

THE HARVEY GIRLS LEGACY — BOOK TWO

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Home
for the *Heart*

Home for the Heart

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PROLOGUE

May 4, 1885

Four-year-old Elizabeth Tilman focused on the men who lifted the two caskets from the carriage hearses. She felt the slight breeze ruffle her golden curls. An oriole sang somewhere nearby. She noticed the neat rows around her in the well-kept cemetery and felt the forbidding darkness of the rectangular shaped hole in the ground before her.

She felt a shiver of anxiety as she turned to her nanny and spoke softly. “Lucia, where’s Mommy and Daddy?”

Lucia knelt beside her, a concerned frown furrowing her brow. “Your mommy and daddy went to Heaven, Elizabeth. They had an accident, and Jesus took them to be with Him.”

“Why?” Hot tears flooded Elizabeth’s eyes. She made a forlorn figure, dressed in black from her hat to the uncomfortable

new shoes and socks on her normally active feet.

“I don’t know why.” Lucia glanced helplessly up to the minister and his wife, then gathered Elizabeth to her and wept.



CHAPTER I

May 1, 1901

Liz Gilbertson sat on cushions in the window seat of her second-story bedroom and studied the images in her parents' wedding photograph. Her father, with blond hair and mustache, looked dapper in a three-piece suit and bow-tie. Her mother's dark hair was swept back into a chignon. She wore a stylish high-necked black dress with tucks in the bodice, accented by a diamond brooch.

The photo had sat on the fireplace mantel since Liz was a small child. Recently, she'd thought more about them and had asked if she could have it for her room.

She flipped the frame over and ran her finger over the names written there: "George Tilman and Mary Gilbertson, married April 20, 1880." Both had been killed in a carriage accident when she was four.

She turned toward her best friend who sat on the edge of

her bed. "You know, Anna Lisa, sometimes I wonder why God allows what he does. Why did He take my parents when I was so little? It was sixteen years ago today, according to the 'deaths' page in Mama's Bible."

Anna Lisa Stoops shook her head, a thoughtful expression on her face. "Why ask me? I don't understand things like that. My mother says God does everything for our good, but sometimes it's hard to figure it out."

Liz closed her eyes. "I've tried to remember life with my real parents. I barely recall giggling when my father threw me up in the air, then caught me in his arms. I wouldn't remember their faces at all if it weren't for this photograph."

"You've brought them up a lot lately. Why? You have a great family." Anna Lisa scooted back on the bed and crossed her legs in front of her.

"It's just a weird feeling. Maybe it's because I'm old enough now to be on my own. I'm twenty. I can't live here with Daddy and Mama forever."

"That makes two of us."

Liz surveyed her bedroom. The bedspread and canopy on her bed matched the lace curtains at the window. Green and rose patterns in the wallpaper harmonized with the roses in the carpet. She leaned against the pillow in the window seat, a pensive expression on her face. "I'm so blessed. Still, I feel restless, I want to know more about my background."

Her Uncle Daniel and Aunt Elise—Daddy and Mama—had brought her to live with them a month after they were married in July of 1886, four months after Grandma Gilbertson died. Since then, they'd lived in Topeka where Uncle Daniel was a vice

president of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. They weren't extraordinarily wealthy, but lived a comfortable life.

They'd loved her and treated her as their daughter, even after their own three children were born. They were the only parents she could remember. Although they had never formally adopted her, she went by the name Gilbertson and called them her parents. When her brother, Adam—their first child—was little, he couldn't say Elizabeth, so she became Liz.

Liz glanced back at the picture. "I know about my real mother Mary's family. My Grandpa Gilbertson, her father, still lives on a ranch near Emporia, Kansas, with Daddy's younger brother, Thomas, and his family. But I'd like to find out more about my real father's family. Nobody has much information about him. I only know he came from Boston, Massachusetts, and he was a lawyer in Columbia, Missouri. That's where we lived when they died."

"Your real mother was your daddy's sister, wasn't she?" Anna Lisa giggled. "That sounds funny."

Liz smiled and nodded. "Yes, she was. She was Uncle Daniel's older sister."

"Have you talked to your mother and father about it? They may have more information."

I've thought about it. They've been so good to me—I don't want to hurt them. They're my real family."

"I'm sure they'd understand your curiosity."

"Maybe." Liz lowered the picture, drew her knees up under her chin, and eyed the afternoon shadows lengthening across the backyard flower garden. Sunlit patterns from the lace curtains danced across her stockinged feet and a honeysuckle scent, borne

on the warm breeze, drifted in through the open bay window.

