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Inside-Out

"Mama, Meg is being mean," Davy said, coming into the family room. "She's says I'm a baby and won't let me play with the kittens."

Davy's mother looked up from her sewing. "Were you being kind to them?" she asked.

"Yes, I was!" Six-year-old Davy declared. "And they are more my kitties than hers, because Whiskers is my cat!"

"I see," said Mama. "Perhaps you weren't sharing, hmm?"

Davy shook his head quickly. "I did share, but Meg just said that I didn't."

"We'll have to see about that. Go fetch my scissors now," said Mama. "I left them on the kitchen table."

Davy started to obey, but suddenly he began hopping. "Ouch! Something poked my foot!"

"Did you step on a pin?" asked Mama, coming to look. She rubbed her hand over the carpet. "Maybe something is stuck in your sock," she suggested.

Davy sat down and held his foot in his lap. Nothing was poking into his sock. But the minute he put his foot down, something pricked him. Mama rubbed her hand along the bottom of his foot. "Ouch!" Davy said. "That hurts."

"Something must be stuck inside your sock," said Mama. "Were you playing outside without your boots again?"

Davy took off his sock and peered inside. "I don't see anything," he said.

"Let's turn it inside out," said Mama. "Then we'll be able to see what's there."

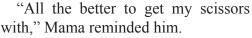
Sure enough, a small hay seed was sticking to the inside of Davy's sock. "What a naughty little troublemaker," Mama said with a smile, picking it off. "We don't want you here!"

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Davy smiled, too. "It was trying to hide from us," he said.

"Just like naughty little attitudes that like to hide inside little hearts," Mama said, handing him the sock. "See if it doesn't feel better now."

Davy pulled it on and stood up. "No pricks!" he said.



Davy was just coming back from the

kitchen when his sisters came inside. "Davy wasn't playing nicely with the kittens," Meg said.

"He took them away," added little Beth.

"And when I told him to put them back with their mama, he kicked off his boots," Meg said, triumphantly.

"And what about you? Were you being kind?" Mama asked her oldest daughter.

Meg nodded. "Yes, I was making sure everyone got a turn."

"Hmm," said Mama, looking from one child to the next. "It seems that there are a lot of prickers hiding in this room. Everyone says that they behaved fine, but the other people didn't. How am I going to find out the truth?"

"Will you have to turn us inside out?" asked Davy, looking worried.

Mama laughed. "That would be a good idea, except that I can't do it. But God knows what's inside and He can turn us inside out if we ask Him."

"People can't be turned inside out!" Meg exclaimed. "They would die."

"I'm talking about inside our hearts and attitudes," Mama explained.
"You told me that you were being kind, and Davy said you weren't. Davy said that he was sharing, and Beth said he wasn't. I can't see who is telling

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me the truth, but God can."

Mama looked at the children and smiled. "Let's ask Him to help us."

Soberly they knelt down and Mama began to pray. "Dear Father, You know what's inside each heart. You love Meg and Davy and Beth, and You want them to be honest. You can help them get rid of the naughty prickers that are bothering them and making them not get along. Please help us now."

After she had finished it was quiet a moment, then Meg whispered, "I'm sorry for saying Davy was a baby when he didn't listen to me."

Davy wiggled uncomfortably. "I'm sorry for grabbing the kittens," he said at last. "And for kicking off my boots." He peeked up at Mama and added quickly, "I didn't mean to walk in my socks - and I picked off all the hay before I came inside."

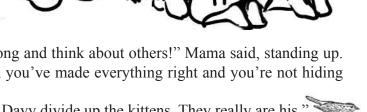
Mama laid her hand on his shoulder. "I'm glad you did," she said softly. "Are there any more naughty prickers inside?"

Davy shook his head. "I want to share my kitties. I don't want to be selfish." He smiled. "You can have the gray one, Beth. Even if its my favorite."

"We can share it," said Beth. "I like the black one, too."

"How much better it is to get along and think about others!" Mama said, standing up. "Don't you feel much happier when you've made everything right and you're not hiding any bad attitudes inside?"

Meg nodded. "Next time, I'll let Davy divide up the kittens. They really are his.













It is a lovely day for a picnic. Let's spread this cloth out on the lawn. The shade feels good on this warm day, doesn't it? Oh, look. We have a little visitor.

