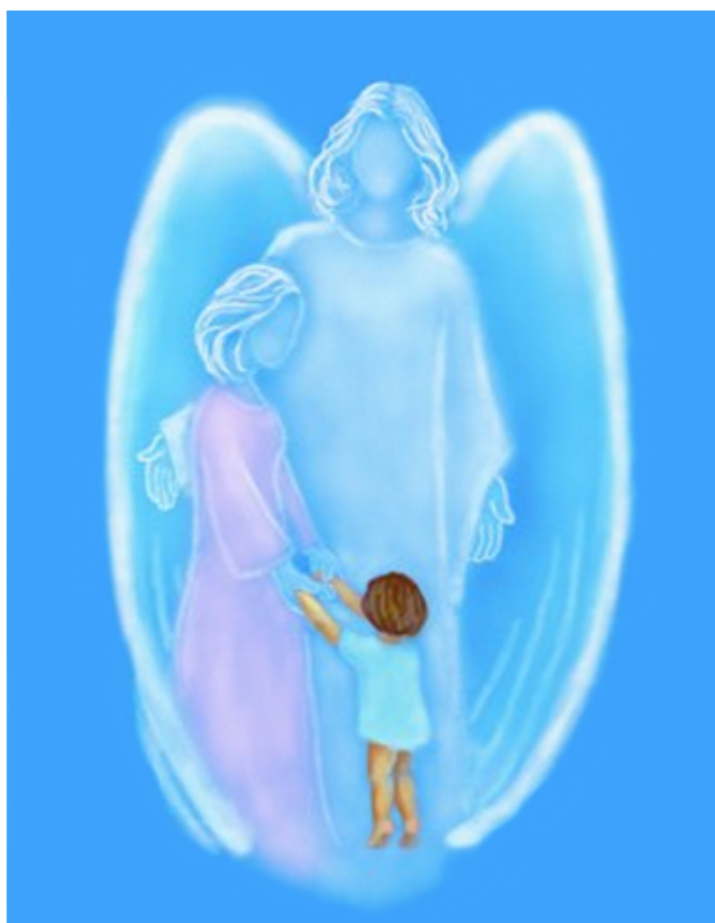


*Sriyam*

*I was not alone* - 1<sup>st</sup> -

*Wisdom for a simple heart*



*1<sup>st</sup> Volume*

*Sriyam*

*I was not alone- 1° -*

*Wisdom for a simple heart*

*1 st Volume*

*To my mum*

*I was a child when  
you went back to the Light.*

*Thank you for keeping hold my hands*

*Looking for you, I rediscovered  
your World of Light and Love  
and my Divine Essence.*

*Thank you for accompanying me tenderly  
in getting back to a simple child.*

*Now, as a child, I live peacefully,  
Walking joyful towards the Light,  
left in the Angels' arms.*

*I love you, mum.*

# *F*oreword

Suddenly, I found myself alone and desperate locked in my room.

They told me: *“Steven, your mum went to the Heaven.”*

I look at the sky for a long time, but I cannot see her...

*“What are you going to do there? Why did you leave me here alone??”*

Dad is away on business:

*“Why do not you work near here, so we can be closer?”*

At home, there is only my stepmother:

*“Why are you always so serious and quiet? What have you come to do here if you do not love my sister and me?”*

A lot of pain, so many ‘why’ that have no answer.

I feel ‘different’ from the others and nobody understands me...

I hear a voice telling me:

*“Hi Steven, it’s Dave talking, I am a friend of yours, I love you  
I am next to you and I will always stay close to you.  
You will hear my voice in your heart.”*

Day after day I find out that Dave is not only a friend who loves me and understands me in everything, but he is also a great ‘Wise’ that explains everything to me, helping me to understand my relationships, everything I experience, things that happen and answers to all my ‘questions’.

I learn how to behave and live my life with him close to me.

He gives me the most beautiful gift, the greatest gift:  
He helps me to feel the voice of my mum in my heart!

-----

I am 20 years old: I plunge into the world...

I have everything a young man dreams, I fully live all pleasures, 'managing' my all relationships.

I do not realize that the noise of the world and my way of life drive me away from myself:

I cannot hear the voice of Dave anymore, nor the voice of my mum.

But now I have everything, I am surrounded by many people, I have money, I have a lot of fun... , I do everything I want, I am free, I do not stop for a moment.

-----

Suddenly, I found myself alone again, desperate again...

*"What happened?"*

I feel 'different' again and everything I used to do does not entertain me anymore, nothing makes sense. Pain and stress are back.

I start the most difficult path: to find myself again!

But I no longer feel Dave, I do not feel my mum ... my heart is empty.

-----

A meeting leads me to make my first channeling where my mum talks to me.

I can identify her for some details that I only know.

She explained to me what happened since I thought she abandoned me.

She told me that she was always close to me, that she will always be close to me and that she really talked to my heart.

She gave me the most beautiful gift, the greatest gift: she helped me to hear and feel again the voice of Dave!

Thanks to her, I found out that Dave is my Angel and he has always been with me as well.

In reality: I was not alone- I have never been alone!

-----

I strongly went on the journey towards myself along a path of growth, development, accompanied, supported, guided, protected, helped and infinitely loved by my Angel, the Angels, and my mum.

Now, I live a simple life again, in a place where life is like 60 years ago, among simple people.

Here, I can be in touch with nature again, surrounded by the animals that I love.

My Angel, the Angels and my mum gave me again the most beautiful gift, the greatest gift:  
they helped me to return a child, living in Their arms.

-----

Now I can also live alone without feeling alone,



# *I*ntroduction

*This is the story of Steven,  
a good child as you are,  
who was born 60 years ago.*

*Then, the world was very different from  
today's world*

*Perhaps, you will be surprised by Steven's simplicity,  
but children were so at that time.*

*Now children grow faster  
and are acquainted with many things in advance.*

*But their hearts are the same.*

*They have the same feelings,  
the same emotions that Steven tells you in this book.*

*You also have a Friend next to you  
Who can read your heart,  
as Dave reads Steven's heart.*

*I love you.*

*Sriyam*

## *Note by the author*

*The events being told reproduce the reality faithfully;  
for this reason, the names of the characters were changed.*

*Steven is a child so he thinks, speaks and expresses his feelings  
and emotions.*

*He keeps this language even when growing. .*

*A capital letter is used where the intrinsic value should be  
pointed out.*

- *Hi Steven, what are you doing alone in your room? Why are you so sad? What happened?* -

- They left me here alone, I am very afraid!

My mum is gone. I do not know why... I do not know what happened... Nobody talks to me, nobody tells me where my mum has gone...

I am very afraid of not seeing her anymore!

My little sister Susan cries.

All adults coming home are so serious and look at me in a strange way. Some of them cry...

Grandma does not feel good, they called the doctor... -

- "Mum, mum, where are you? Where did you go? Mommy, I am scared, come back to me!" -

- *Little Steven, come here, in my arms. I love you.* -

- No, no! I do not want you, I want my mum! -

-----

- "Mum, mum! A gentleman told Susan that you are dead... that you went to the Heaven... and we cannot see you anymore..." -

- “Mommy, tell me that it’s not true!  
Tell me that you did not go without me! How can I do without  
you?  
I want your kisses, your caresses!  
Mum, do not leave me here alone...” -

*- Little Steven, I am sorry you have no longer your mum.  
Without one’s mum, one suffers a lot, and everything is  
difficult.  
I know that you are very bad now and you feel the need for  
being in somebody’s arms, somebody who caresses you giving  
you a lot of kisses and hugs.  
I cannot bring your mum back, honey, but I can stay close to  
you.  
I will help you living this moment when you feel lost, as you  
were lost in a wood. -*

- “Mommy, come back from the Heaven! Come down, come  
here with me, what are you doing there?  
I need you...  
Then I have to go to school, how can I do without you?  
Why does nobody tell me anything else about you?  
Dad, where did you go? Stand by me!  
I am very scared, dad! Do not leave me alone with others!  
I want you, I want my mum!” -

*- Steven, I love you. I will always stand by you. -*

- But, who are you? –

*- I am Dave, your new friend.*

*I know what you are feeling in your little heart. I am always close to you and I love you much. I am here to listen to you and I try to help you as most as possible. -*

- Why did my mum go away without me? Am I not a good child? Did I do something that gave her sorrow? Is she tired of me? -

*- No, no, honey! Nothing of that happened, be quiet!*

*You are a very good child. You did not cause any sorrow to your mum, and she is not tired of you.*

*Do not ever think about these things.*

*You are so sweet and sensitive, I like you very much.*

*I love you, Steven. -*

-----

- “Mommy, I miss you a lot

Mum, there’s something making me feel even worse and cry so much.

I do not know how to tell you that, I fear that you feel bad if I tell you that...

Mum, help me! I’m forgetting the things we did together...

How can I do now?” –

*- Honey, I am sorry that you do not remember the beautiful moments you experienced with your mum, but do not worry about her..*

*Your mum is not feeling bad for that. She knows that these things may happen when those people we love leave us, knowing not to see them anymore.*

*We feel so bad, that we no longer know what to do.*

*We feel that, in some way, we must protect our heart, otherwise it would suffer a lot.*

*Then, without realizing and choosing to do that, we try to forget, as soon as possible, people who left us, and the things we did with them.*

*In this way, it seems that we suffer less, and find the strength to keep on living. .-*

*- But I do not want to forget my mom!*

*I want still her kisses, her hugs; I want to be in her arms in the evening, falling asleep with her!*

*She should take me to school in a little!*

*She had promised that! -*

*- "Mum, I do not want to forget the beautiful things we did together!" -*

*- Dear Steven, I know that now you do not want to hear other talks, but I want to tell you something: even though you cannot see her, your mum is always close to you, accompanying you wherever you go, and she does not leave you alone. -*

-----

- “Mommy, since you have gone, no one looks at me, nobody takes me in his/her arms!

Dad is always away on business, so he called a man and a woman to look after Susan and me.

They are married, but they do not have children.

They help us a little, but not like you.

Then, they never hold us in their arms, nor give us their hands, nor caress us...

Mommy, I miss you so much...” -

-----

- “Mum, today it was my first day at school and I was really scared.

I cried a lot!

Thus, the teacher called Susan, who sat on the bench with me.

But I was still scared! Everything was new, and there were many children and people I have never met.

What makes me feel so bad is realizing that they have their mum close to them, and I have not!

I was very scared, mum, I felt so alone!

I also feel ashamed. I am the only child without a mum and a dad.

If someone asks me why, what should I answer?

I always want to cry, I cannot talk.  
Even at home, nobody talks about you.  
Mum, come here... Do not leave me alone..." -

-----

- Dave, I have a little thing in my heart that hurts me a lot.  
There is a woman at home. They told me that she is the new partner of my dad. What does it mean?  
Her name is Adele, but I have to call her aunt. Why?  
She is a cousin of my mum and she even brought her child.  
His name is Flavius, and he is a bit older than me.  
They tell that now we are a new family...  
But I do not want a new family, I want my mum!  
I want my mum holding me in her arms ...  
I do not want that woman! She is not good, she never come close to me.  
When we go out to take something, she makes me walk on the sidewalk alone, without giving me her hands.  
Since she is here with us, she has never given me a kiss, nor a hug, and she never talks with me.  
She always feels angry with me, and I really fear of being scolded by her.  
Instead, she talks a lot and caress her child. She is always so sweet with him.  
I haven't see her giving a kiss to him yet, but she certainly gives him some kisses when I am not there.  
How do I tell my dad that I do not like this aunt? –



*- Dear Steven, I understand you! I know you are suffering a lot because you do not receive the love you need and wish. They told you that this woman is the new partner of your dad, because he married her, as he married your mum before. Your dad has not the courage to tell you that, at home, she replaced your mum. But, in his heart, there is also your mum. Your dad has brought Aunt Adele at home, so that you could still receive kisses, caresses, hugs and the loving words that your mum used to tell Susan and you. Your dad as well is suffering a lot for your mum, and he hopes that aunt Adele can give you at least a bit of the love you received from your mum.-*

*- That's not true! He does not love my mum anymore, he never tells me about her... We only go together to the cemetery on Sunday. Susan cries, I do not, even though I would really do it in the arms of dad. If he still loved mum, he would tell us about her... I would like to do that! And he would call a good and sweet woman, like mum, to look after us, instead of a bad woman! -*

*- Steven, your dad still loves your mum very much, even though he does not talk of her. It is not easy to do that for him. When he talks of the mum, he remembers more the moments they spent together, and his heart suffers more.*

*Your dad and your mum loved each other very much!  
They wanted to stay together forever. Now, he also misses her  
just as you do.*

*He thinks that, if he talks about your mum with you, you miss  
her much more and you suffer more as he is doing.*

*He is sure that, being silent, you feel better, and that, gradually  
you can turn happy again.*

*You know Steven, your dad, when he was a child, has not had  
his dad close to him, because he went to Heaven, as your mum  
did.*

*He suffered a lot, just like you.*

*Even his mum has never talked about his dad with him, and for  
this reason, he thinks doing this way is right.*

*Be quiet, little Steven, your dad loves you so much. -*

-----

- Dave, I dislike this new woman!

She is like my father: she never speaks!

She always argues with my sister, I do not know why...

I do not want this woman!

She never looks at us, does not speak, nor caresses us, she do  
not say I love you! Why is she here? -

- "Mum, I want you! Please, come back to me, do not leave me  
here.." -

-----

- You know, Dave, aunt Adele never laughs.  
She is small, fat and ugly.  
They told me that she is as old as my dad.  
I know very few things about her, because she never talks with me.  
When my dad is back home at evening, she is so good and obedient with him: she does everything he asks for, and cooks everything he likes.  
My dad really love eating!  
When we are at the table we do not speak hardly ever, but you can watch the TV.  
I like watching it, but I would like more to talk with my dad and Susan.  
Aunt Adele never asks me what I wish to eat, and I am tired of eating always the same things!  
My dad wants that everything is good and complaints with Aunt Adele if something does not suit him, but he does not say bravo to her when he likes something...  
I noticed that, when dad is having a bath, she takes his undershirt and socks.  
Aunt Adele has to put on the socks, because dad has a huge belly and cannot do that by himself. I am always about to laugh when I observe them!  
Dad never tells her she is so good and obedient when she does all these things for him... -

*- Dear Steven, do not be surprised if your dad never tells Aunt Adele that she is good in doing that.  
Your dad as well was not told that when he was a child, so now he is not able to tell that to Aunt.  
Expressing his love with words is very difficult for him.*

*Think that buying many things for the home and giving Aunt Adele money to do shopping is enough to make her understand his love.*

*I imagine, Steven, that he does not say good boy to you as well and who knows how you wish that... -*

- Yes, it is true. He never tells me that!  
He also never tell me that he loves me!  
Maybe, it is because I am less good than others, and I am wrong in everything I do! -

- No, Steven, you are very good and you are not wrong in your actions. -

-----

- At school, I want to cry when the teacher asks me some questions, even questions on my family.  
I also cry when an adult looks at me serious, or asks me something, because I am scared and I fear he laughs at me... -

- Little Steven, these people do not want to laugh at you, nor they want to hurt you.

*You does not feel good because you miss your mum, her love, hugs and kisses.*

*You miss the words of love from your dad, thus, it is normal crying, it couldn't be different.*

*You are so good, little Steven!  
You suffer a lot living without love, as you are doing.  
It is a great pain that remains even when you grow up.  
That happened to your dad as well, that is why he is not able to  
tell you that he loves you. -*

-----

- At school, I always fear of making mistakes and being teased.  
I feel ashamed to say that I have not a mum, because I am the  
only one without a mum. -

*- I know that you feel different from other children because you  
have not a mum anymore, but you should not be ashamed for  
this. Nobody can do something when someone goes to the  
Heaven, nor should be blamed. -*

-----

- It is really so difficult studying by myself! I would like to  
have someone who looked at my homework, helping me, as the  
parents of my classmates do.  
I have nobody!  
My Aunt does not help me, while Susan is too young.

My dad is away for business so he cannot help me. But he does not do that even when he is at home! -

-----

- I'm tired of always being locked up at home!

My Aunt does not let me go down to the yard. She says that she fears that I hurt, and she does not want to be scolded by dad since he told her to look after me.

Then, she leaves me always alone at home in the afternoon!

In this case, she does not fear of being scolded...!

She told me that she goes and visits her sister, and takes Flavius with her.

But even when she is at home, she does not talk with me and I cannot play with Flavius.

I do not have even a toy! I would like to have a ball...

Then, I made a little ball with a napkin!

I imagine that the kitchen door is the goal of a football field: I throw the ball against the wall, and when it comes back, I immediately throw it to the goal. Often, I make a goal.

So, the afternoon is shorter...

Fortunately, on Saturday afternoon I go to my grandma's house, in the country, until Sunday evening. -

-----

- Christmas holidays are coming, and I will go to my grandma's house for a few days.

Dad told me that I spend all holidays at my grandma's house.  
How beautiful! I am happy! I like staying with her.  
So, I can stay far away from that lady... and I do not go to school! –

-----

- It is very bad staying locked at home the whole afternoon alone!

Flavius goes always to his aunt's house with his mum.

He stays there almost all day, because he plays with his cousin and a beautiful dog.

I would also like a dog! I love much animals!

Usually, Flavius stops eating at his aunt's house, even though Aunt Adele comes back home to cook for us, because he eats many good things there.

When he tells me what he eats at his uncle and aunt's house, he makes me feel the need to...! I hope that, sooner or later, she takes me as well to eat all those good things and play with the little dog... -

-----

- It would be great if Aunt Adele sometimes talked with me... so I could ask her to help me doing my homework.

I am not able to do it by myself, thus I am not good at school.

But I have not the courage to ask her, because, when she comes back home, she never asks me if I studied, if I did my homework, if I need some help. She has never looked at my notebook!

She does not take me to school, she even does not talk with the teacher, as the mothers of my classmates do.

I really feel ashamed for these things! -

*- Do not be ashamed, Steven: teachers know many things, even the story of the family of each pupil.*

*They know you have not your mum and know that you cannot tell Aunt Adele to go and talk with them. They also cannot tell her anything.*

*I understand that you feel bad because your Aunt does not care about the school and does not help you in doing your homework ... -*

- She does not care about anything!

When I get back home from school, as always, she does not ask me what I would like to eat and she puts what she has already cooked on the table.

I must eat everything, even if I do not like it.

She cooks always the same things, and, sometimes, I feel so bad that I am going to vomit. But I eat the same, because I have not the courage of saying a word.

Susan as well is always silent: she also is afraid of the Aunt! -

- Instead, she always asks Flavius what he wants to eat, and he can take whatever he wants. She is happy for letting him to choose and pleasing him.



She also gives him chicken thighs that also Susan and I like, but she never gives them to us.

When comes back home in the afternoon, Flavius has a snack with fruit juices and jams, eats the oranges bought by my dad, without asking permission to his mum.

The Aunt never asks Susan and me if we want to have a snack, and we have not the courage to ask her. Thus, we never have a snack! Seeing what Flavius eats makes us feel the desire!

“Why can he eat oranges, even if my dad bought them, while we cannot?” -

-----

- Aunt Adele likes the order and forbidden me to wander around at home, because she fears that I make it dirty.

I feel much tired when she is at home! I do not know what to do, because I cannot move.

In the evening, after having dinner, she obliges Susan and me to go on sitting at the table, without doing anything, until dad comes.

I would like to stand up, play with the balls and do many things... She does not want: she tells that I get dirty and then she has to wash everything!

When dad does not come back home, a short time after dinner, she sends us to bed. I would like to watch the TV... -

-----

- I cannot even turn on the TV.

I always hope that Flavius comes back home soon, because he can turn it on whenever he wants, so I can see the programs for boys as well.

I would like to read the sports newspaper that is on the table under the TV, but I cannot even touch it.

However, when dad is at home, I have the courage to take it and nobody tells me anything.

I love football very much, and I can remember everything I read.

If only it happened with the books for school!

Nevertheless, nobody looks at my school works, even if I do them or not! -

-----

- I talk a little with my sister, I am afraid of my Aunt!

Susan cries often...

The Aunt always scolds her, so I am afraid of being scolded if I go and talk with her...

I always fear that something could happen to me, or to be scolded.

Nobody speaks, thus I feel bad and I am afraid.

That is why I am always careful of how to behave and what to say.

I always feel like an intruder!

I am sure that Susan as well thinks that. She has never told me that, but I realize that she is afraid and is cautious like me.

Susan is so good, but since mum went to the Heaven, she is always sad and cries a lot. She tries not to be seen by me, but I realize that, because her eyes are always blushed and wet.

I hear her crying in her room, alone!

Even Aunt Adele can hear that, but she never goes to comfort her, letting her crying alone...

I also have a great desire to cry for Mum!

Once, Susan and I were sleeping in the same bed, but now Aunt makes her sleep in another room, and I sleep with Flavius, in two beds.

I do not like sleeping with him, and I would like to stay with my sister.

So, I could talk with her, without being scolded by Aunt Adele. Susan stays with us for eating only, then she goes to her room.

I also would like to go and stay with her but I have not the courage to ask Aunt.

In the afternoon, she stays at school with the nuns until evening, so I stay for a short time with her... -

-----

- When we do not go to school, Susan comes with me to grandma Celestine's house, and tells us all pranks played by Aunt Adele: she cries a lot!

Then, grandma takes her in her arms caressing her, so after a while, she smiles again.

Once, I asked her:

“Susan, why do not you tell dad that Aunt Adele plays pranks?”

She replied:

“Steven, dad never talks with me, even though he knows that Aunt Adele plays pranks and make me suffer. This make me feel so bad!”

Fortunately, grandma loves us very much! -

-----

- Grandma Celestine is so good and nice. She is my mum's mother. .

She has a tooth only. She is not so tall, and is neither thin nor fat.

Her hair is long, gray and white. She keeps it always well-groomed high, taking it with big hairpins.

Her eyes are a little green, a little gray. She is so beautiful!

She smiles a lot with Susan and me, but she smiles not so much with our uncles and aunts.

We always go to grandma's house when we do not go to school..

Our dad takes us there, without asking him, because he knows that we like going there.

However, he lets us come down in the yard, and goes back without saying hello to my grandma...

I do not know why he does like this, and I have not the courage to ask him, but I am sorry... -

-----

- Grandma lives in the country. She told me that I was born near her home, because then, my parents lived there, and after a short time they moved to the city.

Grandma lives together with Uncles Roland, Francis, Victor, Valerius.

My grandfather died a long time ago: I was not born yet.

He was very ill because he experienced the war.

I would like he were here, with me! Who knows how many things he would tell me...

I am sure he was so good, like grandma and the uncles.

Grandma as well is very ill, because her heart is hurting.

When I asked her why her heart got sick, she replied:

“You know Steven, your grandfather was not able to walk anymore. So, I took him on my shoulders. I made a huge effort, but I was happy to help him.

I have done that for many years, and the efforts made my heart get sick.”

