

Doors to Joy

*Setting the Captive
Free - Emotionally*

Janine Joi



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4-9-18 Surprises Everywhere!

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Surprises Everywhere! 4.9.18 continued from being taught patience.

The Stranger said, "Patience is a wonderful thing for your teacher to teach you! And it's wonderful that you listened and remembered! When you go to scripture school, there will be scriptures for you to remember and I'm sure you'll do very well." "Stranger? Are you coming to our house for dinner tonight?" The Little Boy asked. "Well yes Son I am." "Goody, goody!" He jumped up and down. "Is the Little Girl's Mommy and Daddy coming over too?" "They're coming over for dessert, I believe."

The kids got to the front of the Little Girl's house. She asked, "are you going to come play on the swing set?"

The Little Boy said 'Not right now. Since The Strangers' here tonight, I want to see what's going on at home. Is that okay with you? I don't want to hurt your feelings.' The Little Girl said, "Oh yes! I'll see you for dessert tonight anyway, so we can play on it tomorrow after school." "Okay I'll see you tonight bye!" "Bye."

The Little Boy held The Stranger's hand and it felt so comfortable and so warm and loving. He really liked The Stranger. The Stranger said, "I have a surprise for you." "You do?" "Yes I do. We have to wait till we talk to your parents first though." 'Oh can't you give me a hint?' The Stranger laughed and said, "I already gave you a hint that I have something for you." The little boy looked sullenly down at

the ground and kicked a rock. “Oh, come on little one, it’s not that big a deal that you need to act like you’re spoiled. Are you spoiled?” The Little Boy said, ‘No I’m not.’ “I didn’t think so. Come on, we’re at your house now, let’s go inside and see what’s been going on today.”

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They went inside and the boy smelled something different. He couldn’t put his finger on it but it smelled like his classroom when the windows had been open all morning. His mother said “Close your eyes son,” and she took him by the hand and led him somewhere. The smell got stronger, she said “Open your eyes.” He opened his eyes and he thought he was in someone else’s house. The floor was shiny and it was wood! It didn’t even look like his house. It looked like everything was new. New furniture, new lights, new curtains, new rug, he was bedazzled! His Mama said, “Do you like it?”

“Oh Mama, where did it come from?” “It came from The Stranger.” He looked up at The Stranger and he said, “How come you didn’t tell me?” The Stranger said “surprise!” “Actually, I want to tell you and your parents something together.”

His Mama said, “Come into the living room, that’s where my husband is. You can tell us all in there.” So they went into the living room and The Little Boy sat on the sofa gingerly as if he thought it would break. Then he looked around him and started bouncing on it with his bottom. The adults saw him and laughed. The Stranger sat in the chair across from the sofa where the family was sitting.

“We’re going to put sidewalks in the town but we’re going to

start on your street first. You know that area at the end of your street that's just a big field? We're going to put in a park." His Mama said "We? We who?" "My employer has directed this to happen." His Mama said "ohhh."

The Stranger turned to the little boy and said, "Do you want to know the surprise I have for you?" The Little Boy said "Yes! Please!" "The sidewalks are going to be done when you get home from school tomorrow. It's a special concrete that dries quickly. Your present is on the back porch." His Mama looked quizzically at The Stranger. The Little Boy said, "Mama? Daddy? May I go look?" They both said "Sure son." So he went to the back porch door and flipped on the light. He went out to the back porch and there was a bike! His very own bicycle! It had training wheels on it, but he knew he wouldn't need those for long.

It was blue, and it had silver stripes on it. It had streamers on the handlebars and small saddlebag type baskets on the back. And it had something that he always wanted if he ever got a bike. He dreamed of it, he saw pictures of them in his Daddy's photo albums. Even though nobody else has them and he knew it was *really* old stuff, like old from his mother's day, but he wanted it nonetheless. A banana seat! There was a blue, with silver stripes on the sides, banana seat. He stood there with his mouth open. His parents came out just after he went outside and were standing behind him. They heard no sound out of their son. His mom bent around to look at him, laughed and said "shut your mouth son, before a fly comes in!"

The little boy closed his mouth, turned around and ran over to The Stranger grabbing him around the waist and said "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! How did you know that I wanted a banana seat? How did you know? How did you know that I wanted a blue and silver bike? How did you know?"

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

He ran over to his Mama and his Daddy and hugged them. “Thank you, thank you! May I ride it now? May I ride it now?” His Daddy laughed and said, “Son there’s no sidewalk out front, you’ll have to wait until tomorrow.”

