

She remembered how easily barriers could be built and make complete strangers out of people.

"Sonny, go ahead and tell me more about this girl," she urged.

"She is not very unusual, Mother. Not unusual enough to talk about. Shall we eat soon? I think I shall take a shower first."

As the boy walked out of the room, she felt that it was more out of her life. The breach between them widened as the years passed, and she visibly suffered. In vain did she try to recapture their gay comradeship. Whenever she tried to draw him towards her, she sensed at once his sudden withdrawal and his attitude of defense.

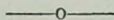
She felt lonelier when he left for the city. His home visits were brief and perfunctory, and when he finally finished his studies and found work, even his very rare visits stopped. Only his brief letters with the monthly checks kept coming—the single fact that persistently reminded her she still had a son.

Stripped now of all vestiges of possession and coddling, she prayed earnestly that they find each other again. She vowed she would not commit the same mistake again.

When she received the telegram from him, telling her that he was coming home for a rest, she felt humbled in the belief that her prayers had been answered at last.

"Please, God, give me another chance that I may have him back," she prayed tearfully.

When finally her son stood before her—frail, thin, and wasted, she hesitantly clasped his hands, carefully, lest he shy away again. The kiss that she felt on her brows was like a benediction, and it was strange that she did not feel the triumph and exultation that the kiss signified. In her heart, she knew that the kiss was neither a surrender nor a truce. Rather, it was the symbol of the bond and alliance with him that she had lost. She had it now and she would not lose it again.



## "3 SWEETEST WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE"

DOROTHY DE ZOUCHE

"We ought to ask questions. We might learn some surprising facts if we did. Teachers crawl too much. Anyone who crawls on his stomach long enough will get to look like a worm and what is more terrible, to think worm thoughts."

"Teachers must stop being concerned only with the educational and salary problems in the community in which they teach. All educational problems (and all other problems) belong to all of us. We should be ashamed to say, 'That problem does not concern us here

in Beaver City.' We must learn now that only so far as the entire group progresses do we progress as individual teachers. Whatever does injury to any group of teachers or to an individual teacher hurts all of us whether we think so or not. If any teacher in New York City or Prairie Center is treated with injustice or indignity, I am the loser; and by whatever good comes to a teacher whose path I shall never cross or whose name I shall never hear, I shall have gained a step upon the way."