

## THE SEARCH

—MARY LOU HALL

The younger boys playing softball were heard shouting noisily as Emily wandered aimlessly near the sandbox area of the playground. Her bare feet made little clouds of dust rise softly into the warm June air. She attempted to seem disinterested as she ambled nearer to the two older girls who were sitting on the edge of the sandbox, and pretended to be deeply interested in plaiting a small rope of grass.

The two other girls, both about ten years old, continued their con-little girl in the worn yellow cotton sundress with the long and straight black hair.

"Before I came here, I had a room all to myself and lots of dolls. I remember one Christmas . . ." the blonde girl who was speaking broke off suddenly as she caught a glimpse of Emily.

"Why does she always have to be hangin' around us? Why can't she go play with Susie or somebody her own age? Go 'way, you, we don't want you!" she screamed and pretended to chase after Emily.

In her haste to get back to Susie and safety on her own side of the playground, Emily dropped her latest hobby and treasure to the dusty, play-worn ground. She ran wildly and with tear-filled eyes straight toward her only friend. Susie was sitting alone in the shade of the huge old brick building that was the Dryden County Orphanage. She and Emily were the two youngest girls in the orphanage. Emily ran panting to Susie, fell down at her side, and began crying.

Have you been listening again?" questioned Susie.

"Y-y-es," sobbed Emily, "I just wanted to hear about what she got for Christmas that time."

It seems that Emily was the only girl among all the girls who had never lived in a house with a family. The blonde girl, Janet, was a new arrival who had lived with some distant relatives for a while, and then had been placed in the orphanage. Janet was a bragger; but to Emily, her boastings about a home and toys, however poor or cheap that home and those toys had been, heaven. The other girls, like Susie, had come from underprivileged homes at an early age, but Emily had been found on the doorstep of the old red brick building.

Susie was the same age as Emily, but she seemed to have experienced much more of life. She protected and mothered Emily, and, as now, tried to draw her out of her sad moods. Soon, all tears were forgotten and the two little girls began a game of hop-scotch as the Georgia sun glared hot upon them.

Their game was interrupted by a boy with a message from the office of the matron of the orphanage.

"She said for you to come right now!" he said excitedly.

Begging Susie to walk part of the way with her, Emily bravely tiptoed down the huge dark hall to the office.

"Emily, I have some happy news for you," chirped cheerful little Mrs. Brock. "That nice couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey, who were here a few months ago have made arrangements to adopt you. You'll leave in two weeks for Atlanta."

At first Emily was relieved just to know that Mrs. Brock was treating her in a friendly manner, but then as she heard those words she had longer for, she became so excited she could not speak.

"Now, Emily, you must begin at once to get your things together and try to remember how to act. We want people to know how well you've been treated, now don't we?" Mrs. Brock continued as she busily collected her papers. But Emily heard not a word. She walked out of the office dreamily, and made her way down the cool hall to where Susie was waiting. Susie finally got Emily to tell her the news; and although Emily wondered why Susie turned away from her for a minute the two friends eagerly discussed what Emily was going to take with her and how she was going.

For the next two weeks Emily could not control her happiness. Her face was a continual smile. Every child around her looked at her with new respect.

Finally the day came for her departure from the place she had lived for eight years. She did so happily and with no regrets.

Mrs. Brock accompanied her to the train station, but was not able to take the trip with her. She was put in the care of the conductor and was told that her foster parents would meet her at the station. She was terribly frightened of the noise and bigness of the train at first; but once inside, she found a lady to talk to who seemed to understand her new-found happiness, and the time passed quickly.

At last the puffing train pulled into the Atlanta station. Emily stepped off, carrying her one suitcase and wearing her best dress. She gazed confidently about her, searching in the milling crowd for the sight of those people from whom she would find love and security.

Suddenly, a wave of quiet swept over the people in the crowded station as the wailing noise of the police cars and ambulances drew closer to the front entrance to the station. Emily heard the excited whispers of the people around her talking about the accident that had occurred in front of the station.

"Heard they were coming after their little girl," one woman whispered to another who was standing near Emily. She stood stunned as she heard the names wrecked car — and then leaned against the wall in the shadows without speaking.

CURED  
CURIOSITY

—LIBBY LINVILLE

One warm afternoon in May, Annette and Ginger were leisurely walking home from school discussing two subjects important to both of them — their two young horses.

"What are we going to do with those two crazy horses!" exclaimed Annette, a pixie-like girl of seventeen with short black hair fixed in a fluff, the latest style. "We've got to do something about that fence-jumping business!"

"I agree," replied Ginger, a strawberry blond of seventeen, who wore her hair very similar to Annette's. "But as to what, I don't know. I've racked my brain and have come up with a-b-s-o-l-u-t-e-l-y nothing!"

Annette glanced at her watch and exclaimed, "It's four o'clock. I guess Mother and Dad have reached Washington. Just think, no parents, except yours, for two weeks. What luck!"

"You bet," said Ginger as they continued homeward, talking over this new subject.

Annette's house, a spacious brick, was beside Ginger's stone ranch styled house in the outskirts of Riverside, a fast growing town. Both girls attended the local high school where they were very popular juniors. They liked school and made good grades. Annette dated a boy named Johnny; Ginger, a boy named Gerald, who was Johnny's best friend. The girls shared the same interest of dancing, singing, playing tennis, reading, and trying out new hair styles. But the most important thing to both of them was an ardent love for horseback riding.

When the girls reached Ginger's house, they checked in with Ginger's mother, changed clothes, and then headed out for the stable, owned jointly by the girls' fathers. As they approached the stable, they saw their two horses leap over the corral fence and head for the garden behind the stable.

"Oh, those horses!" cried Annette as the girls broke into a run to catch their mischievous playmates. On coming closer to the garden, they noticed Kuriosity, Annette's horse, with his nose to the ground as if he were following something moving. Suddenly Kuriosity, jerking his head up and neighing loudly and painfully, turned and jumped back into the corral; and in doing so, Spice, Ginger's horse, spooked, reared, and followed Kuriosity back into the corral. The girls, being apprehensive at the rearing, went back to the house for help; however, they found that Ginger's mother had left a few minutes earlier to go to town for several hours.

"What are we going to do?" cried Annette hysterically. "Why did my parents have to leave? Why did your mother have to go to town? Who can we call? What can we do? Oh, poor Kuriosity! What can be the matter?"

"Now, just calm down a minute and let me think," said Ginger quietly and thoughtfully. Then she snapped her fingers and said, "I'll call Dr. Knox! 'He'll come and look at Kuriosity. After all, isn't he the man who helped us raise those two horses?"

Ginger went to the phone and called Dr. Knox. She told him to please come and check Kuriosity. Still a little afraid, she told him that they would go down to the stables but stay back.

## THE WRONG PRESCRIPTION

—MARY ANN SOWERS

The workers grouped about the water cooler had discussed many topics before the subject of phobias was brought up. First one and then another volunteered his or her private little anxieties, until everyone had contributed. Well, almost everyone had: one person alone insisted that he was free of all fears, large or small. That one was George Wilson, the hero of the town in the last war. Several members of that same office group owed their lives to George's clear thinking and prompt acting after an elevator accident. So his co-workers saw no reason to suspect him of fearing anything.

But George Wilson was hiding something — something he had never confided to anyone, not even to his wife. Lurking in his mind was a fear far greater than any his friends possessed. His was a consuming terror, not of fire or airplanes or the like, but of dogs.

George felt an intense repulsion toward all dogs, but only one particular breed really horrified him. Whenever he encountered a German shepherd, his heart pounded wildly and his knees felt limp as corn silk. He would go to great lengths to avoid close contact with the beasts, even detouring an entire block to keep from passing them on the street.

Lately George's fear had grown stronger, but he had had it since childhood. He could still remember the incident that fixed that fear firmly in his mind. Three-year-old George and the youngster who lived next door had gone to admire the new-born puppies of the neighbor's German shepherd. They had been warned not to go inside the dog pen, but George, being a typical boy, just could not resist the temptation to hold one of the cuddly balls of fluff. So he unlatched the door and grasped the nearest pup. At once it gave forth a babyish squeak which roused its mother into a protective fury. She sprang upon little George and bit him fearfully before she could be subdued by his father.

George's external wounds soon healed, but not the wound left on his memory. From that day he had harbored the feeling that all German shepherds wanted to kill him. Someday, he was strangely

Within ten minutes Dr. Knox was at the stable. He went up to the corral, talking softly and reassuringly. The horses calmed down a little, and Dr. Knox put Spice into a stall and then turned to Kuriosity. All at once Dr. Knox began to laugh uncontrollably, and within a few minutes he came out with something in his hand to meet the shocked, wide-eyed girls who came running to meet him.

"I don't believe you will have anymore trouble with the fence-jumping, as I don't think Kuriosity will soon forget that sore nose, even though it will heal completely," laughed Dr. Knox as he slowly opened his hand revealing porcupine quills!

sure, one would succeed.

All this George remembered as he walked home that same evening. He had just noticed the ominous appearance of the evening sky when he rounded a corner and almost bumped into an elderly man coming from the opposite direction. The stooped old man was carrying a white cane and holding to the harness of a German shepherd. At sight of the dog, George flattened himself against a store front and remained immovable until the man, guided by his faithful companion, had crossed the street and gone on his way. Only then did George feel safe in continuing homeward, for he had noticed, or thought he had noticed, the dog's fur bristle up, and he had heard, or thought he had heard, a low growl emitted from its throat. By the time he reached home, his heart had stopped beating in rhythm to an African victory dance; once through the front door, he was reasonably confident that he had been spared for the time being.

He had sauntered over to the hatrack, hung up his hat and coat, and smoothed his graying hair before he became aware of the other inhabitant of the room. When he did, his heart turned to ice and his body froze with fright, for sitting right there on the living room rug was the most gigantic German shepherd George had ever seen. As he gazed horror-strickenly at the animal, it slowly rose and, one step at a time, advanced ponderously toward him. George backed up until he was against a wall with no where else to go, and still the dog kept coming. In its eyes the man imagined he could see pure and boundless hate; actually they contained only friendly curiosity. To his benumbed mind its fangs were bared in grave anticipation; the wagging tail went unnoticed. When it was but a step from him, his heart, always weak, gave way and he collapsed in a heap, the dog standing there with only a quizzical expression on its face.

The autopsy report read "death resulting from heart failure." The following week, when the grieving widow was gently questioned, she could think of no possible reason for her husband's attack. "However", she recalled, "he was becoming extremely nervous the last few weeks. I thought maybe a pet would do him good — that's why I bought Rex, a German shepherd. Poor George, I'm sure he and Rex would have been great friends."

## ALONE

—JEANETTE TURNER

When all my dreams seem tossed and blown  
I walk in the meadow, all alone.  
There only the loveliest of flowers grow,  
And only the softest of breezes blow.  
There I can rest and think things over;  
There's no one to hear but the bees in the clover.  
Then I walk down by the babbling brook so clear  
And listen to the song of the birds so dear.  
I feel close to heaven under the sky so bright.  
And somehow everything always comes out right.  
I'm lucky to know of this place where few have trod  
Under the sheltering pines, alone with God.