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FAMILY AT DINNER:
THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF A METHOD
FOR DESCRIBING INTERACTIVE BEHAVIORS

A Dissertation Presented
By
JEFFREY BAKER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 1977

Psychology
FAMILY AT DINNER:
THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF A METHOD
FOR DESCRIBING INTERACTIVE BEHAVIORS

A Dissertation Presented

BY

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ABSTRACT

Family at Dinner:
The Development and Application of a Method
to Describing Interactive Behaviors

June 1978

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Family at Dinner is a behavioral description of a four-person family having dinner at home. The descriptive method, of repeated comparison, is similar to that of the representational artist, makes use of repeated observation of an audiovisual record, and requires self-examination comparable to that of the clinician to describe complex interactions holistically. The present study, which includes the family description, examines the precedents, purposes, development, and concrete application of the repeated-comparison method of describing in psychology, literature, and art. The study also examines the methodological integration of objective and subjective processes, and makes claims for the descriptive method as a model of clinical psychological research. The limits and potential applications of holistic description are discussed, with
an eye especially to studying events in the therapy room.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Representational Description

In an article on the trained incapacity of scientists to see and describe, Bernard Dixon (1976) suggests a shift of goals from knowing to seeing before we lose touch with our scientific purposes of "rigorous scrutiny of material as it really is and events as they actually happen." Dixon cites research from England in which university physics students were asked to describe water slowly dripping from a faucet. Descriptions varied from purely associational rather than factual, to textbook descriptions impossible to arrive at with the naked eye by students who apparently set out to write serious objective accounts. Fewer than two-fifths of the serious accounts were free of theoretical notions. None of thirteen students later questioned had written a description of laboratory observations since high school.

In a similar vein, social psychologist Robert Sommer (1977) writes:

At present, there are not many dissertation committees that would allow a purely observational
study. Observation has been equated with anecdote, and is considered less rigorous and reliable than experimentation. This is partly true because psychologists receive no training and encouragement in observation and therefore don't do it very well. . . . [F]ollowing decades of formal schooling and discipline in classification and conceptual learning, a student's abilities to observe have largely atrophied. Students look at things and try to figure out what they are supposed to remember. Training in observation requires some bracketing of categorical thinking (p. 7).

Gregory Bateson (1972) as well as several other system theorists and ecologists have spoken more urgently of the need for scientists of our technological era to achieve a more self-aware and open perspective of the world. The shift in values and goals from objectively knowing and mastering the world to seeing our own role in the complexities around us, so radically contrary to the inductivist definition of science as the patient collection of objective facts, is consistent with a paradigm change in our collective thinking since World War II from linear causality to cybernetics (the study of organized systems). Cybernetics (Wiener, 1950), communication theory (Watzlawick et al., 1967), and General System Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1956) all recognize that complex organizations need to be explored and described rather than explained.

In psychology, conceptual advances in the study of
systems have been most notable in writings on the family (reviewed by Baker, 1976b). Comprehensive family systems research more formal than that derived from the therapy room, however, remains largely an aspiration in search of a method (see Haley, 1962; Framo, 1955). It is difficult to put words to our broad impressions of any given family, Haley has written; more difficult still to state the concrete bases of those impressions.

*Family at Dinner*, the data comprising the middle two-thirds of this dissertation, is an attempt to put words to one "normal" family's relating by concretely describing their behaviors during a videotaping of their dinner at home. The data collection in August 1974 and its audio-visual transcription into writing later comprise a collaborative effort by Brian F. Reynolds, a predoctoral student in clinical psychology at the University of Massachusetts, and myself.

Leaving the details of why and how aside for now, I wish initially to focus broadly on what this research is. The method of study uses repeated observation of short sequences of videotape to capture in written description the simultaneous behaviors of four family members.¹ The written description is then repeatedly revised, compared
to the videotape, and finally polished, with the goal of achieving a realistic representation capable of standing alone. If the description succeeds, the complex mosaic of details on the typepage should result for the reader in a "literary materialization" (Morrissette, 1971) of the family event described.

This is much as if a botanist were to attempt in writing to describe a flower taxonomically, or a zoologist a body anatomically, without reduction to parts -- such that the whole would be visible to the reader in its intrarelatedness. Ours as psychologists is an attempt to holistically describe the behavior of a family, one as ordinary as it is unique. To borrow Werner's (1948) concept of matured perceptual development, representational description should communicate the videotaped event as a coherent whole; at the same time, those details on which viewers of a videotape, film, or live scene quite unconsciously or intuitively (Heider, 1953) base their remembered impressions should be far more differentiated and available in writing than is otherwise possible. For example, in

1Steve and Joanne O'Neal, age 30; Greg, 7; and Beth, 3. Names are pseudonymous.
written description each family member is continually visible in relation to all other family members without the reader's having to shift attention or read the scene repeatedly. A viewer of the original tape might watch it dozens of times, yet see only a small fraction of what is plainly visible in one reading of holistic description. Such visibility is unsurprising if one considers that description sufficient to achieve it is generated by several thousand hours of trained viewing, reviewing, writing, and rewriting.

Behaviors in description are made visible and physical in part by consciously minimizing their interpretation. Interpretations deliberately or nondeliberately imposed on description reduce the informational value of description by ignoring and ruling out more possibilities and complexities of meaning than they suggest. The task of describing "openly," with minimal interpretation, requires that descriptive researchers stay informed of their private interpretations of events. Much of our effort, then, is bent in the direction of recognizing and privately exploring our own interpretations of behaviors and relationships in the process of describing. Questions of what behaviors "mean" psychologically and emotionally are left insofar as
possible for the reader to answer if the reader is so inclined.

