

## Chapter II

### The Placid Stream

Munching the remains of my apple left from lunch, I sat on the back steps waiting for Dave. Such a day! Tomorrow I would start work, beginning with the brambles. I certainly couldn't budge the huge stump overturned in the middle of the bramble heap. With its roots uplifted it looked like a monster grasping for its prey. Construction litter, matted with vines, piled up around it. Surely I had a job ahead and very little money. I was glad utilities wouldn't be much during the summer. This year's insurance was paid and interest on the bank loan wasn't due again until after my next quarterly dividend check. In the meantime, I'd have to stretch every nickel to do a quarter's work. More reason to hurry with my retreat.

Suddenly a small brown rabbit, leaping through a clump of vines, landed not far from me where, except for his twitching nose, he froze. Possibly he came as a reception committee from my woodland neighbors, or more likely he wanted a handout. Offering the remains of the apple, I started toward him. Like a streak he was off through the thicket in the direction of the stream. Without thinking, I went after him. I had gone only a few steps when the matted vines and briars wrapped around my ankles, tearing at my clothing and skin. I had lost sight of bunny, but I might as well push on now for a good look at the stream. As I neared it, the tangled growth lessened and I came out into a fairly clear space.

Glad to be free, I sank down on the bank, trying to get the briars out of my arms and legs. Again under the spell of the woodland, I watched the little brook move along in its friendly way. At times it rippled over pebbles clustered in its path, at others it widened into still pools where it lingered restfully. In the distance, half submerged in the middle of the stream, a huge rock humped up like the back of an elephant. There the water separated and each part came racing

through the narrowed bed.

Thoughts of many past things surged into my mind. What had prompted me as a child to roam by myself through the woods around our home? Queer for a member of a large family to go off alone like that.

Later, why did little country lanes seem to beckon me to leave the paved highway and go exploring? Another wish of mine had been to visit some quiet resort where I could spend possibly a week or two alone in my room. At one time friends dissuaded me from buying a remote mountain cabin with a wooded acreage which I felt would satisfy this strange urge. I wasn't unhappy, yet I felt I had some important mission to fulfill alone.

Several years ago I summed up such feelings in a little poem which may have been prophetic:

Dear Lord, I do not care for show.  
It's your own dear self I want to know.  
Will you come some day to my quiet brook  
That ripples through a woodland nook,  
And speak to my heart in that quiet place?  
It's there I often seek your face.  
I don't belong to the Golden Town,  
My heaven is here. You've moved it down.

The poem was called "The Golden Town." In the first part of it, I expressed disapproval of the picture often associated with heaven as a kind of glorified Disneyland, entered through pearly gates, its interior embellished with jewels and glitter.

My idea of heaven then and now, I mused, is the kind of place I have right here! If I insert an "e" in "Havenwood," look what I get, "Heavenwood." And that's what it is to me here beside my stream—my long-sought sanctuary!

As I sat there, I thought:

I like the way the sunbeams slant through the leaves on the limb over me and break up to go dancing on the ripples of the water below. Some of the dogwoods along the bank lean over, with their branches drooping down to the water's level for the convenience of the birds that come for their dip. That gives me a thought. The birds are creatures of the air; sunshine is warm like fire. This is a meeting



place, kind of a center of the world, where the four basic elements—water, fire, earth, and air—all meet and interblend. In a place where all phases of creation mingle, certainly the force that brought them forth and sustains them must also be present.

Although my friends think I am too old for a new undertaking, I don't feel old, certainly not here. By what scale do they weigh my needs or abilities? Years are the way we measure time. What measure is there for the thing inside that makes the human clocks keep ticking? Certainly not birthdays. I may be as old as creation or as young as the early morning.

Here the trees arch overhead like a cathedral—one without bolts and locks or a wall and a roof. My mind seems open, too; its movement is without restraint, no shutting in or out. No wonder it seems more like church than church itself. How many times have I sat in a church filled with human beings, all like cocoons wrapped tight in the web of fine apparel, woven at the price of their toil and sweat. Will we someday emerge like these butterflies flitting here among my flowers? Light, airy creatures, they are exquisite enough to be considered as symbols of our souls, as I have heard they are.

