

The Flower Girls

BY MARIANNE DAHL JOHNSON
(Based on a true story)

Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven (Helaman 10:7).

Clarissa's eyes shone as she twirled in front of her reflection in the mirror and watched the green folds of her new dress rise above her ankles and spin around her knees. She felt like a princess.

"Is it finished?" she asked her mom.

"Almost," Mom replied. "I just need to hem it. Now go stand by the door so I can see how much shorter it should be."

Clarissa turned slowly as her mother directed. She loved the new dress she would be wearing when she and her younger sister Deseret served as flower girls at Aunt Olivia's wedding.

Clarissa smiled when she thought of

Aunt Olivia. She was Mom's youngest sister, and she always made time to play games and dress-up with Deseret and Clarissa when all the other adults were talking at family gatherings. Clarissa loved Aunt Olivia!





Clarissa remembered the first time she met Edgar, the man Aunt Olivia was going to marry. Mom had invited Aunt Olivia and Edgar to dinner. He was tall and quiet. At first, Clarissa was scared of him because he didn't talk much. But then he had smiled at Clarissa and talked to her quietly. They soon discovered that they shared the same birthday! That made Clarissa feel special. She really liked Edgar.

Clarissa was happy several months later when Mom told her that Edgar and Aunt Olivia were going to be married. She and Deseret were even happier when Aunt Olivia asked them to be flower girls. Mom explained that they would get new matching dresses and that they would carry flowers at the reception. They were going to have so much fun!

Clarissa stopped daydreaming as Deseret ran into the room. "Mom, are you ready to hem my dress?" she asked.

"I'm not quite finished with Clarissa's dress, dear," Mom said.

Deseret looked at Clarissa. "You look so pretty!" she said. The girls grasped hands and twirled around the room together. "We're going to be beautiful at the wedding!" Clarissa exclaimed.

"Actually, girls," Mom said, "you're going to be beautiful at the *reception*. You're not going to the wedding, you know."

The dancing stopped abruptly. "What?" Clarissa asked. "Why can't we go to the wedding?"

"We *have* to!" Deseret cried. "We're the flower girls! Aunt Olivia asked us."

"I know you're the flower girls," Mom said. "But do you girls remember where Aunt Olivia is getting married?"

"In the temple," Deseret said.

"That's right," Mom smiled. "Aunt Olivia and Edgar are getting married in the same temple that Dad and I were married in. But only adults who have a temple recommend can go to weddings in the temple."

"Why?" Clarissa asked.

"Well," Mom said, "getting married in the temple is very sacred and holy. Only people who have made important covenants, or promises, to Heavenly Father in the temple can go. Adults are old enough to understand how important and special those covenants are."

"Why does Aunt Olivia want to get married in a place where we can't go?" Deseret frowned.

"I know why," Clarissa said. "If you get married in the

temple, you can be married forever, right?”

“Right, Clarissa.” Mom nodded. “Did you know that a temple wedding is called a sealing?” Mom laughed as Deseret looked up at the ceiling. “Not that kind of ceiling, Deseret. A temple sealing is a bit like sealing an envelope. When you lick an envelope and shut it tightly, it’s sealed, though not forever. When Olivia and Edgar are sealed in the temple, their marriage *can* last forever—even after they die. Temples are the only places on earth where that kind of marriage can take place.”

“Where will we be during the sealing?” Deseret asked.

“On the temple grounds with Uncle Ammon,” Mom replied. “He’s not old enough to go to Olivia’s sealing, either.”

“Hurray!” the girls cried. Uncle Ammon was a lot of fun, too.

“And then the next day, we’ll go to the reception at the church,” Mom continued. “You girls will wear your new dresses and carry flowers, and lots of people we know will be there. It will be fun. Now why don’t you take this dress off so I can finish it?”

As Clarissa walked to her room to change, she thought

about what Mom had said. She knew Edgar and Aunt Olivia really loved each other. She was happy they could be married forever.

Weeks later, the girls walked around the temple grounds with Uncle Ammon. They admired the beautiful temple and the flowers and trees around it. They went into the visitors’ center and saw some pretty pictures and a movie about Jesus. Then they went outside to meet Mom and Dad after the sealing. Together they waited for Aunt Olivia and Edgar to come outside.

Clarissa spotted them as they came through the door. Aunt Olivia looked so beautiful! Edgar—now *Uncle* Edgar—looked handsome. They smiled as they held hands and hugged everyone.

As Clarissa wrapped her arms around Aunt Olivia, she whispered, “I’m glad I couldn’t go to your wedding.”

Aunt Olivia drew back and looked into Clarissa’s eyes. “What did you say?” she asked.

Clarissa looked down shyly. “I’m glad I couldn’t go to your wedding because I’m glad you got married forever,” she said.

“Me too!” Aunt Olivia smiled as she hugged Clarissa one more time. ●

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