

A photograph of a narrow, paved path winding through a dense forest. Sunlight filters through the thick canopy of green trees, creating a dappled light effect on the path and the surrounding foliage. The path leads from the bottom center towards the middle of the frame, disappearing into the woods.

MYSTERIOUS WAYS:

9 Inspiring
Stories
That Show
Evidence of
God's Love

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

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What are Mysterious Ways? A perennial favorite of *Guideposts* readers, these short stories offer proof of “things unseen,” of miracles. These seeming twists of fate cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence:

- a mother, anxious to return home, experiences the frustration of flight delays—only to get an unexpected surprise!
- a man saves a drowning child alerted by a woman’s cries for help. Why was he the only one who understood her?
- a big black dog guards a minister’s family while he’s away. But where did he come from and where did he go?

Mysterious Ways are inexplicable spine-tingling stories showing evidence of God’s love and God’s grace. Enjoy this collection of our favorite Mysterious Ways stories!

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TO GIVE AND RECEIVE

**A SHINY NEW BIKE WAS ALL I WANTED... BUT
SOMEONE NEEDED IT MORE.**

By Ginger Lingo, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

More than anything I wanted a new bike. I dreamed about it every day while walking to school. My father was a pastor so we didn't have much money. The only way I was going to get that bike was to earn my own money for it. So I worked hard, doing odd jobs like babysitting, weeding and raking leaves. I stashed every penny I earned from those jobs and my allowance in my piggy bank.

Then one day at Sunday school our teacher told us of a letter she had received from Chile about a boy who had hepatitis. His missionary parents said he was recovering, but his spirits were still low. "Can you think of anything that might cheer him up?" our teacher asked us.

"A new bike!" the whole class exclaimed eagerly, and we agreed we would raise the money.


All week long I agonized over what to do. My conscience could only come up with one answer—give up my savings for the boy in Chile. So I emptied out my piggy bank and brought every cent to Sunday school. It was the hardest thing I had ever done, and maybe that's why it felt so right.

In college years later I found myself praying for something even harder than I had prayed for the bike—a

man meant just for me. All my friends were dating. Why wasn't I? Was God asking me to wait again?

At last I met someone named Steve. We had a lot in common. He went to the college where my father taught, and my roommate was engaged to his best friend. He was earnest, smart and hard-working. But I couldn't help wondering, is he really the one?

One evening our families got together for dinner, a chance for everybody to get to know each other better. Over dessert and coffee Steve's mother talked about some of the places they had lived when they were missionaries. "Once when we were in Chile," she said, "Steve got hepatitis. You know what cheered him up?"

Of course, I knew. He got a bike—my bike. And I got the husband I have been married to for 29 years. 

MIA'S TWIN

WE WANTED TO ADOPT TWINS BUT THEN WE MET
MIA.

By Holly Funk, Lyons, Illinois

Twins. Ever since my husband, Doug, and I chose to adopt, we requested twin girls. I felt that God meant for us to have twins—the number “two” just wouldn’t leave my head. We bought a tandem stroller, baby blankets, even two little wind-up lambies that played music. But then an adoption agency introduced us to a 13-month-old girl who had been abandoned outside a textile factory in Yangzhou, China.

Doug and I fell in love with her instantly, and all thoughts of twins were put aside. I knew we had to name her Mia. I had never considered that name before, but somehow it just seemed right (and by now maybe you’ve noticed that I’m often at the mercy of God’s little “nudges”).

In July 2004, we brought baby Mia home with us to Chicago. We gave away the tandem stroller and extra blanket and bought a single stroller, but for some reason I couldn’t part with that second little lambie.

There was an internet forum for parents who had adopted from the same orphanage. For a year I shared updates on Mia’s progress.


Then one day I noticed a posting from a woman named Diana in Florida who was talking about her daughter, a

little girl who was the same age as Mia. I sent her an e-mail and she answered me right away.

Her daughter's birthday was the same as Mia's. "Where was Mia found?" she asked me. Turned out both girls were found in the very same place, a week apart.

We exchanged pictures. Wow! The girls looked so much alike! So many similarities. Could it be? Only a DNA test could tell us for sure. So Diana and I did a swab test on our daughters. The girls were related all right... they were twins!

