

A Cry For Help

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By Ellen Daveys

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The Chicago neighborhood I grew up in was a friendly place, but ever since I was a little girl my mother had warned me not to accept rides from strangers. Still, one frigid day when a man in a truck offered a lift, I climbed aboard.

I knew the moment the door slammed shut that I was in trouble. It was something about the way he looked at me. "You passed the grocery," I said meekly. "Please stop." He said nothing. "I want to get out," I said.

"Don't touch that door!" he ordered. The truck speeded up. From his coat he drew forth a knife and skimmed it along my leg. "Any noise out of you," he warned, "any noise at all and..." He made a violent dagger gesture.

I could hear myself screaming inside, but no sounds were coming out of my mouth. *Our Father, Who art in Heaven...* I began silently saying the Lord's Prayer... *hallowed be Thy name...*

The truck turned into an alley and stopped. I fumbled for the door handle. The man reached over and pushed the door open so swiftly that I fell out. I tried to get up to run, but he was there standing over me, and I saw the knife again. *Thy will be done...*

Down the alley I heard running steps and wild yelling. The man leaped up. A policeman jumped on him as a woman picked me up. "Are you all right?" she kept saying to me. And then, "Thank God that I heard your screams."

But no sound had come from my mouth. I was sure of that. Except in my head, there had been no screams.