

JILTED AT THE PARK

02/10/20-02/12/20 | Episode 17-19

In this story, Carlos reminds us of the absolute power of Christ-centered love, mercy, and forgiveness.

--

Here is another short story for you. I call this one: **JILTED AT THE PARK.**

Let me give you the backstory first.

Scotty Jefferson and Emily Cabrinski are residents of Duarte, California. Duarte is a small city of approximately 21,000 that is bounded to the north by the San Gabriel Mountains and to the west, south, and east by the cities of Bradbury, Monrovia, Irwindale, and Azusa.

This would be Southern California, County of Los Angeles, for those of you not familiar with your California geography.

Ever since he could remember, Scotty had long had a crush on Emily. I suppose it makes sense being that they lived on the same block and on the same street with the homes of two neighbors separating them.

Scotty has one brother, Greg, who is 12 years older than he. Emily is an only child. Scotty's Father, whose name is Eldon, works for the city as an engineer. His mother Mary is a stay at home mom. Emily's parents are divorced. Emily lives with her mother.

When they were kids, Scotty would always walk Emily to school and back home. They shared many conversations and adventures together over the years. For Emily, her relationship with Scotty was as a friend, however, for Scotty, Emily was more than just a friend.

Being an only child, being raised by a single mother who had to work, Emily, when she wasn't spending time with Scotty, would often times hang around with peers who were questionable at best.

As the friends entered into high school Scotty began to notice changes with Emily. She began smoking cigarettes. She began to behave in a fickle manner and she never seemed happy. This weighed heavily on Scotty's heart. Although he loved Emily, he never told Emily that he loved her out of fear that Emily would reject him should she not feel the same way toward him.

While the first two years of high school were challenging for Scotty where Emily is concerned, he was happy to see by their junior year that Emily began to revert back to her former self. So much so, that just before the start of summer vacation leading into their senior year, Emily asked Scotty if he would take her to Disneyland.

Disneyland was a place Emily had always longed to visit but couldn't because of the financial situation at home.

By this time Scotty was working in the men's department of a major retailer at the local mall. A big smile raced across his face and without hesitating he said, **"I would love to take you to Disneyland. How about next Saturday?"** Emily agreed, which is where our short story begins ...

--

The day had finally arrived. Scotty was tickled with excitement. He was finally going to go on a date with Emily to Disneyland of all places. The entire family was happy for Scotty. Even his brother Greg, who happened to be home from college that weekend was happy for his little brother.

"Well, it looks like you finally did it, brother," Greg said. **"You're going on a date with Emily. I am so happy for you."**

“Thanks Greg!” Scotty responded. He was so excited that when he turned to his brother and asked how he looked, Greg chuckled and said, **“You look fine bro, but I would strongly recommend you put your pants on. Walking around in your underwear at home is one thing, but at Disneyland? I doubt you will make past security”**

Both boys were laughing hysterically when mom and dad walked into the room. **“This must feel like going to the prom for you son?”** Scotty’s father asked.

“It sure does dad. Man, I am nervous,” Scotty said in return.

“Don’t be” Scotty’s mom interjected. **“Just remember what we taught you, be a gentleman and respectful.”**

“Thanks mother. I’ll remember.” Scotty responded with a hint of sarcasm.

Scotty finished getting ready, hugged his family, and performed the perfunctory last-minute check – wallet, cash, car keys, etc., before hopping into the car and driving the three houses down to Emily’s house.

Emily was waiting on the front porch when Scotty arrived.

He quickly put the car in park, exited the vehicle, walked around to the passenger door, opened it and with a bow jokingly said to Emily, **“My Lady, your carriage awaits!”**

Emily chuckled to herself before saying, **“Scotty, you dork. C’mon, let’s go!”**

The distance from Duarte to Disneyland is approximately 32 miles and should only take about that much time to drive there. However,

anyone born and raised in the Southern California area knows different. What should have taken about 32 minutes to arrive, took almost two hours. But Scotty didn't mind, he was on a date with Emily and they were going to Disneyland. Nothing was going to spoil this special day. Or so he thought.

