

## MENS MENTI

When mind to mind courses  
And each tongue discourses  
What rapture, what bliss fills the air.

Each says that the faces  
In far distant places  
Could not with his true love compare.

They reckon not forces,  
But each one recourses  
To sweet sounds chosen with care,

To impeccable graces  
And sweet-smelling laces  
And all sorts of that very stuff there.

Such conduct in horses  
Would certainly force us  
To look to the heavens and stare,

And pray heaven's maces  
To batter or brace us  
But straighten and make us aware.

In short mind's resources  
And infinite sources  
The terms of such conduct declare,

That midst warm embraces  
These same foolish faces  
Might shore up that heavenly stair.

—CHOYA—

## BARE FEET AND A FLASHLIGHT

The swirling mists of sleep were swept away, and I woke to consciousness with a jolt. Frozen with a nameless terror, I lay in the hot night, straining to hear I knew not what. I listened for a tense eternity. And then I heard it—a low cry of panic, which brought me, trembling, to the open window. My frightened eyes tried to penetrate the murky darkness of the clearing, but saw only the darker forms of the giant pines silhouetted against the starless sky.

Abruptly as a pistol shot, a board creaked in the direction of the left wing of the cottage. Appalled, I saw a pale, indistinct figure standing on the outdoor stairway which led to the upper

apartment. As though hypnotized, I stared at the figure in the darkness. Once more I heard that low urgent cry, "Mother! Mo-o-ther! Mo-o-o-ther!" That voice—I knew it! Suddenly limp with relief, I realized that the figure in the dark was my employer's seventeen-year-old son David.

"Drinking again," I thought, turning back to my bed. "Guess he's been on another of his wild parties." And then, "Hey, wait a minute! He sounds terrified. There must be something wrong!"

At the window again, I called, "David, are you sick? What's the matter?"

"Who's that?" came the quick, scared voice.

"It's only Doreen. What's the matter?"

"There's a bunch of men in the kitchen! I heard them! they're down there talking. And Father won't be back from Toronto until Friday! There's a whole lot of them down there."

"Are you sure? How do you know?"

"I heard them. They're all roaming around the kitchen and getting into the cupboards and knocking everything over and—"

"Oh don't be so silly, David," I laughed. "I don't hear a sound. You must be dreaming. Go on back to bed before you wake the children. There's not a soul—" Below there was a crash, followed by angry grunts and mutterings. Through suddenly trembling lips, I whispered, "Oh!! Oh my goodness, David!"

"I'm scared!" he whispered back. "Mo-o-o-ther!"

"Hush David! Don't wake your mother and the children. Now listen. While your father is away, you're the man of the family. Should you go down there and see what's going on?"

"Oh! no, I won't! You go down. You're working here. Why don't you go?"

"Oh for goodness sake," I'm a children's nurse, not a police department."

"Well I'm not going down there. You can go if you want to," stated David, as he started back up the stairs. From below came a sound of empty bottles rolling across the floor, and from the stairs I heard again, "I'm scared MO-O-O-THER!"

My, my, these city fellows are certainly brave!" I thought, while aloud I scolded impatiently, "Oh for heaven's sake, stop calling your mother!" and added impulsively, "Okay. If you won't go I will. You wait there till I call you."

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Snatching up a flashlight, I opened my door, and in my bare feet, hurried silently down the long dark hall, past the bedrooms of the sleeping children. At the head of the stairs I listened. Already I was beginning to regret my hasty decision. A shiver of fear chased itself along my spine, for the grunting and groaning, banging and clattering sounded much louder now. My heart thudding loudly, seemed to drown out all the noises below.

What was going on down there? Rampant imagination suggested drunken burglars arguing over their loot—starving convicts escaped from prison—unscrupulous murderers fleeing from the police.

For a moment I considered racing back to my room. Then, clutching the flashlight tighter in my trembling hands, I moved slowly down the dark stairway, my courage sinking with every step. Hand on the kitchen door, I caught my breath. Not a sound came out of the ominous blackness. Now what?

Again my imagination raced. Had **they** heard me coming? Were they waiting just inside the door for me?

I listened. Still no sound. Slowly, carefully, I pushed open the door and anxiously scrutinized the dark room. Everything was in order. The kitchen was empty. Nothing moved. Not a sound broke the quiet. On silent bare feet, I moved stealthily into the centre of the kitchen and peered about.

Abruptly, someone stirred in the long screened porch next to the kitchen! I spun around, my heart missing a beat. Someone else moved, and bumped into the rocking chair, setting it in motion. There was an angry grunt. Something heavy crashed against the table. Suddenly angry, I crossed quickly to the door, and pressed the button of the flashlight.

In the circle of yellow light, the rocking chair still moved. Empty pop bottles rolled crazily around the floor. A chair was overturned. The garbage can was upset, and refuse was strewn across the room. And then, as the light passed from one object to another, I saw the unscrupulous murderers, the drunken burglars of my imagination.

Laughing hysterically, I called in a shaky voice to the still-waiting David, "It's all right, David. You can come on down now. It's only a couple of hungry coons in the garbage can!"

—DOREEN CUSACK '58—