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It was one of those rare days when I had escaped the treadmill of my self-enslavement to regular jobs in industrial plants to expel the usual accumulation of dust and attack the disarray of my house. I was a working wife. My husband had been a semi-invalid all of our married life -- a matter of ten years or more. He was sixteen years older than I, and a veteran of the first world war.

I had read the signs correctly in the early years of our marriage: economically, this marriage was and never could be greater than my ability to endorse it with whatever worldly goods were required to make it.

I was of slight build and limited strength, but according to my philosophy, nothing was impossible and my ambition for my son knew no bounds! I had chosen what I had considered a favorable time to bring him into the world, and my judgment had been at its lowest ebb at that moment. My son was born right in the midst of the depression and all he had seen of this world since had been the gringing aftermath of depression.

The animals on this day, and there were many, had taken up comfortable positions in (they hoped) quiet and less frequently disturbed places. The salvage of these rejected and needy fellows had been my son's very first objective. "These things ARE my work, " he very often said, "you must understand, Mother, that I was sent to earth to do many things that others do not wish to do -- or cannot do. That is why I must often offend the baby sitters by not being at home and even off hurt, now sometimes. You though, I love you very much and you have come nearest to understanding this and everything else about me than anyone else now living..."

There was young Jim's crib in the corner -- it was four foot in length and still large enough to hold him, but seldom was utilized by him these days -- so busy was he, dropping in on the ~~XXXXX~~ lonely, and kinless and sick, taking wild flowers and enchanting odds and ends of things which he could not bear to see abandoned to a garbage heap because of their latent beauty... wherever beauty was in person or thing, obscured as it was often was by careless handling, it became its BEST under his touch.

Troubled people came and he talked long because with them he to take philosophical approaches to solutions. He did this in the privacy of "his church" in the 2nd story of the garage (a spacious, comfortable place with fresh flowers ALWAYS on the altar). Some time later and after their troubles had cleared up, many of these would seek me out to say (some would speak rather nastily or irately) as if I personally...resenting "something" about my attitude toward my son. These I assumed to be close associates of my husband's sisters-in-law, who held that one's character of a housewife was dwarfed by working outside the home especially if she

was so skillful, and if her services were as much in demand as were mine.

The sun topped the distant trees and cleared the intervening shadow, and in a swoop (burst) of glory washed through the big picture window where my husband sat observing the early morning passers-by as they gaped in and out of town along the main artery of travel easterly and westerly. Our village of Lynn, Indiana, provided but few means of making a living for the impoverished who were forced to seek employment in either Winchester, 17 miles to the North, or in Richmond, a somewhat larger city, 17 miles to the South. Our city was halved by Federal Highway #36 which ran from coast to coast through flat lands and hot winds.

of Kansas, though I do not recall my outstanding job opportunities for committing heads of households either to east of _____ (?vest)...

This need of transportation to apply for and maintain jobs in such distant employment and the extreme duress of the depression, making the price of gasoline and upkeep prohibitive, predicament got me bugged over such conditions and made me bent upon seeking alternatives, too it.

out of fear they'd be... Our bankers had looked askance at potential manufacturing interests bent upon borrowing. Like many small towns they wished to cleave to old ways, etc... ~~so being a woman of outstanding impatience and with marrow~~ that persisted in making the poor poorer and fostering new generations of them as in the past, I brought together these bankers and a so-called "deadbeat" from just across the line in Ohio who knew tomatoes and the processing of same from "a to izzart" and whom the depression had just driven into bankruptcy. *It was a woman of outstanding impatience with news and attitude that would do good to serve all segments of population --* So I talked and advocated and stood into this 100% until a job offer in another city again made a commuter of me. By this time, I was certain I had convinced the processor of tomatoes that would tear into him like a rooster on a compile at the first thought that crossed his mind about "defrauding" even the least of these people who had trusted him ONLY because I had sworn that "risk though he be, he was RISK worth taking." ...even though...I knew he would defraud his own Grandma. ~~XXXXXX~~ "Remember," said I, when we reached agreement, "just remember -- in the event temptation starts dangling foolish ideas before your covetous mind's eye.. that nowhere on the face of this earth lives a human being who can so "expertly reduce RISK to zero."

