

**FORTUNE or DEATH**

—Jim Barger

The night was chilly. A cold rain was falling. Harvey Daniels buttoned his overcoat as he got out of his old Ford car. He looked at the dark mansion, standing isolated on the outskirts of town. It had recently belonged to his uncle, Jonathan Daniels. Jonathan Daniels was an eccentric but busy old man, right up until his heart gave away. He had despised lazy people. He had especially disliked his only living close relative, Harvey, the lazy type, who wanted something for nothing. Jonathan had been aware of a weak heart and had made out a will. A queer will it was, too. Harvey, being the only relative, was in line to receive everything, and he did. The day after Jonathan's death, Harvey received a visit from his uncle's lawyer. The lawyer read Jonathan's will to Harvey. The part which was the most important said, "and also to Harvey I leave my entire fortune, fifty thousand dollars. The money is in my private vault in the basement. There may be a time bomb in that vault which might be set off by unlocking the door. And then there might not be a bomb. Maybe I just said that to scare Harvey; anyway he has the chance of fortune or death."

Harvey had read these lines over and over. They were fresh in his mind as he snapped on his flashlight and proceeded to the basement door. He had chosen to come at night, because he didn't want the townspeople to know of his humiliating position. He opened the old oak door and stepped inside. There was not much dirt or dust because old Jonathan had been very particular. Harvey's light played around the room, falling on the big steel vault. The vault was large enough for one person to enter. "There may be a bomb in that vault which might be set off by unlocking the door." That line ran through his mind, haunting, torturing him.

He walked slowly toward the vault. He stopped about two feet away from it. Harvey trembled slightly as he removed the key, which the lawyer had given him, from his pocket. The flashlight found the keyhole. He stood there; his eyes not seeing. His mind wandered. He would have a new car, a new home. Now he could marry Janet. Yes, Janet would marry him now. He had fifty thousand dollars. Fifty thousand dollars! A fortune was awaiting him on the other side of that door. "There may be a bomb—" no, he wouldn't think of it. Uncle Jonathan was an eccentric old man and that was just one of his eccentric ideas.

Harvey took a step forward. He put the key to the keyhole. It clicked as it went into the lock. Suddenly Harvey was gripped by fear. He froze, hardly breathing. Until now Harvey had been afraid but calm. Now he broke out in a cold sweat. An expression of uncontrolled fear showed plainly on his face. Fortune or death, it must be done. Harvey gritted his teeth as he slowly turned the key. Fortune or death—fortune or death—his heart sounded hard. The lock clicked hard at first, then easy. The key made a complete turn. Holding the flashlight with one hand, he opened the heavy steel door with the other. He stood there, the door open, the flashlight spotted on the floor. He didn't move. His heart skipped a beat; he hardly breathed. He saw nothing. He only waited. Five, six seconds passed. A cheerless smile crept over Harvey's fear-stricken face. He shouted almost hysterically, "I'm rich, there's no bomb, I've got fifty thousand dollars!" He never finished that sentence.

No one knew of Jonathan's strange will except Harvey and the lawyer. The people of the town wondered, as they looked at the remains of the once huge mansion, how and why it could have been destroyed. But the lawyer knew, and maybe Harvey knew too. Yes, Harvey, the man who wanted something for nothing, had taken a chance on fortune or death—and lost.

**THE ROSARY**

—Nancy Ann Sink

"And those that are good shall be happy: They shall sit in a golden chair—"

Miss Tompkins is an elderly lady, bent by the unseen hand of time. Her snowy white hair is proof of her years. Many wrinkles appear on the face, but there is no look of pain or weariness. She sits in a chair as ancient as its occupant. The rockers squeak as if meant for just such surroundings.

Miss Tompkins is one of many in this Catholic institution for the aged, and like the others, she has a story. She stares unceasingly at a small photograph held tightly in her hand. As in a dream she closes her eyes, slowly recalling the past, for the past is hers to cling to.

Her memory takes her to a dark street in Philadelphia. A small girl stands ringing the doorbell of a ramshackle apartment house. In one hand she clutches a tiny wicker box containing her few worthless possessions. All attempts failing, she steps to the sidewalk and walks away with a quick step. She cautiously raises one hand to her throat, clutches something and utters a prayer. A lonely look is in her eyes. She looks about her as if frightened and mumbles to herself, "Why? Why?"

This is young Mary Tompkins, orphan, underprivileged American. Mary's parents had died and the little girl was searching for an uncle thought to be living in Philadelphia. After an unsuccessful search for relatives, local citizens sent Mary to an orphanage.

Evelyn and John Tompkins had left to their only daughter one thing—an inheritance of the belief in the Catholic Church.

Mary's new home was one organized by a Protestant denomination. The child was not allowed to uphold her belief. They thought it nonsense for one so young to be so steadfast in her faith.

Once, in an episode with the matron, the Rosary, a beloved possession of all Catholics, was taken from her.

When Mary finished high school she was dismissed from the home. Going immediately to Father O'Tooley, she applied for sisterhood. After many months of strenuous preparation, her dream came true.

Years pass—Mary Tompkins is no longer of use to her fellowmen. The time has come for her to go with the other aged to an institution.

Let us return now from the land of dreams to the land of reality. Everything is quiet. The earth is resting in the lingering hush of a summer's evening—that hush which penetrates the very soul of man. The elderly lady in the squeaky old rocking chair still clutches the picture—the picture clipped from the morning paper under which is printed, "American Sister is Made Saint—Saint Mary."

There is a short lapse of time. The scene is a peaceful graveyard near the home. There is a freshly dug grave. A small group of people in the adornment of the Catholic Church stand sorrowfully by a graveside as the cold red dirt falls pitilessly upon a dull grey coffin. At last Mary Tompkins rests.

