



WANDA &  
BRUNSTETTER



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To Helen Ballard and the children in her class  
at the school I've visited in Walnut Creek, Ohio.





## GLOSSARY



*absatz*—stop

*ach*—oh

*achtsam*—careful

*appetitlich*—delicious

*baremllich*—terrible

*bickel*—pickle

*blentsching*—spanking

*blumme*—flowers

*bopp*—doll

*boppli*—baby

*bruder*—brother

*buch*—book

*daed*—dad

*danki*—thanks

*daremlich*—dizzy

*dumm*—dumb

*eegesinnisch*—selfish

*faahre*—ride

*gaul*—horse

*gern*—nap

*glicker*—marble

*grank*—sick

*gut*—good

*hund*—dog

*hundli*—puppy

*hungerich*—hungry

*hunnskop*—dog's head

*jah*—yes

*katz*—cat

*keffer*—bugs

*kichlin*—cookies

*kinner*—children

*Kumme, schnell!*—Come, quickly!

*leinduch*—sheets

*maedel*—girl

*mamm*—mom

*mann*—man

*niesse*—sneeze

*schnee*—snow

*Sei net so eegesinnisch!*—Don't be so selfish!

*walnuss*—walnut

*wasser*—water

*Wie geht's?*—How are you?

*yung bu*—young boy



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## CHAPTER 1



# A Troublesome Day

“Sure wish we could do somethin’ fun today,” nine-year-old Mark Miller complained to his twin sister, Mattie, as they headed down the driveway toward their parents’ roadside stand. “Selling fruits and vegetables from our garden is just plain boring—especially now, since it’s supposed to be nice out today.”

“I agree,” Mattie said, swatting at a bug that had landed on her arm. “We’re in school all week and don’t have much time to play when we get home. Because it’s Saturday and already warm outside, I was hoping I could visit my friend Stella Schrock.”

School had started a few weeks ago, and even though summer was officially over, there was no sign that the mild weather was going away just yet. In a few weeks they’d probably be wearing jackets, but not today. It was warm and comfortable, and the humidity was low. Although a few pesky insects were still around, they’d be gone in a few short weeks.

This morning the blue, cloudless sky made the landscape look so pretty. Mattie didn’t think it was fair that she and Mark were stuck watching their roadside stand today.

“I was hoping I could go fishin’ today.” Mark took a seat on one of the stools behind the wooden stand and folded his arms.

“Maybe we’ll sell everything really quick. Then we can do whatever we want for the rest of the day,” Mattie said with a hopeful smile as she watched a brownish-orange butterfly flit past and hover near some flowering bushes that were close to the stand. “Did ya see that pretty butterfly, Mark?”

Mark looked where Mattie was pointing. “Oh, that’s a Great Spangled Fritillary.”

“A Frita-what?” Mattie scrunched up her nose. “Are we talkin’ about the same thing?”

“I was talkin’ about the butterfly. Isn’t that what you were referring to—about how pretty it was?” Mark answered.

Mattie nodded, thinking to herself, *Here we go again with the big words.*

“Well, that butterfly is a Great Spangled Fritillary, and it’s common in our state of Ohio. It can be seen from June until October, and it thrives in woods, fields, and gardens. And,” Mark added, “these butterflies lay their eggs on violets.”

“Wow, you sure know a lot about this butterfly!”

“That’s ’cause I like to read about things.” Changing to a new topic, Mark pointed to the stack of pumpkins on the ground to the right of the stand. “Do ya really think we’re gonna sell all those?”

Mattie shrugged. “We’d have a lot more if we hadn’t given some of our pumpkins to our cousins Harold and Mary to sell at their stand.”

“Well, at least Mom and Dad said we could keep the money we make from all the pumpkins we sell.”

“That’s true, but we also have potatoes, apples, beets, pears, and some of Mom’s *kichlin* and homemade bread for sale. ’Course, any money we make from that will go to Mom and Dad.”

Mark looked at the tray full of goodies Mom had brought out earlier and licked his lips. “Those peanut butter *kichlin* sure look *appetitlich*, don’t they? I could eat a few of ’em right now.”

Mattie nodded. “The cookies do look delicious, but you’d better not eat any ’cause Mom’s *kichlin* usually sell really well.”

“Wish we could keep every bit of the money we make here today,” Mark said. “I’d like to buy a new yo-yo and some other fun things.”

Mattie sighed and leaned her elbows on the edge of the wooden surface. “Mom made the baked goods and Dad grew the produce, so it’s only fair that they should get most of the money.”

Mark motioned to a car that had just pulled up near the stand. “Wow, now that was quick! Looks like our first customer is already here.”

Mattie smiled. “That’s good. I hope they buy lots of things.”

A tall woman with short brown hair and a young blond-haired girl, who looked to be about Mattie’s age, got out of the car and approached the stand. “We need two nice big pumpkins,” the woman said, opening her purse and removing a leather wallet.

