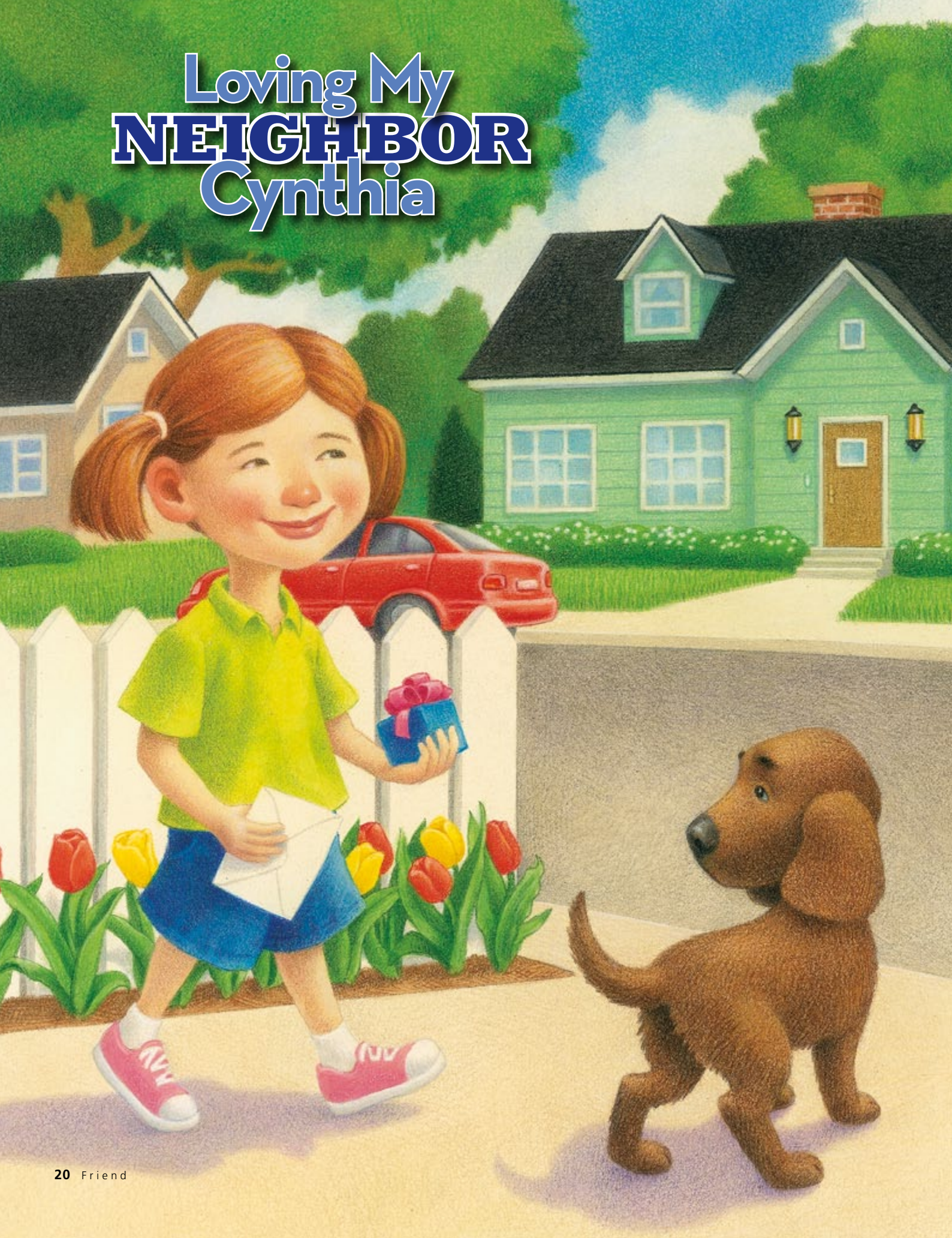


Loving My **NEIGHBOR** Cynthia



By Kimberly Reid

(Based on a true story)

Thou shalt not . . . bear any grudge . . . , but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Leviticus 19:18).

I watched Cynthia prance across the playground, followed by three girls who wanted to be popular, like her. Cynthia's earrings were long and silvery. She wore pink lipstick and bracelets that sounded like chimes.

I had to admit, I was jealous. Cynthia was pretty—and pretty snobby. My friends and I sat on the grass at recess, pointing out every snobby thing she did.

One day, Cynthia wasn't at school. When I got home, Mom asked, "Do you know Cynthia Harper?"

"Yes. Why?" I asked.

"She had an accident yesterday."

"Really? What happened?"

"Both of Cynthia's parents were at work. She forgot her house key, so she tried to open a basement window. She slipped and pushed her arm through the glass."

I gasped. "Will she be OK?"

"I think so," Mom said. "She had to have surgery. Mrs. Keller was the one who found her."

I shuddered thinking about the accident. Then I realized something. "Did you say Mrs. Keller found her?" The Kellers lived on our street.

Mom nodded. "Cynthia's family lives in the green house."

I knew Cynthia lived nearby, but I didn't know she was my neighbor!

The next day, I told my friends about what happened to Cynthia.

"Serves her right," Caroline said.

I thought about how unhappy Cynthia must be. "No, it doesn't," I said. "My mom said she'll have to wear a cast all summer. She's lucky she can even move her fingers."

"Sorry," Caroline mumbled.

After school that day, I went to my room. My eyes fell

on a pair of tiny earrings I had gotten for my birthday that I hadn't worn yet. An idea came to me. Maybe I could give them to Cynthia.

"What are you thinking?" I asked myself. "She doesn't know you, and she'd never wear earrings like that."

But before I knew what I was doing, I was carrying a get-well card and the earrings up the street to the green house.

Cynthia's mom answered the door. "Is Cynthia here?" I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

"She's right here." Her mom smiled, and I looked inside to see Cynthia sitting on the couch.

"I'm Kim," I said. "I live up the street."

Cynthia smiled. "Hi."

"I heard about what happened, and I hope you feel better soon." I gave her the card and earrings and held my breath, waiting for her reaction.

Her eyes lit up. "Thank you! You are so nice!" she exclaimed.

"Um, are you . . . feeling better?" I stammered.

Cynthia nodded. "It hurts a little. But I'm OK." She held out her arm so I could see her pink cast.

"Well, see you later," I said as I hurried out the door.

I skipped all the way home. I knew I had been brave and that I had done the right thing. But most of all, I knew I had been wrong about Cynthia. She wasn't snobby—my friends and I had been the snobs.

Cynthia and I didn't become best friends, but every time we saw each other in the hall or at recess we smiled and said hi. A few weeks later, school ended and I moved away. Knowing I had been wrong about Cynthia helped me not to judge others at my new school. Making friends was easier when I remembered that being nice could start with me. ♦

"Rather than being judgmental and critical of each other, may we have the pure love of Christ for our fellow travelers in this journey through life."³

President Thomas S. Monson

