

The Story of Scott and Susan

Our beginning

In September 1974 I was at a church dance in Raleigh NC where I lived as a youth. I had turned 18 just a few months earlier and had just started classes at NCSU (the Wolf Pack). I was recently unattached for the first time in 4 years, having gone steady with a wonderful girl all through high school. The dance was in the gym at the church. I looked across the room, and up on the stage I saw a girl that I didn't recognize. I remember this part like it was yesterday. I was pretty sure that our eyes met and she smiled at me. Her smile made my knees turn to rubber. It took a while to finally catch up with her and introduce myself to her.

I found out that her name was Susan Yeager. She was almost 17. I thought she was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. I'm pretty sure she was the only girl at the dance because I never saw another girl after meeting her. If there is such a thing as love at first sight, this was it. But I don't really think there is. However something magical did happen that night, and it was more than just a physical attraction. It felt more like we were just remembering each other than meeting for the first time. We spent the whole evening together. We held hands and walked around the church a few times and talked and talked. I learned that she lived in Fayetteville, about an hour from where I lived. I did get her phone number and promised to call. When it was time for her to leave I did something that I have only done once in my life. I kissed a girl the night that I met her. It just seemed so right, like we had known each other forever.



That next week I called her. She was so surprised and happy to hear from me. We talked several more times during the week. Now remember, back in those days you had to pay for long distance calls by the minute. That was not fun. The next weekend Susan told her mother that she wanted to go spend the weekend in Raleigh "with her sister Rendy" who was attending school in Raleigh and had an apartment there. She took the bus and we spent the whole weekend together. Well, at least she did spend the nights with her sister. When I took her back to the bus station Sunday night, there was a photo booth so we got pictures in it. I have only a very vague memory of it, but she kept the photographic evidence of it for all these years.

The Story of Scott and Susan



Over the next year, we spent as many weekends together as we could. It had never occurred to me to ask this beautiful girl if she already had a boyfriend, but one day Rendy told me that she did. His name was Johnny. Rendy said she thought she really only liked him for the Mustang that he drove. It's funny now to think of how I just plowed into her life like a bulldozer and never stopped to consider that she might already have a boyfriend. Of course the fact that she let me kiss her the night we met said a lot to me (and she did absolutely let me). In any case, over the next few months I fell deeply in love with her. I loved her as much as my tender little 18 year old heart could possibly love anyone. The next 9 months were magical. I felt like she was my future, she was everything to me and we had plans to get married.

One day Brother Thornton of my Stake Presidency called me to his office and, among other things, asked about serving a mission. I told him that I did not intend to because I was ready to get married. But then, the spirit started working on me. I asked what would happen if I didn't go on a mission. He just said he didn't know. (Very helpful I thought). By the time I got home, I knew what the Lord expected me to do and I was willing to be obedient. I borrowed my mom's car and drove immediately to Fayetteville and asked Susan if she would wait for me. She said that she would. Susan had only been a member of the church for a couple of years. She had joined when she was 14 because her parents had joined, so there were a lot of things about the church that she did not understand very well, and me leaving her to serve a mission was one of those things she didn't understand.

Over the next couple of months Susan started to get scared and feeling like I was abandoning her and rejecting her because she didn't understand. She felt hurt but she never expressed her feelings to me. How I wish I had understood her feelings. I know I could have presented things in a way that she would have understood. She felt I was abandoning her to do church work, but that was not an accurate description of what I was doing. I knew in my heart that I had been called by God to do a work. Who am I to reject a calling from God and what kind of person would I be if I did? In any case, because of that misunderstanding and through a series of circumstances and choices, both good and bad on both of our parts, we went our separate ways. That was my first real heartbreak, and it hurt badly. I honestly thought she just didn't care about me anymore. But though our relationship had unraveled, and I was hurt, I never stopped loving and caring about her. I think I learned something about unconditional love at that time; loving someone with no expectation of anything in return, because I continued to love her while believing she did not care about me. We need experiences in life to develop into the people that our Father in Heaven hopes we will. He lovingly allows us to make mistakes and places people and trials in our way to strengthen and teach us. I believe that this was one of those times for both of us.

The Story of Scott and Susan

Our Heartbreak

I left North Carolina for my mission in Arizona on September 13th, just one year from the magical night we first met at that dance. Susan and I wrote a few letters back and forth during my mission. She was confused and worried that she had made a mistake (yes she had indeed made a mistake) but once again, never expressed her feelings to me. I kept my letters to her pretty shallow because I was a little resentful. Towards the end of my mission I wrote a letter to her telling her that I thought I might have met the girl I was going to marry. When she read that letter she knew that it was finally done. She felt defeated, discouraged and hopeless. She finally quit going to church completely, not really because of me but due to multiple events and circumstances.

In retrospect, oh how I wish that I had been more sensitive, kind and caring. I know that my life was on course as it should be, but it pains me to know now what that letter did to Susan. If only I had known how she was feeling I could have said things in a kinder and more loving and sensitive way. I hate that my lessons have to be learned at the pain and expense of others.

My Marriage

So about this girl I met: While I was on my mission I met a girl in Arizona named Kitty. She was cute and I liked her. She was a sweet and precious child of God and I was very impressed with her. When I got transferred (to my last area of my mission) she wrote to me. I knew that she loved me already though no such words had ever been spoken. I told her that I could not write to her, but she wrote faithfully at least once a week. When my mission was complete and I went to the airport, Kitty was there with her sister Jeannie and her mother. I could tell that she had been crying, but she was trying hard to be brave for me. She gave me a gift. It was a beautiful watch with a dark blue face. She smiled as she gave it to me but I could see that her precious heart was breaking because she didn't believe that I would come back for her. But I had a revelation that day. I knew at that moment that I was going to come back and marry Kitty.

