

POISSON

BY EMILY CANNON ORGILL

(Based on experiences of the author's family)

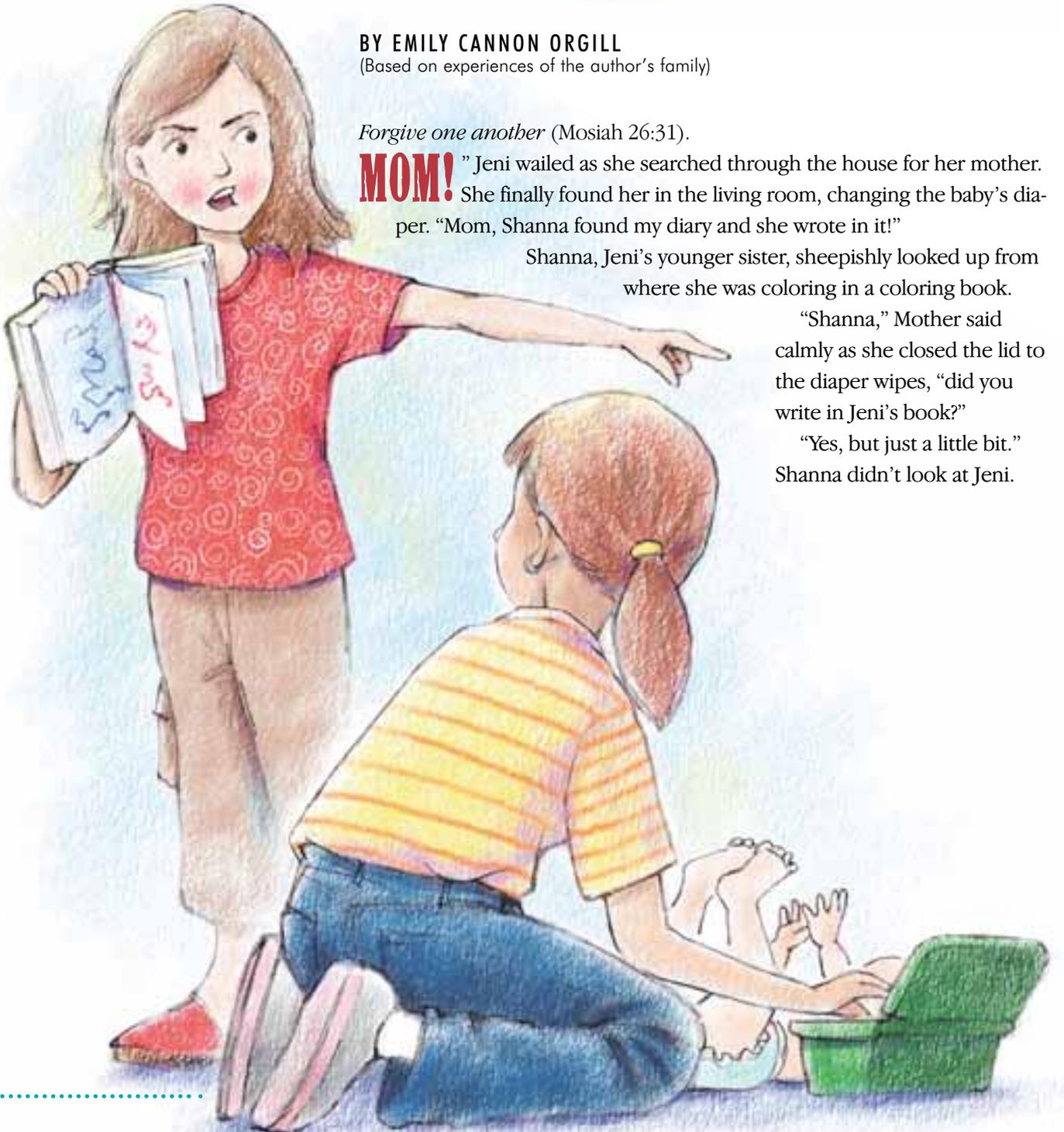
Forgive one another (Mosiah 26:31).

MOM! Jeni wailed as she searched through the house for her mother. She finally found her in the living room, changing the baby's diaper. "Mom, Shanna found my diary and she wrote in it!"

Shanna, Jeni's younger sister, sheepishly looked up from where she was coloring in a coloring book.

"Shanna," Mother said calmly as she closed the lid to the diaper wipes, "did you write in Jeni's book?"

"Yes, but just a little bit." Shanna didn't look at Jeni.



Instead she carefully put each crayon back into the box.

Mother's eyebrows pulled together and her mouth was stern. "Shanna, you know you shouldn't use Jeni's things without asking first."

"Besides, it wasn't just a little bit," Jeni told Mom. "She wrote on practically every page!"

