

Janet stroked the wooden frame of the mirror that had belonged to her great aunt. She knew it would be a great family artifact for Mrs. Ballard's history assignment. She had no idea it would change her life.

"Anybody home?" Her friend Dizzy called.

Janet wrapped the mirror in its cloth and put it back in the trunk. She got down from the attic and into her room moments before Dizzy bounced in. Dana Zoller - D.Z. reminded Janet of Tigger. Her strawberry blonde curls and her freckled skin, along with her bouncy walk, gave her a cheerful air.

"What do you want to do today?" Dizzy plopped on Janet's bed.

"Let's go visit the Xmas trees." Janet said grabbing her jacket.

Janet Collins Fowler lived on the farm that had been in her mother's family for generations. These days it was a Christmas tree farm. When her great aunt had owned it, she raised cows, chickens, fruits, and vegetables. Aunt Janet had had foresight and put the land in trust - otherwise they would have had to sell it to pay the taxes.

Dizzy ran her hand along the gnarled branch of an ancient tree. "I wonder if trees get arthritis?" Both girls breathed in the scent of fir.

Dinner at the Fowler home was always an adventure. Sometimes Woody or Dawn would drop in as a surprise. Dizzy idolized Janet's older siblings, especially Dawn. Dizzy had planned to stay for dinner and when Dawn walked through the door, the mood was festive. The conversation had turned to the latest attempts of a developer to reverse Aunt Janet's land trust.

"... because he's a troglodyte." Dawn had said.

"What's a troglodyte?" Dizzy asked.

Imitating Lynne, Janet gestured toward the den where the unabridged dictionary lay open on a pedestal. As Dizzy swung out of her chair she flashed a "Traitor" look at Janet. Bob

Fowler's cough masked his laugh. Lynne continued eating, saying nothing. Janet wasn't sure if the look of pride in her mother's eyes was for her or Dizzy.

"Troglydyte," Dizzy called from the den. "noun: 1. A member of a primitive people that lived in caves, dens, or holes; a cave dweller. 2. One who is regarded as reclusive, reactionary, out of date, or brutish." Dizzy bounced back into the room. "Sounds like someone who would destroy the woods," she said as she slid back into her chair. "Yuck."

Dizzy basked in the glow of everyone's nodding approval.

After dinner, Dizzy went home and Janet went back to work on her history project for Mrs. Ballard. Janet gazed into the mirror at the reflected portrait of her Aunt Janet. She wondered if her great-aunt's image was the first face she saw in her life. The portrait's face held Janet's gaze. The artist had captured Aunt Janet's expression – to Janet it was a mixture of warmth and mischief. Janet got the feeling that her great-aunt was enjoying the artist's company, more like a visit than a sitting.

And then the portrait smiled. Or had it? Janet blinked and shook her head. She turned and looked at the portrait. It looked like it always had. She turned back to the mirror. A cold chill ran up her spine. The portrait was definitely smiling. "Am I going crazy?" thought Janet. She took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Aunt Janet?" she whispered. The smile widened.