

January 30, 1965

My Growing-up in the Institution
Chapter 1.

I grew up in an institution since I was six years old and went to school because I needed lots of education and speech which I couldn't do myself. My language was very poor and besides, I couldn't remember my own name or write it either; they had to give me lots of attention and besides one of the girls taught me to print my name. I grew very tall for my age, very thin and still kept on growing.

Summer 1938

Age 6

When I first started school, I was in the first grade. My teacher was very nice, she gave me different things to do, and she told me to build my numbers to ten, but I kept on till I built my numbers to one hundred. I also became a nice coloring and also I could remember my lines when they gave me a piece to say,

1

GOD GIVE ME A GOOD MEMORY. I CAN REMEMBER THAT DAY REAL WELL. My mother was giving me a bath and telling me I was going away. But she wouldn't tell me where, just that I was going for a long ride in the car. I was six years old.

She dressed me in my prettiest dress, red with yellow flowers. It had a rip under the arm 'cause it belonged to my sister Wanda first, but always I kept my arm down whenever I wore that dress so no one could see the hole. I liked that dress, it made me feel pretty like Wanda.

It started to rain and thunderstorm and the wipers, the windshield wipers, didn't work too good. My mother kept saying bad words and she had to drive real slow; we drove and drove a long time. I set in back. And she didn't talk to me, she never liked to talk to me, she never even loved me. Maybe that's 'cause she wasn't my real mother. So I just set there, and sometimes I wondered where we was going 'cause we never drove so far away before, and sometimes I tried to look out the window. But I couldn't always see good—too much rain.

Then I started feeling like I needed to go to the bathroom, and I had to tell my mother, and she had to look for a gas station so I could go. I got all wet running into that bathroom, even my shoes got wet. My mother waited in the car, she didn't want to get wet. We drove some more and pretty soon I had to go again. I tried to set real still to hold it, I tried crossing my legs on the seat of the car, but still I had to go. My mother got real mad 'cause she had to find another gas station. But I couldn't help it, that's how I always do when I'm nervous.

I was getting hungry, too, and my stomach was starting up to make growly noises, but I didn't think I better say anything about that.

2

We went through some big gates, we drove up a driveway. I seen lots of yellow buildings—big yellow buildings and little yellow buildings. I thought,

Hmmm, what's this place? and I was glad to get out of that darn car 'cause I sure was tired of setting there.

I got all wet running from the parking lot, my mother got all wet, too. We went into a building full of offices. There was people setting behind desks and some was writing stuff and some was talking on the phone in a busy way. My mother took me up to a lady who was setting at one of them desks. She said, "This here's Winnie Sprockett."

I didn't want to meet the lady, I didn't want to leave go my mother's hand, didn't even know what I was doing in that place. The lady told me to come with her.

"But I'm all wet," I said.

My mother told me, "You go with her, Winnie, and I'm gonna wait right here 'cause you'll be back soon."

The lady took me to another building. We had to walk up some long drive-ways past a whole bunch of other buildings, but at least she had an umbrella. Inside the building I seen nurses, lots of nurses.

I ask, "Is this a hospital?" My daddy was in a hospital once. The lady said yes, it was a hospital.

I told her I wasn't sick but she wouldn't listen, or could be she couldn't understand me 'cause my speech wasn't too good. A nurse took off my wet clothes and she made me wear a funny little nightie that didn't close up all the way, and then I started to cry. I said, "But I'm not sick, I'm just wet, even my shoes is wet, but I'm gonna dry off soon!"

I wanted my red dress with the flowers back, I wanted my mother. I knew my mother didn't even love me, but when they put that funny nightie on me, I wanted her. I was so scared I wasn't even hungry no more. I told them my mother was waiting on me in the office and she was gonna be mad if I took too long. I cried, I screamed, I yelled. They just kept telling me, "Calm down, Winifred. You got to calm down."

"No! I wanna go back to my mother!"

But they didn't pay me no mind. Just carried me to a big room with beds, and got people in the beds, all the while I was kicking and screaming. I thought they was stealing me. They tried to put me down and I jump out of the bed and they tried to put me down and up I pop again.

Then they give me a shot—boy, two nurses had to hold me so they could stick that thing in my arm. I slept for a long time, even though it wasn't my bedtime.

When I woke up, the people in the other beds was sleeping. Outside the window was dark. I thought, maybe my mother got tired of setting and waiting in that office until it got to be dark, maybe she drove home without me and left me all alone in this place. I cried so hard the slobber come all down my nightie. The girl in the next bed said, "Shut up!" so I jump out of bed and start hitting on her. Right away a nurse come running, grab me, she push me back on my bed.

"I want my mother, I want my mother!" I yelled. Another nurse come too, they set with me on my bed holding me, they was saying things like, "Hush, hush, Winifred, you woke everybody up." But I didn't give a darn who I woke up. They had some juice, they told me when I be calm I could have a drink. I did want a drink, my throat was hurting me from all the yelling I done that day. I drunk up all the juice in the cup. When I was done, one of the nurses said, "Your mother had to go home, it was getting late. You go to sleep now, then your mother's gonna come back real soon."

I laid back down, I put the pillow over my head so they couldn't hear me crying. I missed my mother so much. She never give me no loving, but still I missed her. And I missed my daddy. He wasn't my real daddy, neither, but that didn't bother him, he was good to me. I helped him with the chickens. All the time he said to me, "Oh, Winnie, you're a real big help with the chickens." That did make me feel so proud.

I didn't miss my sisters much, only Gladys; I never got along too good with Wanda and Miriam. And Wanda was all the time picking on me. Most of all I missed Patches. He always slept on my bed with me and you could say I wasn't use to being in bed without Patches.

By the time morning come, my whole pillow was all over wet.

Them other people woke up, I could see in the light they was girls and ladies. There wasn't a lot, and most was grown-up, except for the kid in the next bed I hit.

The nurses give me my breakfast, brung it to me in bed.

They said, "Are you gonna behave today?" I said yes. I was feeling too tired to fuss much about anything.

All day they done tests on me, healthy tests, see if I'm healthy or not healthy. They stuck a needle in my arm and took my blood away from me, but I didn't even cry. They told me to go to the bathroom in a paper cup, they took X-ray pictures of me.

They done talking tests, too. Like the doctor ask me stuff, mostly stuff I didn't know, like my numbers and letters and how to spell my name and how many fingers I got on my hands. Whatever I said he wrote down with a pencil, even when I said, "I don't know," he wrote that down. Also he ask me to look at pictures and play games, such as blocks.

Then the doctor wanted to talk about my mother and daddy. Not the mother and daddy I got that the State give me, the real mother and daddy that died. He wanted to know if I did remember them or if I didn't remember them. But I just said, "I don't know" again 'cause I don't always like to talk about that. So we talked about my sisters. I told him they are Gladys, Miriam, and Wanda. They are my real sisters, I didn't get them from the State. I had them already.

All the day I tried to be nice. I wanted to be good so they wouldn't be mad. I thought maybe if I was good, my mother would come sooner and take me home. When they took me back to the hospital room with all them beds I said, "But when is my mother coming? Isn't my mother coming?"

They told me, "Your mother isn't coming today, have some supper," and they brung me my supper, but I wouldn't eat. I was good all day and my mother didn't come, so I had enough of trying to be good. I kicked my tray, my supper tray, and it fell off the bed. There was noodles all over the place. Boy, was I dumb, I was dumb as a doornail, 'cause I was still waiting for my mother to come and get me. It's a good thing I didn't know she wasn't coming, I would of broke everything in the place.

Some more nurses come, they held me down, give me another shot. They sure liked to give people shots in that place. I never did get more supper 'cause then I went to sleep, slept all the night long.

3

First thing I seen when I woke up in the morning time was my red dress with the yellow flowers. It was laying on my bed. Did I ever set up fast. I thought it must be that I was going home, must be that my mother come back to the office. I wanted to take off my funny nightie and put that dress on quick. Trouble was, I didn't know how to dress myself. But I was so happy. I was sick of that place. I wondered, did Patches miss me?

A nurse come and dressed me. They didn't have my socks, said they got lost, but I didn't care if I had to put my shoes on with no socks. My feet felt funny in my shoes with no socks, but that was okay by me.

The nurse was real nice. The kind of nurse that likes you.

She took me downstairs and there was this big lady waiting for me. She had a white dress on, too, like a nurse's dress, but no cap.