The Little Boy looked crestfallen. It seemed like he was always waiting for something. Then he said, “Okay Daddy.” Because he knew there wasn’t any sense in arguing. There was nothing that could be done about it. Then his Mama said, “I’ll tell you what Son, we will move the furniture out of the way and you can ride it in the living room. The floors are nice and clean and shiny and the bike is brand new and not dirty, so it won’t dirty up the floor. But only this *one time* in your life okay?”

The Little Boy’s face brightened up and he looked up at her. “Thank you!” Tears started to well up in his eyes. She said “Why are you crying Son?” “Because I’ve never had a bike before. And the new clothes I got! And everything’s just...so much stuff is going on!” His Mama went over and sat down on the sofa. He went over to her and she gave him a big hug. “I know Son, it’s wonderful. I also know that it’s hard to digest when so many things happen at once. Even if they’re good. Like all these have been. It’s hard to take it all in. You bring it in and we’ll push everything aside.”

“Yes Mama” He ran outside and got it off the kickstand, opened the screen door, figured out how to prop the door open, then opened the regular door and wheeled it in. When he came in, put the kickstand down and left the bike there, going back to close all the doors.

“Okay Mama, watch Daddy, watch Stranger, watch!” He got

on the bike with the training wheels. It was a little wobbly at first and his Dad went over and steadied the bike for him. He got on and started around the living room. All the adults were laughing because they were happy seeing him happy. The little boy was going around in circles. Then he got to where he was steady on the bike and he asked his Daddy, “will you please take the training wheels off?” His Daddy said, “Are you sure Son?” “Yes Daddy.” So the training wheels came off. “Thank you.” Then he got on the bike. His Dad asked, “Do you want me to steady the bike for you Son?”

“No thank you, I think I can do it on my own now.” So he got up on the bike seat and started off. It was wobbly, the front wheel was wobbling all over the place. He called out, “Daddy, will you help me?” His Dad went over and steadied the bike as The Little Boy got a better feeling for how he needed to balance. He straightened out the wheel and rode it around the living room with his Dad steadying the bike, then without him even knowing, his Dad let go and there he was! Riding a 2 wheeler on his own!

The adults started clapping. His Mama said “Okay everybody, we need to go have some supper. The little girl and her parents are coming over after supper for dessert.” The Stranger looked over the little boy and winked. The little boy winked back.

They went into the kitchen where his Mama took a casserole out of the oven. It sure smells good, thought the Little Boy. She put it on the table, took some green beans off the stove, put butter on it and put them in a bowl on the table. There was also salad. “Mama? Why are there two vegetables?” She said laughingly, “One is a salad, one is a vegetable and one is the main dish.” The Little Boy said “oh,” sounding like he didn’t understand and he did *not* understand.

At supper his Daddy asked him, “Son? What was your day like at school today? The Little Boy told him all about the necklaces, the stars and the new teacher’s assistant. Then he asked his wife, “How was your day honey?” Then he laughed, “I think I can imagine! It was quite surprising to come in here and see the living room like that! It’s lovely!”

She told him what the workers had done when they came. How they had cleaned and then brought all the furniture in and took all the old stuff away. Then she asked him “Honey how was your day?”

He said, “It was interesting,” and began to tell them what happened that day. Apparently the foreman from the other job came to town and spoke with him. The foreman told him that the owner of the business went into partnership with someone else. Someone who is very experienced and wanted to expand the business. They decided they would expand it to the town that he lived in. So before he even started work, he got a promotion! His wife’s mouth dropped open and her eyes got wide.

His Dad went on, “they’re setting me up as the head of the new office in this town. They’re going to build an office and a new house for us! Can you believe it?” His wife gasped. “The foreman said they felt bad that we wouldn’t be moving into the house in the new town, so the new owner said, “it’s only right to build a brand new house in this town”. I told the foreman our house is fine.” His wife said “Oh yes! Our house is *fine!*” Her husband went on, “He would have none of it. Apparently this is something they do with this company. They build houses or give housing to their employees that are foreman and above. So, it looks like we’re going to be staying in this town honey.”

His wife said, “You know honey, I was looking forward to

moving to a new town, meeting new people. I thought it might be better than this town. But since The Stranger has been here and since the kids pulled up the cork, our town has changed. For the better. It's not so ugly to live here anymore. People are getting along now, there's still grumpy people of course, but overall...I'm getting to know my neighbors and our town is changing. So I'm glad we're staying here. And a new house is exciting! Even though I got this brand new living room today, I know that the little girl and her parents will be moving in here and that's exciting for them. By the way," she said, "where are they, supper is done, they should be here soon."

"That's another thing," said her husband. "They want to hire...well wait, I'll tell everybody when they get over here." So his Mama started clearing the table and asked, "Will you help me Son?" "Yes Mama." He got up and began clearing the table. She put the dishes in the sink after scraping the food off into the trash. The Little Boy got everything off the table, the salt and pepper and all that and put it away. He asked "What's for dessert Mama? We never have dessert. Unless it's something special."

