

TREASURE HUNTERS!

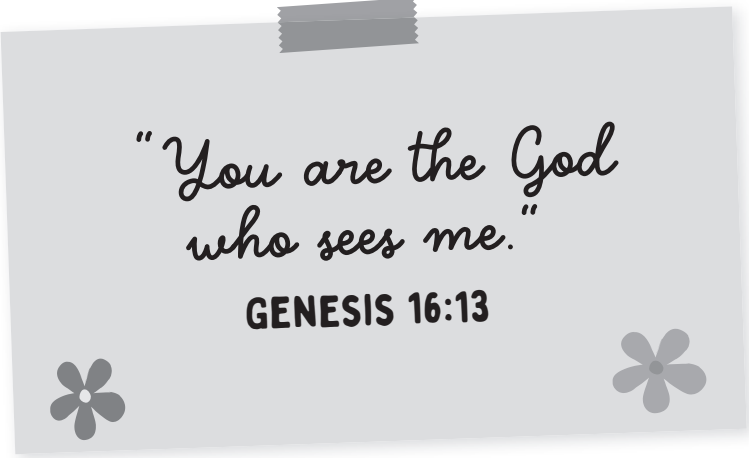
A Daniels Sisters Mystery



Chapter eleven

— WORDS OF TRUTH —

WRITTEN BY JANEL RODRIGUEZ-FERRER



*"You are the God
who sees me."*

GENESIS 16:13



— Chapter Eleven —

**WORDS OF
TRUTH**

The next day at school felt like it both dragged *and* went by in a blur!

In every class I was in, I either wiggled in my seat or jiggled my foot, waiting for it to be over. My mind kept wandering to thoughts about how my sisters and I were going to visit Miss Cynthia later. And every time it did, my heart would beat faster. Sometimes from excitement, sometimes from worry. It was exciting to wonder how God would use us to help the sisters make up. But it also made me nervous to think about what I would say to Miss Cynthia to convince her to make up with Belinda. I didn't want her getting mad at me or my sisters.

After thinking these things though, I would get mad—at *myself*! Because the Daniels Sisters Detective

Agency had placed the case in God's hands. So why was I worrying? And that would tell myself to calm down. And it would work for a bit ... until I went back to fidgeting and wiggling all over again.

By the time journal class came around there was only one hour left until the end of school, and I was feeling more restless than ever.

"All right, everyone," Ms. J-J, our homeroom and Bible teacher said. "Time to take out your journals and your Bibles."

At the beginning of the year, Ms. J-J had given each of us our very own Bibles. They had leathery covers and ribbon bookmarkers and pages with gold edges. They were so beautiful. I always tried to take very good care

of my Bible by treating it gently and respectfully and making sure to not shove it into my bookbag or locker or desk. I didn't want to accidentally bend its pages or mess up the cover.



"Today we're going to do something a little fun. Instead of having you all write about



the same Bible passage and what it means to you, I have written a bunch of Bible passages down on these slips of paper.” Ms. J-J held up what looked like a fishbowl that was half-filled with folded pieces of paper.

“*Ooh!*” my friend, Krista who sat next to me, exclaimed. “Do we get to pick out our own Bible verses?”

“And look them up?” I added.

“You’ll see.” Ms. J-J smiled mysteriously. “This will be an exercise in trusting that God has a word just for you. So you’ll have to pay close attention to what I say. Is that understood?”

“Yes.” Everyone agreed.

“Good. Now, watch.” Ms. J-J held the bowl out to me. “Pick out a slip of paper, please, Ansley.”

I stuck my hand in and made swishing motions to make sure to mix up the slips of paper as well as I could before taking one out.

“Got one?” Ms. J-J asked.

I nodded and began to open it up when she stopped me.

“Not yet, Ansley! In fact, I want you to pass the slip of paper down your row.”

“What?”

“That’s right. Take one and pass it down.”



I looked behind me and found a line of confused faces staring back at me. I still didn't understand.

