

Mr. Pipes

and the

British Hymn Makers



Douglas Bond
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Preface

Mr. Pipes and the British Hymn Makers contains more than an interesting story about two young Americans on vacation in England. It is a story about the most important subject in the world—the worship of Almighty God.

The worship of God in modern times has too often become shallow and man-centered. Many Christians at the opening of the twenty-first century, including young believers, have never understood the importance of approaching God with awe-some reverence and majestic praise. As readers move through *Mr. Pipes and the British Hymn Makers*, however, they will not only learn about the fascinating lives of famous hymn writers but will also be encouraged to cultivate an attitude of humble adoration as they approach their Maker.

Young Christians who grasp the significance of what they read will come to the wonderful realization that their worship is connected with the Church universal—the followers of Christ throughout the world, both past and present. In other words, young readers will understand that true worship is not isolated from believers of the past but is, rather, built upon their godly traditions.

Perhaps the greatest tradition of true biblical worship, aside from scriptural exposition and prayer, is the holy exercise of hymn singing. It is, therefore, the express purpose of this book to rekindle a genuine interest within the lives of young believers in the traditional hymns of the faith once delivered unto the saints. May God be pleased to use this little volume to revive an interest in and appreciation for that which is true and praise-worthy in the realm of Christian worship.

Michael J. McHugh

Foreword

The characters in this story are fictional. Olney is, of course, a very real place, and parts of the story describe it just as you would find things there today. St. Peter and St. Paul's is very real, as are Newton and Cowper's homes; and the Great Ouse (pronounced "ooze") is much like it is described in the story. But liberties have been taken with the town and surrounding countryside. For example, there is a real Bakehouse wedged into the narrow streets of the town of Olney, but it is no longer a bakery; thus there is no real Mrs. Beccles. And there is a real organist, but he's definitely not Mr. Pipes. The history described by Mr. Pipes in the hymn stories, however, is very real.

In addition, I would like to give special thanks to my wife, Cheryl, for her patience and gentle criticism; to Dick Hannula for his chain saw editing; to my mother, Mary Jane Bond; to Bob Rogland, Mike Pfefferle, and Laurel McCoy for encouragement given; and to Rob Rayburn for inspiration, guidance, and source books, without which this book would never have been written.

Douglas Bond, 1999

Douglas Bond lives in Tacoma, Washington, with his wife Cheryl and their four children. He has traveled several times to the United Kingdom, the setting for this book. He teaches history and English at Covenant High School in Tacoma.

Chapter One

Annie and Drew Meet Mr. Pipes

“Now then, now then,” came the Cabby’s voice.
“I think the best thing we could do to pass the time would be to sing a ’ymn.” And he did.
He had a fine voice and the children joined in.

C. S. Lewis

Drew shuffled along the stone sidewalk following his sister down High Street. He adjusted the volume on his compact disc player hooked on the pocket of his jeans, then pressed the headphones tightly to his ears. Looking like a pigeon strutting for crumbs, he bobbed his head up and down with the rhythm.

“Only you—oo—oo—oo . . .” sang Drew, out of tune, his face twisted with emotion. Annie, his sister, rolled her eyes in disgust and embarrassment.

“Please, Drew, you sound like a sick cow,” she said.

Drew cranked the volume higher. As long as he had his tunes maybe he could endure a summer in this dumpy old English town—he looked at the ancient stone buildings crowding the narrow street—*maybe*.

“Will you please stop that ridiculous singing?” shouted Annie.

“You love me, and I love you—oo—oo—oo,” he sang on louder still.

Annie turned in exasperation and stopped at the curb, looking left down Market Street.

A tall man wearing a camel-colored suit and carrying a leather bag overtook them at the intersection and stopped next to Annie. Thrusting out his chin, he narrowed his eyes, looking sideways back at Drew. With a “Humph!” he turned, looking to the right, and waited, while at the same moment Annie, still looking left, stepped off the curb into the cobbled street.

Suddenly, amidst screeching brakes and a blaring horn, Annie felt a strong hand gripping her arm. “I say, my dear, do watch out!” the man cried, pulling her to safety.

A gray and black Morris wheezed past the startled and now breathless Annie.

“Blighter!” said the tall man, staring after the little car.

“Indeed! A near miss, to be sure,” he went on, stroking his mustache. Then turning, he lifted his hat. “Martin Dudley’s the name. Are you quite unhurt, my dear?”

