

Full House Fan Fiction

They Grow Up So Fast

By: Doug Fowler

Author's note: Taking another break, as I'm really getting busy with other stuff, including ideas on a couple new Print On Demand books. But, first, I was thinking about an adorable activity at an area school a few years back that made the paper, and picturing Steph in it. While, at the same time, pondering the decision D.J. makes in the book series to be more proactive, rather than just reacting to toddler/preschooler Michelle's inevitable misbehavior when the men wouldn't do anything. Enjoy.

THEY GROW UP SO FAST

Six-year-old Stephanie Tanner skipped into her house upon returning from school Friday afternoon. The Kindergartener was almost always happy and energetic. Especially because it was late March, with beautiful trees and flowers coming out, and she had a special surprise relating to her class next Monday.

She shouted, "Daddy, Kindergarten is soooo neat!" as her dad, local sportscaster Danny Tanner, gave her a huge hug and kiss on the sofa.

"Well, I guess I don't have to ask how school went. My guess is this is something more than managing to jump rope without lassoing your feet," the doting father said proudly.

Stephanie nodded, her curls shaking a little. "I'm going to marry U."

Danny chuckled under his breath. He wasn't sure if this had any connection to his losing his wife, Pam, almost a year ago. But, he enjoyed playing "wedding," and he knew his daughters D.J., almost eleven, and Stephanie did, too. Michelle, at only one-and-a-half, didn't understand the concept yet.

He indicated a stack of papers with his head. "Well, sweetheart, Daddy's got a lot of work to do, with the baseball preview show tomorrow. But, get all fancied up, and I'll make a little time." He really didn't have very much time. But, he always tried to find a little for his young girls, no matter what.

"Daddy, I would have to wear it all weekend. It's after school Monday," Stephanie declared.

"Well, I wish I could find time off from work then, sweetheart..."

"That's okay, I'm not marrying you. I'm marrying U."

“I see,” Danny said with a large, fake grin. He placed Stephanie on his lap and cuddled her while he continued. He really had been puzzled by the last sentence. “Honey, sometimes children try to tell parents stuff, and just like sometimes if I try to tell you adult stuff, the connections get crossed, and neither of us can understand what the other one’s saying. This is one of those times. Why don’t you go tell Uncle Jesse or Joey all about it; I’m really busy.”

“Okay.” Stephanie got off his lap and headed to the attic apartment. The girls’ Uncle Jesse, Pam’s brother, had moved in there after Pam died to help raise the girls. At the same time, Danny’s best friend Joey had moved into the basement. Joey was a very funny comedian. But, Uncle Jesse enjoyed treating Stephanie like a queen. She fondly remember a few times when Joey would be performing his comedy at a local club, and she would dress up, get a play purse with play money and keys, and pretend to be his date.

As she walked past her dad’s office in the den - which could be a 4th bedroom if not for the office - she noticed more sports magazines than she imagined existed. They were in three distinct piles on a desk. “Wow, Daddy must really be busy. Usually he’s even neater than that,” she said to herself. In fact, Danny was a total neat freak.

She knocked on the door to the apartment. Jesse had felt a lot of pressure from helping with the girls a couple weeks before, and his solution had been to lock his apartment sometimes. That had helped a lot. It also meant Michelle could bug D.J. more for changed diapers or food. D.J. seemed happy with that, but he’d started to realize that being with the girls opened up a special, loving part of him he didn’t even know was there.

“Who is it?” he hollered.

“It’s Q,” Stephanie shouted.

Jesse put down his guitar and shrugged. He walked down the steps and unlocked the door. Thinking of the character from James Bond films who made fancy gadgets, he opened the door and said, “What, are you here to sell me some exploding crayons?”

Stephanie followed him up into his apartment. “Exploding crayons?”

“Yeah, Q’s in that, you know.”

“Hmmm. I know how to spell crayons. So, there must a ‘Q’ in the word ‘exploding.’”

“No, actually, there isn’t. I mean...never mind. So, what’s up, kiddo?”

“Would you like to see a wedding Monday?”

“Well, I’d have to get some time off from the exterminating business I got with your grandpa, my dad. But, I should be able to, it’s a little slow right now. Who’s getting married.”

