

## Chapter 22

### Gracie Has a New Friend

My Lone's family moved yet again this time to the Santa Clara Valley in California near Gilroy. She learned how to pick strawberries that summer. Her whole family picked strawberries to help earn a living. Then the most amazing thing happened. My Lone made a new friend when she was picking strawberries. Her friend's name was Chisayo. My Lone hadn't had a real friend since Timmy. This new friend was a girl whose father owned the strawberry fields. My lone was to learn one of the best gifts you can receive is the gift of friendship. Chisayo was her name she was Japanese. Her family had come all the way from Japan. My Lone had never seen such a beautiful little girl; Chisayo was like a beautiful little doll. She was not only pretty, but Chisayo was also kind and good. She never asked stupid questions. She had beautiful manners she would bow and say kind lovely words of encouragement. She made even "Good Morning" sound beautiful. She talked in a quiet soft singing voice. My Lone thought to herself I used to be cute, but Chisayo is beautiful inside and out. Chisayo had silky long black hair. No red curls and cute bangs or French braids. The best part was she seemed to think My Lone was beautiful too. She wanted to be friends. I won't be My Lone anymore Gracie decided! I have a friend. What a wonderful moment! She decided to think of herself as Gracie again?

One day Chisayo wanted to play make up but Gracie wasn't sure she knew exactly how to play girl stuff. Chisayo showed her how to act like a girl, play dress up, and use makeup. Gracie wore nail polish for the first time. Picking strawberries is hard on nail polish, especially if you don't have time to get it completely dry. It's not easy trying to be beautiful. For Gracie it was magical having a friend that summer. They even pretended they were famous movie stars and very rich.

Gracie has always loved big red strawberries. Thank goodness you could eat as many as you wanted picking strawberries is hard work. Working hard is good, you develop a sense of accomplishment.

That same summer another wonderful thing happened in Gracie's life. First she met Chisayo, then she met Chisayo's father. Mr. Yamashita liked her! He said she had Dragon's Fire Hair. He shared with Gracie his love for planting things and growing seeds. She had wanted to learn how to grow things from her grandfather but she had been too young. Gracie learned to love planting seeds and making things grow.

Chisayo's father was a gifted farmer just like Gracie's grandfather. He knew how to make all kinds of things grow. He especially loved his beautiful flower garden. He grew unique trees he called Bonsai Trees. To Gracie they

were magic trees that grew in flat pots. They looked like old trees but they were small and very beautiful.

When school started again he told the girls how important education was to the Japanese people. You must try to become wise and good he told the two little girls. He never got tired of Gracie's questions. You are a girl who likes to unlock the mystery of life and nature, he would tell her. This is good. Gracie couldn't believe it, someone thought she was good. I love to answer your questions. Don't concern yourself Gracie. You have strange but beautiful thoughts. Sometimes even Chisayo would ask her father about how to grow strawberry plants and fruit trees? The girls wanted to especially know how to grow peaches. They decided peaches were their favorite fruit next to strawberries of course. He would say "I will never get tired of telling you girls about plants and seeds." Gracie set new goals for her life she would become wise not just smart. She would respect nature and be a seed planter, she didn't know that one day God would use her to plant spiritual seeds and bring in The Harvest.

"For me it's the joy of making things grow in the Earth that makes human life worth living." He was very patient and kind and would answers all their questions. What a wonderful father he was. He would tell Gracie what an inquisitive mind you have my child. Never stop asking questions. How will you learn if you don't find The Way of Truth? This kind farmer from Japan surprisingly delivered a prophetic message. Grace would find The Way of Truth.

Would you like grow up to be a teacher of children perhaps? Knowledge is a wonderful Gift. You are blessed with a good spirit. I think you would be a good teacher. Gracie told him she wanted to still be a farmer like him. He would smile and then he would bow and fold his hands. I have work to do. Go now and enjoy life. That was his way of saying you girls should go and play, I am busy. Gracie asked Chisayo if her father was God but Chisayo only laughed.

Then her father again lost his job. This was the most difficult time Gracie could remember. All the Good children were afraid. The Good family had to leave in the middle of the night because they couldn't afford to pay the bill at the old motel. Gracie never got to say goodbye to her friend Mr. Yamashita, nor her special friend Chisayo. I wonder if they worry about me? She knew Mr. Yamashita would think she had bad manners because she hadn't wished them peace.

After that special summer, everywhere Gracie traveled she would plant corn to see if she could get some corn on the cob to grow. Corn on the cob was one of her favorite foods. She had learned how to plant seeds from Mr

Yamashita. How wonderful that he had shared his knowledge with her. She thought to herself what a wonderful Gift to finally know how to grow vegetables from little seeds. If I only liked vegetables she worried. I think my Gift is wasted. I only like corn. Mr Yamashita would be disappointed. He believed all vegetables were to be enjoyed. Unfortunately Gracie never stayed in one place long enough to harvest her corn, but she still loved trying to grow things.

