

STARS FOR SYLVIA

by

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A GATHERING AT FERN'S HOUSE

THE FIRST FRIDAY afternoon Fern was home from the hospital, Mrs. Wilcox invited Sylvia and her friends over to see Fern. When the girls arrived, Fern, in her green-striped robe, was in an easy chair, with her leg propped up on a hassock. Her face was still thin. "It must feel good to be home," Sylvia said.

"It does, and it was dear of you girls to come see me." She smiled, and waved her hand for Sylvia, Claudia and Nancy to sit down.

The girls found seats and chatted of school, while Mrs. Wilcox served homemade vanilla ice cream, large coconut cookies, and pineapple juice.

"This is certainly good," Sylvia said to Mrs. Wilcox.

"Yes, indeed," Nancy seconded.

"And there's plenty more," Mrs. Wilcox offered, as she went back into the kitchen, leaving the girls alone.

"I've so much to be thankful for since I found the Lord," Fern exclaimed.

"Don't we all!" Claudia sighed.

"The doctor said my leg would soon be out of the cast, and Ben has forgiven me for his having to stop school. He says the practical experience will do him good and that he hopes to go back to college next year."

Remembering how badly Fern had felt about not graduating with the rest of them, Sylvia asked, "And what about school?"

"Mother has been to see Miss Boyleston," Fern replied, "and she's arranged for me to study at home. She says if I turn in all the work, I can graduate with the rest of you.

"God is good," Sylvia said, rejoicing from the bottom of her heart.

“Those are all answers to prayer,” Nancy reminded. “Now, if only He would answer our prayers about La Von.”

“By the way, where is she? I know Mom invited her, too.”

“She’s coming. She said she would, only she’s late,” Sylvia explained.

“That’s La Von—goes every place she’s asked but is always late.”

“But she goes to church with you?” Fern persisted.

“Yes.” Sylvia leaned back in her chair, thinking. La Von was a problem! She seemed to agree when anyone talked about the Lord and yet she didn’t make a Christian stand. She explained, “She goes to church, but she’s as quick to go to a movie. I really don’t understand her.”

“Don’t you think she wants to be a Christian?” Claudia asked, a puzzled expression in her blue eyes.

“Why, it’s so wonderful to be a Christian that I can’t understand a girl who doesn’t love the Lord.”

“I think it is that she can’t say No to anything that is asked her, either good or bad.” Sylvia tried to understand La Von.

“Did Sylvia tell you about the set-to we had with Marguerite last week?” Nancy changed the subject.

“Over Sarah,” Claudia explained. “By the way, Dad is always saying he can’t understand the reason people say the Jews are God’s chosen people.”

“I came across the answer to that the other night when I was reading my Bible,” Sylvia remarked. “Fern, is your Bible handy?”

“It’s right here. I always keep it close to me now,” Fern answered, and reaching to the little cluttered table by her chair she picked up her Bible.

“Will you read Deuteronomy 7, verses 6 to 8?”

“If I can find it.” Fern turned the pages in her Bible until she found Deuteronomy. Then she read:

“The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers.”

“There,” Sylvia pointed out with a smile on her face, and a joy in her heart at the goodness of God. “Isn’t it like the Lord to choose them because they were a small nation?”

“But no wonder they have the trouble they do, after all the Lord did for them,” Nancy remarked. “You’d think at least they wouldn’t be money lenders.”

“I don’t know that I think they disobey God more than any other nation,” Claudia surmised.

“Probably not,” Sylvia agreed. “But isn’t it a case of **‘to whom more is given, of them more is expected?’**”

“But don’t they live up to the Old Testament?” Claudia persisted.

“Many of the orthodox Jews do,” Sylvia said, remembering what Sarah had told her; “but not . . .”

A knock came at the door. The girls looked up. Fern called, “Come in.”

The door opened and La Von stuck her dark head in side. “Am I late?”

“And how!”

“Late enough for us to be talking about you.”

