

# Escape to the City

by Gordon Woodward

*"I kept thinking about Clifford and when he would come home again that night and there would be no one in the room. . . ."*

It was almost three o'clock when I arrived in the city that afternoon.

It was that day in late September when I had started out early in the morning while the thick white mist lay close to the ground and I could see the willow bushes down by the river poking up through the filmy blanket beneath the bridge where Clifford and I had always gone fishing; the dew that morning clustered in thick glistening drops on the handle bars of my bike as I wheeled it quietly down from the porch so as not to wake up Jeannie and Father, who would not even know I was gone until they got up and found that note I had left on the kitchen table saying I had gone to the city to visit Clifford.

And I knew Father would be angry, because he hadn't even written to Clifford since that day over two months

before when they had argued about Clifford going into the business because he was seventeen and through high school. Clifford had refused; instead he had answered an ad in the newspaper for a position as an apprentice in a chemical firm in the city and then had drawn all of his money out of the local bank (which had been seven dollars and nineteen cents) and had climbed on the bus with no one there to even say good-bye to him; and I hadn't seen him since that day.

I was beginning to get tired. I'd ridden over fifty-three miles since I had turned off by Galloway's Dairy on the outskirts of Abbotsford<sup>1</sup> that morning and then had headed down the highway through

<sup>1</sup>Abbotsford, a small town in British Columbia a few miles from the Washington border and southeast of Vancouver.

the smell of trees and rotting leaves and the sun throwing bright patches of early sunlight across the fields. I pulled over to the curb and took out the letter I had received from Clifford and looked at the house number again; it was in the next block so I rode close to the curb with my bike wheels crunching over the dried leaves in the gutter until I came to it.

It was one of those big old houses which line the streets in the west end of Vancouver;<sup>2</sup> it was better looked after than most of them and was painted a bright cream-and-brown color. I got off my bike and wheeled it through the gate; then I untied the parcel on the carrier and went up the steps and rang the doorbell.

After a minute a lady came to the door; she was not very old but had gray hair and glasses. "Does Clifford Barton live here, ma'am?" I said.

"Yes, he does," she said. "But he's not in right now."

"Well, I'm his brother," I said.

"Oh, I see." She seemed as though she didn't know what to say.

"I just came in from Abbotsford where we live," I said. I pointed to my blue CCM lying at the bottom of the steps. "I rode in on my bike," I said.

"That's a long way to ride," she said.

"It certainly is," I said. She still didn't move; and I knew she was stalling for some reason. "I haven't seen Clifford for a couple of months," I said.

"That's quite a coincidence, you coming," she said, "because he was telling me just yesterday about all his brothers at home."

"Oh, there must be some mistake, ma'am," I said. "He doesn't have any other brothers except me—only a sister." Then all at once I realized that she had been trying to find out if I really *was* Clifford's brother; and she knew I knew it.

"I'm sorry," she said, and she smiled. "I have to be careful." She opened the door wider. "Would you like to go up to his room? He should be home about six."

I followed her into the hallway and she closed the door and then led me up two flights of winding carpeted stairs to a room on the top floor; she opened the door and let me go in first and then stood in the doorway a moment. "Are you hungry?" she said.

"No thanks," I said. "I had a hamburger and a milkshake at a place on the highway."

She looked at me for a minute with a kind of warm smile on her face. "You don't look much like Clifford," she said.

"I guess just about everybody tells us that," I said.

"You're the youngest, are you?" she said.

"I'm fifteen," I said. "Just turned fifteen."

"Well, if there's anything you want you just come downstairs," she said. She started to close the door and then she came back again. "The bathroom is right across the hall," she said. She closed the door and I could hear her footsteps going down the stairs.

I sat down on the edge of the bed and looked around at the small room; it was very clean and bright. There was lin-

<sup>2</sup>*Vancouver*, city in British Columbia.

leum on the floor and the wallpaper had white flowers all over it. In one corner there was a small cupboard and below it a table covered with oilcloth with a small electric hot plate and a kettle sitting on it; there was a closet with a door on it; and the bed on which I was sitting was covered with a bright homemade quilt.

