




# "BELLES ON"

A black and white graphic featuring the title "BELLES ON" in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Five circular cutouts of the main cast members' faces are arranged around the text: a young boy at the top left, a woman at the top right, a woman in the center, a woman at the bottom left, and a young man at the bottom right.



"The *baby* being graduated," Mother murmured, her expression soft. "I can hardly believe it!"

A black and white photograph showing two women in formal attire. The woman on the left is older, with white hair styled in a bun, wearing a light-colored suit jacket and dark gloves. She is holding a pair of glasses. The woman on the right is younger, wearing a dark dress with a white lace collar and a decorative headpiece. They are both looking towards the right of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting a crowded event like a graduation.



**REMEMBER "CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN"? HERE AGAIN ARE THE GILBRETHS, THE FAMILY ALL AMERICA TOOK TO ITS HEART!**

• The college graduation class marched, slowly to the raised platform. Jane Gilbreth, whose mortarboard was cocked at a jaunty angle atop her shining red curls, looked eagerly along the crowded aisles as she marched. Then, locating her sister, Anne, and her other brothers and sisters, all eight of them, her eyes lighted. But, seeing the empty aisle seat beside Anne, her lips formed a soundless question. "Where's Mother?"

Anne's lips shaped the words, "I don't know." She looked back worriedly as the procession reached the platform, and her face cleared as she saw her mother hurrying in.

Lillian Gilbreth—Mother—came swiftly down the aisle. In her sixties, her hair was white, but her figure was still slim and erect. As she slipped into the empty seat, Anne smiled. "Hello, Mother." Ernestine, the next oldest of Mother's children, leaned forward and greeted her eagerly. In turn—they sat according to the differences in their ages—did Frank, Martha, Bill, Lillian, Fred, Dan and Jack.

When Father had still been alive, the family had been an even dozen. It was, they had always maintained, cheaper that way.

"Where were you, Mother?" Anne whispered.

"I ran into someone from the Engineering Department—"

An attractive man in the seat in front turned around, frowning. Then, seeing who it was, he hailed her warmly.

"Hello, Bob, dear." Settling back, she scanned the platform.

"Where's Jane?"

"Fourth from the right," Anne told her.

"The baby!" Mother spoke under her breath. "The *baby* is being graduated. I can hardly believe it!" As the class valedictorian stepped forward, Mother thought about the number of graduation speeches she had heard. The girl would begin: "*This is an important day in our lives . . .*"

Yes, it was an important day. Mother was thinking now of Father, speaking to him in her heart, as she so often did. *There*





The visitor was Cousin Leora, a well-meaning busybody who greeted Anne and Ernestine as Martha and Jane. Anne corrected her good-naturedly.



When Anne first met the handsome Dr. Bob, she mistook him for a barber.

"No man worth anything would take instructions from a woman," he said.



# "BELLES ON THEIR TOES"

Adapted from the 20TH CENTURY-FOX FILM Production—Copyright 1952 by 20TH CENTURY-FOX FILM CORP.—Produced by SAMUEL G. ENGEL—Directed by HENRY LEVIN—Screenplay by PHOEBE and HENRY EPHRON—Based on the Book by FRANK B. GILBRETH, JR., and ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY—Fictionized by LADD BANKS

Anne Gilbreth.....Jeanne Crain  
 Mrs. Gilbreth..... Myrna Loy  
 Martha..... Debra Paget  
 Dr. Bob Grayson.....Jeffrey Hunter  
 Sam Harper..... Edward Arnold  
 Tom Bracken ..... Hoagy Carmichael  
 Ernestine..... Barbara Bates  
 Frank Gilbreth..... Robert Arthur  
 Cousin Leora..... Verna Felton  
 Bob Gilbreth..... Roddy McCaskill  
 Lily Gilbreth.....Carole Nugent  
 Jane Gilbreth..... Tina Thompson  
 Jack Gilbreth..... Teddy Driver  
 William Gilbreth..... Tommy Ivo  
 Fred Gilbreth.....Jimmy Hunt  
 Dan Gilbreth.....Anthony Sydes  
 Al Lynch.....Martin Milner  
 Morton Dykes ..... Clay Randolph  
 Jane (Age 22)..... June Hedin  
 Franklin Dykes..... Robert Easton

were times, Frank, when I thought this day would never come. But it had to, for in my mind I had promised you the job would be done.

