MORMON SAGA

Maurine Whipple

Editor's Note:
Maurine Whipple wrote this previously unpublished story of blind, unrelenting faith in the 1920s, perhaps for a course at the University of Utah. It probably grew out of the countless hours a young Whipple spent listening to "women's talk," the telling and retelling of stories of travail, birth, illness, and faith that were largely separate from the male world. In a 1991 interview, Whipple told her biographer Veda Hale the following:

> In St. George, as I suppose in other towns, too, there wasn't much to do except visit. There were all those quiltings where women wore down their reticence and finally spilled out intimate things. There were long summer evenings where people walked and stopped at someone's yard to be invited to visit on the porch. There were Relief Society visiting teachers who stayed and stayed and talked about old family stories, some in the category of folklore. And I listened—little miss big-ears.
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> My father scoffed at women's talk, claiming that women believed everything. He made fun of Momma, of her family and friends. . . . He was always questioning things. He often pointed out how gullible some people were about believing Brigham Young saying not to trust doctors, but to trust the priesthood. And there were people in our community who were that narrow, who didn't believe in doctors. There are always those kinds of zealots. I could see both sides, but most of the time felt doctors should have been consulted.

Recently published in Veda Hale, Andrew Hall, and Lynne Larson, eds., *A Craving for Beauty: The Collected Writings of Maurine Whipple* (Salt Lake City: By Common Consent Press, 2020).

The character Cinda can be seen as an early version of two of the sister wives in her 1941 novel *The Giant Joshua*. Like Clory, Cinda is young, high-spirited, and sporting a red sunbonnet, and the childbirth scene resembles Willie's experience in the novel.

Dust clogged my nose and the strong smell of horses, the clump, clump of their hoofs regular-like and slow, the heavy creak of the wheels, and over and above everything else, like sad heartbeats, the solemn thud, thud of the muffled drums. A sort of sigh went over all the multitude, and a woman sobbed out loud once. But mostly folks were quiet. A hush and a fear like the day of doom. You didn't dare look, and yet it was like something glued your eyes toward that wagon passing, the stars and stripes with the black crepe edgings fluttering clean to the wheels.

Cinda shivered and drew herself up close to me and took hold of my arm. Sudden-like I was all over goose pimples. It wouldn't have surprised me none for the heavens to open up and God's hand come forth and smite every living thing off this fair land in pay for the precious blood of our Prophet, spilled on it yesterday.

Somehow when the crowd broke and we all began to move, tight-packed like we was, toward that home where Joseph's wife waited with her tears, a man couldn't find no bit of word to say to the neighbor trudging beside him. He didn't even dare look. It was like if he did, he'd see his thought in his neighbor's eyes, too, and then his thought might be stronger than him. But just the same, a man fingered the gun the state had ordered him to give up and itched more than ever to break loose just once and give the dirty mobocrats hell.

Once out of that house of grief and walking down the street, I couldn't help thinking how strange the cool stars should be the same as ever and the breeze from the river as fresh. When we was all lost. When God's chosen people was deserted and lost.

Cinda said in a scared little voice, "Do you reckon his murderers will ever get caught?"

"They'll go just so long," growled Brother Clawson, who was stepping along beside us with his head down, "just so long as the Lord suffers them!"

"But now he's gone," says I, "and we be deserted—"

"At the mercy of the mobocrats," said Brother Clawson, low.

"But won't they be satisfied with Joseph? Won't they leave us alone now?" cries Cinda, trembling.

Brother Clawson ain't got much patience with women folk. "Didn't you read the note I prepared for Missouri mobbers, Sister Cinda? If your husband ain't got a gun, he'd better get one quick. Mark my words, we'll be driven out of Nauvoo just like we was out of Kirtland and Jackson County. I reckon Governor Ford knows about Mormon extermination orders same as the others."

Even after we got inside our own home, Cinda didn't say nothing. She'd fixed for me the supper I liked best, and the warm, spicy steam was oozing up from the baked beans. But I set there in our cozy kitchen and couldn't swallow past the lump in my throat. I knew what Cinda was thinking, and I felt worse to see her quiet than sputtering. You see, Cinda's like her red hair—pretty as a picture but stormy as all get-out.

I sat and watched her go through all the rooms of our new house, feeling every object from the china shepherdess on the mantle to the crocheted fixings on the chair backs. She took down every dish in the cupboard and wiped it with a towel gentle-like, the way you'd wipe the face of a child. I knew she was fearing she'd have to leave this home, too, and I rebuked her for thinking of material things when the Prophet lay dead. But at that she run and throwed herself into my arms and cried like her heart would bust.

You see, Cinda was big with child when we first got to Nauvoo. I was seeing the old, lopsided, dirt-covered, one-room log cabin I had to move her into. The roof leaked mud onto the bedclothes where Cinda lay. You'd mire up to your knees in mud in the yard. And the mud stunk.

All our neighbors was poor Saints fled from Missouri mobocrats. I was seeing tents made out of ragged quilts pitched in the mud. The cold

and the hunger. Cinda giving away all our store of dried fruit. A poor sister huddled under a torn kiverlid,[1] fighting off a mosquito sounding in her ears like a buzz saw and hearing the death wagons slush through the mud past her door.

I was remembering a man we got to know who'd had his arm torn off by a Gentile rifle ball at Haun's Mill, and with blood spurting from the stump had been throwed on top the other wounded and dead in a well where he laid and seen the fiends drag out his own little boy hiding behind the forge.

"I guess he won't care. Them Mormon bastards ain't got much feeling," a mobber says. "Anyways, I'd just as soon shoot a Mormon as a dog!"

I was seeing Cinda's face when the man was telling us.

There was another man we got to know, too. He was a doctor. He named as how when he'd been plowing one day back East, the Lord advised him to take up doctoring, and from that time forth, he'd gone about healing the sick. I thought in my mind he was first-rate, too, using sensible cures like marshmallow for bed-wetting and cayenne pepper for thinning the blood. When Cinda's time came, she got this feller to physic her. He give her lobelia to relax her, but when the baby come it was dead. I knew it was because Cinda hadn't had enough victuals.

Seemed like Cinda couldn't stop flooding. The doctor give her cayenne and slippery elm tea, but she kept on flooding. I got scared and rushed out to get an elder to come and help me lay on hands. I made out to get the Prophet himself for Cinda; but before he'd administer, he rebuked us for being so weak in the faith as to have a doctor in. You never heard such rebuking! He says to "trust in God when sick and not in an arm of flesh, to live by faith and not by medicine."[2] But he blessed

1. A coverlet or comforter.

2. *History of the Church*, 4:414. From a sermon given September 5, 1841. Joseph Smith and many early Mormons believed in the efficacy of blessings supplemented by Thomsonian medicine, with its focus on herbal remedies. They tended to be distrustful of orthodox medical practices, which at the time were

Cinda she'd get well—"In the name of Jesus Christ, arise and be made whole!"—and he promised us both if we lived our religion and had a strong testimony of the gospel, we'd have posterity as numerous as the sands of the sea. Posterity enough to raise us up to the highest glory hereafter.

You see, that's why now—Joseph telling us like that, and it taking us three years for Cinda to get in the family way again, and then just when we had the drains in so the damp and sickness left the city, and a flour mill and a sawmill and a college and stores and the temple started, and the streets so wide, and Cinda's home with four fireplaces even better'n the other new homes, and then Cinda's babe born so easy-like—a right biddable little chap—just when we was fixing for some happiness, the boy's dead with the green sickness.[3]

As I says, after it took us three years to get Cinda in the family way and then when the boy was ailing, we *did* obey the Prophet and didn't get no doctor but called in Brother Clawson and tried laying on of hands, why it didn't do no good, after all. Me and Cinda's faith hadn't rusted none, neither. But, you see, Cinda knew the doctor to cure lots of other babies of the green sickness.

It ain't I been upholding Cinda for the way she's been thinking and speaking since then. And many's the time I told her about apostates being give over to the buffetings of Satan. But seems like Cinda's tears touch my tender spot. Sometimes I was afraid God might punish me for the way I loved her—almost more than I loved him.

For weeks after Joseph's death seemed like I was being torn into two parts, and one part was marked Cinda and I loved every hair on her red head, but the other part was marked the gospel, and for *that* I'd lay me down and die.

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dominated by dangerously "heroic" remedies that often did more damage than good. Lester E. Bush, Jr., *Health and Medicine Among the Latter-Day Saints: Science, Sense, and Scripture* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 92–93.

3. Hypochromic anemia.

I tried to work the same as usual, but somehow the stone I was cutting didn't seem like part of the temple of God no more, but only just a stone. Nothing was the same in the whole city. Folks gathered on street corners instead of tending to their jobs. But talk of Whittling Deacons and Danites and Destroying Angels always bumped up against the counsel in the note, "Brethren, in the name of the Lord, *be still*." So having got no way to get rid of our bile and fear, we just stewed up tight with it inside till the whole of the City of Joseph was like a hissing pot ready to boil over.

In August Brother Brigham and most of the Twelve come home, and our worried hearts felt to rejoice for the first time. They had been in the East campaigning for Joseph to be president of the United States, but now they had to come home and find us a new prophet.

Early in the morning on August 8, as soon as chores and dishes was done, folks from all over took their way to the temple grove. There was a platform under the trees, and the benches stretched away out in front of it. But by ten o'clock all the room was used up, and you couldn't see the temple nearby nor the city spreading out down in the flats below for a tight-packed wall of standing men and women.

A wind sprung up from nowhere and shook the huge old trees till they rocked and groaned and whirled up dirt with bits of trash chasing around in the whirlings and stinging your eyes. Maybe a cinder from a forgotten picnic fire when Mormons had a right to be happy same as other folks.

Cinda held onto her bonnet and shawl, and I clutched my hat in both hands while that wicked wind was tearing my hair from my scalp. Like a lonesome wolf, that moaning wind seemed to be asking the questions in all our hearts: Could we finish the temple? What about Nauvoo the beautiful? Who would lead God's people? Had he deserted us? And Cinda's bonnet slapping its stiff sides against her face seemed to be saying, "Such a price, such a price, such a price!"

Brother Rigdon talked for a long time. The wind got madder and madder, and we couldn't hear him. When he sat down, nobody moved.

Not even a hand clapped. There with the wind shrilled in our ears, we waited and held our breaths for something—nobody knew what. It was like God had tried his people to the very limit and now we had to have a sign.

When Brother Brigham, the Lion of the Lord, stood up, we all leaned forward toward him. But when he began to speak, we didn't have no trouble hearing *him*. His voice seemed to grow and boom and ride on the wind itself to our ears. Sudden-like folks smiled a little and leaned back, contented to listen. For neither wind nor Gentile could threaten us no more. We was the Lord's chosen people, and we knew it.

Brother Brigham rebuking us same as usual seemed good. Telling us it wasn't fittin' for us to be there electin' a new prophet—only God could tend to that. "You are like children without a father, sheep without a shepherd. Your place is home, mourning for Joseph."

Then the miracle happened. Before God I'm telling this. There on the stand as we looked stood *not* Brigham but *Joseph*, smiling at us, patting us, loving us. The Lord had give us a sign! Brother Brigham under the mantle of Joseph was our new prophet, and to listen to him was to partake anew of the bread of life. That night even Cinda rejoiced and seemed firmer in the faith.

But we still knew our days was numbered in Nauvoo. It's a good thing we couldn't see the whole year of waiting ahead. Living them next months from day to day was like walking a tightrope across the pit of hell.

Straight off we drove ourselves to get the temple done. Brother Joseph had wanted it finished so's we could have our sealings and endowments and baptizings for the dead, and I started carvin' giant moon faces and sun faces and cherubim with a will.

But 'twas hard. In October the judges at Carthage turned the Prophet's murderers loose for more "Mormon baiting." And in January the legislature took away the Nauvoo Charter, so's even in the city, we had no more law. We commenced up the Whittling Deacons again; and with our long, sharp bowie knives slicing off pine sticks, we whittled

many a Gentile clean down to the ferry where us boys stood on the bank whistling low and soft till he got on the ship and puffed away. But nothing did no good. We was licked, and we knew it.

That summer "fire-and-sword" parties got to be commoner than sewing bees. And in the fall begun the "burnings." Women and children mobbed. One old man gummed up with scalding tar and feathers pricked into the blistered skin. Another old man cutting grain on his farm tied to a tree and his back whipped into bleeding strips for no other reason than he was a Latter-day Saint and too old to fight back. If a Mormon *did* fight back, the law always punished him and not the Gentile.

'Twas the hardest for me to watch Cinda. She never railed out at me nor the Church no more, but I seen her lips getting tighter and tighter. She was so *little*, you understand. All them months it was like our homes, our lives, our happiness was all packaged together with a rubber band, and the band kept stretching, stretching—

A man couldn't go to his job loving his fellow man no more. He took his gun and peeled his eye every step of the way. Finally, it came. Latter part of September, year and a half after the martyrdom, the Gentiles met at Quincy and drew up a resolution that we must leave the country. Brother Brigham answered that we'd leave soon's "water runs and grass grows in the spring." It was actually a kind of relief to get the waiting over with.

We finished enough of the temple—having "more revelation, more splendor, and more God than all the rest of the world"—to hold the first meeting. And on that night, the heavens over Nauvoo was full of armies of marching angels. Brother Brigham and the Twelve worked early and late administering the ordinance of endowment and baptizing them who'd paid their tithes. Not everybody got took care of, but me and Cinda was sealed up in the celestial kingdom for time and eternity, and I felt to rejoice in the Lord.

You wouldn't have known Nauvoo that winter. It was turned into one big wagon shop. And now we knew the worst and was gettin' ready to go to a new Zion in the Rock Mountain and we wouldn't have to leave

no more. Cinda seemed more cheerful and helped get ready like her old self.

Even the meetinghouses was turned into blacksmith shops. We got hickory and hardwoods from the forests and boiled them in salt water and dried them in kilns. We melted up all the old iron in town for wagon tires; we fixed up guns and pistols, wagons and tents. If you got yours done, you worked on someone else's. The sound of the hammer and saw was heard all night long. Women patched up old wagon covers and made others from carpets and quilts. Brother Brigham himself helped make the boats to take us across the river in the spring. A man would work from dawn to dark till he'd pretty nigh sleep in his tracks, and then he'd wake up to hear a hammer pounding, pounding somewheres in the night.

Saints were all this time swarming in from every quarter with a mob just behind them. The whole city was in an uproar. Folks rushing around the streets and in and out of places. Most of the Saints had been tormented so much they was like folks driven by demons. Rush, rush to get away. You could feel the fear in folks' hearts and see it in their eyes. Cobble up a wagon—any wagon! Strip your house of its furnishings, gather in your wheat and corn but don't waste no time—what if the wagon be rickety and your children ain't got no warm clothes. If you can buy a team of oxen, all well and good; if you can't, put the pack on your own back, but go! The mobocrats are coming! If you have to crawl—go!

But we couldn't get ready fast enough. Bands of the devils begun dragging people out of them homes even in parts of the city. The governor sent Major Warren and a body of militia to protect us in Nauvoo, but outside nothing was safe.

