

PROLOGUE

Life is for Living

March 1, 2014, was a gleaming, almost spring day in the southern college town /turned/ city of Tallahassee, Florida; Annie Fowler Hightower sat alone in her living room staring reflectively out of the open plate-glass window that merged the beauty of her backyard with that of her pristine and sparkly white living room. Surrounded by the splendor of paintings, sculptures, and artifacts; both old and new; Annie pondered the life she had grown and shaped; and the past into which she has been placed by the design of the universe.

Glancing upwards and outwards from her reveries, she saw her image captured in the odd-shaped mirror from some country included among the destinations of her much traveled world.

"Sixty four years of age... I can't believe it," whispered her heart to her mind as she reflected on the long and difficult journey that had led her to this day, time and place; her 64th birthday.

Rising with the agility of a woman thirty years her junior, she walked past the recently taken photo of her shapely body in a bikini, walked across the room, and gently sat in a side chair—her favorite spot since her early retirement from a local university. Almost absent-mindedly, she lifted a family photo album from the stack that rested on the floor, looked down, and quickly opened the cover.

As she turned the pages of the photo album in her lap, her eyes focused on a photo of her family taken in 1951. Her 36-year-old father, Sgt. Jessie Jacob Fowler, stood handsome and proud in his military uniform. Standing next to him was her beautiful mother, Margret Elaine McGwin, who was her father's junior by six years. In front of them were their six children. Standing were her oldest sister, Elaine, who was nine years old, and her brother, Jessie, Jr., who was seven. Also standing, in front of the two oldest children, were Samantha, age 4 and Robert Lee, 3 years of age. Finally, seated on a bench were Claudine at 2 years old, and the sixth child, Annie, who was only one-year-old.

Staring at her miniature reflection, Annie could internally see and hear the family stories told by her mother and relatives

over the years. Indeed, her actual experiences growing up ran before her. As she stared at the photo, she wondered why her Daddy and Mother hadn't stopped at six children. To her, this was a perfect portrait of a family.

Annie then randomly lifted another photo from the stack dated 1970. It displayed the images of five additional siblings, who had been added to the family portrait after her own birth. Three years after Annie's birth, Donny arrived. Then, two years later, Daisy was born. Four years later Aaron arrived and within three years, two more girls, Janis and Martha, were born.

Finally, the Fowler Family was completed, totaling, eleven children - four boys and seven girls. This officially made Annie the middle child.

Suddenly, Annie's phone began to ring. Despite the piercing noise, her eyes remained upon the family portrait and the web of memories which the images spun in her mind.

CHAPTER 1

Up, Up and Away

Annie's father, Jessie Jacob Fowler, was born in Collierville, Tennessee, in 1914. Jessie's father, Jacob Fowler, was a carpenter and his mother, Candice Fairweather Fowler, was a homemaker. Jessie had two younger brothers named Jason and John. When he was a young boy, his parents left the country town to move to Memphis; but, due to the pressures of city life they soon divorced. Jessie and his brothers worked with their father in construction. Jessie learned the carpentry skills like his father; while his youngest brother, John, learned masonry, and his middle brother, Jason, became a skilled painter. Jessie completed the eighth grade and joined the Army. He was a noticeably handsome man, with large brown eyes and the greatest smile that drew attention. His tightly kinky hair was always cut and groomed to perfection. Jessie's paper sack complexion was a combination of African and Native American genetics. He was very vain about maintaining a muscular body. At six feet tall, Jessie showed off his broad shoulders and narrow waist.

In the summer of 1937, while on military leave, Jessie visited his best friend, Gordon, in Germantown, Tennessee and he was Jessie's army buddy and comrade-in-arms. They attended a local church service. In the choir, singing "How Great Thou Art" with passion, was lovely, seventeen-year-old, Margaret Elaine McGwin. She belted out a high C that immediately caught Jessie's attention. The decision was made... Jessie had finally met the woman who would become his wife. For the rest of the service, Jessie, mesmerized by Margaret's beauty; simply sat and stared.

Margaret stood five feet five inches; she had long silky dark curls that fell to her waist, the cutest freckles Jessie had ever seen, and a gorgeous light, creamy, olive complexion that she inherited from her African, Scott-Irish, and Native American ancestry. As Margaret moved from the choir loft down to a pew, Jessie noticed that she had a shapely body and nice legs that turned his head, as well as the heads of other men in the church.

Jessie couldn't wait until after the service was over so that he could make his move.