**NEW TEACHERS**

(Continued from page one)

from Marshville, but lives at Hege Inn in Lexington.

Miss Vernelle Gilliam is a graduate of Appalachian State Teachers College with a B. S. degree. She is the new librarian and while in Lexington she stays at Hege Inn. Miss Gilliam is from Thomasville, N. C.

Mr. J. L. Gathing, a new teacher in the Science department, is from Pageland, S. C., and is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with an A. B. degree. He also attended summer school at High Point College. Tyro is where Mr. Gathing and his wife live, she being a member of the Grimes School faculty.

There are two new eighth grade teachers on the faculty. Mrs. Jessie Erwin, who is the former Jessie Martin of Lexington. She received her A. B. degree from Meredith College,

**Poets' Corner**



**ESCAPE**

—Hewey Clodfelter

"We, the jury, find George Sands guilty of murder in the first degree." The words echoed through the courtroom with the lash of a whip.

Then the judge arose and said "George Sands, you have heard the verdict of the jury. With due justice, I hereby sentence you to die in the electric chair one week from today. And may God have mercy on your soul."

At the prison, the grating of a key awoke George from his sleep. "You're taking things easy for a man who is to die in the electric chair," said warden Beck. "A man in your position isn't usually able to sleep much."

"You'll never put me in the chair," snarled George. "I'm too smart. I'll be out of here before the execution date."

"You won't get out of this penitentiary, George," replied the warden. "No man has ever gotten out of here alive."

"Wait and see," replied George. "There isn't a jail made to hold me. There isn't a thing that can keep me from getting out of this place."

"We won't discuss it," said the warden. "I just came to tell you that the execution is tomorrow night. Do you want to see the Father?"

"If he comes in here I'll kill him," snarled George. "I don't need to see anyone."

"All right, George, it's up to you," replied the warden. "I'll be leaving now. Sorry to have bothered you."

Three hours later a storm broke and thunder and lightning crashed over the prison. Then a door opened and a figure dashed through it into the prison yard. George Sands dashed to the ladder that led to the guard's booth on the wall. Reaching the booth, he shot the guard who made an attempt to stop him. He then ran along the wall until he reached the steel pipe that carried the refuse from the prison to the stream that ran along the base of the prison wall. He pushed the gun into his pocket and reached for the steel pipe. As his hands touched it, a flash of lightning flung itself from the sky and with a blinding light smashed into the steel pipe. A scream of death echoed through the night, and the lifeless body of George Sands fell from the wall into the prison yard below. Within five minutes the warden and a group of guards were surrounding his body.

"He tricked the guard at his cell," said the warden, "into coming close enough for Sands to grab him. Then Sands took the guard's keys and gun after choking him into unconsciousness."

One of the guards called from the prison wall, "Joe's been shot! Sands must have done it."

"Well, that's three men he's killed," said the warden. "He said we wouldn't put him in the chair, but he died of electrocution just the same. He said nothing could keep him from escaping, but he forgot one thing. You may escape from men, but you cannot escape from God."

and has previously taught in the Lexington City schools for three years.

The other eighth grade teacher is Miss Arriwona Shoaf, also from Lexington. Her home is on Fifth Avenue. Woman's College is where she received her A. B. degree. Miss Shoaf has previously taught in high schools in Thomasville and Ruffin. She also taught at Lexington High last year, substituting for Mrs. William Wright.

**MY LAST LOVE**

Hilda Phillips, Class of '47

I do not think it strange, my dear, That you stopped wanting me; I don't suppose that any love Lasts through Eternity. And though it's quite a common thing to drift apart, 'tis true, Here is the tragedy, my dear: I keep on loving and wanting you.

Perhaps you'll find another Who soon will take my place; The world's so full of lovely things, I'll bring you happiness. Now I face a thousand lonely nights That stretch my whole life through, You still mean everything to me That I once, dear meant to you.

**MY PIE**

—Lyniel Beck

Me, myself, and I Went out to bake a pie. An hour had passed— I thought 'twas the last. I ran for the water— I ran for the mop— I've come to the conclusion My pie was a flop!

**More Truth Than Poetry**

**A WILL FINDS THE WAY**

—Jean Rollins

"Where there's a will there's a way" is illustrated by the lives of many poor boys who have become famous. This is best shown by perhaps the greatest American of all times, Abraham Lincoln. He studied in no schools such as we have today, yet he rose to the highest position this nation can offer. Then, too, there are examples presented in other races as well. George Washington Carver, the son of a Negro slave, who by means of his practical applications of simple materials such as the peanut has become one of the leading scientists of the South and of the world. Without a doubt the handicap of being poor can be overcome if there is a strong will to find the way.

**SILENCE IS GOLDEN**

—Evelyn Fulbright

"Silence is golden" is sometimes a worth-while proverb to remember. It has been said that the tongue is the keyboard of the soul, but it makes a world of difference who plays on it. For example, we often speak when we should hold our peace. At these times, the old saying, "when angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, a hundred," is very useful to remember. It is also better not to speak at all than to say injurious words or to scoff at people, although they give us occasions to do this. Next it is better not to relate news if we do not know whether it is correct, or to speak when we should be listening. Therefore, "Silence is golden" and it can be said that a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.

**A HOUSE OR A HOME?**

—Eva Mae Sink

It is quite evident that most people think of a house and a home as having great difference. A house is only a structure for human habitation, more or less a shelter. On the other hand, a home is what you make it. It should be a place in which one's affections are centered. It is not just a place to eat, sleep and stay around when there is no other place to go. As a result, security, happiness, and a meaning of devotion is found in a home. Some of your happier hours should be spent there. So why not consider the place in which you live? Are you making it a house or a home?