Chapter Outlines – One Trusting Heart

Chapter 1 – Normal Life

Cody is quitting his job at a software company in order to start his home business of building websites. We see him as a provider, father, and husband. We see him think a kid acting out in public a nuisance and questions the parents. This plays a role in foreshadowing his change in understanding of parenting.

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Ashley is a stay at home mother of one part-time daughter name Emily. She’s looking forward to the future, glad to have Cody home. We need to make her really likeable before we drop a bomb shell (ex-boyfriend communication in coming chapter). Cody isn’t “feeling” church on Sunday and they decide to stay home. This foreshadows her and Cody’s spiritual problems and their lack of faithfulness to church which will change with the boys.

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Cody and Ashley take Emily out to lunch and have a nice time. As they get home, Ashley has to go deal with Paige (her sister) and help her with the kids while Paige and Doug go run errands. Cody takes the opportunity to work on fleshing out a new web design schema for a client.

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Ashley is at her sister’s house and it’s a drama lama of a mess. She finds needles in the cupboard and she’s worried Paige is doing more than just smoking marijuana. We feel for the two boys in the situation and we, as the reader, LOVE the fact she’s trying to do the right thing (more building love for her before the bombshell).

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Chapter 2 – Flashback Cody and Ashley 2nd year of marriage

Journey through infertility and finding out that Cody can never have children. We see lots of prayers, crying, devastating news. They look at invitro, but it’s too expensive and they’re not sure because of the way they throw out fertilized eggs. They’re unsure, but praying that God gives them a way to have children. A close friend of Cody’s, Luke, encourages him in the fact that God is faithful and will provide, he just has to trust.

Chapter 3 – Inciting incident #1

Cody takes Ashley and Emily out for dinner at a diner on the boardwalk (*One Fine Diner*). Here we will see a cameo of Abigail. She’s pregnant with a boy named Mac. Everything is good and dinner is going well and then Ashley gets a phone call. Paige is dropping off the boys. We see Cody upset, but he’s willing since they don’t want the kids roaming the streets of Lincoln City with Paige.

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Ashley is trying to care for the kids at home while Cody is finishing up his final week at work. The boys are insane. Pulling stuff off the shelves, scaling the counters in the kitchen. She’s upset and by the time Cody gets home that evening, she’s in tears and retreats to the bedroom to calm down.

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Cody takes over and is trying to manage to get a little work done, but the boys are insane and he’s struggling to keep his cool. He gets firm with one of them and the kid starts choking himself and Cody starts to realize just how much they are taking on through this. Then thinks of how he had prayed for children. This couldn’t be an answer to prayer . . . could it?

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Ashley is relieved to get the kids dropped off and hold her husband’s hand on the way to service and through it. Just being able to sit and relax for an hour is a breath of fresh air. As she listens to the sermon that Wednesday night, she starts to realize how lacking his church attendance has been and really the only reason she was there on a Wednesday night was because of the situation they were in. She ends up talking to Cody about it that night.

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Chapter 4

Ashley is doing a little better with the kids, it’s been six months now. She gets an email while at the park with the kids from her ex-boyfriend. We see her debating on replying and ends up replying. IT’S INNOCENT in nature. Just catching up on lives, etc… The reader is going to feel a little icky here, but there’s so much good for her that it’s going to sting only a bit.

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Cody is now working full-time from home. He’s asking Ashley about progress on Paige, wanting to know when the kids can go back to her and end the guardianship. It’s unclear and she hasn’t heard from Paige. After finally reaching Paige, she decides on the spot she wants to come over for a visit. At the visit Cody catches her laying in bed with the older boy, crying and freaking out while he’s comforting her. Cody sees it as a problem and steps up and into the situation.

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Ashley is talking with Paige, trying to encourage her about the boys and how she can’t be doing stuff like what happened the other day. Telling her it upset the boy and Paige is getting angry at Ashley for putting limits and restrictions on her. “they are my kids and you can’t tell me what to do!”

Going to the kids, she knows in her heart she’s doing the right thing.

