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First Job

By Mrs. Paul E. King

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Dan eased his nearly-six-foot frame back in the cushions of the easy chair as he studied the books before him. Mr. Trumbull had told him to take them home with him and to study them. "I want you to understand the department perfectly," he said. "You'll be managing it, you know. You possess the qualities it takes to be an excellent salesman; and," he had added, as an after-thought, "a store manager someday!"



"Dan," it was Mr. Trumbull, "I want to see you in my office."

Dan chewed thoughtfully on the end of his pencil as he perused the material before him. "It looks simple enough," he countered softly, "and I believe I'll like working in that department. But a store manager! Whew! I don't know."

He stared off into space. He thoroughly liked working in the shoe department and being assistant manager in same said department. The pungent smell of the leather had an exhilarating effect upon him. He liked the odor. Then too, he took great pains in displaying the department's latest and newest foot needs and foot-wear. It was a pleasure and a delight to arrange the latest arrivals in a neat, appealing, eye-catching way. Not only was his floor display a delight but the stockroom as well. He was neatness personified -- back there where no one saw except the employees and store personnel. "I'm sure glad you're working in my department, Dan," Mr. Myers commented frequently. "You keep things so orderly and neat. I can always find what I'm looking for since you've come here."

Dan sighed deeply. He thought of the many offers he had had from other stores in the Mall and how he had refused. He liked working just where he was! He knew he'd

miss working under Mr. Myers. He'd been a great man to be assistant manager to. Oh they'd see each other daily but it wouldn't be like working together in the same department. Maybe he shouldn't accept the managership in the electrical department, he thought silently.

Walking into the kitchen, he picked up a freshly baked cookie and began munching on it halfheartedly. "Mom, what do you think I should do?" he asked.

His mother turned and faced her son. "Have you prayed about it, Dan?" she asked.

"I sure have."

"Then obey what the Lord is telling you to do, dear."

Dan washed a mouthful of cookie down with a swallow of milk. "It's just that it frightens me, Mother," he admitted.

"If God's in it you have nothing to fear, Dan. Furthermore, you've had excellent experience and training under Mr. Myers."

"Some of the best, Mother. But it will be different when I have full responsibility. If the department prospers, that will be in my favor; if it doesn't, well . . ." his voice trailed off meaningfully.

"But if you are sure of God's will, Dan, then everything will move along smoothly and rightly."

"Thanks, Mother. You're a big help. I guess I was wanting some positive answer -- or assurance from you . . . one way or the other."

"Just pray until you find God's leading and His choices for you, dear. You'll not always be home, you know."

"I realize this. But it sure helps a fellow to have parents like you and dad; parents who take their children's problems and decisions seriously and pray over them and help to guide them in making right choices and decisions. I believe I should take the job."

"And God will help you!"

Taking a second cookie, Dan walked out of the kitchen into the living room where he continued studying the material sent home with him by Mr. Trumbull.

Managing the electrical department was completely different from working in the shoe department. Dan missed the smell of leather and the close contact with Mr. Myers.

The electrical department, on a continual downward trend before his acceptance, suddenly and amazingly made a miraculous come-back and was soon flourishing and paying off in a big way.

Dan was ringing up a sale one sunny afternoon when the phone on his desk jangled. He picked it up. "Good afternoon. Stearn's Department Store. Dan Knight speaking. May I help you please?" He spoke in a soft well modulated voice.

"Dan," it was Mr. Trumbull. "I want to see you in my office, please."

"Yes, Sir," Dan answered politely. Turning to his assistant, he said, "Take the department over till I get back, Ken."

At the door of Mr. Trumbull's office, Dan paused.

"Come in, Dan," the head of the store invited. Motioning to a chair, he bade him be seated.

"Thank you; Sir," Dan said as he seated himself across from his boss.

"How do you like your new job, Dan?"

"Very well, Sir. Very well! Thank you."

"I notice you're doing remarkably well. Sales are up and we're making out big in your department. I appreciate the excellent work you're doing." Mr. Trumbull took off his glasses and began polishing them. "I have been getting good reports on you, Dan. The customers like you and your courteous ways. You seem to have a way with the people."

"I like people, Mr. Trumbull -- honestly and truly like people!"

"That is evident -- quite evident!" Mr. Trumbull emphasized, pleased. "Your courteous ways and sweet spirit have brought many a customer back to your department... over and over again and again. They tell me it's pleasant to be around you. Needless to say, I am very pleased with you."

"Thank you, Sir," Dan answered modestly. "I have wonderful parents. I owe everything to God and to them. I was brought up well, Mr. Trumbull."

Mr. Trumbull toyed unconsciously with a paper weight on his desk as he studied Dan's remarks and weighed them carefully in his mind. After a long pause, he spoke. "I fear you'll not like what I am about to say but it looks as if we have no alternative."