She said, "Well it is kind of special. Your Daddy told me what he's going to tell our neighbors, so I made something special. It's a recipe that the Stranger gave me."

"What is it Mama?" "Oh honey, you'll see when I bring it out! Why don't you take your bike out to the back porch and your Daddy and The Stranger will put the living room back together. "Ok Mama."

Just as he came back in and his Daddy put the last trash can in place, there was a knock on the door. "May I answer it Daddy?" "Go ahead Son." He ran to the door and opened it and there was the Little Girl and her parents. "They're

here!” The Little Boy yelled loud enough for everyone to hear. His Mom came to the front door and grabbed the Little Girl’s Mom by the arm and said “Come! Look at this! Look at this!” The two women went into the living room. “Oh my gosh!” Said the little girl’s mother. “Where did all this come from?” “There was a delivery today. They cleaned everything, painted it, brought in new furniture and look! Crown molding!” The Little Girl’s mother stood there, then bent down and felt the floor with her finger. “It’s so shiny!” “I know, isn’t it gorgeous? And they painted the walls and the baseboards, they put new baseboards on. Isn’t it beautiful?” “Yes! It is!” The men had walked into the living room as well and they were all talking about how awesome it looked.

The Little Boy took the Little Girl by the arm and said to her, “Come on, I want to show you something!” He took her over to the back door and said, “I want you to stand out there.” She said, “In the dark?” “Just for a second and I want you to turn to the left”. So she went and stood outside. She looked at him and he said “Close your eyes!” So she closed her eyes and he flipped the light switch on and he said “open your eyes”! She opened her eyes and gasped.

“Oh my gosh!” she exclaimed, “it’s beautiful! How come there’s no training wheels on it?” He said, “There were, but my Mama let me ride it in the living room, they pushed all the furniture out of the way and that’s what I was doing before we had supper. An’ I got so good that my Daddy took the training wheels off, I don’t need them anymore.” “Wow”! she exclaimed. “That was fast!”

They heard his Mama calling for everyone to come into the kitchen for dessert. They ran inside. They all sat down at the table. His Mama had put a tablecloth on the table and it was white with purple flowers and green leaves. His Mama said

they were lilacs. But the Little Boy didn't know what those were.

It was real pretty, he thought. There were purple plates and green cups and silverware. In the middle of the table was this tall white cake. He and the little girl sat down in their chairs next to each other, The Stranger was at his right, then the rest of the people. His Mama said, "There is special news that my husband has and we are celebrating with this cake, it's called a Market Basket cake. Cake and coffee and some vanilla ice cream if anyone would like some. But you might want to taste the cake first." There were oohs and aahs from everyone at the table.

His Daddy said, "Would you like to hear the news before dessert or after dessert?" The woman looked at her husband and he looked at her, she nodded her head and he said "We'd like to hear the news first, before dessert please."

So his Daddy cleared his throat and said, "The foreman from the town where we were moving came over today and talked to me. Apparently the owner merged with someone else and they're opening up an office in this town. They've placed me in charge of the new office. They said they will be building us a brand new house. They said they have lots of plans for this town. They have heard that the town and the people in it have changed. They are eager to expand their business and this is the first town they are going to. So when our new house is built, you folks will be moving into this one. They're going to start work on it tomorrow, along with laying sidewalks on this street. They have a new concrete mix that's quick drying and they have new methods of building houses and buildings. Fabricated, premanufactured, all kinds of things and I guess, from what I understand, they're shipping a lot of parts to the company. I told them about your skills," he looked at the little girl's Daddy, "and they

want you to be a manager overseeing the lumber and hardware supplies.” The man sat there. The Little Boy looked at him, everybody looked at him.

He found his voice and he said “Wow! Are you sure?” The Little Boys Daddy said, “As sure as I’m sitting here. They give houses to their foremen and above in the company. So until our house is built, we can’t move out, so you will have to wait until then to move in here. So, in the meantime, they are going to put you and your family up at a hotel for a week and rebuild your house. In fact, they’re going to rebuild all the houses on the rocky road. So that’s the news. What do you think of it?”

The man just sat there, not saying anything. His wife had tears rolling down her cheeks and the little girl was looking at both of her parents wondering if she should be happy or be sad. She decided she’d be happy. She started clapping her hands. “All of this is good isn’t it Mama? Isn’t it Daddy?” Her Mama said through her tears “yes honey, it’s very good”. Her Daddy said “Yes babydoll, it’s very good. It’s more than good, it’s fantastic! Thank you Lord!” His wife said “Yes, thank you Lord.” The Little Girl said “thank you Daddy Jesus!”

