

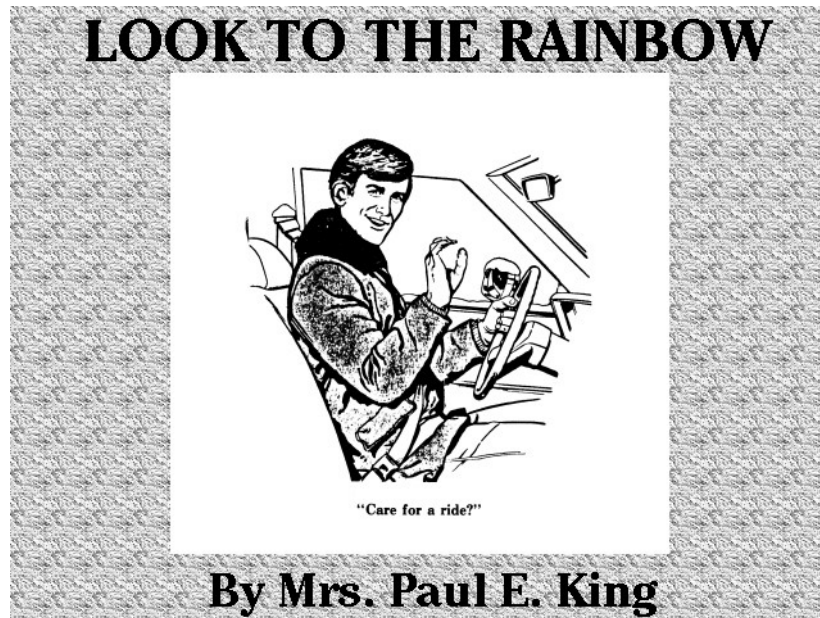
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LOOK TO THE RAINBOW
(The Disappointment--Part 2)
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Dale Adams stood like a statue, dumb and mute and motionless. The mouthpiece of the phone was still clutched tightly in the palm of his hand which was clammy-cold with perspiration over hearing Beth Bilbrey's words -- "You must come home, Dale," Beth cried hysterically. "I'm scared stiff for Julene. She . . . she's acting strangely and . . . and . . . irrationally. Please

Dale, do something. Julene's my best friend. Always, she's been the strong one. Not any more. . . ."

"What's wrong, Beth?" Dale asked with concern.

"You . . . you . . . mean . . . Julene hasn't told you?" Beth sounded awestricken and incredulous. She gasped. Then in a small-sounding voice, she said, "I . . . I'm sorry. I thought you knew. I . . . should not have called. Forget it, Dale, okay? And please, don't let Julene know I called."

"Wait a minute, Beth. Please! Don't hang up. Tell me about it. What's happened to my sister?"

"Don't ask me, Dale, please. I thought you'd heard and that you knew."

"What's wrong, Beth? I must know. You must tell me."

Beth was silent for so long that Dale thought she had hung up. "You still there?" he asked.

"I'm here, Dale. But I'm not sure Julene will be happy that I called. I thought she had already told you."

"Told me what?" Beth, please tell me."

Beth sighed. Dale heard her blow her nose. She was crying, he could tell. "Your . . . parents are . . . separating," she cried, breaking into a sob. "Julene's beside herself. I'm afraid for her."

"Separating? My father and mother?" Dale replied in disbelief. "Are you sure?" That's hard for me to believe. They always seemed to get along well."

"It's true, Dale, I'm sorry to say. I wish it wasn't true. Julene said your dad announced it at the supper table a week ago; said he wants a divorce. Julene's devastated. I guess, from what your dad said, he plans to marry some other woman; someone who works where he works. He moved out the same night he made his big announcement," Beth said in a tone of disgust now.

Dale groaned. He felt like some of his most treasured memories and cherished values had suddenly been taken from him; like he was having a horribly unreal and devastating dream. It couldn't be true; not his parents! he thought. They loved each other. Or so it seemed.