Mattie motioned to the pumpkins sitting on the

ground, sure that the woman would want to buy a few. “We have them in all shapes and sizes.”

While the woman looked at the pumpkins, the girl leaned her elbows on the edge of the stand and stared at Mattie. “My name’s Joyce. What’s yours?”

“Mattie.”

“How old are you?” she asked, blinking her blue eyes rapidly.

“My brother and I are both nine years old.” Mattie motioned to Mark. “We’re twins, and his name is Mark.”

Joyce looked at Mark then back at Mattie. “You do sort of look alike—same red hair, same blue eyes.”

“But we’re different as day and night,” Mark was quick to say. He stepped off the stool, and when he bent down to pick up an odd-shaped rock near the toe of his boot, his straw hat fell off. This caused his thick red hair to stand straight up.

Mattie tried not to giggle, so she focused on the rock in her brother’s hand instead of his funny-looking hair. Since Mark liked to collect rocks of all sizes and shapes, Mattie figured he would probably add this one to his collection.

“You have big ears, and your hair looks funny.” Joyce snickered as she stared at Mark.

“Joyce! You apologize right now. That was not nice,” the girl’s mother scolded.

“I’m sorry,” Joyce said, but she didn’t sound very sincere.

“That’s okay,” Mark answered, and then he walked away from the impolite little girl.

“Where’s your mother?” Joyce asked, looking back at Mattie with a strange expression.

“She’s up at the house baking more pies and bread for us to sell.” Mattie pointed to the baked goods sitting on the counter. “Don’t they look good?”

Joyce’s blue eyes widened. “You mean, your mother sent you and your brother out here by yourselves?” she asked, ignoring Mattie’s question.

“That’s right. Everyone in our family, except for our little sister and brother, takes a turn selling things here at the stand.” Mattie glanced over toward where Mark had been standing, but he wasn’t there. He had wandered away, looking for more rocks, no doubt.

*Mark shouldn’t leave me here to talk to this girl by myself, Mattie thought. He’s being selfish right now.*

Joyce pointed to the black bonnet on Mattie’s head. “How come you’re wearing a hat and long dress?”

“Because I’m Amish, and this is how we dress,” Mattie explained, wondering what the curious girl’s next question might be.

Joyce opened her mouth, like she might say something more, but the woman spoke first. “I didn’t see any pumpkins I like,” she said, rising to her feet and putting her wallet away. “I’m sorry, but none of them are big enough.”

“Oh, I see.” Mattie couldn’t help feeling a bit disappointed. “Is there anything else you’d like?” she asked. “We have lots of other fruits and vegetables for sale, and plenty of baked goods, too.”

The woman slowly shook her head. “All I need are some pumpkins right now.”

“Our cousins down the road have pumpkins for sale,” Mark said, moving back to the stand.

“Why, thank you,” the woman said, smiling. “I believe

we'll check that out." She paused a moment and then quickly added, "I'm sorry I couldn't find the right size pumpkins I need, but you've been most helpful referring us to your cousins."

"You're welcome," Mark said.

Mattie waited until the woman and her daughter got into their car, then she turned to Mark and said, "Why'd you tell her about the pumpkins we gave Harold and Mary to sell at their stand?"

"'Cause she didn't like our pumpkins and wanted somethin' else." Mark gave Mattie's arm a quick jab. "Don't worry about it. I'm sure we'll sell some of our pumpkins, and I bet it'll be soon."

Mattie hoped Mark was right, but she had a funny feeling this might not be a good day.



An hour went by, and not one single customer came. Mark was bored and tired of sitting and waiting. Mattie seemed fine with it, though. She had her nose in a book.

Mark nudged Mattie's arm, and when she pulled it away, her elbow banged the wooden counter. "Want to go play in that?" he asked, pointing to the mound of leaves their brother Russell had raked into a pile the day before.

Mattie shook her head. "Ouch!"

"What's wrong?"

"I got a splinter in my elbow," she said.

"Want me to see if I can get it out?"

"That's okay. I can manage." Mattie picked at the place where the splinter stabbed her skin. "There—it's out now."

"That's good. Now do you wanna play a game?"

“Huh-uh,” she replied. “And please don’t jab me again. It was your fault I got that nasty old splinter.”

“It wouldn’t have happened if you hadn’t jerked away when I bumped your arm.” Mark reached over and tickled Mattie under the chin. “Aw, come on, let’s play a game; it’ll be fun.”

Mattie shook her head so hard that the ribbon ties connected to her bonnet swished around her face. “Whenever I play one of your silly games, it usually means some kind of trouble for me.”

“This game won’t cause you any trouble—I promise,” Mark said.

“I don’t care. I’m not gonna play. I’m gonna sit here and read my *buch* until another customer shows up.”

“Suit yourself.” Mark hurried off, stopping in front of the huge pile of leaves. Then he reached into his pants’ pocket and took out a large blue marble. Grandpa Troyer had given the marble to Mark last summer, and it was the biggest in his collection.

Mark stepped into the pile of leaves and tossed the marble into the air, watching as it dropped. Then he reached into the leaves, felt around, and grabbed the marble out.

*This is so easy, he thought. I figured it’d be harder to find the marble, but it’s not.*

Mark tossed the marble into the air again, let it drop, dug into the leaves, and pulled the marble out. “Want to see what I can do with my marble?” he called to Mattie.

Still showing no interest, Mattie shook her head. “Someone has to watch the stand.”

Mark shrugged and kept tossing the marble and then

picking it up. He'd just thrown it into the air once more when—*woof! woof!*—a big black shaggy dog came out of nowhere, barking loudly and wagging its tail. The mutt wore no collar, and its fur was matted with briars. Mark was pretty sure it must be a stray.

“Get away from here!” Mattie shouted when the dog bumped into the stand. “Mark, *kumme, schnell!*”

Mark figured he'd better go quickly like Mattie had asked, or the dog might knock something over and make a mess of things.

He hurried back to the stand, for the moment forgetting about his marble. “Get away from here you troublesome *hund!*” he hollered, waving his hands.

*Woof! Woof!* The dog's long pink tongue hung out of the side of his mouth as he raced back and forth, circled the stand, and came to a halt in front of the basket of apples. Hunkered down on his front legs and watching the twins as if wanting them to play, the mutt barked again. *Woof! Woof! Woof!*

Mark made a lunge for the dog but missed. The critter stuck his snout into the basket, snatched an apple in his mouth, and darted away.

Mark started after the dog until Mattie shouted, “Just let him go, Mark! He's got what he wants, and we sure don't want the apple back now that it's been in the hund's slobbery mouth.”

Mark stopped running and returned to the stand. “You were right, Mattie. It doesn't look like we're gonna make any money today,” he said with a frown.

“The day's not over yet. Maybe someone will come along soon,” Mattie said with a hopeful-looking smile.



Mark's stomach rumbled. "I'm *hungerich*. Think I'm gonna eat one of Mom's kichlin."

Mattie shook her head. "You'd better not. Mom said she'd bring us something to eat when it's time for lunch, and if we start eating cookies there won't be any left to sell."

"I don't care. We haven't sold one single thing all morning, and I doubt that we will."

Mattie tipped her head and looked toward the road. "I hear a horse and buggy coming. Maybe the driver will stop at our stand."

Mark listened to the steady *clip-clop, clip-clop* of the horse's hooves. A few minutes later, a horse and black box-shaped buggy pulled up near the stand. Mark recognized the elderly driver and his wife—Elam and Martha Fisher. Elam held the reins while Martha climbed out of the buggy. "Do you have any carrots?" she asked, smiling at the twins.

Mark shook his head. "All we have for sale is what's sitting out."

"That's too bad. I really need some carrots for the vegetable soup I'm planning to make later today," Martha said.

Mattie spoke up. "Our cousins down the road have a stand, and they might have some carrots."

Martha smiled. "*Danki*. We'll go there now and check it out." She turned and climbed back into the buggy.

Mark looked at Mattie and frowned. "Looks like our cousins are gonna make all the money today 'cause we sure aren't making any. Think I'll go back to the pile of leaves and look for the marble I dropped there."

Mattie's eyebrows shot straight up. "How are you gonna find it in all those leaves?"

“It’s simple. I saw where I dropped it, so I’ll just reach inside and pick it up, just like I did a couple of times before. It’s a fun game. You really oughta come and watch.”

“Now this I’ve gotta see.” Mattie followed Mark to the pile of leaves and stood watching as he dug around for the marble.

Mark’s forehead wrinkled as he frowned. “That’s really strange. I’m sure I dropped it right here,” he said, scooping out some of the leaves and peering into the hole.

*Woof! Woof!* The big black dog that had taken the apple came running down the road and headed straight for the stand again. Before Mark or Mattie could do a thing, the bouncing dog knocked the tray of cookies on the ground and gobbled them all up, leaving only the crumbs clinging to his whiskers.

Mattie hollered, and just as Mark was about to chase after the dog, the critter leaped into the air and landed in the pile of leaves with a thud! Then he stuck his nose in the leaves and grunted as he pushed them all around. The next thing Mark knew, the dog had scattered the leaves everywhere and trampled the ground.

“Oh no!” Mattie cried. “That hund’s not only eaten Mom’s kichlin, but he’s made a big mess, and now those leaves will have to be raked all over again.”

Mark got down on his hands and knees, hoping to locate his marble, but it was nowhere to be found. “My *glicker* is gone, and I’ll probably never get it back. Wish I’d never gotten out of bed this morning!” he muttered.

