Just Plain Foolishness

Dedication

To Ella Schrock. Thanks for letting me tour your wonderful greenhouse. To the children and teachers at the Pine Creek Amish schoolhouse in Goshen, Indiana. I enjoyed meeting you and introducing you to my Grandma Yoder puppet. And to Elvera Kienbaum. Thanks for sharing your wonderful strawberry story with me.

Glossary

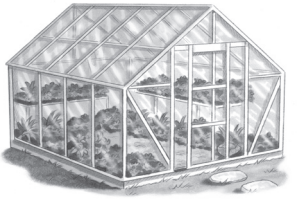
ach—oh
aebeer—strawberry
aebier—strawberries
alt—old
bensel—silly child
boppli—baby
bopplin—babies
brieder—brothers
bruder—brother
busslin—kittens
buwe—boy
daed—dad
danki—thanks
dechder—daughters
dumm—dumb
gans—goose
grossdaadi—grandfather
gut—good
hund—dog
jah—yes
kapp—cap
kinner—children
kumme—come
maedel—girl
mamm—mom
maus—mouse
meis—mice
naerfich—nervous
schee—pretty
schissel—bowl
schliffer—splinter
schmaert—smart
schnell—quickly
schtinkich—stuffy
schwach—feeble
schweschder—sister
sei so gut—please
shillgrott—turtle
windel—diaper
wunderbaar—wonderful

Bisht du an schlaufa?	Are you sleeping?
Des kann ich finne.	I can find it.
Die Rachel is die ganz zeit am grumble.	Rachel is grumbling all the time.
Dummel dich net!	Take your time! Don't hurry!
Geb's mir!	Give it to me!
Grummel net um mich rum.	Don't grumble around me.
Guder mariye.	Good morning.
Gut nacht.	Good night.
Hallich gebottsdaag.	Happy birthday.
Hoscht du schunn geese?	Have you already eaten?

Ich hei-ah die bells an ringa.
Letscht nacht hab ich
ohreweh ghat.
Schweschder Hannah
She dich, eich, wider!
Was in der welt?
Wie geht's?

Morning bells are ringing.
I had an earache
last night.
Sister Hannah
See you later!
What in all the world?
How are you?

Chapter 1
Grandpa's Greenhouse



Bang! Bang! Bang!

Rachel Yoder stepped onto the back porch and shielded her eyes from the glare of the morning sun. She was excited to see Grandpa Schrock's new greenhouse going up on the front of Pap's property. More than a dozen men from their Amish community had come to help.

Pap, Henry, and other men kept busy pounding nails into the wood framing, while Rudy and another group of men sawed the lumber. Rachel's brother Jacob and several other boys carried lumber and other supplies to the men. Grandpa helped wherever he could and supervised everything.

"I wish I could help build Grandpa's greenhouse," Rachel said when Mom stepped onto the porch with a jug of water and a stack of paper cups. "It looks like the men are having so much fun."

Mom nodded, and her glasses slipped to the end of

her nose. Rachel was glad her own blue plastic-framed glasses stayed in place. But that was probably because the bridge of her nose wasn't as thin as Mom's nose.

"I'm sure the men enjoy what they're doing, but it's a lot of hard work," Mom said, pushing her glasses back in place. "That's why we need to keep taking snacks and cold drinks to them."

She handed Rachel the jug of water and paper cups. "Would you please take these out to the workers? They must be thirsty by now."

Rachel groaned. "Do I have to carry water? I'd rather help build the greenhouse."

"That's just plain foolishness, Rachel. Hammering nails and sawing wood is men's work." Mom nudged Rachel's arm. "Now hurry and take this water to the workers."

Gripping the handle of the water jug in one hand, and holding the package of paper cups under her arm, Rachel stepped off the porch.

Her bare feet tingled as she trudged through the cool grass. When she reached the graveled driveway, she walked carefully so she wouldn't step on any sharp rocks. Halfway there, she met Jacob.

"How are things going with Grandpa's greenhouse?" she asked.

"Real well. I'll bet we'll have it up before the day's out." He motioned to the entrance of the building being framed with wood. The rest of the greenhouse would be

built with plastic pipe and covered with heavy plastic.

Rachel sighed. "I wish I could help build the greenhouse. It's not fair that you get to have all the fun."

Jacob grunted and wiped a trickle of sweat running down his forehead. "*Jah* [Yes], right. Helping build the greenhouse is not all fun and games, sister. It's hard work—men's work!"

She snickered. "What would you know about men's work? You're not a man."

Jacob puffed out his chest and lifted his chin. "I'll be thirteen years old in a few months. Before long I'll graduate from school and start helping Pap on the farm full-time—just two more years."

"I'll turn eleven before you turn thirteen," Rachel said. "In case you've forgotten, my birthday's only a few weeks away."

Jacob shrugged. "You're still two years younger than me. That means I'm a lot smarter than you are."

"No, it doesn't."

"Jah, it does."