Anna Lisa broke the silence. "So what will you do in the meantime? You can't just take off to Boston in search of your real father's family."

"I thought wedding plans would take up my time. Then your brother jilted me for another woman." She turned a pretend scowl at her friend, then paused, her expression becoming thoughtful. "I'm convinced now that it's best he broke off our courtship. I was devastated at first, but now I realize I'm not ready for marriage."

"I know." Anna Lisa grimaced. "He changed when he went away to college. He and his new girlfriend plan to be here for two weeks, while her parents travel abroad. They arrive Saturday. I have to share my room with her." She wrinkled her nose and chuckled softly. "Mother's about to have a nervous breakdown. She's had Lucia come in two extra days to get the house ready."

Liz raised her eyebrows. "I hope they're happy. But, don't expect me to come around while she's here."

Anna Lisa ducked her head. "I'm not excited about it, but I don't have much say in the matter."

Liz quirked her mouth and nodded. "It's not your fault." She swung her legs to the floor. "Abigail, from church, got a job as a Harvey Girl. She started to train last week. Maybe we should look into that. I hear they pay pretty well."

"Liz, Daddy's home." Rachel, Liz's seven-year-old sister, ran into the room, pigtails flying. "He brought a man to eat supper with us. His name is Michael. He just moved here today to work in Papa's office." She perched on the end of Liz's bed and tapped her feet against the carpet. "Mama says Michael's from a big city in the East."

Liz quickly slipped the picture behind the cushion in the window seat. She wrinkled her forehead and frowned at Rachel. "Don't jump on the bed. You'll mess it up. Besides, Anna Lisa doesn't want you to bounce her onto the floor."

Rachel grinned and faced Anna Lisa. "Sorry." She stood and skipped toward the door. "Anyway, Mama said get ready for supper. We're gonna eat in twenty minutes."

Liz glared at Rachel's retreating figure. "That girl! Sometimes she's more than a body can bear."

Anna Lisa scooted toward the edge of the bed. "Be glad you have a little sister. I've always wanted one."

"You're right. I love Rachel a lot. I don't tell her often enough." Liz walked to the dressing table, tucked a few errant curls into her chignon, and readjusted the hairpins. Her naturally-curly blonde hair was not easy to manage.

Elise stepped into the room. "You ready for supper, Elizabeth?"

Liz turned at the sound of her mama's voice. Elise was slim and stylish in her navy blue skirt, white blouse, and embroidered vest with a cameo brooch nestled at the neck. "I'll be right there as soon as I put my shoes on."

Elise turned to Anna Lisa. "Would you like to join us? You're always welcome."

"Oh, no. I have to go. Mother is expecting me for supper."

Elise nodded. "You ladies both look charming this evening."

Liz hugged her. "So do you, Mama."

As they descended the stairs, Liz heard her dad's familiar voice in the library to the left. "You must be tired, after your long train ride."

"Actually, I'm not. The trip was smooth and uneventful."

I had a suite in one of the Pullman cars, and the meals in the Harvey dining cars were delicious. I've wanted to travel, so the diverse scenery was fascinating."

Liz raised her eyebrows at the sound of the deep, masculine voice. It presented an immediate mental image of a tall, dark-haired male. But she was in no mood to meet another smooth-talking young man yet, not after Richard jilted her!

Anna Lisa slipped out the front door as Liz walked to the library. A giggle bubbled up inside her and nearly erupted in laughter when she peeked in the door. The young man with her father was as different from her mental image as a person could be. He was short with a full head of copper red hair. Fortunately, he faced away from her, so she could step back and regain her composure.

"Come in, Liz." Her father motioned her into the room. "I want you to meet Michael McKey, the new accountant in my office. You'll probably see each other often."

Michael turned as Liz walked toward him. She was immediately struck by his charming smile, which involved his whole face, and his remarkable hazel eyes. He appeared close to her age, maybe a year or two older. He held out his hand. "Miss Gilbertson, I'm happy to meet you."

Liz placed her hand in his. "Nice to meet you, too, Mr. McKey."

"Michael just arrived from Boston this afternoon. Maybe, when he gets settled and rested, you can show him around the city."

"Of course, Daddy, I'll be glad to." Liz felt a small jolt of excitement at the mention of Boston. Was there a possibility

Michael might know something about her father's family? Instantly, she discounted the thought. Her father had lived there over twenty years ago, and Boston was a grand, bustling city, from what she'd heard.

Elise stepped into the library. "Supper is ready." She looked back and forth between Michael and Liz. "I see you two have met."

Daniel stepped forward and offered his arm. "Yes, Sweetheart, we've completed the introductions."

