

THE ADVENTURES OF LILY LAPP



Book One

Life *with* Lily

Mary Ann Kinsinger and
Suzanne Woods Fisher



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Mary Ann

To my parents,
for pouring their hearts and love
into their little family
and providing me with many happy memories.

Suzanne

To my four beautiful
and amusing children—
my source of constant new material.

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Strange Goings-On

*I*t was still dark outside. Lily tried to keep up with Papa's long strides as he carried little Joseph across the yard to where the horse and buggy were tied to the hitching post. The wet grass swished against the hem of Lily's long flannel nightgown, making it slap against her legs as they hurried along. She felt wet and cold.

Only moments before, Papa had awakened Lily from a sound sleep and handed her a coat to wear over her nightgown. Something mysterious was going on that wasn't explained to five-year-old Lily.

Papa boosted Lily and Joseph up into the buggy and hurried to untie Jim, the buggy horse. Coiling up the rope, Papa tucked it under the seat before he climbed into the buggy. He gave a quick "tch-tch" to Jim and a light touch on the reins to guide the horse out the long, winding driveway.

The chilly night air had wiped all the sleepiness from Lily's



eyes. In the sky, stars twinkled and a full moon hung above the trees like a big golden ball. The only sounds she could hear were the clip-clopping of Jim's hooves and the crunchy sound of the buggy wheels as they rolled over the gravel road. The leaves rustled in the chilly night breeze and cast dancing moon shadows in the trees along the road. The lanterns that hung outside the buggy created little circles of light that shone on Jim's hindquarters. He twitched his ears forward and then back again, listening for Papa's voice.

It seemed to Lily as if they were the only people in the world who were awake. There were no lamps shining in the houses they passed. There were no cars on the road. No birdsong in the trees. The only sound of nature she could hear was the sweet sound of spring peepers, calling to each other in the creek.

As soon as they arrived at Grandpa and Grandma Miller's

house, Papa hopped off the buggy and led Jim over to the long hitching rail. He helped Lily and Joseph jump down from the buggy. Then he reached under the buggy seat for a suitcase. Lily hadn't noticed it until now.

Usually, Grandma and Grandpa Miller's house looked warm and inviting when Lily's family came for a visit. Tonight, in the dark, it looked cold and forbidding. Scary. Papa walked up to the porch and knocked on the door. His loud knock echoed in the quiet. Lily and Joseph stood quietly next to Papa, waiting. Finally, the dim glow of an oil lamp appeared in a window and moved toward the door. The door opened to Grandpa and Grandma, standing in their nightclothes with worried looks on their faces.

"How is she doing?" Grandma asked.

"She's doing fine," Papa said, "but I need to hurry right back."

Grandma nodded. She motioned to Lily and Joseph to come inside.

Papa paused on the porch for a moment. He bent down, gave Lily and Joseph a hug, and told them to be good little children until he came back for them. Then he ran to the buggy and hopped in. The buggy clattered down the driveway. As Lily watched the buggy disappear into the dark, a feeling of forlornness swept through her.

Grandma and Grandpa made a little nest of several thick blankets on their bedroom floor. Grandma tucked Lily and Joseph carefully into the nest, blew out the light, and climbed back into bed.

Lily lay there staring into the dark. She could hear Joseph breathing quietly in his blanket nest beside her. He had already fallen asleep! But then, he was barely four years old. He was just a little boy who didn't understand things like

she did. Shadows from the moving branches of the pine trees outside of the window moved eerily across the wall and floor. The big grandfather clock in the downstairs hallway counted down the minutes in loud ticktocks. She could feel a big lump grow in her throat. She wanted to cry.

Something must be wrong with Mama. She hadn't even come to say goodbye before Papa had hurried them off to Grandpa and Grandma's house.

Lily would never sleep tonight. Never.

She turned over once, and it was morning.



Aunt Susie still lived with Grandma and Grandpa Miller. She was almost as old as Mama, but she didn't seem that old to Lily. She was very patient, and spoke in a slow, thick way. Mama said that Aunt Susie had Down's syndrome. Lily didn't know what that meant, but she was glad that Aunt Susie was her aunt. She liked to play dolls and games with Lily. None of Lily's other aunts were as much fun to spend time with as Aunt Susie. When she came to the breakfast table in the morning and discovered that Lily and Joseph had spent the night, she clapped her hands in delight. Her whole face lit up like a beam of sunshine. Aunt Susie's happiness chased away Lily's worries about Mama.

