

Chapter XXV

Together Forever

December 7, 1941 – June 1 – 4, 1949

Initially, the pain caused by the three bullets that had pierced her body was excruciating. One was in her right lung which had collapsed; one was in her abdomen, which was causing some serious internal bleeding; and one in her left thigh, which completely shattered her femur just below her hip. She had some cuts and lacerations on her head from flying glass as the machine gun bullets shattered the windshield of her car. She received additional bruising when her face impacted the steering wheel when the car came to an abrupt stop after running off the road. That's when she blacked out.

The plane that had gunned them down flew on to contribute to the destruction and devastation reeked in Pearl Harbor. The next thing she remembered was two men taking a hold of her and lifting her out of the car and placing her in the backseat of their car. As she leaned against Sandy, she could tell that her daughter was dead. The ghastly sight of the side of Sandy's head was the last thing she remembered until she came to on a gurney being wheeled into the hospital. She heard someone shout, "The girl is dead. These two are still alive but they're both in pretty bad shape. Give them both some morphine!"

The images of people about her were a blur, until she saw Ramona at her side with a syringe of morphine. "What's going on?" Geannie struggled to ask.

"The Japanese are bombing the harbor!" Ramona answered as she rushed alongside Geannie's gurney as she was taken into the hospital.

Geannie blacked out again for a moment. When she opened her eyes again, Ramona was wrapping a bandage around her head. "Where are the kids?"

"They are being taken care of."

"Sandy is dead, isn't she?"

Ramona paused momentarily, "I'm so sorry, Geannie, but yes she is. Austin is right here next to you. The doctor is working to save him. You have three bullets in you and some shrapnel cuts on your head. After they take care of Austin, we're going to have to operate on you to remove them."

Geannie closed her eyes again. Through the muffled confusion, she heard someone say, "We lost the boy."

Moments later someone said, "The woman will have to wait." Something about there being more casualties being brought in than they could handle. "Give her another shot of morphine."

A medic injected her with another dose of morphine. Soon everything went black again. For how long is uncertain. The next thing Geannie was aware of, she was standing beside the bed looking down on her own body. The mass of confusion going on about her was muted. She knew the end must be close.

Then she became aware that she was not alone. Sandy and Austin were there too and so was her

father and Charles Emmett who had come for them. But it wasn't quite her time, her beloved Curly was on his way. She had to hang on long enough to say good bye and tell him that she loved him.

For the next while she was in and out of consciousness, in and out of life as she slipped in and out of her body. That was when she first learned the nature of her spirit. Freed from the mortal limitations of her body she was amazed to be able to soar to distant places in an instant. With Charles Emmett as her guide, she was taken to Curly who had been fighting for his life high above island. She watched as he bailed out of the stricken plane he had been a passenger in and his parachute open.

The next instant, she found herself in her mother's home in Roanoke. The family was seated around the dinner table talking about the scant shreds of news that they had heard over the radio concerning the events of that morning in far away Hawaii.

They lingered for only a moment, long enough for her to say goodbye. She next found herself back in her body. As she drifted in and out of consciousness and the mortal world, there was Ramona tending to her when she could break away from so many others who also needed her attention amid the confusion and chaos in the hospital.

Then from out of nowhere, Curly was at her side. He took her hand and called her name. Geannie opened her eyes and with an attempted smile said, "Flyboy. I knew you would come." She coughed up some more blood and said, "Happy birthaversary."

With hot tears streaming down his face, he squeezed her hand with his trembling hand and bent down to kiss her lips. "Happy birthaversaray sweetheart. Hang in there. Don't leave me now. I don't know what I'll do without you."

"Did Ramona tell you about the kids?" she whispered.

"Yes, she did." he sobbed.

"I'm so sorry, Curly. If only we had left the house a couple of minutes sooner."

"It's not your fault, sweetheart."

"Will you still take us home?" she plead. "I want to be buried next to Charles Emmett and near Daddy. They're here to take the kids and me back with them. I have to go now. I'll be waiting for you someday. Always remember this, you are the one and only love of my life." With the last of the strength she had, she struggled to whisper, "I love you." and she was gone.

During the days that followed, she and the kids accompanied their bodies to their final resting place. Sheffield had made good on his promise. Although unseen, they were never very far way. She was saddened to see Curly's grief as he mourned for her and the children. She wished that she could assure him that she was alright, that they were there. The same with her mother and family when they arrived home.

She was touched by the out pouring of love during the funeral. So many kind things had been said. It

was a fitting send off to the world that they were about to enter. They followed the procession to the cemetery for one final tribute before their bodies were laid to rest in the ground.