"May the Lord go with Thee.....," Pastor McGwin finally said after a long benediction. Jessie, hopeful of capturing Margaret's attention, quickly stood and looked around.

"Damn, that woman is too 'fyne' for her own good," thought Jessie as Margaret leaned down in the consultation with the pianist regarding a song she was scheduled to sing at the 3'oclock service. It was the day of the Pastor's anniversary and members of other Christian Methodist Episcopal churches would be arriving shortly. The sisters were setting up tables with all sorts of goodies under a grove of bees in the rear of the church.

Jessie hadn't planned to stay for the afternoon event, but quickly changed his mind as he smelled the ribs barbequing on the grill. But, it wasn't, of course, only the promise of some good eating to come that made Jessie hesitant to leave.

"Hey Man, we getting out of here or what?" Gordon asked.

"Well, why don't we stay for the afternoon service," Jessie asked as his eyes still focused upon Margaret.

Following Jessie's eyes, Gordon smiled with understanding.

"I'll stay only if she's got a sister."

"Okay, then let's find out," said Jessie with a twinkle in his eye.

Before Gordon could respond, Jessie had rushed from his side and was talking to a woman who appeared to be in her late sixties. Gordon walked over and joined in the conversation.

"Hi, I'm Gordon Walker," he said as he reached out his hand to Ms. Rosie, the lady who Jessie had chosen as his primary source of information. The extensive conversation revealed that Jessie had made the perfect choice.

Jessie and Gordon learned from Ms. Rosie that Margaret was the fourth child of eleven children: of whom seven were girls. Gordon was excited to hear this information. Margaret's family was well-known in the local communities for their musical skills and ministries. Her father was the church's pastor. Margaret's mother sang and played the piano. Her mother also made additional income as a seamstress.

"That girl is going to make some lucky man a good wife... she can cook real good too," Ms. Rosie lowered her voice.

"She made most of her clothes. She looks sharp all the time."

Jessie was very impressed with the dress that Margaret was wearing.

Margaret had other attributes that Ms. Rose had not shared with the guys; Margaret was strictly a country girl. She worked hard harvesting with her family to gather and preserve food for the large family. While not allowed in the family home, she enjoyed dancing. Margaret was also smart. Although, high school diplomas were not offered at the schools during that time, Margaret completed the eleven years that were offered.

Ms. Rosie continued her monologue as Jessie and Gordon escorted her to a table. By the end of the day, Jessie knew that Margaret was the girl he was going to marry.

What Jessie didn't know on that fateful day was that Margaret had noticed him as soon as he had walked through those church doors. Furthermore, she had told herself, "That is my husband". Sure enough, one year later they were married.

Jessie and Margaret were inseparable and traveled together everywhere the Army would allow them. They had a honeymoon that lasted over five years before the first child was born.

When Margret became pregnant they returned to Memphis and bought a new home. The first born was, Elaine. She was a gorgeous baby and looked much like her father. She was very girly and proper. Each word was enunciated as she spoke. She learned to sew and how to style hair. Elaine was always properly dressed and her hair and nails were maintained. She was Daddy's girl.

Although, Margaret was a country girl, she insisted that her children call her, "Mother".

A few months after Elaine was born, Jessie was deployed to Europe during World War II and returned to Memphis in time for the birth of his first son. The cute little boy was named after Jessie, but was nick named Junior. He was a smart, headstrong, and a conning child who kept these traits into manhood. However, he did not show much respect towards girls.

Jessie, truly a family man, did not like being away from his wife and children. He also had a close relationship with his mother. Jessie always provided for his family and mother; and played an active part in the lives of his children as they were

growing up. Before the third child was born, Jessie packed up the family and moved them to Virginia where he worked for over four years. They lived in military housing. Four more children were born during their stay on the base.

The third born was Samantha, who was a lovely baby with very thin straight hair. A gentle soul and would give another the clothes off her back. She also allowed people to misuse her. Samantha loved to laugh and showed off her dance moves.

The fourth born was Robert Lee, a handsome care free child and man. He showed no concerns regarding what was going on around him and he didn't like to share. He called himself, "Pretty Boy" and had inherited a good singing voice from his mother. He was popular with the girls.

Claudine, the fifth child, was born a year after Robert Lee. She was a healthy, cute baby with thick wavy hair. Claudine was shy and sly when dealing with other family members. She didn't speak much, but continually found ways to undermine a few of her siblings.