Her dad had had trouble understanding when she told him. So, she tried a different way of explaining this time. “U is the groom. And I’m playing the bride.”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold it. It’s you are the groom.”

“No, Uncle Jesse, I just told you. I’m the bride.”

“Yeah, but what I’m sayin’...look,” he said, holding up a finger. “When you talk about what you are, you say you are. ‘Cuase it’s second person. Just like I say I am ‘cause I’m first person.”

“First person where?”

“Anywhere. School, home, the beach, it’s always ‘I am playing the guitar,’ or ‘You are playing the guitar.’ But, you say someone else is playing the guitar.”

“Oh. Soooo...” Stephanie got a puzzled look on her face, and said slowly, “I should say U are, but I still say Q is?”

“Right, you say Q is. Now, what were you tellin’ me?”

Stephanie’s confused look slowly left, and she said, “Okay, Q is getting married, and U are getting married. Is that right?”

“You’re saying I am getting married?”

“Here we go again, it’s the same problem Daddy had. You are not getting married, U are getting married.” She stopped suddenly as Joey walked up to the attic, and held her mouth open for a second. “I think I just confused myself.”

“Same here. Joey, maybe you can help us.”

“Sure. D.J. got home, too, she was going over to Kimmy’s for a bit, so when Danny goes back to the station it’ll be you or me to get Michelle when she wakes up from her nap.” Kimmy Gibbler lived next door, and was D.J.’s best friend. Kimmy could be something of an airhead, and strange at times.

“Okay, great. Listen, Joey, here’s the problem. Steph said I’m in a wedding, then she said I’m not. She said Q is getting married, too. And then we started talkin’ about a bunch of other stuff, and now we’re both confused.”

Joey nodded quickly. “Oh, yeah, one of those play weddings where the letters Q and U get married. Oh, those are so much fun when schools have them.”

“I should have known you’d know what was going on. You probably saw that on Sesame Street,” Jesse teased. He thought Joey seemed quite childish at times - especially with his love of cartoons.

Joey never took offense to such comments, though. He simply said seriously, “Nah, I much prefer cartoons like Bullwinkle and Friends. Are you going to be in one of those weddings, Steph?”

“I sure am. Another girl has the flu, so I get to fill in now, as Q. And Harry’s going to be U. I hope you all can come.”

“Hey, I wouldn’t miss it for the world.” Joey sighed, put an arm around Jesse, and spoke wistfully. “Just think, only six years old, and already one of our little letters is getting married.” Jesse just looked at him strangely.

D.J. woke Sunday morning to the sound of Michelle, who had been making noise for a minute before D.J. noticed. She laid there for a moment, then decided to get up - she remembered that her dad had worked extra late Friday night preparing for the preview show. Uncle Jesse’s door was likely locked, and Joey wouldn’t hear from the basement, so she decided to get Michelle out of her crib and change her. Jesse would hear eventually - would have gotten her up with D.J. sleeping in for who knew how long if he’d been on that floor. But now, she was closer.

After changing Michelle’s diaper and speaking excitedly about the beautiful early spring day, D.J. carried Michelle into their bedroom and began to snuggle with her in bed. Then, she looked at her alarm clock. It was after 7:30 in the morning. And, she was just too wide awake; as was Michelle..

“Hey, Michelle, do you want to come with us today?” she asked nicely. Then, she walked over to Stephanie’s bed. “Hey, Steph, wake up,” she said, jostling her a little.

“Huh? Oh, morning, Deej. You want me to take Michelle in my bed while you get more sleep?” Stephanie didn’t help a lot with Michelle, being so young, but she assisted when she could.

That was a little too much for six-year-old to handle. “Sorry, Michelle’s getting a bit too active. I don’t want her...” She suddenly noticed that Michelle had crawled out of her bed and was closely inspecting a light socket, pulling the cord out and trying to put it back in.

D.J. raced over and pulled her away from the socket while exclaiming, “No, Michelle! Bad girl!” Michelle began shaking her finger back at D.J. but the toddler quickly stopped, melting under the glare and sniffing once. She then remembered other times when D.J. had done the same thing. Luckily, this behavior was getting very infrequent on Michelle’s part.