Every day I went up in town to see if I couldn't sell my land and home and sheep to one of the new citizens. They was decenter than most Gentiles, because they was willing to pay us some cash, but there wasn't enough of them to go around. Didn't look like I'd get a dime. Other Gentiles from towns like Warsaw and Carthage figured to get our stuff without pay if they just waited long enough. All that fall, they'd

come into town and hang around like vultures. A fellow's hands was tied, too, because Brother Brigham had promised we'd go peaceable. Them days I had to leave Cinda, I made her pull the door latch inside and not move without the gun. I never came home without a scared feeling in my heart till I saw her again.

Them nights I'd lay with Cinda in my arms, and she'd talk to me all night long about our new home in the West. Cinda was still scared, but 'twas a different kind of scared. She wasn't giving up no more now because she was *planning* again.

I and Cinda was luckier than most. I had a pretty good wagon I farmed with. Cinda had a little iron step-stove she used in the kitchen, and we figured to take that along. But I hated to look at all my young peach and pear trees and know all my work would go for naught.

At first Cinda packed up all her furniture and dishes and carpets, the spinning wheel, and the orchestrone,[4] and the hair flowers in the glass case she'd brung from Fayette. She had our clothes in a carpetbag and her geraniums in a old box. But when she tried to get all them things in the wagon, they wouldn't go. One by one Cinda had to take out what we didn't downright need. She was blinking at tears when she took the hair flowers and the geraniums back in the house.

On the fourth day of February 1846, the Saints was ready to begin their last exodus. The wagons all lined up on Main Street a little ways above our house to wait the signal. Women was peering out from the flaps, kids yelling from the backs, drivers clutching a rifle with one hand and the reins or the ox whip with the other, teams breathing white into the cold air, and sneerin' Gentiles bundled up against the frost, watching from the sidewalks.

Next door to us I could see Bishop Clawson putting the finishing touches on two big wagon loads, and Sister Clawson setting white and

4. An anachronism. The orchestrone, a small automatic music machine used rolls of paper, was not invented until 1879 by Merritt Gally. Robert F. Gellerman, *The American Reed Organ and the Harmonium* (Lanham, Md.: Vestal Press, 1996), 153–54.

still beside the driver's seat of the lead wagon. Brother Clawson was arranging his squealing boys in the two wagons and telling his oldest about driving the stock.

I and Cinda had been packed for weeks, so it wasn't no trouble getting our wagon ready. Just as I was leading Old Baldy out the double gates, someone yelled, "Wait a minute, Brother Phineas!"

I looked up to see Brother Brigham pulling up in his buggy. His team was lathered and heaving. I tied Old Baldy and went up to the buggy. Brother Brigham was frowning, and some of the fine hairs of his chin beard ended in little icicles where the sweat on his face had run down and froze.

"You all ready to start, Phineas?"

I nodded.

He wetted his lips and kind of looked away from me for a minute. Then his eyes came back to mine and stared a hole right through me. "Well, listen, lad. You and Sister Cinda ain't got any children, and you're pretty well fixed." He seemed to hesitate a spell. I noticed Cinda's face looking out between the wagon flaps, and my heart was sick. "You're willing to do whatever the Lord requires of you, ain't you, Brother Phineas?"

I nodded again and tried to tell him with my eyes what my voice wouldn't say.

"You're young and able-bodied and not afraid. You're strong in the faith. . . . You see, Brother Phineas, some of the brethren can't go on this first trip. Some of them's sick, and some ain't ready. I've got to leave someone behind to help take care of them."

I found my voice at last. "I'm willing, Brother Brigham."

"You see, Brother Phineas, I'll start now with what wagons are ready, and Apostle Woodruff'll follow with the main body. I've got to leave someone to see that the rest of the Saints are all cleared out by next season."

"They'll all be out," I says. I made up my mind I'd somehow fight the Gentiles and hurry the Saints and pacify Cinda all with one hand if necessary.

Brother Brigham drove off, and I and Cinda stood and watched the wagons rattle slow down the street, our friends calling good-bye to us. Somewheres up in town Captain Pitt's brass band was playing, and the silvery, even marching beat of the music and the slow roll of the wagon wheels got all mixed up in my mind.

When the last white wagon cover had melted into the faraway shine of the river, we started carrying our goods and chattels back inside the house. It wasn't till that minute I realized my hands had been gripping the hitching post so long and so hard they was half-froze.

All the time we was putting things away I didn't dare look at Cinda. She hadn't said nary a word. It was dinner time when I finally drove the oxen back to the barn. But when I came into the kitchen I couldn't find Cinda. I heard a noise in the bedroom and found her kneeling in front of a trunk of the baby's clothes she's saved.

She looked up at me white and quiet-like. "My baby'd be alive if we wasn't Mormons," she says, "My *baby*! And now I'll never had another. Phineas—why do we have to go? Why can't we just stay here in our home? We ain't hurting nobody—"

"That would be apostatizing, Cinda!" I couldn't hardly speak that awful word.

"Oh, Phineas, I got a *right* to a home! Phineas, Phineas—"

I knew it was just the thought of waiting around some more that was hard on her.

"I guess you love your religion more than me, Phineas. I'm going back to Fayette."