She closed her eyes, reliving memories. We had just sold the house in Montclair, and we had moved to one not quite so spacious—not quite so full of memories. I was packing to go away on a lecture trip, for I was determined that I would keep on with your work . . .

— The new house had been filled that day with the sound of fresh voices raised in song, as the younger Gilbreths went about their work. Frank, aged seventeen, mowed the lawn. Bill, Dan, and Fred were polishing the ancient Pierce-Arrow.

Inside the house, Anne, who was nearing a strikingly pretty twenty, dusted the upper surfaces of the living-room furniture, while Jane—still so little that she dusted the *under* surfaces—helped her. Martha ran lightly up the stairs, into Mother's room. "I pressed your dinner dress. Just because you're a lady engineer doesn't mean you can't dress up once in a while."

Mother straightened up from her packing and pushed back a lock of shining auburn hair. "I'm not going gallivanting. I'm going away on a job."

"You're going to be away five weeks," Martha said practically. "Somebody might ask you out to dinner. If they do—a free meal is a free meal!" They grinned at each other.

Ernestine, just emerging from the awkward age, came out of the next room and

went down to the kitchen. There, she sniffed suspiciously. "Tom, are we having hash *again*?"

Tom, the wiry, middle-aged Irishman who had worked for the Gilbreths for twenty years, corrected, "That is not hash. That is lamb *rangoon*. It's a recipe that has been in my family for generations."

"It smells like it," Ernestine teased. As Tom glared, the doorbell rang, and she went to answer it, meeting Anne in the hall.

The visitor was Mother's Cousin Leora, a well-meaning busybody who greeted Anne and Ernestine as Martha and Jane. When Anne corrected her, good-naturedly, she commented mournfully that there were so heartbreakingly many of them.

Anne, going upstairs with Ernestine to tell Mother of her arrival, muttered, "Honestly, she makes me feel like a charity case."

Mother was soon to feel the same way. For Cousin Leora plunged into objections to the approaching trip. Leaving the children alone for weeks at a time! "You're trying to handle a job that no one person can do—raising all those children—trying to earn enough money to give them the kind of life they ought to have! You can't do it by yourself! I talked to your brother Bill, and to Aunt Margaret, and each of us has agreed to take two of the younger children."

Anger stiffened Mother's slender form. "I couldn't hear of it! It's outrageous!"

"Listen to me, Lillie Gilbreth!" Cousin Leora's voice rose sharply. "I know most of Frank's life insurance is spent already. If I'm willing to take in two of your children and give them some of the advantages you can't give them, why should you feel I'm being outrageous? Suppose something should happen to one of them while you're away?"

Mother drew in a shaken breath. Cousin Leora, taking this as a sign of surrender, believed the matter settled, but Mother said, quietly, "No. I have to think about it. Call me tonight."

Leaving, Cousin Leora smiled brightly at the ten young Gilbreths gathered in the hall, where they had been listening tensely, and swooped Jane up in her arms. "You darling! How would you like to come and live with me?"

As Jane burst into tears, Mother quickly saw her cousin to the door. "Call me later." Later, when dinner was on the table, and Jack grumbled about the lamb ragout, Mother spoke up hesitantly. "I know where you could get steak, roast chicken, and baked ham. At Cousin Leora's."

"If Father were alive," Anne said clearly, "we'd have a meeting to decide this." She addressed her brothers and sisters. "All those in favor of improving our diet by splitting up the family, put your forks down." When not one fork was relinquished, she ordered, "All right—all those in favor of staying together, no matter what, signify by finishing your lamb *rangoon*!"

Every plate was scraped clean.

The phone rang. Mother's head was high when she answered it. "We've decided to stay together, Leora. No, I'm still going away. I'm going to fill Frank's last lecture contracts. But I'm sending the children to Nantucket." She had just that moment decided. "Tom will go with them."

When she returned to the table, Ernestine breathed, rapturously, "Oh, Mother! Nantucket!"

Mother's eyes lingered on a framed photograph of Father taken on the boat last summer. "We have that house there, and we haven't been able to sell it." They had gone there every other year.

