

Thank You for Your Kind Words!

Fly to Honor, through Jack Turnbull (and so many others), provides us a 'today's' historic and cultural glimpse of what it meant and what it took to play the Creator's game. The values demonstrated by warriors of the past are as much needed today as they were in the past. Honor and Respect will always be the warrior way as the Creator's game mandates."

Sid Jamieson
Bucknell University
Former Men's Lacrosse Coach, Bucknell University (1968-2005)

"A must-read for all lacrosse fans...a profound and captivating tribute to one of the game's most memorable figures."

Dom Starsia
Head Men's Lacrosse Coach, University of Virginia
1999, 2003, 2006, 2011 NCAA Division I National Champions
National Lacrosse Hall of Fame

"Neil Duffy represents the very best about our sport, The Creator's Game. *Fly to Honor* is important and inspiring. You'll read it more than once."

Mike Hanna
Director of Athletics
Hobart College

Fly to Honor offers an ageless and timeless gift of core values that will serve a young man or woman throughout their lives. As a collegiate coach of nearly forty years, this both brings back the 'magical' of feeling my first, hand-carved lacrosse stick, and now offers a refreshing renewal of values for team leadership. This is must-read for leadership that could not have come at a better time in the history of our sport."

Ray Rostan
Head Lacrosse Coach, Hampden-Sydney College
Assistant Coach, Team USA 2002

"*Fly to Honor* is a must-read for players, parents, and coaches of all levels. The lessons and messages that Robbie continues to learn from Red Hawk are applicable today. As caretakers of the Creator's Game, we are all responsible to play, cheer, and coach this game with great honor. The game of lacrosse has a bright future, but for it to shine its brightest, we must embrace its glorious past."

Mike Murphy
Head Men's Lacrosse Coach, Colgate University
Former assistant coach, United States Military Academy at West
Point

"Hopefully, all aspiring lacrosse players will read Coach Duffy's novels *The Spirit in the Stick* and *Fly to Honor*. I have asked all of our players to read *Spirit* and plan to do the same with *Fly to Honor*. Both novels use the game as an avenue to teach valuable life lessons while providing the reader with tremendous insight into the history of our great game."

J.P. Stewart
Head Men's Lacrosse Coach, Virginia Wesleyan College

"*Fly to Honor* is an amazing history lesson of our great sport that captures the imagination and describes all that is great about lacrosse."

Steve Koudelka
Head Lacrosse Coach, Lynchburg College

Fly to Honor

Neil Duffy

Virginia Beach, Virginia

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For

Richie Meade and the USA Men's Lacrosse Team

In Honor of and as a "Thank You" to

Admiral Charles R. Larson, USNA '58

Bob Reifsnnyder, USNA '59

Captain Jim Lewis, USNA '66

LTC & Mrs. Mike Sheedy, USMC (Ret.)

Navy Lacrosse—Past, Present, Future

The United States Naval Academy

"S.F."

and in Memory of

my late father, George A. Duffy

(one of the Greatest Navy Lacrosse Fans in History!)

M.G. Buchanan

(the Greatest Navy Lacrosse Fan in History!)

LT (SEAL) Brendan Looney, USNA '04

Bob Sandell

W. Brooke Tunstall

Sue Cassidy

Lorraine Donder

Introduction to *Fly to Honor*



As current and former head lacrosse coaches at the United States Military Academy, we have had the honor and privilege of working with hundreds of truly special and dedicated young men preparing to become officers in our country's military. We watched those young men go from (sometimes) shaggy-haired civilians, through the Induction process and Plebe Year, and grow with each passing semester into commissioned officers.

We then watched these young men assume positions of immediate leadership, responsibility, and accountability and answer the call of duty in every corner of the globe and in just about every conceivable way—again and again.

We have seen our players get promoted, receive military decorations, visited them in hospitals after being wounded in combat, attended their weddings, change-of-command ceremonies, retirements, and, yes, funerals.

Two of us also enjoyed the honor of serving as coaches of the United States Men's Lacrosse team, where we were privileged to work with our country's finest players—all driven to represent their country with pride and respect and to their fullest capabilities.

As we feel a special kinship with Jack Turnbull of Johns Hopkins University and his collegiate, club, and

international (Jack was a member of the last lacrosse team to represent the United States in an Olympic Games—Los Angeles in 1932) playing career, as well as his exemplary and heroic service to our country, we could not be more eager or proud to commend to you *Fly to Honor*. We also could not be more personally or professionally supportive of and warmed by the dedications that the author offers to Coach Meade, CAPT Lewis, ADM Larson, LT (SEAL) Looney and others.

