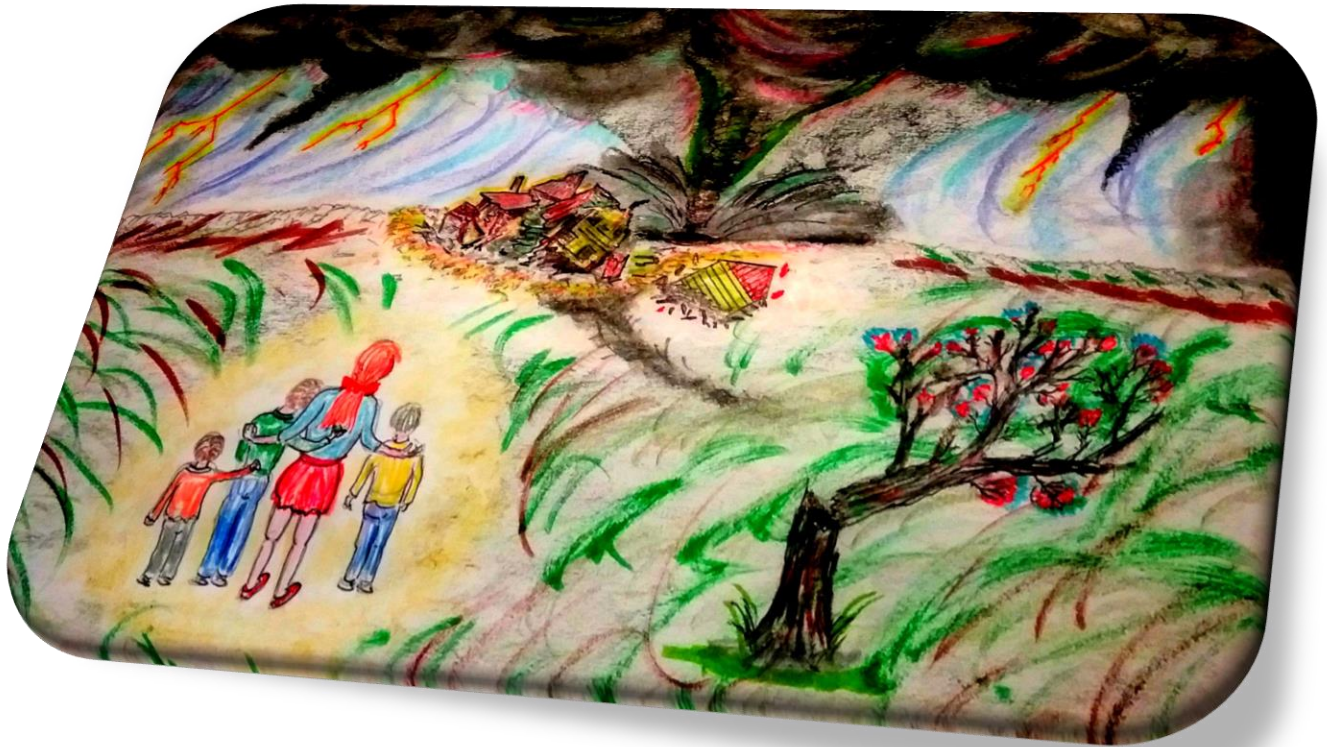


SAND MOUNTAIN

R. A. Reed, Sep 2020



Sometimes God does special hand-crafted miracles to fill our souls with peace and joy when we need it most! This is a story about one such miracle. Once upon a time a storm in California destroyed my daughter's home. It wasn't the usual kind of storm that a meteorologist would recognize. But it was just as devastating. So, my daughter left California and returned to Tennessee to live in our rental home next door. At the same time another storm flooded the creek that flows through the middle of our property. The swirling storm water left a HUGE sand bar along the south bank of the creek. I had never seen anything like it before. Ordinary winter floods leave behind only mounds of jagged pebbles, too sharp to walk on barefoot. But this winter flood left a smooth sand bar of beach sand. The sand bar was approximately 6 ft wide and 30 ft long. Me and the boys called it "Sand Mountain." It quickly became our favorite adventure place!

A single Mom with young children desperately needs time to herself! Sometimes she needs time to hear what God is saying. Sometimes she needs time to take a loooooong hot shower without any interruptions. And sometimes she simply needs Grampa to take her children to "Sand Mountain." Grampa thinks that it is the perfect "win-win" situation!

“OK boys, does everyone have a shovel and pail? Juice to drink? Snack? Let me spray some insect repellent on you. Turn around. Close your eyes. Say bye to Mom.”

