

Doors to Joy

*Setting the Captive
Free - Emotionally*

Janine Joi



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4-7-18 Unexpected Gifts

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4.7.18

Both women in their respective houses, had an expectant air about them. They knew The Stranger only brought good things to them. They were not apprehensive at all, because he had brought them peace, love and this new way of living their lives through Jesus. As they were waiting, they were tidying up, waiting for the delivery man. There was a knock on the Little Girls door. Her mother opened the door. "Yes?" There was a delivery man there, he had credentials. "Ma'am I'm here to deliver something."

"Yes, I've been expecting you, please come in."

The man said, "I just needed to check if this was the right house. I got to go get my helper, if you could move everything out of the way in the hall, then it will make it easier." She said "Oh my yes!" He went back to the truck to get his helper and she moved all of the stuff out of the hall. She stood in the kitchen which is just off the hall near the front door and watched as the men brought in a stove for heating. They put it in the living room, on top of the pad that was already there for a stove that had been there years ago.

The man said, "You don't have to worry ma'am, these pads are good for this stove. Also that plate against the wall is good. He and his partner hooked it up through the plating on the wall and fitted all the chimneys and everything together. They dusted off their hands and stepped back to survey their work. The woman said 'oh my, it's beautiful!'

The man said "yes it is. It's the best one we have. We also

have pellets to go in the stove, we have quite a bit. They're in bags, where would you like us to put them ma'am?" She thought for a moment and said , "how about the back porch? It's covered." The man said okay and he and his partner went out to get the bags of pellets. There were 50 bags of pellets.

They stacked them on the back porch, over on the left side. They were outside hammering and doing all sorts of things. The Little Girl's Mama watched. They put in D rings on the floor, hooks in the ceiling. On these hooks they hung what looked to her like canvas sheets covered in some sort of plastic. They snapped the bottom into place on the floor anchors.

They screwed a low table into the floor and placed a plastic barrel on it that had a lid. The barrel fit a bag of pellets, so they could just scoop it out, instead of having to lift a heavy bag. At the bottom of the barrel was a little door that they could open up when it got low to the bottom to get all the stuff out.

"Thank you so much! You've done so much!" she exclaimed. The man said "oh you're welcome ma'am, we have one more stove to bring in." So they brought in a gas stove for the kitchen. First they had to unhook the stove that was there that did not work. They took that outside and put it on their truck. Then they brought in this shiny brand-new, gas cooking stove with an oven in it. They hooked it up to the gas and did everything they were supposed to do and said "okay ma'am we're done now." She said "oh! Thank you so much! Oh this is just beautiful!" She was running her hands over the top of the stove.

The man said, "Oh! Just a moment! I forgot to bring in some boxes.He had his helper help him bring in the boxes. There

were five boxes. He set them down on the counter and the kitchen table. Then he said "That's it ma'am, I'll be on my way now."

She shook his hand, saying "thank you so much." He said "you're welcome, bye now."

She was so excited! She got a knife out of the drawer and cut open the tape from the first box. As she opened the top flaps she saw pots and pans. She opened the next box and saw cookie sheets, bundt pans, cake pans, muffin pans and all sorts of baking things. As much as she wanted to paw through them, she opened up the 3rd box and saw kitchen gadgets and tools: spatulas, whisks, a cuisinart. In the 4th box was what looked to be a complete set of dishes. Plates, cups and saucers in the color she loved. Glassware, a soup tureen. Then she opened up the 5th box and gasped. Inside this box were tablecloths, lace tablecloths, plastic tablecloths, linen table cloths, silk tablecloths, table runners for holidays, placemats, napkins- both paper and cloth that matched all the tablecloths, napkin rings, kitchen towels, sponges, dishcloths, magnets that had flowers on them, a copper tea kettle, an assortment of teas, a porcelain tea strainer, glass tea cups, a glass teapot! As she looked at all of this, she began to cry. She had never had such wealth before in her life! Everything in the last box were her favorite colors. How did he know, she thought to herself, how did he know?