“Calm down, Mark,” Mattie said. “You’re gettin’ yourself all worked up.”

“That’s easy for you to say. You didn’t lose something

special to you in that pile of leaves.”

“If the marble was so special, then you should have been more careful with it. You shouldn’t have fooled around in the leaves when you should have been watching the stand with me.”

“What was I supposed to watch—the flies buzzin’ over our heads?” Mark asked with a frown.

Mattie rolled her eyes. “Course not. I just think you should have been sitting here by me and not foolin’ around. Guess the game with the glicker wasn’t so much fun after all, huh?”

Choosing to ignore his sister’s last remark, Mark took a seat on the stool and folded his arms. “All right, I’ll just sit here and be *extraordinarily* bored.”

“Extraordi-what?”

“Extraordinarily. It means *very* or *unusually*,” Mark said.

“Why didn’t you just say you’re very bored instead of using a big word I don’t understand?”

“I like big words. They’re fun to use.”

“Not for me,” Mattie said with a shake of her head.

Mark closed his eyes and let the sun beat down on his face. It might be fall, but today it felt almost like summer.

*Meow! Meow!*

Mark opened his eyes and looked down. His fluffy gray cat, Lucky, sat on the ground by his stool, staring up at him.

“Kumme,” Mark said, patting the side of his leg.

Lucky didn’t have to be asked twice. She leaped into Mark’s lap and started licking his hand with her sandpapery tongue.

Mark smiled and stroked the top of Lucky’s head.

“You’re such a nice *katz*.”

“It’s a good thing your cat wasn’t here when that big dog came around,” Mattie said. “Most dogs don’t like cats, you know.”

“That’s true,” Mark agreed. “But Lucky can run really fast, and she’d have probably climbed up a tree, like she does when your dog, Twinkles, chases her.”

Mattie looked like she was going to say something more when their thirteen-year-old brother, Russell, showed up.

“What happened to my pile of leaves?” Russell asked, frowning. “I worked really hard raking them yesterday.”

Mark explained about the big dog that had made a mess of the leaves.

“Couldn’t you have done anything to stop him?” Russell asked, pushing a hunk of his blond hair away from his blue eyes.

“I tried, but the exuberant hund wouldn’t listen.”

“The what?” Mattie asked, looking at Mark.

“Exuberant. It means *lively* or *frisky*.”

“That’s a fact,” Mattie said. “The frisky, exuberant dog had a mind of its own. He ate the whole tray of Mom’s kichlin, too. I’ll bet it was a stray and has no home.”

Russell placed his hand on Mark’s shoulder. “It doesn’t look like you’re that busy here, so how about helping me rake up the leaves? After that, we’ll put them in the wheelbarrow and haul ’em around back to the compost pile. Guess I should have put ’em there in the first place.”

“I’d rather not rake leaves,” Mark said. “Besides, Mattie needs my help with the stand.”

“You weren’t worried about that when you were

foolin' around with your glicker," Mattie said. "I'm sure I can manage on my own for a while—especially since we haven't been that busy anyway."

Mark knew Mattie was right, but he didn't think it was fair that she got to sit and read a book while he helped Russell rake leaves. Well, then again, maybe he would find his marble while they were raking up the leaves. At least that would make it worth all the trouble he'd had here today.



## CHAPTER 2



# Sticky Pickles

That evening during supper, Mattie glanced over at Mark and noticed his frown. He'd been unhappy ever since he lost his marble this afternoon. She couldn't blame him for being upset, but if he'd stayed at the produce stand with her instead of tossing the marble into the leaves, he'd have it with him right now. So in some ways, it kind of served him right.

"How'd things go at the stand today?" Dad asked, passing a bowl of mashed potatoes to Mattie.

"Not so well," she said. "We only sold a few things, and that wasn't till this afternoon, after Mom brought us our lunch."

"That's too bad," Dad said. "I stopped by my brother Aaron's house this afternoon, and he said Harold and Mary sold all the pumpkins you'd given them, as well as most of their other produce."

Mattie frowned. "I'll bet we would have done better if we hadn't given them half our pumpkins."

Mark gave a nod. "The first lady who came by our stand probably would've bought a pumpkin from us if we'd had some bigger ones to choose from. But no—all the

big pumpkins went to Harold and Mary.”

“Where’s your spirit of generosity?” Mom asked. “Don’t you realize how good it feels when we give to others?”

“I suppose it does,” Mattie said. “But since Mark and I didn’t sell any of our pumpkins, we didn’t make one bit of money for ourselves today. Though we did send two different customers over to our cousins’ stand, since we didn’t have what they wanted.”

“It was really nice of you to do that, but don’t worry, you’ll have other chances to earn money,” Dad said.

“That’s correct,” Russell put in. “Grandpa Miller’s always lookin’ for someone to help him with chores.”

Their eleven-year-old brother, Calvin, bobbed his blond head. “I helped Grandpa clean out his barn a few weeks ago, and he gave me some money when we were done.”

“It’s nice to earn money,” Dad said, handing the platter of ham to Mark. “But we should be willing to help others even without getting paid. The Bible tells us in Philippians 2:4 that we shouldn’t look to our own interests, but to the interests of others.”

“Our *daed*’s right,” sixteen-year-old Ike agreed, pushing a strand of red hair out of his blue eyes. “It’s a real good feeling to do something nice for someone.”

Mom nodded in agreement.

“I did something nice for Russell when I helped him rake the leaves that big dog scattered today,” Mark said.

“Did you do it with a smile on your face?” Mom asked, reaching over to wipe some mashed potatoes from three-year-old Ada’s face.

“No, he sure didn’t,” Russell promptly answered before Mark could reply. “He grumbled about it the whole time.”

“That’s ’cause I was upset about losin’ the glicker Grandpa Troyer gave me.”

Ike tapped Mark’s shoulder. “Maybe the marble will turn up someday.”

“Well, I’m gonna keep looking,” Mark said.

“That’s fine,” Dad said. “Just don’t spend time looking for the marble when you should be doing your chores.”

Mark shook his head. “I won’t.”

“Where do you think the marble could be?” Calvin asked.

“I’m not sure,” Mark replied. “I didn’t find it when Russell and I raked up the leaves and unloaded ’em on the compost heap.”

“If I find the glicker, can I keep it?” asked Perry, who was five and also had blond hair like Dad’s.

“No!” Mark said quickly. “If you find the marble, you must give it back to me right away.”

Perry blinked like he might be about to cry, but Mom turned his attention to something else when she put two olives on his plate.

Perry loved olives and liked to put them on the ends of his fingers before popping them into his mouth. Little sister Ada didn’t care for olives, but she liked pickles very much. Mark liked pickles, too, but Mattie preferred olives—especially the green ones stuffed with pimento.



Mark noticed that there was only one pickle left, and he was about to reach for it when Ada hollered, “*Bickel!* Bickel!”



Thinking someone might give the last pickle to Ada, Mark quickly snatched it, and—*chomp! chomp!*—it was gone!

“Bickel! Bickel! Bickel!” Ada screamed. Tears ran down her red cheeks that almost matched her hair. “I want a bickel!”

“Calm down, Ada.” Mom patted Ada’s back, then she turned to Mark and said, “It was greedy of you to eat that whole pickle when you could have given Ada half.”

“Sorry,” Mark mumbled. “But you know how much I like bickels.”

“I understand, but Ada likes them, too.” Mom pointed to the door leading to the basement. “Would you please go downstairs and get another jar of pickles?”

“Okay, Mom.” Mark leaped out of his chair and hurried down the stairs to the basement. He was happy to get a jar of Mom’s homemade pickles because it meant he could have another pickle, too.

Mark found several jars of pickles on the shelf where Mom kept her canning jars. He chose the jar that had the biggest pickles in it, and when he reached for it, a large black cricket jumped out from behind another jar.

“Wow, he’s a big one!” Mark exclaimed. “Boy would I love to catch this one!” Mark had caught crickets before and kept them in a small aquarium, just long enough to observe them for a while before releasing the insects back outside. Mark loved watching the bugs eat when he gave them small pieces of lettuce.

Thinking better of the idea of trying to catch this cricket, he looked at the insect and then at the jar of pickles in his hand. *Guess I’d better not deal with the bug right*

now, he decided. *Mom will either come lookin' for me or send someone else down to see what's takin' so long.*

Running up the stairs, Mark hurried back to the kitchen. "Want me to open it?" he asked Mom after he'd set the jar on the table.

She nodded. "And when you do, the first pickle goes to Ada. Understand?"

"*Jah.*" Mark grabbed the lid of the jar and gave it a twist. It didn't open.

"Want me to do that for you?" Ike asked.

"I'm sure I can get it." Mark twisted a little harder this time, but the lid still wouldn't budge.

"Why don't you take it over to the sink and run some warm water over the lid?" Mom suggested.

Mark did as she suggested, and then he carried the jar back to the table. Gripping the lid tightly and gritting his teeth, he cranked on the lid with all his strength. *Swoosh!* The lid came right off. Mark was about to reach inside the jar for a pickle when Ada bumped his arm and hollered, "Bickel!" The jar slipped out of Mark's hands and toppled over.

Mark took a step backward, but not quick enough. The pickles spilled onto the floor, splattering sticky juice all over, including his shoes. Some even splashed him in the face.

Mom gasped. Mattie plugged her nose and said, "Phew! That pickle juice sure does stink!" Dad's eyebrows lifted high on his forehead. Mark's brothers chuckled. Ada started to howl.

Mark moaned. This had not been a very good day. He and Mattie hadn't made any money at the stand this

morning. He'd lost his marble in the pile of leaves. Then he'd helped Russell rake the leaves back into a pile. There was a big cricket in the basement, and he'd missed the chance to catch it. Now he had a smelly, sticky pickle mess to clean up.

The pickles were slippery, and whenever Mark tried to pick one up, it slipped through his fingers and fell back to the floor. "This isn't working," he said with a groan.

"Here, let me do that." Mom squatted down beside him. She looked over at Mark and slowly shook her head. "You smell like pickle juice, so you'd better let me take over here while you go wash up."

"Danki, Mom," Mark said before scurrying down the hall toward the bathroom.



That night when it was time for bed, Mattie hurried to the bathroom to wash her face and brush her teeth. She figured if she got there before anyone else she wouldn't have to stand out in the hall and wait.

First Mattie washed her face with a warm washcloth. Then she removed the pins from the bun she wore at the back of her head. As she brushed her long red hair, she counted. . .one. . .two. . .three. . .four. . .five. . . She'd just reached the number twenty when someone pounded on the door.

"Hurry up, Mattie! You're taking too long," Mark hollered from the other side of the door.

"Go away! I'm busy brushing my hair!"

*Bang! Bang! Bang!* "Come on, Mattie! I need in there now!"

Mattie kept counting and brushing her hair. She didn't stop until she got to one hundred. Grandma Miller had told Mattie once that she brushed her hair one hundred times every night. Mattie figured it would be a good idea if she did the same.

*Bang! Bang!* “Mattie, are you ever coming out?”

“I'm not done yet. I need to brush my teeth.” Mattie put toothpaste on her toothbrush, opened her mouth real wide, and took her time brushing every one of her teeth. When she was done, she rinsed out her mouth with cold water. When she opened the bathroom door, Mark was standing in the hall with a scowl on his face.

“It's about time,” he grumbled. “You were selfish hoggin' the bathroom like that.”

“I wouldn't talk about being selfish if I were you,” Mattie said with her hands on her hips. “You've been doing selfish things all day.”

“Have not.”

“Have so.”

“Have—”

“Mattie!” Mom called from the kitchen. “Would you tuck Ada and Perry into bed while I finish cleaning up in here? There's still some of that sticky pickle juice on the floor that I missed before.”

Mattie wished she didn't have to tuck her little brother and sister into bed. “Why don't you take care of Perry while I see to Ada?” Mattie asked Mark.

He shook his head. “Mom asked you to do it, not me.”

“I know, but I want to read awhile before I go to bed,” Mattie said. “If I have to tuck both Ada and Perry in, it'll take too long.”

“It won’t take you any longer to tuck them in than it did to comb your hair and brush your teeth while I waited out here in the hall.” Mark opened the bathroom door and quickly stepped inside.

“I wish I were Mom and Dad’s only child,” Mattie mumbled as she tromped up the stairs.



## CHAPTER 3



# A Day with Grandpa and Grandma

The following Saturday, Mark and Mattie were invited to spend the day with Grandma and Grandpa Miller. Mark hoped he and Grandpa would do something fun together—maybe go fishing or take a walk in the woods. However, he was disappointed when Grandpa announced that he and Grandma would be taking the twins to some yard sales today. Mark thought going to a yard sale would be boring, but at least it was a better way to spend a Saturday than selling produce at their roadside stand and not making any money.

As they traveled down the road in Grandpa and Grandma's buggy, Mark's eyes grew heavy. He'd stayed up later than usual last night, first in the basement looking for the cricket, which he'd had no luck in finding. He had spent more than an hour in the basement, looking in every nook and cranny, behind all the jars on the canning shelf, and even in Mom's washing machine. Mark thought it would be awesome if he'd caught the big insect and kept it in his room overnight, listening to it chirp. The last

time he'd done that, with the ones he'd caught and put in the aquarium, it was a full-blown chorus as each cricket seemed to try and outdo the other with its musical song.

Then, when Mark had finally given up on the cricket, he'd gone back to his room, searching for big words in the dictionary. He'd found two new ones that he liked really well. They were *extravagant* and *conscientious*. Now he just needed to wait for the right time to say one or both of these big words.

Feeling the buggy's rocking movement and hearing the steady *clippety-clop* of the horse's hooves made Mark even sleepier. His head lulled against the seat, and he closed his eyes. Pretty soon he was fast asleep. He'd only been sleeping a few minutes, however, when Mattie bumped his arm.

Mark's eyes snapped open. "What do you want, Mattie? Couldn't you see that I was sleeping?"

"Sorry for waking ya, but I was wonderin' if I could borrow your catcher's mitt when we get home. Thought I might ask Calvin or Russell to throw the baseball to me so I can get better at catching."

Mark shook his head. "My friend John Schrock gave me that catcher's mitt for my birthday, so I don't think it'd be right if I loaned it out."

