



Rebellion

Jordan Whitehouse sat slouched at the dinner table with his legs wound around the legs of his chair. He was thoroughly disgruntled and didn't much care who knew it. He didn't want to be sitting here with his parents and two sisters, listening while his father went on and on about his new life, for pity's sake! What he wanted to do was what he had always done, take his plate of food into the living-room and watch television while he ate.

I don't care about your new life, Dad! I care about my life and what I want to do.

"Son," Mr. Whitehouse asked quietly, "Are you listening to what I'm saying?"



Woman of the Forest

Jordan squirmed. "I think you lost me about two miles back."

"Then perhaps I should start over and explain it all again."

Jordan frowned, "Oh, pul – eeze, Dad! I heard you the first time. You and Mum decided to go and get religious, and now you want to drag the rest of the family into your – " He stopped speaking long enough to wiggle two fingers of each hand through the air to form quotation marks, " – new, exciting lifestyle."

Mr. Whitehouse looked mildly concerned. "As a matter of fact, Jordan, it is a new, exciting lifestyle, for both your mother and me. I've never known such peace and joy in my entire life. Looking back, I can't imagine why we waited so long before committing our lives to Christ."

Jordan sat with his teeth clenched. He had barely touched his food, and now it stared back from his plate, cold and unappetizing.

"And that's the reason why," Mr. Whitehouse went on as though his family was eagerly waiting to hear what else he had to say, "certain things in this family are going to change."

Jordan scooted his mashed potatoes around with his fork. Un-cranking his jaw, he sighed wretchedly and mumbled, "Like now I have to sit at the dinner table with the family when I eat instead of taking my food in the other room so I can watch my favourite television show."

"For starters," Mr. Whitehouse agreed solemnly. Thoughtfully, he sipped some coffee. "Looking back,



Rebellion

I see myself as a father who didn't pay half enough attention to his children and the way they were growing up. I'm afraid I didn't much care about where you were or what you were doing, and I'm very sorry about that. But tonight I can see that the dinner table is an excellent place for our family to talk and share about what's going in our lives. I think that's important and in time I hope you will come to agree."

Jordan yawned. He wanted to shout, "Well, rah, rah, rah, Dad!" But he knew better. He was bored to tears with all this new talk about religion and togetherness. If he wanted to talk and share with others, it wouldn't be his family, it would be Mike and Chris and Billy. And right now what he really needed was the telephone and some privacy so he could call Billy and clue him in on what was going on. Because, of all people, Billy Wilkins would understand and sympathize with him. That was because Billy's father was an alcoholic and life for Billy wasn't easy either.

"As you know," Mr. Whitehouse was saying earnestly, "your mother and I have made a decision to follow Christ. That means certain changes have to be made."

Bor – ing! Jordan thought dismally. "Dad, you already said that."

"You mean that now you're dedicated," Jordan's sister, Eileen, put in softly.

Mr. Whitehouse lifted his brows and nodded approvingly. "That's it exactly. Dedication! You know, over the centuries multitudes of Christians have laid



Woman of the Forest

down their lives as martyrs because they refused to deny Christ. The way I see it, the least we can do is to live for Him.”

Jordan sneaked a side look at his older sister. Surely she wasn't buying into any of this! It was hard to tell by her expression, but she was hanging on to this weird conversation intently enough. Then he turned his attention to eight-year-old Sandy. But Sandy was nonchalantly eating her pork chop and gobbling up her mashed potatoes and gravy. She didn't look like she had a care in the world, the little toad. Children were so simple-minded. Led around by the nose like camels and never making their own decisions. She would go right along with Mum and Dad without giving it a single thought.

Well, not him! He was too smart for that.

Sighing forlornly and pushing back his plate, Jordan grumbled, “I suppose the next thing you'll be telling me is that I have to give up all my old friends.” He was trying to keep the bitterness out of his voice but doubted that he was doing a very good job.

Mr. Whitehouse sipped his coffee and thought for a moment. “Son, I will never force you to give up your friends, though I do think some of them are a bad influence. And I do hope that in time you will want to make some friends that are more worthwhile.”

Jordan looked at this father through lowered eyelids. “I will never give up my friends, and I will never make your kind of friends.” His body was so rigid he felt like a stick of wood, “and while we're on the subject, what



Rebellion

about church? I don't have to go, do I?"

His mother's lips were pressed into a thin line. Concern shone from her blue eyes. "Son," she began gently, "going to church is something we should have been doing a long time ago. And I agree with your father: looking back I can see that we haven't been very good parents. I'm afraid that through the years we've set a very bad example for all of you children."

