

Forgiveness Flour



When I went to the door, at the whisper of knocking, I saw Simeon Gantner's daughter, Kathleen, standing there, in her shawl and her shame, sent to ask "Forgiveness Flour" for her bread. "Forgiveness Flour," we call it in our corner. If one has erred, one is sent to ask for flour of his neighbors. If they loan it to him, that means he can stay, but if they refuse, he had best take himself off. I looked at Kathleen . . .

What a jewel of a daughter, though not much like her father, more's the pity. "I'll give you flour," I said, and went to measure it. Measuring was the rub. If I gave too much, neighbors would think I made sin easy, but if I gave too little, they would label me "close." While I stood measuring,

Joel, my husband came in from the mill, a great bag of flour on his shoulder, and seeing her there, shrinking in the doorway, he tossed the bag at her feet. "Here, take all of it." And so she had flour for many loaves, while I stood measuring.

~ Marguerite Stewart



15

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