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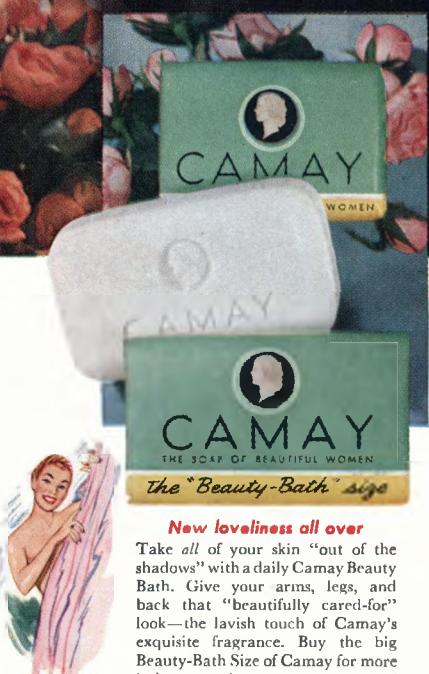
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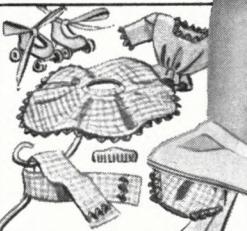
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her costume



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Picture of the Month

As we go to press, the plaudits for "Ivanhoe" are loud and resounding and we have a conviction that the proud producers will soon hear them echoed. For now M-G-M presents one of the world's favorite stories of love and adventure, "The Prisoner of Zenda", filmed for the first time in Technicolor!



With new realism and radiance, the royal romance has also been invested with the cast of stars it so richly deserves. Stewart Granger is seen in the dual role of the abducted king and the intrepid impostor; Deborah Kerr is the blue-blooded beauty who is affianced to the real king but surrenders to the love-making of the impostor; James Mason portrays the conspiratorial Rupert of Hentzau, the wickedest villain in Christendom. In brief, every role is brilliantly cast.

The famous story by Anthony Hope tells of the fabulous adventure of a vacationist who happens to look exactly like the king of the country he has chosen for his holiday. A palace revolt occurs and suddenly the stranger is in the storm-center, impersonating the king at the spectacular Coronation ceremonies, battling the king's mortal enemies, making ardent love to the princess who is unaware of his true identity.

We can only suggest the excitement and sumptuousness of some of the scenes. But there is the royal hunting lodge in which the king is drugged and then abducted... the pomp and regalia of the Coronation ceremony... the Royal Ball... the deserted Summerhouse into which the pretender is lured for an attempted assassination... and finally, moat-rimmed Zenda Castle where the true king is imprisoned... and an indescribably suspenseful duel occurs between Rudolph and Rupert of Hentzau.

With its romance, intrigue and turbulence... and M-G-M's flair for making the spectacular *real* and the *real* spectacular... "The Prisoner of Zenda" emerges as must-be-seen entertainment! Once again, a book beloved by millions becomes something greater on the giant motion picture screen. Not long ago, we urged you to see "Ivanhoe". Now, as friend to friend, we urge you to see "Zenda"!

★ ★ ★

M-G-M presents in color by Technicolor
"THE PRISONER OF ZENDA" starring
 STEWART GRANGER, DEBORAH KERR,
 LOUIS CALHERN, JANE GREER, Lewis Stone,
 Robert Douglas and JAMES MASON as
 Rupert of Hentzau. Screen play by John L.
 Balderston and Noel Langley. Adaptation by
 Wells Root from the novel by Anthony Hope
 and the dramatization by Edward Rose.
 Directed by Richard Thorpe. Produced by
 Pandro S. Berman.

DECEMBER
 1952

True Story

VOL. 67
 NO. 5

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COVER: BY OZZIE SWEET
 COAT: THE DRESS BOX

TRUE STORY interprets the American scene, the American people, the American way of life, truthfully and honestly through these stories and articles.
 The names and places in the stories are fictional.

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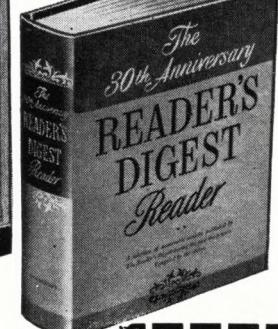
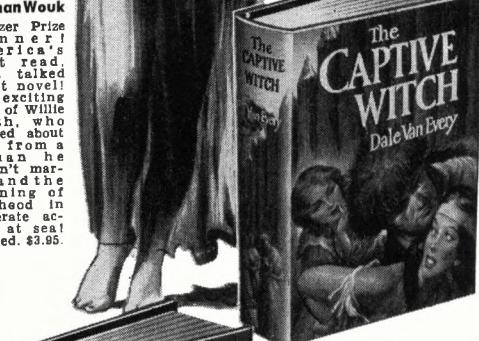
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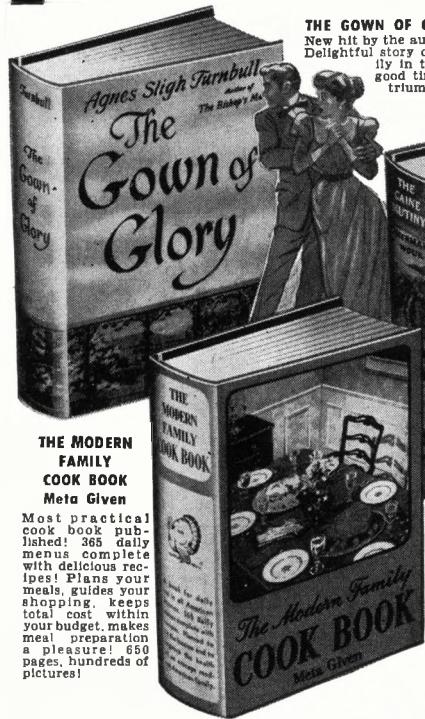
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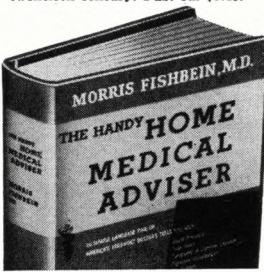
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TRUE STORY

BABIES



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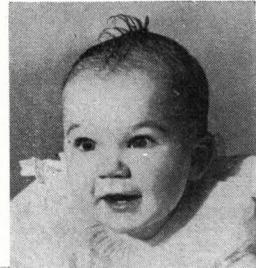
RED BOX—soap-filled pads
GREEN BOX—pads plus cake soap

THRIFTIER—5 AND 12 PAD BOXES

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Brillo lasts longer!



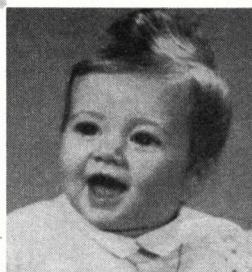
Michael Ray, the proud son of Mr. and Mrs. Candill of Batavia, Ohio, is four and a half months old, loves playing with his hands and feet



Introducing playful Janet Rea Chism, at 7 months, from Algona, Iowa. Her favorite "anything," her mother says, is her big brother



Craig Grant Adams, at eight months, lives in Baltimore, Maryland. His parents say he is a very mischievous but lovable little fellow



This gay young lady is Cheryl Jean Seidel. She lives in Egypt, Pennsylvania, is seven months old and very well-behaved for her age



Kay Ann Siegrist, four and a half months old, hails from Whittemore, Mich. She loves her dog and kitty, especially likes riding in cars

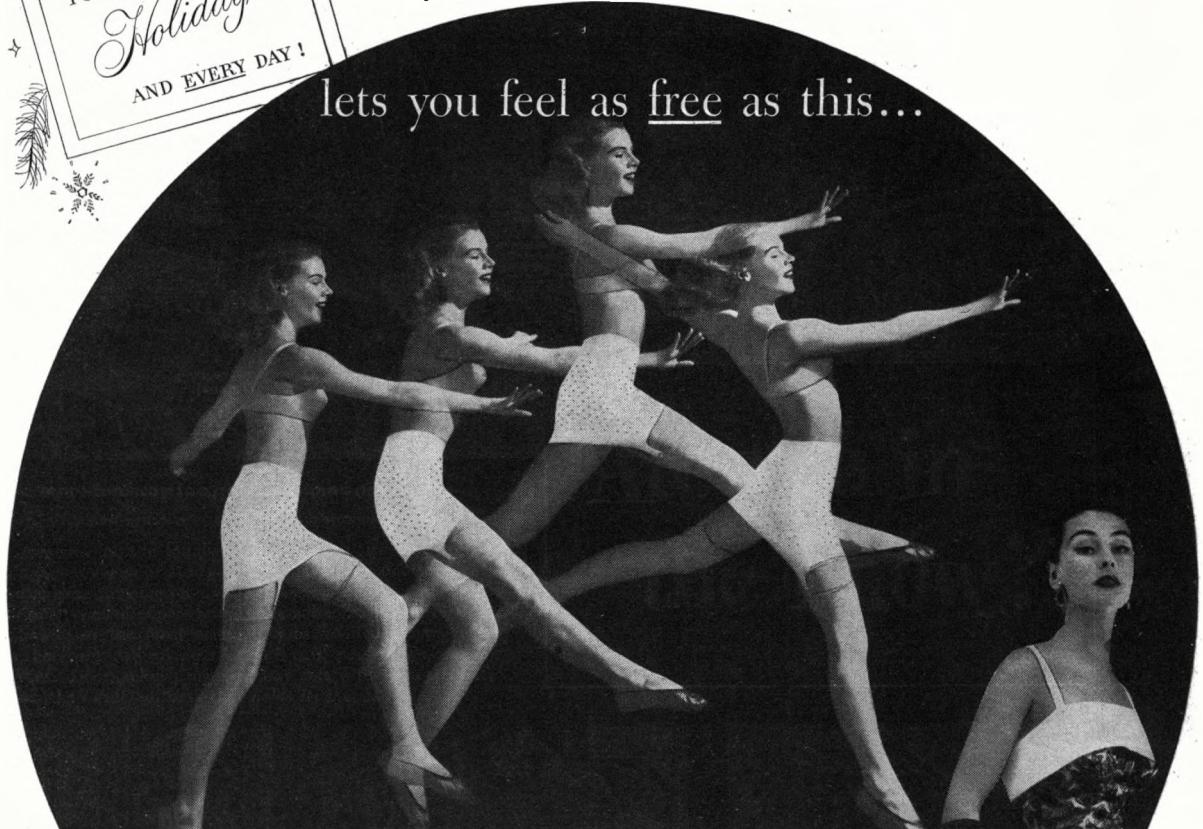


A very husky little girl is Linda Sand. She is six months old, lives in State College, Pa. She loves toys and already tries to talk



Only a PLAY-TEX® Girdle

lets you feel as free as this...



and look as **SLIM** as this...



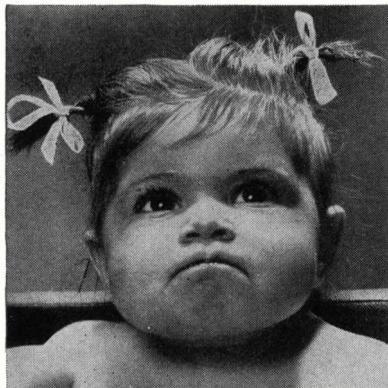
"**Fashion has a festive air** this season of holidays and holly nights," says MARCEL ROCHAS, famous Parisian couturier. "The simple elegance of party clothes puts slender emphasis on *you*. All the more reason why your holiday figure needs a Playtex Fab-Lined Girdle!"

Whatever the occasion, there's no girdle like Playtex Fab-Lined! Fashioned of smooth latex, with softest fabric next to your skin, it whittles you wonderfully, hasn't a seam, stitch or bone, fits invisibly under the most figure-revealing clothes. Four new Adjust-All* garters for perfect fit.

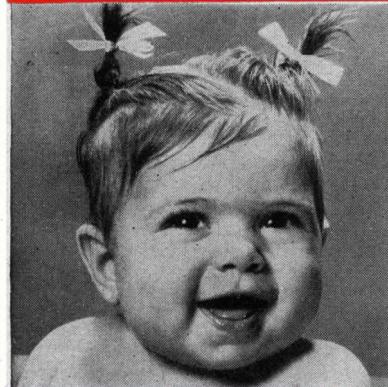
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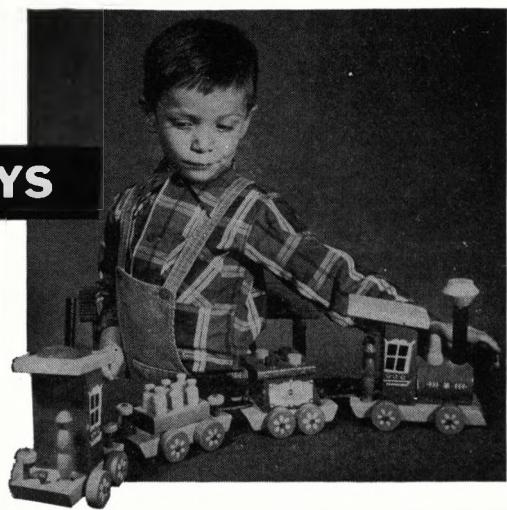
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THE
RIGHT TOYS
FOR
YOUR
CHILD



By SAMUEL R. BERENBERG, M.D.

Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics,
Cornell University Medical School, New York City

THIS is the season when parents start thinking about toys to give their children for Christmas. All too often, unfortunately, they are carried away by department store displays and newspaper ads and sales talk, and they buy playthings that are wrong for their children. Toys are important to a child; they are his tools, because playing is a child's work. So you should take a great deal of care in selecting them, using as your guides, not price, but your child's age and interests and the safety and sturdiness of the toys themselves.

First of all, make sure the toys you buy are safe. Avoid those made of glass or those having sharp points or small parts that children might swallow. Water pistols are safe and a lot of fun, but cap pistols, B-B guns or pea shooters may be dangerous if put into hands that are too young to control them properly. Darts are always a risk, and if you buy your youngsters a dart game, be present yourself whenever it's played, keep children out of the line of flight, and pack all equipment safely away when the game is over.

Secondly, consider the toy's sturdiness. Children, being boisterous, are apt to treat roughly anything that's given them, as you know. They, and you, get very little satisfaction from a toy that comes apart the first day. So check your prospective purchase carefully for durability.

Then consider the child himself—his age, the things that interest him. The younger he is, the less capable he is of delicate muscle movements. So give him toys he can grasp in his small hands, toys whose moving parts are large and simple enough for him to work.

If he's an infant, a cradle gym or some bright strips of colored cloth hung across his crib will do nicely. Or pick out a rattle, a soft ball, a small cuddly animal or doll—even an empty cereal box. He can chew or pull on these to his heart's content without hurting himself.

The toddler—one or two years old—will enjoy small, rounded-edged blocks, push and pull toys with short handles, small wagons, and wooden train sets. Make sure that the stuffed toys you give him do not have eyes or noses that your child can pull out and swallow or put into his ears. When children get to be about two, they like to hammer pegs through boards,

and there are many of these sets in the stores. Finger paints, clay sets, cloth or cardboard picture books, kiddie cars, doll carriages, doll beds—all make excellent presents for this age group.

Your children who are over two will love juvenile records. They'll beg you to play them over and over and will often sway rhythmically to and fro, trying to dance—to the advantage of their own physical and emotional development.

Beyond the age of three, children enjoy simple jig-saw puzzles or stringing large wooden beads. At this age, they begin to imitate what they see around them, so give them toy brooms, cake tins, mops, carpet sweepers, flat irons, furniture and doll houses. You'll find them wanting to "help" with the housework.

As they grow into the four-to-six-year age group, children begin to notice the world outside their front door. They'll want toy automobiles, trains, busses, fire engines, animals, etc. They'll beg for cowboy suits or an outfit like the Space Cadets wear on television. Chalk, paints, and crayons, too, will amuse your four-year-old and allow him self-expression. Give him his own drawing pad or coloring book, and he won't use the walls.

Tricycles will please any child, from the age of two till he starts school or is large enough to handle a two-wheeler. These are, of course, not the only toys that will educate and delight your children; there are many others on the market for you to choose from.

It's tempting, of course, to get that beautiful, fancy doll or the electric train that you or your husband like, rather than something simpler. Even people who have no children sometimes wander wistfully through toy departments, wanting to buy everything they see, so it's no wonder if parents are tempted to get playthings that are too complicated for their children.

But resist it. Buy toys your youngster can use and enjoy today, and years from now you'll probably find him still playing with them, using them, loving them—because they were right at the time you bought them, because they're old favorites and dear to his heart.

Next month we will discuss
your child's elimination.

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is what makes
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*No therapeutic claim is made for the chlorophyll.



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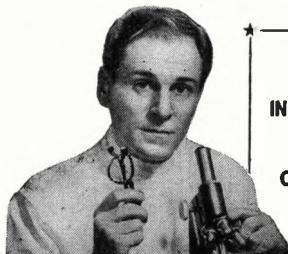


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IN 1285 TESTS PROVED BEYOND A DOUBT
THAT THE PALMOLIVE BEAUTY PLAN
CAN BRING YOU A SOFTER, SMOOTHER,
YOUNGER LOOKING SKIN!

The very first time you try the Palmolive Beauty Plan you'll actually see Palmolive begin to bring out beauty while it cleans your skin. Palmolive is so mild . . . so pure . . . its rich, fragrant lather gives you everything you need for gentle beauty care.

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Massage Palmolive Soap's extra-mild, pure lather onto your skin for 60 seconds. Rinse with warm water, splash with cold, and pat dry. Do this 3 times a day. It feels just right . . . is just right for your skin.

Palmolive... The "Chlorophyll Green" Soap With The Pure White Lather!

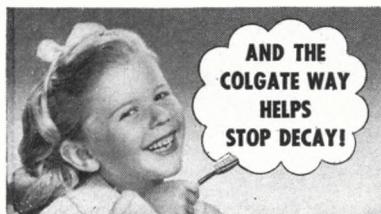
Brushing Teeth Right After Eating with

COLGATE DENTAL CREAM STOPS BAD BREATH AND STOPS DECAY!

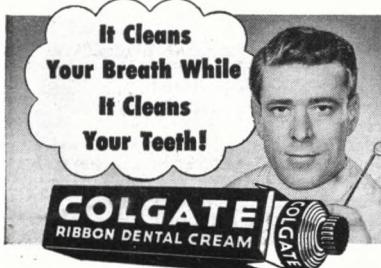
The Colgate way of brushing teeth right after eating is the best home method known to help stop tooth decay! And Colgate's instantly stops bad breath in 7 out of 10 cases that originate in the mouth!



Brushing teeth with Colgate Dental Cream right after eating makes your mouth feel cleaner longer—gives you a clean, fresh mouth all day long! Scientific tests have proved in 7 out of 10 cases, Colgate Dental Cream instantly stops bad breath that originates in the mouth. And no other toothpaste cleans teeth more effectively, yet so safely!



Colgate's has proved conclusively that brushing teeth right after eating stops tooth decay best! Brushing teeth right after eating with Colgate Dental Cream stopped more decay for more people than ever before reported in dentifrice history! The Colgate way is the most thoroughly proved and accepted home method of oral hygiene known today!



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WILL NOT STAIN OR DISCOLOR!



I Was An UNWED FATHER

Maybe you think it's always the girl who pays?

Don't make me laugh. I'm the guy who knows better.

So will you when you read what happened to me

YOU'RE THE FATHER of a baby girl." I stared dumbly at the slight, middle-aged, sober-eyed woman who had come to see me. I couldn't seem to understand. "I don't get it," I said finally.

"At 9:50 Monday morning," she went on crisply, "a seven-pound baby girl was born in Doctors' Hospital. Your baby."

"But that's crazy! I—I'm not even married."

She smiled wryly. "One doesn't have to be married to become a father."

"Who says I'm a father?" I flared. "Who are you anyway?"

From her purse she took a card identifying her as a Miss Arnold, case worker from the city bureau of child welfare. I was scared now and looked around the hall quickly to see if anyone from my office was eavesdropping. I had just come back from lunch when this woman stopped me outside my office with her startling announcement.

"Yesterday, the mother of the child identified you as the father," she said.

"Who—who is the mother?"

"Her name is Ida Morrison."

Ida Morrison! The name echoed faintly in my mind, but that was all. I couldn't even recall her face. For the moment she was nothing more than a blurred memory—and a threat. "Am I under arrest?" I finally managed to say.

"Oh, good heavens, no," Miss Arnold smiled. "I only came to find out what you intend to do about the child."

She paused. I looked at her dumbly. "Fatherhood does have responsibilities, you know. Let's go out for coffee. We can talk."

Fatherhood! Responsibilities! Those were shattering words. A great weight settled on my shoulders as I followed Miss Arnold toward the elevator. I had worked hard to get where I was, and now this scandal could wreck it all. But more than that, it would just about kill my mother. She'd had it pretty tough up till I'd got this last job, and she didn't deserve a blow like this. It must be some fantastic joke.

I told myself that over and over, but still I was sick with fear as I followed Miss Arnold down to the luncheonette. We found a secluded booth and sat staring at

each other over our two cups of coffee. "I deny it!" I burst out suddenly. "I don't even know that girl's name."

"All right," she replied calmly. "We don't take the mother's word alone. There'll be further investigation."

I hadn't expected such gentle answer to my outburst. I looked at Miss Arnold more closely. "How do you investigate further?" I asked her after a moment.

"Well, there are blood tests, of course. Such tests won't positively establish you as the father, if your blood type is the same as the child's, but if it's different, you are certainly ruled out. If the blood types match, we begin to check on the mother's story—collect the circumstantial evidence."

"Like a murder case," I said bitterly.

Miss Arnold leaned across the table to put her hand gently on my arm. "This is life, not death," she said. "A child has been born into the world, and she's a beautiful and wonderful creature who deserves a chance in life. She's not responsible for the sins of her parents." Miss Arnold paused and looked at me soberly. "If this child is yours, it's a very serious matter. But it is not the end of the world for you. You aren't the first boy who has suddenly been faced with unexpected fatherhood."

"Some comfort," I said grimly. "Do you think I'm the father?" I asked.

She shrugged. "Ida Morrison was most reluctant to give your name. It was only after I became her friend that she told me. Let me put it this way—Ida certainly thinks you are the father."

"And when did she say it happened?"

"Last summer. She claims you two and another couple went to the amusement park, and it happened that night."

The moment she mentioned the amusement park, every detail of that summer day came rushing back to me; my stomach went weak.

My friend Jim Everett had suggested a double date. "I'm going out with my girl tomorrow," he said, "and she wants to bring a friend along. How about making it a foursome, Ed?"

"Well," I said cautiously, "what does this girl friend (Continued on page 10)

Now, Tide washes clothes **WHITER** than any bleach can bleach them!



Yes, TIDE washes clothes
even **WHITER** than
soaking in bleach overnight!

No more need to bleach, except for stubborn stains!

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WILL GIVE YOU A WHITER,
CLEANER WASH THAN TIDE!

mealtime's
brightest
moments
come in the
green can
with the
red shield



SHORT 'n' SWEET-a real peach treat!

Yes, even quick-and-easies like this are so good—made with DEL MONTE Brand Peaches—the best-liked peaches in the whole wide world. Always tender and juicy, luscious with rich, tree-ripe flavor, they're tops in dependability. Enjoy DEL MONTE Peaches soon—just plain, or in yummy

PEACH KRINGLE

1 recipe biscuit dough (using 2 cups biscuit mix or your own recipe based on 2 cups flour)
1/4 cup melted butter or margarine

1/2 cup brown sugar
mixed with
2 teaspoons cinnamon

1/4 cup chopped nutmeats
1 No. 2 1/2 can DEL MONTE
Sliced Peaches

Open the peaches; drain them well. (Don't resist your impulse to snitch a tender, juicy slice and taste that wonderful tree-ripe DEL MONTE Peach flavor just "as is"!) Roll the biscuit dough out to 8" circle; cut 16 round 2" biscuits. Dip each biscuit first in the melted butter, then in sugar-cinnamon mix. Overlap biscuits in well-greased 10x6x1 1/2" baking dish, making 2 rows the length of the dish. Insert well-drained DEL MONTE Peach slices between

biscuits and around edges. (Doesn't that glowing orchard color look pretty? You can always count on DEL MONTE for quality!) Sprinkle top with nutmeats. Bake in moderately hot oven (425°F.) 25 min. or till biscuits are thoroughly done. Serve warm to 6 as a coffee-cake, or better still with whipped cream for dessert. You'll be fixing this one often! (DEL MONTE Peaches make it both tasty and delicious. Just be sure you get DEL MONTE.)

DEL MONTE Peaches
packed two ways—
Halves and Sliced

Del Monte BRAND Peaches

the brand you know puts flavor first

(Continued from page 8) look like, Jim?"

"Hey, brother, you got a treat coming. Small, but oh, my, is she stacked."

I said okay. So I met Ida Morrison on a warm, summer afternoon in the middle of the amusement park. She was small, not over five feet tall, but with a breathtaking figure, just as Jim had promised. Tapering bare legs, revealed below close-fitting white shorts, a tiny waist, high full breasts outlined under a flimsy basque shirt, a mass of black hair framing a face that was forever laughing or grimacing.

"Ida, this is Ed," Jim said.

"Hi!" I said. "Glad to know you."

"I'm pleased to make your acquaintance," she replied and then looked up at me with a lazy smile and half-closed eyes. Then she stepped up and took me by the arm, and we swung off down the midway.

Ida turned out to be something of a gold-digger. I don't think there was a single ride in the whole amusement park that we missed. Her conversation was limited to: "Oh, honey, I'd simply *adore* to ride on that." Or, "I told my girl friend that nice fellows don't make passes at you in the tunnel of love. It's not refined." Ida's whole world began and ended with herself.

But practically every guy we passed turned to look at her with admiration and at me with envy. That made me feel pretty good. And too, her body was softly yielding when we were thrown together in the more violent rides. Just the touch of her leg against mine was enough to send my blood pounding. In the tunnel of love, I slipped a tentative hand around her waist the moment we were in the dark interior, and she turned and fell upon me with a violence that left me shaken and breathless. And yet, she seemed to forget that blind and clutching intimacy in the dark the minute we returned to the light.

The hours passed quickly, and when it was dark, a million lights draped the buildings and rides of the park. By then, even Ida had had her fill of the rides and she made no objection when I suggested we take a walk along the bank of the river that ran past the park and into the country. The clatter of the amusement park fell away behind us. We came to a pasture that rolled down to the water's edge, and dropped down on it to light two cigarettes.

Ida was only a vague and shadowy figure as she sat beside me, but I felt her presence sharply. Though she was silent, hardly moving, something was passing between us—a current that became stronger by the minute, building up until my heart hammered against my chest and I had trouble breathing. Almost in a single gesture, we turned and reached out in the darkness. Seeking release from the emotions that held us, we went to each other, falling back upon the ground, kissing with bruising lips, clutching with desperate hands, every nerve pulled to the breaking point.

Finally Ida and I released each other and fled apart. The electricity was gone; there was no magnet left to hold us.

I saw Ida only once more after that evening. The following Friday the four of us had a few beers together. Ida didn't look nearly so good in a dress as she had in revealing shorts. The dress was flashy and conspicuous, and her make-up was smeared on in great globs. But her conversation was the same, giggles and wisecracks. I didn't find her the least bit attractive this time; she was indifferent to me too. Apparently that evening in the amusement park was nothing she held precious, so I told my conscience to go jump in the lake. I never thought of Ida Morrison again (Continued on page 21)



What would you do?

Home Problems Forum
Conducted by **Mrs. Helen Willman**

Dear Mrs. Willman:

My nineteen-year-old daughter met a divorced man of twenty-seven. Betty is my only child and was very sweet until she met Tom. They claim they do not want to marry for several years, as they both have careers. I am doing my best to discourage Tom from seeing Betty, as I realize they can not go on that length of time being as intimate as they have been. I have tried in vain to speak to Tom. He certainly hasn't been respectful to me, and I'm afraid he will treat Betty the same, although he is sweet to her now. Betty is a professional girl, travels, meets new friends, and has several boy friends closer to her own age, and I just feel that she should not see Tom any more. What would you advise me to do? The more I try to keep them apart, the harder she is to get along with.

Mrs. C. F.

Dear Mrs. F.:

In your last sentence, I think you answered your own question very neatly.

Your daughter is nineteen years old and, by your own reckoning, intelligent, mature and capable. I think she's ready to make up her own mind. There comes a point in every person's life, Mrs. F., when she must try her own wings, make her own decisions, begin to be a person in her own right. Betty has obviously reached that moment. There are some things that parents cannot tell their child. The girl must learn them herself through experiences that are sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet, but always valuable.

You must not worry about Betty. If you have brought her up right, taught her manners and high moral standards and good judgment, she will not fail that education now. She simply resents your continued treatment of her as a child, and is probably clinging to Tom because he represents her protest against your constant supervision. So, advise her well and then stand back and let her decide for herself. I think you'll soon find her forgetting about this unsuitable young man.

Dear Mrs. Willman:

I'm fifteen years old, the oldest of five children. My sister and I assume lots of responsibilities around home. Mom does the washing and gets meals, and we girls do all the rest.

My boy friend recently left for the Air Force. He is seventeen, very smart, and mature. Our families get along amazingly well, and we are looking forward to a wonderful future together.

Since Christmas is near, naturally I've looked at several things I'd love to get my beau. But with all the housework I'm responsible for, I have no time to earn any money, and my parents don't think I should have an allowance, though they can afford a little each week. How can I buy Jerry a gift? I do so want to give him a memento.

Miss G. R.

Dear Miss R.:

If all you tell me is true, I certainly do think you deserve a weekly allowance. After all, you aren't acting merely as occasional "mother's helper"—you do a full and responsible share of the housework. If I were you, I'd talk to my parents about it. Explain that if you were doing this for someone else you would get paid a good sum, and that they might take the value of your services into consideration and give you a token sum each week as recognition of the fact that you are a help to them. Ask them also to let you take a few baby-sitting jobs and tell them what you're saving the money for. They seem like understanding and sympathetic people, and I'm sure a reasonable presentation of your side should make them more willing to help you.

Dear Mrs. Willman:

I am forty-nine and have four children—three girls and a boy. My husband left me seventeen years ago, before my son was born.

I work all day in a factory, and come home at night and sit around the house. I'm so lonely. I would like to find someone for companionship, someone who can make me a nice home. My children have their own lives to lead, and are leaving me one by one. Tell me what I should do.

Mrs. J. H.

Dear Mrs. H.:

I know that lonely middle age, especially when it follows a busy, hard-working youth, can be a poignant and heart-breaking thing. But you must not allow yourself to mope.

Your life is certainly a long way from over and there are lots of things you can do to fill in your empty hours and your lonely life. Join clubs at your church or your business. Volunteer for charity work at a local hospital, at the Red Cross or one of the other relief services. You will meet people, men and women both, and you'll have a lot of fun while you're doing a lot of good. Maybe you'll find someone who is doing the same kind of public-spirited job you are has a mutual interest that should draw you close. And whatever happens, you'll be living again—out in the world of people. Go to it!

Do you need advice? Write to Mrs. Helen Willman. She will answer as many questions as possible in **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?** Whenever possible she will send you the name of an agency in your locality that can help you solve your problem. But please do not ask for a personal reply, as no detailed personal advice can be given by mail. If your letter is published, your name will not be used. Address your letter to **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?** care of **TRUE STORY**, P. O. Box 1444, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York.

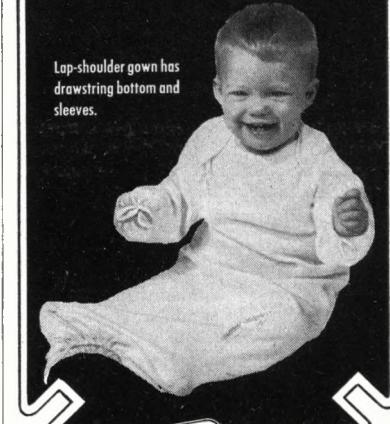


Zipper bottom gown has plenty of room for twisting... hand mittens are part of gown.

BEDTIME STORY with a TWIST... soft-spun Spencer's

Awake or asleep, baby twists a thousand amazing ways...and Spencer's gives with every movement. Soft-spun yarns, generous measurements, safe fasteners (no pins!)...all to assure baby's comfort.

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**THE BEST
TRUE STORIES
I KNOW**
by Don McNeill
Toastmaster of the Breakfast Club

THIS is the story of Henrietta Additon, superintendent of New York State's women's prison and reformatory known as Westfield Farms. When you meet Miss Additon you're surprised. You think to yourself, "But this gentle lady can't be director of a prison!" She is, though, and the girls who have lived at Westfield and been helped by her will tell you what a good director she is—good because she's just what she seems: a gentle, kind, sympathetic and understanding lady.

Henrietta Additon started out in life as a schoolteacher. But she soon grew far more interested in handling the problems of young people than in teaching them, so she quit to join a charitable organization. Shortly after that, she became probation officer of the local municipal court.

It was there that she first realized the desperate plight of girls who get into trouble with the law. She was deeply moved to see this "sad procession of wayward girls," as she called it, and wanted to do something to help them find themselves.

The more Miss Additon listened to the stories of how they came to commit the crimes that brought them up before her desk, the more she was convinced that the solution to their problems was not punishment, but rehabilitation. She maintained that they should have been sent, not to prisons, but to schools where their lives could be re-directed into better, happier channels.

So when she was offered the job as superintendent of Westfield Farms she accepted eagerly. This was her chance to prove what she believed.

That was twelve years ago, and today, under the direction of this gentle lady, Westfield is turning out, not ex-convicts, but young women trained and adjusted to make their way in the world.

I think the best way to show you Miss Additon's method with these girls is to tell you what she has done for one of them. This youngster, whose name is Fay, was a typical member of that "sad procession." Fay's parents died when she was sixteen, and since they had left her a little money and she'd always had an urge toward the glamour of the "Big City," she left her small-town home and came to New York. She had only two years of high school and wasn't trained for any sort of job, but that didn't bother her. She was pretty and felt sure she'd land an exciting job, work in

an imposing office, meet famous people.

But Fay met nothing but disappointment. She had no training of any kind. Nobody wanted to hire her. Finally she landed a job as housemaid, a far cry from the glamorous job of her dreams.

Even then her troubles were not over. The lady of the house began to have suspicions, entirely unfounded, that Fay was making a play for her husband. One morning she accused her of it, and Fay, this last blow being just too much for her, struck the woman savagely.

Dazed and distracted, Fay was arrested and sentenced to Westfield Farms.

And there, at Westfield, she met Miss Henrietta Additon. To Fay, Miss Additon's soft voice seemed to be saying the only kind words she'd heard since she'd left home. "Don't be frightened," Miss Additon was saying. "We're your friends here. We want to help you."

Miss Additon told Fay a little about Westfield. There were no cells—just rooms each girl could decorate as she pleased. There was plenty of recreation, a beauty parlor run by the girls, classes of all kinds. As she talked, Fay began to get a funny feeling about this place and this nice woman. She began to feel like she had come home.

Miss Additon went on, "I see in your file that you'd like to be a secretary some day. Do you want to take a stenography course while you're here? You can also take an academic course and get your high school diploma if you like."

Fay looked at Miss Additon in dumbfounded silence. Then she broke into racking sobs. Miss Additon came over to her and took Fay's hands into her own. She held them and let Fay cry on.

By the time her sentence was up Fay had not only completed the stenography course and received a high school diploma, but had been elected class valedictorian. And in her speech she said:

"If we ever make anything of ourselves in life, it will be because of Henrietta Additon. She takes us each to her heart. She makes us all her friends. She gives us back to ourselves and sends us out into the world new and better people. Thank you, Miss Additon, from all of us."

Fay is a very competent bookkeeper for a small firm in New York right now. And Miss Additon? Well, she's still at Westfield Farms, still helping girls find the right path in life and giving them the training and courage to follow it.

**LISTEN AND LAUGH
WITH
DON MCNEILL**

It's a pleasant habit to relax and enjoy Don McNeill and his gang on the **BREAKFAST CLUB**, Monday through Friday mornings on the ABC radio network.
(Check your local paper for time.)



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"The best softener I've ever used. I'm devoted to Pond's Dry Skin Cream."



THE PRINCESS MURAT
"My skin roughs up easily. But Pond's Dry Skin Cream corrects dryness so quickly."



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"Pond's Dry Skin Cream is wonderfully rich. You can feel it help dry skin right away."

Don't let drying skin give you that "getting-older" look

ALMOST EVERY WOMAN after 25 knows that dismaying shock of finding dry skin signs—flaky patches, tiny criss-cross lines.

At about this age, the natural oil that keeps skin soft and fresh starts decreasing.

But you can offset this loss of natural softening oil. You can use a special replacer. You can use Pond's Dry Skin Cream. Very rich in *lanolin*, it is *homogenized* to soak in better, and has a *special emulsifier* for extra softening.

Smooth away dryness—this way

Soften by night. Cleanse skin thoroughly. Then work in plenty of Pond's Dry Skin Cream over face, and throat. Give extra strokes where skin is dryest. Tissue cream off lightly, leaving a thin veil of cream to coddle your skin while you sleep.

Protect and soften by day. Smooth in a

softening touch of Pond's Dry Skin Cream before you make-up. This rich cream guards your skin from parching winds, dehydrating dry air . . . keeps your skin extra soft and smooth-looking.

Today more women are buying Pond's than any other dry skin cream. See if it isn't the *finest* help for dry skin you've ever used. Get a jar of Pond's Dry Skin Cream today.

3 features make it extra effective for dry skin

1. Rich in *lanolin*
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Drying starts to show first in the places pictured below. See how best to help correct it!



Crepy-Dry Eyelids make skin look darkened. **To Lighten and Soften—Nightly**, touch Pond's Dry Skin Cream to inner corners of eyes—tap gently out over lids. Leave a little of this lanolin-rich cream on all night. A *special emulsifier* makes it extra-softening.



That Matronly-Looking Sagging starts to show along your chin-line.

To Tone Up Chin-Line—"Pinch along" from point of chin to ears, with lanolin-rich Pond's Dry Skin Cream. This treatment gives dry skin the lift and *rich lubrication* it needs.



Dry Skin "Down-Lines" by your nose and mouth harden your expression.

To Help Soften Lines—"Knuckle in" Pond's Dry Skin Cream *out, up* from nostrils, mouth. See this lanolin-rich cream smooth that dry look. It's *homogenized* to soak in better.

The Village Pump



If you have an idea or opinion you'd like to share with others, here's your opportunity to get it off your chest. It's up to you to keep the pump primed

A PROBLEM FOR ALL PARENTS

Not long ago, while I was visiting some relatives, an aunt patted my two small sons on the head and said to me, "You sure have two fine boys. But isn't it awful, you're just bringing them up to be shot at. There's just no future for them." At this point the whole room of relatives agreed, not realizing how the boys might feel.

A few days later, my oldest son said to me, "Mother, I think I'll learn to cook real well." (I'd been letting him help me.) "Then maybe I can cook for the soldiers instead of having to go where I'll be shot at. Because you know, Mother, there's no future for us boys."

I was just heartsick, to think that my little boys had to hear and remember such talk by older people, who I think should know better. Am I wrong in feeling that children shouldn't have to hear war talk that might mar their outlook on life?

MRS. E. W.

DISAPPROVAL FROM GERMANY

There are no words to tell you how much TRUE STORY means to me and what I have learned from your wonderful stories. But, gee, I'm disappointed about the article "Can You Trust A Soldier?" by Jules Archer. I just can't get over it. Not because I'm counting myself as one of those millions of German frauleins who has given her affection largely because "he" could buy her things from the P.X. (you see I'm engaged to an American soldier myself), but simply because it hurts to know how low and cheap you think of us German girls. Don't you think we have some pride left, too? Besides, I don't know of any German store, here in Western Germany, where you can't buy anything as easy as you can in the P.X.

This article has upset many people I know—American people—and most everyone has been talking about it. I heard some people say, "I can't see why it should be any worse over here than it is in the States." An American woman told me, "I don't blame the American boys over here for marrying a German girl—our girls are too spoiled."

Well, I don't know too much about life in the United States, but I just wonder how many girls out of hundreds in America are making a fuss over their soldier-boy friend and behave as if he's a four-star general and she his servant? Or does this happen only over here in Germany?

To those wives and sweethearts who have read "Can You Trust A Soldier?" I can only say, don't believe everything you read and hear. And if you love your husband or sweetheart, you trust him also—for what is love without faith?

W. R.

MANNHEIM, GERMANY

MODERN MADNESS

Our home is full of modern push-button gadgets that do most of our work for us. We press some more buttons and the radio and TV bring us mechanical entertainment. No effort, no originality is required on our part or the children's. We've actually become slaves to these mechanical monsters.

Well, our family has a good tonic for such slavery. Every summer we go off to the mountains, live in a tent, sleep on pine-needle mattresses, catch fish and game, amuse ourselves around a campfire with



our own music, tell stories and dance, hike for miles, bathe in a stream, and make friends with Nature's wild life.

We have found that too much comfort is dulling and deadening. And we have learned from our yearly excursions that a reunion with Nature is a cure for almost every ill, costs surprisingly little, and pays immense dividends. Try it some time and see.

MRS. H. R. S.

A FLY IN THE OINTMENT

My husband and I have been married almost a year and so far we've had nearly a perfect marriage. But I have one problem and I'd like to know if other housewives feel the same as I do about it. Housework is beginning to take on a depressing monotony for me. And it seems even worse when I think that thirty years from now I'll still be doing the family wash every Monday, making the beds, doing the dishes, etc. I do like to keep everything clean and tidy, but I do wish there was something I could do about the monotony of it!

MRS. L. W. L.

THE DANGERS OF NEGLECT

I just finished reading the powerful prize-winning story "Devil Woman" in the September TRUE STORY and I had to let you know how I felt.

Letty Ramey was starved in childhood "for want of my mother." Working mothers certainly can be excused where it is a necessity, but my peeve is against mothers who work only for greedy accumulation. On the veterans' project where I live, one can actually spot the difference

in personalities between children getting a full day's attention and affection from a "home mother," and those whose mothers come home tired and usually too nervous to give loving attention, often screaming when their children get in their way in their frenzy to catch up on household chores. I ask you, how can we expect our children to grow into normal human beings if we constantly deprive them of the vital necessities of normal living?

MRS. E. B. C.

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL

This summer, during my vacation in New England, I was shocked at the number of automobile accidents on the roads. Most of them could have been avoided if the drivers had obeyed the speed laws.

While driving through Maine, I saw some signs that were painted red and had a cross in the middle. They were placed wherever someone had been killed in an automobile accident, and they carried the date of the accident.

As I drove along, I saw many cars that were speeding slow down when they saw these signs. It does something to the drivers to know that they are passing the very spot where someone was killed. For that reason I think such signs should be placed on highways all over the country. It would do a lot more good and probably help cut down on the terrible amount of accidents we've been having.

Y. A.

A LESSON WELL LEARNED

I wonder how many other teenagers felt as guilty as I did when they read "Wildest Teens in Town" (September TRUE STORY). Most of the story was so like my own that I had to read it again. I'm only fourteen, but I easily pass for seventeen, so I go out a lot. My parents dislike my being away so much, but they never say much. My only hope is that other teenagers get as much out of this story as I did, for I feel that it has set me on the path to happiness. And I'm sure there are many more teenagers that would like to thank you for printing such a wonderful story.

MISS S. D.

IN DEFENSE OF NAGGING WIVES

Why do wives nag? Ask a man that question and like as not he'll say, "I don't know—never pay any attention to what she says." Well, let me tell you why.

A man, when he comes home from work, wants dinner on time, his clothes cleaned and pressed—everything running like clockwork, which it generally is. He rarely compliments his wife, but takes all this as his just due. But, let the wife ask her husband to fix the leaky faucet and he'll reply, "Yeah, sure," and promptly forget it. So the wife has to ask him over

**A teenager learns a good lesson . . . a warning
for all readers . . . a mother's plea for
her children . . . a different viewpoint from Germany**

and over again. Then, after a week or so, he retaliates by telling her to stop nagging him!

Women don't want to nag, but about ninety per cent of the time they are forced to by the contrary male who won't listen the first time. So, please men, listen the first time—you'll find nagging a thing of the past if you do.

MRS. M. G.

WAIT AND SEE

I'm a middle-aged grandmother and I want to give some advice to Miss D. H. (September *Village Pump*), who can't understand why Granny refuses to be the least bit strict with her grandchildren when they come to visit her. I think the reason most grandmothers let their children do just about anything (and they do) is because they have spent so many years raising their own children, constantly correcting them, teaching them good manners, etc., they have no desire to continue the same procedure with their grandchildren. They just want to relax and enjoy them.

I think the sensible thing for you to do, Miss D. H., is to be just as patient as possible with your sisters' children when they come to visit. Take the extra time to protect your things. Remember that you were a child once, too. And some day, when you are married and have children of your own, you'll probably enjoy relaxing for a while at Granny's just like your sisters.

MRS. E. E.

TYPICAL REACTIONS

Your story "Forbidden to Love Him" (September *TRUE STORY*) should be a good lesson to many parents. In being brutal, domineering and intolerant, the parents in this story almost ruined the lives of Kathy and Rocky. They never would have been led into temptation, being naturally good young people, if they'd been allowed to see each other under normal circumstances.

People have to learn to judge others for what they are, not what their ancestry or religion is. Good people come from every walk of life, every religion. Slurring remarks can't control love or keep loved ones apart. Name-calling can't solve human problems.

Hats off to *TRUE STORY* for printing such a frank story, sparing no punches. I can readily see why this story won a big prize in your contest. And I hope that this story will hit home with other parents and make them realize what can happen to our young people when they are really in love if we don't give them sympathy and understanding.

MRS. A. B.

While reading "Forbidden to Love Him," a statement regarding a law of the Catholic Church immediately caught my eye. Your story read: "By the law of the Catholic Church a girl's got to be twenty-one before she can be married without her parents' consent." I am a Catholic and

I know this is not true. According to our laws, as long as we have a legal license to marry, and we are of age, which is eighteen years of age for a girl, we are permitted to marry even without our parents' consent.

MISS L. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Miss M. and many other readers who have written in this same objection are confusing the actual laws of the Catholic Church with statements made by characters in the story. When Kathy's mother told her she couldn't get married before twenty-one without her parents' consent, she was partially wrong. She was using Canon law as a final weapon to keep Kathy from marrying Rocky. Canon 1067 in the Code of Canon Law, the official and highest law of the Church, states that marriage can be contracted validly when the boy is sixteen and the girl is fourteen. However, the Canon goes on to warn priests about performing such marriages if there is a danger that the parents of either party might have the union legally annulled—in other words, before the age set by the state in which the couple live.

A "CHARMING" IDEA

I think it would be wonderful if more mothers did as mine has—or at least showed more interest in their young daughters' appearances. My mother was a model before she and Dad were married. Now she is the model mother of four teen-



age daughters and is teaching us everything she can to help us. She has started a little Charm School of her own. Three nights a week she teaches not only her own daughters, but any other girls who care to join. She teaches us how to walk properly, hand and foot co-ordination practices, posture exercises (which most teenagers sorely need), even dancing. She also teaches us etiquette, how to dress correctly, and the proper use of make-up. You can bet her pupils are the most sought-after girls in town!

To top it off, Mother doesn't charge the girls anything for all this. She says her reward is in seeing an unattractive, shy teenager blossom into a charming, poised personality—for which the girls and their parents are always grateful.

MISS L. J.

LET'S ALL BE GOOD AMERICANS

Recently, my husband, a veteran of World War II, went down to the Red Cross to give a pint of his blood as he thought

this was the least he could do for the fellows in Korea. He was shocked to see only one other person waiting, despite the fact that hundreds of people were strolling by outside. To top it off, a helper had failed to show up and one of the nurses had to make the coffee and serve cookies to the few people who did come in. Even though they were giving away tickets to an Eddie Cantor show that week, they fell way below their quota. This happened in one of our largest cities, and other cities are no better.

No wonder the soldiers in Korea feel they are fighting a forgotten war—nobody seems to care about them besides their relatives.

I haven't given blood yet as I've just had a baby, but believe me, I will as soon as I'm able. How many other readers can say the same?

MRS. G. R. S.

A WORD OF WARNING

Recently, two men came into the office where I work and said they were from an advertising company for *TRUE STORY*. They said that if I would give them two dollars, then write a letter telling *TRUE STORY* how much I like their stories, *TRUE STORY* would give me a free subscription and would mail me a check for two dollars. That sounded pretty suspicious to me, so I asked the men for some identification that would prove they were legal representatives of your company. They replied that they hadn't brought their identification cards with them.

I asked them some other questions about *TRUE STORY* and quickly knew their answers were wrong, because I've been reading *TRUE STORY* for several years. Finally, the men realized I didn't trust them and they left.

I am writing you this letter in hopes that maybe if other readers are warned about such crooked people, it will prevent them from being cheated, and they will be able to keep on enjoying *TRUE STORY*.

M. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *TRUE STORY* thanks M.S. for this information and also adds its warning to all of its readers to beware of such frauds.

If you have an opinion about *TRUE STORY*, or an experience you would like to share, or just a gripe, here's the place for it. This is your page: it belongs to you. If we use your letter we will pay \$5.00. None will be returned and the choice of the Editors is final. Plagiarists will be prosecuted to the limit of the law. Send your letters to Ruth Harris, *TRUE STORY Magazine*, P. O. Box 1448, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N. Y.

T
S



When My Soldier Came Home

I loved him so when he went away. But could I love him now—and forever—now that he'd come back to me so different, so unlike himself?

I PRAYED as I waited at the station that clear September day—waiting for Tod to come back to me. I prayed for guidance, to say and do the right thing. But what is "the right thing" to say to the man you're engaged to when he comes home from war? Not laughing, not running to grab you in his arms—not even walking.

How can a soldier walk on one leg? I shuddered at the picture in my mind. My Tod—my handsome, husky, laughing Tod, the boy I'd grown up with, the first boy I'd ever kissed. . . .

The only man I ever wanted to kiss, the only man I wanted to be the father of the children I hoped to have one day. What would happen to all those dreams we had before he went away?

Instinctively, I turned to my dad, who was standing with me at the depot. But he was lost in his own sad thoughts. And Tod's parents were off alone, away from me, their grief-lined faces reflecting all the tragedy of the past six months, since Tod was wounded in action in Korea.

Maybe they resented me; I couldn't be sure. They'd always considered me too frivolous for Tod, too flighty, too gay, too much in love with fun. I guess they'd have wanted me to leave them alone with Tod his first day back.

Oh, but I couldn't! I'd loved him all my life; I just had to be with him.

But where would I find the courage to look past his poor, wounded body? Would I be strong enough to face a future as the wife of an amputee?

I didn't know. Nobody could tell me. Not even Tod. I trembled as the train came around the valley bend.

Another five minutes . . . another three minutes . . . one minute more.

Then I could see him through the dusty train window. He was hobbling down the aisle, turning his face toward us. And I could see, with tear-misted eyes, that Tod was every bit as frightened as I was.

We were all cripples, Tod in his body, but each of us who loved him crippled in our hearts—forever maimed by what had happened to him.

Then he was standing—standing on the warped boards of our old depot. Standing with a cane, true, but standing, straight and tall as ever! He'd written, I remembered, how hard it was at first to learn to manage an artificial leg. But he had learned. He was as stubborn and courageous as ever. That much was the same.

On his left hand he was wearing the little signet pinkie ring I gave him. Funny, he used to wear it on his right . . . I closed my eyes, as the sudden glint of silvery metal hit me. Tod didn't have a right hand any more. There, he had a prong of steel—a hook.

For a second each of us on the platform was silent, lost in our own thoughts. Then Mrs. Chaney surged forward.

"Tod, my son, my boy!" she wept, smothering him in her embrace. I stood staring at them, mother and son. It wasn't real to me yet. I was just an outsider looking in. It couldn't be me, myself, Lucy Remont.

Then, suddenly, some unknown force within me made me move. Mechanically as a robot I held out my arms. I heard my own voice, thin, metallic, stilted.

"Tod—my darling," I said, as he bent to kiss me, as I kissed him back.

And our first kiss, after the long months of waiting, was a cool, graceless kiss, not the soaring, thrilling ecstatic kind we had always shared.

Tod's mother broke the tension. "Come, children," she said, trying to smile. But she never stopped dabbing at her red-rimmed eyes, all the way back to the Chaney farm. And sitting next to Tod, my hand clasped in his one hand, I ached to be alone. To be alone someplace where I could think, where I could sort out the real things from the unreal, where, by

myself, I could find the answer to the tormenting questions that filled my mind.

Did I love Tod still? Could I marry him now—as he was? Could he have children? Could he be a real husband?

I was pale, shaken, sick to my stomach by the time we arrived at Tod's home. My hands were icy cold, the blood inside me feverishly hot.

Tod smiled at me then, a ghostly remnant of his old bright smile.

"Guess I'd scare anybody sick," he tried to joke. "Maybe you'd better go home, Lucy. Let my folks get used to me first. We'll talk tomorrow."

I seized his idea with shamefully grim joy, so withdrawn in my own misery that I hardly saw the despair and pain on his face. At the time I didn't even stop to think how much it must have meant to Tod, how it must have hurt him, to send me away—and see me go so eagerly.

The next morning I had to force myself to face reality. I had to think, step by step, slowly, achingly. Tod and I were childhood sweethearts. I'd loved him as a whole, handsome boy. Could I love what the tragedy of war had left of him?

I must have dressed, had coffee and wandered unknowingly to the Chaney's house. Because, before I was aware, I was there, stepping onto the front porch.

It was the same peaceful white farmhouse it had always been; the old apple tree we used to climb still stood by the side of the house. How we had loved our lives then; swimming, fishing, dancing, climbing. And now, never again—never again. I was so consumed by my thoughts I didn't notice Tod at first, seated in the shadows of the porch. His face was pale, drawn.

"Morning, honey," I said with false brightness. "Don't you kiss your girl hello?"

He kissed me, but it was a duty kiss. It told me, more than any words could ever, ever (Continued on page 18)

"My husband and I trade roles at Christmas!"

"All the rest of the year," Rosalind Russell explains, "he's Frederick Brisson, the producer. But come the holidays, *he's* the star and I'm in charge of production. It's I who actually 'deck the halls with holly.'



"There are packages to be wrapped, then the eggnog to be made, and after washing up, of course, I smooth on Jergens Lotion. It restores beauty to hands *quickly!* See why: Smooth one hand with Jergens . . .



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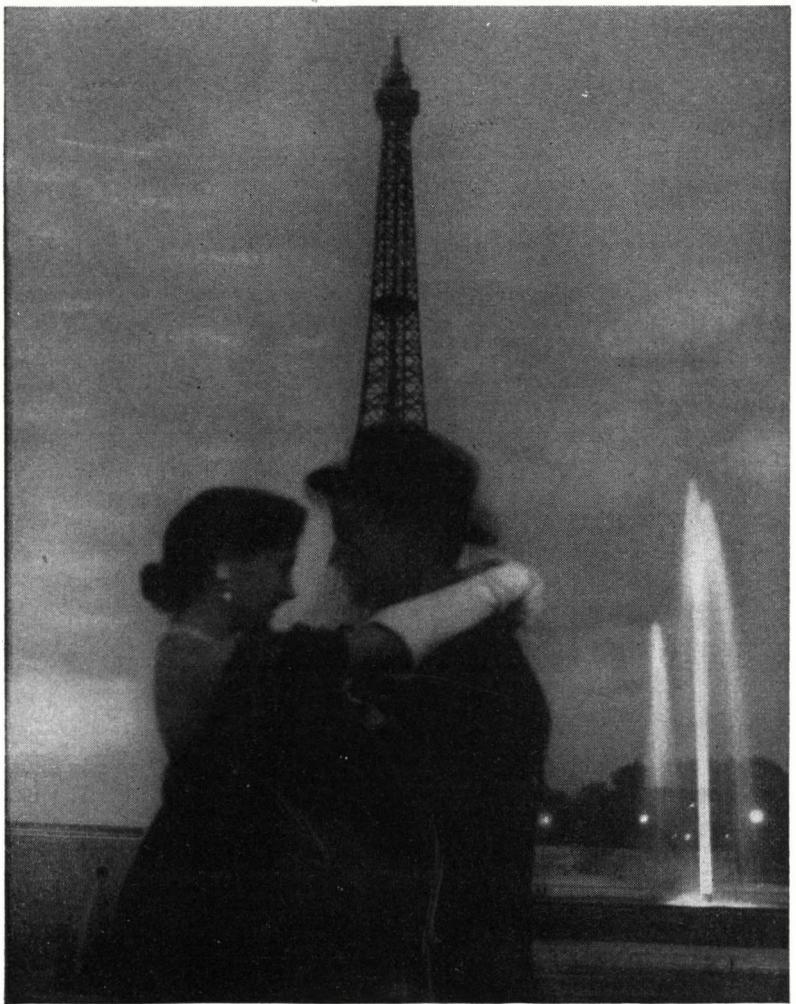
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(Continued from page 16)
say, that Tod was wise, far wiser than I thought. And kinder than I deserved.

If we'd stood another moment there, wrapped in the smothering blanket of our grief, we'd have broken down. I couldn't stand any more. Tod, with his new, uncanny understanding, that must have come from his months of pain, said, "Shall we walk, Lucy?"

Walk. Walk, he said! I stared at him, not really hearing, not comprehending.

He held one arm for me, carefully set his good foot on the steps. To balance the artificial leg he leaned on his cane.

And so we walked, a soldier and his girl. A girl who pretended she was happy, but whose heart was breaking.

A tear traced its way down my cheek. Why did it have to happen this way? Why Tod? Why me? Why did God choose to distort our lives before we'd even lived? How could God take anyone so beautiful, so strong and handsome and sweet as Tod had been, and change him into what he was now?

And the tender kisses we'd shared, the walks in moonlight, the deep ecstasy of our love the night Tod gave me my engagement ring. Why had God taken that away, too?

I didn't know it, but I was sobbing. Sobbing all the fears and heartbreak. And Tod couldn't cry. He was still a man.

He put his arm around me, looked at me with sympathy—as if I were the crippled one, not he.

"Poor kid," he said gently. "It didn't turn out the way you planned, did it?" A bitter smile curled his lips. "Or the way I planned it, either. Funny, lying there in that Army hospital, I thought everything would be okay, just as long as I got home. But nothing's okay, is it, Lucy?"

His eyes were asking me, begging me to say everything was fine, even though he'd come back so wounded, even though he would always be so different.

I wanted to die right there. Such torturing heartbreak was more than I could bear. I'd been too happy and carefree all my life to know how to face this.

"Don't answer now." Tod's voice was dead, toneless. "I can wait."

"That's not fair, Tod," my voice trembled. "I'm not made of stone. Just because I'm too mixed up to think now doesn't give you the right to put words in my mouth."

Tod interrupted. "I'm sorry, Lucy. But I have to settle this. I want you to know that I'm not holding you to any bargain."

I caught my breath. He was offering me my freedom, my own life to live. I could enjoy my youth again—share love with some other man, some whole, uncrippled man. Yes, Tod, yes, I wanted to say. It's better for both of us.

But I didn't say that, I still don't know why. I guess it was pity, or maybe just a sense of duty. It was the time to be honest with Tod, to say I was sorry, that I wasn't brave enough to marry him.

But I was weak, and so I lied. Yes, I lied, almost joking, with quivering lips and a hypocrite's heart.

"Trying to jilt me, Mister? No chance! I'm not letting you go!"

I wanted to cry at the sudden glow in his eyes. But I was past all emotion. When our lips met they were stiff, reserved, still afraid to meet honestly.

"Dad doesn't know I'm here, Tod," I whispered. "I'd better go home." But I only wanted to escape then, to lock myself in my room, to cry my heart out.

That night I had the first of the horrible nightmares. I dreamed that Tod and I were in church, being married. Tod kept

dropping my wedding ring from his shiny hook; no matter how he tried, he couldn't put the ring on my finger. I'd awake, night after night, screaming in horror, choking back the sound so Dad wouldn't hear.

But one night Dad did hear. I was sobbing helplessly when he came into my room. He sat down on the side of my bed, brushing his hand softly over my hair. I could see the tears shiny in his eyes.

