

Starts from
part of area
for her

Chapter I

It's 1945:

Bang-Bang-Bang.

Yay-Yay-Yay.

Retepy is sitting by her kitchen window...Rather she is standing on the chair watching out the window at all the dancing and cheering in the street.

"The war is over! The war is over!"

"I want to see the war is over," said Retepy. "I want to see the war is over."

Retepy was only three years old. What did she know about the war?

...

Retepy did not know what a war was, but she knew all about suffering. Retepy's mom knew all about suffering. Sherrie, her mom, wanted to go to law school—but had no money for it. She was so frustrated. It must be Retepy's fault. She kept her from going to law school.

And she couldn't handle a three-year-old. Retepy would play with her dolls. She loved her dolls. But if she would leave them on the floor instead of in the toy box, Sherrie would have a fit. She would take a belt and whip Retepy.

"Retepy—what is the matter with you? Are you trying to upset me?"

Retepy couldn't understand what she did wrong. All she knew was that she was bad. That's why her mother beat her. Sherrie would take the belt and beat her around her legs. Retepy would then taunt her mother by laughing. Her mother would get madder and madder and would keep beating her. Finally Sherrie would feel guilty and stop and would try to hug Retepy. Retepy would retaliate and not let her mother hug her. But Retepy still felt that she, herself, was bad.

However, when Retepy played with her dolls, and her dolls were bad, Retepy would spank her dolls.

"Don't spank your dolls," he mother would say.

Retepy could not understand. What was wrong with spanking her dolls? After all, her mother spanked her.

Also, when Retepy was younger, about two, Sherrie would sit at the table with Retepy and feed her. This was OK as long as the doorbell didn't ring, or the phone didn't ring. Then Sherrie would immediately answer the doorbell or the phone. But Retepy better not make a mess if she fed herself, so Sherrie took the food away to talk with someone else—someone more important than Retepy. This would upset Retepy, but too bad for her.

Some years passed the Retepy got a little older. She would play with her friends outside. Retepy would love to play house. One person would be the mother, another the father, and the rest, the children.

Retepy liked being the mother best. There was a lot to do as the mother—cooking, dressing the children, cleaning the house—it was fun. It was also fun being a child—going to

school, playing games—a lot of fun. But Retepy hated being the father. The father never did anything. It was boring—being the father.

There were, however, two fond memories Retepy had of her own father.

One memory was of herself sitting on the living room couch with her parents. Her father had just come home from work and her mother, as usual, started complaining about her.

“Retepy is eating my insides out. She is eating my insides out.”

Then Retepy’s parents went into the kitchen. Her mother kept saying, “She’s eating my insides out. She’s eating my insides out.”

Retepy got brave and, which was out of character, and answered back, “I did not!”

Well, Sherrie came flying into the living room. Retepy was petrified. She thought her mother would tear here apart. Fortunately, her father, and this was also out of character, protected Retepy. He wouldn’t let Sherrie near Retepy. There was actually a wrestling match between them.

Retepy was so grateful. Her father was protecting her.

Another fond memory Retepy had of her father was when she was five and a half and her mother was pregnant with Retepy’s brother. Her mother couldn’t stand the smell of food cooking, so she sent Retepy and her father out to eat. They went to a certain restaurant nearby. Retepy’s father always ordered liver and onions. So Retepy always had the same thing, liver and onions. And Retepy loved the dish, liver and onions.

This event occurred several times. Retepy never forgot the restaurant and when she ate with her father. Those were some of the most glorious days in her life. But everything changed when Retepy’s brother was born.

Chapter II

At four years old Retepy desperately wanted to read. “Mommy” she would beg. “Teach me the alphabet. Teach me to read.”

But Sherrie was warned that she should not teach her child to read. That was the going propaganda in those days. And a teacher friend of Sherrie also warned her when Sherrie protested, “I’m going to teach her to read anyway.”

“You’d better not,” her friend said.

For some reason it was not considered good. So Sherrie refused to teach Retepy to read, and not even to recite the alphabet.

But Retepy taught herself to read numbers. She knew how to count to one hundred and she learned to read numbers off the calendar. Sherrie always had a calendar on the wall in the kitchen. Retepy would write the numbers down on a piece of paper. She was able to read and write numbers up to thirty-one.

Her mother also taught Retepy how to read a clock--the kind with a dial. But she still couldn’t read words.

Retepy was five years old when she finally attended kindergarten. She was thrilled. She was under the impression that she would learn to read the first day of school. Well, that didn’t happen.

And she grew to hate kindergarten. Her teacher, Miss Nibar, was a witch. She would get mad at the children and yell and stamp her feet. But Retepy had her ways of getting back at Miss Nibar. Here are some of the shenanigans that went on:

Retepy had it all planned. She was fed up at Miss Nibar’s yelling at her for this and for that. She decided she would do something to get under Miss Nibar’s nerves and Miss Nibar would not be able to yell at her. She soon got her chance. Open-School-Day arrived and Retepy’s mother was there. Retepy knew Miss Nibar would not yell at her with her mother present.

It was time to play a game. The children all formed a circle. Miss Nibar said, “Let’s all walk around in a circle.” So the children all walked around to the right—except Retepy. She walked around to the left. Miss Nibar gently corrected Retepy. “She’s testing me,” she said to her mother. Little did that old witch know.

Sometime after Open-School-Day was over Miss Nibar made two golden paper crowns.

“We are going to have a king and a queen everyday,” said Miss Nibar.

And everyday there was a new king and a new queen. A little boy and a little girl each wore one of the crowns.

Miss Nibar picked different king and queen each day, but never Retepy. It turned out that Retepy was the last one picked for queen. This really ticked Retepy off. There was no one else to pick, so she had to be picked.

“Well,” thought Retepy. “She’s not getting away with this.”

So when snack time came the whole class sat at tables and each child had two cookies and a small container of milk. Retepy, too, sat there with her crown on her head, ticked off. So she decided to get back at Miss Nibar. There she sat, her mouth closed, humming as loud as she could.

“Whose making that noise?” yelled Miss Nibar, stamping her foot.

Retepy just sat there humming.

“Whose making that noise?” yelled Miss Nibar louder and still stamping her foot.

This scene went on and on and the teacher was having more and more of a fit.

“Are you making that noise?” she said of each child.

The child would say, “no.”

Finally she came to the little boy sitting next to Retepy. “Are you making that noise?” Yelled Miss Nibar.

“No,” said the little boy.

“Well, who is?” screamed Miss Nibar.

The little boy pointed to Retepy.

Caught! She was caught!

Retepy had to go and sit on a chair in the corner. What did she care. She took her two cookies with her and left the milk, which she didn’t want anyway. So she sat in the corner, with her crown on her head, eating her cookies.

