

Chapter XVI

Anthony

June 3, 1960 – August 25, 1960

Once again, Ramona celebrated her birthday by traveling. On the morning of the 3rd of June, her fifty seventh birthday, Sheffield and Ramona took off in the Staggerwing and followed the usual Springfield - McCook route and landed in Wayne's pasture that afternoon. Janet and Jerry were there to greet them. Janet was obviously pregnant, being seven months along.

They stayed with Wayne and Gale because Janet and Jerry were in the process of moving and had most everything boxed up. They took enough time out on Friday morning for his graduation, but that afternoon they loaded up everything into one of Wayne's trucks. By evening it was too late to get started unloading, so they too stayed with Wayne and Gale.

On Saturday, they unloaded everything into their new home, a nice three bedroom home about two miles from Wayne and Gale. It was the house where Gale was born and now belonged to one of her brothers. It was located just east of town where the creek crosses the main highway to Richmond. With lots of help, they got everything unloaded and pretty much settled.

On Sunday, Sheffield and Ramona attended the Clarkston Ward with them. After Sunday School they were at the top of the stairs ready to come down, when a little boy, about five years old made his get away from his mother's grasp and made a run for it. Running as fast as he could, he was looking over his shoulder at his mother and not where he was going. He ran smack dab into Janet, bowling her over. He had run into the back of her legs, causing her knees to buckle.

Everyone watched in horror as Janet tumbled down the stairs, piratically head over heels, crashing into the wall when she came to a stop. She took quite a beating in the fall and was in great pain when Ramona reached her a few seconds later. She had a bloody nose and terrible gash on her forehead. Her arms and legs were certain to be bruised as well. Everyone's concern was for her baby. The mother of the guilty culprit was aghast at what had happened.

"Just stay still, Janet." Ramona encouraged her. "Where does it hurt?"

"All over." she groaned

"I know sweetheart. Where does it hurt the most?"

"My hip and abdomen hurt the worst."

"I'm not surprised. I'm concerned that you broke something." Ramona began to gently prod around. "Let me know if this hurts."

Janet tried to muffle a groan as Ramona rolled her off the hip that she landed on. Then she cried out in pain. When she settled down enough to respond, Ramona asked, "Is the pain closer to your hip or more to the inside?"

“Inside.” was all poor Janet could manage to say.

That's when Ramona noticed that the her dress was wet. At first she thought that she must have wet herself. There were several people gathered around helplessly wondering what to do. Among them were Sheffield, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry. Sheffield suggested that they give her a blessing on the spot. Wayne happened to have a vial of oil on his key chain.

While they administered to her, Ramona continued her investigation. That was when she noticed that there was blood mixed in with the damp spot on her dress. Based on what she observed, she deduced that she may have internal injuries that ruptured the amniotic fluid around the baby.

“How long would it take for an ambulance to come clear out here?”

“At least twenty minutes if they hurried.” Wayne responded.

“That's not soon enough, but call for an ambulance. I don't want anyone moving her. It will only make matters worse.”

Ramona turned her attention back to Janet , “I'm not exactly sure what's going on and I hate to tell you this, I think the baby is in danger. Just breathe deep and slow and help will be here soon.”

They tried to make Janet as comfortable as possible without moving her any more than necessary as she lay there at the bottom of the stairs. Worried that she might go into shock, someone rounded up a blanket from their car. Eventually she settled down as she felt only numbness.

The mother of the little boy who had caused the accident was very distraught over the whole thing. She was worried for Janet and her baby. The little boy didn't understand what he had done. Others wanted to help, but there wasn't much anyone could do. Eventually the building cleared out as people went home.

The ambulance arrived about twenty minutes after the call went out. Ramona explained to the attendants that she was a nurse and told them what she had observed and surmised. They carefully moved Janet onto a gurney and loaded her into the ambulance. Ramona got in with her and remained at her side.

“Thanks Mom.” Janet said as the ambulance sped away. “I've lost track of all of the times that you've ridden with me in the back of an ambulance, or taken me to the hospital yourself.”

“We need to find a better way to spend time alone together.” Ramona said.

Janet tried to laugh, but it hurt so she cried instead.