"I wish your mother were alive to help you, Lucy," he said. "She'd know what to do. All I can do, honey, is pray you'll find the right way yourself. You've enough of your mother in you to be wise, honey. Just be sure, that's all. Try to be sure."

EVEN MY friends brought me little comfort. One day I went shopping with Tiny and Bubbles, my best girl friends. It was just the usual gay hen party; I tried to talk naturally about Tod, my wedding plans, our home-to-be. The talk got sort of intimate. We were in the lingerie department at Blenheim's, looking at bridal nighties and negligees. I was admiring a powder-blue set, remembering how Tod always loved me best in blue.

Bubbles was touching the delicate lace, thinking, her question poised on the tip of her tongue. I knew what it was before she said it.

"D'you think Tod—" she paused, half-embarrassed, half-scared, "I mean, Lucy—can you kiss him—let him make love to you?" She flushed with red shame, as a raw nerve deep within me seemed to twitch in pain at the probing question. I wanted to run away. It was the question I'd been asking myself lately—the problem I'd been refusing to face.

I bit my lips, swayed in sudden dizziness. Then, praise the Lord, Tiny broke the tension. In shocked condemnation, she snapped, "Bubbles, you should be ashamed, asking a question like that!" But even she had an eager tilt to her head.

"Why, you inquisitive little girl!" I mocked. "Get your own book about the birds and bees!" Both girls blushed furiously at the sarcasm. Then I added, "Tod will always be more of a man than anyone in this town!"

How desperately I was trying to convince not only the girls, but myself, of that! Did I really believe Tod could be a husband? According to my standards, no. Like lots of young people, I'd confused love with physical beauty, the Hollywood movie kind, in technicolor. The heroine was always gorgeous, the hero always too utterly virile and handsome. Nothing in my life had prepared me for a hero with half the proper number of hands and feet.

And so my wedding day, looming closer and closer, became a day of darkness instead of bright hope. I couldn't tell that to Tod. I couldn't add my burdens to his.

Shortly before our wedding day, Tod and I went to see Pastor Denby for our final instructions. I was scarcely conscious of Tod walking beside me, or of my arm tucked into his until I looked up at him.

My feet felt heavy as lead as we went into Pastor Denby's study. He greeted us warmly; he'd baptized us both, and knew every minute of our lives. But how I felt now he must never know.

He seated us before his great oak desk before he spoke. "You are two brave young people, Tod and Lucy. I admire you. I respect the courage you have shown in your tragedy. Others may think your future is doomed by Tod's handicaps; I do not. The fact that your love endured war and horror and great physical pain proves to me that your marriage will be happy. I am proud of you, children."

I felt like a hypocrite—a guilty criminal who had been mistakenly set free. I had succeeded too well, pretending I was



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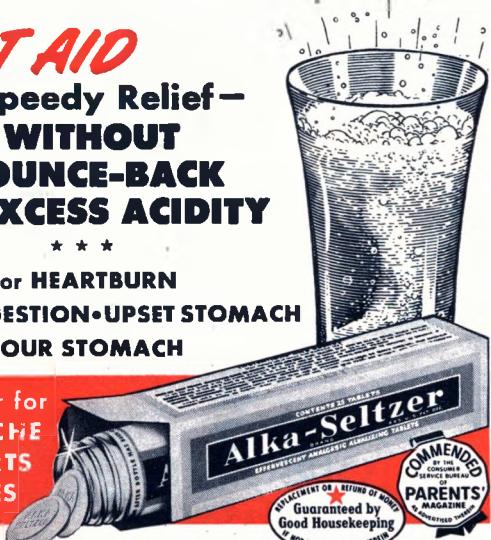
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marrying Tod for love alone—not pity, not shame at breaking a promise to a cripple. Selfishly I'd been considering only my own noble attitudes—I'd been martyr to very shallow ideals. And, I had been false not only to Tod, but before God. I felt so terribly ashamed!

From a great distance the gentle voice of the pastor continued . . . "Marriage, my dear young people, is an honest partnership of love, love freely given and freely accepted. There must be no reservations and no secrets. . . . Every word pierced my heart like a sword. I had been emotionally incapable of loving a crippled man because I was shallow and immature. But I hadn't wanted it that way; I couldn't help it. The shock of Tod's wounds was too great. I had no practice being brave.

" . . . there must be complete honesty between you. . . ." The words echoed through the pastor's booklined study and through my mind. Pastor Denby seemed to be waiting for an answer. Tod, with a tiny questioning smile playing over his lips, appeared to be waiting, too. He looked so strong and confident and yet so like a little boy; proud and yet pleading . . . so, yes, so in love with me. I could see myself as I was, and I hated the picture. I didn't want to feel that way. I wanted to love Tod the way Pastor Denby said. And I knew then that I was willing to try. That was the best I could do. I tucked my hand under Tod's arm and squeezed. "No doubts and no fears, Pastor." This time it was Lucy Remton, the woman speaking, not Lucy Remton, the "most frivolous girl in high school."

THE CHURCH organ throbbed softly. The small impatient sounds of waiting people suddenly stopped. The doors swung wide and the opening chords of the wedding march thundered forth. As I began the long slow procession to the altar I was walking away from my childhood. I was entering a new life. I was here not because of circumstances or fate. I was here because it was right that I should be. But for one crazy moment I felt completely alone, friendless and abandoned. The air grew hot and stale and the walls and ceilings pressed down on me. I felt trapped, surrounded, smothered. I was going to faint—to run madly away . . .

Tod. I saw his face as if from a great distance. Tod. His eyes were looking into mine. His lips were curved in a proud, tender smile. I could see no one else but Tod. He was a beacon of hope, a haven from the storm, someone to cling to. Prayers raced through my spinning brain . . . Tod, help me . . . I need someone. Oh dear God, please let everything be all right for Tod and me—the wedding ring—all those nightmares about the wedding ring . . .

But there was no doubt on Tod's face. He held the delicate little hand expertly in the curved steel of his artificial hand. He slipped it on my finger, easily, softly. Then he smiled and whispered, "I promised myself that I'd never get married until I could do that, honey, so I practiced an awful lot."

Those words, the way he spoke them, lifted every burden from my shoulders. This was love—this was real love, not the make-believe storybook kind. This was the kind of love that faced and conquered hardships instead of weeping and doing nothing. My heart was singing a happy song because I knew without doubt I would gain much, much more with Tod than I would ever give up. "I love you, Tod, oh, I love you," I whispered back.

An astonished murmur arose from the wedding guests at this most unusual ceremony. Then the murmur grew louder because we were kissing and it wasn't even time.

THE END

I AM AN UNWED FATHER

(Continued from page 10)

until Miss Arnold stopped me in the hall with that shattering statement, "You're the father of a baby girl."

So I sat opposite Miss Arnold in the coffee shop now, and these memories of Ida flashed through my mind. I knew that I might be the father of her child.

"Do you expect me to marry her?"

"Do you love her?"

"No," I said. "I never could love her, and I think she feels the same."

"Then I certainly don't expect you to marry her. Our concern now is primarily with the child."

"What do you expect me to do?"

"If it is your child, we expect you to give it financial support. If you refuse, we can go to court and have you legally judged the father and forced to pay."

"But there must have been other men with Ida besides me!" I burst out.

BEFORE the amusement park, yes, but not afterwards. That's what she says, and I believe her."

"You're awful quick to believe anything she says," I remarked bitterly.

"I know what kind of a girl Ida is. She grew up in poverty, and when she got her first job and had money in her pocket, she just went a little wild. She isn't a bad girl, just ignorant. The moment she knew she was pregnant, she went all to pieces with fear and remorse. She almost committed suicide."

As Miss Arnold talked, I began to see Ida in a new light, and my own feeling of guilt grew stronger and stronger. After all, Ida could have come directly to me and blackmailed money out of me. But instead she faced the whole thing alone.

"It looks like I'm in a spot," I said.

She smiled at me, a little sadly, and said, "Your child is in a spot."

"Okay, make the arrangements, and I'll take the blood test."

I had a wild hope that perhaps the tests would prove that my blood type was different from the baby's and that I couldn't have been the father—a wild hope but a futile one. Miss Arnold made the appointment at the hospital for me and the following week I let them take my blood for analysis. My blood and the baby's were identical.

I was walking slowly and heavily out of the hospital laboratory when I heard a familiar voice at my side. I looked down to see Miss Arnold smiling gently at me.

"I see you heard the news," she said.

"I heard. I'm ready to accept it."

"Good boy," she said, and patted my arm. Strangely, this simple word of praise made me feel warm and good inside. "How would you like to see your baby?"

I just looked at her, stunned. When I didn't answer, she added. "She's in the nursery upstairs."

I was struck absolutely dumb, and before I could reply Miss Arnold led me to a large glass window that looked in upon the nursery. At her signal a masked nurse moved among the bassinets that lined the wall, selected one and wheeled it up to the window, and I looked down upon my daughter for the first time. My throat went dry, and I blinked hard as I looked at that tiny face.

"Do you think she looks like me?" I finally managed to say.

"I think she does."

"I would have known her. In a thousand babies I would have known that this was my daughter." We stood there gazing at the baby for a long time in silence, and then I said, "What happens to her?"

"The mother will return to our city maternity shelter, where we've been tak-

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the key to the city*

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ing care of her the last three months, and the baby will be placed in a boarding home pending adoption."

"Boarding home. Adoption!" I gasped. "Doesn't the mother want her?" Miss Arnold shook her head.

"What's the matter with her?" I cried. "Where's her mother instinct?"

Miss Arnold turned and looked me straight in the eyes and said slowly, "The mother instinct is sometimes missing. Just as sometimes the father instinct is missing."

I dropped my eyes. The nurse wheeled my daughter back against the wall with the other babies, and we left the hospital.

I had never met a woman just like Miss Arnold, so patient and wise and understanding. I became her friend just as Ida had, and from her I learned about the work of the Bureau of Child Welfare.

Our city, and every major city in the country, spends millions of dollars every year to take care of unwed mothers and their babies. Each city has a number of private charities that help, but there are always hundreds of girls who must have public charity. To get help, all a girl has to do is come to the Bureau and tell them she's pregnant and hasn't got enough money to help herself. A case worker, like Miss Arnold, is then assigned to her, and she takes care of everything from then on. This case worker tries to find out the identity of the father, contacts him, arranges about financial assistance. But the pregnant girl is cared for whether she reveals the identity of the father or not. If she is living at home, she receives a weekly money grant. If she has no family she's sent to a maternity shelter.

THE MATERNITY shelters are not run by the city, but receive pay for each girl the Bureau sends them. Miss Arnold told me that in our city there were two Catholic, two Protestant and one Jewish maternity shelter and that they cared for the girls during the last three months of their pregnancy.

When it is time for the baby to be delivered, the girl is taken to a city hospital. After the delivery, she returns to the shelter for six weeks of post-natal care. Some mothers give their babies up at the hospital and never see them at all; others bring their infants back to the shelter with them. If at the end of the period of post-natal care, the mother decides she no longer wants to keep her child, it is put up for adoption through either a public or private agency. If she wants the child but can't afford to care for it at the moment, the child is placed in one of the boarding homes approved by the Bureau and is cared for there until the mother is ready to take it back. The Bureau pays for this care, but attempts to get help from both the father and the mother.

What impressed me most was the Bureau's concern that these babies not be branded with the sin of the parents. There is no record of illegitimate birth entered upon the birth certificate. Even if the mother won't give the father's real name, she can make up an imaginary name and the authorities willingly enter it on the certificate. If the mother tells the authorities the father's real name, it is not entered upon the certificate without his permission unless he has been taken to court and officially adjudicated the father and legally required to support the child. In this respect, the fathers of these children fall into the following categories: *alleged*—only the mother's word that he is the father; *putative*—the facts seem to indicate he is the father; *acknowledged*—he admits he is the father; and *adjudicated*—the General Sessions or Surrogate's Court decrees he is the father. A man may be any one or all of these at various

times in relation to the same child. As for myself, I had already been an *alleged, putative, and acknowledged* father. Since I had acknowledged that the child was mine, my name would be entered on the birth certificate as the father. I would be required to contribute to her support until she was eighteen years old, whether Ida kept the child or it was placed in a public boarding home. Only if she was adopted was I relieved of responsibility.

These are the things Miss Arnold told me about the Bureau, but to me there was only one real fact in that moment—I was a father—I!

And then I thought once more of Mom. I couldn't delay any longer telling her the truth, no matter how much it would hurt her. I decided to tell her that same evening, and I asked Miss Arnold to come out to the house. I wanted Miss Arnold there, so we could all discuss what was to be done.

So that night I sat down and told her the entire story right from the beginning. At first I was all clammy with shame for the blow I had to deal her, but when I told her I'd seen my daughter, and how she'd looked, I heard a note of pride creeping into my voice. When I finished, there were tears in Mom's eyes, and I jumped up and ran to put my arms around her. "Mom—Mom," I cried. "I'd give anything if only—"

"I'm not ashamed, son. I'm proud of you."

"Proud!" I exploded. "Why?"

"Because you're not running away from your problem. You're facing it honestly—like a man. That's why I'm proud of you!"

I felt a good deal better after she said that, though the full weight of guilt was by no means lifted. I suppose it never would be for the rest of my life. Mom and I talked seriously about the problem and had reached our decision when the door bell rang and I went to let in Miss Arnold. I introduced her and the three of us talked for a minute before Mom told her what we wanted to do.

"My son has never shirked his share of the blame," Mom said. "And we want to adopt the child."

MISS ARNOLD looked at Mom unbelievingly for a moment, then looked at me and back at Mom. "You—you do?" she said finally.

"The girl doesn't want the child, I understand," Mom said.

"That's right," Miss Arnold replied.

"Then we must take her. She's ours and we can't let her go to strangers."

Miss Arnold frowned. "You'll have to get Ida's permission first. The law recognizes the 'mother's right' as paramount, and if she prefers to put it out for general adoption instead of giving it to you, she may do so."

"Can't you talk to her?" I said.

"I think I can. But then you'll have to be investigated by the Surrogate's Court to determine whether this is a fit home for the child."

"I'm prepared," Mother said quietly.

It all worked out the way we hoped it would. Ida agreed to the adoption and the investigators approved our home. My daughter's original birth certificate was sealed by court order, and in its place was issued a "certification of birth" which doesn't give the statistics that reveal she was illegitimate.

I know there are big problems Mom and I have to face, but we don't expect any easy solutions. We're doing what we think is right and what our hearts want.

As Mom said, "She's our blood, Ed. We must care for our own, no matter what."

THE END

Dial Soap keeps complexions clearer by keeping skin cleaner!



Dial's AT-7 (Hexachlorophene) removes blemish-spreading bacteria that other soaps leave on skin.

The cleaner your skin, the better your complexion.

And mild, fragrant Dial with AT-7 gets your skin cleaner and clearer than any other kind of soap.

It's as simple as that. Of course Dial's bland *beauty-cream* lather gently removes dirt and make-up, giving you scrupulous cleanliness to overcome clogged pores and blackheads. But Dial does far more!

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10 plastic clothespins in assorted colors—plus full-size package of **SATINA**—all for one-third less than regular price! Offer made to introduce you to Speed-Ironing with **SATINA** in your starch. Mail coupon with 10¢ to: **SATINA**, Dept. W, Box 560, New York 46, N.Y.

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Runaway Mother

I was abandoning my children—I, who loved them so—because they'd be better off without me

you. Watch Teddy and Jackie and tell Daddy I may not be back for supper. Tell him supper's all ready. Linda, you're Mother's big girl—you can feed the baby . . ."

I heard my voice drone on with these ordinary household details—while in me, my heart was crying: "I'm deserting you, my darlings! I love you—I love you—but I won't murder the baby in me!"

Then I hurried into the hall, put on my hat and coat. I had to hurry; every gasping breath cried: "Hurry—hurry—before your courage fails!" But there was yet another hurdle; Jackie was swinging on the gate. He jumped to the ground and grabbed my hand. "Take me with you, Mom?"

I caught his freckled face between my fingers and I kissed him. "No, pet, not today. Go ask Linda for a cookie." Jackie laughed and skipped away.

Then Linda stood in the doorway. "You'll come back soon as you can, won't you, Mommy?" I waved and nodded at her; I couldn't speak. Let Ted tell them, I thought, let him explain—if he can.

I forced my feet to move toward the bus stop. I'd taken only enough household money to pay for a one-way ticket to Chicago. I could lose myself there, find a job somehow, and save enough money to care for my child. I'd be able to work until the last months of my pregnancy; except for a short period of morning sickness, I was always in glowing health while I carried my babies.

My babies—my babies . . . How would they get along without me?

What was Linda doing? Was Teddy awake? Would dinner be fit to eat? What would Ted tell them? That—they had no mother? I couldn't go on. But there was the child within me. The wind in the tree tops seemed to cry: murder, murder!

I took a few more steps and turned a corner. Then, I stopped once more. A child was crying somewhere, and in the tumult of heart and mind, I believed it was Teddy. I looked around. I was in front of the orphanage and it was growing dark. Then I saw them: two children, a girl about Linda's age, and a little boy, like my Teddy. She was begging, "Baby, don't cry—please don't cry! If you do, they won't let me take care of you any more."

I leaned over the fence, I couldn't help it. "What's the matter?" I asked. The girl stared at me, her eyes too old and sad for her years.

"I can take care of him myself," she said, childishly proud. "Tommy's new at the Home, and he cries a lot for his mother. I cried a lot, too, when I first came here. But now I'm big and I don't any more."

THIS MONTH'S

SHORT SHORT

TRUE STORY

Oh, the darlings, the precious little ones! Through the mist of tears, I saw my Teddy, and Linda holding him. They were alone now, too. Would they cry a lot, too?

But it wasn't Teddy before me, or Linda. These two were real orphans, deprived of their mothers by death. How solemn the little girl was. And so pitifully young to know tragedy—to lose her childhood.

So would Linda, my first-born, be deprived of all the God-sent pleasures of childhood. And Teddy and Jackie would cry in the night for me . . . and Bob . . .

The little girl was watching me, scanning each changing expression of my face.

"Are you somebody's mother?" she asked suddenly. "Is that why you are so sad? I—I don't remember my mother very much, but I have a picture of her. She's pretty—like you."

I couldn't stand any more. "Oh, little girl!" I whispered. "Thank you for telling me—for making me see . . ."

"You're welcome," she said politely, almost as if she understood everything.

Then I was running again, down the street toward home. I wasn't going to leave my children, no matter what. So long as I lived, so long as they needed me, I had no right to deprive my children of a mother. Only God had that right, by death, to separate mother from child. That's what the little orphan girl taught me.

My heart was pounding wildly as I raced to the house. I was anxious to see the children—and Ted!

And there they all were, running to me, laughing and kissing me. I knelt in thanks, my lips forming a silent prayer of gratitude, and I gathered them all close to me.

And then, I saw Ted watching us, his face white and haggard, his eyes asking the dreaded question—fearing the answer.

"No, Ted," I said. "I didn't do it."

I braced myself then for his anger. But instead, his shoulders sagged in relief, and his arms came about me. And all the dammed-up tension, all the fears and misery welled up into us. We clung to each other, drowning in our own flood of tears.

"Thank God—oh, thank God," Ted kept repeating brokenly. "I almost lost you . . . I almost killed you—and our baby."

I held him close, felt his tension go.

"Forgive me, darling," he shuddered. "I—I kept seeing you on an operating table—and that doctor—he was killing you . . ."

"Ted, Ted," I cried. "Don't."

He pulled me closer in his arms. I raised my eyes to his dear face. "I wasn't going to have the abortion anyway," I told him. "I was running away. I was going to have the baby, and leave the others with you."

"You were leaving us," he whispered in disbelief. "You didn't even tell me."

"No," I said. "I didn't think. But you see I came back. I know you and I can work things out now. We've been married too long not to be able to talk it over. And I love you all too much to leave you."

We went in together then, hand in hand, to have dinner with our children. We still hadn't solved our problem of money and the expense of another baby.

But we hadn't broken our home, either. We hadn't shaken our children's faith in us. And most of all, we hadn't committed the greatest sin of all—murder.

How many of you have come to the point where you think you cannot turn back, when you are both hurt, and angry and unwilling to give in? If you do not stop then, to talk together, to understand and try again, you may find all those wonderful years you've had are wasted, sacrificed to a blind moment of anger.

Talking things over quietly, calmly, you'll solve every problem, in due time. That's what we plan to do.

We sat down, then. I nodded to Ted, and he began to say Grace. "We thank Thee, God . . ."

THE END

LEWYT

WORLD'S
MOST MODERN
VACUUM CLEANER

NO DUST BAG TO EMPTY!



IT'S POWERFUL

FEEL THAT SUCTION!



NO LEAKING DUST

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- **No muss! No fuss!** You never see or touch dirt! Simply toss out Lewyt's extra-big paper "Speed Sak" a few times a year!
- **No whining roar!** Peripheral-Silencer hushes Lewyt to a gentle hum! It's by far the quietest cleaner of all!
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- **Cleans in 32-foot radius** from one outlet! Swivels from center of room for wall-to-wall cleaning! So light, compact!
- **Does every cleaning job!** Sweeps bare floors; dusts blinds; renews upholstery; sprays paint, wax; de-moths!
- **Backed by written Guarantee** and 64 years' precision manufacturing! Video-Pak avoids radio-TV interference!
- **Complete with all attachments!** No extras to buy! No. 80 Carpet Nozzle; Dusting Brush; Crevice Tool; Floor-Wall Brush; Upholstery Nozzle; Power Sprayer; Moth Snuffocator!
- **Greatest dollar-value!** No other cleaner has so many features and costs so little! See the Lewyt today! Your nearest dealer is under "vacuum cleaners" in your phone book!



Stop at this Display for just 10 seconds, let your dealer show you the revolutionary advantages of the Lewyt Vacuum Cleaner! Discover how to cut house-cleaning time in half!

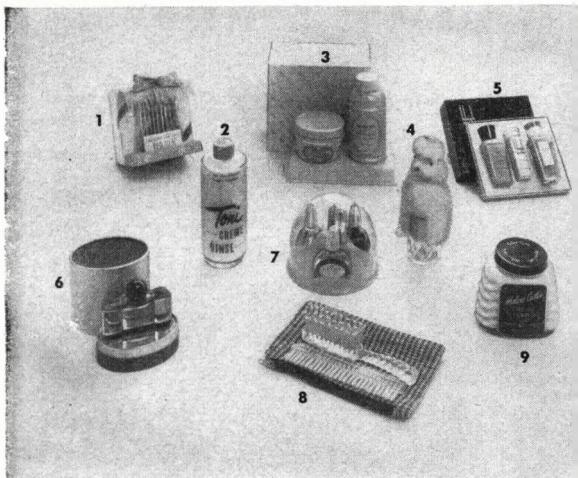
FREE! Write for colorful 16-page booklet "Home Cleaning Made Easy"!

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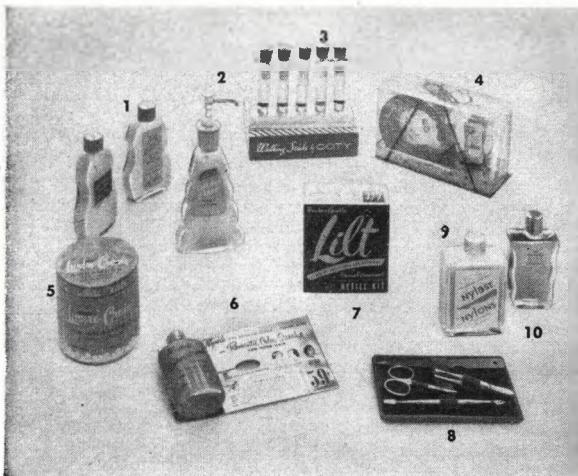
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Presents

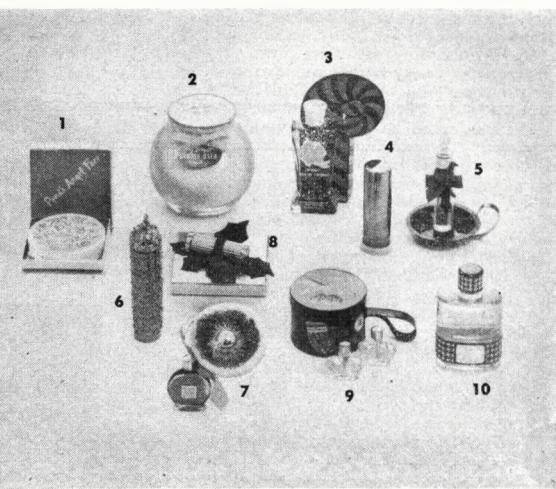
WITH A BEAUTIFUL FUTURE



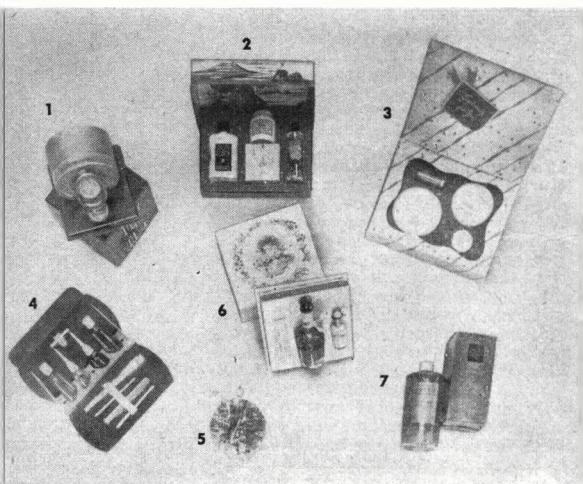
1. Lenthaler toilet water and bath powder, \$2.75. 2. Toni Creme rinse, large size, \$1. 3. Milkmaid Emulsion and Cleansing Milk set, \$3.75. 4. Poodle perched atop a cylinder of Richard Hudnut's Frozen Fragrance cologne stick, \$1.90. 5. Angelique Cologne Wardrobe—trio of liquid, stick and lotion cologne in Black Satin, White Satin or Gold Satin, \$3. 6. Djer-Kiss perfume by Kerkoff, \$1.50. 7. Cutex manicure set with lipstick, \$1.50. 8. Jewelite kit with hair brush, clothes brush and comb, \$2.50 (tax on case). 9. Helene Curtis Creme shampoo, \$1.19 (no tax).



1. Lady Wildroot shampoo, 59¢ (no tax), and Lady Wildroot cream hair dressing, \$1. 2. Cashmere Bouquet hand lotion with pump dispenser, 49¢. 3. Coty's Walking Sticks package of five toilet waters, \$3.95. 4. April Showers toilet water and dusting powder by Cheramy, \$2.35. 5. Large size Lustre-Creme shampoo, \$2. (no tax). 6. Colorstreak for the hair by Nestle-LeMure, 59¢. 7. Lilt home permanent refill kit with "Naturalizer," \$1.25. 8. La Cross Beauty Time manicure set, \$3.50 (plus 10% Federal tax). 9. Nylast, to protect and wash hosiery, 98¢ (no tax). 10. Magie toilet water by Lancome, \$4.



1. Pond's Angel Face compact in gift box, \$1.* 2. Gay Bouquet bubble bath by Wrisley, \$1. 3. Harriet Hubbard Ayer's Custom Cologne in candy cane package, \$1. 4. Hind's Handi-Stick, hand cream, 79¢. 5. Tussy candlestick with $\frac{1}{2}$ dram Midnight or Optimiste perfume, \$1. 6. Aquamarine Solid Mist by Revlon in Frozen Jewel package, \$1.25. 7. Bourjois' Evening in Paris perfume Christmas tree ball, \$1. 8. Christmas Red lipstick by Dermetics in gold kidskin holly leaf, \$1. 9. Prince Matchabelli's Parisian Hat Box with Beloved and Crown Jewel perfumes, \$2.50. 10. Diorama toilet water by Christian Dior, \$5.



1. Nosegay cologne and dusting powder bath set by Dorothy Gray, \$4. 2. Woodbury and Jergen's package "For Beauty on the Go," \$1.10. 3. "Especially for You" gift box of Max Factor's make-up, \$4.40. 4. Chen Yu complete manicure set, \$3.75. 5. April Showers dusting powder by Cheramy, gift-wrapped with cellophane and ribbon, \$1.10. 6. Three Loves set by Shulton, Friendship's Garden Liquid Petals cream perfume, purse stick cologne and toilet water, \$3.50. 7. Breck shampoo in Christmas gift box, three types—dry, normal or oily—16 oz., \$1.75 (no tax).

By Harriet Segman

*All prices, unless otherwise mentioned, subject to 20% Federal tax.

Stays Bright!
Stays Moist!
Stays On!



New! **Cashmere Bouquet**
French Type

NON-SMEAR LIPSTICK

Now your lips can be more exciting, more inviting than ever...and stay that way all day long! Just smooth on the new Cashmere Bouquet French-Type Non-Smear Lipstick

and see how the color flows on your lips so easily, so evenly, so luscious-bright! And here's the beauty-miracle: it won't smear, it won't dry, and it *won't come off!*

New Cashmere Bouquet is the French-Type Non-Smear Lipstick you can use with *confidence* . . . for lips that call for kisses . . . for lips that stay soft and creamy-smooth . . . for lips that *won't tell secrets!*



Contains
"Lip-caressing" Lanolin!

6 Fashion-Right Shades

Just 39¢

For Caressable Hands
Use **Cashmere Bouquet**
HAND LOTION



Absorbs like a lotion—
Softens like a cream,
Makes even
"Sandpaper Hands"
Feel Caressable
in 10 Seconds!



Be sure it's
HAWAIIAN-
Be sure it's
DOLE

Start the day bright with sunny, sparkling
DOLE Pineapple Juice . . . nothing like
it this side of Hawaii!

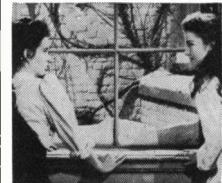
Festive finish to Christmas dinner —
Pineapple Mince Pie! Spread juicy DOLE
crisp-cut Crushed over the mincemeat,
bake as usual, and serve fragrantly hot.
M-M-M-M-Merry Christmas!

SURFING AT WAIKIKI, AS PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANTON BRUEHL



TRUE STORY GOES TO THE MOVIES

Title: **O. HENRY'S FULL HOUSE**



Stars:

Fred Allen
Anne Baxter
Jeanne Crain
Farley Granger
Charles Laughton

Story: Five of O. Henry's familiar short stories comprise one full-length movie.

Facts: Every one of these stories is separate. Writer John Steinbeck pulls the whole piece together with narration. The stories, each with the O. Henry twist, are in turn funny, sad and satiric. The whole family will like this one.

Title: **EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS**

Stars: **Marge and Gower Champion**

Story: A married dance team almost splits up when their baby keeps the wife off the stage for several years.

Facts: Here is a gay, charming Technicolor musical you'll love. In real life Marge and Gower Champion have been married five years. They grew up in show business; they love to garden, own a small, unpretentious home.

Title: **SOMEBODY LOVES ME**

Stars:

Betty Hutton
Ralph Meeker



Story: The rise to fame of a singer who loves her husband more than her career.

Facts: This is based on a true story about two people still alive—Blossom Seeley and Benny Fields. Betty Hutton had a serious throat operation just before the movie began, and her voice sounds different.

Title: **WILLIE AND JOE BACK AT THE FRONT**

Stars: **Tom Ewell, Harvey Lembeck**

Story: Those crazy characters created by Bill Mauldin get sent to Korea and by sheer accident uncover a spy ring while on leave in Tokyo.

Facts: You and your family won't want to miss the hilarious sequel to "Willie and Joe Up Front." The entire movie company went to Tokyo to make this. The extras in the picture are native Japanese. Tom Ewell is excellent.

Oh! The **WONDERFUL** things

Jell-O Puddings and Pie Fillings can do...

to keep Christmas angels healthy...



to make Mom's Christmas merrier...



to please the tree-trimmers



Snowtime of the year, kids' appetites start popping. So, quick as Saint Nick, fix up dark, handsome dishes of nourishing Jell-O **Chocolate** Pudding and Pie Filling. It's made with an exclusive blend of world-famous Walter Baker Chocolate—that's why it tastes so fine. And—with a plate of cookies—it's "Oh my, good-bye" to the whole spread.

Make yourself a present! Spend less time in the kitchen by using Jell-O **Vanilla** Pudding and Pie Filling. This smooth and luscious beauty is a whiz to make. You just add milk—takes about 5 minutes to cook. Then when cool, layer with cranberry sauce and there you are! There everybody else is, too—"ohhing," "aahhing" and eating it all up!

While your family puts the finishing touches on the tree, decorate the table with Jell-O **Butterscotch** Pudding and Pie Filling. It will taste real, wholesome, homemade—without the work of homemade. To top it off, slip in banana slices and slivers of cherry. Then serve and watch those tired faces beam again!

JELL-O Puddings & Pie Fillings

NOW 5 FLAVORS—VANILLA, CHOCOLATE, BUTTERSCOTCH, LEMON, COCONUT CREAM



JOY IN A BOTTLE BEATS ANYTHING IN A BOX

for dishwashing magic!

YES—BECAUSE IT'S LIQUID...

JOY AND ONLY **JOY** OFFERS ALL
THESE DISHWASHING ADVANTAGES!
BEATS ANYTHING IN A BOX—
ANY SOAP OR DETERGENT!

COSTS LESS TO USE! THRIFTY
MEASURING CAP STOPS WASTE!

Joy's thrifty cap is a money-saving marvel. With it you can easily measure the right amount to use every time. There's no guesswork—no sloppy spilling—no waste as when you pour from a box. And in its new, bigger bottle, Joy is far more economical.

AS EASY TO USE AS HAND LOTION
ALREADY DISSOLVED—INSTANT SUDS

Joy's compact bottle takes so little space on shelf or sink. Needn't be hidden away like bulky boxes. And because Joy's already dissolved, it makes more suds faster than anything in a box. Never leaves undissolved particles to streak glasses.

EXCLUSIVE INGREDIENT FOR MORE
GREASE-CUTTING POWER!

Only Joy has it! Yes, Joy contains an exclusive ingredient which steps up its grease-cutting power amazingly. Measure for measure, Joy has more grease-cutting power than any box of soap—any box of detergent powders. Washes dishes the fastest way possible.

NEW IMPROVED **JOY**
NOW EXTRA-MILD...
KINDER TO HANDS THAN
EVER BEFORE!





Good Will Toward All Men

By Francis Carr Stifler, D.D., Secretary, American Bible Society

It's "Merry Christmas" in New York and London and Paris and Rio and Stockholm and wherever the Christian tradition has gone. But Christmas is wider than Christendom. The Moslem world honors Jesus, the Son of Mary, too. There are more kinds of Christmases celebrated in the great Mohammedan city of Istanbul than perhaps anywhere else on earth. The Roman Catholic, the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian, the Bulgarian, the Protestant—and the Moslems tolerate them all.

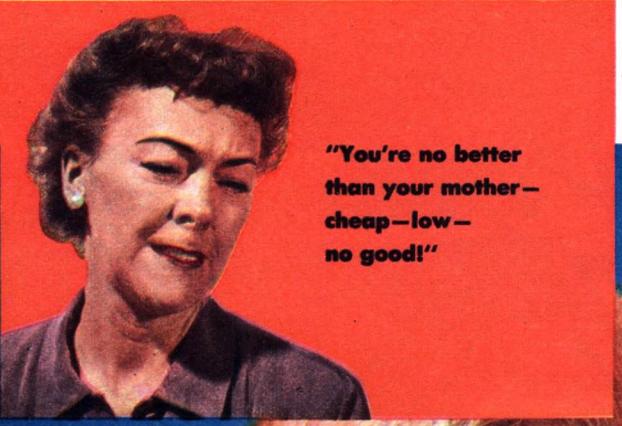
Along the Ginza, the Broadway of Tokyo, store windows will be decorated this month with pictures of the manger scene showing Mary and Joseph and the Babe as typically slant-eyed Orientals.

Was Jesus an Oriental? Well, He was certainly not an American. The honest fact is that there is something universal about Jesus which lends meaning to His birthday wherever the story is told, and the story is told wherever the Bible has gone. And that is almost everywhere, for the Bible, like no other book, is the world's Book. And there is something about the song of the Christmas Angels, "good will toward men," that calls to the best in human beings everywhere.

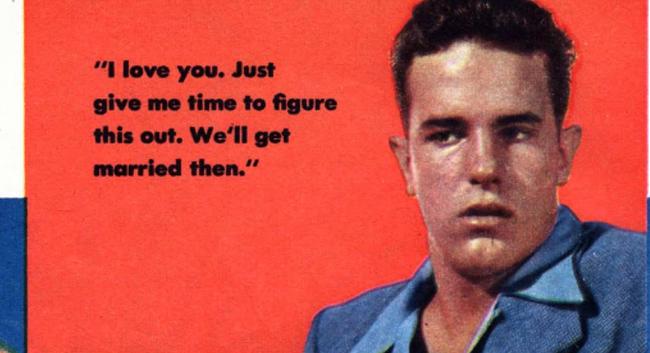
Every night this year, and last year and the year before that, from a thousand to three thousand people have been risking their lives and jeopardizing the futures of their families by escaping under the Iron Curtain to begin life again in that part of the world where a measure of good will is found.

Before the Christmas angels came with their message of good will, another "iron curtain" existed: the poor man was despised for his poverty; the criminal was treated like a beast; the insane were objects of scorn; women were regarded as chattels; primitive tribes were enslaved; old people were left to die; and children put to hard labor.

For the last 1900 years, the spread of the spirit of good will has been gradually changing those things. This spirit, which bursts upon the world for one day each December with a special glory, is an unconquerable power in the world. It is the only power that can put an end to war and establish a lasting peace. It is a power that grows as more men and women seek to make every day like Christmas—a day when good will controls their motives and they "overcome evil with good" as the Bible so beautifully puts it.



**"You're no better
than your mother—
cheap—low—
no good!"**



**"I love you. Just
give me time to figure
this out. We'll get
married then."**



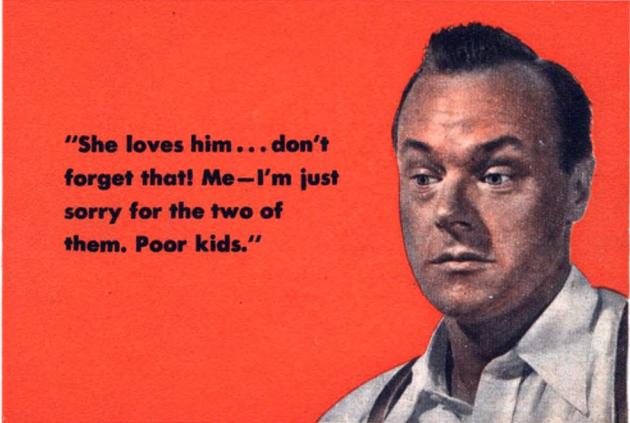
**"Stop it! Oh, can't you all
stop hounding me? I
can't stand any more!"**



**PRIZE
STORY**



**"You'll never marry
my son! And your baby
must never be born!
We'll see to that!"**



**"She loves him . . . don't
forget that! Me—I'm just
sorry for the two of
them. Poor kids."**

DOUBLE-LENGTH

story of a tormented love

NO GOOD GIRL

WOULD DO WHAT I DID

WHEN I look back across the tangled years of my life, my first memory is of happiness, of sea gulls winging across a high, blue sky. Once again I am Cathy Horton, six years old, running with the wind in my hair on a golden beach. I can still hear, out of the past, my own voice and the joyous, high-pitched cries of my five brothers and sisters as we ran, screaming among the dunes, our cries and those of the wheeling gulls one and the same in the bright air. Our skins were burned almost black and our heads sun-bleached almost white. We were happy with the happiness of freedom and sun and blue sea and salt air.

I still hear my father's great bellow across the water, "Ahoy there, kids!"

There he'd be standing, spread-legged, in his dirty, peeling boat, a huge man with a laughing red face framed in chunks of crisp, white hair. We children stood, leaping with impatience on the weathered boards, waiting to see what sea treasures Pop had brought home for us from his fish pots. There was always something, razor clams, a starfish or a horse-shoe crab. We'd grab them and dart off like sand-fleas, back to the gray, unpainted shack that was our home. We never knew what a poor place it was because we loved it. Mom was there, always with a baby at her breast, always laughing with a shining joy in her eyes that I

have never seen since in the eyes of anyone else.

How I loved them—my pretty young mother and the joyous, old man who was my father. We young ones saw nothing odd in the way we lived on our little island in the mouth of Long Island Sound. Nor did we question the presence of the children of our parents' former marriages. Four of the youngest of Pop's eight daughters and a son of Mom's lived with the six of us who were born to them after they came to the island. To us it was a wonderful life. We never lacked companionship. Life was like a long vacation.

Oh, those days were the warm ones that lay in a secret place in my heart—special and deep and soon-ending. Because suddenly my gay, laughing mother was dead. One day she lay on her bed, still and white. Pop, a strange, frightened man, not like the Pop we knew, took her to the mainland in the boat, and when he came back he was alone. Nobody talked about what had happened to her. I only knew my Mom wasn't there any more and it was as if the sun had gone behind a cloud. My sixteen-year-old sister, Vinny, tried to keep the family together, but nothing went quite right. Pop seemed to shrink within himself. He lost his joy without Mom until the only comfort he found was in drink. He became a lonely, bewildered man.

Then something happened to fifteen-year-old Lucy. I didn't know what. I heard quarreling in the night and the next day Lucy cried and wouldn't play with us. In a few days she went away with a rough, young lad who came and got her in his boat. I never saw her again. Vinny left, too, to marry an older man who used to come out for bait. After they were gone, Pop was helpless. He scattered us, placing the girls with relatives and keeping the boys with him.

Pop took me in to Baybridge to live with Martha, one of his grown daughters. One day I was on the beach in the sun and the next I was in a stuffy small, dark living room where I felt as if I couldn't breathe. It seemed crammed with heavy furniture and the blessed sun and air I loved so well were carefully shut out.

Martha was like the house, closed and forbidding. She stared at me in disapproval.

"What can I do with a wild thing like her?" Martha asked thinly.

Pop sighed. "Guess I didn't do so well by any of you. But Cathy's a good girl. She'll be company for you, and it'll help me out, Martha."

She sniffed doubtfully.

He looked down at me. "Now, you be good, Cathy. Mind what Martha tells you."

I clung to his hand with frantic



**I wanted to cry, "Marry me now—now, while you believe in our love.
Because after, if you find out about me, maybe you won't want me."**

fingers, my eyes begging him not to leave me here in this strange place.

But he left me and I found out what it was like to live in a house full of what people call the good things of life, but with no love, no happiness. Martha was thin, and drawn, always ill and always worrying about her husband, Joe, who was a policeman. He was a big man and kind to me in his way, but he was gone from home a lot. When he wasn't there Martha was irritable and she flew at me no matter what I did. I tried hard in my little girl's way to help her but nothing I did was right, it seemed. I dropped the

dishes; I was always in the way. I didn't know it then, but Martha was losing Joe. They hadn't gotten along for years and now he'd fallen in love with another woman. She had taken me in the hope that a child in the house would save her marriage. Her world was a dark place in which she struck out at me to relieve the misery in her own soul. To me, who had known only love and joy, this new life was a smothering thing. I changed gradually into a quiet child with great frightened eyes and a stutter that filled me with shame.

Loss of my family, together with Mar-

tha's violent temper and bursts of unexpected kindnesses, tore at me. Never to know whether I would be met with a curse or a smile was a torment to me. My fevered efforts to please her only made matters worse. Martha would strike me for letting something burn on the stove, or for tearing my clothes. Then, like as not, she would bring me a new hair ribbon next time she shopped. Her shrill complaints rang in my ears. Often there were bursts of tears I didn't understand.

Twice in those years Pop came to see me. But in the shaking old man, so shrunken in his rusty town suit, I saw

little of the father I remembered. I longed to tell him how miserable I was but something in his bewildered eyes and trembling mouth stopped me. Child that I was, I knew there was no going back. It was as if the lovely island of my childhood had sunk into the sea.

So I tried to think of ways to help Martha, and to do well in school. My good marks seemed to please Joe and Martha more than anything I had done for them. They were proud of me at last.

I guess maybe I started to get a little proud of myself, too, thinking I was making Joe and Martha happier than they used to be. A little blind with childish happiness, because I didn't see that they were drifting farther and farther apart, that they spoke to each other less often, that half the time Joe didn't come home till late at night.

And then, one night when I was fourteen, he didn't come home at all. Awkwardly, I tried to comfort Martha but she hit out at me, sending me flying to the floor. Then she lay on her bed, in the darkened room, while her desolation covered the whole house like a veil of mourning. I ate alone, crawled to my little cot and just lay there wondering. Why can't people be happy, the way my Mom and Pop used to be? Why is the world so full of trouble?

DUR I guess it isn't normal for kids to grieve about anything too long. The very force of living, of waking up in the morning and going to sleep at night, of doing homework and sometimes having a new dress to wear . . . all the small things of growing up occupied me. Only, there was always within me a gnawing emptiness for something I could not name. Sometimes in the long nights I would toss restlessly and hug my pillow tight against me, and then I would know dimly that it was love I longed for.

Often, I would catch Martha staring at me.

"You look like your Mom," she would say sharply. "Just be sure you don't turn out like her!"

What did she mean about my beloved Mom, I wondered? I thought it would be heaven to look like Mom, with that shining happiness in my eyes, but I saw nothing of her in my wistful, pointed face, my huge, frightened brown eyes. And yet, my looks were beginning to attract boys. I was frightened when they tried to talk to me—afraid of them and afraid of what Martha would say if she knew.

I kept myself stiffly away from boys until I met Dave Waldron. Dave was a senior at my high school. He was a good student and different from the other boys who pushed and yelled in the crowded halls. He seemed so far above me—a freshman, just fifteen, that I never even dared to dream he would notice me. But at a rally dance before spring baseball season he sought me out where I stood in the doorway of the gym wistfully, watching the other girls dancing.

"How about a dance?" he said. Could he be asking me? The blood rose in my face. I shook my head.

"Why not?" He was standing close to me, looking down out of his dark eyes. "I d—don't know how." I drew back, wishing desperately that the floor would open and swallow me. Here was the wonderful Dave Waldron talking to me and my stupid tongue betrayed me.

"I'll teach you." Dave was smiling at me gently.

Then I was in his arms, moving magically to music that seemed to sweep me so close to him I couldn't help but follow his slow, easy steps. I had not known that dancing would be like this. It was like floating in his arms.

"You see," he said, against my ear. "I knew you could!"

And I forgot myself and smiled at him. There was no need of words. He asked to take me home. I could hardly believe it. Walking slowly in the warm Spring darkness, I was singing inside myself, wishing the way were longer—that this night should never end.

At my stoop he turned me towards him so that I looked up into his eyes. My heart sank at the thought that it was over—my lovely night. But it wasn't—not quite. He cupped my chin in his hand. I felt my head spinning at his touch. I had a terrible desire to reach up with my hungry hands and hold him close to me, as if he could fill forever the starved need for the love I'd longed for since I was eight, and first came to Baybridge. But I must not let him know how I felt. I held my hands clenched at my sides so I wouldn't touch him and give myself away.

"Cathy! Cathy!" he whispered, holding me close to him with a longing that seemed to match my own. I closed my eyes as his lips came close.

"Dave—Dave, why me?" I asked, whispering. "I'm not gay or fun like other girls."

"That's why I like you, I guess," he said softly. "You are different. You're the first girl I ever wanted to talk to. Maybe I'm not like other boys, either."

Suddenly his words and the strange surge of emotion within me confused me. I was afraid. I turned from him and ran up the steps and into the house. All night I lay in bed, my heart beating so fast I could not sleep. The music, the dance, the touch of his lips on mine—it was a glimpse of heaven. But I had run away from him. I had spoiled everything. He'd never come again. My life had made it plain to me how fragile happiness was. A moment or two—that was all I ever expected to have.

But happiness with Dave was to be mine for a little time, at least. He came back again, and again, and then there were no empty places in my life, only a small fear that this was too good to last. But I tried not to think of that.

I did not ask myself why he liked me rather than the popular girls who tried to get him. It was enough for me that we had found each other—found a love he seemed to need as much as I. My heart

was so full of love I wanted nothing else. Even Martha's nagging no longer hurt me. She seemed to like Dave. She put no barriers in our way. I thought it odd that she let me keep my happiness. Then one day I found out why she let me go with him.

"Dave Waldron is a wealthy boy, Cathy, whether you know it or not," she said eagerly. "So you'd better mind your manners."

I hardly knew what she meant by wealth. Money had been of no importance in my scheme of things. I didn't let it worry me. I was too happy. Martha was so pleased with me. By going with a wealthy boy like Dave I was making up for all she had ever done for me.

But money could set us worlds apart. I felt it at once the afternoon Dave proudly took me home. I was dressed in my best and anxious to meet the mother of the boy I loved so much. But the sight of the big house silenced me like a hand across my mouth. It was a big square stucco, not a pretty place, but I had never been in one so large. Inside, it was gloomy and stiff, as if everything had cost a lot but no one really lived there.

Dave's mother was tall and dark like him. At first I hoped she was as kind and gentle as he was, too. But I saw that her eyes were not like his. They were cold blue and restless, and there was bitterness in her thin red mouth, as if all she had wasn't enough. She didn't try to hide her disappointment in me.

"So you are the Cathy Horton I've been hearing so much about," she said distantly. "Could you be one of the Hortons from Sunset Ridge—the ones who belong to Bel Air Country Club?"

She knew I wasn't, yet she kept on smiling her thin smile, and waited impatiently for me to answer.

No-o-o," I faltered. I darted a terrified look at Dave. His face was flushed and he shifted his feet uneasily. I had to answer something, but what could I say? I couldn't tell this strange disapproving woman that my father was a clam digger. She could never understand what he meant to me.

"I—I—I don't live with my father," I began to stammer in nervousness. "I live with my half-sister. Her husband is a policeman."

"Oh," she said. "A policeman. That's nice." Her voice trailed away. She turned from me. I wasn't what she wanted for her David.

I sat miserably on the edge of my chair, folding and unfolding my dress with nervous fingers. Dave was restless—not as though he were in his own home at all.

"How nice," Mrs. Waldron said again and her eyes were icier than ever. She began to ask what I did, where I spent my summers, whom I knew. I sensed each sharp question was planned to show Dave how dull and hopeless I was. And how much she disapproved of his interest in me.

When at last she got up, and the wretched visit was over, her goodbye was a final dismissal. I wondered if Dave knew that.

He caught me fiercely to him when we were in the car at last.

"Don't worry, Cathy. You've got to give her time to know you. She's really wonderful."

"No, Dave. It will never work," I said brokenly.

"It's got to, Cathy! You're the only thing I ever wanted. She'll see it my way. We're awfully (Continued on page 85)





LYING



The little blue bundle was
limp in my arms . . . the little blue
bundle that once was my son

BRIDE

DOUBLE-LENGTH
story of a wife's
greatest mistake

I gave my husband all my heart's love—all my soul's fire
—and all the accursed lies my mind could invent



I WAS EIGHTEEN and Lyle was twenty-two when we started riding the same bus to work. That was when I came to live with Uncle Bert and Aunt Josie and my cousins. I operated a machine that beveled the edges of metal buttons. I didn't like it much, but it was steady and the pay was good, and besides, I had no training for anything else. Lyle had just started working at the warehouse. Before that he'd had a job in another part of town, and had ridden a different bus. That's why I never saw him until then, even though he lived only a block away from me.

I got on the bus ahead of him, that morning we first met. It was snowing, and Lyle's cheeks and nose were red with the cold, and snowflakes sparkled in his crew-cut hair. He smiled at the bus driver like a kid with a big secret, and then at everyone, as if to say: "Isn't the snow swell! Get out the sleds!"

I guess I fell in love with Lyle at first sight. I guess he sort of noticed me, too, from the way he always teased me about it.

"The first thing I saw getting on the bus was this little skittish colt. I said to myself, boy, you'd better go back to bed and wake up again; you're dreaming you're back on the farm. So I took another look, and what was it but a little scaredy girl with big brown eyes peeking up at me from under her black bangs. I didn't dare say a word for fear she'd flip up her heels and jump off the bus and I'd never see her again. So I bided my time, thinking that next morning I'd bring a lump of sugar. That's what you give wild colts that have been scared young. So I brought the sugar. She shied away some at first, but then she took the sugar nice as you please. Haven't had any trouble with her since."

Of course it really wasn't sugar, it was gum. He took out a package of gum, took one piece and said sort of casually, "Have some?" I was surprised and flustered, that's why I was shy at

first, but then I said, "Thank you." He didn't say any more, just whistled under his breath. I chewed the gum for hours, until there wasn't a speck of flavor left in it.

Each morning we got a little more acquainted, until about two weeks later, Lyle asked if he could take me to the movies. After that we went steady.

I think the first time I really lied to Lyle was when we had a date to go roller-skating on a Saturday night about two months after we'd met. I was supposed to meet him at eight in front of the skating rink. He'd always met me at home before, but this one time I expected to be near the rink anyway, so I'd save him the trouble.

We lived near the big city market. Aunt Josie always shopped there Saturday nights, when the prices dropped. Usually, Uncle Bert went with her, but that night he couldn't. And my two cousins, Lucille and Janet, wouldn't be seen dead out shopping with their mother on a "date night." So I was elected. Aunt Josie made no bones about reminding me how good and kind she was, to take me into her home when I'd no place to go. I remember wanting to ask if my fifteen dollars a week board money wasn't welcome, but I skipped the argument. Nobody ever won with Aunt Josie—only my two cousins, the crown princesses.

I had no time to let Lyle know. It was after nine-thirty when we got back from the market and I wouldn't call his boarding house then. I didn't know what to tell him when he came the next day; it would sound so silly to say my aunt made me go shopping with her, as if I was a child with no mind of my own. Only Lyle didn't show up the next day and I was sure he must be furious and I'd have to have a good excuse.

Monday morning on the bus I said, "Golly, Lyle, I was sorry I couldn't meet you Saturday night, but I was sick."

Lyle gave me a queer look. "Too sick to answer (Continued on page 78)

WE WERE

HIGH SCHOOL THRILL CHASERS



Half the fun in anything is doing it on the sly, when "forbidden" means excitement—danger! Let the scared ones keep their silly little pleasures; we wanted ours fast—full to the brim

I KNOW NOW. Secrecy is like dynamite. Eventually it blows up and somebody's bound to get hurt in the explosion. That's the bitter lesson I learned. It's all different now, at Northton High. Everyone's back in class. I close my eyes and imagine that everything is as it was. But then I look up and there are those two empty seats and I know it will never again be the same.

Our parents were the first to tell us the truth. Why must children—even grown children old enough to be high school seniors—have to find things out

the hard way? We heard what the grownups said and we didn't believe one word of it. Worse, we pretended we did, and then went ahead anyway, hiding what we were doing.

Perhaps it won't sound any more dangerous to you, when I tell you, than it did to us. We had clubs in Northton High—we called them sororities and fraternities. You could only belong if you were voted in by the members. The rules were secret and so was the initiation, and if you were an Omega girl you could only date an Alpha boy. It made

us big shots, and, in a way, we pretty much ran things at school.

Sometimes there was trouble, like the spring picnic out on Fork River. Our parents thought it was chaperoned and of course it wasn't. Some of the boys brought cases of beer and on the way home one of the cars got out of control and was pretty badly smashed up. The two couples in the car got out of it with only scratches and bruises, but the car was a wreck.

The investigation revealed that there hadn't been any chaperones and the



"Let 'er rip!" I laughed wildly.
"Goodbye, little girl dress. Get
glamor, be a woman of the world!" I
tugged at the modest shoulder straps

boy who'd been driving had the smell of beer on his breath. All kinds of gossip ran through our little town, but most of it wasn't true. Oh, there were one or two couples on the party who'd gotten carried away more than they should, but the rest of us—even those going steady—didn't do any more necking than we would have right in our own living rooms after the folks had gone to bed. Oh, maybe a little more, but strictly under control.

By summertime, things had quieted down, and none of us gave it any more thought. But we were in real trouble about a month after school re-opened. Because of Carla Blinn. It looked like a cinch that Carla would be elected into Omega. And, like any other girl would,

Carla had her heart set on making it. Well, it was one of those things. At our secret admissions meeting, one of the girls announced she was blackballing Carla. The rest of us tried and tried to make her change her mind, but she wouldn't, and one of the strictest rules we had was that one vote against was all it took to keep anyone out.

As president, I had to tell Carla. For once I wasn't at all glad I was an Omega. When Carla heard what I had to tell her, she didn't say a word—just went dead white and walked away. That night, when her folks came back from a bridge game, they heard moaning in the bathroom. They rushed upstairs and found Carla writhing on the floor, an empty bottle beside her. The

ambulance and doctor got there minutes later, in time to get the poison out before it had done its job.

It took just forty-eight hours to turn our lives upside down after that. The parents, the school board, and the teachers met, and that was that. It was Mom who told me.

"Joy, it's all over. All secret clubs are ruled out in every school in town."

No more Omega! No more Alpha! No more dances, picnics, secret meetings in the barn in back of Jen Harragan's old house.

"But why, Mom, why?" I asked her.

"Why?" Mom said it as if I'd lost my mind. "After what happened to Carla!"

"But Mom, why was that our fault? Don't we have (Continued on page 97) 39



I was a Wife

I was Arthur's wife, Joanie's mother. But I was a woman, too, set suddenly afame in a stranger's arms, alive, really alive, for the first time in my life

I WAS SITTING at a table in a restaurant with seven men. That made it all right, I told myself. I hadn't come here on a date. I was a married woman with a husband in the Air Force and a little girl of seven. I kept that firmly in mind, even when the music started and one of the salesmen asked me to dance. But my boss had told me my first duty was to be friendly, to make contacts at the home appliance show where I was a demonstrator. It was my duty to be here with these well-dressed, good-looking men, to talk to them, laugh at their jokes and dance with them . . .

It was a much nicer duty than scrubbing the kitchen floor or fighting the crowds in the supermarket back in the suburb of Baltimore where I lived. "You're the prettiest girl in the place," my partner had just murmured in my ear.

He was acting like a salesman, of course.

But it's a nice compliment for an ex-school teacher, I thought, looking demurely into my glass. I had never been a social butterfly, but it was getting easier every minute.

"You're really having fun." Guy Stapleton, who sat next to me, spoke almost for the first time. I looked up. His brown eyes were looking down into mine—he was a tall man, and I am small—but his lips were only half-smiling.

I tried to think of a smart, pert answer to his remark, something to show I knew my way around.

"Yes," I heard myself telling him. "You see, this sort of thing is quite a change for me. My life has been a very quiet one."

Now why did I say that stupid thing? I was furious at myself for blurting out the simple truth. And yet, looking at this man, I knew my butterfly act wouldn't go down with him. He saw what I really was and liked what he saw. In a way, we seemed to recognize each other, to respond to unspoken questions. For the first time since I had taken this job, I began to be afraid. Maybe Arthur, my husband, was right.

"Why not go back to school teaching?" he had asked me when he was recalled into the service and we knew I'd have to work. "I thought you liked it."

"That's all you know," I told him. "It's a job and no more. Please try and see it my way. You've been in the service. You've seen the world and met all kinds of people. I've never been anywhere outside of this state. Whom do you meet when teaching a lot of bored eighth-graders? I want to get out and do things!"

Arthur said mildly, running a hand through his soft blond hair, "You could come up to Maine and be with me. That would be different—new."

How would it be different, I thought to myself? I'll be the same me—housewife, mother, wife—dull, old, routine me. And you'd be the same you. "Oh, Arthur, how can you be so stodgy!" I cried.

We were always hurting each other without meaning to. We seemed actually to be looking for slights, for outward signs of the basic friction between us. Ours was not a good marriage and we knew it. Perhaps it might have been, but even the beginning was wrong. The sheltered daughter of a widowed mother, I had gone through school and become a teacher, having none of the young romances that ready a girl for marriage. When Arthur came along, handsome in his Air Force uniform, he was the answer to my dreams. I think I fell in love with a symbol, not a real man, and our brief honeymoon before Arthur went overseas taught me nothing of honest love between a man and a woman. I was totally unprepared for the realities of marriage.

