Fisherman's Wharf
By Mrs. Paul E. King

CHAPTER 1

The train whistle blew loudly and shrilly as the portly old conductor ambled nonchalantly through our coach. "Fisher's Cove," he called loudly. "Next stop Fisher's Cove. Be there in five minutes."

Mama looked anxiously about her, counting as she did so. "They are all here, Susan," she said. "Get your hat on and help me."

Susan, the oldest of eight, very, very carefully put her Sunday best hat on the top of her dark brown hair then tied heavily starched, crisply ironed bonnets on Hannah, Elizabeth, and Anna's head as Mama wrapped baby Frank securely in scratchy wool blankets, handed down to him by five older brothers and sisters.

"Polly's nose," Mama said softly, and Susan gave me immediate attention.

"They must look their best!" Mama said. "Papa will be at the station and maybe some of the deacons, too. Oh, Joey!" she lamented, "Your stocking's come out from beneath your knee breeches." And she lay Frankie down on the seat and hurried to pull the unruly stocking up and back in place.

"But it won't stay, Mama," Joe said innocently. "The pant leg's too big. It just keeps slipping and sliding and..."
"Fisher's Cove. Fisher's Cove," a porter called loudly as the train screeched to an abrupt halt which caught Anna and Harris completely off guard and sent them sprawling to the floor.

Anna's bonnet turned side-ways, covering her pretty blue eyes. She was screaming loudly.

"There, there, honey!" Susan soothed, picking her up and doing the best she could to smooth the wrinkles out of the little bonnet. "Papa's here to meet us. Smile real pretty now," and she wiped the sooty tears away.

"Mama! Mama, look!" I called, "Harris' nose! It's bleeding."

Mama found a clean cloth and handed it to him. "Hold it uptight against your nose," she said calmly. "We're going out to meet Papa now. I'll take care of you as soon as Papa puts Frank, Elizabeth, and Anna in the carriage. You're a big boy . . . almost eleven," and she patted him gently on the head as she gathered Frank in her arms and started grandly down the aisle behind us.

"Joey, your stocking!" Harris called, forgetting about his nose long enough to make the statement and just long enough to put red polka dots on Hannah's pretty white bonnet.

Joe stopped and blushed scarlet as he said, "But Harris, it won't stay up. The pants are too big. They were yours, remember?" and he continued onward, marching gloriously down the aisle, clutching tightly to the rebellious thick black stocking.

Susan stood by the steps of the coach and, taking each small hand in her own steady one, she saw us all safely to the platform outside.

"Step away a bit, Harris," she said softly, "and all of you line up pretty for Papa and the deacons."

I was afraid to move lest my bonnet shift positions. I had just recently learned how to tie bows and I hadn't done the best job of it in the train.

"Don't forget to smile," Susan kept repeating softly; and, like Harris, I began practicing for Papa. The bow beneath my chin slipped a notch and I decided to keep my smiles until I saw Papa... and the deacons.

The train gave another loud, shrill whistle and with the conductor's last "All Aboard," it began moving away from us, billows of black soot and smoke rising out of the engine's stack.
I watched until it faded from view then, hearing Joey’s excited, "Papa! Papa! We're over here," I turned, and would have run across the tracks that separated Papa and me had Susan's hand not come down on me just then.

"No, no, Polly," she said in a soft voice. "Stay here . . . in line. The deacons!"

Again we all stood "at attention" . . . Joey holding the stubborn stocking, Harris holding his nose, and me holding my bonnet. I must have smiled too big or too hard when I saw Papa--the knot came completely untied.

After the train whistle died away, Papa made sure the horses were calmed down enough to leave them alone, secured tightly to the hitching post across the tracks. Then seeing Mama and all of us, he ran to where we were.

"Lois! Lois!" he exclaimed joyously, rushing to Mama and hugging her soundly.

Mama blushed a pretty pink and, very modestly, said, "Don't be too public with your affections, Clarence." But I could tell she was glad to see Papa . . . really glad! Just embarrassed because the deacons had seen Papa's actions, I thought.

I wondered if I'd dare venture my own emotions of love and adoration on Papa in their presence. But Papa soon took care of that; he was coming down the line, hugging all of us, beginning with Susan and ending with Frankie. He then led the way as we crossed the tracks to where the carriage and the deacons were standing.