Jerry, Sheffield and Gale followed behind in Jerry's car. The speeding ambulance outran them and got to Logan LDS Hospital ahead of them. When they got there, they found Ramona in the waiting room. “They've taken her to be x rayed.” She explained. Then she confided, “I'm really worried about the baby.”

Jerry was visibility shaken by the whole ordeal. He felt helpless that he wasn't able to do anything for her. He couldn't sit, so he paced back and forth while his parents and his mother-in-law waited for an update.

Finally, after a very long time, a nurse came out and explained the situation, the news was grim.

"When she fell," the nurse said, "she broke her pelvis. The broken bone punctured her uterus and ruptured the amniotic sac. In order to save the baby, they are performing an emergency c-section right now. Even though it's premature, it's the only hope, otherwise the baby wouldn't have a chance to survive at all. That's the worse of it, she's also got a couple of cracked ribs and some cuts and contusions, and she is going to have some bruises from the fall. We'll keep you posted."

The nurse disappeared behind the door, leaving them to internalize what they had just been told. From a medical point of view, Ramona attempted to reassure everyone that premature babies can go on to grow and develop normally, especially as far as long as she was. She didn't express her own concern about the stress that the fall had put on the baby. All there was to do was wait for more information. While waiting, Ramona reminisced about all of the accidents that Janet had had over the years.

Sometime later they saw a man, who they assumed was doctor, approaching them. "I'm Luis Jordan," he introduced himself. "Are you here with Janet Gover?"

"Yes we are." Ramona answered for all of them. "I'm Ramona Brason and this my husband, Sheffield. We're Janet's parents and this is her husband, Jerry Gover and his mother, Gale Gover,"

"I'm the doctor who attended to Janet. I assume that the nurse informed you how serious things were. We had no choice but to take the baby in an attempt to save it. I'm so sorry to tell you that the baby didn't survive."

He paused a moment to let the information sink in. It was hard news to take. A sickening feeling settled into the pit of their stomachs.

Dr. Jordan continued, "The baby sustained serious injury when the pelvis punctured the womb, otherwise it would have survived the fall. He lived for only a few minutes. Had we been able to operate immediately after the fall, he was far enough along that he would have had a better chance of making it."

"So it was a boy?" Jerry asked without looking up from the floor. "How's Janet?"

"She looks pretty ruff. That was nasty fall. Aside from a broken pelvis, there are no other broken bones other than a couple of cracked ribs. She did experience some internal bleeding and lost a good amount of blood. We had to pin her pelvis in place and it will heal." He paused again before continuing. "But, her uterus was so badly damaged that there was no choice but to remove it, otherwise it would have become a mass of scar tissue that would cause serious problems down the road. Consequently, she won't be able to have any more children."

His news left them stunned and in shock. The baby died, Janet would heal but would never have the chance of having another baby.

"How is Janet right now? Can we see her?" Ramona asked.

"She is still sedated. Once she wakes up you can see her."

“Does she know any of this?” Sheffield asked.

“No, I'm afraid she doesn't. Do you want to tell her or should I?”

“Let's do it together.” Ramona concluded.

While they waited for word that Janet was awake, Gale found a public telephone and nickel in purse and called Wayne to tell him what had happened and for him to call the rest of the family. It took a lot more than a nickel when Ramona called Craig with the tragic news. She happened to catch him just before they left for church. He promised to tell Norma.

After a while, Dr. Jordan came back, “She's waking up now. I'm sure she is going to want to know what happened.”

They all followed him into Janet's room. She was awake but still too groggy to be coherent. They all gathered around her, including Dr. Jordan. She shook her head and looked around at all of the grim faces standing over her. It took a moment more for the confusion to leave her own face. Then with Ramona holding her hand, she told her what had happened and how she broke her pelvis in the fall and that she had lost the baby.

Janet broke into tears, so Ramona didn't tell her the rest just yet. She sobbed uncontrollably for several minutes. When she had regained enough composure to speak, she said, “I want to see my baby.”

Ramona looked at the doctor and nodded her head and he left the room.

“What was it?” Janet sobbed.

“It was a little boy.”