"Everything'll be fine," Anne promised her. "I'll take your place; Martha will take charge of the money and the meals. Ernestine will take care of the girls; Frank will take charge of the boys." She grinned impishly at Tom. "We'll all take care of Tom!"

"Mrs. Gilbreth!" Tom's voice was outraged. "If I was you, I'd give them all to the uncles and aunts. After they'd had them for six months, they'd pay you such a fortune to take them back, we'd never have to worry about money again!"

Shouts of laughter followed his indignant retreat.

• They had arrived in Nantucket weary and ruffled from the long trip in a day coach, and, because a taxi cost too much, they rode to the house in a dairy truck already loaded with chicken crates. As they passed a luxurious summer home, Anne gestured toward a lanky boy of twenty, who was getting into an expensive car. "Ernestine, look—Morton Dykes!"

Flushing, Ernestine tried to hide behind a chicken crate. "I hope he doesn't see us!" "We're *so* inconspicuous," Anne murmured.

"Hi, Morton!" Frank called.

"Hi!" the boy answered. Then his jaw dropped slightly. "Anne! What are you doing up there?"

"How do you do, Morton?" Anne said composedly. Later, she admitted to Ernestine that, last summer, she had rather liked him. But she was a year older now, and he seemed much too young for her. Then she asked, "You want him?"

"Want him?" Ernestine gasped. "He's an Amherst man!"

When he met them on the beach, however, Morton made it painfully clear that Ernestine did not interest him. Finally, she trudged dispiritedly back to the house, arriving there as a grocery truck stopped at the kitchen door. A young man wearing a football sweater adorned with a huge *S* lifted out a heavy box. He grinned at Ernestine. "Hi, there!" His voice was hearty enough to fill a stadium. "This the Gilbreth house?"

"Yes, it is." Ernestine had suddenly dismissed Morton from her mind. "You're new around here, aren't you?"

"Yep. First day on the island, first day on the job. Al Lynch is the name." When Ernestine told him hers, he extended a brawny hand. "Meased to pleat you."

She giggled delightedly. "Is that *S* for Syracuse?"

"No. Sagiwan Agricultural and Technical. Got that for football." As Tom opened the kitchen door. Al balanced the heavy box on one hand. "I only took this job to keep my muscles in trim." He belonged to Tau Tau Tau Fraternity, he told her, setting down the box. "You're looking at the head of the house. Well—so long. I'll be seizin' you!"

Ernestine, staring after him, sighed deeply.

Tom pretended to be writing a letter. "Dear Mrs. Gilbreth," he murmured. "This romance started in the kitchen. I was standing there with Ernestine when this handsome young giant walked in with the beans for the supper. He has the body of an oak tree, and the mind of an acorn. It was love at first sight."

• There were beans not only for supper that night, but, because they were cheap, for every other meal as well; until, days later, the family could barely eat them. Ernestine alone was indifferent to them. She was in love.

When Al gave her his fraternity pin,

she burst excitedly into the room where the others had gathered to beg Martha to change their diet. "Take a look!" she cried.

Anne looked, in dismay. "Oh *no!* Not Al Lynch!"

But Frank demanded, "Are you engaged to him? Then get him to slip you a couple of steaks some night, will you?"

"All anybody in this family ever thinks about is food!"

"It's the next best thing to eating it." Anne sighed.

Martha closed the account book determinedly. "Tonight, you're going to *get* some meat. We're going to have a barbecue."

Their eager questions went unanswered, even as, that evening, they built a barbecue fire on the beach. The meat would be along, Martha told them. When the fire was burning briskly, some twelve people, headed by an elderly Colonel Putnam, came across the beach, followed by servants laden with hampers. Obviously, they were also planning a barbecue.

"Martha!" Anne gasped, with sudden realization. "Is this the meat you said would be along? *You can't!*"

But Martha was smiling a lovely smile at the Colonel. "Were you planning a barbecue, too? We didn't know. Why don't you just take over our fire?"

"You're going to stay right here with us!" Colonel Putnam insisted, gallantly. He spoke to his stout cook. "We've got more than enough for everyone, haven't we, Emily?"