Susan, a great one for order, saw to it that we marched in line behind them--she, herself, bringing up the line. "The deacons!" she whispered softly so we could hear. That meant, "Mind your manners" and "Make a good impression."

As Papa introduced Mama to the deacons, I could see that Joey and Harris were uncomfortable and miserable; and when Harris stopped holding his nose long enough to smile and say, "Pleased to meet you" to the deacons, his troubles really began--he fainted.

Mama handed baby Frank to Susan and, rushing to Harris, she knelt by his side. At the same instant, Deacon Harkness rushed into the small railroad station and soon emerged with a wet handkerchief. "Here," he said, handing it to Mama, "rub this over his face and in the back of his neck. I'll go wet another."

After a time of anxiety for all, Harris revived. Mama, with old Deacon Harkness' aid, stopped the violent nose bleeding.

"Rev. Rousch," the deacon said, "you and the Mrs. take the children and go to the parsonage. We'll bring the luggage as soon as we get it loaded."
I liked Brother Harkness right off, and I could tell that Susan was highly obliged to him for his right good spirit. But I had misgivings about Deacon Bertram; he looked like we didn't impress him one bit--kinda' like a family of children disgusted him. Papa always said that children and dogs could sense very keenly if they were loved or not. I guess it must have been this "childish sensitivity" towards adults . . . for good or bad . . . that made me feel like this. I was glad when Papa called, "Polly, you going with us?" Happily I fell in step with the others.

Papa said little on the trip home and I wondered if, in the two weeks he had preceded us to Fisher's Cove, he, too, had been endowed with that "sensitivity" gift concerning Deacon Bertram. The other deacons all seemed like good, righteous men.

As we rounded the corner of Wharf Street on to Water Street, Papa turned and said, "There's our new home." He pointed to a big red brick house nestled snugly in among ever so many trees.

"Oh!" Susan gasped, "I had no idea it would be so . . . so . . . fabulous."

"I'm glad school is out for the summer," Joey announced proudly. "Me and Harris can play 'squirrel' in those trees."

"Harris and I," Susan corrected.

After having ridden the train from Sprindale to Fisher's Cove . . . a grand total of ten hours and fifteen minutes, our bodies so stiff and "at attention" most of the time from Susan's commands and mother's soft reprimands, we all seemed to suddenly unwind.

Joey was first to express it. With boyish fervor and gusto he jumped out of the family carriage and, running to the neat white picket gate, he jumped on it and swung back and forth fiercely, shouting, "Goody! Goody! There's no deacons here to make me behave. Goody! Goody!" The rebellious stocking was far down over his shoe.

"Joe," Papa called sternly, "go to the porch immediately and sit on the step till I get there. You and I'll be having a little 'business meeting' after awhile."

Papa and Mama were blushing red. I looked toward the porch where Joey was heading and saw strange women standing stiffly in front of the door. The deacons' wives! I thought miserably. Poor Joey! What with the stubborn stocking exposing his leg from below the knee to above his black shoe tops! And Susan having to remind us we were all "at attention" again.

"The church sent a welcoming committee," Papa laughed pleasantly and softly in Mama's ear. "Deaconesses?" Susan wanted to know.

"Just some of our members, honey," Papa said with a wry kind of smile.
Once again we were marched . . . down the beautiful cobblestone walk this time and up the porch past Joey, who was crying softly.

"This is our oldest," Papa was introducing. "She's Susan."

I didn't hear any more. Tearfully, I rushed to Joey and sitting by his side, I wiped his tears (and mine) on the bonnet I held in my hand. I pulled hard at the over-stretched rebellious stocking and gave it a final shove up under his too-big pant leg. "You can go with pride to meet them," I said, just as Papa called, "Joey."

I knew better than to sympathize with Joey for his daring adventure on the front yard gate--all of us would have been in "business meeting" with Papa . . . and him ex-officio of the meeting!

I was not at all surprised to be introduced to a Mrs. Bertram. I felt when I looked at her for the first time that the woman with the sharp scrutinizing eyes and hard look on her face fit in with Deacon Bertram somewhere.