And all Miss Nibar could say was, “And I made her queen! And I made her queen!”

And all Retepy would think was, “yeah you had to. You had no choice. I was the only one left.”

And so Retepy sat in the corner very satisfied.

Chapter III

When Retepy was six years old, her baby brother, Jimmy was born. But Retepy could never remember her baby brother's name. So whenever anyone asked her the name of her new brother, she would give a name—John, Pete, Richie—whatever she could think of, but never Jimmy.

Retepy wanted to help take care of her baby brother, feed him, dress him, something, but she was never allowed to. It was always her mother. She started to get a little jealous of her mother. She got all the privileges. Retepy started to think that maybe instead of a brother, she should have had a dog. At least the dog would be hers, not her mother's.

When Sherrie first brought Jimmy home from the hospital, she tried to breastfeed him. But Jimmy didn't want the breast. He only wanted the bottle like he had in the hospital.

Retepy thought Jimmy was crazy. She asked her mother if she could be breastfed. Her mother told her she couldn't breastfeed her. She had no more milk.

Retepy knew from the minute her mother tried to breastfeed Jimmy that breastfeeding is what Retepy would do when she grew up and had children.

Jimmy took up all of Sherrie's time. Then, when Jimmy was a year old, Sherrie hired a nanny, Mimi. Mimi loved Jimmy. All she could talk about was Jimmy.

Retepy retreated into the background. Sometimes she would go into one of the closets and hide in the closet. Nobody ever missed her.

Once, when Sherrie was out for a while, Mimi was home alone with Retepy and Jimmy. Mimi made Jimmy lunch, but she never made Retepy lunch. Retepy was hungry. She thought of going to the refrigerator and taking her own lunch, but she was afraid she'd get yelled at for messing something up. So Retepy stayed hungry.

But when Jimmy got a little older, about three years old, she and Jimmy would play together. Retepy made up all kinds of fun games. They would go into Retepy's closet. In the closet was a special door. The door led to a magical kingdom, Unicorn Land. Then they would leave the closet and enter Unicorn Land. They would play and play and have such a good time in that magical land.

Then there was Retepy's doll carriage with all her favorite dolls. The doll carriage was a present from her parents and Retepy loved it. It was a very expensive doll carriage so Retepy felt guilty about having it. Her parents really couldn't afford it. However, soon Jimmy started playing with the doll carriage and all the dolls. And Jimmy loved the game.

Their parents started saying, "It's a good that we got that doll carriage after all because now Jimmy's playing with it."

Retepy then felt relieved.

Chapter IV

But let's get back to Retepy's school and what went on there.

Retepy finished kindergarten and started first grade. But Retepy didn't want to go to first grade. She hated school so much that she didn't want to go back to school at all.

When the first day of school arrived, Sherrie took Retepy to her first grade class. But Retepy refused to stay there. And she followed her mother back home.

Sherrie was furious. She took Retepy back to school again. But the first grade teacher was very nice to Retepy. She wasn't angry at all. So Retepy decided to stay there after all.

First grade was fun. But Retepy, as always, was sick much of the time and missed a lot of school. And she missed learning to read.

But Retepy was able to pick it up on her own. The teacher had sentences written on the blackboard. A student would go up to the blackboard and say each word pointing to each one with a pointer. Then another student would do the same thing, and so on. Retepy paid close attention and soon she was able to do the same thing.

Hooray for Retepy! Now she can read!

Retepy's mother may not have taught Retepy to read, but she did teach her a little about history, and the freedom we have in this country, the United States of America.

"We have freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assemble."

She went on to explain each of these freedoms.

"We have the freedom to speak what we believe—the freedom to write what we believe—and the freedom to come together as a group."

Retepy was thrilled to learn all these things. Her mother would remind her of all these freedoms every time she sent Retepy off to school.

And every day Retepy went to school she would pass a closed door outside the school with a sign on it. Retepy would look at the sign. It had two words on it. The first word he could read, "No."

The second word she couldn't read, but it started with "L."

"What is that word?" She wondered.

One day she was walking with her mother and they were passing by the school and they came to that door with the sign.

"What does that sign say?" Retepy asked her mother.

It says, "NO LOITERING," Sherrie answered.

"What does that mean?" questioned Retepy.

"It means you cannot just stand around."

"But why not?" Retepy questioned further.

“Because you might be looking for trouble.”

Now this puzzled Retepy and she started to think, “If you can’t stand around, how can you have freedom of assembly? And if they can take your freedom away for one reason, they can take it away for any reason.”

This really troubled Retepy and it was just the beginning of taking what she was being taught with a grain of salt.

There was also another case Retepy took with a grain of salt. This was in third grade. The class was seated on the floor in front of the room. The teacher was teaching the American revolution. England was portrayed as the bad guys and the colonies were portrayed as the innocent victims. Retepy wondered, “How do they teach the American revolution to the children in England. They couldn’t teach it the same way.”

But Retepy kept her ideas to herself. Nobody was interested in her questions. In fact, her parents did not even like when she questioned. Her parents would get annoyed at her. It was much safer to keep silent. So that’s what she did. She kept silent.

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Some years passed and Retepy reached the top year in her school, sixth grade. Unfortunately, Retepy was sick most of the time in sixth grade and missed a lot of school.

She had to take medicine, which she hated. There was this horrible tasting white liquid medicine that looked like milk. She hated the medicine and began also hating milk. Then there were these pink pills which made her nauseous. Since then whenever she saw anything that color pink, she got nauseous.

Then at the end of the year the students had to take IQ tests. All the students took the test, but none of them were allowed to find out their IQ.

“Let’s look in the teacher’s desk after school,” Retepy’s friend, Joyce said to Retepy, “and find out what our IQ is.”

“Should we?” questioned Retepy.

“Why not?” said Joyce.

“OK,” said Retepy.

So after school Joyce and Retepy went up to the teacher’s desk and found the drawer the IQ tests were in. Joyce went through the tests and found her test. There on the first page of the report was her IQ, 130.

“Mine is 130,” said Joyce. “Go find yours.”

“I can’t,” said Retepy guiltily.

“I’ll look for you,” said Joyce. Joyce went through the papers and found Retepy’s report.

“Your IQ is also 130,” said Joyce. “Now let’s go.”

The teacher the very next day told the class that some of the students were going in the SP (Special Progress) class in junior high. They would do seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in two years.

“Retepy,” the teacher said. “You made the SP’s, but I’m having you go to the regular class instead because you missed a lot of school because you were out sick most of the year.”

Soon there was graduation from sixth grade, summer vacation, and then Retepy started junior high.

Chapter V

“Junior high is easy,” said Retepy to herself. “I thought it would be hard, but it’s easy.”

Sometimes Retepy would feel good and would hug her mother. Sherrie would never hug her back.