"I doubt that John would care."

Mark said nothing—just closed his eyes again and tried to sleep.

Mattie tapped his arm. "I have another question."

"What's that?"

"Did you feed Twinkles this morning?"

"Now why would I wanna do that?" Mark asked.

“Twinkles is your hund, not mine.”

“I know, but when you went outside to give Lucky her breakfast, I asked if you’d feed Twinkles, too.” Mattie nudged his arm again. “Remember, Mark?”

“ ’Course I remember.”

“So did you feed her or not?”

He shook his head.

“How come?”

“ ’Cause it’s your responsibility to take care of your hund, and you oughta be conscientious enough to do it.”

Mattie’s forehead wrinkled. “Consci—what?”

“The word is *conscientious*. It means *reliable*.”

“I am reliable, but I thought you could feed Twinkles as a favor to me.”

“I have enough of my own chores to do,” Mark said.

Mattie folded her arms and frowned. “The only reason I asked you to feed Twinkles is because I was busy helping Mom do the breakfast dishes. I didn’t think I’d have time to get Twinkles fed before Grandma and Grandpa picked us up.”

“We would have waited for you to feed the dog,” Grandma called over her shoulder.

“See,” Mark said. “You should have told Grandma and Grandpa that Twinkles needed to be fed.” He was glad Grandma had heard what Mattie said.

“But I didn’t, and you didn’t feed her, so now the poor hund is probably starving to death. You could have at least told me you didn’t feed her,” Mattie persisted.

“She won’t starve from missing one meal.” Grandpa glanced back at Mattie. “Just remember to feed her as soon as you get home. Oh, and Mark, it would have been



nice if you'd fed Twinkles for your sister."

Mattie looked over at Mark and said, "Don't worry—I'll never ask you to feed my hund again, and don't ask me to feed your katz either."



By the time they had stopped at three yard sales, Mattie was bored. She hadn't seen anything that interested her at all. There were a lot of baby clothes, some farm equipment, furniture, dishes, and some canning jars, which Grandma bought, but nothing Mattie wanted. Grandpa had found a new handle for the one that broke on his rake, and he'd also purchased a metal milk can to store birdseed in for the winter on their back porch.

This third yard sale had something different from the first two they had gone to, however. There was a small concession stand set up selling hot dogs, barbeque sandwiches, homemade cookies, and peanut butter fudge. They also had bottled water available for anyone who was thirsty.

"How would you like something to eat?" Grandpa asked the twins. "Your grandma and I are getting a little hungry from all this yard-sale hopping, and I see there's some food tables set up over there under those big maple trees."

"I'm hungry, too," Mark answered.

"Same here," Mattie agreed.

They all decided to get hot dogs, except for Grandpa. He chose the pork barbeque sandwich. Grandma reminded everyone that she'd made peanut butter cookies yesterday, and they'd have those once they got back to their house.

"I'll have just ketchup on my hot dog," Mattie told the

teenage boy making the sandwiches.

“I’d like mustard and relish on mine,” Mark said when it was his turn to choose.

Grandma smiled when the boy asked her what she would like on her hot dog. “Ketchup, mustard, relish, and onions, please. I want the works.”

There were chairs and a few tables set up, also under the shade of the trees, and they all took a seat to eat their lunch. Mark and Mattie were in a conversation about what they hoped to find at the next place they were going to. As Grandpa and Grandma Miller ate, they watched the small crowd of people looking over the items for sale.

“I hope I can find a yo-yo,” Mark said to Mattie as he wiped a glob of mustard off the side of his mouth.

“I’m not sure if I’m looking for anything in particular.” Mattie took another bite of her hot dog. “I thought you wanted a *new* yo-yo and not another used one.”

“If I find one that’s better than the one I have, that would be okay with me. I just have to—”

Mattie looked at Mark, wondering why he’d stopped in midsentence. Her gaze followed the direction her brother was looking, and Mattie’s heart almost stopped beating. It felt like it had jumped into her throat.

“Carolyn! Carolyn! Are you all right?” Grandpa looked at Grandma with a panicked expression.

Mattie watched in horror as Grandma pointed first to her throat and then to her mouth. It looked like she was trying to tell Grandpa something, but all she could do was make little gasping noises.

Grandpa gave Grandma’s back a couple of thumps, but it didn’t seem to help. “Can someone please help us?”

Grandpa shouted. “My wife seems to be choking!”

It was like someone sounded an alarm, and several people came running over. They must have heard the urgency in Grandpa’s voice.

“Grandma’s turning blue,” Mark whimpered, reaching out to hold Mattie’s hand.

Mattie was really scared. She’d never seen anyone choke like this before, except little Ada, but she had only sputtered on milk while she was drinking it. This was different, though. Grandma couldn’t talk, and it looked like she was having trouble breathing.

