

The Page She Closed in the Orchard

A rare afternoon with Bubby, a pencil racing
the sunlight, and something she could enjoy
without saving it all

For ages 12-15



Chapter 1

Everything Worth Keeping

Sara wrote three lines before Bubby had finished the first pear.

The bench is green. The pear smells sweet. Bubby says the trees were smaller when she first came here.

The afternoon had been arranged for weeks. Bubby, wearing her brown sheitel beneath a wide hat, had come to visit the orchard with Sara and Mama.

They didn't often have a whole weekday afternoon together.

Sara wanted to remember every part.

She brought a small notebook and a sharpened pencil. By the time Mama put the picnic basket on the bench, Sara had begun to worry that the pencil wouldn't keep up.





Chapter 2

The Sentence She Missed

Bubby said something about the tree nearest the fence.

Sara caught the words terrible hat and tried to finish writing the pear sentence first.

"What was that?"

Bubby smiled.

"I was remembering a picnic when my sister brought a hat so wide that she knocked a pear off a branch."

Sara wrote: Hat knocked pear.

"Did it land on somebody?"

"In her own basket. Very convenient."

Mama laughed. Sara copied the answer quickly.





When she looked up, the little joke had already become a new conversation.

She had the words. She had missed the laugh.

Chapter 3

The Light Changes

A patch of sunlight moved along Bubby's sleeve.

Sara wanted to write that down too.

Then a breeze moved the leaves, and the patch disappeared.

She looked at the unfinished line on her page.

If she didn't save things immediately, they changed.

If the afternoon changed, perhaps she would lose it.

Her hand grew cramped.





Mama, whose gray tichel was tied neatly away from her face, noticed the grip on the pencil.

"Are you enjoying writing?"

"I don't want to forget."

That wasn't quite an answer to the question Mama had asked.

Chapter 4

One Thing Instead of All Things

They talked quietly while Bubby watched a robin near the fence.

"You can keep a memory without recording every second," Mama said.

Sara looked at the page. It was already full of ordinary details. None of them could hold the whole afternoon still.





"What if I forget the best part?"

"There may be parts you forget. That doesn't mean they weren't yours to enjoy while they happened."

Sara didn't like the possibility. She also couldn't write and hear everything at once.

She chose one line to keep: The pear fell into the hat owner's own basket.

Then she closed the notebook.

It felt like putting something valuable down without fastening the lid.

Chapter 5

The Robin's Argument

The robin pulled at something in the grass.

It looked indignant, as though the orchard had failed to provide an easier lunch.





Sara watched with Bubby.

"Would you like help?" Bubby asked the bird.

The robin flew to a branch with its discovery.

"Apparently not."

Sara laughed without reaching for the pencil.

For a moment, she wanted to remember exactly how Bubby had sounded. Then she let herself hear the next thing Bubby said instead.

The notebook hadn't been confiscated. Sara could write later if she wanted. Right now, she wanted to be part of the conversation that was happening in front of her.





Chapter 6

A Different Kind of Quiet

After lunch, they sat for a few minutes without talking.

Sara noticed the rough bench beneath her fingers, the trees moving above them, and the small remaining taste of pear.

She didn't turn those into a numbered task or test how calmly she was noticing them.

They were simply there.

Bubby rested. Mama leaned against the bench back.

Sara's afternoon didn't need to produce another story every minute to count as a rare afternoon together.

She could be glad they had it without squeezing every moment for something to preserve.





Chapter 7

The Page at Home

At home, Sara opened the notebook.

The last full sentence was about the hat and the pear.

She remembered the robin, the picnic basket, and Bubby asking whether it wanted help.

She didn't remember the exact order of every conversation.

She added two lines because she wanted to, not because the memory would otherwise be declared missing.

Then she put down the pencil.

Mama asked whether she wanted to look through the notes with her.

"After supper," Sara said.





She went to help set the table. This part of the day deserved attention too, even if she wasn't going to write it down.

Chapter 8

Something Still Here

The following week, Bubby mentioned the robin when she came for supper.

Sara had forgotten the way it had pulled at the grass until Bubby said it.

Then she remembered and laughed.

Memories could be shared, leave gaps, and return in unexpected pieces. They didn't have to be a perfect transcript locked in a book.

Sara kept the notebook. She still liked writing about good days.





Next time, she might write before the visit or afterward, and leave some room in the middle simply to be there.

The orchard afternoon had ended. That was true even with every page filled.

She had enjoyed more of it after she stopped asking the pencil to prevent the ending.

