

Adventures in McCloudland

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Chapter 24

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A couple lived across the street from the back of the hotel. The woman had come over the day I first arrived and brought a paper plate piled high with fresh apples from her yard, wrapped in cellophane, and finished with a bow. It was very sweet and I was happy to know someone in the immediate area.

Theirs was one of the company houses. This one is pink with a giant, steeply pitched roof which seems larger than the house. But what made it special was the assortment of stuff in their front and side yards, including a bus-like RV. Her husband, Roger, loved to be outdoors and would spend hours out there in any weather, all bundled up, keeping busy.

Late one afternoon it started to snow. I had been looking forward to the first snowfall for some time. I had never lived where it snowed and wasn't sure what to expect. I had decided, though, that whatever it brought in the way of inconvenience, I'd just sort of go with it. I have this silly little city car that will act like a snow plow in anything over two inches, so I know I'm not going to go to the store or anywhere else. I would assume this mantle of calm. Accept Mother Nature and make the best of it.

I was at the window most of the night watching it come down in the light of the street lamp on the corner. I went through the icebox of a lobby to see if it looked any different out front. I wished desperately that Lee could have been here for this. It was beautiful.

By morning we had several inches and it was still snowing. Roger was up early, bundled up with hat, face mask, gloves and layers of clothing. Every inch of him was covered. He was shoveling the snow from the stairs, walk and around his car. He kept shoveling and it kept coming down. "How silly," I thought. He's truly compulsive. I'm not going to get out there and get all frantic and fight the snow. Like Tommy Smothers, I'd just achieve a state of "Yo." Mellow out.

It snowed all morning. Roger shoveled all morning.

It continued snowing hard in the afternoon. Roger continued shoveling.

By evening I couldn't see my car. It didn't matter. I didn't need anything.

Early the next morning, I was bolted awake by an earthquake. It rumbled from end of the building to the other. But when I saw the huge snow plow come around the corner to the back I figured it out. It moved a continuous mountain of snow up to my car and over it. In front of the hotel it had moved another mountain right up over the sidewalk and onto the front porch steps and on the grassy area. The huge pile was inches from the hotel.

Roger was at it again, but this time he had a new challenge; several feet of piled-up snow right where he had been shoveling all day yesterday. Silly man.

The following day when the snow had stopped, Roger and his wife walked out onto their cleared porch and walkway, got in the car and headed out.

I couldn't see my car. I couldn't even tell where it had been.

"Oh well. It will melt by tomorrow and everything will be fine."

The next day Roger hollered from across the street, "Would you like to borrow my shovel?"

"I guess I might as well, thanks." I carefully found the six steps down the porch, high-stepped where I hoped the walk had been and struggled to climb over the huge long stack of snow and accepted his shovel. I poised the huge shovel over the pile and gave it a mighty push. It made a sickening clanging sound and bounced off the pile.

It was no longer snow, but solid ice. I couldn't even make a dent in it. It was a week before we could get my car out.

A few weeks later it snowed all night. I got up fairly early, got bundled up, waved at Roger across the street and began shoveling.