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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Journey

Maud Lindsay

A little boy, named Joseph, went with his papa, once upon a time, to visit his Grandma. Grandma was an old, old lady, with hair as white as drifted snow; and she petted Joseph's papa almost as much as she did Joseph, for Papa had been her baby long, long before.

It was a fine thing to go to see Grandma; and Joseph would have been willing to stay a long time, if it had not been that Mamma and the baby and big brother were at home.

He knew they needed him there, too, for Mamma wrote it in a letter.

"Dear Papa," she said, in the letter that the stage coach brought, "When are you, and my precious Joseph coming home? The baby and Brother and I are well but we want to see you. We need a little boy here who can hunt hens' nests and feed chickens, and rock the baby's cradle. Please bring one home with you."

This made Joseph laugh for, of course, Mamma meant him; and though he forgot some of her letter, he always remembered that; and when Papa said; "Look here, Joseph, we must go home," he was just as glad to go, as he had been to come to see Grandma.

Now Joseph and his papa had to travel by stage coach, because there were no trains in those days; and after they had told Grandma goodbye, on the morning they left, they went down to the inn to wait for the stage.

The inn was the place where travelers who were away from home might stop and rest, and the landlady tried to be always pleasant and make everybody feel at home; so she hurried out on the porch, with two chairs for Joseph and his papa, as soon as she saw them.

They were a little early for the stage, so Joseph sat and watched the wagons and carriages, that passed the inn. All the carriages had ladies and children inside, and Joseph thought they must be going to see their grandmas.

Most of the wagons that passed the inn were loaded down. Some of them were full of hay; and Joseph knew in a minute, where they were going, for he had heard his Grandma say that she was going to store her hay away in a barn, that very day.

Some of the wagons carried good things to sell; and the men who drove them would ring their bells, and call out, now and then: "Apples to sell! Apples to sell!" or "Potatoes and corn! Potatoes and corn!" which made Joseph laugh.

Then there was the milkman. His tin cans were so bright that you could see yourself in them, and Joseph knew that they carried good sweet milk.

This made him think of their own cows. He could shut his eyes and see how each one looked. Clover was red, Teenie black, and Buttercup had white spots on her back.

Just then he heard the sound of a horn; and his father jumped up in a hurry and collected their bundles. "For," said he, "that is the guard blowing his horn, and the stage coach is coming!"

Joseph was so pleased when he heard this that he jumped up and down; and while he was jumping, the stage coach whirled around the corner.

There were four horses hitched to it, two white, and two black; and they were trotting along at a fine pace. The driver was a jolly good fellow, who sat on the top of the coach and cracked his whip; and the guard sat behind with the horn.

The wheels were turning so fast that you could scarcely see them, but as soon as the inn was reached, the horses stopped and the stage coach stood still. The guard jumped down to open the door, and Joseph and his papa made haste to get in. The guard blew his horn, the driver cracked his whip, the horses dashed off, and away went Joseph and his papa.

The stage coach had windows, and Joseph looked out. At first, all he could see was smooth, level ground; but after a while, the horses walked slowly and you could have counted the spokes in the wheels, for they were going up hill and the driver was careful of his horses.

The hill was so much higher than therest of the country that when Joseph looked out at the houses in the valley he felt very great, although it was only the hill that was high, after all.



Then they all came down on the other side, and the horses trotted faster. It was early in the morning, and the sunshine was so bright and the air so fresh that the horses tossed their heads, and their hoofs rang out as they hurried over the hard road.

The road ran through the wood, and Joseph could see the maples with their wide-spreading branches, and the poplar with its arms held up to the sky, and

the birches with their white dresses, all nodding in the wind, as though they said, "How do you do?" Once, too, he saw a little squirrel running about, and once a queer rabbit.

Then the stage-coach stopped with a jerk.

"What's the matter?" called Joseph's papa, as the driver and the guard got down.

"The linch-pin has fallen out," answered the driver, "and we have just missed losing a wheel."

"Can we go on?" Joseph asked. And when his papa said "No," he felt sorry. But the guard said that he would go after a wheelwright who lived not far beyond; and Joseph and his papa walked about until the wheelwright came running, with his tools in his hand.



He set to work, and Joseph thought it was very funny that the great wheel could not stay on without the linch-pin; but the wheelwright said that the smallest screws counted. He put the wheel quickly in order, and off the stage-coach went.

The wheels whirled around all the more merrily because of the wheelwright's work; and when the hoofs of the horses clattered on the road, Joseph's papa said that the horse-shoes were saying:—

"It is the little shoes, the little shoes, that help the horse to go!"

Then Joseph looked down at his own small shoes and thought of his mother's letter, and the little boy that she needed to hunt eggs and feed chickens and rock the baby's cradle; and he was anxious to get home.

Clip, clap! clip, clap! The horses stepped on a bridge, and Joseph looked out to see the water. The bridge was strong and good, with great wooden piers set out in the water and a stout wooden railing to make it safe.

The sun was high and shining very brightly on the water, and little Joseph began to nod. He rested his head on papa's arm, and his eyelids dropped down over his two sleepy eyes, and he went so fast asleep that his papa was obliged to give him a little shake when he wanted to wake him up.

"Wake up, Joseph! wake up!" he cried, "and look out of the window!"

Joseph rubbed his eyes and looked out of the window; and he saw a red cow, a black cow, and a cow with spots on her back; and a little further on, a big boy and a baby; and, what do you think?—yes, a mamma! Then the stage-coach could not hold him or his papa another minute, because they were at home!

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