“Someday”

Word Count: 804

It had been a normal day of teaching: kids, homework, complaints, and arguments about whose markers were whose. The sky looked cold and miserable (as it often is in winter in Colorado), and yet I pulled through until the last bell. *Someday I won’t have this job anymore*, I sighed to myself.

 I cut through the construction site on my way home. I was *sooo* ready to take a shower and read my new novel. I stared at the cracked, gray sidewalk when - *clang, clang, clang,* I heard a strange sound echo from the construction site behind me. It was a little bit like a clanking chain, but muffled. I looked behind me, but no one was around. The construction site was abandoned except for an old, white van parked at the curb. A harsh gust of icy wind blew my cap off my head. I grabbed for my cap and caught it just before it blew into an open manhole. *That’s weird,* I thought. Maybe the construction workers forgot to put the lid back on? My teeth started to chatter. I was ready for the warm sanctuary of my house.

 The steps creaked as I headed up towards my door. I slipped my hand into my pocket. *Oh no*, I had forgotten my keys in my desk at school! I would have to grab my spare set of keys from old Mrs. Crumberbun’s broken flower pot. I had to pass through the dark alley to get to her yard. The soil was rough on my hands as my fingers reached through the dry, dead stalks. Suddenly, the hairs stood up on the back of my neck. I felt as if I was being watched. I wrenched my keys from the plant and spun around, only to see a white van slowly creeping past. *This couldn’t be the same white van, could it?*

I headed back down the alley, but before I got to the street, the white van peeled around the corner and skidded to a stop in front of me. I heard a scuffle, a snort, and then a voice say, “She's not here. Keep tracking her. We need her alive!” *Need who alive? What’s going on here?* But before I could ponder it anymore, the van took off. As soon as it rounded the corner, I heard it - c*lang, clang, clang.* It was that sound again, although this time it was coming from the vent next to my basement window. I backed away, and started to run faster and faster until the pounding in my head made me stop – right at the police station.

An officer agreed to come check out my house. Inside, it was quiet and normal. The officer assured me I was safe and that everything was fine. As the door closed behind the officer, all I could hear was silence. It surrounded me, hugged me, choked me, but then - *clang, clang, clang,* I heard it again . . . then louder - *clang, clang,clang.*

I ran to the bathroom and locked the door. I hugged myself and tried to sound brave when I whimpered, “Come out, I know you are there. Show yourself.”

I grabbed my hair brush and held it in front of me as a weapon. Then suddenly, I heard “Owoooooooo.” A howl came up through the shower pipe. Something was in the basement! I crept down the stairs to the basement, and the *clang, clang, clang* grew louder. My hands were trembling as I threw open the hatch on the floor and found . . . a little white dog tangled in the pipes. *How precious!* Her collar had caught on a loose piece of pipe. That was what had made the clanging noise. I unhooked her and was immediately flooded with a sense of relief. Without any hesitation, I walked to the humane society to turn the dog in.

When I got to the shelter, a man was crying. As soon as he saw us, he jumped up, and the little dog leaped into his arms. He explained that this was his dog who had fallen down a manhole, and he had been looking for her for hours. Remember the white van? It was his. He had been driving around trying to find his dog. The clanking chains were just her collar echoing in the pipe. He thanked me profusely, then hurried out the door.

 I was so relieved that I was not being stalked. *Whew*! I had forgotten how much I love animals - maybe someday I will work at the shelter. Working with animals rather than cranky parents and children seemed like heaven to me. That night, I lay snugly in bed with a warm hot chocolate when I heard it again . . . *clang, clang, clang.*