

foreman, the boss man, you would just shoot off the dynamite for the mine. The engineer works up above the timber, and he would work with signals to the men below." "I think I'll be a fisherman, Grandpa John." "Good idea."

There were days like this - the fresh air and lakes filled with fish. There were good things in 1915, and fishing with your grandchildren was one of them for John Hale.

Christmas time in 1916 bore little resemblance to the North Pole. The air had the smell of snow. Clouds obscured the sun trying to poke through and warm the earth. A few gusts of wind rattled bare tree branches, then stopped.

The outhouse door was frozen shut in the wee morning hours, and mittens stuck to frosty door latches.

Ernest pressed his nose against the windowpane, making clear places with his breath. Alfred called from the kitchen table. "Careful you don't knock the newspaper packed around the window sill; the cold air will come in." "O.K.." Ernest looked at the newspapers - they were securely in place.

John finished his arithmetic sums he had left over from the day before Christmas vacation. "Maybe it will snow, and we'll get a long vacation." Alfred laughed, pulling on his boots and tying a scarf around his neck. "No such luck, John. With the school so close you can walk. All you need are boots." "Not if the snow covers the house." Winona looked at Alfred sitting with his legs stretched out on the floor. "Six year olds are so dumb. When have you ever seen snow cover the house?" Alfred paid no attention to his big sister's remark. He was busy looking at the picture book on snow in Alaska he checked out of the school library. Ernest kept his nose pressed on the windowpane. He had seen a white flake drift slowly past him and melt on the ground. One flake fell to earth, then two more. He lost count. He couldn't count much past five flakes. Ernest rubbed his nose dry on his sleeve and proclaimed loudly, "See, it's snowing!" No one paid attention to him. "See", he said again. The white flakes fell faster. "Boy", Ernest grinned, "lots of it coming down." Winona opened the front door and looked out. "It's snowing!" A blast of air almost took her breath, but she yelled loud enough for everyone to hear. Ernest just nodded his head. "I don't get listened to", he thought, but he was glad they knew about the snow. "Shut the door, Winona", Alfred yelled from the kitchen as a blast of cold wind hit him in the face. "There are plenty of windows to look out of. Get your boots on John. We'll go right away and get an extra supply of wood and coal-as much as we can get to fill the wood and coal bin on the porch. We'll pile it up as high as we can by the kitchen stove so it can dry out, just in case we're snowed in. Open the door only if you see someone come up with

a load." The job took an hour and the trail of wet footprints on the clean floor were wiped clean by Annie's rag mop.

Alfred paused by the door Winona held open for him. "I'll buy a bag of coal, Annie, and bring it home tonight when I get off shift. Mind your mother and stay in, kids. We don't want to lose you in a snow storm. When the snow settles, there will be plenty of time to play in it." Alfred started down the crunchy path to work. He looked back and four faces watched him disappear somewhere beyond the snowflakes.

"You must have wished on a star, John." John looked questioningly at Winona. "Star light, star bright, I wish I may, I wish I might, have it snow 5 feet tonight." "You are nuts, Winona. I don't even look at the stars."

Winona watched the stars. She imagined all kinds of things about them. Grandfather John Hale would correct her when he heard her. "Only God brings good things, not luck or sky bound stars." Winona knew that and believed it, but somewhere in Winona Moore's mind, life on a bright shiny star might be more exciting than a coal grey mining town. Wishing for unattainable goods and adventure fit good in story books, and the imaginative 10 year old loved to read them. The snow had performed its first act and made the early covering of white stick to the roofs and trees and ground. The folks in the mining town would dim their lamps and sleep while their town was gently covered in white.

Winona put Ernest in her bed. She fluffed up his pillow so he could lean against it more comfortably. A live little brother was much better than a doll to entertain with bedtime stories.

"What do you want to hear, Ernest?" "I don't care." "Ok, I'll start with the Rabbit's Bride." "What does that mean?" "That means a rabbit marries a lady bride." "If I don't like it, I'll tell you." John leaned back on his pillow to listen. The kerosene lamp made funny pictures of light on the wall, and he traced them in the air with his finger. Six year old Alfred copied him. "Ok, here we go now. Listen all of you."

"The Rabbit's Bride by Hans Christian Anderson. There was once a woman who lived with her daughter in a beautiful cabbage garden." "How can a cabbage garden be beautiful?" "It can if you're a rabbit, or live in Denmark." "Ok, go on." John folded his hands. "And there came a rabbit and ate up all the cabbages. At last said the woman to her daughter, 'go into the garden and drive out the rabbit.' 'Shoo, shoo!' said the maiden." "Come, Maiden," said the rabbit." "What is a maiden?" "Girl, Alfred. 'Come Maiden,' said the rabbit, 'sit on my tail and go with me to my rabbit hutch'." "Is that where rabbits live?" "Ya. But the maiden would not go with him." Ernest stared at the flakes falling down and giving the fence a white fresh covering. His eyes felt heavy, and he fell asleep. Alfred said