

Cut Across, Shorty

By

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Prologue: 2007

Time has a way of playing tricks on a person. Maybe time is an illusion, as Einstein said, but nasty tricks like Alzheimer's disease are all too real. Alzheimer's has a way of sneaking up silently, stealthily, at that time in life when a person has accumulated wisdom – or not. He at least has had time to learn from his mistakes. Then, like a schoolyard bully who knows how to turn his good qualities into insults, Alzheimer's destroys it all. Although I have little hope of making sense of the injustice of dementia, my goal is to pay my respects by remembering. My purpose in writing this is to relate episodes in the life of my father, Donald Andrew Hines, known to friends and family as Dad or Grandpa, Don, Uncle Donald or Shorty. There were other names as well, but this book is written for family reading. The reader must use his imagination for the times when Donald would “turn the air blue” as Mother put it. In part, this book is local history, a neglected aspect of textbook history that needs to be addressed and honored. History is more than battles and wars and generals. We are all part of history. Farms and little towns are as important as battlefields. So for lack of a better term “historical novel” will have to do. I must rely on tales I've heard as well as my own recollections, so a more realistic objective is to tell part of the whole truth as far as it is possible.

This first section is important to prepare you for the epilogue. It's a way to come full circle and pull time together. Dad lived over thirty years before I was around to observe, but stories hover over Boone and Hendricks Counties like a flat land fog. People talk, especially colorful people like Aunt Mozella, his older sister who lived just beyond the southwest corner of the farm. She insisted that scandal and gossip were irresistibly delicious, and she admitted that she never closed her ears to a good story.

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Some of her comments were troubling, and if I left out some of the darker tales of Dad's life it's because life's hard enough. He survived through a long life and did many good deeds, so whatever his sister meant when she hinted that "Donald wasn't fair to his brother Walter" or "didn't do enough to help his family," she took it with her when she died at 102. If for no other reason than I didn't always understand what Aunt M meant, I'll leave those illusory stories for someone else to dig up and write down. There are more than enough sad tales included as it stands. Melancholy memories haunting central Indiana could fill many more books. My hope is that ordinary people will write more local history as they see it. Life is hard enough, but remembering the joy helps.

There is an old photograph of Dad and his mother, father, brother, and sisters that could serve as the cover of this book if it's ever bound. Donald is grinning from ear to ear, he and his brother Walter looking bright and hopeful. His sisters are beautiful. His parents already look care-worn and discouraged. Donald must be twelve or thirteen, full of eager anticipation, ready to tackle life. The contrast between this young, brave boy and the opening scene I had planned when I first thought I'd start in the middle of his final years was too painful. At first it seemed to make sense to begin with the final four years when I took care of my father as his full-time nurse, seeing first hand how cruelly devastating dementia is. An opening scene "in the middle of things" is sometimes a good technique after all, but the pain was too recent. I figured I'd better start at the beginning.

Pain aside, however, one *in medias res* scene opens with Dad in a fury, refusing to wear a seat belt, grabbing for the steering wheel as I'm driving east to Lizton so he can keep his appointment with Dr. Stopperich, his fine young doctor at Hendricks Regional clinic south of Lizton on Hwy #39. Dad is still, at 97, amazingly strong, and he jerks the

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wheel, causing the Dodge to swerve. I pull over and manage to put him into the back seat with his dog Molly. I make sure the window is rolled down halfway so Molly can stick her nose out to enjoy the passing scenery. Somehow I navigate the car to the middle of Lizton without wrecking anything. We turn right at the flashing red light and head south. Dad doesn't appear to know who I am, but he is fighting an adversary of some kind. Good dog Molly is seemingly untroubled, now curled up in the back seat corner of the Dodge, waiting for us to do whatever humans have to do. When we take the right turn into the clinic parking lot, Dad is still angry and refuses to go into the clinic with me. Kathy, the patient nurse, and Dr. Stopperich himself come out and talk to him quietly, helping him into the office where Popeye cartoons bring him back to someplace he remembers. The doctor and nurse calm him, bring him directly into a private room down the hall, and Dad sits beside me, seeing a dark grey object, as he once described macular degeneration, and hearing paranoid nonsense. How does a boy, a man, get from 1908 to 2007? Why must the journey be filled with potholes and washed out bridges? Don't ask me. All I can do is tell the stories and try to reconstruct the times. If Dad's story is often entertaining, good. If it is instructive, great. If it is sad, well, that's life, isn't it?

Note: Although B.B. prefers to remain anonymous, I must thank this generous poet and good friend for the chapter introductions. Encouragement is the essence of hope.

Cut Across, Shorty

* * *

Chapter 1 Convergence

Since giant GM formed in 1908, one hundred years have gone.
Little Donald was born on that Christmas Eve too, only hours before the dawn.

While Donald could seldom, if ever, do right; Brother Walter could seldom do wrong.
A kick in the head marred Don's hearing, but nothing could stop one so strong.

Two sisters then tutored Don's speaking and helped him with reading as well.
When Don entered first grade, but for hearing, he was doing remarkably *swell*.

* * *

On a snowy Christmas Eve in 1908 a boy was born on a small farm in the middle of Indiana to a pioneer couple who already had two daughters. This was the same year that American ingenuity gave birth to General Motors up north in Flint, Michigan. Although the boy had no way of knowing that his birth and the birth of GM would have convergence, the year 1908 was significant for both. Had the boy or GM known of the unanticipated hazards that lay ahead, neither would likely have risked the precarious ups and perilous downs of entrepreneurship, but as both were ignorant of unpredictable pitfalls in the future, they launched into life with high hopes - and eventually converged.

Ora, the boy's father, delayed going for the doctor because a fierce blizzard was raging. The young mother's sharp cries and urgent orders to go fetch the doctor finally forced her husband out the door. When the stolid father hitched up the horse and made it through sharp driving sleet to the doctor's house, however, the doctor wasn't home. A

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hand-written note tacked to the front door announced: GONE TO ED BEAMS. The young father grumbled under his breath, climbed back into the buggy, fighting the angry wind. He slapped the reins and off they went back down the snowy country road, blinded by the sleet. When he rounded the curve before Beams' homestead, he heard the revelry and saw the lights. Music and laughter met him as he prodded his horse up the long drive. The boy's birth had interrupted a lively Christmas Eve party attended by the local doctor, who reluctantly went out into the blizzard with the baby's father, who urged him to get a move on and attend to the birth.

Doc Kernodle was a fun-loving and hard-drinking medical practitioner. Gossips sometimes wondered if his partying might interfere with his doctoring, but he was the only country doctor available for miles around. Ora stomped through the heavy snow to his rig, climbed into the wagon and indicated with a nod of his head that Doc K should follow him. The doctor, laughing into the icy snowfall, stumbled as he climbed into his buggy and shouted to Ora, "Merry Christmas, Ory. Lead the way!" Ora thought wryly that the doctor at least wasn't feeling the cold mix of snow and sleet, probably wasn't feeling a thing. He thought about his wife Dora and had anxious pangs of frustration at the delay. He urged the horse, who knew the way home by heart, to put on the speed. Never favoring the whip on his horses, Ora shouted, "Step on it, Dolly. Oats a waitin' in the warm barn." The horse took off for home. Dolly galloped with agile grace around the end post at the entrance to the Hines farm, but Doc Kernodle, trying to keep up, felt his rig swaying and tipping as his horse nearly missed the driveway on the left. The horse reared as Doc tried to rein him into a left turn. The brougham, Doc's pride and joy,

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tipped over, spilling the doctor into a deep snowdrift. Sobered by the shock of the wet snow, Doc K groaned and tried to stand upright. He fell back into the drift and lay there as Ora came over with his hand out to help him up. Doc's horse, shivering with fear and the cold, hadn't moved. The men trudged through the sleet and snow to the front porch of the old farm house and entered the front door to the hearty cries of a newborn baby.

The boy had no need of the doctor, having made his entrance unaided, but the mother was grateful for Dr. Kernodle's arrival. The father was skeptical and resented the doctor's bill since the doctor was clearly three sheets to the wind. They named the baby Donald Andrew. He was a Hines with strong elements of the Pratt Clan: enough to give a genealogical forecaster a professional headache. In spite of the difficulties, Donald survived and eventually thrived. His parents, Ora and Dora, were thrilled to have a son at last. He also claimed to remember that night in 1908.

Donald's two sisters, Goldia and Mozella, were fascinated with their new brother. They willingly assumed the motherly chores, leaving their mother Dora free to tend to the endless work of the family and farm. One might say the capable sisters brought him up double-handedly, leaving their mother to clean house, do laundry, cook, make soap, tend to the garden, and can beans, tomatoes, peaches, and cherries. Consequently, Donald was in awe of his competent sisters, who trained Donald to ride in their red wagon and tolerate – even expect - incessant babying. The girls would try to teach Donald to speak actual words, but he only made high-pitched sounds and pointed.

“Mom, why is Donald so slow to talk?” Goldia would ask.

“Now, Goldie, he'll talk when he has something worth saying. Don't bother me.”

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This satisfied Goldia, but Mozella was determined to help her little brother grow up smart. “Come on, Donald; say ‘apple’ and you can have a bite.” Mozella was sure this clever ruse would work, but Donald merely crawled away, looking for adventure. The sisters tried to scare him into talking. “Donald, if you don’t learn to say ‘Momma,’ she won’t love you anymore.” Mozella was the persistent one: “Donald, if you don’t try to say ‘horse,’ you won’t grow up to be tall. She would hold his cheeks in her palms breathing “huh, huh, huh, aw, aw, aw, rse,” hoping he would get the idea, but he only laughed and got away from them.

Donald soon learned to walk, then run, but he still wouldn’t try to speak. The sisters, both articulate and bright, took it as a personal challenge that their little brother was so slow to grasp and use language. “What can this mean? Could our brother be retarded?” one sister asked the other. This possibility horrified the two bright girls. “No, of course not, intelligence runs in the Hines family,” the other replied confidently. Then they redoubled their efforts, offering a cookie if he would only say ‘cookie’ or holding out a daisy: “Say ‘flower,’ Donald” but to no avail. The sisters were perplexed.

After two years had passed, Donald was toddling about, stumbling over rocks, and picking himself up, but he still was not talking. The two sisters relished showing young Donald how to climb over the fruit cellar, an underground storage room that formed a hump of sod in back of the farmhouse. Donald seemed to enjoy getting dirty. He’d wander towards the barn, drawn to the animals. The pigs delighted him with their playful, noisy good humor. The cows had a quiet, contented demeanor that calmed Donald’s naturally nervous nature. Their dog Sarge suffered Donald’s rough, clumsy love. The collie lay contentedly while Donald climbed over him and took comfort in his

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thick fur. His favorite, though, was the magnificent Belgian, Old Jim, the huge, tireless draft horse that worked in tandem with the big mare Nellie to pull the plow, cultivator, rake and planter. Donald crowed with delight when his father lifted him high and put him onto the gentle Belgian for a ride. Donald was king of his world. He never wanted to come back down to earth, and he protested loudly when his father lifted him up, over, and, alas, back down.

A Midwestern farm is a wonderland of forested hiding places, buttercup carpets, and sycamore sentinels. Goldia and Mozella had built a tree house in an old oak tree behind the barn where they took their treasures: pretty rocks, mysterious arrowheads, wildflowers, and cocklebur furniture. The cocklebur weeds had sticky balls with purple flowers that offered endless possibilities for dollhouse furniture. They gathered bags of cockleburs to take up into the tree house, where they'd sit cross-legged for hours making purple-upholstered chairs, sofas, and other tiny objects for their miniature kingdom. One sunny afternoon their mother Dora taught the girls how to make hollyhock dolls. "You see, Goldie," Dora said, "Pick the flower from the stem, turn it over, and you have your doll's skirt." Their mother continued: "Try this, Mozell. Cup a second smaller flower over her head, and you have a fancy headpiece fit for a princess. See, she even has eyes." Entranced, the sisters made hollyhock dolls all afternoon, taking the best up to their tree house for a royal ball in the evening.

Donald had little use for hollyhock dolls but loved to look for fun and adventure outdoors. Children who have freedom and opportunity to explore a farm are the blessed of the Earth. Donald and his sisters roamed over the fields, through the woods, and up to the rounded hill that their father called The Indian Mound. After supper they'd beg their

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father to tell them tales of Indian battles and stories of Iroquois tribal customs. Ora told them tales of tribal warfare and explained how the young braves would earn honor by counting coup, a daring maneuver to find a way to touch your enemy without hurting him. He showed them how to use flint to make a weapon. They found arrowheads galore, each one representing a brave warrior. Donald's favorite Indian tale was about the dogs who saved their master, a story about a faithful, brave dog and his mates who killed a monster that was threatening their Indian companion. Donald especially liked the very brave dog who talked, but when the valiant dog died suffering grievous injuries at the end of this graphic legend, Donald grew silent and sober. Tears filled his eyes. They knew he understood the story. Why wouldn't he talk? Mozella was certain her brother was just stubborn and contrary. The children loved playing in the yard under the enormous oak tree with the swing hanging from the lowest branch. They pushed Donald in the swing, higher and higher, hoping he'd beg them to stop. Instead of calling out "STOP," Donald fell out of the swing onto his head. This accident seemed to Mozella to be a premonition. Her little brother had an alarming predilection for falling out of, getting hit by, and running into things. He picked himself up, looked around, and went about his business, unharmed at least for the moment.

When Donald was two and a half, his brother Walter was born, complicating Donald's life but giving him at last a reason to say something important. Gazing in wonder at this new miraculous creature, Donald looked straight into his sister's eyes and said, "B-b-b-brother"; it was a triumphant but alarming moment. His sister said, "Donald, repeat after me: BROTHER." Again, Donald said, "B-b-b-brother!" His sister tried again; maybe something easier would be better. "Donald, say BABY." Little

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Donald repeated, “B-b-b-baby.” Mozella didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “Mom, come quick, Donald is talking!” Donald’s mother, Dora, dried her hands on her apron, came over, smiled at him and said, “Say ‘Momma,’ Donald.” Donald obediently said “M-m-m-m-momma.” He smiled ecstatically. Dora’s smile faded. “No, Donald, say ‘Momma’; now do it right.” Donald’s face fell, then contorted. “M-m-m-momma!” His mother frowned and returned to her work. Donald took refuge in their big, furry collie, put his arms around the dog’s neck and contemplated his own flawed existence.

Unfortunately, Donald’s parents subscribed to the popular method of child rearing neatly summed up in the biblical warning: “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” When Donald tried to stammer out a word, he would suffer a swat or a severe look of disapproval. His world grew dark and oppressive. His persistent sisters continued to try to teach him the “right” way to speak, but he became morose and solemn. He tried so hard to please everybody, but it never seemed to work. “L-l-l-leave m-me alone,” Donald said more and more frequently. Making his situation worse, his kid brother Walter was learning to talk quickly. Walter was cheerful, genial and easy-going. He spoke precisely and developed a natural wit early on. Everyone loved little Walter. “Look, Donald, isn’t Walter cute? He likes to talk to us.” Donald’s refuge was good old Sarge, their ancient collie. He’d sit and hug Sarge, patting his head and combing his thick, tawny coat with his hand.

When Walter was still an infant, their parents had to go away on a business errand, so they decided the older children were competent to watch him until they returned. Goldie, Mozell, and Donald loved to play rowdy games, and all Walter did was sleep, so Goldie looked around for a safe place for Walter to sleep, out of the way of their

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tumbling and chasing. She and Mozell found a hollow stump where they calculated he would be safe. They carefully placed him in the stump wrapped in a blanket. Off they went, playing follow-the-leader, stick ball, and games that led them further and further away from Walter. When their parents returned and asked how Walter was doing, they looked bewildered. None of the children could remember where they had put Walter. The search was on. Ora and Dora looked high and low. Walter was nowhere to be found. Fear gripped their hearts. They decided he must have wandered off and gone to a neighbor's house, so they rode over to Covey's to check there. Walter had not been seen there, but Mr. and Mrs. Covey volunteered to help look for Walter. They scoured the neighborhood until dusk descended, and Dora was in a state of panic. Suddenly, they heard a faint wail, a distant crying, and they followed the sound to the stump, where young Walter was just waking up, wondering what had happened to leave him all alone in an empty world. Donald took the blame. After all he was Walter's big brother.

Toilet training was a nightmare. Donald couldn't control the appropriate muscles, and his parents were growing frustrated and angry. He'd have to sit on the pot for hours before bedtime, contemplating his sorry weaknesses, bored insensible. When he had a certain amount of success, he'd still wake up on a wet sheet, his mother frantic, his father full of the wrath of a helpless parent. Too often Ora would resort to spanking his son and make Donald take his wet bedclothes down to his mother, where she would scold him again and despair of her older son's basic life skills. "What am I going to do with you, Son?" Donald had no answer for that. One morning Donald slept late. When Dora went in to see why he wasn't up yet, she found the sheets dry. When she shook Donald, he

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opened his eyes, smiled, and she noticed a bulge in his pajama bottoms. He had stuffed a towel into his pajama pants.

Donald, his sisters, and his sunny brother Walter loved to play lively games: hide and seek, take a dare, red rover, and their favorite way to pass the long, gray winter days indoors: chickamee, chickamee, craymee crow. This rowdy game involved chasing each other around a stationary object, trying to grab the one in front and pull the leader down. Laughing riotously, the four children dashed around the red-hot parlor stove. Walter called out, "Catch me, Catch me!" Donald stumbled and fell into hot coals, burning both hands and causing considerable chaos and consternation. "Donald, why can't you stay out of trouble?" his mother asked. She favored home remedies, but the lard applied to the burn seemed to make the pain worse. She and her husband Ora felt they couldn't afford expensive trips to the doctor's office, so minor accidents were treated with questionable salves and unreliable, home-grown cures. Donald's skin never healed properly, and his stuttering grew worse.

Donald's father tried desperately to teach him useful skills and a respect for hard work, but the harder Donald tried to please his dad, the worse he bungled the job he'd been given. Ora would carefully show Donald how to hoe beans, but invariably Donald would dig up the healthiest bean vines and overlook the worst weeds. His father grew more and more impatient with the boy: "Donald, yer talent for work is pitiful. I don't know what we're goin' to do with a lazy, good-fer-nuthin' boy like you. Y'er a disgrace to the family." Donald, hanging his head, longed for freedom from this constant criticism and his parents' hopeless expectations. He envied Walter, who couldn't do anything wrong and never failed to amuse and delight.

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One afternoon their Uncle Hobart had been visiting and left behind a pack of cigarettes. Donald found them and surreptitiously slipped the pack into his pocket. Seeing Walter coming through the back screen door, Donald signaled to his brother: “Psst, W-W-Walter, l-l-look what I f-found.” Donald proudly showed Walter the forbidden prize and motioned for him to follow him out to the barn. The two boys sneaked through the barn and found a secluded spot behind a haystack. Donald tapped the cigarette pack expertly on his fist the way he’d seen Uncle Hobart do it, knocking a cigarette out onto the ground. Walter picked it up warily. Donald tapped the pack again and put a cigarette into his mouth, glancing at Walter to make sure his younger brother was properly impressed. “See, W-Walter, h-h-hold it b-between your t-t-teeth like this.” Donald had also remembered to bring matches he had filched from the kitchen. He found a rock and struck the match, holding the flame against the end of the cigarette, trying to suck the air in the way he’d seen Uncle Hobart do it. Dropping the match into the hay, he struck another one to light Walter’s cigarette. Failing again, Donald tried again, dropping the failed match into the hay and striking another match and holding the flame close to Walter’s cigarette while his burned in his other hand. At last both boys were puffing and coughing, while smoke curled beneath them in the haystack.

Around the corner their father suddenly appeared, looming like an Old Testament patriarch. He shouted, “Are ye boys crazy? Ye’ll set the barn on fire.” Ora snatched a bucket from the cattle tank, dipped it into the water and threw it onto the hay, soaking both boys in the bargain. “So, you wise guys think ye need to learn to smoke, do ye?” Ora dragged both boys into the house, where he dug out two cigars from his box. He gave one to Donald and the other to Walter. “Now, boys, ye want to look like men?”

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Smoke these.” Ora took the boys out to the porch, gave them each a chair and lit the cigars. A mighty fit of coughing and choking ensued as Donald sucked in air. Walter, more timid, couldn’t keep his cigar lit, but Ora obliged, lit it again, and instructed both boys: “Now, ye’re to smoke those stogies until there’s nothin’ left but a stub.” Donald looked forlornly at Walter, who was trying mightily to look nonchalant. They were feeling fortunate that their Dad hadn’t given them a whipping, but soon Donald realized a whipping would have been getting off easy. He said to Walter, “I f-f-feel sick.” Walter too was turning a pale shade of green, but their father came around periodically to check on their progress: “Now, Boys, smoke those cigars like men. Keep at it.” That evening Donald and Walter were in bed early. Neither boy wanted supper. Deathly ill, they vowed never to touch demon tobacco again. They never did.

The boys loved the work horses their father prized. They would beg to be allowed to brush and curry their coats. Ora let Donald, who was older, feed the huge Belgian beasts and give them water. He warned the boys never to get behind the horses, but late one afternoon Donald was daydreaming while he hung around Old Jim, his father’s favorite. As Donald finished his chores, he became curious at a rustling sound in the hay at the horse’s feet. Crawling to investigate, Donald startled Old Jim, who kicked his back leg, smashing into Donald’s head, knocking him unconscious. Donald lay on the barn floor, inert, unaware that he was doomed to lie helpless for hours. His father had gone into town for feed. When Ora returned, he brought Belle, his trotting mare, into the barn. He waited until his eyes adjusted to the gloomy interior shadows, then he led Belle to her stall. He spoke to Old Jim, who didn’t move, and suddenly realized Donald was lying at the Belgian giant’s feet. Ora quickly knelt and shook the boy: “Donald, what

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happened? Answer me, Boy.” Unable to respond, Donald appeared dead, and raw fear stabbed Ora’s heart. He lifted him carefully and carried him into the house, placing him on their bed in the one big bedroom downstairs. Dora met him at the door. “Whatever happened, Ora? Goodness gracious, he looks dead.” Ora nodded and looked up, tears in his eyes. Mozella and Goldia came running down the narrow stairs from their attic room. “What happened, Dad? Is Donald hurt?” Walter watched, frightened and worried, wondering if it had somehow been his fault.

Belle was still wet and worn out from the trip into town, but Ora hitched up the young mare again and set off to get the doctor. Why is it always after dark you need the doctor? Ora wondered. He urged the horse on through the night, hoping the doctor was home. Doc Kernodle answered the door in his nightshirt, looking frazzled, but he quickly dressed and hitched up his trotting mare to the buggy. Ora led the doctor back to the farm, opening the front door for him and motioning the girls to stay out of the way. The doctor examined the motionless boy, recommended bed rest and fluids. He left the family desolate. Ora complained: “How are we supposed to give him fluids if he’s out cold?” Dora calmed him the best she could: “Ora, now, I’ll get him to swallow water or juice or soup. Don’t you fret. He’s bound to come round in the morning.”

Donald didn’t come round the next day, or the next. Dora was frantic. “Ora, you’ve got to get the doctor back out here for our boy. He might die.” Donald’s father in desperation went again for the doctor. “Doc, my son ain’t respondin’ and he’s still unconscious. You need to come do something.” Dr. Kernodle said, “Now Ora, have you been giving him fluids like I instructed?” Anger flared in spite of Ora’s determination to remain calm. “Doc, my wife’s been tendin’ to Donald day and night, trying to get soup

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or something down his throat. Donald's not coming around. You doctors don't know yer arse from yer elbow." Dr. Kernodle, a fun-loving bachelor, had developed a certain amount of patience, but Ora irked him with his back-woods arrogance.

"OK, Ora, keep calm. Let me get my bag and I'll meet you at your place." The doctor was recovering from a long day in his dusty office where patients from all over Eel River Township came to be treated. They'd sit for hours to wait their turn in the bleak, simple waiting room, hoping Doc could make their lives better. Some came with sinus problems, dreading the ordeal of cotton stuffed up their sinus passages, the flushing out and the discomfort. Others had more serious troubles: high fevers, tumors, eruptions, aches and pains of uncertain origin, but Doc had a treatment for everybody. Children liked the doctor. He was a free-spirited soul who enjoyed teasing and putting them on: "See this hand, no thumb?" Then he'd pull the reappearing thumb trick, making them laugh. He knew many string games and slight of hand tricks to entertain his smallest patients. Giving shots was the big challenge, but Doc's nurse Hester was also an expert at entertaining his little patients. Her perpetual smiles and bottomless bowl of candy were ready for distracting a crying baby or soothing a frightened infant. Doc's patients found themselves looking forward to the smell of alcohol and mysterious drugs, the clean scent of sterilized equipment and starched uniforms. At the end of the day, however, Doc Kernodle was flat-out tired and in no mood to deal with a house call patient whose state of unconsciousness was a puzzle to him. He couldn't remember anything like that in his medical books.

When doctor and father arrived back at the farmhouse, Dora was frantic. "Doc, our boy is still unconscious. He hasn't moved, nor made a sound. What's wrong with

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him? He's pale as chalk." Donald's two sisters and little Walter were distressed and bewildered. "What if next time it's me?" they each thought in their own private world of childhood worry. The doctor once again examined the lifeless boy. It was so far to the nearest hospital, the little fellow would likely not survive the rough, bumpy roads in a buggy or wagon. Once again night was coming on, and the doctor was stumped. "I'll give him a shot to make sure the kick in the head didn't cause an infection. Come to the office tomorrow and let me know how he's reacting." The doctor left, his horse's hoofs trotting out a cadence that faded into the dusk.

The family ate supper in silence. Dora served the ham and navy bean soup in big bowls with cornbread and milk. Walter wouldn't eat anything, and the girls nibbled at the cornbread, swinging their feet under the table. Ora ate hurriedly, then left the table to finish up the evening chores at the barn. Dora sent the girls and Walter upstairs to get ready for bed, but Walter hesitated: "Mom, do you think Donald's gonna' die?"

"Certainly not, Walter. Donald is just sleeping. When he's ready, he'll wake up."

"But Momma, he isn't eating anything, and he won't play with me anymore."

"Walter, you get to bed and stop worrying. Donald will be all right in the morning." She went to make up cots for her and Ora to sleep near Donald.

Dora and Ora took turns sitting beside Donald in the big bed, trying to get him to swallow water or soup. She thought of all the times the boy had tried so hard in vain to speak without stammering, had struggled to please his father in spite of Ora's stern, unforgiving nature. She worried that Donald had not grown as a normal boy should. He was short and seemed almost stunted. It was her family, she concluded. The Pratts were short. The members of the Hines clan were tall and sturdy. There must be some kind of

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maternal family curse. Dora thought his eyeballs moved behind his eyelid toward morning, but she couldn't be sure. She figured she was so tired that she was probably imagining things. Exhausted, she finally lay down for a nap.

Mozella woke her with a start. "Mom, look! Donald is trying to open his eyes. His hand just moved! Wake up, Momma!" Goldia came running in, and Walter peered cautiously around the corner. Dora lifted her head off the pillow and stared at her oldest son, who did indeed seem to be coming back to consciousness. "God be praised," she breathed hopefully. "Walter, go out and get your father. Quick!" Walter ran as fast as his legs could carry him and found Ora in the stable. "Dad, come quick. Hurry! Donald is trying to talk. He's awake...just like Mom said." Sarge began to bark frantically.

Ora dropped the bridle and hurried through the back door, past the well, ignoring the tin cup although he was thirsty, and went straight to Donald's side, speaking directly to his son: "Well, Donald, did you decide to wake up?" Donald looked bewildered. He seemed to be trying to speak. Walter smiled and edged up closer to his brother: "Hey, Donald, you're alive!" Mozella watched her bed-ridden brother from across the room, afraid to speak to him for fear the spell would be broken. It seemed like a miracle. Goldia took Donald's hand and said: "Donald, we've been so worried. Why didn't you wake up?" Donald looked more perplexed than ever. His eyes fixed onto the violent picture on the wall to the left of the big bed in his parents' bedroom. He saw four wild white horses, nostrils flaring, seeming to stampede out of the frame. He closed his eyes, relieved at the dark escape. The horses terrified him. Then he remembered how he loved that old picture. His mother prayed in a whisper, and the dog barked excitedly from the porch. Sarge sensed that an amazing event was going on just beyond his canine world.

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Donald grew stronger as the days passed. His mother and father were solicitous of him, and his sisters showered affection and gifts on him. Mozella brought him her latest arrowhead. "Look, Donald. Some Indian brave left that behind to give you courage." Goldia made him a cocklebur teddy bear and proudly presented it to him. Both girls had started school and begged their mother to allow them to read to him. Mozella began reading Gene Stratton Porter's book "Freckles" to Donald. She had found it among the library books brought to the school by The Reading Circle wagon, a county effort to bring library material to rural central Indiana school children. Mozella began: "Donald, pay attention. This writer lives in Indiana, and this story is about an orphan boy named Freckles. You're going to love this story." So began Donald's fascination with the Limberlost swamp region of northern Indiana. Mozella was a good reader, and whenever she came across a word unfamiliar to her brother, she would try to explain it. Walter hung around whenever his sisters were reading to Donald and tried to soak up the stories. "Hey, Donald, that was a swell story, don't you think?" Donald didn't answer.

It was Walter who first discovered that Donald had lost his hearing in his left ear. He'd ask Donald a question and not get an answer. Then if he moved around to his other side, Donald would respond. Walter asked his sisters, "Do you think maybe Donald's ear got hurt when Old Jim kicked him in the head?" Mozella had wondered about Donald's hearing too. She had to sit on his right side when she read to him. As long as he was in bed recovering, she could read and know he heard, but when he was able to get up and become active again, she asked if he wanted her to keep reading to him. Donald eagerly urged her to keep up the reading aloud. "Yeah, M-m-mozell, I really like "F-f-freckles" but y-you know, m-my left ear is d-d-dead or something. It f-f-feels real st-stopped up."

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So Mozella made sure she sat on his right side when she read to him. Later, when school officials arranged a hearing test for the first graders, they discovered Donald was stone deaf in his left ear. Old Jim had done more permanent damage than they'd realized.

On Saturday nights their father would pack up his fiddle and disappear. The children asked Dora, "Where is Dad going tonight, Mom?" Dora replied that their father was a fiddler for the Saturday night dances at the community center in North Salem, a small rural town five miles south down State Road 75. The children begged to go with him, but their parents were adamant. "The dances are not for children," Dora told them emphatically. Occasionally they'd hear Ora playing his fiddle, getting ready for the following Saturday night, but he wouldn't talk about it. A cousin whispered once that there was drinking going on at those dances and once in awhile a fight would break out. The fiddle tunes became part of Donald's being, and he longed to play some instrument.

He liked to sing and would try to learn the songs his mother sang while she worked. He liked to hear "Pretty Red Wing" and in spite of sad, disturbing lyrics, he liked to sing a heart-rending Irish ballad he often heard his mother sing in her mellow, alto voice: "No baby's cry can awaken her from the baggage coach ahead." Donald's mother sang old Irish songs and Scottish ballads as she did her routine chores. Donald couldn't help but learn "Beyond Bonnie Banks and Beyond Bonnie Braes" and "Isle of Inishfree." He realized as he sang the songs he loved that he never stuttered when he sang. His favorite was "Oh, Danny Boy"; he and Mozella would sing, and his mother taught them how to harmonize, a delight and wonder to him. He would belt out "She's the most distressful coun-ter-ree that ever I have seen. They're hangin' men and women for the wearin' o' the green." His sisters laughed, but he asked his mother a serious

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question. “M-m-mom, why d-did they hang those p-people?” Then Dora would wipe her hands, sit down in the rocker, and tell the children sad tales of the downtrodden Irish under the oppressive rule of the English. Then she added an ironic family aside that stuck with Donald his whole life. Your grandmother would have turned over in her grave if we had worn green. The Pratts were all Protestants and wore orange. We’re Scots-Irish, you know.” Donald pondered this and felt a little guilty that he still identified more with those underdog Irish who wore green in defiance of the British.

When the time came for Donald to go to school, his mother took him and his sisters into town to buy school clothes. Money was tight, and she was frugal, but the parents were proud and concerned for their reputation in the community. No one wanted to be thought of as “poor folks” or “white trash” so it was important to dress properly. Ora hitched up Belle to the surrey; the family piled in and off they went in the early morning. “Momma, can I buy a red dress for first day?” This was Mozella, who loved bright colors. “Maybe Mary Janes would be good to go with it.” Dora had seen pictures of girls’ shoes with a strap across the arch and feared they wouldn’t be sturdy. “We’ll see, Mozell; don’t get your hopes up. We have to see how far our money goes.” Goldia, the oldest, was proud of her good sense. “I’m going to look for practical clothes that will last all year. Oxfords are better for your feet, Mozell.” Donald and Walter were too busy watching for horses and admiring the cattle as they neared Lebanon to think much about school outfits. Walter was along for the ride anyway. He knew he wouldn’t be going to school for two more years, but the trips into town were a rare occasion that thrilled him. Ora hitched the horse to a post in front of Fulwider’s Department Store, and they all piled out. In the window was a red plaid dress with a white collar that filled Mozella with

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longing. “Oh, Momma, look at that dress. It’s perfect! Let me try it on. Please?”

Donald and Walter were looking bored already, so Ora decided to take them with him to the hardware store around the corner. “We’ll meet you ladies at Frank and Judy’s at 1:00 and have lunch, OK?” The boys danced a jig around their father.

“All right, Ora, we’ll meet you there.” Mozella and Goldia were entranced with Fulwider’s. It smelled of new cloth, leather, and varnish. The wooden floors were rough and uneven but spotless. The salesladies looked elegant. Mozella was startled by a musical clang as the change cylinders slid down long wires from the offices above the sales floor. “Mom, what is that?” asked Mozella. Dora explained the process of giving correct change and having a system for running the business from the offices above in a private mezzanine area. Goldia had spotted a tweed skirt that she wanted to try on, but Mozella was concentrating on the red plaid number in the window. “Please, Momma, ask that lady if I can try it on. Do you think they’ll have it in my size?” Dora approached the clerk and asked for the dress in her daughter’s size. The sales lady disappeared and returned with the dress. Mozella thought it looked perfect. Dora took the girls into a dressing room. Mozella put the dress on and examined her reflection. Somehow it was disappointing. Dora examined the price tag and her heart sank. It was more than they could afford, but she thought Mozella’s heart was set on the dress. “Well, Mozell, do you think this dress will do you for school?” Making a quick decision, Mozella, said, “Yes, Momma, it’s good quality, and it’ll do.” The sales lady wrapped it and put it carefully into a Fulwider’s shopping bag. Goldia chose the tweed skirt and a matching sweater, which also went into a store sack. The saleslady put an official-looking piece of paper into a pneumatic tube, and off it went.

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After they all had lunch, Ora bought the children ice cream sodas. It was the first soda Walter had ever tasted, and his eyes danced. Dora reminded Ora that Donald still needed school clothes. “Yes, it’s time we got him knickers and a good sweater.”

Dora added: “He needs sturdy school shoes most of all. His old shoes are worn out. That boy is so hard on shoes.”

Ora said, “I’ll take the boys to Moore’s and meet you ladies back here in fifteen minutes in front of the shoe store.” The salesman in the men’s clothing store was so aloof that Donald couldn’t wait to get out of there. He made Donald feel unworthy, as if he didn’t deserve new clothes. Maybe he thought he was too good to wait on farmers, Donald thought to himself. Donald tried on brown tweed knickers that were a little loose, but he’d grow into them. His father picked out a tan vest for him, and they left. The shoe store had Buster Brown in the window, so Donald strode confidently into the store where his old comic-strip buddy presided. The salesman determined his shoe size and adjusted brown lace-up boots onto his feet and assured them they would last all year. Donald wanted to wear them home when he saw how poor and worn-out his old shoes looked alongside his new chocolate-colored boots. As they left the shoe store, Donald had a sinking feeling. His new stiff leather shoes were pinching his toes. He didn’t dare say anything but felt sick that he’d made a big mistake. His mother saw his sober face and assured him that new leather shoes must be “broken in” for a few days. Donald nodded, but as they walked to their buggy and horse patiently waiting to take them home, Donald’s feet began to hurt. All that money wasted, Donald thought. He caught a glimpse of himself in the store window and wondered for a second who that short kid was.

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Chapter 2 The Hendricks School

First Grade and Phonics but Don would not try it.
Stuttering when he spoke, he preferred to be quiet.

Teacher said to Lefty, "Write with your right!"
Don said, "Yes Ma'm," then failed, try as he might.

Book Van visits school, sisters love picking books.
Don checks out the Van; he loves the way it looks.

* * *

Fall was the best time of year, in Donald's opinion. He thrived on the cooler, brisk air and pungent smell of newly cut hay. The first day of school was hectic. His sisters were excited but nonchalant as they ate a hot breakfast of pancakes and bacon. Mozella reminded Donald to speak clearly and watch his posture. "You should try to make a good first impression, Donald," she advised him. "Your teacher will be Miss McKinnon. She's very nice." Goldia disagreed, "Miss McKinnon is dull and she's too lenient. She can't control the bad kids." "No, Goldie, Miss McKinnon just tries to encourage all the children to participate." Dora noticed the time and hurried the children along. "The school hack will be out front in five minutes. Hurry up and finish. Don't forget to wash your hands and comb your hair." Grabbing their lunch sacks, the three older children dashed past Walter, who stood watching from the sidelines, hoping some day to be as grown up as his brother and sisters. The horses tossed their heads as the driver stopped at the end of the Hines lane and waited for the three to board the hack. Donald felt shy as he noticed several children he'd never seen before sitting on both sides of the middle aisle. They eyed him with curiosity as he found a seat by himself in the back. His sisters called to old school mates from the year before and plopped down

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beside their friends. The driver called out: “My name’s Fay Scott and I don’t allow no misbehavior. If you’re good, we’ll get along just fine. Gid’yup, Polly, Gid’yup, Peg.” The children never argued with Mr. Scott, and they loved the horses.

The first day of school was a revelation. The children sat at wooden desks with holes in the upper right-hand corner of the lid for ink bottles, grooves for pencils and pens. The desk top opened to store books and supplies when they weren’t being used. Everything smelled new. There were two stoves for burning wood, one at each end of the schoolroom. Donald couldn’t take his eyes off the deep grooves carved into his desk by former students. Eight grades sat together in the schoolroom: first graders on the far left and eighth graders the far right facing the teacher. A large blackboard spanned the front, and the teacher’s desk stood on a platform slightly elevated. The teacher, Miss McKinnon, started with a morning greeting and pledge to the American flag. She had printed her name carefully on the blackboard for the first graders and urged the older children to help the newcomers feel welcome. She started with phonics for the youngest students, sounding out the letters on the board and having the students repeat after her. She gave them practice printing to put in their copybooks. The second graders reviewed a story they remembered from the year before, and Miss McKinnon taught them the beginnings of cursive writing. The third grade students were starting a simple history of America, and the teacher got them started on Chapter 1 by having them read aloud, then to themselves silently. She assigned several math problems to the fourth grade and reviewed multiplication with the fifth graders. The sixth graders were restless, and Miss McKinnon had to discipline Tommy Kincaid for sailing a paper airplane, but she soon had them at the board doing long division. The seventh graders were already reading a

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bright blue history textbook, the only brand-new text, called “World History for Young Americans,” and the eighth graders were assigned the first chapter in their literature anthology “Literary Visions.” Donald was mesmerized. He tried to print the letters into his copybook from the blackboard, but the teacher quickly came over and corrected him. “Donald, you should use your right hand for printing. Here, try it.” And Miss McKinnon took the pencil from him and put it into his right hand. She moved on to help another student, while Donald, embarrassed and awkward, fumbled with his pencil and tried to make the letters neatly. No matter how hard he tried, his right hand wouldn’t work, so he covertly went back to printing the capital letters with his left hand. Twice more the teacher corrected him, but Donald invariably slipped back into writing with his left hand. The teacher was becoming exasperated and students noisy. To the relief of teacher and students, lunchtime arrived. The teacher rang a brass bell, and chaos erupted.

The children pushed and hurried out the side door onto the playground carrying their lunch pails. Picnic tables were scattered around, but there didn’t seem to be any vacant seats. Donald found a big rock, sat down, and took out his cheese sandwich. He looked around at his classmates. Everyone except him seemed to know the others. He watched the older kids playing games and eating exotic sandwiches, fruit, cupcakes, cookies. His cheese sandwich seemed to him the depth of boredom. He was embarrassed by his brown paper sack. The other children all seemed to have lunch pails. His new shoes hurt his feet, and his knickers felt uncomfortable. His sisters were ignoring him like everybody else. Maybe it was because he was printing with his left hand in class, or worse, it must be because he looked foolish. Across the playground he saw the little girl that someone had pointed out as the daughter of the school bus driver.

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His heart beat faster. What a beautiful girl! Her delicate features and blond braids captivated him. She was perfection. When she looked in his direction, Donald quickly became absorbed in his cheese sandwich. He glanced at her again, but she stuck her nose in the air. Donald felt abandoned and lonely. He fed scraps of his sandwich to a couple of birds who seemed to know the territory, and breathing a sigh of relief, he heard the teacher's bell signaling afternoon classes.

He was already bored, his mind on roaming the woods and catching crawdads in the creek. The teacher gave the first graders numbers to copy into their notebooks, and before he could think what he was doing, Donald began printing with his left hand again. Miss McKinnon, openly exasperated with him, said, "Donald, I have spoken to you several times about using your right hand for printing. Please switch hands and get to work." The teacher soon was absorbed in reading with the eighth graders, and Donald tried to make the numbers with his right hand, but the fingers seemed to belong to somebody else. Soon he slipped back into his left-handed sacrilege. Suddenly behind him was the teacher with a piece of rope. She was tying his left hand in back of him. Students all around him began giggling, whispering to each other behind their hands. The humiliation was too much for him to bear. Fay Scott's beautiful daughter would be laughing at him like every other student in Miss McKinnon's God-damn school. He was pleased to remember the most satisfying curse word he'd heard his father use. He thought about the word over and over, surviving the afternoon until the teacher rang her bell. I'm never going back, he thought.

That evening at the supper table, Mozella and Goldia told on their miserable brother, and young Walter listened sympathetically as Donald tried to explain that he'd

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forgotten the teacher's order not to use his left hand. "It w-w-was so m-m-much easier to use my l-l-left hand," he whined. "It just s-slipped up on m-m-me. She d-didn't have to embarrass m-me l-l-l-like that." His mother and father were also embarrassed. Dora said, "Donald, you must mind the teacher." His father didn't say anything, but Donald could feel his disapproval. Walter asked, "Did it hurt to have your hand tied behind your back?" Donald admitted that it hadn't hurt, except for his feelings. He began plotting various illnesses to avoid having to go to school.

Next morning the girls were up early, happily getting ready to leave for school, but Donald had pulled the quilt up over his head. Walter was playing with blocks in the corner and noticed that Donald wasn't up yet. "Hey, Donald! Aren't you going to school?" Walter shouted. Their father, coming in from morning chores, heard Walter and caught Donald trying to scrunch back under the sheets. "Get up, Boy!" he shouted. "What in tarnation do ye think yer adoin'?" Donald frantically grabbed his clothes and pulled them on the best he could under the circumstances. His mother, who was busy in the kitchen, added: "No time for breakfast, Donald. I packed your lunch. Get going." His sisters were already heading out the screen door to wait for the school hack. Donald snatched the brown bag from his mother, hair uncombed, face unwashed. The school hack was coming around the corner just as he made it to the end of the driveway. Fay Scott hailed him with a hearty, "Mornin', Donald, You're lookin' a mite flustered. Didjya oversleep?" Snickers met Donald as he climbed the wooden steps to make his way to the back of the hack. Mr. Scott slapped the reins on the horses' backs and the load of children made its way inexorably to the Hendricks School. Donald shuddered with dread. How could he face his classmates? How could he face that pretty little girl?

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Miss McKinnon was ringing the school bell when the horses halted in front of the brick schoolhouse. Donald hung back and was the last one to enter the dark, forbidding portals. It made him think of a story his sister Mozella had told him about an Inferno, where sinners were punished for eternity. Hoping to be invisible, Donald sunk down into his desk seat and tried to remember to use his right hand to print. Miss McKinnon was evidently in a cheery mood, and after awhile Donald lapsed into a daydream featuring the adorable little daughter of the school hack driver. He was escorting her to a picnic. She was gazing lovingly, approvingly into his eyes. “Donald!” The teacher’s harsh voice pierced his dream bubble. Oh no! He suddenly realized he’d been leaning on his right hand and printing the letters with his left. Miss McKinnon marched to her desk, took out the humiliating rope, and proceeded once again to tie Donald’s left hand behind his back while the students erupted into giggles and mocking laughter. Donald had visions of grey prison walls and endless dark, murky hallways with no escape, his arms and legs tied with dirty, hateful rope.

At first Donald thought it was an accident, but then he realized the Pennington boy was throwing spitballs at him. He looked around to see Jack Pennington smirking at him and making an obscene gesture. Donald had heard about the Pennington gang, three brothers who lived on the edge of Jamestown. Rumor was that their older brother, maybe twenty, had been in jail and their sister...well, Donald didn’t understand much about that, but he’d heard to stay away from the Penningtons: Jack, Mack, and Zack – and Ruby. Donald thought you couldn’t make something like that up. But then there were his own parents: Ora and Dora; rhyming names weren’t that uncommon. Jack was in third grade and his brothers had stayed back and were both now in fifth grade. Donald resolved to

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keep as much distance between them and himself as he could. Recess and lunch were his least favorite times of the school day. Miss McKinnon rang the bell for lunch and everyone filed out. Donald was the last one out since the teacher had to untie him. As he ate his lunch on his lonely rock, he noticed to his horror that Jack and his brothers were coming over to him. “Hey Donald, How’s it feel to be tied up, hmmm?” Donald didn’t respond, and Mack gave him a shove, nearly knocking him off the big rock.

“H-H-Hey, St-Stop it,” Donald shouted.

“You tryin’ to get us in trouble? Maybe you need to be taught a lesson,” Zack threatened.

“Yeah, better watch yer back, Shorty,” sneered Mack. The teacher was moving closer, so the Penningtons swaggered away, but Donald was sick with fear. Now what?

Those adults who remind the younger generation, sometimes at commencement, sometimes at the drop of a hat, that their school days are the best years of their lives are not only repeating a bald-faced lie. They are exposing their own shallow lack of empathy. Maybe they were the swaggering bullies or the nasty rich girls of their own alma maters. Shy youngsters know only too well what a cursed, oppressive place school can be. Victims of mockery, teasing, and disdain are familiar with the cruel trick of turning a person’s best qualities into shameful flaws. A polite boy is called “Sissy” or “Teacher’s Pet”; a studious girl is taunted with “Geek” or “Nerd.” Where do generations of children learn the sing-song, derisive “Nya, nya, nya-nya nya?” Who teaches young, innocent human beings the insulting names that cut other children to the quick: “Dummy, Fatso, Fag, Egghead, Dunce, Creep, Jerk, Shorty, Girl?” Donald remembered Mozella’s grumbling about boys using “Girl” as an insult. “You Girl,” a bully snarls at another boy.

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Why should “Girl” be an insult? Mozella had wondered. His sister was clearly outraged. Donald couldn’t think of a good answer.

Could it be that the confident kids really do remember school as the best years of their lives? Donald was thinking about school’s disappointments following a painful, infuriating scene that transpired right after school. He had alighted at the end of their driveway from the school hack, joyful, free as a bird again, anticipating a few hours of liberating outdoor romping with Walter. His sisters couldn’t wait to tell Mom and Dad about Donald’s humiliation. “The teacher had to tie Donald’s left hand behind him again. She warned him too, but he just keeps on doing it wrong.” His mother called: “Donald, you come here this minute.” As Donald hung his head, Dora scolded him: “Don’t you realize, Son, your school days are the best years of your life? You’ve shamed your family.” His father came in the back door in time to hear his wife’s lament about family shame.

“What’s goin’ on around here now?”

Dora’s instinct was to shield Donald from her husband’s unpredictable anger. “It’s a problem Donald’s been having in school. He’s left-handed, and the teacher’s trying to teach him to use his right hand. She thinks he’s just stubborn.”

Goldia spilled the whole humiliating story: “Teacher told Donald to print with his right hand, but he went right ahead and used his left hand, after she reminded him again. He stutters too and won’t try to speak clearly. Miss McKinnon keeps telling him, but he won’t try to talk the way he’s supposed to. All the kids think he’s a dunce.” His sister took a deep breath and smirked in her superior way. Donald kept his head down but hated her self-satisfied, righteous tone. Why couldn’t she keep her mouth shut?

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Ora shouted, "Donald, ye're a heedless, lazy boy. If ye can't even mind the teacher, what good are ye ever goin' to be? Come out to the well house with me, now." Their father didn't use the strap very often, but the times he did were written on their young minds, remembered indelibly by the bruises and welts. Donald was the brunt of most of his father's wrath and punishment. Donald tried to "Be a Man" and not give his father the satisfaction of his tears, but it was hopeless. The tears came with every whack, and with the punishment came the assurance that he was a terrible disappointment to his father. After his father allowed him to pull up his pants, Donald disappeared upstairs to nurse his injuries. The walls of his tiny bedroom closed in on him. He felt as if he couldn't breathe. The air wasn't getting to his lungs. Jeannie Scott would never like him now, so what use was school? Life wasn't worth the trouble. Despair filled his every fiber and flowed through his body like poison.

How he ever got through that first year of school young Donald couldn't have explained. He continued to lapse into his sinful left-handedness whenever the teacher forgot to tie the offending hand behind his back. He dreaded the teasing and mockery of the children around him, especially the class bullies. How could each class have its own appointed bully? They seemed to be randomly scattered around the schoolroom just waiting for him to do something stupid or awkward. Whenever the teacher's back was turned, spitballs flew toward him. At recess no one chose him for a ball team or picked him to be on her side in red rover. The humiliation of always being the last chosen was a pit of despair. He thought of Mozell's book *Pilgrim's Progress* and the main character encountering obstacles and nearly falling into ditches and pits. He liked the sound of

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“The Slough of Despond.” He wasn’t too sure what a slough was, but he guessed it must be like quicksand or a pit full of snakes. He wished he could fill the slough full of bullies and watch them drown in their own spit. He longed for summer skies and even yearned for spring chores, anything to get him free from those four walls of confinement.

Second grade was an improvement. His father had decided that he was old enough to help with major farm work: plowing, planting, and raking on top of his routine chores, so spring and summer were taken up with dawn to sunset labor. His father would say, “Come on, Donald, y’er growin’ up fast, and the farm don’t run itself.” Back to school didn’t sound so bad; at least he could sit down once in awhile. Miss McKinnon had finally broken him of using his left hand by the end of first grade. His mother had continued making him practice printing his letters and numbers in the warm summer evenings. She kept an eye on him while she did dishes and made sure he was using his right hand. Life was so tedious. Summer was made for roaming and collecting, running and exploring. He admired Will Rogers, who spun lariats, did rope tricks, and told funny stories. He bet old Will Rogers hadn’t wasted his childhood printing the alphabet and plowing the back forty. So his second year at the Hendricks School began with an optimism based on contrast. It would be a rest from farm work, and he’d show the others how strong and tan he’d grown over the summer.

How can a boy live without hope? He’d tried hard to pay attention and get his school work done, but his speech defect and shyness continued to make school an ordeal as the days crawled by. One bright morning, Mozella woke Donald up with a big smile and eyes to match. “Wake up, wake up, Donald. Today is Reading Circle day. The library lady from town is bringing us lots of books. Come on. Get up.” Donald groaned,

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but Mozella persisted. “Mom’s got breakfast ready. Get your clothes on and hurry up.” Mozella danced away, and Donald tried to open his eyes. How could his sisters be so positive about school? They were girls; that was it. Girls were naturally suited to school. Boys weren’t. It wasn’t fair.

Donald began to stir, putting on a sock, knowing his choices about school were limited. He yawned, daring to hope that today would be an improvement on the disaster that school was proving to be so far. He smelled breakfast, a heavenly combination of coffee, bacon, eggs, pancakes, and maple syrup. His sisters were arguing about the library’s annual event: “Why don’t they let us choose more books? We never have enough to last all year,” Goldia grumbled.

Mozella was grateful that the librarian came around to their little school at all. “You know what I heard? They’re bringing the books around this year in one of those horseless carriages!”

“No! I don’t believe it. How can they get enough books into one of those automobiles?”

“I don’t know. Maybe they’ll have a wagon hooked on or something. Come on. We’re going to miss the school hack. You know Mr. Scott won’t wait.”

Once again, Donald dashed out the door, the screen banging behind him, no time for breakfast. His mother had put his lunch bag into his fist as he left and handed him an egg sandwich. At least he wouldn’t starve. The Scott horses pulled up at the front post just as the children made it to the end of the driveway. “Mornin’, Kids. Beautiful fall day, ain’t it?” Donald’s sisters found their friends and sat down. Donald stumbled over a boy’s foot as he made his way to the back. “Hey, w-w-watch it,” he called out. Giggles

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engulfed him. Oh, no, he thought, here goes another day just like the others. He sat by the back window and watched the fields flow by, cattle grazing in the morning light, the creek winding through the poplar and hickory trees. His heart ached to think he'd be spending a perfect fall day inside those four dusty walls, ducking the teacher's scrutiny, trying to avoid talking aloud. How was school going to help him succeed in life? He wanted to own a business, marry a pretty girl, buy a big farm and get rich. How in Sam Hill was printing and reading, adding and subtracting going to help him do all that? Lost in his daydream, watching a Cooper's hawk soar and swoop overhead, he was the last one to enter the building again. Miss McKinnon eyed him critically: "Come on, Donald. Don't dawdle." Then she smiled. "We have an exciting day awaiting us today."

Donald struggled to reply: "Y-y-y-yes, Miss M-M-Mc-Kinnon." He found his desk, sank into his seat, and opened his notebook. After the morning exercises, the teacher looked out the window and announced: "Look, children, it's the Reading Circle van, and this time there are no horses necessary. This is the 20th Century, the Century of the Automobile. The children whispered to each other breathlessly, trying to see the modern vehicle. The teacher restored order, and in the door came two young ladies dressed in fashionable skirts with bustles, matching hats, gloves, hair swept up into Gibson Girl coiffures, and high-button shoes with French heels. They were carrying books and smiling at the students. Donald's sisters were ecstatic. What elegant ladies! Mozella was already thinking of books and authors she'd heard of that she hoped they had brought with them. Donald too was captivated by the two girls. These young women were graduate students from Central Normal College in Danville, earning credits toward their education degrees. They had the enthusiasm of the young but the mature

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appearance that collegiate life cultivates. The children were entranced. Goldia was trying to memorize the way their skirts draped from their narrow waists and their posture enhanced the stylish outfits. She had made up her mind: teaching school was to be her goal in life.

Miss McKinnon lined the children up by grades. They were allowed to pick out four books each for their school library and bring their choices to the teacher's desk. Mozella eagerly looked for Gene Stratton Porter and found *Girl of the Limberlost* and *Laddie*. She was thrilled beyond words to be surrounded by books. The authors called out to her: Mark Twain, Sir Walter Scott, Ring Lardner. Carefully lifting her Porter novels off the van shelf, she looked for two more. Mark Twain would be a good choice. She found *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the latter fairly short and the Joan of Arc book thick and intriguing. Mozella's heart was pounding and her pulse racing. She felt as if she held a treasure in her arms. Donald was more interested in the book van itself. It was a Reliance truck, nearly new, that had been rigged out to haul books on makeshift shelves. He sneaked away from the crowd of students inside the traveling library to admire the shiny hood and chrome trim. He was captivated by the running board and retractable windscreen. The Horseless Carriage: what an invention! He had heard about Henry Ford and his revolutionary Model T, the car for everyman, in any color you want, as long as it was black. His father liked to read the newspaper aloud at the dinner table, and he remembered hearing stories about the "churchmobile," a Catholic Church rig that carried mass to mission sites around a Texas city, maybe Dallas. His father had made some cynical remark about the wealthy Papists, but Donald's appetite was keen for more knowledge about these vehicles. Retractable

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steps allowed the children to climb safely into the back of the truck to pick out the books. Donald had no idea which books to choose, so he selected four slim volumes, looking for colorful covers with dogs or horses on them.

Each student could check out one library book to take home, so Mozella checked out *Girl of the Limberlost* and Donald checked out a thin book about dogs. Goldia found a book by Charles Dickens. On the way home, his sisters were eagerly rehashing the bookmobile adventure, discussing the visitors' fashionable clothes and elegant manners. Donald watched a herd of sheep in a neighbor's field as the school hack bumped along the gravel road toward home. His head was full of dreams of driving a horseless carriage, maybe inventing new devices to make the cars and trucks easier to drive and repair. He had heard their father discussing the possibility of buying a used Oakland a neighboring farmer wanted to sell. He had his heart set on a Model T, but anything with four wheels would be fine with him. With the Great War going on, he wanted to be ready to serve his country, maybe drive a military truck or, better yet, fly one of those Sopwith Strutters he'd heard his father read about in the Indianapolis Star. The Allies needed young men with real courage, and Donald was headed for 3rd grade. He couldn't wait to tell Walter about his plans to learn to drive.

The year Walter started to school was a banner year for both boys. Walter's relaxed and humorous approach to life made his transition from outdoor fun to school tedium easier, and consequently, Donald's school days grew sunnier. The four of them had a rhythm going: up early, barn chores for the boys, hot breakfast for the whole family, hearing the newspaper stories for the day from their father while they ate, their mother making sure they didn't forget anything. "Here, listen to this," his father

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announced: “Montana elects first woman to the legislature. Jeannette Rankin will represent the western state in Congress. See there, Girls, there’s opportunity for everybody in this country.” Goldia was fourteen and already planning to attend the teachers’ college in Danville as soon as she was allowed to enroll. Her ambition was to teach at Hendricks School as soon as she was qualified. Mozella, at twelve, considered herself a teenager as well and hoped to attend Indiana University, but she knew their financial constraints might limit her education to the economical Central Normal College too. She asked her father, “What news is there about the war?” Ora sighed and said, “Too much killing. These German zeppelin bombings are destroying England.” Donald thought someday he’d fly over Germany in one of those biplanes and put a stop to their war machine. He was impatient. I’m so small, he thought; it’s not fair when my country needs me. The War seemed a million miles away. President Wilson was doing his best to maintain a policy of neutrality for the U.S., Ora insisted, but they listened intently when their father read from the Star about Prussian atrocities, the German submarines, the Hun menace.

Walter was such a likable kid that some of his appeal rubbed off on Donald, who was now in 3rd grade with the higher status that entailed. The trouble was that the two brothers loved mischief and were tempted to devise ways of making the school day more entertaining for everybody, except the teacher. One chilly morning Walter ran to catch up to Donald, who was waiting for the school hack to arrive. “Hey, Donald, look what I’ve got.” Walter opened a paper sack carefully, hiding it from their sisters, who were absorbed in school gossip. Donald smiled to see a fat handsome toad. “What d-d-do you p-p-p-plan to do w-w-with him?” Walter’s eyes lit up. “While Miss McKinnon is talking

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to the big kids, I'm gonna put it in her bottom drawer, y'know where she keeps the erasers. She'll be surprised all right."

Donald laughed, imagining the teacher's reaction. "OK, W-W-Walter, but don't get m-m-m-me into t-t-trouble. I'm in en-n-nough trouble with M-miss McK-k-kinnon already."

"Don't worry, Donald," Walter reassured him. "I figgered it all out. It'll be a cinch."

When the school hack arrived at the school, Miss McKinnon was ringing her bell, smiling at her students as they came through the door. Walter whispered to Donald, "She's in a good mood; this'll be easy. Watch." While Miss McKinnon chatted with one of her favorite 8th grade boys at the front entrance, Walter slipped to the teacher's elevated desk with his innocent-looking brown sack, opened the bottom drawer, and dumped the chubby toad onto the erasers, shutting the drawer silently. Walter moved so stealthily and looked so innocent that only Timmy Gochenaur saw it happen. As Walter slid into his seat, he saw Timmy watching him. Walter put his finger to his lips, signaling silence, while Donald watched, impressed with his little brother's audacity. Where did Walter get his comic skill? How could he maneuver so gracefully? Why was he able to elude the teacher's sharp eye when Donald could never escape her vigilance? He knew he'd never be able to pull off a caper like this one.

The morning passed quickly, and nothing out of the ordinary happened until Timmy was called to the blackboard. He finished his arithmetic problem, and then said, "Miss McKinnon, this eraser is covered with chalk. I'll dust the erasers after school for you. Can I use a new one for now?" The teacher smiled her appreciation for his offer

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and reached down to open the bottom drawer. The poor toad, which had been trapped in the strange, dark place all morning, leaped frantically at Miss McKinnon's face, landing in her lap. She shrieked and jumped out of her chair, frightening the toad, which began leaping from desk to desk. It was desperate to escape the pandemonium. Laughter and shouts erupted all over the room. Little girls were screaming, trying to get away from the creature. Jack and Mack Pennington were exploiting the chaos to push and grab at Donald and Walter, who looked worried in spite of his big grin. Boys were trying to catch the toad, knocking over ink wells and bumping into the flag stand. The teacher rescued Old Glory before it hit the floor and shouted, "Order! Children, take your seats. Take your seats right now!"

The toad fortunately leaped toward the light and fresh air, finally escaping through the door to freedom. Miss McKinnon caught her breath, brushed her hair away from her face, straightened her dress, and grabbed her pointer. "Now, children, the toad is no longer in the schoolroom, and whoever put the toad in my drawer will be punished. Please resume your lessons." By this time it was noon, and the teacher, breathing a sigh of relief, rang her lunch bell for the lunch hour, relieved to see the students filing out to the playground. She caught her breath and began to devise a plan for catching the perpetrator. This had to be pinched in the bud. There was only one of her and over forty students, the older boys stronger than she was by a long shot. She searched the desks for clues but couldn't see any incriminating evidence until she spotted a brown paper sack on the floor next to Donald's desk. It couldn't be a lunch bag since the students were all outside eating their lunches while two of the 8th grade girls supervised. Walter had dropped the bag in the aisle in his haste to escape detection. Miss McKinnon picked it up

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and thought about the situation. She wondered if this might have been Donald's retaliation for her punishing him. She'd hated to do it, but he simply wouldn't use his right hand for printing or writing, and she thought she'd be doing him a favor by forcing him to write the normal way. She had read that tying his left hand behind him would eventually achieve results. She was already convinced that his stammering and sullen looks were ways to get back at her. Ignoring her own lunch, she decided to deal with the culprit right away: "Strike while the iron is hot." The old maxim gave her determination. She went to the door and spotted Donald sitting alone under a tree, finishing his lunch.

"Donald, come in here, please," Miss McKinnon called from the doorway.

Donald's heart sank. Oh no, he thought, I knew I'd get blamed for this. His mind raced. How could he protect Walter while defending himself? He was innocent, or at least no more than an accomplice, but Timmy was as guilty as he was. The teacher closed the door quietly and looked Donald in the eye: "Donald, did you put the toad in my desk drawer? I want the truth." Donald felt tears coming, held them back: "N-n-no, M-Ma'm, I d-d-didn't. Honest."

"All right, Donald, if you won't admit what you've done, I'll have to keep the whole student body in detention after school." Donald didn't say anything more but hung his head and felt despair wash over him. There was no justice. Life wasn't fair. What was he going to do? After the teacher rang the bell to resume classes, she announced that unless the guilty party confessed, the students would all be held for an hour after school to serve detention. A loud chorus of groans washed over Donald.

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“But Miss McKinnon,” Fern Jordan protested, “my daddy and I have to go to the dentist right after school’s out.” Fern was the class brain, a straight-A student who had considerable influence with the teacher. This time, however, the teacher was firm.

“That’s too bad, Fern,” the teacher replied, “Unless the student who disrupted class confesses, the group will have to be punished. That’s final.”

Donald was watching his little brother’s face. Walter was on the verge of tears. He rarely cried, but when he did, Donald couldn’t stand it. The older brother suddenly stood up, “M-Miss McKinnon, it was m-m-m-my f-f-fault. I’m s-sorry.”

Miss McKinnon looked relieved. “Donald, come up to my desk.” She took out her ruler. “Put your left hand on my desk.” Donald did as she instructed. The teacher hit his hand as hard as she could three times. “All right, Donald, you will spend the rest of the day in the corner.” Donald was incredulous. The dunce chair? He was only trying to protect Walter. He thought of the soldiers in the war who were captured and tortured by the enemy. This couldn’t be as bad as that. He’d have to practice being brave and stalwart. Stalwart? The word just popped into his head, but it seemed to fit. What did it mean anyway? He’d ask his sisters after school. The afternoon, however, was endless as he stared at the rough, whitewashed wall. He noticed that there were gaps between the chimney and the roof. The wood stoves that heated the schoolhouse were going full blast to counter the November chill. Maybe the school would catch on fire and all the kids would escape except for the Penningtons. He felt better.

Miss McKinnon talked the trustees into hiring another teacher to work with her since the township population was growing. Donald liked the new teacher because she was a math whiz and let Donald work on problems instead of endless cursive. When the

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class recited, she'd let Donald go to the board and do an addition or subtraction problem but wouldn't make him say a word if he didn't feel like it. Miss Rawlings was funny too. She'd make jokes about school and tell them stories about Indiana history. She knew poems by James Whitcomb Riley and recited them from memory with a back country accent and sound effects. Donald was amazed at how quickly the time passed compared with the year before. She also knew about Will Rogers. She'd tell them the latest newspaper story about Rogers. "Did you hear Will Rogers is in the Ziegfeld Follies? He just talks about newspaper headlines and makes fun of politics while he does rope tricks." She lived on a chicken farm near the school and one day told them how to be a chicken farmer. "You go out with a mouthful of marbles. If you stumble, you spit one out. When you've lost all your marbles, you're ready to be a chicken farmer." Donald had never laughed so much in his life. Even Uncle Milford didn't make him laugh as hard as Miss Rawlings did.

Chapter 3 Christmas 1916

Walter pulled Don into the “Toad-gate” crime,
But Walter’s not caught and Don did his time.

Family buys a black Oakland on the birthday of Don.
With a box, pedal extender; and training, Don’s gone.

Tipsy dancing Doc was “a stompin” on Ora’s feet
Ora smashes fiddle on Doc – blow is bittersweet.

* * *

Donald was a sleepwalker. Sometimes his father or mother would find him walking blindly through the kitchen in the middle of the night. He could make his way down the narrow stairs from his attic bedroom without falling, but sometimes he ran into a chair or stumbled over the dog. His parents had heard that it was dangerous to wake up a sleepwalker, so they were careful to guide him back to his bed without disturbing his sleep. One night Donald woke Walter as he went out the door and down the stairs. Walter followed him out to the barn, where Donald took a bucket, dipped it into the cattle tank, took the bucket of water across the barn lot, and dumped the water into the pigs’ trough. He put the bucket back on its hook and made his way in the dark through the back hall into the kitchen, up the steep stairs and back into his bed. Walter was so baffled he couldn’t get back to sleep. What did this mean? Was his brother abnormal? Since Donald had saved him from their teacher’s wrath, Walter had felt obligated to his big brother. He resolved to do something nice for him.

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Donald's birthday was Christmas Eve, so any celebration was overshadowed by the big holiday, Christmas. Walter waited until Donald was absorbed in a Zane Gray novel he was reading upstairs for a book report. "Psst, Mozell," Walter beckoned to his sister, who was engrossed in Saturday reading herself. "Donald's birthday is coming up in a week, and we ought to do something special for him." Mozella agreed, but they were stumped trying to think of something he'd really like. "How about a Zane Gray book?" Walter asked. "He really likes reading westerns."

"No, Walter, he can get those at school."

"OK, how about a BB gun?" Walter was certain that was a corker of an idea.

Mozella was horrified: "Walter, Dad would have a conniption fit if we gave Donald a gun. Are you nuts?" Walter couldn't think of anything else but made his sister promise to tell him if she thought of something.

Winter was a difficult time for the family. They anticipated the weekend even though much of it was taken up by farm chores. Caring for the livestock was more time-consuming, and the bitter wind blew down from the north, making it hard to keep the cattle tank from freezing over. The brothers had to bundle up in their bulky jackets and thick gloves to do their routine chores. The horses needed more care, and the pigs had no warm mud to ease their humdrum lives. Milking the cow was a major battle in winter. Donald had to bring Bessie back from the farthest corner of the field, where the ornery cow balked, turned and did an end run, tossed her stubborn head, and forced Donald to chase her toward the barn again. Once in the stall, she switched her tail repeatedly at the boy, resisting his efforts to rub salve on her cracked udder and sore teats. Finally the milk came, but often the cow kicked at the bucket, forcing Donald to grab it before the

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milk spilled onto the ground. He knew the family needed the milk: their diet was built around the butter, cream, skim milk and cheese. He cringed to think of his father's anger and made every effort to avoid spilled milk, but sometimes the cow was too quick for him, and he'd have to take the brunt of his father's wrath. "What in Sam Hill's the matter with you, Boy? We need the milk. You have to watch that cow."

The boys lived for the weekends. Saturday night dances relieved their father's dour depression and constant demands. They'd hear him playing his fiddle, rehearsing the familiar dance tunes, Irish, Scottish, Appalachian jigs and reels, weepy ballads and waltzes for slow dancing. They yearned to go with him and see the neighbors flinging off their puritanical ways for one night. It was hard to imagine it. They'd heard stories about the antics of their uncles and neighbors. They'd even heard gossip about fights breaking out when jokes or insults spun out of control. As Christmas approached and Saturday drew near, Donald and Walter asked if they might go to the holiday dance coming up. Their father automatically gave his accustomed answer: "Nope, Boys, those dances are for adults. Children would be bored." The two sisters chimed in, "But Dad, this is Christmastime. Why not let us go just this once? We like to hear you play your fiddle. Please?" Their mother overheard and decided to intervene: "Why not, Ora? The children have studied hard and brought home good grades this term. The girls are teenagers. The boys are young but know how to behave. We'll all go."

Ora had an announcement before he gave his permission: "This Christmas was to be special. I had a big surprise for you. Since you've talked me into this foolishness, I'm going to give you your Christmas present early. It'll be Donald's birthday gift as well." Ora went out the door leaving the family looking at each other bewildered. What could

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he be talking about? They heard the mare trotting away down the lane, then silence.

“Mom, what’s going on?” Goldia asked. “I don’t know, Girls. Your father’s been secretive lately.” A few minutes later, they heard an unfamiliar chugging and coughing coming up the drive. Running to the window, Walter cried, “Look! It’s Dad driving a car! Come quick.” Donald couldn’t believe his eyes. There was a shiny, black sedan big enough for the whole family to ride to the dance, or anywhere else for that matter. They all ran out onto the porch. Ora opened the car door, stepped out onto the running board, and called out, “Well, do you want a ride or not?” The children climbed into the back seat while Dora walked cautiously around the back of the car to the front passenger seat. “Wait, Dora, let me open the car door for you,” Ora said.

Donald asked, “Dad, is this the Oakland Mr. Beam wanted to sell you?”

“Yes, Son, I finally saved up the money. It’s an Oakland, all right.”

Donald never forgot that first trial run in the Oakland. In spite of the dust from the gravel road, the feeling of exhilaration was new. His father proudly took them to see their Uncle Jim, pulling into his driveway and honking the comical horn twice. Their relatives were duly impressed but skeptical. “Well, Ora,” Jim started in, “it may be the latest thing, but give me a good team of horses any day.”

Aunt Gertie protested: “Now Jim, you’re just jealous. The horseless carriage is going to take over. Wait and see. Dora, you all come in and sit awhile. I just made coffee and there’s some cake left.”

“We’d like to stay, but the dance is tonight, and we decided the whole family’d go to celebrate the holidays.” Ora had his brother Jim turn the crank so he’d see how easily the engine started. They watched as Ora used the reverse pedal, backing out of the

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driveway with only one hand on the steering wheel, the other resting on the back of Dora's seat so he could see behind him. Donald was wild with desire. He wanted desperately to drive this car, so he began to scheme ways to grow taller faster. He'd heard about vitamins. He'd eat more. That should do it. Meanwhile the dance was beginning in only a few hours.

Ora had mixed feelings. The car could be a mistake, but it was paid for and he'd wanted one of these horseless carriages for a long time. He felt self-conscious about taking his family to the dances for which he played and earned a little extra money, but at least they were going in style. Dora made sure the children were dressed in their best. Mozella wore her red plaid dress. Goldia was decked out in her long, green velvet skirt with a high-necked white long-sleeved blouse. Donald and Walter had to wear their knickers but felt grown-up in sweater vests. Their father was elegant in his traditional dance-night suit, and their mother had her hair swept up on top of her head. They thought she looked as excited as any of them. As they left for the dance about dusk, Sarge barked forlornly. This was new. Leaving him alone on Saturday night? Sacrilege!

Arriving early, they piled out of their new car proudly, looking for neighbors. A few farmers were there setting up tables inside the community center, leaving a dance floor vacant in front with room for the musicians in front of that. Women were putting food out on tables along the left side of the large room. Ora spotted the neighbor who played guitar and greeted him warmly. "Howdy, Sam. Howzyer wrist?" Sam had played the week before with a wrist sprained from a farm accident.

"Much the better, Ora. Thankee kindly. Are ye ready fer yer buddy Doc tonight?"

Ora's face darkened but he kept up the banter: "Oh, he don't bother me none, Sam. Say, Sam, have you met my family? This here's Donald, our oldest son, and his brother Walter. Right here's Goldie and Mozell, our daughters. You know m'wife Dora, don'cha?"

Sam nodded his greeting to all and said, "I haven't seen Ned. We're gonna' need him on the bass fiddle."

"Oh, he'll be along directly. Don't worry yerself about Ned." Just then Doc Kernodle walked in. "Doc's had a few already, if I'm not mistaken. Anybody spike the punch? We'll have to keep the kids away from it."

"Haven't seen, but it always seems to happen along about Christmas time."

"Ok, let's warm up. You kids find yerselves a seat and be good, y'hear?"

Ora began tuning up, and Doc shouted, "Say, Ory, you step on a cat's tail?" His raucous laughter filled the room, and Ora clenched his jaw.

The crowd was filling the room. Donald looked around to find a friendly face from school. His heart stopped. There was Fay Scott and his family. His pretty daughter was sitting primly, talking with her mother. Should he go over and say hello to her? He decided against it but sneaked a glance her way. He caught her eye and she smiled. Then he saw their teacher. He said to Walter, "Hey, l-l-look there. It's M-Miss M-McKinnon. Y-y-you stay here and I'll b-b-bring you a g-g-glass of punch." Walter said OK and hoped the music and dancing would start soon. The fiddle struck up "The Teetotallers," a reel with lively cut time rhythm. Then the guitar and bass joined in, sending the dancers on a rollicking reel set. Without taking a break, the band launched into a jig Donald recalled as "Lark in the Morning." Walter was entranced. Hearing their father practicing

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his fiddle at home was nothing like this. The fiddle caught the spirit of the dancers who began clogging two at a time in a joyous whoop. Doc Kernodle was dancing with Miss McKinnon, and she was transformed. Her hair was up and her cheeks were flushed; her eyes danced as she whirled around the floor. As Doc rounded the corner nearest the musicians, he stepped on Ora's foot and laughed. "Oops, sorry, Ory." The band worked up to a final crescendo and finished with a flourish. They segued into a waltz, and Doc hung onto Miss McKinnon for dear life. As "Star of the County Down" mellowed the spirits with its contagious $\frac{3}{4}$ time, Doc maneuvered Miss McKinnon toward the fiddler, and again Doc landed on Ora's foot. "Uh oh, beg pardon, Ory," Doc said. The evening wore on, and Walter began to nod. His eyes wouldn't stay open. Donald also felt very sleepy. His mother and sisters were chatting with neighbor girls and their parents and ignored the boys. After more jigs and reels, the fiddle launched into a dreamy waltz that threatened to put the boys under for good. As Donald's eyes drooped, he caught a glimpse of Doc again dancing closer and closer to his father. He was doing this on purpose, Donald realized. Sure enough, Doc's foot landed squarely on Ora's, and before anyone knew what had happened Ora smashed Doc over the head with his fiddle. The music came to a crashing halt. Without a word, Ora grabbed his fiddle case, stuffed the cracked fiddle into it, nodding to his wife and the children to follow him. They drove home without a word spoken. Donald's father never played his fiddle again.

Christmas Eve was a solemn occasion for the family. Dora had planned a traditional feast with baked chicken, sweet potato pie, green beans, hot rolls, and peach pie, but after they ate, nobody felt like celebrating. Donald went out to tend to the livestock: to feed the cows and pigs and make sure the water hadn't frozen over in the

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tank and troughs. He marveled at the new snow and the frozen branches on the trees, but his heart was heavy from the scene at the dance. What on earth had possessed his father to break his precious fiddle? Now it had a crack down the back and had no resonance. Mozella had determined to learn to play it, but she'd have to find a way to buy a new one if she planned to be a violinist. Maybe their Uncle Roy Pratt would give her lessons. Everyone admired his talent and knew he planned a career in music. He might be able to find a fiddle for her. Donald finished his chores, his face hurting from the cold wind, and went in the back door. Walter was grinning like the Cheshire Cat. "Hey, Donald, did you think we'd forgotten your birthday?" Donald looked bewildered as they gathered around him. "Hang up your jacket and take off your boots. Come into the parlor. We all have a surprise for you." Donald walked in to see his Uncle Milford and his father smoking their pipes. His mother was knitting, and his sisters were sitting cross-legged on the floor as if waiting for something to happen. Walter jumped up and handed Donald a small package wrapped in newspaper. "Sorry about the lousy wrapping job, but anyhow, Happy Birthday!" The girls sang "Happy Birthday" and even Walter joined in. "Well, open it, Donald," Walter urged. "It was my idea, but they all pitched in to get it for you."

Donald carefully unwrapped the package, opened the red box, and stared. He couldn't believe his eyes. It was a silver harmonica, or at least it looked like silver. He smiled at his family and excused himself. "I think I'll g-g-go practice," he said. Everyone laughed, and Uncle Milford said, "By this time next year, Donald, we'll all be dancing to your French harp." Mozella stole a glance at their father, but he seemed to be enjoying Donald's pleasure along with the rest of them. Donald went upstairs to his room and experimented with his new gift. It took some getting used to, but he soon got

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the hang of it and was playing simple tunes. Here was something he could master. He'd work on his favorite songs until he could really play music. He thought about how school had discouraged him, but now he was sure he could conquer the world. One of his favorite Will Rogers quips came back to him: "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

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Chapter 4 The Great War

The US is off to war while Shorty heads to school.
His siblings seem so smart. Why is he a fool?

Uncle Milford wins the war aboard his Navy ship.
Now home, he takes his nephews on an Indy 500 trip.

Though the US wins the war; the League of Nations dies.
Wilson cannot sell it, no matter how hard he tries.

* * *

The children were mortified by the scene at the dance, but having that Oakland sitting in their driveway was compensation. Donald's birthday gift had cheered him, but his wild desire to drive the Oakland grew. When no one was looking, he would sit in the driver's seat and try to reach the pedals with his short legs, but then he couldn't see over the dashboard. He and Walter watched as their father put water in the radiator. "You see, Boys," Ora would say, "it's important to keep water in the radiator. If the car overheats, you can damage the engine." Their father stressed the value of maintenance, keeping the oil level safe and the tires correctly inflated. He taught the boys how to change a tire and where to fill the radiator.

One night Ora was awakened by a strange sound. He crept silently into the kitchen, seeing nothing amiss. Hearing the sound again, he followed the noise into the parlor. There was Donald in his pajamas, feeling his way blindly down the narrow attic stairs. Ora backed quietly into the kitchen watching the sleepwalker carefully stepping through the kitchen to the well house where he filled a gallon bucket with water. The boy walked back up the stairs with his half-full bucket, his father silently following in his

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footsteps. In spite of his caution about waking a sleepwalker, Ora grew alarmed as Donald approached Walter, sleeping in his small bed along the wall. He decided he'd better prevent a disaster. "Donald, what are ye doin'?"

"I'm filling the radiator with water, Dad."

Ora slowly and carefully took the bucket of water from Donald before he could dump it onto Walter's sleeping form. He put Donald back into his bed and went back to bed, marveling that Donald had not stuttered.

The next morning Ora read the newspaper to the family with great excitement. "Listen here, President Wilson is declaring war on Germany. Says here that German subs have been sinking ships right and left. *The Star* has Wilson's entire speech, his war message; he says, 'We have no quarrel with the German people.' The German farmers in Indiana will be glad to hear that." Sarcasm was an art with Donald's father, and he was learning to interpret his father's subtle inferences. The year was 1917, and the sinking of the British ocean liner *Lusitania* had been big news a year or so back, but this was even bigger from Donald's perspective. The USA was at war! He was in 4th grade and learning to love science. He couldn't wait to get to the chapters on engines and flight. He liked math too. School wasn't so bad. He'd study hard and be a pilot in the war.

He'd been reading about Eddie Rickenbacker, the racecar driver. His father had pointed out the Speedway Brickyard, the race track just twenty-five miles or so east of the farm. They had to pass it on the way to the stockyard, taking pigs to market. Donald remembered that Eddie Rickenbacker had been in the Indy 500 since he'd first heard his name. He'd never won, but Donald liked Eddie's attitude and his philosophy that honest dealings were more important than anything else. "Fast Eddie" was a pilot too and in the

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news because of his flamboyant personality and photogenic face. When Rickenbacker joined the service and became part of the famed 94th Squadron, the *Indianapolis Star* was full of stories and photos about his adventurous life. Donald was disappointed that they'd cancelled the Indy 500 because of the War, but Rickenbacker wouldn't have whined about it, Donald figured. He looked up to the popular daredevil and hoped to model his career after Rickenbacker's. He could hardly wait for the annual Pratt reunion. His Uncle Milford Pratt knew all about the War and Rickenbacker and the Indy 500. He'd ask Uncle Milford what he thought about his plans for the future.

The Pratt Reunions were yearly events that the children looked forward to with eager anticipation. Their aunts, uncles, cousins, and stray Pratts from all over the state gathered in the Lebanon Park to exchange gossip and insults. The girls loved to be the brunt of Uncle Jim's humor, and he always dished out the flattery: "Why, Goldie, you're so grown up I thought you were one of the ladies." Goldia tried to look unimpressed, but her uncle's comments made her blush. He'd say, "Mozell, how'd you get so purty bein' a Pratt and all?" The food was sumptuous, enough to feed Coxey's Army, as Uncle Hobart always said. Uncle Roy brought his fiddle and played for the gathering as the afternoon waned. He was hoping to audition successfully for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Meanwhile, he'd play jigs and reels for the girls. Cousin Margaret loved to dance to his fiddle tunes, and other cousins might join in as the mood struck them. The family legend about Samuel Clemens was an annual topic of surmise. "Where is Talitha Clemens Pratt's grave?" Aunt Mildred asked Lide. "Well, it's over in that patch of woods in back of the old Pratt Homestead just off the Jamestown Road. The whole family is buried there with her. There must be six or eight headstones. They say her

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father was Mark Twain's father's cousin. They came to Missouri from Kentucky back in the early 19th Century." So the legend grew, but nobody had dug up the documents to prove this illustrious connection. Aunt Gertie had gone up to the Allen County Genealogy Library in Fort Wayne, but she'd gotten discouraged at the required research.

The Pratt Reunion in 1917 was all about the war. They'd considered canceling the yearly gathering, but Donald's Grandmother Pratt had insisted it should continue. "We're not hindering the war effort by meeting in Lebanon," she'd said caustically. Goldia and Mozella enjoyed catching up on gossip with their cousins, Margaret, Ruth, Marjorie, and Esther. Cousin Wesley was still a toddler but already showing signs of being a prodigy. He loved to sing and listened intently to Uncle Roy's violin. His exceptional intelligence was evident in his questions and intense interest in the automobiles parked around the picnic area. Donald liked Wesley and tried to answer his questions the best he could. His Uncle Ora took Wesley over to the Oakland, lifted him up to look under the hood. "See there, Wesley, that's a 4-cylinder job with a hundred horsepower. That's a lot of horses, isn't it?" Wesley looked solemn; then he laughed.

The Pratts were arguing about the war. "Pres. Wilson could have maintained our neutrality," Uncle Roy said. Uncle Jim objected: "Now wait, this is our war too. The German government has over and over sunk our ships and harassed our trade. You can't let a bully push you around." Uncle Milford insisted: "It's the airplanes that's gonna' win this war, and it ain't gonna' be that German Flying Circus." Uncle Jim replied, "Yeah, the Strutters are starting to make a difference already. The Americans have crack pilots who throw caution to the wind. That's how we're gonna' beat those Germans."

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Donald had been waiting for his chance. His father lit his pipe and his uncles stretched, lethargic after eating too much good food. Uncle Jim loosened his belt a notch and settled back into a lawn chair. As Uncle Milford reached for another deviled egg, Donald edged over to him and asked: "Uncle Milford, what d-d-do you think about old Rickenbacker? D-D-Do you think he's gonna' race again after the war's over?" Milford smiled and said confidentially, "Don't you worry about Fast Eddie. Whether he's racing on the track or flying one 'a them Strutters, he's a real American hero." Don grinned at his uncle and ran off to find Walter. The men lowered their voices, "Been reading about Mata Hari? They say she's the best spy in the history of the world. Uses sex to get Allied secrets to the German high command and maybe vicey versey. Fearless, they say." The women usually avoided talking politics and weren't as interested in the war as their husbands, but Donald's sisters were listening intently while they pretended to be paying attention to their croquet game. Mozella said, "If I were a spy, I'd use a hollow book and pretend to be taking it to the Allied Commander. Nobody suspects a bookish girl, especially one wearing glasses." Goldia and Margaret were close to winning the round of croquet, but Margaret laughed: "Why is it that our mothers and aunts never talk and argue with the men?" Mozella replied, "They figure they'd have an unfair advantage. It's just good sportsmanship." Goldia said, "I admire Mata Hari. I'll bet she's making a fortune." The other girls looked shocked but secretly they had to admit Mata Hari was an intriguing celebrity. The newspapers and magazines loved people like her. She was probably rich.

Donald and Walter began paying close attention when their father read the paper aloud every morning. They were especially concerned about Uncle Milford Pratt, who

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was going off to the war. He was in the Navy and wouldn't have to fight in trenches, but there was no safe place on the battlefields and not even on the oceans, especially on the oceans. The German subs, the U-boats, were deadliest of all, if the stories in the papers were right. Their comical, wonderful Uncle Milford might not come back. It was a sobering thought, but the boys devoured the war stories: the doughboys, the Sopwith Camels, the Strutter bi-planes, huge tanks, Big Berthas, flame throwers, gas masks to protect soldiers against chlorine gas and other terrible chemical weapons the Germans were using. They heard Ora reading about a new ship called an aircraft carrier. It boggled their young minds. The US was bound to beat the Krauts, but who would have to die? Would they have courage if they were old enough to be in the military? What would it be like to drown with a shipload of your buddies?

At school as 1918 brought steady gains for the Allies and America, the teacher tried to instill patriotism in her students. With American victories capturing headlines, this part of her job wasn't difficult, but the war troubled the children. Timmy raised his hand, "Miss McKinnon, why are we fighting the Germans? My family came from Germany."

"Timmy, President Wilson has made it clear that we have no quarrel with the German people. German leaders let power go to their heads. We must fight tyranny and make the world safe for democracy." Wilson had known that a good slogan is worth its weight in gold, especially in politics. Here was an idea that school children could understand and remember. Walter was listening carefully, but he was uneasy and glanced over at Donald. How could a boy fight tyranny? It was just a word. How could guns and airplanes overcome ideas? How could killing people bring democracy? He felt

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guilty that he and his brother enjoyed the war. It was a puzzle that he couldn't put together. He and Donald had more fun pretending to be Eddie Rickenbacker than any peacetime hero. It seemed wrong to Walter that war was so much fun. Goldia's best friend Julie raised her hand: "Miss McKinnon, why did they execute Mata Hari?" The girls had been discussing the execution in hushed voices before school. "She was a spy," the teacher asserted and then changed the subject.