Rachel shook her head. "Grandpa thinks I'm *schmaert* [smart]. If he didn't, he wouldn't have said I could help him in the greenhouse after it's built."

Jacob snorted. "That doesn't mean you're schmaert. It just means you'll be busy in the greenhouse. Maybe that will help you stay out of trouble for a change."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Trouble seems to follow wherever you go. Always

trouble somewhere. Isn't that what you say?"

Rachel shrugged. "I guess that's true, but I'm hoping I'll have less trouble and more fun after Grandpa's greenhouse is open for business."

"We'll see about that." Jacob motioned to the lumber pile on the other side of the driveway. "I'd better get more wood for the men who are building."

"Can I carry some wood?" Rachel asked.

Jacob shook his head. "If you want to help, stick with what you're doing and see that everyone gets plenty of water."

Rachel frowned. "What's so helpful about hauling water?"

"It helps the thirsty men," Jacob called as he sprinted up the driveway.

When Rachel arrived at the worksite, she set the water and paper cups on the piece of plywood being used as a table.

"I brought you some water," Rachel said when she spotted Grandpa near the entrance of his greenhouse.

He smiled. "*Danki* [Thanks]. I could use a cool drink about now."

"How's everything going?" she asked after he'd helped himself to a cup of water.

"Real well. I think we should have my greenhouse finished by the end of the day."

"Sure wish I could help build it," Rachel said. "It would be a lot more fun than hauling water or helping

Mom make sandwiches and lemonade."

Grandpa raised his bushy gray eyebrows high. "Sorry, Rachel, but building the greenhouse is hard work—too hard for a young girl like you." He patted Rachel's back. "You'll get to help me inside the greenhouse once it's open for business."

"How soon will that be?" she asked.

"Probably in a week or two. I need time to get everything set up."

"Will it be open before Mom has her *boppli* [baby]?"

"Probably so," he said with a nod. "Unless the baby decides to appear early."

Rachel thrust out her bottom lip. "I hope it doesn't come early."

Grandpa tipped his head. "You're not anxious to see your little *bruder* [brother] or *schweschder* [sister]?"

"I—I guess so, but I'm more anxious to help in your greenhouse. If Mom doesn't keep me too busy with chores, that is." Rachel frowned. "I'm afraid once the boppli comes I'll have more chores to do than ever."

Grandpa tweaked Rachel's nose. "I'm sure you'll have some free time to help me."

Pap stepped up to the table and greeted Rachel with a smile. "I see you brought us some water." He poured some into a paper cup and drank. "Ah. . .
now that sure hits the spot! Danki, Rachel."

"You're welcome." Rachel decided to stay and watch the workers awhile. Suddenly, the ladder Uncle Amos

stood on wobbled, and his hammer dropped to the ground with a thud.

Rachel rushed forward and reached for it. *Smack!*—she bumped heads with her oldest brother, Henry, who'd also reached for the hammer.

"Ouch!" Rachel and Henry said at the same time.

"Are you two okay?" Grandpa asked with a look of concern.

"I'm fine. It's just a little bump," Rachel said.

Henry nodded. "I'm okay, too." He looked at Rachel. "You shouldn't have tried to pick up that hammer."

"I was only trying to help." She rubbed her forehead.

"I was going to get it." Henry shook his head. "You shouldn't even be near the worksite, Rachel. Don't you realize this is men's work?"

Rachel clamped her teeth together. *The men and boys get to have all the fun,* she thought. *I wish I'd been a boy!*

Pap touched Rachel's shoulder. "Maybe you should go see if your *mamm* [mom] has something for you to do."

"That's right." Grandpa smiled at Rachel. "We'll see you at noon, when it's time for lunch."

With head down and shoulders slumped, Rachel headed up the driveway. *Oomph!*—she ran right into someone, spilling a can of nails all over the ground.

She looked up. Orlie Troyer, her friend from school, stared at her.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

She nodded. "I–I'm fine. I'll help you pick up the nails."

"Don't bother; I can manage." Orlie scooped up a handful of nails and tossed them back in the can. "What are you doing out here by the worksite, Rachel?"

"I took water to the men."

"Well, you'd better get back to the house before you get hurt. Working on the greenhouse is men's work."

"What would you know about that? You're not a man!" Before Orlie could respond, Rachel hurried away.

When she came to the pile of lumber, she paused. Some pieces didn't look so big. She figured she could probably carry a few of them to the worksite. Maybe then everyone would see that she could help with the greenhouse, too—even if she wasn't a man.

Rachel bent and picked up a piece of wood. "Ouch! Ouch!"

Tears filled her eyes as pain shot through her thumb. She let the wood fall to the ground and stared at her hand. An ugly splinter was stuck in her thumb!

Jacob rushed to her. "What are you yelling about, Rachel?"

She held out her hand. "I've got a nasty *schliffer* [splinter] in my thumb."

"How'd you do that?"

