

This Was Your Life

Tammy Anna Levesque

***Free*editorial** 

“Shots fired! Shots fired! Officer down!” Tom yelled into his collar mic. His buddy Mike was shot in the shoulder, lucky miss; if you can call being shot lucky. Tom gave chase to the perp, a young male about the age of 20. A brazen young man no doubt! Robbing a bank with an oozy in one hand which is unheard of these days, and a 44 in the other (the oozy must have belonged to his Grandfather, Tom thought).

Tom ran like mad, huffing and puffing along mentally promising himself to get back into the gym! “I’ve got to get back in better shape”, this stuff was killing him, and it seemed to happen more frequently! Tom stopped short, the kid stopped running and turned towards Tom. He had the 44 ready as soon as he turned towards Tom. Tom never heard the shot; he felt an instantaneous pressure, then nothing!

Tom awoke in an interrogation room he had never seen before. There was a huge man sitting across from him, huge and bright like he was illuminated from within. Tom couldn’t take his eyes off of him. This guy was a mountain and he had a perfect physique. He felt bad for gawking, but how could he stop looking? His mouth was hanging open and he could not care less. His eyes travelled up and down this guy, up and down. He thought this man must be 7 feet tall and not an ounce of wasted flesh on him! Well if you could call this illuminated guy, flesh! Finally, Tom pulled himself together enough to ask “Where am I?” The man said “You are at your judgement Tom!”

Tom was confused, “What do you mean? I have not committed a crime. Last thing I remember, I was chasing a young man! Wait. Did he shoot me?” The man shook his head Yes! “But, this makes no sense. If he shot me, why am I being judged?” “Better question for now, who are you” Tom asked? “I am your Guardian Angel, and we are here to ascertain your eternal destination!” Tom was reeling! “Wha...what? Oh no, I’m too young to die! I—I really have not done all I wanted to do.” Tom was having a very hard time to process these circumstances. A thought occurred to Tom, “But, I feel so alive!”

“This must be a joke man!” Tom laughed a nervous laugh“. Right? The guys at the station are playing one hell of a joke on me, right?” The Angel shook his head sadly and slowly. “No Tom, look down through the porthole at your right side!” Tom obliged. He saw himself, lying on the ground, eyes open, lifeless and lying in a pool of his own blood. A little way away was Mike, hobbling over, holding his shoulder. Mike was yelling, “Tom, No buddy, No Tom! No! No! No!” As Mike arrived at Tom’s side, a couple of cars with reinforcement arrived. “Too late” Tom said. Tom looked up at the Angel with a sick dread that made him feel like crying.

He sat down heavily into the chair he had vacated, when telling his Guardian Angel this was an elaborate joke. The angel said kindly, “Tom? It’s time to begin looking at your life.” Suddenly, Tom was terrified! “Oh no, I was not a very good person”, Tom said. “I married two women, and was not very nice to either of them.” “I know”, said the Angel. “Well, how does this all work? Ummm, hmmm. Say, what is your name Angel?” “My name is also Thomas”, “But”, thought Tom “You say it the European way.” The Angel

spoke and suddenly Tom saw his Mother birthing him in the hospital. “Wow, she was having such a hard time. She had no one really.” Tom’s Dad was hardly around, ever. When he had been, he was a pretty nasty man to Tom and his Mother.

Tom’s Dad Rick, was a drunk when home. He was thankfully a long haul trucker, so was home once a week most often. The weeks Tom felt luckiest, were the weeks his dad was stuck, waiting somewhere for a load homeward bound. How glad Tom was on those occasions to be free from anger and beatings, and stark fear! Tom’s Mother, Misty, was a kind, gentle, timid woman. She took a lot of abuse and still came up smiling! He never really understood it all. How she had a beating by his father, and still she would smile at him and talk softly to Tom. She would rub his head as she read to him, smiled at him as he would touch her swollen cheek.

One day, Tom arrived home to find his mother dead on the floor! He called the Police to say his father must have done this. There were many cops that showed up, with their guns drawn. Tom decided that day, he was going to become a cop, and kill all the abusive husbands and fathers. It turned out Tom’s mother had died of an aneurysm. She died before she hit the floor, they said. She would not have felt anything; it was so massive an aneurysm. Tom, at 14, was happy to know she suffered no pain. He believed though that his father was to blame anyway. All those beatings, he thought, had to have caused this thing to grow! He was sure of it. Tom hated his father with a passion! His father actually cried when he got home to find out Misty had died! Tom punched his father right in the mouth for being fake and pretending to care about Misty! His father was astounded and then lifted his arm to smash

Tom back, but, at that moment, a woman came to the door and rang the bell. Rick said “Saved by the bell, boy!”

It was a social worker, sent by the Police to see what was what with Tom, who had been alone for 2 days and nights, while Rick had been contacted by the Police. She asked Rick what was to happen to Tom while Rick drove, doing his trucking job. Rick smiled a big smile, and said “Oh, I think I will be calling Misty’s brother Mike! We will see if he wants to take the boy to live with him.” Tom was floored that he even had an uncle! No one ever mentioned an uncle or an aunt or cousins, or anything like it! His mother had a brother? Why never mention him? He must be an awful person! Rick sure looked like the cat that ate the canary. Tom was very uneasy. The social worker had Rick call Uncle Mike right away! Her name was Ms. Brunk. She seemed nice enough to Tom. She seemed hard and cold towards Rick, which made her go up in Tom’s opinion.

So, Uncle Mike answered the call and listened for a moment, as Rick told him Misty had died. Then, Tom heard a yell on the other end of the phone “WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY SISTER?!?!?” Hope arose in Tom at that yell he heard from across the kitchen! The blood drained from Rick’s face, and Tom knew, if Mike had been near, he would have had a mouth full of fist, that was the look Rick had on his face. Tom’s hatred of his father grew to unimaginable heights at that moment. Tom thought. “One day, I am going to kill this man.”

Tom came back to himself in that room with the Angel, at that moment, and felt remorse in front of this Angel and his purity, that shined out of him. He

felt such shame at wanting to murder his father, even though at that time, he felt justified in such hatred. He knew it tainted his life, from that moment on! Suddenly, Tom was in a house he had never seen before, with a child who looked a lot like himself as a child. This child was hiding in a corner, shaking and looking like he was trying to shrink away. A big man came into the room, booming the name “Rick!” He had a razor strap in his hand and walked to the child and began whipping the little boy.

