



How I Came to Live in Morgan Hill by Jean Pinard



My mother grew up on a prune ranch in Madrone, and as a teenager, attended Live Oak High School with her sister. They arrived each morning in a small buggy behind an old mare that kept their attention by producing a small explosion of evil-smelling gas with each trotting step. Later, she worked for a while at her aunt Marie Pinard's candy store on East First Street in Morgan Hill, and for a time at the post office.

My father was born in a tiny town in the south-eastern part of Washington state on the bluffs above the Snake River. His mother died when he was three years old, and he was raised up to the age of twelve by his aunt Osie. He quickly grew tall and strong and when his appetite became too great and perhaps became a bit hard to handle, he was sent south to Morgan Hill to the family patriarch, Uncle Henry, who soon put him to work.

I am not sure how my parents met each other, but since Morgan Hill was such a small town it would be pretty certain that everyone would be acquainted. Old photographs show a lot of clowning around; my mother, her sisters and their friends (including my father and other relatives) had many good times. It was during this period that I decided on my parentage. These were intelligent, fun-loving but practical and hardworking people, and I chose them to be my family.

My parents were married very young – nineteen and twenty – poor as church mice. They made a living “working the bees”, as my mother described it. They

took their hives to wherever there were blossoms: Los Gatos area, Tracey, other places along the San Joaquin river. I certainly did not intend to be born into a roving camp life, beginning my life in a prune box for a crib, so I postponed my arrival for a time. Later on my father acquired the Ford garage on Monterey Street in Morgan Hill, where they lived in a small apartment above the garage. This was a step up for certain, but still not quite what I had in mind, and so I again put off my date for arriving into the family.

It wasn't until my parents had saved up enough money to buy a sizeable piece of property and to build a nice big house that I decided it was time to finally begin my human life. When my father was chosen to be the Chief of Police of Morgan Hill and Constable of Burnett Township, I made my move. On a warm July day I became securely imbedded in my mother's womb, and waited patiently to be born. This event was so unexpected after eight years of marriage that my mother's sister, who was a nurse in Oakland, insisted that I be ushered into the world in clinical hospital surroundings. So my mother and I waited out the last couple of weeks in my Aunt Hazel's Oakland apartment, and I was born with great pomp and circumstance under her professional supervision.

A week or two later, my mother, father and I drove from Oakland to Morgan Hill and I was introduced to Morgan Hill and my brand new home. I was pleased that I had waited to be born. Not only were my surroundings quite luxurious compared to previous years, but the long wait for a child to be born made me quite the important little princess in my mother's eyes.

I enjoyed this status for a few years, until my mother, after bearing two more children, became more realistic, and reminded me emphatically more than once, that I actually was not a princess, but an ordinary little girl in an ordinary little town.

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