

SCREAMS FROM THE BUSHES

It's a haunting story, told by author W.B. Freeman in his *The Longer-Lasting Inspirational Bathroom Book*.

A man was walking down a dimly lit street late one evening when he heard muffled screams coming from behind a clump of bushes.

Alarmed, he slowed down to listen, and panicked when he realized that what he was hearing were the unmistakable sounds of a struggle – heavy grunting, frantic scuffling and tearing of fabric.

Only yards from where he stood, a woman was being attacked. He froze in his steps, hardly daring to breathe lest the attacker should notice his presence. But then a strange thought occurred to him: Should he get involved?

Frightened for his own safety, he cursed himself for having suddenly decided to take a new route home that night. He had family responsibilities; what if he became another statistic? He instantly had the urge to run to a safe place and use his cell phone to call the police. But he could hear the struggle becoming more desperate.

An eternity seemed to pass as he argued with himself. The deliberations in his head had taken only seconds, but already the girl's cries were growing weaker. He had to decide and fast. How could he sleep at night if he walked away from this?

So he finally resolved that he could not turn his back on the fate of this unknown woman, even if it meant risking his life.

Known neither for his bravery nor for his athletic abilities, he nonetheless summoned up all the moral courage and physical strength he could muster. And once he had finally determined to help the girl, he became strangely transformed. He ran behind the bushes and pulled the assailant off the woman and wrestled with the attacker for a few minutes until the man fled.

Panting hard, he scrambled upright and approached the girl, who was crouched behind a tree, sobbing. In the darkness, he could barely see her outline, but he could certainly sense her trembling shock. Not wanting to frighten her further, he first spoke to her from a distance.

"It's OK," he said soothingly. "The man ran away. You're safe now."

There was a long pause, and then he heard these words, uttered in wonder, in amazement: "Dad, is that you?" Out from behind the tree stepped his youngest daughter.

(more)

What if he had passed by that night? What if he had decided not to get involved?

We must understand that every child on this earth is ultimately our son, our daughter, our brother, our sister.

It is good that we take care of those we love. But as people of faith, God calls us to expand those borders, to understand that the good of every person on earth is our concern.

Jesus said it:

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter