The Free Press' Short Story

TREASURE ON EARTH

PLORENCE RERIGAN

46 THE MA, forever more!" At Evelyn's, of doing otherwise, but she did think that tone the Morton twing, Bob it was unnecessary to be forever arrangand Jerry, and their older sis- ing his pillows and his robe. She fancied ter Charlotte passed in the act of help- it annoyed him; but perhaps Mrs. ing themselves to hot cakes and honey and stared at the oldest of the Morton family.

"Forever more!" repeated Evelyn.

Evelyn turned back to the first sheet of the crackly letter paper she held and have all my moriey when I'm gone." read it again in silence, as if to make sure that she read aright.

ahe began. "And who's he, for Pete's sake?" asked

Charlotte. "Adem's grandson," said Jerry, flip-"Hey, Charlie, go easy on the

honey!" "Great-uncle Abner," explained Evelyn. just as if they did not know, "was Grandfather Horne's brother. He's haphelor and we are his nearest of kin, but he wants to be fair about leaving his fortune. Of course we never expected a cent of It-"

"Great-uncle Abner hasn't shuffled of this mortal coil, has he?" asked Jerry. "No, but it seems that there are some other people who might be better fitted to handle his estate, so he says, and he doesn't want the mere fact that we are income fust as we would if it was ours that income each month. The other two old folks' home an ice-cream treat! to keep. There'll be a housekeeper and will get a cash settlement." the housekeeping expenses will be handled by her just as if Great-uncle Abner ently just grasping the facts. "You mean our personal income, which No living expenses to come out of it!"

impish grin, "School's out, and the twins that uses it the best will be-but I told his money, or used it selfishly. will have to help. Anyway we'll do that ye that afore. When a feller tells the for you to help you get the family for- same thing over twice, he's gettin' old, one day. He would write a few words fore he died he would know that she sand dollars o' love-that's the way. But tune!"

"How much is it?" asked Jerry. "Goodness knows!" gasped Evelyn "Are you all going to be there to-

pether?" asked Bob. "I don't know," confessed Evelyn hint. glanding over the letter again. "Here Charlie, you're the keenest of the bunch,

Charlotte read it carefully. "I read it factory!" the same way you've told us," she said quietly. "I wonder how much the income will be for that month?"

"We'll have to wait and see," said dased fashion.

Evelyn's wardrobe was not in exactly for granted. No one had made any ob- suddenly interrupting her typing. "Do from one to the other, apologetically. travelling order. Last minute instruc- jection when she had thrust her high- you know you have a valuable thing Marguerite recovered first. tions were necessary to give to Charlotte school diploma in a bureau drawer and here?"

to Uncle Ahner's home took two days. pointed day. Uncle Abner's chauffour saving all she could so that the twins met her and took her and her bags to could go on to college three years hence. the mansion on top of the hill. It was a Bob and Jerry were working, too, and typical southern home of pre-war days, adding to the fund. Evelyn dismissed with tall white pillars supporting the the idea of making up the difference out porch roof, and very formal looking of the two thousand. She did not think Prench windows opening onto a closely- Uncle Abner meant that, somehow. clipped, velvety lawn. Evelyn loved it the minute she saw it.

library. He was a wrinkled little man be insistent that she should take their with a dry, whispering voice in keeping share of the college money and use it with his appearance. "You're Matilda's Evelyn had a decided flair for writing daughter, aren't you?" he asked, looking advertising copy, besides a more than her up and down with his bright black average ability at drawing. If Pather eyes. "Bit down." He pushed a button had not died right when he did. Evelyn under the edge of his table and sat back would have taken a course in advertisin allence. In a moment an elderly ing. It was not as impractical as it woman appeared in answer to the ring, sounded, either. She knew that all the "Ask the others to come in. Maggie," stores in the town would be glad to let he said.

