DUTY BOUND

One Marine's Story of World War II and The Cold War

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In loving memory of my father,
Alonzo Edward Lindsey (1924 -1999),
who endeavored throughout his life to do his
duty for country, for family, and for his community

Dedicated to Wayne, Ian, Lindsey, Jason, Jordan, Justin, and William—Papa's grandsons and his pride and joy

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Every attempt has been made to write my father's biography with substantiation through government documents, newspaper articles, his Third Marine Division book, his official United States Marine Corps military records, scrapbooks, personal letters, diaries (especially the dairies of my grandmother Ann Foster Lindsey Westley) and family remembrances and research. In some cases, there were gaps in documentation and in those cases, I relied on family oral history. If there are in errors in this accounting, they are mine.

INTRODUCTION

I CAN STILL PICTURE MY FATHER, BENT OVER A BOOK of beloved poetry, reading to me at age ten or eleven as I lay under my pink electric blanket, shivering with fever, home sick from school. After checking my temperature, and feeding me aspirins and ginger ale, Dad's face lit up as he asked me if I was up to hear some poems. From the small bookcase in our living room, Dad lovingly selected a volume and began reading aloud, delighting in each selection. After reciting *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* by Robert W. Service or explaining how Abraham Lincoln's death compelled Walt Whitman to pen *O Captain, My Captain*, Dad sometimes paused as he returned the books to bookcase, his hands alighting on the Third Marine Division book that he kept alongside his other literature.

Dad's piece of World War II action, the Battle of Bougainville and the Guam Campaign, were laid out in prose and pictures inside the dark blue book with the triangular Third Marine red insignia on the cover. The book shook almost imperceptibly in his hands, as bit by bit, little by little, my father talked about World War II, pointing out the maps and skipping the more gruesome photos. Dad told me about the hauntingly beautiful Pacific Islands where he fought on the front lines as a humble private first class. Bougainville was a visual paradise, he explained, with spectacular flowers and fluffy palm trees, but insects were everywhere. He

saw centipedes as long as his arm, rats as big as house cats, and other strange creatures. Mostly though Bougainville was mud and blood and constant rain. The Japanese were brutal and conniving, he said, as he related tales of scouting expeditions where he was the only one to return to his battalion. The worst experience was a banzai attack on Guam. Showing the long shiny scar along his left arm, he explained, "Guam was where I was hit with the shrapnel that left this scar. A drunken Japanese soldier threw a grenade in the foxhole and blew up my gut," he said.

As a child, I did not realize how unusual it was for a World War II veteran to talk openly about his wartime experiences with his family and how fortunate I was to learn his incredible story. As I grew older, I came to appreciate that long after the peace agreements were signed, the war still hummed along in the background of Dad's mind, affecting his entire life and his outlook. Sometimes unspeakable memories haunted him during the day. Occasionally, the peaceful sleep of my childhood was shattered when Dad's screams brought the entire family into his foxhole on Guam. Unlike the veteran fathers of many of my childhood friends, Dad shared his war stories honestly and openly, not only to heal himself but to help others fight the guilt, the horror, and the other invisible wounds of combat.

A few years ago, I was cleaning the garage when I stumbled on two large cardboard boxes labeled in Dad's block lettering, "AE Lindsey." Inside was a treasure trove of scrapbooks, photos, journals, my grandmother's diaries of Yugoslavia and Romania, and Dad's Third Marine Division book. I realized that those boxes contained Dad's remarkable life story, from humble rancher to soldier to spy and finally to protector of the nation's nuclear secrets. While my sisters and I were aware of Dad's life journey, his seven grandsons knew merely that Papa was a Marine in World War II. His full story was lost to them, so I

determined to put his life into narrative form. After reading about their grandfather, Dad's grandsons urged me to publish Dad's book so that a larger audience can appreciate the courage, commitment and sacrifice that warriors, like Dad, bring to battle, and to demonstrate the lifelong consequences of war for the common soldier and the people who love them. We are losing our great veterans from World War II and it is my hope that in reading Dad's story, others will be compelled to tell their own.

