



Adoring Addie



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For Kaleb,
oldest son of mine,
full of intelligence and creativity,
truth and design

Behold, I make all things new.

Revelation 21:5 KJV



He that hath the steerage of my course, direct my sail!

William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Act I, iv, 112–113



C H A P T E R
1

My parents were positive I'd met my future husband. They expected me to marry Phillip Eicher, the bishop's son. And soon.

"He's coming over tomorrow, for the barbecue," my mother said, perched on one of our mismatched chairs at the end of the table, her plump hand gripping a pen that hovered over her notebook. She spent most of her days there, writing lists, giving orders, and babying her bad knee. "He wants to talk to your *Daed*—at least that's what his mother told me."

"Oh." I wiped my sweaty palms down my just-starched apron.

A smile spread across her round face. "We'll have a wedding to plan soon."

"*Mutter*, please." I'd always called her *Mutter* and my father *Daed*, the more formal terms, rather than the familiar *Mamm* and *Dat* that my *Bruders* called them. She seemed to prefer it. I don't think my father cared.

Mutter continued speaking as if she hadn't heard my plea. "That's why you shouldn't go today. We want the barbecue tomorrow to be—"

I strode out of the kitchen, my basket of hand-quilted

potholders in my arms, hoping she'd think I hadn't heard her. I'd already compromised by waiting to go to the farmers' market until after I'd cleaned the breakfast dishes. It would be nearly eight o'clock, long after the market opened, by the time my cousin Hannah and I arrived.

As I turned the corner into our large living room, a space big enough to host our entire church, my brother Billy came sliding in his stocking feet across the polished floor. His eyes narrowed under his dark bangs, partially pushed up on his sweaty forehead. He carried a gallon jar of pond water and plants in one hand, while his other flew around in an attempt to keep his balance. Still, greenish water sloshed over the rim.

A grin spread across his face as he veered toward me.

I swung the basket around to my hip and stepped sideways. It didn't matter.

He plowed into me anyway.

I managed to stay on my feet, but the basket landed on the floor, the jar on top and tipped sideways. The murky water soaked my potholders that *had* been bound for the market.

"Billy," I cried.

"My tadpoles!" he yelled, falling to the floor, stomach down, his ten-year-old body flailing toward my basket.

I righted the jar, which had a few inches of water remaining, and began picking through the potholders, rescuing the slimy creatures.

"What's going on in there?" Mutter called out.

The tadpoles flopped this way and that. I rushed from one to the next, pinching each one tightly enough to hold on to it but not enough to damage, dropping them back into the green slime.

Billy crowded in too and began shaking out the potholders and tossing them onto the floor, his brown eyes wide.

“Addie?” Mutter yelled.

“Just a minute.”

“Nell!” Mutter called to her younger *Schwester*, who’d been holed up in the sewing room off the kitchen since breakfast. “Would you see what’s going on?”

“I think we got them all.” Billy grinned.

“One more.” I plucked the tiniest tadpole from the black border of a potholder still in the basket and dropped it into the jar. “Take them back and let them go.” I spoke firmly. “They’ve been traumatized enough.”

“*Ach*, Addie,” he groaned.

“Take courage and do as I say. Quickly.” I thought of him as Billy the Brave. At ten, although *dabbich*—clumsy—he was still eager to help and please, but he also stuck up for others, including me. “And take Joe-Joe down to the creek with you so he’s out of Mutter’s way.” I scooped up the potholders.

Billy slid to the staircase, called for our littlest brother, the youngest of us seven children, and then headed to the front door to put on his boots. He tended to keep them there to avoid Mutter in the kitchen.

I lifted one of the wet potholders to my face and sniffed. I couldn’t help but frown at the swampy smell.

“What happened?”

I lifted my head to *Aenti* Nell’s round face and alarmed expression. She was short, a little squat, and had still-dark hair, the same color as Mutter’s was a few years ago before it turned gray, but a kerchief partly covered *Aenti*’s head instead of a *Kapp*.

I held up the wet square. “Billy.” That was all I needed to say.