I couldn't think how to comfort her. Then it just come to me sudden-like. "Listen, wife Cinda," I says and kneeled beside her and took hold of her hands, "if Brother Brigham administers to you and promises you in the name of the Lord you'll get to Zion safe and that you shall yet have many children, will you try just once more to stick it out?"

Then her face broke into little bits, and the tears come.

I finally found Brother Brigham and brought him back. He came in with his stovepipe hat and his long black coat, and his eyes and the

lines around his mouth looking so stern. But Cinda never paid him no mind but went on rockin' back and forth, back and forth in front of the baby clothes. After I had rubbed the oil on Cinda's hair (making a little round shiny place like dark red stain) and we had both laid our hands on her head, she stopped rocking and looked up at us, and her eyes came alive again.

Brother Brigham in a stern voice did bless her she'd yet be a mother in Zion. The words sounded first-rate to my scared heart. I felt the presence of the Lord in that room.

After the prayer Cinda just stared up at him solemn-like for a whole minute. "Is that a promise, Brother Brigham?" she says. "Is that a promise that we'll get to the Rocky Mountains safe and I'll really have another home and babies?"

He nodded at her grave-like. "That's a promise, Sister Cinda."

She sighed a little and turned to me. "Do you recollect, Phineas, the Prophet Joseph promising me the same thing in a blessing when we first come to Nauvoo and I was sick?"

I nodded. "Then you must believe it's true."

"I do," she answers solemn-like.

Before Brother Brigham left, he rebuked her for her fears and said, "The Lord expects every one of his handmaidens to be firm in the faith."

I thought he looked at me like he'd never let a wife of *his* act up so. "Remember, Brother Phineas," he pronounced to me slow, "remember, it is a woman's duty to obey her husband, to honor his priesthood!"

But he needn't have worried none about Cinda. During the next hard months, she was my helpmeet for sure. Seemed like nothing was too much if it would help her get quicker to Zion.

Day after day and night after night, I and she stood on the riverbank and told our friends good-bye. Seemed like I never knew there was so many folks in the whole world before. They kept coming and kept coming. Seemed they couldn't wait to get across; and all the time we was getting their wagons and animals tied on a flatboat, they'd set in the littler boats and stare uneasy-like back over their shoulders at Nauvoo.

I wasn't any too comfortable in my own mind myself. And when it would start getting dark and Cinda had waved to the last boatload till it had melted into the mist on the water and I took her cold hand, and we started trudging back up the frozen ruts of the road, my legs would be weak with just being scared till I saw our house again and knew it wasn't burnt down nor full of mobbers. But Cinda would say in her sweet voice, "Don't forget Brother Brigham's promise, Phineas."

We slept them nights with the rifle standing against the bedpost. You'd have thought we'd of been glad to have a nice, warm bed when the others was camped across the river in frozen reed and willows, but we'd have give our hearts to be with them.

By the middle of the month, the weather changed, and we was sending the wagons across on the ice. Seemed funny not to hear the water gurgling no more but only the sharp, slow clunking of the oxen's hoofs on the shining froze river with the long line of white-topped wagons stretching clean across it.

But the ice busted, and then it was mud again. Finally, the last night before Brother Brigham was to break camp, he held a dance in the mud and snow. You'd have thought all was first-rate, the way folks laughed. You had to laugh, because if you swung your partner very hard, she'd fall down in the slush!

After Brother Brigham took us back, I and Cinda stood on the shore waving at his boat pulling away for the last time while snow made crystals in Cinda's red hair. We stood until we couldn't see nothing but the stars in the dark water, until the splash of the oars was gone and only the sharp swishing of ice cakes and Cinda's sighing stirred the stillness. Maybe we wouldn't never see Brother Brigham again. It was a feeling time for me.

All that spring and way into the summer, I and Cinda worked till we was like to drop getting the rest of the Saints out of Nauvoo. At the last there was one man with a big family who was desperate to go, and I up and gave him my ox team and wagon, thinking I'd have time to get another fit-out for me and Cinda.

Do you recollect me telling you how I and Cinda felt there was a rubber band holding together us and our home and our happiness? Well, 'twas like all them months of spring and summer it kept stretching tighter and tighter till we held our breaths waiting for it to snap. Nauvoo was a powder keg, and for nigh a whole year we set and waited for all hell to bust loose. In September, just when I was thinking I and Cinda would pull out with the next load, hell busted.

You see, in the summer Major Warren and the militia had gone with the Mormon Battalion to Mexico. So now there was the crashing of cannon balls through houses, the glass windows of our home cracking like a giant fish had banged them, and me and the few brethren left putting up breastworks of sandbags in the street and fixing up a homemade cannon out of a piece of steamboat shaft bored through and stuffed with a six-pound shot. There was our people, disarmed by the government, sharpening pitchforks for weapons. There was women and children hollering, and wounded men bleeding all over Cinda's front-room rag carpet. Finally, there was the Gentile soldiers marching in the city tearing down doors of houses, stamping into bedrooms and insulting helpless women, kickin' sick old people out of bed, pelting with stones our sad-faced little children if they sneaked outside to play, and entering our holy temple and defiling the baptismal font with Satan's own corruption. There was Brockman giving every last Mormon just till sundown to get out of town.

