

Adam Packbell

Lost Boy Found

The memoirs of Adam Packbell
with his father, Copper Mystran.

By Daveykins FoxFire



Part of the FoxFire Studios of Saint Louis
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It was a winter's night in the early 80s. Christmas Eve.

A lonely log ladder, towering above an empty schoolyard, got an unexpected visitor at that strange hour. A boy about 11 years old who had already had enough of his short life to last him to his old age was climbing that ladder. He had enough of the constant bullying from his peers and humiliation by his teachers. It had dragged him from an exceptionally gifted kindergartner to a hopeless flunker at 6th grade. He had advanced in grade only because his teachers didn't want another year of him. He had gone from a child who was only thought the best of to a whipping boy who was there solely to be kicked around for whatever went wrong in the world. He was someone who lived his life from beating to beating and wasn't considered as much, if at all.

The last straw came about an hour before. At the Christmas recital, somebody rigged his Santa suit to disintegrate right where he stood. Everybody in the hall had a good laugh, at his expense.

The child just couldn't stand any more. He ran sobbing past mocking children and irate adults who demanded that he repeat the scene for the next two performances. He ran out of the hall through a snowstorm and into the darkness until he couldn't hear the laughter or any other human voice.

He didn't stop running until he came to that log ladder. He was usually found there during recesses or when his parents wouldn't let him in his own house because he needed to be played at by other kids. Normally he was on the top rung with the occasional catcalls from below telling him to jump to his death. All too often someone actually climbed up to push him off.

There was a good reason why he chose that place as his personal retreat from the world below him. There was a constant wind at the top of the ladder, an altitude where flags flutter and birds fly, which effectively drown out the noise below him. There he could study the clouds at day and the stars at night—yes, he did show up there at night when things at his house got too intense. He could look for any deity that would claim him or any changes in his fortune in the sky above, and in a way, around him as well. He looked for anything that would ensure him that his past existence would not be the theme of his whole life.

Emphasis on the word, 'any,' and he didn't care who. Never mind what he heard in Church.

Normally he would be found there and dragged back to his school or his house with at least a thorough tongue-lashing but usually worse, but not that night. The snowstorm he had run through had grown to 100-year blizzard proportions with the addition of a thick fog, covering the outside world as if by a flood. The streets were impassable and the visibility all but a few feet. The storm also effectively hid the log ladder below the child in the white and darkness that flowed over and around him as well.

For the first time, the child finally felt that the world he knew had disappeared. It was just him and the wind around him. The wind seemed to blow louder through his hair and into his ears, whipping around his small frame and up to his chin as if to gently guide him to look above.

He did look up and saw what would be the one and only Christmas present he ever needed. The holiday would have no more purpose after tonight because of its presence. Because his silent cries in the night had just been answered.

A book as wide as he was appeared in the neatherspace above him. He stood up tall over the top rung to

reach for it, welcoming it into his arms. It was made out of wood and bronze with pages lined in gold that gave the inside of the book a fiery glow. The book was locked tight with a latch similar to diaries, and it was encrusted by a foxtail-like shape over the felt covers.

The lock sprang open at his touch, as if it were accepting him, and it opened itself to reveal virgin pages of the softest vellum inside. The darkness of the nighttime snow-blind left his presence as the book opened. A fire that the boy had never seen before surrounded him. He could feel the heat and light it gave off, but it didn't cause him the pain of burning, even as it started to ignite the log he was standing on and even seeped through his body and into his soul. And through his handholds to the book, he could see the flicker of flame begin to write on the pages.



It started with a mere trickle, a sole flame forming a single letter.

Then a word.

Then another word.

A sentence.

A paragraph.

And another.

And a third.

They seemed to pour out from the boy's own soul: Stories. A whole universe of stories appeared from every genre imaginable. He saw a romance tale appear in the parchment, then a mystery, science, history, tragedy, comedy, and more and more. Page after page flew past as it was written in fire and flipped over, yet there seemed to be no end to the pages within the book.

It didn't seem weird to the boy. He was already deeply lost in the words that appeared in front of him. In fact, it actually felt right to him, more right than anything else that had occurred and occurred in his short life.

And then the dam really burst open. Wide!

A picture was painted in flame with the text.

And another.

Several of them merged to form a comic strip.

Then a whole series of strips.

Then a whole comic book.

And another.

Pictures and words danced together in perfect harmony. It almost resembled the music that now sang in his ears and in his mind. A whole world, no, a complete universe, flowed from inside him out onto the paper, and then back to him. He felt it resonate inside him as he actually felt every story and tale in his own soul.

He never felt so good about anything like this before.

So right.

So alive, alive for the first time ever.

He closed his eyes.

He took in a breath.

He felt his legs take leave of the log below him.

The fire instantly disappeared. The log ladder was completely consumed, no longer needed, mere ashes to be covered by the snow.

The child was never seen again.

Only the stars and the snow were the witnesses.

All of Christmas Day was spent looking for “That God Damned Brat,” as he was referred to by those looking to find him, and then get their hands on him.

The next day was spent doing the same, but then wondering if they should actually be worried about the child.

The day after that, they filed the Missing Person's report with the cops.

And the day after that, they discovered the remains of his favorite hiding spot, the ashes that was once that log ladder.

By New Years, people actually began to miss the child, and even regret mistreating him.

There was no signs of kidnapping.

No reports of where he was running away to.

He simply vanished without a trace.

And his last days on Earth were made pure Hell. By their hands.

Within two months, the child was pronounced dead and an funeral by proxy was done in his name.

By the end of the school year, in May, someone started to make a small shrine in his honor, set on the exact site as that log ladder, as a effort to ask for the child's forgiveness. It was finished, installed, and dedicated by the start of the next school year in August.

The shrine became known as “The Lost Boy Shrine,” and was eventually dedicated as a national monument of any and all school children who was pushed beyond the brink by the Public School System. Every time a student got teased to the point of committing suicide, beaten to death, driven to drugs, or some other cruel fate, their names were added to this memorial in hope that they would be the last name in the long list.

Of course, this practice came to an abrupt end thanks to the Columbine Massacre. By the time December 24, 2001 came around, nobody even cared about that old dilapidated shrine anymore. It was left to disrepair, cared for by a few who still know why that shrine was built.

It was at that date when someone appeared out of the snow, a young man in his twenties, carrying a single rose. He walked up to that shrine, dropped that rose in front of the shrine, said a little prayer, and left.

He wouldn't have even been noticed if someone hadn't snapped a picture of him, to use to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the boy's disappearance.

Despite over a decade difference in age, he looked somewhat familiar to the city's populace. And he should be.

He's that very same child who disappeared with that log ladder.

His name is Adam Packbell

This is his story.

