

Praise for **RESILIENT SILENCE**

I usually have seven books going at the same time, and it takes half a year to get through many of them. I read *Resilient Silence* in less than seven days. I loved it. Peter Quint superbly takes the reader into the childhood and real-time experiences of a Deaf person. This gripping story threads trauma, identity, isolation, empathy, athletic drive, and the reconciliation of brotherhood. Read it. Share it.

—Jeff Kemp, former NFL quarterback

Author of *Facing The Blitz:*

Three Strategies for Turning Trials into Triumphs

As a Deaf person, even before reading this novel, I anticipated *Resilient Silence* to be a classic story of a true Deaf experience involving a minority culture and language misunderstood and marginalized in our world today. Peter Quint, a gifted Deaf author, is also a teacher of Deaf children. He writes with a clear grasp of Deaf education concepts and experience, which are described with colorful words and creative explanations of how sign language is communicated in the Deaf world. We welcome you, our fellow Deaf sojourners or hearing allies in our Deafhood, to venture silently walking and then running with Julius with resilience, through obstacles and challenges described in the pages of this novel in the search for our Deaf identity and purpose on this earth.

—Lance Forshay, MS

ASL and Deaf culture associate teaching professor,

University of Washington

Resilient Silence is an impressive first novel that briskly explores the psychological isolation experienced by those who endure profound hearing loss. Insightful and personally informed, the writing of Peter Quint takes the reader into the world of silence and the depths of its uniquely challenging emotions. Set in a disturbingly identifiable future where an isolated America is literally walled off from its closest neighbors and under constant threat from terrorists, the always critical need for truthful and clear communication is dramatically underscored. At the heart of this compelling story of personal redemption are two estranged brothers who find a path to each other and meaningful lives through their shared passion for long-distance running and faith in a greater power.

—John Wilder

Writer in residence, Westmont College

Award winning writer, producer,

and director of *The Centennial* and *The Yellow Rose*

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A Deaf-Experience
Suspense Novel

PETER M. QUINT

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This story is dedicated to my wife, Pratibha,
and to my Deaf brothers and sisters in fellowship
who have helped guide me in Spirit and Truth.



But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength.

They will soar high on wings like eagles.

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not faint.

(Isaiah 40:31)

PROLOGUE



May 16, 2031. Seattle metropolitan area, Washington.

Jeremy McLellan ran up the steps of his family's small rambler house, stopping to catch his breath on the main entry landing. Being an endurance runner, he had run to and from school, and at the day's practice at the Thomas Jefferson High School track in Federal Way, Washington.

"Hi, Mom!" he greeted after entering the kitchen, where a small TV on the counter was playing cartoons.

Mom looked up while stirring a pot on the stove. "How was your day, Jeremy?"

"Was good. Listen, I gotta hurry and meet the guys at Skippers." He planned to shower, change clothes, and join his teammates for their customary Friday night at Skippers Fish and Chips.

"Jemy!" His one-year-old, blond-haired brother sat in a high chair drawing with crayons on a blank piece of paper.

Jeremy grimaced. "Shouldn't he still be taking his nap?"

Mom thrust a small bowl of spaghetti at him. "Can you feed Julius? I don't want him making a mess like he usually does."

He had no choice but to take the bowl. "What? No! I told the guys I would meet them at five."

"Do it!" She pointed at his athletic bag still strapped over his shoulders. "And show me you finished your math homework. Remember, your teacher said you were in danger of failing her class if

you didn't complete the homework."

"Yeah. Fine!" He plopped on a chair and slapped a notebook on the table near his little brother. Why did his mother pick the worst times for him to help with Julius? She knew he met his friends for dinner every Friday. He dished out a small spoonful of spaghetti.

"No!" Julius pushed the spoon away and grabbed Jeremy's notebook, scribbling on it with a red crayon.

"Hey! Whatcha doin'?" Jeremy jerked the notebook.

"Daw!" Julius scowled.

His mother flipped to the last written page in the notebook. "Good! I see you finished the homework."

