

**GRAINVIEW:
A NOVEL ABOUT A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE ON A
HUTTERITE COLONY**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all my family and friends who so often put their own lives on hold to accommodate my work schedule. It is also dedicated to anyone who has ever worked in an isolated setting and finally to all the wonderful Hutterites, both the adults and particularly the youngsters whom I have had the pleasure of knowing along the way.

Abstract

Grainview: A Beginning Teacher's Experiences on a Hutterite colony in novel form.

Hutterite colonies dot the Canadian prairie landscape like grain elevators. Where did they come from? What do the people called Hutterites believe?

Accalia McConnell was bright, feisty, newly graduated teacher. Her first teaching assignment was on an Alberta Hutterite colony. As her first seven years of teaching unfold, "Caley" is continuously confronted with new challenges, contradictions, and compromises necessitated when two divergent cultures collide in one small classroom.

The Hutterian life is ostensibly based on the biblical interpretations of their erstwhile leader, Jakob Hutter, who seized on the biblical passage: "all things common". This simple communal life has defied probability and flourished over their four hundred year history. However, in contemporary society the technological advances threaten one of the basic tenets of Hutterian life: isolation. When the Hutterites emigrated to the West it was negotiated that colony members were to be educated in local curricula. This price of admission presented the dilemma of maintaining traditional ways in the face of modern advancements. The flashpoint for this cultural collision is the classroom of Caley McConnell.

As the anecdotal stories of education in the schoolhouse unfold, Caley is forced to continuously balance the myriad of viewpoints surrounding her: those of the superintendent, the preacher, Daniel the domineering farm boss, the illegitimate child, runaways and Caley's own set of values. These stories intertwine numerous challenges that inexorably lead to a breaking point. In searching for an understanding of Hutterian culture, Caley ultimately discovers herself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to deeply thank my advisor and mentor, Dr. David Smith, without whom this novel would never have materialized. He introduced me to ideas that aided me in seeing beauty in diversity, beauty in the Hutterites. It was David's creative insight which realized that the novel format might be the best vehicle through which to explore my experiences with the Hutterites.

The world of academia can be fraught with preconceived notions of how to conduct a study on a given subject. To stray from this path takes a great deal of courage when one's reputation and eventual success lie in the balance. It is also for this fortitude that I would deeply like to thank David.

Rationale

After my first interview with the superintendent of my school division and then with the preacher of the Hutterite colony where I was to begin teaching, it became very obvious that a definite clash of cultures was at hand. As a brash, novice educator however, I felt that the existing cultural gap could be deftly bridged by my efforts.

Thankfully, all teachers believe this, but of course some will be more successful than others in their efforts. What first appears to be an achievable task, experience shows that teaching on a colony is a series of compromises that inexorably builds row on row into a web that threatens to trap the unwary. For example, in order to maintain good relations with the colony, do you allow the students to spend a morning killing chickens when it is clearly an inexcusable absence? In itself, the single incident would be more beneficial than harmful. Colony members would be more willing to participate in school activities. They would perhaps build sets for productions, puppet theaters, make math counters, or quickly repair a broken window in the school. There are many stories throughout my school system whereby the teacher does not have a good relationship with the colony members, and the school simply does not receive the necessary maintenance. However, when the requests extend to needing the students while the mothers are spring and fall cleaning, picking rocks and weeding the garden, helping with and even selling the harvest, it becomes obviously harmful.

If the students are not in the school to learn the curriculum, there are at least two major problems created, and many minor irritations resulting

from these conflicts. First, they do not have enough time to master the necessary grade level materials, and secondly, they rapidly develop an attitude that education is useless. This is the mode that many educators of Hutterite children fall into. They start out wanting to understand, later have difficulty saying no to the many requests, and finally get tired of struggling with it, therefore lapsing into a pattern of indifferent agreement. Teaching, classroom management, concepts and enthusiasm all become extremely sporadic.

Culture is a slowly evolving process and while the outside influence of educators has some effect, there will be some aspects of Hutterite culture that the teacher might not even see, let alone understand. The impetus of this journey came from my personal journals. What started out as daily memories evolved into a series of curiosities and apparent contradictions. When I turned to research on Hutterian life, the paucity of data intrigued me. The dismaying reality I encountered when looking for research was that there was very little recent information or studies done on Hutterite education. There was, however, some cultural research: (Flint, 1975; Peter, 1977; Pickering, 1987; J.W Bennett, 1987).

These sources cumulatively did not answer many of my questions about teachers struggling daily with the reality of Hutterite life. Obviously many teachers were walking into this new culture with very little preparation. There had been some work provided by ex-Hutterites and the occasional lay man, but what was needed was a work that fleshed out educational issues, a work provided by a teacher for teachers. New teachers in regular school settings usually have the advantage of being

able to share their experiences with other teachers with whom they work. It is very valuable to be able to address common concerns and this can be an excellent coping tool if there are difficulties. In the case of Hutterite teachers, they are not only isolated by location but also by experience. This is a unique situation for teachers and I think they really could benefit from the understanding of someone who has previously experienced this situation.

It would be unethical to discuss openly each situation that happens at the colony where I teach, but I feel that over the years of talking to my students, their parents and many other Hutterite teachers that I could be capable of writing composite situations that would further illuminate Hutterite culture for others.

The format of the novel permits a richer, more personal insight into the vicissitudes of all the colony's members. The teacher, in the novel, acts as a lightning rod for all divergent concerns and stakeholders involved in a Hutterite school in Canada. The schoolroom represents the interests of the school division's interpretation of Alberta's curriculum, the interests of the young Hutterites about the outside world, the conservative views of the elders, the almost unheard views of women and how the teacher balances these valid concerns against one another. An empirical, quantitative study could not hope to achieve what the books, body language, and journal entries make abundantly clear to the observant teacher who works with them daily.

The fictional characters here display many things about the culture that may prove helpful for teachers, and for the students' learning. As teachers in a regular setting experience, once they have a clearer understanding of the home life, they are often able to reach their students and understand their needs. This is the same of Hutterite children but it takes years to do because the Hutterites believe that they must remain closed to the outside world. Of course the novel is written clearly from a teacher's point of view and would not be intended to demean the culture in any way. Rather the stories discuss some of the things that happen within the culture and why they might possibly create a problem in school. Some behaviors of the Hutterites are very acceptable in colony life, like violence for instance, but these are not acceptable in school. They have difficulty adjusting to this. It is important to understand that the closed community and the unique culture contribute more to the educational setting than in a regular school. When religion, isolation, business, politics and rites of passage affect learning every day, they need to be better understood to enhance the teacher's effectiveness.

The fictional characters in the novel are composites, not intended to identify actual persons.

To gain a fuller understanding of the Hutterian perspective one must trace their history from its beginning. With the fragmentation of Catholicism during the Protestant Reformation a couple of unpleasant trends emerged: violence and persecution. Perhaps the Hutterite way was a response to these; they are pacifist but tenacious about maintaining their historically-couched customs. They still recite verses in German and seek

isolation to avoid the influence of the "English". One cannot begin to understand the Hutterite of today without knowing the Hutterite of yesterday. In many ways they are the same, in some ways they are very different.

Historical Overview

The history of the Hutterites can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation in 1517. It was at this point the solidarity of the Roman Catholic church was fragmented into a vast array of varying biblical interpretations. From there we are to understand that a group of Christians established a new point of view around 1530 that involved the adoption of a communal lifestyle in order to truly follow God. Jakob Hutter did not actually start the group of persecuted Anabaptists but became their strongest leader when he joined in 1533. He was burned at the stake three years later. The Hutterites at this time were in Moravia and were constantly under attack from other religions and governing bodies. There were about fifteen thousand Hutterites by the early seventeenth century. At this time a full scale plan to convert them back into the state church was undertaken. When techniques of persuasion and discussion by the theologians failed, torture, vandalism and execution followed. By the year 1756 the brethren only had about nineteen members left, but in the same year there were fifty-six Lutherans from Carinthia who were removed from their country, and the two groups joined together. In 1770 the two groups were allowed to settle in the Ukraine, and were exempted from military service and allowed religious freedom. They lived without trouble for one hundred years in Russia.

When Russia revoked the privileges, about eight hundred Hutterites migrated to the United States between 1874 and 1879. About half of these became known as Hutterite Mennonites and adopted a lifestyle closer to that of the Mennonites. The colonies moved and built new colonies throughout the Northwestern United States, but were again forced to move

when certain groups began harassing them just after the First World War. They were German-speaking and pacifist and this did not suit many people. Most colonies moved to Canada but many have returned to the United States since then. There are now hundreds of colonies living communally throughout the western Canadian provinces and the northwestern United States.

The religious beliefs of the colonies throughout Canada and the United States are fundamentally based on the same philosophy. The need to be somewhat individualist is evident in all colonies; however, this is severely limited by their fundamental belief: all things common. The colonies have suffered some internal problems through the years and as a result there are now three sects of the Hutterian brethren. These sects are named for three religious leaders who had strong ideas about where the Hutterites should fit into the outside world.

The Schmiedeleut are based primarily in Manitoba and the Dakotas. They believe that communal living (sharing of goods and beliefs) can be done while still accepting the advantageous aspects of the outside world. A fundamental difference is that they encourage education and all Schmiedeleut students finish grade twelve. The Dariusleut colonies, found throughout Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Montana, are less liberal in their dealings with the outside world. While they practice their belief in the same communal fashion they try to stay away from the influences of the outside world. They feel that too much education is harmful and will cause their members to be tempted to leave. An important difference with this sect is that each colony tends to make their own choices and is not easily

influenced by other colonies. The ministers from each colony rarely meet and hardly ever consult each other on problems within. They strongly urge the members to keep what goes on at the colony very private. This allows for varying degrees of influence that the outside world has on the Dariusleut colonies depending on the ministers and elders at the individual colony.

The opposite is true of Lehrerleut colonies. They rely heavily upon the opinions of each colony and the ministers meet regularly to keep everyone going in the same direction. They are the strictest of the three sects and feel that this is the only way. Their children start school a year later than the others. They are at least seven years old and often closer to eight by the time they enter English school. They believe that education will undermine their system, and they take many precautions to prevent it.

The religious beliefs of all three sects however remain the same and are promulgated by the roles of men, women, and children on the colony. The brethren understood that the references in Acts 2, 4, and 5 of the New Testament were to be followed to the letter. They were to do as the first church did and continue to live this way without further questioning. The success of the colony is very dependent on the free labor, in which each person in the colony must participate. The colony wants to be successful and they want to profit. They condone technology to increase productivity, but not for entertainment or education. Hutterites are keenly competitive in business, seemingly almost to the point of running contrary to their religious beliefs.

Economically, Hutterites are successful for a number of reasons. Not only are they able to share combines, tractors, etc. for farming, but having 70 - 120 people on the colony seems to be just the right number to keep everyone working and content. They have no unnecessary expenses. They leave their crops in God's hands and do not purchase insurance. This works for them, because they have so much land that most times only part of their crop would be destroyed anyway. They also are able to diversify by growing many different crops, and by raising many different animals as well. *Mixed farming is a necessity on a colony when there is no insurance.* Housing units are basic, without individual kitchens. There is a sitting area, but of course the purchase of furniture is unheard of. Everything is made and there are many rules about how many beds, chairs, etc. that each family is allowed.

While giving up private property is part of Hutterite religion, it also makes economic success more attainable for the community. There is a juxtaposition created when the Hutterites avoid poverty by being such good businessmen, but are not to gather too much wealth. This is usually when they are getting larger, and then begin to think about splitting again. The process of building begins again with the daughter and parent colony each starting over with half as much as before. They look for land and work is provided once again as the buildings are put up. Everyone has a job again, and economically they strive for success. This cycle continues and is usually only interrupted by some of the influence of the outside world. There is often resentment as Hutterites begin to plan and buy land all around farmers who are struggling to make ends meet.

Another thing that affects their growth is when too many youngsters (boys) leave the colony. If they do not come back, marry and have children, the colony does not grow because girls go to other colonies when they marry. The Hutterites often feel that education is somewhat to blame for this dilemma.

The gender roles on a Hutterite colony are very distinct. The colony is clearly a patriarchal society with seven male elders making all final decisions for the members. The women in the Hutterite colonies appear to be undergoing a restructuring period as technological changes take place in their society. There are fewer jobs to do and many jobs take less time. Now that machines do the milking, and sewing machines work much faster, women have more free time. Hutterite women are also considered morally weaker and in need of men's guidance. This arose from the part that Eve played in the Garden of Eden, but instead of receiving guidance, over the years, women have become second-class citizens in a patriarchal society. However, as women have more free time, they begin to look at spirituality in a more individual way with a personal savior. Before, the burden of the entire community being saved rested upon each individual. Now mothers do not feel as responsible for their sons who leave the colony, whereas they used to accept the blame for this. Today mothers are quite willing to pass this blame to Alberta education.

The role of education in the community is to comply with the rules stipulated in the agreement when the Hutterites came to Canada in 1918. Very little has changed since then. The Hutterites are very careful to stay at the outer limits of Alberta education. They have their children enter

school as late as possible and leave on their fifteenth birthday. One challenge a Hutterite teacher faces is that like all teachers they want to single out and praise children who work hard and accomplish the high standards set for them. This goes against the Hutterite belief of "all things common". Even though this is not the Hutterite way of life, parents of Hutterite children want their children to be at the top of the class. However they continue to state that this is not the case. They specifically do not single anyone out. The children are told that their real education begins when they leave the school.

This is an interesting idea: education really begins when you leave the Alberta mandated school. This attitude is so profound that it behooves some analysis. What is being taught by the Hutterites that is so much more important than the best curricula developed by Alberta Education? The obvious answer to this is that there is something being taught that must be countered by 1.5 hours of "German" school before and after "normal" school. One of the government stipulations about coming to Canada was that the Hutterite children were to go to Canadian schools. For a short time this happened, but it created a problem to taxpayers who were not particularly happy with the idea of building more schools or with their children mixing with Hutterites.

The obvious compromise was for the Hutterites to build the school on the colony and a Canadian teacher to teach the curriculum of that province. This suited the Hutterites because they could keep their children on the colony and the taxpayers were happy that the expense was limited. So they attended our schools as part of an entry agreement, but then for

the most part they try to ameliorate its effects. This suggests that there is a systematic “plan” to perpetuating this agrarian utopia. The tension that arises from the previously mentioned situation appears to be the result of many things. The Hutterites are aware that tension occurs if there is conflict between church and family. When education (influence) from the outside world is another necessary ingredient there is more conflict and more tension. History has shown that communal families do not stand the test of time, but not so with Hutterites. However, never before has the world changed so rapidly, and so naturally Hutterian culture is bound to be affected also. What does the future hold for the Hutterites? There have already been examples of colonies attempting to use Canadian law to create change within their system. Colonies have split because of religious differences and attempted to take their share of the assets.

Of course there is no definite answer to the question of the future, but as teachers we are faced with problems that many of us do not understand. We deal with tensions and have little knowledge from where they arose. The following is an attempt to write stories that portray some areas of conflict between Alberta education and the colonies, and also to offer a glimpse into a culture that may soon disappear.

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Little Death

Life at Prairieville would soon be very comfortable. It was an exciting time when a colony was branching out. For three years the talk had been about the split and now the day was finally here. The new colony had been built; all the assets were equally divided by the married men. All that was left to divide was the workers. To the women, this was the only and most important day of the whole procedure. Although the women are not at the meeting and do not directly choose which families go where, they talk it over with their husbands and can usually rely on their husbands to keep them with important family members. Such was the case with the Daniel and Susie Wurz family. There would be heart-rending good-byes but it wouldn't be too sad for them. After all, their nine children were school age or younger and therefore there was no risk of leaving their parents. Also, Daniel and Susie had discussed it, and Daniel had made sure that they were on the side with Daniel's widowed mother, and Susie's widowed father. There were also two unmarried sisters left at home that probably would never marry since they were already out of the stage at which a Hutterite girl has much of a possibility to marry. Once a girl turns thirty she begins to take on the colony duties of a married woman, and she no longer interacts with the young single people on the colony. The girl or girls remain in the parent's house and takes care of them until they die. Susie's sisters did just that, but they were also a tremendous help in caring for Susie's children, and Daniel was very lucky to have them at his beck and call also. Usually, the old people didn't go to the new colony, but even if it did happen Daniel and Susie would be with them, as well as Susie's unmarried sisters. In spite of nine children and a husband she adored,

Susie was unusually close to her father and unmarried sisters. Susie had been lucky each time. When she started going out with Daniel during the previous split, their families had moved to Prairieville together. Now once again the old people (their parents) were on the same side. Sometimes that's just luck as each colony has needs which the men decide on. Sometimes a strong-willed person like Daniel can make sure his family is in the group where they want to be.

Daniel and Susie enjoyed all the extra attention paid to them and their children. Susie's sisters were always ready to bring Daniel a cup of coffee or a good stiff drink when he arrived home at night. Even when Susie was busy with a newborn, one of the sisters often prepared an evening snack for him. The children were fortunate, too. Sometimes a child has to wait for certain things in a big family, but not Susie's children. Between her dad and her devoted sisters, the children were well looked after. The sisters had other nieces and nephews on the colony, but none as special as the ones next door. The children often popped in for a hug and never left without a candy or a pop. When Susie's children had been born close together, the unmarried sisters also had a little toddler to raise for a year and a half. This was not seen as extra work but rather a stroke of good fortune. That's the way it is on a colony. If a mother needs help a family member is always available to look after a toddler until they can go to daycare or kindergarten at two and an half years old. Sometimes the child must be sent to a different colony and parents do not see the child more than twice in that time.

Again, Susie was lucky. She always had enough help and her children took turns living next door. Susie enjoyed this extra help more than most. Although she loved Daniel as the "good book" told her to, he was difficult to live with. He demanded a lot from Susie and as more children arrived, he often treated her as he did the children. Daniel was a great teaser and spent his evenings with his family. Often the teasing went too far and somebody ended up crying, but Daniel saw this as a way to strengthen his children. Susie didn't escape the teasing either, and this made her more nervous and jittery as time went on. Perhaps, once the other families departed and each family with more than six children received their extra unit, Daniel would feel less pressure with the increased space.

Daniel Wurz was a complicated man. He was the eldest in a family of fourteen, and he had left the colony four times, and he returned four times. The young men often leave once or twice during their pre-married years. They go out to explore the world around them. They make a little money to sneak back with them later, get a break from daily church, buy a car and get around with other runaways. Rarely, so they stay away and are usually content when they return. Daniel, however, was not the usual. He was an impatient man with a flaring temper. Daniel really was trying to make it on the outside, but returned each time when his temper flared for one reason or another. If there was added pressure on the rig where he worked, or if he made a mistake which he did not want to admit to, he quit and returned to the safe haven of the colony. Even on the colony though, where a young man is subjected to the whims of the older men, soon a problem would arise, and Daniel would anger and leave the colony again.

