



Dr. Giles

The house that I recognize is the home of Dr. Giles. Dad is right. Dr. Giles is the man who can help the train passengers. As we get closer to the house we can see that Dr. Giles is waiting for us on the front porch.

"I saw the train derailment earlier when I came outside to check on the weather," Dr. Giles explains. "I was just on my way up the hill to the railroad tracks when I saw all of you coming. I decided that I better stay here and start turning this place into a makeshift emergency room."

The exhausted and unsettled train passengers begin to file into the house. Dr. Giles has an area prepared where people can wash up and change into clean, dry clothes. One of the rooms is set up with an area to clean the bumps and bruises and wrap them in fresh white bandages that are rolled and stacked on a night table.

In the kitchen, Mrs. Giles is feeding the passengers beets and turnips from the root cellar. She has also made a pot of hot steaming soup with country ham and beans and fresh corn bread warm out of the oven. Lastly, Dr. Giles has a room set aside for people to rest with woolen blankets next to a cozy fire.

Dr. Giles asks Dad and me to stay the night. Dad agrees, and after everyone else is sufficiently taken care of, we begin to clean up, eat something and rest in the front room with the others. It is difficult for me to fall asleep in a strange home with a lot of people that I don't know.

I lie awake and think about all that has happened today. There is a part of me that wants to be home with Mother and Daniel. I know Daniel is missing me and wondering what has happened. There is another part of me that is glad that Dad and I had an adventure together today. Dad doesn't talk much, but I know that he is glad that I am with him. I know that he wouldn't want to be alone and that he needs me as much as I

need him. I am happy just to spend time with Dad no matter what we do. Besides, tonight was kind of exciting.

I awaken to the bright rays of yellow sun as they pour into Dr. Giles' window. Dad is already up and going strong. He wants us to be ready to go before the others get up. Dad hands me my coat that has been drying by the fireplace all night. It is covered with black soot and still smells of smoke from the train wreck.

"Now try and be quiet, Michael, so that we don't wake any of the others," Dad says in a sleepy tone. Dad and I walk softly and quietly as we leave the house. He is careful to shut the door gently so that it doesn't make a loud sound that will wake the passengers.

When we get outside, the reflection of the sun on the pure white snow is brilliant. Dad and I begin our trek back to the farmhouse. Even though the walk home seems slow and laborious through the deep snow, we are back to the train wreck in hardly any time at all. Everything looks incredibly different. The train cars are back on the tracks and the only thing left on the ground is the coal that spilled out from the stoves and is scattered on the ground beneath my feet.

Since the entire day is before me, I can't help thinking that I want to get home and talk to Daniel about gathering up that coal. Dad looks tired and I can tell that he is also anxious to get home.

"Well, it looks like everything has turned out for the best," Dad says as we pass by the accident. "They will probably have that train up and running in no time."

He pauses before saying, "You were a big help last night, Michael. Next time I need help, I will know that I can count on you." Then Dad smiles with an encouraging look on his face.

For the first time, I feel like Dad is thinking of me as a grown-up man instead of a little boy. It is a good feeling and yet a little scary. So many things are changing around me. David goes off to work every morning and I hardly ever see him. Daniel and I seem to have more responsibilities every day. I feel like I am growing up too fast. There are times when I just want to play outside in the field behind the barn and stay a little boy forever. Other times I am ready to be treated like an adult, like today, for instance. I am glad that dad feels that he can count on me. Whether I like it or not, things are going to change and there is nothing I can do about it.

As Dad and I get close to the farmhouse, we can see Daniel watching for us through the window. His eyes light up when he sees us and he begins to run to the front door to

let us inside. Dad picks him up and tosses him into the air and Daniel squeals with delight.

I can tell by the look on Mom's face that she is relieved and concerned.

She and Dad go into the kitchen where it is warm to sit and talk at the table.

Daniel and I go upstairs to our bedroom so that I can tell him about the train wreck and about the coal that was left on the ground. We immediately plan how we are going to get out of the house and gather that coal.

When we finally escape from Mom and Dad, we find ourselves walking back up the hill to the railroad tracks with feed sacks in our hands.

We don't waste any time. The coal is easy to gather up.

"It must have been dumped all in one place and look how much there is of it, Michael!" exclaims Daniel with great excitement.

"Let's hurry to Angle's Blacksmith Shop before anyone comes," I whisper to Daniel as I finish filling my sack with coal.

When we get to the blacksmith shop, Jake dumps our coal into bushel baskets. He pays us seven cents a peck for the coal that we brought.

"It looks like you boys have about two and a half bushels of coal," Jake says as he places the coal on a shelf in the back room. "How does seventy cents sound to you boys?"

"It sounds pretty good, Jake," Daniel says with a big smile on his face.

Jake hands the money to me and says, "Thank you, boys, and remember to be careful. I wouldn't want anything to happen to my two best coal runners."

"We will," Daniel shouts. And with that, we are on our way.

When we get to the train tracks, Daniel and I see something that is very strange and kind of funny looking.

"What is that, Michael?" Daniel asks.

"I am not really sure, but it looks like a Model T Ford with train wheels," I explain as I wait for the unusual object to come closer.



CHAPTER SIX

Railroad Lizzie