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## **Not By Sight Alone**

**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

From the September 7, 1980 Sunday School Beacon

From her desk in the second row from the front, Charlotte King eyes her teacher suspiciously and carefully. Mrs. Kroogel looked as extremely forbidding in her appearance, she thought, as the name sounded. And to think, that for the past four months (when she had heard that Mrs. Kroogel was coming to Foxmoor High) she had prayed that either her father's company would transfer him elsewhere or that some special miracle would happen so she wouldn't have to sit under the woman's tutelage! Well, one thing was certain, her prayer wasn't answered.

Charlotte toyed nervously with the pencil on her desk. She was filled with fear and trepidation, positive that school for her would be a night mare this year -- what with the stern features, the set jaw and the tailored suit!

She opened her English book and tried to concentrate on the words she was reading but found this quite impossible. Why hadn't God answered her prayer? she wondered, feeling the warmth of a tear in her eye. What was wrong with her? Hadn't He said that if she would ask anything in His name, He would do it? She had asked -- many times, to be sure -- but here she was, sitting in the second row of Mrs. Kroogel's room! Something was wrong. Not with God; with her!



Wrong? With her? Charade felt hot all over. The thought frightened her. Immediately she began searching her heart, silently praying for God to show her what was wrong . . . any secret, covered thing of which she was not aware, any selfish motive, any prejudice . . .

Selfish motive and prejudice stopped her short. Perhaps the selfish part didn't pertain to her, but another word could easily be inserted which would fit her case completely . . ., wrong She had prayed with a wrong motive, and, to a degree, out of prejudice, too. The things she'd heard about Mrs. Kroogel had instilled both fear and a bit of prejudice in her thinking; this had carried over into her prayer life.

She bowed her head and thanked God for revealing the facts to her. Then, feeling relieved and happy, she praised Him for not answering her prayers in the way she had wanted them answered, remembering that His way was always best and perfect and right.

The day proceeded smoothly once the girl had conquered battle number one and gotten her priorities in proper perspective and, surprisingly, she enjoyed the lessons immensely in Mrs. Kroogel's class.

"Charlotte," the teacher said one day after school had been in session for several weeks, "I need to see you after school. Be here at my desk upon dismissal, please."

Uh, oh! Now what? Perhaps the judgments (of which she'd heard passing remarks from various students) were finally going to fall, Charlotte thought, wondering what she had done to deserve after-school punishment, of whatever nature it might be.

The afternoon seemed to drag by, minute after slow minute and Charlotte was miserable. To add to her misery, several of the fellows passing her in the hallway during the class change, shouted, "Uh, oh! it's the wet noodle from Mrs. Kroogel -- for Charlotte. The wet noodle from Mrs. Kroogel, for Charlotte!"

In spite of the tears that surfaced and ran down her cheeks, all was calm inside. This, in view of and in spite of the summons to stay after school.

Sliding into the seat of the desk in her math class, Charlotte rejoiced because there was no condemnation in her heart. She had never had problems with any of her former teachers, she remembered, thanking God, and whatever it may be that Mrs. Kroogel felt she needed disciplined for, the Junior decided she would receive the punishment with joy and thanksgiving and make it a stepping stone for her life.

Asking God to help her and to allay her fears, she concentrated on Mr. Gotting's teaching and soon she heard the bell sound for dismissal.

Gathering her books and tablets into her arms, Charlotte hurried down the long hallway to Mrs. Kroogel's room.

"Good luck, Kiddo," Geren Yoh said, falling in step beside her. "I hear the stern one's calling you on the carpet. Whew! I pity you."

Turning quickly and surprising even herself by her bravery, Charlotte said truthfully, "Honesty, Geren, for all her severe looking physical features, Mrs. Kroogel's a tremendously wonderful teacher. She's not at all like some of the students say she is. At least I haven't found her to be. She's quite exacting and precise, but that's good for us."

"Then why must you stay after school" Geren asked, not at all unkindly and sincerely.

Laughing nervously, Charlotte replied, "I don't know. I honestly don't know."

"It bothers me," Geren said; "you, the model student -- a truly genuine Christian, to be more explicit -- being called on the carpet. And for what? Something you didn't do, that's for sure! Why, Charlotte, you've always had a perfect record of proper and Christ-like behavior, and you're always on the honor roll . . . in spite of your timidity . . . and . . ."

"You maybe should have said 'because of' instead of 'in spite of,' Geren," Charade teased. "Perhaps if I was as loquacious as some, I'd talk instead of study and I'd never be on another honor roll. Frankly, though, I do wish I wasn't quite so shy."

Geren spun around quickly and faced her. "You must be kidding!" he exclaimed. "Why Charade, that's another thing that's attractive and appealing about you. A fellow gets tired of a girl who chasers like a magpie all the time."

"Thanks, Geren, but I still think it would be nice to be a little more outgoing than I am."

