

I WANT TO WRITE

By Gladys Whitlock

I want to write. Now that seems a very simple statement on the surface, doesn't it? But wait a minute, let me tell you a little more about it.

I got up this morning with some lovely chilly suspense ideas for a mystery story. But it's Saturday and that's a lot different from the rest of the week. First, everybody sleeps late; then breakfast is late and a bit fancier than usual. But finally the head of the house is off for his usual round or two of golf, the TV has collected its two devotees to the Children's Hour, and I can start building atmosphere. At least that's what I think!

The first commercial reminds Sharon of the promised fifty cents to go with the latest boxtop offer. I get her the money, shoo her out of my private corner of the dining room and settle down again.

At the next station break they're back. How long do I think it will take for the premium to get here? I say I don't know and will they stay in the front room, please.

They're good little girls and it's a full ten minutes before they're back to ask for a snack. Of course, they can't find the apples, even with detailed instructions, so I find them and return to my work.

For some reason my sharp ideas seem to be getting a little fuzzy and the Cisco Kid is coming through loud and clear. I retreat to the upstairs along with table, chair, and portable heater, one trip up the stairs for each piece.

It's really pretty nice. Not a trace of either Cisco or Pancho can reach me, but unfortunately, Sharon isn't anchored by an electric cord. Seems the commercial is on again and she just wondered where I'd gone and why. I told her, with emphasis and she backed down the stairs muttering, "I'm going, I'm going."

Then for the space of a half an hour everything is very quiet, but the mood is gone. I sit chewing on my pencil and gradually the spine tingling atmosphere takes shape again and the words begin to line up at the tip of my pencil. The whole hair raising scene is clear and beautifully constructed, but before I can transfer it to paper there is a small thunder on the stairs and Gina with the shining eyes, bears a gift. Shirley Smith gave her a peppermint stick and half of it must go to Mama!

The cleverly built story climax shatters. . . Peppermint is a horrible flavor in the first place. I say thank you and quit. After all, reasonable people admit it when they are licked.

I'll try again tonight, after everyone is asleep, and if my husband comes back downstairs and says it getting late and hadn't I better come to bed . . . Well, If my neighbors tell of a wild scream ringing through the night, you'll know that's just what happened.