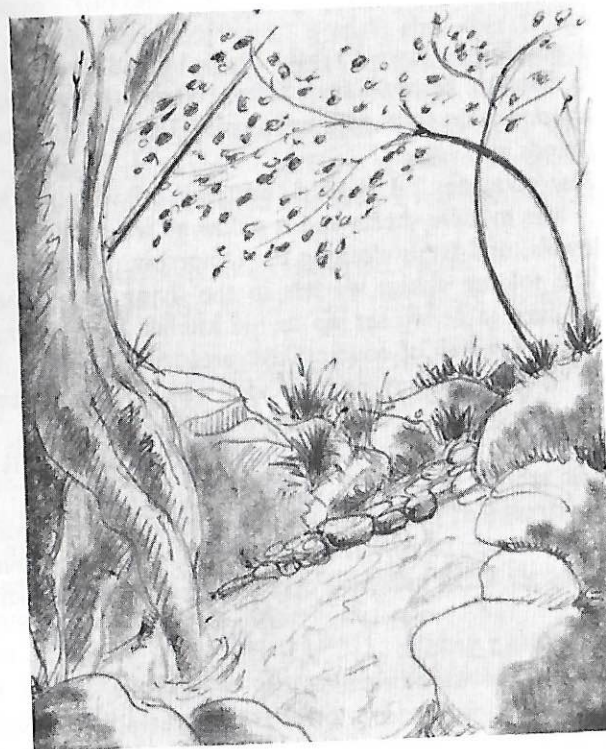
I wish preachers would tell us about that instead of dry old subjects like the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. But maybe they are the same story. Yes, the sea held back. The people were free. God was leading them to the promised land. Only they had to wait. . . . So does the butterfly. . . . So should we, quietly wait.

Maybe the same story is written everywhere: in the cocoon, the story of the Red Sea, Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tales, and those a poet speaks of as "a center of truth," or "Imprisoned Splendor." Whatever term we use, it sounds as if a sealed package, very precious, addressed to us, waits for each to claim his own.

I expect to find mine here beside this placid stream. It bestows what I need. These plants, like "lilies of the field," do not toil. They are not worried about growing. They give themselves to life and, from its abundance, life rewards them.

The stream does not fret, but flows as easily over the pebbles as on the smoother bed. When it comes to an object it cannot go over, it passes around it and stops at a quiet pool to rest. And yet it is not without purpose. Some day it will mingle with the ocean. On its way it has cut deep banks for nature to adorn.

Today, I make a pact with my stream—each with our wilderness to transform.





### Chapter III

## Solitaire Played with a Partner

I hurried across the lawn to help Dave unload his car. As he handed me a suitcase, he exclaimed, "Hey! What's the matter?"

I must have looked a sight with my tousled hair and snagged dress, my clawed hands and legs.

"Just a few scratches," I replied, hurrying off with my luggage, happy that I was to have sheets and a pillow as well as soap, a wash cloth and towels, and fresh clothing for tomorrow.

Two of the folding chairs we left in the living room, the other two with the card table we set up in the kitchen for the first meal in my new home—which of course Dave prepared. I hoped to learn to cook soon, but to date my prize recipes were fudge and heavenly hash, a confectionery concoction mixed with whipped cream.

Between bites of luscious steak, I exclaimed, "My, this is good! You can stick around as cook."

"Is that a permanent offer?" Dave asked with his eyes twinkling. He should smile more often. It lightened the tightness around his thin lips and the set of his pale blue eyes staring through horn-rimmed glasses.

"No. It's not leap year."

"You don't have to wait for that."

He felt safe. I had first known Dave twenty years before, when he had audited some of my father's accounts. He had stayed in our South Carolina home at the time and since then had come and gone like a member of the family. Loyalty to my family had prompted his services to me ever since.

"How did things go today?" he asked.

"Hectic."

"Didn't Trapp finish what he was supposed to do?"

"He didn't show up until the last minute. I was glad to get to Mr. Gantry's office at all. Then you should have heard the names Trapp called me because I refused to let him break our contract."

"You should have let him. There are plenty of other houses for sale, and it might be better for you to look around."

"Not when I've found what I want."

After our supper things were cleared and put away, out on the porch, again Dave noticed my ankles. "Those scratches look mighty deep. Aren't you afraid they'll get infected?"

"I've already doctored them," I said, glad that I didn't have to confess having used my built-in first aid, a saliva-moistened Kleenex out by the stream.