I looked at the two windows that opened out above the porch on the front of the house; there were small birds twittering and chirping on the roof outside. The leaves on the maple trees along the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street were yellow and soft brown and yet-bright green, suddenly fluttering one by one to the ground with a frail and brittle scraping sound as though made of balsa wood.

My legs and my backside felt stiff and sore and I lay back on the bed and looked up at the ceiling, just gazing blankly the way I had been lying in my own bed in Abbotstford and looking up at the ceiling that morning Clifford had come into the room all dressed and wearing his pale blue shirt and the maroon tie I had given him for his birthday, when I hadn't even known he was going anywhere until that moment he said, "I'm going, Pat. Take care of yourself. I'll write," and then was gone.

Not even waiting to say good-by to Father (who wouldn't have answered pleasantly anyway), but just walking out through the door and down to the bus stop and getting on that bus with his battered suitcase in which were all his clothes and that small Wedgwood vase which had belonged to Mother and the

sum of seven dollars and nineteen cents in his pocket and heading for the city where he didn't know anyone; so that when I had finally struggled awake that morning and had put on my clothes and jumped on my bike and raced down to the bus stop I had been just in time to see the bus pulling away and had pedaled hard to get alongside and catch just one glimpse of his face and have him see me so that he would know that I at least had wanted to say good-by; and yet I hadn't been fast enough. It had been almost two months before that letter had come and I had even known where he was living in the city.

There was a cool breeze coming through the open window and I pulled the corner of the quilt up over me and put my head on the pillow and then I must have fallen sound asleep; because all at once I felt someone shaking me by the shoulder and calling my name. "Pat! Wake up!" Then a slight pause and another shake. "Pat!"

I slowly opened my eyes and saw Clifford standing by the bed grinning at me, the room looking a little darker and shadier than it had been so that I knew I had slept quite a while. "Am I ever surprised to see you!" he said. "You could have knocked me over when the landlady told me you were here!"

I struggled to come fully awake. "Hi, Clifford!" I said.

"When did you get here?" he said.

"About three o'clock."

"I was expecting you to write," he said, "but I didn't think you'd be able to come in. How did you ever find the place? Did you come in on the bus?"

"I came on my bike," I said. "Didn't you see my CCM out front?"

"I guess I saw it," he said. "But it never struck me it was yours. Did you ride all the way?"

"Sure," I said. I went to get up and felt the stiffness in my thighs. "But I'm a little stiff now," I said. "I'm not used to riding that far."

"You must be starved," he said. "Wait till I have a wash and we'll go and get something to eat." He took off his jacket and hung it in the closet. "Tell me what's been going on," he said.

"I brought you a fish I caught yesterday by the bridge," I said. "A spring.<sup>3</sup> He put up a good fight." I walked over to the table and started to take it out of the paper bag. "And I swiped a jar of Jeannie's raspberry jam," I said. "Jeanie doesn't make very good jam, anyway." We both laughed.

Clifford took a towel and some soap and went across the hall to the bathroom and I could hear him running water in the basin; then after a few minutes he came back drying his neck with the towel. He had taken his glasses off; he always looked different without his glasses as though his eyes had shrunk. "Holy moses!" he said. "Was I ever surprised when I came in and found you here!" He put his glasses back on and slipped his tie over his head and tightened it and put his jacket on. Then he went over to the cupboard and took down a small bowl and took some money out of it and then put the bowl back in the cupboard. "Come on, kid," he said. "Let's get some food before you collapse from hunger."

<sup>3</sup>spring, a type of salmon.

We went downstairs and he knocked on the landlady's door and asked her if it would be all right for me to put my bike in the basement and she said it would so we went around to the side door and put the bike away; then we went down the front sidewalk and out through the gate. The sun was blood-orange and low in the sky and as we walked down the tree-shaded street it threw long shadows down the sidewalk in front of us; our feet crunched on the dried leaves which had fallen on the cement.

"How do you like it, Clifford?" I said. "You mean Vancouver?" he said. "Or my job?"

"Everything," I said. "Being in Vancouver—and having your job—and living here—you know what I mean."

"I like it fine," he said. "I guess I'm pretty lucky." He went along looking at his feet for a minute. "You should see the building I work in, Pat!" he said. "It covers a whole city block."

"I guess it must be a pretty big company," I said.

"Yes," he said. "They're really big—they ship all over the world."