With one arm around Cinda and the other around my rifle, I stood peeking between our front-room lace curtains. Cinda's orchestrone and all our chairs was stacked up against the front door; but nothing could stop a bunch of devils with bayonets, and I knew it. We could hear the faint barking of rifle shots and the sound of a horse pounding madly over cobblestones. Then a woman's shrieks, high and crazy-like, splitting your eardrums.

"I've *got* to get us a fit-out . . ." I couldn't seem to keep the shake out of my voice.

Things happened so fast after that, everything seemed kind of blurred. But somehow, there we was, Cinda and me, hurrying like mad

to carry stuff out to a rickety old wagon. It was like in a dream when you're running away from something, and no matter how fast you run, the thing's panting right behind you.

A blood-bandaged feller on a horse holding a woman up in front of him galloped by the gate and called: "You better hurry! Mobbers heading this way!"

Cinda gave a little sob and put down the bundle she was carrying on the porch and rushed back into the house. "The eatables, Phineas! That box of bread and corn—"

We got the box out to the porch, and Cinda was going back in again but I pulled her gentle-like out the door. There wasn't no more time. Just for a second, we stood there looking in at our house and saying good-bye. The door was open into the kitchen, and we could see the red checked tablecloth, the plate and knife and fork where Cinda was setting the table when the scare first come. The geranium was blooming so pink and brave in the kitchen window. In the front room, coals still glowed on the hearth; the horsehair sofa and chairs was as bright as ever, and the orchestrone smiled good-bye with its ivory teeth, and the grandfather clock[5] ticked on like the family living here might just be off on a holiday and would soon be back.

With my arm around Cinda, I took firm hold of the latch and pulled shut the door to our house. We'd always said to our friends that the latch was always out, and now that we was leaving forever, it was still out. I couldn't see no more for bawling, but as we turned away, we could still hear that old grandfather clock a-ticking, ticking.

Cinda picked up the bundle, and we went out to the wagon. "Don't feel bad, Phineas," she says. "We can build us another house."

I looked at the bundle on her lap; Cinda had rescued the baby clothes.

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5. Although longcase clocks were commonly found in homes during the 1840s, the term "grandfather clock" was not used until the creation of the popular song "My Grandfather's Clock" in 1876.

Hurrying down to the river, I couldn't help thinking it was like this town we loved was under a spell. Wooden kegs aside the well-curbs cracking apart, vines already choking chimneys, lawns curling brownly around the edges, fences torn, heavy-headed yellow grain rotten ungathered in field after field—in the blacksmith shop the coal-heap and ladling pool and crooked water horn waiting to begin work; in the bake-shop, fresh-chopped light wood waiting against the oven; in the tannery, fresh bark waiting in the vat—and all over the city, homes we'd built and furnished with such love and care just setting there ready to be lived in, waiting till Judgment Day.

Halfway to the river was a hill from which we could catch our last glimpse of the temple. Every wagon stopped; and driven like we was, we all turned around and looked and looked. The white and shining and gilded spire rose up in the sunlight like a finger of God himself. But we clucked to our teams. We knew we'd turned our eyes backward for the last time.

At the ferry folks fought to get across. A bunch of mobbers was there, swaggering, cursing. They grabbed one brother and ducked him in the river. "The commandments must be fulfilled, and God damn you, we baptize you!" they shouted.

Shiverin' in his wet clothes, he got in with us on the last boatload while the devils on the riverbank shook their fists at us and threatened to shoot us if we ever came back. The sun, just going down, was making a long lane of little silver ripples on the water, and you could hear birds singing.

We was in Poor Camp a month before Brother Brigham in Winter Quarters four hundred miles away sent wagons back to rescue us. Poor Camp was a sloughy place. I can see one sister yet setting in the mud under a bush trying to spread her shawl over two shivering little kids soaked to the skin and looking like drowned sparrows.

I and Cinda had a bed, though lots of mornings we'd wake up to find it a pool of water. But she'd only laugh and hug me and say, "It sure costs a lot to be wife to you, Brother Phineas, but it's worth it!"

We was looking forward again, you see, instead of back. We had each other them times, too.

You never saw nothing like Cinda. Cheering up the downcast, taking care of the sick. When I worried about her getting the fever again herself she'd smile gentle-like and say, "Remember Brother Brigham's promise, Phineas. Nothing can touch me."

Seemed like troubles only strengthened our faith in the gospel and brought us closer together in our love for each other. I could be hungry and cold, but with Cinda beside me I was a king!

Recollecting now, it is hard to believe that we were able to find happiness. Eating roasted corn ground with slippery elm bark and getting the dysentery. Crawling in Brother Brigham's wagons to Winter Quarters, feeding our stock on buds and twigs of trees, deaths so common we couldn't even fix up burial clothes—one sister shooing the flies from her dead child's face a whole day before we could stop to bury it. And that next winter, folks turning black with the cholera and dying like flies so there wasn't enough of us well to bury the stinking corpses.

But in spite of everything, Mormons could always find a little honey to suck. One night in the spring, coming home after a shindig, Cinda told me about the new baby. "I wanted to make sure first," she says, her eyes like blue fire. "Oh, Phineas, it's coming true! It's all coming true!"

