BEHIND THE HIGH BOARD FENCE Chapter 14 - Papa suffers accident

WINSTON, 1910—January was cold herself than to the girls. and snowy, so the family stayed in doors.

ring.

"Yes, this is Mrs. Sharp," she was saying. Then, in a strange voice, she was asking questions. "What happened? ...Where was he? ...When? ...Yes ...yes ... thank you." She stopped.

Aunt Emma stopped ironing, led Mother to the sitting room and settled her in a chair. After getting Mother a cup of coffee, Aunt Emma picked up Jack and left Mother with the girls.

Mother sat quietly and continued to stare, this time at the fire that glowed in the sitting room stove. Her hands were shaking so badly that Helen took the coffee cup and set it on the table. For a while Mother rested her head against the chair. Next she began to twist handkerchief and then her hands. She was

N.C., talking softly, more to

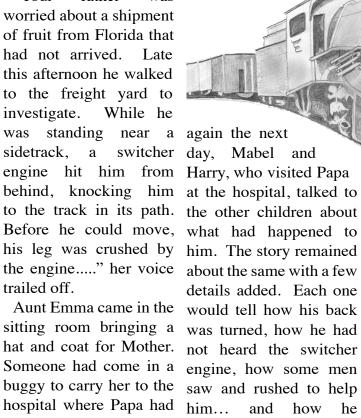
"Your father worried about a shipment Cal had gone, and of fruit from Florida that Helen was watching Aunt had not arrived. Late Emma as she pressed Mr. this afternoon he walked Sharp's shirts, humming to the freight yard to and talking at the same investigate. While he time. The ringing of the was standing near a again the next telephone startled Aunt sidetrack, a switcher day, Mabel and Emma and Helen. They engine hit him from Harry, who visited Papa heard Mother leave the behind, knocking him at the hospital, talked to sitting room where she to the track in its path. the other children about was sewing and walk Before he could move, what had happened to to the hall to answer the his leg was crushed by him. The story remained trailed off.

> sitting room bringing a hat and coat for Mother. not heard the switcher Someone had come in a buggy to carry her to the hospital where Papa had been taken.

Mother rose from her chair. As she put on her coat, she seemed to put on a strong front, one that she would have to wear for a while.

The girls stood quietly in the front hall to say goodbye to her. stooped to kiss them on the cheeks, giving each of them a quick pat and promising them that Papa would be all right. Then she walked out into the early darkness, stepped into the buggy and rode away.

Later in the evening and they amputate it."

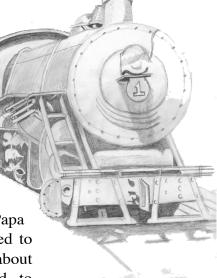


cried. Papa's crying was

more than Helen could

imagine.

The following evening when Mother returned home, she gathered her family around the kitchen table. The soft glow of the oil lamp held them in a close circle. They leaned in to hear Mother's news, but she just looked at her children, gazing at each face in the lamplight. At last Harry spoke for her. "Papa's leg is so badly hurt," he explained, "the doctor says that he won't be able to get well unless



A railroad

"Amputate it?" Libby asked. "What is that?"

Mabel turned and spoke to the girls. "Well, that stop trying until he does means that the doctor it." will take off the bottom, injured part of his leg because he can't use it won't give up on his anymore."

"Will he be able to walk?" Helen's heart nodded. sank as she asked it.

his story. He lost his leg needed. after he was shot in the war."

most of the time."

on his crutches," Alan cut in again, "and now there are good artificial legs for people who are willing to learn to walk with them." He became more emphatic. "Papa is like that! He will never sit still if he can walk, and I know he'll never

"And work, too," Cal added. "You know he store. It's his dream."

She shared Then Alan stood up. a house and having a Worley. Provided by the "Just think of the old business, which would N.C. Press Foundation, man who lives on Holly provide the food and Newspapers in Educa-Avenue. You remember money that the family tion.

The children knew the sacrifices their parents "Yes, sometimes we see had made to open the him sitting on the porch store: the long hours that when we're walking Papa worked, the sewing home from school," Cal that Mother did and the said. "He sits in a chair extra people that she fed at the house. Once Helen "But he can get about had seen Mabel give Mother a nickel to help with family expenses, and she had wished that she, too, had a nickel to contribute. Now Mother would worry about Papa's losing his leg and his giving up on his dream.

next chapter-Papa walks

Adapted and reprinted with permission. Written Mother listened and by Helen Marley based on her mother's stories; Papa's dream of owning illustrated by Thorne

ACTIVITY: Does your local print and/or digital newspaper cover accidents? Study examples. Write a headline and opening paragraph about Papa's accident.

HISTORY: "Spencer Shops" located near Salisbury repaired steam locomotives for Southern Railway. Today, "Spencer Shops" serves as the location for North Carolina's Transportation Museum.