The sixth child, Annie, was a small baby at birth. Unlike the others, she had a full head of kinky golden-reddish hair. She was an independent tom-boy and would try almost anything. Yet, she was a Daddy's girl, and was teased by her siblings for sucking her thumb. A couple of days after Margaret brought Annie home from the hospital, six-year-old Junior forced a penny in baby Annie's mouth. Margaret reached Annie just in time as she began to choke on the coin.

"I told you not to bring no mo' girls home-- too many girls," Junior shouted at his mother.

Shortly after Annie was born, Jessie was deported to Korea. Margaret and the children returned to Memphis. After two years, Jessie returned to Memphis and cute baby Donny was born with beautiful curly hair. He didn't smile much and cried all the time. As a child and teen, he was very shy and needed attention.

After Margaret recovered from giving birth to Donny, Jessie packed up the family, and with all seven children flew to Europe; where he was stationed for over three years. During that time, the eighth child was born in Germany named Daisy. She was a cute bouncy, happy baby girl with thick curly hair. Yet, even as

a little girl, she was stubborn and had to be in control of everything. She enjoyed being the life of the party, but at the same time, if there was any sibling rivalry, Daisy was usually the one in the center of it. She too had inherited Margaret's ability to sing.

While still in Europe, Jessie was ordered to return to the United States for duty in Missouri. Finding housing for ten people was a challenge for the government at that time. As a result, Jessie packed up the eight children and returned to Memphis where Margaret and the children lived until about a year later when a four-bedroom duplex finally became available on the military base.

The trip to Missouri was quite different than any other travel. All ten members of the family squeezed into a large Ford station-wagon. Jessie, Margaret, and the two youngest -Donny and Daisy- sat in the front seats. In the wide rear seat were Elaine, Samantha, Claudine, and Annie. Riding in the storage area in the far rear of the car were Junior and Robert Lee. Packed food and water were placed beneath the seats.

The roof of the car was loaded with suitcases and because there was no air conditioning, all windows were down. As they started the six-hour trip to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, it resembled the "Hillbillies" moving to Hollywood; and like the TV show, Beverly Hillbillies, the journey became an extension of the family happiness.

Once settled into the new base, Jessie was placed in charge of the mess hall. This was ideal for his large family. During his tenure in this position the government had very little wasted food because Jessie did not throw away any leftovers. He kept his family well-fed and healthy.

In the mornings, the children were awakened with the choice of cereal, fresh juice, eggs, bacon, sausage, milk, and cocoa. For dinner there were plenty of meats, fresh vegetables and breads.

Three years after arriving in Missouri, the ninth child was born; an eleven-pound baby boy was named Aaron. He was an easy going baby and didn't cry much. He was always eager to please others and didn't speak much. But, Aaron loved to play little tricks on his siblings.

Jessie was proud of his wonderful family and loved taking photos of everyone. After Aaron was born in 1959, Jessie purchased an 8mm movie camera that recorded only black and white movies without audio. Every family gathering and holiday, Jessie had the camera ready. Sometime afterwards, the family would sit down to watch the movies with homemade popcorn and lemonade; and occasionally Elaine would make homemade caramel to pour over the popcorn and homemade donuts. During the movie, the family would laugh and chat. Although they couldn't hear what was said on the movie; they knew exactly what had been said. One film showed Margaret dancing up a storm. She was turning and kicking her legs. Margaret looked stunning. Yes, Jessie was sentimental and loved to keep wonderful memories of his family.

While still in Missouri, Jessie took leave time, and with assistance from his father, they added a room to the Memphis home for his mother. His youngest brother had already taken in their elderly father. When the room was finished, Jessie's mother lived in the rear of the home while other renters occupied the front section. The renters lived there when the family was away for long periods of time.

Throughout Jessie and Margaret's marriage, they had opened their home to families in need. It was hard to imagine with all of the people living in the house, how they always managed to find space for another relative or friend to stay; but they did. Some stayed for a short period time and others stayed longer.

When Jessie and his family were living in Virginia, he allowed both of his brothers and their families to stay in the Memphis house. His brothers agreed to pay the \$60 monthly mortgage. Within a year, Jessie received a notice for foreclosure on his house. Those were difficult times for a lot of people. His brothers had not paid the mortgage for three months. Jessie took a leave of absence to return to Memphis to refinance the house and to make arrangements for his brothers to move out of the house. Jessie was able to save his home without telling Margaret about the incident. It would be more than twenty years later when she accidentally came across the mortgage files, but Margaret never mentioned her discovery to Jessie.