"You mean I don't get to pick out my own verse?" Stuart, the kid who sat at the back of my row, asked in a disappointed tone.

"This is a test of faith," Ms. J-J said with a warm smile. "The right verse will find its way to you. Trust God." She looked down at me again. "Now pick another one."

And we went on like that until everyone in my row had a slip of paper (including myself) and she moved on to the next row.

But just as I was going to open up that slip of paper, Ms. J-J stopped me again.

"Not yet! Wait until everyone has one and I give the instructions. You did all agree earlier that you were going to listen to me carefully, didn't you?"

"Yes," we agreed again. This time with groans and giggles.

Finally, everyone had a slip of paper in their hands and waited for Ms. J-J to give the word.

"Ready?" Ms. J-J raised her arm like she was holding a flag and was about to say, "Set ... Go!" But instead,



she brought her arm down, and said, "... swap your Bible verse with the person next to you!"

Most of us had started unfolding the verses before we realized what Ms. J-J had just said for us to do. There was a lot of laughter and "*huhs?*" before we did what she told us. I gave my slip of paper to Krista and Krista handed the one she had over to me.

Ms. J-J was laughing, too. "Now you can open them and look up the verse in your Bibles!"

Opening up my slip of paper, I read the words: Mark 13:11. Knowing that the Bible is made up of many books, I knew it meant the Book of Mark. That is, one of the first four books in the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus. (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.) They are also known as the Gospels.

This will be easy to find, I thought, as I quickly found the Book of Matthew first, then flipped pages more slowly until I got to Mark, and then turned pages even more carefully until I reached Chapter 13. Once there, I finally ran my finger down the paragraphs until I found verse 11. Then I read it.

And read it again.

And again.

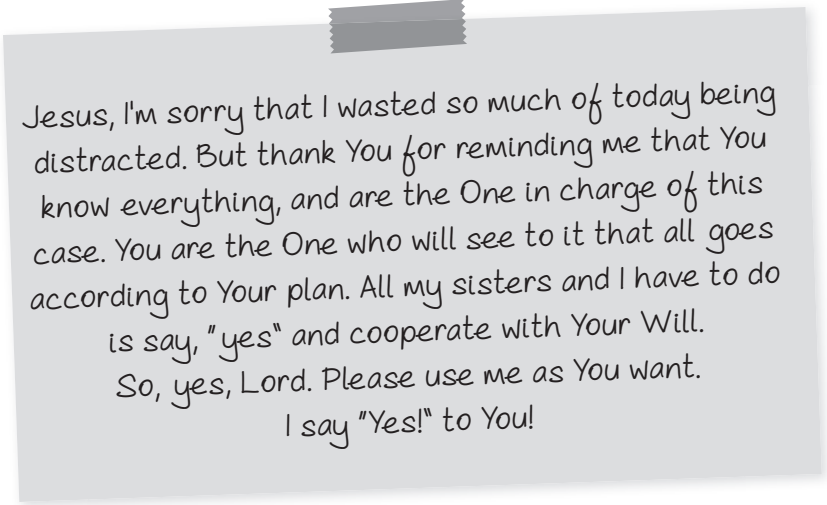


It said:

“Do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Wow, I thought. This verse really is for me! This is exactly what I was worried about! That is, what I was going to say to Miss Cynthia! And here God is saying to me that I don't even have to think about it. That He will be the one speaking, not me.

After writing this down in my journal I added,



Jesus, I'm sorry that I wasted so much of today being distracted. But thank You for reminding me that You know everything, and are the One in charge of this case. You are the One who will see to it that all goes according to Your plan. All my sisters and I have to do is say, "yes" and cooperate with Your Will.
So, yes, Lord. Please use me as You want.
I say "Yes!" to You!



I told my sisters all about the cool Bible verse at the end of the day, when we met out on the front lawn of the school.

“Wasn’t that verse perfect?” I asked them breathlessly. (I had run all the way out of my classroom, down the stairs and out the door.) “It made me really feel—really *believe*—that God is with us on this.”