Another thing that kept Daniel coming back was Susie. When a boy leaves, the parents and siblings are always very thankful if he has a girlfriend because it keeps the connection to colony life. Susie allowed Daniel to do pretty much whatever he wanted. She was not on the long list of things that angered him and showed fierce loyalty to him. Perhaps Susie had learned from her sisters that sometimes you may only get one chance to marry and have your own house. Perhaps she loved him. Most certainly, she was a little afraid of him. When it seemed to all others that he was in the wrong, she stood up for him. Daniel often argued with the others and when it became too much for him, he would leave. Each time Susie was afraid he would not return. Instead he did return, married Susie, and bided his time to be in control of the farming operations.

As he grew older along with his peer group, it actually became much easier to impose his views. Daniel's peers adopted the pacifistic stance of their church. Consequently, Daniel's inflexibility more often asserted itself. When Daniel settled down to married life with Susie, he became a strong advocate of the colony ways and was often able to pressure his own younger brothers into also returning to the fold.

On the day of the final meeting and move, Daniel was in a particularly jovial mood. He could foresee becoming an elder at either colony, hence being really close to the helm of decision making. He left for the meeting in the midst of the buzzing women at the windows. Of course, by now, although it is supposedly decided on that day, the divisions were really just a formality. Susie had a few things packed because of the extra

unit they would be receiving. There was a lot to do on the old colony too. A door in the wall would be cut the same day and new bedrooms would be arranged once they had two units. Moving leaves a mess anywhere and cleaning would take the women's mind off the sadness that was inevitable.

Both colonies would take pride in how quickly they had established themselves in their new homes. They sense that burying themselves in the work is also the way to a speedy recovery. For some, this would be the fourth move, and they know that getting back into the normal routine is the key to happy Hutterian life. For the first-timers, it can be a devastating blow as their families are ripped apart. Susie was familiar with these aspects but had not experienced any of the rending heartache. Her own brothers and sisters had all been at home during the previous split, exactly like her family now. It seemed like such a short time since the family had moved to Prairieville eighteen years ago and now the wheels were in motion for the next move.

The final meeting took about twenty minutes. When the men had left their houses for the church, everything was noisy. As the first preacher stepped out of the door, silence overcame each household. Tradition had always shown that the first to emerge were the chosen few for the new colony. The men filed towards their home for the last time. The other men and one of the preachers stayed behind to determine who needs extra units for their families, and to finalize the new duties of the colony work. Barn bosses are not immediately decided but it is quite obvious which person will be chosen for the job. The others rush home to deliver the already obvious news to their families.

When Daniel unexpectedly led the procession from the church, Susie slowly came to realize that he was with the wrong group. Susie felt a sickening nausea begin to work its way up to her throat. She watched as Josh and Eli, the two younger brothers of Daniel, who had been looking forward to being out from under his watchful eye, followed quietly behind. The excitement of the move no longer held the same appeal for them. Susie's head was spinning as she scanned the group desperately for her father who wasn't there. Susie's sister steadied her with a firm hand placed on her shoulder as Daniel stepped inside the house.

He looked at no one and bluntly stated, "Finish packing, Susie. We're moving."

Susie stared blankly at the church.

Pig Leg

Accalia McConnell set out in the morning with excited anxiety. She travelled along the road at a speed that belied her experience in driving on gravel roads. In a way, she had hoped that this drive would take forever and in years to come it sometimes did, but for the moment her foot just was too heavy on the gas pedal. She was apprehensive and jittery, and as a deer sprang out in front of her, Caley slammed on the brakes. The car skidded along the gravel and when she finally stopped the deer was nowhere in sight. She thought she had turned one hundred and eighty degrees and was now facing the direction she had come from. The young woman, although shaken didn't hesitate a moment. She righted the vehicle which was a new four by four and carried on down the road. However, after a while she began to think that maybe the jeep hadn't really been turned around and she was now heading back to the city. That was what it was like when you lived in the city all your life. Caley was unfamiliar with all the nuances of the landscape; the direction of the rising sun had no impact on her urban mind. She had only been out this way once before and because she had been concentrating on getting the teaching job, she had paid little attention to where the superintendent had driven her to on the previous occasion. Now when Caley had to find the colony herself she was amused by the thought that civilization actually didn't exist this far out. She thought back to what it had been like last June when she had applied at the county office for a job.

Caley and her new husband Will had decided that if they purchased a house, even though there were no immediate plans to start a family they

would want a smaller place to raise their children. So Caley applied for a teaching job at all the surrounding districts with the idea that Will would try and transfer to a fire station at the edge of the city and then commute. She had interviews and though they all went well, she knew the one in Eastlake Division had been the best. When the superintendent called her the next day after a general interview, he told her that although he felt confident that something suitable would come up they were unable to hire her at this time. As an afterthought he mentioned the new colony job, assuming that she most likely wouldn't be interested, for teaching on a Hutterite colony was not for everyone. She was somewhat apprehensive but certainly curious and began to ask questions. He suggested that they should drive out to meet the preacher and to look around. He made it clear that the county was responsible for the hiring and not the colony, but this was an informal way to see if she really felt she could enjoy this unique experience. They had driven out together; Caley asked more questions and received fairly vague answers.

She was nervous when she met two preachers instead of one and they each had a comment.

One said, "You look strong enough to handle the kids."

And the other said, "There's nothing a good willow switch won't handle anyway."

Caley had smiled ruefully, looked at the superintendent and he just seemed to pass it off. The four had only spoken briefly, and although the preachers were polite enough they explained that they were expected back at work.

"A Hutterite preacher wears many hats. Everyone does. That's the key," the older one had said.

Caley and the superintendent were sent on a short tour with one of the women who was working in the kitchen.

"She'll show you around. We've gotta go," said the younger preacher.

No one introduced themselves, so the superintendent and Caley followed the woman around listening.

"These are our new sinks, this is a deep fryer. Everything is new. Whoever comes will have a beautiful kitchen to work in. Are you the new teacher?"

When the superintendent quickly answered, "We don't know yet." Caley felt a pang of disappointment.

The Hutterite woman was oblivious to the tension she had created. She continued on about the new colony.

She said, "We don't know who'll be here. You don't have a choice, so you might as well take what comes. Right now some of the women come here to cook for the men, but they go home at night. The men stay here most of the time. They are busiest right now because the colony is almost finished. Whoever has to come will be packed up and moved here in one afternoon."

The two outsiders looked around at other parts of the new site, thanked her for the tour and left. On the way back to civilization Caley was delightfully surprised when the superintendent offered her the job.

The rest of summer was more relaxing in one way because she was sure of employment, but in another way Caley realized that this was a truly unique situation. She had no idea how to plan all those grades and or even how to keep the students all interested and working at the same time. Accalia managed to speak to one of the teachers at another colony and received a few suggestions, but generally she felt uncomfortable bothering people on their summer vacation. She did learn though that she could employ the teaching method of "cycling" for Science and Social Studies. This meant that she would teach grades one and four the first year, grades two and five the following year, and finally grades three and six in the third year. She was told by the other colony teacher that since the students did not move from school to school like in towns and cities they would still learn the curriculum but it might be out of the usual order. This would only work in those two subjects however, as Language Arts and Math relied on the previously learned concepts and needed to be taught in a specified order. The building blocks of elementary school would be entirely up to her. Caley felt tremendous responsibility in this knowledge. Over the years Caley would come to realize how much impact the teacher has on an entire generation of the colony, but for the moment, she simply wanted to manage the tasks at hand.

She went to teaching stores and looked through catalogues and tried to plan as much as possible, but she knew that she would have to see how it went first. That was essentially how her summer went, and as speedy as it seemed, she knew that what was approaching would probably go by faster.

The golden landscape was different than the short green grass she had seen in June. Now the fields were tall, golden shafts of wheat that waved to her in the wind as she drove by. She spotted one yellow combine on one side of the road and as she drove by she thought of the freedom and solitude in the life of the farmer. As Caley drove further along she spotted three green combines working together, each about half a length behind and to the side of the other, cutting a wide swath as they moved along. They made a magnificent sight as the giant green caterpillars swallowed the harvest up. There was no solitude in this operation and again the fact that this was the way Hutterites worked didn't really register in her head.

Caley loved the countryside even though she had not spent much time in it.

"I'll just ask someone where the new colony is if I don't find it soon," she thought, although she knew that she probably wouldn't.

Why did they always say that this was a male characteristic? She hated asking directions. Being lost on the road somehow represented more to her than what it appeared of course; Accalia McConnell would soon find out she had more than a few traits that would be considered male-like, especially by the Hutterites. Caley had learned very young to fight for most things and protect what she'd acquired. For Caley this mostly applied to the people in her life when she cared about. She also really enjoyed "sparring" with people who held what she considered to be narrow-minded opinions. Many women she had been acquainted with would walk away from an argument or ignore an injustice, but not Caley. She had often walked away from the job instead. Caley didn't know it yet,

but these characteristics would serve her well for what lay ahead over the next few years of her life. Help, yes, but it would be very difficult to prepare for the unique situation she was about to enter.

All of these thoughts were going back and forth in her mind when the giant pig legs appeared. Not a real live pig, rather that was the appearance of the protruding metal augers that are at the top of the barns and feeders that house the pigs. She hadn't remembered the legs until the moment they came into view and she knew she was only a couple of miles away. Her heart began to beat a little faster as she caught glimpses of the colony on that crisp fall morning. When she was reasonably sure of the turnoff she turned in and headed down a long, narrow, graveled road.

Caley's palms started to slip on the steering wheel as she approached the building site. She hoped that she could drive straight to the school, but missing were all the telltale signs of a usual schoolground: the playground, the yellow buses, the groups of chattering, excited children. Where were the squeaking of new shoes and the rustle of new blue jeans?

In its place were the buildings whose only variation was their length. Other than the obvious barns and shops there were seven structures with cream siding and a pale blue stripe around the outside. It came flooding back as her initial panic subsided. The school was at the far end and as she proceeded to it, she could see faces of Hutterite women at their back door windows peering out. There were no men in view and Caley briefly connected the large green caterpillars with their whereabouts.

By the time she arrived at the school all the children had rushed from their houses and were bunched together in a tight group. Caley parked her vehicle and opened her door. The children in unison backed away. The very first thing she noticed was that most of the students wouldn't look at her. The little ones clung tightly to someone older. The older ones looked like they appreciated the tiny grasping hands. Caley had expected them to be shy, but it was more than that, they appeared fearful.

She smiled her biggest grin and said "Hello, it's nice to be here".

An older boy started with "hello" and a few other quiet greetings followed.

"Let's go in and get to know each other," Caley suggested.

The children scurried in and scrambled to their desks. They didn't speak to each other, but their looks were wary. One little girl began to cry, someone reprimanded her in German and she put her head on her desk.

"Now who is this little girl," questioned Caley, "and does she have a big brother or sister here?"

Two older children looked at each other and the boy that had spoken first outside said "yes".

"And you are?" asked Caley.

"Edward and she's Susie. And that's Lydia, Ted, John, and Clara over there. We're one family."

"Okay, good. Now Susie you go and sit with one of your brothers and sisters so that you feel comfortable and then we'll go on."

No response. Caley looked to Edward.

"She doesn't understand. She can't speak English yet. She's in grade one," he said.

Caley blushed, "Of course, tell her in German for me, please. We can't have kids crying their first day of school. We want them to love school, not hate it."

Lydia spoke to the little girl and after Susie glanced at the teacher and received a warm smile and a nod, she rushed to sit with Lydia. Usually people felt relaxed immediately around Caley, but she realized it was going to take some work to put this group at ease.

She smiled again and said, "I really have a lot to learn about you and we'll start with your names. Let's go up and down the rows. Now if someone has left their voice box at home, maybe someone else could help out so I can learn who you are as quickly as possible. Also, if you have a question for me, and I'm sure you do, please put up your hand and I'll see if I remember your name."

After the children said their names, and the only one who didn't speak was little Susie, Caley asked again if there were any questions. There were not. She had never seen less inquisitive children.

"Would you like me just to tell you about myself?" she said sounding what she thought was a bit presumptuous.

A few quiet "yes" responses, the odd smile and many nods gave her reason to begin.

"I'm Accalia McConnell. I would like you to call me Mrs. McConnell. I'm very happy to be here today. I teach children because I like them and it's great to get paid for spending time doing something you like. I'm married, my husband's name is Will and he is a kind of teacher too. He trains people to be firemen. Maybe he'll bring out one of his trucks sometime. Would you like that?"

More nods and warmer smiles as the students glanced at each other.

"I don't have any children of my own," Caley then joked, "How about you? Do any of you have kids?"

The little kids laughed, the older boys smiled shyly and the older girls blushed. Caley immediately got the message that this was a subject that wasn't discussed much.

Quickly changing the discussion Caley asked, "What do you like to do when you're not in school?"

Edward who was rapidly becoming the spokesperson for the group put his hand partially up.

After Caley nodded Edward said very matter of factly, "I work in the cow barn, and I like soccer and hockey and I like to be called Ed."

"What do you do in the cow barn Edward - Ed?"

He was outwardly pleased at the teacher's effort to call him by his shortened name. "At four in the morning I stand up and milk three hundred and fifty cows. Then I come home for a snack, sometimes a sleep and now I go to school," he said.

Caley was incredulous, "Why do you have to stand up to milk them? Can't you get anyone to help or at least a stool?"

All of the older students and a few younger ones couldn't help but giggle.

"Nooo! We hook them onto automatic milkers, the computer does it all. I mean I get up at four o'clock - we call it standing."

He shook his head at her ignorance but wasn't disrespectful. Caley still felt embarrassed by her mistake in spite of Ed's graciousness. In her mind she thought, "So there are computers - they'll be in the school in no time." Little did she realize that the business of making money took a much higher priority than English education of the children of Grainview colony. She was to hear many times over the years from various adults on the colony, "When we leave school, that's when our real education begins." Caley never could get used to hearing those words even though she knew they didn't even realize how useless she was made to feel by the thoughtless statements.

The first part of the morning went by quickly with a few of the students asking questions that were short and to the point. The girls wanted to know about family and friends, and the boys wanted to know about sports and vehicles. The boys were all impressed by Caley's four by four, and she learned that unbeknownst to her, she had chosen the suitable make of vehicle.

"Our last teacher drove a 'Fix Or Repair Daily' - JUNK!" stated Ted very matter of factly.

This allowed the boys in the class to spout their limited knowledge of vehicles. They were obviously parroting what they had heard at home.

The teacher handed out textbooks and supplies and then took the children to the basement to play a variation of a name game she had learned in a university class. Since the children all knew each other it was of little benefit to anyone but Mrs. McConnell, but like all children the Hutterites love to play any game. Caley was impressed at the way in

which the younger children were automatically included in the game by the older ones. Their faces often lit up at the excitement of the ball being passed to them. This was the first thing the teacher noticed that spanned both cultures. Children love to play and often forget their shyness when they become involved. As lunchtime rolled around Caley knew most of the children even though very few had actually spoken to her. She noticed the two oldest girls Dora and Debbie seemed polite enough but Caley felt there was resentment of some sort there. She wasn't sure of the source of the bad feelings but thought it might be that they felt they were too old to come to school. She made a mental note to try to treat them older.

When the buzzer sounded to indicate lunch, Lydia put her hand up.

"The men and women eat first. You should go too."

Caley guessed that this order was an invitation.

"I think I will pass this time because I really want to figure out what I'm doing. I hope I will be invited again."

No sooner had she said that when a huge tray of food arrived at the door. An older girl of perhaps sixteen or seventeen handed the food to Debbie and scurried away.

"Well, isn't this nice," Caley tried to respond but the girl was long gone.

The older children pushed the younger children out the door and moments later Caley heard what she assumed was their buzzer. At lunch Caley thought about a few things she would like to do, but she was only partially through her meal when she heard the students running up the walk.

"Didn't you eat?" she asked shocked.

She thought maybe there weren't enough leftovers. The look on her face told the story.

"We eat afterwards, not their leftovers," Dora said, "we all get lots to eat."

Relieved for the students but uncomfortable because she hadn't finished her meal, Caley put down her fork.

"Don't you like it?" many asked.

"I guess I eat slower, and anyway I'm not very hungry today."

"Well, clean up her desk," said Ted, and three or four girls hurried to do his bidding.

This is exactly what Caley had been thinking about during her brief noon hour. The boys appeared to feel quite superior to the girls. The older children felt superior to the younger ones. Often, rather than requesting something, an authoritative order was used instead. Caley knew that having an egalitarian classroom in a patriarchal culture was going to be one of her most difficult duties. It was noteworthy that even the youngest of girls had already accepted their station. She could foresee all kinds of problems if the boys and girls were continually pitted against each other and allowed to speak to each other in this manner. Caley also decided that she would have to do away with the archaic classroom with the boys seated on one side and the girls on the other. The task ahead of her seemed almost too big, but she hadn't backed down from such things before so she was ready for the challenge.

When the children came in from lunch the first thing Caley did was change the seating plan. The second thing was to offer an explanation of

the difference between a request and an order. She wasn't really sure whether either change was endorsed or not, for the children were still quite stoic.

The afternoon had Caley learning about all the families in the school. The children explained as many connections to their relatives as possible. Dora, Tom, Lillian, and Peter were the German teacher's kids and they were what was known as double cousins to the chicken boss's kids. That meant that the fathers were brothers and the mothers were sisters. There were five in school from the chicken boss' children: Elizabeth, Debbie, Larry, Eli, and Gary. Two little ones in grades two and three named Mary and Paul were the oldest children of Josh Wurz. Daniel Wurz, the new farm boss of the colony, had the six children in school who had stated their relationship to each other in the morning. The only single child without siblings or even cousins was a little girl named Laura.

Laura was in grade two and for some reason she was more friendly than the others. She was less shy, but not at all forward, and she wanted to stay close even when the others seemed to back away. Just as Caley had sensed resentment in the older girls she felt there was something different about Laura. Being different was not to be taken lightly on a Hutterite colony.

In each situation that presented itself that morning and that afternoon, Caley noticed that the children proceeded almost as one mind. They looked to each other for support and no one wanted to be an individual. It was also observed that the older the children were, the more

they conformed to this unwritten rule. Caley's own teenage years were not so distant, and she remembered that all her peers had tried very hard to be unique. Ironically, the result was the same for both groups.

Throughout the many conversations that first day most of them proceeded like this: "Hutterites don't do it like that" followed by Caley asking "Why not?" or "Not any Hutterites?" followed by, "What would the others say?" The 'others', whoever they were, held a lot of status. Caley's mind hungrily tried to take in everything she could that afternoon, but she was sure she wouldn't remember half of it. She hoped that at the very least she remembered enough to keep her out of hot water while she became used to the way things worked.

