

More from the author



I spent the early years of my childhood living in the small town of Loudon in East Tennessee at the foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains. My family lived in an old, two- story wooden house with a tin roof. It stood no more than twenty feet off the main highway, which ran right through the middle of town. The railroad tracks were less than a mile away. We had no air conditioning in those days, and I remember many summer nights lying awake upstairs in the bed in my room listening to the lonesome whistle of the trains coming through and the soft roar of the big eighteen wheelers as they came rolling down the highway in front of the house. The sound of the rain from the occasional summer storm beating against the old tin roof served to arouse my imagination even more. As I would lie in that dark room late at night listening to the sounds of that summer symphony, I wondered about the people riding the trains and driving the trucks. Where had they come from? Where were they going? Did they have kids like me at home waiting for them to return? The sounds stirred me to imagine and create the stories of the people inside those trains and trucks rolling through the rainy nights.

Several years later, as I was about to enter high school, I saw my sister perform in a college drama production. It was my first experience with live theatre, and I was hooked. As I sat in the audience that night, I realized that through the words spoken and the stories told on that stage, the lives of every person who heard them could be inspired, challenged, encouraged, and comforted. Sitting in that dark theatre, my mind drifted back to the darkness of those rainy summer nights and the stories I imagined, the stories I created while listening to the sounds of those summer symphonies. Whether in a classroom, on a stage, under a shade tree, or a thousand other places, I've been telling stories ever since.

IMAGINE and CREATE!