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## **CHILDREN'S PAGE STORIES -- 1964**

**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

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Story 1  
THE THANKFUL HEART

That Judy Johnson thinks she's really somebody !" Mindy said angrily. "Just because they have a nicer house than any of the rest of us doesn't mean that she's any better. Who does She think she is?" and the red haired girl stomped her foot angrily.

"I don't see why you should be so excited, Mindy," her best friend, Ruth Ann, said. "Honestly, I've never felt that she thought she was better than we are. In fact, I like her, Mindy."

For a long time the two schoolmates walked in silence. The air was crisp and cold, and the sky a leaden gray when suddenly a cardinal burst forth with his clarion call.

"Oh, Mindy, Mindy !" Ruth Ann burst out excitedly. "Listen to him! Isn't that beautiful! The Lord made such wonderful things!" and her face lighted up with a beautiful inner glow and radiance.

"I don't see anything so beautiful about that," Mindy said crossly. "You notice the funniest things! Always listening for birds, looking for dandelion and violet blossoms or some other dumb thing."

"How can you say that?" Ruth Ann asked. "The Bible says 'the Lord saw everything he had made and behold, it was good.' Sure, I love these wonderful things He has given us to enjoy. You should too, Mindy. You have such a jealous heart until you can't see, nor find, the beautiful, the good and noble things."

"Why... why... Ruth Ann," Mindy began, completely abashed, "you . . . you never have talked to me like this."

"But it's true, dear," Ruth Ann said, walking briskly as the air was becoming increasingly colder. "I've watched you all this school year. You're jealous and envious of Judy. That's why you don't like her."

"How dare you say that?" Mindy questioned.

"It's true, though," Ruth Ann said sweetly. "Face the facts, Mindy. It's the truth that makes a man free, and you are so . . . so unthankful and ungrateful that at times it makes me cry. Just think, three more days until Thanksgiving and what have you ever been thankful for? Not even for the beautiful cardinal that just serenaded us !"

"Stop preaching to me," Mindy burst out loudly. "We're not in church and I won't listen," whereupon she began to run.

"Very well," Ruth Ann said sweetly. "Suit yourself. I'm going to stop in and see the old Schreffler couple, see if there's anything I can do for them before I go on home. You'd better come too."

Instead of listening, the angry Mindy ran rapidly on.

Ruth Ann, arms loaded heavily with books, tapped lightly on the big door of the old yellow house at the very edge of the town. A pleasant faced, plump, little old lady bid her come in.

"I'm so glad you've come, Ruthie," she said feebly. "I told Papa you'd be along one of these days. The good Lord knows when to send you, child," and a thankful tear rolled down her wrinkled cheek and fell carelessly on to her small, shriveled hands.

"Just show me everything that needs done," the girl said, placing her books on the big round oak table, "and I'll do all your chores for you. I told Mother I felt I should stop in and help you tonight so she'll not worry if I am a little late," and she busily began the many tasks her eyes showed her needed done.

As the cheerful girl worked she sang joyfully, her own heart happy and bubbling over with joy that alone is associated with doing for others.

Ere Ruth Ann departed she sang a hymn for the old folks and knelt by the big Morris chair and had prayer. A snow blizzard had raged in great fury as the child worked -- all unknown and unnoticed to her. She did notice, however, that it had suddenly become darker, and as she wrapped her wool scarf about her neck she planted a hasty kiss on the old lady's face, saying as she did so,

"I'll be seeing you again soon, Mr. and Mrs. Schreffler. I've really enjoyed doing your work, but I'd better run on now so Mother and Dad don't worry too much."

"Here," the feeble, sweet little old lady said as she deposited a beautiful sterling silver berry spoon in the small palm, "keep this for your hope chest. I can't pay you much but I want you to have this."

"Oh, no!" Ruth Ann said. "I don't want pay. I'm happy doing your work free. I'm so-o thankful!" she continued, misty eyed. "You see, the Lord gave me two good hands to work, and two good legs to walk, two eyes to see beautiful things, and two ears to hear sweet bird songs. Oh, I have so much to be thankful for!" and a radiant look stole across her sweet young face.

"You have found life's real values, Ruthie," the old man said. "Don't ever lose sight of them. Keep them ever before you and your heart will always sing and be happy."

Thanking the old folks for the shiny berry spoon, she hastened out the door.

No sooner had she seen the snow the driving blizzard had left behind it, and felt the stinging, biting, cold wind, when her thoughts turned to Mindy. Where was she? Was she warm enough to survive the cold? Her own heart felt warm and good, but she knew Mindy's heart was as cold as the wind that was blowing and driving her homeward. She ran through the drifting snow and was just turning the bend of the quarter mile country road home when she stumbled and fell over a hump. It moved slightly and she quickly laid her books down in the snow and turned herself to see a lock of golden curls.

"Mindy! Mindy!" she exclaimed, grabbing for the near stiff form, her own hands icy cold from the driving wind. "Mindy! Answer me!" she begged, but there was no response. Frantically she rubbed the hands, face, and limbs of her friend, praying silently as she did so. After a long period of massaging the girl moved again. Ruth Ann noticed that her own hands and entire body were warm and finally Mindy said brokenly,

"Thank . . . you, Ruth Ann, and thank God with me. My heart is new and I'm changed! It took this blizzard, and . . . and . . . almost . . . my life, to show me how selfish I have been. If . . . if... I had gone with you to help clean the Schreffler house, this never would have happened; but it's all right. I prayed, Ruthie. When I couldn't see where I was going in this blizzard, the Lord showed me my heart was just as lost as I was in the blinding snow storm; but He found me, and my heart is real warm and nice and good feeling now. I'll never be selfish again. I want to be like Jesus and you, Ruth Ann, and I believe I can be now. I feel like singing and laughing and . . . "

"That's how you'll feel alt the time if you keep Jesus in your heart and let Him always be Captain of your life," Ruth Ann said sweetly, then added brightly, "Let's be on our way, Mindy. The folks will be worried."

"Not after they see me," Mindy said, walking in a stiff, wobbly way down the last quarter mile home, a big smile playing across her freckled face, and her tears glistening like rare diamonds with the snow.

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Story 2

## ALL THINGS

"Dear me!" Margaret moaned. "This is the hardest puzzle I've ever put together. I can't seem to find one single piece," and she sank wearily down into a big soft chair close by.

"Don't give up, dear," Mother encouraged as she worked diligently away sorting pieces. "This has a beautiful winter scene. Let's see who can find the most pieces," and, challenged anew, the children began a diligent search.

"I found a piece," David exclaimed loudly.

"Don't shout about it," Tim said softly, then, giving his small brother a healthy slap on the shoulder, he winked proudly down upon him.

"I found one too," Margaret laughed, "and here's another piece!" and she clapped her hands joyfully. Mother smiled sweetly and worked silently away.

Hour after hour the family worked diligently at the enormous puzzle as the snow whirled and swirled like dizzy cotton balls outside. Occasionally Daddy put aside his desk work to join in the search. Mother brought a big pitcher of cold milk and some warm cinnamon rolls in for the family to enjoy.

"You're sure a wonderful mother," Tim said, beaming down on his five foot dark haired mother, and taking a big, warm roll at the same time.

"She's the best," Daddy said, lovingly placing his big hands on his wife's tiny shoulders and giving her a generous hug as a bonus.

"Mama's blushing," Margaret laughed, running up to her mother and throwing her arms tightly about her waist.

"Mother," Tim began hesitantly after he had eaten a third roll, "you remember I was talking to you about what the school principal said to me."

"Yes, dear," and Mother gave him a worried look. "I have been praying much about it, Tim."

"I've been doing some serious thinking along with my praying," and the dark haired young man worked diligently as he spoke.

"There's nothing like the will of God, Tim. Seek His will -earnestly and faithfully," Daddy said, looking up from his book work. "You'll never regret it, son."

"I know, Father. I'm trying to do just that. But the job Mr. Baker has offered me after graduation surely looks enticing..., and said quite promising too," Tim.

"God's will is the safest place for your life, dear," Mother said softly, "and, if you feel the least check about it, my advice is to consult God more -- through prayer. He'll guide you aright and never lead you wrongly. Obey His voice."

"We're hung up again," David whined after a long time of searching and not one single piece found. "I just know there are some pieces missing," and a sigh escaped his boyish lips.

"I feel the same way," Tim and Margaret said simultaneously. "I think they're all here," Mother said soothingly and encouragingly.

"I don't believe they are," Tim said.

"We'll know after we have it put together," Mother laughed.

The telephone jangled loudly just then, breaking in upon the quiet and peace of the family.

"It's for you, Tim," Father said, handing the receiver over to his son.

"Yes," and Tim spoke into the receiver. "Jim! I'm surely glad to hear your voice. I missed you at school this week. What's the matter? You been sick? Oh, really! What was that?" and he sank weakly into the big easy chair near the telephone.

After Tim hung up he sat for a long time, his face pale and drawn.

"Something happen, dear?" Mother asked quietly.

"Oh! Not much," and Tim came suddenly back to reality. "Not too... much," and he buried his head in his hands. "Just . . . kind of... a... a shock, I guess."

"A shock?" Father questioned, looking at his son.

"Yes," and for a long time all was silence. "Mr. Baker gave Jim the job he offered me. Said I was too long on deciding. Can you imagine! I told him all I wanted was enough time to pray about it properly."

"Don't feel badly," Mother said, coming over to her boy and, with tears in her eyes, she placed her hands on his shoulders. "All things work together for good to them that love God. I feel this is an answer to your father's, and my prayers," and she wept softly.

