

## *A Fortunate Layoff*

Nathaniel dreaded telling his wife he had just been fired from his clerking job. To his amazement, however, she was thrilled by the news that he had lost his livelihood and couldn't support her.

"Now you can write your book!" she exclaimed.

Nathaniel had long wanted to devote himself to literary pursuit, but practical matters prevailed. He was touched by her enthusiasm, but reality kept him from sharing it. "Yes," he replied. "And what will we live on while I'm writing it?"

His wife, Sophia, went over to the bureau, opened a drawer, and pulled out a bundle of cash. "Where on Earth did you get that?" he cried.



**1841 portrait of  
Nathaniel Hawthorne**

She smiled. "I've always known you're a genius and would someday write a masterpiece. So every week, I've put aside some money. I've saved enough to last a whole year."

Who was Nathaniel? His last name gives instant recognition: Hawthorne, an American novelist and short story writer.

By his wife's demonstration of faith in Hawthorne's talent and willingness to bank on his success, he was inspired to spend that year writing *The Scarlet Letter*, one of the great novels in American literature.

What about you? Is there some talent lurking within, eager to get out? Is it part of a grand purpose for your life?

Or maybe you recognize the possibilities in a family member or friend who needs some encouragement to launch into a worthwhile venture.

Hawthorne's wife offers an example worth heeding.

– Beecher Hunter