

CHAPTER FOUR  
TO THE FAIR AND HOME AGAIN



I git more 'cited as we git near and hear the Fair. 'Tis early afternoon and I git tired. I begin to see militia through the trees, marchin' with muskets, and then I see booths with signs that I can't read. The barber who pulls teeth was on the far side from where we come in and 'twas good. Two men help him and hold down the people who need teeth pulled. Papa walk over and talk to the man and Mama was next. I see tears in her eyes when they pull her down. I come over to wipe her tears with my apron but they all shoo me away.

Glad to go, I look back and see them give Mama something from a bottle of rum. Baby run off to see the soldiers parade with whistle and drum and it was smart. Then Baby see a show with little figures on sticks fight and talk. How does that happen? I wander around after Baby who also wants to know

how that happen. There was a cloth hung behind the figures and people behind it move the stick figures!

I look for a booth with food and go up and say, "I got some eggs to trade," and I hold up the basket. I say I would like to trade for coffee or sugar. The lady say she could not trade much for five eggs but I get a small poke of coffee and put it in my pocket.

Later when Baby start to wander again, I see Papa and he talk to a man who has a sign 'Want Apprentiz'. I can't read the sign but I go close enough to hear the words. The man want a small boy to apprentice for chimbley sweep. I know this couldn't be Richard; Puddin' Head git stuck in any chimbley anywhere. So I know Papa talk to the man about Henry. I feel sad because Henry is too small and take everything to heart; he shouldn't be away from family. What kin' I do? I would say "No, Papa" but Papa would tell me not to listen in.

Near some boys play taws, "As you value your pence at the Hole, take your aim. Chuck all safely in and you'll win the Game." We never had any marbles and they wouldn't let me, a girl, play. So I just watch. 'Twas marbles for sale at one booth but I have no money.

I take my puddin' cap from under my apron while I trot after Baby. I stop from time to time and take a few stitches. Then I see that Baby reach for something white and nice on a table. I hurry over to

move his fat little hand and I see it is a Milliner's stall and I would like to touch the pretties, too. The shop lady notice my puddin' cap.

"Good Day, my young friend. That's lovely; did you make it?"

"Yes, Mistress," I say and smile a tiny smile and dip a little curtsy. On her table are all manner of pretties: wax beads, fans, buckles, caps, scarves, stockings, stays, kerchiefs, pin cushions and a small lady dressed in such fashion with a skirt that held out.

"Do you like to sew, to make things?" she ask me.

"I do, but my Mama needs me to do work."

"Would you like me to show you how to make a French knot?"

"Yes, Mistress, please." I only know a few stitches that Mama taught me before she need me to work so much.

"A little stitch, like this, bring your thread around three times, no more, no less, and pull your needle through the loop, over the threads. Then go back into the fabric and pull tight but not too tight." I watch close while she makes a stitch. Then I do the same thing, being most careful and it makes a stitch just like hers.

"That was nicely done. You're nimble fingered. Would you like to apprentice to me? I could teach you

much and that's the kind of work I would want you to do," the lady said and I 'most ran away. 'Course I would, but I felt some fright. I went over to Papa, pull his sleeve and tell him the lady talk to me.

"Keep after Baby, Abby," he say and I do and smile again at the milliner as I pass. I see Mama climb over to a pile of hay and fall asleep.

After a bit, Papa look for me and Baby to start home. We have a long way to go. Then I tell him that the lady ask me to apprentice with her. He go right straight to her and they talk and I hope and hope. He come back and say, "She is Mistress Jolly and she is, too. She have a shop in Alexandria. Maybe when we roll our hogshead of tobacco to the warehouse at the Falls we can find a wheat wagon that'll take you in to Alexandria where her shop is." I am so happy to hear.