“Y-yes, thank you,” stammered Annie.

“And whom have I the pleasure of rescuing today?” he went on.

“I’m Annie—Annie Willis. And this is my little brother, Andrew—you can just call him Drew.”

“Well, Annie and Drew,” he said, “clearly, you are not from our side of the pond. In England you must accustom yourselves to looking right before proceeding across the street. Even the traffic in our little village will expect this of you. I dare say, had you been in London, where motor cars are driven with considerably less care, you would have found yourself in need of my profession.”

He then bent at the waist and looked to the right, shielding his eyes with his free hand like a sea captain scanning the horizon for pirates. Still bent over, he glanced back at Annie and Drew and nodded encouragingly. He then straightened and strode into the now quiet street. Turning back, he said, “Do, pray, be careful in the future.” Tipping his hat, he disappeared down High Street.

“What a nut,” said Drew, pulling his headphones off and running his hand over bristles of blond hair. “But good grief, Annie, you’ve got to watch where you’re going.”

“I was!” said Annie, her face flushed. “I looked left, but I forgot they drive on the wrong side of the road. I looked the wrong way—no, the right way—they just drive the wrong way.”

“Yeah,” said Drew. “And there’s another good reason why this is the stupidest place to spend a summer. They can’t even drive on the right side of the road here. And look how old everything

is,” he snorted. “And what about breakfast this morning! Who eats fried mushrooms and baked beans for breakfast anyway?”

“The stewed tomatoes,” said Annie with a grimace, “almost did me in; but Mrs. Broadwith is nice—you have to admit that.”

“Maybe, but she talks funny,” said Drew, as they walked aimlessly down the street. “And her house we’ll be staying in sure is old.”

The children’s mother (who will be entirely too busy to take much part in this story) had chosen this place to do her research precisely because it was small, off the beaten path, and old.

But “old” to the children, especially to Drew, meant dull and boring. So the cobbled streets, lined with medieval cottages—some with thatched roofs—and the ancient church, its steeple piercing the summer sky, didn’t look fun at all. Moreover, the rolling green fields stretching beyond the market town and covered with grazing sheep seemed humdrum. Even the old stone bridge bordering the village and crossing the old winding river—where children swam, fished, and sailed—didn’t look very interesting just then. They had no idea new friends and new adventures awaited them at every turn.

All they could think of was the city they left behind—full of new skyscrapers, new and bigger malls, new stadiums for sports and concerts, new theaters, new houses, new freeways, new fast-food restaurants, and all their old friends. By comparison, this looked like a pretty unimpressive place to be stuck—and for a whole summer.

Annie suddenly stopped in front of two steps leading to a green door with a large lion knocker in full roar staring down at them. She read from a brass plate, “‘Martin L. J. Dudley, Family Surgery.’ It’s *him*. This must be where that guy stopped.”

“Huh?” said Drew over the din of his headphones.

“I said,” shouted Annie. “That guy who helped me must be a doctor—Dr. Dudley.”

“I’m going to need one,” said Drew sniffing the air, “if I don’t get a decent meal. It’s been forever since we had any real

BAKEHOUSE



food. Breakfast didn't count; that's for sure. And it's already way after lunch. What I wouldn't do for a Big Mac right now!"

Drew turned off his music and pulled the headphones from his ears. Although it didn't smell like a hamburger drive-in, something sure did smell good.

"Do you smell it?" He pointed across the street at a narrow building wedged between two larger ones. Black and reddish stains streaked the worn, gray stones, and the walls leaned to one side. Drew studied the bulky limestone lintel over the window with "Bakehouse" carved long ago into the stone. Hanging above the oak door, a sign read, "Beccles's Bakehouse, established 1711."

"It's a bakery," said Drew, "and I don't care how old it is; I'm starving. Let's go see what's cooking."

Annie, cautiously looking right, stopped Drew before he crossed in front of a middle-aged lady, wearing a wool skirt and jacket, riding toward them on her bicycle. With her thumb she rang a little mechanical bell on the handlebar and nodded politely at them as she pedaled closer. In a wicker basket hung between the handlebars rode a sand-colored, pug-nosed dog, one ear turned inside out and his tongue lolling in the breeze. He yapped a greeting as he passed.

"What a nice little pooch," said Annie. "Look, Drew, he's smiling."