Lena nodded as she led us to the car where Aunt Sam was waiting. “Isn’t that just like the Word? I mean, that’s what the Bible is all about. In both the Old and New Testaments. That God loves us and is with us always.”

“Isn’t it weird how even though God keeps sending us this message again and again, we can still forget it?” Kitty covered her face with her palm and shook her head.

“Maybe it’s not really that we forget it. Maybe it’s more like we don’t really understand—or realize—just how real God really is,” Cammie said.

“That sounded wise, Cammie,” I said.

Lena agreed. “Maybe that was the Holy Spirit talking through her. You know, like that Scripture said.”

“Plus, it’s fun to say.” Kitty grinned.

“Huh?” I asked. “What is?”

“What Cammie said.” And Kitty began skipping



toward the car while repeating, “How real God really is. How real God really is. How real God really is.”

The rest of us joined in until it began sounding something like a chant or a cheer. And by the time we reached the car, Lena had a faraway look in her eyes. “I think I should write a song about the realness of God. ‘How real God really is’ would make a good chorus.”

“That sounds like a nice idea,” Aunt Sam’s voice floated over to us from the driver’s seat of her car. “But first, are you girls ready to visit with Miss Cynthia?”

“We’re not only ready,” I said, smiling at my sisters. “We’re *really* ready.”

But even though I said that aloud and with all my heart, it *still* skipped a beat once we were all standing at the front door to Miss Cynthia’s apartment. Pointy elbows poked my ribs from three different directions.

“Go ahead,” Lena urged.

“Ring the bell,” Kitty added.

“God’s in charge,” Cammie said. “Remember?”

“I remember,” I said. And after taking a deep breath, I pressed the button on the side of the door and heard a dull sort of *ding-dong* sound come from inside the apartment.



“Coming!” a voice called from within. “Please wait. It takes me a while because I’m in the chair.”

As we waited on the other side of the door, I saw Aunt Sam wrinkle her forehead with concern. “Doesn’t she have anyone to help her? Any children? A home attendant? Is she all alone?”

We shrugged our shoulders. We didn’t really know. “How sad.” Aunt Sam sighed.

The scrabbling sound of Miss Cynthia suddenly opening the door made me jump back a little. But I relaxed when I saw how happy and excited Miss Cynthia was to see us all.

“Remind me of all your names again,” she said, grabbing hold of each of our arms in turn and giving them a squeeze. When it was my turn, she pulled me into a kind of hug and I smelled the light scent of lavender coming off from her sweater.

“Your name I remember, Miss Ansley.”

Then she looked up at Aunt Sam. “You’re their Aunt Samantha, aren’t you? I believe we spoke on the phone.”

“That’s right,” Aunt Sam said, bending down to look her in the face. “Thank you so much for allowing me to join this visit.”

“My pleasure, my pleasure.” Miss Cynthia wheeled us toward her small living room.

“Where can I put these? The girls made some pastries for you.”

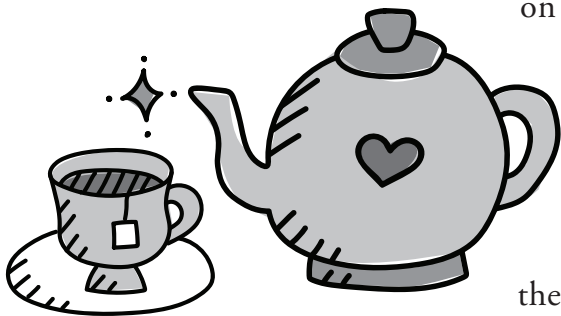
“Oh!” Miss Cynthia clasped her hands together. “I should make some tea.”

“Why don’t I do that?” Aunt Sam said. “I’ll prepare everything and that way you can have your visit with the girls. I think they have some things they wish to discuss with you.” She looked meaningfully at us—and at me in particular. I swallowed hard.

“Oh, have you, girls?” Miss Cynthia gave us a quick once-over. “All right, then. If it’s not too much trouble. Please, follow me.”

