





# Rock Soup

BY MICHELE H. MIRABILE

(Based on a true story)

*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, . . . and be ye thankful (Colossians 3:15).*

**E**liza was hungry. Her stomach churned and rumbled so loudly she was certain everyone at the table could hear it. But no one paid any attention. They were all too busy pushing the small portion of greens around on their plates, and waiting for their mother to sit down so they could say the blessing.

It had been a long winter, and the growing season in their small farming town had been too short, leaving little money for food and supplies. Now the Forsyth family was going hungry. For the past three weeks, all they'd had to eat was pigweed. Eliza didn't want to complain, but pigweed was yucky and she didn't want to eat it anymore.

"Do we have to eat this again?" she asked, poking at the stringy greens with her fork.

"Count your blessings, Eliza," Father said in a quiet voice. "Be thankful that you have something warm to fill your stomach. It's more than a lot of people have right now."

Eliza hoped she hadn't made her father feel bad. He worked so hard to take care of their family. It wasn't his fault that they were having hard times.

"Soup's on," Mother said, carrying a large pot to the table. "Move your elbows and pass your bowls."

Eliza's stomach grumbled in anticipation. Her mother made the best soup in town, and she couldn't wait to sink her teeth into a sweet carrot or meaty potato.

But as she watched her mother fill the bowls with hot, steaming liquid, Eliza's heart sank. There were no carrots in sight. No potatoes. No beans. No meat of any kind. Just rocks. There were rocks in her soup!

At the sight of the stones in the bottom of her bowl, her eyes filled with tears and she groaned. "I'm hungry,



Mother. Don't we have anything else to eat?"

"Yuck," said Eliza's sister Agnes as she plucked a large brown chunk from her bowl. "What's this?"

"That's part of Uncle George's saddle," Mother said, looking around the table at the faces of her unbelieving family. "He doesn't need it anymore, so I cut it up and boiled it to give the soup some flavor. Just set it aside. It's not for eating."

"What are the rocks for?" asked Neal, scrunching up his face as he pushed the rocks around with his spoon.

Mother smiled. "Those are just for fun. Now please fold your arms. Eliza, will you bless the food?"

Eliza didn't want to. She wasn't grateful for weeds and rocks and boiled saddles.

"Don't forget to thank Heavenly Father for keeping us safe, and for giving us so many blessings," Mother said.

Eliza looked into her bowl of rock soup, then around her at the bowed heads of her family. Despite the long, cold winter they had endured, all of them were safe and healthy. They had a house to live in, clothes to wear, and plenty of firewood to keep them warm. And in spite of their suffering, they were kind

to their neighbors and each other. Mother was right. They really did have much to be thankful for.

"Thank Thee, Heavenly Father, for the food our mother has prepared," Eliza prayed.

She thanked Him for the pigweed that grew plentifully on the farm.

She thanked Him for the rocks that covered the west pasture, because without them, they wouldn't be having rock soup.

And she thanked Him for her family and the love they shared.

When Eliza finished her prayer, she had a warm feeling and knew that Heavenly Father loved her.

When dinner was over, the aching emptiness of her stomach was filled with the best soup Eliza had eaten in a long time. ●

"Walk with gratitude before him who is the giver of life and every good gift."

**President Gordon B. Hinckley, "With All Thy Getting Get Understanding," *Ensign*, Aug. 1988, 4.**

