

Mom sat on the bed and took one of Maddie's hands, placing it on her stomach. Maddie held perfectly still, as she intently waited. Her face lit up. "I felt it, Mommy! They did kick!"

Mollie brushed her hair and stood next to Mom. "May I feel too, Mom?"

"Yes. Try over here." It wasn't long before Mollie felt a strong kick. "I can't wait until we can hold them. Do you need help with breakfast, Mom?"

"No. I'm doing a quick, easy one since you children are going with Dad."

At breakfast, Max asked, "What are you going to do with your free time?"

"I've already made a list," Mom responded. "There's sewing to finish—I've been working on matching jumpers for us girls. I also want to organize in my room. Don't worry; I won't move around anything heavy."

Maddie reached for the jar of peanut butter and in the process knocked over her glass of milk. Maple eagerly began lapping up the drips that were coming from the table. Maddie apologized. "I'm terribly sorry. I shouldn't have bereached for the peanut butter."

Mitch, who had wisely evaded the spilled milk by a quick exit from his seat, raced from the table to grab a few rags. He mopped up the milk, and Mollie poured Maddie a new glass. "Five minutes until we leave," Dad reminded, looking at the clock. The children managed to contain their excitement while preparing to leave. They each gave Mom a hug and hurried to the van.

Chapter 5

Grandpa and Grandma's House

Dad pulled into Grandpa and Grandma's large circle driveway. Grandpa stepped out of the door and strode over to the van. "How are my grandchildren and son today?" he boomed cheerfully.

"We're blessed. Is Grandma still feeling well?" Dad wondered.

"Better than ever!" Grandpa replied. "She's looking forward to helping with the shower. Does Emily suspect anything?"

"Not that I can tell. I'm going to call her at lunch and invite her out to dinner. I'll tell her that you and Grandma are coming over to watch the children. Emily's never had a surprise party; I don't think she has any idea."

Grandpa nodded. "I get to be a school teacher this morning; it's a trade I've never tried. We'll take the children home mid-afternoon when we're through."

Dad finished helping the girls out of the van. "You'll make a good teacher, Dad. Children, remember to be praying about the shower tonight. Mr. Delome and Mrs. Bagwell aren't saved yet."

"Yes, sir!"

The children waved to Dad and then hurried into the house, chatting happily with Grandpa. Grandma, who had been

opening the curtains in the living room, came over and gave them each a hug. “Good morning! How is everyone?”

Several minutes of small talk occurred before Grandma explained the schedule. “We’ll do school this morning, and then before lunch, we’ll bake the cake. This afternoon, we’ll decorate the cake while you boys work with Grandpa on the platform you’re going to build.”

“What platform?” Maddie asked.

“We want something to stand on at the baby shower when we’re giving our speeches and such, so Grandpa suggested we make a wooden platform,” Max explained.

“Oh.”

Grandma kept Maddie occupied throughout the morning with coloring books and going through her ABC flashcards. Soon, school was completed. “Well,” Grandpa stood up. “Max and Mitch, let’s go down to my shop and gather our supplies. Martha, please call us for lunch.”

“Sure thing.” The cake mix was sitting on the counter. A measuring cup contained water and oil, and Grandma grabbed a few eggs from the refrigerator. “You may go ahead and start on the cake. Would you girls like to use my aprons?” Opening the pantry door, Grandma fingered several cute aprons.

“Yes, ma’am.” Mollie and Maddie each chose one.

Mollie handed Maddie the large wooden spoon. “You may stir it for me, okay?”

Grandma worked on preparing lunch while the girls made the cake. After a few minutes, the creamy mix was smooth

and ready for the pan. “It smells delicious even before it is in the oven, Grandma!” Mollie poured the rich chocolate batter into the cake pan. “Oh NO!” she wailed.

Grandma turned. “What is it?”

“I forgot to grease the pan. What should I do?”

“Is that all?” Grandma sighed with relief. “Don’t worry; we’ll dump it back into the bowl, wash the pan, and grease it. I’ve done that before.”

When the mistake was fixed, Grandma slid the cake pan into the oven, and she and the girls finished making lunch. “Would you like to call the boys?” Grandma asked Maddie.

“Yes, ma’am. I like to tell people it’s time to eat.” Maddie bounced off to the basement.

The boys and Grandpa joined them, and Grandpa asked Max to bless the food. “Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this food that Grandma and the girls made. Please bless it. I pray that we would be diligent in getting everything done. I pray that Mom wouldn’t guess what we’re doing, and we would be a blessing to her. Please keep the twins safe and healthy. I pray You would also help us to find a van so we can ride together. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

Conversation revolved around the afternoon’s plans. “How are we going to make our platform?” Mitch wondered.

“I’ve been thinking about that.” Grandpa placed a slice of tomato on his bread. “It only needs to hold the weight of each of you children, right? No adult will be standing on it.”

Max nodded. “Yes, sir.”

“I have several old pine boards. They’re not that strong, but they should hold for what we’re needing.”

Grandma buttered a piece of bread. “I’m excited to do cake decorating with you girls. The cake!” She jumped up and hurried to the oven. Pulling the cake out, she poked a toothpick in the center. “Yes, it’s done. I forgot to set the timer.”

“Grandma,” Maddie paused and hurriedly chewed her mouthful of food. “Do I have to take a nap?”

“Yes, your mom said you need to. You may sleep in our special guest room.”

Maddie speared a piece of apple, and then she looked at Grandma. “I like naps in your guest room.”

“I’m glad. First, though, you can help Mollie with the frosting.”

The boys cleared the lunch items and then went downstairs with Grandpa. Grandma turned on a hymn CD. “Grandpa gave this to me recently. I would never have listened to it before I became a Christian, but I love it now. My life has changed so much since I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior.” She hunted through her recipe box and located the frosting recipe. “Here, Maddie, you may take this over to Mollie.” Grandma set out the ingredients. “We’re ready to begin.”

Maddie poured in each ingredient when Mollie gave her permission. The white, creamy frosting took shape as Mollie turned the mixer to a higher speed. Grandma watched her youngest granddaughter and said, “Maddie, it’s important you keep your fingers away from the mixing bowl. If your fingers get in the bowl while it’s beating, it could really hurt them.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Maddie eyed the yummy-looking substance. “May I have a lick?”

Grandma peeked into the bowl. “Soon, Maddie. We’ll let it beat a little longer, and then when it’s done, you’re welcome to a bite. We ought to test what we make.”

A minute later, Mollie turned off the mixer. “Is that enough?”

“Yes,” Grandma grabbed two spoons from the silverware drawer. “Tell me what you think.”

The frosting passed the girls’ taste test. “Time for your nap, Maddie,” Grandma announced cheerfully.

Down in the basement, Grandpa and the boys were enjoying themselves. “How big are you wanting this platform to be?” Grandpa wondered, after listening to Mitch describe the object.

Mitch looked at Max. “Go ahead, Max.”

“That *is* a good question. I don’t want to fall off it. I know I have a tendency to fidget and move around. But if it’s too big, that’ll be a bother. What are your thoughts, Grandpa?”

“The wood will probably limit us on what size we can make. Let’s look through what I have.” Grandpa walked over to his wood bin and found several pieces. He pulled out his tape measure and pencil and made a few grunts as he calculated. “We could make it about two feet long and a foot wide.”

Grandpa marked several places on the wood so they would know where to trim off the edges, and then he let Max carefully cut the pieces. “Can we paint our platform when we’re finished?” Mitch asked.