

While I was writing ‘Grandpa’s Journey’ at the point where Frank and Brian were sitting in Bert’s restaurant I got stuck. Not just a little stuck, mind you, but really stuck; I had major writers block. In order to add some context to the story and help with character development I wrote the following chapter. I knew as I wrote it that it would not become part of the book so I felt no constraints to keep it simple(the book is written at fifth grade reading level so as to be easy to read) nor to polish it up. Some of my readers have asked about what happens after the camping trip so I thought I’d add this to my web sites. The story line does not on its own need to be expanded, however I had some fun with this and I hope you do too. Oh, and by the bye it is still a work in progress so if you spot an obvious mistake let me know about it. --- Anthony

Frank and Meg

Frank knew he was in over his head the moment his lips touched hers. He’d wished to see Meg again and had expected a warm welcome when he stepped back into Bert’s restaurant but wasn’t prepared for this. Every day for the last week, even though he’d been busy camping with his son’s family at Fish Lake, his thoughts never wandered too far from the restaurant that he and Brian had stopped at on their way through Burns, Oregon. The staff was shorthanded and Frank had convinced his grandson, Brian to stay and help them get through the dinner rush. They worked right alongside Bert the owner, and Meg, a beautiful, middle aged waitress who had made a powerful impression upon Frank. Not since his wife had died did Frank allow himself to feel towards another woman the way he felt towards Meg.

When the dinner rush ended, Frank and Brian said their farewells to Bert and to Meg and she’d hugged him and said in an unusual manner three little words that left him stammering. It wasn’t the words alone that affected him so, but it was the way she’d said, “Enjoy your life” that confused him. For days, Frank had mulled over those parting words and the way Meg whispered them. It wasn’t until late one night, after Brian had turned in, that Frank realized the full import and possibilities of that phrase. Enjoy *your* life. After careful consideration, these were the messages Frank realized lay behind the words. Keep living; take control of your life as long as you are able. Take whatever pleasure you can from life as long as you live.

That night in camp, under a spectacular blanket of stars, Frank laughed out loud the moment he felt struck by this epiphany. Now she was in his arms, her lovely face turned up towards his, returning what had started out as a warm hug with a kiss. He’d opened the door of the restaurant only to see Meg standing right there near the register. The mere sight of her in her uniform had sent shivers down his spine. She looked up and saw who it was and hurried to greet him. Frank had wanted to smile and say something funny but Meg reached for him in a welcoming hug and without thinking about it Frank answered with a warm hug of his own.

“I’m so glad you came back Frank.” She’d said, and the welcome in the words were not lost upon him. When he looked down into her face, suddenly and without warning he knew he must kiss those lips. Slowly he lowered his face to hers watching her eyes as he did. He saw her pupils expand, and a smile radiate from that beautiful mouth.

Her full lips welcomed his, returning his kiss with the sweetest lips he'd experienced in years.

He wanted to explore her mouth, wanted to gently caress her lips with his, but realized they were in a restaurant full of people. Meg must have realized it at the same moment. Smiling mischievously she stepped back.

"I've thought about you for days, wondering if you'd come back and here you are. What you and Brian did for us that night was amazing. I'm afraid I didn't have the presence of mind to thank you properly. I was afraid you might not come back and I'd never have the chance to thank you and to tell you I felt attracted to you. But, now you're here and I can."

"I've thought about you too. What you said puzzled me, 'enjoy your life'. I thought about it for days until I finally understood." He paused and looked out of the window. "I live, therefore I am, therefore I can make choices. I can choose to be happy. Frank grinned sheepishly and shrugged his shoulder and added, "I think."

"Very funny, Frank," Meg chuckled. "Listen, I have to finish up this shift but I'm off in an hour so why don't you have some food and afterwards we can talk."

Frank said hello to Bert and did as Meg suggested. Throughout his meal, a salad followed by a slice of pie, Frank sat and thought about what Meg had said. She felt attracted to him! He watched her as she worked. She seemed to spread happiness to every table she waited on. Occasionally, she would glance his way and whenever their eyes met she'd smile. Frank couldn't remember being both excited and nervous at the same time. He couldn't wait to talk to her.

When her shift was over Meg sat down at the table with Frank and they chatted for some time. Meg asked how the camping trip had been and Frank told her all about it. He asked how things had been at the restaurant and she'd told him about the new dishwasher Bert had bought and of the cooks return from vacation. When they had run out of small talk Frank simply looked across the table at Meg and told her he thought she was beautiful. She smiled and quietly said, "Thank you; you have a peculiar vision."

Frank cleared his throat and started to say something about how since his wife died he hadn't been able to open up. She hushed him and said she understood. She'd felt the pain of loss herself and held back too. She went on to tell him that when she'd realized that Frank and Brian were offering to help them that night, Meg had suddenly felt surprised and delighted. She explained her anguish in not knowing if he would return and her joy in seeing him come through the door.

"Frank," she said, "I sense a strength and a warmth in you that I'm very attracted to. I would like us to get to know each other better?"

"I would like that very much."

"Good, then let's go somewhere else, where we can be alone."

Although this was just what he wanted too, he felt startled. He nodded his head and stammered, "Okay."

Meg explained, "Frank, I've been by myself for so long. It might seem forward to you and things may or may not work out well for us in the long run but that's a risk I'm

willing to take. I think you're amazing and I'd like you to get to know me better and I want to get to know you better."

Frank heard the words but it was what he saw in Meg's beautiful blue eyes that swept him away. He recognized in her eyes a question, saw there her vulnerability and quickly answered, "I want that too."

"Good, let's go home to my place."

As in a daze, Frank allowed Meg to lead him to her house. He really hadn't had time to think about the chain of events that led to this. As they entered her house he started to worry he might not be able to perform very well. He tried to put his concern into words, "Meg, I haven't been with a woman in some time and well, the few times I've tried, ugh, you know with another woman, I mean not my wife..."

"Frank, I'm a little nervous too. Let's just take it easy and see where it goes, okay?"

"Sure."

"Um ... when you walked into the restaurant tonight you surprised me with the most wonderful kiss. Can we please start with another one of those?"

Frank smiled and answered her by drawing her towards him and kissing her. This time he felt no need to cut it short. As he kissed her, he gently caressed her face letting his fingertips explore her face and her throat as his tongue explored her mouth. She responded with her tongue gliding around his and then letting it slide across his teeth. A sharp intake of his breath accompanied by an immediate swelling of his manhood reminded Frank of his desire. He allowed his hand to wander slowly down her back till it cupped her round buttocks. He squeezed gently and her sigh told him that she liked it.

Suddenly, Meg pushed herself away from him. She kept her hands on his chest. A playful smile beamed back at him. "Frank, I know where this is going and I want you too. But, I just got off from work and you've been camping for two weeks. We both need a shower. I need to straighten up a little so why don't you get started. The bathroom is right there" she said indicating a door in the hallway to their left. "Why don't you get some clean clothes out of your camper while I clean up a bit?"

Frank could only agree. Seeing the wisdom in her words he did as she suggested. Even though he'd cleaned up after breaking camp he still had plenty of eastern Oregon dust to wash off. The shower felt wonderful. He'd taken his kit in with him. It contained his razor and other sundries so he took the time to shave. He'd been in the shower some time when he wondered if he was using up all the hot water. He called out to Meg to find out and was surprised to hear her answer from just on the other side of the shower curtain.

"No need to worry. It's a fifty gallon tank and we've got plenty of hot water but scoot over I'm joining you. I'd like to scrub your back."

Meg pushed the shower curtain to one side and stepped into the shower with Frank. When he saw her beautiful body Frank smiled and said, "Wow!"