

A New Home 2

The following story illustrates the way in which a lady prepared her "stately habitation" by imaginatively sleeping in it—or "dwelling therein."

"A few months ago my husband decided to place our home on the market. The main object for the move which we had discussed many times was to find a home large enough for the two of us, my mother and my aunt, in addition to ten cats, three dogs and one parakeet. Believe it or not, the contemplated move was my husband's idea as he loved my mother and aunt and said I was at their house most of the time anyway, so 'why not live together and pay one tax bill?' I liked the idea tremendously, but I knew that this new home would have to be something very special in size, location and arrangement as I insisted on privacy for all concerned.

"So at the moment I was undecided whether to sell our present home or not, but I didn't argue as I knew quite well from past experience with imagining that our house would never sell until I stopped 'sleeping' in it. Two months and four or five real estate brokers later, my husband had 'given up' on the sale of our house and so had the brokers. At this point I had convinced myself I now wanted the change, so for four nights in my imagination I went to sleep in the kind of home I would like to own. On the fifth day, my husband had an appointment at a friend's home and while there, met a stranger who 'just happened' to be looking for a house in the hills. He was, of course, brought swiftly back to see our house which he walked through once and said, 'I'll buy it.' This didn't make us very popular with the brokers, but that was all right with me as I was happy to keep the broker's commission in the family! We moved within ten days and stayed with my mother while looking for our new home.

"We listed our requirements with every agent on the Sunset Strip only (because I wouldn't move out of the area) and each one of them without exception informed us we were both mad. It was entirely impossible, they

said, to find an older home of English style with two separate living rooms, separate apartments, a library, and built on a flat knoll with enough ground space to fence for large dogs—and located in one particular area. When we told them the price we would pay for this house they just looked sad.

"I said that wasn't all we wanted. We wanted wood paneling all through the house, a huge fireplace, a magnificent view and seclusion—no close neighbors, please. At this point the lady agent would giggle and remind me that there was no such house, but if there were they would realize five times what we were willing to pay. But I knew there was such a house—because my imagination had been sleeping in it, and if I am my imagination, then I had been sleeping in it.

"By the second week we had exhausted five real estate offices, and the gentleman in the sixth office was looking a little wild when one of his partners who had not spoken until then said, 'Why don't you show them the place up Kings Road?' A third partner in the office laughed sourly and said, 'That property isn't even listed. And besides—the old lady would throw you off the property. She's got two acres up there and you know she wouldn't split.'

"Well, I didn't know what she wouldn't split, but my interest had been aroused by the street name for I liked that particular area best of all. So I asked why not just take a look anyway, for laughs. As we drove up the street and turned off onto a private road, we approached a large two-story house built of redwood and brick, English in appearance, surrounded by tall trees and sitting alone and aloof on its own knoll, viewing the city below from all of its many windows. I felt a peculiar excitement as we walked to the front door and were greeted by a lovely woman who graciously asked us in.

"I do not think I breathed for the next minute or two, for I had walked into the most exquisite room I had ever seen. The solid redwood walls and the brick of a great fireplace rose to a height of twenty-eight feet terminating in an arched ceiling joined together by huge redwood beams. The room was straight out of Dickens, and I could almost hear Christmas carolers singing

on the balcony of the upstairs dining room which looked out over the living room. A great cathedral window gave a view of sky, mountains and city far below, and the beautiful old redwood walls glowed in the sunlight. We were shown through a spacious apartment on the lower floor with connecting library, separate entrance and separate patio. Two staircases led upward to a long hall opening into two separated bedrooms and baths, and at the end of the hall was—yes—a second living room, opening out onto a second patio screened by trees and redwood fencing.

"Built on two acres of beautifully landscaped grounds, I began to understand what the agent had meant by saying, 'she wouldn't split' for on one acre stood a large swimming pool and pool house completely separated from the main house but undoubtedly belonging to it. It did, indeed, seem to be an impossible situation as we did not want two acres of highly taxable property plus a swimming pool a block away from the house.

"Before we left, I walked through that magnificent living room, once more going up the stairs to the dining room balcony. I turned, and looking down saw my husband standing by the fireplace, pipe in hand, with an expression of perfect satisfaction on his face. I placed my hands on the balcony railing and watched him for a moment.

"When we were back in the real estate office, the three agents were ready to close for the day, but my husband detained them saying, 'Let's make her an offer anyway. Maybe she will split the property. What can we lose?' One agent left the office without a word. Another said, 'The idea is ridiculous.' The agent we had originally talked to said, 'Forget it. It's a pipe dream.' My husband is not easily annoyed but when he is, there is no more stubborn creature on earth. He was now annoyed. He sat down, slammed his hand on a desk and roared, 'It's your business to submit offers, isn't it?' They agreed that this was so and finally promised to submit our offer on the property.

"We left, and that night—in my imagination—I stood on that dining room balcony and looked down at my husband standing by the fireplace. He looked up at me and said, 'Well, honey, how do you like our new home?' I said, 'I love it.' I continued to see that beautiful room and my husband in it and 'felt' the balcony railing gripped in my hands until I fell asleep.

"The next day as we were having dinner in my mother's house, the telephone rang and the agent, in an unbelieving voice, informed me that we had just purchased a house. The owner had split the property right down the middle, giving us the house and the acre it stood on for the price we offered." . . .

J.R.B.