Before she knew it, Caley was on her way home with the pig leg in her rear view mirror. With the apprehension of her first day behind her, Caley was more aware of the unpredictability of a gravel road. The slowness of her pace allowed her to sift through the multitude of impressions she had gathered as her first school year was now officially underway. Caley had a sense that she had only scratched the surface of a tremendously different culture, one she was expected to bridge with mainstream society.

The "Rights" of Passage

September and October flew by. Caley's typical day was one of new discoveries concerning her students, and developing a hectic but comfortable routine. She quickly discovered that nowhere is organization and preparation so important as when teaching in a multi-grade classroom. Like all children, Hutterites become mischievous with time on their hands, and if the activities of each grade are not timed just right, the students have time to invent new ways to entertain themselves. In the second week of school, before Caley was able to keep all the children busy, two of the little ones were kept waiting too long and crawled out of the bathroom window. When discovered they were digging holes with their shoes behind the school. That was the only real wake up call Caley needed.

Caley's classroom was far from a smooth running machine but she was able to keep most students on task by early planning. She kept countless activities ready to hand to students who had finished their work faster than the others. Each day Caley discovered huge gaps in the concepts that students should have learned in previous years. She often had to retrace math operations to get to the root of the problem but thought this would probably be common in any school. It was more apparent in areas where general knowledge might be needed to understand what was being taught. One day as the teacher began to explain distance she realized that even the older ones had no idea of how far away places were. When questioned, most of them had been off the colony once a year for the average and none had been farther than the provincial border.

Caley attempted and was successful in outwardly establishing equality in the school. For example, when the students received their duties to help with the school they all took turns sweeping regardless of gender. Anyone strong enough to carry boxes was allowed to help when the monthly delivery truck arrived. This had been a privilege for the older boys previously. Any new diversion from the normal routine was welcomed by the colony children even if the boxes were only full of supplies for the school. Caley and the students would open the boxes at noon and marvel over whatever was inside. Sometimes, new textbooks were all that was needed to peek their interest.

One difficult area was that each day the rules were very obviously different from English school to German school. German school was the place where the school age children went each day before and after English school to learn their prayers. In English school and society there is something called plagiarism. In the Hutterite society it is truly a form of flattery. One day grades four, five and six were researching their science reports with vigor. They seemed especially happy and Caley thought they must really enjoy the topic of animals. She intended to give the group one period to research, one to write a rough draft, and one to make a presentable copy. At the end of the first period each student proudly handed in their work.

"You're already finished?"

"Yes," they said in unison.

"That was easy," said John.

"That was fun," said Lillian.

"Are you sure you did everything I asked for? The habitat, the food, the enemies, distinguishing features?"

"We're sure. Even though we haven't researched before, it was fun," answered John.

As he was speaking, Caley was scanning the papers and enjoying their proud little faces. Everything had been copied word for word out of the encyclopedia. She didn't have the heart to tell them what she had really expected. Caley decided that research projects would wait until a few more basics had been established.

Instead she said, "Well, they look great. You boys and girls are so good at this that I'm going to have to find a new way to challenge you. Maybe you'll have to put it in your own words next time."

They all groaned like a normal class and Caley was comforted.

Ted spoke again, "We can't say it as good as a book. Why would we want to change it?"

"Oh, I think you can and besides I like reading what you write way more than a book." Caley smiled at them as she learned another thing about her students.

As the months wore on Caley gained many glimpses of the way schooling had been done at Prairieville and now in German school. The children discovered a somewhat sympathetic ear in their new teacher. The little ones showed the red marks on their hands when they had not learned their verses. Caley could not hide her shock at the sight of this. She also had to be very careful how she consoled the children. To blatantly speak out against the strap would be a sure way to conflict with the colony beliefs, so she found that shock was the best approach. This enabled her to show

the children that she did not believe in this method and was upset to see it, but she did not directly oppose it.

Another aspect to German school was the seating arrangement. All the students were arranged in their place by age and the boys and girls were separated to their own side of the room as she had seen on the first day. This of course would not work in a classroom where students would need to work together on projects and most often there was only one boy and one girl in each grade. Each morning they changed the desks and each afternoon they set them up for German school. One thing Caley noticed was that for a group of people that wholeheartedly promoted working together there was a tremendous amount of competition amongst the students.

In German school they competed to be the neatest writer. They never went over a verse to memorize it with each other in order to avoid the strap. The odd time an older sibling would help a younger one but generally there was amusement if someone had received the strap. Each child in his or her own time stopped crying about the strappings and began quiet defiance of the pain and the lack of good it did. Once they were at this stage they began to accept that soon they would be able to hand out the strappings within a few years.

Another day in English school as Caley and the grade three's were down on the floor using math counters to understand place value, Ted came over to her.

"We're finished our math pages. Can we play cards until you're ready to mark with us?" they asked.

"Yes you may. What games do you know?" questioned the teacher.

"Well, just Fish," they said sheepishly. "Do you know more?"

"Sure, I'll show you two crazy guys Crazy Eights at lunch."

Caley did just that and thought that was the end of it. The next day when she went to request a new cupboard from the preacher he said, "Were you teaching the boys card games yesterday?"

"Yes, I taught them Crazy Eights."

"They can't play."

Caley still had some difficulty sorting out the meaning of the words spoken and she replied, "Oh, they'll catch on. It takes practice when you're learning a new game."

"They - Hutterites are not allowed to play cards and you should take them home. I know you didn't know; it's okay," he said.

"I didn't give them the cards," she said.

From the look on his face she knew their story had been different. He was mad now, but not at her.

"I let them keep them because they said they were yours. I told them to give them back today. I'll get them tonight."

He sounded as though he almost respected them for thinking up their quick response.

Caley wasn't sure if "them" was the cards or the boys. The next morning she knew. The children were already in the school when she arrived. The icy roads had delayed her slightly. Their usual routine was the gathering around her vehicle but the students were already back from

snack and playing in the basement. Three students sat in their desks. Ted and Tom were staring straight ahead. Susie had her head in her arms on her desk.

"How are you guys? Did you get in trouble over the cards?" Caley asked. She wasn't quite sure why they weren't looking at her. Then she realized that they blamed her for her predicament.

"Wait a minute, fellas. I didn't tell on you. I didn't know the cards were supposed to be mine. You shouldn't have told that to the preacher."

They looked at each other and smiled. They never stayed mad long. Caley remembered other kids that could stay mad for days but not Tom and Ted.

"And what about you, Susie?" she asked.

"She got it for not knowing her verses," Tom offered.

Caley feigned a little extra shock for Susie, "I'm very sorry that this has happened. Were your verses hard to learn?"

A tiny nod as Susie soaked up the extra attention. The shock from Caley showed disapproval without going against the beliefs of the colony.

"Well, maybe Ed, Lydia or Ted could help you a little more."

Ted jumped in, "Ed won't. He takes German school sometimes if Peter's away and Dora has to help her mom. He gets to strap if they don't know their verses."

"Would he do that?" Caley was shocked for real this time.

"He's fourteen now. He has to! Remember?"

She remembered. The birthdays changed everything very quickly.

Birthday celebrations seemed incessant. With eighteen students in the school it had not seemed like such a large task to begin with and when

Caley arrived she was astute enough to pick up the importance of birthdays in the school. It did seem odd to her that many children did not know their birthdays and yet she was expected to make special recognition of it. She soon realized that the parents made very little effort for the child's birthday and in some cases, none at all. However, they were very interested to make sure that each of their children received what was due them from the teacher. There seemed to be constant inner desire to want the outside world, but a struggle to pretend that it was unimportant.

Ed's birthday was an exciting event. Caley had arrived in her four by four, and as usual the children rushed to see what the news of the outside world was. The first question was always about hockey.

"Did the Flames win Mrs. McConnell?" asked young Paul.

"Tie," said the older kids.

"How do you know that?" inquired Caley.

"The milk truck told us," they stated and laughed.

"I hope it was the guy driving instead of the truck," joked the teacher.

This was the informal way of teaching the English language and from previous experiences she knew it worked the best. The Hutterites remembered humor and would remind each other from then on that inanimate objects do not speak. This was not completely successful though because of the German language which has feminine and masculine nouns. Direct translations often presented a problem when speaking English. Caley tried many ways to change the students from saying, "Make open the door", and was relatively successful with the older kids.

"How do I make it?" she would ask, "Do you think it will listen?" and they laughed together.

These conversations were common at the vehicle in the morning, and rarely missed by even the older kids. But this morning as if waiting for just the right amount of time Ed began his stroll up the sidewalk from his house. He was sporting a new black cowboy hat, and the children were making comments.

"Do you like his hat Mrs. McConnell? Doesn't he look tall? Is he wearing the hat or is the hat wearing him?"

The biggest joke of all was, "Now he's a penny boy."

"What's that?" asked Caley.

And she could tell from the laughter that it was commonly understood by everyone.

Lydia who was thirteen and only eleven months younger than her brother explained, "When a boy turns fourteen he's a man. The men say he's not worth much yet because he hasn't learned how to work. So he's a penny boy. He has to do all the worst jobs, like rock picking until someone else turns fourteen."

So Caley figured out the penny boy becomes the brunt of many jokes and everyone partakes. Ed had arrived at the vehicle by this time, but didn't stop. Caley was surprised but smiled to herself at the sudden change.

"Ooh, isn't he feeling big," stated a couple of the girls.

"Well, let's go in and see the birthday boy," countered Caley hoping that this new attitude was a one day phenomenon.

Ed had been one of the students she had relied on. He was a little more outgoing than the others, and had never acted cold or distant. Now as he strutted by, Caley felt a new chill from him.

Inside, as the students took their seats, the teacher studied the new young man in her classroom. He was looking disinterested as regular fourteen year olds often do, but this was highly unusual for Ed.

“Happy birthday, Ed, I like your hat.”

“Thanks.”

“Did you pick it out yourself?” She thought she should ask because she had already made the mistake of not recognizing the difference in some of the girl's dresses.

“The colony buys the same for everybody and we shape it. I got two this year.”

“I see it has a Flames pin on it. Does the colony give you that too?” she joked, knowing the answer.

“No, but they can't stop me from wearing it,” he said with unusual defiance.

The younger kids laughed in disbelief and the older kids nodded in agreement.

“Why not?” Caley questioned out loud.

“They can stop everything else,” she thought to herself.

A negative overtone was beginning to creep into Caley's mind and she knew this was not the way to succeed in this isolated place.

“Well, the preacher might tell me to take it off, but he would have to tell all the others too. He can't watch everything. He watches the kids

more I think," Ed said placing the emphasis on the word kids, of which he was no longer a part.

Dora snickered, "He watches penny boys too."

Dora was already fourteen and remembered her fourteenth birthday. There was not quite the same fanfare in the colony except that a couple of months before, she had received material for two dresses as her present. It was scarier for a girl to turn fourteen. The very first morning she had to take her place with the next oldest girl and begin serving the men their meals. This could be quite an ordeal if the nervousness of the situation caused the girl to make a mistake. As luck would have it Dora dropped the plate of sauerkraut jam.

"Dora," her uncle teased, "Whoever marries you better be rich."

Just as she had it cleaned, one of the older boys said, "Coffee refills are sure slow this morning. Are you grinding it first?"

Everybody laughed, well, everybody except Dora. An uncle would often tease the girl by demanding more of everything. A younger "man" like Ed might drop something so that the girl would have to get on her hands and knees to clean it up around them. This was humor that Caley did not really understand, but then, neither did most of the girls.

Another thing that Dora thought about was the first "crowd" she went to and how different it might be for Ed. The "crowd" was the place where the older boys and girls met at night for a social time. Usually, on Sunday night they gathered in someone's basement, or over in the kindergarten, or even at times in the school. Often it was just the group from their own colony, but the most excitement occurred if boys from other colonies were out and about. It seemed like an endless evening for the younger shy girls

on the colony. If boys arrived, the girls are considered rude if they don't partake, but the evening often consists of continuous teasing of one or more of the girls.

If Caley had ever been in a predicament like this she would have had the freedom to choose some choice words for the offending young man and leave. On the colony the girls just ride it out until someone else takes a turn on the hot seat.

"When Ed heads to his first crowd, maybe we'll have some fun," thought Dora, but she already knew that it probably wouldn't happen.

"More likely Ed will bother me like everybody else now."

There would only be the "penny boy" jokes, but other than that Ed would be left alone. He would probably go with some of the older boys to another colony and at their crowd someone would get him a date. A male fourteen year old on a colony does not really face the same chance of rejection that a pubescent teenager on the outside does. Only if he steps way out of his league by asking someone's girlfriend, or one of the very popular girls, will he be ridiculed.

In the case of Dora and the other younger girls of the crowd there is an unspoken rule that refusal is quite rude. Somewhere in Dora's thoughts there was a nagging voice questioning the difference. The voice was interrupted by the Happy Birthday song that was now being sung to Ed. As Ed opened his present, a key chain on a puck, a Flames sticker and Happy Birthday pencil, there was still a delighted little boy with hockey paraphernalia. Caley did not realize that it was one of the last times she

would see that innocent delight which would be replaced by a distant aloofness of the Hutterite man.

The rest of Ed's time in school was spent trying to be cool, but glimpses of yesterday would show up once in a while. The real change came when Ed finished school for the year and went to work with all the men in the summer. In the field he found his niche. He learned to demand what he wanted and to show a great deal of anger if his needs were not met. He learned that his impatience and complaints about the cooking were acceptable, and that he no longer needed to wipe his feet when he came into the house. When he came back to school for the last two and a half months before he turned fifteen he was a changed person. The mistake he made was in thinking that Caley could be treated like the other women on the colony. The last two and a half months were difficult ones for both of them.

Chicken Day

As Caley read the same student journal entry for the third time she was again pondering the preacher's request. The students had long since been dismissed and even the girls that stayed behind to clean the school had gone off to their babysitting jobs. There was no German school again so Caley had the rare luxury of being able to mark after school instead of hauling everything home. Usually, she had to clear out immediately so that the German teacher could hold German school. The German teacher was a parent of four of the school children . He was obviously resentful of his new job, but this did not seem to bother anyone. The women on the colony indicated to Caley that no one really wanted this new found authority and it took a while to settle in. It seemed to an outsider that he settled in by venting this resentment on the children.

Once he was passing on his way to the garden, stopped his tractor and declared, "The kids are tracking too much mud in the school. When we went to school, if it was too muddy, we stood on the sidewalk."

"Aren't you glad things have changed?" Caley answered ever so flippantly.

He glared at her and said, "No, I'm not," and drove away.

That night in German school a few extra strappings seemed to be handed out. Caley felt that she had indirectly caused this, and made a vow to herself not to make the same mistake. Then since he was also the shoemaker and the gardener, the kids would get out of having German school. This of course delighted the children as they were allowed a few minutes of free time that was not scheduled for them.

Today the boys had decided that they were off to check the ice on the dugout. For the last few weeks the discussions had always been about how they were going to “fly across” the ice, who they were going to “go around”, and how many times they were going to “dent the twines”. These were used over and over again in each conversation. The use of hockey parlance was rife amongst the kids. The girls usually tried to stay around to talk to Caley if they were not expected anywhere, but today she needed to think about the discussion she had with the preacher at noon. Her mind moved to slowly back retracing the events of the noon hour.

The kids had shown interest in Caley's contact lens and she promised to show them how they worked just before lunch. So with the entire class gathered around her she began taking out her lens, rinsing it and putting it back in her eye.

The kids shouted, “The preacher's here!”

All shirt sleeves on the boys went down and all shawls were placed properly on the heads. Everyone including Caley always acted guilty when he arrived, regardless of what they were doing.

“What's going on?” he asked suspiciously.

“I'm just showing the kids my contacts,” she said nervously.

“I'd like to see that too!” he surprised her.

As Caley looked in her mirror she noticed Elsa was hiding behind her door out of sight. She had not had time to put on her shawl and appeared like a frightened little animal. Caley's hand began to shake with the lens on it as she tried to place it in her eye; all the while answering the preacher's questions. Her mind was racing about how the kids would go for lunch, if

he would notice, and most of all what he was there for. When she finished she turned to go out of the bathroom and there was little Elsa, shawl intact. Somehow the children had got her shawl off her desk, passed it around amongst themselves and slipped it to her. Caley was very proud of the way they stuck up for Elsa that day. She felt this was a real sign of progress and she was sure that a few months earlier somebody would have made sure he noticed. The children stood grinning at each other.

“It’s time you went to lunch, not too much for you, Fatso,” he said to the chubbiest girl in the class.

The kids snickered and glanced at Caley.

Caley’s face went red and blurted out, “She’s not fat, she’s beautiful.”

Little Elizabeth beamed and ran away. He spoke harshly in German to Leonard who had forgotten the top button on his shirt. Leonard acted as if he was not really listening, but did it up and scurried away with the rest of the students.

“Go ahead and eat,” he said, “Don’t you like our food? A hot lunch is a lot better for you than that stuff.”

“Oh, I really like your food, and I eat it often but I just like it too much if you know what I mean.”

Her gesture indicated weight gain. The kids always told her “Mudders should be fat”. She was not a mother but assumed they meant a married woman.

“I don’t worry about weight, anyway that’s not why I’m here. On Tuesday we need to kill the chickens and we need all the kids from school. So you just don’t come out that day; that’s the way it’s always been done.

The teacher has a nice day off and when you come back we'll put a chicken in your car."

Why did they always speak like it was an order? That gets anyone's back up. Caley knew that this was one of those times that was going to have a tremendous effect of her relationship with the colony and her teaching career. To allow this was to go against the memo she had received in the bulletin for Hutterite teachers. However, she was aware that some teachers had this worked out. She was wishing now that she had paid closer attention when they were all standing around laughing about Chicken Day.

"Well, please tell me more, I would like to know exactly who you need and for how long. I can't just cancel school. I am bound by law and also I have a note from the superintendent that states that the students who are away for killing chickens are to be registered with inexcusable absences."

He was obviously taken aback but did not try to appear that way.

"That's the way it's always been done. You'll have to learn that it's different out here. That superintendent - did he grow up on a farm? We're shorthanded now that we split. We need those kids."

He was adamant before Caley even had a chance to say very much.

She did say, "But you said it's always done this way and you weren't shorthanded before you split."

She knew now that this was one of the patterns the Hutterites would lapse into and it wouldn't change.

"Tell me what to do, and how long their job takes. I'll call the county and see if I can arrange to change the hours or add some later or find out

exactly what I am allowed to do to help. I will do what I can, but I know it can't quite be like it was. I hope you understand that I don't want to lose my job."

"Oh no, we don't want that either," he said as his tone softened a bit, "Well I guess the little kids that catch the chickens have caught them all by ten or so; even the young boys are done by then. We need the babysitters though because the mothers are not through plucking and cleaning. The older girls have to help with this."

"Well, when is that done?"

