



Chapter Four

# DANCING EYES

*Proverbs 19: 11*

*A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.*

DANCING EYES

In old age when our heads are crowned with gray, we reminisce about the treasured summers of our youth, now living at our hearts core----far, far within. It is through this remembering we realize, no matter how deep the winter's snow, life's beauty has far outweighed its bitterness. Thus, even in the chill of the soul's coldest December, our very being feels a golden glow from knowing special people have tenderly caressed us through acts of patience mercy and love.

When listening to Dick Du Puis recall the summers he spent at Aunt Evelyn's farm, it becomes crystal clear the enormous patience shown to her nephew with the dancing eyes. Even now, when Dick recounts the capers he pulled on his good natured aunt over the course of several summers, waves of mischief playfully skip across his face accompanied by fits of laughter.

During the summertime, Dick loved to spend the majority of his vacation helping his aunt with the chores on the farm. Since her husband had a saloon in town, he was rarely home, which meant her three children needed to do their share of work to keep the farm prosperous. There were arrays of animals requiring care plus the fields of cotton, rice, sugar cane and corn that must be tended.

In addition, house hold chores seemed a never ending task for his aunt. Dick loved to watch as she used a broom to beat the mattresses and covers so the feathers inside would stay evenly distributed. Then, that evening, Dick and his cousin Roland would make a flying leap into bed allowing the 8 inches of feathers to totally incase their bodies.

Every summer, things would be moving along peacefully at Aunt Evelyn's farm until her nephew, Dick O'Neill Du Puis' brown eyes would start to dance. This behavior signaled the birth of a caper that would test his aunt's patience to the breaking point. Clearly, Dick knew exactly when his time was up because Aunt Evelyn would go to the barn, hook her horse to the buggy and leave only a cloud of dust behind as she rapidly drove out of sight. Her mischievous nephew could be assured that her destination was to pay a call on his mother exclaiming, "Come and get your son!" **TIME WAS UP! VACATION HAD ENDED!**

As you enjoy Dick's capers that follow, shine the Medal of Honor to a rich luster and prepare yourself to place it around Aunt Evelyn's neck for showing extreme patience in the line of duty.

#### **CAPER # 1—MYSTERY OF THE MISSING CHICKENS**

Aunt Evelyn had several prized chickens on her farm that she raised to provide eggs and meat for the family. The feed she gave them was neatly stored in a large armoire nearby for convenience. Just for fun, Dick talked his cousin Roland into catching the chickens and placing them inside the large armoire along with the feed. Since closing the doors resulted in creating total darkness, the captive chickens felt no alarm and quickly began roosting thinking night had arrived. Meanwhile, Aunt Evelyn, not hearing the normal clucking and crowing sounds that always filled the air in the barnyard, frantically began searching for her prized chickens. After failing miserably to locate them, she decided the best solution would be to tempt them with their feed. Unfortunately, to her shock and surprise, when she opened the doors to the armoire where the feed was stored, the captive chickens flew in every direction, but mainly in her face. **BUGGY OUT! VACATION OVER!**

#### **CAPER # 2—ROCK CANDY**

Since one of the main crops grown on the farm was sugar cane, Aunt Evelyn would process it and make enough syrup to fill a 50 gallon oil barrel. As the syrup set, rock candy would form on the sides just above the syrup line. The family always enjoyed the rock candy as a very special treat that was served on a plate and placed in the center of the table for a perfect ending to a meal. Unfortunately, Dick witnessed his aunt procuring some candy from the barrel one day and knew exactly where to find it on a regular basis. So, he taught his cousin Roland how to reach into the barrel and pull out the delicious sweet treat called rock candy. Then they proceeded to gorge themselves until the supply became scarce. Consequently, they had to dive deeper for more down through the sticky syrup. As luck would have it, Aunt Evelyn discovered the two sugar bears up to their elbows in syrup, with the sticky substance running from their shoulders down the length of their arms and onto their clothing. **BUSTED!** Their aunt now understood why the two boys had been refusing syrup at the table when she

served pancakes. These two culprits were fully cognizant the syrup had been totally contaminated by their dirty sweaty bodies. THERE GOES THE BACK END OF AUNT EVELYN'S BUGGY DOWN THE DRIVE!

