

## Hidden flowers

There was once a girl we'll call her Sunny. Now as her name suggests she was a warm, bright and bubbly girl, who had a real friendly and courteous nature, Sunny loved everybody and everybody loved her and would wave to her whenever she passed by.

Now Sunny had a passion and that passion was horses. She had a horse of her own, which she called "Sapphire." Sapphire was gentle and friendly too the two of them "just fitted" each other, you could almost say like bookends. They were inseparable.

One day, however, there was a terrible accident. Sapphire for some reason had shied at a shadow, throwing Sunny up into the air on to a fence breaking her back and paralyzing her legs.

Sunny who had been so outgoing was now sullen, sad, silent and angry. Everyone came to see her and tried to cheer her up but Sunny became more and more angry and depressed and withdrew into herself finally not talking to anyone at all.

At a loss as to what to do her parents called in a preacher to see if he could reach Sunny who by now was refusing food and was totally silent. At first there was just a stony silence between Sunny and the preacher but he kept visiting her and speaking of God's love and kindness and how that Sunny was still dear to Him even though she was not seeing it at the time.

As time went on the preacher noticed a change in Sunny and at last she spoke to him saying, "Why did God let this happen to me, and what can I do now I am paralysed?" She went on, "I have prayed to Him ever since this happened and He has never answered me, I think that he has no use for me so why should I believe in Him anyway."

The preacher was silent for a moment then he said to Sunny. "I know that this is hard for you and I know that you were full of life and love before the accident. But sometimes in order to make us great He allows us to go through suffering which at the end reveals our precious gifts to others." Sunny was unmoved and she pouted at the preacher. "How can that be true?" she said angrily. The preacher smiled at her and said, "I will tell you a story that may help explain it." Sunny winced and said under her breath, "this had better be good."

"One day," the preacher began, "the master of the fields went out to look at them. As he walked around he saw nothing but dust and poor grassy places. This saddened him a lot so he asked the field 'what has happened to you, you used to be so pretty with flowers and trees, where are the flowers that I love?' The field replied, "the wind comes and blows all the seeds away, they never have time to grow anymore, that is why I am so dusty and sad now, I have lost my beauty and vibrancy and I too am sad.'

The master went away but he gathered all the birds to him and said to them, 'Go and spread the seeds of my flowers and trees on to the field so it may

have again its beauty and fragrance.’ The birds obeyed and scattered all the seeds on the field as the master had ordered them. Again the master went to look at the field and again the field was dusty and poor none of the flowers had grown at all.

‘What has happened?’ The master asked. The field was angry and replied, ‘The birds came and dropped the seeds but the wind became stronger and blew them all away.’ The master thought for a moment and then abruptly turned away and went to his home. Later he caused a storm to come on the field and during the night a bolt of lightning hit the field right at its heart causing a wide and deep chasm. The field writhed in pain and called out for the master but the master never appeared on that night.

The field writhed in its pain for months and while it writhed and cursed the master the master again sent the birds with all his seeds to scatter them over the broken field. A year later the master went back to the field who by this time was very angry and still writhing long after that lightning bolt hit it. ‘Why did you do this to me?’ the field yelled at the master. ‘So you could heal and grow my flowers.’ The master replied. The field was devastated, ‘well it didn’t work,’ the field cried in anger.

‘Are you sure?’ the master said. You see what the field did not see was that after the lightning bolt there was a split and when the birds dropped the seeds some of them fell in the chasm and there they grew. There were trees that were just now topping the chasm and the birds were nesting in them and spreading seeds all over the field that now had a covering of spring flowers. All the masters especially loved flowers were growing at the bottom of the cliff. ‘I always knew they were there,’ the master said, ‘but you were too busy wailing about the fact that a lightning bolt hurt you. That so consumed you that you could not see what I could see and so you lost them, that is why I am here today, to show you that out of pain great things can be seen and done.

Sunny looked up at the preacher with her eyes full of tears. “What flowers can the master ever see in me?” she wailed. The preacher took her hand and softly said to her, “Sunny, you have always had the flowers of the master, the winds of life came and the lightning bolt of tragedy split your heart in two. Yet while you were consumed with your pain you had forgotten that you always had the especially favourite flowers of the master. Only now they lie within you. When you see them you will be able to show them to others like you used to.”

“What are they then?” Sunny asked, “how can I show them to others in my state?” The preacher stroked her hand, “Sunny,” he said softly; “the flowers that God loves are found in the hidden person of the heart, the gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” (I Peter 3:4). “But what are they?” Sunny asked. “Well,” the preacher replied, “those flowers are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and things like that. You see Sunny; God looks for his favourite flowers and fruit deep within us, just as he did in that field. Sometimes we get hurt like that field, but even then God is looking and sending his birds with the seeds of his precious flowers. And Sunny” he said smiling at her, “you had them flowers before you got hurt, everyone saw them and they loved you for that. So you see you still have them all deep

inside. Everyone hurts with you, but what they really miss are the flowers inside your heart. That is what saddened them, just like the master was sad when the field lost its flowers.”

The preacher smiled and kissed her on the forehead then he went out the door. “She will be all right now,” he told her parents and he left to go home. That night Sunny smiled at those who came to see her. The old Sunny came back. As they left that night Sunny said to them, “do you like the flowers?” The visitors didn’t know what she meant. And Sunny never told them; she silently thanked God for them and vowed that no matter what she would always show the masters favourite flowers to all she met.