

Stories  
For  
Mom and Dad



# Stories



Dick

Barbara



Marie

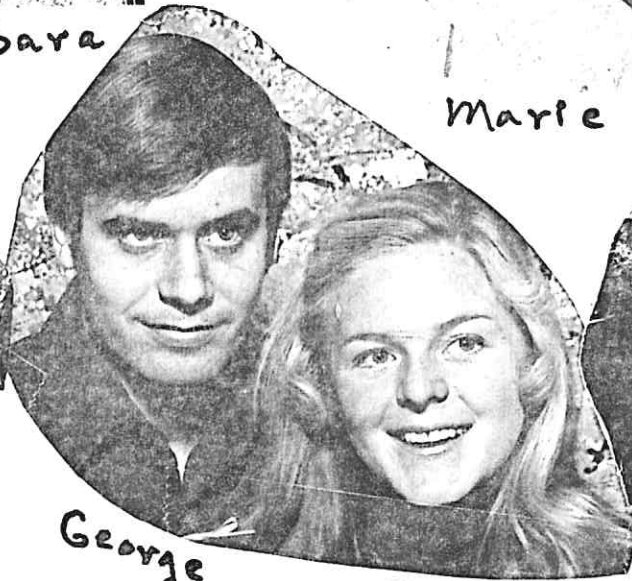
Lewis



Gloria



Jon



George

Bonnie



Barry-Beth



Achim-Rosalée



Lorraine-David

For

Mom

and

Dad



Richard Todd

Richard H.  
OMIE

by Lowell M. Durham, Jr.  
Era of Youth, August, 1967

"I've got a man's inability!" insisted Omie.

He stood squarely in front of me, nose in the air and hands on his tiny hips. I had tried with no measure of success to explain why a little four-year-old brother could not help me beneath the family car. His blue jeans were faded but clean, and I knew Mom would skin us both if he got grease all over his clean clothes.

His nickname came, as most nicknames do, from some obscure beginning that I cannot remember. The most significant thing is that his peculiar nickname sounds like an exasperated expression - Oh me. Nine times out of ten it was a fitting title for him.

Omie plodded around the car, picked up a wrench and began banging on the hubcap, softly at first, but increasing in loudness and tempo with every beat. In a fleeting moment of anger, I grappled the wrench from his grasp and cuffed his hand. Immediately he began whimpering and trotted dejectedly around the car. He reappeared the next minute, sucking his right index finger while tugging apologetically at his right earlobe with his left hand. For Omie, this was a harbinger of extreme fatigue or a sign of hurt feelings.

I continued working under the car, trying my best to ignore him. I could see that his hurt feelings were quickly subsiding. He watched me coolly from the corner of his eye; then he swiftly mounted his tricycle and began making slow, lazy circles around my feet, occasionally brushing them with the tricycle wheel and then finally running over them both. Still I ignored him.

He stuck his little blond head underneath the car. "Let's play airplane," he shrieked.

"Let's not," I yelled back.

He paused and then said softly, "I like puppies. Do you?"

I answered grudgingly in the affirmative. It was little brothers that I was having trouble liking at the moment.

Omie stepped quickly, but definitely, on my ankle and was gone for a blissful thirty seconds. Then, from my position underneath the car, I could see him returning. His scuffed cowboy boots, with jeans half tucked in and half pulled out, were plodding menacingly toward me. Once again his tan little face appeared beneath the car.

"Guess what?" he screamed.

"What?" I answered as politely as my tattered patience would allow.

"That's what!" he yelled and then began laughing hysterically to himself.

"Mother is calling you," I said.

He walked about ten feet away, squatted down and began rolling marbles down the slight incline of the garage floor. The first two marbles passed me on the right. The third, undoubtedly his biggest, hit me squarely on the head.

My paper-thin patience had finally worn through. I scrambled from beneath the car, bumping my head as I came out. I caught him and delivered a stinging blow to the appropriate place and then sat him down on the back stairs with a little too much vigor. This encounter was followed by tears and whimperings. His all-consoling index finger was once again in his mouth and his left hand fingered his right earlobe. His tan little face was not so tan as I had thought; a tear had washed a lighter path down his cheek.

"Oh me, what to do now?" I wondered. "Big cowboys don't cry," I said.

He looked at the floor and wiped his eye with his forearm.

"You do want to grow up to be a big cowboy, don't you?" I queried.

"No," he said quietly. This was a surprise, for to ride the range had always been first in his mind.

"Well, what do you want to be?" I asked.

He paused, looking at me with those blue, tear-filled eyes. Then he choked, "I want to be like you." With that he turned and ran up the stairs.

I had a cold and warm feeling all at once--warm because of a little brother who wanted to be like me, and cold because I had done so very little to deserve such devotion. I went upstairs, gave Omie a big brotherly hug, and together we went down to work on our car.





*Alvira Jean*



*Jennie*



*Mary Jane*



*Jeremy*



*Me too! -  
Dad*

THE HAT IN HER LIFE

by Rene Valerie

Improvement Era -May, 1965

Maybe you think she is yours alone--maybe she even thinks she is yours alone. But somewhere along that rocky passage from bachelor to husband, a man discovers that in every woman's life there is A HAT.

Take this hat for instance. The one on the cover of Mode Magazine. A soft pink circle of straw with loops of narrow ribbon and a pink rosebud nodding cockily over the model's left eyebrow.

Naturally the editors are too wily to mention the price of that handful of fluff on the cover of the magazine. They let you look at it; your blood pressure soars; you dream a little. In my case, the dream is honey-blonde with big blue eyes--Donna, my wife.

I turn the pages of the magazine to find out where I can buy the hat for Donna and on page twenty-six, or thereabouts, I get the bad news--sixty-five dollars. End of dream.

Right now Donna and I are living on the minuscule salary of a junior, junior executive, and our only extra cash is a one hundred dollar reserve fund that I hope will pay for whatever extras come up when our baby is born.

I sigh, push the sixty-five dollar hat out of my mind, try to forget about babbling brooks and crocuses in bloom, and get back to work. When I reach home that evening I am thinking only of the spaghetti sauce I can smell all the way up the apartment stairs. Donna is in the kitchen concentrating on a salad. I sidle up behind her, kiss her lightly on the cheek, "Hi" I say, casual. (After all, we've been married a year now) "Mm-mm," Donna purrs.

Dinner is fine. We linger over dessert and hold hands like honeymooners. I dry the dishes because, with the baby coming any day, Donna is often tired by nightfall. As Donna moves around the kitchen I am thinking that there is a new softness around her mouth nowadays when she is thinking about the baby--and the sixty-five dollar hat is as far from my world as the moon.

Only in these satellite-studded days, the moon is not very far away--and neither is the sixty-five dollar hat.

In fact, the sixty-five dollar hat is sitting on top of the television in our living room. "Do you like it?" Donna asks. She puts on the hat and waits, big-eyed, for approval. The floppy brim throws her eyes into a pool of shadow, the pink rosebud nods over one eyebrow, and she looks exactly like a man wants his wife to look in a lovely hat.

Donna plays it up. "Sir, may I interest you in this lovely new creation? Dirt-cheap at two ninety-eight."

I begin to do a slow burn. But I take it slow. "Did your father give you the hat?" I ask.

"Of course not," Donna stares at me surprised. "Not after all the 'I'll support-my-own-wife' fuss you've made whenever Dad has wanted to help us. Why you even have Daddy so brainwashed that now he thinks you are right."

So I know Donna must have charged the hat. I am disappointed, but then I figure Donna was bound to break out sooner or later. "Living on our budget must be quite a strain for a girl used to being the apple of an indulgent father's eye."

I don't say any more. I count out sixty-five dollars from emergency fund and hand it to her. Donna watches my expression. Her face falls and her eyes look like those of a little girl who doesn't know if she is going to cry or not.

"You don't like it," she says miserably.

"Not sixty-five dollars worth."

Donna gasps. Then her cheeks flush. She gets it now. She can see I haven't fallen for that two-ninety-eight routine.

"Paul Archer, you make me so mad," she cries. "You and your stiff-necked pride that can't bear to accept help even from my own father. Now you even suspect that I bought this hat behind your back. If you had a grain of trust in me---"

"It's not that, Donna" I say patiently, "only---"

Donna doesn't even hear me. "Just because I didn't know how to budget when we were first married, you keep thinking of me as a brainless little spendthrift who can't be trusted with a penny. That's what hurts. You just don't trust me!"

"Donna, don't let's fight," I say. "That hat isn't that important. Now that you've bought it..."

"I didn't buy it," Donna cries indignantly. "I bought Mode Magazine to learn how to drape the veil. The hat is just a straw hat exactly like that expensive hat I bought for our honeymoon, except for the trimming. So I bought a ribbon for ninety-eight cents, the rosebud cost a dollar sixty-nine; and the magazine cost

thirty cents, plus sales taxes makes two-ninety-eight. That's what the hat cost, just like I said. Add it up yourself if you doubt that too."

Donna's chin begins to quiver suddenly, and I know that she is really hurt. She turns and runs into our bedroom. I know that I am in for a session. But I feel like a heel anyway, so I follow and try to make it up.

Donna is in the closet door crying softly against my old flannel bathrobe. (She says the flannel sops up the tears.) I pry her away from there and try to put my arms around her. But she isn't having any. I try to kiss her cheek, but she pulls away, and I stub my nose on a cold, plastic coat hanger.

