

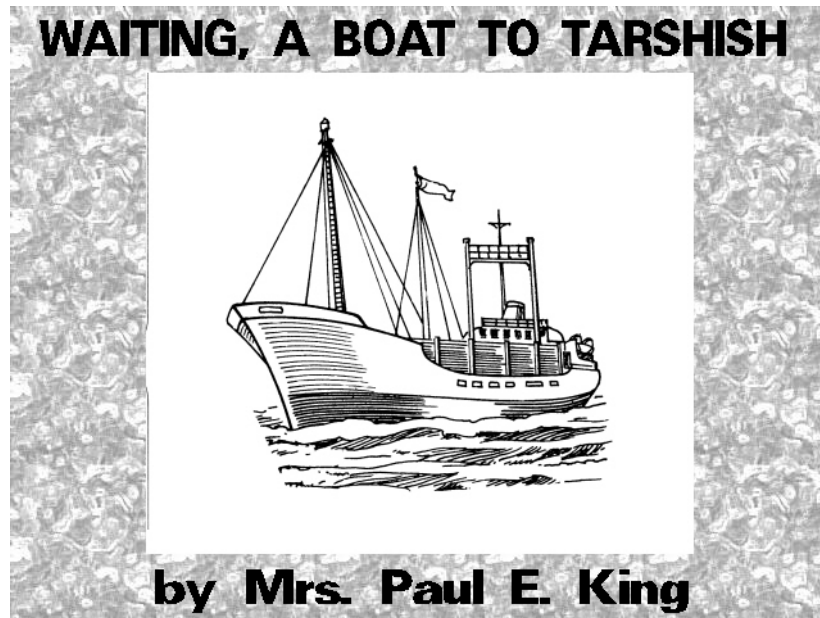
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**WAITING, A BOAT TO TARSHISH**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**  
**Chapter 1**

Raynelle Bowman clutched the diploma to her bosom, glorying in the feat of her accomplishment and feeling like it was the greatest achievement of her entire life. Scholastically, she was correct in her thinking: She had worked hard to receive the long-awaited, much-desired paper, heralding to all

prospective would-be employers that, finally, she was ready and qualified for a position. A position with dollar signs in and on every line of the contract.

"Congratulations!" Bethany exclaimed, as she hugged Raynelle. "How long now before you'll know about that mission assignment, Raynelle? You must be excited. I know I would be."

"Oh, I'm not going to be a missionary," Raynelle announced. "I changed my major to business a few years ago. I'm ready for the business world, Beth. Here are my 'credentials!'" And Raynelle waved the diploma above her head.

Shocked into silence, Bethany merely stared at her longtime friend. Then she said, "I . . . I'm sorry to hear this, Raynelle; especially since you've had God's call on your heart since you were only twelve years old. Oh, who will take your place? I . . . I mean . . . well, there are so few who are answering God's call these days and going out to work in His ripened harvest fields of grain. I . . . it's scary when one stops to think about it. How I wish the Lord would have given me a call!" Tears swam in Bethany's dark eyes.

"There'll be a replacement, Bethany, I'm sure."

Tears still swimming in Bethany's eyes, she asked pointedly, "Is that possible? I mean, well, there's only one you. Each of us is made uniquely different from all others, and God uses our uniqueness for His glory and honor in the field to which He has called us. Think of the souls you may have won and led to Jesus, Raynelle; souls who never ever heard about Jesus before! I can't believe you'd give up such a high calling for something so trivial as business management."

"Trivial! Oh Bethany, you have no idea what you're saying. Trivial indeed! If you knew how hard I've worked to acquire my degree in this field you'd change your mind instantly and choose your words more carefully and cautiously."

"I didn't mean to offend you, Raynelle; truly and honestly I didn't. It's just that I'm shocked to know you're not gang to be a missionary."

"One can change his -- or her -- mind, Bethany; now can't they?"

"But Raynelle; one can never change a call from God. You know this as well as I. Romans 11:29 tells us plainly, 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'"

Raynelle, ignoring the scriptural quotation and acting like she hadn't heard it, even, said excitedly and jubilantly, "I have my first big appointment for an interview two days from today, at ten in the morning. It's a reputable and very large business firm across the state line. If I get the job, it will mean a move for me. But I'm prepared for this. In fact, I'm looking forward to it. I'm sure glad you could come for my graduation. You'll always be my best friend, even though our fields of labor may be poles apart."

"I'm glad I could come, even though I'm terribly disappointed that you aren't going to become a missionary," Bethany said sadly. "I've prayed so earnestly for you, Raynelle, and so very many times, too, and in all seriousness and sincerity, I feel you'll be sorry that you have done what you have. It's dangerous for one to step out of the will of God. I'm only saying this because I'm your friend; a true friend, I may add."

