



# The Calvin Sims Story

by Gwyn Smith



Illustrated by Romi Bryant



China Berry Tree Books

a division of Storytellers of the American Frontier





## China Berry Tree Books

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*“As a boy, I loved to read. I read everything I could get my hands on. My favorite subject was history. My problem was that neighborhood bullies and even my foster siblings would harass me unmercifully. They would hit me and take my books away and destroy them. My solution was to take my books and climb into the large China Berry Tree that grew in my yard. No one could see me there and I could read in peace.” Calvin Sims*



Calvin would often hide in the China Berry Tree that grew in his front yard. There he felt safe from his mean foster siblings and could read in peace.

"Calvin, c'mer, boy. Ya better c'mer. Cuz when I find ya, I'm gonna beat you even harder. Were is you? Were is you hidin', boy?"

Calvin could hear one of his brothers calling him. He knew he was safe high in the old China Berry tree in the corner of the yard. The China Berry tree was Calvin's best hiding place. The tree had thick branches and lots of leaves. Calvin's favorite pastime was to lie on the thick branches and read the books that he often kept hidden in the tree, wrapped in plastic. Sadly, Calvin could not read in the China Berry tree at night. At night he would need to use a flashlight or candle and he was afraid that someone would see the light through the leaves and his favorite hiding place would be discovered.

Down below he could see his brother. He was carrying a stick to beat him. Calvin got beaten often. Usually there was no reason for the beatings. His brother was probably drunk or high on drugs. But Calvin always felt he was to blame for the beatings even when he had done nothing wrong. If it was not one brother beating him or abusing him, it was the other. His two sisters would also beat or abuse him. All four of them were very mean to Calvin. These were not his real brothers and sisters. They were the grown children of Calvin's foster mother.

Calvin never knew his father. His real mother worked as a housekeeper in Atlanta, Georgia. One day, when Calvin was four years old, his mother left him with a babysitter and



**Calvin Sims — StoryTeller  
2009**

# The Calvin Sims Story

How reading can save your life  
by Gwyn Smith



## The Calvin Sims Story

The incredible, inspiring true story of a little boy who was abandoned as a toddler and left to virtually fend for himself in an abusive foster home in one of the most violent neighborhoods in Atlanta, Georgia. Calvin Sims loved to read and it was his love for reading that saved his life.

This story delicately handles a tragic circumstance that molded and shaped one of the most sought after educators in America today. The Calvin Sims Story is sure to be an inspiration to all who read it.

Carefully crafted by veteran educator, Gwyn Smith, the story captures all of the love and compassion for children that both these two extraordinary individuals have made their trademark.

\$19.00 US ~ \$24.00 CAN



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