Marcy Max

The Light Encounters

By William R. Cunningham

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# The Death of Lynn

Nothing could have prepared a fifteen-year-old Marcy Maxwell for the untimely death of her best friend, Lynn Hampton, or the challenge to her faith that it would bring. One sunny day, Lynn was taken to the hospital and for about three weeks her organs started to shut down as if she were dying of old age. The doctors ran several tests but could not determine the cause of her condition. Finally, Lynn’s heart stopped on a beautiful summer morning.

Lynn and Marcy had been friends since they were about five years old and were often seen together. They attended the same schools sharing many classes. They lived only a few houses from each other and would often have play dates and sleepovers.

They would talk about their future together in business and ministry. They loved to discuss the type of men they would marry and the vacations they would take together. High school was approaching so they loved to imagine what life would be like then.

Both were good with art and design. Marcy had a knack for arranging things to produce a certain vibe, something like Fung Shui. Lynn had a knack for organizing things in addition to being good at drawing. She seemed to have a gift to draw something from memory after looking at it only one time.

They dreamed together about how they would start a graphic design and interior decorating business together, which they thought would help support their ministry efforts.

Marcy had visited Lynn only a few days before she died. She walked into Lynn’s hospital room with her parents, Tony and Marsha. Nancy, Lynn’s mother, was already in the room sitting next to the bed. Lynn was lying on the bed hooked up to several monitors.

“Is she ok, Mrs. Hampton?” asked Marcy.

“They are still running tests to figure out what’s going on.”

After a few moments, Lynn slowly opened her eyes and turned to look at Marcy. A small smile formed on her face.

“High school doesn’t look too promising for me—"

“Don’t say that. Please. You’re going to get better,” said Marcy.

She told Lynn how she was praying for her and that she has to have faith. She reminded her of some Bible verses but noticed that Lynn was unresponsive. At that moment one of the monitors started to sound and a nurse came running into the room.

She asked everyone else to leave the room, so they all went into the hallway. Two more nurses ran into the room. The monitor stopped sounding and then tears started to well up in Marcy’s eyes. One of the nurses ran out the room and returned with a machine on wheels.

After a few minutes, the nurses left the room and one of them took Nancy aside and started talking to her. Nancy put her head down and covered her face as the nurse walked away. After a few moments she looked up and walked over to the Maxwells.

Marsha put her arm around Nancy and softly rubbed her shoulder. Nancy then turned towards Marsha and cried softly in her arms. After a few minutes Marsha and Nancy came over to Marcy and Tony.

Marcy looked attentively at Nancy. She didn’t want to ask, but she had to. She had to know what happened to Lynn.

“Is she going to be ok?”

“I wish I had promising news, but Lynn isn’t doing well at all. They still don’t know what’s wrong.” More tears started to flow down Nancy’s face, and she was looking around as if she was lost.

They all went back into Lynn’s room. There was a new piece of equipment next to Lynn’s bed and a tube ran from it to a mask over Lynn’s mouth. Lynn’s breathing appeared to be shallow, and her skin color seemed different.

Marcy called out to Lynn, but she didn’t respond. She called her a few more times and finally, Lynn slowly opened her eyes. Marcy stood over Lynn with her face directly over hers. Tears started to form in Lynn’s eyes.

“You’re going to get better. You’ll see.” Marcy closed her eyes and started to pray for Lynn. Nancy had joined her and was also looking down at Lynn. After a few minutes, Lynn’s eyes slowly closed.

Marcy looked up at Nancy with tears in her eyes. “She’s going to get better, right?”

“I hope so. That’s my baby.”

Marcy stepped away from the bed and joined her parents standing at the foot of the bed. After a while, the Maxwell’s returned home. However, before they walked out of the room, Nancy called out to Marcy.

She reached into her pocketbook and handed Marcy a picture. “Lynn wanted you to have this.”

Marcy took it with a puzzled look on her face. It was a snapshot of the two of them when they were on vacation together the previous year. She glanced back at Lynn with tears in her eyes.

“We’re going to go here again, Lynn.”

Marcy was quiet during the ride home. She was whimpering and periodically gazing at the picture that Nancy gave her. She slowly walked into the house with her parents and then broke down crying.

“I don’t want her to die.” She cried bitterly. “She can’t die.”

Her parents tried to encourage her, but Marcy kept crying until she went up to her bedroom.

Marcy hung the picture Nancy gave her on her wall next to her dresser. She knelt by her bed and begged God to heal Lynn.

Marcy laid in her bed nervous about what was to come. She tried not to accept what her eyes were telling her about Lynn. Lynn looked weak and frail. She hardly moved and it seemed like she had to make a great effort just to move her head or arms. Marcy stayed in her room for the rest of the day and went to bed without eating dinner.

The sun was shining and there were few clouds in the sky a few days later. Marcy woke up that morning trying to believe that Lynn would be better. She prayed again for Lynn to be well and then retrieved some pictures that she wanted to show her when she would visit her later that day.

It was about 1:00pm when Marcy heard the phone ring. She was in her room packing things she wanted to take to Lynn in her backpack. After a few minutes, there was a soft knock on her bedroom door.

“Marcy,” her mother said softly as she gently opened the door. Marcy was facing the door when her mother slowly walked in.

“I’m so sorry, baby.”

Marcy starred into her mother’s eyes as if she were trying to see her thoughts. “No! We are going to see her, and she is going to be fine. No. Please.”

Her mother reached out and wrapped her arms around Marcy. “I’m so sorry. Lynn died sometime last night. She died in her sleep.”

Marcy was whimpering in her mother’s arms.

“I prayed for her. She can’t be dead. She’s supposed to get better.”

“I’m sorry, baby.”

Marcy burst into tears and started to drop when her mother held her tightly to keep her standing. Marcy was shaking and crying loudly. Her father joined them and put his arms around both.

“I’m so sorry, Mar.”

“She can’t be dead. No. Please.”

“It’s ok, Mar.,” said her father.

“It’s not ok. How can she be dead after all that praying? How could God abandon her?” Marcy continued to cry profusely. After several minutes, Marcy laid down on her bed still sobbing.

## The Funeral

The day of the funeral was a sunny and warm day. Even the birds seemed to be singing about how glorious that day was. *It should be raining for Lynn’s sake*, Marcy thought. It was like nature didn’t care that Lynn was dead.

Marcy resisted going to the funeral, but her parents calmed her down insisting that she should go for Lynn’s sake. They told her that Lynn might be there looking at everyone. She refused to wear black, but instead wore all white.

There were many people at the viewing before the funeral service, including many of Lynn’s former classmates, teachers, and friends. Many were sobbing as they viewed Lynn’s body for the last time.

Marcy approached the casket looking at the floor. She started crying aloud when she raised her head and looked at Lynn’s body lying in the casket. The tears were flowing like rivers down her face. Her whole body was shaking, and it looked as if she might fall. Her father held her tightly.

“No. She can’t be dead. I’m sorry, Lynn.” Marcy kept crying and many others started to cry too. Most people knew Marcy and Lynn were best friends.

Marcy sobbed while looking at Pastor Morris standing on the pulpit behind the podium. “Why did he let her die? What did I do wrong?” She again burst into tears and may have jumped on the casket if her father wasn’t holding her. She kept looking back at Lynn’s body and crying as she was walking away.

She tried to run back to the casket, but her father held her tightly. She cried and begged for Lynn to get up. She struggled to escape her father’s grip but couldn’t. She then fell limp and sobbed in her father’s arms after a final escape attempt.

She stared at the casket. “She’s dead. Lynn is dead. Why did God let Lynn die?”

Marcy and her parents sat down while others paid their last respects to Lynn and her family. The funeral service started, and many had fine words to say about Lynn. The songs did not comfort Marcy.

Marcy stopped crying when Pastor Morris started the eulogy. At one point, he said, “Lynn is gone now. God has plucked one of his flowers from his garden for his pleasure.”

“What? God killed Lynn?” Marcy said softly to her father.

Several people looked at Marcy when she said that. Their expressions were as if someone said Jesus was from Mars. Her father looked at as many as he could with a slight frown on his face.

He whispered to her, “Don’t say that. God didn’t kill her.”

“Then why did she die? Why didn’t God heal her like I prayed for?”

“We’ll talk about it later, okay?”

The funeral service ended, and people had one more opportunity to say their last goodbyes. Marcy refused to look at Lynn again. She walked around with her parents but looked down when she reached the casket.

“Bye, Lynn,” she said softly as she walked by sobbing a little.

They all headed to the cemetery where Lynn would be buried. It was beautiful outside, which again, upset Marcy, especially after what Pastor Morris said about God plucking a flower. Her father noticed that she was quiet and put his arm around her. She was so tense..

“You okay, Mar?” She nodded and put her arms around him.

People were tossing flowers on top of the casket. However, Marcy took a small Bible out of her purse and tossed that onto the casket instead of the flower she was given. The small Bible was one that she and Lynn would use when they talked about ministry. Lynn had the same Bible.

Her mother tried to encourage her to toss the flower onto the casket like everyone else. She refused. *God was not going to have this flower*, she thought to herself. Marcy stood gazing at the casket and frowning as it was lowered into the ground.

Some people offered their condolences to Marcy as well as Lynn’s family. Tears started running down her face and then a frown found its way back to her mouth.

“How can it be such a beautiful day when you’re gone now? The angels should be crying.”

Pastor Morris came over to them as Marcy said that. “Well, Marcy. God saw fit to take Lynn from us for his divine purpose. Sometimes—"

“No,” said Marcy abruptly. “I thought God was loving and that he cares about us. I thought you said that if we prayed to God that he would answer us. Is that his answer to my prayers? ‘Hey Marcy. I am going to kill Lynn because I want her more than you.’ What kind of God is that?”

“Marcy!” Her mother glanced at Pastor Morris. “I’m sorry pastor.”

“That’s okay Mrs. Maxwell. Sometimes it is difficult for us to accept the works of God.”

“The works of God?” asked Marcy. “Then that’s not the God I thought I knew.” Marcy was frowning and looking Pastor Morris directly in his face. “That’s not the God I want to be with.”

Her father hugged her. “It’s okay, Mar. Let’s go home now.”

“I want to go to Lynn’s house.”

Marsha apologized to Pastor Morris for Marcy’s outburst and then they went back home and walked to the Hampton’s house. Those who knew of Marcy and Lynn’s relationship offered their condolences. Marcy saw Mrs. Hampton and asked if she could go up to Lynn’s room.

Mrs. Hampton hugged Marcy. “Of course you can. Make yourself at home.”

Lynn’s room was neat and well organized. She had always been good at organizing things. Marcy smiled after thinking about the time several years ago when she rearranged some of the things in Lynn’s room. Lynn was going nuts trying to find her hair band that Marcy replaced with the pencil sharpener. Marcy used to tease her about being so organized.

She sat on Lynn’s bed and looked around the room. She was intimately familiar with her room because she had been in it so many times. There were pictures on her dresser and nightstand. There were pictures and posters on the walls. The small Bible like the one she had tossed on the casket at the cemetery was also lying on the nightstand. Marcy took it.

There on the dresser in a glass container was one of the rocks they used when they swore an oath when they were about eight years old. They swore on three rocks that they would always be together. They both kept one of the rocks and buried the other where they made the promise in Lynn’s backyard. She took the rock out of the container and cried.

Mrs. Hampton came upstairs to Lynn’s room and saw Marcy holding the rock and crying. She sat down on the bed next to her and rubbed her back. “You keep that rock and the case it was in. Lynn told me about that oath years ago.” Tears started to drip from Mrs. Hampton’s eyes too. “Why did my baby have to go?”

Marcy looked at Lynn’s mother. “You don’t think God plucked her?”

“I don’t accept that. What kind of God would kill my baby? I’m sorry.” She wiped her eyes and tried to force a smile on her face. It looked more like a broken frown than a smile.

“Why didn’t God heal her?” Marcy asked.

“I don’t know. I wish I knew, but I don’t understand either.”

“Do you mind if I keep her little Bible? I tossed mine on her casket.”

“Yeah. I saw you do that. Sure. keep it. She would want you to have it.”

Mrs. Hampton looked around the room and stared at a picture of Lynn on the dresser. “She really loved you, Marcy.” She got up, picked up the picture, and gave it to Marcy. “Keep this too. Lynn talked about this summer trip you two went on for weeks afterward. Remember that trip?”

“I remember.” Marcy smiled. “They took a picture of each of us and framed it. We had a picture taken of us together too.”  
Mrs. Hampton smiled. “Of course, you did. Well. Take your time. Make yourself at home.” She went back downstairs to the guests.

Marcy gazed at the picture. “We’ll be together through this rock and...” She thought about the flower she was given at the cemetery. It was going to shrivel up over time like Lynn’s body did. She decided she did not want to keep that flower to remind her of Lynn’s death. She put it in one of Lynn’s dresser drawers.

She looked through some of Lynn’s things remembering all the good times they had together in that room. She went back downstairs and mostly sat quietly in the corner by the piano that she and Lynn used to play, though neither learned how to play the piano.

Marcy and her parents didn’t stay long. They greeted most of the people and offered their condolences to the Hamptons and then went back home.

Marcy headed straight to her room when they got back home. However, about halfway up the stairs, she turned around and caught her father about to head for the kitchen.

“Dad. Did God kill Lynn?”

Her father lowered his head for a moment and then looked back up at Marcy. “I know that’s what Pastor Morris said, but I’m not so sure about that.”

“Then why did she die after so many people were praying for her?”

“I know, Mar. I just don’t know the answer to your question. I do know one thing. Whether God plucked her or not, she is surely in a much better place and one day you’ll meet her.”

“What if I get sick? Will he kill me or watch me die?”

“Now don’t start blaming God. God loves us but we don’t understand why many things happen. I don’t believe that he killed Lynn though.”

“That’s the same thing Mrs. Hampton said. What’s the point of going to church and learning how to live a right life when God doesn’t come through for you when you need him?”

“Well. I think we just don’t understand God very well. Perhaps one day we will.”

Marcy thought for a moment and then continued up the stairs to her room. She sat on the bed staring at the picture of Lynn that Mrs. Hampton gave her. Marcy retrieved her picture of that trip from a box in the closet and put both pictures on her dresser side by side. She retrieved her oath rock and put it in the same case with Lynn’s and put it on her dresser.

Each day Marcy cried while gazing at the oath rocks and the picture of Lynn that were on her dresser. Each night she would go to bed without reading her Bible or saying her usual nighttime prayers. She even took Lynn’s small Bible that she took from Lynn’s room and put it in one of her table drawers.

Marcy still attended church services on Sundays, but she was much less engaged. She stopped going to Sunday school and the mid-week Bible study a few weeks after the funeral. Within a couple of weeks, she even completely stopped reading the Bible and praying.

Pastor Morris checked in on Marcy when he noticed her absence. Marcy would tell him that she is still getting over Lynn’s death and didn’t want to be around things that reminded her of Lynn and the things they did together.

Every time she woke up in the morning and saw sunlight shining through her windows, she would think of the day they got the phone call of Lynn’s death and the funeral. She began keeping the curtains closed to keep some of the sunlight from shining through her window.

Marcy would start crying almost every time she looked at the picture of Lynn on her dresser. One day after gazing at Lynn’s picture, she grabbed a box from her closet.

Marcy touched the picture of Lynn. “I’ll see you again one day, Lynn. I’ll always love you.” She kissed the picture and tucked it away in the box along with the oath rocks. She had flashbacks of the coffin being lowered into the ground at Lynn’s funeral when she put the box in her closet. Marcy started crying. “I’m sorry, Lynn.” She got up and closed the closet door.

Marcy then took the small Bible she had placed in her table drawer, went back to the closet to retrieve the box with Lynn’s picture in it, and put the Bible in the box too. She was about to close the box when she saw Lynn’s picture, which looked as if Lynn was looking back at her.

“No. I’m not putting this Bible in here with you, Lynn.”

She took the Bible out of the box and placed it in another box in the closet. Marcy then stretched out on her bed and cried bitterly. Her father must have heard her because he soon came to her room. She was crying so badly that she didn’t notice him.

He sat down on the bed while Marcy was still in full throttle crying. She looked up at him with eyes full of tears.

“She’s really gone, Dad. Lynn is gone. Why?”

“I know, Mar. I don’t know why she died. But do something for her. Okay?”

Marcy’s crying came to a whimper. “What?”

“Live the best life you and Lynn had planned. Honor her that way. Be successful for you and her. Be double successful. Maybe you’ll find meaning that way.”

Marcy sat up in the bed with her head down and shook her head. “Okay.”

He put his arm around her and held her tightly. “You two had something very special.”

She leaned against him and started jerking from more crying. “It hurts so bad.”

She could feel her father loosening his arms and pulling back. When she looked up, he was looking directly into her eyes like he was trying to see her soul. “Don’t let this destroy you, Mar. Your mother and I will do whatever it takes to help you live your life to the fullest. Promise?”

Marcy looked down. She felt her father’s finger on her chin pushing her head up. “Do you promise?” he asked, looking deep into her eyes.

“I promise.”

He hugged her and held her tightly. “That’s my Mar. You’re going to do great things and maybe understand things better. You’ll see.”

# The Years After Lynn

It was weeks before Marcy stopped spending most of her time in her bedroom. She would become distressed every time she saw something that reminded her of Lynn. She would then subsequently put them away just as she did the picture of Lynn and the oath rocks.

She tried to read the Bible as she would often do, but even that distressed her. She read how Jesus healed the multitudes and then said out loud, “Except for Lynn.”

One morning while eating breakfast with her father, she pushed a Bible in front of him and looked at him as if he were under interrogation.

“Is this stuff true?”

Her father looked startled when he looked down and saw it was the Bible she was asking about.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean can we really trust what the Bible says?”

“Of course, we can—”

“Then why did Lynn die?”

“I don’t know, but one day we may understand it.”

“I want to understand it now. How can I go on trusting this stuff when it didn’t work when we really needed it to? What if we got it all wrong because we don’t understand?”

Marcy asked the same question in different ways for the rest of the summer. She didn’t read the Bible as much as she used to. She stopped talking about ministry and increasingly protested going to church.

“But I don’t want to go to church. Why do I have to go?”

Her mother explained that it was a place of worship and fellowship and where we learn about God and his ways.

“It’s a spectator sport at best,” Marcy protested. “We just go and sit down listen to some songs and a sermon and go home. None of it is practical otherwise Lynn would still be here.”

Marcy and her parents had interactions like that several times a week. She would protest every time they would bring up something having to do with church, God, or the Bible.

One evening, Marcy stayed up to about 1:00am and sat by her bedroom window gazing at the stars.

“Are you really out there? Do you really care?”

She started to talk as if God were standing outside of her window. She thought about the things that she and Lynn had planned, especially the ministry they were to have. She thought about the things Pastor Morris said about God plucking Lynn.

Marcy frowned as she gazed at the sky.

