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Leave It To Solo, or... Beaver Joins the Alliance  
by T. S. Weddell

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\*What in the name of Great Krauooof hit us?\*

Han Solo was too busy blinking away the little points of light that still danced about the edges of his vision like swarms of angry insects and dealing with the plethora of emergency readouts on his control panel to answer his partner's question. Both he and his ship had just taken quite a pounding.

Solo didn't know what had hit them--or, to be precise, what they had hit--but he had a good idea. A quick computer check of the unfamiliar star-field outside the cockpit confirmed his suspicions.

"Damn--a wormhole! Not on any of the charts and right in the approach to the new Alliance base. We better get back and warn them before anyone else gets sucked into it."

\*Do you have any idea where we are?\*

 Chewbacca rumbled.

Han shook his head. "Hell, Gruesome, I don't even know when we are. But we're in luck--the auto-log kicked in the minute we re-entered normal space. We won't have any trouble backtracking to the point where the wormhole spat us out. It'll be a bumpy ride back through, but we'll be ready for it this time around."

Solo was making the necessary calculations when a small trouble light began to blink on the control panel. "Great--that's all we need! We're

losing the port engine. I've gotta find a place to set down before she goes altogether."

Only one solar system was within reach--a mid-sized yellow star surrounded by a family of nine planets.

"The third planet out shows a breathable-atmosphere ... means I won't have to suit up for any outside repairs," Solo said conversationally as they sped sun-ward. "I hate working in a suit."

They were approaching the blue and tan globe of the third planet and were near enough to make out the wind-streaked cloud formations of its upper atmosphere when the trouble light began blinking more frantically and an emergency klaxon began to sound.

"Now the fun begins," Solo muttered, as his ship began to shudder and the controls grew heavy beneath his hands. The Falcon dropped like a hurled brick toward the world below.

\*Shouldn't we try for one of the bigger cities?\* Chewbacca growled concernedly as they passed over what from its lights appeared to be a large population center. \*If we need repair facilities ... \*

Solo shook his head quickly. "You're probably right, but we don't have a choice. I'm saving what little control we have left for the landing. Just be glad we're coming down on dry land." Their trajectory carried them on into the center of a larger continental land mass.

They came to rest in a wooded area outside of a small settlement, just as the Falcon's engines gave out entirely, dropping the old freighter the last few centimeters with a jolt that jarred their teeth.

"Well," said Han wearily, "let's go have a look, and you better hope it's nothing big, 'cause I have a bad feeling that the locals ain't gonna be much help." A brief scan of the planet's communications had revealed only a babble of old-style radio waves of the most primitive sort.

Luckily, the problem proved to be minor. "Just a number twelve relay," Solo said, holding up the burnt-out part with evident relief. "It must've been about ready to go and the stress of going through the wormhole finished the job. Chewie, go get me another one from the shelf in the main hold, will ya?"

Chewbacca returned quickly with some bad news.

"Whaddaya mean, 'there aren't any'?" Han said indignantly. "I thought I told you to requisition some after we used up the last one." Chewbacca

growled and waved his hands. "You thought I was gonna ... ? Oh shit! You mean to tell me that on account of some cruddy little tenth-credit part, we're stuck here?"

The Wookiee shrugged, and Han sighed with exasperation. "Well, we're just gonna have to take a walk into town and hope to hell we can come up with something. This is a fine mess you've gotten us into, Gruesome!"

Chewbacca hooted with indignation as he followed Han outside. It was early morning in the woods, and birds and small animals were beginning to tweet and chitter as they came awake in the grey twilight. Han and Chewie stepped out of the trees and started off across a wide field toward a row of houses that stood on the other side of the open expanse, silent and shuttered in the sleepy dawn.

There was no traffic on the quiet residential street, except for a boy on some sort of two-wheeled contraption who whizzed past as Han and Chewie approached. As they watched, the boy reached into a canvas pouch that hung from his shoulder and pulled out a rolled up bundle of paper, which he threw into a bush at the front of one of the houses before pedaling around the corner.

Solo stooped to retrieve the paper from the bushes and unrolled it. The lettering was quaint and archaic, but he could still make out what was written. A banner across the top of the sheet read: "Mayfield Gazette, Saturday, September 12, 1959."

With a sinking feeling, Han rolled up the paper and carefully replaced it in the shrubbery. He was beginning to realize what a primitive society he and his partner had landed themselves in.

His gloomy thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of a large dog which came trotting out of one of the adjacent yards. The animal took one look at Chewie, and its hackles rose.