I had no knowledge, no instinct even, for physical love, and Arthur was too gentle, too essentially innocent to teach me. And so the years turned my ideal love into an average, hardworking husband, and neither true companionship nor shared passion grew a bond between us. And at last I dreaded contact with his body, endured his caresses as part of the job of being a wife. I tried not to show it, but I knew that Arthur

knew. "I'm not blind," he said. "I know how restless you are. But honey—" He put a tentative hand on my arm, "—all married people get restless now and then. When you look for excitement off somewhere, you're asking for trouble."

I remembered Arthur's words now, as Guy Stapleton reached out to take my hand. I suddenly wondered, might I fall in love with someone? Might I find that excitement I yearned for?

"Let's dance," Guy said, rising.

He took me in his arms and I felt no need to chatter, act gay and entertaining. I just rested there, enclosed by the sense of quiet strength his arms gave me, my feet moving dreamily to the music. And then I found myself danced through a door to a balcony.

"I thought you'd like to get away from that mob as much as I did."

"It's nice and cool," I said. "I'm a little nervous, too. This is my first show and I keep wondering when I'll do something wrong." It had been rather frightening at first, all the crowds and confusion and the sense of being conspicuous as one of the very few women among all the men. I'd had more masculine attention than ever before in my life—all the light but smooth flirtation that could mean anything you wanted it to mean. But this man was different.

"What did you mean," he asked, "about your life being a quiet one?" I told him about me briefly and then he asked, "So why did you come to take a job like this one?" His voice was deep and gentle, his eyes intent, as if he had to know.

"I had to have a job, and this one paid the best. Demonstrating is like teaching, too. My mother takes care of my little girl, and there was no reason why I couldn't travel a little. You know, housework can be, well, confining."

I had kept my eyes down while I told him those half-truths. And when I looked up at him again I knew, without a doubt, that he, a perfect stranger, understood the things I couldn't even

Without Shame

I belonged more to this
man than to any other —
no matter what the law said.



"I'm not blind," my husband said. "I know how restless you are. All married people get restless sometimes. But believe me, you're asking for trouble."

talk about to my own husband easily. I shivered.

Guy Stapleton moved beside me, and I felt his jacket come around my shoulders, warm from his body.

"Thank you."

"Your housework must have been real bad," he said reflectively, "if it gives you a chill just to think of it."

He was too keen. Before I knew it, he'd guess all my thoughts. "So let's skip it," I said quickly. "Let's pretend I'm an amnesia victim, and the past is all a blank."

"That would be quite a game," he said, his voice strangely serious. "You don't think two could play?"

I stood quite still, taking in the meaning of his words, his troubled, almost wistful tone. And then I answered, slowly, "No, I don't think so. I don't think even one can, really."

He sighed. "I was afraid you'd say that. In fact, I've been afraid of it all day."

"All day?" I stared up at his shadowed face. "But you didn't speak to me till tonight."

"I never meant to speak to you at all. But here I am."

"Yes, here we are," I said, trying to laugh. "And here we've been a little too long."

"You're right," he sighed.

I felt dazed, going back into the bright lights of the restaurant. The kidding remarks of the men as we sat down with them seemed cheap and sickening. I was glad that Joe Barnes asked me to dance, so I could get away from the table.

But as soon as we were out of hearing Joe said, "Look out for that Stapleton, Ruthie, babe. A wolf can wear gentleman's clothing, too, you know. Stick with me, kid. I may not be handsome but at least I'm not married."

I missed a step. But how silly! Why should it bother me to hear this from Joe? Of course Guy Stapleton was married.

"That must put you in the minority here," I told Joe lightly. "I gather most of the men are married. And I know I am."

"You don't act like it." His eyes narrowed on me. "To me you look like a girl headed off the reservation—but far off."

"I bet you say that to all the squaws."

"Maybe I do," he said, grinning. "But that doesn't keep it from being true."

"Well, the percentages are against you tonight," I told him as the music stopped and we returned to the table. Again my cheeks were hot and I had that heady feeling of power. But when Guy Stapleton asked me to dance again, I seemed to change into a different person. With him I had that sense of peace, of belonging.

"Let's go out," he said suddenly, his voice almost rough. "And stay out. I've a car. Will you come?"

I knew I shouldn't. We both knew we should stay in the lights, stay with the others.

"Yes, I'll come," I heard myself tell him, my voice breathless, as I followed him.

Outside, we stood among the shadowed shapes of the boxwood hedges, just faintly glimmering with starlight. Guy's hand, holding mine, tightened, drew me toward him. I pulled back—Oh, I think I did—I hope I tried to fight this new thing that was happening to me. But suddenly his hands were very strong, his two arms were holding me hard against his tall, straight body. After that I couldn't seem to try.

Guy's arms tightened about me. His hand came up to touch my hair, to smooth it back from my forehead, and then to cup my chin and lift my face. He seemed to study it in the dimness for a moment. "Why are you so sweet?" he said, in a kind of groan. "I tried to pray you wouldn't be." And then his arms were almost crushing me, and his lips came down on mine with a sort of violence, like punishment. He hurt me, my mouth was bruised, and yet I didn't wince away. My arms clung to his body, loved its lean hardness, and when at last his lips were soft on mine, richly soft and searching, I gave him my own mouth with an eagerness that was new to my lips.

How long this lasted before we both came to, broke away and stood there, shocked, I cannot tell. But then we were stumbling to his car.

"I'm sorry," he said, driving through the quiet, dark streets.

"Don't be," I told him. "It was as much my fault as yours."

"Of course we can't see each other again after this." His voice was grim. "If I felt differently—felt less—" he added, his lips twisting as if in pain, "I'd take a chance. But not this way—"

We drove, without talking any more, to my hotel. At the door we said "Good-bye." I hated the word, then, but I meant it.

In my room I realized I was exhausted. I could hardly hang up my new blue suit before I fell across my bed and was asleep.

When the room clerk woke me at seven, I got up slowly, showered and dressed, but with none of the anticipation I had felt yesterday, of a new day—a new life. Pinning flower to the lapel of the suit that had cost so much and showed it in every subtle slender line, I felt no thrill at my reflection in the mirror. Why had I taken such care about how I looked on my first big assignment? Had I been hoping, secretly, to meet a man who would find me attractive, who would stir me as none had before?

Well, if that was what I had been hoping for, down deep, I had gotten my wish.

And I could never see him again. Never. I was a married woman, a mother.

I walked toward the door, mechanically checking the contents of my bag. Then I stopped short. My wallet wasn't there.

Then I remembered. I had put my evening bag in Guy's pocket, when we were dancing. Riding down the elevator my mind was whirling. I would see Guy again. I would have to.

I don't think I was surprised when I found him waiting in the lobby for me. "Our timing is perfect." New gayety had lighted up his brown eyes. "Here's your handbag, and let's have breakfast."

He held out his arm to me, I took it, and we walked into the hotel dining room. There was a bold, reckless quality about him this morning that was very different from his hesitation and doubts of last night, and very exciting. I had never eaten in such a grand place, with its high, carved ceiling and brilliant crystal chandeliers. But Guy had, obviously. He ordered for me, speaking to the head-waiter with an easy, accustomed air. I was served my grapefruit in a silver bowl of ice, and it tasted much more delicious than the ones I laboriously prepared at home. And when the waiter brought me my tiny crisp sausages he lifted the silver cover off with great flourish.

"He acted as if he conjured them up out of thin air," I told Guy, and we both laughed.

It was easy to laugh at anything with Guy, or nothing. We had taken a little vacation from our consciences, just for this hour. We talked of business, and he told me of the jobs he had held since his war service—he had been in the Navy—as electrician and salesman. Now he worked for a firm making water heaters.

"That surprises me," I told him. "I hadn't figured you for the rover type."

"Maybe it surprises me, a little." His lips quirked up at one corner. "Maybe I hadn't figured myself that way, either." He didn't explain, but went on though, talking about the Pennsylvania territory he covered from Philadelphia as sales engineer.

He hadn't needed to explain. I knew the reason for his restlessness. It was the same reason as mine. He was unhappy in his marriage.

Breakfast was over too soon; the time came when the show would open. We went to our booths, divided by the width of the whole arena. Mr. Grey, the head of our crew, invited me to lunch with some of his staff. In the cafeteria, I couldn't keep my eyes from searching, but they didn't find the face they were looking for. I tried to be glad. It was easier this way. I knew that was why Guy didn't come near me, not even after the show had closed two days later and I was packing up my display props. The place was nearly empty when Joe Barnes came over to me. "Phone for you, Ruth. Long distance."

Arthur! I felt a pang of fear. Something had happened to Joanie!

Then I tried to laugh at myself. It couldn't be Arthur. He wasn't with Joanie.

I knew who it was before I stumbled into the smoky phone booth. "Ruth?" It was Guy's voice, breathless.

"Yes, Guy. Some long distance! I'll bet you're right around the corner."

"I have some news that might interest you." He laughed. "In case you're interested. I've been transferred to new terri-

tory. In the south. You know, Maryland, Virginia, Washington—"

Near me! My home office was Baltimore. "Oh, Guy, you shouldn't have," I whispered.

"Certainly I should have." His voice mocked me. "I'm the only one who can handle this new assignment, as I've been telling the boss all afternoon." Then he spoke very low. "That's the way I want it, Ruth—darling."

I came away from the phone in a daze. I had expected to do the right thing, keep from meeting Guy again, but now he'd be at the same shows where I was working. During my very next trip, to Norfolk, he'd be in the very same city for two whole days.

What should I do? What harm would there be in just seeing him, just eating with him as I had this morning? We wouldn't be hurting anyone, we wouldn't really do wrong. Wasn't everyone entitled to a little happiness? My thoughts began to soar.

MY LIFE became unreal, just waiting for that Norfolk trip. I went home to my mother and my daughter. I wonder now, would it have been different if Arthur had been there waiting for me? Seeing my husband again might have shocked me back to reality. But Arthur was at camp, in Maine, and there was no one to bring me down to earth. With Joan I became suddenly very gay, laughing with her at silly jokes until the tears came.

And then, at last, it was time for me to go to Norfolk—to anticipate, eagerly, our next sight of each other.

It was in the basement of a crowded Norfolk department store where we were to give a demonstration that I saw Guy again. With the people jostling us on every side, it was as if we were completely alone. Guy's hands held mine, and his eyes held mine. I could hardly believe it, but he was even better than I remembered. His brown eyes shone more warmly, his cheeks were flushed with excitement, and the sweet curve of his lips as he smiled made my throat ache with tenderness. The touch of his hand in mine sent live currents up my arms, all over my body. With great effort I drew my hands away.

At my hotel I found a corsage of sweetheart roses, and breathing their fragrance I felt tears come to my eyes at this sweet message of his love. Oh, I loved him, too! Surely this love was a gift from Fate, and who could ask us to reject it? Wearing his flowers, I drove with him that night to a little seafood restaurant on the shore. Though we felt as if we'd known each other always, we had everything to learn about each other's lives. We couldn't wait to learn. We talked fast, interrupting each other. I told him things I had never talked about with anyone before, and he listened intently to my answers.

"You act as if every little thing mattered to you," I told him wonderingly.

"It does," he said. "It's something to remember—when I'm alone."

"Don't say that!" I cried. "I hate that word, 'alone'!" Even more I hated knowing that he was not always alone when I was not with him. His wife was like a faceless ghost beside him.

He showed me pictures he had taken of his children. "This is Cathy. She's four. And this is Mark. He's seven."

Cathy was a charming fly-away blond, her radiant smile showing how much she loved her daddy. But Mark stared rather

somberly into the camera. "He looks much older than seven," I said, studying the taut little face, dark-eyed and fine-boned like his father's. "Serious, somehow."

"He's serious, all right." Guy's voice was thoughtful, and his pride seemed somehow clouded. He smiled quickly and put the wallet away. "Let's see Joanie."

I showed him some snapshots. "She's beautiful," he said. "I'd say she was sensitive. She's a plant that needs careful handling and plenty of sunshine."

"Don't all kids?" I asked, trying to smile.

He nodded, his lips tight. After a moment he said, "When you marry, you have no idea that you're the most important person in the lives of a couple of people you haven't even met."

"If only you could know," I said. "Wouldn't it make you stop and think?"

"It would that." All his unhappiness was in his tone.

There was no point in trying to hold back now. "Was yours a wartime marriage?" I asked Guy. He nodded. "For a couple of years before the war, I'd been going with a girl I liked pretty much. I know now, I didn't love her, but I was about to be sent across— Well," he smiled ruefully, "you've heard the old line, 'Haste makes waste.'"

After a moment he added, "Not that I blame Winnie. She's tried, I guess. And it's tougher for her than for me, maybe. That's why I took a traveling job, so she'd only have to put up with me during weekends. Now, of course, I don't even go home many weekends."

His brown eyes told me why. For a moment I was scared at what our eyes were telling each other.

"Let's get out of here," he said suddenly, and I followed him to the car. I couldn't seem to help following him, I thought, anywhere he wanted me to go.

WE DROVE until we came to the beach, then walked along the deserted stretch of sand together.

We walked with clasped hands, like children, until the warmth from his hand had raced in running tides through my veins and my knees began to weaken. He stopped, turned to hold me in his arms. I went into them as I had never gone into any other arms, gladly, eagerly, urgently, pressing myself close against his body, holding my face up to his, giving my lips to his searching, hungry mouth.

His voice was heavy. "What has happened, darling?" he whispered, breathless.

I told him faintly, "You've taught me what it can be—really—to love."

I shouldn't have told him, I suppose, knowing it was almost too much for his control. And knowing neither one of us was free.

We seemed to remember this at the

same moment. Our hands dropped once more to our sides and without a word, breathing shakily, we walked back to the car.

There was a letter from Arthur waiting at my hotel. He wanted me and Joanie to spend the summer in Maine, away from the harsh Maryland heat. It was a reasonable letter, thoughtful and kind. It had come at the right time. This plan would help me end these dangerous meetings with Guy, a thing I'd never have strength to do unaided.

Next day, when I told Guy, he accepted my decision with a wry smile, as if he had always known it would come. But now our snatched moments changed. Somehow we had removed the guilt by promising it must end. This was an interlude removed from the rest of our ordinary lives. In the next weeks we were together every possible chance, Guy finding ways to coincide his trips with mine.

And as each meeting brought us closer to parting, the desire for fulfillment heightened unbearably. We wanted each other too much to be content with a touch of the hand, a hasty kiss. An evening with Guy left me deeply shaken, faint and trembling with frustration. And Guy—it must have been far worse for him. I hate now to think what I was doing to him—and maybe to his family—in those weeks.

They came to an end, at last. I gave my notice at the office. Joanie's school ended. Mother took her to stay with her while I closed up the house. The movers came on a Thursday and took the furniture. I went to stay with Hetty and Don, our neighbors, till my last day at the office. Joanie and I would leave on Sunday.

Fate stepped in once more. A telegram came early Friday morning for Betty. Her sister's baby, due in August, had been born prematurely, and she was badly needed. "It's a shame," she told me uncomfortably. "I really have to go. As far as I'm concerned it would be perfectly all right for you to stay here alone with Don, but you know how people would talk—"

"I know. But I can just as well stay at a hotel." My heart was pounding. I hadn't made this change in plans. It had been made for me. So correct, so respectable! I have to laugh when I think of it now.

GUY was waiting in the lobby of the building when I left work Friday evening. My lips quivered as I told him, "I'm not staying with my neighbors after all. I have to go to a hotel. Will you drive me out to pick up my bags?"

Guy's eyes widened, and he gasped, "You don't mean—"

"I mean I'll stay at the Southern till Sunday. I'm free as a bird."

"That," Guy said, "demands a celebration!" His voice sounded light-hearted for the first time in weeks, and his mood was catching. Driving out, putting the bags in his car, we were in a world of our own with no one knowing where we were, no one to check the time we went or came. We could go here, go there, go everywhere, do what we liked, eat when we were hungry, and never sleep at all. Why should we waste time sleeping, our last time together, that was measured now in hours?

We drove beside the bay, ate steak and French fries on a porch above blue water, and drove back listening to a Latin-American band on the car radio—or pretending to listen. Music was just the background for our love. (Continued on page 113)



My Young Lover—

A DIVORCEE'S AFFAIR

**Who can blame me for forgetting the years between us
each time I felt the fire of his young lips? When we
clung together I was as vibrantly young as he. I knew,
with dread, that if he ever let me go I'd be empty, hopeless . . .**

THE SILENCE of a telephone can be as jarring as sound. As I sit here listening for mine to ring, for the loved voice I hope to hear, its very silence penetrates everything I do. I imagine I hear it ringing when I'm taking a shower. I turn off the water . . . silence. Then I decide that it's out of order. I lift the receiver. The live humming sound assures me that it is in order, so I replace the receiver very carefully.

This, I tell myself over and over again, is the first installment of my payment for weakness, in a situation where I should have been strong; the just payment for not abiding by my own standards of the rightness of things.

I was weak because I was so bitterly, achingly lonely—lonely as only a woman can be while she learns to adjust to a divorce. Unhappy as Bill and I had been together, he at least meant company, someone to talk to even though the words were quarrelsome. I was learning what it was to spend evenings alone, find amusement alone, eat alone, sleep alone.

That night, eight months ago, when I entered my favorite restaurant, I chose a table near the entrance where I could watch the passersby as I ate. The loneliness of eating by myself night after night was almost unbearable. Doctors claim that a great many people overeat because of unhappiness, but in my case it was the opposite. I would feel very hungry, go somewhere to enjoy a good dinner, take a look at the menu—and order a sandwich. Articles in magazines would suggest ways to make a home-prepared meal attractive for the lonely diner. I tried them all, setting the table with flowers and my best china, turning on the radio to soft dinner music, but eating alone still continued to be a very depressing

thing. I thought it would not be much longer before I joined that group of solitary diners who brought books to the table and read all during dinner.

Suddenly I looked up to find two men standing by my table. One was John Wright, a business acquaintance. The other was a tall, slender man of about twenty-five. His smooth, arched eyebrows, his straight nose, his full, perfect mouth gave him almost a feminine beauty. But there was nothing feminine in the way his dark eyes considered me, frankly taking my measure as a woman.

John said, "Mrs. Owen, this is Chris Stevens, one of our best salesmen."

I smiled and said "How do you do," but Chris said, "I've seen you in here often and wondered who you were. Do you live in the neighborhood?"

I said I did, and then turned to John and asked about mutual friends of ours. As they left, Chris Stevens took my hand and said warmly, "Until we meet again."

"Why—why, yes," I said, taken aback, yet amused that a man eight or ten years younger than I could find me interesting.

I was only thirty-three, but the events of the past year had made me feel much, much older. I sometimes wonder whether, if there had been no war, Bill and I might have made a go of our marriage. But his four years overseas made us like strangers. I'm sure I changed as much as he. We tried for several years, after he came home, to make our marriage work out, because we both hated divorce, looking on it as a sign of personal failure. But angry words between us became more frequent and finally Bill found a woman he felt he could be happy with. There were no children to consider, so I agreed to a divorce and found myself a small apartment and a job making

"You're being very understanding and brave," he said "letting those two young ones dance together."



hats for a famous designer. Life could and would be difficult I knew, but naturally, I hoped to find happiness again. I can see now that I was entirely unprepared for all the adjustments I was going to have to make. Soon, I found that married women do not want a divorcee as a guest too often. Men, I discovered, are very attentive to divorcees, especially if they have a good figure and a friendly smile. However, I soon learned that the attentions I got were definitely of the wolf variety. As time passed and I had more and more unpleasant incidents on my dates, I began to refuse the few I got, since the men made their intentions pretty clear. As a result I spent my evenings reading, and on that night eight months ago I went home with a new book under my arm, with nothing to look forward to but another dull evening.

The telephone was ringing as I unlocked the door of my small apartment. When I answered, a vibrant male voice said, "Mrs. Owen, you're going to think I'm fresh, but I want to make an impression on you before you forget me. When can I see you?"

I laughed when I recognized Chris Stevens' voice, "You are fresh," I said. "But that's not the reason I can't see you."

"Then why?" he asked simply.

"Frankly," I answered, "I have a strong feeling that women look silly going out with men a lot younger than they are."

There was a short pause as if my honesty had startled him. Then he said, "I think it's even sillier for you to feel like that. If you tell me that you don't like me, I'll go away, but I don't see what age has to do with friendship."

"I'm flattered, Mr. Stevens," I replied, "but I have to say no." I hung up, and

then immediately wished that I hadn't. There followed nights of reading and more loneliness. I saw a few of my women friends occasionally, but what woman won't admit she prefers the company of men? I have often noticed that when two or three men are together, they seem to have a wonderful time, but women without escorts always look a little pathetic.

A few weeks after Chris had called me, I went again to the restaurant where we had met. As I was seating myself, I looked up, aware that someone was holding my chair, and there he was, smiling down at me.

MAY I sit here?" he asked, slipping into the chair opposite mine and not waiting for my permission. "Surely it won't hurt you to have a cocktail with me?" He grinned at me impishly.

I laughed at him and said, "Fate seems to be against me this time."

"Fate has nothing to do with it," he said. "I've haunted this place and if you hadn't turned up soon, I'd have become the town drunk." He smiled as he motioned toward the bar.

I started to laugh again, but as I met his eyes, I saw they were surprisingly serious.

"I want very much to get to know you," he said. "Please don't say 'no' again." He paused for a moment and then continued in a teasing tone, "Not that I'll pay too much attention to your answer, for I'm a very determined guy with women. My father taught me that a woman's 'no' means maybe, and her 'maybe' means yes. Unfortunately, he couldn't tell me what her 'yes' meant, so I have to do research on that subject."

"And what have you found, so far?" I asked, amused.

"That a woman can say 'yes' and mean almost anything under the sun . . . or nothing."

"Oh?" I murmured.

"Yes. Now let me hear you say it like you're giving me permission to see you again," he said.

"Now that would be very difficult for me to say," I answered, smiling.

As we lingered over dinner, I realized with a start that I was having a very good time and with a man almost ten years my junior. I had forgotten for the last hour that I was older. Although he treated everything only half seriously, I was impressed with his maturity and quiet self-confidence. After dinner he suggested a movie, but I shook my head and gathered up my book and purse.

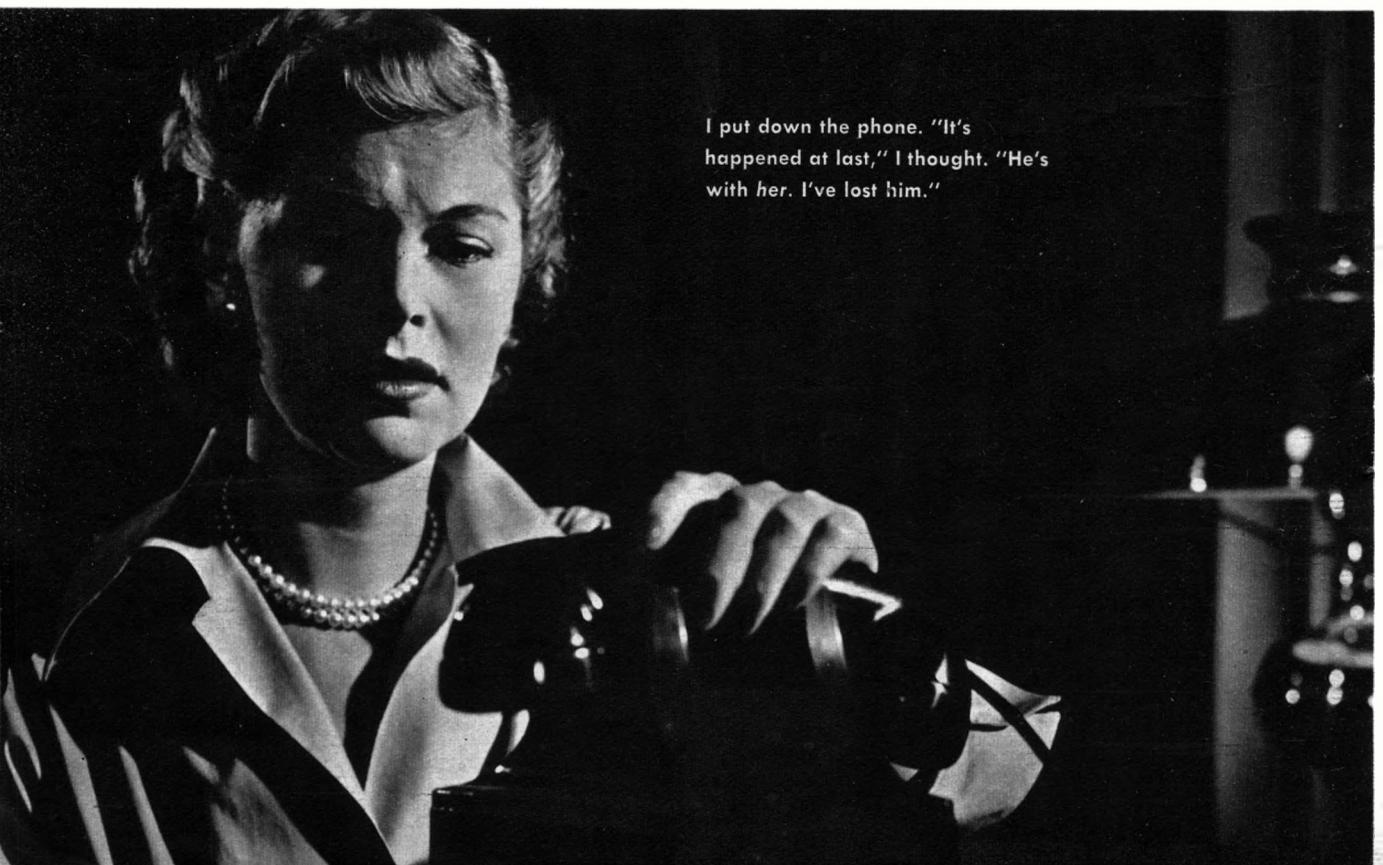
Out on the street I turned to thank him and say goodbye, but he tucked my hand in the crook of his arm and fell into step beside me. His grey eyes crinkled up with an engaging grin, as he said, "Don't walk so fast. People will think you're trying to lose me."

With his tall, athletic body moving easily beside me, I felt very small and fragile. I didn't pull away and all at once I was glad I had worn my most becoming suit to work that day.

When we stopped before my apartment building, he took my hand and said, "See, I told you we'd have fun. Now will you let me see you again?"

It was true I had enjoyed being with him. Just the mere fact of being with an attractive man, of hearing a man's opinions, of being escorted, had given me a lift. I thought to myself, "What will one more meeting matter?" So I said "yes."

I put down the phone. "It's happened at last," I thought. "He's with her. I've lost him."



He threw back his head and laughed delightedly. "That was a very good 'yes,' Nora Owen," he said. Then he tilted up my face and added seriously, "Who knows or cares whether you're older than I am, or I'm older than you? Has it made any difference between us tonight?"

Without waiting for an answer, he turned and left me to ponder over the 'yes' that marked the turning point.

IT WOULD have been so much wiser to say no. I would have saved myself many heartbreaking hours, hours filled with a violent need to touch him once again, to feel the shapely head and crisp flat curls beneath my fingers, to have his lips brush mine with a gay and affectionate caress, but most of all to feel his kiss when there was no laughter or gaiety, the hungry, demanding kiss of a man and a woman in love. But at that time I had no idea that seeing Chris again would involve my heart. I would have laughed at the thought that I, a mature woman, could fall in love with a younger man.

It was a few days before he called and asked if he could stop by for a little while. I told him he could, and hurried to change from my office clothes into a soft print dress. I had no right to wish to be attractive to Chris, but I did wish it. As I smoothed the swirling skirt around my hips, I admitted to myself that my figure was excellent. I still had the firm, well proportioned body of a girl. There was no fat and no need for corseting. To me it was not vanity, but self-respect to keep my body trim and healthy. I brushed my hair, made up, and hurried to the kitchenette to start some coffee.

When Chris arrived, he greeted me with a casual kiss on the cheek. I drew away from him hurriedly, but he pretended not to notice. He walked around the apartment looking at my pictures and books, while I brought in the fragrant coffee and placed it on a low table near the studio couch.

He settled himself in my big reading chair and sighed contentedly. The windows were open and the muted sounds of traffic came in on the soft spring breeze which stirred the curtains. We made no effort to talk while we sipped our coffee slowly. That should have warned me, for two people must be very close to be so completely in harmony and at ease in silence. Finally I played some records, records that later were to become 'our' music, but at the time they were only the beginning of a shared mood.

It was still early when Chris rose to leave. At the door he stopped and, cupping my chin in his hand, he said, "Thanks for letting me see you. And think about this: I'm not as young as my years. The army makes a man grow up fast. Young girls seem like school kids to me." He left then, giving me no chance to reply.

Chris was wise in the ways of women—at least he understood me—for he didn't call again for a week. A week in which I had lots of time to think of what he had said, and miss him. A week in which I found myself growing more and more conscious of the telephone, wondering why it didn't ring.

Our next date was at a quiet little restaurant and we did a lot of talking. We seemed to be making up for the quiet evening we had spent before. Chris told me of his experience in the army, about his parents, who lived in a small town up-state, and of his friends and work. I told him a little about my marriage while he

listened attentively, but for the most part I was more interested in hearing all about him.

From that time on we saw each other once or twice a week. We went to shows, we window shopped, and we tried different places to eat. Always we had fun. Chris had a real talent for mimicry and he was hilarious when he told me about the day's events. Or he could look at a couple at an adjoining table and invent all sorts of fascinating stories about them which he would whisper to me. He was a gay and very dear companion. Other times he would be serious and discuss books we liked or politics. No evening was ever dull for me when I was with Chris.

One night in June we had met for cocktails and after, we started toward home, window shopping as we strolled. Chris stopped in front of a window displaying women's accessories.

"That blue scarf is just the color of your eyes, Nora. Do you know that every time I see something unusual I want to buy it for you?"

I said, "But you're always bringing me presents."

"Oh books, candy and records . . ." he said. "Those don't count. It's just that you're always on my mind. When I used to see you eating in the restaurant before we met, I picked you out as a person I wanted to get to know. I was in a funny mood in those days. Restless and jumpy. Anyway, you helped me through a bad time."

"You've helped me too, Chris," I said softly. There was a mood of such tenderness between us then that neither of us spoke for fear of breaking it. There was no good humored banter now, and suddenly I began to tremble—I couldn't have said why.

When we reached my apartment he took the key from my hand and opened the door. He paused at the threshold and I looked up at him to see why he had stopped. He was looking down at me very seriously. Then he said suddenly, "Nora, let's get married."

I WAS so startled by his words that I stood transfixed in the doorway. I put my hand on his arm to steady myself. My knees suddenly felt as if they would not support me. I was swept with shattering emotions. Unthinking joy took possession of me. My response to his words must have shown in my eyes. For the first time my unsuspected love must have been revealed to Chris, for he was watching me steadily and intently. In that moment of confusion I became aware of the depth of my feeling for him, which I had not admitted to myself before. I loved Chris as I had never loved anyone before. And he wanted me! Then the full meaning of the situation struck me, and joy left me as quickly as it had come. I felt as if I were torn apart. Here was reality and I must face it. Marriage with Chris could never be. The difference in our ages was a wall that no amount of wishing or effort could tear away. It wasn't so obvious now—but in a few years—it was laughable, ridiculous.

I sobbed out, "Oh no, darling, I could never do that to you."

Chris pulled me to him and kissed me as he had never kissed me before. We were not standing in the familiar hallway, we were lost in a world of our own. My mouth resisted the ardent, hungry demand of his. I wanted to stop this powerful need that was surging through me. But in Chris'

arms I only knew that I couldn't be without him. And if we couldn't marry, there was another way—his lips and his hands were compelling. There was no thought, no resistance left in me. My lips responded to his, and with a sigh of surrender I returned his kiss. He picked me up in his triumphant arms, and through a blur, I heard the slamming of the door as he kicked it shut behind me.

In our new intimacy life was beautiful and sweet. Even on those nights when I did not see Chris it was a pleasure to come into my empty apartment, for it was no longer lonely. In the big ashtray I bought for his use would be a pipe he had forgotten. The cushion of the big chair, "his chair," would be all crumpled, and beside it an untidy newspaper.

And there was so much to do. Preparations in advance for the good dinner I would feed him the next night. Painstaking care of the apartment so it would always please his eyes. Thoughtful attention to my clothes to be always attractive to him. Every moment away from Chris I lived only to make perfect that hour when I would hear his step on the stairs and I would open the door to his waiting arms and lover's kiss.

During the first flush of love I looked much younger than I was. It was a pleasure to wash and set my hair, to do my nails, to buy new shades of lipstick, new creams, perfumes, bathpowders. I tended my person and gloried in it because my lover found me delightful.

IN HIS arms, pressed close to his lean, young body I felt as young, as vibrant as he. I tried to live in the moment. But I was not a child and sometimes mature good sense would overtake me. If, walking down the street together, I saw us mirrored in a store window, my quick, searching look found no shocking contrast between his eager youthfulness and my smiling face. Still I knew tomorrow, next week, next year must come and I would be tormented.

I would push back the pain and then find myself staring into the mirror, looking for convincing signs of youth; studying Chris' own face for signs of age. Except in moments of complete abandon the worry was always there, and it was sharpest when he would say, "Let's get married, Nora." Then I would drop from the heights his kisses had taken me and with a sigh I would bury my face in his shoulder. "I'm not right for you, darling. You need a young wife, someone who will have lots of children for you."

But he would silence me. "I know what I want, and it's you. What we will have is a sane marriage that we can both count on."

That hurt, for there was no saneness in my feeling for him. All the torments of young love were with me now. I thought of all the pretty girls he must meet in his work and on the nights when I didn't see him I paced the floor until he would call me to say good night.

Finally Chris said, "Nora, I have always had older friends. I'm going to make dates with some of my married friends. If, when we're with them, you still feel that we're wrong for each other, I'll consider there's something to all these notions of yours. But I know you'll fit in with any group I can think of."

So we went calling on his friends and it was true. They were my age or older, and I did feel at ease with them. They accepted me as a friend. (Continued on page 68)

The Secret

It could be your next door neighbor, your friend, a member of your family. People whisper about these "different" men and women, but do they tell the truth? TRUE STORY brings you the facts you should know

By Shailer Upton Lawton, M.D., F.A.C.P.

IN EVERY TOWN you see them, these "different" men and women. They walk the streets of small villages and huge cities alike. Normal people whisper about them, snicker at their peculiarities and wonder and sometimes are afraid. Perhaps your next door neighbor—who looks like every other man on the block—is one of these people. Perhaps you've been puzzled by an odd-looking woman in the supermarket. Perhaps by the girl who sets your hair, perhaps even someone in your family.

Some of them you can't miss. They are the men with high, fluttery voices and dainty gestures. They are the women who wear slack suits, mannish haircuts, and are seen on the streets in twosomes. Others you cannot tell from normal people. But however they look and behave in public, they are not like the rest of us.

These people are homosexuals—men who are sexually attracted by men, women who want love from women.

Until recent years, "nice" people have pretended that homosexuality just does not exist. But it does—and should be understood. That is why *True Story* has asked me, a psychiatrist, to help render a public service by explaining homosexuality, by showing how tolerance and sympathy can help these unfortunate.

Millions of Americans are confused about what a homosexual really is. How does he or she differ from a normally sexed person? Who are homosexuals, and how did they get that way? How many are there? What are the symptoms of homosexual tendencies in a child, a sweetheart, a husband—in yourself? How important are such tendencies, anyhow? How can you en-

courage normality in those you love? Can homosexuality be cured? How should you behave toward homosexuals?

Let me admit at once that homosexuality is a complex subject about which psychiatrists do not as yet know all the answers. Fortunately, however, we do know enough about it to explain it and to offer helpful advice to parents who want their children to grow up into normal, happy young men and women.

When we speak of a homosexual, we mean a person who rejects sexual intercourse with the opposite sex, who seeks instead, substitute sex satisfactions with his or her own sex. Sometimes this abnormality is not expressed physically, but only emotionally. It may involve no more than mutual caresses. But basically, a homosexual man is one whose love and physical desires are directed toward other men. A homosexual woman, often called a "Lesbian," is one whose love and physical desires are directed toward women.

At birth all of us—men and women alike—are naturally bi-sexual. That is, we can develop the behavior patterns to which we are trained or conditioned. In most cases, boys are educated to grow up to be masculine, girls to be feminine. This development is never one-hundred per cent complete for either sex, so that most men have *some* feminine traits, and most women have *some* masculine traits. Therefore, there is a degree of homosexuality in every one of us.

There is a world of difference, however, between that small degree of homosexuality which everyone shares, and the totally homosexual personality. It is the difference between normal and abnormal. Most of us placed in the

oven of childhood development get "well-done"—that is, we emerge primarily as masculine men and feminine women. But the development of some is only "half-baked," and these may become bi-sexual, that is, they feel love and physical desires toward *both* sexes. And those whose emotional development is "underdone" tend to become homosexual.

It is dangerously easy to misjudge who is, or who is not, a genuine homosexual. Take the case of Jean H., a bewildered wife whose husband had spent sixteen months in prison. When Arthur H. came out of jail, he seemed deeply troubled. After several weeks he finally confessed to his wife that, while in prison, he had indulged in homosexual relations with other prisoners. Jean was horrified, especially since, during the weeks following Arthur's release, there had been nothing in their marital relations to make her suspect anything of the kind. Worried that she was married to a homosexual, Jean sought my advice.

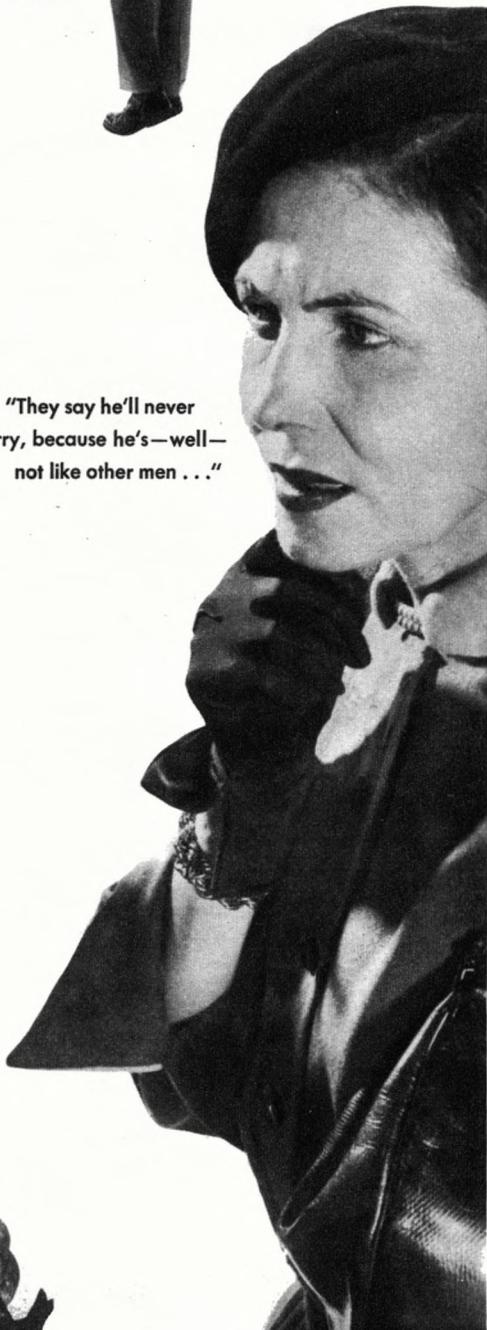
I had a long talk with Arthur. Then I sent for Jean and assured her, "Your husband is perfectly normal. He responds exclusively to the opposite sex—*when he has the opportunity for normal sex relations*. In prison he had no such outlet for his sexual feeling. Other prisoners tempted him to enter into homosexual relations as a 'second-best' choice."

This same thing sometimes happens in the armed forces, too. But if, when a man is free to do so willingly, he returns to normal sex behavior, it is not likely that he has become homosexual. "Unwilling homosexuality" is a tragedy of men confined in a world without women. It need not have any perma-

Sex



"They say he'll never
marry, because he's—well—
not like other men . . ."



ment effect upon a man's character. A man is not a homosexual simply because he has had some homosexual experience in the past.

Nor can you assume, on the other hand, that a married man—a father—is automatically *not* a homosexual. Possibly you know somebody who has had the same shocking introduction to homosexuality as Peggy Y. When Peggy and Hal were first married, Peggy openly worshipped him. Hal was good-looking, sensitive and intelligent, but high-strung, too, and given to frequent emotional outbursts. Peggy did her best to humor him. But Hal became increasingly peevish toward her, especially after their baby was born, and they began to quarrel.

It baffled Peggy that Hal had chosen Mike E., a swaggering, illiterate tough-guy type as his friend. The two men were totally different. Yet Hal was humble, meek and admiring toward Mike. Mike, in turn, was patronizing and contemptuous toward Hal in a way that made Peggy burn with shame for her husband. The two men frequently went off together for fishing weekends in the lake country.

One weekend Peggy set out with the baby for an overnight visit to her mother. The baby became sick in the railroad station just before train time, so Peggy changed her mind and came home instead. As she opened the door to their apartment, she was amazed to hear voices coming from the bedroom—men's voices. Her footsteps muffled by the living room rug, Peggy carried the baby to the door of the bedroom. Then she almost fainted.

Her husband and Mike E. were both unclothed. Hal was in the role of "wife," Mike in the role of "husband." Hal's voice was strangely whining and feminine, and he was uttering words of passionate endearment to his "love partner."

Peggy staggered out of the apartment and never went back.

You may wonder why, if Hal was a homosexual, he had married Peggy in the first place. The answer is simply that many homosexuals—women as well as men—marry in the hope that marriage will "straighten them out." Some marry to deny to themselves that they have homosexual feelings. Others seek the social approval and security of marriage. Many are not aware that they are homosexual, until after marriage.

Hal's marital relations with Peggy did not give him the deep satisfactions he found in homosexuality, so he felt angry and critical toward Peggy. Only with another man could he behave as a true lover.

It should be evident from these two cases that, in deciding who is homosexual and who is not, appearances are deceiving. It is true that a man's or woman's previous sex behavior cannot be ignored. But it is *what they feel in their emotional life* that is most important.

As in the case of John L., appearances do not always tell the whole story either. Iris M. was a pretty girl of nineteen, with whom John was very much in love, and (Continued on page 109)

No

"You mustn't fight, Betty," he
said. "Those other girls did.
That's why I had to . . ."
I was too numb to hear the rest



Woman is Safe!

**Around me, the winds wailed, the cold clutched—and even
the moon deserted me. Behind me, softly at first,
I heard the creeping footsteps, and then, out of the night's
blackness I saw groping, grasping hands**

NOTHING had happened for two months now. There was no reason for me to be afraid to walk home alone. But as I came closer to the last street light, marking where the village ended, my feet went slower and slower, and I wished I were in Jay's car, sitting beside his comforting bulk, watching the road unroll under the headlights.

I could have been. Three hours ago, in the diner, Jay had said, "Want me to stick around and drive you home, Betty?" And—secure there in the bright lights, with the jukebox blaring away—I'd laughed, "Of course not! It's only a fifteen-minute walk!" And that was a mistake no woman should make, because I was scared—and had reason to be scared. I had no right to be too proud to accept protection.

But I hated to risk seeming possessive by asking Jay to hang around waiting, just to drive me home. We'd only been going together about a month—long enough to like each other a lot but not long enough to start taking each other for granted.

Not that Jay was the type you'd ever *really* be able to take for granted, I thought—glad, as I passed under the light and went slowly, unwillingly into the moonlit loneliness beyond, to be thinking about him instead of that loneliness. With his long legs and broad shoulders, his swaggering walk and wicked grin, Jay Carden was a living warning to any girl not to make plans that included him. But if you *could* make them, if you dared to—oh, what wonderful plans they'd be!

I wouldn't be one of those wives who stayed in bed and let their husbands eat breakfast at the diner before starting out in their boats for the day's fishing. No sir! I'd be up before him, boiling coffee, frying eggs, making toast—that was one thing about working in the diner, these last two years; I knew how to cook, and I knew what men liked. And when my husband had gone, I'd stay up, attending to my housekeeping, so that when he came home I could be finished and waiting, ready to do anything he wanted to do, be anything he wanted me to be. I'd—

All at once the brightness of my day-dreams was blotted out. I wasn't bustling around in a neat little house that belonged to Jay and me. I was on the deserted shell road that led from the village to my house, and it was half-past eleven at night. But nothing had happened for two months now.

Those two girls—they hadn't even been local. They were summer people. The first one was a stenog-

rapher from Boston, spending her vacation here with another girl. The second was from New York; her family had rented one of the beach cottages along the dunes at my right. All sorts of people came to Jonathan's Landing in the summer.

But it was late October now, October the 24th. The season had been over for almost two months, and it was longer than that since the second girl's body had been found in a hollow between two of the dunes—naked, and strangled with a long strip of cloth torn from her own pink summer dress. And before she died, the man had—taken her. My mind shied away from the word *rape*. But what you call it doesn't matter, doesn't change what had happened. It was the same thing that had happened to the other girl, a month earlier—except that she'd been strangled with one of her nylon stockings.

I felt a long shiver run over me, like ice stroking my bare skin. I must stop thinking about those girls! They'd been summer people, and the man was a summer man, too. He had to be. No one in Jonathan's Landing would commit such a crime. Only people from the cities whose minds were warped and twisted and evil got pleasure out of doing a thing like that. Didn't the fact that there'd been no more murders since the summer crowd left prove he was an outsider?

Of course it did. I straightened my shoulders and congratulated myself on having common sense, not being scary and flighty like some girls.

Deliberately, I walked slower. I made myself look around—up at the nearly round white disc of the moon in a cloudless sky, then down at the closed-up, shuttered beach cottages on my right, and the dark, reed-bordered inlet on my left. I was halfway home already, halfway to the unpainted, shabby house where I'd lived with my parents ever since I was twelve. In another few minutes I'd be there.

Back of the beach cottages were the dunes, and beyond them, unseen, were the other cottages and then the beach and the ocean. I could hear the surf pounding; I shivered in the cold salt air. And then, with sickening suddenness, my heart lurched in my breast, and seemed to stop entirely. A shadow beside the nearest beach house had moved—*was moving*.

Shock blurred my sight for a second or two. The cottages were built close to the road at this point, and the one where the shadow moved was the next

"Always when there's a full moon," they said. "That old moon's the devil. It takes those crackpots and drives them over that little hair-line between sanity and madness."

one I would pass. I remember thinking about that, and the thought must have stopped my feet, because when I could see again I was standing quite still in the center of the road—the white road, bathed in moonlight.

A man was standing on the wooden boardwalk that ran around the cottage. The deep, black shadow he'd stepped out of was behind him. The brim of his hat still kept all of his face in darkness except his mouth and chin. But he was watching me. I knew that, without seeing his eyes.

My muscles were tugging at me to turn and run. But I knew—without thinking it out, just knowing it—that if I did, and he wanted to catch me, he could. His legs were longer than mine, and he was stronger, and his breath wasn't already fluttering in his lungs because he was scared.

If I walked on the way I had been going, and he started at the same moment to move toward the road from where he was standing, we'd meet, right where the wooden sidewalk ended. He could stop me there.

So, either way, I was trapped. Either way, he could catch me. Somehow, that realization gave me courage—enough courage, at least, to hide my fear. Keeping my eyes on his, I started walking again, in the same direction I'd been going. And suddenly, when I was almost abreast of him, I saw his lips open and the flash of his teeth. He was smiling.

"Hello, Betty," he said. "Did I scare you?"

"Mr. Brownwell!" I gasped. "You certainly did!" I stopped, the breath leaving my lungs in a little rush of near-hysterical laughter. "What are you doing way out here?"

He strolled toward me along the walk—and it was amazing now, how all at once the menace had gone out of that dark-suited figure, leaving only middle-aged, greying Mr. Herbert Brownwell, who owned the real estate office in Jonathan's Landing. I knew him and his wife well. They were nice, both of them—Mrs. Brownwell very sweet and gentle, with a faded prettiness, and Mr. Brownwell always with a joke or something pleasant to say.

As he reached me, he remarked, "Just taking a walk. It's such a fine night, and I like to keep an eye on my cottages." He was close to me now, smiling. "Sorry I scared you," he added.

"Oh, that's all right," I said. My voice still shook a little, but only from reaction, not because I was still afraid. "It was just—I didn't expect you, and—of course I don't usually come home this late, but Mr. Ahrens had to go to Providence for his mother's funeral, so he asked me if I'd mind working nights until he got back."

Mr. Brownwell nodded understandingly. "That's right, I heard he'd been called

away. Let's see—he'll be coming back?"

"Day after tomorrow," I said. I giggled nervously. "I'm glad there's a moon. I'd really be nervous walking home alone in the dark."

"Yes. Yes." He raised his head, tilting it back until he was looking straight up at the near-perfect silver roundness above us. He said, "The moon is beautiful, isn't it? I like to be out on moonlight nights."

For a minute he stayed like that, his eyes wide open, staring upward. He reminded me, oddly, of a picture I'd seen somewhere—of someone worshipping or praying. Without quite knowing why, I took a sideways step, beginning to circle him. He dropped his gaze and said casually, "I remember last month how disappointed I was because it was rainy and cold when the moon was full, and I didn't even get a glimpse of it."

"Um-hmm. I mean—yes, it was too bad." I hardly knew what I was saying. I was talking from the very top of my brain, while down under, like a kettle beginning to boil, was a growing, straining need to go on, to get away, not to stand another minute on this lonely road talking to a man more than twice my age, one of Jonathan's Landing's most prominent citizens. "Well, I'd better run along. Mom will be getting worried."

"Will she?" He smiled a little. "Maybe she'll think you're out spooning with some young fellow," Mr. Brownwell said.

"No—I don't—"

I BROKE off. We were standing close together, not more than a foot apart. The shadow of his hat brim was down over the upper part of his face again, darkening it. I shouldn't have been able to see his eyes very well—but I did. They seemed to glow, like an animal's, or as if—as if some of the moonshine had entered them and stayed.

That was when I knew. Knew absolutely and surely, with my bones and body and blood, beyond any possibility of doubt. His eyes told me, they shouted it. In that moment I remember the summer man I'd heard talking to his girl one night in the diner. He had said, "Always when there's a full moon. No, I mean it, Gale. It's true, ask any detective. That's when the crackpots crawl out of their holes and start acting up. You get the biggest number of drunks and knifers and peeping toms—the most crazy telephone calls—the false alarm fires and the real fires started by arsonists—all the nutty things. That old full moon does something to them, nobody knows what. It makes them step over that little hair-line between sanity and insanity . . ."

Now, held prisoner by Mr. Brownwell's glowing eyes, I remembered those words. I tried to look away from him, I couldn't. Backing away, I stammered. "I—I'd really better hurry, Mr. Brownwell." I kept up

the pretense of courage, the way you pretend not to fear a strange dog, hoping he won't smell your fear and leap at you. I even smiled, waveringly. "Good night," I said, backing away.

He wasn't going to let me go. I sensed that, in the slight hunch of his shoulders and his lowered head. But suddenly, over the rise about half a mile down the road, the headlights of a car appeared. He must have heard the sound of its motor before I did.

"Good night, Betty," he said quietly.

I turned and began walking away fast. I must have gone fifty or sixty steps when I looked back over my shoulder. The car was close now, and its headlights lit up the place where we'd been standing. But no one was there.

The car whirled past me without stopping, its tail light dwindling away in the distance. I was alone again, and in a few minutes I came in sight of our house. I broke into a run. My feet drummed on the planks of the walk, the steps, the rickety porch. I yanked open the door and pushed it shut, leaning against it and panting.

Mr. Brownwell! It wasn't possible! But it was. If that car hadn't come along—

I remembered what I'd heard about the moon then, and in the long night-marsh hours before dawn I lay beside my sister Hilda in the room we shared, and thought back, trying to remember if it had been a full moon when those other two girls were killed. I couldn't be sure, though; I'd have to find out tomorrow what the exact dates were, and look them up on some calendar that told the moon's phases. Anyway, it didn't matter, because Mr. Brownwell was the one who had attacked and killed them. I knew it, and— and maybe he knew I knew it. Maybe he had seen the knowledge in my eyes.

The moon was on its way down now. It shone in at the bedroom window, crept along the floor and touched the bed and kept creeping and creeping until the edge of it was on my face. I moved over toward Hilda, and pretty soon I had to move again, but in the end I couldn't escape. The moonlight was in my eyes.

Sometime toward dawn, I must have slept—a kind of sleeping, anyway, ragged with dreams. Then when the room was light, I really did sleep, and didn't wake up until almost noon.

I wasn't sure then. The certainty was gone. It couldn't live in the bright light of day. Mr. Brownwell was a respected, important man in Jonathan's Landing, with a fine wife and two teenage children. He owned quite a few of the beach cottages, and what was more natural than for him to walk out and take a look at them on a fine moonlit night?

Of course! That was all there was to it! I'd just been imagining things. We were, all of us at the Landing, still edgy after those two murders.

I dressed and went down the hall to the kitchen in back. Hilda sat at the table with a comic book, while Mom was finishing up the breakfast things. It was like any morning, except that I'd gotten up later than usual. But even that was ordinary, since I'd worked late the night before.

We talked a little, about unimportant things, and then Mom asked, "Did you walk home alone last night?"

"Yes," I said. "But I met Mr. Brownwell on the road."

"That's nice," she said. "I don't like to think of you out alone at night. What was

he doing way out this way so late?" "Well—he said he was just taking a walk, looking at his beach houses."

The emphasis I put on "said" made Mom look at me. "Then I expect that's what he was doing," she remarked dryly.

"I don't know, Mom—" I wanted to tell her, ask for her help and advice, but I stopped. I'd forgotten Hilda for a minute, she'd been so absorbed in her comic book. But now she was looking up. Hilda was only thirteen, and I couldn't talk about such things in front of her.

While I hesitated, Hilda said suddenly, with a giggle, "Did he try to put his arm around you?"

I looked at her in astonishment. "What do you mean?" I asked; at the same moment Mom gave an outraged gasp.

Hilda tossed her head. "Well, he did with one of the girls at school," she declared. "Mildred Hunt. It was after school, and she met him in the hall. I guess he'd been talking to the principal. Anyway, he stopped Mildred and talked for a minute, and then he tried to—"

"Hilda!" Mom's voice snapped in anger. "Don't you ever speak like that again! It isn't true—Herb Brownwell's a fine man! If he knew Mildred was spreading a story like that he'd—"

"But Mom, it happened!" Hilda insisted. "Mildred told me herself!"

"Then she's a nasty liar," Mom said flatly. "Of all the people to accuse—why, I've known Herb since I was a girl. We used to go to dances together, and a nicer boy never lived—" There was a catch in her voice, and she stopped. She turned her back on us.

Thank goodness I hadn't had time to blurt out, on impulse, my suspicions of Mr. Brownwell! For Mom would never have believed me—her reaction to Hilda's tale showed that. But if Hilda's friend Mildred had told the truth, then it was another bit of evidence against Mr. Brownwell, another proof that I was right about him.

I didn't say anything more just then. I waited until I could catch Hilda alone, later in the morning, and then I asked her, "Did that really happen—what you said about Mr. Brownwell and Mildred Hunt?"

Hilda nodded firmly. "It did, Betty. Mil never told anyone but me, and I know she wouldn't lie because I'm her best friend." She looked at me shrewdly. "Why? Did he do anything—funny last night?"

"No—no." When you came right down to it, he hadn't. "It just seemed—kind of scary, meeting him on the road."

Hilda nodded. "I'll bet. But you know Mom—anybody she likes, she won't hear a word against. You know what? I bet she was sweet on him when she was a girl."

"Oh, well—" I said. It was just like Hilda to think of a thing like that. But then I thought—wasn't I building up a story about Mr. Brownwell myself, with just as few real facts behind it?

I didn't know. I just didn't know.

I was due at the diner at three in the afternoon. Well, suppose I just didn't go? Suppose I told Mom I was sick, and stayed home? But I couldn't do that. Gus Vradanik, Mr. Ahrens' counterman, had gone on duty this morning early, to open up and serve breakfast to the fishermen who wanted it. He was working long hours as it was, with Mr. Ahrens away, and he was counting on me to relieve him.

So I had to go. As I left, Mom said, "Want your father to pick you up tonight?" I hesitated, then said, "No, let him get his sleep. Jay will bring me home." He'd

said last night, when he left, "See you tomorrow." I'd ask him to wait and drive me home, and of course he would. And tomorrow Mr. Ahrens would be back from Providence and I'd be on my regular day shift again, eight in the morning to five at night, and very soon the moon would be past its fullness and I could forget all the foolish ideas I'd been having about Mr. Brownwell.

At the thought of Jay, fear left me. I felt warm and safe and happy. Because Jay made it possible for me even to stop thinking about Mr. Brownwell, stop wondering whether I was right about him or wrong. He made Mr. Brownwell unimportant.

Or—almost unimportant. All afternoon, while I waited on the few customers who came in, Mr. Brownwell kept creeping back into my thoughts, no matter how often I pushed him out. I might be safe, because of Jay and because I'd be careful never to be out alone again at night, but if Mr. Brownwell really was a—a murderer, how about other girls? I ought to tell someone, someone who could investigate and find out the truth. It was my duty. Only there was nothing definite to tell. Just that I'd met him taking a walk, and he said he liked moonlight.

If only I could find out about the moon when those two murders happened! I couldn't remember the exact dates, and the only way to be sure of them was to visit a library—the nearest one was Plymouth—and look them up in back newspaper files. After that, I'd have to get a calendar that still had its July and August pages, and check on the moon that way.

And even if I found out that the moon had been at the full when the girls were killed—what proof was that of Mr. Brownwell's guilt? Nobody would believe me if I just said he was a murderer.

THINKING so much about Mr. Brownwell, it was a shock when the door opened, late in the afternoon, and Mrs. Brownwell walked in. I don't know why it should have been, because she often came in about this time for a cup of coffee, but it was. I couldn't quite keep my hand from trembling when I served her. She noticed it right away.

"What's the matter, Betty?" she asked with a smile. "Nervous this afternoon?"

"I guess so." I tried to laugh. "Someone walking across my grave—" I caught my breath. What had made me say that? Mrs. Brownwell's eyes were on my face, a little puzzled. I hurried on. "I suppose it's only because I was up late last night, working. While Mr. Ahrens is away, I'm here until eleven."

"Oh, Oh, yes," she said, nodding.

She couldn't know, of course, I was thinking. She couldn't stay married to him if she did. So she was the last person in the world who could help me. But something made me go on.

"How's Mr. Brownwell? Did he get home all right last night?"

Her eyes widened above the rim of the cup. Slowly, she set it down. "Why—yes," she said, polite inquiry in her voice.

"I met him on my way home," I told her. "He was taking a walk." I forced a laugh. "He really scared me, until I saw who it was."

"He did?" All at once I felt a tension between us. I thought, she does know! But then she said quietly, "He often walks on the beach at night." There was a note of sadness in her voice—of loneliness. That was all, though. She had no idea, no suspicion, of what I wanted to tell

her—if only I dared.

Someone else came in, and I got busy. By the time I was free again, Mrs. Brownwell was gone.

The sun dropped down into the west, and a few people came into the diner for supper. For an hour or so I was busy waiting on them. At seven-thirty, while a family party was still in one of the booths, Gus put on his coat and left for the day.

When the family party finished, it was eight o'clock. I felt the first faint stirring of discomfort about Jay. He'd said he would drop in tonight, but—maybe he wouldn't. I remembered that he wasn't the kind you could count on.

I could telephone him at his home. But that would look as if I were chasing him. I decided to wait a while before trying to call him.

THE STREET outside was almost deserted, only one or two cars parked at the curb, and just the drug store and the diner itself lighted up. I thought of closing the diner now, and going home—I could, for all the business that would be coming in. But Mr. Ahrens made a point of staying open until eleven, no matter what, and he'd be mad if he found out I'd closed so early in the night.

While I stood there, the moon rose above the roofs across the street, bright and clear and cold. It was perfectly round tonight—dead full. Watching it, I shivered. I was sorry, now, that I hadn't left word for Pop to drive in after me. But it was too late for that—we had no phone at our house.

