

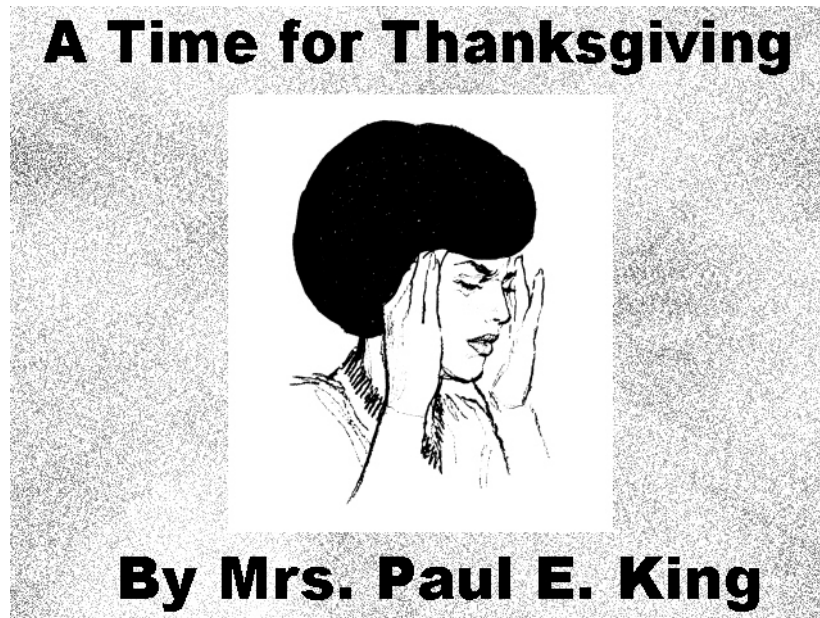
Copyright 2001 By Lucille King
All Rights Reserved and Duplication
Of This Publication Is Forbidden,
Except For Personal Use

* * * * *

Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

The Sunday School Beacon
November 7, 1999



A TIME FOR THANKSGIVING
By Mrs. Paul E. King (Chapter 1)

Lenore stepped out of the revolving doors of Stephen's Department Store and almost collided head-on with a woman. For a long time after the woman had disappeared through the doors, Lenore stood staring. How like Mother the woman looked! A lot more gray-haired, perhaps. But those features! That face with its firm, set jaw!

Lenore brushed a hand over her face. In spite of the crisp air, she found herself sweating. Strange that she should become so upset. She wanted to see her mother -- or did she? she wondered honestly.

She walked briskly to the car and slid behind the wheel. Her knees were trembling. To her astonishment, she found her body shaking. Many years had passed since that awful day. It all came back to her now as if it had been only yesterday.

"Lenore," her mother had said in a highly agitated voice, "you're not taking David to church. It's bad enough having two fanatics in the house. David's going to be brought up differently."

"But David's my boy, Mother" she had pleaded. "He's going to be taught the right way. George and I both promised the Lord when he was born that we'd teach him in the right way. We gave him to the Lord for service, Mother, as well as any other children the Lord may send to us. He gets them all, to be used in the white harvest fields."

"Nonsense! Nonsense! You're in my home, Lenore; you will respect my demands."

"It's Daddy's home, too," Lenore reminded sweetly. "Daddy wants David to go with us."

For a long while her mother stared at her. Her face was drained of color. Suddenly, the color began rising from her neck to her forehead. Lenore knew what this meant. "I've been the most unhappy woman that ever lived since your father and you got 'saved' as you call it." She hissed the words at Lenore. "We have no more social life. I feel as if I'm cut off from the outside world. All I hear is God, God, God; salvation, sal. . . ."

"Mother!" Lenore interrupted, exasperated. "How dare you talk so glibly, so . . . irreverently, about God, the Sovereign Being? He's King of kings and Lord of lords. He's the most wonderful Friend Father and George and I have ever known. We love Him!"

"Love Him!" Again there was that hissing sound. "I'm sorry! Sorry, I say, that I ever relented and let you go to that, that Bible school, Lenore!"

"But Mother, I found Christ there. I got sanctified wholly there and I became Mrs. George Hillary because I attended school there. I thank God I went."

