



Home For the Holidays

By Robin R. Rinke

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Mom answered her phone on the fourth ring, "Hello, Julie."

"Hi Mom, How are you today?" I said in a happy tone.

"Well, you know the arthritis in my hands is flaring up a bit with this colder weather, but I'm taking it easy. I'm watching Gunsmoke and eating Fritos right now."

"I see, did you remember to take your medication?, " I asked.

"Not yet, I'll get to it after the show." She said.

"I wanted to let you know that Jamie from The Vine Senior Living called me today. She informed me that the one bedroom apartment you like is now available. I thought we could talk about going over there this week to sign the papers." I waited for her response.

Mom sighed, "Oh, probably not now, Julie. The holiday season is just approaching and I don't think this is the best time for me to move. It just gets so busy. Maybe after the holidays would be best."

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“I see. Well, she can’t guarantee that the apartment you want will still be available after the holidays. I know you loved how it looked over the pond. What do you feel is so busy about the holidays? Renee and I handle Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner now, “ I questioned.

“I don’t know. Maybe it’s just leaving the house. So many holiday memories have been made here,” she said in a softer voice as if she was thinking.

Ever since dad passed, Renee and I knew it would be good for Mom to move out of the house. She agreed last spring, and we all decided on The Vine Senior Living, but she said she wasn’t quite ready to make the move then. We were ok with that decision being the one bedroom apartment she really liked was not available. So we decided to be on a waitlist.

Now, five months later, the upkeep of the house was starting to wear on myself, Renee, our husbands and the kids. It was too much for her to handle on her own so we pick up the slack.

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I thought for a moment, “How about this, let’s just go over and talk with Jamie, see apartment one more time? It would be good for you to get out of the house. She also said that they were having a Fall Harvest party and we could come and then meet with her afterwards? I think it would be fun!”

Mom answered, “What day? I have my hair done on Tuesday.”

I was glad she had a bit of pep in her voice, “It’s on Thursday, I could pick you up at 11. She said it is a luncheon with live music, Jamie said the residents love the fall event.”

Now mom really sounded interested, “Music? that does sound fun. Ok, call me Wednesday to remind me.”

I picked up Mom on Thursday to head over to The Vine. She was all dressed up in her cute orange sweater and brown slacks. Her hair was all done and she seemed excited to have something to do.”

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We pulled into The Vine parking lot and Renee was waiting for us. The front doors and entry way were decorated with fall colors and looked so beautiful.

“Boy, someone has a magic touch for decor around here,” I said to Mom and Renee.

“Those potted Mums are beautiful!, “ Mom noted.

Jamie met us at the front desk. I had called her the same day I talked with Mom to let her know that Mom accepted the invitation to attend and that we would like to see the apartment once again.

“Mrs. Kroger, so nice to see you again,” Jamie said with a giant smile.

Mom smiled, “Nice to see you as well, Jamie. Do you remember my girls, Julie and Renee?”

Jamie looked at us both, “I sure do, they are as pretty as their mother. I’m so glad you all could make it. Let’s get you to a table before all the fun starts.”

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Jamie sat us at a table with a couple of other ladies that live at The Vine. They were a hoot. I could tell that Mom was having fun chatting with them. They found out that they all had a few things in common like old movies and knitting. Although Mom's hands were not able to knit anymore she loved looking at patterns and talking all about it.

The music began and the food was served. As I watched Mom enjoy herself I couldn't help but think how much fun she would have living at The Vine. She needed friendship and she needed the extra help. I was secretly hoping she would take the apartment. But, we always said it was her decision as to when she moved.

After the event we toured the apartment. Jamie answered many questions for Mom.

Jamie had us all sit down in the Bistro area after the tour and got us each a cup of coffee, "So, Mrs. Kroger, what do you think? Is this your new home for the holidays?"

"About that, I'm just not sure this is the best timing," Mom told her.

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Jamie responded, “Tell me why you think that?”

“Well, the holiday time is so busy and I think it would be best to wait until afterwards.” Mom looked at Renee and I.

Jamie said, “I can understand how you feel. Many of our residents felt that way as well when they were trying to make the decision about moving in during the holiday season. What they found was moving before the peak holiday season helped them get their preferred apartment and they were able to meet many new people and make friends because of all of the activities and social gatherings. One of our dear residents, MaryAnn, found that moving here helped her with her loneliness during the holidays. she said she didn’t feel so isolated.”

Mom thought for a moment, “Those are very good points, Jamie. I do have two wonderful girls who handle the holiday dinners now and I can still go over to their houses to celebrate. I think I would like to have a bit more social life than I currently have. It does get lonely. Today showed me that”

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I was happy to hear Mom think about this move. We all felt it was time, but she needed to see it and feel it. Today she did both.

“What would be the next thing to do if I said yes to the apartment today?”

Jamie smiled, “We would get the ball rolling and make it as seamless as possible. You could be living here in no time. I think your table partners today would be really excited to have you here!”

Mom was in her new home for the holidays and was so thankful that she did. Most of her days were spent with her new friends doing activities and enjoying life.

I called her right before Thanksgiving, “Hi, Mom.”

“Hi, Julie. How are you?” She said with a spring in her step.

“I’m good. How about you?” She sounded so happy.

I replied, “I’m doing good today. I just went to the store to buy all of the food for the Thanksgiving feast on Thursday.”

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“Oh, that’s a big job. I’m getting ready to go down and make cornbread muffins for a party here tomorrow. We have little children coming from the local nursery school to sing songs of Thanksgiving they’ve learned, and we wanted to treat them to cornbread with honey and a cup of cocoa.”

I giggled, “How adorable. Little kids singing is always a hit and miss. So funny sometimes.”

Mom giggled as well, “Oh I remember. My friends and I are looking forward to it. On Friday we are all doing a Christmas project in the Activities Room. Well, I better get going. I don’t want to miss the bake off.”

Mom is so happy and we are delighted and relieved. Her house is on the market and we have a senior moving company helping with the estate sale. Everything always works out when love abounds.

Home is truly where the heart is.