

Hopes and Dreams

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Table of Contents

[Chapter 1 Hopes and Dreams](#)

[Chapter 2 The Letter](#)

[Chapter 3 In Canada](#)

[Chapter 4 A Dream to Come](#)

[Chapter 5 New Hopes and Dreams](#)

Look for the book that comes before this one.

It is called *Mama's Song*.

Hopes and Dreams

Chapter 1 Broken Dreams



Peter Louka lived alone in a little old house in the Old Country. His wife died many years ago.

Peter's son Martin had been the joy in Peter's life. Peter's life had been very hard, but he had dreamed of a better life for Martin. Now Martin was gone. When Martin left, the joy in Peter's life left, too. Peter knew why Martin left. He left with the boss's pretty daughter, Josie. Peter remembered the night his boss came to the house.



John Staiko lived on the other side of town. He and his wife, Anna lived in a big, beautiful house. John and Anna had so many dreams for their daughter, Josie. She was smart and she loved to learn.

John was the boss of the factory where Peter and Martin worked. Josie first saw Martin Louka there. John could not understand why Josie liked Martin. He was just one of the workers. He was poor.

Anna was a sad and lonely woman. She missed Josie so much, but that was years ago.

John remembered the night in 1911 when they found out that Josie was gone. He had gone to Peter Louka's house.

"Where did they go?" John had shouted. Peter did not understand. He asked, "Who are you talking about?"

John yelled, "You know! That boy of yours took Josie! Where did they go?"

John shouted and pushed Peter.

Peter never forgot that night many years ago. He went to work every day and lived quietly in the little house. He missed Martin every day. Peter's dreams for his son were gone.

Peter often said to himself, "I wonder where they are. I wonder if they are safe."

It was the year 1924. John Staiko went to work every day at his factory. He often thought about Josie. He thought about how unhappy Anna was. He had great plans for Josie and the factory. He wanted Josie to marry a man like himself. He wanted the young man to take over the factory some day. Now, John's hopes and dreams for Josie were gone.

One night Anna started to talk about Josie. She said to John, "I still Miss Josie so much! Sometimes I think my heart is broken."

John said, "It doesn't help to think about it." Anna said, "I would feel better if I knew where she was. I would feel better if I knew she was safe and well."

Anna looked at John. She saw a strange look on her husband's face. "What is it, John? Why did you look like that?" she asked.

"I know I should have told you a long time ago," John said.

Anna stood up. "What should you have told me?" she asked.

"Three years ago I got a letter," John began.

"A letter?" cried Anna. "What kind of letter?"

John said softly, "A letter from Josie."

Anna screamed at her husband, "You had a letter for three years and you didn't tell me? How could you do that to me?"

John said, "I was too angry. I hated Josie and Martin for going away."

Anna said, "Where is the letter? I want to see it right now!"

Anna waited for John to bring the letter. Her hands were shaking. Her face was white. John got the letter and gave it to Anna, then he left the room.

Chapter 2 The Letter

Anna opened the letter. She read:

"May 15, 1921

Dear Mama and Papa,

It has been so long. I know you must still be very angry with me. Please forgive me. I did not want to hurt you. I just wanted to be with the man I loved.

Martin and I came to Canada. Life has not been easy for us. You know how I loved to learn new things? Well, I had to learn many things! You would have laughed to see the first things I cooked for poor Martin!

Martin and I have two little girls, Emma and Ruth. Emma looks just like me. She has dark hair and green eyes. Ruth looks more like Martin. The girls go to school now.

For a while, when the girls were little, I was very sick. I was in the hospital when Martin went away to work. Our poor little girls had to go to an orphanage until Martin came home to help us. When I was sick, I missed you more than ever. I love you very much. Your daughter, Josie. "

For days, Anna did not want to talk to John. One day, John said, "Please, Anna! Please listen to me."

"What do you have to say to me?" she asked. John said, "When Josie left, I was so angry! I hated Martin for taking her! Now I can see how wrong I was. Can you ever forgive me?"

Days later, John said, "Anna, I have a crazy idea."

"I didn't think you ever had crazy ideas!" she said. "What is it?"

John said, "I want to find them. I want to see Josie and Martin. The factory does not matter to me any more."

Anna jumped up. "Let's do it! Let's find our family!" she said.