The fact that seeing is interpreting and that objectivity is unattainable does not deter us from describing. We examine our processes of interpreting as description proceeds much the way clinicians work to be aware of themselves and their relationships in the therapy room. In our written research, as in our therapeutic research and practice, we rely to a reasonable extent on a commitment to self-honesty and realism. Aiding us in the research task is the fact that in written description the researchers' attributions of meaning and acting out of emotional needs are somewhat more readily identified and undone by being concretized in writing available to repeated inspection and revision. All told, when behaviors are described simply and visibly, and when researchers responsibly use their own interpretive processes in the service of realism, behavioral progressions and relations in the resulting description make physical and dramatic sense.

This "sense" behaviors make in visual description is available to all readers, whatever their psychological sophistication (see Heider, 1958). More systematic study of behavioral relations is certainly possible using the
description as a data base. In describing representationally, however, we are simply asking what happens in a particular family under circumstances of being observed. The answers are not abstracted rules or structures of a family system or of family relating. Instead, we try to accomplish a reasonably thorough and qualitatively immediate reporting of the event chosen for description.

This, in outline, is the concept of representational description. Central to its integrity as a research method is the requirement that interpretation be kept minimal and limited insofar as possible to the physical endpoints or functions of behaviors by which we are able to visualize them. In the pages to follow I will say more about the aims and requirements of description, and discuss how others, in both the behavioral sciences and the representational arts, have attempted to minimize and best use interpretation in description. In a method section I will describe the development of our own learning in its chronological context. Chapter III is the family description in full. I strongly believe that scientific method evolves in the doing, and that its product alone can substantiate it and prevent its idealization, particularly where method sets out to test the limits of objectification. In the last
chapter I will first explore issues of inference and our choices in describing as these relate specifically to the preceding description. Also retrospectively, I will discuss similarities between descriptive research and the practice of therapy, drawing a parallel especially between the descriptive researcher's interpretive biases and the therapist's countertransferenceal phenomena. The study will conclude with a discussion of the limits and potential applications of representational description.

Closest Antecedents in the Behavioral Sciences

Particularly in its goal of holistic representation, *Family at Dinner* departs from a quite extensive history in psychology of category-based observation (e.g., Bales, 1950), heuristic description (e.g., Erikson, 1940; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969; Haley, 1959; Aponte and Hoffman, 1973), behavioral-ecological description (e.g., Barker and Wright, 1951); and kinesic description (e.g., Scheflen, 1961; Birdwhistle, 1970). Of these, the literature most closely resembling the visual description introduced by these pages is that on nonverbal communication, or kinesics and para-language, primarily the writings of Albert Scheflen and
Ray Birdwhistle. Roger Barker, who has been less concerned with nonverbal communication than with the distribution or ecology of behavior, has written extensive behavioral descriptions which I will review also.

**Kinesic description.** The term "paralanguage" refers to extra-speech sounds, whereas "kinesics," the more comprehensive term, includes all articulations of the body (Key, 1975). Hays (1964) extracts what he identifies as the basic assumptions of the kinesics literature, all

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2 Perhaps the more vivid literature on nonverbal communication occurs in occasional writings on dolphin behavior, in particular that of Bateson (1966) and Sutphen (1974). In addition one finds interactional descriptions of great power in James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1939), describing the lives and dwelling places of people in Appalachia, and in Walter Kerr's *The Silent Clowns* (1975), containing detailed descriptions of scenes from silent film comedies, many of the descriptions able to make the reader laugh aloud. Darwin (1872) early and interpretively described expressive behaviors. Allport and Vernon (1933) did so also, conceptualizing the body as expressive of a personality. Anthropological writings other than Birdwhistle's are a rich source of behavioral description, most notably the writings of Oscar Lewis (1959) in which he succeeded in producing living portraits of families independently of theoretical frameworks; contrast Jules Henry's (1965) family descriptions, compelling except that they are subordinated to illustrating textbook theories. In general, written descriptions of human relationships have been left to fiction, where physical occurrences are created and edited to serve thematic development and deeper characterizations.
identical with or derivative of the basic assumption of the communication theorists that all behavior is communication (Watzlawick et al., 1967).

An important feature of kinesic description, and of ecological description as well, is that these writings tend to be behaviorally descriptive rather than theoretical or otherwise conclusive in their findings. Kinesic researchers' purposes for studying nonverbal behavior can be extracted, but in general all seem to be trying to learn more about how people communicate in a variety of settings. Some researchers attempt to define innate behavioral patterns or universals of behavior cross-culturally. Others seek to define structure in nonverbal language for purposes of translating from gestural to verbal vocabulary. Psychiatry has long looked at the meanings of behaviors intra- (e.g., Reich, 1945) and interpersonally. Double bind theory (Bateson et al., 1956), for example, is concerned with the interactional significance of the relationship between verbal and nonverbal levels of message. More recently, Massie (1975) used microkinesic analysis to examine home movies made prediagnostically by families of autistic children (his treatment of data is reminiscent of the psychological matricide committed by family theorists
of the 1950s). So-called extrasensory perception is properly the province of kinesics (see, for example, Rosenthal's 1966 and later work on the paralinguistic and kinesic cues passed from experimenter to subject). Interspecies communication is another kinesic frontier.