After my mission, I returned to Arizona. It was a little scary for both of us, but after a while, I fell in love with her and she loved me and we were married. I loved her with all of my heart. I adored and cherished her. She was my soulmate, she was everything to me. In fact people that knew us often spoke of how much we seemed to adore each other. I guess there was something in the way we interacted and looked at each other that people could see. She was one of those lucky women that got more beautiful as she grew older. She was a cute teenager, but beautiful at 56. Of course a \$10,000 smile that I paid for sure helped. Our marriage was not perfect, few ever are, but we lived happily ever after for 38 years, until one Wednesday morning at 8:09, I got a call from the Layton Police Department.



The Story of Scott and Susan

I was told that Kitty had been involved in a car accident and had been taken by a Life Flight helicopter to the University of Utah hospital. Now, I know that no one gets a joy ride in one of those unless things are extremely critical. I immediately left work and drove the 35 or so minutes to the hospital. By the time I arrived at the hospital, I felt like I knew the outcome. She was gone.

At the front desk, they told me she was still in Emergency. At the Emergency room desk when I identified myself, the girl said, "Oh, let me get the social worker." Now can I just say that is not the right thing to say to someone in that situation?

When the social worker showed up, a delightful lady in her middle 60s named Drue, she told me that Kitty was in CT Scan. For a moment I had a glimmer of hope that maybe my promptings had been wrong. But she kept saying, "I'm so sorry." When we got to the Surgical Intensive Care Unit I could not go in immediately to see her. The head nurse explained that Kitty had suffered a severe brain injury, damaging the brain stem and that there was no possibility of recovery. She said that she would never regain consciousness and that she would most definitely die from the injuries. She was not insensitive, but very concise and direct.

The only comfort I could find is that one of her well known wishes had been granted. Most everyone who knew her had heard her say that she wanted to die quickly and painlessly doing something she loved. So it came to pass. As far as I can tell, (and choose to believe) she never saw it coming and was most likely knocked unconscious immediately. In addition, she was on her way to go hiking. I believe that Kitty was so faithful that when the time came, God simply could not withhold that blessing from her.

My Death

The next day, July 21st 2016, I died, along with my wife of 38 years. My heart was more than broken, it was shattered to pieces. The pain was indescribable. I have never experienced anything like it before or since. The only thing I wanted was to die then and there. My children tried to comfort me and tell me that they still needed me, but the pain was so intense that all I wanted was to go be with Kitty. My children all had spouses and lives of their own, but I had lost everything. I had been by her side for 38 years. There was nothing about my life that was not about her. What was the point of living without her? Why would my heart not just stop and let me go?

I was completely destroyed as I saw my situation. Strangely, even from the very beginning I never felt any anger or resentment. I was never angry with God. I never felt the need to ask why. For some reason the only thing I felt, other than the intense pain was a feeling that God was very much aware of me and cared infinitely about me. I felt his love more deeply than I ever had before. It seems that God had bestowed special blessings upon me, including acceptance and forgiveness, which, to my shame, is very contrary to my nature. I was not able to feel anger or bitterness. It was as if the ability to feel those emotions had been temporarily turned off.

Over the next month, I received lots of help and support from friends and family. I cried in ways I didn't even know were possible. I cried from the very core of my soul. There were times when I thought I would die because I couldn't even breath and then often times I wished I would. Now, I never contemplated suicide even for a minute. I have too much understanding to think that would solve any problems that I had. However, I do remember one day while riding my bike over to the cemetery, my chest started to hurt (it was probably just from breathing so hard). I said to myself, "I hope I have a heart attack and die." I pushed as hard as I could, till my legs just would not go any more, but I got to the cemetery still alive, obviously, and lay on the ground beside the grave and thought, "Dang it!"

The Story of Scott and Susan

Over the years that I was living my fairytale life with my wife and precious children, I never forgot Susan. I always remembered her with love and fondness. I occasionally thought of her and wondered how she was and what she was doing. I hoped that she had a good life with a kind and loving husband. I hoped that she was well taken care of and deeply loved. I never tried to contact her or make any attempt to find her because I was happily married and I was pretty sure those feelings I had for her should be left undisturbed in the past. Lest there should be any misunderstanding let me make it very clear that during those 38 years I was completely in love with my wife, and true and faithful to her, as it should be. However, when ever a thought of Susan would cross my mind I still felt love and concern. It was also a fact that whenever I thought of losing Susan all those years ago, I would relive just a bit of that pain. It never completely went away.

Because I never really understood why we broke up I remember feeling a bit of resentment towards Susan for a while. But after I was married, those feelings went away completely. I was very content and happy in my marriage and I wished nothing less for Susan. I imagined that she was cherished and adored the way I cherished and adored my wife. I imagined that her husband was successful and cared for her and treated her with the utmost respect. I imagined that she was living her fairytale life parallel to mine. My image of Susan was a woman of elegance and grace. She was intelligent and clever and talented. I knew that she could do or become anything she wanted. Unfortunately, we sometimes believe the negative things we are told about ourselves and as a result spend a lifetime living below our privileges. And so it was with Susan.

My Quest

A month or so after Kitty died, a thought of Susan suddenly came to my mind. One day I just had the thought that it would be ok now to try to find Susan, just to see how her life had been. I was excited at the thought. I had had no contact with her whatsoever for over 40 years. I honestly was not sure she was even alive, but somehow I felt in my heart that she was. However, I couldn't find any trace of her. It was like she never existed. Of course I am not an expert at finding people or searching public records.

