

A Wooden Tray's Tale

*I'm a simple wooden tray but I'm used every day.
I was decorated with love and care and can be used anywhere.*

I would like to believe my life began in a wood maker's shop where a very talented crafts person formed pieces of wood to make a strong tray. Imagination is like a magic carpet even for a simple wooden tray. I don't remember anything about my beginnings but I actually suspect I started in a large factory where hundreds of trays just like me are formed every day. But that's ok because that's just the beginning of my story.



I was sitting on a shelf in a craft store in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The shopkeeper had a sign in front of me that said "75% Off." I saw a woman slowly walk towards me. She carefully studied the merchandise as she looked up and down the aisle. I felt her looking at me; she stepped closer and then I heard her say, "Oh, this could make a wonderful project." She picked me up, walked to the front of the store where she stopped at the cashier's counter. She smiled and asked, "Is the price of this tray truly reduced by 75 percent?" When the cashier assured her of the sales price, the woman gave the cashier her credit card. The cashier reviewed the card, she said "I'm sorry, I'm sure you hear this a lot, but I've never seen this name, Waverly, before. My purchaser nodded, and responded, "Yes, it is unusual, but I like it. The cashier placed me in a paper sack, and Waverly took me to her car. As she drove, I could hear her; she was talking to herself. "I think my sister would enjoy making a pretty tray for her husband." I wondered, "Was she talking about me?"

We arrived at Waverly's destination. She walked up the stairs to a bright and cheery room, removed me from the bag and laid me on the kitchen countertop. I noticed someone at the counter; she looked sad. Then I heard Waverly speak in a warm, kind voice. "Sunshine, what's wrong -- you're my sister and I want to help." Sunshine answered sadly "He's been sleeping all afternoon; he's very weak."

"I have an idea," Waverly responded. "I have a project for you. Sometimes Lloyd isn't up to sitting at the table for meals; it's better for him in the lazyboy chair. Wouldn't it be good to serve his food on a beautiful tray that you've decorated?" Sunshine couldn't help but smile at her sister. "I see the tray, but how am I going to make it beautiful?"

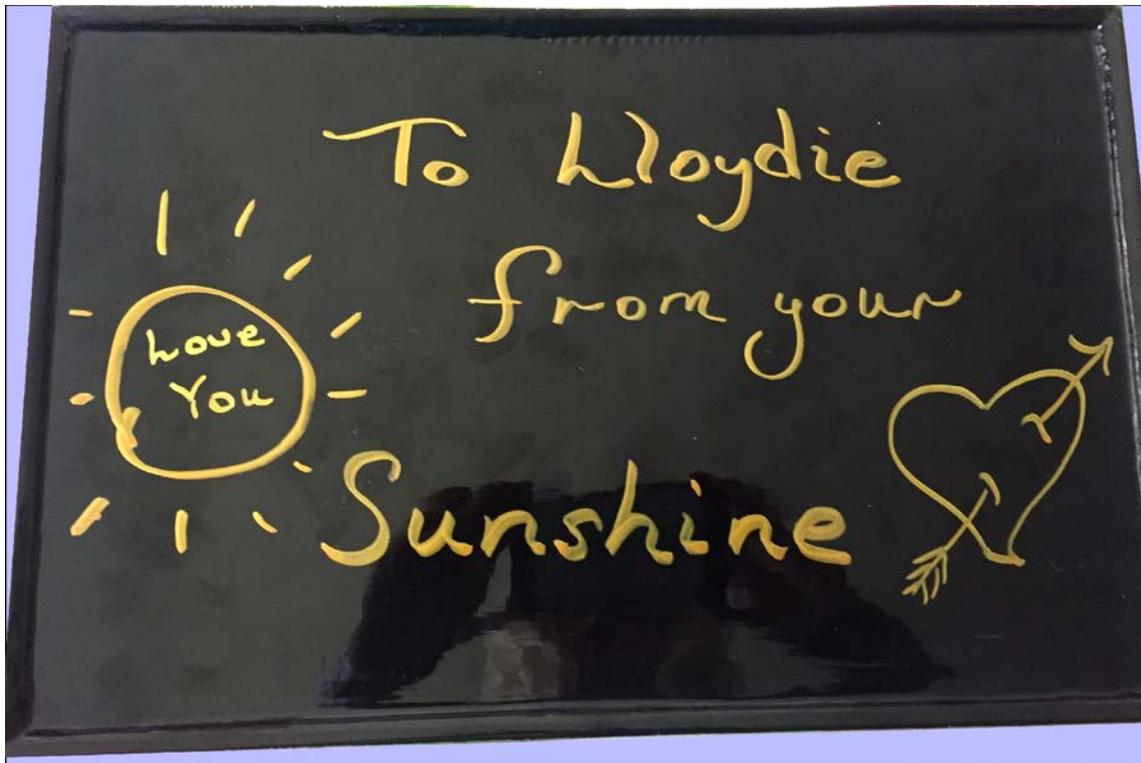
I couldn't help but ask myself the very same question. I know I'm very plain; how could I become beautiful?"

