

DAILY NOVELETTE

THE PEPPERMINT HOUSE

By L. Reid Montgomery

The living wasn't so far here as I'd move on," confided Charles to the cook. Ellen looked up from her novel. "You'd never find another place where it's so cozy," she retorted, "but it's so lonesome. I spent my day of it with my sister yesterday and the children are so cute. This house needs a child to brighten it up. The old lady gives me the creeps the way she sits in that big empty room all the time. The big grounds don't do her a bit of good."

"That's what I was thinking," answered Charles. "I water and dig and keep the flowers nice and moving in the yard. That high brick wall looks so queer. It seems to me, some days, as if it were a wall of bricks and Charles earned his large wages honestly."

"Safely behind my clean walls," she muttered, "the world cannot hurt me now, but—"
The aged black eyes set deeply into the shrunken face, were shadowed with old regrets—"How I long for some one to love me. I know the servants are loyal, but it is not natural that they should love me. I do many things—"

"You like to come in and have milk?" If he, the words hurried themselves out of the aged mouth wrathfully. "Will sell you to me you shall be my little girl and live here—"
The anger merged into hopes for the future—"live happy ever afterward."

"I can't what?" the mistress found her voice at last as the roscifac tongue shot out and greedily licked the newly washed wall.

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thought wearily: "they have their lives before them."
She noticed a movement in the shrubbery, and leaning out from the casement window, the widely opened doors at either side making a picturesque setting for her snowy head, she peered down. A tiny girl in a ragged blue frock stood there. Mrs. Meadows rubbed her eyes and looked again; it was amazing that the child should be in her well-guarded grounds; she did not know of the hole in the wall hidden by bushes, but it was incredible that this strange child with yellow curly hair tumbling over her chubby face could be licking the wall. Taking her cane the mistress hobbled swiftly down the staircase and out on the terrace. Her black garments smothered in crease added most people, but the sparkling blue eyes of the intruder smiled up at her. "You look like the witch sounded," she murmured confidentially, much as though picking up a conversational thread, "but you look too kind. I have run away to play here. I often come because—"
Terror gripped her tiny face—"he beats me when he's mad. I didn't have my breakfast, and the wall isn't—"
"Isn't what?" the mistress found her voice at last as the roscifac tongue shot

out and greedily licked the newly washed wall. "Isn't peppermint candy. In my fairy story the witch lived in the peppermint house and, at the end—"
The tot brushed back her curls wearily, the hot sun on the wet empty stomach was dimming her hopes of magic—"they lived happy ever afterward."
Ellen and Charles drew near them. The mistress would be furious at the intrusion.

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Sunsweet Prune Pudding Delmonico: One cup cooked pitted Sunsweet Prunes; 1/2 cup milk; 4 level tablespoons cornstarch; 1/2 cup sugar; 2 egg yolks; 1 teaspoon butter; 1 teaspoon vanilla. For meringue 2 egg whites; 4 tablespoons sugar; 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Put Sunsweet Prunes with a little juice in a pudding dish. Scald milk in a double boiler; mix sugar and cornstarch until well blended; add to hot milk and cook fifteen minutes. Pour over the beaten yolks of eggs. Pour custard over prunes. Beat egg whites until stiff; beat in gradually 2 tablespoons of sugar; fold in remaining sugar; add vanilla. Spread on top of pudding; bake in slow oven eight minutes. Serve hot or cold.
Sunsweet Prune Charlotte: Cooked Sunsweet Prunes, pitted and rubbed through a coarse sieve, having one cup of prune pulp. Add 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 unbeaten white of egg; 1/2 cup of sugar. Beat with a whip egg beater until consistence of whipped cream. Fill dishes two-thirds full and pile sweetened whipped cream on top. Garnish with cherry.

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