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**[In this scene, John Dodge has just recently  
relocated to Greenbriar, South Carolina. He is taking  
some new acquaintances to lunch: two elderly women  
(Trixie and Big Dove) and Bean, a ten year old girl.  
Greenbriar is the new North American headquarters of  
Kallsjö, a Swedish car manufacturer.]**

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The four of them piled into Dodge's car and drove  
across town to Moe's.

"Look there," Bean said. "A help wanted sign in the  
bank window."

"In't that pretty? Thank you Jesus." Big Dove ran  
it all together into two words: *intthatpretty* (breath)  
*thankyajesus*.

"Things really are picking up," said Trixie. And:  
"What are all those folks doing passing out fliers? Is  
the circus coming to town?"

"The circus ain't been to Greenbriar since Hector  
was a pup," said Big Dove.

"Hector?" said Bean.

"It's the Swedes, I'll bet," Big Dove said. "Look  
there, they got a sign up already on the old Larrabee  
building. There's no moss growing on those Callie-Joe  
folks, that is for sure."

"Ma'am?" said Bean. "It's not *Callie-Joe*, it's  
*caaals-yeeew*." She leaned forward to touch Big Dove's  
shoulder. "Those two little dots? You say that eeeew."

"In't that what I said, sugar?"

"No ma'am. You said Callie-Joe. Sounds like some  
old country woman setting on a porch husking corn."

Dodge laughed at the image, but Big Dove just  
sniffed.

"Well this mouth of mine is too old to be wrapping itself around Swedish, and that's the truth."

"Now what are all those cars?" Trixie said. She craned her head to look as Dodge eased into a parking spot.

"They look brand new," Bean said. "Pretty colors."

"No moss on those Swedes, no sirreee," Big Dove said. "They're moving right on in, dragging better times along behind them."

Once on the sidewalk outside the diner a kid came up and handed them fliers, bright yellow and green.

"Josie's youngest, ain't you?" Trixie said as she took hers. And: "Give your mama and daddy my love, don't forget now."

Big Dove was holding out her flier at arm's length and squinting. "I forgot my specs. What's it say?"

Dodge scanned the flier. "Monday morning nine o'clock they're going to start to take applications for the first round of hiring. Office workers and housekeeping but mostly construction. Unionized."

"Now that is exciting," Trixie said. "They'll be lining up come sunrise, you wait and see."

It took them ten minutes to get settled in a booth, mostly because Big Dove and Trixie had to exchange a few words with everybody from Moe himself to the old men who sat over coffee at the counter. Bean dove right into the menu, her face alight with pleasure.

Dodge said, "I am hungry enough to order one of everything. How about you?"

"This child could out-eat a football team all by her lonesome," Dove said, sliding into the booth next to Bean.

"Our Bean has got a hollow leg," agreed Trixie. Dodge got up to let her in next to him.

"Mama says I'm growin," Bean said, looking a little uncertain.

"You'll need a big lunch then," Dodge said, and Trixie winked at him.

The waitress was Big Dove's second cousin once removed, a quick, lean middle aged woman with a poof of

bright red hair over coal black eyebrows. She managed to take their orders while answering questions about her daddy's kidney stones and whether or not he was going to come down and fill out an application on Monday morning along with the rest of Greenbriar.

"Billie, you tell your daddy to stop by and see me when he comes into town."

"He'll be there," Billie said. "You'd think it was Christmas, as excited as he is about going back to work." She looked across the street at the row of new cars. "Those Swedish cars look like toys, don't they? Something the kiddies would drive around in a circle at the fair."

Then she was gone and Trixie leaned across the table and grasped Dodge by the wrist.

She said, "I'm just an old confused lady who only got through the tenth grade, so I'll ask you straight out to explain something to me. Why have they got all those cars lined up like that?"

Dodge caught Bean's expression, which was slightly panicked. She said, "I think they're cute."