"But now the teacher won't accept this! You can't see some of the answers under the crayon!" Jeremy retorted as he shoved the notebook back in his bag.

"It'll be fine. Now feed your brother!"

Julius leaned forward and opened his mouth wide.

Jeremy deposited a spoonful of spaghetti. "Better eat quick, little man."

As Julius munched on his first bite, Mom's cell phone rang. She placed it on speaker mode and continued her household chores. "Hello?"

"Hello, Julie." Jeremy recognized his father's voice.

"Hi, Robert. What's up?"

"Gonna work a bit late today. I have some paperwork to do before wrapping up for the weekend."

"What time do you think you'll be home?"

"Go ahead and eat. I can warm it up when I arrive around seven."

"Can I talk to Dad?" Jeremy asked, still feeding his brother.

"Sure." Mom handed him the phone, but Julius intercepted it.

"Dada?"

"Hi, buddy!" Dad's voice brightened. "Whatcha doin'?"

Julius picked up his drawing.

RESILIENT SILENCE

“I’m sure it is—”

“Give me that!” Jeremy jerked the phone from his brother. “I’m in a hurry, remember?”

Julius growled but opened his mouth to be fed some more.

“Hi, Dad.”

“Jeremy! How was track practice today?”

“Was good. Did mile repeats. Finally averaged 4:45.”

“That’s great! Seems like you’re ready for your next race coming up.”

“Yeah, will be a mile, I think. Against Federal Way High School. Those guys are mostly seniors. I’ll try to keep up.”

“I think you can beat them. Why not try? Say, I got two tickets to the Mariners game against Houston next weekend. I thought just you and I could go.”

“Sounds great! If it’s a night game, we can go after my track meet on Saturday.”

“Sure. It’ll be a good father-son night at—”

There was a crackling noise through the phone, then silence.

“Dad?” Jeremy dropped the spoon and tapped the phone. “Hello?”

“Foo!” Julius swiped at his brother’s hand.

“What’s wrong?” Mom asked, looking up from the sink.

All of a sudden, a low rumble shook the house as if a large locomotive were passing nearby. There was no train near this house, and soon the sound and shaking subsided.

“Earthquake!” Mom grabbed Julius and moved to the entryway between the kitchen and living room. “Come here, Jeremy!” She grabbed the phone from him. “Robert? Robert?”

Huddled together in the stillness, with only the sound of the TV, they looked across the room. The screen had switched to an emergency newflash. A large column of smoke and fire swirled. At the top of this column, a mushroom cloud billowed out above the Seattle skyline.

“Dad?” Jeremy whispered and glanced at Julius playing with Mom’s phone. A tinge of jealousy swept through him, for the innocent age of his brother who was immune to the horrors of the outside world.

PART I



The Early Years

CHAPTER 1



Prelude to a Loss

Two Years Later. Spokane, Washington.

“**N**o! I’m going outside!” Julius opened the apartment screen door and walked out onto a second-floor balcony. The afternoon sun had slipped behind one of the apartment buildings across the street, casting a shadow over half of the balcony.

“But you usually like to draw during this time of the day,” Mom called from inside the apartment.

“Wanna play!” Julius plopped onto a pile of dried leaves and twigs and crossed his short legs. His head dropped, and he sighed. Wispy strands of blond hair fell over his eyes. One of his hands reached up and massaged the back of his neck. Ever since yesterday it had been sore, and today it seemed particularly worse, a dull, throbbing pain.

His mother stepped up to the screen door. She held an open box in her hands. “Just sitting there rubbing your neck doesn’t look much like playing. What’s wrong, dear?”

“Nothing! Just wanna play!” He scrunched his eyebrow lower as he scowled past the bars that enclosed him within the balcony. “Go to park?”

Mom knew this lowered right eyebrow meant he was upset. She lifted the box. “I already told you I need to unpack all the boxes.” She went back into the apartment.

Normally he would just find his own entertainment with the pile of toys in his room, drawing at his desk in the living room, or

playing a game on the iPad, but today he didn't have the energy. His body ached, and he didn't like it.

