

A letter came from Uncle Stephen, promising to come visit in the late summer or fall, after an assignment he had for a newspaper in Canada. The best part was the postscript, "At that time I'll look at how Elizabeth is coming along with her drawing and painting. Maybe we can discuss art schools, if she's ready then."

"Look Mama, he thinks I might be ready for art school!"

Mama patted her hand. "How nice. But we can't even afford household help. I don't see how we could spend it on something as frivolous as sending you to art school."

Elizabeth tossed the letter on the table. "That's not fair. It's not frivolous."

"It is, if you're just going to get married in a few years anyway. You don't need art lessons to be a good wife and mother."

"Maybe I won't get married," Elizabeth blurted out.

Mama dropped the mending in her lap and gave her a look. "Of course you will. All respectable young ladies get married."

"Well maybe my husband will let me continue my studies, and I'll become an artist too." She thought James would let her pursue her art, if they got married.

Mama shook her head. "That's poppycock. No man wants his wife to be a professional artist. Maybe I let my brother spend too much time with you when you were little, to fill you with such ideas."

"I'm glad I know Uncle Stephen, and there's nothing wrong with women journalists and artists. They will be much more common in the future."

Mama patted her hand. "Not in our lifetimes. The world doesn't change that quickly. Better for you if you accept what is, and live with it, than try for impossibilities."

Elizabeth ran upstairs to her bedroom. Her own mother didn't believe in her hopes and dreams. How could she get Papa, or anyone else, to listen to her?