

Melvin. You'd never believe the honors he's brought you!"

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"Melvin?" said Mrs. Rust. "Now who might Melvin be?"

"Now, Rusty," Emma Davis said, drawing a long breath. "Don't pretend. You know very well that you remember Melvin. You remember how you brought him up, and how once he set fire to Snooks, the white-haired dog, and how you had to spank him for it, and how he never could get enough of your famous apple dowdy. Don't tell me you don't remember that handsome Melvin Rust, for I *know* you do!"

It was Emma Davis' knowledge that accomplished the miracle. For suddenly, far below the layers of almost complete oblivion which made up most of Mrs. Rust's mind, some faint light flickered, wavered, glowed for an instant, struggled to pierce the darkness, and finally managed a frail streak through it, like a beacon through almost impenetrable fog.

"I guess perhaps I do," Mrs. Rust said. "I guess anyway I remember how he ate too much of that apple dowdy and had to take castor oil. How old is Melvin now? Fifteen, perhaps?"

"Melvin is twenty-six," Emma Davis said firmly, thinking more quickly than she had ever thought in all her life. "You forget how