I found a Facebook page called "Where are you". The owner, Judy searches for people for donations. I told her what I could remember about Susan's family from 40 years ago. I knew that she was a year or two younger than me and that her oldest sister was named Rendy (Orenda) and her youngest brother was named Neil. How was I to know that they both were using their middle names? It wasn't much to go on, but she went to work. A few days later she sent me a list of siblings with Jane Orenda as the oldest, Philip Neil as the youngest and Susan in the middle. I saw that the younger sister was named Cynthia and I instantly remembered that Susan's adorable little sister was named Cindy. That was her. It had to be. But, we still could not find her.

A day or two later Judy sent me a message with two names that she thought were related to Susan. They were Susan Cattand and Rebecca Sinclair. I looked them up on Facebook and instantly knew that Rebecca had to be her daughter. Susan didn't update her Facebook page nearly as much as Rebecca. It's also sort of unusual for girls to be named after their mother. Susan Cattand's picture reminded me a little bit of Susan, so I thought it may be a picture of Susan from 20 years ago (because the person in the picture was obviously much younger than either Susan or me). I messaged both of them on Facebook and waited. One Monday evening (coincidentally the same day I tried to give myself a heart attack) they both responded within minutes of each other that they knew Susan Yeager. I asked Susan Cattand if she was Susan Yeager and she replied that Susan Yeager was her mother. I think they all got a good laugh at that question. Then Rebecca also responded that Susan was her mother.

The Story of Scott and Susan

I was sensitive to the potentially inappropriate or awkward situation that could occur, having no idea of Susan's situation in life. Rebecca had already offered to send me Susan's email and phone number, but I asked both of them to please ask Susan's permission specifically before I actually made the call. Both of them said that their mother would be happy to hear from me and I got the phone number. I also discovered that her name was Susan King and that she lived in Altoona, Pennsylvania. What the heck is an Altoona?

The Call

That evening around 8:00 I called her. There were the usual greetings, "how are you", "What have you been up to", "It's good to hear from you." etc. Susan offered condolences for my loss since Rebecca had already done a little bit of research. I was astonished at how familiar her voice was. I was instantly transported to 1974 and converted into an 18 year old. Then I said, "Susan, I have to ask this question. Are you married?" Of course I knew that the rest of this conversation and possibly my life would be affected by the answer to this question. She said that she had been single for 20 years. So I opened my mouth and out came, "Susan, I still love you. I never stopped loving you." I think I heard a little gasp and maybe a giggle and she said that she still loved me too. I'm not sure what I expected her to say, because remember, I thought we broke up because she didn't care about me anymore so I was a little surprised. Then she said something really unexpected. She told me that she had been waiting, hoping and wishing for 20 years that I would someday return to her. She said that she had prayed for most of her life that she would find someone who would love her the way that I had loved her. I knew what that meant because I had truly loved her with all my heart and soul. I honestly can't remember what I said after that.

Somehow I must have recovered because we talked for about 2 hours that night. It was after midnight her time when we finally got off the phone. Neither of us got too much sleep that night. My wife used to call those "red mallet" nights. Those are the nights when you want to get my big red dead-blow hammer in my tool box and hit yourself in the head so you can get some sleep. We were both pretty excited. Since then I've wondered just exactly what it was that happened to us that night. It was so much like that night we met 42 years before. I have thought that maybe our love just had to be put on standby all those years ago for some grand heavenly plan. Now, the time was finally right and it was just waiting for one of us to flip that switch. So I flipped it. Then it came, no... roared, no... burst, no... exploded into life again.

One thing I believe very strongly is that by the time we hung up the phone that night I had an answer to my question about why I could not make my heart stop beating earlier that day. There was at least one reason why I had to stay behind. There was another chapter in the script that I had to follow, and that chapter would include Susan again. Interestingly enough, I had always had the feeling that our lives would be connected again someday in some way. I figured it would be in the next life since it was obvious, by all reason that Kitty would out live me. Sometimes you just don't see it coming.

It was interesting to learn of many things we had in common during those 40+ years. For example, she told me that her favorite movie was Somewhere in Time. That was one of my favorite movies as well. There were several favorite songs we had in common that would trigger memories for both of us. There are two songs in particular, both by the Moody Blues. One is "In Your Wildest Dreams" and the other is "I Know You're Out There Somewhere". Whenever I heard those songs I always wondered what Susan was doing. I learned that those same songs had a similar effect on her. For me, "In Your Wildest Dreams" was the more significant and powerful one because it spoke of simply wondering. For her, "I Know You're Out There Somewhere" was more powerful because it speaks of finding someone from the past, and she was

The Story of Scott and Susan

wishing for my return. She told me that after moving to Pennsylvania as a single mother she would play that song and cry and wonder why she had been so foolish.

Since that night I've often had the feeling that this was all part of a bigger plan. I believe that God knew that he would one day take my wife away for his own wise and loving purposes. I'm sure that he knew what it would do to me. I believe that he prepared Susan for the last several years to rescue me from my hopeless emptiness. I believe that God has prepared me for the last 38 years to be able to rescue Susan from her loneliness. I believe that I was specifically called to be an instrument in His hands to bring Susan back to the Church. How's that for a divine conspiracy theory?

A New Heart

The next morning, as I drove to work, I talked to my wife, as I had most every day since her death. Sometimes I'm not sure she's listening to me, but then other times I am quite sure she is. This was one of those days. I talked to her about my feelings. I told her how much I loved and missed her. I couldn't stop the tears. I wasn't sobbing like I sometimes had, but the tears just kept coming. I talked to her about Susan and how I thought I felt about her. On that drive that Tuesday morning, I think I felt a few fragments of my shattered heart begin to heal. But it was still a long way from complete and whole.