After Jessie's four-year duty in Missouri, Jessie accepted an exciting opportunity in Ft. Braggs, North Carolina, as an Army Airborne paratrooper. He was required to report to duty immediately

for a two-year assignment. Jessie made the decision to retire after this particular duty was completed, thereby, ending a twenty-seven-year career in the Army.

Jessie and Margaret thought it would be best to relocate the family back to Memphis instead of North Carolina. Stability had become particularly important, since the three oldest children were in high school. They felt the environment would be more familiar and the children would not have to experience another adjustment making and then leaving more friends. Margaret was pregnant during the move and a few months later the tenth child, a lovely baby girl, Janis, was born. Janis was also a quiet baby, but soon claimed her voice and became very loud. She was outgoing and loved to make people happy.

It was a blessing for the children to have their paternal grandmother, "Granny", living with them. Each child had their own special bond with her.

Approximately ten months later, the eleventh and final baby girl was born. She was named Martha. She was a sweet and adorable baby who always had a smile on her face. Martha loved being around people and craved attention.

In 1963, Jessie retired from the Army and returned to Memphis. He worked a few years at the VA hospital, but very soon entered into a true retirement. Jessie and Margaret parented eleven endearing children. These memories tell Annie's story.

CHAPTER 2

Early Memories

Early one morning, Annie was in the kitchen helping her oldest sister Elaine, make maple syrup for the pancakes that would be prepared for breakfast. Her mother, Margaret, had turned on the radio to the "Arthur Godfrey Show". Annie, shaking her head to the beat of the rock 'n' roll song "Li'l Girl, Li'l Girl" by Donnie Boyd, that was playing on the radio, pushed a chair to the edge of the stove and climbed aboard. The pot steamed as she watched Elaine stir the syrup until it thickened. Annie wanted to help stir.

"Annie don't you get too close to that stove -you might get burned," she heard her mother's warning.

"Yes Ma'am" Annie always answered. Just as she moved even closer to the stove, Annie heard her mother yell out.

"Heidi! Heidi! Where is that lazy girl? Annie git down and go knock on her door and tell her I want her." Annie got down, ran to the rear of the home, and knocked on Heidi's door.

"Heidi, mother wants you." There was no answer. Annie knocked again.

"Heidi... Heiiiiidiiiiii, mother wants you," she yelled still in a child's voice. "Ok, Ok, I come!" Heidi finally answered.

It was the year 1956 and the place was Stuttgart, Germany. Heidi was an eighteen year old German woman who had been hired by the German government as a live-in maid. She was assigned to work in the home of the United States Army Sgt. Jessie Fowler. The Fowlers had lived in different parts of Germany for more than three years. Margaret was thankful for the extra help in housekeeping, especially with eight children. Margaret appreciated the irony of having a German maid clean the home of a Negro family. This she knew would never happen in the racist country into which she was born or in Hitler's Germany.

Jessie had orders to return to the States. In fact, on that very day a photographer was scheduled to take family portraits. Jessie, Margaret and the children had had a good experience in Germany and, as a result, didn't mind the elderly German woman and the two German boys, seven and twelve years old, who would be a

part of the photo shoot in order to show good relations between Germany and the USA.

When Annie ran back to the kitchen, Jessie, Margaret and her siblings had sat down to eat. Annie wanted to pour her own syrup, so, she stood on the chair next to the stove and stuck a spoon into the hot pot. Suddenly she squealed; Annie had burned her hand, but wouldn't cry because she thought she would get in trouble. The second degree burn left a life time scar on her hand as a reminder and a souvenir from Germany.

Later that day, Annie took her place standing next to her father, Jessie, as she said, "cheese." But, even at sixty-four, Annie often found herself viewing that scar and remembering with fondness a scar of pain that over the years became a symbolic of the love shared by her family during the early dawn of her life.

CHAPTER 3

USA

While life in Germany had its own lessons, other childhood experiences also taught Annie about familiar love, and pain.

The Fowler's Memphis home was built off the ground; held by large brick stilts that left a two-foot space between the house and the ground, there was enough space for a small child to crawl under. Annie loved to play under the house. On some hot days, she found a cool spot and took naps. On one bright, humid day, Annie heard her mother call to her. She rushed across the crawl space on her knees. Suddenly, she felt a sharp pain in her left knee. Looking down, she saw blood and sticking from her knee were two large pieces of glass. Annie needed help from her mother.