After arriving and paying the admission to enter the park, the couple proceeded to walk toward Main Street when Emily said to Scotty, **“Oh darn it. I have to go to the restroom. I better do that right now. Wait here for me Scotty. I shouldn't be long.”**

Emily headed for the restroom located at the entrance of Main Street while Scotty took a seat on an empty bench. His back was toward the restroom that Emily had chosen to use.

As he was waiting for Emily, Scotty decided to plan their day in addition to people watching, something he always enjoyed doing.

Five minutes turned into ten. Ten turned into twenty and twenty turned into thirty before Scotty became concerned about Emily.

As he stood up and turned around to face the restroom where Emily had gone, he saw nothing but a sea of ladies and girls coming and going but no Emily.

Not certain what to do, Scotty approached a mother and her daughter who had just exited from the restroom. He explained the situation and after providing a description of Emily he politely asked the mother if she and/or her daughter would mind checking the facility to see if Emily was in there.

Noticing the obvious concern on his face the mother was all too happy to check for Scotty. After a few minutes the woman came back out and said, **“I am sorry son, but there is no one in the restroom**

that fits the description you gave me. Perhaps she exited the restroom and failed to see you sitting on the bench and is now looking for you.”

That thought never occurred to Scotty. **“Perhaps you are right,”** he said. **“I had my back to the restroom and with all the people in this park she may not have seen me.”**

“Well, she couldn’t have gone far,” the woman said with a smile. She touched Scotty’s arm as if to reassure him and said, **“I would start looking for her in this general area first. Being this is her first time to the park she is probably visiting every shop on Main Street. I will say a prayer that you find her.”**

Scotty thanked the woman for her concern and prayers before setting out to look for Emily. Scotty had been searching about fifteen minutes when an announcement came over the park sound system:

“Attention guests. May we have your attention please. Will a Scotty Jefferson please report to the guest services booth near the Main Street entrance. Again, will a Mr. Scotty Jefferson please report to the guest services booth near the Main Street entrance.”

When Scotty heard his name announced he stopped, listened, and said to himself, **“Oh thank God, Emily. You decided to send in the cavalry. Hang on. I am on my way.”**

Scotty abandoned his search and headed straight for the Main Street Guest Services Booth as instructed. When he arrived, he did not see Emily, but he was greeted by a smiling Disney employee.

“Hello there sir,” the employee said as she greeted Scotty. **“Welcome to the park. Is there something I may assist you with?”**

“Yes, please,” Scotty said. **“My name is Scotty Jefferson. I just heard over the loudspeaker that I was supposed to come to guest services. I seem to have misplaced my friend.”** Scotty was very concerned about Emily and it showed on his face.

“O yes, Mr. Jefferson,” the guest service employee said. **“Emily was just here. She left this note** (which the attendant handed to Scotty) **and said that we should page you to come to guest services because she knew that you were probably searching for her. She did not want you to worry.”**

Scotty was relieved to know that Emily had thought to stop and ask for help but didn't understand why she wasn't at guest services when he arrived. He then opened the envelope to read the note inside. The look on his face had gone from concern to one of sadness. Here is what the note said:

“Dear Scotty. Thank you for bringing me to Disneyland. Please don't look for me. I am fine. I am with Jimmy. I am leaving with him and not coming back. Now that I am 18 there is nothing keeping me here. I will call mom later. I am sorry I had to do this, especially to you. Love, your friend, Emily.”

Scotty was crushed. He didn't know what think. His brain was on fire with a plethora of questions, none of which could be answered.

He dropped his hands into his lap, Emily's note still clinched tightly in his right hand. Being both sensitive and emotional, Scotty knew that he could not express his emotions out in the open public, so he quickly dashed for the nearest restroom and locked himself behind the first empty stall that he could find.

It was at that moment that he began to weep, albeit quietly. He didn't want any of the men entering the restroom to hear him crying.

