What was the sense in trying; the good in achieving? Mellodie wondered as she slid into the seat and dropped her armload of books onto the desk's top. Her world had fallen apart! Everything she had thought to be secure, durable, stable, and firm had crumbled around her in a moment of time. There was no solid foundation anymore; no more stability and security either. Her once-secure nest had suddenly been ripped from beneath her.
Subtly and stealthily, it had happened. And she, like a dumb sheep, had not been aware of its happening until her father had called her aside and "exploded" the bomb in her unbelieving ears.

"Your mother and I have come to a decision," he had told her, his eyes not looking into hers as was his usual custom when he had a matter of great or grave importance to discuss with her. "This will come as a shock to you, Mellodie; but you can handle it, I'm sure, because you have always seemed so adult and so mature. . . ."

His sentence had trailed like the white tail of the jet's exhaust high in the sky above their heads.

"We're separating, Mellodie, your mother and I."

The words exploded somewhere inside her ears with unbelieving shock. She stood as one rooted into the ground, her heart hammering its utter disbelief inside her heaving chest.

"We're still best friends," her father had continued. "And we'll always be best friends. But we don't love each other anymore. So we've decided to separate. You may come and live with me whenever you want to, or you may stay here with your mother. We want you to be happy, Mellodie, that's why we are granting you the privilege of making your own decision and deciding for yourself. Do you understand?"

She had blinked her eyes, trying vainly to push back the onrushing tears. But her efforts were futile; tears fell unbidden and rapidly.

"Do you understand, Mellodie?" her father had questioned again.

"No. No, Father," she had cried bitterly. "I don't understand. I'll never understand. How can you do this to . . . to each other? How? Every child deserves a happy childhood and young adulthood. You're being selfish. Selfish. Both of you. Do you mean you can just up and run away and forget about Mother and all the good times you have shared together? Do you, Father? And what about Tom, away at college? And Colleen and her two little ones -- your grandchildren? Don't we mean anything to you and Mother? Nothing at all, Father?"
"Yes, Mellodie, you do mean something to us. But when two people stop loving each other . . . well. . . ."

"That's not what your wedding vows stated," Mellodie countered tearfully. "The vow states that until death, you will remain together."

"Times have changed, Mellodie. And people have changed, too. Your mother and I have found someone new; someone each of us loves. We want to make a new life for ourselves. Be reasonable, child."

"Who's being un-reasonable, Father? Do you realize what you are doing to me? To my little world? Or . . . or don't you care?"

"I guess you're not as mature as your mother and I thought you were," he had added before walking away.

How long she stood rooted, as it were, to the spot, she had no idea. She knew only that she was sure she was having a horribly horrible nightmare and that she would soon discover that it was truly and honestly that and nothing more. But when her mother came out and began going through the very same lines and dialogue as her father, she had "unglued" her feet and run, crying out, "No! No! No!"

The stark reality of it all had finally gotten through the wall of shock, pain, and hurt until it was now more than she felt she could bear.

"Good morning, Mellodie." Mrs. Pennington's voice penetrated the deep dark thoughts and the even darker mood of the slender girl's thinking. "It's a beautiful day, isn't it?" the teacher said, walking toward the window and looking out at the array of trees and bushes where the sunlight played a game of hide and go seek with the breeze-swaying branches.

Mellodie nodded her head in assent, scarcely looking up from her desk. Mrs. Pennington turned and looked at her straight A student. "Something's bothering you, Mellodie, isn't it?" she asked softly, motherly.

Tears flitted to Mellodie's eyes. They surfaced, then rolled in a wild torrent down her cheeks, settling in silent pools on her books.
"Why, Mellodie . . . child..., what is wrong? I have noticed for several
days that something has been bothering you. Do you want to talk about it, my
dear?"

"I . . . I . . . Oh, Mrs. Pennington, it's . . . it's too unbelievable to talk
about." And Mellodie dropped her face into the palms of her hands while her
shoulders shook with sobs.

Standing beside the girl, Mrs. Pennington put a loving hand upon her
heaving shoulder. "Try to forget about it," she soothed. "The students will
soon be arriving for class. If you care to talk about it later, see me when
school is dismissed."

