

**BOOK TWO**  
**THE STRAWBERRY FAIR**  
**CHAPTER ONE**  
**ADULT RUNAWAY**

Loretta Woods hurriedly packed what she could quickly grab. Writing a short note to the kids, she threw it in freezer along with the keys to the '51 Chevy convertible. Then she burst out the screen door letting it slam shut as she ran down the road to disappear. Vini the Fin, the loan shark, was not going to grab her today, not today or any other day.

She had just gotten a surprise call from her childhood friend, Gloria. Her befuddled friend was warning her that some unsavory characters were on their way to her house, and the visit would not be something she was going to like. "Get out and get out NOW. I am not kidding, this is serious."

Loretta had been drinking and gambling, a combination that is often fatal for one who is not good at it. She had no poker face, so owing a large sum of money to the now unfriendly loan sharks was proving to be a very dangerous scenario for her and her children.

Like many alcoholics, making wrong decisions on a daily basis is a lifestyle that brings sorrow and suffering to all around them, and in this case even danger. So, with this selfish fear driving her, she was again abandoning her children to fend for themselves, thinking she was doing what was best for them.

This was the third time she had turned her back on motherly obligations and hit the road for lesser responsibilities. Deep in her heart she had to know this was not the right thing to do, but she had no logical decision making skills left after so many years of surrender to the vice grip alcohol.

She would get back on her feet again and get



the kids again, as she had already done two times. Right now, they would be better off at their grandpa's farm in Oregon than they would have been with her. She always made these heart-wrenching decisions without consulting them or her father.

Catching the Greyhound at the bus stop in New Hopland, she sat in the seat starrng at her reflection in the window, thinking of the few good days she had given the kids. There had been **SOME** good days, when drinking was not involved. Days of picnics, baseball and swimming in the the Russian River, which ran through Hopland, and sometimes ran over it.

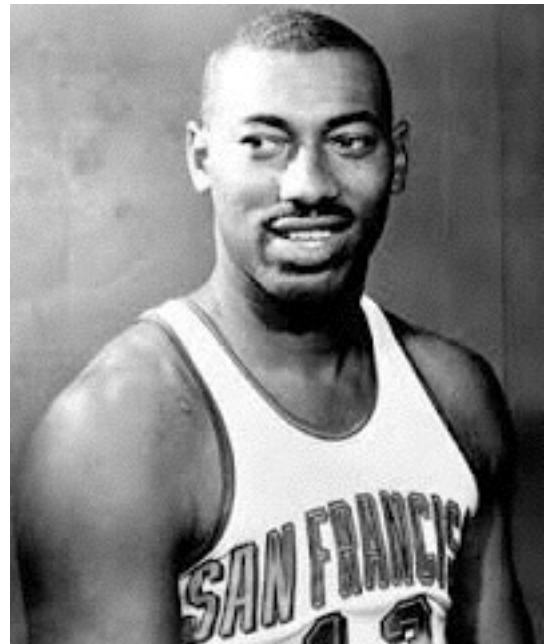
“Where to now”, was on her mind. She would just go south, towards San Francisco and play it by ear from there. She could hide in the city, it was too big for her pursuers to find her, at least this is the wrong conclusion she had come to on her own.

San Francisco was buzzing with excitement as the Warriors basketball team was in the NBA playoffs, with **Wilt Chamberlain** as their leading scorer. Maybe with all the extra tourist traffic, it would be easy for her to get a job as a waitress. She could sleep at the YWCA, as she had done so many times before, where no one would ask her any prying and embarrassing questions.

When the bus stopped in Santa Rosa, a big, blond man entered and sat in the empty seat next to her. He looked friendly enough but Loretta was always suspicious, especially of men. He glanced her way and said with a kindly voice, “Are you going to San Francisco?”

She did not want to talk to anyone but his demeanor was comforting and she felt at ease in his presence. “I am and will be looking for a job when I get there.” She did not know why she was giving this complete strange personal information, she was always **VERY** careful not to do so.

He nodded his understanding. “Do you have any idea where you will search for employment?”



What did he think? Was he going to help her? Not many had ever helped her except her father, Jack Woods and Gloria Dryer, her long lost high school friend. She had discovered that these two could be depended on although she rarely took their sage advice. If she had taken it more often, she would not be on this bus now giving her personal information to a total stranger.

The soft spoken stranger continued, “Do you have family members in the Bay Area? If not, where will you stay tonight?” His interest in her plans startled her at first. No one, except family, ever showed this much concern for her well being. Certainly no complete stranger would be asking these questions unless he had an ulterior motive in mind, at least this was the sum of all of her previous experiences, which all lead to physical and financial disasters for her and her children.

She did not know if she should give this man more information. Could he be trusted? Was he sent by the men looking for her? How could that be possible, they did not even know which direction she was traveling. Maybe he could be trusted, her heart told her he was not a bad person.

“I plan to stay at the YWCA, that is where I have always been welcome.” Now she did it, she told him exactly where she was going and where he could find her. But for some odd reason, she was still not deeply concerned; it did not make her afraid.

The tall blond started to make small talk, “It is a lovely day that the Lord has made, isn’t it?”

What is this, she pondered in her troubled heart? Is this one of those religious fanatics that were always trying to get her to change her ways? She was fed up with them, forever throwing Bible verses at her and insisting she keep THEIR set of rules. Rules, which even if she did keep them, she thought they would never give her peace or solve her deepest problems of doubt and fear. This was her personal opinion.

That is it! She was not going to continue this conversation. She did not want to get into an argument about the Bible or religious stuff, it was a waste of time and usually ended up in a shouting match. It seems that the one with the weaker defense always shouted the loudest. That was always HER.

“I also don’t like to argue about religious things. I just think we need more conversations about the goodness of God and His kindness to us. Don’t you think so?”

What was going on. It was like this stranger could read her mind. She really did not want to talk to him but found his tone of voice and his presence of peace to be overwhelming her defenses. "I have not thought a lot about these subjects, especially lately."

"What has happened lately that has made you uncomfortable talking about this?" He was not going to let her short and illusive answers detour him from continuing his attempt to discuss what he apparently thought was a subject of mutual interest, or at least should be.

She finally had to put a stop to this, "I really do not want to talk about my personal life with a complete stranger." There, that should shut him up for a while, most people would be able to take the hint and zip their lip.

But not this person. He was not offended and just kept on coming with his list of questions. "Where are you going to eat? Where will you find friends? Do you have any friends in San Francisco?" He quickly noticed that if he continued his interrogation, she was going to move to another seat, so he retreated a little. "Okay, you don't want to talk and I understand. I will remain quiet the rest of the trip, so you can stay in your seat."

That suited her just fine, now she could stare out the window thinking of broken promises and abandoned children. The rest of the trip the stranger just hummed a familiar song she remembered from the few times she had attended church. It was "Wonderful Grace" or something like that. The tune was always played at funerals.

If it was grace, and grace meant "freely given" she knew nothing about this subject. If grace is freely given it must be allotted to persons who deserved it, right? And she knew in the depths of her heart that she was not one of these persons.

Nothing was "FREELY GIVEN" especially something as wonderful as salvation. Why it was only logical that it had to be earned, sacrificed for and then there was always the lingering fear that it was not enough. At least this is how she interpreted the religious stuff.

She had always told Gloria, "I believe in God, I think. If there is a judgement day, and I doubt there is. But if there is, God will give me just exactly what I deserve."

Gloria tried to explain it to her. "Listen girl, mercy is God not giving us what we deserve - eternal punishment. And grace is God

offering to us what we do not deserve - eternal life. For some odd reason you believe that God might be eternally kind to you because of all the things you have already suffered here. Am I seeing this right?"

Loretta had to be honest, "Yeah, that is about how I figure it is all going to play out. Show me where I am going wrong, if you can."

"Friend, I have already shown you, many times, but you still insist on clinging to your unbelief. Until you accept the Bible as God's only message to us, it is going to be impossible for anyone, including me, to convince you of your need to accept Christ. But honestly, don't you think most of your hard times have been the result of your own bad decisions."

That is how the conversations usually went with Gloria. In Loretta's opinion, Gloria was closed minded and a pesky religious fanatic who was always trying to get her to see the errors of her ways and change, for the kid's sake, as she often said.

A pothole in the road jolted Loretta back to the present situation; another religious fanatic sitting next to her NOW. Happily, in her favor, the trip would only last another half hour. Then she could get rid of the stranger who had taken such an interest in her personal life.

As they crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, she was feeling better. The sun was setting in the Pacific causing red, blue and yellow stripped clouds. It was a sight to behold but Loretta did not have anyone to thank for it as she did not believe in the Creator of the clouds.

The stranger had kept his word and had not spoken again. Now that the bus was at the terminal, he stood up and looked her right in the eyes. His stare was one of compassion, "Loretta, I am giving you a business card, look up this man **on the wharf**. He will be able to help you when you need it." With that he hurried off the bus, being the first person to pass through the turnstile. When she looked down on



the seat, she found a fifty dollar bill.

She was more concerned now. She had never given him her name. How did he know her name? Was this a reason for her to be alarmed, she hoped not. Now it was her turn to get off. She grabbed the fifty and stepped down; the stranger was no were to be found. Then she felt the cold, damp evening wind break across her face, this made her pull up her sweater hood. Welcome to San Francisco.

Loretta took a trolley to the wharf to look for a job. She was over-whelmed with the smell of lobsters and clams as she worked her way through the eating galleries. The stainless steel tubs held the live, condemned sea creatures until someone chose them to froth in a pot of boiling water.

She talked to a few patrons about a waitress job but found no one interested enough to even give her an application to fill out. This was not going to be as easy as she thought. She had to hurry and catch the last bus in order to get to the YWCA before they closed the doors for the night. She made it and crashed in one of their **rickety bunks**.

She did not immediately go to sleep. She was an alcoholic and a gambler, but was not a mother completely devoid of feelings. She knew her decisions were causing her and the kids a lot of suffering but she did not seem to see clearly enough to conjure up other solutions that were possible in her mind. Escaping always was the easy way out for her. Grandpa would take care of the kids again, he always did, he was a good man.

She wondered where the three of them were now. She had no way of knowing that Thomas had already arrived in San Diego to report for Navy boot camp and that Shane and Kosy were about to be incarcerated for the simple fact that they could not prove the car was theirs. If she would have known this, it definitely would have taken her longer to drop into la-la land. She did not exactly cry herself to sleep like Kosy would be doing.

YWCA roll call was at



**6:00 AM.** She would get a continental breakfast and be ushered out into the streets of San Francisco. She could come back for a bowl of soup at noon, and a place to sleep each night, but she had to spend her daylight hours on the city's dime. Therefore, she made her way back to the wharf, hoping that today she would be more fortunate in finding some employment.

Finding employment was getting to be a real trial, something she had never figured would happen. She usually could land a job within hours of searching. But, not today, this was very strange for her to understand. After having no success and not wanting to return to the YMCA, she decided to take a look at the card the stranger had given her.

She fumbled around in her purse until she pulled it out. It only had a man's name and address on it. In the bright afternoon sunlight she squinted and read, Ted Ballentine, 1098 Lumbard St.

She found **The Crab Shack** and asked for Ted Ballentine. The greeter went to the back and brought a kind looking, elderly man to meet her. He wiped his sweaty hands on his already greasy apron and extended a friendly hand to Loretta. She eagerly accepted his warm reception.

Shoving the piece of folded paper towards him, she mentioned that a kind man on the bus gave her his business card. He took it with a surprised look on his face. "I don't have business



cards, but this is my name and this is the right address." He was a bit taken back but was not a man to get his feathers ruffled easily.

Loretta found the whole ordeal with the man on the bus to be a bit strange, weird,

something to give one goose bumps, for sure. But, here she was, asking this man for a job. The best she could do was hope, hope, hope and trust the situation was not hopeless.

Ted gave her a quick once over and decided that this lady needed a friend. She appeared to be a bit worn out, frazzled, maybe even at wits end. He scratched his head and began slowly, "If you want a job, I need a waitress TODAY. Do you think you can

help us. This extra traffic from the NBA finals is a bit too much for us to handle.” He was hoping she would say “YES.”

She did say yes with a lot of enthusiasm. Wow, she pondered in her heart. The stranger really did help me out. I wanted to thank him, but did not even catch his name. He knew my name though, maybe he will look me up again. I hope so.

Ted was excited to get some extra help with the rush of hungry customers coming into his restaurant, The Crab Shack, at all times of the day and night. His clam chowder and sourdough bread was a favorite on the Wharf. When could she start, that was what he wanted to know right now. “Oh by the way, what is your name.”

She hesitated briefly but finally blurted out, “Olsen, my name is Linda Olsen.” She wanted Loretta Woods to be as hard to find as possible. Maybe this would give her a chance to get her act together enough to retrieve her kids and get on with a normal life, if that is what she decided she really wanted to do. Time would tell.

Not knowing anything was wrong, Ted accepted her as a waitress on the spot. He handed her an apron and told her to wash up and start waiting on the customers; they would settle the other details later. This was just what Loretta, or Linda, as she had to be careful now with her new name and all, wanted - a job, a full time job.

After the evening shift, Loretta was counting her tips. Wow, she had made good money on tips. This was going to be a good deal, her working at Fisherman’s Wharf. All she needed was a little more to get herself an apartment to hide away. Ted was exhausted but content that The Crab Shack had done so well. He was also elated that he had more help. This new girl, Linda, was going to work out well.

He stopped her as she was going out the door. “Where do you live, Linda? It is late and we will give you a ride home.” He was trying to be as helpful as possible. She looked like she could use a friend and some help.

Loretta took a deep breath before answering, “I am staying at the YMCA right now, just until I can get my feet on the ground and find an apartment to rent.”

Ted liked her and wanted to help. “You don’t have to stay there, we have a small efficiency on the second floor, no one is



using it now. You could stay here and it would be more convenient for you. Is that okay with you?"

She was surprised that another stranger was willing to help her. It seemed as though someone else was pulling the strings of her puppet life. Was there really a God and did He have some interest in what she was doing? It seemed like that but she was not willing to concede anything except that Gloria Dryer was praying for her. That she knew for certain.

"I will take your most kind offer, Mr. Ballentine." Then the janitor, Rocky Hartung, offered to give her a ride to the YMCA so she could pick up her bag. She accepted the offer with relief evident in her smiling face. At midnight, she was moved into her new living quarters, with a window view of the mighty Golden Gate Bridge. She felt like her luck was changing.

Before she dozed off that night, she spent a lot of time thinking about her children. Were they already at grandpa's farm, were they happier. She knew they would be safe there. Vini the Fin, did not know anything about her family or their whereabouts. At least this is what she wanted to believe.

The morning shift did not start until 10:00 AM, giving her a little time to take a shower and get more presentable. When she finally donned her apron and grabbed her order book she almost fainted from fright. Her stomach jumped up into her throat. There coming through the door was Vini the Fin.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RIDING LESSONS

It would be late into June before Snow Peak lost all of its winter coat. The cool the waters of Crabtree Creek would invite young, daring swimmers. The older, smarter Lacombeites, wouldn't punish their bodies with the "cold" water. They could wait until July or August. The foolhardy kids really didn't care though, they would stay in the freezing rapids until their lips turned purple.



The bridge across Crabtree Creek was built by the county for logging purposes. Its better days were behind it. The logging rights off the back side of Sleen Mountain had run out, as well as the availability of good fir and spruce. Unfortunately, neither the county nor the logging company felt obligated to maintain the old bridge. It lay stretched across the rapids, weather beaten, and its best days behind it.

The dust had finally settled around grandpa's farm, as the **logging trucks** no longer passed in a cloud of strewn rocks, just forty feet from the house. At last Grandma could quit yelling at the grandkids to stay off the dangerous road. The Monday wash could be hung out in the sunlight, without coming back in dirtier than it was before it was washed.

Shane kept comparing where he had lived in the Golden State, to his present surroundings. That part of northern California was "golden" all right. That description only referred to the brown, burned out grass covering the almost treeless, rolling hills.

It was hot in Mendocino County in August, at least 110 degrees in ice water! They could call him the California Sunshine Kid if they wanted to, he preferred the expanse of the Willamette Valley. Here he could gaze upon green hills year around.

There was always the scent of evergreen in the air, especially

after a severe rain storm. In the winter towering Snow Peak greeted him with its white winter cap. Shane had strong feelings about his grandfather's farm. "I feel at home here. I know this is where I belong. I love this place. I never want to leave."



"Yes, it is mean dirty work living here in Linn County, but someone's got to do it," Kosy commented, " And I sure am glad it's us. She was referring to her hands after picking strawberries all day."

Anyone could tell that the Woods kids were more than excited about staying at grandpa's. This farm was the only place they had ever called "home." They had been dragged from bar to bar and moved from town to town until they didn't know where they lived. Once Kosy had asked her mother, "Where do we live, Mom?"

Loretta's answer was as callous as her life style. "You just tell people that you live on four Firestones." The unfortunate mother was just trying to be coy, but it was not funny anymore. Life was not funny, living in a home where liquor reigned was a horrendous, gut-wrenching experience.

"Four Styrofoams," Kosy questioned innocently.

"No, **FIRESTONES**, dummy!" That was the general treatment the kids received. Thomas and Shane seemed to survive the transitory life better than Kosy. Neither Thomas or Shane had any deep feelings for their mother. They were numb from the treatment, but considered it a hardship that they had to put up with. Kosy wasn't that kind.

She held deep resentments for the way they were teated, like a nuisance, somebody to be tolerated, little people who got in the way of a desired lifestyle. She had very deep scars, bordering on hatred.

Shane had tried to help Kosy, but found it useless. Thomas had only been able to calm her in hard moments but had never convinced her that their lot in life was anything but a nightmare.

Now Shane had hopes that Kosy would accept Christ and learn to forgive their mom. He expected their new friends at the Rocking L ranch to help them win Kosy to Christ. That is one reason they spent so much time there. Only one of the reasons, the other being that the redhead living there had attracted his attention. She was not only very cute, she was a lot of fun and was years ahead of him spiritually.

The blue '51 Chevy crossed the old bridge carefully, so it wouldn't rip a tire on the raised logs serving as guard rails on each side. Kosy was hardly awake as she ran a comb through her hair. "Do you really want riding lessons, or are you just trying to spend more time with Erin?" She had her doubts.

"Riding a horse has always been one of my goals," Shane promptly defended himself. "I certainly do not want to continue using a pillow between the saddle and me. It's embarrassing! You're right to a certain extent though, I might not be quite as interested if the teacher wasn't so cute."

"Aha, so now we see the true motive for our new Lacombe cowboy," Kosy teased. "Well, I agree with you. Erin is really cute, but that means nothing to me. I like her a lot. She is kind and considerate. Just the type of person I have always wanted to have as a best friend. We've moved around so much that I have never developed a 'best friend' relationship with any girl."

As they pulled into the Lynch Ranch, Shane had a comment for Kosy. "I am praying for you, Little Sister. You need to accept Christ as your Savior, too."

"I don't understand God," she responded bitterly. "It doesn't seem like He has been interested in me all these years. I know He exists, I can see His creation all around me. This all didn't happen by accident. It is just that I am not sure how I feel about Him. I haven't seen His great concern for me."

"Enough for now," Shane thought to himself.

Erin and Marty had already pulled four horses out of the barn. There wouldn't be much fenced area to practice. The roads around the ranch definitely offered better conditions. They were all gravel, with little traffic. Numerous hunting trails meandered into the woods. Old abandoned logging roads were just waiting to be explored.

"Well, good morning to Lacombe's only two riding instructors," Shane greeted the Lynches. "Do you have any pillows we can use,

or are we just going to beat ourselves to death anyway?"

Erin pulled the horse's head down to slide the harness over his ears. "I would like to hear about your talk with Pastor Ballentine, Shane." She was passively interested in this kid with such a personality, but unless he was 100% sold out to Christ her interest would only be a passing one.

