

Jane's Thought Garment

SIX YEAR OLD JANE'S VOICE was shrill with anger. She screamed and tears came into her eyes. Her baby brother had taken the pretty little slippers from her very best doll, and he was getting them dirty; trying to put his feet into them. Her mother hurried into the room, and seeing the trouble picked up Jane's little brother.

"Mother, he's ruined them," said Jane between sobs. "My best doll's slippers, and now they're all spoiled. He's mean. I hate him!" She stamped her feet as she looked at her small brother, and he, too, began to sob, frightened by her actions.

Mother sat down on the bed, and handing little brother a cracker, spoke softly. "Jane, I'm sorry he took the slippers, but he hasn't hurt them too much. It's wrong for you to say the things you did"

The little brother, happy with the cracker, let mother take the tiny slippers off the tip of his foot. He watched quietly while Mother carefully wiped the grimy finger marks off the little white slippers; but Jane still sobbed. "But Mother, see, he's torn them. Now, my doll won't look pretty."

Mother looked at her little daughter. "Dear Jane, you shouldn't let yourself become angry and excited. You make very ugly thought patterns when you do. They are like little arrows falling all around which hurt others, and in turn come back to hurt you. You know that, for I have taught you about it."

"But I can't help it, Mother. It hurts to have my doll spoiled. It's mine, and I want it pretty," said Jane resentfully.

Mother nodded. "I know you want it kept pretty, dear, but your brother is too little to understand. He didn't mean any harm. Besides, the slipper isn't

spoiled. I can mend it, and they are both cleaned nicely. There—see?"

Jane looked doubtfully at the slippers and then wiped the tears from her eyes.

Mother continued. "You see, Jane, it is easier to repair the physical damage done than it is to repair the damage you have done with your angry thoughts."

"But, Mother," Jane protested, "everyone gets angry and says things. I didn't mean I...I hated my brother, really. I just said that." The little girl was beginning to look repentant.

Her Mother regarded her gravely.

"Yes, dear, that's the whole trouble. People do say things, and then, not really meaning them, think their words are forgotten and don't amount to anything. They don't realize that our words make patterns around us. When the words are angry ones and mean ugly things the patterns are ugly, too. These patterns aren't just wiped out as soon as our anger is gone. They linger and fasten onto us. They become easier to repeat, and then if not stopped they become a part of our character. Worse, these patterns affect other people. They encourage them to do mean things, and make them unhappy. It is wrong to create ugliness, when we should make patterns of beauty and happiness."

Jane looked at her mother apologetically. "I'm sorry, Mother, truly I am. I'll try to make better thought-patterns—beautiful ones!"

"I'm sure you will, dear," said Mother, giving, her little daughter, a quick hug.

That night after Jane went to bed she had a dream which helped her to remember this promise. In her dream she saw a small angel just her size.

The little angel wore a long white robe and sat on a chair. In her hand the angel had a garment. It was a dress and the angel was sewing designs on it. As she sewed many little things buzzed around her.

Some of the things were of a beautiful shape and color, but others looked more like monstrous insects. They were horrible and ugly to look at. From time to time the angel reached out and chose one from the swirling swarm about her. Sometimes she picked a lovely creature and when she sewed that on the dress it looked very beautiful. However, at other times she chose one of the ugly looking insect-things and these she sewed into place alongside the beautiful patterns already on the dress.

In her dream Jane cried out every time she saw

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an ugly pattern sewed, on the dress.

“You’re spoiling the dress putting those horrible things right with those beautiful designs,” she said to the angel.

To her surprise the angel nodded and replied, “Yes, and isn’t it a shame to spoil a lovely dress with such horrible designs?”

“Yes, it is,” quickly agreed Jane. “Why do you pick them out to put on the dress? Why don’t you just sew the beautiful patterns on the dress?”

The angel smiled sweetly and said, “That is what I’d like to do. It would be very pleasant work if there were only beautiful patterns to sew onto this dress, but you see, I have to sew on the patterns that are made for the garment.”

“But who makes you take the ugly ones?” Jane eagerly inquired.

Again the angel smiled, but this time rather sadly as she replied, “You do, Jane. These are your thoughts. This garment is a symbol of your soul. When you think beautiful, loving thoughts, then I have lovely patterns to work with. When you are angry, or impatient, or say hurtful things, and perhaps act thoughtlessly and selfishly, then one of these ugly patterns form, and it has to be put into the garment.”

Jane trembled. She was frightened at the ugliness of the swarm and of the number of monstrous designs spoiling the beautiful dress the angel sewed on. She felt very unhappy about it all.

“Can’t I ever get rid of the ugly ones,” she asked slowly.

The angel’s smile was very bright. “Oh yes, indeed, dear Jane. You can learn always to control your thoughts and your emotions so that they will make beautiful patterns and then I can take out these ugly designs and sew in the new and beautiful ones.”

“And then may I have the beautiful dress to wear as my very own?” Jane asked eagerly.

The angel nodded, “You have it already. It is

your thought garment. You wear it through life, if you only realized it. And when you go to the heaven world after your life here on earth is completed it goes with you, and that which is good and fine in it becomes a part of the real you—your Spirit.”

Suddenly, Jane awoke, the dream still vivid in her memory. How beautiful the angel had been and how shining some of the thought patterns on the garment! She thought it all over and decided to try hard in the future to control her thoughts.

When she felt cross or selfish, or wanted to become angry, she remembered the angel sewing on the thought garment and immediately tried to think good thoughts. She tried to be unselfish, too, and patient. Sometimes she failed, but she kept trying, for Mother had told her, “There is no failure except in ceasing to try.” As time went on it became easier and easier for her to think good thoughts, and she found herself much happier because of it. The little angel is very happy too, because Jane’s thought garment is growing more beautiful all the time.

Now, dear reader, what about *your* thought garment? Is it lovely to look at, and do you suppose the angel is happy when she works on it? □

—D. D. Arroyo