



Name \_\_\_\_\_

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AMERICAN LITERATURE SELECTIONS, *CONTINUED*

The other big difference was the speed the spindles turned at without stopping. There would be no time out for tea, I could see that. Hetty told me that each of our machines could turn out three or four times as much yarn in a day as the fastest spinner could on a wheel. And the machine yarn was stronger and smoother than the homespun, she said. Pa was right about one thing; the wages I earned would buy a lot more yarn than I could spin in the same time at home. Except, of course, that's not what Pa was going to spend my wages on.

They rang the mill bell at four-thirty in the morning to wake everybody up. But if the wind was wrong we couldn't hear it out on the farm, so George would wake me up. George slept in the back of the house and when the animals started moving around in the morning they'd wake him up. He'd climb up the loft ladder, put his head over the top, and call my name. I'd jump up and dress in two minutes, come down the loft ladder, and grab a piece of johnnycake to eat on the way to the mill. It didn't take me more than twenty minutes to get to the mill, if I hurried.

They rang the mill bell again at five o'clock. We were supposed to be ready to start work then. At seven o'clock the bell rang again for breakfast, and again at noon for dinner, and again at five o'clock to let us quit and go home. From where I stood at the slubbing billy in the wool mill, I could see the bell tower, which was on the cotton mill. There was a clock in the bell tower, and I could see that, too, and now I knew what it meant to work by clock time, instead of sun time.

With sun time, the way we always worked before, and our grandpas and grandmas before us, and their grandpas and grandmas before them, you could rest a little when you were tired, and take a drink of something when you were thirsty, or a bite of bread and cheese when you were hungry. But with clock time you weren't allowed to get tired or hungry or thirsty on your own; you had to wait until the clock told you it was time to be thirsty or tired. I wasn't used to it.

Back on the farm Ma and me would spin all the livelong day half the winter, it seemed like. And if it wasn't spinning it was cutting and sewing to make frocks for ourselves and trousers and shirts for Pa and George. But now and again, when we felt like it, we'd stop working and rest. Ma'd make tea and we'd eat a baked apple left over from supper with cream on it, and talk. Ma would tell about Mrs. Reed's school, or how handsome Pa was when he was courting her, and I'd tell about being a teacher when I was grown up, and the eagle I'd seen the day before in the top of the pine trees.

But you couldn't do that on clock time. You had to wait until the bell said you could rest and eat and talk about things. Oh, it didn't take me but two days to come to hate that bell and that clock in the tower. But there wasn't anything to change that. I just had to get used to being hungry when I was told to be hungry.

They brought us our breakfast at the mill—bread, cheese, and hot tea that they carried over from the lodging house where the boys ate. But we were supposed to get our own dinners at noon. A lot of girls lived right in the village, like Hetty, and could scoot home for dinner. But the ones like me, who lived out on farms, didn't have time to scoot home, and brought our dinners in dinner baskets—cold pork, cold pie, cheese, bread, apples. They sent over a boy from the lodging house kitchen with tea to go with our dinners. The boy's name was Tom Thrush. He was about fourteen but small and looked half his age. Tom was chosen for the job because he had got half his