



Davey Monroe is the most endearing character in American Literature since Tom Sawyer

***THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF
DAVEY MONROE***

By

RICHARD L. EVANS

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DEDICATION

for Eleanor and Arthur
who give me my own short, happy life

INTRODUCTION

Before you read this book you should know that *The Short Happy Life of Davey Monroe* is not a story. It isn't a straightforward narrative with a clear beginning, middle or end. Instead, it's made up of thirty-three short works or episodes. Each episode focuses on a different aspect of a little boy's life as he grows from age five to age twelve. Some tell about his relationships with his parents, his teachers, his friends, or his enemies. Others examine his budding sexuality, his schooling, his ever-expanding explorations or his developing sense of his own, personal place in the world. Like all of us, Davey has moments of triumph and moments of tragedy. And like all of us, he learns the great lessons of life—the most

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important of which we all learned in childhood, too. But don't worry—Davey doesn't die. The shortness of his happy life in the title refers only to the end of his childhood innocence.

Davey lives in the kind of suburban neighborhood that folks who move out of the city hope to find. It's the 1940's and 50's and it's a time of optimism despite recent memories of a "hot" war and the beginnings of a "cold" one. The Great Depression seemed to be broken, though certainly not forgotten. New medicines, new products, new jobs and new possibilities of all kinds were popping up. Life was good and it looked like it would be even better.

But life, even in good times, doesn't move along evenly in time. This book doesn't, either. Think back to your own childhood. Do you remember as a child how slowly the last few days of school dragged along? I used to say it was "slower than molasses in January." That was also what my mother used to say about the way *I* moved doing my daily chores. Now think how quickly the last three days of your life have whizzed by. Can you remember everything you did just three days ago? Probably not, because it has all sped by so fast. No, life is like a roll of toilet paper: the closer you get to the end, the faster it goes. That's how this book treats Davey's life, speeding up and passing over whole months and years and then slowing down to examine significant events in a young boy's life.

We also know *what* time can do to us—how we all change over time. The stories of our lives are etched on our faces. Davey, the little hero of this book, changes,

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too. He ages from the first episode to the last, but you don't need to worry about that. It'll just happen—just as it has to you and me.

Please read these pages at an easy gait and with a happy heart. Lighten up. Stop and smell the roses, or the burning leaves, or the hot tar on the roads, or the sweet aroma the first splashes of a summer rain always give the good earth in Green Valley. Green Valley, that's where Davey Monroe lives.

Now that you're ready, turn the page and meet Davey.

1. INVESTIGATION

Life was sweet. Life was filled with sweet mysteries waiting to be solved. For example, what did Linda Stanley have up her dress that Davey wasn't supposed to know about? His mother told him not to look up girls' dresses. His father said so, too. Well, his father didn't actually say, "Don't look up girls' dresses." What he actually said was nothing. But his father didn't have to say anything because of the way he looked when Davey's mother said it. But what was it they didn't want him to know about? What *did* girls have up there?

He did it. He was playing with Linda Stanley in her side yard. They were playing hide-and-seek—which is not much fun with just two people—but you have to use what you have. She leaned up against a tree to count with her eyes closed and he pulled up her dress.

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Linda screamed. A girl is taught to scream when someone pulls up her dress. Davey didn't know that before he pulled up Linda's dress or he might have been better prepared for her scream. It startled him so he let go of her dress. He didn't know about girls and screaming. He didn't know the scream would change as the girl got older. When a girl gets to be a big girl and she likes the fellow who's doing the pulling up, the scream sounds more like a squeal. But Linda Stanley didn't squeal.

Linda screamed.

Then she turned to him with a scowl so perfect he was sure she must have practiced it in the mirror and said the words no just-turned-five-years-old ever wants to hear: "I'm telling!"

With that, she turned to go in. By the time she reached her door, she had worked up some tears, sobbing for effect. Just for that, Davey vowed never to pull up Linda's dress again. She'd have to get someone else to do it.

