

## Chapter 28

It was a small car—a dark brown Ford Pinto with a driver’s side door that was yellow and obviously not part of the original body. The interior of the car was musty and cluttered. There was an assortment of clothes, books, 8-track tapes and a guitar in the back seat. I spent ten- or fifteen-minutes cleaning out a comfortable spot in the seat to sit on for the adventure.

When Doreen turned the car off the dirt road onto the pavement, she looked at me in the rearview mirror and said, “OK, sweetheart, you need to tell me what city in Texas we’re headed to...What town or city you live in.”

“It’s called Kerrville.” I replied

“Do you know what big city that might be closest to, Hon?” she asked me. Her eyes were still looking right at me in the mirror.

I thought about it for a little bit. “I think it’s not too far from San Antonio. We go back and forth to San Antonio pretty often.”

“Do you know your street name and number in Kerrville?” Doreen asked.

“Yes, Ma’am. 1502 North Pine Street.”

“Now Angela,” she said turning to her daughter. “There’s a U.S. highway map in the glove compartment there. Can you open it up, unfold it and find San Antonio on the Texas page? San Antonio is right smack dab in the center of Texas. Once you find San Antonio look closely around it and see if you can find a city called Kerrville.

Angela opened the glove compartment and found the map. She unfolded it and started looking. It only took a few seconds to find it. “OK,” she said, “Found San Antonio, and looking, looking, looking...Kerrville. There it is”

“How many miles from San Antonio to Kerrville?” asked Doreen of her daughter.

“How can I tell?” asked Angela.

“Down on the bottom of the map, Sweetie. There’s something down there that will tell you how many miles an inch of the map represents.”

Angela looked at the map, found the scale and said, “It’s about seventy-five miles I guess.”

“Good, honey. Now find Yazoo City. That’s where we are close to. Find the easiest highway route between there and Yazoo and San Antonio and then use the map scale to try to give me an estimate of how fare we have to drive David here back to his folks.”

Angela followed the highway with her index finger and then marked off the route segment by segment with her thumb and index finger.”

“Momma, “she said, “It’s about seven hundred miles.”

“Lordy!” exclaimed Doreen, “That’s a good haul to do in one non-stopper. Doreen looked at her watch, then looked at me again in the rearview mirror, “David, Honey. We’ll have you home before the sun comes up tomorrow morning. Just sit tight, make yourself comfortable and let me know if there’s anything you need.”

“How long will it take to get him home, “asked Angela of her mother.

“Well, it’s 11:00 in the morning now, “she said checking her watch again. It will be twelve, thirteen hours, maybe fourteen. We’ll be in Yazoo City in just a few minutes. We’ll get something to eat there and fill the car up. Then we’ll head for Texas. We’re in for a long trip today, kids. We need to get it done as soon as possible. Get it done, get it over and get it behind us.”

We pulled into the city. Doreen filled her car and we went through the drive through at McDonalds. We twisted and turned down several side roads and turned onto the highway.

I slouched back in my seat and watched the trees, pastures and billboards passing by. The rain began to call for what seemed to be hours. Angela crawled into the back seat with me and we tried to pass the time by counting license plates of the different states of cars we saw on the highway. Every now and again, Angela would start to sing a song and try to teach me. Occasionally, her mother would ask her to look for a particular music tape. It rained and it rained. The sun came out. And then it rained again. We stopped to get gas.

Mississippi turned into Louisiana, the miles and miles went by. They all looked the same to me.

Louisiana finally turned into Texas. Doreen turned around and said, “Look there, Hon. Texas state line! Don’t get too excited though, we still got hundreds of miles to go. Texas is a big damned state, y’all.”

Day turned into night and still the miles piled on. Angela crawled back into the front seat. She had said very little to her mother and very little had been said in return. She looked at Doreen and said, “Momma, he really did wake Granny up from her Long Sleep she was in. Honest. I mean, Paw-Paw had been taking me there every week for years and she had never even moved. And then we bring David in that morning and she just pretty near jumped right out of her bed and started talking to us. Don’t you think there’s something to that?”

“Angela, sweetie. I don’t know. I’m glad Clarisse is awake, alert and alive. But all I know for sure if this boy doesn’t belong to Walter and Clarisse. He doesn’t belong to you or me. He belongs to his own family.”

“Well,” proclaimed Angela, “Don’t you think maybe he was meant to pass through our lives in order to wake Granny up from the Sleep?”

“Honey,” said her mother, “I don’t know what I believe anymore. I wish I just had a simple answer for you. I wish I could just tell you God is in control, but child, I just don’t know.”

“Well, I believe it was all meant to be,” said Angela.

“And that’s your business and your right to think that, Sweetie. I don’t believe or disbelieve in anything these days. Right here and now is the only reality I can get my head wrapped around. We just got to get David here to his folks. They are probably just dying not knowing where he’s been.”

“And what are we going to do after that?” demanded Angela of her mother.

“I haven’t figured that out yet,” said Doreen.

“Are you going to take me back to Paw-Paw’s farm?”

“No Angela, I don’t think so. I don’t think Walter needs a little nagging nosey granddaughter in his hair every day, all day anymore now that he has Clarisse back in his life.”

“Then where do you think we will go?”

“I’ve got a friend in Arizona who will let us stay at his place until I get my act together.”

“And how long is it going to take for you to get your act together, Momma?” she asked Doreen.

“Don’t know, darling. It will take as long as it takes. But your crazy old Paw-Paw was right about one thing. It’s time for me to start being your mother while we still have the time.”

“Am I ever going to see Paw-Paw , the farm and the dogs again?” asked Angela.

“Why sure, dear. We’ll go see him for Thanksgiving or Christmas this year.”

Angela leaned her head on the window, fell asleep. The mile markers continued flying by outside the car. And it was long before I too, fell asleep in the back of Doreen’s Ford Pinto.