



## Aunty's Visit

Our Aunty Constance had promised to visit us one day. But for some reason it never happened. After many years it was finally going to happen. We had not seen her for a long time and us children didn't even know where she lived. All we knew was that she lived somewhere in Europe. In fact we had only ever seen her once and all we remembered about her was her expensive clothes. Therefore we always called her "The Expensive Aunty" when Mum could not hear us. What we also remember about her was that she had such a lovely name, Constance. It sounded like an expensive name just like all the expensive clothes she always wore. Actually that is about all we as children remembered about our Aunty Constance. She wore expensive clothes which always had some wonderful mystical fragrance of expensive perfume about it. Whenever she walked past us we could still notice that she had been there half an hour later because the smell lingered on. Yes her clothes were not only expensive but also spotless. She was very proud of her clean and spotless clothes. Especially her priceless mink coat was her pride and glory. Aunty Constance had never been seen to smile, though. Was she really happy or did she have nothing to be happy about? We did not know much about her but we did know that she had no children. Was that perhaps the cause of her unhappiness? So we could never find out if she was not able to smile or if she had nothing to smile about. Now after many years she was coming to visit us. Perhaps we would find out more about this 'expensive' aunty after her arrival.

Mum was dreading this visit because we have a little brother with special needs and Aunty Constance had never made one single comment about our little brother, neither good nor bad. It was as if he did not exist as far as she was concerned. In the few letters she wrote to us she never ever asked how he was going or how Mum was coping. No wonder that Mum was a little apprehensive about this upcoming visit. Mum seems to think that our handicapped little brother was perhaps the reason why she did not visit us so often.



A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia

On the day of Aunty's arrival we all went to the airport to welcome her. After all we had to be nice, Mum said. And suddenly there she was. She greeted Mum with a hug and a kiss and all of us children got a touch on our cheek with her gloved hand and even that left the smell of expensive perfume on our face.



Our little handicapped brother, however, did not get as much as a glance. Aunty either did not see him or she pretended not to see him. On the way home from the airport none of us was really keen to sit next to this newly found aunty after such a cool greeting. So we sat right in the back of our large family vehicle and our eldest brother sat in the front seat next to Mum, the driver. This left Aunty Constance sitting in the back seat next to our disabled little brother. Aunty moved away from our little brother as far as possible and if the door had been open she would have fallen out. Me as older sister noticed all this and this did not actually make me warm towards Aunty. So I made the horrible mistake of asking quite innocently when she was going home again. Aunty did not answer this obviously rude question. She only glared at me.

My little handicapped brother tried to make conversation with Aunty even though he only had very few words in his vocabulary. But Aunty totally ignored him and pretended he was not even there. Unfortunately for her she could not move any further away from him. If my little brother had not been in the seat belt, I'm sure he would have snuggled up to her. He kept on looking at her but Aunty had her head turned away from him and pretended to look at the scenery.



A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia



Finally this painful journey came to an end and we arrived home safely. Because of Aunty's visit Mum had made a special cake for the occasion. So we all sat down and had a drink with a slice of Mum's special cake. It was absolutely delicious. Aunty settled down on the couch which had quite a number of dirty spots from our little brother's constant dribbling. And of course Aunty had noticed this immediately and when our little brother settled himself right next to her she got up and found another chair. She could not afford to have her expensive clothes dirtied by this.....eh.....this what?

It was no wonder, therefore, that we as siblings did not immediately warm towards this 'expensive' aunty.

"Isn't she awful?" I said to my siblings.

"Yes, but we have to be nice to her", Mum told us.

"She does not have an ounce of love and feeling in her body", I responded.

The next day our little brother tried again unsuccessfully to make friends with this 'dear' aunty. But our aunty showed no interest in our handicapped little brother. Instead it seemed to us that she was filled with apprehension and perhaps even a measure of disgust. The following day, however, there was a little change in Aunty's behaviour. It was hardly noticeable, but there was a definite change. The wall she had built around herself as a result of loneliness and discontentment was finally starting to crumble, bit by bit. The constant show of love from our little brother started to get through to her cold heart and started to melt the ice somewhat. The next day, when Aunty was comfortably seated on the couch again, our little brother again snuggled up to her. This time she did not move away from him which encouraged him to move



A short story by Leo Schoof, Kelmscott, Western Australia

even closer and next moment, much to everyone's surprise, he was settled on her lap. Then, in his broken language, he told her: "Luv ye, auny", while at the same time he dribbled on her expensive dress. This time she did not care at all. She had not experienced much love in her life and had never learnt to give love either. In fact she was unable to show any feelings and certainly not to some dribbling disabled little boy. And here was this same dribbling disabled little boy telling her, who was incapable of showing any feelings, that he loved her. What's more he loved her even unconditionally. He was not even aware of the wall she had built around herself. He simply remained himself and continued to shower love and affection on this aunty.

His words were limited and again he said: "luve ye, auny". He could not very well express his love in words but his eyes said it all while all the time he was spreading such warmth and expressing his love to her. Her heart melted and with tears streaming down her face she suddenly couldn't help herself and she embraced him warmly. Why had she always thought that handicapped children like this boy could never show love? For years she had always been of the opinion that such children ought to be kept away from other people. They were just a nuisance, she thought. She was so confused by this display of love that she didn't even notice the boy's dribble dripping on her 'expensive' dress. They sat like this embracing one another for quite some time while she was all the time mumbling to herself: "*How could I have been so blind*"? As in a flash her eyes were opened and she suddenly realised and understood the real meaning of the word love. And what's more she also suddenly grasped the deep meaning of God's unconditional love for sinners.

God loving the unloving.

Leo Schoof [itschoof@iinet.net.au](mailto:itschoof@iinet.net.au)

23-09-2017