

Gone

by Nancy Archibald

When I started grade ten at Lacombe High School, I didn't know many of the students. A girl whose locker was next to mine was a bit of a loner. We chatted every day when we were changing classes and gathering our books. Marg was a petite, slender girl with long black hair.

"Do you want to walk home with me for lunch?" Marg said.

"Sure, I will bring my lunch," I said.

Her house was a twenty-minute walk from school, so Marg had time to make lunch.

My mom always made cheddar cheese sandwiches for us. I am not sure why I didn't make our own, but it must have been just as easy for Mom to make hers and mine.

"Do you want me to make you a sandwich, too?" Marg asked.

Looking down at the familiar cheese from my lunch bag I said, "Sure, that would be great."

She took out the mayonnaise, an onion and bread from the fridge. She cut the onion across the top into slices and turned it 90 degrees to cut it again, then she turned it sideways to make small squares of onions. I had never seen anyone cut an onion like that.

She reached into the cupboard for a can of tuna. After draining the liquid out, she put the rest in the bowl and mixed it with the onion and mayonnaise. She placed the bread on the counter and applied the mixture to the slices.

"Here you go," she said. "Do you want a glass of milk?"

"Sure," I said.

My first bite was wonderful. I was particularly hungry from our walk at noon and this sandwich hit the spot. Marg and I became close friends, although she didn't say much about herself. She was quiet.

Marg and I didn't take the same classes, as she was in the general diploma program rather than matriculation. We had little in common. She didn't like sports and had few friends except Neil Rains. I think she liked someone to talk to on her walk home for lunch.

One day Marg wasn't at the locker. I asked if anyone had seen her, but no one did. She had disappeared. A week went by and still no Marg.

Marg lived across the street from Neil. I got to know Neil a little from hanging around Marg. He was a small friendly guy who wore a tight buckskin jacket with long fringes hanging from his sleeve. He must have been older than us because he had a growth of whiskers.

Later I discovered Marg had become pregnant with Neil's baby and had to leave school. At that time they may have had places where girls could have their baby and give up their child or maybe she had relatives she could stay with. Marg never came back to school and I never saw her again. Neil didn't mention anything about Marg.