"Nice doggie, heh, heh, heh. Nice boy," said Han placatingly. The dog's response was to bare its teeth and advance. "Easy, boy, easy ... oh shit!" Han said. He and Chewie took off with the dog in hot pursuit.

They ran across the street and into the back yard of a house on the other side. Through the neat suburban gardens they went, leaping rosebushes and barbeque pits in their attempt to shake their canine pursuer. Han tore his pants going over a picket fence, and he swore as he felt the morning chill on his back-side.

Finally Chewbacca ran out of patience. He whirled and let out a mighty roar. The dog stopped dead in its tracks, turned, and went ky-yiing back the way it had come, with its tail between its legs.

"Why the hell didn't you do that earlier?" Han demanded peevishly.

Chewie shrugged. \*Didn't think of it until now.\*

"Great," Solo grumbled. "That really tears it!"

\*So it would seem,\* the Wookiee snickered, looking at the gaping hole in the seat of his partner's trousers.

Han drew in his breath, but a noise from down the street forestalled his angry retort. Doors were opening, newspapers were being retrieved from front stoops, the little town was coming awake. "Look, Chewie, we gotta get out of sight. From the way that dog reacted to you, I have a feeling there's gonna be trouble if anyone sees us."

Han and Chewbacca now found themselves on a street several blocks from their starting point, in front of a two-story field stone-faced house with large bay windows. Two white wrought iron chairs flanked a central front entrance, and shiny brass numerals proudly proclaimed the address: 211. Quickly, the two spacers sprinted across the neatly manicured lawn to the side of the house and let themselves into the small detached garage through an unlocked side door. Once inside, they sat themselves down on a pile of tidily-bundled newspapers that had been left there by the lady of the house in anticipation of the next Boy Scout paper drive.

\*What now?\* asked Chewbacca.

"Damned if I know," Han answered. "Lemme think."

Several hours later, they were roused by the sound of voices outside.

"Now, young man," said an obviously adult male, "I want to see the remains of your soapbox racer cleaned up by the time your mother and I come home. I don't want to have to leave my car out again tonight."

"Yessir," a younger voice replied.

Next, Solo heard an ungodly racket, and the stink of an old-fashioned internal combustion engine drifted in through the closed garage door.

"Bye, Mom ... bye, Dad," the younger voice called as the noise of the engine receded.

Soon the side door opened and a dark-haired youngster of about nine or ten wearing a beat-up baseball cap entered. He began to pick away at a pile of wood and other assorted hardware in the middle of the garage floor with a decided lack of enthusiasm.

Han and Chewie looked frantically around for a place to hide, but the garage was simply too neat. They froze, hoping the child would, by some miracle, continue not to notice them.

Two pieces of wood caught the youngster's eye. He placed them together crosswise, holding them out stiffly from his body with one arm. "Neeeeaaaow,neeeaaaoww," he whined, taking his outstretched hand through the swooping motions of a dive-bomber. Tiring of that game, he took the longer piece and held it in closely under his arm, mimicking the staccato, "ack-ack-ack-ack," of a machine gun. Whirling and pivoting, he aimed at various imaginary targets throughout the tiny garage until, inevitably, he spied Han and Chewie huddled motionless in their corner. He stopped dead, the piece of wood clattering to the concrete floor. "Mom! Dad! Walleee ..." he yelled, bolting for the door.

Fearing disaster if the boy roused the entire neighborhood, Solo was off like a shot, placing himself across the doorway. "Please, kid, stop yelling," he pleaded. "I ain't gonna hurt you!"

The youngster stopped short. "You promise?"

"Yeah, kid," said Han with as much sincerity as he could muster, "I promise."

"What about him?" the boy asked, eyeing Chewbacca warily.

"What, him? Chewbacca? He's real friendly. Wouldn't hurt a soul, would ya, Chewie?"

Chewbacca hastily nodded and smiled in his most ingratiating fashion.

That seemed to satisfy the youngster for the time being. "Well, I guess you're okay, mister. But what are you doing in my garage?"

Solo had once heard a wise old adage that said: 'When in doubt, tell the truth.' He did so now. "Y'see, kid, we've got this problem. Our ship--"

"Mister," the boy interrupted skeptically, "there isn't any water near Mayfield ... except for Miller's Pond, and that isn't big enough for anything but a rowboat."

Han sighed patiently. "It's a space ship, kid, hidden in the woods a little ways from here."

"Wow! You mean like a Sputnik?" Suddenly he sounded suspicious again. "Say, you aren't Russians, are ya?"