During the summer of 1918 Donald and Walter played war games exclusively. Their tree house was a Sopwith Camel, and they fought the aerial war from the hickory tree beside the red barn. Donald was Eddie Rickenbacker, flying his deadly bi-plane against the Germans. He was always skillful at eluding Archie. He couldn't get enough of the war's slang: "Here c-c-comes the d-d-deadly Sopwith Camel, d-d-dodging Archie, g-g-gunning down the Hun's F-F-Flying Circus!" Walter asked, "What's Archie?" The older brother loved to explain these things to Walter. "Archie is anti-aircraft f-fire. When F-Fast Eddie g-g-goes up in his b-bi-plane w-with the N-N-Ninety-fourth, he's in danger every s-s-second from Archie." Walter nodded. "Hey, W-W-Walter, d'you th-think you'll ever f-f-fly an airplane?" Walter just smiled his wry smile and shook his head. Donald said, "Some d-d-day I'm g-gonna' fly m-m-my own plane. W-W-Wait and see."

As the Great War began to wind down and America helped the Allies defeat the enemy, the children caught victory's fervent spirit. Donald and Walter couldn't wait to ask Uncle Milford a million questions when he returned home from the war. Ora invited his brother-in-law over for dinner one evening after Dora mentioned again how eager the children were to see him. In civilian clothes Milford looked older and not as impressive

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as his nieces and nephews remembered, but the boys were in awe of their sailor uncle.

“Did the Krauts shoot at you?” Walter asked.

Donald interrupted, “H-H-He was on a sh-ship, W-Walter.”

Uncle Milford smiled sadly: “Well, Boys, our ship did take some enemy fire, but the damage wasn’t catastrophic, thank the Lord.”

Walter said, “Did you see Eddie Rickenbacker, the Flying Ace, over there?”

Their uncle laughed, “Fraid not, Walter. Navy life isn’t as exciting as the news reels make out.”

Donald hesitated, but he impulsively asked: “D-D-Do you m-m-miss the w-war?”

The long silence embarrassed the boys. Donald was afraid he’d asked a question he shouldn’t have. Finally Milford sighed and said, “Sometimes, yes I do. You make close friends in war, and you miss your buddies. Civilian life can be mighty boring.”

Young Walter sensed that their uncle didn’t really enjoy talking about the war, so he changed the subject to the Indy 500 since he and Donald loved the races.

“Uncle Milford, did you ever meet Howdy Wilcox?

“Now, Boys, there’s a fella’ worth your time. He’s from Crawfordsville just west of us. He drove a Stutz in the 1915 Indy 500 and rumor is that he’s going to go for the win this year with a Peugeot. He’s a great guy, a real Hoosier.”

As Memorial Day, 1919, grew near, Uncle Milford, a Pratt bachelor who’d taken an interest in Donald and Walter, decided they needed a break from their farm chores. Ora had no interest in the racing sport, but he agreed to let Milford take the two boys to the races. Dora was hesitant, but she was proud of her brother and knew her sons admired their uncle. “Now Milford, make sure the boys behave. They’re not used to the

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big city.” Donald was so excited he could hardly eat. “Hey Walter, d-d-d’you think w- we’ll see old Howdy Wilcox? I m-m-mean, up c-c-close?”

Walter was eating a big breakfast, wolfed down his eggs and bacon, and looked up at his older brother: “Dunno, Donald, could be.”

The splendor of that day at the Brickyard was beyond words. The smell of the gasoline, the heart-stopping rumble of all those engines, the laughter and cheering of the huge crowd: Donald was transported. “L-L-Look, Walter, there’s N-Number 3. That’s H-H-Howdy!” Uncle Milford got the boys hot dogs, and they sat in the stands on the final straight-away before the pagoda. Donald thought the world had never looked so promising, so hopeful, so modern. He couldn’t believe the speeds, the bright cars splitting the air with their deafening roar, the terrifying risks every time the daring drivers sped around the oval, nearly bumping each other. Uncle Milford was at home, at last, and able to watch the Indy 500. The race had been cancelled because of the war the two years before, so here was a chance for racing fans and other patriotic folks to celebrate America’s victory. They were proud to attend the Liberty Sweepstakes, as the officials decided to call the annual race that year. The final laps brought such excitement that Donald thought he might not survive. He had to remember to breathe in and out. Howdy Wilcox was in the lead, lap after lap, and when the Hoosier flashed by in the lead the final lap, Donald heard a brass band playing a tune he had known since he’d learned to sing: “Back Home Again in Indiana.” Donald began to sing with the band and shivers ran up his spine as he heard the huge crowd all around them singing the Hoosier anthem with him. “When I dream about the moonlight on the Wabash, Then I long for my

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Indiana home,” the crowd, including Donald and Walter and their Uncle Milford, sang. Donald was wishing he had thought to bring his harmonica.

The next day was Sunday, and their father never read the fat Sunday edition of the Indianapolis Star until after church at Old Union. As they waited for their mother to put Sunday dinner on the table, mouths watering, smelling the stewed chicken and dumplings, baked rolls, and cherry pie, Ora turned to the sports page and read aloud: “Howdy Wilcox Wins 500”! Donald and Walter read over his shoulder as he continued: “Hoosier driver from the little city of Crawfordsville reached speeds of 100 miles per hour, racing to victory at this year’s Indy 500, dubbed The Liberty Sweepstakes. He came away with unprecedented winnings of \$20,000.”

Donald added: “Dad, y-y-you should’ve s-seen the c-c-crowd.”

Walter said, “Uncle Milford got us hot dogs and cream sodas too.”

Donald desperately wanted his father to understand how exciting the day had been. “D-Dad, Howdy was d-d-driving car #3. It w-w-was a Peugeot. Man-oh-m-man, could that c-car go!” He felt such a longing to experience that exhilarating excitement again. With the war over, peace time offered different opportunities. America was on the move, Donald had heard over and over. He’d have to move with it. He vowed to do better in school. That was where he’d have to start.

When the Treaty of Versailles was signed, Miss McKinnon explained the part President Wilson had played in writing his Fourteen Points and used the civics discussion to explain the importance of learning to compromise. Goldia asked, “But why didn’t the United States sign the treaty?” The teacher couldn’t give a clear answer. “The U.S. Senate wouldn’t approve the Versailles Treaty.” Fern’s hand went up. “Excuse me, Miss

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McKinnon, shouldn't the United States join the League of Nations?" Miss McKinnon said, "America should avoid entangling alliances and world organizations. We can protect ourselves." Donald couldn't understand why the President's desire for a League of Nations was unpopular in America. He and Walter, young as they were, had heard Uncle Milford, after he returned from the war intact, talking sadly about the destruction and waste of nations fighting each other. Wouldn't a league of nations help keep the peace? The boys, in spite of exuberant enthusiasm for the airplanes, the battles, the powerful weapons, were at heart pacifists.

Chapter 5 The Oakland

Don's suspended for fighting Mack, a "bully son of a beech"
Dad supports his son's brave action. Mom serves cobbler of peach.

When tires go flat, radiator boils, the bolting of horses near,
In keeping the Oakland running, Don proves he has no peer.

Blizzard of '21 takes the life of a tiny calf's mother.
Family saves the little guy, raising it like a brother.

* * *

Goldia had shown her remarkable ability to absorb education in great quantities in short periods of time and had earned her associate's degree from Central Normal Teachers' College before she turned eighteen. This allowed her to fill a sudden vacancy at the Hendricks School after Miss McKinnon ran off with Billy Kennedy, a handsome officer who'd returned from the war and persuaded her to become Mrs. Kennedy. She was somewhat older than Billy, but his status as lieutenant and the snazzy uniform made up in a semblance of maturity what he lacked in years. Small rural schools like the Hendricks often found it difficult to replace teachers in mid-year, but Goldia's timing was excellent. She had been riding to classes with an older school chum every day and studying at night for a year and a half in order to qualify as a teacher in the state of Indiana. The college had allowed her to double up courses, and she'd done well with the heavy load. She went to see the head trustee, Fred Huckstep: "Mr. Huckstep, I'm here to apply for the teaching job that's just gone vacant at the Hendricks School. I have my transcript and three letters of recommendation." Fred had known Goldia for years and could see no reason not to hire her.

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Goldia's brothers had mixed feelings about their sister's new position. They figured things couldn't get too much worse. School was school. Mozella was skeptical. "Goldie, how are you going to be fair with your own sister and brothers in your classes?"

Goldia replied, "Mozell, when have you ever earned anything lower than an A in any class? You can help me organize the lower classes and even teach sometimes. We can be a team."

"OK that might work out, but Walter is shy and Donald has severe speech and writing problems. How can we deal with that?"

"Don't worry, Mozell, I won't play favorites or show any preference for Walter or Donald. You'll see. I'll be as fair as any teacher ever has been."

With their sister teaching school, Walter and Donald kept to the same routine. The brothers still rode the school hack, which had not been replaced with a school bus since the county found it more economical to leave things as they were for the time being. Mozella also rode with her friends in the hack, but Goldia took the trotting mare and their two-seater, a light buggy sometimes called a brougham, so she could maintain her new status as teacher. As the school year got underway, the 8th-grade boy who had served as janitor dropped out of school, and the trustees appointed Donald janitor since he had made a reputation in the community for hard work and reliability. He could ride home after he completed his custodial chores with his sister, the new teacher. It was a solid plan, and Donald felt grown-up, working for a wage, however meager. He'd save for his education, maybe aeronautical engineering. That was the current rage as the war ended. Although their parents had not gone to college, they just assumed their four

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children would naturally want to pursue higher education. That was the wave of the future. How they would pay for it was the problem.

The Pennington brothers were still giving Donald a hard time, but he'd developed ploys for avoiding them or deflecting their stupid insults. It helped that the oldest, Zach, had dropped out of school, and only Jack and Mack were left to torment him. The first day back at school with his big sister standing erect and stern at the head of the classroom behind the elevated desk was a shock. He couldn't adjust to the change, so he avoided raising his hand or volunteering answers. Miss Hines was commanding respect and engaging the children in learning. Donald felt a warm sense of pride in his sister's authority. Mack Pennington, however, was determined to undermine Goldia's new position and grab control of the situation. He tossed a spit ball at Walter just as Donald looked up at him. Walter felt the back of his neck and went back to writing his lesson. Again Mack threw a slimy spitball at Walter, but this time Walter saw him and ducked. The spitball hit Jeannie Scott, the lovely, perfect paragon of girlhood. It hit her face, and she gasped. This was too much for Donald to bear. He leaped across the aisle and grabbed Mack's wrist. "D-D-Don't throw spit-b-balls at my brother, you S.O.B." Mack, with no hesitation, slugged Donald with his other fist, giving him a bloody nose. The room exploded with excitement. Donald hit Mack in the stomach, but Mack landed another solid punch to Donald's face. Blood was dripping on Donald's new clothes, even his handsome, brown shoes were stained with his own blood. Oh, how Donald hated Mack! He hit Mack again in the gut. Goldia shouted angrily at the boys: "Donald! Mack! Stop that fighting this minute!"

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Goldia was busy calming Jeannie and the other girls while she shouted orders to the older boys. “Sam, grab Mack and keep him from doing any more injury. Henry, get a cloth from my top drawer and wipe up the blood. Donald, you sit down and behave.” Henry ran out to the pump, yelled at Ralph to pump some water onto the cloth, and hurried back in to clean up the mess. Donald waved him away: “Don’t b-b-b-bother, Henry. M-M-My clothes are ruined. L-L-Let me use the rag to c-c-clean off my face.” His nose hurt like nothing else he could remember. He wondered if it was broken. He handed the cloth back to Henry, who scrubbed the desks where the ruckus had occurred. Mozella was talking quietly with the younger girls, wondering what Goldia’s next move was going to be. Goldia went to her desk where she announced: “Children, fighting is a serious offense. No matter who started it, both Donald and Mack will be suspended for ten days, with homework to be turned in when they return. This will remain on their school records.” Mack looked relieved, but before the new teacher could snatch victory from him, he snarled, “I’m not doin’ any damn homework for you. You’ll be lucky if I ever come back to this po-dunk school.” It sounded like an unexpected vacation to Mack, but Donald groaned inside. “What is Dad going to say? What will he do? I’m sure to get a whipping.” The afternoon limped by. Time dragged its feet, holding Donald in a tight grip. At last Goldia rang the final bell. The students hurried onto the school hack, leaving a heavy silence in their wake. Donald was mortified. Without a word, he began sweeping, taking out the ashes from the stoves, carrying in wood for the next day. His sister sat at her desk grading papers. As dusk lengthened the shadows and the room grew dark, she lit the coal oil lamp and finished her paperwork. Then she got up: “Come on, Donald. You’ve done enough for one day. Let’s go home. By the way,

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where did you learn about S.O.B.?" They climbed into the buggy, and Goldia let Donald take the reins. The moon hadn't risen, and the gravel road was narrow, but in the darkness the trotting mare Belle knew every one of the seven turns. Donald slowed the horse as they gained the driveway entrance. He knew Belle was notorious for what they called "hobbing the post"; she would cut the corner too short, tipping the buggy over if the driver weren't careful.

That evening at supper Donald concentrated on his food, not raising his eyes. His father asked: "Well, Donald, how was your day at school? Is your sister a good teacher?" Mozella held her breath. She knew Walter wouldn't say a word about the incident, and she was uncertain how Goldia would handle their parents' reaction. Mozella had seen the whole thing and figured she should be the one to report it. The air in the room seemed heavy. "Dad, Donald is suspended for ten days, but it wasn't really his fault." Ora stopped eating, looked up from his green beans and pork chops. "What do you have to say, Donald? Is this true?"

Donald took a deep breath: "Yes, D-D-Dad. M-M-Mack Pennington threw spitballs at W-W-Walter a-and one s-s-slimy one hit J-J-Jeannie, so I g-g-grabbed his arm. Th-Th-Then he p-p-punched mm-mm-me in the f-f-face,"

"Did you defend yourself, Boy?"

"Y-Y-Yes, Dad. I hit him in the g-g-g-gut."

"Good."

Donald looked up in surprise. His father wasn't angry? Wasn't he going to get the strap? He quickly took another bite of his supper, waiting for the ax to fall.

His mother said, "Would everybody like some peach cobbler?"

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The air in the room lifted, tension drained away, and Goldia said, “Donald can do his homework all week here and bring it in next Thursday.”

That night Donald couldn’t get to sleep, but somehow he felt older. Walter was snoring across the way. Donald slipped out of his bed and tiptoed downstairs. The full moon was rising. Was it the harvest moon? The wolf moon? He thought the face in the moon looked like his: chubby, serious, bewildered. He rested his elbows on the sill and watched the moon shadows shift under the trees as the wind blew the branches, leaves falling to the ground. Winter was on its way, but he’d have over a week of fall weather free of school boredom. Life was good.

The next morning, Donald woke with the others and went out to tend to his chores. He passed the Oakland sitting in the driveway and had an urge to get behind the wheel. Watching the others head down the driveway to catch the hack, he figured his older sister had left earlier and would already be at school, building the fire in the stove. During this cool fall weather only one stove was necessary, but Goldie would still have a double load with Donald grounded for the week. She’d manage. His sisters had grown into attractive young ladies, but more important, Donald thought, they had ambition. He knew Mozell wanted to start teacher training as soon as Central Normal accepted her application. She was following in her older sisters footsteps: taking a double load, junior and senior courses together. She had also requested a test-out, to qualify for early entrance into the college in Danville. Donald went in the back door and heard his mother calling: “Donald, you haven’t had breakfast yet. Better come eat while it’s hot.”

“OK, M-M-Mom.”

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His father was drinking his second cup of coffee and reading the newspaper. “Prohibition has stirred up a hornet’s nest, Dora. I saw it coming. They’re arresting folks right and left for selling moonshine and running gin houses. The police arrested the owner and customers at a speakeasy in Indy yesterday.”

Dora nodded: “But Ora, you know drinking is a curse. Hard liquor is the devil’s own weapon. We have to give prohibition a chance.”

“Well, alcohol will find its way to those who want it. Prohibition’ll never work.”

“Dad,” Donald ventured a question: “G-Goldie was t-t-telling us about the troubles in Ireland. H-Have you heard about the B-BBlack & Tans oppressin’ the Irish?”

“Yes, Son, but the Irish will rise up. The Brits can’t hold the Irish down forever.”

Donald finished his oatmeal and pushed his chair back. His father cleared his throat and said, “Son, how would you like to learn to drive the Oakland?” Donald’s face lit up. He couldn’t believe his ears.

“Sh-Sh-Sure, Dad, but d-do you think I’m b-b-big enough. M-M-My legs aren’t very l-l-long, and the k-kids call me Shorty all the t-time. Y-You think I’m old enough?”

“Let’s go see.” His father took him to the barn where he had rigged up a wooden box the right size for the driver’s seat. He opened the car door and motioned for Donald to climb up and sit on the box. Donald could see over the dashboard but he still couldn’t reach the pedals. “Let me work on this awhile, Son.” They went back into the barn where Ora searched through his wood scraps and tools. He had Donald measure the pedals, and they finagled booster blocks for the pedals, fastened them on securely, and Ora showed Donald how to check the water, oil, and air before starting the engine. “The

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other day I was reading about a new electric starter that a feller named Kettering invented, but meanwhile, we're stuck with this stubborn crank."

They turned it over until the engine caught, coughed, and chugged smoothly. "OK, now Son, ease the forward pedal with your right foot while you operate the clutch with your left foot. Your right foot has to be ready to use the brake at any time." Donald felt the car jerk and stall. He was awkward and green. He could do it, though; he knew it. He tried the coordination between his left foot and right foot again, and this time after a quick jerk, the car moved forward and down the driveway. Donald was sweating, hoping they didn't meet any buggies. He knew how farmers hated it when a car scared their horses. When they got back home, Donald was so happy he couldn't contain himself. Why was his father letting him drive the Oakland? He'd be twelve in December, and although there weren't any laws about age limits for driving a car or requirements about needing a license, he knew that what they were doing was risky. He hesitated, then asked his father: "Dad, I really l-l-like d-d-driving the car, but m-m-maybe I'm too y-y-y-young?"

Ora looked hard at his son and said, "Son, I'm going to need you to drive Mozell to Danville twice a week from now on. She's been accepted into teacher training, and I don't have time to take her. She can't drive it because I need the Oakland here during the day. She's going to have classes every Friday and Saturday. You think you can do that?" A boy, whether he is technically a teenager at twelve or not, remembers a moment in time when he is no longer a child. His relationship with the rest of his world changes. The air he breathes has a different quality. His heart beats to a headier rhythm. Donald squared his shoulders.

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“I expect I c-c-can d-d-do it, Dad.” Donald said confidently. He finished his chores with record speed and hurried back to the Oakland that evening. He climbed in and sat on the wooden box. He memorized the controls, the knobs and gauges. What if he ran into something? Danville was about ten miles from the farm. He’d gone with his father to buy feed and supplies, checking the odometer and learning to calculate the miles per gallon of gasoline the Oakland got. He already knew the route he’d take to save time. The North Salem road was one of the few paved county roads, but he’d have to take the gravel road from their house south to the hickory grove, take a right past Covey’s, then a left to the Bartlett log cabin. There he’d have to watch for traffic, both wheel and hoof, then follow the crooked road to State Road 75 that would take him into North Salem. At the crossroads in the center of town he’d turn left onto 236 that would take them straight to Danville. It wouldn’t be long before he knew the route by heart the way Belle knew the route from home to school and back.

Mozella came out to the car after her day at the Hendricks School. She was acting as Goldia’s teaching assistant now that she had passed the entrance exam and matriculated into the Central Normal College freshman class. She climbed into the passenger seat and smiled at her brother. “Hi, Donald. Dad just told me that you’re going to drive me to my classes at Central Normal in Danville. What a swell idea.” She was aware of his lack of confidence and worried that his suspension from school had made his shyness worse. Secretly she was uneasy about his ability to navigate the big Oakland. Ten miles there and ten miles back was a big responsibility for an eleven year old. What if they had an accident? She had read about crashes, knew how vulnerable they’d be on the road. What if they had a flat? What if the radiator boiled over? What if it blew up in

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the middle of the trip? How would they get home? “Are you sure you can do it?” she asked him anxiously.

“Let’s d-d-drive to the end of the lane and b-b-b-back. I’ll show y-y-you,” Donald replied. He got out, went around to the front of the car, cranked the engine until it caught, coughed, then chugged contentedly. Climbing back onto his box, Donald pushed the clutch in and then let it out gently to engage the gear. The Oakland gave a jerk, but moved forward in the twilight. The brother and sister sat in silence as the car reached the end of the lane. Then Donald used the reverse band to back up the driveway, veering off only once with Mozella gasping and Donald laughing at her. “D-D-Don’t worry, Mozell, we’re g-g-going to get to D-Danville and b-b-back. N-N-No problem!”

The first trip into Danville with his sister should have been uncomplicated since Donald was still under punishment for the fight and wasn’t supposed to be in school anyway. Mozella was wearing her best skirt and shirtwaist. She’d gone into Lebanon with their parents for new shoes and a brief case the Saturday before. Their dad had let Donald drive once they reached State Highway 39, which was also paved. It was a good trial run and gave Donald more confidence that he could get his sister to college without wrapping the Oakland around a tree. He was a pre-teenager behind the wheel of an automobile. Life was as beautiful as it was ever going to get, he thought. The fall day was perfectly clear, the colors of autumn: green, gold, a touch of russet, and the sky deep blue, the crystal blue he associated with Crater Lake, on a postcard his Uncle Jim had sent. The Oakland negotiated the turns and accelerated down the hills headed into North Salem, but as they approached the four-way crossroads to turn onto Hwy. 236, Mozella shouted, “Look out, Donald, there’s a team of horses on your right!” Donald slammed on

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the brake, but it spooked the horses, sending them racing down Pearl Street. He could hear the farmer cursing and shouting at the horses. Donald caught his breath, signaled with his left arm and headed left onto 236. Halfway to Danville, the steam began rolling from the radiator in front. Mozella said, "You'd better stop a minute and let the car rest."

"We should have p-p-plenty of t-time to get you to c-class by 10:00. I brought a c-c-can of water." Donald climbed down from his wooden box, grabbed the can of water and tried to turn the radiator cap. He flinched as the cap burned his hand. "Throw m-me that rag in under the d-d-dashboard, Mozell." Spotting the rag under her seat, she tossed it to him. Carefully holding the rag to protect his hand, he finally got the cap off and poured water as steam boiled out of the radiator. Cranking the engine, they got back on the road and waved to the few cars going the other way as they sailed along past the Danville city limit sign. "Almost there!" Donald shouted. He drove through Ellis Park feeling important that he knew a shortcut and pulled up in front of the college entrance. "Thanks, Donald. Hope you get back home all right. I'll see you this afternoon about 4." Mozella climbed down and walked regally up the steps. Donald pulled away from the curb, drove around the courthouse square and headed back west for home. As he coasted down the long hill below the lofty brick house just above Myers' farm, he heard a loud explosion, and the car lurched. O no, he thought, a flat, the thing he dreaded most. His mind went blank. How did the jack work? He went through his dad's instructions step by step in his mind as he eased the Oakland off the road. It was on an angle, leaning precariously away from the highway. He found two big rocks and placed one in front of each front wheel. The rear left tire was flat, so he put the jack in the spot his father had shown him under the left axel and used the lever to jack up the car. It seemed to wobble

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as it rose. Taking the spare tire out of its tire well, he rolled it into position and loosened the bolts holding the flat onto the hub. Easing the flat off the hub, he put the spare on and then screwed all the bolts into place. He jacked the car back down and replaced the jack in its storage compartment. Then he found the wrench he needed and tightened all the bolts. Dusting off his hands, he cranked the engine until it caught, climbed back onto his box, and he was off. Taking the road back slowly, trying not to overheat the engine, he heard hoof beats gaining on him, speeding up. A trotting mare pulling a sleek buggy whizzed past him, the driver laughing as he urged the horse to go faster still. Donald knew what was coming: “Get a horse!” the driver called out to the boy.

When Donald pulled into the driveway, he was exhausted and hungry. He parked the Oakland quickly and ran into the house. He could smell a pie baking and saw his mother working in the garden, picking the last of the tomatoes. “Howdy, M-M-Mom,” he called out happily. “M-M-Man, I c-c-could eat a h-h-horse!”

Dora was more relieved than she let on to see her son back in one piece and the car as well, looking none the worse for wear. “How was your drive into Danville, Son?”

“O.K., Mom. Where’s D-D-Dad?”

“He’s waiting for the Oakland so he can go into Jamestown to mail an important letter and get his medicine. His diabetes is getting worse. He and I’ve had our lunch, but there’s plenty left for you. I left it on the table.”

“Th-Thanks, Mom” Donald ate like a starving dog, gulping down a glass of milk with the beef stew and biscuits. He opened the Norge fridge and poured himself another glass of cold milk to drink with the pie. He knew he should be thinking about doing his homework, but the weather was too perfect to stay indoors.

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Ora came through the back screen door, letting it slam behind him. He washed up at the well house basin and addressed his son respectfully. “Well, Son, how did your drive into Danville go?”

“Just f-fine, Dad, but the r-r-radiator overheated and I had to p-p-put more water in to get to t-town. Then c-coming back I had to change a f-flat, but I think I did it right.”

“How did the box work for you?”

“Great, Dad.” He didn’t mention frightening the team of horses or nearly being run off the road by the speeding buggy and its rude driver.

When he drove back to Danville to pick up his sister at the college, he nearly ran over a squirrel trying to cross the road just as the Oakland was bearing down on it. Here were hazards he hadn’t counted on. As long as he didn’t hit any dogs, he’d be OK. Cats were useful for keeping the mouse population down, so he hoped he’d avoid them too. He had time to think while he drove to the county seat and back. His father had read them a story in the *Star* about Joan of Arc that morning. The Catholic Church had made her a saint. He decided he’d try to find a book about her. Mozell had mentioned something about Mark Twain and Joan, but he couldn’t remember the details. He pulled the car alongside the curb in front of the college building and waited for his sister. She came dashing out and down the wide walkway, smiling and almost running.

“Hey, Donald, you’re right on time. Thanks.” She settled into the passenger seat and put her books down on the floor. You’ll never guess what we discussed in history class today.”

“What, M-M-Mozell?”

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“You know how Dad always reads from the newspaper in the morning? He read us an article this morning about Joan of Arc being canonized, and today the professor discussed her place in European history. He said she was a farm girl who was inspired by voices in her head to lead the French Army against the English. She did it too! She convinced the French dauphin - that means prince - Charles to give her a horse and armor. She gained the respect of the French army, even some of the officers, and she led victorious battles against the English. The Irish need a Joan of Dublin to fight the Brits today - in 1920.” Mozella took a deep breath. “I sure do love college.”

“F-F-Funny, I w-w-was just thinking about Joan of Arc on the w-w-way here.”

“No kidding? She must have been so brave. Most of the French officers were jealous of her. She was popular, you know, like Eddie Rickenbacker. She was my age.”

“How c-c-c-come they b-burned her at the stake?”

“The Brits captured her. The charge was heresy, but they killed her because she put the men to shame and embarrassed the church officials. That’s my theory anyhow.” They rode in silence awhile. Mozella added, “You know, Mark Twain wrote a wonderful book about Joan of Arc. I read it when the Reading Circle van came around one year. If more girls had courage like Joan’s, women wouldn’t have to fight for their rights.”

“D-Dad said they p-p-passed the amendment to let w-w-women vote.”

“Yes, isn’t that great? The 19th Amendment is a fact. We women can finally vote and use our intelligence to move America forward. It’s the 20th Century.”

“Who’re y-y-you g-g-gonna vote for?”

“It’s a secret ballot, Donald, but I guess I’ll vote for Harding and Coolidge. Everybody is fed up with Wilson’s failures.”

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“Wh-Why is everybody so h-h-hard on P-P-President W-W-Wilson?”

“He had a stroke, so maybe he’s incapacitated. He’s a Democrat; that’s why Mom and Dad don’t like him. At least Dad...Mom may be a secret Democrat. They say the Pratts are all damned Democrats at heart, and she’s a Pratt.”

Donald thought about that awhile. “Wh-Why are the Repub-Republicans d-dead set ag-against the unions?”

“I don’t know. Unions support the working man. They want safer work places and higher wages. Must be the strikes. The strikes are getting out of hand.”

Donald was driving with more relaxed ease already, taking the curves with nonchalance. As he stopped for the crossroads in North Salem, a Model T right behind them bumped him, and the Oakland lurched, jolting Donald’s sister. Mozell frowned and regained her dignity: “What’s that guy trying to do?”

Donald shouted back at the driver: “W-Watch it.”

The man sneered, “Keep yer shirt on, Shorty. M’brakes ain’t too good.” Donald turned right and hoped the rear bumper had done its job. Dad would have a fit if the Oakland were damaged, and Donald felt responsible for their car. He secretly was relieved that the guy hadn’t gotten out and seen that he was sitting on a box. Still the slur “Shorty” coming from that insolent mouth irked the boy. He’d been thinking about making race car competition his career. It wouldn’t matter if he was short in that business. It might even be an advantage. He thought about the jockeys in the Kentucky Derby; horse racing was the other sport he and his family followed. He loved the stories about Dan Patch. Those jockeys were really short, but they strutted around as if they

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were kings. If he couldn't make the grade as a champion driver, like Wilcox, he'd be a mechanic. He'd at least get to work around the race track and soak up all the excitement. Automobile technology was the trade of the future. He'd read that somewhere.

The winter of sixth grade was a challenge for Donald as their farm fell into the deep freeze of 1921. Frigid temperatures were breaking records. Keeping the water in the cattle tank from freezing and thawing the water in the troughs for the pigs and chickens was a constant battle. Snow fell in December, and Donald thought he'd never seen such a beautiful sight as the crystal trees and white bushes when he stepped into the deep snow to do his chores. Walter shared the farm tasks and didn't seem to mind the bitter wind and flying snow, blinding them as they made their way to the barn. It didn't take long, however, for the snow's magic to wear thin. "W-Walter, I h-h-hate winter. Someday, I'm g-g-gonna' live where it n-n-never snows."

Walter just smiled and replied, "Well, spring's coming."

The bitter cold continued into early spring, and one day after school, Ora said to the boys: "One of the cows is missing, and I'm afraid she's gone off to have her calf. You two need to wrap up good and go find her." Walter and Donald climbed into their heavy boots and snow gear, pulled their winter caps down over their ears and trudged down the back lane to the Simpson's Woods. They didn't know for sure why it was called that, but it must have been like the Free Place: owned by the Free Family. Who the Simpsons were or where they went was a mystery. For years the boys had gone to the Free Place to swim and fish in the creek, and Donald assumed it was called that because it was free, no admission charge. Then one day he heard his dad and Uncle Hobart talking about Henry Free and his home in Florida, where he spent the winter. Ora called

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him a “snow bird” and laughed about these rich boys who inherit more money than they know what to do with. He’d gone to school with Henry so he knew Henry wouldn’t mind his children playing in the creek. He’d never mentioned the origin of Simpson’s Woods.

Donald and Walter trudged into the woods, searching behind every brush pile and boulder, looking for the missing cow. The tears were freezing on their faces and ice was forming in their noses. The wind seemed to be picking up, and they set their jaws against the painful gusts. At last Walter spotted a black and white hump behind a big log. He began to run: “There she is, Donald, come on!” The cow was barely alive. Beside her was a newborn calf nestled in the curve of its mother’s body. It looked up feebly and tried to bawl, but the sound was a pitiful wheeze. “What’re we gonna’ do, Donald. We can’t lift the cow, and the calf will freeze to death if we carry her away from her mother.”

“I’ll st-stay with the c-c-calf and her mother while you g-go get Dad.” Donald offered. Walter ran back, stumbling in the snowdrifts, picking himself up and fighting the drag of the heavy wet slush. He found their father in the barn tending to the horses.

“Dad, come quick. We found the missing cow, and she has a little calf. They look real cold.” Ora grabbed the reins of the Belgian and harnessed him to a sledge.

Walter sensed his father’s urgent concern, but Ora tried to conceal his worry: “No car or truck could get through this snow, Walter, but Old Jim’ll get her done. A good horse is about as trouble-free as anything. You get on in the house, Walter, and warm up before your nose freezes off yer face.”

Ora drove the horse pulling the sledge back into the woods until he saw Donald waving frantically. He pulled up to the calf whose head Donald was cradling and saw that the cow was half dead. She couldn’t even protest when Ora and Donald carefully

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loaded the calf onto a horse blanket Ora had brought and lifted the tiny, awkward animal onto the sledge, wrapping the blanket carefully around the calf. The cow let out one weak, muffled bleat and lay her head back down in the snow, her huge, desperate eyes filled with fear and despair. Donald looked at his Dad. "Can w-we lift the cow onto the sledge too?"

"No, Son, I'm sorry. She's too far gone. She's been a good cow too. I'm real sorry."

The cow was heaving, trying to get a breath. "L-Look, D-D-Dad, she's still alive. We c-c-can lift her. I'm-I'm-I'm strong." Donald was on the verge of tears, but he trusted his father's judgment. He watched his father getting back onto the sledge and Donald gave one last look, wondering what it felt like to lose your baby and freeze to death. He climbed onto the sledge with his father, and they took the calf back to the barn. Ora lifted the calf wrapped in the blanket and walked with it toward the house. "Wh-Wh-What are you d-d-doing, Dad?"

Ora shouted back over his shoulder, "We have to get milk into the little feller's stomach and keep him from freezing. We'll use a baby bottle. You can feed him."

Walter met them at the door and helped his father unwrap the tiny bundle. The calf tried to stand on his wobbly legs, but they collapsed. He bleated mournfully, looking for his mother. Dora came rushing in to see what the commotion was about. She heated water, filled a baby bottle with milk, and plunged it into the hot water. Testing it, she handed the bottle to Donald and said, "This will be your calf to raise, Donald. You have to get him to drink enough milk to grow." Donald took the bottle and gingerly held it

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toward the tiny calf. The baby explored the nipple, then quickly engulfed it with his hungry mouth, sucking fiercely and making loud gulping noises. Donald laughed.

“This c-c-calf knows what h-h-he’s d-d-doing all right. He’s h-h-hungry!”

Walter watched from the sidelines, a feeling of joy washing over him. What a beautiful creature! He’d never seen anything like it. Then he remembered the poor cow. “Dad, what happened to the calf’s mother? Did you bring her back too?”

“No, Walter, it’s too bad, but she was nearly dead when I got there. We might be able to butcher the beef when it gets above zero.”

Walter didn’t think he could eat a steak ever again.

Goldia and Mozell were still at the Hendricks School marking papers and cleaning up. Mozell was nearly finished with her credits, hoping to teach school in a neighboring elementary school before the year was out. Luckily Donald hadn’t had to drive too much on the dangerous, icy roads, but this last snow storm had lasted two days, and the roads were bound to be slippery on Friday. Maybe his Dad would drive Mozella to Danville while he took care of his new calf. The little critter was going to need constant care. When his sisters got home from school it was growing dark, and they came in stomping the snow off their boots. “What on earth is that calf doing in the house?” Goldia cried. Mozella was enchanted with the calf.

“Can you believe how tiny he is? Donald, where did he come from?”

“W-Walter and m-m-me, we w-went back to l-l-look for the m-m-missing cow, and we f-f-found her n-nearly d-d-dead with this little g-g-guy shivering n-next to her.”

Mozella stooped down. “Would it be OK if I fed him?”

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Donald gave the bottle of warm milk to his sister, and Mozella fed the little calf until Goldia couldn't restrain herself. "OK, now it's my turn. He is a pretty little thing, isn't he?"

Donald felt a surge of pride and joy. This was his very own calf. He'd take good care of it and make sure it grew up strong.

The calf stayed in the spring house just outside the kitchen in a makeshift pen until spring weather arrived, Donald cleaning up after the little animal and feeding him on a regular schedule. As soon as the calf was able to eat solid foods, they fed him corn and cattle feed. Donald named him Milford after his adventurous, kindly uncle. It was the highest compliment he could imagine.

School ended the middle of May, and the brothers took on additional responsibilities: plowing the fields, planting the soybeans, mowing the back lot, cleaning out the barn. They were used to working from breakfast to after sundown, as long as they were able to see in front of them. When work was done for the day, Donald and Walter liked to throw themselves onto the lush grass in the back yard near the big iron kettle where their mother made soap. Donald would lie face up with his hands behind his head and look at the stars. "Walter, s-see the m-m-milky way? H-How many stars d-d-do you think there are?"

Walter laughed. "Who can count the stars? Einstein has a theory about the infinite universe. No beginning; no end. His theory of relativity is changing how we look at light and matter."

"D-Do you know wh-what the speed of l-l-light is?"

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“I forget, gazillions of miles a second. Do you understand Einstein’s formulas and theories? Boy, I don’t.”

“M-Maybe I’ll understand it when I g-get into high school. It’s not l-l-long before I’ll b-b-be going to N-N-North Salem High. M-Maybe my t-teachers w-w-will explain all this stuff there.”

Walter watched the stars in silence. Then he shouted, “Look there, Donald. It’s a shooting star!” The boys watched the white streak mark the dark sky with radiance. They each had dreams as elusive as a meteor shower.

Chapter 6 North Salem High School

Driving a model T, creating history, Mozella's now a frontier teacher.
Kids love her teaching skill, but a powerful steadfast will is still her greatest feature.

Don and Henry design better barns using their skills at math.
Henry makes the basketball team. Don takes the manager's path.

KKK visits local farmers, but they most impolitely say NO!
White sheets & pointy masks, they say, is a coward's way to go.

* * *

The Twenties in America roared with all the audacity of progress and prosperity, but it was in the cities that the roaring was heard. The two brothers, isolated on the farm, took turns fetching the *Indy Star* every morning. The front page headlines, the photos, the daily stories of scandalous, heroic, and ambitious people were their connection to the wider world. If the farm wasn't producing the income they expected, they could blame Pres. Harding, who, it was said, favored bankers and corporations. If they needed a good laugh, Will Rogers was always in the news with his latest witty comment. Donald was an adolescent and trying to make sense of the crazy world. For him adolescence was a strange and distressing land, a place of change and shifting allegiances, a state of uncertainty and posturing. Donald was impatient. As a teenager he could drive a car, farm the land, and raise a calf single-handedly. However, he was restless and filled his parents with worry. He'd convinced his sisters he was hopeless. He had taken to reading the newspapers religiously every morning after his early morning chores before Goldia went to the Hendricks School in the buggy, which she still preferred. Their father insisted he needed the Oakland, so it was a practical arrangement. Donald was reading a

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front-page story about the Irish Civil War. “Why can’t the Irish g-g-get along? The B-Brits are backing down, but all the Irish d-d-do is f-f-fight each other.” Donald stomped out of the room, angry at the world, but soon they heard music from his harmonica. Walter thought what a perfect gift the harmonica had been. It seemed to be the safety valve that protected Donald and anyone around him from his darkest moods.

Walter ate his breakfast patiently, waiting to get a word in edgewise: “Maybe they should send Nellie Bly over to investigate.” Walter was also a reader, but his quiet manner and customary reticence left his opinions running under the radar. His take on the daily news was bound to have a sardonic undertone. It was Mozella who had first mentioned Nellie Bly to Walter. She admired Bly’s bold schemes and her courage. She had told Walter about Nellie Bly’s sensational stories exposing the U.S. mental asylums by faking insanity and experiencing the horrors first-hand as an inmate. Walter picked up on her fascination with the daring journalist and put in his two cents’ worth. “Maybe old Nellie could fake an Irish brogue, join the Sinn Fein, and win the Brits over from the inside. Even the Protestants would join Nellie’s United Ireland.”

Mozella stood up from the table and said, “Don’t joke about Nellie Bly, Walter. It was in the papers just the other day. She died of pneumonia. What a loss to the country.” Donald’s harmonica intruded from the next room. Then they heard him singing mournfully: “She’s the most distressful count-e-ree that ever you have seen. They’re hangin’ men and women for the wearin’ o’ the green.”

Mozella was packing to head out West to report to the Wolf Creek, Montana, school superintendent. She had landed a job teaching school beginning Labor Day and was eager to be out on her own, earning her own money. She had saved enough to buy a

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second-hand Model T and felt independent. Walter asked her: “D’you think you’ll get lonesome way out there?” Mozella just smiled at her brother. She knew she was going to miss the family, but there comes a time, she thought, when a person has to strike out on her own. She hoped she wouldn’t have to change too many flat tires on her way out West. She really hated changing flats. Donald had shown her how to do it and made her try it, so she was confident she’d make it to Wolf Creek all right. She had the maps spread out, and was figuring on a pad of paper. “How long’s it gonna’ take to get to Montana, Mozell?”

“Oh, I figure the Model T can do it in six days if the weather holds. I’m taking a couple of extra spare tires and plenty of water.”

Walter watched his sister pack the Model T for her departure the next morning early. “Wish I could go with you, Mozell,” Walter said wistfully.

“You be good and help Mom, Walter. I’ll be back to see you before you know it. Donald needs you to keep him cheered up.”

Walter understood his sister’s meaning, and a burden of responsibility hung over him like a heavy weight. Donald was given to moods of deep depression off and on, but his spurts of high-spirited fun were worth waiting for, Walter thought. Lately though, Walter sensed that his brother’s dark spells were more frightening, even violent. His anger could spin out of control and sometimes was misdirected towards Walter or his sisters. Donald also had nightmares and sleepwalking episodes. Walter liked to laugh about how he had almost had a shocking shower in the middle of the night when Donald was ready to pour water on Walter, the human radiator. His sleep disturbances were serious though, and Walter was often awakened by his brother’s nocturnal exploring.

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When Walter would mention the sleepwalking, Donald would sometimes deny it and occasionally turn on Walter: “You d-don’t know what you’re talking about, W-Walter. Y-You’re just m-m-making stuff up, t-t-tryin’ to m-m-make me feel like a w-weirdo.”

Donald planned to enroll in North Salem High School the following week and had been tense and edgy. Walter figured he was just nervous about making new friends and adjusting to a new school. He had lashed out at Walter, accusing him of leaving the gate open and letting the cows out into the alfalfa. “D-Don’t you c-c-care about the cows, Walter? If the f-f-frost comes early, th-th-they’ll eat frozen alfalfa and b-b-bloat. N-n-n-nobody cares about the cows but m-m-me.” Donald slammed the gate shut after they rounded up the heifers and steers and drove them into the barn lot. He steamed and stomped, furious at everybody, but Walter, ever meek and good-natured, got the brunt of it. He tried to be philosophical about his brother’s fits and had learned to joke and distract Donald with one of Will Rogers’ latest witticisms, but Donald worried Walter.

It was true that fall weather had come early as September descended on Indiana and mornings were chilly, with frost in the air. Walter had never seen bloat, but his older brother remembered when a heifer had eaten frosty alfalfa and died helpless unable to get up, swollen horribly from the gasses in her four-section stomach. Donald had been haunted by the sound of her pitiful groans. The young cow was on her side swollen like a small hill, unable to move. His father had tried to get her up and told Donald to help prod her, but she had been down too long and died as they watched. The next cold season his father had given Donald the job of chasing the cattle, keeping them moving so that the gas would escape before it could cause bloat. It was a rewarding responsibility because Donald could run with abandon, knowing he was preventing the horrible death. It gave

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him a feeling of satisfaction and exuberance. He loved the animals and liked their reliance on him for their safety and welfare. The dense, intoxicating fragrance of the sycamores filled his head and the chilly air filled his lungs.

The night before the first day at North Salem High School, Donald was eager to talk about his plans and expectations with his brother. Walter asked, “What do you think it’ll be like to be a freshman? All those upperclassmen might give you a hard time.”

“Awww, j-j-just let them t-t-try it. I’m g-goin’ t’get an education and g-g-go to college like M-Mozell and G-G-Goldie. M-Might m-m-make f-friends too.”

Walter was sympathetic. He knew his brother was as shy as he but even more awkward in a crowd. His cocky swagger hid a world of insecurity. “Tell you what, Donald. You find out what high school’s really like and let me know the secret to success, OK?”

Donald laughed, “OK, Walter, I’ll d-d-do that!”

So in the fall of 1924, as J. Edgar Hoover was heading up the FBI and Willa Cather was honored with the Pulitzer Prize for Literature, Donald enrolled at North Salem High School, home of the Blue Devils basketball team. He was too short to make the team but enjoyed watching games with the noisy, lively crowd. Hoosier madness was a fact, and Donald yearned to be a foot taller so he could play basketball, but he was a realist and figured his ability in math might end up being more important. Before his sister Mozella had left for Montana, she had taken him and Walter to a game at NSHS, and the raucous, friendly fans of the local team had filled Donald with ambition to be part of the team when he was old enough to attend high school.

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When he walked through the huge front doors of NSHS for the first time, he looked around to find a friendly face. The sturdy brick structure had classrooms for the required high school subjects, and Don, as he decided he'd be called at NSHS, looked around for Mr. Smith's room. His schedule included L. Smith for mathematics, and Don was happy to see math was his first class every morning. He also had Mrs. Black for English and American History, and Mr. Gardiner for Fundamentals of Science. His seat assignment put him across the aisle from Henry Myers, a fellow NSHS freshman who lived on a farm east of North Salem on State Hwy 236. Henry was a genial, kind-hearted boy who liked Don and enjoyed math, so the two of them hit it off from the first day.

"Say, Don, where do you live anyway?"

"On a farm n-north of here, up 75 towards Jimtown."

"Do y'have any horses?"

"W-Work horses, yeah. There's Old Jim, and B-Belle, and P-Pet, and Cricket."

"Are you goin' out fer basketball?"

"Naw...I g-g-guess I'm too short. H-How about you?"

"Yup, maybe if I make the freshman team, I'll get good enough for the varsity."

"D-Do you like the races? Ever b-b-been to the Indy 500?"

"Yeah, Dad took us last Memorial Day. Boy, that was a swell race!"

"Y-You bet! D-D-Did you ever s-s-see such a crowd?"

"Nope, we were rooting for Jimmy Murphy but Boyer had a supercharged Duesy. Old Jimmy couldn't beat that."

"I like M-Murphy too. The p-papers said he went over 150 mph on the b-boards this year. They call him "K-King of the B-Boards!"

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“Yeah, did you see Tommy Milton win last year?”

“Yup, Uncle Milford took m-m-me and m’brother, Walter. M-My favorite driver is Howdy Wilcox. W-We saw him w-win in 1919 too.”

As the bell rang, Donald realized that the school day was flying by. Time sure was a mystery, he thought. Having math early got the day off to a super start, and he didn’t mind history or English either. The jury was out on science. He wasn’t certain Mr. Gardiner was that interested in teaching science. He was coach too, so maybe that was his main talent. The best part of high school, so far, Don decided, was making a new friend, and a friend who lived on a farm and liked the Indy 500 races. Henry was a real nice guy, Don judged, and since he liked math too, Henry was golden.

“Well, Don, back to classes. How do you like high school?”

“It’s OK, Henry. L-Lots better than Hendricks. M-Maybe I’m just older.”

Don looked forward to math class since he and Henry had improvised a rivalry that was more like a sport. Mr. Smith caught on quickly and encouraged the boys to try challenging each other. He’d send them to the board to race through a new problem, laughing with them when they finished neck and neck. Geometry was a practical aspect of math that appealed to Don and Henry. They’d set up schemes to solve an equation that worked pragmatically in building a hog house or chicken coop. They even worked together on a better barn, a structure that would give farm animals more room, make feeding easier and herding less stressful for the cattle. Pigs would adapt to anything, Don observed, but he knew they liked to play and would be healthier if the barn plan included room for their freewheeling antics. Cows were more easily frightened and spooked when

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a new or restrictive configuration confronted them. Putting a new herder gate up was all it took to scare a cow. Don hated that look of terror and the bawling that accompanied any effort to move cows, take them to market, or herd them in any way.

One morning about a week into the school year Henry came into the classroom out of breath and said, “Hey Don, did you read what happened to Jimmy Murphy yesterday?”

Don was sitting at his desk and looked up sorrowfully: “Yeah, old Jimmy g-got killed by a shock absorber. M-Man, what a w-way to go.”

Henry replied: “What a daredevil. He started out as a riding mechanic, didn’t he?”

“Y-Yeah, he even rode with Eddie Rickenbacker.”

“The story was all over the front page. Headlines shouted: Murphy Killed on Dirt Track.”

“C-Can’t believe it. K-Killed by shock absorbers.”

“Yeah, the paper said when the shocks malfunctioned, the car smashed into the wooden rail, throwing Jimmy into the rail. The impact caved in his chest, killed him instantly.”

“St-Started out as a riding m-m-mechanic.”

Mr. Smith, his tweed coat unbuttoned, strode into the classroom with his jovial greeting: “Good morning, Scholars.”

Henry and Don sat up straighter, ready for the first problem; however, Mr. Smith noticed that Don didn’t have his notebook out and seemed distracted. “Say, Don, how about trying this equation?” He handed Don a sheet of paper with numbers and symbols on it. Ordinarily Donald would have been eager to put it on the board and work on it for

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a solution, but the teacher could see Don just didn't have his heart in it. Must be Monday morning blues, Mr. Smith thought. Finally Don said, "M-Maybe Henry'd like to t-t-try it." Henry went up to the board with the equation in one hand and the chalk in the other. Fern Jordan helped Henry solve the problem, but Don didn't participate. After class Mr. Smith called Don over to one side and asked him what was bothering him. Don was embarrassed to admit he was depressed because of a race car driver's death. He just said, "I'm s-sorry, M-Mr. Smith, I g-guess I d-d-didn't sleep too w-well last n-night."

"Well, Don, math is your strong subject. Keep up your work in here and you should earn an A." Fern interrupted to ask Mr. Smith a question about the homework, and Don left to go to his next class. Death seemed so unfair to him. Why should a young, daring, intelligent fellow like Murphy have to die so young when criminals and lazy bums lived long, useless lives? He was frustrated that he couldn't set it up like an equation in math and solve the puzzle.

When he got home it was getting dark, and he called Sarge, figuring his old friend would give him some comfort and cheer. He called the dog again and walked back toward the red barn where his dad checked on the horses every evening. "Dad?" Don called as he saw a figure coming through the big double doors under the hayloft opening. His father didn't respond but walked toward his son. Don thought his dad must be getting old. He seemed more stooped and slow. Ora stopped and patted Don on the shoulder, a rare show of affection: "Son, I'm sorry to tell you this. Old Sarge died this afternoon. He'd been crippin' around fer quite awhile, nearly stone deaf and almost blind. He was a good dog. I buried him back under the hickory tree where he liked to lie on summer days." Don couldn't respond. His heart pounded and his eyes were filling.

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What would he do without Old Sarge to offer his warm affection and devotion? He felt as if his world had imploded. Here it was again. Death staring him in the face with no answers to his questions. Finally all he said was, “Poor dog. Poor dog.”

Class elections were coming up, and Don backed Fern Jordan, who had gone to elementary school with him at the Hendricks School, and who was running for class president. She was a smart, responsible girl who enjoyed the spotlight, and Don figured she’d make a good president. He thought the campaign was silly, but if this was what high school was all about, he figured he might as well participate. Henry didn’t want the responsibility and said he was tongue-tied when it came to speaking in public. Don smiled at that, thinking how hopeless he’d be at public speaking. Fern had confidence coming out her ears, Don told Henry, trying to convince him to vote for Fern. She was running against Horace Tucker, a rich boy who Don was convinced was a snob. His father was a gentleman farmer who always wore a necktie, called it a “cravat”, and looked down on dirt farmers like Don’s father. Don was with his father once when he went into the bank. He overheard Mr. Tucker say to a teller: “It’s a disgrace the way these local farmers come into the bank with manure on their boots.” The teller replied, “Smells like money to me.” Don had liked that teller – and the bank - from that moment on. A bank was a funny thing to feel loyalty toward, but Don did.

The day Henry made the freshman basketball team Don helped him celebrate. The science teacher, Mr. Gardiner, had talked Don into taking the position of team manager. He told him it would be good experience; he’d get to go to the games and get in free, so Don agreed to do it. One reason he accepted the coach’s offer was that he and Henry would get to hang out together after school, and he’d get out of some of his farm

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chores. It never occurred to him that his brother Walter would have to take up his chores on top of his own. Don had to admit to himself that the manager had a boring job, but he enjoyed being “one of the guys” and having fellow students pound him on the back when the team won a game. Henry was improving his game and hoping to make varsity the next year. Don wanted to help his friend “recognize his weaknesses” as Coach Gardiner drummed into their heads and work on each one until his game got better, so they’d play basketball after school even when there weren’t any scheduled practices.

Meanwhile Walter was feeling lonely and abandoned by his older brother. He finished his chores and did Don’s as well. His father appreciated Walter’s good-natured hard work, but he noticed that Don didn’t seem to realize the burden he’d left for Walter to take up. One evening their father said, “Donald, it don’t seem right to me that Walter is doing your chores as well as his.” Dora had noticed as well that Walter was dutifully finishing Donald’s chores after he did his own and Donald was taking him for granted.

Donald looked up, surprised, and nodded, but he replied: “L-Look, Dad, Walter is old enough n-n-now to take on m-more responsibility. H-H-High School is l-l-like a job with m-more homework and d-duties. I d-don’t have t-time for chores anymore.”

Don’s father wasn’t convinced. “Son, if you can’t get yer daily chores done and yer high school work done too, you’re gonna have to quit managin’ that basketball team,”

“But D-Dad, the t-team counts on m-m-me.”

“So do I, Son. The farm don’t run itself.”

Donald hung his head and tried to think of a way to satisfy his dad but avoid giving up his school activities. “Tell you wh-what, D-D-Dad. I’ll w-work it out w-with Walter. W-We’ll g-get the work d-done.”

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Ora looked skeptical but agreed to honor Don's promise.

That evening Don told Walter he needed to talk to him after supper. Meanwhile he figured he'd have to think of a good incentive to offer Walter. If he had been unfair to his brother, he'd make it up to him. During supper Donald noticed that Walter was unusually quiet. Goldia, still teaching with Miss Rawlings at the Hendricks School, had just gotten in and apologized for being late to the evening meal. She sat down, out of breath, and saw that Walter's head was down. "Walter, you have only one more year at Hendricks before you'll be going to high school. You were falling asleep at your desk today. Is something wrong?"

Walter looked up and smiled, "Nope, Goldie, I was just up late doing my homework after chores and supper."

Donald's conscience was giving him real pain. His brother had taken on his chores with no complaint and even now wasn't blaming him for his problems in school. Walter amazed him. He was barely 12 but knew more about farming than anyone else Don could think of except maybe their father. Walter had an instinct about caring for farm animals and had a sense of responsibility that made him a natural at farming. He loved order and was a hard worker. Donald was beginning to realize, however, that Walter's good-natured willingness to do what had to be done was an easily exploited quality. Donald was feeling ashamed of himself but didn't know how to admit it or change what was making him ashamed.

Walter came up behind Donald while he was doing his geometry homework. "Say, Don, do you think I'll do OK in math when I get to high school?"

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“Oh, sure, W-Walter. M-M-Math is easy. Mr. Smith m-makes it f-fun.”

“Would you help me with my homework? I did your chores tonight.”

“B-Be glad to. B-By the w-way, I’ve b-been meaning to ask y-y-you about th-that. Th-Thanks for d-d-doing my chores wh-while I w-went to the b-b-basketball games with the t-t-team. M-Maybe I c-c-could do something for y-you in return?”

Walter smiled and nodded. “How about teaching me to drive the Oakland? Dad’s been too busy; also there’s no need for me to drive the way there was for you.

Donald beamed at his younger brother. “Say, W-Walter, that’s a swell idea!”

Walter went on: “Mozell wrote us a letter. It came in the mail today. Have you seen it?”

Donald shook his head. Walter said, “Wait, Mom put it somewhere. I’ll get it for you.” Walter ran into the kitchen where his mother was washing the dishes and asked her about their sister’s letter.

Dora smiled: “It’s on the table there, Walter. Be sure you put it back.” Walter nodded and ran back up the narrow stairs to their room, waving the letter. Out of breath, he looked up at Donald as he sat on the narrow bed. Neither brother would admit how much they missed their sister, but the letter was from Wolf Creek, Montana, and it was both a vicarious adventure and a long-distance visit from Mozella. Both brothers envied their sister. Montana was the Wild West, and Donald was impatient for exciting vistas: mountains, lakes, rivers. Walter was happy surrounded by flat cornfields and pastures, at least for now, but he longed to hear his sister’s voice.

Walter unfolded the thin paper and read aloud:

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Dear Family,

You should see the mountains out here. Donald and Walter would love the creeks and the antelope. The Rockies are swell. Some of the peaks near Wolf Creek are over 10,000 feet high. They tell me that grizzlies live near us here, but I haven't seen any yet. I think I'll take their word for it. Folks tell you what to do if a grizzly approaches, but the trouble is, nobody agrees with anybody else. Some say to make lots of noise and wave your arms. Others say to play dead and not threaten the bear. It makes you wonder if any of these "experts" know what they're talking about. I guess I'll avoid grizzlies.

My students are mostly Scandinavian. Their families came over from Norway and Sweden, and they know how to work hard. The climate must agree with them. They're respectful, so teaching is a pleasure. Some of the parents don't speak English, but the children all do. The Wolf Creek School is similar to the Hendricks School. I have thirty students from grades one through eight, so it keeps me busy. The building is a log structure, not brick, but they heat the building with two wood stoves. Donald would feel right at home. He'd like the wood shed. It's just outside the front door along the west side with an overhanging roof to keep the wood dry. Some rancher in the community brings loads of wood all winter.

I found a family with a room to rent close to the school. They're the Erikssons. They have a little boy in third grade who is a good student, so that makes the situation better than it might be. Room and board is reasonable, so I'm

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saving some money already. We eat a lot of fish, but that's all right with me.

Mrs. Eriksson is a good cook and easy to get along with, but her husband is so strait-laced and stern that I never know what to say to him. He never says much anyway, so meals are quiet. I miss Walter's sarcastic remarks and Donald's commentary on the daily news. Donald, are you still playing your harmonica?

Mom, I miss your peach cobbles and fried chicken. Dad, I even miss the smell of your pipe. You should come out here next summer, but I know how the farm keeps you from taking vacations, so I'll look forward to coming home for a month or so. How is Goldie doing with her teaching? Are you studying hard to get ready for high school, Walter? How do you like North Salem High, Donald? You're a Blue Devil now, so I hope you're living up to those high standards.

You boys would like the rodeos here. The local cowboys go for that sport, but not the Blackfeet. Their reservation is north of Wolf Creek. One Saturday I drove the Model T up to the Blackfeet Reservation. It was pretty bleak, but the Indians were friendly, and the children were curious. They swarmed around the car and wanted me to take them for a ride. I let them sit in the driver's seat and play, but there were too many of them to start "rides." Anyway, the parents might have worried and caused a fuss. They all invited me back, so when you come out here, we'll go up to make friends with the Blackfeet. Will Rogers came out here to perform at a rodeo in Great Falls last year, Erik Eriksson told me. He said he wanted to go, but his father wouldn't take frivolous trips like that. Wouldn't it be fun to see Will Rogers in person? Walter, I heard another quip the other day: Old

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Will said, "If I could kick the person in the tail that causes me the most problems, I couldn't sit down for a week." Isn't that excellent? -and so true.

Fall weather has been beautiful so far, but I don't know how I'll like winter up here. Leaves are falling and birds are leaving. They say it snows all the time once winter sets in. Wolf Creek is on the east side of the Rockies, but I can never remember if the east or west side gets more snow. I'll soon find out for myself.

How is the old Oakland running? The practice out here is to make a truck out of your car. Somehow, they cut it in half and rig up a wooden bed to haul things. It seems like a lot of trouble. Old Jim used to pull tons on the sledge or the wagon without so much effort – at least on our part. Dad, how are your Belgians doing? Old Jim is getting old. Are you going to buy a tractor one of these days? You don't see many tractors anywhere yet, but they're the coming thing for farmers. Out here there are still a lot more horses than engines with "horse power." By the way, how is old Sarge doing? He is really getting old and feeble. I miss him. Maybe I'll get a dog to keep me company out here.

Study hard, Boys, and write me a letter soon. I miss you. Mom, you and Dad write too. I know how busy you are, but it gets lonely out here, and it may be a long, cold winter. I'm saving my energy; I might fall into a hole and need all my energy to climb out.

Love, Mozella

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Walter looked up at Donald with that twinkle in his eye: “As soon as North Salem High School graduates you, if they ever do, we’re going out West to see Mozell, OK?”

Donald had a faraway look in his eyes. He promised himself he would write his sister a letter and tell her about old Sarge’s death. She’d be sad, but she ought to know. He looked up. Walter was watching his face eagerly. Don admired his brother. He knew he had loved the old dog as much as anyone else, maybe more, but he was always looking to the future, always hopeful. “Y-You bet! Dad says he c-c-can n-never leave the f-f-farm long enough for a vacation, b-b-but we’ll do it somehow.”

Walter folded the letter carefully and slipped it back into its envelope. He hadn’t admitted to anybody how excited he’d been to get the letter from his sister. He had longed for a letter ever since she drove away in the Model T, and he was glad he had been the one to get the mail the day the letter arrived. He’d write to her right away and ask her how to get to Wolf Creek from the farm. He knew it was a long way, but he guessed that by the time they took a trip out West, he’d know how to drive. Donald had promised to teach him, and in spite of his faults, Don always kept his promises. Walter heard the harmonica. “Old Susanna” came drifting into the room and made Walter smile.

Donald often remarked how quickly time passed now that he was in high school. Math continued to be his favorite subject, and his buddy Henry kept him on his toes. Don was grateful for his good friend and happy that the Penningtons weren’t enrolled in NSHS. He liked music class too. Miss Saunders had them sing four-part harmony, and Don liked to sing tenor. They learned spirituals and American folk songs which Don would then work out on his harmonica when he got home. They discussed current events, ordinary stuff to Don who was used to hearing and reading the *Indy Star* every

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day, but it was fun to toss around ideas and comments. The Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, held them spellbound. Don and Henry thought it was unfair that a high school science teacher had been arrested for wanting his students to think for themselves. Calling it “The Monkey Trials” was a cheap shot, Henry commented, since teaching about Darwin’s theory of evolution didn’t make a man a monkey. Still, William Jennings Bryant was a powerful speaker and convincing debater. Local headlines soon moved on to the D.C. Stephenson scandal, and the boys wondered if his lurid, corrupt crimes would ruin the KKK, since he was Grand Dragon, or had been. Don thought Stephenson might make a good argument for Darwin’s theory as distorted by the raucous “Monkey Trial” anti-science crowd. The trouble was, as Don pondered the puzzle, he’d never heard of a monkey doing anything as primitive and brutal as Stephenson had allegedly done.

Summers were times of freedom of sorts and a chance to see their free-spirited sister Mozell, now a transplanted Montanan. She brought tales of the Wild West: stories of intractable mustangs roaming the valleys, mountain lions and grizzlies haunting the mountains, and cowboys riding the range and performing in rodeos. She told them about a student in her school who had won the local steer-roping contest and another who had the audacity to try bull riding. She said, “Frankly I’m more impressed by students who stick with the violin. Now that’s an impressive talent.” Mozell had taken the opportunity to teach her students music and had given a few violin lessons. Uncle Roy’s generosity in loaning her a violin and giving her lessons had paid off. The boys, however, wanted to hear more about the rodeos and grizzlies. “It’s hard to see grizzlies,” she told them, “because they stay far away from people.” Walter asked about the rodeos out West, and Mozella explained that the rodeo competitions were a lot like the 4-H clubs in Indiana.

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“They work on skills that are practical in ranching, like roping calves, steers, and other animals. You know, that’s how Will Rogers got his start.” She knew what a hero old Will was to Walter and Donald, and she didn’t see any harm in encouraging that kind of hero-worship.

Will Rogers had not only given the boys a sunnier outlook, thanks to his pithy, humorous wisdom, but he had piqued their interest in rodeo entertainment with his rope tricks. Walter would sneak out in back of the barn and practice roping the cows, but they protested, bawling their confusion and outrage. Walter couldn’t stand the bewildered look in their eyes. His soft heart rebelled at the violence to animals in the rodeo sport. Walter finally mastered the art of the lasso but decided there were better ways of controlling cattle than using rope tricks. He mastered the art of lassoing fence posts. Donald avoided horses for obvious reasons, but he too was fascinated by rope skills. He didn’t want to lose his hearing in the other ear, so he never rode horses, but he would secretly try lassoing, first a post, then a calf. Finally he lost interest and made up his mind to stick to the practical. He did, however, note Will’s latest witticisms. He liked the one in the paper that morning; he had read it aloud: “You know everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects.” That made him feel better. It also sounded true.

The Class of 1927 had a class song that Don and Henry liked to sing boisterously, in erratic harmony. The class had started with thirteen freshmen, so they sang of the “Lucky Thirteen” boldly defying any silly superstition based on fear of the cursed number. Fern Jordan continued to show her natural leadership ability and didn’t seem to mind that the boys teased her about running for President of the United States some day. They reminded her that Nellie Ross was Governor of Wyoming, and encouraged her to

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follow the example of Amelia Earhart and run fearlessly. Fern and her young friends had celebrated the amendment that gave women the vote in 1920 even though they were not old enough to vote yet. Fern's hero was Sister Aimee Semple McPherson. When the famed evangelist disappeared on a Venice, California, beach their junior year, the NSHS students eagerly checked the newspapers daily for news of her whereabouts. Don and Henry thought she was pulling a publicity stunt. Agatha Christie had done a similar disappearing act a few months before. These women were just looking for fame, Don thought. When the papers finally reported that Sister McPherson had turned up, dazed but unharmed, Don and Henry were convinced that she had pulled a fast one on the public. Her fame, in spite of the whispered rumors that she had met a lover and done who-knows-what-all, increased even more rapidly. Don said to Henry, "The damn public is t-t-too gullible. That's wh-why old Will Rogers is so cynical about p-politics."

One night Ora had a visit from men who lived in the neighborhood. They showed up mysteriously on the front porch and knocked at the door. Don let them in, thought he recognized a couple of them but had homework to do, so he went on upstairs where Walter was working on a school paper. They heard voices growing louder and their father answering the voices in his patient, sardonic way. Finally the conversation grew heated, and the men left, slamming the door and stomping down the front steps. The next morning before school Walter asked their dad what the men wanted. There was a long, uncomfortable silence. Walter sensed he'd asked something forbidden or intruded where he was unwelcome. At last their father looked up and said, "Boys, I don't want to scare you, but the Ku Kluxers are gettin' feisty around this county. I'm ashamed to admit it,

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but I once belonged to the KKK. I was even an officer, but I quit the Klan, and they think I'm a traitor."

"What's their cause about?" Walter asked.

"Well, they say the KKK defends the white race from inferior races and religions, but lately they've been mainly beatin' the drum for Prohibition and harassin' Negroes and Catholics - Jews too."

"Wh-Why are they f-f-for Prohibition?"

"If ye want my honest opinion, I'd say they like to control people, tell 'em what they can and can't do. They talk about "demon rum," but burnin' crosses don't make sense to me no more. I hate to confess this, but they convinced me to join when I was younger. Appealed to my patriotism and loyalty to the white race."

Walter was troubled: "Why do they burn crosses?"

"They say it's a warnin' to blacks, but it's arson and vandalism far as I can see."

"Why do they wear white sheets and pointy masks?"

"Boys, you'll have to ask them. Seems cowardly to me, at least now it does."

The spring of his junior year at NSHS, Don and Walter went to the Indy 500 races with Uncle Milford again, but Milford had a serious proposition for Don and told him about it as they drove into Speedway. "Don, my friend Spangler in Lizton has a repair shop that's doing real well with so many farmers buying cars and trucks. He needs a hand to help with the shop, learn basic auto repairs, clean up, and give him support. He wants a reliable fellow who is interested in auto mechanics, so I told him about you. You think you could work for him this summer?" Don was surprised, and his mind went into a tailspin thinking how he'd get to work, how he'd save his wages for school, what his

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dad would say. Finally he blurted out: “W-W-Well, sure! It’d b-b-be a g-great way to save m-m-money for school. D-Dad keeps telling m-m-me he can’t afford m-my college expenses. T-Tuition alone is out of the q-q-question. I’ll have to earn m-m-my own way.” Uncle Milford grinned and told Don he could go apply at the shop on Tuesday, the following day. Spangler would be glad to see him.

Walter knew Don was on cloud nine. They had gotten an electric starter and figured out how to put it in the Oakland, bypassing the crank and making the car easier to start. It hadn’t worked at first, but Don had tinkered with it until it turned the engine over. The Oakland was heavily used but mainly on short errands and hauling jobs. The Kettering starter had been a big help, and Ora had been impressed with Don’s ingenuity and initiative. Uncle Milford had heard about the Oakland starter escapade and made an effort to talk with Spangler about his nephew who was in love with engines. He also decided to work behind the scenes to make certain Don got good training in automotive mechanics.

The 1926 Indy 500 was a classic. Rookie Frank Lockhart won the race in the rain, after the race was stopped at Lap 71, restarted and stopped again at Lap 160. The rain made the dangerous sport even more hazardous, and Herb Jones, a local Indianapolis boy crashed and was killed. Don and Walter had brought raingear but were soaked by the time the race had ended. The brothers learned the story only later in the Indy Star of the 23-year-old rookie, who had been scheduled as a relief driver for Bennett. Lockhart eagerly took the wheel after Kreis became ill with pneumonia and wowed the crowd. The fierce competition between the Miller and Duesenberg cars was an annual bone of contention, with the Millers generally coming out ahead, but the brothers loved the

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“Doozies”! Don couldn’t get enough of the roar and excitement. He and Walter pushed their way to the pagoda where the riding mechanics and drivers were congratulating Lockhart. Jimmie Lee, chief mechanic for Lockhart, saw the boys and came over while the hoopla occupied the reporters and spectators. “Say, Boys, how’d you like the race?” Walter said, “The crash was bad, but we like Lockhart. Great that a rookie won.” Don asked him what he did, and when Lee told him he’d been a riding mechanic for several years, Don asked how he trained for it. Lee said, “We’re mostly self-taught. Riding mechanics don’t get much credit, but they’re the eyes and ears for the driver. They pump up the fuel pressure and make sure the driver knows what’s going on behind him.” Don’s mind took it all in, and he decided in his heart if he never made it as a driver, maybe he could train to be a riding mechanic. It wouldn’t be big money, but he’d get to be in the Indy 500 somehow. It seemed more practical and within his reach. Maybe a few years of training and experience would do it. One more year of high school, and then the world was waiting.

Spangler hired Don the next day. Don had talked his Dad into loaning him the Oakland, and when he drove the old car into Spangler’s parking area, he stepped out and tried to seem confident and eager to work for the fellow. Spangler asked Don questions about his training and interests and was satisfied that the young teenager would be a reliable employee. He showed Don where he’d be working and what he’d be expected to do. The more Don saw of tools and grease and parts, the more excited he became. He asked Spangler where he could buy a pair of coveralls like Spangler was wearing. The older man laughed and said, “Tell you what, Don, I’ll loan you an old pair of mine in the back there. I’m a little taller than you, but you can hem ‘em up and that’ll work jest

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fine.” Don showed up on time every weekday that summer and enthusiastically cleaned the garage in the evening after a day of changing oil, changing tires, adjusting carburetors, and checking spark plugs. He was in his element. When it came time for school to start, Don was depressed just thinking about studying books and sitting at a desk for hours on end, but Walter urged him to be sensible. “Come on, Don, you’ve only got a year to go. Give it your best shot.” The brothers survived Don’s senior year at NSHS by sticking to a routine and doing what had to be done. They also read the newspapers.

Don’s last year at North Salem High School began during the September of Miami’s devastating hurricane. Henry Myers and Don never tired of besting each other in their math classes, and both were alert to important national and world news. It amazed Don that most of the students seemed more caught up in planning for the senior prom than in informing themselves about the nation’s concerns. One fall morning Don hurried into algebra class where Henry was working on last-minute homework. “Say, Henry, d-d-did you see the photographs of the b-big Miami hurricane in t-today’s Star?”

“Yeah, don’t think I’d want to live down in Florida. Got an uncle who bought land down there near Miami, said it was the real estate opportunity of the future. Wonder what he thinks now? I think I’ll stay right here in Indiana.”

“Story in the *Star* said winds g-g-got up to 125 mph, killed h-hundreds of people.”

“Talk about hurricanes, Jack Dempsey’s a regular destructive force himself. He’s coming up against Gene Tunney in a couple of days.”

“Naw, n-not interested in p-prize fighters. What’s the p-p-point?”

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Don did give Henry a hard time about Gene Tunney's defeat of Dempsey, but otherwise the two NSHS friends managed to keep the math teacher on his toes in their friendly rivalry. Both boys were also fascinated with science and liked to challenge the science teacher. "Hey, Don, did you read about Goddard's rocket? We'll be going to the moon before long!" Mr. Spaulding warned Don and Henry not to get carried away by the popular science magazines. He didn't think man was meant to walk on the moon.

As winter tightened its bitter grip around Hendricks and Boone Counties, the optimistic students at North Salem High School simply planned for spring. The girls particularly were already plotting strategies for the May prom as basketball season came to a close. When Henry saw Don in the mornings, he'd greet him with, "Say, Don, what's in the news today?" The boys would discuss the latest doings in the City and offer their solutions to local and world problems. The prom was not on their mental radar, at least not yet. They were more interested in the Chicago excitement with Al Capone's gang escaping a 12-car machine gun massacre. Don and Henry figured that Bugs Moran was behind the 1926 September attack on the Hawthorne Inn, but the gang violence in Chicago convinced the boys that Chicago was not the place for them. It might be exciting to read about Capone and Moran from their rural homes, but they had the sense not to want to live in fear. "Did you read where they're building a big high school for Negroes in Indy? They were gonna' call it Thomas Jefferson High School, but somebody objected to naming it after a slave holder, so it's gonna' be Crispus Attucks."

"Who w-w-was he?"

"He was a free black man who fought and was killed in the Revolutionary War. He was the first American to die in the American Revolution."

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“D-D-Did Gov. Jackson approve that? They s-say the KKK got him elected.”

“Yeah, some fellers came to the house awhile back to get my dad to join the KKK, but he didn’t like their bullying. He reminded them about D.C. Stephenson, that Grand Dragon they got on murder charges. He did terrible things to that woman.”

“No k-kiddin’? Some m-men came to see Dad about joinin’ up, but he told me he t-t-turned ‘em down, said he didn’t want no p-part of cross burnin’ and secrecy. In my opinion, they’re a b-bunch of hypocrites.”

“The guys that came to see Dad told him a third of the men in Indiana belonged to the Klan and pressured him to get on board, look to the future of the white race. Dad told ‘em he was a member of the human race.”

Don laughed. “G-Good answer. Yer Dad’s OK, Henry.”

Where had those four years at NSHS gone? Don wondered, as he put on his best clothes for their 1927 commencement in the high school auditorium. There it was again: the mystery of time. He could never get those years back, he was thinking, no matter how he might want to some day. The sun came in through his small bedroom window as he straightened his stiff collar and tie. He combed his hair carefully and decided his blue eyes were a definite asset. So what if he was still short? He had grown strong, tough, and healthy. His mind this bright spring morning was on his future. Their class flower was the rose, so when he walked in the door of the gymnasium Miss Saunders, beaming proudly, handed Don a red rose for his lapel. Walter was in the audience with their mother and father and big sister Goldia. Don lined up with his classmates, in front of Henry Myers, for the processional “Pomp and Circumstance” which had to be repeated

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twice for the graduates to file regally onto the stage for the ceremony. Fern insisted they leave six feet between each student so the members of the North Salem High School Class of 1927 could experience the moment the way a big city high school graduating class might do it. The solemn occasion needed to be savored, she thought, but Don just wanted it to be done with and behind him.

Chapter 7 GMI

High school diploma in hand, Don heads to college at Flint.
At GMI he meets many trials, but always says, "Glad that I went".

No cash for frills; long nights of study; college is not a breeze.
Don survives tough freshman year, on milk and toasted cheese.

Don plays some college football but is the "Rudy" of the team.
Decides that racing or auto mechanics is a more realistic dream.

* * *

Don's mind was not on the formal ceremony. He had applied to GMI, General Motors Institute, for a scholarship at the urging of Mr. Smith, who had written a letter of recommendation for him in proper, rather hyperbolic style, about Don's love of math and his proficiency in that subject as well as his fine performance in science class. Don was hoping to sign up for the freshman class at this young engineering school in Flint, Michigan, beginning in the fall. He had read about GMI's history, influenced by Charles Kettering, an inventor and automotive entrepreneur who believed in the co-op system. Don was impressed with that because it was a practical way for a relatively poor student to work and study in an alternating set-up: six weeks of concentrated study, then six weeks of paid work in the automotive industry. He had never visited the campus but he had pored over maps of Flint and was eager to see the famous automotive city and the Flint River. Don was pondering his opportunities and dreading his inability to measure up when he heard the Principal call his name. "Donald Andrew Hines"! Startled, he stood up and somehow managed to make his way across the NSHS stage to take his diploma in hand and get down the steps without stumbling. He looked up to see Walter

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grinning and his parents beaming with joy. He knew in his secret heart that he wanted fame and fortune, but as young as he was, he was a realist. He knew he was only a country boy from a little farm in Indiana and would have to work twice as hard as his classmates to achieve what he wanted. Anyhow, he reasoned, fame just made you an easy target. Better to be safe and honest than famous, right? His teachers had drummed into them the importance of integrity, and Don believed it. After all, Al Capone was famous, but how much longer could he expect to last on this earth?

As spring planting occupied their time after graduation, Don and Walter were too busy to think too much about world events and national problems, but Don continued to read the news aloud every morning before they went out to get their work done. He had agreed to work for Spangler afternoons during the summer months, and he looked forward to the lively debates in the shop. After busy mornings getting the crops in and taking care of the livestock, it was fun to listen to the adult conversations. Somehow they always got around to discussing Al Capone and his Chicago gang. Don thought it was strange how they made him into some kind of American hero. One June morning he said to Walter, "Look at this! They're t-tryin' to g-g-get Al Capone for racketeering. Chicago police know h-his headquarters is the Hawthorne, b-b-but he's too smart for the cops."

Walter replied, "Well, he gets his illegal liquor from The Purple Gang in Detroit. Everybody knows it. Bootlegging is out in the open. Why can't the police nab him?"

Don thought the police and officials in big cities were all crooked, but he didn't want to disillusion his little brother too much. Anyhow, he figured, he didn't know for sure. He was concentrating on the letter from GMI, and the mention of Detroit stirred up his impatience and worry to fresh turbulence: Where was that letter? Maybe they

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wouldn't accept a student from such a small school in Indiana. He needed that scholarship too. It would be hard enough to survive even with the scholarship, but without it, how could he stay for the years it might take to get a degree and a good job? He knew his dad was worried about the farm's income and couldn't afford to support him in college. The co-op program had seemed the best solution, but what if he didn't make the grade? He knew he was competing with other boys for the GMI acceptance. He finished breakfast, and the brothers went out to get the planting done.

The morning the letter came, Don was ranting about the latest string of gang murders in Chicago. "These g-g-guys just m-mow down their rivals with sub-machine guns. T-Torrio is the head honcho in Chicago, b-b-but Capone directs the d-d-dirty work and g-gets away with m-m-murder." As he continued his raving, Walter came dashing through the door waving an envelope.

"Hey, Don! Looks like the letter from General Motors Institute. It just came."

Don grabbed the letter and slit it open with his knife. The letter had the GMI letterhead and was signed by the president Al Sobey.

"Dear Donald:" the letter began, "We are pleased to inform you..." Donald began to laugh and read the rest silently. "Walter, I'm in. G-G-GMI accepted m-m-me. They're even giving me a scholarship. It's only \$100, but that'll help. How about that?" Don couldn't remember when he had ever been so happy. His father didn't say a word, just looked concerned. His mother was glowing. She tried to tell him how proud she was but knew Ora was worried sick over how to pay for Donald's college. They'd just have to manage somehow. He had his heart set on this. "Dad," Donald began, "I know you

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think we can't afford this, b-b-but I have to think of m-m-my future." Ora took his pipe and tapped it against his palm. He looked up skeptically.

"All right, Donald. This is up to you. We can't afford none a' this extravagant college foolishness. Ye're goin' to have to work yer way through. This co-op program sounds good, but you have to get up on yer own ever mornin', work hard, and get yer papers in on time. No excuses and no horsin' around. So, you got a scholarship?"

Donald nodded. He was painfully aware of the responsibility this entailed, but his elation was unbounded. "L-Look, Dad. I know how to w-w-work like a m-m-man, and Walter can d-drive m-me up to Flint when the t-term starts after Labor D-Day. I won't need a c-car there, living on c-c-campus. Y-Y-You'll need the Oakland, and W-Walter can drive it b-back home." Walter was eager to help and loved driving. They intended to get several more years out of the Oakland, and this was one of the few long trips the old car would suffer. Walter was excited to think he and his brother would be on their own, nearly four hundred miles from home. He wasn't afraid of flat tires or overheated radiators. Just get him behind the wheel and he'd get the car back home all right.

"OK, Don, I'm your man. We'll drive up through Fort Wayne and take turns at the wheel. You'll be going up before high school starts for me. It's gonna work out. Hey, did you read about Lucky Lindy making his Atlantic Ocean crossing in that little airplane?" Don laughed. His brother was good at knowing when he needed to think about something exciting and distracting that had nothing to do with his stress and worry. The boys had been following Charles Lindbergh's adventures and admired his daring. "Next thing you know, Amelia Earhart will be trying it." Don nodded. The brothers had agreed that Amelia was the girl of their dreams.

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When he and Walter drove through the entrance of General Motors Institute, and Don walked onto the GMI campus for the first time, his heart beat faster and his pulse quickened. There was the GMI Academics Building, brand new, built by the school's new owners, General Motors. Walter had come with him, as promised, to drive the Oakland back home. Don had taught him to drive it during Don's senior year of high school. Not only that, but since the old car had been in use for over ten years, Don had taught Walter simple repairs and routine, but crucial, maintenance. They had mapped it out, all 390 miles from the Hendricks County farm to Flint, Michigan. They had left early, their mom packing them a humongous lunch and lots of water. Ora had retreated to the barn to finish chores, he said, but Don and Walter knew their father's difficulty with farewells, so they were off! Now here he was on campus, scared to death, and ready for the worst. Walter was hoping to spend the night and head back to Indiana the following day, so Don had to locate his dormitory room first.

They asked upperclassmen for directions to the freshman dorm, and after a couple of smart-alecs tried to lead them astray, they found the right hall. Don was eager for Walter to see the campus and wanted to impress his younger brother with his collegiate ways, so he parked the Oakland in front of the dorm, and they went in search of the college canteen for an early supper. As they strolled across the grassy quad, Walter said, "Say, Don, you think you'll be coming back home to the farm?" Donald looked down and shook his head: "N-No, Walter, it's the b-b-big city for me. Th-That's where the opportunities are these d-d-days."

They strolled nonchalantly into the canteen and ordered the cheapest items on the menu overhead. Chomping on grilled cheese and drinking milk, they were laughing

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about getting lost in Fort Wayne on their way up to Flint. Relaxing and getting their bearings, they were startled to hear an upperclassman shout, “Anybody drive a vintage Oakland? They’re towin’ it away!” Gulping, Don knocked over his chair getting up. Walter followed his brother, each one as nervous as a cat in a barn full of dogs. Dashing across the grass at a gallop, they shouted as the campus police stood watching a tow truck tow away their beloved Oakland: “Wait, Wait...” both boys called to the retreating tow truck. The campus officers looked indifferent and said, “Now, calm down, Boys, was that your car?” Don nodded, sick at his stomach. Walter said, “We just parked it there while we had lunch, officer.” “Yeah, well, that’s a restricted area. You’ll have to go down to the police station, pay the fine, and retrieve it.”

Don and Walter were horrified. Wasting money and getting in trouble already. They weren’t just hayseeds. They were fools. They got directions to the police station and walked rapidly down Flushing Ave. Don was sick with worry. His most urgent difficulty was money. What would Dad say? Here he was incurring unknown expenses his first day on the GMI campus. The boys were out of breath, and Walter said, “Slow down, Don, the Oakland isn’t going anyplace until we get there with the key to the starter. The russet and gold leaves were raining down on them as the wind gusted across the river. Walter laughed at the fall blizzard of dry leaves. He was worried too, but his method of dealing with situations like this was joking and diversion. “Hey, Don, remember what we were talking about the other day when you read about Al Capone’s latest escapade? Capone and his gang get their money from bootlegging illegal liquor. He’s successful because there is a market, a big one! Even the labor unions were against prohibition because ‘it’s wrong to deprive the workingman of his beer.’ Remember we

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laughed at that one. Prohibition isn't working because the people want to decide for themselves what they drink. Will Rogers said..."

"W-Walter, how c-c-can you joke around at a t-t-time like this?" Donald interrupted.

"Come on, Don, we'll figure out something. Anyhow, ole Will says that Communism is like prohibition; it's a good idea but it won't work."

"Yeah, old W-Will is smarter than all the p-p-politicians put together. He oughta run for office. W-Wish he was here right n-n-now. Maybe he'd know what to d-d-do."

The police station was an old square brick building on Flushing Ave. The boys entered. Don hesitated, but Walter urged him on. "Come on, Don. We didn't know we parked in a stupid restricted area. Maybe they'll have pity on a couple of hicks."

They approached a dispatcher at a desk who had them take a seat. Don looked around at wanted posters and saw his own face superimposed on the ugliest mug shot. How in Sam Hill was he going to get out of this one? The police officer who motioned for them to enter his office looked grim. "So this Oakland we found parked in a restricted area on the GMI grounds belongs to you guys?"

Walter answered: "It belongs to our father. We live near Lizton, Indiana, on a farm west of Indianapolis."

The officer's face lit up. "Home of the Indy 500, right?"

Walter and Don nodded in assent. They relaxed a little and waited for the officer to continue. He looked over his paperwork. "What are you boys doing up here?"

Don replied: "I'm enrolling at GMI, gonna study auto mechanics and own my own business some day."

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“Oh, I see. You’ll get a good practical education there. It’s new but they got the best co-op system in the nation.”

Don eagerly added: “Yes, Sir, I’m enrolled at GMI so I can work my way through school. We don’t have much money to spare.”

The officer looked up, the shadow of a smile and a hint of humor in his eyes. So how do you propose to pay the fine to get your car back?”

Don and Walter looked at each other, stymied and embarrassed.

“The fine is \$10. Do you boys have enough money to pay it now?”

Walter said, “To tell the truth, Officer, we can’t spare a dime. Dad gave me enough to get home, almost 400 miles, but we don’t have \$10 to squander.”

The officer tried to look solemn and reminded them gruffly, “It’s important to obey the traffic and parking regulations.” He let that reminder sink in and went on: “This new campus has restrictions that they should waive during initiation week. The Department discussed this with a GMI committee last week. They don’t even have enough signs posted yet, but they expect the Flint police to enforce their rules.”

Donald and Walter didn’t dare look at each other. They were holding their breath, concentrating on the officer’s face, as they saw hope blooming in the Flint concrete. The officer concluded: “Since you boys are not rich college kids and haven’t got a record with our police department, at least not yet,” he looked up ominously, “I’m going to give you a warning ticket and let you take your car.”