"Sometimes it takes until eleven or a little later, but then the mothers like the babysitters to help with the kids."

"Oh, but there is not that many little ones because the two to five year olds are in the kindergarten."

Caley felt like she was really quizzing him, but she knew by now that they operated on strict rules. Whatever way she went with this would be a decision that would last a long time. Perhaps the next time it came up the preacher would be telling a new teacher.

"That's the way it's always been done."

"How many women have babies?"

"Margaret and Susie have babies."

"Okay, what do the older boys do?"

"They drive the loader, sometimes they cut the head off but not the school boys usually. They are a big help with everything really. Well, they do more when we kill in the spring because we don't always have all the men for killing."

He was really puzzled at her questions and stammered a little as she answered. She was really beginning to get the picture now.

"You see Caley, we do everything together, that's how it works. You'll learn more as you go. So Tuesday then?"

"I'll come and see you tomorrow after I talk to someone. I'm sorry but I have to figure out what we can do. We'll work it out."

She couldn't tell from his reaction exactly what he was thinking, but she was nervous. He had not exactly looked mad, but was certainly perturbed at her resistance to the act and dry structure he was hoping for. The phone rang to disturb her thoughts.

"Good afternoon, Grainview Elementary."

"Good afternoon, I thought I might have missed you. What can I help you with?"

The superintendent always sounded like he was filling a customer's order.

"I know that I received a bulletin on killing chickens but I was hoping you could tell me a little more," Caley said.

"Some teachers work something out."

Silence. Caley thought that she asked the wrong question and was about to convey that she was just checking and intended to when the superintendent interrupted her.

"I suppose that some teachers make up time somewhere - I mean - you're out there - the absence is inexcusable - I know it's hard but you have to do what's best for you and the colony. What were you saying?"

He sounded more nervous than she had been. She had expected "no" or "yes", but she was not prepared for this.

"I asked all about it and found out how much time they need the kids for. It turns out that it is not very much time, at least not a whole day and only a couple hours for some," she replied.

"I'm sorry that I can't be of more help - you're out there. It sounds like you're doing a great job though."

Now she was beginning to hear the answers and she only needed to ask one more question to be sure.

"So if the kids are away as little as possible, and I make up as much time as I can for them, do I need to report inexcusable absences?"

"You're filling out the report, Caley. No one checks excusable absences. You have to do what's best for you."

As Caley hung up the phone she was dumbfounded. It was like some deep dark melodrama. The upper echelons didn't want to know; she was to deal with it and they would only have to fix it if she asked them to which became perfectly clear that they didn't want to be asked. As this information seeped in slowly, Caley really felt alone. She was going to have to compromise the rules without compromising her beliefs. She had heard stories of teachers who taught alone. They ruled the roost or just lapsed into a phlegmatic day to day routine. She was still idealistic enough to believe that the Hutterite students should be in school absolutely as much as possible, and that each day taught something of value. The real lesson today though was for Caley, and as she encountered many more instances like this along the way. She realized that you really do learn far more from your students than you teach.

In compromising, she decided to arrive at school at the usual time, expect all those without a necessary job to be there, and the rest could manage to come at ten. The infants would have to go to someone else so that the babysitters could come to school and the older girls and boys would not be able to help clean up. When she went to the preacher's house the next day to inform him of this, she expected some resistance. She was correct in this assumption, but when she stressed that she had spoken to the office of the superintendent he was more compliant. Caley's diplomacy and her display of concern for the colony's needs definitely smoothed the way for this transaction. The preacher appreciated her point of view and she stressed that he had his members for the bulk of the work.

She thought, "The colony have all their little ants in place."

Caley began to understand that the colony respected the men at the county office far more than her so, even though she did not appreciate this sexist attitude, she knew it was too big to deal with at present. She would have to make it work for her instead of against her. Caley was able to drop the county name at other opportunities and this generally gave her a little extra authority. She realized that the isolation factor is really a benefit for the elders in dealing with the teachers and not just a way to keep their children from the world. So she was really creating the illusion of solidarity from the county in her endeavors with the Hutterites. She also discovered that the county was not as concerned as they pretended to be, just as long as things ran smoothly and they received their funding at the proper time and place. Caley was but a pawn protecting the more important chess pieces in the educational games.

Inner Peace

The highlight of the school year was the Christmas Concert. As much fun as this was, Caley put herself under tremendous stress to out do the previous concerts from past years before she was teaching. From September on she was on an endless mission for new material. The Hutterites seemed in some ways to find comfort in the repeat performances even though there were very few. Each concert needed a nativity scene and Caley realized that there would be only so many ways to do this but she knew that she would be constantly looking for ways to freshen the concerts.

Most of the concert was made up of poems, stories, plays and Christmas carols. The poems and stories made into plays were usually riddled with humor of the slapstick nature. Often the language barriers called for more of the visual type of humor. In many cases what Caley thought would be humorous was not and something that she did not think was particularly funny would turn out to be one of the highlights of the concerts. Caley felt a pang of sadness as she prepared the concert. There was a tremendous amount of hidden talent on the colony that few people would ever experience the pleasure of knowing. There were singers that amazed Caley. Musical instruments were not allowed and yet somehow they picked up tunes very quickly and usually after hearing them very briefly. Some of the students had comic timing that couldn't be taught. The same was true of athletics. Some students were very talented and were never able to unleash their true ability. Caley felt sure that every teacher dreams of making a difference in a student's life or of

seeing a student of theirs change the world in a significant way. This dream had very little chance of being fulfilled on a colony. However, as Caley stopped feeling sorry for herself, she was well aware of the pleasure she had in watching the wonderment of her beloved students as she brought a tiny piece of the world to them each day.

As the time of Grainview's first concert drew near, the entire colony seemed to take an interest in it. With only three days to go, and everyone frantically searching for last minute props and some children searching for ways to remember their lines, there was a knock on the door. As the children scrambled to their seats as though they were doing something they shouldn't be, Caley went to answer. When she opened it she was surprised to see the preacher standing there. She stepped into the hallway and closed the door. As she heard the buzzing on the other side she quickly re-opened the door and assigned the weekly spelling unit. As the door closed she waited for the preacher to speak.

The preacher started by asking "How's the concert coming along?"

Caley cheerfully replied, "Like any performance, it still needs a lot of work, but the students are working very hard and are very excited."

The preacher said then, "Oh, you know Caley, the parents will like anything. Do you really need three more days?"

Here it comes, thought Caley, but she did not speak. This was partly because she needed time to be prepared and partly because she could see that he was a bit uncomfortable with whatever the new request was going to be.

"Well, some of the men are going to a tractor show on Thursday and they won't be back until late, so if you could have the show Wednesday instead we'd really appreciate it. Well not me of course, I can't go to the concert anyway."

Caley needed time to think about this one so she ventured into the direction of why the preacher would not be attending the concert. She was sure he would be attending the tractor show.

"You're not coming?"

"Oh no, I don't go to these things. Oh I love music, but it wouldn't be right."

"But we're not doing anything we shouldn't." she said. She was thinking, "I almost wish I would have known that."

"Oh, the people would be uncomfortable if the preacher came. You just have your concert and come for a Christmas drink after to my house. But have it on Wednesday, okay?"

Caley really had no choice. She wanted the parents there, but the concert wasn't ready. She couldn't do it later when school was out on Friday at noon. They needed time to clean up, open presents and take the tree down. She wondered if this was a way for somebody to have control over the school. Why hadn't they told her about the sale earlier? They would certainly have known. Companies make sure that the Hutterites know about the sales well in advance because they are a large part of their market. She thought it was almost like they were bored and if a little controversy could be stirred up they enjoyed it. The bitterness clouded her thoughts. Caley's mind was racing for a plan. She would just as soon have it Friday morning, but she knew that the kids would never go

for that. It wasn't the same unless you had it at night. They laughed and jeered when they received word about a colony where the preacher decided that the concert could only be in the daytime.

"Well, I guess we'll have to try it Wednesday night, but I'm going to need the kids Tuesday night then, too." "You mean after supper when they're learning their verses?"

"Yes, could you please mention to the German teacher not to assign too much that day?"

She had planned to request a dress rehearsal anyway, but now it appeared as though it was necessary because of the shorter time. She might as well let him believe that his request was the reason.

"Okay, but I don't know if he'll go for that."

"I think he will if you talk to him."

A little flattery never hurt.

"Well, he has to do what I say," he stated ever so proudly. "Sometimes they don't like it, but I have to decide these things. That's my job, and I have the say so from God."

As Caley stepped back into the classroom she could tell from the looks on the faces that they had heard every word.

"We have a problem," she said anyway. "We have to do the concert one day early."

Excited cheers rang out. The girls began a phony display of trembling, but Caley was surprised that considering where she thought the concert was at, the kids obviously were very pleased with their efforts so far.

"I'm not so sure we're ready, but if we don't do it early we won't have an audience. Did anybody know about this sale?"

"My dad told me not to tell," blurted out little Clara.

"Oh, I guess it was a secret. You're good at keeping secrets," Caley said knowing that Clara would have kept quiet out of fear.

The Hutterite children love to be the first to tell, often racing each other to her car in the morning to spread the news.

"How long did you keep this one?"

"Oh, lots of days. Remember when I had a dentist appointment with my dad before. We stopped at the tractor place and the English man told him then. He gave him a paper with it on."

"That was just less than two weeks ago," thought Caley. "So the new farm boss was already exhibiting some of his power."

Last minute preparations were put in place. Some of the older girls came up to the school to clean and decorate. They stitched some green and red material in the shape of trees and candy canes on the many colored sheets that were used for stage curtains. At the night rehearsal, the women sent up snacks and hot cocoa for everybody. All in all, they really did help and this allowed Caley time to rework a couple of scenes from the Santa's workshop play and to spend extra time with the grade one's Welcome Poem. John, in grade four, still had not learned his lines.

"You are going to have to do your best John. You absolutely can't have a book up there with you. Somebody help him. It's not that much."

"I'll do it," volunteered Edward. "And I'll use my dad's strap. That should help."

"No thanks," Caley said. "Lydia, would you please work with John. Edward leave him be, okay?"

They both nodded at her request. John looked relieved.

Caley was constantly surprised by the enthusiasm of most of the colony, but surmised that this must be what it was like in pioneer days when a traveling Chataqua show came to town. Once a year the Hutterites were allowed to sit back and laugh at entertainment. Except for this one evening of Christmas fun they were always part of their entertainment, which only involved singing at church, weddings and funerals.

As day dawned Wednesday morning, Caley yawned and rolled over. That did not last though. She quickly remembered everything she still had to do. She jumped up and was in and out of the shower very quickly. They had worked until nine o'clock p.m. last night and when she had come home she continued preparing until midnight. She had wrapped the rest of the students' presents since they informed her that they usually opened these after the concert so that everybody (parents too) could see everybody else's presents.

The morning of the concert she had to pick up a bell from a friend's, and buy something to contribute to the snack after the concert. This was not expected since hot-dogs and cocoa were the usual snacks, but she thought a few fruit plates would be nice too. As she drove across the white twinkling snow a little earlier than usual that morning she wondered what last minute preparations would be needed. The weather was fine

but that could change so quickly out on the prairie. Caley had only missed one day so far due to the inclement weather. The road had been completely covered with drifts and the snow plow did not get to that road until the afternoon. That could happen again and Caley was going to drive home and get Will before the concert. Everything would have to be ready before Caley went home in case the concert went on without her. That would be another disappointment for the students. They wanted as many English people as possible to come to the concert. They had mentioned one day that Pete, one of the salesmen was coming if he could.

“He keeps a rock in his shoe,” said Elsa.

Elsa was a quiet student in grade two and hardly ever spoke. When all the others guffawed at this, it was easy to see why. Mrs. McConnell gave them a sharp look and turned to Elsa.

“Why does he do that?” she asked.

Elsa was already red-faced but quietly said, “To help him walk, I guess. He has a broken leg or something.”

The whole class roared with laughter again.

Larry who really seemed to enjoy Elsa’s timidity stated, “He has a limp - we say that someone must have a rock in their shoe.”

Caley then understood the humor also and quickly explained to Elsa.

“They’re not really teasing you, Elsa. Anybody could make that mistake if you did not know.”

The teacher then went on to explain the concept of “Break-a-leg”, which is a term used in theater that really means “Have a good show”. The rest of the day passed without incident. The students rehearsed with

the last minute props, everything was clear, entrances and exits worked over and Caley left to go home and get herself ready. She felt quite confident about the concert and herself. She had dealt with all the little problems of a school concert that are usually shared amongst parents and teachers. She had compromised with the colony and changed the day, and whatever satisfaction Daniel Wurz may have been seeking was now irrelevant.

When she returned that evening all the children were there in their Sunday best. Their shiny faces, slicked down hair, and bright eyes were an appealing welcome. They had brought up the benches for the audience after supper was eaten and had set their own props as instructed. When Caley stepped out of the car, she could see the parents come out of their houses.

"They're not coming now are they?" she queried. "They usually come up and sing Christmas carols until we start."

"Okay, well let's quickly go to the basement and warm-up."

She would change this next year. She had put the time on the invitations the kids made, but they obviously did not really pay any attention to this.

"Let's break our legs," said Elsa.

After Caley welcomed the parents and guests, the concert finally began and it went very well for the most part. As Caley stared out at the smug Daniel Wurz, she wondered what he had been thinking.

Just as things were comfortably underway Ted, Daniel's second oldest son, came on stage in character as a cool construction worker.

From the audience Daniel called out, "Ted, roll your sleeves down - right now."

As the audience uncomfortably looked to Caley, Ted tried to ignore his father. Caley was stunned that Daniel would do this in the middle of the play.

"Ted!" he bellowed this time.

Ted seemed defiantly loyal to the school, the play or to Caley. The teacher could see the potential of how this could escalate.

"Do it please, Ted," she stated loud and clear, hoping he would and that it would soon be forgotten.

Ted did just as she said. The audience was oblivious once more but Caley could see that the father had not really achieved what he wanted. Caley couldn't tell if the rest of the colony could tell who Ted listened to; she knew Daniel hadn't missed it. Caley showed no sign of victory, but she did feel proud of the way the students listened to her. Daniel would see it probably as undermining his authority but could not really do anything about it since she had only supported his wishes. With the usual amount of jumbled lines and small little mix ups, the rest of the concert was worth the long awaited anticipation. After it was over, the parents sang the praises of Caley which she in turn transferred to the students, Daniel passed her on his way out.

"Good job," he stated, "Some of it was as good as last year."

This was again not understood by most of those that heard him, but Caley received the message loud and clear. She knew that her dealings with Mr. Wurz had somehow just begun.

War in a Pacifist Society

The month of February has the fewest days and yet always seemed the longest on the colony. The Christmas Concert was long over and the students were back into their regular routine. German school was held everyday since the teacher had little to go to town for. Since he was also the gardener and the shoemaker, he was not purchasing seeds yet and the colony had not yet bought all the equipment for shoemaking. There were very few visitors venturing out in the cold weather and even the boys and girls who had sweethearts on another colony were mailing their Valentine cards to each other instead of visiting.

In school, Valentine's Day was a very big occasion for the kids. Caley had planned a party and by listening to the students, she realized that it was quite a big event. She was more surprised on the actual day when all the students arrived with store bought Valentine cards. All the students had Valentine cards for her and each other. Many students gave more than the usual single Valentine.

The morning after Valentine's Day, Caley arrived to a very excited group of school children. The "morning meeting" as they now called it took place inside during cold weather, but Caley knew that this meeting would have importance. She teased them a little and didn't open her door or window right away. When she rolled her window down she playfully interrupted with her mock panic.

Smiling she said, "Wait, wait a minute, who can say it first? Whose the fastest?"

They looked at her, a little puzzled, for they weren't aware of this behavior.

"Our grandfather died," many voices blurted out.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't know. Which one?"

"Our mother's father from Prairieville," said Dora.

That involved nine children directly. Caley again felt foolish at her lack of timing.

"I didn't know he was sick."

"He wasn't," Tom stated as he went inside, "The mothers and fathers are all surprised. There are lots of old people way sicker and way older."

"But remember Mom had a cold feeling the other night," stated Dora, "When they get that, something bad usually happens. That's what everybody says anyway."

"A cold feeling in February," thought Caley sarcastically, "How strange."

She said instead, "I'm sure this is very hard on everyone. Would you grandchildren like to go home for the day? I'm sure you want to be with your family."

Dora shook her head, "No, we stay in school. The mothers don't want the kids around. They're going to Prairieville this afternoon. Do you want to visit them?"

The kids were puzzled by Caley's offer but weren't planning to miss any drama of this event.

"Do they want me to?" asked Caley.

She thought they might wish to be alone and that she shouldn't intrude.

"Yes, they're waiting for you."

Caley had never left the students before, except for a moment or two to ask the preacher for something.

"Well, okay, I'll go and see your moms while you work on your stories from yesterday. Dora and Edward, would you please read with the grade ones and with Elsa?"

Caley took her expected trip to the houses of the bereaved and when she did she heard the stories over and over again. Each person had some kind of feeling that something was going to happen and their premonitions were all discussed in detail. The family was then on its way to prepare for the wake. Caley learned that if the colony needs more help they call to other colonies for assistance. Some of the young girls who are already out of school go and make sandwiches or organize places for guests to sleep. Each family usually has three or four extra mattresses that are stored on racks in their basements for such occasions.

Caley discovered that a funeral was very similar to a wedding. Other than the very immediate family that was mourning most people almost looked forward to it. This was one of the rare occasions when they could visit old friends and distant relatives. Normally the one or two weeks that the women choose to go for a visit would be spent at a mother's or sister's colony, so because they rarely go visiting without cause, a funeral provides this opportunity. Caley also learned that the body is waked for two or three days before the funeral. Generally, after the body is prepared in the closest town it is brought back to the colony and people begin to arrive. When Caley went back to the school she asked the students what occurs at the wake.

"The coffin and body are placed in the middle of the living room with chairs all around. People come and visit, pay their respect and sing hymns in the room. Often us kids are expected to kiss the dead person."

"Do you have to?" she asked when they disclosed their fears.

"They will say we did not love him then and make us to feel stupid. It's easier to do it and be done," stated Dora.

"Well, I'm not doing it," said Tom flatly.

"They won't make you," Dora said.

Peter just stayed quiet. Caley remembered that Peter had written many stories about his grandpa and the kids had expressed earlier that Peter was the grandfather's favorite. Peter was just nine and Caley knew that he had really missed his grandfather when he first moved to Grainview. The others had spoken often of the other kids, but not Peter.

"Usually the adults go down right away and stay but we're so close by, they will come home at night, except our mothers," said Dora. "The two mothers would stay with their other relatives that had stayed at Prairieville."

"We get to go down Wednesday after school," said Tom.

