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Letter Received

By: [Clare bear 48](#)

Colleen receives the letter

Rated: [Fiction K](#) - English - Friendship - Chapters: 8 - Words: 10,728 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 2 - Follows: 2 - Updated: Apr 18, 2011 - Published: Mar 6, 2011 - id: 6803353

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The Letter.

By Clare Quinn

Disclaimer I do not own the characters in this story. I wish the people who did would use them and create new series.

Peter Lam and Mr Jackson Tate had left Colorado Springs to follow the rail road. Peter had been haunted by the young lady he had met who had been treating him for Malaria. Mr Tate had seen the look in Peter's eyes since he'd been treated by Colleen. Peter had not had it easy since he had been in America. He had been a perfect student and had learnt English quickly with his father. His father was an exceptional worker eager to earn money to return to family still in China. They had worked hard to no avail at digging for gold.

Mr Tate had the knowledge of surveying and was head hunted by the rail road to be there as a fore runner to survey for the Kansas Pacific Rail Road. It was to extend into El Paso. There were two alternate routes to follow and either one would be acceptable. Jackson Tate was to decide.

Mr Tate did not want to discourage Peter from pursuing a dream. They had talked about the young man's dreams. He was now on his own other than the older man since the sudden death of Peter's father. Peter's father had saved Jackson's life when he pushed him out the way of a runaway rail car that smashed against another one. He was indebted to Mr Choi Lam since that time. Since Choi's death Jackson had adopted Peter feeling he owed this to his friend. Now they discussed Peter's desire to keep in contact with the young lady. Hence he suggested that Peter begin by offering friendship and begin by writing to her. Peter began to think this idea an agreeable one:

Master Peter Lam

Central Railroad Construction Camp

Manitou

Colorado Territory

Dear Coleen,

I want to thank you for the tender care you gave me when I was sick in Colorado Springs. Nobody has ever treated me so kindly before. Mr Tate said that because of YOUR quick diagnosis I was lucky. He was so concerned when the doctor in Soda Springs refused to treat

me. You are so clever. You must get it from your mother Dr Quinn.

I noticed you with your friends as we entered your town. You have such compassionate eyes. You did not laugh at me. Your friends acted like everyone always does do when they see me as I am different. It makes me so sad and lonely. Just because I have lived in a strange land does not make me odd I have a plait called a qui all Chinese men have one. Sometimes we are referred to as Koolies. As we carry our loads on a rod over our shoulders. We can't afford transport.

I am so glad that you accepted my small gift of soil from my home land. It came from Canton City the capital of Guangdong Province. I lived near the city when I was smaller. There is a lot of Foreigners' living there. They have a sealed off section in the city near the Pearl River Delta. It is called Shamian Island. There is a moat surrounding the area. Also guards patrol the perimeter stopping the heathen devil's(Chinese People) from entering there. The buildings are most beautiful and elegant and the owners so rich. The people living there are from the East India Trading Company who trade silk and spices to the whole world. We came to America on one of their clippers. The English are trading in opium for tea. There has been a war on opium in China as opium trading is illegal.

Our buildings are square and flat. My family have farmed the soil in the same area for many, many centuries. We are called peasants' by the foreigners. My family have seen many Emperors come and go. My mother died there from an illness that took many people including my family. That is why my father and I left and came to America to find gold to send back to other family members who are very poor. Father was unsuccessful and that is where we met Mr Tate. He encouraged my father to join him when he left the gold fields to work for the railroad. They had become firm friends. That is when my father died as I told you.

I am telling you this as I was too shy when I was sick when I was with you. It is hard for me to explain my feelings when I am with people as I have been rejected so many times. I just wanted to tell you a little about myself.

Your where so kind to me making me feel received as a friend. I have had trouble making friends as we travel all the time but I would appreciate it if you would write sometimes and be my friend. You are so different from anyone I have ever met before. You are so gentle and caring.

There is a festival called Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival. It happens on the 15th day of the 8th full moon in September or October. We look up at the moon and think of our families. No matter where we are we feel connected as we know others will be looking that night as well. Will you look at the moon on that night and think of me? I will be thinking of you. We celebrate with a charcoal barbeque on the roof of our homes, fire crackers and Moon Cakes. They are cakes are made in a wooden mould with an egg or bean curd inside that represents a full moon. In the beginning of the night the moon is very large in the sky and low in the sky and as it gets higher it gets smaller.

I wait in anticipation and hope, by the way Lam means Forrest,

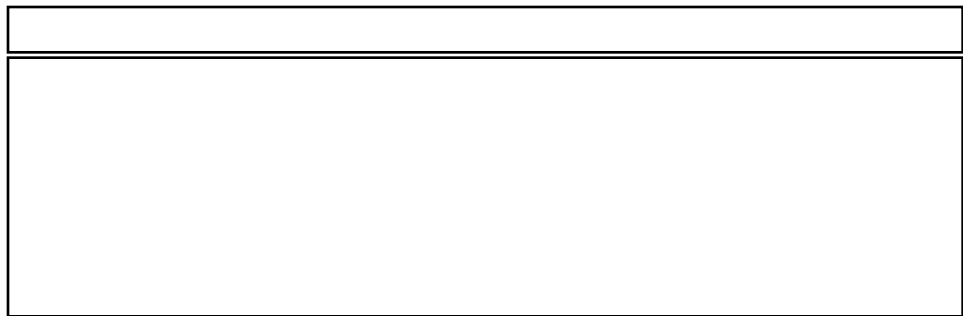
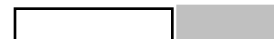
Yours Sincerely,

Peter.

Lam means Forrest. (in memory of Sydney Lam RIP)

Choi means Money/ Wealth (for Jonathon Choi my boss in Zhongshan CHES Guangdong Province) (*Where East meets the West*)

Moon festival is an actual festival and seated on a roof thinking of family is unforgettable. We live in a such a small world.



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Letter Received

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Colleen was strolling towards the school past the telegraph office run by Mr Bing the wireless operator. She had hardly noticed this building other than when she was on an errand for her Ma Dr Michaela Quinn. Or on a few occasions she'd sent away for something. Letters the only ones the family received were from Grandma to Ma.

Ma would be seated at the table and open it in front of them

"Dear Michaela" then they would all chorus "Grandma"

What had commenced her on this train of thought had been Mr Bing leaping off the porch calling her name.

"Colleen" he'd had to repeat it *"Colleen"* before she actually heard him.

"Yes Mr Bing" she said as she turned to face him. She had been going through the words for the spelling test scheduled for later on in the day at school.