Davey stood unmoving for several moments. He couldn't believe what he saw under Linda's dress—white, cotton underpants! White, cotton underpants—almost exactly like the ones he was wearing. That was it? He wasn't supposed to see her white, cotton underpants? He was disappointed. But Linda was "telling" so he started home. By the time he got there, his mother was standing in the doorway holding the screen door open. This was not a courtesy.

"Get in here this minute, young man," she said. The words "young man" meant he was in trouble but maybe

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not big trouble. But “young man” could be trouble enough. If he was in real *big* trouble, she would have used his full name, David Yarnell Monroe. He was sure the last words he would hear on this earth would be “David Yarnell Monroe!” followed immediately by his execution.

His mother wasn’t finished, however. “You march yourself right up to your room until your father gets home.”

Uh, oh—maybe this *was* big trouble. That was the trouble with being five years old: the rules and consequences were always changing without notice. He also had to contend with the mothers’ neighborhood network. Linda’s house was just two houses away and his mother was waiting for him at the door. The telephone must have rung at his house while he was still standing in Linda’s yard. And for what?—white, cotton under-pants.

He waited in his room. The door to his room was closed. He didn’t remember closing it himself but he did remember how it sounded when it closed: clank, clank, thunk! Like a prison door made of steel bars closing behind him. He wondered if he would be granted one last meal before his father got home. No, of course not—Mother wouldn’t have dinner ready until after his father got home. He would have to take what he had coming on an empty stomach.

Time dragged its feet. Time dawdled. His mother hated it when he dawdled, but time could get away with it.

Finally, he heard a car stop in front of the house.

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Some of the houses on his block had garages and driveways but not his house. His father had to park on the street. The Stanley's had a driveway and a garage. They must be rich. That was something else he would hold against Linda Stanley and her mother, the "tattletales."

He heard the car door shut. It sounded just like another prison door closing. The warden was home. He heard his father walking up the flagstone walk to the front door. His father was whistling. His father did a lot of whistling. He never whistled anything anyone could name. It wasn't a tune, it was just whistling. Before he got to the front door, his father stopped whistling. His mother must have been standing in the front door just as she had when he came home. A woman standing in the front door when the man comes home is never good news. His father's footsteps continued up the walk in silence. Davey thought they were a little slower, too. He heard his mother's voice, low and without inflection—a bad sign. Then there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs. Time suddenly sped up. It was keeping up with his heart beat.

The door to his room opened. He heard his mother crying softly downstairs. Her duty done, she had to take the consequences, too. His father stood in the doorway with his hands on his hips.

Davey wanted to run. He wanted to burst by his father and run down the stairs but he couldn't move. He just stood there, trying not to cry. His father was fighting to control his face, too. Davey couldn't know it, of course, but his father wanted to laugh so much his stomach hurt. The Monroes, father and son, stood fac-

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ing each other. Moments passed. Laughter and tears were both suppressed.

Davey already knew that anticipation was almost always better than the real thing. Christmas morning, with all the presents and fruit and candy, was never quite as good as the few days just before Christmas when his imagination made it even better. The same was true of punishment. He had already suffered more pain in his mind than his father's belt could ever produce on his bare leg. But he knew, just like Christmas, he would get the real thing, too.

More moments passed. Finally his father said, "I hope you've learned a lesson here today." His father turned quickly and, shutting the door behind him, went into his own bedroom.

His father had held back his laughter as long as he could. It was the Y chromosome at its devilish best. How could he, the man who had fathered this young skirt puller, punish "the fruit of his loins" for doing the same thing he himself had first done twenty-three years ago (and had happily done many times since with Davey's mother—who would also issue a little squeal of delight later that night when he pulled up her nightie). After all, it was his genes, passed on with only the best intentions that had brought Davey to his desperate act. He hoped so, anyway.

