



# 29



## *Kelly-Belly*

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“Fred – you cannot take that little girl on your train! She’s only two!”

“She’ll be fine, Ruthie. Besides, I’m on the afternoon switch. We’re not going anywhere today.”

“Then I’m coming with. Done.”

“I figured you would Ruthie.” Fred leaned down and kissed his wife’s lips.

They drove to the train yard – Ruth dropped off her husband and their daughter. After parking the car, she joined them. She climbed the steep metal steps first, then while standing on the walkway Fred handed Kelly up into his wife’s arms. Fred climbed up onto the walkway and took his daughter, holding her securely in one muscular arm.

“Come on, little girl...” He opened the cab door. Ruth entered first and sat in Fred’s chair.

He placed Kelly in her mom’s arms. “Here, Ruthie...” Fred held a miniature engineer’s cap in his hands. He put the cap on his daughter’s head, slightly pressing it down on her red curls.

Kelly’s eyes squinted against the brightness of the morning sun as she looked up at her daddy. With both hands, she pulled off the cap and carefully examined it. Her daddy wore a similar cap.

“Dada...” She tried putting the cap back on, but failed miserably. Fred chuckled and again put the cap on his daughter’s head. She rewarded him with a smile.

“Dada!”

Max came into the small cab. “Well... Hi Ruth, nice to see you again!”

Fred stated proudly, “This is our daughter Kelly.”

“I’ve seen pictures. She’s got your red hair, doesn’t she?!” Max held out his hand to the little girl. She grabbed one of his fingers in her fist and wouldn’t let go. “And she’s strong like you, Fred.”

“Yes she is...”

“Are you ready?” Max sat on the chair covered in broken leather. “We’re building the night freight train today.”

“You got it.” Fred bent low and tenderly kissed his wife, then kissed his little girl – his precious little girl who held his heart in her fist – and left the cab.

Max advanced the throttle and released the locomotive’s air brakes. A loud pop, followed by quick bursts of air, startled the toddler and she began crying. Ruth put her hands around her daughter’s head, covering her ears. “Shhh...”

Another burst of hissing air again shocked the little girl, but this time she only looked up at her mommy – and replicated the sound. “Sssss!”

“Yes, little girl. Sssss.”

Max slowly took off the brakes and sounded the horn – two long blasts followed by the continuous ringing of the bell. He opened the throttle – the engine came to life and, as it spooled up, turned the electric generator that powered the traction motors. He waited several seconds before enough electricity was generated. The deep chugging diesel engine soon roared to life and the locomotive inched forward.

Ruth stood Kelly on her lap so the little girl could see out the narrow front window. Kelly’s eyes darted from the front window to the side windows. Max pushed the throttle and the powerful diesel engine whined and grumbled as it increased speed.

“Dada!” Her lower lip quivered for only a moment. But when her father came back into the cab, her eyes brightened and a smile slowly appeared on her face. Kelly immediately reached up to her daddy – her chubby little hands grabbing air. He lifted the toddler up out of Ruth’s arms and, holding his daughter close, exited the cab and stood on the walkway. Though the train barely moved, Kelly’s fascination showed on her face – she couldn’t take her eyes off the tracks as they slowly passed beneath the massive locomotive.

“This is my train, Kelly... Can you say *train*?”

“Dada! Twain!” Fred kissed her face – and the little girl giggled. He went back into the cab and gave his daughter back to Ruth.

“Dada! Twain! Dada! Twain!”

“Yes, my darling girl... This is your daddy’s train.”

But when Fred left the cab, his daughter again burst into tears. Ruth tried consoling her baby girl. Miraculously her tears turned to smiles when her dad came back into the cab and picked up his daughter – and again brought her back out on the walkway.

It was past noon, and time for Ruth to get home. As Fred handed his daughter down from the walkway to his wife, Kelly let loose with an ear-piercing scream. Ruth could only hold her daughter close as she walked back to their car – Kelly’s eyes never left her father’s face as he too watched from the walkway. Fred waited until her car left the train yard and out of sight before he returned to work.

Within a few years, Kelly could ride alone without her mom, promising her dad she’d sit obediently next to the engineer. She loved riding with Max – he would let her sit on his lap and hold the throttle, thereby ‘steering’ the train.

