

*At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*  
by Dwight D. Eisenhower

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“When Earl was about three years old and I was nine or ten, he and I were playing in a workshop attached to the big barn behind our home. He crawled up on a box near a window, unnoticed by me. On the window sill was a knife which I had carefully placed out of his reach when we first arrived. I was busy playing when he, with the knife in his hand, jumped off the box. I heard a scream. Looking around, I saw that his hand had flown up to his face. The blade had punctured his eyeball.

The eye was thought to be the most delicate part of the body and surgery, in small towns at least, was seldom attempted. An injury to the eye was usually irreparable unless nature affected a cure. The doctor believed that Earl’s accident would not blind him but we were exceedingly worried and our whole family lived in anxiety as the wound began to heal. Then a second accident occurred.

Milton and Earl were playing a game called “Crokinole.” This involved a sizable board of considerable weight. As they went at it with Earl amusing Milton who was not much older than a baby, the board was accidentally tipped over and the corner of it struck Earl’s injured eye. This doomed our hope for his complete recovery. The doctor said nothing could be done.”