"You haven't been trying to cut that matted stuff, have you?"

"Not yet, but I hope you've brought Mother's grass hook."

"Yes, I did. But you'd need a sickle. Even then I'd hate to tackle it."

"I don't want anybody to do it for me, Dave."

"Maybe not, but what would your father say about his daughter working like that?"

"He didn't object to my going into the Women's Land Army during the war."

"To pick a few beans and things other people had cultivated. But this clearing! Look at those brambles—taller than you are, as far back as you can see. It's too hard for a fragile little person like you. You'll have to get a man to do it for you."

"I can't. Now that I've put everything I have into the house, it's up to me to economize."

"You must have some income."

"Not much. I sold most of my stock for the down payment. The bank holds the rest as security."

"What are you talking about? Didn't a finance company handle your mortgage for you?"

"I didn't want a mortgage. My sister Emily and her husband lost their home when they couldn't meet their payments during the Depression. I have it fixed so I can't lose as long as I keep up with the interest."

Dave shook his head dubiously.



"Don't worry, Dave. This way I can pay off the principal as I am able. In the meantime I'll get dividends of about a thousand dollars on the securities the bank holds."

"A thousand dollars!" Dave exclaimed with relief. "Great Scott! With that much a month you certainly don't have to work like a farm hand."

"A month?" I hardly dared add the rest, "I mean in a year, Dave."

His blood pressure was up again, "A thousand a year!"

"Not quite that much. I suppose it will be a little over eight hundred dollars."

"Eight hundred dollars is less than seventy dollars a month—just a drop in the bucket when it comes to running a house. . . . Besides the usual expenses there are all kinds of emergencies. You might get awfully sick. You might break your leg. . . ."

"Hush! All kinds of things could happen, but I don't believe they are going to. I've thought through this and have made my plans."

"Are you going back to teaching?" he asked hopefully.

"Not that, but something much better, when I get my retreat going."

"Retreat? I wish you would tell me what this retreat you talk about really is."

Since Dave's religion seemed to be a kind of casual relationship with God, I began cautiously, "I thought you knew. It's a place where people can get away and read." Knowing that Dave's reading was somewhat limited, I hurried on, "and think."

"Why can't they do that at home?" he muttered.

I had intended to say, "about God, and where we have daily devotions," but he burst out, "Well, let them go to the beaches, to a resort, sit on a stump somewhere. There are thousands of places. Beck, why don't you give up this crazy idea and take a nice little apartment somewhere?"

"An apartment! Umph!"

"Once you get a notion, it would take a tornado to change you. But I can't see why you must wreck your health, lose your dignity, and pauperize yourself!"

Rather than argue further, I called Dave's attention to the thrushes' songs that filled the woods with their rapture. "Think of always having that for my evening serenade."

The full rich notes faded into what sounded like contented "good-nights," as dusk gradually became cloaked by night, the blackness soon studded with stars.

Preparing to go, Dave stood up, "You do love it, don't you?" I nodded. "You are taking on a job, and you shouldn't be out here alone."

"I won't be for long. I'm inviting my sister, Lee, to come for a visit."

"That's fine, if it won't rush you too much to get ready for her."

"I won't move my furniture out from Mother's until I finish the improvements. Tomorrow a man is bringing my sewing machine and old Maytag washer along with my chaise longue he has upholstered."

"Your sister can't sleep on that."

"No. She'll have a suite of furniture I'm having sent from South Carolina with some other things. Just wait until I get my chickens together. It won't be bad. Just give me a little time."

Still doubtfully, "Well, you know what you are doing."

As he rose to go, I stood beside him, "Thank you, Dave, for all your help."

Again he cautioned, "Better look out for those scratches. Don't you think you should wear hose?"

"Sure, Dave, old ones. But skin will grow back and a pair of hose won't." He wasn't in a joking mood so I said consolingly, "Don't worry, Dave. Everything will be fine!"

From across the yard he called back, "I forgot to tell you, the telephone company says they will install your phone in a few days."

Good old Dave! A wonderful friend. My family often acted as though they would like to welcome him into the clan, but I held no illusions. Our tastes were too divergent. For real compatibility there would have to be a meeting of minds. Solitaire played with a partner for life was not for me, even if Dave wanted to marry me, which he did not.

