

# Uncle George

RUTH MARIE HAMILL

Every evening when Uncle George walks into the house, before he greets any member of the family, he yells, "O-oh, Pepper! O-oh, Ginger!" and if Pepper and her puppy aren't already scampering down the stairs, or from the living room, they come now. Pepper stands on her hind legs and leans her forepaws on him while she nuzzles in his pockets for peanuts. Ginger dances around him, making funny noises which sometimes terminate in a short bark. He picks the little dog up and feeds both him and Pepper a few peanuts or bites of candy that he has brought for them.

His thick gray hair is rumped and disorderly. Every morning he smooths it down with castor oil, but it never stays that way long. His skin is like a young boy's, smooth with scarcely a semblance of a beard. He is of medium height and portly build, but with none of the dignity usually associated with such a figure.

At the dinner table he refuses to eat pie or turnips unless they are absolutely cold.

"How about some bread and milk?"

he will say, and is content to eat just bread and milk for his evening meal.

In the morning he asks gruffly if that new shirt of his is washed. He will not put on a new shirt or pair of socks until after they have been washed.

Uncle George goes fishing whenever an opportunity presents itself. One summer, when he was out of work, he fished every day. I think he caught two fish that summer. It doesn't matter to him whether or not he catches anything. He just likes to be by the river with his dog. But, although he takes his recreation tramping along the river, he hates to get his shoes muddy. He would rather take them off and wade through the mud in his bare feet than get mud on his shoes.

Folks who don't know him well are sometimes offended by what he says, for he says just what he thinks without regard for another's feelings. He is always willing to go out of his way to accommodate someone, and has many friends in spite of his blunt speech.

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## Fate

Clacking little wooden beads  
Moved by stronger will than ours.  
Occult power never heeds.  
Cries of mercy through the hours.  
Cracked, a tiny wooden round  
Falls unnoticed, makes no sound.

PHILLIPA SCHREIBER