

Deep Feelings

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way out of view

These Deep Feelings

Are they also in you?

By Anne

Liver and Onions

Chapter I

The Year 1942--

“Daddy, Daddy, let’s go out and eat liver and onions.”

“OK, Lori-Ann. We will go very soon.”

“Daddy, am I a big girl?”

“You certainly are. You are five-and-a-half years old.”

“OK, let me say good-bye to my dolls before we go.”

“OK, say good-bye to your dolls and then we will leave.”

“Good-bye dollies Good-bye Shnoucles. Good-bye Suzi. I’ll be back soon. I’m ready, Daddy. Good-bye Mommy. Do you want to come with us?”

“Not now, Lori-Ann. I’m very tired.”

“OK, Mommy. Good-bye.”

“Daddy, I like going out with you,” I say walking to the restaurant with him.

“I like going out with you too, Lori-Ann.”

“Are we going to eat liver and onions again, Daddy?”

“Yes, we are.”

“Daddy, what kind of baby is in Mommy’s tummy, a boy baby or a girl baby?”

“We don’t know yet, Lori-Ann. What kind of baby do you want?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know if I want a boy baby or a girl baby or a dog.”

“Here we are at the restaurant,” says Daddy. “Let’s go in and sit down at a table.”

We go in and sit at a table. Here comes the waiter.

We’ll have two portions of liver and onions—one adult portion and one child portion,” says Daddy.

“Daddy, why is Mommy so tired all the time.”

“Well, Lori-Ann, Mommy has a baby in her tummy and that can make you tired.”

“When will the baby come out of her tummy?”

“In a long time, Lori-Ann. In about five months.”

“Oh.”

Soon the liver and onions arrive.

“I’ll cut your liver for you,” says Daddy. And he does.

“This is good Daddy. I love coming here and eating liver and onions with you.”

“Lori-Ann, do you know you have a birthday soon?”

“Yes, I know. I will be six-years-old.”

“What would you like for a birthday present?”

“I would like a doll carriage to wheel my dollies in. But a real doll carriage—one that looks like a real baby carriage. The doll carriage we saw in the toy store window.”

Daddy didn’t smile when I said that. He looked worried. He then went on eating his liver and onions and so did I.

Daddy finishes before I do. I’m a slow eater. He pays the check while I finish eating.

Then he says, “We can start walking back now.”

We go home.

“Hi Mommy.”

“Hi Lori-Ann. We’ll give you a shower and then you will go to sleep.”

“OK Mommy.”

Mommy helps me get into the shower and into my pajamas and puts me to bed.

“Mommy, I don’t want to go to sleep yet. I’m not tired.”

“Don’t you know, Lori-Ann, the sooner you go to sleep, the sooner morning will come.”

Mommy always says that, but I can’t figure that one out. While I’m in bed, I hear Mommy and Daddy talking in the kitchen.

“Charlotte,” says Daddy, “Lori-Ann wants that doll carriage that is in the toy store window for her birthday.”

“Oh dear, Jonathan, “that is expensive.”

“I know.”

“Let’s get it for her,” says Mommy. “I think we’ll be able to manage it.”

Oh dear, I’m thinking. Maybe I should tell them I don’t really want it even though I do want it. But Mommy did say that she thinks they’ll be able to manage it. And I start falling asleep.

A Few Days Later (The Day Before My Birthday)—

We are all in the kitchen eating breakfast—Mommy, Daddy and me.

“Jonathan, I can’t deal with having a big birthday party for Lori-Ann tomorrow. We can have a small one with just us and some of the family. Lori-Ann, don’t tell anyone you are having a birthday party.”

“OK Mommy.”

The Next Day--

“Happy birthday Lori-Ann,” says Mommy and Daddy. “You are now six-years-old! What a big girl!”

I soon go outside and play.

“Hi Jack. Hi Roz. Today is my birthday. I’m six-years-old.”

A Little Later--

Mommy comes outside.

“Hi Lori-Ann’s Mommy,” says Jack.

“Hi Lori-Ann’s Mommy,” says Roz. “Can we go to Lori-Ann’s birthday party?”

“Yes children,” says Mommy.

A Little Later--

“Lori-Ann, why did you tell the children you were having a birthday party? You weren’t supposed to.”

“I didn’t tell them I was having a birthday party, Mommy. I just told them that it’s my birthday.”

“Well of course they know you will have a birthday party if you tell them it’s your birthday.”

“But Mommy, it’s fun to have a birthday. Why can’t I have fun?”

A little later I have a birthday party and it is lots of fun. I also love the doll carriage I have even though it was too much money.

Later on when I’m in bed I hear Mommy and Daddy talking about the doll carriage again and I feel bad.

Chapter II

Almost Five Months Later--

“Aunt Sadie, why are you at my house every day and you’re sleeping over all the time?”

“Because Mommy needs a little help. She will have a baby soon.”

“When will the baby come out?”

“We’re not sure Lori-Ann, but soon.”

So everyday Aunt Sadie is here. Then one morning Mommy’s not feeling well.

“You have to go to school now, Lori-Ann,” says Mommy. “You had your breakfast, you went to the bathroom, so brush your teeth and walk to school. You don’t want to be late.”

