

Redwoods 13

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After years of decay and decline, from weather, and human abuse, with total disregard. All of which had taken its toll, the dreaded for-sale signs are about to adorn the once active farm. There have been many years, I guess more than twenty, that the farm had been without any title-holders who had called it home, since the days it had been surrounded by unbelievable rumors, some of which were true, and others untrue, that had plagued the farm. The farm never deserved such an exit, but maybe in time the farm can be reborn in all its glory, and those countless miracles it had yielded, return. It was an appropriate day for a new beginning for the farm to be revitalized, November 11th 2021. The bank had selected that date to nail

up its first sign, with more to follow, if no-one comes forth. I remain hopeful that someone would purchase the farm, thus enabling the question to be answered, “Will the magic once more exist, to fill the void, and again enable the rumors to begin to swirl about, true and untrue, or will it remain just a farm?” Only having that special family to claim residence will tell.

On the following day, Tuesday morning, a single dad, Marty Collins, accompanied by his twin 12-year-old children, Austin and Lisa, closely followed by his friend, the bank assistant manager, Phill Caster in his own car, drove between the farm wagon wheels. Which had still existed, though in disrepair for the many years, but still proudly greeting all who had entered. Though the wheels showed they had been weather beaten, worn, adorned greatly with rust, and peeling paint which they had

accumulated throughout the years. That by no means, rendered their age in any way, as they in their golden years, welcomed all who had entered with pride, as they had done throughout the many years of self-dedication.

The property was being sold as a 110-acre farm, with a small forest, standing corral, running brook, and new pre-fab modular three bedroom doubled wide home, without any history, only contrived rumors, and truths known by a selective few. It had been much more, so much more.

This story had started three days prior, when Marty Collins entered his friendly neighborhood bank in Freehold, New Jersey to make a bank deposit, as he had done numerous times before. He was not a creature of change when it came to his banking, and enjoyed the camaraderie and friendships he had forged. The bank employees were all like family, long since

his wife had passed, as she had battled cancer about five years ago and lost. He was now a single father with twelve-year-old twins, a boy and a girl, Justin and Lisa. A voice rang out from the assistant manager's office, "Marty Collins, how are you doing? Are you still interested in retirement property, for you and the kids?"

"Yes Phill, I'm still looking."

"We just got one, that we held the mortgage which should be on the market tomorrow, it seems an ideal property for you and the kids. Come on in here when you're done, sit down, and I'll explain."

"Just a minute Phill, I'm making my deposit at the ATM."

After making his bank deposit Marty entered Phill's office and sat. Marty and Phill had been longtime friends outside of the bank for years.

"Like I said before Marty, I believe this property

is ideal for you and the kids, our for-sale signs go up Saturday, November 11th, and if we come to an agreement, our real-estate rep will meet you there.”

“O kay Phill, I’m all ears, so let’s talk.” Marty had been looking for retirement property since his wife had passed, to try to unbridle him and the kids from their horrible past memories. Marty was semi-retired and had been very successful in the housing market, and was slightly intimidating, except for his infectious smile, and personality. He was about six-foot tall, muscular build, and fifty-five years of age. As Phill relaxed in his chair, he started his sales pitch. “Marty, we just received this property, that we had held the mortgage at one time, it’s off Belvedere Road in Freehold, sits on 110 acres, with a small forest, brook, and a new modular three-bedroom home, and were asking only \$500,000.

“Sounds a little too reasonable to me Phill coming from you, so what’s the catch?”

“There is no catch Marty, the property just comes with a little history of going ons that I believe weren’t at all true.

“That isn’t the Chandler property, is it?”

“Yes, it is. Are you familiar with it?”

“Been there a few, when I was a kid. Had great times there that I can recall, and Carol, John Chandler’s wife, made the most delicious cheese cake. They also had two kids, don’t remember their names, only that they were nice to me.”

“You’re making me hungry when mentioning cheese cake, my all-time favorite, yearning for a slice now Marty, and I just had breakfast.”

“I’ll see you there on the 12th Phill at 9 am, and don’t be late.”

“Not me Marty, a realty representative from the bank, I have to be here.”

“I’m only dealing with you Phill, otherwise it’s no sale.”

Marty stood to leave, and Phill responded as he also stood up, and shook Marty’s hand, and relented to say, “You draw a hard bargain Marty, are you sure you’re still retired? I’ll be there at nine, and don’t you be late.”

As we travel back to September 12th, Marty called Phill from his cell, after he had passed the wagon wheels, telling him he wanted to let his kids off at the forest to explore, and he would meet him at the house to talk business.

“I picked up coffee and cheese cake for us Marty. Sorry, nothing for the kids.”

“No problem, they have bottles of water and chips, they’ll be busy here exploring. Let me get them settled.”

Marty drove to the woods, let his children out of the car, and told them that this may be their home, all the way to the train tracks. “Go guys, explore, but be very careful, and don’t pass the tracks. I’ll pick you up later when I’m finished, and keep your cell on, love you guys.”