After a while I manage to pull Donna into my arms and let her cry big tear spots all over my best necktie. I say all the things guys who have been married only a year say on these occasions. Gradually Donna's tears turn to gulps. To make things right I call myself a few nasty names--a heel, an old goat, things like that.

Donna sniffles at me, "Make up your mind," she says, "Goat or heel?"

When Donna gets back her sense of humor I know that she is all right again. I kiss her, and then I know that we are both all right. But Donna has a one-track mind. By and by she continues aloud the thoughts that have evidently been churning around under that blonde hair.

"Besides, I really wanted the hat for you," Donna says confidently.

"Thanks, honey," I say, "A hat with a pink rosebud is just what I have always wanted!"

"Silly," Donna giggles, "I wanted to surprise you and wear the hat when I go to the hospital. My figure has looked awful for so long I thought maybe a pretty hat would make up for the figure. Then you wouldn't forget that you love me."

What can you do with a woman like that?

I say, "Crazy, crazy" against her hair and hold her on my lap in the big chair.

Suddenly it is 3 a.m. and Donna is shaking me. She wants to go to the hospital. Now.

Everything blurs. When I come to again, I have been shoved into some unused hospital closet and forgotten there for hours along with a couple of other guys who look as disheveled as I am.

Eventually some intern pops in, says, "It's a boy," like he

was saying "It's a nice day," and takes me to Donna.

I don't remember what Donna and I say to each other. I hold her hands hard; we keep looking at that furious little red bundle and I try to swallow a lump in my throat the size of a baseball.

Then Donna starts to laugh. She laughs and laughs. I think maybe she is hysterical. But she says quickly, "My hat--my lovely hat that was supposed to make me beautiful for you--I forgot to wear it!"

I looked at her with the baby in her arms. "You're beautiful, honey," I say, "You're very beautiful!"

It has been well over a year since I have thought about that hat - not until Donna took it down from the top shelf of our closet today, removed its swathe of tissue paper, and tried it on.

Now I am trying to figure out: Is Donna keeping that hat (1) for a memento, (2) because, as every husband learns, wives never throw anything away, or (3) to wear on some approaching, appropriate occasion?

I guess I'll just have to wait and find out.

But this time I hope it's a girl.



*Jean + Emilie*



*Bonnie + Gretchen*



*Beth + Bryan*



*Julia + Lisa*



*Dina + Heather*



*Glennie +*





JEAN S. and JOHN H. GROBERG

L I F E   W I T H O U T   H E R

(Reader's Digest, September 1964)

by Joseph N. Bell

A Drama in Real Life - The poignant story of a man who came face to face with some shattering truths.

\* \* \*

I was home alone at midday, working at my typewriter, when the phone rang. A man's voice said, "Your name Bell?"

"Yes," I said. My stomach began to constrict. There was something in his tone--

"This is police headquarters. You'd better get over to the hospital right away. Your wife's been hurt in an accident.

Janet had gone out not ten minutes earlier to do some errands. As she left, I'd kissed her absentmindedly, and she had needled me, "You don't even know who you're kissing." She was laughing as she went out the door. Ten minutes ago.

Foggily, I said, "How badly is she hurt?"

"I don't know. The accident was just called in to headquarters, and I was told to phone you. You'd better get over to the hospital."

Janet had taken our car and the hospital is on the other side of town. As I ran out the front door, I heard a siren. It had a detached, other-world sound--as if I were hearing it from a great distance. I ran to the house of our next-door neighbor, a good friend. "I've got to have your car," I told her. I must have looked wild-eyes, for she didn't ask the question that showed in her eyes; she just nodded. I backed the car out of the garage and raced away.

We live in an area that has one bad intersection; there is no traffic light and the cars come along the main highway at

high speed. As I approached the highway I saw traffic backed up in a double line. I jumped out and sprinted toward the intersection. Several car lengths away, I saw our station wagon.

It stood across the far side of the dual highway and the door by the driver's seat was wide open. That side of the car, behind the door, was badly smashed. A knot of people was gathered about another car, off the road on the other side.

People were everywhere--standing, gawking out of car windows as they went by. There was a large purple splotch on the pavement near our car, and a pair of shoes--familiar shoes--rested neatly in the middle of the road as though Janet had just stepped out of them. A passerby shouted at me, "Hey, Mac, anybody get killed?" I looked at him blankly, then turned and ran with pounding heart back down the line of cars.

A meter maid in her three-wheeled car was just ahead of me in line. I called out to her, "Can you help me get through this traffic? My wife was in that accident, and I've got to get to the hospital."

She replied, "I'll do what I can."

In my car, I nosed out behind her. As she pulled into the highway, the through traffic had to stop to avoid hitting me.

I have only nightmarish recollections of that trip to the hospital except that I know I prayed. The traffic was heavy, but I went in and out and around it. It probably took me ten minutes to make the trip, and in those minutes I wavered many times between hope and despair.

My thoughts turned to the children. I'd have to go to the high school first and get Dave. Then, together, we'd have to tell the girls. Tell them what? That we were going to have to make a new kind of life, a life without their mother? What kind of life would that be?

I found myself, against my will, contemplating it. For the first time I saw myself as the completely permissive parent I was and I realized that Janet was the iron in our family. This wisp of a girl who could wear slacks or cocktail dresses with equal élan, who frequently skipped when she walked down the street--she was the one who made the tough decisions in our family, then made them stick.

There was money in the bank for David's college education, because she had seen to it that the money got there--and stayed there. Debby could play the piano because Janet refused to let her stop taking lessons after I'd talked her into letting the two older children give up theirs.

Little things rippled through my mind. Moving days, when she had worked for hours along with the moving men, then somehow managed to put together a meal for a family that expected it as a matter of course.

There was the evening we were sitting quietly together in the dusk, when she had said to me, "Why don't you quit?" I was eating my heart out--without anyone knowing, I thought--at a job I didn't like while yearning to try to make a living at writing. She knew, and she made the decision easy for me--at a time when turning away from a steady income would have been unthinkable to most women.

Janet, with only a high-school diploma, but far better educated than most college graduates by dint of her voracious reading and consummate curiosity. Janet, who could examine her own emotional excesses with the sort of rugged self-honesty that brought healing and reform. Janet, who would fight without quarter when she thought that a friend had been badly treated.

In the last few blocks to the hospital, I said to myself that our life together could not end. There were too many good years ahead with our children. Too many trips we'd planned and hadn't yet made. Perhaps I would take that teaching job some day. All these things were part of life, not death. They had to be shared with one another to be meaningful.

At the hospital, a woman at the front desk said, "You want Emergency. Go down that corridor to the far end and turn right."

Glass doors led into a broad hallway. The word "Emergency" was painted on the white walls in malevolent red letters. A half-dozen doors opened off the hallway. Beyond the second one I could see just the end of an examining table--and legs covered with tan slacks. Janet had been wearing tan slacks when she left the house. I shut my eyes for an instant, took a deep breath, then walked in.

Two nurses were bending over her. I walked around them and looked down. Janet's eyes were open, and she saw me. A large, crimson cloth lay across her forehead, and her face and clothing were splashed with blood. But she reached out her hand to me and said, "I'm all right, darling. Really, I'm all right. Just don't leave me."

They were the most wonderful words I'll ever hear.

She was all right. After the lacerations and bumps and bruises had mended, we became a family once again. We're one of the fortunate families, as we know. But the memory of those few awful, indelible moments can be called up instantly--by a thought, a word, a gesture, the ring of a telephone. The almost was.

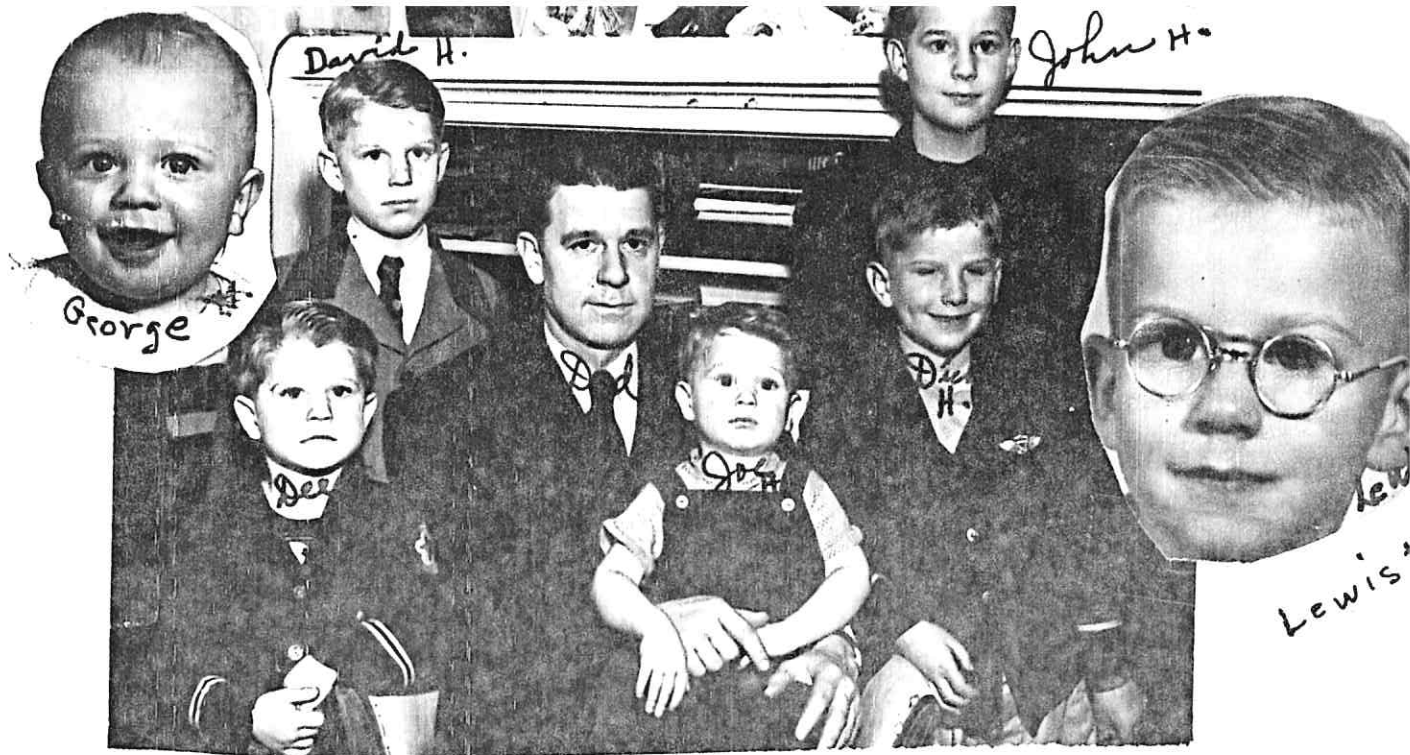
I can never forget the shattering clarity with which I saw my wife as I drove to the hospital that day. Petty annoyances

