

Unforeseen Angel



~ by an inmate at the Utah State Prison

When I was a little boy, our family of five moved out to the country to live on a small farm. I found that I had a love for animals and a special way of connecting with them. I had lots of fun and interesting pets, including two pet skunks.

When I was a teenager, my dad and mom got divorced; something my two older brothers and I didn't see coming. I quit attending church and stopped talking to God. I made bad choices, including smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and dropping out of school. At age 18, one brother died from a drug overdose. He and I were very close!

As an adult, I continued the downhill spiral, using and abusing drugs, along with increased alcohol use. Eventually, I did the unthinkable, for which I was sent to prison - taking the life of an innocent person.

When I first arrived, I was in very bad shape mentally, emotionally, physically, and in grave spiritual darkness. I was separated from my family and the free world, addicted to drugs and alcohol, angry, frustrated, and in denial. I was a complete mess! While sitting in my cell, thinking about the innocent life I took and the pain I know I caused many, including God, I quickly fell into a very dark and deep well of depression for which, at the time, I could see no way out.

My prison cell was a very gloomy place to live. Not only did it have the usual prison bars, the front of each cell was covered entirely with a heavy, steel, diamond-pattern screen. With no window and lack of paint, it certainly had that dungeon look and feel to it.

One day, a little, furry-faced mouse came wandering into my cell clearly looking for trouble or an easy snack. This was my happiest moment on A-block! I was happy to give the little guy anything he wanted. I broke off a piece of cracker and put it on the floor. He quickly grabbed it and was off in a furry flash! Minutes later he was back. After several times of having my new friend scampering off with his chunks of food, leaving me with no one to chat with, I decided to give him much smaller pieces in the hope that he would stay and eat, instead of leaving to store it. It worked!

The next day, he was eating small pieces of food from my fingers. Soon after, he would sit on the palm of my hand happily eating his yummy treats. He would sit on his hind legs, proudly holding his food with his tiny front claws while staring at me with his beady, little eyes as I sat on my bed having a serious chat with him. I was clearly the talker as he seemed content with just nibbling on his yummy treats while listening to my non-stop chatter. Only when I stopped talking did his nibbling and whiskers come to a complete halt.

A favorite thing I enjoyed doing with my little, furry friend was to rub peanuts on the tips of my fingers. He would lightly grab a finger tip with his teeth, tugging and pulling with all his might hoping to take the giant morsel to his secret hiding place. Once he realized that my finger wasn't going anywhere he would sit on his hind legs while firmly holding onto a finger with his tiny claws as he licked the delicious salt and peanut oil from the tips of my fingers.

I thoroughly enjoyed his company! For 3-4 weeks he was my little buddy. May sound strange to most people, but that little creature that God put on this earth distracted me just long enough to help get me through the darkest, loneliest, most unstable time in my life!

It is my sincere belief that everyone will have an "Unforeseen Angel" come into their life in some way, shape, or form. It may not happen today or tomorrow, but it WILL happen.

Whether you are a teenager or an adult, male or female, no matter your race, religion, color, or just different in some special way, we are ALL children of God. We ALL have value and a purpose here on earth! And no matter what issues or challenges you are going through in your life, know that you are NOT alone! If you find yourself in a very dark place struggling to find hope or purpose in life, PLEASE take the first step toward a brighter, happier, more fulfilling life by contacting:

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

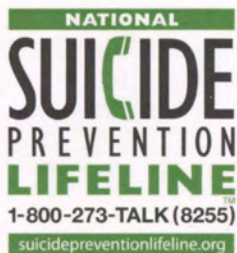


This story is dedicated to:

- Amber Douglas, who took her precious life at the age of 24.
- To Christina Humphrey, who almost took her life had it not been for two, stray kittens that distracted her just long enough to realize she needed to seek help.
- To all the families and loved ones who have lost someone due to suicide, and to all those who have attempted or are thinking about suicide.

Note:

Amber Douglas is the daughter of John and Becky Douglas. Shortly after Amber's death, it was discovered that she had been sending small amounts of her college allowance to an orphanage in India. Becky flew to India to see about the orphanage. While there, she came face-to-face with leprosy and decided to do something about it. She started Rising Star Outreach, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the stigma of leprosy in India. I learned about Rising Star through a PBS documentary, Breaking the Curse. It changed my life. To learn more, visit www.risingstaroutreach.org.



Veterans
Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

Text HOME
to 741741

for free, 24/7 crisis
support in the US.