Some teen-age boys and girls came in, bought bottled soft drinks, and stayed, playing the jukebox. It was eight-thirty, and then it was getting on toward nine. Surely Jay would be here by now—if he was coming at all!

I couldn't call Jay while the kids were around, and I thought they'd never leave. But at last, a few minutes after nine, they swallowed the last hoarded-up drops of their drinks and went out, driving off in their beat-up old car with a lot of noise and laughter. Everything seemed even stiller when they'd left.

I hurried to the phone on the wall and lifted the receiver. I gave the operator Jay's number. My voice stuck in my throat the first time, and I had to repeat it before she understood.

I heard the bell at the other end ringing. It rang and rang and rang, and no response.

Oh, please God, I prayed, let him be there—let him answer it. And then I prayed, let somebody answer it.

Somebody did, at last. Jay's father, and he sounded sleepy.

"Who?" he roared when I tried to tell him who I was. "Who? Oh, Betty Adams. You want Jay? He's not here. No, I don't know where he is. Or—wait a minute—he said something at supper about going out with Bill Tadeuss in his boat."

"Oh!" I gasped. My legs turned to ice, and I had to lean against the wall. "Mr. Carden," I said, "tell him, please, that Betty—"

"What's that? Speak up—I can't hear you!"

"It's terribly important, Mr. Carden!" Now I was almost screaming. "Tell him to come to the diner for me, the minute he comes in. Tell him it's a—a matter of life and death!" It was the wrong thing to say. I knew that the instant I said it. Trying to impress (Continued on page 92)

I HAD A Hysterectomy

From mother to daughter, through generations it came, the dread of this operation. "Afterwards, you're no good as a woman," they said. "Your husband won't love you!" But I know now—and I'm telling you: there is no need to fear

SOMETIMES, a great, overwhelming terror comes into your life, and you feel that you can't face it: it's the end. Not that you'll die, perhaps, but that you face the end of all the wonderful, precious things which make you a woman. Like being feminine and normal in every way, able to want and enjoy love and sex, able to feel the rapture of desire, and in all ways be complete. As you were before terror came to haunt you, to darken your whole world, as it did mine.

I felt that terror when I learned that I must have an operation, one that so many women dread the most—a hysterectomy.

Do you know what that means? It means the removal of the organs of birth and reproduction, the organs that make you a woman. I had known this even before the ghastly day I learned that I must have such an operation, because—this added to my horror—my mother had had a hysterectomy when she was about my own age. After that, she was "different"—off balance. No, I don't mean insane, but nervous, restless, ever complaining and fussing, too tired, exhausted to even do a day's work in the home. But above all else she'd turned on Father; I'd always felt his early death had been caused by her nagging, her tantrums. John and I had to keep her in an old ladies' home where the inmates weren't quite normal, not really mental cases, just unable to cope with life.

Can't you see, can't you understand how I felt? What black despair filled me when I found I was facing the same operation? I might be like Mother, and, dear God, I couldn't stand that! And John would hate me! He and I had been so near, so dear in every way. Companions and lovers. We'd always had such fun together. And,

somehow, the physical need had lasted; the wonder of his arms about me, the eager giving of myself.

That's why, when the symptoms began, red flags of warning, I didn't tell John and I didn't go to our family doctor, Dr. Harrod. I didn't dare, for I'd heard about them from Mother, and panic was in my heart. But they grew worse. All summer, I, who had seldom been tired, was exhausted and irritable. I snapped at the children, I even snapped at John. Until he exclaimed, at last: "Frances, what the dickens is wrong with you lately?"

I answered, not meeting his eyes: "I'm—just tired. I can't seem to get rested. My back aches and—" But I didn't finish. I didn't want to worry him. Besides, I had the feeling, silly as it was, that if I ignored my symptoms, they'd go away.

I worried, waking at night sometimes, to stare into the darkness, with icy fear in my heart.

I kept putting off the visit to the doctor, I kept praying I'd be all right. Until I was jerked from my foolish drifting. I was getting worse, not better. And, above all else, the truth was driven home to me when there was no rapture in John's arms; there was only pain! Instinctively, not wanting to, I began to hold myself back from John's love—then I knew I could stand no more. I told myself I was a sick woman; I needed a doctor.

I made an appointment with Dr. Harrod for that very afternoon.

Mabel and Fran were at school when I left the house, Jackie at the day nursery. Teddy, I left with my next-door neighbor, who had a baby just his age. I remember it was such a beautiful sun-bright day outside, (Continued on page 95)

"No!" I shuddered when the
doctor told me. "That can't happen to
me. I'd almost rather die!"





MY MOTHER -IN-LAW'S

Neva had taken my hope from me—my happiness and my husband, too. Now her guilt-stained, menacing fingers were reaching for my child!

• This is the story of the bitter and vicious fight waged by my mother-in-law, Neva Wilton, to break up my marriage to her son, Bruce. It was a fight in which the odds were on Neva's side because I felt unworthy of Bruce, inferior to his well-educated and wealthy friends. As Irene Andrus, I had known nothing but poverty since my father had died when I was five and my mother went to work as a scrubwoman. My mother's second marriage to a German fruit farmer didn't better our fortunes. My older brothers and sister had to quit school after the eighth grade. I went on to high school. I was so unhappy there, so obviously a misfit that I quit school and resigned myself to a lifetime of dreary poverty.

The following summer, my sister and I moved into town to work in the vegetable cannery. I hated the work and the people I met there. I felt despairingly that beauty and romance would never enter my life. Then I met Bruce Wilton and he opened a whole new world to me. We fell in love in spite of our different backgrounds. Bruce was the oldest son of a wealthy family, spoiled by an ambitious mother. She ordered Bruce to give me up but he defied her and we were married. His father approved and financed our honeymoon. Our homecoming was a nightmare. Neva, in a ghastly scene, made it clear that she hated me and wanted to destroy our marriage. Bruce, however, didn't seem to take her threats seriously and she was careful, after that, to conceal her feelings from him. When I became pregnant, she was furious, accusing me of trying to trap Bruce permanently. She offered me two thousand dollars to have an abortion and when I threatened to tell Bruce, she mockingly said she'd gamble her word against mine. I was afraid of her influence over Bruce, so said nothing. Dr. Joe was the only one I told. The night my baby was born, Neva insisted on being alone with me before

the doctor came. I was in terrible pain and needed a sedative. But Neva gloated over my agony, tantalizing me, saying she hoped both my baby and I would die. Before my very eyes, she threw the pain-relieving medicine away! Fortunately Dr. Joe arrived then and made Neva leave the hospital, just before my little girl was born. We called her Emmy, but to me she was always Emmy.

For a while, after Emmy's birth, Bruce and I were happy, but soon he became restless and dissatisfied with me because I still couldn't fit myself into his crowd. Signs of another woman in his life began to show up. I was sure it was Madeleine Harris, a beautiful girl Bruce had known in college. Bruce and I quarrelled bitterly and I began to realize the tragic truth that Bruce had married me in a childish burst of defiance against Neva. When Bruce's father died, Neva's domination over Bruce was complete. I was living only for Emmy, when Dr. Joe saw the breakdown that threatened me. He urged Bruce to take me away for a rest but Neva thwarted that. Instead, she saw her chance to get rid of me, to send me and Emmy back to my parents' farm. When I tried to rebel, she threatened to make trouble for me . . . to take my precious baby away! I gave in then, knowing that Neva had defeated me again.

EMMY and I stayed with Papa and Mama for two months. Things were better at the farm now. A new state highway had been cut through Papa's land, and he'd been paid generously for it. He had leased his orchards to a fruitgrower, and he and Mama lived on that income. Mary and my two brothers worked and lived in town.

Though my folks accepted my explanation of needing a rest, I knew they'd guessed the truth—that things weren't right between Bruce and me. Other husbands would have been out



CONCLUDING THE TWO-PART STORY OF A DESPERATE WIFE

Revenge



"Didn't you call a doctor?"
I cried. Neva's eyes froze. "No," she
said, while Madeleine might be
dying. "I just waited for you."

"I wonder if you'll ever be ready," Dick said, his face cold with anger. "I wonder if you won't always let your past drag at your heels so there can't be a decent future for you—for us!"

on weekends, to see their wives and children. Bruce only phoned me, once a week, to ask about Emmy. But in my mind, I'm afraid I kept hoping for a miracle. I kept remembering that a miracle brought Bruce and me together in the first place; maybe a miracle would save our marriage now.

At any rate, as my health improved, I became impatient to return to my own home in Franktown. I left the farm one day, with Emmy, without telling Bruce I was coming home. I wanted to surprise him; maybe to see, by the look on his face, what the future would be.

He was out when Emmy and I arrived. I put her to bed, and made myself as attractive as I could while I waited.

But I knew the minute Bruce walked in that it was hopeless. He gave me a long, slow look that sent blushes through me. I knew what he was thinking—that my eager smile, my sheerest negligee, my shining hair were deliberately staged for him. That was true—as true as the final heart-breaking realization sweeping over me—that my efforts were wasted. We were married in name only now.

Bruce spoke first. "So you're back," he said flatly. "Why didn't you call me first?" "I—I didn't think," I whispered.

"No?" he said unpleasantly. "Maybe you thought you'd find some divorce evidence? Neva always did say that you were a lot smarter than I gave you credit for."

Neva again! Always Neva! I cowered in the chair, shivering, wishing I'd never come back.

"It's just as well you're here, though." Bruce went on. "Why kid ourselves? Our marriage is a flop. I want a divorce."

I knew that, but still I had to hear it from his lips. I choked out the question over the raw agony of my aching throat. "You want to marry Madeleine?"

It was Bruce's turn to flush. He said angrily, "That's nothing to you. Neva warned me you'd hold out for more money if you knew I wanted to marry Madeleine, but you won't get it. You'll have to take what I'm willing to offer."

This was my husband speaking, the man in whose arms I had lain close and warm, whose child I had brought into the world from a body racked with pain. . . .

"I don't need your money," I said clearly. "I'll take care of myself and Emmy. You can have your divorce whenever you want it."

I guess my calmness took Bruce by surprise, for he began to bluster, the way he always did when he was uncertain of himself. "We never were right for each other! You always acted like a scared rabbit, you and your damned inferiority complex! Neva told me how often she tried to help you and got told off for her trouble! You didn't want to be helped. That's what Neva says."

"That's what Neva says! That's what Neva says!" I mocked him savagely, aching

to hurt him as he was hurting me. "What are you . . . a man or a babe in arms? Go on, get out of here . . . go running back to Neva!"

I ran into the bedroom and slammed the door and a minute later I heard the front door of the apartment closing behind Bruce. Forever. Oh, such a lonely word . . . a hard word that nothing can soften, not even the floods of tears that I wept that night.

Somehow I struggled through that miserable time that every woman must endure when her marriage has failed. I tried to tell myself that I was lucky. I was rid of Neva. She couldn't torment me any longer. My marriage to Bruce had been a romantic mistake. It was a good thing it was over.

But my heart wouldn't listen. My heart knew that I still loved Bruce and I was miserable without him. The long nights found my pillow wet with tears. At first I prayed that God would send Bruce back to me, but then I changed my prayer, asking God to give me the strength to go on in any way He wanted me to. I found a lot of comfort in that prayer. Of course it hurt when I saw Bruce at a distance, on the street or driving past in his car. The gossip that followed my filing suit for divorce hurt too. I felt as though everyone was laughing inwardly because I'd thought I was good enough to marry a Wilton.

But I got over that. I had to find a job to support myself and Emmy. I'd moved out of our apartment into a small two-room place and was getting by on what remained of our savings account. I'd been firm about not taking money from Bruce, though his lawyer had argued with me for a long time. I knew that Bruce's reason for wanting to pay me alimony was simply for the looks of the thing. He couldn't care much about Emmy because even though he'd been given the right to see her once a week, he never came near her.

The day my lawyer handed me a copy of the divorce decree, I left Emmy with the woman next door and started looking for a job. I walked the streets, trying to decide whether to go back to the factory or perhaps look for a selling job in a store. There were so few things I could do, I thought miserably. I wasn't trained to earn my own living. I wasn't a suave, clever woman like Madeleine Harris. I was just a green, half-educated girl. Then I saw the sign and it seemed the answer to my problem, a clear light piercing the confusion in my mind. The sign said, "Acme Employment Agency—All types of jobs and positions." I was almost amused, seeing the geranium plants in the window, thick-leaved and bristling with scarlet blossoms. It seemed like such a homey touch in the cold business world. I felt that the people in that office might be nice, friendly too. That gave me courage to mount the stairway to the second floor.

The office was one large square room, furnished with a half-dozen yellow oak chairs and a typewriter desk. At the desk, a woman was sitting. She was in her fifties, with a fluff of gray curls all over her head and soft brown eyes. She was short and comfortably plump, the kind of woman you pictured cutting biscuits in her kitchen, not sitting behind an office desk. I liked her on sight.

She spoke cordially and handed me an application form to fill out. Then we'd discuss job possibilities, she said briskly. She was Mrs. Carleton, manager of the agency.

I sat down with the form. "Age?—22." "Married or single?—Divorced." How I hated that ugly word! I hurried on to the next questions, about my education and experience. And suddenly the most awful feeling of hopeless depression swept over me. What could I do? What was I good for? The only work I'd ever done was at the cannery, and I was hopelessly uneducated.

I went up to Mrs. Carleton and dropped the unfinished application on the desk before her.

"There's no use wasting your time," I muttered. "There's nothing I can do . . ."

I turned to leave but her small, warm hand seized my wrist tight.

"How can you say such a thing!" she cried in her high, sweet voice. "A young, healthy, lovely girl like you! Why, there's nothing you can't do, my dear. The world's your oyster!"

SHE BEAMED at me and, incredibly, I found myself smiling back. That was the effect Liz Carleton had on me. She buoyed me up. From the bottomless well of her own confidence, she restored my faith in myself. I told her about my background, my broken education, my unsuccessful marriage.

"I have no talent—no business experience," I finished hopelessly. "Nobody'd hire me for anything."

"I bet there's some talent you've got that you don't even know about," Mrs. Carleton said confidently. "Now tell me, Irene, what are you specially good at? What do you do so well, that other women say 'Oh, Irene, if I could only do that' . . . ?"

I looked at her in astonishment. That was almost what Mrs. Matthews on the floor below had said when she'd come into the playground and found me playing with Emmy and her own daughter and several other neighborhood children.

"Well," I began reluctantly, because it seemed like a silly thing to say, "I love children—very young children—"

She rolled her eyes up to the ceiling. "Don't think that's not a talent," she said emphatically. "Why, I've got a good job right now for a helper in a private kindergarten. It's a full-time job and you can probably arrange to have your daughter there, too. How does that sound?"

I felt tears of happiness gathering in my eyes. "It sounds wonderful," I said shakily, "if only . . . if only I can do it right."

"You can do it," Mrs. Carleton said firmly. "Listen, my dear," she looked deep into my eyes, "your life isn't over because you've been badly hurt. You must look forward, not back. You've got a lot to offer and some day you'll meet the man who'll appreciate that."

I left the office, after arranging for an interview with the kindergarten manager the following day. I thanked Mrs. Carleton fervently, knowing that she offered me more than just a job opportunity. She was

the first person to give me hope and self-confidence.

I got the job because I went there with my head up instead of down.

It was the perfect niche for me. I loved working with the tiny boys and girls, teaching them songs and games, and supervising their play outside. Emmy seemed happy too and more manageable than she'd been recently. I felt a guilty pang as I realized that losing her father had probably upset her more than I'd guessed.

I always came back to Bruce in my thoughts. The pain of bitter memory dulled, but it returned, piercing me with a throbbing ache, when I saw the story in the newspaper of Bruce's marriage to Madeleine. Neva would approve of her. I could just imagine her sharp eyes approving of Madeleine's clothes, her hair, her sophistication.

Then, I was angry with myself for feeling bitter. I knew that Mrs. Carleton was right when she told me to look forward, but all that day scenes from my past life with Bruce kept coming back to me. The happy scenes, the few lost moments of love and understanding we'd known. I reproached myself for not trying harder to be what Bruce had wanted, though I knew that Neva's hatred of me and her influence over Bruce had probably doomed our marriage from the start.

WHEN I went to pay the last installment on the agency fee for my job, Mrs. Carleton sensed my depression. We'd become very friendly in the past weeks. She seemed to like me and to be genuinely interested in me, and I always went away feeling reassured and happy. She told me that she was a widow, that she had started the agency to keep herself busy after her husband's death. Dick, her son, worked as a chemical engineer in the rubber plant which was Franktown's biggest industry. She told me a lot about him too, his service in World War II and his return to find that his girl hadn't waited for him.

"He didn't exactly break down after that," she said thoughtfully, "but he's been a little too much withdrawn ever since."

I felt sympathetic toward Dick Carleton and interested too. I was glad to accept Mrs. Carleton's invitation to dinner. I had Emmy with me, but she said that was fine. Dick loved children.

I was helping Mrs. Carleton with the dinner and we'd left Emmy looking through magazines in the living room. I heard a man's voice and then Emmy's glad, shrill cry, "Daddy!" I dropped the paring knife and ran into the living room, with my heart in my throat. Of course it wasn't Bruce. It was a stranger standing there, smiling down at Emmy, who had her arms twined tightly around one leg.

"Oh, I'm . . . I'm so sorry," I stammered. "You must be Mrs. Carleton's son. Here, let me . . ."

I tried to pry Emmy's fingers loose, but Dick Carleton picked her up and held her in his arms. He winked at her and then he turned his brown eyes, exactly like his mother's, on me.

"It's the nicest welcome home I ever had," he said simply.

I looked at my little girl, clinging happily to this man whom her hungry baby heart accepted as her father, and tears clogged my throat. "I'm afraid she misses her father," I choked out. "She's too young to understand."

Dick Carleton's face brightened. "Why, you must be Irene. Mom's talked a lot about you!" Dick was like his mother,

warm and friendly, and considerate.

Somehow we got into the habit of having dinner several times a week at the Carleton apartment. Then Dick's mother would sit with Emmy while Dick and I went to a movie or out dancing. When I protested that we were imposing on her, she insisted that she tired out early and liked to keep Emmy's bedtime. "Liz," she had me call her now. The name suited her, as sturdy and homespun as her own sweet self.

One night when we stopped back for Emmy, Liz followed me into the bedroom. She put her hands on my shoulders and kissed me on both cheeks. "God bless you, my dear," she said softly, "for what you're doing for Dick. He's getting back to his real self now. He's beginning to trust life again."

I was stunned by her words. "You mean . . . knowing me has done that?"

She nodded, smiling. "You've given him back his faith, because you're always your natural self, without any pretense or affection. Sincerity means a lot to a man."

I was happy to know what my friendship meant to Dick and his mother, but it made me a little self-conscious too. I couldn't seem to find anything to say to Dick when he drove us home and after Emmy was in bed and I went back to him in the living room, I was still at a loss.

"Cat got your tongue?" Dick teased.

I looked into his good, honest face with its clean lines and its firm, sweet mouth. I admired him and liked him and I felt he had the right to know what I was thinking.

"Liz told me this evening how it had helped you to know me, to be friends with me. I'm thankful that I've been able to do something for her. She's done so much for me. I love Liz very much, Dick."

"She loves you like a daughter," he said. Then his face tightened and his eyes became wary. "What are you trying to tell me, Irene? That you love Liz, but not her son?"

"Oh, please, Dick . . . I didn't mean . . ." I faltered. I bowed my head and my eyes fell on my ringless left hand. A white mark circled the third finger, where my wedding ring had been. In time, the mark would go, but never those scars on my heart. How can you love anyone with a crippled heart, I asked myself despairingly? Oh, surely Dick deserves better than that!

We were silent for a few troubled moments and then Dick drew me to my feet and held me lightly in the circle of his arms. He smiled down at me, the shadows cleared from his eyes.

"Don't fret yourself, honey," he said gently. "Maybe Liz spoke her piece too soon. I know what you're feeling . . . once bitten, twice shy. I've been hurt that way too, but I guess I got over it sooner than you. I can wait."

I tried to say that he mustn't wait . . .



that I didn't know . . . I couldn't promise. But his lips were on mine, stifling my breath, and after the first shocked instant, I knew that I wanted his kiss, I wanted his arms around me, crushing me close. It was like coming back to life, the quick, hot surge of blood through my body, the pang of sweetness almost too poignant to bear. . . .

Afterwards, I reproached myself. It was too soon after the smashup of my marriage to be sure of my emotions. The only fair thing to Dick was to keep our relations on a friendly basis, until I could be sure that what I felt for him was sound and lasting. I tried, but it was hard after that first kiss. When I tried to slip away from him in the downstairs hall, Dick would smile and reach out for me with those big, wonderful arms.

But, after the way my life had always worked out, I should have known it couldn't last.

One night he'd just kissed me when we both heard the tap-tap of high heels on the floor above and a woman's voice called down impatiently, "Irene! Is that you, Irene? For heaven's sakes, come up here! I've been waiting for you."

Neva had found me!

I must have turned pale because Dick tried to hold me back when I started up the stairs. Gently I pulled free. "It's Neva," I whispered, "my former mother-in-law. Don't come up with me, please."

"Sure it's okay?" he asked anxiously.

I nodded and tried to smile. I couldn't imagine what Neva wanted with me. I hadn't seen her since that evening she'd driven me and Emmy out to the farm. In that short time, she'd undergone a terrible change. Her beauty was gone, suddenly, as happens to some women. She looked haggard and feverish, and pitifully thin.

"Stop staring!" she snapped at me. "I know I look ghastly. My life . . . oh, Irene, you can't imagine what my life has been since Bruce married that awful woman!"

"You mean Madeleine?" I gasped. "Why, I thought you wanted Bruce to marry her."

"Perhaps I did, once!" she said peevishly. "I thought she'd make a good wife for him but I was wrong. Well, aren't you going to ask me in? Do I have to stand out here in the hall, broadcasting all my intimate family affairs?"

Hysteria rose in her voice as I unlocked the door. I prayed Neva would not start an embarrassing scene. As we entered my apartment, I explained that I must check up on Emmy before we began talking. Neva said nastily, "You mean to say you leave the child without a sitter? I thought you were such a model mother!"

"My neighbor comes in every half hour," I said. "She has a key, and if Emmy should cry she can hear her in her own bedroom."

She hardly waited until I returned and sat down before she started her tirade.

"She's a fiend, that girl!" Neva cried. "Now that she's pregnant herself, you'd think she'd understand mother love, but she doesn't. She actually forbids Bruce to see me—me, his own mother! Since I'm a widow, who can I turn to but my son? But I could die and she wouldn't help me—or let Bruce help me!"

"Why, only yesterday I felt ill and I called Bruce and—" Neva paused for breath. "She laughed! Laughed, I tell you! Then she put Bruce on the phone and he was brutal to me. He said that I'd broken up his first marriage, and he wasn't going to let me do it (Continued on page 118)



"Never any more suffering, after this," I thought. "Never pain or loneliness." Almost calmly I reached for the bottle

TOO LONELY TO LIVE

**"You want us to be together, don't you?" he asked. "Forever?"
I trembled, knowing that he meant—not on this earth!**

IF I CLOSE my eyes, I can see my mother's kitchen in my mind, just as it was when I was small—neat, clean, full of spicy breaths from the oven and the sweet, juicy smell of baking pie. My mother is there too, bustling back and forth, setting the table for supper. But most of all, no matter how I try not to remember it, I see that motto hanging on the wall by the window. The wooden frame is cracked and the parchment paper yellow with age but the words are clear, and burned into my brain now forever.

"I felt sad because I had no shoes, till I met a man who had no feet."

They tell a lesson, those words—Do Not Despair. They accuse my husband and me of a terrible sin against the mercy and goodness of God.

My parents were poor people. Those wonderful cooking odors didn't always pervade the kitchen, because there



wasn't always food for Mother to cook. But when my brother or I cried with hunger, Mother would point silently to the motto, and our whining would stop.

We lived on a little farm in southern Ontario. My parents had to slave from before dawn till after dark just to wring a bare living from our land.

But they taught us that happiness didn't come from things like dresses and paint and fancy meals. It was something deep within you, something joyous from your heart.

And we *were* happy. Our clothes were old and mended and faded, but Mother starched them crisply and we wore them proudly to the little country church on Sunday. Everyone else was just about as poor as we were, so envy didn't enter our hearts. It was a happy childhood. I wish now I'd stayed a child forever.

Our community was on the road

from Detroit to Toronto, so many American tourists passed through on their way east. There was a nice little inn in the village, with rooms and a restaurant, and when I was thirteen years old, I got a job there washing dishes. It wasn't very exciting, but I loved it, and two years later, when they promoted me to waitress, I was ever so proud.

My first day in the dining room was exciting and wonderful, but scary, too. All those sophisticated Americans—that's the way I thought of them. Once or twice they seemed to notice me, and then I'd hear remarks like, "Boy, these Canadians are sure hicks!" or "Look at Miss Wide-Eyed Innocence there. Isn't she a type!" I knew they were laughing at me, and it hurt.

But one day someone noticed me in a different way. She was an American lady too, and every bit as well dressed

as the others. But her manners were better. She smiled and beckoned me over to her table.

"How old are you, dear?" she said. "S-sixteen next September," I stammered.

"Do you like your job here?"

"Yes, I like it fine."

"Would you like a better one?"

"What—what do you mean, ma'am?"

"Would you like a job in the States? Whatever they pay you here, we'll give you five dollars more. You see, dear, we need domestic help very badly, and you seem so sweet. Would you like a job as maid?"

I'd never heard anything like that before, and I didn't know what to make of it. Maybe she was secretly laughing at me like the others. I couldn't answer her.

She saw how bewildered I was and patted my (Continued on page 103)



By Esther Foley, Home Service Director

WHILE you're baking cookies for Christmas, bake some tiny ones. Then make some bright paper containers. Fill them to the brim with cookies, and hang them on the tree. Or paste Christmas stickers on cellophane envelopes, slip frosted cookies inside, and tie with bright red ribbon to the green boughs. Your children can pass these good-to-eat trimmings to visitors, and feel the joy that comes of sharing on this day.

But to keep fresh during the holiday week, cookies must be of certain types:

1. They must be dry and firm. Moist cookies will not keep well.
2. After baking, cool cookies completely on racks, before putting them away.
3. Store each type separately. Dominant flavors mingle easily, but not too well. Stone or crockery jars, tightly sealed canning jars, tin boxes are all good for storage. Put wax paper between layers to prevent crushing.
4. Before filling paper containers, line them with wax paper. Do not mix the cookies; fill each container with a different kind.
5. Decorate cookies just before putting them in the containers, or just before serving them. They will look prettier and taste so much fresher.

To decorate: The base of all Christmas-cookie decoration is a confectioners' icing. Sift a pound of confectioners' sugar into a bowl. Add just enough milk to make a very stiff paste. If the frosting dries and gets too stiff as you work, add a bit more liquid. It should be so stiff it barely flows as you work with it.

A drop of this frosting will fasten a nutmeat to the top of a drop cookie. A smooth coating of it will provide a background for a decoration of cinnamon drops, chopped raisins or cocoanut. Let the smooth frosting dry perfectly. Then color a bit of the remaining frosting and put through a pastry tube to make a fancy design.

Silver dragees, candy shot, and chocolate jimmies can all be fastened to cookie tops with this basic frosting. Or slightly beaten egg white can be used. Let decorations dry until they are firmly fastened. The recipes for all the little cookies shown here are on the next two pages. If you would like to have directions for making the Christmas-tree cookie holders shown in this picture, we can send them to you. Just send us a stamped, self-addressed, long envelope. Address it to: Christmas Trimmings, Post Office Box 1384, Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y.

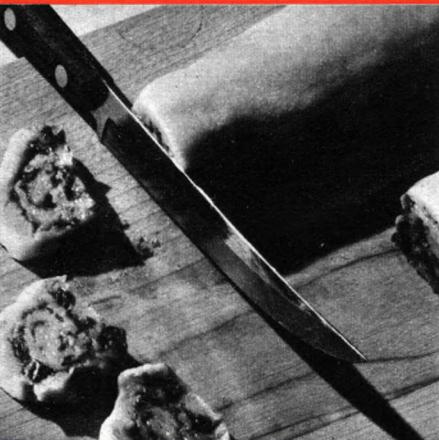
Xmas Decorations...

GOOD TO
EAT!



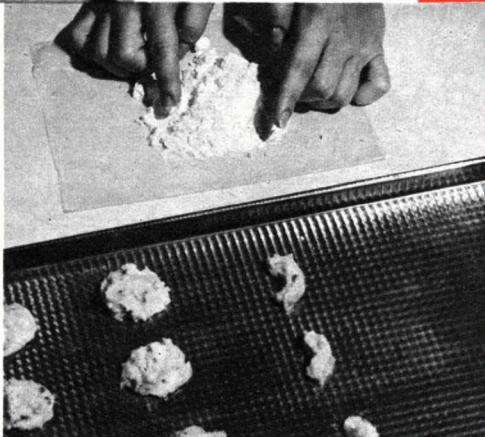
JUST 4 WAYS TO

for



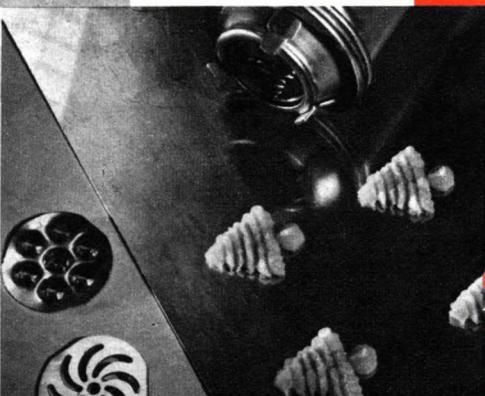
Filled dough-roll should be very cold when sliced. After preparing it, place roll on wax paper, wrap tightly. Place on flat pan and chill until firm. Take from refrigerator, roll under the hands until perfectly round. Return to refrigerator and chill overnight. Slice with very thin sharp knife. For tiny cookies make roll less than 1 inch in diameter

Drop dough can be baked on a greased or ungreased pan. If greased the bottom will brown a little faster. One heaping half-teaspoon of dough will make a cookie the size of a half-dollar. To make tiny cookies, drop one-quarter teaspoon of dough on baking sheet, about two inches apart. Dip fingertips in flour and shape dough into crescents



Rolled cookies, if they are to be decorated, should get careful treatment in order to make perfect shapes. Chill dough well, take a small amount at one time from refrigerator. Spread a little flour on the rolling board, roll dough quickly to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thickness. Dip cutter in flour, shake off excess, cut cookie, lift to baking sheet. Place 1 inch apart

Form cookies are rich in butter or margarine. If the kitchen is very warm, use an extra bit of flour. If it is cold, use a bit less flour than recipe calls for. When pressed through cookie shaper, dough should retain every mark of cutter, but should be soft enough to make a unified shape. Then it will bake with the definite line pattern still visible



Sliced, dropped, rolled, or pressed



ROYAL COCONUT COOKIES

Makes 3 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

1 1/4 cups sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
1/2 teaspoon salt

Measure and place in a mixing bowl:

1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar

Work with a spoon until soft and add:

1 egg
1 cup uncooked rolled oats
1 cup coconut, cut
1/2 teaspoon almond or vanilla extract

Beat until well blended. Stir in sifted dry ingredients. Shape dough into small balls and place on lightly greased baking sheet. Bake in moderate oven (350° F.) 12 minutes or until brown. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks.

Submitted by Janet Mateski, Superior, Wis.



BACHELOR BUTTON COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

2 cups sifted flour
1 teaspoon soda
3/4 teaspoon salt

Measure and put in a bowl:

3/4 cup shortening
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar

Work with a spoon until soft and then add:

1 egg

Beat until light and fluffy.

Add:

1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup chopped nuts
1/2 cup chopped candied or maraschino cherries
1/2 cup coconut

Beat until well blended. Stir in flour. Drop from a teaspoon onto a greased cookie sheet or shape into crescents with floured fingertips. Bake in moderate oven (375° F.) about 12 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks.

Submitted by Vera Terry of Chicago Heights, Ill.



CHRISTMAS MACAROONS

Makes 3 dozen cookies

Mix together until light and fluffy:

2/3 cup (1/2 can) sweetened condensed milk
3 cups shredded coconut
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Drop small amounts from a teaspoon onto a well greased cookie sheet about 1 inch apart. Bake in moderate oven (350° F.) for 8 to 10 minutes or until brown. Remove coconut macaroons from cookie sheet at once and place on wire racks to cool.

HANDLE DOUGH

all kinds of Cookies

—you'll find your favorite type among these mouth-watering Christmas cookie recipes



DATE SWIRL COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

HOW TO MAKE DATE MIXTURE:

Place in saucepan:

1/2 cup water
1/4 cup sugar

Cook for five minutes stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and add:

1/2 pound pitted dates, cut
1/4 cup chopped nuts

Let cool completely.

HOW TO MAKE COOKIE DOUGH:

Measure and sift together:

2 cups sifted flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Measure and put into a bowl:

1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar

Work with a spoon until soft and beat together until light and fluffy.

Add:

2 eggs

Mix well. Stir in dry ingredients. Toss dough on lightly floured board. Roll out 1/4 inch thick. Spread date mixture over dough. Roll like a jelly roll and wrap in wax paper. Place in refrigerator overnight to chill. Cut into slices about 1/8 inch thick and bake in hot oven (400°F.) for 10 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks.

Submitted by Mrs. Lester Boyd of Miami, Okla.



SPRITZ COOKIES

Makes 6 1/2 dozen cookies

Wash by working with a spoon under cold running water:

2 cups butter or margarine

Continue washing until discarded water is clear. Work butter with a spoon until free of water.

Add gradually:

1 cup sugar

Beat together until light and fluffy.

Add:

2 eggs, well beaten

Blend well.

Measure and sift together:

4 cups sifted flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

Add to butter mixture and stir until smooth.

Add:

1 teaspoon almond extract

Put dough through cookie press on a lightly greased cookie sheet, making any desired pattern. Decorate with colored sugar, candied cherries or nuts. Bake in a moderate oven (375°F.) 12 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks. Decorate as desired.



PECAN COOKIES

Makes 2 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

1 cup sifted flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

Measure and place into mixing bowl:

1/4 cup shortening

1/2 cup sugar

Work with a spoon until soft.

Add:

1 egg

2 tablespoons sweet milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup finely cut pecan nuts

Beat until light and fluffy. Stir in dry ingredients. Drop from a teaspoon onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake in moderate oven (375°F.) about 12 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks. From Mrs. John Moore, Marble Falls, Tex.



SCOTCH SUGAR COOKIES

Makes 6 dozen cookies

Place in small bowl and set aside:

1 cup buttermilk

2 teaspoons baking soda

Measure and sift together:

4-5 cups sifted flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

Measure and place into mixing bowl:

1 1/2 cups shortening

3 cups sugar

Work with a spoon until soft and then beat together until mixture is light and fluffy.

Add:

4 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

Stir in dry ingredients alternating with buttermilk mixture. Stir until smooth; add enough flour to make a stiff dough. Blend well. Chill dough for 1 hour. Roll a small amount of dough at a time 1/4 inch thick on a lightly floured board. Use cookie cutter for designs. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in hot oven (425°F.) for 10 minutes. Cool and frost as desired. Submitted by Mrs. H. Mitchell of Tucson, Arizona.



MOLASSES COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ginger or cloves

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon soda

Work with a spoon until soft:

1/2 cup shortening (lard and butter)

1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar

Beat until light and fluffy.

Add:

1 egg

Mix together.

Add:

1/2 cup molasses

1/4 cup cold coffee, milk or water

Beat until well blended. Stir in sifted dry ingredients. Chill. Roll out 1/8 inch thick and cut with cookie cutters. Bake in moderate oven (375°F.) 10 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool. Decorate.



HONEY REFRIGERATOR COOKIES

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

2 1/2 cups sifted flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

Work with a spoon until soft:

1/2 cup shortening

1/2 cup sugar

Beat together until mixture is light and fluffy.

Stir in:

1/2 cup honey

Add:

1 egg

1/2 cup chopped nuts

Beat until well blended. Stir in sifted dry ingredients. Divide dough into two sections. Shape each section into a roll. Wrap in waxed paper. Chill several hours or overnight. Cut rolls into slices 1/8 inch thick. Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake in a hot oven (400°F.) 10 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks.



CHRISTMAS JUMBLES

Makes 2 dozen cookies

Measure and sift together:

1 1/2 cups sifted flour

1/4 teaspoon soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

Work with a spoon until soft:

1/2 cup shortening (part butter)

1/2 cup sugar

Beat together until light and fluffy.

Add:

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla

Beat until well blended. Stir in flour mixture. Drop from a teaspoon onto a greased cookie sheet, about 2 inches apart. Bake in a moderate oven (375°F.) 8 to 10 minutes, or until delicately browned. Remove from cookie sheet. Cool on cake racks.

Have you a recipe you would like to share with other readers? If you have, send it with your name and address to YOUR RECIPE, P.O. Box No. 1804, Grand Central Station, New York 17, New York. We will pay \$5.00 for any recipe we publish.

My husband
taught me how to make
**CORN BREAD
THAT'S
DIFFERENT!**



This corn bread features a crispy, well-browned edge

MRS. MARCELLA SWONKE'S CORN BREAD

Serves 6

Sift together into a large bowl:

- 1 cup sifted flour
- 1 cup yellow corn meal
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder

Add:

- 1 cup plus two tablespoons milk
- 1 egg

Beat for one minute and then add:

- 4 tablespoons cooking oil or soft shortening

Beat one more minute. Place 2 teaspoons oil in 8" cake pan. Pour in batter. The oil will rise around it, greasing pan evenly. Bake in hot oven (425° F.) 25 minutes. Split, toast and butter any that is left over.



Deanna and Frances wait impatiently for some of Mother's special corn bread

MARCELLA Swonke is a slender, pretty, dark-haired Italian war bride. Her husband is a tall blond from Texas. They live in Red Bank, New Jersey, in a new house on a new street. Marcella thinks she's the luckiest woman on the whole street because she has the house with the largest kitchen. Even when company comes there is room for a little table where her two little girls, Deanna and Frances, sit and eat while the grown folks talk.

Marcella's favorite recipe is corn bread. Her husband was an officers' cook in the Army and he earned a great reputation because of his Texas Corn Bread. He found that most men liked a slightly sweet, tender bread. So he revised his mother's recipe just a little. Later, he taught his wife to make it. Marcella makes this corn bread at least once a week. I watched as she put it together. I was particularly interested in the way she greased the pan. She poured about 2 teaspoons of oil into it. Then, when she poured in the batter, the oil rose around the batter as it spread, greasing the sides of the pan evenly!

"I like the way it looks when it's done," Marcella said, "all brown and gold. I serve this corn bread with my special boiled beans. Then for dessert we always have red gelatin. The children love it."

At the mention of dessert, Deanna and Frances pointed at two pretty glass dessert dishes. "Those are their particular dishes," Marcella explained. "If they're missing from the china cabinet, the girls know they're in the refrigerator—filled with gelatin dessert!"

INTERVIEW BY ESTHER FOLEY, HOME SERVICE DIRECTOR

Nature's most refreshing flavor
happens to a meat dish... *when you*

bring on

Pineapple

You can't miss on pleasin' when Pineapple comes to table!

In meat dishes, salads, bakings... as breakfast fruit or dinner dessert...

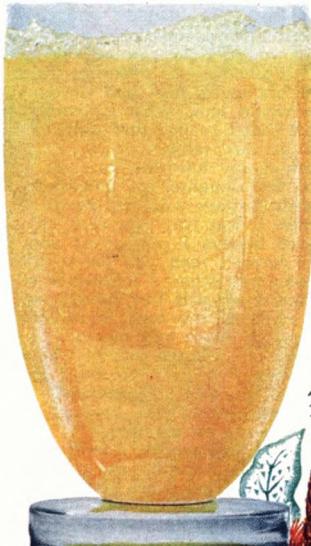
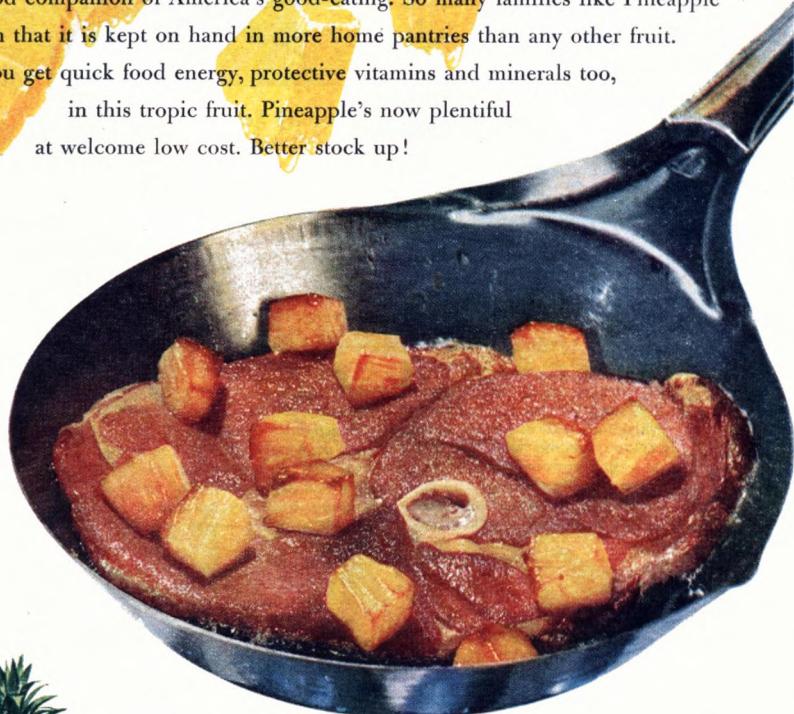
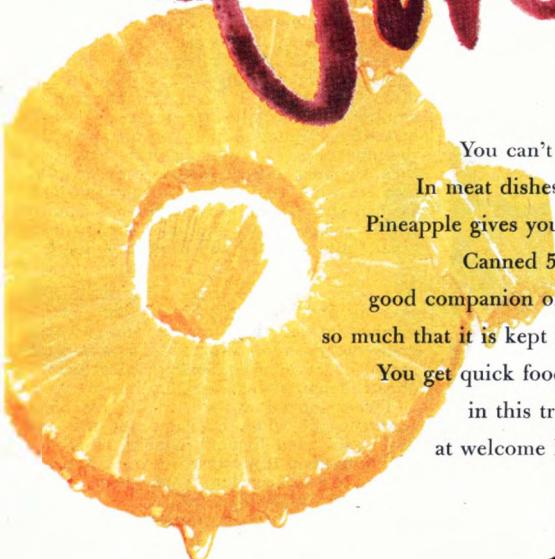
Pineapple gives your meal a lift with Nature's most refreshing flavor.

Canned 5 ways, as golden juice and varied fruit cuts, to be the
good companion of America's good-eating. So many families like Pineapple
so much that it is kept on hand in more home pantries than any other fruit.

You get quick food energy, protective vitamins and minerals too,

in this tropic fruit. Pineapple's now plentiful

at welcome low cost. Better stock up!



↑
CHUNKS

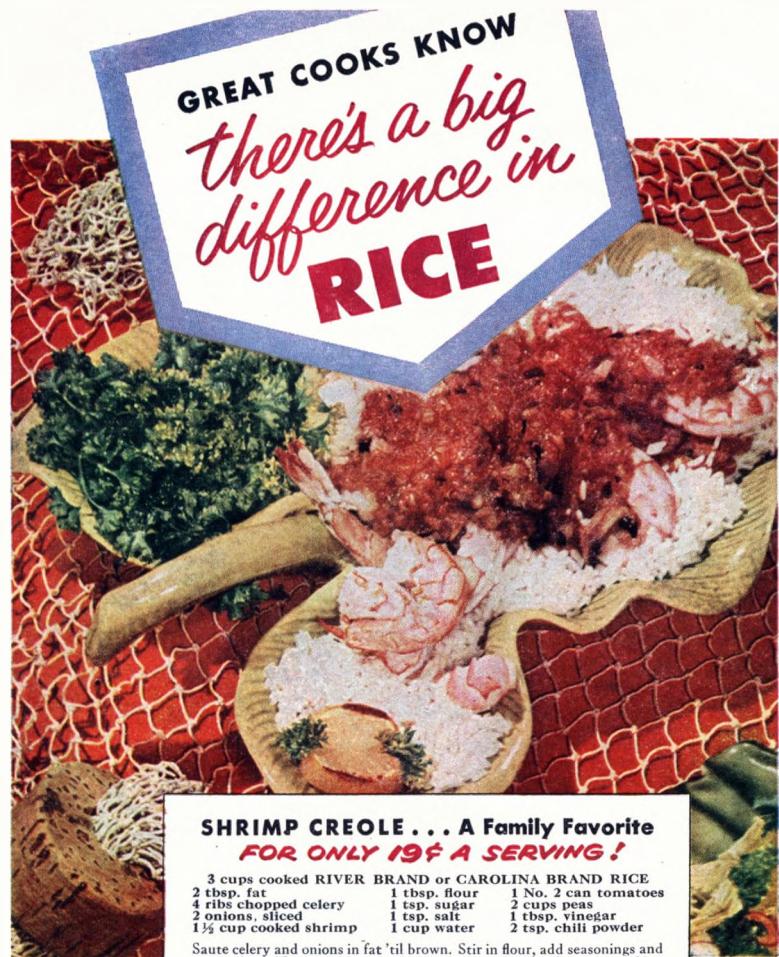


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MY YOUNG LOVER

(Continued from page 47)

One evening, on a double date, the other woman and I went to the restaurant powder room together. As she combed her hair, she said, "Chris certainly seems crazy about you."

I blushed like a teenager. "He's a wonderful guy," I said lightly.

"He is," she went on. "But we were worried about him for a while. He couldn't seem to settle down to anything; you never knew what to expect from him. One time he'd be sulky, another time wild as an Indian. I don't know — somehow you've been good for him." She gave me an oddly shy look. "I hope you're serious."

I hardly realized I was saying it. "Yes, we are," I said.

I had tormented myself and blamed myself long enough. I could not go on as we were going. It was useless now, to try to tell myself that I would be doing a worse wrong to marry Chris. That night, after I got home, I faced the situation. I wanted Chris wholly and forever. He had become so much a part of me that the thought of being without him was torture. I must either marry him or give him up — and surely, marriage was right. He had answered all my arguments against it. My whole being flooded with joy as a great, unqualified "yes" filled my heart.

We were to have dinner the following evening, and I would tell him then. I looked forward to the happiness my words would bring to his eyes. I went to bed happier than I had ever been, seeing a clear course ahead of me, at last, and finding joy.

Chris looked wonderful in his light summer suit when he came for me. His dark hair tried to curl in spite of all his efforts to keep it plastered down. I had put on a very becoming blue sheer dress, which he especially liked.

"You look very desirable tonight, Nora."

"The better to lure you, sir," I answered demurely.

The place he had chosen for dinner was one that had a garden for dining and dancing, where Japanese lanterns gave a colorful glow. But I hardly saw it. I waited only for the moment when I could say, "Darling, I want to marry you. I know now that you're right and we belong together." While he was ordering for us, I watched his loved face and dreamed of how he would look, what he would say. At first I didn't realize that someone had stopped at our table.

I looked up into the face of Mary Duncan, the daughter of a friend. She was standing there with her escort.

"I knew it was you," she said. "Mother will never believe I ran across you like this. We haven't seen you for so long. I guess you don't know — I've finished school and gotten a job and I've moved out and have a room of my own, right in your neighborhood. Mom told me to look you up. I think she wanted you to watch out for me. But I've been so busy getting settled and learning my new job that I hadn't gotten around to it. I'm just so excited at being on my own!"

Chris and her escort, Tom something or other, were standing during all this girlish chatter. They were both smiling.

Chris said, "Won't you join us and we can hear all about your adventures?"

After we were introduced and settled, I turned to Chris to explain that I had known Mary since she was a child. I found him smiling at her with a smile I knew all too well. And when I looked at her, she was blushing. A chill passed through my heart. Never have I seen two people as suddenly aware of each other as those

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King-size breakfast—right size for a busy day!

Pan-fried Armour Star Pure Pork Sausage and apple rings with take-your-pick cereals—here's a big-day breakfast that's ample and easy and packed with energy! The sausage links are plump with pure pork and delicate spices—made fresh daily in an Armour Sausage Kitchen nearby. Place the links in cold frying pan and cook over low heat 12-15 minutes, turning occasionally. Pour off drippings as they accumulate—saving some to fry the apple rings. A choice of ready-to-eat cereals adds a pleasing touch to a breakfast everybody will like!

It's another of Marie Gifford's favorite recipes! For other meal-planning ideas and interesting recipes, write for the helpful folder, "Hot and Cold Hits." Address the famous home economist, Marie Gifford—Armour and Company, Dept. 574, Chicago 9, Illinois.



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 ALL HEINZ CONDENSED SOUPS ARE GREAT
 EATING FOR LITTLE MONEY—ESPECIALLY AT
TODAY'S LOW PRICES!

two. I forced myself to speak casually. "What sort of work are you doing, Mary?" "Stenography. At the Thomas Advertising Agency," she said.

"I deal with them all the time," Chris said. "I'll be up there in a few days and see how you're coming along."

Mary glanced at him again, and their eyes held. "That will be nice," she said.

Our dinner was served, but what I ate I don't know. Chris was making an effort to give me his attention, but his eyes kept returning to Mary, and once or twice he stopped in the middle of a remark to me to look at her.

Mary, I could see, was unaware of anything between Chris and me. To her, I was her mother's friend and therefore no competition for her. She was trying to address her conversation to all of us, but her eyes were drawn more and more to Chris. Tom was bored by having to share Mary with others. He asked her to dance and Mary jumped up eagerly, saying, "I never get tired of dancing."

Chris watched them as they danced. "That is a darling," he said, looking guiltily at me.

"She is indeed," I agreed, hoping I hid the bitterness.

When Tom and Mary returned to the table, Chris, as if he could restrain himself no longer, stood up and asked for the



next dance. Mary turned wordlessly and lifted her arms to him.

I watched them as they danced, and if they talked I didn't see it. They appeared to understand one another without words. They were perfect dancers and swept in beautiful circles, without hesitation.

Tom was also watching them. He leaned across the table to light a cigarette for me. I had been nervously turning it in my hands, not knowing I held it. "Mary's a sweet girl," he said, "but I'm glad this is my first date with her. I think I'm losing out. I think we're witnessing a case of love at first sight . . ." He paused. Clearly the depth of my hurt must have shown in my face, and he looked terribly embarrassed. "I'm sorry," he said, "if I'm talking out of turn."

I managed a smile of sorts, and said. "You're talking out of turn, all right, but it doesn't make any difference."

He gave me an understanding look and said, "You're being very brave."

The rest of the evening was a haze. I danced with Chris but his thoughts weren't with me. He asked me questions about Mary, and I could see him watching her as she danced with Tom. As it happened, I watched it and knew it had to happen. Nothing that I nor anyone else

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HOW TO glamorize a budget meal

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Buying Guide:
Buy *Diamond* Walnuts in bulk or in 1 lb. cellophane bags (red for large size, blue for medium). Or get *Diamond* shelled Walnuts, in 8 or 4 oz. cans, vacuum-packed to stay fresh, sweet and crisp, ready for instant use.



WALNUT SWEET POTATO PUFFS

2 cups mashed cooked sweet potatoes
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 cup chopped *Diamond* Walnuts
3 tbsps. melted butter or margarine
6 slices pineapple, drained
6 marshmallows
6 *Diamond* Walnut halves

Mix potatoes, salt, nutmeg. Form into 6 balls and roll in chopped walnuts. (Remember, any time you plan a thrifty main dish, use *Diamond* Walnuts somewhere in the meal for flavor and for food value.) Place balls on pineapple; brush with butter or margarine. Bake 20 min. at 350° (moderate). Press marshmallow into center of each ball and top with a plump *Diamond* Walnut half. Return to oven till marshmallow is golden, about 5 min.



WALNUT CHRISTMAS TREE SALAD

2 3-oz. pkgs. cream cheese
1/2 cup cottage cheese
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. lemon juice
1/2 cup finely chopped *Diamond* Walnuts

1 cup thin-sliced celery, dried on paper towels
6 stuffed olives, thinly sliced, drained

For decoration: jellied cranberry sauce, *Diamond* Walnut halves and maraschino cherries

Thoroughly blend cheeses. Add rest of ingredients, mixing well. Spread in 8" pie pan lined with waxed paper. Chill 4 hrs., or till firm enough to cut. Turn out on waxed paper. Cut in 6 wedges; nest on lettuce. Decoration: Cut squares of cranberry sauce for "base"; top with crisp, golden *Diamond* Walnut halves. Trim "trees" with red and green maraschino cherries.



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could do would stop it. Chris looked at me once as if he really saw me and said simply, "I'm sorry, Nora." But I knew he couldn't help himself.

I was glad when the evening came to an end. The punishment was more than I could bear. I wanted to get away by myself and let my grief wash over me. The words I had planned to say seemed like a mockery to me now. I had been so happy just a few short hours ago. Now I had to face what the future would be. I no longer tried to fool myself. For the first time I felt old. My face felt cracked with the effort a smile cost me.

We parted from them at the entrance, Mary smiling and happy, Chris apparently reluctant to have the evening end. He suggested that we have coffee somewhere, but Tom and I had had all we could take for one evening. He said, "No, I think we had better say good night."

Chris was silent and thoughtful in the taxi as he took me home. He dismissed the taxi and went up to my door. There he stopped while I went into the hallway. I knew what was coming and I knew also that I was going to need every ounce of control I possessed.

We stood in the shadows, those protecting shadows that had always been the signal for our passions to flare up as we went into each other's arms. Now we stood, not quite touching, my heart pounding—but from fear.

Softly he touched me. "You're a wonderful woman, Nora."

Wonderful? Why? What was he saying? "You always knew, didn't you?" he went on and a chill—the chill of a woman knowing it's over—crept through me. "Knew that someday it would happen. Oh, you were much wiser than I ever was. You kept telling me it couldn't work—you and I being married. Remember how you said that I'd find the right girl suddenly, one day? Someone my own age—just perfect for me?"

My teeth would soon be chattering—from the chill, from the desperate cold set upon me by his words.

"Nora, there will always be a part of my heart that will belong to no one else but you . . ."

His voice fell so low I couldn't quite hear for a moment. "You guessed what happened to me tonight. When I met Mary. I mean to marry her."

Quickly, gently, he leaned to brush his lips against my cheek. "Goodbye, my sweet Nora. And thank you—for everything."

He was gone. I opened the door. I walked into the apartment that had been so vibrant with our companionship. Now my company would be tears and heartbreak, and the tearing pains of conscience. And I'd be lonelier, far lonelier than I'd ever been before. Once before I had been alone, but then I was a woman who knew herself, who trusted herself. Now I was a woman who had thrown away common sense, all the moral lessons, and had bought with them—a young man who whispered only "Thanks for everything" and was gone.

I sat in the chair where we had sat, and tortured myself with the thought of Chris kissing Mary—or her fingers caressing him—of their lips meeting. I dug my nails into my palms until they bled.

Then, as though I were acting it on a stage, under some stranger's direction, I walked over to the telephone. I knew it would never ring again with Chris' call, and yet I sat there, waiting, waiting . . .

It's been a month now and the phone never has rung—one month, the first month of paying for a happiness that never should have been mine. **THE END**



"Okay, pardner... reach for Karo!

It's a rich, quick-energy food for growing youngsters . . . and all us cowboys love it!"

Actually, Mother, you're "boss" of the ranch.

And so—you should know this: all youngsters burn up gobs of energy . . . which must be replaced with food . . . the right kind. Now—let's reason this out.

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As a blend of sugars, Karo does not irritate sensitive little stomachs . . . and being mildly sweet, Karo never encourages children's appetites for excessively sweet foods.

You can serve Karo Syrup in many, many ways . . . it makes other foods more enticing. All youngsters love this great American Syrup . . . and it's mighty good for them.

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~~no~~ wet sponge



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the Mirror Case holds your holiday
complexion *complete*. And it can't
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adored it," says Mrs. John A.
Roosevelt. 6 skin tones. Pond's
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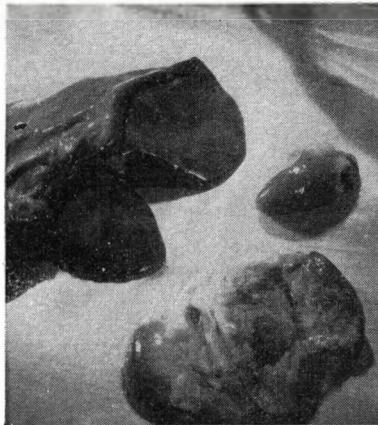


MEN GO FOR GRAVY . . . LIKE THIS!

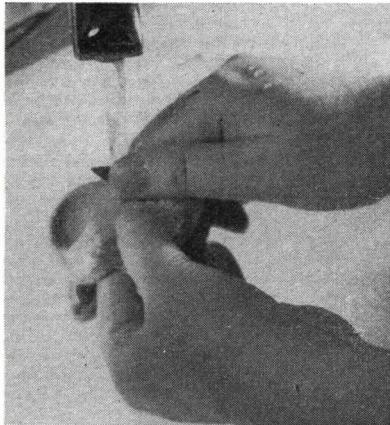


Add half of the chopped cooked giblets to the gravy, then sprinkle the rest on top

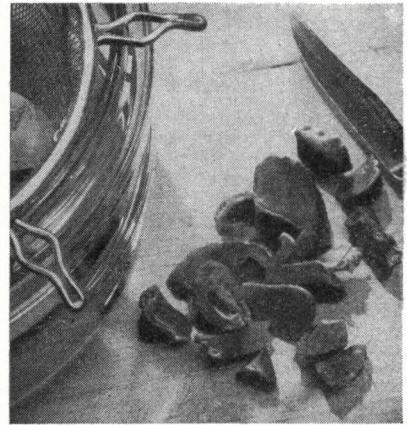
**Smooth, creamy, rich brown, fragrant, plentiful. This gravy will make
your holiday bird the most talked about dish at the feast**



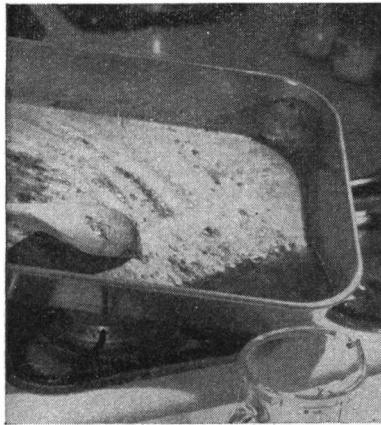
What are giblets? When speaking of turkey or chicken, giblets are the liver, the heart, and the gizzard. These organs are separated from the rest, trimmed, cleaned



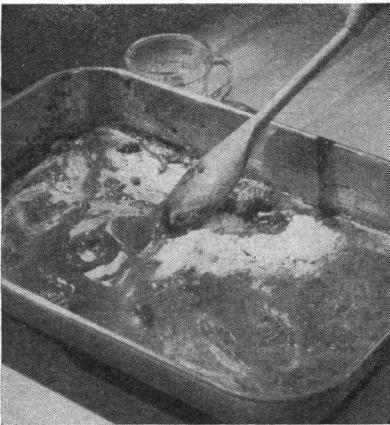
Giblets should be firm and clean in odor. Wash them well under running cold water. Use a small, sharp knife to cut away veins or gristle and to remove fat from gizzard



Cover gizzard and heart with cold water. Add an onion, a sprig of parsley and some celery leaves. Cook until tender, then add liver. Cook 5 minutes. Uncover, cool, drain



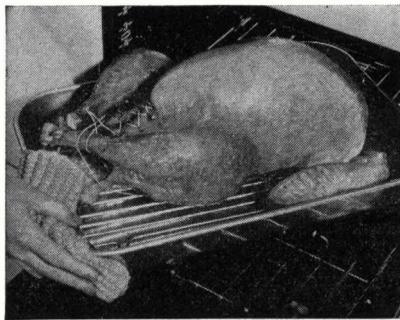
Save giblet broth. Cut giblets into pieces. Remove turkey from roasting pan. Pour drippings into a measuring cup. Return to pan. Place over low heat until bubbly



Measure an amount of flour equal to drippings. Add to drippings and stir until all fat is absorbed. The low heat should brown the mixture to a light, pleasing caramel color



Add 3 cups cold water. Stir well and let cook slowly until thickened. Add giblet broth, a little gravy coloring; season to taste. Add more water to reach desired consistency



HOW TO ROAST A TURKEY

YOUNG turkeys of any size may be roasted. Rinse the bird in cold water and pat dry. Keep in refrigerator and stuff just before roasting. Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup stuffing per pound, ready-to-cook weight. Stuff wishbone cavity lightly and skewer neck skin to back. Shape wings "akimbo" style, bringing tips onto back. Place turkey breast down in deep bowl. Rub cavity with salt. Spoon stuffing into body cavity. Shake bird to settle dressing. Do not pack it. Place skewer-nails across opening and lace shut with cord. Tie drumsticks securely to tail. Grease skin thoroughly with fat. Place on rack in shallow pan. Lay fat-moistened cheese-cloth—large enough to drape down the sides—over top of turkey. Roast at constant low temperature. (See roasting chart below.) Searing, adding water and covering the pan are not necessary for good results.