Miss Cynthia’s apartment was really small. But since the four of us sisters are

on the small side (we all inherited the petite size of our mom), we didn’t overcrowd her. My three sisters fit on the little pink sofa and I





sat on the flowered wing chair next to the bookcase.

Looking over at the bookcase I noticed a lot of old hardcover books, including a giant family Bible and even some old Nancy Drew books. I loved Nancy Drew! Excited, I stretched my hand out toward them, and my fingertips accidentally brushed against the framed photo that sat further down the shelf. It was the same photo Miss Cynthia had shown us last time we'd met. The one of her mom posing proudly with her two small daughters—while wearing the beloved double-strand pearl necklace.

I think God is telling me to speak up now, I thought. Go on, Ansley. You can do this. Don't worry, He'll give you the words.

I cleared my throat and pointed to the picture. “Isn’t this the photo you showed us at the picnic? The one with you and your sister?” And then, before Miss Cynthia could answer, I added. “I actually met your sister yesterday. She was even wearing a pearl necklace!”

Miss Cynthia looked stunned. “What? What are you talking about child?”

“But it turned out to be plastic,” I went on. “She hasn’t seen the real one since it went missing.”



“I still don’t understand. Where did you ... how did you ...?” Miss Cynthia shook her head.

“But what she misses most of all—she told me—is *you*.”

Miss Cynthia sputtered, at a loss for words. My sisters and I all exchanged glances.

My heart began to pound. “I’m sorry, if I shocked you, Miss Cynthia—”

Lena leaned forward in her seat. “Are you okay?”

Cammie and Kitty jumped up at the same time. “Do you want some water or something?”

“That’s okay, I got you.” Aunt Sam entered the living room carrying a tray filled with some tea things, cinnamon rolls, and a glass of lemonade. She set it down on the wooden coffee table in front of Miss Cynthia and placed a hand gently on one of her shoulders. “What Ansley is saying is true, Miss Cynthia. I was there. Belinda would love to reconcile with you.”

Miss Cynthia stared at the rug for a few minutes without saying a word. She didn’t even take a sip of lemonade or tea. Then, just when I thought she might never speak again, she said, “But what happened to the pearls? If she didn’t take them, who did?”

They can't have just disappeared."

"Your sister said something about Frances?" I said.
"Your housekeeper or nanny or nurse?"

"Frances was all those things to us and more," Miss Cynthia lifted up her head to meet my eyes. "Truly a priceless treasure. But she never would have taken the necklace. She was always refusing gifts and doing things out of the goodness of her heart. She was a godly woman. I can't believe Belinda accused her—"

"But she didn't!" I jumped in. "Belinda said just what you said. I was the one who thought that maybe your mom gave her the necklace since the two of you were fighting over it all the time."

"The only reason Frances would have taken the necklace would have been if Mother begged her to. She always wanted to make my mother happy. But if Mother did give it to her, well, I guess we'll never know. Frances joined Mother in Heaven a few years back."

My heart sank. Was that it, then? Would the mystery of the missing pearl necklace always remain a mystery? Would we never find out what happened to it?

"I don't want to talk about the pearls anymore," Miss Cynthia said, interrupting my thoughts. "Tell



me about my sister. Where is she? How did she look? Where can I find her?”

And suddenly the heart that had sank seconds before had wings! The joy I felt in hearing Miss Cynthia say that she cared more about her sister than her mother’s necklace made tears well up in my eyes.

As Aunt Sam began pouring out tea and handing out cinnamon rolls and napkins, I explained to Miss Cynthia how we had accompanied Vita Majors to the nursing home and how I’d found her sister there. I even mentioned that we had prayed together.

When I was finished, Miss Cynthia asked in a shy voice, “Do you have the number to the nursing home?” “Of course,” Aunt Sam said. And she gave it to her. Miss Cynthia immediately gave the phone number a try, but even though someone picked up on the other line, she hung up without speaking to her sister.

“She’s not there, they said,” Miss Cynthia said, a sigh in her voice. “She must be out.”

