

THE RED ROASTER

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There has never been anyone in my life like my Bunia. From the time as a young child when I first spoke this name, until the time that she passed away at the age of 99 years and 2 months, I never called her anything else.

The story related to my brother and myself, was that she wanted to be called Babusia, a diminutive of Baba, the Ukrainian name given to grandmothers. It seems, though, that the two of us at our young ages couldn't get her name right—in fact, it came out quite in a way that would not be appropriately used in public. So, Bunia it was.

Pauline Rychly Koshuba Haydak, my Bunia, truly enjoyed the role she played as grandmother to her eight grandchildren. How special I felt when she would tell me how rich she was—her millions, for she considered each of her children and grandchildren worth a million dollars. Now I, too, am growing in wealth, with our three children married and having children of their own.

While growing up and well into adulthood I thought Bunia was truly rich. In truth, however, she never was. I thought my Bunia to be a gourmet cook of the highest ability. In truth, however, she never was that either.

Pauline was a petite woman, maybe five-feet at her tallest. By the time Bunia died, I doubt that she stood more than four-and-a-half feet tall, or weighed more than 80 pounds soaking wet. What this diminutive woman lacked in size, she made up for in pride. Firm in her beliefs, she called herself persistent rather than stubborn.

I know many thought her too proud, and that's okay. I didn't look at it that way. You see, whatever my Bunia did, from the most menial to the most honorable task, she did to the best of her ability. Nothing less than full effort was acceptable. This is why I thought her rich, because she took care of home and its contents so well. And, this is why I thought her a gourmet cook, because everyday-type foods were prepared exquisitely.

From her work ethics I too learned that I should give my best to whatever task was at hand. From drying rain-drenched shopping carts at Target to making every stitch as perfect as possible on the table runner that won a first prize, doing my best brought a sense of accomplishment.

And so, it was, with the **Red Roaster**. Sometime in the 1920s or 1930s Bunia had won this roaster at a bazaar. Most often she used it for baking her holuptsi, known in English as cabbage rolls. Fifty+ years later, that **red roaster** was still in use—there were a few spots of enamel missing, but I can tell you for certain that not a spot of baking residue ever stayed on that pan permanently.

Because it was often the case for Bunia to bring prepared food to various family gatherings, the **red roaster**, filled with holuupsi, was again in transit to another party of some sort. Here is where the mystery begins.

Where was the red roaster?

At that time I was in the habit of going to her apartment one day a week to take her shopping. Every week I was asked if I had the roaster. I was instructed to go home and look for it. More than once on a visit to our home, Bunia went through my cupboards looking for the pan.

Not having success with me, it was then to my mother that she turned. “*Where is my roaster? You MUST have my **red roaster!***” Mom’s cupboards were subject to the same scrutiny as mine. Whether called persistent for stubborn, the saga of looking for that **red roaster** went on and on—for two years at least I looked, my husband looked, my mother looked, and Bunia looked in every nook and cranny of her home, my home, and my mother’s home.

Well, one day, after all that searching, never giving up on that special red roaster, there was an announcement.

THE RED ROASTER IS NO LONGER LOST! THE RED ROASTER HAS BEEN FOUND!!

Hallelujah! I thought, now I can put that mystery to rest. It was found in the basement of one of her nieces. She had left it there after the last party. Now, today, for some reason I remembered that **red roaster**, after all these years. I asked her why it was so important to find it, because once found it didn’t look so special to me anymore. Bunia said, “It is still a good pan.”

That roaster of little consequence was “still a good pan.” It was still useful because she took such good care of it. Just as Bunia took care of her possessions so well, and just as she looked and looked for that roaster, never giving up until it was found, there is someone who cares that much—not for things—but for each and everyone of us.

That someone is named Jesus. If you are lost in the dregs of human life, He has been looking for you to come and be with Him. He wants you to be one of his “millions.” He wants love you, and give you the best care—better than anyone here in this world can give. Jesus will keep looking and never give up—even when you are angry, or hurt, or turn your back because life has gotten so terrible it all looks black and hopeless.

Whatever situation you may be in, he will wrap his arms around you and see you through to the end. It’s so easy, all you need to do is ask Him. He knows what it is to feel like all hope is lost and alone and empty—like something is missing.

I was sick for a very long time. There was no miraculous cure. It was ten long years, and it was hard. Yet, through it all, I had a friend who was more than a friend, who I knew I could count on to always be there for me—and He was. Sometimes all that kept me going was that I

knew Jesus and His angels were there going through it with me. I am going to put this passage from the Bible in my own words.

Who is it that will separate us from the love that Jesus Christ gives? Can hard times, sorrow, false accusations, danger, or physical harm? The answer is that none will separate us. I know without a doubt, I am convinced, that there is absolutely nothing, that will keep Jesus and those who give themselves to Him apart.

Do you think that you have done things that are wrong, shameful, or hurtful to others, and you can't get it off your mind, can't forgive yourself? Talk to Jesus about it. The fabulous thing about Jesus is that he is with us all time time—can't see him, but he's there. Take that step. Tell Jesus what's wrong. It will be the best thing you ever do for yourself, and the beginning of a whole, new wonderful life.

You know, there are a lot of people in this world who have accepted this invitation, and they haven't been sorry they did. There's more to this story, and I invite you to read about it in the Bible's New Testament. Jesus was a real man, and the story is true.