

# *Ninepatch*

*Stitch - by - Stitch*

*W - e - C - r - e - a - t - e - O - u - r - L - i - v - e - s -*

***Editor's note: Following is a page from my recent spiritual notebook.***

November- December 2005

Dear Friends,

I am not a medium. I am not a psychic. On the other hand, sometimes I have experience I can't explain.

My cousin Mark's suicide in February of 2004 was a tragedy that left me reeling. I did not know what to make of my emotions. I tried to explain the irrational act to myself, but nothing gave me any solace. I wondered what happened to his soul.

Often, I get a "sense" of a departed spirit. At times, I *see* him or her in a dream. Or, I get another *feeling* or *hear* that he or she is OK. I always thought this meant that soul had completed its journey to the other side. So, one day after my cousin took his life, I slid into that space where I sometimes have such an encounter. I waited to *feel* or *hear* Mark, but nothing "came." Another day, I tried again and still got no *sense* of him. I was puzzled.

Then, about six weeks after his death, I finally *heard* Mark. I was driving along in my silent car on a nearly empty highway. Suddenly, I had an impression of Mark. In it, he seemed to say, "*Fritzie, I'm lost. I can't find my way.*"

Immediately, I thought/ prayed a message to him, "*Don't give up! Keep trying! Feel your way!*" I also begged God, angels, Jesus, Mary, all the saints and my deceased relatives guide Mark. I went on to send him unworded prayer energy. Once home, lit a candle to help "carry" more wordless prayers. For a few weeks, I lit a new candle every day.

Then, two weeks ago -- although I didn't recognize them at the time -- I began getting little messages from Cousin Mark. The first one came after I'd been traveling with JK for a few weeks and was just returning to my spiritual group. When the first meeting began, I noticed a man I didn't know. During the sharing he introduced himself as, "Mark." He was about my cousin's age and had similar coloring. At the time I figured the fellow might be a new member, since mostly what he said was, "*I'm just glad to be here.*" Cousin Mark briefly crossed my mind when the man spoke, but I quickly forgot the moment.

Then about a week later, another new member attended the meeting. He *also* introduced himself as, "Mark." This man did not look anything like the first. However, as he began to speak, I noticed something special -- even holy-- in his voice. It was calm, rich and unhurried. "*God loves me...*" he said. In bout three minutes, he used those words in several ways. I was struck. When I left the group that day, a distinct, but indescribable feeling clung to me.

Then last night, I sat with a quiet group of about forty, all listening to a speaker. I knew the man. I had not seen recently, but I had heard other comments he made on his life. (*See top of next page.*)

As I listened, first I noticed his fingers as he grasped the podium. They were long and slender. He wore a wedding band. His hands vaguely reminded me of ... I didn't quite know. Then, I became aware of his stature. He was a tall, slender man. Near his fifties, he had added a little weight above his belt in the special way that only happens to a life-time slender man. Again, this image nudged a vague memory... Then, it hit me: Mark!

As the man told of depression and feelings of hopelessness, he told my cousin's story. However, the man also spoke of finding his way back, of reaching a place in life where he was OK.

As I drove home, I suddenly understood why the other "Marks" had seemed special to me. They were preparing me to hear this man's story, to feel my cousin's shadowy presence, and to hear a complete message. First, I had heard, "I'm here." Second, the words were, "I'm with God and God loves me." The third and last one was, "I went through a hard time, but now I am doing what I need to and at peace with God."

I am encouraged -- happy to know in this special way that my cousin is no longer lost, but at peace with God. The experience brought me peace.

I am blessed.

Frances Fritzie

*Frances Fritzie adds, "Maybe Mark tried to reach me before but I was not 'open.' Perhaps this month I was more sensitive because I have been reading the book that gives this thinking credence, Don't Kiss Them Goodbye, by Allison DuBois. Allison is a real person psychic whose experiences appears each week on the TV show, Medium.*

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**- - - - A-R-O-U-N-D - - T-H-E - - F-R-A-M-E - -**

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(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Frances,

Thank you for your letter with your *Ninepatch* proposal. Also, thank you for the phone call last month. You called because I said might move, and you didn't have a new address for me. It was nice chatting with you that evening.