Evelyn began to feel uncomfortable. She was fair to do it unless she could give was glad she had stopped for a shoe them professional service. She could shine at the city terminal. She was glad take a correspondence course, which she had mended the rip in her glove, al- sould cost much less than the two thouthough there was no way he could pos- sand dollars. She could register in the sibly see it. Somehow she had a feeling university for night classes all winter that he was not missing much and that besides. Her heart bounded at the his keen eyes did not stop at merely out. thought Was that a legitimate use of ward appearances either

She welcomed the arrival of two other | angles, and could not see why it would women. One was a young girl just two hot be. or three years older than herself, and the other was a woman in her forties. The girl, introduced as Marguerite Dennis, had a bright and vivacious manner. fuffy blonde hair, and well-kept hands. and feet. The older woman, Mrs. Spencer, was suff and precise in her manner. with a reverent solicitude for Uncle Abner which seemed to Evelyn to be somewhat uncalled for. To be sure. when he dropped his handkerchief, Evelyn restored it to him without thinking

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Spencer knew him better than she did. "Two called you here, as you know, said the dry, old voice, precisely, "to test which of you is most fitted to carry on "What's it all about?" Jerry wanted to my fortune after I have gone. Just because Evelyn here happens to be my ficah and blood, that's no call why she should

"Oh, don't talk of that," said Mrs. Spencer, with a fluttering gesture of her "It's from Great-uncle Abner Horne," hands. "God grant that you may be spared to us many years yet."

> haven't many years comin' to me. "Have you-er-thought of dividing

your estate?" ventured Mrs. Spencer. "Ye'll all git somethin'," said the old man, waving a claw-like hand as if to brush aside the interruption. "It's the bulk of the estate I'm worryin' over. don't want it to run through; so I'm testin' ye like I said. The normal income per month is two thousand dollars. Each of ye will have that while ye're "Two-two thousand dollars!" gasped

best use of it will inherit the house and

"You mean-" Marguerite was appartoo. The income which we I've got two thousand dollars-all mine!

"It seems like a fairy story," breathed money. Now she had a position teaching Evelyn arrived at Hillcrest on the ap- English in the local high school and was

Evelyn had an idea of her own, which she had never mentioned to anyone, for Great-uncle Abner received her in the she knew that if she did, the twins would her write their advertising copy. They A longer silence followed, in which had told her so. She did not think it the money? She examined it from all

> She talked it over with the other two "I'm going to spend every cent of mine for clothes!" sighed Marguerite, raptuously. "And I'm going to buy a car And I'm going to forget there is such a thing as a job! Cirls! For once I'm going to live! I'm going to have all the things I've read about-and then some-as long as the two thousand holds out. Two thousand-is that all the income from this place?"

"I think it's a lot," faltered Evelyn, "It's not much compared to what the Van Holts get from their place."

"I don't know the Van Holts," confessed Evelyn, somewhat taken back. "I don't either," giggled Marguerite. "I've heard Mother talk about them, She went there after she left here."

"Sure." Marguerite was not at all dis-

Mother was a maid here for a long time, some one could type it, hey?"" and the old man took a liking to har?"

"Oh," said Evelyn. Mrs. Spencer, it developed, was a granddaughter of his boyhood friend. She disapproved of Marguerite's method of spending her mosny, and said so frankly.

I intend to give a tenth of it-two hun- shortcake last night?" dred dollars-to different worthy causes. I don't think we're expected to just take a tenth of our money and dump it into make a strawberry shortcake and it was him. "Poor Uncle Abner," she crooned. the collection plate some Sunday, do you, your favorite dish." Mrs. Spencer?".

"I do not." said Mrs. Spencer." think we should give all but the mere pittance it requires to keep us alive and decently clothed."

"I'm afraid-, began Evelyn. "That's what I intend to do with mine," said Mrs. Spencer with finality. my pastor."

The checks for the correspondence course and for the university class were dispatched at once. Two hundred dollars was stretched over a number of pet charities. The day nursery down in the poor section of town was remembered, a real lady." "I'm ninety-eight," said Uncle Abner, The library that so badly needed some radio was given one. An orphanage that guerite, does it look that way?" had never had an outing was given a holiday. Evelyn found it was remarkable whole blissful day! A missionary friend ary work in general had to be remem- as you like!" bered. After all, two hundred dollars did not go very far, and perhaps there gestion that she had been using her of it! I never had nothin' but money all were a few dollars over when she had uncle for her own ends, and then she my life," he went on, after a moment of added it all up. She looked at the list was hurt, for she had grown genuinely stunned silence. "I thought money was ruefully. Suppose Great-uncle Abner fond of him during her stay there. He all there was to care about. An' then