"I picked up a piece of wood to take to the worksite." Rachel's chin trembled as she struggled not to cry. She didn't want Jacob to call her a boppli. "I didn't know there'd be splinters in the lumber."

"It's wood, little *bensel* [silly child]. It's bound to

have splinters." Jacob clicked his tongue the way Mom often did. "You can help best by going to the house and helping Mom get our lunch ready."

"I will—after she takes the schliffer out of my finger." Sniffling and blinking, Rachel hurried to the house.

Rachel found her sister, Esther, as well as Mom, Grandma Yoder, and several other women, scurrying around the kitchen, making sandwiches.

Mom motioned to the refrigerator. "Good, you're just in time to help us with—" She stared at Rachel. "Have you been crying?"

Rachel nodded. "I—I had some trouble outside."

"What kind of trouble?" Esther asked.

"First I bumped heads with Henry when I was trying to pick up a hammer. Then I ran into Orlie and knocked a can of nails out of his hand." Rachel sniffed a couple of times. "Then I was going to carry some wood over to the worksite, but I ended up with this!" Rachel held up her throbbing thumb.

"*Ach* [Oh], that's a nasty-looking schliffer," Mom said, clicking her tongue. "I'd better get that out for you."

Sniff! Sniff! "It's gonna hurt, isn't it?"

"Taking it out might hurt a little, but it will hurt much worse if the splinter stays in your thumb," Mom said.

Grandma nodded. "And if you don't take it out, it could get infected."

"Sit down and I'll take care of it." Mom went to the

cupboard and returned with bandages, antiseptic, a pair of tweezers, and a needle from her sewing basket.

Rachel sank into a chair and closed her eyes. She hoped it wouldn't hurt too badly. She hoped she wouldn't start sobbing.

Esther held Rachel's hand and spoke soothing words while Mom dug out the splinter. "It's okay, Rachel. The schliffer will be out soon."

Rachel kept her eyes shut and struggled not to cry as Mom poked at the splinter with the needle.

"Got it!" Mom dabbed Rachel's thumb with some antiseptic and covered it with a bandage. "Does that feel better?"

Rachel opened her eyes. "It still hurts a little, but not as much as it did before."

Grandma patted Rachel's shoulder. "You're a brave little girl."

Rachel liked hearing that she was brave, but she didn't like being called a little girl. She figured it was best not to tell that to Grandma, though.

"It's sure a warm day." Mom fanned herself with the corner of her apron.

"It is a bit *schtinkich* [stuffy] in here," Esther agreed.

"Why don't you two sit and rest awhile?" Grandma suggested. "Rachel and I can finish making the sandwiches. Isn't that right, Rachel?"

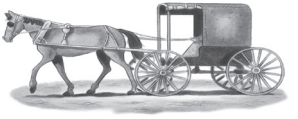
Rachel nodded. At least Grandma thought she was grown up enough to help with lunch. She glanced

out the kitchen window and spotted Jacob and Orlie hauling more wood to the worksite. They walked slowly down the driveway. Rachel figured they were probably hot and tired.

I guess it is hard work. It might be more fun for me to watch the men build the greenhouse than try to help with it. Rachel smiled as she thought, *I can hardly wait to help Grandpa after the greenhouse is open for business!*

Chapter 2

A Trip to Town



The sun cast an orange tint into Rachel's room as she scrambled out of bed on Monday. Since school was out for the summer, Grandpa had promised to take Rachel to town with him. He was going to buy some things he needed for his new greenhouse. Rachel looked forward to spending the day with Grandpa.

Rachel raced to the closet, put on a clean dress, and rushed out the door. When she got to the bottom of the stairs, she stopped and sniffed. The sweet smell of cinnamon coming from the kitchen made her stomach rumble.

I'll bet Mom baked cinnamon rolls. Rachel smacked her lips in anticipation.

When she entered the kitchen, she was surprised to see just one bowl and a small plate on the table. Mom was the only one in the room.

"*Hoscht du schunn geese* [Have you already eaten]*?*" she asked when Mom turned from the sink, where

she was washing dishes.

Mom nodded. "I ate with your *daed* [dad] and *brieder* [brothers] before they went to work in the fields."

"What about Grandpa?" Rachel asked. "Has he eaten, too?"

"Jah. He's in the barn getting his horse and buggy ready to go to town."

Rachel sighed. "I was afraid he might have left without me."

Mom pointed to the table. "You'd better hurry and eat your cereal and cinnamon roll."

Rachel scurried to the refrigerator and took out a carton of milk. She poured some into her bowl then returned to the refrigerator and grabbed a pitcher of apple juice.

The juice sloshed in the pitcher as she bounded back across the room.

"*Dummel dich net* [Take your time, don't hurry]!" Mom said, shaking her head. "You have plenty of time. If you spill juice, it'll make a sticky mess, and I just scrubbed the floor."

"Sorry, Mom. I want to eat quickly so I can go to town with Grandpa." Rachel poured a glass of juice and put the pitcher back in the refrigerator.