PROLOGUE

The Pacific: July 1944

HE OPENS HIS EYES AND QUICKLY SHUTS THEM, wincing against the bright light. He smells the sharp scent of metal, astringent, and antiseptics. Men moan, equipment clangs, and people talk in hushed voices somewhere nearby. He drifts back into a dreamlike state with flashes of clouds and jungle and ships lulling him deeper into the slumber that feels like the only safe place for him. In his dream, he is riding a horse, free and happy, galloping full speed across a grassy plain, the sky large above him, the landscape pierced by the scent of sage and spruce.

He awakens again and glances down at his body. He does not recognize the room or the hospital gown he is wearing. *Why am I on this cot?* he thinks. Another cot hangs above him and two more are beside him just a few feet away. The fellow across from him is bandaged nearly from head to toe. He does not recognize anyone. *I must be in a hospital, but where?* he wonders. He tries to sit up, but sharp pains in his abdomen prevent it. *Why does my gut hurt so bad? How did I get this awful headache? What happened to me?* Bandages are wrapped around the bottom of his ribs down to his thighs, and he realizes that he is injured. His left arm is bound, and his back is sore, but he has no recollection of how he got that way or how he ended up here in this strange

room. There must have been an accident, he thinks. As he tries to remember how or where the injuries occurred, his mind comes up a blank. *Perhaps I fell off my horse*, he surmises, remembering his oh-so-vivid dream, but then realizes he does not remember anything before he opened his eyes in this place. He panics. Whatever happened must have been bad, he decides, if he cannot remember it.

Anxiety bubbles up as he realizes not only does he not remember where he is or what happened to him, but he does not know who he is. The more he tries to grasp a name, the more his apprehension grows. I must be a sailor, he thinks, noting the rows of cots and the men, some of them in uniform, others in hospital gowns. And I must on a ship somewhere, he concludes. But where? And why? He panics as he tries to access his memory, but comes up disoriented and confused. *Will I ever remember?*, he wonders, trying as hard as he can to access the memories that he knows must be there somewhere. He begins to hyperventilate as anxiety overwhelms him.

Fortunately, drowsiness quickly overtakes him once again. This time his dreams take him on a train ride where he watches as the landscape transforms, grass-covered plains morphing into deep red canyons and then rows and rows of citrus orchards. Soon he is traveling by foot through a jungle, palm trees swaying, thick green vegetation and a soft, but constant rain with a fog that limits his views to only a few feet. At the base of a jagged mountain, he and several young men in uniform begin to scale the steep slope, automatic rifles at the ready. They use machetes to hack through the dense foliage as they painstakingly climb higher and higher into the jungle. At many points along the way, they slog through mud up to their knees, swatting at swarms of insects. As darkness falls, the men dig shallow foxholes along a small ledge carved out of the side of the steep hillside and prepare to spend

the night under the cover of their ponchos, mosquito nets thrown loosely over each of them.

In his dream, the men doze off and on, always on edge, with an ever-present feeling of imminent danger. Sometime during the night, slight skittering sounds alert him. He peers above the edge of the foxhole. Hundreds of menacing, slanted eyes gawk at him among the sword-like leaves of the native grass. In a flash the eyes become bodies, charging crazily with swords drawn and grenades strapped to their wrists. An especially frightening man waves a huge white flag with a dark red circle in the middle, shouting something foreign. Heavy artillery shakes the earth beneath him, the rumblings mingled with screams, grunts, shouts, and the whiz of bullets. A small man jumps into his foxhole, eyes crazed and bayonet pointing. A grenade explodes in the foxhole, so loud it jars his helmet loose, knocking it from his head. He sees nothing but carnage—bodies and body parts strewn across the ledge and up the hillside. The air reeks of gunpowder, blood, dirt, and fear. The lifeless body of the intruder shares the foxhole, half in and half out. He spots his own helmet, blown a few feet away by the blast, his best friend's brains splattered across it. He yells in horror.

As he bellows, a nurse, dressed in a starched white uniform, touches his arm tenderly, disrupting the horrendous dream. "Wake up, sir," she says. "You're having a nightmare. Your screams can be heard from one end of this ship to the other."