can become very petty indeed, stacked against a deck like this. The deck was always there, I'd never spread it out and looked at it before--really looked at it.

I took a near tragedy to make me realize that I had never let Janet understand how meaningless life would be without her. How grateful I am for a second chance!







J U S T   L I K E   A   M A N

by Byron Fish

(Everywoman's Family Circle,  
(November, 1960)

Let me give you younger fathers some good advice. The way to train a set of boys to go to bed promptly is to get yourself a stout club, yell "Bedtime!" and brook no further nonsense.

That isn't the procedure I followed, but it is the one I should have. So I'm telling you before it is too late. You probably know what I mean--"too late." If they can get away with it, that's when children go to bed.

The trouble in our family began when I was a relatively new and impressionable father. I read a child-care column by some babe, probably childless, who said bedtime should be associated with a pleasant, quiet atmosphere. You know--soothing. She had visions of children, in pajamas, cuddled in the parent's lap while they listened to a reading of bedtime stories.

"And then," she wrote, "you close the book firmly and say, 'Now, off to bed.' If they know you mean it, they will go with no protest."

"That child-care 'expert' overlooked the fact that literature for the reading-'em-off-to-bed age revolves almost entirely around animals. The listeners identify themselves with the creatures, and as a result you don't have children to put to bed. You have cats, dogs, bears, monkeys, kangaroos, or whatever species the hero of the evening happened to be.

One evening when the hero was a horse, I finished reading about him, closed the book firmly per instructions, and said, "Now, off to bed."

The boys scrambled from my lap and adjoining seats, all right, and disappeared in a flash. But they didn't disappear into bed. The next thing, they were crawling around the room on hands and knees, whinnying, each boy dangling a piece of rope from both sides of his mouth.

Horses must be led to their stalls. On hands and knees, one at a time, they succeeded in making it another bedtime stall.

After getting all the horses corralled and unbridled, I toured the bedrooms again, as parents learn to do out of pure suspicion. I found one bed empty. The pony who was supposed to be in it had heard that his kind can sleep on their feet, so he was standing in a closet.

It took a little talking to relieve him of overidentification with the evening's story. Meanwhile, another pony escaped back to the living room.

That horse had decided it was more fun to be in the saddle than to wear it. He wanted a ride on my back. When we headed for the barn a second time, it was a horse on me.

You can't give one child a ride without giving them all a ride, so the others came tearing out to take their turns. Then they thought one good turn deserved another. As always, I ended up by bellowing, "If you don't stay in bed, I'll start busting gones!"

Kangaroos weren't so bad, because they did make leaping progress. Most exasperating were the evenings when the boys turned turtle. Turtles crawl on their stomachs, and insist after 10 minutes, "But I am on my way to bed."

A few children's books are about personified machines, the most popular being little trains or tugboats. Furthermore, modern children continually play at being machinery such as trucks, jet aircraft, or racing hydroplanes--the noisier the motor, the better.

In our region we have the additional rasping roar of chainsaws. So the next bedtime turmoil we got into had a regional twist.

We started with an innocent little story about a tugboat. Our tugboats commonly are seen towing log rafts to the mills. Because of this association I closed the book about a little tugboat and said firmly (and slyly I thought), "Now let's get you logs to the millpond."

It seemed to work. I simply towed the children away to bed, to their delight and mine.

The next evening they wanted to be towed again, but they pointed out that I would have to fell the trees before I had logs.

"All right," I agreed. They stood with arm "limbs" outstretched, and I applied an imaginary chain saw to their ankles. Naturally the act had to be accompanied by my frantic vocal buzzing before they toppled to the floor.

When I grabbed the first fallen tree and headed for the bedroom, they all broke into protest. "You have to chop off the limbs of the tree and buck it into logs!" they cried.

Well, to shorten the story to its full length, another logging process was added to the game each evening as the boys insisted on authenticity (and delaying bedtimes).

Oh, it developed into just what the female child-care columnist advised-- the happy hour at the end of the day, devoted to the children. I suppose, though, she would have been startled if she could have observed our interpretation of the final, soothing atmosphere.

The chain saw buzzed. The trees crashed. The logger lopped off their limbs, and the chain saw snarled again, cutting log lengths.

Sometimes the logs were dragged from the woods by cable and spar-tree, and sometimes by a grunting tractor, to be stacked in a pile called the "cold deck."

State law requires that logs dumped in the water be branded on the ends, just as cattle are. It is done with a hammer that leaves the brand imprint. Before I put my logs on the track, I had to give them a whack on the head and on the feet.

The logs stretched out stiffly, as the loading boom picked them up. Here the swinging boom's sound effect was the realistic creaking of Pop's back.

As I staggered off toward the mill, I was not allowed to pant normally. "Truck motor, truck motor," each log reminded me. "Rrrrrr," I responded resignedly.

We had to stop at the state weighing station (conveniently, the bathroom.) before we reached the dump. Then the log was tipped off onto the blanket-covered water, where it provided its own sound effect: "Splash!"

Did this end the game? I'll tell you--there is such a thing as children's knowing too much about an industry. Each log stretched its toes upward while it was measured for board feet. Then the towboat had to sit and mutter "P-tooga, p-tooga, p-tooga" as it drew its raft to the mill.

Sometimes I convinced the boys the lumber market was depressed and the logs were just to be stowed in the millpond, so "Good night!" Most evenings, though, they pleaded to go through the mill.

Mill saws let out a harsh scream, particularly when they hit knots. Knees, shoulders, ears, and nose were knots, and they were called to my attention if I failed to scream properly.

By the time the young growth had been logged off, I had all but lost my voice over the Quiet Bedtime Hour and the evolution from trees to lumber.

If I missed any step in the evolution, the little monkeys leaped up and ran back to the missing link. It all must be done fully.

The boys have outgrown such games now, but they apply the pattern in a subtler way. They use up their foolish questions and comments during the day, and save the intelligent ones until they are told to go to bed.

Then they engage Pop in a solemn philosophical discussion, or earnestly inquire into subjects related to government, geography, science, and so on - you know, the sort of thing a parent should be glad his children are thinking about and that he should answer when the opportunity arises so naturally.

It's too late now to reach for a club when I holler, "Bedtime!" But let it be a lesson to you fathers five years behind me.

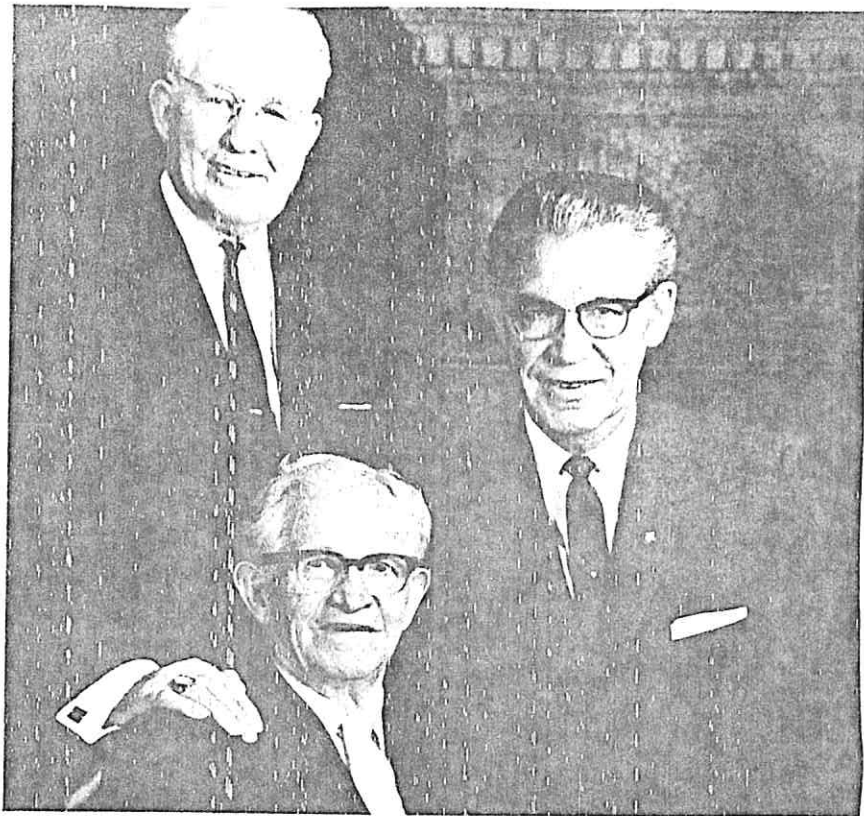




My entry at the Fair  
When I was 12 years old I  
was given one half acre of  
land to raise my own crop  
of potatoes. It was a lot of  
work and a lot of fun  
and excitement. The weeds  
were the big enemies and  
I fought with my strength  
against them. It seemed  
to me the potato plants joined  
me in the fight, for as the  
potato vines filled the rows  
they actually "cut out" weeds.  
At harvest time I was in-  
vited to display a small  
basket of select potatoes  
at the County Fair.  
I watched my entry like a  
proud anxious parent.  
The judges gave all the  
prize ribbons to other  
entries and mine received  
no award at all, not even  
an honorable mention

I remember how deflated I felt. To me my potatoes were special and they just had to deserve better honor than the county judges had given them.

