

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



IN THE MORNING, THE SUN ROSE and the cricket song gave way to bird song and an old woman came walking down the dirt road and tripped right over Edward.

“Hmph,” she said. She pushed at Edward with her fishing pole.

“Looks like a rabbit,” she said. She put down her basket and bent and stared at Edward. “Only he ain’t real.”

She stood back up. “Hmph,” she said again. She rubbed her back. “What I say is, there’s a use for everything and everything has its use. That’s what I say.”

Edward didn’t care what she said. The terrible ache he had felt the night before had gone away and had been replaced with a different feeling, one of hollowness and despair.

Pick me up or don’t pick me up, the rabbit thought. It makes no difference to me.

The old lady picked him up.

She bent him double and put him in her

basket, which smelled of weeds and fish, and then she kept walking, swinging the basket and singing, “Nobody knows the troubles I seen.”

Edward, in spite of himself, listened.

I’ve seen troubles, too, he thought. You bet I have. And apparently they aren’t over yet.

Edward was right. His troubles were not over.

The old woman found a use for him.

She hung him from a pole in her vegetable garden. She nailed his velvet ears to the wooden pole and spread his arms out as if he were flying and attached his paws to the pole by wrapping pieces of wire around them. In addition to Edward, pie tins hung from the pole. They clinked and clanked and shone in the morning sun.

“Ain’t a doubt in my mind that you can scare them off,” the old lady said.

Scare who off? Edward wondered.

Birds, he soon discovered.

Crows. They came flying at him, cawing

and screeching, wheeling over his head, diving at his ears.

“Go on, Clyde,” said the woman. She clapped her hands. “You got to act ferocious.”

Clyde? Edward felt a weariness so intense wash over him that he thought he might actually be able to sigh aloud. Would the world never tire of calling him by the wrong name?

The old woman clapped her hands again. “Get to work, Clyde,” she said. “Scare them birds off.” And then she walked away from him, out of the garden and toward her small house.



I HAVE BEEN LOVED, EDWARD TOLD THE STARS.

The birds were insistent. They flew around his head. They tugged at the loose threads in his sweater. One large crow in particular would not leave the rabbit alone. He perched on the pole and screamed a dark message in Edward's left ear: Caw, caw, caw, without ceasing. As the sun rose higher and shone meaner and brighter, Edward became somewhat dazed. He mistook the large crow for Pellegrina.

Go ahead, he thought. Turn me into a warthog if you want. I don't care. I am done with caring.

Caw, caw, said the Pellegrina crow.

Finally, the sun set and the birds flew away. Edward hung by his velvet ears and looked up at the night sky. He saw the stars. But for the first time in his life, he looked at them and felt no comfort. Instead, he felt mocked. You are down there alone, the stars seemed to say to him. And we are up here, in our constellations, together.

I have been loved, Edward told the stars.

So? said the stars. What difference does that make when you are all alone now?

Edward could think of no answer to that question.

Eventually, the sky lightened and the stars disappeared one by one. The birds returned and the old woman came back to the garden. She brought a boy with her.

Questions: Chapter 15

- 1. *Pick me up or don't pick me up, it makes no difference to me. Why doesn't Edward care about what happens to him?***
- 2. *Go ahead. Turn me into a warthog, I don't care. I am done with caring. Why is he 'done' with caring?***
- 3. **What has changed about the way Edward sees the stars?****
- 4. **Page 120 - What does he care about more than the stars?****