

Rearing an Orphan

A childless couple raised their orphaned nephew named David. He is now leaving them for college, and they're at the railroad station to bid him goodbye.

David looks at his aunt and uncle:

- She, with hands cupped and hard from selling fruit and vegetables outdoors in all kinds of weather, face ruddy and round and invariably smiling. Her heavy body is more accustomed to a half-dozen sweaters at one time than a single coat. Her hair is the color of moonlight now, but the dark eyes are still bright.
- He, with his slight, wiry body, strong and bent from lifting too many fruit and vegetable crates for too many years; the wind-burned skin, the swarthy face, the wry mouth.



They were the couple who had never been blessed with children of their own, but had taken David into their home after both of his parents had died. They had reared him since the age of 7, and yet refused to be called Mama and Papa for fear he would forget his real parents.

David grabbed their rough peddlers' hands, holding them in his smooth student ones.

"How can I ever repay you two for what you've done for me?" he asked.

His uncle spoke gently: "David, there's a saying, 'The love of parents goes to their children, but the love of these children goes to their children.'"

"That's not so," protested David. "I'll always be trying to ..."

His aunt interrupted him. "David," she said, "what your uncle means is that a parent's love isn't to be paid back. It can only be passed on."

For each of us, we are where we are today because of the love of parents, or aunts and uncles, or grandparents, or someone special – or all of the above.

For some of us, our mothers and fathers are deceased; we can no longer do anything to "pay them back."

Except to live in a manner that honors them and would make them proud.

And to pass love on.

– Beecher Hunter