"You've got a letter" he replied as he thrust it into her hand turning and hurriedly returning to the office.

Looking at the letter in her hand puzzled. The beautiful copper plate hand writing she did not recognise there was no return address on it to hint who it was from. This was her first ever letter.

"Who would write her?" she questioned to herself.

All of a sudden the other girls caught up to her. She hurriedly jammed this precious letter into the fold of a book she was carrying. She did not want to be harassed into revealing its contents till she knew herself. The girls could be bizzy bodies. They could be so annoying some times. She did not want their attention at this moment. Her only true friend Becky wouldn't be told either this was her secret.

Knowingly being very discreet so as not to cause suspicion she would gaze at the letter during the day wishing for it to end so she could discover who had taken the time to write to her.

Finally the day at school ended and Colleen spent a few hours at the clinic assisting Ma. Brian had gone off looking for Sully at the livery. Mathew was occupied out at the ranch.

Eventually the family headed to the home stead. Soon Ma and Sully were to be married and they would all be moving to the new house. Mathew was spending more and more time with Ingrid. At last she was free placing the letter securely in the pocket of her apron she scurried out to the barn knowing Mathew wouldn't be home for awhile. Brian was with Pup and Wolf. Ma and Sully were cosied up on the porch smooching.

There was enough light to be able to see the letter. Colleen gingerly opened the letter and looked at the signature first. *PETER*. Her heart jumped she'd liked his shyness and the way he softly spoke to her while she bathed him bringing down his dangerously high fever. She'd never before met someone from a foreign country before. He was Chinese this conjured up visions of exotic a far off lands. He was so gentle and shy. He'd given her the soil from China in a small Clossian bowl with a lid.

She began to read the flowing letters intrigued at what he wanted to say:

Dear Colleen...Moon Festival looking at the moon...I wait in anticipation and hope.

He was asking her to be a friend she did not have a male friend she felt honoured even to be asked.

Ma was calling for her to retire to bed she needed to move now.

Stuffing the letter back into the apron she replied "Coming" and shot out of the barn slamming into Sully who had begun to search for her. They'd been calling for a few minutes with no reply.

The next day she day dreamed all day on how to respond to Peter's request. The other girls caught the wistful look she wore on her face all day. They decided to ambush her and find out what was wrong. Anticipating this she slipped away out the back of the school and walked home still preoccupied with the letter.

Colleen had not kept secrets from her Ma and decided to tell her about the letter while she was preparing the rabbit Sully had provided for a stew for the evening meal. She did not wish the correspondence to become general knowledge with Brian or Mathew knowing. They would hound her mercisilly if that became the case, enjoying putting her in their clutches.

When the evening drew to a close Michaela and Sully had enjoyed a peaceful time on the porch before he was backing down the path towards his lean-to for the night blowing air kisses to her all the way. She responded and hoped firstly Wolf wouldn't trip him or secondly some protruding branch would not cause him to fall. Eventually the night engulfed his retreating figure. Sighing finally Michaela retreated indoors they both were finding these nightly separations harder and harder as their wedding drew closer.

Colleen had patiently waited for her Ma to come inside and tentatively approached her saying "*Ma can I speak to you?*"



Her Ma looked up surprised as generally the children were asleep when she came in. Looking at Colleen she sensed that she wanted to have a woman to woman talk and sat on the bed allowing room for Colleen for join her. Gingerly Colleen handed her the envelope. Michaela quizzically took it asking for permission to read the contents Colleen slightly nodded agreement.

Michaela turned the envelope over and saw no return address. The superb hand writing looked like a picture it was so intricate. Opening the letter and unfolding it she read the content. Her heart went out to the young writer. She had talked to Jackson Tate while they were treating Peter. He was a man you could trust and he was trying to bring Peter up by himself as well. She could relate to Peters loneliness because that is how she felt after arriving in Colorado Springs as well. She finished and enquired as to how Colleen felt about the letter and if she wanted to respond.

Colleen looked at her grinning and replied that she would like to be Peter's friend and begin to correspond with him.

Michaela nodded and said she thought it would be a good idea. Thanking Colleen in the process for asking her first.

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TV Shows Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman**Letter Received**By: [Clare bear 48](#)

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Colleen's Reply

Disclaimer I do not own the characters in this story. I wish the people who did would use them and create new series.

Peter was seated in the Mess Tent having just finished his dinner. The telegraph operator from Manitou had ridden out to hand Mr Tate the bundle of mail while they had dinner. Normally they'd have to go into town but the operator received a small amount of compensation for his trouble. He'd come out after business hours. Then only if mail had the official seal of the Kansas Pacific Rail Road on it. Any other mail being held was a bonus. Hence Peter was handed the letter. Looking at it he saw that it had been sent from Colleen. He gaped at it, he had thought and even hoped that she'd reply, but not expecting it to ever happen. He was over whelmed by the fact that she had. Her hand writing was elegant and she had used a green ink not the blue or black as usual. He walked off on his own and found a secluded spot under a tree and tentatively opened the envelope. His Chinese work mates had given him a little bit of jip over the letter, he didn't care much about that at this moment. He smelt it and inhaled the scent that was only faintly lavender. Luckily the shift for the day was over, his tiredness and fatigue had evaporated as soon as he'd been given the envelope.

Miss Colleen Cooper

Colorado Springs

Colorado

Dear Peter,

I was extremely happy to receive your welcome letter. I thank you so much for it as I did not expect to hear from you again. I appreciate your nice comments about my nursing you. But I was only doing what I would for any patient of Ma's. You are so generous in your praise of my abilities. I only did as Dr Mike my Ma has taught me. With what you told me about your illness I

decided to investigate an idea. Luckily my idea was right. You responded quickly and this excited me. Peter your temperature was very high and making you extremely sick. I am very pleased I was able to assist you.

I did look at the full moon on the night as you suggested. I sat out the back of our home away from the barn where Ma has her vegetable garden and tried to imagine where you would be. It was extremely peaceful. I have never really looked at the sky before Brian had received a telescope from Grandma. It was broken when he wouldn't share. So we only had a small glimpse. It was like black velvet and all those stars so bright. I've not been aware that they twinkle as well. The Milky Way and then shooting stars that Cloud Dancing told Brian are souls travelling to their ancestors. Reading about comets imagine big slush balls of ice and dust hurtling around Earth up there. We had a scare when the paper suggested that the world would end as well. Everyone went to the church but it had been a prank from a major paper thinking meteorite would crash into us.

