

CHAPTER TWO

FOLLOWING upon the exit of his daughter came the realization to Wally that something must be done about the "party." He turned to the group of children, huddled together in horror, like butterflies in a rain storm. Serious and large-eyed, they focussed their attention upon him, in the apparent belief that, being a parent, he would be able to handle this unprecedented situation. They ranged in age from three to six; they were the children of his neighbours and life-long associates; and yet Wally had the feeling that he was hemmed in by a pack of alert, curious little animals.

"Well, children," he managed to say, "I'm sorry that Isabelle was such a naughty girl at her own party, but she is only four years old, we must remember, and I suppose she did not know any better."

'I'm free an' a half, an' I don't take off my clothes at a party," bragged one of the female infants.

"No, I'm sure you don't. It isn't done," said Wally, helplessly.

"She always spoils parties. I wanted not to have her at mine, but mother made me," remarked Tommy Page.

"Hard luck, old man," said Wally.

"She always wants to boss everything," Margie Hunter complained.