"You . . . You . . . mean it?" Tim said, rising to his feet and straightening up tall. "You really mean it, Mom?"

"Of course we do, Tim. We've spent many hours praying about this. We both feel it wasn't God's will. There's something else for you."

"Oh, Mother! You're wonderful! All the time I thought I should take it to help you and Dad out. I always felt a cloud over me when I'd pray," and a relieved look came into his face. "Let's get back to more puzzling," and he started in with new vigor.

"Oh, Mother! Look how beautiful!" Margaret laughed gleefully. "This is beautiful!"

"And worth every tedious moment spent in finding the pieces," Mother said.

"Oh, goody! Goody!" David said, jumping up and down. "I found three pieces that I just knew were missing," and he carefully fitted the pieces into their proper places.

"Me too, pal," Tim said, ruffling David's sandy colored hair.

Things happened fast after David found those three pieces, kind of like a key that unlocks a door and lets you see inside, for in just a little while the puzzle was entirely completed and the whole breathtaking scene unfolded before the family.

"And I just knew some of the pieces were missing!" Tim exclaimed, standing back viewing the finished product.

"Just as you thought some pieces were missing, but actually weren't so it is for each of your lives. God has a plan for each one of you, even what happened to you tonight, Tim. If we constantly seek His guidance and leadership, He'll fit us into the very place He planned for us to be just as each piece of puzzle has its own proper place to be fitted into. God's 'All things' are like this puzzle. If you're God's child, He has a definite and distinct plan for each of your lives. That's why it's so very, very important that you never rush into anything. Always wait patiently upon the Lord. Let Him direct your plans and you'll never be a misfit. The reason Mrs. Corson is so unhappy is because God called her to India when she was just seventeen years old. She went off to college to prepare for her God-called work and fell in love with a man who had no call whatever to India. Instead of telling him about her sacred calling, she let him date her frequently and then, within a half year, they were married. She has been most unhappy ever since all because she's out of the will of God. That's the reason you see so many sad faces and unhappy looking people. Many of them are not what God originally planned they should be. They rushed into things too hastily and failed to consult, and wait upon, the Lord for their directions and their future guidance. Always, God will direct and lead one right who patiently and trustingly leans upon the Lord. God's 'All things' are sometimes mysterious, but after awhile they always 'work together for good' to the child of God."

"Thank you, dear Lord," Tim said tearfully. "I know the Lord will open something else up for me this summer, Lord willing."

"I think we should get on our knees now and thank God for giving Jim the job Mr. Baker wanted you to have. This is God's good providence," and Father knelt by his desk chair as he finished speaking.

As the family knelt in thankfulness to God, the big, heavy teakettle began to whistle a soft, warm, dreamy steam tune of praise and the big grandfather clock, chiming the quarter hour, seemed to be saying, "All things, all things, good things, God's things."

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Story 3-a  
GOLD IN THE HILLS

Robbie hurried down the narrow winding pathway that connected the big sprawling farm house to the barn. Noisily he bounded up the four steps to the front porch and into the kitchen that was almost as big as his back yard had been in the city. Whiskers, neither pure bred nor one hundred per cent mongrel, came panting by his side. Mother, a spatter of yellow paint on her pretty pink cheek, looked up from her job of brightening the many kitchen cupboards from a dull, dark black green to a sunny yellow.

"My! You're a noisy boy today, Robbie," she laughed, sensing the nine year old's excitement.

"Sorry, Mom! I guess I am, but I've never had so much room to roam in," and a big, happy smile played across his face as he sat on the floor near his mother.

For a long time Robbie sat still and motionless, watching as Mother smoothed the paint over the old, old cupboards and made them look like the daffodils had suddenly burst out in full bloom in the big kitchen; then, too, he dare not move lest he awaken Whiskers who, every now and then, snored softly. After awhile he said,

"Know what, Mother? I think this is the nicest place in all the world. I'm so happy Grandpa and Grandma willed it to us. I hate the city! I found a pretty little stream in the south meadow. Whiskers and me ..."

"Whiskers and I," Mother corrected, smiling.

"Whiskers and I," Robbie emphasized excitedly, "chased a brown rabbit, and it led us to the stream, and, Mother, it laughed for us -- all the time we listened! It really did!"

"I love streams too, Robbie," Mother paused and looked at her dark-haired son, "and when Daddy and I are caught up with the big redecorating jobs, we'll all go to the meadow and hear the stream laugh."

"Oh, goody! Goody!" Robbie exclaimed, clapping his hands and awakening the curious Whiskers who sat suddenly upright and twitched his loppv, long brown ears in disgust. "May I go for a hike in the woods?" Robbie asked, jumping to his feet.

"Don't go too far, dear," Mother said, "and be real careful not to step on snakes. They love to lie on rocks and sun themselves these warm days," but Robbie and Whiskers never heard the admonition about the snakes and were already racing off the porch steps to the woods in back of the old barn. This was the land of enchantment and everything about the old home place intrigued the adventuresome lad.

Mother, too, was glad this had been their inheritance, for, though they had lived here a little less than a week, already it had fastened itself around her young heart like the ivy twined around the sturdy old oak in the north pasture. One thing alone bothered her in there was no church for miles around. A sad feeling settled over her as she wondered what the farmers all around them did to receive spiritual food. Maybe the Lord had planted them here for just that purpose, she mused in her thinking.

Robbie and Whiskers, meanwhile, had vanished in the big, leafy forest. Each step he took unfolded something new and more exciting. There were the myriads of bushes abounding with luscious black raspberries or wild huckleberries, and then, all about him grew beautiful, sweet smelling mountain flowers. His boyish heart overwhelmed with thankfulness to God and dear old departed Grandpa.

"Sit down, Whiskers," he commanded the faithful dog. "We're going to pray. The Lord gave us all these beautiful things and I want to tell Him 'Thank you' from me."

Just as Robbie knelt to pray, Whiskers grabbed him fiercely by his pant leg and began tugging, pulling.

"Hey there! What's the matter, old pal?" Robbie asked, jumping to his feet, facing the dog. Immediately Whiskers bounded to the opposite side of the rock and, getting the intruder behind the neck, he swung it, whipped and lashed it with his mighty teeth until he had broken its neck. He then ran joyfully back to Robbie who stood spellbound.

"Good old Whiskers!" he said, patting the dog on his soft furry head. "The Lord gave you that instinct. I might have died here, but God had you to see that big rattlesnake and warn me. Good, good Whiskers!"

For a long time after, the boy and his dog roamed gleefully in the dense forest, ever climbing upward where the air was cool and crisp. Never had he enjoyed anything like this. He climbed the length of a slender grape vine and dangled crazily from its side as Whiskers barked up at him in great excitement.

When, at long last, Robbie decided it was time to return home, he realized he was lost. He didn't know what direction was home, so, as he prayed silently, he kept walking.

Suddenly he saw a wisp of smoke spiraling upward and his heart seemed to skip a beat. He was near someone, he knew. He knew, too, that the Lord knew where he was and would take good care of him. Whiskers bounced forward and into a big clearing. Completely surrounded by big, whispering white pine trees was a neat log cabin. A beautiful large Collie came forward to get

acquainted with Whiskers and Robbie. About the same time, a well built, middle aged man came through the cabin door, a sunny grin on his handsome face.

"Well, well! Company!" he said pleasantly. "Do come in and partake of my supper." And he took Robbie by the hand and led him into the cabin. "Quail stew tonight, son," he said, then added, "You must be starved."

"I am hungry," Robbie said happily, "and I guess Whiskers is too." And he laughed gleefully.

"What's your name?" the big man asked. "I'm Josh Ebbens and this is Master, my dog. Seems like your Whiskers and my Master are hitting it off real good," and Robbie laughed as the two dogs rolled over and over in a playful tug-o'-war.

"My name's Robbie. I'm new here, but I love all Grandpa's farm and woods and . . . "

"You say you're new?" Josh asked. "You mean you're the new folks who moved on the old Jonathan Adam's farm?"

"We moved on Grandpa's farm," Robbie said sweetly. "Poor, dear Grandpa and Grandma! They're dead! But they willed Daddy and Mother the farm and we're living on it. Oh! It's a big, big place. I came for a walk in the woods and got lost."

"Well, Robbie," Josh said kindly, "I know where the farm is but it's too late to get there tonight. You've come a long, long ways. We'll wait till morning and get an early start. You need some rest first. Good people -- your grandpa and grandma."

"They were Christians," Robbie said. "I'm a Christian too, so are my father and my mother. That's why I'm not scared. I know the Lord knows where I am."

A twinkle came into Josh Ebbens's eye and a tear coursed down his ruddy cheek as he dished a generous helping of stew on to the boy's plate.

"Know somethin', Robbie?" and the boy looked to the man as he continued, "There's gold in these hills and valleys and you, and your father and mother, and I are going to do something about digging the nuggets out. It's going to take a lot of praying, and working, and . . . and . . . weeping?"

"Praying! To get gold!" Robbie exclaimed.

"It's gold, all right!" Josh said, helping himself to some fluffy, light biscuits he had made. "You see, Robbie, I'm a Christian. For years I have prayed that God would send a couple along who would begin a church in Fairy Valley."

"Why didn't you?" Robbie asked innocently.

"I tried, son. I tried hard, but the Scripture says 'A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.' Everybody 'round about here knows me. I'm just 'Josh Ebbens,' but new folks coming in, who believe the same as I, well, things will be different! Just you wait and see!"