Seeing Cinda like that made *me* feel first-rate, too. I had never had no real sorrowings over leaving Nauvoo nor Fayette nor nothing because 'twas all for the gospel's sake. What I wanted most all along was for I and Cinda to be worthy of the blessing of the new and everlasting covenant, but what Cinda wanted most was female things, the things of this earth. All my worrying was over Cinda all along.

The trip across the plains the next summer was as easy as pie. We started like Abraham, not knowing whither we went; but we trusted in the living God and, in spite of our hardships and trials, our hearts swelled with thanksgiving. We knew it was the last of our roamings, you see, and that we was finally headed for Zion where Gentile nor mobber

couldn't disturb us no more. Brother Brigham himself had come back from the valley to lead us.

My old wagon that was so rickety in dry weather and that looked like falling to pieces having no iron about it, seemed to swell with the rains and get stouter. I had a pair of young bulls under the tongue that could kick without taking sigh or rest, but when I and Cinda was up there on the wagon seat, singing as we rattled across the prairies, we wouldn't trade places with nobody. We knew our butter was being churned from the cream that jolted behind us in the rafters, and that our salt-rising dough coming up as we rode would be baked in an oven hollowed out of the hillside when we stopped. We knew the Lord would put out the prairie fires blackening our faces with soot and lead us to a stream where we could wash off the stains of the last meal before eating the next. During the rains when we'd have to stay in camp till the weather relaxed and the soil would hold up the wagons after we'd corduroyed it with branches of trees—even then we knew the Lord was just giving us the chance to hold a few shindigs in the mud.

And once when we passed a grave with a buffalo-skull headstone bearing Sister Clawson's name—Cinda, she knowed more than ever. She knowed. "This tabernacle of clay ain't important," says Cinda, "and besides, she died with her face turned toward the west and Zion!"

Finally, we come to the mountains. I and Cinda loved the mountains. In the evening we'd watch the snow-covered peaks gradually lose the redness of the sunset and then the little stars light up like candles. And when we'd get up in the morning, we'd see the peaks lose their silvery shine as the moon grew cold and pale before the new-climbing sun.

And when, at last, after five long years of waiting, ever since the Prophet's death when we first knew we'd have to flee, we drove down through the rocky canyon to where the valley opened up before us and we could see the tents and houses of Zion and the little black figures of men that we knew was our brethren coming to meet us—the valley

of the Great Salt Lake, our real home in the fat valley of Ephraim, the garden of the world, our mountain home we wouldn't never had to leave no more. I tell you, it was a feeling time for us all.

I and Cinda was down on our knees beside our wagon giving thanks to God. I couldn't find words enough. When I got through praying, Cinda whispered to me in a small voice as lightsome as a breeze on a summer's day, "Feel, Phineas. Put your hand here. The little fellow's kicking to beat the band. He knows he's home, too."

I no sooner got Cinda settled in a cabin than her pains started and her time came. I fetched the two midwives and then went out and borrowed the piece of sweet-smelling soap one of the sisters had brought across the plains and sometimes loaned out for birthings. Cinda was in hands for a night and a day, and the sisters talking female talk kept me out of her room. But finally, when I did go in that evening, there was Cinda sleeping, and I could see by the candlelight a fine, biddable little boy with a red fuzzy head nuzzling by her side. I felt to rejoice in the Lord.

It wasn't till the next morning I learned the truth.

"We thought we'd best tell you," says one of the sisters. "The afterbirth didn't come, and we can't get it out ourselves. Don't worry none though, Brother Phineas, as it sometimes comes even twelve hours after; and Sister Cinda in general is doing first-rate."

Now I don't know straight up about sickness, and so I couldn't do nothing. But the next day when Cinda wasn't no stronger and started saying she had pains in her arms and legs and belly, and puked up all her food, and couldn't suckle the baby, I told her about the afterbirth.

Her blue eyes got scared and big. "Oh, Phineas, find a doctor," she says. "I'll die if you don't! The afterbirth *has* to come out or I'll die! Get a doctor, Phineas!"

"Ain't you forgetting Brother Brigham's promise, Cinda?"

I wasn't upset much as I knowed my faith was greater than I had ever felt it before. But to pacify her, I went out and asked one of the

midwives if there was a doctor in town. She says, sure enough, there be this same doctor who delivered Cinda the first time, at the beginning of our days in Nauvoo. He'd come west with the first wagon train.

Of course, when I told Cinda, she begged me to get this doctor right off. But knowing I didn't understand sic 'em[6] in this matter, I went and laid the case before Brother Brigham, God's mouthpiece on this earth, and asked for counsel. And Brother Brigham says, "It is my counsel to let nature have its course; and if you will obey my counsel, the afterbirth will come away of its own accord, and she will get better and all will be well."

I felt that I must obey that message and have confidence for the best. If I went contrary, I would be considered weak in the faith in the authority of the holy priesthood.

But when I told Cinda, she only started clutching at the kiverlid and cried out, "You don't want me to die, do you, Phineas? Don't you want me to get well and raise up our baby and make us a home like we been planning?"

"I wouldn't dare go contrary to counsel, wife Cinda."