“OK Mommy. I’ll go brush my teeth.”

So I go into the bathroom and brush my teeth. And I brush and I brush and I brush.

“Lori-Ann, what’s taking you so long? You don’t want to be late for school.”

“OK. I’ll go now.”

So I finish up. Then Mommy helps me on with my jacket and off I go.

I get to the schoolyard and I can’t find my line. I look and I look and I still can’t find my line. So I go back home.

“Lori-Ann,” says Mommy. “What are you doing back home?”

“I can’t find my line.”

“What do you mean you can’t find your line?” says Mommy looking upset.

“I’ll take her back to school,” says Aunt Sadie. “Let’s go Lori-Ann.”

So we go and this time I find my line.

After school I go back home. There is Aunt Sadie, but no Mommy.

“Where is Mommy?” I ask.

“Mommy is away for a few days. When she comes back she will bring you a new brother or sister.”

“Oh! Aunt Sadie, do you think she could bring back a dog?”

“No, Lori-Ann. It will definitely be a brother or a sister.”

“Oh!”

A Few Days Later At Home--

The front door opens.

“Mommy! You’re home!”

“Yes Lori-Ann. Did you have fun with Aunt Sadie? And look, a brand new baby brother, Ralphy.”

“Hello—what’s his name?”

“Ralphy,” says Mommy. “But you can’t come too close to him. Aunt Sadie tells me you have a cold. You don’t want to give your baby brother a cold.”

“I knew I should have gotten a dog.”

“What!!!” says Mommy.

“Mommy, can I go out and play?”

“Sure, go ahead.”

I go outside and meet Jack’s mother.

“Hello Lori-Ann,” she says. “I see your mother came home with her new baby. Do you have a sister or a brother?”

“A brother,” I say.

“What’s his name?”

I can’t remember his name so I say, “Bill.”

Then I walk down the street and meet Roz’s mother.

“Hello Lori-Ann,” says Roz’s mother. “I hear your mother came home with a new baby. Do you have a baby sister or a baby brother?”

“I have a baby brother,” I say.

“What is your baby brother’s name?”

I still can’t remember his name so I say, “Murray.”

Then I go home. Mommy is feeding the baby. She is trying to nurse him, but he won't do it. She finally gives him the bottle. He drinks from it. I think he's crazy. I would love to be nursed. I think I'll go and nurse my dollies.

Later Aunt Sadie says to me, "How do you like your new baby brother?"

"I don't know," I say.

"You know," says Aunt Sadie, "we should have kept the sales slip from the store where we got him. Then we could return him."

Oh my! I'm thinking. What if they find MY sales slip. Then they'll return me!

I think I'll hide in the closet. I open the closet door and hide in the back of the closet. All I can smell are moth balls.

Chapter III

Summer When I'm Eight-Years-Old--

"Here's the bus for day camp," says Mommy. "Lori-Ann let's go."

I get on the bus. But I have to pee and there is no bathroom on the bus. And I can't help it—I go in my pants. I go to camp everyday and I'm always peeing in my pants at camp. And the kids laugh at me. Once I was outside the bathroom. I decide I'd better go to the bathroom. I get inside and before I got the chance to pull my pants down, I pee in my pants.

I like camp but I wish I were a boy. The boys get to joke around and play rough. Not the girls. We have to be "little ladies." I hate that.

My aunt once gave me as a present four pretty bottles of perfume. Then I told her how I was playing football with my friends—you know, two-hand touch. So my aunt told me that the perfume was not for girls who play football. I decided not to use the perfume.

My favorite part about camp is their petting zoo. I love playing with the snakes and petting the rabbits and the goats. They also have tiny little kittens. Mommy and Daddy won't buy me a dog or a cat, but at least I have a petting zoo at day camp. And we also have horseback riding. Love it.

Then on weekends I am home. Mommy goes shopping sometimes and leaves Ralphy and me home with Aunt Sadie. Aunt Sadie loves Ralphy. Everyone is always saying how much she loves Ralphy. One day Mommy was out shopping. Ralphy was in the kitchen with Aunt Sadie and I was in the living room. Aunt Sadie gave Ralphy lunch, but she never called me in for lunch. I was hungry but I didn't say anything.

Chapter IV

After The Summer--

Then summer is over and I'm back in school again—in the third grade. I like school. It is relaxing. I love the “three R's,” reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. I also like history.

But there are things I don't understand in history. The teacher keeps saying how bad the British were to the colonists, how bad the British were. How do they teach the American Revolution in England? They couldn't teach it that way in England.

Another thing I don't understand is the Bill of Rights. We are supposed to have freedom of speech, freedom the press, and freedom of assembly. But outside the front of our school there is a sign that says “no loitering.” Isn't that against freedom of assembly?

But one good thing that's happening is that now I am a Brownie Scout. We hold our meetings in the American Legion Hall. It's so much fun. We sing, play games, and put on plays. I love it all. We put on the play The Wizard of Oz. That was so much fun. I was Dorothy.

Then there are times when the meetings drag on a bit. That's when my friends and I hang out in the kitchen. We look through all the cabinets and the refrigerator. Guess what we find in the refrigerator? Beer! So we drink the beer at the Brownie Scout meetings. It really doesn't taste so good, but it's fun.

My Brother Ralphy—

Meanwhile Ralphy is five-years-old and guess what? He's playing with my old dolls and that expensive doll carriage.

“Don't tell anyone that I'm playing with dolls,” he says to us.

What do I care if he plays with my old dolls and doll carriage.

One day I'm in my room with the door closed and I hear my father say to my mother, “Charlotte, remember we were so worried about spending all that money on that doll carriage? Well, now I'm glad we did because Ralphy is playing with it.”

I felt so relieved.

Chapter V

In Junior High--

A few years pass and I'm in Junior High. I'm in seventh grade. I was supposed to be in an advanced class, but my teacher didn't want me to go into an advanced class because I was sick most of the year in sixth grade and missed a lot of school. So I'm stuck in this class and I find school boring.

Then I started feeling strange feelings inside me. And the kids make all kinds of comments about sex. And I think there is a connection. And the feelings won't go away. When my mother told me how babies were born when I was younger, she never mentioned these feelings—these scary feelings. These very scary feelings.

“Mommy,” I say to my mother, “can I go to a psychiatrist?”

Mommy says, “that's just for rich people.”

Then my mother keeps poking me in the behind.

“You're sticking out. You're sticking out. You're going to have to wear a girdle.”

So I try wearing a girdle.

“Mommy,” I say, “this girdle is so uncomfortable. Do I have to wear it?”

“Yes, you are sticking out. And you must wear bigger tops also. You are sticking out.”

“If I wear bigger skirts, do I still have to wear a girdle?”

“If you don't stick out—OK. I won't make you wear a girdle.”

So then I buy bigger tops and bigger skirts. Also, I buy bigger pants, although we are not allowed to wear pants to school. And then Mommy doesn't make me wear a girdle.

People would say to me, “Lori-Ann, your clothes are too big on you.”

And I would answer, “I like big clothes.” And then everyone is happy.

But my mother doesn't really want me anymore. I hug her and she doesn't hug me back. She just says, “what are you doing that for?!” or “you yelled at me this morning, now you're doing that?!”

I wish I had a boyfriend, someone who really cares about me.

Things really started getting confusing in Junior High. I start joking around a lot and the teachers get mad at me. I wish I could be good so my teachers would like me and my parents would love me.

I start stealing candy from the candy stores. I don't know why I do it. I have money to pay for it. But I steal it anyway.

Chapter VI

Eighth Grade—

Then comes eighth grade. Things go from bad to worse. I fall for Willie in my class. His mom works in a clothing store near my school. And Willie is so cute.

“Hi Lori-Ann,” says Willie. “Do you want to come to my house after school?”

“OK Willie.” I’m so excited. Willie really likes me.”

After school Willie takes my hand and we walk to his house. My heart beats faster and faster. We walk to his building. We go inside. We take the elevator. Then we go up, then we get out, and then we go to Willie’s apartment.

I know Willie likes me. After we go in his apartment, he kisses me on the mouth. We go into his room. I take off all my clothes and lie naked on the bed with him.

“I love you Willie.”

“I love you Lori-Ann.”

We just hug and kiss. Then I get up and put on my clothes.

“I’m going home now Willie.”

Willie starts laughing. “You’re a whore,” he says. Then he spits at me into my hair.

“Whore, whore,” he laughs.

I run out the door and run home crying.

The next day in school the kids are pushing me.

“Whore, whore,” they laugh.

Then another boy wants to date me after school, Billy.

“Do you want to go out with me after school?” says Billy

“Okay,” I say. Maybe Billy really likes me.

After school we go into the hallway of one of the buildings nearby and just make out in the hallway. After making out I leave and go home.

The next day at school the kids are teasing me again. “Whore, whore,” they laugh.

I feel so terrible. All I want is love and now I’m a whore.

Now Ben wants to go out with me. I don't know why, but I go out with him. I feel so special when I'm alone with a boy. I don't feel like a whore until afterward. Anyway, I go with Ben to the storage room in his building's basement and we lie down on a mattress there and make out. The next day he tells everyone in school and they shout at me, "Whore, whore."

I don't understand, if sex is so bad, why do you have to do it after you are married? And besides, we didn't do sex, we just made out. But they still call me "whore."

Then there is another boy in my class who likes me, but I don't like him and I don't go near him. But his girlfriend, who is in another class, is jealous. For what, I don't know. But outside the class in the halls or outside the building, she and her girlfriends gang up on me and pull my hair and push me down the stairs.

And then something else happens. My English teacher in English class starts yelling at me.

"Lori-Ann, why was your English book lying on the ground outside school? It's all ripped and dirty. What is the matter with you? Don't you know how to take care of your things?"

I get very upset and start to cry. But no one cares. Then I find out what happened from some of the kids. Jenny threw my book out the window.

"Jenny," I tell her. "I'm going to beat the shit out of you. I got in trouble cause you threw my book out the window. Meet me in the schoolyard after school."

And so after school we start fighting in the schoolyard. If I'm too far away from Jenny, the kids push me closer to her. Anyway, I win the fight cause Jenny gives up and walks away.

The next day at school our home room teacher asks me, "who won the fight yesterday?"

"Me," I say.

Chapter VII

Ninth Grade—

I'm now in ninth grade, high school. My parents are sending me to a private high school. They say I'll get a better education in a private school. And thank goodness we have to wear a uniform. And in this uniform my mother doesn't poke me here and poke me there and say "you're sticking out."

My favorite subjects in school are English and art. I spend hours at home making up stories. I don't write them down but I do pastel paintings illustrating them. I do this all in my room with the door closed. No one bothers me, except when I get a phone call.

I like talking on the phone except to Jill. She lives around the corner from me and she is a pain in the ass. She bosses me around and wants me to come over her house all the time. I don't want to go over her house. Then I have to make excuses up—I'm being punished or I have to study for an exam and I can't concentrate on my work over her house. What a pain in the ass.

Sometimes I'm busy and don't answer my phone. So Jill then calls my mother up to have me call her back. Then I keep hearing from my mother, "did you call Jill back? You have to call Jill back."

Then when I finally call her back, I get from her, "come over my house. Why don't you come over my house?"

Thank goodness for my stories and my pastels. I would like to be an artist and just do pastels and maybe watercolor and acrylic. That is my dream, to be an artist. That is my dream.

Meanwhile Ralphy is going to be nine-years-old and he is going to have a birthday party in our backyard. And he also has some demands upon me.

My room is on the ground floor and my window looks out onto the backyard.

"Don't get dressed or undressed in your room when my friends are here," he says. "And also keep the blinds closed."

"But if I get dressed or undressed, the blinds will be closed," I say.

"No, listen to what Ralphy says," my parents insist.

"OK," I say reluctantly.

"Also," my parents continue, "no bossing Ralphy around during the party."

Then comes the party and we are all in the backyard with Ralphy's friends.

“Let’s play hide and seek,” I suggest.

“No,” says my father. “No bossing Ralph around.”

So I go inside to my room and sit by myself in the room with the blinds closed through the whole party listening to everyone else having fun.

Chapter VIII

The Next Three Years of High School—

School is OK. It is a little bit hard except for English and art, but it's OK. But some of the boys make fun of me. I don't know why. And the girls talk down to me. I know I'm a little different, but why don't the kids like me?

And my parents too. My mother is always arguing with me and my father is always lecturing me. I can't seem to please them

I think you would make a good teacher of little children," says my mother. "You are good with little kids."

"But," I say, "I don't want to teach little kids. I want to be an artist."

"Then you can teach art in junior high or high school."

Shit! I think to myself.

Then there are my father's lectures, "you are judged by the company you keep."

What's wrong with the company I keep, except for Jill, whom I can't get rid of?

And my girlfriends at school are always talking about the same thing, what's going on at school or what television program they saw, over and over again, almost every day. There must be more to life than that—school and TV. Why am I so different? Why can't I think like other people think?

Then there's this boy in my class who I used to think was OK, but now I can't stand. I was at a class party and was dancing with him a little away from everyone else. So he feels me up. I got so scared I just ran away. So then at school he starts bragging to some of the boys that he felt me up. Embarrassing! Then he starts calling me "simple." I should have had the presence of mind to scratch his face after what he did at the party. Then everyone would be laughing at HIM.

Sometimes life gets to be a little too much for me. I start daydreaming about being popular and I live in my own special world. In my world everyone admires me and I'm popular and pretty. Or I have the good me and the bad me. The good me gets good marks at school and I go out with my friends. The bad me gets bad marks at school and is punished. I have to stay home alone.

Then there are the boys—John and Jeff. John I liked the first and second year of high school and Jeff I liked the third and fourth year of high school. John I went out with only once, to the junior prom. Jeff I went out with a few times, one of the times was the senior prom.

It's hard going out with boys. If they get fresh you're supposed to say "no." But I'm always thinking "go." I want to be good, but it's really hard. And I'm not always as good as I should be.

Then comes college applications. All my girlfriends want to be teachers. And my parents want me to be a teacher. I can't stand the idea of being a teacher. Sometimes when I sit in class, I think the only thing worse than sitting here is being up there teaching. And, also, what if college is too hard for me? What if I can't do it?

So I start thinking of junior college. That's only two years instead of four. That I probably could do. There I can take secretarial studies and get a decent job afterward. But my mom is against it. She says with junior college I'll only be "half baked."

So I applied to four four-year colleges and I got into three of them. I decided to go to Vermont College. My cousin had visited that school and he says the college looks really good with a real college life. Then I visited Vermont College. It is in the country and really beautiful. And two kids from my high school are students there and they love it. So off I go to Vermont College.

Chapter IX

Vermont College

I meet my roommate, Ellen. This whole experience is really scary. And all these books we have to read!

And then there are the boys—obnoxious. They see my picture in the catalogue and they call me up. Then if I go out with them all they want is to get into my pants whether I want to or not. And usually that's all I see of them, just once. One guy I was going out with three times and that was it. Until I met Carl.

