Blanche Saves the Day

In the summer of 1948, eleven-year-old Marilyn Morden was proud to have been chosen to carry her 4-H Club's hand-embroidered guest towels to the Rockton Fair for judging. The girls had spent weeks carefully stitching their projects, and Marilyn understood the importance of delivering them safely and on time.

Dressed in her best clothes and carrying the neatly folded towels, she set off for the fairgrounds with a sense of purpose. Everything was going perfectly until disaster struck.

As she hurried along the road, Marilyn stumbled and dropped the entire bundle straight into a muddy puddle.

She stared in horror. The beautiful white towels, covered with countless hours of embroidery, were now splattered with dirt and mud.

Fighting back tears, Marilyn gathered up the soggy towels and raced home as fast as she could. When she burst through the door, her mother, Blanche Morden, immediately knew something was wrong.

Between gasps, Marilyn explained what had happened.

Without hesitation, Blanche went to work. This was 1948, long before the convenience of modern washing machines and dryers. Every towel was carefully washed by hand in a tub, scrubbed clean of every trace of mud. Once washed, Blanche draped the towels near the warm stove, drying them as quickly as possible. When they were ready, she heated the iron and carefully pressed each one until it looked crisp, smooth, and fair-ready once again.

Working together against the clock, mother and daughter folded the towels neatly and hurried them to the Rockton Fair.

They arrived just in time for judging.

The towels were accepted without question. Not a judge, leader, or fellow 4-H member suspected the adventure those towels had endured only hours before. They looked every bit as perfect as they had when the girls had finished embroidering them.

For Marilyn, it became a story she would never forget. What could have been a fair-day catastrophe was transformed into a lesson about determination, quick thinking, and a mother's willingness to drop everything to help.

Thanks to Blanche Morden's hard work and resourcefulness, the towels made it to the fair on time, looking their very best—and no one was the wiser. Nearly eighty years later, it remains one of those treasured Rockton Fair memories that proves sometimes the real blue ribbon belongs to the person working behind the scenes.