She just laid and looked at me with the tears slipping down her white cheeks and her red hair spreading like a flame against the pillow.

But I was strong in the faith, and I told myself she was going to be all right. I got the sisters to wash her and anoint her with the consecrated oil from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, and then I laid my hands on her and blessed her by the authority of the holy priesthood vested in me. Dressed in clean linen and laid back on her bed, she seemed more cheerful-like, though very weak and feeble.

The next day Cinda waked up screaming with pain. Seemed like there was a swelling starting up in her belly, and something about her was beginning to smell awful bad. I couldn't convince myself not to worry no more. I went up in town and traded my wagon for a bit of

6. To know nothing about, to be ignorant.

sugar and tea, and my team for a little brandy and half a pint of port wine. Cinda could just swallow half a teaspoon of the wine at a time, but it seemed to help her some, and she tried to let the baby have the breast a spell.

A day or two after that, Cinda begged me to let her suck some of the sugar I had got. I was afraid to give her too much, but she gasps in between the pains she was having, "It can't hurt me none where I'm going, Phineas. You've got a lot of time for good things to eat, but I only got a spell—"

Then one morning Cinda's eyes and teeth was set, and the smell about her like to made me puke, and her skin had got the color of white of egg, and the sister says there was a black spot on her belly where mortification was setting in. I laid my hands on her head and prayed with all my power and tried to reason with the Lord and tell him I could not feel to give her up.

"Oh, wife of my youth and choice of my heart," I says, "arise and be made whole!"

Cinda kind of come to after that and threw her arms around my neck and kissed me and begged me not to leave her no more as she was going to die soon now. Seemed like all them days was just a time of Cinda screaming with pain. I can hear the screams even now, tearing out my heart.

"Do something for me!" she'd scream. "I can't stand it! Please get the doctor, Phineas. He can stop the pain! It's your Cinda that's asking you."

Then other times she'd moan quiet-like, "My baby, Phineas. Who'll take care of my baby? Won't you get the doctor, Phineas—don't let me die—"

I'd hold her wild hands and cradle her in my arms, and my heart would bust with grieving, but I'd made up my mind to be strong for us both. Brother Brigham knew best. I was depending on the Lord.

Then, come Saturday, I and some of the sisters set with Cinda all night long. She waked once in such pain she could not talk and

motioned me to anoint her. I rebuked the pain, and it left, and she fell asleep again. The next time she waked, she called for the baby and pressed it to her breast and say to me, "Do you think I'll hurt him, Phineas, hugging him too hard?"

I couldn't talk much for bawling, but I says, "No, Cinda dear, of course not."

She kisses the top of the baby's red head and looks at it loving-like. "I wouldn't want to hurt it none," she whispers. "Ain't it funny, we been planning on *his* coming so long and now *I* won't be here. Oh, Phineas, I love him—"

Then the pain tears at her face again and draws up her knees, and she hands the baby to me and beats the covers. The next time she waked up she was calm. The sisters was all sobbing, but Cinda was calm. She looked at me wistful-like and whispered, "You know, Phineas, I needn't of died."

For some reason, all our fleeing from the mobocrats, and Poor Camp, and Winter Quarters, and our times crossing the plains was all like they had never been, and I was back in our old home in Nauvoo hearing Cinda say, "You love your religion more'n me, Phineas."

My knees trembled under me, but I says, "Cinda, are you satisfied that I have done the best I possibly could since we been man and wife? Are you satisfied I love you, Cinda?"

She smiled quiet-like. "Of course, Phineas, and I love you. Don't—blame yourself."

Her saying that is what I can't rightly understand now. How could I blame myself when all I had done was listen to counsel and do the will of the Lord? My spirit seemed to mourn within me, but I says to Cinda, "Do you feel happy in your mind concerning the work of God?"

And Cinda answered, "Yes, oh yes, for I know it is right. But oh, Phineas, I did so want a *home*—" She kind of closed her eyes, and her head rolled to one side after that, and I thought she had fell asleep in Jesus to await the resurrection morn, and so I stopped wetting her lips with the wine. But then she looked up at me again and motioned me

to go on. Her eyes was blazing with the most unearthly blue light, and she was smiling.

I leaned closer. "Have you seen something?" I says.

Her lips shaped out "Yes," and she tried hard to tell me, but I could see Cinda hadn't no more time left.

Seemed like I couldn't find no comfort, and so that afternoon, it being the Sabbath, I went to the bowery where Brother Brigham was holding meeting and giving the Saints exhortation.

"If a promised blessing don't come true," he preached, and I thought he was looking down at me, "you mustn't get stiff-necked and blame the gospel; you must look in your own heart for some sin that made you unworthy, or else rebuke yourself for lack of faith—"

'Twas mighty fine discourse.

MAURINE WHIPPLE (1903–1992) was a novelist, essayist, and short story author best known for her historical novel *The Giant Joshua* (1941). She also created the illustrated guide *This is the Place: Utah* (1945) and wrote articles that appeared in *Life*, *Look*, *Collier's*, and *Saturday Evening Post*. *A Craving for Beauty: The Collected Writings of Maurine Whipple* (edited by Veda Hale, Andrew Hall, and Lynne Larson) was recently published by By Common Consent Press.