(What happens to Fairy Valley? Read the final chapter.)

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Story 3-b

GOLD IN THE HILLS

Chapter 2

Mother, so completely absorbed in her work, lost all track of time. Not until she heard the tall grandfather clock at the bottom of the big open stairway strike six was she aware of the lateness of the hour. Bob, too, must have been totally unaware of the hour, for she hadn't heard the loud hum of his new tractor coming in from the field. Sudden panic seized her as she realized that Robbie and Whiskers had not returned.

Without taking time to clean her hands and tidy her hair she ran toward the big southwest acreage where her husband was busy preparing the soil for the corn crop.

"Bob! Bob!" she cried breathlessly. "Robbie's lost!" Oh! Bob! Why did I let him go for a walk?" And she hid her face in her hands and sobbed loudly.

"Now, now, honey!" her husband said. "Calm down and tell me what happened. First, I want you to meet Mr. Coolson. He's our nearest neighbor."

"I . . . I'm . . . sorry," Mrs. Adams said apologetically. "I am real pleased to meet you, Mr. Coolson. I guess I didn't notice you. I was too excited. You see, Robbie -- our son -- went for a walk in the woods and he hasn't returned. He left shortly after dinner, too," and a fresh flow of tears coursed down her cheeks.

"You . . . you . . . mean this, honey?" young Mr. Adams asked as he put his arms comfortingly about his wife's small, dainty shoulders.

"I . . . I'm sorry, Bob, but it's true. He and Whiskers went for a little hike. He was so excited and happy, I just couldn't refuse him when he asked."

"Now, Ruth Margaret," Bob said soothingly, "we have always trusted the Lord before, and He never once has failed us; let's trust Him now. He knows where Robbie is and He'll care for him. Robbie's faith in the Lord is unshakable, so I know that somehow it will all work together for good."

Mr. Coolson strode suddenly over to Bob Adams and, clapping his hand on the young man's shoulder, he said with quivering, trembling voice, "Young man, never you worry one bit! And you, Missus," addressing Ruth Margaret, "go on home and fix a bite to eat, I'll take care o' things. I know the neighbors for miles around. I'll contact them all and we'll go hunting in search parties. Go home now and rest a mite. You're both tired," and the neighbor strode rapidly across the Adams' field to his own tractor in the connecting field and headed rapidly homeward.

Ruth Margaret was scarcely downstairs after washing her own face and hands and changing into a crisp, cool, pale yellow cotton frock for Bob when there was a light knock at her back kitchen door. She hurried to the door and found a plump, neatly dressed middle aged woman standing on the porch.

"I'm Mrs. Coolson," she said brightly. "Jack told me about your little boy. I brought a load of freshly baked bread and some hot chicken noodle soup I made. I thought it might taste good and give you some nourishment too." And, at Ruth Margaret's invitation, Mrs. Coolson set the delectable food on the big kitchen table.

"That is so kind of you, Mrs. Coolson. I know Bob will enjoy this. I got so absorbed in my work until I forgot about Robbie and supper," she said tearfully.

Things happened rapidly after supper. Bob Adams didn't know he had so many neighbors. The big yard was full of brawny armed men, and some of the wives who could get away from their own households long enough came too to add comfort and solace to their new, pretty young neighbor.

"You're all so kind," Ruth Margaret said with tears of gratitude coursing down her cheeks. Then she heard Bob's calm, collected voice, "I shall never be able to repay any of you wonderful friends for the interest you have taken in us; however, there is one thing I feel we should do before we go in search of our precious son."

"What's that?" a dozen or more voices asked simultaneously.

"For many years," Bob said, "I have been a devout Christian, always taking the Lord Jesus Christ into all my business adventures, my personal problems, desires, and ambitions. Needless to say, I have never been disappointed. I feel like God, my Heavenly Father, is taking extra good care of our Robbie. He knows where the boy is and can lead us to him. Shall we pray?" and the young father was on his knees talking to the Lord. When he finished, his face had the shine of heaven upon it and not a dry eye was seen in the yard.

Mr. Coolson divided the men into parties of six and the yard became suddenly quiet and empty as the groups set out. Darkness had set in and a beautiful spring moon rode lazily across a star studded sky. The frogs by the pond and meandering stream broke out in a medley of spring song. All of earth seemed happy, joyous and gay when Mrs. Coolson went to the swing on the big front porch. She had finally persuaded Ruth Margaret to retire while she sat vigil throughout the night, her own heart deep in meditation and thought, secretly longing for the peace and rest the new neighbors possessed.

The sun had just awakened to a new spring day and was busily exercising by stretching her long, warm rays out over all of Fairy Valley when Mrs. Coolson saw a tall, bronzed man stride in to the clearing of the north acreage, two frisky dogs by his side and an excited, laughing boy riding on his shoulders. Ruth Margaret, who had been kneeling by the north window upstairs, saw it too.

"Robbie! Robbie!" she cried happily running down the stairway, on to the porch and out through the yard to meet the stranger and her boy.

"Hi, Mom!" Robbie said calmly. "Isn't Josh just great? Why, Mother, he carried me all the way on his big shoulders." And Josh put the lad gently down where mother and son could embrace.

"Josh! Josh Ebbens!" Mrs. Coolson said, panting as she caught up to Mrs. Adams. "You . . . You .... found the boy?" she asked. "How did you know he was lost?"

"He found me," Josh laughed as he followed the party to the big farmhouse.

"How can I ever thank you?" Ruth Margaret asked when things had settled down to normal. "You have been most kind to take such an interest in a total stranger."

"Robbie's not seemed like a stranger, Mrs. Adams. Christians have a lot in common, and Robbie and I talked much about the Lord and spiritual things."

"You're a Christian, then?" Ruth Margaret asked.

"He sure is, Mother," the boy answered. "And he and I are going to help Dad and you dig the rare gems of gold out of Fairy Valley."

The conversation ended abruptly as the searchers returned, forlorn, tired, and weary, a look of defeat on every face but Bob Adams'.

"Hi, Dad," Robbie said as he and Whiskers walked out to meet the worn men.

"Robbie! Thank God! I knew you'd make it," and Bob held his son high in the air for all to see.

"Uncle Josh took care of me and brought me home this morning."

"Uncle who?" and Josh Ebbens walked over to Bob and clasped his hand tightly, saying,

"So glad to meet you, Brother Adams. I, too, am a Christian."

"Praise be to God! He makes all things work together for good," and Bob Adams walked to the top porch step and in a clear voice said, "By way of payment for all your kindnesses, I want to announce that we'll be having prayer meeting here at the big farmhouse every Wednesday night, and regular Sunday services each Sunday morning and night. I want all to be present. We'll be

building a church here in the valley as soon as funds can be produced, and call a regular pastor -- this is my way of showing the Lord how thankful I am that Robbie's safe. Everyone be here by seven thirty this Wednesday night."

"Uncle Josh can lead the singing," Robbie said innocently. "He's a real singer, Dad. I heard him."

The yard suddenly became alive as the men made conversation together.

"We really do need the Lord," one said.

"My missus'll be glad to hear this," another declared. On and on the conversation continued until finally the group disbanded and headed for their respective farms. Only Josh remained. He it was who had many things to discuss with his new found Christian friends.

"There's real gold in these hills, Dad," Robbie affirmed. "Uncle Josh told me so."

"Yes, son," Bob spoke softly. "We saw it -- shiny and bright -- just a few moments ago, in our yard. Real, true, pure, living gold! By God's grace we'll try to help dig it out."

"You can count on me," Josh said. "This is an answer to years of praying."

"And all because of Robbie," Ruth Margaret whispered softly to the early morning breeze.

A robin, high in the big pear tree burst forth in song.

"God be praised! God be praised!" he chirped loudly.

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Story 4

A YEAR ROUND MOTHER'S DAY GIFT

Sarah finished wiping the last dish as she glanced out the open kitchen window to where the early transparent apple tree was shedding its delicate pink blossoms like snow in January when she noticed a big, fat robin carrying mud in his sharp bill and firmly depositing it in the forks of the apple tree -- building a new nest. Her heart beat with great excitement as he flew to one of the topmost branches and serenaded her lustily with jubilant song. A little farther away one of the wrens began to sing excitedly as he, too, took a brief respite from building and relocating in the tiny house in the maple tree. All of nature had come alive and, like herself, was busy, but extremely happy in their new pursuits.

She hastily hung the dish towel on the inside of the cupboard door, then, very reluctantly, tore herself away from the serenity of the beck yard. Mother would soon be returning from town

with Father and she must have all the house spic and span, plus having Joel and Tommy cleaned prettily. MariAnn and Edyth could pretty themselves up since they were now seven and nine. Then, too, she did want to finish the present she had been working on for Mother's Day.

"When Mama comin' home?" It was Joel. For the 'nteenth time he had asked her the same question; his expressive, tender blue eyes looking innocently up into her own.

"Today, sweetheart," she answered, picking the little bundle of questions gently up and giving him an enormous squeeze and kiss.

"O-Oh! You 'queeze too hard," the fair little fellow laughed as Sarah put him down.

"Run along and play with Tommy a little while longer, then Sissy will clean you up ever so prettily for Mother and Father; and don't forget, we'll be having a brand new, tiny, pink baby boy coming home with Mama. He'll have to see Joel! Just you wait!" and the little lad ran happily outdoors laughing softly, "Mama come home to Joel."