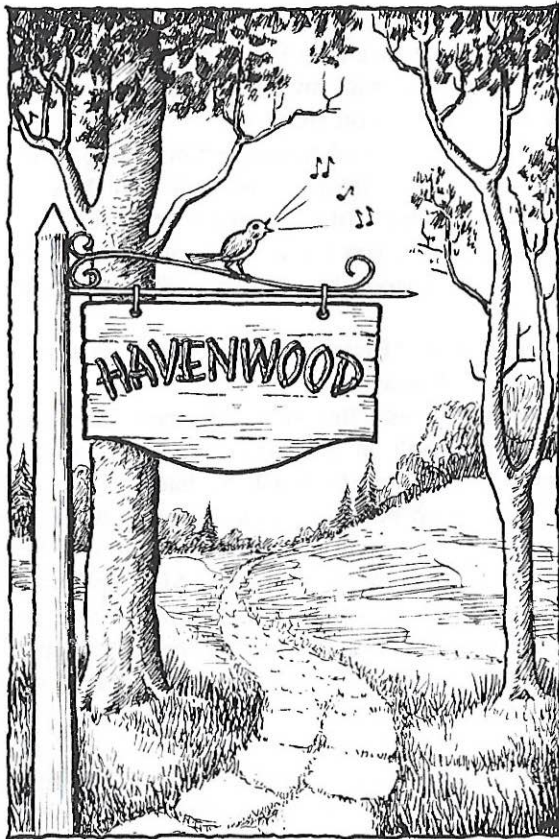
Long after the sound of his car had died away, I stood gazing at the stars, which seemed close enough to touch, then out toward the stream. I was alone in my wilderness, yet not so much alone as I had felt with Dave's chair close to mine on the porch and a chasm of noncommunication between us.

After fastening the door and turning out the lights, I went to my



room and got ready for bed—my first night at Havenwood.

A refreshing breeze blew over me, cradled in my cot, and I stretched as if to encompass my holdings. The impenetrable darkness seemed alive with sounds of the woodland chorus. Lulled by them, I slept, blissful in the consciousness that Havenwood was mine.



## Chapter IV

### Problems Begin

I wakened itching from head to foot. That quiet hour I had spent beside my stream had been in a nest of poison ivy. A foolish thing to do, but poison ivy isn't fatal. Later there were times when I almost wished it were. My problem was to find something soothing to use. A weak solution of Clorox eased the irritation so that I could dress, have breakfast, and write to Lee.

While I was trying to find a place out front where the postman could pick up my letter, I was surprised to see an attractive-looking woman sauntering up my walk. Introducing herself as Mrs. Cox, one of my neighbors, she presented me with a beautiful bunch of roses, fresh from her garden. In a pastel-blue house dress, her dark hair becomingly styled, and with the vital glow of one who spent much time in the open, she could have modeled for a garden magazine. Thanking her for the roses, I invited her in, and hastily put the flowers in the only container I could find, an empty milk bottle.

"Roses certainly dress things up," I said as I sat down near her. "You can see that I am kind of camping."

"You have a nice place. I noticed it while they were working on it."

"Thanks. I have a lot to do to get it in shape, inside and out."

"Are you all alone?"

"For the present. I hope to have my sister with me soon."

"You certainly will need help, with a place this large."

I said, "All the lots around here seem to be very deep."

"Yes, they are. I wonder if you have heard of our area being made into a development, because of that?"

"A development?"

"There seems to be some contractor who wants to buy off half our lots at the back and. . . ."

"But that's what I like about my place! And how could anyone build when there's no street back there?"

"I suppose he would use the alley. You know, of course, that there is an easement down the side of your lot. At the back it joins one that goes behind all our homes up to Lee Highway."

"Yes. I saw it on the plat of the Rixey Estates, but Mr. Trapp said it didn't amount to anything, that they aren't making alleys any more."

"But they are making streets. It might not be a bad idea."

"Oh, no!" I gasped.

In a different tone she continued, "My husband will have to move his tool shed then. He has it on the alley."

"Then it is all right to use the alley? Mr. Trapp said it is, but. . ."

"Certainly. Nearly everyone has it fenced in. My husband wouldn't want to move his tools, but it may be necessary. I hope you don't mind the noise his power saw makes."

I replied lightly, "Not unless it drowns out the thrushes' songs."

