

Second Chance Cruise



As Jean Chancellor dressed on the morning of August 12, she was brimming with anticipation. Her son, Todd, and his wife, Abby, would be picking her up soon to drive her to the city of Saugatuck. There, they would walk around town a bit, have an ice cream cone, and buy some delicious chocolate fudge at a local sweet shop. At noon, her two grown granddaughters would meet them at the marina, and the group would board a cabin cruiser to take out on the lake.

It had been nine years since Jean had boated on Lake Michigan, but it was once the highlight of her summers. She'd loved traveling up the coast from Saugatuck Harbor to Holland and Grand Haven with the sun on her shoulders and the wind



and lake spray in her face. But when her husband's health started to decline nearly a decade ago, they made the painful decision to sell their boat. Now all she had of those days were photographs and beautiful memories.

She had pulled out her photo album the previous night to reminisce about boating with her husband, whom everyone called Chance—a nickname



for Chancellor. His given name was Glen, but he liked going by Chance, and when he bought an Egg Harbor cabin cruiser after retiring in 1993, he named it *Takin' a Chance*.



Today's trip would be on a boat that Todd's friend was lending him for the weekend. Jean didn't know what it was named, but that didn't matter. She just wanted to get out on the water. They went aboard, and

Jean sat in a deck chair as she watched Todd climb up to the flybridge to start the motor. The engine roared to life and then settled into a slow and steady “glub, glub, glub.” The deep, throaty sound of it flooded Jean with memories.

Abby emerged from the cabin with a glass of ice-cold lemonade. “Here, Mom,” she said. “You must be thirsty after that ice cream.” Jean took a sip. Its sweet tartness complemented her happy and excited mood.



As the boat idled through the channel heading out toward the lighthouse, Jean’s granddaughters began to slather suntan lotion on their arms and legs. It smelled like coconut. Jean put on a light sweater and a sun hat to protect her skin from the rays.

Soon, they were on the open lake, and Todd throttled up until they were cruising at a brisk pace. The sun was warm and the breeze was cool. Beaches along the shore were crowded with swimmers and sunbathers. At times, the oily scent of charcoal burning in portable grills wafted to them.



After a time, Todd slowed to a stop and anchored the boat to allow his daughters to take a refreshing dip. Jean hadn't gone into the waters of Lake Michigan in many years, but she remembered that even in August, they were quite chilly. While the girls swam, she nibbled on a square of rich, creamy fudge.

Later, as they returned to Saugatuck Harbor, Jean sighed, realizing she didn't want this beautiful day to end. Todd docked the boat and came down to the deck.

“Mom,” he said, “did this take you back to your days of boating with Dad on Lake Michigan?”



“It certainly did,” she answered. “This was the most enjoyable day I can remember in years. Thank you, Son.”

“Well, what are you doing next weekend?”

“I don’t know,” Jean said. “I have no plans. Why?”



“When I told you a friend lent me this boat, that wasn’t exactly the whole story,” Todd explained. “He let me

take the boat out for a spin last month because he was selling her, and I told him I was interested. I bought her, Mom. There are plenty of boat cruises in your future.”

“Oh, that’s wonderful!” Jean exclaimed.

“And I want your input on something,” Todd added. “Abby and I have been considering a name for her. We’re thinking about *Second Chance*. How do you feel about that?”

Jean felt tears pricking beneath her eyelids. “I think it’s perfect,” she said, beaming. “*Second Chance* is the best name in the world for this boat.”



THE END