Walter and Donald exhaled together, looked at each other joyfully, and thanked the officer, shook his hand, and hurried out to the lot where their beloved Oakland was

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sitting. Don drove back to GMI, pulled into a space clearly marked “Freshman Student Parking” and ran up the steps into the freshman dorm where he registered and got his room key. He and Walter found the room, heard noisy conversation through the door, and knocked. A tall fellow one might have called a “snappy dresser” came to the door, and when Don introduced himself and his brother, he shook hands with each one and invited them in to meet his friends. “This is Ben Norton from Connecticut and over here’s Sam Snyder from New Jersey. My name’s Harry Biddlecox. We’re all from out East. Glad to meet you.”

“Hello, pleased to meet you too. This is m-my brother Walter. I’m Don Hines.”

“Oh, right. We’ve been assigned this room. We’re roommates, at least for now.”

Don wasn’t sure what he meant by that, but he was intrigued by Harry’s tweed jacket and blue knit vest. Expensive clothes, he was sure of this. His shoes were soft black leather, and his long pants were wool. He thought the vest might be cashmere. Not a wrinkle in sight. He sensed that Walter was uncomfortable, but he didn’t know what to say. “W-Well, my b-b-brother Walter n-needs a place to sleep for one n-n-night before he heads b-b-back to Indiana.”

Harry said, “It’s OK. He can take my bunk just for tonight. My parents are having dinner at the Marriott, and afterwards they’ll be picking me up to go out. They have a suite there. There’ll be plenty of room. I’ll stay at the Marriott tonight.”

Donald and Walter thanked him profusely and excused themselves. They were both hungry and figured they’d better get something to eat before too much later. Walter opened the door, and Don was out into the hallway in a flash. Walter closed the dorm door carefully and smiled. “Well, that worked out pretty well, didn’t it?”

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Don was humiliated. He didn't want to spoil Walter's visit, so he kept quiet as they walked back to the student canteen. Don's mind was fixed on his roommate's smooth, sophisticated appearance and suave manners. An Easterner! He imagined how they must be laughing at his bumpkin style and cheap clothes. The dormitory room was too expensive anyhow. He'd give it a try, but he was already planning to find a boarding house where he could eat in and save money. On their way to the police station he had noticed several old three-story Victorian houses along the river, and he thought he remembered seeing a ROOM FOR RENT sign on one of them. Fall was in the air, and Don looked forward to exploring the city of Flint. It was like landing on an alien planet.

He and Walter ordered egg salad sandwiches and both had milk again. Even the cheapest thing on the menu would quickly eat up his spare cash, Don thought. They ate in silence, Walter watching Don, knowing instinctively how insecure his brother was. The boys were starving, so Walter suggested he spend a dime on ice cream for the two of them. "Chocolate ice cream will set you up good and proper, Don," Walter insisted, so they savored the dessert, watching the future grow brighter. Chocolate works every time.

Walter left the next morning for Indiana, and Don walked around the campus trying to figure out what Initiation Week entailed. There was a meeting of all freshmen at 2:00 that afternoon, so Don got to Academic Hall early, found a seat near the front and looked around him. It was a large auditorium with uncomfortable wooden folding seats, tall windows, and a drafty chill in the air. He shivered and watched boys come in and sit down filling the rear rows first. He couldn't hear as well as others, he knew, so he always tried to get close to the speaker. He noticed the echo in the room was distracting so he knew he'd have to concentrate. A distinguished-looking gentleman climbed the

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steps to the stage and sat down to the right of the podium. Don wondered if that man could be President Sobey. A second gentleman proceeded up the steps, strode resolutely to the podium, leaned forward and boomed: “Welcome to GMI, Freshmen. Some of you will soon be Madhatters, so a special greeting to that elite group. You may feel a little silly wearing the derby and sporting the school cane, but tradition lives on here in Flint.” Laughter and applause followed, and Don relaxed a little. This guy was all right. The speaker continued: “I’m Charles Kettering. My claim to fame is invention. That electric starter on your car, if you should be so clever as to have one, is my invention. It has saved many an arm and improved the automobile in a small way. That is one of the primary goals in your higher education at GMI: invention, innovation, integrity – the three “In’s” of the automotive industry in America.” Don was captivated by this inspiring man, with his sensible approach and his confident demeanor. His speech was short but riveting. Don made up his mind to remember Mr. Kettering’s final words: “There will always be a frontier where there is an open mind and a willing hand.”

When Don returned to his dorm room, Harry was sitting at his desk, smoking a pipe. It smelled like home, but he was uneasy. Don asked, “Wh-What d-d-did you think of K-Kettering’s speech?”

“Aww, he’s a screwdriver and pliers mechanic. Working class. He has big ideas, but the wave of the future is real estate and investment in industry. I’m here to get a rudimentary education in mechanics so I can transfer to a bigger school and get a more prestigious degree in engineering or business management.”

This left Don speechless and angry. He changed the subject. “D-Do you know what th-th-this M-M-Madhatter stuff is all about?”

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Harry laughed. “Oh yes, the eggheads are encouraged right off to compete for the dubious honor of wearing silly derby hats and carrying ridiculous canes to impress the freshmen on Initiation Day. Didn’t you notice what geeks those guys were? I wouldn’t waste my time working my tail off to get into that club of losers. I intend to join a fraternity. It’s Sigma Alpha Epsilon for me. Only the oldest and the best. They cultivate leaders, movers and shakers.”

Don didn’t want to admit that he knew absolutely nothing about fraternities, but he had been impressed with the intelligence and good humor he’d seen in the Madhatters. He said, “W-W-Well, they were n-n-nice to m-me and seemed like smart k-k-kids.” He felt instinctively that he should be defending the Madhatters but didn’t know enough about the group to do it effectively, so he changed the subject again. “Wh-Wh-What courses are you t-t-taking? We sign up for our classes tomorrow, right?”

“Right. “I need Fundamentals of Mechanical Engineering and have to take an English and higher math course. How about you?”

“W-Well, I hope to t-t-take a math c-course and enroll in an auto m-m-mechanics c-c-curriculum.”

“GM will be paying us to work for an employer in the Flint area during the six-week co-operative segment. I hear we stay with the same employer the whole time.”

“Seems like a g-g-good system to m-me, practical.”

“Maybe so, but it’s too much like a trade school for my taste. I can’t wait to transfer to a school with better credentials.”

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Don took in the information, watching Harry's face, envying his well-groomed, confident style. Growing angry at Harry's superior attitude, he said, "Wh-Why are you w-wasting your t-t-time with a f-fraternity? What d-d-does that accomplish?"

Harry's face fell. He sensed his roommate's belligerent criticism. "You probably wouldn't understand the social benefits of the Greek Societies. In business it's important to schmooze and booze. That's the main reason Prohibition is a joke. I hear Sigma Alpha Epsilon gets the best bootleg liquor around." He turned away from Don and commenced writing.

Don left and began walking from the campus towards downtown Flint. He brooded and fumed, mulling over what Harry had told him. Was this cynical information true? Should he be trying to rush one of the fraternities on campus? Which one? He felt totally ignorant about such things. With the Madhatters he was swimming in more familiar waters. He knew how to work hard and study. He didn't know the first thing about schmoozing and didn't like the taste of the booze he'd sneaked one night after basketball practice. So he'd stick with the Madhatters, for friends anyway, and maybe he'd make the grade and join them. If not, that was all right too.

He walked for hours down well-lit avenues, past colorful, bright advertising, up dark, filthy alleys where he startled a tom cat. From the first, he was drawn to the Flint River. After matriculation the following day, he dug into a routine, studying every night, and making certain not to miss any classes. His frequent nightly rambles when he couldn't sleep always ended up along the dark, shimmering water that reminded him of the Wabash back in Indiana where one of his uncles had a summer home. He'd been to visit Uncle Hobart during the summer when his parents, in one of their rare vacation

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moods, had taken the family for a reunion on the beautiful river in western Indiana. He loved the relaxing lap of the water and the patterns of sunlight on the current as he sat watching for fish and crawdads. He could think more clearly by the river. He liked to lie in the grass, his hands behind his head, watching the clouds move peacefully along, listening to the musical sound of the rushing river as it flowed placidly down to the Ohio. Oh, he loved the river. Sometimes he'd fall asleep and wake up with alarm, wondering where he was and how he got there. The Flint River was a far cry from the Wabash, but it served to calm his agitated mind and liberate his cramped spirit.

Don managed to survive his first six weeks of academic work and even joined the GMI football team. He was too short to get much opportunity to play, but the coach encouraged him to stick with it, told him it would build character. Don soon became disillusioned, however, sitting on the bench game after game in the cold drizzle when he knew he should be studying. He'd never been so bored. On top of Don's uncomfortable conclusion that he'd made a big mistake to try football, Harry gave him a hard time about the football team. "Come on, Donald, GMI is a brand-new school, their athletic program has no history, no prestige. The coach teaches physics, for heaven's sake. You're wasting your time sitting on that bench game after game." Harry's ability to make him feel stupid irritated Don, especially when he knew Harry was right. They won their games but only because they played only trade schools and other young experimental community colleges as inexperienced in the art and science of football as GMI. If Don could have seen into the future, he'd have laughed at the early demise of the infamous GMI football team. It lasted only a few years more, and then when GMI became Kettering University, popular campus t-shirts proudly announced: KETTERING

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UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL - UNDEFEATED SINCE 1919. Undefeated because KU football ceased to exist in the 1930s when they decided football was irrelevant to well-trained engineers and mechanics.

As the term advanced, Don and Harry soon came to an amicable agreement that Don would move out. He found cheaper quarters on 3rd Avenue, where he had found a room for rent in a boarding house where he could have more privacy and eat meals he prepared himself from the grocery market downtown. His landlady, Mrs. Murphy, was a kind-hearted lady who served regular meals in the dining room for an additional fee, but Don preferred to eat oatmeal and raisins with milk for breakfast, bologna and cheese sandwiches for lunch and hot dogs for supper. His favorite drink was chocolate milk, which he kept cold outside the window on the sill, and he had a small hotplate for those rare occasions when he bothered to cook hot dogs or heat up soup. He enjoyed the independence of the boarding house and the freedom from scrutiny by fancy-pants Harry, his proper roommate, and Harry's snooty friends. He and Harry greeted each other frequently in classes and on the job, but Don found more compatible friends among the unfashionable eggheads and geeks.

He was thriving in the co-op program and earning more than enough money to pay his own way through GMI. The automotive industry was an exciting, challenging, rewarding field that suited Don perfectly. The school issued the students regulation coveralls in which Don felt completely at home. They reminded him of his first real boss, Mr. Spangler, who had so kindly lent him his first pair of coveralls and taught him many practical skills: how to use basic tools and how to relate to customers. He could apply the common sense approach he'd picked up in the Lizton shop and make his GMI

work experience more valuable. One problem he had, however, was resisting his love of tinkering. He sometimes became distracted by an inventive idea and let the job he was supposed to be on go begging. His instructors and supervisors grew accustomed to reminding Don to get back to his task and stop inventing on company time. He resolved that someday he'd own his own business and be his own boss. Then he could tinker all he wanted and would develop some innovative device that would revolutionize the automotive industry. Always in his mind's eye he saw Mr. Kettering in his careless tweed jacket, waving his arms in enthusiastic exuberance, reminding him and his classmates that "it doesn't matter if you try and try and try again and fail. It does matter if you try and fail and fail to try again."

The summer after Don's first year at GMI offered him time to relax as well as a chance to resume his friendship and employment with Spangler. He enjoyed telling his old boss all about his instructors, the co-op system, the GM organization, and what he had learned in class and on the job. He had an easy, relaxed relationship with his boss and didn't mind telling him embarrassing mistakes he'd made. Don admitted that he'd taken unnecessary chances in wandering the city of Flint at night when he couldn't sleep. "I was m-m-mugged once over in Elm Park in a back alley that I knew w-was a rough part of t-town, but the young p-punk didn't g-g-get much." He told Spangler about the speakeasy that some of the students frequented. Don and his boss agreed that Prohibition was a mistake. The older man defended it as a way to curb alcohol abuse, but Don argued that it only encouraged young guys to throw their money away on the black market and line the pockets of outlaws like Capone and The Purple Gang. Don said, "Young g-g-guys think it's exciting t-t-to g-go to these illegal g-g-gin joints. It m-makes

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‘em feel big.” Spangler asked Don what he did for entertainment in Flint. Don admitted that he couldn’t afford to do too much and needed to study, but he told his boss about the Capitol Theater in Flint where he’d seen a movie or two with some of his Madhatter buddies. Don said, “They c-call the Capitol Theater ‘a touch of Italy.’ It’s a s-swell theater. I’d rather go to Italy, b-but for n-now Flint’ll have to do.”

Spangler said, “Did you hear about the Ku Klux Klan march in Indy after Crispus Attucks High School opened its doors?”

“N-No, what happened?”

“They say it took over an hour for the marchers to pass the school.” Don frowned.

The annual Indy 500 excursion with Uncle Milford had become a family tradition. Don felt himself a part of the automotive and racing scene. He found out who the rookies were and picked out the rookie he thought could rival George Souders, who had won the year before, a long shot, by eight laps. It had been an exciting race in ‘27. He missed the rivalry of Jimmy Murphy and Tommy Martin, both self-taught mechanics and real dare devils. He’d never forget how Jimmy Murphy had put a Miller engine in his Duesenberg chassis and won the 1922 race. Uncle Milford had talked with the boys about that ironic turn of events and engraved on Don’s mind the importance of a flexible ingenuity.

On that Wednesday, May 30, 1928, Lou Meyer won the Indy 500, but Don and Walter had been rooting for Souders, who had knocked out the competition the year before. He came in 3rd, but Don was still shaken from the three horrible crashes. Don wondered if he’d have the nerve to continue if his relief driver or riding mechanic were killed on the track. They’d watched the car, going over 100 mph, flip over, throwing the victim, who died from a concussion on the way to the hospital. Death was a predator,

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stalking people who took risks but grabbing unsuspecting victims along the way as well. He loved the brickyard, 3.2 million bricks hard enough to kill a race car driver or riding mechanic. He remembered Kettering talking about taking risks. Don resolved to take all the risks necessary to succeed, but he wasn't sure how he'd react to real danger and the horror of injury and death. He did love excitement, and the Indy 500 was in his blood.

Returning to GMI in the fall felt like going home. The year on 1700 W. 3rd Ave. began with another appearance by Kettering who urged common sense in all endeavors and insisted that experience isn't just the best teacher; it's the only possible teacher. Working for GM was good experience, and Don soaked up every bit that came his way. His instructors praised his efforts, and his efforts were rewarded in his math classes. English, however, was his Waterloo. He dreaded the term papers and sweated blood getting them written. He was so used to seeing "C" scrawled at the top that he'd have fainted at any other grade. A C+ was cause for hope and celebration. He did get his term papers in on time and learned something with each agonizing assignment, but his desperate spelling and creative grammar plagued him.

He still read the newspapers down in the student lounge and on February 15th was disgusted to read that Al Capone's gang had allegedly murdered seven members of the rival Chicago gang led by Bugs Moran. The St. Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago was the horrifying climax of the endless gang war fueled by competition for the lucrative bootleg trade. Don felt guilty for secretly admiring Capone's bold confidence and daring schemes, but crime was crime, and murder was the worst. The newspapers reported that Capone himself was in Florida basking in the sun while the Chicago slaughter occurred. Later in the term, he read that Capone had been arrested for carrying concealed weapons.

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Capone was a slippery one, Don thought; they'd have to put him away for some ordinary crime like tax evasion.

Meanwhile, he survived his last year at GMI by dogged persistence and a steady diet of oatmeal and raisins. He was determined to work hard, get his papers in on time, and succeed. He looked forward to his 6 weeks of co-op work and gained a reputation for reliability and productivity. When he had read about the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, he'd noted that one of the bloody victims machine gunned to death was the gang's auto mechanic and another was an innocent optometrist who evidently was seeking the thrill of hanging out with mobsters. Somehow that put everything into perspective. His steady diet of work and Spartan lifestyle might not be very exciting, but he was still alive.

Chapter 8 The Great Depression

Don buys an Indian motorbike but feels a need to be safer.
Then Donald discovers hitchhiking, where there is less to “pay fer.”

The Depression lays off Don from an excellent Anderson job.
Finds a job as a local mechanic; exits GM with muffled sob.

Don’s called back by the GM team to debug their 500 racer.
After a riding mechanic stint, Don needs a healthy bracer.

* * *

President Hoover had been inaugurated, and 1929 was a bitter cold winter even in an area where the residents liked to boast that the Great Lakes moderated the weather. Don’s co-op boss at his GM job called him over toward the end of the winter term at GMI and asked if he’d be interested in working for GM down nearer his Hoosier home. There was an opening in Anderson, Indiana, at the Buick plant there. Don jumped at the opportunity and signed an agreement to commence working for Buick in Anderson following spring graduation.

Don had briefly owned a motorcycle, a loud, powerful Indian bike that he had talked himself into buying with his savings. A fellow GMI student who owned the bike, needed the money, and Don’s love of the open road put his savings in harm’s way. He had ridden the Indian around Flint and home to Indiana and back once, but a truck had stopped suddenly right in front of him, nearly causing a serious accident, so Don had taken an opportunity to sell it at a profit, figuring he could always hitchhike. In America hitch-hiking was becoming a national art form. The way a guy dressed, the nonchalance in his stance, the casual way he held out his thumb made all the difference. Don didn’t hesitate to pack his few belongings into his small bag and hit the road. He liked to walk,

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but after several miles along the highway he stuck out his thumb and breathed a sigh of relief when a trucker picked him up headed south. “Howdy, young feller, my name’s Pete. Hop in.” The good-natured trucker asked Don question after question about his plans and Flint and GMI. Don didn’t mind talking to this unassuming fellow who seemed to be interested and wasn’t inclined to criticize or scrutinize. He figured the guy must get lonely driving a truck for a living. The windows were down, and it was hard for Don to hear what he said with the spring wind blowing in, but he tried to answer the best he could. He told Pete how he’d survived on oatmeal and raisins while his roommate Harry from out East, Cape Cod, ate out every night at restaurants. Pete laughed: “Welp, y’look purty healthy to me, young feller.” Then Don explained that he’d moved out of the dormitory and gotten a cheap room at a Flint boarding house, finished at GMI, and had a new job with Buick in Indiana. “So ye’re headed for Anderson, Indiana? What’re ye gonna’ do there?” Don explained that he had a job with GM’s Buick division and hoped to get as much experience in the automotive trade as he could. He also confessed that his dream was to drive in the Indy 500. The trucker looked surprised. “That’s a mighty dangerous sport, Kid.” Don agreed but said out loud what he’d been thinking about secretly for months.

“D-Danger is everywhere, and if it’s my t-t-time to go, it’s m-m-my time. As long as I d-do an honest d-day’s work, m-might as well w-work at what I l-like.”

The trucker nodded, “Ye’re right there. Well, go fer it, young feller.”

Don smiled. He intended to do just that.

Buick turned out to be a good employer. Don enjoyed the bustling atmosphere of the automotive division and hustled to keep up and do more than expected. He’d gotten a

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small apartment on Columbus Avenue where he could walk to work. The foreman took him under his wing and convinced him that he should get into the stock market. After all, prosperity in America was available for any hard-working, risk-taking young man who wasn't afraid to put his money where it could do the most good – and earn a good profit for the fellow who had the initiative. Don was wary of this foreman, however, since one infamous morning he had been working on this guy's assembly line. The foreman told them he wanted to make it to the baseball game and began to speed up the operation. They sped up the line so fast that the car body they were working on would bend in the middle as it came down in place. The number of nuts and bolts left off with unknown calamities resulting haunted Don. Years later he would guffaw watching Lucy Arnez of the "I Love Lucy" TV show stuff chocolates into her mouth trying to keep up with an assembly line breaking the speed limit. This same foreman recommended investing in Duesenberg, Auburn or Cord, but Don felt loyal to GM and invested in Buick stock. He wondered why his foreman hadn't favored GM stock himself, but he figured the cocky guy thought he had exclusive insider information and wanted to show off. So Don put any extra money he earned into stocks and watched his small investment grow slowly but steadily. The insane euphoria of the late '20s was infectious, and Don had caught the profit bug. He was feeling prosperous.

Then came the crash. October 24, 1929, was thereafter known as Black Tuesday, and Don suffered agonies over his meager investment as he watched his stock decline with all the others in the business pages of the *Indianapolis Star*. Why hadn't he put his wages into a solid savings account? Then news of bank failures compounded the panic and gloom. He thought philosophically, so much for "solid savings accounts." He read

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the papers avidly now, checking the business pages for the stock market reports first. The only direction was down. He made up his mind to put his future savings into two separate accounts, divide his money between the State Bank of Lizton and the Jamestown Bank. That way if one bank folded, he'd have at least half his money, dividing the risk. He was glad he knew the folks in the State Bank of Lizton. It seemed important to him to be able to trust people.

As the stock market crash became history and severe economic depression set in, Don was grateful to have a good job. The papers were full of horror stories about millionaires committing suicide, failed investors jumping out of windows. The national unemployment rate was climbing on a daily basis. Don saw evidence with his own eyes. He pitied the unemployed men on the street, saw despair in long Salvation Army soup kitchen lines. He learned the difference between the tramp and the hobo. The hobo traveled in boxcars, hoping to find work on the west coast or anywhere across the vast nation. Any hobo was careful to correct anyone who might think he was a tramp. The hobo was looking for work. Tramps were not too proud to beg. More and more homeless men had an aimless look.

Buick was in a survival mode and began laying off workers, but Don managed to hold onto his job for awhile. He tried daily to impress his foreman and fellow workers with his stamina and skill. One morning, however, his boss called him into his office and asked him to sit down. "Don, this gives me a lot of pain, but to get right to the point, we're going to have to let you go. Company policy is changing with the times, and we have to try to accommodate our older employees with families to support. You're a young man with promise and can find a job somewhere until we're able to hire you

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back.” Don was speechless, and he grew more uncomfortable as he watched his boss’s face. The old man had tears in his eyes. What a time to launch his career!

He decided to go into Indianapolis and try to get a job in town, but business after business told him they were laying off workers right and left. He figured he’d better notify his landlord in Anderson and move back home immediately, save his money, try to get his old job with Spangler back. As he hitchhiked back home, his heart was heavy with worry and humiliation. He’d told his brother he wouldn’t be coming back to the farm because of his brilliant future in the big city. Now here he was crawling back with his tail between his legs. A Fuller Brush salesman picked him up along Highway 136 and took him to the crossroads where he walked back along the familiar gravel roads and up the old driveway to the old home place. They’d never gotten a dog to replace old Sarge, so all was quiet as Don approached the front door.

His mom came running to the door when she saw him walking up the drive. “Why, Donald, how are ye? What brings ye home?”

Don explained to his mother how his boss had to let him go because of the economy. He told her how he had tears in his eyes and seemed to be sorry to have to tell him the bad news. “M-M-Mom, I’d really w-worked hard and w-w-was m-making good money. I l-looked for w-work in Indy, b-but all the b-businesses are in b-b-bad shape just like B-Buick.”

Walter burst into the kitchen, shouting, “Hey, Don, what’re you doin’ home?”

Don dreaded telling his brother most of all, but after he explained that the depression was affecting everybody, he felt better and vowed to get another job immediately, somehow. He told Walter he intended to hound Buick until they hired him

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back. Meanwhile he'd go see Spangler and earn some money to buy himself a used car. The Interurban was reliable, running along Hwy 136 all the way into Indy, and he could always hitchhike. He got a schedule for the Interurban line into Indy, went to see his old boss Spangler in Lizton, and worked out a part-time schedule with him. Spangler was glad to see Don: "Say, you won't believe how things have changed around here. One thing's for sure, though: the automobile is here to stay. Folks don't have enough money to buy a new vehicle, so they bring their old cars and trucks to me, and I keep 'em on the road." He hired Don and paid him for half-days, but Don ended up working "steady" and making himself useful. With his GMI training, Don was confident that he could be a valuable mechanic, and he enjoyed working on anything that local farmers brought in for repair. He often offered to work later than agreed for half-day pay, and Spangler tried to be as fair as he could. Hard times had hit everyone.

Don persisted in making himself a nuisance at the Buick plant on Meridian Street in Indianapolis, and with good recommendations from his old boss in Anderson, Don at last received good news. He had gone into Indy weekly while working in Lizton all summer, and in the fall Buick hired him to work with engineers developing a Buick race car for the Indy 500. Don was eager to prove himself and volunteered to do whatever nobody else wanted to do. He helped test the car at every stage of development, and one day the engineers confessed that they were stumped. The car did well until it reached a certain speed, when it invariably stalled and chugged to a stop, not good behavior for a potential oval track performer. The foreman called Don over: "Y'know, Shorty, if y'er willin' to do this, we might get to the bottom of the trouble."

"Sure, M-Mack, what d-d-do you want m-me to do?"

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“OK, we need a small guy to ride in the spare tire well on the side and watch to see what happens to make the engine stall.”

“Hey, I c-can do that. N-No problem.”

So the next day Don, “Shorty” to his buddies in the shop, climbed into the spare tire well on the fender, strapped himself securely to the car, and the driver took off north up the long, straight paved Highway 31. The driver jammed his foot onto the accelerator: 60, 70, 80, 90. Don’s goggles fogged up, but as the speed accelerated, the glass cleared. He kept his eyes glued to the gas line and engine configuration as they went faster and faster. Suddenly he saw the gasoline through the clear tube begin to bubble and boil. As the turbulence grew, the engine stalled, and the car slowed to a stop. The driver pulled over and parked on the embankment on the side of Hwy. 31. “Did you see anything goin’ on, Shorty?”

Don grinned, “Sure d-did! The gas line is too close to the engine. G-Gas is heatin’ up and s-startin’ to b-b-boil at high speed.”

“Ha! We were goin’ over 90 there. That’ll never work if Buick plans to put a car in the Indy 500. Gonna’ have to redesign the gas line.”

They drove back to Indianapolis, Don riding shotgun this time. He couldn’t wait to tell his boss what he’d discovered. Satisfied that Don knew his stuff, the foreman put him on the team that was working on the race car shocks. One engineer from Purdue was convinced that a new innovation, dry shocks, would win the race. They worked with various designs, but Don was skeptical. He warned the Indy race team that the shocks would overheat and the Buick entry would never win the race. He figured the tried-and-true technology was better, but the engineers outvoted him since a sponsor with money

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manufactured the innovative shocks, and the audacious Buick open wheel race car was on its way to glory – they hoped.

In the 1930s they used riding mechanics in the races, and since Don was short and a lightweight, and had assisted in the development of the car, Buick took him on as a relief riding mechanic. He got to know one of the drivers, Harry Butcher, who had come in 14th in 1930. Harry told him about the tragic crash that killed one of the riding mechanics, Paul Marshall of Indianapolis. “He was a good friend, a real dare devil who had worked hard. He didn’t deserve to die.” He introduced Don to Phil “Red” Schaefer, one of Buick’s drivers training for the big race in May. Red Schaefer had come in 7th in the 1930 race the year before and was a seasoned driver. He was Buick’s first choice for the 1931 Buick entry #12. “They tell me you’re training to be a riding mechanic for Buick?” Phil asked Don.

“I’ll b-be ready if they n-n-need me,” Don replied, hoping Phil didn’t notice his nervous lack of confidence. “Not m-much to it. J-just watch the d-d-driver’s back.”

“Well, Kid, good luck to you. Jigger Johnson is a guy to ask if you have questions. He’s a real hot shot mechanic.”

“Thanks, M-Mr. Shafer, I’ll remember that.”

So Don spent every spare minute on Gasoline Alley, working on engines, changing tires, adjusting carburetors and spark plugs, relieving other riding mechanics, and soaking up the Brickyard atmosphere. Just as the “Brickyard” was once an actual brick-paved speedway oval, the “pits” were actual pits, holes in the ground where the mechanics did repairs underneath the race cars. He knew how lucky he was to have any job in 1931, but he was grateful to be in Speedway, doing what he loved most. Buick

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was his survival, at least until after the big race had been run. This time as the Indy 500 got underway with all the familiar engine and crowd noise and heady smell of fuel, Don was positioned in the pit and waiting for Schaefer to pull in. By now he was used to being “bench guy” in high school, at GMI, and now in The Brickyard. He hoped he might get a chance to see some real action as a riding mechanic. Sure enough, lap 93 Red pulled in, the driving mechanic Causson jumped out, told Don to take over, and they were off tearing around the four banked corners and roaring down the straightaway. Don lived a lifetime in the excitement of the Indy race that day, but he had a feeling Buick was under some curse after his friend, Harry Butcher, had flipped over the wall on lap 7. What happened after that changed Donald’s life. The papers the next day reported that the Indy 500 had become a Demolition Derby with half a dozen crashes, serious injuries and deaths. When Billy Arnold’s rear axle broke, he and his riding mechanic Spider Matlock spun, and Luther Johnson hit them broadside, seriously injuring both Billy and Spider. Few at the track that day realized until they read it in the *Indy Star*: Billy Arnold’s wheel spun off and flew over the Brickyard wall, hitting Wilbur Brink, a 12-year-old boy playing in his backyard, and killing him instantly. Also killed were driver Joe Caccia and his riding mechanic Clarence Grover. The crashes made a permanent impression on Don’s young mind. He decided maybe he should reconsider his career plans. Don loved adventure but wasn’t suicidal.

Reading about the race the next morning, Don felt sick. The tragedy that hit him hardest was the boy on Georgetown Road, an innocent young bystander, killed by a flying wheel. It was incomprehensible, devastating. The riding mechanic, too, was young, and Don knew how ambitious he was. Clarence had been a skilled young

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mechanic with a great future ahead, but now he had no future. He wondered how Fast Eddie was taking these tragic accidents. He was taking a lot of heat anyway. Eddie Rickenbacker, his hero, had instituted the “Junk Formula” regulations, easing the expense of entering a car. Recognizing the economic problems after the Crash of '29, Eddie hoped to encourage manufacturers to take a risk and develop a car capable of entering the Indy 500 without the pressure of expensive super-chargers. Fast Eddie had thereby lowered the over-all speed of the Indy race and earned the disdain of critics, who mocked his efforts to accommodate depression-burdened developers. According to popular opinion, Rickenbacker’s good intentions were for nothing.

Rickenbacker had also let Cummins enter a special engineering experimental car with a 361 cubic inch, 4-cylinder marine diesel engine that struggled to hit 85 mph. Fast Eddie had offered an affordable alternative to supercharged, straight-8 racing engines like Miller. Criticism of Rickenbacker filled the news. Critics attacked his “Junk Formula” as a sure-fired way to kill the Indy 500 for good. He was assailed and criticized, but Fast Eddie was still Don’s hero. He knew first-hand that it takes more courage to risk humiliation and contempt than to risk injury and even death. How did Old Eddie feel about the crashes and injuries and deaths at his racetrack? Would he make more changes? Would he throw in the towel? Don needed to know. Questions and doubts about the wisdom of pursuing his chosen profession nagged at him now. Maybe it was too risky, a foolish, reckless adventure. Another Ketteringism came to him: “The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.” Don wanted to find Rickenbacker and tell him what Kettering had said, give him some encouragement.

In spite of the sobering results of the race, Don was encouraged by Stubby Stubblefield's 8th place finish in his Car 36. Stubby was one of Don's favorite characters and the main reason Don loved the camaraderie at the track. Stubby loved to joke around, always had a grin, never met a stranger, and he took time to talk with young guys like Don, who wanted to learn from experience. Stubby was short too, like Don, but it didn't seem to hold him back. The first time Don had heard the name, he'd laughed. With a name like that, Stubby had to succeed. Stubby liked to tease Phil Schaefer, his good friend, about getting old. Don could hear him: "Hey Red, you old fart, how do you stay in this game at your age?" It was Stubby who had warned Don to watch out for reckless behavior on the track: excessive passing, taking the curves too fast, cutting in front of another driver too close, or showing any anger or impatience while behind the wheel. Stubby was a hard, determined driver, but he was always safety first. Don wondered how long he'd last in the racing business. Justice didn't seem to have anything to do with Death's lottery, at least in a high-risk sport like racing. Don enjoyed life too much to court Death.

A letter from sister Mozella arrived in the mail one afternoon in July. She had sold her Model A because it was giving her too much trouble. She wrote that since she had a good offer, she couldn't turn it down. She added wryly that she was also sick of changing flat tires. Donald and Walter eagerly read their sister's plea to come fetch her home. Truth be known, their sister was homesick. This the brothers guessed as they planned a trip across the prairie to Montana where they might see the mountains and mesas, smell the sagebrush, and along the way cross the mighty Mississippi River.

Walter asked his brother: "Can Buick spare you for a couple of weeks?"

Don admitted that Buick had been laying off men and paying him for part-time work. He tried to be indispensable, but he wasn't married, and therefore was vulnerable to a sign of the times: unemployment. Actually he approved of Buick's policy of retaining senior employees who had families to support as a first priority. "I'll t-t-talk to my b-b-boss tomorrow. I expect he'll b-b-be glad to see m-me go."

Their father hesitated to let them take the Oakland, but after he read his daughter's letter, he relented, and they headed west on 136, crossing the Wabash before noon on a hot, humid Tuesday. Just after they had crossed into Illinois, they heard a "POW" and frowned at the prospect of patching or changing the tire. Don had brought two spares, so they were soon back on the road. They took Hwy. 150 through Lincoln's home state because it cut across northwest at the best angle to head for Montana. They drove through Urbana, corn fields, Bloomington, corn fields, Peoria, more corn fields, Galesburg, historic place where Lincoln and Douglas had held their debates, and then straight up to Moline, twin city with Davenport, Iowa, where they crossed the mighty Mississippi. Walter joked about Mark Twain's cutting his teeth on the snags and currents of America's great north/south river while Don drove over the rough steel bridge, gritting his teeth, waiting for the blowout. Not to be disappointed, they heard the POP and hiss as the flattened tire brought the car to a dead stop. They had entered the state of Iowa. The other two flats they'd had in Illinois had been routine, but they needed to buy a spare and didn't know how far they'd have to walk. Davenport, strange city to the brothers, lay west of the river. Don offered to walk to a tire store while Walter stayed with the car. He liked to walk, but the heat radiated up from the sidewalks, and by the time he found a

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service station that sold tires he was soaked with sweat. Mopping his face with a red bandana, he read a large sign: "Welcome to Davenport, Iowa's Front Porch." Resting and feeling welcome, he read the finer print: "the only place where the Mississippi River runs east to west." He made a mental note to tell Walter about this fine river city and its odd geographical position. Purchasing half a dozen inner tubes and a patch kit, he headed back down past the Davenport Chamber of Commerce on Brady Street and found Walter taking a nap in the shade, his head resting on a rock. "My brother could sleep anywhere," Don thought enviously. After Don had jacked up the car, he woke up Walter, gave him the pump and patch kit, and the two of them repaired the blown tire, finally getting the car back on the road.

Iowa was a flat landscape of corn and soybean fields, handsome barns and neat white farmhouses, silo after silo staking out homesteads like fortress towers. They took Hwy. 6 until Don figured they should head to Waterloo, gaining the advantage of the northern latitude. Walter was telling Don a story about William Durant, the millionaire, running a bowling alley after he lost a fortune in the crash of 1929. As they entered Cedar Rapids, Don was driving, Walter navigating, both thinking about Durant's faded glory. When they realized they were headed out of town on a gravel road going the wrong direction, the car lurched, and both brothers groaned. "Oh no, not another flat!" As they changed the tire, an Amish farmer passed, his roan pulling a load of hay. The young farmer tipped his hat politely, and he smiled. Don was grateful the farmer hadn't shouted "Get a horse!" but noted that the Amish seemed to have better manners than most.

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The brothers decided their sense of direction could take them up county roads, going north and west until they hit Waterloo. Luckily they missed Waterloo but hit a paved road, Rte. 20, which headed due west across Iowa and Nebraska into the blinding sun. To save money, they had been spending nights in sleeping bags at the side of the road, but Friday night a thunderstorm came up about midnight, soaking them. They spent the stormy night miserable as wet cats, wringing their clothes out the next morning, glum and out of sorts. They found a creek close by where they shaved and changed clothes, ready to tackle Nebraska. They crossed the wide Missouri River early at Sioux City and vowed to stick to Rte 20 on into Wyoming. They hated to miss the Bad Lands but figured that Mozella would want to see that part of South Dakota, so they could see the famed Black Hills and Mt. Rushmore under construction on the way back to Indiana. A dozen more flat tires and a series of Burma Shave signs later, they drove through the Oglala grasslands and the Indian reservation.

Walter had memorized the last Burma Shave signs they had passed and recited:

“Don’t take a curve

At 60 per

We hate to lose

A customer – Burma Shave”

Don laughed. Part of the reason he liked to travel was because his brother was such good company, but he also had an instinct for it. He had an urge to travel just for the sake of traveling. It put him in a good mood, canceled his frequent dark spells and gave him a sense of moving with the spin of the earth, free as an eagle, but another flat tire reminded him that automobiles had a downside. They were driving along the

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Elkhorn River and had a good place to pull over and change the flat. It was becoming a familiar routine. After they patched and inflated the flat, they spread the roadmap out over the hood of the car and figured they could make it to Wyoming before dark. The brothers were wild about maps.

Hwy. 20 took them to Casper where they stocked up on milk, bologna, bread, and patch kits. The Medicine Bow Mountains made driving more challenging, but they were awed by the scenery: mountain streams, tall pines, and green forests. Heading up to Montana, they stopped in Thermopolis, where Walter insisted they visit the hot springs pool. July weather was easier to take at the higher elevations, but the heat was still oppressive and so they spent half an hour in the natural hot springs of Thermopolis, Wyoming. Don wanted to stay in longer, but the attendant had made them write their names in a big book and ordered them out of the hot pool. The brothers admitted that they were feeling a little woozy and light-headed. The friendly town employee informed them that it was not uncommon for a person to faint if he stayed in too long. Refreshed, they left the pretty Wyoming town, crossed the Montana border at dusk with nothing more alarming than a radiator leak to contend with. Don repaired it with his Blackjack chewing gum.

Wolf Creek, Montana, is located thirty miles north of Helena on the Missouri River near Holter Dam. Walter and Don discovered it was much further from the Wyoming border than they'd thought. Route 12 was scenic, and the Rockies loomed like a beacon as they traveled west, but they were worn to a frazzle by the time they followed Mozella's meticulous directions and found her boarding house on Main Street in Wolf Creek. Mozella was excited to see the Oakland stutter and halt in the driveway. She ran

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out dragging a suitcase, which she threw into the trunk. “Whoa, Mozell. We’ve been driving all day. How about we take you out to dinner?”

“Oh come on, Walter. I know you and Donald especially are happiest when you’re on the go.”

“Could be, Mozell, but we’re famished. Haven’t had a decent meal in I don’t know how long. And we could use a good night’s sleep too.”

So the siblings ate at a local eatery and the boys bunked down with friends of Mozella’s principal a block down the street. They couldn’t wait to get back on the road the next morning. Walter drove all the way to Yellowstone where they entered the famed national park at Mammoth Hot Springs, saw herds of elk, watched Old Faithful spew her steaming water spray right on schedule, and even spotted a few buffalo. Walter commented sadly that there once had been herds of thousands of bison all across the western plains. Mozella said, “The wolves are going fast too. Wolf Creek was named for the Indian phrase “Wolf that jumps in the creek,” but every time a calf is found killed, they get a hunting party together and kill wolves. I know that the ranchers have to make a living, but it’s a downright shame to see wolves disappear.” They headed east through Cody and stopped to explore Devil’s Tower, a striking rock formation in the far northeast corner of Wyoming into the Black Hills. The natural tower above the Belle Fourche River had been designated a national monument, the first, by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. Donald wanted to climb the rock, but Walter held him back while Mozella laughed at them.

Taking turns at the wheel, they arrived back home in Indiana worn out but joking about “The Journey of 43 Flat Tires”; Ora and Dora were overjoyed to see them safely back. Dora cooked their favorite meal making sure they had plenty of peach cobbler.

Chapter 9
Romance in Lizton

Donald spies a Lizton beauty waiting for the Indy train.
Prettiest gal he ever saw, but he doesn't know her name.

Donald's speech and writing and his looks she resisted.
But what Lucile can never forget is the way he persisted.

Don makes a hit with her family and loves her nephew Sherrill.
Then he takes Lucile to church and even hums a carol.

* * *

After that race in 1931 and the journey of forty-three flat tires, Don decided to settle into safer ways of making a living. Buick sent him to pick up Governor Harry G. Leslie on Meridian Street, launching Don's short career as political chauffeur. Don liked to drive but wasn't much of a political animal and tried to avoid conversation with any but close friends and family.

"So, young fellow, are you a loyal Republican?"

Don couldn't remember who he'd voted for, but he knew he wasn't loyal to any particular group of political pundits. "N-No, I guess not, Sir. I'm not a m-member of any organized p-party."

The governor laughed. Everyone had heard the end of that Will Rogers witticism: "I'm a Democrat." Once again Don was grateful to old Will. Took some of the pressure off and relieved the stress of talking with strangers. The governor said, "Y'know, Will is a good friend of mine. He's about the finest man I've ever known."

Don was impressed, and his estimate of the Governor rose instantly. Don asked questions about Rogers, and Gov. Leslie readily answered them all. "Yes, Will is a Cherokee, proud of it too. Had dinner with him and Betty one evening. She is a great cook and a sweetheart of a lady. They live out on the West Coast now, but Will travels a

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lot. Betty is a saint, never complains, thinks the sun rises and sets on Will. The feeling is mutual too. He always says he was the happiest man alive when she married him.”

The Governor asked Don about his plans for the future. “Any lovely lady out there you have your eye on, Don?” Don felt himself blushing in spite of himself. He had seen a local girl waiting for the Interurban mornings when he drove east on 136 to go into Indy to work. He didn’t even know her name, but she was the prettiest girl he’d ever seen. He had wanted to stop to ask her if she’d accept a ride into the city, but he hadn’t had the nerve. Gov. Leslie persisted: “A family is the best treasure a young man can ever have, Son. Don’t wait too long. Money isn’t everything, not even in America. Who’s going to take care of you and keep you company in your old age?” The Governor laughed, but Don took his comments to heart. After all, he was the Governor.

Now the dark-haired girl with the lonely look occupied Don’s thoughts day and night. He had noticed her independent air and wondered where she lived. He knew she lived somewhere in Lizton because she waited every morning at the same Interurban train stop on the corner of Hwy 136 and Hwy 39, always punctual and always wearing white gloves. Her thick, black hair was a mass of waves, and her posture was ramrod perfect. He had taken a few local girls out, but none of them seemed to take to him, and he was hoping this girl would be The One. “Now’s the Time to Fall in Love,” he remembered hearing on the radio. The popular tunes of the day celebrated love in a light-hearted, sentimental way, and he believed it all. “My Darling Clementine,” “Indian Love Call,” “All of Me,” “Peg O’ My Heart, I Love You” and old love ballads he’d learned from his mother formed a picture in his mind of romance, married love, the ideal girl, sweetheart of Sigma Chi, the All-American Girl of his dreams. This Lizton working girl, who took

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the Interurban every morning into the city, surpassed any cheap phony image of the perfect American girl he'd ever seen or heard.

So the next time he passed her at the Interurban stop in Lizton he stopped, tried to joke a bit, said carefully, "How are ye? Would you like a ride into Indianapolis?"

The Girl replied demurely, "No thank you."

Don persisted, "I only l-live down the road on a f-farm just w-west of here. I'd be happy to t-take you into the city in style."

The Girl repeated her shy refusal: "Why, thank you kindly, but I'm waiting for the train."

Don was frantic but had to remain casual. He knew that much. "OK, but let m-me introduce m-myself. I'm Don Hines. I work for B-Buick. I'd be honored to give you a ride."

"No, thank you. Really, I'm fine and don't need a ride."

Don's smile faded, but he figured time was on his side. "All right. M-Maybe you'd tell me your n-name?"

"Certainly. Lucile, Lucile Ginn. Charlie and Ethel Ginn are my parents."

Just at that moment, the Interurban came promptly to a stop. Lucile, lovely Lucile climbed aboard, took a seat, waved to Don, her white gloves impeccable; her purse on her lap, her legs crossed and, to Don's relieved delight, a shy smile on her face.

Don began arriving earlier, cutting across town, hoping to catch her before the train pulled up, hoping for rain, snow, a missed train, a train wreck, anything to tip the balance in his favor. At last one morning, as a chilly wind brought a late fall drizzle into central Indiana, Don pulled up beside Lucile as she walked briskly toward the Interurban

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stop. He invited her to hop in, smiled, held the door open, and glory be, she got in and sat down, his passenger. His heart beat faster, but he determined to remain calm and urbane. He'd seen that word in the newspaper that morning and wasn't sure what it meant, but it sounded just right to him. He'd try for the urbane effect.

"I'd say it's f-f-festerin' up a storm. G-Glad for the rain. W-We can use the rain. So, where d-d-do you work in the city?"

"I'm a private executive secretary for the President of the Iroquois Underwriters, Inc. Company on Meridian Street. Iroquois deals in automobile insurance. Their home office is in Danville, Illinois, but their Indianapolis office is very busy."

"What d-d-do you do all d-day?"

"Paperwork. You know: bookkeeping, writing letters, filling out official forms, contacting and interviewing clients. I'm what they call an amanuensis."

Donald had never heard that word before, but he vowed to remember it and look it up as his sisters would have advised. He drove more slowly than he usually did going into Indianapolis, careful to give every hand signal correctly, navigating State Highway 136 like a pro, slowing down for Pittsboro, then Brownsburg, Speedway, and watching for speed traps along 16th Street. As they sailed past the Speedway Racetrack, he casually mentioned that he had done some work for Buick there at the track.

Lucile was mildly interested but not a race fan. "I've never been to the races, but a friend of mine is a big fan. Are you a mechanic?"

Donald was dying to impress her, but he wasn't sure how to do it. "Y-Yes, I've been working with B-Buick on their race cars for a couple of years n-n-now."

"Do you mean for that to be your life's work, the race car industry?"

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Donald was glancing sideways trying to gauge her mood and reaction, but she was too demure to reveal much of her real feelings. He thought she might be hiding some negative sentiment about the race track lifestyle. There were rumors, after all. He thought for a minute and said, “N-No, what I really want to d-d-do is own my own business, b-b-be my own boss, maybe do some farming too.”

Lucile smiled. “So you’re ambitious?”

Donald wondered if this was a trick question. “Sure, I expect you c-c-could call it ambition. I’d like to raise a f-f-family, you know, get m-m-married, w-w-wouldn’t you?”

Lucile blushed and didn’t answer. Donald drove in silence. The Meridian Street traffic was becoming a serious problem with more and more people, even with the Depression going on, driving automobiles, trucks, and commuting into the city to work. Donald swerved to miss an oncoming car that had crossed the center line. “D-Damn these idiot drivers who don’t know what they’re d-d-doing!” Lucile looked askance at him, and the air filled with disapproval. Uh oh, Donald thought. She must think I cuss and drink - the twin sins that his mother decried. “Beg pardon,” Donald quickly offered, “I didn’t m-mean to cuss, but bad drivers make m-me mad as hell.” Lucile looked down, revealing nothing; however, she decided his language could stand improvement.

Suddenly, Lucile smiled and waved: “Why, there’s Amelia. She works in the same office that I do”

Don said, “Amelia! D-Did you read where she’d c-c-crossed the Atlantic alone in her airplane, first woman to d-d-do it? Then he realized his mistake and apologized: “Sorry, m-m-my mistake. She’s your f-f-friend? Here in Indy?”

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“Yes, Amelia Cook. Miss Cook is the best friend a person could ever have. You must be a fan of the famous aviatrix, Amelia Earhart?”

Relieved to see the insurance building where Lucile worked was on the left, Donald turned into the parking lot and let her out. “I’d like to s-s-see you again,” he called after her. She retreated up the steps, her shoes clicking a cadence that spelled disaster in Donald’s mind. He vowed to himself that he’d work on a different strategy and hurried on so as not to be late to work himself. She was definitely a class act, and her shy smile had left a lasting impression. He wondered if she was religious.

Revivals were a popular way to meet and romance a girl in the ‘30’s in rural America, and Donald made a mental note to check for local church activities in Lizton. When he got home that evening, he read the local papers before he picked up the Indy Star, looking for church events. He didn’t see anything in Lizton, but Plainfield was hosting an evangelist from the South who had a Gospel quartet in his program, a group called the Gospel Four. Perfect, he thought. His parents had recently had a telephone installed, but he avoided using it, not wanting any nosy neighbors on the party line listening to his conversations. Here was an emergency, though, he decided. He picked up the receiver, cranked the handle to get the Central operator, and said, “R-R-Ruby, could you r-r-ring me Charlie G-G-Ginn’s n-n-number in Lizton?”

“Why sure, Don. Just a minute while I check. I think it’s a long and two shorts.”

Donald was unsettled for a second. How did she know it was him?

In a moment he heard a strange voice on the other end of the line. “Hello?”

“H-Hello, who is this?”

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“I might ask the same. To whom am I speaking?”

Kicking himself – figuratively - Donald regretted the faux pas. He should have identified himself and asked for Lucile. “Th-This is D-Donald Hines. Is Lucile there?”

Then the voice giggled. Donald was humiliated. He should never have tried to call her. She undoubtedly despised him and wouldn’t want to talk to him anyway. The girlish voice continued, “I’m sorry, but she isn’t here right now. I’m Thelma, her sister. May I take a message, Donald?”

“N-No, I’ll try calling later. Thanks. When should I t-t-try again?”

“Oh, Donald. She should be back in half an hour. She just went to pick up some groceries for Mom. On Saturdays she takes care of all the errands.”

“OK, t-t-tell her I c-c-called. G-Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

Thelma was fairly bursting with girlish energy and excitement when Lucile came in the door. “Guess who just called you, Lucile?” Lucile was out of breath, carrying bundles of groceries, preoccupied with an encounter with a neighbor’s dog, a little cocker spaniel who thought he owned the neighborhood. She looked at her sister in frustration.

“Well, Thelma, you could hold the door open for me, you know! That little dickens Max just harassed me all the way down the sidewalk. What a pest that dog is!”

“Didn’t you hear me, Lucile? Guess who just called?”

“Now, Thelma, how would I know?”

“Well, it was your new beau, Donald.” Thelma giggled again and took one of the sacks of staples and began loading the flour and sugar into their canisters.

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“Thelma, I don’t have any “beaux” and don’t want one. What did he want?”

“He’s going to call you back. He sounded shy.”

“If it’s any of your business, he is shy, but he can’t help it.”

The other sister, Mary Eloise, came into the room, wearing an equestrienne jacket and jodhpurs, her hair piled on top of her head. She looked elegant and knew it, but she modestly attempted to appear unaware of her stunning appearance. She moved gracefully about the room, picking up a paperweight, leafing through a book, looking nonchalant. Finally, she decided her older sisters were deliberately pretending to ignore her. She burst out: “Say, you two, how do you like my theatrical costume for the Lizton High School play next weekend?” Thelma and Lucile stopped and stared at their little sister. She was a beautiful girl with an oval face, large soulful eyes and auburn hair but had never taken pains to dress in any fashionable way, concentrating on reading and studies. Her love of theater was intense, though, and she had landed the lead in this year’s production, “Prairie Girl” to be presented two nights. Although Lizton was one of the smallest schools in Indiana, their English teacher was a devoted drama buff and encouraged in her students a love of drama. Mary Eloise had been inspired to try out for the play and had astounded Miss Ellis with her talent.

“Mary Eloise, you look as if you left your horse tied to the wood shed. Where on earth did you get that great riding habit?”

“Isn’t it elegant, Thelma? Miss Ellis brought it to school for me. It fits like a dream. Lucile, do you think it needs a scarf or gloves?”

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“Definitely, Kiddo. I’ll look at Ayers or Blocks on my lunch hour and find you a pair of brown suede gloves you can keep and wear later with your winter coat.”

Lucile loved to shop. She and her best friend, Amelia Cook, spent their lunch hour either in the Ayers Tea Room or wandering the vast department store on the Circle. They took a deep breath when they walked briskly through the huge glass and chrome doors of L.S. Ayers or Block’s, anticipating the perfumed atmosphere of abundance. They relished the deference of the salesladies and the meticulous displays of new, colorful merchandise. Here was America at its most lavish; there was little evidence of the depression here. She and Amelia had worked in the same office for ten years and were like sisters. Amelia was a confirmed spinster and proud of it. She laughed when anyone asked her about any plans for marriage. “Oh, I’m too independent to put up with a man. He’d think my habits were eccentric.” Lucile thought Amelia’s habits were curious but appealing. For example, she always ordered vanilla ice cream for dessert and put it under the lamp at the table to melt while they ate their entrees. She was also fastidious about her clothing, never wearing the same outfit twice in a row and taking her jackets and skirts to the cleaners regularly. Lucile enjoyed spending an occasional weekend in the city at Amelia’s apartment where they could eat out or eat in as the mood dictated. Lucile’s modest salary was enough to give her the freedom to go on an occasional shopping spree if the two young women were up to it. She felt useful being able to contribute to her parents’ limited financial pool. She was also grateful for her job, especially considering the high unemployment and economic problems of her generation. She took immense pride in being an excellent private secretary.

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Her dad, Charlie to his many friends, had been post master in Lizton until the Democrats took over in the 30's. After that, he worked for the county hauling gravel for the county roads and served as sexton of the Lizton Christian Church, a volunteer job. Her mother, Ethel, was a "homemaker," as her role in the family was popularly called, but their oldest daughter wanted no part of cleaning, washing clothes, cooking, and endless sewing. To her that smelled of menial slavery and deadly boredom. She was frankly embarrassed by their modest home in the middle of the small town. There was a small parlor with a wood stove for heat, two little bedrooms, a kitchen, and a sun porch which Mary Eloise preferred, even in winter. There was an ice box for keeping food cold. The iceman came once a week, carrying a huge block of ice over his shoulder, swinging it by the ice tongs into the bottom of the icebox, and stomping back out the door, down the steps, to his two faithful horses that he had never had the heart to replace with a truck. The milkman came every morning, the bread man arrived twice a week, and the paperboy delivered the *Indianapolis Star* every day of the year. The large wood cook stove in the kitchen kept that part of the house toasty warm during the day. Charlie was good about keeping the stoves filled with wood from the woodshed. There was a two-seater, an immaculate outhouse out back, a basin in an alcove for washing up in the kitchen, slop jars in every bedroom which Charlie emptied every morning. Above the upholstered easy chair near the parlor stove was a print of "Can He Talk?", a sentimental rendering of a big collie dog looking intently at a chubby little 19th-century girl, crawling on the stone floor and gazing innocently up at the big furry dog. Mary Eloise, when she was a small child, loved that picture, had stared at it, wondering who the little girl was, what was behind the door, where the house could be, and why the child was barefoot.

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The three sisters had acquired a brother at last, and they adored Marion, who enjoyed the attention and devotion. He was the youngest and had spent his first years in a cradle in his parents' bedroom, a crowded arrangement. By the time he was old enough to go to school, his mother had rearranged the sun porch to accommodate his sleeping quarters. Marion was very bright but timid and had delicate health. Hay fever bothered him frequently, and his allergies were a constant annoyance. When Lucile came home from high school, she liked to tease him. She enjoyed practicing her Spanish lesson and babbled Spanish to Marion until he'd cry. Then she'd feel ashamed and help him with his homework or give him a cookie from the cookie jar in the kitchen. He was soon smiling and laughing again as Thelma and Mary Eloise showered affection on him.

When the phone rang, Thelma ran to answer: "Hello? Why yes, Donald, she is here. Would you like to speak with her?" She stifled her giggles and handed the phone receiver to Lucile.

With her two sisters standing nearby, Lucile was mortified and constrained, but she made a valiant effort to sound sophisticated. "Why, yes, Donald, it's good to hear from you." She listened as her sisters strained to listen in as well. "I don't know. Well, OK, that evening should be fine. Friday evening, you say? Seven o'clock? All right, I'll be ready. Thank you for calling. Goodbye." Lucile hung the receiver back on its hook and whirled around to face her giggling sisters. "You two are impossible! How can I talk on the phone with you guys hovering like dirigibles?"

"So where are you going with your new boyfriend?"

"He isn't my 'new boyfriend'!"

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“OK, so where are you and Donald going on Friday?”

“He’s taking me to the revival at the Plainfield Christian Church.”

Lucile’s two sisters were wide-eyed. Thelma said, “I’m impressed. Not many boys these days respect the church and actually take their girlfriends to a service. Maybe because Donald has a responsible job makes a difference.”

“Or maybe he’s just clever enough to know Lucile would be impressed by his choice of courting venues,” offered Mary Eloise, but she had a twinkle in her eyes.

“Oh, Mary Eloise, you’re always so dramatic. He’s just an ordinary country boy who offered me a ride to work.”

“Well, he owns a car, so he can’t be all that ordinary.”

“Hey, Mary Eloise, you’ve been seeing a rich boy with a Duesenberg, so you’re a fine one to talk.”

Mary Eloise blushed and said, “Don’t talk about Randall. We aren’t going out any longer. His parents don’t approve of me. They think our parents are poor and common.”

“They are. So what? Nobody works harder than Dad, and Mother is the best woman this county has seen in a great long while.” Thelma became incensed whenever her sisters mentioned Randall Bradford or his snooty family. She couldn’t abide snobs. Of all the nerve!

The Bradfords had moved to Hendricks County from New England a generation before and made it clear they thought they were superior to the local breed. They had disapproved of the relationship between Randall and Mary Eloise from the beginning, but Randall was smitten nonetheless. He took her into Indianapolis for dinner or to a play

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but avoided being seen with her in the neighborhood, frankly sneaking around away from the prying eyes of his parents or their close friends. Mary Eloise denied being in love with him, but her sisters knew better. It was too tragic to think about. Where would it end? They dropped the subject; it was no laughing matter.

Revivals were all the rage in the 1930's. Famous evangelists such as Sister Aimee Semple McPherson and Billy Sunday drew huge crowds and had fans all over the world, but even the small, country churches invited notable speakers from far away to present nightly sermons to "charge the batteries" of the congregation. This metaphor was frequently used in tune with the popularity of the automobile. Music was a central part of the evening services, bringing quartets and soloists from around the country to enhance the inspirational atmosphere. The emotionally charged sermons were a source of excitement and prompted many converts to the churches. The scandal that Sister Aimee had created after she "disappeared" off the California beach disillusioned some of her followers, but in spite of editorials and even a ballad spoofing her unlikely story of abduction and captivity in Mexico, she regained much of her popularity or at least her fame. The three Ginn sisters had been fans and discussed her alleged kidnapping at length. Lucile and Thelma were skeptical and outraged that two deaths resulted from the rescue effort after her disappearance. Mary Eloise was quieter about her opinion but finally had to admit the famous evangelist might be a charlatan. Her sisters accused her of admiring Sister Aimee's dramatic ability, and Mary Eloise accepted the charge but added that she was disillusioned because she was so sure Sister Aimee had been sincere.

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On Friday evening, Lucile was ready at 7:00 p.m. dressed in her favorite suit with gloves and scarf to match, impatient to leave, but Donald was late. She restlessly paced, pretending to read the paper, putting dishes away from the evening meal, straightening and rearranging shelves. Finally at 7:15 she heard a car pull up to the curb, a car door slam, and a knock on the door. She breathed a sigh of relief but was annoyed. Donald laughed to see her impatience. "Come on, Lucy. We won't be too late." Lucile knew Plainfield was at least twenty minutes away, and if they had car trouble the evening would be a complete waste. At least the early spring weather was on their side.

"Donald, do you realize we're going to be late? The church is in Plainfield, isn't it?"

"Yup, you're right. We might be a little late, but it doesn't matter. By the way, you can call me Don."

"Well, Donald, I don't like arriving late to a church service. Everybody looks at you as if you've grown an extra head."

Donald laughed. "Oh, don't worry about that. This car might get us there on time yet." Lucile sat back and tried to relax but was afraid they might be stopped for speeding. She remembered his connection to the Indy 500 and didn't know what he might do. How fast did those race car drivers go? 100 mph? She decided her nerves might not be able to survive a friendship with this man. They took the Connersville Road to Hwy 40, taking the curves as fast as the Ford would take them and at last pulled up into a parking space behind the brick church in Plainfield, settled by Quakers, quiet folks devoted to peace. Lucile was thinking how she'd appreciate a little peace after the wild ride she'd had. Donald hopped out of the car, dashed around and opened the car door

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since Lucile hadn't moved. They cautiously walked into the church foyer, greeted by an usher, who handed them a program. They could hear congregational singing, and Lucile's heart sank. How she dreaded coming into a strange church late, all eyes on her and this uncouth person. Well, maybe not uncouth, but awkward and late, late, late.

The evangelist was Brother Mack Jones, a preacher from the South, specifically from Bristol, Tennessee, who had brought his male quartet, The Gospel Four, with him. As Donald and Lucile took a pew near the back, the quartet began to sing after an elaborate introduction by a skilled accompanist, who was all over the piano, leaping from arpeggio to arpeggio. The harmony was beautiful, Lucile thought, but she was aware of humming beside her. Donald was humming along with the quartet. At first Lucile was embarrassed but didn't notice anyone else showing signs of disapproval. She tried to be tolerant and decided that his enthusiasm for the church music was a good sign. As they brought their special music to a rousing finale, Donald started to applaud. Lucile gently reached over and took his hand in time to prevent the humiliation of breaking a local custom: no applause in church. When the ushers passed the collection plates to take a free-will offering, Donald put in a quarter. Lucile, blushing painfully, laid a dollar bill over the coin and looked away, hoping nobody, including Donald, had noticed. Donald, meanwhile, was encouraged by Lucile's intimate gesture and tried to hold her hand. She, however, demurely withdrew her gloved hand and tried to concentrate on the sermon.

Brother Jones had a booming voice and dramatic delivery. Lucile was wondering how Mary Eloise might react to this kind of drama. Then she checked herself and tried to retain the gist of the sermon so she could discuss it with her sisters. Brother Jones was just getting warmed up with the introduction to his sermon: "Learning to Fly". This title

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caught Donald's attention, and he began to listen as the enthusiastic evangelist outlined his message. After he read Deuteronomy 32:9-14, he told a story from his "hard times" repertoire about a man who'd lost his job, had a sick daughter who needed an egg every day to restore her strength, whose wife prayed fervently for a miracle, the miraculous event involving a red hen who came by the house every morning and laid an egg. Donald was skeptical but stuck with the sermon as Brother Jones built up momentum. He based his main points on what he called the 6 D's of God's Flight Plan: Demonstration, Discomfort, Danger, Decision, Doing, and Deliverance. The alliteration and careful organization gained Lucile's admiration, and she was pleased that her companion was interested. Brother Jones' message was that God shows by demonstration what we need to do to lead a good life and be saved. He read Romans 5:8 to make it clear. Then he compared the mother eagle and her method of teaching the eaglets to fly by showing, by hovering over the nest. Then he launched into the hard part, the discomfort and danger of leaving the nest. He read from Job 30: 27, which impressed Lucile since Job was one of her favorite books. Then he compared the decision of the baby eagles, who must fly or die, to our tough decisions that cause us to change direction or perish. He read urgently II Corinthians 7:10 about the role of repentance and God's deliverance. He concluded with Psalm 34:19 and told another Depression-related story about praying and relying on God when life gets difficult and frightening. The large congregation stood as one body and sang, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." A few people came forward to be baptized. Donald felt out of place, like an alien on the wrong planet.

As they filed out of the crowded church building, several local members of the Plainfield congregation said hello and shook Donald's hand. The warmth and simplicity

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of the country church made them both feel welcome, and Donald breathed a sigh of relief at having survived a church service with Lucile at his side. The cool evening air struck his face as they looked for his Ford in the crowded parking lot. His eyes strayed to the early green leaves and buds on the flowering crabapple trees around the church grounds, and he breathed deeply of the spring air, grateful for his youth and his good fortune in having persuaded this vision of feminine grace to accompany him. Life was good.

Lucile waited by the passenger door, pointedly expecting the courtesy that Donald, missing the beat by a second or two, finally acknowledged. He swung around as if he'd been looking forward to this all evening, and opened the car door for her. She cautiously edged onto the seat, smoothed her skirt, and folded her gloved hands in her lap waiting for him to close the door. She drew a quick breath when the door slammed, a little too forcefully, and settled in for the ride home. She was troubled somehow by the revival service. Sometimes it seemed sacrilegious to her to speak of God, especially in such familiar ways. She thought God spoke in silence. Donald slid in behind the steering wheel and asked, "Well, n-n-now, how d-d-did you like that m-m-music?" Lucile was still pondering the sermon and had to think a minute.

"Oh, yes, the quartet was talented. Very nice harmony."

"M-My sisters and brother W-Walter and I sing together sometimes."

"Really? Where are your siblings?"

Then Donald told Lucile about his school teacher sisters, who were teaching out West and in northern Indiana and explained that his brother Walter who had recently been graduated from North Salem High School preferred farming and had decided he didn't need college. "W-Walter's smart too, but he's g-gonna do all right with all h-h-his

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experience. M-My professor at GMI used to say experience is the only t-t-teacher worth a d-damn.” Lucile’s quick glance of disapproval brought a quick apology. They rode in silence up to 136 and turned left in Brownsburg at the drug store. “Say,” Don said, “Would you l-l-like a soda? W-We could stop in McClain’s at the soda f-fountain?” Lucile declined. She was tired and worried that her parents might have waited up for her, and she knew the weekends were even busier than week days for them.

“No, thank you, Donald. That’s very considerate of you, but I should be getting home. It must be nearly 10:00 by now.”

So their courtship began. But Lucile was uncertain about this young fellow and didn’t want to “lead him on” if it would only be to disappoint him in the end. She was also sick with worry about her youngest sister, Mary Eloise, who had developed a deep, persistent cough that wouldn’t go away. The doctor had tried several treatments and medications but seemed stumped. Their parents dreaded the prevalent diagnosis of consumption but wouldn’t speak the word “tuberculosis” for fear the very word might invite the curse on their daughter. It was also a kind of shame since it implied that her health was somehow contaminated, her constitution weak, and her resistance inferior. She was an eternal optimist, never complained, and simply assured them that she had overdone her activities and needed more rest. She moved into the sun porch, and Marion slept on the sofa in the parlor, hoping to help his sister recover.

One summer evening, listening to the birds calling contentedly to each other from the huge old trees lining the street in front of their house, Mary Eloise, Thelma, and Lucile were relaxing on the screened porch. Lucile was noticing how pale and thin her youngest sister had become. She seemed to be wasting away. The doctor had demanded

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complete rest for her so she spent a good part of the day in a striped canvas lawn chair, a chaise lounge with a wooden frame, long enough to allow her to stretch out and rest her head on a small pillow. Her cough had gotten worse. Her sisters could no longer ignore how the coughing wracked her body, and although she tried to hide it, the sisters knew she was coughing up blood. They felt completely helpless, and their distress was hard to conceal. Trying for a light-hearted atmosphere, they made small talk: “Have you read Pearl Buck’s *The Good Earth*? She just won the Pulitzer Prize, you know.” Mary Eloise, her head resting on the pillow, smiled but didn’t respond. She appeared to be too weak to speak. Then Thelma tried: “Don’t you just love Jack Benny? What did we ever do without a radio?” Mary Eloise turned to Thelma, her smile spreading. “My favorite character is Rochester. I love his gravelly voice.”

Thelma chimed in: “So do I. He’s a perfect foil for Jack Benny: wise, sensible, kindly, patient...”

Lucile was delighted that Mary Eloise had expressed an interest in Jack Benny. She had bought the Silvertone radio for the family, hoping it would help her sister rally and recover. She was sick with worry that her forced idleness would simply weaken her sister more. Unless she could do one of the expensive “cures” at a spa, Mary Eloise was limited to her doctor’s orders: rest, rest, and more rest. Meanwhile, her cough grew more violent and ominous, alarming the family and their friends. Thelma pursued distractions: “My favorite singer is Bing Crosby. He has the smoothest voice I’ve ever heard. They call him a crooner. Don’t you just love to hear him sing those ballads? Like that great song, ‘When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day?’”

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“I like Gene Autrey, you know, on WLS out of Chicago?” Lucile offered. “He has that country-cousin, cowboy voice. He sounds as if he’s on his horse, ruminating, when he sings on The Barn Dance.”

Mary Eloise giggled. “Lucile, you’re so funny. I’d like to go up to Chicago some time. Pictures of Lake Michigan make it look splendid. Maybe Dad will take us up to celebrate his birthday the end of September.” She closed her eyes as if the effort of speaking had worn her out. Lucile and Thelma looked at each other apprehensively, trying not to think of the possibilities – no, probabilities – based on what they had heard about tuberculosis. How much longer did their sister have? The old dark clock ticked from the corner, usually a comforting sound, but the older sisters listened apprehensively.

Thelma’s friendship with Wayne Fritts was a much sunnier situation. Wayne had proposed the week before, and they were planning to get married as soon as they could afford to buy a house in Indianapolis, where they planned to move. Wayne was working for the city of Indy, saving his money, and Thelma was taking the Interurban into the city Monday through Friday to work at L.S. Ayers, loving the bustle of city life as much as her sister Lucile did. The sisters were having lunch in the tea room when Thelma looked at Lucile mischievously and announced: “Wayne and I are getting married next week. We want you to be maid of honor. Think you could do that?” Lucile nearly choked on her tuna fish salad sandwich.

“Thelma! Are you crazy? It takes months to plan a wedding.”

“Why should it? We want a simple ceremony, no fuss, only close friends and family to celebrate our marriage. So...will you do it?”

“Well, of course, but what about a honeymoon?”

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“Wayne is going to surprise me!”

So her sister Thelma married Wayne and continued to work for L.S. Ayers. With Thelma married, she attained a status that eluded the other sisters. Lucile was eager to know whether Thelma and Wayne were planning a family. Their secretive conversation the last time they’d had a family get-together made Lucile suspect that Thelma had a surprise but wasn’t ready to talk about it yet. As soon as Lucile and Donald arrived after church one Sunday for dinner with the Ginns, Thelma enthusiastically accosted her, “Hello, Lucile, come look at Dad’s garden this year. He outdoes himself every spring.” They left Donald to talk with Charlie, Wayne, and young Marion in the parlor and ignoring kitchen responsibilities for a change walked down the garden path admiring new green shoots. Thelma took a deep breath and broke the news; she and Wayne were expecting a baby in a few months. They were still living in their little house on the western edge of Indianapolis, and Thelma had made the difficult decision to resign from her L.S. Ayers job. Since Wayne worked in Indianapolis, Thelma was having a hard time adjusting to her lonely isolation. Lucile knew her sister had worries similar to her own and asked how long they had known. “The doctor confirmed it last week.”

Lucile asked her: “Do you worry about having a baby to take care of, Thelma? It’s such a responsibility.”

“Don’t I know it? I worry all the time. Wayne wants a son more than anything else in the world. What if it’s a girl? He was a Marine, you know.” Thelma’s voice trailed off, and she looked pensive. Lucile didn’t know what to say, but she understood her sister’s worry and uncertainty. Thelma continued: “I hate to admit how much I miss working at Ayres.

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Lucile wanted to confide in her sister but didn't know how to tell her about her own doubts. It was as if she'd doom her own relationship by confessing her reservations, so she just sympathized. "It's natural to miss the excitement of the city. When the baby comes, you'll be so busy and happy. Wait and see!"

As news about the devastated economy and unrest abroad bombarded them daily, Thelma worried about the imminent birth of their first baby. She and Wayne expected the event any day now. They'd discussed the troubling turmoil in the world at the last Sunday Ginn dinner. Wayne with his calm demeanor assured them that America would never get involved in some European war again. War seemed so remote, and they thought of America as the nation of freedom, opportunity, prosperity – and peace. Lucile was mulling this over when the phone rang: one long and two shorts. She ran to get it, nearly tripping over Marion, who was repairing a lamp for his mother. "Hello? Oh, Thelma! Last night? Which hospital? Riley? What room? OK, OK, Listen. We'll be over to see the new baby as soon as we can get there. A boy? Oh, Thelma. That's just grand! OK, bye." As she hung up, she realized she had tears in her eyes. Why on earth do tears come when a person is so happy? Another mystery. She took off her apron and told Marion and her parents to get ready for a trip into Indianapolis. Thelma and Wayne had a baby boy.

They named the boy Sherrill Jay, a healthy Fritts with a cute little nose and big ears that stuck out the way Wayne's did. Lucile was awed watching the infant sleep. They didn't talk with Thelma for too long. She looked very tired. Wayne was ecstatic. He went back to the nursery with them before they left, and they smiled and waved. The

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baby opened his eyes, and Lucile was certain he looked right at her, smiled and – she was sure of it – winked!

Sherrill, the Ginns' first grandchild, was a first-rate prize. He laughed at everything and soon was crawling around looking for mischief. He loved Granddad Ginn's string games: cat's cradle, spider's web, over and under. Charlie never tired of showing Sherrill the church and steeple inside his hidden fingers. Sherrill's chuckle was reward enough. Thelma was the best mother Lucile had ever seen, and she was not prejudiced. It was simply a fact of life. Now the Sunday dinners were even more fun with Sherrill crowing and gurgling, playing up to everybody in the family. "He's bound to be a Marine some day," Wayne declared. Thelma just smiled, but Lucile thought she saw some sadness in it.

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Chapter 10
Rob Roy Farming and Chicago Gangsters

Donald and his sister think their river farm is dear,
But new gangster neighbors bust the peace and drink illegal beer.

Don and Walter work in the rain and end up in the nude.
Planting gear moves to the farm and no one thinks them lewd.

Don meets gangster Joey who needs an engine for the boss's car.
Replacing engine, Don discovers owner is a gangster Czar.

* * *

Donald asked Lucile to go out with him the following weekend, but she said she had a previous engagement. He left and began to work on a different plan as he drove home. His sisters had come home for the summer school vacation, and he knew Goldia wanted to buy land and try her hand at farming. It was his opinion that the depression had created a likely real estate market for anyone with savings. He was good enough at math to figure that borrowing money was not the best way to make money, at least the way he calculated risk and profit. He'd talk to Uncle Milford. His uncle had friends who lived near Rob Roy, Indiana, northwest of Crawfordsville, on the Wabash River. He'd heard his uncle talking about his friends' plan to sell their small farm and move into the city. He knew that Rob Roy was near the town of Attica, where a cousin lived, and he liked the idea of bottom land, fertile soil that would produce a good crop even during a drought. The Wabash River was a romantic image in his mind as well; maybe it was the effect of hearing *On the Banks of the Wabash* before the start of more than one Indy 500 auto race. The tune filled his head until he couldn't get rid of it.

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When he and Goldia drove west through Crawfordsville the following week to evaluate the farm for sale, his sister had reservations. “Donald, we have no idea how much longer this drought will last. It might be another decade before a farm could make a good living for a person.” Donald agreed but advised that she reserve judgment until they had seen the land, house, and barn. They headed up Hwy. 41, following the directions Uncle Milford had given them. On their right was the sign: FOR SALE BY OWNER and across the road from the land for sale was a long drive leading to a large, impressive house and barn, possibly right on the Wabash River. “Too bad the farm for sale isn’t on the river,” Goldia commented.

“Yes, b-b-but the p-price would be a lot higher if it w-was.”

After having spoken at length with the sellers, Donald and Goldia tentatively agreed to buy the property. Goldia planned to live in the little house, manage the farming business, and possibly marry her fiancé, who had a job but hadn’t saved any money. Donald would own half the property, supervise the agricultural production, provide a buffer should the farm lose money or possibly go under. They thought they understood the risk and at last signed the legal papers. Donald didn’t like the idea of a mortgage, but he knew that was the reality of owning property. He resolved to pay it off as soon as he was able and avoid paying some of the interest.

Meanwhile further north in Chicago Al Capone’s gang was regrouping after their boss was incarcerated in the Atlanta federal prison. Capone was doing fine with his skills at bribing and persuading; he managed to set up a luxury suite in the prison. Out of desperation the authorities moved the mobster to Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay, where even Scarface couldn’t manage to turn his cell into the Regency. Back in Chicago,

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members of his gang were scattering, seeking a hideout near their South Side network but far enough away from the city that the authorities would have a hard time finding them. Rob Roy, Indiana, couldn't have been more perfect. That part of Indiana has been called the boondocks, but that was what Capone's cronies needed. As luck would have it, a large estate with a barn and sycamore trees went on the market, across the road from Don and Goldia's place. The Chicago gangsters were among the few with ready money and the desire to buy the isolated Rob Roy place.

After Goldia and her new husband moved into the farmhouse outside of Rob Roy, they thought nothing about their secretive neighbors. Farmers traditionally keep to themselves and mind their own business. Saturday nights, however, began to disturb not only them but other rural neighbors as well. At first it was empty beer bottles and whiskey jugs thrown along the county road, some in Goldia's cornfield. The Millers down the road mentioned to Goldia one day that the noise had gotten so bad the past weekend that they couldn't sleep and their dogs howled something fierce. Goldia asked her husband to go talk to their neighbors across the road, but he refused. He didn't like the looks of them. "They're downright unfriendly, Goldie." The loud weekend parties extended into the following week, so Goldia called Donald to come investigate. He promised to come pay a call on the neighbors as soon as he could take a break from his garage work.

Don wasn't a stranger to any man, so he drove up the long, sycamore-lined drive to the large house on the hill. All was quiet. He walked up to the front door and knocked. A dog barked from somewhere out back, and after a long wait, a young woman in black opened the door. "Yes? Who are you?"

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“I’m yer n-neighbor across the w-way. Could I t-t-talk to yer husband?”

“I’m sorry, but I’m only the maid. My employer is not here.”

“Well, when d-d-do you expect him b-back?”

“Really, Sir, I could not tell you. Sometimes, they’re gone all week.”

He thought she must be Irish, a kind of lilt in her voice that belied her forbidding, unfriendly manner. She closed the door as he stood there, and he decided to visit his sister and her husband while he was in the vicinity. He drove across the road, parked next to their sleek Cord and opened his car door. He froze. Shouting and angry screaming cut through the chilly air and filled him with dread. He could hear his sister: “You’re nothing but a lazy gambler and a liar!” At that, the door burst open, slammed against the side of the house; the husband, shouting, “Y’er a goddamned harpie. I’m not puttin’ up with this!” stormed down the steps, slid in behind the wheel of the Cord, revved the engine, and gravel flew as he backed out of the driveway into the road. The Cord made the dramatic departure historical. They never saw him again.

Donald cautiously climbed the steps and went through the lately abused door to find his sister, steaming, pacing, breathing heavily and muttering, “Never should have married that no-good...” She stopped cold, suddenly aware of her brother in the room. “Well, Donald, so you’re here.”

“Yup, you asked if I’d t-t-talk to the n-neighbors across the w-way.”

“So what did they say? Any excuses for all the disturbances and noise?”

“None of ‘em was home. An Irish g-girl came to the d-d-door. S-Said she was the m-m-maid.”

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Goldia let slip a sardonic snort. “Those gangsters would have a maid, of course. Even with Prohibition repealed, they must have millions stashed away somewhere.”

“How d-d-do you know they’re g-gangsters?”

“Not for sure, I suppose, but the Millers complained to the police, and the officer didn’t want to mess with them, said they were from Chicago.”

“N-Not everbody from Chicago is a g-g-gangster.”

“And not every gangster is from Chicago.” His sister filled the teakettle and asked him if he’d like lunch. He nodded, and Goldia opened the refrigerator muttering to herself: “I’ll probably never see that shiftless gambler again. When I make a mistake, it’s a doozy.” She began making sandwiches and said to her brother, “Sorry you had to hear the ugly finale. You were right, Donald. Should never have married him.”

Donald wasn’t sure what to say. He wanted to help but was at a loss. At last he ventured: “Are ye gonna’ stay here?”

“No, I’d rather not. If he does come back, I don’t want to be here. Any chance you could move out here and take care of the farm? Could Wesley manage the business in Jamestown for awhile?”

“Oh, I expect he could. He’s a sharp one, better mechanic than I am.”

“Wonder why he never went to college? His sister Margaret was a stellar student at U. of California, had a scholarship. Now she’s teaching courses at Butler. She’d help him pay for his education.”

“N-Nope, Wesley’s too proud, t-too stubborn for his own g-g-good.”

“The Pratt curse.”

“M-Maybe it’s a blessing in d-d-disguise.”

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“How do you figure that?”

“You w-were too independent and headstrong t-t-to stay in a b-b-bad marriage. B-Better now than later, I’d say.”

Donald drove back home and told Walter about the incident. Walter didn’t say much but Donald knew he was brooding about their sister’s distress. Don figured his brother needed a diversion, and Don needed help getting the farm equipment to Rob Roy to do the planting. Don had bought an old used farm truck from a neighbor and planned to use it to haul tractor, plow, planter, cultivator and other farm implements to his farm between Rob Roy and Attica. Planting season was underway, so he laid out his plans and asked Walter if he’d be willing to help. “Well, I reckon I can find the time, Donald.” The brothers spent the afternoon loading the plow and planter onto the truck bed and decided to get a good night’s sleep and leave early the next morning.

Watching clouds move in from the east, they ate breakfast quickly. Indiana had suffered a hot, humid spell, early for June, so Don thought the cooler morning was a good sign. They headed west on Highway 136 through Jamestown dreading the inevitable flat tire. They had managed to reach 41 beyond Crawfordsville when the blowout caused the heavy truck to swerve, narrowly missing a pick-up coming from the other direction. They ended up in a ditch, the overburdened engine wheezing and steaming. The brothers jumped out of the cab; Don grabbed his tools and loosened the nuts on the wheel. They jacked up the truck, pulled off the flat, and seeing quickly it was beyond patching, they dragged out a spare and fitted it onto the wheel. Jamming the wheel back onto the axle, Don motioned for Walter to let the truck back down. He deftly reversed the jack’s lever and fulcrum magic, letting the old vehicle ease back onto the slanted ground. They had

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chained the planter and plow solid onto the truck bed before they left home, so they breathed relief as the equipment settled safely. They headed north as a drizzle began to dot and streak the windshield. Pulling into the driveway of Don's farm, they began to laugh. The drizzle had become a real turtle-drownder. The rain was beating down on the cab roof. Neither one had thought to bring raingear.

Don drove the truck to the end of the long gravel lane under the shelter of a maple tree where a small shed sat. The shed was large enough for the small tractor already there and had room for the plow and planter/drill. There was no way, however, to get the truck out of the downpour. Don began pulling off his heavy work shoes, his socks, and his coveralls. Walter was laughing so hard he could hardly keep up, but he also pulled off every stitch of clothing he had worn. The brothers jumped out of the truck, naked as the day they'd been born, mindless of any neighbors, had there been any close enough to observe the startling sight. They unhooked the chains and unloaded the equipment into the shed. Their wet hair dripped into their eyes, but they reveled in the unplanned shower bath and finished the work in record time. Diving back into the cab of the truck, they used an old denim jacket to dry off, put on their dry clothes, and drove back home. Disappointed that they hadn't been able to start the spring plowing because of the rain, Don eventually managed to get his soybean crop in, having decided it would make sense to move up there for the summer.

So Donald moved into the little farmhouse near Rob Roy and planted a late spring crop. One Saturday night late he heard a commotion across the road, got out of bed, and walked up the drive to the big house on the hill. He could see that there was a party going on but a fight had broken out inside and men were cursing and women shrieking.

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He was wary of being seen, so he crept around to the barn, where he saw a path in the moonlight leading into the tree-lined shadows. Dappled brightness filtered through the young leaves as he followed the path to the Wabash. The river was wide and swift at the point where the path terminated. Donald found a boulder on the shore and sat watching the river rush toward Terre Haute, the nearly full moon shimmering in the hypnotic flow of water. "Don't move, Buddy!" Donald tensed but didn't turn around. He figured the guy had a gun but wasn't afraid. His sleepwalking and nightmares scared him more than any hoodlum with a weapon. "If y'know what's good f'ye, ye'll get on outta here."

"D-Don't look to m-m-me like I'm b-b-botherin' nobody, m-m-mister. The river b-belongs to everbody."

"Don't get smart with me, Buddy. This here's private property."

"L-Look, Mister, around here, n-neighbors act n-n-neighborly."

"Yeah? I don't call trespassin' neighborly."

"D-Didn't mean to trespass. C-Couldn't sleep, so I thought I'd c-come out fer a w-w-walk, see what all the racket was about."

"None of yer cotton-pickin' business, now, is it?"

"If it k-k-keeps me awake, I m-make it my b-business."

"For a guy with a speech defect, you sure got plenty to say."

"Tell ye what, y-you d-don't insult m-me, and I'll g-get goin'. N-No hard feelin's, OK? B-By the way, name's Don, Don Hines." Don held out his hand, but the fellow with the gun didn't seem ready to be "neighborly."

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The noise from the house had increased in a steady crescendo, and even where they stood along the riverbank, it was hard to hear over the racket. The guy with the gun said, "You know who rents this place?"

"Nope, No idear."

"You've heard of Alphonse Capone?"

"The gangster? D-Didn't he go to p-prison last year?"

"That's right. The Feds finally got him on tax evasion charges, but his gang is still alive and well, in and around Chicago. The papers like to report on where his hideouts are: French Lick, Terre Haute, Couderay in the North Country, but do you not think a Big Man like Scarface would have real hideouts where his gang can really hide out? What better spot than outside a hick town in the boondocks, no publicity, no signs? The only problem is nosy guys like you. I'm only a security guard for the South Side Gang, but if my boss knows you've been snoopin' around, it's hard tellin' what he'll do."

"He d-don't need to know. Anyhow, I w-wasn't snoopin'; I told ye already: I couldn't sleep. Always had t-t-trouble sleepin'; I sleepwalk too."

"So what else do you do besides sleepwalk? You just a farmer or what?"

"Sure, I'm a f-farmer, b-b-but I'm mainly a m-m-mechanic, fix cars and trucks."

"No kiddin! Now there's a useful trade."

Donald nodded. He felt like adding, "It sure is more useful than robbing banks and running gambling rings" but he restrained himself. He was fighting the fear that he might have gotten himself into a heap of trouble. He was also getting the feeling that this crook was lonely and needed to boast. He'd read somewhere that lots of criminals are

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caught simply because they can't resist bragging. That seemed to him a rare example of natural justice in the world of right and wrong. "I'd b-better be getting' b-b-back."

"I oughta bring you in to my boss, but he's probably drunk as a skunk by now. Tell you what, you keep your nose clean, not a peep to anyone about this place, you hear? If I have any hint you've snitched on us, I'll blow your brains into this here river."

"I'm n-not a snitch. Anyhow, I d-d-don't have anything on you yet, except for d-d-disturbin' the peace."

"Ain't gonna' have anything either. Boss is tryin' to go straight, so to speak, now that Prohibition was given a decent burial. No market in speakeasies now."

"OK, then, I'll b-be goin.' Ain't told me yer name."

"It's Joey. Be on yer way then."

Don remembered that night as a revelation. The "gang" never gave him any trouble, except for some Saturday night disturbance of the peace. It was hard to guess how old Joey might be. His instincts told him he was younger than he tried to appear. He scanned the newspaper every morning for news of the South Side Gang or Capone's cronies, but the closest he came was an occasional clip about Capone in Alcatraz. Gangster news was dominated now by John Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde, and the notorious, but glamorized Pretty Boy Floyd. When Dillinger escaped from Crown Point, Indiana, county prison, the Wabash River area was on alert, but he evidently went west only to return, where he was finally shot by the FBI near Chicago after having robbed several banks, one of which was the Lizton State Bank. Don was grateful that the local bank covered his and his neighbors' savings and remained a solid institution.