HOW LONG TO ROAST TURKEY

Use the chart below to determine how long to roast your turkey. It gives the approximate time required to cook chilled, unstuffed turkeys. Stuffed turkeys require approximately 5 minutes per pound more time.

Because turkeys vary in shape, the time indicated in the chart below is approximate total cooking time. To judge when your turkey is done, test 15 to 30 minutes before it should be done according to the roasting chart. Move the drumstick up and down; the leg joint should give readily or break. Or press the fleshy part of the drumstick, protecting fingers with cloth or paper—the meat should feel very soft. When a meat thermometer is used, it should register 190°F. placed in the center of the inside thigh muscle or in the center of the thickest meaty part. When dinner is set for a definite hour, start the bird so it will be done 30 or 40 minutes ahead of schedule. This will avoid delay should the turkey take longer to cook than estimated. But it also allows time to make gravy, remove trussing cords and arrange the bird attractively on the platter.

ROASTING CHART

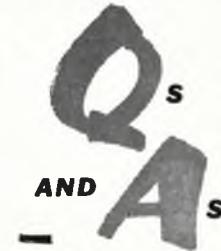
Whole Turkeys—325°F.

Ready to Cook (Pounds)	Weight (Pounds)	Total Cooking Time Approximate Hours
4 to 8	3 to 4	
8 to 12	4 to 4½	
12 to 16	4½ to 5	
16 to 20	5½ to 7	
20 to 24	7 to 8½	

TRUE STORY KITCHEN



By Esther Foley
True Story
Home Service Director



Q. Mrs. L. F. L. of Concord, N. H., writes: "I bought a used gas range and it has a yellow discoloration that shows whenever I open the oven or broiler door. Is there anything I can do to remove it?"

A. If the stain is baked on, it probably cannot be removed entirely. A paste of baking soda and water will help to soften and lighten it. Apply with a wet cloth when the oven is cool, rub hard, then wipe off with a cloth wrung from clear water. But to prevent the stain from deepening, see to it that the gas is properly adjusted. Call your local gas company and ask the service man to come adjust the flame and check the vent.

Q. Mrs. S. of East Detroit, Mich., writes: "I'd like to know how to make Devil's Food Cake look red."

A. This red color develops easily in a cake using baking soda and a tartrate or phosphate baking powder, baking chocolate or cocoa, and white sugar, sweet milk or water. The soda is dissolved in the liquid. If you like the recipe you are now using, keep on with it and increase the soda by $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon. If this does not produce the color you want, use a little more next time. When you have arrived at the amount of excess soda which gives you the color you want, write it down. A very small amount will usually do. Too much will give a bitter taste.

Q. Mrs. R. S. of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., writes: "Do you have some pointers on cream puffs? Mine always turn out a complete failure!"

A. Cream puffs can refuse to puff, and be a headache. But there are a few precautions which will help insure success. First, do not overcook the flour, water, fat mixture. It should be cooked just until thick and smooth. Then, let the mixture cool a little before adding the eggs. Beat the eggs in very well, one at a time. If the mixture seems too thin

to stand up on the baking pan when the last egg is beaten in, place the mixture over hot water and stir until it thickens properly. Bake until the puffs are dry and firm, or they will grow soft and shrink during cooling. Bake in a hot oven (450°F.) for 15 minutes. Then reduce heat to moderate (350°F.) and bake 20 to 25 minutes longer.

Q. M. E. C. of Sherman, N. Y., writes: "My French fries are never crisp, but always soggy. Can you help me?"

A. Quality fries are made from old potatoes not too high in sugar. French fried potatoes can be made real crispy by cooking them twice. Peel the potatoes and cut them into the size strips desired. Soak in cold water 1 hour. Drain and dry on paper towels. Cook, a few at a time, in deep, hot fat (about 350°F.), until they are soft and pale yellow in color. Drain them on a paper towel. Just before serving, heat the fat hotter, to about 390°F. and dip all the potatoes for just a moment or two, until brown. Drain well again, salt, and serve at once.

Q. C. G. of Bernalillo, N. M., writes: "I would like to know the proper method of wringing starched garments. Should I use the wringer?"

A. Yes, it would save you much labor if you used the wringer. Quite often clothes are starched in the machine. The agitators force the starch right into the fibers and do a good job. Just remember to wash the tub out well with clear water, and to run a wet towel two or three times through the wringer to wash off any starch that clings to the rolls.

Mrs. J. E. S. of East Mauch Chunk, Pa., writes: "I would like to tell your readers who have trouble with pastry shells about the method I use. I always turn the pie pan upside down and bake the pastry on the outside of the pie pan. When it is cool I take it off, turn the pan right side up; put it in before filling it."

Do you have a cooking or menu problem? Write to us! Send your questions to True Story Kitchen's Question and Answer Page, P.O. Box 1667, Grand Central Station, New York 17, N. Y.



Do women have to put up with these?

**A skin that looks coarse?
Its color muddled?
A skin that looks harsh and rough?**

*You hate to see it—your skin
losing its fresh look*

**A fascinating, immediate change
can come over your face...**



You can do something to change your skin



You can feel your skin responding



You owe it to yourself to bring out your beauty

Free your skin. Dirt, old make-up stick in pore-openings. Fatigue, wind, dry air constantly *rob* skin of oil and moisture.

There is an exclusive formulation of skin-helping ingredients in Pond's Cold Cream. They work on your skin *as a team*—in inter-action. As you swirl on Pond's, you help *both* sides of your skin.

Outside, embedded dirt is cleansed from pore-openings immaculately. And, *at the same time*, your skin is given oil and moisture it needs to be soft and smooth.

Inside, the circulation is stimulated, helping the skin to repair itself and refine itself.

Feel a wonderful smoothness come to your skin. *Each night* give your face this special oil-and-moisture treatment—to replace the continual thieving of your skin's freshness and softness . . . to cleanse it *rightly, deeply*:

Soft-cleanse—swirl Pond's Cold Cream all over your face and throat generously. Tissue off well.

Soft-rinse quickly with more skin-helping Pond's Cold Cream. Tissue off *lightly*.

Now see the difference. As you use this famous cleansing cream every night, your face takes on a lovely, *cared-for* look.

Look your loveliest and you send out a happy-hearted confidence to all who see you.

You will see the wonder of this skin-helping cream—*immediately*—after your very first Pond's Creaming.

Use Pond's Cold Cream *every night*—mornings, too. (Remember, the constant loss of your skin's natural oil and moisture goes on *every day*.) As you use Pond's, you will delight in your lovelier skin.

Get a large jar of Pond's Cold Cream at your favorite face cream counter—*today*. Start using it this very night.

The Marchioness of Milford Haven, who is the American wife of the great-great-grandson of Queen Victoria, says: "Pond's Cold Cream is my one *essential* cream. It leaves my skin *glowing*. I couldn't do without it."

LYING BRIDE

(Continued from page 37)
the phone? I called twice from the rink and got no answer."

I hadn't thought of that, but I said quickly, "Oh—I heard you ring, but I was so dizzy I almost fainted when I got up to answer."

His face got queerer. "Well, I'm glad you recovered so quickly—in time to go shopping at the City Market!"

I started to say, "I wasn't—" but he shook his head. "Don't bother, Barb. After I'd phoned I hopped the bus to your apartment. There was nobody there. So I went home and did my landlady a favor and went shopping for her, because there was nothing else to do. I saw you with your aunt. I was pretty sore all day yesterday but now I'm madder yet. Barb, why are you lying? I'd have understood the truth, that you were stuck with your aunt."

I couldn't look him in the eyes. He said "Why?" again, and still I couldn't speak. He said, "If that's the way you want it—" and it was time for him to get off.

That day I got behind in my quota, thinking so much about Lyle. The boss asked what was the matter and I said it was the machine. He wasted ten minutes looking at it, and then said, "Quit stalling. The machine's okay."

Then, at closing time, I'd just opened the door to the washroom when I heard a girl say, "Alibi-Barbara was off again today." A voice I knew belonged to a new girl asked, "Who's that?" The other girl said, "Barbara Clarke. She always has a good alibi, so we call her Alibi-Barbara."

I'd always known I didn't fit in with the girls at the factory, but I didn't know they made fun of me. And losing Lyle, too, made me want to crawl into a hole somewhere and just die! I felt so terribly all alone. I couldn't stop myself from heading for the nearest phone, to call Lyle.

Lyle's voice was remote, almost cold. Trembling with fear that he might refuse, I asked, "Lyle—would you—meet me?"

He cut in quickly, "Where?"

I said I'd walk toward his place. When we met I stood looking up at him. It was snowing a little and there were snowflakes in his hair like that first time I saw him. I was shivering with the cold—and the fear in my heart. If I lost Lyle—

He looked down at me soberly for a moment before he reached out to stroke my hair. "Poor little wild colt. Scared again, aren't you?" I shook more than ever. "You've been scared for a long time, haven't you? Barb, don't be afraid—you can tell me anything, no matter what."

He must have seen the tears shining in my eyes because he started to lead me down the street. "We can't talk at your house, I guess. So we'll go to mine. My landlady's a good egg."

He introduced me to Mrs. Herring and explained a little. She smiled sympathetically and said, "No visitors in your room, Lyle, you know. But I tell you what, talk in my kitchen as long as you like."

So it was in Mrs. Herring's friendly kitchen, stumbling at first, then faster and easier as Lyle questioned me gently, that I told him about my life. About the things that had happened, to make me the way I was.

My first vivid memory went back to a day when I was four and a half. I know it was spring because my mother had shown me the jonquils in the park. I remember telling my father all about the afternoon in the park, but he wasn't paying much attention until I said, "And there was a man sitting with Mommy, and they were laughing, and he bought me ice cream off the cart, and he said he'd buy me more tomorrow—"

Daddy lowered the paper and said, "What was that?"

"More ice cream tomorrow, and no wonder I was such a pretty girl with such a pretty mommy and—"

Mother had been saying, "Barbara—Barbara!" but I was too excited to stop, though I knew when she called me that, instead of Bunny, she was cross. "Come here and let me fix your hair." She laughed. "Such a funny-bunny. You know that wasn't a man, darling, it was a lady wearing slacks."

"No!" I insisted stubbornly. "It was a man! I know, because his voice—"

My mother tugged my hair, not gently. Daddy looked at her funny. Then he said, "What happened then, baby? Tell Daddy."

"Oh, Harry!" Mother said. "Don't encourage her. Honestly, she's getting to be the worst li—story-teller lately."

I wasn't at all, and I was shocked at my mother telling such a lie. "That was a girl. Her name's Margaret. Margaret Haley. I got to talking to her. She was wearing a blouse and slacks, has short hair. She's got a contralto voice. That's how Bunny got the idea."

I guess that satisfied Daddy, because he hugged me tight and said, "Kiss Daddy good night. Now be a good girl and don't ever make up things again." I didn't say any more, but I knew a man from a lady.

The next day it rained and we couldn't go to the park. My mother seemed awfully put out. I got on her nerves and she put me to bed. A while later, the doorbell woke me.

Mother said, "Jack! You shouldn't have come here."

I knew it was the man from the park. "I had to see you again. I have to go west for a few months starting tonight and there was no other way." I heard snatches of conversation, and then I fell asleep again.

When I woke up, I smelled Daddy's pipe. I crept out of bed to surprise him but when I peeked through the parlor door I saw it was the man called "Jack." He was smoking a pipe and he had his arm around my mother. While I looked he laid down his pipe and hugged her tight and they kissed each other.

I didn't say anything about it, but that day went to the back of my mind and stayed there. It came out again at the end of that summer.

Mother was going to get her hair done and she'd left me alone for a few hours. A neighbor was supposed to keep an eye on me, but she never bothered. I got awfully tired of talking to my dolls, so I did something I knew was wrong. I opened Mother's bureau drawers and looked at her things. I found a wooden box full of letters and I played postman and delivered them all around the house. When Mother came home and saw the letters, she was angrier than I'd ever seen her.

"Barbara, you bad, bad girl!" she said and slapped me hard. I cried and said I was only playing postman. I had to help her gather them up and she scolded me all the time. She made me stay in the living room while she went into her bedroom and I think she hid the box. When she came out she took me on her lap and kissed me and said she was sorry she'd been cross, that they weren't letters at all, they were recipes.

I asked why did they have stamps on them like letters, and she looked cross again and said not to be tiresome and make up things. If I didn't stop telling stories she'd have to tell Daddy how bad I was, so I'd better forget what happened.

Then she was extra nice to me, joking,

kissing me, and letting me help her get dinner. But afterwards, while Daddy read me the funnies, I saw something sticking up from the cushion, and I pulled it out. Daddy said, "What's this?" I said it was one of Mother's recipes. He said, taking it, "It looks like a letter to me." I said, "Oh, no. It's how to make cookies. There was a lot of them and I played postman, and Mommy was mad."

Right away, Daddy looked angry. He went to the kitchen where Mommy was washing dishes. He said, "Corinne, since when have you been getting recipes from somebody in Fresno, California?" Mother turned very white, and then, suddenly she rushed at me and slapped me across the mouth. "You dirty little sneak! You hid that out to give to your father!" I was too bewildered to cry.

Daddy put me behind him. "Leave the kid alone. It was down in the chair cushion." Nobody said anything for a minute and then Daddy said, "Who is it this time?" He took out the letter and said, "Jack. I thought you stopped after Marvin—or was that Alan?"

They started yelling and I went into the living room and crouched down between the radio and the wall. After a while Mother started crying and said, "It's all over anyway; it was over a month ago. I only kept the letters because he writes so nice."

Only it wasn't over. Maybe it was with my mother and Jack, but there were others. I'd meet them sometimes when I came home from school. Or I'd see Mother sitting in a car in front of the apartment house, and I'd pretend to my friends that the man was my uncle or my cousin.

I was getting awfully mixed up, making up stories to protect my mother. It got so I never knew when I was telling the truth. I just wanted my mother and father to love me—and not fight.

That's a terrible thing to do to a child—to teach her that the truth brings trouble, while a lie brings affection and peace. In my loneliness and terror at losing what little safety I had, I learned a pattern that could only bring my life to tragedy.

I was afraid of my mother and knew that if I did what she said, she'd be good to me and pet me. So I just said whatever she told me to. Daddy never noticed me much. Though I couldn't understand it, I felt down in my heart that he knew what she was doing.

I know now that he loved my mother so much he'd put up with anything so long as she stayed with him. After they'd have a quarrel he'd slam out of the house and come back a little drunk. Then I'd hear him apologizing, saying he was sorry and didn't know why he lost his temper and would she forgive him. It made me a little sick to hear him.

I wasn't quite nine when Mother left Daddy and me. I'm not even sure which man she ran away with, though toward the last there'd been a tall man with a long black convertible. When I came home from school that day she wasn't there, and I couldn't get in. That wasn't unusual, so I went to the corner playground and stayed until all the children had gone home. Then I went home too, and waited.

When Daddy came home he didn't say anything, because it wasn't the first time he'd found me sitting on the stairs. We sat around a while, waiting. Finally Daddy said he'd better get dinner. He went into the bedroom first, and I heard him say, "Oh, my God" in such a terrible voice I ran in. He had the clothes closet door open and most of Mother's things were gone. Her dressing table was swept clean. Daddy looked inside the closet. "Her luggage, too."

He stood glaring around, wild-looking.



For a more-fun way to wrap Christmas packages —

Play post-office Plan a wrapping bee

When presents for the family start piling up in your clothes closet, chances are your study-buddies have the same problem! So ask the gang to come on-over to your house, toting their packages and various types of paper. Supply the scissors, paste, ribbons; award prizes for the most original "jobs." Gift-wrapping a la gang is fun. Even at "calendar" time . . . if you're comfortable, with Kotex. This napkin's made to stay soft while you wear it; gives you chafe-free softness that *holds its shape!*

Are you in the know?



What gift bracelet should you choose?

Wide Chunky Slim

Your best pal Pudge rates something special, you decide. Like that big, chunky bangle (so dashing!). But think . . . will it flatter her hands? If they're short, a broad, heavy bracelet will give her mitts a sawed-off look. Choose a style that's suited to Pudge. Same as on difficult days you choose your own special absorbency of Kotex: the one that's right for you. (Regular, Junior or Super.)



What tags to pack for a house party?

Strictly sports Date duds only

You cram your suitcase with glamour stuff; only to find yourself freezing on a hayride! Learn what's planned beforehand, then pack appropriate duds. At certain times, however you're togged, you'll be confident—for those flat pressed ends of Kotex banish revealing outlines. Your new Kotex belt adds extra comfort, too. It's made with soft-stretch elastic; non-twisting, non-curling!



Know the jinx in this jalopy?

Casanova Four's a crowd Tootin' twosome

Happy New Year? Huh-uh. Here are the makings of a crash landing! (See all answers above.) The car's crowded: bad for careful driving. Raucous blasts add more distraction. And how can a highway Casanova keep his mind on the road? Avoid such hazards! Also, why risk problem day "accidents"—when extra-absorbent Kotex gives extra protection with a special safety center?

More women choose KOTEX than all other sanitary napkins



Have you tried new Delsey toilet tissue—now nicer than ever! Each tissue tears off evenly—no shredding. It's luxuriously soft and absorbent—like Kleenex tissues. And Delsey's double-ply for extra strength.



KOTEX, KLEENEX AND DELSEY
ARE REGISTERED TRADE MARKS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CELLUCOTTON PRODUCTS COMPANY

"Not even a note," he said, in that same awful voice. Then he saw me and grabbed me, shaking me. "Where is she? You were in on all her secrets. Where'd she go?"

I began to cry. "I don't know!"

He frightened me, the way he dashed back and forth, first shocked, and then terribly, terribly angry. I wanted to stop being so afraid—so I went back to the only way I knew to protect myself—lying.

I said, "Oh! Daddy! I—I just remembered. Before I went to school, Mommy got a telephone call from—from a lady who used to live across the hall. Mrs. Gross. She invited Mommy to visit her. She told me to tell you and I forgot."

I lied because I wanted him to stop looking like that; he believed me because he wished it to be so. I knew the clothes Mother left behind were old ones she was tired of. Yet Daddy talked so much about her coming back, I almost believed it might be so. When I would let myself into the apartment with the key Daddy had made for me I half expected she might be there. Of course I missed Mother dreadfully at first, but after a while it seemed a relief not to have to worry about Daddy's finding out things, or getting a slap across the face for telling the wrong story.

Daddy had begun to drink hard. The house looked awful and the whiskey bottles stood in long rows under the sink. Then he lost his job. He got another job and lost that. He kept losing one job after another, getting drunker and drunker. I hated to be home.

My Aunt Josie must have heard about everything, because she came one night. She was Daddy's sister and I hardly knew her. Mother hadn't liked her and had called her "Nosey-Josie," so we never went to see her and she never visited us.

"Pull yourself together, Harry!" she said. "This place is a disgrace. Get a house-keeper." Daddy said he didn't need one. Corinne would be back. "Don't be a fool," Aunt Josie snapped. "She's a tramp. And would you take her back?"

"Of course I would," Daddy said.

They argued for a long time. Aunt Josie said I was neglected and my neck was filthy. After she left Daddy drank.

The next day Daddy tried harder to take care of me. But I guess he was too lonely with just me, so a week later, I was just as neglected as ever.

One day when the school nurse, Miss Ainsley, came around on her regular visit, I had a runny nose and no handkerchief. Miss Ainsley asked me questions about my appearance and I said my mother was a helpless invalid. She said, "Poor child," and gave me a bunch of tissues.

A couple of days later Miss Ainsley sent for me. She acted angry. "Why did you tell me your mother was an invalid?" she asked. I figured she'd been to my house and couldn't get in, so I said, "She's been taken to the hospital." Miss Ainsley sighed and shook her head. "I went to inquire at the next apartment and they said she had gone away a long time ago."

I didn't say anything, and when Miss Ainsley asked me more questions like what did I have to eat I wouldn't answer. I wasn't being stubborn, it was because I couldn't speak without crying, and I wouldn't let anyone see me do that.

I knew she felt sorry for me, because she said kindly, "Barbara, I know you told me a lie because you were ashamed, but if you won't be honest with me, how can I help you?" When I still wouldn't talk to her she said something I never forgot: "Child, if you don't break that habit now, you'll never, never be happy like other girls." It frightened me, but it didn't change me any.

I ran and hid in the bathroom when Miss Ainsley came to see Daddy that

night. At first I couldn't hear what they said, but then they got angry and raised their voices. Miss Ainsley said, "That child's neglected and undernourished. Either you take care of her properly, or the State will!" Daddy said I'd always been thin, and Miss Ainsley said that wasn't it—I needed milk, oranges and vegetables. I wondered how she could tell we ate mostly hot dogs and hamburgers.

After a while Miss Ainsley left and I came out. Daddy was pouring a drink. Then he called up Aunt Josie and asked her to come right away.

When Aunt Josie came, she started right in. "Now, Harry, don't expect help from me. I told you before to get a housekeeper and forget about that—about her. And put away that bottle; you might have the decency not to drink in front of a child!"

Daddy said, "All right, Josie, bawl me out. I deserve it. But Barby—" Then Daddy told Aunt Josie what Miss Ainsley said. Listening, I was so afraid—so afraid. I squirmed under Aunt Josie's sharp eyes. "She is so scrawny. All eyes, and legs like sticks. Harry, are you starving her?"

They went at it back and forth until Daddy lay back in his chair looking beaten. "Okay, okay, I'm no good," he sighed.

NOBODY LOVES A STEPMOTHER

I loved Hal and he loved me. But how could our marriage succeed when I had to share his arms with two stepchildren who hated me? You'll pity my desperate plight when you read it in

January TRUE STORY
On sale everywhere December 10th

"I don't know what to do. Josie—would you take Barby for a while? Just till I get straightened out. I'd pay you."

Aunt Josie stiffened. "So that's what you've been leading up to! No, I couldn't. It's not that I mean to be cruel, but I've got my own two little girls to think of. If you can't take care of Barby, as you should, put her in a children's home until you can!" Then she flounced out.

I thought I was going to be sick to my stomach. "Daddy!" I screamed. "Daddy, don't let them take me away!"

"Of course not," he said. "Nobody's going to take you away. I promise you."

He didn't keep his promise. Why should I expect it? No one ever meant the things they said. A few weeks later I was in a children's home. "It's only for a while," Daddy said, "and it's like boarding school, because I'm paying your way."

At first Daddy came to see me every Sunday, then he started skipping. I kept asking the head matron why, but I couldn't get a straight answer. Then one Sunday Aunt Josie came. "You might as well know that your father's run off."

I didn't feel anything special about Daddy's deserting me. It was just part of my general unhappiness. It wasn't anything against the Home—I just didn't fit in. I was always in disgrace because I couldn't stop lying, making up excuses for things I did or didn't do. Over and over Mrs. Neilson, the matron, told me, "Barbara, if you don't stop that awful lying you'll come to a bad end." But I

couldn't stop, and because I believed Mrs. Neilson and knew that doom hung over me, I was nervous and jumpy and often ill for no reason. I wish I could express how I lived through those years, until I was old enough to leave the Home.

At sixteen, children who hadn't already been boarded out were sent to places where people were willing to give them a home, and let them work for their board. Aunt Josie must have kept good track of time because she arrived on my sixteenth birthday. I didn't want to go to live with her—she'd never come to see me, only the day she told me about Daddy—but there was nothing else I could do.

Up until I met Lyle nobody ever really cared for me. My mother hadn't. When she laughed and played with me and called me funny-bunny it was because she was pleased about something else. She'd have hugged a cat or a dog the same way. And there was never room for anyone else in my father's heart but my mother.

I told all this to Lyle, there in Mrs. Herring's kitchen. When I got to the part about Aunt Josie's taking me out of the Home and putting me to work in the factory, Lyle was looking at the calendar on the wall. I finished, "So then I met you. It was—like starting a new life, and then I had to spoil it by lying to you. I don't suppose you'll like me any more."

He reached for me and held me close. "Barby, I more than like you—I love you with all my heart. I want to take care of you, teach you happiness. You'll never be scared any more."

I stared at him through a sudden mist of tears. I trembled at the strange new warmth that stole into me. I shut my eyes, then opened them again, and my breath came faster as I saw the deep tenderness of Lyle's smile. And then, suddenly, I was clinging to him, and his lips came closer, gentle at first, then hard, the way a man kisses a woman.

For me, it was the end to all my lonely, childhood dreams and the beginning of a new awareness. From Lyle, I learned that love, reaching out to enfold you, makes you feel safe and warm, like coming in out of a dark cold night. All the misery of my life was over. The prophecies about me were false, because I could find happiness. When Lyle and I were married six weeks later, I had everything a girl could want.

After a while—after I'd got used to the wonder of being loved, and Lyle had told me more about himself—I could see why he'd picked me out. It was his nature to love little helpless things. Living on a farm, he'd known all the animals, domestic and wild, and he'd wanted to be a veterinarian. There wasn't money for that, because his father had died and there was a mortgage and debts to pay, but he'd always had his eye out for a job where he could work with animals.

Meanwhile, the job he had paid pretty well and we were able to afford quite a nice apartment. I kept on working, until I knew there was a baby on the way, and each day brought greater happiness.

Being married to Lyle almost—but not quite—cured me of lying. It was only when I was unsure of myself, afraid, that the old falsehoods came out, and more and more I came to feel secure in Lyle's love.

Still, there were times.

I hated our landlord, Mr. Whipple. He was an awful snooper and, well, too nice to me. I was scared to tell Lyle because they might have a fight and apartments as nice as ours were hard to find. So I'd make up reasons why Lyle should talk to him about repairs and things, instead of me.

Then, one morning, Lyle phoned from the warehouse, asking me to come down to have lunch with him. I was getting ready, pressing a blouse to wear, when Mr.

Whipple came for the rent. I went to the place where Lyle usually left the money, but it wasn't there. I rummaged around a little and by that time Mr. Whipple had eased himself in through the door. I hated his baggy eyes following me around in my housecoat, but I didn't know how to make him stop. He was talking on in a nasty, flattering way and I got rattled. It was quite a while before I found the money and closed the door behind him.

I was all upset and when I got back to my ironing I scorched the blouse and had to start over on another one. Lyle was impatient when I arrived late, because of course he was only allowed forty-five minutes. I had to explain. But if I told him about Mr. Whipple he'd have been angry. From my childhood, I was always afraid to make anyone angry. And it was an episode I'd rather forget, anyway.

So I lied to Lyle, saying the reason I was late was because of an accident that caused a traffic snarl. It came out before I knew it. It was quite a while since I'd told him even a little fib.

"Please, Barby," he said patiently. "What really happened?"

I hesitated then, and finally told him the truth. He put his hand over mine and stopped it moving. "Was that so hard?" I shook my head. He said, "I've told you before and I'll keep on telling you till you learn. You can always tell me the truth, no matter what it is. Even if I get mad for a minute, even if it's something really bad, tell me, and I'll always stick up for you. That's because I love you so much. And it kills me, knowing you don't trust my love enough to tell me the truth."

"I do," I said, turning my hand under his until I held it tight. "I swear to you I'll never lie again."

I wish, how I wish I'd kept that promise! But right then, Lyle told me I wouldn't have to worry about Mr. Whipple any more. He had big news. This lunch was a celebration. His dream had come true and he'd found a marvelous new job with a kennel where they raised cocker spaniels. "And there's a little house that goes with it," he said, his eyes like stars, "about a half-mile from the kennels. It's real country—fields and woods, just the place to bring up our baby."

The next Sunday I saw the big white house and kennels and the runs full of cockers bouncing and flopping their ears. When the Kennys, who owned the kennels, took us to the small white house that was to be ours, I fell in love with it right away. It had four rooms, all our own, and was perfect in every way. No one could have guessed that this was to be the scene where the prophecies about me would come true. No one could guess that I would dim its brightness forever with my crime—my terrible lie.

The following week, we moved. Mrs. Kenny helped me unpack dishes and linens. Altogether it was such a happy day I could have burst. We couldn't have picked a nicer time to move to the country—May, with everything coming into bloom. I'd never in my life been out of the city. The only growing things I'd seen had been in city parks. Now I was right in the middle of all the leaves and flowers, and it was like knowing a bit of Heaven.

My baby was born in November, and if I'd thought we were happy before, it was just because I didn't know any better. It seemed he was just a little scrap of humanity in my hands, and then suddenly it was spring again, and he was a real person called Terry.

Lyle was so happy in his job. I learned a lot about dogs, and secretly I'd have loved to have one of the cockers, only of course they were pedigreed and sometimes took prizes at dog shows. A puppy

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But I got my dog after all. One day Lyle came home with a blond cocker under his arm. There was a splint on her foreleg and her eyes looked sick. "She's ours if we can pull her through," Lyle said. "She was sold, and she ran out under Mr. Kenny's car, so of course the buyer doesn't want her now."

But I wanted her, that lovely golden puppy. And I named her "Goldilocks."

Lyle and I nursed her and she got better, though she had a slight limp. We loved her, but she was Terry's slave. He could tease her any way he pleased, and she would whimper in joy. Wherever Terry was, you'd find Goldy, too.

Mr. Kenny noticed that when he stopped by one day. "Look at that child," he marvelled, "a natural dog-handler, just like his father."

By October there was quite a tang in the air. One day, I put Terry's heavy overalls and a sweater on him and pushed his pen into the sun. He was full of pep and he and Goldy played together all morning. After lunch I tried putting him to bed for a nap but he wasn't having any. I let him yell for a while and then put him back in the pen. He'd probably fall asleep and then I could put him to bed. He did, and I decided to leave him alone, while I washed the windows on the other side of the house and put up the curtains I'd ironed that morning. I was on the stepladder when I heard Goldy barking loudly. I thought, "Stop that, you'll wake the baby." After a while she stopped. The windows streaked and I had to do them over. Then Goldy was barking again, sharp, angry barks, then whining, and then she was scratching at the back screen door. I went to the door and scolded her but she kept whining and scratching.

"Stop your noise, Goldy!" I hissed. But she wouldn't. I opened the door and got her by the collar and tried to drag her in. She bared her teeth and growled. She'd never acted vicious before and I was so surprised I let her go. She raced back to the pen and stood there whining.

Puzzled, I walked across the yard—then stopped short while a scream formed in my throat and died there. Terry lay on his back, arms stretched out, as he often slept. Only he wasn't asleep. His eyes were wide and staring in his bluish face. The next thing I knew I was lifting him and he was a limp doll in my arms. He was cold—cold. Oh, God!

"No!" I screamed. "No—it can't be! He's just sleeping! I'll wake him up."

Half-fainting, near hysteria, I clutched my quiet little son. I shook him. "Wake up, wake up!" His head rolled and his blank brown eyes stared at nothing. I picked up the blue blanket and wrapped it around him as if that could warm the cold flesh. I cuddled him, crooning to him, but still he didn't stir.

Then I saw the wooden balls. The pen had a steel rod on which small colored balls were strung for the baby to spin and push back and forth. The rod had come loose. If a baby put one of those balls in his mouth, he could—he could choke to death. There should be six balls; there were only five.

My beautiful little boy—my little brown-eyed angel! I moaned, kissing the smooth, cold cheek. "Help me, help me," I kept sobbing aloud. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't face the loss.

And then, out of my childhood, came the answer. If the truth was bad, you made it not true. My mind whirled and suddenly it began to lose its hold on reality. I sank to my knees, scrabbling frantically in the pen and on the grass for the missing ball. But I couldn't find it.

I stood up, sick and dizzy. No, this

couldn't be real! Somehow I had to make it not real. Because suddenly I saw that it was all my fault. Wild, distorted thoughts raced in my brain. Goldy had barked and tried to tell me, but I'd ignored her. I'd been careless. I'd left my baby alone too long. I'd killed him! It was my fault! Lyle would blame me, hate me!

My last slender hold on reality snapped and I was no longer a grieving mother. I was a madwoman whose distorted mind fashioned a scene with crazy cunning. "I'll say he was kidnaped—that's it! I'll hide him!" Unconsciously, I turned round and round as I fashioned a plan. There! At the back of the field behind the house was a stone wall, and beyond that a burned-out farmhouse, the cellar grown up in scrub. I hurried up the field looking over my shoulder in fear of a passing car. Nothing moved on the road. It was a dead-end road that ended in pasture bars a quarter of a mile beyond the kennels. Goldy stuck to my heels as I climbed the wall.

I couldn't put Terry in that cellar. There might be wild animals. There was a little shed. I wrapped the blanket more tightly over his face. Now he was only a limp blue bundle; just a bundle I was putting in the shed. There was a rusty lock on the door; I found a stick and thrust it in. Goldy wouldn't come away. She scratched and whimpered at the door. I kicked her savagely, caught her on the bad leg, and she gave a human scream. She ran home, three-legged, and I shut her in the basement. I'd have to keep her there until she forgot about the shed.

For a second I saw two big eyes peering at me over the top of the pen—no, no! I couldn't think about anything. Except Lyle. What about Lyle?

Inside the house, I leaned against the wall, icy cold, yet feverishly hot, too. Words flashed crazily through my tormented mind, "Don't tell Daddy . . . Funny-bunny, give Mommy those letters . . . Darling, it was a lady in slacks . . . You mustn't make things up . . . If you tell Daddy the truth, Mommy will have to spank you . . . Naughty girl!"

Over and over and over, the reeling maze of words—words—scraps of my childhood . . . and I was a little scaredy-cat girl again, lying to protect my mommy—to protect myself!

Numbly, instinctively, I went to the phone. I clenched my teeth and picked up the receiver. Automatically, I told the operator the number.

Lyle answered. I said "Lyle," and stopped. His voice was bright and cheery. "Hi, chick! What's up?"

"Lyle! Lyle!" I shrieked, "Lyle!" I dropped the phone, hardly hearing Lyle's worried voice shouting, "Barby! What's the matter? Answer me, what is it?" Then the phone was silent. I sat looking at it till I heard a car stop and voices, and feet running. Then I reached slowly and painfully and replaced it.

I told it over and over. To Lyle and Mr. Kenny. To Lyle again while Mr. Kenny called the police. To the two men who came in the cruiser, to Chief Johnson when he arrived. By that time it was so real in my mind I believed every word. I could almost see the woman kidnaping Terry.

"I was in the bathroom. I heard Goldy barking. By the time I could get to the door the woman was getting into a blue sedan—"

The chief interrupted. "I thought you said green. Oh, bluish-green. Be sure of your details, Mrs. Sherman, they're important. Did you see the license plate?"

"N—not the numbers," I whispered nervously. "But it was a different color than ours—"

Chief Johnson clenched his fists in

anger. "That makes it an out-of-state car. Good clue, Mrs. Sherman! Now, think hard again. Are you sure she was alone? Seems she'd have someone to hold the baby. Unless it was impulse, of course. We'll have to work from two angles. That it might be black market—you know you can get as much as two thousand on the black market for a healthy child. Or else it was some dippy dame who wants a baby."

Lyle made a choked sound. Less than two hours had gone by and already there were great black marks under his eyes. I freed my hand from his to wipe it on my dress. Probably he thought it was because of the perspiration, but it was because it felt like blood. My mind was divided into two parts. One that told and believed my story; one that screamed silently, "My baby's dead. I killed him!"

"Please, Mrs. Sherman, I know this is hard on you. Tell the story again. Try to remember little things that might help."

I jumped. "Little things? Yes. I mean no—I remember now. The woman said, 'Take the kid. This damn dog's chewing my leg off!'"

"Good, that's what we want. Man or woman? Didn't see? Well. Get them again, Mike. Two in the car. Now you're sure they went up the road. How could they when it's a dead end?"

I'd forgotten that. "They were headed up the road but they turned around just above and came back."

"Knew it was a dead end," the chief said. "And still you couldn't get the number—not even the first couple?"

"I was too—too panicky, I tell you. I ran into the road in front of the car so they'd have to stop—" Lyle gasped "—and they swerved around me."

Lyle gripped me so hard it hurt. "My brave little one. So scared and so brave. They might have killed you. Can you remember anything else?" he urged. "Please try, honey. Every minute counts." I shook my head. How could he be so calm, I wondered, with Terry dead. But of course he didn't know! He thought Terry was alive, and the police would find him, and before daylight he'd be asleep in his own little bed. I felt the tears gathering, but I wouldn't cry. If I did I'd go to pieces and tell everything and then Lyle would know and he'd hate me. I forced the tears back and thought, I'll cry for you later, Terry, when I'm alone.

The police went at last and Lyle with them. Mrs. Kenny tried to give me sleeping pills but I refused them. I couldn't go to sleep, something might happen—something—I didn't know what. I drank the coffee she made but I couldn't eat. Was it only nine o'clock? Oh, God, if I'd only told the truth in the beginning. I couldn't now. I'd gone too far.

I remembered something Lyle once told me. "A lie is weak," he'd said, forcing me to look up into his eyes. "It can't stand alone. You have to prop it up with more and more lies, until the first lie gets so top-heavy it crashes down on you."

Oh, if only I could tell him how right he was—how desolately, miserably wrong I was! But Lyle was at the police station, waiting for the return of the darling little son I knew he'd never see again. And all because I lied. All because of the accursed cancer of untruth that fed upon me, that gloated on my weakness.

Mr. Kenny stood around, uneasy, as some people are in a house of tragedy when there is nothing they can say or do.

Goldy was barking and whining and scratching in the basement. Mr. Kenny said, "Maybe I should let her out, she's been shut up there since—for hours. Has she been fed?"

"No!" I cried. They looked at me oddly. I couldn't let her go running up the

field—to Terry. I said, "I mean, no she hasn't been fed. I couldn't bear to—she played with—him—Mr. Kenny, would you take her to the kennels for a while?"

"Sure—sure. Right away." He was glad to do something. I snapped on her leash and took her straight to the car. She tried to jump out and he rolled up the window. "Acts funny, doesn't she?" he said. "Trust a dog to know something's wrong. Gee, that woman must have given her some kick—her leg's awful limpy."

Mr. Kenny drove away and I went back to the house. There was bright moonlight outside. The pen was gone. Lyle must have folded it up and put it away.

Now I could take the sleeping pills. It was fear of Goldy's getting out that had stopped me. I could hide from everything in sleep. I wouldn't undress. I slept heavily without dreaming and woke in daylight to find Lyle sitting beside me. The black marks under his eyes were an inch deep. "Nothing yet. It's too soon. But the F.B.I. is taking the case, darling. They think Terry was taken across state lines, which makes it a federal crime."

My heart gave such a leap, I felt it almost tear loose. What happened when you brought the F.B.I. into a case that didn't exist?

But first the reporters came. Lyle talked to them. When Aunt Josie called up he talked to her, too. The telephone rang and rang. Offers of help, even from strangers, well-meaning people with messages of sympathy. False clues had to be followed up, and there were cranks and publicity seekers. But nothing could be ignored, everything was followed up patiently. And all the time, I was nearly out of my mind, worrying when I would crack, and give myself away—and lose Lyle.

I was thankful he was too busy to talk to me. Mrs. Kenny stayed with me day and night—dear, kind Mrs. Kenny, with her face lined by grief and worry. She tried to be cheerful. "He'll be all right, Barbara. I don't believe that black market theory. It's some childless woman. They always bring a baby back in a day or two. He's safe, I'm sure."

I didn't answer. What could I say? I didn't speak at all except to answer questions. And I had plenty to answer when Mr. Larkin of the F.B.I. came.

I didn't remember much what he looked like—except his eyes. Oh, God, those eyes—sharp, all-seeing, taking in everything, but when they rested on me, so very deep blue and kind, I trembled to look into them but they were like magnets.

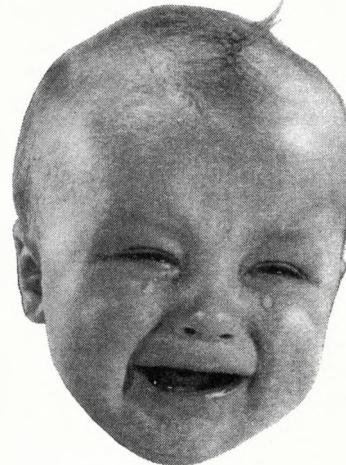
Mr. Larkin had a copy of the snapshot Lyle had given the police, Terry with his arm around Goldy. He kept looking at it, and I wished he'd put it away. He didn't shoot questions at me in the nervous, irritable manner of Chief Johnson, interrupting and catching me on minor points. The chief had small children of his own and was personally upset. Mr. Larkin spoke in a soft, soothing voice and was as calm and matter-of-fact as a census-taker. Yet, somehow, he frightened me.

Suddenly he thrust the picture into my hands. "Is that approximately what he was wearing?" I began to shake and the picture dropped from my hands. My jaw quivered so I couldn't form the words. "Yes—that's—" Shudders ran through me from head to foot, like convulsions. Lyle jumped to catch me before I slipped from the chair. "Quit it!" he snapped savagely. "Stop torturing her!"

"Yes," Mr. Larkin said calmly. "All right. Perhaps you'd better put her to bed and call the doctor."

Mrs. Kenny stripped off my clothes and I didn't protest. The doctor came and I drank what he gave me. As Lyle went away with Mr. Larkin, my eyelids drooped,

The difference between this...



and
this...



is often this...



and the horrifying reality slipped away. It seemed a long, long time later that I struggled half awake. The horror was still in me, but it rested, dulled. I heard the words in the next room, but they were meaningless. Something else was disturbing me more. I had to think what it was.

Mrs. Kenny was saying, "But what made you—"

Then came Mr. Larkin's voice. "Too much detail. I read the transcripts and she kept adding more and more. And she wouldn't look at the picture. Not natural. It's more natural for a mother to yearn over her child's picture, talk and cry about him. And the dog. Why'd she lock it up, not feed it, then send it away? She loved that dog, it was part of the family. When you're in trouble, you cling to your family. You don't divide it. Then, there's something else—hopelessness. As if she knew he wasn't coming back—"

Mr. Larkin's voice droned on. I was too numb, too drugged by grief to understand.

Then Goldy barked outside. That was it—that was what woke me. *But she shouldn't be here!* I sprang from the bed and the room reeled. I leaned on the dresser and saw myself, hair wild, eyes sunk into deep, black pits. A crazy woman, a madwoman. I ran out of the room, down the hall into the kitchen. "Goldy! Come in here!"

Mr. Larkin grabbed me by one arm, Mrs. Kenny by the other. "Lock her up!" I screamed. "Don't let her loose!"

"No," Mr. Larkin said. "It's too late. We found Terry. Goldy took us to him."

I slumped in his arms, bloodless, spineless as a rag doll. I seemed to whirl in a spinning world of black; some far-away voice, it must have been my own, kept screaming, "Let me die! Let me die! Let me be with Terry!"

And after that, the icy numbness of knowing I was alone—naked and alone in the maze of my own lies.

Since I had started the machinery of the F.B.I. working on a non-existent kidnapping, I was guilty of a federal crime—that, in addition to losing my child. But, for the time being, the government would not prosecute me.

But I couldn't see Lyle, that was the worst of it. For days, Aunt Josie and Mr. Larkin and the Kennys hovered around me—but where was Lyle?

Then, when he felt I could stand the shock, Mr. Larkin told me. My husband was in the hospital with a brain concussion.

It happened when they found Terry. Mr. Larkin, suspecting I'd been lying, got Goldy from the kennels. He let her choose her own way—to Terry's hiding place. The faithful little dog hadn't wasted a minute finding her baby master.

Chief Johnson had picked up the blue bundle. Then, in utter misery, Lyle had seized it, crying that he'd run to the doctor. He must have been blind with grief, for he never saw the stone wall in front of him. And now, his poor head open with the ghastly wound, it was touch and go whether he'd live.

I'd done that to him. I, the killer, with my load of lies.

Finally, the case against me was dismissed, since the autopsy and other evidence bore out my story. But it was recommended that I be sent away for two weeks' observation. I didn't care what they did to me. I accepted the small, pleasant room with the barred window as I would a jail cell. Aunt Josie came, looking afraid of me, I noticed, with a small, amused part of my mind. She told me about the funeral she had arranged. I sat with my ears closed.

I felt nothing and scarcely thought of anything. My baby was dead. I was sure Lyle was dying if not already dead. And I, myself, was dead inside.

Psychiatrists came and went, while I answered their questions automatically. From my replies, they pieced together the pattern that showed them how I had come to this final tragedy. They found out how I learned to lie in childhood, to twist the truth, to ignore reality. I had thought I was cured, but my weakness had lain in wait to trap me when a crisis arose. Afterwards I learned that the doctors were quite sure that this terrible tragedy was the real cure, but it was such a drastic cure it had almost wrecked the patient, and only drastic methods could heal me.

It was Mrs. Kenny, prompted by the doctors, who did it. One visiting day, she came toward me swiftly, and without even saying "hello" she thrust something in my hand. It was that picture of Terry.

"Don't you want this?" she asked. "Have you forgotten Terry, the baby you carried for nine months in hope and love, the baby you held in your arms so warm and soft? He was such a darling baby, wasn't he? He was all yours and you loved him so, and now he's dead."

I heard a moaning sound and knew I was making it. Then it started, a pain that bunched my insides, arched my

back, a deep, long, strong pain, like labor.

"Terry!" I screamed in anguish. "My baby, oh, my baby!" I clasped the picture to my breast. The tears came scalding, flooding, racking me. A doctor came with a nurse and they put me to bed. Still I cried and cried. I heard the doctor say, "Thanks, Mrs. Kenny. I think you've done it. You've made her cry. God help her, she'll suffer, but she needs that."

Three days later I was calm and resigned. My chest was weighted with grief, my heart filled with longing. But those were the sane, normal feelings of a mother whose child had died suddenly and tragically by accident. The doctor explained how it could happen in five minutes, while a mother's back was turned.

He said, "You must not blame yourself. Children have died before—and will again, unfortunately—by accidents no mother can prevent. A mother must trust God to watch over her child; she can't do it herself every minute. You were a good mother, my dear, and only God knows why this trouble came to you. But you have to accept it. You must face the future truthfully, without hiding behind a lie, because nothing worse will ever happen to you."

He stood looking at me for a moment and I was able to look squarely back at him, with a strange new peace.

"Now," he said, "your husband is here to see you. I'll leave you two alone."

A moment later, Lyle came in. He was no longer the cheerful young man with snowflakes in his bright brown hair. He was older, thinner, with marks of suffering on his face.

"Lyle," I wept, "my darling love. Say you forgive me for everything! Just forgive me so I can go away in peace. I won't ever bother you again."

For a moment, he said nothing. Then he took my hands and raised me from my chair. His eyes went over my face. "Barby, don't you remember what I told you once?"

"Yes," I whispered in tears, "I'll never forget. You said I could always tell you the truth, no matter how bad it was, because you loved me."

He waited and then said, "You didn't finish. I said you'd never know how much I love you until you learned to trust me. If you talk about going away from me, you haven't learned yet. I'll have to keep on teaching you." He folded me closely in his arms. "Don't leave me, darling. We need each other."

We wept in each other's arms then, tears of loss, of pain—and finally, of hope. We, who had shared the greatest love, the greatest gift two people can know, were welded together anew, by our God-sent tears.

That was two years ago. Mr. Kenny offered to get Lyle a job with a friend who raises race horses in Kentucky. I refused for us both.

"That would be running away," I said. "That would be hiding from the truth. We can't pretend this never happened, it would be living another lie. I want to stay here and face life. I want to be the kind of mother Terry would be proud of. I want Terry's brothers and sisters to grow up here, knowing that he lived here—knowing the fields, even loving his dog."

And God, in His goodness, has chosen to temper our grief, for in a few months, I am to bear our second child. I shall take the best care that I can of my son or daughter, trusting always in God . . . trusting always in the wonderful husband God also has given me.

For that, I am thankful. I can face my future in peace and courage. **THE END**

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NO GOOD GIRL

(Continued from page 35)

close, she and I, ever since my father died. The trouble is she wants so much for me. Oh, sure, we have lots of dough. My dad made it fast in a big trucking company he owned but it never brought my mother the social position she wanted. She thinks that if I go to college and get to be a big lawyer and marry some girl from a fancy family, I'll have all those things. But I don't want that junk. I want you, Cathy!"

I couldn't say anything more. I sank my fingers in his hair and kissed the top of his head. I wished with all my heart that there was something I could do to make him believe I understood—that it was all right—that I never expected miracles in my life.

Dave had asked me to the Senior Prom on Saturday night. Martha had made me a dress—my first evening dress. It was the first thing she had ever done for me and she took much pleasure in it.

It lay on my bed, a swirl of pink net, when Dave called me that morning. My heart dropped at the tight strain in his voice. "If you don't care too much about the dance, Cathy, I'd rather not go. I've got to talk you. Down by the river."

My hands shook as I put up the receiver. Something had gone wrong. I didn't mind missing the dance. I would be with Dave—that was all I wanted.

Trembling, I dressed as if we were going to the dance. I had to wear the dress so that Martha wouldn't know we'd changed our plans. The dress was for Dave, anyway, so it didn't matter. The wonder and pride in his eyes when I came down the stairs was enough for me. Suddenly I was glad we weren't going to the dance—that I'd be beautiful for Dave alone.

It was so lovely down by the river I caught my breath. No dance would have this magic. I was glad that we had come here, just the two of us.

The summer night, the smell of the river, the sound of whispering water was, in my imagination, the sea—the way it had been in my happiest childhood. I felt the same wild happiness and freedom.

Dave spread a blanket for us. He reached for my hands and held them tight. "Cathy!"

I shook my head and smiled at him. "Don't say anything, Dave! It's too beautiful to talk. Let's just be happy."

We sank down, side by side. I could see in his eyes what had happened. There was no need for him to say it. My happiness was not to last. His mother had forbidden him to see me. I pushed the thought away. Tonight was ours.

Dave sat beside me staring into the river. "Cathy, you don't know how bad it is. I'm going away. I'm going into the Reserve and I've got to go to camp for summer maneuvers. It's all arranged. I couldn't help it."

Even our one night we could not have and be happy. I clung to him to ease my misery. "Oh, Dave! I won't see you! What are we going to do?"

"It'll only be for a little while—the summer. Believe me, Cathy, you've got to." He stroked my hair. Tears filled my eyes. Did he really believe this? Somehow I knew that if his mother had anything to do with it he wouldn't be back—not even in the fall. It would always be something. This night was all we had.

He caught me close to him. "I can't bear to leave you like this, Cathy," he cried. "Not even for a little while. Oh, God, I love you! I need you so! If you were only mine, I know I could work things out. But to go away alone, without knowing if you love me enough to

LI'L ABNER ^{by} AL CAPP

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



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S

wait for me—oh, Cathy, I can't. I can't!"

Somehow I knew what he meant. His pain, his longing, were mine too. Love was like a well within me, deep and giving. No one could deny us this night.

Then he kissed me, his kiss deep and searching. His touch swept through me—flames that consumed all doubt and sorrow, and burned bright with the ecstasy of promised joy. Slowly he pressed me back upon the blanket. Together we soared on a wave of sheer delight. With closeness like this—oh, surely our love would be eternal. We belonged together!

Then two days after, Dave was gone. The emptiness without him was past belief. I found that love once given awakens longings that only slept before. Now that I knew the utmost tenderness of love I ached for the sight and touch of him. My nerves were raw, my heart heavy with loneliness. Martha's suspicious eyes followed me. Her questions flicked at me all day: Why had Dave gone? Had I done anything I shouldn't have?

I hid his letters from her prying eyes. She must not know. I sealed my lips.

A month later I found out that I was pregnant. At first I was stunned. Over and over I would tell myself that, "You are going to have Dave's baby, Cathy Horton. And he is far away. You are alone. What are you going to do?" I would stare at myself in the mirror. I looked just the same. There must be some mistake. But I knew there was no mistake when dizzy sickness swept over me in the mornings and my head swam in the August heat. I was sick with the child that was beginning within me—and sick with fear.

Who would understand and help me? Not Martha. Not Dave's mother. Suppose Dave never came back? Should I burden him with this? There was nothing else I could do. I had to tell him. Scarcely able to believe the words as I wrote them, I told Dave what had happened.

His answer filled my heart with love and hope for us. He was glad about the baby. Now his mother must consent to our marriage. He had written to her and told her. We would be married as soon as he came home. I held the blessed pages against my trembling mouth. Dave hadn't let me down! He never would.

Now I could tell Martha. Surely she would see that Dave had loved me and that I had not been wrong to give him all.

But when I told her, Martha's face went white. She drew back from me as if I were a shameful thing. Her words lashed out like whips. "After all I've done for you—you! You had a chance to make something of yourself, and look what you've done! A fine boy like Dave—and you had to be weak. You think he'd want you now?"

"I saw it when you were eight years old," she hissed, "and my father dumped you on me. You're like your mother—cheap, low, no good!"

"No," I whispered. "You're only saying that to hurt me. It—it isn't true."

"Isn't it? Don't tell me you never knew! Well, I knew—everyone knew!"

My heart seemed to drop into the ground, shrivelling. Martha, smiling at me gloatingly, seemed to enjoy each second of my torture.

"They loved each other," I cried. "They had a happy marriage—"

"Marriage!" Martha's eyebrows leaped in scorn. "Hah! They were married—sure—to other people! Your mother stole my father from a good, decent wife. Yes, she tempted him away from my poor, sick mother. Because of her, my mother died of grief, alone, and I grew up in a home—while my father lived in sin!"

"You don't even have the right to the name you use! You're not legal, see?"

And, do you want to know how your mother died? She was trying to lose a baby she didn't want—the way you'll have to."

Then I remembered, cold with horror, how suddenly my sister Lucy had married—as though she were forced to. And I—I had committed the same sin; I, too, had loved without the right.

Maybe Martha was right. In my despair I felt she was truly right. I was no good—I deserved no joy, or love—or hope.

Now I realized why Martha had hated my mother all these years, and why she had hated me. It was because I looked like Mom. All her blows had been for Mom—not me. And here was I! The pattern repeating itself! I was a weak girl as Mom had been weak.

And I was like my mother. What chance had I, coming from that kind of family? Dave would never marry me when he knew all this! Would any man? And the child within me was just another doomed outcast!

The sound of the doorbell came from far away. I saw Martha jerk to answer it. I saw her in the hall with the door open and Mrs. Waldron standing there. Strange, through my wretchedness, I was conscious of how odd Dave's mother looked in the crowded clutter of our living room. Numbly, I wondered why she was there and then the whole thing flooded back. My baby! Dave's letter to her! In the rage that marked her face I saw my fate.

"I'm not surprised at all this," she said. "I knew the kind of girl you were the first time I saw you—and I have no intention of letting this cheap, trick of yours spoil my plans for my son!"

Trick! My love for Dave was just a trick to her! I shrank back, horrified.

"Listen to me, both of you," she said.

"I know you plan to use this child to force me into consenting to your marriage to my son, but I tell you—this child shall not be born!"

My child and Dave's not be born? What did she mean? That her money gave her power over life and death?

I understood human love. I certainly understood hate, too, for I'd seen enough of it. But no hate ever matched Mrs. Waldron's cold disregard for a child's life or for her own son's happiness. Even if I meant nothing to her, surely her own blood, her own grandchild should stir some pity in her frozen heart.

But nothing swayed her murderous plan—to free Dave from me by sacrificing his child. And Martha agreed.

There was no hope. I was helpless! I lay between the two of them, too numb to fight them, while they doomed my child!

Mrs. Waldron had come well prepared, with pills and stern advice. She would not hurt me, but she would make me lose my baby. Martha advised hot mustard baths. In horror, I listened to the two of them.

In dull misery I did everything they told me and tried not to think. I wrote to Dave and told him what had been decided. "If I could only get home, Cathy, things might be different," he wrote. "Perhaps Mother knows best. You know I love you, Cathy. We'll be married when all this has blown over and the coast is clear."

I tore up the letter feeling more alone than ever. A week passed and still I did not lose my baby! No matter what they did to me, that little scrap of life in me kept fighting, growing.

Perhaps God Himself meant it for a sign that Dave and I belonged to each other. Even Mrs. Waldron might relent.

It was a foolish, childlike hope. When Martha told her I had not lost the baby, she was furious.

"We've been wasting our time," she said. "Now we'll find a doctor who will

take care of everything—and soon, too."

I burst into hopeless tears. She would risk my life as well as my child's. How could she, a mother herself, do such evil? "Dave wouldn't let you do this if he were here!" I cried.

"Leave Dave out of this!" his mother said. "He's only a boy. I'll do his thinking! He trusts me—in everything."

After that I didn't care what happened to me. I waited hopelessly for word from Mrs. Waldron about a doctor, not daring to think of the operation to come. Martha had taken the money from her. I hated her for taking it, but she was right when she said, "We have no money to pay for the trouble you've brought us. You can't afford to be proud. You've nothing to be proud of."

Two days later, Martha's husband, Joe, came home. It seemed strange that he should return so suddenly now, after so long, but I guess fate does strange things.

Martha's voice was shrill. "What brought you back now?"

Joe turned his hat round and round in his big red hands. His face was lined and heavy. "My—my conscience, I guess, Martha. I have to straighten things out."

"There's nothing left to be straightened out," she said finally in a dead voice.

Joe sighed, as if he were sorry he had to hurt her. "There is, Martha. One thing. I came back to get a divorce."

"I expected that." Martha folded her hands in her lap in dull despair. "I'm tired fighting, Joe. Maybe it's best anyway. I've got enough trouble with Cathy."

Bitterly she told him all my story while I sat trembling, my face in my hands. I heard Joe say, "Don't be so hard on the kid. She loved the guy. Young as she is, she knows more about love than you ever did. Or ever wanted to."

I raised my head. Joe was looking at me with pity. There was nothing he could do to help, but I was grateful for his understanding.

What Joe had said of love hurt Martha more than anything. It hadn't been her fault that love had seemed an ugly, dangerous thing to her. I pitied her as she sat, bent and old, while Joe got up.

"Martina," he said, kindly. "I want to do the best I can for you. Why don't you and Cathy go away somewhere and start again? I'll send you money every week. Maybe all this is my fault some, too—for walking out on you. Let me help."

She only nodded. Joe went away. When the door had closed behind him, Martha got dinner without a word.

My heart ached for her. I knew now what it was to lose a man. Day by day Martha and I drew closer together in our sorrow.

The morning we got the note from Dave's mother, giving the name and address of the doctor she had found, Martha came to my room.

"Cathy," she said. "You're not going to have that operation. Your mother died that way. If anything happened to you—I'd be guilty. We'll move away as Joe said and let that woman think it's done."

Wordless, I grabbed her rough hand and kissed her.

"We'll get along," she said, shortly. "We're both alone. No point in doing anything that'll make us hate each other."

A few days later we wrote to Mrs. Waldron that I had had the operation, and we made plans to move.

Two weeks before we were to leave, Dave came home from camp. I hadn't known that he was coming, and I didn't realize until I saw him standing there how little hope I'd had that I would ever see him again.

"Surprise, Cathy!" He held out his arms.

He picked me up and carried me into the living room to show me how strong he'd gotten. We laughed through our tears like children, all our troubles forgotten.

