

A T R U E



GENTLEMAN

I watched as a group of guys gathered around Chris and started to mock him.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW ROBERTS

By Meagan Taylor

I was just starting my junior year of high school. The homecoming dance was approaching and I was so excited to get asked. There were several people I wanted to go with, and I couldn't wait to be asked by a cute, fun guy.

One day, I was about to walk into my English class when a senior boy, Chris, stopped me. "Meagan, will you go to homecoming with me?"

Chris has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism that makes social interaction difficult, and he was constantly bullied and teased. I was about to turn him down, but then something stopped me—a sentence I remembered from my patriarchal blessing.

As I looked into Chris's hopeful eyes, I said, "I'll let you know, Chris."

I soon realized how selfish I sounded. God had not given me a trial. He had given me an opportunity to serve Chris. When I told Chris yes, I watched joy come over his face.

As the dance neared, I began to worry because I thought our date might be awkward. The day of the dance came, and as I picked up Chris to meet our group, he met me at his door with flowers. These were the first flowers anyone had ever given me. He ran to open my car door, and he was a true gentleman.

As we arrived at the restaurant, we were a little early, and I had the opportunity to talk with Chris. I learned that Chris had been

through a lot of hard trials. I felt guilty for all the times I'd laughed when others teased him. The group arrived, we ate, and then we went ice blocking. Every time I went down the hill, Chris ran down, carried the ice block up the hill for me, fixed the towel, and set it up for me to go down again. I'd never been treated like such a princess!

Later, as we entered the dance, I watched as a group of guys gathered around Chris and began to shove him, mock him, and dance around him. "Stop!" I yelled as I began to cry. I thought this was going to end in disaster. Then several guys from our group stepped in and moved the crowd away from Chris.

As the guys left, Chris came over to me and asked if I was OK. I'd stood here watching him get teased and mocked, and he wanted to know if I was OK! Who was this guy?

After the dance, I took Chris home. While we were driving, I felt truly humbled. I'd gone on this date thinking I would be helping Chris, when he'd really been helping me. Going to the dance with Chris taught me how wrong we are when we judge others unrighteously. God loves Chris just as much as He loves everyone else. I'd been so busy looking at the outside that I'd looked past the wonderful inside attributes Chris possessed. I believe all of God's children have attributes like that. No matter how different people may appear to be, they still have feelings and God loves them just the same. I thank Heavenly Father for the opportunity I had to go to the dance with Chris. It has forever changed my outlook on life. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.