

# Lucky Penny

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face. Memories, both happy and sad, rushed back to me as I remembered the times that Jim and I had shared.

I THEN turned toward my dresser. Reaching it, I pulled out the little blue cushioned stool and gingerly sat down on it. My eyes wandered over the various articles that cluttered its top surface — hair brush, ribbons, perfume and everything else imaginable for a lively 16-year-old girl to own. I pushed back a lock of curly brown hair which had fallen in my face.

I then raised my green eyes and saw my reflection in the mirror. Many things had changed. I was no longer an innocent girl of 16. I was now a mature and married woman of 21. In fact, I could almost be thought of as a mother. I had so many concerns, fears and questions buzzing through my mind. I was so careless and wrong when I left home to get married.

My parents had pleaded with me not to leave, but I didn't listen. I left

# A World's Grave

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terrors. The darkness spread throughout the land encompassing more towns, which had been hastily evacuated by their residents.

The Lords of Eldor were confused, and finally, King Fargo, already reaching his more venerable years, decided to send a small contingency of knights led by Thoron, one of the lords of the White Plume, into the shadows to find its source. They entered and were never seen again. Another band, this time consisting of the rest of the lords of the White Plume and a large army, were sent promptly after the acknowledgment of the failure of the first group. They too were unsuccessful.

THE DARKNESS kept expanding and, despite all the efforts of the populace, it could not be stopped. King Fargo, realizing how hopeless the situation was, offered to give up his throne to the person who could put an end to this nightmare. Thousands of people overcame their fears and entered the darkness in barren attempts to defeat the undefeatable. All the attempts failed and the darkness finally engulfed all of Eldor.

Young Vancore approached the black, ever-moving wall with a look of defiance on his face. He

anyway. Now, five years have gone by. Father is dead, and I am going to have a baby. I need my mother now, of all times, but could she really ever accept me back and love me again. I knew that she could never forget the pain I caused her. If I were in her place, I would at least try and forgive my daughter, if not forget.

But, I was not my mother. The Irish and very few in their ways. When I was little, Mama loved me dearly and gave me anything my heart desired. Then I grew up and left her. I had now returned, but both of us had changed greatly and she would no longer shower me with affection. I had emotionally wounded

finding more townspeople who apparently died in the same manner.

GRADUALLY, THE darkness around Vancore began to affect his senses. Nausea overcame him and his vision blurred. He struggled on until he reached a rather small valley. The fog thickened tremendously in this area. He stumbled down into the shallow gorge and hit his head against something solid.

Barely retaining consciousness, he stood up and inspected the area. The thing that he had bumped into was the corpse of one of the lords of the White Plume. The body was garbed in the traditional white armor, yet there was a new insignia patched onto the shoulder of the suit. Vancore glanced at the patch and noticed that it had a red, white and blue flag on it. Clumsily, he unsheathed his sword and struggled on.

The fog was not so thick that he could not see through it at all. His lungs were burning, and he began to cough and choke. Finally, after walking for five more feet, Vancore fell to his knees. He crawled for another yard and came into contact with a huge, metal cylinder. He grabbed it in a pliant spasm and inspected it. The cylinder was cracked, and it had some words painted on it.

In a last surge of energy, Vancore read them: Danger. Nuclear Wastes.

Mama and there was no easy cure for it.

I knew this by the cold reception she showed me when I arrived. I had to do something, but what? She probably wouldn't listen if I tried to talk to her, and what could I do to show her that I really did care about her and her feelings?

MY HEAD was all mixed up and I didn't expect any wonderful brainstorm to come to me at 12:30 a.m. So I decided to get myself in bed and face my problem in the morning.

I awoke at 9:00 to the faint chiming of the grandfather clock. I opened the drapes to let in the sunshine and then rummaged through my suitcase to find my bathrobe. I then shuffled to the door to begin my venture downstairs.

I took a deep breath, pushed my hair back and descended down the stairs. I couldn't help peeking into the living room before going to face Mama in the kitchen. My eyes wanted to take in everything at once, but I was especially drawn to an old scratched-up pipe resting on the

mantle of the fireplace. It was my father's pipe, the one he always smoked. I could smell the tobacco as

I stood over it and a tear came to my eye.

"Katherine, is that you?" Jerked from my thoughts, I slowly replied: "Yes... yes Mama, it's me."

I then scurried off to the kitchen to face what I feared most — the hurt feelings that my mother held against me.

MAMA WAS already eating when I entered, and she told me to sit down. At my place, I found a plate heartily filled with bacon, eggs and hashbrowns. Normally, I would have gobbled down the whole meal. But now, I didn't have any appetite at all.

Mama noticed my apprehension and snapped, "Eat it, the baby needs the nourishment."

The baby! Doesn't she have any feelings for me? After all, I'm her baby!

"Oh Mama!" I sobbed. "You can't just block me out! I've been gone five years — five long years..."

"It's not my problem you took off and married that brute against your father's and my wishes. We pleaded with you to stay. You're the one who made the decision."

"Oh, please. I know I was wrong in leaving, but..."

"So, you admit to being wrong, do you? From the looks of you, I would say it's a little too late to just fix things up."

"Oh no! I didn't mean I was wrong in marrying him! He's a wonderful husband, and he will be a great father to your grandchild. If you could only get to know him and stop blaming my actions on him! I had as much to do with it as he did — even more! Can't you try to see my side of this and forgive me? If not for me, then for your grandchild!"

I NOTICED a haze come across her eyes and a queer look came to her face, but in an instant, the cold blue eyes and stern face reappeared. She then stood up and began clearing the table. She didn't look at me, nor did she speak to me. Nothing that she could have said or done could have possibly given me a colder or lonelier feeling. She acted as if I wasn't even there, and indeed, maybe she wished I wasn't.

As the visit progressed, so did the remoteness between my mother and I. She always seemed to have something to do or somewhere to go, and I saw less and less of her each day.

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