A moment later, the doctor returned with the baby's body wrapped in a blanket. Everyone made room as he stepped up close to Janet and unwrapped it so she could see his face, his sweet tiny little face. It brought everyone to tears. Janet instinctively reached for him and took him into her arms and stoked his cheek with her finger.

“I want to see all of him.” she said as she unwrapped him altogether. He had perfect features, just very tiny. Then there was the wound on his abdomen from where he had been cut by the rough edge of the broken bone.

“What were you going to name him?” Sheffield asked.

“We were thinking of naming him Anthony if it was a boy.” Jerry said.

“That's a nice name.” Ramona commented. “Any particular reason?”

“No. we just liked the name.”

During that brief conversation, Janet just kept looking at him, stoking him with her fingers. He was about fourteen inches long and weighed about three pounds. He had eye lashes, eyebrows, and some fine hair on his head. His little fingers and toes had nails. It wasn't hard to imagine what he would have looked

like at full term; much the same only bigger.

“Have you seen enough?” the doctor asked.

“Uh huh.” Janet nodded.

“Would any of the rest of you want to hold him for a moment?”

Jerry took the body and held it for a moment before passing it to his mother. Then Ramona took him and finally Sheffield held him and looked down into his lifeless face. It was painful, but at least he got to do that much. He had missed out on everything with Charles Emmett. When Sheffield was satisfied, he handed him back to the doctor.

“We need to get him to the mortuary now.” he said. “I’m sure you’ll have another opportunity to see him.” Then he left the room with Anthony’s body.

He returned a moment later and said, “We need to tell her the rest. Do you want to do it Misses Brason, or would you rather me tell her.”

“The rest of what?” Janet asked.

“Janet, honey.” Ramona began. “They had to remove your uterus because it was so badly damaged that it couldn’t heal properly. You know what that means, don’t you? You’ll never be able to have another baby.”

Again Janet broke into uncontrollable sobbing. Not only was she grieving for having lost Anthony, she was grieving for the children that she yet hoped to have. It was as if they died with him.

Dr. Jordan left to go about his business and let them grieve and comfort one another. Before leaving them, he again expressed his deepest sympathy.

It wasn’t long before the nurse asked them all to leave so that Janet could get her rest. Rather than loiter in the hospital waiting room, they went over to Morris and Sheila’s house, which wasn’t too far away. Jerry was devastated by their loss. Gale tried to comfort him by assuring him that she knew exactly what they were going through. She told him, “I remember when your sister, Emma, died as if it were yesterday and it’s been going on thirty five years now. She was almost three and a half at the time. That was a little more than ten years before you were born, Jerry.”

Morris added, “I was six at the time and I remember it.”

“If you don’t mind me asking.” Ramona asked, “What happened?”

Gale went onto explain, “She came down with diphtheria. Back then we called it the croup. She was running a fever and had the terrible barking cough and had difficulty breathing. It was particularly difficult for her at night.

“It was in November and we already had snow so travel was difficult anyway. We didn’t have a doctor in town, but we had a couple of women in town who were pretty savvy on home remedies. Aunt Liza,

as everyone in town called her, did everything she could for poor Emma. There was an outbreak going around and several children came down with it. Lord knows why Morris and and Melanie didn't come down with it. I suppose she was just the right the age or something. Aunt Liza was able to cure just about anyone who had it, but not Emma. I guess the good Lord saw fit to call her home. She died about nine days before Thanksgiving. That was nineteen twenty five. About a year before that they came up with a vaccine for it but it wasn't available to us then. Now days you hardly ever hear of anyone coming down with it."

Sheffield also assured Jerry that he too knew what he was going through. Everyone knew the story so he didn't go into it. Of course it didn't take away his pain, but it was comforting to know that others had gone on to survive the experience. His heart went out to Janet, all alone at the hospital.

While they were talking, Wayne came as did most of the rest of their family. The subject turned to talk of burial plans. Jerry decided on a simple graveside service rather than an actual funeral. Wayne offered a plot in the Gover section of the cemetery.

Of course, he'd have to talk it over with Janet.

After a while, Jerry, Gale, Sheffield and Ramona went back to the hospital to see how Janet was doing. She had been resting but was now awake as the sedative had worn off and the nurse allowed them to see her. When asked how she felt, she answered, "I feel like I've been hit by a ton of bricks. I hurt all over." She looked terrible, as if she had been beaten.