"Shame! Shame on you!" she said crossly to Joey. "It's a pity you can't be like my Artie. He's such a good boy. Oh, you naughty, naughty boy! What will our parsonage look like with all you children!" Turning to a Mrs. Johnson she said, "I'm sorry we ever got that new green velvet couch for the living room and that new table and chair set! It'll all be ruined. All that money spent foolishly! My! My!" and she shook her head violently.

"But you should not worry," Deacon Harkness' wife said softly, "You have only a dozen eggs tied up in it." Turning to Papa and Mama, she said sincerely, "What a lovely, lovely family--and such precious children! Come into the house. The children must be famished from that long train ride. Dinner's read to be served." Oh, she was kind. Just like her husband! And we all fell in love with her immediately.

Mrs. Bertram walked from one room to the other, surveying the surroundings carefully, then she returned to Mama.

"We expect everything to remain just as it now is, Mrs. Rousch," she said with great authority. "I shall be coming in two days a week to help you teach these unruly children some sense and to see that things are kept in order."

Mama said nothing as she removed her shawl. Then suddenly I heard her clear, firm voice. "Mrs. Bertram," she said, "I wish to thank you for your offer of help. However, it will not be needed. This is our home... for the next three years, at least. As mother of this family, God's Word commands me to guide my own household. Thank you again. Your services will not be needed."
Poor Mrs. Bertram. She was shocked. Really shocked! She must have been used
to having her own way. But she didn't know Mama; she was just like Papa--a strict
adherent to and doer of a/l the Bible, and I knew she'd never let another intrude in her
upbringing of us.

"God has blessed your pastor and me with these wonderful children," Mama
continued softly, "and no one raises them but us."

Mrs. Bertram grabbed her richly feathered Sunday best hat and stomped angrily
out the door.

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CHAPTER 2

The atmosphere cleared wondrously after Mrs. Bertram's departure and we all
settled down to normal, relaxed beings in Mrs. Harkness' and the other good women's
presence.

I felt really at home when we sat down to eat and I saw the ladies had used
Mama's best china on the big new table.

"We wanted only the best for you," the women explained to Mama as they waited
on her. "This is your day off, Sister Rousch," they said sweetly.

"I appreciate the beautiful furnishings in the parsonage," Mama said sweetly. "And
the children and I shall do our best to keep it nice and clean. It will be a place where
you'll never need to be ashamed to bring your relatives and friends." And I knew it was
ture, for Mama was clean--clean and, like Susan, (or maybe I should say, Susan like
Mama) was a great one for orderliness.

After the deacons and the women from our church had gone, {Deacon Bertram
was the last to leave) we inspected and surveyed the parsonage with pride and great
respect.

I ran into the big parlor and sat tall and lady-like on the new green velvet couch,
my legs dangling below me. Lovingly, I ran my childish hands over the plush, velvety
material as Papa's voice floated calmly into the room,, where he didn't know I was.

"The Bertram's aren't pleased with us," he told Mama. "They heard me preach
one time at Conference and thought that was what they wanted in a preacher," and he
laughed softly.

My mind drifted back to that conference when Papa had preached. He waxed
eloquent in oratory and the people were shouting and running the aisles. But they didn't
know that Papa was a restitution and repentance preacher, too, and a preacher who preached more on Hell and its eternal punishment than he ever did on Heaven and its bliss, splendor and grandeur. "If I can keep you from going to Hell," he often said, "you'll go to Heaven and experience all its glories."

"The real crisis came," his voice floated into the room, "when I began calling on and praying with the men down at the wharf. Some few in our congregation want no 'down-and-outers,' as they put it, coming to the church. But Lois, as I see it now, the future good of this charge lies in our getting new converts. Mr. Peters needs God and..."

So! I soliloquized silently, my "sensitivity gift" had worked right. I slipped off the lovely piece of new furniture and went quietly out to the porch where Susan had a game going for all of us, feeling like an intruder into Papa's and Mama's world.

Sunday morning dawned all golden and glorious with June sprinkling sunshine generously all over our big lawn and the lovely maples. All ten of us filed out to the waiting carriage where Pug and Bibs looked their Sunday best from the grooming Papa had given them the day before.