“I figured.” Her brow wrinkled. She continually brought

me comfort in a *Haus* full of chaos. “I have some potholders you can take.”

I shook my head. “I think I have ten that didn’t get wet. I can try to wash the others.” Maybe they would dry in Hannah’s buggy on the way to the market.

“You won’t have time to iron them. You’re leaving soon, *jah?*” She picked up the basket.

I nodded.

“Addie!”

“Go talk to your Mamm,” Aenti said. She led the way, with me right behind her. Mutter was all eyes as Aenti Nell traipsed through. Obviously my mother had guessed the situation.

“Looks like you aren’t meant to go,” she said.

I shook my head. “I still have enough to sell.” Barely.

“No, fate has spoken.”

I shook my head. I didn’t believe in fate—especially if Billy was involved. Unfortunately, my mother did. Many Plain people looked for signs from God to help them make a decision—my mother did that too. But she took it a step further, believing in a fate that, when it came to our family, seemed to dictate a path of endless woes.

Mutter pushed her chair back from the table. “Besides, the list of chores is longer than I thought. You won’t have time to finish all of them if you go to the market today.”

I didn’t respond. I’d been looking forward to going to the farmers’ market with my cousin for the last two weeks.

She crossed her arms, her pen still in her hand. “And what about dinner?” Mutter was so used to my taking charge of our household it seemed she felt lost without me.

“I’m cooking tonight,” Aenti Nell called out from the sewing room. “Remember, Laurel?”

Mutter shook her head. “I guess I forgot.”

My Aenti's voice grew louder as she stepped back into the kitchen, the basket in her hands. "And maybe she'll see Phillip."

That stopped my Mutter for a moment.

"You should be on your way." Aenti Nell transferred the basket to me. It was fuller than it had originally been. Plus, all the potholders were now tucked inside sealed gallon-sized bags. "I'll clean up the floor."

"*Denki*," I whispered. "For everything."

"Just make sure and tell me who all you see." Her eyes twinkled in anticipation. "And all you hear." She patted my arm, turned on her heel, and headed back to the sewing room. Just because she spent most of her days at home didn't mean she didn't want to know every last bit of Lancaster County gossip possible. As a *Maidel*—a woman who'd never married—she seemed to find her joy in other people's lives.

"What about your chores?" Mutter said to me as she stood and shifted her weight to her good leg.

"I've been working all week." I'd cleaned, polished, weeded, cooked, and baked. All that needed to be done were the finishing touches for the gathering we hosted each year just after mid-July. I'd already told Mutter, three times, everything was under control, regardless of what her latest list contained.

"Laurel, let her go." Aenti Nell stood in the doorway to the sewing room, her arms crossed. "She does so much around here. She deserves to have a little fun."

Mutter placed both her hands on her wide hips. "But I need her here."

"I'll help today."

I mouthed "*Denki*"—again—to Aenti Nell, and then wrapped one arm around Mutter in a display of affection rare for our family, giving her a quick half hug. She'd been

more anxious than usual lately, fretting over this and that, but especially the barbecue. And Phillip Eicher.

“Everything will work out,” I said. “You’ll see.”

She squeezed my arm. “Go on, then.” A faint smile, mixed with a hint of resignation, lingered on her face.

I turned and stepped toward the living room, wanting to be on my way before another disaster struck. Hannah hadn’t arrived yet, but I wasn’t going to stay in the house and take any chances Mutter would change her mind.

“Timothy will pick you up,” Mutter added.

“Jah, I know.” I grabbed my lunch pail from the corner of the table as I passed by. She’d told me four times already, at least. Timothy was on his *Rumschpringe*, his running around time. He was twenty and had a 1993 bright yellow Bronco. I told him it looked like a yellow jacket strapped to a set of wheels and that he drove it like he was out to sting everyone else on the road, but he didn’t think that was funny.

“Come straight home,” Mutter called out.

“Of course,” I answered. Where else would I go?