"God needs people to support the missionary," Raynelle countered defensively. "I plan to be a generous giver," she added, as they parted.

Two days later, Raynelle had a job. She was hired shortly after the interview. Her studying and good grades had paid off handsomely.

The move into the apartment in a new building within walking distance of her work was exciting and thrilling to her; furnishing it was an adventure. She knew she couldn't be happier nor feel more fulfilled and satisfied. The smoothness of the transition amazed her, giving her a feeling of "rightness" over her choice in the ever-expanding and widening field of Business Management.

Raynelle moved among the executives like a pro, frequently overhearing comments in her favor: "That girl has a business head on her shoulders." "She's an expert in this field." "I never saw her equal." Within a short period of time she received three promotions. She was a successful business woman, climbing the ladder toward the top.

A year went by. Then two. Three. She was almost delirious with happiness over her achievements. It was almost unreal, her status with the company; how far she had come; how rapidly she had been promoted.

Promotions brought in more money; higher earnings; bigger paychecks. More and more she was convinced of the rightness of her choice; the wisdom of her decision back in college, when she swished her major.

Raynelle bought a house; a house with "character." That is, a house with the embellishments of the affluent. The wealthy. No mere ordinary houses here. None whatever. Here the lots took one to waterways with boat docks at the end, and boats moored nearby, their bow and stern rocking gently in the blue-green water. The house was furnished with only the finest - the most elegant, with name tags and labels that none of the poorer class could begin to touch, even, financially. Its enormity had intrigued Raynelle; fascinated her, the moment she entered the For Sale house that bright, sunny, cloudless day in mid-May. So she bought it, and had it redecorated throughout, in soft, easy to look at and live in hues and shades and colors.

With no one but Jenni and Juli, the two snow-white miniature poodles, and herself living in the spacious dwelling place, she sometimes felt like three ghosts roamed in and out of its many rooms and up and down its marbled hallways, all of which were kept spotlessly clean and orderly by she herself: It was her outlet after her demanding work at the office. Only in the care of the sprawling lawn, with its impressive and outstandingly-beautiful landscape and carefully manicured and weft-kept grass, did she hire any help at all.

Her life was idyllic; things were going as she had hoped they would. With acquisition of the "dream house," Raynelle was sure she could never be happier. Each morning before leaving for the office, with Jenni and Juli in tow on beaded leashes, she walked to the boat dock and back, going in and out among the many plants and bushes and trees on the lawn, looking for hidden buds and freshly blooming flowers. Life was good to her, she soliloquized as she walked. Who would have thought that she would have it so good! At times it seemed almost unreal to her; but a glance around her and she knew it was reality indeed. Yes, she had made a wise choice. A wise choice, indeed, she was sure.

Sundays came and went by in routine fashion, same as her work at the office did. Only, Sunday was her work day in the dream house and her day to

do whatever she desired to do; her free time away from the demands of her job. Frequently, the poodles and she went for a drive in the country or sat beneath the gazebo near the boat dock and watched as her neighbors set sails to the wind and headed from the canal to deeper, larger bodies of water.

The church, and what it stood for and Whose Blood had purchased it, was almost totally forgotten, so busy and engrossed was Raynelle in her life and its own interests. Rarely did she think of the church and its wonderful services in the days of her childhood and young adulthood. It was passe. She had wanted it thus. Willed it this way, even.

Three different times, with the voice of conscience reminding her that she had said she planned to be a "generous giver," she had written a check out for one hundred dollars each and sent it via mail to whichever church appeared to her as she scanned the church ads in the telephone directory, not knowing what nor to whom she was sending it, nor, even, if the church had a missionary platform or believed in missions. Still, it placated her mind to some degree and silenced her niggling conscience each time she mailed the check. That was the extent of her "generous giving"

Nine years went by. Ten. Eleven. Fifteen. Raynelle's bank accounts continued to grow. And grow. Five times she had the house redecorated on the inside, with extensive work done on its exterior and a landscaping job done down near the boat dock where a brand new sailboat rose and fell gently on the water, seeming to test its mooring to the pilings.

She had learned how to sail and, along with Jenni and Juli, she had taken The Fairy, her name for the boat, and had ventured from the canal out to deeper water on several different occasions. The water was relaxing. Her skill and expertise at handling the lovely craft was exhilarating, giving her a heady feeling, almost like she could do anything.

More and more of her monies were going on things for self; new furniture for the house, a new sports car, a pond in the original landscape area and wide terraced steps leading down to the gazebo and the boat dock. After all, she reasoned silently, it was her money and, as such, she could do with it whatever she wanted to do. She earned it and she paid for the things she had acquired and was acquiring and that was all that mattered.

