

Chapter 14

Treasures and Trust

Just prior to Jenny getting her job and moving to the City, an interesting thing happened to us. We were really struggling financially at that time, and we were given the opportunity to live "rent free" in an old vacant trailer house for a while, until we could get back on our feet. All that was asked in return was that we fix up the place a bit. The home belonged to a nice elderly woman named Mildred, who was currently living in an assisted living center. Her health was failing, and it wasn't expected that she would live very long. We decided this could be a good opportunity to try and get a little bit ahead.

There were only two bedrooms in this trailer. Lee and I took one of them, and Jenny took the other. The boys slept in the living room, but we were happy to be alive, and all together.

While we were living in the trailer house, we fixed up the yard, which was pretty run down, and cleaned out the old garage in the back. Then we decided to do some work on the inside of the trailer. The trailer had one room in it that was just a mess, apparently used just to store "junk." Lee went in and started to clean it out. It was full of garbage... old magazines, old clothes, stuff like that.

Lee moved a box that was sitting in the corner and saw a trap door underneath it. He lifted up the lid and discovered it was a floor safe. It was kind of fun to fantasize just for a moment what could possibly be in there. He reached down, grabbed the handle, and gave it a pull. It opened right up.

Lying in the bottom of the safe, in a fancy plastic container, was what looked to be several rows of half-dollars. He reached in and lifted them out. They were very heavy. He removed the covering and, to our surprise, there were several rows of solid gold coins. We had no idea what they were worth, but I imagine they must have been worth a lot.

We called Mildred's niece and told her what we'd found. She immediately came over and picked them up. It would have been nice to have been able to keep them. I'm sure they could have helped us out. But it was never really a serious temptation. After all, even if we were sure that no one would ever find out about them, we would know, and so would God. But it was fun, none-the-less.

Eventually, with the help from family, we were able to start building a home for us once again.

Few things in life are more beautiful or appreciated than a glorious peaceful sunrise after a night of storms and devastating destruction. That's the way I felt about this period in our lives. As a family, and individually, we'd weathered a lot of storms, and I wasn't at all sure how long this break might last, but I was determined to enjoy it as long as I could.

My health was improving. Jeremy was doing well after recovering from his mishap, Jenny had moved back home and started work at our local hospital. Jason's mind was getting clearer and more active every day. As long as he stayed on his routine and his medication, he showed constant improvement. This was a welcome period in our lives.

A wonderful young man by the name of Randy befriended Jason as he was recovering from his accident, providing both friendship and companionship to Jason at this critical time of his life. We were so grateful when Randy took him under his wing. Randy helped Jason get a job with a tree maintenance business. He really enjoyed the work and seemed to have a natural aptitude for it.

Randy had another friend, Stephany, who had struggled with an abusive marriage, and was going through a divorce. Randy introduced her to Jason and the rest of the family. She instantly became friends with all of us.

She'd come over and talk to me quite often. She suffered from really low self-esteem as a result of her ex-husband, so I tried to help her develop more self-confidence, plus I really thought she was a nice person. Before long, I noticed that she was paying less attention to me and the other members of our family, and more attention to Jason. I have to admit, I was uncomfortable with that.

I'd come to accept the fact that I was going to be mother and caretaker of two special needs boys (I should say men now) for the rest of my life. I didn't know if I wanted anyone coming into our home and upsetting the applecart. Jason wasn't a normal man, even though he was twenty-two years old. He was still a little boy in so many ways, and I wasn't sure he would ever be able to leave home and live a normal life. He'd been involved previously with a young girl, had a baby out of wedlock, and I didn't want that happening again. I decided that Lee needed to have a talk with Stephany.

He spoke with her, and she was very good about understanding our concerns. She said however, that she couldn't help that she was falling in love with

Jason. It just seemed to happen, and soon she realized that the thing that made her the happiest was when she could make Jason happy, too. Before long, they wanted to start dating. This was really difficult for me, but what could I do? We told her that she could only date Jason if Jenny doubled with them, or if Jeremy would go along, after all, Jason's mind was still developing and changing and I wasn't sure where this might end up.

"Don't you trust us?" they asked. Well, it's not like we hadn't rode this horse before... we weren't born yesterday. Lee told them that trust is earned. They would have to prove themselves first by demonstrating that they **could** be trusted. They were fine with that. They group dated for about six months, then Stephany came to Lee and said, "Lee, do you remember what you told me when I first started to like Jason? You said trust is earned. I think we've shown you that we can be trusted, but how will you ever know whether or not we can be trusted, if you don't let us go out alone sometimes?"

Don't you hate it when that happens? What could he say? What can you say when logic and truth have you backed into a corner? We agreed to let her start dating Jason alone, as long as she had him home at an agreed upon hour, and as long as we knew where they were and what they were doing. She agreed.

Well, Stephany was better than her word. It turned out that she was very good for Jason, and Jason was very good for her. They obviously adored each other. She was also great with Michael, Jason's son. She would come to the house, prepare gourmet meals, and do all kinds of nice things for Jason and Michael. Before long, they both wanted to take this relationship to the next level. They wanted to get engaged.

We agreed that they could get engaged, but we told them that they couldn't get married for at least six months. This time would be spent teaching Stephany how to take care of Jason and see if they could both be responsible enough to take this huge step. It's hard enough to make a marriage work under the best of circumstances, but this one would start out with a child from a previous relationship, **and** a husband with a serious head injury. It was such a worry for us. We really did want what was best for both of these kids, but we didn't want either of them to get hurt if things didn't work out.

They did everything we asked them to do for those six months. They kept their end of the agreement, and we could do no less. We allowed them to get married. Time has proven this to be a good decision. It's been wonderful! Jason has

proven himself to be a good provider for his cute little wife. She has been a great wife and companion for him. They eventually got a home of their own, which Jason helped to build, and Stephany has given birth to our first granddaughter, Kailee Lyn Llewellyn. She is such a beautiful little angel. We call her our "little bit of Heaven."

They have become a wonderful family and we spend a lot of time together. Lee and I love spending time with our two grandchildren, as well. Who would have ever guessed that Jason would one day hold down a full-time job and take care of his own little family?

Life is truly full of surprises! I am so proud of him, he is a hard worker and has become employee of the month several times. He is a good husband and a wonderful father, who is full of love. He calls and checks on Jeremy and me on a regular basis and always asks if there is anything he can do for me, then ends his conversation with I love you Mom!