

understand the concern in his voice. Putting her hand on his arm she said, "Sonny, don't worry 'bout ol' Louise. You know if you want me to look, I'll look. After all, you is all de fambly I got. I'll do jes' what you say. But I'll be all right, you know. I'm gonna get me a gun. I sets right by ma front door in ma big ol' chair, and if dey comes, I'll blow dem right off de porch! I ain't afraid. I ain't gonna die 'til the good Lord gets ready fa' me. I ain't afraid. I only got to die once." me. I ain't afraid. I only got to die once."

When he left Louise he felt tired. As he walked through the long, cold halls of the hospital his head was down and his shoulders were slightly stooped. He felt heavy with his new burden—this strange new burden of poverty and age and helplessness.

THE PRETTIEST SOUND

Carla Stoneberg

Man, did I ever see something today. Made me wish I could do it myself in an emergency. Jonesy says certainly I could learn, so who knows? Maybe I will try to take the course.

It all started this evening when we was clearing away the supper trays in the dining room at the nursing home where I work as a nursing assistant. (That's the latest glamour word for "nurse's aide.") I was just putting a tray back in the cart when I hear Alicia, that's another nursing assistant, scream frantically, "Jonesy, come quick!"

I look over and see Alicia whapping her hand hard against the cheek of old Mr. Burns, one of the patients here, who is slumped forward onto the table where he has just finished eating. My own blood suddenly stops cold in my veins. Not spry old Charley Burns, not him! Why just last night he beat me at the quick game of checkers we played together during my coffee break. I want to run over and help him, and I can't. My feet are frozen.

But Jonesy's aren't. Jonesy comes flying into the dining room just like her nurse's hat was all wings. Before I can blink, she grabs Mr. Burns under the arms, and lowers him carefully to the floor. When he is all laid out flat on his back, I can see his face. It is the color of ripe purple plums.

I guess Jonesy sees it too. She gets down on her knees beside him and puts her cheek close to his nose. Guess she doesn't feel no breathing

because she pinches his nose shut, puts her mouth on his, and breathes into him a few times. Then she stops and looks at him and feels in his neck to see if there is a pulse. Next thing I know, Jonesy has ripped open Mr. Burns' shirt and is pushing up and down on his chest with her hands. Every little while she stops, moves to his head, and breathes into him a couple of times. Then she pumps on his chest some more.

She keeps this up for about a minute and then stops and looks at Mr. Burns, who is still as dead as he can be. Jonesy tells Alicia to call the ambulance and be sure to get one with medics on it because we have a heart attack here. Then she tells me to get the other patients out of the dining room and goes right back to pumping on Mr. Burns' chest. There was only a few people left in the dining area when this all started, and they can hardly wait to get out of the room, so it don't take me too long.

When I come back, Jonesy is still pushing up and down on Mr. Burns' chest. The sweat is coming out on her forehead now, and her long, pretty blond hair is starting to fall out of her bun and is getting in her way. Alicia tries to pull it back for her, but she can't get it too good. I can hear Jonesy counting to herself, "one and two and three and four and five and. . ." to help her keep the rhythm while she pushes on his chest. Every time she gets to fifteen, she stops and breathes into him a couple of times. Every once in a while she stops to see if old Mr. Burns will keep going on his own. Since he don't, she goes right back to pumping and breathing.

After about fifteen minutes of this, we hear the sirens outside, and Alicia and I run to open the door for the medics. Two good looking guys—one has red hair and freckles—race past me carrying a bag and a small machine. Jonesy sure looks glad to see them. Red drops down beside her and takes over the chest work, while Jonesy goes up to Mr. Burns' head to do the breathing. They work together while the other guy attaches the machine to Mr. Burns. The machine turns out to be a heart monitor.

Everyone stops for a few seconds while the monitor cranks out a thin strip of paper. The medics stare at it an instant, and then Red mumbles something into the two-way radio he has with him. Next thing I know, the medics have shipped out from somewhere two paddles, which they shove under and on top of Mr. Burns. Red shouts, "Stand back, everyone," and then all at once old Charley Burns' whole body gives a

quick jerk, like someone just shot electricity into him, which they did.

We all stare at him.

And would you believe it, suddenly I hear Mr. Burns take a gasp. On his own! We all hold our breath. Then even I can see his chest start to rise and fall again! Jonesy looks at Red and the other guy, and suddenly she starts to cry. Red puts his arm around her, and then I can't see them anymore, because I'm crying too.

When the medics finally leave for the hospital with Mr. Burns on their stretcher, the heart monitor is still attached to him. I hold the door open, and and they go by me, I can hear the loud, steady beep beep from the machine. I look over at Jonesy and Alicia. From the way they are now smiling, I can tell they are listening to it too.

Prettiest darn sound I ever did hear!

THE POOR LITTLE BIC GIRL
(With Apologies to Hans Christian Anderson)

Jane McCollum

It was dreadfully cold outside. Cars were piled everywhere, schools were closed, and the National Weather Bureau had issued a traveler's warning.

But not everyone could enjoy the Indianapolis ice holiday. Butler