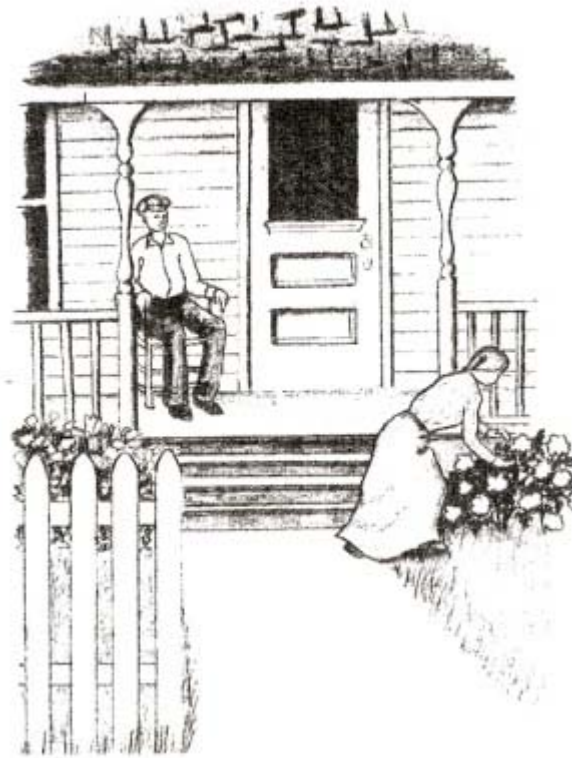
"We don't even know where they are," John said.

"Well," Anna said, "We know they are in Canada! We will look until we find them! There will be people who can help us."

They sold the factory, the house and most of the things in the house. They packed some things to go to Canada.

The day came for John and Anna to leave. They went by ship just as Josie and Martin had done. John and Anna stood by the ship's rail. They looked back at the shore. Anna said softly, "It is time for new hopes and dreams."

Chapter 3 In Canada: 1926



It was a beautiful spring morning. It was Saturday, so Martin was at home. He sat on the porch of their pretty new house. He liked to sit and watch Josie in the flower garden.

Josie would never be very strong. She had been so sick with the terrible flu in 1919. He didn't like to think about the time he first saw Josie in the hospital. He had been so afraid she wouldn't live!

Josie loved to work in her flower garden. It was warm and sunny. That always made her feel good.

"Look at this!" she said to Martin. "The first flowers are blooming!"

Martin laughed and started to sing, "Can you see the sunlight on the flowers?"

Josie laughed and sang back to him, "Can you feel the wind blow through your hair?"

They both laughed and sang together, "When you feel my loving arms around you, you will know how very much I care."

Emma and Ruth were making lunch in the house. When they heard "Mama's Song", they came out onto the porch. They started to sing with Josie and Martin.

"Can you see the stars begin to sparkle?
Day is done and night is coming near.
I will tuck you safely in your bed now,
If you need me, call and I'll be here."

It was the song Josie's mother sang to her long ago. It was the song Josie always sang to Emma and Ruth when they were small.

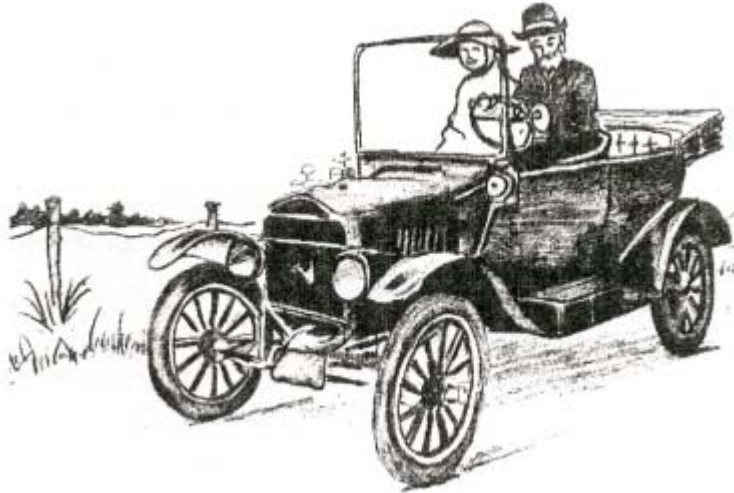
The girls brought lunch out onto the porch. "I love this house," said Josie. "It is so different from our first one. Do you remember, Martin?"

Martin laughed. "That house was so small! I could hardly turn around in it!"

Josie was so proud of Martin. He worked in the factory. He was good at his job and he worked in the office now.

"Look at all this good food, Martin!" Josie said. "I remember when one potato was our whole supper!"

Chapter 4 A Dream Comes True



John and Anna were in Canada. They had looked for months. They had driven many miles in their little Ford car. They had looked in many places. They had talked to many people. They were tired but they were happy to be together. Anna said to herself, "John is different now. He has some hope again."

The next morning they left for the next town. John was driving the little car. "I think I still like the horse and buggy better!" he said to Anna.

Anna laughed. "I don't worry about the car. It won't run away with us like that horse used to do!"

They were close to the next town. They could see black smoke coming from a tall chimney.

"Look at that," said John. "It looks like a factory to me."

Anna asked, "Do you miss the factory, John?"

"Not a bit!" answered John. "I had enough of factories!"

John drove the Ford around town until he found the newspaper office. He said to Anna, "Why don't you walk around a bit? I'll go in and see if they can help us"

Anna walked down the street and looked into store windows.

After awhile Anna turned around and walked back to the car. John was coming out of the newspaper office.

Anna looked at him and said, "John! What's the matter?"

"I think we've found them!" he said. "I think they're here. Right here in this town!"

