



# LOST

**T**HERE was an abrupt silence in the room as the tall blonde youth stepped up to the platform. His long black robe with its circle of gold cloth at the neck proclaimed to all that the Judge had arrived. In an austere voice he began the proceedings. "This is April 16 in the year of 2059. We will hear now the parent delinquency cases." An air of self confidence radiated from the youth to the degree that one would doubt his being only 15 years of age.

The Judge gestured for the group to be seated then sat down behind the large white desk. "We will hear the case of Jimmy Jones. Will Jimmy Jones please come forth and face the council."

A small freckled boy got up from his chair, turned, and walked slowly up the aisle. All the faces, faces that would once have been described as children's faces, turned to watch him as he marched up to the Judge.

"Jimmy Jones, you are charged with giving your parents too much allowance and too many privileges. How do you plead?" The Judge's voice was impersonal, and he did not look at Jimmy. "Are you guilty or not guilty?"

Jimmy swallowed hard and pushed his hands into his pockets. "I . . . I . . ." he stammered, "I don't understand. You see, I only just moved here from a ranch in Wy-

Charlyce King, '43h.ec, '49m, '57d.ed

# RIB EDUCATION

A VIGOROUS EDUCATOR CRITICIZES HER DEPARTMENT'S FRONT-TO-REAR PROGRAMMING

oming, and I have never been in charge of my folks."

There was a roar of "Boooo" from the youthful audience.

"Order!" the young Judge snapped and shot Jimmy a piercing look. "Are you trying to tell the council that you are unaware of your responsibility in bringing up your parents?"

"Yes, sir. I . . . I didn't know." There were tears in Jimmy's eyes.

"How old are you, Jimmy?"

"Thirteen, sir."

"Surely," the Judge explained, "you must have known. Why, any boy knows by the time he is twelve years of age that he is held responsible for his parents. Have you ever known this?"

The youth's face wrinkled into puzzlement.

"No, sir. But, may I ask, sir . . . how long has this been true?" Jimmy's voice was steady now. "I have never been around kids my own age. I was just with my parents on the ranch."

The judge took a deep breath and groped for his words. "It . . . it began a long time ago. I . . . I think it was back in the 1960's or 70's. No one knows for sure. But, parents no longer accepted the responsibility of rearing children. By this time the father had ceased being head of the household,

and the mother was reluctant to serve in her new role. All the child specialists kept telling the mother that she was responsible for juvenile delinquency, so she gave up. Well, someone had to take over."

The Judge leaned across his desk and stared at Jimmy. "Have you ever studied history?"

"Yes," Jimmy's voice was quite low again, "but, I never did learn this."

"Well," the Judge leaned back in his chair, "when the parents refused to rear the children, someone had to take over. The school tried—and failed. The church made a few attempts, and industry was eager, but the children were organized. So, the children took over." There was pride in his voice and a smile played at the corner of his mouth. "Not only did the children take over their own upbringing, but they eventually became responsible for their parents. After all, the children had the youth organizations and had been trained in leadership. There was little that the parents could do, and they were quite relieved to be rid of their responsibility. There wasn't a single agency left in the society that continued to educate for family living." He banged his fist down on the desk. "And now—Jimmy Jones, do you understand?"

There was a feeble "yes" from the freckled boy.

"Then," the young Judge stood up and faced Jimmy, "how do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?"

Fantastic? perhaps. But a notion of the above scene occurred to me several years ago when a thirteen-year-old girl in my junior high homebaking class turned to her friend and said: "Sure you can get your parents to let you go to the preview. Just tell them that all the other kids are going and that the club *voted* to go."

"You don't know *my* mother," the young friend quipped back at her. "She's specialized in bringing up kids," there was a note of pride in her voice as she added, "she majored in it."

It is not the purpose of this article to debate the right or wrong of a 13-year-old attending previews, nor to deal at length with science fiction. Rather, to ask the question: Education for the woman—what kind and quality? Or, to be more exact, just what is the function of the institution of higher education in preparing the young woman for family living?

It is a practice in my classes at the beginning of the semester for the students to introduce themselves, tell what they are go-

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## BY CHARLYCE KING

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR in EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

room on the first floor where he opened one of the casement windows and climbed out into the bushes.

It was perfect. Tomorrow when the night watchman found the open window in the men's room, he would think nothing about it, because he was a forgetful old man anyway. And there was a very large chance that the Professor would not miss his notes, that he would not even look for them until some time the first of the week when he filed a copy of the test and looked for his notes to throw them away.

The early morning air smelled good as prairie as Carl walked across the campus and he breathed with relief. Yet, strangely enough, he was not happy. He felt that what he had done was ridiculous and he realized the folded paper beneath his belt was a sentence for him, a sentence to another year of drudging at books and washing dishes and only half-sleeping during the long nights before examinations. His new feelings were a hard price for a degree.

He went back to his room and put a small coffee pot on the forbidden hot plate and waited until he had brewed a cup of coffee to relax him before he began the arduous process of learning what the test was to cover. He was calm now; there was no more pressure, because the test was in his hand and he had the book from which to copy the answers. At least there was no need to be alarmed or excited or scared anymore.

He drank the coffee slowly and then lay down on the bed and clicked on the lamp and slowly unfolded the paper. He stared at it a long moment and then he began to laugh, a wild, desperate laugh. He put the notes down on the table and began to pack his bag, throwing everything he owned into his single, battered suitcase, his mind already thinking ahead to the highway and the oil fields and the job that would be waiting for him someplace.

And while he packed, he occasionally stopped to look down at the Professor's handwriting and to laugh again. Someday he would have to write the Professor a letter to tell him how well he had understood that test, and how marvelously free he felt now, and how the joy had flooded through him when he lay down on the bed and unfolded the papers and found that the Professor's meticulous, perfect notes had been made in German.

ing to teach, and why they want to teach. I have often heard this answer from the women students—"I am not sure that I am going to teach. I really intend to get married and have a home, if I don't do this—I may teach."

Can we conclude then that a college education will be wasted on these students? I think not. Instead, we might ask just how well have we helped to prepare these young women for the roles of wife and mother?

**T**HE unmarried woman student often fails to see herself functioning as a worker outside the home as well as serving as a wife and mother. Yet recent statistics show that 80% of the working women are married. It was in a recent counseling session when a young mother of four confided to me that she felt very guilty about working outside her home. Many would hasten to tell this woman to quit her job and thus be rid of her guilts. But, this woman had no choice. Her husband was seriously ill, and it was quite necessary for her to work in order to support her family.

It would seem that the woman could easily rationalize her feelings or take an intellectual approach by saying—"I have to work and I won't feel guilty about it." Such feelings are not easily removed. They have a real societal basis.

As a people we are quick to blame the working mother when anything goes wrong with her home or children. Modern society expects the woman to be a split personality—half homemaker and half career person. A similar division of feelings is impossible. Modern woman is trying to find her accepted place in today's world.

Many strange ideas still exist about the place that women have held in the societies of the past. The Feminist Movement of a century ago declared that the woman was a chattel, subject to her husband, with no political or legal rights. At the opposite extreme is the concept of the woman as a fragile creature whom man sustained in leisure. This woman's only useful functions were to bear children and inspire men toward higher goals.

From the dawn of human history until the industrial revolution, woman worked side by side with man, doing fully half of the work of the world. The small family unit as it exists in America today is a fairly recent phenomenon. In the beginning of civilized life the family was a self-con-

tained economic unit to which every able-bodied man, woman, and child contributed his labor. Sisters, daughters, brothers, and sons and all their children and widows constituted the family. Men and women worked side by side in this family cooperative. There was some division of labor, but when helpers were needed in the fields the women joined the men as do peasant women in Europe today.

**I**T WAS during the industrial revolution that the new mills relegated the spinning wheel and the loom to the attic. Great-great-grandmother started buying cloth in the store, and great-grandmother stopped butchering her own hogs and began buying Fluffo and Armour's bacon. The bread pans and the churn were sent to the attic. Grandmother began to patronize the bakery and the creamery. She began to buy ready-made clothes for herself and kept the sewing machine for mending purposes. She sold the old kerosene or wood stove for junk, bought a new gas range, and turned the ice box into a Frigidaire. Mother threw out the Mason jars and began to buy canned and frozen foods.

Who now did the weaving, spinning, sewing, butchering, canning, preserving, churning, and baking? Most of the new factory workers were men. Men were now doing work that for centuries had been done by women.

It was not long before women followed their work out of the home. Then entered the spinning mills and bakeries, the garment factories and creameries and went on doing the work they had done always.

**S**OCIETY looks to college-trained women for their contributions in four major areas of life:

Family living — child-bearing and rearing.

Participation in community life—work in the church, the school, community organizations and government.

Support of cultural life—art, drama, music, and sports.

Employment—primarily in the professions and managerial posts in business (when the economic status of the family demands it).

These areas are presented in the order of importance as the woman herself would express them and as society would approve them. The young girl begins her family life education when she starts in the toddlerhood stage to act out the roles of mother and wife. This education has begun when she puts on her mother's high heels and engages in dramatic play.

There is never a time in the life of the female child when she is not preparing for family living. Even in the gang age when it is largely a "Boys—UGH!" stage, the girl still continues to see herself married to some wonderful, handsome man.

