

An Easter Discovery

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Author's Comment:

To begin the Spring 2021 devotional series, I decided to write another short story. As with "Love in the Time of Covid" (<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/1061515>), "An Easter Discovery" is a work of fiction based loosely on a personal experience. I also decided to stay with my main character, Rosemary. I like her, and like me, she has a lot to learn. This story has never been published. May God bless you with the discovery of what your first fruits are.

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An Easter Discovery

“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops.”

(Proverbs 3:9)

It was Easter Sunday afternoon, and the gentle spring sun warmed the shoulders of those gathered to celebrate the risen Christ. The church youth group had sponsored an egg hunt for the younger children. Hundreds of plastic eggs, filled with a variety of candies, lay scattered around the church grounds, high and low and in places seen and unseen.

Rosemary watched as her five-year-old granddaughter Lucy ran from one end of the large, green lawn, looking in every nook and cranny for possible hiding spots. The eggs lying in plain view had been scooped up first; now, only the dedicated searchers remained to scout for the strategically-placed, hard-to-find treasures. Whenever Lucy made a find, she held her trophy above her head and did a short victory dance. The sun reflected off her red hair and bounced an extra radiance into the already festive scene. Following the dance, Lucy threw the egg into her basket, and then rising to her toes, she raced in search of another conquest.

Soon the children drifted off one by one, returning to their families, feeling they'd found all the eggs. Lucy plopped down on the grass at her grandmother's feet. She emptied her basket and marveled at each plastic egg.

“May I open them now?” asked Lucy, her eyes wide and pleading for a nod and a “yes” from her grandmother.

“Of course, Sweetheart,” answered Rosemary.

Lucy's small hands separated the eggs and sorted them into groups by their color. Before opening any of the eggs, Lucy leaned back on her heels, thinking about how to proceed.

Finally, she said, “I'll start with the blue ones first because that is my favorite color.” Then she grinned and looked up. “Mimi, I know your favorite color is blue, too.”

Rosemary nodded. “I've always loved blue.”

Lucy picked up an egg and popped it in half. Her eyes lit up. “It's a chocolate Kiss,” she exclaimed, extending the silver foil-wrapped candy nestled in the palm of her hand for Rosemary to see. “I love chocolate.”

“Me, too,” agreed Rosemary.

Lucy placed the candy to the side and then opened another egg. “Look, Mimi! A Reese's Peanut Butter Cup. They're my favorite!”

“Mine, too,” said her grandmother.

Lucy placed that piece next to the first one. Then she opened a third: her face fell. “Jelly beans.” Her voice was flat. She placed that packet in a separate pile. “I don't like jelly beans.”

“Me, either.” Rosemary crinkled her nose and pursed her lips in disapproval. “They stick to my teeth.”

Lucy continued going through each egg. The chocolates were relegated into one pile while hard candies, taffies, and jelly beans were placed in another.

“Mom!” A voice called from a distance.

Rosemary looked up and saw her son signaling that they were ready to leave.

Rosemary looked down. “Lucy, gather up your eggs and candy; it's time to go.”

Together they walked to the car and buckled themselves in for the ride to the restaurant. While Rosemary talked to her son, Lucy worked silently in the backseat, arranging her candy back into the eggs.

The trio settled themselves into a booth at Sweet Melissa's, their favorite place to eat and where they ate each Sunday after church. Today Sweet Melissa's was offering a special Easter Brunch.

As the server cleared their table, Lucy asked, “Could I have two to-go bags, please?”

Her dad smiled. “I see you are taking home the other half of your sandwich,” he said. “But, what's the other bag for?”

“It's a surprise,” she answered, hiding her mouth behind her hand conspiratorially. “For Mimi.”

When the server brought the bags, Lucy said, “Thank you.”

After her dad paid the check, they returned to their car to take his mom home. Soon, they pulled up in front of Rosemary's house. As her grandmother got out of the car, Lucy rolled down the backseat window. Rosemary leaned in and gave her granddaughter a kiss, but as she was withdrawing her head, Lucy handed her one of the to-go bags.

“I made you some Easter eggs, too, Mimi,” she said. “You can enjoy the candy with your afternoon tea.”

Once inside, Rosemary opened the bag, and sure enough, there lay three Easter eggs – all blue. Her heart warmed at Lucy's thoughtfulness as she placed the eggs next to her teacup. She put on a kettle of water to boil, and then went to change from her Sunday clothes into a comfortable pair of sweats.

After the tea had steeped, Rosemary settled into her favorite chair. She placed the teacup on the table beside her and cradled the eggs in her lap. Her heart warmed once again . . . at what Lucy had shared . . . her favorite color. But the warmth spread deeper when Rosemary opened the eggs. Each one held a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup . . . her favorite candy.

Rosemary sipped her tea and ate her chocolates, each bite melting in her mouth. The eggs and candy were gifts enough . . . and her favorites. More important, they were also Lucy's favorites. Rosemary thought about her own gifts, and what she gave to others and to God. Did she always give her best, her favorite, her all with a generous heart? Or, did she give her leftovers, after she'd taken what she preferred first? The Bible states clearly that we are to give our first fruits.

Rosemary held the warm teacup close to her heart, her mind processing Lucy's actions. When she rounded up coats for a clothing drive, did she usually only include what she hadn't worn or had grown tired of from her closet? When she gave monetary gifts to her church and charities, did she give from her heart or just donate “the usual amount?” How often, thought Rosemary, did she simply give from a convenient heart? She didn't like the answer.

Easter reminds us that God gave us the best He had, the best He would ever have. God gave His only son to die on the cross for all humans who seek Him. Rosemary thanked God for such a sweet and generous granddaughter, but more important, she thanked Him for the gift of His Son and the opportunities to return our first fruits.

The End

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