"And it wasn't enough for you to 'find God,' as you phrase it; you had to convert your family, huh, Lenore? Well, it worked on your father, but not on me. Ah! No. And what's more, it's never going to work. Do you hear me, Lenore?" She was nearly shouting it. "One other thing: so long as you're staying under my roof, my grandsons not to attend church. He's not going with you today, Lenore." The jaw was set, firm and fixed, as usual when her mother wanted her way.

"I have a grave responsibility before God and to my child, dear Mother; David's going with Father and me to church this morning. I must obey God."

"You defy me? In my home, Lenore?"

"I'm not meaning to be defiant, Mother, but my responsibilities to God and my child come first."

Lenore remembered how she had longed for the day when George and she could have their own home. But she must wait. His duty to his country had separated them for this period.

The memory of it all came painfully back to her now. She brushed her hand across her forehead. It was wet with perspiration. She couldn't forget that day, so long, long ago. She and her father had taken David by his chubby little hands, and together they had walked to the little church some seven blocks distant. The day was beautiful with October's warm sunshine and mellow ways. There wasn't a breeze, yet the leaves spiraled slowly earthward and dropped at their feet and lay there, a carpet of exciting, flamboyant colors and patterns.

David had prattled and laughed all the way there. They paused to watch a busy little gray squirrel enjoy walnut meats for breakfast.

"This is such a perfect day, Father," Lenore said, breaking the silence. "In fact, it couldn't be more perfect in any way - except for Mother." A hard lump seemed to be stuck in her throat.

"You mustn't become discouraged, honey," her father had soothed in his wonderful way. "You've chosen the right way. Oh, how thankful to God and you I am, that you led me to Christ. Imagine! When all the time it was I who should have been leading my girl."

"Oh, Father" Lenore had said, crying hard now, "I feel so sorry for you. You are so good and kind, yet Mother treats you so very badly. Her verbal abuse is bad enough, but when she deprives you of the love and affection you deserve -- and which you give her so freely and unselfishly -- it nearly kills me."

"It's all right, honey," her father had soothed, stroking her long golden hair tenderly. "I have One Who is closer to me than any earthly being has ever been. His grace is sufficient for every trial and test."

"I . . . can't understand Mother," Lenore had ventured. "This salvation is the most wonderful thing I've ever had. I thought Mother would want it, too."

"Your mothers been accustomed to having her own way about things, honey. Our going to church against her wishes and desires is a bit trying on her. But there are some things one cannot give in to: this is one of them."

"But Mothers tried to tell David there is no God, that He's not really in Heaven. I overheard her one day last week. David was sitting on her lap telling her about a memory verse he had learned in Sunday school. He told her what it meant to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength . . . just like his teacher told him. Roughly, she put him down on the floor. Her eyes were blazing with anger."

"Your mother has been a very spoiled woman, Lenore. Prayer can move God. He will save her someday. We must pray harder and more fervently."

Spoiled woman, Dad had said that day. How conservative he was . . . where Mother was concerned, especially, Lenore soliloquized. Her mother, the former Jean McGinnis before her father changed her name to Westover, had been an only child of the wealthy McGinnis family. Needless to say she was catered to, given in to, and very badly spoiled, demanding, domineering, and firmly set in all her ways.

So long as Lenore could remember, her mother's slightest wishes became commands. To keep peace in the home, her father was forced to bow down to and give in to those wishes. Since his conversion, friction and tension seemed ever present. Father refused to succumb to her threats and her demands that he "stop his foolishness and forget about church." Where Scriptural demands were made, expected and exacted, Father stood a giant . . . a spiritual giant. Lenore admired him for it. Her mother was infuriated.

Lenore, herself an only child ("I never liked children too well," her mother scolded one day. "Your father wanted a child; that's why you're here."), possessed mainly her father's characteristics. She not only bore his resemblance in the face but she was possessed with his kindness, his genteel mannerisms, his ardent love for children and his hunger after things eternal . . . spiritual things. She thanked God for this heritage.

When she and George were married, each pledged to the other that God should plan and order their family. Theirs would be a Christian home, where each and every child would be a welcome and happy addition.