She wiped her eyes and got up to put everything away. She wiped off the table with one of the new dishcloths and put on it a solid color tablecloth with a lace tablecloth on top and set the table with her new dishes. She had stemware for water, she put cloth napkins in the napkin rings, then put the copper teapot on the new stove to heat up for tea. She got her Bible and sat at the kitchen table and read Psalm 92. She

read it out loud, pausing to wipe her eyes and blow her nose every so often. Crying happy tears, crying thankful tears. "Thank you Lord for this bounty!" she exclaimed. "Thank you for this abundance, Thank you Father."

At the Little Boy's house, his mom was expectantly looking forward to whatever the delivery man was going to bring. She tidied up her house, got the breakfast dishes washed, moved things out of the hallway because The Stranger said they were delivering something and she wanted to make room for them. She was just plumping up the sofa cushions when someone knocked at the door. She went to open it. There was a delivery man there, with credentials. He said, "Ma'am I have been sent here to deliver something to you. Are you the Little Boy's mom?" "Yes I am."

"May I come in ma'am? I need to remove the furniture in your living room. Her eyes got big and with a sharp intake of air she said "Oh! Yes! Do come in!" So the man waved to the people in his delivery truck and three men came in with him and they went into the living room.

They emptied the living room of everything. Rug, lamp, chair, sofa, trash cans, everything. The Little Boy's Mama was crying. Silently. You could see wet spots on her shirt. The men took everything out of the living room, then they came in and they washed the windows, washed the floor, painted the walls and the ceiling and lastly buffed the wood floor till it was so shiny they could see their faces in it.

They installed new windows that opened outward with a crank. She loves these kinds of windows, but how did they know? These were old fashioned. she didn't know they even

made them anymore. They installed French doors to the back porch. To hasten the paint to dry, they opened all the windows and it was dry in no time.

They brought in long pieces of wood and put wood just below the ceiling, around the middle of the wall, around the windows and the door ways. She watched in awe as they installed crown molding. It was beautiful, she thought.

They put pot lights in the ceiling, installed dimmers on switches. She was amazed how fast they got it all done. They even put a fan in the ceiling, replacing the old one!

They hung new drapes at the windows over privacy curtains. They put a larger mantle over the fireplace and cleaned up the area, placing a new fire screen and tools near it.

Then they started bringing in furniture. They brought in a huge sectional sofa, with lounge chairs and little tables in the sectional to hold drinks and books! Side tables next to the rocker-recliners, end tables next to the sofa, table lamps, trash cans that fit the decor. Floor lamps with tables attached and directional lighting. Bean bags and other cushions for sitting on the floor.

They had installed bookshelves on the wall and now brought in boxes, placing them on the shelves. They brought in a leather log holder and placed it near the fireplace, filling it with wood. The man said, "Ma'am I have more logs, where would you like me to put them?" She said "How about the front porch over on the side?" He said, "Ma'am it would be better if I put them in the back, there's quite a few of them and I see you have chairs on the front porch so there wouldn't be enough room." Her eyes got big as she said, "oh yes! That's fine. The back porch is fine." So the 4-man crew

started carrying logs around the side of the house to the back porch and there was a huge stack of wood. It took four men 45 minutes to stack up all this wood. The man gave her a small box and said "If you sprinkle this on the fire every so often, it'll make the fire turn colors and I think your boy will really enjoy it." She smiled and said "Thank you."

"There's just a couple more things to do," he said. One of the men came back in with the floor buffer and buffed the floor again and then others came in with floor pads and rugs, mats and carpet pieces for near the doors.

The man said, "Well we're done now, is there anything that you would like us to do for you?" The woman said "No thank you, you've done so much." The man said, "Okay glad to be of service! Thank you. Bye now. The woman went to the door and waved goodbye to them all as they left.

She went to the doorway of the living room and just stared, no words came out. She just stared. She made herself a cup of coffee and took it into her brand new living room. Sitting on the sofa that was decorated with pillows, she put her feet up and started reading her Bible, Ps. 93.

