

THREE MONTHS

By Shane Carman

“Rising from the ashes starts with believing.”

—SMS Novel Interactive

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INTRO

In the heart of Geneseo, New York, a family sets out on a journey of hope, healing, and redemption. Jeff Smith is a 13-year-old teenager diagnosed with terminal cancer with only a few months to live. For his final request, he wants to take a family cross-country trip in an RV. So the family pack up their RV and hit the road, destination unknown.

As they travel from coast to coast, they encounter each other's stories of fear and hope. Along the way, they discover the beauty and wonder of the world and the true meaning of family and love.

But their journey is not without its challenges. The son's illness takes a toll on both him and his family. They are forced to confront their own fears, doubts, and regrets. Will they find peace and acceptance before it is too late?

'Three Months' is a powerful and moving story about one family's quest to find meaning and purpose in the face of tragedy. It is a story of hope, of the power of love, and the enduring human spirit.

CHAPTER ONE

The *memory* of that day still haunted him like a ghost. Even while shopping for an RV. It was only two months ago when it happened. He and his wife Deborah sat in the doctor's office with jittery expressions on their faces, anxiously gripping each other's hands as they listened to the dreadful news.

"The results of the testing have come back, and it looks that your son, Jeff, has a rare and severe form of cancer. Please accept my sincere apologies for the inconvenience. It is unfortunate that it has progressed to a terminal stage, and it is estimated that he has just a few months left to live."

Mike's expression became more and more shocked as Deborah let out a sob. As they struggled to come to terms with the fact that

they had lost their cherished kid, they both felt as though the world was collapsing around them.

“Hey Sir,” the salesman spoke, attempting to snap Mike out of the mental fog.

“I’m not really sure what I’m looking for, to be honest. I just know that I need an RV,” Mike spoke to the older salesman as he entered the shop. He soon realized that he hadn’t even greeted the man.

“I’m sorry, I’m Mike.”

“The 68-year-old salesman didn’t worry about the slight too much. In his experience, either the man knew exactly what he wanted and didn’t want to waste any time, or he was nervous because he had no idea what he was looking for.

"Greeting Mike," the man replied with a genuine smile. I'm Jim. And welcome to Nelson's RV. I'm here to help you find the right one for you. What kind of trip are you planning on taking?"

Mike: "It's for my son, Jeff. He's 13 and he's been diagnosed with terminal cancer. We want to take him on one final cross-country trip before he..." Mike's voice trailed off as he fought back tears.

"I'm so sorry to hear that, Mike. I can't even imagine what you and your family are going through. But I'm here to help make this trip as special as possible for you and your son."

"I appreciate that, Jim. I just don't know where to start with all of this. I don't even know what I need in an RV."

"Well, let's start with the basics. How many people will be going on the trip?"

Mike: "It will just be me, my wife, and our two other children Rachel, who is 18 going on 30, and my other son who is four years old. And, of course, Jeff."

"Okay, so you'll need something that can sleep at least five people. Do you have any preferences on the type of RV? Class A, Class B, Class C?"

"I have no idea. I've never even been in an RV before."

"No problem. I'll show you some of the different types and explain the pros and cons of each. And we can narrow it down from there. And also, I suggest you to take a look at the used RVs as well, as they may be a better option for you considering the circumstances"

"Okay, that sounds good. Thank you, Jim. I really appreciate your help."

“Of course, Mike. It's my pleasure to help you and your family make this trip as special as possible. Let's go take a look at some RVs.”

As they walked through the lot, Jim could see the sadness and uncertainty in Mike's eyes, but he also saw the determination to make this trip one to remember for his son and family. Jim knew he would do everything in his power to help Mike find the perfect RV for their journey, and he felt honored to be a part of it.

FEAR

Mike sat in his car, staring at the road ahead. He had just purchased an RV, excited to take his family on one final trip before his son Jeff passed away from cancer. But as he drove home, his mind couldn't help but wander to the unfairness of it all.

Why did this have to happen to his family? Why did his 13-year-old son have to die? He had so much life ahead of him, so many things he would never get to experience. Mike couldn't help but feel angry and resentful at the world for taking away his son.