"Of course not! Do we look like Russians?" Han said, hoping that whatever Russians were he and Chewie didn't resemble them.

"Cross your heart and hope to die?"

Secretly appalled at the barbaric oath, Solo nonetheless nodded solemnly. Evidently it was the right thing to do, for the boy seemed to decide to trust them. He held out his hand. "Hi. I'm Beaver Cleaver."

Han shook the small hand. "B-VER? Sounds like a droid's name."

"It's short for Theodore. What's a droid?"

"Never mind, kid. My name's Han Solo, and this here's my partner, Chewbacca. Listen, Beaver, I don't suppose you could direct us to the nearest spaceport?"

Wide-eyed, the boy shook his head.

Han sighed. "No. Somehow I didn't think you could."

"There's an airport north of Friend's Lake," Beaver said helpfully. "It isn't big enough for jets to land there, though."

"Jets!" Han groaned, as if the term were on a par with flint knives. He looked over at his partner with a mournful, "why me?" expression.

\*Relax, Cub, I'm sure you'll be able to jury-rig something out of materials they have around here,\* Chewbacca growled reassuringly.

"Oh, really?" Han said sarcastically. "It's good to know I have an optimist in my corner. Aw, hell ... I suppose you're right. It's worth a try anyway."

He turned back to Beaver. "See, kid, we need to repair our ship. Do you have any old parts lying around here like, say ..." he searched his knowledge of ancient history for a term that would be comprehensible to a member of this dismally primitive culture, "... electronics?"

"You could have my Dick Tracy Official Two-Way Wrist Radio that I got by sending away three whole Wheaties boxtops," Beaver offered, holding out his left arm.

"No, kid," Han said gently after a quick glance. "I don't think that'll quite do the job. What else have you got in this garage?"

Half an hour later, Han was picking through piles of old light bulbs, flash-light batteries, broken household appliances, and parts from an old Atwater-Kent console radio and becoming increasingly despondent, when a sandy-haired boy about Beaver's age wandered in. The newcomer was wearing a rumpled jacket, and three inches of pudgy pink belly showed in the gap between his striped cotton tee-shirt and the waistband of his corduroy pants. He was munching on a candy bar, and his mouth and hands were smeared with chocolate.

"Hiya, Beave," he said, popping the last of his chocolate bar into his mouth.

"Hiya, Larry."

"Whatcha doing, Beave?" Larry asked, eyeing the two strangers phlegmatically, as if he saw the likes of Chewbacca every day.

"Lookin' for a new part for a spaceship," Beaver replied.

"Oh," said Larry, taking another Baby Ruth out of his pocket and proceeding to peel off the wrapper.

"Is this all there is, kid?" Han asked, looking up from his work. So far he had enjoyed no success in his search.

"'Fraid so, mister."

"We're gonna grow old and die here," Solo muttered bleakly.

"Hey, Beave! How about taking apart the TV set?" the fat youngster suggested. "I bet there's lots've good stuff in there!"

"Gee, I dunno, Larry ..." Beaver said reluctantly.

Han hated to take advantage of innocence, but the situation was becoming serious. "Maybe he's right, kid. Where is this ... teevee?"

"It's in the den. Follow me."

Beaver led them inside, through a sunny kitchen and into a wide stairway hall. On one side of the big front door hung an oil painting of a long-haired youth in a blue velvet costume that reminded Han of Lando Calrissian at his nattiest; on the other was a matching picture of a simpering girl in pink and white. The den was on the right.

"Holy Sith -- it ain't even a holo-vid! " Solo whispered to his partner when he caught sight of the Cleavers' brand new twenty-three inch Zenith. "This planet's so backward, I bet they're still splitting atoms for their energy!"

"Hey, Beaver ... you got anything to eat?" Larry said. "I'm hungry."

"Sure, Larry. In the kitchen." He turned his attention to Han and Chewie, who were moving the heavy television set away from the wall. "Is there anything there you can use, mister?"

"I dunno, kid. Let's get the back off and see what's inside."

Solo was staring in amazement at the most archaic array of tubes and wires he'd ever beheld when Larry returned from the kitchen carrying a plate piled high with a handful of cookies, an apple, a sandwich, and two pieces of chocolate layer cake. He sat down next to Chewbacca and began to consume his snack, looking up every once in a while to check on Han's progress at dismantling the TV set.

Half an hour later, Larry had finished and so had Han. Tubes and parts were scattered all over the room, not a one joined to its original mate. Solo shook his head grimly. "Nuthin' we can use."