Of course, she cannot imagine that this man will be like any *boy* that she knows. He is more likely to be a composite of her father, Tab Hunter, and Pat Boone. Nevertheless the girl knows that her first business in life is that of being a woman.

Her brother does not develop his concept of husband and father until late adolescence or just before marriage. His interests are centered around occupations first and other areas of his life become secondary. The young college man does not have to wrestle with the decision of marriage or a career and he may be quite impatient with his girl friend as she faces this dilemma.

The success or failure of their marriage will depend to a large extent upon the training and preparation that the young wife has had in getting ready to serve in her dual roles of bread winner and wife, and upon the young husband's attitudes toward these roles.

Where will he have gained these attitudes?

In most cases he will have obtained them from his own family life which is more likely to have been a traditional pattern with the mother not working outside the home. Most young couples have planned that the wife will work at least during the early years of the marriage. How successfully are they prepared for this kind of arrangement?

**I**T is the business of the college or university to face up to the fact that the woman will first of all be a wife and mother and secondly a career person.

The training and education must center around this basic premise. Few would wish to change it. Yet in our present system we have the emphasis upon the wrong side of the ledger. We emphasize the professional training first and tend to de-emphasize the education for family living.

We insist that the college woman have certain specified degree requirements, four semesters of physical education, and then we rely upon a haphazard system of electives to insure that her needs in other areas will be met.

Subconsciously we tend to feel that her training for homemaking has been conducted by her mother and completed in her own home before she entered college. A study of present-day family living would disprove this assumption.

There has been a shift in the socializing

functions previously performed by the family. The frontier family provided most of the religious training that the child was to receive. Today this training is largely a matter of one hour on Sunday morning, and the family does not participate.

In the past the recreational activities were centered in the home, but today's child as well as adult finds his recreation outside the family setting. Even the function of character-building is no longer solely the responsibility of the family.

The family appears to be unable to perform its earlier social functions.

We can overlook this or we can face it squarely. We can go on pretending that young women are going to be prepared by some sort of vanished magic for this business of homemaking, or we can begin educating them for this task and thereby give back to the family some of its "rightful" functions.

Recent studies here at the University of Oklahoma show that we graduate only 25% of the women students who enrol. Most of these graduates will marry soon after their college educations have been completed. It is perhaps safe to estimate that only 10% of this graduating group will never marry. Most of the 75% who enter and never finish college quit school to be married at the end of the freshman or sophomore years. Yet we continue to emphasize professional training and overlook the needs of the majority group.

In general, the scholastic aptitude scores of the women students are higher than those of the men students, and the greater academic ability of these women students is noted in their better achievement marks.

Perhaps this is explained by the fact that public school teaching has always been a good business for women and will continue to attract more able young women students. Yet these same women will frequently find that they are paid less than their male colleagues when they enter the teaching profession. Little can be done about the salary differences, but we might ask the question, Should teacher preparation be the same for these two groups?

The women students reveal that they have a better understanding of child development and the role of the teacher when they enter the professional education program. The study and care of children is a large part of the teacher's job, and the young woman has been learning and practicing this role for some time. The more able young woman is likely to be quite bored as the professor begins "at the beginning" to build the basic concepts and concomitant learnings that are necessary for the male student. Certainly this method is

not a part of equality in our democracy.

Instead, why not offer these young women a broader education that would reach out to include more philosophy, sociology, literature, psychology, and art and thus recognize the differences between the two groups? These courses could more than enrich her later teacher preparation training. They will serve as necessary education for her first and most basic occupation of being a homemaker.

Optimum education for the woman student might include the following kinds of courses designed to fulfill the four major areas of her life.

Family living—courses in child development, psychology, family living, nutrition and food preparation, clothing selection and construction, home management, and family finance.

Participation in community life—courses in government, history, economics, sociology, and philosophy.

Support of cultural life—courses in philosophy, art, music, drama, literature, and physical education.

Employment—such courses as determined by degree requirements for specialization in a particular field.

In our present system of curricular offerings we have reversed these areas for the woman students. We start them off in professional fields and then let them choose family living courses as electives in the senior year. Certainly this is a pattern that would seem to be more appropriate for our men students. How long will we continue to educate the women in this "lost rib" fashion?

Mary Brown will graduate from O. U. this spring, and a few days after graduation she will repeat the wedding vows with her fiancé, Jim Jones. In 1980 Mary and Jim will send young Jimmy back to their Alma Mater. With our present system we may have to ask young Jimmy how well he assumed his responsibility in bringing up his parents.

But, let us hope that we can ask, "Jimmy, did your parents succeed in giving you a good home life?"

The question depends to a large extent upon the institution of higher education. When charged with failing to educate for family living—how will *we* plead? Guilty or not guilty?

**Hal Muldrow Agency**

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