

I stayed there for what seemed hours. Then slowly I went back home, making sure I wasn't seen. Next day I told my mother the story. At first she didn't believe it, but after I showed her the bruises and cuts, she stood there amazed. The only thought that entered her mind was to call the police. I quickly talked her out of it, telling her it was better to have a living son than a dead one. We moved back to the West Side. Not much of a change. Both dumps, but it was a change for me—plenty.

 **Talking it over**

1. *a.* How does Phil get involved with the gang in the first place?  
*b.* Could Phil have avoided this involvement?  
*c.* When does he first begin to realize that he may be doing the wrong thing?
2. The gang forces Phil to “play Tarzan” so he can prove he is “worthy” of their friendship.  
*a.* In your opinion, does real friendship require this kind of proof? What do you expect from friendship?  
*b.* Do you think Phil would agree with you? Why or why not?
3. *a.* Why doesn't Phil want his mother to call the police?  
*b.* Do you think this decision is a wise one or a weak one?
4. Who are the wise in this story? Who are the weak? Give reasons for your answers.
5. If you were to devise a solution to the problem presented here, where would you start? You might consider the solutions to similar problems in “Out of Control” (pages 48-68) and “Trouble at Rocky Beach” (pages 15-29).



# *Catalogue D'Art*

by Jesse Stuart

“Why do they always  
ride to church late  
every Sunday morning?”

"It would do my heart good," I thought, "to beat Millie Spens at her own game. Not a girl on Lost Creek has a chance of getting a beau with Millie Spens around."

I sat in the Lost Creek Church House by the window. I sat there every Sunday morning now to watch Millie Spens ride her fine horse into the church house yard with Larry Currie riding his horse beside her. I used to ride in a rubber-tired buggy beside Larry with a big red-checked lap robe over our laps. But that was before Millie Spens came along. That was before she took a notion to take my beau. While I was going with Larry, she was taking other Lost Creek girls' beaus. She waited until I got in love with Larry; then she took him.

"Why do they always ride to church late every Sunday morning?" I thought as I watched them dismount from their panting horses, whose sides were dark with sweat and with foamy flakes gathered around the corners of their bridle bits. "I know why they get here late. They take a ride up Lost Creek and back together before church begins."

It hurt me to see Larry tie Millie's riding skirt to her new brown saddle with the red plush seat. I saw him tie it to her saddle carefully while she pressed the wrinkles from her skirt with her white-gloved hands. I know our preacher, Brother Sizemore, looked at me when he preached. He saw me getting fidgety in my seat. He saw how nervous I was as I looked out the window. He was preaching the love of God, and I was pining for the love of

Larry Currie. But Millie Spens had his love.

When they walked into the church house together, everybody looked at them; then they looked at me. I don't think they could hear my heart pounding. I think everybody understood. Everybody knew that my father, Ezekiel<sup>1</sup> Doore, rented a house to live in and land to farm from Millie's father, Archie Spens. Everybody knew that Archie Spens was the richest man on Lost Creek; that he owned five hundred acres of land; that he had sheep, cattle, fine horses, big apple orchards, and fields of strawberries. Everybody knew that his tenants farmed tobacco, corn, wheat, and potatoes for him, and that his share of the crops was half. Everybody knew that he had money in the bank, that he bought anything his daughter wanted. They knew that he had the brown leather saddle with the red plush seat made especially for Millie. It was the only saddle of its kind on Lost Creek. I think everybody felt sorry for me. That's the way they looked when Larry Currie walked into the church house, holding Millie's hand.

When Larry and Millie sat down on the seat in front of me, Millie put her arm on the back of the long seat around Larry's back. She didn't have her white glove on this hand. It was off, so I could see her move her fingers. She wanted me to see her new diamond ring. It was bright enough to hurt my eyes if I'd looked at it long enough. But I didn't. I wouldn't please Millie that

<sup>1</sup>*Ezekiel* (i:ze'ki al or i:zek'yal).

well. I pretended I didn't notice her engagement ring. Other girls from Lost Creek noticed it. They were glad. If Millie got married, she wouldn't be stealing their beaus any longer, they thought. But they didn't think about what she had done to me. My heart kept pounding as I thought about it. I don't remember to this day what Brother Sizemore preached about, the morning I saw Millie's engagement ring.

Soon as church was over, I hurried out the door. I walked up the path slowly. I stood upon the hill where I could watch people shaking hands at the church house door. I could see them, but they couldn't see me. I watched Larry untie Millie's skirt from the saddle; and while she stepped into it and drew it around her, Larry untied the bridle reins of her horse from an oak branch. I saw Millie mount her horse gracefully while everybody in the churchyard watched her. I heard them saying to one another how beautiful and graceful Millie Spens was. That hurt me so much I could hardly stand it. But what hurt me most was when Larry untied his horse's bridle reins from a low-hanging oak branch, leaped into the saddle, and rode down Lost Creek beside Millie. I watched them ride away—their saddle horses pacing side by side down the winding Lost Creek road.