"I guess they must have an awful lot of money," I said.

We came to a corner and turned down toward the harbor. There was a sparkling-white freighter heading out toward The Narrows and the deep glow of evening sunlight rolled across the windows in the wheelhouse like bright liquid fire.

"Do they pay you pretty good money?" I said.

He didn't say anything. We turned another corner and went down the street a little way and turned into a café. The

place smelled of cigarette smoke and frying food the way Gerry's Hamburger Bar in Abbotsford smelled on Saturday night when all the gang hung around listening to the jukebox. There were no vacant booths so we sat down at the counter in the bucket-shaped wooden stools. The waitress came and I ordered some veal cutlets and mashed potatoes and a glass of milk and a piece of cherry pie. Clifford ordered a cup of coffee and some doughnuts. She gave us each a glass of water and went away along the counter.

"Aren't you going to eat?" I said.

"I'm not hungry," he said. "Down at work we're always eating doughnuts or cookies or candy or some other stuff—it ruins a guy's appetite."

"Yes," I said. "I guess it does."

The waitress brought my veal cutlets and I started to eat. I hadn't realized until then just how hungry I really was, and I was enjoying it. Then I happened to look in the big mirror behind the counter and I saw Clifford watching me closely. "Are you *sure* you aren't going to eat something, Clifford?" I said.

"I'm not the least hungry," he said.

"Really I'm not. What made you ask that?"

"Nothing," I said.

I finished my dinner and we got up and Clifford took the check and went over to the cashier and put a two-dollar bill<sup>4</sup> on the counter as though he couldn't understand how he happened to have such a small bill in his pocket. She rang up one dollar and ten cents and gave him

<sup>4</sup>*two-dollar bill*, a denomination quite common in Canada.



the ninety cents and we went outside and turned up Granville Street.

"Feel better?" Clifford said.

"Boy, do I ever!" I said. "That was really good!"

It was beginning to get dark; the streetlights were all on and the neon signs flashed red and blue and green and yellow. There were a lot of people crowding up and down the sidewalk and we had to keep dodging first to one side, and then the other. It was hard to think that out in Abbotstford at that moment there would be only a few neon signs shining in the whole town; and the only places which would even be open would be Gerry's Hamburger Bar and Watson's Drugstore. I dodged around a couple of old ladies and came up beside Clifford again.

"What do you do at night, Clifford?" I said. "I mean what do you do for fun?"

"Oh, I have lots to do," he said. "I have to study, you know. And every Tuesday night I go to a show."

"Why Tuesday?" I said.

"No reason," he said. "I just started going on Tuesday when I first came here. That's the day I get paid: Tuesday."

"Don't you ever go to parties?" I said.

"Or anything like that?"

"I could go to lots if I wanted to," he said, "but I don't usually have time."

"I guess a guy kind of grows out of parties after a while, anyway," I said.

"Yeah," he said. "You get tired of them."

We kept walking down the street. The crowd wasn't quite so thick where we

were then and we didn't have to dodge so much. We came to the intersection and had to stop for a traffic light.

"What would you like to do now, Pat?" Clifford said. "Would you like to just walk around or what?" The light changed and we crossed over and when we got to the opposite curb, he said, "If I'd brought more money with me we could have gone to a show. I never carry any more money with me than I need. I keep it all in a bowl on the shelf back at the room."

"Why don't you put it in the bank?" I said.

"I can't be bothered with banks," he said. "Maybe later on when I get better organized."

"Anyway," I said, "This is Friday night, and Tuesday night is when you go to the show."

"That's right," he said. "It is." He didn't say anything for several minutes, and then he said, "Do they still have the shows two nights a week at home?"

"Yes," I said. "But they're talking about making it every night because of all those construction workers coming into town from that camp on the meridian road. It will sure liven the town up," I said.

"It seems like a year since I left," he said. He stopped to look at some cigarette lighters in a window we were passing and I stopped beside him.

"Clifford," I said. "Haven't you got some friend here in Vancouver you go to shows with, or somebody you just chum around with?" He didn't answer; instead he leaned forward a little and looked closer at the lighters. I knew the minute

it was out of my mouth that I'd said the wrong thing; because Clifford didn't make very many friends. He was hard to get to know, but when he did make a friend he was really loyal, as though he expected the friendship to go on as long as he was alive.

