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STORYBOUND

# A Sample Book

*Three chapters from a real Storybound hardcover —  
spoken aloud, gently polished, and printed.*

As told by Eleanor M.

Recorded over a Sunday afternoon, Spring 2025

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## CHAPTER ONE · CHILDHOOD

# The Yellow Kitchen

*Spoken by Eleanor M. · 7 min*

**THE PROMPT**

*What is the very first memory you can recall?*

The first thing I remember is the colour yellow. My mother's kitchen in the old house on Wellfield Road was painted the colour of butter, and the morning sun came through the back window and made the walls glow. I would have been three, maybe four. I was sitting on the cold linoleum floor in a nightgown, and she was at the stove with her back to me, stirring something. Porridge, probably. It was always porridge.

She was humming. I cannot tell you what the song was — I have tried for sixty years to place it — but I can still hear the shape of it. A little falling phrase, like a question she was asking herself. The kettle was on. The radio was on too, but turned down so low it was just a murmur, the way my father liked it in the morning before he had finished his first cigarette.

I remember reaching out to touch the wallpaper beside me. It had small blue flowers on it, and one of them was peeling away at the

corner where the wall met the skirting board. I worked my fingernail under the edge and pulled, very slowly, the way a child pulls at a scab. A long strip came away in my hand. I was delighted. I held it up to show her.

She turned and saw the strip of wallpaper, and saw my face, and she did not shout. That is the thing I remember most clearly. She did not shout. She knelt down on the linoleum in her dressing gown and she looked at it for a long time, as if I had brought her a leaf or a feather, something from outside. And then she said, 'Well. That wanted to come off, didn't it.'

She took the strip from me and she folded it once, and she put it in the pocket of her dressing gown. Then she lifted me up and sat me on the counter beside the stove and gave me a wooden spoon to hold, and we finished the porridge together.

I have thought about that morning more times than I can count. My mother was not a soft woman. She had buried a child before me and would bury another after, and the war had made her flinty in ways I only understood much later. But on that morning, in the yellow kitchen, she chose to be gentle with me. I think she chose it on purpose. I think she knew I would remember.

When she died in 1987, I found a small wooden box in the drawer of her bedside table. Inside it were three things: my father's wedding ring, a pressed violet from her own mother's garden, and a folded strip of blue-flowered wallpaper, brittle and brown at the edges, that she had carried with her through four house moves and forty-three years.

## CHAPTER TWO · LOVE

# The Dance at the Pier

*Spoken by Eleanor M. · 9 min*

**THE PROMPT**

*Tell the story of how you met the love of your life.*

I met your grandfather on a Saturday in August of 1962, on the pier at Llandudno. I was nineteen and I was wearing a yellow cotton dress that my sister Margaret had sewn for me, and I had a small blister on my left heel from new shoes. I mention the blister because it is the reason I sat down on the bench at the end of the pier instead of going on dancing, and if I had not sat down on that bench I would not have met him, and you would not be here.

He was on the bench already. He was reading a paperback book — I remember it was a Penguin Classic, orange and white, but I cannot remember the title and he could never remember either. He was wearing a brown jacket that was too warm for August, and he had taken it off and folded it neatly on the bench beside him, and that is where I sat down, on top of his jacket, without seeing it.

He did not say anything. He looked up from his book, looked at me sitting on his jacket, and looked back at his book. After perhaps a

full minute I realised what I had done and I leapt up and apologised in a great rush, and he laughed — and I will say this until the day I die, he had the kindest laugh I have ever heard in my life — and he said, 'Don't worry, it was an old jacket anyway.' It was not. It was nearly new. He told me that twenty years later and I cried.

We talked on that bench until the band stopped playing and the lights on the pier went out one by one. He walked me back to my boarding house and he asked if he could write to me. I said yes. He wrote to me every Tuesday for fourteen months. We married in October of 1963 in a small church in Conwy with thirty-one people and a borrowed cake.

Forty-six years we had. Three children, seven grandchildren, two houses, one dog, and a great many Tuesdays. When he was dying in the hospice he asked me to read to him, and I read him the orange Penguin Classic — I had bought a dozen of them over the years, hoping to stumble on the right one — and he closed his eyes and he said, 'That's the one. That was the book.' I do not know if it was. I think he was being kind, the way he was always being kind.

## CHAPTER THREE · LESSONS

# What I Would Tell Her

*Spoken by Eleanor M. · 5 min*

**THE PROMPT**

*If you could whisper one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?*

If I could go back and find that girl on the bench at Llandudno — the one with the blister and the yellow dress — I do not think I would warn her about any of the hard things. The miscarriage in 1968. The terrible year your mother was eleven. The night the phone rang from the hospice. I would not warn her, because the hard things made the soft things matter, and I would not undo any of it.

What I would tell her is this. You are allowed to want things out loud. You were raised to be quiet about wanting, and you will spend forty years apologising for taking up space, and it will exhaust you in ways you do not yet understand. The people who love you would have loved to hear what you wanted. They were waiting for you to tell them. Tell them sooner.

And the other thing. Keep writing things down. Not for anyone else. For yourself, ten years on, who will have forgotten. The colour

of the kitchen. The shape of a hum. The orange book on the bench. You think you will remember and you will not, not all of it, and the bits you lose are the bits you will miss the most.

That is what I would tell her. And then I would let her go and finish her dance.

# Your story next.

Eleanor's three chapters came from three Sunday afternoons  
and a microphone she already owned. Yours could too.

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