Early in the Morning

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Abstract

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I stepped up to the washbowl and placed my soap on the wide part of the rim. There were five other bowls all in a row with a bright shining mirror directly above. Each bowl was occupied by an industrious worker. The bathroom was quiet except for the splash of wash cloths in soapy water and the whisking noise of busy toothbrushes.

“Goo-oo-d morning, you bright shiny faces!”

I propped one eye open a little farther. A quick look in the mirror confirmed my worst suspicions. We were being attacked from the rear.

The silence quickly closed in on the crack made by the voice in the red print housecoat, but it broke through again. “It’s a beautiful day.” This brought a low moan from the third bowl. “You’ll nev-er guess what we’re having for breakfast. It’s absolutely wonderful.” She was cracking her towel at the light cord.

“Sauerkraut.” It came from behind the blue washcloth but it was not conversational.

“Oh, you silly girl! It’s PANCAKES!” She started to play toreador. We were certainly not in the mood to be bulls. I reached for my soap and it slipped through my hand and made a big splash. I fished it out only to have it slide gracefully back.

My mind dully mulled the thought of pancakes, but they only made a “heavy lump” feeling inside. I could see the syrupy pitcher as I stuck my hand in the warm water.

“Don’t you just adorrre pancakes?” Her tongue curled around the “r” and dragged it out.

“NO.” My voice croaked. It carried more venom than I had intended it to.

Pollyanna rushed to my side. “Oh, don’t start the day out like that. You’ll spoil the beautiful sunshine,” she crooned into my ear.
I turned sharply with every intent of pushing that swinging towel down her dainty neck, but dismissed the idea as requiring too much energy. My reflexes weren't alert enough to engage in physical combat, and one should be a lady even at seven in the morning.

"Here, Sunshine, dunk that bright face in this bowl," said a more patronizing voice to my right.

"Dunk it and hold it under," came from my left. But this was lost in the rushing stream of hot water and the melodious strains of "Oh, What a Beautiful Day" as the busy bee took over.

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**The Tramp of Heavy Boots**

Polly Pride

LIFE on an island with 75,000 soldiers presented a good many problems. Some we laughed about; some we squared our shoulders about. This was war—the real thing—and some fate had placed us comfortably on one of the main streets of Basic Training Center Number Nine, United States Air Corps.

At six-thirty every morning "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" shot through my window, startled me, and left my sleepy mind confused with the heavy tramps of boots outside and the flitting fairies fading hazily away. But soon I was wide awake and knew that it was simply half the world marching under my window. I knew that they probably didn't want to sing "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" at six-thirty in the morning any more than I wanted to hear them. I knew that many of them didn't want to wear the heavy G-I boots and mechanics' suits. Certainly they didn't want to march along that street to the Miami Beach golf course, which was now their drill field, knowing that when they came back along that street they would be exhausted and dusty from long hours of drilling.

But they were doing it, and still singing. So the least I could do was to close my window and try to dream through the loud, worn-out songs, the shouts and cadences of the tough sergeants, and always the pulsing rhythm of the boots. After several weeks of practice I learned to mix that rhythm with the dancing fairies.