Soon the train passed through an urban neighborhood. Since the horn was prohibited in these populated areas, the bell had to ring continuously. Max again let Kelly sit on his lap and pointed to the button that engaged the loud bell. Fred came into the cab just as Kelly pressed the black button.

“Look daddy! Max lets me press the belly button!” She was so proud of herself – and it was all Max could do to stifle a laugh. But Fred loved it – and from that day,

he called his daughter Kelly-Belly. Soon Fred and his Kelly-Belly became regular fixtures on that old Denver & Rio Grande Western Tunnel Motor.

Kelly couldn't ride with her dad during the school year, especially once he started working freight trains over the mountain passes and was gone for days at a time. Only on holidays and special occasions was she able to ride along on day trips.

Finally it was the first day of summer and again Fred brought Kelly to work with him. He stopped at the yard office to check in with Scottie the yardmaster. Gordon, their regular conductor had arrived earlier. Fred set his daughter on a chair – she patiently watched as Gordy updated his big 3-ring binder.

She pointed to the conductor's heavy book. "What's that daddy?"

"It's the CCOR – the rule book."

"What's cee core?"

Gordy winked at Fred as he answered Kelly. "Consolidated Code of Operating Rules."

She began listening to the trainmen's conversation, but soon got bored. She opened her father's heavy black bag – his grip – and peered inside. She reached in and touched every item – his rain suit, some spare keys, a flashlight and the photo book he always carried with him.

Kelly picked it out of the bag and looked through the clear plastic pages: Photos of her mommy and daddy, their wedding pictures, photos of her and her mommy, photos of her and her daddy – and many photos of just her, from the moment of her birth until just a few months ago on her seventh birthday. So many pictures – and enough empty pages to fill a lifetime of love.

Fred noticed her looking through his album. "Put that back, little girl. I can't go anywhere without my girls." Kelly closed the album, touched the cover with tender fingers and returned it to his bag. Again she sat silently, listening to Gordy's conversation with Scottie.

"There's been a bridge abutment washout near Alamosa. A crew's out working on the right-of-way. You'll have a new route today."

"Okay... Are the timetable and general orders ready?"

"Yup, right here..."

Kelly wanted more information. "What's a washout?"

"Well," her father patiently began the explanation. "When there's a lot of rain, the water erodes or washes out the soil from under the rails near the bridge..." He waited until she either figured it out or if she had more questions.

For a moment, she pondered her father's description of the event – already planning her drawing. She drew pictures of her experiences on the train, reinterpreting them in her youthful imagination. Of course, her mom had kept all the drawings, the most recent masterpieces taped on the refrigerator.

Kelly had to skip along to keep up with her daddy's long strides. When they got to the great black and orange locomotive, he picked her up and set her on the walkway – then with his heavy grip hanging on his shoulder, followed close behind. They entered the cab.

Nick sat at the controls. “Okay, Kelly, we’re heading out. How many pulls on the horn is that?”

Kelly looked earnestly at her engineer. “Two!”

Nick laughed. “She’s right, Fred. Pretty soon she’ll take my job.”

Fred touched his daughter’s face, putting his large fingers under her chin. “I love you, Kelly-Belly. You mind Nick, alright?” And he was gone.

After a few minutes, when the engine was leaving the train yard, Fred came back into the cab. He lifted his daughter and cradled her close to his chest. Nick kept the speed down, and the melodious sounds of the engine plus the harmonics of the old locomotive lulled Kelly to sleep. Nick glanced over at Fred.

“She’s out?”

“Like a light...” Fred slowly pulled the little cap off her head and kissed his daughter, pressing his mouth on her red curls. He whispered, *“...like a light...”*

It was time for Fred to get up and again be the eyes of the engineer, standing on the walkway near the front of the locomotive. He lovingly nudged awake his sleeping daughter. “Gotta go to work, little girl.”

“Okay...” She yawned. “Be careful out there!” She had heard her mom use those same words when her husband left the house each morning, so it was only natural she’d repeat them now to her dad.

Kelly spotted the W sign along the side of the tracks. She had learned the rectangular sign warned of an approaching crossing. Nick let her sit on his lap and blow the horn: two long, one short and one long.

As they neared the unmarked crossing, Fred stood out on the walkway and looked for vehicles or pedestrians below the tracks. When he saw the tracks were clear, he called out to his engineer, “Clear Left!”

Similarly, Nick looked above the tracks and called out “Clear Right!” Those times when the train approached a marked or gated crossing, Fred again stood out on the walkway and when he saw the semaphore’s blinking red lights, he called out “Lights on! Gates down!”

Each time Fred called out to his engineer on the radio, Max or Nick repeated the call, whether Fred was outside atop the walkway, or out-of-sight at one of the many hand-operated switches. And each time Kelly heard her dad’s call she relayed the message to the engineer. Even Nick enjoyed her assistance. Both engineers had grown so accustomed to hearing Kelly echoing her dad’s call that when they were on runs without her, they instinctively listened for her munchkin voice.

When they pulled into the servicing area at the end of the day, Nick told Kelly to sound the horn signaling that they were home. She sounded one long blast and announced, "We're home!" Then obediently waited in the cab until her dad came to get her.

Fred and Kelly rode back home in his truck – tired and happy. Ruth always waited for them in the kitchen.

"How was your day little girl?" Ruth stood by the stove watching her daughter and husband each take off their work boots, placing them side-by-side on the shoe tray – Fred's black boots appearing goliath-like next to Kelly's miniature lace-up boots.

"It was good! We did a lot..." Kelly was so excited about relaying her full day with her dad she ran out of breath.

"Hey, Kelly-Belly – let's wash our hands first, then you can tell your mommy about your day..." Fred stood behind his daughter at the kitchen sink, his large frame enveloping his daughter as they lathered their hands. Kelly reached her arms across the edge of the sink as her dad helped her wash between her fingers.

"Too hot!"

"Sorry, honey..." Fred turned down the hot water and rinsed off the soap. Ruth watched the hand-washing ritual. She adored the pair, her husband and her daughter – her two peas in a pod.

While Fred and Kelly finished washing up, Ruth put dinner on the Formica kitchen table. Tonight was boiled dinner night – corned beef with cabbage, carrots and potatoes. Fred drank his beer, Ruth her white wine and Kelly drank chocolate milk out of her own engineer's cup. Before they began eating, they joined hands and thanked the Lord for... "Nick! And daddy's train! And mommy's *mmm* cooking!"

"Looks good, Ruthie..."

Ruth smiled. "Thank you, Fred... How was work today?" She finished serving her husband and now put some corned beef and carrots on Kelly's plate.

Fred winked at Kelly. "Did you know that Kelly-Belly will be taking over for Nick on our next run?"

Kelly sat up straight with great pride. "Yup! Nick even said!"

Ruth looked at Fred as she cut her meat – but he only winked back at her. "This is really good, Ruthie."

Kelly swallowed her mouthful of carrots. "My mommy is a good cooker!"

Ruth laughed as she took a drink of her wine. "Kelly, after dinner you go take your bath and get to bed early... Aren't you tired?"

"I already took a nap today!"

"You did?"

"Yup! When Daddy held me on his lap and the harmonicas rocked me to sleep..."

Though Ruth raised a questioning eyebrow, Fred only laughed. “That’s right, Kelly-Belly. The harmonicas put you to sleep... but you still have to do like your mommy says. You clean up and get to bed early.”

When Kelly ate all she wanted and drank her chocolate milk, she looked up at her daddy. “Read me a story from one of my books?”

“I’ll read you a story... Which one tonight?”

“I like *My Friend Flicka*.”

“Okay...”

“But I also like the word book... the million word book...”

Fred questioned his wife. “The million word book...?”

Ruth winked at her husband. “Her favorite new book... *Macmillan’s Dictionary for Children*.”

“Yeah!” Kelly wiped off her chocolate milk mustache. “I like learning new words!”

After their daughter left the table, Fred moved his chair closer to Ruth’s and held his hand on her knee. She put her hand on his. “I missed you today, old man...”

“I missed you too, honey.” He laughed. “Remember when Kelly was a baby and we took her on that short run?”

“I remember... that old Tunnel Motor practically put *me* to sleep.”

“Well, the swaying, the back-and-forth movements at that reduced speed are called harmonics.”

“That’s so funny. Kelly always finds her own way of explaining things.”

Fred took his wife’s hand in his. “I’m tired tonight. After I read to our daughter, will you come to bed with me?”

“Of course...” Ruth lovingly kissed her husband’s fingers.

Ruth had gone back to work part time after Kelly began grade school, but she stayed home most days in the summer. One particular July morning, Kelly had gotten up before daybreak...