Maybe that was why he had felt the way he had that morning when they had told him that his friend, Tink Martin, had been shot in the stomach while cleaning a shotgun. Clifford had ridden thirteen miles to the hospital in Sardis where they had taken him and then had sat there until they came out and told him that Tink had died without ever regaining consciousness. He had turned around and ridden all the way back and then had sat in the corner of the living room and stared at the wall, not even crying and that was what made it so terrible, just sitting there in the corner while Jeannie and Father had nagged at him to eat something until he finally had and then had been sick right away (perhaps it was because Tink had been shot in the stomach) and then had gone back and sat in the corner again. I'd never forgotten the lost look on his face then. We started walking again.

"I guess there are more important things in the world than just having a lot of friends everywhere," I said.

We turned a corner and started along another street. Not far ahead we could see the Court House with its trimming of little white lights; it looked like a fairy palace. After a minute Clifford said, "When do you have to go back, Pat?" "Tomorrow," I said. "I guess I should head back tomorrow morning."

"It's too bad you couldn't have stayed longer," he said. "If you'd been here Sunday I could have showed you around the city. I don't work Sunday."

"I really think I should go back," I said.

"Yeah," he said. He took out a pack of gum and gave me a stick and then took one himself and put the pack back in his pocket. "Does Father know you came?" he said.

"Yes," I said. "I left before they were up—but I left a note and told them."

"He'd be angry when he found out," he said.

"I don't care," I said. "Let him get mad."

We came to another intersection and looking over to our right we could see the harbor and beyond that the mountains on the north shore. The sun had gone down and the whole sky was covered with blood-orange and pink and yellow and purple; it made the mountains look shadowy purple, almost black. There was a dotted line of lights climbing up the side of one of the mountains and I knew it was the mountain chair-lift. "You know what I'd like to do now?" I said.

"What's that, Pat?" he said.

"I'd just like to go back to your place," I said. "Maybe we could look at some magazines or something."

"Okay," he said.

We started walking faster. We passed a little bakery and Clifford went in and I saw the woman take four little chocolate cream things out of the window and put them in a cardboard box and then Clifford paid her and came out carrying



the box. "I thought you'd like these," he said. "They're really good—I've had them before."

"They looked really good in the window," I said.

We walked back to the house and went upstairs and put on the small drop-cord light. Clifford took the kettle and went in the bathroom and put some water in it and then came back and closed the door. "I'll make some tea," he said. "Would you like some tea?"

"Yes, I would," I said. I sat down on the edge of the bed. My legs really felt stiff and I ran my hands up and down my thighs and watched Clifford. He turned the hot plate on and then got down the teapot and started putting tea bags in it. "How's Father?" he said suddenly. "And Jeannie?"

"They're okay," I said. "I guess." He didn't say anything else but he seemed to be taking an awful long time to put the tea in the pot, so I said, "Father never mentions you. I guess he's still mad."

"Yeah, I guess so," he said. He walked over to the corner and took down a couple of scriblers from a small shelf. "Like to see some of the stuff I'm studying?" he said.

"Sure," I said.

He opened one of the notebooks and there were some drawings in colored pencil and some handwritten notes and a lot of loose typewritten sheets. "This is what they call biochemistry," he said. "I have to study this before I take my exams."

"When are your exams?" I said.

"Oh, not for a long time yet," he said.

"Not until I finish my apprenticeship. But it doesn't hurt to get started ahead of time." He put the book down on the bed and went over to make the tea. I flipped some of the pages. "I guess you get a pretty good salary," I said.

"I don't get very much right now," he said. "You see, I'm only an apprentice and that means they're teaching me. It's like going to school in a way, except that I get paid."

