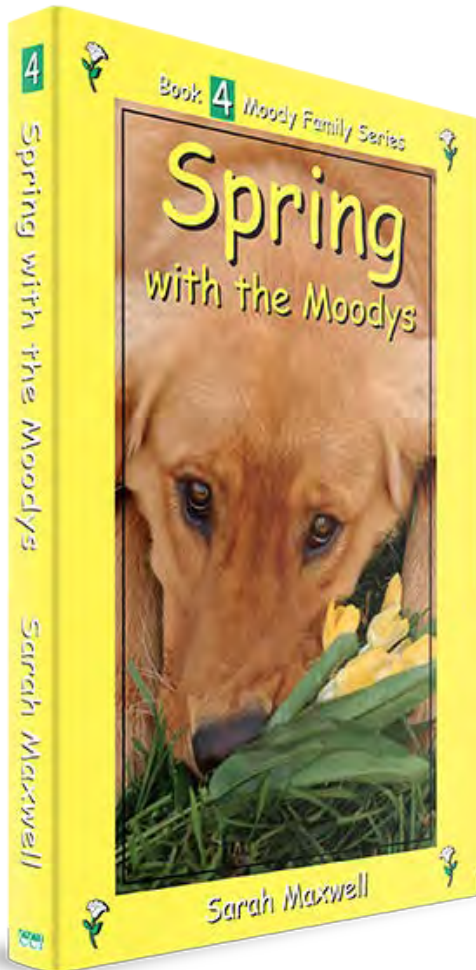


Excerpt from  
*Spring with the  
Moodyys*



“I won’t!” Maddie bounced out of the kitchen and knocked on Dad and Mom’s door. “It’s me, Maddie. I want to come in!”

Dad and Mom were sitting on the bed talking. “I came to take a break,” Maddie snuggled next to Dad. “We’ve been workin’ on dinner. Are you excited?”

“I’d say we are.” Dad tickled Moses. “Can you smile? Ah, there it is.” Dad made a funny face.

“I need to go now.” Maddie jumped off the bed and ran out. Not seeing the boys upstairs, she went to the kitchen.

Just then, a knock was heard. “I know we didn’t invite Mr. Delome,” Mitch stated. “Grandma wasn’t coming until closer to 6.”

“We’re early,” Grandma announced as she and Grandpa stepped in. “Grandpa wanted to drop me off and see the preparations. He’s going out for dinner with Mr. Delome tonight.”

“We’ll show you our setup,” Max offered. Grandpa and Grandma walked around and complimented the children on the way everything was done.

“It was because of your help that it looks this way,” Mollie acknowledged.

Grandma hurried upstairs a few minutes before six so she could receive instructions on the twins’ care. Exactly at six, Dad and Mom walked downstairs. A sign at the bottom of the stairs read, “Please take a seat on the couch.” Dad’s eyes twinkled at Mom as they followed the directions.

Max and Mitch appeared a minute later. A white towel was laid over Max’s arm, which Dad and Mom both noticed, a

sure sign of a fancy restaurant. “Good evening, sir,” Max addressed Dad. “How many tonight?”

“Two, and please make that non-smoking,” Dad couldn’t resist adding.

Mitch barely suppressed a laugh. “Come right this way,” Max motioned to Dad and Mom.

Mom’s eyes sparkled as she saw the table: a pearl-white tablecloth, silver-etched dishes, cloth napkins, and a centerpiece made of three candles, white lights, and greenery. Dad pulled Mom’s chair out for her.



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“We’ll be right with you for drink orders,” Mitch handed Dad and Mom a menu and slid into the kitchen between make-shift curtains the children had rigged so that the kitchen activity couldn’t be seen.

“Wow!” Mitch exclaimed in a loud whisper to Mollie. “Dad and Mom are all dressed up—Dad’s wearing a suit!”

Mollie and Maddie emerged from the kitchen. “What may I get you to drink?” Mollie questioned.

Dad noticed Mollie didn’t have a notepad. “Go ahead, Dear,” he said to Mom.

Mom scanned over the neatly printed drink titles. “I’ll take lemonade please.”

“And for you, sir?”

“Lemonade would be great.”

“Very good. We’ll be back with your drinks.”

Soon, Maddie brought one glass and placed it in front of Mom. “There you go, Mommy.”

Before Maddie said anything more, Dad saw a small opening in the navy curtains, and a voice was heard. “Ma’am, Maddie!”

“Oops,” Maddie gasped. “I mean, ma’am.”

“What a cute apron she had on!” Mom remarked after Maddie left. “I have a feeling Grandma let her borrow it.”

Maddie was soon back with the other glass. “There you go, sir. Someone will take your order in a minute.”

Dad noticed the children had set up the kitchen CD player in the corner, and soft music filled the room. Dad and Mom

talked quietly. Mom sighed. “Jim, we have been blessed so much over these last 13 years of marriage. I’m very grateful for what the Lord Jesus has done in our lives—we’ve changed a lot since we made that commitment to each other.”

Dad nodded. “You’re right. I can’t tell you what a blessing you are to me, Emily. Do you remember the day I came to you and said I felt we should homeschool the children? I know you weren’t very excited about it, but you never complained.”

Just then, Max carried in two salads. “These are complimentary with your meal. What dressing would you care for?”

“French, please, for both of us.”

“Very well.”

Mitch delivered the salad dressing. “What can I get for you tonight?”

Mom said, “I’ll take the Classic Lasagna with the Crunch Garlic Bread.”

“I think I’ll have the same thing.”

After Dad and Mom were served their main course, the plan for the rest of the dinner was being discussed in the kitchen. Max spoke: “Mollie and Maddie can go ahead and eat, and Mitch and I will keep an eye on Dad and Mom. We’ll eat after you’re through.”

Mitch kept Dad and Mom’s drinks filled to the brim. When the lasagna and garlic bread were eaten, Max cleared their plates. A few minutes later, Mollie asked, “Would you like dessert tonight?”

“Sure,” Dad agreed.

“I’m sorry that wasn’t on the menu,” Mollie apologized. “I’ll bring your dessert right out.”

Mollie and Maddie carried generous-sized pieces of This-n-That to Dad and Mom.

“Thank you,” Dad said.

Mom took several bites and smiled. “I can’t believe how wonderful the dessert is! This is the first time the children have made it. I must admit, Jim, at first I felt a little disappointed we wouldn’t be going out for our special date. But, I also knew it would be hard in terms of timing to leave the twins. This has been our best anniversary date yet! The food was delicious, our fellowship even more so, but what meant the most to me was the children’s effort and love.”

Dad squeezed Mom’s hand across the table. “I totally agree. Emily. I also want you to know you are an incredible wife. You’ve stayed home for so many weeks because of the twins, and you haven’t been unhappy.”

They lingered at the table, reminiscing over the last few years. When they were done, they walked into the kitchen. Dad and Mom hugged each child. Mom had tears running down her face. “Thank you so much. Dad and I decided this has been our best anniversary. I can’t tell you how much we’ve enjoyed it!”

“It was a very special evening, children,” Dad beamed. Max, Mollie, Mitch, and Maddie’s faces glowed with pleasure.

“We’re glad; Jesus gave us the idea,” Max said.

“I’m sorry I called you Mommy, ’cause I was only supposed to call you ‘ma’am.’ But, I can call you Mommy again,” Maddie hugged Mom.