

The Inner Light

A story for younger children by Edith Spence.

Nora and Peter hurried along the road towards Uncle Gholam's house. He had invited them to come to meet a special friend of his.

Nora turned to Peter and said, "I wonder what is so special about this friend of Uncle Gholam's, and whether he is young or old?"

"We'll soon see," said Peter, as he knocked on the door.



It was opened immediately, as Uncle Gholam had been expecting them. "Come away in, my friends. It is always good to see you."



Standing by the open window, as if he was staring at the flowers, was a young man about twenty years of age, tall and rather handsome. When he heard the voices he turned around and Uncle Gholam said, "Andrew, meet my two young friends, Nora

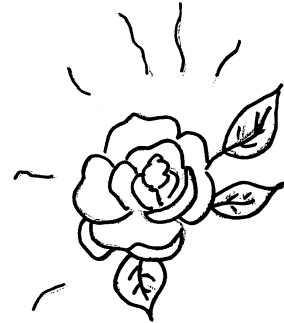
and Peter."

They stepped forward with outstretched hands, but Andrew did not put out his hand to greet them. Uncle Gholam said to them, "Andrew is not bad-mannered, my friends. He is blind, so if you put your hands into his, he will be able to greet you properly." The children did as he said, and what a strong, friendly handshake Andrew gave them. He was a bright young man with a smiling face.



Nora said, "I thought you were looking at the flowers when I first came into the room, you seemed to be looking so closely at them."

"In a way that is true," said Andrew. "I was inhaling the beautiful perfume. I cannot see the colours as you do, but my sense of smell is very good. Also my senses of hearing and touch are most acute. Perhaps I get more from the perfume than you do, Nora, because you are so absorbed with seeing the beauty, while I inhale the fragrance, and can feel the beauty when I touch the flowers tenderly."



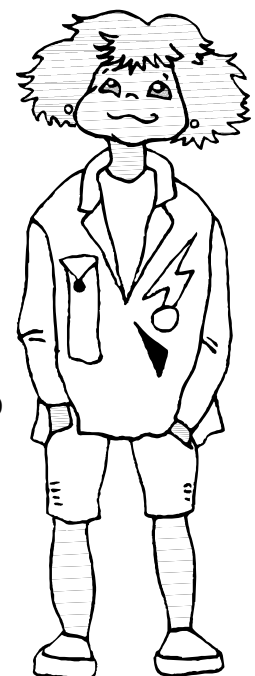
Feeling a little embarrassed, Peter said to Andrew, "How long have you been blind, Andrew?"

"I have always been blind, Peter, but do not pity me because I am very happy. You see, God gave me something else to make up for my physical blindness - He gave me an inner sight, which we all have, but do not always use. I am not troubled by what people look like: I just love them because they are God's creatures, and I can always tell a very kind person by his voice. I just have an 'inner knowing'."

Nora was thinking. "I don't mean to be rude, Andrew, but I would hate to be blind as I would not be able to read, and I love reading so much."

At this point, Uncle Gholam said, "Tea is ready. Do come and sit down at the table."

When they were all seated, Andrew answered.

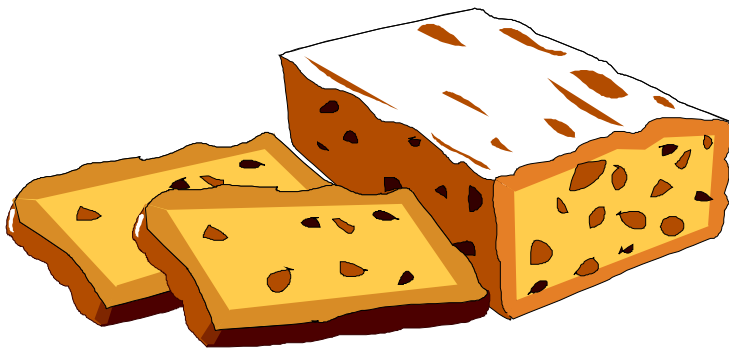


"Well, Nora, learning to read when you first started school must have been very difficult for you, even with your sight, but as you kept on with your lessons, it all suddenly came clear to you. Am I right?"

"Yes, that is true."



"It was the same with me when I first started learning Braille, which is a form of writing all done with raised dots. It is also difficult to learn, but like you, I kept on with my lessons, and one day it all became very clear to me. Then I found I could read by touch, and there are so many books written in Braille, I am never short of things to read. So you see, I get the same enjoyment as you do out of reading, and I am not missing anything there."



"Now, my friends," said Uncle Gholam, "you are letting your tea get cold. Let us have a pause, and enjoy our tea, and this splendid cake which Andrew kindly brought for us."

They all laughed, and for a while gave their attention to eating and drinking.

When tea was finished, Nora and Peter cleared the table and washed up.