Carl is different. He seems to care about me. That is, as much as someone can care about someone else. And I like him too. That is, as much as I can. I do not believe in love anymore.

Carl is the first boy I have sex with. It is in the back seat of his car. But it is weird. I don't feel a thing. I'm completely numb. What's going on? Are we having sex or not? Afterward I say to Carl, "What just happened?"

"Well," says Carl smiling, "as the saying goes, you just got laid."

But, I'm thinking, I'm not bleeding. Aren't you supposed to bleed the first time?"

Carl is OK. At least I don't have to deal anymore with the grotesque dating scene. We hang out together, study together, and make out together. The only thing I don't like is sex with him. But I do it anyway. And it hurts, really hurts. The first night I was numb and now it hurts.

My parents don't like Carl. But I am having a good time. I like the status of having a boyfriend. It makes me feel special. My father and Carl don't like each other. Each one has to be boss and there can only be one boss. I feel as if I'm part of a tug-of-war. I'm the rope and Carl and my father are tugging on opposite ends of me.

Then I'm thinking that maybe I should break off with Carl. This tug-of-war is just too stressful. If I mention breaking up to Carl, he accuses me of putting my father before him.

But I am intrigued by Carl. His life is so different from mine. I find this fascinating. He grew up on a family farm with ten brothers and sisters. And for grade school he attended a one-room schoolhouse.

Carl is good at studying. I'm having a little trouble with it but as time goes on I'm getting better and better at it. But my marks are not good. And my father is angry. He is angry that my marks are not good and he is angry that I'm going with someone he doesn't like.

But by the middle of the second semester things are starting to pick up and I'm enjoying school. I'm also getting tired of Carl. The novelty of going with Carl is starting to wear off. But I figure I'll stick it out with him until the end of the school year and start out fresh going out with other guys the second year of college. That way I don't have to deal with the grotesque dating scene again until next year.

Carl is also graduating this year and starting this summer will be working for his uncle down in Texas. He wants me to go with him to Texas. I'm not going but I don't say anything about that to him yet.

"Carl," I say when the school year is over and my parents are up at school to take me home, "I think we should break up. I don't want to go to Texas. I want to stay and graduate Vermont College."

"You are putting your father before me," says Carl angrily."

Then there is a long pause.

"You know," says Carl, "I'm going to help your parents pack your belongings into their car."

"No Carl. Don't do that."

"Yes, I'm going to help them."

"No don't," I say again

"I'm just going to help them," he says again.

He leaves me to go to the car while I finish packing some things together.

A little later while driving home my father tells me, "you're not going back to college next year."

"But I broke off with Carl," I say.

"It doesn't matter," he says.

"But why can't I go back to school?" I ask.

"Because," says my father, "I want you near me."

Chapter X

Secretarial School—

I don't like to think of myself as a drop-out or a failure—so I won't. I think of myself as going into my sophomore year of college. I'm going back to college someday. College isn't easy but it's satisfying to learn new things.

My mother starts saying to me, "You don't have to go to college. Not all girls go to college."

"Well, if I don't graduate college, I won't marry a man who graduated college."

"What!" says my mother all upset.

"Or maybe," I go on, "I won't get married to anyone."

"What!" says my mother even more upset."

"I'd like to apply to secretarial school," I say to Mom.

"Now that sounds like a good idea," she says.

So I apply to the American Secretarial School and I get in. I'm all excited. I'll now have a career. And if my parents won't send me to college, I'll work during the day and go to school at night. And if I save up enough money, maybe I can finish college going full time during the day.

Fortunately my father sends me to secretarial school. All the students are girls right out of high school and they are less mature than I am. However, I study hard and after seven months I graduate.

Now I'm beginning to wonder what I really want to do. All along I've been doing some pastel paintings while I was going to secretarial school. I need some more art supplies so I go to The Sunny Art & Frame Shop in my neighborhood where I've been going for years.

"Hi Gail," I say to the owner.

"Hi Lori-Ann."

"I just graduated from Secretarial School and I'll be looking for a job. I also want to go to college at night."

"Well, you've come to the right place Lori-Ann. I have a half-time position open. It involves sales and straightening up, but also some typing."

"That's wonderful Gail. I accept. And half-time is perfect. More time for my artwork and more time for school."

“Why aren’t you going away to school anymore? What happened? Weren’t you going to Vermont College?”

“Yes, I want to go, but my father won’t send me back.”

“Why not?”

“Don’t know exactly,” I say. “He is angry because my marks weren’t good and he didn’t like my ex-boyfriend.”

“That sucks. But that was smart of you to go to secretarial school. Now you can work here. By the way, you never showed me any of your artwork. I’d love to see it. Oh, would you be able to start work this coming Monday? It would be nine to twelve Monday through Saturday.”

“Gail, I’d love to. I’ll also bring in two or three of my pastel paintings for you to look at.”

“Great Lori-Ann.”

“Oh, Gail, I’d like to buy a few pastels. That’s what I came here for.”

“OK. Here are the boxes of pastels. Just pick out the colors you want.”

“Thank you.”

After I purchase the five pastels I want, we discuss the salary. I then go home.