"Let me look at it." Mother flipped through the pages one by one. "It's not too bad. I think Shanna just wants to try to be like you and do the same things you're doing."

"It's totally wrecked!" Jeni cried.

"OK. Let's try to think of something that we can do to fix the problem," Mother suggested. "Shanna didn't mean to ruin your diary."

"Nothing can fix it. I'll never forgive her!"

Shanna picked up her crayon box and coloring book and walked quietly out of the room, not looking at Jeni.

"I don't think you really meant that, Jeni," Mother said quietly. Jeni was so angry that she wouldn't listen to her mother. She threw her diary onto the floor and ran outside.

Mother put the baby down on his blanket

with a toy and was beginning to prepare dinner when she heard Jeni crying again. This time it was not an angry wail, but a hurt cry.

Mother sighed and opened the back door. Jeni was crying and rubbing her face.

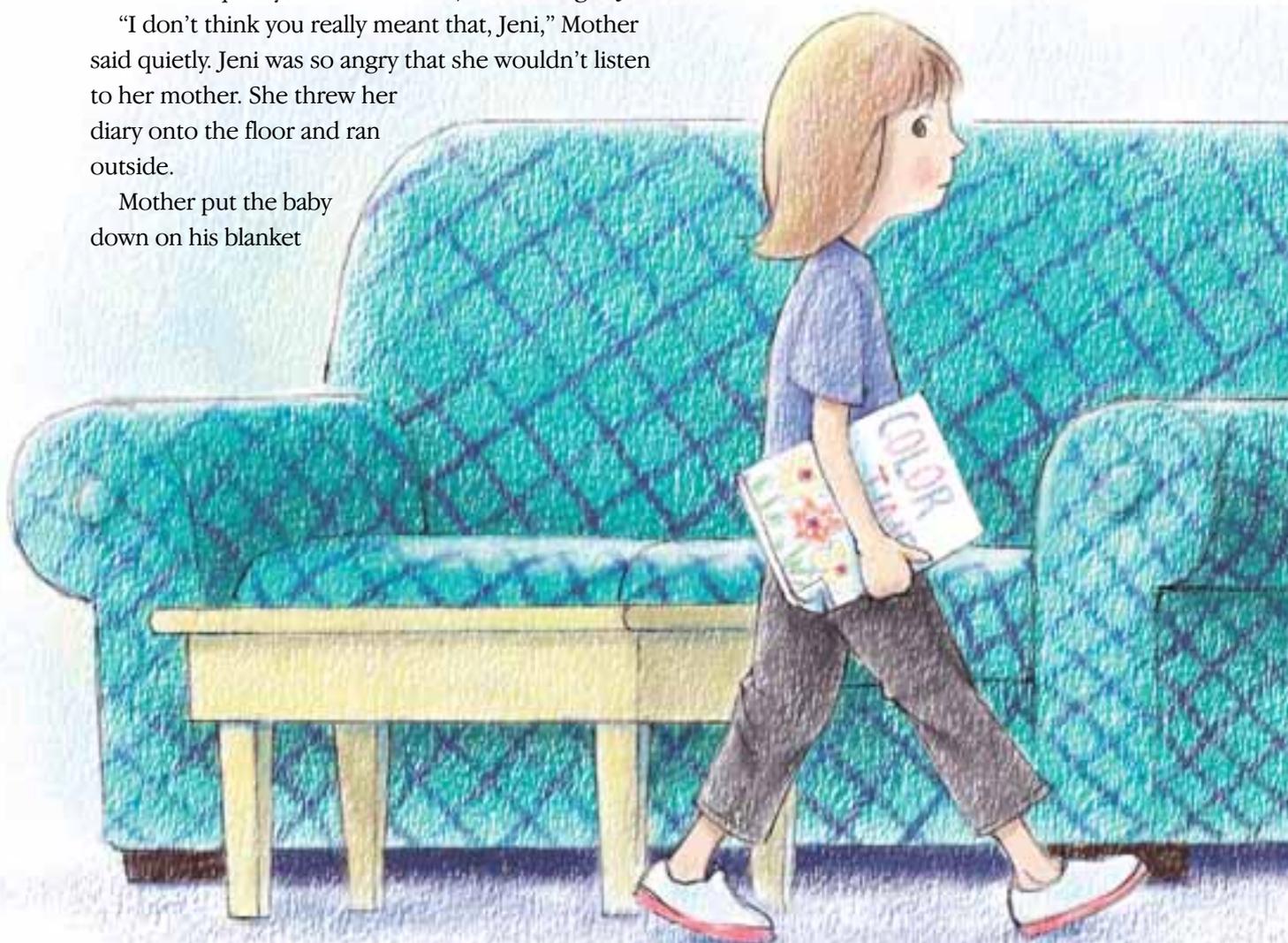
"What happened?" Mother asked.