Mattie quickly said a silent prayer, *Lord, please help my grandma.*

“She needs to stand up!” the teenage boy who’d given them the hot dogs yelled as he raced over and got behind Grandma.

Mattie’s fear increased as Grandpa helped Grandma stand. What was this boy going to do to their grandma?

Mattie watched helplessly as the boy wrapped his arms around Grandma’s waist from behind, made a fist with both hands together, and made quick upward thrusts into the upper part of her stomach. He did this only a few times, and all of a sudden a big piece of hot dog flew out of Grandma’s mouth. Almost immediately Grandma coughed and was able to breathe again.

Mattie breathed a sigh of relief as Grandma, her face turning red, whispered, “Guess I should learn to take smaller bites.”

It seemed like everyone, strangers included, went “*whew*” at the same time as Mark and Mattie.

Grandpa smiled and shook the boy’s hand, thanking

him for saving Grandma's life. "What is your name, son?"

"Well, my real name is Anthony, but most folks just call me Tony," he answered, looking a little embarrassed at all the attention he was getting. "Guess it's a good thing I was listening in class the day they taught us first aid."

"What was it that you did to my grandma?" Mattie asked.

"That's called the Heimlich maneuver," Tony answered. "When someone is choking and can't breathe, that's what you do to dislodge the food or obstruction in their windpipe. There's even a way to do the procedure on yourself, if you happen to be alone and start choking."

"Well, I'm glad you were here to help. Thank you so much." Grandma patted Tony's arm. "Now I want everyone to quit worrying about me. I'm fine now, and you know what? I'm still hungry, not to mention eager to see some of the other yard sales that await us today."

After the frightening experience was over, it felt good to relax, knowing Grandma was going to be all right.

"I know one thing," Mark said to Mattie after they'd finished their lunch. "I'm gonna read up on this Heimlich maneuver. I think everyone should know how to do that."



At the next yard sale they went to, Mattie spotted a table full of toys and games. She was on her way to look at them when she noticed a pretty snow globe on one of the tables. Inside the globe was a garden scene with flowers, a butterfly, and even a frog. Mark must have seen the globe, too, because he reached for it at the same time as Mattie.

"You'd better not touch it," Mattie said. "It looks

breakable. Besides, I saw it first.”

“Don’t be so selfish, Mattie. I have just as much right to look at the snow globe as you do.” Mark snatched up the globe and gave it a shake. Colored pieces of fake snow swirled all around inside the miniature world. It was beautiful!

“It’s my turn now,” Mattie said, taking the globe out of Mark’s hands. It was the prettiest snow globe she’d ever seen. It was not only a globe but also a music box, so that made it even more special.

Mattie had only been holding the globe a few seconds and was getting ready to wind it up so she could listen to the song it played, when Mark snatched it right back. “I wanna see that!”

“Hey! I wasn’t done looking at it yet. I wanna hear what song it plays.” Mattie grabbed hold of the snow globe, but Mark wouldn’t let go. Mattie gritted her teeth and tugged. Mark did the same. Suddenly, Mattie let go, but so did Mark. *Crash!*—the snow globe hit the ground and broke into several pieces. It was ruined!

Mattie gasped. Mark moaned. Grandma and Grandpa came running over with worried expressions.

“What happened?” Grandma asked.

Mattie quickly explained. Mark just stood, staring at the ground.

“If Mattie had let me hold the snow globe, it wouldn’t have fallen and broken into pieces,” Mark said.

Mattie frowned. “If you had let *me* hold the globe, it wouldn’t have broken.”

Deep wrinkles formed across Grandpa’s forehead. “Just a minute here. It sounds to me like you were both

in the wrong, and now you'll have to pay for the broken globe."

Tears welled in Mattie's eyes. "But I only have fifty cents, and the globe is two dollars."

"I have fifty cents, too," Mark said. "So between me and Mattie, we just have one dollar."

"You two can pay for half, and I'll pay the rest of it," Grandpa said. "But you will both have to do a few chores for me and Grandma today to work off your debt."

Mattie looked down, disappointed that they'd be leaving the yard sale empty-handed. Mark's frown let her know that he was unhappy about that, too.

"As soon as you pay for the snow globe, I think we should go home," Grandma told Grandpa. "I've had enough yard sales for one day."

Grandpa gave a nod. "Mark, you can start by helping me tie the milk can I bought at the last yard sale onto the back of the buggy. It's really too crowded for it to ride inside the buggy." Then he looked at both of the twins and said, "If you two don't get over your selfish attitudes, you're going to have a bumpy ride ahead."

"What do you mean?" Mark asked.

"If you keep being selfish, you'll have lots of problems, just like you would if you were riding on a very bumpy road and got jostled around," Grandpa explained.

Mattie couldn't imagine having any more problems than she did right now, and she sure hoped they wouldn't have a bumpy ride home.