their room, they made their way down to their meal. All through the meal, the conversation turned to the book they had bought that day. Over the wine, William said to Mary, "I wonder if I should start to read that book now or wait until we return home".

Mary looked at him and smiled. Then, in a low voice, she reminded him of his promise to her, to read them when the snow was upon them, so that together on the long winter nights, they could plan their return trip to England. He smiled, stretched out his hand to hers and said, "You are right, once again, dear. It will give us something to think about."

RETURN BY BOAT TO AMERICA

That night, after dinner, they packed all their trunks and cases and soon were ready for bed, as they had to be ready for an early start the next morning. Morning soon came and while they were at breakfast, their trunks were loaded and were taken away to the boat, so all they had to do was collect their cases and pay the bill. After a very rough crossing, they arrived back in America with their books and luggage, and, after their visit to London, they were not looking forward to the cold days and long winter nights which they knew were in store for them.

Six weeks later, winter set in around the little town in the mid-west and when William and Mary awoke one Sunday morning, they found as they looked through their bedroom window, that the first fall of snow had arrived. Mary turned to William and told him, "Now you will be able to start to read your books." Then she asked him, "Which will you start on first?"

He turned to her, gave her a slap on the bottom and said, "None yet, until I've had my breakfast".

After their meal, William did his jobs around the house, and saw that the fires were made up before they changed for church, for every Sunday morning ever since they were married, they had always tried to get to church on time so they could meet their friends and pass on their news to each other. That morning, as they made their way through the snow, they were met by one of their friends who told them there would be no church service for

the next month, as the minister had been taken to his bed with a fever. They thanked him for telling them, and soon they made their way homeward towards their warm fireside.

As they entered the house, William told Mary he would see to a hot drink for them both. Then he told her to sit down in her chair. When the drinks were made, he returned and found her slowly going to sleep by the heat of the fire. Placing the drinks on a small table between their two armchairs, he gently shook her awake and told her the drink was there beside her.

WILLIAM CHOOSES HIS BOOK

When they had finished their drinks, Mary turned to him and asked, "What book will it be first?"

He smiled at her and said, "You know which one it will be. Why not close your eyes until it is time to get the dinner ready for it is a shame to leave such a warm fire on a day as cold as this".

Mary took her husband at his word and slowly drifted off to sleep, while William watched the flickering flames of the fire. As he sat there, he thought how lucky he was to have a warm home, good food, a business and a wife like his Mary. William left his chair a little later, smiled down upon her face, then made his way to their bookshelf where he had placed his new books. Running his finger along the titles, he came to the one that he had wanted to read since he came back from England, but had left it until now, the start of the Winter. Somehow he knew that today was to be the day to start reading the book called 'Walk the Rugged Mountain', so taking the book down off the shelf, he made his way back to the comfort of his armchair and fireside.

There we leave him as he opens the book and starts to read the first page of the book, which states my name, is John Dawson. I was born in the year 1882. My father's name was William and my mother's name was Clare. I was told my father died from wounds he received while fighting in South Africa. I was brought up by my mother and a nanny, for my mother was never very strong and I was told by my nanny over the years that my mother never recovered from my father's death. When I was four, I was given a little puppy by a friend of my mother's who told her I needed someone or something to play with; then she may find she would have more peace. I named my little puppy 'Spot' for it had a black spot over one eye. We played all sorts of games, like hunting, in the lower garden where I was allowed to play. The lower garden was used by Mr Hades who came once a week to tend the main garden and would leave all the dead plants in the lower one.

I liked Mr Hades, our gardener. He would share his tea with me. Many a time I would share his bread and cheese, and while he sat there, he would tell me tales about the war and all the strange things he had seen, such as big snakes. He told me they would swallow a little fellow like me up in no time. Then he would tell me the story of the leopard that would lie in wait on the branch of a tree until something came along for its meal. Then nanny would call me to the house for my tea. When he got to know me better, Mr Hades would tell me tales about my father, "how brave he was," for, as he told me, "none knew him better, for did I not fight alongside of him on the day he was shot from his horse". Then, as he went on to tell me more, Nanny called me in and after that I only saw Mr Hades once more.

After the gardener had left, I had only Spot to play with and what fun we had hunting in the garden. We spent most of our days out there for I was told by nanny not to worry my mother, for she was a very sick woman and eventually, I was only able to see her before bed-time and that was to kiss her goodnight. On one such night, I was told I could see her no more as she had gone to join my father in Heaven, for he had been very lonely without her. I knew it must be true because nanny had told me so. That night, nanny told me to be a good boy, for in the morning, a lady was to come and take me to my new home. "Can I take Spot?" I asked her.

Nanny looked down at me with tears in her eyes and said, "No, my darling, your little dog is going to live with Mr Hades, the gardener".

Next morning, Mr Hades came to take my little dog, Spot, away and as I knelt down and kissed him, I told him, "I shall never forget you". Then Mr Hades led my little dog away, and it was soon my turn, as a lady led me away by the hand to a hansom cab which was to take me to an orphanage on the outskirts of London.