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With the crops planted and relative quiet restored around Attica, Donald spent most of the summer working in his shop in Jamestown. He and Wesley had plenty of business and had disciplined savings and investment plans. Don was determined to buy more land east of town where he could farm and build his own shop on the busy state highway 136. Goldia was living at home with their parents, so he made the trip to the Rob Roy farm regularly. One evening he pulled into the driveway where he recognized Joey sitting on the porch. Don jumped out of his car and pumped Joey's hand. "Say, Joey, h-haven't seen you in a b-blue m-m-moon. How are ye anyway?"

"How about comin' with me, Don? The car we was usin' for errands broke down up the road apiece, and I'd come over to see if you could fix it. Good timin'!"

"Why sure, J-Joey. I'll get m-my tools and be right with ye." Don grabbed his tool box from his trunk and climbed into Joey's truck. Joey turned right and took Don beyond Rob Roy to a gravel road where he turned left and drove a couple of miles. He pulled over behind a Model A on the side of the road. "She won't even turn over," Joey said. "We was drivin' along when a rattlin' noise commenced. She slowed to a stop, and then died plumb away."

"When w-was the last time you put oil in this engine?" Don asked after he examined under the hood.

"Not my responsibility," Joey said, "so I couldn't tell you."

"Well, you've got a cracked engine b-block. It could be an expensive repair."

"Can't you give it a quick repair here?"

"L-Look, Joey. There's n-no quick fix when there's oil in the c-c-coolant, and somebody's l-l-let the oil get b-bone dry."

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“Hey, Don, this is my neck. The boss is gonna’ be real mad.”

“Pull the t-truck in f-front of the car. I have a chain. We’ll t-tow the car to m-my place, and I’ll g-get a rebuilt engine t-to put in it.”

The two chained the front bumper to the back of the truck and towed the car back to Don’s Rob Roy farm. Joey rode in the passenger side while Don drove the truck slowly back to his place. “So how long will it take to find a good used engine and put it in the car?”

“Depends, but usually I c-c-can go into Indy and f-find what I want on the West Side, m-maybe the used parts place on Lynhurst Drive or even the junkyard in Clermont would have what you need.”

“OK, but I have to have this car back on the road by the weekend. It’s Thursday.”

“K-Keep yer shirt on. I’ll do the b-b-best I can.”

Don still had the Chevy truck he used for these hauling jobs, and early the next morning he drove into Indy, found a good rebuilt engine, brought it back to his place and put it into the Model A. It took the better part of the afternoon, but Don was satisfied it was a good solution. The Ford ran like an antelope. Joey was overjoyed. “Thankee, Don, old buddy.” Joey paid him in cash, after Don turned down payment in booze, and Don pocketed the cash, secretly hoping he wasn’t guilty of being an accomplice.

Chapter 11
Visiting a Prisoner

Hoosier law grabs the gang and drags them from the woods
And poor neighbor Joey heads to jail along with fellow hoods.

Don's visit to prisoner Joey is very short and sweet.
Joey thanks him for the visit and the welcome chocolate treat.

Don returns to his GM factory job and leaves the river land.
Ponders Lucile's response, if he should ask for her hand.

* * *

The day of the raid, Don was working on his Attica farm harvest, bringing in the late soybeans. He heard the sirens and saw the police cars lining the driveway across the way. He wondered if Joey was going to end up in jail. Watching from his tractor seat and trying to finish his harvest, Don couldn't tell exactly what was happening, but he saw Joey in handcuffs about to get into the back of a squad car. Don made up his mind to satisfy his curiosity. He got down off his tractor, loped across the road, up the drive, and asked an officer standing near the car he'd seen Joey enter, "Officer, wh-wh-what's going on here?" The policeman politely explained that the men had been arrested on suspicion of collusion in a gambling ring out of Gary, Indiana. "There are other charges, but I can't disclose details." Don persisted: "Wh-Where are these m-m-men to be tried?"

"Maybe Terre Haute can handle it. If not, probably Indianapolis. Are you a friend of these guys?"

"No," Don said, "But we're n-n-neighbors." Don thought the policeman looked at him suspiciously. "Well, b-back to w-w-work!"

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Don couldn't sleep that night for thinking about Joey in jail, a young, healthy man incarcerated, shamed, treated with no respect, confined to four narrow walls and forced to obey surly guards? He breathed in the fresh air of his harvested field, heady, pungent odor of dry corn stalks and sycamore trees. He thought, "Poor Joey, Poor Joey."

Meanwhile, he continued to spend most of his working hours in his Jamestown business repairing trucks, cars, and farm machinery: tractors, combines, cultivators. He resumed his churchgoing venture, sometimes sitting with the Ginns if his timing was just right. The sermons often helped him think straight and resolve difficult issues. One Sunday the minister read from Matthew 25, verses 34 to the end of the chapter about followers of Christ visiting those in prison. Donald vowed that he'd pay Joey a visit.

He had read brief accounts of the arrest, trial, conviction, and sentencing of the occupants of the house across the road near Rob Roy, Indiana, and he had considered driving up to Crown Point, where he thought Joey had been incarcerated. It was Sunday afternoon following his epiphany during the church service in Lizton. He'd planned to drive to Veedersburg, then up Hwy 41 past his farm between Rob Roy and Attica, hoping to have time to do a few chores there on the way. He did stop but it had started to rain, so he got back in his car and drove north, thankful for the rain. The drought had hit Indiana hard that year, so any rain was welcome. Driving in the rain made him melancholy, and he began thinking about Lucile and her reluctance to settle down and get married. She could be right, he thought; after all, his own sister had botched her marriage and was terribly distraught about her abandonment. That was how she thought of it, as if it were a fault on her part that had been justly punished. Don had his own opinions about her "late" husband, the good-for-nothing hot shot. It was as if his marriage vows had been

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worth no more than the cheap paper they'd been printed on. If Lucile ever agreed to marry him, it would be different. He knew it in his heart. He'd try not to make her unhappy. He'd not abuse or disrespect her. If only she'd give him a chance to prove himself, he'd work hard and make a success of things.

As he approached Crown Point city limits at last, he decided to ask at the police station for directions to the county prison. He pulled up, parked his car, and entered through the big double doors into a bare office with a long, chrome counter and a lone woman working behind a glass window. "Yes, may I help you, Sir?" she asked him.

"I'm looking f-f-for the county jail. C-Could you g-g-give me directions?"

She scrutinized him a moment, then said, "Certainly, Go down 231 to Main St., take a left and you'll see the prison on your right."

"Thank you, Ma'am," Don wondered if she assumed he was a relative of one of the inmates, contaminated by the family's criminal predilections.

He found the prison and immediately was seized with a dread he couldn't fathom. He sat looking at the formidable building with its razor wire, towers, and forbidding entrance. It had been a longer drive than he'd anticipated, and there was no going back now. He'd come this far, and he was determined to cheer up this Joey fellow who'd somehow gotten mixed up with the mob and was now behind bars. It occurred to him that he should take him a present. He grabbed a chocolate bar he'd brought to snack on and took it in with him, storing it in his jacket pocket. He approached the front desk where a guard sat watching him. "I'm h-h-here to visit a p-prisoner." Don stammered.

"OK, Buddy. What's the name?"

"Joey."

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“Yeah? What’s his last name?”

Don wracked his brain, trying to remember the Italian name in the papers. He finally said, “It’s an Italian n-n-name: Babinino or Guillino or Aiello or....”

The guard patiently waited, went down his list and said, “Joey Barbiero?”

Don took a deep breath and nodded. That must be it.

“Visiting hours are from 3:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m. You have ten minutes.”

He motioned for him to go through a heavy steel door, which he’d unlocked and locked again after he took him through. Then he called another guard to take him to see Joey. The burly guard was as short as Don, so he didn’t feel quite so alien. “Follow me,” the guard told him. Don felt claustrophobic and helpless. He followed the uniform to the end of the bleak corridor. The guard took him through another door where he saw a thick glass wall with stools on either side. Seated towards the end of the glass wall was Joey.

Don sat and tried to smile: “So h-how are y-you d-d-doin’, Joey?”

“As well as can be expected. How are you, Don?”

“OK, I guess. W-Workin’ hard. Stayin’ out of trouble.”

“Yeah, wish I had.”

An uncomfortable silence ensued. Don felt the chocolate bar in his pocket and drew it out, putting it on the counter. “I brought you a c-c-candy bar.”

“Thanks. You’ll have to give it to the guard over there. He might give it to me; depends on his mood.”

“So, how’s the f-f-food in this p-p-place?”

“I’ve had better.”

“D-Did the Ford run OK after I p-p-put the engine in it?”

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“Oh yeah, it ran just fine after that. No more problems. Thanks.”

“H-How long y’in for?”

“Sentence was ten years, never shot nobody, but that’s the breaks.”

A loud voice over an intercom system announced: “VISITING HOURS ARE OVER. VISITORS, PLEASE GO TO THE FRONT OFFICE WITH A GUARD.”

All the way back to the home place, where Don was living to be closer to his Jamestown business, he mulled Joey’s fate. Where had such a likely fellow gone wrong? Why had he turned to crime in America, land of opportunity? There was part of the answer, he guessed: opportunity to exploit Prohibition, man’s weaknesses, especially his “need” for escape in gambling, booze, easy wealth, loose women. That really puzzled him; how could any man exploit the fair sex, pimping and leeching like a parasite? How could a pimp live with his conscience? Maybe he didn’t have a conscience. Don had an overactive conscience, in his opinion. That might not be a good thing either. He thought about his vivid dreams, some disturbing and frightful. Lucile didn’t know about his restless insomnia, his own destructive urges. She was probably smart to avoid him.

When his former boss at the Anderson Buick plant called him one morning, he decided to take his old job back. He had been planning to hire a tenant farmer and rent out his Attica farm anyway. He’d save his wages to buy land closer to his parents’ home place. Moving back to Anderson, Indiana, was a practical decision. He knew that rent there was relatively cheap, and since Anderson was just north of Indianapolis, he might pick Lucile up after work and convince her to look more kindly on him, a hard-working, forward-looking fellow with plans for the future. He found a small room in a boarding

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house at 1121 Pearl Street near his work in Anderson and settled into his former routine at Buick. He liked Anderson, birthplace of the Interurban rail transportation system and home of Anderson College. The college was down the street from him and reminded him of his days at GMI in Flint, Michigan. He also liked the fact that the city boasted over a dozen automobile makes manufactured there. He knew all about the Lambert Family of Anderson who went back to the originator of the Buckeye Gasoline Buggy from before 1900. Their company was still producing cars in Anderson. He liked the stories about Chief Kikthawenund, after whom the city was named. The Delaware Indian's mother was a Lenape girl who married Anderson, a Scandinavian. Don worked with a Moravian fellow who told him the Moravians called the city "The Heathen Town 4 Miles Away." That was puzzling, Don thought, since the Hoosier city was the world headquarters for The Church of God with a big youth camp, but he could never understand religious squabbles and prejudices. He didn't even try.

Chapter 12 Love Letters

Don's writing is poor and he vows to do better
So he "hunts and pecks" her a typewritten letter.

His letter's a success, and he takes her to dinner
But 'twill be a long struggle to finally win her.

Donald's creative spelling, rules of grammar defies.
However what she cares for is how hard he tries.

* * *

His big challenge was persuading Lucile Ginn to associate with him. She was reluctant to go out on a date, always busy, invariably polite but distant. He knew she'd been a stellar student and that made him self-conscious, but he decided he'd try again to write her a letter. His painful memory that she had told him not to write to her after his first poor attempt worried him, but he calculated that persistence and good will might win the day. The task was enormous. What could he say that would interest a young lady who was happy being a career woman? He started the letter on the back of one of his farm report sheets and immediately smudged it. He recalled the advice of a teacher he had admired: beginning is the hardest part of any task. And so he began:

"Dear Lucile, You may be suprized to get this letter, but yer so busy I figgered writing to you woud be the best way to get your attention... You will, if you do at all, read this with the attitude 'just another scrap of paper from that fickle minded kid'; that is what I would think if I got a letter from someone I had

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told not to write. I don't think though that it is just to judge everyone in the world from the example of one person, because there are no two people alike.

Before Walter found out that I wouldn't be free for next Sunday, he made arrangements to take my sister Goldia, Gertrude and me to Attica and then come back past my farm this side of Attica three miles and enjoy our lunch down by the spring on the lower end of the place. It is in a bluegrass pasture next to the creek. Just on the other side of the creek is a high limestone cliff which goes straight up. If you want to go with Gertrude, Walter, and Goldia, I have plenty of work to keep my time employed Sunday without going. I would like to see you enjoy the picnic down by the spring and get away from the daily Sunday routine which you usually have each week end. It was suggested by my brother, and I would like to see you enjoy it if you care to, with Gertrude and Goldia. They would leave about ten-thirty o'clock.

Your indifferent attitude last time I saw you enticed me to make insulting remarks, but I never gave it a thought of how it would have sounded to me if it had been told to me in the same way.

Don looked at the pencil smudges and in desperation asked his landlady if he could borrow her typewriter. Typing one finger style took him the better part of the evening, but he finished it, addressed an envelope, almost forgot a stamp, but returning the typewriter to Mrs. Sellers, she reminded him and exchanged one of her stamps for the pennies Don had in his pocket. He mailed it on the way to work the next day. On an impulse he sent it "special delivery" hoping to impress her. It never occurred to him that

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his attempt to draw her into his family while he arranged to be too busy to annoy her might be a transparent, outlandish ruse. His reasoning was simple: she needed to realize that he was an ambitious, industrious man willing to do anything to win her approval. She wouldn't go out to his farm with him, so maybe she'd consider a picnic with his sister, his brother Walter, whom everyone liked, and Walter's girlfriend. She'd see the beauty of the Attica farm, the possibility of prosperity, and hope for the future as he did.

When Lucile found the letter in her mailbox, she was perturbed but too polite not to answer it. She wrote:

Dear Donald,

I'm rushed to death, but since you sent a "Special" last evening, I suppose I owe it to you to at least acknowledge your letter.

As you no doubt know, I'm secretary of the Lizton High School Alumni Association and the Alumni Banquet is to be held Friday evening—and I'll be busy all week. I don't want to stay in town any this week, as reservations are coming in, and various matters will need attention up till the very last minute. In other words, to make a long story short, I cannot meet you tomorrow evening.

Miss Cook is ill and Lorraine and I have to double up on our work. So long!

Sincerely,

Lucile

By the way, I received your "unsigned" letter—suppose it must have been from YOU. I regret to inform you that I recognized the typing.

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Don read the letter with sinking hopes, but he was determined not to give up. He wrote in answer, on the back of her letter:

That other letter you said you didn't write, I judge, was the refusal you told me Saturday. Please write. I like to read your letters. Don't misinterpret my intentions of this letter. I am writing as a friend with no hard feelings whatever.

Let me know when you will be at Thelma's and it will not be of any more trouble for me to take you on home. I am still just as much a friend as I ever was, Lucile, and you are one person that is able to show some results from what you have made and saved.

You can imagine just how you would feel if you went with a fellow who satisfied your requisites of ability and he deliberately refused you after a reasonable period of time without any reason that you knew of.

I have felt like hitting myself several times when I got home and started thinking just what my opinion would be of a fellow who I saw perform as foolish and thoughtless acts as I had done that day. It is my habit to do things and think afterward instead of thinking prior to the act. I'm discussed with myself. -Don

When the letter arrived, Lucile opened it warily, dreading to read Donald's painful prose, but she smiled at his honest, straight-forward confession. When he called the following day, she accepted his offer to pick her up after work. He took her out to eat and insisted she go with him to see "Frankenstein" at the Lyric. The movie made them late arriving back in Lizton, so Lucile had the car door open as soon as the car stopped. She thanked him and ran into the house, leaving Donald to brood over the evening. He

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sat lost in thought in front of the Ginn house. He called her the next day but hung up bewildered after she expressed dismay and disapproval over his behavior. Several days later a letter arrived at Don's Anderson mailbox.

Dear Donald,

Since you will insist that I write, and Mr. Springer hasn't come in yet, I'll get busy and drop you a note. I don't think I'm going to want to work very hard today anyway. May has brought spring weather and spring fever with it.

I am afraid you misunderstood the spirit in which I asked you not to sit out in your car in front of our house when you get ready to leave. That is one line that has always been drawn at our house—we girls have never made it a practice to sit out in front of the house when we come in at night. If you sit out in front, even though your intentions are the best, might it not be possible that some of the gossips in town might get the idea that I, too, was in the car with you? Of course, you realize only one head in view wouldn't look so good. I've always been respected in the community, although people talk about me the same as anyone else, and I want to keep that respect. I hope that you understand the spirit in which this letter is written and that I have said nothing to offend you.

By this time I suppose you have reached Anderson—at least will have by the time you receive this letter—and are hard at work. You possibly will not be working, however, while you read this letter. You'll pardon me for laughing when I read your letter this morning. I notice that you were "discussed" with yourself. I just wonder if you were by any chance "disgusted"! It sounded like it.

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I'm grateful for small favors this morning—imagine getting a free ride to Indianapolis and a salary check all the same morning!

You mentioned about my plans for Sunday. I know from your letters that you have come to the conclusion that I am good at alibis—and I will admit that. However, in the first place Sunday is Mother's Day, and in the second place if we don't come to Thelma's I imagine we will be busy at the church Sunday afternoon, getting ready for the play Sunday night. We might have to practice the music Sunday afternoon, as Rev. Woody has not been out for practice.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Don saw opportunity where a different fellow might have seen discouragement. He called his parents and arranged to take them and Goldia, who was still living with them, to Raintown Church, where Lucile's Mother's Day program was featured at the evening service. He wrote to her the next day:

My Father and Mother, my sister and I went to see your Mother's Day program at Raintown and thought it was good. You'll probable think, another one of those salesman compliments, but I really mean it, Lucile. It was of interest to Goldia because she coaches plays at Camden High School. The man singing back of the stage made the only mistake which the people noticed.

I am glad that I am able to dream; it's worth a lot to me and no one can stop me from having this pleasure. My dreams are so clear some times that it is almost as real as the actual happening.

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Down to business after the sad news Saturday evening. I'm going to need to hire a new tenant farmer after that lazy fellow neglected picking the corn until the bottom fell out of the corn market. Then he tried to cheat me on top of it. You're acquainted with that Lizton fellow. I would like to know what kind of ambition George Barnett has and is he well experienced in farming. He seems to me like a level minded fellow with reasonable good judgment. I have not known him long myself, but you probable have and could give me some information of his character and ideals. I would rather have some young fellow with plenty of snap in him to rent that farm instead of that slow, creepy natured tenant on there now.

Since I finished paying the 100% part on the farm with clear deed and abstract, oil was found eleven miles north of Covington, I am going to put it for sale at \$3500 which is a low price."

Once again Don forgot to sign the letter, but he added "from Don Andy" on the back of the envelope. He was concerned about finding a suitable tenant farmer to do the work he had no time to do, and a friend had suggested George Barnett from Lizton. George had gone to school with Lucile and might be persuaded to work for him if she put in a good word for him. It didn't escape Don's notice that drawing Lucile into the business decision might be a good move. The Attica farm was becoming a hassle since it was an iron in the fire he had no time to tend. He called Lucile after the Alumni Banquet was over, and she agreed to let him pick her up after work. The relationship was strained, but he continued to write to her, knowing she wouldn't refuse to answer. The two of

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them sometimes visited Thelma and Wayne, who had moved to Clermont, a suburb west of Speedway. Young Sherrill was a lively baby, happy to entertain everyone and growing “like a weed” as Don remarked. Their little son put Don at ease with his sunny disposition and innocent smile. When Don got out his harmonica and played one of his tunes for Sherrill, the baby chuckled and gurgled. Lucile always enjoyed the Saturday afternoons with her sister Thelma. Her younger sister’s marriage to Wayne made Lucile feel a little like an “Old Maid” though. Much as she relished her position as a successful career woman, she wondered whether she might be getting too old to remain single. She never wanted to be pitied, and she was painfully aware of the pity some folks reserved for unmarried women. In answer to Don’s latest attempt at correspondence, Lucile wrote:

August 10, 1932

Dear Don,

I wrote the date on this letter about a half an hour ago and since then have adjusted a theft loss. How’s that? Of course, there’s no doubt that I am violating the rules in writing to you during business hours, but I believe you said in your letter to forget the “Iroquois” and the “DEPRESSION” and to write to you.

Well—the motto here is “NO DEPRESSION WITH THE IROQUOIS?

’32 DEPENDS ON YOU! STEP AHEAD!” And I might add business is good.

I had a swell time over the week end. Saturday night I came in to the Perry Stadium to see my first “real” baseball game, and then the Indians got beat. I enjoyed it a log, however—you know, it was all so new to me. It certainly is a pretty place.

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We had planned during the week to go to Turkey Run Sunday, but when Sunday morning came I practically decided for the family that we weren't going. However, about 8:30 we decided to go and we left about an hour later. We had a mighty nice trip down and by the time we reached our destination we didn't even remember that it had started to rain earlier in the day out at Lizton. We hiked about five miles before lunch and by the time we came back to the car we were about starved. By the way—for one of the first times in my life I ate three pieces of fried chicken, to say nothing of what followed. To make a long story short, we didn't do a lot of hiking in the afternoon as we had to start back about 3:00. Wayne, Thelma, Marion, Mary Eloise, Dad and I went. Mother stayed at home with Sherrill, the baby. You ought to see the baby now. He weighs seventeen pounds. Of course, we don't spoil him at all.

I meant no offense when I asked why you didn't come to Young People's Meetings any more. I guess I wasn't very tactful in asking such a question—because you didn't always come to Y.P. meetings on Sunday evenings. However, come when you can.

I am planning to have a picnic for my Sunday School Class next Sunday in the form of a surprise on Philip Hankins. You probably remember him as the little boy who stays at my Aunt's. I spent last evening in going around and calling either the kids or their folks out of bed, telling them “for sure” that we were going to have the picnic and advising them just what I would like best to eat.

Miss Cook, two of her girl friends, Lorraine, Mary Eloise, and I are planning to take a little trip the week end of August 20th. We're talking of

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McCormick's Creek Canyon, but we don't know for sure that we will go there. As yet we haven't been able to find that they have cottages there. As we can't leave before Saturday noon and want to come back Sunday evening we won't have time to go very far, because we want to have a good time while we are there.

I suppose you knew that Gertrude went to Lake Geneva last Sunday morning. I was awfully glad she got to go as she will graduate next year. She had two years at Lake Wawbee, and then last year went to Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire. Thelma went to Lake Geneva before she married Wayne and liked it so much. I had been so anxious for her to graduate.

My cousin from Bridgeport came out last evening and intends remaining the rest of the week. He's a good scout. He was manager of the Bridgeport branch of the Speedway Lumber Company, but due to financial difficulties he has been laid off. I think tonight George and Mary Eloise and he and I will go to Brownsburg to hear the Brown County Revelers. We went over last Wednesday night and they didn't run us out of town.

Having mentioned "DEPRESSION" only a second time and "Iroquois" about the same number of times, I think I shall close. I'm certainly sorry to know that you think I am a pessimist. Now, don't write back and apologize for leaving the impression that I'm a pessimist. I don't even care. I don't feel half so badly about all the cuts and everything any more.

I was going to close, and before I forget I had better second the motion. You'll probably think you're receiving a copy of my last book which is not yet on the press. However, the last time I wrote you asking you to write sometime—

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though a poor correspondent I would write eventually—now, this time I'll just say "Do write soon." I really expected a letter today from you and if I hadn't heard I might had had to write anyway, telling you when you didn't have anyone else to write to that you might write to me.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Dear Lucille,

I better rite you a letter or you'll think I'm a lazy, no-good fellow. This Depression's getting worse based on the paper, so I'm thankfull for my job with Buick, tho' who knows how much longer I'll have it.

Say, did you see me at Young People's meeting last Sunday nite? Since you won't go with me, I took a teacher friend, Martha Sellers, who has a school down south of Indy. Maybe I'll take her to the baseball game in the afternoon. Your Dad Charlie likes those baseball games. Martha's a friend of Gertrude, Walter's girl friend. I know you are friends with Gertrude too. Walter says they're getting married soon. He wants to get settled first, but money is scarce any way you look at it. What time does church at Lizton begin on Sunday morning?

I think I'll take a couple more courses at I.U. extension in Indy. Education is the best thing for a fellow's future. I bought a set of Blackstone's law books awhile back from a salesman, but they were a waste of money. A

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salesman's got to make a living too, but he ought to be a candy salesman or something more useful.

I been signing my name "Don Andy" because my parents named me after two ancestors: Donald and Andrew Pratt, and if Andrew was the successful one, I'd rather use that name. No sense taking chances.

We went to the Cincinnati Zoo last weekend and had a swell time. Martha wasn't sure about the lions staying put, but she liked the monkeys.

Write—you might send a note to this salesman. Your friend, Don Andy

When Lucile read this letter, she caught herself getting angry with Martha but admitted to herself it was possibly a little jealousy and wasn't fair. She had made up her mind not to answer the letter but thought better of it:

September 15, 1932

Dear Don,

Pardon the intrusion, but I am writing to inquire if you are the same "Donald Hines" that used to write to me a long time ago. I have been receiving letters at long intervals from one who signs his name as "Don Andy". Will you kindly advise just the connection? Is by any chance "Andy" Martha's pet name for Donald Hines? And another question in rapid succession. Is this Andy connected in any way with the Amos and Andy who are on the air? I know curiosity killed a cat, but I have always been anxious to find out just what the cat was curious about.

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As the day was started out in this office today by calling the employees “on the carpet,” just why should you include in a letter “Write—you might send a note to this salesman?” Say, Mister, I wrote to you on the 2nd day of September 1931 or 1932, I don’t remember which year, and received a letter from you this morning. My, I’m feeling just as sarcastic as nobody’s business today.

Yes, I noticed you were at Young People’s Meeting last Sunday night. I noticed your car over in front of the church when I left for Raintown. Thelma was out and sang for church Sunday evening—so, of course, I accompanied her on the piano. You asked what time church begins at Lizton on Sunday morning—I judge possibly it is 10:45 a.m. At any rate, it begins directly after Sunday school.

Loleta Clifton, Mary Eloise and I went down below Edinburg last evening, leaving Indianapolis about 4:15 p.m. and attended the Central Indiana Congregational-Christian Conference. Mary Eloise led the singing and I played the piano. We had a very nice time. I spent the night with a girl whom I had stayed with when I was there five years ago. I had practically forgotten her until last night, but I was quite glad to have the opportunity to stay with someone I knew. They have quite a pretty country home. I really felt like I would rather stay out all night than to go to bed. Their place was absolutely gorgeous by moonlight. I think I’ll move back to the country for a change. A lot of times farmers think they have a hard time getting along, think they don’t get enough money for

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their crops, etc., but after all there is a freedom on the farm one certainly doesn't find in town.

You can tell your "candy salesman" – APPLESAUCE! He probably wouldn't even be recognized in a town like Lizton. People there live on fruit instead of candy. According to statistics, fruit isn't nearly so fattening. Besides, probably half our town is on a diet anyway.

Mary Eloise is going to Sanderson's Business College now. We have been driving in together. I don't know how it will work out, but I figure it will be cheaper to drive than to ride the bus. Our bus fare would be in the neighborhood of \$8.00 a week, and I hope our car expense will not be quite so high—i.e., at least not until I have to buy new tires. I suppose it will be just my luck to have all my tires go bad at once.

I had a committee meeting at the house Tuesday evening. Lloyd, Lester, Gertrude, and I planned for the party which is to be given by the Young People next Monday evening. We're planning for a big time—going to have our lunches done up in newspapers and everything! Gertrude is a regular wizard at planning parties—more ideas!

I am also planning for a Treasure Hunt and Weiner Roast for our church (Raintown) for some night next week. You know, that means a long hike and then finally something to eat. I don't have all my plans formulated as yet, but I think I'll try to collect some ideas tonight.

I saw your father and mother Monday night. They came over to hear the colored girls (The Cotton Blossoms) give their concert. It was

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certainly wonderful to think that though they were blind they could give a real enjoyable program through the teaching that has come to them down in their school. The church was full—and everyone stayed till a late hour!

Well, what did the lady think of Lizton – was it quite the microbe she expected? I hardly imagine she enjoyed the baseball game you were going to take her to on Sunday afternoon.

I'm really good. Dad informed me tonite that I was supposed to attend a political meeting as "helper." Not knowing just what a helper is, I'm off politics tonite. Instead I studied my Sunday school lesson, made out devotional program for Sunday a.m., and then wrote you this note. By the way, the young girls and boys at our church last Sunday decided to merge into one class and chose me teacher. That means about 12 boys and at least that many girls – high school kids and on up on my age! I suspect I'll find I have a real job before me.

Coming down to close these rambling remarks—somehow I feel that you would rather not write any longer—maybe I'm right—maybe I'm wrong—I don't know. However, if you would rather not write, don't hesitate to say so. It would seem that my biggest fault has been being frank—so don't be afraid of hurting my feelings. I like to hear from you, but if you would rather not write, that is up to you. If you can't write, you might hesitate long enough some time to say, "Hello."

Respectfully,

Lucile

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Don was preoccupied with his Attica farm and decided that he and his sister Goldia should spend more time managing and overseeing the place. He and Martha had argued about politics, and Don missed seeing Lucile. He had picked Lucile up after work and taken her to Thelma's several times. One evening Lucile had confessed that she was saving her money to buy her family a radio, so Don had insisted she borrow his Philco, which he promptly delivered. He wrote a hasty letter on the back of a Farm Bureau invitation:

I told my sister Goldie that we need to see the tenant farmer and check up on his work more often. He seems to be a slow-moving fellow with not much get up and go. Attica is too far to drive and take good care of the place, so I'm thinking of selling. Whether I can find a buyer is doubtful with the economy so depressed. Unemployment is at 24% the paper says. Goldie wants to go down there Sunday after next. I told her to hang on to her teacher's job, but she wrote to me in a letter, "You tell me to hang on to a teachers' job. If you'll give me some way that is sure and certain to do that I'll certainly follow your instructions. Of course I'm going to hang on as long as I can – but I can't control politics and the whims of trustees who have political debts to pay." She is afraid of trustees who have political debts to pay and relatives to give jobs to." She is sure she can't control politics. She also thinks higher-ups are escaping Depression hardships entirely too much compared with the way the rest of us are having to do. She wrote, "Samuel Insull won't get near all he deserves. But there are plenty of others who need to be punished as well as he." Insull was the brains

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behind General Electric. I always admired an ambitious fellow like him, but Goldia lost money on GE stock like lots of others. The stock market is the biggest gamble going. She is mainly worried about getting the flu or mumps, being around school kids so much, but as Andy says, "There you are." I miss hearing Amos 'n Andy on the radio but was glad to loan you my radio until you can afford to buy one.

I forgot to tell you I heard Thelma give a talk at the Y.P. meeting in Raintown last Sunday night. I wish I could control my speech the way she does. I miss picking you up after work. Would you call me if you ever need a ride?

Lizton, Indiana

October 23, 1932

Dear Don,

Well, you can't fool me even if you do insist on sending your letters out unsigned. I found your letter Thurs. morning as soon as I walked into the office. I noticed you were thinking of coming home that evening and was afraid your landlady might think it something very important and read it in your absence!! That's not an alibi either. So you're an Amos & Andy fan? Andy always has a wry comment. We certainly enjoy the radio. Thank you again.

Did you go up to your farm today? I almost envy you the trip. Everything is so beautiful now. Mary Eloise and I walked about four miles yesterday – east on Road #34 to the first road, turned south, and then at Norman's turned west to Road #39 and when we got to Ott Kirtley's along came George Barnett and of

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course then Mary E. forgot that we were accepting no lifts. We really enjoyed it a lot even if we were tired. I never saw the leaves prettier.

Next Sunday I am supposed to hunt up another little country church. I understand it is in some edge or corner of Brown County—so if I get to go, I should see some pretty sights then. If I should see one pretty tree, I'd feel the trip alone worthwhile. I love nature so much that several times I have threatened getting a tent and pitching it out on one of nature's beauty spots. I wonder if Joyce Kilmer didn't write his poem "Trees" in the fall of the year.

I'm glad you liked Thelma's talk. I was afraid you couldn't hear her very well because her voice is so soft. I too wish I could control my speech as she does. Do you wonder now why I had dreamed of a "career" for Thelma? However, don't think for a minute that I am criticizing her for throwing it aside, for I am not. Her family is her pride and joy. Sherrill Jay is a Captain!

How's school? Do you enjoy I.U. Extension? Do you get in on Wednesday about 5:30 just like you did last year?

You spoke of changing from your present job over to the farm. I too doubt the advisability of making a change right now. Mr. Springer, my boss, says in his opinion farm conditions will be among the first to improve and is pushing his dairy farm projects. However, it would seem right now the best thing to do is to hang onto the job one has and wait. Your advice to your sister was good.

I haven't heard whether anything is going on here Halloween night. This week is full of political meetings and unfortunately as V.P. of the Young Women's Elephants Club I am expected to attend some of them. However I

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didn't want the job and being a poor politician, I think I shall stay at home. I'm on the Election Board, so I understand—so will probably think I'm supposed to be a politician—might even change my politics.

Sunday evening the County Young People will have charge of the final session of the County S.S. Convention—at Amo, Indiana. If you had been at home and if plans had worked out, you might have had an invitation out for a chicken dinner today. You remember the two fellows who found the chocolates last spring when we were down below Acton? Well, I received a letter from one of them Friday evening saying that he and some other kids were coming over to church today to give an announcement of the meeting for next Sunday. Mother fixed up a swell dinner—and you and George were of the few who had met them—but they didn't come. Mother shouldn't have to cook for three days.

You didn't come home to see the Farm Bureau Play last Tuesday nite, did you? You should have been there. Your Dad did fine—Walter almost brought the house down with his singing. He really was good—and your mother made the cutest little girl. If this letter is sleepy—it's because it is being written in bed.

Write soon –

Sincerely,

Lucile

Chapter 13 Entrepreneur

Depression ever deeper, GM must lay off mechanic Hines.
Don starts his own garage, gets to work and never whines.

Donald's able to fix it all and gains a local fame.
Shop is full of customers, some for checkers game.

Don persists with Lucile but she leaves him in the lurch.
Her family's more accepting and invites him after church.

* * *

GM's Buick Motors had as much trouble during the Great Depression as any other American business. In 1932 and '33 GM sales plummeted, and Buick had to lay off thousands of workers, one of whom, again, was young Donald. He recalled tears in the eyes of his boss, but GM was down – not out. Don was also upended, but not really discouraged. He figured it was a good time to buy more land and start a business, but he hadn't saved enough money yet, so he rented a garage in the heart of Jamestown, Indiana, where he and a Pratt cousin, Wesley Wainwright, set up a car and truck repair shop next door to the popular Standard gas station. It was a likely location at the crossroads of State Highways 136 and 75. The shop was midway between Indianapolis and Crawfordsville running east/west, and 75 headed south to North Salem or north to Thorntown. Don figured it was a direct route to the Indy 500 for fans from the West, the best route to two popular state parks, The Shades and Turkey Run, and a handy location for local farmers and townies who needed to keep their vehicles running. Nobody had money for new cars or trucks, and they soon learned that Don and Wesley could repair anything. It might be unconventional or inventive, but if a customer wanted a job done

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the quickest, cheapest way, Don's Hines Garage was the place to go. Don and Wesley also didn't mind having a little fun once in awhile.

Don was a good welder, but he took chances. One day a customer brought in a vehicle with a gas leak. He didn't want to pay for a new gas tank, so Don drained the gasoline, removed the tank to get at the problem, figured it was safe, straddled the tank, flipped his welding helmet down over his face and lit the acetylene torch. "WHOOM!" Some say there are still echoes of the laughter, and since amazingly Don wasn't hurt, he picked himself up and finished the job successfully, sending another happy customer on his way. There might be a good "moral to the story" if the incident had taught Don a lesson about being careful and taking more pains to assure safety rules were followed, but there are rumors that other welding accidents happened on the premises. There is a myth about an explosion blowing his pants off, but since he always wore heavy, striped coveralls, that has to be apocryphal.

The small-town camaraderie suited them, and the business was thriving as neighbors brought in ailing and disabled cars, trucks, tractors – anything with an engine. Doc Kernodle, having retired, liked to hang out with his checker-playing buddies in Don's shop and joke around with "Shorty" and Wesley. The grease and fragrance of gasoline, carbolic acid, motor oil, grime, rusting metal, rubber tires, and sawdust used to clean up at the end of the day didn't bother the men at all. They relished the ambiance. Wesley created a unique atmosphere with his vocals. He sang ballads of the day in a mellow Bing Crosby voice and had a game he liked to play. He'd sing or hum or whistle a particular melody and see how many guys were humming the same tune by the end of the day. Doc smoked his ubiquitous cigars, wore his favorite fedora, and kept the clients

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and loiters entertained. He was a tall, lanky man with a swagger and air of confidence. He'd been a doctor, a GP, in the early days but had retired from the stressful profession as soon as he could get away with it. A younger man, Dr Alvin Schaaf, had taken over his practice and set up an office a block from Hines Garage. Don had mixed feelings about Doc hanging around because he knew his father held a grudge against him for the broken fiddle incident, but he had to admit Doc was entertaining. Wesley was skeptical of Doc's motives but didn't say much.

Wesley was a young, handsome, wiry farmer with poor eyesight and a lively wit. He had excelled in school and shown great promise in math and science, but his family had suffered as the Depression of the 1930s took its toll, and he felt obligated to help with family financial problems so he decided to forgo college. He had natural musical talent and loved to sing, but he was reticent and never admitted to anyone that he spent rare leisure time composing music, hiding it away. His father had soured on church after an unfortunate encounter one Sunday morning when Chauncey wore his overalls and a respectable clean plaid shirt to service. An Elder of the church called him over to the side and told him privately that it wasn't appropriate to wear work clothes to "The Lord's House" on "The Lord's Day" which should be a day of rest to "honor the Lord." Chauncey stormed out of the little country church with his family in his wake and declared he'd "never darken the door of the church again." Wesley marked this event as significant in his life and found his religion in beautiful music and private meditation. The opportunity to work with his cousin in a relatively unstructured environment where he could use his skills and intelligence with minimal supervision appealed to him, and the two cousins thrived even during the bleak years of the Great Depression.

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One day in Lebanon, the closest large town north of Jamestown, an irate customer came bursting into the Lenox Lincoln/Mercury dealership where he vented his fury on the service manager, Frank Bowen. “What’s the matter with these god-damned small-town mechanics? Can’t trust ‘em fer a minute,” fumed the furious customer. He was sporting a fedora, wore a very fashionable suit, expensive shoes, shined to a blinding brilliance, and a flashy tie. Frank was an affable, easy-going, friendly fellow and listened to the guy in the fancy suit rant and rave for awhile. Then he asked the dandy where he’d taken his new Lincoln. The fellow told him he’d stopped at Hines Garage in Jamestown. “This idiot cut a hole in the floor of my brand-new Lincoln. I oughta sue the son of a bitch.” Frank calmly asked him what exactly he had told the mechanic to do. “I told him to fix my car as quickly and cheaply as possible.”

Frank explained to the man that he had gotten exactly what he’d asked for. Frank was chuckling privately, knowing Don’s distaste for fancy, expensive cars and people. “You know, if the mechanic had done the repair by the book, it would have involved many hours, but by cutting a hole in the floor the job was done quickly and the problem solved for you at low cost.”

The man sputtered, “But, but, he ruined my new car!”

“Did he repair the hole?”

“Well, yes, he soldered a patch over it and covered it up with the mat...but it’s ruined...my new car!”

“You can sue him if it suits you, but I doubt you have a leg to stand on.”

“These country hicks are all a bunch of incompetent hayseeds. I oughta complain to my congressman.”

“Well, that’s your right, but I’d think about it first. By the way, how’s your car running?”

“It’s running just fine.”

The city slicker never did sue Donald or Wesley, nor did he complain to his senator or representative. He did, however, wrap his new Lincoln around a telephone pole one night after a hard-drinking session with the officers of the local chapter of the exclusive and prestigious Moose Lodge. The car was ruined.

Donald had been calling Lucile occasionally, but since she had turned him down several times, he hesitated to call her. He still gave her a ride to work whenever he cut across town and timed it just right, but he had a notion that she was not seriously interested in him and thought she might not want to get married and have to give up her position as private secretary to an important executive in an expensive suit and tie. He had to admit to himself that there was some resentment at his working class status in life. Resentment eats away at a person, and Donald, understanding that truth instinctively, tried to fight any destructive force. The contrast, however, between America’s claim to be a classless society and the obvious privileges and respect enjoyed by the wealthy stirred up old urges for justice. He recalled Lucile’s admission when he’d last seen her that her salary had been cut \$40 a month with no forewarning and no explanation. She didn’t complain and shrugged it off as part of the ailing economy, but he could tell that she was hurt and “miffed” as she put it. He tried to be philosophical and remind himself that he was lucky to have a good business in such hard times. It still irked him, though,

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to see one of those wealthy gentlemen decked out in suit and tie who put on airs and looked down on mechanics. He wondered if Lucile looked down on mechanics.

Since speculation was useless, he decided to pursue a sure thing. He knew she and her family attended church every Sunday at the Lizton Christian Church, so he planned to take up church going again. His family had always favored Old Union, a little country church northeast of Jamestown set in cornfields and pastures, surrounded by farms. They had never been regular church-goers, but he knew about the family legend, ending with the vow: “never darken the church door again” and chalked it up to kinship, loyalty to the Holy Grudge. The Lizton church was as close as Old Union, so he got up the following Sunday morning, took pains to wear his best clothes, shave to perfection and even put on the dreaded tie. He arrived before the service was to begin, hoping to get a pew where he could see Lucile. He glanced to his right, and there they were: Lucile and her family, five handsome people, but in his eyes Lucile was the only person of importance in the small congregation. Rev. Blake spoke of God’s love and grace. Don was relieved not to have to sit through a fire and brimstone barn burner. He longed to be her true friend, protector, provider, husband... Suddenly he realized the congregation had all stood for the final hymn and benediction. He stood and tried to concentrate on the music. After the service, he managed to maneuver toward the wide exit about the time he’d run into the Ginns.

“Why, isn’t that Donald?” He heard Ethel’s friendly alto.

“Hello, folks. How are you?” He was proud of himself for getting it all out without a stammer or blush.

Lucile replied, "Hello, Donald. Glad to see you this morning." She quickly introduced him to her family. "Have you met Marion and Mary Eloise? You're acquainted with my mother and my dad, I believe." Donald shook hands with Charlie and then young Marion.

Charlie and Ethel seemed to be happy to see him, and Marion looked ready to burst out in laughter, but he managed to maintain perfect decorum. He noticed that Mary Eloise was hanging onto her father and looked extremely pale. "I'm delighted to meet you at last, Donald," Mary Eloise said, so softly that Donald had to lean forward.

"Won't you join us for Sunday dinner?" Ethel smiled and reassured him it would be no trouble at all when he protested. She added: "Wayne and Thelma are coming out with their new son Sherrill from Indianapolis, so we have plenty of food waiting." He invited Lucile to ride the short block or two to their house, but she demurred, and he awkwardly drove the car around the block to park in front of their small white house on the corner. As he got out, the fire whistle announcing noon startled him. He wondered if they ever got used to it so close and loud. He mounted the steps following in the wake of the family, who had walked from the church, taking a shortcut down the alley through the garden and backyard.

When he entered the house, the warm fragrance of dinner and baking filled the air and set his stomach to grumbling. He hoped nobody heard it. Lucile met him at the door, and Don said, "How d-d-did your mom get dinner ready so soon?"

Lucile laughed. "She always puts the chicken and dumplings on before we head for church, even has the yeast rolls rising so she can pop them into the oven as soon as we get home. Dad banks the fire from breakfast, and the temperature is just right when we

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come in the door. Don thought he'd never smelled a house as inviting and delicious as this little house in Lizton. Lucile said, "Come on, we'll go see the garden."

Spring had brought blossoms early to the flowering trees, and daffodils were blooming. Charlie had little Sherrill on his lap, and Mary Eloise sat in the porch swing listening to the mourning doves and chirping finches and chickadees. Lucile and Thelma took Donald through the house to show him Charlie's newly planted garden. "You won't believe what a crop of vegetables we have every year," Thelma boasted. "Dad loves to raise sweet corn and tomatoes especially. He puts a fish under each tomato plant."

Donald was impressed. "Where d-d-does he get the fish?"

"Oh, he takes his fishing pole in the county gravel truck, and after work he throws a line into the creek on the way home. Only sunfish, but that's all he needs." Donald opened the screen door heading down the back steps into the backyard, looking back to make sure Lucile and her sister were right behind him.

Suddenly pandemonium broke loose. Don instinctively ducked as a huge white bird flew at him, honking and aggressively flapping his wings, trying to herd him away from the two sisters. The goose beat Don with his powerful wings, feathers flying, making the loudest racket Don had heard since the Indy 500. Thelma was in convulsions of laughter. "Oh no, we forgot about Gabe. He is very protective." Don, who prided himself on his grit and nerves of steel, and who also enjoyed startling people, had to admit the goose had gotten him. "He got your goat, hmm? Or rather got your goose?" Thelma's eyes were dancing.

Charlie came through the back screen door, letting it bang behind him, calling, "Gabe, you rascal, come here." The goose immediately ignored Donald and waddled

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over to Charlie, honking and making conversational noises. The amazing part was that Charlie seemed to understand and answer the goose in his own cryptic language. It reminded Don of what the Pentecostals tried to describe when they proclaimed that they spoke in tongues. They went at it nose to beak, until the sisters couldn't breathe they were laughing so hard. Don was stunned. He'd never seen or heard anything like it.

"D-D-Does your dad always t-talk to his attack g-goose?"

"Oh yes," Thelma replied. "Sometimes he recites poetry or sings to him."

Marion came out to pump a bucket of water and smiled to see the fun. "Is that good-for-nothing goose causing trouble again?"

Wayne came out carrying his new son, who was looking wide-eyed at the great white bird. Sherrill leaned toward the goose holding out his arms. "What do you think of that big bird, Son?" Wayne's gravelly voice seemed to break up the airwaves. Sherrill ventured very goose-like conversational sounds. Everyone laughed with delight.

Lucile seemed unusually quiet. Donald ventured: "D-Did you enjoy the sermon?"

She nodded and said, "Rev. Blake is a fine speaker and a scholar."

Ethel called from the back door: "Dinner is ready!"

They gathered around the dining room table loaded with platters and bowls of mouth-watering food. Donald waited for Charlie to say grace, but it was Marion who gave the family prayer. Don wondered if Charlie felt the way he did about public prayer: inadequate. At any rate, the teenage Marion seemed to take the honor in stride, and everyone eagerly sat down to pass the food endlessly. Donald thought he'd never tasted any better food anywhere. There was an egg bag that the sisters eagerly divided, one

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small, round, yellow yolk for each. Mary Eloise said, “Dad killed and dressed this fine bird before church this morning. The hen was getting too old; it was her turn to go.”

Lucile added: “Mary Eloise, you can have the liver. It’s your favorite.”

Thelma said, “You’re not eating very much, Mary Eloise.”

The youngest sister looked up mischievously and said, “Don’t you remember that camp song we always sang?” Then she sang to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”:

“Chew, chew, chew your food/ Merrily through the meal/ The more you laugh, the less you eat/ The better you will feel.”

The older sisters tried to smile, but they knew Mary Eloise hadn’t had an appetite for many months. She told them she had to make herself eat, and so she valiantly made an effort. It was hard for Donald to understand how anyone wouldn’t devour this meal. He thought he did understand, however, why Lucile was so quiet. She was devoted to her youngest sister, and the girl was clearly wasting away. She must be worried sick, he thought. She had hoped her sister would succeed at Sanderson Business College.

Chapter 14
Tenacity

Don attends her family church hoping to pull her near.
And hopes his gifts and letters will make her find him dear.

She enjoys his letters and reads them twice.
As for his errors, they just add some spice.

Don pops the question but she asks him to wait.
Seeks her Doctor's opinion before setting a date

* * *

In 1933 after Don was laid off again at the Anderson Buick plant, the letters dwindled. Since both Don's sisters were living with his parents for the summer, he rented a house in Jamestown and threw himself into his garage business. He liked repairing engines and welding. He did body work although he didn't enjoy it as much. In the midst of moving back to Jamestown, he had traded his old jalopy for a used Desoto. Hoping his "previously owned" but respectable Desoto would impress Lucile, he asked her out regularly. If she was too busy to go out with him, he'd try to make it on time to the Young People's meetings and outings. She was faithful in attendance and seemed to delight in his efforts to participate. When he complained that she was too busy or didn't seem eager to go out with him, she suggested he write to her. He went home from a YP picnic one summer evening and sat on his back step watching the sky. He wondered whether he was just lonely enough to feel the need for a wife or was really ready to settle down and have a family. He scrawled a note on the back of an Allis-Chalmers flyer.

Dear Lucille,

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I hope yer getting some good out of the radio I brot over when I was moving back to Jamestown. Now that I have one in my Desoto, I don't need the Philco. With the cut in pay you got awhile back, you can't afford to buy your folks a good radio, and everybody ought to get to hear Jack Benny and good ole Amos & Andy. It's always fine to see Charlie and Ethel, and I like Mary Eloise. She never asks me to do chores the way my sisters do. Goldie went to hear a concert in Indy last weekend. She said she was going to hear Chrysler. You run me off Sunday, but then if it was me having to get up early to go to work, I'd want to get my sleep too.

I been itching like crazy since that last picnic, must have gotten into some poison ivory or some such thing. Serves me right for neglecting my farm.

Your good friend,

Don Andy

Lizton, Indiana

June 27, 1934

Dear Don,

When I came in last evening I looked for a letter, although I tho't possibly you were too busy to write, and seeing none went out to supper. Just before I started washing dishes, however, Dad gave me a real funny look and said, "O, I have to go back to the P.O. There's a letter for you." Well I wasn't at all sorry. In fact, I read it twice last evening and once this morning. You see my letters are so few that I have to take 'em all in when I do get one.

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Really, I didn't exactly mean to run you off Sunday night, but Mary Eloise is such a restless sleeper that I don't like to have her lose any more sleep than necessary. Sometimes I think she sleeps better than she thinks she does because she actually admitted that she didn't awaken when we came home Saturday night. However, I think you saw enough of me Sunday anyway—9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.! I enjoyed Sunday immensely, even tho' I wasn't quite up to par, and hope we can go picnicking again this summer.

Please tell me in advance of the heart attack because I do believe I should drive at least once before that happens. I'm not saying, however, just how safe you would be in my hands.

So you got some of that poison "ivory" on you? If I wanted to be nasty I'd ask for an explanation because I never heard of it. I believe you told Goldia that you weren't afraid of ivy—that you had some good, old-fashioned remedy which would rid you of it immediately. I'd better knock on wood, but I have never been poisoned by ivy!

I went to Thelma's Mon. night and last night went with Gertrude to Camp Short, the latter after eating some corn and green beans. (Now hold your breath—I always save the bad news until last.) I didn't feel so hot when I got home, so I spent a sleepless night, and when I undertook to get up I was really sick as a horse. I tho't I would go to work on the 8:42 interurban but felt so wobbly, I definitely decided to go to work at 10:42. I made a mistake by going to the doctor first and he told me to come home and stay here the rest of the day if I knew what was good for me. He usually lets me do as I please so I was so astonished I came

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right home and went to bed. I'll be all right tomorrow. They say, "You can't keep a good man down" and I guess it applies to the ladies too.

All that accounts for your receiving a letter written with pencil. If you can't read the writing in an upright position, try it in a horizontal position, as this little note is being written while I'm flat on my back. By the way, did you by any chance mean that Goldia heard Fritz Kreisler, the famous violinist?

As to the radio, you may take it whenever you like. However, don't be in a hurry about it—in the first place I know you work too hard anyway—the girls probably have lots of odd jobs yet for you to do. Moreover, my budget until next payday will not permit an output of much cash—and I just had to fork over a dollar to the doctor for telling me I needed "renovating."

As you're possibly tired of reading & I'm tired of writing in such a graceful position, I must close.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Dear Lucile,

I hope yer feeling better. You need to learn to drive so your knees won't give out with all that walking. If yer going to be playing tennis and croquet at the YP get-togethers, you better take care of your knees. Maybe the Old Gray Mare she ain't what she used to be. Could it be rumatizm? This day and age, a person should know how to drive a car. My dad had me driving the Oakland at age

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eleven. If you learn to drive, you'd be able to see Thelma and Wayne more often. That corker of a boy, Sherrill, is a lot of fun.

I hope to see you Saturday if you still think you can put up with me. You always seem mighty quick to go in the house after we go someplace. I thought young people naturally stay up awfully late nowadays. Or maybe you just have a nasty disposition? Sorry I left without saying good-night.

Your friend,

Don

Iroquois Underwriters Inc.

1160 Consolidated Building

Indianapolis

Phone LI 4401

July 20, 1934

Dear Don,

I only have a few minutes so this will be quite short. I see by your letter that you are still wondering about my "nasty" disposition. Well, the only solution is this—Miss Cook says it's just the "devil" in me! I'm afraid that isn't a very satisfactory answer, but it's as good as I can give at present. So—you left without saying "Good-night" did you? Of all the nerve! How could you be so thoughtless? I believe I slammed the door in your face as I got out of the car. Maybe that accounts for it.

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As to playing croquet or tennis, I'll have to confess that I have never taken an active interest in sports. I'm much too slow for tennis. I used to play croquet and played in the semi-finals at camp one year during the "Croquet Tournament!" Now I'm sure we'd have won, but they changed the rules on us in our last game, thus handicapping my partner and myself!

You certainly seem to be piling up reasons as to why I should drive! Maybe eventually I'll like to drive. Who knows? However, to date I'm not very particular about it. Incidentally—don't rub it in about the "rheumatism!" I might mention I have a temper somewhat related to a mule's and don't exactly appreciate it!!! I'll ask the M.D. when I go over with Mary Eloise Thursday and if he says OK, maybe I'll go swimming—or drowning—before Halloween.

So—"Young People" naturally stay up awfully late, do they? Just because I want to get home before morning, I'm getting old, am I? Well, I must close and get busy. I'll see you Saturday evening at 7:30 or???? Ha! Ha! Any dates you have before then will have to be with somebody else. Overlook all the remarks that seem to contain sarcasm and read the balance.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Dear Lucile,

I was over here visiting with Mom and Dad at the old home place and that I'd rite you a letter, but I don't know where Mozella hid her typewriter. Maybe she took it with her to Illinois. She has a teaching job there for this coming year south of

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Springfield, and Goldie is teaching at Camden High School in northern Indiana. She met a farmer named Walter Siedentop at church and they're getting married next week. He has a farm near Hamlet, Indiana, a real nice property. Goldie needs to stay happy, and Walter will take good care of the place and her. He is an outstanding fellow, decent and honest. She is real proud of their farm.

Well, I might come over to see you tomorrow night if that's OK. I always enjoy being around your family.

Your friend,

Don

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Iroquois Underwriters Inc.
1160 Consolidated Building
Indianapolis
Phone LI. 4401

August 30, 1934

Dear Don,

And so you have forgotten just where you hid your typewriter when the girls left you all to your lonesome! Well, I have a better plan. My typewriter is fastened onto my desk so that I can't hide it away. I'm rather absent-minded myself at times, you know.

I'm not surprised to know that you are lonesome after having a couple of sisters to see that you got to bed on time, got home in time to at least eat midnight

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lunch, etc. However, you'll become accustomed to it in time I imagine, and will even enjoy having only your own company.

I've been doing real well this week—so far as hours are concerned. Work has been quite heavy, collections good, so there isn't a lot to kick about. Monday night I went to bed by 9:00 P.M. Tuesday night I went out to Thelma's and as we had a lot to talk about we sat up until 11:00 o'clock. Last night I planned writing to you, but it certainly doesn't pay to plan to do anything at night at our house. Mabel Thompson came over while I was helping Mother with the dishes, so we went out on the porch and sat with Mary Eloise. Before Mabel left, two couples from Veedersburg came over and stayed until ten o'clock. Well, by that time Mother was ready for all lights to go out, so I had to go to bed. Wouldn't want my pen scratching to keep them awake!

Have you written to Goldia this week? She asked me to write her when I was talking with her Sunday evening, but really I think I'll not write until at least the postmaster at Hamlet knows that she is actually married. Anyway, you know that I'm not such a good correspondent.

I don't object to your coming over a little while evenings now and then, but don't do it this week. I have some things I must do tonight and tomorrow night, so I still insist that I'LL SEE YOU SATURDAY NIGHT!

Sincerely,

Lucile

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Dear Lucile,

I was disappointed that you couldn't have company last week, but maybe we can go see Thelma tomorrow. That Sherrill is quite a little feller, isn't he? It seems like a long while since I got a letter from you. Try to write. I enjoy your letters.

I was reading in the Star that Pres. Roosevelt is due for another Fireside Chat on the radio this week. Wonder how he plans to catch John Dillinger? Now JD is on a bank robbing spree to beat the band after he escaped from Crown Point. They always claimed it was escape proof. I heard Dillinger even hit the Lizton Bank. Know anything about that? Pretty Boy Floyd will pay big for killing those FBI agents. Crime doesn't pay. I read they opened Alcatraz, an island jail on the West Coast, just for Al Capone. FDR did all right with the CCC, put a lot of family men back to work to support their families. TVA makes sense too. Maybe the New Deal will help the economy in the long run, but FDR has too many enemies. At least the guy who tried to kill him in Miami was a bad shot, got the mayor of Chicago instead. Did you hear about Wiley Post flying around the world solo? Took him nearly eight days, but he did it. I'd like to learn to fly some day.

Walter and Gertrude are thinking about getting married. She's a cheerful, friendly girl, and Walter thinks highly of her. She seems to be embarrassed that she worked as a maid out east, but that shouldn't count against her.

Your friend,

Don

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October 24, 1934

Dear Don,

No doubt you will be surprised to receive a note from me, since I haven't written for so long. My fingers are so stiff this morning I can hardly hit the keys in a harmonious manner. I caught a ride in to work this morning with Mr. Landreth's son who works at some Pontiac Agency here in the city—so I am a few minutes early. Yes, Dillinger robbed the State Bank of little old Lizton. The townfolk are still talking about all the excitement. He got away, of course.

When I talked to Thelma today, she said that Sherrill was quite disappointed that Don and Aunt Lucile hadn't come up to see him. I had told her that you were in town and she suggested to him that we might come out. He came to the telephone a second time this afternoon and asked if I couldn't come out tonight to see him. I told him if you and Mother should by any chance come in Friday evening, we would try to come out if only for a few minutes.

To make a long story short, I had lunch with Margaret Askren yesterday, and she suggested that we come on Wednesday evening. She said that she would expect us between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m.—so I would suggest that you call me as soon as you get in town, and I will meet you downstairs or anyplace you suggest. Will Wednesday suit you as well as Thursday? I hope so, as I believe I was the one who suggested Thursday anyway. If you have time you might call me this evening so that I will know for sure whether or not you can come in.

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Now, listen—don't get into politics—i.e. when we get there—unless it's strictly DEMOCRAT. Judge Williams is Judge of Superior Court No. 2 and is running for office again on the Democrat ticket this fall. AND THEY'RE ALL RED HOT DEMOCRATS! Walter, Margaret's husband, used to be a Republican, but I imagine he has turned over too.

Sincerely,

Lucile

As the Christmas season was approaching, Don and Lucile drove into the "City" to visit Thelma's family and check out the Christmas displays in Blocks and L.S. Ayers windows. The Indy department stores managed to outdo each other every year in magical, creative Christmas scenes. The lights on the Circle were a defiant denial of the realities of the Depression. Don stopped at the Fritts homestead on the way back through Clermont where decorations on Main Street of this small suburb also defied 'Hard Times.' Sherrill ran to open the front door and welcome them. The lively toddler was eager to show Don and Aunt Lucile his Christmas tree and couldn't wait for their reaction to his new toys. December of 1934 was snowy and cold, but Thelma and Wayne's son loved snowballs and snowmen, so he didn't mind winter at all. He also loved the radio and wanted Don to listen to "Scrooge" with him. Lionel Barrymore had launched a Christmas radio special, reading Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." WIRE out of Indianapolis was broadcasting the Barrymore Christmas program several times during the holiday season, and Sherrill had heard it twice already. Don got a kick out of his little

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nephew's enthusiasm and sat patiently through the whole broadcast. Sherrill was also a fan of the new comic strip "L'il Abner" and wanted Don to read it to him before he and Lucile had to leave. Sherrill sang "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town" for him, and Don played his harmonica. The little boy told Don confidentially that his favorite radio personality was Henry Aldrich, and he called out, "Hen-REE, HENRY Aldrich!" and answered himself in a high-pitched voice: "COMING, MOTHER!" Don told Lucile on the way home to Lizton that her nephew Sherrill was a one-kid show.

January 16, 1935

Dear Donald,

As I probably will not see you before Saturday night, I'll take my pen in hand and write you a few lines. Did you read that Amelia Earhart, America's flying sweetheart, flew from Hawaii to California last week? I believe you're a big fan of hers. Maybe I'll have to learn to drive—since it's unlikely I'll ever fly!

This has certainly been one swell day—for ducks. It doesn't seem to be raining as hard right now but about 10:00 it sounded like a regular cloudburst. I'm reforming fast. Sunday night I went to bed at 1:00 A.M.; Monday night at midnight and Tuesday night—midnight! Tonight I hope to crawl between the covers not later than 10:30 P.M. Last night I went with Miss Cook to her Sorority meeting and sat in on a lecture "Fatigue." Needless to say, I was tired when I went. However, I really enjoyed it. I'm going to try to get to bed early now every night till Saturday night! Before I drop off to sleep—Good night.

Sincerely,

Lucile

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P.S. Just received your letter his morning, Thursday. Next time don't cut the last few lines off your letter either. Who's your secretary? I'd rather that you not come up during this week, unless you should have to come in for parts. My work is terribly heavy and I need the rest. Remember—I'm expecting you over for dinner Sunday.

Don's letter has been lost, but he apparently asked Lucile to go with him to his Attica farm on a picnic. This is January! Could be he'd been listening to Billie Holliday singing "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm" and fell under her spell. Lucile was more realistic as her reply indicated:

January 30, 1935

Dear Don,

I really was glad to receive your letter this afternoon. J.S. asked me to take dictation just as the letter came in and then decided to place a long distance telephone call—so I read your letter uninterrupted after all.

I ate down at Wheeler's tonite, had whole wheat waffles, bacon, and milk—forty cents! I'll have to eat at the five-and-dime tomorrow.

Everyone, except Mitzel and I are going to a President's Ball tonite. Mrs. Kriel is dressing up in her black lace as Pete is taking her to the Murat Theatre. Leland and his girl are going the same place. Mrs. Kriel visited the people downstairs last evening—so Mitzel and I listened to the radio. We heard "The

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Desert Song” and enjoyed it very much. You may have seen the show when it was in Indianapolis. I’d like to see “The Merry Widow” when it comes to Indy.

So you’ve been dreaming again! And I’m still glad that I don’t dream. I believe that is the reason I usually enjoy a restful sleep.

Don, I don’t see how we could drive to your farm in time for lunch. Moreover, it would not be such an easy matter to eat outside at this time of year. If it is cold, it wouldn’t be very comfortable—and you know in this day and age we like to enjoy comfort. Of course I realize you could take a few doses of cod liver oil to ward off cold, but I don’t exactly like the idea.

Well, I think I’ll ring off—and study my Sunday school lesson—you might come to class Sunday and it would be just too embarrassing if I didn’t have my lesson.

See you Saturday night.

Sincerely,

Lucile

P.S. Believe it or not, I forgot to mail it. It’s now almost 3:00 P.M. 1/31/35

Dear Lucile,

My landlord is a good fellow. He repaired that broken pipe I told him about last week. Until I can save enough money to build a house on land in the Jimtown area, renting is OK for now. You’d approve of my bachelor training. I don’t cook much, but cold baloney sandwiches and chocolate milk are good enough for me. I try to keep the place clean and even made my bed this morning.

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Hiller runs a good local paper here, so I haven't subscribed to the Star yet. The Jamestown Press reports on all the auctions and sales. He even had a story yesterday about Hitler rearming. The German farmers must take an interest in Hitler's trouble-making. I'd rather read about Wiley Post and Will Rogers.

I hope your feet stop bothering you. The foot doctor must cost you a big chunk of your salary. My flat feet don't bother me too much, but I'm on my feet all day and been working late at the shop, seems like winter brings more hard jobs into the garage, and everybody wants his work done right now. It's been so cold that I have to keep busy to keep warm.

I'll be glad to take you in to Indianapolis any time you need a ride. Just let me know. Thelma always likes to see you. That Sherrill is a corker.

Your friend, Don

March 6, 1935

Dear Donald,

Another rainy Wednesday night! However I guess the farmers need rain—and I'm inside where it's dry. Sunshine always follows rain eventually. As you mentioned in your letter making the bed, doubtless by this time you've done it once or twice more because to sleep in comfort the bed just must be made.

I worked rather hard today. I ate about 5:30 at the Guaranty—veal roast with stew, mashed potatoes, cream slaw, hot rolls and butter and a glass of milk—all for 30 cents! I haven't heard from Mary Eloise this week, but suppose I'll hear

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from her tomorrow. I couldn't blame her if she didn't write, however, for I don't often take the time to write her. She is doing real well in Sanderson.

I'm glad to know you have enough work to keep you out of mischief. I still insist that I'd rather that you not make a special trip to Indpls. during the week. You make a special trip every Sunday evening, and I feel that one special trip a week is enough. Maybe I'll take you up on your offer to teach me to drive.

Thelma came downtown to buy a coat yesterday, and I took care of Sherrill for an hour. He is a Captain! Well, I did my washing tonite, listened to the radio awhile—and now it's ten bells. I read last night and got to bed early.

See you Saturday nite.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Dear Lucile

I'm covered up with work this week, but I wanted to write you a note. You said there's no rest for the wicked, and I guess that's about right. I don't get a lot of rest. Have you talked to Mary Eloise lately? I'd like to see Sherrill when we get time. He has a lot of spunk and energy.

You've been so busy lately. Did you have a good Young People's conference Saturday? I feel bad for the farmers out in Oklahoma. The dust bowl, as they call it, gets worse and worse. Maybe they ought to send Huey Long out there to talk it down. Louisiana ought to spare him for awhile for a good cause. He's quite a talker.

Well, I'll pick you up Saturday night. Your friend, Don

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April 1, 1935

Don taught Lucile to drive after weeks of her objections. He liked driving his Desoto; it handled well, and he thought it was an ideal car for learning to drive. She swore she was a nervous wreck, but Don promised to loan her the car to go to a Young People's conference in southern Indiana if she would master the fine art of navigating the automobile. She did it, and he was true to his word.

April 1, 1935

Dear Don,

Thinking you'd probably be glad to hear from a certain someone, I'll pause in the hustle and bustle of life to write you a line. Did you know that today was April fools Day? I bit early. One of the fellows told me my face was dirty, and I looked in the mirror.

I presume that you're working late again tonight, but just remember that sunshine follows the tempest. Of course, I suppose it's the tempest that actually rolls in the cash. Is the Desoto about back to normal? I certainly must have had a bad effect on her when I drove her all those miles a week ago yesterday. The very idea—causing you to miss a couple nights with the girl friend—a banquet—and a dinner engagement! Seriously, thanks for the loan of your car.

Had a very nice time at the Y.P. conference Saturday. However, I felt a little out of place at first since most of them were so much younger than I. Had a nice banquet—I thought I was going to be completely lost, but a friend of ours

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from Franklin and two who had come with him sat with me at the table. And would you have been burnt up with jealousy if you had walked in? I sat by a red-headed man who was a scream—don't get scared—he must have been about 17 years old—a senior in high school at Whiteland. HaHa! You sort of thought I was putting one over on you, didn't you?

I didn't do anything unusual yesterday. I went to Sunday school and church—talked to Mary Eloise, and after I talked with you, we came in town. I had dinner at Thelma's a spent the night there. She is worried about Sherrill's eye because it droops. The doctor told her a "lazy" eye might correct itself with time. I feel as if I'm fighting flu tonight. Don't tell the folks, if you see them.

Incidentally—I missed you last evening. Now, didn't that cause your heart to miss a beat, or maybe two?

Well, it's now 9:05 P.M. and I'm going to turn in—after washing my neck and ears. Now—if you can't come in Wednesday, come when you can.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Dear Lucile,

Glad you learned to drive the Desoto. That's a practical skill you'll use all your life. Did you have any trouble on the road?

Work is heavy this week, tractors and farm equipment that everybody needs right now. I might see you Saturday, but if not, I'll be at church Sunday.

Don

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Dear Don,

I just washed and cleaned up, wrote a letter to Lois, my friend in Washington D.C. and the clock says it's 11:00 P.M. Moreover, my pen says its supply of ink is low and I'll not be permitted to write a great long letter.

Miss Cook and I sort of celebrated my birthday last evening by attending Loew's Palace where "Naughty Marietta" was being shown. It certainly was good.

How's work this week? I've been busy, although I only worked till 6:00 P.M. tonight. I then went to the Guaranty, where I feasted on stewed chicken, noodles, mashed potatoes, orange pie, hot rolls and butter and milk. Everything was good.

What time do you plan to leave Sunday morning? If you come over at all Saturday night, please don't stay very late because Sunday will really be a long day.

Do you know anything about Taxi Tires? I can get 4 Taxi Tires (made by the Dayton Thoroughbred people) at \$5.30 each and tubes at 80 cents. Personally I thought it was cheap enough.

I never am good on paper—and am sleepy, as usual. So will have to take it out in talking Sunday. See you then.

Sincerely, Lucile

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Dear Lucile,

I've been working late, trying to keep the local farmers in the field while the weather is good. Machinery breaks down at the worst times. I'm glad GMI give me practical training for engine repair and welding work. Farming is the biggest gamble around. The paper has pictures of the dust storms out west where farmers are losing their farms right and left. Can't farm without rain.

The prices on Taxi Tires are OK. I ain't an expert on prices, but Daytons are good tires. I'll pick up a set of tires on my next trip into the city for parts.

Don

May 22, 1935

Dear Don,

Well, just another note—but on my brand new stationery tonight. However, you weren't first tonight: last but not least. You should receive this letter before the other party receives hers! I wrote to Mary Eloise and may run out of ink, so I'll make this short.

Had a very busy day and broke a good record by working till 6:00 P.M. You know, I said I wasn't going to do it anymore. Miss Cook and I ate together tonite for a change—and I didn't get out here until 7:30 P.M. I soon shall have to wash my dirty clothes—or have to stay in bed tomorrow morning until my clothes get dry.

I went to bed about 9:30 last evening—and it was so unusual that I woke up at 5:15 A.M. and a couple more times before it was time to get up.

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Did you and the stimulant get home without an accident Monday night? I'd never have thought you'd be found guilty of transporting such products. Of course, I presume you weren't found out.

I had lunch with Margaret today. We window shopped during our lunch hour—with a meal thrown in. There are so many pretty things—however, it does take money.

You possibly have seen in the papers that the Chain Letter Gamble is still raging here in Indianapolis. Easy money! It surely must be great to get rich quick. Personally, I don't think I'll ever be in that class. My ink, sure enough, is running out.

Sincerely,

Lucile

Don's persistence finally won the day. He had taken Lucile to visit his parents and decided it was "now or never" with his future at stake. He could tell that his mother liked Lucile. His father, holding his pipe at the corner of his mouth, regarded her with his usual stoic gaze. He never showed much emotion, but Donald figured his dad must think highly of his future wife since Donald did. Driving back to Lizton, Donald cautiously brought up the subject of getting married and raising a family. Lucile, reluctantly he thought, agreed to consider it but said she needed time to think about it. She wanted a family and so did he, but a lifetime commitment shouldn't be an impulsive decision. Then she surreptitiously made an appointment with Dr. Schaaf, who counseled her to consider how seriously she wanted a family as opposed to remaining a career woman all her life. Dr. Schaaf was a respected, avuncular, wise member of her community, and his careful delineation of her alternatives and the probable results of each one impressed her

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deeply. She had enjoyed the thirteen years of independence and self-respect that working in Indianapolis had brought. Giving that up was not easy.

She had reservations about Donald. He wasn't the man of her dreams, as the popular songs might have put it. He was ill-at-ease socially, scornful of propriety, resentful of certain professionals: bankers, lawyers, executives, doctors, ministers, do-nothing investors, sit-at-a-desk managers who, in his mind, had no respect for the laborers who did the work. At the same time, he admired many professionals who had proven their worth and worked hard to achieve and invent. His was a complicated mind with some emotional handicaps. She wondered what had caused his stuttering and his difficulty in speaking. She had also noticed his tendency to pick at any injury, "worry" loose, dry skin, and other nervous quirks. Could that be related to his stuttering? She wondered. His moods changed quickly, and she had noticed how he brooded about perceived slights and insults. He was overly defensive if he thought someone had no respect for him. He had a bad temper and used intemperate language from time to time. She certainly didn't approve of that. Then she would consider his positive traits. He was ambitious, and wasn't that a good quality? He liked children, loved her sister's son Sherrill, and he had a soft heart when it came to animals, especially if they were neglected or abused. His taste in music was not sophisticated, but then neither was hers, she had to admit. He was at least honest about what he liked and disliked. He clearly liked her and that was encouraging, but she had to be honest with herself. She didn't think she was really "in love" with Donald. Would it be fair to him to get married and hope she would learn to love him, as Dr. Schaaf had suggested?

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What was she getting herself into with this promise to live with one man the rest of her life? It could be a big mistake. She sat on the front porch reading the Indy Star a few days later. It was hard to concentrate, and she was disgusted with all the publicity King Edward VIII of England was receiving. Reporters seemed to thrive on the scandals surrounding his affairs with married women, especially this American divorcee Simpson. What was the matter with these spoiled aristocrats? This young king had been brought up with every advantage, and the papers were full of his dissolute life of wasteful, extravagant foolishness. If she married Donald, she knew they would honor the sacred institution of marriage. What did it matter if someone had a title or an impressive family or lots of money? She made up her mind to ask her parents and abide by their judgment. She talked it over with Charley and Ethel, who were kindly disposed toward Donald. She knew her folks were accepting and generous to a fault, but she trusted their good sense. They reserved judgment but didn't forbid the marriage.

Chapter 15
A Wedding and a Funeral

Braced with Brandy Lucile wears her white gown to wed,
And Don's vow, "I do," the smartest words he'd ever said.

During the hottest August week of central Indiana ever
Don and Lucile tie the blessed knot they will never sever.

After Niagara honeymoon Lucile Hines has nary a lull,
As home keeper and bookkeeper, she has both hands full.

* * *

By 1936 FDR had changed the mood of the country. Donald, a cautious, sometime Democrat, was euphoric as the economy gained strength; unemployment plummeted. America was now in the care of The Brain Trust, the smartest fellows Roosevelt could gather together. Some Republicans claimed that FDR's economic cures were "socialism" and his experiments "commie" plots, but Donald figured that if FDR's programs were working, that was the important thing. Employment was the crucial key to fighting despair and poverty. The nation was benefiting from CCC projects, and the WPA had saved thousands of families from the hopelessness of unemployment resulting from an ailing economy. Roosevelt was either loved or hated, but his administration's policies were raising America's spirits. Donald found himself looking forward to reading the *Indy Star* again. He laughed out loud reading about the Olympics. Hitler couldn't ignore America's symbolic triumph when Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the Olympics in Berlin, set a record for the 100 meter dash, and challenged the Nazi claim that Blacks were inherently inferior to so-called Aryans.

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Donald couldn't spend too much time thinking about his upcoming wedding or he would become nervous and apprehensive. Most of his waking hours were spent working, but he did enjoy radio, 20th Century's entertainment technology. The powerful radio station WXYZ out of Detroit broadcast "The Green Hornet" for the first time, and soon an Indianapolis station picked it up. Donald enjoyed dramas with their sound effects and atmospheric music but preferred comedy. An unlikely duo, one of them made of wood, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, defied logic by sending over the airwaves a radio ventriloquist and his dummy for everyone to imagine. America was laughing again, and Donald was an enthusiastic laugher. He still preferred Mark Twain to the new writers with their suffering, struggling American characters. Huckleberry Finn was a good-natured, unconventional hero, however rough, that Donald and many other Americans took to heart. Mark Twain's uncouth heroes may have been poor and plain-spoken, but down-trodden Americans identified with his hard-scrabble characters. Donald never thought of himself as down-trodden, but he knew that laughter brought hope, and who can live without it? Wasn't hope what his imminent marriage to Lucile was all about?

Lucile and her sisters began planning the wedding set for August, but as the date for the wedding grew closer, Lucile became more uneasy and nervous. They decided to have the wedding outdoors, in the backyard garden of the house Don had rented in Jamestown. Rev. Blake of the Lizton church was to officiate, and the ceremony was to be simple and modest. Thelma and Mary Eloise would be the attendants, and Walter would be best man. Donald persisted in singing *Daisy, Daisy*: "It won't be a stylish marriage; I can't afford a carriage. But you'll look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two." He thought it was funnier than Lucile did.

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A shadow hung over the Ginn Family, however, as Mary Eloise developed pneumonia and had little strength left to fight it. Tuberculosis, or “consumption” as TB was more often called, was a formidable enemy, and it did not fight fairly. Mary Eloise summoned the last bit of energy she had and promised her oldest sister that she would be at her wedding.

The hottest summer in history didn’t help to lift the atmosphere of gloom and sadness that hung over the Lizton family, and Lucile’s heart wasn’t in the wedding preparations. She tried to keep her spirits up and knew Donald sympathized and was attempting to reassure her, but there was no comfort anywhere for any of the Ginns. She was grateful that they had settled on a sensible, unostentatious wedding ceremony. Rehearsal for the service was brightened by Walter and his fiancée, Gertrude, who were in love and had fun being together. Walter was always ready with a witty comment, and Gertrude, with her wide grin and mischievous personality, kept the mood lighthearted and lively. Lucile was grateful; she liked Donald’s family. Thelma was a sister who knew exactly what to say to reassure her older sister.

“You’re going to have fun marrying into this lively family. Walter is so witty.”

“You’re probably right, Thelma, but you know me, always worrying.”

“Sherrill likes Donald, and he has a sharp instinct about people. Don’t worry.”

“He’s a remarkable boy. I know Donald would like to have a son like him.”

The wedding was to be on the afternoon of the 21st with a brief honeymoon to Niagara Falls. The height of the heat wave had been in July, but August was sweltering as well, and nights were oppressive. The night before the wedding, Donald couldn’t sleep at all, and Lucile was so restless she kept waking up. Lucile’s worry increased by

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the hour. She couldn't get her breakfast down and had dark circles under her eyes. How in the world was she going to look like a bride by noon? Thelma tried bravely to distract her, telling her stories about *Show Boat*, a movie she'd seen with Wayne the week before. They had arranged for a friend from church to stay with Sherrill and had gone to a theatre that advertised air conditioned comfort, a real draw with the heat wave still in progress. News reports had spread the word that the temperature had reached 120 degrees in Oklahoma, an all-time record. Thelma said, "Lucile, did you realize that Indiana suffered heat reaching 116 degrees in July? Dad joked that his sweet corn was roasting on the stalk." Lucile didn't seem to be listening, so Thelma told her about the book she'd just read. She had gotten *Gone with the Wind* from the library and devoured it in less than a week. "Lucile, you can't believe how daring Scarlet O'Hara is, and Brett is so romantic and manly." Thelma saw that it was useless. Lucile was a basket case. Thelma talked privately to their mother, and Ethel smiled with that twinkle in her eye and said she'd take care of it.

While Lucile and Thelma worked to achieve an elegant hairdo, Ethel was searching for the bottle of brandy she had stored away. Although they were teetotalers and associated strong drink with sin and crime, Ethel was above all a practical woman. She had heard that brandy could build up the blood and so had bravely schemed to purchase some brandy for Mary Eloise, hoping to bolster her strength. She had sent Charlie to the package store in the neighboring town, hoping no neighbors saw him buying the booze. Finding the half-empty bottle in the back of her pantry, she concocted a hot toddy for Lucile and made her drink it. The medicinal drink did the job. Thelma helped her finish donning her wedding gown, a simple, elegant, full-length, white

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summer ensemble that set off her naturally curly, thick black hair and gray eyes. By the time Thelma got through with her sister, Lucile looked like a million dollars, and she was even laughing at Thelma's stories about her favorite radio programs: "Jack Benny" and "The Green Hornet". Thelma tried to imitate the voices and recreate the latest episodes for her sister's entertainment and succeeded in lifting Lucile's spirits. The medicinal spirits had also helped; the hot toddy had gone to her head and taken the edge off her nervous state. The ceremony in the backyard of Donald's place in Jamestown went off without a hitch. The weather was perfect. Rev. Blake spoke eloquently of love and fidelity. The flowers were lovely, and the music was simple. Mary Eloise, too weak to participate in the ceremony, was sitting in the shade of the old ash tree and afterwards stood behind the newly married couple for the requisite photographs. Sherrill, spic and span, dressed in his light Sunday suit had fallen off the porch into the dirt, but every solemn occasion needs a good laugh, and young Sherrill was happy to oblige. Lucile picked him up and gave him a big hug. Ethel, in her quiet, unassuming way, had been right about the emergency hot toddy.

The honeymoon was not ideal, but then traveling by car in 1936 had its pitfalls. Here, however, Don was in his element, fixing flats in a flash, making sure the car had plenty of water in the radiator and oil for the engine to run at optimal performance. They were awed by the magnificence and power of the famous falls, taking pictures and walking from one end of Niagara Falls, NY, to the other. Don insisted they drive across into Canada to see the falls from the Canadian side, which he had heard was even more spectacular. Don was proud of his bride and as happy as he'd ever been. They traveled well together and both enjoyed seeing new places and learning about the country.

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Beginnings are sometimes harbingers of what is to come, but life is hard at best, and Lucile couldn't quite reconcile her loss of independence with her new responsibilities.

She also had to confront the great sorrow she had left behind when they returned from the honeymoon. Mary Eloise had continued to weaken after the wedding and was in a restless sleep most of the time. Lucile insisted on spending afternoons by Mary Eloise's bedside, and at last her beloved sister simply stopped breathing. The lovely young woman, barely 21, slipped away as her family watched helplessly. The exhausting effort to breathe was finally too much for her. The grief was deep and unrelenting. The close-knit community shared the family's sorrow, and the somber funeral service fairly shouted: "Don't ask for whom the bell tolls; the bell tolls for thee." John Donne couldn't have penned poetry that echoed truth more starkly. If a young, talented, beautiful woman like Mary Eloise Ginn was not safe from Death's cruel talons, who could have a minute's peace? They say that Randall arrived at the house as the visitation was drawing to a close, put a dozen red roses on the casket, and then collapsed, weeping.

Don and Lucile moved into the little house in Jamestown just down the street from Dr. Schaaf's tidy brick office. Old maple and oak trees lined the street and sidewalks were well maintained. Jamestown had a thriving bank that had survived the crash of '29, a grain elevator, a feed and hardware store, a drug store with a soda fountain, and a reputable local newspaper, The Jamestown Press, run by a man named Hiller, a sharp, enterprising and energetic editor who didn't mind controversy. He was smart enough to figure it might even be good for business. The focus was almost entirely on local Boone County news: accidents, school programs, church activities, farm reports,

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residents who visited and traveled, and editorial pieces. He proudly wrote a story about Herman B. Wells, a local boy, when in 1935 Wells was appointed Dean of Indiana University's School of Business Administration. Once in awhile he would comment on world events, such as the abdication of the throne in England. The romance that prompted King Edward VIII to give up his royal position for the woman he loved played well in America and small towns in particular. She was an American, after all. When Chiang Kei-shek was kidnapped, the editor included that in his little paper, but most controversial was his editorial writing concerning the labor union strikes, in 1936 especially. Donald was concerned about the GM sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan, and had divided loyalties, favoring the workers but sympathetic with management since he felt obligated and grateful to GM for the boost to his career. The anti-union stance of the local paper stirred up latent resentments as Donald read the editorial bias and wondered if the editor knew anything about GM or working on the line in a shop. Donald knew for a fact that GM hired spies to infiltrate the unions. It was a dilemma; how do you balance wages and profits to serve the cause of justice?

Meanwhile Donald's Jamestown business thrived. He and Wesley built up a satisfied clientele with an occasional disgruntled customer when Donald tried an invention of his that was too unorthodox to suit the fellow. One local farmer brought in his old Chevy truck that refused to start any time it rained. Donald rigged up a wooden throttle and adjusted it so that the truck started right up no matter what the weather forecast was. It didn't look pretty but it did the job. The farmer was satisfied.

Once in awhile Don would do a job for someone who didn't pay or whose check bounced. He'd come home in a rage. His anger was frightening. He'd slam the door

and stomp around, dropping his dirty clothes in a corner, glowering and grumbling. Lucile knew she was in for an evening of relentless ranting: “These y-young hooligans don’t know what a d-d-day’s work is. They ain’t g-got a clue about hard work, can’t do a thing f-f-fer themselves. Give ‘em t-tools, and they d-d-don’t know a wrench from a drill bit. B-Buncha lazy b-bums.” Lucile often doubted whether she had made a wise decision to marry. She hated feeling as if she were the object of his wrath. Donald’s habits were careless, and his grease-covered hands and clothes were a constant battle. He insisted that he scrubbed, and she tried to overlook necessary hazards of his business. The laundry problem was a struggle, but Lucile was used to hard work and took it in stride. She never complained about having to wash heavy coveralls every day as well as smelly underwear, sheets, towels, and rags. Still, this was not what she had expected. She missed the camaraderie of her work in Indianapolis, and she missed her friend Amelia. She missed her close-knit family. She missed her parents. She missed Thelma and Marion, and most of all, she missed Mary Eloise.

Lucile encouraged Donald to expedite his plan to build his own Hines Garage on the land he had purchased from The Spinster Sisters, but first they agreed they should build their house on the rise just above the county road off Hwy. 136 and not far from the grove of trees where Don had built a double crib to hold his hay and corn harvest.. The bungalow was to be built by a local master carpenter, Charlie Dale, whose work was renowned in Hendricks County. Lucile wanted a screened-in front porch and a back porch off the kitchen where visitors would feel welcome entering in the country way. They arranged to do the finish work themselves. Lucile hadn’t grown up painting and hammering, but she was spunky and proud and learned quickly. Her mother had taught

her to cook and clean, and she was good at bookkeeping, which was an asset that Donald needed and appreciated. Lucile had been a straight-A student and could keep records, write impressive business letters, fill out orders, send out bills, and do taxes to beat the band. She dreaded doing quarterly taxes; organization was not one of Donald's strong points. The rest of it was right up her alley. Donald had married an amanuensis.

Time passed quickly with the building project underway. Charlie Dale took his time, a kind of pay-as-you-go agreement since Don was reluctant to borrow money. "Cash on the barrel head" was his mantra. He had decided to build a double-crib first since he wanted to start farming immediately, and he needed a shed to store and shelter his farm equipment. The residence was to be a two-story bungalow, but the house continued to be postponed. Two years passed while the foundation was dug and the well drilled. They found good water at a hundred feet and built a garage over the well head. Charlie Dale, much in demand in the rural community, was always busy with other projects and tried to balance his contracted building agreements amongst his clients. Donald liked living close to his work in Jamestown, and the rental house suited them for the time being. There was no hurry.