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The kids got to school and the teacher said, "Good morning children!" The kids said good morning teacher. "Okay, today is the first day of me having an assistant. Most of you know the Little Girl's mother, she is our new assistant. She will be assisting me in all sorts of projects. I am so glad she's here. You may call her Ms. Amazing, going along with the theme for the rest of this year.

Today is the first day of using these necklaces and Miss

Amazing will hand them out to each child. I want you to line up, starting from the back rows. So the little girl over there” –and she pointed to her left of the room – “over by the counter where the hearts are, you start, then it’ll be the next person in front of you and it will go up and down the rows like that.”

So each child came up and the teacher picked up one of the necklaces and put it on their neck. They all had a different wonderful word on them: ‘amazing’, ‘wonderful’, ‘stunning’, ‘smart’, ‘fun’, and others.

The teacher said “since we did not have scripture school this morning, we’re going to pass on giving out stars for a memory scripture. For today, you will give a star to anyone who says something nice to you, or treats you nicely. If someone says something mean to you, then their heart will get dark in one spot. If you will look over here children...” the teacher’s voice trailed off as she walked to the counter full of hearts. “You will see there is a shelf here now. Everyone’s heart is on their own, covered, shelf. There are no names on these shelves, because you all know how to find your own heart and if someone thinks something bad, or says something bad, or does something bad, no one else needs to know whose heart it was that went dark.

Now you’re all going to go outside for recess and when you hear the recess bell, I want the littlest ones to line up in front. I want you to line up according to size and wait for Miss Amazing to let you know when to come in. Each child is to come over to the shelves and stretch out their hand so they know which heart is theirs. When they know which heart is theirs, then I want you to go back outside and stand in a line.”

So the kids all went outside to play, but they didn’t really

play, they all just stood around talking. They all gathered around the Little Boy, talking and looking at each other's necklaces. The Little Boy said to the Little Girl "Hi beautiful, you really are you know." The word on her card was 'beautiful'.

So she gave him a star out of the packet that was attached to the back of the necklace. She gave him a purple star because that was her favorite color. She said "Thank you' fun', I'm glad we're friends." The Little Boy's word was 'fun', so he gave her a green star because that was *his* favorite color. And so it went with all the children on the playground. Everyone tried it out.

The recess bell rang and they ran over to their classroom door and lined up, with the littlest one in front. Miss Amazing came to the doorway, where she ushered in the first child, who went over and stretched her hand along the row of hearts until she found hers. Then she went back outside.

Then the next child and the next. So it went until all 20 children had come in and found the location of their heart, then returned outside.

The teacher then came out and stood next to Miss Amazing. "Ok children, you all know where your heart is located, right?"

"Yes ma'am," they replied.

"Okay, I want you to come in now and we will do our math studies." You could hear a few groans from the kids, but they all went to their desks and pulled out their books.

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Meanwhile, The Stranger was in town. One of the men, who was one of the five who had come up at the luncheon saying he would be happy to lead a Bible study, had a cafe in town.

The Stranger had gone over to have a cup of coffee and while he was there, he began talking to this man. They were talking about using the cafe for a Bible study. The Stranger said, "I see there is a vacant lot next to your Cafe, the man said "Yes it's been there for years." "My employer would like to buy it and lease it to you for \$1 a year. He wants to turn it into an annex to your cafe. He believes more people will be coming into your cafe and he wants to help you enlarge it. So there would be room for a Bible study, meetings, and people just coming in to sit and read while they had their coffee and food. Do you think you would like that?"

"Oh gosh yes! I've wanted to expand for years, but I just haven't been able to scrape together the cash."

The Stranger stuck out his hand to shake the owner's hand and said "great, that's settled then, I'll let him know and he can buy the property and start construction. Do you know any fellas in town who would like to be hired to build it?"

"Yes I do. There's quite a few people that are out of work in town that could use the work. We also have a Commercial contractor here."

"Fine," said The Stranger, "Why don't you round them up and get them here at, say, 3 p.m. today? I will have the plans and we can start work in the morning!"

"So soon? That's short notice, but yes, I'll have them here at 3."

The Stranger left the cafe and went next door to the bookstore. Once he was inside he went over to the children's books.