“What are you doing that for,” Sherrie would say. “You yelled at me this morning and now you’re doing that.”

Retepy gave up. She stopped hugging her mother.

And then she started having all these funny feelings about her body and about boys. She would think to herself, “Mom explained to me how a baby is conceived, but there’s more to sex than that. I really feel confused.”

“Mom,” said Retepy to Sherrie one day. “Can I go to a psychiatrist?”

“That’s just for rich people,” answered Sherrie.

Retepy thought, “I’d like a boyfriend, but all the boys I know are so obnoxious. I’d like to have sex.”

Retepy started thinking, “maybe I’ll have an imaginary boyfriend. Then I can have sex with my imaginary boyfriend and I won’t get pregnant.”

At the same time Retepy’s figure was changing to that of a young girl blossoming out. But Sherrie did not like the way Retepy looked. She would poke Retepy in the behind and mutter, “you’re sticking out. I got you a girdle to wear so you won’t stick out.”

Retepy tried on the girdle. “It hurts. It’s so tight,” she would say. “I can’t wear it.”

“Then you will have to wear looser clothes.” Sherrie said.

So Retepy started wearing loose clothes, loose pants, loose skirts, huge t-shirts, and huge sweaters. Her friends would make fun of her. “You look like raggedyann,” they laughed.

“I like big clothes,” lied Retepy.

Toby laughed at Retepy more than anyone else. “Raggedyann! Raggedyann!”

“But I have a boyfriend and you don’t,” responded Retepy to Toby one day.

“I don’t believe you,” said Toby.

“Yes, I do,” lied Retepy.

“So where is he?” Said Toby

“He goes to another school. His name is Ralph and we go to bed together every night.”

“Whore! Whore! Laughed Toby. “Retepy’s a whore! Retepy’s a whore!”

Everyday Retepy heard, “Whore! Whore! Retepy’s a whore! Retepy’s a whore!”

And the rumors started flying. And Toby wouldn’t let up.

Then there was Bob in Retepy’s class.

“Hi Retepy,” said Bob. “Would you like to go to the movies with me sometime?”

“No thank you,” said Retepy.

“You can go with me. My girlfriend, Alice, won’t know. She’s in another class.”

“No thank you,” said Retepy again.

“Hey Raggedyann! Hey whore! What are you doing talking to Alice’s boyfriend? Alice is not going to like this,” said Toby.

Next thing Retepy knew was that Alice and her girls’ gang were after her. They would beat her up after school.

So far Retepy’s parents didn’t know what was going on.

“My parents would kill me if they knew about all this. What if they knew about my secret boyfriend and that I’m a whore.”

But Retepy had an escape. She belonged to the Girl Scouts and there were Girl Scout meetings in the Veterans’ Club right across the street from the school.

“Girl Scouts is pretty much fun,” thought Retepy. “Most of the time it’s fun. “I love the singing and folk dancing. I love getting badges for the cooking and sewing I do at home. But some of the games are boring.”

Whenever she and some of the other girls got bored they would meet in the kitchen. No one bothered them or checked on them in the kitchen. So the twelve and thirteen year old girls had the room all to themselves. Retepy and the other girls would open the refrigerator. In the refrigerator there were always several bottles of beer. Retepy and her friends would take turns drinking the beer. Nothing like Girl Scout meetings!

The Girl Scout meetings ended for the summer. They finished one week before school was out for the summer.

Retepy finally went to her last day of seventh grade at school. On her way home there she was—Alice—jealous Alice. Retepy had nothing to do with Alice’s boyfriend, but there she was—furious with Retepy.

“You little whore—I’ll beat the shit out of you,” screamed Alice. She ran after Retepy and started punching. Retepy could do nothing but fight back. Finally, after Retepy got punched in the face, Alice backed off and left, whispering “whore” under her breath.

As if that wasn’t bad enough, Retepy ended up with a bruise on her face. When Retepy’s father saw that he was furious.

“How did you get that?” He asked.

“I ran into a fist,” Retepy said.

Her father was angry.

Retepy’s parents finally decided to take Retepy out of junior high and enroll her in eighth grade in a private school.

“I’m glad I’m going to a different school,” thought Retepy. “And I’m glad I’m going to wear a uniform in this school.” Maybe I won’t have to wear a girdle or look like Raggedyann.

Retepy was correct on both counts. Anyway, school started in September. Right now there was summer vacation.

Chapter VI

Summer was spent in the country. Retepy and her family, her mom, dad and brother, all vacationed in a rented house at Lake George along with her dad's friend, Uncle Bill.

Uncle Bill and her dad worked at a pharmaceutical company together. Her family always had a gazillion drug samples for whatever ails you. And Uncle Bill was able to somehow get free cigarettes through the pharmaceutical company. And he smoked and smoked and smoked.

He smoked constantly on the four-hour trip they took together in his SUV to Lake George. He loved to smoke and he loved to drive. He was the one who did all the driving to Lake George.

"Are we there yet?" asked seven year old Jimmy every five to ten minutes.

"Not yet," was the answer.

Well, eventually, they did arrive at the vacation house. Uncle Bill and Retepy's dad brought in all the luggage.

"I'll run and get some pizzas and sodas from the pizza place we passed a few blocks away," said Uncle Bill afterward.

"OK, great," said Sherrie. "I'll set the table. I think we're all starving."

Retepy and the gang all enjoyed their lunch.

"This is so much fun," said Retepy.

"Yeah," said Jimmy.

By the time they finished lunch and finished unpacking, it was already 6pm.

"Let's get in the car and ride around and see the scenery," said Uncle Bill puffing on his cigarette. "Then we'll go to a restaurant and have dinner."

"OK," said everyone.

So off they went. The gang took in all the sights, had dinner in a family-style restaurant, then went home.

The two children showered and went to bed and the three adults sat on the porch for a while and talked.

"Lake George is a beautiful lake," said Uncle Bill. "And they have boating on the lake. I'd like to go boating tomorrow. And this house we rented is great—walking distance to the lake."

"Yes," said Sherrie. "We can boat tomorrow, swim tomorrow. It's so nice and peaceful here. Then in the evening we can eat out and stroll around town. And there are plenty of shows in the evening too."

"Well," said Uncle Bill. "I get kind of tired in the evening after dinner and a stroll. However, you two can go to a show. I'll stay home and relax and make sure the kids get to sleep. I got the TV, the newspaper, my books—just what I love. I'll be fine"

“Oh, I’ll feel kind of guilty doing that,” said Sherrie.

“Don’t be silly,” said Uncle Bill. I could never keep my eyes open for any show after a long day. You’d be doing me a favor. I’ll drive you guys to a show and then I’ll go home with the kids and put them to bed. And I, myself, will probably be sleeping when you come home.”