It was so sweet that your country has such a lovely festival. I cannot imagine what it would be like to live away from my family. Also how it would feel not to be part of a family. We are lucky you have Mr Tate but it's not exactly the same is it? Dr Mike has been so good for us. She has been a great person and shown us such love and compassion since our real Ma died. Our real Ma died from a rattle snake bite Dr Mike tried to save her but it was too late. Since then we have lived with her at the home stead Sully built.

What other festivals do you celebrate in China? You will be aware that we have Christmas, Easter, and Halloween here just to mention a few. A lot of countries have so many different ones you read about them in the books. We also study some at school. I like to read and finish two or more a week. What about you?

Sully is like a Father and Brian loves him, we all do. They do a lot together. Ma and Sully will be getting married soon. Sully is building a new home for us. He has been very busy. The house will be beautiful and I have my own room. This is the first time ever. I am so excited about that, Sully says I can decorate it as I please. He is building all our furniture as well. I want a bed with tall ends so I can have a canopy if I choose later.

Did I tell you that I want to become a Doctor when I grow up? What is your position on the rail road? I know Mr Tate is a surveyor as he told Dr Mike while you were sick at the clinic. He said the rail road was heading for El Paso is that correct? How often do you move camp? It must be awful moving around and not settling down. I cannot imagine that at all. All my life I have only moved a few times. Before our real Pa took off and left Ma on her own. Once to a mining camp and a small farm I don't really remember as I was little then.

I hope your well and I am looking forward to hearing from you again.

Your Friend

Colleen.

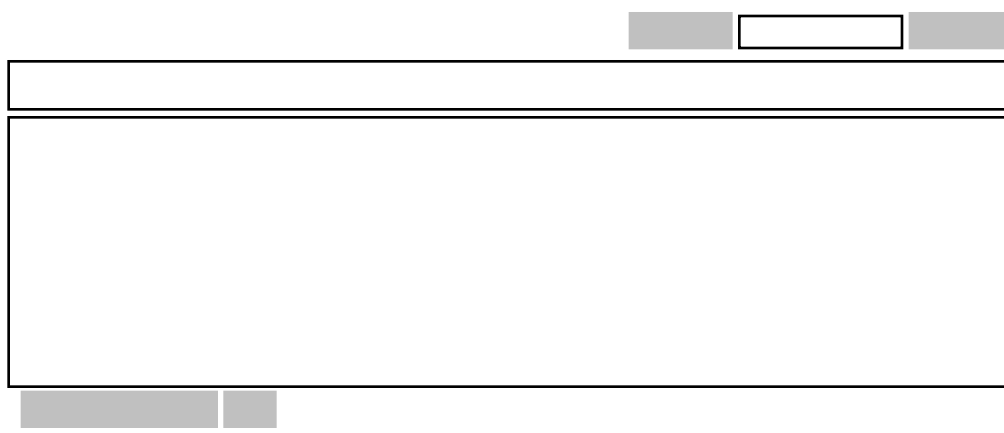
Peter read the letter three times as he wanted to reread her words. He was stunned and amazed that she had replied. Already he had some ideas what to write in his next letter that wouldn't be too long. Not tomorrow that was too soon but not too long. He would put the letter with his other treasures he had in a wooden trunk he'd brought over from China with his Pa. It was black lacquer with red and gold Chinese symbols decorating it. Also there were geranium flowers seen on much Chinese furniture. In it were the last memories of his father (fuh chin), mother (muu-chin) and his life before arriving here in America a life of dreams. The photos, letters in Chinese calligraphy the book of sayings and all the other small things he'd collected to bring with him.

Jackson Tate had handed Peter the letter when it arrived with all the other mail after dinner. He had watched Peter disappear near a big oak tree. Now he leaned against the tent pole watching his son with a smile on his face. He was pleased that Dr Mike's daughter had replied to Peter's letter. That was good.

Please comment.

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Trivial I wanted to mention our Southern Cross and Saucepan and Other stars we see Down Under. But realise most would not know what I was on about. Look at our Aussie and New Zealand's flags.



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Peter's history

The progress of the rail way line was slow going. They only managed to lay about a mile a day depending on the weather, material supplies and labour. Severe storms had hampered the progress for a few days this had been unavoidable.

Mr Tate had watched Peter's tireless labour with his Fuh Chin (Pa) at the mine site. They had followed the gold rush that had brought many foreigners from different end of the earth to California gold fields. Too many of them did not attain their dreams of bondless riches by finding that major strike, and ended up broken men. Many perished in the sicknesses that ravished the camps or starved. Fresh water was always an issue cholera and other water born diseases killed hundreds especially children and sick. The cemeteries were covered with tiny graves testament to the harsh conditions in these crowded unruly tent villages. One woman to twenty men Charlotte had told Dr Mike when she arrived in the frontier. There was a tale that said when a Chinaman died that they would send the body home. But the casket contained mud bricks with a gold nugget in the middle.

When the Gold ran out there was the gold field in a far off new land Australia. Victoria became the next big dream for those suffering gold fever. It was rumoured that it was bigger than California. You could pick it up nuggets off the ground. There was the rumour of the nugget named 'The Welcome Stranger' was picked up in a river bed. So the exodus of hundreds of people left for the far off fields. Peter's Pa decided to accept Mr Tate's offer of the job on the railway instead.

The railway camp stayed in one place as long as possible before being moved. It was more convenient than moving every couple of weeks. There was sleeping tents made from canvas in an A frame accommodating three stretchers. One bunk on each side of the tent wall including the rear. The sided rolled up on very hot days and nights. Belongings were in trunks at the end of each stretcher. There were cloths and personal items brought from the far off home lands in them. Each ethnic group shared the same tents. Mr Tate found it was easier that way. There

was a small table with the night lamp placed on it. They travelled to the end of the line and back each day by cattle dray. All the sleepers and necessary items were moved this way as well.

The larger mess tent was for meals a Chinese cook with two assistants provided nourishing meals each evening and Congee (Chinese Porridge) for breakfast. Fresh Steamed Buns (man tou) were provided for lunch. The Chinese used the chop sticks while others knives and forks. Enamel plates, bowls and cups the common utensils. It had been noted that the Chinese retained their strength longer than other ethnic groups in the goldfields. As they had grown their own vegetables. Some the locals didn't recognise the vegetables, Bok Choy, Chinese Broccoli and Bamboo Shoots to mention a few. Mr Tate encouraged them to plant a garden each time they moved most they grew in pots for transporting easily. Hens and a few goats were included.

There was a wet mess as well for the men to unwind although Mr Tate refused to allow men too intoxicated to work as it was too dangerous. If they broke this law on three occasions they lost their jobs. As they were well paid and all the workers needed the money the camp was relatively quiet. There were only a few times when there were disputes among the different migrants but these soon disintegrated as their working closely forged new respect for each other.