Our daughters met for the first time last August. They hugged each other and acted almost as if they had never been apart. Mia gave her sister the lambie that was meant especially for her.

Oh, and there is one other thing that the two girls have in common. There's not just one Mia. Her twin is named Mia too. 

THE PACKED CAR

THE INSURANCE AGENT GASPED WHEN HE SAW THE
DAMAGE—SO DID I.

By Ramona Scarborough, Salem, Oregon

My family was driving across Canada to Montreal where my husband, Ray, and I were going to be helping out a new church there. Ray had gotten a head start with our daughter in a rental truck stuffed with our belongings. I took my two-year-old, John, in our family car, a hardtop convertible jam-packed from floor to ceiling with piles of books to use in our work. They hadn't been able to fit in the truck.

We crossed into Ontario, driving along a narrow two-lane road. A heavy rain fell. Suddenly a truck veered into our lane. I turned the wheel sharply. The brakes screamed. Our tires hit the gravel on the shoulder. We went spinning off the road. We're going to die, I thought as the car flipped and rolled into a deep ditch.

Coming to my senses, I heard a man's voice from somewhere outside my car. "There's nobody alive in there." Everything was hazy; fine pieces of glass covered me from head to toe. The metal frame of our vehicle pressed tight against my back. I could barely breathe. John! Panicked, I reached behind me.

"Are you all right, honey?"

"Yes, Mama."

I craned my neck toward the window. “We’re alive,” I cried. “My little boy and I. Please help us!” A man reached through a shattered window and pulled John out. A few others pried the metal frame away enough for me to escape. Except for some minor scrapes, cuts and bruises, we were okay. A kind policeman escorted us as we rode in an ambulance to the hospital. He offered to take us to the impound lot to retrieve our belongings when we were ready.

Four days later we went to the lot. The insurance agent who accompanied us gasped when he saw the wreck. So did I. The policeman looked baffled.

“These hardtop convertibles don’t have a window post to keep the roof up if they flip,” he said.

“Then why weren’t we...” My voice trailed off.

Our eyes turned toward the back seat. The roof had stayed up just enough so we weren’t crushed, supported by an amazing brace. Piled from the floor to the ceiling were the books that hadn’t fit in our rental truck. Our Bibles. ⑥

THE SMOKER'S RESOLVE

**HER ATTEMPTS TO QUIT SMOKING HAD FAILED.
UNTIL SHE HEARD THAT FAMILIAR VOICE...**

By Christine Gauthier, Wiarton, Ontario

Took drag on a cigarette one morning as I walked the wooded path toward my tiny cabin deep in the forest of the Bruce Peninsula, about two and a half hours north of Toronto, Ontario.

I know, I know. Smoking is bad for you, dangerous and unhealthy. I had tried to kick the habit, prayed about it too, but I couldn't. Not even when my beloved aunt Bernie got lung cancer. How many times had she begged me to quit? After she died, I vowed to stop, and did briefly, but inevitably I had started up again.

The cabin had been one of aunt Bernie's favorite places to stay. Lately, I had earned some extra income by renting it out to folks who were visiting nearby Lake Huron. New renters were due to arrive that afternoon.

The cabin has no electricity, so I had to make sure there was enough propane in the tank to run the fridge and the stove for the weekend.

Seeing the cabin in the distance through the trees, I thought about my aunt. I could still hear her voice telling

me, “Quit smoking; it’ll kill you.”

Nearing the cabin, the voice grew stronger. “Quit smoking! It’ll kill you!” I heard, as loud as if my aunt were standing right beside me. Finally, I couldn’t ignore it any longer.


I froze in my tracks and dropped the cigarette. Smothered it with my shoe. “Fine, auntie, I put it out. See?”

I continued down the path, resisting the urge to light up again. Reaching the cabin, I opened the door. Whoa! I stepped back and wrinkled my nose.

The odor was strong, and unmistakable. Propane fumes so thick I could see the air shimmer inside the cabin.

I ran around to the back and found the problem. The previous renters had forgotten to turn off the propane tank before they left. The cabin had been filling with gas for a week!

If I had still been smoking that cigarette... I thought now, horrified.

My aunt Bernie was right. Smoking can kill. But it won’t kill me. The next day I started a quit-smoking program, and I haven’t lit up since. How could I ignore those strong words, spoken to me in a familiar voice at just the right moment? 

UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR

**A BABY WAS DROWING IN THE POOL. WHY WAS I THE
ONLY ONE TO JUMP IN?**

By Escott Brostrom, Rock Island, Illinois

On a hot summer Sunday afternoon, my wife and I had been invited to a swimming party at the home of some friends. With our two children in the care of my grandmother, Cherie and I felt as free as the breeze. As I stood on the diving board, I paused to look up into the serene sky.

But then a frantic voice rose above the party din. At the far end of the pool a woman was screaming. “The baby!” I heard her cry. “He’s at the bottom of the pool!”

No one was doing anything to help. People just stood and stared at her. Confused, I searched the length of the pool and saw what I thought might be a motionless form beneath the water. I dived in—and a baby was there. I hurriedly swept him off the bottom and soon laid him on the deck. He’d turned blue...no breath. I began CPR. *Dear God, help me do it right.*

At last the little boy coughed. A short breath came, then another. He would live.

An ambulance was called, for safety’s sake. While we waited, I couldn’t help asking the others, “Why did you

ignore the woman when she said the boy was drowning?”

A friend answered, “None of us understood her, Scott.”

“What do you mean? Even at the far end I could hear her yelling about the baby.”

“But she’s Mexican. None of us understood her Spanish.”

“Spanish? I heard her yell in English.”

“We didn’t. All we heard was Spanish.”

“It’s true,” said the woman’s daughter. “Mama can’t speak a word of English.”

“And I don’t understand a word of Spanish,” I said. ©

LIGHTNING ON THE WATER!

**IT SEEMED LIKE A PERFECT SUNNY DAY FOR MY
DAUGHTER AND I TO TAKE OUR CANOE TRIP.**

By Robert Kramer, Leesburg, Florida

For years, my daughter, Candi, and I had talked about canoeing the Yellow River in the Florida panhandle. Finally, during one of her college breaks, we decided to go for it.

We were only half an hour into our trip when the sky turned dark and thunder rumbled in the distance. The current picked up, and I grew uneasy about the rising water.

The rain came down quickly in wind-whipped sheets and the river tossed us wildly over submerged logs and rocks. “We’ve got to dock!” I shouted. Candi bailed water furiously while I searched for a clearing along the dark, tree-lined bank.

The rain was so heavy I couldn’t see more than a few feet ahead. Every time I’d spot a place to come ashore, we were already past it.

Suddenly a bolt of lightning struck the water directly in front of us. We’ve got to get off this river now! Just then I saw a faint glow in the distance. A house?

I steered the canoe toward the glow. It was a porch light. And there in front of the house was a cleared section of the riverbank.

By the time we got the canoe up on dry land, the porch light was off. “Lucky it was on when we needed it,” I said to Candi. A woman standing on the porch ushered us inside the house.

“Thank you,” I said to her as we dried ourselves off. “I don’t know how we’d have made it to shore if your porch light hadn’t been on.”

“But it couldn’t have been,” she said. “The power’s been out all day.” Ⓜ

OUR GUARD DOG

I WORRIED FOR MY FAMILY'S SAFETY WHILE I WAS AWAY. WHO WOULD WATCH OVER THEM?

By Rev. John E. Trincale, Forest, Virginia

My very first assignment as a minister was to an inner-city parish in Camden, New Jersey. There was drug dealing and violent crime within sight of our home, and rough characters knocked on our door at all hours of the day and night.

Not long after we arrived, I had to attend a week-long church conference out of town. I dreaded leaving my wife and three children alone in our new neighborhood. *God*, I prayed, *take care of them*.

My first spare moment at the conference, I called home to make sure all was well. My wife assured me that everything was fine and that no one had bothered them. "But there is one thing," she said. "You had barely gotten out the door when a huge black Labrador retriever ambled up to our front porch and lay down. Now he won't leave."

"Don't feed him or touch him," I said. "He's probably one of our neighbor's. He'll go back where he belongs soon enough."

The next day when I called, the dog still hadn't left the front porch. "He never bothers the children or me, but he won't let anyone else come to the door," my wife said. "Not even the mailman!"

