

CHARLIE. Look at you. Chelsea Mackinelsea.

CHELSEA. Charlie Mackinarlie.

CHARLIE. When did you get back?

CHELSEA. This morning.

CHARLIE. Bring the boyfriend?

CHELSEA. No. He's not my boyfriend anymore.

CHARLIE. Oh, no?

CHELSEA. No, I married him.

CHARLIE. What the heck for?

CHELSEA. I felt sorry for him.

*Ethel enters with the coffee and a plate of biscuits.*

ETHEL. You're early this morning, Charlie. What happened?

CHARLIE. I'm doing the route backwards.

ETHEL. You are?

CHARLIE. Yuh. Thought I'd like to see what it was like. I've been having these little dizzy spells lately, and I thought maybe it was due to going around the lake in the same direction for thirty years.

ETHEL. Are you going to be going backward for the next thirty years, do you think?

CHARLIE. I might. Chelsea Mackinelsea tells me she got herself married again.

ETHEL. Yes. Isn't it wonderful?

*This earns a dubious look from Chelsea. Charlie shrugs.*

CHARLIE. I guess. That sort of puts me out of the running again, huh? The old maid mailman.

ETHEL. Oh, pooh. You could have had anyone you wanted.

CHARLIE. That's not true, Ethel.

CHELSEA. You wouldn't have wanted me, Charlie. We're too good of friends to be married.

CHARLIE. I guess. Holy Mackinoly. That kid Billy gonna be your son now?

CHELSEA. Yes.

CHARLIE. Huh. Well. Congratulations.

CHELSEA. Thank you.

CHARLIE. How long do you expect to be around this trip?

CHELSEA. Another week.

ETHEL. Wonderful!

CHARLIE. Why don't you come ride the mailboat one time? I'll let you drive it.

CHELSEA. Okay.

CHARLIE. You know, it's funny. I was thinking of you just this morning. I was coming down Koochakiyi Shores, and I almost pulled into the little cove where the big dock used to be, and for a minute there I thought I was a kid again.

ETHEL. There's a lot of that going around, Charlie.

CHARLIE. Yuh? That happen to you, too? I can remember so clearly coming in there on my uncle's boat. *The Mariah*, remember?

*Chelsea smiles and nods.*

I'd get up on the deck with that big mailbag for the whole camp, and all those crazy girls would come running down, and I used to feel so important. I'd swing the bag out onto the dock, and then I'd pick up the outgoing mail, and somewhere in there, I'd look for you. And you'd always be standing in the back, kind of all alone. And you'd smile at me, and I'd feel like I was the best thing going.

CHELSEA. You were.

CHARLIE. Yuh, I guess I was. Those were the times.

CHELSEA. I remember in the evenings sometimes, you'd come along Koochakiyi Shores with your brother Tom and anchor your boat and pretend to fish.

CHARLIE. Yuh. We never caught a single one either. We rarely even brought bait. We just liked to hear all you girls sing, and I'd hope to see you. It would start to get dark, and you'd have a camp-fire, and sing those stupid songs.