“Well, you’re up early!” Ruth leaned in and kissed the top of her eight-year old daughter’s head.

“Hi, Mommy! Daddy’s taking me to work on his train today!”

While pouring her first cup of coffee, she asked her daughter when they’d be leaving.

“As soon as Daddy gets ready...” Kelly finished scooping up her Cheerios, slopping milk back in the bowl.

Ruth brought her coffee to the kitchen table and sat across from her daughter. As she sipped the freshly brewed liquid, she questioned the young girl with a head full of unkempt curly red hair.

“Do you know where you’re going today?” Ruth knew that her husband’s train kept scheduled routes but distances changed day by day. She hoped today’s train would be a shorter route so her daughter wouldn’t get bored – if that could ever happen. Any amount of time Kelly spent with her dad no matter the distance traveled was special.

“Nope...” Kelly ate the last of her cereal. “But Daddy said we’re hauling a load of lime rock.”

“Where’s your cap, little girl?” Ruth looked up and saw her husband stealthily tip-toeing into the kitchen. He put his finger on his lips as he raised the small blue-and-white striped engineer’s cap over his daughter’s head. As he was about to place the cap on her head Kelly looked up. The cap landed on her upturned face.

“Daddy!” She dropped her spoon in her cereal bowl, squirmed out of her chair and hugged her father around his waist. She looked up at him in wide-eyed adoration.

“You all set, Kelly-Belly?” He held her small shoulders in his large hands.

“Yup!” And she pulled her cap down firmly on her head. Ruth watched as her husband and daughter interacted. What a pair – father and daughter, sharing the same auburn colored hair, although his was now peppered with silver. Ruth stood and picked up her Polaroid camera off the counter.

“I want a picture, Fred – hold Kelly?” Her husband leaned down and with large callused hands lifted his 50-pound daughter by her waist and held her to his chest. Kelly hugged her daddy tight around his neck and leaned her head against his bearded face.

“Ready... Smile!” Ruth pressed the red button. Immediately a thin plastic card ejected from the camera.

“Okay, Kelly-Belly, let’s go!” Fred set his daughter back on the black-and-white checkered linoleum floor.

Ruth cautioned her husband. “Don’t let her climb those cars when you’re setting the brakes, Fred.”

“No, that’s not a job for my Kelly-Belly.” He winked at his daughter, whose unkempt orange-red hair was bursting out from under the small cap.

“Little girl,” her mom reminded her daughter. “Don’t forget your lunch!” Kelly picked up her kid-sized silver lunch bucket from the counter.

“Okay, we’re off.” Fred approached his wife, bent his tall frame and kissed her tenderly on the lips. “I love you, Ruthie.”

“I love you too, Fred. Be careful out there.”

Fred picked up his heavy grip and hoisted it on his broad shoulder. Taking his young daughter’s hand, he led her out through the kitchen door into the early morning sun.

Ruth sat back in her chair and drank more of her coffee, waiting the appropriate amount of time before she could peel open the Polaroid picture. She carefully pulled

back the flimsy plastic cover, exposing a perfect photo. Her husband and her daughter – both red heads, two peas in a pod and inseparable.

As Kelly grew older, she traveled with her dad for the full day – often times returning late at night. Though Ruth wasn't happy about her daughter being gone that long, she couldn't fault her husband. This was summer vacation after all and if Kelly wasn't with her father she might be getting into trouble with the wrong kids. But when school was in session, Max and Nick and her dad felt the abject emptiness in the cab of that locomotive. The trips were lonely without Kelly-Belly riding with them. And Kelly missed her dad terribly, especially when he was gone for days on a long run. Ruth missed Fred also, but it was a different kind of emptiness...

When Fred came home and walked into their house, he and Ruth acted like kids, loving each other, holding each other, never wanting to let go of each other... Their lovemaking was still fierce – and their time together was precious. And long after Kelly had gone to bed, Ruth and Fred would lay in their grand bed with Ruth cuddling close to her husband's body.

Most nights, when Fred was home, Ruth waited in bed until he showered. And as usual, he came to bed with the bath towel wrapped around his waist. Though she admonished him for not hanging the towel – they were just words. She was anxious to have her husband next to her.

"You had a good trip, honey?" Ruth watched as Fred lay in the bed. He pulled his wife to him, holding her close in his protective arms.