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Chapter 5 Flashback for Cody Age 13

Journey through the experience of finding out that Cody’s mother had cheated on his father for years. The secret he has to keep from the other siblings in his family. The heart wrenching talks out of town in the car with his father. The promise he made to himself to never end up falling for a woman who would break his heart.

Chapter 6

Ashley gets yet another email from her ex-boyfriend. She goes away from Cody to read it. He’s now asking about seeing her and catching up. She debates on telling Cody but knows he wouldn’t be okay with it. She is convinced it’s friendly and sneaks away to go see him at a McDonalds. Once there, she realizes it was a mistake and leaves. As she gets home she finds Cody sitting on the couch, ringing his hands. He’s upset.

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Cody comes unhinged as he explains he knows. He had a hunch something strange was going on and he went into her email. She’s apologetic and tries to explain to him that she realized it was a mistake and left. Unable to think clearly, he leaves and goes for a drive. He’s praying, he’s crying, he’s dying inside. He’s debating on leaving Ashley. He gets a text from Ashley. Paige is being transported by ambulance to the ER for heroin overdose.

His insides squirm as he knows he has these two boys to care for, to love, to tend to. Just like his father had to do with his mother (draw from the flashback chapter previously).

He realizes he has to choose to trust God or to trust what is going on in his life.

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Ashley is freaking out upset when Cody arrives home. She clings to him tightly as she’s weeping and apologizing. He tells her to go. Driving up to the hospital, as tears are rolling down her cheeks, she phones her parents in Colorado. They’re upset and want to be kept updated. Arriving to her sister’s bedside at the hospital, she’s crying and praying over her. Asking God to heal her. A nurse walks in and joins her in prayer.

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Cody’s extremely apprehensive about Paige coming over for a visit a week later after the overdose. She had been sketchy for the last six months and now she had overdosed. He only allows it for the sake of Ashley and her parents. He’s on edge as he watches Paige interacting with the boys. After a little bit, he gets an email he has to attend to in his office. When he comes back out, she’s gone and the boys are too. Running outside, he sees her burning rubber and taking off with the kids. He calls her and threatens to call the cops if she doesn’t come back. Taking the kids back into the house, he tells her to stay away and shuts the door.

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Chapter 6 Flashback of Ashley Age 15

Journey of her parents raising her. Mom always taking her and the sisters to church, while the father did drugs and drove flashy cars. It’s through this journey we see the “why” in the next chapter when her parents become irate. It’s the drug use of her father that gives a push into the why.

Chapter 7

Ashley gets an irate phone call from her father. He’s upset to hear that they barred Paige from seeing the boys. She’s silent, but he’s going on and on. He says he’s done talking to her. She tries to talk to Cody about letting Paige see the boys, but he declines. When she tries to push, he says a word. “Maybe you aren’t the best for judgement of a situation.” This is a low blow at her for the infraction of what she had done. She’s hurt and struggling in her marriage, in her relationships with the kids, and with her parents.

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Cody is working in his office when he has to address an issue with the boys. Ashley is just sitting there, and he gets upset with her. She starts to cry and goes to bed. It’s the umpteenth time she’s went to bed early and he’s had enough of it. He confronts her. She’s numb, she’s feeling like she can’t handle any of it anymore and she doesn’t know what to do. He spots the Bible on the nightstand and grabs it. “Read it.” Then he leaves. He’s growing in his knowledge of God, but not in his heart.

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Ashley meets with a counselor at the church. Tells her the struggle and they offer marriage counseling, but she knows Cody would never do it. She’s upset about not talking to her parents. She’s upset about realizing just how wicked of heart she truly has and she’s upset that there doesn’t seem to be an end in sight. The woman tells her that God is working and reminds her of how her and Cody had wanted children. This helps shift her mind some in a good direction.

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Cody comes unhinged over dishes in the sink and slams them around. He’s upset, he’s overwhelmed, he’s sad. His wife comforts him, softening his anger. He turns to her and hugs her. Kisses her for the first time since everything happened with the email. They talk and he admits he doesn’t know what to do. She asks if he’s reading his Bible, he is. She asks if he’s applying it (she learned from counseling), he realizes he isn’t. He makes a plan to start living the truth he is reading.