Davey couldn't believe his good fortune. His father had not unbuckled his belt and slid it slowly out of the belt loops on his pants and then doubled it over before delivering that one quick, stinging smack on his bare leg that hurt his feelings far longer than it hurt his leg. He

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had escaped with “a lesson.” But what “lesson”—that girls wore white, cotton underpants and he wasn’t supposed to know that? This mystery would have to be taken up again during some future investigation.

But his relationship with his father would never be the same after the day he discovered what was under Linda Stanley’s dress. Theirs would be one of heightened love and respect. They both knew they could never be sure exactly when another “what now?” would come up with their womenfolk. The Monroes, father and son, had to stick together.

2. CODE

Davey loved his Aunt Ruth. She was his mother's sister and was all the things he loved best about his mother, only doubled. She was very loving. She hugged him tightly whenever she came over to his house. She laughed a lot and she laughed at things he found funny, too. Most adults didn't do that. She was unsparing in her praise for almost everything he did. Aunt Ruth was a good sport, too—frogs and dead birds he found smashed flat in the road did not put her off in the least. Aunt Ruth was also his best defender against the stinging indictments brought against him by the mothers' neighborhood network. She was his attorney.

"You shouldn't be so hard on Davey," she told his mother, "after all, boys will be boys." Not having any children of her own, she was an expert on how to raise her sister's only child.

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However, Aunt Ruth shared one annoying habit with the rest of the adult world. She sometimes spoke in code—*secret* code—secret *adult* code.

When Aunt Ruth came over, she and his mother would sit in the living room and talk. Davey would lie on the floor while they were talking and feign playing or drawing on a piece of notebook paper. He meant to be inconspicuous. He was sure, if he just kept still long enough, he would be invisible. A boy could learn a lot by pretending not to be listening when adults were talking to each other. He could've learned a lot more if his mother and Aunt Ruth didn't use *code*.

"Little pitchers have big ears." He heard that a lot. But what did it mean? They were talking about him, he knew. He knew they knew he was listening to everything they said, but why "big ears" and "little pitchers?" He didn't have big ears. Roger, at school, had big ears and they really stuck out, but not him. And he was too little to pitch the baseball in the pickup games at the Bill Wooten Public Elementary School. He was lucky if they even let him play right field. Playing right field was insulting because almost nothing was ever hit into right field so that's where they always put the smallest and least skilled kid. No, "little pitchers" had to mean something else.

It was secret code.

He knew all about secret code. He had a secret code ring out of a box of cereal. The code was on the outside of the box. All he had to do was match up the numbers in the secret code with the same ones on his ring to get the secret letters that spelled out the secret message.

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There were only two problems with this system: Davey couldn't write very well and he couldn't read very well so he couldn't read what he wrote very well. If he asked his mother to help him with the code, then it wouldn't be secret any more. It was all a conspiracy to keep him from knowing secrets.

He and "the O'Brien boy," as his parents always referred to Davey's best friend, tried to use a real code—Morse Code. They'd seen lots of movies where the telegraph man sent messages in Morse Code. But it was hard.

They tried, though. Long summer afternoons were devoted to dits and daughs. Saying "dot" or "dash" was not allowed (girls could say "dot" or "dash"—they were girls so they didn't know anything anyway). Saying dits and daughs was the easy part. There were several hard parts: One had to know one's alphabet without having to sing it to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" every time. There are adults holding major positions with important companies who still have to sing it under their breaths anytime they have to alphabetize something. One also had to remember what "dits" and what "daughs" went with each letter. Their major problem, however, was the need to spell.

Clearly, Morse Code was not the answer to Davey's need for a secret code. The only thing he could remember was "dit, dit, dit, daugh, daugh, daugh, dit, dit, dit" for S.O.S. If there was ever an emergency at the Monroe house, Davey could telegraph for help.

Adults had other codes, too. They spelled. This wasn't really a secret code because it wasn't secret; it

was openly and blatantly meant to prevent him from understanding their conversations. He fought back by learning to spell their main words. They fought back against his fighting back by moving on to code number two: spelling backwards. Or even code number three: Pig Latin. "Aveyday is isteninglay. Ouyay be arefulcay." Pig Latin was such a complicated code that even some adults couldn't master it. His Aunt Ruth would break down in uncontrollable laughter every time she tried saying something in Pig Latin.