Leading the way across the street, Drew followed the bicycle with his eyes. "I've never seen an old lady in a dress riding a bike," he said shaking his head. "And that's the clunkiest excuse for a bike I've ever seen; what a piece of junk! Who'd ride one like that, anyway? Yeah, well, I suppose it fits in an old place like this."



Drew's mouth watered. Through rippling glass panes they saw an array of freshly baked pastries. Feasting their eyes on swirls of cream, flecks of chocolate topping, flaky golden crusts, and shiny red cherries, the children suddenly saw a large woman dressed in white adding a basket of croissants so fresh

and steaming a haze crept up the windowpanes. Her full red cheeks, a smudge of white flour on each, bulged as she smiled. She beckoned at them with a strong, floury hand.

“I’m going in,” said Drew.

Annie followed him through the door.

A cheerful bell tinkled as they stepped down over a worn threshold. They entered a long, narrow room arranged with a counter, tables, and chairs, and filled with the aroma of baking pastries.

The woman bustling to greet them said, “You’ll be the two young ones from America, then?” Little clouds of flour puffed from her apron as she dusted off her hands.

“You know about us?” asked Annie, smiling at the big woman.

“Indeed I do,” she continued. “This here’s just a wee town.”

Drew almost snorted. She had that right.

“Mrs. Broadwith and I have known each other for ever so long; she told me you’d be arriving. I’m Mrs. Beccles and absolutely delighted to be making your acquaintance.” She studied them for a moment. “But I didn’t expect you to be so nearly the same age; you could be twins for the look of you. But what a handsome pair you be.”

Drew didn’t like people commenting about their appearance, though many did. They both had blond hair, blue eyes, and freckles—lots of freckles. Annie’s hair grew well past her shoulders, and she liked braiding it different ways; right then two braids started at her temples and joined in pigtailed down her back. Drew kept his hair short, mostly due to an unwieldy cowlick where his hair met his freckled forehead. Annie was almost a year and a half older, but Drew insisted he’d caught up with her in height.

“Nice to meet you, Mrs. Beccles,” said Annie smiling.

There she goes, thought Drew, always “little miss friendly.”

“I’m Annie and this is my little brother, Andrew—Drew for short.”

Drew’s face grew warmer. “Little brother?” he thought, “I’m almost a half an inch taller.”

“You’ll have a hard time convincing the likes of me,” she said, smiling at Drew and squinting back and forth at the tops of their heads, “that he’s your *little* brother. I’d wager the crown jewels he’s passed you up in the height department.”

Drew smiled smugly at Annie and looked past Mrs. Beccles at plates mounded with fresh pastries.

Mrs. Beccles followed his gaze. “I’ve just baked these little meat pies,” she said with a twinkle in her eye. “And I need someone to try them out—see if I got things right this time. Would you be so kind and taste some goodies for me?”

“Anything we can do to help,” said Drew, licking his lips and rubbing his hands together.

Scurrying about, Mrs. Beccles, juggling a flurry of plates filled with good things to eat, sat the children down at a table. Before they knew what she was doing, she had gripped each of their hands and with head bowed said, “For what we are about to eat, O Lord, make us truly grateful. Amen.”

After some minutes of gorging himself and with mouth full and eyes roving for more, Drew asked, “Has this place really been around since seventeen something?”

“Oh, indeed it has,” she replied. “My ancestors have baked in these walls for the better part of 300 years.”

“No kidding?”



Thanking Mrs. Beccles for their lunch and, at her insistence, promising to return often, they stepped out into the sunshine with a bag of fresh bread rolls and heard the slow chiming of bells echoing against the stone walls crowding the narrow street.

“Four o’clock,” said Drew. “And all is well.” He smiled, rubbing his full stomach with satisfaction.

As they walked along, a black and white sign with “Church Street,” on it marked a narrower cobbled lane to their left.

“This’ll lead somewhere,” said Annie. “Let’s follow it.”

Drew, headphones in place, punching buttons searching for a favorite song, followed Annie wordlessly.

Limestone houses gave way to a low wall with flowering saxifrage forcing its way between the stones. Annie picked a small handful of the tiny, pink flowers and tucked them into her braid.

Church Street wandered past a large, well-kept house reflecting the warm afternoon sunlight. The stone wall to their right was the fence for a small, green pasture bordering the backs of houses facing High Street.

A white pony lay on its back, legs and hooves in the air, rolling with abandon from side to side in the lush grass.