D.J. placed Michelle back on her bed, handed her a stuffed animal and told her to play with it. Then, she turned back to Stephanie. “I thought it would be nice, since Michelle woke me up, if we went to church.”

“Today? But, Easter isn’t till next Sunday.”

“I know. But, you can show off your pretty white dress. The one you’re going to be a blushing bride in tomorrow,” D.J. kidded her.

“Well, okay. I guess.” Stephanie slowly got out of bed, and remembered the times when their mom would take them. They had gone most Sundays when Pam was alive.

D.J. remembered that, too. And somehow, it seemed that their mom would especially want them there today, though she didn’t know why.

She chuckled to herself. It certainly wasn’t to find a minister for the marriage of Q and U. Indeed, the church’s pastor could probably do it, but he’d be too busy with other things, she presumed. The principal had planned to do it, but had left Friday due to family illness. Joey had volunteered to perform the ceremony instead. He would play the part brilliantly, with a straight face. Although, he’d likely throw in more jokes than needed.

Joey drove them to church, while Uncle Jesse stayed behind to prepare a huge meal for when they got home; he was an excellent cook. Joey took Michelle to the nursery before joining a group for Bible Study before the main service. There were some things that he did like an adult. Indeed, he even knew how to fly a small plane. He just preferred the simpler life of childhood to acting like an adult much of the time.

The girls, meanwhile, visited Sunday School departments they hadn’t visited in over a month. They enjoyed themselves greatly, even as the main service began. There, Joey, D.J. and Stephanie sat in the small auditorium; Stephanie with a coloring book in case she got bored. It was amazing how many things were coming back to D.J., even the gentle nudges she gave Stephanie when she wanted her to catch an important point of the sermon. Just like their mom.

It became even more eerie as D.J. listened. The pastor was speaking about the feeding of the 5,000+ with five loaves and two fish given by a little boy. And, leading into the Good Friday sermon when he would preach on how Jesus had given His all on the cross. D.J.’s mind remained on the feeding of the 5,000, though.

She kept thinking of how that boy had given very little to do great things. And, how she didn't know a lot about being a mother. But, D.J. had a little to give, a few memories, a few ideas, that she could use to help even more than she was now with Michelle. As the invitation hymn was played, she found herself nudging Stephanie again. "Stay with Joey, I'm going up there to pray," she whispered.

D.J. found herself weeping at the altar, telling the Lord how she loved her sisters, and that if He needed her to guide them, even to discipline Michelle, till the men were ready, she would. Instead of just reacting if things got really bad, she would start being proactive.

What was that about?" Stephanie asked Joey once the singing stopped.

Joey shrugged. "I don't know."

"I hope D.J.'s not going to be a missionary. I remember last year when a couple went forward and said they were going to Africa. We don't even know anyone in Africa." Joey shushed her while trying to withhold giggles.

The pastor then asked D.J. to stand. "This young girl...many of you may remember they lost their mother less than a year ago. And, she says she feels in her heart that she needs to start helping more, maybe disciplining their youngest sister, who's getting close to two, if I remember, till the men are ready. D.J., that is such a wonderful decision. It's so important to say you'll be there to help, even if you don't know what you're in for."

D.J. smiled. Stephanie would have said that Danny never seemed to even raise his voice to Michelle. If she were old enough to realize, she might have even said she couldn't see them putting Michelle in timeout, taking away her dessert, or anything; the men hated to see that cute little girl sad.

D.J. was more diplomatic, though. "Thank you, Sir. It has to be rough for them; I know it is for me. Just being here brings back memories, though. And, maybe I can show them how Mom did it."

"I'm sure she did a wonderful job with you girls, too," the minister said, also being very diplomatic. The family hadn't come every Sunday, and were much more inconsistent since the accident that claimed Pam's life. However, the mere fact D.J. was there at that moment spoke volumes.

Upon arriving home, D.J. shared her decision with the rest of the family. Danny, now done cleaning the house, had also joined them for lunch.

"Deej, that's really sweet of you. Reminds me of how your mom always wanted to be the best. And, you're just the same," Danny remarked as they sat. He began to feed Michelle. "But, Michelle is such a good little girl. I'm sure we won't have any need for you to really start sending her to her room or anything."