Jerry talked to her about the funeral arrangements and she agreed that a graveside service would be best. Ramona reminded her that chances were that she would be in the hospital for several days and wouldn't be able to be there.

That was all the more reason to keep it simple.

After leaving the hospital, they returned to Wayne's house to make further plans. Their bishop came over to help work out the simple details. The timing all depended on how soon the funeral home could have things ready. Sheffield was experienced at funerals by then, but he was glad that someone else was taking care of things and not him.

That evening, several ward members stopped in to express there sympathy and condolences. Among them were Cole and Brenda Archibald, the parents of the little boy who had knocked Janet down the stairs. Brenda was about ten years older than Janet and she and Cole had four children. Cole worked for the forest service in the mountains west of town. Janet had gotten to know Brenda through Relief Society. When they heard later that Janet had lost her baby, they were devastated by the fact that their son was the cause of such a tragedy.

They explained to them that it was an accident and tried to console them and put them at ease. Sounding a little like Walt, Sheffield encouraged them to go see her so they could get everything cleared up

so they could rid themselves of the guilt they were feeling. They agreed to do so the very next day.

On Monday, Sheffield and Ramona, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry drove back into Logan to meet with the funeral director and make the final arrangements. They picked out a small casket and it was arranged with the cemetery for him to be buried in one of the Gover family plots. They could have things ready the next day so the service was scheduled for Wednesday morning at the Clarkston Cemetery with a private family gathering on Tuesday evening at the funeral home.

Their next stop was to see Janet. The bruises that covered her were more pronounced and looked even worse. She was still in a lot of pain and was being medicated to control it. When they came into her room, she was awake.

Jerry told her about the arrangements that had been made. She felt bad that she was confined to the hospital and wouldn't be there for the service. She was consigned to visit the grave when she could come home. While they were there, Dr. Jordan was making his rounds. He told her to expect to be in the hospital for at least ten days or up to two weeks, perhaps even longer.

Ever since word got out, there was an overflowing of love and kindness being shown by the ward and the extended and the Gover and Buttars families. The chores were getting done and there was more than enough food to go around. Anything that needed to be done, got done, whether it be an errand or some task, it didn't matter. At times it was almost overwhelming.

People showed up at the hospital to see Janet with flowers and cards, but more importantly, to just be there. Many of them came while Sheffield and Ramona, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry were there. At times, the nursing staff had to monitor the flow of people going in and out of her room. They wanted to make sure that she got her rest, even if it meant turning away well wishers.

Brenda and Cole came to see her to. They were a little apprehensive, but they knew that it was what they had to. They gathered their courage and drove over to Logan and left their kids with his parents. When they arrived at the hospital, there was someone in with Janet and they had to wait their turn.

When they were able to go in, with tears in her eyes, Brenda rushed past the Govers and the Brasons right to Janet and Jerry. If she hadn't been laying down, Brenda would have thrown her arms around her. The sight of Janet, all bruised up was bad enough without having lost the baby.

Brenda held on to Janet's hand, with Cole standing right beside her she plead, "Oh Janet, were so, so sorry. Can you and Jerry ever forgive us?"

"Look Brenda, it was just an accident." Janet responded. "Accidents always seem to come looking for me. Its like I am carrying around a big bullseye or something."

"But we're responsible for this one." Cole protested.

Brenda went on to explain, "I had just gathered up the kids from the Junior Sunday School and had

picked up Amanda from the nursery so we could go home. Amanda was fussing about something so I turned my attention to her. That's when Brent broke away from me. He's done this before. He will run away as fast as he can, daring me to chase after him. He looks back to just to see my reaction.

"I saw him heading straight for you. I yelled at him to stop but it was too late. I sprang after him and got there just in time to see you tumble down the stairs, I even reached out for you but you were out of reach. All I could do was stand there at the top of the stairs, frozen in my tracks. I saw your mother and everyone rushing after you. By the time I gathered my composure and the kids, the Bishop was directing people away. I went down the back way and found Cole and told him what had happened. Someone said the ambulance was on the way so we went home.