After everyone had gone and Walt and Sarah led Sheffield and Marie back to their car, Charles and Charles Emmett, who had been standing back, came forward. Together they watched as the car drove away. A light began to appear as the portal to the world beyond this one opened up. As it did, it grew brighter and and brighter. Geannie, Sandy, and Austin were amazed at what they saw.

The things that had been said about them assured them their lives had definitely been worth living. As sad as it was to leave those who they loved and who loved them, they were excited for what came next. Charles said to them, "Its time to go." He and Charles Emmett led them into the light and the portal closed behind them.

Geannie found herself in the most beautiful surroundings as she and her three children and her father emerged into a whole new world. At first she didn't have a chance to notice the beauty that surrounded her because of the large crowd of people who was there to greet them.

First and foremost was her beloved Grandmother Austin. Next to her was Grandpa Austin. For the first time, she met her sister Carolyn, who died when she was three months old, six years before Geannie was born. Others present included her Uncle Bill and and Aunt Martha, Sarah's parents, and her cousin Billy. She was reunited with Lorraine, who had been a close friend to she and Sarah and became her sister-in-law when she married Stirling. There were also aunts, uncles and cousins who had gone on before as well as other close friends. There were others who she did not know there to greet them who were from generations before her time. How long this reunion lasted is hard to say. She quickly learned that time was not a commodity to be measured.

Following the reunion, they were taken to what looked like a grand cathedral. The well lit main sanctuary was a great dome filled with seats. They were taken to their seats and instructed to wait until their names were called. Geannie watched as people were called forward to one of the twelve tables arranged in semicircle at the front of the chapel. At each table sat a man with a large book.

As each person was called forward, they stood before the table. She couldn't tell what was being said or done, but as each concluded their business, they were shown to one or the other of two doors. Geannie couldn't help but notice the countenances of those around her. Sandy and Austin shown brightly as did others to varying degrees. Others were dim or darkened altogether. It didn't take long to realize that those with the brighter countenances were directed to the door on the right, while the the rest went toward the other. Then it dawned on her what was taking place.

It wasn't much longer until Sandy and then Austin were each called forward. She watched with great interest and strained to hear what was being said, to no avail. Then her name was called. She stood and

made her way forward as Sandy and Austin went through the door on the right.

As she stood before the judgment bar, the man seated on the other side kindly said, "Welcome Geannie. My name is Benjamin." He smiled at her with a face filled with kindness and love. Something told her that he was from a time far past. Yet he looked vibrant, as did everyone she saw. There were no old and no young. Everyone looked to be in the prime of life, even her own children.

"Thank you Benjamin. I'm pleased to meet you."

"I hope your experience here has been pleasant so far. Do you know where you are?"

"Yes. This must be heaven."

"That's how most people refer to it. We call it the Spirit World. Depending on what happens next, you will either be ushered into Paradise or into ... well that other place. But judging from the light that I see radiating from you, I'm pretty sure how this goes. Are you ready?"

"As ready as I'm going to get." Geannie replied.

Benjamin took the next book from the stack beside him and asked. "Do you know what this is?"

"I think so. It's the book of my life."

"Yes." He said as he laid it on the table. "See it has your name right on the cover. Throughout your life, this record has been kept of not only your deeds and actions, but of your thoughts and desires. In a moment, I am going to ask you to place your hand on it. You and I will both see its contents as it plays out before us. Don't worry, no one else will see it. Are you ready?"

"Yes." Geannie said calmly.

"Alright then Geannie. Anytime that you are ready."

She placed her right hand on the first page of the open book and her life as a child began to play out in her mind's eye. As she grew, the vision progressed. Much of what she was about involved Curly. She blushed at the part where they were caught kissing in the church belfry. As embarrassing as that was, she was glad that they were caught because she was afraid that she was about to lose her self control.

When it got to the point where she was dying from the influenza, she learned of her grandmother coming to her when her spirit left her body. She was never aware that she had a choice at that time, to either leave mortality then or return and live out the rest of her life.

She saw their wedding and the birth of her first child. She relived the agony that she went through when she thought that she had lost Curly. She also relived the incident when she was accosted by William Chaney in her home. She watched as he took her clothes at the point of a knife, looking for the moment when she could make her move. Then it came and she kicked the knife out of his hand and desperately wrestled him to the floor. She saw herself running half naked out the door after him as he tried to escape. She had felt so guilty for doing so, but now she could see that there was no shame in what she did.

She watched as her two sons were born and the sadness and grief that came with the loss of Charles Emmett. She saw herself searching for answers as she questioned her beliefs. A search that lasted the rest of her life with no answers.

She watched in horror at how badly she treated Curly when she went through the chemical imbalance that prohibited her from having any more children and the mental illness that she endured because of it.