"Golly, Beaver, what a mess!" Larry said, surveying the chaos on the den carpet. "Boy, are you ever gonna get it when your parents get home! Well, I gotta go now. it's time for lunch."

"Yeah, bye, Larry," Beaver said disconsolately as his friend let himself out.

"Don't worry, kid," Han reassured him. "I can get it back together ... I think."

He was just replacing the back on the set when the front door opened and a husky teenager wearing a sweater with a large letter M on the chest entered. He set his books down on the hall table and came into the den.

"Hi, Beaver."

"Hi, Wally."

The older boy spied Han at work. "I didn't know the set was busted, Beaver."

Beaver shook his head. "This isn't the repairman, Wally, it's my friend General Han Solo of The Lions to Store the Public. His rocketship is in the woods behind Metzger's field and he's lookin' for parts to fix it."

Wally shook his head and turned to Han. "I gotta apologize for my little brother, mister. He's been telling tall stories like this ever since Uncle Billie came to stay with us last summer."

Han laughed. "Don't be so hard on the kid. He's got the details more or less right. Hey, Chewie," he said to his partner, who had just returned from the bathroom, "hand me that screwdriver, will ya?"

Wally turned to stare in disbelief at seven feet of Wookiee. "Holy Cow, Beaver!" he gulped.

"Okay, I've got it back together," Han announced. "Let's check her out."

He switched on the set and waited for the picture to warm up. A strange creature with feelers and tentacles appeared, gesticulating wildly and jabbering in an alien language. The program seemed to be some kind of newscast.

"Gee, mister," Wally said dubiously, "that's not WZBP out of Bell Port."

Han furrowed his brow. "I must've boosted your range of reception a little too much. Never mind, I can adjust that later." He turned off the set and sat back on his heels, rubbing the back of his aching neck. "Great! There's nothing in the garage, no parts in the house. I guess we're stuck here."

"Maybe not, mister," Wally suggested. "There's a new radio store down on Main Street. They've got all kinds of tubes and junk."

Solo perked up. "You may just have saved my life, kid. Where is this 'MainStreet'?" He headed for the door.

"Hey, mister, you can't go downtown looking like that," Wally warned.

Solo craned his head around for a quick look at the torn seat of his pants. "Damn -- you're right! And it's a sure bet Chewie can't go down there without causing a riot."

"Wally and I can go, if you'll tell us what to look for," Beaver volunteered.

"I guess that's the best we can do," Han said, seating himself at Ward Cleaver's big desk and quickly sketching a few diagrams. "We're looking for something like this ... or this other one. And you'll hafta use your own money, but I'll pay you back..."

Han trailed off as he realized that his Alliance scrip and Imperial credits would be of no more use to the boys than to the local shopkeepers. The only other thing he had in his pockets was a souvenir paperweight he'd picked up on Commenor for Leia, thinking it would look nice on her desk.

"Will this be okay?" he asked, taking it out and showing it to the boys. "It's only gold-plate over platinum, but it oughtta be worth enough to cover the cost of the parts."

"Golly!" said Beaver, staring at the heavy, fist-sized object.

"Yeah, mister, it'll be enough," Wally said. "You two guys had better wait upstairs in our room 'til we get back. It's the first door at the end of the hall." They went out the door and disappeared down the street.

Upstairs, Han and Chewie found a pleasant room with neat window curtains and matching plaid spreads on the twin beds. It was filled with the distinctive paraphernalia of boyhood: school pennants, a model sailboat, an old canoe paddle leaning in one corner, and two curved pieces of metal on the wall whose function Solo couldn't begin to guess at.

\*Take off your pants,\* Chewie growled, as Han looked around.

"Huh?"

\*I found a needle and thread downstairs. I'll fix them for you while we wait,\* the Wookiee explained.

"Good idea. Thanks, Chewie."

\*Think nothing of it. I'm just tired of seeing your ugly behind hanging out, that's all.\*

"Well, your hairy butt is no thing of beauty either, Gruesome," Han laughed as he threw his wadded-up trousers at his partner.

No sooner had Chewbacca begun to work than they heard a loud roar from the driveway below. Han rushed to the window and saw an outlandish vehicle, all soaring tailfins and jutting chrome, pull in. Ward and June Cleaver had returned.

Han and Chewie heard the muffled bang of the kitchen door, and voices came drifting up the stairwell.

"Wally ... Beaver..."

"We're home, boys."

"They must have gone somewhere to play, Ward. As long as they're out, I think I'll do a little cleaning up in their room."