"Mother-r-r!" she called repeatedly. Her mother standing by the kitchen sink did not hear Annie's call. Annie, now quite panicked, called again. Hearing a noise, Margaret turned from her sink full of dishes and walked slowly through the house. She was about to dismiss the perception when Annie called again, "Mooooother-r-r-r." Margaret rushed outside; crawled under the house and pulled Annie into the yard. She lifted Annie and carried her into the house where she removed the glass; cleaned and bandaged Annie's wound.

"You are a little girl- not a boy; never ever go under that house again," Margaret, in tears, scolded.

The scars left another life time reminder of her carelessness. Annie followed her mother's advice and never went under the house again, but it didn't stop her from climbing trees.

Early one Saturday morning, Annie was awakened by loud noises. She heard a voice and heavy tapping on the street.

"Iiiccce Man. Iiiccce Man."

Annie jumped out of the bed and ran to the front window. When she pulled back the curtain she couldn't believe her eyes. There, parked in front of the house was a man sitting on a wagon with a horse. Moments later Annie noticed that a couple of her siblings were also watching. They watched the man step off the wagon and walked to the back of it. He pulled back a large cloth that covered the entire wagon. He pulled out the large medal ice tongs and

lifted a large block of ice. The man carried it down the driveway to the rear of the house and into the kitchen where Margaret was waiting. The kids ran to the kitchen just in time to watch the man insert the block of ice into the icebox through its special door. Annie learned that the ice would be delivered on a regular basis to keep the food cold. The children followed the iceman to his wagon where he gave each child some ice chips. Annie had never seen real horses before, just those on her favorite TV shows. It was a good day for Annie.

It was not long after that day, on a warm morning, while Annie was sitting on the lower branch of the tree in front of the house; she heard unusual noises coming toward the house. She wasn't sure in what direction the noise was coming from.

"Raaagg Man... Raaagg Man."

Annie quickly turned to the voice she heard. She was amazed to see a man driving a horse and wagon. The wagon was filled with all sorts of cloths and clothes. Margaret came out the door with a few clothing items and a large jar of water in her hands. She stepped down the stairs onto the driveway and walked to the edge of the street. Annie climbed down from the tree, but stayed a distance and observed.

"Hole gal," the man commanded his horse. The horse stopped and the sweaty old colored man, with a slim body, stepped down from his wagon and greeted Margaret.

"Gud Mo'nin Ma'am."

"Good morning Sir. Here are some rags and you must be thirsty on this warm morning," Margaret said.

He took the rags and threw them in the wagon.

"Yes Ma'am, thank ya so much, I really do pre'shait it."

He took the water from Margaret, and drank the entire 32 ounces. She offered him more, but he declined. He climbed up on the wagon, sat down, and reached for his reigns. He nodded his head to Margaret and Annie.

"Git up," he commanded the horse.

"Raaagg Man. Raaagg Man."

Annie watched as the horse trotted down the street until they disappeared. She learned that the "Rag Man" sold rags, but he also accepted donations of rags. The most important lesson she learned that morning, was to be kind and respectful to all people. She also hoped she would not be told to pick up the big present that the horse left behind on the street in front of the house.

One day, Annie had spent most of the late afternoon outside playing with a neighborhood friend and climbing the tree. Finally tired, she went inside the house. She heard her mother, who was in the kitchen, singing "Precious Lord".

"...I'm tired, I'm weak, Lord I'm worn- Through the storm,
through the night."

What Annie saw next was so confusing and painful that she froze at the sight of it. Her older sister Samantha, 9 years old, was sitting alone, on the sofa, with a swollen, shut eye and bruises on her face. Frightened, Annie looked around to find some reason for what she saw. Her younger brother, Donny, and her sister, Daisy, were asleep in the back bedroom. The older siblings had not come home yet. Jessie was home on leave, but had left the house.

Annie slowly walked over to her sister and sat beside her.

"Samantha, what happened to you?" she asked.

"Daddy hit me because I messed my pants at school. He had to pick me up from school," Samantha whispered.

Tearful, Annie held Samantha's hand and set with her in silence. Margaret continued to sing while she did her chores in the kitchen.

"Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord,
Lead me home."

Shortly, after that experience, Annie began to wet the bed nearly every night. It was many years later when Annie understood the impact of that highly traumatic experience. The level of empathy demonstrated by Annie became a forever bond that allowed the two sisters to remain close.