In *Fly to Honor*, the story of Robbie Jones and his relationship with his special lacrosse stick and its original steward, the Native American boy Red Hawk, begun in *The Spirit in the Stick*, continues as the incredible story of Jack Turnbull comes to life.

Those who knew Jack or watched him play will tell you that he was the greatest they had seen. Beyond his national- and Olympic-championship and First-Team All-American level of play on the field and his well-respected and gentlemanly behavior off the field, it is his truly inspiring service to his country by which he is most remembered. His ultimate sacrifice in 1944 is commemorated even today in the form of the Lt. Col. John I. Turnbull Award, presented annually to the outstanding attackman in each of the three college divisions, and the Turnbull-Reynolds Trophy (Pete Reynolds was another JHU lacrosse player who lost his life in World War II—of whom you will learn more later in the book), awarded to a Johns Hopkins University lacrosse player to recognize sportsmanship and leadership.

Lacrosse's ancient history is rooted in the Native American warrior ethos. It is not a coincidence, we think, that four major lacrosse awards (before the

relatively recent establishment of the Tewaaronon Trophy—the "Heisman Trophy of Lacrosse") are named for players who became military officers and died in the service of our country. The award for Outstanding Defenseman is named in honor of "Father" Bill Schmeisser of Johns Hopkins, who, though not a military officer, is credited with being the inspiration behind the placement of memorial flags on the nets at Johns Hopkins (of which you will learn more later in this book). The (Navy) Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald MacLaughlin, Jr. Award is named for a former Navy Lacrosse player and team captain, Class of 1963, whose plane went down on a combat mission in South Vietnam in 1966 and is presented to the nation's top midfielder. The Outstanding Goaltender award is named in memory of Ensign C. Markland Kelly, who grew up in Baltimore and played at the University of Maryland. Kelly took off from the USS *Hornet* on an escort mission in support of the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942 and was reported missing in action. The country's top player is recognized in memory of our own 1967 West Point graduate, First Lieutenant Raymond Enners, who perished in ground action in Vietnam in 1968. And Jack's Award, of course.

As with this book's predecessor, you will learn about the lives of great people—particularly Jack—and lessons of character, courage, generosity, gratitude, and sacrifice that we think will stay with you.

You will also be treated to a rich collection of thoughts from scores of Turnbull Award recipients—some of the greatest players the game has known—in the special "Legacy" section at the end.

As you enjoy reading *Fly to Honor*, we would ask

you to actively keep in mind the service and sacrifice of the selfless and courageous men and women who have worn—and continue to wear—our country's uniform.

United States Military Academy Lacrosse Coaches

Jim Adams (1958-1969)

Peg Pisano for Al Pisano (1970-1976)

Dick Edell (1977-1983)

Jack Emmer (1984-2005)

Joe Alberici (2006 – present)

July 2014

Preface



When I began to write *The Spirit in the Stick* in 1999, I could never have imagined the impact it would have on my life. The research and writing of the story was its own reward. But once the manuscript and final copy made their way into the hands of readers, I suddenly, and completely unexpectedly, began to hear from people all over the country—and world—about what the Game of Lacrosse had meant to them. The gratitude that overtook me was immediate and overwhelming. You see, the project was not originally intended to be published and would never have happened at all if not for the good grace of people like Coach Bob Scott, CAPT Jim Lewis, USNA '66, MAJ R. Bruce Turnbull, USMA '57, Dr. Tom Vennum, and scores of others. Even from its earliest beginnings, I never considered the story or the project my own but rather the collective sum of the goodness that those good people, and the Game itself, shared with me.

The Spirit in the Stick connected me with thousands of people I would not have met otherwise and enriched my life in ways that I never knew existed. The inspiration and support of those people has kept this project alive and active on a daily basis. I have known all along that there was a sequel to be written—actually there are several more stories to tell to complete the story of this amazing stick. *Fly to Honor* is a story that needed to be written about Jack Turnbull and so many others who have surrendered their lives in the service of our

country.