It wasn't long before Sunshine's and my question was answered, because, Waverly started to bring paints, decals and brushes to the countertop, that is, after she covered it with newspaper.

Sunshine looked at all the paraphernalia and began making choices. "I think I'll paint it gold." And she did. I rather liked the new gold me. After the paint dried, she added a silver border on the inside of me and added flowers and butterflies. I couldn't believe; I whispered to myself, "I really am beautiful!"



But she didn't stop there; she turned me over and said "Ok, now I need to decorate the bottom." And she did. First she painted my bottom black and after the paint dried, she printed a greeting to her husband and decorated the outside ends. When she was finished she and Waverly shellacked me. When the shellac was dry, I shone like a star.



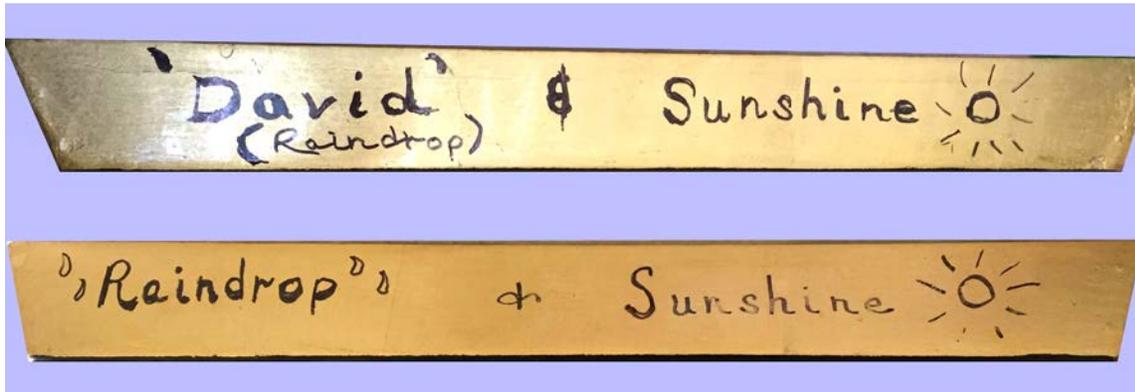
That evening, Waverly and Sunshine prepared a special treat for Lloyd; a pastrami sandwich on rye and ginger ale. Sunshine carefully carried the tray to him and then patiently waited to show him the beauty of the tray. He exclaimed, "Oh Sunshine, it's beautiful!" I was extremely proud and happy as I thought, "Not only am I beautiful, but I helped Lloyd be happy, too; what a wonderful feeling."

Sunshine and Lloyd returned to California so the sisters were once again far apart but they talked often about how they created me because Sunshine used me every day as she cared for Lloyd.

I don't know why, but soon their home was quiet. Sunshine no longer lovingly placed food on me for Lloyd. Then one day, she placed me on a shelf in a dark closet. I don't know how long I was stuck there but it seemed like forever.

Then one day, there was light in the closet and I heard her say, "Oh, I remember this; I'm going to take it out of here." And she did. I soon realized that there were many changes, a different home, a different

man; his name was David. She spoke to me, "You are such a dear memory and I want to use you every day, but I need to add something." And she did.



Now almost every night, she picks me up from beside her lazyboy chair and sets a glass of wine along with her dinner on me and places me in her lap. I smile to myself and say "Life is good!"

I had the most wonderful experience last month. Waverly was visiting. I heard her suggest "Sunshine, bring me five of your favorite necklaces that you no longer wear because you can't fasten the clasps." Waverly picked me up, set me on the couch in the far corner of the living room and began to fasten magnetic clasps to each necklace. She arranged the finished necklaces on me and called, "Sunshine, come and see." When Sunshine saw the necklaces so beautifully arranged on me, she threw her arms around her sister "Thank you so much; you do wonderful magic."



I smiled and happily thought "I can help make magic happen."