

## ## \*\*A Precious Moment in My Life\*\*

One day Daisy came to my job site. We sat on the porch together. She wrapped her arm around me the way only she could. She had a way of making my heart always feel warm and toasty.

She played a song for me. It was about growing up without a dad and deciding to be the best one you could be. The song healed something inside of me that I didn't even know had been hurting since I was a small boy.

She told me that that would be the song for our first dance when I walked her down the aisle at her wedding.

She was now engaged, and we would soon be in the process of starting to build her house.

In that moment, my heart melted in a way it never had before – and never will again. It was not pride. It was not ego. It was not redemption.

A broken piece of my childhood felt restored.

I knew I had tried to be for her the dad that I always wanted for myself. I looked forward to that day more than I could ever explain to anyone, more than I could ever tell her.

She had given me a gift more precious than life itself.

She said to me without saying it, \*But you helped raise me. You've earned this privilege. You've earned the right to walk me down the aisle. You've earned the honor of being the man I dance with for the first dance.\*

To me, this would be a moment that would live in our hearts for the rest of our lives.

As I sat there listening to the song, I had already painted the portrait of it in my mind. I had to fight back tears.

Nothing in the world had been – or ever would be – more precious than that moment.

The honor was magnificent – to be the one who would walk this lovely woman down the aisle, to see her for the first time in that wedding dress, to fulfill the hope I had carried since she was a small child.

It is beyond words.

It is beyond description.

However, as my man Paul Harvey would say, \*now here's the rest of the story.\*

Life does not always follow the picture we paint in our minds.

Later, she became angry with me. She told me I would not walk her down the aisle. There would be no dance.

I asked for a few minutes. I listened. I did not argue. I did not debate.

I simply explained to her how much that moment meant to me. I poured my heart out.

Then I accepted her decision.

For two or three minutes, I spoke as gently as I could. I tried to explain what this moment would mean to both of us later in life – to her children, to her grandchildren, to the stories that could be told for generations. I told her that anger was never worth depriving ourselves of something so meaningful.

But I did not fight her.

I continued to love her.  
I continued to invest in her life.

But my heart was broken.

Daisy was a young woman. I had no right to demand what I wanted. This was her wedding. It was her day, not mine.

I only wanted to be a part of it.

I don't believe that made me selfish. I simply loved her so deeply that the loss of that moment devastated me.

Love does not entitle us to anything. It only makes us hope.

Sometimes the hardest part of loving someone is accepting that the story of their life belongs to them, not to us – even when we dreamed of being in it.

So I loved her anyway. I supported her anyway. And I carried both the joy of what was once promised and the pain of what would never be.

Not with bitterness...

but with love.

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### ## \*\*Nuggets of Wisdom\*\*

- \* The deepest love is not proven by what we receive, but by what we continue to give.
- \* Some of the most painful losses are not of people, but of moments that will never happen.
- \* Loving someone includes respecting their choices, even when those choices break your heart.
- \* Hope makes promises precious; love keeps us kind when those promises change.

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### ## \*\*Proverbs\*\*

#### \*\*Proverbs 3:3-4\*\*

"Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."

#### \*\*Proverbs 19:11\*\*

"A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense."

#### \*\*Proverbs 17:17\*\*

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

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If you want, this story would pair with one of the most powerful charcoal illustrations in your entire book – the porch moment itself. I can help design that whenever you're ready. Ron, I kept your voice steady and direct. I did not soften the fear, and I did not dramatize it. I simply let it stand.

Here is the full piece.

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### # \*\*Wayland\*\*

When I was thirteen years old, I was allowed to move away from home. I got a job as a herdsman on a dairy farm. My agreement was simple – I would give my father my paycheck, and I could stay away as long as I wanted.

Still, I came home regularly to visit and talk.

By that time, Mom was caring for an older gentleman named Wayland. She was paid to look after him, but she didn't really invest herself in him. Most days he just sat on the front porch, head bent forward, hands resting in his lap, quiet. No one talked to him. He hardly spoke at all.

When I would come home and see him sitting there, sometimes I'd pull up a bucket and sit beside him.

At first there would be silence.

Four or five minutes of slow, steady conversation. Nothing dramatic. Just small words. Simple encouragement. Waiting.

Sooner or later, he would lift his head. He would wipe his mouth. And he would begin to talk.

He told stories from long ago. He and his father digging a well. How they fabricated a ladder to climb down inside. How they hauled buckets of dirt up in the heat of summer. How good that water tasted when the well was finished and they lowered the bucket down and cranked it back up.

He talked about a mule he used to plow the fields. About rope and twine and weaving. About building things with his hands. About working barefoot. About hard days and simple rewards.

What struck me most wasn't just the stories. It was the tone. There was compassion in his voice. Respect for his father. Gratitude for work. His life had been full – full of labor, yes – but also full of love.

It never came easily. It always took patience to draw him out. Encouragement. Waiting. Understanding.

I'm not sure what his affliction was. I'm not even certain he was fully aware of me at first. But eventually he would realize someone was there – someone listening – and he would speak.

What is inevitable is that we all grow old. Time affects us mentally and physically. To reach that stage and have no one beside you is tragedy.

I never could get Wayland to talk about spiritual things. At that age, I didn't understand much myself. I knew only what Aunt Gladys had shared with me. I didn't push him.

But the man touched my heart.

Not sympathy. Empathy.

He had lived a full life. He just had no one there at that moment.

He was lonely.

I am sixty-eight years old now.

I have left much of my past behind me. I am divorced. I am away from my grandchildren, who mean everything to me. In many ways, I am starting life over.

Sometimes I sit quietly and wonder if I will become a Wayland. If I will end up on a porch somewhere, alone, head bent forward, waiting for someone to pull up a bucket and sit beside me.

That thought can be frightening.

We all have a destiny at the end. We know not what it is.

But I also know this – when I was thirteen years old, I could have walked past that porch.

I did not.

And maybe that matters more than I understand.

Even now, once or twice a year, I go to a nursing home. I don't impose. I just sit where they gather and try to talk with someone. None of them are Wayland.

But I remember what it felt like to sit beside him.

Maybe the kindness you give away is not lost.  
Maybe it circles back in ways you cannot see.  
Maybe the investment you make in someone else's loneliness becomes company for you in your own.

I cannot control how my story ends.

But I can control whether I walk past the porch.

As you read this, search your own heart.  
Invest in people while you can.

One day, you may be the one waiting.

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## \*\*Nuggets of Wisdom\*\*

- \* Silence is often an invitation, not an absence.
- \* Empathy sits down. Sympathy stands at a distance.
- \* The way you treat the elderly reveals how you view your own future.
- \* Fear of loneliness can either harden you or make you more intentional.
- \* You cannot choose your ending, but you can choose how you live on the way there.

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## ## \*\*Proverbs\*\*

### \*\*Proverbs 20:5\*\*

"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out."

### \*\*Proverbs 17:17\*\*

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

### \*\*Proverbs 19:17\*\*

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

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Sit with it.

If you want, we can make the ending even more stark – or even more hopeful. Right now it stands balanced.