

Chapter V

I pack all my belongings, which amounts to very little, but nonetheless, I am leaving the decrepit church with the red little door that has always been my home. I glance back one last time at the church on the small, grassy hill. My brain is bouncing with new ideas, like a fishing weight bobbing in the channel. I am sad to leave the home I have always had, but as Brother Ethel said in his letter, I have nothing left anymore in this place. I only take my belongings that are still intact, or that have personal value.

Slowly, I walk out the wood, splintered, oak, door, and close it carefully behind me and my past, and I step out into the future. The sun shines brightly throughout the meadow. I walk along the hard, dirt road, my spirits lifted, no longer as heavy as a pouch of gold coins, yet I still have my farthings from Brother Ethel. A little buzzing bee flies down onto my shoulder, and I shoo it away. It seems to snap at me angrily, but I just quicken up my pace. Eventually, it abandons me, flying off to bother someone else.

Far near the horizon, I see a frail apparition, covered in a cloud of dust. As he approaches, I realize he seems to be awfully tired and weak, with a series of many round bubbles covering his body. He is hauling a large tractor-like thing behind him, almost like a mule. We finally meet one another, as I have quickened my pace to look at this curious figure. Finally, we meet and he coughs and mutters, asking a question, like he has

been rambling all day and has had no success in finding an answer. I squint at him, and he repeats his question.

"Wou....gseu....like....so....fnsf?"

Would....gwue....ike...some...fruit?" He gives me a toothless grin, and his eyes twinkle delusionally. He holds up a battered apple. I regard this odd man, thinking to myself, *What has caused this man to dwindle?* "No thank you," I reply, as I slowly back away, "I must be on my way now." I see him trudge along again, his grin completely dissipated, and I feel a little guilty. We part directions, and I continue to walk along the dusty, thinking about the shriveled man.

After walking for a couple hours, I pause to take a rest, and pull out a scone, a special treat from Brother Bruno for my departure. I slowly munch on the vanilla, and as hard and dry as it might be, it tastes delicious. And as I lie there, slowly enjoying this special treat, the sun begins to set, and I see a magnificent facade of yellow, orange, and light purple. Slowly, I drift to sleep, and fall into darkness.

When I awake, I look around me, horrified. Nothing could describe what type of figures were surrounding me, not even the delusional fruit man. They were dressed in ragged clothing, and bulbous boils covered their entire bodies. They walked out of sync, almost like bodies risen from the dead. I wanted to scream, and run, and shriek, all at once, but I was paralyzed with terror, unable to move. I tried to wake up, but to no avail.

This was not a dream.