

## Chapter III

### Trouble Brews

"Squeaky, come here," shouted Posey, "I have an idea."

Squeaky sauntered in to where Posey stood beside the steam pipe and sighed, "Hurry and tell me the idea. It's the first one I have known you to have."

Posey ignored Squeaky's sarcasm and instructed, "Let's stand here in front of the steam pipe and catch Grandpa when he comes skidding in. That way he won't hurt himself."

"I have a better idea," said Squeaky. "Why don't we just poison that old cat so that he won't chase anybody anymore."

Reluctantly, Squeaky took up his post by the steam pipe along side Posey and prepared to put out his arms as a cushion for Grandpa.

An eternity seemed to go by, with no sound or sight of anyone arriving. Just as Squeaky turned to Posey to tell her he was going to go play with a lint ball, Grandpa strolled leisurely through the mouse hole with his head held high and his white whiskers waving with grandeur.

"Grandpa!" shouted Squeaky and Posey together. "Where's Herbert?"

"Only God knows," replied Grandpa, with a gleam in his eye.

Squeaky and Posey helped Grandpa to his chair and stood gazing at him in amazement.

"Sit down, sit down," intoned their grandfather. "I have a church service story to tell."

"Oh good," shouted Squeaky. "I hope it is as good as the last one."

"If you don't take the springs out of your hind legs and be quiet, we will never know," sniffed Posey.

"Well," continued Grandpa, "The singing was inspiring. One of Sis. Verde's chickens had died, but she led the singing well, in spite of it.

"Then came prayer requests. Sis. Verde, wiping tears from her eyes, requested prayer that none of her other chickens would get sick. Then there was a request for a sore bunion and one for arthritis. After that, Sis. Sloan stood to her feet at the front bench, from which Bro. Joe and several of the children were conspicuously absent, and said, 'Please,

please pray for Susie. She is very ill this morning.'

"Everyone felt the weight of her words and feelings, and prayer was more subdued than usual. Bro. Loudermilk prayed that God would work a miracle for Susie and that His will might be done.

"After that, Bro. Loudermilk moved to the pulpit and delivered the sermon. He preached from Matt. 15:2, where the Pharisees questioned Jesus about why His disciples didn't wash their hands before they ate. Bro. Loudermilk spoke with conviction on how salvation is more than having clean hands, but having a clean heart.

"After he sat down, Sis. Nettie stood up and said she enjoyed the sermon, but..."

"She always has a 'but' doesn't she?" interrupted Squeaky, whose query was more of a statement than a question.

Posey rarely saw things the same as her brother, but this statement caused her to nod in agreement. "It isn't right for Sis. Nettie to always take away from what is said with her own ideas!" She exclaimed.

"What she said," Grandpa continued, "was that her grandma often quoted the scripture which says cleanliness is next to godliness, and she felt it would have only been decent for the disciples to wash their hands before eating. She planned to always do it, had taught her children to do it, and planned to teach her grandchildren to do it.

"With a wry grin, Bro. Buddy had responded, 'Cleanliness is next to godliness is not scripture.'

"Sis. Nettie turned and gazed at Bro. Buddy. Since no scripture reference came to her mind, she just stared.

"Bro. Buddy wasn't lacking for words. He said, 'In a battle of wits, you are unarmed.'

"With a red face Sis. Nettie stammered, 'I have wits!' and her glare intensified.

"Bro. Buddy replied, 'A fish doesn't know he's wet and a lunatic doesn't know he's crazy.'

"Sis. Nettie said, 'I have had enough!' Gathering her pretty pink print dress about her, she marched down the aisle and out the door with her head held high."

"Wow!" exclaimed Squeaky, rubbing his front paws together in excitement. "Did she come back?"

"No," said Grandpa with sadness in his voice, "She walked right out

the door, got in her car and drove off."

"What happened after she left?" gasped Posey.

"Well, Bro. Loudermilk got up and told the congregation they needed to pray for each other, and themselves. Then he dismissed with prayer."

Squeaky sat back on his hind legs, not knowing for sure what to say or think. He was anxious to know what would happen next Sunday, but his instinct warned him the situation was too serious to express much excitement.