My grandma was so strong that was able to take my grandfather down in the yard and then went back to home, even though she had to climb a long and steep wooden ladder.

To go up, I have to hold on to a wooden pole on the wall.

Even though she is ill and tired many times, she cooks for the uncles. They are a bit grumpy, but grandma has always an answer to make them silent.

She always ask me how things do with Aunt Adele. When I tell her what Aunt does to me, she sighs and tells me:

“Steven, be patient if your Aunt does not allow you to play and does not talk with you. Whenever you can, come here with me!”

And she smiles me.

I feel safe with her and I am not afraid.

I am so happy when I am with my grandma: here, everybody talks to me and love me.

Here, I can stay outside...!

Then, I can play even the whole day! -

*- Dear Steven, if your grandma and uncles love you, it means that you are a good child. And I know that they would like to do many things for you, but they are not able to do that.*

*Even though she does not tell you, your grandma suffers like you for the lack of your mum. That is why she understands you, and she understands whatever lies in your heart. -*

-----

- I like very much grandma's house, because it is surrounded by trees. Instead, in the city, my house is surrounded by other buildings.

Grandma's house is very big.

There is a large yard with much grass in the front side. My uncles cut it always, because it becomes high and walking is hard.

Beyond the courtyard, there is a ditch that I can jump over barely.

There are also apple and plum trees. They are so many, lined, e with their branches full of apples and plums, and I like them very much...

Further, there are pear trees, with a huge farmyard in the middle, where farmers bring wheat.

Behind the house, there is a very big tree. I love to lie down and watch the sky. It seems that its branches and leaves touch the sky.

Maybe, if I could climb up there, I would reach my mum... -

-----

*- No, Steven. Your mum is so high that even planes cannot reach up there. But she comes to you very soon... -*

-----

- Grandma told me that the house and the trees belong to Mr. and Mrs. Pickwich.

They are happy that grandma lives there, because the house is far from other houses. Thus, my uncles guard it, and if someone steal fruits, they call them.

The house has two floors, but we live only in the second floor. Warehouses occupies the other floor. There, Mr. and Mrs. Pickwich store fruits and wheat.

During summer, big trucks come in front of the warehouses. Grandma told me that Mr. And Mrs. Pickwich sell fruit in a far country.

Trucks come in the evening and my uncles turn on many lights.

I like watching them from the window: men load cases full of apples and pears.

Everybody is happy: they laugh and joke.

What I like more is the escalator. Grandma told me that it is called escalator because it moves by itself.

People make a row, exchange the cases full of fruits, put them on the escalator that, turning, takes them to the truck where other people take them.

I like to be there to watch them, because everyone loves each other.

I know that they work till morning, but I have to go bed early before I am a child. –

- The wooden ladder that takes to the kitchen is very long: it has twenty-one steps. I counted them.

My uncles covered it with a thick cardboard to avoid falling down.

The kitchen is very big. There is a very long table in the middle.

There is a heater where you put pieces of wood from two sides: in the front side, by a little door, and from above, by removing so many iron hoops.

Nearby, there are two large bins full of water my uncles fetch with some buckets in the well behind the house, close to the tall tree that touches the sky. They have to fetch a lot of water, because it is necessary to drink, cook and wash.

There is also a cabinet containing dishes. Above it, there is a photo of my mum smiling.

How beautiful is my mum!

She has a so sweet smile! Her hair is long, black, a bit wavy.

Pity that you can see only half!

She wears a small cape with white fur around her neck, and I like it very much.



It seems that she is always looking at me, even though I move to another part of the kitchen.

I hope it is like that... Who knows if she looks at me and smiles from the Heaven... –

-----

- “Mum, can you look at me from There?

I miss you a lot mum!” -

- *Be sure of that, Steven. Your mum looks at you and always smiles to you from the Heaven.*

*She can help and protect you from There. Sometimes, she comes near to you, even though you cannot hear and see her.*

*She can do that because she loved you so much.*

*Now, she loves you even more, because, when someone is in the Heaven is able to love more and do things that seem magic for those living in the Earth.*

*When you become older, you will understand how this happens. -*

- Really? Are you sure? -

- *Yes, it is like that!* -

- So she still loves me!

How beautiful! Now, I am happier...

If she comes near to me, maybe sometimes I could see her!-

- *I am sure that one day you could see her... -*

- Hurray! –

-----

- Let me tell you again on my grandma.

In the bottom of the kitchen, there is a big window. From there, you can see the courtyard and the apple trees.

My uncles are good in doing all kinds of work, so they put a large pipe in front of the window reaching the courtyard. Inside it, they pour the dirty water after washing the dishes and having a bath.

They poured so much water that the land of the courtyard got inflated forming a little mountain.

There is a big fireplace in the kitchen.

When it is cold, we gather around it to warm up.

I go up on the knees of my uncles. They are so strong that they are able to take me by my arms or legs, raise me, and make me do somersaults. And I have a lot of fun! -

- *How beautiful, Steven, that you can play with your uncles. They are so good and love you so much. -*

- Yes, I am glad to have so good and strong uncles. I also play hide-and-seek with them.

Near the fireplace, there are fagots and pieces of wood to be burnt, closed by wooden boards. I jump in and hide among the fagots.

Opposite the fireplace, grandma placed the radio on a high shelf. I cannot reach it, but grandma always powers it on.

At noon, you can hear many dads and mums telling their children I love you or happy birthday, letting them listen to a song.

Even children do like this with their parents, as well as many friends each other.

I like listening to them: it is beautiful to hear that everybody loves!

I like songs also.

Under the radio, there are chairs made with wood and straw. Behind, there is a big door, closed with a big lock. There, you find the family Pickwich's granary, but nobody can enter. Only my uncles enter there to do something that I am going to tell you.

Once, three people I have not ever met came there and started talking with my uncles. They laughed and agreed to do something.

Then, they tied their trousers down to their feet and took a big wooden paddle, similar to those used when collecting the wheat on the farmyard to put it into big sacks.

They went into the granary, called the cat Barth and its mum and closed the door telling me not to go there for any reason. I was curious, so I was near the door: I was willing to go in...

After a while, I heard a strong noise: they were screaming, laughing and saying even swear words.

Then, I saw huge rats thrown away from the window of the granary, as big as Barth.

At the end, my uncles and their friends came out laughing: they were happy to have killed all the rats that ate the wheat!

Thus, I understood why they did not allowed me to go in... thankfully.

They had a lot of fun doing that play! –

*- Even though they had fun, Steven, that is not a play. They had to kill the mice to save the wheat.*

*Killing animals is never a play, even if those animals are dangerous. -*

-----

- Do you know that grandma's room has not a door? You go in from the kitchen. It is big and has a very large bed where Susan, grandma and I sleep.

There is a cabinet containing clothing of grandma and uncles, and a piece of furniture containing their socks, T-shirts and panties.

The room has three big windows.

You can see apple trees from one of these windows.

I liked a lot looking outside from there, but now I do not look any more because some men with big cars came here and began cutting the trees.

Grandma told me that they build a large road for people wishing to go to the beach.

Why? Why are they building just there, in the middle of the trees, if there is a lot of space nearby?

I feel bad when I see trees falling down. It seems to me that they are crying and feel bad, like the pig killed by my uncles to make sausages.

Even though they have no eyes, mouth and nose, they look alive... -

*- You are right, Steven, all plants are alive, as well as the flowers and the grass.*

*They feel everything like us. If you break a small branch or tear a leaf, they suffer, and if you talk to them, they understand. They are our friends.*

*The same is true also for birds, ants, butterflies, leverets, and all the animals you see. Try to talk to them. You will see how beautiful it is! You can also play with them.-*

-----

- As long as they cut the trees, I look out only by the other two windows of the room. From one window, I can see the house where I was born, in the middle of pear trees.

In summer, grandma starts sewing in front of these windows.

Sometimes, I stand by her, because she tells me what she used to do when my grandfather was alive, telling me many other things.

In this room, something beautiful happens.

Grandma has many chickens, a rooster and two cockerels and she cares a lot about them.

When chickens have their chicks, she moves them to her room because it is warmer.

They are happy to stay warm, so do not run away. After a few days, the chicks hatch.

I like watching the eggs hatching and the chicks coming out...

They are all wet, but they are very beautiful!

Susan also likes watching them. We take them in our hands and caress them: we like them so much...

Sleeping with chickens is so beautiful!

I would like also sleeping with many other animals! So, I would make a nice family... -

- From this room, you can reach the room of my uncles, crossing a door that they close only when going bed.

Even this room is big and has four large beds. Sometimes, I sleep with them. Everybody loves me and calls me in his bed.

They are so good that allow me to take even Barth to bed. -

*- You are lucky to sleep with your cat. Living with animals is good for your little heart!*

*When they are with us, help us healing from diseases.*

*Now, dream of sleeping with many animals and among the trees.*

*In some distant countries, some children can do that and, many years ago, even the grandparents of your grandparents used to do that.*

*Dream on that, and, maybe, one day you can do it too.*

*Even adults dream the beautiful things they wish, because they have learnt that things may happen more easily if you dream them. -*

- How beautiful! I will do it many times, every day, so I can sleep with my animals and trees very soon. -

-----

- In the afternoon, I do not like my uncles' room anymore. After lunch, my grandma and uncles want me to go to bed, as they do, because outside it is very hot. They say that playing when the sun beats down is detrimental.

Every day, I answer:

“I am not sleepy yet... I do not feel hot when I play! If i do not sleep what should I do at bed...! I get tired staying there. Let me stay in the courtyard!”

But nobody listen to me, and my uncles took me to bed with them.

Fortunately, usually, there are not all uncles at the same time, so I can go and sleep alone in a single bed. In this way, when they fall asleep I run out.

I pay attention that grandma is sleeping, and walk near the wall, slowly, because the floor is made of wood and makes noise.

Often, grandma wakes up the same and shouts:

“Steven go back to the bed, it is not time to get up!”

Ugh, I'm so fed up waiting for the time to come out! -

-----

- Sometimes, at night, when I sleep with my uncles, bats come in. I am very afraid of them! So, I hide under the sheets.

Susan told me that bats pass through the hair, and I also fear of their bite. Instead, my uncles keep on sleeping.

Bats enter only my uncles' room, because they always leave the windows open, even in winter.

They are very strong, never feel cold, and do not fear animals.

When I sleep with my grandma, I am never afraid, because she keeps the windows almost closed in summer, and well closed in winter. -

-----

- All rooms in grandma's house are very high, and have thick wooden beams.

My uncles' room has also two poles hanging high, as long as the room. My uncles hang the salamis. When I am at bed I like counting them.

Uncle Valerius works in the fields, but when it is cold he goes to the farmers and kill pigs to make salami, hams, ciccicoli, sausages and other tasty foodstuffs.

My uncles and I eat a lot!

Instead, the doctor told my grandma not to eat them because they are bad for the stomach and the heart.

Anyway, she could not eat them: how could she chew them with a tooth only? -

-----

- Uncle Valerius is the one who tells me more things than the others and is always smiling.



He is also good in singing and whistling. He teaches me the songs and to read the hours in the clock.

He told me that the night when I was born, he went to the country and called the woman who helps mothers to give birth to children.

Since he could not stay at home with my mum, he slept in the courtyard that night, under a tree. When he saw me in the morning, he was very glad.

He told me that I was a beautiful child and that he always took me in his hands. Often, he takes me to fish by his bike.

We leave when it is still dark. We go to a big pulping mill, where there are even ducks.

It is a deep and wide hole, full of water. Farmers put the hemp there to wet it.

My uncle always catches many fish! Then, he cleans and cooks them at home.

I have a lot of fun with him! When the evening he tells me that we'll go fishing, I do not sleep all the night, because I am very happy.

I noticed that everybody talks with Uncle Valerius and even my grandma asks him advice.

He is very kind and never quarrels with her.

When the other uncles of mine get angry with my grandma, she says that she will tell that to Uncle Valerius. When Uncle Valerius argues with them, they puff for a while, but they all are silent and do what he says.

Soon, Uncle Valerius will get married and live with his girlfriend.

She lives in a big house with two brothers. She also has neither the mum nor the dad. She has a ill brother, and Uncle Valerius will help them to work in the fields.

I am sorry he will get married, because I cannot go fishing with him and talks with him about many things. But I am also happy because he told me that they love each other very much. -

-----

- During Christmas holidays, Uncle Valerius kills the pig of my grandma too.

I do not watch when he kills it, because I feel bad even when I see him taking the knives.

Even though I like salami, I am sorry that they kill the pig, because it is very good.

During summer, grandma taught me to make it eat. I like doing so because, for me, it is a friend as Barth and I love it. It lets me caress it, and I talk to it as it were a kitten.

It looks at me... It seems that it understand what I say.

I do not know how it can understand that they are going to kill it but when my uncle gets the knives ready, it begins crying.

I feel so bad when I hear it crying!

I realized that also Uncle Valerius is sorry to kill it, because before killing it, he is very serious. The other uncles of mine help him holding the pig fast and they are serious and nervous too. -

- *You are right, Steven, your uncles feel bad when they kill the pig because they are good and sensitive like you.*

*They do it because they saw others doing that when they were children, and to eat the salami and other foodstuffs you all like. And it is true that the pig realizes when they are going to kill it: all animals feel the danger! -*

- They told me that even the cows of Benet family are killed to make things to eat!

Listen to me, Dave, could not we take the fruits from the plants, ask the milk to the cows, the eggs to the chickens, eating salad, pumpkins, tomatoes and all other tasty things that are in the garden, leaving chickens, pigs and cows in peace? -

- *Yes, Steven, it can be possible. Someone already does it.. -*

- Could you introduce these people to me? Maybe they could teach it to my uncles, Benet family and everybody else.

Thus, nobody kills animals anymore. How beautiful! -

- *Of course, Steven, whenever you want! -*

- I will take my uncles too, so they do not feel bad anymore when they kill the pig!

Fortunately, after a short time that the pig is dead, they joke again and work the whole day laughing.

Also other people come and help them. Everybody does something: there is who work the meat with the salt, who cut it, who turns the handle of the mincer.

They add some gadgets to this device, in order to do many things.

I like looking when they put a sort of funnel where they hung the bowels, to fill them with the minced meat. They pay attention not to break them, but they break the same. So, my uncle pulls everybody's ears.

He is very good at tying the salami, because he puts the rope in many ways: he looks like a circus juggler... They told me that a few people are able to do that as Valerius!

At twelve noon, we eat all together. Men joke and talk about how many sausages and hams they should make.

Even grandma is very happy. She, like me, does not do any work, but she cooks for everyone.

It is beautiful to see how they make cracklings. They put the fattest meat inside a sheet, two strong men turn it, one here and one there, then a man tightens the meat even more with wooden pliers, and finally roast it in a pan.

In the evening, we have a good time, because we eat delicious food!

I am very glad to see grandma, uncles and everybody else so happy!

They are happy because they have salami and hams for the whole year.

But there is something sad for me: there is no longer my friend pig...-

-----

- “Mum, mum, I am afraid! Where are you?  
There are many knives, much blood!  
Mum, mum, hold me in your arms...” -

*- Be quiet Steven. You are in your bed, at grandma’s house,  
and nobody wants to hurt you.*

*Your mum is there, close to you, even though you cannot see  
her.*

*Here, everybody loves you, it was only a bad dream.*

*You dreamed the things you saw today and that impressed your  
little heart.*

*You’d better not to see certain things...*

*Try not to look at those things that scare you.*

*Now, open your eyes. Look, you are in your room: nobody  
wants to harm you. -*

-----

- “You know, Mum, today the new teacher asked each pupil  
the name of their mothers and fathers.

I did not know how to say that you are no longer here.

Mommy, I felt bad... My heart was beating a lot!

When the teacher asked me, I began crying.

She came next to me, and then I told her that you are no longer  
here and that Aunt Adele has replaced you.

I told that while crying, because I couldn’t stop.

I felt bad the whole morning, and I looked forward to go back home.

I fear that my classmates will tease me because Aunt Adele replace you. I feel ashamed a lot!” -

*- Steven, do not be ashamed because you do not have your mum. You will see that your classmates will not tease you, but they will love you even more. -*

- I do not know if it is true, how could I know if they really love me? I do not see them outside school, because Aunt Adele does not allow me to go and play with them. She even does not let me to do the homework together, and I cannot host them at our home! -

*- Steven, your classmates love you because you are good with them. You'll see I am right.  
Good boy, Steven that you told these things to your mum, keep on doing so: it is good for your heart. Be sure that she is next to you and listen to you..-*

-----

- Today, grandma told me when she came to live here with my grandfather, many years ago.

At that time, they were young and had only two children: Uncle Francis and my mum. Uncle Valerius was still in

grandma's belly and Uncles Roland and Victor were not born yet.

Grandma tells everybody:

“It was winter in 1929...”

She told that, that year, many things happened to her.

It snowed heavily for three days, and it seemed that it would never stop.

After the first day, my grandfather had to shovel the snow by himself, because grandma had a big tummy.

Grandpa was very good and made a road in the snow.

Grandma says that the snow was three metres high and they could not go out if grandpa did not shovel it.

The cold was so strong that broke the trees and froze everything.

The great river near the city was so icy that peasants walked over it with oxen and wagons. Grandma feared that, with all that snow, the woman who helps to give birth to children could not go there.

Grandpa was so good. Grandma told me that she still loves him very much, even though he went to Heaven a long time ago.

She tells not much about him. I would like to know more, but I do not ask her because, maybe, she cries.

I cannot talk about my mum too, and I am close to tears when they ask me where she is...

I would like that grandpa were here with us! For sure, he would love me as grandma.

I would ask him many things, also to help me doing my homework...

I would let him pick me up... I would sleep with him and my grandma.

I would let him explain to me how he built the road with that high snow. I would ask him about the war, because grandma told me that he experienced it.

He was good to go to war, because he left grandma and his children at home alone.

Then, I would sit on his knees and ask him the things I cannot ask to my father.

With him, I would do all the things I wish to do with dad who, unfortunately, does not want to do.

I am sure that grandpa would tell me many things, and would have a long time to stay with me, because when you are a grandparent you do not go working anymore.

It would be great!

Maybe I could do it with the dad of my dad, but I do not know where he is...

Dad never tell me about his parents but I do not dare to ask him. -

*- That's true, Steven. Grandparents can do with their grandchildren what their parents have not time to do.*

*Having lived many years, grandparents have understood many things and know what are the most important ones.*

*They are more patient and understood even more how much children need to be listened to, to be hold in their arms, and play with adults too.*

*Parents, sometimes, even knowing that, are seized by their job and many commitments, so they have a short time for their children,*

*After working, when they are too tired, they easily lose their patience and cannot listen to their children carefully.*



*Often, realizing that they are not able to spend enough time with their children, they give them many presents.*

*Presents can make children happy but do not fill their heart with love, warm and everything they need. -*

-----

- This afternoon, I sat next to grandma who was sewing in front of the window in her room, and she told me many things.

She told me that my mum was so good and sweet, and loved her brothers, namely my uncles, and me very much.

She worked in the fields, and, when back, even if she was tired, helped grandma to do the housework.

She was so strong that she was able to do those works that, usually, only man can do. After the death of my grandpa, she used to do the things that grandpa used to do.

Uncles were so pleased with her, because she loved everybody, cooked, washed, ironed and helped everyone.

She was always kind and smiling, and my uncles always listened to her.

If someone did something not good, she never reprimanded him/her, but she used to tell him/her not to do that again and to behave well.

Even after her marriage with dad, she used to come here often and help them, just like when she lived with them. –

-----

- I liked that grandma told me about my mum. I would like that dad too did it...

When grandma came back to the kitchen, I stayed there, in front of the window, looking at the trees.

I thought on my mum... -

- “Mum, if you did all those things for grandma and my uncles, who knows how many things you would do for Susan and me! If you loved them all, who knows how much would you love us... how many pats and kisses would give Susan and me, how much I would stay in your arms...

Mum, why just you had to go to Heaven?” –

-----

- During Christmas holidays, it is often snowing and I am always at grandma’s house.

I am happy when the snow comes, because everybody becomes quieter and better. I feel better too.

There is no more noise and everything is silent. I like silent... I feel better...

I look at the window: how beautiful! It is all white!

When it is snowing, my uncles never go out in the evening, and sit around the fireplace.

I sit on their knees and listen to what they say to me. I am very glad to stay with them.

I would like to do that with my dad too... but he never takes me in his arms!

The radio tells good stories.

There is no electricity because uncles light candles to save money. It's even better to see everything with the light of candles ...

Grandma prepares the pan with the coals, with a few cinders, and thrusts it into the covers, inside a big egg, made with bent wooden strips.

My uncles have it too, but use it only when it is snowing, while grandma and I use it the whole winter. So, the bed is always warm.

When the snow is high outside, my uncles shovel it soon to make the streets leading to a house that they built with pieces of wood and a very hard plastic.

They call this house 'the Big House'. There is the firewood inside it. Then, uncles place bicycles, motorbikes and tools to work the fields.

In the Big House, when the weather is warmer, we have a bath, and, when outside it rains, grandma does the washing.

My uncles shovel the snow even in the streets leading to the pigsty and the poultry pen.

However, when it snows, uncles do something very bad to birds. They put many crumbs of bread on the snow, and, nearby, they put traps.

Birds, which are struggling to find food because there is the snow, are attracted there, so eating the crumbs they are trapped. Then, uncles eat them...

This thing makes me feel sad but I have not the guts to tell that to grandma. –

- Steven, you are a good and sensitive child. That is why it is difficult that you understand why they kill birds and other animals and eat them.

They do not think it is a bad thing. When they were children, they did not learn to love and respect animals, remembering that they are God beings too.

Then, when adults, maybe do it without thinking, even though they see other people do the same thing.

It would be good to teach that, before doing something, it is necessary to wonder why you are doing that, and then listen to the heart.

You are so good and sweet that you was able to understand by yourself how beautiful is to love everybody, even the animals, trees and flowers.

Thus, even though you see others doing that, you will not do it. When you grow up, you will also have the courage to say what you feel in your little heart. -

-----

- In a short time, it is Christmas. We did the Christmas tree and the crib at school.

Each child has brought something, either for the Christmas tree or the crib.

There are colored balls, stars, sparkling wires, cotton to do snowflakes, a big ball with a very long tip to put on the treetop, and many lights that turn on and off.

We have a beautiful Baby Jesus, on straw, inside a cave, with the ox, the donkey, Mary and Joseph. There are also many other figures: men who do their work, many sheep and other animals.

There is a lake, the mill, and a sky full of stars drawn on a large paper.

Then, we put the moss we collected in the meadows.

I have not brought anything, because we do neither the Christmas tree nor the crib at home. Even grandma does not them.

I asked Aunt Adele if I could go and find the moss for the school, but she told me that there was no moss in the nearby meadows.

Thus, I was the only child who did not bring anything!