At the end of the conference, I returned home to find the big black dog sitting on our front porch. He stood up when I opened the car door, his eyes trained on my every move. Once I reached the steps, I said tentatively, “Hey boy, I’ve got to get in the house to be with my family.” With that, he stepped aside.

After hugging my wife and kids, I asked her what we should do about the dog. “I don’t know,” she said. “I have to admit, I felt completely safe knowing he was out there keeping watch.” We both looked to the porch. The dog was gone. I went outside and walked around the block checking all the front porches. No sign of the big retriever! It was as if he had vanished off the face of the earth.

And perhaps he had. ⑥

MESSAGE TRANSMITTED

A STRESSFUL DAY AT WORK ENDS
ON A HAPPY NOTE.

By Terri Kilroy, Meridian, Idaho

Ten o'clock and I'm still at the office, I thought. I'd been putting in a lot of extra hours lately. I barely had a moment to think, pray, talk to my friends—just relax. Everyone else had left hours ago. I'd promised myself I would get home early tonight. So why was I still at work? Just one more fax, I told myself. Then I'll leave.

I put the papers on the machine and punched in the number of a client in Los Angeles. Then I pressed the "send" button. An error message flashed on the display beside the number. I looked at it closely. Odd. That's not the number I dialed. This one was a 714 area code. That's Anaheim, I thought. Why would the fax machine be calling there? I tried again, carefully dialing my client's number. The same thing happened.

Finally, I decided to call the mysterious 714 number. The phone rang a few times. Then a woman answered shakily, "Hello?"

I explained to her that I had been trying to send a fax.

"There's no fax machine here," she said. "This is a


nursing home. You called an old lady.” I quickly apologized for bothering her so late at night.

“Oh, no, my dear, I’m glad you called. I hardly ever get any visitors. In fact, I was just sitting here asking the Lord for a friendly voice.”

The old woman and I chatted for a few minutes. Then a few more. She told me all about her life in the nursing home. I talked about my job. Before I knew it, we were talking about faith too.

“Thank you so much for calling, dear,” the woman finally said. “You made my night.”

Now it was really late. But all the way home a good feeling stayed with me. I didn’t even think about the fax until the next day, when I got to work. Oh no, I forgot to send it! I called my client to apologize.

“What do you mean?” he asked. “I got your fax late last night. It came in just after ten.” 

FLIGHT PLAN

**FLIGHT DELAYS WERE FRUSTRATING FOR THIS
FAMILY, BUT THEY LED TO AN UNEXPECTED
REUNION.**

By Debra Davis, Shreveport, Louisiana


The woman at the airline ticket counter in Munich, Germany, just shook her head. “I’m sorry, but there’s no more availability on this flight,” she said. *Great*, I thought. My husband, Bob, and I had enjoyed every moment of our dream vacation, two weeks in Europe, but I was ready to go home to Shreveport, Louisiana, and sleep in my own bed. Bob could see how frustrated I was. “We’ll just have to try to get on the flight tomorrow,” he said. “Let’s enjoy the extra day.”

Bob’s right, I thought. There were more important things to be worried about—my son Joe, a First Lieutenant in the Army 82nd Airborne Division, would be returning to Ft. Bragg in North Carolina for a short R&R from his tour of duty in Baghdad, and we weren’t sure we’d be able to see him in the little time he’d be stateside. Plus, the time was so up in the air! Back at our hotel, I checked my email to see if our daughter-in-law, Monica, had any news on when Joe was due to arrive. Sure enough, there was a message. “Joe’s been delayed again,” it read, with one of those little frowny faces.

The next morning we made it onto our flight back to the States. Unfortunately, we had to stop in Atlanta. Our

connecting flight there was delayed because of bad weather. The hours passed. I felt the frustration building. “That’s it!” I finally said. “I just want to get home already!”

That’s when I saw a group of soldiers coming down the ramp from one of the gates. I thought of Joe. They’re coming back from a war, I reminded myself. I’m coming back from vacation. What right do I have to be frustrated? Maybe the troops were God’s way of reminding me to trust in his time. Bob grabbed my arm. “Look at those soldiers coming down the ramp.”

“I see them,” I said. Bob persisted. “Do you see who’s in front?” Suddenly, all those delays across all those miles made perfect sense. I rushed toward my son Joe’s open arms. 

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