“Why would you kill Lynn? If you didn’t want us to have a ministry, then why didn’t you just say so?”

She paused for several minutes and appeared to be contemplating a physics problem.

“Why didn’t you save Lynn? I thought you were a loving and all-powerful father?”

Marcy started crying out for Lynn. Suddenly her room door swung open. She jumped out of the chair. She was breathing rapidly and shaking while staring at her bedroom door.

“Mar. Are you okay?” Asked her father.

“I’m okay. I’m sorry.”

“I heard you hollering. You sure you’re okay?”

Her father walked over to her. “Thinking about Lynn?” He held her.

“I used to sit by my window and talk to God when I was your age,” he said. He told her about the many nights he used to sit in the dark in the backyard and talk to God too.

“Did he ever talk back?” asked Marcy.

“Well, not verbally. I suppose I learned to hear his voice my own way.”

“I’ve been praying all these years and when I needed him most, he didn’t show up.”

“Now don’t start blaming God. You’re just grieving for Lynn, which is normal.”

“Do you still believe in God?” asked Marcy.

He paused for a moment. “Of course, I do. Why would you ask that?”

“I don’t know. Maybe you’re right. I’m just grieving.”

Marcy and her father talked for a few minutes in the dark and she asked more questions about his thoughts about God.

“Why are you so stiff? Relax?”

He tried to assure her that one day she would understand.

“Why does it have to be so complicated? Why can’t we just call out to God, and he answers and rescues us when we’re in trouble?” Her voice started to become distressed with a hint of anger and disappointment all rolled up. “I don’t want to understand one day. I want God’s help now,” she said intensely.

Her father kissed her on her forehead and got up to leave. “Time will heal. You’ll be fine.” He left the room but didn’t close the door behind him. She could see the silhouette of his body disappear in the dark as he headed for his bedroom. He always had a nightlight dimly illuminating the hallway because he had a habit of getting up in the middle of the night to get a snack.

Marcy got up and closed the door and then sat on her bed looking out the window.

“I miss you, Lynn. Are you with God? Why did he kill you?”

Suddenly, there was a flash of light right outside of her window. It wasn’t very bright but noticeable enough. It was a bluish-white light that sparked for a moment and gradually faded away.

“What was that? Lynn?” She waited a few moments but there was no answer.

The light appeared again but further away from the window, and it darted away from her and up. It disappeared into the night sky.

“Am I going nuts?” She sat their staring out the window hoping to see the light again. “Was that Lynn? It couldn’t be.”

Marcy laid down on her bed contemplating the good times she had with Lynn and the possibility that she could see her again soon.

## High School Days

Marcy hadn’t talked about Lynn much by the time high school started. She still would sit at her window late at night thinking about all that had happened earlier that summer. She typically kept the curtains at her bedroom window to from remembering the day Lynn died and her funeral.

Marcy started high school without the excitement that she and Lynn had anticipated. She went from class to class and pretty much kept to herself, though she would occasionally hang out with classmates. Marcy decided to keep her promise with her father and live a full and successful life for Lynn’s sake. She joined and participated in clubs and afterschool classes about graphic design and decorating. She also took some art classes.

One day Marcy’s friend Sally asked her if she was going to attend the “Back to School” fellowship that the church was sponsoring one Saturday. She refused. However, Sally told her that she could provide decorating suggestions for her birthday party at the church in a couple of months. Marcy relented.

Marcy and a few of her friends attended the “Back to School” fellowship. Marcy started looking around.

“Those are not aligned right and the colors over there are wrong. These tables should be over there…”

“Relax and enjoy yourself,” said Sally.

“Hello, Marcy.” Pastor Morris had approached Marcy and her friends from behind.

“Hi, Rev. Morris.”

“I haven’t seen you in church much these past couple of months. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I’m just getting my head on straight I guess.”

“That’s good. That’s important now that you are in high school. You can always count on God to help you through a lot of stuff high school kids go through.”

“Like he helped Lynn,” Marcy blurted out.

“Excuse me? What do you mean?”

“I tried to count on God for Lynn’s sake, but where did that end up?”

“I’m sorry about Lynn. I know you too were very close. One day you’ll—"

“I know. One day I’ll understand. When will that day come?”

“You’re still grieving. Don’t let it skew your perception of the Father.”

“Pastor Morris. My perception of God isn’t skewed. Reality speaks for itself. If you told me that I could call you if I needed help and one day, I called you, but you didn’t help. Why would I bother calling you again? Why would I bother trusting you?”

“There’s more to it than that. Trust me. Your picture of God and how he interacts with us is not mature. That’s all.”

“Maybe you’re right. Then perhaps he just doesn’t care about me then.”

“Don’t say that. You’ll understand soon enough. Things aren’t always as they appear.”

As Pastor Morris walked away and greeted others, Sally asked Marcy, “What was that about?”

“I trusted God to save Lynn…” Marcy lowered her head and forced herself to control her emotions and dam the tears.

“You okay,” asked Sally.

“Yeah. I’m fine. Let’s go get some of those fried chicken strips.”

“They’ve got chocolate cake,” Sally said playfully. Marcy smiled and headed straight for the chicken and cake.

Marcy spent a lot of time working to master interior decorating and graphic design. She even secured freelance jobs from local businesses. She spent most of her free time on design and decorating.

An art teacher, Mrs. Simmons, approached Marcy after class one day and said how she thought Marcy was gifted for design.

“You have a God-given talent for design and arranging things. You might have a great career in interior design and decorating.”

“Thank you. I wish he would give me answers.”

“Answers to what?” asked the Mrs. Simmons.

“It’s nothing. Just something that happened a little while ago.” Marcy wiped her eyes.

The freshmen year was a very successful one for Marcy. She made some friends and had a 3.98 GPA. Mrs. Simmons asked if she would mind working with her on some design and decorating projects over the summer. Mrs. Simmons had her own design business. Marcy excitedly agreed.

One Saturday morning, Marcy and her mother stopped in a new store named “Franklin’s Home Store.” The store had opened only a few days prior. Marcy was looking around analyzing the way things were arranged on the shelves and even the artwork on the walls. Things seemed to flow nicely together.

The owner greeted them as they were walking around. Her name was Gloria Franklin. Marcy began asking Gloria the reason things were arranged the way they were and how she came up with the design ideas.

“I’ve never been asked that before.” Gloria explained that every piece had a purpose, and that purpose was ultimately to get people to buy something. She explained that things were organized to tell a story that a person would relate to prompting them to purchase.

“I want people to feel something when they move towards a particular item in the store. That way, they’ll tend to buy it to get that same emotion later.”

Gloria took Marcy and her mother around the store and explained the purpose of most arrangements. Marcy gave her opinions about the decorations that were hanging on the wall and even the arrangements of things.

Gloria folded her arms and looked at Marcy. “You seem to have an eye for design.”

“People keep telling me that.”

Her mother explained how Marcy was obsessed with decorating and design. “You should see our house, especially her room.”

Gloria laughed. “I think I know what you mean. I used to be like that, but more on the artistic side. I mean, I was more interested in the items a decorator would use to decorate than I was in actually decorating.”

“I like both too. I like creating things and then using them for decorating.”

“How would you like to work for me over the summer? If it’s okay with your mother.”

Marcy looked at her mother with her eyes wide open and her mouth agape. Her mother nodded. Marcy quickly turned back to Gloria. “Are you serious? Really?”

“Yes. You could help me decorate and arrange things better.” Gloria discussed work hours with Marcy and her mother. She said that she only wanted her to help with arranging things around the store, cleaning, and stocking. Marcy also agreed to help revamp the company brochures, catalogs, and literature.

Marcy was smiling and jumping around as she and her mother continued walking around the store. Suddenly, there was a sparkle on a shelf ahead of her to the left. She stopped and walked over to it inquisitively.

“This is beautiful,” she said to her mother. “It reminds me of…”

“Of what?” asked her mother.

Marcy fought to maintain her composure. “It reminds me of the oath rock that…”

“It’s okay, honey. Do you want it?”

“Please.”

Her mother purchased the decorative rocks and some other items, and they headed home. Marcy was quiet during the ride home.

“Still thinking about Lynn?”

Marcy started to whimper. She wiped her eyes and sat up straight. “I’m glad I got that job.”

“Is that right? What do you like most about it?”

“I just enjoy arranging things. I can’t wait to work on her company brochures and stuff.”

Each day Marcy would go to Gloria’s to work. She even went on most Saturdays because she loved her work so much. She and Gloria spend lots of time discussing arrangements, designs for company literature, and decorations for the store.

By the end of the summer, Gloria’s became well known by homeowners and small businesses. Marcy would talk to people as they perused the store with an energy that seemed to make them feel comfortable in the store.

Marcy was motivated even more to work hard and become extremely good at interior decorating and graphic design. She began to be known for her keen eye for decorating. Mothers began approaching Marcy to provide recommendations for decorating their homes. Other business owners also approached Marcy about decorating their establishments and graphic design services.

Marcy had acquired several clients and had completed many projects for interior decorating and graphic design before graduating high school and her reputation kept growing.

Hanging out with friends was not one of Marcy’s past times in high school. She spent most of her time studying and improving her design skills. She was hired by more business owners and homeowners to help them decorate. More businesses started calling on Marcy to design company literature, signs, and to help them brand their businesses.

Marcy’s parents made sure that she had all she needed for her design projects. Marcy was famous around town for her design and decorating prowess. One of the business owners Marcy had helped had connections to a graphics design school nearby. He was able to secure a scholarship for Marcy for a BFA in graphic design.

By the time Marcy graduated high school, she was already established as an accomplished graphic designer and interior decorator. However, she decided to go to the college with her scholarship and learn even more.

A couple of days before her high school graduation, Marcy’s father visited her in her room. She was sitting at the window.

“I’m proud of you, Mar.”

She smiled. “I still miss her.”

“I know, but you are honoring her in a great way. Just like you promised. Perhaps she is looking down on you and smiling too.”

“Do really think so?”

“I suppose it is possible.”

“Do you think she might be trying to contact me?”

“What? Where did that come from?”

“Oh. Nothing.” She grinned.

They talked more and after several minutes her mother joined them. They talked for over an hour about many things. Her mother and father expressed their pride in what Marcy had accomplished while in high school.

As they were leaving the room, Marcy’s father turned and said, “Show them how good you really are in college.”

# College Days Flickering

The start of college brought a feeling of excitement for Marcy. She would not only learn to do what she loved, but she was already doing it. She lived in an apartment near the college campus, which her parents paid for. She enrolled in the accelerated program and would finish her degree in about two and a half years.

Marcy excelled in her courses in college. She majored in graphic design and minored in interior decorating. She seemed to have a knack for arranging things and telling stories with pictures and graphics. She also took courses in illustration because she wanted to enhance her drawing skills.

Businesses in the area heard about Marcy and approached her about helping them with branding and some with decorating their stores.

Like in high school, Marcy didn’t socialize much when she wasn’t in class. She did have some classmates that she became close to, but most of her time was spent studying and completing projects.

A few of Marcy’s classmates went to the gym a few times a week. They told her it was their way of destressing. She decided to join them the next time. It was like a whole new world exposed itself when she entered the gym. Her classmate, Janet talked a lot about her yoga classes, so Marcy decided to join her. She also joined a weekly spinning class.

Janet and Marcy became companions in the gym. Marcy enjoyed the spinning classes and found that the yoga classes helped her to relax. It wasn’t too long before Marcy purchased a bicycle to ride around town. Janet was also an avid cyclist, and they would often ride together.

One day, Janet, Marcy, and another classmate, Brianna were outside in a large circular area on campus sitting on a bench. The area was known as the “angel court” because of a large statue of five angels in the center. There were four angels facing four directions with a larger one in the center towering over them.

Marcy and her friends were sitting in direct line of sight of the top angel. It looked as if it were peering down directly at them. The other four angels were looking in the distance.

Suddenly there was a voice from the direction of the statue.

“Marcy.” Marcy looked towards the statue but there were only a few students walking past it and no one was trying to get her attention.

Again, she heard her name called. Again, there was no one trying to get her attention. Suddenly, the top angel started glowing with a bluish-white aura. The light flickered for a few moments and then disappeared.

Marcy jumped out off the bench. “Did you see that!”

“See what? What happened?” asked Janet.

“The light from the angels. I heard someone call me and then when I looked, the angel on top started to glow.”

“I didn’t see any light.”

“Do you mean the sun?” asked Brianna sarcastically. “Maybe God is trying to get your attention like Moses and the burning bush.” Janet laughed.

“I don’t want to hear from him,” said Marcy.

“What?” said Brianna and Janet almost in unison.

Marcy explained to them what happened to Lynn and how she believed that God let her die. She began to explain to them her thoughts about God, religion, and the Bible.

“You mean you don’t believe in God?” asked Janet.

“I’m not saying I don’t believe in him. I just don’t want to have much to do with him.”

Marcy told them about the many people who pray and ask for God’s help, but they still suffer and die. There are many people who cry out to God, but he doesn’t answer. The Bible says he loves us but how? Marcy continued ranting about her troubles with God until she started to whimper.

“Are you okay?” asked Janet.

“Yeah. I was thinking about…I’m okay.”

Marcy repositioned herself so that the water fountain was no longer directly in front of her.

“My mother was miraculously healed five years ago,” said Brianna. “No one to this day knows why she suddenly got better.”

Marcy stared at Brianna inquisitively. “Did you pray for her?”

“Not really—”

“What!” said Marcy.

“I didn’t believe in God then. She kept going back and forth to the doctors and finally they gave up and sent her home.”

“How did she get better?”

“Like I said. No one knows. She just started getting better. I mean there were people praying for her from our church—­­”

“But I thought you said you didn’t believe in God?”

“Yeah. I didn’t”

“But you went to church?” asked Marcy.

“My parents made me go to church. I didn’t believe the things they were pushing though…Well, not until my mother got better.”

Brianna shared more about her mother’s miraculous healing and her new belief in God. She told Marcy not to blame God for Lynn’s death.

Marcy glanced back at the water fountain, but there was no flash of light.

“Well Marcy. It’s time for us to get to class. We’ll catch up with you later.”

Marcy sat on the bench staring at the statue. “Was I imagining things,” she said to herself. The more she looked at the statue, the more it seemed as though the top angel was looking directly at her.

“This is getting creepy. I had better get out of here.” Marcy gathered her things and went back to her apartment.

“I need to get more sleep. I am starting to hear and see things.”

The same thing happened two weeks later, except this time she was sitting on the bench alone and it was about 6:00pm. Marcy started sitting on that bench more frequently since the angelic light encounter.

She glanced up at the statue while reviewing some notes she had taken earlier that day.

“What?” She was staring at the statue. It looked like the top and the three angels in her view were looking at her. “They weren’t turned that way before, were they?” She shook her head and looked back up at the statue and only the top angel was peering down at her.

“Oh my God. I need to get more sleep or something.” Suddenly, the top angel started to glow like it did two weeks ago. Again, there was a few flickers of bluish-white light surrounding the top angel. Marcy was gazing at it.

“Excuse me,” she blurted out to someone walking by, “Do you see the top angel glowing or something?”

“Glowing? That’s just the reflection of the sun this late in the day. It’s an optical illusion or something like that. You a freshman?”

“Yeah. I thought I was seeing things.”

“No prob. Lot’s of people get weirded out by that illusion at first.”

“Ok. Thanks. I didn’t mean to hold you up.”

“No prob. I was just going back to the dorms anyway. It’s been a long day. See you. Hey. What’s your name? I’m Trish.”

“I’m Marcy.”

“See you around Marcy.”

On another occasion, Marcy was walking to her apartment through the angel court at night. She was breathing heavily and staring at the ground as she walked past the statue. Suddenly, she could see a bright light reflecting from the ground coming from the statue. She ran away without looking up at it.

Marcy had several similar flicker encounters but she kept it to herself. She also started to avoid the angel court as much as possible.

Marcy’s friend, Brianna, asked her to attend a bible study with her at her church. Marcy initially refused, but Brianna would not let up. Marcy finally relented.

It was a Wednesday night.

“Why are all these people here?” Marcy asked.

“What do you mean? It’s the normal crowd.”

“This many people show up for a Bible class?”

Marcy and Brianna sat near the front of the room where the Bible studies were held. Pastor Braxton entered the room with a tall man following him. He greeted everyone and introduced the guess teacher for the evening.

“Good evening, everyone. My mentor and teacher, Malcolm Jones, will be teaching this evening. “

Pastor Braxton introduced Reverend Jones and told a few stories about their interactions in the past.

Reverend Jones began speaking to the class about belief, faith, and the power of God. He discussed several passages of Scripture. Marcy was looking at him as if he was a salesperson trying to convince her to buy something.

“What about you, young lady? Do you believe?” asked Reverend Jones as he was looking directly at Marcy. Marcy’s head was down and she wasn’t paying attention at that point.

Brianna jabbed her with her elbow. “He’s talking to you.”

“What?”

“Do you believe?” asked Reverend Jones again.

“Believe what?”

Reverend Jones smiled and walked towards Marcy. “Do you believe that God loves you and wants the best for you?”

“Why are you asking me that?” Marcy asked.

There was a light buzz in the room after Marcy said that. Even Brianna was looking at Marcy strangely.

“I don’t know. I just felt like asking you in particular.”

“Well. He didn’t’ love Lynn and he sure didn’t care for her best interest.”

“Lynn was close to you, I take it.”

“She was my best friend.” Marcy paused. “Like a sister. Your loving God let her die.” Marcy looked around with a stunned look on her face, and there was an eerie hush in the room. However, Brianna started to rub her back. “It’s okay, Marcy.”

Reverend Jones stepped backwards and grabbed a chair and sat down at the end of Marcy’s table. The room was still silent as if someone said Jesus was from Mars.

“So, you don’t think he is your God?” asked Reverend Jones.

Just about everyone was gazing at Marcy. Brianna was still rubbing her back gently. Marcy did not look up at Reverend Jones and tears started to drip from her eyes.

“I don’t want to talk about it.” She looked at Brianna. “I shouldn’t have come. I’m sorry.” Marcy got up from the table and left the church. Brianna followed her. Outside Marcy started crying uncontrollably.

“I thought I was over it. I thought the pain was gone.” Brianna was holding her.

“You’re going to be fine.”

“If he was so loving then why did he let Lynn die after I prayed so much. I thought I believed. I thought I had faith. He’s not my God!”

“Okay. Calm down. It’s going to be alright.” Brianna took Marcy back to her apartment. She cried most of the rest of the night for Lynn.

“I still love you Lynn.”

Brianna stopped by early the next morning.

“What are you doing here?” asked Marcy.

“I came to see if you were okay. You were pretty upset last night.”

“Thanks. I’m okay, I guess. I didn’t know those feelings were still inside me.”

“Pastor Braxton wants to talk to you. Can you come to the church tomorrow night at about 6:00?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“But you should. You have to resolve whatever is eating you up inside.”