Where? Oh-eek! It's a spider! you shout, jumping up.

Are you frightened by a little spider? It won't hurt you. See? It crawls right over my hand.

But what if it bites you? Ooh, I hate spiders, you say with a shudder. Get it away from me!

Don't worry. I've scared it off. You don't need to be afraid of grass spiders. I'm not. Trust me, they won't hurt you any more than a lady bug. You sit down slowly, feeling a bit foolish. I guess it just surprised me, you say. I'm not afraid now.

You know, that spider scare reminds me of a lesson Jesus taught His disciples. Do you remember the time they were in a storm on the sea? Why were the disciples afraid? (Read Mark 4:37-41)

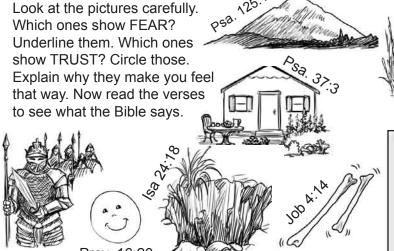
They thought they were going to sink and drown, you say. But was Jesus afraid? You're shaking your head. Why wasn't He?

Because Jesus isn't afraid of anything. He could make the waves be still. So why were the disciples afraid if lesus was with them? You don't know? It was because they weren't trusting Him.

"Where was your faith?" Jesus asked, after He had calmed the wind and waves. The disciples had faith that the waves were stronger than them, so they panicked. But they were trusting in the wrong thing. All Jesus had to say was, "Peace, be still" and everything was calm. Of course, all their fears looked pretty silly then.

There wasn't any reason to fear with Jesus in control, was there? Just like when I scared away the spider, you saw it wasn't dangerous. But it felt dangerous to you, didn't it?

It's easy to focus on the problems we see, and then we feel all panicky inside. But Jesus wants us to trust in His power and love for us. "Let not your heart be troubled," He says, "believe in Me." Do you really believe that Jesus is in control and will take care of you? Then you don't ever need to be afraid – of a tiny spider or a giant storm.



Digging Deeper: The Bible tells us to "fear the Lord." Is this different than other kinds of fear? Read Prov. 8:13; 14:2,26



Prov. 16:20



Psa. 115:9

You have heard about Mark, how he couldn't be trusted and how he wouldn't obey. He got an awful scare because of his disobedience. But this story isn't about how he got a scare. It's about how he scared his Mother and Daddy.

It all started with a book about two boys who lived in colonial times. One was a white boy, while the other was an Indian. They were about Mark's age, and the white boy was fascinated with how the Indian boy could move silently through the woods.

Mark really studied that book. This is really great, he thought. Just think! The ability to sneak around like a ghost! He imagined how he could spy on people. If there was work to be done, he could disappear.

could overhear what his parents were planning. If he wanted those plans to happen, why then he would appear. If not, then he would vanish!

Stupid Mark. He didn't realize how foolish his ideas were. He thought he was learning to hide from his parents so he wouldn't have to obey. But could he ever hide from God? Of course not! God can see every move we make, because God can see through walls and in darkness just like we can see something across the room. And God sees inside our minds and hearts, too. He knew that Mark's thoughts were evil and would get him into a lot of trouble.

Mark practiced sneaking around the house. When he got out of bed, he tried to move without the springs squeaking.

When Mother told him to put away his books, he tiptoed. He especially practiced outside. Instead of walking across the chicken house to collect eggs, he would crawl along

He

the flower bed and dart from bush to bush. Anyone watching would've thought he was a criminal. And he was, inside. He was trying

to get away with wrong, and so his heart was just as bad as any thief or murderer.

His mother didn't like it. "Mark! What are you doing?" she would say when she found

him standing silently beside the refrigerator or creeping down the hallway. She wasn't bothered because he was quiet. After all, that was better than screaming and hollering. But his sneakiness was making her worried.

Mark decided to begin sneaking around at night. No matter how silently he moved in the daylight, someone could still see him.

He could be a better sneak in the dark, he thought. So one night he decided to crawl into his parents' room while they were asleep. He didn't think that God, who records everything we think and do, was watching him.

