

THE MISSING PARTS OF MY STORIES

By John F. Hall

One thing that I will do, when I write a new story, is to go back and review a similar story, to see what I failed to cover in that previous story. I call them the missing parts of my stories. I wrote one story about being in Honolulu, Hawaii, but I did not mention how Diamond Head was given that name. I wrote another story about sleeping on beach sand, but I did not mention several things about that beach. I wrote about my future wife, the former Paula Andree Oakley of Golden Pond,



Kentucky. But I did not mention some of the things, that we did, when we were dating. I did not mention our favorite song, a famous song, that I listened to over, and over, and over again. So, in this story, I will focus in on some of those missing parts. November of 1964, was with no doubt or reservation, on my part, a pivotal moment in my life, and the reason that I stayed in Kentucky.

I met a girl, on a dark night, on her grandmother's front porch. Without saying a word, she pushed me off that porch. Then she chewed me out for almost getting her in trouble, because I knocked too long and too loud, on her grandmother's front door. Looking back, to that moment, on that front porch, when Paula put her hands on my chest, she was less than a foot away from my face. I could smell her sweet breath. Her piercing eyes and beautiful face, totally disarmed me. It did not take much of an effort for her to push me, and for me to fall backwards off the porch. A chance few minutes, of two perfect strangers, meeting for the first time, and then, having that turn into a relationship that has lasted more than 61 years, is indeed, a true blessing.

The missing part, when I try to explain how I felt, when I came face to face with Paula, is not that easy to explain. And, how many others, mentioned in that previous story, may have involved divine intervention. The Honor Guard team, the team leader, the waitress, the telephone operator, and Paula's mother, all lead me to that front porch. I believe that Christ is in charge of my life. Making the decision to go to that front porch, and then asking to write to Paula, may have been Christ's plan for me. Christ gives us a free will to accept or reject Him and His Words. Our brief time on this earth, will determine, how we will spend eternity with Christ, or without Christ. Larry Guichard wrote the poem, "Love Never Fails." These are his words: "To love and be loved is a sacred trust in a pure heart that lives without lust. Love is not just for a little while; it lives within hearts that are without guile. Love reaches out to those who are in need; it helps us to understand temptations and greed. Love is not confined to the family alone; it reaches out far beyond our home. Fear not that our love will be rejected. Love is in the lyrics of an inspiring song, that touches heart and soul all day long..." "Without love we could face an evil fate; with love we can overcome both sin and hate. Although love's origins remain a mystery, it continues to guide and shape our history. Even when death is near to our door, love will blossom and endure evermore. Fear is useless, Taught Jesus Christ our Lord — living in His love, we are of one accord."

There is a song that influenced my relationship with Paula, from the beginning. The part that is missing, when I wrote the story, "The Girl From Golden Pond," may be found in the song, "You've Lost That Loving Feeling." The song was written by Phil Spector, Barry Mann, and Cynthia Weil. These are some of their lyrics: "You never close your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips. And there's no tenderness like before in your fingertips. You're trying not to show it, but baby, baby, baby I know it. You've lost that loving feeling, oh, that loving feeling, now it's gone, gone, gone. Now there's no tenderness in your eyes when I reach for you. And girl, you're starting to criticize the little thing I do. It makes me just feel like crying, 'cause baby, something beautiful is dying. Baby, baby, I get down on my knees for you. If you would only love me like you use to do. We had a love, a love a love you don't every day. So don't, don't, don't let it slip away. Bring back that loving feeling, oh that loving feeling. Bring back that loving feeling. Now it's gone it's gone, gone, gone and I can't go on..."

Young people in love may be afraid of losing that I love. I for one, was afraid of losing Paula's love for me. She was the first person that I ever really felt, loved me. The "You've Lost That Loving Feeling" song was released in November of 1964, the same month and the same year that I started dating Paula. That song was one of the most played songs of the 20th century. The Righteous Brothers, and their soulful sound, brings back such awesome memories for me. I had a small transistor radio, that I kept in one of my ammo pouches, when I was a M-60 machine gunner in B Company, 327th Infantry, 101 Airborne Division. I remember listening to that song, as the cargo ship that I was escorting, was steaming under the Golden Gate bridge, in San Francisco, California. Paula gave me a wallet size photograph from her senior year at Trigg County High School. I would look at that photograph, several times a day, as the cargo ship was steaming times a day.

One missing part of the story, that I did not tell, when I was in the orphanage, is why I became so stoic and had a hard heart. There was no love in my life, or in me. My mom was gone. My dad put me in the orphanage when I was seven years old. It was three years before he was able to take me out of that orphanage. Two months prior to that time, a young couple named Voygang, came to the orphanage. The mother wanted to adopt me, to give their son, Johnny, a brother.

For medical reasons, the mother could only have one child. After coming to visit me several times, their son, decided that he wanted me to be his brother. They contacted my dad and told him that they had someone who wanted to adopt me. But my dad said, "no." My dad was ten years old when his dad, John J. Hall, died in the Flu Pandemic of 1918. The last time the Voygang's came to visit me, I was in the infirmary with a very high fever. I was delirious and thought that I was dying. I kept looking at a light, in the hallway, that seemed to be getting brighter and brighter. I thought that Christ was coming for me. They asked if I wanted anything. For personal reasons, I asked for a Bible. I never expected them to give it to me. They wrote on the presentation page: «To John Hall, from his friends Mr. & Mrs. Voygang, and Johnny, April, 1955.» Today, that Bible is coming apart, as age, travel, and use are taking its toll. I keep it on my desk, under the staircase in my foyer. I want it put in my coffin, when I die.

I've written stories about my old Antebellum house on Dyers Hill. The missing part of that story is what I did to the house, that has allowed me to stay in the house, in the twilight of my life. I have a 18 feet by 14 feet deck, on the east side of my house. The covered deck is over two feet above the ground. It is accessible from my bedroom on the first floor. It was not accessible from the ground. My brother-in-law, Bruce Oakley, is disabled and in a wheelchair. So I had a wooden ramp built onto the deck, so that he could enter my house thru the deck. I have a dual, three-step and short ramp at my kitchen door, it goes to my carport. My son, John, built a metal rail on the steps and ramp. It has helped to prevent me from falling, when I come out the kitchen door. I am frail and weak, and 80 years old. Falls kill one out of four people my age.

In the house, I use a stand-up rollator, as I go from room to room. I take a lot of prescription medicine just to stay alive. Sometimes, I will get dizzy. I will sit in the rollator seat when I shave. My son is a Master plumber, and we built a walk-in shower. Recently, I had my son install a 36-inch stainless, vertical, grab bar, in the middle wall of the shower. It is the first thing that I grab, when I walk into the shower. I use the grab bar to steady my balance in the shower. I dry off as much as I can in the shower. I put a towel on the rollator before getting into the shower. I will sit in the rollator, after getting out of the shower, to finish drying off. I do other things to remain useful, as long as I can. I had to give up walking to the second floor. I draft my stories at my kitchen table. I have an island with four stools, in my kitchen. I walk around, and around that island to get in some exercise. I use one hand to touch the island for balance. It's a safe and comfortable place to walk. I hope that these missing parts are helpful. I'm thankful to, Jesus Christ, for every day of my life. I pray that He will bless you, and keep you healthy and safe.

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:

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