Tom let out a scream of anger at the man, who could not see or hear him. The man just kept beating the child, until the child was unconscious! There was blood seeping through the tee shirt of the little boy. Tom was devastated for the boy. His father had beaten him unconscious. Tom looked around that room and saw nothing other than a bed and a bureau. No toys, no pictures, just a bare mattress and a bare pillow, with a blanket on the floor. There was a window with a drawn yellow shade, nothing to make this homey. Tom compared it with his own room. There was not much in his room, but his mother had hung curtains and put sheets on the bed. He had a few trucks and a glove, ball and bat.

This child had absolutely nothing. Tom felt bad for this child, whom he figured now, was his father as a child. In came a woman, she looked drunk and disheveled, and said unconcerned “Frank, did you kill him this time? You know if you don’t stop, you are going to kill that boy!” Frank shrugged and told the woman to shut up, and mind her own business. She shrugged and sauntered off. Tom was incredulous. He instantly felt that his life had not been as bad as his father’s had been. He also began to understand, why his father was, who and what, he was. He found himself rooting for his father to awaken.

The adults just left the boy there for hours unconscious. What seemed like a long, long while later, Frank came in the room with a large pitcher of beer and poured it over the boy. The boy shot up out of his crumpled position only to fall right back down on the floor, as obvious pain hit him.

Tom was devastated for his father, the child. The Angel said “You never know what makes people the way they are!” The man Frank, left the room, and the child, Rick, got up onto his knees and trembled while holding himself and rocking back and forth, mumbling something over and over again. Tom came closer to hear what he was saying. Rick was saying over and over again, “I’m going to kill them. I’m going to kill them.’ They jumped forward about 10 years or so, and there was his father at about 16, holding a gun, shakily, towards his own father, looking battered and bleeding. Frank had his hands out in front of him, with a desperate plea on his face! “C’mon Rick, put the gun down boy!”

A nasty evil smile came over Rick’s face, and he said to his father “Not so tough now, are you Frank? I really like the feel of this here Frankie boy! You pleadin’ and beggin, that’s a welcome sight there sir.” Rick’s hand no longer had a drop of tremor in it. Tom, as a well-trained officer, began trying to talk his father out of doing, what he knew for sure was going to happen. “Come on Rick, put the gun down. You don’t want to do this.” The Angel said “Tom, he can’t hear you!”

Suddenly, a demon popped into the picture. Tom was stunned and scared. This thing was huge! The Angel said “Pay attention Tom the demon can’t see or hear you. He is not omnipresent! Pay close attention here, there is important

information for you to glean from this encounter.” Tom was awed by what was going on. He thought, not for the first time, that he must be dreaming. Tom did not believe in Angels and Demons. He was a realist, Tom was. Yes sir, he thought to himself, but now this was so real. Tom felt more alive than he’d ever felt, but he was dead! THIS WAS JUDGEMENT, his judgement!

It had been as though everything froze around Tom as he thought his thoughts. Now everything came into sharp focus again. The Demon was at Rick’s side in a flash, and spoke into his ear. “You’ve got him right where you want him Rick. You know you want to torture him a little, after all he put you through in this life, and as far back as you can remember.” The demon ticked off a laundry list of Frank’s sins against Rick. Rick struck his father in the mouth with the butt of the gun. Frank lost a tooth and bit through part of his lip. Tom was not as happy as he’d thought he’d be, to see that sick ole man get his just desserts. He really hated seeing people’s pain, no matter how much they deserved it. Tom said “Oh God, Please!” Then, realized he had done so. “Was that a prayer?” he thought.

Frank, to his credit, stood there. He just steadily looked his son, his victim, in the face. He spit a couple of times and just stood there not saying anything. Rick was still being talked to by the demon, who was now rehashing minute details of everything Rick had ever felt, thought, or fantasized about, concerning this moment. Tom was astounded at the detail of the demons intimate knowledge of his father’s thoughts, feelings, and fantasies. Tom turned to the angel and said, “Can you, or the demons, read our thoughts?” “No” said the angel. “Then, how does this demon know all of this information about my father’s thoughts?” The angel said “because, he told him a long time

ago, to feel those feelings, and think what he thought, and fantasies were the demons planted imagination.

Tom was so stymied by a demon telling someone all of this, and how easily it seems to be our own thought. We accept them as our own thoughts. Understanding hit Tom, and he realized just how many times he must have had his own thoughts and actions guided by demons and evil forces. He gave into so many impulses himself. Why, they turned out to not be impulses at all. It was demons helping one to think wrong thoughts. “Angel, I gave into those things I thought were impulses a lot. I am in big trouble here!” The angel said nothing, and gave no clue to his thoughts. Finally after a few minutes the angel said, “I am not here to judge you. You will judge yourself.”

Tom realized what the angel said was true, because Tom was already judging himself. And it wasn’t looking good! At warp speed, memories began flooding through Tom’s mind. As fast as the memories were going through, Tom re-lived them all. In flashes these memories were utterly complete. Not only did Tom feel all the feelings, he had felt at the time with the suggestions from demons, he also felt the feelings of those he hurt.

Tom just would have never imagined any of this. He had a decent imagination, but nothing like being able to feel the devastation he had caused others so completely. Such as when he was 18 years old, and his Uncle Mike told him since he was not willing to go to Bible College, he had to move out. Tom was so angry; he went to the liquor store and bought a pint of Southern Comfort. Tom had never had a drink in his life. Uncle Mike was the town pastor of the only church, in a town in the middle of nowhere, that had 175

people, spread out over about an 80,000 acre town. It was almost a hundred twenty five mile town. It was so rural there was not much around.

The town center had a co-op and a general store. There was a Post Office, and a small station, right near that, was City Hall, that had a jail cell in it. It was also the place a Sheriff came to once a week to make sure there weren't any troubles. The townsfolk had all bartered and traded. There was no want for anything. Tom hated all of it growing up. He swore his Uncle took him in just to give him to everyone who needed help. He thought to himself, "What was wrong with me?" That looked like the most amazing, carefree living, at this moment. But then, the rest of the memory of the night of his first drunken blackout came. He remembered everything, or was shown it all. He had consumed most of the Southern Comfort. When Deirdre Coss came crying into the clearing of the Baker family's forest, where he was drinking himself into a stupor. She nearly fell on top of him; she was so blinded by her tears. Deirdre was the most beautiful of all the 30 girls in the local High School.

Tom said, "Hey, just in time." She was startled, and jumped up, while letting out a yelp. Tom, though unsteady himself, steadied her. "Woah, you're okay." She was ready to run before that. "Oh Tom, is that you?" She said, and then sniffled. "Yeah" She said, "what are you doing here"? He said on a chuckle "drinking my cares away, want some?" He shoved the bottle in her face, and she shoved his hand away forcefully. "No, I don't want that. I will never touch that junk." And she fell into a heap on the ground crying. He just looked at her and said nothing. He really could not understand much with his head swimming. He just sat there, holding the half empty bottle, feeling like crying himself. His life pretty much sucked all around! He had no idea where

he was going, or what he was going to do.