It may have been that same day, but sometime shortly after our first phone conversation I wrote an email to Susan telling her that I couldn't see how a relationship could possibly work between us. She was in PA with her sisters and her daughter. She had a house and a job working for her sister. I had a good career in Utah with my children around me. It wouldn't be very reasonable for me at my age to move away and change careers now, and how could I expect her to give up all she had for me? She later told me that when she read that email she had a terrible sinking feeling as though I was once again slipping from her grasp. Over the next few days she figuratively took out her heart and humbly placed it at my feet and made it crystal clear that she would do anything she had to in order to have me back. My heart was melted by her sweet humility and sincere love.

Over the next several months we nearly wore out our cell phones. I was afraid they were going to run out of electrons. How grateful I was that we didn't have to pay by the minute any more. I came to really appreciate bluetooth in my car because it meant I could talk to her on my commute to and from work each day. I would have to say that after 2 months I think I really knew more about her than I had learned in that year we were together. Our time to talk and visit was so limited back then. And let's face it, at 18 most of us aren't all that brilliant. It was also interesting that as I began to learn about this grown up woman that I thought I knew, I found that I really liked her in a deeper and more meaningful way than I did as a teenager.

Kitty had always said that she knew that if she died that I would remarry. She had even made the same comment to several other people. She only asked that I give the children a year to mourn before getting married. As I see it now, that year was not for the children as much as it was for me to heal. As our relationship progressed, it was only a few weeks before we both realized where it was going. I have since thought it was very much like the day I saw Kitty at the airport at the end of my mission. I knew, just as I knew then where this was going. I often said, "That train has already left the station."

Now, how was I to tell my children? How would they react? I've heard horror stories about this before and I was a little scared. So I proceeded with caution. I was very careful to pick the right time and place to share the whole story. I didn't choose any particular order to share with my children, but just waited for the proper setting. As I explained the entire story to each of my children, one at a time, I was thrilled

The Story of Scott and Susan

that each of them expressed support and happiness. They were happy for me! They were all excited to meet Susan and asked why in the world she had no Facebook page. I couldn't explain that one either.

Divine Assistance

As time passed I always had the strange feeling that Kitty was involved in this relationship, in a positive way. I felt that she approved and that she was happy for me and proud of me. I also had the rather strange impression that Kitty had been in contact with Susan's mother who died in 1983. Susan's mother and I were quite close. For some reason we just hit it off rather quickly. In fact she was upset with Susan when we parted ways. So it kind of made sense that Kitty and Susan's mother, and maybe my mother as well would be working together to help us find each other. Susan needed to be rescued and so did I. So why would they not work together on our behalf? I kept feeling like this was all part of a much bigger plan, as though everything had gone exactly as it was intended. I have said a few times that I feel like I'm an actor in a play, but I don't get to read the script before going on stage.

A few weeks after I contacted Susan I got a Facebook message from Judy (who had located Susan for me) saying that she felt like my late wife (Kitty) was there beside her helping and guiding her as she searched for Susan. Now this message was completely unsolicited and just out of the blue. I had not told Judy very much about my situation other than that my wife had died, because I didn't want her to get the wrong impression about me trying to connect with an old girlfriend. Now, as I read her message, it rang true to me, and I believe her.

One morning I called Susan after she got home from her morning walk. She told me that she was feeling some doubts and questioning her feelings. That seemed perfectly normal to me. I had occasionally had similar feelings. She said that as she was thinking those thoughts, she heard, loud and unmistakably clear in her mind, a male voice say, "Do not doubt me!" As she related this to me I had a powerful feeling come over me confirming to me that what she had said was true. To both of us it was a clear and undeniable confirmation that things were exactly as they should be and there were forces beyond the veil that were working diligently on our behalf.

The 'M' Word

It was not long before we started tossing the "M" word around. She said that if we got married, it would have to be a civil wedding because she didn't feel that she could ever be worthy to go to the Temple with me. I thought about that for a while. I reasoned that I already had an eternal companion, and I felt that I really wanted Susan's companionship for the rest of my life, (my reasoning may have been flawed) so I said to her, "Well, OK, but I think you will change your mind." Somehow, I was actually pretty sure about that.

Susan, like most of us, knew that her sins were worse than anyone else. She reasoned that others could find forgiveness but not her. Forgiveness of sins was only for other people but not for her. When I told her that General Conference would be broadcast on Sunday October 2nd (2016) she said that she probably would not watch. I told her that I just wanted to let her know it was on. I was very careful not to try to persuade her. I know that my overbearance was in issue when we were teenagers, and I wasn't about to ruin this relationship with something that stupid. Well, Sunday morning came and she turned on the TV, probably to watch a football game or a NASCAR race. But something told her to just see if she could get conference on her TV. She was surprised to find that she did indeed have the BYU channel. She tuned in just in time to see the start of the rebroadcast Women's Conference. She watched all of that and then watched the live Sunday morning session. It was a life changing experience for her. We were

The Story of Scott and Susan

texting back and forth commenting on the talks. Afterwards she was very humbled. I think she was actually a little overwhelmed and maybe even confused by the power of the spirit that she had felt. She said she felt a little selfish because she felt like every talk was speaking specifically to her. I laughed and told her that was the way it was supposed to be. But I, as well as all my children had the same feeling, that the overriding theme of the conference was directed at Susan, telling her, "Come back. It's never too late. You are OK. You can be forgiven. You can come back."

I asked Susan for permission to contact her Bishop. She gave me permission so I called Bishop Matt Prine and told him about Susan. He was aware of her on his records and agreed to do everything he could to help her feel welcome in the ward. That next Sunday Susan went to church. She wanted to just come in quietly, sit on the back row and leave. That wonderful Altoona Ward would have none of that. They welcomed her with open arms. She hasn't missed church since then. She immediately had dozens of friends that truly cared for her. Susan and I actually became pretty good friends with Bishop Prine and his wife McKenna, as well as other members of that ward.