"Water," he croaks. He desperately wants to ask her where he is and how he got there, but finds he can't talk. Grunts and moans are the only sounds he can form. A feeling of utter hopelessness and total isolation grips him. He tries to get up from his cot, but the pain is too intense and prohibits his movements to just a few inches.

"Not too much," the nurse softly tells him, holding a straw up to his parched lips. She eases him down until he is fully resting on the cot. "Your left arm and back had bits of shrapnel in them

when you got here, sir. We think a shell hit you, so you will be sore there for a while. Best guess is a grenade tore up your intestines. You'll be feeling a lot of pain. And you have a concussion. That's the reason for your headache. But, you're safe here and we'll take care of you. You're on the USS *Relief*, the best hospital ship in the Navy. What you need is rest. This'll help," she says and injects him with something, all the while soothing him with soft touches across his forehead and gentle murmurs until he once again confronts the blackness.

PART ONE

The Early Years

"*Human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected.*"

— George Washington

1

HOME ON THE RANGE

THE YOUNG CALF BELLOWED AS LONNIE AND BILLIE struggled to unsnarl the barbed wire that tangled the animal in the fence that surrounded their ranch near Mandel, in the high plains of Wyoming about fifteen miles northwest of Laramie. The calf was obviously in distress as any movement brought more pain from the barbs piercing its neck. Its hind legs were stuck, deep in mud from the recent thunderstorm.

"Do you think we can free him?" Lonnie asked.

"I think so," Billie answered. While Lonnie spoke soothingly to the young animal and petted his head, Billie snipped slowly and carefully at the wire, using every bit of his strength to finally release it. Once freed, Lonnie grinned as the calf bounced up and ran to his mother. "Pa will be pleased we freed the calf," Billie said.

Lonnie was seven and his older brother Billie was ten, nearly eleven, that early summer when they stumbled across the stray while riding their horses, Bean and Betsy, around the 1,400-acre ranch that originally belonged to their grandfather, John James Lindsey, and now belonged to their father, Alonzo Jenkins (AJ)

Lindsey. It was 1931 and the Great Depression had Wyoming in its grip. Like their neighbors, the Lindseys were experiencing lean times as the family's cattle business was less and less profitable each year. Like so many, the Lindseys were struggling, trying their best to keep their beloved ranch solvent as an unprecedented drought made it difficult to provide enough food and water for the cattle on whom they depended for their very livelihood. Under those circumstances, Lonnie and Billie knew every head of cattle was important. Each animal was potential food for the family or would bring money when sold to the stockyards. The boys swelled with pride knowing they had done well for their family that day and they raced home to tell their father.

During those periods of economic hardship, not only was every head of livestock essential, but the Lindseys often lived off the land, shooting wild game and fishing the Little Laramie River, where trout were plentiful. As they galloped back to the ranch house, the boys kept their eyes open for any game that might provide much needed protein for the family dinner table. Big-game hunting was a way of life in those days in Wyoming, especially for those on farms and ranches. Almost as soon as they could walk, Billie and Lonnie, like the other boys and many girls in the area, learned to shoot a rifle and fish. The lucky hunter could bag a white-tailed deer, moose, elk and, or perhaps, a bear or a beaver. Hunting held no special allure for Lonnie, however. Killing other living things was not something he enjoyed doing, but would when necessary. He would rather explore the countryside on foot or ride his horse across the plains unless his father demanded that he and his brother bring home some game for the family's supper. Lonnie knew that many days the only food on the table would be whatever the boys or their father shot.

Lonnie's favorite time to explore was in the late spring when

clumps of Indian paintbrush, Wyoming's state flower, thrived among the dominant sagebrush, prairie grasses, and greasewood. The bold yellow, orange, and red blossoms blanketed the rangelands, preferring the partial shade offered from the occasional pine tree or prickly pear cactus, sometimes sharing their habitat with a rare wild delphinium. The clean air from the 7,000-foot elevation, not only smelled, but also, tasted faintly of sagebrush, intoxicating and slightly minty, mixed with pine, spicy and bitter. The clear blue sky consumed much of the panorama, cut only by the view of the distant Snowy Mountains. Herds of bugling elk and sleek prong-horned antelope often crossed Lonnie's path.