"Well, I do have something exciting to share with you. I finally got that problem resolved between God and me. I accepted Christ as my Savior. I suppose you two have been Christians for a long time."

Marty was glad to give Shane his testimony. "Since our parents were Christians, we were always in church. It was easier for us to understand the truth. We were surrounded by it. I accepted Christ when I was two and a half, by that time I had already memorized 100 bible verses. My dad tried to talk me out of it, saying I was too young to understand. But, I did understand, perfectly."

"I knew I was a sinner and I believed the Bible about where sinners go when they do not have Christ as their Savior. I convinced my dad that I was ready to trust Christ. So, I did and I remember the event as clear as if it were yesterday. Erin accepted Christ when she was four. I thank God every day that we have had Christian parents."

Erin was not going to be left out. "God has been very good to us and we never want to forget it. Ingratitude is never appropriate. Especially when you think of all that God has done to save us." She hoped Kosy was listening carefully.

Kosy was silent but fuming inside. "I have never seen how good God is. Is it even true? If God is really good, and He really loves me, I want to see it in action." She was very mature and hardened for an eleven year old. Bad experiences have a way of doing this for young kids. It seem to go with the sufferer's territory, unfortunately.

"Now the first lesson for beginners," Marty mustered up his best teacher's voice, "is to always put the saddle on the horse's BACK with the horn pointing UP and to the FRONT."

"Now here is one Montana cowboy that is going to put The Three Stooges out of business," Shane laughed. "I don't claim to know much about horses, but that part is so obvious it doesn't really need to be explained, does it?"

Erin was trying to be serious. "Come on, Marty, get serious or we will never get these green horns broken in. To get on the horse you put your left boot in the stirrup on the left side and throw your right leg into the saddle."

"In the syrup," Kosy exclaimed. "What do you mean, put your boot in the syrup?" (By this time it was carnival hour.) Mr. Lynch was enjoying it all as he brought two more saddles from the barn.

"Now look what you went and done, Marty. Your stupidity is contagious. Kosy caught it, and now Shane will probably come down with it."

"Not me," Shane laughed. "I've been vaccinated against it, I eat smart pills every day." Shane showed them something in his hand.

"Those aren't smart pills, Shane," Marty insisted. "Why, they're nothing but sunflower seeds."

"Why look, Marty is getting smarter already." And with that Shane popped the smart pills into his mouth.

Mr. Lynch decided to take charge before P. T. Barnum sent in the clowns. "I don't want Kosy riding Old Bucker. Shane will have to ride Old Smarty since we only have four horses today."

"Well, Old Smarty," Shane complained. "It looks like I'm in for an interesting day." With that he patted the horse on the rump and tipped back his cowboy hat Marty had loaned him.

The foursome decided to have a cold drink before heading out. While sitting on the veranda sipping iced lemonade, Mr. Lynch caught Shane's attention. "I have something interesting you might like to see."

Shane and Kosy followed Mr. Lynch into the kitchen. The ranch style house was new. Two sliding, glass doors led from the veranda to a wide hallway, where the walls were covered with Mrs. Lynch's needle work.

A plush Persian carpet stretched from one end of the house to the other. This was another proof that would cause any Christian to agree that the Lord had been good the Lynches.

Mr. Lynch led them to his study at the end of the hall. His private room wasn't as well organized as the rest of the house. Old looking books were piled to the ceiling and several stacks of newspapers decorated the room. Mrs. Lynch let him be the boss of this mess. He opened a closet and displayed his treasure. "This is my coin collection."

There before them stood shelves of one gallon jars filled with pennies. Shane was amazed. "What do you do, have your own copper mine?"



"Actually I have saved all these pennies over a forty year

period. When I was just ten years old my Dad challenged me to save my pennies and now I have over \$8,000 worth here."

Kosy began calculating. "That would be over 800,000 pennies. Wow, they must weigh a ton! What are you going to do with them open a penny arcade?"

Four hundred pounds, to be exact. Well, I suppose I should take them to the bank so I can get interest for them. They are still here because I enjoy looking at forty years of consistent behavior. Does that sound silly to you guys?"

"Eight thousand dollars sounds great to me," Shane said. "Maybe we will look at things differently when we get to be as OLD as you are, Mr. Lynch." Shane hoped he had not hurt his feelings.

"Old," Mr. Lynch slapped Shane on the back. "Thanks for the compliment, Shane. You will go a long ways with that subtle attack."

Erin shouted from the veranda. "Come on, you guys, or we'll be late getting back for lunch. You can count Daddy's pennies later." She tried to help Kosy mount, but after two failures, she decided to let Marty do it.

Marty pulled the horse over to Kosy. "Mounting is not as easy as it looks. Do you remember what I said about getting aboard?"

Kosy put her left foot in the stirrup. "Mount on the left side, putting your tennis shoe in the syrup," she laughed as she swung her right leg over the horse.

Marty thought she needed a little help, so he pushed her from behind. She had already pulled on the saddle horn with all her might. With Marty's extra help, she slid off the right side and landed on the ground with her hat flying west, and her loose hair covering her surprised face.

Shane had already mounted. "That is the shortest ride I have

ever seen, Little Sister."

Kosy separated her hair with her hands and gave both boys a good look at her tongue. "If Marty hadn't pushed me, I would have been high in the saddle by now." Marty felt sorry for what he had done, so he hurried to retrieve Kosy's fly-away hat.



Pulling out onto the gravel road, the four horses followed single file in one of the three ruts between mounds of gravel. "We have to leave two ruts for cars to pass," Erin insisted. "And hope they don't get friendly enough to honk."

Erin was not a novice rider. Every since she could remember she had owned a horse. She was from Belgrade, Montana, a small town located on the old Lewis and Clark Trail, only four hour's drive from famous Yellowstone National Park.

The Lynches had lived in the shadow of Wyoming's Grand Tetons. Jim Bridger Mountain Ski Lodge and local rodeos were enough to keep teens busy. She really missed the Big Sky Country, but she was beginning to like it here. Lacombe, Oregon had one thing that Montana didn't - a handsome, blue-eyed, Christian boy named Shane.

She couldn't deny that she was attracted to this California transplant, although, he would have to be more than just a normal Christian or her interest would stop there. Being completely sold out to God, willing to do anything He wanted, was the only kind of Christian life worth living. That was the way she felt about it and she wasn't backing down for anyone.

Marty pulled off the road, pointing Old Bucker's nose up a well-beaten path. "Do you know where this trail leads, Shane?"

"We are now at the foot of Buzzard Butte. From afar it looks like the back of a buzzard's head. This is an old logging road. It doesn't go very far up the mountain."

The old logging roads were dug out by caterpillars, and continually smoothed out by road graders. Usually they were only wide enough for one truck to pass. When first built, they were



laden with rocks. If they were not kept up or unused, the rocks washed away, leaving only the reddish brown dirt, hard packed by the sun. They were nice trails for riding. This particular one has had **a lot of trees fall on it**. We will have to traverse it with care.”

When they cleared the trees, the horses began to trot, Shane and Kosy locked their knees, causing them to be thrown up about six inches and then roughly slammed back into the saddle.

Erin was amused by the sight, but felt pity for the rookies. "You green horns need to get a smooth rhythm. Flex your knees and move with the horse or he will beat your pants off," Erin insisted as she pulled alongside Shane.

"Keep your eyes open, Shane," Marty warned. "We didn't rename your horse Old Smarty for nothing." As they rounded a bend in the road, they came to a small meadow with knee high grass. It was in contrast to most of the area, which was so thick with pine trees that the grass could not grow. The base of these evergreen trees were blanketed with dead, brown needles, testimonies of many undisturbed seasons.

Shane liked the calmness. He noted nothing but a small breeze waving the maple trees and the sharp crack of a rifle. **THE SHARP CRACK OF A RIFLE!** Shane cocked his ear. "Is someone target practicing? There is no hunting in early June. Someone must be target practicing. But then again, why was there only one shot? That usually indicates poachers."

**"POACHERS!** I hate poaching," Marty barked. "Anyone who would poach is not only a law breaker, he is a despicable character. My dad had better not catch anyone poaching around here. He would run him right in to the police station.”

The rifle sounded again, suddenly shattering the taut silence they had been enjoying. As slow as an hour hand, Shane turned his head from one side to another. He was trying to get a bearing on the shots. Too quick and too few shots were the problem. He just couldn't zero beat the poacher.

Erin voiced her strong feelings against poaching and then suddenly changed the subject. "Kosy, do you like living here better than California? I'll bet you were always at the beach, and seeing movie stars, right?"

"I wish!" Kosy responded quickly. "We lived in northern California, one hundred miles from the beach. Even if you wanted to swim at Point Arena, the water was toooo coold. As far as

seeing movie stars, yeah, we did have a T.V. And to answer your question, I love it here. At least I sleep in the same bed every night and I know my grandparents love me."

This eleven year old had experienced too much of the world's wild side. She hated playing on the sidewalk, out side of the bar, while her mother was getting drunk inside the bar, and then having Thomas and Shane get her home, wherever that was that week.

"That is really important for me, too," Erin agreed. "By the way, do you and Shane plan to take us to the **Strawberry Fair?**"



Shane started to smile inside when he heard his name mentioned. The good feeling soon worked its way to his innocent face. He was sporting a grin as wide as the desert horizon when he answered Erin. "That was my intention, Cowgirl. When do you want go?"

She never invented adventures, that was for the more bold hearted, and she had never been categorized as part of that exclusive group. "Well, I was hoping to have some fun and thrills. Do you suppose we can accomplish that without any trouble or adventures?"

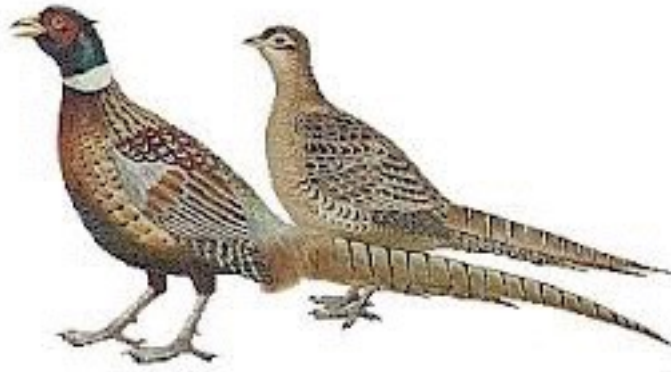
"I'll do the best I can to accommodate you and Marty," Shane tried to assure her as he spurred his horse, leaping out in front of the rest.

Shane was serious about developing a relationship with this cowgirl. He kept tossing frequent backward glances at Erin, as he pondered his situation. "I wonder if she likes me? I could come right out and ask her, but I couldn't chance another rejection right now. I had better give it a little more time."

He was not paying attention to the trail in front, so he didn't notice Old Smarty had lowered his head. When Shane felt a pull on the reins he turned around just in time to wrap his arms over a low-hanging branch. He had to hold on for life as Old Smarty just walked right out from under him. As Erin caught up, she could not resist. "So, now what are you trying, a new form of dismounting? I think it has possibilities."

"No, I'm just hanging around, Cowgirl."

Kosy was about to make fun of her brother when scared Chinese pheasants fluttered in front of her horse. That spooked the mare and she began a fast gallop. Kosy dropped the reins and held on to the saddle horn for all she was worth.



**CHINESE PHEASANTS ARE VERY COMMON IN LINN COUNTY. THE MALE IS THE ONE WITH THE COLORFUL HEAD. THERE IS A SEASON FOR HUNTING THEM. THOSE THAT EAT THIS BIRD SAY IT TASTES JUST LIKE CHICKEN!**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE FIRST ENCOUNTER**

When the horse didn't stop, Kosy had to reach for the mane, and then the neck. She was being bounced right out of the saddle. The untrained, would-be cowgirl threw her legs around the neck as she slipped over the side. Now she was clinging to the underside of the neck. "Help, stop this thing!"

Shane was just dismounting his tree branch, so that only left Marty to spring into action. The sage horseman spurred his mount to the challenge. When he arrived alongside, he lunged forward, grabbing the reins. Kosy was barely hanging on to two strips of mane, dragging her tennis shoes between the horse's front legs. After Marty jerked the horse to a clumsy halt, he watched Kosy drop limp to the ground.

Erin was the first to arrive at Kosy's side. "You all right, Kid?" Kosy answered with a protruded, exhausted, tongue and an affirmative nod, Erin thought it would be alright to commence her teasing. "You and Shane sure do have innovative ways of dismounting! Maybe they will become the new fad around Linn County."

The sun was setting with glorious overtures on what had been a hot, humid Oregon day. The migrant workers were fixing beans and frying pancakes to end their hard day's work, as they sat outside the wooden shacks provided by the fruit field owners. The mosquitos were just resurrecting to begin their night of blood letting.

It was a normal Lebanon summer evening, except it was **STRAWBERRY FAIR TIME**. Lebanon was considered the the capital of the world as far as producing strawberries. Acres and acres of rows and rows of strawberry plants decorated the a great deal of Linn County. The berries were shipped all over the USA. It was the town's only claim to fame.



Although Lebanon was a small town, it hosted a fair every year to celebrate its strawberry harvest. The town's people even chose a queen and planned a parade, which gave all the youngsters a chance to ride through the town on their favorite horse, and provided **the Veterans of Foreign Wars one more opportunity to march proudly down main street.**

This year the fair would be set up at the site of the old high school football field. In 1960 the new high school was opened on 5th Street and the old high school was turned into the junior high. The front lawn of the junior high covered almost an acre of well kept grass, guarded by towering fir trees. It was spacious enough

for the fair, but no one wanted to ruin the beautiful grass. So, the fair was kept at the empty field behind the school.



**LUHS BUILDING IN 1950**

The wooden football stadium was so old and weather-beaten it had to be torn down as public safety hazard. Now this area was used by the Santiam Elementary School for field events, except for once a year

when it served as the fair grounds. The Strawberry Fair was always scheduled during the first half of June. The screams and laughter of kids and adults could be heard above the noise of the straining motors which ran the rides. The participants were forever complaining or exclaiming that their insides were now upside down on the octopus or rock-o-plane.

The '51 Chevy crossed Santiam River and passed Morse Lumber Co. as the Lynches and Woods anticipated an evening of cotton candy and gravity-fed thrills. Thomas was driving. He had only one week left of his leave before he had to report to San Diego for training in the elite Navy Seals, the Underwater Demolition Team.

"Will there be any **strawberry shortcake** left for us?" Marty asked anticipating bursts of flavor.

"Of course, they have a ton of strawberries," Shane assured him. "And an acre of shortcake, all under a mountain of whipped

cream. It is all prepared by Durham's Bakery, and it's all free." His taste buds were standing up at attention, about to salute.

They pulled onto Tangent Street, considering themselves lucky to find a parking spot only three blocks away from the front gate.

Thomas was careful to lock up the car. "You've got to be kidding," Shane chided. "Anyone who wants to get in this car would just take a knife to the canvas top." This was the daily concern of convertible owners and Shane was one of this elite group of car buffs.

"Come on," Kosy insisted as she pushed Shane along. "We'll take our rides first and have shortcake afterwards, as Erin so wisely suggested." None of the gang needed any more of an invitation to set out on a fast gallop towards the front gate.

Beside the entrance was a new attraction. "Step right up, kids," the well-dressed, smooth-talking announcer shouted. "See for yourself. The one and only, original armored **car of Al Capone**, the notorious Chicago gangster. It has six-inch, bullet-proof windows and a Tommy Gun in the back seat. Step right up ..." "We'll have to catch that on the way out," Marty suggested as he headed straight for the octopus.

"Hey, there is something else new," Shane said as he pointed towards the row of games. "Clowns! They have never had clowns before."

There were three clowns. Each one had applied enough make-up so no one could recognize his face. They were entertaining the throngs by leap frogging, standing on their heads and pretending to pick pockets. It was general chaos, but amusing, a good, new



attraction.

Carnival rides were thought up by people who ate worms and slugs when they were kids. One night as an adult they over indulged in garlic, woke up screaming and pronto - a new nightmare ride was invented. These gut twisters were developed with sadistic intentions. Who in their right mind would make such a scream machine. Who, with a lick of sense, would pay hard earned money to have his body turned every way but loose.

Why, if one of those octopus cars ever broke away, it, and all its occupants, would end up being dragged out of the junior high swimming pool across the street. But, here they were - the happy teens, ready to have their brains scrambled and screaming about it all they way.

"Do you have a penny, Shane?" Kosy asked as she stepped up to the **penny crushing machine**. She could put a penny in and chose between The Gettysburg Address or The Lord's Prayer. She took Lincoln's speech. She wasn't much on religious items, they had never seemed to help her when she was abandoned and crying herself to sleep at night.

All the moving parts of the machine were completely open to view. The penny fell into the vice. They all watched as the powerful hydraulic press crushed the penny into the chosen pattern. Kosy could wear it on a necklace or put it in her jewelry box as a keepsake. Lincoln was her favorite president because he was honest.

"If we had my dad's collection to run through the machine," Erin said. "we would be here until Shane was old enough to vote."

The happy-go-lucky clowns now surrounded the group and pretended to pick Shane's pocket. Shane was not entertained. "Hey, you guys, enough is enough. You are good, but I'd rather keep my money and driver's license."

Suddenly one of the clowns looked up, pointed in the sky, and grunted. As everyone was staring upward, another clown knelt



down on all fours behind Shane. Then, the first clown gazed right into Shane's eyes and pushed him backwards. It was an old trick and Shane fell for it, literally. As he went flying backwards the clowns ran off laughing, hoping to bring joy and happiness to some other hapless soul.

"Hey, those guys play a little rough don't they, Thomas?" Shane protested as he sat there on the hard-packed dirt, dusting off his used Levis. This was not fun, there was something rotten in Denmark and he wanted to know which way the wind was blowing.

Thomas was helping his sprawled-out little brother up, and throwing mean glances at the fade-away clowns. "I'd go after them and give them a little return for their pleasure, but I don't want to ruin the evening. I'm not sure what is going on. They don't seem to be treating anyone else as rough as they did us. Maybe they just don't like our faces."

The kids rushed to the stomach floppers. Each compartment on the rock-o-plane held only two people. Shane grabbed Erin's hand and shoved her into the oval shaped torture room. "You're really going to like this one."

Erin didn't know if she wanted to ride or not. "I'm getting a strong sensation that my stomach will soon be in my throat and I am certain that is not where I want it to be, understand Shane?"

"I'll make sure it happens, too," Shane promised her. The lap bar could be adjusted to cause a lot of rocking, or held in one place to come to a complete stop. After the wire mesh door was closed and locked with a pin, the motor began to roar, and the girls commenced screaming.

The **Rock-o-Plane** was not a ride for someone who suffered from motion sickness. Shane could stop the car at the top, or anywhere along the circular route, by pushing the lap bar forward. That would allow them the pleasure of standing motionless with their heads pointing downward, catching fleeting glimpses of the ground. When they were upside down Shane unceremoniously heard all





his loose change fall to the ceiling.

Erin vehemently complained, "Shane, you're going to ruin my hairdo. Besides that, I think I left my stomach at the last twirl." When the ride was finished, there was a mad race to recover the lost change.



The operator made them get out. "Come on, kids, move it along. We have others waiting in line." When they backed off, the operator made a quick dash for the lost coins. Shane helped Erin out. "That was the most expensive ride I've ever taken. I lost all my change. But, at least I didn't lose my supper. Now let's have some strawberry shortcake."

**The line to get strawberry shortcake was not long.** Everyone got enough paper bowls to go up each arm. Even though Shane and Kosy had worked for weeks in the strawberry fields, they still enjoyed their dessert. There is something wonderful about strawberry shortcake. It makes one's taste buds go into orbit.

Just as Shane was putting the first bite to his last bowl of summer delight, the painted menaces attacked again. One clown quickly swooped his hand under the paper bowl and filled Shane's face with strawberries and whipped cream. Another cruel clown promptly crowned Erin with the remains of her bowl.