David, who was now in his third year of Bible school, was preparing for the ministry, while Lois, a first year student at the same Bible school, felt called to the foreign field. As yet, Jonathan and John, the twelfth-grade twins, weren't sure of their calling. Mary Ruth, the eighth-grader, vowed she would someday become a doctor. Lenore smiled faintly at thought of Mary Ruth's obsession.

Lenore's mother had never seen four of the grandchildren. When she and her father returned from church that beautiful fall morning, they found the house emptied of all her mother's personal belongings. A brief note of explanation was tacked on to the door: "Am leaving for good. Won't be back - - ever! I ask just one thing -- don't bother me!"

It had been a sickening jolt for both father and daughter. In the many years that elapsed there had not been a single letter from the woman. Lenore realized that, moneywise, her mother would never lack. The huge estate left her from "McGinnis Enterprises" afforded her luxurious living, no matter where she might have chosen to settle and escape to. She might even have gone abroad.

Lenore suddenly roused herself out of her thoughts. Her knees were no longer shaking and the sweat on her brow and hands had dried. She must bestir herself. The twins and Mary Ruth would soon be home from school. Always, she was there when they burst into the kitchen. She felt she owed this to her family. Her father, too, would be home from work shortly. She would be there as usual, to welcome him home.

Her father had aged dreadfully, the last few years especially. Lenore knew how lonely he was for her mother. Often, she heard him pour his petitions out to God. He hadn't lost hope. Ah, no. Not her father! Someday, Mother would come back to all of them, he declared.

Since the house was so big and roomy, her father had suggested that she and George live there. He would get an apartment somewhere.

"Not so, Dad," George had said, after he was out of service. "This place is big enough for two families. You'll live with us, or rather, we'll live with you."

Thus it had happened that the place which had been home to Lenore, was "home" for all the Hillary children. And they had loved the house as much as she had loved it when she was growing up.

"The place was built for children," Dad said, when the twins were born. "I built it especially like it is . . . for the large family I had hoped we'd have." Poor Dad! Lenore sighed.

To say anything less than to say that it was built for children would do injustice to the house. There were four bedrooms and two full baths upstairs with an airy, sun-drenched, well-stocked library at the very end of the thickly-carpeted hall. The circling balustrade of a sturdy walnut was built exclusively for venturesome "little people" seeking the thrill of a downward ride.

The two bedrooms with their private baths downstairs afford a measure of peace and quiet for Lenore and George and Lenore's father. The spacious living room and dining room held broad, wide windowsills, all open invitations for relaxed and contented reading and bird-watching.

Lenore clutched the steering wheel and started home. She had work to do. All her thinking would not get the last batch of fruit cakes in the oven nor the gingerbread baked. Thanksgiving was just around the corner. She had

many things to do before it arrived. David and Lois would be home and she wanted everything to be well out of the way when they returned so they could visit in a more uninterrupted way.

The prospect of the happy reunion banished all the unpleasant thoughts from Lenore's mind. Already she could smell the fragrance of spicy pumpkin pies, plum puddings, sweet cakes and fruit cake invading every nook and cranny of the big house. It was ambrosial!

She was humming softly as she turned into the big house on Wisteria Avenue.

(Chapter 2)

David Hillary turned the topcoat collar up about his neck. The wind was wicked today. He quickened his pace. Even with proper clothing, Brisbane Avenue was an open invitation to frostbite in the winter storms. The wind whipped and lashed its way mercilessly down the wide street. Relentlessly, it tugged at David's heavy coat and pushed at his back.

The Northeaster was biting cold, spitting snow in his face every now and then. His breath came out in frosty-white vapors. The store signs along the avenue railed and creaked in cold disgust and dismay.

He passed a bakery shop. The smell of spicy pumpkin pie whetted his appetite. He turned back long enough to stare hungrily at the golden-brown pies in the window. Would they sell him a piece? he wondered, as he started for the door. "Silly!" he exclaimed, knowing full well those pies were baked to be sold whole, not by the piece. Mother always kept plenty of them baked around Thanksgiving and Christmas, especially. With this thought in mind, he hurried on his way.

