

## *Het Achterhuis*

*I want to go on living even after my death.*

Anne Frank

Red Hawk came to visit Robbie again on the next full moon.

*“Where would you like to go this time, Robbie?” Red Hawk asked.*

*“Captain Lewis said that the meaning of the book, Het Achterhuis (The Diary of Anne Frank), would become clear to me. Can you help with that part of the story?”*

*“Sure. Let’s go look.”*

*Red Hawk took Robbie to Lewis’s home on Long Island on his sixteenth birthday, February 23, 1960. Doug Turnbull made it a point to visit Lewis on this day and had scheduled a business trip to the area. After dining with the family Turnbull was preparing to leave. The unseen guests looked on. As Doug reached the door, he turned to Lewis and handed him a book.*

*“Happy Birthday, Jim. I don’t know how familiar you are with this book, but my mother gave it to me shortly after it was published in the United States in 1952. The title of the book literally means ‘the house behind’ referring to the ‘secret annex’ that Anne, her family, and another family occupied*

*for more than two years. She asked me to read it and then the letter at the end. I'll ask you to do the same. Perhaps after you do so you'll understand why it's so important to me. It might be of some use to you."* With that Turnbull headed for his hotel.

*A short while later, as Mr. Turnbull requested, Lewis began to read Anne Frank, dutifully planning to save the letter until he finished. Lewis, however, was not as patient to look for the diary entry on the day of his birth, Wednesday, February 23, 1944. He felt a rush of excitement as he found an entry for that special day. As he read it, he thought of the fact that the Holocaust had actually occurred during his lifetime. He read eagerly:*

*The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely, or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature, and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauties of Nature. As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances should be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles....*

*Riches can all be lost, but that happiness in your own heart can only be veiled, and it will still bring you happiness again, as long as you live. As long as you can look fearlessly up into the heavens, as long as you know that you are pure within, and that you will still find happiness.*

*At this point in his life Lewis hadn't given a great deal of thought to the majesty, mystery, and, yes, magic of nature, but he was certainly struck by the power and eloquence of this girl, who was nearly his age when she put her thoughts to paper. Spurred by this passage, Lewis began to contemplate the larger issues of Natural Law.*

*Red Hawk advanced the scene forward a week, after Lewis had completed reading the Diary. He and Robbie looked on as Lewis slipped the letter from its envelope and read:*

*August 18, 1952*

*Douglas,*

*It's difficult to believe that it's been almost eight years since we lost Jack. At times it seems like yesterday and at others it seems like forever ago. I should start by saying that a mother can never completely reconcile the unspeakable pain of losing a son. I am no exception. Having to do so*

*without your father has made it doubly difficult. I shall never be able to patch the gaping hole in my heart. I have always wanted to believe that Jack's loss, though, was justified in some way—specifically by helping to end the senseless, heinous, and widespread persecution of so many innocent people. This amazing book has put my heart at some ease, knowing that Jack and his crews, though unable to spare this brilliant young woman, may have prevented a similar loss of even one innocent young girl like her. I have finally achieved some solace.*

*I know how much you already adore your children. But I hope that after reading this book you will be moved even more to cherish every single second you have with them—particularly your exquisite girls. I have copies of this book for each of your children. At their young ages they will likely not fully grasp the power of this work—but perhaps they will begin to learn something about the injustices of the world, and, despite reading of the worst aspects of human nature, they may still believe in hope, as young Anne did. I am sure that as they grow older, they will*

*appreciate it as much as I do. It is nearly impossible to believe that such insight, wisdom, compassion, hope, and beauty resided in the heart and mind of a fifteen-year-old girl! We were fortunate to have had Jack for as long as we did. The poor father of this girl must be suffering infinitely more than we are.*

*I simply cannot imagine the horrors that were being perpetrated at the hands of the Nazis. My heart breaks for every single person who was "exterminated" simply because of race or religion! War hardly ever seems like the best solution to conflicts between people or nations. But in this case, I can't see that there was any other way to stop these unspeakable atrocities.*

*I know what the loss of Jack has meant to you. I know that you've carried your loss silently deep in your heart, unseen by most people. A mother can sense the pain of her children, and I know that you've suffered much more than you've shown. I know that your feeling of loss is as deep today as it was so many years ago in 1944. But I beg you to continue to carry only the memory of Jack's goodness and heroism. Don't carry the pain of his loss. Please*

*continue to channel any of the hurt into something good as you have done so admirably over these last eight years.*

*I think of Jack and your father every day—as I know you do. But we continue to bear the obligation of living our lives for today and tomorrow, to love and help our children, and to retain hope in our futures.*

*I often think of the only request your father made of his children: that you give more to this country than you take. You've all done that so, so well, each in very different, but equally important, ways.*

*I couldn't be more proud of you and all that you've done. You are a truly special son, brother, father, and citizen. Your father would have been extremely proud of you.*

*All my love,*

*Mum*

*Red Hawk then took Robbie to the Turnbull home the day after Mum's funeral, July 16, 1957. After all of the guests had returned home, Doug finally had some time to himself. He sat in his den and began meticulously inscribing the shaft of the*

*stick with a tribute to his mother and brother—a carving of the cover of Het Achterhuis.*

*“It took Doug about eight hours to do that carving,” Red Hawk shared. “I hope that gives you some sense of the role of that book in the history of the stick, Robbie.”*

Once again, Robbie shared the dream with his parents and recorded the visit in great detail in his journal.