My faith and interest in my basket of, what I considered, perfect potatoes, was likely very evident as I started to claim my display to take it home. The manager saw me as I carefully handled and admired each potato, and he asked me to let him send my exhibit of potatoes to the State Fair which would be in the next few days. I consented and was happy but not really too surprised when I received a check and an award for first prize at the State Fair.



John also had a great experience with Pres. Tanner who came to the 50th Anniversary celebration in Tonga when John presided over the mission there

Pres. McKay (center) with counselors: High B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner



Delbert V. Groberg still interested in spuds -- but this time the Idaho Russet - shown as President of the Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce

an assist from General  
George Washington.  
all my life I have been  
grateful for the feeling  
within me that it was  
wrong to use profanity.  
many who have acquired  
the habit of swearing  
have apologized for their  
language and said it was  
military expression, they  
had learned it in the Army.  
It would be a very good  
thing for the Army and  
all who use profanity  
to take counsel from  
our first and greatest  
General. (He gave me  
a copy of this order.)  
So me it is another way of  
saying "Thou shalt not take  
the name of the Lord thy God  
in vain." —



GENERAL'S ORDER -

Issued by General George Washington in New York, July 1776

The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion. He hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it and that both they and the men will reflect that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it.

"Let us with caution indulge the supposition\* that morality can be maintained without religion."

"No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency...Let us implore the Supreme Ruler of nations to spread his holy protection over these United States...."

"..by the miraculous care of Providence that protected me beyond all human expectation, I had four bullets thru my coat and two horses shot under me and yet escaped unhurt..."

B-14

The Post-Register, Idaho Falls, Idaho, Monday, Nov. 26, 1979

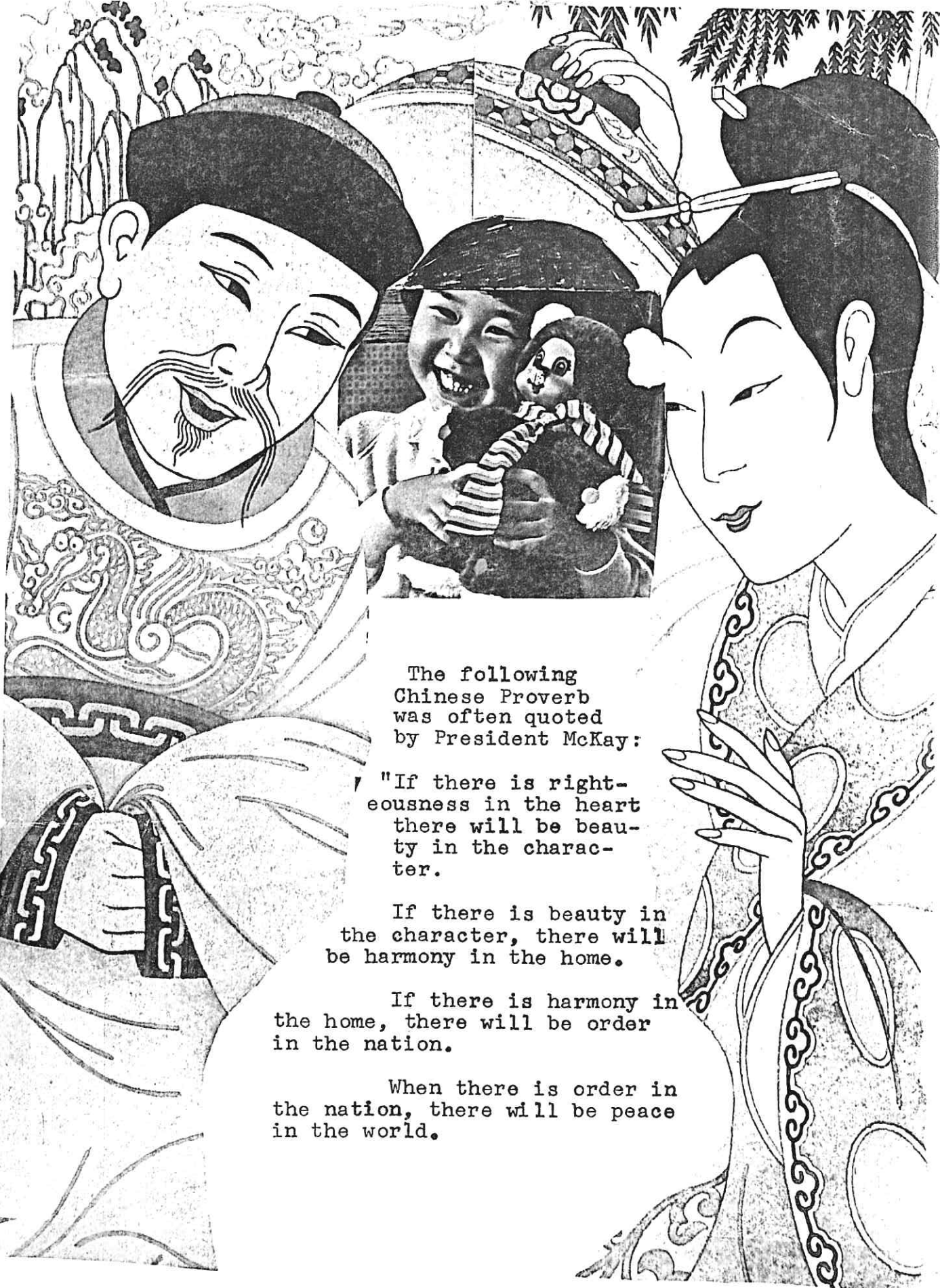


AP Laserphoto

## Still at stake

FIVE WEEKS before their deadline, the people trying to raise \$5 million to keep the two famous portraits by Gilbert Stuart of George, right, and Martha, left, Washington in Boston concede that they will fall far short of their goal.

Retired Gen. James M. Gavin, the World War II paratrooper who is leading the campaign, says the fundraisers will probably finish the year with between \$2 million and \$3 million.



The following Chinese Proverb was often quoted by President McKay:

"If there is righteousness in the heart there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.



Bob



Julia

# SUSPENDED SENTENCES!

(McCall's-no date-long ago)

by D.H. Johnson, a man who has something to say about a habit his wife has. Some women editors of McCall's declare that their husbands are much worse.

\* \* \*

My wife came into the room just now. "Darling," she said, "what did you do with the..." She stopped.

I waited. Nothing much happened. After a while, I said, "Evening paper?"

She blinked. "What do you mean evening paper?"

"Isn't that what you want?"

She gave me the look a psychiatrist would give a man walking into the office with a pancake on his head. "Dear, I didn't even mention the evening paper."

"I know you didn't. But didn't you want it?"

"I did not," she said coldly. "I merely asked what you did with the...." She stopped again. She smiled suddenly. She snapped her fingers. "I remember now," she said. "It wasn't you at all. I left it upstairs in the...."

That sort of thing goes on all the time at our house. Jane leaves half her sentences standing around with their ends open. Sometimes I can fill in the blanks but trying to carry on a conversation with her is still like trying to carry water in a lace curtain.

Not that I mind too much. Jane has other qualities to compensate for her verbal hiatuses, and after twenty years of marriage I still prefer her to the type of talker who goes on and on and never reaches a period. But I sometimes wonder about her pregnant pauses.

Take the first one that threw me off balance. It came during our wedding ceremony. The minister asked if I took Jane to be my lawful wedded wife. I said yes, I did. The minister then turned to Jane. "And do you," he said, "take this man to be your lawful wedded husband?"

"Yes," Jane said. "I--" and stopped dead!

The minister, a man who liked to have things rounded out, stood waiting for her to finish. I felt people staring at the back of my neck. The organist decided the wedding was over and began booming out Mendelssohn.

Eventually, things got straightened out, but I understand that the minister never had another wedding. Neither did I.

Jane seemingly inherited her tendency toward open-end sentences from her mother; but why her mother talks that way, I can't say. All I know is that they can understand each other, even when their conversation seems as full of holes as a fish net. Like the snatch of dialogue I overheard the other day when Mama arrived for a visit.

"Mother," Jane greeted her, "did you remember to....."

"No," Mama said. "I completely forgot about it until I was on the ...."