As he roamed on horseback with his brother, Lonnie looked for flocks of sage grouse during their spring "booming" cycle, when groups of up to twenty male birds would gather on a small hill looking to attract a mate. He and Billie made a game of it, each one hoping to find the biggest flock first and earn bragging rights at the supper table. The birds fed on seeds and insects around the sagebrush and scrub oak that dotted the parched prairie. While booming, groups of ten to twenty males lower their heads, inflate the air sacs on their throats, and make hollow moaning sounds. Billie and Lonnie stifled their laughter, not wanting to spook the silly birds, as the males fluffed up their feathers and jumped into the air all the while making distinctive rumbling cackle sounds, commonly called "booms." This made for fine entertainment, and if they happened to have their rifles with them, they might bag a bird or two for dinner. The succulent birds, especially the more tender hens, made for a fine feast, their spicy succulence mitigating the gamey taste. Killing one of the prairie chickens required top-notch shooting skills, however, so if they missed, they would note the location of the mating birds and let their father know.

Lonnie was grateful that he could roam the wide-open spaces of the Wyoming plains. During school vacations, when their chores were complete, the brothers jumped on their horses seeking wild adventures. Many times, they just rode their horses for hours. On other days, they scavenged, picking up feathers, discarded snake skins, Indian arrowheads, or unusual rocks. One day they stumbled on what they thought were petrified dinosaur eggs wedged under a boulder on a small hill. The brothers gathered the eggs and took them to the Geology Museum at the University of Wyoming in the nearby town of Laramie. Lonnie never found out what the university did with the eggs or what type of prehistoric lizard laid them. On other days, the boys cracked open fragments of golden layers of shale to discover petrified fish or leaf fossils. Soon they were vying with one another for the best find of the day.

Lonnie's elementary school was a one-room schoolhouse located few miles from the ranch. The nearest neighbors were miles away and, consequently, except for school, Lonnie and Billie spent almost all their time with their family and the hired hands. Every school day, Lonnie looked forward to greeting his friends with a ready smile and an interesting anecdote. School gave him plenty of opportunities to express his gregarious nature and quick wit. Lonnie's vivacious personality truly came alive in the company of others. Lonnie approached everyone with an infectious sunny attitude, coupled with impeccable manners and an ability to converse on a variety of subjects. He was a bit of a rascal, hanging out with the boys who liked to joke and fool around. Many days he was the center of attention. In a corner of the schoolyard, Lon played marbles and repeated the off-color stories shared by the hired hands. Many of the fellows sported new nicknames once Lonnie befriended them. John became Lefty, Horace became Steely, and Ed was affectionately called

Lumpy. Lon's sense of humor was not only infectious, but he only engaged in good-natured fun, avoiding meanness. To those at the tiny school, getting a nickname from Lonnie meant you had his approval and friendship.

While he excelled academically, especially in English and history, the other children considered him the class prankster, often leading him to minor trouble with his teachers. In an introductory algebra class, the teacher taught the class sets by using words rather than numbers. A set is just a collection, she explained, such as a set of animals might be and she wrote the words {dog, cat and horse} between brackets on the chalkboard. She then asked one of the girls in the class to come to the blackboard and write down a set for flowers. The girl dutifully drew two brackets and between them wrote the words {daisy, rose, lilac}. Next was Lonnie's turn to create a set of vegetables. Lonnie raced to the board and wrote his answer. When the teacher asked him to read aloud his set to the class, he said, "I wrote 'lettuce, turnip and pea,'" much to the delight of his snickering classmates.

He also took part in many of the playground jokes that were popular in his day and could recite nearly every one of the *In Days of Old* poems that circulated between his elementary school-aged classmates. A favorite was:

> *In days of old, when knights were bold,*
> *And toilets weren't invented,*
> *You left your load in the middle of the road*
> *And went away contented.*

Lonnie made up many additional versions of the rhyme and happily teased the girls by reciting different adaptations.