Sarah had just finished piling the fluffy frosting on the walnut cake when she heard the soft hum of Father's car as he drove into the rose bordered driveway. In an instant the four children rushed for the door.

"Stay inside," Sarah said gently, placing a restraining hand across the door. "Let's wait until Mother gets in the door with baby Tim. We might pull her down if we make a mad rush for her," and they laughed together as Sarah opened the screen door; then, standing side by side, the children held a big placard which read "To the best Mother in the World -WELCOME HOME!"

When she stepped inside the door and noticed the tidiness of her own home and the big cake on the cupboard, she began to weep softly.

"Mama cry?" Joel asked, clutching her skirt nervously.

"I'm sorry,, children," mother apologized, wiping tears of joy and gratitude from her eyes as she lovingly embraced each of her offspring. "I am so happy to be home with you. I missed each of you dreadfully." Then stooping down ever so low, she gave wide-eyed Joel an enormous hug and kiss.

"Mama!" the tiny lad said, patting her soft cheeks with his small, chubby hands.

"Let's see our new brother," Sarah said, leading the way down the hallway to the pale blue bassinet where Father had carefully deposited the soft little pink skinned bundle of new excitement. "Mother must rest," she added understandingly, "so we shall help her all we can in caring for Tim and by always seeing that our rooms are tidied and kept clean," whereupon Joel ran to his youth bed in Tommy's room and, dragging a fuzzy little bedroom shoe behind him, said,

"See! Joel clean."

Sarah, a mother's instinct and love already budding beautifully in her bosom, gave the sweet child an adoring hug and smile as she said softly, "Put it beneath Joel's bed like Sissy had it." A bit confused but obedient, the child ran gleefully down the hallway.

In a short while Judith breezed into the kitchen, her arms loaded with gaily wrapped packages.

"Hi, Sis," she said, patting Sarah on her silken head. "Where's Mom and Tim? Urn!" she said hungrily, "Another one of your wonderful cakes! And I'm starved."

"Mother's resting while I finish supper," Sarah said brightly. "More gifts for Tim?" she questioned.

"All but this big one," Judith replied. "That one's for Morn tomorrow -- Mother's Day, you know."

A sinking feeling overwhelmed Sarah as she remembered her own humble but neat, unfinished Mother's Day gift. Judith always bought such elaborate gifts since she was working. Maybe -- just maybe -- she would be able to finish her gift after the supper dishes were washed and put away.

Not till Joel was bathed and tucked lovingly in bed, and the soiled clothes were deposited in the big clothes hamper in the washroom, was Sarah able to retire to the bedroom she shared with Judith and again take up where she had left off working on Mother's pale blue duster.

"Wait till you see what I bought Mother," Judith said excitedly. "Sarah, it's simply beautiful! It's a delicate pink dress with long sleeves and everything that looks like Mom."

"I'd love to see it," Sarah said, her own dexterous fingers working busily away on the last bit of smocking on the bodice. "Mother and Father are so wonderful and deserve the best," she added.

"I paid a ridiculous price for the dress," Judith said, throwing her body down on the bed with her Sunday School quarterly clutched in her hand. "Mother wouldn't be one bit happy if she knew how costly it was as she's always buying things on sale, or material to make her own clothing."

"Oh, Sis!" Sarah began, "you mustn't be extravagant, for the Bible speaks against costly array. Mother's such a wonderful example of true Holiness and she doesn't want anything so expensive. Now, if it was on sale..."

"This wasn't, Sarah. But I figured my mother deserved something really fine; and, since I am earning the money, well . . ." and her voice trailed off into silence.

Sarah said nothing more for she realized her sister's mind was again set.

The sun poked its long, warm fingers caressingly in through the venetian blinds and tenderly, warmly, teased across Sarah's long, drooping eyelashes and caressed her rosy cheeks as Mother noiselessly entered the room. Judith had been up a long time as this was her morning to get breakfast. For a long time Mother stood, looking tenderly, lovingly down into the calm, sweet face on the pillow. A tear rolled down her cheek, then another and another. She sniffled lightly and Sarah opened her eyes.

"Mother!" she began, then noticing the tears on Mother's face and the unfinished duster lying across the bed, she too began weeping softly.

"I . . . I'm really sorry, Mother. I . . . I . . . wanted it finished so badly for Mother's Day but I . . . just couldn't seem to quite . . . make it," and she buried her head more deeply into the downy pillow as she continued, "I . . . must have gone to sleep."

Mother picked the soft cotton duster up and lovingly caressed it before she slipped into it.

"Sarah!" she exclaimed. "It's ... beautiful, and.., and.., fits perfectly." Then examining the workmanship more closely, she continued, "It's like one I saw in the Ritz Shop one day."

"I saw it too, Mother," the girl said happily. "In fact, I got my idea from that one in the window. It looked just like you, Mother; and while that one was real costly, I decided I'd make one for you. Oh! I'm so sorry I didn't get all the smocking finished for you. I did want it all finished and pressed prettily for you today."

"Sarah," Mother said tenderly, laying a soft hand on her daughter's small shoulders, "I really do appreciate this gift more than you'll ever know; but, honey, you are giving me Mother's Day presents every day of the year." "Oh?" Sarah questioned.

"Yes, dear. Maybe not a beautiful duster every day, nor new dresses and the like, but you make every day a special Mother's Day for me."

"I... I... do?" the child asked, puzzled. "How?"

"You are always so kind and good to me, and . . . and . . . so helpful," Mother said, misty eyed. "You are always finding ways to help me and lighten my, load by washing the dishes, ironing clothes or bathing the children for me, and cleaning the house, and . . ."

"Oh, Mother! I love you and I simply delight in helping you, but that's not a .... a . . . Mother's Day present."

"Yes, dear. In a very, very special way it is a Mother's Day present. You see, Sarah, most children help with the work because it is required of them, but you go so far beyond that; you are always doing because of love. This makes it extra special, honey."

"I see," Sarah said softly. "That's what Jesus must have meant when He said 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' Some folks serve Him out of duty," she mused, almost in a whisper.

"But, Mother, I serve Him and work for you because I love. Oh! I see it! I see it!"

"That's it, honey. All year 'round you are giving me loving Mother's Day presents" Then, quickly planting a kiss on the girl's cheek, she whispered, "You're kinda' extra special too, Sarah."

The sun kissed the girl's cheeks lightly as a robin burst into a lusty duet with the busy wren on the lawn. It was a wonderful Mother's Day after all.

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Story 5

SINGING IN THE NIGHT

Sara Jane's heart was happy. In fact, she felt happy all over! The sun was shining brightly and the sky was a soft robin egg blue with tiny fleecy clouds sailing lazily across the heavens like great puffs of cotton candy. She sprawled her full length on the satin soft apple blossom carpet and listened to the melodic sound of the wind through the branches of the trees, and heard the soft hum of the busy bees as they gathered their supply of winter food. Everything seemed to be in perfect order and harmony. How easy it was to sing and be happy when things were as lovely and peaceful as today!

"It's easy to sing and be happy when everything's going your way, dear," Grandmother told her softly the day she died, "but always remember, it's far greater to be able to have a song in your heart in the night, and when the storm breaks. This is when the Lord gives us songs! Anyone can sing when everything's going all right but only those who know the Lord can sing through the storm."

The thought of Grandmother's death sent a shower of hot salty tears down Sara Jane's pink cheeks and she suddenly sat upright, sifting handfuls of the soft apple blossom petals through her fingers. A busy brown wren perched gracefully on the limb above her and trilled out a medley of songs as a robin and oriole in the big pear tree completed the trio.

"A penny for your thoughts, dear," Mother's soft voice broke in upon the girl's musings and daydreaming.

"Oh, I was just thinking about Grandmother and something she told me, mother," the child answered sweetly.

"I have some beans that need planting and some more onion sets to put out, so you'd better continue your dreaming in the garden, Janie," mother laughed.

"That's fine, mother; I love the garden and the good earth. It gives me such a wonderful feeling: especially when the plants come up and begin to grow," Sara Jane said, following Mother to the neat kitchen.

The morning sun cast its long hot rays on Sara Jane's back as she planted the beans and by midafternoon as she put the last onion set in place the heat seemed unbearable. She noticed a big, foreboding looking black cloud arise in the southwest and she ran quickly to mother as a loud clap of thunder rolled across the heavens.

"It's going to rain, mother," she called excitedly. "Where's Fuzzy and her new babies?"

"I haven't seen her all day," Mother said. "Maybe you'd better go find her. She's probably down along the stream somewhere, but if it rains very hard you know how that meadow gets flooded! We'll lose all the new ducklings Fuzzy hatched out as the flood waters will carry the tender new ones away."

"I'll hurry," Sara Jane said as she began running toward the meadow.

She called as she neared the stream but heard no answer from her pet duck. Farther and farther she went along the stream and louder and nearer the thunder claps rang. Just as she was about to cross the fence that separated their farm from the Wentzel farm she heard a soft "quack, quack, quack," answered by many other softer "quacks." She knew she had found Fuzzy and her brood.

"You naughty, naughty mother!" she scolded as Fuzzy raised her head in carefree unconcern. "You must never again go this far away from home. Do you understand?" and the pet let out a loud "quack" as though to say she didn't realize how far they had ventured. "Now hurry," Sara Jane commanded, "or we'll all be drowned. There's a bad storm approaching and we'll be soaked if we don't hurry." Then, taking a slender stick she gently prodded the confused mother duck upstream and homeward.