He pulled a piece of paper from his pocket and scanned the address, "215 Brisbane," Lois had written clearly. This must be the place. "Ye Olde Gift Shoppe" a sign read, hanging neatly and solidly above the door.

As he entered the small shop, the relaxing sound of softly-ringing musical chimes greeted him. His feet welcomed the thick, plush red carpeting. Everywhere he looked he saw exquisite stem ware, elegant

(almost transparent looking) china, expensive cut glass, rare and unusual vases, whines, figurines, and shiny copper and brass pieces.

He drew his topcoat about him tightly lest he so much as touch the fragile, delicate looking things, and send them shattering to the floor. He never had taken any special fancy to places like this, but his sister did. He marveled that he had consented to come today. But Lois was insistent that he do so, and with a sister as grand as she he couldn't refuse. "Good morning, my boy. May I help you?"

From somewhere -- David never could figure out just where -- a well-dressed, well-coiffed woman with blue-gray hair approached him on silent feet. She stood straight and tall, waiting for him to speak.

He came quickly to the point. "My sister bought a vase in here. She wanted me to pick it up for her. It was to have been gift wrapped."

"Her name?" the woman was all business.

"Lois. Lois Hillary. Here's the paper with the number on it."

"Thank you. I'll be out in a minute. Have a seat." She gestured to a chair close to the desk.

David was glad to sit. At least there was no danger of his knocking any of the expensive looking things off their shiny glass shelves so long as he sat.

His eyes were fascinated by one of the Hummel creations when a big furry white cat ambled nonchalantly over to where he was and rubbed her back smoothly along his pants legs in the friendliest kind of way. She purred softly. David reached down and stroked her lightly. She repaid him generously with a loud purr. Next she jumped up on his lap.

"Felicia!" the woman exclaimed, coming on silent feet into the room. "Get down!" she scolded demandingly. "Get right back into that room!"

With a hurt look in her eyes, Felicia jumped off David's lap and disappeared.

"Oh, that naughty, naughty cat!" the woman exclaimed. "She's ruined your clothes."

"Far from it," David laughed. "I like cats. Felicia's exceptionally beautiful." and he began picking hair from his clothes.

"This brush will help," the woman offered, handing David a clothes brush. "Felicia never mingles with strangers. She must have taken a liking to you."

"I don't like for anyone to feel I'm a stranger to him, not even cats." David laughed easily, warmly. "I've heard that children and dogs can feel when they are loved and wanted: perhaps Felicia can be categorized in here, too. At any rate, I like her."

"Let me assure you again, this was most unusual. I hardly know what to think of her strange behavior."

"Perhaps she feels like I'm kinfolk of yours: who knows?" David teased, trying to set the woman at ease as he picked and brushed, brushed and picked.

"Here's a bill," the woman said. extracting a good-sized bill from the cash register. "I'll pay for the cleaning of your clothes."

"Thanks" David said, "that won't be necessary, ma'am. Tell you what I'd like for you to do, though."

"Yes?"

"There's a special Thanksgiving service at the Bible school my sister and I attend. Would you be our guest on Tuesday night? Or will this interfere with previous plans you may have had?"

"You don't live here, then? You're from out of town?"

"That's right. We live some five hundred miles from here," David explained. "We'll be going home for Thanksgiving after the service on Tuesday night, the Lord willing."

"What is the name of the school where you are a student?"

"Mount Herman Bible School," David answered, picking white cat hair off the red carpet.

"A Bible school, huh?" the shop-owner exclaimed, speaking more to herself than to David.

"Right. You must come over and visit with my sister and me sometime. We'd be delighted to have you. We have some wonderful services at school. In fact, we recently closed one of the best revivals I've ever attended."

"Revival?" the woman turned and walked briskly away.

The word must have been obnoxious to her, David reasoned.

She stood there, in one spot, mechanically fingering one of the sparkly, glittery prism gems that dangled from an expensive chandelier she had for sale. The shop was deathly still and silent.

For a brief moment, David wished Felicia would reappear. At least she would purr up at him. At last he spoke.

"If you'll give me the package I'll be on my way. Sorry to have offended you," he apologized.

Taking the package she handed him, David started for the door.

