

Chapter VI

Inheritance

July 22, 1946 – September 3, 1946

The following Monday, Ramona got a call from her realtor with an offer on her townhouse. She listed it at the price suggested by the realtor, not really knowing how much she could get for it. To her, it seemed like a lot of money. It was considerably more than she had paid for it only three years earlier. The realtor explained that with all of the veterans home from the war, homes were in demand.

She was surprised that the offer was for the asking price. Needless to say, she accepted it. The realtor told her that it would take a couple of weeks to process before the deal could close. After paying off what she still owed, she would have about two thousand dollars. She thought the best thing to do with the money would be to put toward a home in Roanoke.

Ramona still hadn't had any luck finding a job and had been giving some thought to what else she might want to do with herself. It really didn't matter at the moment. She was just enjoying not having anything to do. At least Sheffield had his future settled and was excited about it. He did get a call from the school district with the wrestling schedule for the coming school year. He also got a copy of the government text book that he would be teaching from. The new employee orientation wouldn't be until just before school started.

The next week, Ramona received a frantic call from Marcella. Susannah had died suddenly on the 24th of July and Harvey was away on another of his secret missions. Ramona was able to settle her down and assured her that Sheffield would know how to contact him.

He really didn't, but he placed a phone call to the Pentagon and identified himself as Rear Admiral Sheffield Brason and explained the purpose of his call. After being transferred a couple of times, he was connected with someone who could relay the message on to Harvey.

Ramona called Marcella back and told her what Sheffield had done. She offered to go with her to Texas to make the funeral arrangements. Later that evening, Marcella called back. Harvey's son Joseph had returned home for good about a week earlier – much to Ruth Ann's delight. He had arranged to fly them down in Harvey's Bobcat. After some discussion back and forth, the trip was arranged. They would stop in Roanoke and pick up Ramona and Sheffield the next day which was Saturday.

Shenan and Emily picked them up at their apartment on Saturday morning and drove them to the airport and waited around for the plane to land. When it did, they got to spend a few minutes with Ruth Ann and finally got to meet this Joseph that they heard so much about. With Congress in recess, the switchboard didn't need as many operators so she was able to get the time off. It was only a brief reunion before they had to re-board the plane. When they did, Sheffield took the copilot's seat.

On the trip down Sheffield had an opportunity to get to know Joseph better. He found him to be a

competent pilot. After all, he had been the first officer of a B-29 crew. They had a good discussion on the subject of aviation. For a while Sheffield took the controls. While they were engrossed in conversational, the ladies in the back talked about whatever it is that women talk about when they get together. At one point, Sheffield looked back to see how Ramona was doing to find her making a fuss over Marcella's little girl, Winnifred, who was sixteen months old.

After a fueling stop and lunch in Nashville, they arrived in Dennison late in the afternoon. Once again, the pasture served as a landing strip where they were met by Charlie, the ranch hand. As they exited the plane, it was hot and humid. The dust stirred up by the plane was still swirling around in the air. Sheffield unloaded their luggage and he and Charlie took it into the house while Joseph secured the aircraft. Next, Sheffield and Joseph went out to the barn and pulled the tarp off the '32 Packard and pulled it up in front of the house before going in.

For the first time they learned what had happened. Charlie explained, "We heard a cougar the night before. We'd seen tracks around for about the last week, but couldn't find the critter. The next morning we saddled up and I went south and Susannah went north, up toward the river. The tracks I was following were a day or two old but I rode on, Then about ten o'clock, I heard a rifle shot so I figured she was on to it. I gave up my search and rode off to where shot came from. As I got close, I saw her horse but no sign of her. Then as I rode up, I saw her laying on the ground. She had been shot in the chest. I got down off my horse to have a look but she was already dead. From the looks of the horses tracks, something spooked her horse. It appears that she dropped her rifle and it discharged when it fell to the ground. I didn't have a chance to look around but I reckon she had found the cat. The gunshot must have scared it off.