“Hi Mom,” I say entering the house. “Guess what?! I got a job working at The Sunny Art & Frame Shop. My hours are nine to twelve Monday through Saturday. That will give me time to study when I go to school at night.”

“Your father will send you to school,” says Mom sternly. “But only if you’re serious. Only if you’re serious.”

What an attitude, I’m thinking. What am I supposed to do now—beg. I just walk out of the room. I’ll pay my own way. And at one point I should move out. But I can’t afford to right now and still pay for school, rent, food, and clothes. I don’t think I could even if I work full time. But we shall see. Oh well.

I’ll just finish the pastel painting I am working on. It’s a people-scape and I love it. I’ll show it to Gail on Monday along with “The Last Rose of Summer” painting I just finished. You know, I’m thinking, I work mainly in pastels and I love it. But I’d like to do more watercolor and acrylic.

It’s Thursday and Monday finally rolls around. I’m at The Sunny Art & Frame Shop a few minutes to nine.

“Hi Gail,” I say as she is unlocking the door to the shop.

“Hi Lori-Ann. You’re just in time to make a pot of coffee—first chore of the day.”

“OK,” I say.

So I make a pot of coffee and while it brews, start putting away things on the shelves in back of the store.

“Lori-Ann,” says Gail, let me show you how this cash register works. The prices for things sold are written on the shelves where they come from. But first let’s get our coffee.”

So Gail explains it all to me while we sip our coffee.

“Oh,” I say afterward, “I brought in two of my paintings you said you’d like to see.”

I get my paintings.

“Wow,” says Gail. “You really have talent. Oh, I need you to type up some forms for me. There is lots of stuff to type.”

“OK Gail. That’s what I’m here for.”

And I spend the rest of my work day typing. Before I leave Gail says to me, “Lori-Ann, please bring in more paintings that you’ve done. I’d love to see them. And why don’t you leave the two that you brought today here. We can frame them if you want to. I’ll give you a discounted price.”

“OK Gail. Thanks so much. See you tomorrow. Bye.”

You know, I’m thinking to myself while walking home, maybe I’ll wait with college. I have a job now. And I paint. In fact, after I get home and have lunch, I’m going straight to my painting. There are so many beautiful things to paint. Thank goodness for my camera. I now have some beautiful photos to paint from.

Chapter XI

The Artists—

The next day I feel as if I'm floating on air I'm so happy. I float to work with the new pastel painting I just did. I'm so proud of it.

"Hi Gail," I say walking into the store.

"Hi Lori-Ann. What's that you have? Another painting?"

"Yes Gail. And I'd like to frame this one."

"Let's see Lori-Ann...Oh, it's fabulous. We'll frame it and put it on the wall for sale. I have just the spot for it, next to the other paintings for sale."

"Oh Gail, I'm so happy."

"Good. Now after you make the coffee, please type up the stack of papers next to your typewriter."

"OK Gail."

I do just that and afterward I look at the paintings for sale including mine. They are all fabulous. And some of them are watercolor or acrylic. Both of which I'd like to work with. But it is twelve noon now and my work day is through.

"Oh Lori-Ann," says Gail, "tomorrow I'd like you to do some sales."

"OK Gail. See you then," and I walk home.

So I go home thinking of those five paintings Gail has up for sale. I have to learn a little more about acrylic and watercolor.

When I get to work the next morning, I'm doing sales. When no one is around, I do paperwork behind the counter.

"You know, Lori-Ann," says Gail, "if you want to learn more about artwork and branch out into other areas, I know a terrific artist who can mentor you. Her name is Sally. She comes here for supplies every week or two. I'll introduce her to you the next time she comes in."

Just then who walks in but Sally!

"Hi Sally," says Gail, "speaking of the devil."

"What are you saying about me now?" says Sally. "I did come here to buy some canvasses."

“Before you do,” says Gail, “meet Lori-Ann. She’s our new artist.”

“Hi Lori-Ann,” says Sally.

“Hi Sally,” I say.

“I was just mentioning to Lori-Ann,” says Gail, “that you may be able to mentor her.”

“Are you interested in art lessons, Lori-Ann?” asks Sally.

“Yes,” I say, “I’ve been doing pastel paintings. I’d like to learn watercolor and acrylics. And my pastel painting is on the wall over there.”

Sally walks over and looks at my painting.

“Lovely Lori-Ann,” she says. “I would love to give you lessons. When are you free?”

“I work nine to twelve Monday through Saturday. Otherwise I’m free”

“What about Wednesday, one to four, starting next week?” says Sally. “I live right nearby.”

“Great Sally,” I say.

“I’ll write down my address and phone number for you,” says Sally. “Do you want to start with acrylics?”

“OK,” I say.

“OK. I’ll also write down the art supplies you will need for the lessons. And you give me your address and phone number. And then I’ll find those canvasses that I need for myself.”

I am so happy for the rest of the day. And so happy for the person I’m creating myself to be.

I go home, have lunch, and then lie on the bed for a little while. I’m so exhausted from all the exciting experiences. I doze off...

“Daddy,” I say, “I want to be an artist.”

“Well,” says Daddy, “for the first ten years you will starve.”

“And then,” I say, “after the first ten years?”