Whenever Donald was frustrated with his own obstacles and disappointments, he would read the *Star* to Lucile and gain a little perspective. His problems always seemed small and unimportant compared to the state of the country and the world. "Hitler seizes c-control of the German army," Donald read. "I read the other day that Germany had t-taken control of Austria. F-Franco has c-control of Spain. The whole w-w-world is crazy. H-Hitler sounds like a m-m-madman. How c-can a lunatic take c-control of a great c-c-country like Germany? L-Looks like Europe's headed for a w-w-war." Lucile

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felt weak and queasy. Food hadn't appealed to her for weeks. Could it be some emotional disability? She'd go see Dr. Schaaf if she didn't feel any better in the next week or so. She often had sinus trouble and had to endure the agonies of a sinus treatment to get any relief. She wondered if she was a hypochondriac. She was embarrassed that she also needed to see a podiatrist every month or so because her feet had become misshapen, plagued with bunions and corns, maybe from having stood on her feet in high heels too often or having walked too long in ill-fitting shoes. She now wore orthopedic shoes but knew she might have waited too late to start preventive measures. Donald was not sympathetic either. He made fun of her concerns and suggested it was only vanity. Maybe it was; she couldn't be certain. Donald was reading something about Amelia Earhart and her plans to fly around the world. She thought: that was the life for her. Then Don wouldn't take her for granted. He'd never make fun of Amelia Earhart.

Lucile liked their neighbors in Jamestown and was in no hurry to move out to the isolated farm. They compromised on church-going, settling on the Jamestown Christian Church just up the street from their house. The congregation was friendly and invited them to attend a revival, and after that intense week of getting to know the Jamestown folks, attending Sunday services felt natural, at least to Lucile. The minister, Ross Dampier, was an eloquent speaker, scholar and counselor, admired by the community, but Don was cynical about any man who was afraid to get his hands dirty. He began to balk at leaving his work, even on Sundays. Lucile was alarmed at this turn of events but hesitated to pressure her new husband. She sensed that he was uncomfortable in church, and she simply went alone when he insisted that he had too much work to do at the shop

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to go to church. She missed the easy, comfortable Sundays with the Ginns and looked forward to Sunday dinners with her parents on Sunday afternoons more than she'd ever admit to Donald. She couldn't stand the tension of arguments. She dreaded the angry voice: "Somebody's got to earn a living around here. There's too much work to finish. I can't go to church." So Lucile would go alone, pretending to their church acquaintances that Donald had pressing matters to attend to or deflecting questions skillfully. After they were first married, she had argued that his promise had included going to church with her, but he objected, always raising his voice and filling the air with unrestrained fury. It wasn't worth it, she thought, and so began repressing her inner doubts and agonizing disappointments.

Whether or not he attended church with her, he did enjoy Sunday dinners with the Ginns. The goose, good old Gabe, had made peace with Don and even tried to talk to him the way he did with Charlie. The irrepressible, noisy family guard bird, the Ginn Goose, made Don laugh every time they had an encounter, and that lightened Lucile's spirits. She was learning to value the moments of sunshine that broke through the dark clouds of deep depression. Don did love to laugh, even if it was sometimes at the wrong things. The knowledge that he experienced irrational moods of paranoia and frightening bouts of despair and anger had dawned on her gradually but overwhelmed her when she realized that she would need to cope with these spells of depression regularly. After all, she had promised to be faithful "for better or worse"; how much worse it might become was never on a bride's mind, she thought wryly. Honor was as important to her as it was to him, however the definition of the word might differ from wife to husband.

Easter Sunday dawned with the promise of early spring glory. Lucile got out of bed determined to smooth the way to a perfect celebration of the Resurrection. What did this holiday mean anyway if it didn't signify new life and new hope? She had breakfast ready before Donald opened his eyes. He stretched, yawned, scratched, smelled bacon and eggs and washed quickly. Lucile had laid out his Sunday clothes, leaving him no alternatives. He'd have had to search high and low to find clean coveralls or his John Deere cap. "Good morning, Donald. Sunrise service starts at 6:00 so eat quickly." Something in her voice warned him that arguments would be useless. He asked about dinner at the Ginns and she assured him: "Mother and Dad expect all of us after church. I'm bringing chocolate chip cookies and deviled - stuffed - eggs." Lucile smiled thinking how Donald's mother would never call stuffed eggs "deviled" eggs. A superstitious quirk, she suspected. Lucile knew she had deliberately slighted her domestic skills but was developing key "Domestic Science" talents: fried chicken, biscuits, smooth gravy, chocolate chip cookies. She knew she was ignoring the nutritious food groups, but she also knew what Donald liked. Anyway, she usually served spinach, his favorite, or peas.

Easter had always been Lucile's favorite Sunday. She loved to dress up, get out early and celebrate life. The Jamestown congregation was out in force, ready for spring, happy to be alive. The Easter hats and spring dresses filled the dark, old church with colorful feminine echoes of cherry trees in bloom, daffodils dancing on green stalks, violets and buttercups carpeting the woods. Lucile loved the comforting warmth of the familiar picture of the Good Shepherd gazing down at his sheep, the wooden rack in front with numbers for the morning's hymns, attendance figures, offering totals. The men, most of them farmers during the week, were scrubbed and barbered to startling military

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decorum. Children were subdued during the service but broke into joyful exuberance after the final hymn and benediction. Lucile smiled to see the boys in their Easter suits and little girls in pastel dresses and bonnets running, chasing, tumbling, and trying in vain to “be good.” Doubts melted away with the sunshine, and after they shook hands and greeted old friends she eagerly rode to Lizton with Donald to celebrate Easter in the familiar Ginn family circle.

When they arrived, Wayne and Thelma were already out front, chasing Sherrill down the sidewalk. The lively boy was running as fast as his legs could carry him, laughing and calling “Can’t catch me!” He darted into the Ginn yard headed for the pump, tumbling onto the wooden platform. Marion called out the back door that dinner was ready, so they hurried back in to help Ethel put the chicken and dumplings on the table. Donald was grateful that he could relax with his in-laws and enjoy the holiday. Somehow work seemed to consume him, and he needed an excuse to neglect his duties for a day. He liked Thelma’s musical voice, and he thought Wayne’s deep-throated growly bass was a perfect counterpoint. Wayne sounded as if he had swallowed gravel. “Well, Don, how’s the old garage business doin’?”

“N-Not bad, W-Wayne, Jimtown’s a decent place, g-g-good people.”

“Yeah, sometimes I wonder what I’m doin’ in Indy. I’m thankful for a steady job, but traffic is getting’ ridiculous, and it’s gonna’ get worse. You’re in an up-and-comin’ trade. Folks need to keep their cars on the road.”

“Yup, there’s n-no lack of w-w-work these d-days.”

They all sat down after Marion said grace, and Donald sighed, relishing the excellent food. Everyone was delighted that Sherrill seemed to enjoy the company and

sat like a little monarch on his high chair/throne. Donald had never seen a child he liked better. He vowed to teach him to play checkers and play the harmonica. Ethel passed the mashed potatoes again, and insisted that everybody have more hot rolls. Donald couldn't figure out why none of the Ginns were overweight. He'd have to analyze that one. Carrying the conversation was an effort, but he gave it a try: "Say, W-Wayne, do you think Amelia Earhart is g-g-gonna' finish her f-f-flight around the world?" Wayne wasn't familiar with details of the aviatrix's latest venture but the papers were full of her initial attempt flying from Oakland, California, to Honolulu. Wayne nodded politely but didn't know much about Earhart. "They t-t-tried flying west. T-Tough luck on the air strip in Honolulu." Wayne nodded and Thelma smiled. Lucile was embarrassed but concentrated on her plate of food.

Thelma added: "Didn't Amelia Earhart join the Purdue faculty recently?"

"She sure d-d-did. They p-paid for her plane. P-Purdue f-f-financed her Lockheed 10E Electra twin-engine p-plane."

Wayne looked skeptical: "Why would Purdue do a fool thing like that?"

"M-Maybe for an experiment...s-s-scientific research."

"Or maybe publicity?" Lucile decided she'd join the discussion if it killed her.

Don smiled at her: "G-Good p-p-possibility. Amelia's always in the p-papers."

Marion chimed in: "The first try wasn't very good publicity. She wrecked the plane, didn't she?"

Donald turned to Marion defensively: "The p-plane ground-looped. M-Must have been a t-t-tire blew on t-take-off. Once a p-p-plane starts spinning, that's it."

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Marion persisted: "I read that it was pilot error, but I guess a couple of witnesses said they saw a tire blow out."

"So what will she do now?" Thelma was getting interested in Earhart's problems.

Don jumped in: "She's g-going to try flying the other d-d-direction: w-w-west to east. She'll fly 29,000 m-m-miles, all the way around the world. She's a corker!"

Lucile wanted to change the subject, but she could see that Donald seemed to be enjoying himself. She felt the urge to shoot Earhart down: "I read that she married a divorced man and then wrote her own marriage contract, leaving them both free to do whatever they wanted." Lucile was annoyed that her husband was fascinated with America's flying sweetheart, and it dawned on her that she wouldn't mind seeing Earhart crash, in a figurative way, of course. Then she smiled to herself. Mary Eloise would never have let her live this one down: she was jealous of Amelia Earhart!

Chapter 16
Moving to the Farm

Moving out to the farm goes the Republican bride.
Her new Democratic in-laws seem to live on every side.

First baby due in September gives the family joy.
But will Don be happy if they do not have a boy?

Born in early morning and called his Joannie Squirrel;
Don tells Lucile, "A corker!" – "I love my little girl."

* * *

When Donald read aloud at the breakfast table, Lucile had learned to tune him out most of the time, but one cold morning he read from the *Star* that an ice jam at Niagara Falls was causing problems. She listened as he read about the mighty falls they had seen in August, a year and a half before, now so jammed with ice that the ice bridge had collapsed. On their honeymoon they had thought the falls so beautiful, splendid, and their future looked as brilliant then. Time and tribulations weather and otherwise, were often cruel, she thought, and results unforeseen. Even that awesome natural wonder could be a killer. The beauty of summer quickly turned ugly with a bitter, relentless January wind. When she was honest with herself, she had to admit that she dreaded the loneliness and winter drudgery of an Indiana farm. The isolation loomed like a shapeless phantom. Winter storms often cut power lines, telephone lines, and made roads hazardous. What if there were a sudden emergency? How could they seek help with no neighbors within a

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mile? Putting her fears aside, she stirred the eggs and heated the toast. They were still living in Jamestown, a friendly, comfortable, little town, and fearing the unknown future was pointless. “Hey, Lucile, l-listen to this. They’re p-planning to flood f-four t-t-towns in Massachusetts to build a reservoir, g-g-gonna call it Quabbin Reservoir. Government kickin’ folks outta their homes. Call th-th-that progress?” Lucile often became impatient with her husband, but she had to smile at his ability to put things in perspective. She worried about the possibility of war; he worried about small towns in New England flooded to make way for a reservoir. For better or worse: wherever they lived, Donald would read the newspaper aloud every morning.

Lucile knew her brother Marion wanted to join the U.S. Navy, and she did worry about the unrest overseas. Thelma’s husband, Wayne, was a Marine. Would he be called up if a 2nd world war broke out? If it weren’t the weather causing havoc, it was politics and prejudice, raw aggression, and hatred. Why couldn’t the world be like her parents? Why wasn’t everybody like her sisters or her brother or her other Ginn relatives? She couldn’t understand the world, and politics just made her angry. That was something else. She knew Donald might be a closet Democrat, but he didn’t talk about politics much. Her whole family favored the Republican Party, so she felt a natural loyalty but hadn’t thought too much about why. Now that she was a married woman, an adult voter, she thought she should have more intelligent opinions. She promised herself she’d work on it. Donald read, “Oil discovered in Saudi Arabia. That’s over th-there by T-Turkey, isn’t it?” Lucile got the globe and they checked out Saudi Arabia.

Weekends also occasionally brought Sunday dinners at the Hines homestead. They’d drive the two miles over the gravel road, and Dora would welcome them with a

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huge meal on the round oak table. Donald's sisters were both married now. Goldia had met Walter Siedentop, a handsome, prosperous farmer who owned a thriving farm in northern Indiana not far from Chicago, and they had married and had a daughter, Mary Lee. Time was again getting away from Donald. It made him dizzy. Mozella had married Glendon Alexander, a local farmer, a quiet man who loved to read, whose family was prominent in North Salem. Their young son Jim was nearly the same age as his cousin, Mary Lee. The Alexanders were living just down the road from the old home place between Jamestown and Lizton, near Walter and his new wife Gertrude. Ora and Dora were grateful to have three of their four living so close. They enjoyed their grandchildren and let them have the run of the place when they visited. During planting and harvest seasons everyone pitched in and worked together day and night until crucial, timely work was completed. The life wasn't easy, but it was a practical way to assure that even during hard times the farm community would survive and in good times might prosper.

In July the Hines Family got together for a Sunday feast at the old home place. The atmosphere was festive, but it was dreadfully hot and humid, so they retired to the front porch as soon as dinner was finished. The huge oak tree sheltered the yard from the sun, and a breeze brought the scent of hay and the cherry orchard. Mary Lee and Jim were crawling in the thick grass, chasing each other, swinging in the big swing hanging from a sturdy branch of the oak tree. The adults could hear the young cousins laughing and jabbering. There was a lull in the conversation, and Donald broke the silence: "D-Did you read about Amelia Earhart? She w-w-went d-down somewhere in the P-Pacific."

Walter chimed in: “She had only 7,000 miles to go. They’d already completed 22,000 miles of the trip. Paper said she and Noonan had left New Guinea in good weather but had rain and radio transmission trouble on their way to Howland Island.”

“Do they have much hope of finding the plane?” Mozell had been following avidly the round-the-world flight of the American aviatrix.

“Most extensive search ever, they say. It’ll cost a mint.” Walter was torn between admiration for Earhart and disapproval of money wasted on foolishness.

Lucile was thinking that now she wouldn’t have to listen to endless news reports about dear old Amelia Earhart, but then she checked herself. She ought to be ashamed. Stories about Earhart were distractions from the far more important and sobering news accounts of ominous Nazi Party activities in Eastern Europe. Amelia Earhart was an American celebrity, a pretty face who was a welcome diversion from depressing and alarming world developments. She was only a blip on the news radar. Adolf Hitler, however, was in the news nearly every day. *Time* magazine had splashed a huge photo of the fuehrer on their cover: MAN OF THE YEAR, the popular publication declared. Lucile remembered the alarm she had felt upon reading of Kristallnacht, the deliberate destruction of over 7,000 Jewish businesses, thousands of Jews killed, rumors that Nazi concentration camps – death camps – were being built all over eastern Europe. Donald told her it made him sick to think of the destruction of all those homes and businesses while he was struggling to build just one of each. Families - like those all around them – had been wantonly, senselessly destroyed. What took endless time, effort, and money to build or grow could be destroyed in an instant. War made no sense to Donald or Lucile. When Lucile had first seen the headline: Kristallnacht, she had thought what a beautiful

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word, and then had been shocked and disgusted by the descriptions of senseless vandalism and the murder of innocent people. Why? Anti-Semitism bewildered her; it made no sense. Was Nazi tyranny and outrage so far away as not to cause them harm?

Lucile ate her poached egg and heard Donald laugh. It lifted her spirits in spite of herself. Donald enjoyed the distraction of stories about the wealthy lunatic aviator, Howard Hughes, and laughed out loud when he read about Wrong-Way Corrigan, who ended up in Ireland, flying out of Brooklyn the opposite way from his planned flight to California. Donald got a kick out of the rumor that it had been a planned flight to Ireland all along. Some news story reported that Corrigan couldn't obtain official papers he needed to land in Ireland, and so he planned to "accidentally" make the mistake. The results, whatever the truth might be, were fame and adventure. Donald had to hand it to Corrigan. There was a guy who could turn a mistake into success, or at least celebrity.

After Christmas festivities subsided, Donald took Lucile to see "A Christmas Carol" at the Jewel Theater in Jamestown. The movie based on Charles Dickens' classic tale of Scrooge was a big hit. His epic conversion from miser to philanthropist appealed to everyone. They had Christmas with The Hines Family and then another with the Ginns. Sherrill was the hands-down center of attention at The Ginns' celebration with his amiable personality and quick wit. How time flew! He was six years old and delighted with his gifts: electric train accessories, clever building sets, books for children, and his favorite, a Gene Autrey recording. The lively nephew loved the Singing Cowboy. Opening presents was fun, but watching Sherrill open his gifts, making clever remarks about each one was more fun for the adults than their own presents. After everyone had finished their gift-opening chores, Donald invited Sherrill to play checkers. The boy

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happily sat across from his Uncle Donald and challenged him bravely. He protected his kings, kept them in the back row as long as he could, watched carefully for openings to jump Donald's black checkers and almost beat him. Sherrill thanked him for the game and dashed off to play with his electric train. Donald pulled out his harmonica and played some Irish tunes. Lucile had become more tolerant of her husband's eccentricities, but she wished he'd learn some new Christmas songs. The festive atmosphere prevailed, nevertheless, and at last with a break in the animated conversation, Don decided he should let Lucile's family in on their good news.

Lucile was shy about making their announcement, but Donald boldly pronounced: "L-Lucile's having a b-baby in September. We're m-mighty happy." The family congratulated them, and Lucile, feeling reticent, let Don do the talking. "It sure would be d-d-dandy if w-we had a son, like Sherrill here, but we'll b-be happy whoever turns up!" No one knew quite what to say, and the silence was awkward. Sherrill said, "Say, Granddad, how about a game of Chinese checkers." Charlie got out the marbles, and they wore out the old Chinese checkerboard. Donald played "Old Dan Tucker" on his harmonica, and the mesmerizing electric train went around and around the track.

Lucile began to think of 1939 as the year that would never end. Her pregnancy was exhausting, as first pregnancies often are, but she was determined not to neglect any of her duties. Don continued to read the news to her: "Earthquake in Chile kills 30,000; Franco takes Barcelona; Franco invades and captures Madrid; the Supreme Court outlaws sit-down strikes." The news always left her feeling helpless. What could she do about a 450-ton meteorite hitting Pennsylvania or Hitler's Nazis taking over one nation after another? As long as Hitler didn't invade Jamestown, she didn't have time to think about

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it. In the spring, however, a story she read in the *Star* touched her heart. She had loved Marian Anderson's voice from the first time she heard her sing over the radio. When she read that the Daughters of the American Revolution had forbidden her to sing in their Constitution Hall, she was stunned. It had barely registered with her that Marian Anderson was a black woman. So what? she thought indignantly. It lifted her spirits to read that Eleanor Roosevelt had arranged for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial and 75,000 showed up in the audience to hear her. She had been no big fan of Eleanor or FDR, but she had to admit that this raised her opinion of the first lady several notches. She pondered the mortifying memory of trying to prove one of her Ginn ancestor had been a captain in the American Revolution so she could join the DAR. She had given it up and forgotten about it, but now the recollection stung her. Ecclesiastes came to her mind: "Vanity, vanity..." She was glad now that she hadn't joined the DAR.

Donald was relentless in his work ethic, but Lucile insisted on her weekly trip to the beauty shop in Jamestown and her monthly relaxation with the CC Club held at various ladies' homes. It helped to fill the vacuum left in her social life after she resigned from her job in Indianapolis. When she went to CC Club, she was a part of her new community. It stimulated her mind. Especially during her pregnancy, the circle of ladies bolstered her spirits and gave her support as she struggled with her fears. What if the baby was deformed? What if it was stillborn? What if she had a miscarriage? What if she weren't a good mother? What if the baby was a girl and Donald was disappointed?

The June CC Club meeting was held at the home of Ruth Runyan, and Lucile was determined to attend, even though she was self-conscious about her expanding waistline and swollen ankles. Her pregnancy had gone well under the care of Dr. Schaaf, and she

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was feeling better after having had bouts of morning sickness back during the winter. Donald grumbled about her gadding about, but she had her hair done at Helen's that morning and was eager to see her friends. Another young married lady in Jamestown who was having a baby in August, Gladys Gladden, would be there. Gladys was bold, outspoken, always full of opinions and ready to express them. Lucile looked forward to talking with Gladys and harbored questions she planned to ask her. Lucile loved her mother dearly but feared she hadn't told her nearly enough about marriage and mothering in particular. She thought sardonically that there wasn't too much her mother could have foreseen about Donald, so she shrugged her shoulders and planned her day.

Lucile had made sure Donald had eaten a good breakfast, tried to listen as he read an alarming story about a ship, the SS St. Louis, turned away from Cuba, and then refused entrance to the U.S. It was a desperate effort to seek sanctuary for more than 900 Jews, fleeing Nazi oppression. The ship was forced to return to Europe. FDR had allegedly been willing to accept some of the passengers, but his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and influential southern Democrats had opposed any help for the foreign Jews. Donald was of the opinion that war was imminent and nobody could stop it. He stormed out, certain that the world was going to hell in a hand basket, and when he returned for lunch, Lucile was immaculately groomed, her black wavy hair in a state of perfection, and Donald's favorite meal waiting for him. She was off.

Ruth was what the community called a "character"; she loved to entertain and could talk the hide off an elephant. Her house was decked out in the latest fashion: new slip covers in shades of mauve and dark brown, lace curtains and heavy draperies to match, mahogany furniture with a large Philco radio and record player as a focal point.

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An impressive collection of LP records including opera and symphonies stood at either side of the “Victrola,” and a baby grand piano with the latest popular sheet music in the piano bench graced the airy corner of the large living room. Enormous ferns in oriental vases stood on either side of the piano. A copy of Leonardo DaVinci’s *The Last Supper* hung over the plush sofa. An abundance of sofa pillows and lacy doilies gave the room an air of oppressive luxury. The oriental carpet captured Lucile’s attention upon entering. Ruth fussed over her condition and urged her to sit in the most comfortable easy chair. Lucile couldn’t take her eyes off the carpet. It was too “busy” for her taste, and yet it seemed to capture the essence of tasteful decorating. The contrast between this elegant home out in the country up on a landscaped hill and her own modest rented house in town gave her a twinge of envy and jolt of inadequacy. Would she ever be able to “entertain” the way Ruth Runyan did? The ladies came in one after the other, each bringing in her own unique fragrance on the warm spring air, light laughter filling the hallway as Ruth welcomed each member effusively.

Gladys arrived in a flurry of breathless laughter. She’d had trouble starting her car, she said, and was sure she wouldn’t make the meeting, but here she was! She hurried over to Lucile, sat down next to her and began commiserating. “Lucile, you look wonderful. How do you do it? I look like the wrath of God. Even my maternity clothes don’t fit me any more. I’m simply miserable all the time.”

Lucile smiled at her voluble friend: “Gladys, you look healthy as a horse.”

Gladys laughed. “At least a horse doesn’t have to worry about maternity bras!”

Lucile got a kick out of Gladys and her brash talk. She marveled at her ability to make a joke of nearly anything. “When are you expecting? Soon, isn’t it?”

“Can’t be too soon for me. I feel like a hippo! It could be next month, but the doctor thinks I’ll carry the baby full term. He estimates the middle of August. Hope the weather is cooler than last August. Last summer I honestly thought I’d roast.”

“Oh, don’t you know it? It’s the humidity that kills me. I remember how hot it was during our wedding. That was a summer to make a person appreciate winter!”

Gladys laughed. “No, no, not me. Can’t stand winter, never could. Indiana winters are enough to send me South. Give me a warm beach and sunshine in January, and I’ll be happy as a pig in mud.”

Ruth interrupted to announce refreshments in the dining room, so the ladies gratefully filed into the sunny room through a wide arched entrance and expressed admiration at the lovely buffet, arranged in meticulous order with color-coordinated napkins, tablecloth, and centerpiece. She had baked an angelfood cake, serving it with strawberry topping and whipped cream. She had designated Corinne Huckstep to pour coffee and tea. Lucile hoped some day she’d be hosting the CC Club ladies in comparable style. Corinne had been the one to invite Lucile to join the community ladies club, and Lucile had felt as if she were one of the “elite” in joining; however, she had to admit she’d never known what “CC” stood for, just assumed it was similar to the Eastern Star or the DAR. Standing in dessert queue back of Esther Heady, she asked, just to make conversation, “Esther, you’d be the one to know this. What does CC stand for anyway?”

Esther worked for Dr. Schaaf and loved the club meeting relaxation. She had been one of the founding members and knew what a lark it had been from the beginning.

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They weren't affiliated with any national organization, were just a group of friends who needed an excuse to socialize and find relief from daily chores and stress. "Well, Lucile, it may be a real let-down to know that it stands for "congenial chatter," but we sort of keep that a club secret. It was a way to let members know they didn't have to worry about religious or political debates. We decided to make nothing mandatory. About the only given is dessert and tea or coffee or both. How are you feeling these days?"

"Why I'm doing just fine, thank you, Esther. Morning sickness is gone for now."

"Yes, it usually lasts only a few weeks at the beginning."

"Is it normal for my ankles to be swollen like this?"

"No, Ma'am, it isn't." Esther scolded. "You come into the office tomorrow, you hear?"

Lucile felt a twinge of alarm but made up her mind to enjoy the afternoon. Angel food cake was her favorite.

Nina Blake came over to sit by her and inquire after her condition. Nina lived just across the street from Lucile and Donald, and Lucile admired her ease in a crowd and her forgiving personality. She never felt as if Nina were judging her or trying to put her down. Nina lived in a spacious wood frame house with wrap-around porch on a corner lot across from the Methodist Church. Sitting and chatting on Nina's porch in the springtime was escape from any depressing news she and Donald might have discussed at breakfast. There was always a breeze, and the ancient trees sheltered songbirds that sang and chirped to each other in every season. Nina always had a mockingbird in residence, and the mourning doves sent their hollow, haunting calls out, reminding listeners that

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they shouldn't think all was well. The world was still filled with sadness and misery.

Nina asked: "What hospital are you planning on...you know... to have the baby?"

"Witham in Lebanon is closest, I think, and Dr. Schaaf is affiliated there."

"We're lucky in Jamestown to have attracted a doctor of his caliber," Nina said.

"Yes, he is wise as well as skilled. We're indebted to him."

Mabel called the ladies to order, and announced that Helen Walker had the monthly book review to present. To stimulate literary interest among the members, the CC Club ladies had voted to include a book review each month, perhaps to deflect any accusations that their club was frivolous or meaningless.

Helen had chosen *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck to review. She stood by the piano where she could refer to her notes. Lucile noticed that Helen was nervous, but her old friend could hide a case of nerves better than most.

"Ladies, Pearl Buck has been one of my favorite authors since her best-seller was released a few years back. *The Good Earth* is a novel about China. The main character is Wang Lung, a Chinese farmer who is simple, honest, and determined to maintain his harmony with the earth. His wife O'Lan is a typical, lower caste, submissive Chinese woman, who suffers terribly as their children are born and a drought ravages the land. They are driven from their farm into the city, where they survive by menial work and even begging. War breaks out, increasing their hardships but offering unexpected opportunities for wealth. O'Lan uncovers hidden jewels in an abandoned mansion, and they return to their former home to buy farm after farm, prospering but losing the values that had made them happy. Their sons become spoiled and rich, and O'Lan is scorned and replaced by a young, beautiful concubine after her husband neglects and rejects her.

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The image of O’Lan discarded and dying in a dark corner is heart-breaking. The portrayal of women in China, the shocking discrimination against women in that society, is the most disturbing aspect of the book. It just made me mad, I’ll tell you!

“It might be interesting to review Pearl Buck’s life as background. She was born in West Virginia, to a Presbyterian missionary couple, but they spent most of their lives in China. Pearl spoke both Chinese and English growing up in China. She was educated at an American college and married a young economist, John Lossing Buck. They had one daughter who was severely retarded, a victim of PKU. They named her Carol; she is in an American institution now. Pearl and her husband both taught at Nanking University and had to flee China in the 1920s after Americans had been killed during a war between Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalists and the Communists. War Lords were also involved, so it was very confusing and dangerous for Pearl and her family. American gunboats rescued The Bucks and brought them to America. The Bucks were divorced several years ago. In 1935 she married her publisher, Richard Walsh, so when she won the Nobel Prize last year they referred to her as “Mrs. Walsh”; her maiden name was Sydenstricker. I guess she decided she needed a name that was easier to spell and pronounce!” The ladies all laughed at this, and Helen, who had relaxed once she launched into her book review, smiled with them. “She also won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932. If you have not yet read Pearl Buck’s novel, I recommend it highly.”

Mrs. Walker sat down, relieved that it was over but mightily satisfied that her friends had listened intently and been duly edified. Lucile promised herself she would get Pearl Buck’s book and read it at her first opportunity. Maybe she could discuss it with Donald, who was intrigued by China, especially the 4000-mile-long Great Wall. He

told Lucile that he wanted to see it some day and walk as much of it as time and travel would allow. The June CC Club meeting had been a pleasant interlude, but newspapers were filled with news of the S.S. St. Louis and her ill-fated Jewish passengers. The ship had been denied entrance either to Cuba or to the U.S.A. and was headed back to Europe. W.W.II was coming at them like a locomotive with no brakes.

Donald looked forward to the Sunday afternoon dinners with his Ginn in-laws even more than before. The atmosphere was always congenial and relaxing - different from the troubled world he read about in the newspaper. It was a chance to get to know his nephew and increase his anticipation of a son of his own. Young Sherrill was in 2nd grade now and always full of fun. He was drawn to his Uncle Donald and offered to play checkers or show him the latest comic book he had acquired. *Superman* was his current interest; the American superhero appealed to his sense of honor and valor. The idea that Kent Clark was, in his ordinary life, a shy, awkward reporter who could, when danger flared up, turn into a superb, manly, super-strong hero stimulated Sherrill's active imagination. He eagerly read the comic book to Donald and made him laugh. School had just started again for the young 2nd grader, and enthusiasm for reading was high. Sherrill urged Uncle Donald to get out his harmonica and play a tune. Donald never had to be asked twice, and Sherrill appreciated his uncle's musical enthusiasm. Lucile and Thelma were delighted that Donald and Sherrill got along so well. It seemed to bode well for the future and reassured Lucile about their own chances for a "happy family."

Marion had taken a job as teller at the Lizton Bank and was working his way to any promotion that might offer itself to a likely, hard-working young man. His desire to join the Navy only increased with news of the German military invasion of Poland. He

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had been going out with Alice Jane Hughes, a beautiful girl from Brownsburg, who was worried that he would be in the U.S. Navy if and when the U.S. was drawn into the war. She had not encouraged his ambitions to join, but they were openly discussing the possibilities. It was September. Lucile was due to have the baby any time, and Marion was concerned that war would inevitably be a threat to the U.S. “The world can’t sit by and let Hitler’s Nazis take over Europe without a fight,” Marion said.

“But it isn’t America’s concern, is it? We need to tend to our own business and stay out of other countries’ conflicts.” Wayne offered.

“If this turns into a World War, how can we stand by and not defend our allies? Britain and France won’t be able to fight Nazi Germany without help.”

“You may be right, but we need to stay out of war if it’s possible.”

Lucile remembered how her heart sank as Donald read of Jews going to certain death and FDR’s refusal to help desperate refugees from Nazi Germany. She was biting her tongue but finally blurted out: “If Hitler plans to exterminate the Jews, where will he stop? My Jewish friends at work in the city don’t deserve to die.”

Thelma jumped in: “Hitler’s only taking advantage of prejudice and hate – and fear. I stopped listening to Father Coughlin on WIRE because he was starting to imply that Jews were to blame for the world’s problems. What is this world coming to?”

Sherrill piped up: “Send Superman over to Germany. He’d beat the Nazis!”

Wayne asked: “Son, what can a comic book hero do in the real world?”

“Superman is faster than an airplane, stronger than a locomotive. He’s the man of steel!” Sherrill’s eyes danced and his face lit up.

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Everyone laughed, but Marion was thinking hard about his decision to join the Navy. He was certain he should do the right thing for his country.

Ethel and Charlie were the quiet listeners, pondering the optimism of their son, taking heart in the innocent enthusiasm of their grandson, worried to death about the future and their part in a war.

“Have some more mashed potatoes, Donald. There’s plenty.”

Early the morning of September 23rd Lucile began to have back pains. Donald went off to work, his head filled with jobs due and overdue. She got up and went on with her usual routine, finished the dishes and decided she’d call Dr. Schaaf. The back pains were coming sporadically. She’d been watching her salt intake since her last visit when Dr. Schaaf had alarmed her with his negative report on the toxemia causing swollen ankles and other signs of retention of water. She hesitated to call Donald since she wasn’t sure whether she was in labor or not. When he came home for lunch, she didn’t eat anything, but while he ate his sandwich, she told him she might be about to have the baby. He finished quickly and drove her in to Lebanon to the hospital where she was admitted. Her so-called back pains seemed to move around, and she was uncomfortable when the doctor arrived that afternoon. Dr. Schaaf, after a thorough examination, told her to try to relax, that the baby was on its way. He left, and she languished into the night, the pains coming closer and closer together. Finally the nurse staying with her called the doctor early September 24th, and a baby girl was born. They named her Eileen Joanne, names Donald could never spell correctly, but a middle name that stuck and that Donald mangled into “Joannie Squirrel”!

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Their house in the country on their new farm was nearly halfway finished, but Charlie Dale had been so busy that he had to be prodded to put the roof on and get the porches done. The brickwork was completed the following week, and while Lucile rested in the hospital with the new baby girl, the bungalow gradually took shape. The new mother was happy to be back in Jamestown in their familiar house there after the customary ten-day stay in the hospital. Neighbors brought casseroles and made utter fools of themselves over the baby. The parents loved the attention, and the baby thrived with the conscientious care. “Are you sorry the baby wasn’t a boy, Donald?” she asked.

“N-No, n-not for a m-minute. She’s g-g-gonna be a corker!” Lucile breathed a sigh of relief. She worried too much. She felt a twinge of guilt though; her worries were more about her own insecurities, when she knew the world was on the verge of possible destruction. Not only was the newspaper full of horrifying stories about the war, but she was doubtful about the wisdom of bringing a child into such a world. What if the war reached the United States? It wasn’t impossible. Rumors of new, devastating weapons were rampant. What a heavy responsibility to take care of a child.

The war in Europe raged on, and Don found business was booming, more demanding than ever. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, they destroyed not only the U.S.S. Arizona and over 1,100 American sailors, but also several U.S. battleships and hundreds of U.S. planes. FDR declared war on Japan the following day, and young men all over the U.S. signed up to serve in the armed forces to defeat The Axis Powers. One of those young men was Marion. He was of conscription age, and his determination to join the U.S. Navy made good sense to him.

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When he shipped out, the whole community came over during the day of his departure to wish him well. Alice Jane was stoical and supportive. She knew in her heart he'd be coming home. At any rate, it was clear that Marion was doing the right thing, and she was proud of him. Ethel and Charlie were philosophical: "Now Marion, you be sure to write to us regular. We're going to miss you." Charlie added: "Your Mom and I aren't much for writing letters, but this'll be an exception. Be careful, Son."

Marion was handsome in his Navy whites and reassured his family and friends that he'd be back. The war'd be over just as soon as the Yanks had a chance to show 'em what real fighting was. Marion would never have said this, of course, but the pervasive belief was that "the Yanks are coming" offered hope to the free world. The popular songs, including "Over There" and "Don't Sit under the Apple Tree," were anthems to American optimism, a tribute to American servicemen and women and their part in the 2nd world war. Few could comprehend the terrible toll the war would take on the world.

Donald and Lucile taught their little daughter the skills of rationing, saving, making do: she thought it was fun to squeeze the oleo to distribute the yellow food coloring, although she thought it didn't look – or taste - anything like butter. She liked the idea that they were saving the butter for the troops. She helped her mother flatten tin cans, cut up rags, and listened intently when her mother told her about this war of women warriors: WACS, WAVES, and Rosie the Riveter, who did the manufacturing jobs so crucial to the war effort. She learned the popular songs on the radio that her mother hummed, and she created an imaginary playmate, Marjorie, who could carry on quite a conversation. Donald liked to toss his daughter up in the air and, unfortunately, thought it was funny to tickle her and scare her, jumping out from behind a door or allowing her

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to experiment with electricity and get shocked. Donald laughed uproariously even when these practical jokes made her cry. He paid attention to her curious personality, however, and enjoyed teaching her new skills. They made an odd pair. In the summer he taught his daughter to appreciate dandelions, never called them weeds. All his life Donald defended the right of dandelions to flourish. He liked to play chase in the grass in summer. She loved the new-wood smell of their house on the farm. Years later, she remembered vividly, standing on the platform of the partially finished cellar stairs, holding her mother's hand, looking down into the shadowy, mysterious basement. She recollected thinking that must be where the monsters lived.

The house was finished at last, and Walter volunteered to bring over his mower and mow the high weeds to create the beginnings of a lawn. Don and Lucile were grateful for Walter's help. Their daughter loved Uncle Walter and watched him mowing as his tractor methodically circled the field of high weeds in front of the new house. Joanne was alarmed to hear him shouting, "Rattlesnakes!" He leaped down off the tractor with a gunny sack in hand, captured the whole nest of snakes and disposed of them, but her mother had a real antipathy to snakes and wanted nothing to do with them. She learned to use a hoe as her weapon of choice. The black snakes that Lucile killed mercilessly with the hoe were harmless and would have kept the rat and mice population down, but she was adamant in her battle to rid the farm of these devils incarnate. After all, there was that story in Genesis, and anyway they gave her the creeps. She became an expert in snake destruction: chopping the snake's unoffending head off and flinging the snake to the wind.

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Lucile was determined to teach her little daughter the domestic skills. She taught her to sift flour, stir batter, measure ingredients, and Joanne learned to appreciate frugal habits. Since W.W. II encouraged saving and made oleo margarine a popular substitute for butter, Joanne had the privilege of mixing the orange dye with the inedible-looking shortening in its plastic bag. Her other jobs were to paste green stamps into their book and help smash tin cans for collecting. Rationing was a way of life. As Lucile hung sheets on the long clotheslines in back of the house, she sang “Hard Times, Come Again No More”; the chorus embedded itself in the little girl’s memory: “It’s a song, a sigh of the weary...” Joanne associated the old Stephen Foster ballad with the clean smell of towels, socks, underwear, coveralls, shirts, and sheets snapping in the breeze.

As spring heated up into a full-blown Indiana summer, Joanne discovered the joys of exploring the woods and found a buttercup carpet through a grove of trees near the double crib. That was her spot, a magical place where there was no shouting and no tears. It had a stately entrance of tall saplings and a leafy ceiling. She loved the smell of corncocks and learned quickly to climb the wooden ladder into the hayloft over the cribs. The smell of hay was even more exotic, and she loved to lie in the hay and watch the birds fly in and out, making a nest or looking for food. Most of all, Donald’s daughter loved thunderstorms. She wanted to run out and play in the rain, but Lucile warned the little girl not to stand with her nose pressed against the window. During one memorable summer storm they watched ground lightning roll and snap across the field and hit the window. A shiver of delight and a thrill of danger was the girl’s response. She was Donald’s daughter, all right.

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The tendency of Don's daughter to stray and explore came to an unexpected crisis one sunny afternoon when Joanne figured out how to climb over the wooden stile, up to the top, then down the other side one step at a time bypassing the wire fence with the barbed wire on the top row. Having landed on solid earth, she looked up at the blue sky with clouds like cotton wisps, happily toddled over the grassy clods toward curious large animals, similar in her toddler's perceptions to Uncle Walter's horses or Aunt Mozella's collie dog. Innocently she laughed at the huge shape running straight for her as her mother screamed, leaped over the stile, snatched the child from the onrushing boar, the murderous male hog intent on demolishing the small human intruder. Bewildered, Joanne felt terror only through her mother's fear.

Once in awhile, Lucile would take the bus into Indianapolis for a shopping afternoon, taking Joanne with her. The little girl liked the excitement of the trip into the big city, but her short legs couldn't keep up with her mother's quick-stepping shopping gait. Joanne had to take three rapid steps to her mother's one stride, and at one point, in L.S. Ayres she lost her mother. Total panic overcame the child. Looking around, bewildered, she began to cry. A kindly lady took her hand and stayed with her until Lucile returned to the spot at the top of the escalator. The girl learned about the kindness of strangers but never learned to like shopping. Her mother, on the other hand, was an expert. They stopped in to see Thelma, who had returned to work in an L.S. Ayres office, and they all went to lunch in the tea room. That made the trip worthwhile, Joanne thought - that and the delicious aromas that lingered around certain counters in the ladies' departments. She also loved the texture of the Ayres and Blocks shopping sacks, enjoyed carrying them for her mother. The smell of newness was intoxicating. The best, in the

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girl's opinion, was the Circle, the excitement of looking up to the top of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, walking around it, admiring the flower beds and listening for the trolley clang. The big electric cars were slightly scary with the sparks flying from the live wires overhead, connected by metal rods that swung the long trolley cars around corners with a jerk and a quick straightening, but Donald's daughter watched in fascination as the trolley system transported more people than she dreamed existed. It took her breath away to see so many men, women, and children who seemed to know what to do and where to go. After her scare at Ayers, she held onto her mother's hand.

Just as Donald loved visiting Charlie and Ethel Ginn, Joanne quickly learned to look forward to visits to her Grandma and Granddad Ginn with eager impatience. She liked the neat white house with the screened-in porch, the glider and porch swing waiting for her to set them in motion. She marveled at the sunroom's bright welcome, Grandma Ginn's sewing room with the wicker button box full of endless varieties of buttons. Joanne could sit for hours on the window seat looking at buttons or shells from another box of treasures, beautiful rocks her mother and aunts had collected, souvenirs from the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. There was a huge key with mysterious writing on it. Was it a key to the city? Could it unlock a castle or palace? Even more fun was staying overnight, listening to the sleepy ticking of Granddad's wall clock that he wound faithfully every night before they went to bed. Grandma Ginn, sitting in the creaking wooden rocker, would take down her long white hair she wore in a bun, give Joanne the big comb, and let her comb her hair. Since Donald had built a modern bathroom with indoor plumbing, Joanne found the Ginn outhouse exotic and fascinating. In winter, the trip out through the backdoor, down the walkway to the outhouse was frigid, but the

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wooden two-seater was spotlessly clean, never smelled bad, and always had plenty of paper. Granddad Ginn had installed a linoleum floor and kept fresh lime in generous quantities. He also kept the kitchen basin full of clean water. Joanne loved the smell of their Camay soap. The combination of that sweet odor with grilled ham steaks, biscuits, butterbeans, gravy, and stewed cinnamon apples filled the girl with joy. The wood stoves in kitchen and parlor lent a warm fragrance that infused the little house with the aroma of acceptance and love. She thought how fortunate her father was to have this family as well as his own Hines clan. The Ginns knew how to enjoy life in its simplicity.

Donald enjoyed giving Joanne rides on the tractor, teaching her to hoe weeds, feed the livestock, talk to the pigs, and hammer nails. She decided she was his son. Her mother sometimes objected to Donald's determination to teach their daughter farming skills, but it kept the peace to allow it without objection. Since her father insisted on calling her Joannie Squirrel, she thought it only natural that he gave every new little pig a name: Susie, Pete, Squiggly, Spot, Fred, Maggie – even a deformed piglet born without a proper nose got his own name. Then Johnny-Without-a-Nose became Don's favorite; the pig would come running when he saw Don coming. He'd snort, beg to be scratched, roll over and cavort, not having the faintest idea that he was a hideous looking animal. He knew he had a secure place in Don's heart. Lucile still worried that Donald might think she had failed by not producing a son, but she watched from the kitchen window as Joanne toddled after him. Donald, laughing loudly, swung his daughter into the air and around and around as she shrieked with the thrill of centrifugal force. Lucile figured if she could survive the worry, marriage might turn out to be worth the trouble.

The most exciting event in the daughter's early years was Donald's cousin's wedding. Marjorie Pratt and her good friend, Edna Bowen, her fiancé's sister, had planned a double wedding at Old Union country church. The day was spectacular. Spring was outdoing itself in a million shades of green, warm breezes, brilliant sunshine, and colorful flowers. The brides were so beautiful that Joanne couldn't take her eyes off them. The organ began playing a stately processional. They each paced serenely down one of the two aisles in the curved sanctuary, both wearing white and carrying spring flowers cascading down from bouquets. The little girl was fascinated by Marjorie's glorious, long auburn hair. She thought she'd give anything to have hair like that. She hated the monthly trips to Harry Curry's Barbershop in Lizton to have her ugly, poker-straight, mouse-brown hair cut. Her father and mother nudged her to listen to the minister, so she made an effort to be good. The old church smelled like wood and varnish. Even the pull-apart cardboard fans, donated by the Porter Funeral Home and the Jamestown Hardware Store, smelled heady and ancient as if they'd sat forever in the rack built onto the back of the pew. Her father was dressed in his Sunday suit, even wore a tie, and her mother looked as elegant as the brides in the green suit she loved to wear for special occasions.

After the formal ceremony, endless to the little girl, they lined up to throw rice at the couples and talk with the neighbors. Joanne looked around outside the old church; cornfields, newly planted, in every direction, a spot of woods here and there breaking the monotony of the fence rows, topped by barbed wire, dusty county roads meandering away towards Jamestown and Lebanon. She took deep breaths, loving the fresh air and smell of blossoms from the blooming trees in the cemetery in back of the church. She

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wondered if there was a chance she'd ever be a bride. She frowned and wrinkled her nose, trying to imagine a bride with short, straight, mousy hair. It was hopeless.

Chapter 17
War at Home and Abroad

Don puts up a calendar of winking Betty Grable.
Lucy gets Don's tax work and covers the dining room table.

Joanne must care for sister Donna. She loves the little dickens.
Ring learns a painful lesson: why he should not chase those chickens.

Swimming trips; Guernsey shakes; school bus rides are neat.
Third daughter Marjorie arrives. This beautiful family's complete.

* * *

June faded into July, and then August. Donald was finally moving his business out to a corner lot of his farm facing busy Highway 136, the section of the farm he figured was the best location for his garage. It had taken all summer to move his tools after having arranged the new garage to suit his needs. Lucy, as Don liked to call her, insisted on helping to plan the office, since she would be spending work time there. She had definite ideas about arranging it. The oak roll-top desk was against the inside wall with a large, interior window, allowing the busy bookkeeper, Lucy, to look out at the work area and customer entrance. A fat red Coke machine stood seductively just outside the office door against the front wall. Thick auto parts books were on a shelf against the outer wall, under the windows, and a pin-up calendar, the object of lively debate, was hanging on the wall facing every customer who came in to have work done. These popular advertisements with the latest voluptuous, swimsuit-clad beauty gracing each month's page annoyed Lucile. She argued that they were offensively inappropriate and had no place on the wall of a family business. Don and Wesley could see no harm in the calendar, and so it stayed, for awhile. Since the war was uppermost in everyone's mind,

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the patriotic undertone of the calendar justified the scantily clad girls in the minds of the American mechanics.

Time came for quarterly taxes. The dining table was piled with bills, order slips, receipts, tax forms, Donald's work handkerchiefs, paper clips, his pocket notebooks, and a general mess. Lucile worked non-stop until she had finished the taxes. Expecting their 2nd baby, she was drained of energy and patience. When he came slamming in the back door wanting his supper, as she was untrained in the art of profanity, she simply told him to make himself a bologna sandwich. Joanne wanted to help; she could sense calamity threatening, but she dropped the mustard bottle and couldn't reach the bread. She and her daddy ate supper, and Lucile was blue, had no appetite, and wanted to lie down. She went to bed early, making sure Joanne was tucked in with her tufted blanket over her, pulled up to her chin the way she liked it. She told her mother about a recurring dream she had: four black-clad witches were playing cards and cackling ominously. Lucile was baffled; nobody in the family played cards, and although the Disney movie they had seen could account for the witches, why were they playing cards? She sometimes thought her daughter was lonely, even strange, but maybe a companion - a brother or sister - would help.

The baby was due in March, and the doctor had ordered Lucile to rest with her feet elevated. However, she had to spend a few hours every day in the garage office, bringing Donald's books up to date. She walked in, glaring at Betty Grable with those great legs that Lucile knew she'd never have. It wasn't fair. She admitted to herself that it was foolish and unimportant compared to the deadly war, but as she tried to decipher Donald's scrawls and put figures in order in the record books, she decided to act. She

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ignored the pin-up calendar until she had finished her work; then she stared back at Grable's flirtatious, come-hither wink, took it down, rolled it up, and no one ever asked what happened to the calendar.

Lucile told Donald it was important to introduce his neighbors to their new business on the corner. She insisted they plan an open house and decided Halloween would be an ideal time for the event. She thought children would enjoy scary-for-fun decorations, maybe even a "haunted house" theme. She recruited Joanne to help her rig orange and black crepe paper streamers with lots of pumpkins, some with jack o'lantern faces, shocks of dry cornstalks from their fields, fake giant spider webs, bats, and white sheet ghosts. They baked and decorated sugar cookies and made hot cider in a big pot in the office. They had advertised the open house in Mr. Hiller's Jamestown Press and placed posters in the Standard station and the banks in Jamestown and Lizton.

Halloween evening was cool and clear. Farmers and townies from Hendricks and Boone Counties came with their families to celebrate the new Hines Garage. Donald and Lucile were pleased to see so many children among their guests. Most of Joanne's young cousins were there, Eddie and Richard finding mischief behind every spook and goblin. Eddie jumped from behind one of the witches, nearly scaring Joanne out of her wits, knocking over the witch and her broom, laughing his horselaugh. She vowed to get even, plotting with Cousin Jim to drop a big fake spider onto his head from the elevated storage deck over the office. When no adults were looking, Jim and Joanne climbed the wooden ladder onto the platform overhead. They hid behind boxes, waiting for an opportunity. Meanwhile the adults were drinking hot cider, trading gossip and insults, and savoring the fall weather. Lucile was pouring cider, handing out cookies, and hoping the children

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didn't tumble into mischief too close to a prospective customer. She looked up to see Flossie Foster, one of the local, self-appointed aristocrats, walk through the door with Dessie Huddleston, sister of the only real celebrity they knew: Adele Davis, the nutrition expert and cookbook author. Flossie thrived on social occasions to flaunt her fashionable wardrobe and garrulous sociability. Lucile greeted them warmly, offered refreshments: "How have you been, Flossie? It's so good to see you, Dessie. We are honored that you've come to our open house."

Flossie gushed: "Oh, Lucile, you must be so proud of your husband. He's built his new garage on such a prime location. So you'll be farming too? My, my, what a busy life you must lead! And did I hear that you're expecting a baby? No one would ever suspect. How DO you stay so slender? Now you take good care of yourself."

Lucile knew Dessie had married a farmer from the area and continued her musical pursuits. Dessie was an accomplished classical pianist. Lucile wondered if Dessie ever felt frustrated and lonely. She asked: "How are you doing on the farm, Dessie? Do you hear from Adele much?"

Dessie smiled: "No, I'm afraid Adele travels when she isn't writing or experimenting with some herb or new recipe. We haven't seen her for months."

Flossie was looking around for friends. She grabbed Dessie's arm and called, "Look, there's Bernice. We have to say hello to her. Well, Lucile, good luck!" Off Flossie went, just as Jim was ready to drop the big spider. Eddie had been heading their way, but veered off to avoid running into Flossie and Dessie. The spider landed exactly where Jim had planned, but Flossie was the unexpected target. It landed on her gloved hand, looking as real and slimy as any kid would want. Flossie shrieked and flung the

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spider away, bumping Dessie and knocking over another witch. Jim muffled his laughter and warned Joanne to stay down. They hid until it was safe to climb down the ladder. He retrieved his excellent spider when nobody was looking and considered it a success.

The War was raging, but optimism continued to be high. Uncle Sam posters were everywhere, and patriotism was mandatory. The winter was bitter cold, and rationing reminded everyone that winning the war required sacrifices from all Americans. The Ginns had a festive dinner to celebrate Marion's leave and to provide an occasion for Marion and Alice Jane to announce their wedding date. Joanne was excited to have a chance to be around her Ginn uncles, aunts, cousin Sherrill, and Granddad and Grandma. Uncle Wayne never failed to have chewing gum for the kids. Juicy Fruit or Beechnut or Blackjack: it was a treat the kids loved. When she came through the screen door with her parents, she spotted Sherrill reading a comic book, and Uncle Wayne came over with his Dentyne and a big grin. She thanked him and closed her eyes to appreciate the hot, spicy burst of sweet flavor when she bit down on the gum. Donald sat on the sofa beside Thelma, and Lucile went in to see if she could help her mother with dinner. The little girl stared at the young man in his stiff, white, immaculate uniform. Was that her Uncle Marion? He looked so much older. His fiancée, Alice Jane, she thought, was even more beautiful than the bride with the auburn hair. She was fascinated by Alice's pageboy hairdo and her perfect glowing complexion. She realized she was staring, so she went over to ask Sherrill how he liked school. "For something you have to do, it's OK," he said. "If I have homework, I listen to Spike Jones and that eases the pain." He laughed. She marveled at her cousin's ability to make a clever remark about anything. He was so witty. She could listen to him talk all day: that wry, forgiving, humorous tenor.

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“Who’s Spike Jones?” Joanne asked.

“Oh, he’s a singer – well, no, not exactly. He plays instruments – well, not really instruments, more like lids and horns and whistles and dogs barking...you have to hear it for yourself! Next time you come over with your folks, I’ll play a Spike Jones record, and you’ll hear it for yourself. You have to be a little crazy I guess.”

The whole family wanted Marion to talk about the war, but he was never one to enjoy talking about himself, and the war seemed to be so far away. He assured his folks that the Allies were winning though and hoped the war would be over soon. He said he’d seen The Andrews Sisters and Bob Hope at a show put on for the military. “The guys like Patty and LaVerne and Maxine, but we all look forward to Bob Hope and his jokes that always end up poking fun at himself.” Donald envied Marion’s experiences in the military. Don had flat feet and a family, so he wouldn’t have any opportunity to be involved in the war at all. Wayne had his Marine training, and his Uncle Milford was Navy. Donald still longed for adventure and excitement, speed and danger. Somehow his ordinary civilian life paled, even with his farm and business. “L-Looks like General Eisenhower h-h-has been made Allied Commander. They got j-jet fighter planes n-now t-t-too. W-We m-m-might win this w-w-war yet.”

Marion said: “Yeah, but the Nazis are still too strong. Hitler declared Total War.”

Thelma asked about Lucile’s health and sympathized with her morning sickness and lack of energy. “Any trouble with toxemia this time, Lucile?”

“Not yet. I’m checking my blood pressure, and I watch what I eat.”

Lucile thought it was curious how different this pregnancy was from her first. The newness wears off quickly, she thought, but she was grateful for the comfortable

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acceptance and absence of alarm. She hoped this birth would be routine. Planning ahead, she arranged to have Joanne stay with Donald's sister Goldia. She had observed Joanne's admiration of Mary Lee's musical talent and hoped the older cousin's good example would turn her tomboy daughter into a little lady. The weekend they drove up to northern Indiana to visit the Siedentops, March had come in with the weather lions. High winds, mud, dull skies, and a threat of rain dampened everyone's spirits. Lucile was uncomfortable in the car. The baby was due any day, but she never liked to complain. Anyway, Donald saved his best moods for their road trips, and she looked forward to seeing her sister-in-law and family. By the time they pulled into the driveway leading to the farmhouse, the sun was out, and Lucile felt fine.

Expectantly, the little girl followed her parents into the farmhouse. Joanne took a deep breath; the kitchen smelled immaculately clean. Why did every house smell so different from other homes? Did Aunt Goldia use exotic spices? Did Mary Lee wash with a special soap? Did Uncle Walter Siedentop farm in work clothes made from unique denim, unusual materials? After dinner Mary Lee played her latest piano solo. It was an impossibly flashy and magnificent tour de force. Before she sat down at the piano bench, Mary Lee announced, I will play "The Saber Dance," by Russian composer Khachaturian. Her prodigy cousin pounded the chords furiously at a pace so fast that Joanne felt as if she couldn't listen fast enough to keep up. The beautiful baby grand made her mouth water. If she had a piano that magnificent, would she learn to play that impressively? She knew well enough that it took a lot more than owning a lovely piano, but this may have been her first experience of coveting, one of the seven deadliest sins.

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Donald had to take Lucile back to get her rest, and his work never left his mind for long, so they left Stark County in a March drizzle before dark. Joanne had an exciting week. She enjoyed her cousin's company and envied her flawless fair complexion and blond braids. She discovered a magical place to play with her cousin's paper dolls almost as wonderful as the woods back home. While Mary Lee played piano, Joanne lay on her stomach under the piano listening to the music and letting her imagination run wild. In the afternoons Mary Lee took her down a long lane with a fence on both sides to show her their haunted house. It had been the home of a victim of a senseless murder, Mary Lee said, and had a real ghost that might appear if only they had the courage to stay overnight. The old house was used to store bags of grain and bales of hay and had a musty odor like wet burlap. The air was filled with dust motes, and when they climbed the rickety, wooden ladder into the hay loft, the cousins vowed they would spend a night in the haunted house before Joanne had to go back home, but every night they were too exhausted to do anything but fall into bed.

One afternoon before Donald came back to get her, Joanne was troubled by an incongruous incident. She didn't know what had started the argument, but her Aunt Goldia and Mary Lee were screaming at each other. The loud, angry exchange frightened Joanne, and she remembered feeling relieved that her Uncle Walter had not witnessed the fight. She had decided Uncle Walter was kind and good, and he was handsome besides. The peace that had been shockingly disturbed that afternoon should remain undisturbed. She had heard her own father shout like that and remembered how it disturbed her. She thought to herself you never get used to that. When Mary Lee's sister Lenore was born, the atmosphere changed. Lenore was witty, light-hearted, and bright, as was Mary Lee.

The Siedentop sisters went on to pursue brilliant careers: Mary Lee as a professor and musician, Lenore as an attorney.

Donald and Lucile's second child was born with less difficulty than the first, for which Lucile was grateful. They named her Donna Mae. Joanne was eager to help with the baby and made over her, introducing the baby to her imaginary playmate. One night Joanne slipped as she went to talk to her new sister, knocking the new baby onto the floor. Donna Mae screamed, and Joanne was terrified. The parents, frustrated and alarmed, picked Joanne up by her wrists, one on each side, and gave her a royal thrashing in the doorway between the kitchen and dining room. The baby was crying; Joanne was shrieking, Lucile was nearly beside herself, and Donald was laughing! This was too much, Lucile thought, everything he does is bizarre and inappropriate. The laughter, however, helped Don retain his sanity. He could see that the baby was all right. He thought how fragile the human brain is, how insubstantial existence is. Joanne went to her room to nurse her wounded pride. All she ever deserved was a spanking. She was certain she was a hopeless klutz, an awkward, clumsy oaf with no chance of becoming lovely and elegant, like Daddy's cousin Marjorie Bowen or the charming young woman, Alice Jane, who would soon become her Aunt Alice. Even her new sister had graceful hands and blue eyes and curly hair. Donna Mae was so beautiful with those cerulean eyes. Joanne had analyzed her own. Her eyes were the color of overcooked spinach.

Another wedding! The ceremony, as most were during the war, was simple and subdued. Marion had to finish his last round of service on the ship he'd been assigned, but when he returned, Alice had furnished their cute little house just down the street from Ethel and Charlie's place, and Marion gratefully resumed his work at the State Bank of

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Lizton. In the fall Alice Jane discovered she was expecting. She wasn't one to complain of aches and pains, so her winter ordeal went fairly smoothly. June brought late tulips, hibiscus, hollyhocks, and roses climbing over fences and up walls, crape myrtle, violets, begonias, and Leslie Anne! Their first child was a healthy girl. The name Marion and Alice chose suited the lovely, unique baby perfectly. Donald and Lucile left Joanne and Donna Mae with Ethel and Charlie in Lizton, while they visited Alice Jane in the hospital in Indianapolis. The new mother was resting, so they headed down to the nursery to see the exciting arrival. Marion was beaming, a secret smile on his face and twinkle in his eye. They marveled at the beautiful little girl with her thick, dark hair. She slept serenely during all the waving and smiling through the large window to the maternity ward nursery. Donald admired the dedication of the nurses who cared for the new-born infants as if they were second mothers. One of the nurses picked up Leslie Anne and held her, wide-eyed, for the visitors to admire. He could have sworn he heard mellow, melodious music. Wasn't that a marimba? What on earth would a marimba be doing in a hospital?

Before Donna Mae was born, Donald decided to get a dog. He figured every farm should have a dog and remembered how he had loved Sarge when he was a boy. He heard about a neighbor whose dog's litter of puppies needed homes and brought one home. The Collie puppy was a round, furry, auburn ball of fun. They named her "Ring" for the white collie marking around her neck. Joanne fell in love with the little dog instantly, and the sentiment was mutual. The dog followed Joanne around from morning to night; she ran off only to chase chickens. Donald knew what had to be done. He had Lucile kill a chicken, which she was used to doing at least once a week anyway. She would grab the chicken by the legs, swing it over her head with a hoe nearby, slam it hard

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onto the ground, flip the hoe over the chicken's neck, step on the hoe handle and jerk the chicken hard, then fling it away to flop and bleed to death. Joanne finally grew accustomed to the trauma of this ritual, but she had no preparation for what was to follow this time. Her father took the dead chicken, tied it around Ring's neck, and every time the dog went for the chicken, Donald swatted the dog with a rolled-up newspaper. This went on into the evening, with Joanne in tears, and Ring determined to "get" the chicken. At last she lay down exhausted, with her head on her paws, the bloody chicken like the ancient mariner's albatross. Donald went over and gently patted Ring's head, untied the disgusting carcass from around the dog's neck, and buried it. Joanne was uneasy, but the Collie never again tried to kill a chicken.

Donald read about the war every morning in the *Star* as Lucile got breakfast. He read aloud about the Soviet Army liberating the death camp at Auschwitz. He read that the Allies had bombed Dresden and a firestorm had followed destroying the historic, ancient, once-magnificent city. He read about the Battle of Iwo Jima and showed Lucile a news photograph of Princess Elizabeth in her snappy British Army uniform. The girl who would become Queen Elizabeth II had joined the Army and was serving as a military driver. He read that the Allies had liberated Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, and the Americans had liberated Ohrdruf, one of the many death camps rarely heard of. When FDR died, the country mourned, even his political enemies grieved. In Indiana the grief spread when word came that Ernie Pyle, the beloved journalists who had put a human face on the bewildering war, had been killed. Donald made a point of visiting Dana, Indiana, to see for himself where Pyle had grown up. The *Star* ran a graphic story of the liberation of Dachau by the Americans the end of April. It made Lucile sick and

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triggered severe depression in Donald that he fought for days. It should have helped, he thought, to read that Hitler had died, but rumors flying around about his alleged escape and German propaganda that he had died valiantly in battle gave Donald a headache and sent his ulcer into a fiery flare-up. After the British Army liberated Mandalay, Burma, Donald sang “On the Road to Mandalay” and couldn’t get the tune out of his head for a week. He whipped out his harmonica and played “It’s a Long Way to Tippararee” just to replace the insidious melody with something else.

Lizton celebrated V-E Day as vigorously and joyously as the rest of the nation. Tens of thousands crowded into the Circle in nearby downtown Indianapolis to cheer and give hugs and kisses to the lucky uniformed servicemen who happened to be in that city. The full horror of the Holocaust, revealed as the concentration camps were liberated, was overshadowed by eager celebrations of victory. Indignation and outrage at Nazi atrocities too quickly faded into the past. Controversy lingered after FDR died, Truman took office, and the atomic bomb dropped by the U.S. pilot on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, shocked the world. The 2nd atomic bomb destroyed Nagasaki but allegedly saved thousands – maybe millions - of Allied soldiers, sailors, and marines. Families mourned the war dead, but when figures were released by the nation’s newspapers, the U.S. was grieving with their allies around the world: the Soviet Union, for example, had suffered 20.6 million deaths in W.W. II. Although the U.S.A. had suffered “only” 500,000 dead, the slaughter was sobering, and the nation breathed the air of peace, grateful that, in the words of the popular song, “it was over, over there.”

When Donald had trouble sleeping, he would go down to the shop and work on a car or truck. His sleepwalking subsided, partly because he had so little opportunity for a

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good night's sleep. Road calls were not unusual. The telephone would ring in the middle of the night, and Lucile would answer: "Where are you broken down?" Then she would hand the telephone receiver to Donald who assured the caller that he would be right there and tow the vehicle to his shop. Once in awhile they would put up a customer overnight on the porch or on the hide-a-bed in the living room. The worst cases seemed to happen in winter, so the work was hard, painful, and disagreeable. Donald grew to hate winter more as the years went by. Lucile dreaded hanging the heavy coveralls out on the clothesline in winter since they froze solid before they could dry. She encouraged Joanne to help with the work, but the little girl was not much help in spite of good intentions. Washing clothes almost daily was arduous with the wringer washer down in the cold, damp, dark basement. The greasy coveralls and underwear had to be washed in very hot water, put through the wringer by hand, sometimes washed again, then rinsed at least once, put through the wringer again, and finally hung up to dry. It wasn't unusual to see a woman or even a child whose arm had been disfigured by being pulled by accident through one of these wringers. Lucile had to remind Joanne not to stare at a child they saw in Indianapolis with a mangled arm and discolored skin. She was very careful not to offend anyone accidentally or on purpose.

Summers on the farm were cause for celebration as well as a time of intense work. Donald taught Joanne how to drive a tractor as soon as her legs reached the pedals. She didn't mind the tedious plowing, dragging, and planting because Ring followed her from one corner of the field around and around until the job was complete. Her "tomboy" side thrived on the rugged farm work. She felt useful and important, doted on her dog, and looked forward to her father's occasional announcement that it was time to go swimming.

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He had no particular sports activities that he enjoyed, except swimming. He had taught Joanne to swim in the creek at the Free Place by throwing her in and laughing until she dog-paddled her way to the bank, drinking half the creek water. The little girl learned the meaning of 'pathos' that afternoon too when her father decided it would be a good joke to test Ring's loyalty. He swam out into a deep eddy in the creek and began to cry out and thrash around. Ring whined and barked, jumped in and swam over, frantically trying to rescue him. When her father laughed, however, she felt such pity for the faithful dog she couldn't stop herself. She scolded her father thoroughly and was nearly in tears. He only laughed louder.

Happier swimming adventures were Donald's occasional excursions with all the cousins to the public pool in Lebanon. He'd call up Walter and Mozell, then pile Joanne into the car, Lucile staying behind with the baby, Donna Mae, drive the gravel roads to pick up Eddie, Richard, and Jim. Then he drove Hwy 136 to Lizton, took a left onto 39 and it was clear sailing to Lebanon, past grain elevators, service stations, the courthouse and shops downtown on to Memorial Park where the round blue-water swimming pool beckoned. Nowhere was the sound of exuberance so unrestrained. The minute Donald opened the car door, they could hear the splashing and whoops of pure joy. The cousins waited eagerly for Donald to hand out the numbered safety pins and keys to lockers in the chlorine-scented shower rooms where the kids changed into their bathing suits, took cold showers and carefully stepped into the antiseptic wading pool at the exit doorway. Then it was freedom, sweet freedom! All the "kids" avoided the embarrassing "kiddie" pool and dove head first into the adult pool. The heat and dust of the summer day simply melted away, and the cousins splashed each other, swam underwater, dived from the

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boards, and taught each other tricks: walking underwater on their hands, holding their breath for as long as possible, and swimming in competition. Donald had as much fun as the cousins. He liked to float on his back with his flat feet sticking out of the water. He didn't dive but enjoyed swimming all around the pool. The smell of chlorine and suntan lotion was glorious. Nowhere else on earth were joyful, ecstatic shouts of laughter so uninhibited and freely passed back and forth, echoes of swimmers, floaters, pranksters, divers with their splashing, gurgling, bubbling above then below water. There was the strange rush of resounding stillness with a high-pitched singing sound when a swimmer dived under the surface and shot through the water. Ruling over the majestic scene were the arrogant lifeguards with their high thrones and shrill whistles hanging nonchalantly around their necks. They blew these whistles imperiously any time the horsing around in the water got out of hand. Every kid wanted to be a lifeguard someday.

Almost as much fun as the swimming was the "after-swim" tradition: going to the Guernsey Dairy for milkshakes and malts. Donald always treated the kids to chocolate malts or some lesser choice. Donald knew Joanne could hardly wait to enter Lebanon's Guernsey Dairy. She anticipated the clean pervasive odors, the ravishing, seductive fragrance of ice cream and malt. The immaculate aroma of fresh milk was heavenly; there was nothing else in her world to match it. As she walked through the door, she took the deepest breath she could, closed her eyes, and reveled in the experience. The tall, clean stainless steel milkshake containers gleamed. Huge tubs of home-made ice cream in exotic flavors as well as chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry drew her and the cousins to the glass freezer cases. The teenage employees deftly slung stainless steel scoops down into the deep ice cream tubs, swinging down and up, curling delectable ice cream with its

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creamy ridges and icy edges defiantly refusing to melt. Teen workers plopped each scoop into a steely cold milkshake container, adding frosty milk, syrup, and a dash of malt powder, that heady, pungent finale, then swiftly attaching the milkshake to the spinning machine with a firm, satisfying click, where other milkshake-covered rods were already whipping up a fury of creamy malts. The teenagers skillfully handed down the frosty drinks in tall, wide paper cups with fat straws, allowing the customer to have the stainless steel container as well and pour the rest of the milkshake or malt into the almost empty paper cup when the first half was nearly finished. At first the shakes and malts were too thick to suck through the wide straws, but after slurping off the initial foam, making ice cream mustaches, the cousins got down to serious chocolate malt consuming, making unfortunate, rude straw-sucking noises. This part of the outing was also a delight to Donald. He never tired of swimming or of drinking Guernsey malts. His mother had succeeded in stuffing his head full of pithy, wise sayings; the one that came to mind as he finished his chocolate malt was “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” He wouldn’t make that mistake. He laughed at young Eddie, tipping his fat malted cup up as far as he could, bending backwards, draining every last creamy drop of chocolate malt into his mouth, sucking and slurping the last of his ice cream shake.

As summer came to an end, school loomed for children who were old enough to attend. Joanne was looking forward to school but had mixed feelings. Lucile told her: “Grandma Ginn had to paddle me all the way to school on the first day.” Joanne did appreciate her mother’s attempt to confide in her, but the information wasn’t reassuring. Living out on the farm, Joanne had to catch the school bus, a huge yellow monster covered in dust from traveling an hour or more over gravel roads throughout the

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township, picking up farm children to deliver to the two-story brick school house in Lizton. The bus driver was Marion Linton, a rail-thin, patient, good-natured fellow with a skinny neck and bald head fringed by once-red hair. He had a thin, prominent nose and friendly eyes that reassured the children in spite of his warnings that he was not about to hold the bus for any late, tardy, outta luck sleepyhead that couldn't get down to the bus stop on time. Joanne climbed onto the bus, scared that nobody would want to sit with her, but after she slid into an empty seat near the front, at the next stop in front of a farmhouse south of their farm, an older girl with beautiful auburn hair sat beside her and introduced herself: "Hi, I'm Judy Blake."

As Judy smiled at her, Joanne realized, like a revelation, the immense value of a friendly face and a kind gesture. She couldn't help but contrast Judy's sophisticated presence with her own graceless clumsiness. Her mother had let her pick out a dress for the first day of school, but the six year old was sick at heart that her choice was all wrong and too expensive besides. She felt stiff and uncomfortable. Lucile had made sure Harry Curry had cut her hair to soup-bowl perfection and had put an incongruous white bow on the upper left of her straight hair for opening day. As soon as she settled into her seat, Joanne pulled the bow off and stuck it into her pocket. Judy asked her if she knew who her teacher would be. Joanne answered that a letter from the school had mentioned Miss Williams. Judy laughed and assured her that Miss Williams was a very good teacher, strict but competent. The bus picked up several more students and finally pulled into the parking area in front of the school building where the children piled out, laughing and talking. Judy walked with her up the forbidding steps into the wide corridor that smelled of wax and disinfectant. Judy guided the younger girl into the first doorway on the right.

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The sign on the door announced MISS WILLIAMS' FIRST AND SECOND GRADES. She felt like an alien on the wrong planet, but she was too self-conscious to appreciate the fact that shyness and awkward dread were common to nearly all the first-graders in Miss Williams' class. The tall, no-nonsense, white-haired woman was a seasoned veteran of the elementary classroom and tolerated no foolishness. Her long red fingernails and fashionable high-heeled red shoes intimidated even the boldest of the bad boys. Her hair was piled neatly in a hairdo that defied gravity, and her tailored suits commanded respect. She assigned Joanne a desk close to the front in the second row from the tall windows. The wooden desks were bolted firmly to the wooden floor and had a hole for the ink bottles issued to each student. A groove at the top held a pen, and books issued on the first day of school were stored under the desktop that flipped up from the student's edge. Each student also received a large box of crayons that smelled like school: it was a waxy, colorful odor mixed with paste, poster paper, copy books, and pencils. The chalk was kept at the blackboard on a long shelf, and the wastebasket stood at the right of the elevated teacher's desk. On the left was an American flag. Miss Williams taught first and second graders in one room with a long pointer and a yardstick her only weapons. They were more than enough. School was full of distractions. Joanne puzzled over the "KILROY WAS HERE" carved on her desk. The object that fascinated Joanne most was Miss Rose's chalk holder. Miss Rose was the music teacher for all twelve grades. Her former job had been teaching music to wayward girls in Girls' School, a reformatory for young wayward females. She never smiled but taught music with skill and discipline. She used the five-pronged chalk holder to draw a music staff, could draw a G-clef in record time, and she taught students how to write music as well as sing tunes. Joanne

looked forward to music class every day. Joanne's first report card was revealing. With A's in reading, writing, arithmetic, music, and a C in conduct, Donald figured his daughter was a chip off the old block. Lucile was horrified; "Joanne, what have you been doing to have earned a C in conduct?" Joanne was too embarrassed to explain clearly but stammered out: "If I ask someone something, Miss Williams makes me stand out in the hallway. She won't let us talk at all." And so it went all through elementary school. Donald's oldest daughter just couldn't keep quiet. She was also determined to discover who this KILROY might be. Even after the War was over, she saw the long-nosed cartoon face peering over his fingers drawn everywhere and no one seemed to know who he was, or maybe everyone knew except her.

Donald enjoyed helping his daughter with her homework, as long as it was math and as long as he could draw her a picture of it. Joanne learned to love geometry with all the opportunities for drawing cubes and triangles, parallelograms and shapes that became houses, barns, and sheds. The father tried to bring everything down to earth, make it real and practical. The daughter liked giving her imagination a workout by translating the problems into real-life solutions. One afternoon she ran breathlessly down to the shop from the school bus stop at the end of the driveway. "Daddy, guess what? There was a big fire today at school."

Don looked up from under the hood of a car and asked, "Why, hello there, Joannie Squirrel. D-Did the school b-b-burn down?"

"No, no. The Methodist Church right next to the school was on fire. We looked out the big windows. Mrs. Kincaid let us watch for awhile. The flames were so close we could feel the heat, but the firemen came and put it out. It was scary, but it was exciting."

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Donald gave his daughter a big broom and told her to clean up the shop floor with the clean sawdust he kept in a barrel by the door. He avoided thinking about the dangers his children faced every day. He had never forgotten the flu epidemic his family barely survived when he was a boy. Even his mother was so sick she couldn't take care of them. His father was the only one in the family not to come down with influenza. His daughter had suffered through measles, chicken pox and whooping cough. Life was thin ice. He never knew what to do when Joanne had ear infections. When she was younger, they hit regularly, and she cried with the pain. She learned the word "sulfa" early on, and gratefully welcomed the relief the medicine brought. Donald handed her a scraper and showed her how to use the sawdust to soak up the grease on the stained floor. She liked working with the fragrant sawdust but hated the grease. "Daddy, who is Kilroy?"

Lucile sang while she worked. She had never had formal training in music, but she was determined that their children should have piano lessons. Joanne liked music, and there was a lady at the Jamestown Church who gave lessons. When Lucile first mentioned piano lessons to Donald, he had discouraged the idea. "N-No, there's no n-n-need of that f-foolishness. A piano is expensive. How m-m-much will lessons c-cost?" Lucile explained that her Aunt Maggie had an old piano she didn't want, and Uncle Fletch would move it for her. Donald didn't say anything else about it, but there was a great slamming of the back door. One warm spring day Lucile drove Joanne to Jamestown where Mrs. Thompson was waiting on the front porch of a cement block house across the street from the church. Joanne's heart beat faster as she entered the cold, dark hall with sliding doors on the right, and two pianos facing them. Mabel

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Thompson was a widow whose mother quilted in the back room. The first time the little girl saw the elderly quilter she was astounded at how tiny she was. Her back was a deformed hump, and her wrinkled, bony hands busily stitched quilt squares together over a wooden rack. Her sharp, black eyes regarded the girl with fleeting interest and quickly returned to her work.

Mrs. Thompson had a clever ruse to encourage attention and diligent practice, which, her experience had taught her, did not come without an incentive. These modern children, she thought, had short attention spans and needed discipline. She had a stick of chewing gum carefully laid out on the piano which the pupil could have only at the end of a successful lesson. She started with simple versions of Bach and Beethoven after teaching the octaves and keys with mnemonics: "All good boys deserve favor" which made no sense to Joanne and therefore eluded her. She liked learning tunes that she had either heard in church or on the radio. Sheet music became a treasured possession that was sorted and stored in Aunt Maggie's piano bench. Donald's daughter looked forward to her weekly piano lessons, but she wished Mrs. Thompson would give up her loyalty to Juicy Fruit and go to Dentyne.

After a piano lesson Lucile often took their daughter to the drug store on the corner across from the bank. Joanne liked the soda fountain in front and the dark, mysterious shelves in back. Lucile strolled to the back of the drug store where they would sit at a small glass table with wrought iron legs and chairs that scraped the wooden floor. Lucile ordered vanilla cokes or lemon cokes and chatted with the drug store owner. This was the pinnacle of the little girl's week, but she had to be reminded to practice. It helped that she associated vanilla cokes with Czerny and Schubert. She was

no child prodigy, but she did love music. Donald actually liked to hear his daughter play the piano, and he noticed any improvement. He wasn't convinced she needed lessons. He had heard of musicians playing "by ear" and thought that would be more practical. Donna Mae liked to pretend to play songs and laughed when Joanne taught her "Chopsticks" and a rhythmic novelty tune on the black keys only. As soon as she was old enough to practice, Donna Mae also began piano lessons with Mrs. Thompson. Donald was not convinced that his daughters were taking these piano lessons seriously.

The birth of their third child was a monumental event. Donald had about given up on having a son, but hope beats eternal, so he clung to a shred of optimism. Marjorie, however, made her entrance in November reinforcing Don's resigned assurance that he was good at fathering daughters. He had heard somewhere that smart fathers have daughters, so maybe it was for the best. Marjorie was born as the space age was getting off the ground, so to speak. The Republicans had swept the U.S. Congress; Juan and Eva Peron were in charge of Argentina, and Tupperware had become the rage in America. Marjorie, the youngest of Donald's daughters, quickly developed a love of musicals, several of which were based on events occurring about the time she was born. Eva Peron, who ruled Argentina with her husband Juan, was the inspiration for the soulful show tune "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina." Margie grew up singing melodies from Broadway musicals: "The King and I," set in Siam, "Oklahoma," "Carousel," "Show Boat," and "South Pacific." The lively music from "Annie Get Your Gun" became part of Marjorie's musical repertoire. She grew to love *Pygmalion* set to music as "My Fair Lady." When "Margie" followed Joanne and Donna Mae in attending Lizton School, she also favored music class. Her role models were Eliza Doolittle and Annie Oakley. It wasn't difficult

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to see that little Marjorie added one more complication to Don's complicated life. He knew that Lucile would insist on this third daughter's need to take piano lessons too. Donna Mae was already taking lessons from Mrs. Cox, who had remarried late in life having outlived Mr. Thompson. Margie was curious, cute as a button, and clearly precocious. She grew up favoring music and order, but life with her father wasn't all that orderly, and the music she loved was different from the harmonica tunes he played.

Lucile's brother Marion and his wife Alice had also brought three daughters into the world: Leslie Ann, Sharon, and Barbara. Marion had become the soul of the State Bank of Lizton, eventually becoming President of the thriving local bank. Donald admired Marion, bought stock in the bank, and took pride in that fact that Marion's bank thrived, had even remained stable during the Crash and Depression. He also admired the musical talent their oldest daughter Leslie Ann exhibited at local events. She had fallen in love with the marimba and was mastering the exotic instrument. Donald liked the mellow tones of the marimba and smiled to hear Leslie's mellifluous music. He was grateful, however, not to have to haul an unwieldy marimba from place to place as Marion did. Maybe piano lessons were all right after all.

Chapter 18
The Backdoor Blackboard

The "To Do" list was never done; Dad controlled it like a king.
The sisters preferred picking flowers and petting beautiful Ring.

The accident that cuts Margie's finger becomes the family buzz.
Joanne takes a Toni home perm; gets a full head of kinky fuzz.

Donna's handsome 4-H calf Curly, a definite grand prize winner,
Gave Donna a reason for tears; The Lizton bank bought him for dinner.

* * *

Being blessed with daughters, Donald made up his mind they would work as well as sons in running a farm. There was altogether too much playing and dreaming going on in his family: too much piano practicing, tree house building, wandering in the woods, reading books, lollygagging in general. It was time for discipline and organization, so a blackboard about 16 inches wide and 14 inches high went up at the back door where nobody could miss it. Every morning Donald's daughters had to face that list of jobs to finish before sundown:

1. Feed the cattle, toss down hay
2. Milk the cow
3. Paint the porch
4. Load oats into the wagon
5. Unload oats into the oat bin
6. Repair broken herder gate
7. Close all gates
8. Clean out the chicken house

9. Fill all water troughs
10. Feed the pigs
11. Unload coal into coal chute
12. Clean the shop

Depending on the season the list might include plowing the back 40, dragging the south 40, planting and fertilizing the north 40, painting the barn, painting the garage trim, helping tile the south field. No matter whether it was spring, summer, winter or fall, the list never seemed to get any shorter. School or no school, 4-H Club, or Pet and Hobby Club, nothing was to interfere with getting jobs on the list done.

One frosty Saturday morning Joanne came into the kitchen, ate breakfast with her sisters as her mother began organizing laundry and Donald read the newspaper aloud: "Look at this: old Harry T-Truman grinning from ear to ear." He held up the photograph of their President, whose defeat by Dewey had been predicted. Donald laughed himself silly at that one. The experts had been wrong again. Donald loved the irony of politics and had taken a liking to Truman when he took over after FDR died. Truman never put on airs nor did he act as if he were better than his countrymen - including Negro Americans. He had stood up for Black veterans and fought to grant them fair treatment and benefits when others were trying to fan racial hatred. Don approved of Truman. Marjorie, sitting like a tiny princess in her high chair, grabbed for the paper, and knocked over her milk. Donald laughed again while Lucile cleaned up the mess. "Joanne, you're g-g-gonna have to chase those heifers over there in the n-near field. They c-c-could get bloat and d-d-die."

"Why would chasing them help?"

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“Y-Ye see, a cow’s g-got four stomachs, and the f-frozen alfalfa creates so much g-gas that a c-c-cow can go d-d-down and can’t g-get up. D-Dad lost c-c-cows that way.”

So he went out with his oldest daughter to show her how to make the cows run and expel the gas that frosty alfalfa creates in a cow’s stomach. At last here was a job that was fun. All she had to do was run like the wind hither and thither, storybook words that fit perfectly in this case, until the cows had farted all the danger away. The wind was chilly, but she wore her warm jacket with the collar pulled up to her ears. She avoided hats if possible. She had plenty of hair to keep her head warm. She laughed at the reluctance of the cattle to run ahead of her. They seemed to want to lie down and rest. The running, however reluctant, was for their own good, so she kept at it until noon.

After lunch she went to shovel oats from the wagon into the storage bin. She kept at the boring job until the last of the oats in the corner was rounded up. Just as she finished and tossed the shovel toward the back of the wagon, her mother lifted Marjorie to see what her big sister was doing. The shovel edge hit Marjorie’s finger as she grabbed the wagon slat, cutting it nearly off. The blood soaked the handkerchief Lucile wrapped around it. They rushed the little girl to the hospital where a surgeon stitched the finger back on. Joanne was terrified. Life was precarious, and accidents happened in the blink of an eye. She couldn’t eat and worried about her youngest sister until she saw the finger in its splint. Don laughed, but only when the doctor assured him that there was a good chance the finger would heal properly.

Winter chores were endless and complicated by school. The cow had to be milked and cattle and pigs fed and watered before they got on the school bus. Donald

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made lots of noise in the morning before 6 a.m., pulling Joanne and Donna Mae out of bed bodily if necessary to get dressed and get the work done before the school bus came. Bessie, their family milk cow, was an ornery soul who never failed to give Joanne trouble. When she saw her coming through the wide gate, she turned and ran the other way, her full udder swinging foolishly as she stubbornly retreated. Joanne, exasperated, chased her into the far corner of the fenced-in field, drove her back through the gate and into the barn stall, where she shut the door, trapping the angry cow. She got the greasy can of udder balm down from the shelf, pried off the lid and scooped out salve to massage onto the cracked, dry udder and teats. With the bucket in place and a watchful eye ready to snatch the bucket away if the cow decided to kick, she began to squeeze the chapped teats. Poor cow, she thought, to have to suffer so through the sub-zero Indiana winter. Persistently she pulled and squeezed the warm milk into the clean galvanized bucket. The barn cat came meowing around her ankles as she sat on the three-legged stool, warm hay releasing steam into the cold air. As she carried the full bucket to the house down the lane, she realized she hadn't closed the gate into the barn lot. She put the bucket down and retraced her steps, closing the gate and slipping the wire closure over the wooden latch. She understood the importance of closing gates, but it was a constant bother. The cows weren't going to stroll to Chicago, were they?

At the Lizton School, twelve grades shared a two-story brick building, and the big thrill every elementary student anticipated was "going upstairs" to "high" school when eighth grade graduation was completed. Joanne begged her parents to allow her to buy a graduation dress fancy enough to be like the other girls' dresses, so Lucile dutifully took her oldest daughter to Lebanon where Joanne fell in love with an ivory-white satin dress

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with a sash that seemed perfect. After the purchase was made, Joanne felt sick; the dress was a foolish waste of money. It was not practical, and she would probably never wear it again. Why did she do stupid things? She also wanted curly hair, but with her hopeless head of poker straight hair, the only solution was a permanent.

The beauty shops in the area still did permanent waves with terrifying machines: contraptions hanging from the ceiling, curlers with foul-smelling chemicals suspended by wires or cables. The Frankenstein's monster usually had some helpless neighbor lady trapped and fastened by her scalp. Joanne wanted nothing to do with that, so the new Toni Home Permanent kits were the ideal solution. A neighbor lady, Glenita Bengel, took in a little extra money by giving home permanents to hapless girls and their mothers. Joanne became Glenita's next victim. The chemicals stung and smelled atrocious, but at least she was not captive to some beauty shop's space-age machine with tentacles. Joanne steeled herself to endure this torture, picturing the results, something like the movie-star picture on the box. However, her shoulder length, baby-fine hair frizzed into a monstrous bush of kinky brown fuzz. She was horrified. The graduation ceremony was that evening. Sick at heart, she put on her new satin dress, tried to mash down her curly hair, looked in the mirror and tried not to cry.

The ceremony was mercifully short, but when they got home, and she got into bed, Donald came stomping into the room shouting, "Joanne, you g-get yerself outta that b-b-bed and go shut that far g-gate into the double-crib lot. You left it open again." Joanne groaned, pulled on her jeans and heavy jacket. Tying her shoes, she stumbled out the back door into the night. She grabbed a flashlight, but the battery was low, and it threw a faint glow that barely lit a circle in front of her. She knew the way by heart, but

it was on beyond the barn, and she couldn't see much in the cloudy, moonless night. She passed the hickory tree, the sycamores, the closed gate on her left, on through the gate ahead into the back 40. She closed the gate carefully and made her way slowly through the murky darkness, listening intently to the night sounds as she neared the double-crib lot. She said to herself over and over, "there is nothing to be afraid of just because it's dark. Grow up!" As she crept down the lane to the open gate, she heard a faint scream, like an angry, injured woman. She stopped stock still and froze. Her heart pounded. The gate was just ahead. Again the scream, now louder, curdled her blood. She saw coming nearer two red eyes. Grabbing the gate, she closed it and fastened the latch, catching her breath. She shone the flashlight directly at the screaming monster with the red eyes. The bull! Uncle Walter's bull must have gotten loose. What was he doing in Dad's double-crib lot? With the gate and fence between her and the bull, she bravely shone the dim light at the angry eyes. The bull bugled, snorted, and screamed his furious outrage that some human had invaded his night. Joanne laughed. She could breathe again. It made her hideous hair seem a minor problem.

