

Sample Chapter From -
A MOTHER'S JOURNEY

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CHAPTER SEVEN
A Leap of Faith

“You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it true.”

— Richard Bach, *Illusions*

I could tell by the expression on Mike's face as he entered the living room that this had been another bad day. For six weeks he had been job hunting. In a small university town with so many needy students like themselves, competition was stiff. He slumped down on the couch beside me as I nursed our three-month old son. Natalie played happily at our feet.

“Nothing again. Just a lot of false leads.” We both knew only too well that we were at the end of our savings and almost out of food.

“I'm sure something will come along, honey.” I smiled reassuringly, running my hand over his weary shoulders and back.

Mike shook his head, looking ruefully at the three of us. “I never should have quit my job. Then we wouldn't be in this fix.”

“Don't say that, Mike! We had to take the chance. You know that job was a dead end. You had to quit so you could finish your degree. Now we have a chance for a better life because we're taking this risk. Don't give up now. We'll think of something!”

Mike cuddled the baby and held me close. “But Norah, we need food. Today. *That* is a harsh reality. I guess we could get food stamps but I hate the thought of doing that. I've always worked for everything.”

Norah's eyes stung with tears. *Food stamps. Welfare... that was for poor people, not people like us who have plenty of ... Plenty of what? Unpaid bills?*

Reluctantly Mike dressed and headed for the Social Services office. It was so embarrassing for both of us to be asking for a “hand-out.” We had come from working- class backgrounds. Our fathers had always worked two or three jobs to make ends meet. Mike, the youngest of ten children, had started selling Sunday papers when he was only five. We were taught to work hard and both of us were too proud to ask our parents for help.

I had agonized over our decision to move over a hundred miles from my parents so Mike could go to the University. Not having food for one's children was especially difficult. Yet how would we ever better our lives if we didn't take risks?

“Here you go!” Mike tossed the neatly stapled booklets of food stamps onto the dining room table relieved that he had done his part. “You can go get the groceries now.”

“*Me?*” I stared in disbelief at my husband. “I'm not going to use them!”

“*I* went and got them. I felt like a beggar. Now *you* can go to the grocery store.”

“Mike, I *can't!* I just can't. I'd be too embarrassed! Will you — come with me? Can we do this together? Please?”

“No, I won’t. I can’t.”

We both sat at opposite ends of the dining room table and stared at the booklets of food stamps. *Food stamps are only for the poor. Poor people are lazy. They deserve to be poor. If you can’t provide for your family, you’re a loser..*

“Maybe all those people who use food stamps are people just like us, Mike,” I said softly. “Maybe they are good people too who just need a little help.” Compassion filled my heart and now I let the tears flow freely.

Mike came over and put his arms around me. No further words needed to be spoken. We had just learned an important lesson we would never forget. “Okay, Little Mother. I’ll go to the grocery store with you. Let’s make the list.”

Suddenly the phone rang. When Mike returned from the kitchen his face was glowing.

“Who was that?”

“The Sheriff’s Department. I start tomorrow! Can you believe it?”

“Now we only have to use food stamps once!” I squealed.

Even though it wasn’t November and our evening meal was simple, for us it was Thanksgiving Day. Each of us, including Natalie, took a turn at offering thanks as we passed a piece of bread around the table, breaking off a morsel and chewing it with gusto.

We had taken a big risk by leaving the security of our hometown and a regular paycheck. We had trusted that as long as we focused on our goal, we would be shown the way. Making changes in our life had taken a lot of courage, faith and trust.

The food stamps triggered our negative judgments of others and ourselves. Never again did Mike and I look with disdain at people who used food stamps. We learned everyone is doing the best they can in any situation. We learned to be thankful that help was there when we needed it.

This would not be the last time Mike and I would take a leap of faith. Whenever we did we felt the presence of some Unseen Force supporting us and our dreams. The more often we took risks and gave up attachment to the false security of something outside ourselves, the closer we felt to the Unlimited Power that flows through all things, including ourselves.