"This here's Winifred," the nurse told the big lady, and she told me the big lady was Mrs. Spencer. Mrs. Spencer didn't smile at all, she didn't have a nice look. She had an old face. She took ahold of my hand and I ask her, "Are we going to the office? Is my mother at the office?" I don't know if she could understand me, or maybe she just didn't want to talk. We started walking.

We walked and walked and I seen lots of ladies outside by the yellow buildings. Some was walking and some was setting. I even seen some ladies swinging on swings. I thought that was funny. I never seen grown-up ladies swinging before. Only thing, they all got short hair, they all got short hair almost like a boy's hair. And strange dresses, ugly dresses. I also seen ladies in white dresses like Mrs. Spencer. They got hair like regular.

It was real hot and I was getting tired of walking, going slower and slower, and Mrs. Spencer had to tell me to hurry up. Then we come to this building, it was little and got bars on all the windows like cages. I stopped to look. Could be they got animals in there. But it wasn't animals, it was faces, I seen faces peeping out the bars at me. They got people in there.

"Come on, Winifred!" Mrs. Spencer said.

"What are them people doing?"

Then I heard a terrible scream come from that building. It sounded like

nothing you ever want to remember. Boy, did I go fast, Mrs. Spencer didn't have to tell me to hurry up. I didn't like that place, didn't like the funny ladies they got there, didn't like that scary building with the screaming coming out.

I ask Mrs. Spencer, "Where is my mother? Where is that office?"

"We're not going to the office, we're going to the Children's Cottage."

"No, I wanna go home now!" But she didn't say nothing else.

The building she took me to was yellow like the other buildings, but it was littler, it looked like a house almost. And got a yard with a fence and little swings and a sandbox and all stuff like that. We went up the steps and she took me into a little room, got a lady in there setting at a desk. Mrs. Spencer had some papers from the nurse at the hospital, and she give the papers to the lady. She said, "This here's Winifred." The lady, who was Mrs. Treadwell, put on her glasses and looked at the papers. Then she took off her glasses, said, "Okay, give her to Mrs. Drake."

Mrs. Spencer took me down a long hall and I seen these kids lined up, big girls and little girls. They was all in their nighties and making lots of noises. Some of them was kind of peculiar looking, too. Mrs. Spencer said, "Bath time," and she give me to a colored lady in a white dress. Told the lady, "This here's Winifred Sprockett and she's a new kid."

The colored lady told me to go in line to get my bath. I said, "I don't want no bath. I don't want to stay here." Mrs. Spencer pushed me into the line.

It was such a funny bathroom, I never seen such a bathroom like they got there. Lots of little toilets and lots of little sinks in that bathroom, and three bathtubs. You stand in line for your bath, and there was even two lines, one for kids in wheeling chairs. I was wondering why them kids got to set down and the other kids had to stand up.

I didn't want to get my dress took off when it come my turn, didn't want to get it took off in front of all them people. You could say I wasn't use to it, I was shy, didn't know nobody. The colored lady, Mrs. Drake, she talked to me nice. She wasn't old and grumpy like Mrs. Spencer. So I let her take off my clothes, but still I felt shy. She put me in the tub, she washed me. I didn't like it. The water got hair in it and it wasn't too warm, it was mostly cold. They was using the same water for all the kids.

After I got my bath, Mrs. Drake put my red dress back on me, she give me

some socks and clean bloomers, she tie my shoes. Someone brushed my teeths for me at one of them funny little sinks—I couldn't even brush my teeths then. At home Miriam always brushed my teeths for me, dressed me, too.

Mrs. Drake said I could go get my breakfast and she told another kid to take me, she told the kid that was Ruby Rose to take me. She was the only kid real little like me, the other kids was bigger than me. She took me to the basement and that was where the dining room and the playroom was. Kids was setting at long tables eating. They sure was funny kids. A couple of them got heads which looked too big, or teeths poking out; a couple was shaped wrong in the body. And they knew how to be noisy, too, made so much noise talking and yelling to each other and eat real messy. Food on their faces. Some was trying to eat with their fingers, thought it was funny to eat cereal with their fingers, or maybe they just didn't know no better. I never seen kids doing like that before, never seen kids acting up like that.

I set next to Ruby Rose, ate all my breakfast, every bit, but I was still hungry. They didn't give me enough. "I want more cereal, I want more apple sauce," I told the lady.

