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Reading Article GP2

Article #17: Excerpt from "In The Shadow of the Pines"

by Karen K. Newell

A few weeks after his mother's funeral, Alfred was on his bed doing his homework when he heard the squeaking of the front gate. He jumped up happily. The sound of the gate opening and closing often made his heart beat excitedly before he even knew why. But then he always remembered. "It's not Mama coming home after all," he'd realize. That experience repeated itself many times, and every time he remembered, his heart ached.

But tonight, he heard voices in the kitchen. It was one of Mama's brothers and a sister.

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"And you can just show yourselves the door and don't ever come back," their father's voice bellowed.

Alfred heard the door slam, and a few moments later the sound of a car pulling away.

When his aunt and uncle had left, Alfred slipped cautiously into the kitchen. Papa continued muttering, partially to Alfred, and partially to no one at all.

"Oh sure, your mother's family comes here all high and mighty. „I'll take Velma" says one. „We'll take the two older boys says another." And who's gonna do for the little ones, that's what I'd like to know?" his father ranted.

"Naw, they're just looking for their own farm hands, that's what they's doing," Papa

continued. "Notice no one is asking to take the young 'uhns, do you? What about little Billy, who is hardly able to talk an" all. „Put the little ones in an orphanage“ they says. Over my dead body!"

And with that, Papa left the house, letting the kitchen door slam shut.

"Papa knows," thought Alfred. "He knows that Mama wants us all to stay together and to go to school."

Their father's tirade had its consequences. The children never saw their mother's relatives again.

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