Lily and Joseph sat on Grandpa's lap at the breakfast table. They combed his long gray beard, flowing like crinkled wires down his chest. "Looks like I will have some good little helpers today," he said. He had a fine voice, Grandpa did. Deep and thoughtful. "I could definitely use some help in my harness shop."

After breakfast Lily and Joseph followed Grandpa to the harness shop near the barn. Lily breathed deeply as she walked

into the shop. It smelled like Grandpa—leather and saddle soap and oil. Horse harnesses hung on wall hooks. A big vat sat in the center of the room, filled with warm neats-foot oil. The farmers brought Grandpa their harnesses for dipping once or twice a year. After thirty minutes in the vat, the leather emerged like new, soft and supple. Grandpa lifted a big harness, made for a draft horse, and attached it to several large hooks that hung from cables. The cables were fastened to pulleys so Grandpa could lower the harness into the oil vat. “Stand back so you won’t get splashed,” he warned Lily and Joseph as he lowered the harness into the vat. He pulled his watch out of his pocket and checked to see the time.

Next, Grandpa took a piece of new leather to sew for a harness. Lily liked to watch Grandpa work at the sewing machine. Suddenly, they heard a *ker-splash!* Grandpa and Lily turned around to see Joseph sitting in the vat, covered with oil, a very surprised look on his small face. He had leaned over the edge to see the harness, lost his balance, and tumbled in.

Grandpa rushed over and scooped him out. Lily trotted behind Grandpa as he hurried to the house with a dripping-with-oil Joseph. Grandma’s eyes grew wide as saucers as they entered the kitchen. She pointed to the bathroom. “Put him in the tub,” she ordered Grandpa.

Joseph howled like a piglet stuck between fence rails as Grandma scrubbed him down with soap. A person couldn’t hear herself think. Lily dashed off to play with Aunt Susie so she didn’t have to hear Joseph’s wails as Grandma washed his hair again and again and again. Even after Joseph had been scrubbed and dried and stuffed into the pajamas he wore last night, Lily was sure she caught whiffs of neats-foot oil whenever she stood near him.

Grandma took Joseph’s greasy clothes and put them in

the trash. “They were soaked in so much oil that they could never be cleaned,” she said, dusting her hands together the way she always did when she was making up her mind. Lily wished Joseph hadn’t fallen into that vat. Grandma said that Lily and Joseph couldn’t go back to the harness shop with Grandpa today. She said Grandpa had had enough excitement for one day.

Now Lily couldn’t watch Grandpa hoist the harness out of the vat and help him wipe it with a rag to make it look shiny and new again. It was all because Joseph was too curious. Little boys were difficult that way.

There was a knock on the door. Grandma washed off her hands and went to open the door to see who had come to visit. And there stood Papa! He had a great big smile on his face. Lily jumped up from the chair and ran to meet Papa.

“We have a little baby boy,” Papa said, reaching down to greet Lily and Joseph.

Lily jumped up and down in excitement. “Can we keep him?”

Papa grinned. “We’ll keep him!” He stroked the top of Lily’s head. “Let’s go home and you can see him for yourself.” He turned to Grandma. “We named him Daniel, but we’ll call him Dannie.”

“That’s a fine name,” Grandma said. She looked pleased.

Lily whispered the baby’s name to herself. *Dannie*. She liked the name and not just because it was Papa’s name.

The ride home was much better in the daytime than it had been in the dark. Jim trotted along briskly. His mane and tail blew gracefully in the wind. The buggy swayed comfortably. The birds sang their cheerful songs. Lily thought it sounded as if they were saying, “Dannie, Dannie.”

“Where did you get the baby?” Lily said.

Papa glanced over at her. His cheeks colored up as he took his time answering. “God brought him to us.”

Lily clasped her hands at that thought. How wonderful that God had taken time to bring a baby to them! “Is God still there?” she asked hopefully. But Papa said no, she couldn’t see God today.

What a disappointment! Lily wished she had been home to meet God when He stopped by the house to bring a baby. The thought of meeting God was even more exciting than having a new baby.

When they reached home, Lily and Joseph helped Papa unhitch Jim from the buggy. Papa led Jim into the rickety old barn where he removed his harness and left him in his stall. Papa wanted to knock down this old barn and build a new one soon.