Researchers of kinesics and paralanguage, whatever directions of interest they follow, agree that the greater part of human communication is nonverbal. Communication theory informs and motivates the work of both Scheflen and Birdwhistle, especially in the suggestion made by this theory that a constant stream of relational messages occurs in nature. Between persons, relationship is continually negotiated even in the most mundane circumstances (see Baker, 1976b).

Albert and Alice Scheflen (Scheflen and Scheflen, 1972) ask how body movement maintains and regulates human relationships without reference to language and conscious mental processes. Albert Scheflen's best known work (Scheflen, 1973) uses repeated observation to make public the ingredients of John Rosen's direct analysis therapy. Here and elsewhere, Scheflen's kinesic concerns are primarily with postural locations, orientations, and distances, after Hall (1959). Although he has described the actual effort
of observing and recording filmed behaviors as all but endlessly time consuming (Scheflen, 1973; personal communication, 1974), he goes on in his book to say, "The major effort of this research and others like it has been, not the detailed observation, but the search for a way to tell what the slow-motion analysis of a film has revealed" (p. xi). His method of synthesizing the data from repeated observation of filmed interaction has been to graph the behavior of each bodily region along a time dimension. This yields "a time-segmented, simultaneous record of all the behavior we can see and hear" (p. 320) -- a descriptive record still in graphic rather than written form. He then uses this record to generate and test out hypotheses, related, for example, to postural parallels and disparities. In his published writings, one finds a close analysis of events which includes little pure behavioral description.

Scheflen is intrigued with the opportunity offered by sound motion picture and videotape to repeatedly see the events of a transaction, "systematically observing one, then another, behavioral modality and testing their various relations until we have described a synthesis of elements in the overall picture" (p. 8). Elsewhere (1970) he compares the merits and drawbacks of film versus videotape
for such research. Definitely worth noting, also, is his valuable observation from experience that research using the technology of audiovisual media to observe repeatedly crosses cultural taboos against looking closely at other persons. Siegfried Kracauer (1960), writing about realism in motion pictures, speaks similarly of the audience's experience of viewing characters in their self-forgetfulness. "Looking at such secret displays is like spying; you feel ashamed for entering a forbidden realm where things are going on which must be experienced, not witnessed" (pp. 43-44). Both Scheflen and Kracauer are impressed by film's potential to bring unconscious experience to the witnessed level of awareness.

The directions of Ray Birdwhistle's work are implicit in his definition of kinesics (Birdwhistle, 1970, p. 192):

Kinesics is concerned with abstracting from the continuous muscular shifts which are characteristic of living physiological systems those groupings of movements which are of significance to the communicational process and thus to the interactional systems of particular social groups.

Birdwhistle has spent many years defining the kinesic significance of movement, and is perhaps best known as the devisor of an elaborate transcriptional system for recording
body movement. His descriptive language is at the finite level of musculature. His notations for hand movement (1970) consume eight pages of text. Each joint of each finger has multiple designations. Birdwhistle has also taken a particular interest in analyzing body motion cross-culturally. He interprets freely, but seldom pursues his data beyond posing provocative hypotheses. His writings document the pervasiveness and complexity of nonverbal language, but provide little structure beyond the lexicographic. He is probably most appreciated for bringing nonverbal communication more fully to the attention of psychologists.

Where Birdwhistle does describe transactions, his level of analysis has little power to communicate them visually. In *Kinesics and Context*, the work referred to above, he describes a common scene as follows:

The two soldiers stood in parallel, legs akimbo with an intrafemoral index of 45 degrees. In unison, each raised his right upper arm to about an 80-degree angle with his body and, with the lower arm at approximately a 100-degree angle, moved the arm in an anterior-posterior sweep with a double pivot at shoulder and elbow; the four fingers of the right hand were curled and the thumb was posteriorly hooked; the right palm faced the body. Their left arms were held closer to the body with an elbow bend of about 90 degrees. The left four fingers were curled and the thumb was
partially hidden as it crooked into their respective belts (p. 176).

In this and his other descriptions, Birdwhistle sacrifices the quality and comprehensibility of events to his preference for behavioral classifications and detailed comparisons. His vehicle has no room for the hitchhiking soldiers he describes above with such exactitude.

**Ecological description.** Roger G. Barker, writing about the habitats and behaviors of a Midwestern community, strives for plain language in his descriptions. Barker's use of common English reflects his wish to communicate the quality of people's lives in a language true to those lives. Appropriateness of both method and language to data ranks high among Barker's explicit concerns. To describe physical behavior, he wants concrete language. To describe the "stream of behavior," he needs and chooses a literary form. To collect information on the behavior of the citizens of "Midwest, Kansas," he uses, not the technology of audiovisual recording, but observers who

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3At the time Barker began his research, videotape was unknown and film even more costly than it is today. Barker does accompany his written descriptions with still photographs, which are helpful in giving form to the descriptions. Representational description, too, should benefit from a photographic accompaniment.
look, listen, and tell what they see and hear -- much as many citizens of Midwest themselves do each day. Barker especially wants his observers to see what is there, not what theory tells them is supposed to be there. He therefore asks them to "suspend biases from formal psychological training, and to fall back upon the elementary, garden variety, spur of the moment notions and hunches about behavior which are common to man as a socialized being... and which, while they are not without error, cannot help but astonish anyone who stops to reflect upon them with their accuracy" (Barker and Wright, 1955, pp. 206-207). Better the common theorizing of everyperson in describing everyperson's world, than the abstract theorizing of experts, he seems to be saying.