A while back, you also called me when you needed my OK for my words in *Ninepatch* and haven't gotten my letter yet. Both times when you called it helped me through a difficult time. I think it was God's intention for you to call.

I appreciate you words of care and support. Thanks again.

God bless you – and keep you safe.

Love and prayers,

LindaSue

(See top of next page.)

**LindaSue** (Oct. '05) adds, "When she called, Frances also gave me a list of books I might like to read. But, with the move, I never did make it to the library. I have been busy..."

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Dear Frances

Good to hear from you, My Dear, and have no worries about not writing back right away. We all go through periods when we find one aspect of our lives taking a back seat to others. The important thing is that you are doing what's good for you at the time. And it sounds like JK's good for you -- I'm glad for both of you.

I can't help but smile when you mention how good it is to have resources, like stores, libraries and such at hand. I'm spoiled that way and love 'twacking' -- an Eastern Canadian term for when you're out and about, not really going anywhere in particular. I like wandering store to store, or library to cafe, just seeing what's there and browsing. I imagine you and I would gravitate toward the same sorts of places, especially those with BOOKS!

You asked how my daughter and I are we doing. Ha! I could write so much ... but let's just say "We're good," thanks. She's back to school -- her last year of high school -- and her work is cutting back her hours. Still, she's still tired. Think school will help her get on a schedule again, which is good. I'm still working at the call center, but seriously thinking I need to find something closer to home and trying to figure the finances and other angles of such a change.

As you know, I fled my abusive husband back in February. I am settled in a new place with my daughter. But, my son stayed with his dad. He is still not talking to me, which is sad. I'm still not getting along with the hubby but we're getting by. I'm starting to think I need to get into group counseling or something else to pick me up, or maybe join a club of some kind.

Other than that, I'm well. I just have to keep reminding myself it hasn't been THAT long and it'll take time to heal.

I'll think of you as I go about my day, as always.

With love,

Lynn

**Lynn/TROR** (Feb. '05) adds, "I've heard there's a formula for recovering from relationships - that for every five years you were in it, you'll take one to get over it -- at that rate, I've got four to five years of work ahead! But, I have faith."

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Hi Frances,

Sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you. I've been hugely busy -- as usual.

My job tally is going to be changing considerably in the next two weeks. I've quit my two part-time jobs as a reporter to work for one online newsletter full time. I'll be working full time from home, which is what I've wanted to do for a long time. The pay is a little higher than what I was making at the paper and the other newsletter put together.

Since I'm never one to just have one job, though, I've also accepted a position as a paid 'blogger.' I'll be writing daily posts to a website critiquing (See top next page.)

wedding dresses, cakes, food and decor. Of course, I'll still be doing occasional freelance assignments for little newspaper, too. Like I said, I'm busy!

My fella' is still in school for audio engineering. Now, he has a lot of 'studio hours' that take him out of the apartment on evenings and weekends. I don't mind having the apartment to myself, though. It's nice to be able to be in the space when it's quiet!

*Christa Weber (Aug.-Sept.'05) says, "I'm still working on my novel and it's still going slowly as ever."*

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-  
(Our Experiences.)

ANOTHER LABYRINTH EXPERIENCE

I love walking a labyrinth because I set aside uninterrupted time to walk and talk with God -- and to listen as well. I also love it because there is no right or wrong way to experience it. Some people dance, some walk quickly, some slowly, some have even been known to crawl. It can be done, with shoes or without shoes -- there is no end to personal creativity. The last time I experienced the spiral, I preferred to walk slowly, without shoes.

As I journeyed to the center of the maze, my personal goal was to shed thoughts and their accompanying stress and emotions. This process is an internal cleansing, an emptying of mind, heart and soul. I want to make room for what God has for me. My only expectation is that I will receive whatever I'm supposed to receive. Once I start, it always takes a few twists and turns to let go of energy and the momentum of *doing* and to let myself just *be*.

After I walked a bit, I was aware of an internal struggle. I was trying to make things happen. I realized I was still in a state of *doing*. So, I took advantage of a bench or two along the path to wait, breathe and focus on, "right here, right now."