He was looking for a particular type of book. But he couldn't find it. He went up to the employee and asked her if they had any of this type of book, it was about heroes and heroines in the Bible for boys and girls. The employee looked it up on the computer, and she said "No sir we don't have anything like that." "Thank you for looking." "You're welcome sir."

The Stranger got a bag and he gathered up Bibles; New Living Translations, New King James translations and Life Application Study Bibles New Living Translation. He purchased 5 of Adam Clarke's commentary. He purchased pens and notebooks, knowing that people will retain more if they write it out in long hand. He purchased bookmarks and highlighters and Bible covers in an array of colors. He left the store with his packages.

He wanted to sit down and watch the townspeople for a little bit, so he sat at a round table outside the bookstore. The man from the cafe came over and asked him if he'd like a cup of coffee and The Stranger said "yes thank you. A latte please."

While he sat there drinking his coffee, one of the men that was at the luncheon – but did not come up when the invitation was given – came over and asked The Stranger if he minded if he sat down.

The Stranger said "No I don't mind, sit down please." The Stranger saw that the man's arms were all bruised. Clearly he has been struggling with learning how to walk on the rocky road. He asked The Stranger about walking on the road. "Is there any trick to it? Everytime I think that I have a

handle on it, it seems to rise up and hit me in the face again.”

“Well, there are different ways to go about it, you can take very small steps, or you can take giant steps and thereby pass over quite a few of the rocks. You can pull the rocks out of the road where you’re going to be walking everyday, or you can learn the ways of walking on this road.”

The man said, “Sir, I have been walking on roads all my life, the cork road I really enjoyed. It was good for my hips because it was so soft and it didn’t jar my body. But this rocky road, I know the kids meant good by it, but it’s just really hard on my body. It’s hard not to be angry with them for pulling it up.”

The Stranger asked him, “Sir, have you read the Bible?” The man said “no, I don’t believe I have.” The Stranger pulled a Bible out of his bag. He opened it up. He asked the man “do you mind looking up Ephesians chapter 2? I don’t have my glasses with me.” The man said “oh sure, I’ll do that for you. Shall I read it too?” He asked when he found the chapter. The Stranger said “yes please.”

The man read the whole chapter out loud. He was totally silent when he stopped reading. The Stranger was also silent. The man finally said, “sir, do you think this gift of grace could be for me too?” The Stranger said quietly, “Yes, I know it is. Jesus has been waiting for you with outstretched arms. He has been wanting to hold you and love on you ever since you were born. He has just been waiting for you to come to him.” The man said “what do I do? How do I talk to him?” The Stranger replied, “Just talk to Him like you’re talking to me. Tell Him how you feel. So the man bowed his head and closed his eyes. The Stranger saw tears splash on the hands that were covered in age spots.

The man said very quietly, "Lord, Sir, if You'll have me, I'd be proud to be one of Your sons. I ask to come in to Your family. I ask that You forgive this old man for his wandering ways and everything I have done in my life that did not line up with You, Your purity, Your holiness. I ask that You come into my life and direct me, direct my mind and my steps and I ask that You forgive this old man."

The man looked up and smiled. He said to The Stranger "You know, I feel better. I feel like my head is clear. Like there's no more fog. And I do believe that I will be able to walk on that road with a lighter step now." The Stranger said, "I believe you will also. Here take this Bible as your own, here's some highlighters and bookmarks. There will be a Bible study starting this Friday at the Little Boy's house. Why don't you come on over? There will be coffee, iced tea and refreshments. And you will meet others that have just begun their new walk in the Lord as well." "I believe I will come. And I'll bring my wife too." The Stranger said "that's excellent!" "Maybe I'll be able to convince her that this is the right way before we come over in two days."

The Stranger said, "I will pray that you are able to speak to her about this and that her heart will be open." "Thank you sir," as he stood up from the table shaking The Stranger's hand. "Thank you for the Bible and all the goodies. Is there anything that I can do for you? I'm a cabinet maker and I can make almost anything with wood. I make cabinets, chairs and tables. I made this table you're sitting at."

