"Please, God, No! No! I cried into the moaning, groaning wind. "Spare my sister. Please God! She's so tiny. And . . . and God, I need her. Mom and Dad need her, too. We . . . we all need her."

I stumbled down the lane while the school bus drove away feeling totally and completely alone. How could my peers on the bus be so light and
frivolous? How? I was hurting inside. They knew this. Every one of my fellow passengers knew about my sister and her sudden, emergency surgery. Kit rode the bus every day, same as I. Yet, here were our friends, laughing, cutting up and carrying on just like nothing had happened; like the crisis had passed; like Kit would live. Yes, even, almost, like she was well!

Tears blinded my eyes till I couldn't see. I stumbled into a rut and would have fallen had I not regained my balance quickly. Books flew from my arms and lay scattered on the road. Brushing the tears from my eyes, I quickly retrieved the books and tried to watch more carefully where I was walking. The wind continued moaning and whining along the telephone wires, filling my heart with more grief. It seemed to be whining a funeral dirge. I shivered, thinking about it. Chills of fear traced each other up and down the length of my spine and I felt my heart hammering it's own fear deep inside my chest cavity. My spirit felt as gloomy and morbid as the moaning, whining wind, and my faith was as dark as the lead-gray-black sky above me.

"Please, God!" I implored again. "Spare Kit's life. She's never done anything to hurt or harm anyone. Why Lord, she's belonged to You for as long as I can remember. And God, she doesn't only profess to love You, she possesses You, in her heart."

The wind gave an answering groan to my conversation with the Lord, but, again, it sent shivers racing along my spine.

I flipped the collar of my jacket up around my neck, trying to ward off some of the wind's icy-coldness and hastened my footsteps. There wasn't much to go home to, with both of my parents staying 'round the clock at the hospital with Kit. Still, I had to get out of the wind. In this respect the house would be a welcome thing for me.

I rounded the bend in the road and saw the well-kept, freshly-painted-in-August red barn, and the neatly-kept house beyond. Under ordinary circumstances my heart would have skipped with joy at the thought that I was so near home. This night, however, the mere thought of going into the empty house almost overwhelmed me with oppressiveness. There would be no welcoming voice to greet me and no culinary fragrances floating out to tempt my palate. Boots and Rags would be there, to be sure, but even our cat and dog seemed mopey and droopy since Kit was rushed by ambulance to the
hospital some forty miles away. They missed my sister's soft-spoken words and her gentle touches, I knew.

I heard the bleating of the sheep in their pens and the lowing of the cattle and, immediately, I was reminded of the fact that unless I fed the livestock and did the milking neither job would get done. Since Kit's emergency surgery and Father's love-duty by hers and Mother's sides, I alone was the farmer. Chief cook and everything else, too, for that matter. Ag was my specialty; I hoped someday, with God's help, to major in that when I went away to college. A cook I was not. Oh, I managed: Scrambled eggs and toast and bacon made anybody a good, wholesome and tasty meal. But even that, after a steady diet of it, became something not entirely relished. Frankly, I missed my mother's well-balanced meals. Rags and Boots did too; there were no beef bones for Rags to chew on nor any table scraps for Boots.

I reached the door of the house, took the key from my pocket and opened the door. It felt good inside; warmly good. I relieved my arms of their heavy burden of books, then dressed into my old barn clothes, trying ever so carefully to hang my school clothes on their hangers inside the closet ever so carefully the way Mother had taught me since I was a little boy way-back when. (It's amazing how a crisis helps one to remember such ordinary, simple, and mundane things.) I had always found it far more "convenient" to drop my jacket, shirt, shoes, and trousers on the floor inside the clothes closet. But mothers have a strangely-peculiar way of discovering such things. At least Kit's and my mother does. And did. Mom and Dad have ways of teaching that help the errant one to remember; a few times of wearing wrinkled, horrible looking pants and shirts to school were silent but shameful reminders of my grossly-sinful disobedience.

I heard Boots meowing on the back porch and Rags barking his "Hello-I'm-hungry" welcoming bark. I hurried to the refrigerator to make an even more thorough search than I had done yesterday, hoping to uncover or discover at least something that might resemble a bone or some undesirable left-over food. But, like the nursery rhyme in Old Mother Hubbard, the "cupboard" (refrigerator) was bare of any such thing for either cat or dog.

"Sorry," I said apologetically as I went to the porch and stroked Boots and ruffled Rags' muzzle. "You, my fine cat, will have to be satisfied with some fresh, warm milk. After I milk, that is. And you, Rags, will subsist well on your dog food, even though it isn't exactly to your liking. But then, I'm
getting tired of scrambled eggs, too. Guess we're all in the same predicament, huh?"