She was pleased with how she used the talents and gifts that she had been blessed with and finally understood the good that she did for others. One of the last scenes was when they had visited that palace or whatever it was at Laie and how she felt while there. The vision culminated with her recent death. How long it took, she didn't know. It didn't matter. When it was over she opened her eyes and looked at Benjamin. His eyes seemed to pierce into the core of her spirit.

“What do you think?” he asked.

“I think I lived a good life. I have no regrets except for the fact that I never found the answers to my questions. Will I find them here?”

“That depends on which door you go through. Yes, you did live a good life; one of honor and integrity. What do you think your reward here should be, the door on the right or the door on the left?”

“I saw just enough of the bad things of the world, and I suspect that is what lies behind the door on the left. I don't want any part of that. I believe that door on the right holds the answers to what I have been looking for.”

“I assure you Geannie it does. That is door that you are to enter. You will find it to be a wonderful place. Go and rest from the cares of mortality. There is much for you to learn. At the same time there is much more for you to give.”

Geannie looked at the door and then back at Benjamin. “Thank you.” she said. She turned and moved toward the door on the right. On the other side, Sandy, Austin, Charles Emmett and her father were waiting. The world she entered was as glorious as she had ever imagined such a place to be.

Geannie emerged through the door into a park more exquisite than anything she had ever seen. The colors were so rich and vibrant, almost unnatural. As she looked around, everything was so colorful, even the clothes that people were wearing.

“I thought everyone here dressed in white.” she assumed.

“Oh no. That would be boring now wouldn't it.” her father chuckled. “We need to get the three of you some clothes. You see, what you are wearing are the clothes that you were sent to your birth in. Everything that grew naturally on earth is found here. Wool, cotton, even silk. We'll stop off on our way home to get you some new clothes.”

“Home?”

“Yes. Home. Even though we have no need to eat or sleep, we do have a place to call our own. A place to study and meditate and things like that. There is a place waiting for you right close to where I am.”

“Is it one of the mansions that Jesus spoke of?”

“Oh no. That comes much later. You’ll learn all about these things. Its just a cozy little place. I think you’ll be comfortable there.”

“Speaking of Jesus,” Sandy asked, “When do we get to meet him?”

Again Charles chuckled. “I’m afraid that’s another thing that will come later. You see, he’s not here.”

“What do you mean, he’s not here.” Sandy asked with confusion.

“You see, he’s in another sphere of existence. This is the Spirit World. He has a resurrected body of flesh and bones and is in the Celestial Kingdom with Heavenly Father.”

“I see.” Sandy responded, disappointed that she wouldn’t get to meet Jesus just yet.

Charles went on to explain, “Here in the Spirit World we still have to walk by faith as we continue to progress. If we were to meet him, there would be no need for faith now would there. From what I understand, we’ll get to meet him when he returns to the earth and we’re all resurrected.”

“That makes sense to me.” Geannie reasoned. As they left the park and went into the heart of the city, the streets were full of people.

“Just by looking at them,” Charles said, “you’d never know when or where they lived. If you haven’t noticed everyone has varying degrees of light emanating from them.”

“Yes, I have noticed. Charles Emmett seems to have more than most.”

“That’s right, Mother. You see I didn’t live long enough to be dimmed by the world. I never lost any of the light and truth that I was sent to earth with.”

“Light and truth?” Sandy asked.

“Yes.” Charles answered. “You see, light and truth are the core essence of our spirits. It shines forth from our spirits much more easily than it ever could from our bodies. But here again you will learn all about this and so much more. Charles Emmett is the one to teach you. He holds the key to what you seek.”

“That’s why I couldn’t stay with you, Mother. My purpose was to come here and wait for you so I could answer all of the questions that you came up with because of my death. Its all part of a grand and comprehensive plan. Had I lived, you would have never gone searching, therefore you would not recognize it when you find it. And once you find it, it will be available to rest of the family.”

“Wait a minute. I don’t think I understand.”

“You will.”

Once they were settled, Geannie, Sandy, and Austin began their education. One of the first lessons

was the nature of the world in which they now found themselves. They learned that it was actually part of the natural world existing if it were in another dimension. A realm of highly refined spiritual matter which is unseen to natural eyes. The two worlds were separated by a veil, but as needed, the inhabitants of the spirit world were permitted to return to the natural world. In fact, at times individuals were sent into the natural world as guardians, messengers, comforters, or whatever the need might be. Many who possessed the fullness of the gospel were sent to teach those spirits who were imprisoned by darkness. Charles Emmet had been among them himself and was responsible for bringing some into the light.

Geannie found herself being pulled back fairly often by Curly as he dealt with his grief. She would do what she could to comfort him. Just sensing her presence would strengthen him to help him through. Sure, she missed him too, but she saw things from a different perspective. She knew that she really wasn't dead and she was able to look in on him, something he couldn't do. She quickly discovered the ability to go to him in his dreams where anything was possible, even becoming a mermaid. As time progressed, he needed her less and less. After a year had passed, according to his reckoning, he was finally able to let go. She was pleased when he gave away the dress that he had got for her for their birthaversary, it was a big step for him.