“Oh, I’ll bet that feels good,” said Annie, smiling and leaning over the wall toward the pony. “Come here, girl,” she coaxed.

The pony rolled over and stood staring at the children as if not at all happy to be interrupted in its rolling. Grass and leaves cluttered its mane.

Annie pulled out a piece of bread and held it toward the pony. Drew, still distracted by his music, looked on, wondering why Annie would be interested in a silly old pony. But as it came closer he pulled his headphones off and joined her leaning over the low stone wall.

“Give me a piece of that,” he said, reaching for the bread.

“Quiet! You’ll scare her away.”

“He’s a him,” said Drew. “You saw him rolling. That’s not lady-like behavior. No, he’s got to be a him.”

Annie, knowing Drew was baiting her for a fight, ignored him.

“Aren’t you a friendly girl!” she said, rubbing the pony on its velvety nose as it munched the bread. Annie pulled a twig out of the coarse, white mane. “What’s your name, anyway? I’ll bet you’d let me ride you sometime, wouldn’t you?” She scratched under the pony’s obliging chin.

“You can’t ride a pony that doesn’t belong to you,” said Drew. “And besides, we don’t know whom it *does* belong to, and if we did, I’ll bet they hate kids and wouldn’t let us near him.”

Just then they heard from the church spire, partly hidden from view by a large yew tree, the deep, penetrating sound of bells ringing the half-hour.

“Let’s go check the old church out,” said Drew. “Can’t be much,” he added, “but there’s nothing else to do around here.”



Surrounding the stone church, its spire reaching high into the afternoon sky, spread a large churchyard filled with grave markers. Sunlight bathed most of the yard, but yew and sycamore trees grew in clusters, casting shadows on some of the faded markers.

Passing through the giant gate pillars guarding the churchyard, Annie admired the white clover lining the rough stones of the pathway. The air was alive with the humming of bees busily gathering nectar from the yellows, reds, and whites of cow parsley, cuckoo flower, and willow herb clustered around the stones. Reaching down, she picked an oxeye daisy growing among the untrimmed meadow grass next to a lichen-covered tombstone. Tucking it into her left braid, she sighed, “I like this place.”

Drew studied the massive spire. Rising higher and higher above them, it seemed to lean away at the top. A swallow flew out of the topmost of the four Gothic windows set in the spire. Swooping down and landing on the wing of an angel statue guarding a small, iron-fenced plot, the bird twiddled happily.

They walked toward the Gothic-arched doorway near the base of the spire. On either side of the entrance the pointed stone arch came to rest on two gargoyles; their rigid faces stared down menacingly at the children.

“I can’t imagine it,” said Annie. “Hundreds of years ago somebody actually carved these faces . . . and they’re still here. What do you think, Drew, maybe fifty people, chipping away at boulders every day for who knows how many years, made this old church?”

Drew, who liked figuring out how and why things worked, gazed upward, calculating just how many stones a single arch supported, and then he planned to figure approximately how much each one weighed. After that he’d multiply by the number of stones, then by the total number of arches around the whole church. He did not want to be interrupted.

“One hundred twenty-seven, one hundred twenty-eight,” he said, with a sharpness in his tone of voice, hoping Annie would get the hint and not make him lose count.

“I don’t know,” continued Annie. She stood on tiptoes, studying one of the gargoyle faces. “He’s not smiling, really, but he’s not frowning either. He looks kind of like he’s been doing his duty for hundreds of years—it’s got to be hundreds—holding up all those stones, and it’s given him a pain in the neck.”

“You’re giving me one!” said Drew in exasperation. “Now I’ve lost count.”

He put his headphones on and, cranking up the volume, said, “In the Dark Ages when this old thing was built it took hundreds, probably thousands of years and that many workers to finish a church like this. With advanced technology like we’ve got today, we could whip out a dozen like it in no time flat, only way better.”

Annie, who didn’t really enjoy fighting, and thinking of the modern worship center she and Drew occasionally attended with neighbors back home, replied to herself, “So...why don’t we then?”

Drew, frowning and vaguely troubled by the same thought, began counting again.

Stepping toward the heavy oak door and pushing on it, Annie peeked inside.



It began so quietly that Annie first thought she’d just imagined it. A single melodic line ringing off the walls filled the church. Sunlight shone through enormous windows, and the stone tracery cast a lacelike pattern on the polished stone floor.