Even Barker's expressed purposes are mundane. His descriptions claim no higher purpose than to document events, as people are given to do in many spheres of social living, from court proceedings to baseball games. His work is a behavioral museum, as fascinating and lifeless as taxidermy specimens and dinosaur bones. Psychology's neglect of description has left a serious gap in our psychological knowledge, he asserts, specifically in our knowledge of how variables are distributed in different
cultures and conditions of life. "Psychologists know little more than laymen about the frequency and degrees of occurrence of their basic phenomena in the lives of men. . . . [For example,] what a family actually did and said during a mealtime or how any boy lived his life from the time he awoke in the morning until he went to sleep at night" (p. 2). He is a collector of normative data for comparison purposes, and a documentor of common life events. Beyond this, he has invested much work in defining and categorizing behavioral settings as well as units of behavior.

Barker's work, respectful of preserving and communicating the appearance of behavior in a common language, is distinguished also by his attempt to achieve a level of detail that will flesh out the "hows" of behavior. Descriptive detail provides a reliability check on observers' perceptions, and offers the reader the opportunity to be a participant-observer of the behaviors and scenes represented. A further identifying feature of Barker's writings is his interest in the events of everyday life and his conviction of their meaningfulness, where other researchers often seem to dread data of the everyday as though it were an abyss they might fall into (Kracauer, 1960).

It appears both from his stated purposes and descriptive
writings that Barker wishes to represent behavioral events three-dimensionally, as true to the original as possible. Here his forced reliance on the observer's naked eye rather than audiovisual records creates severe conceptual and practical limitations. Early in his work, Barker's efforts turned to defining individual behavioral units which he saw as the building blocks of larger description. The result is a monotonous listing of behaviors, each "behavioral unit" a separate paragraph. More damaging to the relational integrity of his data, the focus throughout each description is on one person, others seeming to behave around that individual.

Had Barker used film, or had access to today's television technology, the media and their potentials might have led him to search out interactive units more true to life than isolated behaviors. Speaking both conceptually and practically, Scheflen (1973, p. 8) has explained that "to study such complexity [behavioral systems], we needed a technology. We cannot examine multiple modalities of behavior in detail at a single observation. Armed with eyes, ears, and a notebook, the observer has his hands full merely to hear the speech and to note the gross actions of one participant." In describing evolving images, the
building block of larger description is not the behavioral unit but, in film terminology, the "shot" (Gessner, 1969).

Because of the limitations of observer notes to flesh out behavioral detail, examine theoretical biases, and reveal transactional systems, a high level of inference exists in Barker's finished descriptions. For example, in Barker and Wright (1955, p. 197):

Margaret continued trying busily to get the tomatoe cut, her industry suggesting that she meant to resist any help.

The father was occupied with something just then and made no attempt to move or help.

As the description stands, it is not about interaction, but about Margaret, who sits at its center. Observer attributions of intention also far exceed behavioral detail. The adverb "busily" substitutes for more detailed description of Margaret's behavior in time. Also, her busyness is interpreted for the reader as an industry which is further interpreted as a resistance. Father's behavior is interpreted as nonparticipation, which is interpreted as due to his preoccupation with something else (we are not told what he is doing) when in fact there are a multiplicity of possible reasons for his behaving as he does. Barker's descriptions are refreshing in their freedom
from expert theorizing, but remain rife with observer imposition of meaning.

**Comparative summary.** Although all of the works reviewed have the explicit or implied goal of realistic representation, none relies on the researcher's subjective use of self to achieve that goal. Scheflen relies on repeated observation and "random" selection of behaviors to produce an analogical description against which to test broad hypotheses grounded in the postures of relating. Birdwhistle is exacting to an extreme, appearing to forego conscious subjective judgements and accuracy to the gestalt altogether. Barker is explicitly concerned with the intrusion of the observer's theoretical conceptualizations of behavior, and deals with this by asking his observers to repress theory. The whole question of how the researcher might best use his subjectivity in describing would seem to have been largely avoided in the works reviewed. Beyond this basic dimension, further comparisons with our own research are in order.

Concerns similar to those infusing *Family at Dinner* are identifiable in Albert Scheflen's recognition of the potentials of audiovisual media to bring unconscious experience to the witnessed level of awareness, his deliberate use of media for repeated observation, and his decisions to
share the experiences and learnings from his research. Because of these shared interests, I identify our work more with Scheflen's than with that of Birdwhistle or Barker, although Scheflen's research product, of the three, least resembles our own.

In the same communications concepts informing the work of both Scheflen and Birdwhistle, we found a basis for the emotional intensity for its participants of even the most commonplace family interaction, and a conviction that written description sufficiently worked to make a family scene visible to the reader would reveal to awareness elaborate communicational or relational processes ordinarily preconscious (Erikson, 1940) or intuited (Heider, 1958). I therefore identify our descriptive research with Birdwhistle's recognitions of the relational importance and pervasiveness of nonverbal communication, and his determination to bring nonverbal messages in behavior to the attention of behavioral scientists. Birdwhistle's opaque descriptions, however, are too fully a reminder that in the behavioral sciences language bereft of imagery, contrary to all common sense, is trusted more than qualitative description. In choosing to describe representationally, and for general readers as well as scientists, we believe
that the pretentions to meaning of scientific-sounding language are as great a threat to accurate representation of the physical world as are the potential manipulations of literary description to pull and persuade emotionally.

