

The Rose Garden

The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave
(“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

BY PAT WAYNE

(Based on an experience from the author’s life)

Mike,” Dad called. “Time for school.” Walking slowly down the stairs, Mike found Dad waiting for him at the bottom.

“Do I have to go?” Mike asked. “Can’t I wait until tomorrow?”

Dad shook his head. “There have been too many tomorrows. I understand how you feel, but you need to get caught up.”

“Mrs. Peters sent home some of my work,” Mike said.

Dad sighed and handed Mike a sweater. “Today I go back to work—and you go back to school.”

Mike felt tears welling up. Surely he wasn’t going to cry again! “It’s so hard without Mom.”

Dad knelt and hugged Mike. “I know.” Mike could see the pain in Dad’s eyes.

As Mike walked out the door, he looked at Mom’s beautiful rose garden. But it wasn’t beautiful anymore. Weeds were popping up everywhere. He sighed. Would anything ever be the same again?

School was the same—noisy children running and talking. Mike dragged himself into his third-grade classroom.

Sam, his best friend, waved. Mike tried to smile, but his smile wouldn’t work. He kept taking deep breaths and trying not to cry.

Mrs. Peters began class. Mike heard her talking, but his gaze wandered outside. It was sunny. “How can the

world look bright when Mom has died?” he wondered. A tear slid down his nose.

“Look, Mike’s crying!” shouted Bill, who sat across the aisle.

Without thinking, Mike got up and ran out the door and down the hall. He would never go back to school again! He pushed open the big school doors and ran the five blocks home. It was cold without a sweater.

He went to his room to get a jacket, then sat on his swing in the backyard. He swung back and forth, staring at the ground.

He thought of going to Grandma’s house, but she was sad now, too. She used to laugh a lot



“Loving relationships continue beyond the doors of death. . . . Family ties endure because of sealings in the temple.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Doors of Death,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 74.

and go bowling and bake cookies. He wondered if she had gone back to work, too.

Mike made the swing go higher. Maybe, he thought, he would fall off and die. Then he could go to heaven and see Mom.

He heard words like the wind in the trees—"Then Dad and Grandma wouldn't have you. Would you want Dad to leave?"

He stopped the swing, his feet skidding in the dirt. Who had said that? Was it Mom, speaking to him from heaven? He looked around, but there was only the sound of leaves rustling in the wind.

Mike looked at the patch of blue sky through the trees. "I miss my mom! Please, Heavenly Father, help me!" His tears started again.

Suddenly he had the urge to go to Mom's rose garden. He stood looking at the poor rosebushes, without water and with lots of weeds. Mom sure wouldn't like that! He knelt and began pulling and yanking at the weeds. Then he grabbed the garden hose and watered the bushes he had weeded. Soon it would be spring, and the roses would bloom bright red and yellow and pink. He wondered if Mom would see them from heaven. Somehow he felt closer to her as he worked in her garden.

Dad's car came roaring up the driveway. He jumped out, ran to Mike, and hugged him. "They called me from school."

"I'll go back tomorrow," Mike promised. "Dad, look at the rosebushes."

"Mom would be proud," Dad said. "I'll change clothes, and we can work on it together."

As Mike weeded alongside Dad, he thought of the roses that would bloom. He could almost smell their fragrance. After they bloomed, he decided, he would pick some of them for Grandma.

Mike looked up to see Sam and Bill. The two boys looked at the weeds.

"Can we help?" Sam asked.

Mike nodded. Slowly, a smile crept onto his face. ●