When I achieved my focus, I became aware of colors, textures, temperatures, sound, light and shadow. I said a prayer of thanks and added an apology for not paying more attention to these daily treasures. I could almost hear God saying, "*Stay with me a while. Slow down. What's your hurry?*"

Before long there was a point when I became aware that all the noise in my head was gone, my steps were comfortably slow, and my breaths were deep and cleansing. I knew I was in God's presence. I let the awe sink in and waxed philosophical, seeing long stretches of twisting, uncertain paths as my life. Sometimes, I had felt close to God, sometimes not. Along with this thought came the deep sense of peace in knowing I have never been alone.

I walked with my head down because I am unsteady on my feet and am concerned about falling. I used this position to be contemplative -- focused on only the path.

*(See next page.)*

If I have the urge to lift my head and soak in my surroundings, I stop. When I have looked my fill, and worshiped enough, I walk some more.

During this journey I received a communication for someone with whom I had been talking earlier in the week. I didn't see a burning bush or hear a deep rumbling voice. The message was a quiet profound insight about the person's situation.

Finally, I arrived at the center of the labyrinth. To me, it was the center of God's will and I felt joy and peace. I didn't want to be anywhere else -- ever. I opened myself to just *being* until I had the impression that it was time to start back.

Something I started a couple of labyrinth journeys ago is walking backward around the turns on the way out of the maze. To me, this symbolizes accepting that I don't know what's around the next bend. I offer my life to God and I trust Him to take care of me at each bend I the road.

There's always a little disappointment when the walk is over -- you know -- it's back to reality. But, I can't stay on the mountain top forever! I have to come down and tell others what is up there!

*Pam (March '05) adds, "In the past few months I lost my father, started a new job and experienced some health problems. Each event triggered a reflection on my labyrinth*

*journey. In gratitude, my prayers began, 'Here's another turn in the road, Lord. Sure am glad I'm walking it with You.'"*

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**- T-H-E- - K-I-T-C-H-E-N- - T-A-B-L-E-**

(Our Special Topic)

#### ARMY TABLES OVERSEAS

I recall many unusual "kitchen tables" when I was in the army during WW II – especially after I went overseas. In April of '43 I was given a permanent assignment to a liaison unit which was comprised of 75 officers and 300 enlisted men. We did not have our own kitchen, so relied on attaching ourselves to other units for food, medical and other services.

We arrived in England in June of '43 and the unit was immediately broken up into small groups and single individuals. We were assigned duties with the British Army in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

I didn't much like the British army food. Their usual main meal consisted of mutton stew (which I considered greasy) brussels sprouts and tea.

For most of my year in England, prior to the invasion of France, I was housed in various English homes. While stationed in Salisbury, Wiltshire (site of the famous Salisbury cathedral), I was housed along with two British soldiers in the home of an English man and his wife. There, breakfast was mostly toast, preserves, (*See top, next.*) an occasional scrambled egg and *Spam*. (Yes, *Spam* saved England! It was a very important food during WWII. Shipload after shipload was sent to England. The civilian population had very little meat and *Spam* was the answer. The armies fed *Spam* to the troops morning, noon and night!)

Then, in early 1944, I was assigned duty in Warminster, Wiltshire, which is close to the famous Stone Henge of ancient times. Again, I was housed in a private home. Two other American GI's and two British soldiers lived there, too. The lady of the house did her best for our meals. Mostly, we ate *Spam*, rabbit, brussels sprouts, toast, preserves, and an occasional egg or two. Of course, we drank tea. Breakfast often consisted of toast fried in rabbit grease. I recall the landlady often rode her bike to a nearby town to purchase several rabbits for our meals.

Before the invasion of Omaha, our unit was called together. I was assigned to "A" detachment and landed at Omaha Beach. The last time I saw my entire unit was in England prior to the invasion.

Once in France, we again broke up. We worked with various detachments coordinating, men and supplies. In those days, we often ate only "K rations." This was a meal in a cardboard container about the size of a Cracker Jack box. The K rations of that time consisted of two small flat biscuits, lemon juice powder, a chocolate bar (very heavy in paraffin to prevent melting), a small tin of egg/ham mixture (breakfast), or pork--*Spam?*-- (dinner), four cigarettes, toilet paper, and a stick of gum.