As they climbed up the porch stairs that led to the house, Papa cautioned Lily and Joseph to be very quiet. Lily removed her heavy black bonnet and hung it on a hook next to Joseph’s little straw hat. After they had washed their hands, they tiptoed into Mama’s bedroom. Next to Mama in the bed was a little bundle, all wrapped up in blankets. Lily peeked at the baby.

Why, it was the ugliest little baby Lily had ever seen!

His face was all red and wrinkly. His head was bald. Lily didn’t know what to say as Papa lifted the baby carefully out of Mama’s arms. He asked Lily to sit in the rocking chair next to the bed. Very gently, he placed the baby in her arms. “Say hello to your brother Dannie.”

“Hello,” Lily whispered. She looked at the tiny fingers, with tiny nails. The baby opened his eyes and started making funny whimpering little noises. He turned his head and tried to stuff his tiny little fist into his mouth.

“I think he’s hungry,” Papa said as he lifted the baby from her lap and handed him back to Mama.

Lily was glad to scoot off the rocking chair and go out to the living room to play with her own sweet little rag doll, Sally. What a huge disappointment! Of all the babies to choose from in the world, she couldn’t understand why God had chosen to give them an ugly one.

CHAPTER
2

Mama's Crabby Helper

Lily woke to the sound of someone working in the kitchen. Rubbing the sleep from her eyes, she climbed down the ladder of her bunk bed. Joseph was still sound asleep in the lower bunk. Lily tiptoed quietly to her closet to get her favorite play dress. It was light brown with five bright red buttons down the back. She could fasten the top button by herself, but Mama would have to help with the rest.

Lily loved getting up early to help Mama make breakfast. As she skipped down the stairs, she was surprised to see a stranger at Mama's stove. This woman was tall and skinny, with stooped shoulders and a red face. Lily paused at the door, watching and waiting, not sure if she wanted to go into the kitchen or not. Where was Mama? Then she remembered. Mama had a little baby. Quietly, she tiptoed away from the kitchen before the stranger could notice her. She hurried up-stairs to see if Mama was still in bed.

Lily knocked on her parents' bedroom door. She was relieved to hear Mama's sweet voice call out to her to come in. Mama was sitting up in bed. Baby Dannie was sleeping in a little white bassinet right beside her. His eyes were scrunched shut and his little wrinkly fist peeped out of the light blue and white polka-dot blanket. Lily walked over to Mama to have her button her dress.

"You're up early this morning," Mama said. "Do you want to come see the baby?"

Lily shook her head. "I wanted to help you make breakfast. But there is someone else in the kitchen."

"She's a helper named Frieda Troyer," said Mama. "She has agreed to stay with us for a while so that we can spend our time enjoying our new baby." Mama smiled at Lily. "I'm sure Frieda would be glad to have a little helper in the kitchen."

Lily hesitated. She had a funny feeling that Frieda might not be as glad to have a helper as Mama thought. But she went downstairs to the kitchen and found Frieda looking through all the cupboards. Shyly, Lily said, "I can set the table for you."

Frieda spun around and peered at Lily through her big thick spectacles. "I can take care of it myself. Run along and look at some books until breakfast is ready."

Lily went into the living room to get her doll, Sally, and sit on the couch. No one had lit the oil lamp yet so she couldn't see well enough to look at a book. Holding Sally close, she waited for Papa to come into the house after he fed Jim. From where she sat, she could see Frieda bustling around the kitchen, rearranging the things in the cupboards. She clinked and clanked and banged the dishes as she set the table.

Lily wanted to tell Frieda Troyer to go home and leave Mama's things alone. She was glad when Papa finally came

in from the barn. He would tell Frieda to leave Mama's cupboards alone. But Papa didn't say anything. Not a word. He went over to the washbasin to wash his hands. After they were clean, he scooped up big handfuls of water and splashed it over his face. Frieda watched him, frowning, as little droplets of water splashed on the sink and floor.

When breakfast was ready, Papa filled Mama's plate with scrambled eggs, toast, and a big spoonful of liverwurst. Lily thought it was disgusting that Frieda would serve liverwurst for breakfast. She followed Papa as he took the tray to Mama in the bedroom. She told Mama what Frieda Troyer was doing to the cupboards. Mama exchanged a look with Papa.

