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Love is Simple

By Lauren Jones

“Lauren!” my mom [hollered] at me through the hall, “Mrs. Shirley and Bill invited us over for dinner tonight. I’d like you to come with us.”

“Do I have to?” I groaned, “There’s not going to be anything for me to do. I’ll be so bored.”

My mom gave me the look that only she could give. That look has the power to make me feel like I need to repent for every wrong I’ve ever committed in my entire lifetime in the name of Jesus. Needless to say, I knew I would be attending dinner at Bill and Shirley’s that evening; no questions asked.

The old couple welcomed us at the door. Bill had sad eyes and a tired smile. His skin was dark and rough from his days in the garden. His attire almost always consisted of a plain white shirt and khaki slacks. Shirley’s figure was petite and fragile. She had soft, fair skin; her eyes were full of contentment, and her heart was made to serve.



Inside their modest, vintage home, the air smelled of sweet, homemade pecan pie with an occasional whiff of cinnamon and soap. In the living room, a shadow box of old war medals and badges rested on the wall above the bookshelf, along with a picture of a young man with familiar sad eyes and a tired smile. Along with this display, an old grandfather clock moved steadily, never missing a beat. (2)I could hear it ticking away the seconds of the evening in the quiet house. The atmosphere was relaxing, like the pitter-patter of rain on a windowpane. It was as if time stood still; the worries of life melted away in the warm, inviting, little home. We entered the kitchen to help with any finishing touches for the meal. I decided my job would be to set the table. (1)As I searched for the silverware drawer, I noticed antique dishware covered the countertops. Decorative plates demanded attention on the wall above the gas stove. I was so mesmerized by the stories each plate withheld, I almost forgot what I had set out to do. As I set the table, Bill started bringing out food in large pyrex bowls. Grilled chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, rolls, and of course, pecan pie summoned me with their intoxicating smells.

Once everything was in its place, we [raced] to our seats to eat. My mouth watered just looking at the food, but eating it

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was even better. The juicy, tender chicken complemented the creamy potatoes perfectly. The pecan pie was just as enticing as the smell that filled the house. Every bite I took was just as delicious as the one before.

Once dinner was over, we made our way to the living room to let our food settle and chat. I picked a seat right next to Bill. Their couch was soft and had the perfect smooch to it. While Mom and Dad were quietly talking to Mrs. Shirley, Bill nudged me in the ribs and struck up a conversation.

“You wanna know how to never have to wash the dishes again?” he asked.

I smirked and shrugged my shoulders, unsure of what would follow.

“Every time your mother asks you to do the dishes, chip a plate,” he chuckled. “That way, your mom will get sick of you accidentally chippin’ all her plates; eventually, you won’t ever have to wash a dish again.”

We both sat there giggling and snickering as we carried on our goofy conversation. We teased each other and talked about our hobbies as time casually walked by. A comfortable and familiar relationship blossomed between us. Minutes quickly turned into hours as we sat on their old, tan yet inviting couch.

All too soon, my mom announced that our wonderful evening had ended. I slowly rose out of the chair, said my good-byes, and trudged to the door.

The night I had been terribly dreading had turned into one of my most treasured memories. After that night, I continued to visit Bill and Shirley often. The simple yet comforting old couple had turned into my adopted grandparents. I loved them dearly.

Bill and Shirley have both passed away, and I still think about them often. I miss those wonderful days of interesting conversation with them; however, they bestowed upon me so much about the relationships we form with others. Bill taught me that life shouldn’t be taken too seriously; he taught me that humor is important and comforting. Shirley taught me to extend grace to all people, and to look for the beauty in the little things in life. I learned that living simply, investing in others, and loving like Jesus is the most fulfilling lifestyle I could have. They taught me that the worries and haste of life will all pass away, but focusing on Jesus and serving others will last forever. I’m so thankful for the legacy this sweet couple has permanently [ingrained] within my conscience.

I can’t wait to see them again one day. It will be a sweet homecoming with folks like themselves.