"I gathered her up and laid her over her saddle and lead her horse back to the house and called the Sheriff and told him what had happened. He and one of his deputies came out to investigate. Not far from where I found her, they found fresh cougar tracks. The sheriff looked things over and said that I was pretty much right about what happened."

Then Charlie chocked up. "I had loved her for all these years and I never told her. Sure she used to come out to the bunkhouse at night or I'd come here and we'd... well you know. But I never told her how I felt. She'd of turned sixty seven the next day. I'm sure that's pretty much the way she'd like to have gone."

After changing their clothes and freshening up, Sheffield drove the six of them into town to the mortuary. The mortician took them into the viewing room to see Susannah. Charlie had picked out a pair of denim riding pants and white blouse with a ruffle down the front. And naturally, she had her boots on. She looked just like Ramona remembered her from the three occasions that she had been around her. She was just glad that she had got to know her and had connected to her roots.

The undertaker explained that she couldn't wait any longer than the 2nd or 3rd of August to be buried.

Hopefully Harvey would get the message and be able to come in time. In the message he had sent to Harvey, Sheffield had told him that they could be reached at the ranch.

That night as Ramona laid in bed next to Sheffield, there were no coyotes howling as there been the other times. She had just about drifted off to sleep when she heard a blood curdling scream form somewhere out on the ranch. It was terrifying memory of her childhood while living on the reservation, the trek to Arizona, and at the mine near Superstition Mountain. She woke Sheffield up when she drew herself close to his body for comfort. Then the cat screamed again. This time he heard it too.

The next morning Joseph saddled up and went looking for the menace. Joseph knew every inch of the ranch like the back of his hand. Every summer while growing up he would spend it with his grandmother on the ranch, even during the years he was in college, right up until he joined the Army Air Force. Between his grandmother and Charlie, he learned to ride and rope. They taught him how to shoot and every other aspect of life on the ranch.

He hadn't gone far when he found the mangled carcass of a steer, an obvious victim of the cougar. He secluded himself in the shade of some rocks, upwind and waited. The cat was most likely sleeping during the heat of the day, but would certainly be back toward evening.

As the sun was beginning to set, a rifle shot was heard at the ranch house. About a half an hour later, Joseph rode into the barnyard with the dead cat across the horse's back, behind the saddle. With a cougar on the prowl, no one had dared venture far from the house that day. That night, the coyotes resumed their serenade.

There was still no word from Harvey so on Monday morning, Ramona, Joseph, and Marcella went into town to talk to Susannah's attorney. Other than gather together her papers, there wasn't much that he could do. They had to wait for Harvey, who was named the executor of the estate.

That afternoon, Sheffield and Ramona decided to go for a horseback ride. They saddled up Rex and Roxy, the horses that they had ridden before and set off to the north, toward the Red River. Joseph and Ruth Ann tagged along while Marcella and Winnie stayed at the house. It was Ruth Ann's first time on a horse and Joseph patiently showed her what to do.

On Tuesday, there was still no word from Harvey. Time was slipping away and plans for the burial had to be made, as time was running out. Again Ramona, Joseph, and Marcella went into town to meet with the mortician to begin making funereal arrangements. Ruth Ann tagged along just to be with Joseph. There was no question as to where she would be buried. She was to be laid to rest in the family plot on the ranch next to her husband and near her mother, father and daughter, who had preceded her in death.

The funeral itself would be conducted at the funeral home. Since Susannah had not been affiliated with any denomination, there was no minister to conduct the funeral. Remembering all of the burials at sea

that Sheffield had conducted while the captain of the Reprisal, Ramona nominated him. The service itself was to be brief. Along with whatever Sheffield could come up with, Ramona would sing a solo accompanied by Marcella who hadn't played the piano in years. The casket was to be taken to the ranch by hearse and then to the graveside in a horse drawn wagon. The pallbearers would be Sheffield, Joseph, Charlie, and Harvey if he got there. They would have to come up with two more. With the arrangements taken care of, Marcella figured out the music and practiced it using the piano in the mortuary chapel. She decided that the hymn that she was most familiar with was Amazing Grace. It was obvious that she needed the practice.