Several months after the trauma occurred, the family moved to the military base in Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. It was only weeks before school was to start. The four-bedroom duplex was nice and clean. A door was built to join the duplex as one large home. Jessie and Margaret had one bedroom. Elaine and Samantha shared a bedroom. Junior, Robert Lee, and Donny shared a bedroom with bunk beds. The last bedroom, also with bunk beds, was shared by Claudine, Annie and Daisy. One of the living rooms, known as the "front-room", was strictly for Jessie's and Margaret's entertainment space.

Annie was excited about starting school. The night before she laid out her clothes and helped her Mother make sandwiches. A little later, Margaret sat Annie down in front of the stove to press her hair. Earlier she had washed and twisted Annie's long kinky hair into eight little balls all over her head. Margaret placed the straightening iron-comb on the eye of the stove to get it hot. Annie was very "tender-headed" and didn't like to get her hair combed or pressed. While the iron-comb was heating, Margaret began to comb out one of the balls. Annie squealed, placed her hands on her head and dodged the comb. Her mother popped Annie's hands with the comb in her hand. When Annie straightened up, Margaret picked up the hot iron-comb; wiped it on a cotton rag and commenced to press Annie's hair. Just the sight of the hot comb made Annie slide down in her chair onto the floor.

"Girl, get back up in this chair," Margaret yelled. She lifted Annie back into the chair. This went on for a while.

Finally, Margaret stood up, placed the hot iron-comb on a metal holder and walked away.

"That's okay, Annie. You can just stay home tomorrow," Margaret said as she paused at the door.

"I'll be good, Mother," Annie cried.

"Are you sure?" Margaret asked.

"I promise, Mother... I promise," Annie pleaded. That did it; Annie then closed her eyes and didn't move until her hair was finished.

Annie's sisters' hair didn't need as much maintenance as hers. Margaret would just add a little hair oil, then comb, brush and braid their hair. Margaret styled all the girls' hair similarly-

with three braids; one braided on the top of their heads that hung on the side or in the back, and one braided on each side of their heads.

After Margaret completed combing the girls' hair, she called all the children into the kitchen. She opened the cabinet door and pulled out a large bottle of "Cod Liver Oil". It was time for the periodic health remedy that the children dreaded. No one wanted to be the first in line.

"You guys better get over here now!" Margaret told them. Annie didn't want to, but, she jumped in front of the line. Margaret poured the oil in a tablespoon.

"Open your mouth wide."

Annie opened her mouth as wide as she could. Margaret had done this so often that she could pour the oil straight into each child's mouth without the spoon touching their lips. This kept her from having to use different spoons.

"Now swallow." Margaret told her. Annie hated the taste, but she swallowed it; and thought she was going to throw up. But, she didn't.

The last child stood before Margaret as she poured the cod liver oil into his mouth.

"Okay. Did I miss anyone?" Margaret asked. No one replied.

"Well next week you will get the "Sweet-tine."

"Yuk...uhmmm, oh no," the kids reacted.

Another remedy that Annie and her siblings dreaded was for the prevention of lice and ring-worms. Each year, Margaret gave her children a teaspoon of turpentine with sugar; she called it "Sweet-tine". Although this concoction had been controversial in the medical arena, none of her children had ever been infested with lice or ring-worms.

Annie had a wonderful experience in school on that next day. She met a cute little blond-haired girl with green eyes whose name was Susan. They became best friend because they lived only a couple of streets apart and they met sometimes in the park near their homes. They remained friends for the duration of Jessie's Missouri assignment. Her friendship with Susan taught her that because of

the military life style, friends would come and go. She never saw Susan again.

By the third grade, Annie's teacher recommended that she receive speech therapy. Annie had difficulty pronouncing words beginning with "S" and "Th". Learning new things was always exciting to Annie, and she looked forward to the weekly one hour sessions with a very nice teacher named, Miss Rooks. Annie continued the sessions for the entire school year and completed with satisfaction. Annie's speech impairment was cured.

When Annie was a little older, she came home from school and noticed her mother removing a stripe from her father's uniform before she pressed the shirt. She was a little confused, but didn't ask any questions at that time. About six months later Annie saw her mother putting that strip back on her father's uniform and pressing it.

"Why do you take it off and then put it on?" curious Annie, finally asked her mother.

"Well, sometimes people make mistakes and then they make up for it," Margaret explained.

"Did Daddy make a mistake?" Annie asked.

"Yes," said Margaret.

"And he made up for it?" asked Annie.

"Yes he did," Margaret replied.

Young Annie seemed satisfied with the answer at the time. However, about a year later Annie saw her mother again taking off a strip. It was many years later when Annie truly understood.