From time to time, when he was in dangerous circumstances, Geannie was there as his guardian with the purpose of allowing him to fulfill the rest of his life. That day off Salerno when the Reprisal was hit, she was the one who pushed him through the open hatch to escape the elevator that was hurtling his way. If not, he would have certainly been killed. As it was, he nearly died. She was there and presented him with the same choice that her grandmother had presented her. He chose to stay and his life was spared.

Geannie had been grateful for the way in which Ramona had been a comfort to Curly. She had been a big factor in his healing. When he went to very hospital where she had been transferred to, Geannie wanted so badly for the two of them get together. She saw no need for either one of them to be alone. Beside she couldn't think of any one else that she would rather share her husband with.

She already knew how Ramona felt about Curly and was aware she had been in love with him for a long time. It was Curly who needed the encouragement. Geannie did what she could from a distance to nudge him in the right direction. When they did get married, she was thrilled for them.

Not long after Curly and Ramona were married, Geannie had a joyous reunion with her mother, much like the one that she received when she first arrived. From the perspective that she now had, she thought it unnecessary for the living to grieve so. If they only knew how it was where she was. But then she remembered how she had grieved for Charles Emmett. Death is a part of life and grief is the balm that heals the the heart.

The Spirit World was place of learning. Spacious auditoriums were devoted to education. So many of

the people there did not have the opportunity for an education during their lives. Geannie was fascinated by learning about the actual history of the world, taught by those who were part of it.

They had opportunities to attend lectures on the gospel given by various individuals that she had read about in the Bible. It was clear to Geannie what she had suspected all along, that what she had been taught all of her life was incomplete. The thing that she was most interested in learning was the answer to her questions. Charles Emmett was her teacher and mentor. But there were others who helped along the way. She was introduced early on to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it had been restored to the earth. She and the kids attended their frequent meetings and learned directly from those who had a hand in bringing it forth, including the Prophet Joseph Smith.

She recognized it as what she had been searching for and it felt right. Just as Sheffield and Ramona had to do, she prayed about it and received a confirmation that it was true. Even though it was prevalent in that world, many didn't see it. For them, they were in heaven as they had been taught and didn't see the need to look beyond what they had.

Geannie was taught about the premortal existence but just as in mortality, she did not have any memory of it. Just as mortals must live by faith, so must those in the Spirit World. In her diligence, she began finding answers to her questions. She discovered that she had been so close on most of the insights that she had gained during her life. She also discovered many things that she had no idea of.

She realized that she had crossed paths with it on two occasions during her life. One was when they discovered the Temple in Laie. The other she had forgotten all about. It was one morning during June of 1922 while she was outside tending her flowerbeds when she was approached by two men who appeared to be about her age who identified themselves as missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For whatever reason, they never did call on her again and she eventually misplaced the tract that they had given her and forgot about the brief encounter. Geannie found it ironic that the very missionary who had talked to her that morning so long ago had had a part in leading Curly to what she needed him to find so she could have it too.

When Charles Emmett told her about vicarious baptism, she said, "I understand the necessity for baptism. I even understood the concept of baptism for the dead, for it was one of the questions that I had. But I don't understand why that is the way it is."

Charles Emmett explained, "That is a valid question. The ordinance of baptism is physical in nature, as are all of the ordinances of the gospel. For example, part our test in mortality is for the spirit to overcome the flesh. Since the spirit in combination with the body constitute our eternal soul, the body must be brought into submission to the spirit. Therefore it is the body and not the spirit that is in need of baptism and the other ordinances. Does that make sense?"

"I think so."

“Since you are separated from your body, which now rests in the grave, that isn't possible now is it?”

“No, I suppose not.”

“In the the plan of redemption, God has made all things necessary for salvation available to the living and the dead. Since I died before the age of accountability, baptism wasn't necessary for me. But for you and all you become accountable it is. When the Savior suffered for the sins of the world, he did it vicariously for each and every person who ever lived. It was something that they were not capable of doing themselves, only he could do it.

“So the concept of someone standing in for another by proxy is an integral part of the plan. Since you are no longer capable of being baptized in the physical body, someone else can stand in for you. It is still you who makes the covenant. It is up to you whether or not you accept it, which is the same as choosing to be baptized. Therefore, you enter into the gospel covenant just as if you had been personally baptized. The same is true with the ordinances of the temple. You choose to accept or reject the covenants of the endowment and the sealing ordinances.”

“That makes sense to me now. I hope for the day when someone will do this for me. I really need for your father to find and accept the gospel so I can have it too.”

