

*The
Sound
of
Serenity*

Second Edition

By:

Paeti Gustav Xaviers

Copyright 2016 - All Rights Reserved

Chapter One:

When I was a little kid, my best friend was Ronnie. He was the Jewish boy who lived upstairs from me in the two-family house that my parents owned.

Even at the age of four or five, Ronnie was always trying to prove that he was a genius. That was what started the competition between us. He would spout things to show how smart he was and then I would think of something to show that I was smarter. Being a year older than he was and a year ahead of him in school, it was not very difficult to come up with something that Ronnie did not yet know and win the competition for the day. But the competition always continued.

Even though I was only a young child, I knew that to prove that you were really a genius you had to figure something out that had never been figured out before. So while Ronnie was busy quizzing his older brothers and sister for new knowledge, I was busy trying to think of what I could figure out to prove once and for all that I was the genius between us.

One Sunday after Sunday school at the Methodist Church, I was in the park partaking in my favorite pastime: swinging on the swings and singing to the treetops. As I stared at the sky the idea came to me. I would figure out God.

Now to figure out God would certainly prove what I wanted to prove, that I was indeed a genius, so I set my mind to work. For the entire afternoon as I was swinging and singing, so was I thinking as deeply as I could possibly think for my age. I was whole-heartedly determined.

I was learning about God and Jesus in Sunday School. God was the creator of heaven and earth and Jesus was His son in human form. But more than God, Sunday school told stories of Jesus. I felt I had to start from scratch and try to think of all of the things that God could possibly be.

The hours passed and finally I stopped the swing and finished my concert to return home. I pointed to the top of a tree and exclaimed, rather proudly, "I'm a genius. I figured you out, God. You're HHHUUUGGEEEE!"

I giggled a little because I knew that there was more to God than His size, but I was satisfied for the time being that I had at least figured something out about this Supreme Being. I never told Ronnie, though. I had more thinking to do before I could really declare myself the genius. So, thinking became another favorite pastime. I learned to love to just be alone and think: About God.

For years, as I was growing older, I would creep into the livingroom, during the wee hours of the morning, rock in my rocking chair and pursue my thoughts. I spent hours upon hours engrossed with and focused on the God thought path.

Of course, I was too young to realize it but what I had in effect done was plant a seed in my

subconscious. My mind would continue working on the mystery until it was solved, even though I was not always aware of my mind's work. That was just the way the mind functioned when an individual had a problem and thought really hard about it without resolve. It worked in the background until some solution was found that would satisfy the consciousness.

Ronnie eventually moved away and my life became driven, from my mid-teens until my late twenties, by the desperation to find a boyfriend and husband. I was not particularly the shape of girl that boys and young men were automatically attracted to. I was, more or less, "pleasingly plump." So I compensated for that factor by becoming overly promiscuous. Yet, from time period to time period, I would still pursue my deeper thinking.

I often cut school when I was a junior and senior in High School and returned to the park of my childhood. There, I would think and write my thoughts as I tried to figure this life of mine out: in relation to and not in relation to God.

I no longer attended church, although I was a confirmed Methodist. I was totally disinterested in book learning, both about God and school subjects, and was only interested in thinking. I even flunked out of college after two years for all of the time I would spend obliterated to existence from drinking beer or smoking narcotics. I did not want the knowledge that was offered in books. I needed to think. What I was searching for was not in a book yet, not even the Bible.

I knew there had to be more to this life than just reaching puberty, finishing school, finding a husband, getting married, working at a job and having children. How deep would be the paths that my mind would wonder! I was still trying to figure out God.

And there was so much time I spent alone, gaining nothing from even occasional social activities. Again, being social was just something that many believed was important for a happy and healthy life. Not to me. "Girlfriends" always turned out to be more trouble than they were worth.

Whenever at all it was feasibly possible, I would seek a thought-filled seclusion as that childhood seed that I planted blossomed. The tree began to surface and influenced all the aspects of my life.

Chapter Two:

As I examined the courses my life had taken, above all was the relentless determination to truly discover God and some alternative existence where I could pass time in His presence. Sober reality always disinterested and depressed me. I was subconsciously being influenced by my deep and desperate searching for that something better, something more than the typical manner in which life unraveled.

In my life there was continually an addiction to substances that seemed to offer some degree of comfort as I pursued my silent quest: to run my thoughts deep enough to placate the demands of my consciousness. In my youth, I over-indulged in food, one of the few things readily available to a young child. In my teens, I became disgruntled at the resultant weight problem and began smoking cigarettes. Cigarettes introduced me to the first feelings of being “high,” however brief the stoned sensation. Within a couple of years, I added alcohol consumption to the list of possible methods to achieve the form of comfort my mind so severely sought, but the horrible experience of hangovers put a damper on drinking as a permanent solution.

