

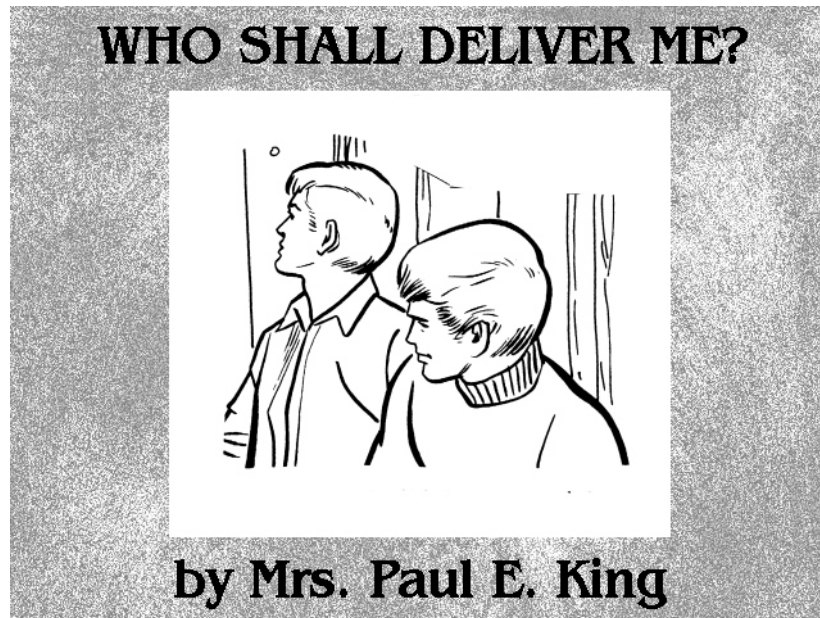
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WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Bob Toole grabbed the jacket off the peg where it hung limply behind the kitchen door of Kurly's Diner. He shrugged into the sleeves, zipped the front shut then exited the place in haste, knowing as surely as he knew his name was Robert Travis Toole that, like always, he was taking with him "fragments" of Kurly's Diner -- fragments of greasy smelling fried eggs and hamburgers and onion. Ugh! He loathed the smell. On his clothes especially.

Inside the always-busy diner it was tolerable; but outside . . . well, that was something else. It wasn't funny to have someone come up to you and greet you with, "One guess and I can tell where you are working." No indeed, it wasn't. Now if he had a job at Frantz's Clothiers. . . .

At thought of the exclusive men's store and of Rob working there, Bob felt his skin crawl. Why did Reuben Frantz choose his twin instead of him? why? It wasn't because Rob was outgoing. On the contrary, Rob was anything but outgoing. He was personable, Bob admitted grudgingly; and he was a plodder, to be frank and truthful. He was faithful and diligent, too. But so was he, Bob told his silent heart. It didn't seem fair, he thought. He, Bob, should have had that good paying, white-collar job. So how come he didn't get it and Rob did?

He kicked a stone off the sidewalk as he walked. It barely missed hitting the window of a car parked along the curb. He looked around quickly to make sure no one saw what he had done. He was obsessed with bitterness over Rob having such an exquisitely elegant and beautiful place in which to work while he had nothing more than a hot, greasy smelling diner in which to earn his wages. And what wages they were! he thought bitterly. He'd be years getting a car. Worse still, he knew there was no way he could possibly get that sharp looking little car on the Blue Banner Car Lot, used though the car was. Someone else would buy it, he was sure, before he'd have earned even a fourth of the car's asking price.

Smarting over his barely-above-minimum wages and the thought of not being able to afford the car, Bob clenched his hands into tight fists inside the jacket's pockets. In a way, he almost hated his twin. Rob was . . . well . . . what? Good? Kind? Gentle? Compliant? Dead to self, to people and to peoples' opinions and alive unto Christ?

Bob dug his fingernails into the palms of his clenched fists, knowing full well he'd have to admit that his brother was all that and more. But simply admitting it didn't make him feel better. He Still felt he should have gotten that job in the men's clothing store. But he didn't, and the mystery of why he didn't only served to add fuel to his anger and his overwrought emotions.

He felt envy burn in his heart; it gnawed like a poison eating away at his soul. Added to the green-eyed monster of envy was a wave of covetousness so big and so strong that it left him almost powerless to help himself. He felt

trapped and helpless. He wanted Rob's job; wanted it so desperately that he could not bear the thought of not having it.

His thoughts raced back to the day when Mr. Frantz had interviewed him, Bob, for the opening in the mens' store. He had taken special pains in dressing that morning -- dark suit, white shirt, conservative black and gray tie and black shoes, freshly polished and shiny clean. He had used his outgoing personality and his winsome smile and ways especially much during the interview, trying desperately to impress Mr. Frantz that he was the man he was looking for. And he was sure, when he left the store with a smile and a handshake from the dark-eyed store owner, that he'd get the job. Yes, he had been so sure.

Bob felt a wave of nausea wash over him now as he recalled the store owner's words the following day on the telephone: "I appreciate you coming in for the interview, Mr. Toole," Reuben Frantz said. "But you're not exactly, what I am looking for. Thank you for allowing me to interview you. Good luck in your search for a job." And the conversation ended with the click of the receiver.