He was wondering why life sucked so bad for some people, and seemed great for others? Like was there some sort of lottery out there somewhere, where people got to pick the life they would live or something? Tom sure didn't pick this life. A demon went and sat next to Tom, and twirled his finger into Tom's brain, right through his skull! Tom was disgusted and curious all at once. He legitimately could not remember all that happened after feeling so much like he was swimming. The demon said "Look at that girl, sitting there. You want her Tom, just take her." Tom walked over to Deirdre, very wobbly, the demon riding Tom's shoulders, fingers working in Tom's 18 year old head, whispering into Tom's ear. Tom helped up the girl and wrapped his arms around her, and told her to let him help her feel better. 18 year old Tom kissed her forehead and she asked what he was doing, he said "Comforting you".

Tom felt her feelings as well. She was frightened and unsure how to handle this all. She was frozen in fear, he felt. Then Deirdre began to push at Tom, and he clasped her tightly and began kissing her more, and trying to kiss her mouth. He was holding her bottom now tightly, to his groin. He began rubbing against her earnestly. She was whimpering and pleading for Tom not to do this. Tom was at the same time, feeling what the demon told him to feel. He was egging Tom's heightened emotions on and talking him into a sexual frenzy. Tom was past hearing the girl; he was off in his mind. Tom of now- did not recognize this animal form of himself.

He was sickened by 18 year old Tom. The worst part was, Deirdre had not lied, not about anything she said against him. He had indeed raped her. He felt

every last devastating feeling she felt. The physical pain, the emotional, the psychological pain, he was just so sickened in every way over that whole thing. He wept bitterly over it all. His remorse was overwhelming. Deirdre disappeared about three months later. He heard her parents sent her away. The angel showed him Deirdre with a child a few years later. Tom was devastated all over again, as he realized that little girl with Deirdre looked so much like him, and the angel confirmed this was his child conceived that night. Tom ached when he saw how guarded Deirdre was, and how careful she was for the daughter's safety. It was confirmed to Tom that Deirdre was very closed off to allowing people in, for all that had happened in her life.

The angel however, helped Tom out somewhat though, by disclosing that Tom was not to blame for everything broken in Deirdre's life. Many people had a hand in her being so hurt and shattered.

Tom was so sorry, he had not believed Deirdre when she told him he raped her. Tom said there was no way he did any such thing, that was not like him, according to himself, and people do not change their character that much, even drunk. She told him she was not lying and punched him in the mouth. He did nothing and she ran off crying. That was the last time he saw her, until the replay just now. His sorrow was soul deep, he felt so wretched. He had created a life, with hatred and rage that he took out on an innocent person and a child was made. Oh man, he was a father? No, scratch that, he was no father, he forced all of that, he was a real big jerk. Now, he would never have the chance, to make it right somehow.

The angel told him, Deirdre does alright for herself and her daughter. Tom

marveled how the angel did not seem to judge him, nor look down at him for all his sins, and never spoke to him in any condemning way. He said to the angel, “Do you think I am, or have been, a horrible person?” The angel smiled, “No Tom, I am not your judge! I have been here all of your life. I know who you are and what makes you tick. I love you and always root for you.” Tom was just continually amazed and astounded. He believed the angel when he told him he loved Tom. He had never felt loved by anyone, other than his precious mother. He missed her so much. Then it suddenly dawned on Tom, to ask about his mother. “Thomas?” “Yes Tom?” “Where is my mother? Since I am alive or whatever consciousness this is, is she with God?”

Thomas smiled again and said “Your mother is lovely!” Tom said “Please, where is she? Can I see her?” “I am sorry Tom”, the angel said “this is not for me to decide, if you can see her or not”. Tom was thinking his mother had been through so much and just always seemed to mentally dust herself off, and smile despite her pain. Some would have called her weak, but Tom knew she had been strong and faithful. His mother had been the most wonderful woman on earth. He was sure she was in heaven, and he knew without question, he would not be going there. He was unforgiving, angry, insulting, and not a man who loved. How could he have loved anyone, when he had hated himself for so long? He figured he just did not know what love was, except for his mom’s love for him. Then there is also Thomas’ here, he had never felt love like his kind of love. He just always was looking at Tom with pride, and kindness, and peace.

Tom had wanted peace but seemed to create chaos wherever he went. Man he was so self-centered! That was it? He knew without a doubt what he had

not been able to figure out on earth! Tom expected everyone on earth to make him happy, when he himself had never been able to make himself happy. He had no idea what he wanted in life other than his boyhood glamorized fantasies of being a cop! That glamour blew up in his face. Oh well, he thought, it was never dull, for sure! Tom was remembering another thing in his life, and that was a night he still hated to think about. He had been drunk, and fighting with Deborah, his first wife. She kicked him and he knocked her out with one punch. He felt that punch, himself, right there, along with her broken heart, she really had cared for him, he thought now as he felt her pain, all of it. This was so awful. Tom groaned to himself as he relived every second over again, from both of their own perspective.

He was again so sorry and disgusted with himself. How could he have been so cruel? She was such a pretty and petite woman. He'd broken her jaw. She left him immediately, and he did not blame her one bit! Tom rarely got drunk after that episode. He had realized there was no control over himself when drunk. He had seen just why that was too, right now. He was learning how demons came when you are cocked, and roll their fingers and or hands, through your brain. They whisper what to think and do, and being Tom did not believe in angels and demons or evil spirits, he believed these were his own thoughts and just went with it!

He was thinking now, how being a cop and dealing on a daily basis with evil and the dregs of the world that, he more than anyone, would believe in angels and demons. He had met both doing his job. Well not angels and demons, but good people and evil people. He was aching at remembering his uncle trying to teach him about the Lord and Tom could have cared less. He

was dealt an awful life, his one ray of light and love snatched from him, how could there have been a God? How could or would God allow such awful things to happen to people?

Tom looked at Thomas and said, “Why does God not care about the pain and hurt and sickness in the world?” Thomas said “Oh no Tom, God aches at all of that.” “Then, why does he allow it? I, just sitting here, feeling your unwavering love for me, from you Thomas; I can only imagine God’s love must be even more?” “Oh Tom, I promise you, God’s love for you, for humankind, is so much more, it’s breathtaking, and I don’t breathe.” Thomas went on, “The Lord gave everyone free will. He will never force anyone to submit to his will. We angels will never force anyone to submit to His will. We, all of us, even angels, have to decide for ourselves what to do, and if we want to surrender to God.” “Why do you say we? You angels have free will too?” “Oh of course we do! 1/3 of Angels decided with Lucifer, and joined his side of the war.”

