

When the Chimney Fell

In the book *More than Coincidence: When God Shines His Light on You*, Joyce Stark shared a lifesaving story of divine care.

She and her husband, John, live in northeast Scotland where the Gulf Stream brings warmth to what would otherwise be a frigid climate – but it can also cause high winds.

One day, the weather service reported gusts topping 100 miles an hour. “I almost blew away when I left for work that morning,” she said. She would be spending most of her day inside at her new job – assisting John, a mortgage and financial services broker. She sat at her desk looking out the large front window, awed by the sheer power of Mother Nature.

“Were the brick chimneys of the old houses around us actually swaying?” she wondered. Historic Flemish buildings from the 18th century lined the street, and their office was a “gable ender,” a one-story house down a long alleyway surrounded by taller residences.

“I don’t like the way that old chimney is moving about,” John said. “So my eyes weren’t playing tricks on me,” she said, but added, “I’m sure it’s nothing. These places have outlasted centuries of winds worse than this.”

John disappeared around the corner into their tiny kitchen. Joyce picked up her pen and got to work, entering appointments into his desk diary.

“Joyce?” she heard John call.

“Yes,” Joyce said. There was no response.

“I got up and walked down the hall to see what he wanted,” Joyce said. “Just as I turned into the kitchen – Boom! Smash! I heard the most deafening crash. It felt like the whole building was going to collapse around us. John and I huddled against the wall. Finally, the rumbling stopped.”

John and Joyce gathered up their courage and made their way to the front of the office. “The chimney stack of the building across the alley had tumbled down and smashed through the window by my desk,” Joyce said. “Shattered glass everywhere, bricks strewn across the desktop.”

Joyce moved one of the bricks. Underneath was a black smudge on the desk, where the pen she had been using had been flattened. John and Joyce stood in shock.

(more)

After a few moments, Joyce broke the silence. “John, I don’t know what to say. If you hadn’t called me, I would have been hurt.”

John stared at her, confused. “But I didn’t call you. It was a surprise when you came into the kitchen.”

“Surprise wasn’t quite the word I would use,” she said.

Do you believe in guardian angels? I do. Lodged in my mind are some close calls from my youth when I did some stupid things – such as going with other boys deep into the bowels of an unexplored cave, and how we got out when our carbide lamps were extinguished, or playing tag with friends in tall trees, jumping from long limb to long limb, or catching a moving freight train making its way through Cookeville for a ride down the rails.

Maybe you can bring to remembrance some dangerous incidents in which you came close to being seriously hurt or killed. God, you see, has a plan in mind for each of us. And if it takes divine intervention to preserve His purposes, He will do it.

And in a very real sense, you may be seen as an angel in the eyes of some of the people you serve. One of the definitions of the word is “a messenger of God.” In the work you do, you bring care and hope to those desperate for your touch.

For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways (Psalm 91:11 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter