

## **Part 6: Acceptance**

He didn't know where he was going. He could hardly feel the ground move underneath his feet, all sounds and smells of the world seemed dull and fake. His mind was floating through the empty spaces that was his past, and the alcohol in his blood wasn't helping either. Did any of it have meaning, his life? Was it all a big waste of time? The pain, the sorrow, the disappointment. All of it. It didn't mean anything.

Although the sky was a rare shade of blue with no cloud in sight, Peter felt as though the sun was hidden behind layers of deceitful clouds, intentionally stealing the light away from his eyes, leaving him cold and abandoned. He could almost feel raindrops fall on his skin as he walked aimlessly on, through the seemingly vacant streets of Cambridge.

Before he knew it, he was at the entrance to a church, St. Anthony's. He never had many fond memories of actually going to church, but this was the one place he remembered going as a family when he was young. And he remembered after mass, Walter would often take him to the Smith Playground baseball field on campus, four or five blocks down the road, to play. It felt so long ago...almost like a dream...

Halfway feeling like an innocent bystander as his own life unfolded before him, Peter slowly climbed the stairs of the church and entered the old brick building. The next thing he knew, he was sitting in one of the pews of the empty church. He had never been a very religious person. There was a day when both of his parents were, however. It felt like their spiritual life died a little more with every passing year, and when Walter went away, that was the last straw for his mother. They never once stepped foot into another church again.

But here he was, after all these years, sitting in the very same church he had come as a boy. Nothing seemed to have changed and yet the building felt different, somehow darkly hallow, the walls whispering words of wonder and fear he couldn't hear. Then again, as he sat in silence he began to understand that the world around him hadn't changed, rather it was he who had changed.

It was amazing how much a small piece of information could change things, Peter thought. But really, did it have to change? Did he have to reject the people he had grown close to because of their past mistakes? Was there no room for forgiveness?

That's when the stone walls of the church seemed to echo his mother's words, "Είναι ένα καλύτερο άνθρωπο από τον πατέρα σου." Although he thought the words could mean "be a better man than your father," Peter was beginning to see past the initial vapor, peering through the mist to their true meaning.

His mother had to have known the truth as well. She had just lost a son and was grieving. Then Walter came to her and said that they could get Peter back, he could

be saved. She tried to talk sense into him, but to no avail. Walter did the unspeakable and brought the alter-Peter into this world, claiming him as his own. Maybe Walter was okay with that and could go on like nothing happened, but not his mother. That is why she was always distant, emotionally detached from Peter: Because every waking day she was reminded of her loss, Walter's lie, and the poor, innocent boy caught in the middle.

That is why she said those words, because someday she knew that Peter would learn the truth and would have to make a very difficult decision. Should he leave the world he had come to know all his life, or should he turn to the relationships that he had made to save him?

*Keep your people close. Take care of the people you care about.*

That was his second interpretation of his mother's words, but the more he thought, he began to imagine yet another:

*Protect those you love. No matter what may come between you.*

If what the man in the suit said was true, that neither world needed to annihilate the other *only if balance could be achieved...*

Peter's heart sank at the realization of one last possibility, that death was inevitable. He had but one choice.

He removed his cell phone and the napkin from his jacket pocket as he stood and walked out of the church, dialing as he went. As he exited the church and walked into the bright light of day, he heard someone answer on the other end of the line.

"This is Peter Bishop," he said. "I don't know what you expected me to do for you, but I can't go with you. My life is here." Without waiting for a response, Peter hung up and walked to the nearest bus stop.