Either our members had come early to pray or else, out of sheer curiosity, they came early to see what the pastor's family looked like, for the hitching posts in the big lot behind the church were nearly all filled. Papa drove us grandly up to his post.

"Pastor!" Susan exclaimed, reading the sign aloud so all of us could hear.

"Yes," Papa said. "This is reserved for my family. It was right nice of Deacon Bertram and his good wife to have it passed on the board."

As we marched timidly down the long aisle of Papa's new charge, I felt certain most of his parishioners weren't there to pray . . . they scrutinized us carefully. I started to slip into the first empty pew but Susan's hand was on my shoulders. "Papa's orders are the second pew from the front," she whispered softly, blushing slightly.

I was glad that Joey's stocking was behaving nicely, for the congregation got a thorough view of us. I felt like a bride when she walks all the way down the aisle to the front. We filed quietly into the long pew . . . all eight of us.

Mama removed Frankie's blanket then bowed her head in silent prayer. Susan bowed hers, too. We sat there, all of us, stiff and silent with that "at attention" air again. We knew better than to ask for a drink or the rest room during Sunday school and church.

"Do whatever needs done now," Papa and Mama ordered sweetly just before leaving for church. "There'll be no drinking again until you get home." So we never thought about being thirsty or having need of a comfort station.
Papa's sermon on restitution and repentance brought loud, heart-felt "Amen's" from many in the congregation and I felt sure that dear old Deacon Harkness and his "good" wife (as Papa called her) had all restitutions made and out of the way; for the good man wept and shouted Papa on, all the way through the sermon!

Poor Deacon and Mrs. Bertram wiggled and squirmed dreadfully that morning. I felt certain they must have had pain somewhere; for Mama let us wiggle only when we had a stomach ache and then just a very, very little if we were in church.

Every now and then, I glanced shyly out from beneath my bonnet in their direction . . . they sat just across from us . . . and that's when I saw Artie. He was sticking his tongue out at someone on the end of the pew and making awful looking eyes. I got scared and turned my head straight up in Papa's direction. He hollered out loud to his mama, "I'm tired of sitting." Then, standing on the seat..., he was seven . . . he stomped his feet and made such horrid noise until Papa stopped preaching. The deacon and his wife took Artie and went home. This, we all learned soon, was a usual Sunday performance.

I missed much of Papa's sermon after that, for I kept thinking of the "business meeting" Papa would have had (in church, too, if necessary) with any of us, had we dared to act so . . . so irreverent and disrespectful.

I could tell though (by what Papa was saying so tearfully) that he "smelled something dead up stream," as he so frequently said. Papa oiled his messages with long hours of prayer and tears and he was endowed with an unusually good sense of smell; every time he said he could "smell something dead up the stream," or that there were "skeletons in the closet," God always helped him to flush them out and people got saved. Oh, we believed in our Papa! He lived what he preached.

Some weeks later as Papa was painting the doghouse he made for Eli (Eli was our big spotted Dalmatian and Papa was painting black polka dots on the white house to match Eli's pretty fur), a self-appointed committee of six, with Deacon and Mrs. Bertram leading, approached Papa boldly.

"Uh! Ahem!" And Deacon Bertram cleared his throat loudly.

"Good morning, friends," Papa said sweetly and pleasantly.

"We've come on business," and Mrs. Bertram got immediately to the point.

"Well, well," Papa rejoined, laying the brush on a piece of paper. "Let's go inside and I'll clean my hands; then we can talk in the study."
"No need for that," Deacon Bertram said in an animated tone of voice. "We're here to tell you not to visit with those folks down at the wharf and ..."

"It's a down-right shame!" his wife interrupted, her face an angry red. "Our other pastors never mingled with those . . . those . . . loathsome fishermen. Why can't you call on Dr. Finklestine and Professor Harvard, like they did? They were good friends with the 'upper class' peoples of our resort town. But you... you..., cater to men like Mr. Peters and..." Here she paused for breath and I could easily see where Artie took his manners from.

Papa straightened up tall. I knew something was coming, for he always did that before his weighty words fell. As he kept stroking his chin, Mrs. Bertram continued with her tirade of words:

"You listen to us, Rev. Rousch! Either you stop calling on those ignorant fishermen or you can move on. We raised the salary fifteen dollars for you, but we'll see that it's cut back unless you do as we say."