“Marcy looked into Brianna’s eyes for a few seconds. Brianna looked like a concerned mother for her child.

“Okay. I’ll talk to him.”

“Great. I’ll let him know. I’ll go with you.”

“You better!” They both laughed.

Brianna took Marcy to the church to meet with Pastor Braxton. They used a side entrance that led directly to the Pastor’s study.

“Oh. Reverend…Jones,” said Marcy. She looked at Brianna who had a puzzled look on her face.

“I didn’t know he would be here.” Marcy whispered to Brianna.

“Hello there, young lady. I’m sorry to have run you off the other night. It was not my intentions.”

Marcy glared at him but didn’t respond. Brianna poked her with her elbow.

“I’m okay, “ said Marcy.

Reverend Jones asked, “What happened to your best friend?”

“God plucked her because he loved her more.”

“What? I don’t understand.”

“God killed her because he wanted her more than me or her parents.”

Reverend Jones and Pastor Braxton looked at each other confused.

“Where did you get that from,” asked Pastor Braxton.

“My pastor said that at Lynn’s funeral.”

“Lynn was your best friend,” asked Reverend Jones.

“Yes. She was.”

“You must have loved her—”

“I still do.” Marcy interrupted.

“Relax, Marcy. You are so tense,” whispered Brianna while rubbing Marcy’s shoulder.

“So, you don’t believe in God?” asked Reverend Jones.

“I believe there is a God, but I don’t believe he is who you say he is.”

“And what is that?”

“A loving and caring God. If he was so loving, then Lynn would still be here.”

“Why do you think that?”

“What! Are you serious?” Marcy started to shake.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“Bri. I can’t take any more.” Marcy started crying.

“Can we pray together?” asked Pastor Braxton.

Marcy abruptly looked up angrily. “Pray. Are you kidding? I prayed for Lynn. What good did that do. She was my best friend in the whole world. We were going to have a life and ministry together. God killed her. It’s that simple.”

Marcy was glaring at Reverend Jones as if she was prepared to defend herself in a fist fight.

“One day you will find closure, Marcy,” said Reverend Jones, “I pray one day that God would show you the truth of the matter. Sometimes God’s will doesn’t make sense to us. Sometimes there is a higher good.”

“I’m tired of hearing that crap about one day I’ll understand. God’s will? Higher Good? What I understand now is God killed…” Marcy cried aloud for Lynn. “I’m sorry, Lynn. I couldn’t help you!” After a few moments, Marcy composed herself. Brianna was still rubbing her shoulder.

She looked at Reverend Jones with a blank emotionless glare. She was still shaking and sobbing. She got up and left the church again with Brianna right behind her.

“No more! I’m not listening to any more of that crap.”

“Calm down, Marcy. You’ll be okay. I’m sorry. I was just trying to help.”

“It’s not your fault. I know you were trying to help.”

“Come on. Let’s go get some chocolate ice cream,” said Brianna. They went to the ice cream shop not too far from the church and sat inside to eat.

Marcy was staring at Brianna after they finished their ice cream.

“What?” asked Brianna.

“My parents pay for my apartment and there is plenty of room in it. Would you like to move in with me?”

“Are you serious?”

“Very. You are a true friend. I see that now. You wouldn’t have to pay for the dorms anymore.”

“Tell me about Lynn.”

“What?”

“Tell me all about your best friend Lynn.”

Marcy told Brianna many stories about their adventures when they were children. She told her about their plans and the ministry they would have together. She told her the details about Lynn’s death.

“You never answered my question?” said Marcy.

“Yes. I’ll move in with you. That way I can keep an eye on you. Why don’t we have a sleep over tonight?”

Marcy laughed. “Sounds great. Let’s go. Do you need anything from your dorm?”

“Yeah. Let me get a few things.”

Brianna picked up some things from her dorm and headed for Marcy’s apartment. They arrived and flopped down on the small sofa for a few minutes. Marcy showed Brianna the room she could use. It was a two-room apartment. The room was already furnished with a bed, dresser, table and chair.

“This is great!” said Brianna. She walked into the room and sat down on the bed while Marcy stayed at the doorway. Brianna got up and started walking towards Marcy.

A bright light appeared in the corner of the bedroom and Marcy stepped back and almost tripped.

“What’s wrong?”

“I keep seeing that light. I saw it a few times at angel court and a few other places. I just saw the same light in the corner over there.” She pointed to the corner of the room.

“I don’t know, Marcy. Maybe God is trying to get your attention.”

“I can’t accept a God who would kill Lynn. I don’t want a God like that.”

“Come on. Don’t say that.”

“Why not? What difference would it make? Will he strike me with lightening? Apparently, he’ll do that even if you try to get close to him. And look out. If he really loves you then He’ll strike you down so you could be with him in heaven.”

“You need therapy,” said Brianna. “Besides. Who said God killed her? There is another you know.”

Marcy looked at Brianna with an extremely puzzled look on her face. “What do you mean?”

“Well. There is God and the angels. Right?”

“Yeah.”

“There is also Satan and the demons. The Bible says that Satan is the one going around trying to kill and steal.”

“I don’t know,” said Marcy.

The friendship between Marcy and Brianna grew during their time in college. Brianna tended to be quite supportive and protective of Marcy. Every so often Brianna would bring up the God question but the wall that Marcy was erecting became larger and higher as time went by.

# Life after College

Marcy graduated at the top of her class. Her parents were very proud of her. They went out and had dinner together, along with Brianna and her parents. Marcy and Brianna went back to their apartment after dinner.

“I’m going to miss you Marcy,” said Brianna.

“I’m going to miss you too.”

“Look me up if you are ever in the Lanchester area. It’ll be good to stay connected,” said Brianna.

Brianna was hired by a company that produces artwork for businesses. She would create artwork for prints, floor designs, along with paintings. Brianna was extremely good at drawing and painting.

“Where did you say Lanchester is?”

“It’s a small city about sixty miles from here. They are growing and I think there will be lots of opportunities in the near future. How long are you going to stay around here?”

“I don’t know. I would love to build my own business or at least do a lot of interior decorating. I love doing that.”

“You’re good at drawing too,” said Brianna.

“Well. I picked a lot of that up from you. I would like to merge the two in my own business if I could.”

“You will…So…just pray about it.”

Marcy threw a pillow at Brianna.

“You can’t live the rest of your life resenting God, Marcy. It’s not healthy.”

“I’ve lived my life just fine without—”

“No, you haven’t. Just because God didn’t strike you with lightening or something doesn’t’ mean that he is passively standing by. He continues to bless you. You’ll see. His mercy lasts forever. Even for you.”

“Maybe. But right now, I don’t think he wants anything to do with me.”

“Stop saying that. You’ve been saying that for the last year and a half. God loves you even if you can’t figure things out.”

“Well. I need answers then.”

“Pray to God for answers instead of trying to live your life without him. Things may not be as they appear.”

“Okay. I’ll ask God for answers,” said Marcy sarcastically.

“I’m going tobed. My brother will be here tomorrow to get my stuff and take me to my new apartment. Why don’t you stop by next week? I should be settled in by then.”

“We can go out to lunch or something,” said Marcy.

“No way! You have to stay a couple of days. You may end up in Europe and we may not see each other for a long time. So, let’s have one last hurrah.”

Marcy laughed. “Okay. Sounds good.”

A week later Marcy headed to Brianna’s apartment in Lanchester. Brianna picked her up at the bus station.

“What is this?” asked Marcy.

“My parents gave me a new car for my graduation present. Isn’t it nice?”

“It sure is. That was really nice of them.”

“They were so proud of me for graduating college and doing so well. I completely turned my life around.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I was a trouble child. I hated people telling me what to do. I was a mess. I was always getting into trouble.”

“You. But you seem so level-headed and controlled.”

“That’s the new me after building a relationship with God.”

“What?”

“That’s right. I know how you feel about it, but for me, God changed my life and blessed me tremendously. I believe he has been blessing you too.”

“How so. I haven’t exactly been on his nice list.”

“You’ve got God all wrong. You’ll see. Come on. Let me show you around town a little bit.”

Brianna drove around town and showed Marcy many of the shopping places and business parks. She even took her to a nearby art college.

“I’m going to be teaching some classes at the art college sometimes.”

“Wow. You’re going to be pretty busy.”

“Come on, let me get you settled in.”

Brianna drove Marcy back to her apartment.

“Ta-da! Here’s home.”

“This is beautiful, Brianna. Wow. I’ll bet you did the paintings.”

“Yup. Look at this one,” pointing across the room at a colorful painting on the wall. “That’s one of my favorites.”

“It’s incredible. Remember me when you’re rich and famous.” Marcy laughed.

Brianna was surprisingly silent after Marcy said that. Marcy turned and saw Brianna sobbing.

“What’s wrong?”

“Nothing. I never thought I would be here. God has been so good to me. I didn’t deserve this after the things I’ve done in my life.”

They both walked over to the painting. Marcy was mesmerized. It was a painting of an angel hovering over a small town looking down at a little girl who had fallen off her bike and hurt her knee. The angel was glowing with a bluish-white light. There was a caption that read, “Always with you.”

“That looks like the light that I saw sometimes on campus.”

“The idea for that painting came from those light encounters you told me about. I believe God is watching over you, Marcy.”

Brianna showed her some other paintings and drawings. She took her around the apartment and showed her the bedroom she would stay in.

“Here it is. All for you. Stay as long as you like. I mean it. I know I said a couple of days but stay as long as you like. I’m glad you’re here, Marcy.”

Marcy walked into the room and looked around. Her mouth was agape and her eyes wide open. She gently touched things and rubbed others. She sat down on the bed and closed her eyes.

“This is beautiful. Thank you.”

“I’m glad you like it. Well. You get settled. Relax a while and we can go out for dinner or order pizzas. Whatever you want. Okay?”

“Forgive me. Why are you doing this?” asked Marcy.

“You’re my friend. Now shut up and chill out. I’ll be in the kitchen or thereabouts.”

Brianna left Marcy sitting on the bed and closed the door behind her. Marcy looked around the room and then laid back on the bed. Marcy then went downstairs and met Brianna in the living room.

“I discovered this really nice restaurant not far from here. Let’s go there,” said Brianna.

The restaurant was bustling with activity. There were many people there, but it wasn’t’ overly crowded. Marcy and Brianna were seated. They both ordered the cheeseburger platter.

Marcy was looking around observing the place. After a few minutes, a gentlemen came to their table and greeted them.

“Hello. My name is Sammy Dyson. I haven’t seen you here before. Are you new in the area or just passing through?”

“We’re both new in the area. I’ll be working for Tylor Designs in Lanchester,” answered Brianna.

“So. You’re in the art business.”

“She’s very good too,” exclaimed Marcy.

Brianna said, “Now this young lady here is extremely good at interior design. I mean like genius level.”

“Is that right,” said Sammy. “We could use a lot of that around here. What’s your names?”

“Sorry. I’m Brianna and this is my best friend, Marcy.”

“Pleased to meet the both of you. Thanks for stopping by and I hope to see more of you.” Sammy started walking away from the table but then came back.

“Listen. Marcy. I just had a thought. Would you be interested in helping me decorate the place like a consultant or something? It’s pretty drabby and I’d like to make it look much better. I want it to look as great as my food is.” Sammy laughed.

“I don’t know what you mean,” answered Marcy.

“I mean I would be interested in hiring you to decorate the place. I know of other businesses in town that are looking for some decorating expertise too.”

“Umm. Sure. I have a few business cards here. I’ve been doing work not too far from here. I can get you references as well.”

Marcy handed him a business card, but one fell on the floor as she took it out of her purse. Sammy reached down and picked it up.

“The Franklin Shop? That woman is great at decorating. I’ve been to her shop a few times looking for items for the restaurant.”

“I used to work there in high school. I learned a lot from her. I did work for several businesses in the area too.”

“In high school? And you worked for Gloria Franklin?”

“Yeah. You know here?”

“You’re hired. If you worked for Gloria, then you must be good. Anyway, are you available tomorrow at about 1:00 in the afternoon to talk about this?”

“Sure.”

Sammy walked away. Brianna was smiling from ear to ear at Marcy.

“What?” said Marcy grinning.

“That’s a sign girlfriend. A sign indeed.”

“Whatever.”

“We can have lunch here tomorrow then.”

The hamburger platters came, and they both ate.

“That was a great burger,” said Marcy. “I think it was the best I’ve ever had.”

“I told you this place was good.”

There was laughter and the humming of conversations from the tables around them.

“What’s the name of this place?” asked Marcy.

“Umm. Sammy D’s,” said Brianna. “I hear it is the favorite spot of the locals.”

“Where are we? Is this still Lanchester?”

“No. This town is called…Blue Haven. Yeah. That’s it.”

“Wait a minute. Didn’t that guy say his name was Sammy Dyson? He must be the owner.”

“I guess so.”

Marcy saw Sammy in the kitchen cooking.

“He can’t be the owner. He’s flipping burgers and cooking steaks.”

A man who was walking past their table heard that and said, ”Nope. That is the one and only Sammy D. missy. Hey. New in town? I’m Jimmy.”

“I’m Marcy and this is my best friend, Brianna.”

“Nice to meet you. Have a good one. Try the chocolate cake. It’s delicious.”

“Did he say chocolate cake?” Marcy smiled.

They finished their chocolate cakes and went back to Brianna’s apartment. They talked about their adventures and hopes most of the night. They talked about what Marcy should charge for her services, what her limitations would be, and more.

“Why don’t you just stay here a while and build your business in the area?” Said Brianna.

“I don’t want to trouble you—”

“Don’t you dare insult me by going there. I said you can stay as long as you like. We can make this work. Besides, you’ll be rich and famous soon.” They both laughed.

The next day they went to meet with Sammy D. at his restaurant.

“Do you mind if Brianna joins us. She’s an artist too…genius level.”

Sammy laughed. “Of course not. Come on into my office.”

Sammy and Marcy worked out an agreement for her to decorate his restaurant. He gave her a budget and she would recommend paintings, prints, and other items, along with colors and arrangements.

“My restaurant is popular among the locals, but I want it to be a kind of tourist attraction too because the area seems to be growing.”

Marcy spent the next three weeks decorating Sammy D’s. She did something that Sammy didn’t expect. She solicited input from the locals regarding colors, table positions, etc. People became fond of Marcy. She even commissioned Brianna to create paintings and prints for the restaurant, which she did at very low cost.

The restaurant was gradually transformed during those three weeks and Sammy loved it. So did the locals. The restaurant was more modern but kept that cozy feeling. Her decorations were a hit and word got around about it.

Marcy and Brianna celebrated her success by eating steaks at Sammy D’s.

“I really like this place and this town. I got a few more requests for decorating too.”

“That’s great. I told you,” said Brianna.

“I’m thinking about moving here.”

“Do you mean here as in Blue Haven?”

“Yeah. I’ll run it past my parents for their opinion.”

“That’s a great idea. It’ll be like a fresh start…or actually a start.”

“I’ll need to make some money while my business grows though.”

“Don’t worry about that. You’ll be fine. Besides, you can always stay with me in the meantime.”

“Thanks. I appreciate that. I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for you.”

“And someone else.” Brianna winked.

Marcy rolled her eyes at Brianna.

Marcy’s business grew as more businesses and homeowners contacted her for interior decorating services. Brianna also provided some of the artwork needed for some projects.

Marcy and Brianna’s friendship and business relationship continued to flourish. One evening, they were eating pizzas together at their apartment.

“I think I’m going to venture out on my own,” said Marcy.

“That’s great.”

“I’ll talk things over with my parents. They’ve been so supportive.”

Marcy made arrangements for her parents to meet with her and discuss her plans for the future. They were elated and agreed to visit her the following weekend.

# Beginning in Blue Haven

It had rained for three days straight before Marcy’s parents were to arrive for their meeting. However, the morning of their visit, the skies cleared, and it turned out to be a beautiful day.

Marcy’s parents arrived and were excited to see her and hear more about her business success. They moved to the dining area while Brianna went to her bedroom. Marcy explained in detail what happened over the summer with her business since meeting Sammy Dyson in Blue Haven.

She told them she decided to move to Blue Haven and rent an apartment. Blue Haven is a small town about 30 minutes away. Her parents were silent for a few moments after Marcy explained everything.

Her parents looked at each other and laughed. Marcy looked at them puzzled. Her father explained that they had been saving money for her since she was born. They also used proceeds from real estate properties they owned over the years to add to the savings.

They agreed to buy a house for Marcy instead of her renting an apartment. They explained that it was a surprise. They were going to buy a house and give her the keys, but they said it would be better for her to buy a house wherever she wants, and they simply give her the money for it.

She would have money left over to help her get started depending on the price of the house she purchased. Marcy was elated. She hugged her parents and thanked them like a kid discovering they are going to Disney World.

They talked a while longer until her parents departed to go back home. Marcy hugged and thanked them again for their help and support as they were leaving.

Marcy called Brianna after her parents left. She was smiling and jumping up and down.

Brianna asked, “How did it go? Did they buy into your plans?”

Marcy peered into Brianna’s eyes and lunged forward to hug her. She held her tightly for a few moments.

“What happened?”

“My parents are giving me enough money to buy my own house and then some.”

“What!”

“I’m going to share some money with you for all the support you’ve given me.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I know, but I really want to. I feel…” Marcy paused.

Brianna grinned. “Were you going to say, blessed?”

“Maybe.”

Both Brianna and Marcy started brainstorming on what area in Blue Haven she should consider. Withing a couple days, they ventured out to find a house in Blue Haven. They were working with a realtor named Jason Mack. He took Marcy to see several houses in the area for about a month, but none of them seemed right to her.

One day, Marcy and Brianna went to lunch at Sammy D’s. They have gone to Sammy D’s several times over the last couple of months. The place was lively as usual. They were seated at a table near the kitchen. The steaks and hamburgers smelt delicious. Sammy was in the back when he noticed them, and he rushed out to greet them.

Marcy started telling Sammy about her plan to purchase a home in Blue Haven. Her phone rang before she could tell him everything. It was Jason. He told her about a house that came back on the market in a development called Hillcrest Manor. He said he could show her the house in a couple of hours. Marcy agreed and got the address.

“Do you know where 320 Maple Drive is, Sammy?” asked Marcy.

“Yeah. That’s about a couple of miles up the road in Hillcrest Manor. I have a good friend who lives there.” said Sammy. He gave them detailed directions to get to the house.

Marcy and Brianna ate their meals, killed some time at Sammy D’s, and headed out to check out the house. It was a nice development. It was peaceful and had more modern homes than the typical older homes in the area. A small park at the front of the development kept the houses far enough away from the street that street noises weren’t an issue.

They sat on a bench in the park area across from the house to wait for the realtor. As they were talking, a couple walked in front of them and stopped.

“Hello ladies. New to the area?”

Marcy was staring at the man who greeted them.

