

CHAPTER 16

Judy and Katy left for Sweden in early July. Judy was just plain excited to be going on an adventure in the world, and helping Katy find her mother was an added bonus. Tommy had left earlier to set up a foundation house, as had the others. By agreement, they had chosen to set up their houses in their native countries. Tommy's was to be the first one James was to visit. Judy, Katy, and James were to meet up in Paris at Pierre's Foundation House in August. Russ was holding down the fort at home, while Cindy and Maggie tried to prepare for the wedding in December.

Brother Francis and Sister Jenny had asked James to keep in touch and he promised to call occasionally on his travels. John was continuing his ministry and trying to keep an eye on his father. James told him not to worry about Dex, figuring his absence would cool Dex's fire.

John, James and the other members of the Aunt Jenny Foundation had discussed extensively how they were going to try to implement James' plan to help those people of the world that seemed deserving of additional divine intervention. James had riled often at the God-like powers he was able to use because of the choices he would have to make. All agreed the final decision to help or heal any individual would have to remain with James.

It was also decided that instead of just lining up customers or those in need of assistance that the foundation house would attempt to help others in need. Mental health programs or crisis intervention programs would be established at each house in order to serve as many as possible. Besides, James thought that this would give them easier access to those people in hospitals and social programs that could use some divine intervention.

James knew it would be hard to choose. He was aware that with God's gift of free will, numerous individuals were suffering needless pain or facing death that God didn't wish to have happen. He also knew that some cases were just results of lifestyles or his Father's will and that he should not interfere. Meeting these people and giving or denying them help was a decision James knew would be difficult. But not using his gift to help anyone would be even more painful.

Tommy had arranged for him to meet two newborns in serious condition on the first night of his visit at a local hospital. Both were on respirators; one had Downs syndrome and the other did not. Neither had really been able to express their free will nor knew what it meant. Both were premature births and both would die without some intervention. The babe without Downs syndrome, however, had decided to be called back to James, Father. He did not know why, he just knew. But the babe with the mental disorder was still free to make a life.

James realized the difficulties the child would expose the families to, but realized if he did nothing, the child could probably die through no fault of His own. The parents, James also knew,

had mixed feelings about the child, worried he would die and worried he would live. It seemed unfair to James to correct the problem in the child with mental problems and not be able to answer the prayers of the parents of the child without problems.

Just as he was turning to go without offering any help, however, a nurse, slight, maybe 25 years old, came in and checked on the babes. She reached in and stroked both of their heads through the incubation bassinets. Both children smiled and James knew that the life, no matter how small, deserved to live and make choices. He also realized that a life's value must be considered on its own merits not the merits of those around it. James stayed and prayed placing his hand on the downs child. The baby smiled as a warm glow engulfed his body. James then placed a blessing on the other child for a painless blessed passing.

James realized that after that experience, more thought and time should be spent in developing criteria as how he should offer his services. Each experience was unique, though, and winging it became his preferred method. James especially liked those simple ones, the repaired leg, the cured cold, and the soothed thoughts over the life and death requests. He was able at one time to be at an accident before the medics arrived and stopped the bleeding of a young woman with child before each was in serious danger. Working with the passerby who extracted the passengers and lent a hand, with no fear for their own possible loss, invigorated James. These, to him, were the true miracles of men and to be included in them was a great thrill.

James had decided to stay no longer than a month at each house. This would enable him to leave before too much attention could be drawn to him and allow him to visit each house twice a year if he so chose. It seemed proper timing, as stories of small acts of healing in the little house started to spread throughout the community.

James was pleased with his first month's work and was looking forward to getting to Paris anyhow. He hadn't heard from Katy or Judy yet because of his schedule, but knew they were well from conversations with his mother. Cindy said it has been more difficult than Katy had thought, but would have news by the time they both reached Pierre in Paris.

John had called James while he was in London. His father had apparently taken John up on his offer to look at the foundation's books. John didn't like it, but promised he would ask James if he would mind. James agreed, hoping that Dex would find nothing wrong and try a conciliatory make up with John. John tried to impress upon James that this was unlikely, but James wanted to try. After the conversation James headed to Paris.

