



Coal for Diamonds

Related by Elsie Peters
Written by Joy Kandel
Edited by Alys Schneider

It was a cold winter. The Lorenzo Fries family was in desperate need of coal. Lorenzo Fries had lost his job and had no money. Praying for help, Lorenzo went to the coal dealer and begged for coal, telling him how the Fries children were freezing. Lorenzo promised he would pay as soon as he could get a job and money. The coal dealer refused. Lorenzo spent the rest of the day hunting for a job, to no avail.

The coal dealer's wife, in the back of the store, had overheard her husband's conversation with Lorenzo Fries. She was a sister in the Truth. Later that day she sent some coal to the Fries home with a book. She told Lorenzo Fries that he could have the coal IF he would promise to read the book. Lorenzo was so grateful for the coal, he promised that he would. The book was *The Divine Plan of the Ages*.

Lorenzo Fries was smitten. It was all he had ever wanted, this Truth. He wanted to share it with his buddy, Martin Foss. Martin and "Louie," as Mr. Fries was called, had shared many a bottle. But Martin was not eager to share the religious book. He did, however, provide the Bible for Louie Fries to compare everything in the book with Scripture.

Bibles were not a desired commodity in their circle of Socialist friends. Only Marina Foss Peterson was a Christian. But Martin and Mary Foss owned a large, family Bible which they had received as a wedding gift. So, amidst the raucous laughter of his pals, Louie Fries carted off this big tome so he could compare all he was reading with the Bible.

Much as Louie tried, it took time to induce Martin Foss to read *The Divine Plan*. Martin said, "You're no fun any more. I don't want to change like you, Louie." Finally, he agreed—he would read it after he went to a wedding, so he could drink and enjoy the wedding. (Just in case he would change and become like Louie after reading the book, he wanted to get in his "last party.")

When Martin finally read the book, he was convinced by the powerful message of Truth. Carl Foss, the little brother who had also been part of the partying days, also became part of the conversion. The coals became diamonds.

Who was that Sister?
We don't know, but we are glad she made the bargain!