Roger Barker's writings more closely resemble our description in finished appearance, although the differences are still more striking than the samenesses. I strongly identify our own work with Barker's wish to observe uncorruptedly and communicate his observations in a language true to the ordinariness of his data. Our description departs emphatically, however, from his substitution of inference for representationally adequate behavioral detail, his attempt to unitize behavior, and his reliance on naive observation. Where readers can see details of behaviors they can then argue informedly against even those interpretations unrecognized by the researcher. Richness of detail is no assurance against writer and reader projections of meaning onto description, but description is somewhat differentiated from fantasy to the extent that details prevail.

In sum, Family at Dinner is viewed as a parallel rather than continuous development to kinesic and ecological description. Although our work grows from the same infor-
mational sciences as that of Scheflen and Birdwhistle, it has different expressed aims from those of kinesics research and draws on creative integration rather than inductive compilation of data to achieve its aims. In the pages to follow, I will have more to say about our aims and the method we evolved to meet them.

Aims and Requirements of Representational Description

The purpose of Family at Dinner is to deliberately illuminate family experience and, more generally, the experience of relationship. Within this goal is a wish to make sense of the alternating pain, pleasure, and other emotions of relating. As a full participant in relationship one cannot examine so explicitly the rapid events which are the context of experiencing. From the first, we expected that, by making visible the stream of relational messages accompanying even the most mundane conversational content, we could account at least implicitly for the felt emotional weight of family relating as we have experienced it in our own families. Similarly, we expected that slowing down interaction in writing while still representing its essential qualities would make visible the human resilience and potential growth true of engagement, most
dramatically among family members. Whereas we initially thought these would be levels of description to point out or interpret, we later recognized the ways both intentional and unintentional explaining of data forecloses and avoids the descriptive task.

A further goal of the description is to describe the uniqueness of ordinary family living without either the idealizing or pathology-seeking of popularizers and psychologists alike -- to describe as much as is possible the way James Agee (1941) attempted to do:

> centrally and simply, without either dissection into science, or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness. . . (p. 11).

As this implies, we wished to learn to observe as uncorruptedly as possible -- first, by attempting to impose as little as possible of our theoretical concepts and our personal search for meaning, second, and related to the first, by not denying to ourselves our own emotional responses and needs in relation to the data. Observing in such an open and introspective way required what was in any case yet another deeply felt aim: to bring to our written research the new ways of applying knowledge and learning taught to us by our rather new experience as clinicians in the therapy
room. By applying this developing knowledge in our written research, we not only accelerate our clinical learning but also enjoy in our writing the same increasing self-honesty, awareness, and access to data we enjoy in clinical practice.

We had from the first the further goal, in and of itself, to study complex data without diluting or artificially limiting it -- in particular to reveal interaction, for which psychology has developed no adequate language. Such a language, we believe, should be as concrete as possible, and we directed our participation in the task of its development to this concern. We did so in part from a clinical recognition that what can't be stated simply isn't yet understood (Erikson, 1940); also from a related belief that abstractions are too glibly called upon to explain behaviors and experiences, foreclosing the exploration of multiple meanings and consequences. Just as we wished not to inflate our data with literary devices, so we wished to recognize and eliminate scientific pretentions of language and method that add nothing to descriptive accuracy. Writing in plain English is helpful in this.

From the start, without fully understanding its requirements of us as writers or its demands on readers, we determined to describe by use of imagery. We valued
word imagery for its informational richness, physicality, experiential immediacy, internal reliability, and compression of time. If we succeeded in producing whole images from mosaic detail, a blind reader following brail might "see" the family at dinner much as we saw the family. If even moderately successful, we thought, our effort to see by describing should have the potential to help others learn to see and understand themselves and their relationships more clearly.

These, in rather intimate, capsule form, were our purposes as we formulated our research and set out in doing it to extract a method for its implementation. In addition to these may be added the obvious reason, cited earlier, that written description makes visible much that is missed even in rigorous, repeated viewing short of thousands of hours of labor describing. In a method section I will describe the development of the research process, but before that I wish to review the purposes stated above in relation to the writings of some others -- scientists, artists, writers, and film makers -- who have concerned themselves with the special requirements of representational or holistic description. Readers may note that the purposes of Family at Dinner as I have described them could be taken
equally well be those of representational art or descriptive science. I see both as having similar requirements, particularly where science intends to study human behavior (see also Nisbet, 1976). I will discuss these requirements and the meeting of them, then in later sections I will say more about their applicability to our research process and their long familiarity to psychologists conducting research in the therapy room.

