

ANSWERED PRAYER

Christine Inman (High School Senior)

I have a cousin whose name is Kyle. I have not seen Kyle much during my life, owing to the fact that he lives a state away from me and our family vacations do not always come at the same time. However, we got along well as children, since he would play pretending games with me in the yard of my grandparents' house. Although he was a couple of years older than me, he rarely excluded me from his fun. Because of this, I loved and admired him as only a young girl could.

As I got older, I saw him less frequently. During one of the long stretches between visits, his parents got a divorce. The next time I saw him after that was the Thanksgiving of my seventh grade year. It had been years since I had seen him. He was so changed that I hardly knew him. He was taller and acted more mature. He had let his hair—beautiful, dark, and curly—grow until it was long enough to put into a ponytail. He dressed in all black, listened to music groups that I had barely heard of, and spoke of requesting black nail polish and black lipstick for Christmas.

I was scared and disturbed. The boy I knew had seemingly ceased to exist, and his replacement was some big guy that wrote depressing poems and wouldn't come down and talk to the rest of the family. My young heart ached with the loss. However, this new Kyle fascinated me, so I stayed and sat by his bed and listened to him talk, and eventually came to realize that this was not actually a new Kyle at all. It was the same boy I had loved, just grown up and thrust into a sad world that he hated.

In the course of about two years, I saw him three more times, and he seemed better and happier with each new visit. I was very happy. However, a point came that he stopped coming to family gatherings, supposedly because he had to work. But as time went on, I began to suspect that it was more than that. I went to my mom and asked her why Kyle wasn't coming anymore. She told me that Kyle had starting going to a Jehovah's Witness church, and that he wasn't really supposed to be around members of his family who weren't Jehovah's Witnesses. My heart broke all over again as I realized that I might never see him again, and that if I did, he wouldn't like me any more and things would not be the same.

After awhile, I resigned myself, and tried not to think about Kyle. But one summer night at my grandparents' house, I decided to write a letter to Kyle and send it to him by way of his younger brother who was visiting. Months passed and I got no answer. As Keith Green says in his song "The Prodigal Son Suite," "I prayed and prayed, never heard a sound." I missed Kyle so much. I dreamed about him, thought about him, but didn't really expect to hear from him. Then one night in late October, my mom handed me an envelope with my name on it, and the top left corner bore Kyle's name. My prayer had begun to be answered! I was so happy I cried . . . and cried. I jumped up and down and danced throughout my house, smiling and laughing and crying.

Since that evening, God has started to bring Kyle back into my life. I have yet to see him again, but we have written and emailed each other and there has been discussion of him coming to visit me. I try to keep my hope strong, remembering that God did not forget me the first time I missed Kyle. I can't wait for the day when I can again see the first boy I ever loved, my cousin Kyle.

Christine Inman is a seventeen-year-old honor student at Kokomo High School. She composes songs, sings, and plays two musical instruments. After she concludes her high school career, Chris will be attending college, but is not yet certain which college or what major she will pursue. For spending money, Chris is working part-time at McDonald's. She, her parents, brother and sister attend and are active members of Highland Park Church in Kokomo, Indiana.

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