“Oh yes”, said Tom. “I remember hearing that as well.” “Did you know Tom, humans will one day judge angels?” “What? Are you serious?” “Yes I am!” said Thomas. “Not me”, Tom said. I did not choose God in my life. Thomas shook his head in agreement, with a sad look now. Tom felt weak at the thought of hell. Through the years his Uncle’s sermons, some were on the eternal torment of hell. Tom shuddered mentally. He said “If I were the judge of me, I would send me to hell. I don’t want to go to hell. Oh God if only there were second chances”. There was no answer for a while. Tom sat there with his self-castigating thoughts, then Tom looked up and it was no longer Thomas sitting there, but a huge demon looming over Tom. There were two more

demons with him. Tom was horrified by them.

The light was so dim and seeming to get dimmer. Tom had the feeling of dread, like nothing he had experienced in life. All hope was gone; it was oppressive, inky blackness where he could see nothing, not even his own hand before his face. Yet all senses keenly aware of everything. Every feeling was dread, fear, panic, anxiety and sorrow. Then something seemed to come out of nowhere and went ripping through him. As it ripped through him, every horrible rotten thing he's ever said poured through him and he felt such sorrow while the demons condemned him, belittled him, and made him afraid. "You are ours now, to do what we want to you." They did things to Tom he could not handle. Horrible things to him sexually, that had Tom crying like a baby. Relentless horror, terror, and pain, were his lot, and when he could get a thought in, it was such a stark terror of the thought of "This is forever", and he would scream "JESUS???? Oh please Lord, help me!"

There were other screams around him too, but he was too consumed with his own state of being, to know what their terror, horror, dread and regret was all about. The demons loved sucking his soul for a while, making him feel as though he was dying again and again only, he couldn't die. Oh to just die and no longer exist. All the while, sorrowing over every chance you'd ever had to learn about God, and surrendering to Him, and mocking and laughing at, belittling those who loved you enough to try and help you see, so you don't end up here. Oh the pain of having your soul ripped at, the pain of the darkness. All of it made Tom cry out for God to forgive him. The demons, many of them, flying out of nowhere into you full impact, what felt like a freight train hitting him and then ripping through him back into dark obscurity.

Another coming from another direction, feeling like you'll surely shatter into a million pieces, but nope, no relief of dying.

The darkness of it, pure pain in itself, but this living through this assault on all of your senses forever, reminded of all the chances to just give your life over to love? That was the worst part, because regret to this degree at every moment, knowing you chose this path and gleefully skipped along it, that was so unbearable. "Oh if only I had given him my life, and not allowed myself to go along with the whispers in my ears", Tom thought for the billionth time. Speaking of time! When Tom was alive in his body, traumatic times seemed to slow down, this all felt like it was in slow motion. Time felt like it just barely moved. Again the thoughts of forever would make Tom cry out "Oh Please God, I am sorry for everything!"

And then slammed again and again, every time he screamed out, he got slammed more. It really angered the demons when he cried out God or Jesus. Tom couldn't help it though. He cried at all times, like a baby and would scream in agony whenever slammed into and ripped through. The demons adored holding him in their hands, each and ripping him apart only to come right back together again. Pleading, screaming out "No---No—No—Please oh God!" Then letting him go, only to chase him down to do it again. Besides the demons, and dark pain, there seemed to be something eating at him that was persistent. It was needle like, constant, munching on you but never eating through. The demons were laughing at him constantly, reminding of how Tom let them lead him here. How easy of prey he was. Every way anyone could abuse anyone else, it was done to Tom.

Every time Tom cried out, he never said he would have served God or anything of the sort, until this moment. He said in a scream “Oh God, forgive me. Give me one more chance and I will live my life telling others of you Father God. I will tell of how you loved us, and sent your son. Please God?!” Then there were the demons again doing their worst, when a light lit up Tom screaming “No, Please No” and trying to fight. Tom jumped up off the ground and threw the white sheet covering his blood soaked body off of himself!

There were a few of his Police brethren nearby, each with dumbfounded looks on their faces. They were tripping over themselves to get to him. Tom was feeling himself over and over again to be sure he was alive. He felt such joy at being given a second chance at life, that when the men came to him, he sunk to his knees and sobbed out some praises to God! A couple of the men, Gianni Scapini, who had tried many times to get Tom to go church with Him, was crying with him. Another of the men, Eric McCormack, was also praising God. Tom’s friend, they called big Mac. He was a huge man, 6’5” and dark, but not a believer, was standing there, mouth still agape saying in awe “Man you were dead for about 90 minutes, man how are you alive?”

Tom jumped up wiping his tears and said God my friend God! Big Mac said “I’m about to believe you man with eyebrows raised!” These men all knew Tom for quite a long time. They better than any, knew Tom had no belief system before all this. The rest of the department working there arrived to this little band of merry men, to find out what they were so jubilant about. Scott Pintner nearly passed out as he got there. “Tom, Tom, you were dead man? How umm how is this possible?” “Dude Scott said, (without giving Tom a chance to answer, Mike’s at the hospital in surgery right now for his shoulder.

You were shot right through the heart. Mike was inconsolable! Wait till he gets a load of you! “Speaking of, show me the bullet hole in your chest!” Tom ripped open his shirt and showed them his bloody chest, minus the hole the bullet went in! They all marveled!

They were all hugging him and slapping him on his back, looking at him in awe then hugging him again. The captain came up and wanted Tom checked out, but saw Tom was just fine, slapped him on the back and said, “welcome back to the land of the living son!” Tom’s story would go down in history, as an amazing case. Captain Brown went over to the Coroner’s van that just pulled up, and said “We have one less than expected. Our officer who was dead is now alive”, with a big happy grin on his face! The coroner came over and shook Tom’s hand, “Congrats sir.” Tom hugged him, and said thanks, with fresh tears in his eyes as he thought about the awful job this man had, of picking up dead bodies all day. Tom asked about the perp. “We got him!” “Oh, is he in the car?” Tom asked. “No, we shot him, and on his way to the hospital he died.” Tom was horrified for the man, and what he must be going through right this minute.

Tom knew there was no way he could ever do this job again. He could not be effective as an officer, because he could not be responsible for killing anyone again. He just would not wish that hell, (literally) on anyone, not even his worst enemy. Tom was going to be taking time to go apologize to everyone he had ever hurt. Tom, and the whole precinct, went to the hospital and waited for Mike to come out of surgery. Finally about 3 hours later, Mike was in recovery. They sent Tom in, and poor Mike thought he himself must have died! “T-Tom,” he stuttered “Oh man, am I dead?” “No bro, neither am I!”

