The little family didn't notice the sun was setting, because they were too busy playing their board game, moving small trains around the map and howling with frustration when someone else's train blocked them. While equally laughing with triumph when they were able to procure a slot for their own little trains.

As it grew dark the game was packed away and the tired, happy people went inside for dinner. They closed up the little house snuggly against the autumn chill and prepared for a quiet evening inside.

They pretended they weren't enduring a pandemic, that the world outside was normal. That the quiet in their neighbourhood was an every day occurrence. That the kitchen wasn't full of dirty dishes. That the pet birds weren't squabbling over who laid the newest egg. That the laundry didn't need folding, or the floors vacuuming.

They donned their warm woollen sweaters, curled up under their big warm quilts, and dimmed the lights as they watched a movie together and giggled over all the right scenes. Then, one by one, they staggered off to bed, tired and worn from a day of sun and wind and love.

Not once did they worry about the news, for their heavy eyes were closed against the dark night, the bedding close to their ears as their breath came softly and deeply, pleasant dreams swimming through their heads. The dishes would be there in the morning, just like the laundry, the dirty carpets, discarded toys on the floor, the upturned world, and all the other undone chores of the day.

One weekend in April of 2020, my husband was working on burning a Japanese Maple in our backyard fire pit. It was a semi-sad day, as none of us were happy to see the demise of our beloved tree, but it had been dying for some time, and had become a danger as the dried limbs and bark had become ant infested and were threatening to fall off the tree at odd

moments of the day.

The chilly weekend warranted a fire in our fire pit, and the wood burned red and hot with little smoke. Not being a family to miss an opportunity to play a board game or have a “camp fire”, we pulled the kitchen table outside near the warmth of the fire and set up our latest edition of Ticket To Ride.

One of the kids went and popped corn for a snack, another filled small glass water bottles, while the rest of us dug out warmer sweaters and blankets. Then we spent the crisp afternoon playing a board game while sitting around the fire.

We were tired and worn upon going inside many hours later, but I wanted to post a quick photo to my social media account so that in years gone-by I would remember the quiet calm of the day. I captioned the photo, *“Then it grew dark and all the tired, happy people went inside for dinner where they pretended the house wasn’t messy, and laundry wasn’t calling.”*

That captioned stirred images in my head, both of what my family had done that chilly afternoon, but also of an entire story playing out in front of me. It was a rather old fashioned seeming story, because in the moment of cozy warmth under my quilt and my family all giggling at some point in a movie, everything felt right with the world.

I think that is what I love the most about “old fashioned” stories. The families are happy and whole, they endure whatever dangers and bad attitudes arise together, and with love they cure the obstacles in their paths– *together*. Each night they gather around their dinner table and they share the stories of the day, good and bad.

While I never expanded on the caption beyond the above few paragraphs, each time I reread it I still see that small family in their little house in the middle of the country going about their daily life, and each evening I see that happy little family snuggly wrapped in their blankets.

Maybe they are star gazing, or telling stories, or playing music together. I’m not really sure, but I know they are there, happy and cozy waiting for someone to tell their story someday.