### **CAPER # 3—THE CASE OF THE HUNGRY ANTS**

Aunt Evelyn decided it was time to freshen the appearance of one of her rooms with new colorful wallpaper. So, having chosen her pattern, the first step in the process was to paste newspaper over the entire wall which would act as a base for better adherence. This accomplished, the next step was to mix her paste using cornstarch and water one day in advance of the papering process. Since she had committed to memory her tried and true recipe, it was finished in no time and left on the table to set up over night. Unfortunately, her nephew's creative mind concocted the theory that by adding sticky sugar to the already prepared paste, it would enhance the adherence of the product. He knew beyond doubt how proud his aunt would be with this ingenuity. The next day, his Aunt Evelyn arose very early and had papered the walls within record time. Then stepping back and admiring her work, it was apparent she felt satisfied the tired room had come to life with the beautiful pattern she had chosen. However, in just a while, the family started noticing tiny holes here and there on the walls, with more appearing each day. Those pesky ants had detected the sugar in the paste and invited all their friends and relatives to partake of the delicious feast. Thus, in record time, Aunt Evelyn's beautiful paper was literally eaten right off the walls. VACATION OVER!

### **CAPER # 4 BETTER THAN SNUFF AND NOT HALF AS DUSTY**

Dick figured out by observing his Aunt Evelyn's habits that she enjoyed her snuff immensely. So, Roland and Dick thought of a creative way in which to use a little of it. They proceeded to sniff some of that brown snuff up their mischievous noses and immediately broke into BROWN SNEEZING FITS! Brown spray flew through the air and all over the walls. Not a pretty sight! Aunt Evelyn made great sounds of alarm, almost to the panic stage, thinking something was terribly wrong with the two boys. This time before her nephew was sent home, he had some housekeeping to complete in the form of scrubbing walls.

### **CAPER # 5 GRANDFATHER O'NEILL'S EVAPORATION PUZZLE**

The momentum from the capers pulled while on summer vacation at Aunt Evelyn's farm once carried over to his Grandfather O'Neill's home, except with a new partner in crime, being Dick's cousin Alfred. Both boys, fully aware of their grandfather's hobby of making sweet wine, knew also of the place where it was stored. Furthermore, since they had relatives as nurses, they were able to obtain hypodermic needles to pull off their caper. Using the needles, they punctured the cork on the wine bottles and enjoyed sucking out one half inch

of the alcoholic beverage from each container for their pleasure. Thus, each time Grandfather O'Neill opened a bottle of his prized dessert wine to serve with a meal, he was absolutely stumped as to why he had an evaporation problem. Dick and Alfred sat stoically at the table daring not to even glance at one another. The issue of the evaporation puzzle was a challenge his grandfather ruminated over for years without ever finding a solution.

### FORGIVENESS

It has been said that forgiveness is never earned, but given to another as an act of mercy and grace. Since Aunt Evelyn demonstrated these traits on a daily basis, it is truly understandable why Dick labeled her as one of the sweetest, most even tempered, forgiving individuals he ever met. In spite of all the capers he pulled each time on the farm, when the next summer arrived, he would hear her comment to his mother, "Since Dick is now a year older, he will not have a problem this year." Although she was astute enough to realize this was probably not a possibility, her love for the nephew with the dancing eyes was so great forgiveness always flowed from her kind heart.

Today, as Dick Du Puis looks back fondly at all the pranks he pulled on his Aunt Evelyn, due to the hardship he was to endure as a mere child at age 12, he realizes those years on her farm were his final time of youth. The next chapter of his life will be so heavy with the weight of responsibility, we will all long for his eyes to dance just one more time.



**AUNT EVELYN**



*(BUGGY LIKE AUNT EVELYN DROVE)*



**DICK, AGE 11**