His mother spoke French but his father didn't. She tried using French words to communicate secretly with his father at the dinner table. It didn't work. His father learned a few words but Davey learned them faster. After a while French became a code only between his mother and him, cutting out his father. Since there was no need for a secret code to get around his father, the French code faded away.

But their main code—the use of nonsense phrases, continued to confound his intelligence gathering. "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." "A stitch in time saves nine." "Don't burn your bridges before you cross them." They had a million of them.

One day, his Aunt Ruth said, "Don't close the barn door after the horse is gone." No one he knew had a barn. No one he knew had a horse. Closing the barn door after the horse was gone made perfect sense to him. But that business about "don't close the barn door" seemed to make perfect sense to the adults. What did they know that they didn't want him to know? What did they *really* mean? Was he the horse in that little piece of

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code? He hoped so. He liked being the horse. He would be proud to be the horse.

He was sure he would learn all about it someday when he got big. And when he did he hoped it would be a whole lot better than knowing what Linda Stanley had up her dress.

3. *THE CREEK*

Davey had to cross a creek to get to school. There was a wooden foot bridge, of course, but he only used it if he was already late and in a hurry. He preferred the challenge of having to leap from bank to stone to log to sandbar to other bank.

His mother hated the creek. She hated what she imagined were the dangers lurking in the creek. It wasn't the depth of the water—it was only six to ten inches deep in most places and only three feet at its deepest. It wasn't the creatures that lived there, either—although snakes and frogs and crayfish were bad enough. It was the typhoid or, even worse, the polio that might live there that worried her most.

It was 1946 and polio was serious business. The war had been frightening, but polio was far more frighten-

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ing—far more potentially devastating to his mother and all the other mothers. Typhoid fever was bad, but one might survive it. But there was no known cause, cure or prevention for polio. His mother made him promise his most serious promise “never, never, never” to drink the water from the creek.

Davey gave two pennies out of his allowance each week to *The March of Dimes*. *The March of Dimes*’ posters always showed little children sitting in wheelchairs or trying to walk using crutches and heavy leg braces. That was what polio could do to you. Sometimes it could be worse. There were pictures of children lying in iron lungs because they couldn’t breathe without them. Davey tried to imagine himself in an iron lung by climbing into an empty steel trash can and then holding his breath as long as he could. He certainly didn’t want to have to be in an iron lung. He didn’t want to get polio or typhoid fever. He didn’t want to worry his mother. But he didn’t want to *not* play in the creek.

Naturally, the creek was a continuing topic for discussion at the dinner table almost every evening. “Did you go near the creek today?”

Uh, oh.

There was another danger posed by the creek, a danger that was much more a concern to Davey—wet shoes. Coming home with wet shoes was a serious offense in the Monroe home. Having wet shoes was a felony punishable by incarceration in one’s room until the Grand Inquisitor came home from work. Wet shoes meant at the least no dessert for a week or no radio that evening or (if the offense was repeated) both. Davey

knew all this from personal experience.

But the creek called to him using her siren songs of gurgling water and splashing fish. The creek swished her skirts and showed him her shimmering curves and smooth, soft surfaces; her flowing currents; her deep green eddies; her wet promises. She opened her arms to take him to her bosom so she could soak his shoes. He was helpless in her proximity.

Shoes were expensive. Shoes had to last. Shoes were made of leather. Leather should not be subjected to immersion in water. This simple lesson was not lost on Davey. He didn't mean to let his feet slide in the water. He just slipped on the muddy banks. He didn't mean to let his foot plunge into the water. It just slipped off one of the flat stones he used to cross the creek.

He tried wearing "rubbers." They made his feet heavy which made it harder to walk home after school. But he wore them because he was sure they would keep his shoes from getting wet.

Lesson Number One: shoes can get wet from the inside as well as from the outside. When the creek came up over his rubbers, his shoes filled with water and got, well...wet.