He made me shut my eyes and hold out my hands and when I opened them there was a ring with a stone in it on my third finger.

"Oh, Davy! Davy!" I cried. "You still want me?"

"Of course I do," he said. "I've never stopped."

He kissed away my tears and held me close. Later he said, "Mother told me about the operation. It must have been tough on you, Cathy, but in the long run, you'll see Mother was right. When we get married later on, after I finish college, we won't be tied down with a baby."

I stared at him, not believing my ears. He did want to marry me, he said, but after college!

And college took four years. Oh, would there *always* be something to bar my way to happiness? Was my ring then just a token—just another empty pledge like all the others? I pushed him away from me and stumbled over to the window.

He came up behind me. "I know it's rotten about school, but Mother's been counting on my going to college. We're still awfully young, Cathy. You understand, don't you?"

My mouth went dry. "Yes, we're still so young." My lips repeated his words. But I was old enough, I thought, to bear his child. I had to tell him. I burst out, "There was no operation, Davy. There's a reason why I couldn't go through with it!"

"What did you say?" His fingers bit into my shoulders. Like a flash I saw in his eyes a sudden stab of fear and disappointment. Then he tried to smile. "We'll just have to change our plans a bit, Cathy. We'll get married sooner."

A sudden flare of hope burst in me.

"Oh, Dave, darling!" I cried. "We'll be so happy!"

He swallowed uneasily. "How about June, when I've finished a year of college? There's no time now."

"But, Davy! The baby will be born in March! How can we wait that long?"

His eyes shifted. "I don't see what else we can do, Cathy! Try to see it my way. I thought everything was over about the baby and now you tell me it isn't. I don't dare upset my mother after all that she's been through. Anyway, you said you were moving away—"

My hands dropped wearily to my sides. He couldn't upset his mother! But I, the girl he loved, the girl who carried his unborn child—I could wait!

"Cathy," he begged. "What else can I do? It'll be so much better if we let things ride a while. We tried rushing and it didn't work. Be patient and believe I love you!"

He could not know how much I longed to believe him and the promises he made.

"I won't tell Mother about the baby—not just now. I don't want to tell her about the ring either. Let's keep it a secret and get married when I come home for the holidays."

It was cold comfort. I fought to keep from drowning in my terror. And yet I had no right to expect more—a girl like me.

We said goodbye and he promised love and marriage, but my heart was heavy as I watched him drive off toward the other side of town to a life I might never share.

Martha came up beside me as I waved to him.

"Humph," she said, drily. "That boy says a lot but means nothing. He's tied to his mother's apron strings and she'll never let go. Mark my words."

How to be a Better Cook

...AND SAVE MONEY TOO!



by
Mary Blake

Carnation Home
Service Director

MAYBE YOU HAVE
ALREADY DONE ALL
YOUR CHRISTMAS
SHOPPING.

I envy you. Despite good intentions, I'm far behind schedule. I have so much shopping ahead of me that it's all I can do to find time for lunch. Just in case there are others in the same fix, I'm going to pass on my favorite "hurry-up" lunch. "Carnation Corn Chowder," I call it... and just as its name suggests, it's made with Carnation Milk. No other form of milk is rich enough! And since Carnation is specially *heat-refined*, it blends better with the other ingredients and brings out their full flavor... in this case all the delicious corn goodness. Here it is... and you'll love it:

CARNATION CORN CHOWDER

(Makes 4 servings)

1/4 cup diced green pepper	2 cups (No. 2 can) cream style corn
1/4 cup sliced onion	1 1/2 cups (large can) undiluted Carnation
2 tbsps. butter	

Brown green pepper and onion in melted butter until tender (3-4 minutes). Add Carnation and corn. Simmer over low heat about 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

AT HOLIDAY TIME OR ANY TIME, a wonderful way to glorify leftover ham or turkey is with Carnation cream sauce. Nothing gives leftovers so much savory goodness. Make it according to your favorite cream sauce recipe, but instead of ordinary milk use Carnation mixed with an equal amount of water. Even diluted this way Carnation is richer than state standards for bottled milk. So you can expect *extra rich* cream sauce. *Extra smooth* sauce, too... thanks to Carnation's special heat-refining.

Add 1 cup diced leftover ham or turkey to 1 1/2 cups Carnation cream sauce. Garnish with diced pimiento or stuffed olives. Serve over toasted buns or bread slices.

When dicing marshmallows, dip scissors or knife in warm water to prevent sticking.

WITH THE HOLIDAYS just around the corner, here's a hint. Whatever your desserts—pudding, fruit, cake or pie—give them the "party touch" with whipped topping. No, not expensive whipping cream... but topping made with Carnation, the milk that whips. Carnation whipped topping looks and tastes wonderful and it costs about $\frac{1}{4}$ as much as whipping cream.

Chill 1 cup undiluted Carnation in refrigerator tray until small ice crystals form around edges of tray (about 25 minutes). Pour into bowl; whip until foamy (about 1 minute). Add 2 tbsps. lemon juice. Whip until very stiff (about 2 minutes longer). Fold in sugar, if desired. Serve immediately. Makes 3 cups whipped topping.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON is the time for unexpected guests. So remember, there's no more friendly beverage to offer them than coffee... and no better way to "cream" it than with Carnation. Millions of real coffee lovers prefer Carnation to expensive cream in coffee. Chances are your guests will, too. So be sure to have plenty on hand.



"from Contented Cows"

I turned and ran into the house to hide my tears. Martha couldn't be right! I'd go crazy if she were, yet my heart told me she was—

Dave was gone again. No sooner was he safe away when Mrs. Waldron sent her lawyers. Dave must have told her I still carried my child, but that did not melt her will. The lawyers made me dizzy with threats and legal phrases. I must give my baby up for adoption as soon as it was born. They said Mrs. Waldron would pay me a large sum to do that. Would this woman never be done with me? From somewhere came the strength to fight at last. To fight for my child—not for Dave. Not for the weak-willed boy who deserted me when I needed him.

I heard myself crying, "No! No! Let me alone! I won't sell my baby!"

Before they went away the lawyers made me promise to go away from town and not try to see Dave again. It was the only way I could get rid of them. I'd promise anything to keep my baby; if Dave loved me enough he'd come for me.

"You might as well take off that ring," Martha said when we were alone. "That boy isn't man enough to stand up against his mother! You're a fool if you put any faith in him."

As we packed to move she kept at me about Dave's weakness, his hopeless attachment to his mother, the shameful thing she tried to make me do. At last, sick with loneliness and doubt, I sat down and wrote Dave all my bitter thoughts, my desperation—I said his mother's treatment of us had been inhuman. I begged him to stand by me in spite of her.

Somehow, I knew as I dropped the letter in the box that I should never have written it. I was right. Dave answered coldly, that as much as he loved me I had no right to speak against his mother. We had broken her heart. She had only tried to do what she thought best.

I knew then, from that cold letter, that it was all over. I'd lost Dave for good.

Martha and I left Baybridge on a dull October day, a day of low, scudding clouds and whirling leaves. It had been our home and in spite of all that had happened to us we left our hearts behind us. We went to a small mill town in Massachusetts to a tiny apartment we found on a dingy street. We were an odd pair, Martha old before her time, thin and shut up within herself, and I, a seventeen-year-old girl without a husband, waiting for the birth of a child. In the eyes of the world we were mother and daughter, so mother and daughter we became, leaning on each other in our lonely life together.

Martha was kind to me in her silent way. "I guess there isn't much to choose between us," she said. "You loved a man and couldn't marry him. I married a man and didn't know how to love him. We both lost."

The months of waiting for my baby's birth in this strange town were slow-moving days and nights. I tried not to think of Dave. If I could only close off the part of my heart with him in it as I had shut away my childhood island, then perhaps I could make a life for my baby and myself.

On the night Jimmy was born all my longing for Dave seemed about to burst forth from me. I had to bite my lips to keep from calling his name. The agony of birth that binds a mother, father and a child into a family was nothing but bitter pain to bear alone like this with only Martha. But when the pain was gone and they laid Jimmy in my arms, I felt a rush of love for this tiny, helpless baby I had borne in such misery.

After Martha and I brought my baby home, I turned all my thoughts and

strength to caring for him. It was easy to love him. His little fingers wound themselves around my heart. But when the work was done and he was sleeping, time hung heavy on my hands. I felt my youth slipping by, my whole life passing before I had a single shred of happiness.

When Jimmy was two months old, I left him in Martha's care while I got work in a laundry. It was hard, the hours were long and the pay small, but I had a baby to support. In a way I was thankful, for the busy days made me tired enough to sleep away my lonely evenings. I kept apart from the others who worked there. No one knew about Martha and me, and it was better left so. My life was over anyway, I thought.

It was Pete Adams and his sister Myra who showed me that there was a place in the world for girls like me. Myra was the only person I talked to at the laundry. She was a big, hearty girl, not pretty, but there was something gay and carefree about her that stirred a spark of life in me. "Gee, Cathy," she said, "you're only seventeen, and yet, you look as if you'd lost your last friend."

"Maybe I have," I answered grimly.

"Then wake up, kid, and make some new ones. For instance, my brother would give his right arm for a date with you."

I asked her who he was.

To keep your hair clean and shiny between shampoos, tuck cotton down into the bristles of your hair brush. It helps to clean and polish your locks.

went when he took his first step. I never saw a man so pleased. My heart warmed to a man who had such tenderness for my unwanted baby.

The best times we had together, the times that drew me closer to Pete, came when he took me home with him. Home was a big, rambling house at the edge of town, and it was full of children. Pete's mother was a great, heavy, laughing woman. The first time I went there she took me in her big, soft arms and squeezed me. I found myself blinking to keep back the tears. I had the strangest feeling that I had come home again. That she was my own Mom and Pop rolled into one, and all this happy family were mine.

One Sunday we brought Jimmy with us. Mrs. Adams swooped upon him and gathered him up in her arms as if he were one of her own.

That night Pete and I put him to sleep on one of the big beds and then we walked away from the others down to a brook that ran below the house. He sat beside me on the bank and gazed at me in the moonlight that shone through the trees.

"Cathy," he said. "You look so far away in the moonlight. Come to think of it, you always look as if you were waiting for something or remembering. What is it?"

I shouldn't have come here in the moonlight like this. I knew Pete liked me and it could go no further. I couldn't risk having him hate me, which he would if he knew the truth. I did not love him, but suddenly I felt as if I didn't want to leave him or this lovely place. This was escape for me—here I could lose myself and all my troubles.

I scrambled to my feet, afraid of what he'd say next and of what I'd have to answer. "Let's go back, Pete, please."

He was beside me, holding my shoulders, tight, roughly.

"Cathy, don't you know I love you? You make it so hard for me to say the words. I want to marry you! I want to take care of you."

I went stiff beneath his hands. "No! No! I can't! I can't!" With tormented certainty, I knew a life like that was not for me, after what I was and what I had done.

But he would not let me go. "What's wrong, Cathy?" he begged.

Suddenly I knew that with a man like Pete there could be no secrets. How could I answer him?

"Let me be, Pete. Oh, please, don't ask me that!"

His fingers tightened on my arms and there was determination in his face I had never seen before. "I'm not giving up that easy, Cathy. I'll keep at you till I know what's keeping us apart."

All right, I thought. I'll tell him and see if his fine love can take the blow.

I threw it at him, standing close to him, my head thrown back. "Jimmy's not Martha's baby—he's mine—mine! Now do you understand?"

Pete let go of my shoulders and his hands held my face so that I had to look at him. "You crazy kid! I knew it all along. Jimmy, dark as he is, has your looks. And you don't treat him the way a sister would."

"Oh, Pete, you know! You don't hate me?"

"Of course not, Cathy. How can I hate you! I love you! Anyway, who's perfect? Don't you think I know something about temptation when you love someone? Can't you forget it—if I can?"

I crumpled against him. He loved me enough to understand, to forgive, and to take Jimmy and my past and make them all his own! In that moment I could see my life ahead as a full thing. With a man

like Pete I could hold up my head again before the world. What did it matter, I told myself, that I didn't feel for Pete the dizzy heights of love I'd felt for Dave? Maybe love like that came only once to a girl. Surely I could learn to love Pete.

"Say you'll marry me, Cathy. Give me a chance to make you happy. You're the only girl I've ever felt this way about. If I can't have you, I don't want anybody."

I could smile at him. I could almost love him, but not quite. I could say, "Yes, Pete! Oh, yes! If you can take me as I am."

His arms went around me hungrily. His breath came against my hair in a low moan. "You'll never be sorry, Cathy. I promise you that."

Later, walking up the hill to the house, I said, "I want your mother to know about Jimmy, Pete. She's been so good to me I can't live a lie with her. I want to tell her myself tonight."

So we told her when she came out of the bedroom with my rosy, sleeping Jimmy against her breast. Pete told her that we were going to be married.

I told her Jimmy was my child, not Martha's, and I waited for the blow to fall. It wasn't pleasant news for any mother. But this great-hearted woman reached out and grabbed me close with one arm while the other still held Jimmy. And so she held us both.

"You didn't have to tell me that, Cathy. When a body's lived as long as I have and loved, and borne seven children, you just know those things and how they happen. One mistake shouldn't spoil your life."

I could only smile at her through tears of gratitude.

"All I ask," she went on, "is that you love my son, really love him enough to make him happy."

I shut my eyes a moment. She had a right to ask if I loved her son. She knew love, this woman did. But I could make him happy! I was sure I could, and love—the kind of love she meant would come later. It had to. So I looked up into her eyes and said I loved Pete, and I prayed within myself that I could make the lie come true.

We planned the wedding for June. I was impatient to be married so I could put behind me forever the memories of Dave that haunted me. In the excitement of planning, of watching Pete's growing happiness, I could almost forget myself and imagine that I loved him as I ought.

Then, suddenly, Pete was drafted. There was no time for our wedding. When he told me I was desolate. Time after time I had reached for happiness and had it snatched from me. This was no different from the rest. I must have been born beneath an evil star. I had no right to be happy as others were.

I sat in dull despair and listened to words that had a familiar ring to me. All this had happened to me before—all the promises—all the waiting—and then nothing!

"It will be all right, Cathy," Pete said. "We'll be married just as soon as I know where I'll be and can find a place for you and Jimmy."

Suddenly panic swept me. I couldn't let this happen again!

"Pete," I cried. "Don't let's wait! Let's get married now—please!"

He held my hands to steady them. "Cathy, baby! What's gotten into you? We've got Jimmy to think of. You've got to have a decent place to keep him."

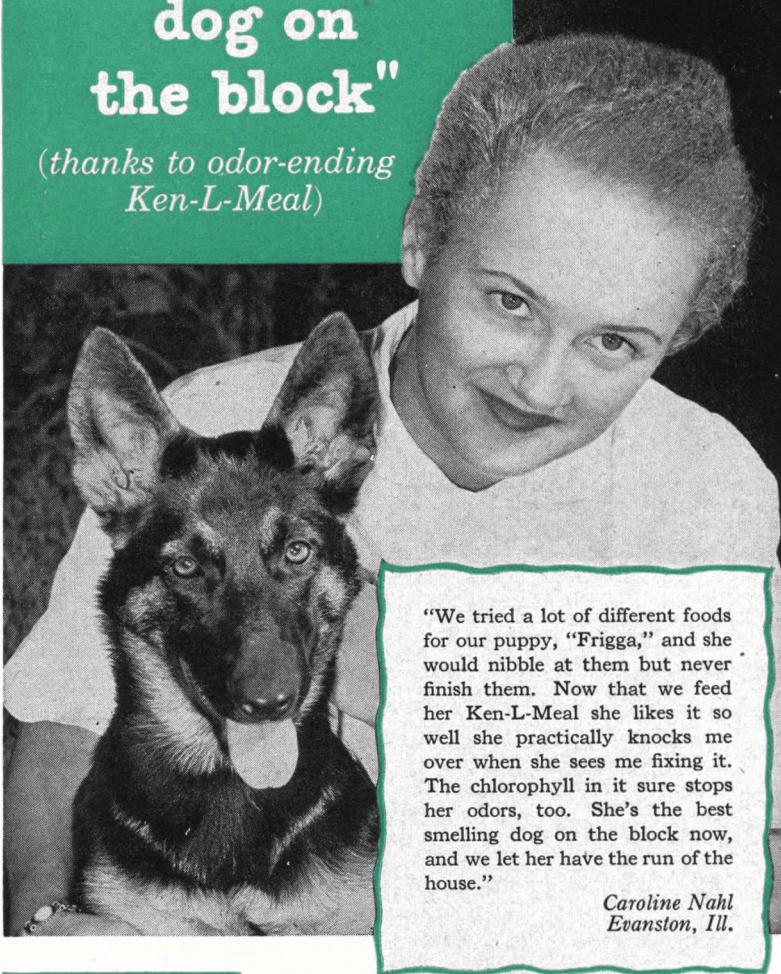
"I know! I know!" I sobbed.

There was no use fighting a destiny that had followed me from the beginning. I had been foolish to expect happiness—a girl like me!

What was I afraid of, I wondered? Of

"Best smelling dog on the block"

(thanks to odor-ending Ken-L-Meal)



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myself? Of this eternal waiting? Was I afraid that Pete would find someone else or that he might regret, when he'd had time to think, that I had borne another man's child?

Once Pete had gone all my old doubts and fears crowded back upon me. I missed him more than I had thought I would. Bitterly I went back to my weary days and lonely nights.

Myra got a better job and left the laundry. A new girl took her place—Gert Peterson. She was little and gay, with red hair. Her tales of dates and dances made me feel blue and pushed aside. I used to listen and wonder what it was like to be free to come and go. I never had been. I could hardly wait for each lunch hour to hear what had happened on her date the night before.

"Want to go along some night?" she asked me. "You're a dope to sit around and wait for a soldier boy. A little fun would do you good. No one would know."

"Sometime, maybe," I said quickly, putting her off. But the idea stayed.

Then one morning she came in when I was hanging up my coat. "How about going out with us tonight? Harry Ogden, a pal of Sam's, is looking for a date. Believe me, kid, there's a guy who can show a girl a swell time."

"Oh, no, I couldn't. Not tonight, anyway," I said, hurriedly.

"Suit yourself," she said with a toss of her head. "Don't say I didn't ask you."

Why couldn't I say yes, as any other girl would do? I was too young to sit and wait—wait for what? For Pete to forget me? Even if he came back, what harm would it do to taste life before I settled down? He'd never know.

At three o'clock I went to get a drink of water so I could walk by Gert as she folded shirts. I hesitated by her table. She looked up. "Hi, kid," she grinned. I opened my mouth to say I'd changed my mind, but the words didn't come. Instead I said, "Hi, Gert," and walked on past.

Why not go? It's just for this once. "Is it too late to say yes for tonight?"

"No, of course not," she said, indifferently. "I'll call Sam and tell him to get Harry. They'll meet us downtown."

I remember a stab of disappointment when I first met Harry. He was older than I'd thought he'd be. His black hair was slicked back, his eyes quick-moving as they sized me up.

"You're for me," he grinned. "Thanks, Gert."

Gert was right about Harry. He knew his way around. Everyone seemed to know him in the bars where we went. It was thrilling to be his girl. It was just that I wasn't used to drinking, to such a dizzy whirl. I wished he hadn't managed to kiss me. His mouth was moist and seeking. It was exciting, but I'd never go a second time, even if he asked me. I was engaged to Pete and this was wrong.

Yet I did go again. Harry's voice over the phone when he called me two nights later was smooth as oil and before I knew what I was doing I'd said yes.

That second date was easier. The drinks tasted better and when I danced with Harry I forgot my shyness. We were with a lively, noisy crowd and all the men made much of me. I was just something new and fresh to them, but I didn't know it then. Their teasing, their attentions went to my head with the giddiness of the liquor and I found myself laughing and chattering loudly like the other girls. This was fun! And my life had taught me to grab at happiness while you had it—you never knew when it would be whisked away. Even Harry's kisses seemed more exciting, or perhaps with the drinks I didn't mind so much. They stirred feelings in me that I had thought were dead.

It was wonderful to feel alive again, to have friends, to have the phone ring, and the evenings filled.

Martha was nagging at me again as in the old days. "It's disgraceful the way

you're running wild. You, with one man's child, engaged to another and now this cheap crowd. You'll lose Pete if you don't watch out. Don't be fool again, Cathy!"

"I have to live, Martha," I said sullenly. "I never had any fun before. How do I know Pete won't forget me? Anyway, I know how to take care of myself."

I met Myra on the street one day. The look she gave me was cold. "You sure are two-timing my brother. I had the idea you two were engaged—"

The blood rose in my cheeks. So she was picking on me too! After that I stopped going out to Pete's. I didn't feel so much at home out there any more.

Sometimes I wondered how long I could keep it up, working hard all day to support my baby and hitting it up all night.

But it was like a drug, the popularity, the excitement. I was afraid to stop and slide back into the drab life I'd had. And I was beginning to wonder how much longer I could hold off Harry. I was finding out that he wasn't a man to spend his money on a girl and get nothing for it. For a while my very simplicity had amused him, but lately he was getting more impatient with me, more urgent in his demands. With Harry there was no question of marriage. Nor did I want to marry him. Sometimes before I'd had a drink I thought I almost hated him. But dancing and liquor blurred his noisy cheapness and I went on seeing him.

Then came a night when I could hold him off no longer. We'd gone to a show, just the two of us. I didn't like to date Harry alone. That night I was sorry I had. After the show we stopped at a bar. I drank my drinks fast to get a pick-up so I could get through the evening. Harry was drinking deep and steadily. I didn't like the way he was looking at me, his eyes sliding up and down my body.

I was glad when he said, "Come on, baby. Let's blow the joint." But I was uneasy when his hand fumbled under my arm and he said, "I want to be alone with you."

"Let's go home, Harry," I said. He grinned at me. "What's your hurry?" He started up the car and headed doggedly for a lonely part of town. I slumped in my corner of the seat, wondering what to do. All at once this life I was leading made me sick. In a dark section of the parkway, he stopped the car and without a word he began to kiss me savagely. I pushed at him, but his arms were steel about me and his mouth was brutal.

"Baby, I'm fed up with waiting for you to come across," he said, thickly. "Grow up, kid! You think you're playing me for a sucker, but you're not—at least not as of tonight. Get that?"

"I—I don't know what you mean, Harry." I stalled for time, frightened.

"Come off it, Cathy," he said, roughly. "You weren't born yesterday!" He grinned at me and it was evil. "I know you've got a kid—and you've never been married. So what're you so high and mighty about?"

I struck him across the mouth with the flat of my hand. "Don't you dare say that to me!" I cried. "It's none of your business. Nothing about me is!"

"So you want to play rough, do you?" He caught my hands and held them in a vice. "I didn't know you had it in you."

He pressed me backward until I thought my wrists would break.

"Let me go! Let me go, Harry! I hate you! Oh, I hate you!" I cried.

His face, with its thin, twisted mouth came closer. I strained and turned my head until I could sink my teeth in his hand. I tasted blood. He yelled in pain and let me go. "Why, you little— I could kill you for that!"

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• Exciting beauty news is a make-up product that seems to erase shadows and dark hollows from the face. It's a transparent cream that you apply to deep-set areas around the nose and mouth, under the eyes and at the temples. It doesn't show itself, but the shadows that so often make even the youngest and prettiest face look drawn and tired seem to disappear. Sounds like magic, but the way it works is really very simple. You put it on over your make-up foundation and blend the edges. It's no trick at all; you just follow the simple instructions that come with the package. By filling the hollows with light, to match the higher portions of your face, it creates the illusion of "lifting" them. You'll find it at most drug and department stores.

I reached for the handle of the door. "Let me out of here! I'm going home!"

He was pale with fury as he reached across me and slammed the door. "Okay. That's where you're going and the sooner you get there the better!"

He shot the car ahead. "You're not worth the struggle, baby," he said, between his teeth. "There's plenty more where you came from."

The car raced through the night. I huddled in a corner of the seat as far from him as I could get. So this was my gay, happy life! This ugly scene played out in a dark car with a man who wanted me only for what he could get, who flung my baby's birth at me as an insult. I wished I were dead. But Pete—Pete had loved my baby. He had opened his arms to both of us. What was wrong with me that I hadn't recognized his love for the rich gift that it had been? Suddenly, in the midst of this wretched mess I'd brought upon myself, I saw Pete, strong and clean, Pete, who had loved me and looked at me as if I were something precious.

If only through some magic Pete could be beside me now, I could tell him that I loved him because I knew it surely—as suddenly as the sun after rain. Perhaps it wasn't too late even now. I could start again. I could give up this shabby life and cling to the hope that Pete would come back to me. I could write to him the words of love that would make the waiting easier. I felt hope warm within me. Home! I'd soon be home and all this would be behind me!

We were turning into my street! At last this night was over! I reached for the car door eagerly. Harry slid his arm behind me. "Last stop, baby. Want to change your mind?"

"Nothing can change it—ever!" I cried. "You don't know how sure I am!"

"Then I'll see you to the door, princess. No hard feelings."

"Don't bother. I can make it," I said.

"Remember me? I'm Harry, the guy who does things up right, especially for a little lady like you," he mocked me.

I couldn't escape his grasp upon my arm. We stumbled up the stairs. Outside the door he grabbed me and kissed me on the mouth.

"Something to remember me by!" He laughed contemptuously. "Thanks for nothing, kid. So long!" And he was gone.

Sick with fury I fumbled at the key-hole. And suddenly the door opened as I stood there holding the key, and Pete was inside, tall and unfamiliar in his uniform. My heart dropped like a stone! Why had he come tonight before I had time to clear away the debris of my life, and make him understand?

His look of shock and pain told me how I must appear to him—my hair a tangled mass, my face smeared with tears and Harry's kisses. I backed away from him and held my hand across my mouth to hide the liquor breath.

"Oh, Pete! Pete! If you only hadn't come tonight!"

He snatched my hand from my mouth. "Nice homecoming for a soldier, Cathy," he cried bitterly. "Who was the guy out there? Who was he?" He grabbed my shoulders and shook me.

"Nobody, Pete! I mean, he doesn't matter. No one does. Oh, please believe me!"

"Of course he matters! Do you take me for a fool? I wouldn't believe the stuff I've been hearing about you. I had to come home and find out for myself. I came home to marry my girl and this is what I find! Oh, Cathy, Cathy! You couldn't wait! It must be true—that you're

just a little tramp!" He pushed me away from him in disgust.

I held out my hands, pleading. "Pete, stop it! Oh, please! You don't understand. You can't! I love you, Pete! I love you!"

He drew back from my reaching hands and slapped me across the face. "Don't say the word 'love' to me, Cathy! You've no right to use it. You don't even know the meaning of it! Oh, God, Cathy," he went on, thickly, "I'd have fought them all for what I believed you to be. But what's the use? You're free of me now. Go do all the drinking you like. Have fun, Cathy."

I heard him cross the room. I heard the door open and close behind him. My knees crumbled beneath me and I lay there in the ruin of my life, not only my life but my child's. Not even for my child could I hold fast. I was a curse to everything.

Pete had come home to marry me in spite of what he'd heard. He'd given me his heart and was willing to put together the pieces of my broken life. Even his family knew my weakness and had opened their arms to me. And I—I had been so eager for thrills, so thirsty for passion, that I had passed up love.

With Dave I had been blinded by the leaping flames of desire but when I needed love and help and strength—I had gotten nothing! With Harry's crowd, the excitement, the dizzying fumes of liquor had bewildered me until I was fair game for any man whose careless hands reached for me.

So this was the kind of girl I was! How could I go on living with myself? For now, even self-respect was gone—not even that was left to me!

I heard a sound and Martha was beside me. "Now you've done it, Cathy. You've lost Pete. You might as well put Jimmy in a home. Then you'll be free of all of us, because I can't go through much

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more with you." She heaved a deep sigh. "Oh, Martha! Martha! What have I done? And why—why?"

"No one knows the answer to that. I guess you had a bad start, and God knows I was no help to you. But that's no excuse, Cathy. Your life's your own. You've had chances, but you always lost your way. Now, you'll have to go on alone, somehow. You might as well come to bed. Tomorrow's another day." She went out and closed the door.

I watched the windows grow pale with dawn. Another day and there would be another after that and another for all the lonely years of my life. What was I going to do with those days and nights?

There was a low knock on the door. When I dragged myself to answer it, Pete stood there in the doorway. His face was gray and tired. I stood staring at him.

"You shouldn't have come back, Pete. I can't stand much more—not now."

"Cathy, I couldn't help myself. I had to come back. I've been walking. I don't know where, but what you said about loving me kept beating in my head. The way

you cried—the hard things I said. Oh, God, I couldn't leave you that way. I have to know. What did you mean when you said I didn't understand?"

"I meant it when I said I loved you, Pete. I'd just found out. But I learned too late."

He came toward me and held my arms, his eyes searching mine. "If I was just sure—oh, Cathy, what made you do it?"

"So many things! Oh, Pete—" and stumbling, stammering, I tried to tell him where I came from, what I'd done—all the confusing things that had tormented me.

When I'd finished all I had to say, Pete held my hand.

"You're all wrong, Cathy, about a lot of things. It doesn't matter what your parents did. It doesn't make you different from the rest of us. Good Lord, Cathy, we're all like that. The only thing we can do is try the best we can to make something of our lives. We've all got to fight our way against the odds."

No one had ever talked to me like this—held out such hope. "I'd like to try again, Pete. But if I fail—"

He smiled at me. "You won't. You've got what it takes. You just don't know it yet. Besides, I won't let you fail."

With my eyes I thanked him for his faith in me. "Would you kiss me, Pete? Oh, please!" I begged.

He didn't answer. His arms came around me hard and his mouth on mine was like a blessing. The deep wave of joy that swept over me was like nothing I had ever known before. My whole heart met him in that kiss.

I leaned back from him, my breath coming fast. "Oh Pete! I love you! I never knew that it would be like this!"

He looked down at me with so much love and pride. How had I ever thought him plain? His smile was like a light.

"Then we can make a go of it, Cathy. I'm going to take you back with me. I've found a place for you and Jimmy."

So I have another chance, with the faith and love I never had before. Please God, this time I'll have the strength and wisdom to make something of my life and Pete's and Jimmy's. God knows—I'll try.

THE END

NO WOMAN IS SAFE

(Continued from page 53)

him with the seriousness of the situation, I'd only made him think I was a silly, love-struck girl.

"Well, there's no telling what time he'll get in," Mr. Carden said grumpily. "But if his mother or I am awake to hear him, we'll tell him. G'night."

"Good night," I whispered. Nervously, I put the phone back on its hook, turned, and stared at the empty diner. I listened to the silence, inside the diner and out. I picked up the soda-pop bottles and put them away, and then looked out the front window again. At ten o'clock the drugstore would close and Mr. Hallam would go home.

The fantastic thought flashed into my mind that Mr. Brownwell had arranged all this. He'd fixed it so the village was quieter than usual tonight, and he'd sent Jay out on Bill Tadeuss' boat, and somehow he would manage it so Jay wouldn't get back until late and Mr. Carden wouldn't deliver my message.

I sank down on one of the stools, putting my elbows on the counter and my forehead against two clenched fists. I had to think straight—figure out what to do. Maybe, if I asked him, Mr. Hallam would take me home. Or I could call one of the girls I knew, and ask to stay all night. I heard a step outside. Jay? Oh, surely it was Jay!

Eagerly, I jumped up, turning to the door. It opened. Mr. Brownwell came in.

I went weak with terror. I fell back against the counter, clutching at its rim with one hand. The other went to my mouth, stifling a scream.

He looked at me in amusement. "Now don't tell me I've scared you again, Betty?" he said mildly. "You'd better see the doc about your nerves."

The world steadied around me. I felt completely, blessedly like an idiot. Because he wasn't the least bit menacing—he was just Mr. Brownwell again.

"I—I guess I'd better," I said unsteadily. "I'm not used to night work, and it was so—so quiet. . . ."

"Well," he said comfortingly, "the boss'll be back tomorrow." He perched on a stool. "Fix me up a couple of hamburgers to take out, will you, Betty? Mrs. Brownwell and I got hungry."

I knew we talked while I cooked the meat and toasted rolls, but I'll never be

able to tell you what either of us said. All I could think of was that I'd been wrong about Mr. Brownwell. For no man who was planning murder would come in first and buy hamburgers for himself and his wife!

He picked up the paper bag with the hamburgers inside it and said jokingly, "Guess I won't take any walk on the beach tonight. Kind of tired—I stayed out there a couple of hours after I saw you."

"You did?" I managed to say. "You must love it there."

"Oh, I do. But it's not so good tonight—too many clouds." He nodded and went out. I heard him walk away.

What a dope I'd been! Anyone with any sense could see that there was no harm in Mr. Brownwell. Lordy, I thought, am I glad I didn't go around telling people I was afraid of him!

The second hand on the electric clock swept round and round, carrying the time on to nine-thirty, ten, ten-thirty. A few people who had been to the movies in Plymouth came in for sandwiches and coffee. Then it was eleven, time to close up. Jay hadn't come, or called. But now I was only hurt because he'd broken his casual promise to see me tonight. I wasn't afraid any more.

I put on my coat and went out, trying the door after me to make sure it was locked. I left a small night light burning. The whole two blocks of the business district were deserted now, with not even a parked car. But who cared?

And once again, with foolhardy courage, I set out by myself on the lonely road home. Sudden clouds hid the moon, except once in a while when it peered through a ragged gap. The night breeze blew against my face, and made a dry, scraping sound in the reeds to my left. The only other sound was the tap-tap of my feet. Tap-tap, tap-tap, tap-tap—tap-a-tap—

I stopped. For just an instant, I thought I heard two sets of footsteps, not just one. But when I listened, there was no sound but the rustling of the reeds. Slowly, unwillingly, I turned and looked behind me. A turn in the road had hidden the street lights in Jonathan's Landing. I could see nothing but darkness.

Shrugging, I went on. But the fear was coming back—a formless, faceless fear now, not even connected with Mr. Brownwell. I seemed to see a black shadow fol-

lowing me, reaching a long arm out to touch my shoulder, and unconsciously I started walking faster. I listened to my footsteps, and again I thought I heard a second set, just barely overlapping my own. But I must be mistaken—I must be!

Without warning, the moon broke through. I whirled around. Out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw a quick, ducking movement beside the reeds—as if someone behind me had dived into its shelter just as I turned.

I stood for a moment, frozen, and then, with a little whimpering sob, I ran. The sound of my running feet filled my ears; I couldn't tell whether there was another sound or not. And the clouds closed around the moon again. There was nothing to guide me but the faint whiteness of the road. A pain knifed through my side, and the air burned my lungs as I dragged it in and pushed it out. But I was still running, tearing off my coat as if that would give me added swiftness. Whoever was behind me—if there was anyone at all—hadn't caught me yet. I was halfway home; here was the spot where the beach cottages were built close to the road, where I'd met Mr. Brownwell last night. If only I could keep on running a little longer—

I stumbled suddenly, bending forward to keep from falling. When I lifted my head again a darker shadow was directly in front of me. I collided with it, unable to stop or swerve. Arms held me, and Mr. Brownwell said with awful triumph, "Betty! What's the hurry?"

My knees sagged. He was holding me up, while my hands beat at him with weak frenzy. I opened my mouth to scream, but my voice came thin and choked. He lifted me off the ground, as easily as if I were a doll.

"Fooled you, didn't I?" I heard him chuckle, deep in his throat. "I knew you were afraid of me. I could tell. So I fooled you. I came in and bought hamburgers. Knew you wouldn't think I was planning to meet you out here if I did that." He laughed again.

Now he was lowering me to the ground, paying no attention to my struggles. He was terribly, insanely strong. He laid me on the soft sand and knelt above me, pinning me down with a hand on each shoulder. I arched my back and kicked out with my feet, but I couldn't escape.

"You mustn't fight, Betty," he said, with an odd, pleading note in his voice. "I won't hurt you if you don't fight me. Those other girls did, that's why I had to—And I

was sorry afterwards. They were so pretty and sweet. Like you, Betty, like you." His voice sank lower and lower, until it was a soft, sickening croon. "Betty—Betty—"

If only he would kill me first.

The moon was out again. I saw his head outlined against it, and the way it found the silver streak in his hair. Abruptly, all the strength went out of me. I watched in fascinated horror while his whole head grew larger and larger, blotting out the shining circle in the sky. Then his lips were on mine, hot and vile. In a spasm of loathing, I jerked my head to one side, freeing myself from his kiss. But I couldn't escape from the weight that held me down, nor from the hands that were tearing at my dress, crawling on my skin.

I heard him panting, gasping, like a wild animal. An animal—yes, he was, he wasn't a man at all. And suddenly I wrenched myself free, out from under him, but the next second he had jerked me back in a flurry of sand that blinded my eyes and choked my open mouth. I was drowning in sand—he was pushing me down into it, down and down and down, to the depths where he would do with me whatever he pleased and then leave me—dead.

I screamed. I heard another scream, and thought it was mine, and then almost at once I knew it hadn't been, because sand filled my mouth. And there was another reason. The pressure, the hands, were leaving me, and the animal wouldn't have cared about my scream.

I was alone, lying on the sand. The moonlight shone down on a woman standing a few feet away. Then I realized that the scream had been a name—"Herbert!"

The woman was Mrs. Brownwell.

Mr. Brownwell, beside me, was on his

knees, trying to stand up. "Nell!" he said thickly. "Don't—"

"I followed her," she said in a dull, flat voice. "She told me—she'd seen you here last night. So I followed her. I couldn't believe it—but I was afraid—oh, God, I was so afraid!"

Mr. Brownwell pushed himself up. Now he was standing, his knees bent, swaying a little. "Nell," he said, low and pleading. "I couldn't help myself."

"I know, Herbert." She sounded like a mother soothing a frightened child. She lifted her hand a little, into the moonlight, and then I saw it—the cold, steely thing she was pointing at him.

Mr. Brownwell saw it too. "Nell!" he cried. "Please—I tell you it's not my fault."

"I know," she said again. "That's why I have to—"

The spurt of flame, the bark of the gun, broke what she was saying. Mr. Brownwell doubled over, crossing his arms in front, as if he were hugging himself, and for a long moment he stood like that.

"I'm sorry, Nell," he gasped at last, and fell forward onto the ground.

Half-lying, half-sitting on the sand, I watched him fall and knew I'd seen death. I couldn't look away or speak, though I felt that if I didn't soon, I'd go crazy with terror. Mrs. Brownwell seemed to forget I was there. She knelt beside him, weeping.

It couldn't have been very many minutes after this that headlights showed on the road. The car was going fast, but then the driver saw us and put the brakes on with a screech. I pushed myself up from the sand, to my knees—and when I saw who it was, to my feet.

"Jay!" I cried. "Oh—Jay!"

He caught me close, staring in fas-

cinated horror over my shoulder at Mr. and Mrs. Brownwell. "My God!" he said huskily. "No wonder you told Pop it was a matter of life and death. I came as soon as I got your message—" He pressed me to him, and then let me go. "Is he—is he dead?" he asked Mrs. Brownwell.

She looked up, her face blank. "Yes," she said dully. "Call the police. I'll wait. I won't run away."

It was to the police, later, she told her story—how since the birth of their second child she and Mr. Brownwell had drifted apart, so they no longer lived like husband and wife, and how for the last two or three years she had noticed him getting restless whenever the moon was full. She'd kept this to herself, ashamed to mention it. Then, this summer the two girls had been killed. Even after the second one, she'd refused to believe Mr. Brownwell was the murderer, but always the terrible suspicion was there. So when I told her I'd met him on the road the night before, she followed me when I left the diner, to watch and act if her suspicions turned out to be correct.

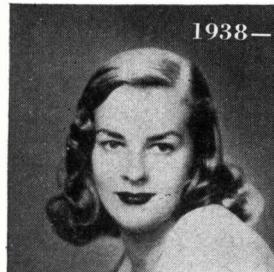
"But Lord!" Jay breathed. "Suppose you hadn't told her about meeting him? She saved you." He gave a deep shudder.

"You might've gotten here in time," I said.

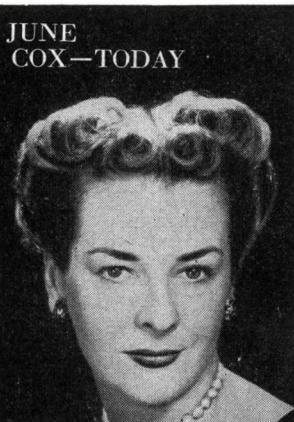
"Or I mightn't have," he said grimly. "No woman is safe, out alone at night, and I hope you know it now. Just let me look after you from now on, will you? Oh, honey, if anything had happened to you—" He left the sentence unfinished. But with his lips pressed on mine, I thought that poor, tortured Mr. Brownwell had done one thing for me—he'd taught Jay and me both that the time had come for us to start counting on each other, to start making plans.

THE END

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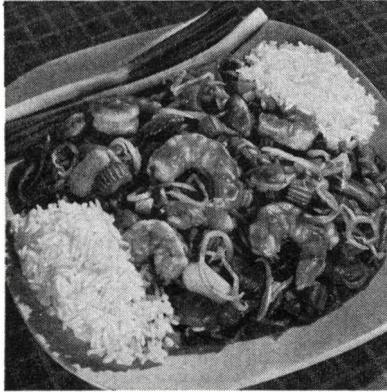
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1 tsp. salt	1 can LaChoy Mixed Chinese Vegetables (drained well)

For flavoring and thickening

2 tbsp. cold water	
2 tsp. LaChoy Soy Sauce	
2 tbsp. cornstarch	1 tsp. sugar
1 tbsp. LaChoy Brown Gravy Sauce	

Saute onions in 3 tablespoons of the measured butter for 3 minutes. Add celery, hot water, salt, and pepper. Cover and cook over hot fire for 5 minutes, stirring often. (Saute shrimp in 1 tablespoon of butter for 2 minutes.) Add drained LaChoy Mixed Chinese Vegetables and shrimp. Heat to boiling point. Combine and add thickening and flavoring ingredients. Stir lightly and cook for 1 minute. Serve hot on cooked rice. (For Chow Mein, serve on LaChoy Chow Mein Noodles.) Flavor individual servings with LaChoy Soy Sauce.

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I HAD A HYSTERECTOMY

(Continued from page 54)
but the color had gone from life. That day will stay in my memory for a long, long time, in spite of the reassuring words Dr. Harrod spoke. The doctor's office, the nurse in white . . . the table where I lay to be examined. I'd expected X-rays, but in these cases the examination is by hand and instrument. Then, dressing again, with the help of the nurse, and going into the office to sit in a chair across from the doctor's desk, hardly breathing as I waited. Trying not to cry out when he said, quietly:

"You have tumors, Mrs. Evans, in the uterus and ovaries. I was almost certain when you told me your symptoms. The examination proved I was right. I advise an immediate operation."

His voice changed, was gentler, soothing. "Mrs. Evans, there is no need for you to be frightened." He had seen my white face and fear-filled eyes. "These days, a hysterectomy is no more serious than any other abdominal operation. You'll be home in ten days."

I cried, my hands tight on the chair arms. "I'll go home—but what will I be like? My mother went through this years ago, and she's never been herself since! She hated my father, she's not a real woman. I wouldn't want to live if—"

"Listen, Mrs. Evans, just listen to me. There is absolutely no need to feel that way." He leaned toward me. "Women must stop listening to these old wives' tales, and understand how far medicine has advanced since your mother's day, especially glandular medicine. There are many glands in the body, you've surely heard of them. There's the thyroid in the throat, for instance, that creates a hormone which is most important to growth."

"What's a hormone?" I stammered.

"A secretion. A glandular secretion. And each different gland or pair of glands makes a different secretion, necessary for normal functioning of the body. These secretions pass directly into the blood stream or the lymph, and the glands of the generative organs do the same. They create the hormones which control the sex of the person. That's why in the old days, before we had this knowledge and those organs were removed from a woman, she did lose the hormones which made her female: the glands were gone and their important secretions were lost, too. But, now," he was very intent, very earnest, "it is completely changed. This is where you listen and believe. Then you won't be afraid. We remove as little as possible. In every case we can leave remnants, large or small, which will continue to produce the hormones needed to keep you a woman, a real female. This also lessens the shock of the operation, and minimizes the after-effects of the removal of so much of the manufacturing glands. By this new technique, we make sure you'll have no flushes, nervousness, exhaustion. Do you understand?"

Oh, yes, in a way I did. And yet, I didn't. It was all so new to me for one thing, and I couldn't really believe it. How could it be true? He might just be saying all this to comfort me, as doctors do. I cried desperately, "But—still—I won't be a real woman with all that gone. I can't!"

Dr. Harrod sighed a little. "I wish you'd accept my word," he said, "even if you can't fully understand. The only difference will be that you can't have more children. And, afterwards, there will be hormone injections, or pills which can be absorbed under the tongue, or between the cheek and teeth, to insure a normal balance of necessary gland secretions. You

will be as you've always been, Mrs. Evans. Please try and believe me. And, now, about the operation itself. You should have it as soon as possible." I stared before me; I had to go through with it, whether I believed him or not. "We must remove those tumors before they become dangerous." My eyes flew back to him, in a new terror.

"You mean—they might be cancer?"

"They might. We can never tell. That's one reason for immediate treatment."

I stood up, holding to the edge of the desk. "How do they happen?" I cried. "What makes tumors cancers? Can't we prevent them?"

Dr. Harrod said, "We don't know, Mrs. Evans. That's still one of the mysteries medicine is trying to solve. Our research hasn't explained these growths yet, but someday it will." He rose. "But there is little to fear when they are caught in time. That's why we urge people not to wait. As you mustn't any longer, Mrs. Evans."

So—there it was, no longer to be evaded. He had tried his best to comfort and explain, and though I'd listened to every word, I wasn't comforted. All the way home I kept whispering to myself: "Doctors don't tell all the truth."

I told John that evening, after the children were in bed. I sat in my usual chair and he was in his in our cozy sitting room. There was the TV set and my sewing basket piled high with mending; there was the worn rug under our feet. We'd planned to buy a new one; that would have to wait for a long time, now. There was John's evening paper, on the floor, where it had dropped after I began talking. I saw his stricken face and the instant effort he made to cover the shock of my news. I somehow managed to keep my voice steady as I repeated, as best I could, what Dr. Harrod had said.

"So, you see, it isn't like—it used to be when Mother—He says the parts they'll leave will still make the hormones, the secretions which keep me a woman—" Then I broke down. John had me in his arms at once. But he couldn't, try as he did, hide the fear in him; I knew him too well for that. Now, just the fear of a major operation—his fear was mine: that I'd be "different." There is something utterly horrible in that; it touched us both.

Let John say "Of course. Dr. Harrod is telling the truth, darling. It will be all right." It still lay, the horror that might be, between our lips. It was there, a shadow I could not banish, as I got ready to go to the hospital.

I took it with me, too; it was almost my last thought as I lay on the operating table. John was waiting downstairs, and he must be wondering if his Frances, his wife, would return to him—like her mother. No, he wouldn't be able to shut out what we'd had to go through with her. It didn't help, at that hour for either of us, that Dr. Harrod had said, more than once, "Don't be foolish, you will enjoy sex just as you always have. This doesn't affect the marriage relationship—not if you've had a good one before." I felt terribly alone, lost. As they put the cone over my face, my heart was whispering, "I'd rather die. I'd rather die than not be—right."

I didn't die. But neither was I over my fears and terrors; they clung around me during the ten days in the hospital. The children came to see me, bubbling over with joy because "Mommy" was going to be well. John came to see me, but his eyes were veiled as mine must have been. We were waiting, wondering. Only the months ahead would prove what was the

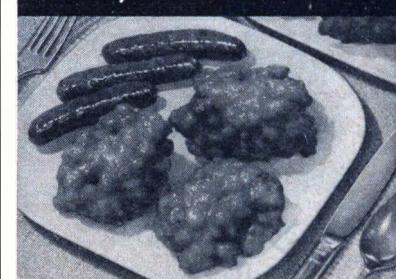
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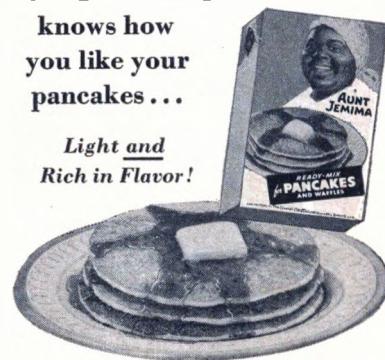


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truth. We laughed and talked and seemed happy, but we were waiting.

After John took me home, I had to take things carefully, of course. I had to stay in bed a great part of the time as you would after any major operation. We had a woman in to do the work as we had while I was away.

I loved my children just as I had before; they didn't irritate me as my brothers and I had irritated my mother after her hysterectomy. I loved John as always; I hadn't turned on him as Mother had on Dad. I couldn't keep one question from haunting me, though. That was: When I'm well and strong again, will I want him as a woman wants a man? Will the gland remnants they left in my body be enough to keep me a woman? Or, if they aren't, will the hormone pills I must take for the next eight or twelve weeks really, truly, make up the difference? So far, Dr. Harrod had been right. My hope was high, though occasional doubts disturbed me. Oh, dear God, I kept praying, let everything he said be true!

As for the pills, they were nothing; just slipped under the tongue to be absorbed. You see, a woman takes them for a certain number of weeks, or goes to a clinic for injections. Then, she stops until she feels nervous and tired. When that happens, she begins again. Under doctor's advice, of course. No one can tell how long you may have to do this; it may even be for the rest of your life. It depends on the individual and her reactions, and how much or how little has been left in her of the sex organs. But as I said, that's nothing unpleasant to have to do, is it?

Then, at last, I was back in the routine of my former life. Tending to the house, the children, to everything. But, one thing still waited to be proved, and soon, as health and life returned to my body, we'd know. Of course, it haunted me, that final question and doubt: Could I love, would I want to love as I always had? John and I never spoke of it. It was too big, too vital. So vital that fear lifted its ugly head, again; it came rushing back, stronger than ever.

Oh, how foolish we'd been! What a hell we'd put ourselves through for nothing! As we learned—that night, about six weeks after I'd been home. I was brushing my hair before the mirror; I'd put on the nylon nightgown and wrapper John had bought me—I think as a kind of act of faith just after I came back. He stepped up behind me, and his hands touched my shoulders. His eyes met mine in the glass. His fingers were harder, pressing down,

while his eyes still held mine, filled with hope and fear. I swung around with a tiny choked sob, the old sweet, wild hunger flooding over me. I lifted my face. His lips found mine; he gathered me into his arms. Our question was answered: I was all woman, I had lost nothing. I was still his and would always be so. There had been nothing to fear, nothing to dread; we should have believed from the beginning!

What we would have been spared if we only had!

That's why I'm writing this, why I feel I must. For other men and women like John and myself, who may face the same problem we faced.

For other husbands and wives who do not know any more than we did, who can't believe the truth. For too few of us know, or even think, about our glands and what they do. Too few of us realize the miracles modern medicine can perform. It's all there in medical journals, but what layman reads them? Or would understand them?

But I thought that night, waking before dawn with such a surge of joy that I couldn't sleep: Suppose I tell others my own experience, just one woman talking to another? Wouldn't it help them lose their fears? For I'm a living, happy proof of the truth, and what can be better than that?

Of course, for younger husbands and wives, the fact that you can't have more children may seem very dreadful. But there are many married people who can't have children for other reasons, and they often adopt one or two. But, for us, and I expect for others, this might even be called a blessing in disguise. You need no longer fear having a larger family than you can afford. There can be new abandon where there never was before. You don't have to be careful. Is that wicked? I don't think so. And, even if it is, there is nothing you can do about it but be thankful that is the only price one pays—being unable to have more children—when you may have to have a hysterectomy.

So please don't fill your thoughts with horrible fears. You'll be just as you were before, you wives and mothers, as feminine, as normal. I know. Don't wait, if you have any of the symptoms I had. Go to your doctor. Don't wait, for another reason, too: those tumors might become cancer, and then it would be too late. Yes, please listen to another woman who suffered unnecessary agony, who learned the hard way. And who, today, is happy and as complete as ever, who will stay that way, because of the modern wonders of surgery and medicine, as long as she lives.

THE END

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WE WERE HIGH SCHOOL THRILL CHASERS

(Continued from page 39)

the right to choose our friends? Look at Daddy. Doesn't he belong to the Kiwanis, and isn't he a Mason?"

"That's different, Joy," Mom replied.

If only she hadn't said that! I guess every boy and girl from the time he can remember has heard folks say, when they couldn't think of anything else, "That's different." And always, you want to scream: "Why is it different? Because you say it is?"

Mostly my mom and dad are wonderful. Of course they laid down the law to me at times, but after a while I could see their side of it. But not now, not this time. No matter what I'd try to say to them, they wouldn't listen, wouldn't try to understand.

I had to talk to someone. And who else but Johnny Jessop? Johnny was president of Alpha. And just last month he had taken me in his arms, while sitting in his car after a movie, and whispered, "Joy, honey, we're for each other, you know that. Why waste any more time?" And he slipped his Alpha ring on my finger. That's how Johnny Jessop and I started going steady.

When I called Johnny, he said he'd be right over, and from the grim way he said it I knew he'd heard the news. I was out in front waiting for him when his green jalopy tore around the corner.

"Oh, Johnny," I cried, "what are we going to do?"

"I don't know," he said desperately, "but it'll be something. They can't do that to us."

I slipped into the front seat and we began cruising up and down the streets, swirls of autumn leaves scattering out beneath the tires. I think it was Johnny who first had the idea. Or maybe it was me. Anyway, when we had it, it seemed so obvious we wondered why it took us so long to come up with it.

"Sure, Joy," Johnny said, "all we have to do is be really secret. Swear everybody in Alpha and Omega to absolute secrecy."

"You mean, just pretend to disband, but go ahead with the meetings and parties . . ." My voice trailed off with a sudden flicker of fear. In all my life I don't think I'd ever really told an important lie. And somehow I knew if we did this, I'd have to begin lying, especially to my folks.

As though Johnny had read my mind, he said, "Look, Joy, were they fair to us? Folding us up without a chance? Just making up their minds and then telling us—like that?"

It was true. Johnny took my hand and whispered, "Would you want to have to give my ring back?"

I guess that did it. Because by the time he'd driven back in front of our house, it was all agreed. Each of us would give the word, boy to boy, girl to girl. There'd be one joint meeting, and if everyone voted in favor, Alpha and Omega would still be in business, and if we did, would it be anyone's business but ours?

In our town, just as in yours, it's a full-time job keeping a secret as important as this one. We had our first meeting and there wasn't a single vote against. It was exciting, knowing that you had to fool the teachers and busybodies, and all those other kids who were always looking for ways to knife us in the back because they were jealous. Though we had to give up dances and monthly parties at home and things like that, knowing we were still the Alphas and the Omegas, that we'd had the courage to stand up for

our rights, more than made up for that.

Meetings were held out in the Lost Cave along the river bank, or in the Simmons' cellar—Jenny Simmons' mother was a widow and worked nights, so we had the place to ourselves. We even managed to have a party after all, right under everybody's nose. George Farnum's birthday party, it was, down in the rumpus room in the Farnums' basement. Nobody except those of us in the know realized that it just so happened George didn't invite anybody but Alphas and Omegas!

In spite of the trouble we had keeping our secret, everything went along fairly smoothly—until right after Thanksgiving, that is. Then all at once it dawned on us that pretty soon it would be Christmas, and how were we going to hold the big annual Alpha-Omega dance?

It hit me harder than anyone, I guess, knowing we couldn't have the Prom. You see, I would have been Prom Queen because I was going steady with Johnny, and he was Alpha's proxy. Just thinking about all I was going to miss got me so low I couldn't help letting it show. And then, of course, Mom cornered me about it.

"What's wrong, honey? You've got a face a mile long!"

I fished around in my mind for something to tell her, and then it dawned on me there wasn't any reason I couldn't tell the truth. Maybe I could make her realize what an awful thing the parent-faculty committee had done to us.

"Christmas is coming, and this year there won't be any A-O dance—"

"That's too bad, Joy," was all she said. She looked almost sympathetic. "But there's the Hi-Y dance—"

"Anybody can go to the Hi-Y, Mom," I said.

A little furrow of worry rippled Mom's forehead. She took my hand. "Joy, Daddy and I don't want to spoil your fun. But we've got to make you understand why we had to break up your sorority. What you just said, 'Anybody can go to the Hi-Y,' is one of the reasons."

Maybe I'm stupid. I didn't get the idea. I just stared at her.

"That's snobbishness, darling," Mom went on. "You're too young to be a snob. When you're grown-up, we hope you won't be. Being so exclusive and secret as the sororities and fraternities are is bad. You get the habit. You begin to think you're somebody special, far above the crowd."

"Oh, Mom," I exploded, "everybody has the right to choose his own friends!"

"I agree there," Mom said. "But not in such secret, hush-hush ways—ways that hurt people who are shut out—ways that hurt yourselves, too, because you turn into sneaky people who run from the truth."

"Times have changed, Mom," I said, thinking out loud. "The whole world's different. Why, even I can remember before the war, and I was such a little kid—"

Mom's green eyes turned deep emerald, the way they always do when she gets worked up. "Times have not changed as much as you think, Joy! Right has always been right, wrong has always been wrong. Every generation has had the same temptations—and every generation thinks the one before it is old-fashioned! When I was sixteen I thought the same thing. So did Daddy!"

I blushed inside. Out of nowhere, I suddenly remembered Mom had married Dad when she was seventeen. It wasn't too terribly long ago. Maybe I had Mom and Dad all wrong.

I almost did go to that Hi-Y dance, after all. Clark Cullen asked me, and I



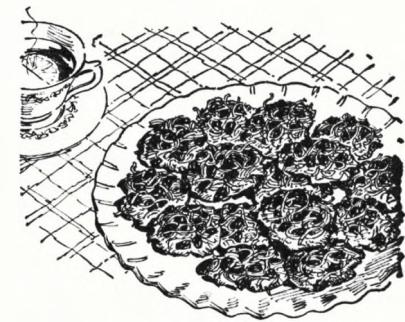
Is there anything on your shelf more versatile than that package of raisins? It does good so many ways...in so many foods. For example, with raisins you can add extra goodness to salads, cereals, puddings, cakes.

And, of course, to cookies. You've done that many times, but maybe never so wonderfully as you will with these...

RAISIN-COCONUT MACAROONS

1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 oz.)
2 cups seedless raisins
1 8-oz. pkg. (3 cups) shredded coconut
1 tsp. vanilla

Measure all ingredients into a large bowl. Toss together thoroughly with 2 forks. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto well-greased cookie sheet. Bake in a slow oven (325°), 12 to 15 minutes. Remove immediately from cookie sheet. Makes 42 macaroons.



P.S. Don't worry about how many of these cookies the youngsters eat. The spicy raisin flavor that attracts them is good for them. For raisins are fruit-rich and fruit-healthful with iron and other essential minerals.

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had an awful time making myself say no. If you knew Clark Cullen, you'd understand why. He's not quite so tall as Johnny, not quite so good-looking, not quite so breezy and smooth and sure of himself. And if I tell you there's something gentle about him, you're going to get the wrong idea. I don't know, but the minute I'd laid eyes on Clark Cullen I'd felt sure he was the sort of fellow I could go for. If only he were an Alpha! But of course, that was before Johnny'd asked me to go steady with him. Then I found out that the Alphas had asked Clark to join and he'd refused. Clark wouldn't take The Pledge of Secrecy, Johnny explained to me, when I asked him. I couldn't help thinking that there must be something pretty funny about a boy like Clark, who got the chance to be Alpha and refused! So I'd simply told myself to forget him. And I did—until right after Thanksgiving, when he asked me to the Hi-Y dance.

When I told him no, I wasn't able to make myself look straight into his eyes for fear I'd change my mind. "I thought maybe I'd have a chance," he told me, "knowing there wasn't going to be any A-O Prom this year. But I guess—I guess maybe you've made other plans, anyhow."

"Yes, I have," I told him. "I'll be dating Johnny that night, same as always."

Then Clark said a funny thing. "How long is always, Joy?" he asked me.

"Always is a pretty long time," I told Clark, making a long solemn face. "For ever and ever, most likely. Why, maybe even till next spring."