"Then later someone called and told us about your baby. We couldn't just stay home as if nothing had happened, we just had to come and see you."

"Thank you. We appreciate that." Jerry answered for both of them.

For the first time, Cole spoke up. "We're responsible for all of this. None of this wouldn't have happened, it not for Brent. I gave him a good spanking when we got home, but that doesn't do much for you folks."

"Please," Janet pleaded, "don't punish him. He's just an innocent little boy. He didn't do it on purpose."

"He has to learn someday." Cole said sternly.

"I hope he learns from it too." Jerry said, "but we don't want him to bear the guilt."

Changing the subject, Cole said, "We've got liability insurance. I've already contacted our agent and he assured us that our coverage will take care of it. He said that he would contact the hospital and the mortuary and handle everything."

"Thanks Cole." Wayne said. "That will help a lot." Wayne and Gale and Sheffield and Ramona had listened in on the whole exchange without saying anything up to that point.

"It's the least we can do." Cole insisted. "I know we can't undo any of the harm done, but if there is anything we can do, anything at all, just let us know."

Their time was up and a nurse came and ushered them out of the room.

Sheffield and Ramona, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry stayed with her throughout the day. That evening when they went back out to Wayne and Gale's house, Sheffield called home to tell Craig what was going on and all about the details that had been worked out. Craig said that there was an outpouring of love and concern on their end as well.

Tuesday was much the same as the day before. Janet wasn't feeling much better either. Late in the afternoon, she had some surprise visitors that she wasn't expecting. She was alone at the time since it was supper time and Sheffield and Ramona, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry had gone to get something to eat. To her delight, Craig and Edith and Norma and Wade entered her room.

“Hey guys, what are you doing here?” she asked as her face brightened.

“We thought we’d come and cheer you up.” Norma said.

“But how did you get here?”

“This morning Craig was able to go get a last minute discount on some standby seats, so he hopped a plane. Mom and Dad don’t even know we were coming. ”

“You don’t know how happy I am to see you. After all, its been a year and a half.”

“Thats' way too long.” Craig said. “When we heard what happened, we had to come. We're so sorry. How are you doing?”

“I hurt all over, and...” she began sobbing. Craig and Norma put their arms around her and she continued, “It just hurts so much.”

“I feel so bad for you.” Norma said. “Its not fair that these things always have to happen to you.”

“Yeah, its always one thing after another with you.” Craig added.

Just then Sheffield and Ramona, Wayne and Gale, and Jerry came back into Janet's room. They were as surprised as Janet had been to see them.

“When did you get here?” Sheffield asked.

“Just a few minutes ago.” Craig answered.

“Where are the kids?” Ramona asked.

“Ours are with my parents.” Edith answered.

“The Same here.” Wade added.

After another round of greetings, they visited for a moment but then it was time to go to the viewing. They took the late arrivals over to Morris' house so they could freshen up and get ready.

The viewing was held at the mortuary. All of the immediate family on both sides where there plus some of Wayne and Gale's family. The only one missing was Janet. It was an informal affair. Those who wanted to, looked in on the tiny little boy dressed in white. At the hospital, Janet had received all of the attention, but in this setting it was Jerry who was the recipient. Janet had gone through the physical trauma but it was equally difficult on both of them emotionally. In the end, Jerry's grandfather, Martin Harris Gover who was eighty one, offered the family prayer. Then came the tearful moment when the miniature casket was closed. Before going back out to Clarkston, they stopped by to see Janet again. Because there were so many, only four were allowed in at a time. They promised to come see her again after the service.

Most of the same people who had been at the viewing the night before, plus a few ward members, including Cole and Brenda, gathered at the beautiful little cemetery overlooking the area, with the mountains towering above it. Quinn and Bonnie came over from Tremonton. Everyone gathered around the open grave, that Cole Archibald had helped to dig. Bishop Ravsten officiated, Sheffield made some brief remarks,

and the grave was dedicated by Jerry. Afterwards, there was a luncheon at the church hosted by the Relief Society. As promised, that afternoon they went back into Logan to see Janet.