The timing of the debut of *Fly to Honor* could not have been more personally meaningful. I offer the initial printing for Richie Meade—my coach, friend, mentor, and, more importantly, my daughter’s godfather—and his USA Lacrosse Team as they compete in the 2014 Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL) World Championships in Denver (and as a gift to all of the teams). I also offer it in honor of the Tewaaraton Foundation’s 2014 Award recipients CAPT Jim Lewis, USNA ’66, the *Tewaaraton Legends Award*, and the late LT (SEAL) Brendan Looney, USNA ’04, the *Spirit of Tewaaraton Award*.

I also have just arrived at the thirty year anniversary of my graduation from the United States Naval Academy (where has the time gone?) and would like to express my deep gratitude to that institution, the Navy Lacrosse program—with which I have been fortunate to maintain contact with all these years—as well as my classmates, teammates, and companymates. I must specifically thank ADM Charles Larson ’58 for his gracious support and impact in my life, my high school football coach, Bob Reifsnyder ’59, and my sponsors at USNA, LTC Mike Sheedy, USMC (Ret.), his wife Cathy and their girls, Lisa, Jennifer, and Erin. I could not be more fortunate or grateful to be connected to such a great program, school, and people. April 2014 is also the ten year anniversary of the first printing of *The Spirit in the Stick*—so it seemed a nice time to produce this story.

I also need to convey my deepest gratitude to the scores of Turnbull Award recipients whose generosity of spirit has enriched this process in ways that have dwarfed all of the goodness that had come in previously, taking the depth and strength of this project to an

entirely new level.

Though I'll never be able to properly thank them all, I hope *Fly to Honor* will serve as a modest and collective "Thank You" to all of the people mentioned here, the United States Naval Academy, and to the Game, itself.

As with *The Spirit in the Stick*, this story has largely written itself, buoyed by the good grace and generosity of scores of people. Please consider this to be a work of "historical fiction/fantasy" in which I have endeavored to remain true to the factual history—and, perhaps more importantly, spirit—of all characters, particularly Jack Turnbull and his family—especially his father and brother, Douglas C. Turnbull, Senior and Junior. Captain Lewis and Jack's family, most notably his nephews (and Doug's sons) Bruce and Jack, and grand-niece, Susan Turnbull Generazio, have, as in my last story, allowed appropriate and spirit-based "writer's license" to connect the main themes of the story. Once again, perhaps it is best left to the reader to decipher fact from fiction.

“Respect the Game!”

N.V.D.

Virginia Beach, VA

10 JUL 2014

Prologue



"I want my children and my grandchildren to know that war is horrible."

Lester L. Tenney

My Hitch in Hell

Convent Gesticht van Den H. Joseph

Petegem-aan-de-Leie/Deinze, Belgium, 18 OCT 1944

"Colonel Turnbull? Colonel Turnbull?"

"Colonel Turnbull? Can you hear me?" sister Christine whispered into Jack's ear in her best English as she gently held his shoulders.

"Please sip this water."

Sister Lutgarde held Jack's hand and desperately prayed for his survival.

Lieutenant Colonel John Iglehart "Jack" Turnbull, United States Army Air Corps, lay motionless and unresponsive on a cot in a convent located about nine miles southwest of Ghent, Belgium clinging to a barely detectable pulse and breath. The nuns had helped rescue Jack from the wreckage of one of the two United States B-24 bombers that had crashed

nearby and about a mile apart earlier that afternoon.

Jack was the only survivor of the crashes—though the two waist gunners in his plane were miraculously able to parachute from the aircraft as it plummeted to the ground following what was probably a midair collision between them in a thunderstorm-filled sky. Those two airmen suffered minor injuries and were quickly moved from the site to receive medical care.

A cursory scan of the scene by first responders reported no other survivors. A Canadian unit in the area began the grim task of recovering bodies from the wreckage for proper disposition. After removing twelve victims and arriving finally upon Jack, one of their officers was shocked to detect a faint pulse.

"I have a survivor! I have a survivor!" the officer yelled to his comrades.

Help came in the form of several soldiers and three nuns from the nearby convent. Knowing that Medevac assistance had left earlier, the nuns volunteered to aid Jack until help could return. The crew extracted Jack gingerly from the wreckage of his aircraft and transported him on a stretcher provided by the nuns to the relative comfort of their modest convent infirmary.

Jack remained unconscious, opening his eyes perhaps a dozen times and only briefly during the night at the convent while the nuns sat vigil.

The women whispered frequently to the American aviator, "Colonel Turnbull? Colonel Turnbull, please stay with us. We are trying to get you

help."

A local doctor arrived at sunrise the next morning but pronounced Jack close to death. "He is certainly suffering from massive internal injuries. We cannot risk moving him. I am afraid there is little we can do."