“Well, then try her cell number,” Aunt Sam said. “I have that, too.”

“I don’t know ...”

Miss Cynthia seemed nervous to try again, so Aunt

Sam suggested, “Why don’t I try from my phone, first?”
“Okay,” Miss Cynthia said, clapping her hands like a small child. “Do that. Do that.”

But just as my aunt began dialing the number, a *ding-dong* sound surprised us all.

“Who can that be?” Miss Cynthia asked. “I’m not expecting any other company today.”

Aunt Sam peeked out through a front window.
“You won’t believe it!” She said, and rushed to open the front door.

There stood an older woman with white hair and a delphinium-blue hoodie. “I’m looking for my sister—” she began.

“Belinda!” Miss Cynthia shouted from the living room.

“Cyndi!” Belinda shouted back from the doorway.
Aunt Sam pulled the door open all the way and let Belinda inside.

Belinda rushed over to her sister’s wheelchair and gave her a hug. To my shock, Miss Cynthia half-rose out of her wheelchair to hug her sister back. Soon the two of them had eyes for no one but each other. They laughed, they cried, they held hands and chatted excitedly face-to-face. Seeing this, Aunt Sam took a dining chair from the



kitchenette and placed it next to Miss Cynthia's wheelchair so that Belinda could sit close to her.

The sisters were still holding hands when Belinda nodded at me. "And we have that lovely girl to thank. After she prayed with me, I knew I had to come see you."

"When she told me she'd seen you, I knew I had to try to reach you," Miss Cynthia said.

"Don't thank me," I said, feeling my face grow warm. "Thank God. He's the one who has wanted you to make up with each other."

"Yes, let's thank God," Miss Cynthia said. "Together. Right here and now."

"That sounds like a lovely idea," Aunt Sam said.

"Yes, let's!" My sisters agreed, taking each other's hands from their places on the couch.

"Can I use this Bible for the prayer?" I asked Miss Cynthia. I pointed to the big, hardcover family Bible sitting on the bookshelf.

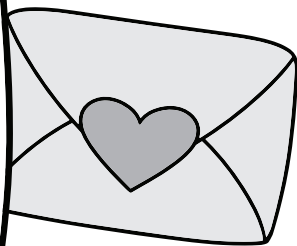
Miss Cynthia warned me. "That's a heavy book, darling. Old and dusty, too. I don't usually take it off the shelf, let alone carry it around or read it. The one I use and take to church is the smaller, paperback one on my bedstand."

But it hurt my heart to imagine a big, beautiful Bible sitting unused on a shelf for years. “Let’s just use this one for the prayer, anyway,” I said, grunting as I pulled it off the shelf. “It’s time it was put to use again, don’t you think?”

Then, sitting myself back on the wing chair, I began flipping through the pages and asking God to lead me to the Bible verse He wanted us to use in prayer. Suddenly, a bookmark interrupted my page-turning. It was not really a bookmark—not like the ribbons in my school Bible. It was a short, white envelope that looked like it had been sealed for years.

And across the front of it were written the words:

*A Letter to
My Darling Daughters
Belinda and Cynthia
(To be read upon my death.)*



— MEET THE — **DANIELS SISTERS**

**THE DANIELS SISTERS ARE FICTIONAL, BUT DID YOU KNOW
THEY WERE INSPIRED BY FOUR VERY REAL SISTERS?**

We first met the Pitts Sisters (and their Daniels Sisters characters) in a series of books: ***Lena in the Spotlight***—three books featuring Alena Pitts' character, Lena Daniels, followed by Kaitlyn Pitts as Ansley Daniels in ***Ansley's Big Bake Off***, Camryn Pitts as Ashton Daniels in ***Ashton's Dancing Dream***, and Olivia Pitts as Amber Daniels in ***Amber's Song***.



Don't forget to continue **YOUR ADVENTURE**
in this month's ***Reflections Journal!***

**Just like Ansley and the Daniels sisters, you can
discover His plans for your life when you study His Word.**