

# Simple Truths

“God Stop” Moments

By Julie Fitz-Gerald

There are special moments in life when time seems to stand still, allowing us to truly see what is right before our eyes; the extraordinary things that are happening all around us. The whirl of a hummingbird’s wings as it drinks nectar while suspended in mid-air. The sparkling pathway that stretches out over the lake as the sun begins to set. Some refer to them as “God Stop” moments. They often appear unexpectedly and are filled with such perfection and wonder that when it happens, the source is clear and the feeling overwhelming: the Lord has you in His embrace, walking with you, sitting beside you and pouring out His blessings upon you.

At the end of August, as the summer was drawing to a close, we headed north to spend some time at one our favourite places; a cottage loaned to us by some very special friends that overlooks Sparrow Lake in the Muskokas. Over the past four years, our trips to the cottage have created cherished memories. Towering Muskoka Pines and crystal clear water have provided the backdrop for teaching the boys how to canoe and fish. Countless hours have been spent tromping through the bush playing an invented game that we call “Terra Aqua Rangers.” Walkie-talkies and code names have made this game a family favourite! It’s hard to beat the feeling that we have

while vacationing here every summer, but this year it became even more special.

Our first morning at the cottage, we donned our lifejackets, climbed into the canoe and headed out onto the still waters of the lake. We were immediately accompanied by a loon and her two babies. They swam so close to us that we could have reached out and touched their soft feathery down. These majestic birds were fully engaged in a feeding lesson. With mama loon disappearing beneath the water, the two babies swam with their heads submerged watching her search for fish. When she popped back up to the surface with a fish in her beak, the babies swam over and enjoyed their breakfast. They neither cared that we were mere feet away, nor that we were watching their every move. Amazing!

We left the trio and paddled to the Kashe River to do some more exploring. As we entered the mouth of the river, the scene changed dramatically. The still, peaceful quietness was enveloping. Neither of my boys said much; we were all mesmerized by our Heavenly surroundings. The lush trees and grasses on the banks of the river were an intense green. The cool clear water that gently rolled off my paddle seemed to be the only detectable movement around us. We dropped a fishing line in and within minutes Liam was reeling in a good-sized smallmouth bass. It leapt out of the water to the boys delight, putting on quite a show as he reeled in the line. Once unhooked, the boys admired this beautiful fish and then released him back into the river.

As we continued our journey down the forest-lined river, the wildlife sat peacefully observing us. A duck sunbathing on a rock, two

more loons swimming side by side, two turtles warming up on logs; it was as if they had been expecting us, curiously watching as we floated by.

We navigated our way around old fallen trees, through “the rock wall narrows” as we dubbed them, under a bridge and to the end of the line where ancient rocks form a cove and a gentle waterfall. Finding a spot to climb out, we stretched our legs, played in the water, climbed the rocks and did some more fishing. Time seemed to be standing still on our adventure, and I was acutely aware of this. The smell of the woods, the sound of trickling water, the singing of birds and two happy kids; it was pure perfection. Resting atop a large rock with water flowing all around me, I watched my husband and two boys fishing on the other side of the cove. Blessings were being poured out on us and a quick glance between Sean and I confirmed that we were both feeling it. An overwhelming and enveloping embrace sent from Heaven above.

A few days later we went back up the Kashe River to snap some photos, but the boys weren't nearly as patient, the animals were hard to find and the fish weren't biting like they had been. Just further confirmation that on that first morning at the cottage, we had a special someone along with us on our canoe trip. It's a moment in time that will stay in my memory forever. A true God Stop moment. When they happen they are unmistakable and certainly worth the wait! All we need to do is recognize these precious moments for the blessings that they are.