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Chapter 8

Ashley and Cody go to church with the kids. We see Ashley taking notes now and listening intently to the sermons. She’s not just there for a break, but there to worship God. With her parents not talking to her, she’s finding herself growing in her relationship with God and others in the body. Abigail invites her to a baby shower for Mac.

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As the two-year mark approaches of having the boys, Cody picks up the oldest boy from therapy when the therapist asks about adoption. He hadn’t thought about it, but he knew the idea of changing their last name to his brought joy to his heart. Arriving home, he thought of Ashley. A part of him still didn’t trust her after what had happened so long ago. Opening up a browser, he was about to click ‘log in’ to check her email like did every day for the last year and a half, but this time, he stopped. *Trust.* Going to the door of the boys’ bedroom, he peaked in. He knew he needed to adopt them and end this for good.

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Ashley knew her parents would go back to not speaking to her again once they heard about the adoption papers reaching her sister. Her only chance would be getting a hold of her sister and getting her to agree beforehand. She asks her parents, but they haven’t heard from her in a week. She goes to the hospital to see if she was there, she wasn’t. She ends up going to the rough side of town to find her sister. She’s high and homeless. Her heart’s breaking, but glad she’s alive. Her sister is mean.

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Cody pushes aside the anger he feels towards Paige and focuses on the sadness that he feels for the boys and their relationship with their mother. He hoped she was doing better and could make this less painful, but that wasn’t the case. We see Cody is maturing.

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Chapter 9

Ashley gets a call from her dad again. This time it’s about the upcoming court hearing. He’s irate again and then hangs up on her. Calls Cody and freaks out on him. Cody stays calm, while he gets more and more angry. After the phone calls with her dad, Cody grabs Ashley and hugs her, not saying anything, just holding her in the moment.

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Cody is angry towards Ashley’s dad and he can’t stand the fact the bitterness is in his heart. He questions God and requests for it to go away from him, but it stays. He’s irritated within himself, yet he keeps pushing through. One evening, Ashley takes the boys to go see a friend in McMinnville. He’s surprised when he feels himself struggling to trust, but turns his trust and heart to God. He thought he had been restored fully in this matter, but the situation only shows how he still struggles and still needs God.

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Ashley and Cody start attending two weekly Bible studies that serve as a family during a hard time in their lives. They press into each other, to God, to the body of Christ for comfort and love.

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Cody’s heart starts to soften as it’s overwhelmed by love of other people. The more he steps out in faith to spend time with others, God teaches him more and more, bringing gentle and lovingkindness to a man who lacked it.

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Chapter 9

Ashley and Cody go to courthouse early. They go grab a coffee beforehand as their nerves are on edge. It’s through this cup of coffee Ashley sees something in Cody that she hasn’t seen before. Fear. She inquires and digs in a little, and he admits the fear and his lack of trust that everything is going to work out. He admits to her about his lack of trust of her recent visit to Patty’s house in McMinnville. He talks about his stress in his home business and how it feels like everything he tries to do feels like failure. She’s touched he has opened up so much during the coffee.

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Cody and Ashley go into the court room. Paige is dolled up and doesn’t look like a drug addict. Seeing the inlaws there in the back row, his heart is crushed for his wife. The judge calls in a family counselor to address both sides before hearing the case. The counselor explains the difficulties of the older boy and how he has a hard time coping, understanding or taking on any changes. Explains that it’s been so long that it’s detrimental for him to be returned to his mother. Paige, through the power of God and prayer decides to willingly sign over her rights. Cody and Ashley’s lawyer therefore doesn’t have to drag out the evidence of her shortcomings. The judge grants the termination of rights and schedules the adoption signing. He makes sure they’re ready and prepared to raise the boys to adulthood.

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That evening, Cody and Ashley go hang out with Paige by the ocean. She’s at peace and she’s trusting God through it. She admits that she messed up and ruined the boys, but Cody is quick to mention that she loves them and just because they live with them now, doesn’t negate that love. We see Cody as a Christ-like figure in this special time. Just then, the parents show up and come down to visit. Everyone is crying and hugging.