“Buh, but, but, I saw you die buddy. How are you here?” “God, my friend, God brought me back and healed me completely!”

Mike praised God loudly and tried to raise his arms, but could not raise the other he'd had surgery on. The nurse popped her head in saying “Hey? No exciting my patient, time to go sir!” “No” Mike said, “He stays.” Sassy woman she was came in and said, “I’m the boss right now, and I say he goes, NOW!” Tom and Mike looked at each other and bust up laughing at this tiny nurse who had such gumption. “Okay, you win” Tom said. “I’m out; I’ll be back tomorrow man.” They hugged and Tom left. Tom shuddered after closing Mike’s door, as all he had just been through came rushing back. He became violently ill, and had to rush into a bathroom across the hall to vomit!

The horrors and terror all came back to him and he cried like a baby. He shook as he bit back the sobs. He knew there was no way to ever recount to anyone, some of the horrid things done to him, as just thinking about it sent him into shamed sorrow, and wanting to just curl up into a ball and cry uncontrollably. Tom decided as soon as it was possible, he would go see his Uncle Mike. Uncle Mike knew everything that Tom had questions about. He also wanted to go apologize to his Uncle, and give him the opportunity to lead him to the Lord. Tom knew, if there was anyone out there that was consumed with the truth, and speaking it, and seeking it, and teaching the truth, it was Uncle Mike.

A month later saw Tom on his way to his Uncle’s place. He was excited and nervous, which was foolish. What really was there to be nervous about? Uncle Mike was a gentle kind man, and would be thrilled to pieces to know Tom

now wanted to gain knowledge about God. He still, was too often, reliving that nightmare called hell. For the last month, Tom had resigned his position on the Police Force, and gone out all over the place apologizing to anyone he had ever harmed, even with words. He just had to make everything right. Reliving the pain he had caused others was quite a revelation. He would never speak or even think carelessly again. There was no more selfish left in him, and that was good. He had, before he left the force, tracked down Deirdre's address, and his first ex-wife's phone number. Deborah had hung up on him when he identified himself, with no chance to say anything. So he drove to her house the next day and waited for her to get home. She nearly panicked when she saw him at her house.

Deborah though, would rather die than show weakness, so she pulled her shoulders back and stood as tall as her 5'2" stature could muster, and blasted him with an angry stare, asking "What the hell do you want? You don't get it? I want nothing to do with you!" He couldn't help a smile from creeping onto his face at her bravado. "Yes Deb, I do get it, but you see I had to come. I owe you so many apologies." She was incredulous. "You came after all this time, to say you're sorry? Why?" "Because, I've had a huge reckoning, and I am sorrier than words could ever convey. I know I hurt you, and that was in many ways. Can you forgive me?" Her mouth hung open. She was so shocked by his admission. She sat on the steps before her house and said, "I don't really understand, after all this time, why you are sorry? How can it make a difference now?"

Tom said "Because, I really am devastated over how bad I had treated you, when you did not deserve any of it! I am starting my life over again, and am

starting by apologizing to you.” They talked for a little while more, and then she said, “I can see there has been a huge change in you Tom. I am glad for you, and yes I forgive you.” He thanked her, and talked a bit, and then left with a hug. Tom arrived at his Uncle’s house around 8 pm. In that tiny town, everyone near would notice a strange car arriving at 8 pm. All phones would be ringing each other, speculating who and why this person would be there. He chuckled as he realized how that would have annoyed him no end, a few short weeks ago.

There was Uncle Mike and his wife at the door. Aunt Louisa was plump and cute, and so sweet. Louisa was the perfect Aunt Bea type. Tom got out of the car and walked about halfway up the pathway to his Uncle’s house. When his Uncle realized who it was, he yelled out “TOM!” and ran to meet him. “Wow”, Tom thought. Uncle Mike was really happy to see him. That was a wonderful surprise for Tom. To be so heartily welcomed, by someone who had always had Tom’s best interests at heart, when Tom had been anything but nice, or even thankful. During Tom’s terror, he had also seen how he’d hurt Uncle Mike. He apologized to Uncle Mike and then launched into everything that had happened to him, on that infamous day.

Uncle Mike was very gracious in accepting Tom’s apology, and telling him it had all been forgiven, a long time ago. Tom explained everything he could bring himself to talk about, of that day, but even thinking on some of it, brought instant sobs to his throat, closing off speech. Uncle Mike and Aunt Louisa held him and sobbed with him. When he pulled himself together, Tom said “I can’t even think about it, let alone speak of some of what happened there.” Both his Uncle and his Aunt said in unison, “We’re so glad you’re

here! We praise God for a second chance!” Tom said, “Which is also why I’m here. I need you to show me the way to the heart of the Lord.” The beaming smile of Uncle Mike was so worth the trip. They went over to the church and put warm water into the baptismal, as his Uncle took him from the start of the world to the fall, and then to why we need Jesus.

Tom understood so easily. He marveled at how it all had made no sense to him, before this whole thing he just went through. It was making so much perfect sense that he knew it had to be God in him, giving him the understanding. Tom said let’s call Derek and Julie and Beth? Can we have them all here?

Aunt Louisa beamed, and said “of course I was going to mention that, but figured if you wanted them here honey, you would ask for them”. “I do!” “So let’s call them up”. Derek Julie and Beth are of course the children of Uncle Mike, and Aunt Louisa. They had all been nothing but kind to Tom, and he had repaid them with, sullen disregard. Aunt Louisa was still smiling huge as she talked cheerfully, saying, “oh now come on Beth, the babies can have baths a little late tonight, can’t they”? “Okay see, good girl, see you in a few minutes”. Aunt Louisa called Julie next, and when she picked up the phone at the first ring, she answered with “on my way!” Aunt Louisa giggled and said, “I am sure I don’t need to call Derek, the whole family is on the way”, with a smug little smile on her face, as she patted his cheek.

Tom smiled and felt so excited to see everyone. He was a changed man all around, he just wanted to love people, everyone everywhere. “This was an amazing transformation”, everyone who knew him had said, and Tom felt it

himself, like a brand new person. While they waited for everyone to arrive, Mike told Tom that on the day of the whole shooting, Mike had been in the sanctuary practicing giving his sermon, and writing down all the Holy Spirit had given him to speak for his sermon, and a loud voice out of nowhere said with great urgency to “pray for Tom”! “So i got right to it”, Said uncle Mike. “I did not know what to pray or say or think, so I just said Father protect Tom, watch over him, bring him truth Lord show him the way.