Mom might not allow us go on safari if she realized that the woods are full of dangerous dinos. So, we kept this little secret to ourselves. Besides, we had weapons that she didn't know about. The first thing we did was to fill our pails with walnuts that had fallen to the ground. Oops! Did I say walnuts? I mean “hand grenades.” Then we proceeded single file through the woods.

“Stop! Don't make a sound! Did you hear something snort behind those trees? Wait here while I check it out. Hide behind these bushes till I get back. And get your grenades ready, just in case.”

Suspense is an art form. Slowly, slowly, step by step, I sneaked up until finally I saw it. Breathless with excitement, I ran back to the boys.

“I saw it – an orange speckled Zapposaurus! But it didn't see me! Are you ready to attack?”

They stood a bit taller, pulled their shoulders back, and nodded their heads.

*“Who wants to lead the charge? . . . (silence) . . .
In that case, follow me. Grenades ready? We go on 1, 2, 3, charge!!!!!!”*

Running at top speed, we caught the dino by surprise and pelted him with a volley of grenades. Then we were out of ammo. The dino roared with anger and chased after us.

“Retreat! Retreat!”

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The angry dino was fast! But we were faster! Amazingly, little Simon ran as fast as his older brothers. Apparently he understood the implications of being last in line when you are being chased by an angry dino! We regrouped behind the greenhouse.

*“He’s still out there waiting for us.
He won’t go until we give him a reason to leave.
Who wants to lead the charge? . . . (silence) . . .
In that case, follow me. Grenades ready? We go on 1, 2, 3, charge!!!!!!”*

We hurled grenades until the air was thick with smoke.

*“Good shot! You hit him right in the belly button! He’s dizzy! Keep shooting! Kaboom!!! Boom!
Boom! Yay! It’s working! He’s running way! Hooray. We win!!!!!!”*

The boys were jubilant. Their eyes were dancing. Their adrenaline was flowing. WARRIORS!!!!

We arrived at Sand Mountain without further incident. Now we became landscape architects and highway engineers. Out of my backpack came brightly colored plastic implements and toys. A dump truck. Trowels. Matchbox cars. And then there was the bulldozer. They always fought over the bulldozer! I had a full-sized shovel to make mountains of sand and to hollow out basins for the lakes. The boys patted the mountains to make them firm and scraped out stream beds to connect the lakes to the creek. There were three towns on the sand bar, one for each boy. The boys made roadways to connect the towns and various points of interest. Spiral roads enabled our matchbox cars to drive to the tops of our mountains. We dug a tunnel through the base of the tallest mountain. It’s always more fun to do this with a partner. The best part about digging a tunnel is the magic moment when you and your partner can finally reach out and touch each other from opposite sides of the tunnel! We hauled water from the creek to fill our lakes. When the lakes were full, we broke the dams. We watched the water run down the stream bed and back into the creek. Then we would make the necessary repairs on the dams and stream beds and do it all over again. Such fun!

Mom always packed healthy snacks for us! Mmmm good! While the highway engineers were enjoying their lunch, I walked upstream and found a waterlogged limb approximately 6 ft long. The rough bark resembled the scales on an alligator. So I tossed it into the creek. Only the snout and nose of the alligator were above the water line. Perfect! When it drifted to where the boys could see it, I yelled out,

“Alligator attack!”

Throwing rocks into water (Splash! Kerplunk!) is deeply fulfilling to little boys. They can do it for hours! So, the boys rose to the occasion and joyfully pelted the alligator with a fury of rocks and pebbles. But the rocks bounced harmlessly off the alligator’s thick hide. I reached out with a long stick and beached the alligator onto the sand bar. He roared and angrily thrashed his tail! The boys redoubled their efforts and finally drove him back into deeper water. We watched him drift downstream until he was out of sight. That was my cue to find another waterlogged limb. And another. And another. . . .



It's important to recognize when the magic begins to fade. It means that the children have had all the fun they can stand. It's time to pack up and go home.

"Did we get all the matchbox cars? We brought eight. How many do we have now?"

When the children return home, the first thing they want is a hug from Mom. Then they are content to quietly play with a toy, or curl up with a picture book, or maybe even take a nap. Me too!

Epilogue: Eventually my daughter and her children were able to return to California. After they left, another winter storm swept down our creek and carried Sand Mountain away. Not a trace of it was left behind! And from that day to this, there has never been another Sand Mountain along our creek. It mysteriously came when my grandchildren arrived. And it left just as mysteriously when they left.