While they were in town, Sheffield helped Charlie with some work that needed done around the ranch. When their work was done, Charlie challenged Sheffield to some target shooting. He hadn't done any for a few years, in fact he hadn't even wore his sidearm since the end of the war. Susannah's Smith and Wesson forty four handled differently than his Browning M1911 forty five. He found that hers had more kick for one thing.

After firing off several rounds, Charlie said, "Not bad. Now how about we up the ante." and pulled his Winchester thirty thirty from its sheath. He handed it to Sheffield and asked, "How are you with a rifle?"

"Humph. I haven't fired a rifle since I was in the Academy, that was more than twenty five years ago." Sheffield took it and looked it over. It was lever action rather than bolt action like the old Springfield M1903 thirty ought six that he had handled. He cocked it took aim and fired, but missed what he was shooting at. After getting the feel for it, he cocked it again, took aim and sqooze the trigger again. This time he came closer. On the third try, he knocked the can off the fence post. There were still five more cans lined up. With the remaining rounds, he hit two more cans. "Now show me how its done, Charlie." he said as he handed it back to him.

Charlie smiled, "Okay then, go get up some more cans."

Sheffield retrieved some cans from the pile that were there for that very reason. When he came back to where Charlie was standing, there were nine cans all lined up on nine consecutive fence posts. Charlie took aim and in just over a half a minute he had sent all nine cans flying.

That evening as they were about ready to sit down for supper, a plane was heard buzzing the the house. Figuring it was Harvey, everyone jumped up and ran outside to see a silver North American T-6 Texan in Army Air Force Markings go around for a second pass. This time it lined up with the pasture as it made its approach. No doubt about it, it was Harvey.

When the plane came to a stop next to the Bobcat, two people emerged from the plane. Marcella ran to meet her husband. Joseph ran to meet the second person, his nineteen year old brother Francis.

They escorted the two men inside and set two more places at the table. After a round of greetings Harvey was told what had happened and was filled in on the details for the plans that had been made so far.

Harvey, took the news hard. It had been several months since he had seen his mother. One just never suspects that the last time might actually be the last time. He explained that he got there as fast as he could. He had been in the Marshall Islands where the military was conducting atomic bomb tests. He didn't get Sheffield's message until late Friday afternoon, after the second and final test.

He got on the next transport and began making his way home. The first leg of the trip took him to Hawaii and then on to San Francisco, where Francis lived with his mother. From there they made their way to Dallas where Harvey borrowed the surplus two seat trainer.

After supper, the seven of them divided up between the Packard the old pickup and drove into the funereal home. It was an emotional time for Harvey as he looked down on his mother laying there in her casket. Marcella and Ramona on either side, held him tight to comfort him.

After he had his moment with his mother, the mortician met with them to finalize the plans for the funeral. Which would be on Thursday. Sheffield agreed, rather reluctantly, to conduct the service and Marcella was making progress with Amazing Grace. With Harvey and Francis, there were five pallbearers but they still needed one more. It was decided to ask the sheriff, who had been a long time friend.

The next morning, Harvey met with the attorney and got things in motion for settling the estate. It would take at least thirty days, if not longer for it to make its way through the court. There was the issue of any outstanding debts that had to be identified and other legalities. At least the process had started.

That afternoon, Harvey gathered everyone together and announced, "I've been doing a lot of thinking the last few days. Sitting in an airplane or while waiting for the next one, a person has a lot to think.

"After being involved with atomic bombs for the last year, I've decided to resign my commission and retire. They are just too powerful and I don't want anymore to do with them, especially after seeing what they did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Sheffield, you were right, it wasn't necessary."