Mark moved on his stomach very slowly and very carefully. He slithered through the hallway into his



parents' bedroom. His daddy was snoring. He always snored. Mark moved closer to the bed. Then his mother said, "Honey, I think someone is in the room!" She sounded really alarmed, and Mark quickly tried to disappear under the bed.

The lamp light came on and heavy feet landed on the floor. "Mark!

over.

What in the world are you doing?" his dad demanded. Stupid Mark! He was caught. And he didn't feel too good on the backside when he crept back to bed a little while later. Mark's days of being a sneak were

His parents loved him too much to let him practice being a criminal.

I am sorry to say that this did not cure Mark of having a disobedient heart. Turn the next page to learn how he did get cured later. You might say, "But his folks didn't *tell* him not to sneak into their bedroom in the middle of the night." No. But he knew better. You do, too. There are a lot of things that you

know better than to ask if you can do, don't you? You know the answer will be **no.** So if you go ahead and do it anyway, then you know that you have disobeyed, don't you?

How sad it will be if God's record book has to say of you: "But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction." (Jeremiah 17:23)

The Disobedience CUIRF:

Do you have a disobedient heart? Maybe you complain about the things you have been told to do: "Why do I have to do that again?" or "No one else has to go to bed so early!" Maybe you just think your own way inside – They can make me do it now, but when I'm bigger I won't have to!

You see, obedience isn't just doing the things Mom and Dad tell you to do. Like Mark, you might be doing what you're told, and still be disobeying.

Disobedience shows up in your attitude inside. Are you washing dishes because Auntie is watching and you want to impress her? Are you planning ways to get out of more work – like disappearing before Mom can give you another job? Maybe you've thought like this before. I have.

Do you want to get rid of this attitude that is selfish and wants its own way? Just think – **disobedience** is the cause of all the trouble in the world! Because of one person's *disobedience* we were *all* born with sinful hearts and grow up doing wrong. All, except one. You know who that is. Yes, and it is only because of Jesus that we can get an obedient heart inside.

Was Jesus ever selfish and disobedient? No. He came to do His Father's will and He "always did the things that please Him." Always. His attitude was always right. How could Jesus be like that? Because He loved His Father with all His heart, mind, and strength. It was really that simple. When you love someone enough, you stop thinking about yourself and what you want. If you really respect and loved your parents, you would never want to displease them, would you?

You see, love (the kind from God) is the real cure of disobedience. It was because of that love that Jesus came to save us. It is because of that love that we can know God and learn to love Him, too. "We love Him because He first loved us," one of Jesus' disciples said. And when our heart is filled with love for God, there won't be any room for disobedience, will there?



You know a lot of things that are right. But do you want will (can to be right? Being something is like the control action word in a sentence. Look let trap at the sentences below. The verbs like sees are missing in each do change one, but watch out! The wrong paving stone can cause want someone to stumble. Can you complete Open) ask the highway so that it is smooth make Thelp and easy to travel on?



"Race you to the stop sign!" your friend shouts. Your bicycle tires hum as you whiz down the street, pedaling hard. Suddenly you begin to slow down. Your pedals are spinning, but you aren't going anywhere. Oh, no! The chain has come off your bike and you've lost your "pedal power."

Pedal power is what makes a bike go, isn't it? If your pedals aren't connected to your wheels, spinning them won't get you

The

anywhere. It's the same way with words without actions. Do you like to talk about being kind and helpful?

But when she passes out a plate of your favorite cookies, you make sure to get the biggest one. Hmm. I think you're just spinning your pedals. If you don't do what you say, there's no power to your words. And you don't get anywhere.

"I'm not selfish," you tell Grandma.

God is looking for people who will take action. People

who mean what they say and do it, too. He's not interested in children who know a lot of good things, but boys and girls who are honest and won't tell lies. Sons that obey their parents, not those that just say they will. Daughters who are kind and good, even when Mom isn't watching. It doesn't matter if they talk well or look good, if they

are smart or slow, English, Kenyan, or Japanese. children of God's kingdom are those that really love

Jesus and do what He says.

Do you want to be one? Maybe you obey your parents (when you feel like it), keep your temper (half the time), and are kind to everyone (except the mean boy across the street). You try to do better, but you never seem to make progress. That's because you need to fix the power problem first. Just like your dad needs to fix the chain on your bike

so it can work again, Jesus needs to fix the problems in your heart so that you can do the right things. He has power that can get you moving and on your way to heaven.