Tiling the south 40 was hard work, but it had the prestige of adult labor, and Donald showed Joanne how to operate the Caterpillar tractor he had bought used from a construction firm. The idea was to run a ditch about four feet deep across the swampy land, lay clay tile piping, and cover it up. This drained the fertile land and made it possible to plant crops. Feeling like one of the "guys" was fun, and Joanne relished the power of the heavy equipment. Since she couldn't lift the tile sections, she felt useful, doing what she could do from the cab of the "cat." The controls were similar to the Massey Harris (MH) tractor she was used to operating. Truth be told, the Cat was easier

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to drive than the MH since one wheel had come off the front of the MH, never to be replaced since it wasn't priority, and the MH was off balance and old. The decrepit rusty tractor ran, loudly and reluctantly, but pulling a load was tricky since any weight from the back would strain the front, actually pulling the front of the tractor up into the air. The tractor had been fairly workable as long as the front loader was attached, but when that malfunctioned, Don removed it, leaving it to rust near the barn.

After a heavy rain, Donald told Joanne to take the Massey Harris and pull a load of corn back to the double crib. She climbed onto the old steel seat, put the tractor into gear and drove it down the lane. A drizzle began as she realized she had it in the high gear range and it was stuck. She frantically jerked the gear shift handle, trying to force it back into the slower gear range. The tractor was going much too fast with the slick mud under the wheels, and she had to make a sharp turn into the far south field. The steel gear handles, rising vertically from the floorboard, were often hard to shift, but as she tried to make the left turn through the open gate, she saw it wasn't going to make it. The slippery mud was like ice, and the powerful tractor with its huge back wheels ran straight into the end post, flipping the ten-foot gate over the girl's head, missing her by inches. The gear was not going to budge, so she finally shut the tractor off, sitting there furious, steaming with the tractor, her heart beating wildly, amazed that when the tractor's one small wheel rose into the air, the whole tractor hadn't flipped over on her. When she slogged back to the house and told Donald about it as he ate lunch, he laughed.

July and August brought heat and humidity that required constant effort and vigilance to get water to the cattle and pigs. Donald had dug a second well in the field where the cows grazed so that a large cattle tank could be kept full. A hand pump on a

platform brought water up for the livestock, but in the summer the tank had to be kept full, a constant job that fell to the daughters. One sweltering day Joanne heard the cattle bawling in the distance. She headed south across the field to the pump to fill the enormous tank. It was ten or twelve feet in diameter and over three feet high, but late afternoon in the hot weather ordinarily would have meant a nearly empty tank. She steeled herself to the long, boring job pumping the water by hand. As she neared the tank, she realized something was wrong. The cattle were bawling but standing apart from the tank, which she saw to her amazement was full of water. Then she smelled the unmistakable odor of death. Gagging, she cautiously drew nearer and saw the problem. A fat, bloated, very dead raccoon had fallen into the tank trying to get water for himself. She gritted her teeth and grabbed the hapless animal's tail expecting to fling the body out of the water. Instead, the tail came off in her hands and the heavy body fell back into the water. She felt the panic of the thirsty cattle and could hardly stand to hear them bawling their agony. She ran back to the barn and found a shovel and bucket, ran back to the tank and scooped the tail-less raccoon out of the water. Then she began the tedious process of emptying the water tank. When that was finally accomplished, she pumped water until she thought her arms would fall off. The cattle eagerly surrounded the tank of water and drank, it seemed, as fast as she pumped. There was great satisfaction, in spite of her sore muscles, in making sure the big tank was full again with fresh water and the cows were once again content. She explained what had happened that evening at supper, and since no cattle were the worse for the agonizing afternoon of thirst, her mother listened, full of concern, and her father laughed. That night she slept the sleep of the dead.

As the girls grew older, 4-H and other school activities interfered more and more with the farm chores, and Donald became frustrated that his children, in his eyes, weren't pulling their weight. He raged, "Nobody cares about this farm but m-m-me." Lucile was used to these rages, but she knew it depressed the girls, and she grew despondent. Had she ever heard the back door close quietly? Everyone was so used to Donald's slamming the back door hard enough to rattle the window frames that it was hardly noticed. The blackboard list always filled the space somehow, and Donald's daughters tried to get the work done, if for no better reason than to forestall his anger. Summers were increasingly occupied by 4-H projects: sewing, baking, food preparation, cattle raising, record keeping and other useful skills. Donald, however, saw it as taking valuable time away from getting the work done that had to be done. The blackboard list was law.

One rainy day, Joanne got up earlier than usual to do the morning chores. She had plans to bake the best cherry pie Hendricks County had ever seen. She had never had much luck with pie crust, but her rational mind insisted that following a recipe conscientiously should produce a good pie. Her mother patiently waited while Joanne put the cherry pie she had been constructing into the cake carrier. The County Fair was underway in Danville, and Betz Leak, their 4-H leader, was eager for her girls to compete. Joanne had made a ruin of the kitchen, rolling out the pie dough, following the recipe to the minutest detail, making a lattice crust on top, even glazing the crust with egg yolk. The pie had come out perfectly, but the main concern was her decision to enter the talent competition for that afternoon. She had been practicing a difficult Rachmaninov Piano Concerto, just the first movement, until she was certain she had it down pat. Lucile drove down State Highway #39 in a steady rain, while Joanne frowned, nervous and

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uneasy. She balanced the pie holder on her lap as she went over the classical piece in her mind. She rarely played for an audience and had severe stage fright any place, even in church. She should overcome such a childish weakness, she thought. They arrived, parked in the parking lot, and as the rain pelted her, Joanne tried to balance her cherry pie as she closed the car door. In her other hand she had her sheet music in a plastic folder. Before she could steady it, the pie fell out of the carrier onto the cement, lattice-top down, the rain beating on it, soaking the crust and filling. All that work wasted. Joanne was filled with despair; tears came in spite of all she could do. She picked up the pieces of the broken pie dish, and tried to clean up as much of the cherry mess as she could. There was nothing to be done but tell Betz, who'd be waiting with her broad grin and enthusiastic welcome, what had happened. Joanne knew she needed to concentrate on her piano performance for the afternoon competition. The pie accident couldn't be helped.

That afternoon, as the audience settled into their seats for the 4-H talent show, Joanne and her mother read through the long program again; Joanne was the last performer listed. They waited through piano duets, vocal solos, guitar pieces, and a trumpet solo that was truly awful. When the MC called her name, Joanne was so nervous she could hardly stand and find the piano on stage. She arranged the sheet music, adjusted the piano bench, and began the ponderous opening. She almost knew it by heart, but when she reached the complicated descending arpeggios of Sergei Rachmaninov's flamboyant concerto, she lost her place, couldn't remember where she had left off and finished in a fluster of chords. The applause embarrassed her beyond any humiliation she could remember. She had flubbed the whole effort. All those people had witnessed her

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failure. She hadn't been ready. Her poor mother must be mortified. Flushing crimson, she sat down, trying to disappear into her seat. She didn't win the talent contest, and she didn't have a ribbon to show for her perfect cherry pie, melting in the rain, but she had learned hard lessons. Her father was right. She should have been home, finishing her chores, getting the work done.

Donna Mae was much more ambitious and skilled at her 4-H activities. She decided one fateful summer to take on a Hereford steer project. Donald took her to the stockyard and helped her pick a Hereford calf. She raised the beautiful russet and white steer from infancy to adult magnificence. She fed him, kept his water trough full, brushed his coat, talked to him, and named him Curley. His snow-white furry face with those big trusting eyes won her heart. He grew and grew, developing a straight back and sturdy legs. Training him for the show ring was a trick she had no background for, so she recruited her cousin John Allen Alexander, Jim's younger brother, to help. John Allen was game. They tried patiently leading him using a rope, but he'd buck or toss his head, deliberately heading in the opposite direction from his human oppressors. Finally, John Allen went down to the shop, got permission to use Donald's tractor, and he and Donna Mae hooked the rope onto the back of the tractor, pulling the poor Hereford slowly around the field until he kept up a steady pace and gave up his obstinate ways. When the day of the cattle judging at the 4-H Fair came round, Donna Mae loaded Curley into the truck, and Donald took the afternoon to drive them into the fair. The Moxley boys also had Herefords to show, but they were experts on raising fine purebred Herefords, and they were sure to come away with the championship. The judges took much too long to deliberate, Donna Mae thought, while the young 4-H cattle raisers waited impatiently.

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Finally the judge/spokesman announced that the older Moxley boy had won the championship and his brother came away with 2nd place, but 3rd place which included a blue ribbon went to Curley and Donna Mae Hines. She was elated, that is, until she faced the fact that next was the auction when she had to sell Curley, all 1200 pounds of him, and say goodbye to him forever. The auction was held on the last day of the fair. Donna Mae again led her handsome Hereford around the ring, and the highest bid went to the State Bank of Lizton. The bid wasn't as high as she thought Curley deserved, and when the handler led Curley away, Donna Mae's eyes were filled with tears. Later she cried and cried. Lucile could not console her, and Donald didn't say much, but he did understand how his daughter felt. He had seen gruesome slaughterhouses firsthand.

Donald enjoyed being a father most of the time. He liked showing his daughters how to do new tasks, thrived on explaining the principles behind each skill. He repeated some stories for effect, especially the fulcrum and lever tale about the Greek feller who said, "Give me a fulcrum and a lever long enough, and I can move the world!" Then he would demonstrate, laughing heartily when little Donna Mae bore down on a lever, raising a heavy load that she couldn't begin to lift otherwise.

One humid summer afternoon Donald had been directing the clearing out of heavy brush back near the double crib. He left Joanne and Donna Mae to push the brush into piles for burning and headed back to the garage to finish an automotive repair job. As the sisters used their Uncle Walter's front loader and tractor, shoving the dead trees and branches into brush piles, suddenly a rabbit ran under the tractor tires. Joanne was horrified to see the furry, flat mess as the big tire flattened the bunny. She turned off the engine, climbed down, and approached the brush pile, examining movement in the

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branches. There were four baby rabbits, now without a mother. The girls ran to the double crib, grabbing a basket used for corncobs, and gathered the babies together onto a bed of leaves they made in the basket. They left the tractor there and carried the basket carefully, one holding one handle, the other balancing the basket with the handle opposite so as not to disturb the tiny bunnies straining up for a mother that was gone forever. Donna Mae remarked that the bunnies were too little to survive, but Joanne insisted they could feed them carrots and lettuce, take care of them until they could survive on their own. She found an old screen to put over the top of the bushel basket to protect them. They ran inside to find something to feed the abandoned babies, but Lucile was busy, so they opened the refrigerator, looking for rabbit food. Donna Mae ran outside to check on the bunnies, only to find the basket tipped over, the screen mangled, and the tomcat chasing the terrified bunnies around the house. She screamed, bringing her older sister out the back door, and the two sisters ran after the cat that was already snatching one baby bunny. The other three bunnies scattered, and before the girls could prevent it, the cat had systematically killed all the bunnies. Out of breath and furious, the sisters collapsed in the grass, heart-sick and cursing the big barn cat. Donald came bounding up the driveway just as the frantic chase had ended, teasing his daughters: “Wh-what’re you two doin’ on the ground?” Joanne tearfully explained why they’d left the tractor back at the double crib, showed him the empty basket, and sobbed that they’d killed the mother and tried to save her babies. Donald was used to fighting pity with his routine of making pets of animals he knew would end up at the slaughterhouse. He said, “D-Don’t worry. I’d’ve had to d-d-drown ‘em anyway. I’ve had to d-do that with k-k-kittens. C-Can’t be

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helped.” He went on into the house to wash up for lunch, but his daughters were heart broken, and he knew it. He needed to do something about his ulcer.

Chapter 19
The Doomed Taylorcraft

In need of excitement Donald buys a Taylor Craft.
He loves the plane. Lucile thinks he's daft.

A stranger crashes the plane but Don gets the pain;
Crushed foot; broken legs; may never walk again.

Don returns to work with legs in a cast.
Police pull him over for driving too fast.

* * *

The work at Hines Garage was modestly lucrative, but it was consistently tedious, dirty, demanding, and rarely if ever exciting. The occasional incidents involving minor explosions, frightened dogs, or runaway trucks in neutral didn't qualify as adventures in Don's estimation. Once in awhile a Gypsy family, wanting to camp out on the farm, would worry Lucile. The appearance of the Roma sent Lucile into a panic, warning the children not to go down to their wagons. So of course Joanne was eager to take them a box of cookies or see whether they needed water or food. In spite of the widespread prejudice - they'd rob you blind or pull some voodoo curse down on your head - nothing terrible ever happened as a result of Gypsy encampments on the Hines farm. Donald reported that they always asked politely if they might camp on his land, and he never refused them. The appearance of the Roma didn't qualify as an adventure either.

Excitement was in the air, however, one Saturday afternoon when Donald came into the house, out of breath, urging them to come with him. In the field across the county road was a yellow airplane, and upon closer inspection, the little plane appeared to be made of oilcloth or heavy paper, maybe both. Lucile refused to go up in the plane,

and Donald's father firmly declared he would never fly in such a flimsy contraption.

Whether it was made of canvas or plastic or balsam, the plane was a Taylor Craft, Donald proudly pronounced, and he was co-owner with Don Haffner, a neighbor also in need of adventure and excitement, expensive excitement as it turned out.

Joanne was jumping up and down, dying to get into the little airplane and take a ride. She couldn't wait to fly. Donald showed his daughter how to turn the ignition key and call out "Contact!" so he could jerk a mighty downward thrust on the propeller, starting the engine. Sometimes it took several mighty thrusts, but it always kicked in, and the airplane was off, down the "runway" headed for some magical place. Joanne and Donald flew the plane to Chicago, to Goldia's farm, or up to Lebanon just to land in their tiny airport and take off again. Joanne began to dream about flying: Disney Technicolor dreams about Swallow busses sprouting huge wings and floating right off the highway, flying over brilliant rainbows, swooping above trains chugging over railroad bridges, sailing with the eagles and hawks. The entire enterprise was quixotic and foolish, and Donald knew it. Don Haffner knew it even before Donald would admit it. He asked Donald to buy him out, since he didn't have time for the sport or hobby or foolishness, and he certainly didn't have the money to spare. As a gesture of goodwill, Donald bought Haffner out and owned the yellow bird outright.

Most of the time, it was convenient to park the airplane next to Walter's farm adjacent to Donald's land. Walter had a long field perfect for taking off and landing the plane in back of his white farmhouse. Eddie and Richard were just old enough to be fascinated with the Taylor Craft but too young to learn to fly it. That wasn't a detail that prevented Eddie, nine or ten years old, from sneaking out with his little brother and

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starting the engine just to get the thrill of taxiing the plane down the field and back. The boys would taxi the plane around and around the long “runway” whenever Walter and Gertrude had to leave for a few hours. Richard would panic and start crying any time he thought he saw their black sedan returning down the gravel road. One gusty afternoon Eddie got the plane going after Walter and Gertrude had left for town. The plane speeded up, headed for the highway. Eddie pulled the steering wheel too far toward him, and the plane was airborne. Richard was crouched in behind the co-pilot’s seat crying and begging Ed to bring the plane down. He was certain their parents were back, and they’d both get a licking for sure. Eddie kept circling and circling, trying to watch for the black sedan coming back up the road. The plane refused to descend. Finally just as the black sedan was sending dust boiling up, nearing the house, Eddie managed to bring the plane back down and get it stopped. The neighbors had also alerted the fire department, the police, and the ambulance, so speeding toward the plane were the sheriff’s car, a fire engine, and the emergency rescue squad from Lizton as well as Jamestown. Sirens split the air, and a crowd gathered. Walter stormed over to the plane and grabbed Eddie, giving him the whaling of his life. Only later did both parents explain that they were mightily relieved that the boys hadn’t been killed and even convinced them that the punishment was necessary precisely because they loved them so much.

Donald’s mother had cancer. The doctor had explained to her that she could have as much morphine as she needed, but she had an antipathy to drugs, especially for pain. She thought she should be able to suffer through it and come out the other side, but cancer proved to be an implacable enemy. She asked Donald when he came to visit if he would take her up for a flight to Goldia’s. She missed her oldest daughter, and now that

the Siedentops lived in northern Indiana, over two hundred miles away, she hardly ever got to see them. Donald was happy to oblige, and one sunny morning he helped his mother into his car, his father shaking his head in despair. When they got to the field where Donald was keeping his airplane, his mother's eyes lit up. "Why, Donald, that's a real beauty of an air-e-o-plane, isn't it?" He smiled and helped her out, guided her across the road and expanse of field where he lifted her into the plane. He started the engine and buckled her in, showing her what the controls were for. The engine revved, the airplane picked up speed, and suddenly the earth dropped away as the little plane lifted them over the power lines and into the summer air. His mother's eyes sparkled, and the smile never left her face. As they flew over the green and brown quilt of farmland, she remarked at the tiny highways with their insect-cars and beetle-trucks. The small lakes and ponds dotted the flat Indiana countryside like water spilled by a careless giant. Goldia, Walter Siedentop, and Mary Lee welcomed the upstart yellow plane and its passengers with enthusiasm and laughter. Dora was thrilled beyond description and delighted to see her oldest daughter and the handsome family. Mary Lee was eager to go up in the plane, and Uncle Donald was happy to take her flying over the local area where she could point out sites that she recognized from her new perspective. When Donald offered to take Walter Siedentop up in the plane, Walter laughed and said, with his laconic good humor, that he felt safer with both feet on the ground.

Dora failed quickly after that golden day flying with Donald. Her cancer spread steadily, and the pain grew to be unbearable. One afternoon Donald insisted the family go to visit her. She had ignored all advice, would not go to the hospital, and refused morphine in any form and in any dose. When they got out of the car and went through

the wooden gate into the yard, they could hear her singing hymns at the top of her voice. Joanne was frightened, but she was determined to hide her fear and try to cheer up her Grandma Hines. Lucile decided to return to the car with Donna Mae. When Donald and his oldest daughter came into the kitchen, the smell of disease and death swept over them, but Donald went into the bedroom with Joanne close behind. Dora was singing loudly “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” and gasping for breath. Joanne tried to look her Grandmother Hines in the face, but she couldn’t do it for long, instead puzzling over the black-framed picture over the bed. An artist had painted four rearing white horses of the Apocalypse with their flaring nostrils and dangerous hooves. The picture with the wide, terrified eyes of the horses burned into her memory that day. Donald was in agony watching helplessly as his mother suffered. Why on earth had God created cancer?

After his mother died, Donald took Donna Mae up in his plane once, although Lucile was apprehensive the entire time they were in the air. His younger daughter was only five years old. He began to feel guilty for the expense and worry the airplane was costing them, and he knew Lucile disapproved of this extravagance. She was expecting their third baby, due in November, and she was out of patience much of the time. He put an advertisement in the local papers as well as in the *Indianapolis Star*, trying to sell it. There wasn’t much of a market for small airplanes in that part of the country, but one day a young man answered the ad and said he wanted to come test-fly the plane. Donald agreed, but when the stranger arrived, the wind had picked up to an alarming extent, and Donald hesitated to fly in such gusty weather. Lucile quietly begged Donald not to go up in the plane. It was windy, and she had a powerful premonition. The fellow insisted and said he didn’t have time to come back. If Donald wanted to sell the plane, “it would have

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to be today,” the fellow said. Reluctantly, Donald allowed the stranger to get into the pilot’s seat; he gave the propeller its customary downward pull, climbed into the passenger seat, and they took off into the wind. The daughters remember a tall man in an overcoat coming to the door to tell their mother the news. The plane had crashed in nearby woods. An ambulance arrived to take Donald to the hospital. The prospective buyer walked away unhurt; they never saw him or heard from him again.

Donald’s foot was crushed; the doctor said every bone was broken, but they would try to rebuild it. Both legs were broken, and Dr. Aiello told him he would never walk again. Donald was in the Hendricks County Hospital for weeks. He watched out his hospital window always regretting as rain fell and night followed day. His mind constantly weighted him down: “If only, if only.” He felt as if he were a prisoner of time, punished for his reckless impulsive decision to buy that airplane. He was in jail and for all he knew it was a life sentence. As he lay in the hospital bed, he thought with wry irony how foolish he had once been about his Indian motorcycle that he had bought while he was a student at GMI. His excuse for buying the dangerous two-wheeled beauty was that he needed transportation to and from school, but he knew Walter was more than willing to come get him. He could easily walk from his boarding house to his classes or his coop work, so why had he risked life and limb, not to mention depleting his bank account, to own that Indian? He could hitchhike as so many did in the ‘30’s. When he hitched a ride, he had enough company to make the risky travel almost respectable. The truth was when he saw that shiny red, chrome-bedizened, powerful bike, it was pure love – no, lust – and his ability to resist owning the machine dwindled to zero. So he bought it and rode it nearly a year. He’d had a minor accident and at last his conscience overcame

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his love for the Indian. He had sold it, at a profit, to another, more prosperous student at GMI, who had wrecked it. Donald agonized over his foolishness and longed to undo what had been done. His mind would not let him rest. That beautiful yellow airplane lay in a heap of wreckage and so did he.

Lucile brought the two older girls to visit Donald, leaving the baby with Thelma. After seeing Donald she wondered whether she should have left Donna Mae with Marjorie at Thelma's in Clermont. Donna Mae was too young to view such sadness. When Joanne approached his bed, she was shaking with fear. She had never seen her father in such a state. His face was pasty and bloated; tears filled his eyes. At first she couldn't recognize him. He was sobbing uncontrollably and wanted to hold her hand. She had no idea what to say or how to comfort him. Her strong, sturdy, invincible father was a helpless wreck. His beautiful airplane lay in the woods shattered. Her heart ached for him, and for the first time she understood the pain of everlasting regret. There was also revulsion, almost disgust, which overcame her as she looked at the pitiful, diminished man that was her father. She thought she was going to be sick. She just wanted to get out of the hospital and never enter another. He slowly recovered. Doctors rebuilt his foot. He liked to think of it as comparable to a rebuilt engine. He'd seen many a vehicle run like new after installing a good rebuilt job. It wasn't quite that easy though. He was in a toe-to-waist cast for months. Soon after returning home, he was back at the shop long before he had a doctor's consent. Wesley would help position him, propping him up so that he could work on an engine, a blanket thrown over his cast.

One late afternoon he needed parts for a car he'd been working on all day. He had the family come along, but he insisted on driving. He'd rigged up the cast so that he

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could maneuver the brake and get the car into gear. Lucile was nervous as a cat burglar breaking into the sheriff's house. She sat in back with the younger girls, and Joanne rode shotgun. All went well until they neared Georgetown Road approaching the Speedway Brickyard. They all heard it: the loud whine of a police car's siren behind them. The alarming squad car lights washed over them in waves. Lucile in a panic grabbed a lap blanket in the back and instructed Joanne to throw it over Donald's knees to hide the cast. She took the blanket and draped it artfully over the white expanse of the leg cast and held her breath. The officer tapped on the window. Donald rolled down the window and greeted the policeman. "Sir, do you know how fast you were going?" Donald answered in the negative. "Well, this is a 35 mile per hour zone." Donald looked appropriately contrite. The officer glanced around at the meek girls and the worried wife. He evidently was in a benign mood. "Sir, I'm giving you a warning ticket, but you need to be more careful in a speed-controlled zone." There was an audible release of breath, but Lucile managed to maintain her composure, and Donald answered meekly:

"Thank you, Officer, I'm m-m-much obliged. I'll b-b-be m-m-more careful."

Lucile couldn't help but wonder what the policeman would have done had he known that Donald was driving illegally, defying doctors' orders, and operating the pedals with his leg encased in a cast to his waist. She figured that the only thing that saved them was the gloomy dusk. The darkness had obscured Donald's blanket-covered cast. They went on into the city; Donald hobbled into his favorite auto parts store using a crutch. The family waited impatiently for what seemed a very long time, but at last Donald returned to the car with a box under his free arm, swung his awkward cast into the driver's seat, handed the auto parts box to Joanne, and they drove home in silence.

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Chapter 20
The Chicago Railroad Fair

GM sponsors a railroad fair on Lake Michigan's shore.
Hines family rides a steam engine, loves all the lore.

Trains of Wabash, Santa Fe, and Rock Island Line;
And a show to celebrate the golden spike of '69.

Hines sisters love Beethoven but can enjoy a jazzy tune.
Their singing wows the Jamestown crowds under a harvest moon.

* * *

Donald read that Chicago was hosting a celebration of the railroads on the shores of Lake Michigan, featuring a re-enactment of the completion of the Union and Central Pacific intercontinental railroad. One of the sponsors was GM, and with the trains passing near his business several times each day and night, he felt an affinity with the railroads. He liked to hear the steam whistles. The powerful, lonesome sound made his heart ache and awakened his wanderlust, but trains were marvels of engineering. To Donald the trains represented man's ingenuity and progress. He called his sister Mozella and brother, Walter, to plan a family outing up north. Donald's sister Mozella and husband Glendon Alexander with their son Jim drove in their Studebaker convoy-style with Donald's brother Walter, Gertrude, and their two sons, Eddie and Richard, traveling with Donald's family to Chicago in a festive mood. It was the first family outing since the tragic plane crash, and Donald was determined to show them how well he could navigate with his crutches. Mozell thought he was a little too self-satisfied in boasting of how

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wrong the doctors had been, but she too questioned the alacrity with which doctors pronounce judgment.

Lake Michigan was a vast blue sea of sailboats and whitecaps. The dunes were blinding white in the sunshine, and the exhibition was laid out like a stupendous ship docked at the edge of the great lake. The entrance fee was \$1 per person, and everything inside except food was included in the fee. Since GM had helped to subsidize the Railroad Fair, Donald felt a proprietary interest in the spectacle. The first scheduled show was an ice skating production featuring the Olympic star Sonja Henie and other glamorous ice dancers backing her up in intricate formations. Joanne had managed to sit beside her Aunt Mozell and whispered that the costumes were the most beautiful she had ever seen. Aunt M agreed and pointed out the stage smiles that every skater must maintain from the beginning of the performance until the end. Sure enough, every broad smile remained undiminished until the last notes of the background music ceased. With the splendid lake as a backdrop, Lucile remembered Mary Eloise's wish before she died that they come up to The Dunes and Lake Michigan and see it for themselves. Sadly she didn't get her wish, but Lucile wanted desperately to believe that Mary Eloise somehow was there with them. She felt her sister's presence but wasn't one to claim mystical gifts.

The Santa Fe Railroad sponsored a re-created Indian pueblo and village with tribal re-enactors and costumed Indians. There was also part of the Wheels A-Rolling pageant dedicated to the conflict between the missionaries, the pioneer settlers, and the tribes out West. The Illinois Central Railroad sponsored "Old New Orleans" which captured the spirit and some of the physical appearance of New Orleans. The Wabash Railroad had on exhibit the fastest locomotive, #7002 from the Pennsylvania Railroad

museum collection. It had been clocked at over 127 mph in its day. The Rock Island Line sponsored the elegant Rocket Village dining car, where old fashioned meals were served. The kids loved the narrow gauge railroad, the Gold Gulch from Deadwood Central that ran from one end of the fairgrounds to the other, transporting visitors as often as they liked along Lake Michigan. Donald was in his element. He enjoyed talking with strangers, sometimes triggered a hostile reaction or alarmed resistance, but here he felt free to strike up a long conversation with any of the interpreters stationed at the various locomotives. After all, that's what they were there for, wasn't it? He passed a Chicago railroad station rebuilt on the fairgrounds, and rows of antique cars. At the exhibit of #999, the famed locomotive that had set records in 1893, Donald approached the "engineer" answering questions: "D-Do you think th-this train c-could beat one of the Indy race c-c-cars?"

The fellow stationed at the #999 smiled and said, "Well, this engine is on loan from the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. She doesn't run on a track anymore, but at one time she was quite a locomotive. She was the first to exceed 100 mph."

Donald checked out the #5020 sponsored by Santa Fe to show dieselization at its best, but he liked the #5502, a "modern" T1 steam-powered engine, and he admired the Cincinnati that formerly had done the Baltimore to Cincinnati run. He asked the man standing nearby whether it was still active. The fellow wasn't an employee but helpfully repeated what was printed on a plaque nearby: "This steam engine now goes from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Detroit, Michigan."

"D-Detroit's the autom-motive center of the c-c-country. I g-g-get p-p-parts there s-sometimes." The stranger smiled politely and walked away. Donald shrugged and

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moved on to the Burlington Zephyr. He noted the schedule posted for the Chicago & Denver diesel train that boasted a daily twelve-hour run from Chicago to Denver every day of the year, and daily from Denver to Chicago, leaving about 4:30 p.m. and arriving in time for breakfast. The Mohawk & Hudson Railroad sponsored the Dewitt Clinton, a famed locomotive that set records in its day. Donald enjoyed showing his nephews, Eddie, Jim, and Richard, the Conestoga wagons, part of the Wild West exhibit. He explained that Jamestown for years had a shop where the blacksmith made and sold the curved metal braces that formed the skeleton over which the pioneers fastened canvas coverings for shelter as they crossed the plains and prairies. The cousins were gung-ho for the exciting, live re-enactments of a stage coach robbery. They were bug-eyed watching an antique fire engine's frantic attempt to put out a realistic fake fire on one of the engines.

The main event was the *Wheels-A-Rolling* re-enactment of the Golden Spike Ceremony, the historic moment on May 10, 1869, in Promontory, Utah, when the Union Pacific joined the Central Pacific Railroad completing the first intercontinental railroad in the U.S.A. In Chicago for this commemoration there were locomotives from dozens of legendary lines: The Wabash, the Rock Island Line, The Boston and Maine, The Chesapeake & Ohio, The Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville, The Atchison, Topeka & the Santa Fe, The Erie, The Illinois Central, and The Northern & Union Pacific were a few of the trains that participated. The pure excitement of seeing and hearing these mammoth steam engines laboring into the exhibition area was exhilarating. Joanne could hardly contain herself, sitting there in awe at these historic trains. She had always liked waving joyfully at engineers driving the trains that regularly passed their farm.

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They nearly always waved back too. She loved to imagine where they had been and where they were headed. This golden afternoon on Lake Michigan was almost too much to absorb: the power and thrill of the steam engines, the eclipse of the steam trains by the diesels, the grace of the ice skaters, her father navigating on his crutches, defying the doom-and-gloom predictions of the doctors, and the fun of seeing and hearing all this with her crazy cousins. It was good to be alive in 1949. The 2nd World War was just a memory, and this amazing exhibition was a perfect antidote to the insanity of the slaughter and destruction of war. Donald had been discussing how much money, manpower, time and effort had been invested in this tribute to America's trains. Whoever had envisioned the event must have seen ahead to the aftermath of the war, and the need for people to appreciate human invention and progress. Life must go on, Donald thought.

The Siedentops had to leave early, but the others lingered on until evening. Lucile and Donald, Glendon and Mozella, Walter and Gertrude decided it was time to leave. They finally rounded up all the children, and Joanne walked out the exit with Aunt Mozella, who commented, "One thing does lead to another, doesn't it?" The ten-year-old felt a remarkably close kinship with her aunt and loved to ask her questions and listen to her wise comments, but she wasn't sure what she meant. Aunt M continued: "If it hadn't been for Mrs. O'Leary's cow, Chicago never would have become the great city it is today. You just never know." So of course Joanne begged to ride back with Uncle Glendon and Aunt Mozell to hear the rest of the story. Mozell and Glendon between them told the cousins about the 1871 fire that totally destroyed nearly four square miles of the city of Chicago. "The fire started in a shed that was owned by the O'Learys, but a

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reporter later admitted he made up the part about their cow kicking over a lantern that started the fire.” Mozell paused to give Glendon a chance to put in his two cents’ worth.

Jim interrupted: “Does anybody know what started the fire then?”

“It may have been a spark from a previous fire. The drought had a lot to do with it, but the wooden buildings and miles of wooden elevated sidewalks, wood sheds full of firewood, and strong winds off the Great Lakes made the fire a conflagration.”

Joanne asked: “If the cow didn’t really kick over a lantern, what could have started the fire?”

“All kinds of theories followed the reporter’s confession that he made up the cow story because he thought it made good copy. Some experts even claimed to have evidence that a meteor shower started fires around the city,” Glendon added.

Jim liked that theory. “Maybe aliens from outer space set the fire.” They all laughed, and Jim added: “You know what “Chicago” means? . . . “Skunk smell!”

And so they passed the time driving home in the growing darkness. The cousins were giddy from the unaccustomed stimulation. Joanne thought she’d never had such a great time in her life, and when the Alexanders dropped her off at home, Lucile thanked them and invited them in, but they begged off saying it was getting late. Glendon backed the Studebaker down the crushed stone driveway, and Lucile hurried in to put Donna Mae to bed. Joanne and Donald stayed out for awhile watching the sky and counting the stars. He put his crutches aside and sat down gingerly in the nearest lawn chair. Joanne sat in the grass for a minute but realized the dampness would soon be uncomfortable in spite of the warm, humid breeze. She chased lightning bugs until exhaustion took over, and they all went in to bed. The summer evening was like a benediction over a nearly

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perfect day. Donald had at least satisfied himself that he could “get around” without being an invalid.

The President of the Chicago Railroad Fair, one of the innovators whose ideas gave birth to the successful exhibition, was Lenox Lohr, the head of Chicago’s excellent Museum of Science and Industry. He had received many illustrious guests during the two-season summer spectacle, and one of them, Walt Disney, later credited Lohr’s Railroad Fair with inspiring Disney’s own Disneyland and Disneyworld permanent exhibitions and amusement parks around the country. As Donald had predicted, the Railroad Fair was a crackerjack idea, a great way to help the country heal and cope with the devastation and death that W.W.II had wrought. Life must go on.

Donna Mae began piano lessons when she was six years old, and Marjorie followed a similar pattern. Somewhere along the way Lucile also learned to play piano, well enough to play hymns for church service and justify buying a used upright piano for the dining room. The old piano had a mellow tone, was tuned every six months, and had a matching piano bench that held sheet music. Piano exercise books were mandatory, thick, boring collections of finger exercises to increase agility and accuracy. One of the collections, however, troubled Joanne every time she opened the front page. An illustration pictured a little girl walking along a path headed for a glorious sunset or sunrise, it was hard to tell which, representing “Classical Music” – good music, but on either side were ugly marshes, swamps, tangled traps to avoid; these swampy areas were labeled “JAZZ” – by implication evil music. To an impressionable young girl, who knew nothing about jazz or what the word might mean, the illustration was ominous. The cryptic illustration was embedded in Donald’s daughter’s mind, since it was staring her in

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the face every time she opened the book to practice her piano lesson, but she noted that her father liked traditional music, especially Irish and Scottish ballads, jigs, and reels, so she ignored any twinges of guilt in the pleasure of this country music. It might have been a perverse defiance of propriety or a questioning of appropriate behavior, but Joanne was soon drawn to jazz and other non-classical forms of musical expression. She was wild about bluegrass music that the family heard once in awhile on Renfro Valley Barn Dance or Grand Ole Opry. Even Country Cousin Chickee on WIBC played good bluegrass once in awhile on his daily morning radio program they listened to during breakfast on school days. Sometime during their brief Indiana road trips, her father took them through Beanblossom, Indiana, where Bill Monroe was making musical history with his innovative bluegrass music. Jamestown produced its own native son bluegrass “star” with Curley Funkhauser and his Country Ramblers, who played traditional country music for the fish fries and other festivals in the Boone County area.

Donald was proud of his daughters and soon forgot that it wasn’t his idea all along for the girls to have piano lessons. His girls were invited to play piano at the church for Sunday school opening exercises, and from humble beginnings each one as she became older and skilled enough play piano for the church services. His oldest daughter cherished the vivid memory of Donald’s singing tenor with Walter and their two sisters harmonizing quartet-style after every monthly session of “cutting hair”. For some reason, they shunned Harry Curry’s worn and pungent leather chair with its chrome foot rest and padded arm rests. Neither did either brother patronize the Jimtown barber; instead they sang harmony following their rollicking joke-infested hair-cutting ritual. Walter would tease his brother: “Say, Donald, when are you going to organize another

outing like the Railroad Fair? We got through that with only two flat tires, and you only ran out of gas once.” Don would reply, “N-Never you mind, W-Walter. Just sing harmony.”

These monthly sessions may have inspired the three daughters’ trio scheme or at least provided a gathering for the melodious genes to take effect. Donald’s three musical daughters began harmonizing hymns and Gospel ballads, and as they noted the popularity of The McGuire Sisters, gained courage to work out arrangements of popular songs. The Hines Sisters trio at last garnered invitations to sing for church and community events. One early fall evening during the annual Jamestown Fish Fry, in front of a friendly audience of local neighbors, they performed on a flat-bed truck stage singing with Curley Funkhauser and his bluegrass band. They sang “Wagon Wheels” and “Don’t Fence Me In,” “Bye, Bye, Blues” and “Sugartime.” The theme from *Picnic* was their finale, and they tried singing “The Three Bells,” but that never lent itself to their style.” This was hardly bluegrass, but Curley was good at improvisation. The Gospel songs were done in a style that was basic bluegrass, and they liked singing them. Donald got a kick out of his daughters’ performances and admitted to himself that Lucile was usually right. The daughters were never cured of their love of harmonizing. It was more fun than the Chicago Railroad Fair, and they got to try out the show-biz perpetual smile.

Chapter 21
See Rock City

A vacation to the south; well hush my mouth; barns say SEE ROCK CITY;
Donna shops there; Margie feeds cub bear; Jo thinks waterfalls are pretty.

Hines Family loves southern living and food cooked Georgia style.
“More chicken and biscuits,” they shout, then ride horses for a mile.

On south to the Florida beaches, they splash and swim for a day.
Joanne gets caught in the undertow. It takes her breath away.

* * *

Now Donald was walking without crutches, although he had a pronounced limp. He still bought tickets for the Indy 500 auto races for the following year the day after he attended the Speedway race, and he missed flying, but he had “learned his lesson” the hardest way of all. He didn’t regret having sold his Indian motorcycle, especially now that he couldn’t have ridden it anyway, but he ached to see the country, travel, take to the open road. The Chicago Railroad Fair had been such a smashing success that he kept his eyes open for another similar adventure. When he opened a letter one spring afternoon from one of his long-lost cousins in Georgia inviting him to come visit, he took it as a sign. They needed a vacation. Lucile had just finished quarterly taxes, putting her in a state of disarray, school was out at last for the two-month break, and Donald had taken the last of his pigs to market. He resolved to take his family to Florida, stopping in Georgia to visit his cousin. After making arrangements for Wesley to take charge of the shop work, asking Walter to check on his cattle and chickens once a day, and leaving the

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Collie dog with Mozell, they piled into the Chevy. Lucile had packed enough food to last nearly all the way: hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, bananas, apples, nuts, bologna and cheese sandwiches, and everyone's favorite, chocolate chip cookies. They began eating just south of Indy. Then Joanne spilled lemonade that they had packed. They stopped to go to the restrooms and clean up the mess. Back on the road, a traffic jam put Donald into a snit, and the sisters began fighting. Lucile was barely tolerating the heat and the noise; her nerves were shredded, and her sinus trouble flared up. At last they crossed the Ohio River at Madison and began looking for unusual license plates and playing alphabet-suitcase games, adding stuff to put in the "suitcase" without forgetting what went before. Kentucky was more interesting for awhile because the horses ran or stood in vast, green fence-enclosed fields. Long, tree-lined lanes led to elegant barns and mansions. Poverty, for which Kentucky was notorious, was nowhere to be seen from the highway. As they drove south, however, into more hilly country, junk cars and trucks, broken down sheds, piles of old tires, ramshackle barns, shacks with ruined sofas and chairs on the front porches, wringer washing machines, old buckets, and trash marred the countryside.

In the midst of the beautiful if sometimes cluttered and chaotic countryside, nearly every barn roof announced 'SEE ROCK CITY!' Donald was as curious as the rest of the family. So they improvised and decided to make a side-trip to see Rock City, wherever that was. The sisters loved maps, so they begged their mother for the road map to find Rock City. They found Chattanooga and the surrounding mountains where Rock City beckoned. Rock City on Lookout Mountain opened to the public in 1932, long before Disneyland or Disneyworld was inspired by the Chicago Railroad Fair. The

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audacious barn roof advertisements drew people from all over the country. Following Mountain Creek Rd. to Pineville Rd. to Moccasin Bend Rd., they navigated Chattanooga to Lookout Mountain. Donald parked the car, and the family followed the endless trails up and around the rock gardens into Enchanted Village and Fairyland Caverns and strange fanciful formations: Fat Man’s Squeeze, Balancing Rock, on up to Lover’s Leap where the bronze plaque announced a seven-state view. Margie was dazzled by Fairyland Caverns and the Enchanted Village, but she wasn’t certain about the seven states. Cute little Margie, with her white sandals and flowered sundress, was captivated by a black bear cub. The little bear drank greedily from a baby bottle Margie held. She giggled as the bear slurped and guzzled the milk, pulling and jerking the warm bottle. Donald got a kick out of her delight and remembered the bear cub long after he had forgotten the Enchanted Village fashioned for tourists. Joanne’s disappointment with the fake elves and fairyland characters was forgotten when they saw Ruby Falls, a natural wonder. Donald’s oldest daughter was in love with waterfalls. Donna Mae was impatient with the long hike and relieved to see the gift shop. They knew better than to ask Donald to buy any “tourist trap junk,” but they spent a memorable day on Lookout Mountain. At least now they knew what the “See Rock City” roof signs were all about. Now they could concentrate on memorizing Burma Shave sign doggerel:

I know he’s a wolf
Said Riding Hood
But Grandma dear
He smells so good.

Since they were only six miles from the Georgia border, it was a short drive to Donald's old friend Buddy Pitcher and his family where they spent the night. The Pitchers had horses, so Joanne couldn't contain her excitement. She had always longed to ride a horse. After a supper of good country food: ham, biscuits, gravy, butterbeans, collard greens, and blackberry cobbler, the Pitchers insisted the girls come with them to go horseback riding. Unfortunately, or more likely fortunately, the horses turned out to be old nags. Joanne had no way of knowing how lucky she was to have the old horse as her first riding experience, but in her imagination she saw a sleek, black steed flying smooth as a sailboat over green terrain. Reality was Polly, an old mare who clopped along over the red clay earth like a drunken camel. Joanne was devastated; she wanted to race along with the wind in her hair and the steed's long mane floating in the breeze. The humiliating part of the whole farce was that she could hardly stay on the old horse as slowly as she plodded. The warm, old-fashioned cabin was Donald's daughters' dream come true. They rocked in the old rocker, ate biscuits and fried chicken with enthusiasm, absorbed the smells and sights of the bare wood floor, the stone fireplace, the log walls, and quilted sofa throws. Here was southern living at its best: simple braid and rag rugs, home-made muslin curtains, an upright piano in the parlor and a feather bed. The Pitchers invited Lucile to play the piano, so she scooted sideways onto the bench and played "Shall We Gather at the River" and "Mansion over the Hilltop" which the girls couldn't resist singing in harmony. Donald pulled his harmonica out of his pocket, and everyone joined in the spontaneous musicale.

Driving through the mountains was the most wonderful part of the trip; at least Joanne thought so. Margery and Donna Mae remembered the ocean and the beach most

fondly. Indiana is conspicuously devoid of oceans or mountains, so it was a thrill to climb as Donald navigated hairpin curves, watching the rushing water, listening to the musical applause of the cascading streams, smelling the fresh, mossy, mountain air. Mountain streams and creeks cascading down the cliffs and ridges followed the winding roads through the mountainous areas of the Southeast on through northern Georgia. Joanne insisted their father stop the car so they could climb onto the rocks and boulders, some of which called out to her for sitting and climbing. The clear, swift water swirled and bubbled over and around the stones, headed down the mountain. Joanne would have been happy to stay in the mountains, but Donald was impatient to get to Florida.

As they drove through Georgia's vast cotton fields, they watched black workers picking cotton. Donna remembered a little black child playing at the edge of a field and was troubled that he was wearing only a shirt and no trousers. They took a rest stop near one of the cotton fields and captured a cotton boll with its seeds and soft white puff like cotton candy. Donna thought cotton was a more interesting crop than corn, but the familiar often gets little respect. They piled back into the car and looked for Burma Shave signs. At last they watched the Florida "Welcome" sign flash by them as they entered the panhandle. They wanted to stop at one of the many farm businesses offering orange juice and other southern treats, so at last Donald pulled into a roadside stand that sold oranges, fresh juice, and boiled peanuts. Nobody wanted boiled peanuts, but the orange juice was memorable. Joanne felt healthier by the minute drinking the squeezed orange juice, and they all decided Florida must be a great place.

White sugar-sand beaches delighted the daughters and their father with an open invitation to go barefoot and wander. They splashed through whispering surf, kicking

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the clear salt water, looking for shells and treasures tossed ashore by random waves. Joanne resolved to live near the ocean some day. The Florida panhandle led east and then south to Daytona Beach where Donald rented an ocean-front cabin for a week. The girls had never been so relaxed and delighted by a place: palm trees, miles of sand and surf, shore birds beating the air overhead, herons, pelicans, egrets, terns, seagulls of endless variety, sandpipers, plovers,. Joanne admired her mother for having thought to bring a bird book so they could identify these shorebirds of the Gulf and Atlantic coastal areas. They liked watching the sanderlings skitter just in front of the surf.

They soon discovered that life on the beach, relaxing though it was, required certain vigilance. They were up early to swim every morning, but on their last day in their beach cabin they didn't heed the warning of a sudden strong wind off the coast. A rogue wave and powerful undertow knocked the wind out of Joanne's lungs, tossing her helpless on the wet sand unable to get a breath. Donald saw it happen, ran to her and pounded her back until she heaved and managed an intake of air. She remembered vividly the panic and desperate feeling of helplessness. She was grateful to her father forever after: "Daddy, it's scary when you can't breathe." Margie in her bright flowered sundress and white sandals was desolate at their having to leave the beach and ocean. She was certain that being a beach bum was the life for her. Better yet, she'd join the Navy when she was old enough. They gathered their treasures: shells, beach glass, a horseshoe crab's skeletal remains, a starfish, beautiful stones, and more Florida sand than they intended, and Donald headed back North with his family. They had no idea this would be the last road trip vacation the family was ever to take together.

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Chapter 22
The Economy Run

Back home again in Indiana, Northern Lights glow in the sky.
Daytime chores demand vigilance, "Jimsonweeds must die!"

Between welding spots, needed or not, Don assists in local fun;
By tuning the winning autos for a high school economy run.

Welding to Don is hypnotic. Legend goes: across the highway in grass
Lies a crumpled vehicle's cursed gas tank: welded without draining the gas.

* * *

Back home on the farm, Donald redoubled his focus on the work. Wesley was covered up with a backlog of jobs at the shop. The weeds in the corn had to be hoed, grass needed to be mowed, house and barn needed to be painted. The younger daughters were too small to handle the lawn mower, an unwieldy, dangerous, exhaust-chugging relic that Donald had inherited from a customer. Joanne hated the outsized machine but liked the yard to look neat. The antiquated mower belched disgusting exhaust fumes and shimmied like Salome. Whoever was stuck with the job had to start it with a greasy rope that always took several vigorous tugs to ignite the engine. Finally the mower took off, pulling her with it. The blades were exposed on the front of the mower, cutting like dozens of menacing clippers. By the time she had finished the front section – the easy part – she was dripping with sweat, her face beet-red, and her eyes stinging. Maneuvering the monster mower around to the backyard, she startled a black snake that slithered off into the cornfield. She dreaded killing toads or baby rabbits; the tall grass was filled with life and vulnerable to the voracious mower. Meanwhile her sisters had taken hoes out into the cornfield to tackle the smelly, poisonous, hardy jimsonweed that

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could strangle any crop. In spite of Donald's defense of dandelions, he had no sympathy with jimsonweed. His sister Mozella had once praised the white jimsonweed flower, the subject of one of her favorite Georgia O'Keeffe paintings, but Donald wasn't impressed. Jimsonweeds must die. He knew the toxic taste of jimsonweed-poisoned milk was revolting, and anything that reduced his crop yield was anathema.

When Joanne came in to lunch ahead of her father, who slammed the backdoor even harder than she felt like doing, her sisters were already eating. She poured milk for everybody and sat down grousing about the rattletrap mower that was so hard to start and control. Already their vacation seemed years in the past. Donald was frustrated that he and Wesley couldn't get the work backlog under control. Customers all needed their cars, trucks, and tractors immediately. Crystal Flash had raised the price of gasoline and was complaining that the public restroom wasn't regulation. He had noticed graffiti written on the new restroom he'd had installed and was so enraged he bought black paint. He assigned the painting job to Joanne, who hated that black restroom more than hell itself. Lucile was embroiled in quarterly taxes and begged Donald to keep records with better organization. Donald grabbed the newspaper and ignored her irritating comments. He read silently, eating his salmon cakes and peas.

Suddenly he looked up and announced: "The Indianapolis *Star* says here th-that the n-n-northern lights should p-put on a real show tonight." Relieved that Donald was not ranting, Lucile nodded and added: "We haven't seen the aurora borealis in a long time. Maybe tonight we'll be lucky enough to see it." Donald went back to the shop, and the girls finished their chores. That evening as darkness gradually replaced a rose and violet sunset streaking the sky, they put up a ladder, leaning it against the north side of

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the house, and climbed onto the roof. At first the girls thought it must be somebody's imagination. They couldn't see anything but a dark expanse. Then green waves slowly swirled and filled the northern sky. The magical effect was similar to shooting stars they had seen. Donald thought how foolish people were to shoot off fireworks and ignore nature's own magnificent performances.

One hot Indian summer afternoon Walter, Eddie, Jim and John Allen were putting up baled hay in the old red barn. Walter was worried about Richard, who had been sick, and was grateful that Glendon and Mozella's boys had offered to help him. The hay bailing work was hot, and Walter suggested a rest. Eagerly, Eddie and his cousins flopped down under a tree. Jim asked Walter if it was true that Uncle Donald enjoyed welding so much that he would always find a reason to include welding in any repair job. Jim said, "Uncle Walter, they say Uncle Donald is famous in the neighborhood for welding some part of every machine brought into the shop for repair. Is that true?"

Walter laughed, his eyes twinkling, squinting in the bright sunlight. "Well, Boys, I'll tell you a true story." Eddie, Jim and John Allen stretched and breathed in the dusty, hay-sweet air, knowing how Uncle Walter loved a good story. Walter tilted back his straw hat with the knuckle of his forefinger and leaning an elbow on the top rung of the wood fence, he told them another Uncle Donald tale: "Y'see, Shorty Pritchett - just lives down the road here y'know - once bet another neighbor farmer he could get his brand new truck in and out of your Uncle Donald's shop without it being remodeled by Don's welder. The other farmer bet a buck he couldn't do it. So Shorty rolled his brand new Chevy truck into the shop one morning and requested an inspection to make sure everything was in good, solid working order. Donald looked it all over, and just when

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Shorty thought he'd won the bet for sure, Donald said, 'Y'know, those bolts in yer truck bed there could work loose,' and before Shorty had time to protest Don had grabbed the stinger of his electric welder, flipped the welding hood down over his face, and tacked the nuts on the bed bolts on Shorty's new truck."

Walter had his own troubles, especially with his youngest adopted son Richard, who had a heap of trouble in school. Rumor was he'd even pulled a knife on Walter, but Walter would never talk about his own problems. He preferred a good laugh to any useless wallowing in self-pity. He only hung his head and brooded over the sorrows of the world when he was alone. Relishing the boys' laughter over the Shorty Pritchett story, he passed around the water canteen and wiped his face with a bandana. John Allen begged their uncle for another story about Donald, so Walter sat down on a stump under the ancient hickory tree and told the boys they needed a rest from the hot sun anyway. Jim and John threw themselves down on the grass under the big tree waiting for the tale to unwind. Walter rested his elbows on his knees and looked up mischievously.

"OK, Boys, you likely remember all the ditching we did to drain the fields for farming around there? Well, Donald decided he needed to buy a bulldozer; renting one was expensive and troublesome. He saw an ad in the Farm Bureau magazine from a farmer over in Illinois who had a used Caterpillar tractor for sale. The price was low enough that he called the guy who agreed to sell it to him if he'd come get it. 'A-course, he asked me to come help him bring it back. I ain't sayin' Donald was too cheap to do it right and hire a tractor trailer, but he knew the Cat was a seven-ton job. Anyhow, we drove his Chevy farm truck to southern Illinois, got lost once, but finally found the feller's farm down around Carbondale. Donald paid the farmer, and we rigged up a ramp

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and finally got the big Cat onto the 'perfectly good' truck bed, but the dozer was so heavy that the truck bed was resting on the tires. You know your Uncle Donald; there's always a solution. So we blocked up the truck bed off the frame of the truck to keep the bed from setting down on the tires. You could see how overloaded the tires were just by lookin', but that kind of thing never stopped Donald. The guy who sold him the 'dozer was sure we'd never make it back to Indiana, but Don and I set out for home. Every few miles a tire would blow, and we'd unload the bulldozer, jack up the truck, repair or replace the blown tire, and get back on the road. Took us four days to haul the thing home, but Donald didn't have to pay a heavy equipment mover to do the job. We were lucky though; it didn't rain."

One afternoon Donald and Wesley were knee-deep in work at the shop when Don's nephew Jim Alexander came into the garage with his friend Larry. The two teenagers were juniors at North Salem High School and bursting with excitement. Jim said, "Hey, Uncle Donald, we're gonna' enter the North Salem High School Economy Run Race but we need your help."

Don and Wesley looked up. Don cackled and Wesley gave a wry smile, "So you guys think you're going to win?"

"Well," Jim replied thoughtfully, "not unless you figure out how to make Mom's '52 Studebaker and Larry's '40 Ford get 30-plus miles to the gallon."

Don's cackle worked its way into a hearty horse laugh. "Wh-wh-what kinda cockamaymee scheme are y-y-you guys talkin' about?"

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Jim and Larry explained that the object of the race was to see who could get the most mileage out of a gallon of gasoline. At this Don's eyes lit up. This was right up his alley: "So h-h-how did you t-two decide you c-could win this race?"

Larry enthusiastically launched into his favorite story: "Y'see, Mr. Hines, awhile back I was in North Salem headed north on state road 75 and stopped at the town's main crossing. At that very moment Jim was headed east and entered the same intersection. The front bumper of my '40 Ford caught his grey Studebaker and ripped a slice from the front fender well to the end of his car. The Ford suffered not a scratch. Pre-War autos proved their mettle again."

Wesley and Don were laughing till their sides ached with Jim looking slightly uncomfortable. Wesley asked Jim: "Your mom must have been miffed. What did Mozell say when she saw her Studebaker?"

Jim replied nonchalantly, "Oh, insurance paid for fixing the Studebaker's side panels. But see, Uncle Donald, here's a chance for the Studebaker Champion to even the score!" Larry was grinning from ear to ear so Don saw that it was all in fun.

"OK, Boys, I'll t-tune up b-b-both cars so n-nobody cain't accuse me of favorin' one feller over the other. How's that sound?"

Wesley asked, "Whose bright idea was this anyhow?"

Jim explained: "John Gleason over at the gas station offered prize money and advertising. He's working with the high school coach Noel Peters. Coach Peters spoke to our class on how to improve your miles per gallon. He also showed us a film on how to optimize a car's gas mileage."

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“I like to see a t-t-teacher giving students practical knowledge.” Don wiped his greasy hands on a greasy rag. “All right, h-h-here’s what we’ll d-do. B-Bring b-b-both c-c-cars in Saturday and we’ll t-t-turn those cars into real winners!”

Jim and Larry shook hands with Donald and left to return promptly at 9 a.m. Saturday morning. Jim Alexander’s 1952 Studebaker Champion and Larry’s 1940 Ford Deluxe were both unlikely competitors, but after Don installed new plugs and points, adjusted the timing and gaps, and fine tuned both engines for maximum performance, the two cars were purring like well-fed kittens. Jim and Larry were classmates, close friends, and members of the High School Barbershop quartet, but like most teens in central Indiana, they loved cars and speed. Proximity to the Speedway and Indy 500 races was a powerful influence. The school wisely sought to teach economy and safety. A teen might work for a day to earn enough to fill a gas tank with gas at 29 cents a gallon at Gleason’s Gas Station in downtown North Salem.

There were fifteen seniors competing in the economy race, both boys and girls. They met on a Saturday morning in the spring of 1956 at Gleason’s. Each car had the gas tank filled to the brim. Participants paid for that initial tank of gas. Mr. Gleason would provide free gasoline for what was used during the race. The cars were partitioned by weight into three classes. Jim’s Studebaker was in group #1 (the lightest group) and the Ford was in group #2. Group #3 was populated by the heavier cars driven by North Salem High School Seniors. The students were to run a designated route of about thirty miles. There were checkpoints along the route and the competitors needed to complete the race in one hour. Allen Holgrave was driving his Dad’s Lincoln in class # 3. Allen’s Dad had convinced him that the Lincoln got the best fuel mileage at 55-60 MPH. Jim

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and Larry could not convince Allen that a slower speed was more efficient. Allen was certainly the quickest finisher but he and his Lincoln got the worst miles per gallon. The '40 Ford purred along at 30 to 40 MPH. When headed downhill Jim and Larry coasted and then when the car had slowed, accelerated slowly back to speed. Following the race all tanks were topped off and usage measured carefully. Both Jim and Larry won their classes with the Ford getting 28 MPG and the lighter Studebaker getting 33 MPG. Ton miles were calculated by multiplying the car's weight in tons by the miles per gallon. Jim's Studebaker edged out the Ford and was the grand champion based upon ton-miles. Cash prizes were awarded. The amount of the prizes might have seemed modest to some, but to Jim and Larry the \$10 class winner's award and the grand champion's \$15 prize were a fortune - not to mention the honor and celebrity the awards brought the winners.

After Larry left for the Naval Academy, his brother Jimmy Hopper bought a Cushman motor scooter and rode it, weather permitting, all over Indiana. The scooter was in need of repair so Jimmy and Everett, his Dad, took it to Don's shop. Some welding was underway when Don got the flame too near to the gas tank. The scooter's gas tank exploded and made a dent in the roof of Hines Garage. Luckily no one was hurt and the scooter repairs were successfully completed. The tin roof never leaked either.

Chapter 23
Hanging Rock

Asked about Church camp Don grumbles, "First comes the farm."
Lucile whispers, "My girls will go!" and prevails - using her charm.

Joanne imagines baptism; in a babbling brook would be swell.
Instead they use a swimming pool with a pungent chlorine smell.

Old songs and new friends highlight the Christian camping week.
There's romance and kisses for the brave; inheritance for the meek.

* * *

Donald didn't have a chance when Lucile had made up her mind about something she thought was important. He could sound like a tyrant, but she managed to make things happen if she was convinced they were important. The Christian Church in Jamestown sponsored a Youth Camp at Hanging Rock near West Lebanon, Indiana, and Donald's daughters wanted to spend a week with their friends at camp during their summer vacation. Donald was opposed because he considered it frivolous; farm chores came first. When July rolled around, however, Joanne, Donna Mae, and Margery each had a week at Hanging Rock. Resigned to the inevitable, Donald learned to make a holiday for the family out of taking a daughter to camp and coming to fetch her back home. Being the oldest, Joanne had gone to camp first, bringing back enthusiastic reports of delicious meals, inspiring speakers, wonderful singing, and a variety of sports: swimming in the pool, races, ballgames, and a primitive form of archery. Bible study was the main focus, but memories of bunk bed friendships and the smell of sausage, pancakes, maple syrup, scrambled eggs filling the chilly morning air as the youngsters hurried to the mess hall

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for breakfast lingered longer than all the intense theological training. Pen pal letter writing followed camp weeks, and budding romances flourished in the camp atmosphere, usually to fade away once camp season was behind the young teenagers.

One Saturday afternoon, Donald, Lucile, Donna, and Margery piled into The Chevy, a snazzy white and turquoise '52 sedan decked out with chrome and antenna, to drive to West Lebanon to pick up Joanne at Hanging Rock. Camp ran from Sunday afternoon for a week ending on a Saturday when families from central Indiana converged on the grounds to collect their exhausted offspring. Joanne was waiting, sorry to leave and excited to report on new friends, swimming skills, and one prize for a foot race. She laughed about having performed for talent night with her group who had written a skit about the administrators, spoofing their eccentricities and going for cheap laughs. She was glad to report that everyone had an excellent sense of humor and didn't seem to mind the disrespectful or even irreverent tone of the skits. She was troubled about her baptism but didn't feel like talking about it. Joanne was brooding about her indecision and doubts. She wanted desperately to talk to her father about the distasteful baptismal service in the swimming pool, but she didn't know how to bring up the subject. The final evening Hanging Rock worship service was heavy on persuasive sermons and group singing to sway any unsaved campers to come forward and confess Christ as their Savior. Several girls and boys had been eager, seemingly, to confess their sins and be baptized, but something had held her back. She felt bullied and resistant to being pressured. The baptismal service was the following morning, the last event before the campers went home. Joanne was in agony as two of her closest camp friends prepared to participate in the large baptismal service. She desperately made a quick decision. Going to her camp

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counselor, she said she had never been baptized and thought she should do it. The counselor quickly included her in the service, and she was baptized with her friends. The service in the swimming pool seemed all wrong to her, and she was sick that she had given in to group pressure. She had listened to sermons about baptism as far back as she could remember, but she had an image in her mind of a wide, calm river. The candidate for baptism would wear a white robe, angels would sing, a white dove would appear over her head. The swimming pool was a small cement enclosure filled with chlorinated water and surrounded by a fence. She didn't feel she knew enough to criticize the ritual but felt too ignorant to participate the way she had. She was convinced she was a hypocrite. How could she possibly ask her father or mother about this? It was altogether too shameful to admit her weak-willed submission to this peer pressure.

Donald stopped at a roadside table, and they got out the sandwiches, deviled eggs, and watermelon. The family custom was to pack a picnic including a big fresh watermelon that the daughters could have devoured all by themselves. Don had to get his slice early on to make sure he had some. There was nothing Don liked better, and his daughters had each inherited the taste for fresh cut watermelon. Sickening memories of disillusionment at the swimming pool baptism fled in the wake of hunger and their Mother's sandwiches and chocolate chip cookies. Joanne vowed to eat all the watermelon she wanted. The ritual of total immersion may have been orthodox and acceptable, but why did she regret it?

The memory of Uncle Fletch flashed through Don's mind when he hauled out the huge heavy melon from the trunk. Fletch was really Lucile's uncle, but Donald had taken a liking to the old man, who took his ancient truck down South every spring to bring up a

load of early watermelons to sell from the back of the truck. Fletch had done this every spring that Don had known him, but one evening going home at twilight, he hadn't heard the train whistle, hadn't seen the headlight rushing at him as he drove his old truck over the railroad tracks. The engineer had tried to brake the locomotive but couldn't prevent the tragic accident. Fletch was killed instantly, his truck nothing but wreckage. Don had heard the crash and jumped into his truck to go see if he could help. Wesley called the police and fire department, but it was too late for anything but grieving. Fletch had loved watermelon. They finished the long, green melon with its juicy pink flesh and cleaned up their picnic mess. What would have saved Uncle Fletch?

It was always a let-down when camp was over for another season. What was it that the girls loved so much about this simple week at Hanging Rock? They slept in triple-bunk beds in a bare dormitory with cold, cement floors. The showers were primitive, one large bare room, and the dining hall was an unimpressive one-story building with long tables and folding chairs. The thrill of waking at dawn to the smell of pancakes and coffee, bacon and sausage, hearing the camp bell announce breakfast, then devotions, then recreation, games, fun, then lunch, then Bible study, classes, more devotions, then swimming, then dinner as evening fell over the group of teenagers brought them closer together than many families. In one week the new friends seemed like old friends and camp teachers seemed like parents, or more accurately like grandparents, less baggage. It was a remarkable experience. Singing the old sweet songs, "Tell Me Why," "Precious Lord Take My Hand," "Do Remember Me," "Amazing Grace," in harmony was the way to form friendships around a big campfire. There was a sentimental ritual in walking together down to the creek for vespers. Maybe it wasn't so

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hard to understand. Teenagers need friendship as much as they need good food, and the mystery of spiritual yearning seemed to make camp friends deeper kindred spirits.

Donald still had his doubts about the value of camp. Joanne had heard her school friends talk about McCormick's Creek 4-H Camp and begged her parents to let her attend 4-H Camp, so Donald compromised. If she gave up Hanging Rock for the summer, she could substitute McCormick's Creek. So ready for a new adventure, she was shipped off to McCormick's Creek for a week, but the camp atmosphere was not spiritual in any way, and the friends she made seemed superficial. The skills they learned, weaving bracelets, making other trivial crafts, seemed a waste of time, so it was back to Hanging Rock the next summer. Joanne even had her first "romance" at HR camp and found excitement new to her. His name was disappointing, but she figured that Harold couldn't help it that he was born an "Odle." It was at least better than Ivan Odor, the name of a minister she'd seen. She had heard that Rev. Odor even made jokes about not allowing his children to watch TV because too many TV ads promoted products that promised to kill little odors. Odle was close, but not as bad as Odor. Harold's main attraction was that he managed to assume the air of a young James Dean, whom Joanne had decided was the best looking movie star ever. He sported a flat top haircut and rolled his t-shirt sleeves up to show off his muscles. The experience of holding hands and goodnight kisses was satisfying, but the friendship petered out by the end of summer. Letters quickly subsided, and life went on back on the farm. Young Harold Odle was not a letter writer. No hearts were broken and no dreams smashed.

Donald in turn opposed the younger daughters' camp attendance. Donna Mae and Marjorie loved Hanging Rock too. They enjoyed the singing, the excellent food, the

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superior classes, and the good friends, in some cases, life-long friends. Donna was very fond of the Jamestown Church minister, Warren Robbins, and his pretty wife Margaret. The year she was able to go to camp while The Robbins Family was there was a banner week. Warren Robbins had a winning manner with children and teenagers, and Margaret was every little girl's mentor and model of near perfection. Donald, however, had a difficult problem dealing with Warren Robbins. The dilemma was that Warren Robbins was extremely handsome. He was also a seemingly faultless example of "handsome is as handsome does." Moreover everyone, or so it seemed, liked Warren Robbins. He made Donald angry and bitter. Paranoia is a terrible curse and has no rational basis in reality, but Lucile took the brunt of this irrational jealousy. Sunday mornings became "sloughs of despond" and unfortunate opportunities for arguments. While Lucile got ready for church, made sure the girls were dressed properly, and prepared the last revisions of her Sunday school lesson, Donald found urgent work to do at the shop or in the back field. If he happened to come back into the kitchen before Lucile had left with their daughters, he'd sarcastically remark about her excessive concern for her appearance, implying that she was sweet on the minister and only wanted to impress Warren Robbins. In spite of the ridiculous nature of the accusation, Lucile had to listen to it every Sunday morning until the Robbins Family left Jamestown to take the Plainfield Church. Life on Earth makes little sense when a man's religious life requires an ugly minister.

The daughters tried to explain the importance of Hanging Rock to their father. What was the appeal of Hanging Rock? At camp there was a time for everything and everything had its designated time announced by the bold, cheerful dinner bell. In spite of frequent laughter and relaxed joking around, every activity had a serious purpose. There

was no snobbery; cliques were foreign to the Hanging Rock atmosphere. Even the staff acted as if they had no more status than the youngest or poorest teenager. The savvy senior campers did have one way to achieve superior - literally "higher" - status, and that was simply to grab the top bunk. They used the rafters to hang clothes, jewelry, scarves, bandanas, and food. They lived in a world apart, at least after dark.

Margie attended Hanging Rock in spite of her father's persistent attempt to obstruct attending camp at Hanging Rock as an extravagance. His obstinate insistence that the farm chores were always first priority was hard to dispute, but Lucile managed to convince him, or at least wear him down, and they took Margie to Hanging Rock just as they had taken the two older daughters. Donald eventually made a generous contribution to the camp and took pride in their work. It annoyed Margie that he boasted of his generosity to the camp when he had made Mother's life so miserable, forcing her to fight him just to allow camp-going. Donald figured he was simply a person who took convincing and then when persuaded to change his mind, enjoyed showing his generosity.

Donald was grateful to his wife for her ability to make company feel at home. He recalled Easter morning just a few weeks before. Lucile had convinced Donald to host Easter breakfast for the youth group after sunrise service. She had baked their finest ham; the menu included homemade biscuits, cornbread, ham gravy, scrambled eggs, fresh orange juice, and coffee. Joanne had done the baking and helped with the serving. He closed his eyes to recapture the fragrance of their house, the brilliant sunshine, the carefree young people playing ball in the south field while his daughters and their mother finished setting the table with the best china, silverware, and glassware. The shouts of

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exuberance, the calm pleasure he felt as he presided over the Easter banquet in his home. He knew Lucile had done most of the hard work: cleaning the house until it shone, making sure the yard was shipshape, planning the meal, and supervising the invitations that couldn't leave anybody out who might be part of the Jamestown Youth Group. Joanne had asked him why the youth group wasn't called "Christian Endeavor" since she had seen that term somewhere and looked up "endeavor." She wondered why they didn't use that name since it was certainly an effort. He didn't know either. Maybe "Christian Endeavor" people were Methodists; they did everything right, didn't they?

Hanging Rock was like that morning. What was the magic? Maybe it was the exuberance of young folks free to explore, sing, study, love, think, eat heartily, and celebrate their friendship. All of these things they did together. Joanne asked Donald at breakfast one summer morning about going to camp in July. He never wanted to talk about it, instead giving Lucile a hard time about their neglect of the farm. "You know this is probably the last summer I'll be able to go to Hanging Rock." Donald reached for the salt and doctored his eggs. "I'll paint the barn and catch up on the other chores when I get back." Donald finished his milk and pushed back his chair.

"W-We'll see about it." He went out the back door, slamming it hard.

On a windy Saturday afternoon in mid-July, Donald drove as they took their oldest daughter to Hanging Rock for the last time. Donna Mae was in the back seat between her older and younger sisters. "You think you'll see Harold Odle this year?"

"I doubt it. Anyway, he isn't my boyfriend." It amused Donald to hear his daughters talk about boyfriends. They were just children to him. He thought of Joannie Squirrel trying to hide in her tree house to postpone her chores. She kept a book in her

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backpack so she could grab it and climb into the hickory branches to read. She had asked him questions about *Ben Hur* at breakfast, so he figured that's what she was reading. She had mentioned getting a job in Indianapolis as soon as she could. She wanted to go to college and knew she would need to earn money for tuition. Joanne continued explaining to her sisters: "Mother doesn't want us to be boy crazy, you know." The three girls had the impression from their mother that "boy crazy" was some kind of contagious illness they must avoid at all costs.

Donald enjoyed the drive west and always reminisced about their occasional hikes in Turkey Run or The Shades, state parks close to Crawfordsville. In spite of his relentless work ethic, he couldn't wait to explore the caves and cliffs with his family. He loved eating Lucile's picnic lunches and relaxing with his daughters. It still puzzled him that his daughters preferred Hanging Rock to Turkey Run or The Shades, both far more scenic. He pulled into the Hanging Rock entrance, and Joanne jumped out before the car had come to a stop. "See if you can grab a top bunk for me, Donna Mae. I want to check out the creek." Joanne was gone in a flash. As she walked down to the creek, thinking nostalgically of that glorious Easter morning just a few weeks earlier, she spotted a large boulder sheltered by willow trees and sat down to avoid intrusive company. Her mother was a saint, she was sure of it, and her gratitude knew no bound. She wished her mother wouldn't resort to tears when Donald went on a rampage, but she guessed that was life. She wished Donald could always be the way he was on Easter Sunday.

"Hey, Jo, how are you doing?" Her reverie was interrupted by Stella (She couldn't remember her last name) from the summer before. "I'm glad you're here this

week. I should have written to you, but I'm not a good letter writer." Joanne thought wryly that it seemed to be her luck to make friends who didn't write letters.

"Hi Kid! Good to see you. Have you picked out a bunk?"

"Yup, got a top bunk. How about you?"

"We just got here. Donna Mae'll probably nab a top bunk for me. I wanted to see the creek and say hello to Hanging Rock."

"You got a bonus. Here I am! Why don't we try to get top bunks together?"

The girls ran back to the bunkhouse where Stella's sleeping claim had been staked out. Donna Mae was talking with kids from the Cayuga Church and hadn't had a chance to snag a top bunk for her sister, so Joanne and Stella quickly ducked into the dormitory, looking around for Stella's bunk. Joanne couldn't believe her good luck. The bunk next to Stella's was available. They giggled while unpacking and hanging anything that would hang from the rafters. They were top-bunk upper class elite! Stella ran to tell her parents goodbye, and Stella's mom invited Joanne to spend a few days after the camp week at their house near Oaklandon, north of Indianapolis. Joanne asked her mother and father in front of Stella if she could go home with Stella's family at the end of the week. It was an unfair tactic, but Donald reluctantly agreed. It would save him a trip west and he didn't mind picking her up later at Stella's. Lucile promised her they'd come get her on the way home from one of Donald's frequent auto parts buying trips.

The camp week flew by, and Stella's parents arrived on the final day to take the girls back to Oaklandon. Stella and Joanne climbed into the back seat with their luggage, talking over the highlights of the week, laughing about Stella's group winning the skit night competition and wondering if it would be the last Hanging Rock experience for

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them. Joanne knew she needed to get a summer job in Indianapolis if she planned to go to college the following year. The two of them were already feeling nostalgic for Hanging Rock. Watching the fields and small towns flash by from her backseat window, Joanne could hardly wait to see Stella's home. Stella's father never said a word, and her mother was nearly as reticent. Joanne pondered the mystery: Stella was outgoing, at ease with anyone, polite to everyone, and always ready for a lively conversation. She had a lovely smile and sympathetic eyes. Stella reminded Joanne of her Aunt Thelma, all poise and mellow optimism, and Joanne assumed their home would reflect her neat, attractive friend.

She was stunned as they turned into a muddy lane marked off by rusty fencing, pulled into a chaotic backyard with junked appliances, old tires, wrecked garden equipment, and a jalopy resting against a shed like a tired old man. The house was faded brown asbestos siding with a rusted tin roof. The back steps were 4x4 posts stacked against the house up to the back door. Stella cheerfully took Joanne into the tiny kitchen where a small hand pump rested on an old-fashioned soapstone sink; a thin, ragged towel hung from a rack, and the kitchen table was chartreuse Formica. One of the chairs had white stuffing exploding from the side of the seat. Stella led Joanne up narrow stairs past a door that might have been made of cardboard. A smell that assaulted them as they passed the flimsy door nearly gagged her. Stella paused and noted that the door led to the bathroom. Joanne opened the thin door and backed away, trying to hide her nausea. She'd never seen or smelled a chemical toilet before. Stella's room was narrow and the ceiling slanted with the roof overhead. She explained that her little sister had died several years before, so Joanne could have Francine's bed across from hers. There was no closet,

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just a rod on which Stella hung her clothes. Her one narrow window covered in a dusty film offered a view of a desolate, empty field. There were no big trees, but Stella proudly showed her later the row of zinnias she had planted along the broken walkway to the shed. In spite of her trying to hold her breath whenever she had to use the bathroom, Joanne soaked up this new experience soberly. She knew her father would have nothing but disdain for a man responsible for a neglected farm, but how would her mother judge the situation? She had sensed that her mother was ashamed of the Ginns' modest house and thought they were "poor," but here was real poverty. She could smell it and feel it. After supper the girls went upstairs to their attic room and flopped on their beds. Stella explained quietly that her father had tried to raise cattle but lost them to a mysterious disease that had afflicted the herd. She said he drank when he could sneak away for the evening but he tried to hide it because he knew Stella's mom hated booze. She sighed and looked away at some invisible sorrow. "I guess he just gave up." Her mother, Stella noted proudly, worked at the dime store in Oaklandon. Stella had no plans to go to college but seemed content. She had a boyfriend in high school named Earl.

When Donald and Lucile picked her up, Joanne gratefully climbed into the back seat with Donna Mae and Marjorie. She felt guilty about not introducing her parents to Stella's, but she was afraid her father would ask Stella's father embarrassing questions. Joanne waved goodbye to Stella and thanked her mother. Thankfully, Stella's dad wasn't anywhere to be seen anyway. Donna Mae was already asking questions of her own: "How was camp?"

- "Great."

"Did you have a boyfriend this year?"

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-“No, I’m going out with Del, remember?”

Donna Mae frowned. She liked Del but figured a week at Hanging Rock was a rare opportunity. How often does a girl get to sit around a roaring campfire and hold hands with a cute boy? Life is short. “Wait till you see the job list.”

-“Oh no, what’s up?”

“Dad wants us to paint Hines Garage. He bought this terrible pink paint on sale.”

-“Pink?”

Their mother interrupted, “It’s dusty rose. Crystal Flash agreed to supply a service station on your father’s corner, but he has to maintain a clean restroom.”

Joanne said sarcastically, “Well it’s back to the real world.”

That was the last summer at Hanging Rock Christian Assembly for Joanne. The following summer she did get a job at Pilgrim Insurance Company on Meridian Street in Indianapolis. She had taken typing with Mrs. Purdy at Lizton High School and found it sensible and practical. Sure enough, she had skills that Pilgrim could use. Donald didn’t object to his oldest daughter’s summer job since he realized that she had enrolled at Milligan College, a church-sponsored liberal arts college in East Tennessee and would need to pay tuition. Weekends were busier than ever, however, since the painting project had to be finished, and cleaning the garage restroom had to be done after the end-of-day floor scraping and sweeping. Joanne never minded the garage work since Wesley always sang in the background and joking around was the standing rule. Lucile didn’t approve her wearing shorts in summer, but that was the fashion, and Alice, Marion’s wife, wore shorts. Donald didn’t care what his daughters wore as long as the work was done. When she was older and looked back on this time, Joanne regretted that Donald or Lucile had

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not forbid her buying a pair of high heels to wear to work. They were fashionable, beige dress shoes with 3-inch narrow heels that had made her feel grown up when she tried them on and looked in the shoe store mirror. She had a twenty block walk from the bus station to 2100 Meridian Street, and her feet were killing her by the time she arrived at work. She sometimes took the shoes off on the long walk back to the Swallow Line station, but that was hard on stockings. She seemed to go through life kicking herself for foolish purchases. Donald cared not a whit for fashion or propriety. She should have paid more attention to her father.

The 1950's were days of circle skirts and ducktail haircuts, fuzzy white collars or colorful neckerchiefs the girls tied over their sweaters, and saddle shoes with ankle socks folded over just so. Donna Mae and Marjorie followed their oldest sister in supporting the Lizton Blue Blazers basketball team. She had been a cheerleader by default since the school was so small. There were only nine members in her class of 1957, so likely candidates for cheerleader were expected to serve to make a respectable squad. The Lizton cheerleaders made their own uniforms of blue corduroy lined in satin. The short circle skirts were easy to make, but the vests and lining were more difficult. Putting in a zipper was never Joanne's strong point. Basketball was an honored tradition, followed by nearly everyone in town who flocked to the games in the small gym. The bleachers were always full. The tradition of senior cords - corduroy skirts or pants with autographs scrawled all over them - was mandatory. Marjorie had outdone the other two sisters in making an impressive autographed corduroy skirt. The daughters had all learned to make their own clothes and had come a long way from the feed sack dresses, aprons, and skirts they had made in junior high home economics class. Donna Mae was a real seamstress,

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fashioning elegant suits, jackets, gowns, slacks, shirts, even her own wedding gown years later. Donald was scornful of what he saw as vain, lazy behavior of the young people he observed on their black and white snowy TV set, but he had to admit his daughters were learning impressive skills and showing ambition. He knew he had been too angry too often, but he liked to think he had taught them to respect hard work at least.

Donald figured that Hanging Rock had been necessary to his daughters in coping with talk of nuclear bombs, bomb shelters, emergency “duck and cover” drills in school, and incessant news from the Korean War front. He suspected that Hanging Rock camp was an escape from the “real” world, but maybe he’d benefit from some kind of similar escape. He knew his daughters had been distressed by TV coverage of the Senator McCarthy’s hearings grilling alleged Communists in front of sarcastic, confrontational committee members. Donald thought the tactics were dishonest: questioning the patriotism of anyone who refused to be bullied. The Cold War seemed to occupy most of Congress’s time and effort, and President Eisenhower was bogged down in getting the U.S. out of Korea somehow. What a long way from “I like Ike” to the somber, skeptical, discouraged mood of the country over the Korean War. Donald still liked Ike’s approach though. He thought people should pay attention when the President warned against the military-industrial complex and the terrible consequences of war.

Chapter 24
Don's Daughters in College

Joanne heads to Milligan College, on advice of boyfriend Del,
Then graduate school at Radcliffe, marrying Richard as well.

Donna goes to Purdue for a B.S. following a bachelor named Mark.
He loves speaking and farming - and Donna - making music like a lark.

Margie transfers to Ball State from Milligan, Harold serving as the lure.
She teaches school for a few years, and then takes a Navy tour.

* * *

When Joanne announced to the family that she had decided to attend Milligan College, Donald was disappointed. He had assumed she would choose Purdue or one of the other state schools closer to home, maybe take up engineering or agriculture, but he made no objection. She told no one that the real reason for her choice was that Del had urged her to consider the school. They had dated for two years and then written letters back and forth since Del had enrolled in Milligan the year previous to Joanne's high school graduation. Donald was awed by Del's first appearance at their front door. He was 6' 4" tall and growing. Joanne noticed that when Del walked in to chat before they went out in his little red car, Donald never stood up. He sat by the fireplace and might have been Rodin's "Thinker" sitting there. It was obvious that her father felt awkward and - well - "short" in Del's presence. She shrugged it off. Her father had never been at ease with people he didn't work with or for. With coveralls on and a wrench in his hand he was OK. She dreaded for Del to have to sit and wait for her since her father was ill at

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ease with him, but farm work had to be finished before she went out, and it was hard to predict how long some of the chores would take. She remembered one balmy summer evening when the red car had pulled into their driveway and she was just coming up with a bucket in each hand, sweaty, covered in oat dust, and needing a bath. She rushed to change and not keep him waiting too long, but she was humiliated beyond simple embarrassment. When she had met Del's father, she'd been impressed with his sophisticated, amiable ease in talking with her, a stranger. Then she thought of Stella's father and was ashamed. Donald was a hard-working, conscientious father who did the best he could with what he had.

The week before Joanne was scheduled to enroll at Milligan, she was finishing some farm chores when she realized Ring, their collie, was missing. The dog was ancient, nearly sixteen, but had followed her around without fail whenever she was working around the farm. She called and called, putting down her bucket and heading back to the double crib. She thought the old dog might have gone after a rabbit and collapsed, pushing her waning strength beyond its limits. She took a deep breath of sycamore and marveled at the extravagant sky as the sun dropped beyond the horizon. Golden light hovered behind the white clouds as rose wisps and coral swirls filled the vast western expanse of sky. "The Big Sky" was Indiana's main scenic wonder, but it was enough. The clouds formed surf patterns, wave upon wave of golden peach-hued swells. It took her breath, and she thought sadly that her life was soon to change forever. How she loved the farm! She loved Ring too, this faithful, loyal collie who had grown up with her and always returned her affection. Silence answered her frantic calls for the dog. The double crib was dusty and cool. The girl looked inside both cribs, knowing it

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was useless. The dog would always come when she called. She walked back to the house and asked her sisters if they had seen Ring, but no one knew where the old dog had gone. When Donald came home for supper, she asked him about Ring, but her father never told her what had happened to the dog.

Summer was drawing to a close as the whole family helped Joanne pack her things into the car, and they headed south, Donald driving. Donald always enjoyed a road trip, and Lucile was a calming influence. Joanne settled into the seat behind Donald, remembering a disastrous auto parts buying trip they had once taken to Detroit years before. Donald had gotten lost after dark in the labyrinth of dingy Detroit streets and had yelled in frustration at Lucile. After an escalating verbal fight, he had slammed his door and left them alone in what looked like a rough part of Detroit. Joanne finally had lost all patience and, angry at her father's unfair treatment of her mother, had screamed that she hated him. Lucile slapped her. That was the only time that ever happened. Joanne smiled bitterly as she recalled thinking "I needed that" and quietly waited for Donald's return. He was carrying a box when he got behind the wheel to take them home, so he evidently found the parts store without getting mugged. They never knew.

This was their first trip to Milligan; Joanne had selected Milligan sight unseen. As they drove through Brown County, they admired Indiana at its most scenic: forests, rolling hills, cliffs, and trees just beginning to turn fall colors. The route they took through the Cumberland Mountains was a jarring mix of lovely mountain streams and trashy roadside homes and businesses. Hairpin curves taxed Donald's driving skills, but as they entered Tennessee, Joanne cheered and begged Donald to stop so they could stretch and walk around. Looking at a map, Joanne realized how much farther east

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Milligan was than she had thought. It was east of Johnson City, almost to Elizabethton, TN, and Donald had some difficulty in finding the right road. At last with dusk falling, they drove through the entrance under an arch that announced MILLIGAN COLLEGE with a stream and waterfall on their right and a brick post office on their left. They found Hardin Hall, the girls' dormitory to which Joanne had been assigned and parked. Inquiring of a lady who seemed to be in charge, they found Joanne's room and left her luggage. Her roommate hadn't arrived yet, so she asked if her family could stay overnight. The lady, whose name was Mrs. Nice, said it would be all right. Lucile always brought blankets and pillows, knowing Donald's frugal ways. Fortunately, Donna Mae had stayed back in Indiana on a sleepover with her best friend, and Marjorie had stayed with the Ginns so there would be room for Joanne's stuff in the car. Donald was an early riser even in a strange place, and they wanted to get an early start for the long ride back to Indiana. They'd never been a demonstrative family, but Lucile's eyes were filled with tears. "Write to us," she said, and they drove away.

After they left, Joanne was overcome with a strange mix of loneliness and freedom. Her roommate arrived about 10:00 a.m. Betty Conant was from Akron, Ohio, and was a stylish girl, Joanne thought, if a little flighty. She seemed distracted and aloof, but Joanne figured she'd get to know her better in a few days. She thought optimistically that she could get along with anybody. When she came downstairs to go to dinner, Mrs. Nice, who Joanne discovered was called the house mother, handed her an envelope with her name on it. Her heart fell; it was Del's handwriting. Why she had a premonition of disaster she couldn't have said, but her hands were shaking. The note read: "Meet me in the chapel at 9 p.m. -Del." That was all. After dinner she left alone and climbed the hill

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in an eerie fog. She was dreading the meeting and regretted her decision to come to Milligan. What was the matter with her? She could have chosen IU or Purdue and would have saved money. Her father hadn't said much, but she sensed he would have preferred her choosing a state school. She kicked herself for going through life as if falling through doors backwards. Why on earth couldn't she weigh the alternatives rationally and make good decisions like everybody else? Walking up the steps of the administration building, she nearly turned back. The windows were all dark except for a weak light on the second floor. Mrs. Nice had told her the chapel was on the second floor of the ad building, so the light must be where she was to go. She pushed the heavy door open and entered the empty area. She could make out stairs on her left where she went up, her heart pounding. As she climbed the left stairs, she saw Del coming up the stairs on the right. He let her enter the door into the chapel first and sat beside her in the dim light. "I'm sorry to tell you this way," he began, "but last week I got engaged to my roommate's sister, Joyce." Joanne couldn't look up, didn't say anything. What could she say? "Come on now, it's not so bad. I'm no blue ribbon prize." Joanne thought later that was a funny thing to say.