"I can't stand it," I screamed where no one would hear me, wiping tears from my eyes. "Why can't my father be rich and own five hundred acres of land and raise cattle and sheep and fine horses? Why can't my father have tenants to raise his tobacco, corn, po-

tatoes, and wheat? Then he could buy me the latest riding skirts from Ohio. And he could have bought me a brown leather saddle with a red plush seat!"

"What's the matter, Maudie?" Mom asked me soon as I reached our shack.

"There's nothing wrong with me," I said, rushing upstairs.

"I thought you'd been crying," Mom said.

I didn't answer her. I looked into the mirror in my room upstairs. My eyes were red. My face looked broken. From my upstairs window I looked down Lost Creek valley—down the winding road that wound under the sycamore trees, the water birches, and elms that grew along the creek banks. There I saw two horses racing side by side—down the sun-dried yellow road where the thin spring leaves rustled on the trees. The riders were Larry and Millie.

"I won't cry," I said to myself, getting mad all of a sudden. "It will please Millie too well. I'll never shed another tear for her. I'll whip her at her own game. I'll beat her yet. Never will I run up these stairs again to cry like a calf. Mom will never ask me again if I've been crying; she'll be asking why I come home from church laughing."

"I'll have new clothes," I said, smiling, as I picked up a catalogue. "I'll never buy any more clothes from Larry Currie's store. He'll not know where I get my clothes. I'll dress better than Millie Spens, though I don't have a fine horse to ride and a beautiful saddle to sit on. I'll make all the young men on Lost Creek look at me twice."

I had an idea as I fondled the catalogue. I'd order me some clothes. I'd find a girl in the catalogue that I wanted to look like; then I'd order the clothes that she was wearing. "I'll hunt a pretty girl in the catalogue," I said to myself.

Then I laughed as I turned the pages looking for the girl that I wanted to look like. I turned over many pages before I found the right one. She was beautiful—just the girl I wanted to look like—and she was the girl that I *would* look like.

"Larry Currie, when you see me looking like this girl, you'll turn your head to look at me twice," I said. "Larry Currie, she's wearing prettier clothes than you keep in your store. Millie Spens won't be wearing that diamond long."

But I stopped smiling when I thought about the money. How would I get the money? Pa couldn't let me have it. He had seven mouths to feed and seven bodies to clothe. He had to give Archie Spens half of everything we raised. I couldn't sell things at Larry Currie's store. He'd know if I sold him young fryers, eggs, and butter that I was doing it for a purpose! But it came to me. I could trade these things to Huckster Charlie Hunt. He came every Friday so he could gather his produce and sell it in Ashland on Saturday. He came to our house. I knew that he would help me. I'd ridden so many times with him from school in years past in the huckster wagon.

Friday morning I'd gathered a basket of eggs for him. I met him down



the road a mile from our house. And then I told him my secret.

"I'll hep ye, Maudie," he said. "I'll hep ye to look jist like that gal in the catalogue. I can git ye that fine dress, that very hat, and them slippers that she has on."

"You'll certainly be doing me a favor," I told him as he put my eggs into a crate on his wagon. "I'll pay you along as I can," I told him. "Some of our produce will go to you instead of Larry Currie's General Merchandise Store."

Huckster Charlie Hunt was pleased when I told him he'd get part of our produce. He knew that Pa had been trading our produce at Larry Currie's store for groceries and spices. He took the page that I'd torn from the catalogue—the picture of the girl that would take Larry Currie from Millie Spens. He laughed as he folded it up and put it in his watch pocket.

"I'll fetch ye a purty spring outfit," he said, slapping his horses with the lines, driving up the winding, yellow clay road.

I could barely wait for next Friday to come. I hunted more eggs and heard Pa grumbling about our hens being on a strike. I managed to hide a few pounds of butter for Huckster Charlie. Everything I managed to get didn't go to Larry Currie's General Merchandise Store to help Larry buy diamond rings for Millie. And it pleased me to slip out every egg and every pound of butter I could for Huckster Charlie.

When Charlie came that Friday, he brought me a dress, slippers, and a hat.

I didn't unwrap them. I gave him twelve dozen eggs and five pounds of butter on my account. My outfit came to sixteen dollars. It would take me a long time to pay him, but he knew that I would. So he gave me a receipt for all I had paid him. And he gave me the page I'd torn from the catalogue.

"Now if ye don't look blank like this gal, only a lot purtier," he said, "ye fetch this stuff back and I'll get ye another outfit."

"All right, Huckster Charlie," I said as I ran up the path to the house with my bundle under my arm. I could hardly wait until I got to my room upstairs. I heard Huckster Charlie's huckster-wagon bell tinkling at the next Lost Creek farmhouse when I slipped through the front room and upstairs to my room.