“Hi. I’m Marcy and this is my best friend, Brianna.”

“Pleased to meet you. My name is Frank Wilson, and this is my wife Sally.”

Marcy was still staring at Frank who pretended not to notice.

“You’re like…glowing or something,” said Marcy.

“Is that right.” He looked at Sally and they both smiled.

“Are you visiting someone,” asked Sally.

“No. We are waiting for the realtor to check out that house for sale.”

“That’s nice. You’re going to love it here.”

“What do you know about the house. Was there something wrong with it? Why did the previous owners leave?”

Frank told Marcy about the house and the neighborhood. The previous owner had to move out because he was promoted, and the position was in another state. He said that the house was well maintained. They chatted for a few minutes more and then the Wilsons went home. They lived two houses down from the one for sale.

The realtor, Jason Mack, arrived and parked in the driveway of the house. They all entered the house and started looking around. There were two bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen with a small nook, two and a half bathrooms, and a basement.

The house was very clean. The floors were in great shape and the walls were freshly painted. Marcy went from room to room nodding her head and smiling. Brianna told her that it is a great house for her and that she should make an offer. Marcy told Jason that she would like to make an offer, but she wanted her parents to look at it first.

So, the next day, Marcy’s parents met Marcy, Brianna, and Jason at the house. They all went in and looked around. Marcy’s parents were nodding their approval as they went from room to room. They asked Jason many questions about the construction, maintenance, taxes, and more.

Marcy briefly consulted with her parents and then made an offer on the house. She told Jason that she would be paying cash. Jason called the seller on the spot and gave him Marcy’s offer. He accepted on the spot.

“The house is yours. He accepted your offers.” Marcy signed the paperwork and her parents and they all celebrated.

Marcy, her parents, and Brianna went to Sammy D’s for an early dinner. It was busy as usual.

“Hey Marcy! I love the way you decorated the place,” said a man at a table near the door. Others also expressed their thoughts about how Marcy decorated the place. There were others who waved at Marcy as she was taken to a table.

“What was that about,” asked her father.

“Marcy is a celebrity around here,” said Brianna.

“I decorated the place and Brianna provided some of the artwork.”

“Good for you,” said her mother.

The waitress came to the table and introduced herself. Her name was Patty. She gave them all menus and told them what the specials were. Marcy discovered that Sammy was hiring and inquired about the job.

“I might be interested in being a waitress here,” said Marcy.

“What? Really? Are you serious?” Patty was smiling and shaking her head. “Sammy. I need an application!”

“For what?” he shouted from the kitchen.

“What do you think. For a waitress.”

“Sammy looked at the table and shouted, “She’s hired!”

“You don’t even know who it is.”

“It’s Marcy. She’s hired. We can talk about a start date later.”

Marcy’s parents were looking at Marcy with their mouth agape. “What just happened?”

“I got a job.” Marcy laughed. “I already met Sammy. He’s the owner.”

Brianna was laughing too. After a few minutes, Sammy rushed over to greet everyone.

“You are always welcome here, Marcy. The new look you gave my restaurant is a hit. I mean people love it!”

“Thanks, Sammy. I’m glad I could help.”

“You did more than help. I was blessed. Hey. Employees’ meals are free here. So, since you are now an employee, you don’t have to pay. The rest of you. Dinner is on me.” Sammy rushed back to the kitchen.

Marcy wouldn’t start working at Sammy D’s until she moved into her home, which was expected to be in a few weeks.

“Wait a minute. What’s going on?” asked her mother.

“She is blessed all over the place. Isn’t that right?” Brianna was looking at Marcy.

“Perhaps.”

“No perhaps. She’s blessed and a blessing evidently.”

They ate their dinner and talked a lot more about the house and Marcy’s new beginning in Blue Haven.

Later that evening, Brianna and Marcy were talking more about the house. Marcy decided to purchase a bicycle and a small car. She planned to use the bike to get back and forth to work at Sammy D’s. The car would be for her business to get to client locations.

A few weeks later, Marcy moved into her new home. It was completely paid for, but now she needed furniture. Marcy and Brianna went to the house after closing and sat on the floor.

“God is taking care of you, Marcy.”

“If you say so. I wonder how Lynn is doing?” Marcy replied after a moment of silence.

“You are still holding on to that? It’s time to move on. I’m your best friend now.”

“Yes. You are.”

“So. When are we going shopping?”

“We?”

“That’s right. I’m going with you to make sure you get nice stuff.”

They talked and laughed for a while and then they drove back to Brianna’s apartment in Marcy’s new car, which was paid for.

# Sammy D’s

Not even the flies on the wall were aware of her deep secret. She was the life of the party and Sammy Dyson’s prized possession at his restaurant, Sammy D’s, a small and very popular restaurant on Main Street in Blue Haven, Pennsylvania. It was where the locals regularly hung out along with the occasional tourist.

The locals simply knew her as Marcy, the part-time waitress at Sammy D’s. Others outside of this small circle knew Marcy owned an interior decorating and graphic arts business, and she was very good at her trade. The only other major thing most people knew about this beautiful young woman was she could often be seen riding her bike nearly everywhere in town. Beyond that, no one really knew her up close and personal, and she always seemed to go out of her way to keep things this way.

Marcy was a pretty young woman, about 24 years old, medium height and around 150 pounds with an athletic build. Her shimmering black hair came close to her shoulders. Many believed her ethnicity to be a mixture of African American, Asian, and Native American, but no one could tell for sure.

When she looked at you, her eyes could be quite disarming; however, if for some reason she became upset, her eyes instantly took on the foreboding look of an eagle ready to pounce on its prey.

Marcy’s businesses kept her busy and able to meet her financial needs. The primary reason she continued working at Sammy D’s was to remain engaged with the community. The locals were all very fond of her and respected her greatly.

One Tuesday, Marcy was waitressing like she normally did but this evening would begin a series of events that would change her life and reveal her dark secret to the world. Things started out pretty much as normal with the usual humming of conversations permeating the air as people engaged in discussing a plethora of topics.

Jimmy, a regular at Sammy D’s, was especially fond of Marcy, but not in a romantic way. To him, Marcy was like the daughter he used to have, and this fondness helped fill the loneliness in his soul over his daughter, Alice, who was raped and murdered several years ago while visiting friends in the city. She was easy to get along with, energetic, athletic, and very outgoing, just like his precious daughter.

Alice’s death devastated him and his wife, but they were able to strengthen their marriage through this tragedy, and somehow move on. What made things particularly difficult to deal with was that the killer was never found, preventing closure and hindering their attempts to overcome that dark part of their lives.

Jimmy vowed that nothing would happen to Marcy so long as he was around. He was like Marcy’s father and big brother all rolled up into one, always watching over her from a distance while having a heightened sense of situational awareness around her. One time, an unruly visitor learned this lesson the hard way.

Several months ago, a tourist stumbled into Sammy D’s. He took one look at Marcy and decided to make her his target, seeing a piece of fresh meat. The tourist thought it would be amusing to show his power over women by slapping Marcy on her behind after making some lewd remarks.

To his surprise, Marcy showed she was not amused when she wheeled around and slapped him in the face so hard it dropped him to the floor, making a sound so loud you might have thought someone had dropped a stack of plates in the kitchen. Everyone in the restaurant began laughing at this stranger who just found out he picked the wrong woman to mess with.

After gathering himself, the tourist’s eyes became fiery. He quickly got up and placed both hands around Marcy’s neck and began to squeeze, saying, “You stupid b\*tch, no one steps to me like that, especially not some chick like you.”

In a flash, nearly half the men at the bar, with Jimmy leading the pack, pounced on him like a flock of sea gulls attacking unprotected food at the Jersey shore. While he did not need to go to the hospital, they roughed him up quite a bit to make sure he got the message loud and clear that no one is to mess with Marcy, especially while at Sammy D’s.

“Now you listen real good buddy,” Jimmy said. “I don’t know how they do things where you’re from, but around here we take care of our women. We don’t treat them like a piece of fresh meat. If you want that, go to the butcher and get a slab of beef. No one here messes with Marcy. I hope we’ve made ourselves clear. Or do we need to continue with the lesson? You feel me?”

“Alright. Chill out everybody. I hear you. My bad, I didn’t mean nothing by it, but if it’s ok with you guys, I’ll just finish my meal and get out of here.”

“That would be fine, and I think you’ve got the right idea. You’ve worn your welcome out here. Go ahead and finish your dinner, but we’ll be watching you.”

The tourist scarfed down his cheeseburger and gulped down his drink like a starving man. Then he quickly left money for his bill on the bar, along with a sizeable tip and made a beeline for the exit.

Nothing like that has happened since.

“Give me another special, mam!” Jimmy shouted from across the room, making a play on Marcy’s name. Few people knew her full name, Marcy Ann Maxwell. Jimmy was privileged to have a closer relationship with Marcy than most of the other regulars. Marcy knew his drink of choice, milk with a little club soda and strawberry juice or flavoring added to it. Jimmy gave Marcy the recipe a while back and besides Sammy, she was the only one who knew how to make it. Marcy returned with his drink and subtly shook her booty at him as she walked away. She would also sometimes shake her booty at other regulars.

What a lot of people didn’t realize was that Sammy was a devout Christian. He was not a mere churchgoer like many others; Sammy really believed in God and actively sought to build a personal and intimate relationship with him. Jesus Christ was much more than an afterthought who was only thought about during Easter and Christmas, he was an integral part of Sammy’s life. In fact, Sammy treated and talked to him like he was a real living person. Sammy was a testament of the ability of a person to get their life back together and succeed, with the help of God and others.

Marcy kept telling herself she was going to try Jimmy’s drink one of these days, but she never seemed to get around to it. Instead, she just continued her regular routine, serving tables, getting drinks, shaking her booty, and just having an overall good time with the regulars.

# The Strange Rain

There was nothing particularly unusual about that Tuesday evening except for a few new faces. By the way they acted, it was evident they were tourists. This was not all that unusual since the suburbs were only a short ride from the city. Marcy entertained the guests and shook her booty at the regulars, and the guys loved it.

The weather report for the evening was rain, heavy at times but there was nothing alarming about that for this time of the year. It certainly wasn’t about to stop people from their regular fellowship at Sammy D’s. It was around 75 degrees and very humid, which was typical for the early summer in Blue Haven. However, what followed was definitely not a normal summer rain.

Suddenly a very loud whooshing sound that caused the building to vibrate came from outside. It sounded as if giants were pouring buckets of water onto the roof in a sort of sadistic glee.

Mark came running down from the second floor, looking like he had seen a ghost. Mark was a photography student at the nearby art academy. He worked part time at Sammy D’s as the janitor and stock-boy. Sammy let him live on the second floor in exchange for keeping the restaurant clean and well stocked. He was a good and responsible worker who took his job and arrangement with Sammy seriously.

Mark shouted as he ran down the stairs, “Did you hear that!? What was that?”

People were already looking up and around at the strange and horrific noise. Looking outside everyone saw that it was raining like cats and dogs. It was as if Noah was preparing to come down the street in his ark!

“That is much more than ‘rain, heavy at times,’” Sammy muttered. “I’ve never seen so much rain before in my life.”

This was not mere heavy raindrops falling from the sky, it was more like streams of water. After a few moments, the curiousness ceased, and things gradually returned to normal.

“I sure feel sorry for anyone who was out in that mess,” said Jimmy.

Marcy in disgust mumbled, “Yeah, right.” She was once again mulling over her bad luck. Her shift was almost over, which meant she would have to go out in that mess and ride home on her bike. Fortunately, she lived close by, but the rain was falling so hard that she was sure to get drenched.

Marcy was getting more annoyed because once again, she could not seem to get a break in life. She hoped the rain would stop in the next thirty minutes before it was time for her to leave. Many of the patrons were also hoping the rain would subside or at least slow down so they could make a quick getaway.

People were nervous because the rain was extremely loud when it hit the building, almost as if someone were pounding on it. Everyone knew it was just rain, but there was something different, something strange about it that they just couldn’t place their finger on.

There were a few who thought there might have been something metaphysical or supernatural going on. Of course, they weren’t about to express that opinion openly. After all, Sammy D’s was not the kind of place to get weird about that stuff.

A few years ago, a middle-aged man suddenly began babbling on about aliens. The next thing you know, guys were bringing in alien dolls and talking about taking them to this man’s leader. All the mocking was done in a spirit of good humor, nevertheless he never lived it down or brought up the subject again.

Marcy served and entertained the customers in a special kind of way, and they loved her for it, especially on this particular night. Her antics helped distract some of them from the seemingly supernatural rain. The night grew older and the rain kept coming down, though it did seem to ease up every now and then, only to return to its former fury.

When Marcy’s shift was over, and she was ready to go home, the rain was still coming down like an open faucet. She mumbled to herself, “Of course it’s still raining like crazy. It knew I was working tonight. Isn’t that how it always goes?”

She went to the back to get her bike. Jimmy and a few others tried to get her to either wait out the storm or let them drive her home. If she wouldn’t have had her bike, she might have accepted a ride, but she told them all she was going to brave it and ride home.

“Bye all!” Marcy said, and with one last subtle shake of her booty, she took her bike and walked out the front door.

A lot of guys were watching her leave when something fantastic happened. The rain stopped falling the exact instant the front wheel of Marcy’s bike crossed the door’s threshold, but only where she was.

She was so focused on her own thoughts she failed to notice the bizarre timing, but several of the men did. They all gasped as if choreographed with an intensity that seemed as if they were trying to suck all the air out of the room.

“Did you see that!?” Jimmy shouted. Sammy was staring out the front door, looking at Marcy in complete amazement. He said, “What is God about to do with her?”

Just then Marcy noticed that she wasn’t getting wet and said, “What’s going on? How can it be raining over there and not where I am?”

She figured there must be a logical explanation for the strange rain and her rain-free area. In any event, she was thrilled that for the first time in a long time, she was finally having a bit of good luck.

Marcy lived about two miles from Sammy D’s and normally took about ten minutes to ride home. Because of all the standing water left by the rain she decided to ride mostly on the sidewalk, just to be safe. Marcy still hadn’t realized that the rain-free zone was localized around her.

When she got to the corner where she lived, Marcy hit something hard with her front wheel. She came to an abrupt stop but didn’t fall. Disgusted, she straddled her bike to the side, looked down to see what she hit, and examine the condition of her bike.

Looking down at her front wheel, she said with a sigh, “Oh no.” When she bent down further to take a closer look, she realized how bent up her rim was. Marcy was upset at how this could have happened because she wasn’t going all that fast. She was indeed upset. Her knee-jerk reaction was that this was just another validation that God hated her.

“Nothing ever goes right for me! If it weren’t for bad luck, I’d have no luck at all!” she said looking down at her wheel. Through all this, Marcy was still oblivious to everything remaining calm and surreal in her little rain-free zone, protecting her from the raging downpour around her. She scanned the ground again, but for the life of her she could not figure out what caused her rim to bend. After standing motionless in disgust for a brief moment, just when she was about to walk the bike the rest of the way home, she noticed something unusual to her left, approaching her from across the street.

Marcy’s house was in a residential area but there were shops and businesses across the street. The development, Hillcrest Manor, was quite nice and well-kept. Near the center at the front of the development was a beautiful courtyard with some trees and benches lining the walkways. Although not very large, it was a very appreciative amenity to the area’s residents. Marcy’s house was a small rancher three-bedroom house with a living room, family room, dining room, eating area, and a kitchen. It also boasted a two-car garage and basement along with a respectable sized backyard.

# The Light Man

From out of nowhere, Marcy noticed a figure from across the street that suddenly began moving towards her, getting brighter with each step. The figure seemed like a man on fire, but he was calmly walking in the rain. The fire was not blazing and flickering like a person engulfed in flames, but whatever was causing the fire was enough to be noticed.

Marcy murmured, “But it’s raining? How could that be fire? Who or what is that?”

The fire man slowly moved across the street. The light emitting from him was a yellowish orange. Marcy was paralyzed with curiosity and perhaps a little fear. Her life wasn’t known for having much excitement, so she was thrilled over the possibility this experience would be something worth writing about later, or at least something to make her life a little more interesting and meaningful.

As the fire man got closer, Marcy realized he was not really on fire. Instead, he was emitting a light that seemed to come in waves, like looking at daylight through hot air. He was a light man, not a fire man. The light was now extremely bright and more of a blueish white, but not so intense as to prevent her looking at him. He kept moving closer at a steady pace. He was not walking, but rather gliding or floating across the street like a ghost in a movie.

Marcy began thinking that perhaps she fell and hit her head. She let out a quick chuckle as she touched her head to feel for an injury as the light man kept getting closer.

The light man stopped to the left of Marcy at the front of her bike. Now she began getting a little scared. There was no heat, just a lot of light. The light man did not acknowledge Marcy, instead he silently bent down and put his hands on the bicycle wheel. One hand was at the top while the other was at the 8 o’clock position. Marcy was mesmerized. While she should be scared, for some reason she felt completely calm and at ease.

*What is he doing?* Marcy thought to herself. *Why is he holding my bicycle wheel? Who or what is he? Is he an angel!?”*

The light man held the wheel for a few moments and then slowly started looking up at Marcy as if he were trying to communicate with her mentally. Marcy’s mouth opened and a soft gasp of air exited her mouth. It was not the type of gasp when someone is relieved; it was a gasp of amazement. Marcy was totally relaxed. She then felt something she had never felt or thought she would feel in her entire life.

As the light man looked at her, she felt an overwhelming sensation of love, as if she were the most important person in the whole world to him. This love was so powerful that if it had been a drug, a person would have been instantly and hopelessly addicted for life. All Marcy saw was light and all she felt was an overwhelming love. It felt so good.

“Please don’t stop,” Marcy muttered.

After a few moments, the light man looked down at the bike then slowly turned and glided back across the street from wherever he came from. Marcy was still standing in a trance-like state, soaking in the immense love that came from the light man.

As she watched him glide back across the street, she suddenly shouted, “No! Come back! Don’t go! Please come back!”

Marcy stood there, still straddling her bike and sobbing as the feeling of great love began to fade.

“No. Please come back. Please don’t leave me,” she sobbed.

Marcy kept staring across the street, hoping that the light man would come back. Maybe he had to get something before returning, she hoped. Maybe if she just stood there he would come back. Marcy kept trying to figure out who this stranger was.

Then she whispered, “Please come back. I live at 320 Maple Drive,” while pointing to her house. However, the light man was gone, leaving her alone.

Marcy was confused. Was this all just a crazy dream or hallucination? Was there really a light man or did she just imagine it?

“I must have hit my head after falling off the bike,” she said. “Yeah. This was all a hallucination or a dream.”

Marcy started walking her bike home when she noticed there was no longer a thumping sound caused by the bent rim. Thinking that was strange, she looked down and noticed it was no longer bent. The light man had fixed her bike. Why? What was going on? She noticed that the rim looked different, almost like it was brand-new.