First Meeting

Susan's daughter, Susan Cantand is a devout Catholic and just a really good woman. I learned that her daughter Kira was being confirmed in Denver, CO on Sunday November 6th. Susan would be there, so I made arrangements to fly to Denver for the weekend. I arrived at the airport Saturday morning. Both of her daughters were taking pictures and videos of the meeting. Susan had prepared a giant cardboard heart with some pictures and a few quotes from songs and movies that were meaningful to both of us. I was worried that I might not recognize her from the (really bad) pictures that I had. In addition, she had just had her hair done. But when I saw this woman holding this giant red heart, it was easy to identify her.



I had been thinking about what I would and should do when I first saw her. Since I had kissed her the night I met her, it only seemed fitting that I kiss her when I saw her at the airport. Of course I was pretty nervous for a whole hand full of reasons. However, summoning all my courage as I walked up the stairs in the Denver airport and saw her there, I walked right up to her took her face in my hands and kissed her. Wow! Both of her daughters captured photographic evidence of the event. Afterwards, as we walked through the airport hand in hand I was surprised by just how natural it all felt. I had only held hands with one woman for over 28 years, but I didn't feel like this was strange or wrong in any way. It just felt comfortable, normal and natural, as though this was exactly where I was meant to be at this time.

It was a really fun reunion and we had a fun day together. Susan and I went to Lucile's in Denver for breakfast/lunch. It was awesome. Then we went shopping for groceries and then spent some time with her family. I felt very comfortable with all of her children. I really enjoyed the association and felt so

The Story of Scott and Susan

accepted. Almost like the night we met 42 years ago, there seemed to be forces working in our behalf. But I was still holding back. I suppose that's to be expected.

My Conflict

When I returned to my hotel that night I prayed and asked Heavenly Father to help me relax. I talked with Kitty as well, asking her to help me and guide me to do the right things. I felt sure that she was hearing me. On Sunday morning Susan met me at the door. I told her that I knew that I was still holding back and offered my apology. Susan told me that she could tell and that it scared her. She told me that if I just wasn't feeling what we thought I would feel that I could tell her so and it would be OK. She said that she would rather hear it now than later. I began to cry as I told her that I just missed Kitty so bad that I was having a difficult time sorting through all the emotions. We sat in the car and had a very emotional talk. She was very sensitive and I found great comfort in that discussion. I think that my emotions were still so consumed with missing Kitty that there just was not enough left over to feel what I wanted to feel. But that morning was also a turning point for me and a healing moment.

We had a wonderful day together. The Confirmation service at the Catholic Church was wonderful. As I sat there among those people I just had such good feelings. I knew that I was among honorable Christians. It was really nice. The bench I was sitting on was about to kill me. Man do they ever need some padding on those benches. But it was still an enjoyable experience. Susan Cattand did a reading during the service and then made announcements at the end of the meeting. It's funny to me that I actually felt proud of her. I had only met her just 24 hours before, but I was her guest there in Denver.



Meet the Parents (or rather, Children)

We spent most of the rest of the day with the family and had a wonderful time. That evening I had the opportunity to talk to all three of her children in private individually. I first spoke with Susan Cattand on her back porch. Susan is her oldest. She was very gracious, kind and gentle. I explained all of my feelings towards her mother and she accepted it and believed me. I felt like she was very appreciative of my love and devotion for her mother.

Then I met with Rebecca on the front porch. She had decided to come out from Altoona. I'm not sure if it was mostly to meet me or to be there for Kira. Rebecca is the passionate one and she wanted some answers. Since it was already pretty obvious where this relationship was going, she asked me if I had

The Story of Scott and Susan

considered moving east instead of Susan moving west. Obviously from her point of view, I was taking her mother away from her and I felt that she had a very legitimate point. I said that I had considered it, but that I had a good career in Utah and was not real confident about starting over at 60 years of age. She accepted that and we had a good conversation. I felt very good as we departed with a new appreciation for each other.

Later that evening Mike came out and talked with me on the back porch. His intention was to aggressively interrogate me, and he did. He was not at all disrespectful, but this was about his mother and he is fiercely defensive of his mother, as it should be. I think he very much wanted to dislike me, but as I explained the story and expressed to him my feelings for his mother, I think it eased his worries quite a bit. I quite liked him and I think that we went away from that conversation as friends. At the very least we had something in common, and that was our mutual love and concern for his mother.

It was really a great privilege for me and was very fulfilling to be able to meet with all of them. I am so glad that Rebecca made the trip out because it was the start of a very close friendship for us. Susan and Mike already lived in Denver. Susan has 3 wonderful children. I really respected their straightforward honesty and concern for their mother. Truly, I did not expect anything less; I would actually have been a little disappointed. Although they were still understandably concerned I think that all of them were a lot more comfortable with me than they thought they would be.

More Divine Guidance

Sunday morning Susan told me something that her daughter Susan Cattand had told her. She said that she had felt a presence in her home that she had not felt before. She said she had even sensed a shadow of sorts. But she said it was not scary or strange but just extremely peaceful and welcome. She said that she felt strongly that it was Kitty visiting her house to watch over and take care of me. I had not personally felt those feelings, but when Susan related this to me, I had a sudden and powerful prompting that it was true. I felt certain that Kitty was in fact there with me, comforting me, guiding me and watching over me. Well of course she was! Why would she not be there watching over me? She had taken care of me for the last 38 years.

Sunday night at the hotel, I once again prayed to feel more complete because I knew that I was still holding back. I also asked Kitty to continue to support and lead me. Susan had been single for a lot of years and I knew that she was completely ready for this relationship. But she was also very sensitive to my feelings and was willing to wait as long as necessary for me to be ready. I honestly was ready, in my heart that is. But my head and my heart seemed to be conflicted. I just wanted to be free to feel what I was feeling. I wanted to give in and surrender my logic to what my heart was feeling. I wanted to let down my guard and just let the feelings flow.

