

A VENT WINDOW VIEW
The Three Little Fords
July 2015-B. K. Showalter

During our childhoods some of us were flooded by nursery rhymes and fairy tales that too often generated nightmares. For example, the “Three Little Pigs” were set upon by a hungry wolf. They survived, but two of them ended up homeless. In another fairy tale Mama Bear, Papa Bear, and Baby Bear return home only to discover a stranger named “Goldilocks” has invaded their cottage. The shameless Miss Goldilocks had dined on their supper, sat in their chairs and, after testing others, actually settled down for a nice long nap in Baby Bear’s bed.

In a darker tale, one that has caused a number of adults to suffer nightmares, Marley’s spirit tells Scrooge to expect visits from three more ghosts. If any story is capable of scaring a kid into a night of wakefulness, that one is it! In fact, that tale would spoil an adult’s sleep. Even worse is the rhyme about three blind mice that run after the farmer’s wife; provoked, she cuts off *their tails with a carving knife!* The responsible poet then poses the question: Did you ever see such a sight in your life as three blind mice? **“Hush up, child, and go to sleep!”** Sure, Mom!

Until I graduated from second grade, my dreams were filled with hungry wolves, sleepy bears, and an untold number of trolls lurking under the goat family’s footbridge that, in the dream, I’m obligated to cross. However, by then WW II had ended and there were more exciting things to marvel at and dream about; new cars became available as auto manufacturers switched from production of war machines to consumer goods. My father, appalled at the price tags Detroit hung on their new machines, simply put a new set of tires on our ’41 Ford two door sedan and ignored the brightly painted new cars that flooded dealerships at war’s end. He stuck to his guns until early in 1949 when a blue ’47 Chevrolet caught his eye. That six-cylinder sedan was not quite up to dealing with our rural roads and that led my father to swap it for a used 1949 Chevy sedan. As the years passed he continued to buy Chevrolets. His first new one was the gray 1953 two-door sedan in which I took my driver’s test. By the time I was a high school senior, he had swapped the ’53 for a 1955 blue and white six-cylinder four-door with overdrive.

That same year, my older brother traded his ’52 Chevy for a new, “powder blue” 1955 Ford sedan. He barely had it broken in when I borrowed it for a date with my fiancée. That she was located some 60 miles away did not seem to concern him. I was as delighted at the prospect of finding out just what that V-8 Ford with its overdrive transmission could do as I was about impressing my date with such a nice set of wheels.

My brother’s little blue Ford truly impressed me; after driving Dad’s cars, the Ford’s handling on the open road was a delightful experience. When (three years later) I was in the market for a car, I fell in love with a used brown and white ’55 Ford Customline. That machine probably was the best bargain in Texas for it served me well for over five years.

Thirty-plus years later I retired and decided to buy a vehicle that would remind me of my youth; that’s when I remembered the good luck I had enjoyed with the two aforementioned ’55 Fords. Next day, while reading a local “freebie” paper, I spotted an ad for a ’55 Ford. Since it was located only thirty miles from my home, I figured it was worth a look. And, it was! Two days later, I drove the old Ford home. Its speedometer did not work, so I had my wife lead me home in our “good” car with instructions to keep her speed down around 55 mph. Traffic, however, forced her to pick up the pace a bit and since the old ’55 was running like a charm, I stayed right behind her. We were home before I learned that she had led me down I-5 at 70 mph in order to keep us from being run over by the eighteen-wheelers speeding south on the

busy Interstate.

That car, my third '55 Ford, was a very pleasant driver that served us well until we signed on for a car tour into the Deep South. Aware that we would need an air conditioned car for that trip, I sold the '55. Now, like many earlier writers, I consider the number “three” to be a magic number. Three blind mice, three little pigs, and Goldilocks' three bears—why can't Three Little Fords be magic? Fact is both “55” and “3” have been lucky numbers for me! However, if I find another '55 Ford for sale at a bargain price, I might be singing “Four Little Fords!”