She said, "So does all the other kids."

I didn't think it was fair that you couldn't get seconds. I got a big appetite.

After breakfast, when all the kids went out to that little yard, Mrs. Spencer come to get me. I thought I was going home. But she took me up to the bathroom, she got a chair, she got big scissors, she told me, "Set down."

"What are you gonna do?"

"Cut your hair."

"Cut my hair?" Miriam always made me braids. I had real long hair. Sometimes, when Miriam was being nice to me, or for special, she even put ribbons in my braids. I liked my braids, I liked how they jumped when I jumped.

I told Mrs. Spencer, "Maybe my mother might be mad. Maybe my mother don't want me to get my hair cut." But she just combed my hair and started cutting. She cut and cut and cut, and my hair fell down all over me and all over the floor. I thought she wasn't gonna leave me nothing on my head at all.

When she was done, I put up my hands to feel. I could feel my ears sticking out, that's how short she cut my hair. Short like them other kids and ladies.

I told Mrs. Spencer, “I don’t think my mother’s gonna like my hair the way you cut it.” But she act like she didn’t care if my mother didn’t like it, didn’t even give a darn if my mother might be mad. I started to cry.

Mrs. Spencer told me to go out in the yard, but I didn’t want to. I was all worked up, and anyway I was ashamed. I knew I looked funny with my ears sticking out. My ears was never sticking out before. I ask Mrs. Spencer, “When is my mother coming?” but she couldn’t understand me with all that crying, or maybe she could understand me but she didn’t want to tell me. Maybe she knew I’d never stop crying if she told me my mother wasn’t coming.

A big girl took me out to the yard and I set there in a corner of the sand-box all by myself, crying. I tried to cover my ears with my hands, tried not to look at them other kids, but I couldn’t help it. Some was playing on the swings and seesaw but some wasn’t playing, just stood there and rocked or shook their hands in front of their face. One was singing. They looked to me to be real dumb. And when they move or walk they go all jerky. It was strange, it sure looked strange to me. I never seen such kinds of kids before. They even scared me a little bit ‘cause I wasn’t use to kids which was peculiar like that.

I kept wondering, why did my mother ever bring me to this place, anyway? What was this kind of place? Why did she go home and leave me here? Must be she didn’t know they got peculiar kinds of kids here, or maybe no one told her.

Ruby Rose come over with another girl. They stood there, watched me crying and covering my ears. That got me so mad I hollered bad words and threw sand. Then the bigger girls come and start to laugh at me. They was telling each other stuff like, “Look at little new girl, setting there crying.”

“So what. I could cry if I want to.”

And this big fat girl, the big fat girl that was Estelle Sampson—she was one of the kids with them big heads, she threw sand at me. So I had to throw sand back at her. And I told her, “My mother is coming soon and taking me home. I’m not staying in this place!”

“She thinks she’s going home,” Estelle Sampson said. “She’s so dumb she thinks she’s going home.” And she told me, “You’re not going home, you’re gonna stay here forever.”

“That’s what you think! I’m going home right now!” And I run right out of that yard.

I was gonna find that office place all by myself. Maybe my mother come back, maybe my mother was waiting in the office a long time and no one would tell her where I was. So many buildings. How could she tell wherever did they put me? I start running up one of the driveways. My hair felt funny when I run, no braids left to bump up and down.

I heard Mrs. Spencer yelling, “Winifred! Winifred!” She was coming after me. I didn’t want her to catch me, I had to find the office before my mother got tired of waiting and went home without me again. Then she might never come back. It took such a long time to drive here and my mother didn’t like to drive a lot. I called, “Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!” and run fast as I could, turned up another driveway, and then Mrs. Spencer wasn’t behind me no more.

There was ladies setting on a bench, got short hair and them dresses. They laughed and yelled, “Where you going, little girl?” But I didn’t stop. I was getting real hot and my feets hurt ‘cause my shoes was a little small, but I kept running. There was buildings all over the place, but I didn’t see none that looked like the office. And every time I pass some of them ladies with their funny dresses, they call out to me and laugh. All the way up that driveway I run, all the way until I got to the end where there was only just fields. No office. Wrong driveway.

