

The Smiths, Part 1 – The Origins

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Chapter I – Steven Smith

It was September 1858. In the small fishing village of Edgar's Hollow, Steven Smith made a living supporting his family of six, soon to be seven children by making a daily sojourn out onto the waves of the North Atlantic to provide for his family and put aside a meager amount of money for lean times as well as towards the dowries of his two oldest daughters. His second cousin, William Jones shared the small skiff and the two worked together bringing in the daily catch, sharing the wealth that the sea provided. William, two years younger, had so far been unlucky in having a son and he and his wife Anna, were still working on creating one, following the four daughters they had already produced. As much as the men and their wives loved their daughters, it was the income and support of the sons that provided for a comfortable retirement in old age as the daughters eventually moved on into the households of their husbands.

Steven's son, James, was sixteen and learning the fishing trade, only occasionally joining the two older men on their daily expeditions. More often than not, he remained ashore tending to repairing nets, baskets and the assorted other equipment used by the fishermen or by assisting his mother with some of her chores. His sisters Emma and Annie were learning the tasks of running a household, taught effectively by their mother, Mary. The three youngest of the brood, Bruce, at seven years old and Ella at six and Robert at three still had the opportunities to be children and played most of the day. Mary pushed much of the childcare of the three youngsters on her older daughters, as that knowledge of child rearing and child care was expected of women at the time, which gave her more time to take care of the household itself.

William and Anna had, four months ago, just married off their oldest daughter Margaret with a modest dowry. It had taken no time for the young bride to be expecting a grandchild for William and Anna. It seemed like a full moon or something ordained that on or shortly after that wedding, both Mary and Anna also became pregnant.

Chapter II – Out Fishing

At the base of the short dock stood what to many outsiders was really a laughable excuse for a lighthouse. Only fifteen feet tall, its only purpose was to provide light for the small crafts that ventured from Edgar's Hollow about five miles to find their way home. The light, which burned fish oil, would only be lit at dusk if there were still boats out and would be extinguished once the last of the small fishing boats had returned to the safety of the harbour. This was done in order to save on the use of the valuable fish oil. It was the responsibility of the crew the first boat out to ensure the small lighthouse was fully fuelled, so on this day, Steven took a small can of fish oil, climbed the twenty eight steps to top up the reservoir with the fuel for the light. Old Joeseph would ensure the lamp was lit when the daylight dimmed, be it for dusk or for storm. While Steven tended to the lighthouse, William loaded their boat with over a dozen empty wicker baskets. With two handles for carrying and two foot across and two foot deep, the baskets would hold their catch while out on the ocean and enable easy carrying of the days catch to the fish market. So, at the crack of dawn Steven and William ventured out as they did every day, except on the Lord's Day, Sunday when they too, like the Lord, rested.

The ocean was unusually calm, almost glass like and made for easy rowing. Both men knew the risk of a glass like sea surface. It was a foreboding, sure sign of a storm to come. However, for Steven, with Emma being fourteen and at the marrying age, a reasonable dowry would secure a better man for her to wed and for William, his family finances being exhausted by paying out the dowry four months earlier, left little in the way of 'extra' in the event of thin times.

Unique to this area of coastline were the small fishing boats that were substantially wider than those found farther up or down the coast. The fishermen of these waters believed that the wider boat provided greater stability in the water and the wider interior of the craft allowed for the holding of a larger catch than the narrower boats elsewhere. The wider skiff also allowed for the two men to sit side by side in the center of the craft, each with a single oar. With years of practice, working together for more than twenty years, Steven and William handled the small craft like a single entity. Few words were spoken between the two as they worked their way out, miles from shore, both knowing where to stop where the fishing was at its best.

The calm sea provided a better than usual bounty and the men figured that they could push their luck to load up a little more. The calm seas had deterred a number of other fishermen from venturing out as all seasoned fishermen knew a substantial storm was coming. That meant for Steven and William that their days catch would also be just that much more valuable. With all of the wicker baskets on board full and still more fish lying in the bilge, the two men were rejoicing at the largest haul they'd ever pulled in and the day wasn't done yet. However, judging the weather, their experience told the men to call it a day mid afternoon and they began their rowing back to Edgar's Hollow.