Clark laughed then, too. And he was still laughing when he asked, "Think maybe I should stick around and wait it out?" Laughing, but it wasn't a joke. He meant it. I could tell. And I had to swallow a couple of times, and wait till I could get my face arranged with just the right look, not too silly and not too sober, before I said, "Well . . . maybe."

It was right then that Johnny and some of the others hailed me from up the block. I made up my mind I'd better get away from Clark before I got in any deeper, so I thanked him again and hurried off to join the gang.

They were all steamed up. The first thing Johnny said was, "We got a date for the twenty-second, Joy. For an A-O Christmas Prom!" And then, before I could get my breath back, they were all talking and laughing at once. When I got it sorted out, it amounted to this: George and Johnny had thought up a way to have our A-O Prom after all.

"Remember the old Millspaugh house, on that little back road that runs into Fanwood Drive?" Johnny asked. "George and I were out there. The place is all boarded up, you know, and there's not another house for miles around. Why, out there we could have the biggest brawl in history, and nobody'd get wise!"

"How'd you ever think of it?" I asked.

"I'm just a genius, I guess." He grinned happily. "Joy, you ought to see the place! Why, the Northton Arms ballroom, where the A-O was last year, can't hold a candle to it! The whole main floor is one big room, with a little bar off to one side."

I wondered for a minute why the Millspaugh's, a quiet old couple who'd died when I was a little girl, had wanted to live like that. Then I remembered. Between then and now, someone else had occupied the place. Paddy O'Flaherty—the one they said was a gangster—had run it as a gambling joint for a while. There'd been a big scandal about it in the *Northton News*, I recalled now—when the police had raided it. There was something about a lot of girls being mixed up with Paddy. The place had been deserted for years.

Our new secret, about the A-O Christmas Prom, was even more trouble to keep than the one about the Alphas and Omegas going underground. Mom caught on right away that something was in the wind. Thank goodness, inspiration came to me when she asked me why I was so happy all of a sudden. It's not any fun lying to your mother, but sometimes you just have to. I told her we'd changed our minds about going to the Hi-Y dance.

"Well, now, that's wonderful," she said, smiling. "You know what? Maybe we can stretch the budget for a new dress!"

"Mom, there's a dress in Hammerman's window that's dreamy! It's antique satin, they call it, sort of misty gray with one shoulder strap—so it's not really a strapless."

Mom looked doubtful. "Well, I'd have to see . . . I'll have a look at it . . ."

That was the best I could get out of her in the way of a promise.

From then on we were all so darned busy we couldn't see straight, what with the usual rush of getting ready for Christmas and the hush-hush routine we had to go through planning the Prom. We'd decided to have champagne. It was George Farnum who managed that for us. He called up a liquor store over in Oakwood and ordered the champagne and the ice

TRUE STORY THANKS YOU

The editors of **TRUE STORY** want to thank the many thousands of readers who sent in their heart-stirring true life experiences to the great True Story Contest. The contest is over and all the prize winners have been notified. In this issue and in forthcoming issues you will find the gripping tales from the lives of men and women you may know. And watch for another big story contest to be announced early in 1953.

and glasses and stuff we'd need, and told the man he'd send his son to pick everything up the day of the dance. All George had to do was borrow his dad's car, turn up at the place in Oakwood, pretend he was his own son, and drive off.

Everything was clicking right up till two days before the Prom, when Mom came home from downtown with that big box from Hammerman's. Right away I knew she hadn't bought the gray satin number. But I crossed my fingers and held my breath while she cut the string.

Well, you should have seen it! I got a look at Mom's face, all lit up from inside, and I couldn't say a thing! I just swallowed back the tears and pretended I liked it—the pink tulle with little blue flowers holding up the skirt in scallops all around the bottom. It was awful. But what could I do, after Mom had tried to be so nice about it? So, I had to wear it!

On the night of the twenty-second, Mom and Dad and my little brother Davy were lined up in the living room to see me off. I had Johnny all primed beforehand about the Hi-Y dance, to make sure he'd say the right things. By the time I got downstairs he was feeding them a big line about how it was probably all for the best that all the secret societies had been closed down.

He heaved a big sigh of relief when we got into the car. "Whew! Thought we'd never make it, baby!"

"Is everything okay?" I asked him. "Did George get all the stuff?"

He grinned. "Everything's George with George. Me, too. Look in the back."

I flipped on the light. There, lined up in a row on the seat, were five brandy bottles. "What's that for?" I wanted to know. "We're having champagne—"

"Champagne! Gosh, what's that but pep-up pop? We guys just went along with you girls on it because you seemed so set on being swishy. But champagne spiked with brandy—a couple of those and we'll be jet-fired for sure!"

The old Millspaugh house at night looked like something out of a horror movie. The whole place was boarded up and it looked a mile high in the moonlight, and here and there little ghostly flickers of lights from inside came through the chinks in the boards. The boys hadn't been able to pry the front door loose, so we had to go in through a back window.

Once we were inside, I had to hand it to the boys—they were the ones who'd made most of the arrangements, and they'd really done a neat job. It's too bad, I thought in sudden rebellion, that it all has to be so darned hushed-up! Why, if our parents could see what a party we put together without a stitch of help from them, they'd get a whole new picture of how grown-up we were!

Who'd believe, for instance, that you could have a dance with a real, live orchestra, and keep it secret? Johnny was responsible for that one. He'd remembered some guys with a four-piece combo who'd been kicked out of school for getting high on tea—that's smoking marijuana, you know, like they say all the real big-time musicians do—and they'd needed a job bad enough to promise to keep their mouth shut. Of course, the boys weren't magicians. They couldn't get the shut-off electricity working, or sneak any oil for the oil burner. But they'd rounded up what seemed like a million candles, and we were lucky enough to have a mild night, so that just the fires in the two big fireplaces, one at each end of the main room, gave us plenty of heat.

Funny thing, though. For a little while after we got there, everybody was kind of stiff and formal, and quiet. Maybe it was the flickering light of the candles and the fires that made everyone look different—and feel different, too. Gosh, that room looked ten times as big as it had by daylight, with all sorts of little nooks and alcoves off it, and each one of them piled high with shadows! We had absolute freedom now to do anything we wanted. But we didn't do a thing, at first. Maybe our consciences were bothering us, I don't know. But for the first hour, our party was a fizzle—until the boys started taking sprigs of mistletoe out of their pockets, and tacking them all over the place.

It got to be practically like musical chairs, everybody moving up one place at a time to kiss, or be kissed, because of course you can kiss even a stranger when you've got mistletoe for an excuse! Pretty soon, the kisses began to last a lot longer than just little pecks, and the steady-daters were kissing only each other, and trying to stay in the dark corners of the room. Somebody was telling jokes that got pretty off-track, and the boys began to laugh and look at the girls with strange, intense expressions.

I was having a wonderful time, giggling over the feather-tickle I felt on my nose from the champagne bubbles, dancing every dance with Johnny. Except it wasn't dancing really. We just held on to each other and stood in one place while the music played.

"Isn't this dreamy, Johnny-boy?" I said.

He grinned, sort of lopsided. I thought. Or maybe it was my eyes that were seeing

crooked. "Really living, this is. Sugar! Say, you tried one of my spiked Specials?"

I shook my head. "I'm happy the way I am—I'm floating half up to the ceiling now, just on champagne."

All by itself, champagne's like drinking sunshine caught in a glass. Adding the brandy, as far as I was concerned, made it taste the way furniture polish smells. But I knew from experience that Johnny has a way of sulking up the whole evening if you cross him, so I strung along and sipped the drink away.

Down at the other end of the bar, Polly Strauss and a couple of the other girls and some of the boys were talking. "Honestly, look at this Mother Hubbard Mom bought me—bows, yet!" She flicked the blue taffeta ribbons at the shoulders and waist of her dress with disgust.

"Look what my mother got me up in," I cried. "Just get a load of me!"

Sure, what happened next doesn't make much sense. But right then I thought it was smart. Okay, then—why not remodel it, right on the spot?

"These darned flowers!" Polly reached out and began to tear off the little bouquets. "Too much glop around the neck!"

"What I wanted was one shoulder strap!" I said that myself, as with a quick jerk I fixed that. "Let 'er rip!" I laughed wildly. The other strap came off. Miraculously the top of my dress stayed up, but I was suddenly conscious of the way my shoulders gleamed in the candlelight and of the soft roundness of my bosom. I felt wonderful, seductive. I raised one arm to touch my hair and then I had to grab the bodice of my dress. Johnny started to laugh, and I waltzed over to him.

"Trying to tease me?" he grinned as I sidled close to him. "You little flirt! Just make sure you keep that treatment for me!"

And he grabbed me, so tight I had to hang on or I'd have lost my balance. I blinked half-dizzy at the little pin-pointy candle lights. Everything was so awfully, terribly wonderful, I couldn't bear to believe it. All around me the boys were handsomer than ever, the girls prettier—bigger and better than life. You bet.

Then the orchestra took a break, and it got pretty quiet for a while. Except of course you could hear lots of giggling and kissing, and once in a while a little scuffle.

And Johnny—Johnny was kissing me again, his lips running over my face and neck. I tried to hold him back, when all the time I was just dying to have him kiss me that way. It was getting awfully warm, even for December. I began to feel kind of groggy when we heard George's voice calling from way off somewhere: "Hey, gang—come on! Come on upstairs!"

The second floor had a long hall down the middle, with lots of doors opening off it. Behind those doors were bedrooms—bedrooms like nothing I'd ever seen outside the movies. All draperies and tarnished gilt, and big beds with canopies and even one bed that was perfectly round, for goodness sake! And little breezes out of nowhere, to make the candles flicker.

"The Millspaugh—what on earth did they want a place like this for?" I asked Johnny.

"Not the Millspaugh," he laughed. "Paddy O'Flaherty's the one who fixed this up, you can bet!"

"But—but I thought he just ran a gambling house here, not a hotel."

Johnny put his hands on my shoulders, swung me around to face him. "Look, Miss Innocence, this joint was no hotel. Don't you get it? Paddy must've had—well, girls up here. For the customers."

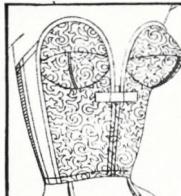
"It was a—a—" I couldn't get the word out. I guess I didn't even know the right

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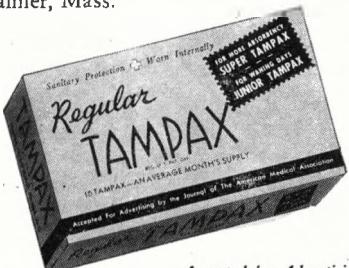
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word, but I understood all the same. And that explained why the people in all the towns around had been so mad, and why Paddy had disappeared so fast when the police had closed the place up.

Suddenly, I felt a little cold inside—maybe a little scared, like a kid waking up alone in the dark. "Johnny," I said, "let's go downstairs."

Johnny laughed and looked at me as if he'd never seen me before. I felt a sudden warmth in me, then the shivering cold again. Everything seemed so unreal.

"Please, Johnny," I said. "Please . . ."

His hand gripped mine tighter. "Sure, baby, I just want to show you something. C'mon." He pushed open a bedroom door and I followed him—I couldn't have helped it, anyway, with his fingers clamped on my wrist.

Just inside he let go, shut the door. "I haven't kissed my girl all evening," he whispered in a queer, strangled voice. And suddenly he caught me to him.

I can't begin to tell you what it did to me, Johnny's kiss. All I can say is, every time his mouth and my mouth came together, it was like the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve all rolled up in one, only more so. I felt solemnly excited, the way bands waving and flags flying and soldiers marching made you feel, only a lot better because the feeling was just mine and Johnny's, not belonging to a whole parade of people. The music was just our music, and the skyrocketts that burst and lit up the world had been set in our very own hearts . . .

I don't know how long we stood there, holding tight to each other, our lips locked together. A long time, I guess. Long enough so that when Johnny released me, when he led me over toward the bed, it seemed perfectly right. Even when Johnny pushed me down, very gently, on that bed, it seemed right. And right for him to lie down beside me, gather me very close. Right, even, when he reached over and pinched out the candle, plunging the room into darkness.

For what must have been many minutes, and seemed like many hours, we lay there, perfectly still. Not talking. Not even kissing any more. Just holding each other, drifting together through a dream that was too bewilderingly beautiful to understand. Just floating through clouds, until finally, Johnny's voice, a hoarse whisper in the blackness, brought me back. "Want to, Joy?"

I knew what he meant. Hadn't I wondered about it a lot lately, especially whenever I was in Johnny's arms? Hadn't each touch, each kiss, each sidewise intimate glance set off that strange new flame inside me?

Did I want to? Sure I did—I have to confess that I did. But there, in that great gilded bed, in that boarded-up old house? There, with dance music jerking me out of the breathless wonder of my yearning, back to the dust and darkness of our secret forbidden party?

"Joy," he whispered. "Joy . . . it'll always be you and me like this."

But will it? It could be. Unless I didn't want it that way. Oh, always is such a long, long time!

Always is the rest of my life. Always is the time I should give to my husband, when I find one. Always . . .

Maybe I want to keep myself the way I am for a while longer.

But I want to know what it's like. What happens to a girl when—

"Please, Joy," Johnny whispered. "Now?"

Suddenly, I turned away, burying my face in the bedspread of that fancy bed. I imagined I saw those other girls—those

girls Paddy O'Flaherty once had kept here.

I thought, "No—no," as I saw Clark Cullen's face in my mind. Why in the world should I think of him now?

Johnny was getting more insistent. I realized he'd had more to drink than I'd thought. He held me close, until I could hardly breathe.

"Johnny," I said, "this is—my first time. I mean—well, have you ever, ever before?"

He laughed. Right out loud, as he hugged me so tight I could hardly breathe. "Sure," he bragged, "lots of times! What do you think we Alphas do at our meetings? Play checkers?" He sounded suddenly so unlike the boy I thought he was, more like a boastful hunter.

"I couldn't be an Alpha if I hadn't," he went on. "That's the famous Alpha Secret Pledge, didn't you know? You have to visit the girls in those houses over on the other side of town. The part we call 'Scarlet Town.' Baby, are you the innocent little kiddie!"

So that was why Clark Cullen had refused to take the Alpha Secret Pledge! And maybe Johnny would tell about me, too, if I gave myself to him. With a little liquor in him, maybe he'd tell anything.

Again, Johnny held me close, too close. He kissed me, and the pulses in me went mad, and I couldn't help myself.

I was like a marionette, and he was pulling the strings to make me dance. My breath came fast and strained. I wanted—but I didn't want . . . oh, why was I so mixed up? He started to fumble with my dress, his hands like separate wild creatures on me. I began to be frightened. This wasn't right. I didn't want this strange, rough, uncaring Johnny. I tried to pull away from him but he wouldn't let me. And then I was terrified because I knew what I wanted now and it was only to escape. And he wouldn't let me.

Then suddenly, he jerked up, startling me. He sat on the side of the bed, tense, nervous. "Joy! Did you hear?"

"What, Johnny? Oh, what? I—I don't—" "Shut up!"

For a moment we held our breath, listening. Then I heard it, too. From below there was no longer the sound of music but an excited murmuring, an insistent babble. And then, high and clear, a girl's scream.

"I smell smoke!" Johnny's voice was sharp. Cutting across it, the scream came again. Not just a sound, this time, but a word. One terrible, heart-chilling word, endlessly repeated.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Johnny pulled me to my feet, dragged me after him across the room. For an awful moment he tugged at the door. "Damned door's stuck. All the damp—closed up so long—" Then it gave way, opened. And let in a cloud of smoke.

I don't remember the rest of it in the order that it happened. Just little bits and pieces. June Ann crying out, as if it mattered, "Was it the candles? Did someone knock over a candle?" And Tommy answering her, "It's all up this side, up this chimney—the flue must've been choked!" Kate, repeating shrilly, "We've got to get out of here! Why don't we get out of here?" Then Johnny, "Where's George? Anybody know where George is?" And a voice I was surprised to find was my own, telling him, "George and Polly were in one of the rooms, way at the end of the hall upstairs, the last I saw them." All at once, everybody calling, "George, George!" and "Polly, Polly!" and getting no answer. And everyone pushing and shoving and running into each other and saying, "We've got to get out! We've got to find George and Polly!" but not doing anything except push and shove more.

Johnny kept that death grip locked on my wrist all the time he was running aimlessly from the front to the back, to the foot of the stairs, to the door, back to the stairs again, dragging me after him. Tommy Fife came over to us.

"George and Polly—they must still be in that room. Maybe their door's stuck, too. Tommy, we've got to get them out—where they are is right over the worst of the fire!"

He turned and dashed up the stairs, pulling us after him. Behind us, I could hear other feet following, other voices calling, "Upstairs! George and Polly are upstairs!"

It wasn't quite so smoky in the upper hall. We felt our way down to the end and Johnny backed me into the corner, ordering, "Don't move!" and let go of me. He tried the door, and then Tommy did, and then both together they threw themselves against it. But it wouldn't budge.

A man, one of the orchestra fellows, came running up with a thing like a torch. A burning piece from one of the fireplaces, I realized later. Then we could see a little better. Tommy kept babbling, "If I'd just brought an axe, if I'd only brought an axe," just as if an axe was something you always took along to parties, only nobody seemed to think it was strange, then. Johnny kept trying to make the fellows work together like a flying wedge, to run against the door, only he couldn't get them organized. "Come on, come on," he kept pleading. "We can do it. They can't get out any other way. Those boards on the windows are too thick, and there's nothing to pry them off with. For God's sake, come on, come on!" There were tears running down his face, and his fingers were all bloody where he'd torn the nails, scrabbling to get a finger-hold on the edge of the door.

"Oh, God help us!" That was Kate screaming, and when we looked where she was looking, we saw the stairway, filled now with licking flames. We were cut off, trapped.

It was then that we heard, over the crackling hell-noise the fire made, the sound of sirens. I don't know how long it was we stood there, huddled like sheep at the end of the hall, coughing and choking and crying. But we didn't move, any of us, until, like magic, one of the other bedroom doors, halfway down the hall, opened from the inside. And a fireman, in his rubber coat and helmet, with an axe in his hand, came out and beckoned to us and called, "This way—in here, kids, in here! Quick!"

They took us down ladders they'd put up to the windows. The rest of the orchestra boys, we found out later, had gone outside, and were able to tell the firemen the minute they arrived where we were.

Huddled in a grove of trees a little way from the house, we waited. And watched. Watched while the firemen hacked at the window boards of the room where Polly and George were trapped. Watched and saw the puffing smoke, the billowing flame belch out when they made an opening. And then, sick, turned away.

"Count! Make sure everyone else is out." There was another fireman, calling as he ran by us. Obediently we counted, by light of the fire, losing track and having to start over and losing track again. Missing some girl and then finding her a moment later, missing some boy and then hearing him call his own name from the shadows. Then finally we stopped counting. We didn't dare count any more, couldn't count any more, because no matter how often we counted we never got the same answer.

Time stood still, and we stood still with it, watching the old Millspaugh house go up. We were paralyzed—so tired, so bit-

terly cold and frightened. We weren't sure, we didn't even care that we were alive.

At last a hand, touching my arm, brought me back. I stared into the face of one of our town policemen. "Come on," he said. "Get into the cars. We're taking you back to town."

That's all I remember till I woke up and found that I—and the rest of the Omegas and Alphas—was in the North顿 City Jail.

No. Not all of us. All but two. All but George Farnum and Polly Strauss. They'd both been found dead, in each other's arms, in the ashes of the old house.

Dad and Mom came and got me after a while. I didn't have to tell them what had happened. By that time they knew. They, and the whole town of North顿 and all the people from all the towns for miles around knew that those crazy kids who belong to Alpha and Omega had defied the authorities. Knew we'd had a secret party. Knew that there'd been the fire, and the old Millspaugh place destroyed. Knew that two of us never came back.

They didn't scold, Mom and Dad. They were just quiet. I kept catching them looking at me with big, solemn eyes. And when they'd put me to bed, still without one word of reproach, I couldn't stand it any longer. I stared up at Mom, standing there looking about a thousand years older than yesterday, and I cried, "Why don't you say something? Why don't you yell at me? Why don't you—"

She put out a hand to touch my shoulder. "Because it's so big and so frightening there aren't any words," she whispered. "How can I be angry when you—when you might have been Polly Strauss?" Her face crumpled up, and she ran outside.

I wish I could forget. I wish I didn't have to remember any of it, the night of the fire or the days and the nights that followed it. But I do. And now it's nearly Christmas time again. Twelve whole months have passed, and still I remember everything, about those days.

The whole day after the fire, the twenty-third, I spent in bed. Mom had sent for Dr. Morrison, and he gave me something that kept me mercifully half-drugged, unthinking. But the morning of the twenty-fourth I got up. Part of me wanted to stay there in my room forever, hiding. But part of me wanted to be with people, to feel I still belonged in the world.

Dad had gone to work, and my little brother Davy was outdoors somewhere. Mom was alone, sitting at the breakfast table. I don't know what I expected her to say. Something big and important, surely. But all she said was, "Good morning, Joy. Sit down and I'll fix your eggs. Scrambled, as usual?"

"As usual," she'd said. Oh, didn't she know that for me, nothing would ever be the same again?

I ate slowly, with no appetite, with Mom sitting across from me, drinking cup after cup of coffee. We were like a couple of strangers who accidentally share a table in a restaurant, I thought. Nothing to say to each other. Each not even sure the other wants to be talked to. Finally, though, I asked the question that was nagging at me. "What's going to happen, Mom?"

"Happen?"

"To us. To me. How are you and Dad going to punish me?"

Her eyes filled up with tears. "I don't know, Joy, I don't know. I keep thinking and thinking about it. I think about how you lied to us and deceived us, and I can't figure out a punishment that's bad enough. And then I remember the fire, and what happened, and—and I think you children have probably punished yourselves worse than any of us parents could. She sighed, a long, shaky-sounding sigh. "Mostly,

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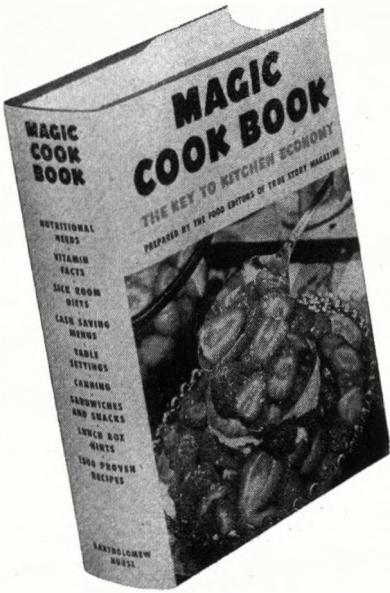
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Dad and I are so thankful you're safe—alive—we can't think about punishment!"

"But Mom, how can you care for me now, after what I did to you?"

"Because—oh, Joy, parents don't ever stop loving their children, no matter what. Maybe it's crazy, but they don't. You made some mistakes, big mistakes that had terrible consequences. But—well, I think you've learned more from those mistakes than Dad or I could ever teach you."

Once—only the day before, but it seemed like years—I would have answered "Yes!" Answered off the top of my head, without even thinking, just thankful I was getting off so easy.

But now I couldn't answer that way, and I was pretty sure I never would, ever again. I was very slowly thinking it out. "I don't know, Mom. I forget. I get all steamed up over something and I forget even the biggest things. But—oh, gosh, I'm going to try! I'm going to try so hard!"

For a while, we were quiet again. I was doing a lot of thinking, and I have an idea Mom was thinking pretty much the same thing. Finally I said, "Mom—remember what you said about secrecy. That's what was wrong about the whole thing, just like you told me. It wasn't wrong for us to want to have a party, or even to have one. It was the way we went at it that got us all fouled up. We could have had a party, right here in town. We could even have used the left-over money in the Alpha and Omega treasures to hire the ballroom and the orchestra and buy the refreshments. It would have been okay—you wouldn't have said a word, you and the other kids' folks, would you?"

"No, honey. We never in this world wanted to keep you from having fun. You know that. You only had to tell us."

"I know. It could have been a good party, too. Plenty good, and lots of things wouldn't have happened that did happen out there at the Millspaugh house. Not just the big thing, the fire. Little things, that sort of spoiled it. Like the silly business about my dress."

Mom can be awfully swell—she didn't ask me what silly business about my dress. She didn't ask what other things happened. She knew I was feeling my way.

"And the drinks. I don't like to drink. And those rooms upstairs. And—and Johnny." It couldn't have made much sense to Mom, but she still didn't ask questions. "All because we felt we had to keep it secret. Only the secret got too big. Like you said—we just aren't old enough and wise enough to know where to draw the line. Mom, I've got to tell you about everything that happened. But not now—it's too close, too awful!"

She smiled the deep-down, sweet smile that I've never seen on any other face but Mom's. "When you're ready," was all she said. "Whenever you're ready."

"Not just the party, either," I went on. "Everything about secret societies and why I know now they're wrong for kids like us. I could have gotten into worse trouble than I did. More trouble I'd be ashamed of all my life. Oh, Mom—does it always have to be like this? Does something awful have to happen to you before you get good sense? Do—do people have to die so other people can learn the difference between right and wrong?"

Mom reached across the table and closed her hand, hard and tight, over mine. "Not always, Joy. But often—too often. Even grownups aren't always safe with secrets." All at once she got to her feet. "That's enough! What's done is done. There's no going back."

There was one more thing I had to ask and get it over with: "Mom, what about the police? They took us to jail. Is it—was it a crime, what we did to the old

house, even if we didn't mean to?"

"Dad found out about that yesterday. Just using the old Millspaugh house without permission is what they call 'Breaking and Entering.' The police could charge all you youngsters with that, they say—only they're not going to. I guess they figure the way we do, that enough has happened so you'll never forget. As far as the fire is concerned, the owner could sue for damages. But it happens that the owner is that O'Flaherty man, who's due to be arrested if he ever so much as sets foot in this state again. So I guess he won't do anything about it, either." She began piling up plates. "Come on, let's get these dishes done. We've got a lot to do. It's Christmas Eve, remember?"

I lost track completely. "You—you mean we're going to have Christmas, just like always? Oh, Mom, I can't—I can't!"

She stopped beside me, put her arm about my shoulders. "Maybe," she said very gently, "the biggest part of your punishment is finding out the whole world doesn't stand still because something happened to you. Finding out life goes on, just like always. Finding out you must force yourself to go on even when you feel you'd just like to crawl into a hole somewhere and never come out again." She waited a second, then went on. "Right now, it's Davy, mostly. Your brother's a little boy, looking forward to Christmas. We can't deny him the fun he should have. No matter how you feel."

So there was Christmas in our house, after all. Tree-trimming that night, and carolers making the rounds, and bells at midnight. And in the morning, presents under the tree and filled stockings hanging from the mantel and the house full of turkey-and-mince-pie smells, and people dropping in after church.

Mostly, the people who came were callers for Mom and Dad, grownups. I could see, I thought, all sorts of things in their eyes when they looked at me. Disapproval, contempt, disgust. At last I went up to my room to get away from them. But then Mom called me down again, because there was a visitor for me. Clark Cullen.

I didn't want to face him, either. All at once I wanted to see him least of all. Clark, whom I'd thought was out because he'd had a chance to join Alpha and turned it down. Why, all along, when I'd seen only the surface things about the sororities and fraternities, the excitement, the tinsel-coating, he'd seen deep inside them. And he'd been wise enough not to want any part of them. So why had he come? Why should he want any part of me?

He answered my question without it being asked out loud. "I thought maybe you'd like someone to talk to," Clark said, and he slipped his arm through mine and turned me toward the sunroom where there weren't any people. And then, when we were sitting on the couch. "Or if you don't want to talk, you don't have to. And I won't, if you don't want me to. Only I had to come over, Joy."

We sat a long time, not saying anything. I had the funniest feeling—as if I knew Clark, with whom I'd never had a date, to whom I'd never said more than ten words running, better than any other boy in town! As if we'd always been friends—and better, as if we'd always be friends. He felt it, too, because just before he left he said, "Remember the time I asked you how long forever is, Joy? And you said maybe till next spring?"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well—couldn't forever come a little sooner than that? Would you go out with me? Maybe next week, or—"

"Oh, Clark, I'd like to—but not so soon!"

"Or the week after," he went on. "Or a month or a year from now. Whenever you're ready, Joy. Whenever you say."

For just a moment, then, when Clark squeezed my hand tight and then turned to go, Christmas wasn't only in our town, in our house. It was in my heart, too.

Christmas in our house—and in all the houses in Northton, except two, I thought, as I turned away from the door, the glow in me fading. That's what Mom meant by life going on.

Better and more important and more like—like a miracle, there was in our house and all over Northton, I realized, the love and warmth and special togetherness of families that Christmas brings. That special togetherness and love and warmth, even for me. And for Johnny and Jane Ann and Tommy and all the other Alphas and Omegas, in spite of what had happened. Perhaps even more love and warmth, even for me. And for Johnny and parents were all thinking of the emptiness in the Farnums' house, and in the Strauss'. I was thinking of it, too, and so were all the rest of the Alphas and

Omegas, I knew. That, even more than the other, I guess, was what Mom meant by life having to go on . . .

Life has gone on. Another year of it. Northton's the same and our homes are the same. The warmth and the love and the togetherness—they're the same, too. But I'm different, and so are the others. We don't have secret societies any more. We're not special, set apart, too important to worry about rules. Now we're just—well, just people. Just kids. Our parents' children. A lot older and a lot wiser, in some ways, than most kids our age, because of the terrible way we learned our lesson. But younger, too, than others our age, because now we cling to the good, sweet things of home, knowing that being grownup isn't all we once imagined it to be.

I'm willing, we're all willing, to wait until our grown-up years come by themselves. We're willing to stay young a while longer, and yet—remembering that night, remembering George and Polly, we know there's a part of our hearts that will never be young again.

THE END

TOO LONELY TO LIVE

(Continued from page 61)
hand. "I know this must seem very queer to you, but I'm quite serious. I live in a small town in Missouri, and it's terribly hard to get help. When I saw you at work—so neat, so quiet—I just said to my husband, 'Now that's the girl I'd like to have working for me.' What do you say?"

"Why—I don't know. I—I'd have to ask my folks. It's so sudden."

She patted my hand again. "Don't you worry, I understand perfectly. We're on our way to Montreal at the moment, but we'll drive back this way in about a month. You think it over, and let me know then."

That night, when I told my family about the woman's offer, Mother and Papa were pleased, but my brother laughed. "Oh, she was just pulling your leg!" he scoffed.

I thought and thought about it in the time the lady was away, and I made up my mind to tell the lady no. But when the time drew near for her to come back, my brother Joe kept on teasing me:

"She was laughing at you. She'll never come back. Imagine anyone going to the trouble of importing a maid!" And he laughed.

I was furious at him, but he kept on at me. The lady came back, and I still told her no. But that night at supper, Joe started in again:

"I don't believe there ever was such a lady!"

"Oh, no?" I shouted at him. "Well, I'll prove it to you. I'll go down there now and tell her yes—so there!"

Mother and Papa tried to stop me, but I was too mad. I burst out of the house and ran down the road to the Inn. When the American lady heard I was waiting to see her, she came right down.

"I—I've changed my mind, ma'am. Is it still open?"

"Why, of course it is, dear!" she said, delighted. "But are you sure, now?"

"Yes! Yes, I'm sure. When shall I be ready?"

"Well, I want to leave first thing in the morning, so be here at six, all packed."

And I was there. Mother, Papa, even Joe—scared at what his teasing had made me do—tried to talk me out of it, saying I shouldn't make a decision while I was upset. But I'd been lying awake most of the night, dreaming excitedly of the strange and wonderful future I might have in the

States, and I wouldn't listen. Now that I'd actually said the word, I was happy to go, and when my new bosses, the Everetts, stowed my little cardboard box of clothes in the back seat and held the car door for me, I was filled with a kind of starry-eyed excitement.

The family had come down to the Inn to see us start, and as the big, sleek car turned out onto the road, I looked back to see them standing together in a row, Papa, Joe, and Mama. I waved and waved till they were out of sight, then turned to face forward the way we were going—across the border to my new home.

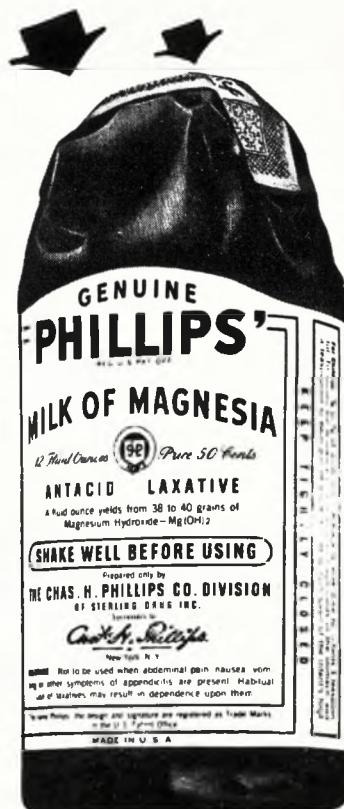
I won't say I regret that decision, but I've often wondered what my life would have been like if I hadn't known that fit of pique at Joe. Would I always have been sorry I hadn't taken the job? Where would I be now? Would I be happy and different today? No. No, a person is what he is. A simple change of place would not have made me into a stranger to myself. I must accept that. I must acknowledge my guilt and shame.

The Everetts were kindness itself to me. Mrs. Everett taught me all the niceties of serving.

I'd learned how to cook from my mother, but Mrs. Everett showed me how to make food fancy and elegant like we'd never had it at home. She taught me to set a table, to answer the phone, to polish silver, use the vacuum, announce callers. I loved my job, loved the Everetts' big, gracious house and their quiet, polite guests. If I was homesick now and then for my mother's warming presence and my father's voice, I smothered it with the thought of how much money I could send back to them out of my pay.

But still, even with that, I'd feel lost and lonely some of the time. When you've been brought up on a farm, when your only boundaries have been the rims of the horizon, it's hard for you to settle down in a town—even a small town. Sometimes I longed for my home so badly I'd cry myself to sleep.

If I'd worked in a shop or a factory I'd soon have gotten to know other girls. If there'd been boys around to ask me for dates, I'd have been less homesick. But being a maid means being isolated, living on the fringes of someone else's household. So I kept thinking of home—that bleak Ca-



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nadian farm that now seemed like heaven.

So it wasn't any surprise that I was happy when I got to know Ross. He came around once a month to read the gas meter. I'd seen him—even admired him—from afar, but if something hadn't gone wrong with the meter that once, I probably would never have gotten to speak to him. But the meter wasn't working properly, and he rang the back doorbell to tell us to have it fixed.

And there on the back steps I found him—a tall blond man, his face craggy, his eyes blue and deep-set. And when he began to speak, I couldn't keep myself from crying out:

"Why, you're Canadian!"

"So are you!" he said—that gaunt face breaking into a delighted grin.

And in a minute we were chattering away like old friends. He was from Toronto, his name was Ross MacKay, and this job was only temporary—until he could buy into the real estate business.

"And then, Dolly, let me tell you, I'm heading back home."

"It sounds wonderful, Ross. I hope you make it."

After that, he stopped to talk to me whenever he came by, and the third time asked me to go to a movie with him.

After the show was out, we sat for hours talking about our families, our childhoods, our Canada. Ross had been raised in an orphan home, and since his sixteenth birthday, when he got out, he'd been going from one job to another. The only one he'd really liked was in a real estate office. He'd done well there, but somehow, when the owner speculated poorly on some building sites, the business had failed, and Ross had come to the States to make enough money for his own business.

There was something so downbeaten about Ross. He was kind and gentle, but when he talked about his life he seemed to remember only the failures. I was touched, deeply, permanently, and I wanted to reach out and touch him, tell him that I'd see that he succeeded.

But I couldn't say that. I could only listen to the story of his dreams.

"And when I do get the business set up, Dolly," he was saying, "I'm going to buy me a farm, like your folks have. That's the life for me. Up to now it's been nothing but hard luck, but with a place of my own—nothing can go wrong again."

"Ross," I said hesitantly. It was a nice, good dream he had, but I wanted to tell him how hard a farmer's life was, how he shouldn't be disappointed in it. But I remembered that he was already discouraged. I didn't want the dream to fade from his eyes, so I just let it go. Instead, I said, "Ross, it's late. You'd better take me home."

From then on I saw him every Thursday and on Sunday afternoons, too. Some evenings he'd visit with me in the kitchen. Mrs. Everett didn't mind, and I loved to pretend it was our own home, and I was washing up the dishes.

Because, you see, I was falling in love with Ross. I loved his soft light hair, his eyes, the way he walked, his slow, deep voice; I loved his faraway look and the way his dreams seemed to fill him up and overflow all over me. I loved everything about him. I'd lie awake at night, counting his perfections and thinking, was there ever such a sweet guy? I loved him.

But he wasn't in love with me. I don't know how I knew. I guess my heart could tell that it was only loneliness that brought him back again and again, nostalgia for home, the sound of another Canadian voice.

And the more this sank in, the more I

tried to make him see my love for him.

Mrs. Everett must have noticed it, because I'd catch her smiling when I'd run to answer Ross' ring. I was proud that my heart showed so plainly even to a stranger. Ross couldn't help but see it. He couldn't help but love me back—if just from the intensity of my own need.

One day Ross came for me as usual, but there was a subdued excitement boiling in him. I could tell.

"Dolly," he said, "I have it. I have the money, the business, everything. I'm taking over from an old man in Vancouver who's retiring. I'm going next week." His face almost split in two, his grin was so wide.

"Next week?" I echoed numbly. Ross was going out of my life next week. Just like that. I wanted to shout, to weep, to plead with him. I wanted to say, No, no! Not so soon. Not when I love you so much I hurt inside all the time. Not when I haven't had a chance to prove to you what love is like. But instead I made my lips say, "Ross, how wonderful for you."

He took me by the shoulders, and I felt those deep-set blue eyes boring into mine. But I kept my gaze down. In my pride I couldn't let him read the naked agony they showed.

"Dolly," he said gently, "wouldn't you like to see Vancouver? They say it's beautiful up there."

My heart jerked in my breast, and I looked quickly up at him to see if he were teasing me. But no, his face was sober and earnest. He meant it—he meant it.

"That farm won't be any fun alone," he was going on. "How would you like to be a farm wife, Dolly?"

I don't know why I should have cried at good news, when I'd held back at the bad, but I did. The tears were slipping from under my lids, sobs were beginning to shake my chest when I flung myself into his arms. "Any kind of a wife, Ross. Just so it's you!"

He held me close, right there in the street, and a sigh seemed to rumble through his body. "I love you so, Ross," I murmured. "I love you so!"

He tilted up my chin. My lips were still wet with tears when he kissed me, and whatever it was that made me weep was swept away on a high white tide of ecstasy. Nothing I'd ever imagined in a life of dreaming had ever had this wild, fierce joy in it, and I only wanted to make that kiss a promise of more to come.

We were married just three days later in the Everetts' front room. Mr. and Mrs. Everett stood up with us. Besides them and Ross and the minister, there was no one else in the flower-decked room. I would have loved to have had Mother and Papa and Joe present, but as it was, I'd won a dream, and no girl could ask for a happier wedding day.

Then we set out in Ross' old jalopy on the long, lovely drive from Missouri to Vancouver.

We set up housekeeping in a furnished room, and Ross started out in the business he'd bought. I worked on as a maid, taking jobs by the day, or doing ironing. It was hard work for both of us. Ross couldn't afford to keep up the office the previous owner had had, so he just took clients out in his car to show them property. He didn't dare ask a very high commission for fear the sale would fall through. He seemed always afraid that he'd fail. It was as though he were haunted by the ghost of past disappointments, as though he didn't really believe these new dreams could come true. But he did sell some farms and houses and stores, and gradually we began to have a little money in the bank. I got work in office buildings in the evening too, to help out.

We were happy together. I'd have been in paradise anywhere, doing anything with Ross by my side. I made him happy, too, I think. But there was no real height of passion. I guess a man has to be all the way in love before he can give a woman the greatest physical love. Ross tried hard to do for me everything a husband wants to do for his wife, but I knew always that that spark was missing. He was fond of me, good to me as few men have ever been good to a woman. Only he didn't really love me.

That's a hard thing to accept. You love a man desperately, completely—and he's fond of you. You give him your whole soul—and he's good to you. You make yourself his slave—and he kisses you lightly. But those little crumbs were all Ross could give me. I think he was a little bit ashamed of that and I loved him all the more for it.

I wanted to make him love me—for both our sakes—and the night I came home from work to tell Ross we were going to have a baby, I thought I had found the secret.

His face was radiant. "Dolly, darling!" he cried. He lifted me in those hard, strong arms and swung me off the ground. "A baby—a kid of our own! Whee!" Ross had always been sober and quiet, but now he was laughing and shouting his glee. My heart mounted into my throat at the thought that I could give him this, at least.

That night we came closest of all to the fire we lacked.

The coming baby took a chunk out of our precious "farm money." But Ross didn't seem to care. I worked as long as I could, and then just stayed at home, economizing, doing take-in work till it came time for me to go to the hospital.

I'd wanted to have my baby at home to save on hospital bills, but Ross was afraid for us and insisted on a hospital delivery. Joyce was born early in the morning, and two hours afterwards, they let Ross come in to see me. He'd brought me a big box of candy and the baby a toy bear.

"Dolly, honey," he whispered, tiptoeing into the room, "are you all right?"

"Yes, darling. I'm wonderful. Have you seen our little girl?"

He smiled and smoothed my hair. "She's just lovely, Dolly. I love her already."

It's funny to think how blissful our happiness was those few days. We were a family now, father, mother, baby. Ross and I held hands and whispered excited plans for our precious farm, for our more than precious daughter.

We took our baby home after a few days and then my time was given over to caring for her, bathing, feeding, changing, dressing—the hundreds of blessed little tasks that delight new mothers.

Ross would come home from work, joyously eager to play with her and admire her. I cry inside, thinking of those days—so few and so heartbreakingly wonderful.

Two weeks later, that beautiful time came to an end. The doctor who'd delivered Joyce called Ross and me into his office and told us there was something wrong with our baby.

"She's an idiot," he said flatly. "She probably won't live to be fifteen, and her mind will never develop."

"But—but what, how—?" Ross stammered.

"It's no reflection on you or your wife, Mr. MacKay. These things simply happen, that's all. Nothing can be done for these poor children except to put them in institutions where trained people can care for them."

I sagged in my chair, stunned, sick. Somewhere in the background, the doctor's voice droned on, "Keep her until she's old

enough for admittance to a home . . . can't be helped . . . sure you will do the right thing . . . maybe another baby someday . . ." But all I could think was: My baby, my little Joyce, so blonde, so much like an angel. She's an idiot. My mind detoured past the sickening word. No . . . No . . . NO! Not our baby!

Ross caught me as I fell forward in a dead faint.

After that, there were no more laughing and joking for a long time. I went on taking care of Joyce, but there wasn't the old gay pleasure in it; my child also lacked the capacity to give joy. Ross tried hard, too, to be playful with her, but his trials were pitiful . . . futile. She wasn't the baby who could love me, either. I'd never realized before how thirsty I was for love, until I cuddled my child in my arms, and she did not respond. I'd coo to her, jiggle her in my lap, tickle her little foot, but she'd stare past me, her vacant blue eyes fixed on nothing. I'd hold out my finger for her to grasp, and her hand stayed limp. I'd hug her tight, but there was no answering clinging. She didn't love me. She couldn't—she didn't have the mind to know me.

I'd weep at night when Ross was asleep, thinking: "A dog would lick my hand; a cat would purr if I stroked her; even a mouse would react to my existence. But my baby doesn't even know I'm alive."

It was even worse for Ross. He almost had to force himself to pick her up. I was miserable watching his face, knowing that to him, she was just another symbol of his failure in life.

We talked only once about her future. We both wanted her to go to an institution as soon as she was old enough. We both felt guilty about that; as though we were betraying her. But still, we wanted her to go.

After a while, we hardly spoke to each other at all, even about Joyce. We'd lost the one thing we'd shared in the beginning—the ability to pour out our hearts to each other. Now we were as two strangers, living together, but apart, finding no joy in life, no future.

I still loved Ross with all my heart, but I couldn't offer him the comfort of my love—not when I knew so well that he had no real love for me.

And now, without my baby, there was no one on earth to love me.

The doctor had said we could have more children, and we tried. But maybe we were too afraid the next baby would be like Joyce. The doctor said no, but sometimes, even doctors are wrong. So we hung back—trying and not trying.

I confessed some of this in my letters to Mother, and her replies always came back telling me to have courage, to face our troubles and we'd be all right. I wish I'd remembered what she'd said.

Joyce was eighteen months old the day Ross came home and showed me our savings account. "There's enough there for a down payment on a farm I know of," he said listlessly. "What do you say?"

What did I say? I could have told him he wasn't a farmer, that he couldn't make a go of something he didn't know. But I looked at his hopeless face, and what I said was: "Ross, how wonderful. I'd forgotten to ask—"

And a little of the old light, the old dream seemed to seep back into his eyes. "I'll start it going then. We have no dealer's commission, so we get it a little cheaper. I'll keep on with this work, and what we make on the farm will be just so much extra."

It wasn't much of a farm we bought, just ten acres of hilly cornland. But the air was clear and sweet and the little house

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had a view of distant blue mountains that seemed to promise us beauty and joy.

We'd thought Joyce would thrive on the fresh farm eggs and wonderful air, but she just grew thick and white and unhealthy-looking.

For a while Ross really did well on the farm, although he kept on with his real estate business, too. Our crops were small, but they were enough for us with a little over to sell. I'd take Joyce along with me and prop her against a nearby tree while I did the everyday work in our truck patch. On the whole the farm did much better than I expected, and I began to feel that all was well with us again. We tried harder to have another child, but nothing seemed to happen.

Then a year of flood came. The brooks poured down from the mountains, swollen and ugly, spreading ominously over our young plants. By the time the streams were back in their banks, our crop had been ruined.

Ross looked more and more unhappy about it. I couldn't understand. We hadn't planned on living on what our little garden made. "So much extra," that was what our farm profit was to be. Why should he worry so? But I didn't want to ask. He'd always carried the financial burden, and he worried so about little things. I was sure he'd tell me if things got really bad. But soon his worried look became haggard and harried, and he took to staying away long hours, working to sell more and more property. But the flood had hurt his work, too, and few people wanted to buy farms. My worry increased. Maybe business was very bad.

We celebrated Joyce's third birthday in September with a special dinner. It was a glum meal, both of us silent and Joyce sitting at the table, dumb as a stone. Toward the end of the evening, Ross looked up at me.

"I have to go inland for a few days, Dolly. Would you like to come with me?" "Ross!" I said, delighted. "A good prospect?"

"The only prospect. Would you come?"

"I'd love to, only—"

"We'll take Joyce with us," he said.

So we made our plans. I felt actually light-hearted as I packed for the three of us. It would be like our honeymoon, Joyce to remind us that dreams don't always come true the way you want them to.

We started out, driving six hundred miles west through mountains, valleys, open country, small towns.

But the views we saw and the scents we smelled and the breezes that blew on our cheeks didn't seem to touch Ross. He grew quieter and sadder the further we went from the farm, and I began to wonder if his prospect was just a forlorn hope and that he worried because he'd brought us so far for nothing.

Our second night out, we stopped at a motel, and rented a cabin. It was a small place, but clean, and there was a heavenly view of the clouds across the mountains. I wanted to lie on my bed and watch them till it grew dark, but there was Joyce to feed.

I got up and turned to Ross. "Can I have some money, darling? I want to buy some milk for Joyce."

Ross turned from the other window. The light was behind him and I couldn't see his face, but his voice was strange and choked. "She won't need any supper, Dolly," he said.

"Won't—"

In one stride, Ross was beside me, my shoulders in his hands. "I wanted to do this last night, Dolly, but I didn't even have that much courage. Now I have—a coward's courage."

I was frightened and bewildered. "What are you talking about, Ross? Do what?"

He looked deep into my eyes, and the heart of me that loved him ached with pity to see his agony. "I've brought you this long way to ask you to share—to share death with me."

"Death!"

"I want us to commit suicide."

"No, Ross!" I cried in horror. Suicide. That was murder—self-murder, my mother used to say. That was taking the life God gave you to live on His earth and cutting it off, throwing it away before its time. No, no, no, I couldn't. Not even for Ross.

We stood there facing each other, still staring into each other's eyes, and I thought, Ross will do it. I can see it in him now. He'll kill himself and I'll never see him again, never be in his arms again, never turn over in my sleep and feel the soft, warm comforting nearness of his body, never cook a meal for him, never brush the shock of silky blond hair off his forehead, never adjust his tie or iron his shirts or be able to love him. Never, in this world or the next. Never, never, never!

A scream was rising in my throat and I put my hands to my face to ward it off. Ross was going to kill himself and I'd lose him forever. I'd be alone—without ever any chance for love. Alone without

—all our work, all our scrimped pennies have gone. Dolly. The farm was the last thing to go—but now its turn has come."

"The farm!" I gasped.

"The bank is foreclosing next week," he said sardonically. "We had no crop to sell—and that's what I was paying for it. I couldn't even run a farm—"

This was what I'd been afraid of in my heart all summer. The farm. Ross had worked and dreamed so hard, so long, for those few acres of soil. And now they were gone, too. I began to understand dimly how he felt. It's like that when you love terribly—you read your loved one's heart and moods.

"I can't even sell property any more, Dolly. I take a man out to a farm, and I can't tell him about it. All I can do is talk about us, about Joyce, and you and me. I'm no good, Dolly. Everything I touch just seems to—just seems to droop and die. Even you. I can't even give you the love you deserve." It was the first time he'd ever hinted that his love was only fondness, and I winced at the living pain that stabbed through my heart.

I stood there wordlessly, unable to comfort him or reach him with my love. He went on, his voice muffled. "A failure, always . . . everywhere. A failure." He raised his head suddenly, and there was a burning, fierce, wild look to his eyes. "But I've made up my mind. I'm not going to fail at this!" His glance seemed to sear itself into me. "Do you remember what the minister said, Dolly? Till death us do part, that was it. Well, death isn't going to win. Death is the one thing I'm going to beat. Death isn't going to part us—because I'm taking you with me. Do you hear? You and Joyce. She's never been part of the family before—but now she will be. You must do it, Dolly. You must!"

He was holding my wrist tightly, hotly, his eyes still boring into mine. I felt hypnotized by that terrible gaze—and yet my mind was clear. I thought. Is it wrong to take your own life? Is it really wrong in the sight of God? He gave it to you. Surely He meant you to do with it what you pleased. And again my mind swerved back to life without my darling—my own dearest, most precious Ross. What would I do? What could I do—if he did this thing, if he went this way and left me behind? I loved him so . . .

Nothing I'd done had been right. I'd urged him to take the farm—when I should have said to wait. I gave him Joyce—when someone else might have been the mother of his strong, bright normal child. I took him for my husband when I knew I didn't have his love. I'd done nothing for him but bring him sorrow—but this I could do. I could die for him—with him.

So I lifted up my head and smiled and said, "I'm ready."

He held me tight to him for a long minute, while I thought. This is the last time my husband will hold me.

At last he released me. We were both calm now, strangely, ominously matter-of-fact. He began to talk quietly, pulling a small bottle from his pocket. "I have everything here. We'll give Joyce some first. Then we'll take ours and go to bed. I've written a letter so the police will know who we are and why we've done this. What furniture we have will pay for our funerals. That's all. Death is simple."

I wrote a letter to my mother, asking her to forgive me for what I was going to do. Then Ross stirred something into a little glass and held it to Joyce's mouth.

I'm watching my daughter's murderer, I thought. It can't be real; I can't be in

VIRGIN WIFE

I thought of Clyde as my older brother. I never dreamed that people whispered about us, that I'd hear Pop yell at Clyde, "You've ruined my daughter's name—now marry her!" Read my story in

January TRUE STORY

On sale everywhere December 10th

Ross. I couldn't live without him. I loved him so . . . I loved him so . . .

"Ross," I stammered faintly, "no, no, Ross, it's wicked—it's wrong. You mustn't—please . . ."

He took a step forward. "Dolly, listen to me!" His teeth gritted and his face worked. I'd never seen him like this before. "There's nothing for us to live for. Nothing—do you hear me. Look at us—you and me. Working, like plow-horses, year after year, putting every cent away, never having fun like other people. Wanting children—" He gestured almost like a wild man toward Joyce who was lying on the bed, staring blankly at nothing. "Children! Do you call that a child?" he shouted.

"Ross—our baby—"

"Our baby!" He spat out the words like some obscene curse. "She's a lump of flesh—eating, sleeping, but not really alive. She's a monster, Dolly. That's all we were good enough to conceive—a monster!"

"Ross—stop—for the love of God—"

But he went on relentlessly. "They'll put her away—cage her in a pen like the animal she is. Flesh of our flesh—and locked in a cage! Do you want that? Do you want to live to see your own daughter forever behind bars?"

I cowered, terrified, from this madman. What had done this to Ross? What had driven my gentle, kind, thoughtful husband to this?

As though I'd said it, he went on, his voice high-pitched and crazy. "And now

this room, watching Joyce swallow poison. But I am. When she'd drunk it all, Ross took my hand and together we kissed our little girl on the forehead. It was as though I were moving in a dream; even when Ross mixed two more glasses and held one out to me, I wasn't entirely awake. I looked into his eyes, and they were full of tears. How strange, I thought numbly, Ross doesn't cry. I took the glass from his hand and together we lifted them in a grim toast. Together we drank.

The liquid was bitter, but I swallowed it, thinking, For you, Ross. I looked at him again, and he was staring at me, eyes growing wide and horrified. His glass was half-empty. I was lifting mine to finish the draught when he seemed to come to life. His hand swept in a wide arc, smashing the glass from my hand.

"No!" he cried.

That was all. I stood there, hand still halfway to my mouth, eyes lowered to the shattered fragments of glass that strewed the floor, to the spattered drops of poison. I still felt dull. Hadn't I done what Ross wanted? What was wrong?

"No!" he cried again. "Dolly—my God, what are we doing! Dolly—you mustn't, not you! This is the worst kind of failure. Dolly, is it too late?" He shook me violently, and the touch of his hands on my shoulders woke me from my trance.

"You—you don't want us to—"

"Dolly, we can't do this—Joyce—get her quick. It isn't too late—"

He whirled, and in one movement he had wrapped sleeping Joyce in a blanket from the bed and started out the door. I followed.

The poison must have been starting to take effect, because I lurched as I went through the door and my head was swimming by the time we reached the car. Ross felt it, too. He stumbled, carrying Joyce. Her eyes were closed and she breathed in heavy gusts. He gave her to me. I leaned against the car, Joyce sagging in my arms, and watched Ross fumbling slowly in his pocket for the key to the car.

Then we were in the car, driving down the highway, Joyce in my lap—dead, maybe, dying certainly, but still soft and warm. "Oh, God," I prayed through my dizziness, "don't take her. It was our fault, not hers. At least let Joyce live."

"There's a doctor in the town we passed," I heard Ross say. "We'll find him."

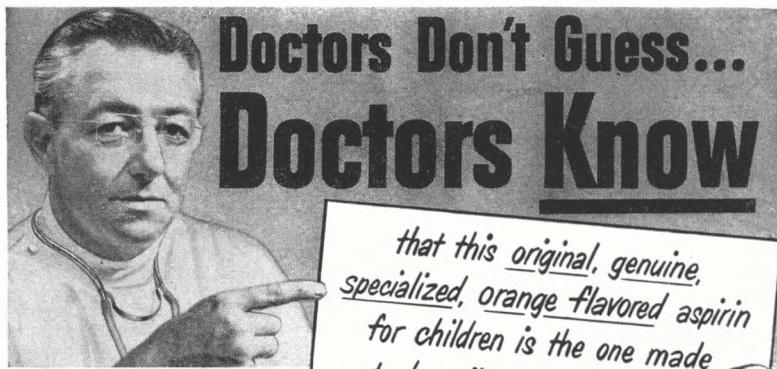
His voice came and went, first loud in my ears, then soft and faraway. How can he even drive, I thought wearily? He's sick, too.

It was only about a mile to that doctor's office, but it might as well have been across a continent. I fought to keep my head clear, but unconsciousness came and went in smothering waves. When my mind was alive for a moment, I'd look at Ross. Sometimes he'd be holding the steering wheel grimly, staring ahead, keeping himself awake with nothing but will power. Sometimes he'd slump, his hands begin to loosen, his whole body to go limp; the car would swoop sickeningly, and if there were another motorist driving near, he'd shout angrily at us. Then Ross would pull himself up again, right the car, and try to fight off his own death—for me, for Joyce.

I tried once to call for help at one of those passing cars, but my voice wouldn't work. I tried again and again; then a last black wave swept over me and I sank into it, trying to say Ross' name.

The next time I opened my eyes, I saw a sunny, flower-papered room. I couldn't think where I was or what had happened.

There was a slight noise. I turned my head and saw Ross by my bed, weeping.



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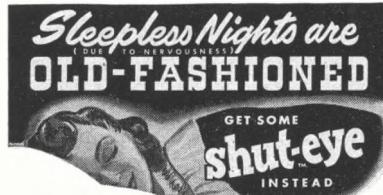
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How strange, I thought. Ross doesn't cry. And then, but I've thought that before—when? When was it . . . ?

And I remembered the tears in Ross' eyes—and the glass—and the poison—and Ross striking it out of my hand, and that terrible trip through the twilight to the doctor.

"Ross," I murmured weakly. "Ross, is it—is it all right?"

"Oh, darling, darling, darling!" He leaned over the bed. "You're awake, you're . . . ?"

"Joyce?"

"She's here. She's fine. Oh, Dolly, if you'd died—if I'd murdered you . . . ?"

"Oh, Ross—hold me—hold me tight!"

I was too weak to sit up, so Ross slid his arm behind my back and lifted me up, held me close to his heart. We didn't talk; we didn't have to. We only had to sit there close to each other, to let the knowledge sink in that we were both still alive.

Ross began to speak finally. He told me how he managed to get the car to the doctor's house, and stagger drunkenly up the steps. He had just enough strength to ring the bell, wait till the doctor answered, and tell him what it was we'd taken before he collapsed in a heap on the porch.

That little country doctor had a terrible time saving us, working over us till it was nearly morning. But at last he thought we'd be all right. Joyce had come round first, then Ross. Now I was going to get well, too. It was like a miracle, a new day dawning for our little family. I thought of Joyce as Ross told me all this, and I wondered in horror how I could ever have dreamed of letting her be killed. My daughter—my little girl. She wasn't whole, but I loved her just the same. Why didn't I know how much I loved her?

There was no hospital in that little town, so the doctor's wife had put us to sleep in her spare room.

I whispered that to Ross and he said he felt the same. "When I found out I'd be okay," he went on, "I had to make you live. I prayed, Dolly, I've never really prayed in my life until last night. I begged God to do anything to me so He'd just save you from this awful sin. Because you did it for me. I was guilty for all of us. And He heard me. He saved you."

He hugged me fiercely to him, and I knew dimly that his love was stronger for me because of this. But all I could ask in that moment was: "Why, Ross? Why did you change your mind?"

"I guess it was seeing you drink poison. It was knowing that I'd never see you again. That hit me hard, Dolly. So terribly hard. I could kill myself and the world wouldn't lose anything—but you . . . Oh, Dolly!"

The doctor and his wife were very kind. They left us alone to talk, although even Ross was still not completely recovered from that terrible poison. They took care of Joyce, who never even knew that her mother wasn't waiting on her, that her parents had tried to kill her. They knew Joyce must have had something to do with our attempted suicide, and I guess they sympathized. They should have reported us to the police, too, because attempted suicide is a crime, but they didn't. They just gave out that we'd had ptomaine poisoning from bad food.

When we felt better, Dr. Benson had a talk with us. "Son," he said to Ross, "I know you've had some pretty bad times—this child and all. But nothing is worth killing yourself for. There's still a good life—if you'll look for it."

Ross told him how all our misfortunes had piled up. Dr. Benson listened and then

went on, "Sure, but it's not so terrible having to start over. How old are you? Not thirty, I'll bet." Ross nodded. "Well, in 1929, I was forty-two. The depression wiped out everything I'd saved. We lost our house. I still had a practice, but nobody paid, and I still had the wife, two sons and my folks to support because they'd lost their farm. Well, I got along. You can get along, too."