Geannie came to fully understand everything and accepted it. Now it all depended upon Curly. She prayed for the day that he and Ramona would find it too. She had laid the groundwork for him, but she wondered if he would recognize it when the opportunity was presented.

Then one day, a chain of events was set in motion that would provide that opportunity. She prayed that she might intervene in order to increase the chances that they would understand the sign. Her desire was granted and therefor the night before they received the wedding announcement from Morris Gover, she was permitted to communicate a simple message to them.

It worked. And now there they were in the temple, the place where the mortal realm, the spirit world, and eternity overlap. Geannie, Sandy, and Austin were there to witness the baptisms that were about to be performed in their behalf. They weren't the only ones. Everyone in the Austin and Brason family lines and others who were going to have their baptisms performed, that is those who accepted this gesture in their behalf, were also there.

Geannie was pleased that it was Ramona who would be standing in for her. As Curly helped her down into the water, Geannie came forward to observe. Finally, now that they had it, she could have it too.

As Ramona came up out of the water, she couldn't help but wonder if Geannie had witnessed it. Knowing Geannie, she was sure that she had. Ramona came up out of the water and sat at the fonts edge where Walt and Roger and Jack Brown confirmed her a member of the Church for and in behalf of Geannie.

That was when she felt Geannie's presence and acceptance. She returned the font where in the same manner she was baptized for her Sandy; her own mother, Paloma; her Grandma Erhart; and her great grandmother, Opah.

Next, Norma stepped into the font and she was baptized for her mother and for many of Sheffield's ancestors on his mothers side, as was Janet. Craig was baptized for his father and some more of Sheffield's ancestors. Before leaving the font, Sheffield was baptized for Austin; Ramona's first husband, Oliver North; her second husband and his friend, Thomas Katmuth; Ramona's father Cyrus Erhart; and her grandfather, Marshall Erhart.

By the time the group was done, everyone had the opportunity of being baptized for two hundred fifty of their departed immediate family members and ancestors from both the Brason and Austin families. It had been a great experience, especially for Craig, Norma, Janet, and Edith.

After a busy day at the temple, there was still some afternoon and all evening left. Sheffield, Ramona and the kids and others made their way out to Saltair on the Great Salt Lake. The resort was nothing like it had been in its heyday, but it was for the novelty of swimming in the lake that they came for. The lake has several times the salt content of the ocean, and therefore has greater buoyancy, allowing a person to bob like a cork on the surface of the water. The salt also caked to their bodies, so outdoor showers were available to rinse off with before changing their clothes.

The next morning, Sheffield and Ramona returned to the temple to do two endowment sessions. Just as they had done for themselves the day before, only this time for the dead. In their first session, Sheffield went through for Austin and Ramona went through for Geannie. Through out the session, she felt Geannie's presence quite strongly. No doubt, she was certainly there. For the second session, Sheffield went through for Ramona's father and Ramona for Sandy.

During the afternoon, they took the kids up to Emigration Canyon through which the pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley. A large monument marked the spot where Brigham young uttered those famous words, "This is the place." While there, they had lunch at Ruth's Diner, which was an old trolley car that had been moved there earlier that year. Also at the mouth of the canyon was the Hogel Zoo where they spent the majority of the afternoon. The star attraction at the zoo was Shasta, the one year old liger. Shasta was the first ever liger cub born in United States. She was a cross between an African lion and a Siberian tigress, inheriting the facial features of her father.

Chet Mayfield picked them up at the hotel at six o'clock and drove the Brasons to their home just west of the Capitol Building on Wall Street. It was lovely two story home on a corner lot with a view of the capitol.

As they went into the house, Debra had dinner ready. After greeting their hostess and Molly, they sat down to eat. Over dinner, Sheffield got better acquainted with Chet and his three children, who were close in ages to the Brason children. Besides Molly who was now fifteen, their blended family consisted of his eighteen year old daughter Genevieve, a freshman at the University of Utah, and his sons, sixteen year old Michael and thirteen year old Carey.

An economist, Chet worked for the State of Utah and had filled a number of assignments, including the one that took him to Washington D.C. where he met Debra. Currently he was serving as the chairman of the Governor's Economic Advisory Commission. Since he was financially well off, Debra didn't have to work outside of the home.

Their family seemed to be quite cohesive, as his children treated Debra with respect. His wife had died, leaving him a widower with three children about two years before meeting Debra while living in Washington. As it turned out, their home was in the Cleveland Park area, not far from Ramona's townhouse.

After dinner, the kids entertained themselves and the adults retired to the living room where the conversation covered a number of subjects. One of the topics included how Sheffield had rescued Debra and Molly. She paid tribute to him by saying, "Captain Brason was then, still is and always will be my hero."