I had not told any of the extended family about Susan yet. However, Susan's daughters had finally set up a Facebook page for her about 12:30 AM on Sunday. Of course I was among the first friends to connect with her, not thinking about the fact that suddenly everyone who knew me would be connected indirectly to Susan and see all the posts from her daughters. Sunday afternoon I was looking at Susan's Facebook page on her phone and noticed that Jeannie Welton, my sister in law had "liked" one of the pictures that Susan's daughters had posted of Susan and I together. I didn't think about all the implications until Monday morning. So I called Jeannie Monday morning before going over to see Susan. We had a wonderful and very emotional conversation as I told Jeannie the whole story from the beginning and shared with her all the feelings I had been having that weekend. I expressed my

The Story of Scott and Susan

confidence that Kitty had been leading me through this relationship, and Jeannie expressed her support and love for me.

Rebirth

That day was different. I felt the blessings of the Lord and Kitty's influence as I finally surrendered all of my resistance and opened myself up to all the emotions that were trying to get through to me. It was a life changing day for me. When Kitty died, I felt like my life ended. That Monday, I was reborn as a new and changed person.

In November Ramon and I flew down to Arizona for the Thanksgiving holiday. It was an interesting experience because, well, this was Kitty's family, not mine. But as I stood to introduce my Family at the reunion lunch on Thanksgiving day, as is the tradition, I felt so comfortable declaring my eternal membership in that Jarvis family. During that weekend I had the opportunity to tell our story to many of my closest relatives. I was so thrilled at the universal support that I received. When I told my mother in law our story she was happy for me. When I told her that she would have to accept a new daughter, because she was the only mother either of us had, she cried and hugged me.

My First Visit to Altoona

I next scheduled a weekend trip to Pennsylvania for December 2nd. I would stay till Monday so I would not have to take any vacation time. However, Rebecca wanted to make plans as well so I decided to extend my stay till Wednesday. Then suddenly my work schedule got changed around. It would require me to go to Houston directly from Pittsburgh on that Wednesday. I would stay in Houston for 10 days till Saturday the 17th. That would leave Ramon at home alone for two full weeks. (Ramon is our handicapped foster son that had been in our house for 14 years). I was quite worried about that but as it turned out, he did quite well.

Susan had had a traumatic experience on an airplane 25 years earlier and had not flown since. In fact, she took the train everywhere she wanted to go. She even took the train from Pennsylvania to Denver Colorado, taking two full days to get there. So I was quite pleased when she expressed her willingness to try flying again for my benefit. I booked a flight for both of us from Pittsburgh to Baltimore, leaving in the morning and returning at night. (It was the shortest flight I could find and I had never been to Baltimore). I was astonished at the intensity of her fear. Through the whole flight she was wrapped around me like a pretzel with her face buried in my shoulder. I was grateful to be wearing a leather jacket that she couldn't claw through. I don't think she opened her eyes once on that morning flight. We listened to music through headphones to try to calm her. I am so amazed and humbled that she was willing to face and endure such intense fear for me.

Our day in Baltimore was really enjoyable. The weather was nice. We visited Fort McHenry and got to participate in a flag raising ceremony. My dad would have been so proud of me (but why would I say it like that? I know that he is proud of me and happy for me). Then we visited the USS Constellation, a three-masted battleship from the early eighteen-hundreds. Next we walked through a World War II era submarine called the USS Torsk. We finished the afternoon with dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe on Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

The Story of Scott and Susan



A New Commitment

We still had a few hours before we had to be at the airport so we decided to drive over to the Washington DC Temple. As we walked around the visitors center we saw the cutaway model of the temple. Susan pointed to one of the sealing rooms and said that her parents were sealed somewhere in there. We met a sweet young sister missionary from Syracuse Utah and had a chance to tell her a little about ourselves. Then we went into the little theater and watched Mr. Krueger's Christmas. I think the angels were working pretty hard on Susan that day trying to set the mood just right. When we came out of the theater the Christmas lights had been turned on. The sight was simply breathtaking. It's as though the silver was set on the satin table cloth, the candles were lit and the angels were singing. I think I heard some sea creatures singing "Sha-la-la-la-la my oh my...", as I asked her to take a walk around the temple with me. As we were about three quarters of the way around the temple she stopped and looked at me and said, "I am not going to settle for anything less than this." (Meaning a temple marriage). Like I said before, I knew she would change her mind, and once again I was right.



The return flight was only slightly better than the morning flight. She did open her eyes a couple of times this time. I suppose any improvement is good. But obviously we survived the flight. With the two hour drive from Pittsburgh to Altoona I got back to my hotel at about 1:00AM. Even so, we even made it on time to church at 9:30 the next morning.

The Story of Scott and Susan

The whole trip was really great. We got to know each other better than we ever had. Susan pointed out that it was the longest time we had ever spent together. When we were young we only had weekends together. This time we were together for 5 days. I find it amusing how this relationship seems to have been built upside down. We started off in love but then became very dear friends. It's also interesting to me how completely comfortable we felt when we were together. It was almost as if no time had passed and we just took up right where we left off 42 year earlier.

I made another trip to Altoona over the weekend of January 13th. This time the trip started out as another work trip to Houston and then I flew straight from Houston to Altoona. It was a fairly short stay, from Friday afternoon to Monday afternoon. But it was another transition for us. It seems as though we moved from the "getting to know each other" stage to the courting stage. It was really a wonderful weekend. In any case, I had a really good time. I feel like my relationship with my wife was a "once in a lifetime" love. Now I was having a second "once in a lifetime" love. How in the world could I be loved so much again in just one lifetime. There was no way that I could possibly deserve this. I feel like I've been too blessed; blessed beyond all reason.