"That's fine, but wash your breakfast dishes before you go."

"I will." Rachel sat at the table and bowed her head for silent prayer. *Dear God, Danki for this day I get to*

spend with Grandpa. Bless this food to my body. Amen.

"I'll leave the dishwater in the sink for you to use, and then I'm going outside to hang a few clothes on the line," Mom said when Rachel finished her prayer. "If I see your *grossdaadi* [grandfather], I'll tell him you're eating breakfast and will be out soon."

"Okay, Mom."

Rachel quickly ate her cinnamon roll. Then she drank the apple juice. "Mmm. . ." She smacked her lips. "This is so *gut* [good]. I think I'll have some more." She hurried to the refrigerator and poured another glass.

When she started back, she nearly dropped her glass. Cuddles sat on the table, lapping milk from Rachel's bowl of cereal!

Rachel clapped her hands, and the cat leaped off the table. "Shame on you, Cuddles! You know you're not supposed to be up there!"

Meow! Cuddles looked at Rachel as if to say, "I was hungry."

"Oh, all right." Rachel put the cereal on the floor beside the cat. "It's full of germs now anyway, so you may as well eat it!"

Lap. . .lap. . .lap. Cuddles slurped the milk with her little pink tongue. *Crunch. . .crunch. . .crunch.* She ate the rest of the cereal.

"What is that cat doing eating from your *schissel* [bowl]?" Mom hollered when she entered the kitchen.

Rachel gulped. "I–I'm sorry, Mom," she stammered.

"I went to the refrigerator to get more juice, and when I turned around, Cuddles was on the table, eating my cereal."

"And just how did your cereal bowl get on the floor?" Mom asked.

"I—uh—figured since Cuddles had already eaten out of my bowl and it was full of germs, I may as well let her eat the rest of it."

Mom frowned. "You know how I feel about animals eating from our dishes." She pointed to Cuddles. "Take her outside right now!"

Rachel picked up the cat and set her on the porch. "Now you be good," she said as Cuddles curled into a ball and began to purr.

"I'll wash my dishes now," Rachel said when she returned to the kitchen. She set the bowl, plate, and glass in the sink and plunged her hands into the soapy water.

"Cuddles probably got in when I went to hang my clothes on the line, so I know it wasn't your fault she was on the table." Mom peered at Rachel over the top of her glasses. "But I'd better never see that cat eating out of your dish again! If I do, you'll wash all the dishes after every meal for a whole week. Is that clear?"

"Jah, Mom," Rachel nodded. "I'll make sure it doesn't happen again."

A little later, as Rachel and Grandpa headed for town, the buggy hit a pothole in the road, nearly knocking

Rachel out of her seat.

"Sorry about that," Grandpa said. "I didn't realize there was a rut, or I would have avoided it."

Rachel looked at him and smiled. "It's okay, Grandpa. I'm enjoying the ride."

He grinned and patted her knee. "I like your positive attitude today, Rachel. It's always good to look on the bright side of things."

"Sometimes, when things don't go so well, it's hard for me to see the bright side," Rachel admitted.

Grandpa nodded. "That's when we need to remember Psalm 32:11: 'Rejoice in the Lord and be glad.' We should try to rejoice no matter what happens—even in the middle of our troubles."

Rachel smiled and relaxed against the seat. She enjoyed listening to the steady *clip-clop, clip-clop* of the horse's hooves and watching all the cars zip past in the opposite lane. She dreamed about riding in a convertible some day, but she wondered if that dream would ever come true. She was sure it would be exciting to travel fast with the top of the car down and the wind in her face.

Beep! Beep! A horn honked as a car whipped around them.

A muscle on Grandpa's face quivered as he gripped the reins and guided the horse closer to the side of the road. "There's way too much traffic today," he mumbled. "I wish I'd picked a different day to go to town. Maybe

we should have stayed home."

"You're not going back, I hope." Rachel had looked forward to spending the day with Grandpa. She'd be disappointed if he decided to go home.

Grandpa shook his head. "Don't worry. I won't go home until my errands are done. Fast cars just make me *naerfich* [nervous], and I don't like all this traffic."

Rachel didn't mind the traffic, and she thought fast cars were exciting. She decided not to mention that, though. She didn't want to say anything that might spoil her day with Grandpa, so she decided to change the subject.

"Did you know my birthday's coming soon?" she asked.

"I think I may have heard something about that. Remind me now—how old will you be?"

"Eleven."

"Hmm. . ." Grandpa's lips twitched. "You've gotten so tall, I thought maybe you'd skipped a few years and had become a teenager."

Rachel giggled. "Are you teasing me?"

He nodded and chuckled. "You know me. . . . I do like to tease now and then."

She smiled. "That's one of the things I like about you, Grandpa. You're always so much fun to be with."

"I enjoy being with you, too." Grandpa looked at her and winked. "So what do you hope to get for your birthday?"