Gracie was growing up. She was ten years old, no longer a little girl. Her family was poor again. They had moved into a storage room above a garage. Could the Good family survive this latest crisis? Her father was having trouble getting a job. He finally found a job delivering oil to gas stations part time. That was the best job he could find. The weather was very bad and there were no construction jobs that winter. For a while the family only had baking powder biscuits to eat. Finally Gracie's mother had to go to work too. Gracie's mother was bitter and unhappy because she had to go to work. She worked as a nurse's aide. Gracie's parents were having trouble keeping the family together. Again there was talk of divorce. Gracie was beginning to feel like My Lone again. She was afraid of that word, divorce. She didn't want to be divorced. She wouldn't be able to see her dad if they got divorced. There were children in school whose parents were divorced but the nuns said God hates divorce. Gracie said a prayer, please don't let my parents make God mad at them by getting divorced. Divorce is like division not unity. Everyone's hurt.

Chapter 23  
The Good Children Nearly Die  
The Angel Speaks A Forth Time

With the two jobs, finally the family was able to move into a house. It was an old run down house but it was better than living in two storage rooms over a garage.

That winter it was foggy and cold. It never seemed to stop raining. Gracie was still having trouble with her breathing. Before going to work their mother told her and her sister Maxine to keep the doors and windows tightly closed. She said she couldn't afford to run the furnace all the time. "Don't open the door." "I know Gracie says she can breath easier if the windows and door are open, but I can't afford to keep heating the house." "I'll keep the furnace lit but don't keep it running unless it gets very cold." All of the children were cold, so Maxine, Gracie's older sister, turned the furnace on. It was Christmas vacation.

They all got in bed to keep warm. It started raining very hard. Brown water was rushing around all sides of the old house. The water was so deep you couldn't get out of the house without wading into knee-deep water. The house was in a low area near a creek. Gracie noticed Lucy was still playing with her doll. She said she wanted to take a nap. Gracie's older sister Maxine and her little brother Gabriel had fallen asleep. She started to feel sleepy too. The air was so dry she just couldn't breath. Someone the Angel's voice told Gracie "**open the door**" real wide not just a crack. Could it be her Guardian Angel's voice warning her again? Nothing seemed to be dangerous she just couldn't breath very well. She wanted to open the door so she could breath fresh air. Mom told us to keep the door closed. She will be real mad! Should she open the door she kept thinking. We are supposed to obey our parents. She hears the voice again Open The Door.

Her mother had given them direct orders to keep all the windows closed and the door shut. Gracie decided to disobey her mother again. By now Gracie was used to feeling she should obey the voice she heard. So many times the Angels voice had protected her. Someone kept the thought in her mind she must open the door right now. She had never told anyone about the voice. Her mother would probably say she was crazy hearing voices. She was worried her parents would just think she was making up strange stories again. She was almost sure the voice was a Guardian Angel. Gracie remembered reading about Angels in a Children's book. The nuns had told her again about Guardian Angels when she was in the hospital. She was also sure the Angel's voice had saved her life many times. She knew cats had nine lives but she worried children only had one life. Surely she had had a lot of close calls, especially lately. She had even been very sick when she was a

baby in Minnesota. Her mother told her she had suffered from a long list of childhood diseases even measles and scarlet fever. Her mother told her you were a very sick baby always fussing. You never gave me a minute of peace and quiet always crying or getting sick. Right from the minute you were born you started causing trouble. Her mother said she was born to be a thorn in her side. I don't know how many times you almost died. Thank goodness she couldn't remember being sick as a baby. Gracie did remember her grandma and grandpa. She missed them both. Maybe we should move back to Minnesota so they can help us she suggested to her father. That's when her father told her they weren't in Minnesota anymore they had died. She didn't want to have to worry or think about dying anymore.

Why is it so important to open the door? Should she trust the voice? Maybe if she just opened it for a second. **"Open the door."** There it was again. She tried to wake up her sister Maxine but she wouldn't wake up. Maxine was the oldest My Lone didn't want all the responsibility. Why wouldn't her little brother and sisters wake up? She opened the door? The Angel said to open it. She did, thinking maybe my mom won't find out.

I have to get help for Maxine she thought. What could be the matter with my sisters and my brother? Gracie had trouble getting through the swirling muddy water. A couple of times she fell down and thought she would drown. The brown dirty water got in her mouth and she had trouble coughing up all the water. Finally the water was calmer and shallower. She ran to the neighbors. Would they help her? She didn't know them, but she could see their lights shining through a window. The rain was falling harder and harder. Do you think they will know why Maxine wouldn't wake up? A man answered the door. Hey kid what ever happened to you, you look like a drowned rat. Please come! she croaked. Help me! my sister won't wake up. The man got his coat and asked her where she lived. He was astonished she said that old house? Why that's not safe especially in this weather. You stay here. Gracie said **no** we must hurry!

