

'Til Next Week

By Alex FIELD

I can usually tell when things are wrong. But sometimes I can't, because no one else acts like anything is wrong. It's just the way things are.

Ma & Pa

I don't remember much about my Ma and Pa. They died before I turned five. They were nice people, or at least that's what I'm told. I remember the day they died — actually, I remember the day I realized that they were never coming back. I was sitting in my Gan-ma's kitchen — I live with my Gan-ma now — and I was eating milk and cookies. A piece of cookie broke off and fell into the milk. It floated for a couple of seconds and then it disappeared. A haunting feeling entered my chest as the last sign of the cookie sunk. I realized then that my parents weren't coming back, not because my parents were living on through that piece of cookie, but because I realized that some things just can't go back to the way they were, no matter how much I wanted it to. I sat there and cried. My Gan-ma came over to me and gave me another cookie — they're the best.

Gan-ma

My Gan-ma's a great lady with her two tint white and gray hair that is neatly packaged into a tight bun at the

back of her head, which would stay perfectly placed for the intier day. Gan-ma has the softest looking face. It doesn't show any sign of aging, except when she smiled, revealing crows' feet at the corners of her eyes.

She'll do anything to make me happy.

"Do it again, Gan-ma," I would insist, "please, Gan-ma, do it again."

"Okay," she'd say

She always says Okay.

It's hilarious, she takes her index finger and thumb, and puts them in her mouth, placing them on her teeth, and then removes them. It's amazing. Her teeth are now in her hand, and her lips, a red line of dangling flesh, which hangs loose over her mouth. And if that isn't enough, she talks in the silliest way.

"There now, give your old Gan-ma a kiss," she'd say with a hissing noise and a little drip of spit in the corner of her mouth. — Gan-ma never takes her teeth out when other people are in the house —

Gan-ma's so funny, and she's a great entertainer.

I guess that's why there's always people in our house. People walk into our white aand green, two story house, through the old creaking screen-door, through the hallway, passed the stairs on the left, and the living room on the right, into the

kitchen in the back part of the house.

Gan-ma's kitchen is always spotless. The checkered floor with it's black and white squares, matches perfectly with the white cupboards on the left, with the black counter, and the white table in the far left corner, where I sit most of the day. Every time someone enters the house, they bring with them a warm gust of air from the summer's heat, and then they sit down in the kitchen, where Gan-ma pours them some Ice Tea, or at least that's what she says it is. — I wouldn't know though, because I never get to have any of Gan-ma's Ice Tea — People come all the time to drink Gan-ma's Ice Tea, but most come at night. There are a few people that come more often than others, like Harry Fizzelworth, Mr. Everlly and Mr. Passington.

Gan-ma never seems to mind when they come over. I don't mind either, because if it wasn't for them, Gan-ma would be the only person I'd ever get to talk to — not that there would be anything wrong with that.

Harry Fizzelworth

Harry Fizzelworth is almost always at Gan-ma's house. I get up in the morning and there he is, sipping on some of Gan-ma's Ice Tea.

"Good mornin' fell," Harry says when I walk into the kitchen. "Aren't you a lazy one."

Harry always makes it sound like I'm so lazy, which is funny, because he never does anything, except sit in Gan-ma's kitchen and sip on her Ice Tea. One time I asked my Gan-ma why Harry was always here and not at work or something.

"He doesn't have to work," my Gan-ma replied, "he's well off."

Harry doesn't look too well off to

me. He's covered in dirt, and has a messed-up-birds-nest hairdo that looks like a whole family of birds cold live in it. Harry looks so sad, he always slouches over his drink like he's going to dive head first into it. I never talk to Harry. I tried to once, but the yellow shine from his teeth, the brown goop in his lower lip, and the smell of his stale breath, are enough to knock me out or make me throw up. But I don't want to seem impolite, so whenever I see Harry in the room, I nod my head and give a welcoming smile, and quickly find something to do, so he doesn't try to talk to me.

I think Harry would live with us if he could, but then he's have to deal with Mr. Everlly.

I don't think Harry and Mr. Everlly get along to well. It seems that if Harry's in the kitchen, then Mr. Everlly isn't, and the opposite is true too.

Harry would always make sure to leave before eight o'clock. He would keep an eye on the clock form 7:30 on, making sure that he was finished of his drink and was gone before the big hand struck eight. Mr. Everlly

Mr. Everlly — actually, he's Doctor Everlly — would come in at eight o'clock sharp every night. He would take a quick drink of Ice Tea and then get another drink to sip on for the rest of his visit. Doc Everlly is an odd man. He always drinks out of these tiny little glasses, which are no bigger than his thumb, and he never gets any more than a mouth full of Ice Tea per glass — it's funny to watch one of his big hands hold the small glass.

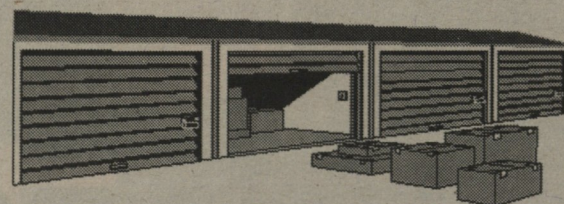
Doc Everlly is the dullest man that I've ever met. All that he ever wants to talk about is work. Fixing bones, sewing cuts, or curing colds. It's so boring, because he never gives any good details —

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