I liked Mrs. Cox and hoped we would be friends. I had admired her brownstone house with its wide frontage, which Mr. Trapp had pointed out to me one day. I wanted to ask her more about the street, but the young couple who had met Trapp at the title company office the day before had now come to the door, asking if I had seen Mr. Trapp around. They were Melba Winters, a pleasant-looking young blonde, and her husband, Roy, whom I immediately felt I would like to have for neighbors.

As they came in to wait for Mr. Trapp I said, "You probably know I have just moved here, and this is Mrs. Cox, a neighbor. She has given me quite a blow. She says some developer is talking about making a street through my property."

"Where would it go?" Roy Winters asked.

"Down the alley easement," I explained.

"And on up to the highway, behind all our places," Mrs. Cox added.

Melba Winters said, "How terrible! But we're lucky, Roy."

"I'll say," her husband agreed. "The Lord must look after newlyweds. Miss Dial, it would go right by your kitchen door, wouldn't it?"

"She'd have a few feet," Mrs. Cox countered.

"Not many. I'll show you." They followed me to the porch and I

pointed to where the sod ended, "That's my line there, where the grass stops."

"Whew!" Roy Winters whistled, "that's not more than nine feet from your house."

His wife exclaimed, "Think of having cars go whizzing by that close at all times of the day and night. There'd be no privacy. Roy, we couldn't have stood it!"

"They might as well come on through my living room," I agreed.

"Some drunken driver might do it, too," Mr. Winters said wryly.

"For protection you could put up a very high fence with a hedge inside it, and there'd still be room for a walk between it and the house," Mrs. Cox suggested.

Of course, I was thinking about my retreat. If I couldn't explain it to my best friends, I certainly wouldn't try to make strangers understand it, but with the stream fenced off my project could amount to nothing. Suddenly thinking I had a solution, I exclaimed, "They couldn't make a street out there. With the creek, there's not room for one."

"They would probably tile the stream in." Winters' reply made my spirits drop.

"But, Roy, the stream was why we wanted to buy the place, and the trees. . ."

"What does cutting a few trees mean to anyone who wants to make a street?" Roy asked.

I knew the truth of what he said.

Mrs. Cox tried to comfort me, "Of course, there may be nothing to it."

Feeling like a collapsed balloon, I led the way back into the living room.

When she was leaving Mrs. Cox offered to mail my letter, explaining that postal regulations required us to have metal boxes nailed to the wall.

As she started out the door, I asked, "Mrs. Cox, do you know who that developer is?"

"I'm sorry if I have disturbed you. It may be just a rumor," she answered and was gone.

"Why did she have to tell me such a thing? Is it really true? Do you think it could be Mr. Trapp? My questions spilled over to the Winters.



"We certainly wouldn't want the house next door, if the lots were cut in half and a street put back there," Winters said.

"We wanted this place because of the stream and the woods around it," Melba said again. "Your changing your mind certainly saved us."

"Changing my mind? What do you mean?"

"Mr. Trapp told us you expected to cancel your option, so we were there yesterday ready to take it over," Mr. Winters explained.

His wife went on in girlish fashion, "Were we surprised when in you walked with Mr. Trapp!"

"I think Mr. Trapp was pretty sore, because we had made him a better offer."

Now I understood. For days Trapp had done everything possible to exasperate me to the point of breaking our contract, so he could accept a higher offer. Yesterday he had tried to force me to do it.

Suddenly I saw him standing in the doorway and knew that he had heard our conversation. "Come in, Mr. Trapp. Mr. and Mrs. Winters are waiting for you."

Mopping his brow nervously, he tried to cover his embarrassment. He floundered for an explanation, "Miss Dial, I hope you understand that you were mixed up about the price."

"Really? Was I the one mixed up?"

I wanted the Winters for neighbors. Berating Trapp before them would do no good, so I denied myself the pleasure. However, I did ask him about the street.

"Street?" He seemed nonplussed.

"We have just heard that a developer is planning to put a street through here," Roy Winters explained.

"I know nothing about it. For the present I am working on a development on the other side of town."

"For the present? What then?" I snapped.

"I have no plans," he said curtly, then hurried out with the Winters.