The funeral was Thursday so Caley called the superintendent. She told him that nine kids would be missing to go to the funeral. Lydia and Clara were going to look after the toddlers from Peter's family so eleven would be out of school. Also she was not sure but she felt she was expected to attend.

"That is the way it usually is," he said. "You can close the school that day. You probably should go to the funeral. Take someone with you if you want. The more the merrier".

Caley thought that was an odd thing to say and decided she would go on her own. But when she arrived at the funeral the actions of the first three people she met seemed to indicate that it was indeed a rather joyous occasion.

"Where's your better half, didn't he come?" some questioned.

She was puzzled by their merriment and said, "He has to work today".

Hutterites accept work above all else as a good reason for missing a special event. They continued to explain that in spite of it being February, over three hundred people had attended the wake and would be at the funeral. She caught glimpses of her students throughout the afternoon. Some were having snowball fights, and the older ones were jovially visiting with cousins. Two little girls who had not seen each other since the splitting of the colonies were quietly holding hands and whispering in the kitchen of their late grandfather's house. As the kids catch up with each other the adults also relive old times. One story that is continuously enjoyed, especially at funerals is the story of Elma Wipf. Elma was seventy seven and had traveled a long distance to attend her twin sister's funeral. She had retired for a nap soon after she arrived. When young Andy, grandson of the deceased woman, was sent for a plate he was met with an untimely appearance of who he thought was his grandmother. The screams of the astonished child immediately followed by more screams from Elma quickly brought a large audience to laugh and then to recount the tale many times in the future.

As Caley found her way up to the church, she was ushered near the front with some other people who were not Hutterites. The service was all in German and although Caley did not understand the words it seemed brief and to the point. The service had the preacher speaking and the congregation responding. Caley did not think there was a place in the ceremony where the man's life was discussed or his merits mentioned, but she was not sure.

As people filed back to the house where the grandfather had lived many years, there was a certain somberness. Lunch was served throughout the house as people filed in. The basement had long tables set up for guests and the family sat in the living room where the body had been. Many people from the colony just went home. Once lunch was over it was a very short time and the vans full of people began heading out. Some had come from the Saskatchewan/Manitoba border and also from Montana so they had a long way to drive home.

Caley paid her respects to the family and headed home. On her way home she decided to pick up a few things from her own school. As she pulled into the colony she was greeted by waves from the women and the kids hurrying over to visit. She explained that she needed a few things from her office and would not stop to visit this time. As she opened the door to the school she heard another door slam. She entered the classroom which was not locked and stuck her key into her office door. She distinctly heard noise on the other side and as she opened the door there were three boys standing red-faced in her office. Caley could feel her head get hot and her hands go clammy. She stood in the doorway as the

boys made a motion to simply leave. Two of the culprits were older boys whom she barely knew and the third was Ted. She tried to stay calm but she could feel her voice shaking.

"What are you boys doing in here?" she asked.

No response. Then slowly they looked at each other sheepishly but not at her.

"I think considering that this is my private office I deserve an answer," Caley said quietly.

"We just wanted to look around," said one of the older ones whom Caley recognized as Ted's oldest brother, Dave.

"Look around? You can look around when it's open during school hours. There isn't anything in here to look at. Now you can do better than that. What did you want?" Caley said as she could feel that anger in her voice begin to seep out.

She noticed bulging pockets on all the jackets and she did not hide her stare. The red faces turned another shade but no move was made to return whatever they had taken.

"We used the copy machine. See," Ted showed her some pictures of a truck with a catchy phrase underneath it.

"You couldn't ask to do this, Ted? Haven't I always let the students and parents make copies of things they wanted? Do you boys not understand what "invasion of privacy" means? What you have done is a crime. Now empty your pockets and stop wasting my time."

She could really feel her own anger now. As they returned the supplies Caley could not believe what she saw. They had stolen erasers, elastics, pens, a few stickers and some gum that was used for prizes.

There was nothing of value taken and nothing that she wouldn't have given them, had they asked.

"Do you realize that I should phone the police and have you arrested? Maybe I will."

Thirteen year old Ted started to cry. Caley was surprised that this tough exterior that she had always seen was gone. She was uncomfortable all of a sudden.

"Go home and tell your parents and I'll decide tomorrow what I am going to do."

She hoped that scared them sufficiently. She was still in shock herself when she caught a glimpse of all the other kids who had been listening at the classroom door. She knew that even if the three in the office did not tell, which they probably would not, the rest of the kids would tell this at home. She forgot what she came for, jumped in her car, slammed the door and stormed out of the colony. She spent the evening contemplating how to handle the situation.

Caley awoke the next morning feeling like she had not slept. How could she explain how she felt? She wanted them to understand that this was one of the boundaries that should not be crossed. Yet she knew that it was not viewed seriously on the colony. The students told many stories of stealing their parents' keys to the candy cupboard. They joked about reading private letters that did not belong to them and often borrowed whatever they needed without permission.

She thought to herself, "If I haven't made it clear before, I will from now on."

As she drove along with her eyes scanning the landscape, she noticed that everything looked the same as yesterday, but she knew it was not. When she drove into the colony, there were no greetings from the windows and only a very few students were outside the school. Caley got out of her vehicle, said hello to the kids. It was very obvious that everybody knew and they were worried. She sighted the preacher out of the corner of her eye and saw that he was headed her way. She went on inside to wait for him. When he arrived he immediately wanted to downplay the incident but he also felt badly for Caley.

"Kids are kids you know Caley. They know they shouldn't be in your office but they're not baptized yet, so they do these things."

"Other than Ted, who is thirteen, do you still consider them kids? How old are they? Seventeen, eighteen? One of them drives I know and I've seen them with beer at Christmas. They're not in school. They eat with the men. How come they're kids right now, but the rest of the year they're adults?"

"Well, we know that kids will do these things until they're baptized. Then when they really pay attention to our scriptures and then they don't do it anymore."

Caley's mind raced to where she had heard that before. It was from the same baptized man who had tried to sell her a cabinet. He had obviously forgot the prohibitive rules of personal gain. This reinforced Caley's theory that if you adopted certain behaviours as a youngster, it was unlikely that you discontinued those behaviors after marriage. She chose not to challenge the preacher's belief of their system at that moment.

She was about to answer when Ted and Dave's father strode through the door. It was unlikely that Daniel Wurz was here to support Caley's opinion in the matter so she was surprised that he would show up when his children were caught red-handed.

"Who do you think you are, McConnell?" he spat out, "You're not going to the police about my sons. We'll deal with this ourselves and you mind your own business."

"Now Daniel," said the preacher, "let's just hold on. Nobody has said what they're doing."

"Oh McConnell did," he said, "McConnell thinks she can get those boys in trouble for breaking into our school. Isn't that right McConnell?"

Each time he used her name he emphasized it and then she got the meaning behind it. The Hutterites usually called people including teachers by their last names only. Caley had expressed that she felt this was disrespectful and insisted upon being called Mrs. McConnell. Daniel Wurz continued to overstate this disrespect throughout the conversation.

"Since when is breaking into my office not my own business Mr. Wurz?"

She emphasized Mr.

"What I said was that I could have them arrested for breaking and entering. Then I said, maybe I will. That was how it was left. I was hoping that this would be resolved without that, but you seem to think it is okay to break into my office anyway. What do you do when they get your keys from you?"

Caley was maintaining her temper, but barely.

"I strap them and they don't do it anymore," he said.

"Oh, so you're saying they've only done it once. It was my understanding that you won't strap your young adults. How would you handle them, because they are still doing it?"

She looked at the preacher. He was more intimidated by Daniel than she was.

She continued, "Look, I'm not telling you how to raise your kids, but why do you expect me to deal with them the same way when I can see it hasn't worked. The kids are proud when they manage to sneak something from their parents or when they see something they're not supposed to."

Daniel was obviously still stuck on the police issue and ignored everything she had to say.

"If you think you can arrest them, I'm going to the county to tell what you've been doing out here."

Now Caley was completely shocked, "What have I been doing?" she asked.

"You are always late and I bet you're not supposed to be. I'm going to tell them you're late everyday."

Caley realized suddenly why his children would break into the office. There were obviously no ground rules. She was angry now and showing it.

"I'm not late. A few times when the weather was bad, but what are you talking about?"

Daniel smiled sadistically, "They don't know that. And anyway I think you are."

The argument was now getting about as childish as humanly possible as Caley replied, "Go ahead. I stop for my coffee every morning in town. I imagine they can verify the time."

As Daniel continued Caley began to tune him out. She realized that this was really a diversionary tactic from the real issue and she also realized that she probably was not going to get back to it. All the while the preacher stayed out of it and looked very embarrassed.

Daniel was saying, "And another thing, why don't you come for snack to my house? It's because you don't like my kids. You treat the others better."

That touched a nerve with Caley because she prided herself on fairness.

"I will go for my break wherever I like and as for your kids - why is it that they seem to like me so much if I'm unfair to them?"

"You don't know what they like. They have no respect for you. They respect us, not you," he yelled at her.

So that was it. The Christmas concert incident really did bother him just as she suspected.

"Is respect doing it behind your back? Maybe Ted doesn't respect me, but I know that I wouldn't embarrass my parents by breaking into my teacher's office."

There, what could he say to that?

"Or doesn't it matter Mr. Wurz?"

"If they broke in it's your fault."

"I never even had the two older ones and you've had Ted for years before I had anything to do with him. I'm sorry but this conversation is over."

I'll deal with Ted and you two deal with the others. But I will call the police if this happens again."

Caley ignored any further attempt to talk and went to the door to call the kids in. Daniel Wurz left smiling smugly because he had accomplished what he came for. The preacher followed sheepishly behind.

As the students filed quietly into the classroom, they watched their teacher warily. They had heard the loud voices from the schoolroom and it was a side of Caley that she had hoped never to share with them. She asked them to read silently for a few moments while she washed her face. Normally, there would be endless happy chatter when she left the room, but today each student simply took out a book. When Caley returned smiling, a few sighs were noted around the room.

Caley began, "I'm not proud of what we as adults displayed for you today. This is a situation that has arisen out of disrespect. When you invade someone's private place it is not right."

The whole class turned to Ted.

"It isn't just about Ted. Ted made a mistake but everybody needs to understand this. When you go in someone's drawer at home, is that right? How do you feel when someone goes into your things or reads your private letters? We don't allow each other in our desks here and you seem to appreciate that. This is what we need to work on. Ted, I'll see you after lunch please."

Caley needed the rest of the morning to mull over what discipline Ted should receive. The lack of support from his parents and especially where Dave, the older brother was concerned, made it very difficult. Is it

fair to punish one when the other two are out of school and would receive nothing more than admonishment? By the time noon hour rolled around Caley had another visitor. It was the father of the other boy.

He looked very upset and Caley thought, "Here we go again."

Not so. The father spoke with quite intense anger.

"I am very ashamed of my boy's actions. I wish he was in school so you could punish him. Once they're out and feelin' big we hope they know better."

Caley was grateful and told him so, "Well, thank you, Leonard. I'm sure it was just a spur of the moment thing."

"Well, he shouldn't treat people that way. It's hanging around with Dave too much. They didn't get along when they were in school. I'm sorry the colony can't do more but I can't really make him behave at his age and if the other guy doesn't make his son, how can I?"

"Oh, I understand," Caley said. "I was thinking about poor Ted."

She laughed, "I'll try not to make him pay for the other two."

She felt better and knew she wouldn't. By the time Ted arrived she was able to talk it over with him. He apologized and they agreed he would spend some time in at lunch for a while working on lessons or marking for her.

Caley thought about how the preacher who was supposed to control their lives was really ineffectual against an aggressor within the community. The preacher's pacifist beliefs did not allow him to deal properly with someone in their own community who was not living by the teachings. When the Hutterites come across this in the outside world they can return to isolation; when it is within the community it poses new problems

because everyone is aware of it. Caley understood how this necessity of equality was needed in the school and could only imagine the ripple it could create if one adult was choosing their own path to follow.

Subsequently, it became a tougher struggle for Caley in her attempts to teach and remain fair, for Daniel Wurz did not concern himself with fairness. He cared about having his way. Any attempts to do anything unusual with the students, such as, play broomball on the frozen dugout was met with disapproval. Daniel went to the preacher and told him that Caley would be responsible and so would the preacher if they fell through the ice. How they would be damaged on a dugout that was one foot deep with ice and frozen to the ground she wasn't sure. Under the guise of safety for the children many plans were thwarted. Even school soccer balls were run over by the farm trucks more frequently, accidentally of course.

Out of all of this however, as many teachers might believe Caley also began to believe that the message of resistance and rejection was coming from the colony. Many members including Daniel's brothers assured her that the message was from him alone. Over the coming months part of Caley's time was spent cautiously staying one step ahead of Daniel Wurz.

Marriage Anyone?

As always the excited bubbling children rushed into the school to try and be the first to tell the news. The spring season provided lots of "firsts" for the students. The little ones were excited and argued over who saw the first bird or flower while the older boys mentioned the animals.

Lillian was first today and she blurted out, "Mrs. MacConnell, the cheverie date has been set, June third."

"Is that your engagement party?"

Lillian blushed, "Well, not mine. It's the engagement party and the same weekend we have a wedding. The party is more fun."

Little Elizabeth was very aware of the anticipated fun.

"The older girls want to do a play for it. Can they?"

"Well, of course they can; it's not up to me. But if they ask for help I can do that during a couple of noon hours."

The girls were pleased and of course wanted to begin right away.

"First, I'll look for a skit. Give me a couple of days. Maybe some of you can think of some funny stories about the couple. I bet you could write your own play."

Caley was a little scared to have anything to do with it if they wrote their own because she wasn't sure if she understood their humour yet.

"How well do you know William's girlfriend?"

"She is a sweetheart, the best," said Lillian. "She is friendly."

"What else would they say about a new member of the colony?" thought Caley.

That was an endearing quality of the Hutterites that she had noticed. They were always ready to accept someone, and welcomed a new member. The younger siblings of a brother or sister had irrevocable loyalty. So it was understood also that their choice of mate also gained the same immediate status. Caley thought back to over a year ago when Dora who hadn't left school yet was quite excited over a mouth organ that William had given her. As the year wore on Caley figured out that it wasn't really the mouth organ, but rather that Dora was excited about William's upcoming wedding. Throughout the year, bits and pieces were disclosed to Caley. William had to spend a year proving his virtue to the colony. That meant that he couldn't play the musical instruments that he had previously enjoyed. He also gave away his tape machine to his friend Dave. He could no longer listen to the country and western music from the outside world. There were other things, too. If the young boys decided to borrow a truck without asking in order to visit another colony, William could not be a part of it. It was also the first winter in a long time that William wasn't gliding along on the dugout or sneaking into town for a game of shinny with other Hutterite boys and runaways.

Ironically, William was preparing for something that was barely discussed.

When Caley went to the parents' house one day she asked, "So is there going to be a wedding soon?"

The mother said, "Oh, we don't really know until it gets very close. After William is baptized at Easter, we might hear something then."

Caley laughed and teased her a little, too.

"Well, this thing that you don't know about, can you tell me when it might happen, if it does at all?"

"Well, after William is baptized at Easter and after Pentecost, usually the boy and his father go to our preacher first and tell him that he wants to get married. The preacher then gives them permission to go to whatever colony the girl is from and do the same thing. If she says 'yes' they plan a wedding. Usually, they go about three weeks before they want the wedding to take place."

"That doesn't give them much time, but I guess if they are already working on their unannounced wedding, their plans are probably already prepared."

It was very odd to Caley that unofficially they were preparing all year but it was only spoken about after the formalization.

"Did William know Rebecca when he was away?" she asked.

"Oh yes, he came back because of her," Dora offered.

"He was away twice and it was lucky that he had a girlfriend. Sometimes guys that are gone don't come back as soon if they don't have a girlfriend. Rebecca told him last time that she wasn't waiting forever."

"Dora, you don't know that," her mother said.

"I do too! William told me. I don't blame her. A girl takes a real chance going out with a runaway. Remember Josh Waldner. He kept promising Mary at Prairieville he'd be back. She waited and he's still out there somewhere. Now she's too old to get married. I'm not ever going out with a runaway."

Dora had the usual strong opinions of a teenager.

"Ha, we'll see, Dora," said her big sister Julia.

"Lots of girls say that, but once you love them are you going to break up with them if they run away? It's your duty to help bring them back. Besides, you'll probably never be able to pick just one anyway," she said as she laughed.

"You two stop it," interjected their mother halfheartedly, for it was obvious that she enjoyed this sparring as much as the girls.

Caley wondered what it must be like to work so closely with your family day after day. The mother was teaching the girls to sew shirts for the boys and dresses for themselves. They all really seemed to enjoy their work together and although Caley didn't see any of the real arguments she was made aware that they experienced all the disputes of a regular family. But another thing she had really come to admire was that, with the exception of Daniel Wurz, generally grudges didn't last too long. They may have had their spats but all was forgiven very quickly amongst family members. There were members on each colony who probably didn't see eye to eye but when you are working together you have to get over it. Caley really enjoyed the time she spent at the houses visiting. The women were always interested in the outside world, the weather and any of Caley's activities. But many times Caley was content to sit back and listen to inside workings of the family.

Caley was fascinated by the baptism ceremony that took place each Easter. The rules of the colony stated that if a young man or woman wish to marry, then they must first prove their worthiness to the community.

William had met a girl from a neighboring colony many years prior to his impending year of salvation. He had run away from the colony twice

but only saved his money the second time while working on a rig. Now when he decided to marry there were many preparations ahead. When he came back from the outside he had to go to the preacher first and ask to return. Then he had to meet with the elders and confess all his sins from the outside world. He was to return any extra money he had earned and this was to be burned. However, Caley learned very few of the boys follow this strict adherence to the rule. Usually, the boys want to save as much as they can so that they will have a nest egg after they are married, because unless they are a boss of an operation, they will not have any more opportunities to earn spending money. William was no exception. He had saved his money and upon his return confessed only to the usual worldly endeavors. He hadn't gone to church regularly, he had drunk too much, had worked for personal gain, and had participated in worldly activities such as sports and movies.

William's girlfriend Rebecca had been putting pressure on him for two years and told him that she wouldn't wait forever. They had dated numerous times. On the colony the boy may go see his girlfriend every six weeks, but if she is close by, there is always a reason to go: a tractor part that needs to be picked up, or to borrow machinery, both provide ample opportunity for a young man to visit his girl. William didn't enjoy going home alone anymore. That was when he decided to leave for the second time. The first time was to have all the adventures of a young man with new found freedom, but the second was to earn money for the future. All the older boys and girls go to a similar version of Sunday School with the preacher after church. Anyone who is going to be baptized begins to pay

closer attention to this time because they have a very long verse that they have to say before the congregation the week before Easter.