Joe-Joe sat by the front door, struggling to pull on the second of his rubber boots, his towhead bent toward the floor. He was fair, like me, although his hair was much lighter than mine. He’d turned seven a month before but seemed younger. He was short and slight for his age and still easy to carry. And during the summer, when he was tuckered out from trying to keep up with Billy, he took a nap in the afternoon. He was sweet as pie, cute as a June bug, and cuddly as a puppy. I thought of him as Joe-Joe the Jewel because I valued him so much, and from the time he was born I’d longed to have a half dozen just like him.

“Where’s Billy?” Joe-Joe asked as I set the basket beside him and yanked the boot on for him.

“He’s outside, waiting for you,” I said. “Come on.” I stood, balanced the basket on my hip, and tousled his blond hair. He smiled up at me, his dimples flashing across his face.

“Grab your hat,” I said as I opened the door.

He obeyed, resting it on his head at an angle as we stepped onto the porch. Even though it was morning, I could feel the coming heat of the day. The initial thrill of summer had grown old as July grew hotter and more humid. We were due for a storm—and soon.

Joe-Joe skipped across the worn planks, dragging me down the steps. I’d asked Timothy to paint the porch several times, but he hadn’t. I’d ask Danny, who at sixteen was far more reliable than Timothy.

In the distance, I heard the clippity-clop of a horse—most likely Hannah’s—pulling a buggy down our lane.

Billy stood at the edge of the trees, the jar in his hands, bouncing from foot to foot as he waited.

“Keep Joe-Joe with you,” I called out to him.

“Jah,” he answered.

My youngest brother zigzagged across the green lawn, his arms twirling in circles, but then he turned and waved at me, a smile as bright as the summer sun on his face. He laughed and then took off after Billy. They would spend the day in the willow trees along the creek, and in and out of the sycamore grove that bordered *Onkel* Bob’s property. My Bruders’ boots would be off in no time, and barefoot they’d catch more tadpoles, salamanders, and marsh periwinkles.

They lived a childhood I’d only dreamed about—one I’d watched my other Bruders experience too. I was sure I loved the outdoors as much or more than any of them, but what I experienced when it came to nature was mostly in our garden, from spreading the heaps of chicken manure—*Misht*—used

to fertilize it to weeding the mammoth plot. At least that work allowed me to be outside.

Now that I was older, though, instead of wishing for a childhood of romping through the trees, I longed for a husband, a marriage, and a child of my own as sweet as Joe-Joe. I longed to be out from under Mutter and her lists and worries and talk of fate. Everyone knew I was anxious to marry and leave my parents' home. And most days I thought if Phillip Eicher was my ticket then so be it. But on other days a nagging sensation plagued me. It was on those days I wasn't entirely sure how I felt about Phillip.

And this happened to be one of them.

"Come on!" Hannah yelled from her buggy. "We're running late."

I hurried across the lawn toward my cousin. As much as I loved them, I was desperate for a break from my family—if only for a few hours.



As Hannah drove away from our farm, I shifted on the bench and peered through the rear window of her buggy at our old white Haus, growing smaller in the distance.

I'd been raised to honor my parents. I'd never done anything but please them. The closest I'd ever come to not obeying was ignoring Mutter's request for me to stay home today.

If Aenti Nell hadn't intervened, I likely would have given up on going.

Aenti Nell and my cousin Cate both said I had a gift for managing a house. My parents never acknowledged it though.

That was another reason I longed to start my own family. I wanted to share my hopes and dreams with someone who

cared. I wanted to partner with a man who would listen to me. With someone who valued me for who I was.

The buggy rounded the first curve, and the Haus fell from view.

“Addie?”

I faced my cousin. “Jah?”

Hannah’s dark eyebrows waggled at me. “Whatcha thinking about?”

I shook my head.

She giggled, her pure white Kapp bobbing up and down, a stark contrast to her dark, dark hair and olive skin. She took after my Mutter’s side of the family, while I, with my blond hair and fairer skin, took after my Daed’s. Hannah also took after my Mutter in that she tended to be either very happy or very sad—rarely in between—and also solid in her shape, although she was an accomplished horse rider, and that kept her in good condition.