I stopped and I stood there and I screamed. I was afraid to keep going and I was afraid of Mrs. Spencer coming after me the other way. I didn’t know what to do, where to go, and my legs wouldn’t move no more, had to set down real quick on the grass. I was hot and sweaty, but I was shivering, too.

When Mrs. Spencer and them other ladies catched me, Mrs. Spencer pulled me up and she shook me and shook me until I thought I was gonna throw up all over Wanda’s dress. Boy, was she ever mad ‘cause I made her run so far. Her face was all sweaty and red. She told the other ladies, “This kid is a real trouble maker. Hold her tight so she don’t get away again.” Mrs. Spencer and one of the ladies grabbed my arms hard, they hurt me. But they didn’t need to do that. I wasn’t going nowhere. I couldn’t run no more ‘cause

my legs quit on me, and anyway what could I do? I was little, they was big. All I wanted was to get away from that lady, the lady with the blood and noises.

They took me back to the kids' building and always they kept pulling my arms. Once I almost fell down 'cause my legs wouldn't go right, but they was holding me so tight I couldn't fall. When they got me back, they took me to the big room where all the beds was and they took off my clothes. They put a nightie on me, it felt scratchy but at least it closed up all the way, and Mrs. Drake come in with medicine in a spoon and she made me take it. I laid in my bed real quiet, laid there a long time. I didn't even cry.

4

Oh, the nighttime was awful. In the big room for sleeping there was lots of beds, lots of kids, and after Miss Busby turned off the lights, was there ever lots of noises. The girls screamed in their sleep, the girls called for their mommies, sometimes they banged their heads. I didn't know what the heck was going on, it frightened me to lay in the dark and listen to all that stuff. The bed was hard, too, not soft and comfy like at home.

Then I start to go to sleep and I heard this most terrible noise. I set up real quick in bed. One of the girls was on the floor, she was rolling and screaming and making animal kind of noises. Miss Busby and the other ladies turned on the lights and run in. They had to hold her down on the floor, then they had to give her some medicine. In awhile she got calm down again.

Ruby Rose was in the next bed to me. I ask her, "Why is that girl on the floor?"

She told me, "She got the fits."

Another kid got the fits that night, too. And I'd have to wake up, you can't sleep with all that going on. Miss Busby give her the calm medicine and she went back to sleep, but I couldn't. I just laid there, didn't want to go back to sleep 'cause I didn't know if someone else was gonna get the fits and wake me up and scare me all over again. I wasn't use to it. Too many kids, too much noises, fits, fits, fits. At home I only had to sleep with Wanda and Miriam, and

they didn't have the fits, they didn't make noises. At home Patches was always on my bed. At home was quiet, quiet and still for sleeping.

I laid there and I start thinking about what Estelle Sampson said, that I wasn't never going home. Maybe she just liked to see me cry. Or maybe what she said could even be true. If I was going home, why was I still here? Why didn't my mother come and get me already? She should of took me home when the hospital said I'm healthy. But she didn't.

Could be she left me here 'cause I wasn't a good girl. Always in the trouble, any trouble I could find I get right into it. Like taking money from her pocketbook when she told me I better not do that again, or breaking her watch, or socking Wanda when I got real mad and had a tamper. Maybe she left me here 'cause I was always carrying on and throwing tampers, maybe she just didn't want a kid who done them things. Or maybe she left me here 'cause I was a nervous girl, I wasn't a normal girl like Wanda and Miriam and Gladys. My nerves is bad, their nerves is good.

But even if my mother didn't want me, I knew my daddy wanted me.

So then I got to thinking, well, maybe my daddy don't know where she took me. How could he? He didn't come with us. But I bet as soon as he finds out where she took me, he's gonna come get me. 'Cause I help him so much with the chickens. Who's gonna help him with the chickens if I'm not there? Not Wanda.

Then I felt better. I thought I just had to wait for my daddy to come get me. It was taking a long time, but I just had to wait. I thought about me and Patches running through the woods behind the chicken coops, I thought about the chickens coming out clucking and making happy noises, all excited to see me back home. That helped me to go to sleep. I didn't hear no more fits that night.

When I woke up I wasn't feeling so bad.

Mrs. Drake put a different dress on me. I ask her where was mine, she said it was being washed. I didn't like this dress. It was blue and it didn't fit me too good.