They also have memorized responses to questions from the preacher. Usually the preacher has come from another colony to perform this ceremony. It was odd for Caley to get used to this notion. The change in a person that was expected before and after baptism was like the conversion of Saul, and she could see that it didn't really happen. The married plumber had borrowed cassette tapes from Will. The women listened to the guitar if no one was around to catch them. A married uncle dropped off the older boys to skate at the town rink. All of these things that were completely against the rules, particularly after one's baptism, simply became better hidden. The real change occurred in the acknowledgement of sins. Once they weren't supposed to commit wrongdoing anymore they acted, Caley thought, very piously and pretended they didn't. While they weren't yet baptized they relied on the idea of "The preacher has to catch us and prove that's what we were doing." This created havoc in the classroom. Caley had a very difficult time getting the students to understand that she did not want to act as policeman, but rather that everyone would benefit if they could trust each other.

No one wants to be baptized alone as they stand in front of the congregation to declare their faith. Generally, a sister will be talked into joining them and such was the case with William. William's sister Julia was a young woman who was out of school for four to five years when Caley began to teach at Grainview. Originally she would come up to the school to borrow the phone if she had a call to make that she didn't want

the financial boss to be aware of. The only phone on a colony is in his house with an extension in a hallway so that the business of Hutterites may be conducted if necessary. Whenever a member wanted to speak to someone privately they would come to use Caley's phone. They usually came at noon and were discouraged from too many long distance calls. At the end of the month Caley would collect by sending messages home through the kids.

One noon hour when Julia came up to use the phone, which by this stage was really just an excuse for a visit, Caley asked her if she was looking forward to Easter.

"No, I'm not," she said, "I agreed to go baptizing because William didn't want to go alone."

Caley asked, "The kids have told me that being baptized means that you have to give up quite a few things. Are you ready to do that?"

She answered slowly, "There's not that much to give up. I don't really enjoy crowds anyway. I can still go, just not when they're playing tapes."

"I haven't heard that before. I thought the boys and girls really enjoyed getting together."

"You get tired of it after awhile. It's the same old thing."

Caley wondered if she meant that she hadn't met anybody but didn't want to embarrass the girl so she didn't ask for a further explanation. But since Julia had obviously come to talk, she received one anyway.

"Most of the girls and boys go on dates and find someone. I don't want someone but you can't tell anybody that or they just say you're lying."

"Really," said Caley, "Why don't you? Not that there's anything wrong with it, but why don't you want someone? You'll want to marry someday, won't you?"

"I don't think there'll ever be anybody for me. There hasn't been so far. I'm not going to some wrecked, old colony just to be married."

"What are the colonies like?" asked Caley, "I've been to a couple. They are quite a bit like this one."

"These are the good ones because they are new and there are others that the people renovate, but some are just junk. Some do not have indoor plumbing. Who'd go there?"

She answered her own question.

"I guess if you loved somebody you would, but most of the girls don't get involved with those guys, and the girls from there are happy to leave."

"But wouldn't the colony die out then?"

"No, the boys do find wives. They keep promising to fix it up. Last year eight or nine colonies, us included, gave them thousands of dollars to build a pig operation. Couldn't they have used some to make better houses? The elders vote on that and some said that we'd only be paying for their houses this year. Maybe if they can make money with the pigs they'll buy their own stuff."

"Is that what usually happens?" asked Caley, "You help out other colonies?"

"There's lots of colonies that need help so we help and they pay us back when they can. No interest, whatever that means."

"So is that the only reason you wouldn't get married?" Caley asked, "You want a nice place?"

"Oh, I'd get married, but I don't want to get married to just anybody. I can work at home and look after my parents just as easy as working for a man."

The way she said it Caley sensed that this girl wasn't interested in marriage or was too shy or something, but she wasn't getting married. It seemed like a bleak existence since, as a single woman, you are never allowed your own house. Although, you do get the house if your parents die, but unless you have another unmarried sibling you are alone. One good thing is that you are always taken care of. Old aunts and uncles are looked after the same as everyone else. Julia came up more and more often to see Caley and was a constant source of information if there was something that Caley didn't understand. As all the girls in turn were married, Julia went to the crowds less and less. Caley wasn't sure if this was because of the tapes or because Julia was no longer interested. She was a long way from thirty, which is the age at which a single girl joins the married women's activities and work.

One day the kids asked, "What time are you coming to the cheverie, Mrs. MacConnell?"

They just assumed that their teacher would be as excited as they were to share in one of the big events of the year.

"I'm not sure about Will's work yet. But I wouldn't miss it," she said enthusiastically.

"Come as early as you can. William brings Rebecca here at about two o'clock. They've already had a cheverie at her colony the night before."

"Who comes with her?" asked Caley.

"Everybody that she is allowed to invite to the wedding. That's her brothers and sisters and parents. Her sisters can take their husbands as drivers, and they can bring a babysitter, too!"

"Can her brothers bring their wives?" Caley asked.

"No, the wives can't come."

"Well, maybe I won't bring Will since I can drive myself," she said jokingly.

Laura's look of understanding pleased Caley.

"No, no he should come. Outsiders are different. That's just our rules," said Peter.

She was glad Peter and Laura realized that.

"The kids are so excited. This cheverie must really be something," Caley expressed to Will as they headed onto the road towards the colony.

"I can hardly wait," he said dryly, "Don't you spend enough time out there? You teach full time, prepare, mark and your obligatory visits. Isn't that enough? Do they need your weekends, too?"

"This is an obligation, but it's fascinating also. I want to go. It will be a nice evening out. I like these people. I know sometimes it would be easier elsewhere, but look at the benefits. Very few disgruntled parents to contend with, a few extra days each year for holidays and weather, but the best is the kids. I'm always teaching, Will. I don't have to spend a whole bunch of time disciplining. These kids are eager and anxious to learn. You should have seen them yesterday. They were bouncing off the walls waiting for today. Some of the girls are doing a skit. They borrowed clothes from the school costumes."

"Where is the girl from? I bet somebody got the groom's clothes ready for him tonight," said Will teasingly.

"You're a big boy. I'm sure you can manage your own clothes. I wonder how long those men on the colony will be completely taken care of by their women," laughed Caley.

"Not long if you have anything to do with it," he said.

"It doesn't have anything to do with me."

She relayed Julia's story to him, making him aware that the girls on colonies were getting a few of their own ideas, too.

"Do you know that Esther, she's the one that has been married ten years and has no children, confided to me that if she had known she was barren she would never have gotten married."

"Maybe her husband is a jerk," Will said.

"No, that's not it. Glen is one of the nicer guys. But if you don't have kids on the colony, you are on the fringe, especially if you are a female that has come from another colony."

"How so?"

"You are not part of anything really. The society is based on family and working and sharing everything. When a woman has a child, she gets a babysitter from another family. The babysitter cleans your house as well as looks after the baby. Your child goes to the kindergarten and learns to interact, he or she goes to school and you are part of that, too. Maybe your child grows up and works for someone in a barn or babysits for someone and the connections begin again. You live through the children. Think about poor Esther. She came from another colony. She finishes her group work and then sits home by herself. Her own house doesn't even get dirty. She doesn't have a sister on the colony who would help to alleviate the

loneliness. Since the men and women are separated in their work, at church, and at meal time, the only time she is with her husband is in the evening. If she had stayed single she would have friendship and company all the time."

"Do you know why they haven't had children?" Will asked.

"Esther said that they haven't checked, but it's probably her fault. On top of everything else she carries the burden of that and they won't see if it can be fixed because they believe it must be God's way. Or maybe Glen couldn't take the truth."

"Why did she tell you all this?" Will wanted to know.

"I think she told me because she wonders why we haven't had any kids yet. Also, any time I have been for coffee with just one woman, they confide in me."

"In that case, it doesn't look like you will be a confidante tonight," he said as they were driving into the colony.

They were greeted by half of the colony. It was seven o'clock

"We've been waiting for you all afternoon. We thought you were coming early," they said.

"Who told you that?" Caley asked but she knew the answer before they spoke.

Many times when Hutterites are sitting around discussing an event each person wishes to contribute and it's like a story told in a circle. By the time it gets around the circle it's an entirely different story.

"Peter said you were coming in the afternoon when Will was finished work."

"Lydia said she didn't think Will had to work today so you'd be out early," said Elizabeth.

"I did not say that Elizabeth. I said if Will had to work she might not come," said Lydia.

"Well, she's here now. Let's go to the kitchen."

As they stepped into the kitchen to many warm smiles and gestures they waved to the bride and groom who were sitting in the middle of the room on chairs. The men and boys were on their side, sitting on the benches; Daniel Wurz was absent but would arrive later. The women and girls were on the other.

"Nice evening out," whispered Will to Caley as room was made for him amongst the men.

Caley sat with the German teacher's wife and looked around. William's uncle from Prairieville seemed to have declared himself the master of ceremonies. He would request people to sing by themselves or in a group, and usually they would. Some people told an off-color joke or two and the school girls performed their skit. When the emcee requested a song from Caley she agreed to sing a couple of songs with the kids, but not alone. A couple of boys played the harmonica. Every once in a while the preacher would come in and tell them to sing German songs, which they would until he left. Caley surmised it was a lonely evening for him as well. All evening the beer flowed continuously and Caley noticed a few of her students sneaking glasses of beer. She looked shocked but didn't want to appear so righteous so she stayed clear of what she opposed.

At about eight thirty the heads all turned as a group of boys arrived. By this time Caley was sitting with a few of the older girls who whispered to her.

"Some are from other colonies and some are runaways that put on Hutterite clothes so they can come to the cheverie. Other runaways will just party later at the crowd."

The boys all looked to have already had quite a bit to drink. Throughout the evening Caley excused herself for some fresh air and Will did the same. As they decided to take a short stroll they saw the older boys and their friends out having a smoke. As they came closer they realized that the smoke they were sharing was a joint. Caley had heard that marijuana had reached the colonies, but was surprised that they hardly hid it. Like young teenagers wanting to be cool, they were quite proud of it.

"These kinds of things are far more damaging than an educational video," thought Caley.

When Caley and Will returned to the party it was snack time. Everybody left the kitchen for a few minutes and the snack was placed on the tables. The snack was white store-bought bread sandwiches, cheezies, and chocolate bars. After snack nearly everyone went downstairs to the basement of the kitchen. This was the place where the keyboards and guitars showed up. Couples sat together there and it became the young people's time. The married members stayed for awhile, but eventually to the disappointment of the smaller children took them home to bed. The married people without kids stayed a little while longer but they too made an early exit. Caley noticed that the bleary-eyed runaways continued to make trips outside taking boys from the colony with them. They either became braver and asked girls out on an evening date, or became extremely introverted. A date consisted of a walk or a few stolen moments of privacy. It didn't sound appealing to Caley but then she was no longer sixteen.

As Caley and Will drove out of the colony, they saw a young couple stealing away to the garages to be alone.

Will winked at Caley and said, "In spite of time and place, some things haven't changed all that much."

Caley wished that it were true but with all that she had witnessed over the last few days she knew that the changes within were only a step away. Many things from the outside world were no longer just creeping in, they were breaking down the door.

Laura

Right from the start Laura was different from the others. She smiled more openly at Caley and wanted her to feel welcome immediately. Within a very short time Laura was wrapping her arms around the school teacher, trying her very hardest in school and hanging on every word the teacher spoke. If the teacher spoke about good sportsmanship, Laura practiced it. If the teacher spoke of being courteous to others, Laura tried to speak as politely as possible. Laura often told the teacher how much she liked her, loved her and wanted to be just like her. Laura disappeared often into her own world. Without any warning Laura would remove herself from a class discussion or spend time by herself at recess or lunch. This was not usual for the Hutterite children. Inevitably she would often end up in Caley's room at lunch time talking to her. She never intruded however and always waited to be asked. One time in school an odd thing happened. It was just before lunch and the students were mingling around cleaning up. Lydia approached the teacher.

"I know you don't like this, but it wasn't me," she said.

Caley looked at the picture/dictionary, compared it to another one and realized that all the B's had been torn out. She quickly realized that a nude baby had been on one of the pages.

As she looked around the room she asked, "Who did this? You know this is not the way to treat a book or anything that doesn't belong to you. Please don't do it again."

As she was speaking it became very clear that the culprit was Laura. This was so out of character that Caley left it at that. Patience was

important too, and Caley felt sure that Laura was somehow justified. Hopefully, she would find out the cause of the behavior at a later time.

Caley was very flattered by this student's eagerness to please and thought that it probably had little to do with school. Caley had met Laura's parents who were quite youthful, and they also had a toddler and a newborn whom Laura babysat most of the time when she wasn't in school.

Laura's mother Marie was quiet and didn't seem very sociable. In fact, the few times that Caley was at the house she noticed right away that Laura actually seemed to run most of the household, although there weren't many real decisions to make. She made decisions concerning the younger ones though, such as, naptime, clothing and snacks. If the father was there and was his usual talkative self, there was very little conversation from Laura or the mother.

He would often mention his own school days, "I was the only one that finished grade ten, you know."

Another time he asked Caley for a correspondence course about agriculture.

"These old fellas out here don't know that there is a lot we can learn from a course. I guess you had to have been a good student in a school to know that."

In school, Laura took on the responsibility of her grade. She helped the other two students without any thought of trying to do better than them. This was unusual because when there were only two or three children in each grade it was often very obvious who the best student was. The other

Hutterite students who shared a grade were highly competitive with each other if they considered it a viable opportunity. In Physical Education Laura attempted all activities right from the beginning which again was different for a Hutterite female. She was unusually strong for an eight year old and extremely coordinated. As the years passed, she quickly became a formidable opponent to all the students in the school.

In spite of all these qualities, Laura Hofer still seemed to be set apart from the others. She was respected by her peers as they knew she could conquer them mentally and physically, yet at the same time they seemed to look down on her. She felt it and Caley knew she wasn't wrong. One day in Social Studies when the teacher brought in some historical facts on names it led to researching the Hutterite names. It was discovered that the Hofers were actually Lutherans who joined the Hutterian Brethren two hundred years after Jakob Hutter of 1533.

Laura blurted out, "I knew I wasn't really a Hutterite!"

Her face went red as she looked to the teacher for help. Caley saw by the silent, shocked faces around her that news of this outburst would probably be going home as news.

"Oh, many joined afterwards but they're all Hutterites," Caley said, and added "The Wurz families were Lutherans too".

This brought forth teasing of who was a real Hutterite and who wasn't. As the teacher suspected, some of the older students were glad to have some outside roots while the little ones needed the strong security blanket of four hundred years. This also illustrated how little they knew of their ancestry.

"What do you know about your ancestors?" asked Caley.

"They were very good," volunteered Lillian, "and we have to be good so we can go to be with them."

"Okay, what else do you know? Tom?"

"They used to live in the States. Some still do. Just what we learned together. We don't talk about that stuff."

One little girl asked, "Did our grandfathers know Jesus?"

Some laughed and some waited for an answer. The answer came from Lydia. "Noo! He lived at least a hundred years before that."

Caley allowed conversation to go on a little longer than usual in the hopes that whatever went home wouldn't have repercussions for Laura. When she was quite sure that the comment had become part of the conversation and wouldn't be noteworthy she went on. She had realized very early in her career that the story that went home was often not closely related to the actual event. It wasn't that the children intentionally lied, but rather there were many reasons for misinterpretations. Sometimes the cultural differences changed the meaning, often the language barriers caused misinformation and sometimes the kids felt that they might be disclosing something they shouldn't so they changed the story slightly. The students had the idea for many years that if they really enjoyed an activity, it probably was not allowed, so they either wouldn't mention it or wouldn't explain it at home as well as they could have. Caley, like any new teacher, would have wanted the students to be explaining a good lesson and was unaware that as their loyalty toward her grew, they actually told less.

Many times she would happen across a member of the colony who would ask, "The kids say there is nothin' going on in school. What do you do, play or what?"

Occasionally when all of these factors compounded simultaneously the result could be explosive. On one occasion the lesson had been about racism. As the students were questioning Caley about the outside world, each had negative opinions about Native Americans, with whom, of course, they had never had contact. By the time the discussion got around to what people thought of Hutterites, Caley explained that some people would have bad opinions of Hutterites and just as the students do not really know any Native Americans, the same was true for people who do not know Hutterites and that ignorance often breeds prejudice. The conversation came back that one of the parents wondered why Caley was teaching at the colony? Did she think like other people about Hutterites? Caley had to go for tea at one of the houses and explain the whole lesson over again. Then the student was in trouble for so called "lying" to the parents. Caley slowly understood that she could not possibly correct every misunderstanding in school.

Fortunately, Laura hadn't been involved in that particular situation. Caley felt that this child needed some kind of special protection, but she wasn't sure why. She had hoped that there was no more physical force used than the standard harshness, and she watched for signs of it. Laura mentioned a few times that her father didn't like her, but Caley hoped that this was not true. Ben seemed genuinely interested in her schoolwork and fancied himself a bit of a scholar on the colony.

Each morning, out of the children's need to visit, arose a time in school to discuss current events. So Caley informed the students.

"I'm going to bring a newspaper once a week and give it to a family from school. You clip out news from the paper and orally present articles of interest. You can pick any five articles as long as they are from different sections. We'll paste the sections on this bulletin board and try to follow some of the stories. When a story seems complete we'll remove it and make room for others."

The discussion also involved more sports, songs the kids liked and their favorite topic - colony news.

One morning Caley said, "I really like that new song about the guitar player. What's the name of it? It's like Tennessee Flat Top Box."

Lydia spoke up, "I don't know about the new song but the first time they played Tennessee Flat Top Box on the radio we heard it at Ben and Marie's cheverie".

"It must have been a different song you're thinking of, or maybe when Roseanne Cash's dad sang it," Caley stated, "Her version didn't come out until the late eighties."

"Nope, that's when it was 1988, we remember because we weren't supposed to be listening, but one of the runaways brought a radio and the guy said: "Here's a brand new song by Roseanne Cash."

"It couldn't have been Ben and Marie's though because...." As Caley stopped in midsentence she stared at the various reactions: the older girls were blushing, the older boys were smiling shyly, and as usual the younger ones, including Laura, were oblivious to what simple arithmetic had just revealed.

"I guess it could have. It's a great song isn't it?" Caley said, and the conversation was back on track.

Meanwhile her head was sifting through the information she had just received. Laura must have been five or six when her parents married if in fact they were both her parents. Was this why the father didn't like her? There were quite a few years between Laura and her two younger brothers which was unusual since birth control was not allowed among Hutterites.

As Caley went for coffee one day at Esther's house, where there were no children, she discovered that Ben was definitely the father. Esther and Glen had been married for ten years and did not have any children of their own.

Esther told her very privately, "Marie is already going to have another baby."

Caley was taken aback because this was not spoke of often.

Esther went on, "Ben can't leave her alone. A woman needs to heal a bit."

Caley was definitely interested and fishing for a little information. "Well there's quite a large time between Laura and her little brother."