able fall clothing for herself. Charlotte seemed like work; but if Marguerite had and the twins, and a set of books on imagined-! Oh, how could she? engineering for the twins, a membership in a literary society for Charlotte, and she imagined that he looked at her with "Oh naturally not,". Uncle Ahner typewriter for herself, she did not have suspicion in his eye. She was embarever he thinks made the wisest use of it, hastened to assure you. "Two thousand much of the two thousand dollars left, rassed and self-conscious, whereupon the I'm to so next week. Think you can dollars each to spend as you wish." He except just spending money. She hoped manage the house while I'm gone, Char- waved a thin forefinger vaguely before Uncle Abner would approve; not that she and he sighed, and answered her more him. "But ye'll need to tell me what ye wanted to inherit his estate, but she did sharply than was his way. She decided

and I sin't come to that yet!" He look- and then shake his fountain pen. It really was sincere. ed from one to the other and seemed to as an ancient pen which had seen better get a little inward amusement from the days apparently, but Uncle Abner never soon. He had gathered the three into dased expressions on their faces. "Lunch thought of buying a new one. She would the library again, and went over their plenty to do with them, eh, Evvie?" is at one," he said, and they took the buy him one, not with his own money, lists of expenditures. None had anything of course. She laid it on his dear in lieft over. That was the stipulation. He "Can you imagine it!" gasped Mar- place of the old one and the next time read first one and then the other. Not guerite, as she and Evelyn went up the she passed the library window she saw a muscle of his face changed to show see what you can make out of the let- wide stairway together. "And just yes- him writing with it easily and as swiftly that he approved or disapproved. terday I was punching a typewriter in a as his old hand could go. Apparently "I'm afraid," he said, slowly, "that

Evelyn. "I-I can't imagine it. I-I library to help him, handing him down the man that takes care of my business a book, adjusting his light on dark days, on' my figgers was wrong. Money ain't She did know in her heart. As the reading to him when he asked her to what it was, with banks failin' an' stocks Evelyn, beginning to eat a hot cake in a oldest of the family it had been up to do so. Toward the end of the month's goin' down. I don't know's much o' her to see that Charlotte and the twins stay, she typed his spidery hand-written that as I ought. So when I told ye-I The next few days were hectic ones, had a fair chance. They had taken that manuscript. "Uncle Abner!" she said, didn't mean to deceive ye-" He looked

work. Charlotte had gone to college as a pleased smile. "So you like it, hey? in' here was just a teaser to go back an'

"Marguerite is a stenographer," said take my place as head of a house like Evelyn segerly. "I'm sure she'd be glad this-"

to help you." He shook his head. "I asked her, and she said she was on vacation. If people like their work they can't go away on a Spencer, deliberately, "you would have "I intend to give mine away," she said, real vacation, seems as though. Didn't it now, in a broader sense. But you laid the parrying of awkward questions. As I catch you makin' cookies 'tother day? up treasure on carth where moth and "All of it?" saked Evelyn. "Of course And wasn't it you made the strawberry rust doth corrupt." "I know-"

> "Oh, I like to do those things," laughed Evelyn, "and Maggie said she never could

"Ah," nodded the old man. "Tis so." Evelyn went on with her transcribing, with Marguerite and two of the boys from the neighboring house, Marguerite said something which disturbed her.

"I'm having a good time," she said significantly, "and I'm letting the for-"I'm turning the whole check over to tune go. I'm not trying to stand in with the old man! I've been honest. I didn't Evelyn had fun spending that money! give all my money away like Spence did, and . I'm not playing on the man's affections, either. I'm spending this money the way I think the heiress to the fortune ought to spend it-in entertaining and dressing well and being

"Oh," whispered Evelyn. "I didn't matter-of-fact, "and it stands to reason new books for small children was help- | mean that! I wonder if Uncle Abner "And you'd take me into your home-An old folks' home that needed a thinks I've been pretending? Oh, Mar-

> "It sure does," said Marguerite, bluntly; then she looked at Evelyn searchingport the whole orphanage, children and way, at that," she said, in unwilling admatrons and all, to the country for a miration. "You're just plain sweet, aren't you? Never mind, duckie, when I own ly. "Well-I dunno-" He sat up was given an extra ten dollars. Mission- this place you can come here as often straighter and looked at the three of

"Ye'll do with that just what ye'd do did not approve of missions. Suppose had a sweetness of disposition rarely met if it were yer own. It is yer own. I'm he thought an orphanage did not need with in a man of his age, and in one who givin' it to ye. The one that makes the outings. It did look rather silly to write suffered so constantly. His keen mind down the few dollars it took to give the and his brilliant wit were a constant source of delight to her. She had honest-After Evelyn had bought some service- ly liked working for him. It had not

The next time she sat with her uncle "Have to." said Charlotte, with an done with it before ye leave. The one not want him to feel that she had wasted there was not anything she could do. except to continue to show her affection Evelyn noticed Uncle Abner writing after the award was made. Perhaps be-

She made a habit of going into the such a good business man-or-I sent for

who had never managed the home before pitched into the housekeeping end of the "It's a life's work, lass," he said, with money after all?" she shrilled. "My stayor the routine of housekeeping. The trip a matter of course on Father's insurance I'm gettin' the rest of it typed. Know take up my job again?? I spent that to

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"Yes, I know," he said, wearly. after all, my dear child-"

"If you had given it away," said Mrs

Evelyn felt her heart go out to him She ran to him and put her arms around given us a wonderful month here anddearest, isn't there anything left? Not That afternoon after a game of tennis even your books?" He made an inarticulate sound. "You can come with us

> He twisted around in her arms and looked at the fresh young face so near his own. "Eh? Come live with you? What for?"

"Because we love you! Look--Uncle Abner—" She fumbled in the pocket of her sweater and brought out a folded letter from the twins. "We think Uncle Abner must be swell," they had written. What you've said about him and the stories he's told you and everything. Can't you get him to visit us some time?" "They said that about me?" he asked.

Her arms held him tighter. "I know But if they'll keep you with us for a ly. "I don't believe you mean it that long, long while-the twins will love the way you play the jew's-harp--"

"Oh. that-" he laughed depreciating-

them. "Who said I lost my money?" At first Evelyn was angry at the sug- he demanded. "I ain't lost nary cent with her money. She gave some of it away, and she used some of it for pleasure, and she used some for making other folks happier, and she used some to make herself biggen in the future; besides that she give herself to me-her love, an' her time, an' her youth to an old codger like me. Then I heerd whispers that she was just doin' it-Evvie girl, I hadn't ought to have listened but-I've never had just sure so I tested ye some more.

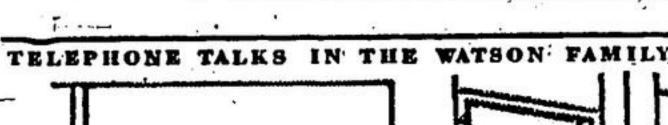
cracks ain't the way to use it: but usin' it with love to make folks happy, givin' a hundred dollars of money an' a thou-The last day of their stay came too now-but the house an' the incomeA BUDDING POLITICIAN

teur psychologist, whose reading of Hansard has convinced him that Parliamentary skill is most frequently displayed in an example he cites the case of his fiveyear-old daughter, on whom he was called to deliver judgment.

This young lady plays with her next door neighbor, Barbara, relations being usually very amicable. Nevertheless, on her habitual truthfulness, 'It was Bar-"As if that made any difference! You've the day in question, a dispute over ter- bara's shovel."-The Printed Word.

ritorial rights in a sand-box had artes Instead of relying on diplomatic nago-Aptitude for a political career appears tiation and arbitration, as their alders "But at an early age, reports a Toronto ama- and betters invariably do, the young ladies resorted to direct action, and were vigorously assaulting each other with shovels, when higher powers intervened As a one-man court of inquiry, our

heroine's father began investigations. "Why did you hit Barbara with your shovel?" he seked. "I didn't, Daddy," was the reply, as tonishing in the face of the evidence and





"raw edges of civilization"—to mining towns and construction camps where life was rough and comforts few. New he telephones her and the children from each new location, cheering them,

and himself, in the process. "After all", he muses, "you're never out of civilization as long as you have the telephone."



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