"I'd really like a trip to Hershey Park." Rachel

sighed. "But I'm sure that won't happen."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because when I asked Pap about going, he said he was too busy, and that Mom wasn't up to making the trip." She slowly shook her head. "I'll probably never go to Hershey Park, or anyplace else where there are fun rides."

"Never say never," Grandpa said. "Sometimes the things we want happen when we least expect them."

Hope rose inside Rachel. Maybe Mom and Pap would surprise her with a trip to Hershey Park for her birthday. Maybe Grandpa knew about it and was keeping it a secret.

"I don't know about you, but I'm getting hungry," Grandpa said when they had purchased flower pots, potting soil, gardening gloves, and packets of seeds. These were all things he would either use or sell in his greenhouse.

Rachel patted her stomach. "I'm hungry, too."

"I'll let you choose where we'll have our lunch," Grandpa said.

Rachel smiled. "I'd like to eat at the Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant. They have real tasty food there."

"I like eating there, too," Grandpa said as he guided the horse and buggy onto the road.

When they entered the restaurant, Rachel's stomach rumbled and her nose twitched. The delicious aromas coming from the kitchen made her even hungrier.

The hostess showed them to a table. Then a waitress asked what they would like to drink.

"I'll have a glass of iced tea," Grandpa said. "How about you, Rachel?"

"I'd like a glass of milk."

"Do you know what you'd like to eat?" the waitress asked.

"I think I'll have the buffet." Grandpa smiled at Rachel. "Does that sound good to you?"

"That suits me fine." She licked her lips. "There are always lots of good things on the buffet, and they even have pickled beets on the salad bar!"

Grandpa chuckled. "You take after your mamm, Rachel. She's always liked pickled beets."

"Help yourself when you're ready," the waitress said. "I'll have your beverages at the table when you get back."

Rachel pushed her chair aside and scurried to the salad bar. She didn't care much for lettuce, but she liked some of the other vegetables there. So she loaded her plate and made sure she got plenty of pickled beets.

A girl with blond hair in a ponytail stepped up to Rachel and studied her a few seconds. "Is your name Rachel Yoder?"

"Yes," Rachel said.

"I thought so. We met at the farmers' market last summer." The girl tilted her head. "You look different than the last time I saw you. I don't think you wore glasses then."

"I got my glasses about a month ago." Rachel smiled at the girl. "Your name's Sherry, isn't it?"

"That's right."

"You had a cute dog with you. I remember we took it for a walk."

"Yes, we did. You should see how much Bundles has grown since then."

"My cat, Cuddles, has grown a lot, too—especially around the middle. I think it's because she eats so much," Rachel said.

"What are you doing here?" Sherry asked. "Are you going to the farmers' market?"

Rachel shook her head. "I came with my grandpa so he could buy some things for his new greenhouse."

"That sounds interesting."

"Yes, and I'm going to help him there when I'm not busy with other things," Rachel said. "What are you doing here?"

Sherry motioned to a woman sitting at a table across the room. "I came with my mother. We went shopping for a new quilt to put in our guest room."

"My mother made a quilt for my sister when she got married," Rachel said. "She used the Lone Star pattern."

"Will you help in your grandpa's greenhouse all summer?" Sherry asked. "Or will your family take a vacation?"

Rachel shook her head. "My mom's due to have a baby soon, so we won't go on vacation. How about you?"

"We may visit my aunt and uncle in California. My brother's planning to take me to Hershey Park sometime this summer, too."

Rachel couldn't help but feel envious. Hearing that Sherry was going to Hershey Park made her wish all the more that she could go there.

"It was nice to see you, Rachel." Sherry turned away from the salad bar. "Maybe I'll see you sometime later this summer."

Rachel smiled. "That would be nice."

When Sherry walked away, Rachel finished filling her plate and took it to the table where Grandpa waited. Despite longing for things she might never get to do, she was excited about the things they'd bought for Grandpa's greenhouse. And she was excited about helping him there. At least that was something to look forward to.

Chapter 3

Trouble by the Road

"The hurrier I go, the behinder I get," Grandpa mumbled as he hurried toward his greenhouse the following morning.

"I wish I could help you today," Rachel called from the garden, where she and Jacob were picking strawberries.

"Maybe you can help me later," Grandpa called as he kept walking.

Rachel dropped two berries into the basket by her knees. "I don't think there's much chance of that. When I'm done here, I'll have to spend the rest of the day selling these *aebier* [strawberries] from our roadside stand," she said as Grandpa disappeared.

"*Grummel net um mich rum* [Don't grumble around me]." Jacob tossed a berry, and it splattered on Rachel's arm.

"Stop! I'll end up with berry juice all over my dress!" Rachel grabbed a berry and threw it at Jacob. She laughed when it hit his nose.

"You'd better quit fooling around! You'll be in trouble if Mom sees you're playing."

"What about you?" Rachel frowned. "You threw an *aebeer* [strawberry] at me first."

"You didn't have to throw one back, little bensel."