She arrived home from the office one evening and discovered a box beside her front door. Wondering what it could be and from whom it had come, she hurried to the door after putting the car in the garage. Seeing the name on the return address, Raynelle's face turned white. Weary and feeling faint, she sat down on the box. It couldn't be! she thought. It couldn't!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Chapter 2

Raynelle sat for a long while on the box, staring at the name and place given on the return address label. Her heart pounded furiously inside her chest and her legs felt weak and trembly, like they wouldn't hold her up if she got to her feet. Perspiration broke out on her face. Her hands were clammy-cold. She felt weak. Extremely weak. She was grateful for the soft, gentle breeze that skipped across the wide verandah and cooled her wet face to some degree.

"I can't believe it!" she exclaimed in what was almost a whispered benediction.

Curiosity finally had its payday and, getting to her feet and unlocking the door, Raynelle tried lifting the box. Its weight baffled her. She tried a second time and this time she succeeded to get it inside the door, but barely.

Jenni and Juli bounded eagerly to the door and greeted her warmly and exuberantly, barking sharply at the "intruder" standing just inside the door on the floor. Raynelle paused long enough to take the tiny creatures in her arms and stroke their furry backs, then she hurried away for a knife with which to open the box, with the two poodles in step beside her.

With trembling hands, Raynelle lifted the first thing from the box. It was a book of considerable volume. Taped on to the cover of the book was a typewritten letter addressed to her. Slowly, she began reading:

Dear Miss Bowman,

In compliance with Bethany Rushford's request and wishes, I am herewith sending you this letter and the box. It is the least I can do for the one who led me to my wonderful Lord Jesus Christ, my Savior and my

Sanctifier. You will find Miss Bethany's letter inside the book. Wishing you God's best.

Sincerely,  
Anna Broomfield

Raynelle's interest was piqued to its maximum now and with trembling hands she opened the book. Bethany's letter was taped to the inside of the cover.

"My dearest friend, Raynelle," she read. "I'm sure you will be shocked to hear from me; especially since we have been out of contact with each other for these many long years, and, too, that I am on another continent and you are still in the United States of America.

"I came here, Raynelle, two years after I was to your graduation. The thought of your not going as a missionary, when God had so definitely called you, troubled me greatly. I couldn't rest at night, knowing you should have been here working for Jesus and winning these precious people to the Lord, so I told the Lord I'd come, willing and joyously so, if He'd open the door for me. I told Him I was willing to be a sort of surrogate missionary for you.

"And He did! Less than a month after my prayer, a position opened up in the field of teaching! The English language! (These people are eager to learn our native language.) I applied immediately and was accepted and approved, since teaching has been my vocation and that for which I got my degree.

"Oh Raynelle, I wish I had words to adequately tell you how wonderful the Lord has been to me and how He has led and directed my footsteps and my way since I arrived over here thirteen years ago! It is marvelous. Marvelous! I am a teacher, to be sure, but God has opened one door after another for me -- to witness for Jesus; to be a missionary for Him! I feel rich beyond any describing; not in monies or material things, but in spiritual gifts -- precious souls who have come to know and love the Lord and are ready for Heaven. Talk about treasures! Money can't buy it; earth can't give it, and the world can't take it away. Eternal treasures! Jewels for His crown!

"I contracted a disease recently, something quite common to these people and to this country, but something which my body is not handling well

at all and to which no amount, or kind of medication seems to be helping. My body is weakening daily and my food intake is small. I'm on the Homeward stretch, Raynelle, and I know it. But I am not afraid; I have no fear whatever: my Shepherd is by my side constantly, leading me, consoling and comforting me, and blessing my soul. Who can be afraid, or be fearful, when Heaven is in one's heart!

"My one regret is that I couldn't do more for Jesus since He gave His very life's blood to pay for my sins and my wickednesses.

"I have asked my good friend, Anna Broomfield, upon my decease, to send you my journals I have kept since leaving America. Anna's a wonderful young woman. She came here as a teacher, like I did, availing herself of every opportunity to make converts to a false, unbiblical cult until the Lord got ahold of her and converted her. These journals are my gift to you, dear friend, sent with love and a written confession that I haven't ceased praying for you. Daily, every day, I have prayed for you."

Tears ran copiously down Raynelle's cheeks, making it impossible for her to read on. Bethany dead! And on foreign soil!

Finding the tissue box, Raynelle dried the tears from her eyes so she could finish reading the letter.

"My earthly possessions have been few; but what I have, I have divided among and between some of the most needy converts here. I am sending my Bible to you, however. I want you to have it, Raynelle. Please, for Jesus' sake, read it. There is gold between its sacred covers; gold like this old world has no knowledge of nor can it give.

"How I have wished you were here, dear friend. What a missionary you would have been, had you not grown lean in your soul and gone back on your Lord! Your ship to Tarshish was ready for you, Raynelle.

