



Shoot for the Moon: A Novel

Warren Sanford Lee

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What are unintended or unexpected consequences? This is a tale of three families, spanning four generations and three countries. It is a story of perseverance, inspiration, love, conflict, the law, tragedy, triumph over adversity, humor over despair, heroism, honor, social issues, war and history. The following is from the notes of "The Life and Times of Charles Everett Beasley" by Pulitzer Prize winning Author Carl Aarons: "We were sitting on the veranda in the deep wicker chairs, gently rocking, sipping cold beer, when Charlie looked up and asked, "What are unintended or unexpected consequences?" "Charlie, haven't we had enough today? Isn't that part of the "What if" philosophy?" "C'mon Carl, I'm serious." I sighed, looked at him and suggested, in a way it definitely is part of the "what if" school of philosophy. For example: The Department of Agriculture imports Kudzu from China to use on berms along highways. Great idea. The stuff is strong, fast growing, deep rooted and will protect against erosion. However it loves the American South and soon takes over destroying trees, telephone wires, and buries abandoned cars and buildings. That is the unintended and unexpected consequence for an act that was supposed to help solve a problem. "Can't there also be result for good?" "Of course Charlie. What is it you're thinking about?" "Your interviews with me triggered thoughts Carl. I've looked at my life until now and thought, interesting how things happen. I said, maybe I am the result of unconnected and unexpected events that have changed my life, and others around me. You for instance, if you had not been at an editorial meeting at the Washington Post we would not be sitting here today. You, my friend, who drinks my booze, would not have received a Pulitzer for the story of my life, and I would still be an obscure small town lawyer. I guess that would be an unexpected consequence." "Come to think of it Charlie, look at how your ancestors have influenced you. Those generations are embedded in your DNA. All you have become is a result of the past; plus of course your own individuality. Unrelated acts my friend oft times determine the future. Do you have any idea what would have been different for you if the PTA in Bradford Falls had never written that letter to your parents? What if your Great Grandfather William Beasley had decided to remain in Lancashire England? What if the Warwicks had never sent their son to Penn State or the Sugarman had remained in Berlin unaware of what the future would hold for their descendants. It would have been a different scenario. How's that for a 'What if?" After retrieving another beer for himself and me he returned to the rocker. He appeared thoughtful. "It's really amazing Carl. Three families and a loving tailor never knew one another until unintended and unexpected circumstances drew them together, and helped to reshape the world." "That tailor was the one who told you to 'Shoot for the Moon,' wasn't he?" "Yes. As a youngster I didn't really understand what that meant. He told me as I grew older that I would." "And you sure did. Of course the other part of your heritage was the Beasley family motto that was passed on to each succeeding generation. Perseverance will overcome most obstacles. How come the word is most Charlie, not all?" "I often thought about that, and came to the conclusion that death is the one thing we cannot overcome. We can live longer and healthier, but the end is still the same. Everything else is within the realm of possibilities I had another thought Carl." Suppose I had never been born." "Forget it Charlie. My head is ready to split. Let's just finish our beer."

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