During the day, the nuns were able to nurse Jack to a state of quasi-consciousness—but only for the briefest of periods.

When Jack was able to move or attempt speech, he groaned in the faintest whisper, and mostly-unintelligible words that may have been, "Mellish," and "flag."

The nuns continued their vigil. The sisters rotated duties from holding Jack's hand to whispering and listening to him, then dabbing his lips with water; but constantly praying. They could do little else.

Of the few words the nuns were able to decipher was "flag," which Jack seemed to whisper several times while feebly motioning his right hand toward his heart.

The sisters were not sure of what Jack was attempting to communicate, but he seemed to be gesturing to the zipped compartment in his flight suit immediately below his heart and nametag. The nuns unzipped the compartment and removed a small—perhaps eighteen by twenty four inch—United States flag rolled and secured by three thin ribbons—one white, one red, one blue.

Jack desperately strained in a whisper, "O...pen..."

Sister Seraphine untied the ribbons, unfurled the flag, and discovered two sheets of paper. Jack offered a barely-perceptible nod and again strained a whisper, "y...es."

The nun began to read silently the first sheet of paper. She numbly passed it to her cohorts and then did the same with the next. The three sisters stared at each other in disbelief but said nothing.

"Send," Jack whispered still without opening his eyes. "Mellish."

"There," the nuns were certain Jack was breathing his last words, "are," sister Christine leaned her ear to Jack's lips, "more." "Please..." A minute later, "...find."

Jack became unconscious again.

Then several minutes later, he whispered again, "Please..." Yet another interminable delay, "...send.... Thank... you."

"Colonel Turnbull," the nuns begged.

"Colonel Turnbull? ...Please...."

That's what stories are for. Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember except the story.

Tim O'Brien

The Things They Carried

Robbie's Journey Continues



For hours I stood backing at the icy ground. The guard passed by, insulting me, and once again, I communicated with my beloved. More and more I felt that she was present, that she was with me: I had the feeling that I was able to touch her, able to stretch out my hand and grasp hers. The feeling was very strong: she was there. Then, at that very moment, a bird flew down silently and perched just in front of me, on the heap of soil which I had dug up from the ditch, and looked steadily at me.

Viktor E. Frankel

Man's Search for Meaning

Everything was brighter, sharper, deeper, richer—better—now for Robbie. He could see and *feel* more colors and hear more sounds. His sensitivity to, and appreciation for, the beauty and majesty of nature—all living things, the Earth, the cosmos—rocketed to new heights the instant his eyes stared into the red hawk's eyes a month earlier. His understanding of the essence of the human condition had leapt tenfold in the last year. History was no longer a collection of dry, dull, dusty, inert names, dates, and arcane facts—but stories of *real* people experiencing *real* emotions, *real* challenges, *real* events, and living *real* lives.

His knowledge and understanding of the past and vision for the future had also become more

keenly honed, but, much more importantly, he had also learned that neither of those mattered nearly as much as the present—the *now*. His fourteen-year-old way of thinking and acting was now long gone.

Robbie's magical lacrosse stick had brought him more insight and taught him more in the preceding year than he could have ever imagined, and his relationship with Captain Lewis and Red Hawk had changed his life forever. He was eager to learn more and knew he was still only scratching the surface of this amazing story. The lives of the men who had the stick before him—the previous stewards—were all models of leadership, service, sacrifice, and gratitude. The meanings of the carvings on his stick were rich and compelling stories of their own.

What would come next? He wondered.

Robbie reminded himself of what the young Native American boy Red Hawk, who had befriended him in his dreams through the spirit in the stick, had shared with him on his last visit. "I believe this is a stick of life. It is a stick of honor. It is a stick of respect. Above all, though, I think the true spirit of this stick is one of hope," Red Hawk had shared.

What would he ask Captain Lewis? What would he ask Red Hawk? Whom else would he meet? Where else would he go?

Robbie stood by himself in the exact location where he had met Captain Lewis for the first time nearly one year earlier and waited for him to arrive. He held his special stick softly in his hands and had its leather bag slung over his right shoulder. They were there to celebrate the one-year anniversary of

their meeting. A full moon was beginning to rise—like during his first meeting with Captain Lewis. This time, though, Robbie was fully aware of the moon and its significance, having actually grown accustomed to feeling Red Hawk's presence on days like these. The boy was already beginning to formulate his questions for tonight.