My mental turmoil hadn't helped the ivy rash. I decided I must get some medicine for it immediately, also a mailbox. I expected a notice about the truckload of things from South Carolina any day. The postman might have it today. I'd put up something temporary, just in case he stopped. Hastily emptying my Kleenex box, I taped it to the wall with a placard underneath saying, "Mail box." It might not be up to specifications, but no one could mistake its purpose. Dis-

regarding the temperature, which was in the nineties, I started on my errands.

At the drugstore I bought a pinkish liquid which the pharmacist said would do the work if I kept the eruption dry and stayed out of the sun. That meant I'd just have to stand it until I finished my errands and could get home. Then an application relieved the torment somewhat.

The postman had passed me by. Maybe the contraption had to be nailed up, as Mrs. Cox had said. Well, I was ready for him. I hadn't forgotten a thing, not even the hammer. I had no idea how hard the wall was until I began whamming away, getting nowhere except mashing my thumb. Having used up my bag of nails without success, I was ready to welcome even Trapp as he came up the walk with a colored man, whom I knew must be John, his helper. This stocky Negro later proved equal to any task. Mr. Trapp had brought him now to finish the things that needed to be done. Since the mail box wasn't on the list, I was amazed when he told John to start with it. With the right kind of nails, which they had in the car, John fastened the box in place before I knew what was happening.

With the same deftness, he replaced the window pane, corrected the faulty chimney flue, and finished everything else except putting the second coat of paint on the porch banisters and covering the upstairs louvres. Evidently this was Trapp's way of making amends, and I willingly accepted it.

However, when Trapp blamed me for spoiling his sale of the property next door by telling the Winters about the street, I said, "If you have any plans for future development of this area, the Winters and I should know about it."

"Miss Dial, why would I sell these houses with 240-foot lots and then have to buy half of them back?"

"It does sound crazy," I said with a sigh of relief.

"Just the same, it doesn't mean that some other fellow won't think it is a darn good idea and go after it. . . ."

The gnawing anxiety again! If only it could be relieved by bandages and lotions as easily as the scratches and poison ivy eruption and the squashed thumb. But this pain went too deep.

That evening, by the time Dave had finished lecturing me for getting myself so involved, I felt even worse. He did say, however,



Mr. Marsh hastily explained, "I would be glad to plant them for you, but I'm a little rushed today with appointments to demonstrate my new model vacuum cleaner."

By holding on to the door knob, I managed to keep pressure off the worst rocks as he launched into a lengthy recital about the wonders of his product.

Trying not to seem too abrupt, but with an air of finality that sent him on his way, I said, "I wouldn't think of detaining you today, Mr. Marsh. Another time, maybe."

From his car, he called pleasantly, "The plants should be set out at once, don't forget."

But more important matters demanded my attention. An Eastern Transportation van, looking like a mountain on wheels, was stopping out front. The best I could do for the plants just then was drag them to a shady spot under my outside spigot.

As soon as I paid the driver, he unbolted the doors and began unloading my treasures: the suite of furniture for my sister's room, with odd pieces to be used elsewhere; a Hollywood bed; a platform rocker and some tables and chairs; three trunks, reminders of my mother, brother, and baby sister; and last, two chairs, one a small rocker, a relic of my babyhood, and the sturdy porch rocker that had belonged to Father. The trunks I had carried to the basement, the furniture helped to fill my empty rooms.

A Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company truck pulled up just as the transportation van was leaving. My telephone! After I had showed the serviceman where I wanted the phone installed, at last I attended to my suffering feet and ivy eruption. As soon as the young man left, I dropped on my cot, exhausted from the day's activities.

The sound of my telephone ringing awakened me. When I answered it, Mrs. Masters, a pleasant neighbor, told me that she and several others had an appointment with a lawyer that evening to see what he could do about closing our alley. Would I care to come to her home about seven-thirty to go to his office with them?

Here was the lawyer I needed! To calm my excitement I sought a Biblical tranquilizer. Joshua 1:9, the verse to which I opened, sounded like a personal letter postmarked from heaven. It read, "Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage, be

not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord, thy God, is with thee."

Three other neighbors went with Mrs. Masters and me to Lytton Gibson's office. As the study-looking young lawyer puffed away on his pipe, he explained that to vacate an alley such as ours, the title of each lot had to be searched to establish the present ownership. He said he could have a member of his staff do that, after which he would draw up a petition for vacating the alley. This we would have to get all the property owners to sign, about twenty-six in all.