One day, Lonnie played hooky, deciding the rare warm spring

day was too nice to waste inside the classroom. He rode away from the house at the usual time that morning, but instead of stopping and hitching his horse in front of the schoolhouse, he and Betsy went on an escapade, exploring new territory. Lon's exhilaration from his adventure was short-lived, however, as his parents were waiting for him anxiously when he returned home later that day. While his mother merely shook her head with her hands on her hips and a stern expression, his father was livid. Lonnie's usually closemouthed father had plenty to say, yelling at him about his irresponsible behavior as he gave him a good whupping and then beat his horse Betsy as well. Lonnie said from that day forward, Betsy refused to go anywhere off the ranch property except to take him directly to school and back. Lonnie learned his lesson too and did not skip school again.

Lonnie was expected to learn all he could about animal husbandry to prepare to make his livelihood at the family homestead. Even as late as the 1930s, Wyoming still had vestiges of the frontier and nearly everyone Lonnie knew was a rancher, except those who lived in town. Like them, he learned how to break a horse, rope a steer, brand a calf with the Lindsey ranch unique markings, mend a fence, and round up the cattle. From early childhood, he helped with castrating, vaccinating, and earmarking the cows. At first, he was queasy and would retch each time an animal had to be castrated, his head turned as he tried to hide his reaction from his father. Over time he trained himself to perform any procedure, without showing his emotions, just as his dad, uncles, and grandfather did. *I will prove to them that I am tough*, he thought whenever a task was gruesome or required extra courage. The last thing he wanted was for his family or the ranch hands to tease him because he could not do what the others did easily. As the youngest in the family, he constantly tried to prove that he was up to any challenge. "I'm

no baby," he told himself whenever an onerous chore seemed to be too much. Gritting his teeth and swallowing the bile that rose in his throat, he mustered up his courage, kept up with his brother, and proved his maturity by tackling the most squeamish of chores.

Every August Lonnie and his brother accompanied their dad and the wranglers on the roundup, where they searched for their cattle on the plains. The entire herd was turned loose in the spring, and they needed to be brought back inside the miles of barbed wire fence that marked the perimeter of their land before the first snowfall. After rounding them up, the mature cattle would be sold at market in Texas, Kansas City, or Chicago while the younger stock would be confined to the ranch property for the winter. Camping under the stars and eating beans from cans was just about the most perfect lifestyle, Lonnie believed. *I'm a cowboy for real*, Lonnie would think, sticking out his chest proudly as he glanced at his father, brother, and ranch hands gathered around the campfire, telling stories about ranching in nearby Colorado or from as far away as Texas or New Mexico. His father had the respect of the men because he had grown up as a cattleman. *Someday everyone will look up to me, just like Pa*, Lonnie thought, *when I inherit the ranch and am the big man in charge*. The cowpokes, who called him "Small Fry" or "Little Feller," told him wild stories as they relaxed under the open sky after a long day on the range. Other times, someone picked up a guitar or harmonica and they sang cowboy ballads together, such as "Git Along, Little Dogies" and "Home, Home on the Range." While looking up and trying to find the Milky Way or the Big Dipper in the expansive Wyoming sky, Lonnie imagined himself taking over the family ranch one day and leading the cattle drives as his father did. Once he was the owner, he would inherit the special pair of sheepskin chaps that his father wore when herding

the cattle through bushy terrain. While Lonnie had his own pair of leather chaps made by his mother, he coveted the special ones his father wore that set him apart as the head honcho of the Lindsey Ranch.

It was also in summer when the boys helped harvest the family's small garden and orchard. Lonnie's job was to scramble up the family's two apricot trees where he plucked the fruit from the upper branches, He knew the more he harvested, the more apricot jam his mother would make to slather atop his biscuits during the long Wyoming winter. High up in the tree, Lonnie pretended he was an Indian, scouting the ranch looking for cattle to rustle, wielding a bow and arrow, and a deadly aim.

Lonnie's life was busy, mostly defined by chores. After school, he groomed and fed his horse. Then he and his brother hauled water from the well up to the house, chopped wood and tended the wood box, fed the livestock, gathered eggs from the henhouse, and mucked the barn before moving inside to help their mother with supper. Sometimes he pulled carrots, turnips, or potatoes from the small vegetable garden alongside the ranch house. After supper, the brothers worked on school lessons side by side at the kitchen table usually until bedtime. Because rural electrification was not available until 1940 in Wyoming, the house had no running water, no electricity, and they depended on kerosene lamps for light.

