





Clean-up Claire

BY MARIANNE DAHL JOHNSON

(Based on a true story)

All things work together for good to them that love God
(Romans 8:28).



Claire stomped her foot and glared at her closed bedroom door. Then she collapsed on her bed in tears. It was so unfair! Claire had two younger sisters and one younger brother. All she ever did was clean up after them! At least that's what she had told Dad five minutes ago.

Claire had been reading a book, her favorite thing to do. Danielle was at the kitchen table making an art project. Liberty was playing with her blocks and dolls, and Hyrum was playing with his farm set.

"Guess what?" Mom said as she walked into the room. "Dad checked out a fun video at the library. Please clean up quickly so there will be time to eat dinner and watch the video before bedtime," Mom said. "Claire, please help Hyrum clean up his farm set."

As Claire set her book down, she heard her sisters complaining. Danielle said she wasn't done with her art project and Liberty said she was too little to clean up her toys. Claire smiled. Liberty always said she was too little when she was asked to do something.

"I have to clean up Hyrum's toys and I'm not complaining," Claire thought. She scooped little farm animals into the toy barn and then put the barn on the shelf in Hyrum's room. Then she went back to the couch and opened her book.

Dad came into the room. "Claire, could you please help Liberty clean up the blocks and dolls?" he asked. "Mom and I will be busy making dinner."

"But I didn't play with them, Dad," Claire said. "Mom said we needed to clean up what we were playing with. I already cleaned up Hyrum's mess."

"Claire, we need to work together or we won't have time to finish the video before bedtime," Dad said. "Please go help Liberty."

Claire was upset. She saw all of the blocks scattered throughout the family room. They had been made into little houses for Liberty's dolls and stuffed animals. What a mess! She stomped her foot. "All I ever do is clean up after little kids!" she said.

"Let's go to your room," Dad said. He walked with Claire to her room. When they got there he said, "I know you've already cleaned.

But we are a family and we work together. We all want to watch the video, so we all need to help. Danielle is cleaning up her art project, and Mom and I are making dinner. Liberty made a big mess but she's





only three. She needs help. Can you please be more willing to help?"

Now Claire lay on her bed crying. She felt awful inside. Did her parents think she was a maid? Maybe they should call her "Clean-up Claire." Claire felt like a dark cloud was hanging over her head. She felt angry and alone. She took a deep breath. "I've got to stop feeling like this," she thought. "What can I do to feel better?"

She knew what would make her feel better. She wiped the tears out of her eyes and knelt by the side of her bed. "Heavenly Father," she prayed, "I'm sorry for the way I've acted. I'm sorry that I didn't obey and that I complained to my parents. Please help me to feel better. Please help me feel the Spirit."

As she said those words, the dark feelings left her. She felt warm and peaceful. She stayed on her knees and enjoyed the good feelings in her heart. Then she stood up. "This won't be so bad," she thought. She opened her door and quickly found the bucket that the blocks went in. She scooped them up as quickly as she could. "Liberty," she called, "come and help me put these dolls and stuffed animals away."

"I can't help," Liberty said as she walked into the room. "I'm too little."

Claire smiled at her. "No, you're not," Claire said kindly. "Come on, I'll help you." Together the girls picked up the family room. Then Claire went into the kitchen where Mom and Dad were setting the table.

"I'm sorry I complained," Claire said.

Mom and Dad smiled at her. "Thank you, Claire," Dad said.

As the family gathered around the table, Mom said, "I never realized how much effect one person can have on the feeling we have in our home. A little while ago, it didn't seem like the Spirit was here. But now, I know that it is. Thank you for doing your work happily, Claire."

Claire smiled. She knew she had helped her whole family. ●

"Every family can be strengthened in one way or another if the Spirit of the Lord is brought into our homes."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles⁴