“Then,” says Daddy, “you will get used to it!”

I wake up in a sweat. Wow! What a dream! Good thing I have that job at The Sunny Art & Frame Shop. And good things are happening...Good things are happening.

The next day I'm at work behind the counter. And who walks in—an adorable guy with black hair and blue eyes.

“Hello,” he says to me, “I'd like some help please...”

The End

TERRI

Dream Land

Here I sit

With paper and pen

Time, time

To write again

Again we see

Among the stars

The ruby red, red

Planet of Mars

Time to dream

Time to hope

Of what we can see

With our telescope

Alison and Terri

“Why can’t we all just get along?” Alison says. “Why can’t we all just get along? Are we bringing up our children not to get along? We do teach them to excel. Then there is competition. And with competition there are winners and losers. And everyone wants to be a winner.”

“I’m not a loser,” I say.

“Yes you are,” says Alison. “You flunked out of school.”

“I may have flunked out of school, but I didn’t flunk out of life.”

“Yes you did Terri,” says Alison. “You are not working; you are not going to school; you flunked out of life.”

“I’ll show them,” I say to myself. “I’ll show them who I am.”

Terri Growing Up

“Mommy, play Ring Around of Rosies with me,” I say from the other room while Mommy is in the kitchen.”

“OK,” says Mommy coming out of the kitchen and taking hold of my hands.

“Ring around of Roses. A pocket full of Posies. Ashes. Ashes. All fall down.” We sing going around in a circle and then falling down.

“Again Mommy. Again.”

“Ring around of Roses. A pocket full of Posies. Ashes. Ashes. All fall down.”

“Again Mommy. Again.”

“No,” says Mommy. I have to go into the kitchen.”

“OK Shnockles,” I say to my doll. “I’ll put you in this red wagon and I’ll wheel you around the house. Here we go—in and out all the rooms. And into the kitchen with Mommy. Here we go...”

“What are you doing Terri?” says Mommy. “I’m trying to fix food.”

“Here we go Shnockles. Whee, whee, whee.”

“Now stop this,” yells Mommy, grabbing for the strap.

Whip, whip, whip around my legs. Whip, whip, whip again.

It hurts but I laugh. Won’t let Mommy see that she’s hurting me. Whip, whip, whip.

Then I run away and hide in the closet, where no one knows I am. I don’t know what I did wrong. All I know is I’m bad.

I come out of the closet when I hear Daddy coming home. I go into the living room.

“Hello Daddy,” I say.

“Hello Terri,” says Daddy from across the room.

“How has Terri been?” says Daddy to Mommy.

“She’s driving me crazy,” says Mommy. “She’s driving me crazy.”

Mommy says that all the time to Daddy, all the time. The only time she doesn’t say that is at night after I’m in bed. Sometimes I look out my window at night. I see the stars. I know that red planet, Mars, is among the stars, the red planet, Mars. Mommy

says when I'm twelve years old she will send me to boarding school. I'd like to go to boarding school away on Mars, so I don't drive Mommy crazy anymore.
Mars...Mars...Mars...Mars...

Many Years Later-

Every night when I go to sleep, I've had the same dream for many years. I'm in a spaceship going to Mars. And every night the same thing happens—right before landing on Mars the spaceship explodes. It explodes into many pieces and then I wake up. So then I start pinching myself so I wake up right before the spaceship explodes. But I wonder, what are the Martians like? Are they nice? Would they like me?

One night I'm sleeping and I'm on that spaceship heading again for Mars. I start pinching myself as usual so I would wake up before the spaceship explodes. Only this time I don't wake up. And the spaceship doesn't explode. And I land on Mars.

Landing is completed and I find myself all alone in the spaceship on Mars. A door opens. And what's this? A giant green frog?

"Hello Terri. My name is Gorf."

"Gorf? How did you know my name?"

"That's for me to know and for you to find out. But don't worry. Everything will work out well."

"What am I doing here?" I ask.

"Would you like to go for a walk with me?" says Gorf.

"OK," I say.

So we leave the spaceship.

"Almost everything is red. And there is a red mist in the air," I say.

"Well," says Gorf. This is The Red Planet, Mars."

"What is this?" I ask as we pass an enclosure with many animals inside.

"This is a petting zoo. Let's go in. I know you love animals."

"How did you know that?!" I exclaim.

So we go inside and what do you know—a skunk, Petunia. And then I pet her. Then come the goats who are chewing on the bottoms of my pants' legs. And then a

turtle, Bondy. She even stuck her head out of her shell for me to pet. What a glorious day!

“Would you like to go eat now Terri?”

“How did you know I was getting hungry?”

“Because you usually eat around this time.”

“Gorf, how did you know that?”

“Let’s go,” says Gorf.

We walk to this beautiful café. We find seats and sit down.

“Would you like lasagna?” he asks. “I know it’s your favorite food.”

“How’d you know that? How do you know so much about me?”

The waitress comes and takes our orders—two lasagnas with two club sodas. I mention to Gorf that the waitresses here are all so pretty.

“And they all are actors,” says Gorf.

“Oh,” I say. “I waited tables last summer at a summer camp.”