Lewis had told Robbie that he would be bringing some guests and, as usual, arrived exactly on time. "Hi, Robbie. Great to see you." Lewis greeted Robbie warmly with a handshake.

"Let me introduce you to Major Bruce Turnbull and his wife Jerri."

Robbie immediately registered the name—Turnbull—and his mind raced to determine how the couple might be connected to his special stick and, therefore, him.

Robbie greeted the couple with his usual politeness.

"Robbie, please call me Bruce. It is a pleasure to meet you. Captain Lewis has shared a great deal about his and your relationship with Jerri and me."

"Robbie, Bruce is the son of Doug and the nephew of Jack Turnbull. I know that you learned a great deal about both of those men—but I thought it might be a good time for you to meet Bruce so that you may ask him some questions," Captain Lewis offered.

Like so many other times in the last year, Robbie's heart raced with excitement and his mind began to swirl with thoughts of where he might go

and what he might see and learn.

"Robbie, I can't tell you how thrilled I am that you now have that incredible stick that my father and Uncle Jack shared so many years ago," Bruce began as his eyes gazed at Robbie's ancient stick. "They took great care of it and I know that Captain Lewis has done the same for these fifty-some years. You can probably imagine what an honor it was for my father and uncle to be a part of the history of that stick. It has meant so, so much to our family. Jim and I arranged to meet with you today because this is the exact date one hundred years ago when my father received the stick from General Chamberlain! My father was a boy of eleven at that point.

"I always knew of the stick and how important it was to my father, of course, but I did not know of its remarkable magical powers until after my father passed it to Captain Lewis. I remember that after his mother died in 1957, my father carved that beautiful depiction of the Anne Frank book *Het Achterhuis* on the shaft to add to the others. I had recently graduated from West Point at that time. He began to think that he should pass it along to someone else. I haven't seen it since then."

Robbie offered the stick to Bruce. "Would you like to look at it, sir?"

"Thank you, Robbie, I would love to!"

Bruce's body warmed as he touched the stick. He felt his father's and uncle's presence immediately as he held this piece of history. He blinked back tears.

"My goodness, Robbie, there are the carvings my father and Jack did when they had it," Bruce

marveled. Jerri stood by in awe as she had never seen the stick—but had only heard of it.

Bruce spoke quietly to the boy as his thumb caressed each carving, "So you have learned of all of these carvings? Running Water's, Red Hawk's, Lieutenant Casey's, General Chamberlain's, Jack's, my father's, ... and this one must be Jim's?"

Robbie nodded with Bruce's pauses at each notch on the stick.

"Yes, sir."

"Jim," Bruce turned to Lewis, "I hope you'll share with me the meaning of your carving at some point. I am sure that it has tremendous significance to you."

"It does. I would be glad to," Lewis replied eagerly.

"And the writing, Robbie?" Bruce continued as he turned the stick on its edge.

"Yes, sir, that, too," the boy replied proudly.

"Jim, it seems that you and Red Hawk have done a great job in sharing the history of the stick with Robbie," Bruce concluded.

"I've tried, sir. I think Red Hawk has done most of it, though."

Bruce continued to hold the stick and stare at it with great reverence as he maneuvered it through every possible angle. "You know, Robbie, my father kept a detailed journal of his relationship with the stick and Red Hawk. When I first read it, I was completely spellbound. My father was meticulous in

everything he did. He was also extremely religious and for a long time seemed to have a very difficult time believing that the 'visits' from Red Hawk were actually real. He did not share any of it with his parents and only let me see his writings after he had passed the stick to Jim. And, of course, the stick had an incredible role in the life of my Uncle Jack, as well.

"I have been fortunate to get some idea of what this stick has meant to its stewards through my father's and Jack's writings, but I know that you must have a much greater appreciation for what it means because you have *experienced* its power firsthand. I know that you have already learned and grown a great deal, Robbie. Jerri and I hope that we may add to your experience with the stick. We'll do our best to help you. Captain Lewis, of course, will continue to be a part of your learning, as well."

Lewis, the Turnbulls, and Robbie began to walk slowly along the path where Robbie and Lewis had saved a fledgling bird last year.

"I hope you don't mind that Captain Lewis has gotten Jerri and me pretty much up-to-date on the visits that you have shared with him—so I think we have a sense of some of the scenes you have experienced concerning my father and Uncle Jack. Is there anything I can help you with now, Robbie?" Bruce offered.