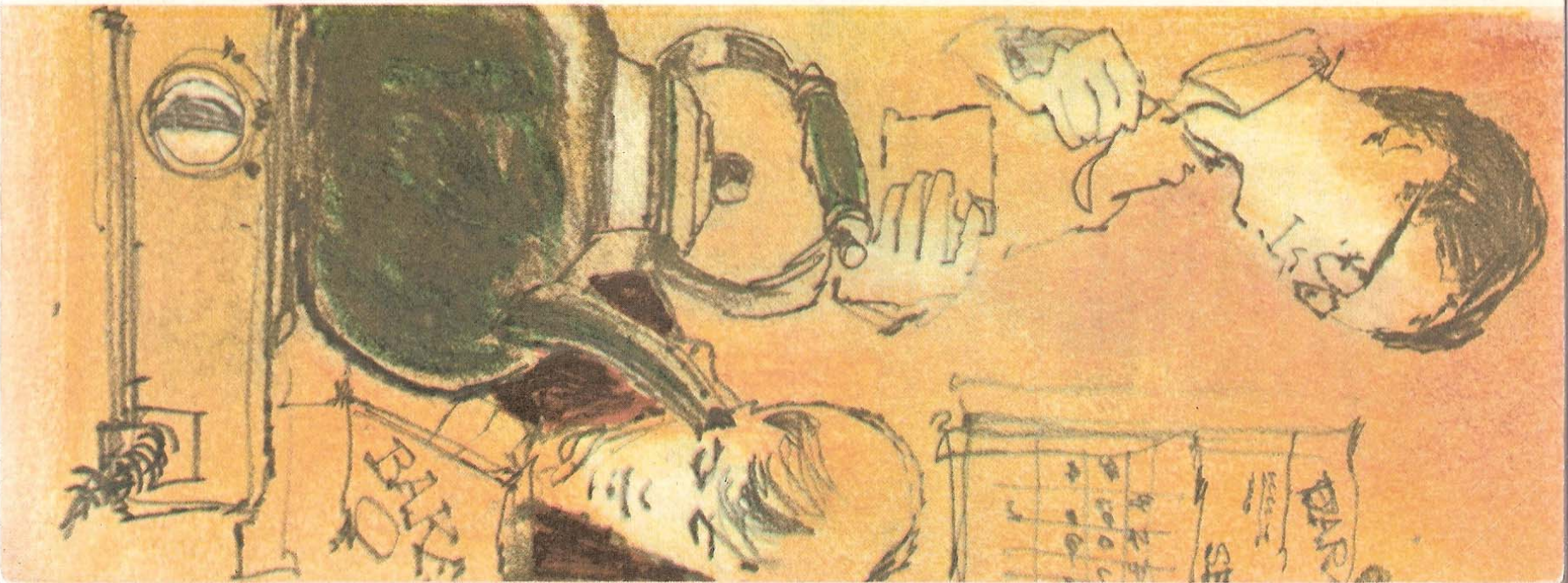
"How much?" I said.

"I get eleven dollars a week right now," he said. "But next year I get fourteen; and I also get a week's holiday with pay next summer."

He poured some boiling water into the teapot and put the lid on it and then turned the hot plate off. I just kept looking around at the room; it was clean and bright and neat, but there wasn't very much homeyness about it. There was a stack of magazines on a chair in the corner and a few pocket novels on the shelf by the bed and a calendar from some produce company on the door of the closet and mother's Wedgwood vase sitting up on top of the cupboard, but there was no radio and there were no lamps or cushions. The window was still open and there was a cool breeze floating in and when I looked out I could see the soft-orange squares of lighted windows in the houses across the street.

"A year is a long time," I said.

He brought two cups over and put them on the table and then got a bowl of sugar out of the cupboard and a small can of milk and some teaspoons and put them all on the table. "It's too bad you haven't got a radio, Clifford," I said.



"I've never been much of a guy for listening to the radio, anyway," he said. "You know that." He poured out some tea and put the pot back and then opened up the box with the chocolate-cream pastries in it. "Dig in," he said. "They're good. You'll like them."

I picked one up and took a bite out of it; they were really good. I'd never tasted anything like that in Abbotsford. Clifford took one and ate it and then started drinking his tea. "Finish them up, Pat," he said.

"You have another one," I said.

"Not for me," he said. "I can't eat much of that stuff. It makes me sick. Besides, I can get them any time I want." He watched me eat them with a little smile on his pale face. "Do you like them?" he said.

"They're super!" I said. "What do they call them?"

"I don't know," he said. "They've probably got some European name." He picked up his cup and took a drink and I noticed that every time he did the steam fogged his glasses and he had to wait a couple of minutes before they cleared again. "What are you going to do now that you've quit school, Pat?" he said.