They had reached the orchard and were almost home when the storm broke. Seeking one of the stoutest trees Sara Jane nestled close to its roots and trunk with Fuzzy spreading her wings wide for all eleven of her young to be shielded from the storm.

The wind whipped, lashed and whistled through the orchard, ripping off many branches laden heavily with blooms. A sick feeling of nausea enveloped the child as she watched the storm take its toll. The tree by which she had taken refuge bent and swayed as though it would be uprooted but it held fast and securely. A branch blew close to her feet and, as it dropped, four soft blue colored eggs dropped at her feet, and a frightened robin flew into the branch directly above her and huddled close to the stout branch, her neck and head pulled closely to her wings.

"Poor, poor dear," Sara Jane said above the roar of the storm, at the same time giving Fuzzy a gentle stroke on her back to help allay her fears.

The storm passed over almost as suddenly as it had come, leaving in its wake a mass of twisted torn limbs and debris. Fuzzy carefully raised her cramped, straining wings and flapped them noisily several times as Sara Jane gave the stout trunk a reassuring and affectionate pat before stretching her aching legs and standing upright. Above her the robin flew on the highest limb then let forth with a warble and song that sent the tears coursing down her cheeks.

"Singing in the storm!" she whispered prayerfully. "I understand now what you meant, grandmother. In spite of that beautiful robin losing her nest and four pretty eggs she can sing -- in the night or through the storm. How amazing!" She looked tenderly toward the raised head and song of thankfulness as the Lord seemed to be whispering:

'I can do it for you too. Of how much more value are ye than many sparrows! My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest.' Sara Jane hurried home through the freshly washed orchard, the robin's song still echoing and reechoing in her heart. Fuzzy stopped every little bit to wash her broad yellow bill in the myriads of puddles as her energetic babies frolicked and bathed in the fresh rainfall. The dark black clouds darkened the eastern sky as a brilliant sun shone brightly in the west upon a new clean world and a child who learned there can be songs in the night and singing in the storm.

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Story 6

## THE FENCE ROW

The day was hot and sultry with the sun beating fiercely down upon the dry, parched ground.

Paul and Ronnie started down the dusty lane toward the big acre, scythe and sickle across their shoulders and straw hats on their heads. The perspiration ran down their foreheads and cheeks in small rivers, mixing freely with the brown dust on their ruddy faces and caking in a sticky, miserable way.

"Can't see why Dad decided the fence row needed cleaning today," Ronnie scolded. "Any other day but today! It's hot enough to die." And he hung his tongue out like a panting dog. "Nasty old job anyway," he growled, "and Dad knows I hate it any day -- especially when it's hot."

"It is hot," Paul said kindly, "but since it needs done, I'd just as soon do it today as any day. Really, Ronnie," he continued as he looked toward the clear blue sky and hot sun, "the day is beautiful. A bit hot perhaps; but I love it. Every day has some new surprise and something wonderful in it if you look for it."

"Depends on which way you look at it." Ronnie scolded crossly.

"It sure does," Paul laughed cheerfully as he watched a bird on wing, giving his toe a severe scuff on a big, fat rock in the road. Quickly he grabbed the bare foot in his free hand and danced round and round in the road. "Kinda' hurts," he said tearfully.

"If you'd quit being a cloud gazer and watch where you're going it wouldn't have happened," Ronnie said bitterly; then, noticing a small trickle of blood mingling in the dust on the toe, he said sympathetically.:

"Sit down, Paul, and I'll bandage it for you." With that he drew a big red handkerchief from his back pocket and very carefully bandaged the bleeding toe.

"Thanks, Ronnie," Paul said kindly as he started again toward the big acre and the fence row.

Few words were exchanged as the boys began the arduous and tedious task. The intense heat, along with the strenuous work, only caused Ronnie's irritability to increase.

They were working in a dense tangle of scrub trees, thorn bushes and berry vines when Paul discovered a small song sparrow's nest in a sheltered, secluded spot, hidden away from the sharp detecting eyes of the hawk, in a dense clump of berry vine entanglement.

"Don't touch that, Ronnie," Paul ordered firmly but sweetly as his brother, mumbling and grumbling to himself, raised the big scythe to begin cutting. "There's a song sparrow's nest in there with four speckled eggs and we're not clearing any of this stuff out. We're saving the nest."

"Oh no, we're not," the perspiring boy shouted. "It's all coming down! Dad's not sending me back again. I hate this old job and . . . and . . . I hate you, Paul."

"Why Ronnie," Paul said tearfully, "whatever have I done? I love you, and as for this area that we're not clearing I'll take all the blame if father says anything; but I know he won't as father is most kind and considerate and very good to his animals and anything helpless."

"It's coming down. All of it," Ronnie said, cutting fiercely at the nearest tree.

"Please!" Paul urged, gently grasping Ronnie's arm. "We're not cutting any of this down. The little sparrow shall raise her family. God would not be pleased otherwise. Proverbs says 'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast,' and we're sparing this nest and all these trees and bushes around it."

Ronnie faced his brother squarely, then, dropping the scythe, he gave Paul a hard, firm slap on his right cheek and lip. "I'm bigger than you," he said, trembling with anger and giving his younger brother another hard blow which caused the blood to flow freely and sent the young lad to the ground.

For a long while Paul lay still and silent with Ronnie glaring down at him. Suddenly, like the sounding of an alarm, his conscience began troubling him.

'Bigger than Paul, you say!' it began. 'How blind can you get! That boy is so far above you in every way except stature; but remember, God chooses the weak things . . . to confound the wise! You, in your estimation, are tall, great and mighty, but God sees not as man sees for He looks on the heart -- not the outward physical man. You hate Paul because he is tender, good and kind while your own disposition is hateful and mean. You need God, Ronnie, and you need Him badly. You have been envious of Paul since he got genuinely converted and sanctified, but you too could have the same wonderful experience as he if you paid the price like he has!'

"Stop it! Stop it!" Ronnie begged aloud as he stooped low and cupped the limp head in the big palms of his hands, praying loudly to God for forgiveness.

Paul sat upright and looked dazedly toward Ronnie who kept right on praying until he too was a new creature in Christ.

"Paul! Paul! I'm sorry. Forgive me," he begged tearfully and humbly when he saw his brother's upright form. "The Lord Jesus just forgave me all my sins but I want to be sanctified too so I'll never do what I just did to you. I want to be full of God, emptied of all self and filled with Him and His presence."

"Thank the Lord," Paul said through his swollen lips, tears streaming copiously down his cheeks in behalf of his brother's sanctification.

"He's come, Paul! He's come!" Ronnie said joyfully, hugging his brother tenderly. "Go home, Paul, and have Mother care for that lip. I'll finish all the fence row and take my punishment gladly for hitting you. I deserve the worst."

"Thanks, Ronnie," Paul said softly. "I love you. I'll have my lip and cheek cared for but I'll be back to help you finish. We're brothers and we're a team. As for the punishment, I'll explain everything to father and mother. I don't believe you deserve any."

"I'll save the bird nest and any others I find," Ronnie called as Paul started toward the big farmhouse.

Far to the west Paul heard the distant rumble of thunder and knew they were due for a shower and a respite from the heat. His heart raised in exultant praises to God as high above him a tiny song sparrow, head turned heavenward, sang out a song of praise to God and thanks to Him. The whole world seemed to be singing.

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Story 7

THE YEARLINGS

Kevin sat on the edge of the back seat and eagerly surveyed the lush green meadows and the beautiful rolling hills: of Kentucky. Every new turn in the road unfolded more beautiful and breath: taking scenery it seemed.

"Oh, Daddy!" Darlene said, clapping her hands together excitedly, "I just saw more of those pretty wild flowers. They're all purple or pink looking. Can't we stop and gather some? Please?" and a dreamy look came into her eyes as she continued gazing out the window.

"If we'd stop every time you and Kevin wanted to we'd never get to the Smoky Mountains," Daddy laughed.

"But these are so-o pretty," the blonde-haired child continued.

"I know, honey," Mother said softly. "I saw them too, and they really are beautiful, but we'll never get to where Daddy wanted to put up for the night if we keep stopping. We'll really take our time in the Smokies and maybe you can find some flowers there."

For a long time the children rode in silence. Every now and then Kevin stole a shy glance at his sister but said not a word, sensing too keenly her disappointment.

Upon rounding a bend and descending a long hill the children noted mile after mile of picturesque gray stone fences or gleaming white rail fences with stately mansions set far back off the highway.

"Daddy! Daddy!" Kevin shouted joyously. "Horses! See the horses?" and he pressed his face against the window.

"They're baby horses!" Darlene exclaimed, sitting erect on the edge of her seat. "Aren't they cute!" and she laughed with glee.

"See that shiny brown one run?" Kevin asked, pointing to the rolling hillside.

"Can't we stop?" the children asked together.

Father and Mother looked at each other and an amused expression played across their faces.

"Let's stop just a short while," Mother suggested as she gave the children an understanding smile.

"Wait till I find a good place to park," and Daddy gazed in the direction of the frisky colt.

"Look to your right," Mother said. "There are lots and lots of young horses. Why not stop under those large spreading oak trees? We could pull off the road there."

"Good idea," Daddy exclaimed as he slowly brought the car to a standstill beneath the mammoth trees.

Kevin and Darlene darted out and ran to the big, high, gleaming white rail fence.

"Aren't they sweet!" Darlene exclaimed as she looked between the rails.

"They're kind of wobbly," Mother answered with an amused smile.

Just then two of the long legged frisky yearlings let out a loud neigh and began nickering pitifully, casting anxious, lingering glances across the broad clear stream to where the mothers were grazing contentedly.

