



A SONG FOR GRANDFATHER

A NADVENTIST GIRL STORY

~ BOOK ONE ~

JEAN BOONSTRA



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CHAPTER 1

Mr. Barnes's Surprise

Sarah Barnes tightened the strings on her violin. *Oh, how I dislike this dreadful thing*, she thought. She brushed a wisp of light-brown hair off her forehead and tucked the violin under her chin. As she placed the bow on the strings, she tried to make sense of the music in front of her and squeaked out a few notes.

“Sarah! Sarah!” Mrs. Margaret Barnes called from the kitchen.

“Yes, Mother,” Sarah yelled. She

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dropped the violin to her side.

Sarah knew what her mother wanted. She needed more help getting ready for Grammy and Grandfather's visit. Sarah needed to practice! She knew that Grandfather would ask her to play for him after dinner. Her mother's footsteps sounded on the stairs. Sarah's big brown eyes raced over the page of music.

"Sarah!" Suddenly a hand snatched the sheet of music off the stand.

Sarah quickly put the violin on her bed and straightened her apron. Sheepishly she looked up at her mother. "Yes, Ma'am," she answered.

"Now, Sarah, love," Mrs. Barnes said, holding the music in her hand. "You know that I need your help today." Her usually neat hair was slipping out from underneath her cotton cap, and her cheeks were red from hard work.

"I know, Mother," Sarah answered, looking down at her feet. "I just thought

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that I could practice my violin for a few minutes.”

“You’ve had all week to practice,” Mrs. Barnes said, setting the music back on the stand. “If you didn’t make good use of your free time, then it is too late to change that now.” Mrs. Barnes took Sarah by the hand and with a sweep of her petticoats, led her down the stairs. “Grammy and Grandfather will be here any minute,” she said hurriedly. “I need to have you roll the pastry out for the pie, sweep the kitchen floor, and set the table for dinner.”

Sarah bounced down the stairs after her. “Yes, Mother,” she sighed. She knew that there was no use complaining. Her mother was right. She could have practiced her violin the day before.

“Emily! Were you trying to follow your mama up the stairs?” Mrs. Barnes scooped up baby Emily from the bottom stair and set her down on the floor by the kitchen table. Emily giggled happily.

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“Sarah, please watch Emily. I need to polish the silver, and my hands will get very dirty,” Mrs. Barnes continued.

“Yes, Mother,” Sarah replied. “Emily, you may play with these.” Sarah handed her little sister the measuring spoons. Emily took them in her chubby little hand and shook them happily. Her blue eyes sparkled, and she gurgled out her own little thank-you.

Sarah picked up the rolling pin and sprinkled some flour on the table. She rolled the pastry out with long, smooth strokes. It was her job to help her mother in the kitchen, and she was good at doing almost everything. The fire crackled in the hearth in the corner of the kitchen. The wooden table creaked as Sarah moved the rolling pin back and forth.

Sarah smiled. “Mother,” she said over her shoulder, “if we had servants, like the queen of England, we wouldn’t need to do all of this work!”

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Mrs. Barnes chuckled. She lifted her polishing cloth and rubbed her nose with the back of her hand. "Then we could drink tea all day!" she said.

Sarah laughed as she lined the pie plate with the pastry.

"Mother! Sarah!" Katie called as she rushed in, crashing against the little kitchen door. She was carrying a pail of milk in one hand. It swayed back and forth, and drops of milk splashed onto the clean floor. "Grammy and Grandfather are here! They are coming down our road," she announced, dropping her pail of milk onto the table.

Sarah scowled. "Watch out for the pie, Katie," she said. Katie was always rushing around and making a mess of things, she thought.

"Stop fussing," said Katie. She dashed across the kitchen.

Mrs. Barnes stopped her. "Katie, slow down please." She gathered up Katie's

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straw-colored hair and tucked it under her cap. She wiped the dirt off her face and straightened her dress so that her petticoats weren't peaking out. "Go and wipe up that milk."

"Yes, Ma'am," Katie answered, pouting.

Six-year-olds! Sarah thought. She wiped her hands on her apron and dusted the flour off her shoes. Her stomach felt all quivery. Sarah walked through the dining room and past the parlor. She waited eagerly as her mother pulled open the heavy wooden front door.

Grandfather Henry walked quickly up the stone path with his arms open wide. "Margaret!" he said, his face shining. His rough, sea-weathered cheeks crinkled as he smiled.

