

FLOWERS FOR MOM

“To be honest Susan, both mean the world to me.”

Pausing, Kristi lovingly moves a small glass with little yellow flowers, and rearranges the roses on the mantle.

“And let me guess, you can’t decide which is more precious?” Susan asks.

Shaking her head, Kristi chuckles. “You know me too well, Sue. When Darryl gave me the roses, my heart just melted.”

“And the bearer of the dandelions?”

Again, Kristi shakes her head, her laugh betraying the slightest touch of annoyance.

“Well, to be honest, at first, I wanted to strangle him.”

Hi, Tony Baggz here. We’re in the living room at Darryl and Kristi’s home. The Martinsons host a Mother’s Day cookout and most of the neighborhood gang shows up. It’s become a tradition because the guys do all the cooking, serving, and cleanup. It’s a day of rest for mom; the kids love it, and the dads enjoy the camaraderie.

Kristi, her friend Susan, and Rabbi Green’s wife Rachel are talking by the stone fireplace. On the mantle are two dozen red roses in a beautiful Victorian crystal vase next to six dandelions floating in a Scooby Doo jelly glass.

The girls are enjoying the beauty of the flowers as several others amble in. From Kristi’s last statement, I’m curious to hear her story. I don’t know why, but I think it just might be epic.

What do you say we listen in ...?

“You wanted to strangle who” Rachel asks.

“Bobby,” Kristi says, laughter in her voice.

“Your little Bobby ... your four-year-old? ... Why?”

“Well, last evening we went to the Vigil Mass so we’d have time to prepare for today. I wake up this morning and in walks Darryl and the kids carrying two trays with coffee, orange juice, toast and our favorite family breakfast, blueberry pancakes. And this beautiful bouquet of roses.”

“Sounds like the royal treatment.”

“Oh, it was. We had a wonderful breakfast, Peter and Lauren cleaned up the dishes, and Darryl went downstairs to put the roses in the vase. He’s gone a couple of minutes when I hear, ‘*oh no, Bobby what are you doing*’ in his ‘call 911 there’s been a disaster’ voice.”

“I hear a calamity in the making,” Rabbi Josh says, laughing gently.

“Yea, Rabbi. So, I’m putting on my robe and it dawns on me Bobby was missing from breakfast. I hurry downstairs and there’s Bobby, climbing on a chair trying to reach the mantle where Darryl placed the roses. And there’s mud everywhere ... I mean everywhere. He even had mud in his ears.”

“What’d you do?”

“Well, I rushed over to Bobby and he’s holding this jelly glass with six dandelions floating on whatever water he hadn’t spilled on the chair. And he turns to me, his face just beaming ...

“And?”

And with a smile an angel would have to practice for a month to get right, looks at me and says, 'these are for you Mommy, Happy Muhvers day ... I wuv you'."

"Let me guess," Josh says. "You didn't know whether hug him or clobber him?"

"Exactly Rabbi. I mean, he had no idea of the mess he'd caused. Part of me wanted to because I knew how long it would take to clean up his mess. And all the time he's standing there looking up at me."

"... with that angelic smile still plastered on his face, right" chuckles Father Bob.

"Oh yes," Kristi says softly

"And your reaction?" Susan asks

"My heart almost burst."

"Let me guess," the priest says, "that desire to strangle him just sort of ... disappeared?"

"It went poof!" Kristi laughs.

A twinkle lights up Rachel's eye. "And you forgave him for everything, right?"

"Oh yea ... everything."

"So, what happened next?"

"Well Darryl took Bobby upstairs to clean him up, and I put the dandelions up next to the roses. Then, we both proceeded to clean up the mess."

“Where did Bobby get the idea for the flowers?”

“Well,” Darryl says, walking into the room, “I took Bobby with me on Friday when I ordered the roses. He asked why I was buying flowers and I told him Sunday was a very special day for mommy and giving mommy flowers is our way of telling her we love her.”

“Cute.”

“Bobby had this incredibly earnest look on his face, as if he was getting in on this big, important secret.”

“The way we figure it,” Kristi says, laughing softly, “Bobby was in the flower garden in back this morning, and it was muddy from last night’s rain. He must have been crawling around looking for flowers and not being able to pick the larger ones, he pulled some dandelions from the lawn.”

“Anyway, we got everything in order, and finally was able to concentrate on the cookout.”

Looking at the roses, Darryl shakes his head then turns to the priest. “The funny thing was, Father, while Kristi and I were cleaning up the mess, I kept looking at the dandelions and they reminded me of something you once talked about.”

A hint of surprise lights up Father Bob’s face. “And what might that be?”

“Well I was thinking of the story Christ told about the enemy who sowed weeds in a man’s field, and we think of dandelions as weeds. You used the parable in a homily earlier this year. Don’t know why I thought of it at that moment. In the story, the owner of the field ordered his servants not to damage the wheat, letting the weeds coexist. I thought it odd not to eradicate them. I know that’s what I would have done.”

“I remember, Father Bob says, chuckling softly, “nice to know someone was listening.”

“Funny you should say that honey,” Kristi says, looking at Darryl. “Looking at the dandelions it struck me that while we see dandelions as weeds, Bobby sees a treasure. Maybe what we see as weeds, could be something else?”

An impish look lights up the Rabbi’s eyes. “Great minds think alike. It’s something I’ve always thought to be true, Kristi.”

“Thought what, Rabbi?” Susan asks.

“That what appear to us as weeds, might look quite different to God.”

Josh pauses, then continues. “Well, think about it,” he says, “who are the weeds in your life?”

“Weeds ... you mean like, people ...” Susan asks. “... like people who harm you?”

“Well, yea, but more like people who annoy you, who you’d rather avoid.”

“Like...?”

“Like the guy who cuts you off in traffic, the rude girl at the checkout counter, or the coworker constantly making a mess. Elderly people who get in your way or accost you with the same story they’ve told a dozen times, and you have to smile and listen all over again.”

“‘Weeds’ who have two legs” Father Bob says, picking up Josh’s thought. “The elderly, the unborn, kids with Down Syndrome and other debilitating physical conditions, the delinquent teen constantly causing problems, or those living on the margins of society. People we see as ‘weeds’. I think Christ would tell you He doesn’t. That He offered everything for not only the green grass but also the ‘weeds’ in the lawn. And at times, we’re all weeds.”

“They may be the dandelions in the front lawn of your life,” chuckles Josh. “But in the eyes of God, as valuable as you and me.”

Susan and the others nod gently as Father Bob, winks at his friend.

“Well said, Josh, well said.”

“Unless you become like unto these little children you shall not see God, for such as these little ones is the kingdom of Heaven, made.” Words from One who definitely knows.

A little boy picks a small yellow flower and transforms a common weed into a statement of unconditional love. Or tells you with absolute certainty that Santa Claus and his reindeer are coming Christmas Eve. In the eyes of a small child, we see perfect faith, trust, hope, and love; the true path to God.

And one other thing about little ones; they don’t act on prejudice, they simply accept something as beautiful and use it for good. Like a small child with a handful of dandelions on Mother’s Day.

A thief on a cross offered a plea for a simple remembrance, a dandelion you might say. And God rewarded him with a garden in paradise.

Like the Rabbi asked; who are the “weeds in your life? And do you think the Creator made dandelions to teach us a lesson? That what we think of as unattractive, irritating, or useless are important in their own right? And in the sight of their Heavenly Father?

A dandelion is a weed?

Well ... not in the fist of a four-year-old ...

... and not in the heart of God.

Thinkaboutit ... I'm Tony Baggz.

© 2017 Tres Angeli Publishing, LLC