Knowing and seeing. In my opening paragraphs I cited Gregory Bateson's (1972) cautions, and those of other ecologically-concerned scientists, against letting our model world preclude the reality we seek to comprehend. Psychologists as diverse in point of view as Skinner (1975) and Schafer (1976) have expressed related concerns and sought remedies. Skinner would have us exclusively use a language of behavior, unfortunately itself highly reified. Schafer would remedy the reification of psychoanalytic metaphors and their subsequent loss of

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4I am particularly indebted in this review to art historian E. H. Gombrich, whose writing about the development of representational art in his book *Art and Illusion* (1960) confirmed and helped me put shape and words to our own descriptive process. I will quote from and otherwise draw on his work extensively in the balance of this introduction.
meaning by substituting a vocabulary of active verbs. In mental illness labelling, also, depth attributions of great sticking power are made to explain confusing behaviors, often without regard to the contexts in which these behaviors appear reasonable. The consequences of making such depth attributions, and questions of whose needs they serve more, patient or psychiatrist, have been much debated (Goffman, 1961; Szasz, 1970; Golann et al., 1974). Erik Erikson in his 1940 monograph, "Studies in the Interpretation of Play," took a particular interest in the love-hate relationship between seeing and knowing, going to great lengths to specify the preconscious details from which he drew his interpretations as an observer of play as well as the process by which he moved repeatedly between seeing and knowing. Yankelovich and Barrett (1970) have written an invaluable book on theory and experience as both relate to psychoanalytic thinking in particular and other sciences more generally.

What Leonardo da Vinci in the fifteenth century called the "supreme misfortune of theory outstripping performance" (quoted in Read, 1955), or what Herbert Read, art critic and poet, terms the problem of placing theoretical precepts above observation, is a hazard of representational art as well as science. Leonardo's notebooks provide this illustration:
Amid the whirling currents of the winds were seen a great number of companies of birds coming from distant lands, and these appeared in such a way as to be almost indistinguishable, for in their whirling movements at one time all the birds of one company were seen edgewise, that is showing as little as possible of their bodies, and at another time showing the full measure of their breadth, that is full in face; and at the time of their first appearance they took the form of an indistinguishable cloud, and then the second and third bands became by degrees more clearly defined as they approached nearer to the eye of the beholder.

And the nearest of the above-mentioned bands dropped down low with a slanting movement, and settled upon the dead bodies, which were borne along by the waves of this great deluge, and fed upon them, and so continued until such time as the buoyancy of the inflated dead bodies came to fall, and with slow descent they sank gradually down to the bottom of the waters (in Read, 1955, p. 102).

"This is pure observation, such indeed as a scientist would make," writes Read. "But the analytic reason has not yet intervened with its why and how, and therefore the vision, realized in words, is conveyed in all its integrity to the reader, and a direct emotional response takes place. The same faculties would be engaged in giving a plastic representation to the same scene in paint." Leonardo's description is brilliantly visual and informative even though, as in his anatomical drawings of the human heart where he included features he knew of but could not have seen (Combrich, 1960), here he also describes some of what
he cannot have seen (the whirling currents of winds, the slow descent of bodies in water). Theory does not outstrip his success in describing what he saw, but definitely does beset his vision.

In Art and Illusion, E. H. Gombrich (1960) explores in depth the difficulties encountered by artists attempting to make their images look like nature, among these difficulties that of "disentangling what we really see from what we merely know" (p. 14). Until late in the nineteenth century, most artists believed that representation advanced through the suppression of conceptual knowledge. Only then did the recognition become more general that all seeing is interpreting. Naive realism and Ruskin's concept of "the innocent eye" in painting gave way late in the last century to the recognition that "sense, knowledge, and inference all come into play in perception" (Gombrich, p. 14). In the same years, Gombrich writes, the sciences overcame their belief in unbiased observation of uninterpreted facts, the belief that the patient collection of one instance after the other will gradually build up into a correct image of nature, provided always that no observation is ever colored by subjective bias... [that is,] by a preconceived notion, a hypothesis, or an expectation which may adulterate...
suits. . . . This inductivist ideal of pure observation has proved a mirage in science no less than in art. The very idea that you can make your mind an innocent blank on which nature will record its secrets, has come in for strong criticism. Every observation. . . is a result of a question we ask nature, and every question implies a tentative hypothesis. We look for something because our hypothesis makes us expect certain results. Let us see if they follow. If not, we must revise our hypothesis and try again to test it against observation as rigorously as we can; we do that by trying to disprove it, and the hypothesis that survives that winnowing process is the one we feel entitled to hold, pro tempore (pp. 320-321).

Gombrich, I think, idealizes too much the pendulum swing of the disillusioned sciences. The natural sciences, particularly, in attempting to move beyond naive description, also abandoned description of quality. These sciences, in calling a simplified experimental paradigm the only method of true science, were content to substitute public techniques of objectification for a blank mind. In thus trying to do away with the researcher's subjectivity as though it were not only expendable but dishonest, they retained the same, recognizable naivety and essential inductivism Gombrich decries in the early nineteenth century arts and sciences. The natural sciences in our century, rather than engaging their data with the benefit of self-insight in response to recognizing the falsity of the pure imitation
of nature ideal, instead chose to impose a technology of scientific methodology to cope with the still too much feared opportunism of the human imagination. So dormant did qualitative description remain in psychology and the other natural sciences, and for so long, that those wishing to revive it today hardly know better than to try to achieve theoretical neutrality by, for example, repressing their own learning or applying overly exacting descriptive language.