I would not go to school, because I felt ashamed not to bring anything. Fortunately, the teacher did not ask me anything, so I felt better,

I also found out that Aunt Adele told me another lie: my classmates found the moss just near my house... she told me that there was no moss there...

I would like to tell her that, but I have no courage! -

-----

- "Mummy, it is so sad knowing that you are not here even at Christmas!

If you were you, we would do a beautiful crib together with dad and Susan, as well as a beautiful tree.

Mum, it is so bad that Aunt Adele always tell me lies! So, I feel alone even more!

You know, mum, I have not the heart to tell the teacher and my classmates the reasons why I did not take the moss, I am ashamed to say that this woman does not allow me to go out, does not want that other children come home, and tells me lies.” -

*- I understand, Steven, how much you feel bad because you cannot do the Christmas tree and the crib, as your classmates do.*

*I know that you would like doing it at least at your grandma’s house, with your uncles, because this is a very beautiful thing for everybody, especially for children.*

*I understand how much you felt ashamed for not bringing the moss, and I know that the thing that made you feel worse was the lie from your Aunt.*

*Lies make you suffer because you feel that who tells that does not love you and you cannot trust him/her.*

*Lies hurt adults too, but they are told the same. -*

-----

- The teacher told us to bring a letter to write a Christmas card to our parents.

I asked dad the money to buy it, and he gave money to me.

I told the teacher that I cannot write it to my father, because at Christmas Day I am at grandma’s house.

She advised me to write it to my uncles and helped me, but she did not ask me why I am not with dad the Christmas Day, as other children do.

I was the only one who did not write the letter to his dad! I am the only one who does not spend the Christmas day with his parents!

I fear that my classmates tease me for that.

“Why can I never do what my classmates do? Why does dad not spend Christmas day with Susan and me?”

I would like stay with them, the three of us alone talking on everything. He could tell us about the mum and do things with us.

I know he could do it, because he does not work at Christmas...

“Why does he stay with that woman and Flavius and not with us?”

He is our dad, not Flavius dad!” -

*- Little Steven, your dad understood that Aunt Adele does not love you as he wish and he is very sad for that.*

*Thus, he thinks that you feel better when you are at grandma’s house because there everybody loves you.*

*He knows that he cannot compel Aunt Adele to love you because this comes out from the heart.*

*I know that your dad, before marrying her, asked Aunt Adele to love you and to do all the things your mum used to do for you.*

*Aunt Adele answered yes, but now she is not able to do that.*

*He always hopes she changes attitude keeping the promise.*

*He works away and he does not know other people who can look after you.*

*He misses your mum too and he would like to spend Christmas all together. -*

-----

- I am happy that I wrote the letter for my uncles. It is very beautiful, there are Christmas trees covered with shimmering white dots.

Today it is Christmas, I returned from Mass and I asked grandma under which dish I should place the letter, she answered under Uncle Roland dish.

When he sat at the table, he immediately noticed that: I went next to him and I read the letter aloud.

All uncles and grandma were pleased, because I wrote that I love everybody.

They clapped and told me:

“Good boy, Steven. What a nice surprise! It is a very beautiful letter. You have done well, we are so happy. We love you too.”

Then, they gave me some money.

I am happy to have pleased them, because they are good with me and love me. –

-----



- "Mummy, I was happy to be at grandma's house, with Susan and the uncles, the Christmas Day, but I missed dad a lot... Then, I felt your lack more than the other days, and I had a stronger desire to be in your arms and receive your kisses. Mummy, I feel much alone!" -

-----

- Today is the day of Epiphany and I came back home in the city, because Christmas holidays are over. This evening, I saw that Flavius has some beautiful new toys. I asked him who gave them to him and he replied:

"The Befana!"

And Aunt Adele added soon:

"There are no presents for you because you were at your grandma's house!"

I was about to cry:

"Why did the Befana not come to grandma's house? Does she not love me? Or am I not good as I am not at school?"

Flavius never makes me play with his toys, and now he is going to take them to his aunt's house and play with his cousin. I noticed that he has many toys and hid them. I do not know why he did that, since I never ask him!

Susan did not say anything: she went to her room soon, and she is crying now... -

*- I know you suffer, dear Steven, seeing Flavius with the toys of the Befana.*

*Do not think that the Befana does not love you or that you are not good.*

*This happened, because Aunt Adele cares a lot of her child that, sometimes, forget Susan and you.*

*Do not be angry with her. She does that because she has not Flavius dad near her anymore, so she thinks only about him.*

*She promised your dad that she would cook for everybody and do the housework.*

*As you can see, she does everything well, but she does not feel you as her family.*

*She suffers too because Flavius dad has gone. -*

-----

-Today, I got the school report: I fear to show it to my dad because he never talks with me and does not look at my homework!

Last time, he signed the report silently and he only told me that I was not good.

I do my best at school, but there are many things I cannot understand!

When I do my homework, often I cannot end them because I do not know where to seek help.

My classmates are helped by their parents.

Some of them go to another teacher who explains those things they did not understand at school.

Then, they do the homework together!

I would like to do the homework with my classmates and have somebody who can explain the lessons!

But I fear to ask dad, because I heard grandma Celestine telling that somebody advised dad to take us to the boarding school.

I'd better not to ask anything: if he gets angry with me due to the school, he may change his mind!

And I do not want go to the boarding school... even because, then, I could not go to grandma Celestine's house! -

-----

- "Mum, how can I do without you?

Mummy, I am sure that if you were here with me, I would be great, you would help me doing my homework, explaining me what I cannot understand.

If you were here, I would go playing, after doing my homework, so I could have many friends.

I would call them at home to play with me and you would give us a good snack.

Mum, come back to me, I want your hugs, kisses and caresses.

Come back, mum! I feel very alone!" -

-----

- Dave, but cannot the one calling to go to Heaven see that I want to stay with my mum? And I need her?

That I love her?

I am very angry with the one who called her to the Heaven without asking me before!

Now, here, I have nobody who loves me!

Dave, could you tell him to let her come back? -

*- I am sorry, little Steven, I cannot do that, and nobody else can do that.*

*Now you cannot feel her hugs and caresses, but be sure that your mum comes often next to you, even though you cannot see her.*

*And while you are sleeping, she caresses your face and gives you many kisses. -*

-----

- Finally, school is over!

I am happy, but I am ashamed: I failed!

Dad did not tell anything! Even grandma and uncles were silent, but I know that they are not happy for that, and I am very sorry.

Now that I do not go to school I fear less, and I have not that strong stomachache that made me run to the bathroom when I was at school.

It always happens when I have to go somewhere or they take me to somebody else.

I will stay here with grandma and uncles for many days! How beautiful!

Uncle Francis is teaching me riding the bicycle. He takes me to the farmyard, puts a rope under my arms and pulls it, so I cannot lose my balance and learn soon.

Uncle Francis has a big bally, and he does not talk much with grandma and other uncles, but he plays a lot with me.

Now, I have fun going by bicycle on the mound of land made by dirty water coming from the pipe placed by my uncles. I start fast, ride it, and then I throw in the meadow without cycling. -

- Even here, in the country, I have not some friends...

However, there is a girl living nearby and I can go to her house and play with her.

Her name is Wilma, she lives with her dad, mum, grandparents and an aunt called Maryn.

Maryn is very good, and chats a lot with Susan. Often, they have a stroll together in the neighboring countries.

Maryn loves me too. She is always kind with me: when I am at her home, she asks me if I want something to eat or drink.

Wilma and I have a lot of fun, because her house is huge.

It is as high as grandma's, but it is longer. It has a wine cellar with many barrels full of wine and we have fun playing hide-and-seek among the barrels.

There is also an oven: sometimes they make bread and delicious cakes that I love very much!

We also play in the garden, where there are vegetables. We like to climb trees of apricots and plums and eat the fruit. There is always Mr. Adam, Wilma's grandfather, in the garden. He is good and kind with me too.

Wilma's father work in the fields and picks fruit.

I like seeing when he makes wine: he puts all bunches of grapes in a barrel, takes off his shoes, jumps in together with some friends and they crush all grapes with their feet, singing and joking.

Once, he put Wilma and me in a barrel, and we had a lot of fun. Wilma is a very sweet girl. She is younger than I am, so I help her in doing something she is not able to do because I am stronger.

Her hair is blonde and long, she always wears beautiful dresses, because her aunt Maryn is a dressmaker.

Playing with her is beautiful and I love her. -

-----

- Today, I cried!

Tomorrow, I have to go back to the city, because school starts again.

Grandma told me that I stayed there many days: it seems to me that school is just ended...

Grandma, seeing me crying, explained to me:

“Steven, I am sorry you feel so bad, but here you cannot go to school because it is too far from home.

Do not cry like that, Christmas will come soon and you can come back here.”

I do not want to go back and see Aunt Adele! -

*- Steven, I know that you wish to learn many things, but rather than returning and seeing Aunt Adele, you would not go to school.*

*School is important because you will learn those things that are necessary when you grow up.*

*You know, many children cannot attend school because they live in countries where there are no schools or they have no money to buy books and the school smock. And they would like to go to school...*

*Think about them and feel that you are a bit luckier child. .*

*Come on make an effort.*

*Remember that you mum helps you from Heaven. -*

-----

- School has started again for two months, but I am not able to be good.

When the teacher questions me, I am never able to answer because I fear of making a mistake.

As always, I am alone at home. I can see dad for a short time, he goes always far by his truck. I can see Susan in the evening only while having dinner.

Fortunately, I go back to grandma's house at Christmas!

When I go bed, before falling asleep, I always talk to my mum and say the prayers that nuns taught to me.

I do it under my blankets because I do not want that Flavius hears or sees me.

The priest taught me to say a prayer just for my mum: after saying it, I am happier! -

-----

- Now, it is Carnival.

Today, the teacher told us to get ready the Carnival costume because we are having a party in the next few days.

Last year, dad gave me an Indian costume.

It is blue and has many colored feathers that I put on my head; it is just amazing!

I asked Aunt Adele if this year I could wear it again, and she said yes. I look forward! -

-----

- I am very sad, I still cry... Today, it is Carnival and Aunt Adele told me that she threw away my Indian costume because it was spoilt.

It is another lie by Aunt Adele! I haven't spoilt it. It was still beautiful!

Now, what does I wear?

I feel crying more seeing Flavius with his cowboy costume and pistols.

She could tell me that before, Aunt Adele! I could ask dad to buy another costume for me...

How can I go to the party without a costume?

Why is Aunt Adele so mean with me?

I did nothing to her! -



-----

- Nuns let us play in many ways, eat many sweets and drink chocolate at the party.

I had fun the same.

But I felt sorry for not wearing a costume as the others...

As always, I was the only child without a costume! -

*- Come on, dear Steven. I know how much you are suffering for Aunt Adele lies and because you could not wear your costume.*

*I know you feel cheated.*

*I love you very much, baby. -*

-----

- School ended again: I have to resit in September.

I am very sorry and I feel ashamed. The beautiful thing is that I can go to grandma's house for the whole summer and I can play. . -

-----

- Yesterday, I saw my uncles quarreling: I was very afraid!

Everyone shouted, Uncle Francis took a knife and pointed at the other uncles.

Seeing him, the others calmed down and all was over quickly.

Luckily! –

*- Do not be afraid, Steven, your uncles, as everybody else, sometimes get angry and quarrel, but Uncle Francis would never use that knife against the others.. Maybe, he saw doing that in some films.*

*However, you never do dangerous things like that, because, without realizing it, you could hurt somebody or yourself.*

*Often, many children hurt themselves while doing dangerous things.*

*It is better doing cheerful play and laugh. –*

-----

*- I am happy because nothing bad happened to my uncles. I noticed that they get along as before, even though they quarreled.*

*I talk a lot with them and play: they are good and nice!*

*I would like to do that with my dad too, but he spends a short time with me, and when we are together, he never talks to me, nor play.*

*If only he took me in his arms!*

*This summer he came and visit me at grandma's house only twice, and he stayed a short time...! -*

-----

- I went back home before the beginning of the school to do the resit exam, but something strange happened to me, I did not understand it and nobody explained it to me.

The day of the exam, Aunt Adele took me to school, but she went back home soon and I stayed there alone.

The school caretaker let me go in the room and told me to wait for the teacher.

I waited for a while, but teacher did not come!

I was alone! After a short time, I felt bad: I did not see anybody coming! Then, I was afraid...

After a long time, the school caretaker came in and told me to go back home.

I went back home by myself. When I entered home, Aunt Adele did not ask me anything, even if I did the exam.

I was afraid to talk to her, but I would like to know why I did not do the exam, and if I had to do it the following day. Thus, I said to her:

“Aunt, the teacher did not come... I did not the exam... They left me alone in the room... have I to go back tomorrow?”

She did not reply! -

-----

- Today, Aunt told me that I failed.

“Why did they reject me if was I not questioned?”

This time, it is not my fault. I went to school!  
Why did they do it to me? Why does anybody not explain it to me?" -

- "Mum, mum, nobody loves me, nobody cares about me.  
Mum, where are you?" -

-----

- This year, there is a very nice teacher at school. She let me sit at the first desk, in front of her, and sometimes she sits next to me and caresses me.

I am less afraid to talk with her, so I go to school with more pleasure, even though I look forward to go to grandma's house on Saturday afternoon. -

-----

- Christmas holidays are coming fast.  
The snow fell down. Susan and I have fun making snowmen and throwing snowballs.  
Today, grandma said to us:

"Steven, Susan, let's go out, there is a surprise for you. Dress well because it is cold."

We looked each other with wonder and then looked at grandma who was smiling at us: we realized that she wanted to make us a surprise!

Outside, there is a lot of snow and everything is stunning.

I am very happy to go out with grandma and Susan. She took us by her hands and smiled at us.

She took us to the church to see the crib and told us about the Baby Jesus and the shepherds.

How beautiful is listening to grandma telling us many beautiful things!

She told us that Jesus mam is in Heaven...

Maybe she met my mum... -

- "Oh Jesus Mommy, you loved Jesus too, and you saw that children need their mum...

Then, could you tell my mum to come here with Susan and me? Maybe you can come together..." -

- Grandma is calling me:

"Steven, come on, let's go back home. Do you like the crib, right? I see you spellbound..."

"Yes, grandma, here everything is nice"

I do not tell her that I was talking with Jesus mum...

"Thank you grandma, you gave us a beautiful gift. Thank you for loving us."

I am going back home happy: who know if Jesus mum could help me...! -

-----

- Christmas holidays are over, but I go back to school happier, because I know that there is the nice teacher. Finally, I am good too! So, dad, grandma and my uncles will be pleased with me... -

-----

- Dad made us a surprise on Sunday. We visited a friend of his he met when he served in the army. He lives in a very far city. It was the first time we went on a trip together. Before arriving at his friend's, we stopped at a restaurant to eat. I never went to a restaurant! When the waiter came to us, everybody told him what he/she wanted to eat. I did not know what to ask, and I was silent. Susan did not say anything, but dad, Aunt Adele and Flavius laughed. Dad said to me: "Come on Steven, tell what you want!" I have difficulty in speaking when I am in new places and with new people, and I blushed... So, dad said to me: "Steven, here they cook huge and delicious steaks, a specialty in this area."

But I did not want to eat a steak, so I was still silent.  
At the end, I said to dad:

“I want beans.”

Dad, Aunt Adele and Flavius laughed again.

I did not understand why they were laughing...!

Fortunately, Susan was next to me and smiled at me.

Thus, I ate beans only.

After eating, we went and visit dad’s friend and then we go back home.

After few days, I went to buy a t-shirt with Aunt Adele.

Before returning home, she stopped at her sister’s to take Flavius.

Flavius uncle and cousin were there too.

Aunt Adele told them the trip we took on Sunday.

Halfway through her speech, she said:

“Do you want to know something? When we went to the restaurant, Steven, instead of eating a steak, preferred beans. Think: you go to a place like that to eat beans...”

Everybody started laughing.

I blushed, and I felt heat... I did not say anything! Since then, sometimes, I hear Flavius laughing with Aunt Adele while talking of beans...

She smiles at him. I pretend not to hear, but I still feel ashamed.

They do that with other people as well... –

*- Steven, do not be ashamed, you did not do anything wrong.  
They did not understand that you are shy and you had some  
difficulties at the restaurant.  
I know how much you are suffering: they should never tease  
anybody, especially a child...  
I love you, baby! -*

-----

- I went to grandma's for Easter holidays, and I found a stunning surprise.

All trees are full of flowers of different colors, and there is a nice scent.

I like stay there looking at them... they are so beautiful...!

When I look at the trees and flowers, I am as happy as when I play. I also told that to grandma.

She smiled at me:

“Steven, when I look at the trees and flowers, I also feel something in my heart... it is called joy.”

How beautiful! Grandma and I feel the same things in our hearts!

I am very happy to feel that grandma and my uncles love me and that they live in the country! So, I can look at the trees, flowers and smell many scents.

There are very few trees in the city.

“Why do they not build houses surrounded by trees like here?”



*- I am happy, Steven, to hear that you love trees and flowers so much.*

*When you look at them, always listen to your heart and see how many nice things you can feel!*

*Flowers, meadows, the sky, the sea, all together form nature.*

*Nature is like a great mum, offering many beautiful things. Sweet and sensitive hearts like yours can feel and appreciate it much more.*

*When you are in the meadows among the trees, you can find out many beautiful things.*

*Continue to love nature, as you are doing, and your heart will always be happy and pure.*

*When you grow up, you will understand very important things, just spending much time among nature.*

*Trees can also speak, besides being alive, but adults found it difficult to understand.*

*Often, they do not listen to the voices that can be heard in nature, so they do not love it.*

*That is why they cut trees to build cities.*

*The city is a useful thing, because it offers convenience and places to entertain, but if they built them leaving more trees and parks, people would live better and happier. -*

-----

*- Hurrah, school is over! I was successful! I am very happy! I look forward to tell that to grandma and uncles: they will be pleased and proud of me! How beautiful! -*

-----

- Here, at grandma's, I go to mass every Sunday with Susan. I like going there, because I can meet many people. Sometimes, grandma comes too.

My uncles never come, because they go to a house called 'People's House', where there are many games and a cafe.

Sometimes, I go there to call my uncles, when grandma needs them, and I see many men drinking wine, playing and having fun.

Church is near home.

The priest name is Raffael and he is very nice. He loves Susan and me and always ask us how we are.

He told me to go and play in the grass in front of the church with other children.

How beautiful! Finally, I do not play by myself anymore! I have many friends... I have a lot of fun in playing with them!

If only I could do it in the city...!

When he can, Raffael let us play with his ball and we play funny football matches.

Dad gave me a new bike: it is amazing and has even a racing handlebar.

I am happy because now I can help grandma too!

I go and buy the bread and other things for her by my new bike. I am happy I can do that for her... I love her very much...!

I go for some rides in the country streets with my friends. I discovered new fields where there are maize, big retting-pits I have never seen and wonderful meadows full of flowers.

Often, we stop in the middle of the fields to eat grapes and watermelons.

Sometimes, while my friends pick fruits, I have fun looking the poppies. They are so many and wonderful!  
I talk a lot with my friends and we do many games.  
It is just good to have friends! -

*- You are right, Steven. Friendship is a beautiful thing: it is one of the most precious treasures.*

*Besides playing and having fun, you can tell your friends what are you feeling in your heart, both beautiful and bad things, without being afraid of not to be understood or teased.*

*When somebody is your friend, he always tell you what he is thinking of and never tells you lies.*

*Always tell your friends what you feel in your heart, what you think, what you hear, what you cannot understand, what you like or dislike.*

*This is true friendship. If your friend does not agree with you for something, never get angry.*

*Maybe, he is right. But, if what he is saying is absolutely wrong for you, listen to your heart and be happy.*

*If a child does something that is not good for you, do as your mum used to do: do not reprimand him, but tell him that it is not good kindly.*

*If he does it the same, continue loving him and be quiet.*

*If he behaves badly or does things that hurt somebody, always tell what you think, telling that you love him but you cannot stay with him anymore.*

*When you are friends, you understand everything, never judge or tease, and always respect what your friend want to do.*

*But you cannot do bad thing for friendship. -*

-----

- Today, Mathilde, grandma sister, came to visit us.  
She gave me some chocolates and told me that I am a good boy.

How beautiful hearing those things!

They chatted a lot, as always.

I sat next to them playing with football cards and I heard what they were saying... -

- “You know, mommy, when grandma told Mrs. Mathilde that you worked in the house of important people, I recalled that you took me there by bike.

I felt like crying... I run in the courtyard. I sat under the big tree near the well, and I cried...

I wish you were here ... I miss you so much, Mum!

I remember when you sat me at the baby’s chair, fastened to the bike handlebar. While going, you caressed me, gave me many kisses and told me that I was a nice child and that you loved me and other things. Then, you sang...

Mummy, could not you ask Jesus and the Angels to come here sometimes?

Dave told me that you already come, but I cannot see and hear you.

I do not feel even your kisses. Ask them if I can see you, if you can take me in your arms for a while.

I asked Dave: he answered that nobody can do it! But I believe that you can do it, because you live where Jesus lives...” -

- *Dear Steven, for sure, your mum can do many things from there, things that cannot be done here in the Earth.*

*Now, you cannot see her because her body is different from yours: it is made up of Light.*

*Maybe, one day you can see her and listen to her. . -*

- We hope... maybe tomorrow...!

Who knows how much is my mum beautiful if she is made of Light...! -

-----

- I live in a small city, but its football team plays with the teams in the big cities, in Serie A. I root for it, as my dad does. He takes me to see football matches a few times, but I know everything on this team and its players: I always read the sports newspaper that dad buys!

When I see it playing, I am excited: how beautiful is the stadium, full of people and colors!

I am happy to go to the stadium, because I can also stay with my dad.

We go by his beautiful car, but before we stop at the café, where dad has many friends.

When I am in the car with him, I always hope that he tells me about mum, the things he does, and asks me how I feel with Aunt Adele.

I would like to tell him that I do not like Aunt and that Susan and I do not feel good with her.

I would like to tell him that she tells me lies and does many things that hurt me.

I would like to tell him all the things that I dislike.

I would like to tell him about the school and many other things.

But I am not able to tell him anything if he does not ask me: he is always so steady...!

When we are in the car, he only talks of football and our team.

But I am happy the same, because he becomes better. I feel that he loves me a bit, even though he never tells me.

Dad plays cards with his friends at the cafe, jokes with everybody and he is the one who mess up more!

I like to see these guys playing, screaming, beating his fists on the table, and making a fuss as children do.

When they stop playing, we all go together to the stadium by dad's car.

It is nice to be with dad and his friends because they talk a lot on my team.

I am happy that they love this team too! -

- "You know, Mom, I'm sure that, if you were here with me, you would let me be a footballer. I really like football and I can play well, even though I play by myself when I am at grandma's: aunt never allows me to go to the courtyard when I am at home...

Fortunately, sometimes, dad takes me to the stadium! Maybe, by looking, I will learn...