"I don't know," I said. "I can go to work in Abbotsford. I can even work for Father in the store."

"Is there any kind of work you want to do?" he said. "Anything in particular?"

"No," I said. "I haven't made up my mind yet."

We finished our tea and then Clifford went and washed the cups out and dried them and put them back in the cup-

board. We just sat around for a while and then we both decided we were tired so we went to bed and put the light out. I was lying on the outside of the bed and I could see out of the window without moving.

There were a lot of bright-lighted windows and street lights and car lights sliding down the street; but they all seemed as though they had nothing at all to do with Clifford and me lying there in the darkened room; then away in the distance against the dark night sky I could see the bright amber-pointed lights of the Lions Gate Bridge curving through the darkness across The Narrows.<sup>5</sup>

I must have been just dozing off when Clifford spoke. "Pat?" he said. "Are you asleep?"

"Not yet," I said.

"Pat, why do you suppose Father got so angry with me?" he said. "I only wanted to live my own life."

I didn't answer for a moment. I wanted to say that it was all because Father was such a bullheaded character; but I knew Clifford wouldn't believe that about anybody, let alone Father. He'd just say there was some reason beneath that. "I don't know, Clifford," I said. "Maybe he just wanted to have his own way."

He didn't say anything for several minutes and I thought he must have gone to sleep; then all of a sudden he said, "So you think he really hates me, Pat?"

<sup>5</sup>*Lions Gate Bridge . . . The Narrows.* One of the world's longest suspension bridges, the Lions Gate, spans Burrard Inlet at the First Narrows (narrow part of the inlet) to connect Stanley Park with West Vancouver.

"I don't think so, Clifford," I said. "Maybe you just don't see things the same way, that's all. It'll work out okay." I waited for quite a while and there was no sound so I reached over in the darkness and put my hand on his shoulder; he didn't move.

The next morning Clifford woke me up. "Pat! It's half-past seven," he said. "I've got to leave pretty soon. Pat?"

I sat up and opened my eyes; there was bright sunlight pouring through the window and brushing across the cups on the table like liquid amber. Clifford was already dressed and sitting at the table drinking a cup of tea. "I thought I'd let you sleep for a while," he said. "You looked tired."

"I'm okay," I said. I got up and put on my clothes and went across the hall and had a wash and then came back and sat down at the table. "That toast sure does smell good," I said.

"I'm sorry I haven't got more than just toast for your breakfast," he said. "But the fact is that I forgot to get any bacon yesterday."

"That's okay," I said. He got up and started to make some toast on the hot plate but I went over and took the bread from him. "I'll do that," I said. "You drink your tea."

He went and sat down again and took a sip of his tea; then he looked out of the window. "You've got a nice day for your trip back," he said.

"Yeah," I said. "It should be okay." I turned the piece of bread over on the wire mesh on top of the electric plate. "What time do you have to leave for work?" I said.

"I usually leave about fifteen to eight," he said. "It takes me about fifteen minutes to walk." He drank the rest of his tea and washed the cup out and then came back and dried it on the dish towel and put it back in the cupboard. "Don't bother with those dishes before you go, Pat," he said. "I'll clean them up when I come home."

"I can do them," I said. I took the toast over to the table and put some butter on it and then poured some tea into a cup. "It won't hurt me to do a few dishes," I said.

"Well, I guess I'd better go," he said. He walked over and opened the door and stood there a minute with his hand on the doorknob. "I guess you'll come in again sometime when you get a chance," he said. "I don't mean right away, but . . ."

"Sure, I'll be in again, Clifford," I said.

He was still standing there with his hand on the doorknob as though he wanted to say something but didn't know just how to say it. "Well, anyway," he said, "watch yourself on the highway. And give my best to Abbottsford when you get back. So long!"

"So long, Clifford," I said. "And thanks for everything."

He closed the door and I could hear him going down the stairs; then I got up and went to the window and watched him go out through the gate and start along the street. He was walking very fast and he had his head down; he didn't look back.

I went back to the table and ate the rest of my toast and drank the tea and

then I went back to the window. The bright morning sunlight sparkled and shimmered over the harbor and the windows in the buildings on the distant north shore. I kept thinking about Clifford and when he would come home again that night and there would be no one in the room and he would sit down all alone and eat his supper and then wash the plate and the cup and put them back in the cupboard and then maybe go for a walk or else do some of his studying until it was time to go to bed.