I was reacquainted with marijuana when I was in my late twenties. Marijuana was the drug I had experimented with when I was away at college, but had forgotten about once I was reunited with my family and the “at home” lifestyle. Besides, marijuana was illegal at the time and any discreet source of the drug was completely unknown to me.

It was by mere chance that one day the direction of an innocent conversation with a colleague from work led to the disclosure of a drug dealer. The dealer was an individual that I was familiar with and, being able to afford the relatively high cost, I jumped at the opportunity.

As I wallowed in the affects of my first “joint,” I knew that I found something that I had long been looking for. My indulgence lasted approximately six years. I became a firm believer in the use of the drug.

I never believed there was any “medical” use for marijuana. Nor did I believe marijuana was for “partying” or social use. I came to believe that marijuana was put on this earth in order that human beings be able to experience a superior sense of spiritual well-being, be deeply inspired through thoughtful introspection and achieve a profound inner peace and happiness that was otherwise unattainable in a sober society.

I began smoking “pot” three to four times each day, every day, for those approximated six solid years. I used marijuana so much that it could have been considered abuse as opposed to just use, but I had my own motivations. My motive was to finally find the thoughts that would satisfy my need to fully know and understand my existence.

Unfortunately, where substance “abuse” was involved, there existed the possible destiny of a downfall. Yet I well remembered that even as my world came crashing in around me and the finalities of my own downfall drew near, I desperately prayed to the Supreme Authority as I clung to my last euphoric hours, “Dear God, if I’m going to die, please let me die high!”

At the time when I began smoking marijuana, from all appearances my life was taking normal turns. I was employed as an Assistant Vice-President with a mid-sized Mortgage Banking firm. I had won a National Award for my chairmanship of an industry Association committee and was also participating in the beginnings of computer technology as it was introduced into the then fully-manual mortgage companies. I went to and graduated from a prominent school for computer programming. I was even the first woman elected to the Board of Governors of the state Mortgage Bankers Association.

Earning a decent salary, I drove a relatively expensive sports car, had clothes for any occasion, and cigarettes and beer to my heart's content. I had no other expenses except for credit cards. I lived with my attorney fiancée in his home located in the better section of town. He footed the bill for all housing costs and food.

More than love, for I did not believe I ever felt true love or lust for the opposite sex, with my successful fiancée I believed that I had found my ticket to future financial security. I anticipated that when we were finally married, there would no longer be a need for me to work. With an allowance I imagined he would grant to me, I dreamed I would be able to do as I pleased while he spent those long hours he devoted to furthering his career.

I was alone most of the time when I was not at my own office. My fiancée's career kept him out until the late night hours for most of the week and I occupied myself at home by visiting the wonderful world I discovered while inhaling my quasi-narcotic: marijuana. My fiancée knew about my drug use, but I believed he put up with that, and my occasional emotional rampages because I did not feel I was receiving the attention I deserved, simply because I was conveniently there to satisfy his sexual and social needs.

I was acutely aware of the negative repercussions that would tidal wave if my marijuana use became popularly known, so I kept the secret, for the most part, to myself. I only smoked pot when no one else was around and did not breathe a word to anyone about how much I actually used. Throughout, though, I was able to maintain my mind in a constant state of "high" by indulging in a maryjane cigarette three or four times a day, every day.

I smoked my first joint in the morning after my fiancée left for work. I carried two joints with me in my car as I ventured out to my own place of employment: One for smoking during my lunch hour and the other for my journey home when the workday was through. My favorite and most leisurely joint was enjoyed after dinner, when I settled into the basement room of the house and listened to soft rock music by candlelight. I rocked in my rocking chair, smoked and thought. It was because of those times that I loved my life at this point.

But my fiancée and I broke up. I planned for a wedding to take place a year after we became engaged but he refused to cooperate. In anticipation of my wedding day, I fasted often and was able to lose a tremendous amount of weight. I was down to 108 pounds and felt extremely good

about myself and my appearance. For the first time in my life, I felt physically beautiful.

My fiancée expressed that he preferred me with weight on and demanded that I quit smoking cigarettes before he committed to a lifetime together. Really, he just wanted to procrastinate and I was impatient. We were already together for ten years. The difference led to loud arguments and, myself feeling more confident than ever that I would be able to find someone else, I threw the engagement ring back at him.

I began frequenting bars, returning to my old, overly promiscuous self in the desperate hope of meeting a replacement for my ex-fiancée. Yet, I felt no urgency to remove myself from my ex-fiancée's house. I believed that we still "loved" each other and could remain living together, we just were not engaged. Silently, I believed my real intention was to just bide my time in the comfortable and convenient surroundings I had become accustomed to until someone better came along.

Chapter Three.