Jordan flung back his shock of blond hair and with narrowed eyes he ground out, "I'm not a child, and I don't want to go to church!"

"Careful, son," his father warned quietly. "I'm with your mother on this. We will be attending church services." He laid aside his fork and drank the rest of his coffee. "But I want all of you to know this, we will never attempt to force Christianity over on you. That's not the way to win people to Christ. We simply want to guide this family onto a new path, one that's far better than the old one."

"I like the old one just fine if you don't mind," Jordan muttered. "I always hang out with my friends on Sunday." He shook his head woefully. "If you make me go to church on Sunday, I'll lose every friend I've got."

"Oh, I doubt that," Eileen offered dryly.

Jordan turned on his sister. "Will you please stay out of this? I wasn't even talking to you."

Eileen was eighteen months older than Jordan and the two of them had always got along very well. But if she was going to get all gooey with religion, then their relationship was about to change.



Woman of the Forest

Jordan sat with narrowed grey eyes with his elbows on the table. "Well, Dad, it sure seems to me that there's one big thing you've forgotten about."

The man looked at his son with interest. "Oh? What would that be?"

"You seem to forget that I don't believe in God."

A dark frown buried itself in Mr. Whitehouse's forehead. He sat back hard. For a moment he had nothing to say. Then he said sadly, "That's another place where I've fallen down as a parent. I should have been paying attention to what they were teaching you in school. I guess I thought you were too smart to believe something as foolish as evolution."

Jordan's jaw hardened. "Well, believe it, Dad, and just don't expect me to ever change what I believe about creation."

"But, Jordan, don't you see?" Eileen burst in. "I've been taught the theory of evolution my whole life, too, and I always had questions about it."

"Well, goody for you!" Jordan scooted back his chair. "I suppose I have to ask if I can be excused!"

Mr. Whitehouse felt a heavy weight in his heart. "You're free to leave the table, Jordan." He put up a hand. "Look, the last thing I want is to make this hard for anyone. I simply want us to begin functioning as a family. And it seems to me that eating our supper together gives us an opportunity to share what's going on in our lives."

"Well, three cheers for family!" Jordan stood so quickly that his chair toppled over and crashed to the



Rebellion

floor. He resisted the impulse to throw it through the window. Gritting his teeth, he straightened it with a thump and stalked from the room.

Sandy appeared to be totally unaware of what was happening around her and happily finished her slice of chocolate pie. Eileen, on the other hand, tucked her long brown hair behind her ears, hesitated and followed her brother from the room. It was most definitely time for a brother-sister talk. Hopefully she could talk some sense into Jordan.

In the living-room, Jordan's grey eyes searched frantically for the cordless phone. Spying it at last, he scooped it up and went off to his room. He had to talk to someone around here who made sense. Billy Wilkins.

He had punched in only two numbers, though, when his bedroom door burst open and Eileen marched inside. "We have to talk."

Jordan turned his desk chair around and straddled it backwards. "Did you ever hear of something called knocking?" he demanded reproachfully.

Eileen ignored his sarcasm and plopped down on the side of his bed, fingering her hair behind her ears.

Before she could speak, Jordan barged in with, "I have nothing to say to you. You'll just take sides with Mum and Dad and I'm not interested."

"Come on Jordan. Don't close your heart to what's happening in our family." Her brow was wrinkled, her face was earnest. "Actually, I've been thinking about spiritual things for quite a while. You know, is God



Woman of the Forest

real? Does He care about us? Can we know Him? I just never dreamed that Mum and Dad would be interested, so I kept all the questions to myself. But now... ” She shrugged her slim shoulders and sighed. “I feel pretty good about what’s going on. And I’m not going to close my mind about accepting Jesus either.”

Jordan was a good-looking youth. With his thatch of blond hair, his intelligent grey eyes and his tall, slim build, he would one day make a handsome man. Not that he was muscular, for his time was spent in front of the television or the computer or with his friends. So exercise was limited, and that was fine by him.

At the moment his keen grey eyes were full of anger. “You want to get out of my room now? I was just about to make a call.”

Eileen studied her younger brother for a long moment before standing to her feet and walking to the door. “Jordan –”

“Please close the door behind you,” Jordan said coolly.

“Please –”

“Right now, Eileen.”

Eileen hand-combed her hair behind her ears again, sighed in defeat, and closed her brother’s bedroom door.