That was the last straw! Thomas and Marty burst into action. They chased the clowns across the grounds as the crowd cheered them on. Everyone thought it was part of the act. Unfortunately, the Lacombeites had stuffed themselves too much to make it to the front gate. The race was as short as the cake. Thomas and Marty collapsed on the midway as the painted plagues laughed their way out the main entrance.

The rest of the '51 Chevy gang caught up just as Thomas and Marty were helping each other up from the turf. Erin was beside herself. "Look at what those creeps did to my hair." She asked Kosy to help her wash it out at the water faucet.

Marty was not going to miss a chance like this, "Well, friends, someday you are the bug and some days you are the windshield."

It looks like this is your day to be the bug.”

As the gang began to leave the fairgrounds, Shane suggested they visit Al Capone's car. "We need to see how to defend ourselves from Snow Peak robbers."

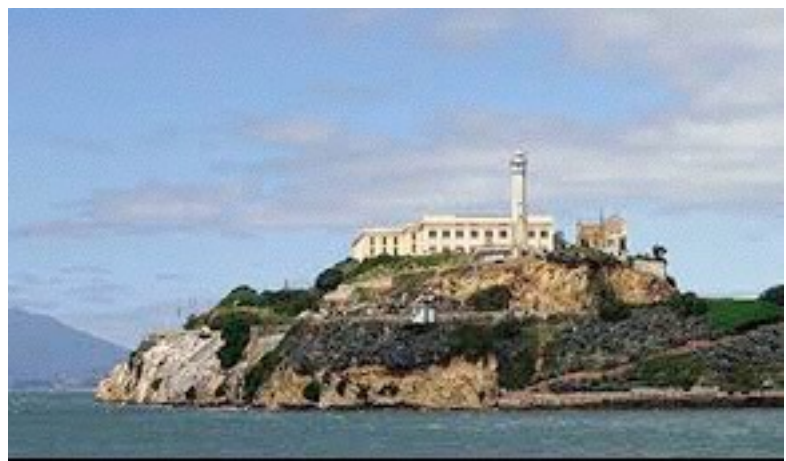
The grill from a 1925 Packard grinned menacingly at them as they stepped through the door. The front had a three inch steel plate protecting the radiator. Thick, wavy windows made it hard to see inside. Two Tommy Guns were strapped to the back seat. The sliding window on the roof, was for warding off attacks from all sides. Steel plates decorated the wheels as well as protecting them.

Thomas tapped the door. "You can bet there are steel plates in these doors, too. This car weighs 5,000 pounds and has a 200 horse power motor." Erin read the plaque.

*"Al Capone controlled the Chicago underworld during the 1920's. His gang ran the liquor and gambling operations. Capone's thugs were responsible for the death of seven men in 1929 - The Valentine's Day Massacre. They also murdered many rival gang members. The federal government convicted Capone of tax evasion in 1931. He served almost eight years at the maximum Federal prison on Alcatraz, more affectionately called - 'The Rock.'"*

Marty looked shocked. "Can you imagine that. He did all those crimes, and the only thing they could get on him was tax evasion." When Thomas walked out the gate, he turned to the guard to complain. "Those clowns you hired play a little rough. If they are supposed to bring joy and happiness to the crowd, they are obviously not accomplishing that."

"Those three clowns do not work for the fair," the guard replied. "I think they were hired by the city. But even so, I'll register your comment, passing it on to the fair officials. So far you are the only



ones to voice a complaint. Maybe they just don't like you kids."

The Oregon night glowed with a full moon surrounded by glistening stars, like a king and his court. On brilliant nights like this, one could drive the country roads without using his headlights, but only fools would really do it. There was a small breeze coming from the west, probably from the Coast Range. Although it wasn't enough to cool anyone off, it was just enough to keep the mosquitos at bay.

As they strolled back to the car, passing under a street light, Marty noticed something. "Hey, Shane, take a gander at this paint job. It looks terrible. I could do better with a roller."

"You're right, you could," Shane agreed as he took a closer look. "They must have painted it with a broom. Perhaps they are dirt poor, or were in a big hurry."

"Isn't this a '55 Chevy, two door?" Thomas noticed as he passed his hand over the hood. Shane ran to the back of the Chevy. "Look, Kosy, some horse hairs are jammed into this cracked tail light.

"Shane, this gives me goose bumps," Kosy exclaimed as she began to trim her nails with her teeth. "You mean those three robbers are in the fair grounds?"

"I'm afraid so, Little Sister," Shane agreed. "I think Marty and you guys should call Sergeant Kochian while I stay here and see which way the robbers might go."

"I'll stay with you, Shane," Erin offered. "We can hide behind those bushes over there. Erin was already reading her brother's mind, "Marty, we promise we won't mess with them. We will just observe their actions."

"You knew what I was going to say," Marty complimented his sister. "Okay, on that basis we will round up Sergeant Kochian. But, keep your word, Erin. If you get into trouble, I'll be more than just a little perturbed with you."

As the others raced to the car, Shane and Erin knelt down between the bushes and the cyclone fence which surrounded the fair grounds. When the '51 Chevy sped by, Shane crawled closer to Erin. She was a strange girl. This teenager certainly was brave and yet extremely attractive. He was so close to her now, he could smell her Channel No. 5.

Would he be able to impress this cowgirl? Or did he need to impress her? She was about as genuine as a person could be.

What had really impressed him was her determination to serve Christ out reservations. Since he had accepted Christ himself, that seemed to be quite important.

Could she ever bring herself to be interested in someone with a background such as he had? Her hair was so red that it almost looked black in the shadows. He was concentrating so on Erin, he did not see the three men approaching. Erin brought him back into reality by bumping her shoulder on his. "There they are, Shane," she whispered.

Shane returned to the job at hand. Three men were putting large hand bags into the trunk. The tall man who opened the driver's side seemed to be the boss. His name was **Horace Trader** and he was not a nice person; not someone to spend a holiday with. "Get in, Clem, before I get really mad. I didn't like it at all dat we saw dose junior detectives again."

"You bet, Horace," Clem slammed the trunk. "Sometime we hav' to make sure day get what day deserve."

"They saw us at the fair, Shane," Erin whispered in his ear. The other two were shorter and wore western style jeans and jackets, with straw cowboy hats, partially shadowing their faces. It was too bad they had come out already. There was no way Shane and Erin could follow them, not unless they had some greyhound blood running in their veins.

Just as Horace opened the driver's door, a garter snake about as thick as a broom handle slithered between Erin's knees.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **AN INDIAN FRIEND**

When God put enmity between the woman and the serpent He certainly included Erin Lynch. She not only disliked snakes, she abhorred them. Her most vivid and horrible nightmare was when she dreamt she was being lowered into a pit of poisonous, withering snakes. Horrors! Knowing that, her reaction could be completely understood.

Erin let out a yelp and leaped to her feet. Shane followed her to her feet, but only gasped. Both of them were clearly visible under the bright street light. "Hey look, it's dose nosey kids again," Horace yelled. "Let's show dem a lesson once and for all."

With that threat Shane and Erin turned tail and hit the trail. There was only one place to go, into the carnival parking area. The fair crew had living quarters there in old road-beaten semi trucks and trailers. Since some used live animals in their acts, they kept the animal cages close, between the trucks.

Shane pulled Erin along as his heart hammered wildly. "We've got to hide. We can't out run them. Where are those clowns when you need them? They could really rough these guys up."

Erin noticed a truck which had plywood walls all around from the truck bed to the ground. One sheet of plywood had a round hole about the size of a large beach ball, just big enough to scoot through. She dove for it, waving at her exposed partner. "Follow me, Shane. They won't see us in here."

Shane followed her as he heard Horace's angry voice getting closer. After the good guys were both under the truck, the bad guys raced on by. Soon they returned, stopping directly in front of the hole.

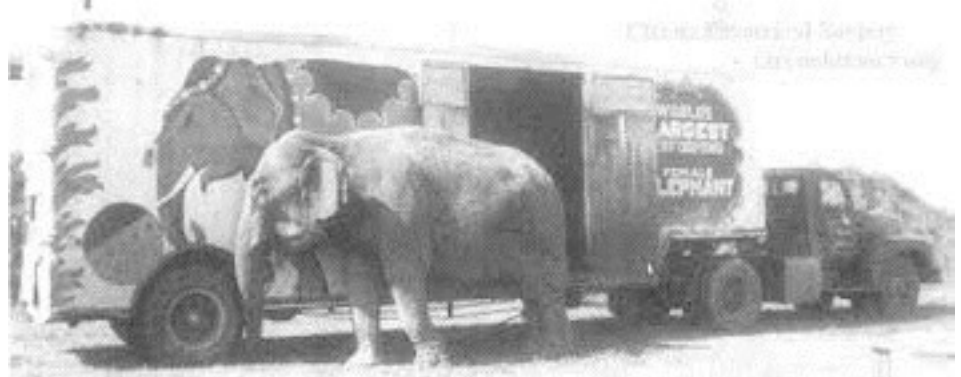
Horace shined his weak flashlight on the opening. "They certainly wouldn't crawl under dat truck. We have lost dem again. Rats, we almost had dose two punks in our hans."

With that they hurried away and burned rubber, tearing west on Tangent Street. Meanwhile, Shane and Erin wondered why the crooks were so sure they wouldn't have crawled under this particular semi truck. Suddenly, as their adrenalin wore off, they began to turn up their noses.

"I certainly hope this is mud we are kneeling in," Erin pleaded.

She did not like to get dirty, especially her hair. She was a real princess waiting for a wonderful prince to find her.

"Let's get out of here before we suffocate," Shane



recommended

as he beat Erin to the open air. Crawling out they turned to read the large-lettered sign on the side of the semi truck: "**ELEPHANTS - LIVE CARGO.**" When the others returned, with Sergeant Kochian, Shane and Erin were trying to wash the elephant manure off their hands, elbows, and every other part that smelled.

Marty was angry. "I thought you were just going to observe, Erin. And what is that terrible smell?" He had a mischievous grin on his face as he realized what had happened. "Maybe if you wiped you hands and legs with **skunk weed**, it would help."

"Oh, be quiet before I rub my hands in your face," Erin said disgustedly. She hated anything that took her every day lady-like appearance away.

Shane addressed Sergeant Kochian without even trying to shake his hand. "It was the Snow Peak robbers again. We think they must have been at the fair, because we heard them say they had seen us. They hightailed it west again. Sorry we lost them. I suppose we have not really helped too much, have we?"

The burly sheriff took out his radio. As he turned the street light reflected on his badge. He took a great deal of pride in the fact he was maintaining order in the community. "I'll put out an APB on them."



**IT IS CALLED SKUNK WEED BECAUSE IT STINKS LIKE A POLECAT, A STRIPPED KITTY.**

**"What is an APB?" Kosy wanted to know as she kept her distance from the hapless teens and she wrinkled up her nose at the two unfortunate elephant lovers. Marty was glad to inform her.**

**"An APB is police talk for ALL Points Bulletin. It means they are telling everyone to keep a look out for the robbers."**

**"Oh, by the way," Shane added, "They painted their car black, and the new license is JOV 567."**

**Sergeant Kochian was taking down notes. "Now that you know their car, they will probably dump it and steal another one. You kids are always around where the action is. Do you read Dick Tracy a lot?"**

**Thomas pinched his nose as he edged over to Shane. "Be sure and get all that fertilizer off before you get into our car."**

**"OUR car," Shane responded with shock. "I thought it was MY car. You haven't changed your plans have you, Big Brother?"**

**"I guess you are right," Thomas corrected himself. "Let's get home. But on the way, we have to stop and get gas."**

**On the way out of Lebanon the blue Chevy pulled into a Texaco station. A young man supporting a Stetson western hat came out to attend them. He wore cowboy boots and appeared a bit bowlegged.**

**Kosy pointed to the sign above the door. "Isn't that a strange name - T.P. and Sons Oil Company?"**

**"What's so strange about that, Kosy," Thomas asked.**

**"T.P., you know, tepee, like where Indians live."**

**Since Shane was driving, he got out to meet the attendant. "Two bucks worth of regular, and you can change the air in all four tires. We've had that old air in those tires for over a year. About time for a change don't you think, partner?"**

**The big guy responded, "That's real cute, it must be a new one. At least I've never heard it before. And I thought I had heard them all."**

**Shane noticed that this kid was really big, and stocky. Shane only came up to his shoulder. His olive brown skin made his straight hair look blacker than midnight. "We were noticing the name of your station. What does the T.P. stand for?"**

**"That's my dad's initials, Travis Pinetree."**

**Shane was getting really bold now. "Are you by any chance of Indian descent?"**

**"That's right, Friend," he answered as he rounded the pump**

off to two dollars. "We are full-blooded Nez Pierce Indians."

As Shane was paying for the gas, he noticed a warm, friendly smile working its way from the Indian's face. Shane felt that he could really like this kid, even if the big guy did out weigh him by at least one hundred pounds "I presume you'll be attending high school here?"

"Yes, I'll be a freshman at Lebanon High." The Nez Perce had not seen customers quite so talkative or interested in what HE was doing. This might prove to be a very interesting contact.

"Good grief, he's got six more years to grow," Shane thought. "If he is this big now, he will be bigger than a horse by the time he gets out of high school."

"Shane, can you hurry up?" Erin pleaded from the car. "Can't you chat tomorrow? I have to get home and get this . . .this yucky stuff off my body."

"By the way, my name is Bowie, Pinetree of course," he said as he held out his hand. "What's your handle?" Unfortunately they shook hands.

"Shane, Shane Woods, and just for your information my grandfather was a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from out around Ohio way. Can we talk again?"

"Sure, I'm here every day 4:00 PM to midnight."

"Shane, please," Erin begged.

Shane advanced towards the car. "Got to go, see you soon, Bowie."

Bowie was sniffing his hand. "By the way, Shane, what is this terrible smell?"

The car pulled into Lacombe with everyone complaining about the airs that Shane and Erin were putting on. "Poor Erin," Shane thought, "such a prissy girl and all covered with . . . ."

"Just for your information, fellows," Shane informed them, "That is the last time I'm following a girl under a semi. Mark it down."

Erin was defensive. "At least we did get away, didn't we,





Shane. Don't be too critical, now. What was your plan to save us, disappear?"

Thomas was also feeling just a little bit sorry for Erin. "What do you say we go to the fair on the last night? I hear they are giving free elephant rides."

"Great idea," Marty added with a chuckle. "It's better to be on an elephant's back than under his truck."

"Let me out of this car," Erin demanded as they pulled into the Rocking L Ranch. With that she bolted through the door and made a bee line for the bathroom.



Marty was waving good-bye to the Woods. "Wait a minute, Shane. If you come over tomorrow afternoon, I will give you your first wrestling lesson. Don't eat anything three hours before."

Shane looked surprised. "Is that a threat or one of the dark secrets of the wrestling world?"

"Well, if you eat anything before you wrestle, you might eat it again. Do you follow my point?"

"I'll take your word for it!"

On the way home Thomas questioned Shane. "I have been meaning to talk to you. What is happening around here? First, Grandpa and Grandma start going to the Baptist Church. Then they quit smoking and drinking. Now you also start getting religious on Kosy and me."

"Getting religious is not exactly what happened to me," Shane responded defensively. "Anyone can be religious. Remember, we all were baptized as babies in a church in Scio? That is religion; a decision made for me by others to get me closer to God."

"What I really needed was to recognize that I was a sinner, repent of my sin and accept Christ as my personal Savior. And I did. Christ is the way to heaven. Salvation is in a Person, Thomas, not in a process or a church. That is exactly what you and Kosy need to do - accept Christ. I am praying for both of you."

Thomas didn't mind that. "Thanks, Brother, I can use all the prayer I can get."

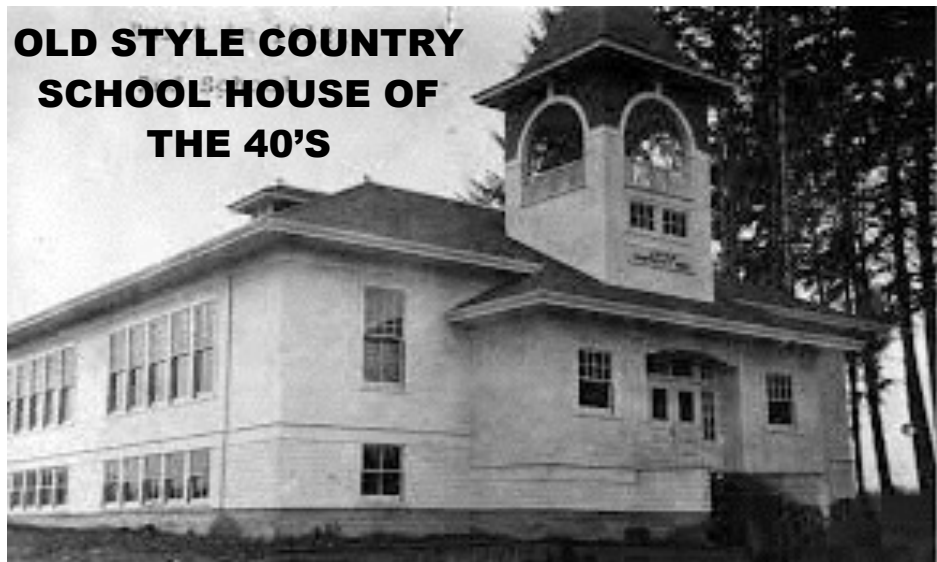
Shane was very serious. "Perhaps you will get an opportunity

to talk to Pastor Ballentine before you have to leave. He is really a nice guy. He was a gunnery sergeant alongside Patton when the general walked all over Europe."

The next afternoon the Woods kids drove to the Lynch Ranch. They went the long way around to show Kosy the Green Mountain Elementary School, where she would begin classes in a few months. Both Thomas and Shane had attended the school when they were juniors. It was the same two-room school house that their mother had attended 30 years ago.

He even told them what he remembered. "Many times we had to walk the three miles to school. Usually we met the neighbors and walked with them. We had to walk home, too, unless it rained. Then a kind neighbor would come and get us.

"The two room country school is fading into history," Thomas told Kosy. In fact, this will be Green Mountain's last year. It will be



quite a switch from the other schools you have attended. Our two uncles even went here. At least now the plumbing is located inside."

Kosy stiffened up at the mention of her mother. Now was her opportunity to talk to Thomas about her unanswered questions. She looked as serious as she could. "Thomas, now that you mentioned our mother, maybe you can give me some answers that Shane can't."

Thomas was always ready to help this sister that he loved so much. "Shoot, Kosy, I'm ready to field questions!"

"Shane has been talking a lot about religion lately. I mean accepting Christ, of course. What I do not understand is how God could say He loves us when he allowed us to be treated so badly by our mother. Can you explain that? Does God really love us? If

so, how can we know?"

Thomas did not have the answers Kosy needed. "Before I tried to explain how mom loved us even though she treated us like she did. I don't think I ever convinced you, did I?"

Kosy shook her head with a smirk and a firm negative answer. Her question was one that was the subject of stacks of books, written by different authors trying to figure out the answer, many using the Old Testament character of Job as a reference.

But Thomas had not read any of these books and he certainly was not familiar with the story of Job. This young sailor was searching his untrained mind, trying to give his sister a suitable response. He was really struggling. "Now you have thrown God into the problem. I really cannot answer you my little sister. But I would venture to say that Pastor Ballentine could. Why don't you go and talk to him?"

No one had the answers she so desperately needed but they all kept telling her the same thing, "Go talk to Pastor Ballentine." She wanted to ease Thomas' mind. "Maybe I will, Brother. Maybe I will."

Shane continued his interrupted tour guide session. "Next year Green Mountain will be consolidating with Lacombe's elementary school. This year you will have the same teacher we had, Mr. Gene Young. He is a nice man, about six feet seven, and reeeel skinny."

