

mander. He respected him for his fairness, good judgment, and quick thinking. He loved him for his constant concern for the men who served under him. No man was too insignificant, no outpost too remote or dangerously situated for the General to give his personal attention when necessary. In fact, Jim often gently chided him for his complete disregard for his own safety. There were many battalion and regimental commanders who became grey-haired faster than nature had intended because of General Raymond's frequent, unannounced visits to the front lines.

Four months after their arrival, the first snow fell on the Korean hills; and, when the snow subsided, the air became biting and bitterly cold. The General's visits to front-line areas became more frequent, almost daily, as the cold caused increased suffering to his men. The cold would have been bad enough, but the Reds kept up an almost continual harassment and probing attack on the front.

One morning Jim and the General were heading for their jeep, after making a visit to a company on the line, when a stray sniper's bullet hit the General in the back. As he fell to the ground, Jim caught him in his arms; he knew the General's wound was serious. In a few minutes, without uttering a word, General Raymond died.

As the General's aide, Jim was chosen to accompany the body on its long trip home. Now he stood in Arlington Cemetery looking down at the freshly packed grave, and the tears came unhindered. Jim's grief was as deep as when he had lost his own father years ago, because this man had become like a second father to him. He looked at the plain white cross and read its inscription:

Major General Samuel Raymond
United States Army
Born 1895—Died 1951 in Korea

The funeral procession had moved on, and Jim turned to leave when his eyes caught the inscription of a second cross:

2nd Lt. Samuel Raymond, Jr.
United States Army
Born 1920—Died 1944 in Germany

The Little Blue Vase

Shirley Jo Waltz

THE little blue vase sat firmly on one end of the mantel. How long she had sat there, she wasn't quite sure. It's hard for a vase to count time, you know. But she did remember sitting once long ago on a counter among other pieces of china. And right next to her stood another blue vase just like herself. Then one day

they were packed away together in a square white cardboard box with crinkly tissue paper stuffed in around them. It wasn't at all pleasant.

After being in this smothered state for several days, somebody removed the lid to the box and lifted them out. The welcome light struck their hard enameled surfaces and reflected the blue in rays of color. A soft slender hand held the two up together.

"Oh, aren't they splendid, John? Aren't they just absolutely splendid?"

"They are beautiful. Thank you so much, Aunt Julie."

"All of our wedding gifts have been wonderful. I can hardly wait to arrange them in our new house!"

And once more the two vases were laid side by side in the white box where it was very, very stuffy. However, soon they were taken out again by the same soft slender hand. The little blue vase found herself looking into the crystal-blue eyes of a lovely young woman. Her skin was a beautiful tan, and her hair was only a shade lighter and very soft looking.

"Look, John. I don't like them on the end tables, do you? I think they are much better on the mantel. What do you think?"

"Mmmm, yes, they are much better on the mantel."

"John, you aren't even looking!"

And the little blue vase settled down in her place on the right end of the mantel. She was very happy. The room was a pleasant one, with light beige walls, white billowing curtains, and blue and rose furniture. There were sharp dark blue and white accents here and there for contrast. In the morning when the sun yawned in the two broad front windows, the room was gay and bright. On cold winter nights when Laura and John sat before the crackling, dancing flame, the room glowed with pleasant soft shades of color. The little blue vase was so happy that she almost cracked her enamel. In fact sometimes she turned just enough to wink at her mate on the other end of the mantel. Her mate never winked back, but that didn't bother the little blue vase. She sighed happily, and the blue glowed through more beautifully than ever. She watched the days come and go. Soft, peaceful, lazy days; exciting bright days; and snowy, sparkly days. And twice a week, Laura lifted the little blue vase, dusted, and then put her back in her spot.

But the most exciting day for the little blue vase was the one when Laura and John brought home a beautiful pink little baby. Now the little house was really alive. The little vase heard strange new noises and saw strange new things.

And now there were three sitting before the fire. The little blue vase was so proud and so happy that one day she toppled right off the edge of the mantel! When Laura picked her up, she saw the

little chip on one side, but she only smiled, and placed the chipped side next to the wall.

But all of the happiness ended one day when the baby died. There was no more laughter in the little house. And not long after, Laura pulled all the blinds; the doors were locked; and the little house was void of life. Week after week, dust settled on the little blue vase, and the blinds barred the sunlight from the room. The little blue vase no longer glowed or shone. She was very unhappy and sad. What had happened to her room and her family? Layer after layer of dust settled on the room. At night everything looked like blue-black velvet. In the daytime, it looked a dull grayish gold. Many times, the little blue vase was tempted to throw herself off the mantel and shatter herself to bits. But she only consoled herself with her memories of the happier days and dreams of days to come.

Finally one day, she heard a key turn in the lock and saw Laura's slim figure step in. Laura stood in the hall looking at the room with almost strange eyes. Her face was whiter and thinner than it had been, and her lips were drawn tightly together. And as the little blue vase stared at her, she saw John come in and silently stand beside her.

"Well, John, I suppose we might as well start dividing the furniture. I'd like to get this over as quickly as possible. Let's see now. You can have the two end tables and the gold floor lamp. I would like to keep the two table lamps with the blue shades. Is that satisfactory with you?"

Receiving no answer, she went on. "Well, if you want the blue over-stuffed chair, I would like to have the rose-colored tilt-back chair. How's that?"

John leaned against the mantel watching the smoke from his pipe wind around the little blue vase, and he seemed to see days of the past mirrored in the shiny, glazed surface. He turned and gazed at the small, tired figure which looked so alone. He walked slowly over and touched Laura on the shoulder. She closed her eyes and her entire body shook.

"You know, Laura. I just can't seem to picture the two blue vases divided. One would be only half as radiant without the other. They just seem to belong together, Laura."

The next evening, the dust was all cleared away, and the room glowed in a soft, pastel way. The firelight cast soft shadows here and there, and sent out a warmth which penetrated even the cold, stony surface of the little blue vase. She gave a little shiver of delight and glanced at her mate on the other end of the mantel. And much to her surprise, he winked!