After we got our breakfast, we went out in the yard. I didn't want to go, I wanted to stay inside, I was afraid Estelle Sampson and them others was gonna bother me. But you have to go, you can't say you don't want to, you

gotta do like they say. So I set in the corner of the sandbox again. Only this time I wasn't crying and could be that's why I didn't get teased.

There was some toys out there. A busted baby buggy and a tricycle. Ruby Rose was riding the tricycle, she could sure go fast. I never rode a tricycle before. I wanted to do it, go fast like Ruby Rose, but I was too shy to try.

While I was setting in the sandbox, I heard a "quack-quack" and I spied a duck, a real live duck. It was walking around near the yard. I hollered, "Look, look, a duck!" and Mrs. Treadwell—she was in the yard talking to Mrs. Spencer—she opened the gate and let the duck come into the yard. She said it lived near the building and come to play with the kids all the time, said his name was Donald Duck. I went "quack-quack" at him and he went "quack-quack" back at me. He was real friendly. I liked him, I liked him better than the kids. I knew he wasn't gonna tease me. When it come to be lunch time, I didn't even want to go in to get my lunch, didn't want to leave Donald Duck.

After lunch Donald Duck wasn't there. I looked and called and I even go "quack-quack," but no Donald Duck. Then I thought maybe I could try to ride that tricycle. I didn't know if I could make it go, but I really did want to learn it. When my daddy come there I'd be, riding that tricycle all over the darn place, and wouldn't his eyes just pop out.

But when I set on the tricycle, Ruby Rose come over to get it back. She pulled the tricycle, so I had to get off and pull it too, keep her from getting it away from me. I give a hard pull, and Ruby Rose fell right on top of the tricycle, bumped her face. She set up such a yell. Mrs. Spencer come running, started hollering at me. And Ruby Rose got to ride the tricycle. I wanted to sock her.

I had trouble sleeping again that night. More noises, more fits. And every time a kid gets a fit the ladies come in, turn on the lights, got to quiet the kid and give her the calm medicine. That made the kid go back to sleep, but it didn't do nothing for me. I just laid there and laid there.

Always in my thoughts was home. Like I wondered, where was Patches sleeping? Was he sleeping on my bed still? Maybe he started sleeping on Wanda's bed. That got me mad, to think that.

So I thought about the chickens, how I get the eggs and Patches comes

with me. I put the eggs in a big basket when I get them, I carry the basket real careful so as not to break the eggs. My best job is feeding the chickens. Chickens are soft when they are little and I hold them in my hands to get the softness of them. I laid there in my bed and thought of the softness of little chickies in my hands. I laid there in my bed and thought about all them things while I waited for the next fits to come.

I didn't get a whole lot of sleep.

5

In the morning all the kids was in a dither. They was talking and buzzing about visiting day. Mabel said, "My mommy's coming to see me and she's bringing me lots of chocolate candy."

"Who cares?" Estelle Sampson told her. "When my mommy and daddy come they is bringing me chocolate candy and chocolate cake and chocolate cookies."

All the girls was getting their baths, getting dressed, eating breakfast, all the girls was talking, talking, talking, about who was coming to see them and what goodies they was gonna get. I got real excited. I thought it must be the day my mother and daddy was coming. And when my daddy seen me he'd take me right away home, no matter what my mother said.

Mrs. Spencer give me another dress to wear. It was stripey yellow and green and it was big, bigger than the blue one yesterday. Come almost down to the bottom of my legs. I must of looked awful funny in that ugly dress and got all my hair cut off. What was my mother and daddy gonna say when they seen me?

After we got our breakfast, we had to go out to the yard, and in a little while Mrs. Spencer come to get Josephine 'cause her mother was there, then she come to get Lucy. We seen Josephine riding down the driveway in a big car, then we seen Lucy going, too.

The kids in the yard, the dumb ones, they was rocking and singing and playing with their hands like always. Like they didn't know nothing, like they didn't care what was going on. But the other ones was all waiting, not

even playing, just standing by the fence watching the driveway to see who was coming. So was I doing that, my mother had an old black car and I kept looking for that car. I seen some cars go by, even seen an old black car like my mother got, but it went to another building, didn't come to our building, and the people who got out weren't my mother and daddy. Wrong car.

The kids was talking about the stuff they was gonna get when their families come, and they kept waiting and waiting. Finally Mrs. Spencer come out again. She called Ruby Rose.