Ross smiled sheepishly. "Sure we can," he said. There was a strange new vigor in the way he said it. "I just ought to stop dreaming so much—"

"No, son. Dreams are good. Just believe in your heart that you can reach them."

"And Joyce?" I said.

"Well, she's three now. Keep her a couple more years, then put her in an institution."

Two days before, I wouldn't even have questioned that, but with this strange new love for her, I couldn't bear the thought of separation. I started to protest, but he cut me off. "No, ma'am. She'll be happy there. They can do more for her than you can. Besides, you'll be so busy, you won't have time to spend taking care of a child who's physically grown, but mentally an infant."

"Busy?"

"I guess you didn't know. When my wife and I were working over you, we found out. Thought at first that was why you tried to kill yourselves."

"You mean I'm—"

"You're going to have a baby."

"Ross!" We turned to each other, and the looks on our faces must have betrayed our joy, because Dr. and Mrs. Benson began to beam too. Ross and I went into each other's arms with a joy we hadn't felt since the night we knew Joyce was coming. When I thought that, I sobered right away. "Dr. Benson," I said, trying not to sound worried, "will this one—I mean, will there be anything wrong with it?"

Dr. Benson put an arm around each of us. "I don't think so. This new one will probably be the brightest, healthiest baby you ever saw."

Dr. Benson was right. Neil was born in Vancouver six months from that night. The bank took over the farm, and we moved into a furnished room again, but Ross' business picked up. I think something went into Ross' veins that night on the trip to the doctor's and was crystallized by what the doctor had to say. He learned that he could succeed if only he believed that he could. He learned that the only real failure is the man who gives up.

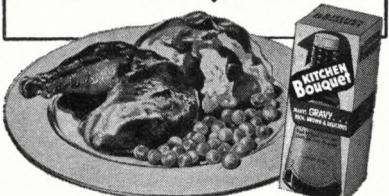
And the day after Neil was born—perfect, normal, happy, the child that we had wanted four years before—Ross sold two farms and earned enough commission to redeem the farm from the bank. That was a surprise for me. He'd arranged with the people there who were all his friends not to sell it till he had a chance to get back on his feet and pay off the old mortgage.

We put Joyce in the state home. We missed her terribly at first, but we see her out there now. She's as happy as ever she could be—and so are we. Neil is nearly the age Joyce was when we tried to take our lives, and we have another little girl now. She'll never take Joyce's place—because Joyce was the one who taught us how precious a child, even a child who does not know her own parents, can be.

So we all learned the lesson that Mother's little motto should have taught me long ago. We learned that there is never a time to despair. We learned that the only important thing is hope, and that we must always keep it alive. **THE END**

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THE SECRET SEX

(Continued from page 49)

he had proposed to her. Iris was flattered by the proposal, but asked for time to think it over.

So while John waited for Iris to make up her mind, he introduced her to his sister Winnie. The two girls became good friends. This delighted John, who felt it would help his cause. Then suddenly Winnie cooled toward Iris, who in turn now seemed cold toward John. John was astonished and dismayed at this abrupt turn of events.

"What in heaven's name happened between you and Iris, Winnie?" he demanded anxiously of his sister. "After all, you know, I hope she's going to be your sister-in-law."

"I don't," Winnie said tightly. She hesitated a moment, then faced her brother. "John, you mustn't marry that girl! I don't care how charming or delicate she seems to be, she's not normal. John—she tried to make love to me! You're in love with a Lesbian!"

The Lesbian may be gracious and feminine like Iris, or she may be a woman who dresses and acts like a man. The homosexual man, likewise, may be an aggressive prizefighter or a man who wears lipstick in public, or an ordinary-looking bank clerk you hardly notice. Only a small minority of either sex boldly advertise their homosexuality. The vast majority cannot be told apart from their normally-sexed neighbors.

It is important to understand that homosexuality does not indicate a low moral character, too. A homosexual person is not depraved—just different. Psychiatrists recognize this and sympathize, just as they sympathize with the alcoholic who is driven to drink by emotional disorders. Psychiatrists have delved into the causes of homosexuality and have come up with some important discoveries that every parent should know about and take to heart.

First, what causes homosexuality? Most psychiatrists today believe that homosexuals are not born, but made—by short circuits in their emotional development. Dr. Albert Ellis, a former chief psychologist for the State of New Jersey, says, "At least ninety per cent of recent authorities would agree that basically, homosexuality . . . (can be traced to) psychological conditions."

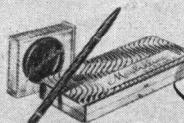
The early years of childhood seem to be the most crucial in shaping sexual personality. Lewis T., for example, came to me for psychiatric treatment for alcoholism. This, I discovered, dated from his wedding night, when he had left his bride alone in their honeymoon hotel. He had gone out on a drunken spree that night—a spree that had continued for weeks. Psychiatrists know that a major cause of alcoholism is an inner conflict over homosexual feelings. I was fairly certain that might be Lewis' trouble.

Sure enough. Lewis proved to be a latent homosexual, that is, one who has very definite homosexual tendencies. But he would not permit himself to recognize that fact. He had had no pre-marital sex relations, nor had he had any homosexual contacts, but still, he felt the tendency was there. Faced with the crisis of his wedding night, his homosexual nature had overwhelmed him. He had fled in terror to the consolation of alcoholism.

Lewis had been bottle-fed in infancy by a mother who resented his arrival as "tying her down." Later, apparently feeling guilty over her rejection of him, she had compensated by being extremely possessive toward him, as if to deny to her



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World Wide Bible Reading

One day, during World War II, an American family received a letter from their son, a lonely Marine fighting on Guadalcanal. In his letter he asked his family to join him in reading the same passage from the Bible each day. With this small beginning, the practice of worldwide Bible reading has since spread to people throughout the world, with the purpose of drawing nations and families closer together.

The American Bible Society, which sponsors Worldwide Bible Reading, has compiled a list of twenty-nine readings for Thanksgiving through Christmas. These readings that are printed below were listed by 1,096 ministers as their favorite selections on the theme, "The Word of Life."

NOVEMBER

27 Thanksgiving	Psalms 103
28	Psalms 91
29	Psalms 121
30 Sunday	Psalms 1

DECEMBER

1	Psalms 27
2	Psalms 46
3	Psalms 90
4	Isaiah 40
5	Isaiah 50
6	Matthew 5:1—26
7 Sunday	Matthew 5:27—48
8	Matthew 6:1—18
9	Matthew 6:19—34
10	Matthew 7
11	John 14
12	John 15
13	John 17
14 Universal Bible Sunday	Psalms 23
15	Luke 15
16	Romans 8
17	Romans 12
18	Ephesians 6
19	Philippians 4
20	Revelation 21
21 Sunday	John 1:1—18
22	Isaiah 53
23	Hebrews 11
24	I Corinthians 13
25 Christmas	Luke 2:1—20

Why don't you make Bible reading a daily practice? Ask your minister for help, write your church headquarters for lists. And, if you would like this list of daily Bible readings in the form of a bookmark, write to:

conscience that she had not originally welcomed him. Lewis' father, a man wrapped up in business, paid little or no attention to him. So Lewis grew up under his mother's domination, unconsciously modeling himself after her and her ideas. It was this feminine identification which had made him a latent homosexual. The normal-sexed man identifies himself with his father or male substitute.

Fathers seem to be equally important in the normal development of daughters. After a young girl's first devotion to her mother, she tends to shift to some extent to a growing adoration of her father. If the father is absent or unresponsive, or if the child is afraid to "love Daddy more than Mommy," this vital stage in her emotional development may be skipped. It may later hinder her ability to respond to the opposite sex.

At an early stage of adolescence, it is normal for boys and girls to show some homosexual feeling. This is the result of the social taboo between the sexes, so that a girl's expressions of affection go out to her friends, a boy's to his gang. Sometimes the youngsters grow curious and experiment with physical homosexuality. But this phase does not ordinarily last long, and teenagers of both sexes "graduate" to the next stage of emotional development. This is attraction between the sexes. When a boy or girl fails to "graduate," homosexuality may become fixed.

Susan T. came to me in a state of panic. She had married reluctantly mostly to escape being an old maid. She had found herself frigid in marriage, however, and avoided her husband as much as possible. When a seventeen-year-old part-time maid came into the house Susan found herself assailed by violent sensations of love. Should she make love to the girl and admit to herself that she was a Lesbian?

Susan had grown up in a household in which her two brothers were greatly cherished, while she—the girl—was mildly tolerated. This situation often inclines a child toward homosexuality.

When Susan reached adolescence, she was warned repeatedly by her parents against "the sin boys will try to make you commit." Over-eager to please her parents, Susan seldom dated, spending most of her time with other girls. By the time she was eighteen, any normal sex drive

she might have had was warped. She had found satisfaction in homosexual relations with girl friends.

Marriage alone could not change Susan. Her sexual development had been arrested at the adolescent stage. That was why she was frigid with her husband. It was why she was in bitter self-conflict over her desperate desires to repeat her adolescent experience with her young housemaid.

What happened to Susan often happens to adolescent boys, too. If they are brought up by strict parents to regard sex relations with girls as "sinful," they tend to fear contact with the opposite sex. But boys' sex drive in adolescence is too powerful to be ignored. Many turn to homosexual activities with other boys, as a "second-best" alternative. These boys often remain fixated at this juvenile level of emotional development.

The best way to encourage normal sex development in your children is to make your home life as happy for them as possible. They are most likely to pass easily through the various stages of emotional development if you and your husband offer them acceptance and love, neither dominating nor withdrawing from them. Your daughter needs a feminine mother to model after. Your son needs a masculine father to copy.

Don't frighten your children about sex, or in any way give them the impression that sex means "sin." Simply explain that normal sex is a wonderful part of married life, and give the practical reasons why it is worth waiting for until marriage.

Basically, homosexuality is a condition of emotional immaturity. If teenagers show some homosexual traits in early adolescence, don't be too alarmed. In most cases, they are going through the final phase of emotional development before "graduating" to mature, normal conduct. But if homosexual interest should develop in the very late teens, or past that age period, it is a matter for concern.

"When that interest becomes excessive," states Dr. Karl Menninger, "when it becomes exclusive, when it impels adult persons to establish physical contact and enjoy physical pleasure with one another, it is certainly abnormal." If this is the case with your sweetheart or husband—or



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with yourself—I would advise discussing the problem with your family physician.

Dormant homosexual feeling which is not expressed in practice may be so mild that it hardly constitutes a serious problem. On the other hand, it may erupt in personality disorders disturbing all normal love relationships. It may express itself in fear, contempt, jealousy, suspicion or patronizing paternalism. In men, impotence is often a symptom.

The man who tries to convince everyone, including himself, that he is a Don Juan, is frequently running away from the fear that he is homosexual. Sometimes this fear is quite groundless, but is simply caused by general feelings of anxiety and inadequacy. In any event, if the man you love exhibits any disturbing traits along the above lines, you should seek guidance from a marriage clinic or family agency.

Bear in mind that the *majority* of homosexuals are not a menace to society in any way, as a recent study by the State of California shows. Many homosexuals who have accepted themselves as such do not wish to be cured, even if cure is possible for them. They ask nothing more than to be let alone by society. Those who *want* to be cured, as a rule, are those who are in violent conflict with themselves.

Whether or not psychiatric treatment can cure such unwilling homosexuals seems to depend, in large measure, on the degree of their homosexuality. Encouraging success has been enjoyed with mild cases, where homosexual inclinations were superficial and could be restrained into a normal sex pattern. Many psychiatrists are coming to believe, however, that cures for exclusive homosexuals are doubtful, but that psychiatry can help them accept themselves.

"No amount of psychotherapy," declares Dr. Edward A. Strecker, "will change the sex pattern in the particular group I have in mind, turning them away from the unfortunate sexual love of their own sex, and magically endowing them with normal physical and emotional desire and capacity. Nevertheless, the counsel of a wise psychotherapist whom they respect and, who, while not condoning their behavior still does not despise them, who understands their problems and difficulties, personal and social, frequently keeps them from complete futility and despair."

We should face the widespread problem of homosexuality, in women as well as men, with confidence rather than despair, with a sincere desire to help. It is barbaric to brand homosexuals as "untouchables" since, as we have seen, their sad condition is the result of distorted childhood situations. Let us never forget that homosexuals were once the *normal* children of parents who failed them.

Above all, we must not persecute or discriminate against our homosexuals, male or female. They are fellow human beings in need of emotional sympathy and understanding. Let us not forget, either, that all of us have some degree of homosexuality in our make-up, no matter how small. Psychiatrists believe that those people who most loudly denounce homosexuality are themselves suppressed homosexuals. By such vicious condemnation, they seek to turn suspicion away from themselves.

Where we can, let us prevent.

Where we are too late to prevent, let us try to help.

Where we cannot help, let us then be tolerant!

THE END

EDITOR'S NOTE: The names of persons referred to in cases mentioned in this article are fictitious.

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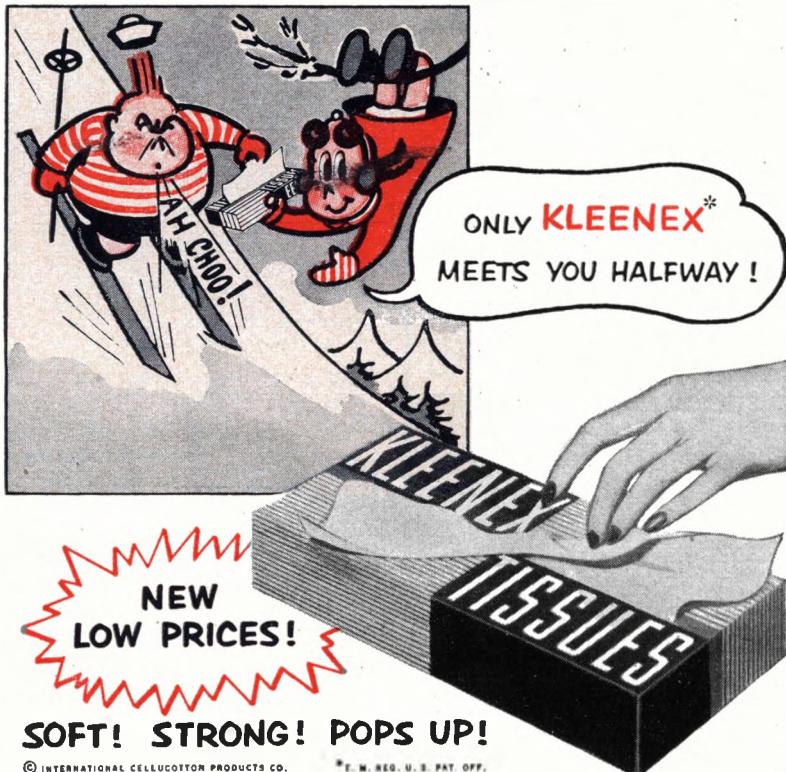
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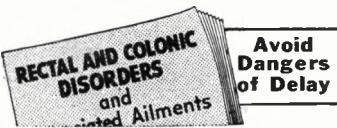
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his mouth was hard on mine, bruising, crushing hard. I couldn't press close enough against him. I wanted to be part of him, one with him. Only there could I find rest.

Guy was a gentle, skillful lover, and now my response inspired him far beyond any art he could have practiced. Time stopped, and we both learned, far too fully, what wonder and glory we had missed.

We felt like honeymooners, and in a way we were. Except that honeymoons are rarely perfect. Young inexperienced couples have to learn their way to ultimate happiness—if they are lucky enough to find it. But we had had our years of searching, and our failure only sharpened the edge of the ecstasy we found now.

But time had not really stopped. Suddenly it was Sunday and Guy was taking me to my train to go to my mother's and get Joanie for the longer trip up to Maine.

"The skies are weeping for us," I told him, trying to smile. Rain swept in sheets between the car and the station.

Then it was really goodbye. I shall never forget Guy's white face as he stood on the platform.

The first half of the trip to my mother's I spent weeping, crying out against fate. At last, exhausted, I pulled myself together and remembered promises. I had allowed myself this brief, sweet interlude because it would have an ending. Because I had resolved not to hurt my husband or my child. This unforgettable moment out of time belonged to me alone, and now it was over and I must go on.

I resolved to be a good wife, a good mother, yet two days later, when I stepped down off the train with Joanie, into Arthur's waiting arms, some deep impulse made me turn my cheek to his kiss.

Joanie was jumping on her daddy, leaping into his arms, shrieking, clinging. I was glad. Perhaps he had not noticed. I would do better next time.

"I think you'll like the house," he said to me over Joanie's head.

"I'm sure I will," I told him.

And I did like it. "I don't see how you ever managed to get it," I told him as we walked through the shining, compact, convenient little home.

Joanie was rushing all over, exploring every corner, squealing, and we both smiled, watching her.

Arthur looked tired; his color wasn't good and his shoulders slumped. His sandy hair was receding at the temples, and his hand went up in a nervous way he had of touching the thin spo's. Suddenly I wanted to scream. I wanted to run out of this neat, new shining little prison. I couldn't stay here! I couldn't go on living with Arthur. Oh, no!

"I have to get back to the base," he said, and Joanie jumped on him again, begging him not to go.

"I'll be back soon," he told her. "And that time for good."

The words had a momentous sound, like a threat, and one meant for me. But somehow I would have to make him understand. I would have to have more time. I couldn't start being his wife again.

I don't know what he understood that night. I told him I was tired, after my trip, and he accepted it as he had always had to accept my excuses, my postponements. I hated myself for being unkind to him, but I repeated that I wasn't well. It was true. My longing for Guy was a physical illness. I couldn't eat. I woke up exhausted. I lay in bed feeling faint and sick, from the dreams that kept coming unbidden. I didn't try to get up till noon the next day, after Arthur was gone, and then I didn't dress. Joanie looked at

me puzzled, asking, "What's wrong, Mummy?"

"I'm just tired, honey," I said, and I was. Tired to death of living without Guy.

Joanie made friends in the neighborhood quickly, but I didn't want to know anyone. Only Donna, the girl across the street, insisted on being nice to me anyway. She sent Joanie home with a tray of her ice cream, and made an extra casserole when she knew I hadn't fixed any supper. She was friendly and warm, and I wanted terribly to confide in her. I had been carrying my secret so long!

I know. It was Arthur whom I should have told. He had a right to the truth. Perhaps he could have helped me salvage something of our marriage. But I couldn't confide in him—we were strangers who lived in the same house.

I had to end it. Arthur was to leave on the tenth of August for a week's trip on Air Force business and I looked forward to his absence as a time to think and plan. Something drastic had to be done.

How did Guy know? He didn't, of course, but it was the twelfth of August when the phone rang. Our phone rang seldom these days, but each time I felt a lift of hope followed by sickening disappointment when I heard the wrong voice.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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This time, though, it was different. "Ruth—" Just one breathless word.

"Oh, Guy!"

"It's no good," he said brokenly. "I can't go on this way."

"I can't either," I whispered. "Something has to be done."

"When can I see you? Where?"

It was then the idea came to me. "Come this weekend. It's all right; Arthur's not here. Try to get here in time to see Joanie, too," I told him. It was important for them to like each other, important for the future.

I rushed around preparing for Guy, as happy as a young girl about to entertain her beau. All my listlessness was gone. I was full of energy. I took Joanie shopping for new clothes, had my hair done.

Now, in my happiness, I couldn't keep from telling Donna. She was sympathetic, as I had known she would be. "Arthur's a good guy, but I guess it's just one of those things. No use crying over spilt milk."

"I tell you, Donna," I suddenly said. "Do you think your husband would be willing to go out with us Saturday night?"

"I'll talk to him," she said. "I'm sure he'll see it the way I do."

After supper she came running over to tell me. "It's a date. We'll go to Port-land!"

I was as excited as a seventeen-year-old. I had never been able to show Guy off to anyone. We had no shared friends. So I couldn't wait till Friday!

Friday morning Guy phoned. "I can't make it till tomorrow." His voice made me forget my own disappointment.

"You sound worried, Guy," I told him. "Is anything wrong?"

"Not exactly. It's just a meeting I have to go to."

"A meeting!"

"Well, it looks like I really have to go, my boy's in some kind of mix-up at the school and they've sent for me."

I had never heard his voice sound so depressed.

"Never mind, dear," I told him. "We'll pack all the weekend into the time that's left."

"You bet we will," his voice responded to mine. "It's only till tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!" The word sang over the wire, lovely word!

I prayed all day Saturday that nothing would hold Guy up. And nothing did. His car, so dear and familiar, pulled into the driveway at half-past five. Now I was praying that Joanie would like him.

I needn't have troubled. He was no inexperienced bachelor. He looked at her and really appreciated her; he listened to what she said with grave intentness. When he started making jokes, they were ones she could understand, and when I heard her delighted laughter I wanted to cry for joy.

"Now I'm going to take my girls out to dinner," he finally said.

"Me, too?" She stared at him, her eyes widening. "Truly?"

"Truly."

Then she leaped into his arms, covering his face with kisses. Could she accept a new father, I wondered hopefully, without any deep upset in her life?

After dinner, when Joanie was tucked into bed and Jen, the baby sitter, had come, we went over to pick up Donna and Pat. They offered us drinks and we sat talking like two married couples, the men about business at first, then arguing in friendly fashion about which car to use. Guy's car won out, and at last we were on the way. I was in my old place beside Guy in his car—in our world. I wanted to put my head on his shoulder, but we were not alone. "Love me?" he whispered as he reached across me to put a map into the glove compartment.

Donna began to sing, and that helped, for we all joined in. To Donna, I must have seemed an entirely different person from the dreary creature of this last month. Guy's spirits rose as the evening went on. Though he had seemed a little tired when the evening started, his wonderful humor began to come out in the things he said. I could give way to my wild need to laugh. Fortunately the show we saw was a comedy. But the funniest thing that happened or so we thought was finding that Guy had locked the keys into the car. When he finally broke open the right front window, we all collapsed on the seats weak from laughter.

"We're being very silly," I told Guy. "Good," he said, gripping my hand. "Let's grab all the fun we can."

It turned out that we had about twenty minutes of it left. No more, ever.

I was leaning against Guy's shoulder, not watching where he drove, but vaguely conscious that we were climbing a hill. I had turned on the radio and started to sing with it, when I felt Guy stiffen against me. For one flash I wondered if I had gone too far, acted too gay, irritated him.

"Good Lord, where does he think he's going?"

Pat had leaned forward from the back seat.

I felt the glare of the other car's lights in my eyes then, and saw it racing down the hill toward us. Guy was wrenching the wheel, but on our side there was a high bank beside the road. There was no place to get out of the way. The road

curved, but the car lights didn't turn away from us with the curve. They got brighter, brighter, blinding bright. "Oh, God!" Guy groaned. "He's going to hit us!"

Then there was only the screaming of brakes, useless brakes, and the crash. It was a horrible huge sound like an explosion, with small sounds mingled with it, small angry vicious sounds. I heard that much, and knew the dreadful impact, too big and shocking to be exactly felt, too stunning. Then the terrible silence, heavy and hollow and empty.

How long it was before I heard Guy's voice I don't know. "Ruth, Ruth! Oh, God, let her be alive!"

Those were the first words I heard, dimly, faintly, from far off. I must have stirred, tried to reach out to touch him, for he breathed, "Thank God!" And then quickly, "Ruth! Don't move! Wait."

I could wait. That was all I could do. I didn't believe yet that I was alive.

Other voices began then, Donna's and Pat's behind us, scared, upset, but all right. I felt relief. We were all alive.

There was a wrenching, and Guy managed to force open the jammed door. Other sounds, then, getting more mixed up, cars stopping, excited voices, questions.

"What a mess," someone said. "Phone for an ambulance."

I tried to move but found I couldn't. "Be careful," Guy said gently. "Wait till the doctor comes to see if you are okay." Then, off guard, "Ruth, your knees! If that guy has hurt you, I swear I'll kill him!"

That roused me. "Oh, Guy, dear, I'm all right," I whispered. "My legs don't hurt." But now I could feel the warm blood on my knee, dripping down my stockings.

A stern voice said a little later, "Get this girl to the hospital!" And I remember arriving there still later in the ambulance, with a blank between. There were many blanks in the hours that followed. In between I would see Guy's face above me, tired and white and tender.

"What am I doing here all this time?" I asked. "What time is it?"

"About three," he said. "The doctor won't set your legs till the specialist arrives." I didn't see why they kept talking about my legs, which didn't hurt at all. It was the dazed, sick feeling I didn't like.

"How are the others?" I asked once. "Are you all right?" I asked Guy. I made out some kind of bandage over his eye.

"Sure. We got off light. Minor cuts and bruises."

The specialist came then and made his examination. I listened carefully and I heard his first words when he had finished. I'll never forget them.

"You're a lucky girl."

It must be true, I thought. The old man at the tourist camp had said it, too. For a minute I got him mixed up with the doctor.

"A miracle . . . God on our side . . ." Of course. It had always been that way. We could play the game by our own rules. Fate carried the ball for us.

The doctor did things to my legs, and a long time later Guy took me home. Pat was waiting outside with a taxi, and he helped. "I'll get my car and take the baby-sitter home," he planned with Guy. "You can carry Ruth in by the back door so the kid doesn't see her."

Pat knew what this small town was like. Already he was trying to keep down the talk. But I wasn't worrying about that. My legs were hurting now, more and more, and my head ached dreadfully. "I'm sorry about—our date," I told Guy.

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way," he said. "Just knowing you were alive when I thought you were dead—that moment was good enough to last a while."

He sat there by my bed and he kept on talking—Donna told me later it was because he thought my headache might mean a head injury and he didn't want me to sleep till it was over—telling me of his plans in his business, of the new car he would have to have. "What kind shall I buy?" he asked, and I tried to put my mind on choosing.

"I'm sorry the old one is wrecked," I said, and I felt a tear roll down my cheek. "It was our world and I loved it."

He wiped the tear away. "So did I, when you were in it. But you'll ride in the new one, and it will be our new world. Like our new life."

"Do you think we'll have that?" I asked. "A new life, I mean?"

"We've got to," he said firmly. "One way or another."

I held to that, his hand beneath my cheek. After a moment I asked, "How was that meeting you had to go to? You didn't tell me."

He turned and looked out into the gray dawn. "I could have done without it," he said, his lips tightening.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Oh, a lot of talk. The boy's been misbehaving."

I could see he didn't want to talk about it. "Let's play some records," I said.

He went to the living room and put on our favorites. We listened in silence, our hands clasped tight.

Dawn came up bright in the sky as we sat there. At six-thirty we heard steps on the porch.

"It's Donna and Pat," he said. "Donna will stay with you while Pat takes me to the airport."

"The airport?" I stared up at him, unbelieving. My dazed mind could not, would not, understand.

"I have to go," he said gently. "It's better for me to be out of the picture when the town starts buzzing." He leaned over and laid his cheek against my hair. "I'll call you when I can. And remember, I'll always think of you."

The last thing I heard as I fell asleep were his footsteps, quick and firm, on the porch outside. My headache was gone.

I woke up to a very different world. A world of pain and questions. My mother came to take care of us. But my legs got worse instead of better. The doctor insisted on taking me to the hospital for the kind of examination that hadn't been possible before. And Arthur came home.

He looked tired when he came in, and much thinner than I had ever seen him. His uniform jacket hung loose on the body that used to fill it out. "Ruthie, girl. I— I wish I could have kept this from happening to you—"

How strange, he was talking as if he blamed himself!

"If I hadn't had to leave you so much, you wouldn't have got mixed up in this." He looked so miserable I had to try to cheer him.

"But you had to leave me," I reminded him. "You had to go into the service. But, oh, Arthur, it didn't have to happen! Not this way!"

"What do you mean?" Arthur's face was very white, as if he guessed what was coming, as if he didn't want to hear it, but knew he had to, at last. He did have to. I couldn't deceive him any more.

"I mean it was just as bad as it looked," I said. "I went on a date with Guy, and it wasn't the first one. And they weren't just dates—" Tears were streaming down my cheeks. "Oh, Arthur, I've been

so rotten to you—" I sobbed. He was plowing his fingers through his thick light hair, and I could see the white places on his lip where his teeth were biting in. "I tried to kid myself," he said. "But I think I knew it all along. I think I knew it would happen if you took that job. I knew you couldn't stand me—" He went to stand beside the window, his shoulders sagging tiredly in the loose jacket. I had never been so sorry for anyone in my life.

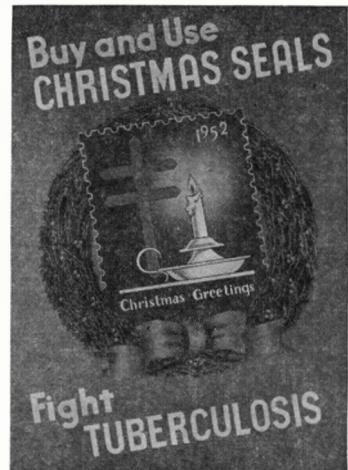
"Oh, Arthur. I'm ashamed! What's wrong with me?"

"Nothing different from what's wrong with most people," he said slowly, turning around. "I guess everybody feels like kicking over the traces some times. If you don't do it early, then it comes on you later, if you don't watch yourself—"

"Well, I should have watched myself," I said miserably. Then I looked at him. "Arthur, you talk almost as if you knew—as if it had happened to you—"

"Why not?" He shrugged his big shoulders wearily. "Why shouldn't it happen to me?"

I was looking at him, and he was my husband, the same Arthur he had always been. But suddenly I was seeing him



different, the way a stranger might see him, a girl—

"Don't worry," he said, raising his blue eyes to give me a little half-grin. "When I start stepping out on you, you'll know it. Maybe when I'm about forty. How about that?"

Tears stung my eyes suddenly. I knew what he was saying. He was telling me that he would forgive me. That if I wanted to come back to him I could. In that moment I wanted terribly to tell him that I would.

But I couldn't. Not after this last weekend. Not after Guy and I had given each other up for dead and found each other miraculously living.

The doctor came then, and Arthur slipped quietly out.

"I can't lie here any longer," I said a little wildly. "I just have to get up!"

"You can go home today," the doctor said. "But as to being up and doing—" He studied me. "Didn't your husband tell you?"

It was then I got really scared. "No—"

"I'm afraid you'll have to find different ways to be up and doing, my dear. Not that there won't be plenty you can do—"

"Doctor!" I sat up, my back rigid, not feeling the pain. "Are you trying to tell me I won't—that I can't—"

"Walk?" He took my hand and held it hard. "Eventually face the world,

my dear. Not at all, now. Later, perhaps, with crutches . . ."

"No!" My hand came up to my throat, felt the wild throbbing. "No! I can't take it—"

"You have to take it, sooner or later," he said gently. "You may get considerably better, you may learn to get around pretty well, but you'll never really walk, short of a miracle—"

A miracle!

That's what I had been believing in, all along. In luck, in Fate carrying the ball. But suddenly the whole silly childlike structure of my make-believe came crashing down around me.

But still I couldn't quite face all the facts. To live my life in a wheelchair? Oh, no—no! But when Arthur came back to take me home, I knew the horror was true.

Arthur had to pick me up and carry me to the car.

"Where's Joanie?" I asked him, as he drove. That was one safe subject, one not charged with unanswerable questions.

"Your mother took her to the beach this morning. When I get you settled I'll go and get them."

He carried me into the house, laid me on the bed. How gentle his hands were! I had never thought of them that way before. There were many things I hadn't known about him, perhaps, and now it was too late ever to learn.

He carefully put the phone within reach, and then he asked, a little gruffly, "You'll be all right till I get back?"

I told him I would. As all right as I could ever be, now.

In ten minutes the phone rang. I picked it up, tried to say, "Hello."

"It's me, Ruth." Guy's voice, as I had known it would be. "How are you, how are your legs?"

"Oh, fine," I said hastily. "And Guy, how are things with you?" I made my voice eager.

"Not good, Ruth," he said, his voice heavy. "Not good at all."

"What do you mean?" When he didn't answer, I almost forgot my own trouble in sensing his. "Guy, what's wrong? What's happened?"

"Nothing new," he said. "My son—my son—"

"Mark! He's ill?"

"Not physically. But something's wrong with him. Really wrong. He's been stealing—"

"Darling, I'm so sorry!" The words were inadequate, and it seemed to me that I had said them too often. "What did they say at the clinic?" I went on.

"Oh, it's a long business. They can't cure this like a case of measles. They said a lot, and some of it hurt. I've been failing as a father. I shouldn't have needed to be told that."

No. Nor I. I had helped him. I had kept him away from his son.

"They say kids steal things to take the place of the love they're not getting. They say it has to be there in their home—they have to have it like they have to have food, or they get sick."

"I don't know how we're going to work it out," he forced himself to go on. "But we have to, Winnie and I. Somehow we've got to give our kid a better deal."

He'd said, "Winnie and I . . . Our kid."

I knew then what he was telling me. And this time, somehow, I really faced it. Without any hesitation I was able to answer. "You're right, Guy. It's the only thing you can do. And I'm proud—"

My voice must have quavered. Guy suddenly asked, "Ruthie, are you all right?"

Maybe he thought I must be sick if I

could face a fact straight and square, I thought grimly.

"Of course I'm all right," I told him.

"Are your legs well?" he asked. "Are you walking?"

"Don't rush me," I told him, trying to laugh. "I'm relaxing."

He must have thought I was taking a pretty flippancy tone for a time like this. But it was the only tone I could take, just then. It was the only tone I could take and not start weeping. For this time I knew without any doubt that we were saying goodbye.

"Forget me, Guy," I said, my voice suddenly low and steady. "Once you do that, you can do anything you have to."

He hesitated a moment, and I could hear his hard indrawn breath. "That's hard," he said at last. "And it's hard to tell you to forget me. But you're right. It's the only way we can go on and do the job ahead. . . . Goodbye, Ruth."

Our voices were both very quiet. I said, "Goodbye."

And that was all.

It has not been easy. My first impulse was to go back to Mother. Surely to stay with Arthur, now that I was crippled, after what I had done to him, would not be fair.

But wait. Fair to whom?

I remembered Arthur's face, when he had turned back from the window, in that hospital room. I remembered the look in his blue eyes as he had made his little joke about stepping out on me when he was forty. I looked back honestly, and I knew. Arthur not only loved his little daughter, but he loved his wife. He wanted us with him.

I looked deep now, deep into truth.

"If you forget me," I had told Guy, "you can do the job ahead of you."

How about me? How about my job? If he could do his, couldn't I do mine? He was going back to build his home anew, build it with love in it for those to whom he owed his love.

If he could do it, so could I. Or rather, if they could do it, so could we. For this was a job two people had to do together—Arthur and I.

The months have shown that my decision—a decision, for once, that considered the good of others—was right.

I am much better. The doctor is amazed at how quickly I learned to be "up and doing." But we know—Arthur and I—that the reason is that I had something to do. For the first time, I'm working for a goal. I'm seeking satisfaction and excitement and fulfillment within my marriage.

There is no other way. Years ago, as a bride, I had pledged, in God's eyes, my life to the man I was marrying. Then, as so many wives do, I began to look only upon the dullness of married life. I blamed my husband for failing to fill my days with the brimming excitement I thought was due me. Somewhere else, I felt, there was the fulfillment that was now denied me. So I went out to find it. And, as Arthur had so bitterly warned me in the beginning, when you are out to find illegal pleasures, they are always there for you to discover. But I bought them with the heartbreak of two families. I had no right to do it. For if I had sought the richness of a good life within my marriage as eagerly as I had outside it, I would have found peace and satisfaction. Now, I must try desperately to build again what I tore down.

I want now to give my life meaning through the happiness of others. With their help I will once again be a woman who has much love to give. **THE END**

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MY MOTHER-IN-LAW'S REVENGE

(Continued from page 59)
again. Did you ever hear such a monstrous lie?"

I looked at Neva helplessly. She really seemed to think it was a lie, that she hadn't ever plotted to wreck my marriage to Bruce. I murmured something but she wasn't listening. She was watching me closely, her eyes glinting feverishly.

"There's one thing Madeleine doesn't know yet." Neva smiled craftily, still watching me with that strange, glowing intensity. "That I alone control the Wilton money! She thinks a child—and believe me—maybe it isn't even Bruce's—she thinks a child will get the money for her. Just wait and see! Won't she be put out when she finds out she can't fool me? I know she married Bruce for the money—the dirty little gold-digger!"

I shuddered. The room seemed to turn suddenly cold, suddenly clammy with the crawling evil that was in it.

"Oh no," I said. "Madeleine wouldn't—"

"Wouldn't she!" Neva snapped. "I know the signs! I did it myself so I ought to be able to spot it. Now you married Bruce because you loved him, didn't you?"

I swallowed hard, my throat parched with the wave of terror that shook me. "Yes," I whispered. "Yes, I loved Bruce when I married him."

"And you still love him, don't you?" She leaned toward me and her thin hands gripped mine fiercely. She was like a hypnotist, with me, terrified, her victim. What did Neva want?

"No... I don't know," I cried, hardly knowing what I was saying. "I mean, it's all over... Bruce and I. Our marriage didn't work out..."

"But it could have!" Her fingers clawed into me. "You're the right girl for him. He—we didn't know that until now. You'll see him, won't you, Irene?"

I stared at Neva wonderingly. It didn't seem possible that she meant what she was asking me to do—to see the man who'd thrown me out, who'd discarded me, and try to win him away from his second wife! I pulled away from Neva's clutching fingers. I said as firmly as I could, "No. I can't talk to him, Neva."

The eagerness left Neva's face and her eyes dulled. She looked at me with a brooding somberness for a long moment and then she said, "You may be sorry, Irene." Her voice, harsh and flat, sent a thrill of fear plunging down my spine. Resolutely I made myself think of Dick and Liz, whose strength had given me the courage to build a new life.

Neva got to her feet. She smiled and for an instant I glimpsed the beautiful poised woman she had once been.

"I'll run along now," she said carelessly. "Oh, by the way, will it be convenient for me to pick up Emmy about nine next Saturday morning?"

"Pick up Emmy?" I repeated in bewilderment. "I don't understand..."

"But of course you do, darling." Her smile was brilliant with malice. "Bruce has visitation rights, you know. One day a week to see his child. It's little enough."

"But... he's never come near her." I choked out the words. "It's been almost a year... and never..."

"I know, dear." Neva's voice was rich with mock sympathy. "And you've been hurt, haven't you? But you can understand how it was. At first, Bruce was too utterly shattered by the divorce and then there was this wretched marriage to Madeleine, which has nearly ruined him. But naturally he loves his own child and wants to see her. Have her ready by nine, won't you?"

So that's what she meant by "You may be sorry, Irene." She'd strike at me through my child! Neva had the law on her side. Though I hated the idea of my baby spending a day with this woman, there was nothing I could do to prevent it.

I slept badly that night, trapped in dreams that recalled my life with Bruce. I re-lived that horrible scene in the hospital, when Neva had unleashed the full viciousness of her hatred and I awoke, crying with terror.

"Dick!" I heard myself whimpering. "Oh, Dick!"

I switched on the light and tried to calm down. I must be as strong as Neva. I mustn't let her get the hold on me again that she'd had when I was a weak and inexperienced girl. Bruce was out of my life and she couldn't force me to take him back. I must hold fast to the thought of Dick's love and the happiness we might some time find together. But even as I argued with myself, waves of terror, blind and unreasoning, engulfed me. Neva had no conscience, no honor, no scruples... and her hold on me came through the

**MISS TRUE STORY
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will appear on next month's cover.
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fact that her son was Emmy's father. I couldn't change that. I couldn't hold back the days and the hours that brought me up to Saturday morning when my baby left me to spend the day with Bruce.

I watched Neva croon to her, softening her face and her voice. I saw Emmy's dazzled smile as she sat beside Neva in the convertible and speed away out of my sight. I spent a wretched, restless day, waiting tensely for Emmy's return, anxious for her reaction. But Emmy seemed happy as usual when she came home. She liked Neva, she said, and Daddy ate lunch with her.

"How was Daddy... I mean, was your lunch good?" I checked my questioning, ashamed to think I'd asked her for information about Bruce.

"Oh, yes! I didn't have to eat anything but ice cream and cookies!"

"But darling," I said gently, "you know Mother wants you to eat your meat and vegetables too."

She nodded, a sly little smile lurking in the corners of her small mouth. She looked sidewise at me, adorably angelic.

"Neva said I could!" she announced importantly. "She says I could have anything I want! Next week we're having choc'lit cake—Neva said so!"

She ran out of the room, childishly unconscious of the terror she struck in me.

I sat there, sick with fear, torn by my helplessness. I'd tried hard to be a good mother to Emmy. Was Neva going to use Bruce's visitation rights to ruin my baby... to twist her little mind and soul?

"Dear God, help me!" I prayed as, with dread heavy in my heart, I saw Emmy go off the next Saturday to spend the day presumably with Bruce, but actually with Neva. She came home tired and cross, way past her normal bedtime. The rich

food that Neva gave her upset her stomach and she was over-stimulated by excitement and too much attention. I undressed her, tried to put her to bed.

"No—no!" she screamed. "Don't want to go to bed! You're a bad Mommy and I don't have to do anything you say! Neva said so!"

Neva said so! Would those cursed words haunt me forever, wrecking Emmy's happiness as they had wrecked her father's? Neva said so . . . an echo out of my miserable marriage. Was Neva stealing my child with her honeyed words, the same as she stole my husband? I couldn't do a thing about it. Oh, it was agony knowing that the law was on her side. Desolate, miserable, I paced my small rooms that night, longing for help, yet unable to turn to the two I loved most, Liz and Dick. I had no right to involve them in my sordid problems.

I'd dropped off into a restless sleep. It must have been past midnight, when suddenly, piercingly shrill, the phone rang. It was Neva . . . even disturbing my unhappy sleep.

"Irene?" she began in her high nervous voice. "You weren't asleep, were you? I just called to see how Emmy was. Honestly, Irene, that child is so happy here with us! Why, the way she eats, you'd think she never—"

I listened on, not really hearing the malicious words, not really absorbing the twisting little sarcasms and hidden meanings in Neva's remarks. But as her sick words tumbled out over the phone one after another, I pictured the scene as it must have been: sweet little Emmy, delighted as all children would be in Neva's lavish home, utterly innocent, utterly plastic in Neva's vicious hands.

Yet surely, I told myself, as Neva's voice rang over the wire, surely Neva would not harm Emmy. If Neva loves Bruce as much as she does, she would never hurt his child.

After that phone call, I didn't sleep. Early the next morning, when Dick and Liz came to take Emmy and me to church, I was a tense, nervous shadow. I was myself as I used to be—insecure, unhappy. "Neva again?" was all Liz said. I guess she knew more than I thought she did.

"Don't let that woman drag you back into that mess," Dick begged. "Hang up on her. You're free now. She has no claim on you!"

I looked into Dick's eyes, so kind and anxious. The clasp of his hand was warm and firm and just the look of his broad shoulders was comforting. Oh, Dick was a man, a real man! Not a spoiled child like Bruce, who was too weak to run his own life. It would have been so easy to throw myself into his strong arms and sob out the whole story of my fear of Neva! Dick would fight for me, I knew, but could even Dick win against a cruel, ruthless person like Neva? I decided against it. Best not to stir up any more trouble—not yet—not unless I absolutely had to. Besides . . . I shuddered, ravaged by the nameless terror that just the thought of Neva could arouse in me . . . if Neva suspected that I was serious about Dick she might go into a violent rage and hurt someone. Dick or me or even . . . Emmy.

But I couldn't explain all that to Dick so I made light of his anxiety. I pretended that there was nothing but what he saw on the surface . . . the child of divorced parents going to spend one day a week with her father and grandmother. I turned aside his efforts to come to a definite understanding, though it broke my heart to see the growing pain and bewilderment in his eyes. I kept telling him that I wasn't quite "ready" till one night Dick lost his patience.

"I wonder if you'll ever be ready," he said, his face cold as I'd never seen it. "I wonder if you won't always let your past drag at your heels so there can't be a decent future for you . . . or for us."

His anger almost steeled me to defy Neva, but when she called for Emmy the next morning, which was Saturday, I felt the same old blind terror and there was nothing I could do but let Emmy go. In a minute, she came running back.

"Neva wants you to come too, Mommy!"

I stared at her expectant little face. Of course she saw no reason why I shouldn't go to Neva's with her. Anger suddenly stiffened my spine. Neva was undoubtedly planning to bring me together with Bruce, plotting through me to break up his marriage. Madeleine was too much for Neva to handle but she thought I could still be ordered around! I said harshly, "Tell Neva I'm not coming!"

Emmy started down the stairs again, with a puzzled backward glance, and my heart reproached me for the tangled emotions, the wonders and the doubts that even her baby mind must often feel. When Emmy came home that evening, I saw she'd been crying.

"Something wrong, darling?" I asked softly. "Tell Mommy."

Her small body grew tense and her head shook back and forth violently. She wouldn't look at me. Fear wrenches my heart. *What had Neva done to my baby?*

"Listen to Mommy, darling." Gently I forced her head up. Her eyes were damp with tears. "Tell Mommy all about it."

With a tremendous effort I kept my voice calm. Emmy's lips began to quiver and she burst out in an agonized wail, "Neva said you didn't love me! She said that's why you didn't want to come with me today . . . and maybe you aren't my mommy at all! She said maybe I didn't have any real mommy or daddy!"

She was shaking with hysterical sobs now and her eyes were wide with panic. I held her close and whispered to her soothingly until she dropped off to sleep. I sat there holding her, the brooding despair in my soul as black as the night. So that was how Neva would punish me when I disobeyed her wishes . . . through Emmy's soft heart and impressionable mind. She would hurt Emmy, knowing the pain to me would be twice as keen.

I'd hardly sunk into a restless sleep when Neva phoned me again. Her voice was a piercing scream.

"I need you, Irene!" She sounded hysterical. "Come over here right away! It's Madeleine! Quick, Irene!" She dropped the receiver and I couldn't get her back, so I dressed hurriedly, left Emmy with the next-door neighbor, and rushed by cab to Bruce's old home. Neva opened the door, serene and unruffled. I was stunned by her uncanny grip on herself.

"What happened?" I stammered excitedly. Neva silenced me with a gracious wave of her white hand. She turned and I followed her to the foot of the wide mahogany stairway that swept down from the second floor. Madeleine lay at the bottom in a limp, twisted heap. Her unconscious face was turned up and set in a terrified, shocked expression.

"You've called the doctor and the ambulance, Neva?" I asked.

"Why, no," Neva said reproachfully. "I was waiting for you, dear. Bruce is out of town so you were the only one I could call. She's just the way I found her. Do you think she's lost her baby?"

She spoke the last sentence with a dreadful, lip-smacking satisfaction. I shuddered. In my heart I was sure that Neva had deliberately withheld help from Madeleine . . . hoping she'd die! Yes, Neva



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was doing the same thing to Madeleine that she'd done to me.

I hurried to the phone and called the ambulance and Dr. Joe. Madeleine was stirring and groaning softly when they arrived. She'd have to be rushed to the hospital if there was to be any chance of saving the baby, Dr. Joe said. As they lifted the stretcher to carry her out to the ambulance, Madeleine's eyes opened and stared straight at Neva. Her face twisted in pain as she gasped out, "She pushed me! Neva pushed me down the stairs! Ask Emmy how she hates me!"

Neva protested shrilly. "She's delirious! I nearly fell too, trying to save her."

Nobody said anything. But Dr. Joe gave Neva a straight, hard look. After the ambulance had gone, Neva turned to me.

"You say you were here and saw Madeleine fall!" she demanded. "Nobody knows you weren't. It would be our word against hers. I don't want her making trouble between me and Bruce."

Her eyes were bright and hard on my face. I swallowed painfully. "I can't do that, Neva," I whispered. "I didn't see her fall . . . I don't know how it happened." "I'll pay you for it!" Neva insisted feverishly. "You must have a struggle getting along on your salary. I'll give you five hundred!"

I backed away, step by step, and she followed. All I could think of was Emmy. Madeleine had mentioned Emmy. To what blind, half-mad scenes had my little girl been exposed? To what horrors had she been an innocent witness?

"I don't want your money!" I cried wildly. "I can't lie about it! I can't! I can't! Why don't you leave me alone?"

Neva's eyes narrowed to glittering pinpoints. She spat at me.

Then, abruptly, the frail shell of her self-control cracked completely. She pushed her face close up to mine, the eyes glassy and the mouth curled in an animal-like snarl. "I'll make you sorry for this! Go on, get out of here . . . quick, before I kill you!"

She pushed me, her long, painted nails scratching my cheek. I glanced back over my shoulder as I ran down the steps.

I was sure that Neva had pushed Madeleine down the steps to make her lose her baby, as she had tried to force me into an abortion. The jealous hatred of any woman who attracted Bruce had been smoldering in Neva's heart for years, thinly checked and bursting out now into open violence. This time there had been more than jealousy in Neva's heart. *There had been murder.*

She's crazy, I whispered to myself, saying at last what I'd actually thought for a long time. *Neva was a madwoman . . . and every week my baby spent a day in her company!*

The fears I'd been beating off had their way with me then. They flocked around me, taunting me, whispering to me of imagined horrors that Neva might inflict on my helpless child.

I was frantic with the realization of my own helplessness to protect Emmy. I had nothing definite to take to the police. *Mrs. Wilton . . . the respected, wealthy Mrs. Wilton insane?* Where was my proof? They'd laugh me out of the station-house.

Fearfully I waited for Neva the following Saturday but she didn't come for Emmy. We spent a happy day in the country with Dick and Liz. They both loved me and in their eyes I saw the same appeal, the same hurt wonderment because I was still holding back from Dick. They were so fine, so wholesome and good it seemed strange that a creature like Neva could live in the same world with them. Madeleine lost her baby but everything

was hushed up and there was no scandal. She left town directly from the hospital and went to Reno. There was a rumor that Bruce had been forced to make a big cash settlement on her.

Bruce moved back into the old home with Neva. The younger boys were away at college, so they were alone. Neva began calling for Emmy on Saturday mornings. I was afraid not to let her go. Neva, angered, would find revenge through my child no matter how I tried to protect her. She was dying her hair red now and she wore it in a fuzzy poodle cut. Everything about Neva in those days was more unrestrained. She drove with an impatient recklessness that made me shiver.

Each Saturday when Emmy was with Neva, I'd try to keep busy, washing, dusting . . . but always whatever I was doing would fall from my hands and I'd stare at the clock. Slowly, with an aching slowness that left me limp with tension, the hours passed. If Emmy was late, as she often was, I'd pace up and down the room, to keep back the frightened sobs. When I heard the car outside and Emmy's step on the stairs, I'd sigh as if reprieved from death. I'd force myself to smile for her, just as though nothing were wrong. I mustn't frighten Emmy. Somehow I must

enough to try again?" he asked me. I tugged my hand free. "I don't know what you mean," I said, stalling for time. I felt my heart begin to thud.

"I mean just this, Irene. I mean that I want you to re-marry me and try to make a go of our life together. I know I gave you a dirty deal . . . and so did Neva, when we were married before. But I'm older now and I've learned my lesson. Madeleine was just a . . . well, a brain-storm. I still care a lot for you, Irene darling."

I looked into his weak, handsome face. I remembered the touch of his mouth on mine and his arms that had awakened me to womanhood, but the memory meant nothing.

I said stiffly, "It's too late, Bruce. Too much has happened to both of us. It wouldn't work out."

I glimpsed a shallow flash of anger across his face, but he smoothed it away quickly. Bruce wasn't used to being denied anything, least of all by me.

"I had the impression from what Neva said," he began slowly, and then hesitated. Behind his words, I could imagine what had happened. Neva pulling the strings as always and Bruce dancing to her tune! Assuming that I was waiting eagerly and hopefully to be taken back!

Through a mist of shocked anger I heard him talking, cleverly and smoothly, pouring out the persuasive words that Neva had put in his mouth. "Emmy deserves to have both her parents with her, loving her and taking care of her. I can do a lot for Emmy and I will, after we're married again." His voice softened. "I've never stopped caring for you, Irene."

I turned away to hide the revulsion in my face. What did Bruce know of love? Love like Dick's that asked nothing for itself, but wanted only to give and cherish and protect. I longed to turn him away, but I was afraid to refuse him because he was Neva's son!

Bruce sensed my indecision. He asked quickly, "You'll think it over, Irene?"

I nodded. "Yes," I said dully.

He left, smiling and complacent, and I sat down and tried to think clearly. It was hard to do with that other presence in the room . . . that haggard, once-beautiful woman whose burning blue eyes were fixed on my face. I could feel their gaze and feel the terrible force of her evil will.

Sick with terror, I struggled to tear my thoughts away from Neva. For the first time, the significance of Bruce's plea struck me with its full impact. He was removing from me the stigma of failure as his wife. He was offering me a chance to go back to the marriage from which I'd been thrown out, humiliatingly rejected in the sight of the town. But I didn't want anything Bruce could give me. All I wanted was to be free of him and Neva forever, free to marry Dick and make a happy home for my little girl.

Hesitantly I waited for Neva's next move. I hadn't actually rejected Bruce, but I knew Neva wouldn't let the matter hang fire. The next night, she was waiting for me in the lobby. I sent Emmy out to play and we went up together to my apartment. Neva was all smiles and sweetness.

"I want us to be good friends, Irene," she began coaxingly.

I could feel her watching me from under her thick lashes and I waited warily for her to go on. She sighed. "Poor Bruce is so unhappy. Madeleine was never the girl for him, never! He wants you to re-marry him. Oh, Irene, you must! You can't find it in your heart to refuse him. Remember he's Emmy's own father!"

She arranged her haggard face in a wistful expression.

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January TRUE STORY

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keep her free of the terror and despair that were eating into me.

Then, on Sunday night I opened the door when the chime sounded . . . and looked into Bruce's face. How can I tell you what I felt? It was such a confused feeling, a mixed-up blend of astonishment and anger with, perhaps, a little fear, because he was Neva's son.

Bruce had changed, as Neva had. Gray dulled the brightness of his hair and deep lines of dissipation were cut into the soft flesh of his face. I looked at him with a clear, impartial gaze and saw the weakness and the selfishness that had ruined our marriage.

"May I talk to you, Irene?" he asked. Silently I swung the door wide and stood back. He walked restlessly around.

"Nice place you've got here," he said uneasily. "How's Emmy?"

"She's all right," I said coolly. "She's at Neva's every Saturday if you should ever want to see her."

Bruce flushed. "I know I haven't spent much time with her. I've been in a jam with Neva and Madeleine. Between them they've led me a dog's life. I haven't been able to think straight in weeks."

"I'm sorry," I said mechanically.

"Are you?" Bruce took my hand in his. His voice seemed to deepen with earnestness. "Are you really sorry, Irene? Sorry

I said slowly, "You didn't want me to marry Bruce before. Why did you change your mind?"

She waved her still lovely hands in a graceful gesture. "Oh, I was wrong! I admit it freely to you, as I admitted it to Bruce. I didn't appreciate what a sweet little thing you were."

"Sweet little thing!" Yes, I'd been that all right . . . and scared of my shadow and weak and full of self-doubt. I hadn't fought Neva as Madeleine had done. I'd let her frighten me into submission. Neva wanted Bruce to re-marry me because she thought she could still enslave me.

I saw her now with eyes that were clear and unafraid. I saw an aging, unhappy woman who herself was in bondage to her unreasonable whims. I felt deeply sorry for her and for Bruce, whose life she had warped. And pitying them so, I lost fear, for you can't fear someone you pity. I lifted my head, feeling new courage and self-confidence course through me.

Of course I wasn't going to re-marry Bruce!

I told Neva that and watched her eyes widen in astonishment and her face darken with fury.

"How dare you, a creature like you, turn down my son!" She lashed at me wildly. "I insist that you re-marry Bruce! Otherwise, that wretched Madeleine may come snooping around, trying to get him away from me! Do you hear me? I order you to!"

Her nostrils flared like an angry animal's and the light in her eyes was a blazing fury. I conquered the tremor of fear that ran through me.

"Listen, Neva," I said. "You told me something once that I've never forgotten. You told me I'd had quite a ride for my money. You were right. I'd been riding on your merry-go-round to the music you played. But I fell off . . . and that's the best thing that ever happened to me. I'm not getting up on that merry-go-round again, Neva. That's final . . . and you can tell Bruce that, for me."

Neva cursed me viciously. She called me every vile name she could think of. She rushed up and down the room, hurling threats at me. Anyone seeing Neva at that moment would have known she was insane. Her face was deathly white and her eyes were huge with the anger that possessed her. She threw books, ashtrays, pictures at the walls, hardly seeming to know what she was doing. When she finally stopped, I was terrified, for there was an ominous new threat in her voice. "Do you know what I'm going to do? To Emmy?"

The cords of her neck stood out ugly and swollen and her fingers kept clenching and unclenching as though they were itching to tear . . . to hurt . . . to destroy! And then, in that paralyzed moment of complete panic, God gave me the courage I needed. I wasn't afraid any longer. I was fighting for my child.

I met Neva's crazy glare without shrinking. I said harshly, "You're not going to do anything to Emmy because you're never going to see her again! I'm going to the court and have Bruce's visitation rights set aside. He doesn't care anything about Emmy and I can prove it. I can prove Emmy saw you every Saturday—not her father. And I can get Madeleine to testify, too."

I held Neva's gaze as I talked and step by step, she retreated across the room and I followed her, talking steadily. She was still furious but she looked dazed, too. I followed through quickly and the words came so fast and sure it seemed that a greater force was speaking through me. "Don't forget about Madeleine's fall! I

know you pushed her down the stairs and Dr. Joe heard her say so. You paid her off but there are ways to get her to tell the truth . . . to prove what a terrible person you are . . . unfit to live under the same roof with Emmy!"

"Stop, stop, stop!" Neva clapped her hands over her ears as though she couldn't bear to hear any more. Her back was to the door now and she whirled and I had a last glimpse of her tortured face before she ran down the stairs.

I phoned Dick, then. I'd been wrong not to tell him before. I could see that now. I'd tried to keep him from sharing my life and that wasn't fair to either of us. He came hurrying over and made me lie down while he gave Emmy her supper and saw her through her bath and bedtime prayers. It was such a sweet, safe feeling to lie there in the twilight and hear Dick talking to Emmy in the next room. Later, cradled in the haven of his arms, I told him all about Neva and her insane plottings, and my fear of her that had held me suspended in a ghastly vacuum of inaction week after week. He soothed me and reassured me.

"If I'd only known what was going on," he said regretfully, "I might have saved you a lot of suffering. Don't you know that what happens to you happens to me also? I don't ask for anything better than the chance to fight for your happiness. There're ways to handle people like Neva. I promise she'll never bother you again."

I turned up my face for his kiss, content and peaceful as a child. The menace of Neva was forever erased from my life.

Dick went straight to the Wilton family lawyer and had a brutally frank talk with him about Neva. The result was that the lawyer convinced both Bruce and Neva that I was prepared to cause plenty of trouble unless given complete custody of my child. Furthermore, they were never to bother me again.

Dick and I were married in a few weeks and soon after, he was transferred to another city. We were both glad because it gave us a fresh start on our life together. Dick is wonderful, both as a husband and a father. Emmy loves him devotedly and thinks of him as her real father.

I've never seen Bruce or Neva again, but Liz, who stayed on in Franktown, sometimes hears news that she passes on to me. The two younger boys never came back to the old home after they finished college. I suppose they'd seen what happened to Bruce and didn't want to get involved with Neva. Bruce left Neva too, and from the last report was settled in a city hundreds of miles away and doing well. I was glad to hear that.

After Neva lost all her sons, she lived on alone in the big family house. I can feel nothing but pity for her, eaten alive as she is by her vicious and evil impulses. Her mind, always wavering on the edge of insanity, has broken completely. When Liz came to spend Christmas with us, she told us the story that was circulating around Franktown. As her Christmas present to herself, Neva had bought a huge organ and had it installed in her living room.

"She can't play a note," Liz said compassionately, "but she sits and pounds on it. That's what her cleaning woman says. No one else ever goes there. She told the woman, 'I sit and sway on my little hips and the music soars far out into the night.' How pitiful!"

So now you know what happened to Neva, who inflicted so much suffering on others and ended by destroying herself. May God have mercy on her soul!

THE END

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