HERE IS MILDRED

Those Summer Visitors

If you are in the habit of dropping in on friends in other cities for a visit, better read what happened when visitors came to visit our gal Mildred. It shouldn't happen to a dog.

By Alice Childress

Marge, I am tuckered out, tired, short-tempered and most upset!

I have had one heetic weekend, and was too wore-out to get to work this mornin'.

Yes, my guests are gone; they left this mornin'; let it be said, to my everlastin' credit, that I saw them off with a gracious smile.

It took all my strength to ha-ha and hee-hee as I waved goodbye, because I felt like givin' them a piece of my mind!

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SURE, I LIKE company and I'm always glad to see folks and entertain 'em but not the way this went down.

Well, Friday, I opened my mail box and there was a big, fat letter from Theresa and her husband; here it is:

Dear Mildred,

Bill and I will arrive Friday night.

We suddenly decided to get away from the same old grind and enjoy ourselves for a couple of days.

I hope you can put us up.

We would love to see you and stay there.

Of course, if it would put too much strain on you, we could run around and try to find a hotel.

Remember the good time we had when you visited with us?

Best regards,
Theresa

YOU SEE what I mean? . . . I got the letter the day they were arrivin'!

I hope you caught all the hints she was throwin' at me!

Remindin' me that I stayed with them and talkin' 'bout how they'd have to **run around** and find a hotel.

Marge, when I went to see them . . . they knew I was comin' three weeks in advance!

* * *

WELL, THERE was nothin' for me to do but scramble and try to get myself together.

I couldn't go to work that day I went to the bank and drew out half the little money that was there!

All I had in my refrigerator was four chops, a soda pop and a head of lettuce.

I had to hit it on over to the grocery store, the liquor store, the bakery and also go and pick up my laundry.

* * *

NOW, IF you recall, I gave my studio couch to my cousin, so I went upstairs to Miss Taylor and borrowed her chair-bed; so I could sleep on that and let them have my bed.

Sure, I had to pay a boy a dollar to bring it down for me and he's gonna get another dollar for takin' it back up there today.

You shoulda seen me dashin' around with the house-cleanin'!

I threw a roast in the oven and scrubbed and polished and shined because Theresa has ever made remarks 'bout how she can't stand a speck of dust or things out of order.

I did the kitchen curtains and fixed up my room all pretty for them.

My blood pressure was climbin' and I mean to tell you, I was a tired wreck by the time they got here!

* * *

THEY CAME in at six in the evenin' with three big leather bags. First thing Theresa says is . . . "Hope we haven't put you to any trouble."

"Oh, no," I says, "No trouble atall."

She smiled real pretty and says, "Don't pay us any mind at all, you just act like we're not here."

* * *

I CLEARED my stuff out of the closet so's they could hang up their clothes, set up the table with linens and china, made a salad, baked some potatoes, brought out the drinks and ice cubes, then we sat down.

I mean **they** sat down and had dinner.

We got to laughin' and talkin' 'bout first one thing and then another, by the time dinner was over she asked me . . . . "Mildred, do you mind if I call up my brother and tell him we're in New York?

"I'll pay you for the call."

"No," I says, "Go ahead, you don't have to pay me."

* * *

IT TURNS out that her brother is in California, so I can't figure out why he has to know they're in New York. They chatted 'bout old times for at least twenty minutes!

Suddenly the doorbell rings, I open the door and there stands four perfect strangers.

That's right, Theresa and Bill told them to come to my house and meet them there.

I ran up to Miss Taylor's and borrowed all of her ice cubes, went 'round to the grocery and bought cold cuts; by the time I got back there were three new strangers and more on the way.

* * *

THERESA WANTED to go see some old schoolmates of hers, so I said let's call her up, and see if she'll be home.

"Oh, no," says Theresa, "I want to catch her off-guard and surprise her!

Girl, that is just what they did to me!

The next time they pull that . . . I'm gonna leave town 'fore they get here.

People got to learn to have some consideration!



I had to hotfoot it over to the grocery store. All I had in the refrigerator was a couple of chops.

'Here I Stand'

(Continued from Page 3)

and Homer and the other classics in which he was well grounded.

He was my first teacher in public speaking, and long before my days as class orator and college debater there were the evenings of recitations at home, where his love for the eloquent and meaningful word and his insistence on purity of diction made their impress.

* * *

HIGH SCHOOL in Somerville was not jim crow, and there I formed close friendships with a number of white classmates.

One of these was Douglas Brown, a brilliant student who was in my class through the four years and who later became the dean of Princeton University.

I was welcomed as a member of the glee club (unlike later at college) and the dramatic club and into the various sports and social activities around the school.

The teachers also were friendly and several of them are especially remembered.

Miss Vosseller, the music teacher who directed our glee club, took a special interest in training my voice.

Anna Miller, English teacher, paid close attention to my development as a speaker and debater; and it was she who first introduced me to Shakespeare's works.

Many years were to pass before the American theatre would permit a colored actor to play Othello, but the idea seemed eminently right to Miss Miller and she coached me in the part for a high-school dramatic performance.

Nervous and scared, I struggled through the lines on that solemn occasion (mindful of my father's ear for perfect diction and my teacher's patient direction) and no one in the world could have convinced me then that I should ever try acting again.