“You’ll have to quit now that I’m here.” She dropped onto the end of the divan, curled her legs under her and tucked a pillow behind her back.

“Nancy, will you get La Von some ice cream?” Fern asked.

Nancy nodded, picked up her empty dish and Sylvia’s, and carried them into the kitchen.

With her eyes flashing, La Von demanded, “What were you saying about me?”

Everyone was silent. Sylvia squirmed. It was hard to answer La Von’s question, and yet if she didn’t, La Von would think they had been criticizing her. With a prayer in her heart, she murmured, “We were only wondering why you don’t take a stand for the Lord.”

“Oh!” La Von breathed deeply, then admitted, “I’d like to be a Christian like the rest of you; but if I do, I want to do it right. I’m afraid I can’t give up my friends who aren’t Christian.”

“Here’s your ice cream.” Nancy walked back into the room and handed La Von her dish.

“Thanks, pard.” La Von smiled and as she started eating the ice cream, Sylvia thought with regret that the opportunity to talk to her about the Lord had gone. But no, Claudia continued.

“You don’t need to worry about not being able to give up your friends who aren’t Christians. If you take your stand, they’ll give you up.”

“How?” La Von stopped eating and stared at Claudia.

Claudia’s face turned white and she explained. “Before I was a Christian, I used to go around with a fellow named Ed. He smokes and drinks beer; but he’s a hard worker, and we were talking about getting married after I graduated. My dad thought he was okay. Anyway, after I became a Christian and wouldn’t go to dances with him and started talking about the Lord, he dropped me but quick. I hear he’s going around with a red-headed girl these days.”

Sylvia nodded sympathetically. She knew that it meant a great deal to Claudia to have Ed drop her. She would get over it, but meanwhile it hurt.

“You live your Christian testimony, and your worldly friends won’t have time for you.”

“But won’t I miss them?” La Von asked, a thoughtful expression on her face.

“Not if you’re a real Christian,” Sylvia assured her. “Anyway, not for long. Being a Christian does mean giving up some things; but from what I’ve seen of them, I’m better off without them. I’m happy.”

“So am I,” Nancy chimed in.

“But you—what about you, Claudia?” La Von insisted.

“It hurt at first when Ed didn’t phone, but I’ve sense enough to know that if I married him he wouldn’t make me happy any more than my dad made my mother happy.”

La Von put her spoon on the side of her plate, and put the plate aside, leaving most of the ice cream. “But I’m so afraid I couldn’t hold out. I’d be a Christian one week and not the next.”

“No, you couldn’t be,” Claudia protested.

“There must be an answer,” Fern said. “What are the verses, Sylvia?”

“Let me think.” Sylvia closed her eyes so she could picture her list of verses. “Under the heading ‘Afraid they couldn’t stay true’ are Jude 24 and II Timothy 1:12.”

Fern turned to the first verse and read, “**Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.**”

“There, you see. Christ is able to keep you from falling.”

“But some girls do backslide, I know they do,” La Von reminded.

“Read the next one,” Sylvia said hopefully. “Maybe it has the answer.”

Fern turned to the other reference and read: **“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”**

“There’s your answer.” Sylvia grew excited and her words tumbled over each other as she tried to explain. “Some girls don’t commit themselves to the Lord. We know He is able. The fault lies with us. We have to commit all our problems, our amusements, our friends, all our life, everything to the Lord, and then He will keep us.”

“Are you sure?” La Von asked earnestly.

Sylvia lifted her head, and with full assurance replied, “That is God’s promise.”

“Then, next Sunday night when the altar call is given, I’ll go forward, accept Jesus as my Saviour and give Him my entire life.”

“And when you do, He’ll give you something to do for Him, and it helps to be busy for Him, like Sylvia is,” Claudia reminded.

Embarrassed by Claudia’s admiration, Sylvia pointed out, “I don’t do any more for the Lord than the rest of you do. Nancy prays for everyone I try to win. Claudia is always trying to find the answers to the different questions. And I am sure that if you give your life to Him, He’ll give you something to do for Him.”

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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