Pierre was ecstatic to see James. He had rarely been out of James sight for thirteen years and was overjoyed to be with him again. Pierre had set up his foundation house in his home village close to Paris, and not too far from his family. James was just as thrilled to see Pierre, but equally as pleased to see Pierre's family. James had stayed with these people on numerous occasions and they treated him as one of their own.

"Mama will have dinner for you in a little while," Pierre said. "She has been on the phone

already for a month with your mother. They have become fast friends and she has taken a new vigor in being in charge of your welfare during your stay here. Papa and Uncle had been working as mad dogs preparing the house for our foundation. All is well and ready to go." They sat outside, sipping wine in the soft air.

"Well, I must thank them. Where are they?" asked James.

"They will be along shortly. How were things in England? How is Tommy?"

"I thought things went pretty good. There was a large learning experience I did not anticipate, but our successes did give me great joy and seemed to help a number of people. I did leave Tommy in a bit of a lurch. Apparently we were not as discreet as we hoped and a number of people were trying for miracle cures as I left. Thankfully no one recognized me as the healer and Tommy was able to deflect the attention."

"It must be difficult, making those decisions," said Pierre solemnly.

"The decisions are still the property of the individual," said James. "I just help those that have decided to continue living or who are recovering from their problems. The ones that need an additional hand to meet their goals."

"I know you have spoken before about this. But, it still must be difficult not to help everyone that is sick or injured," replied Pierre.

"Yes, it is. But each injury or sickness is different and the person themselves may have decided to be sick. Free will is still a gift from my Fathers and must be respected. That is why it is usually much easier to handle a problem brought upon by an accident than illness brought upon by the person."

"Aren't all illnesses and injury and accident?" Asked Pierre.

"More than you know and less than you would believe," replied James.

Pierre looked down the street and began to grin. "Well, enough shop talk now, my friend. It is time to meet the family."

Pierre stood and looked down the small street, lifting James up with him. They both began to here strains of joyous music grow louder and louder. James suddenly realized it was a procession filled with flowers, Pierre's family, and the friends he had met during their previous visits to Pierre's hometown. Pierre's moma was in the lead, arm in arm with his papa. Just as James was getting ready to run to hug them both, they separated and Katy was standing behind them grinning a halo of flowers braided in her hair. Judy was laughing and smiling right behind her.

James rushed into Katy's arms, laughing and crying at the seeming explosion of music, lights and flowers all around him. Suddenly it was a party, right there in the middle of the street. Food came from nowhere. The dancing had already started as James began hugging and kissing mama and papa, Judy and the whole group. Katy finally grabbed James and held him still.

"You still love a party, don't you, big boy?" She laughed.

"Most definitely." James said, holding her hands as tight as she would allow. "Well, I got someone I want you to meet." Katy said.

"Who?" asked James.

"Well, who do you think I went all the way to Europe to find?"

"James, you are so stupid sometimes." Judy piped in, bringing a small woman by the hand up to meet Him.

"You found her?" James said breathlessly.

"Yes. Now straighten up, cause I want you to meet my mother." Said Katy, pulling gently on the hand of the lady Judy had brought forward.

"Momma. This is James. James, Ingrid, my mother." Said Katy.

All within earshot began to cry. James drew himself up and with great joy and as much dignity as he could muster.

"It is a great honor to meet you."

Ingrid took his hand in hers, looked into his eyes, took a small gasp and collapsed.

"James, what did you do?" yelled Judy.

"Nothing." stuttered James. The music stopped and they all gathered around Ingrid. James held her hand as Pierre took her to a chair. In a few minutes Ingrid awoke.

"You're Him." Said Ingrid, wide-eyed.

James turned to Katy, a look of relief on his face. "You didn't tell her, did you?"

"Well, James, it is a little hard. I just met her for the first time in twenty-two years. What was I supposed to do. Yell, 'Hi Mom, I just met God. He and I are getting married'? She would have thought I was nuts."

"Or going to a convent," giggled Judy.

