

EDITH. It's all too much. The farm is a mess. Lloyd juss cain't manage it on his own with that leg a' his an' Cuffy an' Frank aren't enough t' be proper help. An' Alvis. Lord, help me. You saw Alvis runnin' around crazy at Gary Ray's funeral. I don't know what t' do with 'im. Doc thinks he's schizophrenic. Most likely, we're gonna have t'put 'im in an institution or somethin'.

DOOCHIE. That might be best, Edith. I know ya don't want to, but—

EDITH. — I'm scared. Th' kids are scared. His . . . explosive . . . outburst really got t' Debbie. She won't sleep. Lloyd juss stays in th' field all day . . . an' I'm no good since Rayboy . . . since he . . . I cain't . . . I cain't even say it . . . I feel like I'm juss . . . juss . . . empty.

DOOCHIE. (*Grabbing her hand:*) I ain't no preacher. An' I'm pretty sure I ain't even made it t' th' bottom a' St. Peter's pearly-gate list. But I do know a thing or two about life an' death.

EDITH. (*A sad chuckle:*) I know ya do.

DOOCHIE. (*Sharing a bit of her lunch:*) When my ma died, it was like I lost who I was. I juss became a . . . a shell of a girl an' I couldn't make it a single day without cryin'. One day she was there, an' th' next she was gone. An' there I was with four sisters that were waiting fer me t' fill her shoes. Scraggly lil hungry things—

EDITH. —But, how . . . how did you get back t' . . . t' you?

DOOCHIE. I didn't really git a choice. I pulled up my britches an' did what I had t' do. Pa was on th' farm all day an' somebody had t' feed those lil rascals.

(*Beat.*)

What else could I do? There weren't anybody else t' do it. So . . . I did it.

EDITH. . . . How?

DOOCHIE. Lissen . . . at th' end a' th' day, all you need is hope an' strength.

EDITH. Oh that's all, huh? How d'you figure?

DOOCHIE. (*Taking EDITH's face in her hands:*) Hope that it will get better, an' th' strength t' hold on until it does. (*Holds her tight.*)