On celebrations though there had been a few scary moments. The Chinese always celebrated with fire crackers. On one occasion there was a moment when the fire crackers got too close to the explosives store. Everyone held their breath many turning to run. Luckily the crackers miraculously fizzled out just as they reached the explosives dump. They'd also have the Lion or Dragon dances as well but here at the moment it was only the crackers.

Peter Pa was sick of continually shifting so grabbed at the opportunity to go with Jackson Tate. It would be more consistent and give Peter some stability.

Peter studied hard he commanded English and learnt write it as well quite quickly. His hand style was superb and he had learnt the Chinese Characters' with Calligraphy. His hand writing was artistic and a pleasure to see. After the accident that claimed the life of Peter's father but saved the life of Mr Tate. Peter was adopted and mentored by his friend. Peter only 19 years was a quiet young man. Mr Tate had many Chinese apply as labourers' in the railroad. They needed them and so Mr Tate had no hesitation of making Peter a foreman of a Chinese crew. He could translate from English into Chinese orders and the men respected him as he requested not ordered them to do a job. He also would assist when necessary.

The job needed laying a ballast of stone as a stabilizer. This was brought from a quarry that Mr Tate had located some miles back. It was transported on the existing line that had been laid. The sleepers made of wood brought in from a lumber mill miles away on mule or cattle drays. Then there was the iron rail put in place by dog bolts (pegs or spikes) it was back breaking work. They would each have specific jobs and work six days a week. Sunday was the only day off when washing was done. Many Chinese were Taoist (is the truest home grown Chinese religion), or Buddhist (from India) in belief. So they did not go to Church unless they were Christian which other groups were. A Reverend visited once a month.

This Sunday Peter was once again under the oak tree. His thoughts had drifted to Colleen again. It had been Wednesday when he'd received the letter. He was contemplating what he would write about. He didn't want to appear too anxious as he wanted this friendship to last. He recognised that she would be an important friend and being eager may scare her off. He just wanted to enjoy that idea of friendship for awhile longer.

Day dreaming Peter was reminded about Colleen telling him while he'd been recovering of an incident where Sully had been shot at another camp earlier. She had removed the bullet from the

army rifle. The dog soldiers had blown up the camp because of the buffalo hunters. Peter had told Mr Tate and he assured them that that was not his policy. Although now there was always a guard on watch in case of trouble from the dog soldiers.

Comments welcome

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Gold nugget information : Victorian Museum

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Peters Reply

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Peter decided that today he'd write to Colleen. It had been close to six weeks since he'd received her reply, he was afraid to appear too eager. They'd been busy as now the camp had needed to be shifted as the line was too far in front again. So for a day they had all worked at shifting it ten miles. Now it was situated in front of the end of the line again. The line would soon move past again. Though still close enough for Peter to use the Manitou address.

Eventually they would be too far out and nearer the next town then his postal address would change and he would be further away from Colleen. The frontier was moving faster and further west devouring the entire country side prairies, hills and rivers. The train was changing the entire continent. Soon there would be no more areas to discover or tame. There would be more people and towns growing everywhere.

Members of his crew had seen him receive the letter and had teased him continually about having a girl friend. Their respect for their boss was there even though he was younger he knew how to treat them. He gave them respect. They then gave one hundred percent to him. Peter always insisted that she was just a friend. His crew were mainly married men from mainland China. They sent most of their wages to their families as many were poor peasants. The American Dollar was worth a lot in China in exchange for the Yuan. Most spoke Mandarin the main language used in China. Peter was also fluent in Cantonese as well. That was the language that was spoken in Hong Kong and locally in Guangdong Province. There were more than 250 local dialects as well. The men came from different provinces Fujian, Guangxi and Liaoning mentioning a few. China had changed also although populated there had been large changes. The Capital had moved and other changes as well. The foreigners were not understood and some felt they were greedy.

Master Peter Lam

Central Railroad Construction Camp

Manitou

Colorado Territory

Dear Colleen,

I was so happy to receive your most welcome reply. Colleen thank you so much for agreeing to be a friend. It is difficult to make friends when you have to move all the time. Actually when I was sick was the longest time we had been in one place for a week.

Why would a paper lie about the end of the world I wonder? I am most grateful it didn't as we wouldn't be able to write to each other.

I am really pleased that we shared Autumn Festival and that we saw the moon on the same night. I like how you described Comets as slush balls. If I discovered a comet or new star I would name it after you.

I have only some Aunts and Uncles plus their families living in China. There are a few that have migrated to Australia for the gold rush.

We have many festivals in China. They are for many reasons. As you're interested I'll tell you of them each time I write. There is Ghost Month around the end of August early September. It is said that the ghosts of the dead in hell walk on the earth. Suspicions say we should not travel, go for a swim, marry or move house in that month. We do not cremate our dead in that month preferring to wait till the next month. Our families ashes are placed in a large ceramic urn usually on a hill side for wind and water (Fung Shui). It is rumoured that it brings the family prosperity. A question do you think that your Halloween Festival may have originated from our old one? That would be interesting don't you think? Our two cultures are linked by a festival. How many other celebrations do you read about at school from other countries?

Sully and Dr Mike sound like really nice people. It is good that Dr Mike took you all in after your Ma died. Sully told Mr Tate about some areas that he felt should be preserved because of the animals and special trees he suggested another route that covered a shorter and less difficult distance. When is their wedding? I hope I can see your house some time as it sounds lovely. Is in the town?

I am glad that you want to become a doctor like your Ma that is good. You will make a really good one. You're so caring and patient.

I am a foreman of a crew of Chinese workers. We have a hard job we lay the sleepers for the line. Ballast is down then it is our job to place the sleepers on that then the rail line is placed on them. They have to be level and the same distant apart for stability. As the heavy trains move over the new line it has to settle. Any problems will cause the engine to topple over. The other day sleepers fell from the flat to wagon and injured one of the men. He crushed his hand. He will be okay though. At the moment we have to go across a creek and a carpenter is building a bridge of wood over it. We cannot stop the water. So we are finding other jobs for a couple of days. Carting wood for the carpenter and other items needed for bridge formation.

