

Woman Released After 38 Years In Penitentiary

Walla Walla, Wash. — (AP) — A 65-year-old woman who has spent more time behind the walls of the state penitentiary here than any other current inmate has been freed — probably to spend the rest of her days in a nursing home.

She is Mrs. Ruth Plumlee, who was sentenced to the prison for life May 2, 1922, after being convicted of first degree murder in K.I.S.A. for the poisoning of her husband.

Returned voluntarily.

Mrs. Plumlee sobbed as she left the small women's section of the prison Monday, she said. "It has been my home," she said. "In a way I would like to die here."

She had one chance at freedom in 1951, but after the years in prison, complications of living outside the walls convinced her and she returned voluntarily in 1953. Since then, she has retained parole consideration a number of times.

Because of her age and health condition requiring institutional care, the State Board of Prison Terms and Paroles placed her in a State nursing home. She has no relatives.

Prison officials said her few visitors had been from church groups.

Home Fallout Shelter Approved

Salem — (AP) — The State Civil Defense agency said Tuesday that a special program to demonstrate the simplicity of home fallout shelter construction in Oregon has been authorized by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization.

Under the plan, \$250 will be given to eight private or public high schools in the state which agree to build family fallout shelters on school or other public property.

A other requirement is that the schools make the shelters available for public display.

The federal money will pay for construction materials. Labor is to be provided by manual training classes during the school year under the direction of supervisors.

Letters explaining the plan have been sent to local school superintendents. Deadline for applications, made to the state CD agency, is Dec. 22.

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Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychologist, a woman's editor and two women who have had problems that have been dealt with by responsible agencies and counselors.

Gertrude Y. Her job with Craig is over. It's my turn now.

Mrs. C. Y. — She doesn't see that there's room for both of us.

Gertrude Y. — My mother-in-law is a widow. Craig is her only child. She seems to have no idea of retiring gracefully from our lives. And since she hasn't taken my hints, I'm telling her the facts of life in plain English until she catches on.

Craig's health is now in my hands. She doesn't have to tell me not to fry his chops, but to broil them. And Craig Jr. is my little boy, and I don't want him taught baby talk. She thinks it's cute. I think it's ridiculous.

She had her chance at being a wife and mother-in-law. I know my insistence on her left alone has poor Craig on the spot. But Mother Y. could smooth things out easily by moving away or finding a few other people's lives to butt into.

Mrs. C. Y. — I have always been so aware of the pitfalls of being a mother-in-law to an only son's wife that I tried extra hard to please Gertrude. All I want is her goodwill and friendship.

But she seems to be anti-parent. I think that's why I'm not just Craig's mother, I'm a symbol of all mothers. She hated her own mother. I've learned, and she has a chip on her shoulder against mothers in general. It's hard to come close to her.

At the same time, my son is still my son and my child is my only grandchild. What does Gertrude expect me to do — go to Borneo and never come back?

I don't feel possessive about Craig, just interested and maternal. This running battle upsets him, I know, especially since it's all one-sided. He tells me not to feel hurt, and that they are usually a mother and a blessing, not a menace.

That's too long to wait. Someone ought to be able to convince her that mothers have a real place in the life of their married children, and that they are usually a mother and a blessing, not a menace.

The Council: We might ask, "Where's Craig in all this?" If the answer weren't so clear. At his wedding, of course, wondering what he can do to reassure the two women he loves.

One tack he might hammer home to Gertrude is that his love for his mother-in-law is no very threatens his love for her. It's a completely different species. And there's enough love to go around. Gertrude is a fearful, insecure girl who has no real understanding of the nature of love and its many aspects.

Evidently Gertrude has had so little experience with parental love that it frightens her. At the same time she is learning how to be a mother she must learn how to be a daughter. It's too bad she must practice on her mother-in-law who, up to now, has been serving both as piano and piano teacher, so to speak.

A loving wife or mother, as King Solomon proved, will not subject the loved one to cruel ultimatums. She will add just her demands to make life easier for the man in the middle. Gertrude's "solution" is unnatural and unfeeling. It indicates her need for enlightenment by a family counselor. Craig's mother will help her more than banishing the older woman.

Meanwhile, the older Mrs. Y. must also be the "bigger" Mrs. Y. Gertrude is scared and mixed up and until she straightens herself out in the role of woman, wife and mother she won't be able to do justice to that daughter-in-law. So Mrs. Y. can expect to be slapped down now and then, during the learning period.

But Gertrude will learn. An added prod will be the growing awareness of her young son who is "drinking in" this example of how a man's wife versus. Above all, she will learn that true love is like nasturtiums — pick one and two grow.

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