"Stop calling me a silly child!" Rachel's fingers itched to pitch another berry at Jacob, but she heard the screen door open and saw Mom step onto the porch.

Plunk! Plunk! Plunk! Rachel dropped one strawberry after another into the basket. When Mom disappeared around the side of the house, Rachel popped a juicy berry into her mouth and giggled. "Mmm. . .this tastes *wunderbaar* [wonderful]."

"You'll never get enough berries picked to sell if you keep eating 'em," Jacob said, shaking his head.

"I only ate one." Rachel glared at Jacob. "And quit telling me what to do. You're not my boss."

"Someone has to tell you what to do when you're fooling around."

"I'm not fooling around." Rachel lifted her basket. "I have just as many berries as you do."

"Whatever you say, little bensel." Jacob snickered and moved to the next row.

That was fine with Rachel; she'd rather not work too close to her teasing brother.

She leaned over, plucked off another berry, and was about to put it in her basket, when—*Peck! Peck!*—their mean old goose nipped the back of Rachel's legs.

"Yeow!" Rachel dropped the berry and whirled around.

Honk! Honk! Honk! The goose flapped her wings and grabbed a berry in her beak.

Before Rachel could react, Jacob waved his hands and hollered, "Get away from here you stupid *gans* [goose]!"

The goose bobbed her head up and down, sounded another loud *Honk!* and waddled away.

Rachel sighed with relief. "Danki, Jacob. I thought that goose was gonna get me."

"I think she was after the strawberries and just wanted to get you out of her way," Jacob said. "She likes to sneak to the garden and help herself when no one's looking."

Rachel's hand trembled as she picked up the berry. "That gans is nothing but trouble. I wish Pap would get rid of her!"

"If she keeps getting into trouble, maybe he will." Jacob grabbed his box of berries. "I've filled eight boxes now, so I think I'll take 'em out to the stand. Are you ready to join me, or did you want to pick more?"

"I have eight boxes, too, so I'm gonna stop picking," Rachel said. "But before I come to the stand, I think I'll go inside and get some of my painted rocks to sell."

"I don't think anyone will want a *dumm* [dumb] old rock, but if you want to try selling some, then suit yourself." Jacob gathered all the berries and put them in

the wheelbarrow. "I'll see you at the stand!" He wheeled the boxes of berries down the driveway toward the roadside stand Pap had built.

Rachel hurried into the house, raced up the stairs, and opened her dresser drawer, where she kept several painted rocks. She found an empty box in her closet and put three ladybug rocks inside, along with two rocks she'd painted to look like turtles. She grunted when she picked up the box. The rocks sure made it heavy!

Huffing and puffing, Rachel stumbled down the stairs. When she stepped onto the back porch, she noticed Mom sitting in a chair, shelling peas.

"What are you doing, Rachel?" Mom asked. "I thought you and Jacob were in the garden picking aebier."

Rachel's arms hurt, so she set the box of rocks on the small table by the door. "We were. Jacob took the strawberries out to the stand while I came to get some painted rocks to sell."

"That's a good idea, Rachel. I hope you sell them." Mom smiled. "I'll let you know when lunch is ready, and then you and Jacob can take turns coming up to the house to eat."

"Can't we eat lunch at the stand? I don't want to leave my rocks with Jacob. He might give them away."

Mom shook her head. "I don't think Jacob would do something like that, but if you'd like to eat at the stand, I'll bring lunch to you when it's ready."

"Danki." Rachel picked up the box and trudged down the stairs, panting as she made her way down the driveway.

"This is sure heavy," she said, placing the box on one end of the stand.

Jacob rolled his eyes. "I still think selling rocks is a dumm idea. I'll bet no one will even look at them."

"I bet they will."

"Bet they won't."

Rachel bit her lip. There was no point arguing about it. Jacob would see that he was wrong when she sold her first painted rock.

"Have you had any customers?" Rachel asked as she set the rocks on the other side of the strawberries.

He shook his head. "Only a couple of cars have passed, and no buggies at all."

Rachel shielded her eyes from the sun's glare. "It's still early. I'm sure someone will stop soon."

"I hope so, because it's already hot and muggy, and I don't want to sit out here all day and sweat."

"Now who's grumbling?" Rachel nudged Jacob's arm with her elbow. "Huh?"

"I'm not grumbling, just stating facts." He wiped the sweat on his forehead with his shirtsleeve. "If it's this hot so early in the day, I can only imagine how it'll feel this afternoon."

Rachel sat on the folding chair beside Jacob. She glanced at the other side of the driveway, where Grandpa's greenhouse had been built. No cars or

buggies were there either. "It looks like we're not the only ones who don't have customers," she said. "Grandpa's greenhouse looks deserted."

Jacob nodded. "Everyone must either be at home, working, or shopping in town."

Rachel leaned on the wooden counter. "If you could be doing anything else right now, what would it be?"

