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Lauchie wouldn't marry her 'til the MacDonnells moved out, so we had six months to watch her trying to make up her mind. Of course, she couldn't be sure Rory loved her. He might of been laughing at her. With him you couldn't tell for sure. I could, but I'd been watching him for years. Every time she came to the house he shook her hand, and he curled his middle finger so it stuck in her palm, but he did it so it looked like he was making fun of Lauchie, how formal he was when he introduced them. "Rory," he had said, "may I present to you my fiancée, Liza." And Rory shook her hand, like he did every time after, even after the marriage, and said, like an Englishman in the movies, "Awfully good of you to come," and everybody about doubled over laughing, except, of course, Lauchie and, of course, our mother; she stood there and waited for things to get back to "normal." So Liza and Lauchie got married; Mother died • "mission I accomplished, I suppose," Rory said. And they lived across the wall from us, and honest to God we never heard a peep out of them 'til their kid was born. Then we heard the kid. They called him Rory. He cried for two years. When he stopped, Liza started. Both our stairs went up the wall that separated us and I first heard her through that wall, sitting on her stairs, sobbing. After that I took to going over every day to console her, but she never admitted to anything, though she knew I knew. She caught on pretty quick how much alike we were. She talked about it one night we were playing cards, which we did every Friday. "If me and her," she said, meaning me, "if we got our x-rays mixed up, they wouldn't be YOUNG'S... POWER EQUIPMENT SALES'SERVICE'PARTS STIHL & JONSERED CHAIN SAWS BRIGGS & STRATTON MURRAY-TECUMSEH ARIENS SNOW BLOWERS & ROTO TILLERS LAWN TRACTORS - GENERATORS SELF-PROPELLED MOWERS SAFETY CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES 674-2008 MILLVILLE, BOULARDERIE MacNEILS comfortable accommodations * * * * * • REASONABLE RATES • MMiMVi=Hi'yiKVirf*|jil'!!M!lidiliM Trans-Canada Highway 105, Bras d'Or, Cape Breton BOC IBO 17 UNITS COLOUR CABLE T.V. ELECTRIC HEAT • some with microwaves & refrigerators • Over(X)king the Bras d'Or Lakes (902) 736-9106 ? (902) 736-2692 HILLTOP TRAILER SERVICES and AUTO GLASS • complete line of RV parts & accessories • service to all makes & models of trailers • canvas repair & replacement, boat tops, etc. • windshield repair & replacement • specializing in new & used awnings WE DO IT ALL AND EBVS!Y99S| Trans-Canada Highway WE DO IT RIGHT! WiSU'i'Wm BRAS D'OR able to tell which one had T.B." We all looked at her but Lauchie; he looked at his cards. "What's it mean, anyway, T.B.?" he said. "Tough biscuit," Rory said. "You wouldn't need an x-ray to figure that out," I said, thinking to make a joke, but when I looked at Liza for her little smile, she was crying, and I knew there was no secret between us. When little Rory was five and about to go to school they left him with us on the miners' vacation and went to Halifax to visit Liza's sister and get Lauchie's lungs looked at. "The little bugger needs a little fun before he goes to school," Rory said, and gave him every minute of his time, took him everywhere, showed him everything he could think of, even took him down the pit and showed him where



him and his father worked. When Lauchie and Liza came back, the boy wouldn't go back with them. They had to drag him back. Then he started school and every day he came home he came to the wrong gate and landed in our place. Lauchie would have to come over and drag him back. "I thought I told you to come straight home." "I forgot," he'd say. He kept it up 'til we locked him out. We had to, to keep Lauchie from getting desperate. But he'd start again every time he went through a new phase of growing, until he got to be nine, and after that he wouldn't do his homework except at our place. He hated school, but he was first in his class because he did so much homework. Of course, Rory helped him; he couldn't resist; and when he got to Grade Nine and Rory couldn't help him anymore he started to teach big Rory. He taught him Algebra, French, Latin, Geometry, Chemistry, English, and God knows He used to bring home the exams and would do them and make high marks, known I was that smart I'd a stayed Udder Delight Ice Cream Caboose Delicious homemade HAND-ROLLED CONES • 18 FLAVOURS of Old FASHIONED ICE CREAM • YOGURT BLENDED WITH FRESH FRUIT • Slush Cones • SOFT'ERVE CONES • BEAUTIFUL, RELAXING VIEW • Old General Store at Bras d'Or Come visit... a Working Old Country Store Established in 1907 in a Beautiful Atmosphere • FRUITS .VEGGIES -BAKING -GIFTS • DELI . HOME DECORATING ITEMS 'CRAFTS That Old-Time Feeling • at Bras d'Or Beautiful Bras d'Or: A Cape Breton Island Centre