

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Little clues are plentiful. If this kitchen-detective can just piece them together, perhaps we can solve the Great Pumpkin Pie Caper.

Crumbs all over the counter.

Little, white, pie crust crumbs, spilling from the counter to the floor. I managed to sweep up just a bit of the evidence before the cat finished retrieving the crumbs from the floor.

On the counter, abandoned and lonely, lay a fork. Ah ha, closer examination revealed traces, barely apparent, of pumpkin pie filling.

And in the sink, the empty crumb-encrusted pie plate, left there brazenly, with not the slightest attempt to cover up the crime. The perpetrator couldn't even bother hiding the evidence in the dishwasher.

Less than 24 hours before, three-three, mind you - large, fresh pumpkin pies had sat proudly on the kitchen counter, steam escaping from the nutmeg-speckled top. Before the steam had even disappeared toward the ceiling, attackers had stabbed the victim, slicing into the whole by bits and pieces, whittling it down to just a shadow of its former self.

Security measures proved useless, as the attackers returned again and again to eat away at the

goods. Supper time, bedtime. Even at breakfast!

The Great Pumpkin Pie Caper could be just the latest chapter in a book that any mother of teenagers might write, a volume with all the action of an Agatha Christie mystery. "The Case of the Disappearing Delicacies" might be an appropriate title.

Victim - in this case - is a farm wife, but it could be millions of other mothers across the land. Suspects disguise themselves as typical, normal teenagers, but are actually undercover agents for a massive food trash-compacting underworld, wiping out incredible amounts of food, threatening famine and laying waste in their wake.

Within days, the marauding band had wiped out yet another trio of pies, along with a large cake. All in a day's time.

Pies plundered and cake crumbled to nothing, this army on four legs moved to conquer other challenges.

They pillaged the cereal shelf, leaving behind dying boxes of flakes, puffs and rounds of

breakfast grain goodies. Another battle saw clashing swords of celery sticks laced with peanut butter. A pound of cheese melted into history. Boxes of apples, plates of pears, bread and jelly, even the jar of dill pickles in the back of the fridge proved no match for the hungry horde.

And all this when they return, starved, from school, and just prior to moseying back to the kitchen, wide-eyed, innocent, and pleading: "What's for supper. I'm starving."

I blame the fresh air and country chores for part of this insatiable appetite syndrome. Urban mothers, though I understand, face a similar dilemma.

Please, all you mothers of two-year-old toddlers, valiantly pleading with Junior to eat just one more bite of supper, take heed. Save your energy, and your grocery pennies, salting them away into C.D.'s at some bank where you can wrangle the very highest interest rate.

In ten years, believe me, you'll need every cent of 'em, just to keep the cupboard laced with basics.

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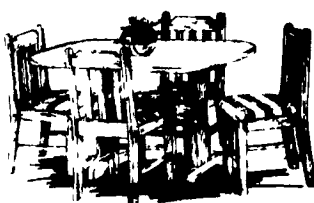
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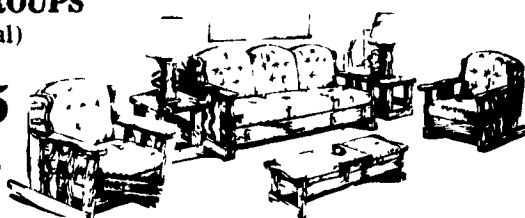
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