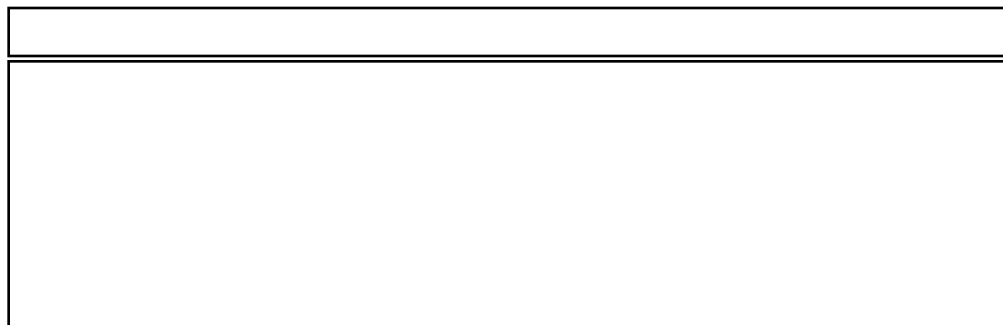
I hope your well and I am looking forward to hearing from you again.

Your Special Friend,

Peter

Peter placed the folded letter in the envelope and sealed it with red wax and his Chop. This was the small square stone that had his Chinese name carved into it that his parents had given him when he was young. One of the special items he still had from his mainland. He looked at the seal and was transported back there to an earlier time. Hearing his name being called he came to the present. Kissing the seal with a shy grin he stood up looking for Mr Tate so it would be placed with the other mail as Mr Tate had to go into town today for more supplies, and check that the sleepers and rail for the next twenty miles was in transit to the site.

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Letter Received

By: [Clare bear 48](#)

Colleen receives the letter

Rated: [Fiction K](#) - English - Friendship - Chapters: 8 - Words: 10,728 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 2 - Follows: 2 - Updated: Apr 18, 2011 - Published: Mar 6, 2011 - id: 6803353

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Chapter 6 The Discussion

Disclaimer I do not own the characters in this story. I wish the people who did would use them and create new series. I have just borrowed the characters.

Michael and Sully were seated in their favourite spot at their favourite time of the day snuggling as usual. Michaela seemed to be far away. Sully moved her slightly so he could see her face. She was obviously fretting about something as he was recognising some of her little quirks that she wasn't able to hide from him any longer. Now they were spending more time together and she was letting her guard down with him. When she could just be herself Michaela not Doctor Mike as to the whole town saw her. She revelled in the fact that Sully was there for her. Her sounding board, he never judged her and listened well. Gave an opinion when asked, he always gave good council.

His shy disposition was unique his attitude was one of tolerance. His philosophy was "*Think what ya like but don't say it if it would hurt someone*". Only rarely did he not use this proposal. And then "*Think before ya say it*".

Michaela reminded herself a number of times of this when she'd got the towns back up by speaking before thinking. As well as incidents with Mathew came to mind too.

"*Wat ya thinking?*" He asked.

"*Colleen*" she replied.

"*Why ya fretting?*" He questioned.

"*Colleen has received another letter from Peter*" she replied.

"*Ya?*" Sully had a question in that reply.

Then Michaela began to tell Sully how she was concerned at how to talk to Colleen about her friendship with Peter. She had said that she didn't mind them corresponding but was wondering if it would lead to anything. Remembering her strict mother and how her upbringing was distorted, by her mother's attitudes to life especially relationships. How it wasn't about feelings but prestige and love would develop later. Michaela through her own experience realized this wasn't so. Since meeting Sully who was guiding her and introducing other ideas on how couples could be. She became shy at explaining these thoughts. Just speaking this out loud was making her feel uncomfortable until Sully squeezed her shoulder in reassurance. Pleased to witness this blossoming in Michaela personality.

Sully was surprised that she had even broached this problem with him as he rarely had the opportunity to see this part of her past. Her questioning the values of her childhood and past. Though while they had been in Boston, he'd witnessed the uptight Mrs Quinn's influence on her daughters especially her youngest and it upset him. Sully knew Michaela wanted to know what he thought. He knew that she was aware that his upbringing was less restricted than her own so his ideas would be different to hers. Was she willing to listen rather than judge? She nodded as she knew what he was thinking.

He discussed their ideas when they began to court and she smiled and nodded how they'd come from different back grounds that could have torn them apart but working together they'd overcome all problems with patience and time.

He continued that it wouldn't be easy if the relationship between the two young people grew. Reminding her as she stiffened that they were young but growing up. That was what young people did. Then she began to relax again. Willing for him to continue with a nod.

He reminded her about the time that Colleen had, had a crush on him and how that infatuation could have become dangerous. But then how quickly it had been redirected. How Colleen and he remained friends and moved on, once Sully had told Colleen he didn't feel the same way as she and that his love was for Dr Mike. Recognising Colleen was young and it was that that put her in danger.

That * IF* the relationship between the two did progress there was the difficulty with separation as well as people's attitudes. How the town and its citizen's had a narrow point of view on life and the world. How Michaela had slowly assisted the town's folk to grow and change some attitudes. Reminding her of the change when Cloud Dancing was held by Custer then the Library books. Then the Thanks Giving they'd all enjoyed eventually during the drought. How the town treated Immigrants and Negros the same way. All these allowed for the growth and understanding. Also including the development of the town. Gradually making it a nicer place to live.

Michaela shifted to look at him questioning. He continued that they would require support and that it was still early and did she think she could trust Colleen.

"*Of course*" was her quick response.

"*Then that's all that is needed*" he replied.

Michaela asked Sully how he'd respond. Thinking he continued.

He spoke of a family whose back grounds were different when he'd met them at the mine site. The couple were from totally different backgrounds and they'd made it work because of their devotion for one another. Their children were the ones bullied by others. Though the strength of the parents and friends allowed them to survive and grow.

That the world was getting smaller and that there were not that many women on the frontier even now so there were bound to be different ethnic groups marrying. The mine sites and the West was changing the strict relationships forged in society and religion years from before were being eroded.

Chuckling he said *"Member when I went to church with ya and didn't bend my head or shut my eyes to pray. You now accept my belief in Spirit"*. She smiled and nodded.

He continued *"Don have a problem with religion but have me own belief everyone needs to make up their own mind"*. They had had other discussions on this subject.

He'd seen whites marry into tribes and how both citizens groups reacted and how he was saddened by that. Loath to mention Catherine and people's attitudes to Indian and white alliances. But he finally took the plunge and reminded her that Catherine had loved her Indian husband and his people. The town had the problem when she was brought in and yes it may be different as she was removed from her family but she'd adapted. But did all the orphans coming through on the orphan train where they actually orphans or has some actually been abandoned nobody really knew. Different tribes didn't allow the intermarriages either. He reminded her of when she'd said if she was Pawnee and he Cheyenne he'd have had to carry her off in the dead of night. She smiled as she remembered him sweeping her up into his arms.