Jane gasped --"Oh, dear! Where did you..."

"Right under the...."

"Oh, not there! Mother, if it rains, it will get..."

"No, it won't," Mama said firmly. "Before I left the house I closed all the..."

"Tight?" Jane asked.

"Tight," Mama said.

Frankly, a stranger would have thought they were.....

The worst thing about Jane's habit of leaving her sentences dangling is that it's contagious. When I married her, I could start out to say something with fair confidence that I would at least hit the bull, if not the bull's eye. Today, I never know. Maybe I'll get to the period. Maybe I'll end with the pause that confuses.

Once in a while it works out okay, though. For instance, there's the day I went into the boss's office to have him sign an expense voucher. "Mr. Billings," I began. "I'd like to ask..." Right there, my brakes grabbed. Whatever thoughts I had slid down around my ankles.



Mr. Billings, a bulging man who always looks as if he ought to be croaking on a large-size lily pad, glared up at me, "Well?" he croaked.

I tried another approach, concentrating on the voucher I wanted him to sign. "These daily expenses..." I said, and there I was again with my mouth hanging open and nothing in it but teeth.

Mr. Billings waited awhile. Then he shrugged. "All right," he said. "I know how expenses are these days, and I suppose it's tough to get by on what you make. I'll give you ten dollars more a week."

By the time I arrived home that evening, I had myself under fair control. I decided that when I told Jane the news, I'd use the stop-short technique deliberately, just to tantalize her.

"Dear," I began, "the strangest thing happened today." I slowed down, so I could enjoy myself every word of the way. "Well, I went into the boss's office to have him okay this voucher. But somehow he misunderstood me, and then..." I stopped. I sat there, smirking an evil smirk. At last I was making Jane suffer in suspense, the way she's made me suffer all these years. I waited for her to speak.

Presently she did. "How nice!" she said. "How big a raise did he...."

Well, it just goes to show you. You think you've got a woman figured out so you can use her own tactics on her, but she'll find some way to get you in.....



"He was with the prophet  
at Nauvoo"

I was about 8 or 9 years  
old and was walking home  
with my grandma Susant-  
from the old 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Church  
House. As we walked along  
old brother Robert L. Dyke  
joined us. To me he really  
looked queer, he was so  
old and spindly. I expect  
my feeling about this old  
brother showed clearly  
in my looks and actions,  
for Grandma gave me a  
very memorable lecture  
and lesson - she said.

"Delbert, you must be most  
respectful to Patriarch Dyke.  
He may be the only man that  
you will know in this life,  
who was with the prophet  
Joseph Smith in Nauvoo"  
His looks changed quickly  
and he and this experience  
has been special to me.

## a Father's counsel.

My last and only memory of my father was when I was held up to him at his bedside. Grandpa and Grandma and Dr Clark were there. Father gave my brother Leroy a kiss and then he kissed me. I recall his words as plain as they were spoken yesterday. He said with a soft but loving voice. "Be good boys"

He died soon after that.

I have always been so grateful for the love and the counsel of my father. It has been a constant guide and blessing to me. Neither Father nor his message has ever seemed far away. They have been ever present.

Leaders we met "on the Highway"

During the late summer of 1952 when John was 18 and Dee was 11 we took a vacation trip up the Alaska Hiway. David, Dick and David's grand Larry Anderson whose apts were in between John & Dee were the rest of the crew. The six of us each had our fishing and sleeping gear and packed into our new old mobile sedan and drove right up thru the panhandle of Idaho into Canada.

Prior to leaving we visited with Uncle Will Knight at Provo. He said he wished we would look up his good friend and partner in the oil exploration business. He said we would - the name was Hugh B. Brown. He took a message from Uncle Will and called on Hugh B. Brown in Calgary - He was enthused about the oil prospects and gave us a written report to take to Uncle Will - He attended meeting in his ward, he was a Sunday School teacher and a good one.



We were pleased to visit with him after his loss - He said he would like to go with us to Edmonton but we didn't have room and he and his wife were going to be very busy. He did tell us we must plan to stop in Edmonton and that his nephew was the Branch President there and he wanted us to be sure to meet him.

Our travel schedule worked out so we reached Edmonton Saturday night. We located the Chapel and the six of us walked into Presb. meeting. The Branch President greeted us and when we told him we were going up the Hiway to Alaska he asked us to stop on the way back and give him a report. We promised we would. At exactly 8:00 o'clock he started the meeting. We attended all the Sunday meetings they were all started right on time.

the broad, jovial manner and his complete preparedness impressed us. He introduced himself to us - we hadn't heard of him before, even his uncle hadn't mentioned his name - or if he did it didn't register, after seeing him again on our return trip. I expressed to the boys <sup>\*to watch the dog, etc.</sup> - we should remember his name and keep track of him because he demonstrated some very special qualities of leadership.

As we shook hands with him after reporting our interesting fishing and camping and Highway experience, he told us he was leaving Edmonton and was moving to Calgary and going into the oil business.

His name was N. Eldon Jansen. That was 1952 - Each of the boys remember our trip + visit.

It was a most enjoyable trip  
and such an interesting experience  
to do so many unusual things  
with John + David + Dick and Doc  
and Larry - One regret that I had  
was that we didn't take Joe.

But going into such new and  
wild country it was thought  
risky to take an eleven year  
old - the older boys jokingly  
called him "bear bait". It  
wasn't nearly as rough  
and wild as I've had ex-  
pected it to be.

The most significant  
part of the whole vacation  
was our meeting the Sunday  
School teacher at Calgary and  
the Branch President at Edmonton.  
Hence the title of this  
account.

Friends we met on the highway

in 1952

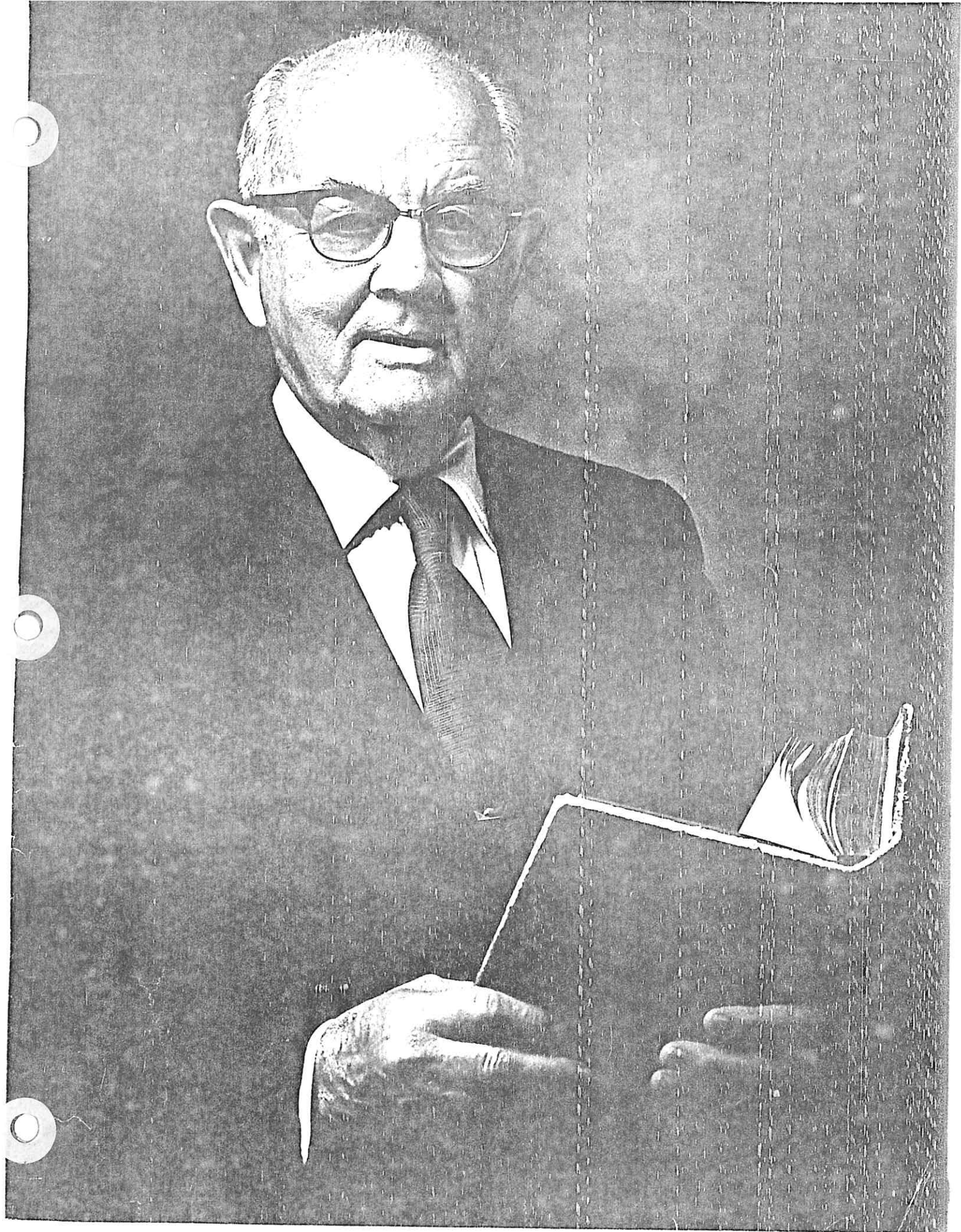
## The good humor of a Prophet.