Papa continued the steady stroking on his chin, a heavenly smile playing sweetly all over his godly face. I wondered if he remembered about the dozen eggs!

It was true that our town was a resort town with big fancy houses and modern up-to-date stores; but it was also painfully true that some in Papa's congregation were dreadfully worldly, proud, and carnal. I felt like crying as Joey, Hannah, Harris, and I stood around Papa and heard the sharp words lashed brutally and authoritatively at him. Then, too, We all loved the fishermen at the wharf, especially, Mr. Peters.

We loved the fresh, clean smell of the water and even got accustomed to the many fishy odors that abounded at the busy wharf. The men loved and respected Papa and Mama and treated all of us with the greatest of courtesies. They felt honored and were delighted that Papa took time out from his busy schedule to think of them. "You're the first preacher what's ever come to see us and . . . and . . . to pray with us," Mr. Peters told Papa one time when I went calling with him.

I stifled a sudden mischievous smile. Papa and Mama had had the "loathsome" fishermen out to dinner in the parsonage on numerous occasions and I wondered what poor Mrs. Bertram would think if she knew that everyone sat, at one time or another, on the beautiful new green velvet couch in which she had invested the price of exactly one dozen eggs!

So deep in thoughtful meditation was I that I failed to hear what else she poured forth on Papa and the fishermen. It was Papa's soft, firm voice that brought me suddenly back to the moment.
"My friends," he was saying as he stopped stroking his chin, stood straight and tall and faced them squarely, "God has called me to preach and to win souls, not to compromise with carnal-hearted, worldly-minded church members. I get orders from Heaven, not man. You do not frighten me in the least and I wish to inform you that I cannot, will not, comply with your un-Christian demands. I will continue calling on the men at the wharf. The value of their souls is priceless. I have a great love and soul burden for them.' "

"We'll leave the church then," Deacon Bertram pouted.

"That's too bad, dear man," Papa said brokenly. "I had hoped you'd let me help you. I am filled with great concern for you both."

With angry faces, the self-appointed committee of six stomped out of the yard.

Papa picked up the brush and went to painting again. Eli bounded playfully across the lawn just then and Papa laughed, "See how well the house matches Eli's shiny fur!"

I knew Papa felt badly that we had been subjected to what we just heard, for he and Mama never discussed any of the problems and troubles in our presence. Pleasantly he said, "What do we do tomorrow, the good Lord willing? Who can tell me?"

"Oh, Papa!" I exclaimed joyfully, suddenly remembering. "We go fishing with Mr. Peters." And all of us jumped up and down with eager excitement and childish fervor.

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CHAPTER 3

The following morning dawned cloudlessly clear and sunny, a perfect day for Mr. Peters to take us with him fishing.

With great excitement, I jumped out of bed and was in the process of dressing when I heard Harris and Joe.


"I'm sick, too, Joey. Sick two ways: first off, my stomach's killin' me, and... and..., then I'm sick 'cause I can't... go... fishin'. Oh, Joey! Why did we do it?" and he moaned pitifully.

Just then I heard Papa. "Too many green plums, boys?" Poor Harris and Joey only moaned and groaned as they rolled and tumbled in their bed.
"Oh, Papa," Joey cried, "Why didn't we listen to you? My stomach!"

"Some things are learned best the hard way, Son," Papa said. "I'm right sorry for you, too; a great lot of fish you could have caught today. But maybe some other time . . . when there are no green plums hanging temptingly on a tree in the back yard," and he called for Susan to bring two water bottles filled with hot water and wrapped in heavy towels for the aching stomachs.

Hannah looked pale and peaked and complained of not feeling well; so Papa and I went alone to Fisherman's Wharf. I wondered, as I skipped happily by Papa's dear side, if Hannah, too, had eaten of the forbidden fruit, as Eve did in the beautiful garden of Eden. I hoped nothing dreadful would result from the awful disobedience.

I smelled the pure, clean fragrance of the water and, stopping suddenly, I inhaled long, deep draughts of it. Oh, it was wonderful! No wonder Mr. Peters and the other men loved it down here, I thought.