* * *

MISS VANDEVEER, who taught Latin, seemed to have no taint of racial prejudice; and Miss Bagg, instructor in chemistry and physics, made every effort to make me feel welcome and at ease in the school's social life of which she was in charge.

Miss Bagg urged me to attend the various parties and dances, and when I did so, it was she who was the first to dance with me.

But despite her encouragement, I shied away from most of these social affairs.

There was always the feeling that — well, something unpleasant might happen; for the two worlds of white and colored were nowhere more separate than in social life.

Though I might visit the homes of white classmates, I was always conscious that I belonged to the colored community.

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FROM AN early age I had come to accept and follow a certain protective tactic of colored life in America, and I did not fully break with the pattern until many years later.

Even while demonstrating that he is really an equal (and strangely, the proof must be **superior** performance!) the colored man must never appear to be challenging white superiority. Climb up if you can — but don't act "uppity."

Always show that you are **grateful.** (Even if what you have gained has been wrested from unwilling powers, be sure to be grateful lest "they" take it all away.)

Above all, **do nothing to give them cause to fear you,** for then the oppressing hand, which might at times ease up a little, will surely become a fist to knock you down again!

* * *

WELL, AS a boy in high school I tried my best to "act right." I would make the best of my opportunities; I would measure myself only against my own potential and not see myself in competition with anyone else.

Certainly I had no idea of challenging the way things were. But courtesy and restraint did not shield me from all hostility; it soon became clear that the high school principal hated me.

Dr. Ackerman, who later rose to higher positions in the New Jersey school system, made no effort to hide his bitter feelings.

The better I did, the worse his scorn.

The cheers of my fellow students as I played fullback on the football team — "Let Paul carry the ball! Yay—Paul!"— seemed to curdle the very soul of Dr. Ackerman; and when the music teacher made me soloist of the glee club it was against the principal's furious opposition.

* * *

HE NEVER spoke to me except to administer a reprimand; and he seemed constantly to be looking for an excuse to do so.

One fault I had was occasionally being late to class in the morning — probably because our house was only a few hundred yards from the school!

"Early to bed and early to rise" was always a hard rule for me to keep, and sometimes I misjudged the few minutes needed to get up and get to class.

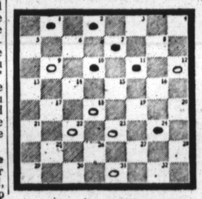
Then, like a watchful hawk, Dr. Ackerman would pounce on me, and his sharp words were meant to make me feel as miserably inferior as he thought a colored person was.

One time he sent me home for punishment. Usually Pop preferred that the teacher's hand rather than his own should administer the proper penalty, but this time I had something to say about that.

"Listen, Pop," I said, "I'm bigger now. I don't care what you do to me, but if that hateful old principal ever lays a hand on me, I swear I'll try my best to break his neck!"

I guess Pop understood. He let it go at that.

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Book 11, $2.50. Mail directly to Archie Waters. Spanish Pool Checkers, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md. (Copyright, 1958 by Clyde Black and Archie Waters).



33 Cash Prizes

This is your last chance to get in on this big cash prize coloring contest. That's right, there are 33 prizes you can win.

Eight five-dollar prizes, and 25 one-dollar awards. The rules are simple. Here's all you have to do to get in on the fun and win some money for yourself, too.

On this page are four pictures to be colored. Two of them appeared last week. We reprint them in case you missed getting them.

You MUST color all four pictures to be eligible for a prize.

The contest will close at midnight April 5, 1958. Your entry must be postmarked before that date to be considered.

First read the rules printed below, then get out your crayons or colored pencils and get started.



Contest Rules

1. The contest is limited to boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12 years old. You must not be older than 12.

2. All entries must be postmarked on or before midnight, April 5, 1958. Late entries will not be considered.

3. Use crayons or colored pencils to color the pictures. Water-colors or paints are not acceptable.

4. In case of a tie, prizes will be awarded on the decision of the judges. Decisions of the judges are absolutely final.

5. Employees of the AFRO-AMERICAN and their families are not eligible for prizes.

6. You must color all four pictures to be considered for prizes.

7. Mail all entries to:

AFRO Magazine Section
COLORING CONTEST
628 N. Eutaw Street
Baltimore 1, Md.

GARDENING NOTES

Get Ready For Spring Chores

This is the first month of spring.

Crocuses are in bloom. It will be a good year for spring flowers.

Tulips and jonquils have stuck their heads out of the ground. Elm trees are in bud.

Time to cut tea and polyantha roses back to eight inches in height, fertilize roses, azaleas, trees and shrubs so spring rains will dissolve it and carry it down to the roots.

Trim evergreens, spray fruit and shade trees against scale before foliage comes.

To feed trees or shrubs, dig dozen holes, one to two inches in diameter around the plant. Fill each hole with fertilizer up to within an inch of the top and then cover with dirt.

Don't remove winter cover from plants too soon. There may be another freeze. It's still a good time to rake bare spots in lawn and sow grass seeds.

Did You Know?

The problem of dust is so crucial in the manufacture of some missile parts that the walls of assembly rooms are scraped with razor blades to remove loose paint flecks that might get into the mechanisms.

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The first regular airmail service in the world was introduced early in 1918, when the Royal Air Force began to carry military mail between London and Paris.