Today Hannah was happy. She grinned. “Who ya thinking about?”

“No one,” I said, a little too forcefully, confused by my doubts.

“That’s not what you were saying last week.” Hannah held the reins lightly.

“Ach,” I sighed. “How do I know . . . for sure? Day after day. Week after week.”

“Well, if you’re worried about him, don’t be. Molly says Phillip is as serious as can be about you.”

Molly Zook was Hannah’s best friend and rivaled Aenti Nell when it came to knowing the juiciest gossip in Lancaster County.

Hannah leaned toward me. “And why would you have any doubts? He’s the perfect catch.”

That was just it. Phillip was the perfect catch. It actually made it harder for me to be sure how I felt about him.

“I know your parents like him a whole lot better than they did Mervin Mosier.” Hannah giggled as soon as she said his name.

The thing was, Mervin was a wonderful-*gut* young man, although my parents certainly didn’t seem to think so. Last year they had, out of character, allowed me to go kayaking with a group of *Youngie*, including him, his twin brother, and my cousins, Cate and Betsy, on my father’s side, whose family farm bordered ours. But when Mervin showed an interest in me, Daed cited a decades-long rift between the Cramers and the Mosiers and forbade me to see him again.

As we passed my Onkel’s farm, I waved at Cate as she hung wash on the line, her dresses flapping in the breeze alongside her husband’s shirts. Her Dat, my Onkel Bob, had been married to my Daed’s younger sister. But she had died when Betsy was a newborn. Onkel Bob stayed on good terms with my Daed, and we remained close.

As much as I appreciated my cousins, our families didn’t have a lot in common. Their family was small. Ours was large. They had a business that catered to the *Englisch*, which meant they were much more comfortable with ideas outside our community. That was reflected in Cate’s speech and what she read, plus she used modern office equipment every day and managed the crew of workers when Onkel Bob had meetings.

But that wasn’t why I admired my cousin more than any other woman I knew. I admired her because she was a loving daughter, Schwester, and wife, but still she was very much her own person, and somehow she’d managed to find a husband who appreciated that.

I wanted what Cate had found.

Hannah interrupted my thoughts again. “Phillip plans to buy the farm near his parents’ place, jah?”

“Oh really?” I hadn’t heard.

“And he’s hoping to get a loan from his district to finance the purchase.” Hannah leaned toward me again. “There are advantages to being a bishop’s son.”

Phillip’s Daed was the bishop of the next district over from us, the one Onkel Bob and his family belonged to, but Bishop Eicher had a good reputation all around the area, and many, many people highly respected him, including my parents.

“Who told you about the farm?” I wedged my hands under my legs, flat against the bench.

Hannah’s voice rose in volume over the *clickity-clack* of the horse’s hooves. “Molly. She says he plans to marry soon.” Her dark eyes danced. “He says it’s official, you’re his *Aldi*.”

We had been courting, so it was no surprise he considered me his girlfriend. Still, today, the term made me shiver.

“Ach, Addie. He’s so tall and handsome.”

He was.

“And capable,” Hannah added.

“Jah.” He longed to farm a place of his own—that I knew.

“So what’s the problem, then?” She glanced my way, her dark eyes concerned.

I sighed. I’d already told her, but she hadn’t been listening. I asked it again, slowly, “How do I know, for sure, that he’s the right one?”

She chuckled. “If you figure it out, let the rest of us know. Okay?”

I shook my head. She met more men—from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and even Indiana—over one weekend of Youngie parties than I’d met in my entire life. “But I haven’t gone

out with anyone else,” I said, “except just that once with Mervin. What if there’s someone else out there who’s the right one?”

She sighed. “Ach, Addie. Don’t think about it so much. It’s not as if you have a say in the long run anyway.”

I sank back against the seat. “What do you mean?”

“You have to marry someone who is Amish, whom your parents approve of, who lives somewhere close. The man can’t be a Mosier. And your Dat would prefer a farmer, jah?”

I nodded. What she said was true.

