

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	What Happened to Daddy?	3
Chapter 2	The Hospital Visit	7
Chapter 3	Daddy Comes Home	12
Chapter 4	The Big Black Boot	16
Chapter 5	Sadie and the Chicks	22
Chapter 6	The Broken Bike	27
Chapter 7	Ye Have Need of Patience	31
Chapter 8	Picture of a Broken Leg	34
Chapter 9	Brothers' Work Day	39
Chapter 10	The Fruit and Vegetable Stand	46
Chapter 11	The Most Important Part	50
Chapter 12	Chicken Chases	55
Chapter 13	Mrs. Black's Surprise	60
Chapter 14	Ten More Potatoes	64
Chapter 15	"I Can, I Can!"	71
Chapter 16	A Letter From Andrew	77

Chapter 1

What Happened to Daddy?

“Hi, Daddy! We brought you lunch,” called seven-year-old Andrew. He shaded his eyes in the bright June sunshine and waved. Beside him his four-year-old brother Christopher was prancing and waving his arms.

High above, the sound of hammering stopped. Daddy’s shadowy shape straightened, and he smiled down from the rooftop. “Hi, boys!” he called. “I’ll be down in a minute.” He stuck his hammer into his tool belt and began to climb down the ladder.

“When I grow up, I want to be a roofer just like Daddy,” Andrew said.

“Me too!” Christopher agreed. He had stopped waving, but he was still prancing. It was so much fun to bring Daddy lunch at his work place!

Daddy’s heavy work boots pounded the gravel, first one, then the other, as he stepped off the ladder. Andrew took Daddy’s warm hand as they walked to the shade tree where Mom and his five-and-a-half-year-old sister Megan were setting out the picnic lunch.

Baby Sharilyn toddled toward Andrew and Daddy. “Dadda, Dadda,” she said. Daddy picked her up and tossed her playfully into the air. She giggled.

“It’s a very warm day,” Daddy said. He sat down beside Mom on the grass and wiped sweat from his brow. Mom handed him a cold drink.

“We brought freeze pops for dessert!” Christopher announced.

“Shhh!” Megan hissed. “It’s supposed to be a surprise!”

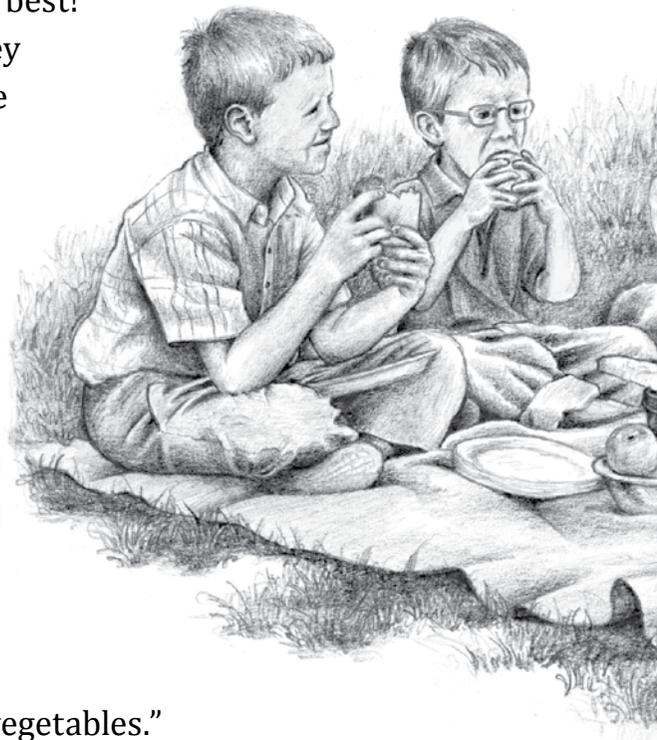
Andrew sat down on the picnic blanket. After Daddy had thanked God for the food, Andrew grabbed his plate and took a big bite of his tasty sandwich.

“What do you like best about living in the country?” Daddy asked the children. Two months ago, Andrew and his family had moved out of town to their own home in the country.

“I like riding my bike best!” Andrew said. When they had lived in town, there had been no place to ride his bike. Now he liked to race up and down the long driveway.

“I like the yard and the garden,” Megan said. Their old house had only a small fenced-in yard and no space for a garden. “I’m so glad we can plant flowers and vegetables.”

“I like the chicks!” Christopher cried.



“Teep, teep,” Sharilyn said.

Andrew agreed that having chicks was the next best thing about living in the country, after space to ride his bike. He pictured the chickens in the chicken coop—thirty-nine balls of yellow fluff dashing from the feeders to the water fountains.

“Did you remember to feed the chicks this morning, Andrew?” Daddy asked.



Andrew nodded. "Yes, Daddy, but we're almost out of feed."

"We'll go to the feed store after lunch and buy some," Mom said.

"Did the lumber yard deliver the lumber I ordered?" Daddy asked.

"Yes," Andrew answered. "A big truck came, and we watched them unload everything."

"Good," said Daddy. "When I get home after work, we'll start building the chicken pen. Those chicks will soon outgrow their little coop."

Megan handed out the freeze pops. Andrew chose a blue one and sucked loudly at the cold sweetness.

"Are you almost finished with this roofing job?" Andrew asked Daddy.

"I think we'll finish today," Daddy answered.

Too soon, Daddy stood to his feet. "Time to go back to work," he announced.

He hugged each one and strapped on his tool belt. Mom and the children watched Daddy climb the ladder and step onto the roof. Once again, he stood high above them and waved. "Love you, family!" he called.

"Love you!" they shouted back.

Mom packed up the lunch. "Time to go," she said. She helped little Sharilyn into her car seat. "If we hurry, we'll have time to stop by Aunt Helen's."

Megan clapped her hands. "Oh, Mom, we'll see the twins!"

Andrew was glad to see the babies too, but even more than that, he wanted to play with Cousin Joel.

A half hour later, Andrew was sailing through the sky on the grand tire swing Uncle Pete had put up in the big maple tree while Joel watched from the ground.

When his ride was over, Andrew panted, "I need a drink. I'll be back in a bit." He bounded through the back door and poured himself a glass of cold water in the kitchen.

"Oh, they're so cute!" he heard Megan squeal.

She was sitting on the couch between Mom and Aunt Helen holding one of the twins. Mom held the other one. *I remember how much fun I had holding them when we came to visit last week, Andrew thought. But I'll wait to play with them until they are older.*

Andrew set the empty glass on the table and turned to go back outside.

Just then the telephone rang.

Aunt Helen answered it, then held the phone out to Mom. "It's for you."

Andrew stopped short. *Why would someone call Mom here?* he wondered.

"Hello?... When did this happen?... Is he all right?" Mom asked. Her voice sounded alarmed. Andrew's heart beat faster. *What happened?* he wondered.

"Thank you, Margaret." Mom hung up the phone. She looked up and noticed Andrew in the kitchen.

"Andrew, please run outside and tell Christopher it's time to go. Something has happened to Daddy!"

Andrew bolted toward the door. As he raced to the backyard, his mind raced too. *What happened to Daddy? Whatever it is, it's not good!*