

**By Mary**

The following is my sister, Louise's, story

## Grandma and the Tea Party

It was harvest time. Grandma was staying with us while Mother worked in the harvest.

One day Grandma came upon Louise, playing alone in the middle bedroom with her dolls. Chairs formed a circle, with all our dollies seated on the chairs and toy dishes placed before each doll. Louise was having a tea party. Grandma wished she could join the party, and Louise invited her.

Grandma sipped the "tea" Louise poured for her.

"Oh, Louise," she declared, "This is a very special event. You must offer your guests something better than this."

Quickly, Grandma rose, carrying the tiny cups to the kitchen, and set them on the dining table. The permanent accouterments—salt, pepper, pepper sauce, sugar bowl, and toothpicks—lay at the center of the table top, covered with a tea towel between meals. Grandma lifted the tea towel, removed the lid of the sugar bowl, dipped the spoon into it, and spooned a smidgen of sugar into each cup. Louise watched all this with interest.



Grandma brought the teacups back to the party scene, handing a cup to Louise. Both quietly sipped the syrupy liquid. When their cups were emptied, Grandma licked her lips, savoring every last bit of sweetness.

"Louisa," she admonished her grand-daughter in German-accented English, "You must never, ever, tell your mother what we have done."

And, Louise concluded the story to me, our mother did not know this secret until Louise shared it with her some forty years later.

Why did this simple event remain so vivid in Louise's memory all these years? Perhaps it was guilt of the naughty act, filching war-rationed sugar to indulge two sweet mouths.

Or perhaps it was the special magic of an almost 90-year-old grandma playing dolls with a 10-year-old grand-daughter