About an hour later her mother got home. Helen couldn't believe her eyes. What now? She was very angry. What else can go wrong? Had one of her children set the house on fire? There were sirens, red lights flashing, and big firemen in yellow suits everywhere. Was that one of the neighbors? He seemed excited about something. He just stood watching in the rain without an umbrella shaking his head saying I hope they don't die. I did what I could.

Helen finally captured his attention, what happened she asked. The fire department had to come to give oxygen to the sick children. Whose children she asked. What was happening? They almost all died he said. She couldn't believe it. My baby boy had almost died. What about my baby she screamed. He is all right and so are those cute little girls. The little red head is the

worst she almost drowned trying to get help. What had Gracie done now that kid will be the death of me? How did she call for firemen? They seemed to be every where she looked. Did Gracie set the house on fire she wondered?

Are you the children's mother? The Firechief had come to talk to her. He told her the flooding had caused the heater to malfunction and send carbon monoxide into the old house replacing the oxygen. There was a faulty furnace. That cute little red haired girl saved her brother and sisters by opening the door and getting the neighbors. The Henderson's called the fire department. I don't know how she got through the deep water it was swirling around the house like a storm drain. You mean Gracie saved my children by opening the door? That child never does obey me! Well you are damm lucky she didn't obey you this time lady yelled the fireman. She is a hero! If she hadn't gotten help you would have come home to three dead children and one almost dead from drowning. I would be thanking God and that brave little red headed girl if I were you.

Gracie learned they had been going into what the firemen called a coma. They had been breathing carbon monoxide. What is carbon monoxide? Could it be true, if she hadn't obeyed the voice and opened the door all of the Good children would have been dead? I didn't feel dead she said to herself. For once Gracie was the hero. Oh no, I'm not a hero I was so afraid. Once again the Angel had watched over her and kept her safe. Why did the Angel keep saving her? God must love me. Did God really love her just as she was, a lonely, rebellious, frightened little naughty child? But I act bad all the time, no one loves me. I am always doing bad things or thinking mean things. There is no nice in my heart. What happened? I bet all that muddy water washed all my bad away. Am I really **Good**?

After talking to the fireman, even her mother seemed happy to hear she had opened the door. Opening the door had let oxygen in and saved all of the children. Her mother keep hugging them especially baby Gabriel. My precious son Gabriel thank God, he is safe, she kept screaming. Gracie didn't completely understand about carbon monoxide you couldn't see it or smell it but she was very happy. She had done the right thing by opening the door.

She could breathe better now in the fresh air. She was a hero. All of the fireman came up to her and hugged her. I am a hero she decided. More people kept coming to hear the story. Over and over they said how proud they were, she was very brave. One of the firemen on the fire truck let her wear his red hat. They all seemed so happy.

The Fire Chief told the man from the newspaper she was a wonderful little girl who had done the smart thing and opened the door. She had saved her whole family. They said it was a close call. She couldn't believe it she had

done the right thing by opening the door. Don't they know I wasn't supposed to open the door, I disobeyed? Over and over she thought to herself, the Angel saved us, the Angel saved us. She hadn't done the right thing. The Angel saved them. The whole neighborhood seemed to be coming out of their houses. The rain had finally stopped. She had never seen so many excited people. She thought she was the most unlikely hero that ever was. Was all this a dream?

When her father finally got home he said where is Gracie? He kissed her and thanked her for saving the Good family. He was crying. The family couldn't stay even one more night in the old house by the creek. The fireman had condemned the house. She didn't tell anyone the Angel voice had told her to open the door until she was much older. She knew no one would believe her. Gracie couldn't help enjoying being the **good** child for a change. For a long time after the almost fatal accident, she was praised even at school

That very night the Good family found a motel room to live in for at least a month. The owner said they could stay longer if it was necessary he would give them the first month free. He would give them a monthly rate they could afford. She heard the man tell her father his only job for now was to find a safer house for his family. You got a second chance; you should treasure your family. Not everyone is so lucky. Everyone was being so nice.

The captain from the fire department made all the arrangements. He also knew of a place that was for rent that he was sure was fire safe. His second cousin owned the house. He was sure his cousin would be sympathetic to their situation. He had lost his job too a couple years back.

The motel was big and clean. Gracie even had her own bed. That night after a warm bath she snuggled down under the warm blankets. What had really happened? What could it all mean? It was more than she could even imagine. Better than being Queen of Zepp tune. Everyone loved her. Even her mother was crying saying what a special little girl she was. "I am proud of you Gracie," she had said.

