

Not Just Taken Along, Taken In

After waging a relentless campaign of intense psychological warfare, I was somehow able to weasel my way aboard for my Cousin Derek's family vacation to Six Flags back in the early 70's. I like to think it was my Eddie Haskell like charm, but some believe I simply frazzled my uncle's nerves until he could no longer make a sound judgment. In any event, before he'd fully realized his folly, we were backing out of the driveway, waving goodbye to my squalling little brother Heath. Poor thing, his little tantrum just seemed so primitive. He had a lot to learn about the subtle art of persuasion.

After putting a few hundred miles behind us, we pulled into a little roadside diner for lunch. Boy was I glad to get out of that car. I wasn't used to long trips and I'd already hurled twice. I guess I should have backed off the chili the night before. Besides, I'd already run out of ways to pester Derek and his little brother Jeff, and both parents were no longer responding to my incessant questioning, "How much further?"

Once seated, my uncle Dolly tossed each of us a menu. I studied him carefully, not knowing exactly how to react. Had he slept through my mother's pre-trip briefing? I'd only eaten out a few times, and NEVER had I been allowed to pick my own food.

"I get to choose?" I queried carefully, reading his expression for any signs of a practical joke.

"Sure," he smiled, "What'd you like?"

Hastily pouring over the pictures I found a hugely expensive golden fried shrimp dinner and pointed at it. He gulped. "Oh, and a bowl of chili too," I added. We were to soon find both selections would hit us pretty hard in the pocketbook, or at least in that region, if you get my drift.

"Look! There's Colonial Sanders from Kentucky Fried Chicken," Derek gasp, pointing to an elderly white haired gentleman with a cane. We all laughed. Sure enough, it looked just like him. Soon we were picking out other famous look-a-likes. It was noted I resembled a young Gilligan.

After the meal I prodded Derek to talk his dad out of some of the jingle I'd heard rattling in his pocket. I had my eye on some candy up at the counter. To our delight he pulled out a wad of nickels. He was about to lay them on the table when I reached across and scooped them out of his palm.

"Now that's for both of you!" he called as I bolted off.

We had our selections on the counter and were ciphering the change when a grandfatherly voice spoke from behind us. "I'll get that for you young fellows." We turned. It was the white haired gentleman with the goatee. He stepped forward and handed the young lady more than enough to cover the tab. He tousled our heads, and I'll never forget what he said as he turned to go. "Just tell em' the Colonel did it."

It was him after all, the Colonel! Who'd have guessed it, in that sleepy little diner. We stood there in awe. To be honest, I don't recall much about Six Flags, but I can still almost smell the faint fragrance of those 11 herbs and spices as he walked off.

I often wonder what it would have been like to live in Jesus' day, and to have a face to face encounter with the KING, God in the flesh, the Great I AM. You would think those people would have really been in awe. I suppose some were, but the Bible tells us that many of them scoffed at the things of God... to His face! They heard His wonderful truths, saw the miracles, smelled the wonderful fragrance of His love, and still walked away unbelieving. Is it possible that we could do the same in our lives today?

You may not believe this, but despite our Eddie Haskell like charm, it's not imperative to God's enjoyment we be taken along on this trip. In fact, when you really think about God's grace there's a temptation to look for signs of a practical joke. It seems way too good to be true. He not only takes those of us along who ask to go, but offers to take us in, permanently. (*His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. And He did this because He wanted to!* **Ephesians 1:5**. NLT)

But anyway- I can almost hear Jesus saying, "Just tell em' the KING did it."

-Guy Sheffield 1-25-07