"But watch out, Kosy. Don't get into trouble," Thomas warned. "He has a shoe size seventeen, and it can really make an nice impression on your backside."

"I was so young when I went to the first grade here, but I do remember a few things. Wasn't my teacher Mrs. Irene Larson? And didn't they use **a big pot bellied stove to heat the room?** Are you sure I will like it now?"

"Yes, yes, and YES, you will like it," Shane assured her. "Every Friday the kids bring vegetables and put them in a large pot. By lunch time the stew is ready. Now, let's



**scoot on down to Erin's place." Erin lived at the foot of Gentry's Hill, where five roads met.**

**From Gentry's Hill to Five Corners there exists a very sharp decline. Thomas was on a safety campaign. "On gravel roads you have to be very careful, Shane. You cannot stop on a dime and get nine cents change. If you brake suddenly the road turns into a million tiny marbles. There is no way to control where you will go, and when you will stop."**

**Shane pulled the nose of the '51 Chevy over the rise and shifted into neutral. "Trying to save gas, Shane," Thomas asked. "I hope you have good brakes!"**

**By the time Shane was half way down the hill he was topping forty-five miles per hour. It was time to start braking. A slight pump on the brake pedal and Shane's eyes went wide open. The pedal slammed all the way down to the floor board. He tried to shift down into first gear but only succeeded in grinding the gears, so he stopped lest he destroy the transmission.**

**"Great scott," Shane yelled, "We have no brakes!" He started sweating profusely, then his adrenalin hit its peak. There was a logging truck entering into the crossing at the bottom of the hill. If everyone didn't pay attention there would be a terrific accident at the crossroads.**

**"God help us," Shane prayed. Kosy hardly had time to start munching on her fingernails!**

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE FIRST WRESTLING LESSON**



Shane was vigorously beating on the horn, trying to warn the truck driver to speed up, to get clear of the crossing. When the alert trucker finally noticed what was going on he punched the diesel motor to its limit. **Black smoke poured out of the exhaust pipe.**

Shane tried to jam his transmission into second gear this time. That desperate act only caused more grinding noises. Unfortunately, this particular teenager's car never did have an emergency brake. Why should it? Teens never think they are going to have an emergency, and if they do, they are always overly optimistic about their

abilities to handle it.

Kosy was wide-eyed and having a snack with her fingernails. The best Thomas could do was to cross his fingers. That is about the best any non-Christian can do. Shane was different. Now that he had Christ as his Rock, he was able to pray for help. "Lord send us help, now!"

As Shane approached the corner he hit fifty-five miles per hour. The truck cleared the crossing but one extra-long log was still extended over Shane's part of the road. The trio in the front ducked their heads while the Chevy passed under the log. Although his whole body was below the dashboard, Shane kept a strong grip on the steering wheel.

The Douglas Fir was just low enough to take off the canvas top. That made Bluejay a permanent, home-made convertible. After the near disaster, it was just a matter of keeping the Chevy on the road until it came to a complete stop.

When they finally quit rolling, Shane was the first to speak. "Thank God that truck driver was paying attention. That is the fastest answer to prayer I've ever had."

The driver stopped to check on the kids. Finding they were all

fine, he turned to leave. "We really appreciate your concern and help. We are all Okay, just feeling like a peeled banana," Shane lamented as he gazed at the pieces of his canvas top scattered all over the road.

The scared teen driver drove carefully into the Lynch ranch. Kosy was the first to explain why they had no top on the car. **She pulled hair on both sides of her head.** "It was another one of Shane's scream trips."



Mr. Lynch crawled under the car and looked at the brake line, coming up with fluid all over his hands. "It just simply wore through, Shane. I think Thomas and I can fix it, if you and Marty want to work out. Go ahead, get going, Marty's already warming up in the wrestling room."

Shane thanked Mr. Lynch and headed for the wrestling room. This could be very interesting. He had always liked watching the Saturday night wrestling on T.V. But Marty had already informed him that this was entirely a different matter. What ever that meant, he was about to find out.

Marty was stretching out his leg muscles. Shane entered and filled him in on the latest adventure. Marty just smiled as he shook his head. "You probably learned what a quick prayer is like didn't you?"

"Yeah, and you can be sure that Kosy chewing her fingernails and Thomas with his fingers crossed, didn't help a bit. I am glad I have more to depend on than that. Now what you doing, trying out for the rubber man act at the fair?"

"It is very important to loosen all body parts. Do everything I do, so you won't pull a muscle." Sit ups, push ups, pull ups and all other "ups" were used to loosen UP stiff and unused muscles so they would not tear and get you a bench-warming job for half the season.

"Did you hear the Giant's game last night?" Shane asked as he imitated Marty's every move. "Willie Mays hit his 15th homer and this is only June. How is **Mantle** doing?" "The Mick is right up

there," Marty defended his favorite player. It looks like the Yankees will be in the World Series again, if Whitey Ford can keep coming through. We will have to listen to it together."

Having loosened everything, Marty threw a pair of wrestling shoes toward Shane. He actually missed his original target and the shoes ended up wrapped around Shane's neck. That caused both of the would-be wrestlers to burst out laughing.

"Nice necklace, Shane. I promised you these shoes if you would practice with me. I think they are the right size.

Be sure and tie them snugly, after you get them off your neck, of course!"

"The priorities of wrestling are conditioning, balance, speed, moves, strength and desire."

Shane looked like an unbeliever. "I would think that strength would be the most important factor. It always seemed to be on the Saturday night wrestling. How come you say strength isn't?"

Marty moved to the end of the room. "Shane, you are going to have to get that style of wrestling out of your mind. Strength is important, but not the most important factor. I think I failed to show you my weight room."

Shane peeked into the room and whistled. "You have everything: sit-up bench, bench press, wall weights and dumbbells. Why bust your back using all this weight equipment, if strength is last on the priority list?"

"Because, if in all other areas you are equal with your wrestling opponent, desire and strength are the only variables left. Although strength is the least important, it can win you some matches."

Shane had some doubts about all of this. "Do you really think I can do well enough to make it worth my while? All I know about this sport could be written with capital letters, on my thumb nail."

"I'll tell you what," Marty answered encouragingly, "If you wrestle with me all summer and you don't like the sport, you can fade out without any criticism from me. I think you have great



possibilities."

"How can you say that? You have not even seen me wrestle."

"That is true," Marty responded. "But I think I am judging your personality and not your wrestling ability. I think you would preform well at anything you set your mind to do."

Shane was humbled. "You sure know how to make a guy feel good. Do you think I would really have a chance to make the varsity?"

"Probably not the first year. Few freshmen make the varsity in any high school or university," Marty answered. "Coach Haze-winkle will let you try out for the varsity, but you will have to beat a guy six feet tall. How does that grab you, Shane?"

"You can't be referring to that big Indian at the gas station. What was his name, Bowie Pinetree? Why he out weighs me by almost one hundred pounds."

Marty struggled with one of the dumbbells. "Get serious, Shane. That big guy would only have to sit on your chest to make a pancake out of you. The kid I'm referring to weighs a little more than you."

"You have to be kidding. Someone weighs the same as I do and he is six feet tall? He would be so skinny that his muscles would look like mosquito bites on spaghetti."

"The Lebanon Warriors have a junior varsity wrestling team. That is where the freshmen participate. It will give you a lot of experience on your own level."

Shane was grunting on the bench press with 150 pound barbell just above his chest. "Help me, Marty." When he was relieved, the subject continued. "What about this Coach guy Hazelrinkle? What kind of person is he?"

"It's HAZEWINKLE," Marty corrected him. "He's really good. Jim used to coach the West Point wrestling team. He has won the AAU national championship ten times, and has been on two olympic Greco-Roman teams. He really knows the moves and is a fine Christian, too."

"Now let's learn some basics, and afterwards we can pump some more iron, okay, Shane?"

"Sure boss, whatever you say."

Marty moved to the center of the mat. "Legs about eighteen inches apart, knees bent, arms extended with palms up, with your shoulders out in front of your knees. Your head must always be



erect. Always look your opponent right in the eye."

"Now pay attention."

Marty made a move like lightening that threw Shane to the mat. The surprised victim was flat on his back, making it easy to get a good look at the ceiling.

As Shane allowed Marty to help him up he stuttered, "What . . . what happened?"

"That was a **single-leg takedown** and a cradle hold for a pin. Did you get the ceiling tile counted?"

"What am I doing here? I feel like I did the first time my cousin Larry checkmated me in just three moves. Awful! But I eventually learned how to checkmate, too, so watch it next time, Pilgrim. Seriously, will I ever learn to do that?"

Marty felt just a bit ashamed of himself. "Sorry, Shane, I was only showing off. Sure, you will get good, probably better than me. Now here is the single-leg takedown in slow motion."

Shane was a natural. After only fifteen attempts he was able to use the move, although Marty was not putting up much resistance. Marty knew that if Shane applied himself he could be a potential champion.

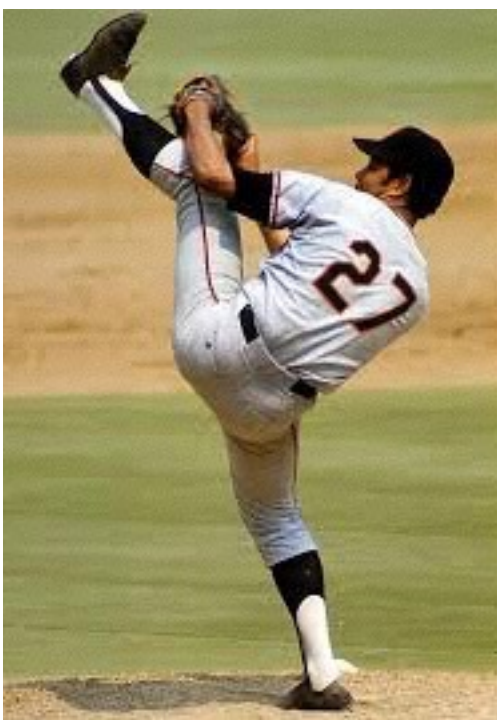


## **SINGLE LEG TAKEDOWN**

"I am amazed at how fast you catch on. Are you sure you have never had any wrestling experience?"

"None whatsoever unless you count wrestling with my brother, Thomas when we were fortunate enough to have some grass to fall on."

Marty was impressed. "Shane, what you need is one good takedown and a few moves to confuse the opponents. If you use just one takedown, you will be marked for that, so you vary your moves. Like the Giant's pitcher, **Juan Marichal**. He has three different angles





that he pitches the same ball from."

The twosome practiced the single-leg takedown for an hour, stopping periodically for Shane to catch his breath. "This is harder than hauling hay in Hopland, California, at high noon. And some of those alfalfa bales weighed even more than I did."

"A match is divided into three two-minute periods. The first period begins with **both wrestlers starting in the neutral position.** That means they are standing and facing each other. The other two periods start with the wrestlers in **the referee's position.**" "The majority of wrestlers are trained to set up on their opponent's left side for the referee's position. We are going to practice setting up on the right side. That will really confuse most wrestlers."

Shane paused to rest. "May I be so ignorant as to ask why setting up on the right side will confuse the other wrestler?"

"They have practiced all their escapes with their opponents on their left

side. Setting up on their right side will throw all their escapes into confusion. Any small advantage is worth working for."

Afterwards Marty was doing curls with the barbells. "I am sure glad you became a Christian, Shane. We have been praying for you since we got here and met your grandparents. They sure are wonderful people."

"I owe them more than I could ever repay," Shane got real serious. "They have taken us in three times and always loved us like their own children. I'm sure glad they are Christians. They are responsible for my salvation. Now we have to pray for Thomas and



Kosy."

"That's good, Shane," Marty agreed. "But what will really make a difference to them is to see a change in your life, a sincere desire to follow Christ. That will speak volumes. There are enough "religious" people in the world, we don't need any more of them confusing the general population. What we need is followers of Christ, putting Him first, and living the life He wants. This will attract the non-believer's attention. God wants total custody of His Children, not just weekend visits."

"I really don't know much about the Christian life, but like wrestling, I am willing to learn. But what you say must be true. The first thing that got me thinking about Christ was the great change I noticed in my grandfathers life. He pounded it into me that Christ made the difference, not religion.

Unfortunately, Kosy has not gotten the point yet. She is so bitter against Mom that she cannot see how God loves us. Frankly, I cannot answer her hard questions yet. Maybe Pastor Ballentine will be able to."

The experienced wrestler nodded his head in agreement. "That is a question that preachers have always had a hard time explaining.

**Jeremiah was a man of God but was put into a pit of water.** I will pray for her even as I have for you. Shane, if you live the Christian life like you wrestle, then God will have all He wants of you. I believe that is what will make a difference to Thomas and Kosy."

Marty looked a little sheepish but was dying to know, "Excuse the question, I don't want to embarrass you or anything like that. But how is it that you are sixteen and only a freshman? Usually kids who are sixteen are at least in their sophomore year if not their junior? Just asking, if you don't want to answer this question, you don't have to."

"My wrestling teacher," Shane put his hand on his hips, "I do not take offense. First, I missed the cut off date by three days with my birthday. And secondly, we moved around so much I was not



able to get enough days in the first grade, so they held me back. Thomas always told people that it was because I did not learn my colors. Do you have any other questions you want to ask while I am still in the mood to answer them?"

Erin peeked her head in the weight room. "Okay, **Charles and Stanley Atlas**, supper is on the picnic table. Come on, if you are hungry?"

"We can either shower after supper or jump in the creek behind our house," Marty proposed to Shane as they sat down to fried rainbow trout and lettuce salad.

"I like the creek idea," Shane answered as he passed the potato chips to Kosy. "Have you ever swam at the covered bridge? There is a nice flat rock, and a rope to swing out over the water. Let's go there tomorrow evening, then we can also visit the Roaring River Fish Hatchery. They have a few humongous sturgeons."

Mrs. Lynch motioned for the girls to start clearing off the picnic table. "What is this story about going to the Strawberry Fair again, Shane?"

Before Shane could muster up a word for himself, Kosy decided to answer for him. "We go a couple of times every year, Mrs. Lynch. Every year that we have been here, anyway. There are lots of rides. Don't worry, we are not going to gamble away our money on those foolish games. Our grandparents wouldn't let us anyway."

"We need to contact Bowie Pinetree and see if he is interested in going to the fair with us," Shane suggested, heading for the phone. "Can I use your phone, Mrs. Lynch?"

Mrs. Lynch answered affirmatively. "It is a party line, like yours, so check to see if anyone is using it **BEFORE** you start dialing."

Many people in this area of Oregon could not afford private lines, so, they were put on a party line with three to five other families. Each family had its own particular ring. Maybe a short and



**CHARLES ATLAS**  
**BODYBUILDER OF THE 50'S**

two longs or three shorts. The family ears got trained to respond to their special ring.

If someone was conversing and a neighbor picked up the phone a distinctive "click" could be heard. The distinctive "click" made it possible to know if someone was eavesdropping. If both parties picked up the phone at the same time there was no way for either to know that someone else was listening.



For anyone who was crude enough to, a party line was a great means of learning the latest gossip. Lacombites were very careful what they said on a **party line phone!** No one would want everyone to know all the family secrets.

"Hello, Bowie, Shane here. Would you like to go to the Strawberry Fair with us Saturday evening? It's the last night. Sure, you can meet us at the archery range. We will drop you off at home afterwards."

Erin was in her bedroom with her newest best friend. "Kosy, what is your brother like? I really haven't had a chance to talk seriously with him."

"Both of my brothers are very kind. They looked after me all my life, even feeding me and changing my diapers," Kosy said with a blush. "My mother never cared for any of us. We were left to fend for ourselves. We never knew who our dads were. They left us when we were all young. We knew what every bar looked like in Linn county. I know others have had it worse than I have, but that never made me feel any better."

Erin looked very sympathetic. She could sense the bitterness in Kosy's young voice. She put her arm around the Woods girl. Here was a friend that needed to know of the love of God. "I can't even imagine how that would be, Kosy. I've always had such good faithful, Christian parents."

Kosy continued. "Shane has dedicated himself to taking care of me. Now he even prays that I will be saved. I've got to get up to the parsonage sometime and talk to Pastor Ballentine. He seems to

be the only one that might be able to answer my questions about the love of God."

Erin already knew about Kosy's problem and didn't feel qualified to answer her, so she changed the subject. "Does Shane have a girlfriend in California. You know, someone he writes to?"

"There were a lot of girls chasing Shane because he is so good looking." Kosy snickered. "But, he had so many responsibilities with me that he didn't pay much attention to them. Besides, they were mostly a bunch of knuckleheads."

Erin was delighted to hear that. She continued the Sherlock investigation as she started to twirl her fiery red hair with her index finger. "Is Shane interested in girls . . . ah, what I mean is . . . ah, well, what I'm trying to say is ah - would he date a girl now?"

Kosy was getting humored by Erin's obvious bashfulness. "Why don't you ask him yourself? He would probably be glad to tell you."

"Maybe I will, Kosy. Maybe I will."

**IN 2014 I VISTED THE ROARING RIVER FISH HATCHERY WITH TWO OF MY GRANDCHILDREN. NOTICE THE HUGE RAINBOW TROUT**



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ROARING RIVER POACHER**

"Are you sure you remember the way to the covered bridge, Shane?" Grandpa asked as he picked up his welding mask. As a hobby farmer, Jack Woods had to do a lot of things, he was a multiple talented man with a deep feeling for his family. He would protect them with his life if necessary.

"Sure, Grandpa, just take every road to the right and we'll eventually come to the covered bridge." Shane responded with confidence. "And if we keep going to the right, we will eventually come to the Roaring River Fish Hatchery. Am I correct?"

"As right as rain. Now off you go." Jack loved these grandchildren. This was the third time he had taken them in. He also loved his daughter, Loretta, but did not excuse her bad behavior. He tried to guide her down the right path but until now, she was not willing to follow his sage advice.

When the Chevy pulled into the Rocking L Ranch, Erin yelled at Kosy as she stepped out of the car. "How could you, Kosy? Your epidermis is showing." Kosette looked all around her, and started feeling everything. "Where, where is it showing? I don't see anything."

Shane came to his sister's rescue. "It's a trick as old as skin itself, Kosy, and you fell for it." He put his hand on his little sister's shoulder. "This kid needs a lot more work if she is going to spend much time around the Lynch family."



**LARWOOD COVERED  
BRIDGE ON CRABTREE  
CREEK. THIS IS WHERE I  
SPENT WONDERFUL TIMES  
WITH THE FAMILY AND  
COUSINS, SWIMMING AND  
SWINGING ON THE ROPE,  
SPLASHING AND SCARING  
RAINBOW TROUT.**

Thomas came to everyone's rescue. "Let's make like a tree and leave."

The covered bridge is a unique part of history. Only a few still exist. The one at the Crabtree Creek and Roaring River crossing is one hundred years old and still functioning, with certain creaks and groans.



There is something special about a covered bridge, something earthy, very historic, right in front of your eyes. The thick, smooth, worn-out planks sang their creaking song as Shane drove over them.

Thomas started his best tour guide voice. "Does anyone know why certain bridges are covered?"

"To keep the planks from rotting," Erin volunteered.

"Nope."

"To keep the snow off the bridge," Marty tried.

"Nope, wrong again," Thomas teased. "If that were true, why are there covered bridges in the south where it never snows?"

Kosy stopped the game. "Okay, Thomas, we give up. Tell us before we all die of curiosity!"

"Well, since you asked. **The bridges were covered because a horse would not cross a wooden bridge that had ice on it.** Now that history lesson is free, but there will be a charge for the next one."

The car was parked in the picnic area which surrounded the old historic site. Shane was so excited he didn't even open the car door, he just stood up and jumped over the side. "Come over here, Erin and Marty. I will show you something you have never seen, not even in The Big Sky Country."