I put on my silk stockings first. And they felt like butterflies' wings against my brown sun-tanned legs. Then I put on my new slippers. They felt tight on my feet, but they made my feet look so much smaller—just like the girl's feet in the catalogue. Then I tried to put on my skirt. But it wouldn't fit over my petticoats. So I had to take one off. Then my skirt fit. I put on my light-green taffeta blouse. And I tied my yellow-and-green plaid sash around me in different ways. I tied it with a big bow in the back, for I still thought the skirt was a little tight. But I thought it looked fine.

I stood before the mirror and worked on my hair until my arms and back ached, but I couldn't make it look like the girl's in the catalogue. Then I got

another idea. I stooped over and brushed all my hair over my face; then I tied a ribbon around my head. I combed the front part of my hair back over the ribbon; it had a pompadour effect. It was easy then to twist the back of my hair into a knot. Now, when I put my hat on, I looked like the girl in the catalogue, for my hat, like hers, was no bigger than a saucer and had a bunch of red roses on it and two velvet streamers that tied under my chin.

Saturday, every time I could slip away from my mother and sisters, I ran upstairs and practiced putting my clothes on. Then I would look at the girl in the catalogue. I wondered how she would walk and talk. I wanted to be like her. I practiced walking across my room in my new shoes. I talked to myself in the mirror. I looked like a different person. I talked to myself in the mirror so I would know just how I looked when I talked to the Lost Creek people at church.

I worked so hard at all this that on Sunday morning, when I dressed, I felt at ease in my new clothes. I felt they were a part of me, that I had always worn this kind of clothes. Before I left the shack, I took a last look at the girl in the catalogue; then I looked at myself in the mirror.

I hurried down the path to the Lost Creek road. I was alone, but behind me I heard voices speaking about the girl ahead. They were wondering who I was. I hurried to the Lost Creek



Church House; crossed the churchyard, where many young men were standing. I didn't know whether they knew me or not. They just stood and looked at me, and I heard them saying soon as I entered the church that I was "beautiful." I took my seat by the window while everybody, even Brother Sizemore, stared at me.

Before church services had begun, I saw two sweat-damp, foam-flecked horses dash into the churchyard. Larry dismounted his horse and helped Millie from hers. While Larry tied the horses to the low-hanging branches of an oak tree, the same branches where they had tied them last Sunday, Millie stepped from her riding skirt.

Not knowing who I was, they sat down on the seat in front of me. Larry glanced around and saw me—his eyes were slow to leave. He turned his head slowly, and then Millie looked around to see why Larry looked so long. Millie looked at me quickly and then she looked away. Larry turned to look at me again—I don't believe he knew me.

Larry looked at the young men in the church house who were looking at me. Then he would look around to see if I was looking at them. Millie would look at Larry—her face was a little stern as she watched Larry move nervously in his seat. He would rub his face with his hands and then he would twirl his hat around and around. He would pull his watch out and look at it all the time church was going on. He even pulled his fountain pen from his pocket and screwed the top off and on again until I thought he would wear it out.

When church was over, I started walking slowly toward the door. Larry followed me out of the house as other young men stood along the aisles looking at me. I felt as I had never felt before.

I wondered why Larry was following me before the whole church crowd. I wondered if Millie knew what he was doing—Millie, whose face must have been getting red as she talked to her mother's first cousin. Maybe she didn't want to see what was going on. And I wondered if she put the white glove on again.

"Maudie Doore, is that you?" I heard Larry ask as he followed me into the churchyard.

"It is," I said as I kept walking like I thought the girl in the catalogue would walk.

"You're beautiful, Maudie," he said. "I didn't know you were so pretty!"

I didn't answer.

"Today will be a great day at Upper Lost Creek," he said. "I wonder if you would like to go with me to the baptizing there?"

"Why, yes, I think I would," I said softly.

"Wait here, until I get my horse," he said quickly.

Soon we were walking up the Lost Creek road side by side. Larry was leading his horse.

"Would you like for me to bring a horse for you to ride next Sunday?" Larry asked.

"Well, no, I'd rather walk," I said shyly, remembering the girl in the catalogue and my tight skirt.

### Talking it over

1. What is Maudie's problem?
2. Do you think Maudie is justified in getting the money for her new clothes the way she does? Why or why not?
3. Do you think Larry is deserving of Maudie's efforts? Explain your answer.
4. If Maudie and Larry marry, do you think they'll be happy? Why or why not?
5. Remember that Maudie tells her own story. How might the story have been different if it had been told by someone else—Millie, for instance?



**Columnist states views on "Catalogue Girl!"**

Ann Landers, newspaper columnist who answers readers' questions about personal problems, was asked her opinions of "Catalogue Girl." This is the way she answered the text questions.

#### *1. What is Maudie's problem?*

Maudie's problem is a basic lack of confidence in herself. When her sweetheart gives her the air for the rich and fancy Millie, instead of accepting the fact that she has failed to fill Larry's emotional needs, she twists the picture in her mind so that it will be less painful to her ego. "It's Millie's beautiful clothes and fancy hairdo that won Larry away," she tells herself.

#### *2. Do you think Maudie is justified*