Placidly, Emily threw open a hamper packed to the brim with steaks. "Enough for a regiment."

The Gilbreths paled, longingly. Even Anne accepted the invitation. Presently, the happy occasion was made even happier by the fact that Mother made a surprise return. Seeing however, that she'd only picked at the delicious food on her plate, and that her face looked unusually worn, Anne whispered, "Is something wrong, Mother? We weren't expecting you till the middle of August."

"I just did everything very quickly—" Mother began. Then she shook her head. "Anne, you might as well know. We'll have to go back to Montclair. The real estate agent thinks he can rent the house here for the rest of the summer." The trip had been disappointing. "Two of the lectures were canceled, and I couldn't get any of the others to renew your father's old contracts." Her voice was suddenly bitter. "They think of me as someone who just tagged along. When I get back to Montclair, I'll write letters to every firm I can think of, and see if someone will condescend to hire a lady engineer."

"Mother, I don't have to go back to college," Anne said gently. "I can skip this year. I could stay home and get a job and help."

Mother managed a smile. "Don't let's make any drastic plans until we have to."

• Because every penny counted now, Anne had a request to make of the barber, the day she took the younger children to the barber shop in Montclair. But the good-looking, white-clad young man, combing his hair at the mirror, was no one she had ever seen before, and she asked, "Where is the other barber?"

The young man looked at her admiringly. "He's just gone out to lunch. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I had hoped to talk to Albert. These are my brothers and sisters. Since we're such a large family, and get so many haircuts a month, don't you think we should get a special rate?"

"I think you (*Continued on page 88*)

# Belles on Their Toes

(Continued from page 41)

should get a medal! I mean—large families are the backbone of the nation."

"That's not the point," Anne said stiffly. "The point is—do you think you can give us a special price? I don't need a haircut."

"Yes, I noticed that." He walked around her. "You look *fine!*"

Middle-aged Albert bustled in then from the back room. "Glad to see you. Miss Gilbreth!" He gave the young man a surprised glance. "You still here, Dr. Grayson?"

"Doctor!" Anne's voice was indignant. "Are you a doctor?"

"Don't feel bad. Miss Gilbreth." Dr. Grayson smiled, indicating his intern's suit. "I'm usually taken for a bus boy or a street cleaner. You think a mustache would help?"

"No!" Anne snapped.

"Neither do I." He started out. "Good-bye, Gilbreths."

When the children's hair had been cut, Anne drove to pick up the older ones, who had been collecting empty bottles for the root beer they were making at home. Warily, they dumped the bottles into the Pierce-Arrow and climbed in after them. Going down the street, they passed Dr. Bob Grayson.

Grinning, he sang, "Any rags, any bones, any bottles today?"

Anne's chin lifted and, she stared straight ahead.

When the bottles had been sterilized, they were filled with the homemade root beer and stored in the cellar. Making it themselves saved over three dollars a week, Martha told Mother proudly.

An expensive car had drawn up before the house, and Fred announced, "There's a man waiting in the living room to see you."

As Mother left the kitchen, Martha called down the cellar steps, "Don't touch the bottles with chalk marks. They're Tom's."

Tom, it seemed, had added yeast and prunes and sugar to his batch.

As Mother entered the living room, a prosperous-looking man was standing before Father's picture. Turning, he said, "Hello, Mrs. Gilbreth. That your husband? They tell me he was quite a guy."

"He was quite a guy," Mother replied.

"I was just visiting the Wilson Tool and Die outfit. Wilson's got a couple of boys running the plant for him. They're great!"

"They should be. My husband trained them."

"I know. That's why I'm here. I got a great opportunity for fellows like that. I could use half a dozen." Belatedly, then, he supplied his name. "Harper. Sam Harper."

"Of Harper Electric?" Mother asked. "We trained many men, but none of them would be right for Harper Electric. We trained them for Wilson Tool and Die. My husband and I worked together. I'm an engineer, too."

"You don't suppose that you—" He broke off, shaking his head. "No—it would never work."

"It certainly would!" Excited hope rose in Mother. "I'll train some men for you. Right here, where we trained all the others."

Sam Harper's face became obstinate. "No man who's worth anything would ever take instructions from a woman. I know I wouldn't."

"That is a very narrow-minded, bigoted point of view!"