The Stranger said "Now that you mention it, yes!" And he began telling him about the annex to the cafe. He said "there's going to be a meeting at the cafe at 3 p.m. today, regarding the construction of the annex. Why don't you go on over there at that time?" The man said "Why yes I will! I'll be there promptly at 3. Thank you again sir." The

Stranger said, "My pleasure."

The Stranger drank the rest of his coffee watching people walking on the rocky road, going in and out of stores. It was very good coffee he thought to himself. When it was done he threw the cup in the nearby trash can and started walking to the Little Boy's house.

When he arrived at their house, he knocked on the door. The Little Boy's Mama answered and she threw her arms around his neck when she saw who it was and just hugged him. "Thank you! Thank you! What a wonderful gift you have given us! And we will be able to leave it here for the family that comes and lives here after us. What a wonderful, wonderful thing you have done!" The Stranger smiled and said "you're welcome. My employer thought it would be helpful."

"Oh, it's more than helpful. The paint is in the colors that I've always dreamed about decorating in, it's the latest furniture, it's comfortable, there's enough seating here for 20 people! I didn't even know that the floors would shine like they do. It's all so much and I thank you, I thank you!" The Stranger smiled, "May I come in and see it?" "Oh! Pardon me! Yes, yes! Please come in, come in to this gorgeous living room!"

The Stranger came in and nodded his head. "Good" he said, "they did a good job." She said "oh they did a wonderful job! They buffed the floors and painted the walls and washed the new windows and hung protection over the wood outside, they put crown molding up, it's just so much, it's so much. I can't get over this. It's wonderful!"

The Stranger gave his bags to the woman and said, "Here

this is for the Bible study that you and your husband will be having weekly starting this Friday.” She said, “how did you know? My husband and I just decided to do that this morning at breakfast.” The Stranger smiled and just nodded his head. The woman had already started opening up the bags when she asked that. The Stranger knew he didn’t have to elaborate on anything because she was lost in what was in the bags.

“Oh my!” She exclaimed. “There’s so many bibles and so many different *kinds* of Bibles in here! This is wonderful! Thank you!” The Stranger said “You’re welcome. And there is something for you and your husband in that bag over there on the kitchen counter.” She hadn’t noticed the bag. She went over to the bag, much smaller than the other bags and it had pretty tissue paper sticking out of the top.

She asked The Stranger, “It’s for both of us?” “Yes.” “I think I will wait for my husband to get home. This has been so much, I want him to be able to open something that’s a surprise. Do you mind?” The Stranger said with a smile in his voice, “No I don’t mind at all. Feel free to open it whenever you’d like.”

“Good. Thank you for it.” “You’re most welcome. You have done a lot for your family and for the Little Girl’s family and you will continue to do more and more the deeper you grow in your walk with the Lord. The further down the road you go in your later years, you will still continue to do much. It will be different than the things you are doing now, but you will be used by the Lord until the day you are taken home to be with Him.”

The woman just looked at him. All of a sudden it’s as if her eyes were opened into another dimension. As she continued looking at The Stranger while he spoke, she realized he had a

glow about him. She realized this was an angel of God.

The Stranger said, “yes, I see that you see who I am. You may tell your husband, but I ask you to not speak of this to anyone else in the town. It would be impossible for me to continue my work.” The woman slowly came over to the chair at the kitchen table and sat down. She said “No, I won’t tell a soul. Other than my husband,” she hastened to add. “Good! Now, how about I help you put these books on the bookshelf?”

Still with a dumbfounded look on her face, she replied, “Oh yes! That would be great!” They went into the living room and set about getting everything on the book shelf. All the bookmarks in little baskets and the highlighters in other baskets. She turned to The Stranger and asked, “Is this why we felt so much peace after the first time you came? Is this why all these things have happened? Because of you?”

