

## **The Big Island Restaurant**

Brie was new to the big high school, George Washington High, and because Brie was blind she felt afraid she might not meet any new friends. She came from Maine and was now living in Texas, the second biggest states in the United States.

Her first day at school, Brie was surprised that many of the teens were very nice to her and invited her to go to lunch with them, showed her how to get to class, and where she would meet the bus that afternoon.

After school Brie was waiting for the bus when she heard a friendly voice behind her. "Hi, my name is Joel. What is your name?"

Brie smiled because she and Joel went to Space Camp three years ago together, however he must not have recognized her. Joel had spotty vision and could see a small amount, but enough to know who was pretty, and Brie was beautiful.

"Joel, you don't remember me, do you?" Brie chuckled.

"No, I don't," Joe thought for a minute and then laughed.

"Brie, is that you?" he asked.

"Yes, my hair is much longer and as you can tell I am much taller," she smiled.

Joel remembered the cute shy girl from Space Camp for the blind and visually impaired, but he never dreamed she would turn out to be so beautiful and friendly. They had been twelve-years-old back at Space Camp, but now they were teens. Joel could not believe how lucky he was to end up at a school with Brie.

After the two talked more on the bus ride home from school, they talked more by the pond where the ducks were quacking away. There was a bench near the water, and even though it was a little cool, neither seemed to notice.

Joel was nervous but he asked anyway, "Will you go to a new and cool restaurant with me Saturday night?" he said through a trembling voice.

To Joel's surprise, Brie said yes immediately, so the two made plans for Joel to walk to Brie's house from his home and then venture to the new and cool restaurant, The Big Island.

Saturday night Joel was getting ready to walk to Brie's house. Fortunately, Brie lived right next to the restaurant and was only a few blocks away from Joel's house.

Joel asked his orientation and mobility specialist, Ms. Hall, to demonstrate how to walk from his house to pick up Brie. Since it was raining, Ms. Hall pulled out Tactile Town and role-played how he would walk from his house to pick up Brie and then to The Big Island.

"Do you have your Talking Watch with you?" Ms. Hall asked.

"Yes, I have it and my date book calendar filled out with the date -- not that I would ever forget a date with Brie," Joel laughed.

Saturday night before Joel left the house, he phoned the restaurant and asked for a braille and large print menu, checked his wallet to make sure he had money, and called to tell Brie what time he would pick her up.

Joel walked north to the stop sign and turned east toward Brie's house. Her home was three houses down after he crossed the street to the west. All he had to do was pick Brie up and continue walking toward the west until he could hear the loud music from The Big Island.

When Joel picked up Brie, she looked beautiful. He could smell sweet-smelling perfume and could hear the excitement in her voice.

It took less than five minutes for the teens to arrive at the restaurant.

The restaurant was fun. It had loud music playing, colorful streamers hanging from the ceiling and the lake behind it.

When the waitress came up to the table she introduced herself as Toni.

Toni was a great sport, brought the menus in large print, but did not have the braille copy.

Brie laughed and said, “That is okay, but would you mind telling me what is on the menu?” After Toni read the menu the two teens ordered iced tea and a wonderful dinner. The hot buttered rolls came out first and then a crisp delicious salad.

After the delicious steak and baked potatoes the two ordered a hot chocolate molten cake and shared it.

When the bill arrived, Joel used his magnifier and looked at the total. The total cost was what he predicted when the two ordered, and the cost for the meal, drinks and dessert was \$64.00. Instead of using his debit card, Joel used cash. He knew he must tip Toni 20% for her great service.

Brie wanted to join in on the fun of doing the math with Joel, so the two worked out the cost plus tip together.

Joel said, “The tip comes out to 12.8 dollars, so the total bill will be \$72.80.”

After the two paid, they listened to music on the deck of the restaurant. Time flew by fast because when Joel checked his talking watch, he said, “10:00”.

“I had so much fun, Joel, but we better get back before 10:30,” Brie stated.

Since the neighborhood was well lit and many pedestrians were out strolling and enjoying the cool night, Joel did not need to call for his friend, Woody to pick them up, even though it was getting late.

Once they reached Brie’s doorstep, Joel hugged Brie and asked with a nervous voice, “Another date soon?”

“No,” Brie said sadly.

Joel’s heart dropped.

“I’m kidding; you goof, yes, of course I want to go out again soon!” Brie teased.

Joel laughed and sent Brie a quick text on his walk home. It said, “You owe me two dates now for scaring me. LOL.”

Brie texted back, “Yes, anytime. I am still ROFL” (rolling on the floor laughing).