He turned quickly and faced the woman. "Please read this," he urged, placing a tract in her hand. "It's the only way to real peace and lasting joy." He smiled broadly at her, then stepped out into the cold.

The wind moaned and howled as he made his way up Brisbane toward the road that led to the school. Instead of spitting an occasional flake of snow in his face the wind was now driving an almost blinding flurry of the white spinning, churning, turning stuff all over him and all about him.

"What a day to go after a gift!" he exclaimed to himself. pulling his topcoat more tightly around him and heading, face forward, into the storm.

Lois was waiting for him in the foyer of the main building.

"Thanks, Dave," she said affectionately. "I really do appreciate this. I wanted it for Mother and I didn't see how I could possibly have gone after it before leaving for home. My schedule's pretty tight with all the extras I'm taking."

"That woman's a little peculiar, Sis: isn't she?" David ventured.

"I like her," Lois defended sweetly. "I'd sure like to work there someday: part time, that is. Oh-h! Don't you just love those beautiful things!" It was an exclamation.

"Love them? The place petrifies me!" David confided honestly. "One bump or one wrong move and, well, you know the rest. It's all too fragile looking for a clumsy fellow like I am." He laughed softly as he removed his topcoat. "Say! That wind's tearing around like it's fighting mad at someone today. Sure am glad I don't need to work out in it."

"She really has a lot of beautiful things. Lois said, her mind still on the stem ware and cut glass pieces in "Ye Olde Gift Shoppe."

"Expensive, too," David added. "By the way, what did you get for Mother'? Maybe you'd better get her something for me. By that I mean, you pick it out and I'll pay for it. You know better what a woman likes than I do."

"I bought her a small dish that can be used for either pickles or relishes and such. The shop has so many lovely things to choose from," and Lois reached into the package to examine her gift-wrapped treasure.

"Oh, David!" she gasped, bringing out a piece of exquisitely cut, expensive glass. "She gave you the wrong package. This isn't mine! We'll have to take it back. It doesn't belong to me. I couldn't afford anything like this."

"You . . . mean?" Already David was getting into his topcoat. "She must have made a mistake. Her cat took a liking to me and stroked herself along my trousers, much to the disapproval of the woman. She was terribly upset over the little incident. Perhaps that accounts for the mistake."

"I'm going with you," Lois said.

"Seems the woman's cat fell for me in a big way, Sis," David teased, as they started out the road that led to Brisbane Avenue.

"You always did have a special way of attracting every stray cat and hungry-looking dog for miles and miles around." Lois laughed, remembering. "Mother used to say we'd have to start our own animal shelter."

David laughed softly above the roar of the wind. "This wind's furious today, isn't it, Sis?"

"It's certainly penetrating." Lois admitted, walking briskly beside her brother.

The shop signs along Brisbane rattled, creaked and groaned under the powerful lashes of the wind. It was a great relief when the sturdy "Ye Olde Gift Shoppe" sign came into view. They were welcomed into the shop by the same soft, sweet chimes that greeted David's ears only a short time ago.

Lois walked in an easy, relaxed manner to the desk and waited. David's muscles tightened into knots and his stomach felt funny. How could Lois be so relaxed like this? he wondered, almost afraid to breathe lest his breath send some of the fragile things to the floor.

"May I help you?" Again the woman stood before them, her face pale and tired looking: drawn, too, David thought.

"There was a mistake." David said, very carefully handing the package back to the shop owner.

"I bought a small dish for my mother." Lois explained. "It was to have been gift wrapped. You gave my brother the wrong package." She smiled pleasantly into the woman's face.

For a long, long while she stared at Lois, then at David. She spoke not a word. Slowly, she removed the piece of expensive cut glass from the package David had handed her. "I'm sorry," she apologized. "I was terribly

upset over Felicia. I still feel you should accept some money for what soil she put on your trousers and coat," she said, looking full into David's face.

"My trousers aren't ruined. Honest they're not!" David tried hard to sound convincing. "And I wouldn't give you a bit of trouble, so set your mind at ease. You see, ma'am, we're Christians, both Lois and I. Christians aren't troublemakers. Have you thought any about coming to our special Thanksgiving service, like I proposed to you? I'm sure you'd enjoy it immensely."