"So what are you going to do?" was the question put to him.

"I need to talk to Marcella first, but I know what I'd like to do." he answered.

For the rest of the afternoon, Harvey and Marcella had a long talk. At one point, they asked Joseph to join them. Whatever it was that they talked about, they kept it to themselves. Harvey did ask Charlie to stay on to take care of the place until things were settled. He also told him that if he needed extra help, to let him know and he'd get someone to help him.

That evening Joseph and Ruth Ann took a long walk and he asked her to marry him. Even though he didn't have a ring to give her just then, she said yes. When they got back to the house, not a word was said. Despite the differences that she had with her parents, she thought they should be the first to know.

Thursday was the day of the funeral. As with Grandma Erhart's funeral, an assortment of neighboring

ranchers and businessmen from town assembled at the mortuary. The service was brief, as planned. Sheffield borrowed some things that he had seen his father and brother do over the years in conducting the service, including the invocation. Marcella's piano playing wasn't perfect but Ramona's voice made up for it. In conclusion, Harvey had a chance to offer some remembrances of his mother.

After the service, many of those who attended went about their business. A small number of people made up the funeral procession, lead by the Sheriff, made their way back to the ranch. At the house, the casket was placed in the back of a wagon for the last little ways to the burial plot. Earlier that morning, a neighboring rancher had come over with a tractor with a shovel attachment for digging trenches and had dug the grave. Drawing upon the occasions of committing the bodies of his fallen sailors to the deep, he committed the body of Susannah Erhart Morrison to the grave as her final resting place and asked that the spot of ground be hallowed and protected until the time that her body should be raise from the dead.

The rest of the afternoon was spent at the ranch, with everyone sitting around visiting. Late that night, as they were getting ready for bed, Ramona saw Ruth Ann and Joseph sneaking out to the barn. She mentioned to Sheffield who simply shook his head asking, "Won't that girl ever learn?"

Through their open window, the sound coming from the barn made it quite obvious what Ruth Ann and Joesph were up to.

The next morning, all but Harvey and Francis left to go home. Harvey's plan was to stay for a few days to take care of business, then he had to take Francis home and return to the South Pacific and wrap up his work.

After a stop in Nashville, the rest of them arrived back in Roanoke. Rather than going back to Washington, Marcella, Joseph, and Ruth Ann spent the night at Shenan and Emily's house. They had mixed feelings about the announcement of their engagement since he had only been home for such a short amount of time. They really had to swallow hard when told that they wanted to get married at the end of August. By now Shenan and Emily had learned that Ruth Ann was going to do what she was going to do regardless of what they may think. Sheffield and Ramona felt it was best not to say anything about what they assumed happened the night before.

The next morning, they returned to Washington and Sheffield and Ramona got back to their retirement. During the following week, Ramona was informed that the deal on her townhouse was ready to close, which meant that she had to make a trip to Washington. They drove to Washington on Thursday so Ramona could sign the papers. That night, they stayed with Marcella.

The next day when they returned to Roanoke, they brought Ruth Ann with them as she had quit her job to come home to get ready for the wedding. In the meantime, she had seen Joesph off as he was returning to Dennison to help Charlie on the ranch.

Now that her townhouse had sold, Ramona and Sheffield set about looking for a house to purchase. Ramona planned to take the money she got from the sale of her town house and put it down on a home in Roanoke.

After looking at houses for several days, she found one that she really liked. It was a quaint older home with a lot of character at 359 Elm Avenue. The house looked like a cottage that came right out of a storybook. The location was perfect; just off Franklin Road on Elm it was about three and a half blocks from his parents house and six blocks from the high school.

A high gable rose above the left two thirds of the front of the house. A large picture window was centered under the gable. The front door was recessed under the gable and was flush with the right third of the front of the house. The gable tied into the tall roof over the narrow second story.