He brushed his hand over his eyes as if trying to wipe away the unpleasant and extremely shocking news. He felt limp, like a wet dish cloth, and weak: his knees wanted to buckle beneath his body weight. This couldn't be true. It couldn't! Someone else, maybe, but not his father and mother. "Beth . . . ?"

"I'm still here, Dale. But I must hang up now; I hear Julene coming down the stairs and she mustn't know I called. She's here with me. Good-bye."

At the click of the receiver, Dale collapsed in a nearby chair. Perspiration broke out over his face. It was almost more than he could take, he felt, wondering what had happened to his father and when the unlawful and wicked affair had begun. Why hadn't his mother called him and let him know?

He put the mouthpiece of the phone back in place then sat down to think. He should call his mother and his sister, he thought. But, from all appearance, it seemed they didn't want him to know; so maybe calling wasn't the thing to do just yet. Maybe he should go home.

The thought was a staggering one. Go home! What good could he do if he did go home? And what about his job? He was making good money, putting sizable amounts of it into the church as well as to missions.

Dale felt trapped; like he was caught between two fires. Logic cried out for him to stay where he was while his heart hammered out with each beat inside his chest that he should go home.

He picked up the phone and dialed his parents' number. There was no response. He let it ring and ring with no success. He knew Julene was staying with Beth; she had said so. But where was his mother? Why didn't she answer the phone? Usually, she was always home. Could something have happened to her, and had Beth not revealed all she knew?

Feeling torn and devastated, he put the phone up then fell to his knees in prayer, seeking strength from above, as well as wisdom and guidance for the right thing to do. From childhood days up until he left home to work for Bitner and Bitner Company, his father had instructed each of the offspring to consult God about everything and he, Dale, had taken that advice and heeded that wise and good counsel.

A sob tore his manly frame and for a long while he could do nothing but cry. When had his father turned his back on the Lord and the way of holiness and righteousness? When had he backslidden and forsaken everything that was noble and manly and upright? The questions bounced back and forth from his brain. How could he break his mother's heart? Had he forgotten that Proverbs 6:32-33 declared, "But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

"A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."

A heavy burden settled down upon Dale and for a long time he interceded for his father. For his mother, too, that her faith would remain constant, unwavering and intact during this time of crisis. And then he prayed for Julene. How he prayed! And God helped him wondrously and marvelously.

He got to his feet and, through with work for the day, he locked the door to his little apartment and hurried to the park a few blocks away. He sat on a bench along the long, narrow man-made lake and watched the swans on the water. They were a handsome pair, those two, and so close to each other. Generally, where one was the other was always nearby.

Dale watched them glide gracefully across the water, never getting too far apart and, much of the time, side by side. A pain, like a dart, stung his heart. His parents had been like that. In all of his growing-up years they had labored side by side and made a happy and secure home for him. And for Julene too -- until whenever it was that his father had tossed what he knew was upright and right overboard and had become involved in that which was both unholy and unlawful.

How suddenly one's happiness could be shattered and his security crumble! he thought sadly, feeling sorry for Julene who was not yet quite

seventeen and whose life had always been closely intertwined with that of their father.

He dropped his face into the open palms of his hands and prayed silently for Divine guidance. He must not move on his own; he must know God's will for him.

"Mind if I join you?"

Dale lifted his head and opened his eyes. The man's voice was soft and kind sounding.

"Not at all," he said, moving off-center down the bench.

"Beautiful day, isn't it, young man?"

"That it is, Sir."

The gentleman watched the gracefully moving swans for a while then he said, "The Lord is in His heavens and all is well."

Dale felt a lump form inside his throat. How true the words were. Maybe on the surface it appeared that all was not well but knowing that God was in His Heavens, sitting upon His throne, and that His eyes ran to and fro throughout all the earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts were perfect toward Him was pure balm: a Heavenly emollient.

"Thank you for reminding me, kind Sir," Dale said. "For a moment I had almost forgotten that. I needed this reminder. It's so easy to look at one's problems and griefs until one loses sight of the rainbow of promises."

Extracting a handful of grain from a bag in one of his pockets, the man tossed it near the water's edge and the swans swam eagerly to shore.