"That was good thinking on your part." Chet said. "I'm afraid I'd of blasted them with everything I had and gone on my way."

"We had a report of the ship that it sank the night before." Sheffield continued.

"The one that Molly and I were on." Debra interjected.

"I had a report that said the Germans had a number of prisoners aboard and my intention was to disable the Edelweiss and rescue them and capture the crew before sinking it. Something went wrong and she sank anyway."

Again Debra added, "And that 's when Molly and I went into the sea for the second time. It was quite harrowing. Then a submarine surfaced. I was afraid it was German Uboat but it turned out to be one of ours. They didn't have room to take us aboard but rounded up all the lifeboats and tied us up alongside. Then the ships that the Captain sent arrived and picked us up and took us back to the carrier."

"I had the survivors transferred aboard my ship because we had room to accommodate all of them. I had gone down to see how things were going and that is when I saw a woman and little girl climb over the edge of the elevator."

"We were still wearing the nightgowns that we had worn to bed the night before. They were ripped and torn and soaked with oil. I bet we were a quite a sight. And that is when our hero swooped in. The next thing I knew, he was escorting us to the admirals quarters where he put us up.

"He had his ships' tailor fix us up with some clothes. I still have them. Oh and that red dress. Who

would of thought I could find such a beautiful dress on a warship in the middle of the ocean.” Debra paused, “Just a moment. I'll be right back.”

Chet said, “Debra has told this story so often, I should remember. Just why did you have a woman's dress with you?”

“Well, it was a birthday and anniversary gift for my wife for our twentieth anniversary. I had picked it up in San Diego six months before that. But she was killed before I could give it to her.”

“Debra has told that story too. That part I remember.”

“I didn't know what else do do with it so I hauled it around with me for a year after she died. When I met Debra, I knew what to do with it. Giving it to her was a big step in getting over my wife's death.”

Just then Debra returned wearing the dress and shoes that he had given her.

“So,” Ramona said, “that's the dress. Its much prettier than how you described it, Sheffield.”

“The best part,” Debra said, “is that it still fits.”

“I have an entire chapter in my book about the Edelweiss in which I tell the whole story.”

“You wrote a book?” Debra asked.

“Yeah. It should be out later this summer.”

“Whats the title? I'll have to watch for it.”

“It's 'Reprisal: The Forgotten Carrier'.”

“I've got to have a copy.” Debra determined.

Changing the subject, Chet asked, “So how did you and Ramona meet?”

Ramona answered the question. “We've known each other for a very long time. His wife was my best friend. She went on to tell the story of how Geannie had introduced her to Tom and that he was killed in a midair collision with Sheffield, right up through living in Hawaii and Pearl Harbor. She concluded with being transferred to Washington and nursing Sheffield back to health. “...and here we are today.”

“So are the kids your's, Ramona?” Debra asked.

“Thats another story altogether.” Ramona went on to tell how they came to be their children.

The conversation drifted from that to their conversion story and how they came into the church.

“So,” Chet asked, “what do they have you doing in your ward?”

“Actually its a branch.” Sheffield said. “I teach the older kids in Sunday School.”

“And I'm the second counselor in the Relief Society.” Ramona added.

“Really,” Debra commented. “Thats what I am. Chet here is the first counselor in the stake presidency.”

“Is that right? I'm not very familiar with how a stake works.”

“Much like a district does.” Chet answered. “Only larger. The main differences are that a stake has

wards with bishops, we also have a high priest quorum and a patriarch that a district doesn't."

"We're getting our patriarchal blessings on Friday." Norma boasted. The kids had rejoined their parents by this point.

"Tell me Chet. Are you a convert or a life long member?" Sheffield inquired.

"I was born and raised right here in Salt Lake. Both sets of my grandparents left Nauvoo and crossed the plains with the pioneers. My father's family came here exactly one hundred years ago this year and my mother's family came two years later. So, yes. I was born and raised in the church. While in college, I took two years off and served a mission in the New Zealand. When I came home I finished my degree at the University of Utah where I met my first wife. I went to work for the state right out of college and we started our family. We bought this house in thirty five. I went to D. C. on a four year assignment in forty and a year later my wife died. She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis as a young woman, before I knew her and that is what claimed her life.

"So," he concluded, "we all know what it is like to lose a spouse and find love again, don't we."

By then it had gotten quite late. As they were getting ready to leave, Sheffield invited them to attend their sealing on Friday and explained that Morris was going to be there. They accepted the invitation. Before leaving, both Debra and Molly had a big hug for their hero. Then Chet took them back to the hotel.

The next day Sheffield and Ramona did two more endowment sessions. This was a working vacation and there were a lot of family members who needed their temple work done. Sheffield and Ramona weren't the only ones as everyone in the party did two and sometimes three sessions a day.

