

*Rick's Collection of Stories,*  
*written by Rick Beneteau*

Dedicated to my beloved, and yes, this is her real name,  
Jennifer Love.



THE ICE CREAM “COMB” STORY

SHE WAS THREE, JUST RELEASED from a far-away hospital after life threatening brain surgery, ready to take on the world again. I was happy just to have her back. My little “Mr. Clean” (shaven head and hoop earrings) and I were driving along to our local mall. It was hanging out with dad day.

I recall her words as if it were yesterday. “Daddy, can I get a treat?” She was understandably spoiled (if there is such a thing), so I replied, “Okay honey, but just *one*.” Her eyes beamed like the sparklers on the Fourth of July in anticipation of that something that only she knew at the time.

We drove around to the new end of the mall on the normal seek-and-destroy mission of capturing a parking place. After all, it was Saturday. We landed a fair distance from our destination, and began walking hand-in-hand towards the entrance, her pace gaining momentum with each tiny step. A few feet from the doors she broke loose and ran hands-first into the thick wall of glass, trying with everything she had to swing the big doors open. No luck.

With a little assistance, she ‘did it’ and tried the very same thing at the second set of doors. It was then that I asked her what she wanted for her treat. Without hesitation, she matter-of-factly said “an ice-cream comb from the ice-cream store.” Okay, the goal was set, and we were in the mall!

But hold on! What was this? At the end of what was just an ordinary looking lane of retail chain outlets she spied something new—a huge fountain with water shooting who knows how high into the air. The new goal line! She ran, and I walked (don’t ya just hate it when parents let their kids run wild in public?), and we arrived at the spectacle at about the same time. The turbulent noise was almost deafening. “Daddy, can I make a wish, can I make a wish?” she screamed as she jumped with the kind of pure joy we’ve all long since forgotten. “Sure honey, but that will be *your treat* you know,” I explained (gotta be firm with these kind of things). She agreed. I fumbled around in my pocket and pulled out what I thought was a dime (big spender) and placed it in her outstretched hand. She cupped it tightly, closed her eyes and grimaced, formulating her wish. I stared at that little scrunched-up face and said my own kind of prayer of thanks, feeling so blessed to still have this ball of energy in my life. And then like a shooting star, the coin was flung into the foaming water and with it, her wish.

We happily continued our stroll into the familiar section of the mall. An eerie silence ensued, which I was admittedly uncomfortable with. I couldn’t resist breaking it. “Aren’t you gonna tell daddy what you wished for?” She retorted “I wished I could get an ice-cream comb.”