Enough talking. Are you ready for some action?

\teps "Crumbs! This stupid game is broken," Darrell said, throwing down the controller of his video game. "I'm going to see what's to eat."

IG NSS

"Ah, that's no fun. Watch this!" said Darrell, taking over the remote. He shot the plane up high over the house

"Don't get too high," Joseph said, looking worried. "Dad said to keep it

Mom was laughing

with her party friends, so Darrell managed to slip into the kitchen without being seen. He was fishing in a Cheeto bag when she appeared, carrying a tray of empty glasses. "I told you to stay out of here!" she hissed.

Darrell popped the Cheetos into his mouth and opened the fridge. "I'm thirsty," he growled, grabbing a Pepsi.

"That's it!" Mom said, jerking him by the arm. "Now go outside and keep out of my sight!"

"Kicked out again," Darrell muttered as the door slammed behind him.

But he didn't really care. Now he could spend the afternoon however he liked.

"Hev, Darrell, look at this!" Joseph called from

across the street.

Darrell looked up just in time to see a small glider sail toward him. He ducked his head, but instead into the grass, the plane turned and headed

back toward the darker-skinned boy. "Oh, sweet! It has a remote!" Darrell dashed across the street to stand beside his friend. "Let me drive 'm."

of diving

"I don't know," Joseph said, slowly. "It's kinda hard to turn and Dad said to keep it above the street "

low."

"So he's your Big Boss, eh?" Darrell sneered, sending the plane in a wide circle. "Dad this and dad that. I guess I can think for myself."

"My Dad isn't a big boss. He's my friend," Joseph said confidently. "He's teaching me how to fly the glider so I won't crash it. We're going to take it over to Elmer's Bluff this evening."

Darrell didn't answer. His eyes were on the little red and white plane. "Watch out,

> or I'll bomb you!" he hollered, as he pulled it down in a dive that skimmed over the car next door and up over a tall fence. The plane disappeared in the neighbor's back yard.

"Hey, what'd you do that for?" Joseph shouted.

"What's the fuss?" Darrell was annoyed. "Just climb over and get it."

Joseph shook his head. "My dad told me to stay off the fence. There is a big dog in there."

"That's dumb," Darrell said. "You're just chicken!

The dog isn't around." Darrell stuffed the controls in his pocket and scrambled up the chain links like a cat. He knew how to take care of himself without any old daddy to tell him what to do.

"See?" Darrell said, picking up the glider. "It's not hurt a bit. I'm going to fly it to the old semi by the empty lot."

"No, you can't!" Joseph said. "We have

to stay in front of the house. My dad said so."

"He's not my boss, so I don't care," Darrell replied.

Joseph turned and ran off to the house. "Squealer," Darrell muttered. "If his old daddy tries to make me do anything, he'll be sorry." He flew the glider over the fence and landed it across the street..

Darrell was stuffing the controls back into his pocket when he heard a door slam. Loud barks filled the air

as a huge brown dog bounded towards him.

"Get out of my yard, you rascal!" a lady shrieked, and Darrell didn't have too much trouble obeying. With a snarling dog at his heels, he launched himself over the fence in record speed.

"You Okay?"

Darrell looked up from his crash landing

to see a tall dark-haired man standing over him. Joseph's dad.

"I'm fine," Darrell muttered, scrambling to his feet. His knees hurt and his hands stung, but Darrell wasn't going to admit that. He eyed the man warily.

"Joseph says you take my air-o-plane," the man said, crossing his arms.

"What airplane?" Darrell asked, spreading his hands. He glanced at the smaller boy standing beside his father, and glared at him. Joseph's dark eyes gleamed back.

"My son not lie to me," the man said, and his deep voice reminded Darrell of the cop that had given Mom a ticket for speeding. "Where you put it?"



Darrell rolled his eyes and looked around in mock surprise. "Put it? Man, those airo-planes are too big to hide!"

Joseph's dad didn't say a word, but the look in his face made Darrell feel really stupid. Like the way his cat Micky looked when he jumped into the hedge and missed the bird. He would have to think up a story quick to save face. Joseph's frown gave Darrell an idea.