THE ORPHANAGE

It was just before lunch. Looking through the window, I could see a rather large woman who held a small bewildered boy by the hand as she led him up through the gates of the orphanage. I saw him looking at her and my heart went out to him, for as he looked up, I could see his tear-stained face. I knew the reason for the tears, for I was at that time the Superintendent of the Orphanage, and I knew the woman. She had been with him that day when they told him that his mother had died and gone to Heaven to join his father and he was then told by her that he was now all alone in the world.

As they walked slowly up the drive, the little boy looked about him with bewilderment, for to him it seemed only a short time ago that he had been playing with his little dog, Spot, in the garden where he had been told to stay by his nanny who had also looked after his mother who was ill. To the little boy, it seemed such a long time ago that he had hugged his dog to his chest and kissed him goodbye. Then, as Mr Hades led the little dog away, the little boy knew in his heart that he would never see his beloved Spot again.

The woman rang the bell and, after a short while, the door opened. She led the little boy inside and walked with him to a large room where, behind a desk, sat an old lady.

Well, she looked old to the boy for he was only five years of age. The woman sat him down on a chair. Then she handed over her papers to the lady behind the desk. She read them and from time to time she would glance at the boy over the top of her glasses. When she had finished reading, she reached out her hand and pressed a bell. Slowly the door opened and another woman came towards her. The Superintendent said, "Take him and put him in the same room as the other little boy who came here today".

The woman turned, lifted the boy down, and, with his case in her one hand and his hand in her other, she left the room. After they had left the room, the woman asked the boy his name. He told her, "My name is John, John Dawson. That is what my mother called me."

"Well, John, there is another little boy here who has just lost his mother, so you can sleep by him. He has only just arrived too, so you will both be new boys together".

As she took him along the passage, she caught sight of a young girl who she called by name. "Jean," she called, "I need you," and as the girl came towards her, she asked her to help the two little boys to settle in.

"Yes miss," answered the girl. Then, taking John by the hand, she smiled down at him and told him in a quiet voice, "I will look after you, don't be afraid". John clung to her hand as if never to let go and as they entered the bedroom he saw another little boy breaking his heart on his bed. Jean took John with her and sat him on the bed while she spoke to the little boy. She placed her arms around him and John heard her say, "Hush now, see I have brought you a little friend, so don't worry, I shall look after you both". Jean wiped his eyes and told him, "This is John, now tell him your name".

The little boy lifted his tear-stained face to John and said in a low voice, "My name is Tudor Hughes".

LIFE IN THE ORPHANAGE

As the years at the orphanage passed slowly by, the two boys and Jean remained friends.

Tudor never forgot the story John had told him about his little dog, Spot, and from the moment he had heard the story, he made up his mind that when he grew up, he, too, would own a dog and nobody would ever part them. They walked to school together and played together. By the time John reached ten years of age, Tudor and he had developed a passion for writing but notepaper was in short supply in the orphanage. So the teacher at the school where they were taught who noticed the two boys' interest in writing, each night brought them in some paper, because she felt sorry for them and she felt it was her duty to encourage them.

Late at night, the two boys wrote, and later the next day, Jean would read what they had written and then she would tell them where they had gone wrong. "This way," she told them, "is how you will learn not to make mistakes".

One year before the boys were due to leave school, their teacher called them to her desk. There she told them that one day a week for the next year could be spent writing their stories, and at the end of that time she would be able to tell them if they had the ability to earn their living in the world as writers. So one day a week for a year, the boys wrote their stories and by the end of the year the teacher knew which one she was sure would make a writer.

The day came for the boys to finish school. On that day, she called the two boys to her. Then, looking at them, she told them, "One year ago today, I told you I would say if you could earn a living as writers. Now are you ready to be told?" The two boys said, "Yes, Miss, we are ready".

The teacher told Tudor, "You will make a good literary agent if you work hard in your spare time. Try to get work with a good publishing company". Then she told him, "I shall give you a good reference to help you".

Then, looking at John, she said, "John, you have the makings of a good writer, but you will still have to work hard and if I were you, I, too, would look for a job in publishing, for it is there that you will be able to learn how a book is started and finished, for to be a writer it does help to know how a book is written and printed".

Both boys returned to their seats and before they left the school for the last time, the teacher shook their hands and told them to "work hard and make me proud of you both".

STARTING WORK

The two boys were now at an age to leave the orphanage, which had been their home for so many years. They had been found jobs and places to stay. Tudor was leaving for the West Country where he had been found work with a small publishing company, and John had been found a job with a firm in London. As the boys shook hands with the staff, they asked if they could take Jean outside so they could thank her for looking after them all these years. Permission was given, so together they took her out into the garden and there they both kissed her. They both looked at Jean who, by the way, was only two years older than themselves, and before they shook hands with each other and promised to keep in touch, they told her how much they would miss her. She told them, "You have been like two brothers to me and you have both given me lots of love when I needed it most".

"Now go," she scolded, "or you will miss your trains".

As they walked down the drive, their thoughts turned to the day when they had been led in through the same gates and up that same drive, not knowing what was to happen to them. Now they felt like men of the world, as they turned in the drive to wave goodbye to those they were leaving behind. The time came at the end of the drive for them to go their separate ways, and as they shook hands, they promised each other once again to keep in touch and each promised that if one needed help, the other would try to help. Then, with arms around each other's shoulders, they turned away with tears in their eyes, for they had been good friends for so many years and this was the first time they would be apart from each other. Both knew it would take some getting used to.



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