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Little Lonesomes

By DOROTHY DOUGLAS

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In one back garden little Joy Ransom played at doll house and just over the fence Harold Ainley struggled with tracks and engines.

In the room above and overlooking both gardens Joy's father struggled to finish his novelette that a check might find its way to his front door.

The back room in the other house held Harold's lovely mother, who typed other people's plays and wished with all her heart that she could have an office so that she would earn more money for the maintenance of her loved boy.

"Oh, mumsey, I can't make my switch work—the train won't turn!" wailed Harold from below to his mother, who was endeavoring to end the third act before she must go down to prepare her boy's supper.

"Daddy, daddy, I've torn Julia's bestest party dress and can't fix it," cried a small voice, thereby distracting her author father into hopelessness.

The continued interruptions to his work, the tenderness and pity he felt for his tiny daughter and his most complete disability to help her fatigued him and made him unfit for the work that must be accomplished if the pretty house was to be kept.

He dragged himself from his typewriter and went downstairs and out into the garden where his five-year-old offspring was weeping now with her doll held close in her wee arms.

And next door Helen Ainley had abandoned hope of finishing her typing and had gone out to her small son in a vain effort to help him with his railway system.

The high garden fence hid the small domestic tragedies from each other, but if a birdman had happened to fly overhead most any day in the week he would have seen two large gardens each with a tiny bit of lonesome humanity struggling to make a day happy without anyone to play with. There was not even the smallest of openings in the great fence, nor yet even a broken board through which childish curiosity might peer.

Had the fence been less perfect a most harmonious pair of lonesome children might have found each other and made the long days short. Also it would have given two distracted parents more opportunity to pursue their fortunes free from an ever-recurring demand on their time.

But one day, because it must always be the male who hunts, young Harold decided that he would like to know what lay on the opposite side of his confining wall. At seven years old a six-foot fence seems a regular Jack-in-the-Beanstalk climb. The vines were strong, or seemed so to Harold's venturesome mood.

Mumsey was not looking when he began the ascent; otherwise well-happenings would undoubtedly have been different.

Harold gained the top with only minor struggles. His delight at seeing Joy in all her young beauty as a reward for his climb almost succeeded in sending him headlong into her garden. As it was, he perched himself like a squirrel on a branch and opened shameless conversation with the young lady with her dolls.

Joy made suitable replies and made no effort to conceal the delight his arrival on the fence gave her. She held her doll up for his inspection, only to be told that his railway track was much more fun. Joy only tossed her sunny curls.

Perhaps it was her disdain that unbalanced him, for a second later he thumped down into Joy's garden and lay in a heap among the pink geraniums that bordered the wall.

Joy's shriek of dismay was so terrifying that her daddy flew down the stairs at top speed, scattering the pages of his novelette and leaving his heroine in a scandalous, wholly uncompromising position.

And Harold's mother flung a frantic glance at the two gardens, suspected the worst and barely escaped falling out of her window in an effort to see where her boy lay.

But the author had been so swift to the rescue that before she could withdraw from her window and dash down the stairs he had Harold in his arms. There were no bones broken and a most manly smile crept through the fright that lingered in the small adventurer's eyes.

Mrs. Ainley nearly collapsed over the window ledge in her relief.

"Sound as a bell," Ransom called up when he caught sight of her. In a flash he wondered why he had never before known that his next-door neighbor was a charming mixture of poetic loveliness and earthly reality. Her hair was sun-kissed and reddish, her color delicate as hawthorne blooms and her nose had a smear of typewriter ink on it. He hoped that she, too, was not a poor struggling writer.

"How shall I get him back?" she was calling.

"Now that he has found his way over, may he not play with my daughter? I think they both need companionship." Ransom meantime had got rid of young Harold and was gazing straightway into Harold's mother's eyes.

"Poor little lonesomes," was what she softly answered, "if they don't disturb you I am happy to let him stay." Her eyes were suddenly appealing. "I

am not terribly disqualified as a father," she added; "my boy does not need some one to help him with engines and tracks."

Ransom found himself shaking with sympathy for Harold.

"And my tiny daughter," he told her, "has one tragedy after another with her dolls. Only yesterday she tore what she calls her very bestest dress. Poor little soul, she certainly needs more mothering than I seem able to give her."

Mrs. Ainley's blue eyes were positively glistening with tears of sympathy for motherless little Joy.

"Still," she suggested, "if they can just play together perhaps they will manage to be more contented."

"I will have to make a small opening in the fence for them," Ransom said; "we don't want them scrambling over the fence."

"Oh! if you only would it would be a splendid way out of the difficulty. Do you think you can saw through those thick boards?"

"I'm sure I can," Ransom said, and decided his next heroine should have reddish hair and that peculiarly magnetic smile which was being wafted to him from the window. He decided also that he must see the smile often if he were to describe it worthily in his novel. "But if the boards are too awfully heavy I may have to remove a couple of them, which would make a gate quite big enough for grownup people to pass through; that is, if I have your consent!"

It was then that Mrs. Ainley chose to blush.

"I suppose it would be much simpler than sawing them," she said.

Ransom thought swiftly. If he could just finish off his story late that night he could work on the gate during the afternoon. The story must be completed. He sent another glance up at his neighbor and realized that the gate, too, must be finished—it was essential to his happiness. So long as the fence remained in its present perfect dividing state he would fret, and if he fretted he could not write stories. Something gentle and lovable about his neighbor's personality told him that he was going to have to write many stories. He seemed to sense that a greater income was going to be most necessary soon.

"It really should be done right away," he told her; "the children won't be happy now that they have found each other until they can play together, and I will try to help the boy with his tracks."

"And I will mend the bestest dress," said his heroine.

Ransom's neck was getting a bit crooked from continued looking up to his neighbor's window, but somehow he knew the outcome was going to be worth getting a stiff neck over. He felt that he must come in for more bodily discomfort after his carpentering efforts. Authors are not built for manual labor.

"Tonight's sun will set on two gardens made into one," he informed her, "and our children will be happy as the day is long."

"Some falls are all for the best," she said laughingly, while her eyes rested with added tenderness on her son.

"The very, very best," Ransom supplemented, while his eyes rested on the mother of her son. And if there was tenderness in them it could not be seen from so great a distance as the window next door.

However, the gate would be finished soon.

Worked for Centuries.

The fisheries of Ceylon, Madagascar and the Persian gulf, from which the best quality of Oriental pearls come, have been worked for centuries. Fine small pearls are taken there, but no more large ones. The world's hopes of finding large pearls of the best grade are now centered on Australia and the islands of the South seas.

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Why Diamonds Burst.

That diamonds burst is an old idea, which has been variously explained. It has been thought that the stones have been fractured by violent eruptions in the inclosing rocks, by sudden removal of pressure around them, or in the smoky specimens by spontaneous breaking up. Dr. J. R. Sutton concludes that the breaking usually results from the minerals inclosed. These may be garnet, zircon, ilmenite or iron pyrites, and such crystals, under ordinary heating at least, have so much greater expansion than the diamond that they would exert great pressure.

Duty.

There are persons who love to do everything good but that which their immediate duty requires. There are servants that will serve everyone more cheerfully than their masters; there are men who will distribute money liberally to all except their creditors, and there are wives who will love all mankind better than their husbands. Duty is a familiar word which has little effect upon an ordinary mind; and, as ordinary minds make a vast majority, we have acts of generosity, self-denial and honesty, where smaller pains would constitute greater virtues.—Mrs. Ingham.

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