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PRO

by Lydia Torrance

Dear Readers, dear friends! We have come such a long way together, over many roads and flower-bestrewn paths still damp from morning dew: that sweet nectar Nature bestows upon a slumb'ring, yearning world.

And so many miles to go Yet I must stop for a while. There are so many other moments I wish to share with you. If I have sometimes dwelt too long on sorrow and the twilight edges of a peaceful, serenely happy life it is only that occasionally a darkling memory will linger too long and I must rid myself of its fearful presence by facing it.

I want to tell you of those wonderful years with Portleigh and of how, though we weren't blessed with our own child, Portleigh's nephew Nestor came to live with us and we raised him as our own. Why he came to us: the tragic circumstances which issued forth in rage, hate, flames, multiple deaths, nightcries, fearful blasphemies, blood against blood, anguish and groans among the oversweet dahlias, screams that reverberate still within a shattered soul of all that let us not speak. Speak rather of the joy reaped by a little boy and two childless, loving people who bless God's ways no matter how strange.

Reader, call me "Pollyanna" and scoff if you wish. If trying to see the bright side of life in dire circumstances is to be simplistic, then "Pollyanna" is a name I'll proudly brandish. There is enough grief in the world without dwelling on it.

Portleigh was an inspiration to me. Even when he slipped from me three years ago and such a travesty of the cosmic laws, that a noble, fulfilled, *important* gentleman such as he should be taken from me in what the newspapers insisted in calling a "freak accident" yes, even when he was no longer by my side I said to myself: "Live, Lydia! Live as Portleigh would have wanted you to live. Unselfishly. Devote yourself to the improvement of the species!"

Then I sat down and thought. The luxurious green lawn stretched away from my feet on the terrace—stretched away to the river bank. I sat sipping my Campari and soda but I couldn't fix it right and neither could the house boy. What *were* those proportions? Such a simple thing and yet having it wrong made everything seem wrong. Angrily I flung the glass on the terrace where it smashed like a hundred tiny ice cubes.

Manuel came out of the greenhouse. "I've dropped my drink. Fix me another," I commanded. Then regretted it. Manuel had worked too long in Del Rio: he put salt or sugar on the rim of any glass. I got

up, idly wandering toward the river.

"And now, my girl, what next?" I heard Portleigh's voice. "Ya going to waste the rest of your life being rude to houseboys? Ever thought of actually doing something with your life?" "That's not fair!" I shouted at the sky. I had come so far from my sleazy origins, surely I deserved some encouragement rather than accusations. The few people who knew I hadn't finished University were always surprised to learn of it. Mind you, I never pretended anything. But the kind of life I was always meant for fitted me as I knew it would like an Yves St. Laurent glove.

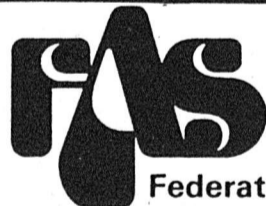
Ten years after I married Portleigh I took a good look at myself and said: "Lyddie, you're going to be real unhappy unless you straighten up. If you're going to be a part of this publishing world you'd better learn the rules." So I took up my recorder lessons, started reading more, going to art galleries, drinking, and only now and then I'd look in the mirror and wonder: "Who's that? Whatever happened to simplicity and goodness?" Then I'd scurry past.

So as I walked on the thick green lawn toward the river I thought: "Do I want to be Portleigh's widow for the rest of my life? Is that a meaningful identity? Is that who I really am?" And an answer came from a lilac-scented breeze that suddenly sprang up. "No ma'am! Whatever happened to little Lyddie who we haven't seen for years! Why don't you finish what you were learning at Hecuba Normal when the world lay all before you? Before you got ensnared with those men who wanted you to be different things than you were? It's never too late to become what you were meant to be. Portleigh would have wanted it that way."

I turned on my spiked heel, leaving a hole in the perfect lawn as for a golf tee. I gazed back at the house. What were money and servants and a vast mansion like Riverhaven if I didn't have happiness? I *longed* to be back in Household Ec., working with my hands, doing something that I really *wanted* to be doing. I suddenly remembered all those years under the awesome blue prairie skies when life seemed to be held out like a vast, tremorous promise.

I'd go back to school. I'd help others by sharing my spiritual riches. A life lived richly should be lavishly bestowed!

Goodbye, my friends, but not farewell! There are so many other treasured moments I wish to share, I'm sure we'll meet again, if not next year, then in that Great Schoolhouse Above, where we are perennial freshmen! Good-bye!



Federation of Alberta Students

The Federation of Alberta Students requires:

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Function: Responsible to the F.A.S. Executive Committee for the ongoing functions of the federation.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Maintain and operate the provincial office
- 2) Maintain ongoing communication between the executive committee and between member institutions
- 3) Maintain effective relations with the media
- 4) Represent the interests of the Federation to the provincial government, its departments, agencies and boards
- 5) Act as travelling resource person for Alberta Post-Secondary Student Associations

Qualifications:

- 1) Minimum Grade XII, one year in post secondary education
- 2) Ability to work with people effectively
- 3) Some experience with student affairs
- 4) Must be willing to locate in Edmonton

Salary: \$600 per month or up, depending on qualifications and experience.

Position begins April 25, 1977

Apply to;

Louise Borle, President
c/o F.A.S., Room 620, SUB
U of A, Edmonton, Alberta.

NEWS 76-77 from page 3

A suggestion by the GFC executive committee to limit press coverage of their meetings to reporting on final recommendations made to GFC was met with opposition from local news media. GFC exec. members claim coverage of their comments may bias members of the full council in their deliberations on executive recommendations. GFC supported the executive's move.

The declining competence of high school graduates led Bert Hohol to hint at **qualifying exams** for students wishing to attend university.

A similar sentiment was voiced in a **Faculty of Education Undergraduate Studies Revisions Committee** report which recommended raising the entrance standards of the Ed. faculty.

APRIL:

The U of A's 1977-78 operating budget needed a \$2.3 million injection of reserve money to balance. The move ended speculation that a general tuition hike would be imposed to cover a cut-back in provincial grants to the university.