"I'd be sitting on a big rock at the creek with my bare feet dangling in the water." Jacob looked over at Rachel. "What would you be doing?"

"The creek sounds nice, but I'd probably be in the greenhouse helping Grandpa." She sat up straight. "No, wait. I'd be on one of those wild rides at Hershey Park."

Jacob grunted. "I'd enjoy that, too, but it doesn't look like we'll go anywhere this summer. Not with so much work in the fields and the boppli coming soon."

Rachel sighed. "I wonder if I'll ever get to do anything fun."

Before Jacob could respond, Audra rode up on her scooter. It reminded Rachel of her skateboard. Unlike English scooters that sometimes had engines, Audra's A*mish scooter was similar to a skateboard with handles.*

"Wie geht's [How are you]*?"* Audra asked, smiling at Rachel.

"Okay. How about you?"

"I'm doing good." Audra stepped down from the scooter and leaned on the counter. "I came to see if you could play."

"I can't today. Jacob and I have to sit here and try to sell these aebier." Rachel motioned to the box of berries sitting closest to her. "Would you like to buy some?"

"Sorry, but I don't have any money with me." Audra looked up at the yard. "Can't you leave the stand for a while? I was hoping we could jump on your trampoline."

"I wish I could, but I'll be in trouble with Mom if I don't try to sell these berries."

"Should I come back later this afternoon?" Audra asked. "Maybe you'll be free to play then."

Rachel shook her head. "If the berries sell, I'll help Grandpa in his new greenhouse this afternoon. If they don't sell, I'll probably be stuck here in the hot sun for the rest of the day."

"Die Rachel is die ganz zeit am grumble [Rachel is grumbling all the time]," Jacob said to Audra.

Rachel nudged him. "That's not true. Besides, you grumbled about how hot it is. Remember?"

"Jah, but I don't grumble all the time. You always grumble about something."

"Do not."

"Do so."

"Do not."

"Do so."

"I'd better go," Audra said. "*She dich, eich, wider* [See you later]*!*" She waved at Rachel and glided away.

Rachel looked over at Jacob. "I wonder why Audra

doesn't have to work today. It doesn't seem fair, does it?"

"You're grumbling again."

"Am not. I'm just stating facts."

"Oh good, I think a customer's coming." Jacob motioned to a car coming down the road. But instead of stopping, it sped up and passed the stand. A small rock from the road hurled through the air. It hit the front of the stand, putting a hole through the letter *S* in the STRAWBERRIES FOR SALE sign Jacob had painted and nailed to the stand.

"That's great!" Jacob mumbled. "Now our sign says, 'TRAWBERRIES FOR SALE." He looked at Rachel and shook his head. "Who's ever heard of trawberries, and who's gonna stop at a stand selling some weird kind of berry?"

Rachel poked Jacob. "I guess you think you're funny, huh?"

Jacob laughed. "Jah, I'm the man selling strawberries with a great sense of humor."

Rachel grunted. "You're not a man!"

"I will be soon."

A car pulled into the driveway, and a bald, middle-aged man got out of the car. He walked to the stand and pointed at the strawberries. "How much are you asking?"

"One dollar a box," Rachel said.

"I'll take two boxes." The man motioned to Grandpa's greenhouse. "I'm going to look at some

plants. Would you please put the strawberries on the front seat of my car while I'm gone?" He hurried away before Rachel could respond.

"That was rude," Jacob said. "He didn't even pay for the berries."

"Maybe he'll pay for them when he's done at the greenhouse." Rachel picked up two boxes of berries and took them to the man's car. She opened the door on the driver's side and placed them on the seat. Then she closed the door and raced back to the stand.

"I'm thirsty," Jacob said. "I think I'll run up to the house and get something cold to drink."

"That sounds good. Could you get something for me, too?"

"Jah, sure." Jacob scurried up the driveway.

The man finally returned to his car, but instead of coming to the stand to pay for the berries, he jumped into his car and started to drive away.

Suddenly, he slammed on the brakes and climbed out of the car. He stomped to the stand and shook his finger at Rachel. "Did you put those berries on the front seat of my car?"

"Yes," she admitted.

"Just look what you've done!" He whirled around.

Rachel gasped. Bright red berry juice covered the man's tan-colored pants!

"I—I only set them there because you told me to," she said in a shaky voice.

"I did tell you to put them on the seat, but I didn't think you'd put them where I would sit on them!" A muscle of the side of the man's neck quivered, and his pale eyebrows pulled together.

"I–I'm sorry. I thought you'd come back to the stand to pay for the strawberries, and I was gonna tell you then that the berries were in the front seat of your car." She drew in a quick breath. "But you didn't come back."

"Oh, you're right, I should have paid for the berries, and I did tell you to put them in my front seat. So I guess it's more my fault than yours." The man reached into his pants pocket and handed Rachel four dollars. "The berries in my car are too smashed to eat, but here's enough money for two more boxes, plus the ones I sat on."

