

# LADY IN THE BLACK SHAWL

By H. N. Ferguson

IT WAS a dark, blustery November afternoon where Sam Padgett looked out the door of his second-hand hardware store and saw the little old lady for the first time. She wore a faded black shawl around her head and shoulders; her thin body was hunched against the biting north wind that was sweeping in gusts along Hackett Street. As Sam watched her, she paused for a moment to admire his display of repainted gas heaters in the window.

Sam hurried outside. "How about putting a heater in the lay-away for winter?" he asked. Her watery eyes met his for a fleeting second, then she shook her head and walked on.

Then one day, toward the end of the month, she came into the store and handed Sam a dollar in small coins. "The little stove where the sign says \$6," she said. "You put for me in the lay-away, please?"

"Sure," agreed Sam. "Only that's a mighty small heater. You think it's big enough?"

"I got just a little room on the back of the house," she replied. "Is my son's house. A little room on the north side of the house. Is very cold when the wind is blowing strong."

"You got heat in the rest of the house?" inquired Sam.

"Heat, yes. In the kitchen is big stove for cooking. In the big room is stove for my son and his wife and the children. Little stove is plenty good for me."

Sam wrote a receipt acknowledging one dollar received on account from Mrs. Josefa Patara. And every few days Mrs. Patara would pay a little on the heater; sometimes as much as 50 cents, more often no more than a dime.

The bookkeeping on Mrs. Patara's lay-away was more trouble than the sale was worth but business was business and Sam was a businessman.

January blew in bitter cold and wet. On a Monday morning Mrs. Patara paid 35 cents, leaving a balance of \$1.65. As she started out into the cold drizzle, her black shawl pulled tight about her stooped shoulders, Sam's heart softened.

"Wait a minute, Mrs. Patara," he called. "Seeing it's so cold, why don't you just take the heater on with you now, and pay me the rest when you can?"

She smiled and thanked him but shook her head. She said she would ask her son for \$2 on Saturday. Then she would take the heater.

But she never came back.

A week passed, then another. Almost three weeks later a young man came into the store one morning and said his name was Paul Patara. He had come about the laid-away heater.

"How is your mama?" asked Sam. "I been worried about her."

"She died," said Paul. "We buried her the first of this week. Mister, I need that money bad. The money mama paid on the heater."

"Refunds we don't give," said Sam. "Why don't you pay the balance and take the heater. You can use some heat in that little north room where you had your mama, can't you?"

"Sure," agreed Paul. "We got a new baby in there. It was born the night mama died. Now I got to pay the midwife and pay for the funeral and buy something to eat. I got to have that money, mister."

"All right," said Sam, "you can take the heater and you don't owe me nothing. I'm doing it because Mrs. Patara was such a sweet old lady. What did she do for you?"

The young man hung his head. "The doctor said pneumonia. I don't need the heater. We can't use it anyway. We got no gas pipes at our house."



Every woman has her own way of working off a spell of ill humor. In the past, mine was pitching right in and giving the kitchen stove a good going over. The other day, however, I realized my old "work it off" remedy couldn't be used any more.

With the new built-in cooking units there isn't much work connected with cleaning the range. Since the oven is at such a convenient height, I usually take a damp cloth and wipe it out when cleaning up after dinner. This way none of the neat spatters or spilled pie fillings ever "cake on." Time was, when a 1/4 of a cup of ammonia had to be put in the oven overnight before it was possible to get the oven clean.

I'm sure the enamel they use nowadays on the oven doors is different too. Nothing seems to stain it. Even the surface burners don't get as greasy or dirty as they did before. That's probably because I use the new automatic top burner for cooking things like cereals, gravies, and sauces which used to boil over every once in a while. Nothing has burned or boiled over for ages. The "built-in brain" of the automatic burner regulates the gas flame to prevent this from happening.

Thinking it might be a good idea to clean the burners anyway, I lifted them out and wiped them off with a damp cloth and detergent. The few "hard spots" came off quite easily with some steel wool, and a bobby pin was just the right tool to clear the burner ports.

While cleaning the oven, the pilot light became "snuffed out" somehow. Never having used LP-gas until we moved into our country home, I went over to my neighbor to check with her about relighting it.

She told me that the automatic shut-off valve on the range undoubtedly had stopped the flow of LP-gas from the main tank to the range. We checked the instruction book and, sure enough, found a paragraph about relighting the pilot. In order to get the gas back to the pilot, all we had to do was relight it with a kitchen match and hold down the little red button for about half a minute or so until the pilot stayed lit when the button was released.