"What is that, Sir?"

"Beginning Aug. 1st we'll be staying open on Sunday. You will be expected to take your turn at working, along with all the employees."

The color drained from Dan's face. Rising to his feet, he courteously extended his hand toward Mr. Trumbull. "I'm afraid you'll have to look for a new department manager then," he said steadily and kindly but with no hesitation. "I cannot work on Sunday. It's against Scriptural teaching and I would be violating my conscience, shattering my convictions, and forfeiting my relationship with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Shelf the old Puritanical teaching, Dan! This is the 20th century. Times have changed. Things have changed; as well as people."

"But God's Word has never changed, Mr. Trumbull. It abideth forever and God has not, and does not, change. No, I cannot work on Sunday."

"But can't you see my position, Dan? Every store in the Mall is opening. We've got to follow suit. This is a game of competition. I'll lose money if I don't remain open. Sunday is getting to be a big day for shoppers anymore. Think of the thousands of men and women who work all week! They're entitled to one day of shopping, don't you think so?"

"They're not entitled to Sunday shopping," Dan said. "Furthermore, think of all the men and women who will be working . . . forced to do so... on a day that God long ago ordained as a 'rest' day! 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy!' He emphasized strongly in the Book of Exodus.

" 'Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work:

" 'But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.'

"No man, Mr. Trumbull, is entitled to shop on Sunday. God gave us six days in which to take care of the secular. I cannot violate either the Holy Word nor my conscience and work on Sunday."

Mr. Trumbull pulled at his fingernails nervously. "I'd hate terribly to have to replace you, Dan. You've brought the department out of the red, and we've averaged the best and highest average ever . . . since your managing of the department."

"As I stated previously, Mr. Trumbull, I cannot work on Sunday. I feel it's only fair that you should know this."

Rising to his feet, Mr. Trumbull ran nervous fingers through his steel-gray hair. He paced back and forth across the room. "What would you suggest I do, Dan?" he asked, stopping abruptly in front of him. "From my view-point, I have no alternative. This business of competition is keen! It's nerve-shattering and brain-straining."

Dan smiled at his superior. "What do I suggest? you ask. Do you want my opinion, Mr. Trumbull?"

"I do! I value your judgment. There's something different about you. All the way around, different!"

"Don't open the store at all for Sunday business, Mr. Trumbull. God will honor you. Sales-wise and every other way, if you choose to honor Him and His Word. He can double your sales volume through the week; and you'll have far better humored sales clerks, too!"

"Do you honestly believe that, Dan? Oh I wish I had your faith and courage!"

"I strongly believe everything I told you, Mr. Trumbull. In fact, my father proved it to be true!"

"Your father. He's a store manager then?"

"Not a store manager," Dan answered, "he has the big orchard along the highway..." 'The Fruit Barrell,' it's called."

Mr. Trumbull's eyes brightened. "Why, I've bought fruit dozens and dozens of times from the stand out there. Always get good measure and only the choicest of fruit, too!" he exclaimed honestly.

"Many of dad's competitors keep their stands open Sunday..."

"And what happened?" Mr. Trumbull asked anxiously, seating himself on the edge of his desk.

"My father's six-day-a-week sales far exceed any of their seven-day-sales. What's more, father makes almost twice as much as those who keep their stands open on Sunday and he sells his choice fruit at an even less price than the others!"

For a long time Mr. Trumbull stared at Dan, then a look of determination filled his eyes. He set his jaw. Slammng a fisted hand into the open palm of the other, he exclaimed in a relieved tone of voice, "You've convinced me, boy! You've convinced me! And why not? I'm owner-manager of Stearn's! I guess I can do as I please! Say, you're quite a salesman! You just sold me on the Bible-way."

"And I promise, on the authority of God's Word, that you'll not regret your decision, Mr. Trumbull," Dan said emphatically.

Striding over to Dan, Mr. Trumbull laid his hands on the young man's shoulders. "This is your first job, Dan is it not? Your first place of employment?"

"Yes, Sir. My first job at any public employment. I've worked all along with father and..."

"It shall be your first and last place, Dan!" Mr. Trumbull interrupted. "I need a young man like you . . . a conscientious Christian young man. I'll train you myself. Someday you'll manage this store! Yes, Sir! If I have anything to say about it you shall be manager someday!" Lifting his head, he laughed jovially. "You may go now, Dan."

"Praise the Lord!" Dan said softly heavenward as he started from the room.

"Oh yes, Dan, one thing more!" Mr. Trumbull called. "Where do you attend church? I'm an old man; and I should have long ago taken as good care, or better, of my soul as I have of my business. But I haven't too much time left for I do need the Saviour whom you have portrayed so wonderfully in your life every day since your coming here."

After giving Mr. Trumbull the church address, Dan hurried back to his department, tears of gratitude and thankfulness shining in his eyes.

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