I knew you would be watched over Tom. I also knew one day you would come to the Lord in truth son. Your mother would be so proud of you Tom, he said with a catch in his voice. I miss her so much. Yeah me too Uncle Mike, but you know I know she is with the Lord. No matter what mom went through, she always had this secret joy in her heart that no one could touch. “Why didn’t I know about you, uncle mike”? That scared me, because I found out by accident about you at 14, why? Uncle mike looked a little troubled, and told him “well Tom, I begged and pleaded with your mother not to marry Rick. Everyone knew of his woman beating ways”

Misty had been pretty, but so shy and quiet, that barely anyone noticed her. She also was just kindness to everyone Tom.. Everyone told her not to give that nasty guy a chance, but she said that “everyone could be redeemed”. He was pretty good to her for a long while, until you came along son. I am not saying that it is your fault in anyway, “no” Tom said,” I know that’s not it”, my father was severely abused uncle Mike, much worse than he had done to us. His father was like all the monsters your imagination can conjure, put together. Oh Uncle Mike said, that would explain a lot. After a pensive pause, where Uncle Mike was deep in thought, he said, “anyway, I told your mother I could

not be a part of her life then, if she was marrying Rick”. It was the first and last time, I saw your mother angry. I have regretted it ever since. It was the last time I saw her alive as well.

Where were you and mom raised? Oh not here, Aunt Louisa and I came here 30 years ago. We passed through and got stuck in the winter, and Old Joe Parker gave us a place to stay in his house. We were strangers, but you would have thought he had known us all his life. That was a fine fellow right there. We spent hours chatting about everything in life, and especially the Lord. He said that he was sure the Lord brought this town, an on fire young preacher, and that they needed a pastor here badly, so would I consider it? The house comes with the church, and everyone lends a hand and feeds the pastor and his family. So we all prayed about it for the next few days took some time to fast for understanding and strength, as well as resolve.

We all came to the conclusion that, the Lord meant for us to come here and stay here. There have been no problems at all in the fine state of Nebraska, in this 125 square mile town of Pendleton. Your mother and I come from Wisconsin. We had wonderful Christian parents. “Very jovial good people”, he said with a faraway smile. They died together in a plane crash when they were going on a mission’s trip. Our mother was a nurse and our father was a doctor. That’s how they met. They both loved the Lord, and figured they were blessed, to be a blessing to others. So they would fly to some hidden land somewhere. I had no idea where, they went every year for 6 weeks in the winter.

I have your inheritance Tom, your mother’s part of our parent’s money due to the plane crash. I had planned on giving it to you when you retired. Your

mother left instructions for me in case of her death, and how to disburse your money to you. I am a very savvy investor and I have increased your money over the last 20 years, You are quite wealthy Tom. Just then everyone arrived, and there were hugs and love all around, and Tom apologized to everyone for how he had been and thanked them all for their loving kindness toward him and their many prayers for him over the years. Then he repented and was baptized with his whole family there. They all laid hands on him after, and prayed over him.

Tom felt a little overwhelmed and exhausted by this whole trip, and night and day. Everything had been moving swiftly since his death, and second chance. But it was a peaceful exhaustion, he was at peace in his soul and could face anything, because of what he had been through, he had nothing but compassion for his fellow human beings. He could not imagine anyone ever going there, and having to stay there. He was hoping to persuade people not to go there, so if he was wealthy, then what better way to help than to start funding things that needed funding? He had no idea what, but was sure there were many things that needed funding. He would find out.

First though Tom had to go make something else right. One last thing that needed some serious attention, he would be leaving in two days to go take care of this important matter. The two days was a whirlwind of reminiscing, and loving his family, and being so grateful for their love. He was busy being sorry in his heart, that he had missed out on all this family had to offer. There were no strings attached, but he always thought, one day they would hurt him, so no one could come in. He was glad he had been wrong.

His family! Yes he was so thankful for them all. Everything in his life was so angry, for all of his life it seemed, and he was so free now. He was thinking this, as his Uncle and Aunt waved to him in the rearview mirror. He was off to Colorado, he had to go see Deirdre, and meet his daughter. His daughter's name was Rebecca, and he did not hold out much hope of meeting her, but he was going to try. First he needed to speak to Deirdre alone. He would not dream of springing his presence on either of them. She owned a flower shop. He figured he would call the flower shop and ask to meet her without Rebecca there. So Deirdre could feel safe and comfortable, she should invite someone of her choosing there too?

He did not want to spook her at all that would defeat the purpose of this meeting. Oh Lord help me to say the right things, and for her to have an open heart to hear my apology. Tom said to himself, "here's to nothing, and dialed Deirdre's flower shop, named Deirdre's Dahlias. Rebecca answered the phone and he froze for a second, she said hello? He said sorry something got in my throat. May I speak to Deirdre? She's out on a delivery for a special deal; can I ask whose calling and take a message? Sure tell her Thomas, and here's my number. She repeated the number back and said sure Thomas I'll have her call you back as soon as she gets in. Thanks for calling Deirdre's Dahlias.

An hour later his cell rang, it was Deirdre, and his heart did somersaults. Okay no nerves just talk calm. "Hello" Said Tom. His this is Deirdre calling returning your call, can I help you with something? Yes i needed to talk to you Deirdre, I have a huge apology to make to you and to your daughter, and a lot of amends to make as well. I'm sorry sir what? You don't owe me an apology do I know you? He said yes you know me Deirdre this is Tom. She slammed

the phone down in his ear. He decided though he was not very hungry, but for something to do, he would go eat a bite at a diner he passed, on the way to the motel.

Should I give up God? What do I do now? I cannot with so delicate a situation force myself on them. He felt sure he should hang out a little bit. He ordered the house special eggplant parmesan, which was really tasty. Though he wasn't hungry, it just tasted so good; he ate his whole heaping steaming cheesy plate. He noticed that he just never let anything affect his mood anymore. Old Tom as he thought of whom he had been would have been going off in a fit, for not having his way right now when he wanted it. He still marveled at the changes in himself, and was overjoyed by it all. Losing your life literally, and suffering intensely for the choices you made in your life, has a strong impact, one could never remain the same.

A couple of hours later Tom's phone rang, it was Deirdre. After thinking about what he had said in the message, and listening to it a few times over, she decided meeting would be okay. They could meet at the beautiful garden coffee shop right next door to her shop. That was public, and her daughter had plans for the afternoon the following day. Tom thanked her profusely and apologized for disturbing her life, but this was important. She said thank you and ended the call with, see you tomorrow at 2? Count on it Tom said to a dead call. Well he thought what can I expect, I hurt this woman terribly, she was kind enough to give me the chance to apologize.

