

A Different View

by Judy Camplin

Icy shivers raced down Cerise's back as she peered up at the dark, red brick building looming above her. This was where her beloved Josie had to live?

Josephine Davis was a famous artist who for years had been Cerise's neighbor. Visiting Josie's home was always an adventure. Mesmerized by her stories of traveling to exotic places, Cerise loved discovering the treasures Josie had collected from all over the world.

One night Josie fell. While she recuperated in the hospital, her niece and nephew claimed Josie couldn't live by herself any longer. They sold her place and moved all her things to Wedgwood Lodge. It sounded like a nice old English estate.

Cerise knew it was a retirement home. 5 Cerise missed her friend and had been anxious to call on her, but now she had to force her feet to move down the poorly-lit hallway and knock on Josie's door.

"Come in!" Josie welcomed Cerise with open arms.

Josie smelled fresh, like soap, but she looked different. Without makeup, her skin appeared luminous and pale and showed pink through her white hair. The sparkle was gone from her chocolate brown eyes. The gray dress hung on her.

Her rooms were dull, with heavy, old colorless furniture. Gone was the bedroom set with hand-carved pineapple bed posts draped with a filmy white mosquito netting; the black ebony chest and its hundred drawers filled with surprises; glass-topped display tables exhibiting Josie's collections of ivory pieces, seashells, polished rocks and beautiful jewelry. Not a single picture decorated the walls.

"Where's *Images of Africa*?" Cerise asked.

10 Josie shrugged. "In the University Gallery."

Cerise recalled the huge paintings decorating the walls in Josie's old home. Under vivid blue skies, hairy gray elephants, mired to their knees in a mud hole, raised their trunks to spray streams of water at long-necked giraffes, nibbling on tree leaves. Through high golden grass, sleek-bodied cheetahs chased frightened gazelles; their hooves never appearing to touch the ground.

"The animals symbolize natural beauty and freedom," Josie always said.

"I could drive you to see your paintings," Cerise offered.

"I don't get out much anymore," Josie said.

15 Aching inside, Cerise fought to control her emotions. How could Josephine Davis, adventurer and traveler all her life, accept confinement in this dull, dreary place?

"I know she isn't happy," Cerise told Mama.

"She's getting old, honey," Mama said.

On Cerise's next visit, Josie appeared smaller and more frail. Worse, she was losing interest in the world outside. The drapes were shut tightly.

"Should I open them for you?" Cerise asked.

20 "Nothing to look at," Josie shrugged.

Cerise couldn't stop fretting about Josie or erase the vision of her sad friend.

She tried. On each visit, she brought a gift. But Josie picked at the food and didn't read or listen to music.

Today had been the worst. Josie shuffled to greet Cerise in floppy, white slippers and a threadbare bathrobe.

"Can I help you with your clothes?" Cerise offered.

25 "I don't feel like getting dressed."

Tears wet Cerise's cheeks. It hurt her to think about Josie existing in such stark surroundings. No wonder Josie was letting go of her life. What was she going to do? She had to help Josie.

One night Cerise dreamed that she and Josie were strolling across an emerald green lawn, laughing together.

It was not just a dream! Cerise remembered her birthday a few years ago. Josie had joined the family at Cerise's party and gave Cerise a wonderful camera.

"So you can see the world through different eyes," Josie had said.
30 "I've got an idea," Cerise told Mama.

At the University Gallery, excitement tingled inside Cerise as she clicked photographs of *Images of Africa*.

After they were developed, she fit her favorites into frames. Cerise couldn't wait to place the wrapped gift in Josie's lap.

When Josie opened the box, tears splashed from the crinkled eyes.

Cerise smiled. "Since you couldn't go to *Images of Africa*, I brought it to you."

35 Josie whispered, "Thank you so much!"

Arranging the photographs around the room, she told Cerise stories about her adventures while sketching and painting the panels.

"The bull elephant didn't want his portrait painted, so he charged the truck. We had to skedaddle!"

They laughed together. Cerise eased the drapes back. Fingers of sun streamed in.

"Look, a cardinal." Cerise pointed to the tree outside the window.

40 "I'd like to paint a picture of him," Josie said.

"I'll bring you art supplies," Cerise offered.

Josie plucked at her robe. "Next time you come to see me, I'll be dressed."

That night Cerise was bursting with plans.

"I'm taking her brushes, paper, paints and a seashell. She can hold it up and hear the crashing waves listen to the world through another ear."