The music and dancing began again as James, Judy and Katy sat down beside Ingrid. "You are Him, aren't you?" asked Ingrid.

"Yes, mother, James is the Son of Jesus." Said Katy.

"Well, blessed be. I had thought I lost you forever. Then you come back to find me to be at your wedding and the bridegroom is the Lord's child Himself. Well, I have a feeling this is going to put a severe cramp in the mother-in-law ability to hassle."

They all laughed. "This is definitely the mother of Katy," said Pierre as they all toasted their health and rejoined the party.

James found out a few more details about Katy by talking with her mother. It turned out her father had died when she was fourteen from a traffic accident. Money had been tight and mother and daughter fought. When she turned sixteen, Katy had left. Her mother had searched for her, but was never able to find her again. She was overjoyed to see Katy again and recognized her as soon as she had opened the door to the apartment she was in. Ingrid had never remarried and was happy to know her daughter had forgiven her for anything she had done.

Pierre's momma had immediately taken Ingrid into the house after the Party to call James' mother. James had hoped to say hi to Cindy, but after an hour of waiting, realized that once again his mother had made another fast friend, so he went to bed.

James walked into the kitchen and saw Pierre with a helpless look upon his face. It was breakfast, but the kitchen was already humming. Being in a groggy state of mind, James was caught before he knew what was coming.

"Don't you think that would be all right James?" asked Katy

"I say if she wants to, she should go ahead," said Pierre's momma. "I don't know, Katy; that's awful generous," said Ingrid.

"James, she said I could go if you went with me," said Judy.

Pierre grabbed something to drink and a piece of bread and slunk out the door. James realized the sinking feeling of being trapped as Momma put a large helping of food in front of him. Katy retrieved a beverage from the counter for him to drink.

"What did you say?" he asked Katy.

"Honestly, James. Pay attention. Mom, your mom, asked my mom to the states to help plan the wedding. Maggie says she'll come and get her, but my mom thinks it's too much to ask. I tried to tell her to go, but she's scared." she glared at her mother.

"I'm not scared, I just don't know any of these people. And it is just a little much," said Ingrid.

"James, I want to go to Africa to see Mobutu next month and mom says I can go if you take Me." interrupted Judy.

"I think she should, James," interrupted Momma. "Mobutu's a good boy. Besides, we would love to show her around France."

James wondered, "Was I here for these conversations?"

He stood up, grabbed his cup and a piece of bread and backed up towards the door.

"If Momma wants to keep an eye on you while your here, I'll take you to Africa with me, Sis. Why don't you have Maggie bring Mom over to meet your mom, Katy? Then maybe they will fly back together after they know each other. Besides, Mom has never seen France and I know she would love to meet Momma." James slid quickly out the back door.

"I knew he might have an idea," said Momma "Then it's settled." Judy squealed with delight as they all began a new round of discussions.

Within a week, James, Pierre, and Poppa had moved into the Foundation house. It allowed James to continue his work and set up new programs to help the people around the area that could be continued in his absence. It also allowed the women a chance to really get the planning started and get to know each other.

Cindy had arrived with Maggie two days after the discussion in the kitchen. It had looked like old home week at the airport. Cindy recognized Momma right off, and Ingrid had become close friends with both. It astonished James how quickly His mother could make a friend. After a day or two of rest, the six of them had gone to Paris for a sightseeing and shopping expedition. Maggie and Momma showed the rest around the town like proud mother hens.

At the end of the week, it was decided that Ingrid would go to Atlanta with Cindy and help prepare the wedding. Katy would return with them to help with a few items and try on a dress or two, while Judy stayed with Momma and James. Katy would return in time to accompany James and Judy to Africa, after which Judy would return with Katy to the states to help prepare for the wedding.

James was ecstatic the plans had been made and heartily endorsed each and every decision. Relieved of distractions, he was able to accelerate his work and meet some of the goals he and Pierre had set.

"What are these reports I keep hearing about in Europe, concerning the Foundation?" Asked Cardinal Michael.

"What reports are those?" asked Brother Francis.

