

They clambered into the trees. It was warmer twelve feet up where the leaves were thick. Josiah's orchard was an island of apples, isolated.

"Do we get paid by the hour or by the bushel?" Matt asked.

"You'll get a bonus with your next allowance," Dad said from a McIntosh tree. "Maybe it would be best to spread out the bonus for a month."

Vivvy yelled "Yay!" This sounded more generous than Dad had ever been. She had tied a net into a basket on a branch and it already had eight apples in it. When she came down from the step ladder, Matt was straddling a branch on the next tree. He shimmied down the tree and actually steadied the ladder for Vivvy.

Vivvy was thinking about the word *woodwind* as a breeze came through the leaves. Her flute was a woodwind instrument. When she reached for a cluster of apples though, she remembered how Mr. Fortray held his baton under her wrist, forcing her to keep it high. Fierce as jazz, he said, "Aren't you strong enough to hold a flute up?"

She and the other girls burst out giggling. Mr. Fortray crabbed, "Gigglers might as well give up! It takes more air to play a flute than it takes to play a trumpet. Only a sliver of your air goes into the flute. Most of it goes into the air. Flute players need to have lungs like athletes." Vivvy felt the air that the trees sifted in Josiah's orchard, feeling strong as a tree there and that her flute was like a branch.

They had their picnic lunch under a McIntosh tree.

"We didn't see a Golden Grimes tree last year," Matt said.

"Josiah said it's at the back of the orchard. I didn't want to drag the bushel baskets so far," Dad answered.

"I know. I'll go find it," Matt said. "I'll put the apples in the picnic tablecloth."

Vivvy was shaking crumbs out the tablecloth when Matt took it and headed for the lane.

"C'mon Vivvy. We'll pick at a tree farther down the lane," Dad said.

They looked through the trees and saw Matt zigzagging across the path.

"I suppose he'll want better pay for yellow apples," Dad said.

While Dad set the stepladder at a laden McIntosh tree, Vivvy kept an eye out for Matt. Matt would have loved to be in the orchard with his friends, pitching apples or playing Tarzan. And if it were summer, he'd like to fill all the baskets with green apples. He swapped green apples with Rally Noyes just to impress him. When Rally had to admit that he liked them better than store apples, Matt said that he was going to grow apple trees someday. So that he could harvest green apples.

"He's been talking about growing his own apple trees someday," Vivvy said as she caught McIntoshes. "I can't see him."

She ran out to the lane where she saw Matt in the whorled grass near the Northern Spy tree. He was probably searching for a windfall. As Vivvy ran to him, she saw that he had something in his hands.

"Matt, you're not supposed to go near that tree."

"The sign says to stay off the Northern Spy. You're just scared of snakes. I'm not."

"You've got an apple."

Matt waded out of the grass.

"Look at this Northern Spy," he said.

It must have been a windfall, brown on one side and marked with wormholes like blackheads. Vivvy jumped when she heard a bird in another tree. Then Matt threw the windfall at the nearest overhanging branch and watched the leaves ruffle.

Something fell in the grass. And then something else fell.