The mortuary had set up a tape recorder to record the service and brought the bulky reel to reel tape machine to the hospital so Janet could listen to it. It wasn't the clearest recording, as it picked up the breeze. She sobbed as she listened, but found comfort in the what her father had said.

Sheffield and Ramona had come out for Jerry's graduation and had planned on returning home on Monday. They hadn't planned on attending the funeral of their grandson who wasn't supposed to be born for another two months.

Ramona couldn't leave Janet there in the hospital. After all, she would be there several more days. It was decided that Sheffield would fly home the next day and Ramona would stay with Morris and Sheila since they lived so close to the hospital. Sheffield had room for four passengers in the Staggerwing so he would take Craig and Edith and Norma and Wade back with him. They said goodbye to Janet and Ramona that evening and went back out to Clarkston so they could get an early start in the morning for the trip home.

As in circumstances like this, everyone went on with life. It was a hard time for Janet and Jerry. She still had several days in the hospital ahead of her. Ramona pretty much stayed with her from morning until evening. From that time on, Janet's bruises began to subside and her ribs and pelvis began to heal. Her body would heal faster than her heart.

They had a lot of time to talk. Ramona told her what it was like going through life wanting to have children and not being able to. Now Janet faced the same prospect. She told her what a joy it was to adopt her and her brother and sister. One day when the time was right, perhaps she and Jerry could adopt as well.

Jerry tried to focus on work, as there was a lot to do on the ranch. It would soon be time to ship the lambs off to market. He went into Logan as often as could to spend time with Janet. On occasion he too stayed with Morris and Sheila. Once the lambs had been shipped, he had more time.

As for Sheffield, he and the kids flew back home the day after the funeral and Craig and Wade each went back to work. Now that Wade had another year of school behind him, he was working full time at the Rowan's ranch. Both Edith and Norma held their little ones just a little closer and for a little longer, grateful to have them, knowing that Janet's arms were empty.

Sheffield was lonely in that big house all by himself but found plenty to keep busy around the place. Tending to the members of the branch seemed to always keep him busy anyway. At the end of the week, Ramona called to talk to him and tell him how Janet was doing.

After ten days in the hospital, Janet finally got to go home. She had only stayed in their home one night before the accident and hadn't completely got settled. Before she came home, Ramona and Gale got everything ready for when she could come home.

Once she did, she still had to stay down to allow her pelvis to heal. Ramona was right there to take care of her. Not only that, she knew just what she needed and what to watch out for if any complications were to develop. Jerry was glad to have her there as well. Eventually Janet could get around with the use of a wheelchair. On her first time to leave the house, she had them take her to the cemetery. Twice a week, Ramona took her into town for therapy. Slowly she was making progress and the bruises had pretty much gone away.

Once each week, Sheffield and Ramona would talk on the telephone. She would tell him about Janet's progress and they would talk about things in general. He told her how on Father's Day the kids had all come over. In addition to Father's day they had celebrated Geoffrey and Teresa's fifth birthdays. A couple of weeks later he told her about going to the Austin/Brason 4th of July celebration. The summer seemed to be passing slowly with them apart.

By the first of August, Janet was able to take her first steps, using crutches. She was anxious to be able to get around and do things for herself again. The only thing that wasn't healing as fast was her aching heart. Each week she got stronger and Ramona began making plans to go home. Janet used her time to write. She wrote about her experience, but mostly she wrote short stories about things in general. It seemed to keep her mind occupied so that Anthony wasn't the only thing on her mind.

At the beginning of the fourth week in August, Sheffield flew out in the Staggerwing and was reunited with Ramona and spent a couple of days. She felt that she could now leave Janet on her own. Dr. Jordan felt that after another three weeks that she would be completely healed, physically. The emotional healing would take much longer.

Ramona was anxious to get home and see the grandchildren and take care of her business that she had neglected. Sheffield and Ramona said goodbye and flew home on Thursday the 25th. That evening when they landed at the Two Star Ranch, the kids and grandkids were waiting for them with dinner on the table. She was particularly glad to see the grandchildren. By that time Edith was about seven months along and Norma waited until Ramona got home to announce that she was expecting in February. For Sheffield and Ramona, The two expected grandchildren helped to ease the loss of Anthony.

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