

## An excerpt from

### Avenging Angel

by John E. Miller

“CLEAR!”

“CLEAR, MR. BRIDGIT! COME ON.”

*I'm ready to go.*

“DAMN IT! WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING HIM SOONER?”

*Thank you, doctor. You did your best.*

“Wake up,” a soft voice said.

The haze cleared from Adam Bridgit's eyes. Before him stood a beautiful angel with long, flowing robes and huge wings.

“Uh, OK. So I'm dead,” Adam decided.

“You need to go to work.”

“To work? I have a job in heaven?”

“Yes to work, but here on earth.”

“What's my job?”

“That's your choice.”

“What do you mean?”

“You'll see.”

Adam Bridgit opened his eyes and looked around him. He was in an apartment that was clean, too clean, not a flaw in sight.

“BITCH, I SAID TO HAVE THE TOASTER CRUMBS CLEANED OUT!” a man yelled.

He heard a woman's soft voice, “It was only a crumb.”

“THAT FUCKIN' BOY DID THIS.”

Adam looked around and saw a little boy crying, his face red.

“I'LL KILL HIM, THEN YOU,” the man pointed at the boy, then at the woman who crouched on the floor, cradling her bloodied face.

The man crept toward the cringing boy. His voice became softer, more malevolent, “You like your toast, don't you boy?”

Something stirred deep inside Adam. He couldn't put his finger on the feeling, but he didn't like it. The woman and the boy looked as if they had missed many meals. But the man was plump and reeked of cheap beer.

The boy just shook his head.

The man pulled a carving knife from the butcher block, “Liar. You know what they do to little fuckin’ liars like you? They cut their tongue out. So I plan to save the courts some time and cut yours out now.”

The man moved toward the young boy. The boy took a step back. The man tried to take another step, but a weight stopped him from lifting his leg. He looked down and saw the woman had wrapped herself around his ankle. He struck downward, cutting into the woman’s arm, “Let go bitch or you will be first.”

She lurched back, letting go of his leg. The man turned back to the boy, “You can’t run you can’t hide. You might as well take your punishment.”

The boy stood shaking and crying. A dark patch appeared on the boy’s pants and spread down his leg.

“Pissing yourself is only going to make it worse, boy,” the man growled.

*Today will be the day I get rid of this piece of garbage.* Adam heard the angry man’s thoughts as if they were his own.

Adam reached for the knife the man held, but his hand only passed through it. He stumbled and his hand reached into the man’s chest. He felt a lump and saw his hand had wrapped around a glowing sphere. At first he thought it was the man’s heart. Then he realized that it was not his heart, but his very soul.

As the man raised the knife to stab the boy, Adam tightened his grip on his soul. He heard the man’s heart stop for a moment.

The man’s eyes widened. He grabbed his chest, dropping the knife, “Bitch, I’m dying. Call for an ambulance!”

“Mom, don’t do it,” the boy screamed.

“Shut it boy! Call now, bitch!”

Adam squeezed a little harder. The man’s face turned red. His lips became a bluish purple. He dropped to his knees. Adam followed him down, then leaned forward and whispered, “Look at me.”

Adam didn’t think the man would hear him, but the man looked up and a shock spread across his face.

“You can you hear me?” a grin came over Adam’s face.

The man nodded.

“Good. I want you to understand I have your life in my hand right now. Do you understand?”

The man nodded.

“Now listen closely. I have a choice of either killing you or letting you live. And from what I’ve seen so far, I don’t see why I should let you live.”

“Please don’t...Please,” the man whimpered.

“What did you say?” the little boy asked.

“Damn! They disconnected the phone,” the woman cried.

Adam pressed his face close to the dying man's. "You were not going to give a choice to the boy, why should I give you one?"

"I'll go next door," the woman said and ran out the door.

"Please...please. I will change," the man whispered.

"You change? You bastard!" the boy screamed as he ran over and kicked the man. The boy stared down at the knife and leaned over to pick it up.

*I should do the same to you that you were going to do to my mother and me.* The boy's thoughts came to Adam's mind. He saw fear and cold loathing in the boy's eyes.

*No, it is not the right thing,* Adam sent a thought out to the boy, hoping he would hear. *You would end up no better than him.*

"I have a hard time believing you," Adam said out loud. "Maybe I should let the boy give you a taste of your own blood." Adam squeezed a little more, watching the man's face turn purple.

"I swear," the man gasped.

*Put the knife down son, I have it all under control.*

*Who are you? And how can I be sure?* the boy thought.

*I'm your guardian angel now.*

Adam let go of the man's heart and watched him fall over. "I will be back to check on you. If you don't change, I will finish what I started," Adam let both the boy and the man hear his promise. Darkness came over him.

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Adam saw a small square of light. It opened gradually to reveal a man and the red brick wall of an elementary school behind him. He got a bad feeling about this man. The man walked over to a little blonde girl. His eyes ran over her from top to bottom and came to rest on the small white rectangle plastered to her chest.

*Oh no. The teacher let her walk out with her name tag on.*

"Well, hello there, Megan. I'm a friend of your mom's from work. She asked me to pick you up today because she had to work a little late." Adam heard the man say.

"What's the password?" the girl asked.

The man looked around and saw she wore a backpack that had a picture of Sponge Bob, Square Pants. "Sponge bob square pants."

*Mistake number two. Never, never use a password that's so obvious.* Adam tried to move, but found he could only watch.

The little girl gave the man a hard look, but took his hand.

"You have your house key, right?" the man asked.

*Run little girl, run,* Adam tried to think to her, as he had the little boy. But it didn't seem to work.

"Yes I do," she said proudly.

“I’m glad that your mother keeps you safe,” the man smiled. *Ah another notch on my belt*, the man’s thoughts echoed through Adam’s head and his vision faded to black. *Lord, why didn’t you let me stop him?* Adam thought, as his heart sagged against his soul.