When Joanne returned to Hardin Hall, Betty was dying her hair in the sink, and Joanne had no urge to confide in her new roommate. She tried to be philosophical in spite of what she recognized as injured pride and hurt feelings. She vowed to forget Del entirely. It was going to be difficult to avoid him and his fiancée, but she knew she'd be busy. She wanted to join the choir and maybe a service club to make friends and be useful. The one club she had joined immediately was the Buffalo Ramblers, a group who hiked and climbed mountains on the weekends. Don had remarked that East Tennessee was a big change from Indiana: mountains, rhododendron, and streams all around the

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Milligan area. He envied his daughter's opportunity to live in the mountains, and she sensed her father's reluctance to leave an adventure behind. It was up to her to make the most of it and when she had her head on straight she'd write and tell him all about it. She was certain she wouldn't be homesick, and she was right. In a few weeks she wrote to them:

Dear Mother and Dad,

Milligan is a small college but it was founded in 1866 and has a good motto: Christian Education, the Hope of the World. I plan to make the best of it. Dad, you have done well with your GMI training, so I hope to contribute what I can here, join the choir and Service Seekers, study hard, and maybe I'll do as well in my own way. You taught us how to work hard and stick to a job until it's finished. Maybe I'll at least build up stamina. I joined the Buffalo Ramblers first thing. We are going to climb Buffalo Mountain near the campus this weekend.

My roommate Betty and I formed a trio with a girl from Youngstown, Ohio, named Kitty Kraft. We like to harmonize, and last week we were asked to sing for a baby's funeral in a little house, no more than a shack on Upper Schell Creek. We didn't know what to expect, but the rain was a fit forecast for a sad day. The young mother was in bed in the only other room we could see, and she never got up. We stood in front of a wringer washing machine and sang a Capella with relatives crying and the father looking grim and bitter. He was only a teenager. The little white casket had a pink satin liner. The baby looked like a doll. We sang Gospel songs but felt such sorrow. The preacher tried to comfort them, but I doubt that he succeeded. No one mentioned how the baby had died.

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I'm taking elementary French under Professor Casale, who's Italian. He has thick round glasses, a round face, and a round nose. We don't speak much French with each other as we should, but it's probably just as well since he would speak it with an Italian accent. We memorize verb tenses and vocabulary. It isn't my favorite class, but it's better than trigonometry with Prof. Hyder. Every class is the same; Prof. Hyder scribbles a problem on the blackboard, no explanation, and then he writes in huge, fancy letters Q.E.D. at the bottom. He says it means: "Quite easily done" but it's supposed to be Latin for "quod erat demonstrandum" – which I had to look up. Mr. Sullivan would be disappointed in me. He was my favorite teacher at Lizton High School and expected us to learn Latin. Remember that Christmas card he sent me with a letter in Latin to translate and answer? The reply was to be in Latin, of course. He told us in class he'd been a farmer and a detective before he decided to teach Latin and physics and math. He confessed that he'd taught home economics! But I'm getting away from the present - and Milligan. You'd think I missed Lizton and the good old days!

The best part about Prof. Hyder is that he is an expert candy maker. He lets us come over and make peanut brittle and toffee, not the best candy in my opinion, but it's fun to work on his marble slab and watch it form up. It's probably a good thing that he doesn't specialize in fudge or I'd eat too much of it. He also lets us use his .22 rifles and shoot at cans. Mrs. Hyder tolerates all this and is like everybody's grandmother. The Hyders live down the hill from Hardin Hall in a pretty white house. Prof. Hyder and the science professor "Lone" Sisk are the campus characters. Prof. Sisk calls everyone "Dear Heart" and has a

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daughter, Zenobia, who is a student here. I'm afraid Zenobia is rather ugly and very fat; I feel sorry for her, but she seems happy and must be a whiz at science.

Who is my favorite professor here? That's easy: Dr. Lambert! He teaches English literature and looks like a Greek god. When he reads John Keats, Coleridge, or Lord Byron's poetry, everyone is spellbound. I think he is from Indiana, maybe the Hagerstown area, east of Indy.

How is spring planting coming? Are your soybeans in yet? Spring has brought the daffodils and jonquils out here, and trees are in bloom. Sometimes I miss the farm, but Milligan's campus is beautiful, way out in the country. East Tennessee mountains are friendly and green. The Buffalo Ramblers climb nearby Buffalo Mountain frequently and Roan Mountain once in awhile. That's the best exercise I get. Team sports never were my thing, and although I like tennis, golf requires too much equipment. Don't work Donna Mae and Margie too hard.

Remember "All work and no play..."

Love, Joanne

Donald read the letter aloud and pronounced it a "spicy" letter, but he wondered whether his daughter was getting her money's worth gambling on this far-away college in East Tennessee. What was his daughter going to do with a college degree? Liberal arts? That didn't seem very practical to him. She hadn't talked to them about teaching school, but maybe that's what she would do. It seemed to run in the family. At least she hadn't mentioned a boyfriend. He figured that was a good sign, and Lucile secretly agreed. It would never do for their daughter to be "boy crazy" or waste her time gadding about.

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She hoped her daughter would achieve success in the business world, find satisfaction as a business woman, have a career, and maybe later have a family.

Donald looked forward to the six hundred mile drive down to East Tennessee to pick Joanne up at Milligan after spring term ended. He was glad that Joanne continued her summer job at the Pilgrim Insurance Company in Indy and saved her money. She didn't mind taking the bus and saved more money by refusing to own a car. Instead of a car, she had her little Singer, a portable sewing machine. She had written that her new roommate, Mildred Turner, came from a poor coal-mining family in West Virginia. She had offered to make clothes for Millie, and it had worked out perfectly since the sheath was in style, looked good on Millie, and was simple to sew. The spring before her senior year her roommate Millie was talking of dropping out of school. Don and Lucile received this letter in April of 1960:

Dear Mother and Dad,

Wish you'd been here for Prof. Tappa's operetta "The Devil and Daniel Webster." We worked hard on difficult music, but it was worth it. The music was dissident and strange to the ear, but singing such close harmony was exciting. Our "Continentials" group led by Adam Kharenchek, who taught us Russian hymns in four-part harmony, performed last weekend, and - most fun of all - Benjie's quartet: Millie, Benjie, Jim, and I are singing at Valley Forge next week. Finally, a place where an alto is welcome! Benjie is quite a hero after our big celebration last year to honor his home state Hawaii. He had hundreds of Hawaiian orchids sent to Milligan to celebrate our 50th state, Hawaii! We tease

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him about how Hawaii can't be that wonderful—all that warm weather, boring trade winds, beaches and surf at your doorstep. He just smiles his knowing smile.

We climbed Buffalo Mountain, an annual ritual, recently, and ran into a nest of rattlesnakes! No one was bitten, but probably because the snakes were still numb from hibernating all winter. The good news is that is the most danger I've been in lately, at least as far as I know. Oh, I did have borscht, a Russian soup that Adam's wife Linda makes, and love it.

My roommate Millie Turner is my best friend. Some tease me about having brought my little portable Singer sewing machine to college, but I've made Millie several dresses. The current fashion is the sheath dress, very easy to sew, and Millie is so grateful. Sewing is a relief from studying and cramming for exams. It saves my sanity after finishing a term paper. Millie worries a lot about her little sister Billie Jo, who has turned "wild" after the move to Detroit from West Virginia. You remember when I spent spring vacation last year with Millie's family in that crowded run-down Detroit neighborhood, it was an eye-opener. So many people crowded into that house on a narrow street in the middle of the city. I was lucky to grow up on a farm.

Millie won't mind my telling you of her recent troubles. Her church scholarship has dried up, and she will have to drop out of college unless she can find a way to get a loan. Her father was a coal miner in W. VA, but the mine closed down, and he had to move the family to Detroit to find work. She has ten brothers and sisters. She is very worried about Billie Jo, her youngest sister, who

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looks to Millie for guidance. Millie has been like a sister to me since we became roommates two years ago, and I know she would pay back any loan.

I heard the most moving violin solo in the auditorium during a chapel service. Dick Hayes, who played “Jesu Bambino” during a Christmas service and made me cry from the pure beauty of it, played a Bach piece before President Walker spoke. Then Dean Walker made me angry warning us to beware of John F. Kennedy because of his Catholic beliefs. I agree with JFK: his religion is “nobody’s business.”

The talk on campus is all about Francis Powers, the U-2 spy plane pilot who was captured over the U.S.S.R. Khrushchev made a big deal of it, and Powers, a Milligan graduate, has been sentenced to ten years in a Soviet prison.

I should be studying, so I’ll stop writing and get back to work.

Love,

Joanne

Donald was more interested in the new Saint Lawrence Seaway connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean than a spy plane incident, but after reading his daughter’s letter, he paid more attention to the Cold War news warnings about conflicts between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. He vowed someday that he would take Lucile to Russia with him and they’d travel from one end of that vast nation to the other by train. He had a sneaking suspicion that Russian farmers were a lot like American farmers, and he wanted to talk with them.

He didn’t hesitate about the tuition loan to his daughter’s roommate. He had met Millie Turner on one of their trips down to Milligan and liked her. She

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was open and friendly, smart and pretty. If lack of money stood between a good person and education, he figured he could help out. He had no way of knowing that she would pay back every dollar, but she did and thanked him profusely when she wrote to him and Lucile. Years later she invited them to visit after she had settled into her teaching career, having married Carl Pruitt, a shy red-head who ministered to a church in Indy. Millie was teaching high school English in Indianapolis and regaled Don and Lucile with funny stories about her students. Don got a kick out of Millie's delight in her profession. She was also glowing with pride at the opportunity to show her benefactors their in-ground swimming pool. Don was certain Millie must be a good teacher. She and her husband Carl were also marriage counselors. Her enthusiasm was boundless.

About the time Millie was receiving her B.A. degree from Milligan and celebrating her high hopes for a career in teaching, Don's middle daughter Donna Mae was working on plans to attend Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, a state school with strong credentials and close proximity to their farm. Donna's good friend, Mark Lawson, was a freshman at PU and not opposed to Donna's joining the student body come fall. When Mark had returned for summer break, he made it a point to take Donna Mae to the North Salem ice cream social. Mark never would have admitted to Donna that Donald intimidated him, but he had gone into the relationship with forebodings. His Granddad Graham had warned him early on about Donna Mae's headstrong father. Mark, however, made up his mind to hide any apprehension behind cocky cowboy confidence. He won Don over quickly with his wry, unflappable good humor. One afternoon as Don left to

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go back to work at the shop after lunch, he saw a horse and rider approaching the driveway from the south. Wearing boots, a Stetson, and plaid shirt, Mark galloped up in a cloud of dust, swung off his quarter horse Joe and hailed Don. “How’re you doing, Don?” Mark called out. Don laughed and noticed that Donna was laughing too, sauntering nonchalantly down the porch steps. It irked him that first one daughter brought home a seven-foot tall basketball player and now another daughter was hanging around with a six-footer. At least future sons-in-law, no matter how tall, didn’t dare call him Shorty.

Mark, a Scots American with a bold, carefree personality and musical talent, liked to tease Donna Mae about meeting her the night they had both been scheduled to entertain with Curley Funkhouser’s country music band in Jamestown. The Hines Sisters had sung three-part harmony, giving the popular Maguire Sisters no run for the money, but they had fun singing. Mark had shown up that notable night with his guitar, but his claim to fame was skill on the saxophone. He couldn’t, however, figure out how to tell a comical tale and play sax simultaneously. Mark loved telling funny stories and had done a humorous monologue that evening. Donna Mae liked to pretend she wasn’t impressed, but those blue eyes betrayed some interest. Mark always took time to talk with Don and Lucile before he took Donna Mae to the West Lake Drive-in movie and cruised into The Pole for their monumental hamburgers and shakes. Elvis was the rage, and The Beatles were invading the U.S. from the Mother Country, but Mark had sense enough to talk to Don about farming and the automotive repair business. Mark even appreciated Don’s harmonica playing and didn’t mind when

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Don whipped out his Hohner and serenaded everyone whether they liked it or not. After all, Mark didn't mind bringing his twelve-string guitar over and playing unscheduled concerts now and then. At least he didn't play the bagpipes.

Meanwhile Joanne had taken a full scholarship to Radcliffe for graduate work following her graduation from Milligan College in 1961. At spring commencement she had been thrilled to see not only her parents and sisters but also Granddad Ginn and her high school teacher Byron Sullivan, who had made the drive from Indiana to see her receive her B.A. She had a job for the summer working at Blue Water Manor on Lake George in New York State, waiting tables by day and singing in the resort's musical entertainment by night. She wrote home that she had learned to water-ski and later wrote that her new skill wasn't much use at Radcliffe. She was living in a co-op house on Jarvis Street north of Harvard Yard with other unusual graduate students: a Quaker, a Mennonite, Marian Nicholson her roommate from Maine, and Sister Kristen, a pretty young nun. Donald was bewildered by his oldest daughter's independence and quirky choices. He made an effort to write a letter to her in Cambridge once in awhile and vowed to drive out to New England as soon as work allowed. The following year as Donna Mae was writing her freshman papers and taking exams at Purdue, Donald brought a letter up the driveway from Joanne. She had been too busy to do a lot of letter writing from Cambridge, but this one floored her parents:

Dear Mother and Dad,

Don't disown me for not writing more often. When I'm not studying at Widener Library, I'm singing in the Harvard Choir or going to

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classes in The Yard. As you know, Dick Hayes, my friend from Milligan, is also doing graduate work at Harvard, so our main relaxation is going to The Cambridge School with Sarah Greenleaf on the commuter train every Saturday. She grew up in the Boston area and knows Joel Cohen from the Harvard Choir. He has Saturday musicales where we sing and listen to his early music rehearsals. He is extremely talented and loves medieval and Renaissance music. Sarah is in the choir with us and has taken us under her wing since we Midwesterners have a steep learning curve. Our choir director and incomparable organist John Ferris insists we sing in Latin and German, so I feel breathless and tongue-tied most of the time.

We do attend plays at the Loeb and see movies once in awhile at the Brattle Theater. The foreign movies are usually in French or some Scandinavian language, so I try to pay attention since my French is fast disappearing after that Butler course I took with Aunt Mozella two summers ago. I feel like a fraud since my French at Milligan was elementary, and the Butler course was too advanced; however, my course work fulfills requirements for a minor in French, so technically I can teach it some day. Education is not an exact science, is it?

Dean Kirby-Miller had Dick and me over for cocktails the other evening at her beautiful home on Brattle Street. It was hilarious, but I didn't laugh in front of the dean. Neither of us had ever had any kind of cocktail, and when she asked if we'd like martinis, we had to say yes! The drinks looked like greasy rubbing alcohol with a green olive floating on

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the surface. I cautiously sipped it and nearly choked. It tasted like battery acid – or at least what I imagine battery acid might taste like! By sipping gingerly, I tried to finish mine, but it was a hopeless effort. When the dean's back was turned, I poured the rest of the martini onto a large tropical plant in the corner. It was so big that I figured it could take the jolt. I did choke down the olive – and I don't even like green olives! Later Dick and I laughed and laughed. Sophistication eludes us.

Might as well get it out: Dick and I are getting married in June. We can't afford it, but if we are married in Memorial Church in Appleton Chapel and have our reception in the Phillips Brooke's House, we can avoid nearly all expenses. Students can use the campus facilities, at least members of the choir can, at no cost. There is a \$1 charge for using the Phillips-Brooke's House for Harvard/Radcliffe students, and we will pay Prof. Ferris, who has agreed to play the organ for our ceremony. It will be worth the trip just to hear John Ferris play the organ! When we sing at Memorial Church, we sit on either side of the magnificent organ, and you can feel the music from the soles of your feet, up your spine, to your hair – that stands on end when he plays J.S. Bach! Since I brought my trusty Singer sewing machine, I can make my wedding gown in between exams. Dick's father is a minister and has agreed to officiate at the service. The only problem is they might make him wear a robe, but we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. You don't need to worry about a thing. We've already agreed to work the summer at Blue Water Manor on Lake George,

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so the honeymoon will be a paid holiday. After we wait tables we do musicals for the guests, most from NYC or Canada. We've done "Guys and Dolls" and "Pal Joey" so far.

I hope you are all in good health. I wrote to my sisters about being bridesmaids and will mail those letters as I mail this one. The pattern for their dresses is simple and I already bought the material. My Jarvis House roommate from Maine, Marian Nicholson, will be my maid-of-honor. Margie must be doing well at Lizton High School. Tell her to write to me. How does Donna Mae like Purdue? She must appreciate Mark's forging a path for her. I'll never forget how lost I felt when I got off the bus in the rain in Harvard Square. There was nobody to give me a hint about where to go or what to do first. Thank heavens for the Harvard Choir and Prof. Ferris.

Love,

Joanne

Donald read the letter to Lucile while he ate his navy bean and ham soup. His first reaction was dismay that his daughter was so hastily planning a wedding, but he soon looked forward to his own plans to drive east. He had always wanted to take Lucile and the family to Boston and see all the historical sights. Here was a perfect opportunity. He didn't much like the idea of giving his oldest daughter away but mainly because he was obligated to wear a suit and tie to do it. Anyhow she had already taken herself away when she accepted that scholarship to go to school out East. He got out the maps. They

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could stay with relatives in Pennsylvania and drive it in two days. Donna Mae and Margie could hardly wait to be bridesmaids for the first time.

The family sat with Donald that rainy morning in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on wooden benches in historic Sanders where Joanne in black scholastic robe and mortarboard accepted her Masters degree, in Latin no less. Don's oldest daughter was thinking about all those blue books she had filled and all the sleepless nights she had spent finishing papers and studying for exams. She thought how proud Mr. Sullivan would be just to see that ancient Latin script on the sheepskin. Don was pleased, but his mind was leaping forward to the wedding coming up in a few days. This loomed ahead of him like an alien and dangerous experience, an event that required skills he didn't have and had little need to acquire. Lucile was proud but fearful. She was sure that her daughter was ill-prepared for the corrupt world of struggle and disappointment.

June 8, 1962, dawned in brilliant spring glory. Don decided that the eastern air was as invigorating as Indiana's, and the sunshine as glorious as it was back home. He admired the high brick walls and wrought iron gates surrounding the venerable old buildings. As he passed John Harvard's statue, he gave it little heed but admired the huge old trees in Harvard Yard spreading branches over pathways laid out by stern Puritan clergy. The birds were singing their spring anthems as the family made their way to Memorial Church through the dappled sunshine.

In spite of a short rehearsal the day before, Donald felt as if he'd been shipped to Mars. The elegant historic church seemed much too huge for the simple ceremony, and even with Dick's Hayes Family and the couple's close college friends attending, the congregation was dwarfed by the soaring ceilings and vast sanctuary. Donald couldn't

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help wishing this were all happening at Old Union in the midst of cornfields and friendly neighbors. Dick's father had his own misgivings; he had bowed to the rector's insistence that tradition required the clergy wear a black clerical robe in the church. Howard Hayes reluctantly put aside his Campbellite belief that robes and other clerical symbols of authority and piety were ostentatious and prideful – just for this one unique day. Donald would have been less uneasy had he known of Howard's own misgivings, but he gamely tried to ignore the uncomfortable tie at his throat and the stiff Sunday suit he wore.

Before the family had left the farm to drive east for the wedding of their eldest daughter, Donald had studied his maps, planning to see the country on the way to the East Coast and back. He wanted to visit the U.S.S. Constitution, Old North Church, a lonely lighthouse or two, walk the Freedom Trail, swim in Boston Harbor, and drive on down to old Cape Cod. He planned to take a few days to show Lucile and his younger daughters historic sites in the Boston area they had only read about in history books. So after they had thrown bird seed at the young couple, they waved goodbye and took in as much of New England's glorious history as they could in their brief time away from Indiana responsibilities.

Donald was fascinated by that curious bent-arm shaped peninsula defining the east coast of Massachusetts making it look like a gigantic can opener, and his daughters liked to sing the Patti Page hit about "Old Cape Cod." The younger sisters had been harmonizing the dreamy tune on the way to Boston and insisted that was one place they had to go. After a hot day hiking the Freedom Trail through Boston, they were ready for a relaxing drive to The Cape and its famed beaches. Their wise decision to drive to Cape Cod on a Monday allowed them to escape the weekend traffic jam at Sagamore Bridge,

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but their afternoon in the Nauset Beach sun turned Donna Mae and Margie lobster red. The girls spent most of the day in the water, swimming or wading the surf, building a sand castle and admiring the lifeguards. They collected shells and horseshoe crabs, watched the gulls and cormorants, trying to soak up all the salt air they could before they returned to the Midwest. Lucile was restless in her beach chair as the afternoon waned. She was used to Donald's wandering off, but as evening descended and a breeze brought cooler air, she began to worry. Where had Donald gone? The beach crowd had been thinning out, and they were nearly alone and getting hungry. Their drinking water was running low, and the snacks Lucile had brought were gone.

Lucile remembered that Donald had taken the beach road east out of Orleans because he had noticed on a map the long stretch of apparently uninhabited coastal land. He was telling them about shipwrecks an old fisherman assured him were out there under the water just off Nauset. Lucile always dreaded going into a strange place with Donald because he invariably struck up a conversation with some local, and she'd have to drag him away. Most strangers were soon Don's friend and confidant, but once in awhile Don's innocent curiosity would startle or offend someone. She had noticed a strange man looking suspicious when Don had approached him to ask a question, and when he reached out to detain him, the man had roughly pulled away and turned his back on him. The old fisherman, however, was typical of most workingmen. He had clearly enjoyed regaling Don with tales of the fishing trade, pirates and ships' treasures drowned with captain and crew off the Nauset Coast. Lucile imagined Donald, walking alone, striking up a conversation with the wrong person, even a criminal, who'd take advantage of him or delay him somehow. She worried that Donald's combination of down-to-earth good

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sense and gullible trust would someday cause real calamity. It made her angry that his best qualities, in her opinion, were his trusting nature and impetuous generosity. She knew these same qualities were dangerous, and he was vulnerable.

As dusk brought calmer waves and chillier air, Donna Mae and Margie came running up to their mother, laughing and breathless, a little terrier at their heels. The dog had a faded collar but no tags and had attached himself to the girls. Lucile knew at once the abandoned dog look; the puppy had a desperate, hopeful light in his brown eyes, but his tail was wagging frantically. They had taken in several “dumped” dogs on the farm, but she was realistic and spoke urgently: “Girls, this dog has been abandoned. We can’t take him all the way back to Indiana; there isn’t room.”

Margie looked stricken: “But Mother, how will he survive? Look, he loves us.”

Donna chimed in: “He’s such a good dog. We taught him to sit, and he can swim. He’s been following us all day. Can’t we take him with us? He’s only a little dog.”

Lucile’s heart ached. She loved dogs too and missed Ring more than she had admitted, but she had to be firm: “As I said we don’t have room in the car, and this dog is still a puppy. He probably isn’t even housebroken. Your father will have to make the decision. If he ever comes back, you can ask him.”

Donna’s eyes grew troubled: “What do you mean, if he ever comes back? Where is he?”

Lucile tried to look confident and dismiss her fears: “Last I saw of him he was walking down the beach. I expect he will be back any minute now.”

Margie looked worried: “What if pirates kidnapped him for a ransom or stole all his money. How will we get back home?”

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Lucile watched sandpipers skitter across the sand just out of reach of the surf. She had made sure she stayed under the beach umbrella, knowing from hard experience how readily she burned in the sun. Her daughters, however, had soaked up all the Cape Cod sunshine they could, oblivious to any harm. Now she knew her daughters would suffer with sunburn and handed them a bottle of Solarcain. "Here rub this over your arms and legs. Tonight you may have trouble sleeping." Then she saw him, walking towards them, looking absentminded, careless of the deepening shadows, ignoring the limp that had plagued him since the plane accident. "Donald, where have you been? It's nearly dark, and we need to find a place to spend the night."

Donald laughed, "Y'know, Nauset goes on for forty m-m-miles. Feller back there told me I c-could walk all day and all n-night without anything to stop m-me." Don had a bad case of wanderlust, but he also had a strong, almost oppressive, sense of duty. He figured one more day on Cape Cod and then they'd have to go back home. It was a busy time at the shop with planting season and summer coming on. Wesley'd be covered up with work and wonder when Don was planning to give him a break. They carried their paraphernalia back to the car, the little dog tagging along. The girls were holding their breath, trying to think of a way to ask the crucial question.

Donna Mae bravely put their longing into words: "Can we take our little dog home with us, Daddy? He wants to come, and nobody else wants him. Somebody left him on the beach. Please?"

"Nope, no room in the car. We have to find a motel tonight. What would we do with the dog?" Donald wouldn't look at the little dog. He was too abrupt, but he knew

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somebody had to think about consequences, even if he couldn't let himself think about the probable consequences for the lost terrier.

The girls begged and cried, but Donald held his ground, gruffer than he needed to be but certain of this decision, rare he thought to himself. Most decisions were a lot harder than this one. He still felt guilty about hiding their collie's death from the girls. A few days before the family had taken Joanne to Milligan, he had seen Ring crawling off into the weeds and knew she would die soon. He later found the dog in the woods, stiff and silent forever. He took his shovel from the barn and buried the collie deep under a sycamore tree, covering the dog's grave with leaves and weeds he pulled up. It had been five years ago, but he remembered that better than he remembered names and dates he needed to have handy for his business. As he drove into Orleans looking for a likely place to stay the night, he couldn't get that abandoned dog out of his mind. The little terrier had watched them drive away sitting at attention in the parking lot. How could people do that to a trusting animal? It made him ashamed of the human race.

Donna Mae was eager to get back to Indiana, hoping to see Mark and have a little summer fun before her fall term at Purdue began. As soon as they returned, she called to let him know they were safely home. Mark, a young, enthusiastic history buff, was eager to hear about the Boston trip and arranged to come over the next day. The following morning after Donald had left for work, Donna Mae was washing breakfast dishes as she watched out the kitchen window over the sink. She saw the dust before Mark - on his horse Joe - appeared over the hill just south of Virgil Bengé's place. Wiping her hands on the dish towel, she went out to meet him as he trotted the quarter horse up the gravel lane. Joe was a sturdy roping horse Mark had bought at the Indiana State Fair. Mark had

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gone through a calf roping school and learned to rope and tie a 500 pound calf with two wraps and a “Hooley” as calf ropers say. He told Donna Mae that the best time he ever did was 14 seconds. She expressed her admiration, but he said, “Naw, a good roper can do it in less than 10 seconds.” He asked about their visit to Boston and Cambridge, but all Donna Mae wanted to talk about was Cape Cod. He laughed about her father disappearing down Nauset Beach. He said, “Your dad is the neighborhood character, you know. I remember once, as I turned down the road by the shop, hearing a loud ‘whump,’ then out of the corner of my eye seeing what appeared to be a gas tank flying over the top of the shop. I kept moving. My Granddad Graham told me once about your dad welding on another gas tank, which also blew up, setting his coveralls on fire. The explosion sent a chunk of steel flying across U.S. 136 landing on the railroad track across the state highway. Now it’s forever embedded in the railroad grade. Donald shed his flaming coveralls, the only thing between him and jail, and stood there at the edge of the highway in the buff. He pointed at the remains of the gas tank sticking out of the ground across the road and said, ‘That’s dangerous!’ Doc Kernodle is still laughing.”

Donna laughed but felt painful embarrassment. Trying to hide her mortification, she brought the subject back to Boston. She told him about touring Bunker Hill and the historic U.S.S. Constitution and feeling as if Paul Revere would walk right into Old North Church while they were there. She was disappointed in Boston Common but couldn’t praise Trinity Church enough. She said, “The architecture is fabulous, and there is a statue of Phillips Brooks as you go in the side entrance. The wedding reception was at the Phillips Brooks House in Harvard Square, and Memorial Church was beautiful. What a place for a wedding!” He asked about Faneuil Market and the North End, but

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Donna wanted to tell him about Harvard Yard. “You should see the high brick walls and wrought iron gates and the huge old trees. There is a statue of John Harvard with one foot rubbed shiny. People think it’s good luck to rub it, at least superstitious people do. Students probably rub it raw before exams. Widener Library is my favorite building, but Sever Hall, where Joanne had classes, is ugly.”

Purdue suited Donna Mae just fine. Her friendship with Mark grew into a serious relationship and their discussions as they drove together from Hendricks County to the Lafayette campus and back involved plans for their mutual future. Mark and Donna Mae left Purdue in 1964, he with studies in agronomy to serve him well, and she with a degree in home economics and a certificate to teach school in Indiana. They planned their wedding as Donna Mae was launching her teaching career at Granville Wells High School north of Jamestown. Donald was glad at least one of his daughters was marrying a farmer with good sense and a love of the land – and settling down nearby

They decided to get married Christmas vacation when Margie would have a break from her term at Milligan College and Joanne could make the trip from New England. The oldest sister had been teaching high school students in Avon, Massachusetts, and had given birth to their son David in July. Donald and Lucile made the drive back East in late July to meet their first grandson, who had been born earlier than planned. His stay in an incubator was brief, and he was ready to impress his grandparents by the time they pulled into the Avon, Massachusetts, driveway. Donald and David were kindred spirits from the cheerful baby’s first grin. Lucile, a new grandmother, pondered their mutual affinity, but who could foretell that Donald and his grandson David would make two hair-raising camping trips to the Yukon and Alaska together?

Joanne had written to Donna offering her wedding gown, which Donna Mae was confident she could enhance and make her own. Lucile and Donald brought the wedding gown back to Indiana with them, and Donna found time to add an elegant train. Joanne was glad her sister could wear the gown she had frantically finished in time for her wedding and insisted she also keep the headpiece. The innocent looking headpiece with its veil had cost more than the gown. Choosing the elegant, expensive material was hard enough for Donald's frugal daughter, but when she cut it and realized instead of a circle, she had four wedge-shaped pieces, her heart sank. There was no time to mend the mess, so there was nothing to do but buy more expensive material for the veil. The result was triumphant, and if both sisters could get married wearing the foolish thing, so much the better.

Two days after Christmas, with Jack VanArsdale presiding at the Jamestown Christian Church, Mark and Donna Mae Lawson emerged beaming, married at last. It had been enough to challenge a saint, but Donna Mae had managed to make both Margie's red velvet bridesmaid's dress and Joanne's dark green velvet gown as well as alter her own wedding gown. Joanne had written that she broke her arm when a horse she was riding in The Blue Hills near Boston ran away with her, rearing and throwing her against a boulder, but the cast was removed just in time for the Lawson-Hines nuptials. In spite of the suit and tie obligation, Donald was a proud father and father-in-law. He was giving another daughter away, but he was not giving this one so far away. He also had a chance to enjoy six-month-old David's antics again and felt like celebrating. Mark and Donna celebrated in their own distinctive way by heading to Louisville and concluding their honeymoon with a romantic drive along the beautiful Ohio River.

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His youngest daughter Margie was engaged to a local boy, Harold Emmert, and she was thinking about transferring from Milligan College in East Tennessee to Ball State or some other local college closer to home and to Harold. She recalled with some embarrassment the first time Harold had come calling. She had been busy with chores in the house and didn't realize that her father had waylaid Harold to do some weeding. Donald could never tolerate useful man power going to waste. Being a scholar of the Bible, Harold knew the story of Jacob's working for Rachel's father for seven years plus seven more and didn't want to re-enact the old tale. Donald's proximity to his daughters was to prove a mixed blessing.

Transferring from Milligan College, Margie spent three terms at Ball State University living on the third floor of Mariah Bingham Hall, the oldest dormitory on the Muncie, Indiana, campus. She laughed about the washing machine overflowing across the hall from her room and hearing toilets flush all around her. The old dorm had character, and she enjoyed her year there, especially since she was singing with the University Singers. They had a good laugh when the chorus sang a lugubrious musical spoof, "They Called the Dorm Mariah," after the popular song about a notorious wind. She married Harold during her sophomore year of college, and they spent their honeymoon watching the final basketball game of the Indiana tournament. They did manage a delayed honeymoon to Washington DC two months after the wedding and later fell in love with Seattle when they drove out for a science convention. Unconventional honeymoons were becoming a family tradition.

Margie remembered that Donald had looked proud at the wedding, had a certain way of standing when he approved, so she knew that she and Harold had his blessing.

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They set up housekeeping in a cottage behind Betz and Bob Leak's place a mile or so south of Donald and Lucile. Not long after, they moved into a little redwood house in Frankton, Indiana, a reasonable commute for Harold, who was working on his Masters degree at Ball State. Margie was working through summer terms as well as winter to qualify for an Indiana teaching job. After Margie finished her college degree, a bachelor of science in education, Harold took a summer scholarship with the National Science Foundation in St. Louis. They both taught high school students for many years: Harold specializing in physics and Margie in music and English. After they built their dream home on land within walking distance of Donald and Lucile, Harold taught at Danville High School and later at Brownsburg High. Margie was hired to teach at Tri-West High School, a regional school serving students from Pittsboro, North Salem, and Lizton. Her love of American musicals found an outlet in exhausting but rewarding high school theater. She found it hard to say no as a young teacher when administrators asked that she sponsor the yearbook, the worst job in the school system, but she learned to take it all in stride and stay sane. She was Donald's and Lucile's daughter to the core.

College for three daughters had not cost Donald too much, what with scholarships and Indiana state colleges' low tuition, but education is an on-going, unpredictable proposition; it wasn't finished yet. In the late 1970s Margie had a mid-career crisis. She decided she should join the Navy! Navy recruiters had visited Tri-West, where she was teaching, and unexpectedly recruited one of the teachers. Margie contacted her oldest sister in coastal Scituate, Massachusetts, between Boston and Plymouth on the South Shore. A requirement for her naval career was successful completion of a rigorous officer-training course of studies at the War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and she

hoped to stay with the Hayes Family until she could take a puddle jumper from Logan Airport in Boston to Newport. Joanne was happy to have her sister around for the weekend and took her into Logan to catch a small plane to Newport. After six weeks of “Cage those eyes” discipline and intense studies, Margie welcomed Christmas break with her family back in Indiana. She recalled dreading the hazardous flight after Christmas vacation to Newport from Boston in icy, snowy weather more than the OCS training regimen. She survived and earned her 1st OC (Officer Candidate) commission at the end of sixteen grueling weeks. To her delight, she was assigned to the Orlando, Florida, area to work as an Apprentice Training Discipline Officer for a year. She breathed a sigh of relief, knowing that her family would be pleased to hear of her coveted location. She later became a Division Officer for Recruiting. Her 3rd assignment was MTSA (Military Training Special Assistant) which included helping to write and edit a new Naval Training Manual and serving on the Performance Review Board. She was proud to carry on the family tradition that Uncle Marion and Uncle Milford had established in the United States Navy. She knew her father was gratified that she had accomplished something he was unable to do.

Her family supported her all along the way, and Harold, Jennifer, and Adam joined her in Orlando in June, six weeks after her graduation from Officer Candidate School in Newport. She was overjoyed to see her husband and children - and glad to be able to move out of BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters) since it was considered by the Navy to be “condemned” substandard housing. Harold was apprehensive about finding a teaching position in Florida, not certain how the system worked “down South,” but he forged ahead and quickly secured a new job near the naval base. Harold had enjoyed

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teaching science at Danville High School for eight years before they moved to Florida to accommodate Margie's naval career. He was offered a job teaching science at Trinity Prep School, a private school near the Winter Park naval base near Orlando. Jennifer attended Trinity Prep for three years until she transferred to a public school closer to the naval base as she entered 7th grade. Adam spent grades 3, 4, and 5 in the nearby public school where most of the students were sons and daughters of Navy personnel. Then Margie was reassigned to Indianapolis duty. Adam and Jennifer were not entirely happy about leaving their friends and the Florida sunshine when the whole Emmert Family moved back to Indiana. Margie served in the U.S. Navy until 1987, giving birth to Alison, their third and last child, as she wound up her career in the Navy. They had all fallen in love with the Orlando area and vowed they'd be back down South some day. Donald and Lucile were happy to see them return to their roots and the house they had built on eight acres of Donald's farm just down the road. Donald's close proximity to two of his daughters and some of his grandchildren was assured.

Chapter 25
Setbacks and Grandchildren

With a tragic barn fire Don's depression grew dire
His beloved farm animals all gone.

But the grandchildren beckoned, and Donald soon reckoned
That life must go on; he'd endure.

Camping trips with the kids: a journey west always rid
Don of sadness and gave him new hope.

Renovating the Falcon, riding herd on his grandsons
Kept him young and exceedingly proud.

* * *

A few months before Donald and Lucile's first grandson was born in 1964 a tragedy occurred that Donald never could forget. January of that year in Indiana was bitter cold, and Donald had rigged the barn with heat lamps to keep his two hundred young fattening hogs and other farm animals from freezing to death. Daisy was the family milk cow, a sweet-faced Jersey with big soulful eyes and a tawny coat. Her milk was high in butterfat, and the sweet butter they churned from her milk was heavenly. There were eight mother sows with new litters of little pigs, and there was Rusty, the hard-working barn cat who kept the mice and rats under control. Donald gave every pig a name, which left the family reaching for new ones; the youngest daughter Margie, still living at home, had come up with Latin numerals for the mother sows; the favorite was Octavia. Each animal had a distinct personality, and Donald knew them all.

At 5:00 a.m. Walter was up and headed out to do his own farm chores when he looked to the northeast and saw the flames. He called the Lizton Fire

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Department, all volunteer, and they in turn called in the Jamestown firemen when they realized the extent of the fire. He called Donald's number, but the phone rang and rang. Hanging up his phone, Walter jumped into his pickup truck and sped over to his brother's place. He banged on the door but there was no response. Finally Donald came to the door, half asleep, and Walter told him the barn was on fire. Donald pulled on his coveralls and shoes, dashing out the backdoor, headed for the barn engulfed in flames. His animals were trapped inside the barn. Walter had to physically restrain him, fight him, to prevent him from trying to rescue the trapped animals. The firemen knew it was hopeless to save the barn, but they were determined to save the house. They worked through the morning in sub-zero weather; WIBC announced the temperature was 16 degrees below zero at 7:00 a.m. The volunteers, who included Marion Ginn, Lucile's brother, fought the fire until their hands were in danger of frostbite. They would come in to thaw out, their eyelashes frozen, eyebrows white with frost, and go back out, working to keep the house from catching fire. Lucile kept the coffeepot full and urged the men, including Donald, to eat breakfast in between manning the hoses. Lucile held the family together, aware that Donald was on the verge of nervous collapse. He could never forgive himself, blaming his own hasty attempt to thaw out a water pipe with an oily rag. The north wall of the old wooden barn had been floor-to-hayloft bales of hay, the loft filled with hay as well. There was no way anyone could have saved any of the animals, but somehow three little pigs escaped on their own. No one ever figured out how the escape occurred. Margie named them Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego.

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Donald continued to fight nightmares and guilt-ridden mental flashes of desperate animals in agony. His animals had depended on him. He was responsible, and he had let them down.

Donald had ten grandchildren when all was said and done. They came along so quickly that he had a hard time keeping up and remembering names. After David was born July 13, 1964, Becky made her debut on New Year's Eve in 1965. Joanne recalled the loneliness of the hospital since the weather was too icy and the roads too hazardous to encourage visitors. Becky was her own fireworks and made independence her first priority. Planning had little to do with the Hayes grandkids, but Becky had her own agenda from the beginning. Donald and Lucile made road trips East to see their New Englanders as often as they could and got a kick out of Becky's feisty personality. Donald declared that she was a corker. Dick's father and mother, Howard and Florence Hayes, also combined vacation time with opportunities to see their new grandbabies. The children were always excited to see Grandma and Grandpa Hayes. It was a grueling two or three-day drive for both sets of grandparents. Howard and Florence Hayes drove from Minneapolis to see David and Becky, and they later drove from East Tennessee to New England to see their four grandchildren. Joanne and Dick had bought a three-family house with a rose garden and fenced-in backyard in Brockton, Massachusetts, a short commute to Avon, where Dick still worked. Fields Park, north of Auburn Street where they lived in the Campello section of the city, was the place David and Becky loved most. It was a Brockton nature preserve where ducks thrived and children could run and play freely. Karen arrived during a

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blizzard on February 7th in 1968, dooming her birthday parties, which were usually snowed out or postponed by Northeasters. Donald rarely allowed icy weather to ruin his travel plans and brought Lucile to welcome their granddaughter. Karen took to Grandpa and Grandma Hines with enthusiasm and always favored her grandparents. John, the artist, was born in better weather on May 17, 1969, making four Hayes grandkids for Donald and Lucile to visit and spoil “out East.”

Terri Lawson was born to Mark and Donna Mae on November 29, 1967, while they were living near Jamestown, Indiana, running a dairy farm for the Billy Cox estate. Terri, the oldest Lawson grandchild, was destined to become the quintessential nurse, a medical specialist caring for people. From the beginning her sweet personality and take-charge manner both charmed and disarmed anyone around her. A couple of years after Patrick Lawson was born on June 12, 1970, the Lawsons moved to a farm near Montezuma, Indiana, on the Wabash River. The Parke County area was ideal for bringing up children, and Terri thrived on taking care of her little brother Pat on the vast acreage they farmed. The Lawson clan seven years later welcomed Samuel born February 1, 1977. Sam completed the Lawson trio dear to their grandparents’ hearts. Donald and Lucile were able to spend more time with their Indiana grandkids and appreciated getting to know them. Donald noticed Sam’s love of music and regaled him with all his favorite harmonica tunes. “Grandpa Hines” was fortunate to live long enough to enjoy Sam’s brilliant classical and Spanish guitar performances in and around Danville, but sadly he died before Sam’s teaching career began at Ball State.

The Lawsons farmed the fertile bottom land until the big flood of 1980. Here was the incentive they needed to move back “home” to the Danville, Indiana, area, where they settled, first on Mark’s Uncle Joe’s land, which had been owned by Butler University before it was purchased by the Lawsons, and later near his parents’ farm and homestead. They eventually moved into the old stone house where Mark had grown up and farmed the land with his Dad. Mark loved history almost as much as he loved the land. He sometimes wondered how their lives would have changed had he become a history teacher.

Meantime Margie and Harold brought Jennifer Emmert into the world October 12, 1970, a few months following Pat Lawson’s birth. Donald was grateful for Lucile’s ability to keep records straight and birthdays in proper sequence. Being a grandfather was becoming complicated. Sweet Jennifer, the Emmerts’ first child, was born in Anderson Community Hospital near Frankton. They moved to Jamestown across the street from Leon and Rosetta, Harold’s parents, where they lived when Adam was born at Culver Hospital in Crawfordsville on March 2, 1973. A few months later they finished building their new home and moved in by the end of the summer of ’73. Margie went back to teaching high school students at Tri-West, and Harold continued at Danville High School. Fourteen years later Alison came along, the last granddaughter, while Margie was active as an officer in the Navy. Alison was born at St. Vincent’s Hospital March 2, 1987, giving Donald and Lucile a break remembering birthdays. Adam and Alison could celebrate their birthdays together for years to

come. Alison was the youngest grandchild, a latecomer who knew her grandfather only as an “old man,” but she knew him perhaps better than any other grandchild. There is an empathy that comes only from sharing life’s struggles.

David, on the other hand, can recall a younger grandfather. He and Donald survived two wild camping trips together when Dave was twelve and thirteen. Donald knew that Dave was a boy scout with camping skills: putting up a tent, cooking over a campfire, building a fire with or without matches, and knowing how to survive. Since Don had grown up on a farm, he had never joined scouts or any other camping organization but knew that adventures in the wilderness were considered genuine American boyhood rites of passage. He figured he owed it to his oldest grandson to make such an adventure possible. He also yearned for adventures himself. Where should they go? Alaska, of course! Donald had read about a train that took passengers north to Churchill in Manitoba, Canada, but hadn’t had an opportunity to take Lucile there yet. Here was a chance to scout out the great North Country for himself and get to know his first grandson better in the bargain. He bought a fairly new 70’s-era van from a teenager who had overreached financially. It was carpeted in back, floor to ceiling, and ideal for camping, or at least Donald hoped this was the case.

Dave had all the camping equipment required for such a trip: tent, rope, shovel, bucket, pans and utensils for cooking, matches, sleeping bag, and his own pillow. He had camped with his family, and his father had taught him whatever his scout leader might have omitted. They left Indiana the first of July and drove the Alaskan “highway,” which was a gravel road then. Dave remembers choosing

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a spot too close to a glacier for pitching their tent and nearly freezing to death, an encounter with a bear and another with a moose, an unopened can of beans exploding over the fire, nearly being left behind as the ferry pulled out from Vancouver, and fighting mosquitoes all through the Yukon and Alaska. Dave laughed about the frequent disasters, but they did it again the following year and survived both adventures to the North Country. Donald sold the van at a profit.

Becky was something of a tomboy and by rights should have been the lucky grandchild to go with Donald on the second camping trip to Alaska, but she was philosophical and pondered the hair-raising stories of disaster and near escapes that Dave related after he and his grandfather returned from their second adventure in America's 49th state. It was probably just as well, she reasoned, that Dave accompanied Grandpa Hines on these insane trips to the Yukon and Alaska. She would undoubtedly have told him off when he deserved it.

As David turned seven, Becky five years old, Karen a toddler and John a baby, the Hayes Family piled their growing family into their hatchback and headed west to Indiana. Ritual annual trips to the grandparents were ordeals, but the grandchildren loved the freedom of the farm. The family usually camped along the way during summer trips, favoring a western Pennsylvania forest they called "Hungry Bear" woods in the Allegheny Mountains. Then it was on to Indiana. Becky once declared that she felt more "at home" on the farm than anywhere else. This startled her mother since their children had always been city dwellers. Nothing should have surprised Joanne since their daughter at age two had stood on a small hill outside their Brockton home loudly declaiming to their

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devoutly Catholic neighbor, who was watering his garden, using every forbidden word she had heard from The Belchers, the outlaw neighbors across the street. When Mom washed her mouth out with soap, Becky indignantly accused her of following a neighbor's suggestion instead of thinking for herself. At any rate, this August visit to the Indiana farm occurred during dread dog days, the worst of Indiana's heat and humidity. Becky wanted to cool off. In Becky's own words:

-Like the time we were all there in the summer (I was maybe 5) and it was hot and we were bored and complaining and bugging him that we wanted to go swimming, so he built us a swimming pool out of random junk and lined it with a tarp or something -- I don't remember the exact materials but I have this event in my earliest memory. Classic Shorty: make it happen with whatever you got lying around. Grandma made us a water slide out of a long piece of plastic and a garden hose. We had fun.

The visits to the Hines Farm usually involved such innovations as well as unusual recreational experiences. Dave, for example, looked forward to riding the biggest pigs with Robert Alexander, his cousin. The two young cowboys thrived on the mud and the squealing, laughing until they were weak in the knees. David suggested they were "pigboys" but Robert assured him that cowboys never rode cows, so they were correctly named. They also climbed onto the hog houses in the shade and traded stories, lying with their backs against the cool corrugated roof, watching the clouds.

Becky's memories include the infamous Falcon caper. She and Karen were teenagers, both visiting Grandpa Hines and both in love with his junked Ford Falcon gathering a thick coat of dust in the barn. Karen had automotive

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repair skills and was determined to get it running. They put on coveralls they found in the back of his closet and convinced Grandpa to come with them. Donald, feeling at home in his long-neglected coveralls, unlocked the abandoned shop, turned on the lights, the grinder, and began sorting his tools in a greasy toolbox. They managed to push the Falcon from the barn to the shop and began working on the engine. Here's how Becky remembers the adventure:

Most recently, (recent, as in, at this point nobody thought he should still be driving) he was taking me and Karen into town to get the flywheel rebuilt (or whatever - Karen would have better details) for that Falcon he was going to give up (but after we fixed the fly wheel we found out it had no brakes)... anyhow, he was driving like Mr. McGoo as usual, and a big semi-truck was coming at us on the other side but Grandpa wanted to give the truck more room, so without slowing down he veers off onto the grass, heading straight for a mailbox on the side of the road. We were looking at each other like "this is it, bye bye" -- but just as we passed the truck he pinned the car right between the truck and the post and veered back onto the road. Anyway we went into town. "The Girls" (Karen and I) flanked him as he proceeded to terrorize everyone at the bank and the auto shop, over-stepping the boundaries of propriety and making a "senile" horse's ass of himself at every turn. At the first auto parts store the guys looked bored and sarcastic, didn't want to tolerate a tiresome old man. At the second parts shop everybody knew him and were glad to see him, joking around with him, and they got his business. He had that flywheel resurfaced and we brought it back. Out in his dirty old-school garage the three of us in our coveralls put the dang thing in the car -- but Grandpa wanted to check and make sure Karen did it right. She was getting frustrated because she couldn't get the

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clutch and flywheel back into place, so he gets down on his back on the creeper and scoots under the car (he was way past 80 years old), and sure enough he spots the trouble. He pointed out the details of fitting the clutch and flywheel onto the drive shaft. To do this, he had to pull out the drive shaft. He put it up onto the workbench and showed me and Karen where one of the pins had come loose. He fastened it back into its slot, and Karen slid back under the car, shoving the driveshaft into place, snapping the flywheel into position. Karen emerged from under the Falcon, grinning from ear to ear, her hands and face greasy, but she knew she had it in right. Meanwhile we all had the flu (from eating fly-infested pork?) and I had to go outside the garage and barf a couple times while we fixed the car...

We had to head back to the West Coast, but Grandpa Hines enjoyed himself even if we didn't finish putting the Falcon back on the road. We came close though.

That Falcon had seen many dusty back roads and busy interstate highways. Donald's grandfathering required travel to the ends of the nation with many stops in between. He often took Lucile to New England to visit their four grandchildren in Massachusetts where they set out on tent camping trips. Moosehead Lake and remote Seboomook in Maine offered wilderness adventures that tested the grandkids' survival skills, Donald's auto repair expertise, and Lucile's patience. One summer vacation Donald and Lucile pulled into the Hayes driveway in their '64 Ford Falcon ready to go camping with Dave, Becky, Karen, and John. Eight people required a convoy, so the Falcon headed north following the VW hatchback with the canoe tied on top. They reached Greenville, Maine, in the afternoon as dark clouds hovered over the vast lake known as Moosehead. Over a late lunch, they decided to drive on up the lake on lumber

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company roads to Seboomook. As Dick paid a ranger for a campsite, Donald joked to a young man, "Say, your w-w-wife's a b-b-better wood chopper than y-y-you are!" The fellow was not in a joking mood and took a menacing step towards Donald, glaring with hot-temper fury. Dick saw the imminent fight coming in time to intervene: "It's OK, Sir. He's only kidding you. Calm down." The fellow backed off, glowering at Donald. Setting up camp, Dick directed the children to carry out assigned camping tasks but discovered to his dismay that they had forgotten the tent poles. Simultaneously, Joanne realized that a suitcase containing her clothes was still on the bed back home. David got a kick out of saving the day; his mother wore his sweatshirts, and he helped his father cut saplings which they used as tent poles. It rained hard that night, and Donald was sure they'd drown in their sleep. The next morning, Donald was astounded that he wasn't wet. At breakfast he announced: "D-Dick, you're a g-g-good tent rigger. N-Not a drop of rain got inside m-m-my tent. D-D-Dry as a bone!" The children discovered another family with kids their ages and went off into the woods to gather wood dropped by loggers. While the youngsters were engaged in cabin building, Donald decided to take a canoe ride, so Dick and Joanne manned the paddles with Donald sitting in the middle. Lucile preferred to hold down the fort and watch the children. As they rowed to the middle of the lake, the clouds thickened, and Joanne heard an unmistakable sound. She asked a rhetorical question: "Isn't that thunder?" At that Donald stood up and looked around. The little green canoe tipped precariously, taking on water, as Joanne shouted, "Dad, sit down!" Donald meekly sat back down as Dick and Joanne frantically leaned against the paddles, trying to beat the storm back to shore. Meanwhile, Lucile had made lunch for the children, who excitedly invited the adults to visit their log cabin built with

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dropped six-foot logs. Becky and Karen had made friends with girls from New Jersey. David had discovered esoteric religious intrigue from his new Jehovah's Witness buddies, who spooked them with warnings about 144,000 saved and avoiding 666 threats. Never had numbers seemed so ominous or nights so dark. After a week of rain, the four children began coughing, and the adults decided to take them into Greenville to see a doctor. The only physician in the area was an old Maineiac doctor who talked incessantly about communists and conspiracies, but he prescribed sulfa, which eased the ear infections. John, the youngest, recovered last but remembered the discomfort. Thirty years later he was recalling his grandfather's love of adventure:

When Grandpa Hines visited me in San Francisco after Grandma died, we had a great time. He was in his nineties, must have been 90 since it was February 1999. He showed up on a Sunday and slept on an extra bed I had set up next to mine in front of the windows. He liked the sound of traffic. Pine Street is right on the cable line, and the cable cars rattle coming down the steep street. Next day, Monday, February 15th, I took him to the Cow Palace for the 50th annual Grand National Roadster Show where we saw a few nice Mercs and endless Fords, hotrods, mostly early '30s models. They also had a few custom bikes in the lobby. Good show. He sat down after about an hour and took a rest while I tried to absorb as much as I could. It went by too fast to learn much, and he already knew it all...that night when we were going through my "car book" I inadvertently insulted him by saying, "I bet you musta worked on a lot of those old cars." He snapped, "John! I worked on every single one of 'em!"

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Next day, February 16th, I dragged him (I brought the folding chair this time.) to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and I'm pretty sure he hated it more than Deusebergs (those fancy cars driven by movie stars in the 1930's). Anyway we got through it and had dinner at the International Café on 3rd Street. They had just about everything, so he liked it.

*Next day, Wednesday, the 17th, we went to Fisherman's Wharf, got tickets to Alcatraz for the next day, and stopped to talk with my artist-friend, Diarmud, from Ireland. Diarmud told him a joke about a farmer whose pig had saved him in a fire, and now the pig was missing a leg. I've forgotten all the details that made the joke so funny, but it ends with the stranger asking about the pig's leg, and the farmer replies, "A pig like that you don't eat all at once!" Believe me, it was much better when Diarmud told it. That night I rented two Bogart movies, (He loved Bogart.), *To Have and Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*, both co-starring Lauren Bacall. That was the night he first told me the "Al Capone Story."*

The next day, February 18th, Thursday, we went to Alcatraz and took the audio cassette tour of the prison like everybody else. When the tour was over, we were walking down the boat ramp when Grandpa struck up a conversation with a park ranger. This is when I prompted him to retell the story, which was practically verbatim from the night before. He and his sister bought a farm in 1931, his first. They split it 50/50, and eventually he bought her half. Anyway it was common knowledge locally that gangster Al Capone had recently purchased the house across the highway. (Park ranger's ears light up; he exclaims, "Really? That's very interesting, do tell! Etc.") Anyway, he goes into great detail about how

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the back seats on all these long black Buick Super-sixes flip back on hinges to reveal kegs of moonshine. (Nice welding job! Who could have done it?) This house was a stopover point for bootleg whiskey runners working for Al Capone. Grandpa saw them "plenty of times." He said "They got to having wild parties all night, and one of the neighbors called the law." When I asked if these neighbors wouldn't have been miles away, he sort of gave a nod that, yes, they weren't so close. Anyway, I asked him straight out if he ever saw Al Capone, and he said, "No, I never did." The only time I remember Grandpa getting angry or maybe annoyed at me was when I put on some old music I thought he might like (Cab Calloway). He yelled, "Turn it off!" I asked him once, "What was the best car ever made?" He said, "You mean the best engine? That was the 1927 Chevrolet.

Becky remembers a darker time before Lucile died of multiple strokes. Donald insisted she needed to walk and make a better effort, use her will power, but strokes had left her weak and frustrated. He put her into their creatively redesigned GEO and drove across the country, staying with relatives or friends, usually unannounced. The GEO was a tiny car that he had rigged with a wooden luggage carrier on top. In spite of the heavy, ungainly invention, he had tinkered with the GEO engine until he claimed to get 60 miles to the gallon. So off they would go, occasionally all the way to the West Coast where John, Karen, and Becky were working and going to school. Becky recalls:

Yep I could have told you a similar story, when Grandpa dragged Grandma out to San Francisco in his tiny Geo stuffed to the roof with all their junk. It was kind of a sad story though so I didn't want to bring it up. They didn't

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call ahead, just showed up. I was in the middle of school and work and there was nothing we could really do together. There was no room in their car for me and John, so I had to lead them around on my Ninja motorcycle, with Mr. McGoo following me around the streets of San Francisco in his silly-packed Geo. We went to McDonald's in the Haight-Ashbury, and Grandma looked terrified of all the hippies. I had to walk her to the bathroom there: my first and last experience with "elder care" (which I am not cut out for). Grandma was not up to the trip, and none of us had a place for them to stay. Grandma couldn't have made it up the stairs to my place or John's no matter how Grandpa insisted she could -- not that we would have had room for them anyway -- so I took them to the nearest motel; it was pretty expensive and not a very nice place, about as charming as a downtown gas station... Grandpa got sick, was throwing up, and they just took off the next morning back to Indiana.

I know there was a time before this when Grandpa came to visit, because I had my Honda Rebel (my first bike) and Grandpa jumped on the back and I drove him around those crazy San Francisco hills up near John's house on my motorcycle. I couldn't even believe he could get his short leg up over the seat, but he jumped right on. I seem to remember he was in his late 80's at that time.

Mark's and Donna Mae's oldest daughter Terri, who is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the Community Hospital in Anderson, Indiana, where Donald first worked for GM Buick in the 1930s, remembers her grandfather this way:

I know I have fond memories of Grandpa Hines taking out his teeth and making funny faces at us or letting us get candy at the shop. I always remember that he and Grandma made sure they attended every birthday celebration they could and every activity they could. They always supported every educational endeavor. They came to my graduation from nursing school in 1991 and Grandpa attended my graduation with my master's degree in 2003 with my parents.

I've never seen anyone prouder than Grandpa when he got to meet his first great-grandson, Carl. I didn't expect to see him and Grandma at the hospital when Carl was born but there they came down the hall- him in one of his incredible hats and Grandma in her faux fur wrap. He didn't hold Carl much but he was just thrilled! Carl has fond memories of him, too. There was one time when he was about 4-5 years old when Grandpa chased him around the dining table at Mom and Dad's. When he was a little baby and Mom came up to baby sit while I slept during the day, she would occasionally bring Grandma and Grandpa with her. Grandpa loved to take walks in my woods and would walk outside a little with Carl.

When Caleb came along in 1997, Grandma was no longer with us, but again, Grandpa was very proud of his great-grandsons. He held Caleb a couple of times down at Mom and Dad's. He wasn't as close to Caleb because his mind was starting to go a little by that time but he always loved watching my boys play and run around. Even when his mind was pretty much 'gone' Mom and Dad would bring him to football games and even though he didn't necessarily know everyone, he knew that someone significant to him was on that field. During halftime one time, during Carl's pee-wee football years, Carl came over to say hi and Grandpa insisted on standing up to pat Carl on the shoulders. He knew. Carl had a soft spot for Grandpa, and

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when he started getting taller than Grandpa, Grandpa Hines just looked up at him and laughed in that special way.

*Terri Girt, MSN, APRN, BCMed-Surg Clinical Nurse Specialist
Community Hospital Anderson, IN*

Jennifer, one of Don and Lucile's granddaughters, had finished her degree at Milligan College, where she met a young, handsome fellow named Joe Champa. The wedding was held at the Jamestown Christian Church where Donald and Lucile helped to celebrate the bright future of the two youngsters. Jennifer was a classic beauty but suffered troubling disabilities. She had neurological problems first evident by signs of obsessive-compulsive disorder which eventually developed into MS. The newlyweds needed a place to live, and Donald quickly realized that his situation with Lucile was growing too difficult for him to manage by himself. He offered to have the couple live with him in the upstairs section of the house where they would have privacy. Jennifer would take care of Lucile, cook meals, and Joe could mow the lawn and take care of the landscaping. The plan worked for awhile, but Lucile's strokes and worsening dementia made Jennifer's job more and more difficult.

The marriage fell upon rocky ground, and Donald's despair over Lucile's deterioration caused more grief than he could bear. He was a hard task master, failing to show his appreciation for Jennifer's hard work and desperate need for sleep. She was taking courses in Indianapolis toward a certificate in dental hygiene, trying to make her relationship with Joe work, and it was all falling apart. When Jennifer and Joe moved out, Donald tried to cope with Lucile's care and his complicated situation, but nothing was working.

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Chapter 26 Travel and Death

Don travels to Europe with Farm Bureau, loving each farm and each sight.
He returns with new memories and new friends that Lucile chooses to write.

The deaths of Glendon, Walter, and Jim create a deep family pain.
Those left behind can't fathom the loss; the family is never the same.

Then, Uncle Wayne and Grandma Ginn go; the dark angel has his way.
Charlie is gone too, but Don's hardest blow is when Lucile passes away.

* * *

After their three daughters had left home, earned college degrees, taught school, gotten married, and were anticipating children, Donald made up his mind to see the world. He eventually dragged Lucile, ever the good sport, all over Canada, Europe, Japan, China, Australia, and the U.S.S.R. He missed planes, wandered off on his own, got lost in unauthorized sections of strange cities, fell asleep in airports, was rescued by kind-hearted locals and had an excellent time. So far as anyone knows he caused no serious international incidents, but he gave Lucile some worrisome moments. Rumors and wild stories about Donald might be entertaining, but sticking to the facts and nothing but the facts would be taking the high road. We'll take the high road with an occasional side trip. That's the way Don did it.

Donald loved to travel, but "traditional" guided tours would not have suited him. Fortunately Farm Bureau and the National Live Stock Producers Association sponsored farm tours. He signed up in 1964 for his first guided tour of farms overseas. The Live Stock Producers were promoting a 22-day "Friendship Tour of Europe." This "first-ever" agricultural tour of five countries included farms and markets in France, England,

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West Germany, Holland, and Switzerland. Even in the Vietnam War-era summer of 1964, \$815 per person from New York City sounded reasonable to Don since it included air fare as well as all hotel, meal and sightseeing expenses. Lucile had urged Donald to travel without her and offered to drive the car back to Indiana after dropping him off at La Guardia Airport. She assured him that she would hold down the fort, and he knew the fort was in good hands.

Don flew KLM Royal Dutch Airlines with a group of thirty diverse farmers from Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Ohio, Missouri, North Carolina, and New York. In Amsterdam they admired quantities of Rembrandt art and visited Rembrandt's house as well. Their guide took them to the Amsterdam Exchange, the oldest stock exchange in the world. The Dutch Breeders Association hosted their first evening reception following an afternoon of sightseeing along the canals. Donald and his new friends were able to see the famous Dutch windmills and dikes before they had the opportunity to enjoy the local cuisine. The next day was an exhausting round of narrated, informative agricultural excursions in Holland. The American farmers saw the Dutch Institutes for Livestock Research, Feeding, Poultry Breeding, Experimental Farm Animal Husbandry, and the State Agricultural University.

Back in Indiana, Donald's wife wrote letters to him faithfully, keeping him up to date regarding the farm, garage business, and local gossip. The newsy content of Lucile's daily letters to Donald as he traveled was a window on their relationship and revealed her mixed feelings about staying home to shoulder responsibilities vs. traveling. Her own longing to see the world, which she shared with Don, was in conflict with her stoic sense of responsibility.

On June 24, 1964, she wrote:

Dear Donald,

It is a beautiful day in Indiana. At 7:00 A.M. I've fed the stock and checked the water, and had my eggs, toast and coffee – and even listened to the news. Apparently, the thunderstorms are over for the time being, and hay-making weather is promised for the next several days. Moreover, the resurfacing of the road is progressing.

Have you met a “Millie” or a counterpart of your pet pig “Priscilla” yet? The pigs at present seem to be more interested in eating ear corn than the ground feed. Of course, with our 90 degree temperatures and high humidity, all of the pigs are more interested in lying around in the shade or a mud puddle. Yesterday I looked out in the south field to see the cattle and hogs standing in the pond. The pond has disappeared this morning.

The humidity has dropped and much of the dampness has disappeared from the basement.

Yesterday I cleaned the basement, even cleaned out the sink hole. As the humidity had dropped, the clothes dried in a very short time. The 80 degree temperatures forecast will suit me just fine.

I took some tomato plants from our garden over to Dad, and he in turn gave me two quarts of raspberries and some juice for jelly. While I was there Lawrence and Joan Robinson, Elsie Warren's brother, from Bridgeport came. They had just returned from one of those Allison excursions to New York City that included the NYC World's Fair and a 3-hour trip around Manhattan Island.

I still hope you are having a wonderful time. Oh yes, next time I'm going with you – no matter whether I want to go or not. I MISS YOU. SHOCKED

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Love, Lucile

From Switzerland Donald wrote a Palace Hotel Lucerne post card to Lucile:

I took a final look at Lucern in Switzerland this morning. Then we drove all day thru Switzerland and France to Nevers and got here about 9:00 this evening. It is now 10:30 p.m. The Swiss are very smart and the best workers in the world. When we got into France, things changed. Most of buildings were 200 or 300 years old and not kept up at all.

=Don= The card was mailed from Nevers-Gare, Nievre.

Donald saved most of Lucile's letters, and she was a conscientious letter writer; however, many of his cards and letters have been lost. One page from a six-page letter written on Midland Hotel stationery in Birmingham, England, is preserved. Don writes:

"I have not had a chance to take a ride thru Birmingham, but I might this evening after the livestock show. Today we went thru two of the Old Castles built in 1387. The stone walls with the water ditch around them are still there. It took a lot of labor to build all this just to protect a few. They have done a good job of preserving them. The most interesting part this morning was the drive thru Stratford-on-Avon. We stopped and went thru the Shakespear part of the town. It was in pretty good shape to be 400 years old. I got one good picture of the Inn where Shakespear wrote and worked, and we ate in the restaurant there. Hope you have a chance some day to go thru these places. How about going as soon as I get home – HA HA –

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Tomorrow I am going to the National Livestock Exhibit. It is quite an event here in England. The Queen is supposed to be there. If I see her, I'll tell her all about you. She might even want to see those pictures of the Girls. =Don=

R.R. #1, Box #78

Lizton, Indiana

June 25, 1964

Dear Donald,

This should be the first good haymaking day, as the sun is shining. Some cut their hay down day before yesterday – Wesley did in fact – and I rather imagine he will put up his hay today. Walter cut the hay in the south part of that field yesterday about noon.

I received your first post card yesterday. Now, when I receive your mail from Europe I can begin to relax. I'm glad you had time to see the NYC Fair before your KLM Flight. Of course, I knew General Motors would have the best exhibit on the grounds.

I have managed to feed the livestock by 6:30 a.m. each day – sometimes earlier than that. They demand to be fed both early and late. This morning Ferdinand even breathed down the back of my neck as I walked over to the wagon. I try to fool them sometimes, unloading from the other wagon onto the scoop shovel, so as to keep them out of my way. However, they soon make straight for me after I go to the old wagon.

Wesley did cultivate in the north field yesterday afternoon. My guess is that practically all the corn is laid by.

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I presume you will send all your mail by "Air." It will cost a little more, but by that method I would receive it within four to six days.

There is really no news. The phone seldom rings. One section of road surfacing went almost to Walter's road yesterday. They are beginning to work now, coming from Grafton's curve this way. You should have a good road to drive on when you return. YOU HAVEN'T DECIDED TO REMAIN IN PARIS, have you?

I'll take it all back. In the last fifteen minutes – Gertrude called, I called Gertrude, Paul Dale's wife called and now Thelma just called! Of course those were all business calls!

Hydraulic Hoist sent you a pocket secretary with your name on it yesterday. It would not have held your passport, etc., but it is nice. Then Burma Shave products came yesterday. They even sent some razor blades.

I must go to the shop and do some work, or I'll get fired.

Love,

Lucile

In Hamburg, Germany, Don and his group toured the market and took an excursion to Cruxhaven visiting a poultry research organization. They took the Autobahn to Frankfurt, did sightseeing in Heidelberg, Baden Baden and saw the Rhine Falls after driving through the heart of the Black Forest. Entering Switzerland, they continued through the cleanest landscape Don had ever seen to Lucerne on the Lake. In Lucerne they managed to see the Swiss Guard's Lion Monument, the 1333 wooden chapel bridge, medieval town walls and the Town Hall built in 1599. They visited Bernese Oberland

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Experimental Center at Zug, and the following day went up Mt. Pilatus with several other adventurous friends.

July 1st Lucile wrote:

It is 8 AM and time for me to go to the shop. I fed the cattle and checked their water, mowed weeds and worked in the garden for a little while before breakfast. I got up a little later than yesterday when I was up at 5:30 A.M. Oh, this clean living: no television, early to bed, etc.

I received two letters from you in Hamburg yesterday. SO THEY SWITCHED SUITCASES ON YOU – AND WE WERE SO SURE THERE WASN'T ANOTHER RED SUITCASE LIKE THAT ONE! You doubtless noticed that I put those pills you take before meals in your bag. It was probably all that excitement – oh yes – and too much food.

I read both your letters to Mother and Dad, and they enjoyed them immensely. Howard Barringer was pleased to have heard from you. Although it looked like rain yesterday, it didn't rain here. Wheat must have flowed into the elevator yesterday, as it must have been nine or later when Alice left there last evening.

Wesley is cultivating beans this morning, as he also did yesterday afternoon. Hogs went to at least 18 cents yesterday – the highest they had been in a long time. You have some that weigh 250 – or do they just look that way?? I discovered they still have quite a little pond of their own down here in the south field. I couldn't tell what color the hogs were, but there was a look of contentment in their eyes.

Must go to the shop. Love,

Lucile

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July 2nd they left Lucerne, driving through the Emmenthal region to Bern, capital of the Swiss Confederation. They entered France at Les Verrieres, and traveling through Burgundy, they arrived in Nevers to study Charolais herds and to inspect France's renowned Hog-research Center. Donald expected to see Charolais cattle in France, but white cows in such profusion made him long for a friendly white-faced Hereford after awhile. They left Nevers traveling north along the Loire River through the forest of Fontainebleau to Paris in time to celebrate July 4th with his fellow Americans. Three more days in Paris allowed them to see Napoleon's Tomb, the Eiffel Tower, Etoile, the Arc de Triomphe, Trocadero, Bois de Boulogne, the Opera, and many cathedrals. The highlight was La Villette Market, France's leading marketing center averaging 6,000 cattle, 1,500 calves, 10,000 sheep, and 1,000 hogs a day. Their animated, bi-lingual tour guide insisted they learn "The Marseillaise," France's national anthem. Since Donald had learned English phonetically, the Frenchman's methods were compatible with Donald's learning style. "Allons enfants de la patrie; Les jours de gloire sont arrivees" stuck in Don's mind, and "Marchons, marchons" remained embedded in his brain years later when dementia had taken most of everything else.

Back home in Indiana Lucile was keeping up her end of the deal with hard work and faithful correspondence. On June 26, 1964, she wrote:

Dear Donald,

Sooooo - you are in Paris! Does it live up to your expectations?

I don't know why everything is so quiet this morning. I'm sure at least a part of the road gang worked all night. There was a full moon, not a cloud in the sky, and I believe the State Highway Department must have taken advantage of it.

Floyd Whittinghill managed to break the axle in his John Deere day before yesterday, and had Wesley help him install the new one yesterday. He plans to put up hay today. I guess it was not quite ready yesterday.

Tinker, the lovable stray, makes himself scarce now, so we know whom he comes to see. He must miss you. And we thought it was Jody. That reminds me: one of Marjorie's roommates at Hanging Rock where she is working this summer is called "Tinker." Jody misses you, but at least she is the Main Dog now.

I trust you are getting a lot of good pictures. Are you thinking of going on a lecture tour?

John Hoover was around yesterday, as usual. It seems Maurice must have had Wesley put in a freeze plug last evening.

My, you do get around. I just noticed that my next mail will be sent to London, England.

I'm tempted to go back to sleep, as the road equipment caused me to spend a rather wakeful night. However, after thinking it over, I guess I should go to the shop.

Love,

Lucile

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P.S. I'm hoping to hear from you tomorrow. Your card, which was mailed from Pittsburgh, didn't come until yesterday. It was first marked postage due – no amount marked. Then it was sent on, and there was a stamp on it.

Donald and the Friendship Tour group left Paris for London by morning plane and had time for an afternoon tour of the West End, London's theater district. They saw the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, walked through Hyde Park where an orator was haranguing the crowd, visited the Houses of Parliament with its Tower of Big Ben, and were relieved to rest and meditate during 5 p.m. evensong in Westminster Abbey. They left London the next day, traveling through Oxford, waving to the ancient university, straining to see remote Blenheim Castle, birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, paying their respects to Shakespeare as they drove through the bard's home town, Stratford-upon-Avon and, down the road, saluting Warwick Castle. Whirlwind tour it was, but their goal was Stoneleigh Abbey in Leamington Spa, where they were to attend The Royal Show, England's major agricultural event. The promotions and tour guides had promised "all that is best in farming under ideal conditions" and "honorary stewards will welcome you and attend to your wishes as guests of the Royal Agricultural Society of England." They were impressed indeed to see over 3,000 pedigree cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats.

The last letter Lucile wrote to Don while he was traveling with the National Livestock Tour was written July 5, 1964:

Dear Donald,

Here comes my last epistle! I figure from here on out, you are on your way home.

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Before you left on the trip, you said you would like to send cards to both Jim and John Alexander. I didn't have the addresses at the time, but did get them from Mozella last evening:

Mr. and Mrs. John Alexander	SFC James H. Alexander
1141 Sonoma Ave., Apt. #4	RA 16605172
Seaside, California	Det. "E" KMAG APO 358
	San Francisco, California

Mozella feels that they really do not know where Jim is. I believe Ursaline has had only one letter. Mozella feels that he might be in Viet Nam, in which case he would not be able to tell them. By the way, John got his rating – without the delay they had expected.

Marjorie was pleasantly surprised yesterday to open a letter from the president of Milligan College, the first paragraph of which reads as follows:

“May I offer you my congratulations upon your achievement in your high school program, which qualifies you for an honor scholarship at Milligan for your freshman year in the college.”

Last evening Mozella asked me to come over for ice cream and cake. Mrs. Hooten and the four youngest children were there and they and Ann enjoyed playing with sparklers. You should have seen Elizabeth and Mary Ann. Neither was afraid, and their eyes sparkled just like the fireworks. Glendon also played the organ for a little while.

We had a nice shower on Friday evening just before I left for Purdue, where Dad and I attended the Informal Buffet given by the girls at Home Management House No. 2 for their parents. It was very nice – if you don't believe me, just ask Dad. You should

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have seen those beaming mothers, each feeling that her daughter had a wonderful opportunity in living at the house this summer and having the responsibility of buying groceries for all seven girls, three meals a day, for a week.

The soy beans have been cultivated at least twice and the wheat has been combined. Corn just looks wonderful. Don't worry about souvenirs and gifts. Get plenty of pictures with the camera.

Love,

Lucile

Back in London by motor coach, they had a relaxing free day in London before flying back on July 12th at 4:15 p.m. on KLM Flight 641. Donald relished the flight back to NYC, especially since his return flight companion was Henry Makizuru from Kailua, Hawaii, whose friendly, candid personality made the long flight seem short. Henry confided that he was struggling with a decision about going back to school, and they parted good friends. Lucile was at the airport waiting to greet Don, who confessed he was homesick. They stayed with friends on the way back home and on the evening of the second day of steady driving arrived safely home.

Lucile discovered when she called Massachusetts from Indiana that David Hayes had arrived early, was in a Cambridge Hospital incubator and needed a visit from his renegade, globe-trotting grandparents. Donald and Lucile figured this was a fitting finale to Don's agricultural tour of Europe: their first grandson! Joanne encouraged them to come out for a visit, and Donald didn't hesitate. Since July was vacation for their two younger daughters, Donna Mae and Margie were able to make the trip too. Lucile was as eager as Donald to see their new grandchild, so before he even had time to rest up from

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his three weeks overseas, Donald, with Lucile and their daughters this time, was on the road again headed east. Dick and Joanne were in the midst of moving from Cambridge to Avon, Massachusetts, where Dick had been appointed Director of the public library there. They had found a large apartment on High Street within walking distance of both the library and Avon High School, where Joanne was teaching French and English. The whole family helped Joanne and Dick with their new-born move into an apartment twice the size of the previous studio apartment on Oxford Street. The sparse furniture seemed to rattle around, but it helped to have the space filled with company – relatives at that!

After they returned, Donald felt guilty that Wesley had a backlog at the shop and so he worked late hours for months to catch up. His sleep habits had always been erratic, but after the trip to Europe he began waking in the middle of the night. He would pull on his coveralls and work shoes, walk down to the shop in the dark and work on the most urgent jobs until dawn. They got the work done, but one result was an ulcer that became worse and worse. Dr. Schaaf was able to help him stabilize his condition, but Lucile had to put him on a diet of milk toast and soft boiled eggs for breakfast. The habit of pouring warm milk over everything endured even after his ulcer healed.

One other result was his decision not to participate in a similar tour to South American farms the following year. His appetite for travel had been whetted, however, and he convinced Lucile to travel with him to visit friends he had made during the Friendship Tour. They launched a follow-up series of slide tours with friends who had traveled with Don: Lester Wilts near Canfield, Ohio, where they had a quick-see at their turkeys and cattle, and Hugo Klafehns near Hamlin, New York, where they had been invited to stay overnight. In a letter to them Lucile thanks them for the lovely time at

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their cottage on Lake Ontario and comments on sitting up until the wee hours viewing their European slides. They became firm friends with Juanita Horton-Grant from Kansas and exchanged correspondence with her for years.

Lucile put her secretarial skills to an unexpected use. Although she had not gone with Donald on that Cattlemen's Friendship Tour, she corresponded with friends Don had made, watched numerous slide shows, and enjoyed the trip vicariously. In a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Holding of Hominy, Oklahoma, she writes: "We took Marjorie, our youngest, to Milligan College in Eastern Tennessee, and drove across the state to visit with Mr. Frost. Again we spent time viewing our slides. He had shown his slides at the town park in Brentwood, Tennessee, the previous evening. We enjoyed visiting with Dr. Galloway on our way home from the Farm Progress Show, met his son Marshall, and again viewed slides. In fact, we have exchanged quite a few. Stewart Barton of Pleasant Hill, Illinois, wrote that he often thought of the good times we had on the tour—that it was something he would always remember. We enjoyed talking with the Lewis Smiths one Sunday morning and later received a letter from them." Lucile adds a P.S. "Although I have not met all those who were on the trip with Donald, I have thoroughly enjoyed corresponding with them. Donald has told me often, Mrs. Holding, that you have such a lovely voice."

They visited Carl and Margaret Mitzner of Tipton, Iowa, who had just built a machine shed on their farm and proudly showed it to Donald and Lucile. Carl had also helped put up a building for the Lions Club. They enjoyed telling Don and Lucile about their trip to New York with a group of forty-five to attend a Methodist United Nations Seminar in November. When Lucile wrote to the Mitzners she mentioned that Hugo Klafehn, another member of the Friendship Tour, had suffered a broken hip in October

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and was in the hospital for sixteen weeks. It seemed that this friendship tour, originally to expand farm and ranch friendships overseas had also created a lasting network of American friends.

They corresponded with Dorothy Millikan of “Millikan’s Country Hams” in Asheboro, North Carolina, who boasted that Asheboro area had eight and a half inches of snow the week before. Lucile replied that Indiana had had two big snows: thirteen inches each time. Lucile wrote: “For the first time since I can remember, there were two days in succession we did not get any mail. No mail even came in to the Lizton Post Office. Our farm is on a state highway, too!” Since Lucile’s father Charlie Ginn had been postmaster in Lizton for many years, Lucile paid attention to those things.

One October morning in 1965 Don had a telephone call from his sister Mozella. Her husband Glendon had died suddenly after a long struggle with lung cancer and she was grief-stricken. Don tried to console her and offer her suggestions, but she couldn’t talk and hung up. Glendon’s Alexander Family took care of the funeral arrangements, but Mozella, who had a young daughter Ann in school and both sons, Jim and John Allen, away in the army, couldn’t cope with the loss. Donald tried to visit when he could take time from his work, but he soon realized his sister’s life was crumbling, and the daughter in jeopardy. Not being able to do more made him angry and frustrated.

Their travels were put on hold during the Vietnam War after Jim Alexander was killed in “friendly fire” – the cruelest oxymoron of all - trying to prevent a grenade from killing his young soldiers when one of his men went berserk and threw a live grenade into the midst of them. Jim threw himself on the grenade, which exploded. Jim lived in hospital for two weeks, but it took the Army officials much longer than that to reveal the

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true story in its entirety to Jim's mother. Mozella was devastated. She grew bitter and cynical. Ann was distraught, painted her room to look like blood dripping from the ceiling down the walls. Don felt helpless to ease his sister's and niece's pain.

His other sister, Goldia, was also grieving. Her husband, Walter Siedentop, had been killed in a farm accident, falling from their hay loft. She suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized. Lucile and Don invited Lenore, Goldia's youngest daughter, to come live with them until Goldia had recovered. Lenore became part of the family and contributed her sharp wit and ready humor to the household. Her sister, Mary Lee, was at Indiana University pursuing a music degree during this upheaval. Donald longed to ease his sisters' suffering, but he and Lucile felt inadequate to be much help. Don was convinced that life was too full of pain and sorrow to make sense.

Shortly after Terri Lawson was born to Donna Mae and Mark, Wayne Fritts died. It was hard to believe they'd never hear that gravelly voice again. Donald and Lucile's daughters had doted on their Uncle Wayne and would remember him vividly any time they saw a package of Dentyne gum. Thelma grieved terribly but became busier than ever in her church activities. Their son Sherrill, who had trained for the ministry at Lincoln Bible College, was a comfort. He had married a minister's daughter, Jaranell, who was the ideal wife. Their children gave Thelma great comfort as they grew up under her loving eyes. When Sherrill's ministries required a move too far for frequent visits, Thelma relied on photography and correspondence as compensation. Donald and Lucile followed the lives of Sherrill's children and grandchildren, reading their letters avidly and making the family reunions feasts for the memory as well as the stomach.

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When Ethel Ginn died in 1969, osteoporosis finally captured another victim. Don tried to write to his oldest daughter, who was distraught because it was impossible to leave her teaching responsibilities to attend her Grandma Ginn's funeral in Indiana, but once again, he felt inadequate to help. He was grateful that Lucile was better at writing letters, and he vowed to arrange another road trip east to visit The Hayes Family in Brockton, Massachusetts. Joanne had agonized over Grandma Ginn's debilitating bone loss; every visit showed the ravages of time as Ethel, a bent back and painful hump making it difficult to walk, sat in her favorite chair straining to look up at visitors. She seemed to be crumbling before the very eyes of those who loved her. She still had that wonderful twinkle in her eyes but found it increasingly hard to carry on a conversation. Charlie Ginn did his best to ease the agonies of physical disabilities for Ethel, taking on the cooking, cleaning, accepting home improvements that their offspring insisted on arranging, and doing everything in his power to make her comfortable. After Ethel died, Charlie failed quickly, slipping into spells of oblivion when he couldn't recognize his grandchildren, but once in awhile he seemed to regain consciousness and go on with his lonely life, living alone in the little house in Lizton they had shared for so many years.

When Charlie died the following year, Donald and Lucile called Joanne, who was able to arrange an emergency leave from teaching and a bereavement flight to Indiana. Donald and Lucile knew how much she had relied on Granddad Ginn and how deeply she loved him. They were not sure how to deal with her reaction to his funeral. She was angry and hurt: the funeral should have been held in the church; he should not have been displayed in a suit and tie; they should have sung his favorite old hymns; he should never have died. The violent and irrational reaction to a perfectly proper funeral threw Lucile

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and Donald into helpless bewilderment. Once again, Donald felt unable to solve problems and answer questions. Finally their eldest daughter seemed resigned and told them of her memory of the last time she had spoken with Granddad Ginn. In the final months before Charlie died, he had suffered erratic spells of dementia, looking blankly into space and recognizing no one. Joanne told them of a visit she had made, Granddad Ginn sitting in his chair, staring straight ahead, unaware of her presence. She had talked to him anyway, and after an hour or so he suddenly looked right at her and said, ‘Why, Joanne, how are you? When did you get here?’

Chapter 27
Don Bails out Wesley

With Mother and Aunt Maude to care for, Wesley has no time for a wife.
But Wesley likes customer Hildegard. She adds some spice to his life.

Wesley tutors Hildegard's son. They study every week.
Paul Blake studies Hildegard. She has what he goes to seek.

When someone shoots Paul Blake, the police take Wesley to jail.
They decide to hire a good lawyer; Don gets Wesley out on bail.

* * *

Donald had depended on Wesley Wainwright to help maintain his successful vehicle and equipment repair business for many years. Wesley quietly went about his business, earning a reputation for skill and honesty at Hines Garage, but he also had his own farm to run and the family homestead to maintain. One of his few close friends, Frank Bowen, found that Wesley had less and less time for their outings. When they were younger, both fun-loving fellows enjoyed practical jokes. They took college courses together in everything from history to auto mechanics in night school, and liked to bedevil their college instructors, asking questions the instructors couldn't answer. Wesley's duties grew more and more demanding both at the shop and at his home. A confirmed bachelor, he lived on the family farm with his mother Lide. His mother's older sister, Maude, was living with them. Maude was elderly, senile, and dependent, creating even more work for his hard-working mother. Wesley objected to his mother Lide's stubborn insistence that she had to care for her sister. Maude was demanding, feisty, even dangerous, and was disrupting the family peace. Donald laughed about stories that his Aunt Maude would eat a whole cherry pie if she could get her hands on it and wandered off into the woods or into town if she were not constantly watched.

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Wesley could not see the humor in dementia. The situation grew worse and worse, resulting in his increasingly bitter, anti-social attitude. Wesley argued that Maude belonged in a nursing home, but his mother wouldn't hear of it.

Donald also strained Wesley's patience with his short temper and careless disregard of Wesley's meticulous habits and careful routines. Wesley compensated for his weak vision by keeping his tools carefully organized and knowing where everything could be found. When Donald accused Wesley of taking one of his favorite wrenches and losing it, Wesley blew up at him. He knew how frequently Don misplaced tools and took offense at the unfair accusation. The argument was heated and futile, so they were both relieved when Jody, the stray dog that they had adopted came trotting in the door with a squirrel he had caught. Donald often gave Jody half his baloney sandwich or a piece of his candy bar, so Jody was too spoiled to bother with the squirrel. Once the spunky dog had displayed her trophy, she dropped it and begged for something better. Don laughed recalling Walter's comment: "That dog does a dollar's worth of begging for a nickel's worth of food."

"Little Joe" Couch came in as he sometimes did after school to hang out at the garage. Donald and Wesley were both discreet enough to avoid arguing in front of customers or their teenage sons. Joe's mother was a beautiful German divorcee who had remarried and moved to Hendricks County. She occasionally dropped in to have her car repaired and liked to talk with Wesley, recognizing his intelligence and appreciating his skill. Wesley also had inspired rumors of a secret love interest, unrequited love, romance gone sour in the past. He was good looking and appealing to female customers. A little mysterious repressed sex never hurt business. Hildegard, Joe's mother, would smile

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when she walked in the door as Wesley's musical voice soared out from under the hood of a car or his baritone floated up from the creeper under a truck. Little Joe liked to talk to Wesley and on this particular day had a request. "Hey, Wesley, my mother is after me to bring up my grades. You think you could tutor me?"