It was there in the ranch house that Lonnie was born, on September 17, 1924. His mother, Ann Gertrude Foster Lindsey, bore him with only the help of a local midwife and a bit of whiskey for the pain. While his family called him "Junior," he was not a true junior. His father was named Alonzo Jenkins Lindsey while he had the moniker of Alonzo Edward Lindsey, his middle name a tribute to his mother's favorite brother. Lonnie hated being called Junior, but to all at the ranch and to all in town

Lonnie's parents, AJ and Ann Lindsey, 1923.

he was Junior during his childhood. Lonnie had to move from Laramie before he could take on his given name of Alonzo, or as he preferred, Lon or Lonnie.

As Lonnie grew, he developed into a natural athlete, with a sinewy, flexible body, and wiry strength. Lonnie's father and his uncles also showed athletic abilities. His mother's brothers, his uncles Ed and Hiram, were well-known in the area for their abilities to ride bucking broncos and for their skills in roping and branding cattle. His father, and even his mother, often contended and usually placed in the top three places in rodeo and county fair competitions across the state. Attending them were special events for the Lindseys, providing that rare opportunity for the whole family to get away from the ranch and mingle with the town folk. Lonnie sat in the bleachers with his cousins, watching

his aunts, uncles, and even his parents vie for a first, second, or third place ribbon. He and his brother competed in the junior contests, hoping to win first prize in cattle wrestling or barrel racing. As he entered his teens, Lonnie noticed the girls checking him out, noting his straight patrician nose; full, pouty, curvy lips; dark brown, nearly black hair, and large hazel eyes framed by bushy, often unruly brows.

When time permitted, the family had fun at home. If the weather was good, they played horseshoes, the boys raced their horses, or they played cowboys and Indians. It was during the horseshoe contests with the ranch hands that Lonnie's athletic ability first showed up. While the youngest, he was still able to best his opponents much of the time with his steady aim, perfect eyesight, and the ability to get consistent ringers. A popular pastime on ranches during the Great Depression, all horseshoes requires is a cleared area, four horseshoes, and two stakes about 40 feet apart. Players alternate by throwing two horseshoes with the objective to wrap the horseshoes around the opposite stake (a ringer) or to get as close as possible to the stake. Lonnie spent hours practicing his technique. In bad weather, the family moved inside for playtime, sitting around the kitchen table over a game of cribbage, pinochle, or poker. Lonnie's dad taught his sons how to bluff, how to bet, and how to read a "tell." From an early age, Lonnie showed a keen aptitude for cards, a skill he enjoyed throughout his lifetime. He also enjoyed all kinds of games and competitions.

Each spring the brothers helped their father break the range horses, an important money-maker for the struggling ranch. The range horses were wild, captured up near Green River, where thousands roamed free along the buttes and canyons that broke up the plains. AJ spent considerable time training his boys the requisite skills to tame and break the wild mustangs, a process

that could take up to three years. With the one-year-olds, all AJ wanted was for them to get comfortable taking a bit and walking around the pen. At age two, the horses could handle a rein and a bareback rider. The horse then required walking with its reins on as it was introduced to the older, more seasoned horses—a job for the two boys. Many horses were not ready for a rider and full saddle until age three. The tamed mustangs that AJ broke became important components of keeping the ranch going. If a horse was agile enough and displayed some "cow sense"—the ability to sense where a cow was going or what it would do next, then the animal joined the ranch and helped with the annual round-up and other chores. Those animals not deemed suitable for the Lindsey ranch were sold, providing much-needed income.

During the training, the boys sat atop the wooden fence of the corral while AJ put the horse through its early paces, trying to acclimate the animal to humans. "Pay attention," AJ warned his sons. Wild horses could be dangerous; all unbroken horses bucked, some more than others, especially the one-year-olds. One day an exceptionally unruly horse broke away from AJ, turned and galloped right in the direction of the two boys. Lonnie quickly jumped down onto the other side of the fence and watched in horror as Billie fell from the fence into the corral, tumbling underneath the rowdy colt. As his brother screamed, Lonnie grimaced. Through the dust, Lonnie saw the horse trampling Billy in his groin area. It seemed like several minutes passed before his father could bring the horse under control. Once the horse was safely tethered in the stables, Lonnie, shaking and stammering, ran to his brother's side. Billie was white and shivering, curled into a ball, clutching his groin area. He was unable to talk, obviously in shock, moving in and out of consciousness. With the rowdy horse locked up, AJ ran back to the corral, gathered Billie in his arms, and carried him to the

