

SUMMERTIME ADVENTURES ON THE FARM

by
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The sun is just starting to rise over the golden fields of grain as the children sneak out the back door to Grandpa's trailer for a breakfast of milk and cookies. As they tramp through the thick grass, still in their pajamas, their bare feet become cold and wet from the early morning dew. When the children come through the door they are greeted by the familiar musty smell of the trailer and their grandpa's happy smile. Soon the little girl has settled into Grandpa's lap with her breakfast, and her older brother has plopped down in front of the TV with his breakfast to watch cartoons.

After they have finally gone home to get dressed, the children head right back outside to play. First, they stop to play with the dog. Next they go torture the cats. When they get bored with that they decide to head out to the barns with the dog. The first stop, the tractor barn, smells like a dusty mechanic's shop. As the dog hunts for mice, the children explore the contents of an old wagon covered with junk. The children contemplate the purpose of each gadget and try to imagine where it came from. As they move on to their next destination, they are greeted by the pigs at the fence, eager for a morning treat. The brother and the dog go into the barn first and run right up the stairs to the hayloft. The little girl hesitates; the stairs have a small hole in them at the top, and there is a big step where they meet the hayloft. At the top of the stairs she sees the sunlight shining through the only window, creating a dance of particles in the air. Finally, she carefully climbs up and helps her brother build a fort. They find a wonderful surprise. Kittens! The mother is not there so they are able to play with them a little. Then they are off to tell their parents the good news. Getting down from the hayloft is much easier. The children throw some straw down a hay chute and slide down, then race off to the house.

In the house the parents are getting lunch ready when the twosome comes bursting through the front door. When they see all the ripe, juicy garden fresh vegetables on the table, the children suddenly realize how hungry they are and almost forget about the kittens. Over the hum of the fans, they excitedly tell their parents the good news. After lunch the children decide to ride their bikes for a while before taking a swim. They go out on the road to try to pop "wheelies" on the bumps. As they race down the road they can hear the tar popping beneath their tires and smell the hot, heavy summer air. Soon they are very hot and ready for a swim.

The pool, where they sometimes spend all day, is the children's favorite place to play. As they dive into the cool water they are immediately refreshed. At first the water is very cold, but it soon warms up. The children play games like basketball or football, but the older brother always wins because his litter sister can't touch the bottom of the

pool yet. To be fair, the brother suggests they race instead and even gives her a head start. After they have both won a few races, they tire and decide to play something else. They play make-believe for awhile and swim around and dive for rings. By now the water is starting to get cold because they have been in for so long, so the children get out and jump back in a few times to make the water feel warmer. Then the little girl asks her brother for a buckin' bronco ride. This is a game where he twists and turns, jumps and flops, and goes underwater until she cannot hang on anymore. Occasionally he gets choked in the process of jumping around, but the little girl does not mind going underwater. In fact, she loves it. If the sun is just right, she can look up at the surface of the water and see a merry-go-round of sun rays so close she can almost touch it. Sometimes, if the little girl has spent a long time playing underwater, she feels as if she could breathe underwater.

While they are still playing in the water, Grandpa comes out to the orchard to pick fruit. Immediately, thoughts of cooked apples come to the children's minds, so they jump out to help and climb a tree or two. Sure enough, when they are done picking they all go back to Grandpa's and have supper with cooked apples for desert.

At dusk, the children's dad calls, wondering if they want to go back to the creek with him to burn some branches. The creek, which is on their dad's other property, has plenty of places to explore and is a special treat. The flames from the fire accentuate the colorful flames in the western sky. For a few minutes, the children stand and watch the brilliant show of colors with delight and then catch lightning bugs in the cool evening air. As the fire gets dimmer and the crickets become louder, the family heads home--the end of a perfect day.

BARN SWEET BARN

by
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[Assignment: Describe a place for which you hold significant emotion. It could be a place you have been to only once or one you visit regularly.]

It is a sweet smelling spring day, the kind in which one can actually feel the warm weather starting to push the gray winter away. Slowly walking down a gravel driveway that is in desperate need of a replenishing of stone, I can hear the wet gravel crunching beneath my feet as I make my descent. I smile as I take in the beautiful scenery that surrounds the farthest barn on my family's farm.