

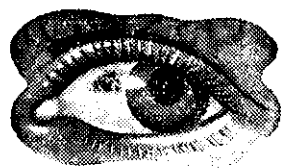
The "369" is one of the Lee and James range of painting brushes. There is also a full range of domestic brushes and brooms.

THIS BRUSH Stands up to HARD WORK

The "369" is a pure bristle brush, tough textured and bevelled. It is hard-wearing, can be used with all paints, stains, varnishes, enamels. Available in six sizes, with polished wooden handles. Made in England by Lee and James Ltd., who have been making fine painting brushes for 170 years. Ask for Lee and James "369" at any leading paintbrush store.

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Short Story

ROOTS

By A. E. Batistich

MARA had never got used to being in the new country. She would look out across the paddocks to the burnt, bare hills, where the charred stumps stood like mourning sentinels over the desolation which had once been a forest, and her heart would cry out for the craggy mountains that had been the first things she had known.

Mara had a secret longing—to die where she could see them once again. She would lie awake at night and think of them, and wonder what it would have been like to have grown old in the valley that nestled in their grey folds like a child in the arms of its mother and her heart would turn over in her breast with the ache for her own home and her own kind.

She could not speak of these things to anyone. Ivan, her husband, was a good man, but he was different. The farm was his country. All his world was in those shining acres—ploughing, sowing, reaping, milking, all he ever thought about. You would think he had never known any other life.

They had no children. She had given over longing for them. They were young women's dreams. The only dream Mara ever had now was that one day she would cross the threshold of her father's house again.

The older she was, the sharper and the more insistent the longing became. She would tell it to the long night hours, like a Rosary that you say over and over again.

Yet all the time, Mara knew that it was only a dream which would never come true—like the children that had never come, and the red woollen stockings she had wanted so much when she was a little girl.

"Strange," she would brood to herself, in her slow, peasant way, "you always want something and you never quite get it. You are young, and you want to be grown-up and wise. Soon you are grown-up, and still not wise. Then you are old before you know it, and wise enough and there is nothing you could wish for more than to be young again and to feel the blood dancing in your veins with your feet like flying things, and singing and laughing all the time with the joy of existence.

"Ah! there's never anything like being young," she said out aloud to the trees that were heavy with the swelling fruit, and she felt the stab of the years at her heart.

Somehow, it never seemed quite right that you should go out into the orchard at Christmas time and see the trees laden with apples and peaches and plums. At Home, Christmas was a white veil upon the world, with the snow glistening upon the roofs and banked right up to the window ledges, and all the earth asleep. Christmas was a Star that gleamed lone in a cold night sky,

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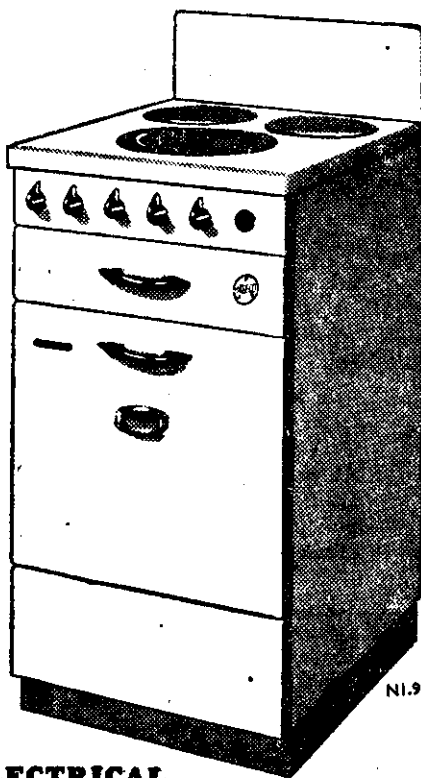
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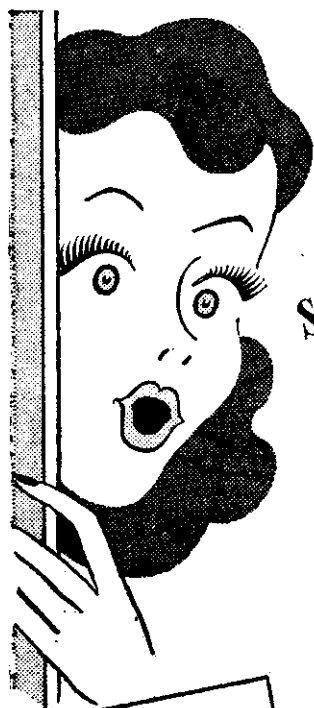
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