He gently reminded her how she'd felt when she'd seen the Indians for the first time from the stage coach window. Now she considered them friends. Continuing with the fact that she did not discriminate when treating her patients Robert E and his burns as well as Black Kettle and his gun shot.

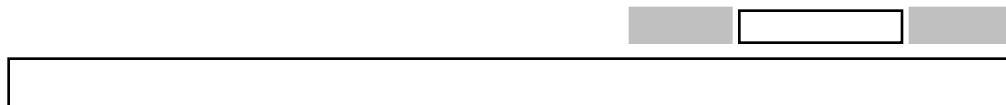
Finally he said he thought it was far too early to say anything but encourage Colleen to keep on talking to them. For her to keep up the friendship as they'd both grow learning more about the differences in people. Peter was from a different culture but really he was just a young man wanting to be friends with Colleen at the moment. They'd know if there was anything serious happening. Reminding her that she trusted Colleen, and he felt that Peter was an honourable young man. Stating that Jackson Tate didn't appear to be the type of man who wouldn't be encouraging good social morals into Peter.

Michaela agreed and relaxed into Sully's arms deciding to wait and see. Knowing she could always ask Sully for advice again if she was fretting again as he so eloquently referred to her when deep in thought. Giggling as she snuggled deeper into his embrace. He just looked at her quizzically not saying a word just smiling into the dark.

The end

Thank you Linda for the idea.

For my G'children who have a mother from the Philippines and are subjected to people's narrow attitudes at school.



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Letter Received

By: [Clare bear 48](#)

Colleen receives the letter

Rated: [Fiction K](#) - English - Friendship - Chapters: 8 - Words: 10,728 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 2 - Follows: 2 - Updated: Apr 18, 2011 - Published: Mar 6, 2011 - id: 6803353

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Ch 7 Colleen's Letter

Disclaimer I do not own the characters in this story. I wish the people who did would use them and create new series.

It had been awhile since Colleen had received the last letter from Peter. She had been thinking about him and her reply.

School and helping DR Mike after school had been time consuming. Then the chores at home had made the days then weeks just fly by. The weather was changing and the days were becoming shorter too. Colleen was beginning to feel guilty that she had taken so long with her reply this time.

Dear Peter,

Thank you so very much for your ever welcome letter...

Another day was going by. She had homework to complete and was exceptionally tired tonight. Promising herself she'd get to it tomorrow.

Next day they came into town as usual Mathew having hitched the wagon, Brian and she ready for school. She had the beginning of Peter's letter folded into a book to complete after school. Brain had scooted off to school as soon as they'd stopped. Colleen was headed towards the meadow and school. Dr Mike and Mathew watched as a wagon rounded the corner near the telegraph office. Seated up on the seat they saw Mr Tate and Peter. The side of the wagon was embossed with the words Denver & Rio Grande RR. They stopped in front of the mercantile owned by Mr Bray. Mr Tate had instructed Peter to go to the telegraph office but seeing Colleen he ran in her direction. Colleen had witnessed their arrival and waited at the gate leading into the meadow for him.

"Peter what are you doing here?" She asked with a huge smile on her face.

"Mr Tate has some business and we are trying to find out why the supplies of rail have not arrived" he replied. "Can we meet after you've finished school?"

"Yes of cause" She said.

Dr Mike met Mr Tate at the store looking up she enquired if Peter was with him. While trying on a fetching hat.

"Yes he is" he responded."I know that he is looking forward to seeing Colleen again"

"Yes and I know she will be happy to see him" Dr Mike answered.

Peter returned to Jackson Tate with disturbing news. Their steam mule that was used for transport their supplies was out of commission. It would more than likely need to be repaired in Denver putting them back from progressing till after winter. Dr Mike suggested Robert E could do the repairs. He accepted the challenge even though it would be hard. Peter had examined his work and tools and said they were good.

Mr Tate had two stipulations. That it was ready in two weeks and that Peter assist so as to learn all there was about the railroad. He offered Robert E a fortune to do the job. Robert E hired Mathew and the two Chinese men that accompanied the mule into Colorado Springs to help.

At lunch time Colleen would bring their lunch from Grace's. She and Peter would share this time to talk and spend some time together. Peter drank the milk she offered leaving a moustache across his top lip.

"Peter you lip" she said quietly gently leaning forward to wipe it away.

"I've thought of you often and wondered what you might be doing". He said in his quiet unassuming manner.

Responding Colleen replied "you did?"

"Do you still have the earth from China I gave you?" Peter questioned.

"Of course I keep it beside the silver comb and brush Grandma gave me" She offered.

"I was afraid that after time you might come to see it as only dirt". He continued.

"Oh! No you gave it to me."She responded shyly looking at him with sincerity.

Dr Mike had offered Peter a bed in the barn with Mathew while he was fixing the mule. Sully had gone out to check on his traps. They spent time playing Draughts and Chess in the evenings. Both Peter and Mathew were extremely tired after dinner and retired early. On a couple of nights Peter played Chess against Dr Mike who discovered she had an expert opponent as Peter played against his mentor as well. Dr Mike enjoyed when she was challenged at the game enjoying the contests immensely.

Colleen had told Peter that a number of friends from school were going for a picnic and she would ask if he could accompany them. Arriving in town the next morning she excitedly asked if Peter may

join them. The girls refused and this left her feeling extremely disappointed. Coming back she told Peter their decision. He said he understood.

"I was expecting better friends" she said.

"They do not want me to come?" he questioned. Knowing that this was the usual response from people and not wanting to embarrass Colleen.

"Well let's have our own picnic" she said.

"Please I understand if you would rather be with your friends" Peter offered.

"I would rather be with you" She admitted Peter responding with a shy smile. Both of them happily smiling at each other in acceptance.

The busy schedule that Robert E was pushing didn't offer many opportunities for them to spend much time together. Colleen visited with meals when she could. Peter and Mathew were getting tired as the week wore on as the work was punishing. Robert E had the entire pipe cutting under control. He felt the enormity of the burden of finishing the job on time become urgent as the Chinese men became sick and Dr Mike was wondering if there was something contagious happening.

Colleen was in the clinic with Dr Mike day dreaming.

Dr Mike looked at her saying "Something bothering you Colleen?"

"You like Peter don't you..No it's just well I was wondering?" Colleen tentatively asked.

Yes I do. What about you?" Questioned Dr Mike.

"I really like spending time with him. He's so easy to talk to there's not many boys like that". Colleen continued.

Replying Dr Mike said "No there aren't"

"My friends think his strange do you?" Colleen asked with concern in her voice.

"NO he's from a different culture that's one thing I like about him" Dr Mike responded.

