

Moonlight Mood

SAMUEL SMITH

As I walked down the country lane I saw for the first time the universal power of night. The full moon hung in the center of a magnificent arch, formed by the boughs of trees meeting like touching fingertips. I could almost hear the moonbeams tenderly kissing the tree leaves and then falling down, down into the earth, to be buried there like secrets that can never be told.

Stars peeped shyly through a passing cloud like children behind their mothers' aprons. Far ahead I saw a couple strolling arm in arm. As they stopped and kissed a

star zipped down two million light years and stopped in astonishment. I looked at the man in the moon to see his reaction and discovered the coward trying to hide behind a cloud, so that I would not see that he was playing Cupid. The clouds breezed nonchalantly through the sky, leaving Mr. Moon hanging naked in the circle of trees.

As I continued walking, the stars marched across the sky until the Big Dipper scooped the horizon. The moon became bored and went to bed. The clouds drifted listlessly on and the couple in the lane kissed again.

Injustice

HELEN WELLS

Chuck couldn't understand grownups. He couldn't understand them, and they certainly didn't understand him. All he wanted was just one little corner in the basement.

"Just one little corner, mom. I won't take up much space," he pleaded. His plea fell on deaf ears.

"You may not take up space, but any space is too much when you're going to fill it with junk," his mother answered. "I haven't any room for delapidated bottles, cast-off rubber tubing, and whatever else you have there."

Protestation was written on Chuck's face. "Mother! It ain't ----"

"Isn't, dear."

"It *isn't* junk. It's my chemistry set."

"All the more reason why you are not going to transport it to my basement. I enjoy having the roof over my head."

"Ah, mom, can't a guy do anything 'round here?" All the disgust an eleven-year-old could muster was in his voice. "Women don't understand a fellow at all. I ain't ----"

"I'm not, Chuck," his mother corrected.

"O. K., I'm not going to blow anything up. All I got is just a few chemicals and water."

"And my cleansing cream, not to mention my hand lotion, face powder, my best cologne, and heaven knows what else," chimed in Chuck's older sister, Helen. "Mother, can't you do something with him, nothing is sacred on my dressing table."

"Heck, sis, I was just gonna, 'analizz' that stuff."

"Don't you mean analyze, Chuck?" inquired his mother.

"Well, analyze it, then."

"I don't care what you're going to do

with it, "annalizz" or analyze, if I find anything else missing, it's coming out of your allowance," Helen warned.

"For gosh' sakes, mom, she can't do that, can she?" Consternation showed on his face.

"I'm afraid so, if you don't let Helen's things alone. They cost her money, you know."

"Ah, nuts, how can I be a scientist if I don't get any cooper — coop — well, any help from you."

"Oh, you want to be a scientist, now?" asked mother. "What made you decide that?"

"Gee, mom, just think, I can make explosives, and synthetic rubber, and television inventions, and rocket ships, and—"

"What does a pipsqueak like you know about television?" asked Helen incredulously. "Listen to the kid brother rave."

"You're not so smart." Chuck was getting mad, and as usual, his voice doubled in volume, "I know as much about television as you do, what do you think I am, a moron?"

"Sure, but that is beside the point. The point is that you are not having any mess in the basement, and you're not taking another ounce of my cosmetics," Helen put her hand on the kid brother's shoulder. "Understand?"

"Yeah, I understand, but it sure ain't—"

"Isn't," Chuck, when are you going to learn to speak English? Queried Helen. "It seems that you ought to learn something about English in school, or would

that be too much trouble?"

"You just think you're smart because you're going to college, and as I was saying, before I was so rudely interrupted, you aren't fair."

"I'm not fair?" Helen cried in astonishment. "Do you actually think it's fair to abscond with someone's personal belongings?"

"Personal belongings she says. I call it just plain paint and flour that smells good. Don't know why you use it anyway; don't do you any good." Chuck ducked the palm of his sister's hand as he finished his last sentence.

"Mother!" expostulated Helen, "can't you do something with him? I never have seen such a smart aleck in all my life."

"You run up to bed now, Chuck," said his mother. "We'll see what can be done about a place for your experiments. I guess I can't impede progress; that is, if you are a good boy."

"O. K. mom, g'night," Chuck said, starting up the stairs. "Sisters," he muttered, "a regular pain in the neck. But if mom would let me have a place in the basement —" Chuck's thoughts wandered, visualizing a thousand dreams. "Gee, television, and rocket ships, and ray guns. Gosh, the Japs wouldn't have a chance 'gainst my ray gun, and robots that did what you told them, and —, Maybe it won't be so bad being grown up, but if my kids want their chemistry sets in the front room, I won't say anything like mom and Helen do."