"Maybe it is, but it's my own, and I'm stuck with it!"

Bitterly, Mother opened the door. "Good day, Mr. Harper." When he had gone, she told Anne, bleakly, "It would have been absolutely perfect. I could have earned

enough money right here at home to take care of all of us—to send you back to college." She put a hand to her forehead. "Anne—I'm at my wits' end—" Suddenly, a deafening explosion from the cellar shook the house, and she cried, "We must get the children out of the house before it blows up!"

Tom rushed in. "It ain't nothin' but the children's root beer," he reassured them hurriedly. "I'll go down and clean everything up."

Mother followed him to the cellar steps, saying sharply, "Root beer doesn't explode." She sniffed the air. "Alcohol!"

"Well—" Tom hedged, guiltily. "You take prunes and yeast and sugar, and you create something that smells like alcohol—"

"And *tastes* like alcohol!" Mother gestured distractedly. "You'll simply have to go. We could have been arrested. Please pack your things and leave immediately!"

The doorbell rang again, and Mr. Harper, ignoring Mother's icy look, walked in. "I've changed my mind. You can have your school. I'll send you two men." When she told him it wouldn't pay her to take less than six men, he said, briskly, "All right! All right!" He gave her his card. "Call me tomorrow, and we'll work out the details."

At this moment, there was another shattering explosion. "The children have a laboratory downstairs," Mother told Mr. Harper blandly. Smiling, she saw him to the door. For a moment after he had gone, she gave herself over to savoring her miraculous luck. Then she saw Tom. He was carrying a suitcase and held a reference for her to sign. Indignation shook her voice. "Quitting! A *fine* time you picked!"

"Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry, ma'am." The twinkle in Tom's eyes was lost upon the reference he quickly tore in two.

• The school was hearteningly successful. Sam Harper had more than kept his word; he'd used his influence to get her eight men. And Anne was able to go back to college.

As the Thanksgiving holidays neared, there were festive plans made. Wednesday evening, the Gilbreths were giving a dance. By late Wednesday afternoon, Ernestine was in a state of breathless excitement. For, although Mother had never met Al Lynch, she had allowed her to invite him—and he was due to arrive at any moment.

They were all clustered at the window when the incredibly gaudy car drew up. "Baby!" Al greeted Ernestine at the door with an exuberant kiss. "Did you get a load of the chariot? Cost two thousand smackers. How about taking a quick spin?" When Ernestine insisted that he say hello to Mother first, he drawled, "Sure, I'd like to meet your old lady." Whereupon he insisted to Mother, "I'd have sworn she was your sister!"

Mother frowned at the light wrap Ernestine was putting on. "Don't you think you'll be cold in that open car?"

"It's all right, Mrs. G.," Al boomed. "If she gets cold, I'll give her part of my coat. The sleeves! Well—be seizin' ya!"

When they had gone, Frank growled, "Lend her his sleeves! I'd like to lend him a swift kick in the pants!" Then, slowly, a thoughtful look crossed his face.

Anne had invited Morton Dykes to the dance. No, she didn't care about him particularly, she answered Martha's question. "But there isn't anybody else I care for—yet."

Al kept Ernestine out in the open car for

three hours, and she was blue with cold by the time they returned. Al, however, immediately took a hot bath; singing boisterously in the tub.

Frank beckoned the three youngest boys. "Now, just do what I told you. You go first, Bill."

That bathroom lock had never worked, Bill announced cheerfully as he burst in. Sure, he admitted, pouring himself a drink of water, one of the girls might walk in. Things like that happened in a big family. He went out, leaving the door open.

Fred and Dan came in next. Fred threw open the window. "Dan's ball is out there. I want to get it for him." Getting the mythical ball involved using Al's bath brush—and returning it to him filthy.

The next arrival wore a softly rustling dress, and Al ducked completely under water. "Oh, pardon me," cried a high falsetto voice. As the figure left, Al recognized Frank, wearing one of his sisters' dresses.

The party downstairs was in full swing when Al, valise in hand, stamped through the hall. When Ernestine ran out to him, his voice was outraged. "No locks on the doors! Brothers dressing up like sisters! I always thought this family was peculiar—but they're just plain crazy!" When Ernestine said hotly that, if he didn't like her family, he could leave, he snapped, "Not without my pin!"