"Didn't God make you the way He wanted you to be . . . the way He knew you'd be the nicest? Of course He did. And I know a whole group of church-going young people who would never, never want you any different than you are now and ever have been, including yours truly. Well, here we are. I'll wait here until you're finished. After you've had the 'third degree,' I'll stand by with my presence and my humble but devoted assistance and sympathy."

"Thanks, Geren, but whatever the punishment and the cause for it, I told the Lord I'd let it be anger stepping stone for me along life's pathway."

"A great girl, that's what you are," Geren said softly as Charlotte disappeared inside Mrs. Kroogel's room.

"I see you're very punctual, Charlotte," the teacher remarked as the girl entered the classroom.

"I guess one's up-bringing has everything to do with one's responses to his superiors, Mrs. Kroogel. I owe all that I am or ever hope to be to God and to my wonderful father and mother. They've been strict with us, but it's not been without love."

A light came on somewhere inside Mrs. Kroogel's being that reflected instantly through to her face. She smiled then; a pleased smile it was. "You're the very girl I've been praying for," she exclaimed suddenly and without preamble. "You're everything I asked God for, and more. I've observed you, Charlotte -- for these past four and one-half weeks -- and you're hired."

"Hired? For what? I mean . . . well, you wanted to see me after school . . . What have I done wrong?"

Suddenly Mrs. Kroogel was laughing. It was not at all like the severe-looking lines on her face -- false, deceptive lines of a beautiful inner soul. Her laughter was soft and beautiful like a laughing brook, and in that instant Charlotte was at ease with the teacher. Involuntarily, she broke out in spontaneous laughter.

"Now tell me what this is all about," she said softly when the laughter had subsided.

"I called you here to hire you," Mrs. Kroogel replied simply.

"For what?"

"To be my secretary and to baby-sit once a week for Jay and me. We usually go out to eat on Friday evening. It's the one night we always do something together, and until Jimmy's two or three -- at least not until he doesn't need his regular formula feedings anymore -- we're in desperate need of a Christian baby sitter. And you are our answer to prayer."

"You're a Christian!" Charlotte exclaimed joyfully. "O that's wonderful! You must come to our church sometime, the Lord willing. It's a spiritual church, and the people are so friendly. We have a wonderful pastor and wife, too."

"That's another answer to prayer, then," Mrs. Kroogel said. "We've tried church after church and they've been so dead and so cold . . ."

Giving the teacher the pastor's name and address, as well as that of the church, Charlotte asked suddenly, "You said you wanted me to be your secretary?"

"That's right; I'm doing a bit of writing on Christian ethics and Christian principle. I've made inquiry about your work in typing and learned that you took top grades in it. You could work on the manuscripts at your convenience, Charlotte. I'll pay you well for your services . . ."

Walking out into the hallway a short time later, Geren stepped out from behind an opened door.

"How did it go?" he asked quickly, searching Charlotte's face for any stress lines. "Was she mean?"

Charlotte began laughing. "Oh, Geren, no. No! Mrs. Kroogel's a wonderful person. She's a Christian. She and her husband and their infant son will be attending our church, the Lord willing."

"What did she want? Why did you have to stay after school?"

"I'm hired -- paid secretary and Friday night baby sitter, Geren."

"You're a what?"

"A secretary and a Friday night baby sitter. Mrs. Kroogel asked if I'd do her typing -- at my convenience -- and also take care of their baby."

"Well, what do you know," Geren exclaimed thoughtfully.

"I know that I've learned a lesson," Charlotte told her companion. "One I hope I never forget . . ."

"Good is coming out of this; I can feel it!" Geren said, smiling broadly, knowing just about what Charlotte would say.

"That's what Rom. 8:28 says," Charlotte said, smiling, "and I believe every word of it. But I see something else far more clearly than I've ever seen it before; that is the error of forming hasty opinions and passing judgment upon a person by sight alone. Isaiah 11:3-5 has taken on new emphasis for me. ' . . . and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes nether reprove after the hearing of his ears;

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

"I see what you mean, Charlotte. I guess I hadn't thought too much about those verses before now. It's wonderful, when you stop and think about it, isn't it? It won't be what my friends think about me that counts, but what God knows."

"Right. And now, back to Mrs. Kroogel. She's strict, it's true, but she's also scrupulously fair and not at all slow to praise for work well done. Haven't you noticed how Jenny Cloud is coming to the fore since Mrs. Kroogel's come here? And even Clark Templin's attitude's changing. I honestly believe, looking back over these few weeks of schooling and seeing a new Clark emerging, that with God's help and Mrs. Kroogel's discipline and praise formula, Clark's going to amount to a lot more than any of us ever imagined."

"In other words, you're saying that underneath Mrs. Kroogel's deceiving crusty exterior there lies a heart of gold, a heart as soft as melted butter."

"Beautifully phrased, Geren. And now, I must be going. Mother will wonder what happened to me unless I come through that back doorway soon. Thanks for the support."

Walking with her down the marble steps, Geren laughed and said, "At your service any time, O noble lady!"

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