“That’s so nice of you,” said Sherrie. “And we can always take a taxi home. That’s no problem. Tonight I saw people taking taxis all over the place.”

“That sounds great,” said Uncle Bill. Well, you two can stay on the porch a while and enjoy the evening. I’m exhausted. I’ve got to go to bed. See you in the morning.”

So that’s just what occurred. Uncle Bill went to sleep. And after a while Retepy’s parents went to sleep. Everyone had a good night’s sleep after a long day and they all woke up refreshed in the morning.

Chapter VII

The next morning the gang was up by 7am.

"I'm hungry," said Retepy.

"I'm hungry," said Jimmy.

"Well," said Uncle Bill. "I'll drive all you guys for breakfast at the diner. Then we'll go supermarket shopping so we'll have some food in the house. Come on, everyone. Let's get moving and go for breakfast."

By the time they were all ready to go, it was almost 8 o'clock. They were seated in the diner by 8:30. They all had a fun breakfast of pancakes.

Then they went to the supermarket two blocks away and bought some food. They bought, among other things, at Uncle Bill's suggestion, ready-made sandwiches for lunch to take with them when they went to the lake. They then went home with all their treasures.

"OK," said Sherrie. "Everyone into your bathing suits. Take towels and bathrobes. I'll pack a lunch for each of you."

"I want to go swimming," said Retepy."

"I want to go swimming," said Jimmy."

"I'm going to take out a rowboat," said Uncle Bill.

Then when they all got ready, they walked two and one half blocks to Lake George.

"The lake is so peaceful and beautiful," Uncle George said to Retepy as they were walking. "Would you like to go in a rowboat with me? I'll teach you how to row. And on the other side of the lake there is a magic castle where a fairy princess once lived. You'll love it."

"Oh, I'd love that, Uncle Bill."

So, when they reached the lake Jimmy and his parents went swimming. One stayed with Jimmy while the other one swam. Then they switched roles. And Jimmy was having so much fun playing in the water with his parents.

Meanwhile, Uncle Bill and Retepy went rowboating.

"Don't wait for us when you are finished swimming," Uncle Bill told Retepy's parents. "We have a lot of lake to explore."

Uncle Bill rented a rowboat and Retepy and he got in. Uncle Bill started to row.

"I want to see the fairy princess castle," said Retepy. "What does it look like?"

"It's magical," said Uncle Bill puffing on his cigarette. "It's on the other side of the lake. I'll take you there."

Retepy loved being with Uncle Bill. He always paid so much attention to her and made her feel so special. Now he was taking her to see a magical castle. The castle of a fairy princess.

"Uncle Bill, can you teach me how to smoke?" asked Retepy.

“Of course I will,” said Uncle Bill. “As soon as we get to the magic castle.”

“Good,” laughed Retepy. “But don’t tell Mom and Dad.”

“Of course not,” said Uncle Bill. “It will be our secret.”

After a while they finally reached the other side of the lake. It was all trees, bushes, and tall grass and reeds. They then came to a path.

“We’ll park the boat here,” said Uncle Bill. He parked the boat, got out and then pulled it onto the path.

“Let me help you out,” he said to Retepy, holding her hands. They made it onto the path.

“Where is the magic castle?” asked Retepy.

“It’s this way into the woods,” said Uncle Bill.

They walked a few minutes and came to a little house.

“Oh,” said Retepy. Is this it?”

“This is it,” said Uncle Bill. “Come inside and I’ll teach you how to smoke.”

Uncle Bill opened the door with a key and they went inside. Then he said to Retepy:

“When I take a puff of this cigarette, open your mouth a little. I’ll blow the smoke into your mouth, then you’ll blow it out of your mouth, and you’ll be smoking.”

So Uncle Bill took a puff of his cigarette, put his mouth over Retepy’s mouth, and blew smoke into her mouth. Then Retepy blew the smoke out of her mouth.

“I’m smoking! I’m smoking!” giggled Retepy. “I’m smoking! I’m smoking!”

Retepy didn’t understand what was happening to her next. She laughed and laughed but it wasn’t funny. It hurt. And she didn’t feel that anything was happening to her. It was happening to the fairy princess. And all Uncle Bill would say is, “This is our secret. This is our secret.” Retepy was confused.

Afterward, Uncle Bill ate the lunch Sherrie gave him. Retepy wasn’t hungry, so Uncle Bill ate her lunch too.

Then they went to the rowboat, got in and Uncle Bill rowed back. Retepy was still confused but she laughed anyway. She was so special. She was a fairy princess. She would be his fairy princess for the whole three weeks of vacation.

When the vacation was over, Uncle Bill drove everyone back home in his SUV.

Soon it was the first day of school, the first day of eighth grade for Retepy.

Chapter VIII

Retepy started eighth grade. She made friends easily and she was a good student. Uncle Bill came around all the time to give Retepy rides in his SUV. Retepy was always laughing when she was with Uncle Bill. She was his fairy princess.

But after a few months something happened with Uncle Bill. Her father stopped calling him “Uncle Bill” and started calling him “Bastard Bill.” There was a big scandal. “Bastard Bill” was caught stealing drugs from the pharmaceutical company he worked for and selling them on the street. It was in the papers, on TV, on the radio. But at home when Retepy was around, everyone spoke about it in a hush-hush voice.

Uncle Bill never came around anymore. But Retepy knew he still loved her.

One day Retepy was walking to the store for her mother. There was a strange car following her.

“Retepy, Retepy,” she heard someone calling. It was Uncle Bill. Uncle Bill was driving that strange car.

“Get in Retepy, quick.”

Retepy got in.

“Retepy,” said Uncle Bill. “I have to go away—far away. I won’t be back for a long time. I’m going away for 99 years. But wait for me. I’ll be back. And always remember to keep our secret. You are my fairy princess. You are my special fairy princess.

“I’ll wait for you, Uncle Bill. I’ll wait for you. And I will keep our secret.”

“I have to go now, Retepy.”

“Good bye, Uncle Bill.”

Retepy got out of the car. She never saw Uncle Bill again. But she is waiting 99 years for him and she is keeping their special secret.

Chapter IX

After Retepy said good bye to Uncle Bill she began to feel lonely. She was no longer special in anybody's life.

She had her girlfriends but they didn't have the same interests as Retepy. They didn't read the books Retepy read. Retepy read anything she could get her hands on—novels, short stories, poetry, and the Bible. And also, she did something no one was aware of; she wrote short stories and poetry.

She did all this in her room with the door closed. Her parents seemed content that she was home and keeping out of trouble. They never asked her what she was doing in her room.

At school she would spend lunchtime with her girlfriends. But all they talked about was their school work and what they saw on television the night before.

"I don't understand them," thought Retepy. "There must be more to life than television and school work."

