



Chapter Four - by Kay Hively

After getting a big hug from her mother, Emily got a stern lecture about going into caves. As Mrs. Todd spoke in strong language, Emily hung her head. It would have been easier to get a spanking than hear her mother's words.

As she hung her head, Emily could see her wet, muddy shoes and stockings. Her dress was muddy and had a big hole in back. There was dried blood on her forehead. She was a mess all over. And then things got worse. Her mother said as punishment, she would have to stay home until her father returned. No going to the store or playing with her friends or having any friends over to visit.

Mrs. Todd filled a big tub with warm water so Emily could take a bath. The water felt good and Emily's mother helped her wash the dried blood from her head.

When the bath was finished, Mrs. Todd put dirty clothes into the tub while she and Emily ate lunch. As they ate their beans and bread, Emily told about her adventure with John and Rose. Mrs. Todd asked about the men who had rescued the children. She said she wanted to thank them for saving her daughter, but Emily said she had never seen the men before.

After the clothes in the tub were washed and rinsed, Emily carried the willow basket outside to hang them on the clothesline. One by one, she hung the wet clothes on the line. Usually no washing was done on Thursday, but since there was fresh bath water, Mrs. Todd was able to do some extra laundry.

Emily did not mind working outside. It was a bright, sunny and warm day. She knew that somewhere on the river, her father was piloting his boat down to St. Louis. There he would let off some passengers and go on to Memphis. It would be a nice day to be on the riverboat, Emily sighed. But, with all her troubles, she was just glad to be home safe and sound.

As Emily was hanging the last apron on the clothesline she heard a loud noise. Turning to look toward town, she saw two men running down the little alley, headed straight toward her. Before she could escape, the men crashed over the back fence and plowed right through the clothes, dragging them into the dirt.

Untangling themselves from the wet clothes, the men scrambled to their feet and disappeared up the alley. As Emily watched, she recognized the two men as the ones who had rescued her from the cave that morning. She knew that black bushy beard and that green plaid shirt.

In only a moment the men were out of sight, racing off toward the bluffs.

Emily looked at the clothes her mother had just washed. They were lying on the ground, caked with mud. Mrs. Todd was standing on the back porch crying.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2005.

Things to Think About and Do

- How did Mrs. Todd wash the dirty clothes? Explain why she did this. Ask an adult how his or her parents did laundry many years ago.
- Emily dreams of going on the river to see St. Louis or Memphis or New Orleans. Calculate the distance from St. Louis to Memphis and from Memphis to New Orleans. If you add the two distances together, what are you measuring?

Next Week: Chapter Five – A bad day