Shane pointed to the area where two bodies of water merged. "This is the only place in the United States where a river flows into a creek. Look at Roaring River here. You could jump across it. Now Crabtree Creek over there is at least one hundred feet wide in the summer. It just doesn't make sense does it?"

Erin was the first to ask the obvious question. "Well, why did they name this small stream Roaring River? It's not roaring and it's definitely not a river."

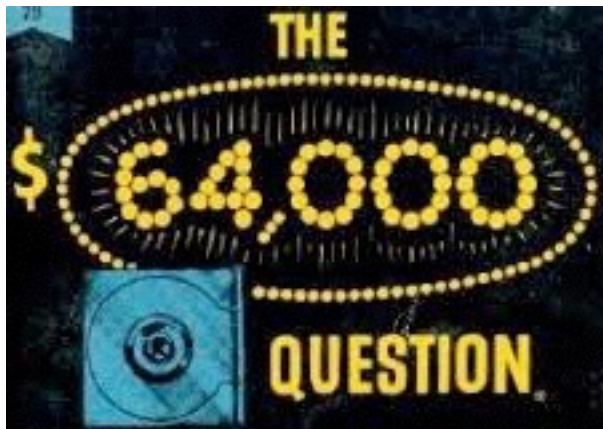


**WHERE ROARING RIVER AND CRABTREE CREEK MERGE. IT IS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD THAT A RIVER MERGES WITH A CREEK.**



"That, my dear friend is **the \$64,000 question**," Shane answered. "Perhaps the person who named it was optimistic about its future. Maybe Crabtree Creek was smaller then, who knows. Stick with me and you guys will learn many important facts of history and geography."

Marty pointed his index finger up, twirling it in the air. "Wow, do we have to pay for tour guide lessons? Will there be a test later, maybe a pop quiz?"



**A QUIZ PROGRAM IN THE 60'S**

"Okay, just for that, you go in first." Shane winked at Thomas, and they both descended on Marty. Shane preformed a quick and perfect single-leg takedown.

Thomas grabbed his arms. "It is dunking time. We two are the dunkers and you are the dunkee."

"And you can stay in the water until your lips turn purple," Kosy added to the

smart aleck's punishment. With that ringing in his ears, Marty was the first one to scare the rainbow trout under the covered bridge. The involuntary splash was spectacular.

When Marty's head finally broke to the surface, Erin thought she would also get in her two bits worth. "There is a thin line between being smart and being a smart aleck Marty, and you crossed that line."

Soon Shane had his hands on the rope, swinging out over the

clear blue water. He cannonballed Marty for the finale. The water under the bridge was in turmoil for the next hour as the teens frolicked in the summer pastime.

Summer fun was always better in the shadow of a covered bridge. Before Shane did another cannonball from the rope swing, he yelled at Erin.

"When Kosy and I swim alone here, we feel like we own the whole river." The water runs clear in the small streams, creeks and large rivers of Linn County. So clear a person can see flashes of light when the sun reflects off the silver scales of the rainbow trout as they run over one another, fighting to get caught on fishing hooks. Fired rainbow trout are perfect eating when about six to eight inches long.

Now there's a tantalizing temptation that had never been out of Shane's mind, no matter how far away from Crabtree Creek he

had been. The Woods family would catch their limit of trout almost every day, storing them at Wimpy's walk-in freezer. The summer fishing effort would provide many a winter delight.

Besides the covered bridge, the **Roaring River Fish Hatchery** was the only other tourist attraction in Linn County. The fish hatchery has many large cement tanks that hold thousands of fish, ranging from little finger size (minnows) to twenty-six inchers.

The next stop was this very fish hatchery, as Shane had promised. After they arrived, he began leading the group in his best tour guide voice. Shane pointed to the tank with the medium-sized trout. "There are over 3,000 fish in this tank. I know, 'cause I counted them twice."

"And just how does our tour guide count such a large number of fish?" an inquisitive tourist asked.

"That's easy," the tour guide answered. "Just count their eyes and divide by two!"

"Seriously, Shane," Erin asked, "What do they do with all



these fish?"

Shane was standing on the edge of the tank that held the six to eight inchers. "The ones about this size are put in a truck and dumped in the rivers around here. It is called 'stocking.' Usually they stock the rivers in the spring, giving the fish plenty of time to adapt before the muddy waters of winter ruin their radar."

"Here at the fish hatchery the water must be cool and constantly running, or these fish will die. These Rainbow trout are raised from eggs. The big ones provide the eggs used to hatch the tiny minnows."

Shane then moved to a smaller tank close to the office. "In this tank you will find the famous sturgeons. It is from these mighty fresh water monsters that those tasty fish eggs are extracted. Every rich person enjoys them as **caviar**."



Erin looked sick. "Yuck! You mean people eat fish eggs? May I never be rich."

"If I don't like your biology lesson, are you going to throw me to them?" Marty asked as he moved away from the edge of the tank.

Kosy tapped Shane on the shoulder. "That guy over there must be partially crippled. Shane, look at the way he is walking into the woods." Kosy noticed that no one paid any attention to her. When one of the workers threw food into the tank that held the medium sized trout, the water changed from a tranquil scene to a frothing and splashing about. It looked like a T.V. documentary from the Amazon River in Brazil, with piranhas going berserk.

"May our tour guide please inform us how all this is financed," Marty asked in his best tourist voice.

The tour guide continued. "The resident fishermen are charged five dollars a year for a license and non-residents pay twenty. The money is used to continually stock the rivers with these delicious rainbow trout. When we see the truck going up Snow Peak Road, we grab our fishing poles and hit the streams.

We can usually catch our limit of six in minutes, without even using any bait. There is also a limit of size. Each fish you take home must be six inches long or you will pay a big fine if the **game warden** catches you."

Erin had one more question. "Do you know anyone that has been caught and fined?"



"Not for undersized fish, but for more than the legal limit yes," Thomas added. "There are only three game wardens for Linn County, which has one thousand square miles of land. They can hardly cover all the streams and rivers. They are mostly concerned with poaching - hunting or fishing out of season."

Kosy wasn't paying much attention as she had heard all this before. She was still watching the poor crippled boy. "Thomas, I don't understand it. Every time that boy goes over to the woods he walks like a cripple but when he comes back he strolls along quickly, without a limp. Is he crippled or not?"

Now both Thomas and Shane started to pay attention to their sister. Shane began to study the poor cripple boy out of the corner of his eye. "Don't look directly at him, or he will quickly become suspicious. Let's just observe him for a while. Maybe we can catch us a poacher." They all kept a wary eye on the suspect.

The boy walked to the side of the tank holding the twelve inch fish. After waiting a few minutes, he walked awkwardly into the woods, disappearing for a time. Then, he reappeared walking normally. Thomas was already on to the kid's trick. "Kosy, go get Mr. Burggraff, the attendant. We will keep our eyes on this guy. Something stinks around here, and it isn't the fish this time."

Kosy returned with Mr. Burggraff. His forehead ran from above his eyebrows to the middle of his head. His glasses, which must have been made from the bottoms of two coke bottles, kept slipping down his nose. "What is going on, Thomas? By the way, good to see you kids again. I hope you are here to stay this time."

"Don't look directly at him," Thomas suggested. "But, do you see that kid in the baggy pants and red t-shirt? I think he is

hooking fish and dropping them in the woods. Let's allow him a chance to get one more up his pant leg and then we will follow him to the trees."

Kosy and Erin had a hard time restraining their laughter as they caught glances of the kid pulling a large trout up his pant leg. They could hardly believe someone would be that nervy and crude. "Apparently he has a line that runs down those loose pants," Marty surmised. "He probably doesn't even need bait. These fish would strike at anything small in the water."

"Oh, yuck," Kosy said, "Can you imagine pulling a slimy, wiggling, cold fish up your pant leg?" She shook her head violently and shuttered.

When the kid began his duck walk back to the trees, Mr. Burggraff and the others advanced towards him. Noticing that he was drawing a crowd, the poacher dropped the line and struck out for the deep woods.

They were not able to catch him, but they were able to recover the fish. Mr. Burggraff was obviously upset. "Grab the ones still wiggling and throw them into the tank. The dead ones you kids can take home for supper. Can you imagine that? I have worked here for ten years and never seen such a thing."

"Do you know who he is, Mr. Burggraff?" Shane asked as he picked up a squirming trout and headed straight for the big tank.

"No, but if I ever see him again I will recognize him and he will be taken to the police station in Lebanon."

On the way back to the Rocking L Ranch, Kosy made a suggestion. "Why don't we go to town tonight? I would like one of those black raspberry milk shakes at the Dairy Queen. They're so thick **you can turn them upside down and not a drop will come out.**" Her suggestion mustered a majority vote, so the '51 Chevy made the trip into Lebanon.

Pulling into the Dairy Queen, across from the junior high, they noticed that there were several empty spots. Shane pulled the rustic-looking, shaved Chevy alongside a



well-kept '56 Ford Fairlane. He grabbed the mike, ordering five extra thick, wild mountain blackberry milk shakes.

Erin snickered as she whispered to Shane, "Do you suppose that is really that kid's name printed on the driver's door? He's got to be kidding - Engelbert Farnsworth III."

"It wouldn't surprise me, Erin," Shane replied. "I know that Mr. Farnsworth, who must be the II, is the owner of Cent-Wise Drug store on Main Street, and president of the First National Bank."

The five rowdy teens in the Ford were looking for trouble. They noticed the California plates, which Shane hadn't changed yet, and of course, the missing roof. The driver yelled over to Erin who was staring at them. "Looks like your California special was made into a convertible by a low hanging overpass."

Erin already didn't like these boys. "By the way, it was a custom job, done by a log truck driver. Do you think he is good enough to open up his own convertible top business?"

"Watch it, Erin. Those guys are bigger than we are. They also out number us," Shane warned her.

"So, some real California beach bums, huh?" came the remark from the back seat of the Ford.

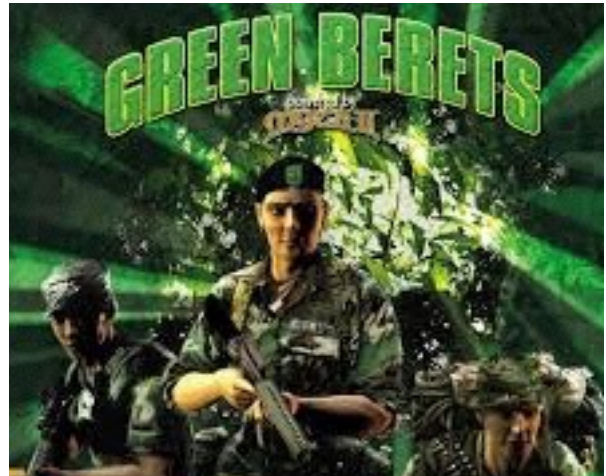
"Yah, your mudder wears combat boots."

Now it was Thomas' turn. "Not since she was honorably discharged from the **Green Berets** she doesn't."

It was Thomas' answer that emptied the Ford. Soon the Bluebird was surrounded by five angry customers who had no good intentions in mind. The tallest one was the driver. He stepped up to Shane's door and looked threatening.

Shane began to swallow hard while he was praying silently. The rough bunch grabbed for the door knob, just as the waitress rolled out on her skates, balancing the milk shakes on a large tray.

She was definitely inclined to prevent a scrimmage that the owners wouldn't care to have at the drive-in. "Why don't you five thugs get back in your car and leave these nice kids alone. They look like they just survived an accident?"



With that suggestion there was a retreat to the Ford by five dissatisfied customers. "We'll get you guys later. This is a car no one could miss."

Kosy leaned forward and tapped Shane on the shoulder, "Hey, brother, that kid driving the car, he is the same one that was pulling the large trout up his jeans at the fish hatchery."

Shane looked intently at the driver. "I believe you are right, little sister. How about you guys, what do you think?" They all agreed, this was the same kid.

The girl hooked the tray on the window. "I am Linda McCarn. What is your name you handsome guy?"

"I'mah...mynameisah...ShaneWoods. Nice to meet you, Linda. Thanks for running off those punks. They certainly were rude. I'm not looking forward to going to high school with them. Do you know them? Maybe I'll be lucky - tell me they go to Albany High!"

**Linda began handing the milk shakes to the three in the back seat.** "No such luck, Shane. I know every one of them by name. Every high school has their bullies. I don't let them push me around. Most of the time they are not so brave when they are alone. That was Engelbert Farnsworth III. He is a regular pain around here.

Thomas gave Linda a good once over. "You wouldn't per-chance be the Linda McCarn that went to the Queen Anne Elementary School, would you?"

"Yes, by the way I am that Linda. Do I know you kids?"

"Shane, this is the Linda who lived next to us on Grove Street when we went to Queen Anne School," Thomas declared enthusiastically. "Look how grown up she is now. Isn't she cute?"

"And is this your girlfriend sitting next to you, Shane?" Linda asked, raising her eyebrows. She was obviously hoping that Erin was NOT Shane's girlfriend.

"Well, Erin is a girl and a friend," Shane replied awkwardly.

As Shane and Linda reminisced. Erin felt her blood beginning to warm up. She gritted her teeth at the thoughts that were running



through her mind. Finally she gave in to her feelings. She tipped Shane's milk shake upside down above his lap. "Kosy said you could turn these over and not a drop would come out." She gave it just a little squeeze. "Oops, Kosy, you were wrong."

There he sat, in all his glory. Erin had filled Shane's lap with his own milk shake. Shane's lower jaw dropped to his chest. He could hardly believe that this usually calm Montana cowgirl could do such a thing. When he finally came to his senses, he grabbed the melting hunk of ice cream and deposited it between Erin's beautiful fiery pigtails.

That set everyone in the car to laughing and soon there was a milk shake fight between all five of them. They were the losers. The Dairy Queen was the winner as the Lacombe kids had to order a few more shakes. They laughed all the way home.

This incident seemed to be a new revelation for Shane. He began to see that there was another side to Erin. He started to express his feelings after he dropped the Lynches off at the Rocking L Ranch. "Thomas, can you imagine what got into Erin?"

Thomas could hardly believe that Shane couldn't interpret Erin's actions. "Come on, Shane. You mean to tell me that you really do not know why Erin dumped your milk shake in your lap?"

Shane started scratching his head. "Could it be possible that Erin was actually jealous of Linda?" He had no experience with girls. He moved around so much, he never developed a close friendship with either boys or girls. He hoped with all his heart that those transient days were all behind him, history for sure.

Thomas was just shaking his head at his naive younger brother. "Only a dunderhead could miss that conclusion, Shane!"

The kid with the ice cream stain in his lap was still a little bit in the dark. "I'm not sure if that is good news or bad news. But, I'm positive I'll find out soon enough."



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### A RUNDOWN

The strawberry season was almost over. In a few weeks only the small, partially green ones could be bought. It was now or never to make jam or jelly, freeze them or can them. The work would not stop in the Linn County harvest fields. Teens, who wanted to, could earn over \$1,500 during the



summer, just by working in the berry and bean harvests.

There was also cherry and pear picking. That work was a bit more hazardous as the workers had to pick with one hand while hanging on to a branch with the other.

Raspberries, **blackcaps**, boysenberries and wild blackberries were abundant in Linn County. The wild blackberries grew alongside the roads and even filled some large open areas. In order to pick them Shane had to lay a few boards down in the patch itself, moving the planks ahead of him as he went deeper into yellow-jacket spider territory.

It was not a job for timid souls. The yellow jacket spiders would bounce their webs back and forth and strike out at insects. Grandma even claimed they would jump at humans, at least she had Kosy convinced.

If someone was not up to facing the notorious spiders he could always grab a few gallon jugs and float down the canal in



Lebanon, picking **wild blackberries** as he enjoyed a summer swim. The only problem with floating the canal was the long walk back up stream.

Shane had done it all. He even picked prunes, or plums as proper people would call



them. Actually they were not prunes until they were dried. **A prune is just a dried up plumb!** And in that same vain a raisin is just a dried up grape.

Usually the pickers could partake of the fruit they were picking, unless it was boysenberries. These rare berries were so big and tart no one could eat many. The owners didn't like the pickers eating the berries because there scarcity made them very valuable, expensive to boot!

Partaking of the fruit by the pickers was usually considered a right. But no one would feel "right" if he ate to many plums. There was one item that the owners always collected all of the harvest. No one would be caught dead eating garlic!

Shane had picked blackcaps until his hands were stained for weeks. He had even hoed the mint fields for a dollar an hour. Carrying two five-gallon cans of water, he had provided a source of irrigation for young tender tomato plants. That was when he was only eleven years old.

All these experiences were old hat to anyone raised in Linn County, a regular part of growing up, like fishing in Crabtree Creek and swinging under the covered bridges. Activities like these were taken for granted by Oregonians. It was their way of life, and they loved it.

Who would trade the crystal clear water of Crabtree Creek or the smoke-free air of Linn County for the pollution of an enormous city, where you didn't feel safe even with the doors locked and barred? This was living at its best. It was a great place to raise a family.

All these thoughts occupied Shane's mind as he stopped at

the Rocking L Ranch on his way into town. He jumped over the car door rather than opening it. That had been his new custom since the logging truck had turned Bluejay into a permanent convertible.

Erin was peeking through her bedroom window and enjoying the scene. Shane had no sooner entered the front room before the Montana cowgirl, grabbed his hand and whisked him out the back door. She motioned for him to sit on the picnic bench.

"I have a few things on my mind," she started out a bit nervously, tugging at her perfectly webbed pigtail. "I would like to apologize for dumping your milk shake in your lap last night. That was a stupid thing to do, and I don't even like to think of the reason why I did it. Will you forgive me for that?"

Shane was trying keep cool. That was his usual mode of operation. He was forcing himself to retain a sober face. Inside he was smiling to beat the band and enjoying every word. He hiked his bottom lip up over his top lip, to keep from revealing his true emotions.

"I certainly will, my good friend. Needless to say, you caught me quite by surprise. Is that all you want to say to me?" He was hopefully probing for more information about her true feelings towards him. But, alas, they were not forth coming just yet. Erin answered negatively and excused herself.

Shane had a lot to ponder as he drove into town to visit Bowie. Did Erin really like him? If so, how much? He knew she was the type of girl that he could get interested in, but he was too unsure of the situation to risk another rejection. Right now he would have to content himself with concentrating on his new found Indian friend.

He had a lot more to learn about this Indian and his people. Bowie was not embarrassed to be a Nez Perce. He was proud enough to share his heritage. Perhaps Shane would be able to know more about his own roots if he could tap Bowie's mind.

If he was really fortunate maybe he would get an opportunity to witness to Bowie. It would be different having a Nez Perce Indian for a friend. He had already had many Mexican friends in California, that is how he had learned Spanish. At least at this stage, he really didn't have any plans on learning Nez Perce.

He descended the highest point of the Lacombe Road and could see Brewster's Corner two miles ahead. It was rare for him to be traveling alone, but he enjoyed it sometimes. It gave him a

chance to think about his new life as a Christian and consider some of the decisions he had yet to make.

He was still deep in thought, so he didn't notice the black '55 Chevy catching up to him. It passed him like a shot. He just shrugged his shoulders as to who it was. The Chevy slowed down inviting him to pass. Shane got that nervous butterfly feeling in his stomach. He passed anyway. Uh-oh, trouble!

It was already too late when Shane realized the black Chevy belonged to the Snow Peak robbers. Worse than that, they also recognized him. Shane's smaller engine was not going to be a match for their powerful V-8. But what else could he do except make a run for it.

They quickly closed the gap between them. Shane recognized the driver as Horace, the boss. Horace moved within a few feet of Shane's bumper. Shane couldn't believe it. The snow peak robbers were ramming his car. "I suppose they expect to run me off the road, to destroy my car, and who knows what they will do to ME if I get ditched." Worse case scenarios always ran amuck in his brain, more than he wanted them to. It was his choleric personality, he had often explained it to himself.