The front door entered into the living room. On the far outside wall was another window and door that exited onto the driveway. To the right was a small bedroom or den. Moving further into the house, the bathroom was just on the other side of living room. Across from it was the stairs that lead upstairs. Next to that was a small utility room with a set of stairs that lead to the small basement that housed an old coal furnace. These stairs were directly under the stairs that went upstairs. Next came the kitchen and dining room that spanned the width of the house, the kitchen to the left and the dining room to right. At the far end of the house was the master bedroom. Upstairs there were two more small bedrooms and a small bathroom with a toilet and sink.

Overall, the house was fifteen hundred sixty square feet. It was a little smaller than their townhouse but was big enough for the two of them. The only problem was, it needed fixed up. It had been built in 1926 and was in need of some work. Sheffield told Ramona that whatever she wanted to do was fine with him. She made an offer on the house which was accepted. Once the deal closed, she hired Ray Austin to do the remodel work. It helped that he could get the material at cost from his dad and uncles. It wouldn't be ready to move into until around the end September. They were in no hurry, as they had a place to live in the meantime.

Ramona hadn't heard from Samantha since before going to Texas so she decided that she had better go and check up on her. In the short time since returning from their vacation in Hawaii, she had taken a turn for the worse. She hadn't been able to get out of bed for a few days, she was that weak. Mike was swamped trying to take care of her and the kids as well as stay on top of things with his business.

Ramona got the kids busy helping with some chores that had obviously gone undone for a couple of days. She was still there when Mike came home. He was amazed at how good everything looked. "How did you get them to help like that? I've been harping on them for two days to help out around here." It was obvious that things had deteriorated in the home. Having their wife and mother dying before their eyes had

be a stressful situation.

"Listen," Ramona offered, "Why don't I come over for a couple of hours every day and help out?"

"We couldn't put you out like that." Mike protested.

"I have more time on my hands than I know what to do with anyway. After all I am a nurse, I can give Sam the attention and care that she needs. I can see that you're overwhelmed here."

"We can't pay you for your time."

"I don't want to be paid." Ramona insisted.

"You'd do that for us?" Mike asked.

"That's what friends are for, isn't it?"

"Wait right here, I'm going to go in and see how Sam is doing and tell her."

A moment later, Mike called Ramona into Sam's bedroom. She bent over as Sam reached up with her weak arms and wrapped them around her friend's neck. All she could do in response was sob.

When Ramona went home she excitedly told Sheffield about the new endeavor that she had just undertaken, even if it would only last for as long as Sam lasted. She wanted to make the best of however long that she might have. All she wanted to do was utilize her nursing skills and help people. Who better to help than the Taylors. Not only was Sam suffering, the entire family was suffering right along with her.

The next day, she got started. She soon discovered that some days it would take more time and others less, depending on what needed attention. When Ramona arrived that day, the children were quarreling. She sat them down and explained how that only made things worse for their mother. She said that she was there to help, but she needed their help as well, she couldn't do it alone. She asked them to start by straightening up their rooms while she tended to their mother, and then they could bake a cake or something.

During the time they had spent with the Brasons while their parents were on vacation, they had come to trust and respect them. They found Ramona to be fun to be around. While they were busy, Ramona tended to Sam.

She hadn't bathed for a few days so Ramona ran a tub for her, complete with bubbles. When she helped her get undressed she was shocked to see how much she had wasted away. Her ribs and her shoulder blades were showing. Her arms and legs were pencil thin. Ramona had seen a lot of people in bad shape, but this nearly broke her heart. The trained professional that she was, she buried her emotions as she helped Sam into the tub and lovingly helped her bathe.

She left her to relax for a moment while she went to check on the kids. She put the girls to work on the dishes in the sink and convinced Craig to mow the lawn so there would be one less thing for his dad to have worry about when he got home.