Sobbing, Jeni pointed at a soccer ball on the lawn. "I was so mad at Shanna, I threw my ball down really hard and it bounced up and hit me in the face."

"Oh, dear." Mother sat down on the steps and pulled Jeni onto her lap. "I think there's a good lesson in this. I once heard a story about a man who was bitten by a rattlesnake. What would you do if you were bitten by a rattlesnake?"

"I don't know," Jeni replied.

"You're supposed to stay still until help comes," said



Jeni's older brother, who had just ridden up on his bike.

"Well, in this case, the man was so angry at the snake that he ran after it and chased it until he killed it. The problem," Mother continued, "was that running caused the poison from the snake to spread faster through his body, and so he died quickly. If he had remained calm, the poison would not have done as much damage, and he could have received help and lived."

Jeni rubbed her red cheek. "So are you saying that when we get mad, we only hurt ourselves?"

Mother nodded. "Why do you think Heavenly Father wants us to forgive others when they do something to hurt us or make us mad?"

"So we can show love to them?" Jeni asked.

"That's part of it. Heavenly Father wants us to do everything we can to help others grow and improve. But He also wants us to forgive others because He knows that if we don't, it hurts us the most. It hurts us deep inside, like poison, and the wound just keeps getting bigger if we don't stop it. Sometimes people get so hurt and angry inside that it makes them do bad things they wouldn't normally do."

"Like me banging the ball really hard," Jeni said.

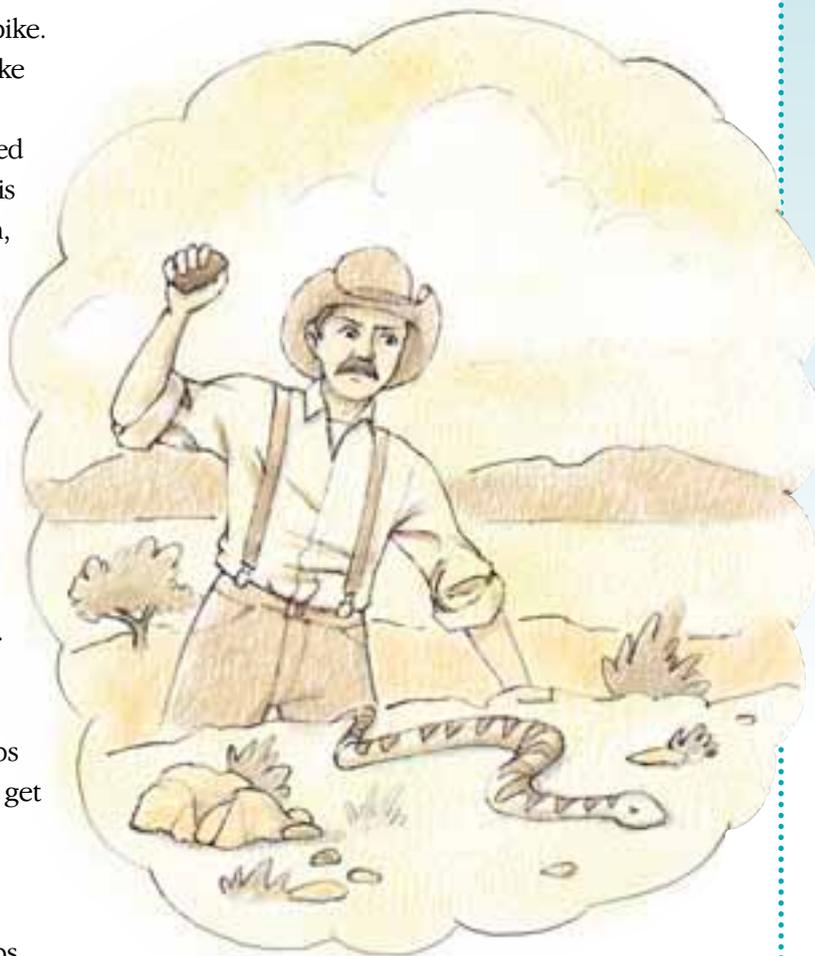
"That's right. And sometimes the hurt inside keeps people from doing good things they would normally do. It keeps them from being close to Heavenly Father," Mother said.

Jeni was thinking hard now. "Maybe I'm ready to think about a solution for the diary," she said.

"I'm glad," Mother replied. "I know Heavenly Father loves you very much. He wants you to be happy!"

Jeni's face brightened. With a big smile, she hurried off to look for her sister. ●

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"As individuals, we should 'follow after the things which make for peace' (Romans 14:19). We should be personal peacemakers."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, " 'Blessed Are the Peacemakers,' " *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 41.