



Overflowing Love

Sketch

[Please provide: five actresses and five copies of the sketch for the actresses.]

Cast: Helen, a widow
Reader
April, a wife
Marsha, wife of a serviceman and mother of four
Cindy, a nurse

Setting: Church meeting room with a table and chairs; coffee cups and coffeecake; serving tray; bags with craft material to make centerpieces. Each actress could carry a tote and/or purse with the various craft objects.

Helen: [Enters, takes off jacket and looks around.] Well, I certainly didn't expect to be the first one here. You would think women who volunteer for a committee would think enough of the project to get here on time. Sometimes I wonder why I said I would chair this group.

Reader: [Stands off to the side.] ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

Helen: Why am I acting this way? They have families and responsibilities while I only have myself and the cat to be concerned with.

April: [Rushes in with a bag or two of craft items.] Oh, Helen, I am so glad you are here. I just had the strangest experience and I need to share it.

Helen: I certainly hope it was a good strange. Here, let me help you with your things. [Starts to help unload items.]

April: Well, I'll let you be the judge of the strangeness. I just stopped at Wally World to pick up some ribbon and glue sticks for the centerpieces we are making. Of course, I found a few sale items that I could use so it took longer than I had planned. Wouldn't you know that there was only one gal at the check-out but the couple in front of me only had three items in their cart so I thought I would be out in short order. Was I wrong!

Helen: What do you mean?

April: The woman was cashing an out-of-town payroll check for \$55. She didn't have any ID and her husband had a different last name so the clerk was trying to get the supervisor to come and approve the check. No supervisor was available – something about a meeting, I guess. Then the man took out a credit card and said they could use it. Surprise! It didn't work either. By then I was getting really impatient so I reached into my billfold for my credit card. Behind my card was one of those business cards we had made for the church to put with the Christmas cookies we took to the nursing home. Suddenly ...

Reader: ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

April: It just came to me that I could pay for their bread, cheese, and lunch meat and it would still be faster than waiting for them to figure out their problems. I told the clerk to put their items on my bill and I gave them the card and invited them to church Sunday. The woman looked like she was in shock and the man just stared, while the clerk asked if I was sure that's what I wanted to do. While the clerk was ringing up my stuff, the woman told me that this was her last paycheck because she had been let go from her job. She and her husband, who was out of work also, were on their way to stay with family. They both thanked me and left while I loaded up and separated the church stuff from my home things. I have no idea why I helped them the way that I did.

Reader: ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

Helen: Your situation sounds like it was a good strange. I am so pleased that you thought to help those folks. I don't know if I would have thought of doing that. I might have looked around for another checker or just thought nasty thoughts about it all.

Marsha: [Angrily enters. Tosses her jacket and purse aside and plops down on a chair.] It's a wonder I even made it to this meeting. Arggh!!!! What a morning!

April: Wow, what happened to you? Were you in an accident with your car?

Helen: Something terrible must have happened. Was it the kids? Is it something with Mike? You usually seem so cheerful and positive.

Marsha: Would you believe that I planned on being here early? The kids know this is my day for doing the things I like. Tom was as bad as he has been since Mike went to Kabal. For being my oldest, he certainly acted like a spoiled rotten kid. [Briefly pauses.] Is there coffee? I didn't even have time for that.

Helen: I think the coffee should be ready, and I have some coffee cake I brought that I was planning on serving. Let me get it. [Leaves.]

Marsha: I can't believe Helen is so cheerful.

April: And helpful.

Marsha: Being a single parent, even for a year, is getting to be too much and it's only been six months. Helen has been widowed for years and I don't understand how she happily does so much for everyone. I feel awful. [Takes out a tissue, wipes her eyes, and then blows her nose.]

Reader: ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

[**Helen** enters carrying a tray of cups and goodies.]

April: [Reaches out to help **Helen**.] Let me help you. I think a cup of coffee would be good for all of us. I'm sure Cindy won't mind if we start snacking without her. Bless her heart, she hasn't been to a meeting on time since she started working nights at the VA hospital.

Marsha: She probably won't want to hear my tale of woe. She told me she didn't know if she would be staying here for much longer. Here I am complaining because I am unable to cope with a household without a husband to help.

Helen: Now, Marsha, drink your coffee and tell us why your morning was so terrible. [**All** drink and eat a bite]

Marsha: Well, it started last night. We didn't get to talk to Mike on the computer. He had said they might be deployed for a day or so and would not be able to get in touch, but when it happens, I just lose it. That always sets the kids off so it might have been my fault as well.

