

bridge over the rug as the Seabees do. But the best and most sensible idea, I decide after long consideration, is simply to move the rug to some desolate corner behind a nice comfortable chair. I have also debated many times with my conscience about quietly slipping from my room, after everyone is dead to the world, and building a pleasant bonfire with this cunning little rug as fuel. But that idea would bring forth the problem of getting a new rug, which might not fit in with the surroundings, either. No, I am

opposed to all these policies and have decided to meet the rug on his own battleground with better weapons than he.

The last time I went home, I greeted my dear enemy, the rug, with a cautious step. Alas! He heard me coming. Just as I was gingerly taking the last steps, the rug rushed from under my feet, leaving me breathlessly trying to regain my dignity. This little old rug is still the Unconquerable Hero . . . but he does not trip me any more. I approach the kitchen through the hall door.

It Could Happen Only To Me

BETTY FERGUSON

Prepare for the invasion! This is my slogan as I put the vases, the imported lamp, and the little knickknacks that usually grace our home into the back of a secluded closet. Every breakable object must be out of sight before my eleven cousins arrive for the annual party that I, as the oldest cousin, am obliged to have for them. My cousins range in age from tiny babes-in-arms to thirteen year old neophytes, and all of them come to this party except those who are suffering at the time from measles, mumps, whooping cough, chicken pox, or some other plague of childhood.

At the appointed time they charge into the house, their lusty young voices leading the attack. With their arrival come the problems of keeping them entertained and keeping them from dissecting the few pieces of furniture that have been left in the house. I know that each of these dear cherubs has had the proper training from the cradle to the present

time, yet they all seem to forget their careful manners at the precise moment they enter our house, which is converted into a combination race track and battlefield as my beloved cousins spring into action. More and more the action drifts toward the clash of the two opposing armies that are battling it out across the sofa in the living room. They have taken the expression "over the top" quite seriously, and they proceed to go "over the top" of the sofa. I had visions of a broken spring popping through the upholstery at any moment. As I saw the children mauling both themselves and the furniture, I realized that something must be done to halt the ever-growing tussle, so I hauled out the Pin-the-Tail-on-the-Donkey game. They were reluctant to give up their glorious fight for a quiet game such as this, but the promise of a prize finally induced them to concentrate on the game. Said game was not as quiet as I expected. Three year old

Eddie aroused a good deal of excitement when he thrust his weapon into his sister instead of into the cardboard donkey. Pleased at the result of his impishness, Eddie proceeded to do the same thing to one of his cousins and then to another before he could finally be stopped. Looking at the tear-stained faces of my young cousins, I wondered why the manufacturers advertised this game as the game for young children.

I attempted to rectify my error by having them play Musical Chair. Boys and girls were both slugging one another; the youngest tots were taking quite a beating. I stopped this game immediately and awarded the prize to Charles because he had behaved the best. Everyone began to pout, so I had to present everyone a prize just to "keep peace in the family." Before they had a chance to become dissatisfied with their gifts, I hustled them off to the dining room for refreshments. This plan also backfired. Not one of the children was satisfied with his paper hat, so a mad scramble ensued, in which paper hats were grabbed from one another and torn to shreds. This probably would have proved catastrophic had not the refreshments been brought in at that time. Most of the children dived furiously into eating the refreshments, but a few of them, who had paid a previous call to the kitchen, had already stuffed themselves, so they merely minced over the food and then began to throw

chunks of cake at each other. This looked as if it were fun, so everybody began playing this new and exciting game which they called "Socko with the Cako." In a few seconds the room was filled with flying morsels of angel cake, and my dear cousins were climbing on the chairs, darting across the table top, and crawling in and out under the table. I tried with what I thought was good psychology to stop this vicious new outburst, but my tact in urging them to eat their refreshments rewarded me with a large piece of cake, with very sticky frosting, plastered across my face. I gave up! I could do no more to stop them, so I left them to their own destruction.

When my aunts finally arrived to take my cousins home, they found instead of the freshly pleated and pinafores darlings they had left only two hours before a mangled mass of young humanity sticky from head to toe. Many a quizzical glance was directed at me, but I merely shrugged and said, "They are your children." My aunts very firmly marched each little cousin home, despite the fact that the children wanted to stay because they had had so much fun. After looking under the table, behind the sofa, in the pantry, and in all the closets to be sure that none of the little demons had stayed to heckle me, I collapsed onto the nearest chair. From there I viewed the wreckage before me, but I was too exhausted to do anything about it.