"Fine idea, dear. There's a good game on this afternoon -- the Milwaukee Braves versus the Brooklyn Dodgers. I'll be in the den, watching television."

"oh ... shit!" Solo whispered as he heard footsteps on the stairs. He motioned to his partner. "Quick, under the bed! ... What? I don't care how -- try exhaling!"

Han slithered under the bed closest to the window just as June Cleaver entered, dragging a heavy upright vacuum cleaner. Soon the room was filled with aloud, thumping whine, and Han could see her high-heeled feet moving back and forth as she worked. She covered the space between the window and the bed and then began to vacuum underneath. The heavy Hoover thudded into Solo's ribs once, then twice.

The noise of the machine ceased. "Now what could the Beaver have under there this time?" Han heard June mutter. "Sometimes I just don't know about those boys..."

June knelt and peered into the darkness under the bed, letting out a stifled squeak of surprise as she found an unfamiliar pair of hazel eyes staring back at her.

Solo scrambled hastily out backwards and stood up in the space between the two beds. He saw a look of horrified indignation cross the woman's face and realized too late what a strange sight he must present with his shirttails flapping and his blaster strapped to his bare leg.

"Uhh ... hold on, lady," he pleaded. "This ain't what it looks like!"

Obviously unconvinced, June snatched up Wally's tennis racket from the top of the bureau and advanced on Han, her eyes gleaming with a dangerous light, her single strand of pearls dancing at the neck of her Peter Pan collared housedress. All in all, she looked as if she meant business.

Downstairs the front door opened and closed, and two sets of feet clattered up the stairs.

"We're sorry, mister. They didn't have what you wanted. But the guy at the store was real interested in finding out where we got those drawings, and...uh oh!"

Beaver's voice trailed off as he watched Solo duck under the swipe of June's tennis racket. At the same time, Ward could be heard trudging up the stairs.

"June, oh June ... there seems to be something wrong with the television set..."

At that precise moment, Chewbacca emerged from under the other bed, coming to his partner's aid, and all hell broke loose.

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It was at least an hour before Ward Cleaver had calmed his family down and all the explanations were made. Han, his pants newly mended courtesy of June, sat with the others in the spacious Cleaver living room.

"... and so, Wally and Beaver, let this be a lesson to you," Ward was saying sternly. "The next time we have visitors from outer space, I hope you two boys will come to your mother and me."

"Yes, sir. "

"Yes, Dad."

"Very well." He turned to Han. "I'm sorry that took so long, General Solo."

Han dismissed it with a wave of his hand. "Hey, I know how it goes. I'm a family man myself."

He removed a holo-cube from his vest pocket and activated the display.

The figures of a beautiful dark-haired woman and a little blond boy of about three appeared in full color on the Cleavers' coffee table. It was

plain from the way that the midriff of the woman's white gown swelled that there would soon be an addition to the little group.

"What a lovely family, General Solo," June remarked.

"Yeah, that's why I'm so anxious to get home," Han said. "That, and 'cause I'm needed back there. There's a war on."

Ward nodded gravely. "Yes, about getting you home ... just where is home for you?"

Solo shrugged. "I wish I knew. We got here through a sort of ... flaw in the space-time continuum. We might be from your past, or from your future, or from a different universe entirely. But that's no problem. If we go back through the wormhole, we'll end up where we started. It's getting to the wormhole that's gonna be difficult."

"I think I can help you, General," Ward said. "The boys came back empty-handed because they didn't know what they were looking for, but I have some familiarity with present day electronics. If you and I put our heads together, I'm sure we can devise something that will do the job for you."

"You really think so?" Solo asked hopefully.

"Of course," Ward said confidently. "After all, I was an engineer in the Seabees during the War. Now as soon as I get some paper and pencils ..." He headed off in the direction of the den wearing the happy expression of a man reliving his flaming youth.

"My goodness, where are my manners?" June suddenly exclaimed. "You two gentlemen must be famished!" She disappeared into the kitchen.

While the two elder Cleavers were gone, the doorbell rang and Wally went to answer it. He returned to the living room accompanied by a weaselly-looking boy about the same age as himself.

"Hiya, squirt," the newcomer said to Beaver. "How're things in Kindergarten?"

"Hi, Eddie," Beaver replied in a long-suffering tone.

Eddie spied Han and Chewbacca sitting on the couch. "Hey, Wally, is Halloween a month early this year?" he said in a whisper that was not soft

enough to escape Han's keen ears. "Hah -- Buck Rogers and his trained monkey!"