Just then the beloved form of Mr. Peters came into full view. He was sitting on an old crate near one of the boat houses, working on a hook or a sinker, a wry, half-smile on his weather-beaten face.

"H'lo, Mr. Peters," Papa greeted warmly, hugging the smelly old fisherman soundly.

"A sure enough good mornin' to you, Reverend and Miss Polly." Then, looking down the long wharf, he asked, disappointed like, "But where's the rest of the happy family?"

"Too many green plums," Papa explained. "And right disappointed they were, too."

Mr. Peters seemed to adore all of us and I felt sorry that he didn't have a boy or a girl all his own. I thought how wonderful it would be to live in a little house like the "loathsome" fisherman did and go fishing and shrimping whenever you wanted to. I couldn't understand why the fishermen were loathsome, as Mrs. Bertram said; for, like Papa, they were doing what they must have felt called to do.

I was suddenly overflowing with joy, for if Mr. Peters and others like him would not have obeyed their "call," Mama would not have had nearly so many golden brown fried fish and shrimp to set on the table for us to eat. Yes, to me, Mr. Peters had a very important call and was fulfilling it dutifully and joyfully, just like Papa. His call was a lot more odoriferous than Papa's, but I got to looking forward even to the smell when we approached the weather-beaten old wharf.
Mr. Peters started the noisy motor and we were soon on our journey. Nearly forty miles out in the blue-green ocean we dropped anchor. Oh, it was wonderful! Never had I been this far before.

Mr. Peters handed me a rod containing a very active and lively minnow. "Drop it in the water, Polly," he said softly, a musical ripple of laughter accompanying the statement.

I obeyed. Feeling sorry for the wiggly creature on the end of my line, I drew it up again. "Mr. Peters," I begged, "can't I fish without this? It... it... wants to live. I can feel it! I'll just drop my line down and maybe a big fish will see it and bite."

He laughed again, softly and musically, until it sounded like the soothing sound of the water splashing up against the sides of the boat. "You got'ta have bait, little Polly, else no fish will bite. See?" and very patiently, he dropped my line.

Already Papa had a strike and was reeling a big fish up to the side of the boat. You could tell Papa had had experience previously and I knew, if his first catch was any true indication of success for the day, that we'd be having plenty of golden brown fried fish for many a day to come.

As Papa and Mr. Peters fished, they talked just kind of general like at first . . . how long had Mr. Peters lived in Fisher's Cove and where had he lived before that . . . just a lot of such kind of talk. But I knew Papa! It wouldn't be that way for long. His conversation "diet" consisted mainly of spiritual food. I remembered what Jesus had said so long, long ago: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Papa merely talked out of what his heart was feeling and was full of! And sure enough, he steered the subject very wisely to spiritual things.

"I'm still expecting you out to the Sunday services, Mr. Peters," he was saying in a most convincing way.

The sun, all golden and warm, lovingly caressed my head with her long finger rays while the soft warm breezes with their magic fan, along with the good rhythmic sound of the gentle splash, splash, splash against the sides of the boat, all had its effect upon me. I forgot all about my line and the wiggly little creature of a fish on the end of it. I half-dozed ever so sweetly, my head leaning lightly against the rough side of the boat. Vaguely I heard Mr. Peters:

"It's no use, Reverend. Them people down there don't want the likes of us attendin' church. We're not fash'nable enough. You take the Bertrams for instance. It's a sight on earth how that there woman acts. You know they come down to the wharf for fish at least once every week?"

"I didn't know that," Papa said as I got sleepier and sleepier.
"She comes kind'a mincin' like and pulls her skirt tight about her like we was contaminatin' her an' the family. I always give her the best kind of fish and shrimp I have, fer I thinks I'll do unto her as I'd like it done to me. Yet she always complains at the price and says, 'I just know they're fish you kept over from yesterday you contemptible, low-down fisherman!' I tell you, Reverend, them's hard words. Especially when one's honest and sells strictly fresh fish and shrimp."

"Have you tried what I told you to do?" and Papa's words seemed far away now.

"Oh, yes, Reverend. 'Deed I have. I read God's Word every day..., ever since you come a'callin' on us poor fishermen. But the prayin' part, well, I riggers a feller's got to mean what he tells God and..."