“Dad, she’ll be two in a few months. She might not mean to do a lot of stuff. But, she’s still growing up faster than you realize. And, she’ll do stuff she needs to know is wrong.” She put a hand to her mouth. “Wow, that sounded Dad-like.”

Jesse agreed as he dished everyone some casserole. “Yeah, she’s right, man. In another couple years, maybe she’ll be gettin’ married to B or D or something.”

“Uncle Jesse, why would ‘B’ get married?” Stephanie said between giggles.

Joey knew right away. “I don’t know, but I’m sure B would find a honey somewhere.”

“Yeah, it’s not like other letters have any special relationship with each other. Besides, if she were any letter, she’d be M. Right, Michelle?” Danny asked as he shoved a spoonful of food into her mouth.

“Mmmmm,” Michelle said as she swallowed it.

“I don’t mind if she’s M or D or some other letter, as long as she minds her P’s and Q’s,” D.J. joked.

Joey shook his head. “She can’t, Stephaine’s already Q.”

“Maybe that means she’d have to mind me. I wouldn’t mind that.”

“D.J. can work you in slowly when you’re ready, maybe have you help put her to bed or something if I’m not available. Honey, I really am proud of you for making this decision,” Danny told his oldest. “I guess I just have such success leading her away from bad stuff, I don’t see the need for it. Of course, maybe I’m just not wanting her to grow up - after all, my little Q is getting married,” he joked proudly.

That Monday, the other grades let out a little early, so everyone could attend the wedding. Numerous children were given large cardboard signs with letters on them, in addition to pictures of things with “qu” in them - queens, quarters, equals signs, and so on.

Kimmy and D.J. sat toward the side of the auditorium in front, instead of with their classes. Jesse sat with them.

Danny entered just before the Kindergarten teacher began to speak. “I hope this is the section for the Q family.”

“Sure is, Dad. If you look quick, you’ll think some of us are quadruplets.” D.J. pointed to several students, all holding up the same letter.

Danny continued to think about the adorable spectacle on the stage. “I feel right at home with you Q’s - when I think of my little girl as a bride I really start to quiver.” He sat.

The teacher spoke about the special relationship between the letters Q and U. Then, Joey took the podium. The other parts of the wedding party, then Stephanie and Harry, walked up to the stage. Stephanie wore a large letter Q, while Harry wore a large U. The others also wore letters - maid of honor Allie Taylor wore S, for instance.

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to unite in holy matrimony the letters Q and U. The only thing missing is Vanna White as a bridesmaid.”

“Oh, could we call her?” Stephanie asked suddenly.

“Sorry, Steph, I think she’s a little busy.” Joey cleared his throat, and remarked that, “Ever since they were little, lower-case letters, the letters Q and U have been inseparable. Many’s the time Q sat there with nothing to do, and U came to woo Q, by quoting Shakespeare, or inviting Q to join him in quiet walks while sipping some cool, orange-flavored liquid...”

Danny started to sweat as Stephanie smiled dreamily at the thoughts. “I hope my daughter doesn’t think real love is going to be this easy.”

“Cheer up, Mr. Tanner. I’m sure Stephanie knows better than to go out and marry some letter,” Kimmy remarked.

“...And though they sometimes quarreled, they quickly learned they equaled a quite wonderful pair. For they are always seen together spelling words. U would not be complete without Q in the alphabet.”

Kimmy tilted her head. “Speak for yourself. I’d be complete. One less letter would make spelling a whole lot easier, in my view.” D.J. nudged Kimmy to keep her quiet.

“And so, we gather together to witness the marriage of Q and U. If there be any who object, believing these two should not be joined, let him speak now or forever hold his peace.”

Kimmy raised her hand and stood, responding to Joey’s ad lib. “Hey, I object. I just now got ‘truffles’ right in spelling. If Q and U get married I’ll have to learn words like that all over again.”

Joey smiled politely as numerous students chuckled. “Oh, don’t worry, Kimmy. While U is out earning a living forming words like under and umbrella, Q will be taking care of the kids and working at her favorite charity - making Q-tips for needy children in third world countries.”