Representational art, meanwhile, was left with the task of qualitative description. This was accompanied by the realization among artists that the self must be used toward the accomplishment of optimally objective and, by logic, original and informative representation. Gombrich describes several mechanical and psychological methods applied by representational painters to attempt to differentiate their learned and familiar worlds of meanings from the world beyond them. These include the painter's window-like frame through which to view and copy a subject in arbitrary or geometric parts; half closing the eye or cutting off the view of the subject with an intervening hand or thumb; switching attention from objects of study to the "meaningless" negative shapes they leave empty against the background (also a Zen technique of achieving "no meaning"); and Cézanne's
advice to a student to view nature in terms of simple shapes of known property such as cylinders, cones, and spheres. In these technologically unimpressive but practical ways, the representational artist asks concrete questions of his subject which call into question his own familiar meanings.

Seeing and feeling. The precluding of realistic representation by preconceptualization is closely related to the impact of emotions on description. In fact, the philosopher R. G. Collingwood (1938) refers to artistic consciousness as feelings converted into ideas, or "domesticated." Gombrich provides the example in painting of a melancholy artist's straightening exuberant contours and emphasizing blue hues in his representations of reality, and quotes Zola's definition of a work of art as "a corner of nature seen through a temperament" (p. 64). Herbert Read (1955) coined the term "haptic expression" to describe art in which the forms are dictated by inward sensations rather than by outward observation -- for example, the stylized human figures in paleolithic cave drawings whose "running limbs are lengthened because in the act of running they feel long" (p. 25). The artist's subjective and haptic knowledge of his own substance is most complicating when he contemplates another human being, as opposed to, say,
the figures of bison more objectively represented in cave drawings also of the paleolithic period.

The artist of any period may "try to exclude these subjective feelings," writes Read, "but we shall see that he cannot really do so without corrupting his consciousness" (p. 97). Here Read borrows from Collingwood (1938) the concept of corrupt or untruthful consciousness — that consciousness which fails to grasp its own emotions. "A true consciousness is the confession to ourselves of our feelings," Collingwood writes; "a false consciousness would be disowning them, i.e., thinking about one of them, 'That feeling is not mine'" (quoted in Read, 1955, p. 91). Read illustrates this idea, which is essentially the same as Freud's concept of repression, with a painting of human figures by Masaccio, an Italian painter of the early fifteenth century, finding there only symbols divorced from sensibility. . . . The artist, that is to say, was content to give a deliberate illustration of intellectual concepts and religious dogmas that had never entered his consciousness as sensations or feelings, but were present to him as already received ideas, as lifeless formulas (pp. 92-93).

Similar objections to projection and other dissociation of feelings have been expressed in literature from a com-
pletely different angle and in radical prose by Alain Robbe-Grillet, who has concerned himself with the problem of the observer's "eye which sees... thought which reexamines... and passion which distorts." (1965, p. 137). Robbe-Grillet's novels, and others of the school of the "New Novel" which has grown up around his, describe a world composed entirely of material objects and gestures. Accused by critics of robbing the world of meaning, Robbe-Grillet asserts both in his fiction and in his literary essays that the world is its own meaning. Obsessed with finding a depth meaning in what simply is, he claims, we recognize and remember only our impressions, while the determining elements from which we draw our impressions escape our awareness. Forgotten are the objects and gestures whose presence and relatively irrefutable reality we seem to prefer less than the significations we find in them. Of writers who describe the weather as capricious, the sun as pitiless, the village as huddled, the earth as noble, the forest as having a heart, the mountain as majestic, Robbe-Grillet writes, "The height of the mountain would be nothing to them, if it did not offer the moral spectacle of 'majesty'" (p. 55). He suggests that our search for profound meaning and explanation in the physical
universe is our search for meaning in our own lives and our attempt to control life events by enclosing them in a "system of references, whether emotional, sociological, Freudian or metaphysical" (p. 21).

Applying these insights in his novels, Robbe-Grillet has attempted to create a literature which takes physical gesture and things into account, refusing to treat the surface as "the mask of the heart," a sentiment he claims has led to every kind of metaphysical transcendence. "Even if many objects are presented and described," he writes, "there is always, and especially, the eye which sees them, the thought which reexamines them, the passion which distorts them" (1965, p. 137). Using the freedoms of fiction, Robbe-Grillet reveals his characters by describing the world of their projections -- that is, the physical world as they see it. For example, in Jealousy (1959) an unnamed, unseen person is in effect the camera eye through which the reader witnesses a world of objects and gestures. Every gesture,

5I should be content
to look at a mountain
for what it is
and not as a comment
on my life.

The poem "Content," by David Ignatow (1977)
every positioning of every object touched and left, every omission, holds a jealous question. Sounds and surfaces, portrayed in exacting detail, take on a physicality which forces the reader into the world of the otherwise unseen person. Uncertainty, sometimes terrible certainty and rage, distort a world whose integrity is thoroughly implied.

In Jealousy (pp. 90-91) "A. . ." has just returned from the town with Franck. Franck remains behind the wheel of his car as A. . . steps out the passenger door. A. . .'s husband observes from the porch of the house as:

. . . She stands motionless next to the front door of the car, leaning toward the gray imitation-leather upholstery, above the window which has been rolled down as far as it will go.

The white dress with the wide skirt almost disappears above the waist: the head, arms, and upper part of the body, filling the window opening, also obscure what is happening inside. A. . . is probably gathering up the purchases she has just made to carry them with her. But the left elbow reappears, soon followed by the forearm, the wrist, the hand, which holds onto the edge of the window-frame.

After another pause, the shoulders emerge into daylight too, then the neck, and the head with its heavy mass of black hair, whose loose curls are a little disarranged, and finally the right hand which holds by its string only an extremely tiny green cubical package.