John told Anna what he had found out. "They told me there is a family near here. They have two girls. The man works in that factory we saw. They said his wife is a pretty woman with dark hair. They told me where to find the house. It must be them!" he said to Anna. "It has to be them!"

"What should we do?" asked Anna. "Can we just walk up to the door? It's going to be a big surprise for them. What if they don't want us?"

John said, "I have to see them now!"

They got into the car. John drove slowly down the street. He turned at the first corner. He drove half way down the street. He said, "They told me to look for a pretty white house. They said it has a beautiful flower garden in the front. That's it right there!"

John stopped the car across the street.

"Oh, John! Look!" said Anna "Look at that girl on the porch! She looks just like Josie did when she was small!"



Emma was sitting on the porch. She looked up. She saw the people get out of the car and come toward her.

"Can I help you?" Emma asked.

The woman said, "Are you...are you...Emma? You look just like your mother."

"Yes," whispered Emma. "Who are you?"

"I'm your grandmother," answered Anna.

"Mama!" called Emma.

She ran to the house. "Mama" she called again.

Josie came to the door. "What are you shouting about?" she asked.

Then Josie saw the man and woman. "Oh, my!" she whispered.

She dropped the dish she had in her hand. It broke into a hundred pieces. She didn't hear it break.

She ran to Anna and John. "Mama! Papa! I can't believe it! Is it really you?" she asked.

She threw her arms around her mother. They all started to cry and laugh at the same time!

Emma looked at them. Her eyes were as round as could be.

"Grandparents?" she shouted. "I've got grandparents?"

"Come here, child," said Anna. "Let me look at you. "

Ruth came to the door. "Mama!" she said, "What is it?"

Josie answered, "Come here, Ruth. Meet your grandparents."

They all sat on the porch and talked. They talked, laughed, cried and talked some more.

Suddenly John looked at his watch. He asked, "What time does Martin get home from work?"

"Soon," answered Josie.

John said, "I'm not sure how Martin will feel about us. I treated him badly."

Just then Martin drove around the corner. He saw the people on the porch. He stopped the car and got out.

An older man walked toward him. "Martin ?" the man said, "Martin, it's John Staiko."

Martin stopped walking. His face went very still. He didn't say anything.

John stopped in front of Martin. He said softly, "I was a fool. I am so sorry for the way I treated you. Please forgive an old man."

Slowly Martin put out his hand. Slowly John took the hand in his. They just stood there for a long time.



"Come on, Dad!" said Ruth. "Don't just stand there! Come and meet my grandmother!"

Martin smiled and said, "She's just like her mother! Always telling me what to do!"

The six of them went onto the porch.

"What a pretty house!" said Anna.

"Come in and see the rest of it, Grandma," said Ruth. "Come on, Grandpa!"

Josie said to Emma, "It looks like Ruth is looking after Grandma and Grandpa! It's getting late. Do you think the two of us can get supper ready?"

Chapter 5 New Hopes and Dreams

After supper, John and Martin walked out onto the porch. Emma started to go after them. Anna whispered, "Just leave them. They need a little time to themselves. Let's help your mother with the dishes."

John said, "You have done well, Martin. I'm sorry I was such a fool. I made so much trouble!"

"We'd best try to forget the past," said Martin. "It doesn't do any good to think about that."

John said, "I would like to tell you about your father. We took the letter from Josie over to read to your father. He was ill but he was so happy about the letter. He gave me these two rings. He said they were your mother's. He said he would like his granddaughters to have them. We asked him to come with us, but he couldn't make the trip."

Martin took the rings. Tears filled his eyes. "I'm so glad you saw him," he said. "I am glad to have the rings. Thank you for bringing them to us."

The two men stood quietly for a long time. Then John said, "I sold the factory. We are staying in Canada."

Martin said, "Will you stay with us until you have a place of your own? I hope you won't get tired of having two lively girls in the house!"

John said, "The last few years have been too quiet! We'll be very happy to get to know our granddaughters."

Martin smiled, and John said softly, "Thank you! Thank you for everything."

Martin asked, "Will you be looking for a factory to buy?"

John said, "No, I have had enough of factories. I would like to start up a small business. Anna said I need new hopes and dreams. She's right. I need a new start. I hope you and Josie will help us."

Just then the two men heard singing. They heard four beautiful voices that sang:

"Can you see the sunlight on the flowers?
Can you feel the wind blow through your hair?
When I put my loving arms around you,
You will know how very much I care."

John took Martin's arm. "Let's go in," he said. "I'd like to help the ladies sing the rest of the song."

John and Martin went into the house. They all sang together,

"Can you see the stars begin to sparkle?
Day is done and night is coming near.
I will tuck you safely in your bed now,
If you need me, call and I'll be here."

Josie thought to herself, "The song kept us together. Even when we were apart for so long, the song kept us together."

She put her arm around Martin. "This is a dream come true," she said.



To Lana, Gillian and Dallas
My wonderful kids

This book is not based on the lives
of specific people.