She turned to Lily. "I guess you'll have to help me put everything back into place after Frieda goes home. But that will be our little secret. Okay?"

Lily smiled and nodded. It would be fun to keep a secret. Whenever she saw Frieda putting wrong things in the wrong cupboards, she would think of the secret she and Mama were keeping.

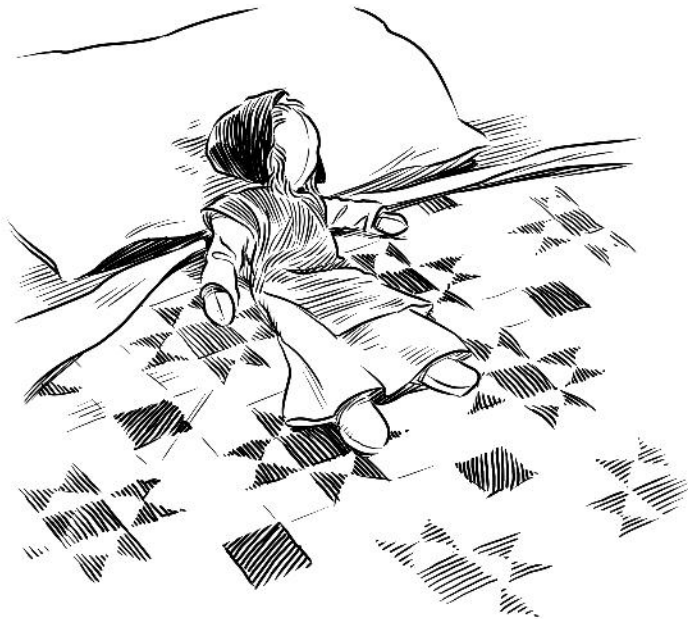
Every single day, Frieda told Lily and Joseph to get out of her way. She wanted to keep the house nice and didn't like it when they sat at their little table in the living room to color in their coloring books or put their puzzles together. She didn't like it when Joseph played with his toy animals or when Lily sat on the couch to play with her doll. She didn't even like it when they sang songs. Too noisy, she said. It hurt her ears.

Lily thought she had never seen anyone who didn't like so many things. The only thing Frieda liked to do was clean house and rearrange cupboards. And serve liverwurst for breakfast. Disgusting! Lily wrinkled her nose at the very thought of liverwurst.

So Lily and Joseph spent most of their days in Mama's

bedroom. Mama didn't mind if they played with their toys or talked and laughed and sang. She helped them sing songs and sat on her rocking chair to read stories to them. But best of all, Lily liked to help take care of baby Dannie. He was finally starting to get cute. She talked and crooned to him just like Mama did. Dannie would look at her with his big blue eyes and tuck his hands under his chin. Lily liked to hold his tiny hands and count his fingers.

On Sunday afternoons, visitors would come to the house to see Mama and baby Dannie. They would hold Dannie and say he looked just like Mama or Papa. Lily thought that was such a silly thing to say. Baby Dannie had no hair and no teeth. He looked like a baby, not like Mama or Papa. The visitors would bring a baby card and a few little toys. Mama would let Lily place the toys carefully on the dresser. There



were baby books, teething rings, rattles, homemade strings of pretty colored beads and little squeaky animals. Dannie was too small to play with them now, Mama told her. But when Dannie grew older, Mama would take the toys to church for him to play with while the ministers preached their long sermons.

At last, the day came when Frieda Troyer packed her suitcase. It was time for her to leave! Papa paid her and thanked her for helping out. She picked up her suitcase and walked out the door, down the walkway to where a taxi was waiting to drive her home. Lily climbed on a chair to look out the window and watch Frieda leave. As soon as the taxi disappeared around the bend in the driveway, Lily slid off the chair. She didn't know what she wanted to do first! She held her arms out and started spinning in happy circles until she was dizzy and collapsed, giggling on the floor. Joseph joined in and they both spun in circles. It was so nice not to have Frieda frown at them or tell them to stop! Lily was so happy she couldn't hold still! Mama smiled at Lily and Joseph from the rocking chair where she held baby Dannie. Lily wondered how Mama could remain calm. Lily felt as if her feet wanted to dance and jump and hop through the house.