Oh mum, could you tell dad to send me to a school where you learn to become a footballer?

I do not know if there are matches in the place where you are, but they are so beautiful!

If Susan was younger, I would play football with her, but she is older than me, and then she is a girl..." -

- I sit next to dada t the stadium and I listen to what they say about footballers.

When the teams enter the ground, my heart pounds with joy. The t-shirt colors are wonderful; the ground has a well-cut grass, at the same level, and is always green, even in winter. It looks like a big carpet!

How I would love to run there and do somersaults!

When my team scores a goal, we jump and shout with joy.

Every time, I see my dad shouting, jumping and happy.

How nice is my dad! Why is he not always so happy?

I am sure that if he played football with me, he would have fun and be happier. And I would dance about with joy! -

- "Mummy, could you tell dad to play football with me when he is at home?

So we are together, have fun and I become a good footballer!

I would make him laugh... and he would never be so steady..."

- After the match, dad takes me back home and then he goes back to the cafe with his friends.

I always hope there is much traffic, so I can stay a bit more with him and can hear other comments on the match.

Fortunately, it happens often!

I reach home happy, because I did the things that I like more: being with dad and going to the stadium.

He was good and kind with me. I liked seeing him laugh, jump, shout with his friends, just as I do.

My dad is fantastic!

Going to the stadium and watching the match is very beautiful, but I like more being with dad and seeing him so happy! -

*- Dear Steven, it is beautiful that you are pleased when you see your dad so happy.*

*He expresses all his joy at the stadium because he becomes a child like you, and children sing, laugh and jump.*

*Instead, at home he is not able to express itself like that because he feels the responsibility for being the head of the family.*

*He learnt that, when someone becomes head of a family, he needs to be steady, showing to be strong and not to joke too much.*

*Instead, he can do the important things and be a bit children singing, playing and shouting.. -*

- I would like that Susan as well could see dad so cool!

She has been crying and saddened even more for a short time.

Today, while crying, she told grandma that Aunt did something very bad to her: she has not entered her in the first year of lower secondary school. Thus, she cannot go to school and has to go and work.

When she asked Aunt Adele why she did not enter her, Aunt answered that she forgot it...!

This is another lie! You cannot forget such an important thing!

Why did she not forget to enter Flavius?



He ended elementary school with Susan, and she remembered well to enter him...!

Aunt is just bad!

She did a bad thing, because Susan is good at school. She failed once only, because she was crying a lot.

I also hoped that she could help me in doing my homework, but no! So I can see her even less and this makes me cry...

Poor Susan! That is not right! She is so good!

I am a bit angry with dad:

“Why does he allow Aunt to do these bad things and tell us lies?”

Susan too is angry with dad, because, since aunt did not enroll her, he could do that! Then, he did not even scold aunt!

Grandma told Susan not to cry, to be patient, and that she will try to talk with dad and Aunt Adele. I hope she can do that, because dad never talks to her, nor says hello to her when he takes me there.

But now Susan cannot go to school anymore...

I am very sorry, because now Susan is even sadder!

She wanted to go to school, but now she has to go and work in a factory.

Let's hope that, when I finish elementary school, aunt does not forget to enroll me too in the lower secondary school...! -

-----

- Since Susan told grandma what aunt did to her, grandma Celestine is more smiling with us.

My grandma is so beautiful and good! She always talks sweetly to me and caresses me.

Rarely, she is angry with me, only when I get into mischief.

I have never seen her getting angry with Susan, but she never gets into mischief...: she is always so good.

Susan helps grandma to do the housework, and they chat a lot together.

Sometimes, I heard that they talk of me too...

Susan does only the things that only adults do. I never see her playing with other girls.

She has a friend only, the aunt of my friend Wilma, but she is older than her, so they cannot play together.

When we are at grandma's house, Susan washes my clothes. She tells me that I should be always neat, and she makes me have a bath.

It seems to me that I am clean, but she insists. Then, she puts me in a tub and washes me.

She is happy to see me clean and neat. She loves me very much...! -

-----

- Uncle Valerius got married.

I am pleased because he is happy, but I am a bit sorry because he does not live with grandma anymore.

Fortunately, Uncles Roland, Francis and Victor have not a girlfriend!

I like seeing them together, especially at the table, because they are big eaters.

Uncle Francis is the one eating more than anybody else! He has a big belly that hangs down, and he keeps it with a big belt.

Uncle Roland and Victor are big eaters too, but they have not such a big belly.

All my uncles are fat and tall. Their hair is black and they are so hairy. They have a dark skin, because they take the sun while working in the countryside. They look like chimpanzees... but they are beautiful and strong.

My hair is black and my skin is dark like that of my uncles, and maybe, when I grow up, I will have hair on the chest and the back like them.

Often, when I meet people that I have never met, they ask me:

“Is your family the Finlay family?”

I answer yes and they reply:

“I can see...!”

I am happy to look like my uncles!

However, someone says to me:

“Are you the child of the poor Florence?”

I answer yes, but I become sad.

The first time they said that to me, I ran to grandma and asked her:

“Grandma, what does ‘poor Florence’ mean? I do not like that, and makes me feel bad.”

She answered:

“Steven, it is a common saying. When someone goes to Heaven, you say ‘poor’. It means that who is speaking loved her and still loves her.” -

- Dave, but if everybody is happy in Heaven, why does they say ‘poor’ to my mum? She is happy up there; I am the one who is alone here!

Or...does my mum cry there as I do? -

*- Steven, your mum never cries up There.*

*When on Earth someone was good as she was, he/she does not feel worse in Heaven and he/she is only happy.*

*For sure, she would see you happy too, but she does not suffer when you are not happy, because up there she can understand all the reasons why things happen.*

*She understands that even those things that make someone feel bad on Earth can be good for that ‘bright thing’ placed in the heart, called soul.*

*And she can help you more from There.*

*This should make you happy.*

*You are right, baby, they should not say ‘poor’ to those living in Heaven and are happy. This is only a common saying.*

*You do not like that, because you are always happy when you see someone happy and, since your mum smiles and is happy in Heaven, you cannot say her ‘poor’...But you can also not say that.*

*Then, death is not something so bad.*

*Of course, it hurts those who remain on Earth, but it's always a great thing for those who go up there.*

*In other countries, when a person go to Heaven, they dance and sing. They are happy, because they know that you are well up There.*

*Heaven is our real Home. We leave it for a short time, to come to Earth, because here we learn many things. Imagine it is a travel... When we ended everything, we go back Home.*

*Now that you are a child and you miss your mum, it is not easy to understand these things, but when you grow up you will understand everything better. -*

-----

- My uncles work the fields of Pickwich family and those of other people as well.

They can drive well the caterpillar.

Those caterpillars are owned by some people living near there.

When they plough the fields, they start working in the evening until the morning, because the weather is hot during the day.

When I wake up overnight hearing the noise of caterpillars, my heart is full of joy, and I imagine being there on a caterpillar with them.

I asked my uncles to take me with them many times, but they always answer that it is dangerous and I would be tired.

However, I have never stopped to ask them, so, this evening they pleased me.

Uncle Roland went to the field when the sun set. Uncle Victor and I left at nightfall. He let me ride his motorbike, behind him, and left...

I held him tightly. I was so happy that my heart was pounding a lot!

It seemed that we were going for an adventure, as those we watch at the TV...

We crossed small streets in the middle of two large ditches and large and high trees.

He explained to me that they are very old trees; some of them are more than one hundred years old...

He told me that, among the leaves, on the highest branches, there are nests of sparrows. For sure, they were sleeping with their little birds at that time...

I paid attention in order to learn the street: so I can come back by my bike, and I will climb the trees to watch nests.

We also crossed some meadows and fruit trees.

How beautiful is seeing everything lighted by the lamp of the motorbike!

My heart was pounding more and more, so I held my uncle even more tightly. .

I did not understand if my heart was pounding because I was happy or because I feared the dark around us.

Then, I saw the lamp of the caterpillar and its noise: I was about to shout for joy!

When I got off the motorbike, my legs were trembling...

The caterpillar was in the middle of the field and came towards us: it was huge and beautiful! Its noise was like that of the fireworks.

The field was lighted by its big lamps.

Uncle Victor was pleased to see me so happy.

When Uncle Roland came near us, he stopped the caterpillar and got off.

Uncle Victor gave him a bag containing something to eat and drink, prepared by grandma.

Later, he went up the caterpillar, in his place, and said to me:

“Come on Steven, come up with me, let’s drive the caterpillar together.”

I sat between his legs and we started.

How beautiful!

Behind the caterpillar, the plough was digging a hole and put up a lot of dirt.

I smelled some scents I had never smelled: I liked them very much!

In front of me, there were three large iron levers: when I pulled them, together with uncle, they stopped near my legs.

Down the field, we played half ring-a-ring-o’-roses with the caterpillar and I laughed: I felt so strong up there!

We ploughed until Uncle Roland ate, and we stopped only when he beckoned with his hands.

When I got off the caterpillar, I gave him a kiss and I said to him:

“Uncle, driving the caterpillar is very beautiful, I had a lot of fun, can I drive it again?”

He smiled at me:

“Yes, Steven, another day. Now it is late and you should go to bed. I am very pleased to see you happy.”

I gave him another kiss and I jumped on Uncle Victor motorbike.

I held him tightly and we left for home.

My heart was pounding, but in a different way: maybe I was afraid before...

I had a lot of fun, and I was happy also because, now, I experienced a nice adventure and I could tell it to my friends!

I just imagine how much they will be happy tomorrow, when I say:

“I found new places to explore... are we going there?”

I cannot sleep... and I think of my uncles who spend all the night alone, far from home: they are so strong and brave!

I am happy to have these uncles! -

*- How beautiful adventure, Steven!*

*You can be very proud of your uncles: they are strong, brave, good and love you very much.*

*Steven, even adults are afraid of the dark, not just the children...*

*This fear is natural because when it is dark you cannot see far away thus, you cannot see well the obstacles you could meet while walking or the possible dangers.*

*Fierce animals come closer when it is dark. For this reason, those who sleep outdoors light some fires in order to keep animals away.*

*When it is dark, you have more fear, because who wants to steal something or do bad things, can hide better in the dark.*

*Steven, be always cautious: as long as you are a child, never go out at night.. -*

*- I fear the dark even when I am at home... -*



- *This is natural too as long as you are young.*  
*If you want, I can help you to be no longer afraid of the dark.*  
*You know, Steven, there is always a friend near you, even though you cannot see him, as you cannot see your mum when she is next to you.*  
*This friend is an Angel!*  
*He has large wings and is surrounded by Light! He is always close to you, since you was born.*  
*He lived when now your mum is living. He came on Earth to be with you, to help and protect you.*  
*On Earth, everybody has an Angel close to him/her.*  
*He can help you to do everything, with less effort, even your homework. And if you ask him, he can help you even more. You can ask it as you do with your uncles.*  
*Even though you cannot see him, talk to him as you talk to your mum. I assure you that he always listens to you.*  
*Then, when it is dark, call your mum and your Angel friend and ask them to help, protect and be near you.*  
*You can always do it, not just when you fear the Dark.*  
*When you want to cry or you have difficulties in doing something, or you are ill, or you feel alone, call him: He always help you in everything.*  
*Your Angel Friend is stronger than your uncles and loves you as much as your mum.*  
*He can do more things than those done by adults.*  
*Angels can do just everything.*  
*However, they cannot always do whatever we ask them, because you have to experience some situations to learn things.-*

- Dave, now I remember that, when my mum was here, I saw some people like that, as you told me. I do not remember them very well... they were so beautiful and always smiled at me. There was also a strong light...

I thought I have dreamed them, but no... I saw them...really! They were so many...

Thus, were they Angels? Were they all friends who loved me?-

*- Yes, Steven, there could be many Angels next to you  
When you are a child, seeing Angels is easier, but there are also adults who can see and hear them.*

*Angels talk to the heart and suggest the good things to do and say.*

*They teach many things, especially to love everybody and be happy for what you have and what you can do.*

*You know Steven, besides Angels, there are other friends you cannot always see easily. They live in the meadows, in the woods, the countryside, and love you very much. They are so small. They like laughing, joking and playing.*

*They are always happy and sing.*

*When you are in the countryside, among the trees, you can do a beautiful play. Call these little friends and imagine they are coming to you happily, smiling and full of joy, playing ring-a-ring-o'-roses around you.*

*You can talk, sing, play and run with them. You can do everything with them. You'll see how it is beautiful!*

*When it is dark, if you are at home or outdoors, you can talk loudly to your mum, your Angel friend and these little friends. In this way, you have no longer fear because you know that they are there near you and protect you.*

*You can do it always, also when you fear other things.. You will see that your fears will disappear.*

*If you do that even when you are sad or you want to cry, you will be happy again.. -*

-----

- They told me that this year my favourite teacher is no more at school. There is another teacher replacing her. I hope he is good and sweet like her!

I have always difficulties in being good at school, but now I am able not to cry. -

-----

- Hurrah, the teacher is good! He lets us sing the songs of his country.

He likes make us do gym. I like it too! So, I feel less bad when I go back home and I cannot move.

Unfortunately, we do gym only twice a week!

The teacher organized a football tournament with other elementary schools.

When he asked who wanted to be part of the team, I wished to raise my hand too... but I did not that: Aunt Adele does not allow me to go out!

And, for sure, she would not take me to the football field, which is in another district.

I have not even football shoes and the uniform.

Aunt Adele makes me realize that she strains herself to wash my clothes.

She always tells me to stay clean as most as possible: I think that she would not wash also my uniform!

I could ask dad to buy my football shoes and the uniform, and to say Aunt Adele to wash them... but how can I ask that? He never talks to me, he is always so serious...

I told the teacher that I had no desire to play...

However, this time I cried! I cried when I was alone, so nobody could see me.

I would love to go there... Being part of a football team would be great

When my classmates told me about the matches, I was about to cry but I was able not to cry.

“Why can they go there, and cannot I?” -

- “Mum, come back...

Mum, if you were here, I could go there...” -

-----

- Today, there is the most important match, because my class plays against the first one.

The teacher asked those who do not play to go and root for. I asked Aunt Adele to let me go at least once but, as always, she answered no.

Now, she went out to her sister's: I feel like crying... and I am very angry with her

She is a very bad woman! -

-----

- This year I was successful too: next year I will attend the first year in the lower secondary school.

I have to pay attention that Aunt Adele enrolls me... She could pretend to forget, as she did with Susan...! -

- Dad was so pleased when I told him that I was successful, and he kept the promise he made: giving me a football uniform.

He took me at grandma's, and we went to a big sports shop in the city centre.

I got on his beautiful car happily, and I became happier when dad gave me a kiss.

This time, he was smiling when driving. So, I could look at him without fear: how beautiful and strong he is!

He is strong like my uncles. His hair is black, well groomed, combed backwards, and he puts a cream on it to become shining.

When he does not work, my dad is always well dressed.

He wears a white shirt, a tie, and puts a white hanky on the breast-pocket.

His shoes are always new and polished.

When I give him some kisses, I feel his smooth skin, beardless and perfumed. He look like a rich and important person!

When we entered the shop, a man came close to us and dad said:

“I want a football uniform for my son, ask him which he likes.”

I could hardly believe! It was the first time he did not say what I had to do!

I did not know which uniform to choose:

“The shirt of my team or the shirt of an important team?”

That man showed many shirts to me. At the end, I chose the shirt of the team that won more shields than the others and Susan likes it as well.

So, she is happy too.

My friends also will like this shirt because they always talk of this strong team.

When I tried on it, I felt better in playing football...

Then, dad asked that man to give him another uniform like that, to have another one in reserve and the shoes. I could not believe! When he bought even a leather ball for me, I felt like dreaming.

While I was trying on the uniform and the shoes, dad went on talking with that man.

He always speak a lot with people, even though he does not know them. However, it was the first time I heard him talking of himself.

He told that, when he was a child, he never received even a present.

At the end, he said:

“Now I do everything for my children, and I try to give them the best as possible.”

When I heard that, my heart began to pound: So dad loves Susan and me! -

- Dave, you told me that! I could hardly believe it... for the many things that I told you... -

- *You see, Steven, how difficult is to understand what lies in the heart of a person!*

*For this reason, we can never judge people.*

*We do not know what that person experienced, if he/she suffered, if someone loved him/her, what he/she never received, and what he/she is not able to express. -*

- Yes, you are right..., I was impressed by listening to my dad who was saying those things!

However, soon after, I felt sad and I do not know why.

Then, when I was alone at home, I understood that I would have liked if he addressed me before.

Why did he tell that to someone he does not know, instead of telling me?

Why has dad never said:

“Steven, I love you”!

Why has he never held me in his arms? Why has he never told me about his life with mum? -

- *Steven, there are things that make us feel that we are loved. They are called: 'expressions of love'.*

*They can be words, caresses, kisses, smiles, hugs. They can be action through which you look after the person you love, help and make him/her happy.*

*When a child does not receive these expressions and does not see these actions, he feels he is not loved, just as it happened to your dad and you.*

*This is the worst pain because for everybody, young or adult, love is the most important thing to live happily.*

*These pains are so bad that cause many fears, making you feel insecure, weak and other things.*

*When you are an adult, you are ashamed of feeling that. So, you conceal what you are feeling, in many ways, even pretending to be strong and confident.*

*You have so much fear of suffering more that you refuse all expressions of love, even though you wish them.*

*In addition, you have difficulties in expressing love for the same reason.*

*That happened to your dad. Try to understand him; he loves you.*

*Now, understand that the most important strength is in the heart, the strength that let us give and receive the expressions of love, helping us to say what we feel in our heart, our feelings. -*

- However, Dave, I also did not receive those things, the expressions of love, as you call them, but I tell you the same what I feel in my heart. And I tell grandma that I love her! -

- Yes, you are right. And you are good in doing that.

*But remember that you also fear to say the things that you tell me and your mum to you dad, your teacher, your friends... it is not always easy, Steven...*

*Now, do not worry: gradually, I will help you to do that with everyone.*

*And when your heart will be full of love, you will do that in a better way. -*



-----

- This year, I started the first year in the lower secondary school.

The school is the same where Flavius goes. It is far from home, it takes almost one hour to reach there.

I am happy it is far, so I can cross the whole city and see many people and shops.

I went with Flavius the first day.

I thought to do like that every morning but, the second day, Flavius told me that he preferred going with one of his classmates: they already agreed that.

I answered that I remembered the street so I could go by myself.

I pretended nothing had happened, but I am very sorry that Flavius does not like me as a friend.

He talks to me a little and he is always cryptic with me.

Even when we eat, he does not talk to me!

If dad is there, he is silent, as the others; other times, he talks to his mum only. I tried to talk to him when we are sitting at the table, but he does not answer to me, nor Aunt Adele. So, I am always silent but I feel like crying...

Only when we go to bed, he tells me about the games he did with his friends and how much he had fun with all his toys...

I have neither toys, nor friends!

Flavius and I meet not so much even though we attend the same school, because he comes back at different hours from mine and then, as always, he spends the afternoon at his aunt's house.

I had already figure out that he does not want me as a friend for a long time, because he never asked me to play with him.

Now, I am sure: he does not want even to go to school with me  
I do not know why...

I have never told him anything, nor did anything to him! -

*- Steven, when a person does not want to be with us, not always means that he does not like us as a friend or refuse us.*

*There could be other reasons that this person cannot tell us or is ashamed to talk about them.*

*When we do not know the truth, we'd better not to imagine anything because we could suffer without any reason or blame someone who has no guilt.*

*Do not blame Flavius, he loves you even though he does not show it to you.-*

-----

- Everything is new at school: new classmates, many teachers, and much more homework to do. But I have not the same fear as before.

I sit at the last desk in the classroom, so I can chat more and copying a classmate's work is easier.

In the report of the first quarter, the teachers wrote that I am a bit undisciplined.

I am sorry they wrote that, because I would like to please my dad, grandma and my uncles, but I am not able to be quiet.

I have been nervous for a short time and I do not know what I could do.. -

*- You are growing, Steven. Many things are changing in your body, and this makes you feel restless and a bit strange. You can feel confused feelings even in your heart.. -*

- That's true, Dave, and I feel ashamed to tell you.  
I am confused: I feel I love dad, but I am also angry with him. I am very angry with Aunt Adele!  
However, I do not want to talk now about that... I feel bad and I am about to cry...  
And I am fed up with crying! -

*- I know, Steven. Whenever you want, I will always listen to you.  
Try not to keep the things that make you feel bad in your heart because those things get bigger and cause troubles. -*

-----

- Susan work in a trousers factory, in a country far from home. She goes by bike early in the morning, when it is still dark and it is cold, goes to the station and takes a bus in order to reach the factory.  
She does not feel good: she is pale and lost weight. She comes back home late at night, has dinner in a hurry and goes soon to her room.  
Even though she does not feel good, she does the housework in her room and washes her clothes.  
Aunt Adele and she never look each other.

Sometimes, they quarrel because Aunt wants that she does even the housework in the whole house.

So, Susan cries and locks in her room.

Aunt is very mean! She is not satisfied to see that Susan cleans her room, washes and irons her clothes, cooks after working all day long!

I would like to help Susan and say that I love her, but when they quarrel, I feel bad too, and I fear more Aunt Adele: after the quarrel, she goes back to the kitchen even more silent and serious! -

-----

- Some evenings, I have been going to Susan's room to talk with her for some time.

Susan asked me that and I went soon even though I was a bit afraid of Aunt.

Susan is very sweet, even though she does not feel good.

Often, she caresses me as if she was my mum, and even kisses me. She tells me that she loves me and she would like to see my happy.

She urges me to tell her if Aunt Adele does something bad to me.

Before leaving her room, we kiss each other for the goodnight.

One night, she said to me:

“Steven, do not worry if you see me crying.

I miss mum a lot...!

I feel alone: dad never talks with me! He never held me in his arms, nor caressed me.

I would love if he told us about mum or spent a short time with us.

He knows that Aunt Adele mistreats us, but he never tells her anything!

He should protect us; he is our dad!

This makes me be angry with him.”

I did not know what to say and I felt like crying.

She held me tight...

We started crying, hugging each other.

After leaving her room, I was about to cry again... How everything would be different if we were with mum...!

I am afraid that Susan gets sick and dies, as my mum! -

- “Mum, help us! Please, let Susan not to get sick... Help her in feeling better.

Please, mum, help us!” –

-----

- Often, when I leave Susan’s room, I want to cry and go to my room to stay by myself.

But I have to pretend nothing has happened, going to the kitchen and watch the TV, until it is time to go to bed.

Aunt Adele is very serious: I fear a lot that she rebukes me so I hold my breath!

Susan, after a while, comes back to the kitchen to cook the pasta she will eat the following day at the factory.

She stands there, without saying anything, turned to the cookers.

I look at her out of the corner of my eye: I have a lump in my throat.