It sure is good to know that such safety devices are built right into the appliance. And even if I have to change my standard remedy for getting rid of frustrated or angry feelings, it's a big satisfaction to know that another of the old housekeeping hard work bugaboos has completely disappeared.

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION  
In The Superior Court  
NORTH CAROLINA  
YANCEY COUNTY  
Carson Fox, Plaintiff

vs.  
Gladys Crain Fox, Defendant  
TO Gladys Crain Fox:

Take notice that an action as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Yancey County

and complaint in said action has been filed by the plaintiff, Carson Fox, seeking a divorce absolute upon the grounds of adultery of said defendant, Gladys Crain Fox, and for the custody of Engeline Fox, Maybelle Fox, Linda Fox, and Denise Fox, minors.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than December 23, 1956, and upon failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in the complaint.

This Oct. 25, 1956.

Lowe Thomas, Clerk Superior Court.

Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
YANCEY COUNTY  
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Mrs. Cora Peterson, deceased, late of Yancey County, this is to notify all persons having claims against the Decedent to exhibit the same to the undersigned Administrator at his home at Rt. 4, Burnsville, N. C., on or before the 16th

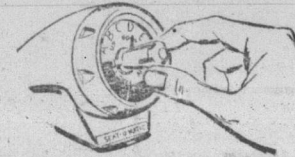
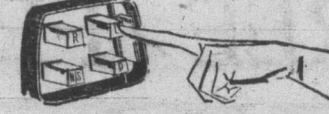




day of November, 1957, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.  
All persons owing the Estate will please make immediate payment.  
This 16th day of November, 1956  
Harmon Peterson, Administrator of the Estate of Mrs. Cora Peterson, Deceased.  
Nov. 22, 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27

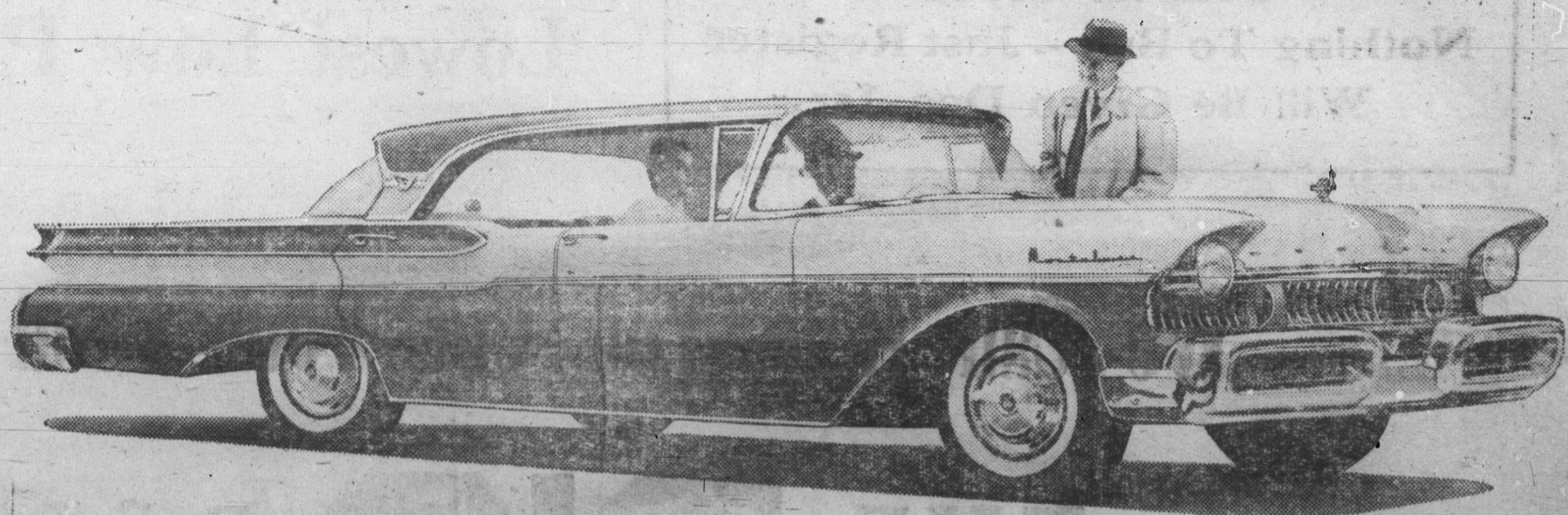
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BIGGEST FAMILY IN U. S. . . Gerrit Koolenga, 51, and wife Johana, 49, of Zeeland, Mich., visit Chicago with their 21 children, ages 7 to 31.

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