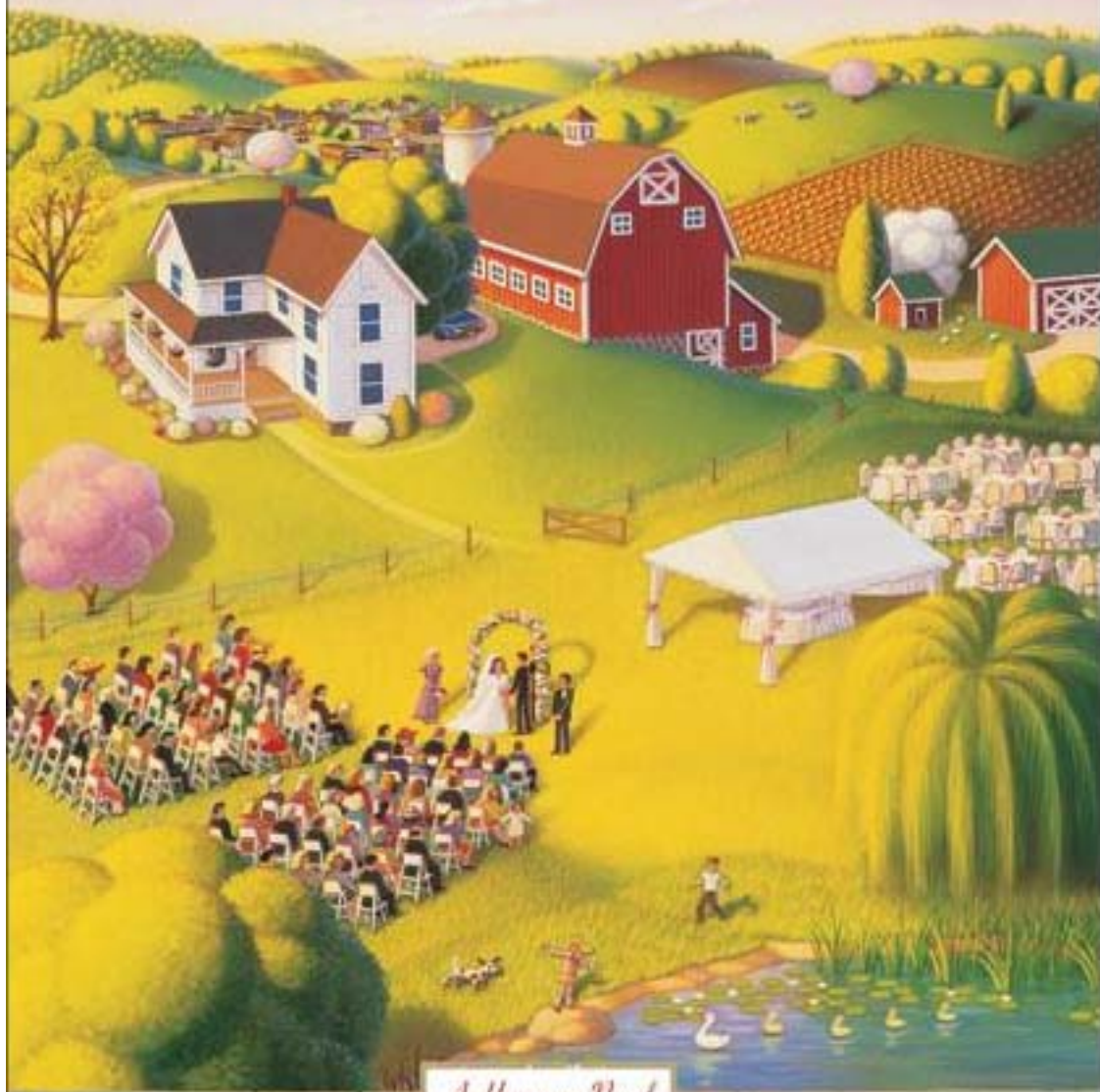


# A Change of HEART



*A Harmony Novel*

PHILIP GULLEY

*Author of the Bestselling Just Shy of Harmony*

**A Change of Heart**

By Philip Gulley

Chapter 1

A Monument to Romance

It was the Tuesday after Easter, and Sam and Barbara Gardner were reclining underneath a palm tree, their eyes closed, their bodies ghostlike after a long winter.

"This is the life," Sam said, sipping his ginger ale, then sighing contentedly.

"It's not quite what I had in mind," Barbara said.

"What do you mean, it isn't what you had in mind?"

"When I agreed to be in charge of the church's Easter program in exchange for your taking me somewhere with palm trees, I wasn't thinking of the Holidome in Cartersburg."

"You should have been more specific," Sam pointed out.

"We could have at least spent the night."

"Are you crazy? They want eighty dollars a night."

"And you're sure we won't get in trouble for using the pool?"

"Not so long as they don't catch us," Sam said. "Just act like you belong."

Barbara sighed. "Steve Newman is a podiatrist and has a vacation condominium in Florida."

"Who's Steve Newman?"

"A guy I dated in college, before I met you. He wanted to marry me, but I turned him down. Now he owns a chain of podiatry offices in Ohio and spends the winter in Florida."

"Why didn't you marry him?"

"He gave me the creeps. He kept wanting to touch my feet."

Sam gazed at her feet. "I can't fault him. You have lovely feet."

"You think so?" She lifted her feet to inspect them.

"I especially like your thin ankles."

"Oh, Sam, you always know just what to say."

"It's a minister thing. Seventeen years of being diplomatic."

Barbara reclined her lounge chair until it was flat, then turned to lie on her stomach.

"Would you like me to rub suntan lotion on your back?" Sam offered.

"In case you haven't noticed, we're inside."

"We can pretend, can't we?"

"In that case, sure."

Sam squirted out a gob of lotion in his hand and began rubbing Barbara's back.

"Be careful not to get any on my feet," she cautioned. "I don't want the sand to stick to me."

"Now you're catching on."

They sat by the pool another hour, then rose and made their way to a table to eat lunch. Baloney sandwiches with ketchup, which Sam had made at home, along with potato chips and HoHos. Sam went to the vending machine and bought them a Coke to share.

They lasted another hour before the manager invited them to leave.

"I believe that was a record," Barbara said on the drive home.

"What record is that?"

"The cheapest date ever."

"I thought it was creative," Sam said, slightly hurt.

"Dr. Pierce is taking Deena scuba diving in Belize for their honeymoon. That's creative."

"I thought you liked our honeymoon."

"Sam, you know I liked it. Cincinnati was nice." She reached over and took his hand." I just thought when you said you'd take me somewhere with palm trees, you didn't mean Cartersburg. Those weren't even real palm trees."

"Speaking of Dr. Pierce and Deena," Sam said, eager to change the subject, "I had a good premarital counseling session with them.

Did you know his great-grandfather was the Pierce in Pierce-Arrow?"

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