"Poor things!" Darlene said. "They want their mothers but are scared of the water."

Again the two long legged shiny yearlings let out a pitiful neigh and the sleek, shiny chestnut colored mothers stopped grazing for a brief moment as they gazed fondly in the direction of their young on the other side of the stream, then gracefully walked farther into the lush pastures, away from the neighing young.

"They're going away from their babies," Kevin gasped. "Just look at them!"

"That's all right," Daddy said. "Now watch those long legged babies. If they really, want to get to their mothers they'll cross the water," whereupon one of the young began very slowly and cautiously to wade into the broad stream. Immediately the other followed. The children laughed with glee and clapped their hands in great excitement. On and on the two ventured, very slowly and cautiously, a slow, deliberate step at a time. The water was up to the middle of their thin long legs and getting higher as they advanced. Presently, the one halted and, giving a long pitiful neigh and a longing look toward his mother, he retreated quickly back to the shore from where he had stood before. The other colt halted, but only a moment; then, casting his longing eyes on his mother and the lush green pastures beyond, he walked rapidly through the water to the side of his mother. He kicked his long willowly legs in the air and ran happily around his mother; all the while the other yearling remained on the opposite shore, nickering and casting long yearning glances across.

"He's scared," Kevin said, with pathos in his voice.

"He's like so many, many people I know," Mother said sadly as all eyes were focused upon her sweet face. "They say they want to be sanctified and want to have a holy and clean heart but, like the little horse, they're afraid to wade in. God's spirit begins to deal with them and shows them the awfulness of carnality and, while they say they want to be wholly and entirely sanctified, they fail to cross over -- all the way. Yes, they're like the poor yearling -- looking over with deep yearning -- but fearful to go all the way across. See how happy and content the baby horse is that has gotten across -- a U the way? He's eating of the choicest grasses and is no longer neighing and yearning. He's happy; he's crossed over! This is how holiness works; and when once we're over in Canaan's wonderful land, we're happy and contented as we abide constantly in Him and He in us. Holiness is wonderful!"

Just then a loud neigh echoed across the stream. The contented yearling cast a look toward the other side of the water that seemed to say, 'Come over! It's glorious over here! The water's not going to drown you. Come over!' Then, kicking his lanky legs in the air, he frisked away over the rolling hills -- carefree and happy.

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Story 8

### THE RAREST GEMS

"Oh, Mother!" Edith cried, bursting into the house and stacking her school books on the old oak desk in the dining room. "I guess I'll just never make it!"

"Why, Dee Dee!" Mother exclaimed affectionately as she folded the brown haired girl gently to her bosom. "What do you mean, dear child?"

"I . . . I'm . . . sa ashamed of myself, Mother," the girl said brokenly, "but the harder I try to let Jesus shine through me the less I seem to see accomplished."

"Why not rest in the Lord, dear! You've been trying too hard within yourself, and it just won't work. Now, dear," and Mother stroked the silken braids as she continued, "tell me everything, will you?"

"It's Clan again!" and the beautiful dark eyes looked pleadingly into Mother's.

"He just keeps testing and trying me until I feel there's no use to try being a Christian. Why, only this afternoon he pulled my braids and made a big ink spot on my spelling test paper, and you know how I hate untidiness and messy looking papers."

"Anything else?" Mother asked, chuckling.

"That's it, Mother; but I just can't live my religion at school. It's getting harder and harder," and she sobbed bitterly as she finished.

"Let's get our sweaters and go to the grocery store," Mother suggested. "Perhaps a change of scenery will help you, dear; and I could use some help in the store too."

"Oh, goody! I'm glad you waited until I got home, Mother," and the bright eyed child ran gleefully into her bedroom and came out smiling through her tears, her sweater draped lightly over her shoulders.

On the way to the store Mother said kindly, "Dee Dee, honey, in the kitchen you mentioned that you just couldn't live your religion. What did you mean by that, dear? A Christian has salvation, not merely religion. There's a great big difference between the two."

"I meant salvation," Edith corrected. Then, as they were walking past one of the big factories in the town, she burst out exultantly,

"Mother! Mother! Look at those beautiful purple flowers! Aren't they just beautiful? May I please pick a bouquet?"

"They really are beautiful, aren't they, honey?" Mother answered. "Of course you may pick them. They're New England Asters."

"Are they growing wild?" the girl asked.

"Yes," Mother smiled. "The Lord has planted them there. Have you noticed where they're growing and where they're blooming?" she asked.

"Yes," Edith replied. "Right up against that old black telephone pole and in among all that dirt and dust. They're the only pretty thing around here too," she added, looking wistfully at the clump of beautiful purple flowers where bumble bees and honey bees were flying in and out among them. A brightly colored yellow butterfly dropped ever so lightly on one of the dainty, small flowers and twitched his wings in satisfaction and contentment. All around the beautiful flowers was nothing but dirt from the factory and rusty tin cans and debris.

"A most unlikely place to bloom," Mother said thoughtfully, "yet they're blooming just as beautifully as though they were in our own front yard."

"I was just thinking of that too," the child said with bowed head.

"You see, Dee Dee," Mother said softly, "God's rarest gems must many times be placed where things look the gloomiest and the darkest. They shine prettier and brighter there. God saw that this whole area was nothing but dirt, filth and debris so He planted a small seed -- perhaps by either a bird or the wind -- up against this old telephone pole, and look at the beauty now! The tiny seed became a plant and the small plant grew into this beautiful bush with hundreds and hundreds of blooms. Yes, Dee Dee, God's rarest gems grow best and produce the prettiest fruit in the hard, dark places, just like this bush of wild New England Asters is blooming in a most spectacular way. Its beauty is unusually outstanding because of the dark, drab surroundings. It does not, however, refuse to bloom and emit its perfume for the bees and butterflies just because it's been placed among these awful surroundings. On the contrary, it seems to be blooming all the more beautifully. See how vivid, dark and striking are the colors of each small petal! And smell of the pungent fragrance, Edith! God's choicest and rarest gems are made and produced in just such surroundings and under just such circumstances as these. It takes the trying times and painful experiences to produce the rarest gems for Him. If this bush can bloom and radiate beauty for all who pass by to behold, don't you think you can shine for Jesus in school? Even with Clan pulling

your braids and making ink spots on your spelling papers? Don't you, Dee Dee?" Mother asked affectionately.

"I . . . I believe . . . I, can do anything now, Mother," the girl said brokenly. "If the Lord can keep a flower bush blooming in a pile of factory dirt and debris, tight up against an old drab looking telephone pole, surely He can help me to stay sweet and keep shining. And Mother," the girl added softly, "He can make me so full of His sweet likeness until I'll attract sinners like the flowers attract the bees and butterflies. I'm going to pray when I get home and you wait until Clan sees me tomorrow! Just wait! He's going to be disappointed when he can't make me cry. I can smile now for Jesus just taught me a wonderful lesson," and she affectionately kissed the armful of flowers she had just picked as she silently thanked God for placing them there. A cardinal, high on a tree down the railroad track burst out in loud praises to the Lord as another bee darted hungrily into Edith's bouquet of Asters.

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Story 9

## TALKING MONEY

Jerry took his walking stick and started up the old familiar trail. He hoped today there would be no silly, pesky, religious girls to bother him. Not that there were many girls around just Judy and Joyce, the Johnson twins, who lived on the next farm to the east of the Brokson home; and really, he mused, it was their father's timberland and, in a sort of, kind of way, he was trespassing. Oh, no! The Johnson's didn't mind not in the least. They were good people, but so deeply religious and "gave everything away," as Jerry's father often said.

Jerry found his favorite spot and sprawled the full length of his body beneath the beautiful white-pine tree where the needles made a soft carpet for him. The twins had enlarged their playing quarters beneath the boughs of the whispering old tree and he knew they were sure to be there again sometime today.

Jerry had just dozed off and relaxed lazily when he heard the laughing twins coming up their small narrow pathway. He jumped to his feet and, picking his crooked hickory walking stick up, he disappeared in the thick tangle of underbrush nearby and found the pathway to his own home.

"Judy! Judy, look!" Joyce exclaimed excitedly. "A half dollar and a dime and penny. Right here in our house, too! However did these coins get here?"

"Somebody's been here, naturally!" Judy said, philosophically. "But the Lord saw to it that his pants pockets leaked, for I've been praying for something to give to the missionary offering, and here it is," she said as she picked up a crisp new dollar bill that blew from no telling where and stopped at her small feet.

Isn't this wonderful!" she continued. "Now we shall split it after it's tithed and we'll each have the same to put into the offering," for the girls were sweet and unselfish and always saw that each had an equal amount no matter which one received the larger part of anything. "Here, Joyce, you keep all the money for now. You have a deeper apron pocket than I," and she handed the crisp bill to her identical twin.

Joyce held the money fondly -almost reverently it was sent by God and she must take good care of it. God had entrusted it into their keeping, therefore they must dispense it with great care. Gently she slipped the money down into her pocket as she began playing beneath the lovely old pine.

Now people frequently say money talks, so we would like to listen in on the conversation in the apron pocket. If it could talk, it may go something like this:

"Ah! Those hands!" the dollar bill sighed to the shiny fifty cent piece and the copper penny and thin dime which were all wrapped up in him. "Did you ever feel hands more loving and gentle than those hands that held us so fondly a few minutes ago."

"Never," answered the dime. "These are different hands.