He thought about all the things Jeff would never get to do. He would never go to prom, he would never graduate from high school, he would never fall in love, he would never have children of his own. The list seemed endless and Mike felt a weight on his chest as he thought of all the things his son would miss.

He thought of his other children, Rachel and Shawn, and how they would never have the same bond with their brother, how they would

never be able to confide in him or turn to him for advice. He thought of his wife Deborah, who would never have the same companion she had shared her life with.

As he pulled into his driveway, Mike couldn't help but feel a sense of hopelessness. He knew that the trip would be difficult and emotional, but he couldn't shake the feeling that it wouldn't be enough. He knew that no matter what he did, he would never be able to make up for the time his son would never have.

Mike got out of the car and walked into the house, determined to make the most of the time they had left. He knew that life was unfair, but he wouldn't let that stop him from cherishing every moment with his family. He would make this trip one to remember, not just for Jeff, but

for all of them. He would be there to hold their hands and to be a rock for them to rely on. He would make sure they had enough memories to last a lifetime, no matter how short it may be.

As he walked into the house, Mike knew that the road ahead would be difficult, but he was ready to face it with his family by his side. He knew that he couldn't change the fact that Jeff was dying, but he could make sure that the time they had left was filled with love, laughter, and memories that would last a lifetime.

GOOD NEWS

"Kids! I'm so excited to tell you this! I bought an RV, so pack your bags!"

"That is wonderful, my darling. Jeff is going to be ecstatic about this."

Rachel languished in the kitchen looking somber doing homework. Mike knew she was

about to say something snarky. "Yay for you all I guess. By the way, I won't be going."

Mike had heard this before from Rachel. She too was struggling with the reality of Jeff's illness. She was almost a third parent, making sure he had everything he needed. She was concerned that a trip like this would have negative effects on Jeff's health. But both he and Deborah had told her again and again, there was nothing more that the doctors could do. Plus, this trip was something that Jeff had asked for.

"Can you tell me again why you don't want to do a road trip with your brother, despite the fact that it is his wish," Mike responded sarcastically.

"Simply put, I do not wish to go. I don't want to spend my final time with Jeff crammed

inside some dingy old RV that stinks on the road, with no wifi, sleeping God knows where! The last time I checked, we do have a backyard.”

Deborah interjected. She gave Rachel a long leash, as she helped out as much with Jeff as both parents, but she didn’t want to hear her objections.

“Rachel, you know your brother is looking forward to this, she replied as she unloaded the dishwasher. Your brother needs this. It is vital for every one of us. You will be there regardless of whether or not you want to be there.”

Mike attempted to defuse the tension.

“Guys, let's try to avoid conflict here. Rachel, we know this will be a challenge for you, but we ask that you make an effort to comprehend the significance of this journey for both Jeff and

our family. It is imperative that we create these memories together..while Jeff is still here."

A silence enveloped the kitchen. The mention of time was always a thorn in the flesh. They knew that Jeff's time was running out and that there was nothing that they could do.

Rachel sighed. "Fine. But regardless of what happens, it won't make me happy."

"It's not a problem, Rachel. It is sufficient for you to simply be there with us," Mike replied.

Deborah went around the kitchen aisle to give Rachel a hug. She could see that she had a tear in her eye. "I'll go start packing. Rachel, you better start packing too. Jeff is going to be stoked."

"I do not doubt that. To put it simply, I hope that..." As Mike contemplated the

seriousness of the issue, we are going to have a good time. We're going to make this trip one he'll never forget."

"Yes, we will. And the entire family will participate in the activity together. I need to check on Shawn, he's probably waking up from his nap."

Shawn was the youngest of the family. At four years old, he provided comic relief for the family during this time.

Mike was unable to shake the sensation of melancholy that pervaded the home as Deborah left. He watched as she walked away. He was aware that the journey would be challenging, but he also understood the significance of going on it. No matter what happened, he was going to do all in his power to ensure that Jeff and his family had a vacation they would never forget.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shane Carman resides in Florida and is employed in the hospitality industry. He provides services for major hotel corporations and travels America on a daily basis. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management from the University of Central Florida. Carman has authored screenplays, business plans, executive summaries, and many short stories.