“In that case, consider Phillip the catch of a lifetime.” She scooted up on the bench, urged her horse to go faster, and changed the subject. As she prattled on about the party she’d attended last Saturday night, I thought about what she’d said. Did I really have so little control over my own life?

To the right an Englisch farmer was baling his hay, and as Hannah turned the buggy onto the highway, the warm breeze, boosted by the force of his tractor, sent a cloud of dust our way. We both turned our heads. To the left a young Amish boy herded a group of cows across a pasture, and ahead, alongside the road, an older girl propelled a scooter with her foot.

“There’s a party tonight. Want to come?” Hannah pulled farther to the right to let a car pass.

“I have too much to do,” I answered. “I barely got to come along today.”

Before we reached Paradise, the market came into view.

Hannah turned the buggy onto the side road. “How long until the wedding, then?”

“Hannah!” It wasn’t our way to speak so openly.

“Oh, come on, Addie.” She slowed the horse. “Everyone knows it’s what your Mamm and Dat want—and we all know

you'll do as they say. Besides, you want to marry and leave home, jah? And soon?"

I didn't answer.

"You'll come to love Phillip. By the time you marry, you'll know for sure." She didn't wait for my response. "Just wait and see."

I craned my neck to see who was at the market—not wanting to think about, let alone discuss, my future.

The booths sat on the corner of the Zooks' farm, all manned by Youngie—and more girls than guys, who were more likely to be working in the fields or holding down regular jobs on a Saturday morning.

With its inventory of vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, plants, breads and baked goods, jams and preserves, handwork, wooden planters, and homemade food, it attracted mostly weekend tourist traffic.

As the buggy bumped over the rutted road, Molly waved from the center of the market, a bouquet of herbs in her hand. Tall and fair, with hair lighter than mine, her face lit up like a lantern in the night. Molly Zook was hard to miss.

She had begun overseeing the market on her parents' property in the middle of May, two months earlier. The Zooks ran a nursery stock business. They had transformed their family farm through the years, field by field, into rows of trees and shrubs. It was no secret the bust in the building boom had affected their profits. In hopes of supplementing their income, Molly's father had planted flowers in a couple of fields the last few years, but her parents were older than most and obviously struggling to keep up with all the work on the farm. The boys in the family had moved away from Lancaster County and the older daughters were all married and had families of their own. Only Molly and her little sister, Bea, still lived at home.

It seemed Molly aimed to bring in more income to the family through the market. She was the sort of girl who always had a new idea. Her enthusiasm alone could carry a project.

Hannah and I would be sharing Molly's booth, and I, no doubt, would be picking up all sorts of bits of gossip Aenti Nell would love to hear.

Molly pointed at something beside her, blocked by a pole and canopy. I craned my neck as Hannah pulled the buggy into the pasture behind the booths, bringing the subject of Molly's smile into clear view.

Phillip Eicher, at six foot four, towered above everyone else in the market. He lifted his straw hat from his head, showing his dark bowl-cut hair, and waved at me with vigor.



The mouth-watering smoke from sausage grilling, mixed with the smell of freshly baked pretzels and pungent herbs, greeted us along with the first sunflowers of the season, buckets of snapdragons, and containers of dusty pink lilies as we reached Molly's table.

Her blue eyes sparkled. "Look who's here." She swept her arm wide, gesturing toward Phillip, as if I might be surprised.

He'd placed his hat back on his head and now had his thumbs hooked around his suspenders. His white shirt was neatly tucked into black pants.

"Hello," I said to him as I placed my basket on the tabletop. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm on my break." He tipped his head toward where the smoke was billowing out of a barbecue, a row beyond us. "I already got something to eat." Then he smiled, slightly. "And I was hoping to see you."

My face grew warm as I arranged the potholders on the

table. He stepped toward me, and for a moment I thought he might comment on my work—or Aenti Nell’s, to be exact—but he didn’t.

“I have something to tell you.” He leaned toward me, placing his palms down on the table. I was always surprised at how clean he kept his hands considering his work.

I raised my head, my heart rate increasing. “Oh?”