The pasta is cooked in a short time and Susan puts it in a metal container, goes back through us, with his head down, sad, silent, and goes to sleep.

Ours is not a family!

“Why does dad not let us live alone, Susan and me?”

It would be better for everybody, and finally we both would live in peace.

Susan can do the housework and cook, and I would help her. Gradually, I would learn to do everything.

I am sure that we are able to manage on our own!

If dad does not want to stay with us, he can stay with Aunt and Flavius, since we do not see him so much... -

*- Steven, do not be angry with your dad like that. He loves you and cannot let you live by yourselves, because you are still young.*

*I know that you are suffering a lot for Susan.*

*Whenever you can, stay with her and tell that you love her.*

*Caress and kiss her.*

*Then, pray to your mum, as you are doing. Ask help to your Angel friend too.*

*Never go to bed angry, Steven. It hurts your heart.*

*Talk with your mum, your Angel friend, and ask them to help you for sleeping happily. -*

-----

- I just get a pass at school! I do not want to study!  
I am finding new streets, so I could see that my city is beautiful, has many parks, with many trees and meadows; this makes me happy.  
I also like seeing monuments, the cinema, cafes, shops: I feel good around the people!  
Three times a week, I have lessons until 1 pm and I go back home at 2 pm.  
Thus, the afternoon passes more quickly. I am not still allowed to go playing and have a stroll outside...  
I cannot understand Aunt Adele!  
I am enough old to go to school by myself for her, but I am not for going to play in the courtyard or having a stroll...  
She is very mean with me!  
I look forward to Saturday, so I can go to my grandma's house. When I arrive, I soon play football with my friends.  
I am no more nervous when I am there.  
Often, dad gives me the pocket money; when he does not do that, it's grandma that gives me pocket money.  
On Sunday afternoon, I walk around with my friends.  
We ride our bikes and go to the neighbouring countries to play and listen to the songs in the Jukebox.  
Dad knows that and allows me to do that.  
Then, why does he not say to Aunt to allow me doing that even when I am in the city?  
I cannot understand him at all!  
As long as he does not speak to me, I will never know! -

-----

- Susan as well comes to grandma's house every Saturday. Sometimes, in winter, gets on the car with dad and me. When she is with us, dad is even more serious and does not say any word. Susan barely says hello to dad and never looks at him. I get angry, because dad goes on pretending nothing has happened. He knows very well that Susan and me feel worse with Aunt Adele. I would like to tell him many things, but I fear dad a lot, so I am silent and sometimes smile at him. -

-----

- Today, one of my classmates invited everyone to his birthday party. I blushed; I did not know what to say... I do not want to tell him that Aunt Adele does not allow me to go out. He told us that his mum will cook many delicious cakes and that we will find some surprises. He already knows that they give him an electric train as a present. I could no longer stay there and listen to those things... and I run to the toilet and started crying... Nobody remembers when it is my birthday! Nobody gave a party for me. I have never received a present. Nobody wishes me a happy birthday! -



- "Mum, why does anybody not remember when it is my birthday?

Even dad! Everybody forgets me!" -

-----

- Susan has no longer come to grandma's by car with dad and me for a few months.

If it is cold, she comes by bus; if the weather is fine, she comes by bike.

Here, at grandma's house, she feels better and smiles.

She even goes to the cinema with the aunt of my friend Wilma. Yesterday afternoon, while I was at the cafe playing table football, I saw her passing by together with a boy, and they were holding by their hands.

I think he is her boyfriend, even though she did not tell me anything.

But she is different, quieter and feels better.

I am very pleased with that, also because she has a boyfriend.

I hope he loves her very much! -

-----

- Last week, grandma asked me if tomorrow I could go with her to a near town because she has to go to a doctor for an examination to her heart.

I was very surprised when she told me that even Aunt Adele would come with us...

Grandma is worried because Susan is not feeling good again, and she wants to talk with Aunt Adele.

So, I think she will talk to her tomorrow.

We left for the medical examination by a taxi that took us in front of the surgery.

Before going in, we went to a park near there.

Grandma asked me to go for a stroll.

I soon understood that she wanted to talk with Aunt Adele! I answered yes, but I did not go away too much, so I could hear what they were saying.

Grandma Celestine talked with Aunt Adele about Susan and me and asked her to understand us, to love us and be patient because we are young.

She was talking slowly, sweetly, quietly, as when she talks with Susan and me.

I expected that Aunt Adele would get angry and raise her voice. Instead, she was quiet and listened to grandma with her head down.

Later, grandma went for the examination. When she came back, she continued talking with Aunt until the taxi arrived.

We took Aunt Adele home, and she greeted us with a smile.

Miracle...!

Then, we went back to grandma's house.

When the taxi left again, she hugged me tight and kissed me.

Surely, she was happy because she talked with Aunt Adele and for her reaction.

Who knows! Let's hope well!

I do not believe that Aunt Adele becomes good! -

-----

- The school year is over, and I was required to resit a subject only: maths.

Dad told me to search for a teacher, near grandma's house, to get ready for the examination in September.

Finally, he cares about me!

Grandma Celestine gave me the address of the teacher and I went there soon.

I think that dad gave me the money for private lessons for the speeches that grandma gave to Aunt Adele...

Susan and I are lucky to have a grandma who loves us so much!

This teacher is a young girl.

She lives with her parents, in a house surrounded by fields of wheat, full of poppies, not far from grandma's house.

I like stay with her, because she is very good and patient.

She explained everything well until I understand.

I feel that she likes me and wants to help me, because the lesson lasts 2 hours, but she remains with me and helps me, until I finish my homework, even though we exceed 2 hours.

I became good and I even get fun in doing the exercises.

The teacher always tells me that I am good and clever.

I am happy to go to lesson! -

-----

- Summer is very hot and I have a lot of fun.

I still play football with my friends in the meadow in front of the church.

This year, we play a new game, called carbide.

It is a forbidden game, because it is a bit dangerous, but we play in the countryside, where there are not many people. Two friends of mine take the carbide, a gray bursting powder. The other friends and I take some bins and tins or iron pots. We dig large holes for the bins, and small holes for the tins. We put the gray powder inside, add some water and burn them. The carbide, bursting, blows up all bins and tins: they look like missiles!

We compete to see who makes them go higher, but we also like to hear the strong bang.

Sometimes, there comes a farmer, screaming.

Quickly, we jump on our bikes and go away without forgetting to take the carbide bag ... Then, we go and play in another field and after a few days we go back there. -

-----

- I always see Susan together with that boy.

Last Sunday, I went to the festival of the patron saint in the neighbouring country and I met them both.

Susan stopped me and said:

“Steven, he is a friend of mine, his name is George. Why do not we go together on the bumper car merry-go-round?”

I answered yes because I like it very much!

She rode the car with George, while I rode another car with a friend of mine.

We had a lot of fun.

When we finished the counters, we got off laughing.

I thanked them and said goodbye and I went on walking around the festival with my friends. -

-----

- As every year, this summer too went by too quickly...  
It is already time to do the resit examination! I feel ready and I am quiet. .  
I went back to the city two days before the examination.  
The day of the written text, I went to school by myself, as usual!  
When I reached the area, I saw many boys who had to do their resit examinations and their parents.  
I had a lump in my throat...  
As always, I am alone: without my mum, my dad or anybody else! -

- “Mum, I miss you very much.  
I suffer a lot because you are not here, and I feel worse when I see my classmates with their parents.  
I want to cry...  
Dad gets on my nerves: he never stands by me!  
Mum, why does he leave me always alone? What did I do to him?  
He makes me feel more alone than an orphan!” -

- I also had the shivers but, after a while, it was over and I went in.

I sat at a desk in the front row of the classroom.

I did the exercise easily, how beautiful! I was the first one who ended it.

A classmate, sat at the desk behind me, asked me if he could copy my work. I gradually moved my paper so he could see it better.

Incredible, nobody has ever copied my work!

I was sure that the exercise was right, because I did them many times with the teacher at the private lessons.

When my classmate ended to copy, I handed over my test and went out laughing: I was the first one to hand it over!

I was very happy and proud of me.

Outside, I saw my dad's car: I did not expect it!

I run to meet him happily, but I saw that also Aunt Adele was there.

It was better that she was not there...

Dad asked me:

“Steven, what happened? Why did you come out soon?”

I told him everything happily and proudly, and he smiled at me satisfied.

While I was getting on the car, he looked at Aunt Adele smiling and told her that I was very good. She did not reply, and remained silent, serious looking straight ahead.

I know she does not feel good because Flavius failed for the second year running, but she was very mean since she did not say a word.

She always ruin everything! She could stay at home!

And, as usual, dad is silent. -

*- Steven, do not waste the joy of this day thinking of your Aunt's behavior.*

*Think dad your dad came at school and you did not expect it: it was a true surprise.*

*Be pleased with this and proud of you.*

*When beautiful things happen, we have to enjoy them, without losing our happiness for other reasons.*

*Remember that happiness, beautiful feelings and emotions, should be always safeguarded, and nobody must ruin them. -*

-----

- I was successful, and everybody told me that I was good.

Of course, neither Aunt Adele, nor Flavius told me anything...

When I went back to grandma's house, I thanked the teacher for her learnings.

She was sure that I would be successful, and she was waiting for me with a cake. We celebrated this moment with her parents.

While I was at the table with them, I got excited: I did not know what to say, I felt that I was about to cry...

I barely was able to refrain from crying, and everybody was silent for a while...

My teacher's parents paid many compliments to me, and wanted to know about my examination. I was very happy and proud of telling them everything!

Then, I thanked them a lot for celebrating me: it was the first time!

While I was greeting them, the teacher and her mum gave me a kiss on my cheek, and her dad caressed me.

I got in the bike and I felt light as a feather. I had never experienced that feeling!

I did not want to go back home, so I went under the high tree, near the well. I lay down and watched the sky.

Suddenly I began to cry silently.

I tried to stop the tears, but this time I could not, but they increased.

I also started trembling, and I was a bit afraid... -

- "Mum, mum, I miss you very much!

Now I understand why I was about to cry when I was at the teacher's house...!

I thought of how celebrating with you, dad and Susan would be great...

It seemed to me that I was seeing you slicing the cake while saying to me:

"Good boy, Steven, we are proud of you, we love you."

And then, all together clapped our hands and hugged happily.

Mum, mum, come close to me! Mum, come here, I feel alone...!" -

- My crying lasted for a while. Then, gradually, I calmed down. I closed my eyes and I remembered your words, Dave:

"Your mum is always near you, even though you cannot see her."

It seemed to me that she was really near me, under the tree!

I opened my eyes: I did not see anybody, but I did not feel alone anymore.



After that, I felt light again, like when I got on the bike.  
I do not understand how I could feel better after crying so much... but I was happy and I went back home quietly.  
Grandma smiled at me when she saw me arriving and gave me a kiss. How beautiful! -

*- I am happy, Steven, that you felt your mum near you.  
She was really there. Her love calmed your heart.  
She was next to you even when you were celebrating with your teacher and her family.  
But there you could not feel her because you were living many feelings and were listening to what they were saying to you.  
It is easier feeling your mum when everything is silent so your heart can feel her better.  
That is why you like silent, since you was young, and you like nature.  
You could not realize but, just then, you were feeling your mum close to you.  
You were feeling your Angel friend and the creatures that live in the woods, the countryside, among trees and flowers.  
There is another reason why you were able to feel your mum: you were crying...  
Tears empty your heart out of sad things: pains, sufferings, angry and other things.  
When the heart is emptied of these things, it becomes light and love and joy replace those things.  
Then, you can easily feel the presence of the Angel and those who love us, even though we cannot see them.  
When the heart is like that, we can love everybody more easily.  
Others understand that and come close to us, as it happened with your grandma.*

*Never hold your tears!  
When you suffer, crying is good for your heart. -*

-----

- School started again.

There are new boys and among them there is James.

He is the son of a very talented footballer who came to play in the team of my city.

Every morning, his dad takes him to school.

When I see them arriving, I stop and look at them... I envy James a bit, because his dad is always close to him and hugs him.

He also smiles at us, and he is very kind. He signed his autograph to those who asked him. I have it too.

James is very proud of having a kind dad who is also a talented footballer.

James is a bit different from us, and he did not become friend of everybody.

He is the first in the class, and he likes being only with skilled children like him.

I am not good at school, so I can never be his friend, and I am very sorry.

He goes playing football with the other skilled children every afternoon.

Even if I were his friend, I could not go there because Aunt Adele does not allow me to go out.

James is very lucky!

His dad taught him to play football so well that now he is the best even in that.

I was told that his dad goes to talk with the teachers very often, even when there are no school talks.

Sometimes, I make a comparison between James and me: everything is very different for me!

I cannot just understand why dad is not loving with me!

I understand that, working far away, he cannot take me to school as James dad does, but I do not think that, for this reason, he cannot come and talk with my teachers.

If he is outside the city in the scheduled days, he could go in other moments, as James dad does.

“At least once a year he could do that, right?!”

He has always been like that, since the elementary school.

I have to accept that he never goes there, nor is he interested in my performance at school!

When I think about that, my desire of being close to him and that he hugs me and is loving is even stronger.

I feel many things in my heart: sadness, need to cry, nervousness.

But the strongest thing is the fear. I fear him, his silence and his serious eyes!

Then, he gets on my nerves because he never tell me about mum.

When I feel all these things, I miss mum even more... –

- “Mum, mum, help me, I feel bad, upset and nervous.

I would like to tell dad that I fear him.

I am angry with him: he always leaves me alone... he never tell me of you!

My friends tell me everything they do and say with their dad.

Why cannot I do it? Why does he never stay with me? Why does he never talk to me?

Why is he never loving with me?

What kind of dad is he?

I am fed up with all the things that Aunt Adele does to me. I would like to tell her many things...!

Mum, I do not like feeling like this!

I do not have the courage to tell these things even to Dave: I feel ashamed too much...

Mum, help me!" -

-----

- The report of the first quarter is full of four, a disaster!

While I was showing it to dad, I was trembling with fear: he signed it without speaking and more serious than ever!

Teachers requested a meeting with our parents.

Aunt Adele went there!

But I am not a son of her! Instead, dad had to go!

I had to accompany her!

We went through the street in silence; she was behind me.

Once we reached the school, she went in and I waited for her outside.

When she came out, she informed me that I am very bad at school and she will tell everything to dad.

What's new! What was the point of her going there? It was only to make me feel worse.

It is hard to do anything with her: she is as cold as an ice on a stick...

Seeing her always sulky, makes me feel very bad and hold my breath.

Of course, we went back home silently.

I expected that dad would rebuke me, but he did not speak again.

So, now I am even worse and I am more afraid!

What should I do if I feel always worried for the fear of making a bad impression and because I feel alone?

Nobody helps me at home!

When I went to private lessons with the teacher who helped me a lot, I was improved!

Dad does not want to help me and does not care about me!

“What does I do by myself?” -

*- Do not be angry with your dad, Steven, and do not fear him like that because he will never hurt you; he loves you even though he does not say that to you.*

*I know that you barely believe me, but it is like that! Be patient!*

*It is normal that you cannot manage on your own.*

*It is not your fault if you are not painstaking at school and make so much effort to study.*

*When someone feels bad, as you are feeling, it is normal to have difficulties at school.*

*You are a good boy.*

*I understand you and know that you feel bad for these things.*

*I know the things that you have in your heart, even the things that you do not tell to me.*

*I love you so much. Come on, Steven, ask your mum to help you.*

*Do not forget that she is close to you and will always help you.-*

-----

- Last week, George, Susan's friend, came to our house and talked with dad.

He told that he loves Susan and would like to get engaged to her.

Dad was waiting for him, because Susan informed him.

He answered that he was pleased if they engaged and that he could come whenever he wanted.

George spends a short time at our house, until Susan gets ready.

Sometimes, they stop a bit with me.

I hoped that, having a loving boyfriend, Susan was finally happy and did not feel bad anymore.

Instead, she has been suddenly fainting for a short time, so she has to come back home.

Aunt Adele does not speak even to George; she only says good morning or good evening. Then, she goes on walking around at home, pretending to do the housework.

Thus, George talks with me in the kitchen until Susan is ready.

He likes football too and when he can, he plays in the team of his country, which is near grandma Celestine.

He told me that he works far away, that's why he visits Susan only in the weekend, but he already demanded his company to be transferred to our country.

When she is ready, Susan comes in the kitchen with us. So, Aunt Adele goes to her room and disappears until Susan and George go out.

They stay a short time with me, because they feel bad too seeing Aunt Adele always sulky at home. Then, they prefer going out.

Now, George takes Susan to grandma's house every Saturday afternoon.

There, he stops much more with me.

We became friends and talk of many things.

I am very pleased that Susan has a nice and friendly boyfriend.-

-----

- George gave Susan a stunning couple of Zebra finches: they are very small white birds with an orange beak.

Susan, happily, took them in her room, in a beautiful blue cage.

When George came out, she called me to see these birds: she was very happy!

She said:

“So, they keep my company every night, until George comes back.”

The following night, Aunt Adele said to her:

“These birds are very noisy and there is a bad smell at home: either you take them away, or I will do that...!”

Susan began crying.

I have never seen her so angry! Even Aunt raised her voice, and they slammed the doors so hard that I thought they would fall down.

I was afraid: I stood still on a chair in the kitchen, holding my breath...

I was feeling bad even more when I saw Susan crying inconsolably, shouting and locking in her room.

They rarely quarreled like that, because they always tried to avoid each other.

I went to bed with the lump in my throat: I stayed awake the whole night...

The birds were down, in the warehouse, in the dark, and do not chirp anymore.

Susan told me that, when George comes back, she has to give them back.

Every evening, I hear Susan coming back by her bike that she leaves in the warehouse.

Now, she goes up late at home: she stops with her birds! -

- "Mum, why is Aunt Adele so angry with us?

We did nothing to her...

Susan never bother her and can manage everything...

She realizes that Susa does not feel good, why is she so merciless with her?

Mum, help us, what should we both do here alone?

Please, do something, Mum.

We cannot bear living here anymore: aunt is mean, while dad never supports us!

Mum, mum, help Susan somehow. I feel so bad when I see her crying and quarreling with Aunt Adele.

Even George is not able to help her! Please, Mum, help her!" -

-----

- Today, the Italian teacher came back to school, after two weeks of absence.



She was very sad; her eyes were full of tears.

She said hello in a whisper.

We said hello to her and then we were all silent: we were sorry to see her like that and we did not know what to do.

After a while, she told us that she was at home because her dad committed suicide.

We were disconcerted! Nobody spoke.

She told us that she saw her father died, while crying.

I cannot repeat what she said... Sad things!

I would have not wanted to hear!

When I hear talking about death and suffering people, my heart pounds a lot and I begin feeling bad...

It happens also when I see people quarreling or having a fight.

When I see an accident on the road, I go away.

Today I could not go away from the classroom!

Then, I tried not to listen to what the teacher was saying but I did not manage!

I felt bad and nervous: I did not want that my classmates would realize that.

I did not know what to do, I even thought of going to the bathroom but the teacher stopped talking.

I was looking at my classmates to understand if they felt bad too, but I think no, or maybe they fear of showing it.

Dave, why did the teacher tell us those sad and bad things?

She could say only that her father died!

Did she not think that we could feel bad? -

*- Dear Steven, when a person suffers so much, as your teacher is suffering, or is disconcerted for something, he/she can behave differently from his/her normal behavior and can say some things without realizing what he/she is saying.*

*This is a reaction to pain and fear.*

*You can react in different ways: you can always talk about that or no more, crying a lot or not, be angry with everyone or be afraid.*

*Some people can talk only with those they love, while someone else talks only with unknown people.*

*Your teacher loves you, and feeling your love, she opened her heart.*

*She was feeling so bad that she did not think about your age.*

*She understood that talking to you made her feel better.*

*Indeed, if you are able to talk, cry and shout, you free your heart and feel better.*

*Thus, gradually, you can heal the pain with love and sympathy.*

*Today, your classmates and you healed a bit the wound of your teacher, by listening to her silently and making her understand that you love her and you are sorry if she feels bad.*

*Think what a beautiful things you did!*

*Dear Steven, never be ashamed to feel bad when you see someone suffering or painful things.*

*You are very sensitive and good, and I know that you would like to see everybody happy and loving.*

*Even though you are very young, you suffered a lot and still suffer.*

*That is why you do not want to see other people suffering or talking about pain.*

*You feel that your heart is already full of pain, so you can feel more the sufferings of other people.*

*One day, your sensitivity will become a great treasure and you will be proud of it.*

*You will be able to understand better what lies in the heart of the people you will meet, thanks to this great treasure. Then,*

*you can help them in a special way, even only by listening to them with love.*

*These persons, feeling that you understand them, will open their heart to you.*

*You will become an important friend for them, and you will be happy for that.*

*Now, tell everything to me and your mum who is loving, protecting and listening to you from Heaven. -*

-----

- Susan feel bad: she cannot go working because she is always tired.

Now, she lives at grandma's house, so she does not come back home anymore during the week.

The doctor advised her to stay at rest because she is worn-out... So, she decided to live with grandma until she recovers.

I always think of her, and I look forward that it is Saturday to see her.

She is at bed all the day, takes many medicines, and they give her two injections per day.

Grandma and my uncles are very worried and try not to bother her.

I feel like crying when I see her always at bed.

I do not know what to do for her... I give her kisses, caresses but I do not know what to say.

When I am there, I do not want to go back home.

I fear that Susan will die!

I did not tell anybody about this fear.

On Sunday evening, dad comes up at home when he takes me. He comes in seriously, whispers a 'hello', without looking at anybody.

I do not know why he does not speak and he is not kind with grandma and my uncles...

Grandma greets him and then goes on doing her things.

My uncles do like her if they are at home.

It is a very sad period for me, because I love everybody.

I feel bad when I see them being unfeeling each other.

Dad goes soon to Susan's room and says:

"Hi Susan, how are you?"

She answered always the same way, without looking at him:

"A little better."

After a few minutes of silence, dad says hello to her and goes out.

I follow him and we go back home silently! -

-----

- After his second failure, Flavius did not go to school anymore.

Now, I can see him even less because he works in a car electric parts shop near here.

When I come back from school he is already at work, and often, he comes back only to sleep because he has dinner at his aunt's.

As usual, Aunt Adele spends every afternoon at her sister's.

Dad goes always away by his truck and stays even 15 days without coming back home.

So, I spend every evening with Aunt without saying even a word.

Fortunately, she always turns on the TV...! -

-----

- I really have no desire to study; I can't take it anymore!

When Aunt goes out in the afternoon, I close the books because I feel bad.

I do not even look at the homework!

As always, I spend the whole afternoon playing football on my own with the ball made with a handkerchief.

So, sadness and nervousness go away. -

-----

- I am making bad impressions at school in the questions and class assignments.

Teachers tell me that I am idle.

The French teacher teases me when I am wrong, and my classmates laugh.

I feel bad, but I pretend nothing happened.

