

## She Thought She Had It All

Pain plagued Meg's powerless form. Duct-tape suppressed any movement in the tiny trunk. Three-hundred-horses under the hood, potholes, darkness, and searing pain joined forces against her. Terror wrapped its icy fingers around her throat, suffocating her. Bound and gagged, Megan Sanders, Lincoln High's Cheerleading Captain, was at the mercy of her captors. Meg had no warning that afternoon that her life would take such a drastic turn. The day started like any other. After school, at the soda shop she joked around with friends. Blonde hair hung loosely around slim shoulders; hazel-eyes scanned the room, her thick red lips puckered at the corners for effect. Joking around was a euphemism for tormenting the kids from the tenements across town, especially Beth Alexander, the waitress who worked after school to help her family. Meg's crowd hurled cruel insults at her. Beth had the audacity to challenge Meg's hypothesis that one couldn't be happy without money. Beth's Scriptural response, "I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"(John 10:10 MKJV) wasn't appreciated. Beth Alexander, with her flawless countenance, long auburn hair worn back, contagious smile, explained that Jesus came not only to atone for our sin, but we receive abundant life when the Holy Spirit lives in our spirit. This abundant life includes spiritual power through a personal relationship with God. Meg was livid as Beth concluded, "In this kind of relationship, we can find joy in any circumstance." Meg was especially hard on Beth that day. She made an order and then refused to pay for it, saying that Beth must have written it down wrong. She knew Mr. Strickland would take half the cost out of Beth's paycheck, but she didn't care. "Let's see her find joy in that," she smirked, backing out of the soda shop. A quick stop at the Post Office changed everything. She never looked in the back when she returned to her car. He was crouching in the floor, behind the passenger's seat. A thin sun-baked hand held a gun to her head, forcing her to pull over down the road to pick up a friend. Grinding her teeth together Meg slowly inhaled when she saw his friend's beady black eyes and leathery face. "Drive 'til I tell you to stop. You'd better not do anything stupid." Just outside of town, Meg went in the trunk. Ghoulish laughter permeated the car. Meg's eyebrows furrowed in pain as she listened. Desperate to hear what they were saying, she couldn't make out their words. Her thoughts raced. Oh, God. Where are they taking me? What's going to happen to me? Please don't let them hurt me. Pain, fear, and engine fumes lulled her into a fitful sleep. Meg woke to the squealing of brakes as they rolled to a stop. She had no idea where they were. The smell of pine needles mixed with exhaust fumes filled the air. She heard them plot while they built a campfire. Cackling over their plans, they both agreed that she would die after supper. Meg's mind was reeling. Thoughts flashed like frames on a strip of broken film. Let's see, if I can kick a panel out maybe I can reach around with my, "No, I cant move my legs. My arms are so numb. What can I do? There's no way out. Am I actually going to die? Oh, God! Let's see, I remember they taught us a prayer in Sunday school. Now what was it that stupid teacher said? The smell of fried bacon and biscuits invaded her senses, hunger pangs screamed for relief. She heard forks scraping against dishes, pans tossed on the ground, and footsteps. The footsteps were getting louder. Let's see, what was it? Now I lay me down to sleep... No, that's not it! What was it? I bet Beth Alexander would know what to do. The key turned in the lock, as the sun-baked hand stabbed a gun in her face. "Come on, Missy, it's time for a walk." Meg staggered forward like a drunkard, every limb screamed in agony. "We'll take the tape off your mouth if you promise not to scream." Her temples pulsed, eyes darting between her captors pleaded for mercy. She nodded in agreement. "Please, don't do this," desperation engulfed her. Callous hands pushed her toward the woods, "Enough with the tears already." Meg's mind was spinning desperately. I guess Beth was right; my money can't help me now. 2006 by Dr. Sharon Schuetz

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### About the Author

Dr. Sharon Schuetz is an ordained minister and holds a BA in Religious Education and a PhD in Clinical Counseling Psychology. She and her husband, Michael, have been married for 33 years. They have three children and seven grandchildren. Like most writers, she has loved writing since she was a child.