I never saw the man again, but kept my finger on the pulse of his "impulses" as I had sworn to do. He flew right -- not only keeping faith with the folk in the town but "expanding" in response to increased need, holding strictly as he had agreed with me to our hiring of local residents on a first priority.

Bobby, the raccoon kitten was rolling and kicking amid the downiness of the crib arranging and rearranging his covers. An attention he insisted that I grant him at bed time is giving a plaintive whimper "whee" when he was ready to end his busy day. His waking up to a new day was quite a ritual as he conducted it -- so cunningly, appealing as to make one weep at remembering. It always inspired to grab him and shield him from all harm in some enchanted nook where "harm" could never come.

The village never-do-well strolled past the picture window over alled, plow shoes, outfitted for agricultural work which he had shunned

most of his life.

"Ugh," growled my spouse. "There goes a good for nothin. For all of the years I know him and I swear, he never tells the truth."

The truth is often too drab. In his case, it was so. He likes more color, more humorous events than every day happenings afford -- quite a philosophical man...

"Philosophical, hell.. he's downright ignorant," said he, with undue heat.

I continued, "Once he challenged his sister Beatrice about having kids faster than a cat can respectably have kittens.. Betty answered, "The Bible said populate the earth and I believe the bible.." said she smugly.

He replied, "But dear sister, it did not say you gotta do it all by yourself. Why doncha just relax this big heat of yours before all the kids start lookin' as if cut over the same pattern.. You, Betty, I love ye but I do not think

we have all that much to hand down or pass on... Ye know how Paw lit out and left maw, house full of kids and nothin else.. and showed up in this county on a dozen towns every election day to vote the republican ticket.. 'cause his paw did. Why else? Paw didn't have enough solid sense to pour pea out of a book. How would ee know what's best to vote for?

A screen door hit the outside wall of the house with a bang and th young man, I called Jimba, my son, bounced into the room. Clad in sun suit slender, bronzed and full of zip, he gave the racoon kitten a gentle roughing. Bobby spat, hissed, blew and became a round ball to be stuffed in the bib of Jimba's sunsuit. I landed again, he hoisted himself up beside me where I sat on the ancient library table beside my typewriter.

"Remember that man who offered you that marvelous opportunity way back in that time you called depression, Mom, said he. I ~~can~~ could sense my husband giving full rein to his morbid suspicions of vast, ill founded promiscuity.. Startled, I stammered a "Good Heaven's, No, child!" Whan man or woman either could have boasted such excellent turn of events or safely hustled(?) such strength of bargaining power at such an unfortunate time in our history when nations starved and all people sought sustenance from garbage dumps...

The child continued. "You needn't be so shocked, Mom. Perhaps you do not remember, but that does not mean there was no such man. He sat in that very chair right there. I stood beside his chair. My eyes came level with his ear and I was surprised and shocked when I saw a speck of dirt there...

"Why," thundered I, with more feeling than I'd dreamed possible to register -- especially over...nothing.

"Mother," said he with studied patience ... "here was a man well dressed, clean as a pin, who spoke remarkably well and who was concerned only with you, and you deliberately did not restrain Pete the groundhog, and he was bitten to the bone and one of his crimson socks rent in half so he had to stick both socks in his pocket and let his ankle bleed better, etc., but somehow he thought it funny and looked much happier when he left our house. You know I've wondered for years about what that remarkable opportunity was that he offered you.

"Oh, ~~thought~~ that!" tittered I, gustily, "I shall reveal it the very moment your father sets off for the pool hall this evening.

His father rose in high drudgeon and decamped the place, speedily and at once.