Lifting tear-filled eyes, Mellodie said, "Oh, please, Mrs. Pennington! I
feel like I . . . I'm going to die from shock. My father and mother are . . .
separating."

The word seemed to have been torn from Mellodie's young heart. Sobs
again shook her shoulders. She trembled.

Mrs. Pennington was silent for a moment. Then, placing a comforting
hand upon her student, she said, "I care, Mellodie. Very much. And I have a
Friend who cares even more than I. I will talk to Him about this. He can help
you, child. He knows how to heal the hurt and the pain. See me when
classes are over for the day."

Mellodie lifted tear-wet eyes and met the sympathizing eyes of her
favorite teacher. "I will, Mrs. Pennington," she promised, taking a tissue from
the desk and drying her tears. "Excuse me, please, while I go into the
lavatory and splash cold water on these hurting teary eyes of mine. No need
to get anyone's suspicions aroused as to why I've been crying. Things travel
with lightning speed in school."

"That's true enough, Mellodie. But my dear, you will have to face reality:
sooner or later, your classmates will all have heard about it. Divorces are
printed in the newspaper. . . ." The teacher's sentence trailed meaningfully
and realistically.

All the way to the lavatory and back to her home room, Mellodie felt like
the walls were closing in upon her. She felt both shame and grief for what
was happening to her parents. Then her thoughts meandered back across the year to one of her very favorite friends. Jeremy McCall had been hurt by his parents' shocking divorce, hadn't he? And though his little world had crumbled (literally) around him, he had had no time for self-pity. Jeremy was an only child, too! She, at least, had Tom and Colleen to talk to and rely upon, didn't she?

She slid into the seat of her desk and glanced across the room at Jeremy who was smiling at her. Did he know? she wondered with a stab of pain in her heart. Had he heard the bitter news? Had he? And was it, even now, known among her friends?

Jeremy cleared his throat in an unusually loud manner and Mellodie cast him another quick glance. Jeremy pointed upward with his index finger, his face all the while wearing a radiantly-happy smile.

Mellodie caught the significance of the gesture and lowered her eyes in shame. Something wonderful had happened to Jeremy during all the trauma and the hurt and the pain of his parents' divorce. Having no one to turn to for help, he had told her one time, he had picked up a Bible which his father had kept on one of the bookshelves in his well-stocked library. Opening it at random, he began reading in St. John's Gospel. His heart, he had added, was strangely warmed and greatly moved upon and stirred.

"I knew that, in Christ, I had found the answer to my hurt and pain," Jeremy had stated earnestly. "So, right then and there, I repented of my sins and asked Jesus to come into my heart and to save me, a sinner. And Mellodie, He did it! I passed from death unto life. In an instant of time, I was converted. I was changed; made new in Christ. And now, whenever I feel I can't bear the hurt and the pain any longer, I get alone somewhere with the Lord and pour everything out to Him. Always, He takes my burden and leaves me with a light and happy heart."

Mellodie remembered the words now. Something had happened to Jeremy, this she knew: he was different. Totally so. He still grieved over his parents' separation and ultimate divorce, but he was different. He seemed to have found a rest and a peace which held him steady through the changing times of bitterness; through the transition of coming home to a house without his father's presence and into an oppressive atmosphere of having lost something extremely valuable and precious.
"It drove me to God, Mellodie," Jeremy had declared firmly. "Into His arms. In fact, I couldn't live without Him. He's my dearest and best Companion Friend. I wish you knew Him; you'd love Him, too."

His words haunted her now. Maybe she should get acquainted with Jesus, she reasoned silently and contemplatively. Yes, that may be the thing to do. The Lord Jesus Christ had not only changed Jeremy's way of living -- his habits and his attitudes -- but He had given Jeremy something to cling to; an anchor to hold on to. He could smile again. And go on living, too.

Suddenly, Mellodie knew that she would follow Jeremy's pattern: she would take his advice and give her heart to Jesus. Mrs. Pennington would be able to tell her what to do. Yes, her teacher would help her to find Christ.

Mellodie could scarcely wait till school was dismissed for the day. She felt that her life was going to take on new meaning and that she, like Jeremy, would be able to face her disappointments in Christ and through Christ.

With hope in her heart, she looked over at Jeremy. He was smiling at her.