Wesley took a rag out of his coverall pocket and wiped his greasy hands. "When would you like to start?"

Joe's eyes lit up: "Right away. Hey, that'll be cool. Thanks, Wesley."

"OK, Joe, ask your mother if Wednesday evenings at 6:00 would work."

"All right. Hey, that's great. See you Wednesday."

The tutoring became a welcome part of Wesley's routine, giving him an excuse to leave the shop at a regular time every week, and the satisfaction of Joe's improvement was a joy Wesley devoured. Wesley's bitterness eased a bit, and the arguments with Donald were not as frequent, which made the Paul Blake shooting and Wesley's mysterious involvement even more puzzling. How could a man with poor eyesight, an upright reputation and elusive motive find himself in jail accused of shooting a neighbor? Donald was drawn into the strange event one afternoon after an angry argument.

Donald was ranting and raving about a local gentleman farmer down the road, a handsome neighbor, Paul Blake, who raised horses and lived in opulent style south of Donald and his family. Paul's wife Fern was a devoted wife and mother, giving their auburn-haired daughter Judy the best training in social graces available, encouraging her successful modeling career as a teenage model at Block's department store in downtown Indianapolis. She and Paul had two sons who loved horses and guns as their father did. Their beautiful plantation-style home with a wide, two-story front porch set back in old

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evergreen and oak trees belied the dark gossip that had begun to spread. Paul was slow in paying his bills and rumored to be running around on his wife Fern. Wesley had suspected for some time that his friend Hildegard, Little Joe's mother, was the other woman. He disliked gossip but had to admit to himself reluctantly that a scandal was of lively interest. His main worry was Little Joe, whom he was tutoring, and the affect it might have on the boy. Don's only concern was an unpaid repair bill, and he went on and on with Wesley ignoring him.

When Fern, Paul's wife, came in the shop door, Donald stopped grouching and went back to his work, leaving Wesley to talk with Fern. Her car needed an oil change, but she seemed to need to talk even more. Wesley thought people needed maintenance as much as cars did, but all he could do was listen, a skill he had carefully cultivated. He'd just finished a brutal truck engine repair and figured he'd do her oil change while she waited. She asked, "Has Paul been in today?" When Wesley said no, she said, "I never know where he is lately." Wesley couldn't think of anything to say, so Fern continued: "He rents that little hired hand's house down the road from us to Hildegard, so he must be taking care of some problem there." Wesley nodded and opened a couple of Quaker State oil cans. "Thanks for your help with the car; Paul neglects these things. He's so busy with his horses I hardly ever see him any more. Phil, our oldest, is home on break from college, and John has taken up gun collecting like his father. The boys are my pride and joy." Wesley finished the oil change and gave Fern's car a tune-up. Fern handed him a check for his work and drove away.

The next day was Wednesday, but Wesley had been delayed and arrived half an hour later than usual to tutor Joe. Paul Blake's truck was parked in Hildegard's driveway

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blocking the spot where Wesley usually parked his black Ford truck. Wesley figured he'd pull in behind Paul's vehicle and ignore the consequences. He went in the back door as Paul came out heading for his truck. Wesley had no response when Paul said, "You're blocking my truck." Paul spun wheels on gravel as he made a U-turn in the tight spot and stopped. Wesley nodded a polite greeting to Hildegard who had followed Paul to his truck, but she greeted Wesley, and then retraced her steps to retrieve her sweater. When she came back out, Paul held the passenger door open for her as Wesley and Little Joe watched. She looked back and said, "Paul's taking me with him to the hardware store in Jamestown. He's doing repairs to the house for me. We should be back in an hour." The red truck sped away leaving a cloud of dust in its path.

Wesley said hello to Little Joe, and they settled in to study geometry and English in the front room. Joe still didn't take to reading assigned books, but Wesley had given him a copy of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" that appealed to Joe's imagination, and even his English literature marks were showing improvement. Wesley enjoyed the logic of grammar and tried to teach Joe good writing tricks by emphasizing clarity and simplicity. Geometry had been easier since Wesley could draw sketches of problems, and Joe caught on quickly. They were engrossed in dimensions of an area problem when they heard the truck return. Hildegard, out of breath, hurried into the house with groceries and began putting food away in the refrigerator. She called: "Wesley, you want a Coke?" She came into the front room carrying two cokes and asked: "Where's Joe?" Wesley said he thought Joe had taken a bathroom break. Hildegard said, "Paul's putting a few things in the garage; it's too late to do the repairs now. He can come back tomorrow."

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What happened after that was chaos and confusion. A shot rang out. Hildegard ran out the back door and screamed. Wesley saw Paul Blake fall forward clutching his abdomen so he ran to the phone, called a local ambulance and then called the sheriff. He hung up the phone and figured he should call Fern. His mind had always retained numbers, and Fern was a regular customer, part of a mental list he kept stored in his head, so he immediately dialed the Blake residence. Phil answered and said his brother was at target practice and his mother was shopping. The wail of a siren grew louder as the spring evening sank into twilight and Wesley heard Hildegard sobbing. He had no idea what had happened to Joe. The tan cruiser made a sharp left into the yard. The sheriff jumped out and strode over to Paul's inert body. Sheriff Brady examined him, looked up and said, "He's still alive. Who's been here besides you two?" Hildegard made an effort to stay calm and replied that Wesley had been tutoring her young son. "Where is he?" Wesley indicated that Joe had taken a break from his studies and was in the house. "All right, we need to wait for the ambulance and get him to the hospital in Danville right now." Another siren shattered the evening quiet, and a dust cloud announced the arrival of the Lizton fire department ambulance. The driver leaped out, got Paul onto a stretcher, covered him with blankets and slammed the double doors. The volunteer attendant looked at the pool of blood and back at the sheriff. "He's lost a lot of blood, been shot in the groin. Nasty crime." The sheriff looked grim and shook his head. The neighbor jumped into the emergency vehicle and sped away. It might have happened that way.

The next day Donald and Wesley were at work in the shop, Don wrestling with an engine he had suspended from a chain, Wesley under one of Hoovermale's big delivery trucks. Wesley was singing, "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day..."

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as the sheriff and his deputy came through the door. Don came over, and the sheriff said, "I need to talk to Wesley. Where is he?" They heard the uneven rattle and clank of the creeper wheels as Wesley scooted out from under Hoovermale's truck and stood up. The deputy swaggered over, forced Wesley's wrist behind his back and made a show, Donald thought, of snapping the handcuffs on the other wrist and shoving him into the waiting squad car in front of the shop. The sheriff said to Donald, "We're taking him in for questioning. We'll be holding him in the county jail at least overnight." Don was speechless, watching the tan cruiser kidnapping his mechanic. The first thing Don thought was "How am I going to finish the Hoovermale job today?" The second was his obligation to call Aunt Lide so Wesley's mother wouldn't worry more than necessary. The worst way she could hear about this bizarre event was from a neighbor. He picked up the phone and dialed Lide's number. She answered after several rings, and Don could hear Maude calling out in the background. Don made it as simple as he could: "L-Lide? Wesley's b-b-been taken to Danville jail by the sheriff. D-Don't worry. . . What's that? N-No, I'm not sure what this is all about. I'll go see if I c-c-can b-bail him out. He should b-b-be home before you know it."

Donald had to finish the repair job he'd started, and by the time he had driven to Danville, the sheriff told him his sisters had both been there, but Wesley wouldn't allow them to take him home. Sheriff Brady explained how it happened, "He just looked up and said to them 'What're you doing here?' and wouldn't talk to them or let either one post bail." Donald lifted his cap, scratched his head, and stuck his hands into his coverall pockets. He remembered his visit to the Crown Point jail years before and couldn't stand the thought of Wesley spending time locked up. None of this made sense to Don.

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“W-Well, I’m g-g-gonna’ take c-care of his bail. How m-much?” The sheriff started to explain the procedure, but Don was impatient and out of sorts. “J-Just t-t-tell me how m-m-much; I’ll p-pay you and t-t-take Wesley home.” Donald took out his wallet and began peeling off bills and putting them on the sheriff’s desk. The sheriff got up, opened a drawer, took out his keys, opened the cell gate, and gestured with his head for Wesley to come with him. He said he’d take care of the rest of the paperwork and gave Wesley a sheet of paper with court dates and instructions on it. Don and Wesley left Danville jail, got into Don’s car, and didn’t say a word to each other all the way back to Wesley’s farm.

Wesley’s sisters hired a high-powered lawyer from Indy to defend Wesley, and the grand jury released him, exonerating him for lack of evidence. The community found the trial a welcome topic. It was hush-hush, but no one had any accurate details about either the crime or the courtroom eloquence – if any - that resulted in Wesley’s release. The defense might have concluded that if motive and opportunity are enough to convict a man, who of us would escape hanging? There was speculation that one of the sons indirectly affected by the adulterous affair might have shot Paul Blake. Could it have been Phil, loyal to his mother, angry with his father? Maybe it was John, who was skilled with a pistol, protective of Fern, his mother, or was it Little Joe, jealous of his mother’s lover and resentful of the intruder in his life? There was a rumor going around that Wesley was secretly in love with Hildegard and shot Paul in a jealous rage. There was even speculation that he might have had strong feelings for Fern and shot Paul as an act of revenge or retribution. No one ever knew. At least no one ever told. Not long after the incident, Paul and Fern divorced, and Paul married Hildegard.

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When Wesley's vision grew worse, he was no longer able to drive, so Donald picked him up every morning, taking him home in the evening. Lide had passed away leaving Mozella to care for Maude, so Wesley was living alone. Wesley was still able to perform repairs on the trucks, tractors, and cars that came in to the shop, but his taciturn alienation from the community grew pronounced. Every morning Donald drove the two miles to the Wainwright farm, waited for Wesley to climb into his car, drove to the shop, and the two cousins worked silently through the endless repair jobs that came into Hines Garage. Neighbors came to rely on Donald's and Wesley's routine as a gauge of the stability of the rural community. They could set their watches by Don's Buick's daily two-way trip.

One morning Donald drove to Wesley's to pick him up, waited, honked, waited, and at last got out, went in the back door, and found Wesley lying on the kitchen floor. He could detect no sign of life so he called the ambulance. Wesley at 65 had had a massive heart attack. He took whatever he knew about the mystery of the Paul Blake shooting with him in death. Was he shielding Little Joe or one of the Blake boys from suspicion and arrest? Was he protecting the perpetrator? No one ever knew.

Donald's youngest daughter, Margie, discovered another secret about Wesley. He had been surreptitiously composing music through the years. When the Wainwright Family asked her to furnish special music for his funeral, she asked what would be appropriate. His sisters mentioned that after Wesley died, they had found original compositions written in Wesley's handwriting. Margie became excited and asked to see the music. She studied the sheets of music, filled with spiritual ideas and religious longing, and sang Wesley's own composition as a way of honoring and remembering his

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quiet, unassuming sense of life and beauty. Wesley was an enigma, but his hard work, creativity and intelligence enriched his rural community.

Chapter 28

In China, Israel, and Scituate

Of his travels, Don preferred China; people there were just his size. However, a warm Russian reindeer hat was his favorite travel prize.

In Jerusalem they walked where Jesus walked and Don of course got lost. He returned with stories of friends, harmonica lovers, and fun without cost.

Don loved the birds, whales and dolphins of Scituate's eastern shore. He loved telling of travels with Lucile; his partner who was no more.

Stories abound regarding Don and Lucile's overseas adventures. Don's wanderlust was inexhaustible. A trip to Russia that nearly ended in disaster when Donald fell asleep in an airline waiting room became one of Don's fondest memories. Kindly Russian travelers and airline officials, most of whom spoke little English, helped Lucile and Donald find a hotel for the night and arrange another flight. In the U.S.S.R. Don finally found a winter hat that kept his head and ears warm in the harshest Indiana winter weather. The fur-lined reindeer hide helmet with generous ear-flaps was a marvel. He wore it until an envious gentleman offered him more than he had paid. He finally relented and sold it to him. The two trips that remained dominant in Don's memory, however, were the tours of China and The Holy Land.

In the *Jamestown Press* Mel Hiller wrote a piece called "Whirlin' Around" in which Mr. Hiller complained: "I received a post card last week which took a long time to determine who it was from. If we figured it out correctly, it came from Donald Hines and was mailed from China. He and Mrs. Hines have returned from a trip there.

Donald said on his card that there are 10,000 bicycles to one car and that one gas station services a city of 2,000,000. Being an automobile mechanic,

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Donald stated that he would not consider going into business there, not unless he changed from gasoline powered vehicles to bicycles.

He also mentioned a healthy rice crop now being threshed on one-fifth or one-third acre farms. He explained that a foot pedal runs the machine and two people pedal and put in rice heads. Sounds like everything in China is run by pedals.”

Although the highlight of this trip to China was Don’s opportunity at last to walk part of the Great Wall, he and Lucile also saw the Gate of Heavenly Peace in Beijing and 60 miles north of the great city The Summer Palace on 700 acres and the Forbidden City with its many palaces and other buildings with 9,999 rooms. They also visited the Underground City constructed by volunteers in ten years following W.W.II, an elaborate emergency shelter in the event of attack. As the group arrived in October they were able to enjoy a national holiday celebrating the birth of Chairman Mao’s Peoples Republic of China. Mammoth parades, military exhibitions, acrobatic dancers and fireworks entertained vast crowds. They flew to Turpin, the lowest and hottest place in China, below sea level, where melting snow provides an underground water supply from the surrounding mountains. This is a vast farming area with communes, state farms, and villages supervised by the communist government. Don’s opinion was it would never work. A 28-hour train trip through the mountains and plains gave them a chance to see how the people of China lived and farmed. Carts along the route were loaded with farm produce and pulled by people, donkey, camel, horse, oxen or mule. They saw the famed Jade Buddha Temple in the old city of Shanghai, and on a river cruise they entered the mighty Yangtze River. They visited factories, colleges, stores, schools, apartments,

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communes, hospitals, and temples, but Donald liked the people best. They returned his friendly smile, and in China he was never the shortest one in a crowd.

Flying east 6000 miles from NYC several years later, Donald and Lucile visited The Holy Land, once known as Canaan, then later as Palestine and Israel. Donald and Lucile wrote back to their daughters that Jerusalem was situated on mountains over 2000 ft. in elevation and on longitude with Savannah, Georgia and Tucson, Arizona. Donald was astounded that driving the length of Israel is comparable to driving from Chicago to Peoria. That's it. The total land area of Israel is about 10,000 square miles, the size of Vermont. Israel is barely 70 miles across from the Mediterranean coast to the desert. They walked where Jesus walked but noted that The Dome of the Rock mosque reminds everyone that Jerusalem is holy to Muslims as well as Christians and Jews. Traveling through the Holy Land, Donald took off on his own down unfamiliar streets and up strange alleys. The exotic city of Jerusalem, set on a Judean mountain ridge, was the highlight of their trip. The limestone rocks of which the holy city is built seemed to glow with ancient, Biblical history. From the old walled city, the visitors could see the Mount of Olives and picture the "Gethsemane" of the Gospels. While in Jerusalem, Donald went missing long enough that the tour guide was ready to send out a search team. Lucile was embarrassed, always afraid he would keep the tour group waiting or be arrested, but when he showed up, he predictably had an entertaining tale to tell. His travel companions finally stopped worrying; he always appeared at the last minute with stories to tell and his harmonica in his pocket. Undoubtedly, Donald tried the patience of the tour guides and his fellow travel companions, but he treasured the trips he and his

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wife were able to take. After Lucile had several strokes, Donald still took her with him in a wheelchair, and they found kind-hearted people all over the world.

Donald and Lucile made frequent road trips to Scituate after the Hayes family moved even further east to the fishing village on the Atlantic. Scituate was on the South Shore between Boston and Plymouth and boasted its own historical importance. Don's favorite tale was of The Army of Two, the story of Abigail and Becky, the Lighthouse keeper's daughters who saved Scituate from the British in the War of 1812. Left alone for the day while their father went for supplies, the teenage girls saw a British ship approaching Scituate Harbor. They had heard horrifying tales of the British burning and sacking New England villages, so they grabbed their flute and drum and hid in the bushes. As the ship drew closer, they played every military tune they had ever heard as loudly as they could, and the British, thinking there must be a military encampment in Scituate turned around and left Scituate unmolested.

Another Scituate tale that Donald enjoyed was the story of the Lawson Tower across from Thomas Lawson's mansion Dreamwald. The name Lawson, Don's middle daughter's married name, connected it in his mind to his own family. Thomas Lawson, Scituate's "Copper King," married a beautiful young woman who complained, after an extensive honeymoon, that the view from their magnificent home was marred by the town's ugly water tower just across Branch Street on a hill. Lawson tried to persuade the town fathers to renovate and beautify the water tower to no avail. The selectmen firmly refused his plea to move it or tear it down. Finally he commissioned one of his ships with a crew instructed to dismantle a Norman tower he had observed on one of their overseas trips to Europe, number every rock, plank, and shingle so the ancient tower

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could be rebuilt exactly as it had stood in Germany. The historic water tower was now a tourist attraction and housed not only a water works but also a set of bells played four times a year for holidays and Scituate's Heritage Days. Lawson also collected elephants and donated a unique three-elephant fountain to the town for the common.

Donald enjoyed Scituate because he could walk past a sturdy house built in 1690, sit beside the elephant fountain on the green Scituate common and rest, walk as far as his strength allowed past stone walls and the Lawson Tower and imagine early settlers retrieving their wandering cattle. He laughed to see the stone wall-enclosed "pound" where stray animals were imprisoned until they could be claimed by one town farmer or another. Cudworth House, located next to the cattle pound, was one of several historic 17th-century homes open to the public four times a year. Another historic home, The Mann homestead, came with a story that appealed to Donald. The patriarch, Mr. Mann, was relatively wealthy and bought the first automobile in Scituate, proudly driving it around town. Incensed when the town officials informed him that he needed a driver's license to do this, he parked it in his back yard, refusing to comply with these orders. Donald laughed to see the skeleton of Mann's rotting Buick with a big oak tree growing surrounded by the chassis. Scituate's little red school house, for years the home of Scituate's active historical society, was open to the public not far from the Cudworth House, close enough for Donald to include that on his walks around town. Joanne enjoyed walking with him to Peggotty Beach, telling him stories about Henry David Thoreau's long walks from Concord to Scituate, where he courted Ellen Sewell, daughter of the minister.

Donald also loved Murphy, the Hayes Gordon Setter, who had come to Scituate by way of Indiana. The story of Murphy, the good dog, illustrates the way families become separated, flung to the four winds, but find ways to stay family. As the Scituate Hayes Family with four grandchildren to lure Donald and Lucile to the East Coast, grew older, the boys, David and John, and two girls, Becky and Karen, left the Atlantic Coast one by one. David enrolled in Boston University, living at home and commuting to engineering classes, but Becky decided to travel west with her band, touring the country in a school bus purchased cheap and painted silver. She ended up in San Francisco where she enrolled in the state university there. Karen two years later also went west and after taking courses at the community college, Columbia, near Yosemite where she lived in a canyon, earned a scholarship to University of California at Berkeley. The problem was she couldn't take Murphy, the dog she had rescued, with her, but she had a plan. Murphy loved to ride in her truck, and Becky was always game for another adventure.

She and Becky one Christmas holiday drove Karen's truck east from the San Francisco Bay area to Indiana to visit Grandma and Grandpa Hines in Indiana. They brought Murphy, the good dog, who loved the freedom of the farm even in the dead of winter. Meanwhile, Joanne and Dick drove west from the East Coast to Indiana where the family celebrated Christmas together. The scheme was to take Murphy for a walk while Becky and Karen drove away, back to California. Joanne wanted to walk back through the fields to Uncle Walter's to see Donald's frail brother, so she took Murphy for a long walk over the frozen clods and snow-covered cornstalks to Walter's place. While they were gone, Karen and Becky left to return to the West Coast. When Murphy returned, he adjusted to his new owners and became the East Coast dog who loved to go

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camping with Donald, Joanne, and Dick. Now Donald had one more reason to visit Scituate – Murphy.

Donald loved to tell the story of the friendly Scituate policeman who struck up a conversation with him on one of his walks with Murphy down to Peggotty Beach across the causeway and over the little 2nd Cliff Bridge. Don asked the officer why the stream ran one direction in the morning and the opposite direction in the afternoon. Donald remarked, “That crazy river runs both directions!” The policeman laughed heartily and explained the tidal river running into the salt marsh when the tide was coming in and flowing the opposite way as the tide went out six hours later. The “river that ran both ways” tickled Donald almost as much as watching the fishing boats bring in huge catches of codfish early in the morning. Murphy, the Gordon setter who had adopted the Scituate family after Karen moved to attend U. Cal. at Berkeley, accompanied Don down to the seawall and beach every day of his week’s visit. The neighbors, Pete and Marilyn Spencer, made Don and Lucile feel at home. When Don and Murphy, both growing old, had walked too far and rested under the big beech trees on 2nd Cliff, Pete would offer them a ride in his construction-business truck. Pete had a laugh as hearty as Donald’s, and they became good friends.

One memorable trip to Scituate included a whale watch cruise on the *Capt. John* out of Plymouth to Stellwagon Bank, an underwater plateau in Massachusetts Bay where whales feed on a lush smorgasbord of crustaceans. Joanne had bought the tickets and made arrangements to arrive in Plymouth Harbor around 9 a.m. to catch the 10:00 cruise. Donald and Lucile had seen the world but never seen whales up close, so they were anticipating a new adventure. They sat on the upper deck and jumped as the pilot

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announced departure with the ear-splitting air horn. The boat eased out of Plymouth Harbor, past Mayflower II, between red and green markers, picking up speed as they left floating speed limit signs and headed into open sea. They passed Gurnet Light, a small lighthouse on the left and Clark's Island, a private settlement of a dozen families dating back to the arrival of the Mayflower pilgrims in 1620.

As historic, picturesque South Shore slipped by, Joanne told Don and Lucile about their long week-end visit with friends on Clark's Island. The grandchildren, Becky, Karen, David, and John, loved the freedom and beauty of the island. Old growth trees and ancient stone walls cast a magical spell over the grassy bowers that lead to a fresh-water well in the center of the island. She told of being dived-bombed by angry shore birds when she invaded a nesting area unawares and had to swim to safety. They stayed in the stately house on the point where antique furnishings and an old parlor organ pulled them back in time. The "kids" were sure they heard the organ playing in the middle of the night. Bob Woodward, the island caretaker and avid boatman, told them a little of the island's history. John Clark, First Mate on the Mayflower, made the decision to land on the island as a storm threatened. It was December 20, 1620, and the Separatists had a religious service at a cabin-sized rock in the center of the island. The Puritan passengers carved on the huge rock: ON THE SABBOTH DAY WEE RESTED 20 DECEMBER 1620. Locals call this rock the real Plymouth Rock. Descendants of the Watson Family live there today with no electricity on the island.

Headed for the Stellwagon Bank area, the boat sped ahead for half an hour or more, the air growing colder. Donald noticed a teenage girl, her nose buried in a Harry Potter book, not fazed by the chilly wind. Suddenly the *Capt. John* slowed, and someone

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pointed to something way out on the horizon. The voice over the loud speaker shouted, “Humpbacks, at three o’clock!” So everyone crowded the starboard (right-hand) side of the boat trying to see the whales. They were so far away spectators saw only gray humps over the waves, but with no warning, a couple of humpbacks splashed up and over, flashing their dorsal tails, not more than twenty feet from the boat. The pilot killed the motor and passengers sat spellbound watching the humpbacks. One came carousing so close to the boat Donald could hear the loud snuffling as air flew from his blowhole. The teenager didn’t look up. Her attention was riveted to her book. A few minutes later a mother whale with a calf surfaced and apparently had no fear of the boat. Another shout announced a whale breaching far off on the horizon, so the boat again picked up speed in the direction of the spectacular breaching performance. As they approached, the whale went under and didn’t surface, but half a dozen smaller minke whales were playing close by. Again the pilot killed the motor and everyone waited, watching sea birds swooping overhead. Varieties of gulls followed the boat, but the naturalist pointed out Wilson’s storm petrels and said, “We were lucky to see them before they migrated to Antarctica.” As spectators waited, the naturalist explained excitedly that the smooth circular surface - he called it a “footprint” - was a common technique for herding plankton, sand lance eels, and other food that whales favor. Whales cooperated and gathered more food by working together. The teenager had not lifted her eyes from her book.

Reluctantly passengers on the *Capt. John* headed back to Plymouth Harbor noting a pod of dolphins in their wake. Everyone was chilled through and went down to the enclosed lower level where staff was selling hot dogs, coffee, and other treats. Donald was in his element. He always enjoyed new experiences – and got a kick out of the Harry

Potter fan. The family had time to visit the cranberry museum, a short walk along the wharf, and learned how to tell a good cranberry from a dud; if it bounces, it's healthy. One never knows when information like that might come in handy. On the way back to Scituate, Don and the family drove along the Duxbury coast, stopping to walk across Powder Point Bridge to the beach. The sunset was lovely.

On this same visit, Don and Lucile managed to tour Scituate's Irish Mossing and Maritime Museum. It's tricky since the little museum is open only on weekends, but it is worth the effort. Donald enjoyed the shipwreck exhibits and the old fashioned prismatic lighthouse lamp. He had seen a boy out in Scituate Harbor in his wooden boat with a long-handled wooden rake pulling in seaweed, but the museum explained in detail how the seaweed was collected, dried, bleached in the sun, and gathered up to be sold. It is used in making commercial ice cream, pudding, and other products needing body and stabilizing. The official name for Irish moss is carrageen, a thickening agent, good old-fashioned seaweed.

Donald brought Lucile to Scituate as often as he could make the long drive, but it was taking a toll on her as stroke after stroke weakened her physical strength and took her mental acuity. The last time they visited Scituate, John, the youngest Hayes son, was still living at home. Donald had gone to the trunk of the car to get out Lucile's wheelchair. When John saw what difficulty his Grandmother was having trying to get out of the car, he ran over, scooped her up, and carried her into the house. She had a good laugh over his quick response and effortless assistance. These road trips, no matter how much Donald and Lucile enjoyed seeing their grandchildren, were growing more and more difficult. She often asked where she was and seemed distressed. She repeated the same

questions over and over. She was now confined to a wheelchair and had to have assistance for the most routine activities, a maddening restriction for one so independent. One day, however, as they ate lunch in the bay window alcove, she looked up and smiled as she gazed out the window. "Look!" she said, "It's a goldfinch." There were tall wildflowers between the window and the woods where a pair of goldfinches enjoyed feeding, and Lucile had spotted one of them. It was a moment in time. Donald drove back to Indiana with his frail wife in tow having no way of knowing this would be the last time he took her on a trip.

Chapter 29
Life without Lucile

Down the lonely road a rooster crows; Don wanders in the night.
Lucile is gone; though comes the dawn, for him there is no light.

Of Boston's subway routes Don has no doubts; he can find another way.
With a friend for a chat; cares not where he's at; best family can do is pray.

Buick loaded to gills, heads towards western hills; car begins to wheeze.
Don's oil rag was there, stopping the engine's air; rest of the trip - a breeze.

* * *

A phone call from Indiana brought the sad news. Doctors had given Lucile less than a week to live, so Joanne took a bereavement leave from teaching and flew out to Indiana to be with her in Hendricks Regional Hospital. The family sat in shifts and watched as Lucile breathed in and out, a labored effort that wracked her whole body, never regaining consciousness. Donald was distraught beyond any help for it. He agonized over Lucile's refusal to walk when he'd tried to make her get out of her wheelchair and walk with him. He had never been able to admit that her physical disabilities made walking impossible. Joanne was grateful that she had been sitting by her mother's bedside all night when at 8 a.m. the loud, labored breathing suddenly stopped. Holding her breath, Joanne tiptoed over to her Mother and called her, but there was no answer. Silence filled the room.

After Lucile's death, Donald was at loose ends. He had never slept well, and after the funeral, he often walked the dark, empty county road at night. He didn't realize to what extent he had relied on Lucile to hold his chaotic life together. He neglected bills – even tax obligations – and lived on baloney and cheese sandwiches. He had no sense of

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timing or of other people's schedules, and he often appeared at Margie's and Harold's back door just as they were preparing to leave to teach school. Ever the tinkerer, the inventor, Donald rigged up a hat with a headlight so he could see on his lonely walks in the middle of the night. Margie struggled with her father's disruptive visits, not wishing to ignore his need for company but knowing she could not sacrifice her teaching career.

Whenever Donald needed advice or an encouraging word, he'd call his brother Walter on the telephone. Walter had gone through his own valley of tears and shadows. After he and his wife, the cheerful, fun-loving Gertrude, had devoted their life to helping the mentally ill, Gertrude fell victim to Alzheimer's. She began to lose her sense of direction, and the local sheriff brought her back home several times after she drove the car into territory she no longer recognized. Then she left the stove on, lost her lively personality, gradually becoming a dependent shell. She became a danger to herself and her family. Walter cared for her for years, watching the love of his life fading away to nothing. After she died, he began to fail physically and mentally. Donald came to visit, always urging him to walk. When Walter resisted, Donald grew impatient and never did acknowledge that Walter really couldn't walk.

Donald went to visit his brother Walter frequently after he became housebound and eventually unable to walk. As he had done with Lucile, Donald tried to make Walter get up and walk. He was sure that will power was all Walter needed to regain his strength. It was futile and only frustrated his brother. Ruth, the caregiver in charge, became angry with Donald and demanded that Ed forbid Donald's visits. The situation grew precarious, and family tensions worsened. Mozella got wind of the ban on Donald's visits, and as she had seniority, the ban was lifted. The rift in the family never

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healed properly, however, and after Walter passed away following Lucile's passing and Marion's tragic death, Donald brooded, saying: "I should have died instead of Walter." Life became increasingly difficult and confusing. When Donald fell into despair and felt unable to make a decision, he would say, "I need to call Walter."

Joanne encouraged Donald to visit Scituate whenever he could manage a trip, and he drove the thousand miles east several times. More often as he grew older, he flew from Weir Cook Airport in Indy to Logan Airport in East Boston where Joanne and Dick picked him up. One summer day, Joanne drove in to pick Donald up at Logan, parking in Quincy at the Wollaston MBTA Station and taking the subway to the Airport station, much easier than driving all the way to the airport through Boston traffic. Don got a kick out of the subway train with blue line stops at the greyhound racetrack and the Aquarium to the green line at Park Street where they descended to the red line. Joanne made a point of warning Don about taking only a Braintree train since the Ashmont train went to South Boston, not to South Shore. The MBTA alternates Braintree and Ashmont trains on the red line. A newcomer can get lost forever taking the wrong train.

Don gamely learned to navigate Boston on the MBTA subway routes by himself, finding easterners were helpful if he became lost or disoriented. His favorite stop was the Museum of Science on the Charles River where he'd happily spend the day exploring the exhibits, meeting Joanne at the Quincy red line stop at 5 or 6 that evening. The system worked perfectly for awhile. Joanne decided it would be fun to take her father back to the airport on the Hingham water shuttle that went to Boston's Long Wharf where a water taxi took passengers to the airport. Don enjoyed the novelty of taking the water route, but they didn't foresee the possibilities for future misunderstandings.

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In July Donald wrote to Joanne and Dick about an upcoming trip he was planning to Scituate, so Joanne wrote back that they would pick him up at the baggage claim. Don was 90 but still enthusiastic about traveling, arranged his flight to Logan and had Margie drive him into the Indy airport on the flight date. Joanne and Dick, with the flight number and arrival time in hand, left Scituate with an hour to spare, but traffic from the South Shore into Boston was jammed from Hingham all the way into the city. They were over half an hour late.. When they finally arrived at the airport, they had Donald paged and waited at the information desk. Donald didn't show up, so they began searching the airport frantically looking from one terminal to the next. They had him paged every half hour until darkness fell, and they gave up. Joanne's heart was in her mouth. Anything might have happened to Donald, but they decided to drive back to Scituate. They pulled into their driveway and went to the back door. There was Donald's suitcase with a note scribbled: "I'll be at the Situate Fire Station." Relief filled the daughter's mind. She could almost predict what had happened and sure enough... Don had taken the water shuttle to Hingham after having waited half an hour. On the boat he had struck up a conversation with one of the Scituate firemen heading back home. He'd offered Donald a ride to Scituate. When Joanne walked down First Parish Rd. the half block to the fire station, she saw the men through the lighted window. They were laughing, drinking coffee and eating doughnuts. Don was having a great time. As usual with Donald, he was never lost; it was everybody else who misplaced him.

This was the Scituate trip that fell on Independence Day. Joanne had planned a trip to the Boston Pops July 4th Concert so her father could see the fireworks and hear Keith Lockhart's famed music at the half shell on the Charles River. They parked at their

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Wollaston subway station lot and took the subway into Boston, getting off the train at the Charles Street station. It was a balmy evening, a pleasant walk along the river to the Hatch Shell location, but Donald tripped over a curb and fell hard. Luckily the fall was onto a grassy spot, and amid stares and concerned bystanders Don picked himself up, dusted himself off, and he and his daughter went on to stake out a spot for their blanket seat in the crowd. Trisha Yearwood was guest performer, and the finale with cannons and fireworks was typical “1812 Overture” bombast. July 4th concluded with patriotic exuberance and bursts of red, white, and blue explosions reflected in the river. Joanne eased them along the edge of the crowd hoping to beat the crowds and avoid the crush after the last fireworks display ended. They walked to the Charles Street MBTA station with fireworks splashing the sky overhead and caught a Braintree train. Buskers, itinerant musicians, entertained as usual underground at each subway stop, and father and daughter navigated the musty air of the underground stations to emerge in Quincy where the trusty little red Dodge was waiting. Don managed to get up early the next day for one last walk to the beach with Murphy before he flew back to Indiana.

The Scituate family took Donald on several camping trips after Lucile died. While visiting the Indiana farm in 1997, they discussed camping in Michigan’s Northern Peninsula. This idea appealed to Don because he had memories of Flint, Detroit, and wilder Michigan adventures up North. After the long drive north through Michigan across the Straits of Mackinac, they were rewarded with bucolic forested, lake shore camping sites and breath-taking views of Lake Superior from Pictured Rocks National Seashore. Awesome Lake Superior is over 600 feet above sea level and looks it.

One last camping trip occurred when Don was in his 90's and his two oldest daughters had a brilliant plan to use their summer vacation to treat their father to the adventure of a lifetime. Dick was too busy working to accompany them, and Joanne was sure she had absorbed her husband's camping skills so that they'd be able to enjoy the great outdoors without the discomfort – pain actually – of camping. She ordered from a catalog a “Pop-up tent”, a one-man marvel that required only a flick of the wrist to set itself up. Joanne, of all people, should have known nothing is that easy. Dad insisted they drive his Buick, a car he had bought to fulfill his obligation to GM at last, and he promised to take his turn at the wheel. The Girls were fans of Mr. Magoo cartoons and plotted to avoid this at all costs. They loaded the Buick with camping gear, snacks, drinking water, and the two tents and headed west, taking old State Highway 36 to Dana, Indiana, where they spent the afternoon exploring Ernie Pyle's hometown and memorial on the border with Illinois. The Girls took turns driving, insisting they loved to drive and wanted Dad to enjoy the scenery. Their goal was the West Coast, Crater Lake, Karen, John, and Becky in San Francisco, and the glories of California. They envisioned roughing it all the way to the Columbia River. “Roll on, Columbia, Roll on” the old song goes. Unfortunately the first night at an Illinois state park it was so hot and humid that Donald abandoned the little pop tent and slept outside on the ground. The next morning he urged The Girls to stay in motels the rest of the trip: “I'll pay,” he begged.

They crossed Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado, stopping at Ft. Collins to visit Donna's son Pat, who was training for mission work there. So far the Buick had performed admirably, but heading north into Wyoming the engine began stalling. Joanne couldn't get the car to go faster than twenty miles an hour, and cars passed them with her

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foot jammed on the accelerator. They pulled over, and Donald checked everything out but could find nothing wrong. After what seemed like days, they limped into Casper after 5:00 p.m. hot and tired. They found a Buick dealership, busy and impersonal; the manager said they might be able to work on the Buick in a couple of days. Joanne thanked him, but they left to try to find a mechanic somewhere who'd repair the car. They drove up and down the streets of Casper, looking for a repair garage. The heat was oppressive, and Donna was exhausted and out of sorts. Joanne was suffering regret that she had ever conceived this "camping" trip and felt responsible for her sister's despair. Don never complained; he was a stoic through and through.

Joanne spotted an Exxon station on the corner and turned left into their service bay. They were closing, but a gentleman in coveralls with the name LOCKHART over his heart came to our car and asked if he could help. Joanne introduced him to Donald, who was unusually reticent. Joanne went over the details of the car's bizarre behavior. Mr. Lockhart listened carefully to the story and offered to test drive the ailing Buick. Lockhart got behind the steering wheel, and he and Joanne took it around the block, the car so sluggish it would barely move. He and another mechanic raised the hood and puzzled over the engine, testing this and trying that, but nothing seemed to work. Suddenly he shouted to his younger partner: "Hey, come and look at this!" They began laughing and waved a greasy rag in the air. Joanne and Donna couldn't imagine what they had found, but they crowded around the scene of the crime and listened as Hugh Lockhart explained the greasy rag had been sucked up into the air intake pipe causing the problem. Donald had a long-standing habit of stashing a rag somewhere in the vicinity of

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the engine in case he had to check the oil or do a quick repair. Joanne asked how much they owed them, and Lockhart looked perplexed. He said, “Oh I guess \$10 would do it.”

Somehow Donald and his daughters made it to Lenore and Robert Perry’s home in Granger, Wyoming, before it was too late to stay with Goldia’s youngest daughter, a lawyer, and her husband, Robert. Driving into the glaring sunset was an ordeal, but a herd of antelope met them as they came into Granger’s town limits. As they pulled up beside the Perry bungalow in quiet, downtown Granger, the old friendly Perry hound dog greeted them. Lenore, always hospitable and resourceful, had the gang for supper and put them up for the night. The next morning they spent a few hours exploring Granger, an old stage coach stop on the Oregon Trail. There is a stone memorial dedicated to The Old South Bend Stage Station built in 1850 at the western edge of the town not far from the Cactus Saloon and the town library housed in a trailer. Town hall is a double-wide, and the railroad still dominates the area, which is near the Flaming Gorge and reservoir, Green River, Firehole Canyon, and Rock Springs in Wyoming’s far southwest corner. Joanne wondered if the Granger stage coach station was the one mentioned in Mark Twain’s *Roughing It*, the southwestern Wyoming stage stop where Twain meets the renegade Slade, notorious for having murdered twenty-six men.

After a string of cheap cookie-cutter motels, the Columbia River inn was a rare treat. A young couple had recently opened this wayside inn overlooking the mighty Columbia, and it was not only reasonable but perfect for our needs. There was a separate bedroom for Donald, lots of windows, a small kitchen, lovely modern bathroom, and coffee! Once again, they were grateful for creative, friendly westerners. They had followed The winding Snake River across Idaho after crossing the Tetons on the western

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boundary of Wyoming, stunned by the beauty of America's West. Following the Columbia River, then heading south to Oregon's Crater Lake, they spent the day at this spectacular blue, blue glacier pothole, chilly but glad to be out of the humid heat.

Coming at San Francisco from the north allowed them to cross the Golden Gate Bridge into the Bay City, but their anticipation met with initial disappointment as thick fog blocked any spectacular view. Even in the fog the bridge was clearly red, not golden, but Don was curious and figured he'd ask questions later. Joanne found Becky's "cave" on 3rd Street, and Don explored the Market Street area with a small wharf at Becky's back door. Artists lived in unconventional spaces, had frequent art fairs, street festivals and BBQs. Becky's "Cave" was primarily a music rehearsal and performance area with private loft apartments for members of her band and other renters. The kitchen and shower area was available for all residents of The Cave, a little like a co-op house within a university area.

Highlights of Don's visit included a Pier 39 encounter with his grandson John Hayes, who drew caricatures and had an art business out of his Pine Street apartment. John drew Don's caricature, captured his determined jaw and eccentric profile, then offered to take the whole family on a tour of his city. He delighted in showing the travelers Lombard Street, "the crookedest street in the world," the Presidio, Ghirardelli chocolate factory, Golden Gate Park and its lovely tea house and gardens. Don rode the cable cars, laughed with the sea lions and seals along the piers, and walked the steep hills until John finally wore him out. The fresh seafood at Alioto's on Fishermen's Wharf was excellent, and everyone loved Ghirardelli's, the fragrance alone worth the trip.

Karen, another of Don's granddaughters, invited Grandpa Hines and his chauffeurs to her home in Oakland across the Bay Bridge, managing to prepare a vegetarian feast that nearly converted her kindred carnivores. She walked with her grandfather, Aunt Donna, and Mom to Jack London Square which was picturesque and redolent with literary significance. *The Call of the Wild* seemed far removed from the civilized, sophisticated square with its shops and restaurants, but the evening was balmy and offered a welcome contrast to Jack London's grueling scenes of bitter cold and painful endurance. They reluctantly bid the grandchildren goodbye and began the drive back home to Indiana. Driving east through South Dakota, they paid their respects to the four Presidents carved on Mt. Rushmore: Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt, and nearby the gargantuan Crazy Horse, an even larger stone figure unfinished but underway and impressive.

After seeing WALL DRUG signs along the highway for miles, they succumbed to curiosity and stopped at this American wayside phenomenon for lunch. In the middle of nowhere, Wall Drug had become a tourist mecca with talking dinosaurs, cowboy hats for sale, ice cream, and anything else a traveler might want to eat or buy. The corn palace in Mitchell, SD, was a delight for Donald's inquisitive nature, but he was skeptical about using corn for architectural and decorative purposes. A day in the corn palace completed about all they could take of South Dakota, and they began to look forward to getting back home. They concluded their "camping" trip with a historic visit to Galinas, Illinois, a picturesque river town on the mighty Mississippi where the Lincoln-Douglas debates occurred in the pre-Civil War political campaign of 1860. Donna may have regretted ever having agreed to tackle this road trip with Donald, but she was kind

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enough not to rub it in or hold it over Joanne's head. Donald was happy to be back home, but everyone knew he never turned down an opportunity to travel.

Chapter 30
Gradual Disaster

Marion's death adds fears to Don's endless tears. Memories of Lucile never leave.
With the endless plight of his failing eyesight, now much of life is to grieve.

The caregiving pair don't give him good care, as much as they help each other.
Their selfish greed begins to exceed expectations: they move in Roy's Mother.

With no love at home Don soon starts to roam. At night he walks the road.
Dolores changes the will, family's had its fill, and Jo takes over the load.

* * *

Not long after Lucile passed away, Donald was standing in line at the State Bank of Lizton directly behind Marion Ginn, his brother-in-law. Don began reminiscing about Lucile, Marion's sister, recalling her matchless ability as a bookkeeper, mother, homemaker, tax preparer. As he remembered Lucile's final years of suffering after her strokes began to take their toll, his eyes welled up with tears, and he began bemoaning his failure to ease her last days. "Lucile needed to walk, and I tried to help her walk more, but she couldn't do it." As Marion listened, he - without warning - gave a cry of pain and collapsed. Donald caught him, and a bank teller called an ambulance. Marion died on the way to the hospital in an emergency helicopter. He had suffered a brain hemorrhage, but Donald was always convinced that he had caused Marion's death by speaking of his sister's final years of agony. "I shouldn't have been talking to Marion about Lucile," he insisted to whoever would listen.

As life without Lucile grew darker, he ignored the IRS and for several years didn't pay taxes. Eventually as letters went unanswered, a representative of the IRS paid him a visit. Donald was belligerent at first, but the man finally convinced him he would go to jail if he didn't pay his taxes, back taxes, fines, and accumulated interest. That

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night he had nightmares about prison and thought he heard a helicopter in the front yard. The next day he stuffed old papers, letters, documents, anything he thought a tax preparer might need into an old backpack and headed into Indianapolis to see a CPA he'd been referred to by his son-in-law. It took years to straighten out the bureaucratic mess, but he finally paid every IRS demand, bitterly resenting every penny. He was convinced that he had escaped prison by the skin of his teeth.

Macular degeneration began to take Donald's eyesight, and his diabetes grew worse as he aged. He finally had to face the fact that he needed help. After Donald invited a local couple to move in with him, his situation seemed to improve. The Daytons had lost their house through foreclosure and had given an inherited house trailer to their church, so they were homeless, and Donald decided having Dolores and Roy live with him was the perfect solution to his loneliness and lack of cooking skills. He agreed to pay Dolores a weekly salary plus room and board in return for three meals a day, but he was unable to foresee the insidious complications and ominous nightmares they were eventually to bring with them. He provided wages, generous gifts, as well as a new ride-on John Deere mower in return for Roy's mowing the yard during the summer months. Dolores was used to hard work and impressed Donald with her ambition.

Her grandsons spent nearly every day at Donald's place since her daughter needed day care for her three lively sons while she worked. Dolores liked to boast that her grandkids provided entertainment for Donald, and their two dogs, Amos and Angie, were good company for an increasingly senile old man. Dolores talked Donald into buying her a flock of chickens so that she could sell eggs or give them to the needy in her church in Crawfordsville. This also gave her an excuse to drive to Greenfield, where she had

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friends to visit, so that she could stock up on chicken feed. She bought guinea fowl, banty hens and roosters, a flock of ducks, and supplies for a large garden. She had managed to convince Donald's daughters that she needed to sign his checks, so that expedited her plans for the future. She planted flowers, shrubs, trees, and laid out a plot behind the barn for their house of the future. She was ambitious.

She had cases of generic brand cans of chicken noodle soup in the basement so that Donald never went hungry. She took him to Jamestown with her when she went grocery shopping at the IGA and filled two grocery carts weekly. Anything she ran out of or had forgotten could be found at Wal-Mart. Her daughter, her son-in-law, and their three children were a hungry family, and Dolores liked to take Donald to her daughter's for his weekly haircuts for which he approved \$50 payments. Donald was often bored since his vision and hearing were impaired. He could no longer work so he never objected to going someplace – anyplace - in the car. Donald had spent his long life working, investing and saving, so this spending became easier and easier. Dolores told him she had to have a new washer and dryer and needed a better electric stove, the kind with a smooth glass surface, easier to clean. She convinced him they needed a new refrigerator and had the old one moved to the garage for extra frozen food and cold drinks. She also wanted a dishwasher. When he objected, saying Lucile had never needed such modern appliances, Roy shouted at him: "Look here, Donald. I'm not having my wife, with her back problems, leaning over that sink day after day." And so Donald paid for the dishwasher and co-signed to buy Dolores an SUV. Roy liked to drive his Mustang, which wasn't big enough to haul Donald around with the three grandchildren. Dolores was a hard worker.

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When Roy's mother fell ill and her condition worsened, they were faced with the problem of taking care of her. The doctor advised a nursing home, but there were no funds to pay for that option. The solution, they decided, was to move her into Donald's home with them. Donald, in spite of his anger towards Roy, had a soft spot in his heart for anyone in need, so he approved the new arrangement. A hospital bed was installed in the front room, crowding Roy's comfy chair but providing a sunny hospital room for Roy's mom. Dolores's grandsons continued to create noisy chaos during the days and Donald's restless nights grew more disruptive than ever. Roy shouted at Donald: "How can we sleep around here with you stomping around in the middle of the night?"

Donald's feeble response: "This is still m-m-my house." The Blessing faded into the distance.

Visits from Donald's grandchildren became rare since no one in his family felt welcome anymore. It was painfully clear that Dolores, Roy, and their family had taken over the old home place. When Donald's daughter Joanne came to visit, planning a coordinated reunion with their daughters, Karen and Becky, who drove to Indiana from the West Coast to see their Grandpa Hines, they planned to have a family dinner. Dolores offered spaghetti for lunch, and Donald was teasing Karen, enjoying her playful conversation. They began a contest to see who could slurp the longest spaghetti. Karen and Donald were giggling and watching each other's progress. Suddenly Dolores jumped up from the table, walked resolutely over to Donald's chair and standing behind him grabbed his fork and knife, cutting up the pasta for him, then slamming the fork and knife back down. Stunned silence followed. Karen and Becky were outraged but said nothing to Dolores. They said plenty to Joanne later, warning her that her sisters shouldn't be

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trusting Dolores. Joanne explained that Donna Mae had gone to school in Lizton with Dolores; she was a local so they could trust her. “Why does she call him ‘Daddy’ anyway?” Becky wanted to know. Joanne had wondered the same thing.

Meanwhile Donald developed a friendship with a neighbor lady named Sylvia. She enjoyed his company and relieved his loneliness. Donald drove her out to see her son and family, drove her wherever she wanted to go. The Buick he had finally bought, easing his conscience for never having owned a GM automobile before then, took a beating. The Buick accumulated an astounding odometer reading. Sylvia took him in hand, helped him buy more fashionable clothes, weaned him away from his beloved, sensible coveralls. She even talked him into seeing an optician and buying new glasses. In the past he had used his ingenuity, repeatedly repairing glasses with tape and baling wire. Lucile had given up her battle to help Donald live in the real world with more style and propriety, but Sylvia was not used to giving up and knew how to wage war with more tenacity.

Sylvia enjoyed visiting her son, a doctor, down south, and she knew Donald would jump at the chance to take her on a road trip. Don obliged, and they made several trips down to see her son and grandchildren. She also mentioned how handy and versatile the new RVs were becoming. One afternoon he walked into the Lizton bank determined to take out a loan designed to purchase a motor home for Sylvia, but one of the bank’s officers talked him out of the scheme, and eventually Sylvia grew weary of the battle. Donald was never an easy person with whom to co-exist, and their arguments became more and more tiring. He was growing weary of trying to develop a relationship that was exhausting and exploitive. Dolores hinted that the romance was doomed. She

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was convinced that Sylvia was a gold digger. Sylvia occasionally tried to re-ignite the flame, but Donald was stubborn and resolved to remain loyal to Lucile's memory. At this point Dolores and Roy were living in Donald's home place, and he was growing more dependant on Dolores. Dolores did not approve of Sylvia.

The battle over the Buick was Donald's Waterloo. He'd always been proud of that car, the only GM vehicle he ever owned. He continued to drive long after he could safely maneuver a car anywhere. Dolores tried every trick she could think of to take his car keys, but he stormed and protested, "That's m-m-my car, and I have every right to drive it. Nothin' wrong with my eyesight." But after several minor accidents and a frightening near miss, he drove the Buick into the barn and left it there. It gathered dust for years before it was donated to the Salvation Army by his daughter. The loss of his driving ability made the mutual hatred between him and Roy unbearable. Their enmity grew worse as the days passed and Roy's bullying became bolder.

Roy liked to shoot rats after he played his trumpet. He sat in a lawn chair with his rifle across the arms of the chair and waited. Once in awhile he'd get one, but he decided what he needed was a blind, so without asking Donald, he took out the back window of the garage and replaced it with a rough board, leaving a couple of inches at the bottom so he could sit and watch for rats without being seen. This worked better, but Donald discovered the ugly boarded up opening where his window had formerly been one day when he was puttering around the farm. He confronted Roy but was unable to get a straight answer; Donald fumed and simmered about his loss of control. He was forgetting names and having a harder and harder time writing. He had tried all his life to keep a notepad and write down things he should do and remember, but the notepad lay

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neglected. Even the task of signing checks was becoming difficult, and Dolores was more than willing to take over a chore that, more than anything else, increased her control.

As time went on, the most obvious problem with the arrangement was Roy. He kept his guns in the house and bragged that if it weren't for him the rats would take over the farm. After he took out the back window of the garage, nailing a board over the window frame with a slit opening in the bottom for a blind, he declared that he had wiped out the rats. He was smoking his cigarettes in the house until Margie objected. He claimed his inability to hold a job was because of his mysterious physical disability. Mark Lawson, seeing a deteriorating situation, finagled a security guard job for him through a friend, but Roy held the job for less than a week, missing work and arriving late. Roy liked to be King of the Hill and bought a huge, comfy, leather reclining chair for himself, yelling at Donald when Don tried to sit in it. Roy menaced Don with his superior height: "That's my chair. We bought it with Dolores's gift money."

Donald yelled back: "This is still m-m-my house, and I c-can sit where I want."

Roy shouted louder: "No. I'm the husband here, and I'm the man of the house."

The absurd shouting match ended with Roy shoving Donald out of his way, after Donald had made a pathetic attempt at pushing Roy, who sat heavily, reclining in his throne and glaring up at him. Roy finalized it: "Don't you ever touch this chair again."

Anger built up in Donald's failing mind, and his sleepless nights grew worse. He sometimes woke the Daytons in the middle of the night, so Dolores had a new bathroom installed in a closet area off their bedroom. She also had a heavy lock installed on their bedroom door. She made daily long-distance calls to their pastor at the Pentecostal

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Church in Crawfordsville. He counseled her to be patient, to wait for The Blessing, to be faithful. Lucile, had she been alive, could have told her how much patience she'd need. Donald, after accompanying them to their church, refused to go with them and began attending church with Margie and her family at New Brunswick Christian Church. Dolores routinely dropped him off at Emmerts early Sunday mornings before they drove the twenty-five miles west to Crawfordsville. The Daytons also attended Sunday evening services and Wednesday mid-week service; Dolores put many miles on the SUV, but Donald was paying for the gas. It would be worth it for The Blessing.

One late September waking before dawn, Donald wandered out of the house, down the county road, across the highway and over the railroad track, headed north to help with a train wreck that had awakened him and drawn him out into the cold empty night. When Dolores realized he was missing when she got up at dawn, she jumped into the SUV and drove south towards Emmerts, looking frantically for him. Finally she turned around and headed north, seeing him walking in his pajamas and bare feet along the road. Furious and frightened, she stopped and made him get into the car, shouting at him and slamming the front passenger door. Donald explained that there had been a train wreck and he knew they needed help.

Shortly after the "train wreck" on a sunny fall day Dolores, noting that Donald was in a good mood, laid out his Sunday clothes and convinced him that he should have a new will drawn up. She talked reasonably as he ate his breakfast, explaining that financial advisors recommend revising a will periodically, rewriting and adjusting it for new circumstances, including different situations that arise as one grows older. Roy was playing his trumpet in the back room, but even that annoyance didn't seem to bother

Donald. He had been out early, breathing in the early autumn air, admiring the soybeans ready for harvest. Life was good, and Dolores seemed to make sense. He had always tried to make astute financial decisions. It was Dolores's daughter's day off, so the grandchildren were not underfoot, and Dolores reminded Donald that it was a beautiful day for a drive. She had made an appointment with a lawyer earlier and made sure Donald had his wallet and checkbook with him. The lawyer perused the old will and had few changes to suggest, but Dolores made sure she was included in the revised will. It was only fair, she reasoned. The trip to the Lizton bank for the property deed was the next step.

As Donald's memory faded and his ability to reason vanished, he became more difficult to manage, and Dolores resented his belligerence. Roy's hostility grew with Donald's hatred of him. As the situation deteriorated, the three daughters continued to assume the arrangement their father had made with Dolores and Roy was satisfactory. Joanne, especially, had no idea that a thousand miles to the west her father was heading for disaster. Her awareness of the danger began with a phone call one peaceful late summer morning as she planned the coming school term.

Epilogue

Scituate, Massachusetts, lies along the South Shore of the Atlantic Ocean between historic Boston and Plymouth, at the end of Hwy 123, the Satuit Trail. My husband and I had lived in an old Scituate farmhouse, built in 1849, solid as New England granite, for nearly thirty years. Spring was always a welcome relief from relentless winters, but summer was my favorite season, a chance to explore Peggotty Beach, ride my bike, and spend more time with husband Richard and Murphy, our good dog. We loved to slip out onto the little deck in the early morning, drink our first pot of coffee, sit under the dogwood tree and watch the chickadees and cardinals have breakfast. We dreamed of some day moving to the Blue Ridge Mountains, but meanwhile we were content to breathe salt air. On this particular dawn as Labor Day approached, I was feeling the sad inevitability of summer's end as I drank my coffee. We South Shore teachers had gotten our class assignments in the mail, and I was trying to concentrate on a lesson plan. A ray of light filtered through the old chestnut tree across the driveway as a cloud in the east drifted on. The salt air felt damp and delicious. Concern for Dad in Indiana had not crossed my mind in a long while.

When the phone rang, I ran to get it, hoping it was my old friend Sally, but the caller sounded strained and peculiar. I thought I recognized the voice, but why would Dad's caregiver be calling from Indiana? Dolores rarely called, only when some dire emergency came up. In spite of the distance, I tensed up as I heard her complaining: "Your Daddy's havin' hallucinations. He thought there'd been a train wreck and walked down to help out, across 136. Had to drive down to get him. I'm gonna have to lock him in his room."

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“No, Dolores, you have less than two minutes to get out of a burning house. You can’t lock him in that back bedroom.”

“Oh, Honey, I’ll get your Daddy out. By the way, I reminded him that he always likes to send you girls a check for Christmas.” I ignored the non sequitur but remembered how puzzled I was to open an envelope from Dolores the week before with a thousand dollar check from Dad for Christmas – in September.

“No, Dolores, listen to me, you’re not to lock him in. You’d be breaking fire department regulations.” I had no idea if there were such a rule but figured there should be. Dolores sounded strange, as if she were feeling guilty. Since Dolores and Roy had moved in to take care of Dad, neither I nor the rest of the family had felt welcome. We figured all was well since it was our dad’s idea to invite them to move in after they lost their house. He had taken Mother’s death harder than anyone had anticipated, having relied on her to take care of his business, taxes, bills, correspondence, and a hundred other tasks. Dolores and Roy were local folks, so we could trust them, we thought. My sisters and their families lived close by, but I had moved to New England years before to go to school, marry Hayes, raise our family, and work. I was the black sheep, an Easterner.

I hung up, worried, which is nothing new for me, but it was September and school was beginning in a few days, so preparations for the grueling first week of school pushed other worries to the back of my mind. Although I loved my students and enjoyed teaching, new government programs, increased testing, and pressure to show improved performance were changing the teaching profession, and I was not convinced it was for the better. I began writing an introduction to Jack London’s *Call of the Wild* and decided

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to try adventure literature first and hoped my new freshmen were dog lovers. The trick was to sneak in lessons in writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar.

After Labor Day, school began in earnest, and on Thursday I hurried home, made a cup of tea, and sank into a chair with my lists of new freshmen and their initial attempts at writing in class, prepared to be disheartened but determined to learn every name. Summer heat had not subsided simply because the school calendar and store ads were looking to the fall season. I was thinking how ridiculous to start school in sweltering classrooms with no air conditioning when I heard the phone ring. It was Margie, my youngest sister, who sounded very upset. “Joanne, you’re not going to believe this, but Dolores and Roy took Dad to the bank today with the lock box key, told them to open the box so that they could have the deed to the farm. Lisa, at the bank, said, ‘Donald would’ve done whatever Dolores told him to do. Dolores was clearly in control.’”

“What are you saying? That’s an outrage. What did she do? Give him a double dose of Paxil ... or slip him something stronger?”

“Wait, that’s not all. Atty. Lind called me out of class and said something was very wrong, that these people brought Dad in with the property deed, told him ‘Daddy’ wanted to give them the farm, put everything in their name, or at least give them the original homestead plot, over thirty acres and the house. He said, ‘Donald would have agreed to anything Dolores said. He wasn’t himself.’ Atty. Lind stalled them, saying he needed a couple of days to draw up papers and do the legal work. Thank goodness Mel Lind is an old friend of Dad’s.”

“Margie, if they take Dad’s house, he won’t live a week. The farm means everything to him.” Dad had bought the land during the Depression, ditched it, built the

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house and barn. He'd always been proud of his farm. It also occurred to me that with the house in their name, they would have Dad in their power. "Have you called Donna?"

"Well, sure. She was Dolores' friend in high school. It's clear she doesn't want to talk about it. She's in denial, doesn't want to think about it, insists it must be a misunderstanding. So anyhow I went down to confront Dolores, and she backed off, gave a kind of strange laugh and said 'I guess I should have told you three daughters what we were planning to do, huh?' I couldn't believe how brazen she was."

"I don't understand it, Margie. Doesn't she know they could be charged with a crime? Dad's ninety-four, becoming senile. He's more and more dependent on her." Margie and Donna had told me earlier that Dad was not able to make rational decisions. They'd seen signs of dementia, had noticed bizarre behavior, but then for awhile he would seem to be OK. They had given Dolores power of attorney to sign his checks so she could pay his bills and take care of his taxes.

"Oh, Dolores assured me it was all Daddy's idea to give them the house and land. It gives me the creeps when she calls him 'Daddy,' and she does it all the time."

"Look Margie, I'm way out here and school just started. Can you have a meeting with Donna and Dad; see if he can discuss it?"

"Oh, I already did that. He was embarrassed, said he'd never intended to give them the house. He seemed confused and bewildered. He kept saying over and over, "Too much, too much." So that's where it rests. Dolores knows she has gone too far. We should've listened to the grandchildren. They suspected Dolores and Roy from the time they came on the scene. They've been warning us for years."

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“OK, what do you suggest? It was Dad’s idea to have them move in, and he brags about Dolores’ gardening and cooking.”

“Oh, come on, Joanne. She gives him canned noodle soup half the time, and he thinks she’s a gourmet cook. They won’t even eat with him. She gives him meals in the corner on a TV tray. I can’t stand the way she calls him ‘Daddy’ and bosses him around. Dad bought them a brand new SUV last year, and they act entitled.”

“Margie, we have to protect him. Who knows what goes on behind closed doors? They have plans; the exploitation won’t end just because we stopped this particular scheme. I feel like a fool for not taking our daughters’ suspicions seriously. It irked me last time we visited that they wouldn’t let him play his harmonica.”

“I know, I know; Roy left us a phone message last week that they weren’t getting paid enough considering what they had to put up with. Our daughter took the message. Alison was furious. She was so mad she called him back and told him off.”

“Good for Alison. But I don’t understand Roy’s complaint. Dad’s paying them a good salary on top of providing a home, food, anything they need. He even let Roy bring his bed-ridden mother to live with them until she died. Her hospital bed was in the living room when we last visited. Dad had no privacy at all. What on earth is Roy’s problem?”

“He may feel guilty – or maybe emboldened. Neighbors are joking about the loaded grocery carts Dolores pushes through the line at the IGA with Dad in tow. Rumor is that Dad pays for her daughter’s family’s food too. She also writes “gift” checks and “extra pay” checks to herself, usually \$200, and tries to have Dad sign those. His signature is so shaky though and his eyesight is getting worse.”

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“Margie, this is serious. When we visited last summer Dad had bought Dolores a new stove and new refrigerator. Roy insisted she had to have a dish washer too because, he told me, he wouldn’t have his wife standing over the sink. Roy even said Dad should buy him a new trumpet after Roy’s spray painting job ruined his old one, now blue. Dad hates Roy’s trumpet playing. They complain when Dad plays his harmonica, but Roy plays his horn hours on end. Roy’s “Horn Ministry” literature was lying around with that evangelist and his blue trumpet on the front. Roy has the nerve to complain about Dad.

“He implied that Dad was abusive. He also complained about needing a new John Deere ride-on to mow the lawn, so Dad bought a new mower. At least mowing keeps Roy off the trumpet for a few hours. He’s never held a steady job. Mark found him a security guard job, but he never showed up after the first day. He claims to have health problems but smokes constantly, and he keeps loaded guns around.”

“That does it. Dad is in real danger. We can’t avoid our responsibility. How can we get rid of them? Who could we get to live there with him?”

“I can’t think of anybody, but he can’t live alone; that’s for sure.”

You work full time, Margie. I’m the oldest and could retire early. I’ll drive the Dodge out and we’ll go from there. Richard will have the Camry.”

“Joanne, you love teaching. You can’t do that. Anyhow, we probably should put him in a nursing home...nope, that would kill him. He has always been so independent, but even if he could adjust, the only thing is...Donna told me the Brownsburg Nursing Home won’t let him visit his old school chum Jeannie any more, said he disrupts their routine and upsets Jeannie. You know how he is, always patting people, no sense of space. It’s easy for strangers to misunderstand him.”

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“No, he’d never survive in a nursing home, even if they let him stay. I’ve made up my mind. I’ll come out and stay with Donna until we can figure out what to do. I’ll take Dad for outings, to see his sister. How old is Aunt Mozell, 98? She’d like visitors. Does she still live alone with her daughter-in-law Immy looking in on her?”

“Yup, Mozell is older than Dad but sharp and funny. He enjoys going to see her.”

“OK, give me a week to wrap up my teaching and talk to the superintendent; he’s decent and fair. I have sick days and personal days to use until they find a new teacher. Thank goodness Gerry Bova came to South Shore. He has taken over the directing for our drama club and knows what he is doing. I’ll miss those dinner theater productions more than anything else. Our drama kids are the best. Sorry, I’m babbling. Try to keep an eye on Dad. I’ll be there as soon as I can. I’ll let you know when.”

“Joanne, Are you sure? You don’t have to do this. I wouldn’t do it.”

“It’ll be all right, Margie. We have to do something right away. See you. Bye.”

I hung up and realized my knees were weak. My insides were crawling and my hands shaking. What had Dad been going through with those self-righteous exploiters? It could be a terrible mistake, I thought, going back to Indiana to the farm to take care of my father. Thomas Wolfe had given fair warning. *You can’t go home again*. I remembered a teacher who used to forbid the word “can’t.” What do you do when you “can’t” go home but you have no choice? Aunt Mozell insisted that Wolfe was a lyrical writer of prose – always a poet - and poets never mean exactly what they write. What in Sam Hill, as Dad would say, could Wolfe mean by “can’t” in that context? My marriage

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could be in jeopardy as well. I hadn't even had a chance to talk the situation over with Richard. It looked to me as if necessity determined everything.

* * *

Margie rushed out to greet me as I parked under the trees after driving from the East Coast to central Indiana. Darkness was obscuring the familiar fields, but October brought nostalgic memories of growing up surrounded by these cornfields and breathing the pungent scent of ripe harvest. Margie had offered to let me stay with her family overnight until I could settle in with our other sister, Donna, who had a spare room. She understood my dread of confronting Dolores and Roy, but it had to be done. The trauma of taking early retirement was behind me. It wasn't as if I'd taught science or math. They could hire two young English teachers for what they were paying me, probably glad to see me go. My husband had been supportive and encouraging. He understood the precarious situation and promised to drive to Indiana periodically and stay as long as he could. His own parents living in East Tennessee were elderly and needed help as well, so he worked out a routine drive from Scituate, MA, to Johnson City, TN, to central Indiana. He put many miles on that Camry in the next four years but never complained.

Margie and Harold had built their dream house years before on eight acres of Dad's farm, just south of the old home place, and looking north, I could see Dolores's SUV and Roy's sporty car in Dad's driveway the next morning. Faking courage I did not feel, I called Dolores to let her know I'd be picking up Dad in half an hour, setting in motion a routine Dad and I continued for weeks. Reluctantly I drove the Dodge down to the home place, turned left into the gravel driveway, and parked behind Roy's Mustang.

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Bumper stickers glared at me: MY PRESIDENT IS CHARLETON HESTON and on the other side GUNS, GUTS, AND GOD. It was going to be a long winter.

Every day I'd pick up Dad early, drive him to visit his sister or take him to the Nature Preserve south of North Salem, visit his cousin in Jamestown or walk with him and the dog in the town park. Sundays we went to Old Union where he had attended church as a boy. People in the congregation knew him, and he sensed that he was welcome. He seemed to be reassured that they had rebuilt the historic church, the "Lighthouse on the Prairie," after a teenaged arsonist with a troubled mind had set fire to it. He liked to visit the graves on the broad hillside behind the church where his mother, father, and other relatives rested.

Donna and Margie agreed that we had to get Dolores and Roy out, but we knew it would take time. Making an appointment with Atty. Lind, I told Dolores that we were scheduling a meeting to resolve the issue of their betrayal of Dad's trust. She protested but agreed to meet with us on Friday in Danville at the attorney's office. November was upon us, and I dreaded the meeting as much as I dreaded winter in central Indiana. The icy wind blows down from Lake Michigan with nothing to stop it.

Dad and I arrived early on Friday, so I took him for a walk. When we returned from our walk around the block, we had to step around Roy, who was sitting on Atty. Lind's front steps smoking, in order to go in the office door. He glared up at us. My sisters were waiting at a long table, and Dolores was already seated scowling. Glancing at Atty. Lind, I grew alarmed at the elderly attorney's haggard face. He looked weary, shrunken. It seemed to me it would be a miracle if this old man made it through the meeting. We found out later that his son had committed suicide the week before. He

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managed to guide the group to termination papers. Roy interrupted to complain, “How am I going to pay for my medicine now?”

This was too much for me. I replied acidly, “You could stop smoking.” My sisters shot me deadly looks. The attorney advised that to avoid delays we should pay them a substantial termination lump sum, give them at least three weeks’ notice and help them move. They chose Dec. 4th to vacate. Dread turned to agony as I imagined Dad living there in the same house for another month while they packed and figured out how to get as much as possible out of a failed situation, a kind of consolation prize...revenge?

Living in Donna’s back room was awkward, and I missed my husband, who was driving back and forth taking care of his own elderly parents in eastern Tennessee. Every morning I left early to pick Dad up and take him on his daily outing. We’d spend the morning talking with Aunt Mozell, then go to the Jamestown Library or McCloud Nature Park where Big Walnut Creek cut through the rolling Indiana hills and woods. There was satisfaction in reading to Dad. If I sat close to his right ear to read aloud, he would listen and nod. Apparently he couldn’t hear much of it, but he liked books about Lincoln and Will Rogers. Mark Twain was his favorite. I tried to avoid Dolores, but I’d run into her at the back door. She always had her three grandchildren there shouting at them. The kitchen was a mess. It was a madhouse. Rowdy, the oldest, six or seven, earned his name. Dolores was constantly on the phone with her pastor at their Pentecostal Church in Crawfordsville while her grandsons ran in and out chasing their dogs and cats and each other. She took pride in being a hard worker, which Dad admired, and created chaos with the laundry, dishwasher, egg-crating, and garden chores. Roy spent most of his time shooting his guns or playing his trumpet.

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Uncle Walter's son, our generous cousin Ed, got wind of the crisis and offered to move them out on Dec. 4th. Thanks to Ed, I was able to take Dad and Molly to Austin, Texas, to visit his granddaughter, Becky, while they finished moving out. It was cold, bleak winter weather by this time, and it was making me sick seeing Roy bring a trailer in to load plants that they dug up to take with them. Dolores considered all appliances Dad had purchased while she was there as gifts to her, so when we returned from Texas, we walked into an empty house in dead of winter with nothing but ourselves to make it home. My heart sank. All we had to relieve the bitter cold were memories of Austin's warm December breezes, Becky's hospitality and love for her grandfather. We were both grateful for the ten days in Texas exploring Ladybird Johnson's wildflower gardens, walking along Barton Springs and the "other" Columbia River that cuts through Austin. It had been a perfect respite from the nightmare back home.

Dad's bedroom was the only room left intact, so I helped him with his pajamas, heeded his reminder to leave a nightlight on in his room. He asked where the two dogs were: not a word about Dolores and Roy. We needed a dog! The next morning I began calling sisters and other relatives who soon rounded up enough used, discarded, or abandoned furniture to replace what Dolores and Roy had taken. Donna had ordered a stove from Sears, and we moved Dad's old refrigerator from the garage back into the kitchen. As for the dishwasher, I figured it was good riddance. Donna also found a dog for Dad from her daughter-in-law's dog's litter. Molly was a chow misfit, but she was perfect for Dad. We took Molly, his good dog, everywhere with us. She was the runt of the litter, but she became Dad's loyal companion. At night she leaped onto the foot of Dad's bed, establishing a routine that never varied.

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Launching into extreme make-over mode house cleaning, I scrubbed and aired out every square inch. Dolores and Roy had taken their cats, so I made a house for Dad's cat Rusty on the back porch ledge/loft where she could go in and out at will and continue to keep the premises mouse-free. On one of his visits, Dick cleaned and painted the back porch and helped me spruce up the front porch. It was beginning to seem like home. So here I was where I started sixty-some years before, going to church where I had witnessed my first wedding as a child, living on a farm that had hardly changed. My old tree house, what was left of it, was still up in the old hickory tree. My still-blue, rusting, no-gear bicycle was leaning against the wall inside the garage. The Indiana "big-sky" sunrises and sunsets were still first rate.

Dad feared the dark and had to have a light on somewhere. At first he'd get up every hour or so at night but never made it successfully to the toilet. Pulling down his pajama bottoms and Depends as he staggered to the bathroom, he'd leave a trail of urine. I became skilled at cleaning up messes but never could get enough sleep. I wondered how people managed before Depends. The doctor said Dad suffered from "sundowners" syndrome; darkness magnified his paranoia fears. Dad's agitated fear of darkness troubled me more than anything else. Why would a grown man who had faced perils all his life revert to childish terror? His intermittent distress calls, sometimes lasting most of the day, put my nerves on edge, but the nighttime stress was worse.

One night, as Dad's stumbling from his bed woke me, I grabbed my robe and threw it on, calling to him to wait until I could help him. I had tried to teach him how to use a walker, but he had taken it down the cellar steps and fallen. Thankful that he had come through that accident with only bruises, I had given up on the walker. As I headed

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into the hallway, Dad shouted, slipped in his own urine, and fell heavily onto the floor. Trying to pick him up, I lost my footing and realized that the hardwood floor was a slippery mess. I heard screaming and, horrified, I realized it was my own voice. Breathing deeply, I made myself calm down and told Dad to stay there, as if he had a choice. Using towels, I dried the floor and dragged Dad into the shower, positioning the shower chair so I could lift him onto it. He loudly objected to a shower at 3:00 in the morning, but realizing the Depends held more than urine, I had no other options. After scrubbing with great quantities of soap, I rinsed him thoroughly, managed to put clean, dry pajamas on him, change his sheets, and help him back into bed. Molly was frantic throughout, trying to lick his face and help in her canine concern. After Dad was happily warm, dry, and comfortable tucked back into his bed, the dog leaped onto the bed and lay with her head flat on the blanket looking up as if she had everything under control. Then I took a long, hot shower. That winter I used great quantities of Murphy's floor cleaner and took inordinate pride in Dad's house smelling fresh and clean. What on earth did people do before running water, plumbing, and showers?

Molly tolerated Dad's shouting and enjoyed keeping the mole population under control. Dad would say, "She's my faithful dog, my only friend." Sundays we continued to take Molly with us to Old Union country church, Dad's family's congregation from years back. We took Molly with us everywhere, but she especially liked going to Old Union. She waited patiently and liked to romp with the children after church. I'd look for Margaret, Dad's cousin, who sat on the right side of the sanctuary, four rows from the back, and sit with her. She and I loved to sing harmony and belt out the sweet old Gospel

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hymns. After she could no longer attend services at the “Lighthouse on the Prairie,” she would reminisce about singing those good old hymns at Old Union.

Old Union was in the middle of cornfields and soy beans just down the county road from the farm. My vivid memory of a double wedding at Old Union, all color and sunlight, made it keen nostalgia to return. Dad’s ancestors were buried in a cemetery behind the church: Pratts, Wainwrights, Hines gravestones. Wave upon wave of Boone County’s departed citizens rested behind the recently rebuilt Old Union church. One of the first destinations that Dad requested when I began driving him around central Indiana was Old Union. He seemed distressed that it had burned to the ground, and when I reassured him that they had rebuilt the church, that had been one of the first things Dad wanted to see. Then he wanted to see the old Pratt homestead, pointed out the Jackson place and the place where “Uncle John Covey” used to live. It seemed to stimulate his memory when I drove him around his old haunts.

The four years that followed, before my father passed away in May of 2007, seemed a time out of time. Only those who have cleaned up after an incontinent parent with dementia day after day know the anguish of the gradual, inexorable deterioration. One has to get used to the anger, the misplaced resentment, the paranoia and fear. I no longer had a name; Dad referred to me as “she.” Days when he was lucid were rare but memorable. Dad loved the old songs. He’d sing: “She’s the most distressful count-er-ee that ever you have seen. They’re hangin’ men & women for the wearin’ o’ the green.” I took him in the wheelchair to St. Paddy’s Day parade in Indy. He got a kick out of the green canal and the bagpipe band. He’d always loved to play his harmonica, but little by little his “French harp” grew silent.

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His attacks of paranoia became more frequent. One night he was so certain that a helicopter had landed in the front yard that I went to the front door to check. He had evidently had a dream and was convinced it had actually happened. Later that fall day he grew agitated, had an accident in his Depends and refused to get into the shower. I insisted, and he fought me through the necessary cleaning process. After I put clean clothes on him and left the bathroom, I heard shouting. He was yelling at the top of his voice, "HELP! I'm in jail" over and over out the bathroom window. A passing police officer, the local sheriff, was going off duty, driving past with his grandson. Hearing the shouting, the sheriff pulled into the driveway, came to the front door and knocked. By this time, Dad was calmed down, back into his wheelchair, and when I invited the officer into the living room, Dad was jovial and polite. The sheriff asked, "How are you doing, Don?" Dad replied, "Just fine. Couldn't be better." After a few questions, nodding courteously, the officer went on home to his supper.

Even after Dad stopped communicating, he enjoyed going to see his elder sister. Aunt Mozell remembered old stories about growing up with her brother in the first two decades of the 20th Century that he couldn't remember or communicate. She told me that his compulsion to scratch the skin on his left hand harked back to a terrible accident when he was four years old: "We were playing chickamee, chickamee, craymie crow. We were chasing each other, our brother Walter too, around the hot stove. We were laughing hysterically when suddenly Donald fell into hot coals, burning his hands. It seemed as if he had more accidents than most boys." His stone deaf left ear was caused by a kick in the head from Grandpa's favorite horse, Old Jim, when Donald, only a small boy, crept too close in back of the Belgian giant. Aunt Mozell said, "Donald was unconscious for

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three days. Oh, Dad carried Donald into the house, and Dad cried and cried. It was pitiful. Only time we ever saw Dad cry.” I remembered that my father had also burned the same hand when his old Moline tractor caught on fire and he tried to put the fire out. The ‘proud flesh’ on his left hand was so sensitive that he had taken to wearing a cotton glove with the fingers cut off to keep from scratching the skin and causing an eruption.

Trying to help organize the home place, I stirred up a hornet’s nest, so to speak, when I decided to donate the last car Dad had owned. Dad’s old Buick, parked in the barn, was covered with layers of dust but in good running condition, so I called Salvation Army to donate the car. He hadn’t driven it for years, but I had no way of knowing what a commotion I was about to cause. When he realized that a stranger had come to take his Buick, he hobbled out to the barn with his walking stick, climbed into the trunk, reached into the back and pulled out a toolbox filled with tools from his road call days back when his garage business was booming. He was fuming.

Dad loved to tell tales about his school days: “Fay Scott drove the horses that pulled the school hack. The horses knew the seven turns from school to home by heart.”

“So how did you kids stay warm in winter on those country roads in an open hack?” Trying to picture my once ox-strong father as a small boy stretched my mind.

“There was a little coal oil stove in the middle of the hack to keep the kids warm.”

“Wasn’t that dangerous?”

“Well, it never tipped over. There were two wood stoves in the Hendricks School where we went up to 8th grade. One at each end of the schoolroom. I used to carry in wood after school while my sister, who taught us for a year or two, graded papers by a coal oil lantern. That’s when they made me janitor and I got to ride home with Maude.

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She had a surrey pulled by the trotting mare, Belle. We had to watch that mare after dark. She'd make all the turns, but when she got to the last turn, she'd be thinkin' about oats and would cut the corner too short and turn the surrey over if we weren't careful."

"Why didn't we ever have horses here on the farm?"

"I never could see the economy of having horses after tractors came in use." I wondered if the accident that made him deaf in his left ear was another reason.

The best stories were about his love of airplanes. His favorite celebrity was Amelia Earhart. When he got a scholarship to GMI, General Motors Institute, in the 1920's, he was hoping to earn a degree in aeronautical engineering, but that never materialized. He opened an auto repair business. He did have a small Taylor Craft airplane after his family began to prosper. He bought it with a neighbor who soon grew tired of it. Dad bought him out and owned it outright until the tragic crash. He kept the plane across the road in a long field he used as a runway. I begged to fly with him, and he often let me go up. I'd shout "Contact!" a signal for him to start the engine by manually spinning the propeller. Finally, he must have felt guilty about the expense and decided to sell it. A fellow who wanted to buy it talked Dad into going for a test flight with him. Dad refused at first, said it was too gusty. Wanting desperately to sell it, however, Dad took the risk, and the plane crashed, coming in too low and fast. Dad said, "I grabbed the controls and pancaked it." The prospective buyer walked away unhurt. Never looked back. Dad was in the hospital for weeks with both legs broken and a foot crushed. Dr. Aiello said he'd never walk again, but he did, even fulfilling his promise to walk a stretch of the Great Wall of China. I recall one of the last things he said before he died: "Did they ever find Amelia Earhart?"

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Dad told about riding his Indian motorcycle across the country in the 1930's and making road trips with his brother and sister, stopping frequently to change tires and cool radiators. Dad's love of adventure may have caused him pain, but his Indy 500 tales never failed to fascinate us. He started his career with Buick in Indianapolis, and because he was short, they gave him an opportunity to help test a new gas line by riding in a spare tire well on the side of a car. As the driver sped up Hwy. 31 going 60, 70, 80 mph, - the driver claimed he hit 100 - Dad hung on and noted that the gas began to boil at a certain point. Buick redesigned the gas line configuration. Buick also offered him a chance to work the Indy 500 as a "riding mechanic." Buick's car didn't finish. Dad recalled his dismay. "They were trying dry shocks. I told them it wouldn't work. Nobody listened to me. I was a greenhorn."

"So the Buick car didn't win the Indy 500?"

"Not by a long shot. Shoulda' stuck with the old shocks."

Gradually Dad's memory evaporated, but before dementia took the past from him, he told stories about his high school rivalry with his friend Henry Myers. His classmates called Dad "Shorty," a nickname Dad hated, but Henry never did. They both loved math and were good at solving problems. He'd laugh, remembering a time when he'd bested old Henry. For awhile Henry and Dad were the only two left from their high school class. Then Henry died not long after his 95th birthday celebration, which Dad and I attended in North Salem, Dad said sadly, "They all died on me."

Until he was too weak and had to use a wheelchair, Dad loved to walk with me down the road, Molly chasing rabbits and field mice nearby. He used a hand-carved walking stick that he prized, said it had a double purpose. He'd note the superior soybean

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crop, but sometimes with his macular degeneration he didn't realize he was looking at weeds that grew faster than the beans. He'd sometimes play his harmonica and tolerate my pathetic attempts to play the fiddle. Aunt Maude was brutally honest. When I played the fiddle for her, a new tune I had learned, she said, "You're not very good, are you?" She told the truth. She was a fair judge too as she had taught violin to her students back when she was a school teacher in Montana. Dad's impaired hearing became a blessing when I decided to take up fiddling.

Good neighbors were a saving grace. Since I had very little garden, old friends from school, Bill and Sally Rawlings who lived on a farm down the road, brought us sweet corn and tomatoes fit for royalty. Bill was relatively tall, maybe six feet, but Dad, who had suffered the nickname Shorty all his life, enjoyed looking up at Bill as if at a giant: "That b-b-boy is seven feet tall, and he's still agrowin' looks like to me." On my birthday in September, after I had resigned myself to no celebration, there were festive helium "birthday" balloons tied to the lawn chair in the front yard when I drove up the driveway from taking Dad to visit Mozella. Puzzled, I asked my sisters if they had sneaked them into the yard, but both denied any knowledge of mysterious birthday balloons. Exhausting all relatives, I finally called Sally Rawlings, and she laughed, admitting that Bill had found the balloons caught on a wire fence and brought them to us, remembering that Sally had mentioned my birthday and sent a card a few days before. Anytime there was farm machinery stirring up dust across the road, Dad would remark that Bill Rawlings owned the field across from his. Bill was an anchor in Dad's stormy ocean. He'd remind me: "That Rawlings boy is a mighty hard worker."

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When Margaret Wainwright, the music-loving cousin with whom we sat on Sunday mornings, had to move to Homewood Health Center following an operation, our routine expanded to include outings to Lebanon Memorial Park. We'd pick up Margaret at the nursing home with Dad and Molly in the back seat of the Dodge. After I set off the alarm in my first attempt at entering the Homewood facility, I became adept at navigating the nursing home environment. We'd spring Margaret for the day. I'd put a Mozart CD in the player, and we'd spend the afternoon admiring the trees and flowers, walking to the bench donated by Lizton State Bank and watching the children play. When I read that the Indianapolis Symphony was giving a summer concert in Lebanon's park, we made plans to make a night of it, see if Mozella could come along, and celebrate. The night of the concert Margaret was so excited she nearly forgot her purse and sweater, but we drove intact to the high school auditorium where the event had been relocated by a rain forecast. Although Dad was in his wheelchair, we found good central seats near the front and settled in for the evening. I had invited Mozell to go with us, but she had decided not to try an evening event. We told her all about it later. Dozens of friendly faces greeted Margaret. Old friends were shaking her hand, praising her years as the Lebanon school's administrator, and telling her they missed her. She was beaming. The Indy Symphony outdid itself – or maybe it was the audience-friendly program, the glorious music, the jovial conductor, the balmy air. Whatever it was that made the evening magical, I recalled that night fondly as later on Margaret's health began to decline and her mind deteriorated. All too soon, Margaret was confined to a wheelchair. She talked of coming back to Old Union but was never able to do it. Dad and I continued to take her on outings, but they grew more difficult and infrequent. Margaret always asked about

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Molly and laughed when we sneaked her into Homewood one afternoon. At least we didn't set off the alarm.

Dad's 2nd stroke was too much for him. One sunny May morning he finished his breakfast but seemed lethargic. He indicated he needed help so I wheeled him into the bathroom and helped him sit. After awhile he slumped over, and I couldn't get him back into the wheelchair no matter what I tried. Helpless, I called 911 for Lizton's rescue squad. The humiliation of strangers having to lift him off the toilet was probably more my own embarrassment than any concern of Dad's. The EMTs arrived within minutes, and with efficient, infinitely patient care, they lifted him onto a gurney, covered him after I managed to put clean clothes on him, and we headed for Hendricks Regional Hospital in Danville. I followed with his faithful dog Molly in my Dodge and spent the next couple of weeks going back and forth from the farm to the hospital, spending the days by his bedside. Visitors with kindly, familiar faces came by, some I hadn't seen in fifty years, and paid their respects, although Dad was unaware most of the time. Hospice was helpful, compassionate, even arranged for Molly to visit Dad in the hospital, but Dad died the end of May.

My violin teacher, a sixteen-year-old fiddler from Pittsboro, Indiana, named Cody Bauer, played bluegrass Gospel music for Dad's funeral at Old Union. Dad's ten grandsons and granddaughters came from all over the country to the funeral. His favorite nephew Sherrill Fritts, a retired minister, and his grandson Adam Emmert, a youth minister, gave the eulogies. Cody brought a local bluegrass singer and guitarist with him, and they played Dad's old favorites: several spirituals, "I'll Fly Away," "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and traditional Gospel hymns that I'd mentioned when Cody asked me

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what he should play. Cody knew Dad liked the classic “Old Joe Clark” but didn’t know whether he should play the lively fiddle tune at a funeral. I assured him that Dad would approve, and so he closed with the unorthodox bluegrass toe-tapper. Sherrill came to the pulpit for his eulogy as the bluegrass music faded into the air. The first thing he said was, “Maybe I have a big imagination, but I could swear I heard a harmonica.” Dad was buried beside Mother. The church ladies had a typically sumptuous dinner for the family back at Old Union after the graveside service. Here was true comfort food. Dad always did enjoy the pitch-in dinners at Old Union. He felt at home there, and nobody called him Shorty.

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Donald Andrew Hines

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