As before, when we could, we went to various units for food, medicines, and clothing. While I was stationed in Cherbourg, France I was invited to chow aboard a Navy ship. What a treat that was! We ate *real* eggs (not powdered ones), fruit, juice, coffee, meat ( not rabbit or *Spam*), and cake. Wow, I still smile when I recall that day.

Another day I entered the famous Mont St. Michael 's monastery off the coast of Brittany with two other GI's. The monastery is on the end of a causeway which juts out into the English Channel. There is a narrow spiral street which ascends to the towering structure which sits at the top. The street has some homes, and shops facing it and is a popular tourist attraction.

After scouting the monastery in the company of a monk, we three stopped at a café along the street. Sitting down, we leaned our rifles against the wall and ordered egg omelets. (Nowadays, that same café is world famous for its omelets!)

Prior to being discharged, each returning GI was promised a TEN COURSE DINNER. I had mine, too. The funny thing is, I don't really remember much about it.

*Le (Feb. '05) adds, "During my three years in the army, I developed a constant craving for fresh vegetables like we used to have at home -- especially celery."*  
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#### TOTE THAT PIE!

Cooking was my mother's creative art. She took great pride in her desserts, especially her lemon and cocoanut crème pies she topped with two- inch- high meringue.

She had a Tupperware pie carrier which she always used for transporting her masterpieces.

*(See top of next page.)*

During my mother's last years, she gave up her car and I drove her to family gatherings, church dinners and other covered-dish occasions. For years, each time I reached for her pie tote she warned me, *again*, not to pick it up by the side handles, or the top would come off and spill the pie.

My mother did not accept correction well, so I handled the carrier as she instructed. Finally, one day in a casual, offhand way, I said to her, "Do you think maybe if you turned the carrier upside down, it might work better?"

A look of astonishment came over her face as her mouth dropped open. "You reckon I've been using it upside down all this time?"

"I think so," I nodded.

And we laughed together.

*June Poucher (Oct. '05) reflects: "It was a special moment we shared. I was relieved my know-it-all mother could see humor in the situation."*

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### ***Longevity honors friendships.***

*James (Oct. '05) adds, "Time is the true test of a friendship."*

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### PEARLS AT MOTHER'S KITCHEN TABLE

The little porcelain-topped table was not large, about three feet by four, nestled under the window in our Pennsylvania kitchen. Our larger family table was where we sat to eat our meals and sat in the middle of the floor.

The smaller one was a work and gathering center for the females of the house. Here, most of the food preparation occurred: dough rolled and cut for pies, doughnuts and cookies; peaches and tomatoes poached and peeled for canning; home-made noodles stretched and dried.

Here, I also did my homework, loving the crisp lines my sharp pencil lead made on the table's hard porcelain surface. Here, I also tried experiments with my chemistry set, even starting a small fire on one occasion. Here, in the late afternoon, I loved to find mother alone at the table, peeling potatoes. I would pick up a knife and help her, chattering about my day, absorbing her wisdom eagerly, and basking in her vibrant aura which seemed to expand to enfold and celebrate me -- unconditionally.

One day I sought her out, wanting to enlighten her with an amazing piece of knowledge I had gleaned from the set of encyclopedias she had "bought on time" for her girls. I wanted her to be the first to know about this life-changing information. Perhaps,

secretly, I also wanted to shock her out of her complacent space just a little. After all, I was approaching adolescence and discovering a larger world than our little neighborhood.

“Mom,” I said. “There is no God!”

*(See top of next page.)*

“And how do you know this?” she asked, not looking up from her work.

“Well, in the science section of the encyclopedias it says that the universe started with a large ball of matter that exploded, creating millions of suns and planets, and that’s how the earth was created. So you see, the Bible was wrong about God creating the earth, and I’m beginning to think it was wrong about a lot of things, including,” here I paused for effect, “whether there is even a God at all!”

Mother kept peeling.

“Well,” I demanded, “What do you think of that?” I expected astonishment at my brilliant deduction, maybe a request for further enlightenment, or possibly a quote from her extensive knowledge of the Bible to present a counter argument. I instead beheld her serenely peeling away.