I sit at the desk at the end of the classroom together with the other guys not so good at school.

We laugh and joke a lot.

Teachers rebuke us and once they sent us out of the room. -

-----

- Yesterday, something very bad happened and nobody could believe.

Gerard, a classmate of mine, is dead.

Teachers told us that he was ill for a long time, but we did not know that.

He was always a bit pale, but he laughed and joked as everybody else, and he was not exempt from doing gym.

Teachers told us that he was absent due to the flu, but it was not true: he had a serious blood disease.

There is silence in the classroom. We all are sad and afraid. -

*- Steven, do not be afraid. Think that now Gerard is in Heaven, and he is not suffering anymore. Up There, he is happy and still loves you. Think about that and be happy. -*

-----

- Susan decided to live with grandma forever: she does not come home anymore.

She told me that when I arrived.

I cried desperately between her arms; she cried too and held me tightly.

Also grandma came and hugged us.

She said us sweetly:

“My children do not cry like that. Your uncles and I love you very much. See that everything will right itself soon and then we will be happy together.”

Susan, crying, added:

“Steven, I am sorry I am not with you, but if I come back home I will never recover because Aunt makes me feel too bad. Now, be strong. Be a good boy! Continue going to school and take the lower secondary school diploma because it is very important.”

I understand my sister, but I am despaired! Now, I cannot see her in the evening, I cannot talk with her, I cannot give her the goodnight kiss.

I hoped she would come back home soon!

“What can I do without her? I feel more and more alone!

What does dad do?

Why does he allow Aunt Adele to hurt us like that?

Why does he not rebuke her and send her away?

Why have we to part from each other because of her?

She is a mean woman! She is a nagging woman!” -

- You are still the same dad, never protect us, nor love us.

I am very very angry with you! -

- “Mum, help us! Do something for us...”

There should be a solution for Susan and me so that we have not to part!

Please, mum, talk to dad. Tell him to send that woman away. I also can't take this situation any more.  
Help me, mum. Do not leave me alone.” -

-----

- There are still some months until the end of the school, but I am already sure to fail because I always get bad marks.  
I am not able to be attentive, because I feel confused and always think of my mum, grandma and Susan who never comes back home.  
The only thing I am interested in is going to grandma's house, and be with my sister for summer. I would love living there all year round! -

-----

- Finally, school is over!  
Teachers already told me that I failed.  
Even though I knew that, I am sorry..., and I feel ashamed.  
The great thing is that I can go soon to grandma's, because I have not to wait for some days to see the results on the school noticeboard. -

-----



- Now, I fear less of telling that to dad. -

-----

- Today, I told dad that I failed. He answered only:

“Get ready to go.”

He was silent for the whole travel!

But I think that I will be with my sister, grandma and uncles:  
the only important thing for me.

Now, even if dad leaves soon without going up to grandma’s  
house, I do not feel bad as before.

They are happy that I am there and nobody told me anything  
for my failure. -

-----

- Susan feels better, but she did not recover at all. She helps  
grandma for the housework.

She, like me, could not have friends in the city because Aunt  
Adele did not want. Instead, here she can invite whomever she  
wants. So, Maryn is here every day.

Susan talks a lot with her. They go to grandma’s room and,  
while sewing, they laugh and joke

I am happy, and grandma too. -

-----

- I met all my friends again and we go on playing football in the meadow at the church.

This year, we decided to go swimming in the retting-pits.

We do it without telling anybody. Last year, two boys from a neighbouring country, drowned there, so, now, the parents do not allow their children to go there.

Susan, grandma and uncles warned me:

“Woe betide you if you go swimming!”

I answered them to be quiet: I would not like to disobey, but I have a strong desire...

We all meet in the meadow, then... we leave by our bikes.

We chose a retting-pit located in another country, far from home, so we are sure that nobody can know that.

The retting-pit is huge and well hidden among trees and vineyards. I am learning to swim soon. A few days ago, I was able to cross the retting-pit for the first time.

I screamed with joy:

“Hurrah, I succeeded too!”

It was amazing!

Doing the things I was not able to do before makes me feel strong and good.

Now, I am good in swimming and playing football.

How happy I am!

If only I could be good at school too! -

-----

- “Mum, are you proud of me? At least in these things I am good, isn’t it?  
Help me to become good at school too!” -

- We go swimming every day, then we go back to the country soon to play football.  
Nobody found us! Swimming is wonderful! When we are there, we feel like Indian warriors, we scream like them and feel very strong. We are also sure that nothing can happen to us. -

-----

- George has not been transferred here yet.  
He arrives at grandma’s house on Friday evening and then comes back on Saturday and Sunday.  
Susan started again to go out, thanks to him, and I am happy.  
It is beautiful to meet them at the patron saint festivals in the neighbouring countries!  
We have a lot of fun on the bumper cars. -  
- Since I arrived here, Susan hugs, kisses and cuddles me. Often, she says to me:  
“My dear brother.”

This makes me happy and makes me feel many beautiful things in my heart.

Often, she comes close to me and hugs me tightly.  
I feel that her heart pounds and her eyes are full of tears.  
Even though she is two years older than me, I feel like being in my mum's arms in those moments, and I feel safe and strong.  
I think that Susan too feels like she was my mum, and sees me much younger than her. She cares a lot for me: she does everything to see me happy...  
Living with grandma and Susan made me forget soon my failure at school and the long bad months spent silently with dad and Aunt Adele. . -

-----

- Every Thursday, I go to the cemetery with grandma to visit my grandpa and an uncle of mine, who died during the war.  
I am sorry that mum is buried in the cemetery of the city.  
It would be better she was here next to her father and brother...  
Then, here I could come more often together with grandma. -

*- Steven, it is a beautiful thing going to the cemetery to visit the people we love and bring them some flowers.  
Do not forget that only their body is there.  
Your mum goes on living in Heaven where she met again her father and brother.  
Think that now they are all together and love you. -*

- I goes to the cemetery by bike, while grandma goes by foot.

While we are going, she tells me many things. Today, she told me about the jobs she did when she was young.

She used to get up at 3 am, and after doing some housework, she started to work the field. Then, she went to the retting-pit and soaked the hemp for many hours.

At the end, she said:

“Steven, you see how important is going to school. Please, study, so you will avoid doing heavy work as we are doing.

Be always good, as your mum was.

So, everybody will love you and you will live happily.

Your mum was always peaceful and happy because everybody loved her.” -

- How much grandma loves me...!

I answered soon:

“Yes grandma, I will do that. I will do my best to be good as my mum was.”

At the cemetery, she is silent and her eyes become a bit red.

She cleans the vaults well and I help her to remove the grass.

Then, she stands still looking at the photo of grandpa and her son silently.

I feel that, when she looks at them, she talks to them with her heart...

Poor grandma, who knows how much she is suffering...! She is always able to keep everything in her heart without crying.

Instead, she is always smiling.

She is very good!

After a short time, she says:

“Steven, now we can go.” -

-----

- Often, before going back home, we stop and visit Benet family.

A few years ago, they lived near grandma, but now they moved to this country.

Their house is surrounded by fields and, taking the shortcut, we pass in front of it.

Mrs. Chloe, grandma's friend, is always happy to see us and talk a lot with grandma.

I hear that she always asks her if Aunt Adele loves me. Grandma sighs and opens her arms...

I would like to tell her how she treats me...!

Before leaving, she gives us bags full of fruits and vegetables. She also gives us some glass jars containing peaches prepared by herself, and I like them very much.

I put the bags in the bike handlebar happily, we thank her and say hello. -

-----

- The first days of every month, I go with grandma to take her pension in a neighbouring country.

She is happy that I accompany her, because sometimes she does not feel good.

She says to me:

“Steven, sometimes my heart makes me some tricks, and if I should feel bad, go and call someone. But do not worry, because, after a while, I recover.

I am happy there is a little man close to me. You makes me feel quieter and safer with you.

I am happy to be so important for grandma and I can help her.

Fortunately, she feels always good when she walks!

Every time that I accompany her, she always gives me some money. I use money to buy ice creams and play table football. -

-----

- Lucius is my best friend.

He lives near the place where I was born, with his dad, mum, sister, uncle, aunt, cousin and grandpa.

Lucius always invites me to go to him, because we have more fun there.

His house has a huge barn, with a higher floor full of straw. In the center, there is a large hatch for throwing the straw downstairs.

Lucius and I throw ourselves from the hatch and fall over the mountain of straw: we enjoy it a lot!

He has many poultry: rooster, hens, cockerels, turkeys, peacocks, rabbits. In the stable, he has cows, horses, a donkey and two pigs in the pigsty. There are also many cats walking around the house. Lucius told me that they live free in the countryside. Here, I can play with Ulysses, a stunning guard dog! I am happy to be surrounded by so many animals!

When I grow up, I want many animals living with me. -

-----

- I talk a lot with Lucius because we like the same things: the countryside, animals, playing football, and looking at girls.

At school, he is in a mixed class, so he knows many girls.

A few days ago, he was invited by a classmate of his to a birthday party and he asked her if she could invite me too. She said yes, and we went together.

We were very excited: it was the first time we went to a party with little girls.

We met other classmates that Lucius introduced to me. Thus, i chatted with everyone.

When they turned on the turntable, Lucius had a dance with a friend of him, hugging her.

I was in a corner, still excited and my heart was pounding: I had not the guts to ask some girls to dance with me.

Lucius, after dancing, came close to me and said:

“Steven, come on, dance, it is so beautiful!”

He kept on asking that I plucked up my courage and asked a little girl, having long and black hair, if she wanted to dance with me.

She answered yes. I could not believe!

How beautiful hugging her!

While dancing, we smiled at each other. She was so nice!

I was so excited that I was not able to say anything to her. She was silent too.

After dancing, we chatted together.

I liked it!

Then, I made friends with everybody.



When we were coming back home, we were still so excited that we felt like flying on the bike.

We were happy to have danced and talked with our friends.

Now, we feel older! -

*- Indeed, Steven, you are older. You are growing up, that is why you are feeling new emotions with girls.*

*I am happy that you have a good friend, Lucius, and that you talk together about these new feelings.*

*By talking about that, you can understand more that they are natural: every boy as you feel these things.*

*Girls as well feel these emotions and talk about that, as you do.. -*

-----

- On Sunday afternoon, we met Lucius' friends at the cinema.

We sat near them and we laughed and joked a lot while watching the movie.

I am happy to have also female friends!

When I am near them, I feel new and beautiful things in my heart. -

*- They are different emotions and feelings from those that you felt till now with your friends, grandma and uncles.*

*They are natural and can be strong.*

*If you wish, I can help you to understand them better, playing a beautiful game. Do you want it? -*

- Yes, yes! How beautiful! Thank you, Dave. -

*- Then, close your eyes and listen to what you feel in your heart thinking of your grandma.*

*Done? Great*

*Now, listen to what you feel thinking of Susan..., your uncles...and Lucius... -*

- I feel that I love them all, but it is a bit different for each one... -

- *Great, okay. .*

*Now, let's go on. Think of your cat Barth..., all the animals owned by Lucius..., your friends..., your classmates ... -*

- You know, Dave, I feel beautiful things for everyone? But they are different one another...

I love more some of them, such as Susan, grandma and Lucius... and I love my mum even more. -

- *Good Steven, that's it.*

*It is normal to love more those who give you more love.*

*However, it could happen that you suddenly love a girl you do not know well. This means falling in love. -*

- Without her loving me? -

- *Yes, Steven, you could love her more than anybody else.* -

- Of course, I cannot love her more than my mum! -

- *Not necessarily... You see Steven, all these ways of affection belong to the same feeling: love.*

*What are you feeling for your grandma, uncles, Susan, Lucius, classmates, animals is love.*

*You will meet other people, but they all will be 'love'.*

*And you can feel a strong love for many people at the same time.* -

- "No, no! Mum, do not worry.

I love you more than I love anybody else, you are the greatest love...

In short, you are my best and greatest love!" -

-----

- Lucius and I talk a lot about girls; we laugh and joke about some of them.

His grandfather explains to him many other things on girls and the difference between boys and girls.

He is lucky to have a good grandpa who loves him!

I am lucky too to have a friend like him...  
And I am lucky to have a friend like you, Dave.  
You always explains to me many things, more than Lucius's  
grandpa does...  
And you love me very much...  
I love you too, Dave. -

*- Thank you Steven, I love you so much and I will always  
explain to you whatever you want to know and understand.. -*

-----

- Summer is going by soon among football matches, swimming  
table football and country festivals.  
When I think I have to go back to the city, I shudder...  
However, I feel bad for a short time, because then I look at my  
beautiful countryside full of colors and scents...  
I also feel the warmth of the sun, and I start running... -

*- Good boy, Steven, you are really good for forgetting bad  
things by thinking of the beautiful things you are living now.  
Always do like that. It is useless to think about what you will  
live, because it can always happen something that changes  
everything.  
You are so good at being always happy for what you have and  
you can do now. -*

-----

- Susan feels better and can start to work again.

Maryn advised her to apply for a job at a trousers factory located in the country where she was born.

The owner said yes, so she can start working in September.

Susan is happy for that.

I am very happy, because now she can have her money without asking grandma and dad anymore. Thus, she will feel even better. -

-----

- Holidays are over and I have to return to school!

I feel very sad: I have to leave Susan, grandma, uncles, by beautiful countryside and my friends...

This is the worst moment of the year!

I always need much time to get used again to Aunt Adele and dad! -

-----

- Autumn has come and my city becomes sad.

Leaves fall from the trees and it is cold.

The weather is misty and everything becomes gray.

Often, the mist remains for a week. When I cannot see the sun, I become sad as my city...

There is a beautiful surprise at school: I am in a mixed class.  
There are more girls than boys and they are well dressed and very nice.

You see that I am repeating a year: I am older than the others.  
This makes me feel ashamed, but I console myself because I am not the only one: we are five!

Since we met before, we “ganged up” and we sat at close desks in the bottom of the class.

We wondered why Gilbert was not there. He should be with us because he is repeating the year too.

Our French teacher gave us the bad news: Gilbert drowned this summer, in the river crossing the city!

We were stunned. Nobody could talk... we loved him so much...

Even the classmates who did not meet him were stunned.

Then, I thought that I was lucky this summer: I crossed the retting-pit many times, even when I was not able to swim properly!

There is not the same current of the river that made Gilbert drown, but the retting-pit is very deep.

Maybe, he also felt strong like an Indian warrior and thought that nothing could happen to him...! -

- “Mum, you protected me, right? I am sure!

It is as if someone told me that in my heart.

Then, Dave as well tells me that.

Now, I feel like crying!

I do not know if it is due to Gilbert, or because I disobeyed too... and you love me the same... you help me so much...!

It is true that you, from Heaven, can help me more than the other mums do here on Earth, because we disobey to them and they cannot protect us from a distance!” -

*- Yes, Steven, it is true. Your mum can protect you more from There, but you'd better not to do dangerous things.*

*The courage is a very important thing because it is often necessary during your life, but also prudence is necessary.*

*I know that, at your age, it is beautiful doing things that adults do and feeling strong like a warrior.*

*But the true warriors, before acting, reflect on everything and look at the dangers that can be avoided.*

*They are also very humble because they know they cannot do everything, just because they are warriors.*

*So, they are very brave, but also very cautious. -*

- Nobody talked of Gilbert anymore, we all feel bad!

You know, Dave, I recall another thing that you said to me:

“It is not certain that you will do what you think you should do.”

Perhaps, Gilbert too was thinking of coming back to school... instead... -

*- I understood what you mean, Steven... but it is not only death that changes the future. There are many things that could change our life.*

*However, it is necessary to plan things to live responsibly.*

*Then, it is good to live peacefully every day and be happy with what you have at that time and what you can do.*

*Now, you are upset because he is the second classmate of yours that you lost.*

*Think that Gilbert is not dead; he only changed House...*

*He is Up There, in Heaven...*

*If you think of him, send him a greeting and a smile, so he will be happy.*

*In Heaven, he still loves you. -*

-----

- I have more and more difficulties in living with Aunt Adele! When I come back from school, we even do not say hello. Thus, there is more silence...

As always, I eat by myself. The pasta is cold and overcooked: Aunt cooked it two hours before, when Flavius had lunch...

I eat it without complaining: I have not the guts to do it. Then, If I do not eat pasta, I cannot eat the second course.

Aunt always says:

“Who does not eat has already eaten.”

I prefer making an effort to eat the second course, which is better than the pasta.

She stays in the kitchenette and washes the dishes.

I am very angry and think:

“I should tell dad that pasta is uneatable!”

But then, I see him in front of him: huge, serious, silent.



“Who has the guts to tell him anything?”

So, I become sad.

I keep on eating quickly and, after that, I go to the bathroom and cry with anger... -

-----

- Susan works and is happy.

When she comes back from work, she helps grandma with the housework. She does as my mum used to do!

George and her friend Maryn love her very much.

Now, grandma and my uncles are much quieter.

I am more relaxed and happier for her. I love her so much... -

-----

- At school, there is a girl I like more than the others, her name is Deborah.

She is among the best girl in the classroom.

She has a beautiful round face, with a few freckles, blond hair, tidy and with a pageboy cut, as it is fashionable now.

She looks like older than she is. She wears different dresses every day.

The first days at school, when the weather was not cold yet, she wore fine socks, as young ladies. She was the only one...

I realized that everybody likes her!

Nobody shows that, but we all try to be pleasant with her. She never looks at me, she barely says hello.

She likes being with a few boys, the best ones.

She knows she is very nice and everyone likes her. So, she feels important and makes us understand that.

This year, I thought I was better at school, because I had already done many things, but it is not like that, and I am sorry.

When I am in the classroom, I become upset unconsciously. I speak, move, laugh and joke.

I am not able to pay attention to what teachers explain.

They always rebuke me and give me bad marks.

Thus, Deborah stays away from me. If I ask her something, she does not answer to me. -

-----

- I spend every afternoon looking out the kitchen window and playing with my ball.

I look at the courtyard, where there are the garage and the garden of the landlord, Mr. Tennyson. He is always there and cultivate his vegetables.

He is an elderly man. He walks very slowly, but he does every kind of work.

Sometimes, he sees me, smiles, and waves his hand to me. I also wave my hand at him.

At the end of the garden, there are two houses close one another, and having beautiful courtyards, separated by a wire mesh.

Francis, a boy as old as me, lives in one of the two houses. He always plays in the courtyard by himself or with other boys.

I knew his name, because his mum shouts his name for hours, until he goes up and does his homework.

Aunt Adele could allow me to go to the courtyard!

Even though there are not boys I can play with in my building, I could stay in the garden with Mr. Tennyson or have a walk in the courtyard.

I am more and more angry with dad, because I know that it would be enough if he said Aunt Adele to let me go out, so I would feel better.

But he does not do that. I do not know why. I am about to cry...

“How do they always keep me locked in the house?”

I look at the street in front of me and invent many new games. One of them is to guess how many cars or bikes cross the street in five minutes.

It is not a great game, but the time goes by soon and I feel better.

I feel so bad locked here that I am not able to study, so I close my books. My only desire is to move and go to grandma's!

Dave, do you know why does dad not say Aunt Adele to let me go out? -

*- Steven, it is not easy to do that for your dad because he fears that something bad could happen to you. He knows that Aunt Adele would not be careful and would allow you to go out without any guidance.*

*You are a little boy, Steven, and there are many attractions in the world that can be dangerous and make you suffer.*

*A teenager should be accompanied with love and attention.*

*It is important for him to receive suggestions, advice and experience from those who love him.*

*Your dad cannot do that because he is always far away, thus he chose not to get you out. This is the best thing for him.*

*You know that you suffer, that is why he is always ready to take you to grandma's. . -*

- Does he know that Aunt Adele does not allow me to go even to the courtyard? That she locks me at home every afternoon? Nothing would happen to me in the courtyard! -

- *Yes, Steven, he knows that. He cannot prevent Aunt Adele to go and visit her sister, nor can he oblige her to take you with her.*

*Perhaps, one day, you will know why Aunt Adele did not want that Flavius would grow up with Susan and you.*

*It is something that they only can tell you, if they wish.*

*Now, dad chose to behave like that because he cannot see any other solution.*

*Try to understand him. Come on Steven. You will grow up in a short time and will see how many things will change. -*

- At least, he could avoid having always that dark and silent face. Sometimes he could tell me that he loves me, right?

He could explain me that he cannot do certain things!

No, I do not want to understand him; he is very mean with me.

I am angry with him! –

-----

- I heard another bad news. I hoped not to hear that word anymore.

But it happened again.

The Gym teacher died. He was 36 years old.

They told us that he had an incurable disease.

We were stunned, silent and sad! -

-----

- Now, I go back to school two afternoons in a week.

I am very happy, because I leave home... finally! -

-----

- I got the first school report: it is full of low marks.

I expected that, but I am very sorry.

The thought of telling dad to sign it scared me. However, nothing happened.

This time, dad was even more dismissive: only a glance... without looking at me and always silent! -

-----

- My classmates usually meet to do their homework together at their houses.

Vincent, my desk mate, is repeating the yea, as I do. Today, he asked me if I want to go to his house to do our homework: I told that I prefer no. I feel ashamed to tell him that Aunt Adele does not allow me to go out!

He always invites everybody to his house and, after the homework, plays the drums.

His parents bought it to him, even though he is not as good as I am at school.

Vincent is always well dressed. This year, he bought the Beatles hat, pointed ankle boots, a high collar sweater on the shirt, as it is fashionable.

However, he never gives himself airs; instead, he is good and playful.

I envy him a bit. I feel ashamed for my clothes...

Aunt Adele established some rules: I can change clothes on Friday evening only, after having a bath. She gave me my clothes: she puts them on the chair behind the bed...

I have to wear the same shirt for one week, as well as my briefs and vest. I have to wear the same shirts and trousers for 15 days.

I feel a bit dirty and very ashamed to go to school like that.

One day, while we were going to grandma's house, I asked dad if he told Aunt Adele to allow me to change my clothes once more.

He answered to me:

“Steven, you must be patient!”

Then, he changed the subject.

I did not have the heart to insist, because, when he does that, I'm afraid that he gets angry. I felt like crying: he does not help me in anything! –

-----

- When I come out from school in the afternoon, I go and play in the near college with my friend Robert. I did not tell dad: I extended my return home by one hour.

This is the first lie I tell him... but I can't take to stay home anymore!

Sometimes, I return home even later, but Aunt Adele never tells me anything. -

-----

- It is spring and it seems that my city was awakened after a long sleep.

There are more cars in the streets and more people walking in the city centre.

In spring, I have even less desire to go to school...

Today, I played truant for the first time. I did it with my classmate, Louis.

We went to the largest park, where we found many other boys who had played truant as we did.

They came from all schools in the city.

There were some boys playing and singing Beatles and other bands songs.

Other guys had the portable record-player and danced with girls.

We stopped with them and we sang and listened to the songs.

However, even though I met new guys, I had not fun.