The little boy said “Can we have dessert now?” Everybody laughed, the little girl’s mommy asked, “What kind of cake is it again?”

“It’s called Market Basket cake. It’s two layers of white cake cut to make four layers. In between the first layer is strawberries and whipped cream. The second layer is bananas and whipped cream. The third layer is pineapple and whipped cream, with whipped cream on the top and sides. I’ve heard this is a very good cake, but we will all see how good it is.”

She cut the cake and passed all the slices around.

She poured coffee for the adults and the little boy asked “Mama? Since it’s so special, can she and I have coffee tonight too?” His mom started to shake her head no and he said, “please?” She said “okay, but I’m going to make it.”

She put half coffee and half milk in the cup and gave it to each of them. So everybody had coffee and cake. The little kids felt so adult and everybody ate the cake with gusto. You could hear mmm and other approval noises coming from everyone. “This is so good!” the little girl’s mother exclaimed. Her Daddy said “Yes! It’s excellent!” His Daddy said “honey, this is excellent, too bad we don’t own a bakery!” His wife grinned. The little kids had whipped cream on their cheeks and were scooping it off their plates with their fingers and you could hear the loud smacking noises when they sucked their fingers clean.

The Stranger said, “before I go, I have one more surprise.” He turned to the Little Girl and he said, “it’s for you honey.” “For me?” “Yes, for you. I want you to go to the back porch.” “Here, at *this* house” she asked? “Yes. Go to the back porch and turn to your right.” So everybody went through the living room to the back porch. The Little Boy turned on the light and the little girl opened the door, then the screen door and turned to her right. It was a bicycle! And it looked just like the little boys! With a banana seat and everything! Except hers was pink and purple and white. Her favorite colors! Streamers on the handlebars, a basket on the front and a headlight! The little boy said, how come mine doesn’t have a headlight? And the Stranger said “Oh, but it does!” He went to the front of the bike and pulled it up. It locked into place. “You see, when you’re not using it it turns down and tucks under, when you want to use it, you just pull it up and it turns on!” “Oh!, thank you!” said The Little Boy. “My

pleasure” said the Stranger and he smiled.

“Well folks I’m going to be leaving now. Thank you so much for your hospitality. The dinner was wonderful and the dessert was scrumptious!” The Little Boy’s Mama said, “Thanks to you and your recipe! Since so much is going on in town, will you be back tomorrow?” The Stranger said “Yes I’ll be in and out. I’ll be around town.” The parents of the little girl said “We need to be going to, thank you so much for the wonderful news and the wonderful dessert. Is it ok if we pick up the bike tomorrow?” “Yes, of course,” said the Little Boy’s Daddy. The Little Girl’s Daddy picked her up and they all walked to the door and went outside. Everyone waved goodbye to each other and the Little Boy’s Mama and Daddy closed the door. Going into the kitchen, his Mama said to him, “Honey you go upstairs and take a bath, your Daddy and I are going to clean up.” “Ok Mama. Then I’ll get my pj’s on and you and Daddy will tuck me in?” “Of course we will! We always do! Not everything has changed sweetheart.”

As The Little Boy went upstairs, his Mama followed him and drew a bath, making sure it wasn’t too hot and he had all his favorite toys. Then she went downstairs. The little boy got in the bathtub. She said to her husband “Honey, there’s something here that the Stranger gave us. He said it’s for both of us. It’s in this bag.” She showed him the bag with the pretty tissue paper coming out of the top. “I wanted to have you open it because so much has been happening that I wanted to make sure that you had a surprise as well. I didn’t know that you were meeting with the foreman. But this is a surprise between you and I and I’d like you to open it.” “Do you know what it is? Did the Stranger tell you what it was?” “No he didn’t tell me and I don’t know what it is.” “Let’s wait until our boy is in bed, then let’s take this to our bedroom and open it there.” “That sounds like a good idea

honey.” So they got the rest of the kitchen cleaned up.

They heard the water draining out of the tub just as they were finishing up. They picked up the living room and went upstairs. They kissed the little boy and made sure he said his prayers. The little boy said, “Mama? Daddy? It’s been a pretty exciting day huh?” His parents said “yes go to sleep and get a good night’s rest. We’ll see you in the morning”. “Goodnight Mama, ‘night Daddy.” “Good night son.”

They went to their room. The Little Boy turned over in bed and saw the blue shaft of light coming through his window. He looked at the foot of the bed to see if he could see an outline of an angel wing. He couldn’t. But he felt like there was an angel there and it was very comforting. So he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

In his parents bedroom, both of them sat on the bed with the bag between them. “I wonder what’s in it,” he said. “I don’t know,” his wife whispered back. “Let’s open it and see.”

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