Later in the evening, Papa sat in his big creaky rocking chair and held Lily and Joseph on his lap. Mama rocked Dannie in her rocking chair. It was wonderful to hear Papa and Mama laugh and talk again. Lily snuggled into Papa's strong arms and sighed with happiness. Everything in her world was right again. And tomorrow, she would help Mama start putting everything in the cupboards back to where they had been before Frieda had come.

CHAPTER
3

Papa's Disappearing Shovel

On a warm, sunny April morning, Lily and Joseph were playing in the sandbox in the yard. A loud roar startled them. They looked up to see a big white truck come bouncing into sight at the bottom of the long driveway. Behind it rolled another truck, lurching around the bend. Stacked on the back of the trucks were piles of lumber.

Lily watched as the trucks came to a shuddering stop in front of the house. Papa walked over to talk to the truck drivers. He pointed toward Jim's pasture while he spoke with the men. Lily wished she could hear what Papa was saying! Something was going to happen and she couldn't tell what.

After Papa finished talking to the truck drivers, they drove the trucks over to Jim's pasture. One man climbed on the back of the truck and started handing lumber, one piece at a time, to the other man waiting below. The man on the ground carried the lumber over to Papa. He stacked the lumber in neat

piles on the ground. After the men emptied the trucks, they said goodbye to Papa and drove back down the driveway. Lily was glad when the noisy trucks were gone. They had been so loud that she couldn't hear the birds sing in the trees. She couldn't hear Mama sing through the open windows as she moved about the house.

Lily dropped the little shovel that she had been using to dig a pond in the sandbox. She held Joseph's hand and the two ran to Papa. He was whistling a happy little tune while straightening the piles of lumber. He smiled at them. "Well, children, what do you think? Does this look like a barn?"

Lily giggled. To her, it did not look like anything but boards.

Papa pushed his hat back and wiped sweat off of his brow with his shirtsleeve. "Looks like a lot of work before it will be a barn. We'll have to see if we can organize a frolic."

"What's a frolic, Papa?" Joseph said.

Lily knew! She answered before Papa had a chance to explain. "It's when everyone comes to help you work."

Papa smiled at her. He understood. She was the big sister. She knew these things.

Later that day, Lily and Joseph were in the kitchen, watching Mama make molasses cookies. Through the window, Lily saw Papa hitch Jim to the little open buggy and tie him to the hitching post. He came into the kitchen. "I'm ready to go invite people to the frolic. Would Lily and Joseph like to come along?"

Lily and Joseph looked up at Mama. They knew Papa's question was directed to her, not to them.

"They had their naps already," Mama said, eyes smiling. "I think they might like to go."

Lily ran to get her black heavy bonnet off the wall peg. She tried to stand still as Mama tied the strings in a neat little bow beneath her chin, but it was so hard and the bonnet was

so big. She skipped happily beside Papa as they walked to the buggy. Papa lifted Joseph to the seat and then boosted Lily up. Joseph had to sit in the middle, between Papa and Lily, so he wouldn't fall off while they were driving down the road. He was just a little boy. Barely four.

Lily loved riding in the open buggy. As Jim trotted down the road, she could see everything around her so much better than when she was in the top buggy. Big thistle plants grew in the ditches along the road. Goldfinches flew in funny little bouncing swoops from one thistle to the next, gathering seeds to eat.

Looking down, Lily could watch the wheels turn around and around. When Jim trotted, the spokes whirled into a blur, but when he slowed to walk up a hill, the spokes turned slowly. Papa whistled cheerfully as they drove along. Suddenly, Jim blew his nose in a loud snort. A wet spray blew back at Papa, Lily, and Joseph, splattering their face and arms. Papa's whistle died on his lips as he wiped off his face. Lily knew Jim didn't do it on purpose. Secretly, she thought it would be fun to be a horse and be able to blow her nose like that, whenever she wanted to.

As they reached the first Amish neighbor, Papa pulled the buggy up to the hitching post. He tied Jim's rope to the post and told Lily and Joseph to stay in the buggy. He was going to find someone to invite to the barn-building frolic.

As Papa disappeared, Lily gathered up the reins and pretended to drive the buggy. "Giddyup! Whoa!" she told Jim. Joseph wanted to drive too, so she handed him a rein. "Giddyup!" they shouted to Jim.

The gentle horse turned his head and looked back at them but didn't budge. Jim knew that Papa wasn't there. He was too well trained to try to leave without Papa.