Satan always has one waiting for the soul who is not firmly rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus; the one who is not filled with God's sweet Holy Spirit and is not sanctified wholly and entirely. It's such an easy thing to do -- get on board the Tarshish-bound ship and sail away from that which Christ has told one to do. But it is a danger filled venture.

"I'm sure your journey down to Tarshish has been profitable for you materially and financially, Raynelle; for you have always been blessed with a great business head, and as I have ministered and taught over here, I have even thought how wonderfully well you would have managed a clinic and how many, many souls your life would have impacted and you could have ministered to.

"I have not tried to be you, dear Ray, for God has no two of us who are exactly alike. I have not been able to do that for which God so clearly called you. But I have done what I could. With God's help, I gave my very best and He rewarded my feeble efforts with souls, rescued from sin and hell's fire and its never-ending flames. My soul is richly blest and I am joyously happy in Jesus, knowing that when I stand before Him, which will be soon, I'm sure, I will have some sheaves to lay at His feet. Just to hear Him say, 'She hath done what she could' will be pay enough for me. I will not go to face Him empty handed! Oh joy! Blessed, blissful, wonderful joy!

"I had a Visitor here in my hospital room last night, a Heavenly Visitor. He was dressed in spotless white and oh, the glory and sweetness of His presence! Words cannot describe what His coming meant to me. He stood over me for awhile, smiling upon me, then He left as quickly as He had arrived. For a long while after His departure, the glory of His Presence lingered in the room. I wept for holy joy. My inner being was refreshed and strengthened by His coming; my physical being felt considerably weaker. He came, I am confident, to give me courage and strength for the crossing over from this life to Heaven and, in my heart, I feel that it will be His hand that will lead me through the chilling-cold water of death safely on to the other side, where I will just begin to live -- forever -- with Jesus. Oh blessed blissful thought!

"I have a last and final request, dear Raynelle, meet me in Heaven."

With all my love and prayers,  
Bethany

P. S. This is from me again, Anna Broomfield, to let you know that our mutual friend, Bethany, made the crossing that night, after having written this letter to you. God honored me by allowing me an early class dismissal (the main line water pipe burst at the school and the classes were dismissed mid-

afternoon). I spent the remainder of my day at the hospital with Bethany, who was conscious to the end.

I wish you could have been there! Never have I experienced nor witnessed what I did in those last few hours! She was victorious to the end. Her face shone like I'm sure Heaven will shine. She looked more like a heavenly than an earthly being and she was constantly praising the Lord, telling me often, "He is here, Anna! He is here! He has come to lead me safely across the river and I am not afraid. See how lovingly and gently He takes my hand in His!"

I, of course, did not see Him; but His presence filled the room with such glory and sacredness until my entire being was transported into the realm of the heavenlies. She died thanking and praising God for allowing her to walk through His open door to be a teacher-missionary for her Savior, Jesus Christ, who was Lord of her life. I wanted you to know this, and to know that she was buried over here -- a request of hers. Anna

Raynelle felt like she was suffocating, so piercing and penetrating was Bethany's letter and Ann's postscript. So young. Bethany was so very young to be dead, she thought. And what about Steve? He and Bethany had planned to be married in the future, "it being God's will; only God's will," each had told her one time.

Tears spilled from Raynelle's eyes as the scenario unfolded before her now. Steve felt a definite leading from God to be a pastor to inner city missions and the re-establishment of Holiness churches in the city proper, much like the Apostle Paul did. And God, meanwhile, had opened the door of teaching abroad for Bethany, who entered "willing and joyously" (her written words) and she, in turn, had used her "tool" for teaching and God had broadened her horizon and used her as a missionary. A "surrogate" missionary, she had written -- in place of her Raynelle.

She felt a stab of pain; like a sharp object was thrust into her very soul. What a comparison between Bethany and herself! What a contrast! She knew that, weighed on Divine scales, her great achievements and all her assets and material things would count as nothing.

And the ship to Tarshish? It was true, she admitted silently. Willingly, excitedly, selfishly and proudly she had boarded the vessel, feeling confident

of her business prowess to achieve and to be successful. And all had come to pass as she had planned and anticipated, going far beyond her greatest expectations, even.

And what about her soul? Her spiritual life? The souls she could have won for Christ had she been obedient to God's call for her?

"My God," she cried out, "I am speechless. It is too late for me to go back to school and prepare for the mission field. Furthermore, I am entrenched securely in Tarshish. I will try to be more faithful in my giving for missions," she added, as she shoved the heavy box, with the journals inside, along the hallway to the closet into which she put it and closed the doors.

"Come, my dears," she called to Jenni and Juli, "it is time for food. I'm hungry. Something to eat may help me to overcome this haunting feeling within."

In her heart she knew that it would haunt her forever; yes, throughout all eternity!

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THE END