“There’s a farm close to my folks’ place,” he said. “I’ve been talking to the owners.” He stopped, as if waiting for my reaction.

I wasn’t about to tell him Hannah had told me. I smiled and then said, “Go on.”

“The soil has to be the best in the county. Even better than your Dat’s. And the barn is in good shape, although it does need a new roof.”

Hannah and Molly leaned against each other, their Kapps touching, watching us. They were quite the contrast in height, coloring, and personality too—and yet they complemented each other perfectly. Every time I saw them together, I couldn’t help but wish I had a best friend. That’s why I wanted a husband who would listen to me, who would be that friend.

Phillip’s voice grew louder. “And the chicken coop is larger than your Mamm’s, almost as big as my parents’. The Haus is old but adequate.” I’d never seen him so animated.

I stepped to the back of the table.

He took a deep breath and then said, “What do you think?” His biceps bulged against the sleeves of his shirt as he crossed his arms.

I met his gaze. “It sounds fine, just fine.”

“Well sure,” he said. “You’ll want to take a look-see.” He grinned. “No need to worry about that.”

The nagging sensation began to spread.

Before I could speak, he continued, “The garden plot there used to be huge, as big as at your place, but now it’s just for two people. But I was thinking we could enlarge it and raise enough extra to sell.” He looked around. “Maybe here. You could be in charge of that.”

I choked out, “Sure.”

He chuckled. “You aren’t afraid of extra work, are you?” No words came—I simply shook my head.

“Well,” Phillip said, a happy look on his face, “I should get back to work.” The place he hired out to was a half mile up the road. “I just wanted to tell you about the farm.” He grinned a second time. “Because the owner said I could give you a tour—next week.”

Hannah and Molly shifted again, this time toward a commotion down the row of booths.

“I’ll have to see if that will work with Mutter’s schedule,” I said to Phillip. But who was I fooling? We both knew it would.

My attention drifted to the loud voices, certain they were familiar. I shaded my eyes against the morning sun. Sure enough it was Mervin Mosier and his twin brother, Martin, at the end of the row, eight or nine booths away from us. They were wearing matching mauve shirts, suspenders, black pants, and straw hats over their sandy hair. Plus aviator sunglasses.

“Genuine Amish hope chests,” Martin called out to an English couple passing by.

“Custom-made and personalized,” Mervin interjected. “And we’re not joking.”

“Or pulling your leg!” Martin boomed.

They grinned at each other, and then Mervin’s voice rang out loud and clear. “You’ll also find mantels, bookends, and trivets too.”

I stepped to the side of Molly's table to get a better look. I could see a fireplace mantel, although I couldn't make out the details, and beyond it were several chests. Phillip joined me, stepping close enough so that I could smell the scent of his Mamm's strong lye soap on his skin.

"Made by our cousin—who is new to Lancaster County, straight from Big Valley," bellowed Martin.

Hannah giggled.

"What's their cousin's name?" I asked, impressed by the woodwork I could see and also by Martin and Mervin's tribute.

Phillip crossed his arms.

"Ask Hannah." Molly elbowed my cousin. "He wouldn't leave her alone at the party last weekend."

"His name is Jonathan. His family's moving back from Big Valley to take care of his grandfather." Hannah wrinkled her nose. "He's cute and nice and all, but when I told my Mamm and Dat about him they said he's like all the Mosiers, that his family is trouble and to steer clear." She pointed toward a figure wearing a black hat. "That's him."

All I could see was his back, his suspenders crossed over his back in an X. His blue shirt was untucked and bunching up around his waist.

"Too bad about the rift between our families." I crossed my arms.

"Jah, but it's okay." Hannah shrugged. "If I was going to court a Mosier it would be Mervin, not Jonathan." She grinned.

"Why?"

She shrugged again. "Jonathan's too much of a dreamer. Kind of a sap. Besides, he didn't have much of a plan for his life." She grinned again. "Not like Phillip does, anyway."

Instead of responding to Hannah, Phillip smiled at me and

nodded. “Jah, I do have a plan. A good one.” Phillip stepped even closer to me, bumping my arm with his. “What time should I arrive tomorrow?”

