

The Glass Bowl

By Marilyn Reeves

I've never been good at telling lies. Honesty not only helps build a sense of trust and reliability, it's a whole lot easier to remember what you said. Telling lies can get a person tangled up in a web of deceit where they find themselves having to tell more lies in order to cover up the first one. On the other hand, there are times when it seems more prudent not to tell the *whole* truth. Keeping certain things to yourself can sometimes save another person's feelings. A case in point was an incident involving my mother.

A few years ago, while she was still lucid, Mom started giving away some of her little treasures, wanting to make sure that each of her three daughters received certain things before she passed away. So she began wrapping up various items – a knickknack for Janet, a vase for Rosie, and something for me – and giving them to us as Christmas gifts.

On Christmas Day 2004, Mom gave me a cut-glass bowl that had been handed down to *her* years earlier. It was made in the manner of those old turn-of-the-century pieces – quite heavy and multi-faceted – and sparkled like crystal. It was truly lovely and I was delighted to have it.

As we were getting ready to depart Rosie's place, where our family gathering was held that year, Jim and I loaded the trunk of his car with boxes and bags filled with gifts and goodies, and somehow that precious cut-glass bowl got set precariously on top of the heap. Even though it was placed back into the little box it came in, the box itself should have been nested more securely. But it wasn't. So when we were walking up the steps to my apartment, both of us carrying loads of stuff in our arms, somehow the big bag that Jim was carrying got tilted and the little box fell out. When I heard the sound of breaking glass I didn't even need to look to know what it was that had gotten broken. Jim felt terrible but I couldn't very well scold him. It was my own fault for not making sure that that pretty glass bowl was handled with extreme care.

I decided then and there not to tell Mom. What could be gained by telling her that her precious bowl hadn't even made it back home with me in one piece? If she had asked me about it, I would have confessed, but she never did. To my way of thinking, sometimes a little lie of omission is better than telling the truth when somebody's heart can be broken as easily as that beautiful cut-glass bowl.