When Papa returned, he took the reins back from Lily

and Joseph. He told them never to play with a horse's reins. "Even a nice horse like Jim might not like it."

All afternoon, Papa drove the buggy from one neighbor to another, until everyone in their entire church was invited to come to the frolic on Saturday.



Lily and Joseph sat on top of a little mound of dirt and watched as Papa and Mama pounded little wooden stakes into the ground. Papa wanted to square off the foundation of the barn before the frolic, so that it would be built straight and solid. Baby Dannie kicked his feet and cooed as he lay on his back in the baby carriage beside Lily. He tried to swat at strings of colorful beads that Mama pinned to the roof of the carriage for him.

Lily liked sitting on the little mound. It was several inches higher than the rest of the yard. There was another mound just like it closer to the house. Papa thought those mounds were a nuisance and an eyesore. Soon, he would try to level them. "Whoever did the landscaping around here must have been in a hurry," Papa said. "He sure didn't care what he was doing."

Papa pounded the last stake into the ground. After double-checking that the barn foundation was properly measured off, he picked up his shovel and walked to the house. Lily and Joseph ran ahead of him. As he stepped on the little mound where Lily and Joseph had been playing, his leg suddenly disappeared! Mama screamed and reached for Papa's hands. He managed to pull his leg out of the mound, but his shovel fell into the hole. *Ker-splash!* Lily could hear the shovel hit water far below.

Mama began to cry. Papa held her close to him and patted her shoulder. "It's all right, Rachel," he said soothingly. "No one was hurt."

Mama's face was white. "Oh, Daniel!" she whispered. "The children had just been sitting there! Think how often they've played on top of those mounds! How could we not have realized it was an old well? It was an accident just waiting to happen!"

"I must say it gave me quite a stir," Papa said in a soothing voice. "A man gets kind of used to having the ground stay solid under his feet." His face brightened. "But this solves the problem of how we will get water to the barn. I'll get this old well fixed up nice." He looked around at the mound. "Until then, I'd better do something to keep anyone else from falling through."

Papa removed the rest of the dirt and rotten boards. Hands on his hips, he stood gazing at the big, gaping hole in the yard. "I'm guessing there's an old well under that other mound too." He went into the basement to get another shovel. He started digging at the other mound. Once again, he found rotten boards covering an old well. This well, though, was bone dry. Not a drop of water was in it.

Lily and Joseph watched as Papa built covers for the wells and placed them over the holes. "That will have to do until I have more time." He tested each cover to make sure it didn't move and it could hold his weight.

Lily shuddered at how easily she and Joseph and baby Dannie could have fallen into the deep, dark, scary well. They might have disappeared and never been seen or heard from again. How sad! It was a dreadful thought.



A few days later, Lily and Joseph sat on the back of the bouncing spring wagon as Papa drove Jim across the field. The grass came up all the way to Jim's belly. If Lily held her

hands over the side of the spring wagon, she could brush the tops of the grass with her fingers. Papa was taking them to the edge of the woods for a big pile of rocks and stones. He wanted to fill the spring wagon with the rocks. He would use the rocks to fill up the dry well. If it was filled to the top with rocks, no little boy or girl could fall into it and disappear.

When they reached the rock pile, Papa hopped off the spring wagon and lifted Lily and Joseph down. He didn't have to tie Jim when he was working; he was such a good horse that he stood quietly wherever Papa left him. Besides, out in the field, if Jim wanted to take a few steps, it wouldn't matter.

Papa started throwing rocks on the back of the spring wagon. Lily and Joseph picked up smaller stones and tossed them into the wagon. Lily's hands felt dirty and grimy after the first couple handfuls, but she enjoyed being a help to Papa.

Papa whistled as he worked, and before long the spring wagon was filled with rocks. As they drove to the yard, Lily sat on the front seat with Papa while he held Joseph on his lap. Papa stopped Jim beside the dry well and removed the cover. He climbed into the back of the spring wagon and started pitching the rocks into the hollow well.

It took many trips to the rock pile before the dry well was filled to the top. Once it was full, Papa unhitched Jim and let him rest in the pasture. Then Papa filled a wheelbarrow with dirt and dumped the dirt on top of the rocks in the well. When he was satisfied that the well was filled and solid, he scattered some grass seeds on top. Soon grass would grow and no one would ever know that there had once been a well on that spot.

And no little girl would have to worry about falling into it.