Days went by, and still the Help Wanted ad appeared in the daily newspaper. That's when Rob decided he'd answer the ad by setting up an appointment for an interview.

"You won't mind, will you, Bob?" Rob had asked his twin when the ad continued running in the paper.

"Mind? Of course not, Rob. But I doubt there's any use of trying, even. I don't know what the man's qualifications are. I wish he'd have told me; I'd certainly have tried to measure up to them. Go ahead, try to get an interview. This may be interesting."

He recalled now how he had laughed over the conversation.

Mr. Frantz was gracious enough to grant Rob an interview, and Bob recalled now how shocked he was to hear Rob say, when he returned home, that he was hired on the spot. He, Bob, had felt chagrined and humiliated. Dreadfully so. It was almost like he'd been slapped in the face. Rob, hired on the spot! It had seemed incredulous. Unreal. He remembered how he had given Rob the once-over look that day. And all he saw was the ever-steady,

constantly-ready, unassuming, willing-to-do-anything-kind of legitimate work
Rob: totally and positively transparent and unpretentious.

Wave after fresh wave of envy and covetousness now rushed over and through his soul over his twin's good fortune and his, Bob's, ill-fortune; over his brother's excellent paying job and his "peanuts," as he had come to think of his earnings and wages. He was so absorbed and obsessed in his bitter thoughts that he didn't hear his best friend call to him from across the street. Not until Cody called to him a third time was he aware that anybody was anywhere nearby.

"Man," Cody exclaimed, as he crossed the street and fell in step with Bob's long, measured strides, "I'd think you were positively stone deaf if I didn't know you so well! What's with you, Bob? Out with it, what's eating you?"

Bob sucked his breath in quick like, detesting the mere sight of Cody now and, even worse, despising the forthright question he'd asked. Glancing quickly at his friend, he kept walking.

"Mind if I tag along?" Cody asked, keeping pace with his friend.

"Can I stop you?" was Bob's Sarcastic reply. "The sidewalk's yours as well as mine."

When Bob passed the corner where he should have turned left to go to his home, and he continued walking straight ahead, Cody looked into his friend's face. "Hey, you missed your turn," he remarked kindly.

"So what! Maybe I did it purposely."

"Okay, Bob. Sorry if I nettled you: I certainly didn't mean to. Is it Rob, and his good job? Huh?"

If Cody had suddenly exploded a high-powered bomb in front of Bob it would not have had more force or impact on him than the impromptu, off-guard question had. Bob stopped dead in his tracks; he stood like a stone statue -- hard and cold -- looking straight ahead.

Cody knew he had hit upon the source of Bob's trouble. Bob's stare terrified him. He saw hatred in the eyes. Hatred and malice and envy and contempt and. . . .

"Bob," Cody said softly, as he touched his friend's broad shoulders, "if we hate our brother, Jesus said we are a murderer. There will be no murderers in Heaven. Neither any who are covetous and who have envy and jealousy in their heart. I don't need to remind you of this; you already know it. Only thing, you're blinded so badly right now that you're forgetting that you know it. Your covetous heart and your overpowering envy have you blinded. I've been praying for you. Really praying."

Bob shook himself, then spun on his heel. "Who told you?" he demanded angrily. "How'd you know?" His face was white.

"How did I know? Oh, Bob, don't act so naive: it's as obvious as the nose on your face. And frankly, I feel sorry for Rob. He feels your attitude, I'm sure. How could he help not to?"

Bob sat down by a tree and leaned his back against the trunk. He felt weak, and as limp as one of the wet dishcloths he used at Kurly's Diner. He let his head drop into the palms of his hands. Cody, sensing the struggle that was going on inside his friend, sat down quietly beside him, saying nothing more for the time being. Bob was in a battle; a battle with self. Cody began to pray silently.

After a long while, Bob raised his head. Tears shimmered in his eyes. "I might have known," he said, more meekly than Cody had heard him speak for a long time. "My sins have found me out. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'" His head dropped once more to the open palms of his hands.

"Go on, Bob, finish that scripture. It doesn't end there, you know," Cody encouraged. "It says, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

"I know," Bob admitted, lifting his pain-filled eyes to meet Cody's. "Oh, if only I'd have settled it at the altar that night; paid the price and settled it to go through with God regardless of the cost or the cross. But I didn't, Cody. I didn't. There were some things I still wanted to hang on to; some things I didn't want to give up. Oh I know I professed to having gotten sanctified

wholly; but I wasn't. I felt better for having prayed at the altar; but I never really did die out to self and to the world.

"How foolish I have been, and how blind, thinking I could bargain with God and bring Him down to my wishes and demands! And yes, Cody, you were right; I hate Rob. It frightens me now, knowing that the kind of hatred I have for my twin is murder in one's heart. And all because of my covetous and envious spirit that was never crucified and eradicated. Oh, I need help! I'm afraid I'll lose my soul unless God helps me. I need forgiven first. Could you go with me over to the church and pray for me, please?"

"Nothing would suit me better or make me happier," Cody answered brokenly. "And this time, seek until you're not only saved but until you know you're really and truly sanctified wholly."

Sobbing brokenly, Bob cried, "I will, Cody. I will. Count on it. God helping me, I'm going to seek until I am totally delivered."

In haste, the pair headed for the church.