"Different!" exclaimed the shining copper penny. "I guess so! That Jerry Brokson's going to be another penny pincher. He's already as tight as his dad-. Why, honestly, if I were a human being, I'd be all bruised with black and blue marks -- he pinched me so hard! Scared to turn loose of me! The old penny pincher!" and he felt sorry for himself.

"You think you had it rough," the dollar bill exclaimed, "but you should have felt what Jerry's dad did to me before he turned lose of me. First off, he got me in a dirty saloon. Ugh," and he got sick to his stomach. Imagine! He goes there, you know."

"I thought they were church people;" the fifty cent piece said.

"They're church people all right, but that's the extent of it," the dollar bill went on. "Well, Mr. Brokson felt like he should do a little something for Jerry's birthday, so m after he held me so tight I could hardly breathe he handed me over to Jerry. You feel sorry for yourselves because he pinched each of you, but me! he squeezed me until I crackled and crunched -- I am very new, you know, and I crack very easily as I am so crisp yet. Oh, my! I'm glad we're all out of the Brokson hands. They're .worse than tight -- they're misers!" and he went limp, just thinking of his past miserable experiences.

"I almost went to Mentzer's Candy Shop last week," the penny said. "Jerry started out with me, then turned around and came home. I got the blues many times -- always down in his old dark, drab pocket -- always going to church but never making any financial contribution. I'm just one of Jerry's pennies, but he has lots and lots more of us, and we all had such high hopes of going for foreign missions. Me, I've always wanted to travel, not belong to some old miser!"

"One time," the dime said thinly, "Jerry acted like he was getting liberal and I fully expected him to give me to some poor little orphan girl who would have been so happy to have received me; but, no, he changed his mind just like that," and the dime made a strange clinking noise as he added, "after he handled me and looked at me. I could have made that poor little girl so happy! I may be small and thin but I do possess a bit of power all my own," and he sighed deeply.

"I know what you mean," the fifty cent piece said. "I've been a much handled coin. I've passed through gamblers' hands and drunks' hands at a filthy bar, never because I chose to be there; I had no choice in the matter. Always I have wanted to sail abroad . . . to Africa, India, New Guinea, or, well, just any heathen country to help spread the gospel. Always I have been deprived of this, but today the girls mentioned 'Missionary Offering' and I thought I was dreaming. I have always had a secret longing and desire to be carried down a church aisle in an offering plate and from there sail to some mission field."

"Looks like we're going to have our wishes granted," the dollar bill said. "Listen!" and all became silent down inside the apron pocket.

"Isn't it wonderful, Judy," Joyce was saying as she laughed for joy. "We're going to have money to send to New Guinea to our new mission field! God does answer prayer."

"Wish I knew how it got here," Judy said.

"God sent it," her sister answered.

"Glad she doesn't know," the penny said. "She may be tempted to thank Jerry instead of God, and he's a penny pincher. Ouch! It hurts me to think of him pinching me so!" and he moaned a weak moan and fell back limply into the lap of the crisp new dollar bill.

"Don't bump me too hard," the dollar winced. "After all, I'm still sore myself from the old tightwad."

"To New Guinea!" the dime exclaimed dreamily. "Why, that's where the head hunters are! How exciting!"

"I can scarcely wait to be on our journey," the fifty cent piece said. "And we'll all stick together. One dollar and sixty-one cents may not sound like much but with us all pulling together we'll be able to do a lot over there."

"After our wounds heal," the dollar bill added.

"Mine feel good already -- just knowing I'm going to church and to a mission field," the dime said. "But hark! I hear music."

"Pennies, pennies, hear them dropping, We are small, we know. We are saving coins for Jesus You should see them grow!"

And the twins' voices blended softly with the peaceful whisperings of the pine tree.

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Story 10

## THE PUMPKIN PIES

Andrea and Andrew, the thirteen year old twins, helped Mother cut out big, fat, sweet and spicy brown gingerbread boys as Mose, the fluffy soft angora cat stretched lazily out on the big, brightly colored braided rug in front of the kitchen stove. The heavy iron tea kettle was puffing big puffs of hot steam out its long spout while the whole house was fragrantly sweet with the scent of spicy baked goods and a baking ham, rubbed generously with brown sugar and mustard and dotted all over with whole cloves.

"Wait till Peter comes in from skating!" Andrea said softly, turning enormous blue eyes and a full round face toward the steamed over south windows. "He'll be starved and really hungry when he smells these cookies."

"You mean you're not hungry, Sis?" and Andrew, his dark black hair shining like a raven, shook his head questioningly. "If Mother would only say the word, I'd have eaten my fourth gingerbread boy long, long ago," and he laughed mischievously.

"And you'd be sick, too," Andrea laughed as she pushed a big plump raisin in the soft gingerbread boy's brown body.

"Pleasantly so," the dark haired boy replied, dusting a small amount of flour in his sister's long blonde hair.

"Oh, Andrew!" she exclaimed in sheer exasperation "My hair! Now I'll have to shampoo it tonight again. I can't have that powdery stuff on my scalp with Aunt Matilda coming tomorrow. She'd think I was aging for sure," and she laughed loud and long at the thought of Aunt Matilda's reaction. "She's really a dear, but so... so... fussy," and she laughed again.

"You mean over fussy, Sis," and Andrew patted her silken head lightly.

"You'd better wash your hands real, real good, Andrew Kinsley, or Mother will be firing you. We can't have hair in our cookies."

"Right you are, fuss button, and I love you for it," and Andrew dashed for the big wash bowl in the bathroom, thankful for his sister's reminder. As he rubbed the soap over his hands, he blew soap bubbles in every direction, his heart light and excited at the thought of Thanksgiving Day being only a night away, with all the Aunts and Uncles and myriads of active cousins coming to their big house this year. Already many were in from distant states, staying with near kin and relation. Then too, dear sweet Grandfather and Grandmother would be arriving tonight on the

Silver Chief at the Santa Fe railroad station Father had promised to take him along to meet them. A loud whistle and a high pitched yell escaped his boyish lips.

"Whatever has happened?" and Andrea stood, trembling, in the bathroom doorway, her hands all covered with flour. "Andrew Kinsley, you frightened Mother and me!" and she leaned her blonde head weakly against the door frame work.

"You girls!" he said, laughing loudly and spraying her with a handful of water. "I was just happy and wanting the world to know. Sorry I scared you, Sis, but I'm really quite all right."

"I'm not too sure about that," Andrea said teasingly.

"Hi, Mom! Hi, Sis!" and Peter stepped noisily onto the big porch before entering the sunny kitchen, his face a bright red from the crisp, cold air. He walked quickly to the stove, rubbing his unmittened hands vigorously and unbuttoning his heavy jacket. "Um! Something smells wonderful," and he stepped to the big kitchen table where all the goodies were being set and stacked to cool before being put away for tomorrow's big meal.

"Only one, Peter," Mother said, handing him a big, fat gingerbread boy. "It's too near suppertime."

"That sure was fun -- on the pond, I mean" Then, quickly he asked, "Say, Mother, where was Sandy going.

"Sandy?" Mother questioned, puzzled. "Why .... nowhere. Where is she? I had forgotten all about her, so busy have I been. Shame on me, too!" and she hastily went out on the long glass encased porch and searched the yard but no Sandy could she see. Her eyes hastily scanned the rolling hills, all covered with glittering, shimmering snow, but no bright blue coat did she see. "Sandy. San .... dee!" she called, but no little voice answered.

"Where did you see her, Peter?" she asked, entering the warm kitchen.

"Don't get excited, Mom. She's not lost. She was going across the big field -- probably just taking a walk. She'll be back."

The big clock on the mantle slowly, melodiously, chimed out the quarter till five hour when the little five year old entered the big porch, singing softly, "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, I'll be a sunbeam for Him." Tediously she worked, trying to pull: her bright red boots off her chubby feet, her cheeks a scarlet red and her nose as bright as a cherry.

"Sandy, honey!" and Mother folded the bundle of sunshine in her arms. "Where have you been, and for how long have you been gone? I was too busy and almost lost my precious little girl. This must never, never happen," and she kissed her daughter on her red cold nose. "Me take a walk, Mommie." "But where, dear?" "Me can't tell." "But why, Sandy?"

"It's a secret between Jesus and me," and her full round, deep blue eyes looked shiny like diamonds and polished crystal.

"Oh! Well, that's different," and Mother finished undressing her youngest child. "Nanny and Papaw will soon be here. Go wash your hands and face and put your red plaid dress on for them, dear." Gleefully the singing child ran to her bedroom.

The morning dawned leaden gray and tiny snow flakes were filtering softly to the ground when the relation came merrily to the big farm on Ridge View. Aunts and Uncles exchanged handshakes and friendly greetings, and the cousins shouted loud "hoorahs" and more ecstatic greetings. Mother, long since awake and up, had the big turkey baking fragrantly in the oven, all packed with moist, tasty stuffing.

The many cousins donned heavy mittens, boots, scarves and coats, and, with skates dangling from their side, headed for the big pond, their hearts as light and soft as the rapidly falling powdery snow.

Mother headed for the cellar and the big pie cupboard, where she was transporting the delicious baked goods from the basement to a large table on the glassed-in porch to be kept cool for the noon meal.

"That's strange," she mused, counting for the third time. "I know I baked eight pumpkin pies, but there are only six.

"What did you say, Mary?" and Grandmother Was immediately by her daughter's side.

"Oh! It's nothing much. I can't find two of my pumpkin pies, that's all."