Baby and I wait with Mama while Papa gets General Braddock from where he stake him. Papa help Mama to climb up and Mama hold her kerchief still to her face and spit blood from time to time, but she does look a little happier even though the rum is wore out. Baby holds his hands up to her but she doesn't see and I pick him up and run a little ways and Baby laugh. Mama say to Papa, when he tell her about the milliner ask to apprentice me, "I need Abby at home," but she is hard to understand through the kerchief.



After we had gone a way, Mama know I am glump to hear that, so she say, "I think Abby should name Baby. Baby's getting big and strong." I smile at Mama and tell the name that I been savin' a long time, "Zurishaddai." Mama's eyes open big and she say, "Where do you get such an idea?"

But Papa know. He tell a story to us at night about a strong soldier he knew before he marry Mama. He say, "That be a fine name. This boy not going to be namby-pamby. We can call him Shaddy until he's a man. Shaddy looks like he's goin' be a fine big boy, like Richard, not dainty like Henry. I can get a lot done with two strapping sons."

Mama said, "I wish we could send Henry to school; I wish there was a school."



Papa didn't have much money and had to pay most of it for Mama's tooth but before we left, I ask Papa to buy some raisins for the other children. I tell him I will give them even and he know I will, so he

hand me the poke. We travel fast as we can, but we don't get close to home 'til after dark.

In the morning the children ask about the Fair. I say they should gather round and hold out their hands and I give one raisin to Annie, one to Henry, one to Richard and Shaddy lines right up. Now that he has a name he is one of us. I keep give one to each 'til they are all give and everyone has eight. I make them count them as they eat them. Shaddy can't count but he make funny words.

Papa call "I need some help chasin' those turkeys through the tobacco to get the worms or we ain't gonna' have no hogshead to roll into the warehouse. Richard, be sure the turkeys get put back in the pen after. Next year I will plant mustard around the tobacco bed, Neighbor Mooney says it will keep off worms."

Annie, Richard and Henry take off at a trot and I grab up Shaddy, he's big enough to help now. Shaddy wave his hands and squeal as the others begin the chase down each line of tobacco hills. Shaddy and I take the middle. Carryin' Shaddy gets to be tryin' and I ask Richard if he do it. He puts Shaddy on his shoulders and Shaddy squeals.

I go back to the house to see what Mama need me to do. Papa is over at the edge of the tobacco, chopping down small trees to make more planting space for next year's tobacco. Tobacco eat up more

and more land. Now we have to prime the low leaves, keep picking suckers off the plants and finally top all but a few plants for seed next year. It's constant work and Papa has to give most of the tobacco notes ever' harvest to Master Thomas Lee for our rent. Papa works so hard; I'm glad Shaddy looks like he'll be strong and able to help. Henry wants to help but he can't do more'n Annie. I am ablest now, next to Puddin' Head.

Papa told Henry this morning about being a chimbley sweep. Henry have tears in his eyes and I put my arms around him. Papa tell Henry not to be namby-pamby.

## CHAPTER FIVE SUMMER IS BUSY

Mama build up the fence around her kitchen garden. 'Tis not very big and the animals help themselves to leaves and shoots all they want. I get rocks to pile under the rails and keep out the ground hogs. I see a animal has tromp or gobble on one of the cabbages. I think about our neighbor's hogs.

Mama say, "Go get some lamb's quarters now for dinner." I go out and look among the new corn for the fuzzy lamb's quarters and gather them in my apron. Richard brung Shaddy to me and I take him down to the run to wash the lamb's quarters and get a bucket of water. Shaddy git in the water and stir it up and I have to go upstream to get a clear bucket.

While we cook some fish from the barrel that we salted down last month, Mama say, "I need you to get clothes ready before winter. Annie is good at carding but you can drop spindle." Then I think to myself that I could try to make yarn aplenty for a cap and mittens for Mama. Last winter she felt the cold so bad. I tell Annie my plan and she will card and card but not tell Mama. I will spin and spin when I can, at night while Papa is talking, if Mama don't come out.

Now I shoo the chickens out of the house before Papa come in to eat; soon they will roost.

Mama still have one of her two gowns she brought