Lesson Number Two: leather expands when it gets wet which makes it almost impossible to remove a wet shoe from inside a rubber.

Lesson Number Three: the same is true (only more so) of a galosh.

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Wet shoes, according to his mother, were “the leading cause of colds and pneumonia. You’ll catch your death of cold,” she warned. And, “If I ever catch you in that creek, young man, I will spank you to within an inch of your life.”

Adults were always saying things like that. Things like, “within an inch of your life.” What did that mean? How could you get “within an inch of your life?” He wasn’t worried about her catching him, though. He knew his mother would never come within an inch of the creek.

The critters that inhabited the creek were both fascinating and frightening. Frogs were so elusive that merely spotting one as it came up for air after leaping in the water at his approach was a victory for the human. Catching one, while not impossible, was justification for bringing it home to show Mother. Davey only made *that* mistake once.

In the spring, tadpoles in vast numbers would almost blacken the creek close to its grassy banks. Glass Mason Jars containing creek water and some of this mass would materialize on classroom window ledges at the Bill Wooten Public Elementary School. The progress of the change from tadpole to frog would be monitored hour to hour by generations of little Green Valleyans (the developer had named the neighborhood “Green Valley”). The process never seemed to lose its fascination even for the sixth graders who had seen it every year since kindergarten.

Snakes were another matter. Snakes were not as elusive as frogs. He could always find snakes. He never

wanted to find snakes, but he found them anyway. His father told him they were water snakes. His father told him they were “harmless.” His father was never wrong about anything; but Davey found it hard to believe they were harmless, and he almost never saw the snakes in the water. They were usually wrapped around tree branches growing out from the steep banks of the creek *at eye level*. That’s why he had no trouble finding them. They were usually from three to six inches from his face in the first millisecond he saw them. In the next millisecond, they were still there. But Davey wasn’t.

If the snakes weren’t wrapped around tree branches by the creek, they were on the ground—on the ground at his feet. Why he never seemed to see them before they were right at his feet was another of those not-so-sweet mysteries of life. The snakes he found at his feet were black or brown or green. That’s all he could remember about them. He didn’t hang around to take names or kick butt.

Crayfish or “crawdads” were the most fun (one of his friends’ dads called them “crawdads” but none of the boys could figure out why). They weren’t nearly as elusive as the frogs or as scary as the snakes. Any part of the creek where the water was only a few inches deep over a rocky bottom was crayfish country. Davey had only to lift a flat rock and look under it to find his quarry. He and his friends spent hours hunting, chasing and releasing crayfish.

Someone said you could eat crayfish, but he didn’t think he’d want to eat anything that looked like a crayfish. They weren’t fish. They resembled the lobsters he

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had seen in one of his mother's cook books. But they were little, and brown, and ugly. You'd have to be crazy to eat one.

Girls weren't welcome on these hunting expeditions, of course. But girls could still be fun if shown a frog or a crayfish up close by surprise.

Water skippers resembled spiders which made them innately interesting. But his friends assured him they weren't really spiders—they were just water skippers. Whatever they were, they had the amazing ability to walk, even leap, on the top of the water. Who wouldn't like that?

Davey tried for four full years to dam up the creek. It became a cause for him. After school and evenings he tried and tried. He didn't understand why he wanted to stop the water's flow, but he did. There is something elemental—deep in primitive man (and small boys *are* primitive)—that requires him to try to control nature's forces. Or perhaps, it was simply to master something he loved.

One summer afternoon he enlisted the help of several friends. They labored mightily for hours pushing sand and rocks up against the current. But stopping the stream in one place only caused it to rush faster and stronger in another. They failed. He wanted to control it, but the creek would not have him; it would not submit to him. It was his first lesson in unrequited love. He also caught "you know what" when he got home with his clothes and body covered with stuff that could have come only from the creek.

