P 205 Treasure Found! Little Jimmy-Stand-by

We love to do puzzles around here and we did quite a few over the holidays. You know that satisfying feeling when you look and look and look for a puzzle piece—and then you finally find it and the piece fits exactly right!

That is the same feeling that I hope you are experiencing in this way of learning. I hope there are always questions that need answering and missing pieces to find all along the way. Because when you find them, it gives you that little dopamine rush, doesn’ t it? Just like finding a missing puzzle piece.

Margaret Eggleston is the storyteller I told you about in the Storytelling section in catch the Vision who has been such a huge influence on my life and this work. I’ve been piecing together her story for years. And it’s so fun to find new pieces.

One of her stories I shared with you was about the time she went to her friend’s house and could hear her young son upstairs throwing a temper tantrum. She asked if she could help, and went upstairs and told him the story of little Jimmy Standby whom Dr. Grenfell trusted.

Now, I had never heard of Dr. Grenfell and I didn’t expect that I would ever know anything about him. Yet, as I started gathering stories around the rotation, I kept bumping into him. He was an incredible man! A doctor who served the people in the remote freezing cold regions of Labrador in Canada. He wrote a book about a harrowing experience he had adrift on an ice-pan. But I never heard anything about little Jimmy Standby. And I always wondered what the story was that she told this little boy that was so life changing.

Well, a few days ago someone asked if I knew where the rest of the story was. And I told her it has remained a missing puzzle piece—a piece I wasn’t sure I’d ever find. I told her there are lots of books out there with stories of Dr. Grenfell. But I hadn’t found Jimmy.

This morning someone wrote me to tell me how inspired she was by Margaret Eggleston, too. And had learned that her husband had connections in that family line, and so she was interested in finding out if there were more books about her.

I went to Internet Archive to link her to a page that had a number of her books available digitally. I’ve been collecting her books over the years and have some that have not been posted in Internet Archive, but when I went to internet archive this morning, I noticed a new book that I had never seen before—30 Stories I Love to Tell by Margaret Eggleston, published in 1949. I noticed someone had only uploaded the book last July so it hasn’t been there long.

I opened the book and guess what the first story was? Little Jimmy Standby. She wrote in the Preface:
“Of all the hundreds of stories that I have written or told boys and girls during these many years, the story of Jimmie Stand-by is the one most often asked for. Apparently it is the one longest remembered. I am happy to include it in this volume of stories, hoping that it may do for other teachers and leaders what it has done for me in my work with teenage boys and girls.”

In the footnote, it said that Dr. Grenfell had told her this story personally and asked that she not publish it in writing until after his death.

He died in 1940—and this book was published not many years after that. That’s why I hadn’t found it before!

Talk about a dopamine rush! Yet without the background of what went before, A. I wouldn’t have noticed the book and B. Little Jimmy Standby would have no particular meaning to me.

So that’s why I keep telling you—plant as many seeds as you can. Then you have more puzzle pieces to connect to and when you find those connections, it just makes you so happy and you want to keep learning. Don’t worry about learning everything about a topic the first time around.

It's a bonus that I am finding this story in Month 5 when we are learning about Canada. So, after more than 15 years of searching for it, I’ll share the story with you now, but it will find a permanent home in our Belmonde Listening Library in the Canada section.

I think your kids will like it.