Chapter III – Accident In Bad Weather

Still about three miles out from the protected cove of home, the sea became progressively rougher, and the wind whipped the two men as they now struggled to make way against the wind with the heavily laden boat only adding to their woes. Old Joseph had lit the light in the lighthouse and the dim light it produced provided a target for the two men. Rowing into the waves, the angry sea splashed over the bow on the skiff as it cleaved each wave in its slow movement shoreward. William motioned to Steven to hold his oar while he got up and bear crawled to the bow to get the bailer. While taking the few steps to the bow, the wind slowly turned the small craft just slightly away from being straight into the waves. As he reached the bow, bending down to grab the bucket, a large wave hit the boat, catching both Steven and William by surprise and turning it to a forty-five degree angle of the oncoming waves. William was leaning over to grab the bailer when the wave hit. He stumbled, lost his footing, bashing his head on the gunnel as he tumbled and fell into the dark waters. Neither man could swim and falling into the water like this was usually a death sentence.

Steven, aghast at what had occurred, now quickly bear crawled to the bow of the boat, grabbed the rope that was used to tie up the boat to the dock and tied it around his waist, in case he too fell overboard. Lying face down, floating in the water was his cousin. The ballast water and of the day's catch helped to keep the boat somewhat even and upright as he struggled to haul William back into the small craft. The bobbing of the boat both helped and hindered his efforts as it rose and fell. After much struggling, William was hauled aboard. A large purple welt had already begun to form on his temple. Steven plopped William on top of some of the baskets of fish and hastily pushed aside a number of the others to create a larger space in the bottom of the boat. Quickly dropping William into the newly vacated space atop the fish in the bilge, Steven began pumping William's chest to force air in and out as William had stopped breathing. Meanwhile waves continued to crest over the gunnel of the small boat and William, lying atop the fish in the bottom of the boat appeared to gradually be sinking into the bilge water.

Eventually, William coughed up and began breathing on his own. Steven could now focus on saving the two of them. Propping William up in the bow supported by a few baskets of fish, Steven straightened the

bow of the boat into the waves and then quickly bailed as much of the water out. Once done to his reasonable satisfaction considering the situation, he then assumed a spot on the bench and with an oar in each hand struggled to regain control of the skiff and point it towards home.

The hurricane's winds would abate then rise up again. During the lulls, Steven would stop rowing if he felt there was too much water in the bottom of the boat and bail as much out as he could. It also gave him a chance to check on William who remained unconscious but breathing. Following the dim light cast by the stubby lighthouse and with leaden arms, the cove of Edgar's Hollow eventually appeared to Steven through the driving rain.

After tying up, Steven hauled – dragged William out of the boat, carrying – dragging him home to Anna. After quickly explaining what had occurred, he hurried home to Mary, rounded up her and those children that could help carry the catch to the market. There was the fear that the hurricane might capsize or sink their boat and the days haul would be lost. Struggling through the steadily increasing velocity of the winds carrying icy rain, they emptied the boat and hauled the whole catch to the market. The catch was the largest one of the few brought in for the day and brought in a good monetary return. Hurrying home, they battened down the house and weathered out the storm.

The next day, after bailing out the skiff, Steven took James out with him onto the ocean as William had only gained consciousness with the breaking of the day. For the next week Steven and his son manned the small craft, bringing in their meager income. Every day following the depositing of the days catch at the market, Steven had James take half of the day's revenue to Anna. Family was family and the reciprocal was expected if the roles were reversed.

Chapter IV – Church Service

The second Sunday after the accident arrived and both families made their way to church. It was William's first time out of his home since he was deposited into Anna's arms after the accident and the parishioners had gone out of their way to greet him and ask of his health. The youngsters were sent to worship in a different part of the small church so they wouldn't disturb the adults during their worship. Steven sat at one end of the pew and William at the other. Their wives sat next to them, both just past four months along in their pregnancies, seemingly barely showing due to the number of previous pregnancies that had gradually expanded their midriffs. James sat next to his mother and eleven year old Annie next to him. On the other end of the pew, eleven year old Ida sat next to her mother and Thomas, Margaret's new husband, thirteen years her senior, sat next to her. This left Margaret and Emma to be seated next to each other in the center.

Thomas was the eldest son of the owner of the village general store and therefore one of the wealthiest families in Edgar's Hollow. His parents were very much against the marriage of Thomas to Margaret, the daughter of a lowly fisherman who would come with a meager dowry. Thomas, however persisted and eventually his parents relented and Margaret joined Thomas's family. William had joked that it was Margaret's two personal assets that added substantially to her dowry, at least from Thomas's perspective.

