

A Fine Day

by Regina Glynn

Joe slowly lowered his lanky body onto the soft green grass. The morning dew dampened his clothes. He gently sighed, paused, then lifted his head to feel the softness of the sun's warming breath upon his face. Joe's eyes closed in pleasure as his hand reached across the new grass to feel the silky coat of his ever-present Beau. The hound knew comfort with his master and nudged his body closer until his long grey and white nose rested on Joe's knee.

The rising sun was sweetly warm and fresh. Truly it was a morning to sip and savor. Joe's conscience poked at him as he thought of the wood Ma wanted brought in. But wouldn't she be happier with some fresh fish for lunch? Once feeling justified, boy and dog settled comfortably at Black Pond for some carefree fishing.

Joe swung his crooked pole across the calm water and watched his strung worm fall softly into the barest ripple. The waves danced outwardly onto the pond. It was so quiet and peaceful; he could taste the freedom of solitude.



Joe had always been taller and shyer than anyone else in school. He felt somehow awkward and excluded. But as the oldest boy, he had responsibilities to his Ma. She depended on him. Today should not be any different, he thought guiltily.

He thought of yesterday at the post office, meeting Ginny. She had hardly noticed him at all in school. But there she was yesterday, looking up at him with such quiet eyes, deep, dark and still - like the pond. They had not

exchanged greetings. He felt himself blushing as he wondered what he must have looked like to the popular Ginny, always as happy as a springtime cricket.

Feeling a nibble on his line, Joe hoped it would be a big one. The fish was easily two pounds. Ma would be pleased.

Joe gently undid the hook from the fish's mouth and slid it into his pouch. Beau looked up expectantly, ready to march home, or preferably to settle back on the warm grass. Joe fondled the dog's neck for a brief instant. He received in return a wet kiss, just one, for Beau was a dignified old hunter not given to undo fuss.

Joe glanced out across the still water, and again thought of Ginn's dark eyes looking up at him, deep and quiet. His mind played with him. Could her eyes be suggesting an unspoken bond?

Joe laughed at his foolishness, feeling strangely excited, as if a great promise had suddenly been made to him. What a beautiful morning, he thought, glancing anew at the brilliantly green trees which somehow seemed just as happy as he.

As they came around the bend in the road, Joe could see his old house and Ma at the clothesline. Beau noticed the kittens coming out from under the house and ran ahead to "grandfather" them into being careful, like he always did. Ma was calling, her voice stern but not angry. "Joe, did you forget the wood you were goin' to bring in this mornin'? I had to send Jeremy so I could get the fire goin'."

Joe's eyes twinkled as he waved the fish: "Good, I reckoned Jeremy just might be next in line for that chore." Ma looked up at her sixteen-year-old, her first-born, all arms and legs like a colt. His eyes beamed straight at her. She saw the magic of the morning on her son's face. Hope smiled deep in her heart. Yes, it was going to be a fine day.