I went over to the cupboard and took down the bowl I had seen him taking money from and looked inside. There were some receipts for his room rent every week, each one made out for five dollars and signed by the landlady; and there was one quarter, a nickel, and two pennies. I put the bowl back and sat down on the edge of the bed again. I kept remembering the way he had watched me when I was eating in the café and the way he had put the two-dollar bill on the counter so casually and the chocolate-cream pastries he had bought me on the way home; for a minute I thought I was going to bawl.

After a while I got up and went downstairs and asked the landlady if I could use her phone to call home and told her I would see that she got paid in a few days. Then I called the long distance operator and asked for Abbotsford 723 and waited until the buzzing and clicking stopped and I heard the receiver being lifted on the other end fifty-some miles away. "Hello?"

"Hello," I said. "Jeannie? This is Pat."

"Patrick Barton!" she said. "Where are you?"

"I'm in Vancouver," I said. "Where did you think I was, Siberia?"

"You don't need to think you're being smart," she said. "You're going to get into plenty of trouble when Father sees you! You'd better get right back here this very minute!"

"I'll just go outside and get in my jet,"

I said. "I should be there by the time you get out to the back porch." That's the only way I can hold my own with Jeannie.

"I'm not fooling, either," she said.

"Neither am I," I said. "Is Father there?"

"No," she said. "He's gone down to open the store. He's been absolutely *sick* worrying about you!"

"Well, tell him I'm staying here!" I said. "Did you get that? I'm staying here with Clifford!"

"You're what?" she said.

"I'm staying here," I said. "I'm going to get a job here in the city. Don't you understand English?"

"Now look, Mister Man," she said. "Just because Clifford gets too big for his boots is no reason for you to think you can just do what you want! Don't either of you ever think of Father——"

"Oh, shut up!" I said. "This call is costing money. Are you going to tell him or not?"

"Of course I'm going to tell him," she said. "And he is going to be as mad as——"

"Then he'll just have to be mad!" I said, and hung up.

I went back upstairs and washed the

dishes and put them away in the cupboard; then I looked in the want ads in the paper and I saw an ad for a delivery boy so I went downstairs and phoned the number and the man took my name and told me to come Monday morning and I would have first call for the job. Then I got my bike out of the basement and went for a ride down by the docks.

About four o'clock I came back and put the bike away and went down to the shopping district. I still had sixty-five cents I'd been going to use for hamburgers and stuff on the way home, so I bought some butter and some tomatoes and some jam tarts and took them all back to the room. Then I cut some salmon steaks and fried them in butter and put them on a plate and slid it under the hot plate; and after I'd done that I cut up some of the tomatoes and put the kettle on and then set the table.

I kept going over to the window and watching for Clifford; and then all at once I saw him coming down the street.

He had a newspaper in one hand and he was walking more slowly than usual and he still had his head down. I waited until I saw him turn in at the gate and then I put everything on the table and poured some boiling water in the teapot and put the lid on it and then I sat down and waited for the sound of his footsteps on the stairs.

### Talking it over

1. Why did Clifford go to the city?
2. Why do you think Clifford took the Wedgwood vase with him to Vancouver?
  3. *a.* Why does Clifford eat only doughnuts instead of dinner the first night?
  3. *b.* Why doesn't Clifford "have time" to go to parties?
  3. *c.* Do pastries really make Clifford sick? Explain.
4. *a.* When does Pat begin to suspect that Clifford may not be telling the truth about everything?
  4. *b.* By quoting Clifford's words, point out two additional times he hides the truth and tell how you know.
  4. *c.* Why does Clifford hide his true situation from Pat?
5. *a.* Does Pat understand Clifford and his problems? Explain.
  5. *b.* Do his sister and father understand Clifford?
6. *a.* What do you think is the main reason Pat stays in Vancouver?
  6. *b.* In your opinion, was it the right thing for him to do? Explain.
7. What kind of person is Pat? Is he someone you would like to know? Explain.
8. How would the story have differed if Clifford had told it? What would he have left out? What would he have added?