Annie searched the nave with her eyes, but the church appeared empty. She walked down the central aisle, looking at the stone vaulting high above. The music grew louder, more thrilling, and seemed to come from everywhere.

Meanwhile, Drew heard something above the noise of his CD player and, seeing the open door, took off his headphones. Where had she gone, and what was that music? Walking cau-

tiously into the church, he soon joined Annie near the altar at the front of the nave.

“Where’s it coming from?” whispered Annie.

“Beats me,” said Drew, gazing around in circles.

“Wait!” said Drew, pointing to a row of pipes to the right of the nave. “The sound’s coming from there.” Following the curve of a Gothic arch, a row of dull silver pipes stood on a wooden mantel like giant tin soldiers. A dark-red curtain hung below the pipes.

“There are twenty-five pipes,” said Drew. “But where’s the guy playing the music?” He shrugged. “Maybe it’s computerized and nobody’s actually playing it at all.”

The music slowed, and the final chord ended with a flourish. Annie and Drew held their breath as the music faded and only stillness remained.

Suddenly the curtain below the pipes flew back. An old man sitting on an oak bench squinted over the top of his glasses at the wide-eyed children. Neither the old man nor the children spoke for several seconds.

“I ... we ... I’m sorry we disturbed you,” stammered Annie, finding her voice. “We really didn’t mean to.”

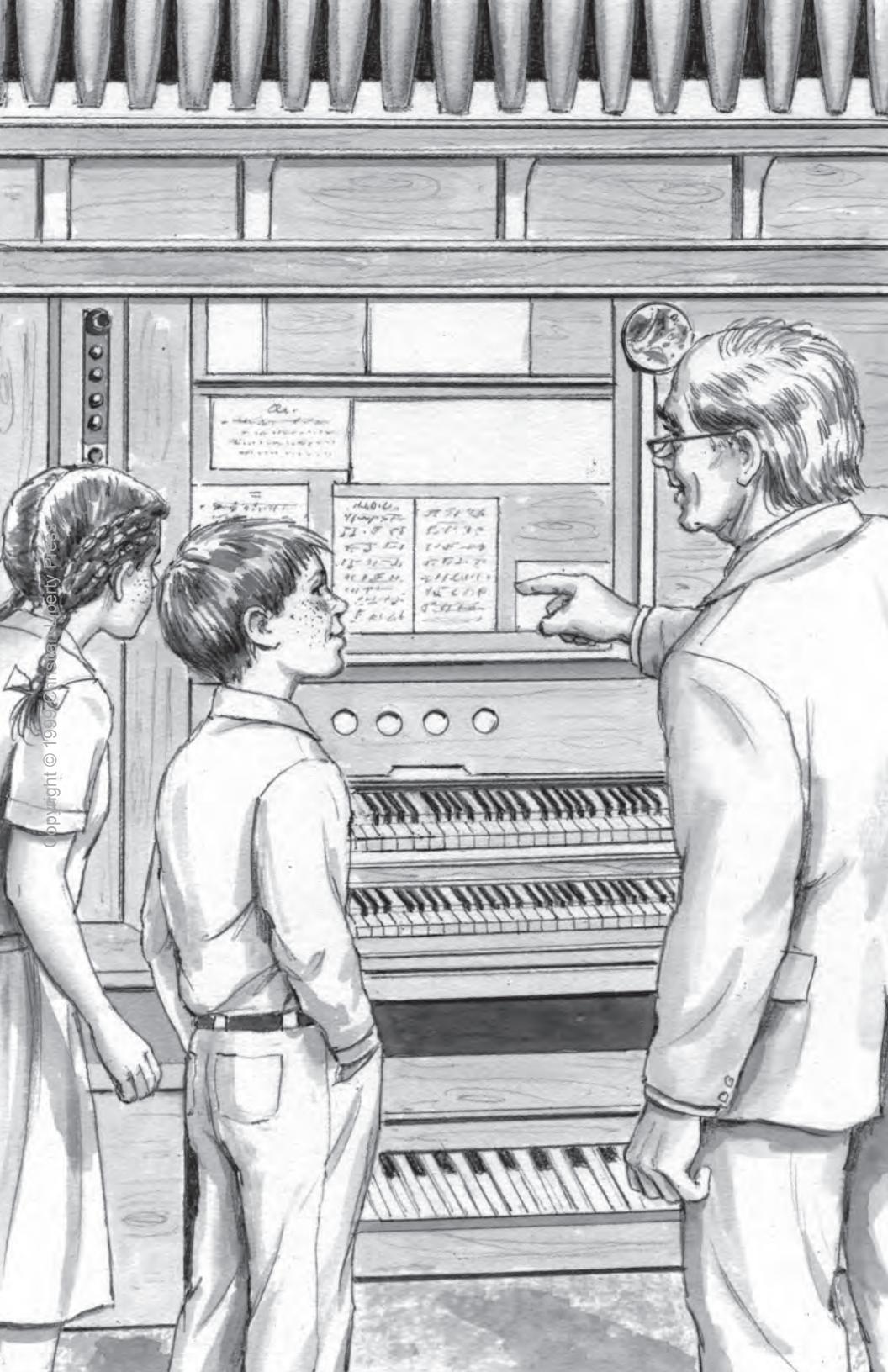
Taking his gold-rimmed glasses off, the old man seemed to see the children better.