Of course I continued to struggle, as expected. I suppose I will have difficult moments for a long time to come. Even after we are married I expect that I will always miss the precious child that I have lost. While I was in a grocery store one morning in Altoona with Susan I passed by a section displaying a variety of "no-bake" cheesecake. It brought back sweet memories of how Kitty would always make me a heart shaped cherry cheesecake for Valentine's day. I could feel the tears coming. It's sort of like a sneeze. You can feel it coming but there's nothing you can do to stop it. Susan turned around and looked at me and asked if I was all right. I shook my head and said no, and then the floodgates opened up and I just sobbed in her arms for a minute or so. And then I was OK again.

A New Home

In July 2017 I moved out of the town house where Kitty and I intended to spend the rest of our lives. I loved that little house, but understandably, Susan did not want to live in kitty's house. Leaving that house, however, was tough for me. I searched for a while for a house. Several times I would see a house I wanted to look at, but by the time I got off work it would be under contract for \$10K to \$20K more than the asking price. Fortunately, through my daughter in law I found a house in Kaysville that was not yet listed. The owner had just posted it on Facebook. I looked at the house and, with Susan's approval, bought it. It is a beautiful, moderate sized house in north Kaysville, just over the border from Layton. We love it.

Susan and I continued to grow closer together. Our love and our friendship grew hand in hand. Our courtship was mostly done long distance over the phone. I think though that it was good. We were already in love, but we really needed to get to know each others' true feelings and opinions. We do have different opinions about some things as expected, but they don't seem to matter much. We loved being together and wanted to spend the rest of eternity together. She was able to come out to Utah a couple of times. Towards the end of July, she rented a Penske truck and drove from Pennsylvania to Utah. She brought a friend named Mary. Mary is a wonderful woman. She is widowed and just spends all her time helping whoever she can. They stayed through my birthday and then flew back to Pennsylvania.

The Ogden Temple

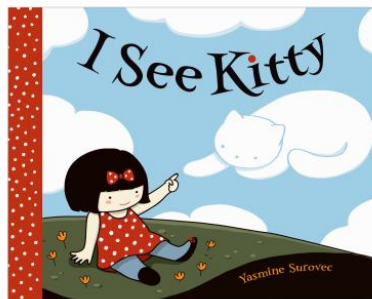
On Sunday July 9th Susan was able to get her temple recommend from her Bishop. We were worried about being able to see the Stake President, but at the last minute she was able to get an appointment

The Story of Scott and Susan

for July 16th so she got it signed by him as well. I was in Houston at the time. I had made an appointment at the Ogden Temple for her for July 22nd. We thought we were not going to be able to make that, but for some reason I just had the feeling that I should not cancel that reservation. She texted me while I was in church in Houston with (my daughter) Joannie's family. She said, "How is Ogden this time of year?" I responded, "It's hot. Why?" She replied, "Is the Temple air conditioned?". I said "Of course, Duh. wait... What? Wait a minute. Are you meeting with your Stake President today?" She said, "I had my interview with the Stake President and now have my recommend!" I was so excited!



We finally made it to the temple on Saturday July 22nd. We went to the Ogden Temple. Karen was her escort. Brian, Tony, Abby, Kevin, Dawnie, Jill, Darcy, Lori and Dave (children and friends) were also there. It was a life altering experience for at least some of us. I know that Kitty was with us at least part of the time. I am so grateful that my whole family has embraced Susan so wholeheartedly. After we were done in the Temple we walked over to Deseret Book. I saw a children's book titled "I See Kitty". I was taken by the symbolism I saw in that title book.



We had made some rather strange arrangements for the honeymoon because Susan's daughter Becca was expecting a baby on 16th of August, 11 days after our wedding date. I planned on flying home after the honeymoon, working for a week and then flying back and picking her up a week later. But amazingly, Rebecca had her beautiful little girl Avery on July 30th. It worked out perfectly.

The Wedding

Susan and I finally got married on Saturday August 5th in the Washington DC Temple. It was a most excellent day. Everything was beautiful. Susan's father was there. My best friend (growing up) Donald Gilreath and his wife Jan came up from Raleigh. Kitty's best friend Jill Davis and her husband John were there. Susan's friends Doug and Tonia Whitfield came to the sealing. My children, Joannie & Brady and Tony and Ramon and Kevin & Dawnie were all there. Karen already had a vacation scheduled. Of course Susan's son Mike and daughter Susan and granddaughter Kira came from Denver. Only Susan made the

The Story of Scott and Susan

trip down from Altoona to Washington. Becca didn't make it because she just had a baby, DUH. Mike and Kira waited for us in Altoona as well. The sealing ceremony was just beautiful. The Washington DC Temple was the only place we could consider getting married. I had first been endowed in that temple. Susan's parents were sealed in that temple. She had done baptisms in that temple as a youth and Altoona is in the Washington DC Temple district. It was the obvious choice.



After the wedding we got pictures outside the temple. I saw Susan Cattand and Joannie walking around and said, "Hey are you the two ugly step sisters?" I made sure they knew I was kidding. It's obvious because they are both so beautiful. But you can't be too careful about other's self esteem. Sometimes people will believe ridiculous falsehoods about themselves.

Enterprise had upgraded us to a BMW SUV. It was quite a nice car with lots of power. After the pictures we headed off to Altoona for the reception. On the way we started getting hungry so when we saw a sign for Subway we decided to go. I was still in my suit and Susan was still in her wedding dress. Several people congratulated us, but one sweet teenage girl asked if she could buy us lunch as a wedding present. It was so sweet and we graciously accepted. Even now I am touched with emotion when I think about it. What a precious memory.