She replied only, “If you say so.”

I made another run at her, repeating my premise, making sure she understood all of its “weighty” ramifications, trying to get some kind of response.

She said only, “If you say so,” then got up to rinse the potatoes.

I felt a lot of things -- most of all, disappointment at getting no clear response from her, nothing, from someone who always had shared her thoughts freely with me. It was clear, though, that the “big bang theory” hadn’t made a dent in her belief in God.

Suddenly I felt loneliness, like a feisty chick who finds itself unceremoniously pushed from the nest. There was no rebuke from Mother, not even a concerned look my way. I was on my own. Stymied by her manner, but unsatisfied, I returned to the encyclopedias.

I realized later that Mother and I had come to a parting that day. She knew it was time for me to find my own way in the world of ideas without her. She was content with her truth about the “big questions,” but willed me forward to find my own.

She was right. Searching out and forging my own life view has made it more precious to me than anyone else’s thoughts I might have accepted wholesale. Though I didn’t fully realize the value of her gift until after she was gone -- and we never discussed it -- I came to see it as the generous gesture it was. Mother set me loose that day to explore all of the knowledge I could glean from the universe without and within. She trusted me to find my way, knowing she had found hers.

When I see an old porcelain table, I think back to those precious afternoon hours with Mother, and the day she set me free to fly so many years ago.

**Joan H.** (June '05) adds, “Mother once said she was sorry they couldn't give me any money for college. That was the day I squeezed her hard and said, You gave me all I needed.”

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*(See top of next page.)*



**- - -T-H-R-E-A-D- - -**

(Our Knowing and Our Spirituality)

**CLINGING LEAVES**

The sky is gray.  
A chill is in the air  
And in the trees  
A few leaves cling --  
Yesterday's memories  
Lingering there.

Thanksgiving is  
The customary day  
To be thankful for the harvest.  
Lest we forget the leaner years.  
Those straggler leaves I see  
Are solitary sentinels  
Left providentially.

Hair, gray like the autumn sky  
Adorns my head today,  
Garnishing the memories,  
Gray matter stores away,  
And though these locks are thinning Like the leaves upon the trees,  
I'm grateful -- and I hope they bring  
More thankful days like these.

So when the autumn leaves do fall  
In the delinquent few  
I delight,  
Then as the winter comes  
And my waning locks turn to white  
I'll be thankful again  
Because, like those clinging leaves,  
Somewhere  
You'll find me  
Hanging in there.

*Lee (May '05) is in the midst of moving back to his northern home state after many years of living in Florida.*

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*(See top of next page.)*

**MOTHERS, DAUGHTERS,  
FRIENDS**

When bonding with a lasting friend,  
One who supports and praises,  
I learn she'd read her kindness  
From her mother's loving pages.

Her heart's at peace; she's clear and  
firm;  
Her center's full and blessed.  
That's where her Spirit shines its  
light;  
It's where her friends find rest.

In growing up, I glean from life  
The need to gladly lend  
The kindness to a daughter  
I would bestow upon a friend.

When mother is not present,  
My heart's so like a flame,  
I place my hand upon its spark  
And call upon her name.

If mother had not been so kind  
And I had not forgiven,  
The hand I press upon my breast  
Calls Mary forth from heaven.

*Gail (Oct. '05) adds, "This poem percolated from the book, The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd. It was a reading assignment by a friend having long-term difficulties with her daughter. An incident with my own daughter also contributed to the poem."*

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**OUR NEXT SPECIAL FEATURE**  
**January 2006**  
**will begin our special topic,**  
***The Vacation.***

INFORMATION
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ABOUT Ninepatch, Inc.

Copyright 2005  
PO Box 1263  
Avon Park, FL. 33825-1263

**\*ISSN 1094-3234**

**\*E-mail: [Ninepatch9@AOL.com](mailto:Ninepatch9@AOL.com)**

**\*Website: <http://www.ninepatch9.org>**

*\*Annual newsletter donation rate:*  
\$15-\$35

\*The IRS recognizes *Ninepatch, Inc.* as a nonprofit corporation, category 501c3. Documentation is available for a small fee on request.