"Could Andrea have put them elsewhere?" and Grandmother began opening cupboards.

"I put them down in the big pie cupboard myself, Mother. No, Andrea didn't take them out, but they're gone. I thought I missed a loaf of bread too. Funny, though, I can't imagine how they'd have gotten away." Quickly she went into Sandy's bedroom and, calling the child in, she closed the door silently behind her.

"Honey," she began softly. "Did you see Mommie's pumpkin pies?"  
"Yes . . ." very timidly.

"Do you know where two of them could be found, and . . . and . . . a big loaf of homemade bread?"

Sandy began weeping softly. "I . . . I . . . didn't mean to... steal; and... I... I wasn't stealing, Mommie; but you told us all to give a Thanksgiving offering -- something we loved very, very much -- and I didn't have anything to give. Andrea gave her beautiful Betsy to poor Jane March, and Andrew gave his three dollars to the Missionary offering. Peter gave lots of money that he had saved and I love pumpkin pie, Mommie, so I gave poor widow Birch my share of the pumpkin pies

and one loaf of your bread. That's . . . That's where... I . . . was yesterday," and the girl was weeping softly. "I'm not going to . . . to... eat any pie. I gave mine to Mrs. Birch, and Mommie, all she could do when I gave it to her was cry and cry. She said no one had ever been so kind to her. She can't bake because of her rheumatism, and the children were so happy! She said she was coming to church as soon as she could find a way."

"We shall make a way for her, dear. Bless your You have been more thoughtful of the really poor than I have been. It's all right. I'm so glad you gave her those few things. Today I shall see that she too has a good, full Thanksgiving dinner; and you, Sandy, you shall have all the pumpkin pie you can eat."

"Don't tell Andrew and Peter, Mommie, please!"

"But why not, honey?"

"My Sunday School teacher told me to never go telling what you do for Jesus. He will reward us someday."

"So, that's the secret between you and Jesus?"

"I like to keep secrets with Jesus and me." And a heavenly smile played across the innocent childish face.

"This time it will be a secret between Jesus, you and me. No one else. How's that, sweetheart?"

"Wonderful, Mommie! I'm glad you know it too."

Laughter from the outdoors broke in upon the mother and daughter, and the tantalizing odors from the kitchen brought the mother back to reality.

"I must go now, honey. The turkey's almost finished. Together we shall make Mrs. Birch a very, very happy widow woman today, too." And she laughed happily as she hastened to the big kitchen, her heart as warm as the steaming tea kettle.

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Story 11

"GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN"

The late afternoon sun had just finished tucking himself into the cradle of the west and pulled the purplish red drapes of evening about his body, the last dying shadows of which were slowly fading into cold, chilly looking patterns in the snow. Down in the village, the vesper bells

chimed out melodiously and faded away with the dying sunset. Elizabeth Ann tucked the covers in more tightly around the shoulders of her mother.

"Oh, mother! You look more beautiful tonight than ever," and she bent over the beloved form of her mother whose cheeks were beginning to blossom and glow again under Elizabeth Ann's careful nursing and tender ministrations.

"You always say that," mother teased.

"I mean it, though, mother. I have an angel for a mother," and the twelve year old kissed the silk hair of her mother.

"Hush! Hush, child! I am but flesh and blood, and would an angel spank you if you're naughty?" Mother teased.

"But I needed it, mother, every time you gave it to me," the golden haired girl ejaculated, "and I love you for it. You did it because you loved me and wanted to help guide my footsteps in the right paths." ' "We will forget about that now, Elizabeth Ann, and think on how good you and Jonathan are to me. Whatever would I do without you both since Father's gone to be with Jesus! There isn't much I can do for you this Christmas, being so crippled like I am," and she heaved a deep, hurt sigh.

"Oh, mother, you must not think about that. Jonathan and I have the best Christmas presents two children could ever have: We have Jesus living in our heart and then we have you, mother dearest. This is all we want for Christmas."

"You humble my heart so, Bethie," she said tearfully, addressing her daughter by her pet name.

"But it's so, all the same," Elizabeth said. "Now, can you eat more broth and some bread? Dr. Peterson wants you to eat all you can get down and keep down. He said you should soon be well and out of this bed if you followed his orders," and the child reached for the hot broth on the night-stand.

"Mother, I've been thinking about Lou Jean down in the village. I can't seem to get her out of my mind today." : "Well!" mother said. "Would you mind terribly if I gave her my soft green wool dress you made me before you got sick?"

"That's the only good dress you have, honey," Mother reminded, "and we're too poor for material for any more for a long, long time. But, if you feel you should ....."

"I've been praying about it, Mother. It's the most beautiful dress I've ever had, but Lou Jean just seems to have nothing. Her mother left them two years ago and her daddy was crippled for life in some mine, They're so much poorer than we are and they don't know Jesus. Lou Jean told me she has three brothers and sisters besides herself. Her daddy draws a little sum of money each month as compensation but it doesn't nearly feed and clothe them and take care of Mr. Jacob's medicine

too. I... I've been feeling like she'd go to church if she had a nice dress. She's real clean and nice about herself, mother."

"What would you wear, dear?" mother asked.

"Oh, I always have that blue gingham to wear."

"But, Bethie, it's patched at places and . . . and . . . is fading so," mother said softly as a tear gleamed in her eye.

"If you'd rather not, mother, I shall obey you, but I felt I should do it -- for Jesus' sake," the child added softly.

"No! No, dear. It is not the dress that is making me weep, it is your sweet unselfish soul and heart. By all means, Lou Jean shall have the dress, and go to our cupboard with its meager fare and limited supplies and get the best out for the Jacob's family. They shall know a little about the joys of Christmas and why we have such a wonderful day."

"But, mother, our cupboard's almost bare," Elizabeth said.

"Give them a part of what remains, honey. The Lord will supply our need. Has He ever failed us, dear?" mother asked joyously. "Never once, dear mother, and maybe Jonathan shall be paid extra for the overtime at the mill," Elizabeth said as she surveyed the contents of the cupboard.

"'Tis not ours to worry about," Mother said softly. "He promised to care for us and He will. Now hurry dear, before it's too dark to see the path to the village and the Jacob's door. Christmas is too near at hand to delay."

Elizabeth Ann found her treasured Sunday School leaflet on the Christmas Story and, tucking it in among the few canned foods, plus an old ball Jonathan never used anymore and a homemade Raggedy Ann doll which had been a special treasure of hers for years, she carefully folded the beautiful woolen dress, then kissed mother good-bye and started down the steep path to the village.

The lights were already shining brightly in the village streets, and, as she walked, she thought they seemed to be smiling at her. It made her feel good all over. The moon began a silvery voyage across the starry heavens and the glistening snow crunched beneath her feet. Her breath came out in big white puffs and her nose felt cold and chilly but inwardly she was warm.

Quickly she went by the little shop windows where all kinds of pretty lights were shining and all sorts of wares were displayed. She gave them a hurried look, then turned into a small side street where the snow was piled in high drifts. Luckily, the snow had crusted, thereby holding her weight.

She found the small unpainted house and tiptoed quietly up the porch steps; then, rapping lightly on the door, she stepped back, waiting for an answer.

"Who's there?" a frightened voice asked as the door opened a small way.

"Lou Jean," Elizabeth said softly, "a blessed Christmas to all of you. It is I, Elizabeth Ann Harding. I've brought you something."

"Oh! Elizabeth Ann, how sweet of you to come to our house on a night like this!" and Lou Jean swung the heavy door wide open to admit her young friend.

"There's not too much here," Elizabeth Ann began, "but mother, Jonathan, and I wanted to share our supplies with you. Some of the fruit mother and I canned this summer. That will be good for your father, and here's a dress especially for you, Lou Jean. Since we're the same height and weight, I knew it would fit you," and she carefully unfolded her own prized green wool.

"Oh! Oh!" was all Lou Jean could exclaim as she hugged the soft dress to her bosom. "It's... It's . . . beautiful," she whispered as she began weeping softly. "I've never had anything like this in all my life! I love it, and Elizabeth Ann, I'm going to go with you to church every Sunday now. My clothes were too poor to wear to church."

A soft knock upon the door brought-everybody suddenly back to reality.

"God's blessings upon the occupants of this house!" happy voices shouted from outside, as the soft strains of the Christmas carols were wafted through the now open door.

"Rev. Bishop! It's . . . you!" Elizabeth Ann exclaimed.

"Yes, dear child, 'tis me. We have some Christmas boxes to deliver here. Jonathan told us about the Jacobs family," and the young people from the church began carrying in boxes of edibles and clothes.

"Now come, Elizabeth Ann," the gray haired minister said, placing his kind hands on the angel child's head. "We'll take you home. Jonathan's waiting for you at home. We have another big shipment to deliver -- at the little white cottage on top of the hill."

"You . . . You . . . mean . . . my house?" she faltered.

"Exactly so, and I think we shall put you on top of the big spruce tree in your yard; you're our little Christmas angel if ever I saw or heard of any."

"No, no, Brother Bishop," Elizabeth Ann protested. "Jesus said 'Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye do it unto me.'"

"Right! I see Miss Lux has done a right smart job in helping her Sunday School girls get the Scriptures," Rev. Bishop said as the group started up the hill to the girl's home, "but Jesus also said, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure .... ' Now it's your turn to receive."

Somewhere from down in the village the soft, sweet strains of "Joy to the World" floated up to the church group.

"Sounds just like angels," the sweet child whispered, clutching the old minister's hand more tightly.

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THE END OF THIS FILE