Stephanie smiled. Even she wondered how Joey had said that with a straight face. Jesse also grinned happily, as the comment seemed to have finally quieted Kimmy - at least it made her have to think, which would take a while. At least there's one great use for jokes at a wedding, he told himself.

"Now, do you, Q, take U to go together in the alphabet, to spell words like quilt and quiet, and to never quibble or quarrel?"

"Kwa," Stephanie said proudly as the students began chuckling again.

"Do you, U, take Q to go together in the alphabet, to spell words like quilt and quiet, and to never quibble or quarrel?"

"Kwa," Harry declared.

"May we have the quarters?" Another Kindergarten student handed Joey two quarters from a pillow. "You will please hand these quarter to each other, then when you receive them, put them in your pockets." When they did this, Joey said, "Q and U, I now pronounce you QU. You may kiss the bride." Stephanie, Harry, and many others merely made grossed out faces at the thought.

Danny continued taping the proceedings, as he'd been doing since he arrived and Jesse handed him the camera, which he'd begun using himself just in case. "Isn't that the cutest thing you've ever seen?"

"I'm still confused - isn't that the Quutest? Or...however you say that," Kimmy said.

D.J. smiled at her best friend, hiding her mirth. "Kimmy, that's just to teach them how the letters go together so much. The important thing is, there's wedding cake in the cafeteria. And, Michelle is at Grandma and Grandpa's, rather than here trying to wear a piece as a hat."

That evening, D.J. sat holding Michelle and playing with her. Then, the doorbell rang. Danny, who had just returned home from the station, answered. "Oh, hi...Mrs. Brook, isn't it?" Danny recognized the woman with light gray curly hair right away - she had visited several times shortly after Pam died. "Come on in." Danny introduced everyone, including Kimmy, who was visiting.

"Yes, I remember Kimmy from Sunday School when Pam would bring her along, too." The teacher considered that, while Kimmy seemed to understand salvation, at the same time she asked questions or gave answers that were quite off the wall during discussions.

"I'm still trying to figure out if Jesus would have changed any of those loaves or fish into toful," Kimmy considered aloud.

The teacher smiled at Kimmy. “Well...I guess that’s a matter of faith. The Lord didn’t consider it important enough to say, I guess.” She then turned to D.J.. “I came to see you, D.J.,” Mrs. Brook said as they sat around the living room. “You made a really grown-up decision yesterday. Did you tell your family?”

“She did, but please, don’t say ‘grown up,’ I had enough problems earlier today.”

Stephanie explained Danny’s nervousness. “I got married today,” she said matter-of-factly.

“Yep, just think, Mr. Tanner. Pretty soon you’ll be a grandletter,” Kimmy joked. “They’ll have little ‘qu’ combinations running all around. Maybe they’ll even adopt an a. Which reminds me, if you do, I could use it for my report card,” Kimmy told Stephanie.

“It would be a nice change. D.J. says you sleep in class. So, you already have enough Z’s,” Stephanie joked.

Mrs. Brook laughed lightly at the exchange, and acknowledged that children grew up very fast. She asked if this was a play wedding.

“Yeah, they had it in Kindergarten,” Jesse explained. “It was a way to show the kids how Q and U always go together.” He chuckled under his breath. “Don’t tell any of the guys in my band this, I don’t want to spoil my image. But...I kinda thought it was cute. Only because my niece was in it, though,” he hastily added.

The teacher thought this was a nice time to segue into what D.J. had pledged to do. “It’s okay for a man to be sensitive and like cute, fun things. My husband’s been that way for years, and he’s still the breadwinner. I liked to joke that I got him hooked on playing ‘house’ with me, and he’s been doing it for over thirty years. I find my experience growing more and more important, too. Fourth through sixth grade girls used to simply learn all sorts of things about being proper, distinguished ladies, but now some of them are thinking about boys by age ten or eleven.”

D.J. could tell Danny looked a little nervous. “Don’t worry, Dad. I don’t have any crushes yet - although the letter Y is kind of cute. The way its little points stick up like little bunny rabbit ears. I always thought of the word ‘bunny,’ that’s how I remembered ‘y’ when I was little.”