Rachel shook her head. "You don't have to pay for the ones that are ruined."

He placed the money on the counter and picked up two boxes of berries. "I'll pay for all four boxes. Maybe my wife can make jelly out of the squished ones."

Rachel smiled. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." The man hurried back to his car and drove away just as a horse and buggy pulled in. It was Rachel's aunt Karen and her little boy, Gerald.

"Wie geht's?" Aunt Karen asked, walking to the stand.

"I'm doing okay," Rachel said. "How about you?"

"Gerald and I are well." Aunt Karen patted Gerald's

head. "We were on our way home from town and noticed you, so I decided to stop and see what you have for sale."

"Jacob and I are selling strawberries." Rachel motioned to her painted rocks. "And these."

"Those are nice. Did you paint them yourself?" Aunt Karen asked.

Rachel nodded. "Painting rocks is a hobby of mine."

Gerald eyed a turtle rock; then he tugged his mother's skirt and said, "*Shillgrott* [Turtle]. *Geb's mir* [Give it to me]*!*"

Aunt Karen shook her head. "That's no way to ask for something. You must say *sei so gut* [please]."

Gerald looked at his mother with pleading eyes. "Sei so gut?"

Aunt Karen squeezed his shoulder. "Jah, you may have the turtle." She opened her purse. "How much are the rocks, Rachel?"

"I'm asking a dollar for them, but since Gerald's my cousin, he can have one for free," Rachel said.

Aunt Karen shook her head. "You worked hard to paint these nice rocks, and I will pay."

"Danki," Rachel said as she took the dollar Aunt Karen handed her. "Would you like a box of strawberries, too?"

"I have a big strawberry patch in my garden, so I really don't need any more." Aunt Karen smiled. "Your berries are nice and plump, so I'm sure you'll sell them in no time."

"I hope so, because I don't want to spend the whole day out here in the hot sun."

"It is quite warm," Aunt Karen agreed. She handed Gerald his turtle rock. "We'd best be on our way home now. Tell your mamm I said hello."

"I will," Rachel called as Aunt Karen and Gerald walked away.

Their buggy had just pulled out of the driveway when Jacob returned.

"I brought some of Pap's cold root beer," he said, handing Rachel a mug.

Rachel smiled. "Danki. It looks good."

Jacob took a big drink from his mug. "This sure hits the spot." He ran his tongue across his upper lip, where some foamy root beer had gathered.

Rachel laughed and sipped from her mug. "You're right; this does hit the spot! Pap makes the best root beer!"

Jacob glanced at the strawberries. "Looks like you sold two more boxes of berries while I was gone."

"Jah." Rachel told Jacob how the man had bought two more boxes of berries after he'd sat on the ones she'd put in his car. "I really felt bad about the man's pants," she added.

"That was a dumb thing to do, Rachel."

"The man said it was as much his fault because he told me to put the berries on the front seat."

Jacob shrugged. "I guess it was partly his fault then."

"Then Aunt Karen and Gerald came by." Rachel pointed to the spot where the painted turtle rock had been sitting. "She bought one of my rocks for Gerald."

"Really?"

"Jah. I told you I'd sell some rocks today."

"Puh!" Jacob flapped his hand like he was swatting a fly. "You've only sold one, and to a member of our family. I'd be more impressed if you'd sold the whole lot of them to a stranger."

Rachel frowned. "You don't have to be so mean."

"I wasn't being mean; I was just stating facts." He gulped more root beer. "Selling a rock to a relative doesn't count."

"Jah, it does."

"Does not."

"Does too, and I think you ought to stop—"

Woof! Woof! Jacob's dog, Buddy, bounded up to the stand and licked Rachel's arm with his big pink tongue.

"Get away from me!" Rachel pushed Buddy down. "Your breath is awful!"

Thunk!—Buddy's tail hit a berry box, knocking it to the ground.

"Oh, no," Rachel moaned. "Now the berries are dirty!" She bent over and was about to pick them up, when—*thunk!*—Buddy whacked another box with his tail.

Rachel glared at Jacob. "Look what your hairy mutt's done! He's always causing trouble! Why's he out of his dog run?"

Jacob shrugged. "I don't know, but I'll put him back right away." He reached for Buddy's collar, but the dog put his paws in Rachel's lap and licked her face.

"Yuck! Go away, you hairy beast!"

Buddy grunted and flopped down on the berries he'd knocked to the ground.

Rachel groaned. "Trouble. . .trouble. . .Buddy's always causing trouble!" She pointed at Jacob. "You'd better pick some more berries!"

Jacob frowned. "Why me?"

"Because your *hund* [dog] knocked over the berries and squished them with his big hairy body. So you should be the one to pick more berries!"

"Oh, okay. It'll be better than sitting here listening to you grumble." Jacob scooped up the berry boxes and led Buddy up the driveway, mumbling, "Stupid hund!"

Rachel leaned on the counter and closed her eyes. She hoped the whole summer wouldn't be full of trouble.