Smiling at Dr Mike she answered "Me too".

Colleen took them dinner as everything had become tense as the two Chinese had developed an illness Dr Mike could not identify. Mathew had quit as he wasn't happy with Robert E's attitude. Robert E was under the pressure of having the whole town turn on him if he didn't succeed. Grace's fear for her husband was escalating and she couldn't stand by watching the man she loved being in so much danger. Robert E had been working through the night to finish it even though it now looked hopeless. Nodding off then awaking with a jolt after he'd had a terrifying dream of the mule exploding.

Colleen and Peter moved away to enjoy the few private moments they could get. Peter once again accepted milk from Colleen. Once again having the sign of milk on his upper lip.

"Do you believe in luck?" Colleen asked.

"I feel lucky I met you" Peter replied holding Colleen's hands.

Shyly Colleen handed the dirt back to Peter saying. "Oh! Here I thought that the others may like to hold the earth". Continuing. "Will you go back to China?"

"Only to find a wife" he said.

"OH!" Looking at him showing some distress on her face.

Seeing what the comment had done he quickly added "That is only if I could not find one here".

Smiling Colleen responded with a shy smile "OH!"

Continuing Peter replied "But I would live in this country". They continued Peter telling her about San Francisco. How that was the city he'd like to settle in, build a house and eventually have a family.

Colleen told him of her dreams of becoming a Doctor marrying and raising a family.

Peter said "You would like San Francisco.

"I hope to see it one day" Colleen answered.

"I hope to see you seeing it someday" He responded looking at her tenderly.

Finally Dr Mike discovered the men had lead poisoning from some tainted biscuits they'd been eating. Peter and Mathew had not been affected due to the minor fact that their stomachs had been lined with the milk they'd consumed.

Colleen had another discussion about how the railroad would make transport and travel so much easier in the future. That she may go and live in San Francisco. Dr Mike didn't quite get what Colleen was alluring too. But left it for the time being.

Sully just arriving with the pelts from the traps saw Peter just before he was going to telegram Mr Tate to tell him the job may be delayed. Sully said that sending the telegram wouldn't achieve anything and Peter agreed deciding not to send the wire.

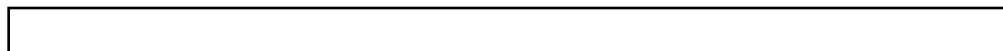
Having returned Dr Mike reminded Sully that to assist Robert E complete his project, wasn't so much about the railroad but about helping a friend out who really needed his help. When Sully offered and Robert E relaxed a little Mathew rejoined the band. The two Chinese having recovered sufficiently came to assist as well. The time was urgent as Mr Tate was due at noon.

On noon Mr Tate rode into town. The team having just put the finishing touches to the task. Asking Peter if there had been any problems Peter responded no there'd been none. Fire her up Mr Tate instructed Robert E. The whole town taking cover collectively held their breaths as Robert E with Sully standing beside his friend brought the steam engine up to 150 degrees.

Eventually Mr Tate yelled at Robert E that that was fine. Brian was allowed to expel the steam by blowing the whistle. There was an audible sigh as the town let out a collective breath and Congratulations began. Celebrating firstly Robert E brought a shawl that Grace had her eye in.

Mr Tate now wishing not to be delayed longer insisted that they return to the rail road. Colleen and Peter had a few moments alone saying their good byes with promises to keep writing and keeping in touch. Peter pressing the small bowl of Chinese dirt into the palm of her hand before he left.

The end.



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Letter Received

By: [Clare bear 48](#)

Colleen receives the letter

Rated: [Fiction K](#) - English - Friendship - Chapters: 8 - Words: 10,728 - Reviews: 9 - Favs: 2 - Follows: 2 - Updated: Apr 18, 2011 - Published: Mar 6, 2011 - id: 6803353

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Chapter 8 Colleen's letter

Disclaimer I do not own the characters in this story. I wish the people who did would use them and create new series.

There was so much excitement being created in and around Colorado Springs. The little frontier town had not experienced the type of mammoth exhilaration since its first citizens had arrived.

The Railroad had been completed and there was only a week to go before the first train was due to arrive. The week past that Dr Mike and Sully were due to be married. Colleen wanted to write and tell Peter of all these exciting events. They had heard that the railroad had continued further away in the direction of its destination. That Mr Tate and Peter were unable to attend the ceremony when the first train would arrive due to some hold up with supplies and now the project was once again running behind schedule.

Then Colleen was ecstatic that Dr Mike and Sully were to be married a week later. The town was abuzz with anticipation as this would definitely be the social high light of the town since the beginning. All the women were becoming wedding crazy as they all had an idea of what a grand event this should be, for their favourite female doctor, and her mountain man fiancée.

Dr Mike was trying to keep control of her emotions as the road had not been free from its tragedies. Custer had systematically killed all of Chief Black Kettle's tribe at Washita. This had had a profound effect on the small family. They all suffered especially Brian in his young life he'd experienced more than his fair share of sorrow. When Sully had informed him No Harm had been killed but he'd saved the baby Brian couldn't move past the fact that No Harm was only his age. Sully had lost his entire Cheyenne family the only survivor was his brother Cloud Dancing. Dr Mike needed assistance to recover from the shock of the tragedy. The entire incident had affected all of them. To top it off Custer was still hanging around like a bad smell.

Miss Colleen Cooper

Colorado Springs

Colorado

Dear Peter,

I hope this correspondence finds you well. That Mr Tate is in good health as well.

I am so excited there is so much happening here at home. As you are aware the first train is due here real soon. The town has now a new telegraph office that will serve as a ticket office for the railroad as well. Horace, Myra and their baby have shifted into a new place. The old telegraph office is to be sold. As you are aware the train will run through the centre of town. A new town sign is over the office. They are planning a large celebration for that day something like a whole town party.

Dr Mike and Sully have decided to have an outside wedding as the church will not be big enough for the guests. Both Ma and Sully are sad. Ma as she hasn't heard from Grandma or her sisters. They were sent invitations months ago. I hope Ma hears from them real soon. Sully because they haven't heard from Cloud Dancing since he left with the baby they named "He who lives in Hopes" to go up North. He is really sad as all his tribe are gone now. I once treated Snow Bird for a badly infected hand. I went out the reservation on Sully's horse. They were our friends and I am so mad at the army I don't think I can forgive them they're so cruel.

Ma has forgotten to ask me if I'd like to be in the bridal party. Mrs Godfrey's book on Wedding Etiquette says I'm old enough. I hope she asks me real soon. Brian is too old to be the ring bearer and too young to be in the bridal party. So he is being miserable and obnoxious to everyone especially to me as he says the book is silly. But Mrs Godfrey is very clear that Brian is to young.