A wooden footbridge had been built so that all the

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children in the neighborhood could get across the creek to the Bill Wooten Public Elementary School. On two occasions the bridge was washed out by sudden floods caused by monster thunderstorms. Those occasions became part of the folklore of Green Valley. Big children passed the knowledge of those washouts down to smaller children who passed it down to even littler children who passed it down to their infant brothers and sisters lying in cribs and cradles. *There was always hope.*

4. **BAD WORDS**

Dinner at the Monroe table was a time when the family came together at the end of the day to speak of the little victories they had each managed that day; to make plans for future outings, holidays and vacations; to find the “sweet spot” in their interpersonal relationships; and, in Davey’s case, to make accusations of criminal misconduct.

“I got a call from Mrs. Stanley today,” his mother said one evening at the dinner table.

Uh, oh, he thought. A call from Mrs. Stanley (mother of Linda “the snitch” Stanley) to Mrs. Monroe (mother of Davey “go to your room, young man” Monroe) was not occasion for rejoicing. He knew what was coming. A call from Mrs. Stanley meant another arrest warrant was about to be issued. The only mitigating factor was that his mother had waited until dinner time to air the

details. Now he would have to answer for his most recent social faux pas, with “the Stanley girl.” (He always imagined his parents saying “Stanley ghoul” but knew better than to voice that cruel little sentiment.)

He had seen Linda playing in her yard that afternoon as he headed home after a football scrimmage on the school playground. Davey was still too little to play in the football game, but he liked to watch so he would be ready one day when he got his chance. He was small, but he was quick. He was sure he could run as fast as any of the other boys. Linda was pushing a toy baby carriage with a doll in it. The doll was wrapped in some towels. Linda called them blankets. She was the mother. Davey offered to be the family dog, but Linda didn’t think her play family needed a dog. She would consent to his presence in her yard only if he played the father. Davey declined the invitation. After that, one thing had led to another, which had led inevitably to his little verbal slip.

“I’m telling,” Linda had said. Davey thought her threat to get him in trouble justified what he’d just called her, so he said it again.

Linda’s mother had called his mother, naturally. He knew he’d have to face the music. Now the “music” was about to begin.

“Would you care to repeat for your father what you called the Stanley girl, today?”

No, I would not, he thought. But it really wasn’t an invitation he could decline, was it?

“I called her a big poop-poop.”

His father’s eyes widened and seemed to bulge out of

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his head. His mother turned away from Davey so he couldn't see her face. Her head, neck and shoulders seemed to shake a little. This could be bad. This could be much worse than he thought. A complaint from Linda Stanley's mother had to be honored. If his mother started ignoring the accusations brought by the mothers' neighborhood network it would wreck the whole system. Evil would triumph over good and the world as everyone in Green Valley knew it would come to an end. When Linda Stanley declared, "I'm telling!" his goose was already cooked.

"Well now, son," his father's voice sounded strange, as if he were choking on something, "I can't believe you would call anyone a..." His father seemed to be having a hard time saying it.

Davey thought he'd help him out, so he said it again, finishing his father's sentence, "...poop-poop."

His father's reaction scared him. Davey had never seen his father react so quickly to anything. His father jumped up from the table and almost ran out of the dining room, through the kitchen and out the back door. His mother also rose quickly from her chair and followed his father, covering her face with her hands.

Davey sat at the table waiting. He was really scared, now. He felt tears filling his eyes as he contemplated the terrible punishment his parents must be discussing even now in the back yard. What would it be? He'd heard of bad children being sent away somewhere—somewhere where they were beaten and forced to work all day with nothing to eat. No one knew anyone it had happened to, but that didn't mean Davey wouldn't be the first kid in

Green Valley to be so condemned. What other cruel fate might await him? There was nothing he could do to help himself. He had to wait.

It was a long wait. It seemed like a long wait, anyway. It was some time before his parents returned. He felt awful. He could see they had both been crying. Their cheeks were still a little moist, their eyes red and puffy.