On Thursday afternoon Sheffield, Ramona and the kids, along with Stirling, Mary Ann, Edith, and others rode the train up to Lagoon, an amusement park at Farmington, fifteen miles north of Salt Lake City. The main attraction was Lagoon Dipper, a roller coaster built in 1921. The wooden structure measured approximately 690 feet in length including the station and waiting area. It was sixty two feet high at its tallest point with a total track length of 2,598 feet. Norma, who was susceptible to motion sickness, refused to go on it and waited on the ground. For Sheffield it was just like flying a fighter plane. The pull of gravity or the lack of it didn't bother him at all. He probably had more fun than anyone, except maybe for Craig. For him the thrill was Edith holding on to him for dear life.

Another ride that Norma refused to go on was the Captive Aeroplanes, a circular swing that swung around out over the lagoon. She wouldn't go on the Tilt-a-Whirl either. When it came to rides, the carousel was more her speed. One ride that everyone could agree on was Shoot the Chutes, a flat-bottomed boat that slides down a ramp into the lagoon. Everyone enjoyed the Fun House and the games on the midway.

Friday was the last full day of the trip and the most significant. That was the day set aside for the

families to be sealed together. It was also Ramona's forty sixth birthday. But the first order of business for Sheffield's family was an eight o'clock appointment with Elder Eldred G. Smith, the Church Patriarch, at his office in the Church Administration Building located between the Hotel Utah and the Lion House.

President Price had made arrangements for each member of the party over twelve to receive their patriarchal blessings while in Salt Lake. Since patriarchs are only called in stakes, there was not one in the mission. The Church Patriarch served as the patriarch to the church at large. Sheffield and his family were the last of the group to have an appointment with him.

Elder Smith, warmly invited them into his office and explained patriarchal blessings to them. After having met with the others, he already knew a little bit about them. He preferred to get to know more about them after the fact so as not to be influenced in blessing that he pronounced. He began with Janet, and then Norma and Craig.

When he came to Ramona, he identified her lineage with the Tribe of Manasseh. He went on to specify a number of gifts that she had. Among them were the gift of healing, the gift of faith, a gift for singing, and a very unusual one, the gift of youth. Not fully knowing the dynamics of the family, he told her that she had been blessed with the children that had chosen her in the premortal world to be their mother.

The last to receive a blessing was Sheffield. He was told that he had the gift to lead men, a gift that would serve the nation and the church. Additionally, he had the gift of discerning spirits, the gift to heal and be healed, and the gift to command the elements. It was said of him that, "Thou art as Job of Old, a man tested and tried of the Lord and with him you proclaim 'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' That which the Lord has taken from you the Lord has restored unto you again." He went on to declare, "If thou will remain faithful and endure to the end, ye shall have a crown and kingdom with your wives at your side." He was promised him a long life of service until he was called home to rest in peace until the morning of the first resurrection.

After the blessings, Elder Smith took the time to get better acquainted with them. It was then that he himself understood the significance of the things that he had pronounced on them.

From the Administration Building, they walked down the street and entered the temple. After changing into white cloths, they were taken to the one of the large sealing rooms just off the Celestial Room which were reserved that day for the Brasons, the other was reserved for the Austins.

The Austins, accompanied by Roger and Chantelle Rowan and Jack and Renee Brown, were greeted by the temple president, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve, who was to be their sealer. The Brasons were accompanied by Tom and Eve Rowan and Herman and Opal Gibson. Also joining them were the Mayfields along with Wayne and Gail Gover and Morris and Sheila who had driven down from Clarkston to be with Sheffield and Ramona for their special day. The sealer assigned to their

company, who had been delayed momentarily, was ushered into the room. The Brasons recognized the slender, six foot tall man with a narrow face and goatee from photographs they had seen of him. Following the example of the their guests, everyone stood as he entered the room.

He walked to the front of the room and took the center of three seats at the head of the alter. When he was seated, everyone else sat back down. "Good morning." he said. "It's a pleasure to be with you. I am Brother Smith, I will be your sealer today. Yesterday at our meeting of the Brethren here in the temple, Elder Smith told me of the large company of recent converts from Virginia that were here to receive their temple ordinances. I wanted to meet you dedicated saints and be a part of this, so I had myself scheduled to be your sealer today."

No one expected to meet President George Albert Smith, let alone like this. He took the the time to visit with them and get to know them before beginning. Just being in his presence reaffirmed for Sheffield, Ramona, Craig, Norma, and Janet their testimonies that he was the Lord's prophet.

They weren't the only ones in that sealing room. Those who would be blessed by what was about to take place were also there. They held back and watched as Emmett and Ellen were sealed for time and all eternity. Then their three sons, Shenan, Walt, and Sheffield were sealed to them. Then each of them, according to their age were sealed to their wives.

