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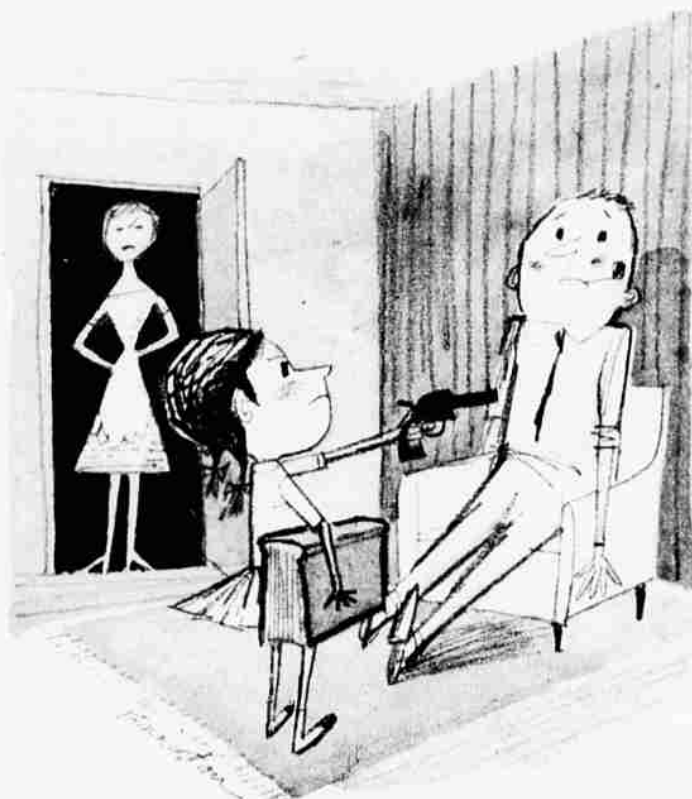
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Children Should Be Seen, Not Read To

by Dick Emmons

I DON'T LIKE to appear immodest, but to my three children I am something of an idol. This is especially true of Ann, our seven-year-old daughter, who views me as a pleasant mixture of Abraham Lincoln, the Lone Ranger, and Donald Duck.

She often interrupts me, craving my company. When I'm reading, for instance. And what father can resist a winsome, sweet-faced little girl who rips the book from his hand, ties his feet together with her skipping rope, and accidentally knocks an ash tray into his lap while jerking his glasses down his nose?

In the cozy father-daughter talks that follow these overtures, my mature brain leads her untrained little mind through a broad gamut of educational and inspiring subjects.

Just the other night she ambushed me in the living room and said, "Golly, you must be smart. You read books and things all the time."

"Reading is the path to knowledge," I said simply.

"Read me what you're reading," she pleaded winningly.

"You wouldn't be interested, honey," I said quickly. "Daddy's improving his mind. Go play."

"Do you want me to scream? I scream good."

"Okay, okay," I gave in, looking around nervously for signs of my wife. "I'll read just a little bit." I lowered my voice. "I'll give it to you where it hurts!" Sloan said, wiping the blood from his hairy forearm. "Keep the dough, keep the blonde if you want;

just let me live!" the sniveler begged. "Gee!" Ann gasped.

"That's enough for right now," I said hastily. "Why don't you go trap some more beetles or something?"

To my surprise, the girl leaped from my lap and, firing her six-gun wildly, galloped off. Naturally, I reopened the book to see if Sloan would take the blonde. If he didn't and she was anything like the girl on the cover, he was an absolute fool.

My concentration was interrupted by a tete-a-tete between my wife and daughter in the kitchen.

"Hands up, Mommy!" Ann ordered. "Ooh, don't shoot!" her mother mocked.

"I'll give it to you where it hurts!" Ann said.

"What did you say?" my wife roared. I loped for the back hallway.

"Come back here!" my bride commanded sternly.

I edged into the kitchen, secreting my book behind a picture on the wall.

"Did Ann learn that from you?" she demanded.

"Learn what?" I asked in a hurt tone.

"I'll give it to you—" Ann began to chant loudly.

"Never mind!" her mother shrieked.

"Now keep calm, sweet," I started.

"Keep still!" my wife barked.

"Keep the dough, keep the blonde, and let me live!" Ann burst out.

Things got a little fuzzy for the next few minutes and I guess I made some feverish promises in the heat of the moment. Anyway, I'm now reading a book called "Edna Treadway Goes to Finishing School." It isn't exactly racy but it's absolutely safe.