

My mind had been so solidly made up for so many years that I would neither marry nor have a child, that it came as a shock to me when I realized that I had reversed this thinking completely. At the time it happened, I was unaware that it had. I could not say today what reasoning first made up my mind, or what part reasoning played, if any, in the final resolution to marry and also to have a child: a male child: one child, not more. But I can relate the incident that in due course terminated in both marriage and some five years later, the birth of the child.

My mother had passed away in 1925, of typhoid fever. My father had preceded her death some years before. I was sorely grieved for my mother and was very lonely without her. I returned to the home of my father's foster father who had reared him from the age of fourteen and in turn reared me from infancy. He was undoubtedly the most outstanding character I had ever met in my life. Nothing was ever too much for him to do to relieve poverty and need, trouble and unhappiness, wherever he found it, and however often he found it.

By this time he was alone and getting up in years. His fortune had been spent just for the necessities for himself and whatever the other fellow seemed to need who was in want. His fortune, once quite substantial, had been dissipated in the processing of what he figured each person owed to another. He had become wealthy in the timber business. Having mills all over southern Indiana. When the ~~tax~~ timber was cleared he even went into the business of buying and rolling grain. This was highly speculative and a person with his bigness of heart ~~and~~ had little chance against the sharks who profited by not caring about the underdogs of the land, though he was a man of outstanding intelligence.

My mind was made up a long while in advance that my child should be exactly like Lewis Parker even though he was no blood kin -- even to his brown eyes. My in-laws reminded me that it was scientifically said to be impossible that two blue eyed people should produce a brown eyed child. Impudently I replied to this: "I specialize in the ~~px~~ impossible, be it scientifically or otherwise proclaimed." I would lose my temper completely when anyone dared to voice a negation on this subject, though normally I was ~~not~~ very much in control of myself and whatever situation confronted me.

Then came the fateful day when I was destined to come down with typhoid fever: Before full break of day I was packing out for a swamp, now dry enough to travel through and where blackberries being unbelievably large and tasty to edify those who dared to enter the snake infested swamp. I had been rather fond of snakes since early childhood, and they of me, and did not grudge the snakes the sharing of the berries which they relished as much as I, especially before sunrise when the dew clung like the nectar of the Gods--and this was a very dry place in those seasons when the rivers were not pulsing with overflow and the sun was hot despite the shades of ground cover and the tall, tangled second growth of timber.

As I took a long drink of water from my jug before leaving my parked car, I

nor could I remember water ever tasting so satisfying. I came to the berry patch, paused to admire the beauty of the luscious clusters, almost decided it was a sin to pick such beauty even though I never failed to leave a great strip up high for the birds and a strip near the ground for the ground creatures.. it still ~~stx~~ seemed a sin, but not for long.

Hours later, consciousness returned and found me tightly locked beneath the ground cover -- consisting of strong, heavy vines among other things. Why I was there I had no idea. I was eyeball to eyeball with snakes of all sizes, with some eggs just hatching. I put these in my pocket to afford greater comfort for the young and found the most active snake of all is a new hatch. So I tried to take the eggs out again and rest meanwhile, but somewhere along... unconsciousness overtook me again, and so it was for hours -- just in and out of "reality" and really enjoying the unreal quite as much, if not more, than the real. At last I woke up within sight of my car, crawled to it and started for home, but struck a sinkhole that swallowed a wheel to the hub cap and beyond. I spotted a length of down timber that normally would have required two strong men to lift. After a time, I walked over, picked it up and placed it in the sink hole ahead of the wheel and pulled the car out with the greatest of ease. It was not a light car: it was a Studebaker special Six. Probably the best that they ever manufactured, to this day.

But one must remember it was a "witching" time when nothing could be explained by natural law... why was I not still imprisoned under the ground cover; how could I, a frail appearing person lift a log with the mind, perhaps, or more logical still, miracles were being wrought even then...

At last, between long sleeps, I made it home. I bathed, combed and polished up, and hired the neighbor across the street to fry me a chicken. Having eaten the major portion, I hemorrhaged from the bowel from then on. Medical service was almost impossible to get. The doctor that had brought me into the world came. Mr. Parkers, my foster father, was ill throughout my illness but would not take his bed: he was so troubled about my condition, knowing my mother had not survived the disease the year before.

The climax or crisis of my disease came about four weeks following its beginning at 3:30 a.m., it was thought by those in attendance. I had remained at home because of my anxiety about Lewis' condition, my little dog, Sontag, being so troubled about it all and the fact that there was no hospital nearer than ten miles.

During the crisis I seemed to go down to the Egyptian River of Death and look it over, carefully... there was an Egyptian burial box which could be used as a boat... I thought and a plank that could be used as a paddle. The river was narrow and one sensed great depth because of the blackness of the water.

My mother walked out on the other shore.. she was dressed in skins -- a primitive woman... her hair was matted. This was great contrast to her way of

life. She had been very stylish and always well groomed. What would she be doing in Hades? So the legends were false, and I said so... While briefly preparing to cross that river. Legends are always false," she said, "it is the way of humankind to seek to evade the truth of things. But you are not permitted to cross that river yet. There are two very important things you must do before you come here. Your world is so full of sorrow and sadness, and Lew needs you now that he is old more than ever before. He has no one else. Remember? "

I thought it over in the wink of an eye and sadly turned to retrace my steps. I came to the bed where the sick woman was and found I was the sick woman... I walked to the door of Lew's room... I walked to his bed and offered water and cold cloths for his head... I fluffed up his pillow and said: "I will not leave you, now. Do not worry. Just get well, Lew. There will be other rivers, other hardships, but I hope to be with you always -- now..." Then, one year later, I married the man I was engaged to and took Lew home with me, but he grieved for his own home I felt. Five years after that, my son was born with brown eyes, too, though both my husband and myself had blue eyes.