

Looking back, Lucia never realized how much Phil's hometown, Belvidere, IL, would feel like home to her. While she had come to the conclusion that she felt rich to begin her life with Phil, she still retained an uneasy feeling about living in a tiny farmtown- even with the new house Phil had built for the two of them. Phil had told her that Belvidere was just outside of Rockford...but she had never been to Rockford and therefore had nothing to really equate it to.

"It's really beautiful, Lucia, you're going to feel at home right away." Phil reiterated these not entirely comforting words over and over to her. It was a gorgeous, sunny June day outside, but what could be so beautiful about a farming town?

"I'm going to take you on a little spin around the town before I show you our new home," Phil said to her as he drove along the road lined with cornfields. Lucia really wasn't too excited yet. As they sped on, there were more and more trees along the cornfields- cottonwoods, box elders, different varieties of elms and a soft maple here and there.

Then, as they slowed down to a nice coasting speed, Lucia realized they were coming upon the downtown area of Belvidere. As Lucia took a breath in, the breeze wafted the magical scent of blooming lilacs towards her. The landscape architecture around the town's buildings was really quite beautiful. There were beds of geraniums around the town hall, in which Phil told her used to house the one room library-

"Gorry! There's a library!?" interjected Lucia.

"There sure is," confirmed Phil, "G.C. Miller designed the new building that opened for it in 1913, soon after I went to work in Chicago...you know Lucia, from here, downtown Chicago is only a little over 70 miles away—much closer than your parents live. We can take trips there whenever we have extra time. I know how much you are interested in the city."

As Lucia was looking southward, all of a sudden she noticed it--- there was a river going through the town! It had people picnicking alongside it with their feet dangling in the water. There were gorgeous willow trees whose branches caressed the river's surface and danced in the warm summer breeze.

"You see those purple lilac bushes beyond the willow trees there, Lucia?" Phil asked her, pointing along the river bed. "That is our back yard. There's also a row of peonies along the east side of the house. I remembered that your mother had prize-winning peonies back in the Broadlands, so I had them planted there to remind you of home."

"Oh Phil!" Lucia beamed, "It really is lovely. I can't wait to see the house!"