

THE WONDERFULS



They were an ordinary family living in an ordinary town doing all of the ordinary things families do. They were the Wonderfals. Scott, Sue, Sally, and Sam Wonderful. For them, life could not have been better.

They lived in a nice house in a nice neighborhood. It was a quiet place to live. All of the families there said hello to each other when they passed. The people were friendly and the children enjoyed playing together. It was the American dream.

Scott had a good job in the city, while Sue stayed at home, baking cookies, and helping the children with their homework.

Scott coached the sports teams for his kids at the local church where they played baseball, soccer, and basketball.

Mom drove them to music lessons and made sure they always looked clean and neat.

Their lives are great, until..... a new family moved onto their block.

The new family bought the red brick house down the street. It did not take long until people realized they were completely different from any of the other families who lived there.

Their names were Jim, Julie, Jenny, and Jimmy Terrible. They were the exact opposite of the Wonderfals.

Their children were loud and had little respect for the people who lived around

them. They were always in old clothes. They never looked neat and clean like the other children.

Jim was out of work and during the day played so loud music the entire neighborhood could hear. This irritated his neighbors so much they called the police many times to ask them to turn down the music.

Julie worked hard as a hairdresser and came home tired every night. She was too tired to help the kids with their homework and Jim was too lazy. The children did not play sports, they just hung around the house after school and made a lot of noise.

The Wonderfals did not know what to do. The Terribles were making life miserable, but no one knew what to do.

All of the neighbors complained to each other because everything was different.

Over time, the Terribles just got worse. The house needed paint, the lawn was turning brown, and people were coming and going from the house every day all day and night.

Scott Wonderful considered moving away, but when he looked for other houses, could not find as nice as the one they already owned, so they decided to stay and make the best of the situation.

This went on for several years. The Wonderfals and the Terribles never talked to each other. The Wonderfals did not allow Sally and Sam to play with Jenny and Jimmy. They were just too different to play with. Scott and Sue were afraid their children would become like the Terribles. They had their image to protect.

Time went by and things went from bad to worse.

Every day, More and more people were coming and going from the Terribles house. These were not the kind of people who lived in their neighborhood. Some of them were scary.

None of the children in the neighborhood played outside any more. Their parents thought it was just too dangerous.

Then something happened. It seemed like the Terribles had moved. The cars that

went by the house stopped coming. The music went away. The house got a new coat of paint. The lawn was now green.

Everyone was curious about what was happening, but no one went to ask.

The Terribles were seen playing with their children in the yard. Their clothes were clean and neat.

Jim got a good job and Julie did not have to work so hard. Things at the Terribles' house had changed.

The Wonderfals were amazed, but they did not trust the Terribles. They thought something crazy had happened. They expected they would return to the old ways.

One day, there was a knock at the Wonderfals' door.

Scott answered the door; there at the door were Jim and Julie Terrible!

Scott rudely asked, "What do you want?"

"We just wanted to say Hello. We want to apologize for the way we have been all of these years. Will you forgive us?" Jim asked Scott.

"Yeah, sure, Why not?" Scott answered and then promptly closed the door.

Two weeks later a storm came through the town. The largest tornado to ever hit the city ripped through the neighborhood. Every house on the block was destroyed.

Scott and Sue Wonderful, along with their kids found themselves at the gates of Hell. Satan was there to meet them.

"What are we doing here?" Scott asked Satan.

"You are here because you did not do what God asked," Satan replied, matter-of-factly.

"We went to church. We did all of the best things we could for our family and friends. We weren't bad people. Why are we here? What did we do wrong?" Scott inquired further.

"Are you really surprised? You did all of the right things in your life, but you never listened in church to what was really important."

"What was that?" asked Scott, very surprised at their circumstances.

“You never listened to the preacher. You never read your Bible. You never gave your life to Jesus Christ. You never surrendered your life to God the way he asked you to. Now you are here with me for the rest of eternity,” Satan responded.

“How can this be? We tried to live good lives. We treated our neighbors well. We worked hard and raised our children with good morals,” Scott pondered his situation.

“Remember the Terribles? How did you treat them?” Satan reminded them.

Scott was surprised at the question. He did not know how to respond.

“I want to talk to God about this,” Scott insisted. “There has been a mistake!”

Scott went to see St. Peter at the gates of heaven.

“I think there has been a mistake. We should be here, not Hell,” Scott stated.

“Let me see,” St. Peter said as he opened the Book of Life. “You say your name is Scott Wonderful, Right?”

“That is correct,” Scott said smiling.

“I’m sorry. I don’t see your name listed. Did you ever give your life to Christ?” St. Peter asked.

“I don’t understand your question,” Scott replied.

“When you were a child and the pastor of your church asked you if you wanted to give your life to Christ, did you respond?” St. Peter asked.

“No, I didn’t think I needed to do that then. I figured I could wait. I guess I never got around to it,” Scott said, with his head hung low. “Is it too late?”

“I’m afraid so,” St. Peter responded. “You had many chances during your life to respond to the message.”

Scott returned to Hell with the bad news.

“I can’t believe this. I have to tell all of our neighbors. They have to know that they are doomed to Hell. Can I go back and warn them? Can I try to convince them that what they are doing is wrong?” Scott pleaded with Satan.

“You can try, but I’m going to have to inform you, they won’t listen to you,” Satan told him.

Scott went to his neighborhood. Everything was gone. Where his house used to be was nothing but an empty hole in the ground.

Turning to Satan, Scott asked, “Where are the Terribles? What happened to them?”

“They’re in heaven,” Satan replied.

“Heaven! How did *they* get to heaven?” Scott asked.

“They tried to talk to you, but you wouldn’t listen. They found Jesus and they wanted to warn you, but you shut them out,” Satan informed Scott.

Scott went to the funeral for his family. He saw the people crying. Many people had nice things to say about him, and how they were sure that the family was in heaven because of all the good they had done in the community.

Scott went to the microphone and pleaded with the people not to make the same mistake he and his family had made. They needed to seek God and find his way, or they were going to be doomed to eternal Hell.

No one listened, no one heard him, no one cared.

When Scott returned to Hell, he met Satan.

“So how did it go?” he asked.

“They wouldn’t listen to me. They think they have the answer. They will join us here unless they find God and ask Him to forgive them,” Scott answered.

Satan smiled and said, “I told you so.”