

HEAD IN THE CLOUDS • BOLT OUT OF THE BLUE

By Carole L. Cooney

In the early 1600s, if a person wasn't paying attention to what was going on, it was written that their "head was in the air." Later, "air" was changed to "clouds," so the idiom is now written, if a person is daydreaming or lost in thought, their "head is in the clouds."

In the early 1800s, if the sky was blue and suddenly a bolt of lightning flashed down, that would have created a big surprise. So if something happens that you are not expecting, it would like a "bolt out of the blue."

Setting: The Jackson home

Characters:

Narrator

Mother

Gene

Narrator: It was a cool overcast morning – just perfect for going to the State Fair. Mrs. Jackson and her son, Gene, packed the car with their sweaters, hats, and sunscreen.

Mother: Come on, Gene! We want to be there early so we can beat the crowd.

Gene: Okay, Mom. I just need to check the film in my camera. It seems to be stuck.

Mother: Can't we do that at the fair? If we don't go now, we'll have to wait in a long line for our tickets.

Narrator: While Mrs. Jackson was grabbing a few bottles of water, Gene fiddled with the camera. Suddenly, he looked out his bedroom window. Something flashed across the yard.

Gene: (whispering) I wonder what *that* was?

Narrator: Gene stared and stared out the window until his eyes glossed over. He just stood there, motionless, until his mother walked up behind him.

Mother: (annoyed) Gene!

Gene: (loudly) WHAT! (sheepishly) Yes, Mother.

Mother: If you don't get your head out of the clouds, we'll never get to the Fair.

Gene: I was just trying to figure out what ran across our lawn. It was like a bolt out of the blue. Take a look.

Narrator: Mrs. Jackson opened the window and stuck her head out. There on the lawn was a long streak of burned grass.

Mother: My goodness! It looks like 4th of July fireworks just zipped across our front yard.

Gene: Let's take a look!

Mother: All right, but then let's get in the car and go. That is, if it's nothing dangerous.

Narrator: Gene slowly walked over to the smoking grass to see what was causing the smoldering streak.

Gene: I think you're right, Mom. Look over here. That looks like the top of one of those new cannon balls.

Mother: I wonder who is still lighting fireworks? It's way past the 4th.

Gene: I think I know who it is.

Mother: I hope that's the last of them. I don't think there's any danger. Gene, grab the hose and give it a good dousing of water.

Narrator: While Gene hosed the burnt grass, his mother waited patiently in the car.

Gene: It looks good and wet. What do you think, Mom?

Mother: You did a good job, Gene. Now, let's go to the Fair!

Narrator: Mrs. Jackson stepped on the gas and the car zoomed down the street like a bolt out of the blue!