

## THE FORGOTTEN PROMISE

By Marilyn Kratz

397 Words

Brittle December sunshine streamed in through the west windows of my small one-room schoolhouse that afternoon, many years ago, as I graded papers and then cleared my desk. I shut down the oil heater in the center of the room and slipped into my coat. "Hurry, Donna," I whispered to myself, as I stood by the window watching for my younger sister who picked me up every day on her way home from high school.

Though I was only nineteen years old with just one year of college training and still lived with my parents on their farm, I felt independent and quite grown-up. I was a certified teacher, after all, and this room was the tiny world where I was in charge of everything.

I smiled as I thought about how excited my former college roommate, Joanie, must feel right then. She was a "one-year wonder," too, teaching in the nearby rural school that I had attended as a child, and that evening her students would present their Christmas program. I couldn't be late for her special night.

At last I saw my sister coming down the road. I reached into my pocket and pulled out my gloves. A piece of paper fluttered to the floor. I picked it up and recognized my own handwriting.

"Oh, no!" I groaned as I read the words, "Remember to make three pies for the lunch at Joanie's Christmas program."

I had forgotten all about the note, and it was too late now to make pies. I felt my cheeks redden with humiliation. What would I say to Joanie? All the smug self-confidence I had felt just minutes ago faded as I climbed into the car.

Mama was putting the fried chicken on the supper table as my sister and I came into the kitchen. Suddenly, I stopped and gasped. On the counter were three beautiful apple pies.

"Mama!" I cried. "I didn't tell you I'd promised to bring three pies tonight. How did you know?"

"Oh, I always take pies to the Christmas program at our school," said Mama. "Sit down, girls. Supper's ready."

For a moment, I just stood there, letting my mother's calm efficiency restore my self-confidence, now tempered with a good dose of modesty. Then I said, "Thank you, Mama." And I didn't feel too grown-up to give her a quick hug.