

MEMORABLE THANKSGIVING

By Fran Pachter

THE spell of the holidays were enhanced by the aroma emanating from the kitchen and jovial good spirits dispelled the gloom of the typical gloomy November day. In the Blaney household preparation for the usual Thanksgiving dinner was under way heightened by the news that Jamie would be with them.

The Blaney family consisted of four, Mom and Dad, Kathleen and Jamie. Jamie, the family pet, had served with Uncle Sam's Navy for four years, and ended up in a Veterans' Hospital partially disabled due to a spine injury. He had spent the two years taking physical therapy to strengthen his leg muscles. The hospital had worked hard to reactivate his legs, without receiving much co-operation from Jamie. He had suffered a severe mental shock upon learning that his legs were useless and his resignation hampered his progress.

On the Blaney's last visit to see their son, they found the once cocksure impudent youngster they loved turned into a bitter individual.

Mother Blaney had choked back a sob, and father had walked to the window to hide the tears that welled up in his eyes. Kathleen had shocked them all, her words heavy in the air: "Jamie, you're yellow and a quitter. I'm ashamed of you. Look at those around you, many are far worse off. How can you sit there feeling sorry for yourself? Look at Bob Randall, one arm gone and the other needing exercise to regain use of it. He's got the biggest grin and a welcome for everyone he sees."

Jamie had looked at his sister with hate in his eyes and in a voice bordering on hysteria, had told them to get out and stay away.

Kathleen had broken into tears when out of Jamie's sight. But she worked with veterans and knew that anger spurred efforts.

They'd not seen Jamie since. He'd received no visitors. Mom and Dad so hurt at his rejection, blamed her for it all.

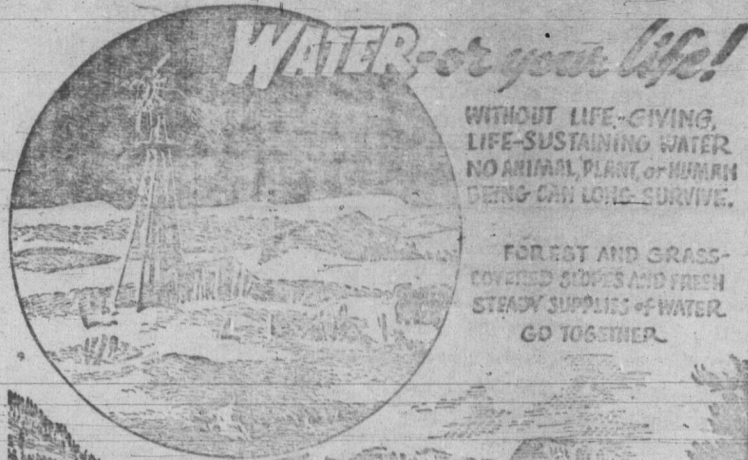
A week before Thanksgiving the telegram had arrived, "will be home for Thanksgiving" love, Jamie. It had caused pandemonium. Jamie's room had to be readied, furniture replaced to make room for easy management of his wheelchair and his favorite food to be planned and cooked. Kathleen and Dad chuckled at the sight of Jamie's three pet desserts lined up on the cabinet, chocolate pie, pumpkin and a large angel food cake. All in readiness and excitement at fever pitch, Dad had spent all morning at the window, grumbling when Mom asked his help.

A sleek new auto pulled into the drive. Father shouted, "He's here," and rushed out the door. Mother ran too but Kathleen held back. A sudden fear beset her, she'd never forgotten the hurt in her brother's eyes. Giving the turkey an unnecessary baste, she strained her ears for sound. She heard her Mom say, "Jamie, my boy," and her Dad's fervent tone, "My Son," then silence.

Her back to the kitchen door, she did not see the slim young man tip toe into the kitchen, nor the happy faces of her Mom and Dad behind him. She felt herself picked up and given a bear hug. "Better be on your best behavior, y'fir big brother is back to keep you in line." Putting his arm around her he laughed, at the shocked surprise look she had. "You did it you know. You made me so mad I decided to show you." Jamie walked over to where his Mom's pies were. Taking a lick of the whipped cream, he said, "Mom I sure missed your cooking."

A humble Blaney Family gave thanks that Thanksgiving Day for it was to be the most memorable they ever shared.

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1. Diffident means (a) indifferent; (b) timid; (c) spiteful.
2. Florescence means (a) artificially lighted; (b) bursting into flower; (c) iridescent.
3. Khoraan refers to (a) Persian temple; (b) carpet; (c) ancient writings.

ANSWERS

1. Timid.
2. Bursting into flower.
3. Persian temple.

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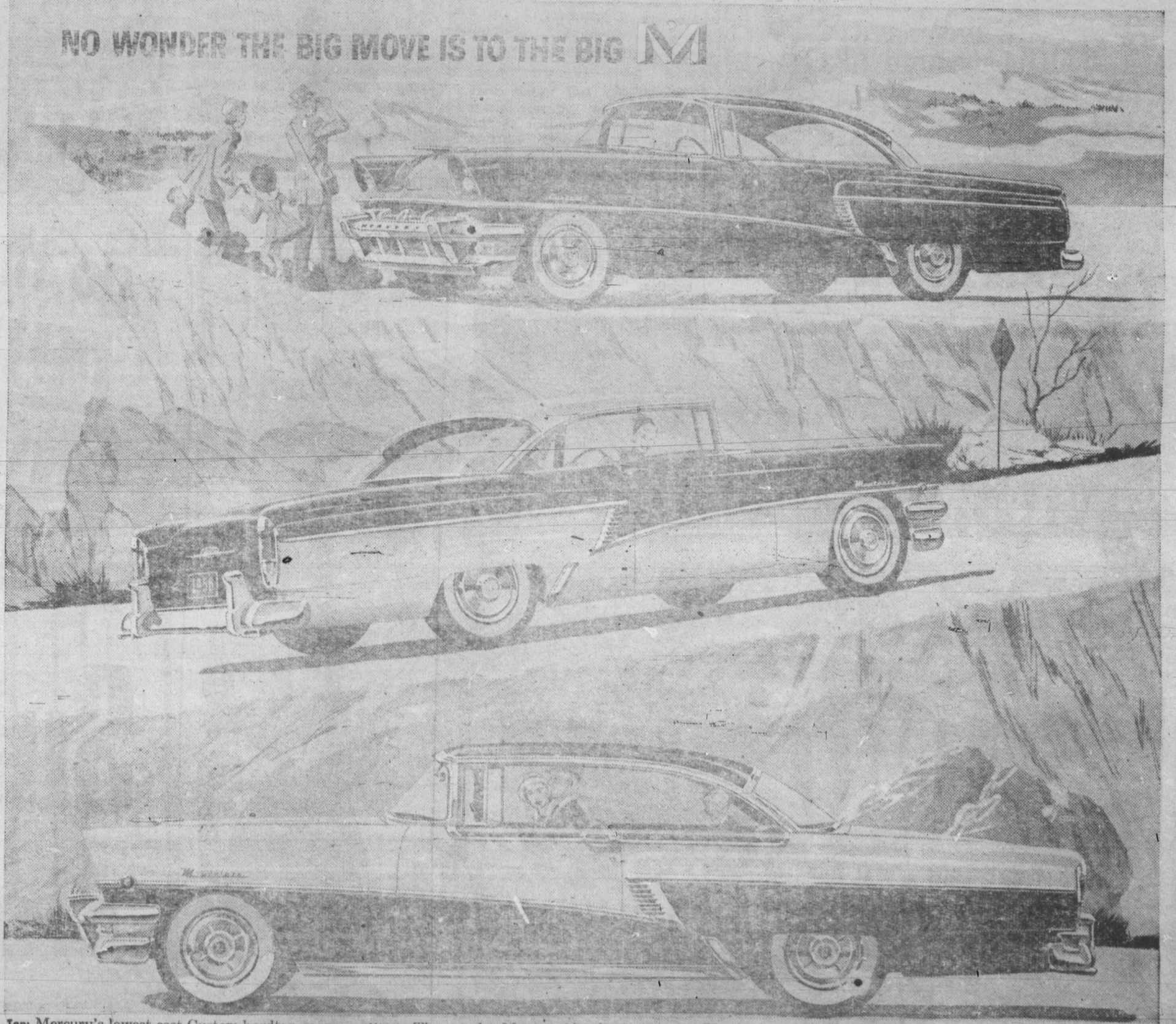
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