

My Town

written by **Leigh Anne Florence** and illustrated by **Chris Ware**

Chapter 6

The life I love is making music with my friends and we can't wait to get on the road again."

"One more time," Mom sang.

"We can't wait to get on the road again."

"I love that song," I said, sitting in the backseat with Chloe, tapping my paws to the beat. "And I'm glad I'm on the road again and not in the doghouse."

We'd spent yesterday at the Gaslight Festival in Jeffersontown, or J-town as it's called. We were admiring a classic car when the owner, Kelsey, let us look inside. I accidentally locked the keys in the car. Thankfully, Kelsey had a spare or I'd be in the doghouse instead of traveling down Highway 15 headed to Hazard, Kentucky.

"Most of Hazard's economy is based on logging and coal mining," Chloe said, reading a pamphlet Mom had picked up at a rest area.

"Logging?" I asked.

"Logging is the process of cutting down trees, loading them on a truck and sending them to the sawmill to be used as lumber," Mom explained. "And coal is a flammable rock that can be burned for energy or heat, so coal mining is the process of getting coal – or black gold – out of the ground or mountain."

"So black gold is actually coal?" I asked.

"Yes," Dad answered.

"Now I understand why it's called the Black Gold Festival," I said, a lightbulb shining in my head.

"Most festivals celebrate something unique or beneficial to their town," Dad explained.

"The Black Gold Festival is the second largest festival in Kentucky, with the Derby Festival being the largest," Chloe continued reading. "It can be traced to 1937 when it was the Hazard Coal Carnival. There are countless festivals in this area. Clay City has Patriot Day, Stanton has a Corn Festival, Campton has the Wolfe County Swift Silver Mine Festival, Jackson has the Honey Festival, and Ravenna has the Railroad Festival. And that's not all!" Chloe exclaimed, naming the towns we'd been close to in the last hour. "In 1981 celebrities from the TV series *The Dukes of Hazzard* attended the festival, although the show isn't about Hazard, Kentucky. Speaking of celebrities and stars, are you nervous, Woody?"

"A little," I answered, though I was really a lot nervous. "I can't believe I bought a magic set at the Fordsville Days Yard Sale for only two dollars and fifty cents," I announced, amazed at my bargain. Once I'd learned some tricks, we decided to take the show on the road. Mom had made me a black cape and made my lovely assistant Chloe a pink dress with sparkles on it.

"Is your Vendor Registration complete?" Mom asked.

"Yes ma'am," I answered. "I used my best handwriting – and I stapled the money to the form. Why do we have to pay to be a vendor?"

"Festivals need money to hire entertainment and advertise,"

Dad answered, "Most festivals don't charge admission or parking, so money must come from somewhere. Besides, vendors keep the money they make."

"And many of the festivals take their profit and give it to a charity," Mom added once Dad was finished.

"What's a profit?" Chloe asked.

"Profit is the money made once the expenses have been covered," Mom explained. "Let's pretend you're selling popsicles. You paid \$100 for supplies, \$25 for the registration fee and \$30 in gas and food. You have \$155 in expenses. Any money you take in after \$155 is profit."

"How can I make a profit if I'm not selling anything?" I asked.

"Don't worry about that," Dad spoke as he parked the car. "Just concentrate on doing your best."

"You two look fantastic," the lady at the Vendor Registration said. "You'll be performing on the main stage in two hours. Good luck." We thanked her and went to locate the stage. I practiced my magic tricks I'd planned for the show.

"Since we've got time, let's enjoy the festival," Mom suggested. Walking around, we saw craft tents, bouncy houses, and plenty of food for sale. "Those cinnamon pecans smell delicious," Mom announced. Unfortunately, I was too nervous to eat.

"Check this out," Dad said, leading us inside a tent that contained loud music and people dancing. On the tent wall was a sign that said, "Black Gold Festival Dance Party." The DJ was playing music from the 50s and 60s. My favorite was about splishing and splashing during bath time. We also danced to a song called The Twist. Chloe's dress was perfect for spinning around.

"We better run," Dad announced. "Show time's in 15 minutes."

There was a crowd waiting when we arrived. I took a deep breath, grabbed Chloe's hand and we walked on stage.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," I announced. "Prepare to be amazed as I make this box of crayons disappear. *Abracadabra...*"

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