I am not happy for playing truant, because I feel that it is not a good thing.

Now I have to forge my dad's signature for the excuse note.

I do not like doing that. I feel very sad...

I will never do that, even if I am not good at school. -

-----

- Yesterday afternoon, Vincent came to visit me at home. Aunt Adele was still there and opened the door.

He asked for me, and she, dismissive, replied that I could not get out.

She greeted him and closed the door.

She said to me:

“He was a friend of yours”,

then, she went out...

She is so heartless! She was even rude to my friend!

She is a witch, not a woman!

I do not know why Vincent came here without informing me, and who knows what he would ask me the following day at school.

Instead, today he told me quietly that he had come at home but a woman told him that I could not go out.

I smiled at him, I did not know what to say and I was holding my breath.

He did not laugh at me, but he invited me to his house again.

I felt better! Then, we went on laughing and joking.

Vincent is a very good friend of mine! -



*- Yes, Steven, Vincent is very good. He came without informing you in advance because he understands what you are experiencing and wants to help you.  
He showed you that by telling nothing to you because he did not want to create trouble for you. -*

-----

- Susan is more peaceful. Today, she said to me:

“Steven, I would like to say something very beautiful to you: when George will be transferred to our city, we will get married. I am sorry to leave you, but do not worry, we came and visit you often.”

She had bright eyes... I hugged her tightly and gave her a kiss. I was only able to say:

“I am happy for you.”

Susan is so good and deserves to be happy, but I do not want to lose her too.

I try not to think about the moment when they will get married. When I think that, I feel the lump in my throat... I cannot meet her all Saturdays and Sundays, I will not be with them anymore... -

- “Mum, I would like to be happy for Susan...

I do not want to be selfish... but I suffer a lot thinking that she will not be close to me anymore, as well as George.

I feel more and more alone...

Mum, why do I always lose anybody?” -

- Steven, I understand you baby, but remember that you cannot know what happens in the future. For this reason, do not suffer for a thing that has not happened yet.

You do not know when Susan get married; you do not know how you will be then.

Maybe, you will find new friends that make you feel less alone.

Maybe you can meet Susan and George the same and spend time with them.

You were right to express your fear, but think that now they are next to you and enjoy their love.

Steven, I am very proud of you: you are good at being happy for Susan, without being selfish.

You are a very good boy, not selfish at all. -

-----

- On Sunday, I go out with Lucius.

We also go to the cinema to watch western films.

Now, Susan give me money too, and I am happy. -

-----

- This year, many things happened at school and many other things are happening.

We can see the internal part of the science secondary school from the windows of our classroom.

Students are going on strike and gather in protest meetings.

When I went out, I saw them in the street. They were so many: most of them had long hair, wore flower shirts, had some guitars and were jumping and shouting against the school and teachers.

They were angry with everybody... -

- I liked a lot seeing all this; I was excited!

I would love being near them and shout with them, but I had not the guts to do that.

I was about to go back home, when I saw Deborah with them: she was talking with some boys much older than her and me.

I looked at her from a distance: she climbed on the motorbike of one of these guys and they left.

I said to myself:

“Steven, if she sees those boys, she will not look at you anymore... Goodbye, Deborah!”

I sighed and I set off for home sadly. -

-----

- The heat has come, and it's time to change the winter clothes. When I was thinking of this moment, I have been felt badly for some weeks, so I tried not to think about that.

Unfortunately, what I feared has happened, and now I feel very bad.

Last year I felt bad too: Aunt Adele made me wear shorts and I felt very ashamed.

I hoped not to wear them anymore!

When I saw them on the chair in my room, along with the lightweight sweater, I had the lump in my throat. I did not say anything but, after the Aunt came out, I began crying.

She cannot do that to me!

She sees that now I grew up! Nobody in the city, attending the second class at the lower secondary school, wears the shorts.

Then, now that they are protesting...

“What do my classmates, Deborah and the other girls say seeing that I am wearing the shorts despite my age?”

I am despaired! I do not know what I would do to aunt... I would like not to see her anymore!

I think about dad: my angry whit him is increasing... I cannot seek help to anybody.

Dad, aunt, you cannot always treat me like that!

You both are very bad with me. I do not want to see you anymore! -

- “Mum, help me, please. Do something: I cannot stop crying!

I feel bad feelings towards dad and aunt.

I am very confused, despaired...

I do not know what I should to calm down.

I would like to run away from home, from dad!

I feel ashamed to go to school dressed like that.

Even Susan is not here with me.

I feel alone, Mum...

I do want to cry like this no more. Help me...” -

- *Be quiet Steven, I am here, near to you.*

*I love you very much, and your mu mas well loves you.*

*I know that you feel alone, but we are always next to you and see how much you feel bad and suffer.*

*Come on, sonny, be strong.*

*You are so confused because you would not feel those things you are feeling towards your dad and aunt.*

*You are a good and sensitive boy, and you do not like having these feelings.*

*You are very angry, because you do not know how to change this situation, this way of living that you cannot stand anymore.*

*Come on, Steven!*

*Now that you cried and relieved your feelings, dry your eyes, wash your face and take a deep breath.*

*So you calm down, and you can even go to school.*

*Now, you cannot do anything, but you'll see that everything will change. Believe me! I love you. -*

-----

- In the classroom, when it is time to go out, I quickly greet my classmates, I pretend nothing happened, but I am very ashamed-

I wait, holding my breath, that some classmate of mine tells me something...

Then, I hear:

“Are you still wearing shorts?”

I stop breathing: I feel cold and begin to sweat...

I cannot answer: I pretend nothing has happened.

Then, I hear laughing, words of mockery from some of my classmates: I feel very bad!

In the classroom, there is only another boy wearing the shorts but he is two years younger than me. Only Vincent never tells me anything and goes on smiling happily.

When it happens, and he realizes that I do not want to speak, he begins looking at his notebooks: he does not want to get me in trouble.

I take a quick glance to my girl classmates who are talking to each other, in small groups.

I do not think they are teasing me, but I am not sure: usually, they do that speaking in a low voice and sniggering.

Now, they are doing just like that...

I have not the guts to look at Deborah anymore!

The teacher starts the lesson, but I am confused.

I have only a desire: that lessons end soon! -

-----

- They have not been teasing me due to the shorts for a short time, but I am not quiet because I fear they will tease me again.

-----

- It is almost the end of the school: as ever this year I look forward to that time! -

-----

- Once again, they wrote 'failed' next to my name!  
As always, I am very sorry and I feel ashamed, but I do not want to cry anymore. So, I think about Susan, grandma, uncles, and the countryside...  
There, everybody is waiting for me happily.  
Nobody will look at my shorts, nor will tease me.  
When I reach grandma's house, everybody welcomes me with smiles and kisses, and they tell me that they are happy for my arrival. -

-----

- Nobody asked me if I was successful or not at school. After a few days, with my head down, I decided to tell them:  
"I failed this year too."  
Nobody reproached me, and after a few minutes, they changed the subject. They realize that I feel bad and ashamed. They are very good with me! -

-----

- Susan is very angry with dad. She always unburdens herself to grandma, George and Maryn.  
Now, I tell her everything is happening at home.  
I told her about the dirty clothes that I have to wear for at least two weeks running, the shorts, and the other things that make me feel bad.

I also told her that, when I had the guts to tell dad that aunt did not allow me to change my clothes more often, even when I am dirty, he only answered that I should be patient.

Susan sighed:

“Steven, dad does not love us, I have been knowing that for a long time. Grandma tells us that it is not true... instead, I am sure, otherwise he would protect us from that bacd woman. Do not worry about the clothes, I will find a way to help you.” -

-----

- Susan fears dad less than me.

I realized that today, when dad and I reached grandma’s house. Dad started talking to Susan and she looked at him straight in his eyes.

He lowered his head soon and, after a short time, he went back...

I am happy: it is true that dad does not love us! -

-----

- Susan gave me a beautiful gift: she brought two pairs of trousers and two striped and colored shirts from the factory where she works.

I filled her with kisses, hugged her tightly, saying to her:



“Susan, you gave me the most important gift for me now. You love me and understand me!” -

Here, I wear shorts without any problems, because, in the countryside, everybody wears them in summertime.

When I will go to the Patron festivals and the cinema with girls, now I can wear these beautiful long trousers and the shirts. Hurrah... -

-----

- Uncle Victor got married too, and they went to live in town. They got married in the church located in the country where his wife was born.

We were a few people: Susan, George, grandma, my uncles, some friends of Uncle Victor and me.

Also relatives and friends of his wife were a few. .

They had lunch at her house.

Everybody was happy, laughed, joked and sang so much.

I was always close to Susan and George. How beautiful to see everybody loving each other...

Sometimes, I moved and I had the lump in my throat, but I tried not to be seen by anybody.

Before falling asleep, I thought that the marriage of Uncle Victor was very different from those that I saw in my city.

There are always many people there, making a lot of noise with their cars, and most of them have lunch at a restaurant.

I prefer doing like we did...! -

-----

- Dad came to visit me and said:

“Now... as for school... what are you going to do?”

I expected this question, so I had already talked with Susan. She repeated that taking the lower secondary school diploma was very important.

I remained silent with my head down... I was ashamed of my all failures... I was about to cry!

Thus, dad added:

“You’d better to learn a work! I thought to enroll you in the ‘S. Gregory Institute’ college, where in the morning you learn a trade, while in the afternoon you attend the lower secondary school.

If you like it, I enroll you as a day-pupil, so you can come back home in the evening.”

The College...? I began shivering!

He went on:

“S. Gregory Institute’ was founded with the aim at helping those children who had a misfortune, as ours...

Most boarders are orphans. The headmaster is a priest helped by some religious people called ‘Brothers’.

The teachers of ‘trades’ are people specialized in the trades they teach.

As for lower secondary school, teachers come from the city.

Steven, this is the right thing for you!”

These days, I thought of going to work, but I do not like the available jobs.

Then, I felt that Susan was right: I had to take the lower secondary school diploma!

I also thought:

“If I go to ‘S. Gregory Institute’, I could stay all day outside home, besides taking a diploma...”

So, I answered:

“If you want, all right, I will go.”

Then, I ran away: it is a college! I feel like crying... -

-----

- This college is 5 km away from home, on the street taking to grandma’s country.

When I went back to the city, dad told Flavius and me that he gave us a bicycle as a present:

“Go and take it at my friend’s, the one having the shop near the cafe.” -

-----

- We were very pleased with this surprise.

But, after a while, I became sad again:

“Dad, why do not you take us to your friend? Always alone, as an orphan...!”

I thought that, but I had not the guts to tell him...  
So, I went to buy the bicycle together with Flavius...  
Now, we have the same bicycles. The color changes only: mine  
is blue, Flavius' is sprayed with metallic paint. -

-----

- And here I am ready for the first time at school.  
I woke up at 7 am and then I went out by my bicycle.  
The college has a path of almost two hundred metres, and there  
are huge cypresses at its sides.  
I have always liked this path. I used to see it when I was going  
to grandma. I was stunned while looking at it, especially in  
wintertime, when cypresses are full of snow.  
I could never imagine that, one day, this college would become  
my school!  
Before arriving at the square, you can see football fields: there  
are two fields as large as those used for the Serie A.  
Now that I am in front of it, I notice that the college is huge!  
Outside, there are many motorbikes and bikes.  
The headmaster told dad that, among boarders and day-pupils,  
there are almost four hundred pupils.  
As every time I go to a new place, I get a stomachache and  
diarrhea.  
I am afraid, shaken.  
As always, I am alone: I feel very sad! -

- "Mum, mum, I am afraid.  
Why did dad not take me even here?"

How can I go in alone? Everything is big... Who knows how many people are there...

I have not the courage to go in... Mum, help me..." -

- I go in from the porter's lodge: everything becomes more difficult.

The corridor is very long and has many rooms.

It is full of boys making a lot of noise. I recognize soon those who have been there for years, because they jump, shout and joke one another.

Instead, new pupils look around, are fearful as me, and do not talk with anybody. Everybody is waiting for going in the Church. This was the first thing Ludovic, the doorkeeper, said to me when he saw me:

"At 8.10 am, you have to be at the church for the Mass."

I was a bit in advance, so I began walking around the corridor.

I tried to see if some classmates of mine from the lower secondary school were there, but I did not see anybody.

I do not know even a boy.

I feel lost and alone...

While looking around, I felt a strange smell I had never heard before: it is everywhere.

I walked down the corridor and read what is written on the nameplates near the doors.

On one side: bathroom, play rooms, cafe, kitchen, dining hall, pantry. On the other side: library, reading room, offices, meeting room for teachers and professors, headmaster's office and Church.

In the middle, there is the porter's lodge, and Ludovic room.

At the end of the corridor, on both sides, there are two big stairs leading to the upper floors, where bathrooms and rooms for boarders are located.

Next to the stairs, there is a writing: 'Day-pupil not allowed upstairs.

The bell is ringing: it is time to go in the Church.

We are so many!

The porter's lodge opens wide and many guys go in talking aloud.

I could see the 'Brothers' at the Church: they are men of all ages.

Some of them are as old as George, 27 years old, others have the same age as dad.

Most of them wear dark jackets and white or blue shirts.

Someone wears a turtleneck under his jacket.

All are clean-shaven and have very short hair: you see that they want to be tidy!

They sometimes smile, but their attitude is very resolute. They invite us firmly to go in the Church.

While the headmaster celebrates mass, they check if everybody is silent.

Mass lasts almost 20 minutes.

At the end, the 'Brothers' hold the lists in their hands. They call the roll and send students to their classrooms according to the job they decided to learn.

In summer, when dad proposed me to go to the college, he gave me the list of the works I could choose.

These works are: the typesetter, the carpenter, the turner, the mechanic.

I do not know any of these ...

I expected that dad would advise me. But no! As always, I have to manage everything!

Thus, I asked George's advice: he told me that turners find a job more easily.

I listened to his advice, so when dad came back, I told him to join the turner work: he made no comment...

Here is the voice of the Brother calling my name:

“Steven, second class and first turning, this way!”

I felt my heart pounding and my stomach knotted for the fear and excitement.

How many new things!

“Will I like this work? Will I be able to do that?

How do my classmates behave?” -

- “Dad, where are you? Why did you not take me even this time?

You always leave me facing everything alone!

You treat me as if I were not your son...

You always leave me alone!

Dad, why do not you love me? What did I do?” -

- “Mum, mum, help me!

I feel bad! I am nervous, I can hardly breathe, but I do not want the others notice that.

I have the lump in my throat: I miss you a lot, mum!

Surely, you would take me there...

I am about to cry... I do not want to cry now! I feel very ashamed...

Mum, come close to me. Help me!” -

- *Come on Steven, breathe deeply.*  
*Your mum and your Angel friend are next to you.*  
*Try to think of a beautiful thing, so you can overcome thus*  
*difficult moment, without crying. -*

- The only beautiful thing is that, from now, I will never stay at home in the afternoon!

I take deep breaths.

Yes, this is a very important thing for me. It is a beautiful thing!

I feel like smiling, and my heart becomes light.

“Thank you Dave”,

This time, I made it!

“Thank you, mum. Thank you, Angel friend! Stay here with me: now, everything is starting!” -

-----

- The first two months in college are over.

As expected, going back home only in the evening makes me feel better.

The evening goes by very quickly.

I wash, eat, watch a TV program and then go to bed: everything always silently.

This does not cause me trouble anymore...

Now, when I come back from the college, when I come in, I have a serious face like dad's, even though I have no reason.



Thus, it seems I feel better! The sulk of aunt and the silence of dad make me less afraid!

Sometimes, when I see them, my stomach knots...

Fortunately, dad is at work and often he does not come back home! -

-----

- I do not feel bad at the college.

I met many guys. They are a bit different from my classmates in the city.

Many guys are good and quiet, but the 'Boarders', the oldest attending the last years, make me feel a bit afraid: I keep out of their way!

They are always together.

They sat near each other at the dining hall and, while eating, they throw apples and bread to everybody and tease us.

The 'Brother' who controls everything has his work cut out to keep them quiet.

When they go to the playrooms, they choose the best table football and table tennis.

If someone is playing, he/she must immediately leave the place to them.

They even play football together, of course in the most beautiful field.

Only who is good and friendly with them can play with them. They are good at all games, but in the football, they are a bit bad.

Often, they fight.

We, the 'New entries', do not think even to play with them!

Their overbearing manner awes me. Even when they joke, they lay hands on each other, and sometimes, they give punches.

They have been year for many years, and most of them are attending the last year.

The headmaster will find a job to those who take a diploma.

The 'Brothers' pay attention to these groups but, of course, they do not fear them.

Last week, at the turning lab, something bad happened near to me.

A 'Boarder', one of the most frenzied, came to the lab to tease a classmate of mine.

The 'Brother' noticed that and sent him away soon.

The Boarder reacted, insulted him and gave him a strong shove.

Then, something I did not expect happened.

The 'Brother' turned red and said to him:

"Then, it's that what you want!"

He took off his glasses and jacket, pulled up his sleeves, and began to give him some punches.

The boy replied soon, but the 'Brother' was much stronger and, after a short time, he made him fall down.

What impressed me the most was seeing that the 'Brother' did not stop and went on giving the boy some punches, even though the boy was lying on the ground.

The boy began shouting and crying: his face was full of blood.

All teachers of mechanics and turning came there, so the Brother stopped.

I was confused and surprised by the reaction of the 'Brother'.

Surely, he had his reasons, but he could stop before...

I noticed that even teachers agreed with him on what he did.

The boy was taken to the infirmary.

The Brother's warning was useful for everybody: now, 'Boarders' are much quieter and do not bother anybody. -

*- Steven, it is necessary that I tell you something important for your life.*

*It is not easy, because I would not lead you to judge and cast the 'Brothers' in a bad light.*

*But I know that you will understand me, as always.*

*These boys are so aggressive and violent, because they have never received love from their families since they were children. Some of them had no father, or mother, or both of them.*

*Who raised them did not give them love, sweetness and care that every child needs, for different reasons.*

*Nobody told them they were good.*

*To understand what I am going to tell you in a better way, now think about what you have experienced and are still experiencing.*

*Reflect on the pain that makes you cry a lot, even when you do not want to cry.*

*Think about the fear you have towards your dad and Aunt Adele, and how you cannot love them as you wish, so you want to run away from home.*

*Note how your heart is full of anger and grudge towards them and all feelings you do not want to feel.*

*Instead, think of how much you love Susan, your grandma and uncles because they showed their love to you, think of how you try to do what they advise you and what makes them happy. -*

- Yes, you are right, Dave! When I feel those bad things, I feel bad and ashamed, while when I hug Susan, grandma and uncles I feel good and happy. I am happy even when Vincent and Lucius show that they love me. -

*- Well, Steven. Now, think about the facts of history that you studied: sooner or later, the subjugated countries rebelled, so they caused the outbreak of wars.*

*Remember that the cause of bad behaviors is always linked to the lack of love and its expressions.*

*Violence is born from violence and love is born from love.*

*Those who did not receive love have more difficulties in behaving properly and can become aggressive acting to the detriment of other people.*

*It is not easy to help them. It would take a lot of time, years of constant attentions, love, expressions of love, assurances. They would need help to put an end to their pain, filling their heart with joy and sweetness.*

*It is easier to prevent aggressiveness, violence and dangerous actions with the use of strength and terror...*

*As you told, that 'Brother' had his reasons to do what he did.*

*Surely, other times, he tried to calm that boy in other ways, and he cannot do what should be done, namely what I have just explained to you.*

*This is because there are many boys, so there are not people who can take care of them, one by one, for a long time, maybe for years.*

*There is the risk that those boys who witnessed what happened, think that they can achieve what they want using the strength and violence. Maybe, they will behave like that in their life.*

*Of course, that boy cannot love the 'Brother', nor has gratitude for the college or those who took him there.*

*Steven, remember this saying: 'As you sow, so shall you reap.'*

*If you give love, you will receive love.*

*Perhaps, you do not necessarily receive love from the person you gave your love, but love always comes back to you, much more than what you gave.*

*If you help, you will be helped.*

*If you understand, you will be understood.*

*If you forgive, you will be forgiven.*

*If you bring peace, you will live in peace.*

*If you give your smile, you will live in joy.*

*Therefore, it will be like that for everything you will give, for the things you will do to give love. -*

- Thank you, Dave. Now, I feel better!

What you told me makes me thinking: if I had not had Susan, grandma and uncles, I could be like those boys...

Always help me, Dave.

I would like to be good and give everybody the things that you told me.

I want that my mum is proud of me! -

-----

- Some time ago, I heard some parents in the district where I live talking of my college.

They was telling that there are orphans in that college, those who are not able to end their studies in other schools and those who have not desire to study.

At the end, they said:

“In short, difficult teenagers.”

Since then, I feel ashamed of attending the college, but I do not tell anybody.

Now, being here for some time, I think that maybe they are right, but there are also good and quiet teenagers.

And I get on well with them.

However, I have already understood that I do not like the work I decided to learn.

Now, I cannot change it, so I am committing myself to do it well.

I am good at school, so this year I should not fail.

Lessons start at 8.30 am, lunch break is at 12.30 am and then lessons start again at 2 pm until 5.30 pm.

I spend the break playing table tennis and table football, and I get fun.

Now, I got used to the smell that is always in the corridors: it is a mixture of sweat, smell of food and incense. I call it: ‘smell of college! -

-----

- On Saturday, lessons end at 12.30 pm.

I go back soon and have lunch quickly, so I can go to grandma’s house as soon as possible.

When I am in the car with dad, I always wait for him to talk.

Now that I grew up, he starts talking with me more...

On Saturday, I tried to talk with him by saying:

“Dad, Is working as a lorry driver nice?”

He replied with his usual hard way:

“No, it is a very dangerous work: you see many accidents and many lorry drivers die on the street! It is a very tiring job.”

Then, he added:

“I never want to see you getting on a lorry! Now, let’s stop talking about that!”

He remained silent and serious.

I do not understand him at all!

Could not he explain things in a sweeter way?

He is so hard while he talks, so I lose my desire to talk with him.

Maybe, that is what he wants: to shut up!

The sentence:

“I never want to see you getting on a lorry”,

hurt me, and now I feel very angry.

“Why should he decide what I will do with my life?”

Without even asking me what I want to do!

I would like to do his job, rather than the turner! -

*- Steven, do not be angry with your dad.*

*The lorry driver is a very dangerous and tiring job.*

*You only see the beautiful side, while your dad knows the difficulties as well. Think that he had to stay away from you in order to do his job, and entrusted you to Aunt Adele.*

*You will see, Steven, you will find a job that you like. -*

-----

- When we reach grandma's house, he does not go always and greet Susan. This makes me feel bad.

Today, once arrived, Susan ran towards me and shouted:

“Steven, Steven... George was transferred from his work... Now, we can set the marriage date. I cannot believe! I am very happy.”

“Really, Susan? How beautiful!”

I held her tightly and made her dance round.