Stephanie grinned. She’d been able to read at age four, but any little piece of advice helped. “Cool, I’ll remember that,” she said, suddenly sounding a little down. When asked what was wrong, she admitted, “I was just thinking, the only thing that would have made this day perfect was if Mommy had been there.” Danny picked her up and embraced her.

Jesse slid from the arm of the sofa into the vacated seat. “Hey, we all feel the same way. It was really hard losing your mom. I think we all lost faith for a little while.”

“And your men have done a wonderful job in how you’ve kept things going despite that tragedy. If you grow in faith consistently, you’ll just grow more confident that day will come when you see her again.” She knew each of the men, D.J., and Kimmy - who had really come to look up to Pam in the time she’d known D.J. - had trusted Christ as Savior. “You know, I could teach my students about compassion, calmness, respect, not gossiping, now even starting to discuss purity a little, and such. But, that sort of thing begins at home. The Bible says ‘The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.’”

“What does that mean?” Stephannie asked.

“It means that the one a little child clings to is the one they’ll copy, the one they’ll learn about life from,” she explained simply. “Like you, for instance, Jesse...may I call you that?” He agreed. “I remember Pam saying you were a bit of a rebel. Now, of course, I know that you brought everyone together after Pam died, and you’ve really helped. But, just from the way you talked about your ‘image,’ my guess is that you would be more cool than compassionate.”

“Maybe, but let’s get one thing straight - when something goes wrong, I lay down the law, I say this is how it’s gonna be. If one of them calls someone all kinds of names, for instance, I’m gonna tell her, you’re getting on that phone and you’re gonna apologize right now. I know how to handle kids like me.”

Danny smirked, knowing that Jesse was very good, but sometimes very laid back and even lax in things. “And if that doesn’t work?”

“Simple, then I’d call you for backup.”

“I didn’t want to say in front of everyone, but...Dad never handled discipline when we were little. It was always Mom.”

Joey agreed with D.J.. “And, who can blame him? Could you stand to make such an adorable looking little girl cry?”

“Joey’s right,” Danny said as Michelle began to fall asleep in D.J.’s lap. He took Michelle, while Stephanie shifted over to Jesse’s lap. “I can’t imagine this girl doing anything wrong.”

“But it’s going to start sometime. And, you might have to make the decision to start putting her in timeout or something sooner than you think.” Mrs. Brook cleared her throat. “A sharp ‘no’ or time in a chair now will keep her from having a more stubborn or rebellious attitude later. And, the longer you wait, the more likely it is she might totally refuse to stay in her room or in a chair sometime, or that taking privileges away won’t work at some point.”

"I've already started," D.J. said decisively. "Not the timeout part. But, while Dad guides her away from dangerous stuff and just talks to her, like Jesse and Joey do, I'm always very firm if she does something wrong. Last week I forced her to come into the bathroom and roll up a roll of toilet paper she unrolled along with me while scolding her a little. That really worked, she knows it's wrong now. I make sure she looks at my angry face if she's into something she shouldn't be. And, that has a big effect, since she usually sees me being so nice."

"Well, of course, Deej, you probably remember Mom with Steph, or when she would babysit other little kids. I guess it's just my nature to talk on and on, I mean, my career is in the media, so of course, I'm so used to talking."

"It's hard for you to really be firm, isn't it, Mr. Tanner?"

Danny sighed. His girls were growing up so fast - too fast, really. "It's not that, I'm firm when I have to be. At least...with the older girls. But, when Pam was alive it was so wonderful. Michelle was still a baby. D.J. didn't have to take on this type of responsibility. And Steph...she barely knew the letter U." He wiped back a tear. "I guess I just wish it were still like that."

"I know, Mr. Tanner. Some things don't make sense in this life. But, you have a duty to teach Michelle right from wrong, just like the others. If D.J. can do a better job for a while, fine. But, don't forget that you're still the dad."

The teacher thought for a moment, then continued with the voice of many years of experience. "You know what I would recommend? Let D.J. put her in a chair or her room the first few times Michelle needs to be punished, if you can't do it. Tell Michelle that D.J.'s part of the team that needs to be obeyed, just like Jesse and Joey. We talked after the service about how she needs to be mature and Mom-like, and not selfish in how she expects things done. She needs to think about her sisters first now."