"A car in't supposed to be *cute*," Big Dove said. "My daddy, he drove a Ford. Wouldn't even look at no other kind of truck." She cast an easy glance out the window. "Them little cars won't be much use out in the county. Those clay roads turn to muck and misery in the rainy season, you need something with some muscle."

"What I was wondering," Trixie went on, "is why bother hauling those little foreign cars all the way down here to Greenbriar? It don't make sense."

Big Dove said, "Maybe they're just for show."

"That must be it," Trixie said. "A curiosity to look at, like a calf born with two heads. They couldn't mean to build those foreign cars here." She huffed an uneasy laugh and looked directly at Dodge.

They were all looking at him, the two old ladies with a certain hope, and Bean with some degree of sympathy. He cleared his throat, and managed a smile. "That model is called the Freya. From what I understand

they do plan to build that very car here at the Greenbriar plant."

Trixie's mouth fell open and then shut with a snap. She looked out the window and back at Dodge. "Son," she said. "You must be confused. Those cars are *foreign*. Last I looked, Greenbriar South Carolina was American."

Big Dove reached over the table and poked Dodge with a forefinger. "You're joshing us."

"No ma'am," Dodge said. "I'm serious."

Trixie and Big Dove looked at each other. Bean looked at her lap. Dodge looked around for help, but there was none to be found.

"I thought they were going to build Fords or maybe Chryslers," Big Dove said. "Olds-mobiles, even. You've must have got it wrong."

They were looking at him sternly, waiting for him to justify his absurd contention that the Kallsjö company would dare to build an assembly plant in which to manufacturer Kallsjö cars. Laughter, Dodge told himself, would be a mistake.

He said, "Things are pretty complicated these days when it comes to cars. If you went out and bought a Buick—"

"That's a *fine* American car," said Trixie. "My Uncle Henry had a Buick."

"Most Buicks are made in Canada these days."

Trixie reared back. "No."

"Yes ma'am, it's true. My sister drives a Mazda. You know where that was built?"

"What is Italy!" Dove hollered, and slapped the table with the palm of her hand.

"Shush," said Trixie. "This ain't Jeopardy we're playing at, Dove. Dodge, those Mazda automobiles are made in Italy, en't that so?"

"Well no," Dodge said. "Mazda is Japanese."

Big Dove's whole forehead creased itself in half. "Doesn't sound Japanese to me. Sounds Eytalian."

Trixie said, "Like mazda ball soup."

"Matzo ball soup," Dodge said, trying very hard to keep his voice even, "is Jewish."

The two old ladies exchanged solemn looks that seemed to say they would graciously overlook such an absurd statement, just as they would pretend not to hear him if he passed gas. Trixie cleared her throat. "I never heard of a Jewish car," she said. "Is there such a thing?"

Dodge said, "I truly don't know."

"Well and why should you?" Big Dove said. "Now, Eytalian cars. Those little convertibles, those really are cute."

"Alfa Romeos," said Trixie.

"Like Romeo and Juliet?" Bean asked.

"Not like Romeo and Juliet," said Dodge. He was starting to enjoy himself. "It's RoMAYo, not ROMEo."

"Either way, it's Eytalian," said Big Dove.

"Yes," Dodge said. "The Alfa Romeo is an Italian car. But if I can get back to my original point, Mazda manufactures their cars in Japan."

"So they are Japanese," Big Dove said. "Doesn't anybody remember Pearl Harbor anymore?"

"Wait," Dodge said. "It's complicated. Mazda is an American owned company that makes its cars in Japan. So is my sister's car American or Japanese?"

Trixie smiled nervously. "Dodge, sugar, you're not making any sense. Are you claiming that Americans go to Japan to build cars, and Swedes come here to do the same thing?"

"Yes ma'am," Dodge said.

Trixie's small mouth pursed. "That's just foolish. Musical chairs for grownups. Why would they bother?"

"That's a question I can't answer," Dodge said.

Bean caught sight of something across the street and sat up straight. "Miss Trixie, here come a whole crowd of the Kallsjö people. Why don't we ask them?"

Dodge had never been so glad to see Swedes in his life.