“And the summer before also,” says Gorf.

“What!” I exclaim.

Then come the lasagnas, the best lasagna I’ve ever eaten.

“You know, Gorf, I’d like to study acting and be an actor.”

“You can do that,” says Gorf. “There are some fine acting schools both here on Mars and on Earth near you. And you can wait tables when you are not acting.”

We then finish eating.

“Now that we have finished,” says Gorf, “I’d like to show you my house. It’s just a short walk from here.”

“OK, Gorf,” I say.

So we take a short walk through the red mist on a path lined with red flowers and red leaves on either side.

“And voila,” says Gorf. “Here’s my house.”

“Oh what a cute little house,” I say. “And what’s that in front of it?”

“Oh that’s a telescope I use to see planet Earth.”

“Well that’s how you know so much about me. You’ve been spying on me.”

“No Terri, I’ve been admiring you. Let’s go inside.”

We walk inside the house. Gorf takes me for a tour of his lovely little house. When we get to the living room I say:

“Gorf, I must lie down for a while on your couch. I’m exhausted.”

“Please do,” says Gorf.

And that’s exactly what I do. But I don’t expect to fall asleep which I do. And when I open my eyes—what’s this? Where am I? I’m in my own bed in my own room. But now I have a mission in life. I will study acting and when I am not acting I will wait tables.

“What a dream,” I say to myself. “What a dream...What a dream...What a dream...”

The End

EPILOGUE OR MORE DEEP FEELINGS

MY WRITING

What to do

What to pursue

Jack of trades, a few

Master of two.

Take a bill

Cure an ill

And mask a problem

That stays there still.

Mistakes are blessings

In disguise

To learn from them

You are wise.

Here I am

With a pocketful of verse

All my thoughts

It could be worse.

I'll be who I am

Who I am, who I am

If you don't like it

I don't give a damn.

The spunky spine

We need to realign

Then you'll be fine

We do it all the time.

GLAD TO BE ME

Parent—

“You are bad
There is nothing you can do
To make me give
My love to you
There are times
That I may care
But you won’t get my money
This to you I swear
You’ll never change
People never do
You’re a crazy dunce
That’s you; that’s you.”

Child—

“However, however
If I’m the one you disown
I’ll still get what I want
I’ll just make it on my own—
It wasn’t easy
People used me
They were very nasty
And that confused me
But I finally did it
I have all that I love
You may not want me
But heaven does above
I have my daughter and my friends
And also one person more
He is everything to me
He is the one I adore
So I don’t need you
I’m now happy as can be
I now like who I am
And I’m glad to be me.”

MOTHER?

Mother if you don't want me
That's OK with me
I manage on my own
I've done it since I am three.

SCREW YOU

You do to me
What you want to do
With no explanation
Screw you. Screw you.

PLEASE

I tried to please you
It could not be
But I no longer need you
Because now I please me.

TOUGH SITUATIONS

Why did I stay
In tough situations
Where I was being
Hurt a lot?
First I knew
The devil I had
Second I thought
I deserved what I got
But things are different now
And how. And how
But things are different now
And how
But things are different now
Oh boy. Oh boy
But things are different now
Oh boy
“Those who sow in tears
Reap in joy, reap in joy
Those who sow in tears
Reap in joy.”

BELLE OF THE BALL

When I was tiny
Was the belle of the ball
Then came another
And he got all
But I was resourceful
With the deal I was dealt
And I did my very best
No matter how I felt
But there were times I was sick
And couldn't quite manage
And those were the times
People took advantage
But I played my cards well
In spite of it all
And now I'm again
The belle of the ball.

ANGEL OF FAILURE

Now I am here
To tell my story
To tell it as it is
And at what price glory
I tried and I tried
And I tried some more
But the Angel of Failure
Kept knocking at my door
The Angel of Failure says
“You think you will win
You think you will beat me
Then beat me again
You think you are blessed
You think you are great
You think you have it all
But just wait, just wait
The glory you seek
May come at a price
So whatever you do
Think twice, think twice

Fortune is handy
Success is nice
But they both are illusive
Think twice, think twice”
So Angel of Failure
You may knock at my door
But I’ll walk right by you
As I’ve always done before
I’ll walk right by you
And say with a grin
I’ll have my day of glory
And you can’t come in
I’ll lead the life
That I love the best
And you will be gone
At my request
So there it is
That is my story
And I no longer fear—
And I’m living my glory.

MOMMY, DADDY

Mommy, Daddy
Why'd you treat me this way
No opportunity
Cause I'm not OK
There's room in my head
For a lot more
Than you are giving me
Credit for
But I didn't sit back
And moan and moan
I did what I needed to
On my own
I got no help
I got no rest
But I managed to do
My very best
I did it all
In spite of a mate

Who treated me like
I am second-rate
But finally I'm free
And on my own
And reaping the products
That I have sown
I now have joy
I now have love
With all my friends
Sent from up above
My daughter is also
Special to me
And also my sweetheart
Through eternity
I now have life
With serenity
With my loved ones and friends
Surrounding me.



Deep Feelings
Way out of view
These Deep Feelings
Are they also in you?

The End