"No, I don't mind at all—that's great. I have been trying to write down the stories that I have learned from Captain Lewis and Red Hawk—just like I think your father did," Robbie responded.

"There is so much more I would like to know

about them, though. Red Hawk has taken me to some amazing places to see them—and so many others, too. I still don't really even know what is possible. Do you think I might be able to see your father's journals at some point?"

Bruce smiled. "That would be easy, Robbie. I have more stuff than you can imagine. My father and uncle would be thrilled for you to see it all. We can decide how to share that part as we go along. Jim has told me that he shared the letter my father wrote him on his high school graduation and a couple of other pieces. The entire collection is in the thousands of pages—I'm not sure exactly how many—probably two or three thousand from my father alone. Jack's papers are in the hundreds. Not only did my father keep a diary—but he also kept and filed just about every piece of correspondence that he ever received. He also made carbon copies of what he considered to be his most important outbound hand-written letters, as well—including all of the ones he sent to Jim." Bruce looked over at Lewis who gave him a smile admitting that his records were probably not as well kept as Doug's.

"My father lived to be ninety-two years old and passed on in 1996. When he wasn't busy being 'The World's Happiest Grandfather,' as he used to describe himself, he spent a good deal of time in his last few years organizing his papers. It really is a treasure to our family. I have spent a pretty good amount of time editing the papers with notes and information that might otherwise be lost to history. My father willed that the collection remain in our family—so I am in possession of it all now. He said he

initially thought to pass it along to Jim—but realized that he could accomplish more if he gave it to us to enjoy and allow Jim the actual relationship with Red Hawk and the other stewards. I think he was probably right. I think Jim would agree that he has not been deprived of a single thing in this regard and that he has formed his own relationship with Red Hawk and the stick."

Lewis nodded enthusiastically, "I totally agree, Robbie. This is the best way for you to move forward with the stick."

"General Chamberlain's daughter also communicated with Doug for many years—and we have all of that correspondence, as well," Mrs. Turnbull added.

Bruce continued, "It might be good, Robbie, for you to enjoy most of your relationship directly with Red Hawk. And as Jim has supplemented your experience with his own thoughts and writings, perhaps I can send you some things that might be of interest and use, as well. I'd hate to overwhelm you or make your experience more about Doug and Jack than yourself!"

"I think that would be great. Thanks!" Robbie agreed.

"At some point down the road perhaps we can set up a visit for you and your family to come see us in South Carolina and we'll let you look through it all? Not too far down the road—I am eighty-two years old now!" Bruce smiled.

"I would love that," Robbie beamed.

Lewis took over the discussion, "Well, Robbie, Jerri and Bruce have been a big part of my life—which you probably didn't know—and now I have invited them to be a part of your journey and I am sure they'll be glad to help you in any way they can."

Jerri added, "Robbie, we are so excited. Here is our information—phone numbers, address, and e-mail. Please stay in touch with us."

As the group arrived back to their start point, Robbie's parents were waiting there to pick him up. Lewis introduced Bruce and Jerri to Robbie's parents, Mary and John, and his ten-year-old sister Catherine. Mary and John were infinitely more at ease with this meeting compared to last year, though still rather overwhelmed with what this stick had done for and meant to their son.

As the adults got to know each other a little more, a barely perceptible breeze swept softly across Robbie's face eliciting his now-instinctive and immediate reaction to look to the sky. Robbie noticed a hawk circling above them and alighting on a fencepost some thirty or forty yards away. He quietly excused himself, slipped from the discussion, and approached the bird—exactly as he had on his last trip to this park with Lewis a month earlier. As before, the bird invited Robbie to approach by bobbing its head and the boy picked her up.

Lewis had also felt the breeze—a second or two even before Robbie had—and saw Robbie begin to walk toward the hawk. He brought the chat to a quiet pause and slowly directed his eyes toward Robbie and the bird for all to watch. Robbie's parents

had not been there for their son's last meeting with the hawk and the Turnbills had not heard that part of the story.

Despite knowing how powerful and incredible this stick was, this scene surpassed all other aspects of the story for Robbie's mother as she gasped, covered her mouth with her hand, and blinked back tears as Robbie gently lifted the hawk and stared into her eyes in silent communication. The bird cocked her head and softly flapped her wings a few times. Robbie nodded. The bird nodded. Robbie then gracefully lifted the bird back into the sky and slowly walked back to his group.

Robbie smiled at Lewis as he arrived back, "This time *I thanked her.*"