A Mercury came into view at the next crossing. In order to avoid trouble, the black '55 Chevy slowed down, playing innocent as both Chevys passed



**I BRAKE  
for tailgaters!**

the intersection. The Mercury entered the road and advanced, passing both cars. This was Shane's chance to tailgate the only means of safety he had. The new car sped up and Shane stayed right on its tail light.

**No one likes tailgaters.** Shane tried to get the couple's attention, and even motioned for them to stop. The elderly Lacombe couple were not inclined to give credence to teens, especially in homemade convertibles. They didn't like his tailing that close, so they sped up and left Shane to the mercy of the black plague

behind him.

Panic flared through Shane's mind and muscles. He felt the blood rush from the surface of his skin. "I won't make it to Brewster's Corner before they knock me in the ditch. I can't out run'm, so I'll have to out smart'm."

He was still three hundred yards ahead of them. His smaller motor was getting hotter by the mile. He spied a wide gravel driveway on the right. Just enough room for a spin around. Still at a good speed, he hit the gravel, jerking his steering wheel tight to the left. A perfect donut. Spinning completely around, he threw gravel all over the road. The dust had not cleared before he hit the pavement again and headed straight for the robbers.

Bluebird propelled down the left lane straight for the '55 Chevy. It wasn't **a form of "chicken"** because Shane was counting on the notion that these crooks were actually cowards at heart. He wasn't the bravest person in the world himself, but, in these short minutes he could not see any other alternative.

The black car stood its ground. With only one hundred yards between them now, space was getting to be a premium. The robbers WERE cowards. Horace, the biggest coward, was driving. "Getting even with dat smart aleck, punk kid is not worth wrecking our car."



The Woods kid slowed down to about 25 miles per hour, but maintained his position in their lane, heading straight for them, his hands, bloodlessly tight, griped the steering wheel.

Speed was not important. He just wanted to get past them and back to Lcomb. Now Shane could actually see the contortions on their surprised, stupid faces.

They could not believe HE was attacking them. "It's now or never," Shane thought. He wasn't going to give in to these crooks. With lots of commotion in the front seat the robbers finally swerved around Shane, almost shooting into the ditch. As soon as they righted the car, they hit the gravel Shane had thrown on the road

when he turned around. That slide DID put them in the ditch.

The grappler took advantage of his excellent opportunity to return to Lacombe and safety. The last he saw of the robbers, they were pushing their car out of the ditch heading into town, obviously looking for more trouble to perpetrate on hapless victims.

This was a good time for a thanksgiving prayer. "Thank you Lord for helping this foolhardy, inexperienced driver." Since he accepted Christ, Shane had discovered that prayer was not just a nightly "Now I lay me down to sleep" ritual. It was a call for assistance or a thankful communication with God, through Christ, at any time he needed to.

Shane had a good story to tell Sergeant Kochian, when he talked to the policeman at Erin's house. Although still a bit nervous, Shane managed to carry on a conversation. "It is apparent that the robbers are still using the '55 Chevy. Do you think they will dump it soon, Sergeant?"

"These hoodlums will not leave our county until they have tapped all the resources available. I will keep my ears open for any stolen car reports. I think they will rid themselves of that car soon. It has been seen too many times. Keep me informed, if you see them again."

"I was glad no one was with me. I don't think I would have done what I did if even one other person would have been in the car. It is one thing to make such a serious decision for yourself, but quite another to make it for someone else. I'll check you later, Sergeant."

Shane finally relaxed, sitting down in the well-worn armchair. "What could possibly happen to me next?" he thought to himself. Adventure was one thing, but coming this close to a head-on collision was not his idea of an adventure that was well planned. Maybe he could get a job as a stunt driver when he got out of high school!

"Lunch will be ready soon," Erin promised. "You and Kosy will certainly stay, won't you?"

"Yeah, we can stay,"



Shane affirmed, "But why is everyone around here **grinning like the cat in 'Alice in Wonderland?'** Do you all know something I don't, but should?" He had already discovered that it was best to park his life on the side of caution when dealing with Erin and Marty.

Nobody gave him a straight answer. It was eating time again at the Lynch Ranch. Sitting down at their kitchen table was something Shane had happily accustomed himself to enjoy. He had never been disappointed with the food, and didn't expect to be this time either. Things might be a little different at this meal. Mr. and Mrs. Lynch had gone into town, leaving the kitchen to the kids.

Erin opened the refrigerator door. "What is this green hairy stuff growing in here?"

Marty and Erin were making the best of it for Shane's benefit. "It looks like Dad is letting the cheese mold to make roquefort dressing. Shall we whip up some now and serve it to Shane?"

Shane's fears were well founded. "Hey, you guys, I'm not eating anything out of the ordinary while Mrs. Lynch is absent from the kitchen. Not that I don't trust you. I just like to play it safe when it comes to something as important as my stomach. I don't want any peaches with worms."

They sat down at the table, and before anyone was asked to say the blessing, Erin brought in a covered plate. "Hey, what is this?" Shane burst out with as he scratched his head. "It looks like your mother's most fancy silver plate and cover. We must be going to have pheasant under glass or some other fancy foreign dish."

"We will give you the pleasure, Shane," Marty invited him to take the lid off the plate. "The honor is yours."

**THIS IS WHAT THEY WANTED SHANE TO THINK HE WAS GETTING. HE WAS FOOLED FOR A MOMENT AND FELL INTO THEIR TRAP.**



Shane always enjoyed being honored, especially by such a

good group of close friends. He raised the lid, and before he could even get a good look at what it was, IT leaped up and landed on his chest. Bounding away again, it cleared the entire living room and stopped, squatting on the couch. Erin, true to her form, jumped up on the kitchen table.

Shane was so startled he dropped the lid. "What. . . what in the world are you guys laughing at? That CRITTER almost scared me to death."

"It's not a CRITTER, Shane," Kosy explained. "It is just a tiny, harmless bullfrog. We were out by the barn and kept hearing this loud sound like 'jug-o-rum, jug-o-rum', so Marty started lifting up planks until he found our smooth-skinned, yellow and black striped friend. What do you think of him? We were really impressed with how far he could jump."

"Marty thinks he has possibilities at the frog jumping contest in Corvallis," Erin added, from her perch on the table.

"I am surprised that a girl who won't have anything to do with a slimy worm would play around with a leaping, slimy frog," Shane sort of complained to the girl crouched on the table.

"Who said I even touched him," Erin replied, defending her femininity. "Marty and Kosy did all the dirty work I just continued to cheer them on."

"If you think for one minute I am going to forget this practical joke you are all very wrong. I will find a way to personally get even with each one of you, including the frog,"

Shane promised with an evil grin on his normally innocent face. "In fact, if we keep that frog long enough, he might have possibilities of filling a fry pan with those big powerful legs of his."

Marty was horrified. "You're not going to eat Leaping Larry, are you? He has a lot blue ribbons in those ham hocks."

"Yeah, and the final ribbon will be won at the Linn County Hot Dish Contest," Shane added as he hurried to retrieve the slippery, illusive, slimy Leaping Larry.





## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **INDIAN HISTORY**

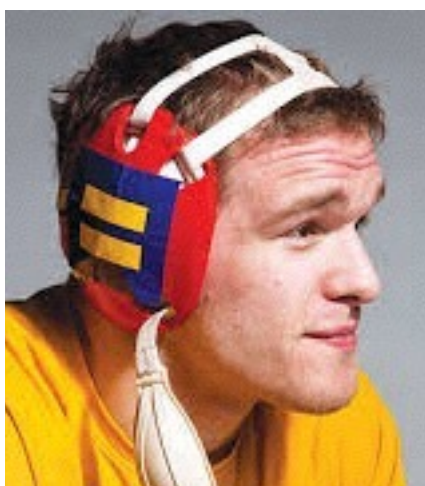
**"The single-leg takedown is the most popular, but you most also learn the duck under, the fireman's carry and the double-leg takedown. The ankle grab is good, too, but it is just a lower form of the single-leg takedown." Marty was giving Shane his second wrestling lesson.**

**"For every move there is a counter move. You need to learn the counter moves also. Let's work on the single-leg takedown for thirty minutes. That will probably be your bread and butter. What weight do you suppose you will wrestle?"**

**"What do you think?" Shane was trying to pinch an inch on his hips.**

**Marty calculated Shane's weight. "With your frame you should wrestle in the 141 or 136 pound class. You can replace some body fat with muscle. If we planned it right you might be able to chose either weight class. You'll have to cut down on food intake and really watch stuff like ice cream and apple pie."**

**"Well, if I keep getting my milk shakes served in my lap, I won't have to worry about those calories." While Marty was distracted by the humor, Shane grabbed his right knee and promptly kicked his left ankle out from under him. Marty landed on his back. "Were you on your back long enough to count all the**



**ceiling tile, my dear instructor?"**

**Marty was impressed. "Shane, if you work hard in an hour's practice, you can easily lose five to six pounds, IF the humidity and**

temperature are kept high." Marty adjusted his head gear.

**"You should wear head gear all the time, even in practice, unless you want cauliflower ears. Girls don't like cauliflower ears."**

"Then give me a head gear, please," Shane insisted.

"I have some bad news for you, Shane," Marty frowned. "I was asking around. I even phoned Coach Hazewinkle, and my fears were confirmed. Can you imagine who wrestles at 141 pounds for the Warriors?"

"Well, considering who I know in town, it must be Engelbert Farnsworth III, or it wouldn't be significant news. But, how could that be, he is at least six feet tall. He looked like he weighed at least 170 pounds."

Marty opened the door to the weight room. "You're right! But listen, he is so 'gung ho' for the sport that he really sacrifices to get down to 141 pounds. He even has a sauna at his house." Shane felt a little nervous. Taking his anxiety out on the weights, he soon tired.

"Whoa, Shane," Marty warned, "Don't pull a muscle.

Remember, we want many repetitions with lighter weights. That will give you cable strength without putting on the bulk weight."

Shane put the twenty pound dumbbell to rest. "What say we go to town tonight and talk to Bowie. Maybe he would like to go to Richie's Drive-in and we could all get a Basket Special. It is only fifty cents. Hamburger, fries and a coke for half a dollar, you can't beat that anywhere. Maybe we could even get a milk shake before I have to join eater's anonymous."

Erin questioned the wisdom of taking Shane's car to town, knowing that it was already marked for destruction by the Snow Peak robbers and Engelbert Farnsworth III. Finally she conceded. "But I guess it is Shane's car or stay at home. It's too far to ride the horses! So let's make like a tree and leave."

Summer nights in Linn County could be very hot and humid. Some kids can't stand to sleep in a hot house. So, they just throw a sleeping bag on the front lawn and tell jokes until the mosquitoes drive them deep into the sack. It was such a summer night as this that the '51 Chevy trooped into Lebanon, with its top down, of course. Did they really have a choice?

Pulling into the T.P. Oil Company gas station, Shane parked the car on the back side of the office, to hide it from predators. He

saw Bowie sitting at the desk. As they entered the office, Kosy noticed a large picture on the wall. "Who is that Indian, Bowie?"

"I was hoping you would ask," Bowie answered proudly. "That is Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians. He was considered the greatest military strategist of all the Indian chiefs."

This was the information Shane was looking for and he thought Bowie was just the right person to fill them in on Indian history. "Tell us about your people, Bowie."

"Well, first let me tell you about my family. I have twin sisters in the eighth grade at the junior high. One is White Dove Pinetee and the other is Running Fawn Pinetree. I will introduce them to you later. I also have an older brother Bear Claw Pinetree, who is studying right now at Oregon State University.

"We got our name from the French. It means 'pierced nose', for what reason I have yet to find out. I have an idea it really meant flat nose, like the one I have." With that he put his index finger on his nose and laid it flat against his cheek bone.

"Our grandfather was a full-blooded Cherokee Indian," Thomas added. "Since we never met him, we know little about his life. What is your connection with Chief Joseph?"

"**Chief Joseph** is my great grandfather," Bowie began explaining. "We used to live on the Indian reservation in Northern Idaho. But, there were too many descendants of Chief Joseph. It was becoming a situation of too many chiefs and not enough Indians."

"Reservation life leaves a lot to be desired. My dad figured that boat wouldn't float. So, he decided to come here where we could have a normal life without depending on a monthly government handout."

"So that makes Chief Joseph your dad's grandfather," Erin stated with admiration. "Wow, that is really something! We have heard a lot about Chief Joseph. There were many Nez Perce Indians in our area of Montana."

Bowie was glad to finally have someone to share his history



with. "Chief Joseph tried to live peacefully among the white settlers. He studied at a mission school and learned military tactics by watching soldiers at drill. When there was a conflict over some Nez Perce territory, he ordered a retreat. He knew his warriors could not defeat the U.S. Army."



The Nez Perce teenager went over to the picture thinking he would kick the history lesson up a notch, "Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce in Oregon preached forbearance: 'Better to live in peace than to begin a war and lie dead.' His peaceful attitude was in vain. He was driven off his land. **His retreat to Canada is one of history's most brilliant military maneuvers.** But, he was finally forced to surrender forty miles from the Canadian border. He lived on a reservation in Colville, Washington until he died in 1904."

"How is it that you know so much about Indian history?" Kosy asked.

"Well, my Little White Princess," Bowie said as he stood up and towered over Kosy, "I have made it my hobby, Indian history, and not just MY tribe. I also know something about the great Cherokee Nation. But, right now I have to be excused to attend a very impatient customer."

Bowie serviced the car and returned with a scowl on his face. When he rounded his desk he slammed his fist down so hard that the whole office vibrated. "That was old knucklehead again. He knows I am an Indian, and he always makes wise cracks. I think his dad owns a store here in town."

"That wouldn't be old Engelbert Farnsworth III, would it?" Thomas asked. "I think I recognize the car and your very colorful description of him."

"Yeah, that's him. Do you know him personally? Is he a friend of yours?" Bowie hoped both answers would be negative.

Everyone got a chuckle out of that. "Not exactly," Shane answered, "But we do know him. Actually, I don't think Bert could have any real friends."

With a lull in the conversation there was heard a deep growling sound. Kosy was the first to wrinkle up her forehead and

say something. "Was that a bear or a German Shepherd I just heard growling?"

Marty had not been fooled. "That was one big guy's empty stomach, right, Bowie?" With that Marty remembered their real reason for stopping at the T. P. station.

"Say, Bowie, can you go to **Richie's Drive-in** with us to get a hamburger?" Marty asked, hoping for a positive answer.

"Sure, I'd love to. Wait just five minutes more and my dad will be here to replace me. I'm sure he'll let me go. There is only one thing I like better than hamburgers - that's PIZZA!"

Marty never missed a chance to practice his investigative skills. "Just by chance, would you happen to be a wrestler, Bowie?"

"What makes you ask that?"

"It's the size of your neck," Marty revealed his hint. "Most wrestlers have thick necks from neck bridging. It also means that when they buy a shirt that fits them well on the neck, the sleeves usually drag the ground."

"I've had two years of wrestling experience in junior high. I like the rodeo, too. I guess a love of horses is in my blood. The Nez Perce were excellent horsemen. They developed the Appaloosa, selling many to the U.S. Cavalry."

"There is a rodeo in John Day and several roundups before school starts. The big one is the second week of September. It is called the Pendleton Roundup. I go every year. Maybe you guys could go with me sometime, to be my cheering section."

Shane was sure they could. "What do you know about our tribe, the Cherokees Nation?"

"Well, the Cherokee Nation started out on the east coast, in the Carolinas. They were the first literate tribe. **The humorist, Will Rogers, was part Cherokee Indian.**"

"They lived as farmers in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, and they sided with the British during America's War



**RICHIE'S DRIVE IN OF 1962**

for Independence. Both of our tribes suffered the same fate. When gold was discovered on the land the U. S. Government gave them, they were run off and located elsewhere.”

“The unfortunate Cherokees were marched on foot to Indian Territory, which is now Oklahoma. The greatest athlete of all times was a Cherokee Indian. **Jim Thorpe**, he won the decathlon, played professional baseball and professional football. No other American has done that. He was also one of the original founders of the National Football League.”

“The Nez Perce tribe was herded into Northern Idaho. Well, here's my dad. I guess we can go now.” After long introductions and a few friendly pats on the back, the '51 Chevy pulled out, heading up Park Street. Shane wanted to drag the main one more time before ending up at Richie's Drive-in. Shane stopped at the red light on Grant Street. A 1961 Corvette pulled up next to him, revving the powerful engine to a competition level.

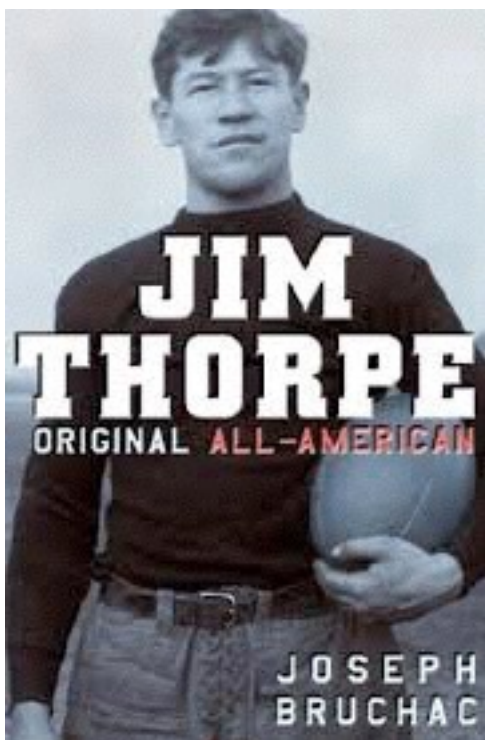
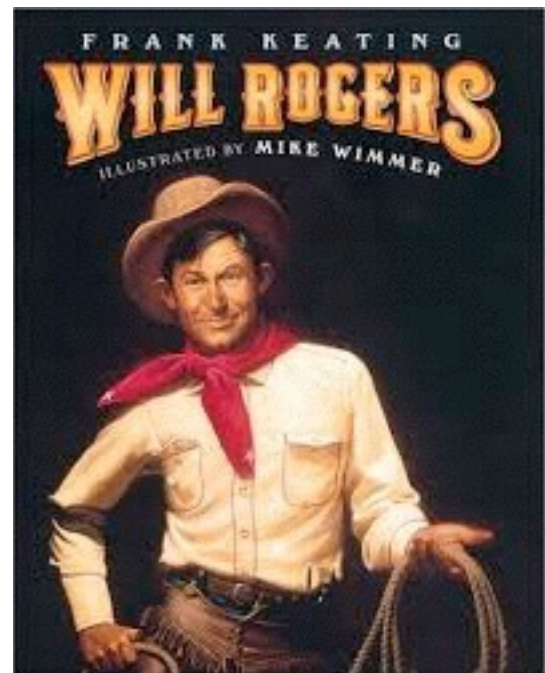
Shane leaned out the window. "You've got to be kidding, you want to drag down Main Street?"

The driver shouted over the roar of his motor. "These are both Chevrolets, made by the same company, right?"

"Sure," Erin yelled back. "But your rubber band is wound much tighter than ours."

"Yeah, forget it," Shane echoed. "We don't drag, ever. That would be, reckless and irresponsible."

"So who are you anyway," the irate driver yelled, "Goody two-shoes. Come on, lets have some fun." In his unsaved state Shane would have been mad enough to take the challenge. But it still would not have made any difference.



His car against a Corvette, are you kidding. It would be like the turtle and the hare, but in this case the turtle would not win.

He was different now. It wouldn't be a good testimony for a Christian to be dragging down Main Street, or anywhere else. Christ certainly had made a difference in Shane's life. The wildness was gone. It had been replaced by a sense of gratitude to the Savior for all His kindnesses. He still felt neutral about his mom, but he was a new Christian yet. Things like that would eventually also change.

Shane just wrinkled up his nose and waved goodbye to the dragster. "No way Jose, endangering my car and my passengers is not my idea of fun."