Rags jumped up and down with glee and Boots rubbed his furry, yellow body on my pant legs with apparent satisfaction. As for me, having one's parents gone, and much time to think about many things, was a real eye-opener to me. It made me appreciate what I had. Whom I had, I guess I should have stated. Well, maybe both. Yes, very positively, what I had and whom I had. Both.

I groaned inwardly. I had taken so many things for granted. And, in a way, I hadn't been quite as diligent as I should have been. Oh, I worked with my father, to be sure; but, to a degree, I had been thoughtless and selfish, always putting my own interests and desires first and foremost. Now, however, with total responsibility being thrust upon me via an emergency, my many and varied thoughtlessnesses paraded before me like giant things.

Tears swam in my eyes. How could I have taken my parents for granted? And their many kindnesses, too? Kit, too? And her so frail and fragile looking; almost like a fair porcelain or china doll, I realized now. I had been so dependent upon them all. My thoughtless attitude must, indeed, have been odious and obnoxious to God, I thought, feeling shame wash over me.

All the way to the barn, my heart wept inside. So many things came before me now. My selfishness, especially. Always, I wanted things done my way, and when I wanted them done. Not that I got my way always; I didn't. Thank God for parents who ruled and guided their house according to God's precepts and principles and commands! But inside, where no one but God and I saw, and knew, I wanted my way.

I conformed outwardly to Father's rules but, inside, my heart hadn't conformed. Now don't get me wrong, and think that I am like one of the rebellious youth who stomps his feet and storms out the door when he fails to get his own way, for nothing could be more wrong than that kind of thinking. Outwardly, I was every bit as calm and collected and unruffled as my entirely sanctified sister was and is. Like I said, the big difference was all inside. And that, my dear friends, is where God looks. And sees. There is just no fooling God, I don't care whom you are: He knows the heart. The inside truth; that
part of you where no earthly being can see. I realized that I was uncovered. By God!

The realization of the revelation frightened me no little bit. In spite of the biting cold, I discovered that I was perspiring profusely. In that instant, I saw that my so-called righteousness was as filthy rags. My profession was a sham. A cover-up; only, I hadn't covered nor concealed one single thing from the Eternal, Almighty, All-Wise God who sees all things and knows all things.

Rags nipped my boot in playful fashion and Boots followed so close beside me that a time or two I nearly tripped over my furry friend.

I reached the barn just as the heavy clouds above me turned loose their burden of snow. I was greeted by the lowing cattle, anxious to be milked, watered, and fed as I entered the barn and closed the doors against the wind and the blowing, driving snow. In their pens some distance from the barn, the sheep continued their I-know-you're-home; come-and-feed-us-now, bleating.

I worked rapidly, doing the chores in a mechanical, routine way, my heart begging me to come away and pray and get things settled between God and me. I felt greatly relieved when I had finished the work in the barn and had fed the sheep, chopping the ice away in their watering tanks so they could drink till they were filled and satisfied. Then I hurried to the house. I didn't make my usual supper of scrambled eggs. I didn't make anything. The desire to pray until I knew things were well in my soul far out-weighed my usually voracious appetite for food.

I prostrated myself on the living room floor and cried like a baby. Prayed, too. How I prayed! I stayed on my knees until I made contact with Heaven and its Almighty, All-powerful King. Talk about joy and peace and rest! I got it all when I touched God and He, for Christ's sake, washed all of my sins away in Calvary's fountain filled with blood Precious blood!

It was dark in the house when my shouting and praising subsided and I opened my eyes. Unlike the darkness in the house, my soul was illuminated with Heavenly love and the light from another world. I was forgiven and I knew it. No sham profession this time. This was real. And this time, with such a glorious beginning, I would go on into Holiness of heart and life. I would get
entirely sanctified. Already my heart was hungering for this blessed cleansing-purging of the old man of sin: The Carnal Man.

The phone rang noisily just then and I hurried to answer it.

"Kit just passed the crisis!" Father exclaimed on the other end of the line. "She's going to live, son!" he added. "A few minutes ago, she passed the crisis"

"So did I, Dad." I stated joyfully "My heart had it's first ever radical heart change a short time ago. I'll tell you all about it when you come home, God willing.

Long distance calls can soon add up on one's phone bill, and Dad, who only called to let me know what was happening and going on, hung up after a fervent, "Praise the Lord, Son! Yes, praise the Lord!"

It took Kit's near-death, emergency experience to shake me loose and humble me down. Yes, it did. But it was worth it, terrible price though it was. I knew my sister would say the same thing when she was home and well on her way to recovery. Kit is like that, always resigned to the whole will of God no matter what the sacrifice.

I flicked the light on and hurried into the kitchen. Scrambled eggs with cheese and onions sounded delicious to me.