Had she saved her two sisters and brother from certain death? Was she really a hero because she obeyed the voice and only opened a door? She had waded through the raging water. That was true. The truth was she had been so afraid. In her heart she admitted she really was a "fraidy cat." She knew it was really the Angel voice that had clearly saved her and her whole family. Would anyone ever believe her secret? Didn't people say you were crazy if you heard voices? Gracie knew she wasn't truly a hero. The firemen's actions were truly heroic.

## Chapter 24 God Speaks

She started to get up to tell her dad about the Angel voice when she heard a voice again. Gracie, you are greatly loved. Be at peace, Gracie, One of these days you will understand everything. You must be patient. I have a unique plan I have set in motion for a very unique little girl. Some day you will open the door of your heart to receive my Love and Forgiveness. Go to sleep my dear sweet child. All is well! I have set my Angels to continue watching over you and your family through the night.

Could it be true, God Himself was watching over her? Had He said so Himself? At that moment Gracie was completely certain, without any doubts, the real hero was God. He had sent his Angel to warn her of the danger. He had always watched over her when she was in danger.

Why? Did God really care about her? Was that possible? She felt so unimportant, she wasn't really good or special. Did God love her? What was the meaning of this term "His unique plan for her"? Was there a special purpose for her life? Would God make her become a nun? Oh no, Gracie thought, maybe there was another way. Could she bargain with God? She didn't want to be ungrateful. He must know she really didn't want to be a nun. She wanted to work outside and grow plants and enjoy His creation.

How could she thank God for such an amazing miracle? Would God be really mad if she didn't want to be a nun? So many questions were swirling like the muddy water in her mind. These thoughts were too much for a very tired little girl. I'll find out some day she thought. She went to sleep too tired to even say her prayers. Sweet dreams my sweet Miracle of Love were the last words she heard! In heaven God was smiling!

That year Gracie got a special book for Christmas. Her father told her it was a Bible. Her father said it is God's plans. Gracie, the Bible is called the **Good News**. In it, you will find out about God's plan for you and many answers to your questions. To this day God still calls me His Miracle of Love. Many gifts were given to me as a child. I've learned my lesson well. I find the that being his servant and helping others experience God's love made every lesson a blessing not a trial. The greatest gift is experiencing on a personal level God's amazing Love. God's ways are higher than our ways, he had a marvelous plan to teach me about his gifts. Using my gifts has taught me to overcome evil by doing **Good**.

All of a sudden Truman is yelling and pushing on her shoulder. Gracie, Gracie wake up you forgot my treat. Remember we were going to eat some of my jelly beans. You're such a sleepyhead wake up, wake up you are going to

tell me about the Spiders of Texas. Are they big? Were you afraid of them? Did they ever bite you? I bet they were creepy. My father says we have spiders called Daddy Longlegs. What a funny name. Did you name your spiders? Gracie yawns and laughs at Truman. You are beginning to ask as many questions as I did. Gracie have you ever seen a Daddy Longleg? Yes, Truman all spiders are still creepy to me even California spiders.

Okay Tru I'm up now let's get comfortable on the couch I'll tell you about Texas and answer all your questions. That's what I like about you Truman, you remind me of myself when I was a little girl. My father called me "Little Miss Why".

## EPILOGUE

My Lone had many more adventures. There are so many more stories she could tell including many happy ones. She eventually gets to see giant redwood trees. Oh what a marvelous creation! For a girl who always loved the beauty of nature, it was a marvelous Gift for her to be able to also travel all over the world. My Lone is no longer that sad lonely child. Sadly she never really became close friends with Timmy again. He died in a motorcycle accident in high school.

It took many more years for her to fully understand and forgive her mother. As her story shows, My Lone never really hated her parents she truly loved them. She couldn't understand why her mother couldn't return her love. Many children have parents with problems.

When My Lone grows up, she meets and talks to many of these unhappy parents and children at Homeless Shelters, Children's Receiving Homes, and Abused Women's Shelters. Sometimes she tells them parts of her story. They all loved her true stories. They encouraged her to tell her stories to other children. This is why **My Lone's Gifts** was finally written.

As My Lone learned, it's not easy growing up. It's not easy for parents to raise children either, when they have financial and emotional problems. Now My Lone is an old lady, still the lonely or abandoned children understand when she talks about how much God loves them. They insist on giving her their teddy bears so she won't forget them as if she ever could. Her favorite is Boo-Bear, a bear she was told likes carrots He is bright turquoise blue. He lives in her living room with others in her collection including her own teddy bear called, Teddy.

When My Lone finally forgave her mother, she learned to completely accept God's love and forgiveness. What a glorious day! No more bitterness or anger, My Lone was free. Another Gift.

Dear children, do you know that He is also watching over you? God loves all his children old and young at all stages of life. We are unique and precious to him. We are created in his Image. God is also your loving Father. God isn't like Zena He doesn't force us to love Him. Will you return His Love?