Margaret and Emma no longer had the opportunity to see each other much since the wedding with Margaret having had to move in with her husband into the home of his parents while their own home was being built. Despite their different status, one as wife and soon to be mother and the other still living like a child, unattached, but looking to change her status to one similar to her cousin as being married and starting a family, the two teens whispered amongst themselves. There were giggles and gasps which prompted shushing and "quiet" for one or the other of their mothers.

Despite only sharing common great-grandparents, the family resemblance between all of the children was obvious. James looked like a younger version of either Steven or William and the older daughters could

have switched parents and a stranger would not have been able to tell the difference, save for the one noticeable difference that had secured her a husband above her family's status. Aside from the noticeable swelling of her pregnant belly, Margaret could have passed for a fraternal twin of the year younger Emma, except for the substantial breasts the older cousin possessed. Each breast swelling a half foot from her chest wall, lay in contrast to the year younger girl next to her. Emma was almost flat chested, like her mother. A similar story was being written for Annie and Ida, with the former still looking like she was awaiting puberty to begin to make changes to her chest and the latter well on her way to looking like her older sister and her mother.

The preacher ranted fire and brimstone to the congregation as he did every Sunday and as per usual before the collection plate was passed and the blessing of the offerings made, he finished the lesson asking for the parishioners to pray for a personal salvation. William clasped his hands tightly together and closed his eyes to pray, not for himself, but for Steven. The concentration created a throbbing in his temple where the boat gunnel had hit him as he fell.

'Oh Lord,' he prayed, 'as thanks for Steven giving me back my life after the near drowning, I beseech you to be so gracious as to grant one wish to Steven as thanks on my behalf.'

Meanwhile, Steven glanced down the row at the bowed heads of his and William's families as they individually prayed for something personal and significant. He noted again, as he did every Sunday that it was obvious that Anna's mother and grandmother had both been substantially endowed to have her and her girl children boasting breasts as large as they were. Now even eleven-year-old Ida boasted breasts comparable to large apples while his own daughter, Annie, who was the same age was, like her older year old sister, flat chested. With Emma and Margaret side by side and knowing that the substantial size of her breasts had bought Margaret a better husband more than what her dowry alone could have secured, he thought to himself that it was a shame that all of the females in his branch of the family were flat chested. His only thought was that he wished that his family could be endowed with bosoms as large or larger. It wasn't that he specifically wanted his girl children to have large breasts, but the joke William had made about Margaret's womanly attributes snagging Thomas for a husband stuck in his mind as he compared Emma and Margaret; virtually twins, save for the latter's breasts which dominated the girl's torso.

A week passed and William felt well enough to return to fishing with Steven and the former routine was re-established. Now on occasion one of the two men would take a day off to allow James to take a turn in the boat to learn his predetermined trade.

Chapter V – Curse Or Blessing?

Weeks passed into months and Steven noticed a strange thing happening to his wife and two eldest daughters. Although it wouldn't necessarily seem strange that his daughter's breasts would begin to fill out with their move through puberty, the fact that after having nine children, of which six survived past their first birthday, his wife's breasts barely got any larger during each of those pregnancies, this time his wife's breasts were steadily increasing in size also. Mary's breasts grew at an accelerated rate in preparation to the forming child in her womb and by the seventh month of her pregnancy she had surpassed Anna's breasts in size and volume. Steven, always somewhat jealous of William having such a well endowed wife as Anna, no longer felt that way as his own spouse soon provided the same objects of desire, only larger.

It was Emma that he was soon becoming concerned about. Although not as quickly as her mother, her breasts filled out seemingly faster than they would in comparison to other young women in the village. Like her mother, Emma surpassed her pregnant cousin's breast size by the time Margaret was eight

months along in her pregnancy, just four months after the church service. It didn't seem normal, but everything spoke of healthy, safe growth, just substantially faster than the average. Even young Annie's bodice was filling out, albeit at a more 'normal' rate. Soon both Annie and Ida were virtually indistinguishable from each other as the former grew to catch up with the later about six months after the church service and soon after superseded her in size and volume.