"These articles concerning miracle healings. We aren't endorsing another 'Love' foundation over there, are we?" Asked the Cardinal.

"No, sir." Said Francis "I can assure you of that."

"Well, then why the press coverage? First in England, now in France. I admit it is only small articles, but if the tabloids get hold of them it could be embarrassing for the Church."

I assure you that there are no shenanigans going on in that foundation," Brother Francis said. "It would have to be just a few locals seeking some sort of public attention. If you wish, I will research it some more to confirm this."

"It would ease my mind," replied the Cardinal.

"I'll get right on it then."

As Brother Francis left, the Cardinal made a note to himself to look into the Brother's relationship with the Aunt Jenny Foundation. It seemed to him that the Brother was way too conciliatory.

Dex couldn't find anything wrong with Foundations books. He had looked it over himself. "I told you they were clean, dad," said John.

"It's not the Foundation I'm worried about, son. It's that nigger." "What, in God's name, is so wrong with James?"

"The way he twists you an everybody else around. It just ain't right. There has got to be something wrong with him."

"The way he twists everybody around? He has asked nothing of anyone they haven't been willing to give. What is wrong with that."

"It's just not right, boy. No black man ought to be able to control people like he does. Ain't normal. There has got to be an angle."

"Are you just angry at him because he's black, or just because he's good."

"Ain't nobody that good. You listen to me, boy. Someday your gonna thank me for looking into this. That boy's gonna pop right up and stab you in the back. Mark my word," said Dex. "You're impossible," replied John as he left the room.

Africa had been as big a madhouse as France. Judy had nearly put up a screaming fit when she was to return home with Katy. Mobutu was no help either. It had become fairly obvious to all that Mobutu and Judy really preferred each other's company to the rest of the world.

Brother Francis had called from the States while James was in France. Apparently James' minor miracles were getting some press time and it was bringing unwelcome attention to his works. James and Pierre had agreed to develop some new ways to continue the good works without bringing attention to themselves. They even called John, who had been so good at avoiding reporters, and asked for tips. Apparently it had worked as Sister Genny had called to relate that no new stories had appeared in some time.

After sending Judy back to the States with Katy, Mobutu and James were finally able to get some serious works done. They put into place some of the programs developed in the other countries and were able to initiate some unique ones for Africa.

Ahmed was well prepared by the time James had arrived in Arabia. Having a full three months of preparation and the benefit of constant communication with Tommy, Mobutu, and Pierre, Ahmed had been able to circumvent a lot of the problems the others had encountered. It was here that James was able to make the most progress on his trip. He visited many refugee camps, dispensed water, care and cured various forms of disease. The relative isolation of the foundation house had allowed him to work without fear of being found out and he enjoyed it immensely.

Lu Chan had had some difficulties do to the political climate, but still was far ahead of Tommy and Pierre by the time James arrived. He had also chosen a more isolated home for the foundation house and was able to bring those that needed help to and from James with little interference.

As great as the world tour had been James was looking forward to returning to Atlanta. He was filled with the joy of helping others, but quite tired with the long hours and stress. It was early December before he finally touched down in Atlanta. Lu Chan had accompanied him leaving a small

staff in charge of the house.

He saw Katy first. "James!" she yelled.

James ran to her and swept her up in his arms. "How are you doing, soon-to-be-wife?" Asked James.

"All the better for seeing you," she said, kissing him passionately. Lu Chan coughed.

"Oh, hi Lu Chan," Katy said sheepishly, releasing her grip on James just long enough to give Lu Chan a hug.

"Can you believe that? I get an "Oh, Hi" and you get treated like God's gift to man." Lu Chan teased.

"When you got it, you got it, old man." James teased back. "Lu Chan, James!" shouted a familiar voice.

"When did you guys get in?" asked Lu Chan, noticing Tommy, Ahmed and Pierre. "Yesterday," Tommy said. "Sorry, James, but we fairly ran your poor dad to death picking us up and dropping us off from the airport. Told him we'd pick you up today to save him the trouble. Insisted on it, really. I swear that man will never slow down."