First was Shenan and Emily, were joined together and then their three sons, Danny, Joe, and Delbert, to them. Neither of their daughters, Ruth Ann or Wendalynn were there nor would have any part in it. Next was Walt and Sarah and all four of their children. Last of all, Sheffield and Ramona were sealed together for eternity. It was the best birthday gift she could have had. Then Craig, Norma, and Janet were brought into the room and were sealed to them.

Sheffield and Ramona remained across from each other and Geannie moved to the other end of the alter as Ramona acted in her behalf as she was sealed to Curly, the love of her life for all eternity. Now a bond that not even death could separate had united them as one forever.

Next, Sandy, Austin, and Charles Emmett joined their mother at the alter as their cousins, Sylvia, Tim, and Joe each stood in for them as they were sealed to their parents.

The joy of the occasion was immense, for not only the mortals but also those who were not. After Sheffield and Ramona had exchanged a hug and kiss, Geannie tapped Curly on the shoulder. As he turned around he didn't see any one there, but he knew who it was as she placed her arms around his neck and pressed her lips to his. He instinctively placed his hand to his mouth.

Now she had what she had been looking for for so long. Her longing had been satisfied. Now she was completely free from the restraints that had kept her from progressing any further in the world in which

she now lived. Sheffield and Ramona had come through for her and made it all possible.

In the seven and half years since she had died, her love for Curly had only been made stronger, if that was possible. And Ramona, oh how she loved her too. She had been her best friend. She loved her for the way she had helped Curly through the most difficult time in his life. She was thrilled that they were now together and had their own family. And now Geannie and Ramona had a special connection as they both had an everlasting claim to the wonderful man who they both loved and who loved them.

Not only did Geannie rejoice in the connection that had just been made with Curly and their children, but moments before, she had witnessed the joining of her parents to each other and her three brothers, her sister Carolyn, and herself joined to them, with Sarah as her proxy. Once their work was complete, those from the Spirit World returned to their realm with their countenances shining more brightly.

After Sheffield's family had been completed, those of Emmett and Ellen's grandchildren who were there were each sealed to their companions with their children were brought in and sealed to them. Last of all Tim and Vonda were married as well. Following the sealings for the living, both the Brason and Austins split up into smaller groups and were dispersed among the other sealing rooms in the temple so they could more efficiently perform the sealings for those of their families from past generations.

Once they were done and everyone had changed back into their street cloths they left the temple and congregated on the temple grounds. The Brasons and the Austins and their guests all assembled on the front steps of the temple for a group photograph. Then just the Basons and then just the Austins. Each individual family also had their picture taken on the steps of the temple in front of the large wooden doors.

For the first time, Sheffield and Ramona had a chance to visit with the Govers who had been a big part in the events that lead up that day. Sheffield invited them to join them in the activities planed for the evening. They had to decline, as they had to drive back to Clarkston. But they insisted that they stop by for a day or two when they brought Craig out to Ricks College in the fall. Sheffield and Ramona promised that they would as they bid the Govers goodbye.

The rest of the afternoon was spent exploring downtown Salt Lake City. For them, it was a big city; with twice the population of Roanoke. The Salt Lake Valley, with a population of 270,000, was considerably larger in area and population than the entire Roanoke Valley back home. In fact the population of the Salt Lake Valley was even more than the City of Richmond, the capital of the State of Virginia.

That evening, the Virginians gathered in one of the hotel's banquet halls for dinner, catered by the hotel. It was in celebration of all that had happened that week. It was part wedding reception for Tim and Vonda, part birthday party for Ramona, and part testimony meeting as various members of the party shared

their insights and experiences of the last four days.

On Saturday morning, everyone was anxious to get home. At the airport a different DC-4 and a different crew were waiting on the tarmac to take them home. After loading the passengers and their luggage, the plane took off at seven fifty five a.m.. Adjusting for the two hour time difference the plane landed in Roanoke at five thirty five that afternoon.

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For the story of Geannie and the kids dying refer to Missing Geannie, Part 3, Chapter 39.

The description of the Spirit World is purely conjecture based somewhat on my understanding and should not be taken as how things are. Remember, this is fiction.

Ruth's diner is a real place.

For the story of Debra and Molly and the Edelweiss, see Surviving Geannie, Part 1, Chapter 24 and Part 2, Chapters 25 and 26.

The rides at Lagoon mentioned all existed in 1949 according to "It's About Fun: A History of Lagoon Amusement/Theme Park" By Lynn R. Ara published in 2009 found on pages 65 and 66 at www.lagoonisfun.com/downloads/itsaboutfun.pdf

Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth President of the Church was the president of the Salt Lake Temple from 1945 until 1949.