Marcy also finally realized that the entire light man experience had taken place in a rain-free zone.

“What in the world is going on?” she asked. “This must be a dream. I’m going to wake up any moment, but I don’t want to.”

She kept thinking about the great feeling of love that emanated from the light man and how she wanted more of it. Marcy was afraid she would never see him or ever feel that kind of love again. Surely, he would return, and when he did, she would be ready.

Marcy finally mustered enough strength to leave the corner and head home. Even though the bicycle wheel was no longer damaged, Marcy decided to walk the bike home as she contemplated all the events of the past several minutes. She hoped the light man was still watching her because it would give him a chance to see exactly where she lived. She turned the corner and headed towards the entrance of the development. Marcy’s house was at the front, so she didn’t have to go far to get home.

Marcy put her bike in the garage. She took really good care of that bike. It was a top-of-the-line cruiser with a 26-inch frame and front and rear brakes. She noticed something else strange as she put the bike away. Not only was the wheel no longer bent, it was clean. Not clean as in just washed up, it was clean as in brand-new. It seemed that the light man didn’t just fix her bike wheel, he replaced it with a new one. She stared at the bike for a few moments, still contemplating everything that happened that evening.

She typically preferred to keep her house in low light, even though the family room had a very nice view of the northeastern sky, enabling her to see sunrises if she wanted. However, typically the curtains were closed.

Marcy turned on one of the living room lights and sat down. She figured once she woke up in the morning all of this would turn out to just be a dream. Then she decided to fix herself a small salmon salad before going to bed.

“What if it wasn’t a dream? What if the events of the evening were real and the light man returns? I don’t want to miss the opportunity to greet him if he does come back.”

Then she realized that the view from her living room window looked out onto Hillcrest Avenue where the light man came from across the street.

She finished her meal, washed the dishes, and then went to the living room to open the curtains just in case he ended up returning. If he did, she would be able to see his light and run outside to meet him. Although it was a long shot, it was an opportunity she did not want to miss. Marcy got a blanket from her closet, sat down on her sofa and then pulled it over, sitting there like a cop on a stakeout.

As she continued looking across the street, she noticed it had stopped raining. Marcy waited and waited, but the only other visitor that night was the sandman.

# The Wilsons

Marcy slowly regained consciousness after sleeping on her sofa overnight. It was about 9:00 am when her eyes slowly opened. Then a shockwave shot through her system when she noticed a bright light coming through her living room window. She jumped up with great excitement, thinking the light man was coming back or was at least nearby. She jumped up and headed toward the window before realizing it was just the sunlight coming in. She had opened the curtains, something she normally didn’t do.

The disappointment Marcy felt was almost as overwhelming as the love she felt from the light man the night before. She thought to herself, all that love was just a dream hatched in her imagination. She was dejected over having the same miserable life, nothing real had changed one iota.

Suddenly she realized that if it were really a dream then the front wheel of her bike would not be shiny new and perfectly round. Marcy was too afraid to check because if it were worn like the back wheel would be, it would confirm she had been dreaming.

Instead of heading for the bike, Marcy went to the kitchen and made herself a cup of tea. She was shaking as if she was in a haunted house. She was hoping so much that the light man encounter was real. Fixing herself a cup of cherry zinger tea, she took her time drinking it. If all this had been nothing more than a dream, she wanted to wallow in the illusion of hope just a little bit longer before snapping back to reality.

Her mind drifted back again to all that happened with the light man the night before. She contemplated the love she felt and wondered how to get it back. Why did he leave her? Why didn’t he stay and talk to her?

Then Marcy said out loud, “Why me anyway?”

It was about 10:30 by the time she finished her tea, ate something quick for breakfast then forced herself out of contemplation. Marcy did not have a 9-to-5 job because she owned her own interior and graphic design company. During a typical day, she would go see clients, run errands, or work in her home studio in the basement. She also used the second bedroom as an office.

Marcy was about to start working on some projects when the doorbell rang. She wasn’t going to answer the door, thinking it was someone soliciting something or a religious missionary, but something inside kept compelling her to go and see who it was. Reluctantly, she got up and looked through the peephole.

It was the Wilsons from two houses down at 324 Maple Drive. Marcy saw them in the courtyard several times a week and sometimes they would have short conversations. They seemed to be religious folks, but she wasn’t too interested in that kind of stuff. However, they were nice people who never caused her any trouble, so she decided to let them in.

Marcy liked Frank and Sally because they always talked to her as if she meant something to the world. They never judged her for her seemingly anti-religious attitude, which put them on her “OK” list.

After sitting down, Frank said, “Good morning Marcy, I’ll cut right to the chase. Sally and I were wondering if we could talk to you about something that happened to us last night and this morning.”

That statement caught her attention. Marcy sat in her reading chair facing the sofa where Frank and Sally were sitting.

Marcy asked, “What happened last night?”

They looked at each other and diverted their answer to the events of this morning.

Frank said, “I don’t know if this means anything, but we were compelled to come see you about last night.”

Sally chimed in, “Yes. We both had the same compulsion to come and talk to you.”

Frank explained, ‘This may sound strange, and if it does, I apologize, but we came here to explain to you or answer your questions about what happened to you last night. Does that make any sense?”

Marcy started crying for seemingly no reason. Frank and Sally were a bit confused, but then surmised that their statements must have meant something to her.

Suddenly, Marcy said, “You need to look at my bike in the garage.”

Sally was looking at Marcy with a puzzled look on her face, wondering what the bike had to do with the events of last night.

Frank and Sally glanced at each other and then followed Marcy to the garage.

Marcy said, “Look at the front and rear wheels and tell me what you notice is different.” She was too afraid to look at the bike, so she let them examine it.

Frank looked at the front wheel and then the back wheel. He stood there for a moment comparing the two until finally Marcy shouted out nervously, “Well, what do you see?”

Frank responded, “Nothing much except that the front wheel seems to be newer than the back one. It’s also a different brand than the back wheel. Did you replace it recently?” At that statement Marcy started crying profusely.

Sally put her arms around her and asked, “What’s the matter? What happened last night?”

Marcy started sobbing and then said, “It wasn’t a dream,” and started crying some more. After a few moments of crying in Sally’s arms, she started to lead them back to the living room to tell them about everything that happened last night.

Just then Marcy got a quick glance at her bike and noticed something she didn’t see the night before. She turned around and was shaking as if a bear had entered the garage. Frank and Sally were puzzled and concerned.

Frank said, “What’s the matter? What happened?”

Marcy said, “My bike is blue,” while pointing at it.

“Ok. What does that mean?”

Marcy cried out, “My bike was purple. Not blue. The light man changed the color of my bike too.”

Sally said, “The light man?”

Frank gestured for everyone to go back into the house. “Let’s go sit down and talk about this.”

After making their way back to the living room and sitting down, Sally asked, “What did you mean, ‘it wasn’t a dream’?”

“It started to rain like crazy last night while I was working at Sammy D’s. When I left, somehow, I entered a rain-free zone or rain pocket all the way home. It was raining everywhere except directly around me—”

“Do you mean the rain stopped as soon as you walked outside?” asked Frank.

“Yes, but only around me and my bike. But it didn’t stop when I walked out. It stopped when my bike’s front wheel got outside. The rain-free zone was already there by the time I stepped out the door.

“Anyway, I was riding my bike on the sidewalk because I didn’t feel very safe riding in the street. When I was almost home, suddenly I hit something that was hard enough to bend the front rim. I still don’t know what it was. It takes a lot to bend that rim and I wasn’t going very fast.”

Marcy stopped for a moment and a few tears began streaming down her face. She was thinking about that overwhelming love she experienced from the light man and the fact that she was feeling something similar coming from the Wilsons.

Marcy continued, “I cursed my life in a way because it seems that bad things always happen to me. At that point I noticed something bright coming from across Hillcrest. I didn’t see where it came from, but it looked like a man on fire. He floated across the street and headed straight towards me. As he got closer, I noticed that he was emitting a bluish white light.”

Sally asked, “What do you mean a bluish white light?”

“The light coming from him was white with a tint of blue. It was wavy like you see when looking at a mirage over a hot road or in the desert.”

“How did you feel when he got up to you,” Sally asked.

“I felt an overwhelming feeling of love. It was so warm and engulfing. I wanted to wallow in it forever.”

Marcy started to cry again and said, “Then he floated back across the street and left me. Why did he leave me? Where did he come from? I begged him not to go and to come back. I even told him where I live in case he wanted to come to my house.”

“An overwhelming love,” Sally said as she looked at Frank.

Marcy said, “Yes. Like a highly addictive drug. I want more of whatever it was, but he’s gone now. He left me and I’ll never see him again.”

“No, he didn’t,” Frank said sternly.

“What do you mean?”

“For now, just please continue on with your story. I promise you I’ll explain it all afterwards.”

Marcy continued, “After the light man went back across the street and disappeared, I noticed that my front rim wasn’t bent anymore. I still don’t know what I hit.

“I thought I would wait for a few more minutes just in case he came right back. He didn’t. Then I thought I would wait for him at home just in case he wanted to visit me. I ended up falling asleep on the sofa.

“It looks like what happened to me wasn’t a dream. What happened last night seems to have been real. And now I just found out that he changed the color of my bike. Why would he do that? What’s so special about my bike?”

Marcy was still sobbing because if what had happened to her was real, it meant somebody truly did love her.

She asked Frank and Sally, “Who was that light man? Am I crazy? Why did he leave me? Why didn’t he come back? Was he an angel?”

Frank and Sally glanced at each other again and let out a sigh of relief. They then both looked at Marcy and smiled.

Frank explained. “No. What happened to you was not a dream. In fact, it was very real. The reason I know this is because the same light man came to Sally and me last night and told us about you.

“The light man, as you call him, told us that he visited you last night and that you would need someone to talk to. We figured it must have been life-changing but was unsure how to approach you about it. However, this morning we both felt compelled to come and talk to you.”

Marcy was staring at Frank as he talked. She was completely focused on his words, hoping he wasn’t trying to pull a fast one on her. This couldn’t be a con job. How would they have known to come see her about last night? She wanted to believe them, but she was afraid this was all one big hoax. However, she knew the Wilsons enough to know this was highly unlikely.

Marcy then looked at them and nervously asked, “What did the light man look like?”

Sally said, “He was like waves of light emanating from a human body. It didn’t appear to be solid like ours but rather translucent. The color of the light was bright white and yellow, but not blinding. “

Marcy then asked, “Ok. You know about my experience with the light man last night. So, now what? Am I supposed to do something? What does it all mean?”

She shrugged her shoulders exaggeratingly. “And what does fixing and changing the color of my bike have to do with any of this? I’m thinking that the light man may have caused my rim to bend because I didn’t see anything on that corner that could have bent it the way it was. Anyway, what now?”

Frank and Sally looked at each other and then looked at Marcy while both smiling at her.

Frank said, “We don’t know the significance of fixing the wheel or changing the color of your bike. However, you said before that you felt as though God doesn’t like you—”

“Hates me.” Marcy blurted out.

“Right.” Said Frank. “However, the fact of the matter is that God *does* love you.”

“How can he love me when he keeps letting bad things happen to me?”

“Was last night a bad thing? Did you feel love or hate from the light man?”

Marcy answered, “I felt love.”

“Well, ok then. Both good and bad things happen to all of us,” said Frank. “It doesn’t mean that God loves us less when the bad things happen. He never stops loving us, regardless of what is happening to us.”

“But why did that happen to me last night? Why me?”

Sally said, “You were chosen.”

“Chosen for what?”

Frank and Sally then said, as if rehearsed, “Chosen to be a blessing to others!”

“What!?” Marcy shouted. “Me be a blessing?! But how? Why? This is all a joke, right? I mean, I don’t go to church, I don’t pray, I don’t do anything that puts me in the company of God.”

Frank said, “We don’t know what you specifically have to do. We only were told that you were chosen, and to go see you because you wouldn’t understand what happened last night.”

“So why did he fix my bike? Why couldn’t he have just told me the reason?” asked Marcy.

Sally said, “I don’t know. There is something else. He wasn’t just fixing your bike; he was fixing you. You were anointed to do God’s work in the way you were designed.”

“Do you mean I’m supposed to be a preacher?” Marcy shouted.

“No,” answered Sally. “Doing God’s work is about much more than being a preacher or pastor. It’s about being who you are and allowing God to work through you.”

“But how will I know what to do?”

Frank said, “You will just know. Just be yourself and listen to the small voice inside of you. Sometimes you will have a strong urge to do something you normally wouldn’t do. When that happens, don’t be afraid of the situations you may find yourself in. Remember, God is always with you to protect you and help you. Don’t be afraid to call on him when you need him.”

Sally added, “Look. Frank and I know this is a lot for you to take in, and I’m sure you’ve got some doubts. I would too if I were in your shoes. However, there is no denying that you had some kind of encounter last night and it affected you in ways you may not even realize.”

Frank said, “That’s right. But don’t overanalyze this. Just be yourself and continue doing all those things you normally do. Go to work, go about your businesses, play, and ride your bike just like you have always done. As time goes by, you will start to notice a change in the things you do. Don’t think you need to get religious all of a sudden—just be yourself. God has put a light in you to help others. He has transformed you. Do you have any questions?”

Marcy answered, “Do I? I’ve got a million of them right now. I need to take all this in. I want to feel that love I felt from the light man again.”

“You already have that love,” said Frank. “Don’t rely on your feelings to tell you that you have God’s love. Know that the same love you felt is the same love that God has always had for you.”

Marcy said, “Ok. If you say so. But I don’t know about that calling stuff. I don’t see why God would call me to do something for him, especially given the way I’ve treated him for the past ten years. I would have thought he’d want to punish me or leave me alone.”

Frank laughed and told Marcy briefly about the Apostle Paul. He explained how he was a significant figure in the persecution of Christians. He told her how one day, as he was going to a city named Damascus with letters giving him authority to arrest Christians, Jesus Christ interrupted him and called him to be an his Apostle. This number-one enemy of God’s people became one of Christianity’s foremost spokesmen so to speak and ended up writing most of the New Testament.

Frank continued. “There is one thing you must realize about God. He does not see or judge things the way we do. You may think that whatever you did over the past 10 years, whatever it was, is a big deal. However, God may not even be thinking about it. So, don’t prejudge yourself based on what you did; instead, try to respond to God now.”

Marcy said, “I guess. But this is really a lot to take in.”

Sally responded, “I know it is. We don’t want to trouble you too long. How about we give you some time to take it all in and then meet again?”

Marcy perked up and said, “Ok. That sounds like a plan. We can set something up now if you want.”

“Sure. Why don’t you come over to our place for dinner on Friday night and we can talk then?”

“What time is dinner?” Marcy asked.

“Dinner is at 5:30 pm sharp!” Sally already knew from previous conversations with Marcy how much of a stickler she was for being on time.

Marcy laughed and agreed to come to the dinner engagement.

After Frank and Sally left, Marcy sat down on her sofa to contemplate everything that happened over the past 12 hours, starting with last night.

She kept thinking this was all one big gag, but then she kept reminding herself it couldn’t be. Why would God choose her to do anything after she turned her back on him for letting her down for the past ten years? She just could not get past that one point.

However, she had to admit there was something special about the love she felt last night, so she began entertaining the thought that perhaps God didn’t take what she had done so seriously. Maybe deep down inside, God felt she had not abandoned him, but was instead just having a 10 -year temper tantrum.

Marcy decided to start reading her Bible to help her be more prepared for the dinner meeting. Of course, she also spent a lot of time looking out her living room window in hopes that the light man would return.

# The New Life

Marcy’s meeting with the Wilsons was very helpful. There was still a lot she did not understand, but at least she got the gist of what happened to her. A major epiphany for her was the realization that God loves her and wasn’t holding a grudge for how she had been treating him the last ten years. This was very refreshing to her. She also realized that she did not hate God.

Marcy looked out of her living room window and put a great big smile on her face. Deep inside she knew things would be much different for her, for the better. She realized she would continue to have challenges, but the knowledge that God was with her made her feel safe, secure, and happy. Marcy said out loud, “I love you too, God!”

Marcy decided to fix some pancakes, eggs, and scrapple for breakfast before starting her workday. This was a new and great day for the rest of her life, so she might as well have a special breakfast to set it off. Afterwards, she cleaned up the kitchen and decided to get started on some of her design projects.

Marcy noticed that her mind was more open regarding design ideas. She could see different relationships within the project that she had not quite seen before. Perhaps her clearer insight was one of the new abilities she acquired from the light man. Whatever the reason, it made Marcy’s work easier and more exciting.

Later that afternoon, Marcy went to work at Sammy D’s. People immediately noticed something different about her. She was more outgoing than normal. She seemed happier.

As soon as she arrived, Sammy asked, “Hey Marcy. Is that a new bike?”

Marcy laughed and said, “Not really. It’s the same bike with some newness added to it.”

Sammy asked with some concern in his voice, “How did you make out last night? Did you get home ok?”

Marcy put a big smile on her face. “Yes. I got home ok, but it was quite an adventure. I’ll have to tell you about it one day.”

Sammy said, “Ok.” With some hesitation, he asked. “Did you notice anything strange about the rain while you were out there?”

That question made Marcy suspicious. She asked herself, “Does he know about the light man?” She got closer to Sammy and whispered, “What do you mean?”

“When you left last night, I noticed something very strange about the rain. You seemed to stay dry while everything else was getting drenched. That was weird to me.”

“Yeah. I noticed that too. That was just the tip of the iceberg compared to everything else that happened.”

Sammy was now very curious. “What happened?”

Marcy smiled and said, “I had an encounter with a light man. I believe it was an angel. I hit my front wheel on something, and he fixed it as good as new. Actually, my front wheel seems to be brand new. The kicker was that I was engulfed in a feeling of extreme love from this light man. It was a sensation of love that I had never felt before.”

Sammy changed his tone a bit as if wanting to change the subject. “Is that right. What was his name?”

“I don’t know. He didn’t say anything to me at all. All he did was come across the street, then he fixed my front wheel, grabbed my face and disappeared across the street. Why? Do you know something?” Marcy sensed the tone in Sammy’s voice.

Sammy stuttered a bit. “No. It just seemed like last night was special for you. I felt that something was going to impact your life when I saw the rain pocket around you. You should probably talk to the Wilsons. They’ll definitely be able to help you.”

Marcy chuckled. “Well guess what? They showed up at my house this morning to discuss what happened to me last night! Imagine that.

“Apparently, the light man gave them the 411 on my situation. We had a nice conversation about it all, and I have a dinner date with them this Friday.”

Sammy smiled and started shaking his head. “That’s great news. I’ve known the Wilsons for over ten years, and they are very good people. They are very spiritual, and very close to God.”

Marcy said, “Really. I didn’t know that. I’ve talked to them many times, but I didn’t know much about their spiritual life. Although I did surmise that they were religious.”