A breeze blew and some of the leaves from the trees tumbled onto his lap. "Phew!" He grabbed his nose as a putrid smell came with the breeze.

Just then a large mass of white descended the exit steps adjacent to the balcony. It was one of those things they slept on; something Julius recalled beginning with the word "mat." A man who lived in the apartment across from them was carrying it on his back. A blue facemask covered his mouth.

Julius stood and grabbed the bars of the barrier and watched. Large flecks of paint on the bars pricked at his fingers, exposing rusty metal underneath.

The white mass proceeded across the parking area toward its destination, a large green container filled with the source of the putrid smell. Heaps upon heaps of white household garbage bags piled impossibly high and spilled out onto the concrete below.

Julius watched the man struggle with the load and noticed how the bags piled high more toward the front of the container, creating a ledge on which to stand. Just in front of the container was a short stack of other square things people slept on. He looked between the garbage ledge and the white mass below. He could climb that, and jump and fly!

"Need some help?" Julius heard a familiar voice, and his brother, Jeremy, approached the man and helped carry the large square thing and place it atop another one next to the large green container. "Whew! It stinks, doesn't it?"

"Yeah," the man said through his mask. "They sure do need to come get the garbage. Been over a month now."

"Seems ever since the Seattle bombing, the state and local governments have diverted all funds to building the northern border wall between Canada and us."

RESILIENT SILENCE

“Yeah. That leaves less money for our infrastructure,” the man said as they walked back toward the apartment building.

All this adult conversation was boring for Julius, so he turned his attention to the strange texture on the other side of the metal bars. He picked off a rather large fleck of white paint and analyzed it. The shiny-white sheen on one side was inviting, and he stuck out his tongue to lick the fleck.

“Whatcha doin’?” Jeremy paused on the stairs.

Startled, Julius dropped the fleck and quickly picked up a stick. “Nothing!”

Jeremy swore under his breath. “I saw that!”

“Was nothing!” Julius placed the stick in his mouth. “See!”

“Do you think I’m stupid?” Jeremy continued up the stairs and entered the apartment. “Mom! The little brat is eating paint off the balcony!”

Julius turned and tried looking into the apartment, but the setting sun illuminated the screen door. He could not see inside.

“Why’d you let him do that?” Mom asked. “You know it could be poisonous for him!”

“What? Did ya want me to scramble over the steps and balcony to grab it from him?”

“Julius! Stop eating the paint!” Mom called. “We just moved in, and I don’t want the manager kicking us out because we are destroying his property!”

Julius took the stick out of his mouth. “Not paint! Is a stick!”

“Liar!” Jeremy accused.

“Take care of it! Certainly you can see I am busy unpacking.”

“Fine!” Jeremy opened the screen door and picked up Julius.

Julius laid his head on his brother’s broad shoulders. “Play?” he asked in a weak voice. Ever since they had moved into this new place, it seemed nobody wanted to play with him. He missed playing at his cousin Lukas’s house.

“For a little bit. Then I got other things I gotta do,” Jeremy said and set his little brother at his drawing table.



As he sat in his high chair later that evening, Julius watched his mother transfer some meat into a sauce pan. He recognized the smell of taco seasoning as she sprinkled the contents of a pouch over the meat.

He looked at the iPad screen and tapped the controls for a Sonic the Hedgehog car-chase game. The tightening in his neck had become worse, and his skin tingled. Plus, he felt hot.

“Jemy!” he called when his on-screen car crashed.

“I don’t think he can hear you.” His mother paused from stirring the meat. “He’s in his room and usually has one of those headphone things on.”

“Get him!”

“Well, aren’t you being demanding tonight!” She wiped her hands on a towel and left the kitchen. “Jeremy! Julius needs you. Dinner will be ready soon.”

Rubbing his eyes, Jeremy approached the table. Julius knew he had been sleeping and not just listening to his headphones. Tufts of his thick, black hair protruded like a lawn in need of mowing. With a grunt, he sat in the chair next to his brother. “Whatcha playin’?”

