

The Long Journey

I was resting lazily on a limb of a medium-sized tree in southern state when I was taken down by force and thrown in the back of a pick-up truck. It happened so fast that I was unable to defend myself.

The truck stopped in front of a shabby-looking shed with a big cotton field nearby. I was puzzled and frightened when I was taken off the truck and put under the shed. I did not understand why I should be receiving such treatment.

There were many people talking and laughing but I could not hear them for the loud noises made by things they called machinery. No one would talk to me, nor tell me what was going on. Then a Negro boy started towards me, and before I could say a word, picked me up and slung me on a section of this machinery called rollers. The women stood there watching as I was tossed about.

Suddenly a large door opened and I was dropped unexpectedly into a dark dungeon-like place. I was whirled around and around. Another large door opened and I was back on a similar section of rollers. Again women stood gazing as I passed by them. I could not understand how they could watch me being treated this way. Did not one of them have any sympathy? If I could only make them understand that I desired help.

My thoughts were interrupted when I dropped down on an enormous conveyor belt extending from one end of the shed to the other. It was moving at a fast rate of speed. Fear was building up inside of me. To think that a beautiful, summer afternoon could turn into such a ugly, dismal one. One of the young girls standing by the conveyor belt seemed to be reaching out her hand to pick me up.

Thank goodness! She is picking me up. I knew there must be at

least one kind person around this place. But wait! She only picked me up to place me on another conveyor belt above the previous one. I see some boys, but I dare not hope for their help. I fear to trust anyone else around here.

When a boy did pick me up, I did not get excited. There will only be something worse I thought, and I was correct. The boy dumped me into a deep metal container and placed it over in a long line of containers identical to it. By now I was cut and bruised. Looking up out of the container, I saw a tall man holding a huge basket. He brought it down with a jolt. Now I could not see out, and I was smothering. Someone flipped the container, topped by the basket. This made me dizzy. The container was removed and I could breathe again. The first thing I saw was a group of men sitting around watching and discussing me.

The basket was pushed on to slowly moving boards. I had wished things would slacken, but not under these circumstances. Icy water was pouring down full force. But at least no one was staring at me now since this wild experience had begun. This lasted fifteen minutes. Ah! The basket is being pulled out from under the water. Maybe this madness is coming to an end. How I had survived thus far was a miracle.

The boy who had pulled the basket out clamped a top over it. I did not mind the darkness and smothering effect by now. I was exhausted and willing to give up. Out of the small cracks in the basket that I had failed to see, I saw a train stopping behind the shed. I had never ridden on a freight car.

Looks as if my first train ride is about to begin. Just as the slide doors rattled shut I could faintly hear someone saying, "Oh! What a peach!"

Birthday Good

Leaning toward her bed, little eight-year-old Judy poked him tenderly.

"Pug! Pug! Get up. Do you know what today is?"

Turning over and opening his eyes, he looked at her.

"No. What is it?" he asked.

"It's my birthday!" Judy exclaimed exuberantly.

"Hey, that's right," he said with the admiring little grin he looked at her.

She thought a minute. "I don't know."

"We could go have a picnic on the beach," he suggested.

"That's a real keen idea," he agreed. "Let's get dressed."

Quietly they got up and began preparing to go. Bathing suits, slippers, and plant food were packed in the box of cookies and two boxes of biscuits. Walking out the back door at seven o'clock, they went on a hundred feet of their way onto the beach.

"It's nice to go swimming in the ocean," Pug said.

"Yes, I'm going to miss you when we leave tomorrow for the city," Judy said.

Paddling around in the waii sunshine (their father was stationed there), they celebrated Judy's birthday.

Around quarter till eight they got out onto the sand to play.

"Look, Judy! Look at those planes coming," cried Pug.

"Gee, they're really fast," said Judy.

This happening took place about ten years ago. The date was August 7, 1941, her eighth birthday.

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