



## A Time For ...

Perhaps some of the **A Story A Week** readers are somewhat apprehensive about the content of the next group of stories - with a brand new baby in the family, is there going to be a steady stream of 'baby stories'? Well please relax; I'm not going to be like the happy father who can endlessly talk about nothing else but his new baby ... we'll have one more story involving little Alex, and then get back to more general topics from next week!

The new family - Himi and her husband Ioan, along with baby Alex - don't have their own home yet, so are staying with Himi's mother, who lives in the Vancouver area. The house is a modern 'townhouse', and has only a small patio garden, but they make up for that by renting a good-sized allotment from the city. On one of the days that I visited them during my recent trip to Canada, we spent most of the day having a picnic down there, and a very pleasant day it was!

Their allotment is about a half-hour walk from the home, down on the flood plain of a nearby major river, where houses cannot be built safely. The soil seems extremely rich, and at this time of year there are fat berries, ripe fruit, and huge vegetables everywhere you look!

As we sat eating our picnic lunch, we were joined by a family from one of the nearby allotment plots - a couple with a one-year old baby. With two babies on hand, you can well imagine the directions in which the conversation turned! Yes ... birth experiences, feeding schedules, and of course, that overwhelming concern of all new families - diapers!

My own experience of that particular topic - being more than 20 years old - was too out of date to allow me to contribute much to the conversation, but I listened with passing interest as they discussed the merits of one brand of diaper over another, and even whether or not cloth diapers were better than disposable.

At one point in the conversation, the father of the other family spoke up. He was a very large man - easily over six feet tall, and very powerfully built - who works as a building contractor. He said "I can't believe that I've actually spent the last half-hour discussing diapers! What is going on?!"

We all laughed at his comment, and to try and answer his rhetorical question, I chimed in with an anecdote. When my parents and brother had been visiting me early last year, at one point in our conversations we suddenly realized that we had spent the past hour discussing nothing but physical problems and visits to the doctor. We were obviously all 'getting old'!

The point is of course, that at various stages of life, certain things - which otherwise play no part in our affairs - come to the forefront to claim our attention, before in turn sinking out of sight as something else takes their place. Those two new families are today talking about diapers; very soon now that will be forgotten, and they will find themselves deep in discussions about kindergarten, then school entrance, and so on and so on.

I suppose it is just like the allotment gardens that surrounded our picnic table; this week the blueberries were front and center, and all the visitors had blue tongues. Next week it will be raspberries, and the tongues will be red ...

To everything there is a season, and for my daughter and her friends - even the big burly contractor - the season is diapers!

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