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Treasure in Heaven

All the way home from the bridge party Joan was bothered by a feeling of deep depression. It wasn't, she told herself angrily, Patty's new home, or other girls' new homes, or her and Bill's failure to keep up with the rest of them. No. The trouble lay deeper than that, in a sudden revealing truth that made her want to fight the world fiercely in Bill's behalf.

Ordinarily, her own street filled her with a warm consciousness of hominess and peace. She loved the tall oak trees whose leaves floated gently to the ground; the tidy green lawns; the fragrance of roses and honeysuckle mixed with the even more homey odors of cooking; the low, overhanging eaves and wide hospitable windows that seemed to bid one rest awhile.

But today she was seeing these houses, particularly her own, with new eyes. She was seeing their oldness, their shabbiness, their complete outdatedness.

And for the first time in their seventeen years of marriage, she was actually seeing Bill as a failure, too. What was it that kept him in the same spot year after year, never moving, never progressing, while all their school and college friends had passed them by and, seemingly, advanced out of sight? Was it lazy contentment or an unwillingness to fight?

As she got out of the car and went toward the house, the door opened and Denny, twelve, bare-footed, shirttail out, hair uncombed, met her with an injured air. "Gosh, Mom, when do we eat?" Glancing at the clock, he added, "It's already after five."

Pam, fifteen, and busily engaged in plucking lovely eyebrows above a childish, upturned nose, sniffed disgustedly without looking up. "Eat! All that creep ever thinks about is his stomach."

Denny looked from his sister to his mother. "Mom," he said, "Can't you do something about her? Honest, pluckin' her eyebrows! How dumb you get?"

Flat on her back on the couch,

feet propped against the wall, Connie, sixteen, covered the telephone receiver with her hand and hissed, "Quiet, dopes!"

"It's that drippy boy friend of hers," explained Denny. "Two solid hours of nothin'! Mom, isn't there some way to make her—"

"Get lost," Connie retaliated in a tight voice.

"Children! children!" protested Joan wearily. "Quit quarreling! And Pam, please leave your eyebrows alone."

The back door slammed suddenly and Joan winced involuntarily as it shook the whole house. "Mom; Oh Mom!" all sixty pounds of Sandy, who was seven, burst into the room excitedly. "I'm hungry! and so's Daddy," she added as a clincher.

Bill was home, and Joan began guiltily to fly around preparing a



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quick meal: warmed-over roast, instant potatoes, frozen peas, a bought cake. As she worked swiftly, the disturbing thoughts that had taken root at the party that afternoon continued to tease and torment her: Frieda Hawkins' remark that brought her to a sudden realization of Bill's failure; her own swift anger toward Frieda, and toward the others who, by their very silence, it seemed to her, agreed in Frieda's criticism of Bill.

Usually a day with her old school friends left her in a glow. She had looked forward to this particular party so much, since it was held at Patty's new home.

It was her first view of her school friend's new home, and even though she loved bridge, she had been unable to keep her mind on the game. For her eyes kept traveling almost enviously about her, and she could not but compare her home to the shining perfection around her: the huge brick fireplace, the wall-to-wall carpet-

ing, the lovely front, and the complete with outdoor furniture.

Pinecrest Exclusive and could Patty and this lavishness, construction wasn't much. remembered had started out had bypassed his frankly admitted ole apple." "Co that pedestal, Bill.

Bill's reply, leaves me out," of him. She had for his honesty,

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It wasn't just for one by one friends had moved blossomed out on as I w clothes, and on a pick-up expensive vacat, I glance could brag about imand a gave? Was it throwing a so, they didn't by eyes back they'd all started that the tr same time.

At the party to remember when Marilyn H on the "Guess what, g going to Honol ed up his

Joan did not of delight, but group of said, "How nice, and t did no disc

Then Frieda looked at her new homes neve you and Bill, of Mr. Stou if you can do ent, called feel I'm getting here stood

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