Since each owner would acquire at least one thousand square feet of land, it seemed there should be no objections. We still had a great deal to learn. Mr. Gibson held the members of our committee responsible for the legal fee, indeterminate at the time. The fact that I had found a lawyer and that others were helping to get the alley closed was all that mattered to me just then.

However, I was stunned at other information Mr. Gibson gave me. Only half of the thirty-foot alley easement went with my property; that is, I could claim only fifteen feet adjoining my land and the owner on the other side of the alley would have the remainder. It was logical. Why hadn't it dawned on me before?

None of the group knew who owned the land beyond mine. Again Trapp came to my rescue when he brought the ever-faithful John to help me the next day. Trapp had bought the land for his houses from the Rucker Realty Company in Arlington, who still owned the tract beyond mine. The company was under the management of Mr. Ashton Jones and his sons.

When John stepped off the measurements for me, the results were worse than I expected. My fifteen feet of the alley didn't even touch the stream; the entire thirty feet went to only about the middle of it. None of the stream belonged to me—not even a ripple.

I didn't blame Trapp. Neither did I confide in him. This was my bungle and I must try to remedy it at once. A strip of twenty additional feet would include the stream with a few feet beyond, giving me claim to it and all of the alley. My one hope was that Rucker's would sell me that much at a reasonable price. Otherwise, I might as well give up my whole project.

The next morning when I walked into the roomy office of the Rucker Realty Company, which was buzzing with activity, I needed



to recall Joshua 1:9 again. Even then I quavered as I asked Mr. Ashton Jones, Jr., about selling me the twenty-foot strip. While he was in the next room talking it over with another member of his firm, I kept praying for success. Soon Mr. Jones came back with news that they could not sell me the strip.

Desperately trying to devise some way to induce them to change their minds, I almost missed the rest of his statement, "But we have decided we will let you have fifty feet, if you care to consider it."

"Care to consider it?" I wanted to shout—but the price? A lot 260 feet by 50 feet would probably cost thousands. When he said I could have it for seven hundred and fifty dollars I must have gasped. Before he had a chance to change his mind, I agreed to the purchase. One of the bonds I had been hoarding for finishing upstairs would pay for it.

Just as I started to sign our contract, Mr. Jones gave me another shock. He supposed I knew that a sanitary sewer line ran diagonally across the tract I was buying. It accounted for the low price they were asking, because it made the area worthless for building. But for me the extra fifty feet was priceless. Thanking Mr. Jones for telling me about it, I completed the transaction.

That was the beginning of my long-drawn-out struggle to retain the natural beauty around me—a struggle that would continue for many years, taxing all my resources and before which I might have weakened had I known all that I would encounter.

## Chapter VI

### Visitors Welcome and Unwelcome

My sister Lee had accepted my invitation. How I wished she would like Havenwood well enough to make it her home! With some apprehension I set about trying to make it as attractive as possible for her. I was most concerned about getting the musty odor out of the old furniture in her room. Every day for a week I carried the drawers and all removable parts out for sunning. But for John, my ebony angel, I never would have gotten the mattress outside. When Mr. Trapp came to pick up John one Tuesday afternoon, he asked if I would help him out next day by taking care of a couple who were interested in the house next door.

"I'm sorry I forgot the key," he explained, "but since the arrangement of the houses is the same, I feel it will be all right with Andy Jones if you'll let him see yours."

With no idea of what I was undertaking, I agreed.

That evening a telegram came from Lee saying she would arrive early Thursday morning. She also gave information of when and where to meet her at the Union Station. With only one day for final preparations, I was up early Wednesday morning and before breakfast had vacuumed and dusted, buffed the floors and made the beds, Lee's with my best hand-crocheted spread.

I was ready for Trapp's couple when a little later I answered my buzzer. A whole family stood on my porch. The muscular-looking head of the family was neat enough in his work clothes, but his wife had a bedraggled, harassed look. No wonder, with a heavy baby propped on her hunched-up hip and four larger boys trailing after her.

"I tol' you to stay in the car," she protested.

Her husband intervened, "Oh, leave 'em be. The kids want to see the house, too, and we can keep an eye on them in here." Turning to me, he said, "Good morning, Ma'am, we're the Joneses and ap-