Soon after Mama and I were called to be President and Matron of the Idaho Falls Temple we obtained, appropriately framed pictures of President Kimball and his Counselors and hung the pictures on the best view wall in the main entrance of the Temple.

I could hardly wait for the next visit of President Kimball to show him some thing new at the Temple.

When he came I was excited as I walked with him to the head of the beautiful stairs where he could see these lovely pictures. This very special moment had arrived. As he gazed at the pictures President Kimball said.  
"They don't look new to me."







JOHN CARMODY READS BEAUTIFUL STORY

as told by

special reporter, Michael Foster

It's queer, the things you remember. When life has crumbled suddenly, and left you standing there, alone. It's not the big important things that you remember when you come to that: not the plans of years, not the love nor the hopes you've worked so hard for. It's the little things that you remember then: the little things you hadn't noticed at the time. The way a hand touched yours, and you too busy to notice; the hopeful little inflection of a voice you didn't really bother to listen to.

John Carmody found that out, staring through the living-room window at the cheerful Tuesday afternoon life of the street. He kept trying to think about the big important things, lost now--the years and the plans, and the hopes, and the love. But he couldn't quite get them focused sharply in his mind just now--not this afternoon. They--those important things--were like a huge but nebulous background in his mind. All he could remember, now, was a queer little thing: nothing, really, if you stopped and thought about it in the light of the years and the plans and the--the great love. It was only something his little girl had said to him one evening, two--perhaps three weeks ago. Nothing, if you looked at it rationally--the sort of thing that kids are always saying.

But it was what he was remembering, now.

That particular night, he had brought home from the office a finished draft of the annual stockholders' report. Very important, it was. Things being as they were, it meant a great deal--to his future; to the future of his wife and his littl

girl. He sat down to re-read it before dinner. It had to be right; it meant so much.

And just as he turned a page, Marge, his little girl, came with a book under her arm. It was a green-covered book, with a fairy-tale picture pasted on it. And she said: "Look, Daddy." He glanced up and said: "Oh, fine. A new book, eh?"

"Yes, Daddy," she said. "Will you read me a story in it?" "No, dear. Not just now," he said.

Marge just stood there, and he read through a paragraph which told the stockholders about certain replacements in the machinery of the factory. And Marge's voice, with timid and hopeful little inflections, was saying: "But Mummy said you probably would, Daddy."

He looked up over the top of the typescript. "I'm sorry," he answered. "Maybe Mummy will read it to you. I'm busy, dear."

"No," Marge said politely. "Mummy is much busier upstairs. Won't you read me just this one story? Look---it has a picture. See? Isn't it a LOVELY picture, Daddy?"

"Oh, yes. Beautiful," he said. "Now that picture has class, hasn't it? But I do have to work tonight. Some other time. . . ." After that, there was quite a long silence. Marge just stood there with the book open at the lovely picture. It was a long time before she said anything else. He read through two more pages explaining in full detail, as he had directed, the shift in markets over the past twelve months, the plans outlined by the sales department for meeting these problems which, after all, could safely be ascribed to local conditions, and the advertising program which after weeks of conferences had been devised to stabilize and even increase the demand for their products.

"But it IS a lovely picture, Daddy. And the story looks SO exciting," Marge said. "I know," he said "Ah. . . Mmmmmmm. Some other time. Run along, now."

"I'm sure you'd enjoy it, Daddy," Marge said. "Eh? Yes. I know I would. But later. . . ." "Oh," Marge said. "Well, some other time then. Will you, Daddy some other time?" "Oh, of course," he said. "You bet."

But she didn't go away. She still stood there quietly, like a good child. And after a long time, she put the book down on the stool at his feet, and said: "Well, whenever you get ready, just read it to yourself. Only read it loud enough so I can hear too." "Sure," he said, "sure---later."

And that was what John Carmody was remembering---now, not the long plans of love and care for the years ahead. He was remembering---the way a well-mannered child had touched his hand with timed little fingers, and said: "Just read it to yourself. Only read it loud enough so I can hear too."

And that was why, now, he put his hand on the book from the corner table, where they had piled some of Marge's playthings, picking them up from the floor where she had left them. The book wasn't new anymore; and the green cover was dented and thumbed. He opened it to the LOVELY picture.



And reading that story, his lips moving stiffly with anguish to form the words, he didn't try to think anymore, as he should be thinking, about the important things: about his careful and shrewd and loving plans for the years to come; and for a little while he forgot, even, the horror and bitterness of his hate for the half-drunken driver who had careened down the street in a second-hand car-- and who was now in jail on manslaughter charges.

He didn't even see his wife--white and silent--dressed to be with Marge for the last time, standing in the doorway, trying to make her voice say calmly, "I'm ready, dear. We must go."

Because John Carmody was reading:

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived in a woodcutter's hut in the Black Forest. And she was so fair that the birds forgot their singing from the bough, looking at her. And there came a day when. . ."

He was reading it to himself. But loud enough for her to hear, too. Maybe.

Yunkster Gazette  
Hometown, U.S.A.  
July, 1955







## “Little Johnny Slept Here”

A different kind  
of love story

A Reader's Digest  
“First Person” Award

By C. M. WILLIAMS

JOHN pulled the car off the narrow country road in front of an old deserted farmhouse. The cloud of dust that had been following us caught up and enveloped us. I grabbed the folded road map and fanned myself in exasperation. The sun blazed down.

“Well,” John said, “this is it. Let's go view the ruins.”

“It's too hot. You go. I'll wait.”

“Come on,” he urged. “I'll show

you where I used to hang my sock for old Santa.”

“Sail on!” I said impatiently. “Go ahead and get it over with.”

John waded through the knee-high grass to the old house--alone.

While he was exploring his past, I sweltered and seethed in the present.

We were on our way home from a month-long argument to California. This trip had been a sort of last-ditch attempt to save our disintegrating marriage, with the unspoken understanding that if harmony wasn't restored before we reached home, we'd go our separate ways. We had not so much as touched each other, even once, in the last three weeks, and we rode in the car like strangers--he in his corner, I in mine.

John had set his goal in life and worked hard to reach it. When his success was assured at last I began to feel left out, neglected. I thrive on affection and being needed. Without them I was desolate.

"Come on in," he called from a broken window. "I just saw Grandpa's ghost come down the stairs. No telling who you might see here." He was trying to be gay. I pretended not to hear.

When John finally came back to the car he was carrying a No Trespassing sign that had fallen over in the grass. "You're not going to take that thing home, I hope," I said. He didn't answer but took a pencil and printed on the sign. Then he went back, set it up in front of the old house-- "LITTLE JOHNNY SLEPT HERE"--and again disappeared in side.

"Why?" I thought. "What's in there?" I was broiling in the car. I got out and made my way through the tall, dusty grass.

When I entered the house, John was just standing there, amid dust and cobwebs and bits of broken plaster fallen from the ceiling. This was the parlor that was also a bedroom when company came, he said. A bed had stood in the corner, with a headboard as high as his grandfather. The pillows always stood up, and were covered by square pillow shams with peacocks in bright-colored cross-stich.

We went to the kitchen. He showed me where the old cookstove used to stand, and the woodbox that he'd filled for Grandma so many times. And the kitchen table. "It was covered with oilcloth," he said, "oilcloth with pansies on it. The prettiest pansies I ever saw."

Upstairs, we entered a big, forlorn-looking room with one tall window. "I used to lie on the bed here and imagine that window reached right up into the sky."

"I understand now why you wanted to come back here," I said. "It was home to you, wasn't it?"

"No. Not home, Just a here-today-gone-tomorrow sort of place. I was too much for the old folks. I'd be here a few weeks, then an aunt or uncle would take me over for a while. Wherever I happened to be, my suitcase was always under the bed, waiting to go when they tired of me. I probably was a nuisance.

"One time I was visiting my cousins. There was a row of clothes hooks on the wall, just our height. Each one had a name under it, and no one dared to use another's hook. Gee, I thought, if only I had a hook all my own like my cousins had! I finally found one and asked Aunt Millie, 'Could I please put my name under that empty one?' 'Oh, you won't need it,' she told me, 'You won't even be here next week.' I ran out on the porch and howled and howled until she made me stop it.

"Another time, my cousin Curt hurt himself. Aunt Millie gathered him up in her lap to bandage his toe, and held him for a while to stop his crying. I remember standing by the screen door watching; it seemed to me the most wonderful thing in the world to have a mother hold you close while she bandaged your toe, and ~~said~~, 'Never mind. Everything's going to be all right.'

"I guess that's what I've really wanted, all my life. Someone to hold me when I was hurt or lonely; a place to live that was my home, this week and next week and always; and my own hook to hang my coat on."

John sat on the dusty windowsill and pulled me down beside him. He was almost casual as he related his story, but the vivid picture that came through tore at my emotions and wrenched me out of that cocoon of self-pity I had been weaving around myself. I was watching a lonely, motherless six-year-old, in this very room, a long time ago. Suddenly that boy was very dear to me,

I could hear the winter winds rattling the windows of the old farmhouse, just as he had then, and, peering out through the frosted panes, I could see the moon. It gave the lonely little fellow the only comforting light in the dark, shivery room and seemed his only friend.

This evening Grandpa had said to Aunt Alice, "We'll bring the boy over in the morning. He's big enough to fetch in the wood for you. I'll come for that calf next week."