Elise smiled, took his arm, and walked from the room by his side.

Michael grinned at Liz then held out his arm. "Allow me."

Liz tucked her fingers under his elbow and followed with him to the dining room. She caught a whiff of the expected meal. "I hope you like beef. We have it quite often. We are in Kansas, after all. More cattle are shipped back East from Kansas than any other state."

Michael chuckled. "I do like beef. It smells tantalizing. I'm glad to be in Kansas, and I'm eager to learn more about this state."

When they entered the spacious, sunny dining room, Adam, Liz's thirteen-year-old brother, stepped through a doorway opposite, followed by Rachel. She ran to her mother's side. "Mama, Julien is still in the sitting room reading his book. He wouldn't come when I told him it was time for dinner."

Elise stepped to the open door. "Come on, Julien. You can leave your book long enough to eat."

Daniel took his place at the head of the table. Elise motioned Michael to the chair to his left. The others took their usual

places, then bowed their heads and waited, expectantly, for Daniel to pray.

Liz listened as he asked God's blessing on the food and thanked Him for the bounty of the day. She peeked at Michael across the table. His eyes were closed, a slight smile on his face. He wasn't put off by the prayer. Quickly she closed her eyes as her father said, "Amen."

When she re-opened her eyes, Michael had turned toward her dad. Liz let her gaze trail over his dinner jacket, shirt, and dark tie. They were the latest style. By contrast, his auburn hair, though stylishly cut, lay in unruly curls, which gave him a youthful appearance.

A middle-aged woman entered from the kitchen, carrying a large platter of roast beef surrounded by carrots, potatoes, and other vegetables. A young woman followed with a bowl of green beans and a lettuce salad.

Elise looked pleased, "Thank you, Catherine and Annie. This meal looks delectable as usual. Is this lettuce from the garden?"

The older woman nodded. "Yes, ma'am. The green beans are too. They've started to produce."

"That's wonderful." Elise picked up a plate from the pile beside her and began to serve the meat and vegetables, then passed it around the table.

Daniel handed a plate to Michael. "Tell us about your family. Do you have brothers and sisters?"

"Yes, my brother, David, is a year older, and my sister, Marie, is seventeen. David works at the bank with my father. He wanted me to go into the bank, too, but I'm afraid I have wanderlust."

“Does your father approve of your job in Kansas?”

“It wasn’t his choice for me to leave, but he’s alright with it. My mother, on the other hand, isn’t thrilled at all.”

“I bet she’s not,” Elise spoke from the other end of the table.

“What’s Boston like?” Julien laid down his fork. “I’ve read books about it, but it’s not like being there.”

Michael turned to Julien. “Boston’s a busy, modern city. Much larger than Topeka from my early observations. The business district is very cosmopolitan with skyscrapers and department stores. Telephones and electric lamps are state-of-the-art.”

“Are there lots of automobiles?” Adam leaned forward. “I think we should get one, but Pa says we don’t need it.”

Michael glanced at Daniel and smiled. “Yes, they’re everywhere in the city.”

Julien sighed. “Why’d you come to Kansas? I’d rather go to Boston. I’ve read about the Boston Tea Party. Do you know where that was?”

“Yes, I do. There’s a lot of history in Boston. The bank, where my father works, was started in the 1780s, over a hundred years ago. My great-great-grandfather worked in that first bank. The story is that Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock banked there.”

“Wow!” Julien’s eyes sparkled with interest.

Daniel chuckled. “I think you have a new admirer, Michael. Julien loves history.” He turned his attention to Julien. “That’s enough questions for now. Let Michael finish his meal.”

Liz watched Michael interact with her brothers. His demeanor was relaxed and comfortable. He fit in, even though they’d just become acquainted.

As the family finished the meal, Michael spoke to Elise. "This was enjoyable, Mrs. Gilbertson. Thanks so much for the invitation."

"Most of the thanks goes to Catherine and Annie. Catherine was a cook at the Harvey House, and I stole her away. We're fortunate to have her." Elise gathered the dirty plates.

Michael faced Liz as they rose to leave. "I'd appreciate that tour around the city. Would Saturday morning work? Maybe we could eat lunch at the Harvey House?"

"Sounds like fun. I'd enjoy that."



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joyce Valdois Smith is wife to Bob, mother to four married children and grandmother to twelve beautiful grandchildren. She is a retired public health and school nurse. Writing has been her long time passion. Joyce is an author of Christian historical and contemporary fiction as well as children's books. She lives with her husband and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Lady Catherine (Katie), in southwest Missouri.

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