Even as I was in my teens, I had set myself a goal of retiring from the work force by the age of thirty-five. My plan was to either marry a millionaire or, by some stroke of luck, win the lottery. As it turned out, I was “retired” by the time I was in my early thirties. But there was no way I could have foreseen it happening the way it did.

My engagement of marriage was over on July 5, 1987. It was probably around mid-September of the same year that something happened that changed my life forever:

My ex-fiancee was not at home. I was in the bedroom, preparing to go out for the night when, for whatever reason, I ventured toward the main area of the house. I was alarmed at the sight of my two sisters, sitting in the livingroom. They had let themselves in.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

They got up from their seated positions and started toward me. I darted back to the bedroom, closed the door and braced the door shut with my body. They broke their way in. While one sister tackled me to the bed, the other began packing some of my clothes into an overnight bag.

“You’re coming with us,” the tackling sister said.

“I’m going out!” I retorted.

“You’re coming with us!” they chorused.

I calmed myself down and they escorted me from my ex-fiancee’s house. I was being kidnaped by my own family. One sister drove me to her house and instructed me that I was to stay in her guest room until morning. She barricaded her front door so that I would not be able to leave.

When morning arrived, my father showed up at my sister’s house and together they drove me to a downtown hospital. I felt an urgency to try to escape, though I had no idea where I would escape to or how an escape might take place. In the emergency room I fought and screamed, “You can’t do this to me. I’m a free person!”

The orderly called for assistance and I was strapped to the bed. “You can’t do this to me,” I continued screaming.

The nurse said they would remove the straps if I calmed down and cooperated. I took a deep breath. I had not an inkling of an idea about what was to happen next. I was cold from the air-conditioning. The orderly helped me from the bed and instructed me to sit in a wheelchair. He covered me with a blanket. I was wheeled to the psychiatric ward.

Before I knew it, I was being drugged with psychiatric medications and diagnosed with a mental disorder. I was told that the hospital could keep me locked up, under observation, for three days involuntarily. I learned that I had to cooperate with their little “mental” program or they would not release me to the free world again.

With no other choice, I took a deep breath and followed the dictated routine until the doctor finally agreed to let me go home. That is, “provided” I remained on medication and stopped smoking pot. My mother and sister led me from that prison for the mentally ill and drove me back to my sister’s house. I had been incarcerated for 30 days.

Now removed from my ex-fiancee’s house, I really had no home. While I was in the hospital, my sister had gone to my ex-fiancee’s house and packed more of my belongings, transporting my rocking chair also. I stayed with my sister for a couple of weeks and then moved to the home of my parents.

In the meantime, I missed a lot of work. My boss, being aware of my newly diagnosed mental illness, though not of my marijuana abuse, my job was still open and I was welcomed back at the office without anything negative set to occur. “Mental illness,” I decided, was more “socially acceptable” than just marijuana use.

As soon as I returned to work, I made my contact once more with the drug dealer that kept me supplied with my fix of choice. I managed to sneak a supply into my parents’ house. I started a routine of getting high as I drove the hour long drive from my parents’ home to my job and again smoking on my return trip.

My living situation was only temporary, so I made do. My ex-fiancee agreed to pay me a considerable sum of money in settlement of our relationship and I started looking for an apartment. By January, 1988, I signed a lease and excitedly prepared myself for a new, solo-style living arrangement. As far as men went, I decided I really did not need, nor want, a husband and emotionally celebrated by removing myself from the social competition.

Where psychiatric medication and out-patient treatment were concerned, I more or less just refused. Once I was settled in my own apartment, living independently of my family, I knew I would be able to forget that the nightmare ever happened. I planned on a wonderful life, filled with a constant, marijuana-altered state of mind and the freedom to do whatever I pleased, whenever I pleased to do it.

I moved into my apartment in mid-January. I purchased all new furniture and did not hesitate to spend money on whatever I wanted. I created a really nice place to live. I still had my job and my sports car and my connection with my drug supplier. I had never in my life experienced such happiness before. I was embarking on the best time of my entire life and looked forward to my future filled with absolute freedom and independence.

What I enjoyed the most was spending time alone in my apartment, getting stoned and enveloping my mind in depths of thought. There was no one to bother me or interrupt my peace. There was no one I had to answer to and there were no social obligations. I began to hate leaving my apartment to go to work and only dragged myself through the day until I could return to my home in the evening. Work was the last thing I had to rid myself of in order to be totally happy. I knew that was the truth.

I was entitled to a full month's vacation at that point in my career and decided to take the time all at once. The month of March I was just overwhelmed with joy as I lived the life of a high recluse. I dreaded the day when March would be over.

When the day that I was to return to work arrived, I begrudgingly dressed and started the commute to the office. Mid-traffic jam I said to myself, "What am I doing?!" I turned the car around and went home, never to go back to my office again except to clean out my personal belongings. I quitted my job.