

## Lois Looking for Love

Lois looked out of the living room window and smiled nervously to herself. *It was certainly nice of James to send me a plane ticket. I don't know if these old bones would take kindly to a trip out to Wisconsin on a Greyhound, the bus ride to Boston will be hard enough. I told him I could do it all the way; I'd do almost anything to finally see my grandchildren -- pictures just aren't the same.*

She let the curtain fall back in place and reassured herself on the way into the kitchen. *I hope the car service will ring the door bell if I don't hear the honk. I told them that some of the children here just make too much noise.*

She took a glass from the drainer, took a few sips of water from the faucet, rinsed the glass and returned it to the drainer. Then she hurried back to the window to resume her vigil.

She recalled her last conversation with her friend Sybil, how when she told her, "My son lives in Cudahy," Sybil asked, "What's a Cudahy?"

"Well that's where my son and two granddaughters live, in Wisconsin."

Sybil sniffed and then asked about Lois's daughter-in-law, "Did she die or something?"

Lois had shaken her head since she couldn't remember her daughter-in-law's name at the moment. She snatched and reminded herself that it was Victoria. *And my son James always writes and tells me how in love they still are.*

She went back into the kitchen to check the clock above the stove, her eyes on the table. On her way back to the front window she told herself that it was still early. *They promised to pick me up by 9:15 A.M., said it would be time enough.*

She remembered how in the early days Abel liked to make love on the kitchen table, telling her that's why the pioneers made them out of oak. *I thought I had love then, but now I don't know. Abel sure liked it but with my skinny bottom it wasn't all that much fun. And him saying that I needn't worry about any drippings -- "Sweetie, we can save on mayo," -- well that was plain gross. But I must have thought it was love since I went back with him to his mom in Wisconsin. But love? Now I just don't know.*

*Colin and Kathy never say much just like Abel -- I imagine it must have been hard on them, me leaving Abel and running after Professor Fringle, but I took them with me, James too. It wasn't as if I abandoned them. I couldn't have done such a bad job; Colin used to call me for my birthday or about that time of the year anyhow.*

Lois walked over to the coat closet next to the hall door, opened it and peered intently at her reflection in the mirror attached on the inside. *I still don't look all that bad in spite of being so tired.*

*Maybe I'll be able to sleep a lot at James's place; I don't think there's much to do in Cudahy. I could go out again. It's never too late to find love.*

She walked over to the couch, picked up the doily from one of its arms and put it in her purse. *Well, I don't know why Dottie liked these so much, insisting I take four when I came back here to New England. They always remind me of handkerchiefs – I guess I may as well use it as one. I did have some good years with her -- but I don't think that could have been love – no, not love.*

Just then she heard a car horn and rushed to the window.

She ran down the stairs and up to the driver's window. "You're here to take me to the Greyhound station?" A nod confirmed that he was and she continued, "I have one bag at the top of the stairs, perhaps you can help me?"

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An hour into the flight she watched puffy white clusters of clouds floating beneath the plane. She smiled. *How like the pillows at Stephen's. I wonder where he could be – James never says anything about his father.*

She fell asleep and woke on the approach into General Billy Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee. Taking a small mirror from her purse, she decided to reapply some lipstick, reassuring herself that she was not bad looking for a woman of 70. *Why maybe there's still hope for me to find love.*

Both the flight and the landing had been bumpy. She stood up to collect her carry-on from the overhead compartment. *My life has been just like this flight: full of bumps.*