Sammy laughed and shook his head from side to side. “I wouldn’t call them religious. A religious person is a completely different animal than a spiritual person. A spiritual person pursues a relationship with God, not ceremonies, rituals, programs, services, and the like, which are all characteristics of religion.”

Marcy said, “Oh. Ok. They did seem to know what they were talking about.”

Sammy sighed. “They helped me in my spiritual development many years ago. I was a mess. It was because of their ministry that I was able to get my life together and open this restaurant. This establishment is a testimony to how you can succeed if people help each other and when God is with you. That’s why I know you’re in good hands with the Wilsons.”

Marcy had a relieved look on her face. “That’s very good news. I keep thinking this whole thing is some kind of gag. I know it’s not, but it sure seems incredible.”

Marcy started her shift and began serving customers. The place seemed brighter than normal. Marcy was always the light of the establishment. However, it seemed that her light was much brighter, and the regulars noticed it.

Jimmy arrived later that evening and seemed to be in a good mood. He asked Marcy how she made out last night after going home in all the rain. After telling him that she made out very well, Jimmy told her that he was worried about her. When Jimmy said that, Marcy felt something awfully familiar, but she couldn’t put her finger on it.

When Marcy’s shift was over, she wrapped up some food. Employees of Sammy D’s eat for free—one meal per shift plus a snack or two. Then she said her goodbyes and mounted her bike and rode home. She stopped at the same corner as the night before, wondering and hoping that perhaps the light man would show up. It was a beautiful evening, but no light man.

The rest of the week was characterized by Marcy’s newness of life. She was the happiest anybody could ever remember. She read her Bible regularly and prayed often. Every now and then she would ask Sammy a question or two about something she read in the Bible because she wanted to be ready for her dinner date with the Wilsons.

# Dinner with the Wilsons

There was a change occurring in Marcy’s life and she wanted to make the best of it. Marcy took a few moments to contemplate the possibility that God did not hate her. Perhaps there really was another reason for all the issues she had faced most of her life, especially the one she never told anyone about and suppressed deep inside the recesses of her mind.

It was Friday, and Marcy was looking forward to her dinner meeting with the Wilsons that evening. She arranged to go to work at Sammy D’s around lunchtime, then come home and freshen up before heading to Frank and Sally’s house for dinner.

She decided to put on something for work that she had not worn in a long time. There was a spark happening inside of her and she was feeling good about it.

Marcy put on a cobalt blue jean skirt outfit that was more form fitting than most of her dresses. She started to second guess herself because it would show more booty motion than normal. She decided to stick with her choice because it was different, and she felt different.

The skirt showed off her sturdy, muscular, yet supple legs from all the bike riding. Marcy admired herself in the mirror for a few minutes—something she rarely did. For the first time in a long time she felt good about herself. She went to the kitchen and fixed her tea and breakfast. Afterwards, she freshened up a bit then grabbed her bike and headed to work.

“This is going to be a good day,” Marcy said to herself. Those words hadn’t passed Marcy’s lips since nearly ten years ago before Lynn died.

The noise level in Sammy D’s dropped when Marcy walked in with her bike. Most of the air was sucked out of the room as many gasped with admiration upon seeing this new Marcy. The regulars all looked at her with their jaws dropped to the floor. While she always carried herself well, today she looked quite different.

The outfit accentuated her figure, but not inappropriately. She had a type of glow about her that radiated a new beauty. No one dared whistle at her, even respectfully, because Jimmy would probably go on the warpath. Most eyes were on Marcy, but as she walked towards the bar the greetings slowly started coming. Jimmy even told her that she looked great.

Marcy then did something no one expected.

She looked at Jimmy and smiled after staring at him for a few moments. “Hi Jimmy.”

She hadn’t realized it before, but she was feeling a love from Jimmy that was similar to what she felt from the light man and the Wilsons. In her mind she played over her many encounters with Jimmy at Sammy D’s, then realized that he had been watching over her.

She then walked over to Jimmy, still staring him straight in the eyes. Jimmy had a puzzled look on his face because she never focused on him like that, and she definitely never approached him the way she was doing. Marcy walked up to Jimmy, and without any warning she gave him a great big bear hug. Then she whispered in his ear, “Thank you Jimmy. I know you have been watching over me and protecting me. I love you.”

Jimmy put his arms around her, not knowing exactly how to respond. He began getting emotional over it all. He loved Marcy like she was his own daughter. For her to acknowledge this meant everything to him. It was like his daughter had come back from the grave. They hugged each other for a few moments and then slowly let each other go. Marcy once again looked Jimmy straight in the eyes and touched his face. She smiled at him and said, “Papa.”

Upon hearing this Jimmy could not hold back his emotions. He looked right back at Marcy and she was still smiling at him. All this was too much for him. The tears started flowing like the strange rain a few nights ago. He then said, “daughter?” She smiled at him and nodded her head as if to acknowledge his care for her. Then she slowly backed away and went to get ready for work.

Jimmy quickly went to the restroom to compose himself. He really did love Marcy as a man loves his daughter. He was her protector, and everyone knew that. You didn’t mess with Marcy or you would have Jimmy to contend with. Everyone knew what Marcy meant to him and they were also feeling the love.

Jimmy came out and sat back down at his table. Some of the guys came over and patted him on the back, letting him know they were happy for him.

Marcy did her thing that day at Sammy D’s. She served the customers, shook her booty at the regulars, and just made everyone feel happy. She was a new person and people could see it. This really made Sammy happy because he had been praying and hoping that her life would turn around. Besides, a happier Marcy was great for business.

Marcy arrived home from work about an hour before dinner with Frank and Sally. This gave her enough time to change and freshen up. Like this morning, she decided to wear something she had not worn in a while. She chose a dark blue dress with cream collars. She looked as if she belonged in it. Instead of sneakers, she put on some flats—Marcy hated shoes with high heels. She did a final inspection in the mirror and then headed over to the Wilsons.

By habit, Marcy knocked on the door even though there was a doorbell. She could hear some commotion going on as she waited.

“Who is it?” Asked Frank. That confused Marcy for a moment. No one asks, “who is it?” she thought to herself, these days everyone had a peephole or camera. Frank opened the door and greeted Marcy with a very warm and inviting smile. He was glad she came for dinner and was willing to talk about the events surrounding the light man.

“How are you, Marcy?” asked Sally from the kitchen. “I sure hope you’re hungry.”

Frank led Marcy to the dining room and invited her to sit down at the table. “Here ya go, Mar. Do people call you Mar? Is it alright to call you that?”

Marcy said, “Thanks. Yes. People call me Mar and it’s ok. There’s also a few folks who tease me and call me ‘Mam.’”

“Mam?” Frank asked.

“Yeah. It’s a play on my name, Marcy Ann Maxwell.”

“Oh,” said Frank. “I would have thought they’d call you Marcy Max. That has a nice ring to it.”

Marcy chuckled for a moment. “I guess, but no one has ever called me that. I do like it though. Makes me sound like some kind of superhero.” Marcy laughed.

Sally shouted from the kitchen, “Frank! Tell Marcy what we’re having for dinner.”

Frank laughed. “How does golden fried chicken, rice, green beans, corn on the cob, and biscuits sound to you? Then for dessert we have a three-layer chocolate cake.”

Marcy looked at Frank as if he just landed in a spaceship. “Did you say golden fried chicken and chocolate cake? Do you realize that fried chicken is my favorite food group and chocolate is nourishment for the soul?”

Frank started laughing at that. “Your friend, the light man, recommended that we serve fried chicken and chocolate cake when we discussed the calling on your life. I suppose he knew that we would be meeting for dinner.”

“Calling on my life?” Marcy asked.

“Yes, we’ll talk about that over dinner, but for now we just want you to be comfortable and relaxed.”

Sally began putting food and drinks on the table. It smelled and looked so good.

Frank said, “let’s give thanks.” He then bowed his head and began to pray.

“Lord, we thank you for this food that we are about to eat. We thank you for the fellowship that we are having at this moment. We also thank you for allowing us to be a part of your plan for the calling that you have on Marcy. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

# The Eruption

Marcy thought to herself, There’s that calling on my life thing again. What calling? I guess I’ll find out. Right now, I just want some of that chicken.

Marcy took a couple pieces of fried chicken and a sample of everything else that was on the table, even the salad. She loved every bite of the chicken. They did not talk much about the light man experience, though it did come up every now and then. The Wilson’s planned to save that for after dinner. The three of them learned a lot more about each other. For the first time in many years, Marcy found herself opening up to people.

Marcy said, “That was delicious…scrumptious!” She laughed. “I haven’t felt this good since Lynn and I…”

She caught herself. The floodgates almost opened, and she was determined to suppress the powerful emotions that came whenever she thought about her best friend.

A glimmer of tears made it to Marcy’s eyes and both Frank and Sally noticed it.

“Is everything all right dear,” Sally asked.

“Oh, yes. I’m doing fine. Thank you.” But this wasn’t true. Despite her best attempts to appear calm and composed, the deep emotions surrounding Lynn’s death were fighting to rise to the surface like a long dormant volcano about to erupt in a torrential and devastating explosion that destroyed itself.

Frank decided to push the envelope because he knew the volcano was preparing to blow, and it was vital for all this pressure to be released before it destroyed the host.

“So, Marcy. What happened in your past that was so bad that caused you to think God is against you or hates you?”

Again, Marcy’s thoughts turned towards Lynn. It was her death that changed Marcy’s life regarding her relationship with God and other people.

“The light man didn’t tell you?” asked Marcy.

“No, he didn’t tell us anything about your personal life.” Frank said. “I think that was deliberate because he knew you needed to be the one to tell it.”

Ten years of suppressed emotional pressure was intently pushing within Marcy like a balloon ready to pop. She was losing the battle of suppressing the tears.

Marcy mumbled, “He didn’t heal Lynn and she died.” At that, she burst into tears and began crying uncontrollably as she was oblivious to everything else.

Marcy embarrassingly put her hands over her face and started to apologize for crying. However, despite her many years at becoming an expert at beating these thoughts back, tonight she couldn’t do it. She was defenseless against its onslaught to break free. The volcano was erupting, and it had to run its course. Sally got up quickly to get a box of tissues.

Marcy took the tissues as she continued crying profusely and said once more, “He didn’t heal Lynn.” Marcy started to cry even more, mumbling about how Lynn died and how she couldn’t save her.

“What happened?” asked Frank. “It must have been horrible. I can’t begin to imagine what you must have gone through.”

“Lynn and I were best friends. We were like Nell and her sister in that movie Nell with Jodie Foster and Liam Neeson. About ten years ago, Lynn was struck with some kind of crazy disease that was eating her alive from the inside. When it began happening, I remembered a scripture in the Bible that says, ‘He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.’ So, I asked God to heal her of that disease, and I was confident that he would do it because it said so in the Bible. I told Lynn not to worry because we would be out playing again in no time.

“Then Lynn died three days later, and I died with her that day. What had I done to make God so indifferent that he refused to answer my prayer to heal Lynn? He neglected my prayer and therefore rejected me.”—Marcy started to sob—"He let Lynn die and I couldn’t do anything to help her!”

Frank and Sally looked at each other for a moment and then looked down at the floor. They offered their condolences, and Marcy seemed to appreciate it.

“I need answers.” Marcy blurted out. “Perhaps there are no answers. Suppose there was no rhyme or reason for Lynn’s death. What if Lynn’s death was just something that happened on the earth, and there was no purpose or explanation for it.”

The prospect of Lynn’s death seemingly having no meaning obviously frightened Marcy. She was glad to be with the Wilsons because at least she finally had someone to talk to. and perhaps could get, if not answers, a resolution to the anguish in her heart that had been there for so long it was almost like an old friend.

Frank and Sally sat quietly for a few moments in the hopes of not overwhelming Marcy. She was still crying, but not as hard as before. Marcy briefly thought about getting answers again and then allowed things to continue with her sadness and grief. She normally did not allow herself to be so emotionally vulnerable, especially in the company of others, nor was she accustomed to being so open with people. However, Frank and Sally seemed safe, and they seemed to genuinely care.

After a few moments of silence and quick internal contemplation, Marcy said, “Why didn’t God heal Lynn? The two of you sit here telling me I have some kind a calling on my life. Well, how can I trust God for my needs in this calling if He didn’t come through for me when I really needed him the most, for Lynn? God controls everything, so Lynn died because he chose not to come to her rescue. I chose not to acknowledge God in my life after that because I figured what would be the point.”

Frank asked, “So, why don’t you acknowledge God?”

Marcy said, “Because that would mean I could be setting myself up for another letdown. Suppose I were to start getting excited about something that I asked him for and then it didn’t happen. Nope. Not me. Not again.”

Marcy paused for a few moments, waiting for a response from the Wilsons and then bellowed, “So, why didn’t God heal Lynn? Why did she have to die?”

Frank let out a deep sigh and then started to give Marcy the answer. Sally rubbed him on his back as he started because she knew how hard this would be for Marcy to hear. Marcy was at full attention, as if she were hanging on every word that Frank was about to say.

“Marcy, God didn’t let Lynn down. In fact, He wanted her healed just as you did. —”

“So why didn’t he just go ahead and heal her then?” Marcy shrieked out. “Sorry.”

“That’s ok,” said Frank. “We totally understand your pain and desperation for real answers. The first mistake we make when it comes to things like this is—and I heard you mention this earlier—that God is in control of everything that happens. That’s not true.

“Let me explain. Did God control the offerings that Cain and Abel gave? Did God control Cain when he killed Abel? Did God control all the evil people in our history or the horrible events we constantly hear about in the news?”

“No. I suppose not,” said Marcy.

Frank continued, “Don’t think of it so much as control. Whatever God says and whatever he wants will happen. Period. Nothing can stop his will from occurring on the earth.”

Marcy asked, “Ok, I’m really confused now. So, are you saying that he didn’t want Lynn to get well?”

Frank answered, “No. Not at all. The thing is, there are things he delegates to us, that most of the time we do not do. For example, Jesus sent his disciples out and told them to preach, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Did you catch it, Marcy Max?”

Marcy was staring at Frank as if he had celery in his teeth. Her brain was trying to understand what he was trying to say, but she just couldn’t see it.

“No, I didn’t catch that. What are you telling me?”

Frank said, “In the same way that God has already provided salvation to the whole human race, he has already provided healing for everyone. But just as the disciples had to go out and tell people about it, what is necessary is for us to minister that healing just like we minister salvation. Unfortunately, most people who call themselves Christians, do not do that.”

Marcy said, “Wait a minute! But I did minister healing to Lynn, and she still died. So, what am I missing?”

Frank shock his head. “No. Based on what you said to us earlier, you didn’t minister healing. Now, we understand that you did everything you knew to do with the light you had. You said that you asked God to heal her. That is not the same thing as healing the sick. Jesus didn’t tell his disciples to go and ask the Father to heal the sick. He told them to heal the sick. This is because we don’t have to ask God to heal someone, just like we don’t have to ask God to save someone because he already wants to and has already provided both. We just have to get it done with his power and authority.”

Marcy said, “I’ve never heard it like that before. But how does that apply to Lynn?”

Sally interjected, “You mentioned a passage on healing that you discovered or remembered concerning Lynn’s sickness. You said that God will forgive all your sins and heal all your diseases. That passage is found in Psalm 103”—Marcy quickly made a note of that—"and it is David’s testimony or praise about his God. It wasn’t saying that God will automatically forgive our sins. If he did, we wouldn’t need Jesus. Likewise, the verse wasn’t saying that God would automatically heal every sick person. If this is what the verse meant, no one would ever stay sick.”

With a very confused look on her face, Marcy asked, “So, what does that passage mean?”

“Just like what Frank said, in the same way people have to hear the gospel and receive salvation, which God already provided for everyone, people also need to hear the good news about healing, receive it, and then be healed. We minister salvation for salvation and healing for healing.”

Marcy started shaking her head and holding her cheeks. I’m missing something. What was missing in Lynn’s situation?”

Frank stated, “No one ministered healing to her. Because of that, no one healed her. It’s that simple, sort of. Again, what Jesus told his disciples to do—and us—was to go and heal the sick, not ask God to do it. God works through people, which the Bible reveals to us. You were on the right path, but there was so much you didn’t know and didn’t have time to learn. Don’t worry, it’s not your fault, so don’t even go there. You simply didn’t know and did the best you could with the light you had.”

Marcy seemed to be understanding what Frank and Sally were trying to tell her. It made sense. We should do what God said to do with what he already provided, and we would be the better for it.

Frank said, “Sally and I believe that this is where you fit in, along with many others. God is raising up true ministers to help his people just like he raised up Moses and the prophets to help his people in ancient times, along with a number of ministers in our day.

They were just regular people who ended up doing great things for God. As a matter of fact, many, if not all of them could have been considered by the world’s standards as being unqualified to do what they were called to do. But like you, God prepared them to do his work even though they may not have been aware of what He was doing.”

Marcy was nodding her head. She seemed to understand the basic concept of what Frank and Sally were trying to show her. Marcy reasoned that she had a great deal to learn in this area.

Marcy said, “I can’t bring Lynn back, but I now understand that it wasn’t God’s fault. I just didn’t know. However, if I can stop what happened to Lynn from happening to others, then I’m game because I know it would honor Lynn. I don’t know why God called me, but I’m going to answer his call and do my very best.”

# Marcy’s Calling

Marcy and the Wilsons continued their dinner conversation. They discussed ministry in general, mostly how it pertains to healing and God’s involvement with people. Frank and Sally explained some basic things about how God operates through people and how we are supposed to do a lot more then what we are currently doing. Marcy was still somewhat emotional because of her love for Lynn. However, she seemed to have gotten over distancing herself from God. She just needed someone to talk to about it to help her understand.

At one point in their conversation, Marcy frustratingly bellowed, “But why does God seem to be so coy? It’s almost like you have to solve 1,000 riddles before you can get anywhere, and in the meantime, people are suffering and dying?”

Frank rubbed his head, let out a big sigh and said, “God is not coy. It’s just that we are ignorant of him and his ways, and we expect him to hold our hands and lead the way in ignorance.”

Frank reached for his Bible and presented it for Marcy to look at. “See this? This is the Bible. This is how we can learn about God and then practice what we learn to get to know God personally. The problem is we don’t do that. He has been talking to us all along, but we haven’t learned to discern his voice. Because of that, we don’t know to do the many things that God has empowered us to do.”

Marcy jerked her head up as if she remembered something important. “That reminds me of a movie I saw many years ago, *Tears of the Sun*. I remember a statement or quote at the end of the movie that read something like, *‘All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.’* So, all that is necessary for the triumph of sickness is for Christians to do nothing. Right?”

Sally looked at Frank with a somber look on her face and said, “Unfortunately, there is a lot of truth in that statement. But it is greater than just sickness. The forces of evil use all kinds of schemes to destroy people. Sickness in the body is just one of them.”

Sally smiled at Marcy. “How do you feel now?”