"Yup. I had a trainee with me today. I expected mistakes, but that young man was sharp."

"I'm glad you're home..."

"I'm glad I'm home too, Ruthie." He kissed her face. "I'm glad I'm home, too."

Ruth could never get enough of her big man – and Fred was still madly in love with his diminutive wife – his heart. He knew the minute he met her that she was special. And even after ten years of marriage, his passion for his wife only increased. He could never get enough of her...

"Are you tired Fred?"

"I'm tired Ruthie..."

"Are you too tired to hold me, old man?"

"Never too tired to hold you, Ruthie..." He pulled her closer to his chest, her head resting on his shoulder. In the dark of their bedroom, their shadows as one, their whispers the only signs of life... she was so warm, so soft. She was his safe haven, the one constant in his life. Fred kissed his wife's forehead. "I leave early tomorrow."

"Will you wake me?"

"Yes, but it will be early Ruthie."

"Wake me so I can love you."



He smiled – she sensed his smile. “I’ll wake you so I can love you, Ruthie.” He kissed her face and asked her to roll on her side, her back to his front. He enveloped her in his large arms. She felt safe with her husband – the man who would be at her side always and forever...

He woke before daybreak. Fred knew it was early – but he promised to love his wife before leaving for work. He kissed her face – his large callused hand stroked her face, her neck, her shoulders, her back... and pressed his hand between her legs.

Ruth stretched, pinning her husband’s hand between her thighs. “Hi baby...”

“G’morning Ruthie...”

She pushed her body into her husband’s large body. They both knew to be quiet – their daughter’s bedroom was just down the hall. This was the school year, so Kelly wouldn’t be up yet. But during the summer she was always up in time to go with her dad to his train.

He kissed her face – his full mustache tickling her cheek. And in the dark of their bedroom, Fred and Ruth consummated their love affair.

Ruthie still rocked his world. She was the one who stole his heart. Since the first night they spent together, he never looked at another woman. And when she told him she was pregnant, his world once again shifted – into alignment.

Each morning as Fred left the house he’d kiss Ruthie and say “I love you.” And each morning the last thing he heard were her cautionary words... “Be careful out there.” They knew how precious their lives were and would never take each other for granted.

On occasion when the train was delayed, the radio dispatcher Scottie telephoned Ruth, telling her when her husband would be home. When she got those calls, she knew to wait until she heard the horn at the 42th Street crossing before heating up the hot dish or begin preparing the chicken fried steak. And dinner was always ready and on the table when Fred came home. He’d take off his big black boots, placing them on the shoe tray and kiss his wife.

Their daughter was born within that first year. Oh the neighbors counted the months from their wedding date and the tongues waggled when she was born less than nine months later. But they didn’t care. Ruth loved Fred – and Fred loved his little family.

Ruth had been pregnant several more times, but couldn’t carry the babies to term. She had two miscarriages – and didn’t want to try again. A heart can take only so much disappointment... Ruth had her tubes tied after the second miscarriage. Done.

Kelly proved to be their miracle baby. She was loved like no other child. And when Fred burst into the house at the end of a long day, he lifted her high over his head – then holding her close to his heart, letting her grab onto his full beard.

Fred knew the hazards of his job. Railroading was never a safe profession, and there was always the risk of injury or death if you weren't vigilant and careful – and he wasn't one to chance fate. He had gone back to Thomas Bentley and made a will ensuring his wife and daughter would be well taken care of if the unspeakable happened...

As Ruth watched her daughter grow, Kelly slowly slipped away from being her good little girl and turned instead into a headstrong adversary. But her daddy could do no wrong – and though she tried otherwise, Ruth was becoming the disciplinarian. Whenever she attempted to curb her daughter's rebellious behavior, Fred was there as Kelly's refuge. And though he tried remaining neutral, Kelly always sought out his comforting arms – her daddy was her hero.

And then that awful day – that awful day that changed so many lives. Ruth had gotten home from work and made spaghetti for dinner.

"Is your homework done, Kelly?"

"Yes!" Kelly walked into the kitchen and smelled the wonderful aroma. It was her father's recipe. Her daddy made her laugh when he sucked up the long strands of noodles, making the sauce splash on his beard. But her father wasn't home yet. She walked into the living room and turned on the TV. *Family Ties* was on. Kelly was almost a teenager and tall like her daddy. She slumped down into the overstuffed cushions on the couch.

