

Here's winsome Zorada Johnson of Sarasota, No. 3 in the Family Weekly series of "unknown" cover girls

"IF A 'MISS SOMEBODY' is supposed to be someone who has never done anything before, I guess I qualify."

The 15-year-old girl who told me this with a pixie grin and a good-humored shrug of tanned shoulders actually had a lot of qualifications as a FAMILY WEEKLY cover girl.

Her hazel eyes and full lips, for instance, are a photographer's dream. When she brightens into an infectious smile, the eyes intensify in color, and the tiny pout at the tips of her mouth lifts into upside-down commas. And when she lapses into wistfulness, the lips lower and the eyes grow distant like those of a young girl who has just finished reading "Camille."

But, as a father, I've learned never to flatter youngsters too much; they're even more susceptible than adults. So I just told her: "Well, you're cute—and that's an unusual name you have, Zorada Johnson."

She smiled delightedly, as if I'd just paid her a courtly bow. "My grandmother is named Zorada, too, but she doesn't know where the name comes from, either. I like unusual names, don't you?"

When you're called Ozzie, you have to agree. But I was thinking how that pure olive complexion would photograph under the warm sunlight of Sarasota, Fla., maybe beneath the billowing sail of a skiff.

"And it's unusual that your family is native Floridian, isn't it?" I asked.

The head tilted pensively, and a soft nut-brown wave of hair slipped across her temple. "Father—he died three years ago—and Mother were born in Florida. I'm proud we're natives of the state, but I'm glad so many people are moving here. I learn about every place else without leaving Sarasota."

We photographed Zorada in the course of

her day, lounging around the house in teenage contortions, helping Mrs. Johnson shop, attending ultramodern Riverview high school, sailing with a boy friend, and dreaming about being a cover girl among a bedful of teddy bears.

Throughout the hectic day, she remained that "photographer's dream," never stiffening or posturing—just chattering the kid's chatter that is as much a part of her as the slim femininity of her figure or the charming tilt of her chin.

"My grandmother and I keep house because Mom works at a research plant. I cook pretty well. Would you like to try some of my cake?"

THE CAKE was delicious. I resisted the temptation to try seconds for the sake of my not-so-slim figure. "Too bad," said Zorada, helping herself to another piece. "I weigh 101 and don't have a weight problem. Good thing, too, because I get awful hungry for my own cooking."

"You'll make somebody a good wife."

"Some day," she replied matter-of-factly. "But I don't even have a steady, though I go out a lot. I love swimming, sailing, and bowling, and boys are good at that, so I date them. But I like housework even more than sports, so I know I'll get married—some day."

But first Zorada would like to work her way through college by modeling and become a dental hygienist. She has another ambition: when old enough, she wants to enter the Miss Florida Pageant held in Sarasota.

"By then, maybe, I won't be a 'nobody.'"

I'm sure she won't. All she had to do was crook that smile and toss those bangs, and she became a Miss Somebody to me.



Family Weekly, August 21, 1960



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