Esther jumped right in wanting to talk. "That's because Laura was almost six when he finally married Marie. He's lucky too that those others weren't pregnant."

"Who?" Caley felt a little sick now that she had brought it up.

"I used to see him strutting around her and I knew there was trouble. I told some of the people; they wouldn't listen. He talked a few girls into you know what."

"Is it true that if a boy and girl have a child that they must marry." Caley asked, "What about in that case, what if there were two girls pregnant?"

"That's why he was lucky, well the girls were lucky. It's up to them really because if there was more than one, one of them could never marry. Anyway, no, they don't have to marry each other but they can't marry anyone else so usually they do. There are some girls on colonies that have a child from a runaway that hasn't come back. We thought Ben wasn't coming back because he ran away when he got Marie pregnant."

Esther obviously disliked Ben, but was maybe a little resentful of the luck she thought he had. She and Glen had not been so lucky.

Caley still wasn't sure if Ben resented Laura because of her untimely birth, but surmised that many of Laura's difficulties were from "sins of the father". Over the years Caley heard three or four different interpretations of the event so the actual story was unclear but the one thing that was certain was that Laura suffered for it. On a positive note the adage that "adversity makes you strong," was certainly true for Laura.

As Laura grew older, each year she relied on Caley more. When Laura was twelve, one of the boys that was marrying had to hurry the wedding because his girlfriend was pregnant. This was unusual but for some reason the elders had met and allowed the wedding to take place anyway. Laura stayed after school one day with obviously something on her mind. The conversation started the same as most with light-hearted humor and teasing. Over the years Caley had also come to rely on Laura and as she felt isolated at times, Laura was a constant source of loyalty.

She could not discuss things with Laura about the colony because she did not want her in the position of choosing sides, but anything that Laura knew about, she made it very clear that she sided with Caley. This was a situation that was delicate because the teacher did not want her student ostracized anymore than she already was.

"So when are you getting married?" The teacher asked of the now twelve year old.

"Probably never, who'd have me?" she answered.

"Oh, there is probably some old, greasy-haired, chubby, crazy man that's looking for a girl like you," the teacher teased.

"Too bad you're married - he probably would rather have you," laughed Laura.

The teasing went back and forth between them. It was an odd friendship, but Caley never had to explain to Laura the boundaries of teacher and student. In class she was treated exactly the same as the others, and she responded as a student holding her teacher in the highest regard. Yet, once out of school and if the opportunity arose, Caley treated Laura as an equal, always acknowledging the serious, mature side of the young woman, as well as the bantering humor they shared.

As Laura explained the wedding plans and hinted about the pregnancy, Caley tried to put her at ease.

"Is there something, Laura, that's bothering you or that you need to ask?" she said.

"No, I know all about that stuff," Laura said quietly.

Caley assumed she meant the fact that the boy's girlfriend was pregnant and how it happened.

Laura remained quiet and spoke, "You know about me and my mom and dad, don't you?".

For a split second, Caley wanted to play dumb, but she knew she couldn't do that to Laura even if it meant discussing something that was beyond the realms of casual conversation, and beyond the scope of normal pupil/teacher dialogue.

"I know that your mom and dad were married after you were born, if that's what you were talking about. What's bothering you?" Caley queried.

"I'm just wondering if they'll leave us alone now and pick on Jake and Pauline instead."

"Do you think they pick on you because of that? What does it have to do with you?" questioned Caley.

"It has everything to do with me." stated Laura with a sad, forlorn look. "I'm God's punishment. That's why everybody hates me and they hated my dad too! My mom - not so much. I don't know why."

"You are not God's punishment, Laura. No one is. God does not punish by giving someone a beautiful baby girl. That doesn't make sense. Whoever told you that is completely wrong."

Caley's heart was pumping very hard as she thought about how this could happen. She had never spoken out so clearly against Hutterite beliefs before, but this time she didn't care.

"Have I ever lied to you before?" She saw the look on Laura's face begin to change. "You know, I would tell you that not everything is fair. I

might tell you to make the best of a bad situation. But I would not lie to you. Laura, a child can be conceived if a man and a woman have sex during the time in a woman's cycle when she can become pregnant. That is all that happened and you are the same as every other person on this colony.

Laura said, "But they all say that I'm illegitimate - I guess that's bad isn't it?"

Caley was infuriated by now and went on. "Who said that to you? Illegitimate comes from the word illegal - not legal - you know, against the law. How could you be not legal? A long time ago it was illegal for people to have sex without being married and if a child was born from that people would say that it was illegitimate. But that's nonsense. A child cannot be illegal. The child has nothing to do with it."

The look on the young girl's face was like the weight of the world had been lifted off her shoulders and she began to cry.

"I could never believe that you liked me even after you knew about me, but you never even thought that way about me in the first place." Laura said.

"Honey, there is nothing to think about. You're not responsible for what other people do. Laura, people won't change overnight how they think about you, but over time they'll see you for what you are."

Caley was crying by now too. She was angry that this innocent child had carried this burden for so many years. She was upset that the parents had obviously passed on some of these ill-feelings down to their children. Caley was even upset that the parents had not ever discussed this with

Laura, but she knew that they wouldn't realize the pain Laura felt. It was so frustrating sometimes to look at the damage created by ignorance. Even though Caley respected the beliefs that the Hutterites had about keeping the children in the dark about sexual matters, she couldn't understand how they could sacrifice the well being of the child for it. Those angry thoughts crowded Caley's mind that day, but deep down she knew that it was only generations of narrow-minded beliefs.

As Caley hugged Laura and dried her tears she thought back to all the times that Laura had been so serious in class. Many times the subject was indirectly related to life and birth, and Laura had skillfully avoided participating. How many times had someone glanced at Laura and hurt her feelings? That would be all it would take when the pain was so deep-rooted. The mystery of the torn out baby pictures from the picture dictionary now made sense. Laura had not wanted any reference to herself or to the new baby that would arrive a few months from now.

Caley was wise enough to know that this was not going to change immediately for Laura. Besides, the change that was needed was not in the two kindred spirits sitting there, but rather in four hundred years of oppression.

"Hey, you better get home in case some crazy man comes courting," Caley said.

"I'll tell him where you live," Laura replied, composed and outwardly happy again.

As Caley drove out of the colony that late afternoon she felt that perhaps one of her questions about the purpose of life had been answered. She wondered if there would be ramifications, but deep down knew that the trust she had in Laura would prevent anyone from knowing what had been revealed. She sighed and pondered over the conversation. She knew that the discussion could not erase years of damage but perhaps it eased Laura's mind a little. Neither the woman or the girl felt that same isolation of aloneness ever again. That afternoon they had both discovered the friendships of the heart can cross age, time and cultural differences.

Daniel's Den

Caley's classroom, she truly felt, became a secure haven for all of her students. Because of this feeling of acceptance and safety Caley often heard of the dreams, hopes and frustrations of her students. In many ways, life was stultifying for a Hutterian youth. There were nowadays enough cracks in the isolation policy that blossoming adolescents were daily tantalized with tidbits of news, and yet were officially never allowed to partake or explore. It was like having a secret on the other side of a door, a door which you could possibly enter and really not have to pay too high a price for the privilege. The key was to run. Being a runaway had almost become a rite of passage, for boys that is.

Whenever someone ran away the kids in the school were unusually active. Generally, the boys indicated that they were waiting their turn and most of the girls stressed how sorry they felt for them. This changed over the years though as the enticing outside world pulled a few girls from other colonies to try their hand at freedom. Grainview Colony had not experienced this however and as far as Caley could see, probably would not. Realistically, it would be even harder for a young girl to leave. The boys, though equally uneducated, could do farm work. They usually signed on at a large farming operation where they shared a bunkhouse situation with other runaways. Then if they stayed away long, they could possibly landscape or work on a rig. On Ted's last day of school he shared some of his hopes and dreams. He spoke of the usual dream of playing in the National Hockey League, but he also spoke of seeing the whole world.

Caley had never heard this before. Most of the runaways just want to earn some money, chase some English girls and return home.

Ted apologized to the teacher once more for any trouble he had caused and three days later he was gone. He left with his brother Dave whom Caley had never taught and never even seen since two years ago when she confronted him in her office. The kids quickly told Caley that the father was going to drag Ted back home.

"I thought that they usually just let them be or sometimes try to convince them, but never force them."

Clara spoke up, "My dad always said he didn't care what anybody did, but if one of the boys left before they were eighteen he would go get them."

"Does your dad know where he is?" Caley asked.

"No , not yet but he will soon and then the penny boy will be coming back," she said very confidently.

"What about Dave?"

"Well, he'll try to convince him that he shouldn't do this to our mother. It might work."

"If I ever leave it will be forever," Laura said quietly. "Cause girls don't leave."

"That's how my brother came home," said Elsa in support of Clara's idea about the mother and guilt.

"Everybody has a choice," was all Caley said.

"Gary won't go for awhile. I'm glad because they're not safe out there," said Elsa.

Elsa was thirteen now and still the same sweet naive girl. She was well liked for many reasons but one was because she was what Caley called a good Hutterite. She didn't question too much and accepted whatever her parents, teachers, and other adults did as the correct way. The other students talked about whatever knowledge they had of their older brothers and also of their fathers. Most had left and with the exception of a couple of uncles, all had returned.

"If you don't run away," Paul said, "You get stuck being preacher. That's what happened to Josh, the young one. He should have left and then they would have picked someone else. But he was the only one at that time, so he got it."

"Doesn't anybody want to be the preacher?" asked Caley.

The disgusted looks told her the answer.

"No! You can't do anything, and you have to watch everybody. Your kids really don't like it. They always are told to set the example then."

The conversation moved to how unfair it was and Caley decided they would get to work instead of worrying about fairness. She continued to think about Ted and she understood the worries of his mother. After all he was only fifteen and she didn't feel confident in Dave's ability to take care of him. Not that Ted would let him anyway. He was an independent soul. He had been a nice guy in school and although he was a bit rough with the little kids, he was gentler than Edward had been. She thought that he was quite remarkable considering who his father was. The young boys often brought stories of something nasty that Dave and Edward had done to them but not usually with Ted.

When news of Ted's whereabouts seeped back through the colony grapevine, the kids learned that Ted was actually at a different farm than Dave. The father immediately set out in the morning to bring him back. Daniel had left alone in the small pickup and fully expected to be returning with his fifteen year old son.

As Caley was heading home for the day she heard first and then saw the truck screeching into the colony. There was only the driver. The truck stopped at his house, Daniel jumped out and stomped into his unit. As Caley drove slowly out of the colony she had mixed feelings. She was partially glad that Daniel was unsuccessful in his attempt to bring Ted back, but she too wished for Ted to be home safe and sound. It was odd how she had changed in many ways over the years. When she began teaching at the colony she could see the possibility of freedom but as she attached herself to the people she came to understand the safe haven under which they were blanketed. What a wonderful thing to be able to keep your children safe. They have a job for life, food, clothing and shelter. What more could anyone want? That was what they said, and Caley found herself repeating it. She wondered if she had somehow contributed to Ted's leaving, but then she knew that young boys had always been leaving. They left for adventures. Most didn't leave because of ideological reasons, most just wanted to make their living within the Hutterite system a little easier later on. They earned money, squirreled it away and returned. They didn't want to leave their family. They were uncomfortable in the outside world. Caley knew this by the way they returned for weddings and other special occasions. It was possible to shed the clothes for a time but not the way of life. The boys hardly ever found a permanent English girlfriend.

They are allowed to return to their old life, get married and be well taken care of in every way. They stand in church for two hours and do not leave the colony for six weeks. The danger of course that Daniel figured out was that a fifteen year old would be more impressionable than an older boy. He wouldn't have a steady girlfriend to return to and he might ingratiate himself into another family.

In the morning the kids explained that Ted had refused to return and when his dad tried to grab him, he ran. Daniel had waited a couple of hours and then the farmer asked him to leave. Young Danny never said a thing during the discussion and Caley thought he probably missed sharing a room with Ted.

"Do you move in with Edward while those two rascals are gone?" she asked.

Danny shook his head but didn't speak. As Caley looked closer at Danny she noticed his lip was fat and he had a cut on it.

"What happened Dan?"

"He fell down the stairs," said Susie at the same time that Clara said, "He fell off the bed."

Caley went to look at him and was reasonably sure what had happened. As her stomach turned she knew that Daniel's lack of control with Ted had escalated with his namesake. Danny's teeth had come through his lip and the look on everyone's face told the tale.

Once Caley had everyone at work she called the superintendent. She had made them aware from time to time that Daniel Wurz was a

problem and that he was harsher than the other parents but she had always felt that the worst thing was the mental cruelty. The superintendent agreed to pop out and said that he would bring someone with him, just so it would be unclear as to where the necessary report came from. That same afternoon the Gideons made their usual visit to give Bibles to the grade fives so there were lots of people at the school.

It is far different on a Hutterite colony when there is a possibility of abuse. The teacher is usually the only one who would have access to the child. If a child is abused physically the family would not go to town for an appointment unless it was severe enough that they needed medical attention. The situation becomes far more delicate for the teacher as she takes on her legal responsibility and reports these actions. Caley often wondered what the line was when the children would arrive at the school with welts. The students sometimes unknowingly told of their harsh treatment. But Danny was clearly hurt, if in fact he had been hit. The two different stories indicated that something wasn't right.

The following day a social worker arrived at the school to speak privately with Danny. She took him in a separate room to speak, when they departed one of the grade ones asked Mrs. McConnell the question, "Why does she have to speak to Danny alone?"

"She just wants to talk to him about his injury," Caley replied.

"Why did his mother tell him that he would go to jail if he didn't tell her that he fell down the stairs? He said he fell down the stairs, to me."

"Well then, I guess that's what he'll tell her."

Caley was really biting her lip now.

"His mother probably just wants to make sure he tells the story, however it really happened," she replied.

The older kids knew what this meant but showed no sign. As the school went on with their lessons Caley heard the social worker and Danny leave. They were not gone too long. Danny came back to the classroom and Caley stepped out to speak to the social worker. They went right outside to her car to speak quietly.

"They have the story down perfectly," she said. "This is the way it is. We do not get far in these closed communities. They band together and it rarely improves. Our only hope is that education helps. We have to keep reporting and make them a little more cautious. Maybe the students can learn of another way to deal with frustration when they become parents."

"I agree," said Caley, "For the most part they are very good to their children. It is just so difficult to change all these years of corporal punishment. The real problem is that there is no real check in place when you live in isolation. They can do pretty much what they want."

"I've set up appointments for the parents to come to Westridge to talk but it is unlikely that it will happen. They would probably only come if we could get the elders on our side."

Caley recalled her previous experience with Daniel and the preacher and knew it wouldn't happen. She resigned herself to spending more time on dealing with violence in school. The children already knew that she wouldn't strap them, and they knew that they were not allowed to touch each other in school. But she felt she could make more progress by talking about other ways to deal with anger. She would continue to seek gentler ways for the students to deal with each other. As she suspected and as the social worker confirmed, the colony circled the wagons and stuck together

on this issue. They supported Daniel publicly, though perhaps not privately. Daniel and Susie did not go to Lethbridge for any counselling because it was determined that it was impossible to prove how young Danny had been hurt.

As Caley passed Daniel at lunch shortly after the incident the look from him made it very clear that he suspected who had reported him. The colony did not side with him on this issue and were sure that it was one of the Gideons who said something to the social worker. Caley looked through him and was unconcerned over whatever he may have thought. After a time Dave returned to the colony as Daniel knew he would. Ted stayed away much longer and when he did return he stressed that it was only for awhile. He had argued at his job, needed a place to stay and decided to please his mother at the same time. The pattern of his father's youth began again. Ted was sent to the pig barn to work which he strongly opposed, and the kids at school said that was what would make him leave again. Gary didn't feel sorry for him.

"The pigs may stink, but the money doesn't."

Gary's dad was the pig boss and this was the way to remind the others that the hog operation brought in a lot of money.

Ted wasn't home very long when a boar bit him. He took the hose, shoved it down the pig's throat and turned on the tap forcing the pig to bloat and die. Another argument with the pig boss ensued over the wasted money from the animal and Ted left again. Daniel was less concerned this time because he realized that he had created a son very much like himself. He'd be back.

Conflicts and Compromises

The final days of August were winding down and Caley was busy preparing for the first day of the new school year. Seven years at the colony had left Caley somewhat restless at times. One year flowed into the next and yet always there were new things to learn about this fascinating culture. New students arrived and adjusted to English school. Tearful goodbyes, mostly on the part of the teacher, were inevitable. Only the original grade ones were left and they would be gone in the upcoming year. Edward, as he now again liked to be called, had recently married as did Dora and Debbie. Ted was still gone from the colony but he had a girlfriend at one of the colonies so he would be returning for ever one day. Other boys were still away and some had left and already returned. Most of the girls brought Caley lunch when they could and were always anxious to visit when she went to their parents houses. Even Laura had finished school and was now learning colony duties. That was especially hard for Caley but she was glad to see that Laura had become more accepted and seemed to fit in better as a young adult.

The old financial boss had passed away in May and just as Daniel Wurz had planned so long ago, he was voted in to take over. A few of Caley's Hutterite friends had stopped in on their way to Lethbridge to deliver the news. The colony members had some reservations about the choice of Daniel but with his experience as farm boss he was the most qualified candidate. Caley removed herself for the summer mostly to clear her head and try to regain her focus and perspective. She was mulling over how day after day the endless compromises and concessions on the

colony cloud the line that Caley promised herself she would never cross. After years it was difficult to tell where that line was. Her reverie was interrupted by a faint tapping at her door. Outside was a wide-eyed, fearful, Hutterite girl. Laura had run away.

The situation any other time would have been comical, for Laura was dressed in jeans which were too big and an old shirt that Caley recognized from the school costumes. There was very little to say. As Caley hugged Laura she could feel her young heart pounding. The girl didn't want to let go and when she finally did she was crying.

"I know I shouldn't have come here but I had to. I won't stay. I'm sorry."

Caley sat the girl down on her couch and attempted to calm her.

"You knew you could come here Laura and you were right to do so. It's alright."

"But you always said you wouldn't encourage us to leave. What can I do?"

"Well, the first thing I need to ask is what triggered it?" Caley questioned the girl. She wanted to know if it was impulsiveness over an event or something she had been thinking seriously about.

"You know, I've never felt like I fit in. They don't like me. I've thought about it lots of times. I know my dreams can't come true there. Maybe they can't come true anywhere," she started to cry again.

Now Laura, you just relax, I'll get you some lemonade and we'll figure this out."