I clutched the bronzed shoulder in a weak hearted grip.. the racoon kitten rose to full height out of his sun suit bib and blew a warning blast in my face.

Always play acting with Jimba and our wee animal babes, I croaked hoarsely, "Alas! 'Twas a correspondence course he offered and with almost no installment terms, and though I could not have bought it if the charge _____ had been a bag of cinders, money was that tight, then -- non-existent. Perhaps you should reveal this to your Father, not later than tomorrow...

"Mom," said he, "I can urinate over our hen house since I was circumcized."

"Man!! ~~xxx~~ exclaimed I, "I must say that is real free wheeling compared to the modest-- arc we had before.

Later in the day, when I was making some progress with my house cleaning, I was aware of voices out in front on the sidewalk and lifted the edge of a curtain to sneak a peek...

There was little Jim convoying a stranger (an adult female) straight for the front door and it was still the depth of depression years and without a doubt she had a cargo of something to sell, for he was saying, "Do not be troubled, Madam. You will feel better after we talk to my mother about it. She can think of ways to do most everything. Last week she made our Miss Mouse a pair of pj's and Miss Mouse on the very verge of having babies, to which she did almost immediatly thereafter, and of all the things that might have messed up Miss Mouse's plans what with Mom meddling with her plans, NOTHING did as I shall show you.. Miss Mouse's plans wokked very well, indeed, in spite of mom's meddlin' wit 'em.. I shall show you her babies. It's like that with -- nuybut I will say Mom doesn't work at getting into people's business...though it never fails that she knows more about it and how to get 'em out of it than they KNOW about their own business. She says that is because these are depressi years and nobody has lived through the likes of it before..

By now, he was paunding on the front door and I had darted into an upstairs bedroom ^{where} and crawled under the bed.. This lady had looked so correctly English throughout, that I hadn't the courage to confront her problem in present state of physical fatigue and dishevelment. Certainly I had never come up with such impolite solution, hitherto..

So he escorted the lady into the house and seated her comfortably with a tall glass of water at her elbow, then swung the stair door wide open to yell into the void, "Come out from under that bed, Mom! That's no way for a grown up lady to act! I know you are under there!! *This lady needs help, Mom! It has never been like you to behave like this.*"

*Miss Mouse
& the parents
English lady*

It was in the years immediately following the depression and before there had been any measurable indication of a leveling off, such as more work available at better pay... or reduction in the cost of living..

But Little Jim (my son) never seemed to lack for answers when the troubled approached him with their troubles and this they very often did.

Jim had entered this veil of tears at the very ^{crash} crash of the depression in the year 1931, and had allowed nothing to dim the sparkle in his beautiful brown eyes, since.

He had his little church on the second floor of the garage, and the animal quarters directly beneath it and any person who sacked up their domestic animals and flung them by the roadsides to thirst and starve to death.. had reached the last level of depravity and deserved to starve in company with all their blood line.. so this earth would be FREE of them, henceforth and forever, and KNOW them no more.

While I was in full accord with his findings (100%) most of the population had already resorted to the heathen rule of "self-preservation being the first law of nature," all... ~~that~~ that is, except the young ~~and~~ lad, Jimba, who went out every day before sunrise to ~~comb~~ ~~comb~~ comb every highway and biway for kittens and puppies.. babies who may have been tightly ^{ried} ~~bed~~ in gunny sacks to starve and thirst to death. It was a very hard task for the four year old to cycle these unfortunates home, not to speak of the ever present hazard of ~~the~~ highways where small bodies are often thrown and broken beyond "recognition," by those who worship speed. ..more and more speed, greater speed and ^{even and always} ~~ever~~ more greater speed.. but always there was that ever watchful higher power looking after the young Jimba -- maturing him to ^{adult hood} ~~maturity~~ in order that he might meet the need of those thousands of "troubled others" for whom there would be no other way to peace and well being in the turbulence of ^{these} ~~these~~ grievous times.

*before
bicycle
down to pick up
animals in
gunny sacks*