Just then the light turned green and the Corvette peeled out, fishtailing for about ten yards. Marty could not help himself. "The tire companies best friend, he probably gets five per gallon, if he's lucky."

"Well five miles per gallon isn't bad for a corvette," Thomas wanted to show his intelligence.

"Miles! I'm talking about five blocks per gallon," Marty snickered. Shane did not repent for holding back. Besides the fact that he would have looked ridiculous, there were always police cars just waiting for teens to "drag" the main. Shane felt he could drag the main without "dragging" the main.

The Woods kid was not a prophet nor the son of a prophet. But just as the Corvette passed Maple Street, a squad car pulled out behind it and turned on a flashing red light.

As the '51 Chevy snuck by the Corvette, Erin could not help herself. She stuck her head out of what should have been a convertible roof and yelled, "We'll beat you after all. Oh, good evening, Sergeant Kochian. I hope Lois is well!"



## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **A SETUP**

Richie's Drive-in is a favorite hang out for Lebanon teens, especially during lunch hour on school days. Shane had heard all about the rush hour traffic. He already had his strategy worked out. At the end of his fourth hour class, IF he was sitting close to the door and could leave his books with a friend, so he wouldn't have to return to his locker and fight with a stubborn combination, he could be among the first ones out of the building.

IF he didn't let anyone pass him, and hightailed it a little, he could make it to Richie's to enjoy a Basket Special for lunch. Even after taking a few spins on the chair, he would still have time to walk back to school to catch fifth hour. But all that would be unnecessary. Shane was lucky enough to have a '51 Chevy convertible. He could go in style without getting all sweaty.

All these thoughts filled his mind as he opened the door to Richie's and smelled the hamburgers frying. Finding six empty stools in a row at Richie's was next to impossible, so the Woods, Lynch and Pinetree gang sat in a booth. Unfortunately, they were not concerned about the car. They didn't see the '56 Ford pull up beside it.

The Lacombe gang didn't take notice of Bert until he and his buddies had already pulled out onto the highway. They were not so coy as to have completely escaped unnoticed. Shane was the first to rise and head for the door. "Those guys just came out of the parking lot. I don't trust them. I will be right back. I'm going to check the car. Watch my hamburger."

When he returned all five of the clowns at the booth were leaning over staring at Shane's sandwich. "Okay, I get the point. You can stop gawking at my supper."

"Well, Shane," Kosy smiled, "You did ask us to watch it, right?"

"Yeah, I did, but next time you don't have to take me quite so literally. I didn't see anything amiss with the car. They certainly couldn't take a knife to the top."

Fifty cents wasn't bad for a supper. When a teen only made a dollar an hour, he had to work thirty minutes for a Basket Special. Therefore, it was still dutch treat most of the time. No one could



afford to be overly generous.

When they pulled out of Richie's, Shane headed for the station to drop Bowie off at work. First, they decided to drag the main one more time. Gas was only **twelve cents a gallon**, they could afford a little frivolity, if everyone pitched in a nickel!

Stopping at the light on Grant Street, Shane put the car in neutral, a bad habit that he was about to break. The '56 Ford pulled up behind him, bumping his car. Engelbert Farnsworth III did not stop there. He pushed Shane right into the intersection.

The car turning left onto Main Street had to come to a sudden, screeching stop. The innocent teens in the blue Chevy were severely reprimanded by a couple of senior citizens who were ignorant of the real culprits. Shane gave them a sheepish grin and quickly passed through the intersection to clear the traffic.

The bad news was not over. A policeman had witnessed only the near accident, he had not seen what Bert had done. He pulled Shane over to the side as Engelbert Farnsworth III and his rowdies passed, thumbing their noses at the unlucky bunch.

"Let's have all of you kids out of the car and up against the building," the officer ordered. "We received a anonymous call informing us of a blue '51 Chevy convertible full of teens who were drinking."

Thomas was indignant. "Well, that's not us. No one in this car drinks, ever. We all hate liquor with a passion." This was not a joke, no Woods kid ever spoke well of any form of liquor. They had seen their mother use all types of it and every drop if it had ruined their lives and driven their mother into hiding.

"We'll see," the officer promised. "Just take it easy while I search this car."

Erin was a bit put out and nervously twirled her pigtails. "He won't find anything. How could he find any alcohol?" Kosy was munching on her fingernails. Shane was stroking his chin and Marty's knee was starting its nervous twitch.



The officer didn't take much time to search the car. He seemed to know right where it was. He looked in the faces of five petrified teens when he held up a half empty bottle of whiskey. "You kids will have to come with me to the station. I'm kind of new here, so, I'll trust you to follow me."

Thomas got behind the wheel and tried to calm the troops down a bit. Everyone was casting puzzled glances at each other. The "What-do-we-do-now look" permeated the place.

Bowie was the first to speak. "I know it was that bunch in the '56 Ford. It had to be old Engelbert Farnsworth III and his buddies. The group with room temperature I.Q.'s. I can't wait until I get my hands on them. They'll be lucky if I don't put sugar in their gas tank." With that he vented his frustrations by slamming his fist into his open palm. This was no teen to trifle with, he was angry and had the muscle and weight to back up his threat.

At the station the atmosphere changed in favor the of '51 Chevy group. The other officers, having followed Shane's actions since he relocated in Lacombe, were not a bit inclined to believe the set up.

Johnathan Hitz, the officer working the graveyard shift, quickly vouched for them, as well as Sergeant Kochian.

"Just smell their breath and let them go," the secretary suggested. **"These kids are as innocent as morning glories."**



"I hope none of this will get in the paper," Erin requested politely. "We don't need that kind of publicity." Erin was always deeply concerned about her Christian testimony. She wanted to shine for Christ even as a teenager.

It wasn't a story they wanted circulated around, therefore at church on Sunday no one even mentioned a word. Pastor John Ballentine stopped Shane on the way out the door. "Have you been reading the Gospel of John like I suggested? You know you have to study the Bible, not just tuck it under your pillow at night time, hoping to learn something by osmosis!"

Shane liked this elderly pastor. Yes, I have been studying the Book, and I find it very interesting. You know the first time I ever read the Bible I started in Matthew and got bogged down in the 'begats.' I was not impressed. I quit before I finished the first chapter. But now I really understand more about Christ and what He expects of me."

The pastor was very pleased with Shane's progress. "Keep your eyes and ears open, Shane. You will find that God will speak a great deal to you through His Word. There is no limit to what He can do through a surrendered vessel."

The new convert was encouraged by Pastor Ballentine's interest in his spiritual growth. Shane lowered his voice. "Please keep praying for Thomas and Kosy. I really want them to get saved, too. I don't know how to answer Kosy's questions about Mom. Maybe you can come up with an answer that she can accept; something that will help."

Pastor Ballentine gave Shane a winning smile and a warm pat on the back. "I will work on that problem and put it on the top of my prayer list. I know how you kids have suffered and I believe I can help Kosy." With that, the kind pastor turned to Thomas. "What are your plans for this lovely summer afternoon?"

Thomas answered the pastor and caught the Lynches' attention at the same time.

"Kosy and I are going to the covered bridge to swim."

"Would you two Lynches like to come along. Maybe we could even scare a few crayfish."

Marty talked to his parents. Mrs. Lynch had a better idea. "Why don't you three come to our house for lunch, and then go swimming from there? We have lots of food just waiting to be devoured. And you guys look like the crew that could do the job."

Thomas conferred with Grandpa and Grandma, giving Mrs. Lynch the affirmative sign (fist closed with the thumb up). The Lynch kitchen was designed practically. It was circular with



cupboards completing the entire circle. The wooden circular counter top, three feet in diameter, decorated the center of the room. Mrs. Lynch was cutting strawberries, mixing them with raspberries for a shortcake. She looked up when Thomas walked through the door.

"You will be returning to San Diego soon, right, Thomas? I bet you'll miss your family a lot. Shane and Kosy have become regular attractions around here. They sure have given Marty and Erin good friends to pal around with."

"That's right, Mrs. Lynch," Thomas answered. "I only have four days left. Then the real tough training begins. Did you know that only three in a hundred of the trainees make it through the Navy UDT boot camp."

Mrs. Lynch looked surprised. "You will really have to apply yourself, Thomas. I guess you might finally discover what you are made of - **MAN OF STEEL!** We will be praying for you and your safety. By the way, right after lunch I have something to show you kids."

Mr. Lynch said the blessing, and then it was time to attack the table. A bucket of fried chicken, a mountain of mashed potatoes, and tiers of corn on the cob, accompanied by cold lemonade to wash it all down. And to top it all off, a veritable June delight - strawberry/raspberry shortcake.

Mr. Lynch was just diving through the whipped cream when he spoke to Shane. "After the Strawberry Fair is over are you and Kosy going to continue to work in the harvest fields?"

Shane looked at Kosy first. "We will some, in order to spend our time wisely. No one will hire a fifteen year old. We will work the **raspberry harvest** and then the pole beans. But by next summer, I expect to have a regular job."

"Come with me, kids," Mrs. Lynch



motioned to the Woods family. "Let the Lynches clear off the table. Behind the barn we have a chicken mesh pen with some very fine **homing pigeons** that I would like to show you."

"It is a hobby of mine, but the whole family enjoys it. Every time we go on a long trip, we let one loose to see how long it takes the bird



to get home. Sometimes we even send messages tied to their legs. This brown one here is named 'Speedy.' He's my favorite."

Kosy was careful where she stepped. "What is the longest distance you have tried?"

Mrs. Lynch really appreciated Kosy's question. "That is the most common question asked. Pigeons have been known to fly more than a thousand miles in two days." Thomas was amazed. "Wow, that would not leave much time for eating, sleeping, or dating."

"We have been turning Speedy loose further from home each time. That is the way we train them. The furthest he has flown is from the Idaho border. Each time he beats us home. Enough pigeon lore for today. You had better hurry to the covered bridge as the clouds are getting gray and darker."

The water was cool, but clear. Marty could see the crayfish scurrying across the bottom. Under the covered bridge was an area wide enough to push

**THE COVERED BRIDGE WAS A DELIGHTFUL PLACE TO SWIM AND SWING OFF THE SLAB OF ROCK. IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY, YOU CAN SEE THE ROCK UNDER LEFT SIDE.**



off the rope swing, to do a cannonball or feet first plunge. Head first diving would not be smart.

Erin noticed it first. "There is a putrid smell around here."

"I smelled it, too," Thomas agreed, pinching his nose between his fingers. "I think it must be coming from behind those trees over there."

Marty and Shane investigated. Shane held his hand up, motioning for the girls to stay where they were. "It's a doe. Someone has killed and skinned it, taking only the meat. This is the work of poachers. There's probably a young fawn around here wondering what to do now."

Kosy looked concerned. She always had a tender heart for the unfortunate and mistreated because she knew how it felt. A young life without its mother, how horrible. "If we find the fawn, can we take it to the fish hatchery? Will they be able to save it?"

"Catching a fawn would be like trying to catch the wind,"



Marty responded. He noticed Kosy's tender heart and wished that she would get saved soon.

Thomas began to dig a hole to bury the remains. "I hate poaching. Poachers destroy God's handiwork with no regard for the severe consequences. If it can avoid the cougars, bears and mountain lions around here, the fawn has a chance to survive."

"There are predators around here for sure," Marty concurred. "Remember the big mountain lion that chased the robber into the river?"

Thomas went to the car and retrieved a shovel. The three

boys took turns digging a hole to bury the remains. This would make for a better atmosphere for their swimming adventure. After the dirty work, it was back to fun time. The only thing closer to a Lacombe teenager's heart than swimming in Crabtree Creek, was fishing in it.

Most bridges around the area had rope swings if the water was deep enough for diving. The rock base of this bridge formed a perfect ledge to push off. It was twelve feet wide and had a seven foot drop straight to the water.

The rope swing had a loop on the bottom. Kosy grabbed the rope and pushed off with her foot in the loop. Thomas didn't think it was a good idea. "Kosy, take your foot out of the loop. It is...."

Before he could finish the sentence, Kosy's grip slipped from the rope and her foot caught in the loop. Erin screamed as Kosy swung back towards the rock head first.

## **CHAPTER TEN**

### **A NEAR DROWNING**

Before she hit the ledge, Kosy was able to cushion herself with her extended arms. She still slammed her head on the rock with a sickening thud, knocking herself unconscious. Her foot slipped out of the loop, and she dropped under the water.

In the fractional moment before horror paralyzed her, Erin managed to squeak out another terrifying scream. Shane was on the bridge when he witnessed the horrible scene. A violent, instantaneous explosion of absolute terror roared through him. He just stood there with his mouth open.

Thomas yelled at Shane, bringing him back to his senses. "Warm the car up and point it towards Lebanon." All of his Naval training was coming to mind again. He was glad he paid close attention in all of his first aid classes.

Marty was the first to get close to Kosy. He dove quickly, lifting her from the water. Thomas hit the water running, and began mouth to mouth resuscitation before Marty could get his wounded sister to the shore.

Erin was crying and screaming at the same time. Marty crawled into the back seat and Thomas followed, still trying to revive his sister. As Shane fishtailed out of the gravel parking lot, Marty was emphatic, "Pedal to the metal, Shane, don't spare the rubber."

Shane hit the bridge, smoking the back tires on the wooden floor, and praying, "God, please don't let my little sister die. I love her, and she doesn't know Christ as her Savior. Please God, give my sister another chance to be saved, and help us get to the hospital safely."

Thomas was still trying to get Kosy to breathe. "Shane, when you hit Snow Peak Road turn right. Don't stop at the crossings, use your horn. When we get to Western Plywood turn left. Don't spare the car."

Shane felt the necessity for hurrying, but the safety of all concerned was also on his mind. "I'll do the best I can, Thomas. I can't go very fast until we get off this gravel. There'd be no sense in wrecking the car and injuring all of us."

Erin was still crying and praying as the Chevy turned on to the



Snow Peak Road. As Thomas was administering first aid he could think of a hundred times that he had mistreated his Kosy. Even though he wasn't a Christian, he prayed, "God, please save my sister."

Every moment was crucial. If Kosy didn't start breathing before they reached the plywood mill, she would die. "Hold her head back farther, Marty," Thomas yelled. Kosy began to cough up water, and Thomas sighed with relief as his sister started to gasp roughly. "She's going to make it. Man, am I ever glad I didn't sleep through that first aid class! Kosy is still not out of danger, Shane, so keep up the speed, but don't be reckless! How do you feel, Kosy?"

Her pulse pounded fiercely in her temples from the wound on her head and her chest ached so, she could hardly breathe. "I...I feel terrible. **My chest feels like.....an elephant is sitting on it.**"



Murphy's Law was still in effect in Linn County. When Shane passed Brewster's Corner, a red dome began flashing behind him. He was relieved and disappointed at the same time. "These local policemen seem to like my car."

Shane motioned for the squad car to pull alongside. The officer followed his request. "What's the hurry, kid? Where's the fire."

Motioning to the back seat Shane shouted at the officer. "We have a medical emergency. My sister is badly hurt. Can you help us? We are going to the emergency room of the hospital."

"Sure can, kids, follow me," the officer motioned as he pulled out in front and turned on his siren and left his light flashing. The rest of the trip was easy, except for the weird looks the passers by gave them.

Pulling into the Lebanon Community Hospital emergency entrance, Thomas released Kosy to the doctors but stayed by her side. He looked at Shane, "Phone Grandma and Grandpa and tell them where we are."

After Kosy's head injury was treated, she was put in room 106 on the new west wing. Dr. Ferguson put his hand on Thomas' shoulder. "If you had not administered first aid procedures, your sister would not have made it. That compress pad on the head also helped. Where did you learn all that medical information? If you want to visit her now, you can."

The happy foursome entered Kosy's room. Shane grabbed her hand. There were tears of joy in his young eyes. "God answered my prayer, Kosy."

"I . . . I thought I was going to die, Thomas. I was so scared. Thank you for saving my life. Will Grandpa and Grandma be here soon?"

Kosy stayed over night in the hospital for observation, but the next day she was released. Grandpa wheeled her out to the car. "Can she still go to the Strawberry Fair on Saturday night."

Dr. Sam Telloyan was on duty now. He was new in town, having just finished his internship at John Hopkins in New York. He was the son of Armenian immigrants.

"Yes, she can. But don't put her on any of the rides. Violent motion like that might affect her head wound. We like this girl, but we don't want to see her around here again, understand?"

On the way home Kosy was very serious. "Grandpa, I could have died. I was really scared."

"Kosy, where would your soul have gone if you had died yesterday?" Grandpa asked with great concern. "We have been praying that you would understand salvation by grace through Christ."

"I am still confused about how God loves me. Shane, can you take me to talk to Pastor Ballentine?" Now this was a change in attitude. This is what the Lynchs and the Woods families had been praying for.

That evening Shane drove Kosy to the parsonage and rang the door bell. Marva Ballentine answered the door. "Well, do come in. We heard about your accident yesterday, Kosy. God certainly did take care of you."

Mrs. Ballentine was a real homemaker. She was just the kind of woman anyone would want for a grandmother or mother-in-law. She was kind, and considerate, with all the trappings of an appreciated grandmother

"The Pastor is in the radio room talking to his brother in

Brazil. You can go right in." Pastor Ballentine heard the noise, opened the door and motioned them to enter and take a seat. **"Just a minute and I will sign off with my brother in Brazil. Okay, Tom, 73's and 99's, old buddy, see you next week. This is WB7SQQ signing off with PY3ZBA."**



Shane was enthralled. "Very interesting, Pastor. Some day I would like to talk to your brother on the radio. Does he ever come here and preach? Actually, we are here because Kosy wants to talk to you."

"You probably know about my accident at the covered bridge the other day," Kosy began nervously, "If....if it hadn't been for the boy's fast action, I wouldn't be here now." With that Kosy started to bit her fingernails, but Shane pulled her hand away from her mouth.

"Yes, I heard. What exactly do you want to talk about?"

"I want to be sure where I will go when I die," Kosy answered. "I am still confused about how God loves me. If He really loves me, where was He when our dad abandoned us and our mom tramped us all over the country from bar to bar?"

Pastor Ballentine had heard this desperate cry before. He knew Kosette was coming with a lot of emotional baggage and he was not sure if he could unpack all of it in a meeting of just a few minutes. But he was going to give it his best shot.

"Christ was also abandoned by His Father when the sin of all mankind was laid on His body, Kosy. He was mistreated and voluntarily died a horrible death to pay the price of your sin and my sin. He really experienced rejection, even from those for whom He died".

"I can't answer all those questions you have. God proved His love for you when He sent His only Son to die in your place. He DOES love you and wants you to be born again. Listen to this, the most well-known verse in the Bible, John 3:16: 'For God so LOVED the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in Him,  
should not  
perish but have  
everlasting life.'

"I know  
you are very  
bitter against  
your mother, but  
you are also  
bitter against

God. He cannot be blamed for the sins of your parents against you. God never told them to do that or made them do it. They sinned against God and against you when they did those things to you. You have to be real careful, Kosy. If hatred and revenge were solid and had a form, **it would be in the shape of a boomerang.**"

"What are you trying to say? You mean they would eventually come back and hit me?"

"That is exactly what I am saying. You understood perfectly. Hatred and revenge are enemies that destroy our lives. Wouldn't you like to pray tonight and ask Christ to be your personal Savior?"

Kosy looked at Shane. "What should I do?"

Shane put his hand on her shoulder. How he loved this little sister of his, with all his heart. He knew how much more she had suffered than Thomas and he had. They were there, they saw it, and it broke their hearts. They always tried to comfort her, especially when she was crying herself to sleep in a boarding home. "Now is the time, Sis. I see no reason to delay any further."

"I've got to think this thing through some more." They left the parsonage without any decision to receive Christ as Savior. Shane knew there was still a great deal to pray about.

Kosy and Shane planned to stop at the Lynch Ranch before going on home. They didn't even get to the house before a down-pour hit. Mr. Lynch was holding the door open as they hurried through, soaked to their waists.