Mrs. Barnes balanced Emily on one hip and hugged Grandfather with her free arm. "Welcome, Father. It is so nice to see you."

Grandfather gave his daughter a big kiss on the cheek. Then he squeezed

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Emily's cheeks and kissed her forehead.

Grammy Joan swished past them, her silky blue dress gliding across the floor. Neatly she slipped off her long black gloves. Sarah thought that she looked like the china doll she had seen in a store window in Portsmouth, the largest town in their state of New Hampshire. Her shimmering black-and-silver hair was twisted up elegantly beneath her bonnet. Sarah felt nervous. Grammy always made her feel that way, as though she had forgotten to brush her hair or tie her shoes.

Grammy untied her bonnet. "Margaret," she said to Sarah's mother, smoothing her hair, "do be a dear and wash your face. You've got a smudge right across your nose!"

"Of course," Mrs. Barnes stammered, putting her hand to her nose. "Please come in and make yourself comfortable." Mrs. Barnes shifted Emily to her other arm. She winked at Sarah and Katie as she walked

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past them toward the kitchen. "Flour," she whispered in Sarah's ear and pointed to her sleeve.

Sarah quickly dusted the flour off her dress before Grammy could notice it.

"There are my girls!" Grandfather exclaimed. He grabbed Sarah and Katie and hugged them tight. He scooped Katie up into his arms and twirled her around his head. "I know that my Sarah is too grown up for this now," he said, putting the giggling Katie down again, "but are you too grown up to give your old grandfather a kiss?"

"Never!" Sarah said with a laugh, and she gave Grandfather a big kiss on his rough cheek. "I missed you, Grandfather," she said, holding his hand tight. A warm, happy feeling washed over her. "Where did your ship sail this time?" she asked.

"We sailed all the way to Portugal! It was a fine trip, and I have many wonder-

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ful stories to tell you some—" Grandfather coughed. He covered his mouth with a handkerchief.

"Are you all right, Grandfather?" Sarah asked. She suddenly felt very worried.

Grandfather smiled. He coughed twice more and then put his handkerchief away. "Yes, dear. Don't you worry." Grandfather's kind brown eyes seemed to smile, and he squeezed Sarah's hand.

Grammy sat down on the sofa under the window in the parlor. She straightened the sash on her dress and inspected the room. "Come here, girls," she finally called. "I want to take a look at my beautiful granddaughters."

"Grammy!" Katie hollered. She ran into the parlor and jumped up onto Grammy's lap.

"Yes, Katherine, dear," said Grammy, startled. She tried to straighten her dress.

"Father taught me how to milk Pepper. He says that I'm very *efficient*."

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Sarah giggled quietly. She didn't think that Katie even knew what *efficient* meant. Sarah walked slowly toward the sofa. She was careful to keep her back straight and walk like a proper young lady. She curtsied. "Hello, Grammy," she said in her most grown-up voice.

Grammy smiled. "Hello, Miss Barnes," she answered. She seemed pleased.

The wooden door creaked open. It was Sarah's father, Mr. Edward Barnes.

"Joan, Henry! Welcome!" he said as he took off his hat. He shook Grandfather's hand and clapped him on the back.

Mr. Barnes ran his hand through his curly light brown hair. Little bits of sawdust floated down to the floor. He had been working in the old barn the last few weeks. Sarah had heard lots of hammering and sawing, but Mr. Barnes had not allowed her to see what he was working on. Sarah was naturally a very curious girl. She had begged her father to tell her what he was

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doing. All he had said was, "You will find out soon enough. Be patient."

"If you will excuse me, I need to go and wash up," said Mr. Barnes, turning to go upstairs. "According to my nose, supper must be ready!"

Oh, no. My pie! Sarah thought. She dashed into the kitchen. Her mother was rolling the top crust over the chopped apples.

"It's all right," Mrs. Barnes said as she placed the pie in the little brick oven beside the hearth. "Just sweep the floor and set the table. The food is almost ready."

"Thank you, Mother," said Sarah, feeling relieved and a little guilty. She pulled the good plates and saucers out of the cupboard and set them out on the dining table. She poured water into each person's glass. Mrs. Barnes passed her bowls of steaming potatoes and corn. Sarah laid them out on the table. It looked like a lovely feast. Mrs. Barnes called the

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family, and they gathered to enjoy the evening meal together.

“Sarah,” Mr. Barnes said, his eyes twinkling, “that is just about the best apple pie you’ve made!”

