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# **Mixed Cookies**

Peggy Tait



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With immigration and the influx of foreign refugees dominating today's news, this story of how this problem was handled fifty-six years ago stands in stark contrast. This is the story of one American family's sponsorship of a refugee family in 1959. How this remarkable experience came about and how it turned out to be one of the most valuable, most treasured, and most entertaining episodes in this family's life is worth reading.

With a brand-new baby joining three siblings under ten, the prospect of welcoming unknown, non-Englishspeaking people into her large, busy home was met with little enthusiasm on the mom's part. It was Dad who had generously answered the emergency call for help with these refugees. Easy for Dad because he could go off to work every morning!

But as events unfolded and they moved in, God moved in with them, quickly softening and opening Mom's heart. Seen now as deeply introspective, hopefully inspiring, indeed life-changing, it is really the story of one special year in the life of an ordinary American family. They learned not only the joy of sharing and giving, but also later in the same year, they learned the harder lesson of having to accept help from others.

The months of the two families living together were altogether fascinating, exhausting, and hilarious, with communication carried on mostly in pantomime. The story's title comes from only one of dozens of day-today events during that time. On a chilly March day, as the kids played outside, an unknown (and unclaimed) missile came crashing through the dining room window. One side of a cardboard box hurriedly made into a replacement piece for the broken pane turned out to be this family's trademark: Mixed Cookies.

A sea change hit the family halfway through this special year of learning to be cheerful givers. A diagnosis of polio and paralysis for the thirty-one-year-old breadwinning, mortgage-bearing father of four came suddenly, bringing far more fear and uncertainty than had that emergency call earlier seeking help for the refugees. But God came alongside, with answered prayer, financial help (all bills were paid), food, and friendship. Suddenly placed in the position of receiving instead of giving, the real lesson was to learn God's grace in taking as well as giving.

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