When she returned to Sam, she was ready to get out. She wasn't strong enough to lift herself out, so Ramona helped her out. Sam was just going to put her night gown and robe back on, but Ramona insisted that she would feel better if she got dressed and put on her makeup and fixed her hair. She agreed and Ramona helped her. It did make her feel better. For the first time in days she left the bedroom and came out into the kitchen while Ramona fixed lunch.

As promised, she and the girls baked a cake and decorated it. Even Craig got in on it. They laughed and visited the whole time. When the cake was finished and the kitchen cleaned up, Ramona put together the fixings for dinner and showed Norma what to do. By then Ramona had been there for four hours and needed to go home. When Mike got home, it was like coming home to different place. The house was in order, the lawn had been mowed, and supper was ready. Best of all, Sam was in good spirits.

This became the general routine. Each day was different depending on what was needed. Some days she'd take the kids to town while she did the shopping for the family. It just depended. Once a week, Sheffield and Ramona would take the kids out to pizza or a movie, perhaps rollerskating or something else. It let them get out and do something and gave Mike and Sam time alone. Sam didn't feel any better physically, but she did emotionally as did the entire family.

During the month of August, while Ramona was helping the Taylors, Sheffield was doing his homework. He read the government textbook from cover to cover. The course was divided into thirty nine lessons to be taught over thirty seven weeks. The first and second lessons could be combined as could the seventh and eighth. After reading the text book he felt confident that he understood the material. There were a few parts that he wasn't very familiar with.

He also studied up on the rules and regulations that governed high school wrestling in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He spent some time figuring out how to handle tryouts and the training regiment that he wanted to follow. Most of what he drew upon was his own wrestling experience, mingled with a little military perspective. He also met with the assistant coach to discuss the boys who would be returning. He also met with the junior varsity coach to review those moving up from the junior varsity team.

Then came the day for his orientation. There was a lot of paperwork and lectures to set through. As the day went on, he was shown his classroom that was shared with the other government teacher who used it during the periods of the day when he wouldn't be using it. They also shared an office. He was shown the teacher's lounge and finally the gymnasium and the locker room.

By the time the day was over, his head was swimming. At least he had time to sort through it before school actually started. After spending more time at the school, Sheffield became more comfortable with what he was getting himself into. He remembered how Geannie always looked forward to the first day of school with great anticipation. She was always ready and he felt he was too. Now the only thing that stood

between him and the first day of school was Labor Day.

But before Labor Day was Ruth Ann's wedding on the 31st of August. She and her mother had been planning it all month. It's fortunate that it wasn't going to be an extravagant affair given the amount of time that they had to prepare for it.

Joseph arrived from Denison three days before the wedding. The next day his mother, Josephine and her husband Arthur Franklin, and Francis arrived from California. Francis was to be the best man. They all stayed at the Hotel Roanoke. Lastly, Harvey, Marcella, and Winnie came down from Washington.

In the month since his mother's funeral, Harvey had resigned his commission and retired from the Army Air Force. He was now prepared to answer the question put to him in Texas. "What are you going to do next?"

During the wedding rehearsal on Saturday morning, he pulled Ramona and Sheffield aside.

"So just what are you going to do now Harvey?" Sheffield asked.

"We're moving to Denison to take over the Ranch." he announced. "We've sold our home in Washington and will be moving next week."

"Really?" Ramona questioned. "Marcella doesn't strike me as the type of gal to pull out of the city to live on a ranch."

"Yeah, how's that going to work?" Sheffield asked.

"Actually, she's quite excited about it. She even surprised me. She says that she's ready for a change of pace."

"Don't take me wrong, Harvey," Ramona worried, "but how long will that last before she gets tired of it down there?"

"Not to worry. She really wants to do this. She says she wants Winnie to grow up around animals and in the wide open spaces. It's not that we'll be all by ourselves down there. Joseph and Ruth Ann are coming too."

"Ruth Ann? That's even more surprising." Sheffield said sceptically.

