

Melenie Freedom Flynn  
Excerpt from *Now Is My Father*

Dad has always said that another way we might get rich is if we get behind a money truck at the right time. Even though money trucks are armored, sometimes the doors just fly open and money pours out the back. It happened before to these people in Utah and they got something like a million dollars. It can happen at any time and you can never know when — that’s why Dad says it’s important to be behind the money truck at the right time. He says it has everything to do with karma. *Sweetheart, if we come into a bankroll like that, we ain’t going to have any more problems. You and your mother are going have nothing but the best. The best clothes, the best houses, cars — and I’m going to buy me a cherry red Cadillac!*

The stoplight turns green and the money truck rolls forward. Dad presses his foot on the gas pedal and leans over the steering wheel, inching Delilah closer and closer behind the money truck.

“What do you say girls, how about those doors flying open right now? What would you think of that, huh?”

As I look at the side of Dad’s face and follow his stare back to the money truck, I see what he sees — the back doors swinging open and bags and bags of money pouring out, the kind of bags in the cartoons the bad guys carry when they’re robbing the bank, those white bags with the big dollar signs on them. We roll down Delilah’s windows and stiff, green hundred dollar bills stream in and pile up on our laps and shoulders, filling the car until we have to pull over because the windshield is fogged up

with our breath and all of that green money. Green money everywhere — in my hair, smoldering in the ashtray, wedged between the seats. Green up past my neck and I don't know how to swim.

“Hey girls, if I hadn't thought it was time to stop for breakfast, then we wouldn't be behind the money truck. What do you think of that, huh? Your old Dad makes a good move once and awhile, don't he? Don't he?”

We stay right on the money truck's tail past the Denny's and a Mobil station until it slows down and puts on its blinker. The three of us watch silently as it pulls into the parking lot of a McDonald's and parks. I watch Dad's brown eyes in the rearview mirror dart back and forth as he tries to decide if we should follow the money truck into the McDonald's parking lot. After a moment, he lets out a long sigh and presses on the gas.

“Well girls, I don't think this one is our truck today.”

“What a bummer,” Mom says as she pulls out Delilah's ashtray and flicks her cigarette ash in it. “It kind of felt like it might be ours, didn't it?”

“It sure did. But don't worry girls,” He reaches over and squeezes Mom's knee. “I'll put us a bankroll together when we get down to Vegas. Your hear me? I've still got a score or two left in me, you can be as sure of that as the nose on your face, right Mel-Mel?” Dad winks at me in the rearview mirror.

I wink back and watch out the back window as the money truck gets smaller and smaller until all that's left is the yellow *M* of the McDonald's.

\*