



GILBERT DARLING

What got me interested in his soul was a letter from Sally, who was madly in love with me

The Soul of Joe Forsythe

By B. M. ATKINSON, JR.

I STILL say the twenty bucks had nothing to do with it. It was strictly for the sake of Brother Joe Forsythe's soul. Of course, where sophomores and their souls are concerned you have to take drastic steps, and that's what I did. It was just unfortunate that he took it the way he did.

What got me interested in Brother Forsythe's soul was a letter from his fifteen-year-old sister, Sally, who was madly in love with me and every other brother in the chapter who'd ever gone home with Brother Forsythe for a week end.

The letter started out: *Dearest Wretch: When I am the sweetheart of Sigma Chi, SAE, Deke, KA, etc., you Chi Phi stinkers will rue the day you didn't invite me up for those crummy spring dances.*

It wound up: *Even though you don't have the decency to rescue a maiden fair from the vile clutches of a bunch of high-school creeps maybe you will at least stoop to helping one of your own filthy kind. My idiot brother Joe wrote Mother that unless she sent him twenty dollars before the dances he was going to destroy himself. Father told her that he was going to destroy them both if she did, so she didn't. That sounds like high tragedy but it's really a panic.*

Joe has twenty dollars right in his room at school but he doesn't know it. You know what a great churchwoman Mother is. Well, she sent Joe a Bible back in the fall and told him to be sure and read it. In the Bible at the place where it says the Lord will provide, she tucked a nice, crisp twenty-dollar bill. Every time she writes him she asks if he is reading the Bible. Every time he writes he says he is learning whole chapters by heart. She knows it's a lie because he has never mentioned the twenty dollars and if Joe ever found twenty dollars you could hear him mentioning it all over the county.

So, if it's not asking too much of you, kind sir, please get him to read his Bible. Just hint at it because I promised Mother that I would never tell him about it. Good night, Stinker.

*Your Handmaiden,
Sally.*

Well, when I read that, I closed my door and had a long heart-to-heart talk with myself. "Pete," I said, "the fact that you desperately need twenty dollars to go with that poor lonely ten of yours has nothing whatsoever to do with the decision you're about to make, does it?"

"Perish the thought!" I said.

"You are going to buy that Bible from him just to teach him a lesson, aren't you? Any boy who will lie to his mother about reading the holy book deserves just what he gets, doesn't he? You're doing it for the good of his soul, aren't you?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!"

"Besides," I said, "it will teach him some respect for his elders. A sophomore should not win all the brothers' money playing poker and then spend it all wining and dining the brothers' girls, should he?"

"Horrors, no!" I replied. "Go buy that Bible immediately. Make all the world your debtor."

WELL, I went into his room and there he was stretched out on his bed. That's another one of his failings. He studies one hour a night and he's got the highest grades in the lodge.

"Brother Forsythe," I said, "you don't happen to have a Bible, do you?"

"Why, certainly I've got a Bible!" he said. "What do you think I am?"

"I know what you are, Brother Forsythe," I said. "That's the reason I want to buy it from you. Your way of life calls more for a voodoo manual."

He sat up and stared at me. "You want to buy my Bible?" he gasped. "You, Godless John Upshaw, want to buy a—?"

"All right!" I told him. "I'm on a spot. My uncle, the Reverend Philip Upshaw, is in town and he just called and said he was coming out to see me. He gave me a Bible last Christmas. I sold it and I've got to have another one because I know he will be looking for the—"

"Oh, you wretch!" he said. "Your uncle gives you a nice Bible and you sell it. How low, how degraded, how mercenary can a—? How much money you got?"

"Don't talk that way, Brother Forsythe," I said. "You can buy a fine Bible any place for a buck, so—"

"A buck!" he screamed. He reached up on the top of his bureau, got this oblong cardboard box down, blew the dust off, opened it up, and pulled out this brand-new Bible. It had never been opened.

"Brother Upshaw," he said, "my dear-old mother sent me this Bible. There's a million dollars' worth of love and hope and sentiment behind this book. However, as we are brothers in the bond, pledged to one another even unto death, I'm gonna let you have it for only five bucks."

"Five bucks!" I gasped.

"Brother Upshaw," he said, "this is a horrible thing I do. I must have funds enough to drown my shame in the proper fashion."

"You're a loathsome leech on the body fraternal, Brother Forsythe," I said bitterly, "but here. Take it." I fished one of the two fives out of my wallet and handed it to him.

He snatched the Bible back. "Just what the hell is this? It just ain't right you paying me five bucks for my Bible when you could borrow one around the house someplace for—" He started to thumb through it. I grabbed it from him.

"There's my Uncle Philip," I gasped. "Just heard him come in downstairs. I've got to have this."

"Ten bucks," he snarled. "It's some kind of low, dirty trick but you're going to pay for it."

"Damn you, Brother Forsythe," I said, "you'll regret this!" I gave him my other five and dashed down the hall. "Coming, Uncle Philip." . . .

A half hour later I was down in the library, thumbing through the Bible for the fifty-third time. There just wasn't any nice crisp twenty-dollar bill in it. I gave it one more shake and headed upstairs for his room. He wasn't there, but this letter of his was lying on his table.

Dear Sally, it said, Please send more Bibles. Just hooked Brother Upshaw. That makes seven dear brothers this week. A funny thing but not one of them has said anything to me or to anybody else about it. I wonder why? Write Ed and Roger next. Enclosed is twenty bucks. Ten is for you. Put the other ten in the collection plate Sunday. The Lord's work must go forward.

Joe.

P.S. Yes, I've already written Mary Jane that although I love her above all the creatures of this earth I can't have her up for the spring dances as I have to take my dear little sister. It is hard for me to believe that such a straightforward, up-standing young man as myself could have a blackmailing sister who would threaten to expose him to his father.

THE END

Collier's SHORT SHORT



Once again it's time to make a bowl of Merry Christmas!

The ingredients: Here's all you need for the finest "Bowl of Merry Christmas" ever—a Four Roses Eggnog:

Six eggs; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar; 1 pint milk; 1 pint cream; 1 oz. Jamaica Rum; 1 pint Four Roses; grated nutmeg.

The procedure: Beat separately egg yolks and whites. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar to yolks while beating. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar to whites after beating them very stiff. Mix whites with yolks.

Stir in cream and milk. Add Four Roses and rum. Stir thoroughly. Serve very cold, with grated nutmeg.

The delightful result: A bowlful (five pints) of the grandest Eggnog ever ladled into a cup... thanks to the magnificent flavor of that matchless whiskey—Four Roses.

Frankfort Distillers Corporation, New York City. Blended Whiskey. 86.8 proof. 60% grain neutral spirits.

Wouldn't you rather
give (and get)

Four Roses

IN ATTRACTIVE GIFT CARTON





INSIDE THE LUNCFORD CABIN, Mine Luncford (right) churns butter. Others in family are Grandmother Freelove Eviline Issacs, Charles George Washington and John Loss Luncford. Entering the hut, says Brodie, was like moving back the clock



DRAWINGS BY
THE AUTHOR

RUGGEDLY HANDSOME, John Luncford's appearance belies usual comic-art interpretation of a mountaineer. The 50-year-old gun in his hands is his favorite; it once belonged to his father



GRANDMOTHER Issacs, 96 years old, is still vigorous. The contraption in her mouth is a crude birch-twig toothbrush, from which she sucks her snuff