Tom went out into the town and checked out everything around. He came across some vagrants huddled together in the corner of a closed off alley, and

went and decided to go to the diner he had eaten at and get them some chow. He figured you couldn't go wrong with burgers and fries and a thermos of coffee. He went into a grocery/department store and bought a couple of travel mugs and a steel thermos. He also bought some sleeping bags and yoga mats too. Then headed to the diner, and had the girl brew a fresh pot of coffee, and give him a hand full of creamers and sugar. He paid and then tipped the young woman handsomely. She cried when she saw the hundred dollar tip he had left, and ran out after him, hugging him and thanking him nonstop.

Mister she said you don't know how you have helped me, with tears in her eyes. He smiled and said I am so glad then! He had, when eating there earlier, left the other waitress a fat tip. She had been super busy though and had not gotten it right away. Tom did not care to wait around and see what happened; he figured everyone could use a little extra help. His pension from the police force over twenty years' worth, was sufficient to live, he was going to enjoy being a philanthropist he was enjoying this to the nth degree. He went over to the men in the alley and handed them the goods. They were just speechless. One asked what you want us to do for you man, with a very suspicious look in his eye. Tom said nothing at all, I don't need anything i just saw you might need a few things and some food so I just gave you some gifts is all.

They looked at each other and big smiles dawned on their faces. They said in unison, thanks man, and came over to accept their gifts and shake his hand. He hugged them both and then told them well I must go but before I go can I just tell ya God loves you and saw you had a need and told me to fill it, He really does love you men. One said Amen; the other gave him a skeptical look, and said yeah okay. That set them to arguing a bit, not heatedly, just a little

back and forth bickering about God and rather he loved them or not. The taller man said I been telling you for years God loves us, you just deny it though. The shorter guy said man what has God done for us all these years? The taller said you're alive right? Yeah well yes I am so? Well, said the tall one that is something we were just given supplies we really needed and both of us were saying not so long ago we were hungry, and this guy out of nowhere brings us food. I would say that is something all right.

Tom could hear them as he was leaving the alley, Lord he though I pray for them both truth and strength, and most of all peace. Tom went back to his room to go do some quiet study and prayer for the rest of the evening. He loved doing that as he had never imagined understanding so completely the bible and what he read in it. But it was as he was reading it that things seemed to come to life for him in those pages. Understanding was deep and strong and held him together even stronger as he went through the pages. He understood things that had made him scratch his head, when as a young man; he was forced to do devotions in the evenings at Uncle Mike's house.

Again he thanked the Lord for giving him another chance, but not only that, really pouring out upon Tom knowledge and understanding that defied logic. It was a voice speaking directly into his heart, and that was the only way he could figure out to explain it to Uncle Mike and the family. They had all smiled big, and said yes that is what is meant by the still small voice of the Lord, it's not a voice really, not one we hear, it's just knowledge and being filled with information that had not been there before. Tom was gaining knowledge big time, and learning how to live the right way, without humans teaching him, though Uncle Mike was a great teacher. Tom was learning much

more just by studying the word and praying. He prayed for his meeting tomorrow and then went off to bed singing hymns in his head.

The next day dawned bright and full of promise for Tom. He was excited for the meeting and a little nervous of how to begin it all. So he practiced a little in the mirror of the bathroom after his shower and shave. Hi Deirdre you look lovely, no no too cliché! Hmmm How about hello Deirdre, I have to share with you something, that isn't very good either. He thought well Lord you give me the words, because I feel like a bumbling idiot here, and am not sure how to even begin with her. I have so much to say and so many apologies to make to her. He didn't bother to eat as he felt like he just had to calm his nervous stomach, and coffee and food did not seem to appeal.

Tom marched around the room a million times he thought, as he waited for the time to arrive. Finally he could go and wait at the meeting place. He was sweating it out, and just feeling so nervous. The place she picked was really quite easy to relax in and that was a good thing as he needed to just regather himself and find a peace about it all. The beautiful flowers and plants within the place helped a lot. He just looked around and allowed himself to drink in the calmness of the place. The waitress came over and said what can I get you? He said oh I'll just wait for my companion to come. Okay how about a glass of water as you wait? Sure sounds good. Do you mind if I ask who you are waiting for, I've never seen you before and know everyone in town. Oh Deirdre Coss. Oh you know Deirdre? She is the one who grew all these plants, and gave the owner the idea for the place, when she just could not decide what to do with this little building she had inherited.

That was an interesting little tidbit. She's very smart and so kind and Rebecca her daughter is one of my best friends said Jeanine, the sweet waitress taking care of him. That's very nice he said with a big smile. Oh said Jeanine, "here comes Deirdre now"! Tom stood up as soon as she approached the table. She was more beautiful than he remembered. He extended his hand to shake hers and at first she was a little reluctant. But then put her hand out and grasped his. She said I don't mind telling you I am nervous as to what this is all about. Tom said I feel the same I mean nervousness anyway. So let's order a little something from the lovely Miss Jeanine here, and settle into some conversation.

They ordered and got settled a little and made small talk as they waited for their coffee and snacks to arrive. He didn't want to get into heavy conversation and be interrupted, and Deirdre seemed to be of the same mind. When their stuff had come and Jeanine left them to it, he said I am not sure how to start other than to say that you were so right about what happened when we were kids, and I am so sorry I cannot tell you how very sorry I am and how sick I was over the fact that I had hurt you so badly. I was not in my right mind at all was drunk and angry and I am sorry I took it out on you. I know Rebecca was conceived that night and I am sorry for that embarrassment as well, to you and your family. She said what? How do you know Rebecca's name, and that she is yours? How do you know any of this? She was red faced and very unhappy he could see.

He said please I did not come to anger you with the knowledge that I have gained, let me tell you all about what happened to me please, and that will help you to know why I know what I know. I hope it helps you to forgive me

as well. He launched into the whole infamous day, and did not stop till he arrived here at this moment. She looked at him with tears in her eyes, and said wow that is really something. He had cried in the midst of the telling as well, which helped her to know he was not making this elaborate story up. She just sat there with tears in her eyes, for a few moments. She gathered her thoughts and said why now though, why are you here now, and what does this change as far as Rebecca goes?