“Well,” I said, “around two. Any sooner and we’ll put you to work.”

“I’d like that,” he said.

“I was just kidding.” I didn’t want him to come early. “See you then.” I knew my voice lacked enthusiasm, but Phillip didn’t seem to notice.

He strode off down the aisle between the booths, saying hello to Martin and Mervin as he passed. The two turned their heads toward me.

Hannah and Molly watched Phillip go.

Molly sighed and turned toward me, her index finger intertwined in the tie of her Kapp. “I hope you’re grateful,” she said.

“For . . . ?”

She tilted her head, gave me a scathing look, and pointed to Phillip just before he turned at the end of the row, by one of the vegetable booths. “You—any of us—could do a whole lot worse.”

I must have grimaced, because she said, “Goodness, Addie. Get off your high horse and give him a chance. He might not be the brightest . . .”

My face reddened. “It’s not that.” It wasn’t as if I thought I was too good for him. It wasn’t that at all.

Molly grabbed a sprig of rosemary and held it to her nose. “What’s bothering you, then?”

“How do I *know*?”

She shook her head. “Know what?”

“If he’s the right one.”

She twirled the rosemary. “You don’t ever *know*. You *decide*. And then you train him.”

Hannah laughed, and I couldn't help but smile, but I couldn't take what Molly said seriously. First of all, she wasn't married. Second of all, I'd been trying to train members of the opposite gender my entire life—I wasn't sure I wanted to do that in a marriage too.

Before I could think of what to say to Molly, an older English woman stopped at my table. Grateful for the interruption, I turned my attention toward her. She quilted too, and we chatted as she chose five potholders to buy.

After the English woman left, Molly sat down beside me, crushing the sprig of rosemary in her fingers, sending a pungent pine scent into the air. "Sorry if I said more than I should have."

"No, it's fine," I answered. I wasn't opposed to hearing her opinions.

"So if you're not set on Phillip, why don't you come to the singings? You might meet someone new."

"Jah," Hannah said. "And to the parties too. Kids from all over have been coming. There are all sorts of good-looking guys."

I wouldn't mind going to the singings, but I wasn't interested in the parties, and besides, I wasn't sure I wasn't set on Phillip. No more than I was sure that I was. "We'll see" was all I said.

The next couple of hours sped by as the day grew warmer. Molly peddled her herbs, selling out of her gigantic dill, her silver-edge lavender, and all of her flowers in the next couple of hours. Hannah sold her half-pint jars of strawberry jam, which seemed to be the perfect size for the tourists. I didn't need to do much to pitch the potholders; Aenti Nell's work sold itself, and by noon over half of them were gone. All three of us fanned ourselves with folded newspapers Molly had brought to wrap herbs in.

The dust from the field grew thicker as more and more feet pounded over it, and the line at the lemonade stand a row away from us grew longer and longer.

Several times, I glanced toward the booth Martin and Mervin had been at, but I didn't see them or their cousin again. Molly walked around the market several times and came back with bits of gossip. She said Mervin and Martin hadn't left. Instead they'd parked themselves by the food booths.

The sausage had been tempting me all morning, but I pulled out my ham salad sandwich from my lunch pail, the same one I used to pack for school, and shared half of it with Hannah.

After that the day grew lazy as the heat hung over the pasture and settled under the tarp where we sat. Thankfully, the traffic of tourists stayed steady and kept me awake.

After a while Mervin stopped by our booth to chat, but soon Martin yelled at him to help him out at their cousin's booth.

"Jonathan took his buggy to get more hope chests," Mervin said, twirling his hat in his hands. "They've been selling like hot cakes." He turned and ambled up the row. A crowd of customers awaited him. Martin motioned for him to hurry and Mervin quickened his pace, but just a little.

Sometime after three, the rumble of an engine caught my attention. It sounded like Timothy's, but he was an hour early.

I stood, ducking out from under the tarp. Sure enough, his Bronco was cruising down the side road along the market.