Then there were the boys. Retepy was attracted to boys, but kept them at arms' length. At the class parties, however, she did dance with them. And she did have a few platonic friends, like Stevie. Stevie was a special friend, platonic, but special. He would come over Retepy's house. They would do homework together, watch TV together and go out to the movies together; but that was it.

As far as boys went, Retepy kept true to Uncle Bill.

Chapter X

Then something happened at a class party. There was Mike. Mike was doing a slow dance with Retepy in a corner away from everyone else.

All of a sudden Mike put his hand on Retepy's breast. Retepy panicked. She ran away, called her father to take her home, put on her hat and coat, and waited outside for her father to come by in the car.

Retepy never mentioned what happened with Mike to her parents and she never went to a class party again.

Chapter XI

Then there was ninth grade.

Retepy's favorite subjects in ninth grade were algebra and geometry. First she took algebra and then geometry. She was thrilled that her father helped her with both these subjects. Retepy was so happy to have her father study with her that she paid no attention to the teacher explaining these subjects in class and just paid attention to her father teaching them to her. She was ecstatic.

Then it happened. Three quarters the way through her geometry course, Retepy and her father were studying geometry together at the kitchen table. It was a sunny day and the sun was shining in Retepy's eyes. So she got up to fix the blind to block out the sun and she just couldn't get the blind right.

"I don't want to keep my father waiting," thought Retepy. "I'd better sit down and study with him."

So Retepy sat down to study with her father.

"What are you doing?" her father growled. He got up, fixed the blind and walked away. That was the last time he ever studied with Retepy.

Chapter XII

Retepy finished ninth grade and then started tenth grade. She still studied, but did not do as well in tenth grade as in ninth grade.

But Stevie would still come over and study with Retepy. It was Stevie who kept Retepy on track with her studying.

But when Retepy was alone, she spent most of the time in her room reading novels, poetry, and the Bible and writing poetry and short stories.

Retepy started getting jealous of her brother, Jimmy. Jimmy would have his friends over the house and have a great time while Retepy stayed in her room.

“Why can’t I have friends and have a good time like Jimmy?” Retepy thought.

Chapter XIII

The eleventh and twelfth grades were lonely. Stevie came over once in a while. That was the bright star in Retepy's life. Other than that Retepy spent most of the time in her room with the door closed.

And summer vacations were boring. Ever since that summer in the country with Uncle Bill, Retepy's family never went away anymore. Her parents would sit in the living room, read newspapers and magazines, and watch TV.

Retepy decided during the summers to take some courses in summer school. Since there was no summer school at her own school, she went to a nearby high school. She took two semesters of French, two semesters of typing, and one semester of history. She did it for her own benefit and did not ask for credit for it at her own school. And, as usual, she would study in her room with the door closed.

Other times in her room she would think of her life after high school. She wanted to go to nursing school, but her parents said "no." It had to be a four-year college. After all, her parents reasoned, that was the best way to meet a husband.

Retepy would sit in her room and think about college.

"I'm no good," Retepy would think. "I can't do all that work. Four years of college! How will I ever manage that?! Why don't they let me do nursing school? I would love being a nurse and taking care of sick people. I used to play nurse and take care of my dolls when I was little. Or, at least, they could let me go to junior college. That's only two years. But four years?! That's so scary! I'm going to read the Bible a little right now. That always makes me feel better."

Chapter XIV

Some time passed and Retepy got into a four-year college. Her parents were very happy about it.

Soon Retepy was off to college. But she found the transition from high school to college very difficult.

“How can I keep up with all this reading?” Retepy worried. “I love to read but this is too much.”

“And all these college guys,” Retepy went on. “They suck. All they want is to get into your pants. And all the drinking and smoking the kids do. Is that what college is all about?”

Then Retepy met Ted. She met him at a school concert. Afterward he drove her back to the dorm. He gave her one quick kiss and that was it. And he didn’t smoke and he didn’t drink. “But he doesn’t go to our church,” Retepy said to herself. “My parents are not going to like that.”

Chapter XV

The next day outside the dorm—

“Hi Retepy,” it was Ted in his car. “Where are you off to?”

“I’m going to English class,” said Retepy.

“Can you meet me at three o’clock in front of your dorm? We’ll go to my fraternity. You can meet the guys. We have a fraternity mother so the girls are allowed in our fraternity house.”

“OK,” said Retepy. “Gotta run now.”

“OK,” said Ted.

“At three o’clock Retepy waited in front of her dorm.

“Hi Retepy,” it was Ted in his car.

“Hi Ted.”

“Do you have any more classes today?” asked Ted.

“Not today,” said Retepy.

“Well get in the car and we’ll go to my fraternity. You can have dinner with us there.”

Retepy got in the car and they drove off.

That’s how the relationship started with Ted.

Then it happened—one night in Ted’s car. They had sex. But Retepy didn’t feel a thing. She was completely numb. It was as if nothing had happened. She wasn’t even sure she had sex.

“What happened?” Retepy asked afterward.

“As the saying goes,” laughed Ted. “You just got laid.”

“He is the first one,” pondered Retepy to herself.

As time went on Retepy and Ted became a couple. They only went out with each other and they also studied together. When they studied together in the library at night, after a couple of hours they would take a break and go outside behind the building and just make out. Then they would return and resume studying.

Other times at night they would go into Ted’s car and have sex. But after that first time, the sex was different. Retepy didn’t feel numb anymore. Sex would hurt. But Retepy would have sex anyway. And each time it would hurt. But she didn’t say anything. She just did it over and over again.

Chapter XVI

Some time passed and Christmas vacation was approaching.

“Why don’t I come to your house for Christmas?” said Ted. “I’d like to meet your family.”

“I don’t know,” said Retepy. “I never had a boy sleep over my house before.”

“Well, there’s always a first time,” said Ted.

“I’ll speak to my mother about it when she calls.”

That night it just so happened that Sherrie called.

“Mom,” said Retepy. “My boyfriend’s coming over our house for Christmas vacation.”

“What!!—What boyfriend?!!”

“You know—Ted. I told you about him. I invited him over our house for Christmas vacation,” explained Retepy.

“All I know about Ted is that he doesn’t go to our Church.”

“But, I’ve been to his house, Mom, and his family is friendly and close—his parents and all eight brothers and sisters. I’ve also been to his brother’s house. His brother is married and they have two children, a boy and a girl.”

“Retepy, you never had a boy sleep over before.”

“I never had a boyfriend living so far away from home. And I invited him over our house for Christmas vacation.”

“And what’s this about ‘boyfriend?’ continued Sherrie. “Now he’s your ‘boyfriend?!”

Silence.

“I’m getting off now,” said Retepy. “It’s almost time for dinner.”