With breasts now almost the size of her head hanging on her torso, dominating her slender mid-teen form, Emma became a prized catch for many of those men of marrying age. It was the plight of every father that had an extremely desirable daughter. Keeping her virtue as well as sorting out prospective suitors and despite his meager funds that would form her dowry. Steven and Mary eventually agreed upon a suitable man for Emma. Twelve years older than the girl, Henry came from the family that owned the fish market. It seemed an incredible stroke of luck that Emma and her substantial breasts had persuaded the eldest son of the wealthiest family in the village. It seems that Henry, like Thomas, put the looks of his future bride and spouse above that of her status in the village. And he was able to persuade his parents to relent upon their desire that he marry within their same social circle. The details of the wedding and value of the dowry were set and a month and a half after or so after Mary, Anna and Margaret birthed, Emma was wedded and within a week of the marriage, she too was pregnant.

Chapter VI – James And Rose

A dozen years later Steven and Mary were, for the fourth time arranging for the marriage of a child. This time it was different. They were the parents of a son and assisting in selecting a suitable spouse for him. James understood the situation of having to wait so long to finally marry and start a family. It was typical of the time. He, like all male children, needed to prove to the parents of a young woman that he could protect and provide for them and all the children they may have. It had been a long time coming and he was more than ready. Regardless, he still felt envious of his sisters, Emma, now twenty seven had birthed two daughters and then four sons, Annie at twenty three had already pushed out two girls and two boys with a fifth well on the way. Even little Ella, now just eighteen had been virtually pregnant from the day she married was now carrying her fourth child. Like William and Anna a generation before, she hoped for her first son. James had watched as the number of nieces and nephews increased around him and he could hardly wait until he could be father to his own brood. He was an astute businessman as well as a superb fisherman. Now as the owner of three boats, soon to be four, he took a share of each day's catch from each boat. He had already built his own house. Despite being 'just a fisherman', James had the prospects of providing very well of the individual he took of a bride.

This time it was the wealthier families that sought Steven and Mary out, offering up a substantial dowry along with their daughters. Eventually they settled upon a niece of Thomas's, again tying Steven and William's families together. Rose was almost to the age of being considered an 'old maid'. Having just turned eighteen, she was the youngest daughter of Thomas's youngest sister. A plain girl, not what one would consider a looker, Rose had a somewhat lanky appearance despite being of average height. Being the last to marry in her family and coming with the smallest dowry because of it, her family was willing to settle for a marriage of an up-and-coming young man as opposed to her remaining unmarried due to her age, small dowry and plain appearance. But she was fiscally smart and that's what really attracted James to her.

The wedding was a big affair in Edgar's Hollow. James's 'New Money' was marrying Rose's 'Old Money'. Towards the end of the service, James and Rose exchanged vows. As is the tradition, he agreed first to take her with their vows then she to take him. With the exchange of rings, the priest announced the union. To the congregation it appeared as though Rose had stumbled or lost her footing, but she would later explain that it felt like someone had slapped or punched her in the back between her shoulder blades. She would be the first of many women to experience the changes that happened by marrying into part of Steven's family and its descendants.

It seemed strange to all that shortly after the marriage, with her puberty having finished years earlier, that Rose's breasts began to grow. It was particularly noticeable considering that she had a chest resembling the average man's. Her breasts were nonexistent on the day of the wedding. Their growth would not even be the result of pregnancy as James and Rose held off on starting their family for a little over a year following their marriage while they consolidated their business and financial situation. Of all the women in the Smith family, Rose, who started out with the smallest breasts, finished with the largest. It was a complete mystery. The same would happen to Robert's bride and his younger brother Ian's. As for the girls, their children all bred large breasted offspring, but for the males, when they wed, their wives didn't experience the bizarre post puberty growth following the exchange of wedding vows. It seemed that it was because they were no longer 'Smiths'.

As the decades past, the wealth of James and Rose grew substantially, they eventually buying out Thomas's family's interest in the general store fully and securing the controlling interest in the fish market. Never forgetting the value of family connections, James's siblings and their descendants took on leadership roles in the increasing variety of family-controlled businesses that James and Rose started or bought out. The steady increasing of wealth soon allowed for them to provide support for the higher education and new business opportunities for any descendant that asked. Of course, the two of them always took a slice of the profits of those businesses! Many of those businesses you know of today.

Continued in The Smiths, Part 2 – My Girl