"Oh, I know!" he shouted, rather too loudly. "You must mean that little glider Joe was

playing with!" Darrell slapped his leg, and pointed across the street. "He left it over at my house!"

Joseph was only too glad to run and fetch it, but his dad was not so easily distracted. "The controls in you pocket," the man said. "Give it to me." Darrell's heart beat fast. He was caught.



"Uh...
yeah, Joseph
let me have it,"
he mumbled,
pulling the
remote from
his pocket.
"You want it?"
Darrell tried to
smile.

"Yes,"
the man said,
and the look
in his eyes
made Darrell
squirm. "You
don't take.
You ask me.
Okay?" Dar-

rell looked away. "Stupid glider," he muttered, as Joseph came running up. "Why would *I* want it?"

He was turning to go when a heavy hand

was laid on his shoulder. A quiet voice said,

"No okay, no go."
Darrell thought of running. The strength in that hand made him change his mind.

He could kick and bite, but that might get him in more trouble.

Darrell felt like a fly caught in a spider's web. The more he wiggled, the tighter grew the grip on his arm.

"You going to obey my dad? Just say you will." Joseph said, but Darrell wasn't listening.

"Let me go!" he whimpered. "I didn't hurt nobody! Let me go!"

Joseph's dad squatted down and took Darrell by both arms. "Look at me." The commanding voice was quiet, but Darrell

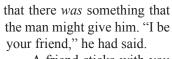
squeezed his eyes shut. He used that trick on his mom when she wanted to bawl him out.

Nothing happened. Finally Darrell glanced up. Joseph's dad didn't even look angry! "I

not hurt you. You listen, and I be your friend," he said with a smile. "You say, 'Okay,' now?"

Darrell pressed his lips together and studied his captor's face. It was brown and strong, with a friendly smile under those piercing black eyes. One thing for certain, Joseph's dad expected an answer.

If there was something Darrell had never done, it was to give up something he wanted. If he gave up his will to Joseph's dad he wasn't going to get anything. Nothing? Deep down inside Darrell realized



A friend sticks with you in trouble. A friend believes in you and watches out for you. Darrell didn't have any real friends. He was a bully and a show-off, and the guys he ran around with knew it. Now here was someone tougher than him. Someone

Darrell couldn't trick or cheat. Would this big man really be his friend?

"I – I'm sorry I took the glider," he said at last, looking down. Blood was oozing from a scrape on his knee and a sniffle suddenly got in his nose. He had never felt so small and helpless before.

Joseph's dad let go of his arms and stood up. "All right," he said. "Let's shake."

Darrell looked up, surprised. Was Joseph's dad really holding out his hand to him, the street bully? The brown fingers were strong, but the grip on his hand was a kind one. Darrell felt the warm squeeze all the way down to the cold empty place inside, and he managed a wobbly smile.

Joseph's dad must have noticed his scrapes then. "We fix you up at the house," he said, leading the way. "Then maybe you like to come with Joseph and me on my truck?"

Darrell grinned.
"In the semi by the empty lot? That would be great!"

He had made peace with the "Big Boss" and had found a real friend



Does MIGHT Make RIGHT?

Think About It: True Authority

"I'm my own boss." That was Darrell's attitude in the beginning of the story, wasn't it? What is *your* "boss" or authority? Maybe you like to fit in with your friends. "Everybody else is doing it," you might say. Or maybe your rule is to do what "feels good" and is fun. Or you want lots of "nice things" and so you value money most. Maybe, like Darrell, you believe that "might makes right." My parents boss me around because they are bigger than me, you think. But when I'm BIG enough, no one is going to tell me what to do!

Friends. Good feelings. Money. Power. These are the things that most people want in life. But do they really bring security and happiness? Let's think about the story again. At first, Darrell's way looked like it might work. He pushed for what he wanted, ignored what others said, laughed at the rules, and showed off. When he got in trouble, he told lies. He thought the stronger and smarter people could always get their own way. But then he met someone stronger and smarter than he was.

