

"Radiators Are Full Of 'Em"

BY DICK ASHBAUGH

This humor writer has another round with his small daughter. And comes in second, as usual

Last evening, Daddy, his nerves humming like banjo strings, crawled into his retreat and pried open the door of the smoker in search of a friendly pipe. Immediately a small female child, rolled into a ball, plummeted to the floor, uncurled and stood up, her eyes flashing fire.

"Now the wolf will get me and eat me up," she announced sternly. "And it'll be your fault."

Steadying himself, Daddy picked up a pipe, tamped tobacco into his vest pocket and applied a light to his thumb. "For the five-hundredth time," he roared, "stay out of my smoker! And another thing, there are no wolves in this house."

He'll Be Crowded

"THAT'S what you think," she said pityingly. "One got in the keyhole last night and he's living in the back door."

"He'll be pretty crowded in there," said Daddy grimly.

"He lived in a telephone pole all winter. Wolves can make themselves little. They can live any place."

"Well, he's not going to spend the summer in our back door," said Daddy, his voice a little high for a grown man. "Go tell him to get out."

"He can't get out. His foot's caught in the hinge. He squeals every time somebody comes along and opens the door."



"Now the wolf will get me," she announced sternly

"Look, Sis," said Daddy hollowly, "I happen to know the hinge needs a little oil. That's the reason it squeals. There is no wolf in the door. Now go look for polar bears. The radiators are full of them."

"Anyhow the back-door key won't

work," she said, pensively opening the tobacco jar and installing several lightning bugs she happened to have in her pocket. "The wolf got his tail caught in the lock."

"That's fine," said Daddy. "We'll just pile furniture against the door at night. Now beat it."

Happily at this point the child's mother, a fine figure of a woman in her early thirties, swept through the room, collected the child under one arm, and headed upstairs.

Polar Bears, Too

TEN minutes later she was back, an ominous gleam in her eyes. "It would be a great help," she said acidly, "if you would refrain from filling your daughter with weird stories before bedtime. Polar bears in the radiators! She'll probably wake up screaming."

"Wait a minute," said Daddy, frowning around in an attempt to sit bolt upright. "She started the whole thing. She said —"

"All right, dear. Let's forget it, shall we? But as long as you're doing nothing, I wish you'd take a look at the back door."

"The back door?" said Daddy slowly. "What's wrong with the back door?"

"Well," she said, "one of the hinges squeals like a trapped cat and for some mysterious reason the key refuses to work. And another thing —"

"Yes?" said Daddy, feeling a prickling sensation in the back of his neck. "Go on."

"Well, don't get excited, but there's a funny noise inside that door." She paused to consider. "It's like something scratching . . ."

LOCATED deep in the southwest corner of our living room is a section of floor space, roughly six by six, known as Daddy's Corner.

Its lavish appointments consist of a battered low-level lounging chair with spring-fed ottoman, a laminated mahogany smoker from which the laminations have been removed by persons too young to prosecute, and a reading lamp that can be instantly converted to whale oil in case of a power failure. These creature comforts were purchased on a low-powered installment plan in 1937, have survived fire, flood and famine.

Technically, Daddy is supposed to crawl into this retreat each evening to brood and meditate, away from the hurly-burly of family life.

A check of traffic through the area, however, shows that it would be an excellent location for a small but busy railroad terminal. As early as 1940, Daddy made a move to have a chain-link fence thrown around the entire section, but this move was thwarted by the lady of the house.

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