"Look to the rainbow, my boy," came the soft, provocative reply. "Always, look to the rainbow. It's a bright reminder that things will be better by and by. The flood that seems now to have inundated you will soon be receding and in its wake you will see the never-failing rainbow of God's promise. You will be a stronger young man -- after this storm. Storms test the

strength of a tree and the depth of its roots. Storms don't last forever; for the most part, they're here then they're gone."

Dale felt like a fresh breath of Heaven was wafted over his soul, leaving it revived, encouraged, and full of faith and hope.

"God sent you to me," he said brokenly.

"I'm thankful I came," was the soft response. "One never goes wrong when God leads. So, in His name, look to the rainbow, young man. Look to the rainbow." Getting to his feet, and tossing the grain from his bag to the swans, the man walked away, leaving a hearty, "God bless you," behind him.

Dale watched until he could no longer see the retreating figure. Then he got to his feet and walked along the water's edge, praying as he did so. He should go home immediately to his mother and sister, he felt; but one couldn't just walk off from his job, he reasoned sensibly.

As if God Himself was prodding him onward, he continued walking along the placid water of the lake, going farther and farther downward toward the very tip of the lake, praying as he went. Where the body of water narrowed, the park widened into an expansive area of blooming trees and shrubs and magnificent flower beds. Beneath the trees there were picnic tables and, to Dale's surprise, he saw that each table was taken and was either being used or was being readied for use by the throng of laughing, chattering, talking picnickers. Not wanting to cut through the eating area, he turned hastily and began walking away.

"Dale. Dale Adams! Come back, please. You're the very man I've been trying to reach for over an hour and have been unable to do so."

Recognizing the voice, Dale spun around and came face to face with the senior Mr. Bitner. "Good evening, Sir," he said smiling. "I didn't expect to see you in the park," he added. "However, it's a lovely place in which to relax and fill one's mind with things other than company business. I'm glad to see you're here."

"Thank you, Dale," Mr. Bitner answered. "Now, to the point. We began a small business three hundred plus miles from here. My brother and I feel you're the man to manage this new venture and get it on its feet. You've

always been trustworthy and honest and fair and you're conscientious and . . . and upright."

"Where is this place, Mr. Bitner?"

"It's not over fifty miles from where your home is, Dale. We feel you're the man for the job. If you're interested, drop by my office first thing in the morning. I must go now; my wife doesn't like me to be late for a meal. Not even a picnic meal," he said, laughing lustily.

"I'll be there in the morning, Mr. Bitner, God willing. And thank you."

Turning, Dale started homeward, wondering what God had in store for him.

Part 2

Dale Adams looked through the small-parted window to the street outside. Already, the town was bustling and hustling with early morning shoppers. He missed the spaciousness of the building in which he had worked for three years. Missed, too, the frequent drop-in of his bosses, Hiram Bitner, St. and his younger brother, Byron Bitner.

Being on his own was a bit frightening, to say the least, and were it not for his close contact and fellowship with the Lord he would not have undertaken a thing so big. The home circumstances and crisis, however, seemed to dictate that the move back was definitely in God's plan and His timing. And the fact that he could drive the forty-seven miles from his home to the office each day had an indescribably healing effect upon his mother and younger sister.

In the four weeks since his return home, his physical, manly presence, as well as his close relationship with the Lord, had brought an amazingly marvelous effect of stability into the shattered and torn-apart lives of his mother and Julene. Slowly but solidly, with much prayer and many tears, the home was being rebuilt and coming into its own again.

Dale sighed, longing for the sight of one of his bosses. Always, he had felt secure in knowing that their watchful eye and their close scrutiny was over him -- and the others working for them. It gave him a sense of ease,

knowing one or the other of the Bitners would "catch" any error, should there be any, or notice any flaw before it left the plant. Being on his own frightened him and more than once he wished he could have continued working in the bigger plant under the Bitners' sharp eyes.

He walked to the back of the plant where five men were busy at work. Like the Bitners, he watched and observed the work that was being done, making sure everything was being done according to plans and patterns -- perfectly.