I thought of what the first chapter of Psalms said about "Not standing in the way of sinners" and I shuddered sleepily, wondering if anybody was standing in poor, rebellious Artie's way, too. Mama had really imprinted that chapter on our hearts as she made us memorize it, word for word. It and Matthew 5!

I must have fallen asleep, for when I opened my eyes, the boat was rocking fiercely and the once clear sky was now completely obliterated by great, dark, foreboding-looking clouds. The water was dreadfully choppy and full of big waves... kind of like it had become suddenly very angry with us.

"I've been a fisherman fer many a year," Mr. Peters was shouting to Papa above the roaring of the wind, "but I never did see the likes of this." He pulled hard on the anchor, trying to lift it into the boat.

A sudden gust of wind completely unbalanced him and sent him sprawling head-first down, down into the depths of the angry, choppy waters.

Papa, sensing eminent danger, peeled off his coat and heavy shoes. "Polly," he said, looking me in the eyes and laying his big, kind hands on my shoulders, "stay seated in the boat. Don't stand up at all. I'll be back as soon as possible." Then, bowing his head in fervent prayer, he looked over the side of the boat and soon disappeared with Mr. Peters.

"Please, Lord," I prayed tearfully and earnestly, "take good care of Papa and Mr. Peters. You can have a fish ready for them like you did for Jonah. I know you can, for You said if we kept your commandments, we could ask anything and You'd do it--and I believe it, dear Jesus. Thank You. Amen."

Feeling something warm on my head, I opened my eyes. The sun was shining brightly and the clouds were every one of them gone with not a boisterous wave in sight.
"Papa," I called softly, "can you hear me? I'm sitting down like you told me to do and I prayed for you and Mr. Peters."

For what seemed like a long time all was total silence except for the companionable sound of water lapping gently and reassuringly at the side of the boat.

"Reverend," it was Mr. Peter's voice, "I guess the good Lord knew what He was a'doin'. Away down there in the depths of the ocean I cried, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.' And Reverend Rousch, He heard me and He saved me! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! He saved a sinner like me! I guess God knew I needed an experience like Jonah to make me willin' to fergit the hypocrites and look to Him." And he came up with the anchor rope and was soon in the boat, dripping wet all over but shining like a light and shouting "Hallelujah!" over and over again and again.

"Why, little Polly, where's your Papa?" he asked, sudden concern flooding his otherwise radiant face.

"Oh, he'll be back, Mr. Peters," I said simply. "He went after you. I prayed for you and for Papa."

Just then Papa's head came into view and he came up into the boat the same way Mr. Peters had come.

"Jacob Peters!" he exclaimed hoarsely, tearfully. "Thank God, you're safe! You had me scared for awhile when I couldn't see you."

Mr. Peters rushed to Papa and hugged him soundly, shouting, laughing and crying all at once and jumping up and down until the boat rocked happily with him. "Imagine! Reverend Rousch, Jesus saved me! The Lord sent that storm to get me converted. I'll be to church some Sunday, the Lord willing, and I'll bring the other fishermen with me, too. We've got to lead them to Jesus. They's hungry, Reverend. Hungry after God. And now that I'm out of the way, they'll come."

Papa was praising the Lord with a loud voice and I just sat there and cried for joy..., happy to know that Mr. Peters wasn't going to allow anyone to stand in his way anymore and happy because I knew he wasn't standing in the way of sinners. I knew from what Papa had told Mama so frequently that if Mr. Peters got converted, the most of the men at the wharf would follow, for Mr. Peters was a real leader.

"Your hat, Jacob," Papa said. "It's drifting this way. And, Polly, your line's moving greatly." With that he reeled it carefully in and landed the beautiful flapping fish right at my feet. I squealed with delight and felt like jumping up and down with Mr. Peters.

"This has been a wonderful day so far, Reverend," and Mr. Peters was laughing again.
"With greater things ahead for you, Jacob," Papa said emphatically.

Oh, it was a wonderful day, and I was so happy! Happy because my Papa took orders from Heaven and was, therefore, a successful and wise fisher of men. And happy, too, because suddenly, from somewhere, a voice seemed to be singing, "Deacon Peters!"

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THE END