unTETHER me

For years he had been on the streets. Slept during the day, spooked about all hours of the night, wreaking havoc, scaring people, taking great joy in causing harm to folks he'd never know. And who would ever know him, or his story.

As a little boy he used to sit on his Grammy's lap, hour after hour, as she would sing soothing songs to him that talked about some guy named Jesus who loved even him, and she'd tell him the most beautiful stories too about the same guy. She would rock him back and forth and hold him close when all the horrific voices in his head became too loud to think.

But then something happened, and they took him away from his Grammy, and after that, he got passed from one foster home to another like a bad chore. And the more those foster adults yelled at him and called him names like, 'Stupid' and 'Retard' and 'Loser', the more he withdrew inside himself. And the more the agony and anger grew. He ran more times than athletes, and just as many times, the system brought him back to another un-wanting home. All he was to them was a paycheck, extra food on the table, a lump taking up space in an attic or basement room, if he was lucky. Usually, it was a utility closet. He hated the nighttime because all the monsters and the memories haunted him then. Thoughts boiled in his brain of his crack addict parents who had poisoned him before he was even born; who branded him with the burning embers of their cigarettes; who laid him on an altar of sacrifice, trading him for drugs and momentary highs and short-lived pleasure. The only kind thing they ever did for him was leave him on his Grammy's doorstep when he was three.

Those foster adults—because they ain't parents—thought he was dumb, but really, he was just taking it all in, buying time like some buy groceries or toiletries; you know, necessities. He saved change, hid food, kept amenities within reach for a fast escape. And when he could, he bolted and went far away.

He'd been roaming the streets and homeless camps and hiding in abandoned buildings ever since. The anger and hatred building inside of him like a churning storm, like an active volcano, spewed as hot lava no matter who he encountered. Until one night. One night when a little old lady reminded him of his Grammy. No matter how he fought her, she had a grip on him that wouldn't let go. And she began to sing the words of that same song his dear Grammy used to whisper into his ear, *"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found; I was blind but now I see."*

Suddenly, he felt like a rag doll, and every ounce of fight escaped him. The tears coursed his cheeks like a pathway going somewhere and he grew limp in this grandmother's arms as she began to whisper words of affirmation and kindness over him, setting him free from the bondage and demons that had bound him and held him hostage throughout his lifetime.

There was another man (Mark 5:1-20). For years, he'd hidden in the tombs, outcast from society, overlooked and considered a poor excuse. For all their ignorance, it created in him, hostility and savageness. Their unkindness and taunting bore a monster and his greatest desire was to hurt others as badly as he hurt. Everything inside him screamed of evil until he controlled nothing; rather, he was treated as a possession, as if his life was no longer his own. He demolished any attempt that came against him to retain him, and his delight grew as the people ran from him in fear.

Until the day Jesus came. He just pulled right up on the shore and walked straight toward him. He knew who He was. There was no mistaking. Every demon inside of him screeched and clamored and howled and shrieked. At once Jesus extended to the demon's permission to leave the man alone and they fled at once, the many demons taking possession of a herd of many pigs, and immediately, the man was set free.

That's Who God is, the Defender of our hearts, the Lifter of our heads, and the One Who sets those imprisoned free!

Romans 3:24, 'Yet God, in His grace, freely makes us right in His sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when He freed us from the penalty for our sins.'