

A snake slithered across the rocks, and disappeared into the bushes.

A moth, faintly white in the dusk, flitted by my face. From the next island came strains of music, borne by the evening breeze.

Evening had fallen on the Muskoka Lakes.

DOREEN CUSACK, '58.

THE FATAL TURN

The sun was slowly drying the dew off the lawn on one of those beautiful summer mornings. It was the kind of day when one feels the urge to either lazily lounge around home and pass a quiet weekend or go for a pleasure drive in the country and view the wonders of nature. I had decided in favor of the former and was setting up the new hammock between the two Manitoba Maples on the lawn when I heard a voice say, "Nice day to go fishing Joe."

I turned and saw the mailman at the front gate. "No" I replied, "I am just erecting the new hammock and will spend a quiet day with the children."

"You seem to be aging fast," he replied. "Last year you were always out for the weekends and seemed to be really full of life."

"Yes, that was last year, but after the attack of pleurisy this spring I feel more like staying home and getting rested for the coming days at the office," I explained.

"Well, I had better continue on my route. Here are a few letters for you. Good morning."

At that he turned and walked briskly down the street. I took the letters and thumbed through them checking the post marks; one from Aunt Mary in Florida, one from my college friend in the West and one from my mother. I opened my mother's letter first and read the first paragraph.

"Dear Joe: Just a note to tell you that you father was badly injured in a car accident and he wishes that you would come to see him at once---" I stopped. "Dad hurt in a car accident and wants me to come at once." This was hard to conceive, Dad was always such a careful driver. I gathered my thoughts and rushed into the house to see my wife, Mary, who was in the kitchen humming a jaunty tune as she went about her morning chores.

"Mary," I said, "Dad was hurt in an accident and

wants us to go home at once. Can you, Betty and Johnny be ready to leave this afternoon?"

She looked at me in that usual sweet way and then came forward and took the letter from me and read it, then raised her eyes and said, "Yes, I suppose we can leave things as they are and leave immediately after dinner. It must be urgent or your mother would not write in such an upset manner. Call the children, and tell them so that they can get washed and ready."

I went to the door, called Betty and Johnny and broke the news to them and went about making the necessary preparations for the trip.

The car needed some attention before starting on a four hundred mile trip so I went to the garage and undertook the slight check-up. Luckily I had the two thousand mile check just last week and it did not need any major overhauling; check the oil, tires and battery, clean the sediment bowl, and add a drop of water to the radiator.

This done, I returned to the house and helped gather are necessary clothes and pack them for the whole family. Thus the morning passed quickly and we sat down for a lunch before we left.

The dishes were soon washed and in a short time we were driving down Main Street on our way home. The children were excited with the idea of getting to see their grandmother, but I was somewhat worried about my father's condition.

"Drive carefully now Joe," my wife cautioned me in the usual way; "in about seven hours we will be there if everything goes well."

"Yes" I thought, "If everything goes well. Everything didn't seem to be going so well though — my father hurt, perhaps dying or even dead by now, and me not there when he wanted me most."

My head was in a whirl as we manoeuvred through the downtown traffic which seemed worse today than ever before.

Finally we came to the outskirts of the city and entered Highway 3 A which was the best surfaced road in the province although there were numerous curves on it as it wended through a slight mountain.

Once on the straight road I began to accelerate. My muscles were tense and my stomach squeamish so I turned on the radio in search of relaxation. This helped considerably and the miles and hours passed amazingly fast.

After about four and a half hours we were approaching the series of curves and I was somewhat fatigued from driving and the strain of my father's malady.

Those curves were such that I could usually take them about seventy, but today they seemed sharper than ever but I did not want to lose time nor admit to my wife and kids that I was upset since they always had such confidence in me. They were now engaged in a game of tongue-twisters and not concerned with my plight.

The roadside sign indicated the pattern of the next curve and I judged accordingly. On the centre of the curve the car seemed to be bewitched. I attempted to hold to my own lane but it gradually and persistently drifted over the white line.

"Heck!" I thought, "there is nothing coming so I will stay over the white line. It may be more easily controlled there."

As I saddled the white line and continued at my speed, which was about sixty-five, I sighted the nose of another vehicle rounding the curve. It was a semi-trailer truck.

I pulled to my own lane but something went amiss, the car skidded and went completely out of control. The children started to sob and Mary uttered a quick "Hail Mary". All I could see was the towering side of that monstrous truck as I applied the brakes, there was a horrifying screech from the tires and then — "Crash!"

The whole universe seemed to have hit me in the face; everything went a complete blank and that was the last I remembered.

I was awakened by a gentle slapping on the face and I noticed a score of nurses and two doctors around my bed. "Take it easy, Mr. Dean, you will be better soon," someone said.

I felt a sharp pain in my legs and noticed a multitude of ropes and pulleys suspending my legs in the air.

"Are they badly broken?" I asked.

"Fairly bad," the doctor answered, and then continued, "This is really a coincidence, you in this bed and your father in the next one, both with identical injuries."

At that I glanced over and there was Dad in the same position.

"Tough luck hit us both, eh, Joe?" Dad said. "It happened to me on that same curve when I was returning from a business trip. I feel better now but it was serious at first," he added.

I wondered about Mary and the children and since the nurses had left for a few minutes, I asked my father about their condition.

"It is very serious, Joe," he said; "I don't think I can tell you about them. Here is yesterday's paper with an account of the whole accident."

As he handed me the paper, the headlines stared me in the face. "Mother and Two Children Fatally Injured, Father in Hospital in Critical Condition after Car-Truck Collision on Dangerous Curve."

M. J. R.

WILLIAM GOES TO A WAKE

William Blackburn lived with his mother on a small farm. Nature was the sole means of livelihood for uneducated William and his mother. In fact, nature provided everything for William except a wife.

William was not handsome. He was tall and somewhat slim except for a few extra pounds around the waist. His fifty years had brought a few wisps of grey to his otherwise jet black hair. His countenance might have been handsome except for a protrusion of the lower lip, which was, however, somewhat hidden by a large black mustache curled upwards at both ends.

One cold morning in January William was plodding his way through the deep snow on the way to the mailbox. As he neared the gate, the mailman was bringing his horse to a stop and preparing to put the mail in the box. William spoke.

"Good mornin, Joe. This is a bad sort of a day."

"Yea. It's cold alright."

"Yes, I guess it went down to about ten below last night."

"If not more."

"Any mail, Joe?"

"Just the paper. By the way, did you hear the latest news?"

William looked at the mailman with his dark eyes twinkling.

"No, I don't think I did."

"Timmy Butler died last night."

"Get out!"