What he thought was only a few minutes from the time he entered the stall was actually thirty minutes. There was a knock on the door, **“Sir, are you okay?”** the voice said. **“You have been in that stall for quite some time now.”**

Scotty was taken by surprise. He immediately wiped his eyes and composed himself before responding, **“I’m sorry. I didn’t realize I had been in here that long. Yes, everything is okay. I am just getting ready to leave. Thank you for your concern.”**

“Not a problem, sir,” the voice responded. **“Someone had reported that you had been in that stall for and we wanted to be certain that you were okay. I will report back and let them know that all is well.”**

Scotty thanked the man who was obviously a park employee as he departed from the facility. He then placed Emily’s note in his right pant pocket as he stood up. He wiped any remnant of tears from his eyes using a handkerchief his mother had given him before exiting from the stall. He then proceeded to the sink to wash his hands and face.

Scotty knew he couldn’t go home before the park closed because his family would know that something was wrong. He decided to remain at the park until closing time, thus giving the impression that he and Emily had spent the entire day at the park.

It was well past 8:00 PM when Scotty arrived home. He was greeted by his parents who were happy to see him. They asked how his day went. He said it was great and that he and Emily had a wonderful time. He then excused himself and began to head upstairs to his bedroom when his father asked, **“Are you and Emily planning to go out again soon?”**

It was all Scotty could do from holding back the tears caused by the pain he felt in his heart. He turned around, looked at his parents while keeping his composure and said, **“No, dad. I don’t think we’ll be going out again. Emily said she is happy with us just being friends.”**

He smiled faintly before turning around and started up the stairs again toward his bedroom. His parents knew something wasn’t right, but decided not to press their son on the matter. When he was ready, he would let them know.

Scotty didn’t waste any time getting undressed which he usually does every time he is at home. He also didn’t realize Greg was in his room.

Their bedrooms are adjoined by a common bathroom.

Hearing his brother enter into his bedroom, Greg immediately stopped what he was doing and proceeded to Scotty’s room. When he opened the door to Scotty’s bedroom, Greg heard his brother crying. Instinctively, he knew something had gone wrong with the date and immediately went into big brother mode.

When he asked Scotty what was wrong, Scotty immediately stood up, wrapped his arms around his brother unable to hold back the tears from his broken heart and told him Greg everything.

Greg was deeply concerned for Scotty. The two were very close and Greg never minced words when it came to his baby brother. **“You hurt Scotty and you deal with me!”**

Greg asked Scotty to give him the note Emily had left him. He was going to have to let their parents and Emily’s mother know what happened.

Just then there was a knock at the door. It was Scotty's parents. Greg said to Scotty, **"Listen brother, you lie down and have a good cry. I will take care of mom, dad and Mrs. Cabrinski. Don't worry about a thing."**

Scotty stood in the darkness dressed only in a t-shirt and his underwear as Greg answered the door. Greg asked his parents if he could speak with them privately downstairs. Scotty laid back on his bed and cried himself to sleep.

Greg explained the whole story to his parents. They were heartbroken for their son. Greg suggested to his parents that they let Scotty rest before seeing him and that they should walk to Emily's house to inform her mother so she wouldn't worry.

Emily's mother was embarrassed by her daughters behavior. She apologized for what Emily did to Scotty. She said she had only just finished speaking with Emily by telephone. When Mrs. Jefferson asked how Emily was, her mother responded, **"She is fine. She said for me not to worry. She apologized again for what she had done to Scotty and said that she had no intentions of coming back home."**

No one spoke a word.

Below are entries from Greg's journal (Scotty's brother) related to the rest of the story.

It took several years for Scotty to get over the incident of that day at Disneyland. His heart was crushed. You might even say, so was his spirit. He truly loved Emily. He had since they were children.

Although he remained close to me, Mom and Dad, Scotty wanted nothing further to do with dating and, for almost two years following the incident, withdrew from all his friends with the exception of David, his best friend since kindergarten.

Scotty completed his senior year in high school barely speaking a word or venturing outside. The day following his graduation he told mom and dad that he wanted to attend a university outside of California. Rather than to go to USC, *the University of Southern California*, my alma mater and dad's as originally planned, he decided instead that he apply to enroll at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Our family was very understanding and supportive of my little brother's decision, although mother didn't like the idea that her baby would be so far away from home.

I was working remotely as an independent consultant at the time Scotty announced his decision to go to OSU, so I reassured mother that I would lease a house or apartment in Stillwater in order to be close by just in case Scotty needed his big brother around.

Scotty liked that idea as well much to the relief of our parents.