Tom was at the library for a study time with his math group. They are trying out for some special academic contest so he was late coming home and didn't put gas in his car. Since he was driving his carpool this morning, he wanted to use my car. So we switched cars and I had to put in gas at the first place I could find. Of course, Katie couldn't find her homework, and Emma thought she had an upset stomach and didn't want to go to school. That meant Tyler didn't want to go to preschool either. The only good thing that happened is that silly dog came in with Tyler's backpack just like a normal morning. I am so glad we have Tyler and Sarge.

Even though it was a mad house with us all yelling or crying and so rushed that juice and yogurt bars were all they had time to eat, there was time for all of us to laugh before we left the house.

I was so aggravated at them and, I suppose, Mike and myself. I know it was partially because I was worried about Mike but still ...

Reader: ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

April: I am sorry your day started out so badly. Let's have a hug and know we love you and understand. [**All** stand and hug.]

[**Cindy** enters as she carries more craft items.]

Cindy: Hey, what's going on? Can I get in on the hugs? I could use a hug today.

[**All** laugh and individually hug **Cindy**, then settle around the table.]

Helen: [Turns to **Cindy**.] It seems we all have had unusual mornings. How has yours been?

April: Has it been normal or strange in a good or bad way?

Marsha: I certainly hope it has been good.

Cindy: Well, if you can believe it, it has been both bad and good strange. [**All** nod and quietly comment.] The VA is closing the hospital I work at and moving to "a major metropolitan area for easier access and better service." What they mean is that they are down-sizing and cost-cutting and I will be out of a job. The nurses can either apply at the

new hospital or look for another job. That's the bad news and the other is either good or bad.

Helen, April, Marsha: [Speak together.] What?

Cindy: You know I had been thinking about applying for a medical mission trip. Today Pastor called to tell me that Lutheran World Relief is looking for Administrative RNs to do work coordinating at a couple of facilities in Turkey. He thought if I had a heart for this it would be a good thing for me and for them.

Helen: That sounds like something you would be good at. Of course they will have applicants from all over but if you want we can certainly start praying about it.

[All agree and nod their heads affirmatively.]

Marsha: Cindy, what is bothering you? Mike has said that the refugees are really in need of assistance, both medically and in relocating to a new home.

April: You are a good nurse and have a heart for people. Of course, there is a danger in those countries. Is that what is bothering you?

Helen: You would get used to a new area in no time. Look how fast you adjusted to living and working at the VA. You like working with all sorts of people.

Cindy: That's just it. I don't know if I could serve the same people who have terrorists as part of their nationality. I know thinking that isn't being a good Christian. I don't know what to do.

Reader: ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...* (1 Thessalonians 3:12a).

Helen: This is something we can pray about with you, Cindy. We know that God works change in our hearts. Remember, God can do anything. Prayer is a powerful tool. It isn't easy to give a problem to God and then not take it back. Trusting in God for everyday help is something we all do.

April: Remember how Marsha reacted when Mike called to ask if she would be willing to accept a new child into their family? That child came with a dog. Neither understood English nor our lifestyle.

Marsha: Oh, I was just awful! I can still remember that phone call. At first I thought he was out of his mind. Then Mike asked me to just listen and pray. He told me that his team had rescued an infant from an abandoned village where his family had been killed. They were going in to verify that the enemy had gone when they found our Tyler. Of course, he wasn't our Tyler then. Then he told me about the dog that was protecting the baby and wouldn't leave. If it hadn't been because of the unusual circumstances and the need for immediate humanitarian action, Tyler would have perished right there. It was due to the work of military, government, and church folks that it all took place. It had to have been God's hand that moved everyone. Those groups had never cooperated like that before or since.

Cindy, you were the one person that I wanted with me when I flew to get Tyler and Sarge. You didn't hesitate at all. You came and I know you cared for Tyler as soon as we saw him.

Cindy: But that was different. Mike knew the history and checked out the situation.

Helen: Maybe it wasn't Mike that checked out the situation but God that did the choosing and checking.

April: Cindy, this is definitely a God moment. Once He has a plan in place, it works. There is a Bible verse from 1 Thessalonians that has been going through my mind all morning.

Marsha: Mine too.

Helen: Is it ... *may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all ...?*

Cindy: Oh my! I do know that verse. That will be my prayer while I consider this tremendous decision.

All: It will be our prayer even after you reach your decision.

Helen: Friends, let's get our crafting out of the way so we can get to the serious work of talking and listening to God.

[**All** nod affirmatively as they take their craft supplies out of their bags.]