Caley needed time to think. One thing for sure, the girl could not stay with her. She would love to have her but that would be the end of her

job. Hutterites do not sue so it was not a legal issue but still there would be ramifications. Where could Laura go? She still hadn't determined what Laura intended to do, if she even had a plan in the first place. If she simply wanted to be with her teacher maybe she would be allowed to continue in school. That thought was ridiculous and Caley knew it. The whole idea was to make sure they didn't have too much outside influence. Had Laura learned too quickly? Had Caley contributed in any way? If she had, Laura could have a very difficult life ahead of her. She could be very lonely. Would she be able to get more education? She would definitely need it if she was planning to stay out. Could Caley accept the burden that she was responsible?

Could Laura fit in the outside world or would she be somewhere in the middle again. She always had felt that she never fit into the Hutterite colony because she was too liberal-thinking, now in the English world she might still be on the fringe of society; this time because she was too conservative-thinking. Caley returned with the lemonade and Laura took it gratefully.

"Now, how did you get here?" Caley asked.

"I made a doctor's appointment this morning. I knew my dad wouldn't be able to take me because he was taking a grain truck to Calgary to be fixed. So I went with Elsa and her dad and mom. I borrowed these clothes from the school. Her mom and dad went shopping across the street. We were at the doctor's. We were supposed to meet them. Elsa had an appointment too but I went in first. I looked after her bag and I put a note in it and left it with the nurse. I was going to take a bus to Lethbridge but then I saw Andy from Prairieville. He told me I was crazy but he

brought me to this town. I didn't tell him you lived here, just that I had some friends I could go to. He didn't want to know anyway."

"As if they won't figure out what friends you mean," Caley said dryly.

"I wrote to Elsa that I was going to Calgary or Lethbridge, whichever bus came first, so that's where they'll look," Laura said.

Caley smiled, "Where do you think they'll look after they can't find you?"

"Should I go?" Laura was getting that frightened look again.

"What is it that you want to do? Are you just trying this out like the boys? Do you want to find a job, make a little money and return? I don't have to tell you that either way it won't be easy. Everybody will be mad but if you go back today it will soon be forgotten, but it will be harder to go back each day you delay. You know what they say about girls who leave. It's not the same as boys, honey."

"I'm not out for that. I don't care what they say. I want to work somewhere and I want to go to school. You said everybody has a choice. This is my choice." She was adamant.

"What about your family Laura?" Caley asked, "Can you stand it? You know they'll come for you."

"I don't want to see them until I have everything set. I know I have to go. Remember when that married Hutterite woman left? You said she probably went to the woman's shelter. Can I go there?"

Caley wasn't sure of the answer. After all Laura was only fifteen. She called the shelter and briefly explained the situation and was told that most shelters deal with adults or adults and their children. They then gave her a few numbers such as a Teen Line, Children's Advocate and Child

Welfare. Caley called child welfare in Lethbridge and talked it over with them. They were interested in determining whether or not there had been sexual, physical or emotional abuse. Caley knew that Laura would not speak a word against her parents and felt that she had hit a brick wall. She explained all of it to a very disappointed girl.

"I can't go back. I'll run away over and over again. They can take me back but they can't make me stay," she said defiantly.

Caley's last avenue, the one she had been saving was a phone call to an old friend. A former teacher friend who had taught on a Hutterite colony and was now staying at home with a daughter and twin boys had been mentioning that she needed help. She dialed the number with Laura looking on.

"Hi Joyce, this is Caley. How would you like some help with those kids for free room and board? She's great with kids, has lots of experience. She can cook and clean and doesn't watch much t.v.," Caley winked at Laura.

"What have you got yourself into Caley McConnell?" asked the friend. "It has a familiar ring."

Caley explained the situation briefly and took Laura over. Caley stayed all evening for two reasons. She wanted Laura to be reasonably comfortable which she seemed to be quite quickly, and also Caley didn't want to be home if the Hutterites showed up. She had no idea what she was going to do. She had learned that Laura as a minor would probably be taken home, but if she was as determined as she appeared she would leave again. The other option for a minor was to get the courts to allow someone else to be your guardian. Caley knew that she couldn't do this but maybe Joyce could, but that was a long way off.

Caley had a restless night and when she finally drifted off to sleep she was awakened by the doorbell. She knew immediately who it was and she called out, "I'll be there in a minute."

She quickly threw on her sweatpants and shirt and tried to wake up rapidly. She opened the door to Ben and of all people Daniel Wurz. She welcomed them in wondering what Daniel thought of her house.

"It probably isn't clean enough. Wouldn't he be surprised to see how much housework Will does at home?" she thought to herself.

She offered them coffee and waited for them to bring up the reason they were there.

"We're wondering if Laura has phoned you or if you know where she is," Ben said, "She's run away and we want to find her."

"Yes I do know where she is and she's fine," said Caley softly. "Do you want to phone her mother?"

"No, I think we'll just take her home. Where?" said Ben. "Is she here?"

"No, she isn't here," said Caley. "But I don't think she's ready to go home, Ben." Caley stressed again how safe she was.

"Oh, she'll come once we talk to her," interjected Daniel confidently.

Caley assumed that he was there because he had other business in town. He and Ben were not particularly friends.

"She has said that she doesn't want to talk to anyone yet. I know that you're worried Ben but she has said that she will only keep running away. What do you do with the boys?" Caley asked him.

"She's not a boy," said Daniel. "This is different. Anything can happen to a girl. Outsiders will take advantage of her. She's coming home."

Caley said, "Mr. Wurz, you should know of all people that they come home when they want to. Remember when Ted left the first time?"

This was probably still a painful reminder three years later to Daniel that he couldn't control everything.

She turned again to the father, "Ben, she isn't staying with me, and I hope you know that I did not know she was planning to leave. When she came though I was very concerned and I have made sure that she is safe. That's really all we can do right now."

"I can't tell her mother that Caley. Please," pleaded Ben.

"You don't have to say please to her Ben. She's lying! This is her fault," shouted Daniel. "Now you tell us where she is."

"I'm going to have to ask you to leave my house. Ben I know this is hard but she has to come on her own. I'll go see her today and ask her to talk to you, okay? I'll phone you and I'll be out at the school tomorrow. I'll come and see Marie."

Ben got up and headed for the door. He was mad and very upset but something told him that Caley wasn't changing her mind. Once he could talk to Laura it would be alright. Daniel glared at her.

"This isn't over McConnell. We didn't drive here for nothing."

"I'm sure it isn't," she mumbled.

She wanted to say, "I was unaware that your new found authority was hunting down runaways," but she held her tongue.

As she watched them drive away she felt very sorry for Ben. What person wouldn't be worried sick over their fifteen year old?

The rest of the morning Caley was consumed with thoughts of Laura. She struggled with how much she should have to do with the situation. She didn't feel like she could let Laura down after all they had meant to each other. Laura needed her support but at what price? Caley decided that if Laura was as determined as she appeared, Caley had better stay involved so that nothing bad would happen to the girl. Caley called child welfare and spoke to the social worker that had handled the abuse case three years ago. Caley explained to her the situation as best she could over the phone. The social worker requested a meeting with Laura in order to understand the girl's predicament better. This would probably be a good indication of how serious Laura was. Caley went over to see her and relayed the message. Laura was hesitant, but when Caley explained that it was the only way, she relented.

Caley and Laura had an appointment in Lethbridge at eleven o'clock and when the social worker met them she said, "I'm Jacquie Bessen, you must be Laura. I think I remember you. Do you remember me?"

"Yes," Laura replied very quietly.

"I like to talk to you alone at first, Laura. Are you comfortable with that?"

"Okay," Laura mumbled and looked to Caley.

After Laura and Mrs. Bessen spoke privately for about half an hour Caley was invited to join them.

The social worker began. "This is a very delicate situation. As you know determining grounds or cause is very difficult but Laura has expressed to me that she will only leave again if we encourage her to go

home. I'm not sure how this will be viewed but I believe there may be some grounds to keep the child out of the home. However, there are no guarantees because more than likely if her parents insist, she will have to return anyway and she will have to stay until she is eighteen."

It seemed to Caley like she was talking about the possibility of emotional abuse which was unclear in almost all situations.

"I'll leave as soon as I can," said Laura to Caley.

"Isn't there anything we can do?" asked Caley.

"Well, considering that this is a unique situation we would like to meet with the parents," said the social worker. "It might be possible to arrange something if there is somewhere that Laura could stay, but the first step is to get the two sides talking."

"I'm going out to the school tomorrow to prepare and I told Laura's father that I would come to talk with him and his wife. I can do that but I'm not sure what to say."

"I think it is important to determine what they are thinking," said Ms. Bessen. "Laura is not prepared to meet with them, but she will have to if we are to be allowed to continue. I haven't spoken to my supervisor yet but I feel quite positive that he will suggest this course of action."

"I feel confident in saying that they are thinking that the sooner Laura goes home the better, and beyond that they probably can't see anything else," answered Caley.

"Is that about how it is, Laura? Is there something that could be worked out with your parents and you Laura?"

"The problem is not my parents. It's that I want to do what other kids do - not Hutterites. I want to go to school and learn new things. I want to

try and make my dreams come true. I don't feel good there. I hope I can feel good somewhere else."

"What if your parents and the colony would agree to let you continue in school?" questioned Ms. Bessen, "Would you go back then?"

"Even if they did, which they wouldn't, what would everybody else say?"

Laura was amazing. She could read the situation and Caley knew she was right. They couldn't change rules or they would be changing it for everybody, that would be out of the question.

"What about court, Laura? Can you face your parents and tell a judge how you feel?" asked Jacquie.

"My parents won't come to court. We're not supposed to do that kind of thing," said Laura.

"Oh, I think they'll come to this," opined the social worker.

"You don't know Hutterites. That's not our way," stated Laura with quiet assurance.

"I think Laura may be right," said Caley, "It's not that they don't care, it's just that they know that someone has to be convinced or come back on their own. And they do not like internal troubles publicized."

"Well, let's leave it at that then. Why don't you see if you can arrange a meeting between Laura and her parents."

The social worker felt that it was all that could be done for the time being.

"Good luck," she said.

Laura and Caley drove home in silence. At times Caley sensed that Laura wished she had never left and was now just too stubborn to show

her fear. Other times she felt that Laura really was determined. Caley and Laura talked a long time and each time the girl spoke, Caley felt more sure that Laura really did want to try the outside world. Caley had never intended to be involved and now she was in it more deeply than she ever imagined. What could she tell a broken-hearted mother? How would the whole colony view her from now on? What had Daniel Wurz poisoned their minds with? Most importantly, if Laura did not return would the colony continue to trust her with their children or would they see her as the Pied Piper luring their children away?

These thoughts and many more accompanied Caley to the colony the next morning. She didn't know whether to go to the school for awhile or to rush immediately to Ben and Marie's when she had so little to say. She chose the former out of fear. She wasn't working very long when six of the women showed up. The preacher's wife, the German teacher's wife Judy, Lydia, Esther, Judy and Rachel. Caley found chairs, joked about how it was about time that they came to visit and sat down to talk. It was quite comfortable for a moment which is very rare on a Hutterite colony.

"Hey, there's seven of us," Caley said lightly, "Maybe we're the new elders."

"Is Laura okay?" Lydia asked shyly.

"Yes, Lydia, she's fine."

"Is she coming home?"

"I don't know, is the only answer I can tell you. I didn't know Laura was planning to leave and I was very surprised to see her. Did the older girls know she was leaving?" asked Caley.

Lydia was silent for a moment, just long enough for the others to realize that there must have been some warning.

"Laura talked about it more than the rest of us. We were all just fooling around. We never thought Laura would really leave."

"When I was a girl that was just for the boys," said the preacher's wife. "Hardly a girl ever left. I never heard of one till about ten years ago."

The older women in the group nodded in agreement.

The preacher's wife was very surprised, "I can't believe you talked about such things. You shouldn't even be doing that. Why would anyone want to leave when we have everything we need? We don't have to go out to work; our husbands love us; there's no divorce; everyone has enough to eat; and our children don't go hungry. What more could anyone want?"

She sounded like she felt genuinely sorry for the rest of the world.

Caley thought that everything she said was absolutely true, but she still knew that freedom was the price that had to be paid for security.

"I know you love your life," she said quietly, "But what if for some reason someone doesn't want it as much as you, or what if they want different things?"

"Then they are going against God, and the Devil is out in the world waiting for them," stated Esther.

Caley had never heard it so cut and dry.

"Do you think I'm living with the Devil?" Caley questioned.

"No, because you never had the chance to know. But if a Hutterite leaves and stays out the Devil is just waiting."

"Maybe not like that," said Lydia, "I'm not saying anybody should leave, but God might look after you in the world."

She was either hopeful out of fear for Laura or perhaps the younger generations were establishing new beliefs. This way of thinking was in direct opposition of the older women's ideas and Caley could foresee now how the changes might affect the younger members and eventually the entire colony. She was already aware of a colony in the States that had become Born Again Christians and looked more to the personal savior theology. They even had their services in English part of the time.

The preacher's wife said then, "Caley, we like you and we know you wouldn't have had anything to do with Laura leaving, but we also think she'll come back if you tell her to. She thinks the world of you. Everybody talked and that's what it might take. Now you should go and see Marie."

With that they left.

Well, there it was. That was it. Deep in the back of Caley's mind she knew the whole situation hinged on her. It always had and they knew it too. She noticed that there was no question in their mind that if that's what it would take then that's what she would do. She didn't even have an opportunity to question them about Laura coming back on her own, which is what they always say about the boys. Many times she heard that the ones that come out of guilt are resentful but the ones that choose the life are happy and contented. Didn't Laura's happiness and contentment matter? She went to see Marie and it was easier than she thought. Marie was glad that Laura was safe. She then spoke of the same things as the older women and added one more thing.

"If she does things she shouldn't do, when she comes back maybe nobody will marry her. Caley, you have to tell her to come home right away. She'll listen to you."

Ben came in shortly after Caley arrived and surprisingly Caley learned that he had purposely stayed away a few moments so they could talk alone. Caley explained as delicately and as gently as she could, "I know this is very difficult, but Laura has said that if she is forced to return, she will continue to leave. What if I asked or tell her to come home and then when she leaves again, she doesn't come to me? She wasn't going to this time. It was only luck that she met another Hutterite. Otherwise she was planning to get on a bus. I'm not going to lie to you. She shouldn't be in the city."

Marie looked to Ben for the answer.

"If she wants to go to school we'll let her," he said.

"Ben," said Caley, "You know the rest won't let that start. It would change everything. Don't you think it's more important for her to be safe and then she can come home when she's ready?"

"Well, where is she?" he demanded he know.

"She's staying with a family on a farm, just like the boys usually do. She helps with the children. The wife has to do the chores most of the time because her husband has to work off the farm to make a go of it."

"He should sell to Hutterites," said Ben sarcastically.

"You see, it's almost the same; she's not in town, she's not hanging around. She'll probably get so bored she'll be back in no time."

"It's not the same," said Marie, "Does she go to church everyday? I finally thought I was getting some help and now she's gone."

"She's only been gone two days. I don't know, but I know she's safe."

"What can we do?" Marie asked of Ben.

Caley felt she must tell them the truth. So she answered.

"The truth is, you can force her to come home. The law would probably make her, but you would probably have to go to court and there is no telling when she would run again. I'm going back to school to work for awhile and I'll stop in on my way home. You two talk it over."

Caley knew it wouldn't be just them talking it over. She wasn't even back to the school when she saw the two preachers and Daniel Wurz go into Ben and Marie's. A few moments later the old preacher came into the school.

"Did you have some lunch?" He always started this way she realized.

"The kids have been popping in with snacks and that was lots. Thank you," Caley really liked this man.

"Caley, I won't beat around the bush. We talked everything over with Ben and Marie. We can't change the rules for Laura. We just want you to tell her to come home. I know you think she'll leave and go somewhere else but she won't. We'll make sure of that."

"How?" asked Caley, "How can you be sure? I don't mean to be disrespectful but if you could really keep the boys at home I know you would, so how can you possibly keep Laura or any other girls at home? The other colonies have girls leaving all the time, too! The world is changing and it affects your colonies. Tell me, what did her mother say?"

"Ben said..." he started.

"Not Ben, her mother," interrupted Caley.

"Well, Marie is worried that she'll leave and you told her she might not come to you next time. You shouldn't have told her that, but if you tell her to come home we can forget about everything else."

"Well, she wouldn't come to me next time, and please don't tell me there won't be a next time. I've spent seven years with this girl. I know her and she is very stubborn and very determined."

"Look Caley, you have to tell her and that's it. We want you to teach our children, but not if they are going to leave because of you. So you go home and tell her. That's how it has to be, okay? We're not going to court or anything like that," he finished, "If you tell her to come home and she still doesn't, then we'll accept that."

"I'm sorry, I have to think this over, but I understand what you're saying, perfectly. Thank you for your honesty," Caley replied.

Caley felt cold all over. Her head was pounding. It was made perfectly clear this time. Tell her or don't come back. Not that they could do anything about it, but it would be too difficult to continue teaching. She would face the shunning of the colony. That was how they dealt with someone that badly misbehaved within their group, and basically that was how they would deal with her. The kids would be instructed to only do what was required. No one would attend school functions, such as, interviews or concerts. Never again would she be invited to a house. It would be a real shunning in every sense of the word.

Caley had decided before the preacher was down the steps. This was one compromise she couldn't accept. This was obviously the line she couldn't cross. It was all about choices and the reason she felt so committed to education. It offered choices. If Laura made a choice because of the education she received, Caley couldn't deny that she had had influence, but could a teacher be expected not to have some influence on her pupils? Caley had sincerely tried to separate her own beliefs

everyday while teaching. That was the real struggle. The Hutterites could only keep aspects of the world out for so long if they were going to stay part of the community economically. Wasn't it better to teach them more and educate them so they could make good choices instead of poor ones? As Caley headed home she wondered if there would be any contact with all the friends she had made. She felt sure there would. Perhaps at first the colony would expect solidarity from it's members, but as Laura visited or even returned Caley would hear from them. Julia would write, the kids would send hello's, and eventually some would stop in again. She thought that Laura could probably take home schooling for a while and then try to adjust later by going to high school. Maybe she would go back, but it still wouldn't have been for nothing. It was the principle of it all.

The phone rang in Caley's office as she was about to leave. It was the superintendent.

"Caley, I received a call today from that new boss at your colony. I think you better come in to the office today. There's certainly no problem with your teaching, but maybe we should talk about your assignment for this year."

"Yes, I was going to call you about the possibility of a re-assignment," said Caley, "I'll be there in half an hour."

As Caley drove away she glimpsed the pig leg in her rear view mirror and remembered the first day she entered this foreign world. It had really been like Alice going through the looking glass. The images of her first impressions flashed through her mind. Had this been her last trip to Grainview? The world of the Hutterites was getting smaller and smaller.

Their world was changing almost as rapidly as Caley's. Some of it was good and some of it was not. Whatever it had been, Caley also knew she was a different person than when she had begun her career there. She wouldn't have changed it for anything. She checked her rear view mirror, the pig leg was hidden by it's enveloping blanket of wheat.