

I Knew I Was In Trouble When...

I knew I was in trouble when I looked out the side mirror of the tractor I was driving to see the rear wheel of the back wagon I was pulling roll diagonally across the road.

Let me explain. It was nineteen eighty-something. The corn harvest was going well. Gordon was in his usual position in the combine. His older brother Arnold, with whom we farmed and the usual corn hauler, was being forced to stay near the house.

The men's elderly mother, who lived with Arnold, suffered from dementia, which was progressing to the point she needed closer supervision. And, due to her feelings about me, I was not an option as a caretaker. That left me to haul loads of corn to the dryer, located at Arnold's farm, a mile and a half from our farm.

These two guys had been a farming team since Gordon was a teen and had very hard and fast rolls. Gordon ran the combine, while Arnold hauled the loads away to either the dryer, the storage bin on the farm, or to the elevator.

Up until now, Arnold had made it clear my place on the farm was making meals, helping with the livestock, and doing farm bookwork. I was to leave the field work to the guys.

But desperate times called for desperate measures. Put the woman in the tractor.

Although I knew how to drive a tractor, I had never pulled loads with one, let alone driven these loads on a public road.

I was now deemed capable enough to help in a pinch. Arnold would be able to come out to help me unload. And so it was, I went out to the field where my loads awaited me. I got into the tractor, fired it up, and, while turning on my four-way flashers put the implement in gear.

When I had expressed to Gordon my hesitancy to pull onto the road from the grade of the field driveway, he'd said, "Drive through the yard." So gingerly, I made my way onto the road from our more level home driveway. So far, so good. I sped up the tractor to get up to road speed.

As I neared the intersection, I geared the tractor down in order to turn the corner. I looked both ways before pulling out, making sure the coast was clear. It was shortly after I had executed the turn, I looked to find I was minus the wheel. This, with nearly seven hundred bushels of grain on my wagons, and this was a well-traveled road, known as a time maker between towns!

I must have had an angel riding on my shoulder that day. Through no ability or knowledge on my part,

I somehow got those loads pulled to the side of the road and stopped without spilling a kernel of corn.

Knowing I should have arrived at the corn dryer by now, Arnold eventually came looking for me.

When he surveyed the situation, he mused, "A bearing went out."

Luckily, a nearby farm store was still open where he could locate parts to get me on the road again.

Before long, I was on my way to my next adventure.