"Don't worry about us, we'll all be just fine." Harvey assured them. "Now, I have been working on settling the estate and it should all be final in a couple of weeks. I have been working with the attorney and the bank down there and I'm prepared to buy out your half of the ranch, Ramona."

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't you remember? When I took you down to meet Grandma Erhart she told you that after your father left, Granddad felt so bad that he stipulated that if your father or any his offspring were ever found, half of the ranch was theirs. Since you are the only survivor, that's you."

"I had forgot all about that. I remember telling her that I didn't go down there looking for anything?"

"I remember that too. Do you remember what she said to that? She said 'I didn't ask you if you wanted it. I'm telling you that its yours."

"Yes she did say that, didn't she."

"Yes she did. So like I said, I'm prepared to buy out your half, that is unless you want to maintain half interest and all that goes with it."

"No, I don't want to do that."

"Alright then. With my half interest as collateral the bank is willing to lend me the rest, plus operating expenses to get me started. In a couple of weeks, I'll be sending you a check for a hundred grand."

Ramona's mouth fell open in disbelief. She looked at Sheffield and then back at Harvey. "Did you say one hundred thousand dollars?"

"That's right. With six thousand acres, the livestock, the home and all of the out buildings the place is worth two hundred thousand dollars. And half of it is yours. Oh and I almost forgot. Mom had stipulated in a note attached to the will that she wanted you to have Red and Roxy as well."

"I don't know what to say."

"Just be sure to invest it wisely." Harvey cautioned.

After the conversation with Harvey, Ramona and Sheffield were in a daze for the rest of the day as they attended the wedding. Between the two of them they already had a good share of money stashed away, but nowhere near that much. They decided that they better seek out some financial advice as how to best handle it. There were questions of taxes, investment options, and charitable contributions that they needed some answers to.

The wedding was a nice simple affair at Green Memorial where Shenan and Emily still attended. It seemed odd not to have Walt perform the marriage. He looked content setting in the pews with the rest of the family as an observer.

Ruth Ann and Joseph had a lot of well wishers greet them in the hall after the ceremony. The next morning they were off on their honeymoon to California. When they got back, they would settle down on the ranch. For the first little while, they would have to live in Denison until they could build a house on the ranch.

On Labor Day, the Brasons got together for their picnic. Everyone was there except for Ruth Ann. Wendalynn and Sylvia each brought the same young they had with them at Memorial day. After graduating, the girls had found jobs and were sharing an apartment. They were still roommates and best friends. Curtis and Delbert would be going off to college in the next few days. And Sheffield too was going back to school.

Sheffield got up and got ready for school on Tuesday morning. He found a new use for his uniforms as he put on a pair of khaki trousers, one of his white shirts, and a navy blue tie. That, with his shoes with a military spit shine, he passed inspection when he asked Ramona, "How do I look?"

After breakfast he drove to Jefferson High School which was only five and half blocks from his folks' house. This day there were no students and no classes. It was a preparation day. It mainly consisted of receiving enough text books for each student, class rolls, and classroom supplies. His day was split between his government class and the wrestling team. He and the assistant coach inventoried their equipment and received their schedule for use of the gym.

Before going home, he stopped by his folks and found Ramona there, as she routinely stopped in to check on them after she finished up with Samantha. Emmett's Parkinson's disease hadn't become any worse yet as it is a slow progressing disease. Sheffield and Ramona ended up staying for supper, at Ellen's insistence.

On their way home, they stopped by to see how Ray was progressing with the remodel of their house. They hadn't seen it for several days. He had updated the electrical wiring and installed new fixtures. While into the walls, he also replaced the plumbing. The walls had been refinished and he was working on the cabinets. Also, a new oil furnace and a new water heater had been installed in the basement. It appeared to be right on schedule.

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Jefferson High School 541 Luck Avenue Originally constructed in 1922, Jefferson High School served as Roanoke's largest high school from 1924 to 1974