

Beauty With Buttons by Gramps Curtis

I Got One! It's All Mine!

“Excited” couldn’t begin to describe Zena as she almost ripped into the packing box. This had to be the absolute best gift she’d ever received. First out of the box was the instruction manual that had to be thicker than a CD case. Next the charger and battery was taken out and placed on her daybed beside the manual. And then there it was – still packed in its plastic wrapper. It was beauty beyond belief. Its candy apple red plastic jacket shouted itself to be more computer than cell phone.

Adrenalin exploded into every cell of Zena’s body with the news that she now had her very own cell phone with onboard video camera, text messaging keyboard, and GPS locator.

As her dad followed the directions for installing the battery and getting it on line, he couldn’t recall more arms and legs moving since he first saw his beautiful daughter in the hospital’s “New Infants” nursery, 15 years ago.

Zena’s body finally quit thrashing as she held her beautiful red cell phone in front of a mirror. With her mind still racing she took a picture of her reflection in the mirror and immediately phoned it to her favorite girlfriend.

Like the lungs of a newborn, her cell phone battery was getting a real workout from the very start. Malcolm, Zena’s dad, began to notice the excessive cell phone use by Zena. Several times he’d see her hold it to her ear while shopping when he knew she didn’t even have it turned on. Her father somehow thought a cell phone held to her ear became some kind of jewelry or a status symbol.

Malcolm discussed his concern more than once with his wife Barb, but no decisions were made. The conclusion was that Zena’s phone addiction didn’t seem to be breaking any laws and besides, all the rest of her friends were doing it. It was almost like her cell phone was a critical key; a key to acceptance by one’s peers.

Powder and the Squealers

Zena’s parents recently had briefly discussed with her the possibility of Zena working as a candy striper at the nearby hospital. But now seemed the the right time to investigate it further. Summer vacation was about to start, and her parents definitely felt their daughter needed some real challenges to fill her time that had been occupied by school.

After further arrangements were made, the daughter with the new cell phone was assigned to the nursery ward of the hospital, which thrilled Zena’s mom. The first week of ‘hospital helper’ orientation had Zena doing more studying and note-taking than she’d done in school. Her dedication was due to her ‘little lives are at risk by lazy attitudes and actions’ sign she had hung near her dresser mirror. This hospital helper in training, quickly adopted the credo: whether patients are big or small; whether the tasks for me are big or small – I’ll do them with my very best.

‘Her very best’ meant that she must leave her beautiful cell phone with all its nuances must be left in her nursery ward locker; not to be touched until she headed for home. She loved every second of every day she spent in the nursery learning how to powder, diaper, and care for the newbies in zillions of tiny ways. Baby care in the nursery took on a whole new meaning the third week when she began working the night shift, with Katey, an African born African-American with a stubborn smile that never disappeared even when crying newbies exceeded the noise level of most airports.

But Zena really enjoyed the quiet nights with all the babies sound asleep, their security blankets touching their soft puffy cheeks. How beautiful and quiet they lay there, all the while their bodies inside are working full tilt, creating bigger muscles and bones to be used all their life to come?

Then it hit Zena like a ton of bricks. These beautiful little ones are helpless; powerless to protect

or provide for themselves. They can't feed or dress themselves. These little beauties are, every minute, at the mercy of whoever is watching over them; and for the moment, that's Zena and Katey.

Many of Zena's quiet moments on shift were spent staring down at the little faces so perfectly and individually formed. She'd imagine this one would become a powerful president of some company. That one over there would become a laboratory researcher of muscle diseases in humans. And that one over there... well, she might become another Katey with her smile that prods others to keep up the good fight even when life creates noisy overloads.

How Could She Have Done It?

Sitting at the supper table, Zena had a troubled look on her face, that mom and dad took special note of. Their daughter was rather picky about eating her food and cleaning her plate, but the adults decided she'd explain what troubled her heart when she was ready.

"Mom. I did something today that I will always remember, and that it will probably cause me difficulty for the next few days." Zena's mom softly said, "I'll be glad to listen, if you want me to." Well, the only thing is, I left my cell phone locked in my nursery ward locker and I can't get it until I go back in, on Monday evening." We'll not mention her mom's thoughts about the oversight.

For the first few hours that evening, the teen asked herself how she'd possibly live through a whole weekend without her candy red cell phone with which she could communicate with the world. But when she woke up the next morning, she ran her hand over her soft fluffy bed covers and began thinking about those beautiful wiggly people that could do little more than grow new muscles, cry, and give you a smile brighter and bigger than any rainbow or sunset.

Through the remainder of the weekend Zena kept pondering the real meaning of 'beauty.' What is it? Is beauty a gleaming new cell phone, or the finishing touches spent with eye liner and mascara, at her little makeup table?

The youth pastor put the frosting on the cake as he used God's word to show that real beauty can't be manufactured by man. And it can't be created with eye shadow and lipstick. Pastor Dean taught his teen church group with the Bible's explanation of beauty, by starting with a newborn baby. The Bible used the word 'nativity' in showing all the blessings of beauty God has given every person that breathes. (Ezekiel 16) A few verses later scripture explained how mankind was putting those beautiful things on their idols and worshiping them.

Then Zena's tears flowed when she read further and saw where idol worship led the parents to sacrifice (incinerate) their children in their evil worship. It was then and there, Zena decided she now knew what real beauty was, and she wanted to honor God by faithfully gratefully worshiping Him for all the true beauty He has blessed us with.

Friend, if you were to make a list of beautiful things in your life, what would be on the list? Would your parent's names be there? Would the beauty of a new life be listed? I can think of nothing better to put at the top of my list than the beautiful promises that have come with my Salvation that was bought, once and for all, with a blood-red Cross.

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