Joseph's dad was different. He was strong, but he didn't push. He was smart, but he wasn't selfish. He expected his son to obey and tell the truth. And he was ready to help when Joseph had trouble. He was a kind man that lived by what was *right*. This was a different kind of authority than Darrell knew. It was based on trust and respect. Darrell couldn't push his way around; he had to submit to something that was bigger than him. And it wasn't just Joseph's dad. It was the law of love, where *right* is might and not the other way around.

Just like Darrell had to reckon with Joseph's dad, we all have to face God someday. And He's not going to let you get away with wrong either. Excuses and lies won't get by. God's authority doesn't bend to what your friends think or what you feel like. His way is truth – what is really so. And even though He is far stronger and smarter than everyone in the whole world put together, God loves you. What He wants is for you to give up your big ideas and obey Him. He's the Big Boss, alright, but He wants to be your Friend.

Do you know God's love and care? Or, are you like Darrell, pushing for your own way, angry and afraid? Be still a moment. Feel His grip on your heart, His quiet voice saying, "Look at Me." Look up at His power and His goodness. Don't continue to rebel and hold to your own way. Oh, will you admit that **you** are *wrong* – that **God's way** is *right*? Will you believe in His love for you and give up to God?

Let Me Tell You...

The Tale of a Sparrow

It all started one day when Katie came over to do some things with Miss Laura. When she went outside she saw a little birdhouse and she said, "I wonder if there are any birds in there?"

"I don't think so, but let's check," said Miss Laura.

They got the ladder and Katie said, "There are five baby sparrows in the nest!" They were pink and had fat bulgy tummies. You could see their insides. They had no feathers.

It was almost two weeks later before Katie came back to visit. She looked in the birdhouse again and saw three baby birds. They had feathers and were really cute and fuzzy.

Katie said, "I want to tame one."

Miss Laura said, "It is going to be hard to tame a baby bird, but you can try."

Katie and Miss Laura found an old birdhouse and cleaned it out. They put some straw and feathers into the house and then they put a baby bird in it. One of the little sparrows got away.

Then Katie said, "Are there any more in there?" She lifted up the old nest and found one baby sparrow left. She put it in with the other baby and said, "We better get some food

for them. They are probably very hungry." But that night they were too spooked to eat.

The next day Katie said, "I want to take the baby birds to show my best friend, Hannah." They took the birdhouse to the Brawley Farms (where her friend was having horse riding lessons). On the way there Katie lost one of the birds in the truck. "Oh, no!" she said. "I can't find it and I don't want it to get hurt." They looked for it, but they couldn't find it.

Katie set the birdhouse (with the other sparrow in it) outside by the door of the stables. She said, "I'll show it to my friend after her lessons." But when they came back, the box was

open and the nest was torn apart. Katie thought that the dog had gotten her last little bird. She felt very, very sad.

As they were driving to her aunt's house, Katie thought she would never find the other baby bird. Now she didn't have any birds left to tame! "Maybe we should pray that we would be able to find our baby bird in the truck," she said.

"We will pray that God will help us find it if He wants us to," said Miss Laura. "And we'll pray that He will keep it safe."

When they arrived at Aunt Coquetta's house, they started looking again. They looked under the passenger's seat. No bird. When they looked under the driver's seat, Miss Laura said, "I found him!"

Katie said, "You did?"

Miss Laura said, "Yes, I did. And pray that we can get him out safely." So that is what Katie did.

Soon they got the bird out safe and sound! They thanked God for helping them find him and for getting him out safely. Katie put the baby bird inside the nest and took it in to show her aunt.

Aunt Coquetta said, "What is his name?"

Katie said, "His name is Special because he went through a lot of hard things and he lived through all of it."



Katie realized that even though something sad can happen, God can still help us and He wants to show us that He loves us. He loves us even more than many sparrows.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and

not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:6-7

A True Story, by Katie Lawson (almost 10)

He Loves Me, Too!



Dear Reader,

Are you hungry? For a pleasure snack, or for something that will really feed your soul? We pray that this issue will be a meal worth chewing on, and that it may refresh and strengthen those that desire to live by the Word of God. Thank you for your patience. We are sorry it is late.

Do you have any questions or concerns about topics that we've addressed? Or perhaps you have something to share? We would be very happy to learn how the Lord has been working in your life. **Please write!**

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In the King's service, The Editors

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How many sparrows can you find? There should be 88, including this one:



SEND TO: