



"There's the hut!" Clarisse stepped close to me to see where my finger was pointing. Very quietly she put her arm around me and kissed me. I was so surprised and bewildered I almost cried out

Childless Spring

By Ray Bradbury

If you can remember being baffled and hurt by an adult world, you'll like this story about a kid who fought desperately, with strange weapons, against ever growing up

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VINCENT GUISE

THAT week, so many years ago, I thought my mother and father were poisoning me. And now, twenty years later, I'm not so sure they didn't. There's no way of telling.

It all comes back to me through the simple expedient of an examined trunk in the attic. This morning I pulled back the brass hasps and lifted the lid, and the immemorial odor of mothballs shrouded the unstrung tennis rackets, the worn sneakers, the shattered toys, the rusty roller skates. These implements of play, seen again through older eyes, make it seem only an hour ago I rushed in from the shady streets, all asweat, the cry of "Ollie, Ollie, Oxen Free!" still excitedly trembling on my lips.

I was a weird and ridiculous boy then with brooding and uncommon ideas; the poison and the fear were only part of me in those years. I began making notes in a lined nickel tablet when I was only twelve. I can feel the stubby pencil in my fingers now, writing in those timeless spring mornings.

I PAUSED to lick my pencil, thoughtfully. I sat in my upstairs room at the beginning of a clear endless day, blinking at the rose-stamped wallpaper, my feet bare, my hair shorn to a hairbrush stubble, thinking.

"I didn't know I was sick until this week," I wrote. "I've been sick for a long time. Since I was ten. I'm twelve now."

I scrouged up my face, bit my lips hard, focused blurrily on the tablet. "Mom and Dad have *made* me sick. Teachers at school also gave this—" I hesitated. Then I wrote: "Disease to me! The only ones who don't scare me are the other kids. Isabel Skelton and Willard Bowers and Clarisse Mellin; they aren't very sick yet. But I'm *really* bad off . . ."

I laid the pencil down. I went to the bathroom mirror to see myself. My mother called me from downstairs to come to breakfast. I pressed close to the mirror, breathing so fast I made a big damp fog on the glass. I saw how my face was—changing.

The bones of it. Even the eyes. The pores of my nose. My ears. My forehead. My hair. All the things that'd been me for such a long time, starting to become something else. ("Douglas, come to breakfast, you'll be late for school!") As I took a quick bath I saw my body floating under me. I was inside it. There was no escape. And the bones of it were doing things, shifting, mixing around!

Then I began singing and whistling loud, so I wouldn't think about it; until Father, rapping on the door, told me to quiet down and come eat.

I sat at the breakfast table. There was a yellow box of cereal and milk, white cold in a pitcher, and shining spoons and knives, and eggs planked with bacon, Dad reading his paper, Mom moving around the kitchen. I sniffed. I felt my stomach lie down like a whipped dog.

"What's wrong, Son?" Dad looked at me casually. "Not hungry?"

"No, sir."

"A boy should be hungry in the morning," said Father.

"You go ahead and eat," said Mother at me. "Go on now. Hurry."

I looked at the eggs. They were poison. I looked at the butter. It was poison. The milk was so white and creamy and poisonous in its pitcher, and the cereal was brown and crisp and tasty in a green dish with pink flowers on it.

Poison, all of them, poison! The thought ran in my head like ants at a picnic. I caught my lip in my teeth.

"Unh?" said Dad, blinking at me. "You said?"

"Nothing," I said. "Except I'm not hungry."

I couldn't say I was ill and that food made me ill. I couldn't say that cookies, cakes, cereals and soups and vegetables had done *this* to me, could I? No, I had to sit, swallowing nothing, my heart beginning to pound.

"Well, drink your milk at least, and go on," said Mother. "Dad, give him money for a good lunch at school. Orange juice, meat and milk. No candy."

She didn't have to warn me on candy. It

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Dorothy Liebes at her loom, with Chinese Venita Fong, one of her weavers

Weaving of Art

BY RUTH
CARSON

Untutored as we are, we'd always thought that weaving was something designed to keep idle hands from becoming the devil's playthings. Now we learn it is a rewarding hobby and a fascinating art

WHEN Dorothy Liebes arrives in New York on one of her regular commuting trips from San Francisco, she moves into a hotel suite with a secretary and two telephones; unpacks her hats by John-Frederics and clothes by Adrian; hangs lengths of magnificent hand-woven textiles by Liebes on the wall; and is ready for business.

From then on, the telephones seldom stop ringing. People are milling around the place. And Dorothy herself doesn't stop talking; except when she loses her voice. "I may give other people nervous breakdowns," she says, "but nothing ever happens to me except that I lose my voice."

Dorothy Liebes is tall, willowy, blond and from California. She's a weaver, out to prove

that artists can be practical. Authorities say that Dorothy Liebes is perhaps the greatest weaver living. The hand-woven textiles she turns out in her San Francisco studio have won awards here and abroad. They are credited with influencing the trend to rough textiles and clear colors, now evident in so many of our decorative fabrics. They are used in houses, clubs and hotels from Honolulu to Eastport, from Texas to Connecticut. They're on exhibition in museums, too.

But that isn't what's causing the commotion in her hotel room. What she is more likely talking about is machine-made tablecloths. She is proud of her tablecloths. "Imagine," she says, spreading out before you a cotton cloth in tweedlike weave, a variant on the old-time beer check—styled by Liebes, woven by machine—"a dollar ninety-five cents wholesale. Cloth and four napkins."

That tablecloth is a key to the current Liebes success. A superb craftsman herself, she holds no brief for handwork if a machine can do the job as well. Obviously more people can afford to own machine-made things. Her high-priced, custom-order work is a "laboratory for experiment, financed by rich people, and for people who really love hand-made things."

She is consultant to half a dozen mills,

working on things like the upholstery of your new car, the sound-filter screen of your radio, the ticking on your mattress. She works with manufacturers of wallpaper (they intend to reproduce, photographically, the textured look of her hand-loomed fabrics) and lamp shades. ("Shades can be woven of all kinds of light-filtering materials.")

In her hotel-room jam sessions you meet not only people like Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, but businessmen who see that good art can pay. Some of them are British textile men, who want her to put on a show in London. Her latest convert is a necktie manufacturer.

The Art of Blending Materials

Her color schemes are snips of yarns and materials. For convenience, a dozen or more combinations are fastened on a strip of buckram. They are made out of such things as lucite, cotton, hemp, copper, wool, ribbon and reed. The mixture is deliberate. The Liebes textiles are famous for color and texture, achieved by just such a blending of materials.

Dorothy Liebes, who was Dorothy Wright then, studied textile design at the University of California, and learned to weave there.

She spent a summer at Hull House in Chicago, weaving. Then she went to Columbia University to study for a master's in education. "When you are poor you need a way of making a living. My father was a professor and my mother was a teacher, so they thought a teaching diploma was a good safe thing to have. But I wanted to go to Paris, so I bought a loom and wove night and day to supplement my income from part-time teaching. I made eleven hundred dollars in three months. I wove baby blankets for Saks and for Madison Avenue shops."

Back from Paris and out of school, Dorothy Wright became Mrs. Leon Liebes of the department store Liebeses in San Francisco, and there was no need for her to earn money. But she was a weaver and she liked to weave. Also, a loom can be a very decorative thing to have around. She made one with a hand-carved ram's head on the frame, painted it red and gold and put it in the living room. She made other looms, too. Soon there were looms in the dining room, in the sunroom, even in the bathroom. Her friends came around to help her use them. Eventually Dorothy and her looms and her friends moved into a studio downtown, for more room and convenience.

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