



Chapter Two – by Russ and Kay Hively

Strike three. Larry was out. The pitch had been in the strike zone, and he had made a good clean swing. How could he have missed that one?

Larry just stood there stunned. He wanted to scream, but he knew that would not be good sportsmanship, so he bit his lip. That was the last out in the inning and his team would have to take the field.

Slowly, Larry put the bat down, collected his glove and headed out to the field for the next inning. The ball he had just missed was waiting for him at the pitcher's spot. As he walked toward the ball, it seemed to look at him and say, "Ha."

Larry picked up the ball and looked it over. There was no magic glow around it, and it didn't say anything. It was just a baseball. How could he have missed a perfect pitch?

Larry put the ball in his glove and gripped it tightly. He was ready to pitch to the other team. The new batter stepped up to the plate and it was time for the game to continue.

Before Larry could throw even one pitch, one of the boys heard his mother yelling that supper was ready. That meant the game was over and Larry's team had lost.

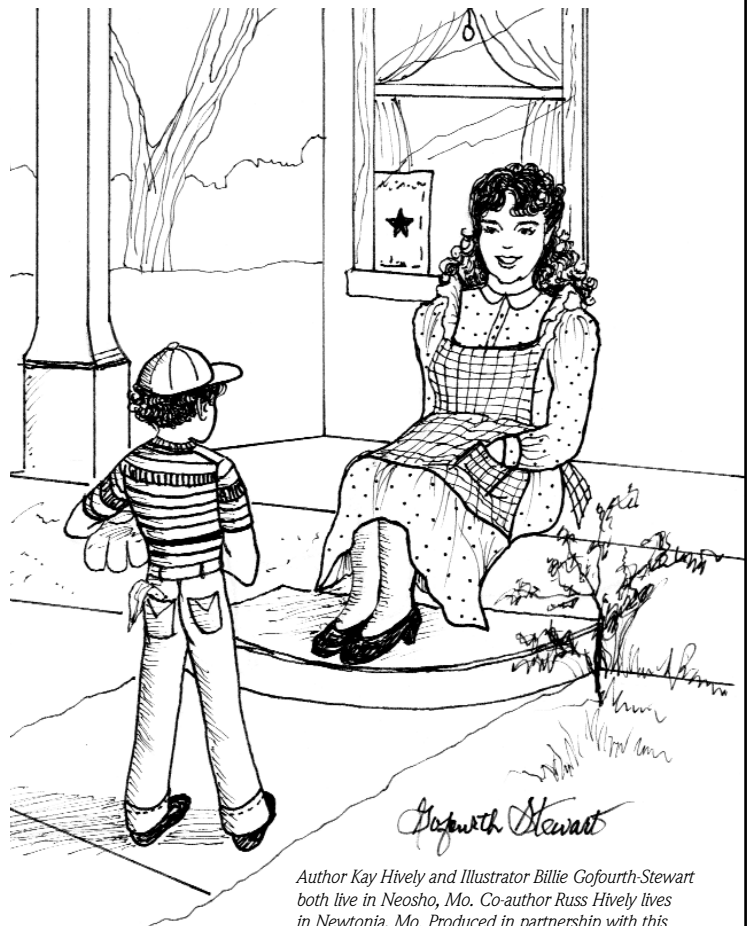
The boys picked up their gloves and bats and decided to have another game the next afternoon.

Larry headed home, walking alongside the railroad tracks. As he walked, he realized he was very hungry. He wondered what he and his mother were going to have for supper. Several boys walked along with Larry. As each boy reached the street where he lived, he would turn and head for home. Larry turned off on his street. He only lived three houses from the tracks, and he could see his mother waiting on the porch.

Mrs. Green was a short heavy woman with dark eyes and curly dark hair like her son. She asked who won the game. Larry said he had pitched a good game. Mrs. Green looked at Larry and again asked him who had won. Larry admitted that his team had lost. His mother smiled and said that he needed to eat supper and get ready for his Scout meeting.

Supper was noodles with tomato sauce, green beans and thick bread with butter. Larry and his mother grew the beans and tomatoes in their victory garden. As they ate, Larry and his mother talked about the game and about the news of the day. For dessert, Mrs. Green served some apricots she had picked up at the West Side Market. When she set them down on the table, she also laid a letter next to Larry's plate. The letter was from Petty Officer Green, Larry's father.

Mrs. Green said there was a surprise for him in the letter. Larry's eyes lit up. He loved surprises.



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Learning Extensions – Things to Think About and Do

- Larry showed good sportsmanship when he missed the ball. What is "good sportsmanship?" Have you ever seen someone show poor sportsmanship? What did he or she do?
- Larry and Mrs. Green had a "victory garden." What is a victory garden? Why were they important? List what you would like to grow if you had a garden.

Next Week: Chapter Three – An unexpected visitor