Julius tossed the iPad in front of Jeremy. “Sonic. Your turn.” His voice was soft.

Jeremy looked at his brother for a moment then shook his head while squinting into the screen. “Why do I get the pink car?”

“Mine black.” The little boy shrugged.

“Fine.” The older brother sighed and tapped the controls for the pink car.

RESILIENT SILENCE

Mom set three plates on the table. “Time to eat.” She dished out an enchilada onto Julius’s plate and held a small spoon. “C’mon, boys. Stop your game and eat.”

Julius didn’t want to interrupt the rare attention he had gained from his brother. With a feeble motion, he pushed the spoon away.

Mom grabbed the iPad from Jeremy and put it aside. “Eat!”

The little boy didn’t have the energy to argue with his mother, so he picked up the spoon and dug into the enchilada.

Mom looked at her older son. “It’s track season, right?”

“Yeah, so?”

“Why aren’t you running for the Shadle Park High School team?”

Jeremy dished out some enchiladas and looked at them, shaking his head. “Don’t much want to this year, I guess. Don’t know anybody on the team, and it’s near the end of the season. Plus, I’ll graduate soon anyway, so what’s the point?”

Mom shrugged. “At least it will be a good way to get to know some people.”

“Nah. Drove by a track meet at the school the other day and saw the parents cheering their kids.” Jeremy paused and pointed to his head. “I don’t wanna see all their dads sitting in the stands reminding me of what I don’t have.”

Mom paused from her eating and raised both hands. “Jeremy, I lost him too. You don’t think I notice all the wives who still have their husbands? I mean, what do you think I had to go through seeing Karen and Simon together every day when we lived at their place for the last two years?”

Jeremy pointed his fork in the direction of the screen door. “I am glad we’re not at their place anymore. I was sick of facing that fake smile of Uncle Simon and the way they both tried to keep their perfect family intact while giving us charity.”

Mom looked at Jeremy. "I am aware of that. You made that very clear; however, now that I am working most nights at Sacred Heart Hospital, you're gonna have to take over childcare for him." She pointed at Julius and frowned. "Julius?"

The little boy had dropped his spoon and seemingly fallen forward, asleep with his head on the table. One hand rested on his plate in a pile of enchilada.

"What's wrong, honey?" Mom felt his forehead.

"Stubborn little snot, ain't he?" Jeremy muttered, shaking his head.

"He is not a little snot, Jeremy!" Mom snapped. "I think he has a fever." She picked up the little boy and walked across the living room toward the hallway. "I'm gonna take his temperature."

Julius groaned and opened his eyes slightly, then placed his head on his mother's shoulder.

They entered the bathroom, and Mom took his temperature. "A hundred and one point five." She filled a small cup with water. "Come on, sweetie. Drink."

Slowly Julius raised his head and sipped from the water cup. Some of the liquid dribbled down his cheek and onto his shirt.

"I'm gonna give you an aspirin and put you to bed." Mom carried him into their shared room across the hall and placed him on his twin bed. She changed his clothes and put pajamas on him.

"Argh . . . um," was all Julius could mutter as he turned in his bed to go to sleep.



"One hundred and three point five!" It was now 10:00 p.m., and Mom rushed into Jeremy's room. "Quick! Get up, Jeremy!" She prodded the big lump under the covers on the bed. "We gotta take him to the hospital!"

"What?" Jeremy sat up, rubbing his eyes.

RESILIENT SILENCE

“Get your clothes on, and let’s go!” Mom ran into her bedroom and picked up Julius, keeping the blanket around him. His eyes did not open, and no sound came from his mouth. Not letting go of her son, she sat on the couch and struggled to put on her shoes.

“Let’s go!” she called into Jeremy’s room. “You’re driving!”

He emerged, hair sprouting even more than it had before. “I’m ready.”

They locked the apartment door and rushed down the stairs to the older-model green Subaru sedan parked across the lot. The car doors slammed and the vehicle backed up, tires slightly squealing as it exited the apartment complex, appearing and disappearing under the streetlamps as it sped toward Sacred Heart Hospital.