

## Cancer: Love for Home

“Have fun, and don’t worry about a thing,” called Amy as her mother boarded the plane. Amy was looking forward to managing the house while Mother visited her brother for a week, and didn’t share her mother’s reluctance to leave her in charge.

It was spring vacation, so Amy would be free to devote full time to home and family, and to her that seemed as much fun as taking a trip. She had already planned a series of elaborate dinners for her father and two brothers, and had promised the boys pancakes every morning if they wanted them. She was going to line the kitchen cabinets with new shelfpaper, prepare a number of main courses that could be frozen so Mother wouldn’t have to cook the minute she got home, and maybe even paint her room. But her really big project, about which she had said nothing, was to make a set of new living room drapes. The old ones were faded, and Mother had spoken vaguely several times of replacing them.

On the way home from the airport Amy stopped to get the material — a lovely golden-bronze shade that would blend with the rug and brighten the room. She wanted to start work on them right away but, since it was already late afternoon she thought she’d better concentrate on fixing supper, and wait till morning to tackle the drapes.

In the morning, the boys clamored for their pancakes, and Amy had to make two batches in order to have enough for herself. As she was washing the dishes, her older brother pointed out that a button was missing from his shirt and that his pants needed pressing. He refused to consider Amy’s suggestion that he wear something else, so she took care of his clothes.

Later, when she was making the beds, her younger brother complained that he could not find his baseball glove because Mother had straightened up his room. Amy found it in the closet where it belonged.

Then, since it was Saturday, she thought she had better clean the house before starting the drapes, and she had no sooner finished putting the vacuum cleaner away than the boys came home demanding lunch. This reminded her that she had not yet done the marketing, or even made a shopping list. After lunch she wrote out her menus for the week, went shopping, and returned home loaded with groceries and very tired. She curled up with a magazine for half an hour and then, after ironing her own dress for that evening and watering the house plants, she decided it was too late to tackle one of the big projects.

Sunday, with church, Sunday dinner to which her grandparents had been invited, and an afternoon date for tennis and a picnic supper, was full, and Monday found Amy busy with laundry, ironing, and more cooking. She had promised to baby-sit for the family next door on Tuesday, and although she managed her routine housework, with two pre-schoolers under foot she again was unable to start the drapes. On Wednesday morning Amy thought she had better attend to the debris that had again accumulated in her younger brother's room, since he was pointedly ignoring her requests to straighten it up himself. She also managed, however, to clean and re-line the kitchen cabinets. By Thursday another big load of laundry had piled up, and Amy was in the midst of this when their large and overly-enthusiastic dog appeared covered with dirt in which he had been rolling. Amy decided there was no alternative but to bathe him, after which she herself was soaked. Her younger brother asked if two of his cronies with whom he had been playing could stay for

lunch, and Amy found herself unexpectedly creating milk-shakes and other favorite fifth-grade foods. Then her father phoned to say that he had bragged so much about her cooking that his boss had more or less invited himself and his wife for supper that evening, and did Amy mind? Amy really didn't — she had confidence in her cooking ability — but of course this meant straightening up the house as well as taking time with dinner, and making sure her younger brother was properly cleaned up and “washed behind his ears.”

On Friday morning Amy desperately announced to her startled family that she was going to spend the entire day sewing drapes, that the boys would have to make their own beds and fend for themselves at lunch-time, and that her only other chore for them that day would be to cook dinner. Her father left the breakfast table grinning, and the boys grumbling, but when they came home that evening the new drapes were in place, and even the boys made admiring comments.

Saturday was devoted to cleaning house for Mother's approval. Amy stayed out late Saturday evening, slept late Sunday morning, and rushed through her chores. After church they picked up Mother at the airport and were driving home for dinner when Mother asked, “Well, Amy, how do you like running a house?”

“I like it — I really like it as much as I thought I would. But how do you ever find time to do all the things you do?”

Mother laughed at Amy's perplexed face. “That comes with practice, honey. You've done wonderfully well this week, and you'll make an excellent housewife some day.”