Tom said I am not here to harm you nor demand anything from you or Rebecca, I am here to ask your forgiveness and to help you in any way I can. Rebecca being 18 I am sure college is coming soon? Can I offer to pay for her college or set up a trust fund or something? “No Rebecca is a very intelligent young woman; her college is all paid for already she has been saving since she was 12 to go become a veterinarian”. I have a check here for \$250,000, would you accept it please for her future? I really don’t know Tom, really I don’t know what to think or do. I do accept your apology and forgive you. I myself have come to the Lord a long while ago, on the day Rebecca was born. I realized so much in that life changing moment, and began seeking the Lord with all my heart. I wanted my child to be filled with love and hope and peace, as my life was anything but like that.

That night that everything between us had happened Tom, I had left my home, my step father was a very abusive person, and tried in his drunken stupor, to force himself on me. I could not understand how this was all happening, escaping one abuser to the arms of another. I thought I must be cursed. Tom was doubly disgusted. He knew all too well about being abused, and to run from one to another without ever hoping to find that kind of trouble

twice in a day, he had helped that to become a reality for her. His face showed the sorrow he felt about this all. Again Deirdre I am so very sorry, my goodness words cannot express my sorrow of this all.

She said you really could not have known as I said nothing, and I am not sure if you would have heard anything anyway, you were quite out of it, and very incoherent. So what is it you hope to have happen here Tom? He said “I was hoping that maybe a little down the road if I could meet Rebecca and get to know her, I mean you know after some time”. “I have never said much at all about her father to her. She of course has asked off and on, I became really adept at changing the subject and diverting her attention. She stopped asking a few years ago. I don’t know what to even say to her.

Tom said tell her the truth, it is the only way we can possibly have a chance at an honest relationship if she so desires, after hearing all of that. Tom looked up and saw Rebecca rushing towards her mother very upset. She apologized for interrupting them, but needed to speak to her mother. He said sure excuse me, and as he got up, Rebecca looked at him for the first time. Her mouth fell open, and she forgot everything she was going to say to her mother. Her face turned pure white at the recognition of so many of her own features, on this strangers face. She cried out MOM, is he my father? Ummm well ummm yes Rebecca this is Tom Kinsell, yes he is your biological father.

“Were you ever going to tell me”, cried Rebecca? Yes I was but was not sure how to go about it all. The truth mom, all of the truth and nothing held back. I stopped asking because it was like pulling teeth. I figured it was something very painful since we discussed everything always open and

honestly, but that subject made your face close up, and you changed the subject. So I left it alone, I figured one day you would feel comfortable enough to talk about him, and how I came to being. Deirdre had a deer in the headlights look on her face so Tom said would you like me to explain everything? I don't mind telling her of what I had done and all of everything else.

So everything had been taken out of their hands, no choices needed to be made it was all there in front of them. They jumped into it and shared both of their side of the story. Rebecca was justifiably upset at finding out she was a baby from rape. She went through the gamut of emotions hot rage, to sorrow, to just downright insult. Then Tom told her everything of his life, and again she went through many emotions. He told her also of the day of his death and second chance which is what brought him here, and how he had been shown her, and her mother, which is how he found out of her existence. He told her after he was finished recounting everything how sorry he was and he hoped she could forgive him.

She sat there stunned a little, and obviously upset, and said nothing for a bit. She was thinking and feeling through again and her face showed all her emotions as she ran through them each. She said wow this is very heavy all of it. She looked at her mother and then Tom, and back to her mother. She grasped her mother's hand, and said "I am so sorry mommy that you went through so much, I am however very glad that you did not abort me as so many would have done". "I love you and wish that you felt you could share this with me, but understand you probably thought there was no good time to tell of this whole thing". "So where do we go from here"? Tom looked at

Deirdre, she said “this has all been so fast and I am reeling”. ”I can’t say, as now the ball is in your court Becca? You now have to decide what you would like to do.

Deirdre also gave her daughter the check Tom had given her, and said that is from him to help you in whatever capacity you decide you need to use it for. I don’t need the money, but will keep it, and I thank you for it. “Please give me some time to think on all of this and I will let you know”. Tom had said nothing more as he allowed his daughter to feel and think and do whatever she felt she needed to do. “He said, take all the time you need Rebecca”. I have time in mind for you to decide whatever you decide and I will abide by your decision, no matter what it is. She said good enough, thank you. He then asked what was wrong when you came in. You looked upset? She said oh well in the scheme of things compared to all of this, that was really nothing. It is funny how quickly life changes, in the space of a day isn’t it?

Yes Deirdre and Tom said in unison and they smiled at each other. Tom was impressed as he could be by these two remarkable women, and he told them so. He stood up to go and allow them time to process all of this. He said, “I’ll go for now, Deirdre you have my number if Rebecca wants to get in touch, she can”. I will let you ladies talk and figure everything out and just know I am so grateful for your forgiveness Deirdre, it is more than I could have hoped for. He put out a hand to shake Deirdre’s and Rebecca’s, but both gave him a hug instead. He felt misty eyed at that. These two seemed to really know how to forgive entirely, nothing held back.

A few days later Tom was packing up to head out, he had heard nothing

more from the girl's and so he figured he had better move on and get going on some research as to where to start doing philanthropy. As he was zipping his suitcase up, his cell rang. "Hello" he said hopefully? It was Rebecca, she was cheerful, and said hi I was wondering can we go for a walk and chat a bit? He said "sure where do I meet you?" "She said how about at the lake", and gave him explicit directions. "I'll meet you there in a few minutes" he said.

He pulled into the parking lot and found her already there with a big welcoming smile on her face. She said "you know I am a pretty good judge of character, and I can see that you are truly sorry for what happened, I want you to know that I too forgive you and hope for us to have a relationship". Tom beamed a smile that would have lit any room, and said "thank you" with his hand over his heart as it just wanted to swell out of his chest. "Mom asked me to tell you she is interested in a friendship with you, if that works for you"? "Oh boy does it ever". "I had always had a crush on your mom in school; she was the prettiest girl in that school, actually the whole town". "There were not many people there".

"When do you leave"? He said "I was packing up, to head out, thinking I was not going to hear from you, but was going to stop by the shop to let you know I was available if ever you wanted a relationship". "I'm glad I called you then when I did" she said. "So am I, believe me so am I". Okay well I will stop by the shop anyway to say bye to your mother. He hugged Rebecca and then left. Oh life was so good; it was unreal how good life really was right now. He stopped by the shop and hugged Deirdre, and thanked her so much for everything and for forgiving him. He could not be any more thankful if he tried. He said he would see her soon, and headed out of town to the farm to get

his family's input on how to go about helping, when he could, where he could.

Life sure can be exciting he thought, and wondered at it all, in his thoughts he just could not imagine that his life would actually ever have meaning and here just a few short weeks had gone by and he was so different and saw everything so differently, He thought God is so good, he would never take God for granted and his relationship with Him through His son Jesus.



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