So Retepy had dinner at the dorm with a few of her girlfriends. After dinner there was a big surprise.

“Retepy, you are wanted outside,” someone told her.

Retepy went outside and there they were, Ted and his whole fraternity. The fraternity all formed a circle around Ted and Retepy. Ted then presented Retepy with his fraternity pin and the fraternity serenaded Retepy.

Retepy was so excited. Life was an adventure and she would be the envy of all the girls who weren’t pinned.

Chapter XVII

Sometime later, Retepy was alone in her dorm room. She was in seventh heaven being pinned.

"It's always great having a boyfriend," thought Retepy to herself. "The kids all think you're 'somebody' and the other boys leave you alone. You don't have to go out with them and put up with their trying to get into your pants."

Just then one of the girls in the hall yelled out, "Phone call for Retepy."

Retepy ran out into the hall to get the phone.

"Hello."

"Hi Retepy."

"Hi Ted. Next week is Christmas vacation. You told me you'd drive us to my place."

"Of course. Your Dad doesn't have to come pick us up."

"That's what I told him."

"Listen, I'll meet you after your English class. Then we'll go to the library and study. Then we'll eat dinner at the fraternity."

"That sounds great Ted."

"OK. See you then. Bye for now."

"Bye Ted."

Chapter XVIII

The next week Retepy and Ted packed their suitcases, put them in Ted's car and they drove to Retepy's house.

Christmas vacation turned out to be very stressful for Retepy. She loved being pinned. It was an honor. But she was having second thoughts about Ted.

Retepy was thinking, "I'm not sure I want to go further than being pinned. My family doesn't like Ted, but that's not the reason. I don't want things to go further. It's where he wants to live when we get married—out in the sticks with no neighbors around. I'll be so lonely. Also, he's graduating in the fall and he's taking the ROTC program. He hopes to go to Germany. If that happens I won't see him anymore anyway. I think I'll stay pinned 'til the end of the year and that's it. Then start a new life as a sophomore. My family doesn't like Ted anyway. So it will work out fine."

Chapter XIX

The first semester of college soon ended and the second semester was soon to begin. The grades from Retepy's first semester were not good. And she failed History.

"Oh dear," thought Retepy. "I'm so embarrassed. There was just too much to study. Maybe if I drop History next semester and just concentrate on my other courses, I'll do OK."

So that day when Retepy saw Ted she mentioned to him, "Ted, I think next semester I'll drop "History."

"What!" Exclaimed Ted. "You shouldn't drop anything!"

Retepy felt confused. And she couldn't talk to her parents about it because they would be angry that she failed something. So Retepy decided to take History again and just do her best.

Then Ted sort of dropped out of Retepy's life for a while.

"I don't know what he's doing," Retepy would think to herself. "But it's great. I love hanging out with my girlfriends and going to the movies with them. School is also getting better. It's still a little too much work, but I'm getting used to things. Now I'm glad I'm in college. I'm beginning to like it. And I like being with my girlfriends and not being with guys. But I'm still worried about History. That History course is a bummer—too much reading with everything else."

Then the end of the school year came. And then came the grades. Retepy got her grades and almost died. "I failed History again! And now I'm on probation! And if I fail History one more time I flunk out! Oh my gosh! My father will kill me!"

Then she met with Ted. "Ted, I failed History again. I told you I should have dropped it." Ted just made an upset face.

Then Retepy said, "Ted, I'm going to give you your pin back."

"No, you keep it Retepy. I meant to tell you; I heard from my superiors. Just as I requested, I'm going to do my ROTC in Germany. I'll go first to New Jersey for basic training during the summer; then in the fall I go to Germany."

"Are you sure you don't want your pin back? I don't want it anymore. I think we should lead our separate lives."

"That's OK. But you keep the pin and write to me. We can still be friends."

"OK Ted. We'll just be friends."

Chapter XX

The next day Retepy's parents came to pick her up from school and take her home. Retepy was right—her father was angry that she failed History again. And he was angry about her going with Ted.

"You're not going back to college next year," he said to her.

"But why not? I broke off with Ted."

"It doesn't matter."

"But why can't I go back to school?" asked Retepy, who was very perplexed.

"Because I want you with me."

"But I want to go back to college. Why can't I go back?"

"Because you're flunking out."

"But I can go back."

"You're not going back."

Retepy said no more.

Chapter XXI

Retepy went home with her parents. That summer Retepy decided to take a reading course which was given at one of the colleges nearby.

“I’ve got to improve my reading comprehension and speed,” said Retepy to herself. “I want to go back to college someday and study for a career.”

During the summer Retepy’s father said he would send her to secretarial school. Retepy did her research and found a secretarial school nearby that taught typing, shorthand, and office skills in seven months.

“This is great,” thought Retepy to herself. “Now I can do one of two things. I can have a career as a secretary or I can work during the day and go to college at night. And I can get a decent job to pay for my college education. But if my father pays for my brother’s college, maybe he’ll pay for mine too. But if he doesn’t, I’ll do it myself. I can’t wait for secretarial school to start.”

Retepy started feeling much better. Her life started falling back into place. Finally fall arrived and it was time to go to secretarial school.

Chapter XXII

The girls (there were no boys) in secretarial school were young, right out of high school. But Retepy got along with everybody.

But she felt stressed out. “I love being in school and learning, even if it isn’t college,” thought Retepy to herself. “I also like the shorthand, but I can’t go fast enough. When I push myself to go faster, I write so sloppy, I can’t read it back.”

Retepy practiced and practiced her shorthand. The school year was almost over. She knew the shorthand but she still couldn’t write it down fast enough.

“I’m afraid I won’t graduate,” Retepy told her parents. They didn’t say anything, but they looked unhappy about it.

Then “voila!” She did it! The school year ended and Retepy graduated after all!

“Now to find a job,” thought Retepy.

The secretarial school sent Retepy on three interviews. After the interviews the first two places never contacted Retepy, so they were out. The third interview was at a bank, Blue Bank. They told her right away—she was hired!

“Isn’t that wonderful,” Retepy said to herself. “This is the first day of the rest of my life.”

Chapter XXIII

Soon it was Retepy's first day of work at Blue Bank. She was in the Mortgage Department. Jeff was the office manager and he introduced Retepy to all the girls in the office.

Retepy mainly did shorthand and typing. She loved it. And the bank also had their own cafeteria with free lunches for all the employees.

The other girls at work were mostly young and single. Sometimes after work they would go out to eat together and then go bowling or to a movie afterward. Retepy would join them. But other days Retepy had nothing to do after work. She didn't care for TV. She often found it boring. Sometimes she would read a novel.

But Retepy missed school. She decided to go back to college at night and study French. She always loved languages. So she reviewed her high school French and then enrolled in college. She needed to go at night so she could work during the day to earn money for tuition and books.