The reception was held at the church in Altoona. Cindy bought a life size skeleton, named her Irene (Susan's middle name), dressed her in one of Susan's outfits and sat her at one of the tables. She had a sign beside her that said something like, "This is what we thought Susan would look like before she found Mr. Right." It was quite a conversation piece, and went with us on our honeymoon. The reception was fantastic. Susan and I had selected a hand full of songs that had special meaning to us and I performed them accompanied by my guitar. I sang "From the Beginning", "Danny's Song", "What Might Have Been", "In Your Wildest Dream", "Love Changes Everything", "I Know You're Out There Somewhere" and "This Old Guitar". In between each song Susan would tell a little bit of our story. It was a great

The Story of Scott and Susan

program. Susan and I then danced our first dance to “Can I Have This Dance For the Rest of My Life”. Then Susan danced with her father to “Daddy, Dance With Me”. That was pretty emotional.



The Honeymoon

Someone had put Irene on the organ bench in the chapel. I think she likes to play the organ. The organist moved her into a closet on the stage Sunday morning. Before leaving the Church on Sunday afternoon to head out for our Honeymoon, we were in the foyer talking to my children when Susan remembered and said, “Oh, I have to get my skeleton out of the closet.” My son Kevin remarked, “And so it begins.”

Our Honeymoon was fantastic. We had no schedule, just a week to go wherever we wanted. It was even better for the fact that I would get to take my wife home with me instead of leaving her behind for a week. We drove up to Niagara Falls first. That was actually the second time we had visited there, but this time we got to stay in the same room. Then we drove over to the Palmyra area. We stayed two nights in the beautiful King Suite in the Hampton Inn in Victor, NY. We attended the Palmyra temple and visited the Smith farm and the Sacred Grove.

The next day we headed back to Altoona so Susan could spend some time with her new baby and the rest of the family. I know that leaving that little baby Avery behind was the hardest part for her. We stayed another night at the Fairfield Inn in Altoona and then dropped off the rental car there in Altoona. Susan’s sister Rendy took us over to the train station where we caught the Amtrak to Pittsburgh. I was able to ride on the famous Altoona Horseshoe Curve in the Allegheny mountains. From there we took an Uber over to the Wyndham Garden Inn. That’s the same place we stayed the night before going to Baltimore back in December of 2016. But once again, this time we stayed in the same room. On the last day of our Honeymoon we went to the Pittsburgh Zoo with Donny and Cindy. They dropped us off at the airport afterwards. What an amazing adventure.

Back Home

We had a second reception at my ward building in Layton. We put on a similar program but this time Jake and Alta Baxter sang with me. I really liked it. Receptions are different out here than they are on the East coast. Out there, it’s a party that you come to and stay for the night. Out here you drop in grab a piece of cake, say congratulations and leave. Susan got a little stressed. However, when we started the program the cream of the crop was there and they all stayed. We had a great time.

As of this writing we have been married for more than 8 months. We are so deeply in love and very happy together. For me, getting to know this grown up version of my sweet little teenage beauty has just

The Story of Scott and Susan

been a great adventure. There is nothing that I don't love about her. My goal now is to live another 20 or 30 years to finally cherish and adore her the way that she deserves.



In conclusion:

To say that losing a spouse has changed me would be a ridiculous and unnecessary understatement. It honestly has redefined who I am. I died along with my wife and have now been born as a new and changed person. I really was born yesterday (a few years ago). I am different in a lot of ways. I have absolutely no fear of death. I'm even more emotional than I used to be. I'm much more aware of how fragile life is and that any moment could be the last for me or a loved one. I wish I could go back in time and relive those 38 years with Kitty and my children with this new perspective. I know I could be a better and more patient husband and father. I now know what it is like to say goodbye for the last time; a last kiss; a last walk together. I also know what it is like to receive special gifts from God and that he is very aware of each of us. Fortunately, I do not know what it is like to feel bitterness, hatred or anger about it. I do not know what it feels like to be filled with regret, but I know now more than ever before that God is aware of me and loves and cares infinitely about me personally.

Now, I never let a day go by without expressing my love for my wife. I always tell my children that I love them whenever we say goodbye. My goal in life is to never speak a word in anger or raise my voice to my wife or any of my loved ones and to cherish each day I have with them as though it was the last.

Addendum January 17th 2020

We have been married for over two years now. I am still as in love with Susan as I was during our courtship. I love her with all my heart and soul as I did when I was 18 years old. She is very easy to get along with and we really enjoy spending time together. I am completely content and even more convinced that God's plan for my life has unfolded just the way it was intended. I can honestly say that I am as happy as I have ever been. It is my privilege to love, cherish and adore Susan the way it was intended; the way she has always deserved.

I've noticed that over the months the extra dispensation of strength and patience that God granted me has been gradually withdrawn from me. Though I have never felt the need to ask why, nor felt bitter about my loss and pain, I find myself more reliant on my own strengths again. Where as before, the patience and unconditional love towards all people and situations was a free gift, now it becomes more of an effort, and I often fail. I suppose that as we learn to walk on our own, God stops carrying us for a time so that we may learn and be better able to carry others with burdens.

The Story of Scott and Susan

I am still so grateful for this second “once in a lifetime” that has been granted to me. I know that there is no way that I could have deserved or earned such a blessing and I acknowledge it as a free gift from God. I don’t know why I have been thus favored, but will do my best to be worthy of it. I know without a doubt that God knows every one of us personally and cares infinitely about our pain and struggles. When we call, he is there.

I will continue to update and add to this story as time goes on. It gives me great personal joy to reread it every few months, and hopefully it can help or cheer someone else throughout the years and generations to come.