“No, no,” he said. “I’m the one who must apologize. I see I’ve given you a terrible fright. I always keep the curtain pulled for drafts and so as not to distract from worship. Poor dears, you look like you’ve seen a ghost. Well, I am nothing of the sort, I assure you. Do come closer.”

Extending his hand he said, “No doubt you’re the children visiting our village for the summer. I’m simply delighted that you’ve come. My name’s David McCallum, but everyone in the parish calls me Mr. Pipes—have for ages—and you must too.”

“I’m Annie, and this is my—”

“I’m Drew,” said Drew interrupting, not wanting to be called “little brother” three times in one day.



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“How does this thing work?” asked Drew, looking over the old man’s shoulder at two rows of keys and an array of stops and foot pedals.

“Do you like music?” asked Mr. Pipes, raising his bushy white eyebrows. Annie studied his face more closely. He had a shiny, balding forehead, but what he lacked in hair on top of his head seemed to be growing, and sticking at odd angles, out of his eyebrows and ears, each white strand thicker than ordinary hair. He wore a brown tweed suit, and a slightly rumpled white shirt and tie.

“Some kinds of music,” said Drew, with reserve. “I used to take lessons, but now I just play.”

“How it works is actually quite simple. I push a key.” With the thumb of his right hand he played middle c. “And a valve opens, letting air into that pipe just there.” Drew followed his finger but couldn’t be sure which pipe he meant.

“A ‘Battleship Binns,’ they call this one, and she’s been here nearly 100 years,” continued Mr. Pipes, patting the oak case and casting his eyes up at the row of pipes. “She’ll fill this wee church till your ears hurt if I give her leave, which I only do twice a year—Christmas and Easter.” Mr. Pipes showed how he controlled the volume and how by pulling stops he selected pipes that sound like trumpets, violins, and woodwind instruments. Drew moved closer.

“So, where does the air come from, anyway?” asked Drew, looking down by the foot pedals.

“In the old days—Christians have used organs in worship for hundreds of years—peasants pumped furiously on large bellows in the crypt below the church; not a very satisfying task, I dare say. Today, electric motors oblige us with air.”

Annie, sitting on the end of a nearby pew, took her sketchbook out and, trying not to be noticed, sketched Mr. Pipes’s profile as he talked with Drew. From the side his eyebrows stuck out in comical disarray. “That wouldn’t do,” she mused; full-face would show his cheerful eyes better. After all, his eyes

made her want to draw him in the first place. They were deep eyes that sparkled as they looked at you.

“We’ve been neglecting you, my dear,” he said, smiling down at Annie.

“That’s all right,” said Annie. “I’ve been listening.” She paused, studying his solid chin while still moving her pencil.

“What, my dear,” he continued, “are you writing in that little book?”

“I wasn’t writing anything ... this time,” she continued. “I ... I was trying to draw your picture. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Not at all, though I can’t imagine it fetching much of a price. But you do write in your book sometimes?”

“Yes ... but it’s nothing really,” said Annie.

“If I may make so free, my dear, what do you write?”

“Well ... poetry, I guess.” The color came to her cheeks, and she stared hard at her sketchbook. “It’s not very good poetry, though.”

“And it’s certain to remain so if you don’t practice,” said Mr. Pipes smiling. “I’d love to read one of your poems sometime.”

While Mr. Pipes and Annie talked, Drew busied himself looking over the pedals, stops, and keys, with an occasional stretching glance up at the pipes.