Scotty eventually applied for and was accepted into Oklahoma State's College of Osteopathic Medicine. After completing all the necessary studies, residency, etc., Scotty became a doctor.

As fate would have it, I met the love of my life, Maria, who incidentally was a friend of Scotty's at Oklahoma State. In fact, it was Scotty who introduced us. After graduation, Maria and I were married and moved to Scottsdale, Arizona, in order to remain close to her family in New Mexico and to mine in California.

Scotty never dated again after the Emily incident. Instead, he made the decision to live out his life in the service of others rather than devote himself to a relationship or marriage. He believed becoming

involved in a relationship would distract him from what he felt called in his heart to do, to serve Christ by serving others especially the poor.

Scotty worked several years at a local hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma before making the decision to pick up stakes and move to Arizona. He wanted to be closer to the family.

Mother and Dad had said for quite some time that they would put the house up for sale and move where their sons were after dad retired. That is exactly what they did.

What ever happened to Emily you ask?

Emily's mother died a couple of years following the incident. Mom said she died from a broken heart. Emily's action was the last straw.

No one, not even Scotty, heard from Emily since the day she skipped out on Scotty at Disneyland. That whole situation was bizarre.

Prior to moving to Arizona, Scotty had begun specializing in caring for cancer patients. He said he never forgot how much the death of our cousin's baby girl from cancer had affected him. That was part of the reason he wanted to become a doctor, to help cancer patients.

Let's fast forward three years after Scotty moved to Arizona. My brother worked at a cancer hospital and research center that specialized in caring for cancer patients.

One day while he was making his rounds, he stopped at the nurses station to see if any new patients had been admitted. Scotty said he went completely white when the nurse at the station informed him that one new patient had just been admitted and her name was...yes, you guessed it, Emily Cabrinski. She was in stage four colon cancer.

The attending physician who initially examined Emily wrote on her chart that he didn't believe she should be admitted due to the advanced stage of her cancer. He believes Emily should have been placed in hospice care.

At that moment all the memories of that day at Disneyland flooded into Scotty's mind. Scotty thanked the nurse and said that he would be back to check on the new patient shortly but had something to do first. That is when he called and asked if I could meet him at the hospital.

And I did.

As soon as I arrived Scotty took me into a private office and said, **"Greg, I just found out that Emily is here."** Initially I thought he meant "here" as in Arizona. **"What do you mean, here?"** I asked. **"Do you mean here in Arizona?"**

Scotty replied, **"No! Yes! I mean, yes she is here in Arizona and is a patient at my hospital."** As soon as Scotty disclosed that information my jaw dropped to the floor. I couldn't believe what he had just told me.

Scotty explained that Emily was in stage four colon cancer and from what he could see on her chart, the cancer had metastasized onto the neighboring organs. She didn't have long to live. **"Why here?"** He asked. **"Why would the hospital admit her if the cancer has progressed to stage four rather than place her in hospice? I don't understand it,"**

My response to him was, **"Some things aren't meant to be understood brother. It's fate. That is what this is ... fate. I know what she did was wrong and she hurt you in ways I cannot even imagine, but maybe the one person she needs most right now is the one person who is**

capable of seeing beyond the past in order to see the suffering servant or child of God. In this case, Emily.”

It was going to be the hardest thing Scotty ever had to do, but he knew I was right, he needed to see Emily as she is now and not as the young, impetuous girl she was 35 years ago.

“You’re right brother,” Scotty said. **“I am going to head up there right now and see her.”**

I gave my brother a hug as is customary in our family and said that I would stop by the hospital chapel on my way out to say a prayer for the both of them.

Emily was sleeping when Scotty entered her room. She looked nothing like her former self. Rather, she looked like a victim of a German concentration camp from World War II.

The sight of seeing Emily in that condition was more than Scotty could bare. He began to weep.

Emily must have sensed Scotty’s presence because she opened her eyes and with a weak voice said, **“Scotty!?”**

Scotty was startled and stepped back for a moment before moving toward Emily. He gently lifted her right hand into his, tears still streaming down his face and asked, **“Emily, what happened to you?”**

Emily did not have the strength to speak except to say as as she attempted to squeeze his hand, **“I loved you, too.”**

Then she expired.