"Oh, I know she'll be great. Did she tell you about the time she stayed home from a slumber party to watch Michelle so I could go to a game?" Danny asked.

"She did, I was very proud of that. But, D.J., you make sure your dad sees and hears how you do it. Do it the same way your mom did it if she'd take something away or scold you send you to your rooms. Help him to see if he makes her cry because he scolds her or punishes her it's not going to destroy the bond they've got. It never did with your mother and you girls."

"That's right, Deej. You do it for a while. I'll start...well, sometime," Danny hedged. It would be two more years, but he would start punishing Michelle then. And, by that time, she would be quite compliant, and he'd have it easy, thanks to D.J.'s work, with D.J. still working on an attitude that wouldn't be nearly as bad as it could have been. "You're too young to be a mom, Deej. And, I guess that's what's going to eventually make me willing to start punishing Michelle." he said more lowly.

He noted that it was near Steph's bathtime. Joey went upstairs with her to start the bathwater while Jesse carried Michelle upstairs to put her in her crib.

Danny hadn't wanted to confide this while Stephanie was there. However, he decided that D.J. was mature enough to hear it. "You know, Pam and I, like parents should, we had a long talks about discipline after D.J. was born. I told her the Tanner hearts have always been so tender, I knew we'd never have to go through the tush to get to one. And, she agreed. Pam said she would do it if she had to, but I knew I could never hurt someone physically. She never even had to think about it, let alone do it, and I couldn't do it now. I guess it's a good thing D.J.'s going to start using timeout or removing privileges now, if waiting would increase the chance of it having to happen later."

"I remember Pam and I talking about discipline. I thought it was clever the way you described a parents' job in teach right from wrong, getting through to the child's heart. That's really what it is. I'm not saying you would have to use that last resort later if D.J. didn't step forward and set limits now. I'm just saying that it would be more likely. Knowing D.J., though, she would have reacted before it got that bad, and she wouldn't have to do it eitehr. It sounds to me like you're raising some wonderful girls. As our pastor said, just seeing D.J. step forward like this really says something."

"Well, you're right. I would have reacted anyway, and started punishing her well before it got that bad," D.J. asserted. "It's just going to be a lot easier now that we've talked about this. I know I'll have Dad's support, so I won't worry about it the first time I think about putting Michelle in timeout."

The teacher said, "I'm sure you would have. It's just now, you'll be proactive. It might seem like they grow up too fast sometimes, Mr. Tanner. But, I think she made the right decision to commit herself to being more mature in dealing with Michelle. Maybe the Lord gave you a wonderful girl like D.J. because He knew that you'd need help. He never gives us more than what we can handle. And, He always gives us someone to help when we need it, if they're wiling to step out in faith."

After a couple more minutes, the teacher bade them goodbye, with Danny promising that they would all be there next Sunday. They wouldn't miss that sunrise celebration.

Danny and D.J. sat on the couch after she left, each shedding a tiny tear. "Are you thinking about Mom too, Dad?" D.J. asked.

"I sure am, Deej." Danny and she hugged. "Holidays, birthdays, first day of school...now starting another major life milestone without her. As if the wedding wasn't hard enough," he deadpanned.

"Dad, I promise...I'm going to try to make it just like Mom were here for Michelle."

Danny placed an arm around her and spoe tenderly. "That's fine, Deej. Don't put too much pressure on yourself, though. You still need to be the best D.J. Tanner you can

be,” he said tenderly. “Mom was always very proud of you, anyway. I’m sure, whatever you do, you’ll make her proud.”

“Yeah.” She sighed deeply. “I guess it can’t be totally like she were here, though. Can it?”

“No. But, you’ll use ideas, little things you remember from Mom. And, you know what? You’ve got me, and you’ll have Jesse and Joey supporting you every step of the way. So, take the lead. And, we’ll follow. I promise, sometime later, I’ll try to be the one to take the reins. Because I want you to have a great, fun-filled life as a preteen and teenager, too.”

D.J. threw her arms around Danny, grateful for the loving father who gave her the freedom he did. “Thanks, Dad. You’re the greatest.”