

BOBBY UNWELCOME

A Dramatic Reading

by
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A 1957 cutting. USBN 1-60045-022-9

Bobby had learned U that day at school, and he wondered as he strutted home beside Olga, his nurse, whether it would be prudent to speak of it now. Olga had times, Bobby had discovered, when you dassent speak of things, and it looked—yes—it looked as if she were having one now. Still if you only dared to—He would!

“It’s the one in the middle of my name, you know.”

“Mercy, what iss the child talking about now?”

“That letter, you know—U. The one in the middle of my name—right in the middle of it. I wish—” He caught himself up with a jerk. It didn’t seem best, after all, to consult Olga just now. Better wait—but dear, dear, he had waited so long already. It had not occurred to Bobby to consult his mother. They two were not very intimately acquainted, and naturally he felt shy. Bobby’s mother was very young and beautiful. He had seen her dressed in a wonderful white dress once, with little specks of shiny things burning on her bare throat, and ever since he had known what angels look like. There was another reason why he and the beautiful mother did not know each other very well but even Olga had never explained that one. Bobby had that ahead of him to find out—poor Bobby! Some one had called him “Fire Face” at school once, but the kind-hearted teacher had never let it happen again. At home, in the great empty house, the mirrors were all high, out of reach, and in the nursery there had never been any at all. Bobby had never looked at himself in a mirror. Of course, he had seen himself up to his chin,—dear yes,—and admired his own straight little legs often enough, and doubled up his little arms to hunt for his muscles. In a quiet, rather unobtrusive way, Bobby was rather proud of himself. He had to be—there was no one else, you see. And even at six, when there is little else to do, one can put in considerable time admiring one’s legs and arms.

He had once exulted: “I guess you don’t call those bowlegged, do you Olga? I guess you’d call those pretty straight up and down ones?”

And the hard face of the nurse softened in a strange, pleasant manner, and for the only time that Bobby could remember, Olga had taken him in her arms and kissed him.

“They’re beautiful legs, that iss so,” Olga had said, but she hadn’t been looking at them when she said it. She had been looking straight into his face. The look hurt, too, Bobby remembered. He did not know what pity was, but it was that that hurt. That night after he had learned U at school, Bobby decided he would hazard everything. He could not wait any longer.

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