

BREADCRUMBS

by Michelle Feagin

AFGHANS AND ANGELS.

They say life begins at 40. They weren't kidding! Several years ago, I was in a whirlwind of fear over the welfare of my great-nephews. They were living in terrible conditions and my attempts to intervene had been fruitless. None of the social services seemed concerned about these three little guys. All I could do is fret -- and pray. And turn 40.

On a miserably cold March day I was completely unable to focus on my work. I left the office hoping an escape for lunch would help clear my head. Just one problem, I had no appetite. Perhaps browsing through the nearby resale shop would clear my head. It was worth a try.

Rummaging about the shop I spotted a beautiful baby afghan at the irresistible bargain price of \$1.00. It had obviously been hand-made with great love. I picked it up thinking how nice it would be to give this to the baby. Just as quickly, I threw it back on the shelf. How stupid! I'll never get a chance to see the baby or even get this to him. Forget it! I moved along the aisle trying to re-focus.

Something grabbed me by the collar and pulled me back to the afghan. I picked it up again. It was so soft and inviting! How could it be priced at just a dollar? Again, I threw it back down, a bit more irritated with myself. This is ridiculous! There must be something in this shop to catch my attention. Maybe they have something I can use in the kitchen. Once more I felt my collar being snatched and pulled back down the aisle. Once more I found myself rubbing the afghan. Was there a magnet on that spot on the floor?

Finally, I snatched the stupid afghan and marched over to the cashier, throwing it down on the counter. Words can't express how irritated I was with myself for doing something so pointless. I headed out to the parking lot and threw the proof of my early senility into the trunk and returned to work.

When I arrived, one of my co-workers rushed frantically toward me. She told me CPS had been trying to reach me for the last half hour and thrust a pink phone message into my hand. I returned the call and was told the baby had been abandoned. They needed me to come and pick him up to care for him until they could find the mother and work things out.

I don't know what the speed limit was, but I'm sure I broke it racing over there. It was love at first sight when I saw Matthew. Somehow, through it all, he managed to give me a huge smile. I was hooked. All he had for clothing was an undershirt and a diaper. It was freezing outside. I just happened to have a cuddly warm baby afghan with me! I wrapped him up and snuggled him in my arms. I've never seen a baby look so peaceful. Perhaps the angel that kept grabbing my collar was still with the afghan, singing lullabies to him. It didn't matter that I had no idea where to start, that I had nothing but the afghan to use to care for him. Or that I had no idea how to reunite him with his brothers. Somehow, I knew I would be directed through it all, just as I had been from the start in that resale shop. I would follow the rest of the breadcrumbs.