"Why don't you kids wait out the storm by playing some billiards in the family room?" Mr. Lynch suggested. "I will park the topless Chevy in the barn, and you can thank God you have leather seats." With this, Fred grabbed the keys and headed for the drenched Bluejay.



Erin grabbed Kosy and headed down the hall, answering her dad as she turned the corner. "Kosy and I have to straighten up our hair first."

While Erin was handing her brushes to Kosy, she began to talk about her most recent favorite subject. "Since Shane has accepted Christ have you noticed any changes in his life?"

Kosy was tugging at her tangled strands of wet hair. "Why, yes, I have. He doesn't use bad words anymore and every time we eat, even if it is in a restaurant, he insists on blessing the food. Sometimes I think it is very embarrassing."

"He's doing well," Erin joyfully noted. "A real dedicated Christian is never embarrassed to claim he knows Christ. What else is new?"

"Well, he reads the Bible often and has many talks with Pastor Ballentine. He even pays attention in church. Oh yeah, can you believe this, he is even talking about giving ten per cent of his money to the church. And, he is always telling me he is praying for me."

These are just the kind of changes this Montana cowgirl had been praying for. Shane was on her mind all the time, but she was not going to linger on that subject if he wasn't one hundred per cent sold out to the Lord and His cause. No way was she going to get interested in a mediocre Christian, there was no place in her future for a half hearted interest in the things of God.

The girls entered the family room at the whistles of three teasing boys. "You girls look great," Shane said, "Especially that transplant from The Big Sky Country." Erin blushed red but absolutely enjoyed the compliment.

They racked the balls and Thomas broke, but all six pockets still remained empty. Shane was looking out the window. "Can you believe that, a man is climbing up the electric pole? What in the world is he going to do up there in this rain storm?"

"Good grief, he is putting his face up to the wire," Marty recorded.

"That's dumb. There must be 40,000 volts in that line. He could be . . ."

There was a flash of light at the pole, making the bulbs temporarily dim in the room. Thomas laid his cue stick on the table. "This guy is going to need some help. Call your parents."

When they found the hapless victim, he was crumpled up at

the foot of the electric pole. Mr. Lynch turned him over and noticed that he was bleeding out of his mouth, but breathing. "I think he broke his leg and an arm. What were you doing up there?"

"I was tryngk to lyte my cigaryette," he babbled with a slur.

It was then that Mr. Lynch smelled liquor on his breath. "This poor fellow is so drunk he doesn't know what he is doing. You're lucky to be alive. I can't imagine a sane man doing what you did. You are soaking wet. Where do you live?"

The man could hardly talk as the electric jolt had knocked all his teeth out. "I yive on the old Simon's pyace."

They put him in the car and drove him the two miles to the old Simon's farm. Mr. Lynch was friendly but not overly excited about these neighbors. "Your family will have to take you to a doctor to get this leg looked at."

As they pulled into the driveway, Shane was casing the place. What a mess! Car parts were scattered all over the yard. The uncut grass was growing up around them and through them. **An old rusted-out Maytag wringer washing machine on the front porch.**

When they returned from delivering the injured man to the door, Shane asked Mr. Lynch to turn on his head lights. "Just as I thought, look at those red streaks running down the license plate



of that **ugly 'whatever' car** in the driveway . Pull your hood latch, Mr. Lynch. I want to check your oil."

Shane lifted the hood and checked the oil. On the way back he ran his hand over the license plate. Back in the car he examined it closer. "Just as I thought, blood. These guys must be into



**poaching as a pastime."**

**As they pulled out the narrow driveway Erin noticed that someone had lifted up the window shade and was observing their every move. That gave her goose bumps and the hair stood up on the back of her neck.**



## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **THE FINAL ENCOUNTER**

"This is the last night of the Strawberry Fair, Bowie," Shane pleaded on the phone. "We all want you to go with us. It'll be fun. Okay, we will pick you up at the archery range at six o'clock. Sharpening up your aim, huh?"

Thomas was explaining the plans to Grandpa Woods. "We will pick up the Lynches and be back before midnight. Don't worry about tomorrow. I'll be responsible for getting Kosette up and ready for church, even if I have to put an ice cube under her armpit."

Shane spent the afternoon fishing in the channels by the Snow Peak Bridge, thinking about the near tragedy that occurred there just a short time ago. It was that incident which had opened his eyes to his need of salvation. He had always believed in God, the Bible and eternity, but had never done anything about his destiny.

He had always thought that God used a scale weighing good works against sins. He now understood that type of thinking wasn't even logical! Using this method of salvation and dealing with a holy God, left everyone out of heaven.

It was through Pastor Ballentine's preaching, his grandparents changed lives and the Lynches witnessing that he finally came to understand salvation by grace alone, through the shed blood of Christ on the cross of Calvary. He finally settled the question of his eternal destiny by repenting of his sin and accepting Christ as his Savior.

It was a decision that he had not regretted. His life was not the same since. Even his plans for the future were being molded by God. He just sat there and smiled as his bobber floated in the pool.

He had borrowed a pigeon from Mrs. Lynch and now was attaching a note to its leg. "Irlga luspa riendfa qualsea irfriendga, igha?"

He turned the bird loose. "This should be a short trip. Now don't get lost, and don't stop to date or eat any worms."

Shane hurried home and picked up Thomas and Kosy. As he drove to the Lynches, he thanked God for Kosy's recovery, praying for her salvation. "God, I want both Thomas and Kosy to know the



peace that I have, knowing that my sins are forgiven in Christ."

Erin ran out to the car to meet Shane. "Mom said there was a message for me on one of the pigeons. Can you imagine that? Wait right here, Shane. I need to retrieve it." His heart was pounding so loud he thought Thomas and Kosy could hear it.

When Erin rounded the corner of the barn reading the message, she was smiling so big she almost broke her face. She was also blushing a little. "Shane, no wonder my mother couldn't understand the note. How sweet of you. So you speak three languages, English, Spanish and Pig Latin. Wow, you are really talented!"

Erin was patting Shane's hand that was positioned on the car door when Marty came out. "Hey, what is this, two more members in the teenage mutual admiration society? Let's get going before all the strawberry shortcake is gone."

At the archery range, Bowie was just putting his last arrow in the bulls eye. Shane was impressed. "Nine out of ten in the bulls eye area. Not bad for an Indian. Where did you learn to shoot like that? Can you teach me?"

"My Uncle Elk Looks Back gave me lessons. He is a great police officer in Pendleton, over in eastern Oregon. I've had a lot of practice. It is something I like to do. Let's put the stuff in the trunk and go straight to the fair."

When they turned on to Tangent Street, they found a parking space right by the main gate. Shane backed up, parking parallel on the first try, but he did manage to scrap the tires on the curb.

"Not bad for a California driver," Bowie teased, getting his revenge.

The fair grounds were crowded. Shane could see the clowns at the far end, up to their usual pranks. He pointed them out to Bowie. "Those guys are sort of obnoxious. Last time we were here they really roughed me up. Maybe they just don't like us, because we seem to be the only ones they get rough with."

First came the strawberry shortcake since the line was not very long. Thomas was finishing his third bowl when he commented to Marty. "We had better let this settle a bit before we ride any of those gut-twisting, brain-bashing rides."

They made the rounds to see all the exhibits, including the two-headed calf and the rubber man. Bowie looked interested. "If I could do those bends and curves like the rubber man, I would

never be beaten as a wrestler. Do you think he would give lessons?"

The clowns came flying by again, and this time they plowed into the boys knocking them flat. Then they ran on laughing and pointing their fingers. Shane was helping Marty up. "Those guys ought to be fired. They're not clowns, they're jerks."

The rock-o-plane was the first mind-bender they tried. Shane forgot to take his change out of his pockets again. He didn't even think about it until he heard it clatter to the roof, as they were upside down.

Kosy could only watch with envy as the gang boarded the octopus. Erin looked sympathetic. "Sorry, Kosy, doctor's orders. We want you to get completely healed. Thomas was even more firm than that, giving a few orders that just made Kosy shake her head at him.

Kosy let out a session of protests, but there wasn't any use, not with anyone as stubborn as Thomas. She sat in the grass and pouted. "I guess I will just have to wait until next year."

Now came the brain scrambler. Shane and Erin were right behind Thomas and Bowie. Marty had to ride with a girl he didn't know. Just as they got airborne and began twirling like a top, the clowns descended on Kosy, turning her upside down and shaking her around.

Thomas was indignant, but all he could do was yell. "Hey you clowns, leave my sister alone. She has a head injury. Just wait until I get down from here."

Shane and Erin began yelling at the clowns, too. By the time the octopus was stopped, Kosy was picking the grass out of her hair. She was visibly shaken and stuttering. "Those g...guys are nuts. I'm going to complain to the fair officials."

"But, Kosy, remember they don't work for the fair company," Erin made a point of it.

Shane scratched his head. "Then they must work for the

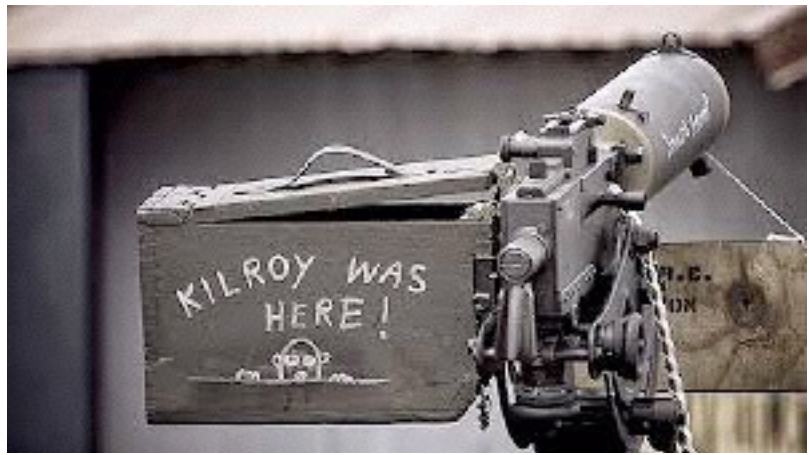


**1963 OCTOPUS**

Strawberry Fair committee." With the hours passing, they decided to head for Lacombe. As they approached the car Erin noticed it first.

"Someone around here doesn't like us, Shane." Written with

pink spray paint all down the side of the car were the famous words: **"KILROY WAS HERE."**



"Who is Kilroy?" Kosy asked.

"I'll explain that later," Shane promised as he noticed Mark Poorman coming towards them. Mr. Poorman had been Shane's sixth grade teacher at the junior high across the street.

"Good evening, Mr. Poorman," Shane said, extending a warm friendly hand. "Aren't you on the Strawberry Fair Committee?"

Mr. Poorman was dumbfounded. "Well, look at this. The Woods kids have invaded Lebanon again. Are you living around here now? To answer your question, Yes, I am on the committee."

"Well, those clowns you hired to spread joy and happiness among the good citizens of Linn County are not doing anything but causing havoc and disrupting the troops. They almost gave my sister, Kosy, a headache; bouncing her upside down. This is a bit too much, don't you think?"

Mr. Poorman looked puzzled. "I'm not sure what you are talking about, Shane. We didn't hire any clowns. I thought those men were rude, too. They must have been hired by the Strawberry fair personnel office."

Now Shane was really concerned, "Do you know for sure those dumb clowns were not hired by the committee?"

"Absolutely, Shane," Mr. Poorman looked bewildered now. "I'm the chairman of the committee. No doubt about it."

"Then there is something rotten in Denmark and it ain't the pigs." Shane looked at the rest of the crew. "If they don't work for the committee or for the fair company, then they must be on their own." Shane began to put the jigsaw puzzle together. "Why don't they like us.....?" With that on his mind the young Sherlock began stroking his chin. "Wait a minute, wait just a minute cotton picking

minute. The Snow Peak robbers were here last time we were roughed up, right?"

Erin started thinking, too. "Remember, those three crooks that chased us. Each one put a big duffel bag in the trunk. Those could have been their clown clothes."



"They must be using the clown outfits as a diversion," Marty concluded. "They are up to no good. Everywhere they go mischief and pain follow behind like the tail of a tornado."

Shane moved quickly now. "Mr. Poorman, if you can get to a phone, would you please contact Sergeant Kochian or anyone at the police station and tell them that the Snow Peak robbers are going to assault the fair ticket office?"

"Are you sure, Shane. That is a lot of guessing don't you think?"

"Putting all the loose ends together, that is the most logical conclusion I can come up with," Shane answered with as much confidence as he could muster. "They are apparently using the clown outfits for cover."

"Fine, then. I'll phone from my office in the junior high." As Mr. Poorman was running to the junior high building Shane got another idea. "Let's go warn the ticket office. Maybe we can prevent a robbery."

As they approached the office they noticed the door ajar.

Bowie looked in. "They have already been here. The unlucky cashier is out cold."



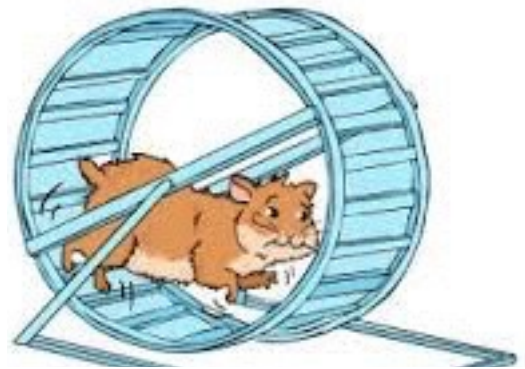
"Look, Thomas," Kosy exclaimed, pulling on his shirt. "They are just running out the front gate." In hot pursuit, the group passed the main gate just in time to see the clowns

enter the far parking lot and get into **a car no one could recognize.**

Thomas was determined. "They're not going to get away this time. Shane, you do the driving. Marty, tell the gate guard what has happened and ask him to send Sergeant Kochian west on Tangent Street. Bowie, get your bow from the trunk."

With Thomas barking orders like a sergeant, the clowns fishtailed onto Tangent Street, heading west, just as Thomas had predicted. Loaded with anxious and angry teens, the '51 Chevy followed after them. The crooks now had a car so ugly not even Shane could tell what it was.

"It's probably stolen, and no one would really miss a car that ugly." Shane surmised. The '51 Chevy was working up speed after it crossed the railroad tracks. Top speed for this old worn-out eggbeater was about sixty-five miles per hour, **if the hamster in the flywheel was in good shape.** It was all or nothing for the small 85 horsepower engine and the six nervous riders.



"They took a left on 9th Street," Thomas noted.

When Shane slowed way down to make a sharp left turn, the passenger door flew open. Marty had been leaning hard on it. He flew out with the door, holding all his weight up with his right arm over the window.

"Hold on, Marty. Keep your feet up," Erin yelled. "Shane, make a right turn."

Fortunately, the crooks turned right on Isabella Street. When the blue Chevy made a sharp turn to the right, Marty came scooting back in his place. When the door shut hard, Bowie locked it.

Marty was still dumbfounded about how he had exited and entered so smoothly. He was getting a nervous bounce in his right leg. "We want to follow these guys but we don't need any more accidents."

The burned out, ugly, blue car turned back towards Tangent Street. Realizing that they were being followed, the crooks headed for the open highway. By the time Shane got onto Tangent, he could see a police car just turning the corner at the junior high. Their red lights were a blazing. Thomas handed Bowie an arrow.

**"Do you think you can hit that back tire?"**

**"I'll try," Bowie said as he stood up. He braced his right foot in the crease of the back seat and his left knee on the top of the front seat. Just as he let fly an arrow with a hunting tip, the car hit a hole. He missed. "Can you get any closer, Shane?"**

**"This old baby is screaming now, but I will put my foot in the carburetor." Shane gained a little on the unknown car and Bowie released another missile. "POW", right on the mark. The rusted out bucket of bolts began to swerve, it rolled on its side, then came back up on its wheels, and broadsided a telephone pole. The foreign car doubled in the middle as the driver's door slammed into the pole.**

**"Ram it, Shane," Thomas ordered. "Crush the other door or they will escape again."**

**"But my car!" This was the only thing he owned.**

**"Forget the car. We can get another one."**

**"Everyone brace yourself." Shane slowed down to about thirty miles per hour and torpedoed the '51 Chevy into the thug's passenger door, trapping the three crooks inside making the ultra ugly car more ugly, if that was even possible!**

**Six teenagers jumped over the side like rats abandoning a sinking ship. They took off for the high country, just in case the crooks decided to take some pot shots out the windows.**

**Sergeant Kochian arrived just as the dust was settling and the radiator leaking. The three unhappy criminals were ceremoniously dragged from between the two wrecked cars and arrested. The boss was beside himself. He managed to yell through all his ugly smeared makeup. "I'll get you punks for this."**

**"Shane, here you are again mixed up in the action," Sergeant Kochian marveled. "Are you lucky or what?"**

**"Either I'm always in the wrong place at the right time or the right place at the wrong time," Shane babbled.**

**"What was that you said?" Kosy asked perplexed.**

**"Look at my car. Totaled out. It wasn't much, but it was all I had," Shane complained as he let out a deep sigh. The Bluejay had flown south for the winter.**

**Kosy felt like a good friend had just died. The '51 Chevy had been their only continuity until they arrived at grandpa's farm. The blue convertible had transferred them to happier times and had served as an ambulance when Kosy's life needed saving. Tears**

clouded her blue luminous eyes and her lips began to tremble.

"Look at poor Bluejay, Shane. She is crying, too." Kosy was pointing to the leaking radiator.

Shane felt as bad as Kosy did but he was trying to live up to his macho image. He shook his head several times to clear it. It seemed there were tears in his own eyes, too.

"Listen, Shane," Sergeant Kochian said, "We are so happy to finally capture **Horace Power** and his robbing murderers. You sacrificed all you had to make sure they didn't escape. I think there is something down at the city pound that might interest you. Can you come back tomorrow afternoon? We will have an official decision by then."

On the way home Kosy reminded Shane to explain what "**KILROY WAS HERE**" meant. Shane took the teacher's position. "Kilroy was a working in a WWII ammunitions supply deposit. His boss thought he was goofing off. So to prove he wasn't, he wrote KILROY (his name) WAS HERE on every 10th box of supplies going to the troops. When the troops got the boxes they began to speculate who he was. They finally found out. Now anyone who wants to say 'I have been here, take notice' writes it down."

The six tired teens were driven home by Officer Quinten Freeburg. The next day Mr. Lynch was at the city pound to take pictures for the Lebanon Express. Shane was grinning like a cheshire cat.

"This 1957 Chevrolet convertible was confiscated last month from **Fora DaLei**. She is a criminal who won't need it where she is going," Sergeant Kochian announced proudly. "It has four special features: the transmission has been changed to a four on the floor, the motor has been bored out 60 cc's over normal, it has a four-barreled carbonator, and, for some weird reason, no one here can explain, the front window can fold down flat."

"It's all yours, Shane, lock, stock and four barrels," Officer Freeburg added. "The title will be transferred to your grandfather's name, but it is your car. All of us here at the office pitched in for one year of Bilyeu's insurance."

"Now," Mr. Lynch requested, "All six of you get next to the '57 Chevy for a picture, but don't hide the nice car."

Officer Freeburg asked, "Just for the record, Shane, is that your girlfriend standing next to you?"

Shane put his arm around Erin's shoulder. "She's already

been a girl and a friend. Is she my girlfriend, you want to know?" Shane glanced at Erin with a mischievous look in his eye. "Well, I think that might depend on if she's applying for the job."

Erin didn't know exactly how to interpret Shane's strange look and comments, so she just smiled warmly for the cameraman.

**THE END**



**1957 CHEVY BEL AIR CONVERTIBLE IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE ALL-TIME CLASSIC CARS, LIKE A CORVETTE OR A THUNDERBIRD. ITS DYNAMIC STYLE HAS ONLY MAKE IT MORE DESIRED, AND WORTH A LOT OF MONEY TODAY.**