She unfastened it with shaking fingers. "As if I even wanted it!" But, when he had gone, tears coursed down her cheeks. "Oh, Mother," she sobbed, "I don't know what they did to him, but it was something terrible!"

"You have other guests," Mother said gently. "I'll get to the bottom of this." As Ernestine went reluctantly toward the dance music, Mother beckoned to Frank. "Did you have anything to do with insulting Al Lynch?"

"It took quite a bit of doing," Frank admitted, grinning, "but we managed it." Certainly, Al had been Ernestine's guest. "That was the trouble."

"It wasn't up to you to judge him," Mother rebuked. "Do you realize the poor girl is heartbroken? She's in tears."

But Frank was looking over Mother's shoulder, and she turned to follow his gaze. A new man had just asked Ernestine to dance, and their spirited Charleston was a far cry from heartbreak. "Now, Mother—" A new, important note had come into Frank's voice. "From now on, there are certain things the men of the family will have to do for you."

"Yes, Frank." Mother smiled with pride.

• That Anne met Dr. Bob Grayson again, and that they fell in love, was the result of Mother's automobile accident. Mother had been invited to speak at a dinner at the Engineers' Club in New York—only to find, when she arrived there, that they hadn't

known Dr. L. M. Gilbreth was a woman. No woman, it seemed, was allowed to enter the Club. When Mother reached her car again, her anger had mounted so that she swung it straight into a parked truck.

She was taken to the Montclair Hospital, where a nurse phoned the Gilbreth home. Mrs. Gilbreth was resting comfortably, Martha was told, and her family could see her in the morning. The nurse was reassuring, but Martha, frightened, telephoned Anne to come home from school.

At first, because Mother was so bandaged, Anne didn't even notice Dr. Bob. But when he said that Mother simply needed rest, she did look at him. "The—barber!"

When she left, he intercepted her in the corridor. "I just wanted to reassure you about your mother's condition." She was going to be completely all right. "I hope you will come to see her every day. I think that's good for her."

"I have to go back to college tomorrow," Anne told him. At his look of disappointment, she smiled. "But I'll be back for Easter vacation."

Sam Harper, who was as forthright about his great admiration for Mother as he was about everything else, also came to the hospital. He was enraged that the Engineers' Club hadn't known she was a woman. "Lillie—what you need is some good publicity, and I'm going to see to it that you get it!"

His method of getting it was to have the entire family appear in a newsreel, as soon as Mother was well. It was released after Anne was graduated from college, and she asked Dr. Bob to go with the family to see it. The film, however, turned out to be a painful experience, for the newsreel's timing had been so speeded up that the Gilbreth's activities seemed horseplay.

The audience hooted with laughter, and even Mother—despite Sam Harper's defense of the film—was affronted. But Dr. Bob took it admirably in his stride. When he left Anne, after a doleful family had partaken of refreshments, he kissed her, simply and directly. "Are you free tomorrow night?"

"Oh, yes!" Anne breathed happily.

By the time Mother was due to return from a lecture engagement, there was no doubt in either of their hearts that they were meant for each other; when Anne went to meet Mother's train, she was aglow with happiness. She would tell Mother at once, and, when Dr. Bob came to the house later, they would make plans for the wedding.

But it was Mother who spoke first. "I have the most wonderful news, Anne! You are looking at *Professor* Lillian Gilbreth of Purdue University! I think that silly newsreel helped. The Dean told me he had never laughed at anything so much in his life. If only Purdue were nearer Montclair! I hate to leave the children, but, now that you're home, and can take over—"

In a small, forced voice, Anne managed,



"Congratulations, Mother." The happiness that had been in her was gone. For she couldn't marry Dr. Bob—not for a long time. Not when Mother was counting on her to take over. He *had* to understand.

But he didn't understand. "I've heard of families like this," he said bitterly, "but this is the first time I've ever met one. They raise the children—then never let them go. Turn them into a lot of assistant mothers and fathers. It's *wrong*, Anne. We're too much in love. We ought to get married now, and start out together. If you won't tell your mother, I will."

