

Garden Of Souls **by Terry Fulgham**

Garden Of Souls, is a story based on fiction that could actually be a true story because of its story context. This story is about two men, Peter Knight and George Martin, whose lives seem to cross paths over their teenage years and on through adulthood. Though they were never friends, by some unusual force in the universe, they feel this strange closeness to each other.

Excerpt

Preface

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Peter Knight is black and proud of whom he is and his accomplishments. Peter became a very successful attorney who then became a prosecutor and then, at an early age, became a criminal trial Judge.

George Martin is white and, has been in and out of jail throughout his teenage years and throughout his adult life.

George was a thief, who became a master thief earlier in life.

George Martin wasn’t your typical criminal. Over the years he had developed a conscience; his thought was why steal from someone who does not have something worth stealing.

After serving time in prison for stealing small items, he had made up his mind that he would only steal from the rich and very wealthy.

George had been taught to steal at an early age by his uncle and aunt who took George in when his adopted parents were killed in an automobile accident. George did not know he was adopted at the age of 2 days old.

Peter Knight was born in a well to do privileged family whose father gave him anything that he wanted. Peter’s mother, Ellen Knight, died two days after giving birth to him and his twin brother.

Peter was three minutes older than his twin brother. Although his younger twin brother, Carl, didn't look or act anything like Peter they were very close. Peter was dark. He was a black man like his father.

Peter and Carl were the only children that Gregory J. Knight had. Gregory J. Knight's live-in housekeeper, Ms. Ida Cooper, was nicknamed and referred lovingly as Mama Cooper. She was the only mother they knew. She treated them as if she was their birth mother.

Ellen Knight, was a very lonely and depressed woman before and while she was pregnant. Her husband Gregory was always on business trip that took him all over the country. Although she love Gregory with all her heart. being she still felt alone and was suffering from depression.

She had an extra marital affair with the hired help who happened to be this younger white man which was the "live in" groundskeeper. He, was later fired for drinking on the job before Ellen Knight died.

Ellen had broken off the relationship that she had been having with this man long before she had realized that she was pregnant. When Ellen found out, she was going to have twins she and George marriage seemed to have gotten better.

Gregory J. Knight never knew that while he was on these business trips that his wife was being unfaithful to him.

George Martin's adopted parents James and Sara Martin died in an automobile accident when George was only one year old. The only memories that George had of them were some old faded photos from when his parents were married.

James Martin's brother, John, took George in to take care of him.

This was only because of the life insurance money that James and Sara Martin had left for their only son George.

John Martin had been in and out of prison all of his life.

James Martin hadn't spoken to John in years.

John had stolen from James and Sara in the past and James had broken off his relationship with his only brother.

When James and his wife Sara died in that fatal car accident this was a great opportunity for John to get some free money but there was one catch-he had to take his nephew, George Martin, into his home. He really did not like George, his only nephew.

“As far as John was concerned there wasn’t a choice if he and his wife, Kate Martin, were going to get his brother’s life insurance money they had to take this kid in to their home”ll .

John and Kate had two other kids, Danny and Sharon. Danny was the same age as George. Sharon was three years older.

Over the years, they would grow-up as brothers and sisters.

George would become close to Danny and Sharon. Although his Uncle John and Aunt Kate would always let him know he was staying with them on borrowed time. He knew he could be put out of their home at anytime. This was all he heard as far back as he can remember. He knew that he did not belong with them.

George lived with his new adopted family in a trailer in the worst part of town. He and his brother and sister were taught at an early age how to steal thanks to his uncle and aunt.

The whole family was in and out of jail or reform school always. Everything they stole his Uncle John and Aunt Kate would sell for their drug habits.

For most of their young lives they would go to bed hungry.

Frank and Kate Martin weren’t meant to be parents-any kids parents.

Living with them was a nightmare not only for George, but was also for Danny and Sharon who were their natural kids.

George had a rough upbringing.

Peter Knight’s first encounter with George Martin was during his senior year in high school. Peter and Carl, his twin brother, were good athletes throughout high school and their college years.

Peter had been training for the golden glove. He was going to compete for the light heavy weight state championship. He found out that he was going to fight this white boy name George Martin who lived across town and from what he had heard was supposed to be a good boxer.

This would be their first meeting.

Over the years they crossed each other’s paths and not in a friendly way.

Peter Knight had been a prosecutor and then became a criminal judge and George Martin as a career criminal.

Peter's prosecuting of lawbreakers earned him the respect and reputation of being a hard nosed, no nonsense prosecutor. His motto was: "Take no prisoners; you do the crime you do the time."

As a prosecutor, Peter's first three years were very impressive. His conviction rate was 95% on jury convictions and 5% for plea bargains.

He did not do plead bargains if he didn't have to. Peter was that sure of himself.

Yes, he was a good lawyer, he knew it, and everyone who worked with him knew it.

While Peter was in the D.A.'s office, during his closing arguments he would always tell the jury to find the defendant guilty and send them to the "Garden of Souls" .

Peter believed that people were like seeds when they were born. Once you are out of your mother's womb you start to develop into who you may become, you are either a good seed or a bad seed.

His belief was that if you became a bad seed and you committed a crime against society that you should be punished but not sent to prison to throw the key away to be forgotten.

He never uses the word "prison" .

"Garden of Souls" was a place where bad seeds can become functional in our society again he would tell the jury. He would continue to explain to the jury in his closing statement, as a prosecutor, that we no longer needed to call prisons a "prison" . We should think of it as a place where we send these people who break the law into a garden until they grow strong and are able to be productive in our society, let us call it the "Garden of Lost Souls" and when their time is spent there in the "GARDEN" , they would be good seeds of our society.

You had to give it to Peter Knight he was a good prosecutor.

Peter became a judge at an early age because of his conviction rate. His fellow lawyers would eventually give him the nickname "Pistol Pete" , not because he was a gunslinger and shot his guns from the hip. Whenever he appeared in court, he took his guns out and laid them on his bench in plain sight for everyone to see he was serious.

Then after he sentenced someone to the Garden of Souls, he would stand up lift his robe so that he could place his two guns into his holster, actually that was for show only.

George Martin had been in and out of prison (Garden of Souls) ever since he was a teenager. George had been prosecuted by Peter Knight once as a D.A. and sentenced to prison. Then George was sent back to prison this time now by Judge Knight.

(They had history between the both of them.)

George grew up around blacks and Mexicans so he wasn't color blind. His girlfriend, who he fathered a kid with, was black.

When George went back to prison for the second time he was forced to join a white supremacist group who did not like the mixing of race.

He had to stop his girlfriend and his son from visiting the prison because he was afraid that while he was in prison and being a part of this group they would find out that his woman was black and that he had a black son. His life would be in danger. He learned a long time ago that prison life had a different set of rules than being on the outside in a civilized society.

You will read how Peter Knight and George Martin deal with their lives and try to overcome a life and death situation.

This story reads like a "made for television" movie. You will laugh, you will cry. I guarantee you will enjoy it.

Fact or Fiction; you be the Judge!

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