Again, he wished he could be back in the original plant, not as a manager but as one of the laborers, which he had been. Then he realized that, young though he may be, he, like so many older people whom he knew, was not taking the change well. It should not be so with him, he thought; he was too young to not accept change gracefully and gratefully. Especially since God had worked things around until he had no doubt that his move back home was in the perfect timing of his caring Heavenly Father.

A verse of scripture from Deuteronomy came quickly to mind: "He brought us out . . . that he might bring us in . . ." (Deut. 6:23). A simple statement, really. But contained in it was a profound principle upon which the grace of God operates. In all the various changes that take place in one's life, God wanted man to see that He brings him out of one place in order to bring him into a better place. He takes man from one set of circumstances that he might come into a more satisfying and useful experience. God, in His infinite wisdom, ever insists that man leave one set of experiences where he has spent some time, in order to introduce him to another set of experiences designed to make him grow in his relationship to the Divine.

Dale recalled hearing a sermon once on change and the changeless God. Bits and pieces of the sermon came back now to help him and encourage him. "We speak of the immutability of God's person and attributes," the minister had said. "Nevertheless, He is the God of change. But He never changes things simply for the sake of change. God is not impressed with novelty. When God changes the course of our lives, for instance," the minister had continued, "the change is meaningful and purposeful. In all of the changes that take place in our lives there is an unbroken chain of divine, purposeful and careful Providence.

"Let us acknowledge at once that though change is a divine ministry, it does often bring pain. So much that is good for us is at first painful to us. Change disturbs and upsets, and the reason it does is that each of us has a desire, to some extent, to be left alone; to resist anything that upsets the familiar, comfortable patterns of our life."

Dale winced, recalling the statement. Of a truth, he was comfortable working where he had worked. Too comfortable, perhaps. And, like the eagle stirring up her nest and exposing her young to the thorns beneath the comfort of the "down" in order to get them out of and away from the nest so they would learn to fly and soar in the heights above them, so God, in many cases, had to "stir up" the comfortable nest. Painful? Yes. And frustrating, too. But in it all was the hand of Omnipotence and divine Providence.

There was no rebellion in his heart nor any resistance to the known will of God, either, he realized with an overflowing heart; but the change was something he would have to accept and be thankful for. God had sent him back. He was needed in the home, of this he was sure. In a figure, he was representative of the father-the head of the home. He was the strong arm of support and consolation and comfort to both his mother and his sister, whose faith was now strong in their God.

Dale offered a silent but deep heart-felt prayer for his once Christian father whose whereabouts were unknown. He had seemed to have disappeared with the young woman and no one knew where they had gone. It hurt Dale badly. Especially when he remembered the good years when his father was at peace with God and had a glowing testimony of victory over all sin. All he (or anyone) could do now was to pray for the wanderer to come back to God before it was too late, he thought, as he settled in the chair behind his desk and began doing paper work for the company.

After the church service on a Sunday morning shortly after his sixth week home, the minister approached him about taking over the young people's services due to the illness of the regular young people's leader.

"I . . . don't know," Dale said hesitantly. "I've never done it, you know."

"But you're a wonderful Sunday school teacher," the minister declared. "All the young people think you're great. While praying about this, the Lord

impressed you on my mind. I feel you're God's man for the hour, Dale. I really do."

"Then by God's grace and His help, I'll take it," he told the minister. "And as soon as James is able I'll turn it back to him, God willing."

"I appreciate your willingness to help, Dale. God sent you here. Your influence upon the young people is powerful. It's tremendous. You are living proof of what God can do in the life of one who is totally and completely dead to self and is sanctified wholly, filled with the Holy Ghost and power."

And then, as clearly as the shining noonday sun, Dale realized something; something that glowed warmly in his heart: his keen disappointment had been God's wonderful appointment. Yes, it had. And it was. The change had had an appointment for divine enlargement and betterment in a different area -- that of a spiritual nature, for the building up of God's kingdom.

Bowing his head, he wept. Then he praised. And he was joyously happy with the appointment for it was from God.

The End