I sat back down.

"Timothy?" Hannah asked.

I nodded, wiping away the trickle of sweat at my temple.

"Maybe he's going to look around for a while," she said, a tinge of sarcasm to her voice.

“Unlikely,” I said. “He’s come early for some reason.”

Hannah groaned.

“What?” I asked.

“Maybe he’s looking to take care of some unfinished business.”

That didn’t sound good. “Such as?”

“Mervin and Martin. He had a falling out with them at that party last weekend. He’d been talking to their cousin Tabitha.”

“Who is she?” I’d never heard of her.

“She lives on the other side of the county—her mother is Mervin and Martin’s Daed’s sister. She came over to help out with their grandfather, until Jonathan’s parents move here for good.”

“Oh.”

“Timothy had been drinking, and Mervin and Martin told him to back off.”

My face grew warm.

Hannah continued. “When Timothy left, he shouted he’d get even.”

“Oh dear.” I snatched up my lunch pail and dropped it into my basket. Timothy didn’t take kindly to being bossed around, and even less so when he’d had too much to drink. He was sure to be vindictive. I gathered the potholders that hadn’t sold, slipped them into a plastic bag, and put it in the basket too. Then I grabbed my money box, took out the wad of cash I’d earned, slipped it into the pocket of my apron, and dropped the box in the bottom of the basket, where Timothy wouldn’t see it. If he did, he’d realize I’d earned money and ask to borrow it.

When we were young, Timothy and I had been close. He’d even had a pet name for me—Toad. But by the time he turned

sixteen he'd turned against me. He'd always teased me, sure, and that I didn't mind. It was the mean streak he developed once he started partying that I couldn't stand. He criticized and bullied. Made fun of me and others. Always put himself first, even though we'd been taught the exact opposite. He'd always been a little moody, but the last few years he'd changed into a troublemaker.

As a child I thought of him as Timothy the Terrific. Now he was Timothy the Terrible.

"I'm going to go tell him I need to go home—now." I gave Hannah a quick hug and stepped out from under the tarp.

Timothy, who was wearing jeans, a torn gray T-shirt, and a baseball cap over his dark-brown hair, stopped behind the crowd gathered around Mervin and Martin's cousin's booth.

"Hey!" Timothy called out as he jumped up and down.

At the sound of his voice, Mervin froze with a trivet in his hand.

As Timothy yelled, "Hey!" a second time, Martin spun around.

I started to walk toward them, but Hannah grabbed my arm. "Don't," she said. "Let them figure it out."

A couple with two little girls, each wearing braids, stopped at our booth. The husband picked up a jar of Hannah's jam, and the mother asked to see my potholders. I took a sampling out for her, and she said she'd take ten, which left me with only two unsold.

As I made change from my pocket, I could make out Timothy's voice but not his words.

"What's going on over there?" the woman asked, turning toward the commotion, a daughter hanging on either side of her.

"I'm not sure," I answered.

She directed her attention back at me as I handed her the bag of potholders. “Have you seen that young man’s hope chests?”

I shook my head.

“They’re masterpieces. I ordered one for each of my girls. Wish I’d had something like that growing up.”

I nodded. So did I. Not having been given a chest—*Kashta*—of my own was one of the biggest disappointments of my childhood.

“We’re hoping to order one of his mantels sometime,” the husband added. “His work is incredible. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

The group that had gathered around the booth started to disperse—thanks to Timothy, I was sure. I grabbed my basket and started toward my brother, who now stood with his feet spread apart, pointing his index finger at Martin. Timothy towered over both of the twins, looking exactly like the bully he was.

Mervin stepped in front of his brother as Martin shifted his foot forward. I couldn’t see what happened next, but Mervin stumbled backward, probably shoved by Timothy, and then fell with the trivet still in his hand over one of the chests on display, crashing into the mantel behind it. The upper piece shifted.

Martin darted forward, lunging for the top piece, just as Timothy shoved him too, sending him flying into the booth, straight at the mantel. The whole thing toppled over, followed by the sound of splintering wood.