“Thank you, Father,” Sarah said. “Mother helped me, though.”

“Delicious!” said Grandfather as he finished his second piece.

Mrs. Barnes smiled. “Why don’t you share the good news with the girls,” she said to Mr. Barnes as she cleared away Grandfather’s pie plate.

“Sarah,” Mr. Barnes said, folding his napkin and placing it beside his empty plate. “I’ll let Grandfather tell you what I’ve been doing in the old barn these last few weeks.”

Excited, Sarah wiggled to the edge of her chair. “Oh, please do, Grandfather,” she cried.

Grandfather let out a deep, low laugh. “Sarah, your father has fixed up the old barn into living quarters. Grammy and I

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are going to live with you on the farm for a few months!"

Sarah squealed with joy. Right on their farm! Grammy and Grandfather lived in Portsmouth, and often they had tea together after church on Sundays. Now Sarah could see them every day.

"Of course," Grammy added, brushing a crumb off of the table, "we will keep the house in the city. This is just until Henry's health improves."

Sarah's heart sank. "Grandfather, are you sick?" she asked, remembering his cough. She was afraid to hear the answer.

"Don't worry, sweetheart," said Grandfather, leaning over the table toward her. "The doctor thinks that some fresh New Hampshire air and some rest might help me get over this cough." Sarah felt a little bit better. She loved her Grandfather very much.

Mrs. Barnes rose from the table and carried a stack of dishes toward the kitchen.

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She looked at Sarah and then at Katie as she walked out. They knew what to do.

“I almost forgot,” said Grandfather, changing the subject. “We missed our Sarah’s birthday.”

Sarah blushed. She had turned eight just the week before.

“We have a special gift for you,” said Grammy, smiling. “Unfortunately, it isn’t quite ready. You should have it soon.”

“Thank you,” Sarah answered politely. She and Katie stood up and excused themselves from the table. Sarah carried the remaining cups, saucers, and pie plates into the kitchen. A quiet spring breeze rustled the kitchen curtains, and the scent of apple blossoms tiptoed in beneath the ruffles as Sarah placed the dirty dishes next to the wash basin. Mrs. Barnes already had her arms up to her elbows in dishwater. Katie dried a clean dinner plate and set it down on a corner of the table.

“Sarah,” she said, thrusting the tea

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towel toward her. "It's your turn now."

Mrs. Barnes snatched the tea towel out of Katie's hand and draped it over the back of a chair.

"No, no. Sarah, don't disappoint your grandfather," she said as she put her hands back into the dishwater. "Run upstairs and get your violin." Mrs. Barnes sighed and looked at the pile of dirty dishes. "Katie, it's your turn to put Emily to bed. Please change her and tuck her in. I'll finish the dishes."

Sarah and Katie looked at each other and grinned. It wasn't very often that they got out of doing dishes. "Thank you, Mother!" they said, giggling, and ran out of the kitchen before she could change her mind.

Sarah pushed open her bedroom door. The soft glow of the setting sun filled the room. She lifted her violin off the bed and gathered her music. *Oh well, she thought, I guess I'll just have to try my best.*

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Sarah slipped into a corner chair in the parlor. She rested her violin on her lap. Her father and Grandfather were deep in conversation, and she didn't want to disturb them.

"I tell you, Edward," Grandfather was saying excitedly. "Mr. Miller is preaching some very interesting things at the Christian Society chapel each night. He has shown clearly from the Bible that Jesus could return to this earth as early as next year!"

Sarah tried to look as if she weren't listening, but she couldn't help it.

"Which Bible texts does he use?" Mr. Barnes asked, his brow furrowed.

"Several," Grandfather said, "mostly from the prophecies of Daniel and the Revel—" Grandfather coughed. "There are so many texts," he continued in a raspy voice. "We need to sit down with our Bibles open and study them together."

"Humph!" Grammy said and stood up,

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her nose in the air. "I'd actually rather be in the kitchen than listen to this conversation!" She dropped her stitching onto the couch and brushed past Sarah's chair.

Sarah watched, her eyes wide open, as Grammy stormed into the kitchen. *Could Jesus really come back in the next year*, she wondered. Grammy didn't seem to believe it. Sarah felt excited and scared all at the same time. She sat quietly in her chair, not saying a word. Grandfather excitedly told Mr. Barnes about Mr. Miller's message. He was so excited about it, in fact, that he forgot to ask for his violin concert!