

*Ray bursts through the door. Attractive and well-dressed, a tad self-serious but with a good sense of humor when he remembers to use it. He drops his several suitcases, out of breath and more than a little rattled.*

CHELSEA. Look at you. You made it.

BILL. Yes. I think I saw a bear.

CHELSEA. I doubt that. Bill, this is my mother. Mommy, Bill Ray.

ETHEL. *(Shaking Bill's hand.)* I'm very pleased you could come. Welcome to Golden pond.

BILL. Thank you. Do you have a dog?

ETHEL. What? No. *(To Chelsea.)* You know, I tried to interest Norman in getting a dog this summer, but he went into some morbid diatribe about how unfair it is to take on a puppy if you're planning to die soon.

CHELSEA. You could have gotten him an old dog. Something on its last leg.

ETHEL. Well, Norman is still in mourning for Chum, I'm afraid.

CHELSEA. *(To Bill.)* Chum was a Labrador retriever who passed on just twenty short years ago.

BILL. *(Not exactly following.)* Oh. Do any of your neighbors have dogs?

ETHEL. Um. No, I don't believe so.

BILL. Then I definitely saw a bear.

ETHEL. Oh, no, I don't think there'd be a bear out there this time of year. They go pretty far into the woods when the summer people show up. There are a lot of very nasty moths flying around, though, I'm sorry to say.

BILL. This was kind of big for a moth.

CHELSEA. Probably a wild boar, then. *(Bill looks at her, not immediately comforted by her Norman-like drollery. She smiles, taking his hand.)* Bill, you want to visit the men's room before you go through the shock of meeting my father?

BILL. Huh? Uh. No. I'm all right. *(There is a clatter on the stairs, and Billy leaps down, followed by Norman.)*

CHELSEA. Too late anyway.

BILLY. Dad. They do have indoor plumbing.

BILL. *(Embarrassed.)* Oh. Good.

BILLY. *(Crossing down into the room.)* Chelsea was bullshitting us.

BILL. Billy.

CHELSEA. *(To Ethel.)* I always try to paint a rustic picture of life on Golden Pond.

ETHEL. Oh, it's rustic all right.

BILL. It's lovely, though. Lovely rusticity. (*He turns warily, feeling Norman bearing down on him.*)

NORMAN. We've been peeing indoors for forty years.

BILL. Oh. You must be Norman.

NORMAN. Yes, I must be. Who are you?

BILL. Bill Ray. (*He puts out his hand. Norman shakes it.*)

NORMAN. Bill Ray. The dentist?

BILL. Um. Yes.

NORMAN. Want to see my teeth? (*He bares them.*)

ETHEL. Norman.

BILL. (*Smiling.*) I just want to tell you how glad I am to be here, sir. Chelsea talks so much about you and your wife and your wonderful house on the lake, and I'm very pleased that she's brought us here.

NORMAN. (*He stares at Bill a moment, then turns to Chelsea.*)

Charlie's been asking for you.

CHELSEA. Charlie? (*Norman responds by mimicking Charlie's laugh.*)

Holy Mackinoly. (*To Bill.*) Charlie is our mailman. He was also my boyfriend every summer for twelve years. He taught me everything.

BILL. (*Goodnaturedly.*) Isn't that amazing?

NORMAN. It is when you know Charlie. (*A pause.*)

CHELSEA. Well. I'm going to say hello to the lake. Anyone like to come?

BILLY. Me. I've never seen anyone say hello to a lake.

CHELSEA. Then this will be a valuable experience for you, wise guy. It's always my first order of business when I get to Golden Pond. Coming, Mommy?

ETHEL. Yes! Want to take the boat?

BILLY. Yeah!

CHELSEA. Why not? Let's go, Bill.

BILL. Where? Outside?

CHELSEA. That's where the lake is. (*She heads for the door. Ethel and Billy follow.*) Coming, Norman?

NORMAN. Nope.

ETHEL. Oh, come on.

NORMAN. No. I'm just going to sit here and enjoy the quiet.

CHELSEA. Oh. Um ... (*She looks to Ethel, and then at Bill.*)

BILL. I think I'll stay, too.

ETHEL. Come on, Norman.

NORMAN. Don't be silly. I want to sit here and enjoy the quiet. With Bill. We can talk baseball.

BILL. Great.