Ma and Sully had meetings with the Reverend some type of meeting to iron out any problems before a couple get married. I think it was okay although Ma came home one day without Sully and he didn't come to dinner that night as well. Took them a couple of days and it was a bit strained there for that short time. Talk about cold to each other. I can't imagine what the problem was but it was uncomfortable for those few days. They must have sorted it as they were soon back to normal. Thank goodness they're so in love and made for each other. All Brian can think of is us being a family. He's wanted that ever since Dr Mike took us in when our real Ma died. He has always hero worshiped Sully.

Sully nearly has the new homestead really Peter you should see it, it is the grandest house here in Colorado Springs. There are two stories and I have my own room. Sully is so good with his hands it's magnificent. Ma and Sully have let me decorate it just how I like. Sully has also made all the furniture for the house. They are only buying some bits and pieces that can't be made. There is a large room down stairs that is for the family. The kitchen has an open fire as well as a new stove it is a lot larger than in the current homestead. Sully laughs as he says the family may grow then he sneaks up behind Ma and steals a kiss. She goes red and scolds him about not in front of the children. We all laugh as Sully is teasing Ma she never gives up telling off him though.

All the ladies are getting involved in making Ma's wedding dress. Miss Dorothy had designed the garment and Ma is happy with it. They are making the lace for it some ladies are tatting for the lace border.

I'm sorry Peter it is now after the Wedding Ma and Sully are on their honeymoon. Grandma, Aunts Marjory and Rebecca are looking after us. They did arrive in time for the wedding. It was just so beautiful and romantic. You should have seen them they made the most magic couple. I

was included as a bridesmaid.

First the train arrived and Grandma was the first passenger to arrive. Ma nearly cried with happiness. They stayed at the clinic but Grandma brought all this fancy stuff with her and began upsetting everyone. Aunt Marjory looked like she'd drunk vinegar. Grandma flounces in and takes over with all this expensive wedding apparel leaving the towns folk feeling poor. We've seen how Ma grew up but she doesn't act like that, she acts normal.

I did not like the way they criticized our new home. Sully wasn't happy either, he disappeared for a couple of days and Grandma was saying he'd jilted Ma. She made me and Brian real mad. Sully wouldn't do that he loves Ma too much. Turns out Custer captured him. Thought he'd capture Cloud Dancing who by the way now has a bounty on his head dead or alive. It made Sully miss the pre rehearsal dinner Ma was worried and Grandma was livered. Everyone was on edge. Made me think I'll elope if that's how a wedding is. But it all smoothed out eventually when Sully arrived home.

There were funny moments though Hank had a book going that Sully wouldn't go through with the wedding and when Sully disappeared then he thought he'd won. He and Aunt Marjory keep going into corners and whispering. Gee I hope they're not getting cosy. Imagine Uncle Hank. Don't think Ma and Sully would be pleased not to mention Grandma. Imagine No! That really is scary.

The men arranged for Sully to have a get together. Matthew was really into that as he I imagine is thinking he'll be next with Ingrid. They all chipped in and gave Sully a brand new buck saw. By the way after that Matthew accepted Sully's offer of the old homestead for him and Ingrid.

At Ma's Bridal Shower the ladies gathered and Ma was given a quilt, biscuit cutter and Grandma gave her a gorgeous gown from Paris. The trouble with Grandma is she knows how Ma lives but tries to best the people here. Trouble is it really embarrasses Ma.

The wedding was beautiful and Ma had her wish and had the dress she wanted she looked exquisite. Sully looked handsome dressed in Cloud Dancing's wedding shirt that Snow Bird had made. Guess what Cloud Dancing came and stood beside Sully. Matthew told us Custer was there but disappeared and never came back. That was strange you'd think he'd have taken Cloud Dancing if he was there. There was the bridal party and Matthew and I were in it along with Ingrid aunts Rebecca and Marjory. Actually she appears much happier at the moment. Grandma gave Ma away that's not actually in Mrs Godfrey's book.

Then the reception and the food was excellent. Grace and the ladies out did even what Grandma could have done in Boston. Peter the cake was big and had a big blue heart on it. After wards they got in a white drawn carriage and went to the train station and off to a honey moon for two weeks in Denver. Brian and John had arranged the carriage as if they were in our new home. It was just so romantic and special. Sully gave Brian a huge pat on the back and laughed I think he was really pleased with Brian's surprise though Ma looked nervous.

Well Peter they are due back in eleven days from now. Imagine being in Denver all those fabulous places. Seeing inside the library and art galleries. Maybe one day we can go and see them.

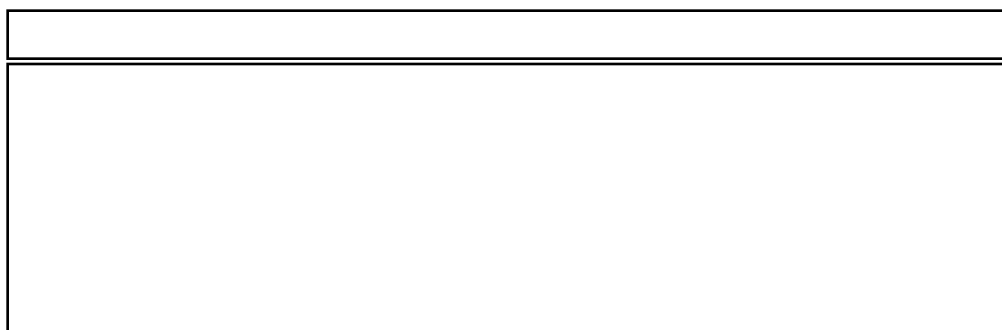
I must go now and get this in the mail. I am sorry that I've taken so long to reply.

Your Friend,

Colleen

Folding the letter and placing it in its envelope Colleen sealed it and placed a couple of drops of lavender oil on a corner. Hugging it to herself she sighed and she hurried off to see Horace to send it.

Horace wasn't the most romantic gentleman in Colorado Springs but he did take notice of all the correspondence that travelled though his office. He could just about recite it all since he was employed by the government some years ago. Although if you asked him he'd tell you he had taken a strict oath never to reveal anything that transpired there. One mistake that he finally didn't regret was leaving an *A* off a telegram to the Reverend from a Boston doctor called Michael Quinn MD. Horace smiled and noted that the letters between these two young people occurred on a reasonably regular bases. Poor Lewis had moved away some time ago and hadn't kept in contact with Colleen.



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