Marcy thought for a moment. “I feel ready! I want to help people, honor Lynn, and do what God wants me to do. But do you think God is mad at me for abandoning him all these years? Surely, I have to pay some kind of penalty or something, right?”

Frank put a big smile on his face. “You are already forgiven. The light man showed you that. Don’t think God has a grudge against you because that guilt will grow like a noxious weed and wreak havoc in your heart.” Frank paused. “So, if God wants you to do something for him, would you do—”

Marcy interrupted and said, “Yeah! I would. So, what does God want me to do anyway?”

Frank said, “God wants you to help. You are wired to help.”

“But How?” Marcy asked.

“You’ll learn how as time goes by. Just pursue God and be attentive to his voice. While you’re waiting on him, just be you.”

There were a few moments of silence and then Marcy blurted out, “Can I have some more of that delicious fried chicken?” She was being herself.

Frank and Sally laughed. They continued with the dinner and had dessert. The chocolate cake was delicious, and Marcy enjoyed every crumb. They talked more about the Bible and how God works. Marcy was intrigued by it all. Something gripped her like never before. She was excited about her calling and was raring to go.

After a while, Marcy decided it was time to go home. She thanked the Wilsons for a wonderful dinner and a most edifying conversation. She specifically thanked them for helping her get over Lynn’s death and putting her back on track to having a relationship with God. Marcy headed home after everyone said their goodbyes.

Marcy decided to walk over to the corner where she met the light man. She was thinking how great a day it had been, and how it was that event that triggered it all. She wasn’t sure what to make of her calling, but she was ready and willing to take it on. Something was now very different about Marcy. For the first time in years, she was smiling and happy. She got more than a break. She felt… blessed.

She slowly walked through the development’s courtyard. When she arrived at the place where it all started, it was dark just like it was then. She started looking at the ground and walking around as if she dropped something.

“What caused my rim to bend like that?” She didn’t see a hole in the street, a rock… or anything. That was like an unsolved mystery to her. Marcy stood there for a while looking across the street. She didn’t think the light man would show up again, but it would have been nice if he did.

Nothing much was happening because it was about 9:00 pm and Blue Haven was a relatively small town. A car drove by every so often, but for the most part the streets were empty. It was a very nice evening. The temperature was about 75 degrees and there was no rain in the forecast.

“Ok. Time to go home.”

She turned back into the quiet development and headed home. You could see the stars in the sky and hear the wind blowing in the trees and bushes in the courtyard. It was all so beautiful Marcy could have sat outside the entire night.

She went into her house through the garage because she wanted to see her bike. There it was, still fixed and still blue. After entering the house, she decided to have a cup of tea and relax for a while. She liked peppermint tea because it had a soothing effect on her. She sat down on her sofa with her tea, turned on the soft lighting and said, “This was a very good day.” She just sat there for a while alone in her thoughts, contemplating the events of the week and the culmination of her dinner with Frank and Sally.

“It was a very good evening with the Wilsons too,” said Marcy to herself.

After a short while, Marcy did something she hadn’t done in probably ten years or so. She started talking to God and started to pray.

“God. I’m sorry about the way I’ve treated you all these years. I know you love me because you showed me with your angel. I call him the light man. Thanks for being patient with me all these years. I assume that Lynn is with you in heaven, so please tell her hello for me. Well, I’m starting to get sleepy, so I guess I’ll go to bed now. Good night… I mean, amen.”

Marcy got up from the sofa, cleaned up the kitchen and then headed to her bedroom. Laying down, she was still thinking about the light man and her dinner with the Wilsons.

Everything was now new for her, even her bike. She drifted off to sleep, contemplating her calling and what her life would be like from this point forward. It was all exciting and mysterious at the same time.

# New Strength

Marcy woke up Saturday morning to the sunlight peeking through the curtains. She left them partially open when she went to bed. She was still in a very good mood from all that happened to her over the past week. Marcy got up, opened the curtains, and began talking to God.

“Thank you for a new day, God. As a matter of fact, thank you for a new life. I feel like a totally different person. For that matter, I think everything is different now. I know I’ve said it before, but I really am sorry for the way I treated you all those years. Thanks for the Wilsons too. Please guide me and help me to discover my calling and what you want me to do. Thanks… Amen.”

Marcy had a strange feeling after she prayed. She couldn’t quite put her finger on it, but something was definitely different about her. It wasn’t a bad thing, just a strange and new thing she’d never felt before.

“I feel so full of energy like I could run a marathon and then ride my bike for miles. Oh well. What shall I eat for breakfast?”

Marcy got washed, put on some clothes and then went to the kitchen and fixed herself breakfast. She sat down and ate, smiling to herself the whole time.

“I sure feel different. I’m not sure what it is, but I like it a lot.” She laughed at herself.

After breakfast, Marcy washed the dishes and decided to grab her sunglasses and go sit outside in the courtyard. It was nice and sunny outside but not too hot. When she got outside, she heard a noise. It was the Wilsons. They were doing something in their garage and there were a bunch of boxes sitting outside. She decided to go over and see what was going on.

She found Frank and Sally seemingly doing spring cleaning. “Hi, Frank. Hi, Sally.”

They stopped what they were doing and greeted Marcy warmly.

Frank asked, “How are you doing?”

“Actually, I’m doing fine for the first time in a long time. As a matter of fact, I feel really strange but in a good way.”

Sally said, “Is that right. How so?”

“I don’t really know. I feel so full of energy or something. Can I help you guys with anything?”

Frank said, “Sure. We’re just kind of taking inventory and throwing out what we don’t want. A lot of stuff has been here for years, even since before our son moved out.”

Frank directed Marcy to an area of the garage where she could start working. She was to bring a stack of boxes and crates to Frank one at a time. He warned her to be careful because some of them might be a bit heavy, especially the crates, and to call him if she needed help lifting anything.

Marcy took the first box from a pile of four stacked boxes and brought them to Frank to inspect the contents.

“These are just old clothes that we don’t need. We should create a ‘donate’ pile too.”

Sally agreed. Marcy took two more boxes down and they both contained old clothes. The last box was a metal case. Marcy assumed it was more clothes since that seemed to be the clothes pile. She also figured it would be a little heavier since it was a metal case. When she sat it down next to Frank it made a clanging noise.

Marcy said, “That didn’t sound like clothes.”

Frank opened the case and looked at its contents. He stared at it for a few moments with his mouth agape like he had just seen a ghost.

Sally looked over at that moment and asked, “What’s wrong, dear?”

“Marcy Just picked up and carried over this case full of Stanley’s old weights. There has to be over 100 pounds of weights in here!”

Marcy said, “Wow! It didn’t seem heavy at all.”

She stooped down, like she did the first time and effortlessly picked the case up by the handles on both sides. There wasn’t even a hint of straining on her part. Then she lifted the box over her head and stretched it out in front of her like she was doing exercises. Both Frank and Sally were looking at her in amazement, trying to assess what was happening. Marcy was really excited about this.

Marcy exclaimed, “This must be one of my new abilities! I knew something was different about me this morning when I got up. The light man must have given me some kind of extra strength or something.”

Frank started taking the items out of the case to see what the weight actually was. There were two 45-pound plates, two 25-pound plates, four 10-pound plates, a 15-pound kettle ball and four 5-pound plates.

Frank said, “There’s at least 215 pounds in this case! I wouldn’t have been able to lift that box the way Marcy did!” Frank was a fitness buff like his son. He did some weight training and had an athletic physique that made him look very muscular. Marcy was looking at the case of weights with an expression of awe.

Marcy asked, “So, what does this mean?”

Frank said, “I don’t know, but it sure is incredible— almost unbelievable.”

Sally blurted out, “You’re hired, Marcy!”

Marcy laughed and said, “I asked God to guide me and show me what I’m supposed to do about my calling. I guess having super strength is part of it.”

Frank said, “That certainly seems to be the case. Now, I’m not trying to put a damper on it, but let me give you a word of caution. This really is awesome, but you need to be extremely careful because you don’t want to abuse this gift. God gave it to you for a reason and that reason most likely has to do with the calling on your life. Remember to be yourself. However, be careful with it in public. Most folks won’t understand it and will probably think of you as a freak. Not only that, Satan is a master of human behavior and he could easily cause you to become lifted up with pride over this marvelous gift.”

They all went back to work on the garage. However, Marcy was hoping to find another heavy crate to lift. She was excited about her new strength and wondered how strong she really was. Every now and then, she went over to where Frank put the weights and lifted them all at once. Frank silently thanked God for Marcy and for giving her this newfound strength. He prayed that she would gain spiritual strength and wisdom commensurate with her physical ability.

# Fitness Emporium

It was about 11:00 am when Marcy decided to go back home and get some work done. She vacuumed the floors, mopped, dusted, and did the normal household cleaning chores. She also opened the curtains and drapes to let more sunlight in. Things were surely new because there was no more low-light ambience in her house. All was good. Marcy sat down in the living room and just relaxed for a while. She was still high from the exciting things that happened to her, especially the situation at the Wilsons that morning.

Marcy decided to have a pizza delivered. She had not eaten one in months and did not want to eat too many carbs because she was conscious of her health and physique. She ate about half of it. She loved pizza with meat. She would justify all the carbs by claiming the extra protein helped curb the sugar spike.

Marcy started thinking about the strength she discovered at the Wilsons. She said, “I could easily lift over 200 pounds.” She then decided to visit Fitness Emporium and play around with their exercise equipment to test her new strength even further. Fitness Emporium is a fitness superstore where you can purchase exercise equipment, supplements, exercise accessories, and more. They also have stations where the exercise equipment is setup for you to try them out. They even have various fitness classes such as yoga, boxing, weight training, and more.

It was still relatively early, so she figured she would spend an hour or so at Fitness Emporium and then get back before dark. It was now about 5:30 pm.

Marcy got herself ready and headed out to catch the bus. After arriving at Fitness Emporium, she went straight to the weight training section. Marcy scanned the area and saw there weren’t a lot of people around. This was perfect because she didn’t want to make a spectacle of herself.

Marcy saw what she was looking for: a set that included dumbbells up to 75 pounds each. Marcy decided to pick up a pair of 25-pound dumbbells. They were so light to her they felt like picking up a piece of paper. She then decided to go ahead and pick up the 50-pound pair. Again, they were not a challenge. She started to curl the weights and stretch them out to her sides with little effort. She then picked up the 75-pound pair and found they weren’t much of a challenge either. It was like picking up a cup of milk.

Suddenly, from behind the row of equipment someone said, “Marcy? Is that you?” She quickly put the weights down and looked around to see who it was. It was Mark from Sammy D’s.

Marcy responded, “Mark! What are you doing here?”

“I wanted to look at some training equipment. What are you doing here? I saw you lifting some weights. Do you lift?”

Marcy said, “Not really. I had an experience earlier this week and I was curious about how much weight I could lift.”

“So, you came all the way here for that?”

“Not really. Can you keep a secret? I mean for real.”

Mark said, “I’ll keep your secret if you keep mine.”

Marcy said, “I have superhuman strength.”

“What? Is that right.”

“You don’t believe me?”

“After what happened to me, I am most definitely inclined to believe you.”

Marcy said, “Huh? What happened to you?”

“It’s a long story.”

Marcy said, “Anyway, check this out.”

She then picked up the pair of 75-pound weights and started lifting them over her head, out to her sides, and in front of her with little to no effort.

Mark was amazed but didn’t appear to be shocked with unbelief. It was almost as if he expected something like that. He then did something that Marcy did not expect at all. Mark picked up the same weights and did the same movements. Marcy was shocked.

“How did you do that?”

Mark answered, “I did it the same way you did.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“You know what I mean.”

Marcy was afraid to say it out loud.

She nervously said, “The light man gave you powers?”

“I guess you could call him that. Yup. I was a lot stronger after my encounter with him.”

Marcy said with a slight tremble in her voice, “When did you see him?”

“It was Tuesday evening now that I think about it. It was the same evening that it rained like crazy. Remember?”

“Was that your secret?” Marcy asked.

“That was part of it. Come here. Let me show you something.”

Mark took Marcy to the punching bag area and started to demonstrate various forms of martial arts. His movements were graceful and powerful at the same time.

“Wow. That was incredible. I didn’t realize you were a martial arts expert.”

Mark said, “It wasn’t until Wednesday or so. I mean, I train with weights and practice martial arts, but my strength seemed to go off the chart during my training routine on Wednesday afternoon. I also noticed that I could move much faster than I used to. There were all kinds of new stuff in my head that my body was able to do. It was like someone wired me up and uploaded all kinds of physical abilities and knowledge. It was like Neo in the movie, *The Matrix*, when he learned kung fu.”

Marcy asked, “How far have you tested your new abilities?”

“That’s the main reason I came here this evening. I wanted to test myself on some of the equipment. I might buy some things too.”

“That’s also why I came here. I wanted to test my new strength and see how much I can lift.”

Marcy noticed something about Mark that made her believe there was more to his story.

“Is there something else that you’re not telling me?”

“Kind of. We can talk about that later.”

“Ok. Well, this has been quite enlightening. I better get back home before it gets dark.”

Mark persuasively said, “It’s Saturday night. Don’t you want to hang out for a while?”

“I’ve got to catch the bus back home and I don’t like being out and about at night in the city.”

Mark reassured Marcy. “Don’t worry about that. I’ll drive you home.”

“That’s great. I would like to hang out for a while and try some more of those weights. I think I’ll try those barbells.”

Mark explained, “That is a 300-pound Olympic set on the ground there. I don’t know how much they have the bar loaded with, but I can see right away it’s more than 150 pounds. Let’s see. Forty-five plus thirty-five plus… There’s 210 pounds on that bar, making the total weight 255 pounds. Do a deadlift if you gotta lift it.”

Mark then showed Marcy how to do a deadlift using the barbell. “Make sure your form is right or you may hurt yourself.”

She reached down, grabbed the bar the way Mark showed her and pulled it up as if she were picking up a box of kittens. She gently lowered the bar and lifted it a few more times. Mark was looking at her with his mouth open in amazement.

Then without warning someone asked, “How in the world did you lift that much weight?” Mark and Marcy turned to discover a woman and her daughter watching them.

The woman said, “I saw when he lifted the weights and just figured he was a power lifter or something. Then I saw you lift the weights and thought I was looking at something out of the Twilight Zone. How did you do that?”

“Trust me, it’s a long story. Mark here showed me that with proper form, I could lift a lot of weight.”

The woman walked up to the weights and tried to lift them herself. She could not budge them off the floor.

“How did you do that? You look so small, and I don’t see any bulging muscles. Something is not adding up. Are you taking some kind of performance enhancing drug?”

“No drugs. This may sound strange but the reason I’m so strong now is because God gave me the strength. It all happened this week. I’m still learning what it all means but that’s what happened.”

Mark then said, “The same kind of thing happened to me. I’ve been weight training for many years but now my strength level is off the chart. This is a direct result of something that God did to me this week.”

The woman said, “Oh. That’s interesting.”

Neither of them expected that kind of answer.

Marcy asked, “What do you mean?”

The woman said, “Well. Let’s just say that some strange things have happened to us today too, which is mostly why we’re here tonight. Oh, how rude of me. My name is Sharon Johnson, and this is my daughter, Tiffany.”

Marcy said, “My name is Marcy Maxwell, and this is Mark Jacobson. Pleased to meet you.”

Sharon said, “Well, I’ll let you guys get back to what you were doing.” Then she walked away to another part of the exercise equipment displays, glancing back at Marcy and Mark a few times.

Marcy said to Mark, “I wonder if the light man visited her too?”

Marcy then noticed the bench press machine and wondered how much weight she could press.

“I see what you’re looking at,” Mark said. “Have you ever done bench presses before?”

“No, but I’m dying to try,” she said with a mischievous tone.

“All right then, let me show you the right way to do this so you don’t hurt yourself. Neither of us know our limits yet so we need to be cautious.”

“All right daddy, whatever you say,” Marcy said then laughed to show she was teasing.

They both laughed out loud and Mark rolled his eyes playfully. After Marcy laid down on the bench, Mark put the empty Olympic bar on the rack. Then he loaded 90 pounds on the bar and told Marcy to lift it. She lifted it with no problem and did a few reps.

“How much weight was that?” Marcy asked.

“That was about 135 pounds.”

Marcy said with disdain, “135 pounds!? Come on. Can’t you see I have super strength?”

“All right, Supergirl, let’s up the ante’ shall we?”

Mark continued to load more plates on the bar and Marcy lifted them all with no problem. Finally, she convinced him to put all the plates on the bar, which came to about 300 pounds. He reluctantly acquiesced and loaded the bar.

To both their surprise, Marcy lifted 300 pounds as easily as lifting a bucket of water. Both Mark and Marcy were amazed. Marcy did a few more reps of 300 pounds on the bench press.

Just as she was finishing, without warning someone behind them yelled, “What the hell!”

They were so caught up in their little test they failed to notice a sales associate had wandered over to them and was watching Marcy’s superhuman feats. He was staring at Marcy in utter amazement and disbelief.

“What’s your juice, babe?”

“My juice?”

Mark chuckled and said, “He wants to know what kind of performance enhancement drugs you’re using.”

The sales associate said, “You must be juicing because there is no way you could lift 300 pounds the way I just saw you do.”

Marcy said, “Trust me, I’m not juicing. I didn’t even know what the word meant until just now.”

The sales associate said, “You’re full of it. You gotta be on something.’”

Marcy said, “Ok, you caught me. You may not have heard of this drug. It’s called POG.”

Both Mark and the sales associate looked at Marcy with a puzzled look on their faces.

“You’re right. I’ve never heard of that one. That must be some next level stuff. What’s POG?”

Marcy laughed and said, “It stands for power of God. You see, earlier this week I had an encounter with God and one of the effects on my life was that I now have superhuman strength.”

The sales associate said, “The power of God. Ok. I’ll have to check that one out—wait a minute. The power of what? God? Are you playing me?”

Marcy said with a little disgust, “No. I’m not. Something happened to me this week and now I’m extremely strong. Lifting that 300 pounds took hardly any effort on my part. God gave me new abilities, including this strength, to do his work. The crazy thing is—What’s your name?”

“I’m Carl.”

“OK. The crazy thing is that God was not a part of my life at all before this happened. I thought he hated me, and I was very indifferent towards him. Actually, I was downright angry at him and hurt because my best friend died of a horrible disease about ten years ago. But even though I was not a godly person, he still chose me to do his work. Not only that, he showed me that he loved me with a love that I cannot describe. It was so powerful.”

Carl was looking at Marcy, not knowing how to respond or what to think. He said, “Well, I know God really doesn’t care about me. He ain’t hangin’ with a guy like me.”

Marcy said, “What do you mean by that? Why do you think God wouldn’t want to have anything to do with you?”

“Let’s just say that I’m not a good guy. I’ve done a lot of bad things in my life.”

“And?”

