

# ALL . . . IS DIVIDED IN THREE PARTS

by  
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The die is cast. We'll sell the Glen Ridge house which we have built and lived in for forty-one years, and move to Meadow Lakes, a retirement home in Hightstown, N.J. (George and Dorothy, who had built a similar, but not exact, house next to us, moved to Meadow Lakes a year and a half before we did. We thought we were too young to retire! However, after their house was sold, and strangers moved in, it was never the same so we decided to follow them to Meadow Lakes where only a hallway would separate our apartments instead of a driveway between our houses.)

But what to do with a house filled with an accumulation of forty-one years which included "Keep sakes" from both of our parents; papers, books, drawings and diplomas from each of the three boys; plus treasured items from nine grandchildren.

It was lucky for us that Howie, Johnnie and Don all had homes of their own. The big problem was: how could we divide our lares and penates equitably? This is how we finally did it:

On a Saturday night, the three boys and their wives came to our house for an early dinner wearing (by request) their working clothes. In advance, we had pulled out from the eaves, boxes and trunks filled with things which the young people soon referred to as "being up for grabs." Whoever wanted something, said so. If more than one was interested in a given item, a coin was kept handy and, by flipping it, an instantaneous decision was made. Then everybody lugged the stuff to the boys' three station wagons.

Now it was time for the serious business of dividing the household goods. For this, we sat in the living room, in a circle, each would-be recipient armed with a large yellow pad of paper and pencil, and we, with a notebook. In order to make the division as fair as possible, and to assure that each recipient had what he or she really wanted, we spread a deck of cards as for a Bridge deal. It was agreed in advance that an Ace would be low, that the value of the cards would increase as in

Bridge, and that the one drawing the *lowest* card would choose first from anything in the house. As they drew, the names were listed in order in the notebook.

Johnnie drew the two of Clubs, and surprised us by using his precious first choice to ask for the hand-carved Balinese head. At that moment, we were made aware, as never before, of the importance of environment in the life of an individual. Not one of the boys had ever commented on how beautiful this carving was, yet Anne and Peggy both said afterwards that if *their* husbands had won first choice, they had agreed that the carving would be it.

Keeping the same order of choice, we went round and round the six, allocating everything except the silver tea service, table linens and kitchen utensils. Since the girls would be primarily the ones to use these, we felt that they should be allowed to choose by themselves. Besides, that gave us an excuse for another evening together. Once more, the station wagons were filled to the top.

Throughout this entire operation, there was only one small altercation. Anne had chosen a frame of multiple-pictures of me when I was three years old. After Anne had made her choice, she turned to Johnnie and said, "This isn't fair! Your Susie looks the most like Mom." To this, Johnnie replied, "No, it was your turn and you have every right to it." This went on for awhile until someone suggested that they might trade something already on Johnnie's list. In the end, a trade was made. They traded me for a fireplace grate!

Now it is fun for us to visit our children, and to use our old possessions in their new surroundings. It brings a warm glow of satisfaction to hear our grandchildren say, "We think our house looks much prettier with your things in it."

Howie was the only one who had a completely empty room in his house. So he chose our Guest Room complete with furniture, pictures from the walls and rugs from the floor. Now "our room" is always ready and waiting for us. Peggy laughingly reminds us that we simply *cannot* make any derogatory remarks about the beds in the Guest Room!



Howard Ruth Peggie Don Ann SaraLee John D  
Peter  
Howie Susie Bonnie Deb Lynn Kathy David  
Billie John H

The Howard Sanborn Family—1968