I have never seen her so happy!

I had tears in my eyes seeing her like that and I held her tightly again.

Now, I am here, under my big tree: I try to remove the lump in my throat. -

- “Mum, help me. I do not want Susan sees me crying.

I feel that now I lose her...” -

*- I understand you, Steven. It is actually a bit like that.*

*A new life will start for her, but she will always love you. One day, you too will part from her to begin a new life. -*



-----

- My friend Lucius and I love each other even more.  
Now, when I reach grandma's house, I take the bike and go to his house.  
We talk about girls and organize how to spend our Sunday.  
We like girls very much...!  
On Sunday afternoon, we are always at the cinema with them.  
We feel adult and important.... -

-----

- At Christmas, Susan gave me another pair of trousers and a sweater as a present.  
She cares so much that I am tidy, and me too.  
She also said to me:  
"Steven, now that I feel better, I will wash your clothes. Bring them to me every week, so you can change clothes whenever you want!"  
I could not believe! I asked her:  
"Really Susan? Do you manage to wash even my clothes?"  
She replied smiling at me:  
"Yes, Steven, do not worry for me. I wish that you are always tidy and clean."  
I danced about with joy and I hugged her tightly:

“Susan, you are wonderful. Thank you, thank you! Thank you for loving me.”

We had tears in our eyes... we were close... -

-----

- On Saturday, I put all my dirty clothes in a bag to take them to Susan.

Dad looked at the bag when we were in the car, but he did not say anything!

I hoped till the last moment that he asked me...

So, I could tell him about the clothes, and many other things...

Maybe he knows, that is why he is silent...

He asked me the usual question:

“Do you have money?”

Climbing the stairs of grandma’s house, I felt very sad and wanted to cry and shout...

But a voice inside me said:

“What are you doing? Do not cry, now you are grown up!”

The pain was strong and my eyes became bright.

I kept thinking:

“Dad, why do you never talk to me or help me? Why do not you love me? Why do you make me understand that I am a problem for you?”

When I went in the house, Susan looked at me and understood...

She greeted me, took the bag and hugged me: we both started crying! -

-----

- When I went back home, in the city, even Aunt Adele did not say anything about the clothes.  
I expected it! She is happy not to wash and iron my clothes.... -

-----

- At the college, I met Martin. He lives in the city, in a district not far from my home.  
He failed at the lower secondary school too, and he is here at the college for the first time.  
We have the same age and he is very nice.  
During the first months, some boys teased him, because he is thin and has sticking-out ears.  
They called him Mickey Mouse.  
He did not care about that, but when a boy exaggerated, he made himself respected: he gave him two shoves and a slap.  
Now, everybody understood that he was silent because he is a good boy, but he does not fear bullies at all.  
He is thin, but very strong!  
We sit at the same desk, and he works at the lathe opposite mine at the workshop.  
In the evening, we go back home together, by bike.

It is beautiful going back with him: we tell some jokes and have fun -

-----

- Now, dad has dinner at home more often, every three or four days, between a trip and the other.

A evening, he suddenly made a speech to Flavius and me:

“Now that you are grown up, you need a fixed pocket money every week. I will give you it every Saturday.

Since you both like movies, why do not you go to the cinema together?”

I was amazed!

It was the first time that dad cared about me! And asked me to go out with Flavius!

But I was even more stunned when he added:

“Even on Saturday evening, you can eat out pizza together...”

Flavius soon thanked him with a big smile:

“Thank you dad”,

then he turned to me, waiting for my reply.

I looked at dad:

“All right. I am happy.”

Dad started eating, becoming serious again.

I took a glance to Aunt Adele: she was watching TV unmoved...

In the bedroom, Flavius asked me:

“Why do not we go this Saturday out to eat pizza?”

I replied:

“Flavius, I am sorry to answer no, but I have to inform grandma before; we will go next Saturday.”

No, I am confused, and I recall dad’s words.

I am happy to receive pocket money every week.

I like less going out with Flavius, because he never wanted to be my friend.

“Why did he reply yes soon? Why does Aunt Adele allow him to go out with me? What is happening?

Can Flavius and I get along? We never went out together...”

Maybe, it is time that we become friends!

I feel excited for the permission to go out on Saturday evening...

I think of Susan, grandma, uncles and Lucius...

From one hand, I am sorry not to see them all Sundays.

From the other side, I look forward to go out on Saturday evening and on Sunday in the city, because there are many more entertainments.

I cannot sleep: too many news, feelings and thoughts! -

-----

- Today, once arrived, I told Susan and grandma what dad proposed to Flavius and me.

They remained silent for a short while and looked at each other.

Grandma said to me:

“Do you really like staying in the city some times?”

I replied:

“From one hand yes, grandma, there are many amusements and I could find new friends.

But I am sorry not to meet you, Susan and Lucius all weeks.”

Grandma smiled at me and added:

“You are right, my boy, for sure you have more fun in the city. I am happy for you.

You can come here whenever you want and I will be always happy.”

Susan, with her pale face, added:

“Steven, I am sorry too not to see you every Saturday, but it is right that you do like that, I am happy for you too.”

Then, she quickly moved away...

While talking, I looked her in her eyes: I noticed that she was about to cry. Who knows what happened again!

I hope that Susan does not feel so bad because of me! Maybe, it is due to dad’s behaviour.

Now, I am thinking: neither told me that they are happy because I will go out with Flavius!

Dave, I cannot understand well...

I love Susan very much, and I would never see her suffering because of me. -

- No, Steven. Susan does not feel bad because of you.  
You are right: Susan is suffering because she heard that your dad is caring about Flavius and you.  
She knows that it is right, and she is happy for you.  
However, she felt bad because she knows that she did not receive that kind of attention from your dad.  
She feels that he never protected her.  
He allowed aunt to treat her bad, thus she was obliged to leave home and you.  
She is happy even for Flavius, because she has nothing against him.  
But she feels that there is the hand of Aunt Adele in your dad new attitude.  
Hearing that Flavius replied:  
“Thank you, dad!”,  
gave her the confirmation of that.  
She remembers well that Flavius started to call ‘dad’ your dad, only after she left home... -

-----

- Lucius was waiting for me to tell me about the past week.  
I listened to him, then I told him how I spent my past week.  
At the end, I said to him:  
“Lucius, I have some news. Dad allowed me to go out with Flavius, on Saturday evening and Sunday.  
Now, I do not know what to do. I would like to go out with you every Sunday, but I would like to go out in the city as well.

There is the bowling and many places where boys and girls meet.

My classmates are going there, telling me that they have fun and are meeting many girls.”

Lucius smiled at me:

“Steven, this is a very beautiful thing.

Who knows how many girls you will meet! Thus, you can introduce them to me... and when you come here, we will tell many more things and will have a lot of fun.

You know, Steven, I envy you a bit; I would like to go out on Saturday evening too.

But here, in the countryside, there are no meeting places, and girls do not go out in the evening.”

We smiled, shook hands and slapped on our back. Then, we promised each other that we would never part.

Lucius is a very good friend! A true friend, good, loving me very much!

I know that he is also sorry not to meet me every weekend, but he made me not understand that: loving me so much, he wants that I get fun and feel good. -

-----

- I started to go out with Flavius.

It is beautiful going to the pizza restaurant on Saturday evening and have a walk in the city centre.

I like also going to the cinema on Sunday afternoon, because we watch first-release movies.



However, we do not like the same things.  
Thus, when we talk about these things, we rarely agree.  
Sometimes, he is enigmatic, as we were children, and makes me always understand that he is cleverer than I am.  
I feel that he does not love me as much as Lucius and Martin!  
For this reason, I decided not to confide anything of me.  
The latest few times we went out, he called two of his friends.  
They already work: they repair cars as Flavius does.  
They love talking about their work and racing cars.  
I listened to them to make friends with them, pretending that I am interested in those things, even though I am not.  
When we talk about girls, I can never express my opinion: they make me realize that I know less than they know...  
Maybe they are right, because I am the youngest, but I am hurt.  
Flavius, is different with them: laughs, jokes and always listens to them.  
They say all the time that are good for the work they do on cars.  
I realized that Flavius and I will never become friends!  
Thus, now, when I go out with him, I only think of having fun.  
I do not try to become his friend anymore; it is obvious that he does not want that! -

*- Dear Steven, Flavius is not to be blamed if he does not show his love and does not want to become your friend. They did not learn it to him and he was always been kept away from you. Do not be angry with those who could do that. Now, be happy and have fun with the other friends of yours. One day, you will understand. -*

-----

- Since dad asked us to go out together, Flavius has changed his habits a bit. When dad is at home, we always have lunch and dinner together.

He tries to talk with me at the table, but if dad is not here, he does not do that.

I do not know why he does that; maybe, he wants to show dad that we became friends.... -

-----

- Now, I go to grandma's house more often.

Going out with Lucius, I realized that the entertainments, even if beautiful, do not make me happy without a true friend near to me. -

-----

- This week, my classmate, Martin, asked me if we go out together and I answered yes.

When I told dad that this Saturday I would go out with Martin, instead that Flavius, he asked me if we quarreled.

I replied:

“No, dad. Flavius has many friends and some of them went out with us. Now, I want to go out with my classmates.”

He replied:

“Behave well!”,

then, he went to work.

When I told that to Flavius, he only replied:

“Ok.” -

-----

- Going to the college, time goes by quickly and Saturday comes soon.

Thanks to Martin, I met many boys who became my friends: so, now, we go out together.

I am very happy, because I like Martin’s new friends.

We have the same opinion on many things, we like the same things.

Every so often, I meet Flavius with his friends: we say hello quickly but everybody stays with his own friends.

In the city, they opened new ballrooms.

Students of higher school and university organize the ‘student parties.

They rent ballrooms on Saturday afternoon where all students can come in by paying a small fee.

There, new bands play, and they are increasing in number.

These guys began playing with the instruments given by their parents, as my friend Vincent did.

Some of them took music lessons and now play very well.

They are ‘legends’ for us, and we dream of becoming like them.

When I go to grandma's and meet Lucius, I tell him about the parties and the new friends.

He listens to me smiling and very interested:

“Steven, what you are doing in the city is great. I am happy that you have nice friends and you are having fun...

Here in the countryside, guys are always the same and we have the usual parties.” -

-----

- Today, Lucius said to me:

“Steven, I want to tell you something good. Do you remember Frances?

That girl living near me who came to the parish with us?

Well... We are going out together... We love so much. I am on cloud nine...

I am so happy that I cannot believe it.”

I felt such a strong emotion as to feel like crying.

Lucius was very excited and spoke eagerly, but I saw him very quiet.

I realized how much he is happier than I am!

He is happy to live in the countryside and loves the peace of this place.

He is happy for the love of his family and girlfriend. -

*- Yes, Steven. It is nice to have fun, have the motorbike, a car, new and fashionable clothes, play in a band, feel important.*

*However, love is the most important thing in one's life. Giving love and receiving love is essential.*

*When love is present, everything else is not essential, because love satisfies the heart and makes you happy.*

*You have already realized that. -*

-----

- As I walked home, to grandma's, I felt very alone.

I thought of my mum...

The excitement came back and I began crying. . -

- "Mum, help me! I feel confused, alone, sad.

I do not understand what I want, what I should do.

I like having fun in the city with my friends, but I always feel a void in my heart: I feel alone and I want to cry.

I would like to hug you, mum, talk with you...

I would like to have a loving girlfriend and love her...

No! I want you, mum..." -

-----

- Among the friends that Martin introduced to me, there are two brothers: Ferdinand and Lawrence.

Ferdinand is the same age as I am, while Lawrence is a bit older.

Their mum died a few years ago.

We always meet at their flat. Their dad is a baker and is happy that we are all there.

They both play the guitar and sing very well.

Ferdinand is good, but he is often sad, very nervous and quarrel with Lawrence.

I realized soon that Ferdinand feels bad because he misses his mum...

Once, I saw him more serious than ever and I wanted to tell him that even my mum dead.

But I recalled what Lawrence said to us:

“Never tell or ask Ferdinand about his mum.”

Then, I approached him, made him a smile and put my arm on his shoulder. He smiled at me.

I hope that one day he will tell me about his mum, so I can tell him about my mum. I think that this is good for him and can make us more friends. -

*- Of course, Steven. You are right. He can feel that you understand him more than the others do, because you feel the same things, so he can open your heart.*

*And you know that telling others the things that make us feel bad is good...*

*Good boy Steven, you understood that what you are experiencing could help some friends of yours who have the same difficulties.*

*Remember to do that every time you have this opportunity.*

*You are a very good boy. I love you, Steven. -*

-----

- Susan and George get married.

They had told that they would marry in spring and now it's time...

They will move to the city. When I was informed on that, I danced around with joy, because I can visit them whenever I want! –

-----

- The marriage was celebrated in the country where grandma lives, at Raffael's.

We were few people at the celebration. Dad came with some friends of him, without Aunt Adele.

Susan told him that she never wants to meet her.

We had lunch at Maryn and Wilma's house, which has been emptied since they moved to the neighbouring country.

Susan and George rented it and prepared a beautiful table.

They were happy and smiling: what a joy to see them like that!

I sat near them at the table, and dad was next to me together with his friends.

Dad was cheerful: he talked and joked with his friends and the people he did not know.

His voice was the loudest, as when he is at the cafe.

I hoped that he would chat even with grandma and my uncles; instead, he barely looked at them. I was very sorry!

I cannot understand why he behaves like that!

Now, I am sure that they quarreled, but even grandma did not tell me anything. I would like to know what happened...

Dad was the first one to go back. Before leaving, he told me that he would come and take me in the evening.

With a few words, he said hello to Susan and George, then he raised his arm and said:

“Bye everybody.”

And he went out.

He is like that: very firm and brusque! –

-----

- Grandma and Uncles Roland and Francis moved to another house.

At Christmas, Uncle Roland told me:

“When Susan gets married, we move to the country.”

Even then I felt bad, but I never thought about that.

Now that they moved, I feel bad again.

They moved recently. They live in a small house, on the ground floor, near other houses.

When I go and visit them, I always go back to the previous house, among the orchards.

I sit on the entry steps or under the big tree.

I stay there for a few hours: I look at the trees, the grass, the yard, the house ...

Swallows fly above me, perform some pirouettes and sometimes come down and brush against me: it seems they want to play ...

I go and see the nests of last year: I find it intact, full of eggs, and there are even other nests.

Silence is as complete that sometimes I fear.

The first time, I did not know why I went there.



Instead, now I feel that my heart fills with joy and peace there. While listening to the birds singing, tears come down... Sometimes, someone from Pickwich family comes there to go to the warehouses. They look at me, say hello and smile. No more. -

*- Steven, places keep the power of those who lived there and what happened there.*

*Thus, when you go to some places, you can feel that. That's why in some places you feel good, and in other places not.*

*Those sensitive and openhearted like you can feel more this power.*

*In this place, where the old grandma's house lies, people lived in simplicity.*

*They showed love, comprehension, friendship, kindness and many other good things.*

*You have always searched for that, since you were a child, and you are still searching.*

*Now, you are distracted by the life in the city, many things that are happening quickly, inside you and around you, and you are feeling more than ever the need for what you learned and experienced at grandma's house.*

*That is why you are in tears: tears express the void in your heart, the desire to be loved.*

*Let them falling down Steven; it helps you.*

*This will remain a place where you can find peace, happiness and strength to continue your path. -*

-----

- The first year at the college is over and I was successful.  
Even if now I have many friends in the city, I told dad to take me to grandma's, so I can spend summer in the countryside.  
In these last few months, I had many difficulties in living with dad and Aunt Adele.

I cannot stand them anymore!

Aunt Adele and I do not say hello to each other, besides shunning.

Despite I am grown up now, I have to eat what she prepared, even if I do not like it, at lunch and dinner.

Dad sees that, knows everything, but, as always, is silent!

He has been knowing everything for a long time, but I try not to think of that: I feel very bad!

I wanted that he would ask me:

“Why do not you say hello to Aunt Adele?

Why do not you ask what you want to eat? Why do you go to bed whenever you can?”

He is at the head of the table: he looks like a giant, with a serious face, bowed on his plate, and eats...

Moving his head or pointing with his forefinger, he asks aunt the dishes he wishes.

Every so often, you hear harsh sounds: they are half-words they tell each other when they do not like something to eat.

I am still impressed when I see him crushing nuts by his hands as if they were biscuits.

I hope he turns to me, smiles at me, gives me a caress.

I hear a voice that breaks that silence, it is my mind telling me:

“Do not bother, do not create troubles, be quiet.”

I feel trapped, in prison, I feel bad!

I place on the chair in a better way: I try to distract myself watching the TV.

I am afraid! Afraid of what? I do not know! Afraid of everything, of nothing...

I say to myself:

“Stand it. Where can you go? Who takes you? What can you do? You did not take even the lower secondary school diploma. You cannot work.”

Then, I suddenly stop thinking: it is time to go to bed

Dad, Aunt Adele, I cannot stand you anymore!

Tomorrow I will go to grandma's: another Summer is waiting for me! -

- Among my friends, in the city, there is John.

He is the oldest, has the driving license and drives his dad's car.

A week ago, he promised me that he would come and take me to grandma's in order to go for a trip to the lake together with Martin, Ferdinand, Lawrence, and he kept the promise.

This morning, they came early to grandma's and we left soon.

I told grandma that I would stay in the city, at the home of a friend of mine, for the whole day.

It is a lie, but I do not want her to worry.

I did not ask permission to dad: he never asks me where I go, with whom, what I do when I go out...

He only says:

“Behave well.”

When we left, we all were excited, because nobody went to the lake before.

Only John went once with his family.

While looking out of the window, I thought of dad who is a lorry driver: I like very much his job, I would like to do that job too!

It is very beautiful to travel, see hills, plains, mountains, rivers, cities and meet new people...

I am sure that I would be a good driver.

Often, I wonder:

“How could I be a turner? I do not like that job and I do not feel inclined to do it!”

I think that this is the reason why when I turn I am absent-minded.

I still laugh when I think of last winter, when I turned on the turn at the workshop, forgetting to tighten the clamps of the spindle: the piece I was working on blasted off like a bullet...

Fortunately, it did not hit anybody!

My classmates joked for a week.

Every time I approached their turn, they pretended to protect themselves with a shield or a helmet.

I joked and laughed with them.

The teacher told me that I am a public menace on the turn...

When I think that I should do this job and be at a factory, I feel the shivers.

No, this job is not suitable for me! -

-----

- The day at the lake was great!

We visited the castle and walked at the suburbs that surround the lake.

We ate some sandwiches on a beautiful meadow full of daisies. John is a painter, as his dad, and has more money than we have. He is very generous: he paid petrol for everybody and bought cigarettes.

He has always a packet and smokes even at home.

When he offers a cigarette to me, I take it but, luckily, I did not take this bad habit and I can avoid them easily. I buy cigarettes only on Sunday, if I have money.

After visiting what scheduled, we left for home.

In the car, with the radio on, we kept on laugh, joke and sing.

We felt as adults!

Late at night, they took me again to grandma's.

I said goodbye and we arranged to meet at the fun fair in the city.

Grandma knew that I would go back late, cooked my dinner and was waiting for me quietly.

After seeing me, she greeted me and went to sleep.

I was so happy!

My friends of the city came to take me here to stay together and have fun!

So, they love me! They love me as Lucius does.

My heart is full of joy.

Sitting at the table, I said to me:

“Steven, not only Susan, grandma, uncles and Lucius love you, but also these friends! You are worth too! Even though you was not good at school.”

I have been thinking about the job I could do for a long time, but I do not find any opportunity.

The only one could be the lorry driver, but dad does not allow me to do that job.

Thus, I feared to be a good for nothing!

At home, everybody makes me realize that through his/her attitude, without telling me.

Instead, my friends showed me that it is not true...

My heart is full of joy, so I go to sleep happily.

Before closing my eyes, I guess:

“I also have something to be proud of: I have many friends who love me.” -

*- Steven, be loved is one of the most important thing in one's life.*

*You will see that you will find a job suitable for you, through your will power.*

*Your mum will help you then.*

*Now, commit yourself to end school.*

*Then, you will see.*

*The future always brings some surprises.*

*That is why you should not be worried and sad for the future.*

*Do not think that you was not good at school, because you devoted yourself.*

*The important thing is to be good into your heart. And you are.*

*Be proud of that. I am proud of you too.*

*Good boy, Steven! -*

- “Mum, are you proud of me too? I wish that!

I will do my best so you can always be proud of me.

Help me to become a good and sweet man.

It's so nice to have someone to love and who loves us!  
I will do everything to become good even at work.  
Be always near to me. Mum, help me to manage it.” -

-----

- One day, before marrying, Susan called me aside and said to me:

“Steven, even if I get married, I will wash your clothes the same, do not worry.”

I moved a lot. She loves me very much!

I thanked the Heaven: I feared that George would not agree.

Instead, he showed me again that he loves me too.

Today, Susan came to visit grandma together with George, and took my clean clothes.

I thanked her so much: it is very important to be tidy and clean for me.

Now, both Susan and grandma cares about that. I cannot believe! -

-----

- Many things have changed since last summer.

Grandma does not live in the house surrounded by trees anymore.

Susan lives in the city.

Lucius has a girlfriend and they are always together.

I am very worried...!

In a short time, I will start the last year at school and then I have to find a job.

“What will my job be?

How can I live in that house yet, with Aunt Adele?

Which kind of life is waiting for me?”

I always wonders these questions and they make me become sad.

When seeing me serious, grandma says to me:

“Steven, what’s up?

Be quiet, you will find a job you like. You will meet a girl who loves you, get married, build your family, and be happy.”

I smile at her and think of how beautiful having a family would be!

But I do not want to marry and build a family: I would like to have my mum and dad... -

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- “Mum, I miss you very much!” -



## *C*onclusions

*- Hello to you, who read this book,*

*now, Steven and I say hello to you, but we can meet again, in a while.*

*Steven will grow up and, when we meet again, he goes on telling his story to you.*

*Right, Steven? -*

*- Yes, yes. I promise.*

*However, before greeting, I would like to do a thing.*

*I do not know you, but Dave told me that you are good as well.*

*I feel that I love you too.*

*Thus, I send you many kisses and ask my Angel to take them to you.*

*He can do that, Dave told me.*

Dave knows many things and always tells the truth.  
Now, we can make a good game.

I ask my Angel to take my kisses and love to you, whenever you want, and you can do the same through your Angel.

So, our Angels have fun in running here and there and our heart will be full of love. What do you think?

Dave, can we make this game, right? -

*- Of course.*

*You already know that everyone of us has an Angel close to us. Angels are happy to bring love, joy and beautiful things in your heart.*

*What a nice idea, Steven!*

*Can I make this game too, together with you? -*

*- Yes, yes. How beautiful! All together... -*

*- Bye, see you soon.*

*We love you very much. -*

*Steven and Dave*

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*Dave's words have been channeled by Satya.*

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