"Kelly! Come on, please. Your daddy should be home soon." Ruth was anxious to see her husband. He had been gone on a freight run for several days and had planned on returning today. She figured she'd hear his train any time – and since she hadn't heard from Scottie, there was no reason to worry.

Kelly reluctantly stood and stomped into the kitchen – and plopped down on the padded metal chair. Ruth dished up the spaghetti and meat sauce on their plates. After wiping the stove, she brought over a plate for her husband, setting it on the table at his empty chair. Kelly pushed at her plate. She didn't want to start eating until her daddy got home. They sat in uncomfortable silence – their spaghetti was getting cold.

The yellow wall-mounted phone rang.

As Ruth stood to answer the phone, she spoke apologetically to her daughter. "I bet your daddy's going to be late..." She picked up the receiver. "Hello? Hi Scottie. Is the train late tonight?"

"Ruth..."

"Yes?" But when he didn't say anything, she knew... "Scottie, what's wrong?"

"Ruth, you'll be getting the official call... but I needed to... I felt I should... I had to contact you first... Personally..."

She looked to the ceiling... wondering... listening to his labored breathing.

"Ruth... God... There's been an accident..."

“How bad?” Ruth knew the word ‘accident’ spoken within the realm of railroading was never a good omen. She felt her daughter’s eyes boring into her soul. “Tell me, Scottie. How is my husband?”

“Ruth... Fred was... Um... he was still alive when Nick found him, but...”

*She forgot how to breathe...*

“There was nothing we could do... Oh God, Ruth...”

“How? Tell me how, Scottie.” Her voice sounded so matter-of-fact, but she needed to know. As a railroad wife, she was familiar with his duties. And she needed to know.

“He was out setting the flares at the siding... The brakes failed on the set out cars... Um, he was caught between the knuckles...” Again his breathing filled the vacant air. “I am so sorry...”

Ruth felt she was having an out-of-body experience – so detached from reality. “When did it happen?”

“... earlier, Ruth... um, this morning...”

*Oh God... Last night... She had a dream...* She leaned into the wall, putting her hand to her heart. Ruth looked down at her daughter – her beautiful twelve-year old daughter – sitting at the table, waiting for her daddy to come through the kitchen door... The girl with a mass of curly red hair... Her daughter who was waiting for her daddy... Her daughter who was looking up at her... waiting...

*Oh God...*

Ruth had no breath – she had no breath... all she could do was look at her beautiful daughter... the little girl whose world revolved around her daddy... the little girl whose sun and moon rose and set with her daddy... And all she could do was whisper, “*Daddy died...*”

*Oh God...*

She held the phone to her chest. Through the receiver, she could hear Scottie’s voice. “Ruth? Are you okay? Ruth?”

Kelly put her hands on the table. “No he did not!”

“Oh baby, your daddy... there was an accident...”

**“He’s not dead! My daddy is not dead!”**

“Oh baby...” Ruth let the receiver fall from her hand. She emitted a sound like Kelly had never heard.

Again Kelly screamed at her mother. **“My daddy is not dead!”**

Ruth closed her eyes... *Oh God... The love of her life...*

**“I hate you!”** Kelly stood, pushing her chair back, letting it fall... **“I hate you!”**

Ruth ignored her daughter’s outburst. She looked at Kelly – standing so tall like her daddy, sharing her daddy’s red hair... Again Ruth whispered, “*Oh God Kelly... your daddy...*”

***“My daddy’s not dead! I hate you!”*** Kelly violently swept her plate of spaghetti off the table – it hit the oven door and splattered broken Melmac and sauce on the floor. ***“I hate you!”***

*Oh God... Fred... The only man she had ever loved...*

Ruth looked at her daughter – the little girl who from the moment she took her first breath adored her father. “Oh Kelly-Belly...”

***“I am not your Kelly-Belly! I am my daddy’s Kelly-Belly!!!”***

There was nothing Ruth could do or say that would remedy this awful situation. She closed her eyes and took a giant step back to her chair. But when she tried balancing on the chair back, she missed – collapsing heavily on the black-and-white checkered linoleum floor. Through her tears she watched her daughter’s feet walk out of the kitchen to the back yard – the door slamming behind her...

And life as they knew it would never be the same...