Retepy's parents didn't mind her working, but they were not too happy about her evening activities. They wanted her home after dark. They did not like her being out then.

"Can't you take a cab home after school?" they would ask. "You take cabs home when you go out with your girlfriends."

"But there are no cabs at the school. Everyone takes the train except for a few cars picking people up."

Silence.

"Why can't they pick me up in their car?" pondered Retepy to herself. But there was no mention of it.

Chapter XXIV

One Tuesday Retepy finished work and took the train to college. She had enough time to go to the school cafeteria for dinner before class. When she got to the cafeteria she got her usual, a hamburger and an ice cream soda. Then she went with her food to sit down at a table.

As soon as Retepy sat down some good-looking guy sat down next to her.

"That looks good what you're eating," he said to her.

"That's 'cause it is good," she said.

"I'm Bob," he said.

"I'm Retepy."

"I teach History here," said Bob.

"I always had trouble with History," said Retepy. "But I do like it."

Then Bob took out a cigarette. "Do you want one, Retepy," he said.

"No thank you, Bob. I gave up smoking."

"Since when?" asked Bob.

"Since I was thirteen years old."

"What!" exclaimed Bob. "You gave up smoking at thirteen! I didn't start until I was fifteen."

"Well, that's the difference between you and me," said Retepy.

"Oh, there are a few other differences too," said Bob puffing away on his cigarette.

"I'm sure there are," said Retepy eating her hamburger and then working on her ice cream soda.

Then there were a few minutes of silence while they both ate their dinners.

"I'm going to have to leave soon," Bob finally said. "I have to teach a class. I'd love to meet you again sometime. Would you give me your phone number?"

"Sure," said Retepy. She grabbed a pen from her bag and wrote the number on a napkin.

"Thanks," said Bob, finishing up his dinner. "I will call you. Bye for now."

"Bye," said Retepy finishing up her ice cream soda and then going to class.

Chapter XXV

Two days later Retepy's phone rang at home at 10pm. She picked up the phone.

"Hello."

"Hi Retepy."

"Who's this?"

"It's Bob."

Silence.

"Bob—remember I met you in the school cafeteria two days ago?"

"Oh hi Bob. How are you?"

"I'm good. How are you?"

"I'm doing great. I'm in the middle of studying."

"Retepy, I'd like to meet you after school tomorrow. Can you make it about 5pm?"

"Sure."

"Only I have to ask you a favor. Don't tell anyone because the teachers aren't allowed to fraternize with the students. I could get in trouble big time."

"Mums the word," said Retepy.

"Meet me at the Corner Café. Do you know where that is?"

"Sure. It's two blocks from the school."

"Good," said Bob. "I'll be in a booth all the way in the back. So, how's everything going with you? Do you work during the day?"

"Yes, I work as a stenographer at Blue Bank in the mortgage department. It's on Sixth Avenue and 40th Street. And I take French Lit. I and Political Science. I love it all, but sometimes I get tired. But I keep going anyway. I'm thinking of teaching French in college. Or maybe going into the business world with my French. I always admired good business women."

"You're ambitious," said Bob. "I like that. I wish you the best. And I'll see you tomorrow at five."

"Great, see you then. Bye."

"Bye."

The next day at 5 after 5 Retepy entered the Corner Café. She walked toward the back and saw a booth partially hidden with some smoke going up in the air.

"That must be Bob," she thought. And it was.

"Hi Bob," said Retepy approaching the booth.

“Hi Retepy,” said Bob with a drink in his hand. “Sit down. I ordered you a drink. You’ll like it.”

“OK,” said Retepy sitting down. “What is it?”

“It’s a Vodka Grimlet,” said Bob. “You’ll like it.”

“Mmmmm, it’s really good,” said Retepy sipping the drink.

“And I’ll light you up a cigarette,” said Bob. “What’s a drink without a smoke?”

So the two of them just sat and smoked and drank. They ordered some food also, but they mostly just sat and smoked and drank.

“You want to come home with me tonight?” said Bob. “Tomorrow’s Saturday. You don’t have to work.”

“OK,” said Retepy. “Just let me call my mom and tell her I’m staying over a girlfriend’s house so they won’t get worried.”

Well that’s how it started with Bob and Retepy. Retepy would continue meeting Bob at the Corner Café and it would continue to be a repeat of that first date. This went on for about four months.

Then one day at the Café Bob said, “Retepy, I just got a teaching position in San Diego at Brooke University. I’m going to be moving there over the summer and I’ll be teaching there in the fall. The university will supply a furnished apartment for me. I’d like you to come with me. We could just live together or get married—whichever you prefer.”

“I think my parents would rather we get married. You never met my parents. You’ll have to pick me up at home someday and I’ll introduce you to them. I’ll have to tell them you are a teacher, though, so they’ll know you can make a living. The secret will be out.”

“That’s OK at this point. I already have a new job,” said Bob.

Chapter XXVI

So the following week Bob picked Retepy up at home. Retepy introduced Bob to her parents. Bob was charming. He knew just how to talk to Retepy's parents and what to say to them. And then he said he wanted to marry Retepy.

Her parents were thrilled. Retepy couldn't believe it—no discussion about it, no nothing. Retepy felt a little jittery over this. "What if I change my mind?" she thought. "How will I get out of it?" But she didn't say a word.

Then there was a discussion about the wedding plans. Retepy didn't want too much of a fuss over the wedding. She wanted just a small wedding in her home.

Two months later came the big day. And two days after that the couple was on the plane to San Diego. Bob had decided to postpone the honeymoon and go right to work.

"You know Bob, I can't wait to start school again," said Retepy when they were on the plane.

"What are you talking about, Retepy? You're staying home and keeping house for me. There will be enough to do with all the cooking and cleaning."

"Bob!" exclaimed Retepy. "We talked about this over and over again. You said I could go back to school and study for a career."

"I changed my mind," said Bob. "Now shut up or I'll smack you."

Chapter XXVII

Retepy was devastated. She didn't know what to think or what to do. And she became quiet and didn't say a word.

As time went on she mentioned how she wanted to go back school.

"I think I can manage cooking and taking care of an apartment and still go back to school part time," she would say.

"Retepy, we really can't afford you going back to school. And what do you need school for anyway? And you really don't have the brains to go to school and manage taking care of a home at the same time."

"I do have the brains. In sixth grade I got 130 on an IQ test. That's capable of doing college work," said Retepy.

"Well," said Bob. You wouldn't get that now on an IQ test. Now stop arguing with me or I'll smack you."

Retepy couldn't help but bring up the subject again and again. And Bob didn't just threaten her anymore, but he would punch her over and over again for that and for anything else he didn't like. Retepy often had black and blue marks up and down her arms. The fighting got worse and worse. Sometimes Retepy would punch back but she was no match for Bob.