So he'd been traded off, he assumed, for a calf. He'd never again get to sit for hours in Grandpa's beautiful black buggy, and pretend he was driving a team of prancing black horses. The buggy would still have its own special place, there between the corn bin and the horse stall. It had a home. Only little boys were traded like calves.

Almost lost in his grown uncle's nightshirt, the boy crawled out of bed and tiptoed over the cold floor to the window. He stuck his forefinger in his mouth to make it warm and wet, then rubbed it against the frosted pane to clear a spot through which to see. He looked up at the moon and his small body shivered. "Please, Mr. Man-in-the-moon," he pleaded, "don't let Grandpa trade me off. Please let me stay."

"I bawled myself to sleep that night," the man beside me said, and chuckled as if it were funny.

When he finally stopped talking, I found that my hand had somehow stolen into his, and I was grasping it tightly. But it was not just the hand of my husband that I was holding so protectively; it was also the hand of a very small, very frightened, heartbroken little boy.

Never again was I able to look at John without seeing, too, a reflection of the little fellow who wanted only a hook to hang his coat on, a place to call home--and someone to reassure him when he stubbed his toe. Now, I realized that I had no monopoly on the need for affection and reassurance. And, with a new serenity, I could understand his intention, and that this was what really counted.

Now when he said, "Get your war paint on. Let's go for a ride," I knew it was his way of saying, "I love you. Come share the big outdoors with me." Or when we'd planned to visit friends for the evening, and he suddenly said, "Let's just sit here on the porch instead, and listen to the rain on the roof," I knew he meant, "I'd rather be at home alone with you than anyplace else in the world."

As John and I rode down that dusty country road away from the old house, we turned a corner into a different life. In the years that followed, there grew a nearness and dearness between us. When irritation tempted me to be impatient, or when I knew things were going wrong for him, I quietly slip my hand in his. "Never mind. Everything will be all right." No matter how tense the situation, his response was always the same--a tightening of his hand on mine.

And then, one day, John suffered a severe cerebral thrombosis, after which he did not move again, and seemed to be in a coma. As I rode beside him in the ambulance on the way to the hospital, I clasped his hand firmly in mine, and spoke clearly, "Never mind, dear. Everything will be all right."

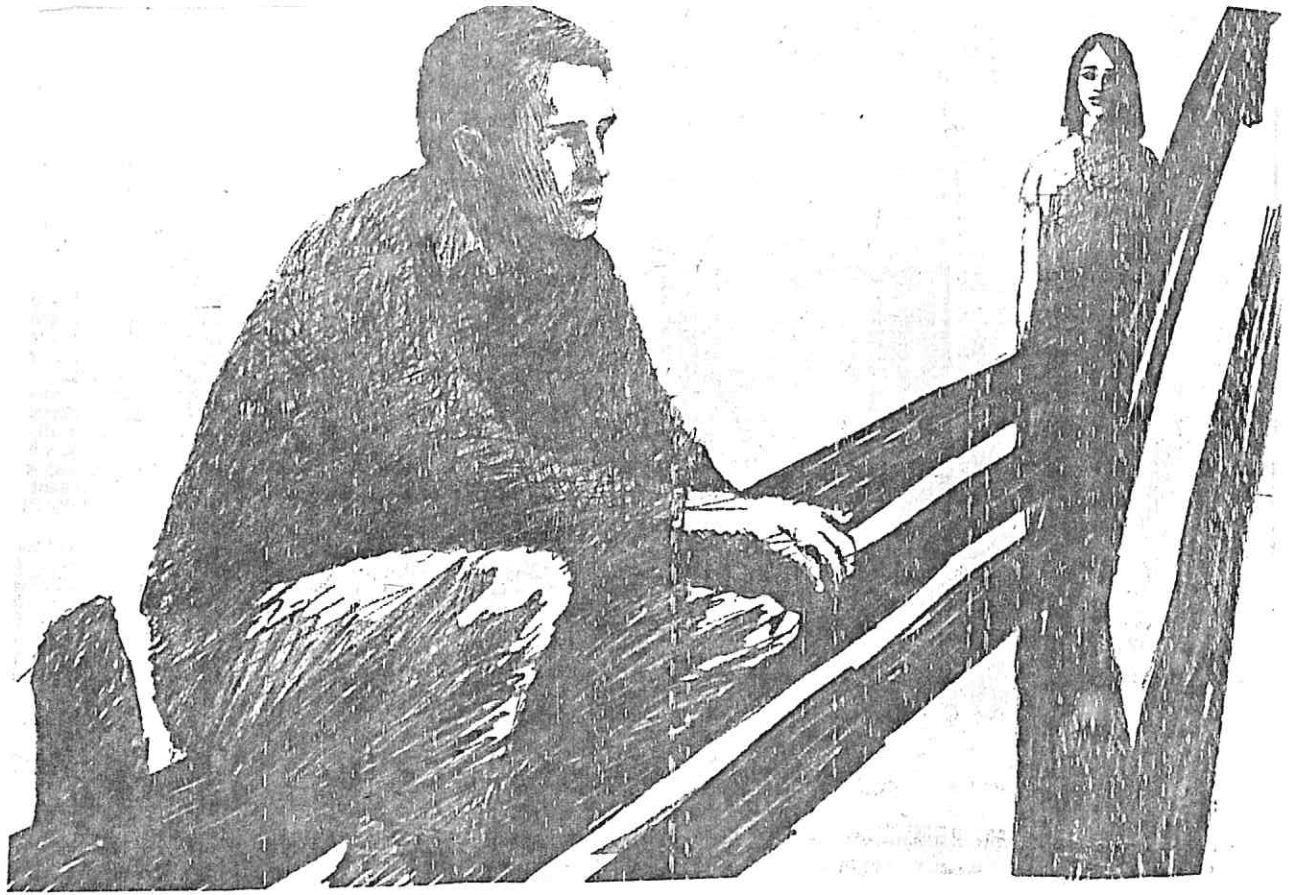
His staring eyes focused on my face for one brief instant, and I felt a perceptible tightening of his hand.

Was it a split second of awareness, or just a reflect response? I do not know. But I believe that in that moment, he knew, if ever so briefly, fulfillment of his lifetime need of love and reassurance.



They needed also to know: "In the Celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood, (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase." (D&C 131,1-4)





THE SEARCH FOR  
THE  
IMMORTALITY PILL

Family Weekly, July 17, 1966

by Taylor Caldwell

With a great deal of amusement, Pravda, the largest newspaper in Russia, published a letter from a 16-year-old Moscow girl named Svetlena.

The girl wrote: "I think the world is stupidly conceived! We study all our lives, and then when we have learned and learned more and have worked and are still capable of working--- we die! It all ends in the grave. Our scientists should strive for an immortality pill so that all we have learned is not lost."

Even the most indifferent of us must feel some anguish for the despair of that girl. She had been deprived of things which are spiritual and in consequence had come to realize that her whole life was without meaning---unless a way was found to give her immortality.

She must have realized, that poor child, that absolute death negates every human value and every human striving and that if the grave is truly the end for us it would have been better if we never had been born.

Youth is very short; it ends at 25, at the very latest. If one must plod on thereafter doing the same thing over and over in order to survive, then life takes on the aspect of a nightmare without hope. Inevitably, and much sooner than we suffer even greater despair than little Svetlena of Moscow.

For what have we live? How can we reconcile ourselves to lying in the earth forever while the stars wheel and the suns come and go and the nations rise and fall--and there is life a few feet above our bones but no life in our hearts and no memory?

The few years we live (and how short they are, though the very young do not know it!) are not worth the living for so little time to love and see the light and to accomplish. We are only May flies who are born in the morning, dance a short time in the sun, and then die at sunset.

Are we of the human race only that? Little Svetlena has been taught so, and millions of our own American youth, too.

A friend of mine, who will be called Irene in this article, has given me permission to report her story. Although she and I have never met, we correspond regularly. She is still a young woman, but she would probably be dead now if she had not been given the "immortality pill."

Irene was like Svetlena of Moscow, although she had been born in a Middle Western state right here in our own country. Her parents were very "sophisticated" in the manner of the 1920's and very "enlightened!" They thought they would remain young forever. They had discarded the faith of their fathers and were determined to "live free and unbound from superstition and religion."

They would never, they said, "darken our children's minds with any creed. We'll teach them that this world is all, and man's destiny is here, and he must live richly and fully every day."

So Irene was brought up without religion. God was only a word for sneers. She was taught to laugh at faith--and to "live fully and richly." But she found that living, in the main, is sheer drudgery for everyone. So, like Svetlena, she began to feel despair. A nervous breakdown resulted.

However, Irene also had been taught "courage to face the facts of life." She went on to college in a numb and indifferent state, and there she met John.

They fell in love deeply and passionately for the first time in their young lives. John had parents like hers, wretchedly trying to retain youth and freshness far into the middle years and trying always to live life to the full ---and not succeeding (as who can?)

Irene and John laughed at their parents. When they were married, they would be more sensible. They would accept life "serenely," they told each other, and take the dull with the bright, the pain with the joy, the sorrow with common sense, and strive to fulfill themselves. They would have true courage, they said, free not only from any religious taint but free of the silliness of their parents.

City-born, they wanted to live in the country while John wrote a great novel and Irene kept the vinecovered cottage warm and peaceful. After they married, they found the cottage without much trouble, and John also found a teaching post nearby. The salary was barely enough to pay the mortgage and keep them fed and fires on the hearth and a few clothes on their backs.

