

BEHIND THE HIGH BOARD FENCE

Chapter 2 – Cal and Joe sell newspapers

WINSTON, N.C., 1910—Early the next morning Cal crept quietly into the girls' room and gently nudged Helen. "Get dressed," he whispered, "Meet me in the kitchen."

When she came downstairs, Helen found him alone in the kitchen, cutting thick slices of bread. He had set out the butter and a jar of blackberry jam. Missing from the table this morning was the dishpan of soapy water that Mother used to wash the hands, faces and ears of the children before they left for school. Saturday was different, and they could skip the regular routine.

Helen got the milk from the ice-box, poured some in two glasses and finished spreading the bread with butter and jam while Cal went to get a newspaper bag. When he returned, Cal hurried to explain their plan while they ate. Then they slipped out of the house before the others woke.

At the corner, Joe was waiting with a stack of local newspapers beside him and more in his newspaper bag. He and Cal loaded the ones on the ground into Cal's bag. Together the three of them turned east toward the train station and the morning sun.

"Why is Helen with you?" Joe asked as they made a single line along the edge of the street.

"She's going with us, but just to the station. Mother told me to take her, and I had to promise that we wouldn't go off and leave her." Cal looked at

her as she tagged along at the back of their line. Turning to Joe, he continued, "Besides, you know she won't be any trouble because she doesn't want to be left behind."

Helen knew he was right. She'd do almost anything to get him to include her in his adventures.

As they neared the square, the red streaks of sunrise began to vanish, leaving the clouds white and the sky a hazy blue. Horses and wagons seemed to be everywhere as farmers drove into town for market day.

The children made their way across the granite pavers of Main Street and headed down the hill to the station. They dodged the horses and carriages bringing passengers and those coming to meet the train. They went inside to the waiting room where a few people were at the window to purchase tickets, but the children hurried out onto the long wooden platform.

There Helen felt the excitement as everything seemed to focus on the incoming train. The mail and baggage carts rattled by as the porters rolled them across the boards of the platform, and the station door slammed as the last passengers joined those already there.

The shrill whistle called from down the tracks and alerted the crowd. Men reached for their families, guarding them from the blast of the locomotive. Though they held back, all of them turned to see the arriving train.

Over the noise of the engine and the brakes, Cal yelled to Helen, "Stay right here and wait for us! The train won't be here long, and we have to hurry." The boys left her standing on the platform alone. She saw them get on the first coach as soon as the conductor set down the step to take on new passengers.

As the steam disappeared and the soot settled, Helen moved closer to the train. Behind the engine and the coal car were five coaches and a dining car. Helen supposed that beyond that were the Pullman cars with sleeping compartments where travelers from places like New York would be getting up to start a new day on the train. Some would be having breakfast, and maybe they would be buying a newspaper from Cal or Joe.

It wasn't long before she saw Cal squeeze by a family that was getting off the train. Helen could see that he was avoiding the conductor. "Let's



go!" he said as he came near her. Then he headed for the station.

Cal and Helen ran as quickly as they could. Joe was not far behind as they made their way through the station again and back into town. They were at the square before they stopped to talk.

Joe was panting. "The conductor saw that I wasn't the regular newsman and ran me off the train. I do have permission to sell the papers on the street corner but not on the train. It's not my area. I was thinking that we wouldn't get caught, but we did. Besides, all I really wanted was to see the train."

"You know," he added, "the one who will be madder than the conductor is the newsman who is supposed to sell there."

"And Papa!" cried Cal. "He will be furious with me if he hears that we tried to cheat a man out of the money he should have earned. He will never let me forget it. In fact, I probably won't forget it anyway."

On the way home Helen practiced telling her mother about the train without any mention of the boys going aboard. She would let Cal decide what to say about that.

HISTORY: Winston-Salem's major daily is over 100 years old. What local newspaper serves your area? When did it begin publication? Today, does your newspaper deliver news on several platforms—in print, on the Web and in replica or e-editions?

Next chapter — Helen steps out

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Frank Tursi's history offers this newspaper timeline:

1885 — Twin-City Daily, forerunner of the Twin City Sentinel began publication.

1897 — Winston-Salem Journal begins publication.

1927 — Winston-Salem Journal and Twin City Sentinel merge.

1974 — Winston-Salem Chronicle serving black residents begins publication.

1985 — Twin City Sentinel was dropped from the newspaper's logo when it was absorbed into the morning paper.

Currently, like many daily newspapers, the Winston-Salem Journal delivers news on several platforms, in print, on the Web and in replica or e-editions.

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITY:

What do you learn about a family and its relationships from a comic strip and/or news story?