Lois eyes grew large and round with eager excitement. Leave it up to David, she thought. He always found an opportunity, somehow, to get folks into church. It looked like God had helped him in a special way here by sending the woman's cat into the room.

"Oh! Could you come!" Lois asked eagerly, her eyes shining brightly. "David and I'd come and get you. We'd escort you there and back in a taxi." They all laughed together now.

"Where did you say you're from?" the woman asked, staring suddenly out of the window to the driving snow.

"We're from Ferndale," David said, dreamy-eyed. "It's not a big town but it's one of the nicest, most beautiful places in the States, I dare safely say."

"And you say your name's Hillary. That's a pretty name. Are there any others in the family?"

"Many of us," Lois laughed. "There's Mother and Father, Jonathan and John, our twelfth grade twins, and Mary Ruth."

"And dear Grandfather!" David added, almost reverently. "Bless my dear grandfather! He's one great man!"

"You should see the beautiful house we live in!" Lois exclaimed, her face beaming. "Oh! It's wonderful! We have such a happy home."

"You sound like an interesting family," the woman said softly. "I . . . I'll go with you on Tuesday night. Here's the right package," she said, handing David the gift-wrapped box.

"Oh, thank you, Ma'am," he said. "We'll call for you around six-thirty, then, the Lord willing."

The wind howled fiercely, savagely, as the pair started up Brisbane. They seemed not to notice.

"She is different, isn't she?" Lois said, looking in her brother's face.

"It's time for me to say, 'I like her.'" He smiled down on his petite sister in a strange sort of way.

(Chapter 3)

Tuesday morning dawned clear and cold and bright. Mount Herman Bible School was alive with activity and excitement. The students were jovial, congenial and extremely pleasant. The spirit of freedom carried over into the faculty. It was as if a bird were being released from his cage for a spell. For one whole glorious week, this was to be the final day for books, lessons and studies.

David and Lois were almost impatient for the night to come. They were expectant . . . David especially. The several hours he had spent with God in prayer made him this way.

At the appointed time, they pulled up in front of "YE OLDE GIFT SHOPPE." David went to the door. Their guest was waiting and ready. David escorted her to the waiting cab and Lois.

"It's so nice to see you again!" Lois said, reaching for the woman's gloved hand and giving it a tight little squeeze. "David and I have been looking forward to this most eagerly." There was a note of real sincerity in her voice. The shop owner felt it and smiled into Lois' eyes.

"Do you realize we don't even know your name?" Lois said, laughing softly. "Just call me Annie. Miss Annie," the woman said kindly.

"This is indeed a pleasure, Miss Annie," David said. "I'm sure you won't be disappointed with what you hear tonight."

She looked at David affectionately. "I . . . I read the little paper you gave me," she volunteered, slowly.

"Good!" David exclaimed, searching her face for the real meaning behind the statement . . . the full meaning. He hoped it meant what he thought it did.

He suddenly noticed the deep blue of Miss Annie's eyes. They were beautiful. Almost like his mothers, he thought; only Miss Annie's didn't sparkle quite so brightly. The eyes looked kind tonight. Not at all like that day in the shop. Her face looked different, too. What was it? he wondered. Wherein was the change?

As the taxi sped away, Miss Annie turned to speak to Lois. David took a long look at their companion-guest. What he saw brought sudden tears to his eyes. Miss Annie was beautiful tonight. Her face was natural . . . all the way through, natural, with not the slightest trace of rouge or lipstick on it. She looked like an angel with her silky-soft, white hair pulled back ever so gently over her well-shaped head and coiled in the prettiest coil ever in the nape of her neck. Even the lines about her mouth were different. Gone was the hard, cold severeness; in their place were all kinds of laughlines that made David want to shout out loud. Miss Annie was different all right!

Quickly, David turned his head and gazed out the window. Too strong was the impulse to take Miss Annie's hand and caress it, smooth it. She was too familiar. Somewhere in the back of his mind he kept calling out to her, "Grandmother! Dear Grandmother!" With the superficial shell cracked and opened and the artificial covering gone from the outside of her, Miss Annie could be any boy's ideal grandmother.