"Watch your mouth, sonny," Solo said evenly, "or I'll have my 'trained monkey' tear your arms out of their sockets."

Eddie, for once at a loss for words, looked at Wally in dismay. Luckily, before Wally was forced to invent some explanation for the Cleavers' two unusual houseguests, Ward reappeared. Immediately, Eddie's entire demeanor altered. If he'd had a tail, Solo thought, it would have been wagging.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Cleaver," Eddie gushed. "I just came by to see if Wallace might accompany me to the movies. That is, with your permission, sir."

"I think that would be a very good idea, Wally," Ward said pointedly. "In fact, it will be my treat."

"Huh? Oh, yeah ... sure," Wally said, taking a dollar bill from his father's outstretched hand. "Thanks, Dad."

"Why, hello, Mrs. Cleaver. What a becoming dress you have on this afternoon," Eddie said to June, who had just entered the living room carrying a tray of tiny sandwiches which had been cut into the shapes of hearts, clubs, diamonds, and spades, each garnished with a single olive or radish rose. Chewie picked one up and examined it curiously, the scrap of bread becoming lost between his huge thumb and forefinger.

"Thank you, Eddie," June replied patiently.

"Now run along, boys," Ward prompted. "We wouldn't want you to be late for your movie."

"Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Cleaver. Good-bye, Theodore."

"Bye, Dad."

As the door shut behind them, Eddie could be heard loudly proclaiming, "Jeez, Wally, where did your old man ever dig up those two weirdos?"

\*That boy reminds me of someone ... \* Chewie growled rhetorically.

Solo merely shot his partner a dirty look and turned his attention to Ward.

"Say, Cleaver, are you sure that paperweight I gave you will cover the cost of the parts and the repairs to your television?"

"Don't trouble yourself about it any further, General Solo," Ward said, patting the lump of solid platinum in his pocket. With the proceeds from its sale carefully invested, and with the knowledge he expected to pick up from his brainpicking session with Solo, Ward looked forward in a few years to being able to tell Fred Rutherford to take a hike. "Now, shall we get down to work?"

"Sure thing. What we're looking for is something like this..."

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That evening, Ward and June Cleaver sat relaxing in their living room, Ward leafing through the late edition of the Mayfield Gazette and June darning a pair of socks. Earlier that afternoon, Ward and Han had succeeded in knocking together a Rube Goldberg contraption to fill in for the missing relay, and the two visitors had been driven to the woods behind Metzger's field, Chewie concealed under a blanket in the back seat of Ward's Oldsmobile. The part had been installed, and the Falcon was safely away.

Ward looked up from a headline that read: "Early Morning Fireball Sighted over Midwest," and mused, "I wonder if they made it home?"

"oh, I think they'll be all right," June said, not bothering to glance up from her work. "I have a feeling about it."

"Ah, yes -- you and your woman's intuition," Ward chuckled tolerantly. June merely smiled a knowing smile.

Ward put down his paper, and a faraway look came into his eyes. "I wonder what it would have been like to go with them," he said. "Imagine, June; being able to fly through space, seeking out new life, new civilizations, boldly going where no m--"

"Now, Ward," June interrupted with a frown. "I think we've had just about enough excitement for one day."

"Yes, dear," Ward said meekly and returned to his newspaper.

Upstairs, the boys were preparing for bed. Wally was experimenting at the mirror, applying Brylcream and carefully combing his hair into a passable imitation of Frankie Avalon, whom just the day before Mary Ellen Rogers

had told him he resembled. Beaver, already in his pajamas and robe, was seated at the desk, scribbling furiously on a wrinkled sheet of notebook paper. Every so often he would pause and stare into space, his tongue protruding earnestly from one corner of his mouth. Then he would fall to writing again.

"Whatcha doing, Beave?"

"Writing a story, Wally. I got this neat idea about a space-guy who crash-lands on Earth and gets stuck here, and he hides in this little kid's garage and the kid finds him and gets to be his friend and helps him get back home." His eyes sparkled with excitement. "Maybe some guys from Hollywood will read it and wanna make it into a movie, even!"

"Aw, Beaver, ya little goof!" Wally snorted. "Nobody's gonna want to pay good money to see a dopey story like that!"

Beaver put down his pencil, crestfallen. "Yeah, Wally, I guess you're right." He crumpled the sheet of paper and threw it into the wastebasket. Taking off his robe, he pulled back the covers of his bed and crawled in. Wally did the same.

"G'night, Beaver."

"G'night, Wally."

End

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