family automobile while Lonnie ran inside the house to get his mother. They sped the fifteen miles into town, Billie covered in a blanket, snuggled against his mother as she softly assured him again and again that everything would be okay. Once at the hospital, Billie went immediately to surgery. Lonnie paced in the waiting room, back and forth, back and forth worrying about his brother. While his mother cried softly and prayed, his father sat, quietly twisting his hat in his hands, staring out vacantly. After more than an hour, the doctor emerged. While Billie suffered no broken bones or internal bruising, the doctor told them, the horse's hoofs tore his testicles, rendering him sterile. Billie would need to stay a few days at Ivinson Memorial, but he would recover, the doctor assured them, although he would never father a child.

Back at home, Lonnie could not stop thinking about the accident. Lonnie realized that his quickness and his ability to jump off the fence to the other side of the corral might have saved him from a similar fate. Imagining that it could have been him under the crazy stallion was just too much. In any dangerous situation, Lonnie realized, he needed to pay attention and be ready to move quickly. Later that night, Lonnie woke the entire household with his screams, as he relived the disaster in a nightmare. Lonnie was so shaken that his mother insisted that Lonnie sleep between his parents that night, a rare privilege that he savored, breathing in his father's scent of horses, cattle, sweat, and tobacco and his mother's sweet aroma of flour and spices mingled with the wood smell from the old stove that she hovered over much of every day.

Besides the hazards involving animals, other dangers on the Wyoming prairie included snow blindness, frostbite, hypothermia, and broken bones. Even insects could present problems. One hot July day when Lonnie was ten, he heard snapping sounds and felt

something move under his boots as he walked one of the range horses from the barn to the stable. Suddenly Lonnie was immersed in a cloud of wings and jaws. A swarm of snapping grasshoppers struck him, clinging to his jeans and shirt, leaving smears of tobacco colored spit on his arms, his face, his shirt, and his jeans. "Get off me," Lonnie screamed, swatting at insects with his leather cowboy hat.

In wet years or years with normal rainfall, the grasshopper eggs developed a fungus and most died, therefore Lonnie encountered only a few of the hungry insects. With the extreme drought in the country during the hot, dry years of the Great Depression, however, conditions were ripe for a grasshopper infestation. While the incident was unpleasant, Lonnie considered himself lucky that the swarm was not larger. Infestations in southern Wyoming were not nearly as severe as they were in the northern part of the state and in neighboring Nebraska. There the hordes of the feared insects were so thick they blocked out the sun and devoured every crop and every bit of grassland they could find. Some of the insects were so hungry they ate cotton sheets, dresses, and undershirts from clotheslines and even damaged fences.

During the extended Wyoming winters, harsh weather, winds, and snow were common for seven to eight months of the year, from October to May followed by a short spring and an even briefer summer. Every year, Lonnie joked that they had a great summer this Fourth of July in Wyoming. In between snowfalls, balmy Chinook winds from the east would blow in warm air for a few days, melting the snow. After a day or two, the snow would fall again. Lonnie and Billie looked forward to the blizzards, so they could ice skate on one of the nearby beaver ponds, build snow forts, and slide down the hillsides on whatever suitable piece of wood or cardboard they could find. When trips to town were necessary, the boys enjoyed riding on the roomy horse-

drawn sleigh that was large enough to fit the whole family. Snuggling under buffalo fur blankets, the boys leaned their heads back to catch flakes of snow on their tongue. It was a moment to be savored. The quiet of the countryside was broken only by the sound of the horses' hooves beating against the snow packed road. If Lonnie was fortunate, the sleigh ride was followed by an evening in front of the fireplace reading poetry, the works of Zane Grey, or one of the Greek classics. Lonnie also liked Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, the poems of Robert Louis Stevenson, and the fiction and poetry of Rudyard Kipling.