"That's all right. Say, where's Mobutu? I thought he was supposed to arrive yesterday also."

"Well, he did." Katy grinned.

"So, is there something I should know?" asked James, eyebrows raised.

"I do believe, old man, that you have been replaced as the object of Mobutu's heart." Tommy laughed.

"Oh, quit teasing." said Katy. "He finally asked Judy and your Dad, James. They both said yes."

James whooped with joy. "I thought he would never choke it out. When's the date? Did they say?"

"Sometime in June. They figured your Mom needed a break before the next wedding." Said Pierre.

"Probably," said James, sweeping Katy into his arms one more time. "How big is the wedding this time, my dear?"

"Now don't start. Let's get your bags. Your mom's waiting and we have lots to talk about."

Brother Francis and Sister Genny were waiting at the Foundation house when James and the others pulled up. They hurriedly came down the steps to greet James. "Hello, James!" said Sister Genny. "How are you?"

"Yes, Hello James." Said Brother Francis. He was never quite comfortable with the familiar title that he was permitted to use with Jesus' Son.

"What do I owe the honor of your presence this late afternoon?" said James, genuinely happy

to see both of them.

"Well, I don't know if it is good or bad news. I know that you prefer to deal with just us, and well..." Said Brother Francis.

"Cardinal Michael wants to meet you." Said Sister Genny in a rush. She then shrunk back as if she had done something wrong.

James smiled. "And do you know why he needs to see me?"

"No. We don't even know how he found out about you. We have been ever so careful to keep your identity hidden, just as you asked." Brother Francis looked worried.

"I know you have. You are a good friend and things just happen," said James. "We can try to distract him or something," said Sister Genny.

"No, I will meet with him. We have nothing to hide. It's just that I hate to face the problems associated with discovery."

"Thank you," said Brother Francis. "We'll try to arrange it so as few people are there as possible. Could we make it for day after tomorrow?"

"That'll be fine. Now come in to Mom's house. I know food is on and you are hungry. I won't take no for an answer and neither will Katy. Besides, if you try to leave I'll send Mom out to get you, and nobody wants to face her."

"Gracious, No. And thank you for the invitation," said sister Genny, grabbing Brother Francis by the arm and following James and the rest into Cindy's house.

"Mom, we got company!" shouted James.

"James!" shouted Russ from the chair in the front room.

"What's this I hear 'bout company? Oh, Its you!" said Cindy, coming from the kitchen. Ingrid was trailing close behind her.

"James, it's good to see you." Said Ingrid.

"Put the bags by the door, boys," Thomas said. "We'll get James settled in after dinner. Brother Francis, Sister Genny, good to see you. You're staying for dinner? Boys, put up the extra table. Mom we got company."

"Hi, Dad," said James, giving Thomas a big hug.

"I see we got company," Cindy said giving James' cheek a pinch. "You don't have to shout. Ingrid, get some of your coffee for the priest and sister. Katy, go next door and tell Mobutu and Judy that James is here. Let your future sister know there is help needed in the kitchen."

With a few short words and a couple of "looks" from Cindy the room was set up for a feast in but little time. Judy came over directly, dragging Mobuto behind her. James teased and congratulated both of them. Then Judy set about to the kitchen to help prepare dinner.

Cold and hot drinks were passed around the table and everyone began sharing their experiences from the last five months. In what seemed no time at all, great smells wafted from the kitchen and began to make everyone's mouths water. Brother Francis and Sister Genny were in awe

with the conversation and company and felt truly blessed to be included. Soup came first, followed by bread, salad, and fruit. Fried chicken was the main course, with all sorts of fixings. Just as everyone felt their stomachs about to pop, Judy stepped through the doors with two large chocolate pies.

"Enough," protested Brother Francis after his second piece of pie. "We truly have to go. James, I will call you tomorrow with the time for the appointment. Sister Genny, are you ready?"

Sister Genny looked up, wiped off the last remnants of her third piece of pie and said, "Yes, Father." She rose to go, begging off a doggie bag of goodies that Cindy was going to prepare for her.

"We look forward to hearing from you," said James, and showed them both to the front door.