

Cottonwood Summer (Pages 206-207)

Breakfast at the Farm

When the boys awake from Danny's first night at the farm, Grandpa and Grandma Compton are confronted with one of Danny's most fascinating quirks -- his enormous appetite.

Grandpa and Grandma were up well before first light. Grandpa always enjoyed his first cup of Grandma's coffee at the kitchen table before he commenced his morning chores.

Sound from the kitchen woke Danny first. He hopped out of bed and immediately removed Grandma's nightgown. When I opened my eyes, he was back in his army uniform, sitting on the side of our bed. He looked quite relieved at being dressed normally again. Normal for Danny, that is. I couldn't blame him.

"Aren't you hungry?" he inquired eagerly.

"Yep! Why don't you go on down while I get dressed," I urged my friend who, inexplicably, seemed a bit shy that morning.

But he took my advice and disappeared down the stairs. I smiled to myself when I heard Grandma and Grandpa's warm greetings from the kitchen below. I also heard Danny fall for Grandpa's morning standard, "Up before breakfast, eh?"

"Yep!" Danny replied.

I dressed in my farm clothes, tumbled downstairs, and entered the kitchen. Danny looked up from the table and beat Grandpa to the punch, "Up before breakfast, eh?"

Grandpa smiled and turned back to finish the calculations he was making on a pad of paper on the kitchen table. "I'll bet you're figuring how much seed and fertilizer we'll need," I speculated innocently, showing off a bit for Danny.

Grandpa smiled. "How'd you know that?"

Of course, he knew how I knew. For the last three summers, each time before we drilled, I had seen him go through this calculation. But Grandpa went along with my little show for Danny's benefit.

When I sat down, Grandma turned from her stove and gave me a funny look, "If you're as hungry as Danny, you'll probably want the same breakfast."

Again, she gave me that funny look. I got the hint. "What's Danny having, Grandma?"

"Well, let's see. First, he's havin' coffee with lots of milk and sugar -- brown sugar is what he prefers. Then he wants some hickory-smoked bacon and eggs. Then he says he'll have a bowl of oatmeal with fresh cream -- that's what I'm havin'. Next, there's Grapenuts -- steamed with hot water first -- with milk and brown sugar. That's what Grandpa is thinking about. Then he wants some fresh bread toast -- four slices, he says -- with strawberry, blackberry, *and* blueberry jam. Next, he wants some prunes. And, finally, he'd like to finish up with some molasses cookies. Just a few, he tells me."

Grandma had spelled out Danny's order with the skill of a truck stop waitress.

I reacted without thinking. "Holy Cow! Danny, what are you doing? We came out here to help Grandpa, not to eat breakfast all day long!"

I felt a little guilty about my accusation, but evidently, my message got through. Danny stared at me, weighing my words carefully. Then, much to my surprise, he nodded his head in agreement.

Turning to Grandma, he said, "Cancel that blueberry jam order, please."

**Excerpted from *Cottonwood Summer* by Gary Slaughter.
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