Why didn't his grandmother come home? he wondered. Where was she? The grandmother who used to hold him on her lap and kiss his full, fat little red cheeks? He would never forget her! He couldn't. Every boy had the right to at least one grandmother, he reasoned silently. Since Grandmother Hillary had died shortly after he was born, David knew only one grandmother . . . Grandmother Westover.

"We're here!" Lois exclaimed, looking at David.

"You've been daydreaming," she accused, smiling up at her brother.

"Guess I was, Sis. It was a pleasant daydream, too," David answered truthfully, handing the cab driver his fare and helping Miss Annie out.

"Will the third seat from the front be all right?" he asked, as they started down the aisle of the school chapel. "I had it reserved for you. Thought it would be the ideal section for you."

"This will be fine, David; just fine," she said, smiling up at him in a way that made him single all over.

He patted her arm gently as she took the seat. "We'll be back for you as soon as the service is over. It's to be a musical, mainly." Quickly, he slipped away.

"Grandmother! Oh, Grandmother! Where are you?" he cried softly into his hands.

From his place in the choir, David felt he dare not look at the radiant little figure in the third seat. He must not dream so! His heart was too near to tears.

Each student was at his best. In obedience to her fingers, Lois' piano solo spoke volumes.

The girls' trio, of which Lois was a part, sang with heart-reaching feeling. The audience was moved to tears. The chapel was filled with the presence of the Lord. The organist was playing softly. It was time for David's solo.

"I want to sing something that has meant much to my heart," David began. "I love it because it speaks the sentiment of my heart. Then, there's another reason for this song . . ." he paused, trying hard to dispel the lump that hung tenaciously to the middle of his throat. "Many of you have heard me make frequent reference to my grandfather. He's very dear to my heart. He had great sorrow come into his life many years ago. This song became Grandfather's own . . . his favorite. I want to sing it for you tonight

With great ease, the rich mellow baritone came out:

"I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus
Since I found in Him a Friend so strong and true.
I would tell you how He changed my life completely . . .
He did something that no other friend could do.
No one ever cared for me like Jesus;
There's no other Friend so kind as He;
No one else could take the sin and sorrow from me.
O how much He cares for me."

David dare not look to the third seat. His heart was too full. Already great tears were spilling down over his cheeks. Was Miss Annie crying too? He was sure he'd seen her handkerchief go to her eyes.

Quickly, he glanced in her direction. Her eyes were covered with her dainty handkerchief. Miss Annie was crying! She was! She was! God was doing something, David was sure. Once again, he looked across the faces. His heart was full. Brokenly, he went on,

"All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me;
All my heart was full of misery and woe;
Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me
And He led me in the way I ought to go."

God was in the chapel, in the congregation! It was all too awesome for Miss Annie . . . too wonderful! She cried all through the service.

"It was wonderful!" she told David and Lois as she rode between them in the cab to "YE OLDE GIFT SHOPPE." She found David's hand and held it lovingly. Lois already had hers enclosed in the other.

"Be on your way," she said to the cab driver as they stopped at the shop. "The young folks are going inside with me." Handing him a good-sized bill she said cheerily, "Keep the change." With a light gesture of her hand, she waved him on.

Entering a room off the little shop, David and Lois found themselves in a thickly-carpeted, spacious and elegantly furnished, living room.

"I'll take your coats," Miss Annie said, her voice soft, sweet, and well-modulated. "I thought you might like something hot to drink, after that lovely service tonight."

"Can't we just visit with you?" David asked, wanting nothing more than to be near the sweet old woman. "I want to call you Grandmother so badly" he blurted, frankly, "that I feel I'll die if I can't."

Miss Annie stood like one petrified. Her face went ashen white. She collapsed in a little heap on the floor.

"She . . . she's fainted! Oh, David, what will we do? Where? Where's the bathroom?" and Lois scurried into another room after washcloths and cold water.

"I'm sorry, Lois," David apologized, helping to bathe Miss Annie's white face with cold water "But I love her! She's so much like Grandmother until she could just be Grandmother. You weren't born. You couldn't know! But I'll never forget her. Never! I was little, yes, when she left us; but I'll always remember her. In remembering I love! Grandfather says she's coming home. I wonder when."