Donald Duck come quacking by, he wanted to get into the yard. But I didn't have no time for him, didn't care to play. I was waiting too hard.

Lunchtime. Some of the kids started getting grouchy. "See, your mommy isn't coming and you're not getting no chocolate candy, neither," Estelle Sampson told Mabel.

Mabel yelled, "Well, least my mommy comes sometimes. No one ever come to see you."

Estelle Sampson hit Mabel, hit her right in the face, give her a bloody nose. Mabel couldn't do much about it on account of she was in a wheeling chair, her legs didn't go at all. She just set there and screamed, "Mrs. Spencer! Mrs. Drake!" and one of the kids run in to tell that Mabel got a bloody nose. She got a bloody dress, too, by the time someone come. They had to put ice on Mabel, and Estelle Sampson had to stay in the rest of the whole day long, didn't get no lunch, no dinner, neither. Served her right.

Even after it was lunchtime, I was thinking my mother and daddy was coming. I knew I was very far away, I knew they had to drive a long time to get here. That could make them be late. I set in the yard all afternoon and looked for the car.

The other girls was all nasty by then 'cause they didn't get no visitors. They was grumping and growling and being mean to anyone that talked to them or even come near. Minnie told one of the littler kids, the kid that was Edith, that her mother wasn't coming to see her 'cause she was too dumb. That made Edith cry. And when Mrs. Drake hollered at Minnie, she got the fits right there in the yard in the daytime. They had to carry her inside, she was kicking and screaming and making them awful noises. Wet her pants, too.

It was a terrible afternoon. But I kept waiting. Stood by the fence, and when I get tired from standing I go set on a swing for awhile, then go back to the fence again. I could tell when it got near to supper time. I could smell the supper smells coming out to the yard. Ruby Rose come back with her mother and she had a big doll, the kind with yellow curls. It was brand new. She said, "Look, look!" and some of the kids run over to see that doll, it was so pretty, but some of them didn't want to. They was feeling too bad.

When it come time for supper I told Mrs. Drake, "I can't go in, I gotta wait here for my mother and daddy." I wanted to stay in the yard so my mother and daddy could see me, so they could find me. If they didn't see me out there, how was they gonna know where I was?

Mrs. Drake told me, "Looks like they're not coming today."

"Yes, they are."

"You got to go get your supper now, Winifred, and maybe next week your mother and daddy is gonna come." Then she went to get Edith, make her come in for supper. Edith was still out there waiting, too.

Ruby Rose was making believe her doll was real, making believe to give it food, and wiped off the doll's mouth with her napkin. That doll even got teeths, and a big smile, and all them curls of hair. I didn't like it that she had that doll, and that her mother come, and no one come to take me home, no one give me nothing. I never even had a doll before. I set there watching Ruby Rose feed that pretty doll. It made me feel mad, it did. So I smacked her.

"Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. Spencer!" Ruby Rose yelled, "Winifred hit me!" And she start to bang me on the head with the doll, banging and banging my head. It hurt, that doll hurt me. I had to pull it away and throw it on the floor, get it all busted, so it couldn't hurt me no more.

Mrs. Spencer come running, she said, "I had enough of that kid. I had enough of Winifred!" Ruby Rose was crying real hard and the other kids was all looking at her doll on the floor. It was busted in the head and the dress was tore, the pretty red and white dress. Mrs. Spencer grab me and carried me to the bathroom. All the way up I was yelling, "I can't help it, Ruby Rose hit me with that doll, don't get mad at me!" I was scared of Mrs. Spencer. Even when she was just standing there Mrs. Spencer had a mean look on. I bet she had a mean look when she was sleeping.

She got me in a corner of the bathroom and started smacking, not just my backside but my front side, too, kept turning me around to hit new spots. She smacked and smacked and I yowled and yowled. By the time she was done, she was huffing and puffing. Even my mother never smacked me so long. She pulled me into the bedroom, she pushed me onto my bed, she stomp out. I just laid there and cried. I was doing a lot of crying in that place.

I got up once to look out the window 'cause there was another old black car going by, but it didn't stop.

When we was all going to bed Josephine and Lucy was telling what they done with their families. They both went to town and got their supper in restaurants. They didn't have no goodies, no candy or cake or cookies, but they had real happy looks.