The Stranger said “no, it’s because of Jesus. The Lord. He saw your need, He saw the needs of this town and He sent me here to help. The one that had the most open heart was your son.” “Oh, he is such a special boy.” The Stranger said “he is very special both to you *and* to the Lord. He will have an extraordinary life as an evangelist and healer and when he speaks, his words will have power.” The Little Boy’s Mama just stared at the angel, who was glowing while he spoke these words. She brought her hand up to the top of her chest as if trying to prevent it from coming out.

The Stranger said, “Why don’t you go in the kitchen and fix yourself a cup of coffee or tea or something? I have to be going, I’m meeting the townspeople at 3.” She found her voice and said, “yes, yes I’ll do that. Thank you very much.”

The Stranger left and the woman sat down at her kitchen table with a cup of tea. She went over everything in her mind. From when The Stranger first gave the clothes to her son, to when he came over to their house that first night and they all felt such peace. From her husband all of a sudden getting a job in another town, to the children in town stopping the bullying of her son. She realized now, that it was all because of the Lord sending this angel, and that the glory of the angel is the glory that comes from God and so it was God's spirit permeating everything in their lives. She was stunned, how did she know this? She didn't know how she knew, she just knew. She just sat at the table stunned. This is how her husband found her when he came home 2 hours later.

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The Stranger got to the cafe at 2:45. The men and some women were already starting to gather at the cafe. They were sitting at all the tables in the cafe and some had purchased food or drinks. The Stranger smiled, 'that's as it should be' he thought to himself. Everyone supporting each other. When he walked through the door everyone started talking to him at once. He went to the front where the cash register was and asked everyone to please sit down. He told them, "My employer has purchased the land next door to this cafe. He wanted to invest in this town and what better place to do it than where there's food?" Everyone laughed. "So I need to hire townspeople to build an annex. It's going to be an extension of the cafe and it's going to have two extra rooms in it. One set up informally with chairs and tables for relaxing and reading, the other set up for meetings.

I have purchased all the wood, it will be here tomorrow morning at 7. I need to know what each one of you can do. I need to know what your skill set is and in what area. This

man here,” he put his hand on the back of the man he talked to earlier that day, who was standing near him, “is the foreman of the project. Please turn in your resumes to him today by 6 p.m.

Tomorrow at 6 a.m. he will be assigning people to be supervisors and leaders over different divisions. After that, you all will be handling the arrival of the building materials. Why are you ladies here? Do you have construction skills?”

One lady said yes, she drives a forklift, another said she can use saws very well and another lady said she’s helped build the house that she and her husband live in. Her husband was there and he said, “yeah she’s an excellent carpenter.” The Stranger said, “Well, welcome!”

He went on to describe what this Annex was going to look like. The plan is to have several windows, an area for a small lending library with seating, a bathroom set, one for each gender and a small stage for readings or acoustic music. There is going to be free Wi-Fi throughout the whole cafe.

The Stranger said, “I believe that if everyone works hard and works together, that this Annex could be built in a week. That includes the plumbing, the wiring, everything. You have all the skilled labor here.”

Everyone looked at each other. Some raised their eyebrows, and then they thought, yes we can. We can! They all said out loud “yes! We can!”

The meeting lasted a little over an hour, the men all brought up their resumes to the foreman. Some had to go home and type them up, but they were back in time to give them to the foreman. The Stranger looked at his watch and said, “I’ve

got to get going, so I'll see you all tomorrow morning, bright and early for material arrival!"

The cafe owner shouted out "Everyone! Everyone!" Everyone stopped and listened to him. "There will be free coffee and scrambled eggs, sausage and toast for the workers at 5:30 a.m. Be here on time!" The townspeople said "Wow! Ok! We'll be here!"

They left the store and went home. The Stranger said, "Here's some money to help you cover the expenses for tomorrow morning's breakfast." The man said, "Oh no sir! Thank you very much, but I've got it covered. This town has been good to me. I've got enough to feed and provide for my family and to send my daughter to college. I'm sure there's enough money to cover breakfast." The Stranger said "Nevertheless, it would bless me greatly if you would allow me to pitch in some money to help cover the cost." The man said "Well since you put it that way, thank you very much I'll accept your offer."

The Stranger handed him an envelope and said, 'I'll see you in the morning.'

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