As Marty drove away, Austin ran to his sister and said, “Let’s go find the tracks Lisa, before dad comes back.”

“Remember Austin, dad said that was the end of the property, and I don’t think we should go any further.”

I know, we won’t I promise. So, let’s go Lisa, follow me.”

Meanwhile, Marty had reached the house and entered, where Phill had already begun devouring his slice of cheese cake at a small table, that he had brought with him, along with two chairs, hopefully for the signing. Marty sat

down, grabbed a coffee container, lifted it to his lips, and with his other hand, reached for slice of cake saying, “Phill, thank you for coming, and the coffee and cake. I had already made up my mind about purchasing the property when I had been informed it was the Chandler’s property, and will sign the papers if the bank would accept my offer of \$450,000 cash.”

“Thought you said \$500,000 was a fair price?”

“I did Phill, it’s a very good price, and did you forget, I may be your friend, but I’m also a business man, what would you expect, anything less?”

Phill replied, “And a good one at that, I’ll call it in, and see what I can do.”

“You do that good buddy, Marty said as he stood up, and started checking the house out.”

Phill was on the phone for a good half hour when the last words Marty heard Phill say were, “Marty Collins, that’s who, yes that Marty, I’ll tell him, he’s right here. Marty it’s all yours. Congratulations Marty, so let’s start signing.”

Meanwhile, back at the forest, the children had reached the train tracks, which glistened brightly as an invitation for Austin to cross as well as a yellow glow that showed a clear path on the other side.

Austin asked, “Lisa, see that glow and that path? I’m going to cross over, want to go with me?”

“Austin, dad told us the property ends at the tracks, I think we shouldn’t go any further, we might get in trouble. Besides Austin, you promised.”

“So Lisa, if you don’t want to go, you can stay here alone.”

“By myself Austin? I’m not staying alone.”

Lisa ran to Austin’s side as they crossed the tracks to follow the path. “Look Austin, a white feather.” Lisa bent down and picked the feather up showing it to Austin. “Do you know what kind of a bird this feather comes from,” Lisa asked, as she held the feather up to her brother.

“No I don’t, it may be only a chicken feather. Hold on to it, and you can ask dad.”

“I will” she answered, as she put the feather away, and they continued to explore beyond, as they once more continued to follow the glowing path. About a half mile further more into their venture they came upon a treehouse, just beyond the end of the glowing path. It was so big, bigger than any treehouse that they had

ever seen, even bigger than some houses. Austin looked at Lisa, as though he was looking for her permission to go farther. “You think we should check out the treehouse, and see if anyone lives there Lisa?”

“It was your idea to pass the tracks Austin, what’s a little more, so if we’re in trouble, we’re in trouble, no matter how far we go. Guess you wanted me to say something like that Austin.”

“I Sure did Lisa, so let’s go.”

As they reached the treehouse, they saw what may have been a door, and not so brave Austin gave Lisa a slight nudge, pointed to the door, and whispered to her to knock. Lisa knocked once, and then again, and the door was opened, and out came to their amazement a very elderly couple, just about their size, maybe a little shorter. As the couple exited the

treehouse Austin and Lisa turned away to run, the couple and called them back. The couple were smiling, and seemed to be friendly. “My name is Lisette children, and this is my husband Bill, we are called little people, and live in this treehouse. What’s your names?” Austin still couldn’t get hold of himself as Lisa answered, “I am Lisa and this is my brother Austin, our dad, Marty Collins may be buying this property, we don’t know for sure.”

All at once their dad appeared from out of the woods, where they had come from earlier, “Children! He exclaimed with much excitement, this is now our new home, and I see you met our neighbors.”

“Yes dad, Lisa replied, they are Bill and Lisette, and I don’t know their last name.”

“I know Lisa, and I’ll explain to you later.”

Before Marty could introduce himself to the couple, the skies filled up with clouds, and the heavens gave out a thunderous roar, the forest canopy began to open, as Marty had witnessed once before, when he was young, and had visited the farm. Hundredths of redwood tree houses appeared on the land as they did once in the day, while a bright rainbow occupied the sky for that moment, the children ran to their dad, grasping each of his hands tightly in fear. Marty and the little people knew what to expect, as the responsibility had been passed on to Marty.

After the exciting going on's had ceased, and all returned to what I would call, slightly back to normal. Marty eventually calmed the children down. Telling them it was all was to be normal where they were about to live, and they have to get prepared for strange happenings from now on, and he would explain more in detail

when they returned home. He then introduced himself to Bill and Lissette, and told them they would all return another day.

On their way home, Lisa showed her father the feather she found, and if he knew what kind of a bird it was from. He explained it was from a special owl, whom they will meet in time, and that what they had heard today and every future day on the farm, was for their eyes and ears alone. Marty then asked, if they understood, and they both replied “Yes”, and he then asked Austin a second time, and he again replied, “Yes dad”, lowering his head as he answered the second time, knowing quite well why he was asked over again.

The magic had surely resumed in all its mystical glory, and the farm wasn't just a farm anymore.”