

God is Holding Your Hand

THE MORNING SUN moved to schooltime in the sky. He sent his messengers to the children of Earth. One bright ray hastened to Margy Lou's room where he lit on her face and wakened her. As she slowly opened her eyes she noticed the sunbeam, coming through a crack in the blind just like a golden ladder to heaven.

"Margy Lou, Margy Lou! Time to get up." It was her mother calling. Margy didn't answer; she was absorbed in watching the dancing particles in the light ray.

A few minutes later her mother called again. "Margy Lou, Margy Lou! You had better get up now or you will be late for school."

"When she heard the word *school* Margy's heart turned a flip-flop. She remembered that it was the day they were to recite the poem, *The Children's Hour*. She liked poetry and especially Longfellow's poems, but she was afraid to stand in front of the boys and girls and recite.

Her throat tightened as she thought about it. It began to hurt. She would tell her mother she didn't feel well. Perhaps she would let her stay at home. Then she wouldn't have to say the poem.

Mrs. Bond came into the room. Margy didn't move. Her mother came to the bed. "What's the matter, Margy? Why aren't you getting up?"

"Oh, Mother, my throat hurts." Margy held her hands to her throat. Mrs. Bond examined her throat and found enlarged kernels on each side. However, being a wise mother, she decided it was best to ignore symptoms this time.

She said, "I don't think it is anything serious. It



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will probably be all right by the time you reach school. Get up now and get ready. I will have your breakfast in a few minutes." Then she left the room.

Margy got up; she knew her mother wasn't going to let the throat trouble be an excuse for her to stay home this time. Soon she was dressed and ready for breakfast. But the hot chocolate she liked so well with brown toast had no appeal as she thought about the ordeal ahead. She ate a little to keep her mother from worrying, but left her cereal untouched.

Then she got her books and started for school. Usually she enjoyed the walk, but today each step was bringing her nearer to recitation time. Finally she bowed her head and prayed as she walked, "Dear God, help me to speak the poem. Help me not to be afraid."

Asking God to help made her feel better, and as she lifted her head she saw something round, dark,

and shiny lying on the walk in front of her. She stooped and picked it up. It was a buckeye. Margy knew what had made it so shiny. Someone had been carrying it in his pocket a long time, probably to keep off rheumatism, as she had heard her Uncle Jim say.

She held it in her hand and looked at it. How could the nut possibly keep rheumatism away? It might be because one believed that it would. Then she saw Thelma and Lucille motioning for her to hurry, so she dropped the nut in her dress pocket and ran to catch up with them.

At last the hour came for the poetry. Thelma was the first to recite. She spoke without the least sign of fear. Margy knew the poem just as well as Thelma. She wondered why she couldn't recite like Thelma. A couple of boys were next after Thelma. Margy began to get fidgety as she knew her time was getting nearer. Finally the teacher smiled and said, "You are next, Margy Lou."

Margy walked hesitantly to the front of the room. She didn't dare to look at the boys and girls so she kept her eyes on the floor. She tried to speak. Her lips moved. Not a sound came. Her throat hurt. Her knees shook. Unconsciously she put her hand into her pocket. What was that hard thing her fingers touched? Oh, yes, the buckeye she had picked up. She clutched it tightly in her hand as she tried again to speak. To her surprise the words now came out clearly. She lifted her eyes and looked at the children. She recited the poem without an error.

Margy went back to her seat very happy, but the teacher's compliments were not the cause of her happiness. Something had happened to her. She had not been afraid to recite as long as she had held the buckeye in her hand. Perhaps it did keep rheumatism away, after all, she thought. Anyway, she was going to keep that buckeye, and the next time she was afraid to recite she would see if it helped her.

So for several months Margy had no more throat swellings. Whenever she had a difficult lesson she held the magic buckeye in her hand and recited well. But she never told anyone about the nut. Always she was careful to hide it away when she got home from school.

Then came the history test. Margy had never learned history easily. She must be sure to take the buckeye to help her during the test. Just before starting to school she looked for it in the drawer in her usual hiding place. It wasn't there. She searched the room, but could not find her buckeye. She must have left it in the pocket of her blue dress last Friday. She would ask her mother if she had found it.

Mrs. Bond was ironing. "Mother, have you seen my buckeye?" asked the little girl.

"Why, yes, I found one yesterday when I washed."

"Oh, goody! What did you do with it?" Margy's voice grew higher.

"I threw it away, dear," replied her mother.

Then Margy shrieked, "You threw my buckeye away! What will I do? What will I do now?"

"Why, you can get another the next time we go to Uncle Jim's, darling. You aren't getting superstitious, are you?"

"But I don't want another one. I want *that* one." Margy began to cry.

Mrs. Bond turned off the iron, put her arm around Margy and led her to the couch. Then she said, "Now tell Mother what is the matter. Did someone you like very much give the buckeye to you?"

"No, I found it," sobbed Margy.

"Can't you tell me why it means so much to you?" asked Mrs. Bond. "I would have kept it if I had known you wanted to keep it," she went on consolingly.

Little by little her mother got from Margy the story of how whenever she held the buckeye in her hand she could recite without being afraid and could get her lessons more easily.

Then Mrs. Bond said, "Margy Lou, listen to me. That little buckeye was filled with Life; we know Life was in it because if we had planted it, it would have grown. Isn't that true? Now, the Life in that buckeye was God. When you held the nut in your hand, you were really holding God's hand, for God's hand is everywhere. He holds our hand all the time so we won't be afraid, but sometimes we don't know that He does.

Now this is your opportunity to learn that God is

holding your hand. Whenever you are afraid or think you can't get your lessons or recite them, just remember that you can hold God's hand with your mind. Then you will be free to use both of your hands for whatever you have to do. Don't you think that will be better than always having to hunt and take care of a buckeye?"

"Yes," said Margy thoughtfully, "I do. But, Mother, I can't feel God holding my hand like I can feel the buckeye, can I?"

"No, dear," replied her mother, "but you can know that God is always with you—that is holding His hand with your mind. Don't you think you can do that?"

Margy looked at her mother a moment and then said, "Yes, I believe I can. I think God is holding my hand now, and I am sure I can pass that history test today."

Then Margy picked up her books and started to school. She stopped at the door long enough to say to her mother, "I'm glad now that you threw my buckeye away, but, I am glad, too, that I found it

THE WIND

I never, never see the wind,
And yet it bends the tallest trees;
It chases leaves along the path
And sails the ships upon the seas.

Sometimes the wind is strong and gay,
Sometimes I feel it kiss my face,
And yet, although it is so near,
I cannot see it any place.

I think this is the way with God:
I cannot see Him, yet I know
He often holds my hand in His,
When I know not which way to go.

—Patsey Ellis

because if I hadn't, I might have been a long time learning that God is holding my hand." □

—Clara E. Huffman

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