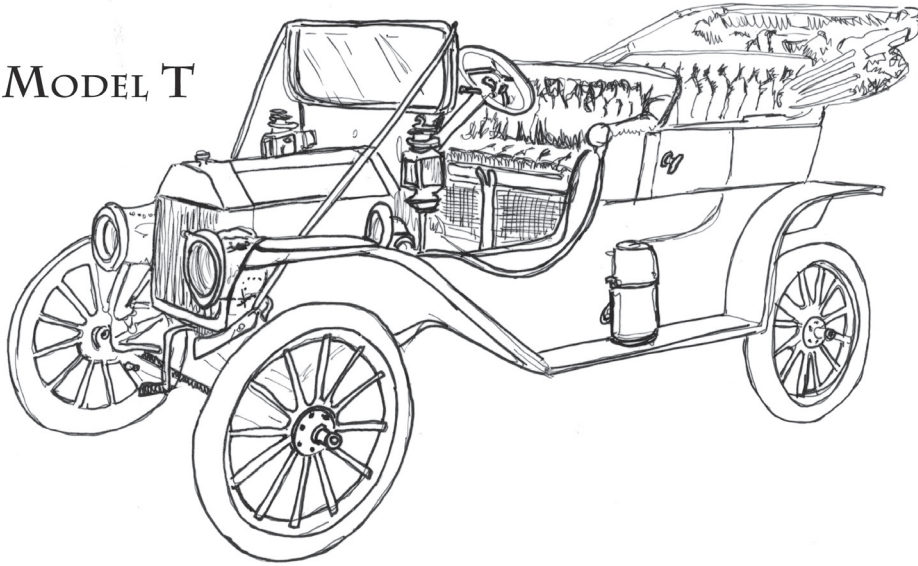


Model T

First Day at the Factory

MODEL T



Today is my first day at my new job working for Ford. I am excited and nervous.

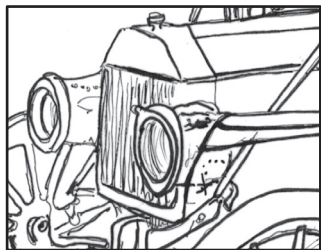
I give my shoes one final buff before I stand up to get my coat. It's an icy, windy morning in Michigan. Dirty snow lines the streets of my neighborhood. I try to avoid the slush as I walk the 2 miles to the factory.

The Ford factory is enormous. Huge squares of floor-to-ceiling windows surround the ground floor. Above it loom five towering smokestacks, huffing smoke into the frigid morning air.

"Stanley Marks reporting for training, sir," I tell Mr. Hubbard, the floor manager, when I arrive.

"Hrmm, yes," says Mr. Hubbard looking me up and down.
 "Follow me, Mr. Marks. Our factory is the most advanced in the world. When we started, it took us 12 hours to make and build a Model T. Today, we do it in only 6 hours!"

Model T



Hundreds of young men are at work, each busy with a different job along the conveyor belt. The conveyor belt moves parts at a frantic pace. The air is heavy with the sounds of the machines, the clanging of hammers, and the grunts of the workers. Each man does one job and nothing else, working as fast as he can. No one stops to look at us. They don't take their eyes from their work—"That's a sure way to lose a finger, or worse," says Mr. Hubbard.

Mr. Hubbard explains that my job will be to smooth the edges of the pinion gear. He shows me how to do this using a tool called a buffer. I'm supposed to put the finished gear on the conveyor belt when I'm done.

Mr. Hubbard asks me to show him what I've learned. When I'm done, he puts a hand on my shoulder and says, "Tip top, my boy. Now you're an expert. Get to work." Then he walks away.

The work is harder than it looks. I have to stand on my feet for eight hours and do the same motions over and over again all day. If I don't move fast enough, the guys ahead of me on the assembly line begin to complain. They need me to finish so that they can do their jobs.

I leave the factory at the end of the day. The frosty air outside is much quieter. I walk home deep in thought. I don't think I can do this job. I don't think I can do the same motions all day, everyday for the rest of my life. If my family didn't need the money, I would walk home and never come back. But Ford pays better than most anyone else in town. With bonuses, I'll be able to make \$5 a day. I'll be able to feed my family and even take them to an occasional picture show. Maybe one day, if we save up, we'll even have enough money to buy our own Model T. Then I can take my family out to the country on the weekends. Wouldn't that be grand!

