The Monster

Billie M. Allen Mrs.*
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Abstract

THE child sat on a pillow at her mother’s feet, wide-eyed, ““- straining to hear the conversation between her father and his visitor on the other side of the fire-place...
to go. Did I tell you how I met him? I guess he noticed me at that dance over at the..."

Helen's voice faded as they moved down the hall. Dorrie could hear the end of the branches of the tree outside the window pane. That sound had irritated her earlier, but now it seemed relaxing. She turned on her side and watched the branches as they moved back and forth, casting shadows on her desk and chair. Helen's words kept drifting back, "I think he was still in love with Dorrie." Again and again she turned the words over. Don, who was much too honest, who believed in all the little things most people forgot about... did he still love her?

She let the memories of Don play back and forth across her mind... picnics... dances... warm, intimate moments, the long walks, his crooked smile. She watched the shadows for a long moment and then her mind clicked its decision as she reached out and snapped on the light.

She rolled off the bed and sat down in front of the mirror at the dressing table. Slowly she began combing her brown hair, which hung to her shoulders. Then a smile began to play at the corner of her mouth. That cigarette and coffee would be good now, she thought as she picked up her lipstick. She could go to Jake's place, where she had first met Don. Maybe she'd see Don. He might not be there, but she would see him... sometime... of that she was sure.

P.D.M.

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THE child sat on a pillow at her mother's feet, wide-eyed, straining to hear the conversation between her father and his visitor on the other side of the fire-place.

"Ya know, Casey, I'll be damn-danged," her father began, suddenly conscious of the presence of his wife and daughter, "if I'll get in the car with one of those ornery critters. Think I'll just hitch up the wagon and go to the polls myself..."

"Yup, Jake," the visitor answered. "It's a crime the way that gang of thieves fly over these roads... no wonder they're in such bad shape...

The little girl moved closer to her mother. She knew she was about to hear some more exciting stories about, about,
but she wasn't sure quite what they were about. These people her father hated so much must be giants, or dragons, or ... or something terrible. He was afraid of them, and he wasn't ever afraid of things, wild horses, or snakes, or bulls. But he wouldn't go with them ... these monsters ... tomorrow. That was it, monsters! He was going to the polls by himself. . . . She wondered what "the poles" were, and she wished she could go along.

The five-year-old Cathy imagined the morrow. She would lie in the back of the wagon and cover up with hay, and she would take the shotgun along. When the monsters attacked her father, she'd jump up and shoot 'em, and . . .

But her reveries were disturbed by Casey's booming voice. He was on his feet, pacing the room. "Hell, you remember what those damn Democrats did four years ago . . . pardon, ma'am, . . . They lay in wait down there or they go out and round up all the old fools that can't even read, flatter 'em, wine 'em, and tell 'em what to do." "What can we do, though?" It was her mother's voice now. "They're so many, we're so few."

"Ah, Jenny . . . you sound like all the others . . . 'what can we do' . . . I'll tell you what we can do. We can go out there tomorrow and clean up on every last one of 'em . . .!"

Cathy thought she wouldn't be able to sleep, she was so excited. Tomorrow would be a battle. Tomorrow she would see these dreaded, hated Democrats! But she did sleep, and she had a dream about herself on a white horse, fighting a duel with a two-headed Democrat. When she struck her sword through his heart, he was suddenly transformed into a handsome prince who said, "Beautiful Republican princess, you have saved me . . . The Democrats had me in their power, but now I am free."

Cathy awakened early the next morning. She could hardly wait to get out to the wagon to make her nest in the hay.

It was almost complete when the sleek black car pulled into the farmyard. Cathy ran to the corner of the house and peered around. Across one side of the car was a huge red banner. The Democrats had arrived! The door opened, one head came out, but before the other head of the dreaded Democrat appeared, the terrified Cathy was running toward the barn. Her father found her there when he returned from the polls, still trembling from almost seeing the ghastly two-headed monster.

—Mrs. Billie M. Allen, Special Student