"No." Her throat felt clogged with tears. "Please, Bob—I love you so—"

"Okay. Let's forget it." His voice was harsh with hurt and disappointment. "I'd better get back to the hospital."

• The night of the high-school dance, Anne alone was not in a pleasant mood of excitement. Martha, who was going with a friend of Frank's, was wearing her first evening dress. Ernestine lacked a beau, so she was helping out at the refreshment booth. And Mother, who had an engagement with Sam Harper, looked distinguished in a trailing dinner gown. But she cast an anxious look at Anne's drawn face. "Is everything all right between you and Bob? It seems to me I haven't seen him for a couple of weeks."

"He's working nights at the hospital," Anne answered.

The phone rang, and Ernestine answered it. Then she flew to Anne, her eyes shining. "It's Morton Dykes, and he has his cousin from Georgia with him, and they want to take us to the dance! Anne, *please!* If you don't go, I'll be stuck behind that refreshment booth all night! Please, Anne, for my sake!"

It was impossible to resist the pleading in her voice, and Anne said, "All right."

Sam Harper arrived, telling Mother, "Lillie, you look beautiful. Come in the living room. I want to talk to you." Once there, he began purposefully, "When I want to say something, I say it straight out—"

The doorbell rang, and Mother went to admit Morton Dykes and his cousin, calling for Anne and Ernestine. When they had gone, Martha's beau arrived to take her to the dance. Then Frank came in to have Mother tie his tie.

Sam Harper sat impatiently through the interruptions. "Lillie," he began again, firmly, at last, "you know I'm pretty well-fixed financially. I have a great deal of—"

The doorbell rang again. Mother got up and opened the door to Dr. Bob, who came into the living room and sat down. There he burst out, "I'm leaving for Detroit. That appointment at the Detroit General Hospital came through, and I have to leave tonight. That's why I want to see Anne." When he learned Anne had gone to a dance to help Ernestine out, he frowned with anger.

"Now she's helping Ernestine! Last time

I talked to her, she was helping *you!* This isn't a family. Most families have only two hands to hold you with. This is an octopus, holding on with every tentacle. Maybe Anne is willing to waste her life. I'm not!"

When he had slammed the front door, Harper growled, "What the devil was that about?"

"I don't know," Mother answered, rising. "But I have a pretty good idea." When she and Sam reached the high school, she sent him to bring Anne off the dance floor. Then she told her daughter, "Bob is leaving for Detroit tonight. He got that appointment. What's this business about your telling him you have to wait? And why is the Gilbreth family an octopus?"

"It's just," Anne faltered, "that you have that wonderful opportunity to go to Purdue, and I ought to stay home—"

Mother spoke with unanswerable firmness. "What I've been praying for is to have someone like Bob love you and marry you. Go down to that hospital and catch him before he gets away!"

But Dr. Bob himself was striding toward them. "I'm not going to Detroit alone!" he announced. "Mrs. Gilbreth, you'll just have to figure out some way to get along without her. *I can't!*"

"Well, then, what are you waiting for?" Mother challenged. "There she is! Take her!" As they went joyously into each other's arms, she turned away to leave with Sam Harper.

On the way home, he asked, "Lillie, do you have many days like this?" When she answered, smiling, that they were all like this, he asked, with sober significance, "You don't have much room for anything else in your life, do you?"

Very gently, she gave him his answer. "No, Sam, I haven't." The car pulled up at the house, and she added, softly, "Thank you, Sam. Thank you for everything."

As she went inside, an explosion rent the air. Once again, Tom had been experimenting with prunes and sugar and yeast. Mother sighed. "Tom, you're incorrigible!" Then she turned and picked up little Jane, who was crying, and dried her tears comfortingly.

There would be many troubled days ahead, she knew. But she also knew that she would have the strength to meet them. For she would not be alone—not while Father's memory lived so in her heart . . .

• When Jane received her diploma, Anne and the others burst into a salvo of applause. Mother opened her eyes.

"I must say, you're a great one," Anne told her in loving rebuke. "You work your whole lifetime to send your children through college, and then, when the final great moment arrives, you go to sleep!"

"I wasn't asleep, dear." Mother's smile was happy. "I was just thinking of someone who loved us all very much—and saying, 'Thank you.'"

THE END