

The Date

“What do you think Helen?”

I turn around and straighten out the back of my long sleeve evergreen dress. It seems awfully fancier than what I am used to wearing. The knee-length dress is covered in lace, and the top has a delicate buttoned shawl to keep me warm with a dainty belt wrapped around my waist. My black heeled boots cover my stockings and tie the entire outfit together.

“I think he’ll love it Pearl,” Helen says.

I smile and poof my curly chestnut hair one last time.

Knock, knock, knock. Uh oh.



“Pearl, who is this *boy* at the door?”

Mrs. Thomas got to him before I did. Living at Mrs. Thomas’ boarding house has some benefits. One is that Helen and I do not have to travel all day from the farm to get to the high school. The horse and buggy ride is not as fun at that long of a distance. Secondly, I get to live with Helen, who being my boisterous younger sister, always keeps me entertained. The only negative to living with Mrs. Thomas is that she does not enjoy the presence of a boy on her property. In fact, she does not even allow them in her home. This can make it a little bit difficult to date. I quickly walk down the stairs to find Raymond Davis on the front porch with Mrs. Thomas’ five-foot two body sternly planted between him and I.

“Mrs. Thomas, this is Raymond Davis. We attend Moreland Methodist Church together. We’re going on our first date tonight,” I say hesitantly.

An aching pit forms in my stomach. Mrs. Thomas looks Raymond up and down. He stands firm but kind in his navy church suit and tie.

“Where are you taking Pearl this evening Mr. Davis?”

“We are going to Schine’s Theater to see Shepherd of the Hills ma’am.”

Mrs. Thomas does not look impressed. Her brow is furrowed, as if she is debating if this is a good idea or not.

“You *will* have her back by 9:00 sharp, understood Mr. Davis?”

“Yes ma’am. We’ll be back by then. Thank you.”

Raymond walks down the porch steps and I feel a tug on my shawl.

“I will be alerting your parents about this new boy of yours, Pearl,” Mrs. Thomas says in a hushed voice.

With that, she scoots out of the way and I move on to temporary freedom.



“You look pretty Pearl. I wanted to tell you at Ms. Thomas’ home, but I knew she didn’t want me there any longer than I had to be.”

I turn my head to hide my blushing and bashful smile. Raymond didn't say much, but when he did it was always loving and thoughtful. We pull up to Schine's Theater and Raymond comes around to the side to help me out of the buggy. It is awfully blustery outside today, and Raymond's tie is flapping in the wind. It's not tucked into the vest of his three-piece suit. I grin; he sure is uncomfortable in fancy clothes. I stare at the tie a little too long, and he notices.

"I don't like tucking my tie into my vest. It feels like I am choking with it on. I much prefer being in my work clothes on the farm. But being on this date with you is a good reason to get dressed up."

I grin again. Something about him is different than the other boys around town.



The lobby is bustling with people. In fact, there are so many people you can hardly see an inch of the newly installed ornate marble floor. I glance around and see a lot of the kids I go to school with from the city. I feel better with country boy Raymond. He pays for our tickets, and we walk inside the theater. It's almost as fancy as the lobby. The rows and rows of red padded chairs seem endless, and a golden chandelier hangs dramatically from the ceiling. We make our way to our seats, right in the center of the theater. The lights dim, and the film starts. I feel Raymond's hand touch mine, and I hold his hand. My stomach is doing flip flops and my heart is fluttering. Even though it's dark, I can tell Raymond is smiling at me. I'm smiling at him too.



“Well, that was a good movie. What did you think Pearl?”

“Uh, yes it was great,” I reply.

To be honest, I can’t really remember all that much about the movie. I was more focused on the fact that I was holding Raymond’s hand and my stomach was in knots.

“So, we have an hour and a half before we need to be back to Mrs. Thomas’ home. If you’re interested, we could go to Freedlander’s. I want to buy my little sister Sarah an outfit for Christmas, and I could use some help picking something out. I am not very good with clothes and all that.”

“I would love to help Raymond.”



Watching an adolescent boy trying to pick out clothes for his little sister is more humorous than it sounds. I think we stare at the same three dresses for ten minutes. It’s cute how he spends so much time trying to pick something out.

“What about this one Raymond?”

The navy-blue button-down dress with the folded collar looks perfect for a little girl in the middle of winter. Seeing Raymond look over the dress with a protective and caring look in his eyes makes me get that funny feeling in my stomach again.



“Thank you for bringing me back to Mrs. Thomas’ Raymond,” I say as the buggy stops.

“Thank you for being a wonderful date, and for helping me pick out an outfit for Sarah. I think she will love it.”

We stare, gazing into each other’s eyes once again. I hear Mrs. Thomas open the door to the house, waiting for me to come in and get away from the dreaded boy she thinks I have been out with. I didn’t have a dreadful night at all.

“Goodnight Raymond,” I say, wishing the night wasn’t over.

“Goodnight Pearl,” he replies with a glimmer in his eye.