

Apéndice A

The House on the Hill

A few days before Christmas, Chantal Yardley visited Jacob Samuels in the old people's home.

"Do you know they want to make it disappear?" said Mister Samuels as he looked out of a window. His face was nearly the same red as the hanging Christmas decorations. He was angry at the thought that the house on "Bright Hill" -- the place of his happy years when his wife Irma was alive—his house was to be destroyed.

"The people who bought the house said it would be a fine place to raise their children. They really **pulled the wool over my eyes**, if my wife was alive she would not talk to me for a year.

Chantal tried to change the subject. "Do you know it has been almost thirty years?" she asked the old man.

"I remember," said Jacob Samuels. "Irma and I spent the whole week before, calling the people in the community trying to put together a welcome for you."

"A week?"

"Yes," answered the old man quietly. "We saw what was going on with all that violence in the big cities and all the wrong people with guns in the south. We thought all that was not a friendly welcoming environment".

Chantal remembered being a little afraid thirty years ago. No black family had ever lived in the Bright Hill community.

Her husband Rafe was leading the big moving truck, driving their small black car. Rafe stopped the car when they saw fifteen or twenty people in front of their new home on Tully Lane. Someone walked toward them in the street. Chantal's **heart missed a beat**. Then, a man in front of their new house showed a sign written in big colourful letters. It said "Welcome."

People filled Chantal's and Rafe's arms with sweets, cooked dinners and more. There was so much food and everyone **bent over backwards** to make them feel welcome.

"What a day that was," Said Chantal. "What a day," agreed Jacob Samuels.

It was a beautiful community. Children could walk to school or play happily up at the Samuels' house, and their parents need not worry if the children were safe. Most important, nobody wanted to move out of the Bright Hill community just because people moved in who were a little different.

"Remember Mrs. Hancock's picture in the newspaper?" asked Chantal.

"Sure I do," answered Jacob Samuels with a smile, "When Mister and Mrs. Ho came from Vietnam and we drew a little Buddha on their welcome sign." Everyone in the neighbourhood **took a shine** to the Ho family right away

"Then the men in white cloth came," said Chantal.

One morning there were men standing in front of the Ho family's house. The men were covered from head to toe in white cloth, with holes cut out for their eyes. One of the men held up a wooden cross and set fire to it. Then **all hell broke loose**. All the people in the other houses on Tully Lane ran out their doors and toward Mister and Mrs. Ho's house. Bob Hobart carried a long, iron-point African war weapon. Jacob Samuels came running wearing a silver Swedish war hat, carrying a meat cutting knife high in his right hand. The men in white cloth flew everywhere, they were much surprised by this sudden appearance of more than fifty people.

Old Mrs. Hancock threw a stick under the feet of a "white cloth" flying around the corner of her house. The man fell. Mrs. Hancock jumped from her front steps onto the man's back and hit him with an empty flower can. Jake Griffin had to pull her off the man. Later Jake said he never knew someone **so long in the tooth** could be that strong.

Old Mrs. Hancock died the next year. The Alavi's bought her house. They had fled Iran when the Ayatollah took over. The Sun's from Kunming, China moved into the community soon after; then the Ankoli's from Uganda; the Kummar's from Bombay, India; the Santiago's from Nicaragua. There were parties for all the new people - in the streets or in the house on Bright Hill. And after the battle of the "white cloths," where they all **nipped in the bud**, the community held some kind of celebration almost every week. No other neighbourhood could **hold a candle to theirs**.

Now the house on Bright Hill's days **seemed to be numbered**. In the quiet week between Christmas and New Years, Jacob Samuels sat and thought about his old house. **He racked his brains** trying to think of a solution but he just **drew a blank**.

On a day not long after, Chantal called Jacob Samuels. "Don't **throw in the towel** yet, Rafe says he can **pull some strings** and get the house declared a historic building," said Chantal on the telephone. "That way it could not be torn down. He is going to talk with a friend in the government."

The next morning Rafe hurried off to talk with the town officials. He knew it was **a long shot** but he had to try. Chantal was leaving for work. A funny figure on a bicycle came riding up Tully Lane, wearing a shiny hat and a big red cloth tied around his neck. Chantal laughed. It was Jacob Samuels.

Mister Samuels waved and shouted: "They thought no one would notice if they came quietly and started tearing down the house." He pointed behind him at a big earth-mover and two trucks coming up Tully Lane.

Mister Samuels did not **beat about the bush**, he got off the bicycle at his old front door and pulled his special meat knife from under his neck-cloth. The workman driving the earth-mover tried to talk with him. But Mister Samuels would not let the man come close. The workmen for their part, seemed **to be sitting on the fence**. They talked together quietly for a while. Then they climbed into their vehicles, started their engines and drove toward different parts of the little house.

Mister Samuels was everywhere at once throwing himself in front of the earth-mover or a threatening truck, trying **to keep them at bay**. He moved very fast for an old man. Again other people in the community came out of their doors, just as on the day of the "white cloths".

Fred Jantzen wanted to know what was going on. Chantal told him some men had come to tear down the Samuels house on Bright Hill.

Over my dead body! Not if I can help it," Fred shouted as **he made a beeline** for the house.

Jacob Samuels took the red cloth from around his neck to wave and defend his house like a Spanish bullfighter. Then one of the trucks drove straight at Jacob. Jacob was slow to move. The truck just missed hitting him. The driver could not turn the truck in time, and ran into the side of the house on Bright Hill. The little house shook. Everybody **stopped in their tracks**, even the trucks and earth-mover.

Then, **out of the blue**, Rafe Yardley appeared driving his black car slowly through the crowd, he stopped and showed a paper. "Judge Martin Klein signed a court order this morning," he said. "Nothing can be done to this house until Judge Klein has a hearing about it. The town officials will meet after the New Year holiday. There are enough votes so Bright Hill will be named as a historic house."

Jacob Samuels looked at the sad little house with its broken windows and fallen stones. It had **seen better days**, but it was the most beautiful place in the world to him. "Now, I have to buy it back," he said. "But... I can hardly **make ends meet** as it is"

"We have some saved," said Rafe as he looked toward Chantal. They knew mister Samuel **lived on a shoestring**.

All over the little hill people began to speak up, offering money and willing hands to work, even one of the workmen. They all **saw eye to eye**.

Church bells far off played "Joy to the World."

Rafe stepped to his open car. "The people of France make a wonderful drink called champagne," he smiled. "I was saving this for New Years Eve, but December Twenty-Ninth is close enough." Rafe opened some bottles and passed them into the crowd.

The church bells far away played "Should Old Friendships be Forgotten."

Then Rafe turned to Jacob Samuels, held a bottle high, and said in a loud voice: "Here's to Jacob Samuels and all the people of the Bright Hill community. You are the spirit of the real humankind – people who stick together **through thick and thin**. And the voices of the Yardley family and the Sun family and the Kummarr family and the voices of all the people who came to Bright Hill from all around the world rose up to meet the bells with happy shouts and bright song.