But they were happy, and John wrote when he could and corrected term papers and assigned homework and made classroom schedules and attended PTA meetings and all the other wearisome work of teachers. He did finish a book, and with the brightest hopes he sent it to various publishers. It was always rejected. But Irene bravely began to type his next book, which was also rejected. Then a third.

They nearly went out of their minds with joy when the third one was accepted by a publisher. They had visions--- for hadn't they planned it all?---to buy the 40 acres of farm land and forest next to the cottage, a new car for John, a car for Irene, have "half a dozen children," investments, riches, "security." They had no doubt but that the novel would be an astounding best seller.

It was not. It received critical acclaim, it is true, but the book sold only a few thousand copies. And as the royalty was low, the young couple realized about \$2,000. They were disappointed, but, they said, there would be many more novels, and one of them would bring all their dreams to reality.

Irene's and John's faith in each other, and their deep love, grew stronger and firmer. They lived only for each other.

Then World War II finally made itself felt in their lives. John was called for military duty. They had no children. He was 26 and in fine physical condition, Irene was 25. It was their first parting since they had been married four years before, and they were in despair. They had not kept in touch with their foolish parents very much and had lived only for each other, needing nothing else.

But John was drafted, and Irene was alone in the little cottage. Suddenly it seemed so bleak, lonely, cold, and on the edge of nowhere. However, it was early 1944, and everyone said the war would soon be over, and life, so beautiful and so hopeful, would be renewed.

John was killed in June, 1944. When Irene received the telegram, she could not, and would not, believe it. It was impossible! John, so young, so brilliant, so talented, so full of life, so serious and yet so laughing—why, John couldn't be dead, shattered in bone and blood on a lonely, wave-washed coast!

For a whole month, Irene went on "serenely," laughing a little at the idea that all that young and manly strength, that deep love, that dear voice, ~~that good, kind hand dear voice,~~ that good, kind hand and beloved voice were lost to her forever and that never again would she know them. But one morning late in June, she awoke, stretched out her hand for John as always—and she knew he was not there and that he would never be there again. John was dead in some lost grave in France—for all eternity.

"I think I went out of my mind for several weeks," she wrote me. "I don't remember the summer at all, nor the fall. Whether I ate or dressed or slept, I don't know. It's all a blank. The first thing I really remember is seeing the snow falling, and I began to think of John's grave with the snow on it, and the most terrible pain anyone can suffer came to me."

As she was an atheist and had never been taught any religion, she had no consolation, no hope of ever being with John again. She had never loved anyone before and knew she would never love anyone again. Where were the children who would fill the little cottage with laughter and games and affection and pride? They would never run

over the nearby farm land, which was still for sale. ~~They~~ They would never know a father and a mother, and she herself never would know them, either.

The world was totally lost. There was only one thing to do; that was to die. A life without love and occasional joy and hope was not a life at all. It was only a dark existence, and Irene decided that not only did she not want such an existence but that she could not bear it.

So she planned to die. She set the night, and for the first time in her widowhood she felt a little peace. She had no qualms about taking her own life for there was no life beyond the grave. And if there was no knowing, at least there was no pain and no lost love. For just an hour, she mourned that she had no faith, but it did not occur to her that without faith one can't have true courage, either.

It was a March early evening when she planned her death. She laid out the pills, then looked outside at the cold and silence. She would take a walk over the empty farm land, which would never be hers and John's. She would remember the lost dreams, and it would stop any fears she had. So she put on her coat, tied a scarf over her head, and went out into the cold.

The sun was a brilliant and glittering orange as it fell behind the stark March trees; the evening star was rising above it; and there was a sharp wind and total silence and desolation on the dark earth. Irene stumbled over icy ruts, blind with her tears. She heard herself saying, "O GOD, God, God!"

The slow twilight came down. She was utterly alone, hearing only her desperate voice in the quiet. But there was no God, and there was no John any longer. Worst of all, she realized, there was no God.

She came to an old log fence and leaned on it, broken-hearted and abandoned. The hazy darkness began to be lightened by a full moon. She wiped her eyes and prepared to return to the cottage—and death. Then she saw someone sitting on the fence only a few feet from her.

She did not move, but all at once she knew, and the knowing stunned her. She cried out: "John! John! Why, you aren't dead at all. They lied, they lied!"



He said; "Of course I'm not dead, sweet heart, and of course they lied! YOU see me, don't you?"

There was something in his voice, strange and far, that kept her from running to him with wild tears of joy, She did move a little toward him, her hands creeping on the fence. Then in the moonlight, she was his face fully, young and happy and filled with love. "John?" she whispered.

"Yes, dear," he said. "I've never been away, you know. You just didn't see me. I tried to make you hear me telling you that there isn't any death, but you didn't listen. They lied to us when they told us that death was all that was. Why, you can't realize how surprised I was when I found I wasn't really dead after all." He laughed, and it was the laugh she so well remembered.

"I'm just imagining this because I'm almost out of my mind," said poor Irene with despairing hope.

"No, dear, you aren't imagining it. I'm here, not in the flesh you remember, but I'm truly here, more alive than I ever was, a real life, not the little one I lived. I can't tell you very much about it, just a portion. I'll walk back to the cottage with you, and we'll talk as we always did and look at the farm land you are going to buy. And you won't die tonight, you know. That's why I was given permission to let you see the truth you were always denied."

He held out his hand to her, and she took it trembling-- and it was warm and strong as she remembered. Then he jumped down from the fence, and hand-in-hand they slowly walked back to the cottage in the moonlight. He held aside branches for her as once he had done and helped her over frozen pools. And then they were laughing and talking eagerly, and it was as it always had been to them in the past.

"Only, and I can't explain it," Irene wrote me, "It was much dearer, much closer, much more delightful. John told me many things; about the work he was doing, where he really was, and how wonderful it was to know there is no death at all but only increasing life, increasing fulfillment, never ending youth, many friends, and--above everything else--the Presence of God."

"All that we ever hoped for and longed for is here with me now," said John. "No disease, no old age, no misery, no fear, no doubt."

They stopped in Irene's winter-blasted garden, which had died of neglect the previous summer. But little shoots of narcissuses were showing.

"Remember when we planted the bulbs?" asked John, holding tight to Irene's hand. "The leaves came up, but there were never any flowers. No matter what we did, they never bloomed, did they? But next week they'll be blooming, and you'll know that I was really here with you."

He bent down and touched the shoots, all dark green in the moonlight. Then he touched her cheek gently, and she turned her face and kissed his hand. There was no more pain in her, only deep peace and happiness. John said, "And don't worry about leaving our cottage, sweetheart. Next week you'll begin to have all the money you need."

"Let me die and go with you," said Irene.

John shook his head. "If you do that, it's possible you'll never see me again, Irene. No, you have a full life ahead. You'll enlarge the cottage. There'll be children here as we planned. It isn't God's will that you die tonight."

And then he was gone. She called his name over and over, but only a startled crow answered. Yet she knew he was not really gone and that she wasn't alone. She went into the cottage and brewed some coffee.

"And then," she wrote. "I really knew what life was all about, and I was so peaceful. I knew that John was within sound of my voice and that he lived and still loved me. And there was God."

The next week, a producer wrote her that he wished to buy the rights to John's novel for a play, and he offered a large sum of money. It was all as John had told her. The play ran for nearly two years, and then it was made into a musical for Hollywood. Later it was a movie in a revised version. Irene, as John had said, had all the money she would ever need.

She adopted two children, then two more. The cottage was enlarged to the size of a big house. Now the farm land was hers, and children were racing over it and planting new young trees, and the house was full of the laughter of young voices. She was happy as she had never dreamed of being happy.



**About the Author:** As a child in Buffalo, Janet Taylor Caldwell met Mark Twain on the street and told him that she, too, was an author. At the time, the statement may have been mostly childish fantasy. But in the intervening years, she has made good her boast remarkably well. Today, Taylor Caldwell's name is synonymous with best-selling novels.

Each Sunday she drove the children to the village church, and every night before the children went to bed she told them of the Everlasting Father who was with them always. She heard her children's prayers. She knew John joined in the prayers, too.

And every late March, the narcissuses bloom in great golden bursts of color as John had told her they would. They seem to bloom longer than the flowers of others. Irene cuts them in armfuls to fill her house.

She has been given, by the grace of God, the "immortality pill" that is available to all of us. We have only to reach out our hands and believe.

"For this we were born; to know and serve God in our mortal life," Irene wrote me in March. "And to join Him in everlasting joy and life after our worldly death. All the little, futile cries of modern men that "God is dead!" are just the screams of crows in winter woods. Do you know, I think they really want to believe that He lives. For He lives. He lives!"

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from Family Weekly -Ask Yourself (Want to ask a famous person a Question?)

For Taylor Caldwell: Recently it was reported that your book "Captains and the Kings" will be seen as a nine-hour TV production. Does this bring you the solid satisfaction that seemed denied you by Hollywood's failure to make films of your books? J.B. Snyder, N.Y.

"There is no solid satisfaction in any career for a woman like myself. There is no home, no true freedom, no hope, no joy, no expectation for tomorrow, no contentment. I would rather cook a meal for a man and bring him his slippers and feel myself in the protection of his arms than have all the citations and awards and honors I have received worldwide, including the Ribbon of Legion of Honor and my property and my bank accounts. They mean nothing to me. And I am only one among the millions of sad women like myself." *Answer by Taylor Caldwell*

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(I wonder if she wouldn't be an excellent contact for some of us missionaries!)