

My Town

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Chapter 5

"What'll it be?" the lady inside the food truck asked.

"I'm Woody. This is my sister Chloe and my mom and dad. Thanks to Chloe, I answered a trivia question correctly on the radio and won the *My Town* prize package which includes four free bratwurst on a bun at this festival. So that's what we'll have. Chloe and I've never eaten brats but we'll love them." I said, before taking a breath.

"You're telling me that two German hot dogs have never eaten German sausage before?" she replied.

"Chloe and I aren't from Germany," I answered, confused. "We're from Kentucky."

She laughed and said, "Mustard, ketchup and kraut?"

"Sounds delicious," I replied.

A few minutes later we were looking for a table when we heard, "Feel free to eat here."

"Thanks," we said to a couple seated at a round table.

"I'm Steve and this is my wife, Allie." We shook their hands, looked them in the eye and introduced ourselves.

"Is this your first time at the Gaslight Festival?" Steve asked.

"It is," Mom confirmed. "We've been to J-town but not to the festival."

"J-town? Aren't we in Louisville?" I whispered.

"Jeffersontown - or J-town as it's called - is a suburb of Louisville," Allie answered. "The Gaslight Festival is the 5th largest festival in the region and one of the top 20 festivals in the Southeast. It lasts 8 days and we look forward to it all year! Louisville has so many festivals - Forecastle, Derby City Jazz Festival, Worldfest, Nulu Fest. Of course the most well-known and largest is the Kentucky Derby Festival, held the two weeks prior to Derby. They're all incredible, but I'm partial to the Gaslight Festival, probably because it's in my town."

"What exactly is a gaslight?" Chloe asked.

"It's a light - or lamp - produced by burning gas," Dad explained. "You know the old lamps we see in movies or books? Those are gaslights."

"In 1966 J-town built a new city hall in the Federal Style," Steve informed. "The Restoration Society convinced the business owners on the town square to remodel their storefronts the same way. Later, in a different renovation, a church found one of the original gaslights that lined J-town. Merchants started using replicas of the gaslights. Eventually the town square was called Gaslight Square. To showcase the renovations, a festival was held. The rest, as they say, is history."

"Do you have a favorite part of the festival?" Mom asked.

"The motorcycle rally and car show," Steve answered.

"Definitely the live entertainment," Allie said.

"Speaking of entertainment," Chloe said, "Woody bought..."

I softly kicked Chloe under the table. I wasn't ready to unveil the treasure I'd bought at the Fordsville Days Yard Sale.

"Nevermind," Chloe recovered.

"That was the most delicious brat I've ever eaten," I said, drinking the last drop of lemonade.

"It's the only brat you've ever eaten," Mom chuckled, "but I'm glad you loved it!"

We said goodbye to Steve and Allie, threw our trash away, and walked around the festival.

"Chloe, look!" I pointed. "Those cars have silver animals glued to their hood."

"They're hood ornaments," Dad explained. "Most classic cars had hood ornaments. It served as the car's mascot or logo. Many were animals."

"This is the prettiest car ever," Chloe announced, admiring a beautiful turquoise blue automobile. It had round headlights and looked like something from a black-and-white TV show.

"Isn't she a beauty?" we heard someone ask. "I'm Kelsey and this is Jolene."

I looked around but didn't see anyone with Kelsey.

"Is Jolene shy?" I asked.

"Jolene is my '68 Studebaker Lark," Kelsey informed, laughing. "Feel free to have a look-see."

Dad opened the door and I saw one long seat that looked like a bench. The radio had big buttons and the steering wheel was enormous. We listened to the engine rumble as Kelsey started the car.

"How do you roll down the window?" I asked. "I don't see any buttons."

"Jolene doesn't have automatic windows or locks," Kelsey laughed. "You'll have to use the handle to roll it up or down. To lock the door you push down the lever. Give it a try."

"It's beautiful, but don't you ever wish you had a modern car?" I asked, moving the handle to roll the window down and back up again.

"Modern cars are nice," Kelsey answered, "but this is a classic. It represents history and how things were before technology. Besides, history shapes our present and our future. We can look at the decisions and see what works, what doesn't and what we can improve on."

Minutes later, we thanked Kelsey and told her goodbye. As Jolene's door slammed shut, I realized I hadn't unlocked it. Unfortunately, the windows were all rolled up. To make matters worse, I saw the keys dangling from the ignition.

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