Lois hurried away to wet the washcloths again.

Loving, David whispered in Miss Annie's ear, "You'll be all right, Grandmother. I love you. We all love you."

The woman's eyes fluttered, then opened. She sat up. "Dave! My Davie!" she exclaimed, smiling weary but sweetly. "We've found each other at last."

Lois entered then. "Why . . . why . . . !" She was too astonished to speak. Miss Annie had David in her arms and was rocking back and forth with him. She was patting his cheeks, too . . . like a grandmother pats a little grandson.

"Grandmother! Grandmother!" was all David could exclaim between his sobs of joy.

"Come here, dear child," Miss Annie said, drawing Lois into the circle of her other arm. "I'll be all right now. In fact, everythings going to be all right from now on. I'm your grandmother: Grandmother Westover!"

"Then . . . then . . ." Lois didn't know how to say it.

"You may call me 'Grandmother.' That's right: I said Grandmother. Drop the 'Miss Annie' bit. My name is Jean Ann McGinnis Westover. That's where the 'Miss Annie' came from." She laughed contentedly as the two snuggled cozily up to her and nearly smothered her with kisses.

"How is Grandfather?" she asked, her eyes filled with sudden concern and longing.

"Except for being terribly lonesome for you, he's very well, Grandmother," David said. "He's expecting you home. He loves you very much."

She sniffed loudly. "And I . . . do I have right to such love, children?" She stood, facing them, as she asked it.

"Till death do us part . . ." David quoted.

"But I deserted him. I've loved him. Oh, how I loved him! But my selfish pride and stubbornness kept me away from him all these years. They've been lonesome years," she admitted.

"Grandfather waiting for you," David reminded again. "We've all been waiting for you. Dear, dear Grandmother! Were been praying too."

"Speaking of prayer, David, I . . . I . . ."

"Yes?" he urged, his heart beating with wild anticipation.

"I read the little paper you gave me when you came after Lois' gift for your mother. I prayed, too. I did just what the writer said to do. I'm saved. Children, you have a Christian grandmother now."

"Praise the Lord!" David and Lois cried together weeping for joy.

"I confessed all my sins and asked Him to live in my heart, and He did. His presence is wonderful!"

"I knew it! I knew it!" David said, throwing his arms around his grandmother's neck. "I saw it all over your face when we were riding up to school tonight. I could feel it, too. You're beautiful since you're a Christian, Grandmother!" David couldn't conceal his feelings.

"From the day you came into my shop, I knew you were my David. You are the image of my Alan, your grandfather, when he was young. But come! We must hurry. The train for Ferndale leaves in exactly one hour and thirty-five minutes. We'll drink something hot here. I have plenty of sandwiches for the ride."

"You . . . you . . . mean . . .?" Lois was wide-eyed with wonder awe and excitement. "Oh-h-h! Grandmother!"

"Yes. We're going home for Thanksgiving. We're all going home for Thanksgiving!"

"Oh, Grandmother!" Lois exclaimed again, her eyes spilling over with happy tears. "Can you have a heart attack from joy? I believe I'm going to have one," she teased. "I love you!" she added, laying her head on her grandmother shoulder.

"Only since He saved me, have I felt in the least way worthy of going back to the man I love with all my heart. I'll make everything up to your grandfather, your mother and father, and all of you," Grandmother said. "See if I don't!"

Felicia, hearing happy voices from the kitchen, twitched her furry white whiskers several times, stretched her body its full length then ambled nonchalantly into the kitchen. She walked over to David, meowed softly, then rubbed her body in the friendliest kind of way along his trouser legs.

"Felicia!" Grandmother scolded in a laughing way.

"I'm not a stranger," David reminded, patting Grandmother's hand.

"We're all going home for Thanksgiving, Felicia!" Lois exclaimed, whispering it softly into the cat's furry white ear. "That means you, too!"

Felicia meowed her understanding and full cooperation.

Home for Thanksgiving? It sounded wonderful. A time for Thanksgiving! Yes; and much more!

THE END