“So, what were you playing when we came in?” interrupted Drew. He couldn’t imagine that an old guy like Mr. Pipes could have very good taste in music, but he did want to hear the organ again. There was something ... he couldn’t put his finger on what, but there was something ... well, *big* about the sound the organ had made; not loud—like *his* music—just *big*.

“Ah, my boy,” said Mr. Pipes. “That would be one of my favorites, the Tallis Canon,[†] a lovely old melody, full of grandeur.”

“How old?” asked Drew, wondering what “grandeur” meant.

“Well, by now this immortal canon,” with his right hand he played the first line, “is something over 400 years old.”

[†] The Tallis Canon is a musical arrangement composed (circa 1562) by Thomas Tallis as one of nine tunes and several anthems for Archbishop Matthew Parker’s *The Whole Psalter translated into English Metre, which containeth an hundred and fifty Psalmes*.

After the first two measures, he followed with his left hand on the lower keyboard, playing the notes over again as his right hand continued. Mr. Pipes moved his hands effortlessly over the keys, blending the musical lines without a glance at the hymnal.

Drew, trying to follow the music with his eyes, wondered how just two hands could make music like that. The simple melody, superimposed on itself, and ringing off the stone pillars and walls, surrounded the children with thrilling sounds.

“Does it have words?” asked Annie, in a hushed voice after he finished playing.

“A poet’s question, indeed,” said Mr. Pipes, smiling at her. “It has become connected with perhaps the first, and one of the greatest English hymns, the ‘Evening Hymn’—grand words, to be sure, of the highest rank. Thomas Ken, whose life reads like an adventure story, wrote them. And, Annie, they are most emphatically *good* poetry.”

“Drew likes singing,” said Annie, suppressing a giggle thinking of his moaning earlier in the day. “And so do I. Could we sing it?”

Drew made a face at her.

“The last verse is best known—the Doxology—and with pleasure I’ll introduce you to Mr. Ken’s hymn,” said Mr. Pipes. “With good reason, it has been around for ages.”

The words sounded only vaguely familiar to Annie and Drew, and after they sang it together, Mr. Pipes said, “You would call this a round, and it’s quite enjoyable to sing as such. Annie, you begin with ‘Praise,’ and Drew you come in here, after the word, ‘flow.’ I’ll join after Drew sings the word, ‘below.’ Sing it together in praise to Almighty God.”

The organ seemed to lift their voices with it to the stone vaulting above. Continuing through the hymn three times, Annie and Drew gained more confidence.

For a fleeting moment Drew wondered why he was enjoying himself. Here he was in an old English village, in an old church, singing with an old organ a hymn twice as old as America—he glanced over at Mr. Pipes, whose strong voice made Drew want

to sing louder—with a very old man. It didn't make any sense, but he lifted his head, brow furrowed, and sang on.

The strains of the Tallis Canon, combined with Thomas Ken's poetry, made them feel smaller; then, gradually, they didn't think about themselves at all. They just wondered.

The music resolved in a grand chord that filled the church and made Annie feel like bursting inside. Then, silence returned. Even Annie couldn't think of anything to say.

Suddenly, the great bells rang out, and Mr. Pipes, blinking with each gong, counted the hour. Long beams of light in the shape of stretched-out Gothic windows shone across the nave of the church.

"Oh, my dear me," he said, looking ruffled. "Dr. Dudley'll give me what for for this. He will, indeed. It's six o'clock, and I was to be at Martin's surgery ages ago."

"We've met him," said Annie. "At least I think we have."

"Splendid chap. But he's always coming up with some new idea to give me nine lives—I'm afraid he takes dreadfully good care of me."

Drew's interest faded as the last of the music died away.

"What a long summer lies ahead," he thought, "and I'm hungry."

"Now you two begone, and with my blessing," said Mr. Pipes kindly. "Mrs. Broadwith serves tea promptly at half past six. You must hurry or you'll be late; and do extend my sincerest apologies. Run along now, whilst I secure the organ for the night."

Annie thanked him, and turning, they walked down the aisle. Mr. Pipes hummed behind them, clicking switches and pulling stops. At the door Annie paused for a last look at the fading light in the church while Drew fumbled with his CD player.

"One last thing, my dears," his voice echoed off the stone walls. "There's so very much to see and do; your summer holiday will be over before you know it. If there's anything I can do to make your stay more pleasant...."

His voice trailed away. Then, hymnal in hand, he called after them.

"Do you like fishing?"