His father sat down and said, "Davey, I want you to promise me you'll never call anyone a ..." he still couldn't bring himself to say it. His face contorted at the mere thought of the bad words. "... what you called the Stanley girl," he was able to say at last.

How could he refuse his father's request, made as it was with such genuine emotion?

There would be other, similar accusations over the coming years about "bad words." But never again would he be accused of calling anyone a "poop-poop." He took pride in keeping his promises. It was a matter of family tradition among the Monroes. That evening was one he long remembered.

Later that night, just as he was falling asleep, he thought he heard those bad words again, "poop-poop." He must have been dreaming because it sounded like his father's voice. In his near-dream, the words "poop-poop" were followed by the strangest assortment of snorts and muffled cries he'd ever heard. Some of the cries were high pitched and some were low. They all seemed to be coming from his parents' bedroom.

5. SEE DAVEY RUN

Davey wanted to learn to read more than he wanted anything else. He was sure the world of books would reveal the answers to all the mysteries that lay hidden from him. Reading would enable him to solve the codes adults used to frustrate him. Reading might even help him cope with Linda Stanley and the mothers' neighborhood network. Once he could read he would be a good boy.

But the book his teacher gave him to read—a book about Dick and Jane—was not a very good book. Dick and Jane had to be the two dullest people in English literature. All they ever did was look and run—they didn't do anything else (Oh, well, sometimes they jumped, too—big deal!). But all the children had to read about Dick and Jane. After a few chapters with Dick and Jane, Davey wasn't so sure he wanted to learn to read after

all.

Coming home from church one scorchingly hot summer afternoon, Davey was ordered to stay outside—still wearing his good clothes. His parents wanted to pick up something to take to whichever relative it was they were about to visit—the relative they had chosen to have the honor of seeing Davey in his good clothes. His parents left him out too long and the heat got him.

Look at Davey. Look. Look. Look.

Davey is taking off his shirt. Look. Look. Look.

Davey is taking off his shoes. Davey is taking off his socks. Davey is taking off his socks, socks, socks and his shoes, shoes, shoes.

Now look. Davey is taking off his pants! Don't look, Jane—don't look.

Now Davey is taking off his (gasp!) white, cotton underpants. Don't look, Dick. Dick! Dick! Dick!

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Now Davey is very comfortable in the hot, hot sun.

Oh listen! Can you hear something? In the house the telephone is ringing. "Ring, ring, ring" goes the telephone. One of the neighborhood mothers looked, looked, looked out her window and saw Davey with no clothes on.

Oh, Look! Here comes Mother. Here comes Father. Mother and Father don't look very happy, do they? Run, Davey, run!

What is Mother saying? "Come back, Davey. Please come back. Come back. Come back."

What is Father saying?

Ooops, we don't have those words in this book, do we children? Father is saying, "Come back you little (bleep!). When I get my hands on you I'm going

to spank your little (bleep!). (Bleep!). (Bleep!). (Bleep!). (Bleep!)."

Oh dear, Father knows some new words, doesn't he? Don't learn those words, children. No. No. No.

Look at Father run. Father is running after Davey.

Run Davey run. You'd better run, run, run if you know what's good for you.

Oh, look. Mother is laughing. "Ha, ha," says Mother, "Ha, ha. Ha, ha."

Oh, look. Now Father is laughing, too. "Ha, ha," says Father, "Ha, ha. Ha, ha."

Mother and Father both think Davey is very funny. "Ha, ha."

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Father isn't running very fast any more. Father is laughing too hard to run fast.

Look, here comes Davey running around the house again. Run, Davey, run.

Dick and Jane could learn a thing or two from Davey couldn't they? If they took off their clothes and ran around like Davey, it would be much more fun. Fun. Fun. Fun.

Oh, look! Father is chasing Davey around the yard again. What is Father saying, now? "You'd better keep running in the hot, hot sun, you little son-of-a gun! 'Cause when you stop running in the hot, hot sun, I'm going to get you, you little son-of-a-(bleep!)"

Oh my goodness, children! That wasn't a rhyming word, was it?