At times Retepy got so frustrated that she would just break down and cry.

"Enough of the histrionics," Bob would say and walk away.

"Our relationship is terrible," thought Retepy. "We've grown so far apart. Maybe if we had a baby, the baby would bring us close together again. I've always wanted a baby so badly."

Now Retepy wouldn't have sex with Bob since the plane trip. But when Retepy decided she wanted a baby, she went back to having sex.

Then it happened. A year after the wedding Retepy got pregnant. They found out that she would have a boy.

"Let's call the baby Bill Jr.," said Retepy.

"Bill Jr.?!," exclaimed Bob. "My name I 'Bob' not 'Bill.'"

"Oh, I meant 'Bob,'" said Retepy.

And so it happened. Bob Jr. was born.

Chapter XXVIII

Retepy had an easy labor and delivery and she was thrilled to have and to nurse BJ. That's what they called the baby—BJ.

"Now I'm glad I'm not working," said Retepy to herself. "I'm glad to be able to nurse BJ whenever he wants to nurse."

BJ nursed for almost two years. And when he turned two and a half Retepy found herself pregnant again. Bob accepted that Retepy was pregnant but he wasn't too happy about it.

"Bob," said Retepy. "The gynecologist I used for BJ has retired. I'll have to find someone new."

"As long as he or she is good, that's all that matters," said Bob.

So Retepy found a new doctor through a neighbor and all went well for a while. The doctor told her she would have twins and she was so excited.

"Bob, I'm so happy we are having twins," she would say.

Bob never said a word.

However circumstances began to change. Retepy was having a problem with her pregnancy and she went into labor after five and one-half months.

Retepy had identical twin girls. She would look at them through the window of the hospital nursery. They were kicking and kicking their feet.

"They're so beautiful," Retepy said to herself. "Look at those beautiful hands and feet."

But after two days, within three hours of each other, God took the twins for Himself. Retepy was devastated. After she came home from the hospital, even though she knew they were dead, she would think she heard them crying and she would go all around the apartment looking for them.

"They are with God now," Retepy would sigh. "They are close to God and far away from me."

No one seemed to care about Retepy's loss.

"I never got any regrets from anyone or one sympathy card," lamented Retepy. "No one can even tell me where they are buried."

Bob, however, became angry about the situation.

"You know, Retepy, I think the twins died because the doctor was no good."

"What was wrong with him?" asked Retepy.

"I didn't like him. He was no good. And you picked him. You picked him so it's your fault the twins died. It's your fault."

Retepy never stopped hearing Bob say, "It's your fault that the twins died."

But Retepy had BJ. "BJ is my shining star. I love him more than anyone in the world," Retepy would think to herself.

But Retepy could not tolerate Bob saying to her all the time, "It's your fault that the twins died."

"I have to go to a psychiatrist, Bob," pleaded Retepy. "I feel like I'm going crazy."

"I think you should go to a psychiatrist," said Bob. "You are crazy."

Retepy went to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist put her on drugs, which only made her tired. And nothing could convince her that she didn't kill her babies.

Chapter XXIX

BJ turned four and started preschool.

It was then that Bob had a heart attack. Retepy would visit him at the hospital when BJ was in preschool.

Nothing could save Bob. After nine days in the hospital he passed away.

This time Retepy got condolences. And everyone worried how Retepy would manage. After all, she was seeing a psychiatrist and she had a four-year-old.

“Everyone seems to worry about me,” said Retepy to herself. “But I feel great. No more Bob to take care of. And there’s way more money than I thought. Enough to live on and go back to school. And I have my beautiful BJ. Awesome!”

Chapter XXX

Just then the phone rang.

“Hello,” answered Retepy.

“Hi Retepy”

“Hi Micky. I’m glad you called. How are you and your kids and your husband?”

“We’re all good. How are you and BJ?”

“We’re good. You know, I was thinking of going back to school—maybe taking accounting. You know, like you did. Then maybe I could get a good job.”

“That’s a great idea,” said Micky. “I could try and get you a job with my firm. Oh Retepy,

Chapter XXXI

So Retepy went back to school, studied accounting and loved it.

“I’m so glad I’m in school now,” Retepy would think to herself. “And my Nanny, Teri, is so good with BJ. I’m really fortunate.”

It took Retepy four and a half years to finish college.

“I feel a little stupid because it took me so long to do school,” Retepy would think to herself. “But I didn’t want to miss out on spending time with BJ. I’m glad I could afford it all. And now it’s time for my career. And Micky got me a job with her firm. Great!”

Chapter XXXII

Retepy enjoyed her job.

“I love working,” she would think to herself. “It’s like the old days, but not quite. I don’t spend so much time with the girls after work anymore. Occasionally, but rarely. I like to be home with BJ.”

However, an exception arose. It was Retepy’s birthday and some of her friends at work wanted to take her out to a nice restaurant for dinner. Retepy made plans to go.

“It’s so much fun being with the girls,” thought Retepy on the way to the restaurant.

They got there early so they decided to have a few drinks at the bar. Retepy heard a voice behind her.

“Hello.”

Retepy turned around.”

“What a nice-looking man,” Retepy thought as she said, “Hi!”

“I’m John.”

“I’m Retepy.”

Well that’s how it started. She and John ended up exchanging phone numbers before Retepy and her friends sat down for dinner. What a birthday!

The next day John called Retepy. He spent an hour on the phone with her and told her his life story. And Retepy told him her life story. That Saturday night they ate dinner out at the same restaurant where they had met. While they were eating Retepy said, “You know John, I feel as if I’ve known you for years.”

“And I feel the same way about you,” said John. “Do you want to make a date for dinner together every Saturday night?”

“I don’t know,” said Retepy. “I don’t like being away from BJ so much.”

“So we can all eat together at a family restaurant. Do you think BJ would like that?”

“Maybe he would. Let’s try it once and see.”

“OK—deal!” said John.

The following Saturday night, BJ, John, and Retepy ate out together at “The Family Farm” and they all had a lovely time. Retepy and John were falling in love and BJ fit beautifully into the picture.

Chapter XXXIII

The romance was in full bloom and the three of them did everything together as a family. They would eat at The Family Farm on Saturday nights. Then they would go to Retepy's place after dinner. BJ would go to bed, and John and Retepy would spend the rest of the evening watching a movie.

"Will you marry me?" asked John late one Saturday night.

"I was afraid you would ask me that," said Retepy.

"What do you mean?" asked John nervously. "I love you very much."

"I love you too, John. You and BJ mean everything to me. And you are very kind and good to us both. But I would prefer going on just as we are doing now."

Retepy looked into John's eyes. He looked hurt and astonished.

"John," Retepy said softly. "Marriage is not for everyone."