



The Fickle Finger of Fate

Our journey through life is a baffling combination of joy and disaster, laughter and pain. The feathery touch of chance or the bulldozer thrust of fate can change our lives and shape our destiny.

This fragile truth erases our intelligence and overcomes our plans. We are at the mercy of some phantom angel that blesses our progress with good, or a monster-like shadow that makes us stumble and falter.

We are simply lucky individuals or unlucky individuals. We either run freely across the meadow or we are felled by a single blade of grass. We can be healthy in the magnificent rays of the sun, or we can be sunburned into fiery torment. And these whims that control us, these mysteries that guide us, are completely out of our power to enhance or forfeit.

It is an enigma to me how good fortune envelopes some people like a blanket. And this good fortune isn't fostered upon the righteous but is dispensed indiscriminately amongst all of us. I have a neighbor whose every move brings success, fulfillment, and happiness. He could be run over by a train and escape unscathed. He could fall from the highest tree and land on his feet like a cat. Two weeks ago he was walking along the beach and found an old tin can filled with twenty dollar bills. He has won the lottery six times and his

wife got trench mouth and couldn't speak for a month.

The lady next door inadvertently dropped some soap in her jelly recipe and she not only won the first prize at the county fair but a huge commercial firm paid her thirty thousand dollars for that recipe. They said they had never encountered jelly with such a good, clean taste.

My uncle, who has to be the ugliest scoundrel on this earth, got a contract from one of the bigger Hollywood studios and now is making a fortune doing horror films with Vincent Price.

Billy Henteet, a distant cousin of mine, went to the doctor complaining of stomach disorder. When he was operated on the surgeon found a gold teapot (probably swallowed at an early age) resting against some partially digested spinach. The teapot, traced back to the Aztecs, brought Billy fifteen thousand dollars.

These people, and many more just like them, unconsciously stumble into good fortune. Blessings are showered upon them daily and their progress through life is fruitful and exciting.

Others are not that fortunate.

Some people move with reluctance because they know the sinister tenacles of fate are constantly reaching out to grasp them. I knew a woman, once, who really wasn't very attractive. She was a warm, good-

hearted person but there was virtually no chance that she would ever know romance or love. And then, due to divine intervention, she became acquainted with a very handsome gentleman. Progressing under the theory that the way to a man's heart was through his stomach she invited her new boyfriend over for dinner. She was stuffing a turkey when the phone rang. While she was answering the phone a mouse ran into the turkey and started eating the stuffing. While the rodent was occupied with delightful imbibing the woman finished her phone call and came back into the kitchen. She crammed more stuffing into her turkey and pushed the bird into the oven. That evening, with her new boyfriend salivating in anticipation, she scooped out the dressing. She also scooped out the baked mouse. The boyfriend kind of staggered out the door and has never been heard from again.

My Aunt Bessie, always accident prone, weighed a trifle over three hundred pounds. One night she got in the tub and proceeded to scrub that huge anatomy. Refreshed, and sparkling, she reached up and grabbed the towel rack and began the tedious job of extracting herself from the tub. The towel rack broke when she was halfway up and Aunt Bessie went tumblin' back into the tub with

terrible force. She landed in such an odd position that her vast body was irretrievably wedged in the tub. When the four men from the Rescue Squad arrived they sort of awed by the situation and Aunt Bessie's size. Here was a mountain of a woman...topless and bottomless...and the solution to her problem was complex. They finally broke the enamel of the tub with a sledge hammer and Aunt Bessie, like a huge block of gelatin, slowly oozed herself to freedom.

But the pinnacle of ill fortune involved my Uncle Charlie. He had just removed himself from the shower when he went down into his basement (stark naked) and began taking clothes from the washing machine. He made a wrong move and got his arm caught in the wringer. Of course he yelled like a wounded bull and the lady next door came running in to help. When the lady saw my uncle's unclothed condition she screamed and ran out of the house. When she came back she brought with her an officer of the law. The policeman stopped the washing machine and freed my uncle's arm. And then, while Uncle Charlie groaned in great agony...and at the insistence of the female neighbor...the policeman charged my uncle with indecent exposure.

Can you believe that?