

A Side of Story

“Dinner’s ready!” Mom called out. “Tonight I’m going to tell you a story.”

“What is it gonna be about this time?” Molly asked.

“Yeah!” July yelled.

“Wait ‘til your father gets here.”

“I’m home!” Dad yelled at exactly the right time. “What are we having today?”

“Meatloaf with a side of green beans and a story,” Mom said.

“Oooo,” Dad said. “What story?”

“Our story,” Mom replied.

When we were young children just like you, we dreamed of playing together forever and ever. Of course we couldn’t though because I am black and he is white and in the 1960s there was segregation. We were neighbors and could see each other through our windows. We sent secret messages back and forth on paper airplanes until our parents found out and banned us from sending messages. Carl’s parents even threatened to call the police! We went to different schools and we had no way of communicating yet we still knew that we both wanted two things: segregation to end and to be able to play together. Pretty soon we found ways to communicate differently - calling, letters, hand expressions and even blinking through our windows. Finally we settled on sign language.

One day we both learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks and what they were doing to change the world and how it was all working. By the time Dr. King was giving his “I Have A Dream” speech, we knew what we wanted to do. We were going to make our own speech. We made a string zipline between our houses and put a bucket on it. One person would write a sentence on a piece of paper then send it to the other

person down the zipline. The other person would write a second sentence and send it back and so on. Our speech showed how even though we are different, that isn't bad. It's good. It was very well written for nine year olds. The whole time we felt something that at that time we couldn't quite name. We showed our parents the speech and they said we were right but they weren't the ones who made that rule. We realized that we weren't the only ones being affected by segregation and not being able to play together. We went with our parents to marches and sit-ins and we protested peacefully every second we got. We did it until segregation ended and we had a big party. At that time we realized what the feeling we felt was. Love. As soon as we could, we married and had you two.

"Wow!" Molly and July said.

"Wow is right," Dad said. "Times were tough but we didn't give up."

"In the end, it all ended up okay," Mom said. "We saw that some boundaries are meant to be pushed down."

"We're going to push them down," July said.

"Yeah!" Molly said.

"Good," Mom said.

"That's great," said Dad.

They all had a great dinner and passed the story down with happiness and love.