

Sagittarius: Generosity

"I'd love to, Laura," said Karen's mother wistfully. "Going to New York for a few days — especially to the theater — would be heavenly, but I couldn't do that to Karen. She's been looking forward to this weekend for so long, I can't ask her to stay home with the girls. And you know I couldn't afford a sitter for 72 hours."

"Isn't it about time you started thinking of yourself?" Mrs. Reese asked rather impatiently. "You haven't gone anywhere since Ralph —," she stopped and reddened.

"Since Ralph passed on," finished Karen's mother gently. "No, I suppose I haven't, but that time will come. Right now my duty is to the children."

"Your duty is to yourself, too. You work all day, and then come home and cook, sew, and scrub for the girls. How long do you think that can go on? Here we have the tickets, and Harry has to drive up anyhow — think what fun we could have!"

"I know, Laura, and I love you for asking me, but it's out of the question now. You have a good time, and I'll be thinking of you."

The ladies got up, Mrs. Reese still arguing, and Karen, who had been standing outside the door, tiptoed to her room. What a wonderful chance for her mother to get a vacation, she thought. Why did it have to come just this weekend? She *had* been looking forward to the weekend for a long time — all the homecoming festivities, and especially the big dance Saturday night. She looked at her lovely new dress hanging on the door, and remembered with a pang that Mother had been up till almost 2 o'clock this morning finishing it.

“Ooooooh!” she muttered angrily to herself. “Why couldn’t Mrs. Reese go *next* weekend?” But Mrs. Reese was going *this* weekend, and this would probably be Mother’s one chance in months for a vacation. Karen sat, thinking, and gradually her frown changed to a calm, determined, expression.

She went to her mother’s closet, took out a suit and a good dress, and was ironing them when her mother found her.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

“You’re going to New York with Mrs. Reese, and I thought I’d help you get ready.” Karen unplugged the iron and took a suitcase from the closet. “This small one should hold enough for three days, don’t you think?”

Karen’s mother had been watching open-mouthed. “Honey, I’m not going to New York,” she finally managed to say.

“Yes, you are,” answered Karen firmly. “Now look — this is one chance in a million — and if I know Mrs. Reese, she’s not going to miss anything while she’s up there. I’ll stay with the girls. This weekend isn’t all that important anyhow, and there’ll be other dances and I’ll have plenty of time to wear my new dress. It’s about time you had a little fun, too!”

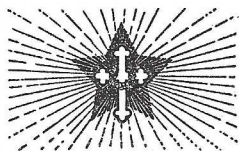
Karen dialed the phone. “Mrs. Reese, this is Karen. Mother is going to New York with you after all. Tell me what time you’re planning to leave, and she’ll be ready.”

Karen’s mother seemed unable to say or do much of anything. She protested feebly that Karen shouldn’t spoil her weekend, but Karen ignored the protests, packed the suitcase, checked the kitchen to make sure there was enough food for the weekend, and called Jack to say that she couldn’t go to the game or the dance with him after all. That was the hardest part,

and Karen didn't know that her mother saw her blow her nose and wipe her eyes after the phone conversation.

After Karen left the room, Mother made a call of her own and, as she hung up the receiver, her smile was one of mingled relief and joy. After that, she fell in happily with Karen's suggestions about which clothes to take, and chatted amiably about the plays they were going to see in New York. Karen was delighted with her mother's sudden animation, and managed to conceal her own disappointment. She finished packing the suitcase and set it in the front hall.

When the Reese's car pulled up, Mother went out,



only to hurry excitedly back up the walk a few minutes later. "Karen, Mrs. Reese's sister said that she would be willing to spend the night here Saturday and stay with the girls, so you can go to the dance after all. And you know, if Jack doesn't mind two grade schoolers tagging along, why don't you take them to the game in the afternoon? They'd love it!"

Karen shrieked with glee, hugged her mother, and waltzed her around the room. "Oh, that's marvelous! And Jack won't mind taking them once. He really likes the kids — and they adore him. And I adore *you*. Now come on, they're waiting."

Karen playfully pushed her mother to the car, and waved as they drove off. She grinned from ear to ear as she ran back into the house, thinking of the wonderful weekend that everyone was going to have.