

Sarah's Mistake

By Sister Mary Murray, H.M.

Sarah ran into the house and right into her mother's arms. "The girls from Cherry Hill School told me it would be like this. I didn't believe them," she sobbed. "But they were right! People don't want us in this neighborhood. They don't!"

"Come, sit down, honey," her mother said softly. "Tell me what happened."

"Wait, Mom. See that girl on the porch across the street?" Sarah pointed. "I wanted to make friends with her the way you and Daddy said I should. So I waved and said hi. I even held up my jump rope. But do you know what she did? She just turned off her cassette player and walked in the house."

"Did you say anything else to the little girl, Sarah?" asked Mother. She was worried, but she didn't want Sarah to know it.

"No, I didn't! And I'm not going to either. She can just keep on playing her silly old cassettes."

"Look, Sarah," said her mother gently. "Let's give her a little time. She may be shy."

"Old stuck-up, that's what she is!" Sarah's eyes kept filling with tears. "Momma, I want to go back to Cherry Hill School. These kids will never play with me."

"Hush, dear!" said her mother. She put her arms around Sarah. "This doesn't sound like our little girl. You love your new house. You have your own room. You have a place to study and a place to play. Everything will work out. You'll see."

But things did not work out for Sarah. Day after day passed, and the girl across the street took no notice at all.

One afternoon, the two girls met in an ice cream shop at the mall. The girl's father was talking to her. "Let's see, Gabrielle. How about lime sherbet? Or orange? Or maybe raspberry."

"Oh, Daddy, I love raspberry," said the girl. Suddenly she bumped against Sarah, but the girl pretended she had never seen her. "Pardon me, please," was all she said.

Sarah didn't answer. "Stupid," she thought. "Who does she think she is-- a movie actress or something—with her red dress and dark glasses? Gabrielle? Ugh!"

The first day of school finally arrived. Sarah was excited. She stood at the front door, waiting for her mother. Suddenly she cried out, "Mother! Come quick. Look! Gabrielle isn't going to my school."

Sarah was correct. She and her mother watched while Gabrielle board a blue-and-gray bus in front of her house. On the side of the bus in large letters were these words: DR. GRAY'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

Sarah's mother sighed. "We'll make the best of it," she said, almost to herself. "There will be other friends, honey."

Sarah said nothing. But suddenly she decided she didn't like Gabrielle at all. "I'll show her," she muttered, "Just wait till I get a chance."

The chance came sooner than she expected. The next afternoon Gabrielle was sitting in her yard

listening to cassettes and playing with a tiny black puppy. Suddenly, the puppy jumped from her arms.

"Come back here, Peppy," she shouted.

"Come back. Where are you going?" Gabrielle jumped to her feet and started after the puppy.

At the same time, Sarah rode down the sidewalk on her new bike. "Watch where you're going," shouted Sarah. "Look out!"

But it was too late. The bicycle had brushed Gabrielle, and she fell.

"What's the matter, klutz? Don't they teach you safety rules in that silly school of yours? Or can't you see?"

"No," said Gabrielle, starting to cry. "I can't see. I'm blind!"

"Blind!" gasped Sarah. "You're blind?" She put down her bike and helped Gabrielle to her feet. "I'm sorry I said what I did," said Sarah. "Here, let me help you. Then I'll get your puppy. My name is Sarah, and we just moved in across the street."

"Yes, I know," said Gabrielle. "My mother told me. I was hoping we could play together, but not everyone likes to play with blind people. I can't even go to your school."

"That Dr. Gray School is –" began Sarah.

"For the blind," said Gabrielle. "We learn to read with our fingers and listen to stories on cassettes. I have a story today called 'The Giggling Ghost of Haunted House Three.' Would you like to hear it?"

"I sure would," said Sarah. But wait till I get your puppy and tell my mother where I am. Is she going to be surprised!"