“What do you mean, ‘and?’ God wouldn’t have anything to do with a sinner head like me. I’m one of those guys who’s doomed to hell, so I figure I might as well try to enjoy the ride. There’s nothing I can do about it anyway.”

“You have got to be kidding me!” Mark exclaimed.

“What, dude?”

“So, you think that God is going around looking for good people to love and interact with? Is that it? You’ve got it all wrong my friend. If God were only doing that, then no one would be with him. We would all be doomed to hell.”

Carl had a puzzled look on his face. He remembered back to all the times his father punished him for the slightest offenses, then told him he was ashamed of him and how worthless he was. Then he remembered being forced to go to a church growing up where the preacher constantly warned about God’s wrath and how he expected holiness out of his children, and if they strayed in the slightest, God would punish them, or worse just leave them alone. It was from these events that Carl formed his view of what God, his heavenly Father is. Sadly, it was a skewed vision because while God is holy, Carl never heard about the tender and loving side of God. He had become a victim of the works mentality in religion.

Marcy said, “That’s right. The Bible says that Jesus died for us even though we were still sinners. I read that Bible verse over and over because I could never figure out why he showed his love to me after I treated him so cruelly for the past ten years.”

Mark interjected, “Me too, my friend. That passage still sends chills down my spine. Like you, I always thought I was unworthy of anything from God. I didn’t go to church, and I certainly never pursued him. I kind of just figured that he existed and all, but that he wanted nothing to do with me, and the feeling was mutual. Like you, I was an evil guy. However, God turned my life around several years ago but this week he called me to do a work for him.”

Carl said, “Yeah, well maybe, but you guys don’t know some of the things that I’ve done. Trust me, if you did, you wouldn’t like me very much and would shy away from me.”

Mark asked, “Let me ask you, have you gone around and arrested Christians so that they would be killed?”

“What?! No way man, I mean as bad as I am, I haven’t done anything like that.”

“Well. One of the greatest apostles of Jesus Christ did just that. As a matter of fact, he was on his way to a town called Damascus to arrest Christians when Jesus interrupted him and called him to be an apostle. Imagine that. One of the worst enemies of Christianity was called by God to be used to spread the Christian faith throughout the Roman Empire and even up to England.”

Marcy said, “It just goes to show you that no matter how bad you think you are; God still loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. At least that’s what I’ve concluded so far.”

Carl said, “Are you saying that God loves me? I’m a worthless piece of crap. You guys aren’t punking me, are you?”

Marcy and Mark said at the same time, “No. You are not a piece of crap! God loves you.”

“But I’m going to hell.” Carl said inquisitively.

“So were we,” Mark said, “The good news is there’s a way to get off that train and onto God’s railway to heaven.”

Carl’s eyes opened wide in utter amazement for a moment. Then he started to think and said, “Yeah, I know. To do it I’ve got to go to church, feed the hungry, pay my tithes, blah, blah. I’ve heard it all before. There’s no way I can do all that, at least not consistently.”

Mark smiled and said, “You may have heard all that, but you haven’t heard the truth. The way you get off that train is simply to accept Jesus’ forgiveness for your sins. Believe that he died for your sins, rose from the dead, and is alive now so that you can have an abundant life. While we were on the train to hell, God sent Jesus to die for our sins so we would not have to. Jesus paid the price for our sins with his life. He made a way for us all to get off the train to hell.”

Carl said, “Yeah, but I don’t know about all that religious stuff you got to do.”

Mark laughed. “Of course you don’t. Listen, Carl. When you receive Jesus as your Savior, you become a new person inside. After that happens, you’ll be surprised at how many things you lose a desire for or that no longer sit right with you. There’s an old hymn that says “Just as I Am.” Don’t worry about you changing your life. That will occur over time as the Spirit of God begins to affect you. It’s not about you and what you can do. God didn’t send Jesus to save you only for you to have to work for it.”

Carl said, “I think I want that. I’m tired of being miserable with no hope. How do I become a Christian and get off this train to hell?”

“It’s not about becoming a Christian as if you were joining some type of religion. It is about a relationship with God the Father. He wants a relationship with you, and that can only happen if your sins are forgiven and you receive the righteousness provided by Christ. Do you believe, or do you accept what we said earlier? Asked Mark. “That is, Jesus died for your sins so that you won’t have to. He was raised from the dead so you can live in right-standing with God. Do you accept and truly believe that?”

Carl said, “Yup. I guess I do.”

Mark said, “Say it out loud then. Say what you understand about what we said Jesus did for you.”

Carl quietly said, “I accept Jesus’ payment through his death for my sins. Since he paid for my sins, then I don’t have to pay for them. That means I’m not going to go to hell. Since he was raised from the dead, I can live too. I also accept that I don’t have to earn God’s love or his salvation.”

Marcy said, “Great! If you really meant that then you are no longer on the train to hell. You are saved!”

Marcy and Mark laid hands on Carl and thanked God for forgiving and paying the price for all of Carl’s sins. They declared the Spirit of God is now dwelling inside of him and that Carl is now a new person.

Something then hit Carl that he wasn’t prepared for. It was an extreme feeling of love. He remembered the love he felt from his mother who died several years ago; but what he was feeling now was exponentially greater than his mother’s love. Carl felt as though something heavy had been lifted off his shoulders. Something changed inside of him, but he couldn’t put his finger on it. A tear started to come down from his eyes.

Marcy said, “Are you ok?”

“No. Not really. I feel so strange. It’s a good strange though. Listen, how can I get in touch with you guys in case I have any questions or need help?”

“Are you familiar with Sammy D’s in Blue Haven?” Mark asked.

“I sure am. I eat there sometimes.”

“Well, that’s where you can find us. However, here’s my number. Feel free to call me if you need to talk. Marcy and I can come together and meet with you if you like.”

“That would be great, guys. Thank you so much. I think my mom would be proud that I finally came to Jesus. She was always telling me about him, but I never listened to her. I ignored her and kept running after that train to hell. She died, thinking I would die and go to hell. I wish she could have seen me get saved.” Carl then started crying.

Marcy smiled and said, “Don’t worry. I believe you’ll see each other again in heaven, and you’ll rejoice and worship God together for eternity. You see, you don’t cease to exist when you die. From what you said about your mom, she’s in heaven now with Jesus, angels, the Father, and other Christians. She’ll be so happy to see you. So, don’t feel bad about your mom not knowing you were saved before she died.”

That made Carl feel a lot better. He calmed down and thanked them for taking the time to talk to him.

He said, “If I hadn’t seen Marcy here lifting that much weight, I never would have come over here and had the opportunity to accept Jesus. Thank you so much!”

When Carl said that, Marcy remembered what the Wilsons told her. People need to hear the gospel to be saved, and in order for them to hear, someone has to minister to them. She just did the work of God by helping someone accept what Jesus did for all. She was so happy to have helped Carl get off his train to hell and give him a ticket on the northbound train to heaven.

“If it’s ok, I’ll reach out to both of you every couple of weeks of so. I need you to hold me accountable to make sure I’m not returning to my old ways. Would that be alright?”

“Absolutely,” Marcy said.

“Dittos,” Mark echoed, “But don’t feel you have to wait that long. If you ever feel you are in danger of giving in to temptation or just need some encouragement, don’t hesitate to call me anytime, day or night. Also, be sure to start reading your Bible. That is especially important.”

“Will do. And thanks.” Carl said, then he took out two of his cards and gave them to Mark and Marcy.

“Here is my business card. It has my cell number on it if you need to reach me.” Carl looked at Marcy and chuckled. “So, now I think I understand POG. Do you think I’ll get superhuman strength?”

They all laughed at that. Carl excused himself so he could get back to work.

Mark and Marcy decided to get a little snack before heading home. Mark walked Marcy to his Toyota Camry LE. It was a newer model and very clean on the inside. He opened the door for Marcy, then, as promised, he drove her home in style.

Marcy said, “Thank you. This is a lot better than the bus.”

When Mark pulled up to her house, he noticed Marcy was looking at him rather strangely.

“Is everything ok?”

Marcy was looking at him with a slight smile on her face and almost starry eyed.

“Thanks for a great evening,” she said. “I had a great time. I feel as though I was walking in my calling.”

“No problem. I feel the same way actually.”

“Well, goodnight. You still owe me more information about your whole secret, and I intend to collect,” Marcy said, smiling.

Mark said, “Oh yeah. That’s right. Let me square up my tab right now. The whole secret is that the light man told me to watch over you, protect you, and train you.”

“I figured that you were somehow my protector or something. You seemed to be watching over me the whole time at Fitness Emporium, especially when I was lifting all those weights.”

“Anyway, I’d better get inside. Have a good one.”

Marcy then leaned over and kissed Mark on his cheek. He was deeply touched by that act of affection because he really liked Marcy, though he would never admit it. He waited until Marcy got into her house and then drove to his home.

The second floor of Mark’s living area was very spacious. It included the storage area along with his living quarters. It even had a large area that Mark used for his personal gym and training room.

Mark was thrilled about what happened that evening, but he was especially happy to have spent so much time with Marcy. He was really fond of her and hoped this would be the first of many such times together. Then he was struck by the thought that this was probably a given since he was her protector and trainer.

# The Light Man Returns

Marcy watched Mark drive away from her living room window. She felt good about Mark. You might even say that she liked him. She sat down on her sofa for a few minutes. As she began meditating on tonight’s events, Marcy was overwhelmed at the thought of God using her to accomplish something so amazing, assisting in giving birth to a new child of God. Marcy still couldn’t believe God allowed her the privilege of reaching someone else and helping him discover the joy she felt. Marcy decided to say a prayer to God, thanking him for such a great day. She also thanked God for meeting Mark, and that he had a car, so she didn’t have to catch the bus to get back home.

Marcy went back outside and sat down on one of the benches in the courtyard to relax. It was a nice evening, about 75 degrees and the sky was clear and full of stars. A small breeze helped keep things nice and cool.

Suddenly Marcy noticed a flicker near the tree off to her left. It was not very tall, but it did a good job of providing shade in the afternoon.

“What was that?” Marcy said.

Her heart almost jumped out of her chest because she thought it might be the light man coming back to visit her. She was nervous, scared, and excited all at the same time. She began getting very emotional as she began to anticipate the overwhelming feeling of love she experienced only a few nights prior.

“Is the light man coming back to me? God. Please send your light man back to me. I know that Frank said I don’t need to feel your love and that you love me all the time, but the love I felt from the light man was so beautiful. It’s been so long since I experienced any kind of real love. Can’t I please have some of that love just one more time?”

Marcy started to think that perhaps the flicker of light was just a group of fireflies or something, but when it got brighter over by the tree, she quickly ruled out that theory.

The flicker became very bright but not blinding. It seemed to approach her just like what happened earlier that week when this all started.

“It’s the light man!” Her heart was racing with excitement over the thought of him coming to visit her again. He came closer and this time he stood right in front of her. For the first time she was able to get a good look at him. It was like fire blazing in front of her, but it didn’t give off any heat. If anything, it was somewhat cool. She recognized his face and could see the distinctive outline of a body. The light emanating from him was whiter this time. She began crying and shaking as if she had a fever. She felt so insignificant next to an angel that she contemplated falling down as if dead.

Finally, Marcy mustered up her strength, and in a voice barely perceptible she muttered, “Hello, light man.”

“Hello, Marcy. Blessed of the Lord and loved!”

Marcy almost fainted with excitement and awe upon hearing his booming, yet soothing voice say those words. She started to cry some more because he said that she was loved and blessed.

She began feeling that same love she felt Tuesday night wash over her like a powerful wave, which only caused her to cry even more. It felt so good that, for a moment, she contemplated jumping up and wrapping her arms around the light man. She then began to wonder if she was talking to God. At that thought, she suddenly became completely terrified, just like John felt when in the presence of the glorified Jesus.

The light man sensed her humble spirit and said reassuringly, “Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you and instruct you.”

Still trembling and crying, Marcy said, “Ok. What do you want me to do? Are you an angel or something? I’m sorry for everything I’ve done to God all these years. Forgive me please.”

“Yes. I am an angel of the Lord Most High. I am here to tell you that you are already forgiven for those numerous accusations you made against the Lord God. You are loved by the Lord and called to do great things.”

Marcy was trembling at this point. She could not conceive how she could actually be talking to a real angel. Before this week, her only experience with them was what she read in the Bible; and now here an angel was standing right in front of her and talking to her.

Marcy said, “But I don’t know what to do or say.”

The light man said, “You are loved. Do not be afraid. The Father of lights loves you with a deep love and he has chosen you to do his work. He never calls anyone without giving them the ability to obey that calling. Where God leads, God provides.”

“But why? I am not worthy. I turned my back on him for almost ten years. How could he choose me after all the wicked things I have done?”

The light man sternly said, “I said that you are forgiven, so do not mention what you have done in the past with your relationship with the Father again. He has removed your sins as far as the east is from the west and has buried them in the depths of the deepest sea. Now he chose you to do his work and commands you to go.”

She was really getting scared now because she thought she might have upset an angel and therefore, God.

The light man sensed this, so he said, “Do not be afraid. Accept the love of the Lord. Do not think you must earn it or that you deserve it. It is called grace because it is unmerited favor, no one earns or deserves it. The Lord’s love has been on you before you were even born, and it can never be diminished or severed.”

Marcy said, “Ok. I accept his love unconditionally. But what does he want me to do? I have super strength now and I helped the Wilson’s today with it. Mark and I used it to open a door to lead Carl to Christ today at Fitness Emporium. Am I supposed to use my super strength to help others—like by becoming a fireman or something?”

It was almost like the light man chuckled when Marcy mentioned a fireman.

“You have been given many abilities, some of which you have not yet discovered. However, you will discover them when the appropriate time comes. They will not come all at once, but only as needed. You will be able to do things that are not humanly possible. You will see and perceive things that you otherwise would not know. All these abilities are given to aid you in doing the work of helping people.

“The Wilsons will help you. They have been chosen to be your mentors to help you cope with the new life that you have. Sammy, your boss at Sammy D’s, will also help you. He has been instructed about your calling and has been the one praying for you these past few years.”

“Sammy was praying for me?”

“Yes. His prayers were answered. Also, Mark Jacobson has been assigned to watch over and protect you. Listen to him.”

Marcy asked, “So, what do I do now? I mean, am I supposed to go wandering around town randomly looking for people to help?”

“No. Just live your normal life and respond to opportunities to help as they come, just like this evening at Fitness Emporium. You will not be able to help everyone, but don’t worry. Others have also been called to do the work of helping others. Also, know that not everyone will want to be helped or will accept your help, even though they may need it. They will reject you and be mean to you. Some will even resent you. When this happens, don’t worry about that. You are protected so long as you do not abuse your calling or use it for personal profit.”

Marcy asked, “How will I know who to help?”

“You will make the decision yourself. The Spirit of God within you will guide you and give you wisdom. Use that wisdom to discern whom you should help.”

“What if I make a mistake? What if I help someone I shouldn’t have, or I don't help someone I should have helped?”

“You will know. Listen to the Spirit within you. Always remember, it is not you that will do the great things that you are called to do. It is the Spirit of God inside of you that makes them possible. You will make mistakes and discern inaccurately. You may even allow emotions to corrupt the wisdom that you have. All this is to be expected for he knows you are but flesh. Just do your best and be you. Do not violate who you are. Listen to your heart and allow the Spirit of God within you to guide you and instruct you. You are a new person now, Marcy. Therefore, trust the Spirit of God that dwells within you.”

The light man suddenly stretched out both of his hands and touched the sides of her face. He looked her directly in her eyes for about ten seconds before letting go. He then took his right hand and placed it over her mouth for a few seconds. Marcy felt that overwhelming love she felt the first time they met; however, this time it was accompanied by an intense feeling of power, strength, and awareness. For a moment Marcy thought about the Spider-Man movie and how she was getting her own type of spidey-senses. She felt embarrassed because she figured that the light man would have known she thought of that. However, he didn’t seem to care because he did not respond.

The light man lowered his arms as he took his hands from her face. He was looking her directly in her eyes and then he smiled. It was not so much a smile that said I’m happy, instead it was more of an I’m really proud of you smile. Marcy felt so much at ease. Tears started pouring from her eyes in rivulets. She felt joy, happiness, freedom, love, and power, all at the same time. Her emotions were overloaded, and she had no idea what to say.

Marcy then blurted out, “Thank you. Will I see you again?”

“I am always with you. You don’t need to see me. Know that the Lord God is always with you.”

He then began rising straight up into the sky until he disappeared from sight. Marcy was shaking as if hiding from a ferocious bear that suddenly appeared from behind the tree. She could not believe that she had just seen and talked to an angel.

Marcy wondered what other powers she has. She considered stopping by the Wilsons but realized it was too late. She began focusing her thoughts on the light man proclaiming that she was loved and blessed by God. That made her feel extremely good and it seemed to have erased the ill feelings she long held within her regarding Lynn’s death.

It was about 11:30 pm. She went home, cleaned up the kitchen and went to bed. As she closed her eyes on her pillow and drifted off to sleep, her last thoughts were of how it had been such a good day. She had even talked to an angel.

Marcy said to herself, “I wonder what great adventures are coming my way?”

She then had a thought. *The light man told me that I’ve been given many abilities.* She already knew about the strength.

She whispered, “I wonder if I can fly?” She laughed out loud. “Yeah right!” Then she pulled the covers over herself and drifted off to sleep after saying out loud, “Good night, God. Me and you. We be mates.”

Marcy did not know it yet, but her new life was going to be filled with excitement, adventure, challenges, and satisfaction as she grows in her calling. God had many plans to use her for great things, some of which were so incredible that if she knew what they were, it would terrify her. God knew this, which is why they wouldn’t come until her faith had been strengthened to a level enabling her to face it. With each new day, Marcy will discover new and wonderful ways to exercise her new calling and purpose in life, as well as develop relationships with those who were similarly called.

# About the Author

William R. Cunningham, known by most as Reggie, is a Christian minister and Bible teacher. He has been teaching from the Bible since the 1980s. He is a former pastor of Oasis Christian Fellowship and the Pursuing the Truth Ministries Church. He has headed the Christian education departments of several churches over the last 40 years. Reggie has written numerous Bible study guides and made them available on his ministry website, www.pursuingthetruth.org. He has also written a book, *Beyond the Hype: Pursuing the Truth of Christianity*, which showcases his belief that we need to know the truth instead of blindly following religion.

God wired Reggie to help people. He does this through *Pursuing the Truth Ministries*, *My Hope In Marriage* (www.myhopeinmarriage.com), and his technology business, *Reggie’s PC Resources*. He loves teaching and he has been doing it a long time. Reggie endeavors to help people to develop a personal and intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ.

Reggie has a very vivid imagination and has a gift of developing solutions. He likes making up stories, even telling some alternative versions of popular children’s stories to his son when he was much younger. He started using stories to teach principles from the Bible and to promote his message of knowing God personally, apart from religious dogma.