Leaving the print of four parallel tapering fingers on the dusty enamel of the window-frame, the left hand hurriedly arranges the hair, while A. . . walks away from the blue car and, after a last look back, heads toward the door with her decisive gait. The uneven surface of the courtyard seems to level
out in front of her, for A... never even glances at her feet.

Robbe-Grillet's position that our interpretations of the world are self-serving and preclude its surface meanings are echoed elsewhere in the literary world by James Agee (1939) and Susan Sontag (1967, p. 7: "To interpret is to impoverish, to deplete the world -- in order to set up a shadow world of 'meanings...'"). "Commentaries seem useless, superfluous, even improper in the face of this irrefutable presence [of things and gestures]," writes Robbe-Grillet (1955, p. 21). "We get the mounting sense that nothing else is true."

The ingenious devices Robbe-Grillet produces in his novels to imply the existence of a physically neutral world distorted only by an observer's perception are not available to the scientist or artist who wishes to represent the world with a minimum of interpretive distortions or, to put it another way, leaving open to the beholder of the work the maximum number of possible interpretations. At one end of the spectrum in science and art are those preoccupied with inner visions, abstractions, and purposes. Proust's characterization of classic tragedy (quoted in Kracauer, 1960), that "Only those details are retained which
help us make the purpose of things intelligible," could well be applied to the great majority of writings in experimental and theoretical psychology. It would be pious, however, for the qualitative researcher or representational artist to claim freedom from an identical dilemma of selective attention and imposed purpose (see Barber, 1973). To claim such freedom would make him indistinguishable from those implicitly or explicitly making the claim of objectivity for results obtained by experimental methods and statistical techniques.

Some six decades since Einstein (1916) published his Theory of Relativity, we are finding in psychology a few more researchers asking, not so much, "Is this theory true?" or "What is the explanation?" but instead, "What are the consequences for my data and for my knowing of my taking this or that perspective?" (see Golann and Eisdorfer, 1972; Baker, 1976a). Particularly attentive to the relativity of interpretation are several self-searching published reports of systems interventions with individuals, couples and especially families (see, for example, Bowen, 1972; Aponte and Hoffman, 1973), as well as with a variety of community institutions (see Cumming and Cumming, 1957;
Even a brief review of scientific excursions into the realm of relating must include Gregory Bateson's (1972) thought-provoking collection of essays, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Bateson's choice of title stems from his view that a system of sufficient complexity and organization, for example the ocean, is "mind" (Brand, 1974). A similar respect for organismic complexity led John Lilly (1961) to relate to dolphins instead of dissecting them as he had earlier done in search of information and explanation. Lilly's book, entitled *Man and Dolphin*, expressed his revised concept of research as relationship. The painful confusion of self-recognition, and the relinquishment inherent in seeing comprehensively versus finding familiar meanings are not incidental elements in Carlos Castaneda's (1968; 1971; 1972; 1974) descriptions of discovering his own perceptual framework through experiencing another's. All of the works referred to make clear that, while searching for meaning at the expense of seeing may enable the researcher to avoid much pain of relinquishment, our commonly accepted, sophisticated, and mechanistic languages of explanation impose our human requirements on the world hardly less than the language of more primitive anthropomorphism.
Before looking further at the requirements of representational description, and as a starting point for looking in greater detail at Brian Reynolds and my experience attempting it, it would be well to examine briefly the film maker's descriptive task and assess the limitations and potentials of his medium. I wish to do so in part because we chose a related audiovisual medium for the initial recording of our data, but also because nowhere is the impossibility of objective description more graphically revealed than in film with its power to record events almost directly. The film theorists, especially Siegfried Kracauer (1960) and Gianfranco Bettetini (1973), write quite beautifully of this dilemma.

Long after the advent of still-photography, and the disappointing recognition at the turn of the century that this was also an interpretive medium (see Kracauer, 1960), the neorealist Italian film makers of the late 1940s and early 1950s recognized film's power to reveal certain details of living that had always been there but had not been noticed before (Giannetti, 1972). Ideologically concerned with revealing the innate dignity of the human spirit (see, for example, Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief*), the neorealists took particular interest in the
slice of common life, strove to picture people factually, avoided casting extraordinary characters and events to achieve drama, and understated use of the camera -- insisting on the dramatic superiority of things as they are, the texture of life as people commonly experience it (Mast, 1971). Their earthiness was romantic and their political message deliberate, but they did recognize and apply the power of film to make commonplace events visible.

Film theorist Michael Roemer (1971) sees such use of film to reveal commonplace physical realities as the most effective use of the medium. "Only film renders experience with enough immediacy and totality to call into play the perceptual processes we employ in life itself...", he writes (p. 99). "There is great challenge in making the commonplaces of life...yield up their meaning and take their rightful place in the larger patterns of existence" (p. 109). Nicola Chiaromonte (1970) also sees film as purely concerned with the mediation of things and gestures. Cinema, he writes, is a "universe of external signs, which is indubitable, certain, self-contained, since it leaves no gap between intention and act, and no place for ambiguity. In this universe motives, feelings, and ideas are completely transmuted into corporeal signs..." (p. 46).
Siegfried Kracauer, a major film theorist and student of psychology interested in realistic representation of the world, goes so far as to subtitle his book on the theory of film (1950) "The Redemption of Physical Reality." He writes of the resistance inherent in our habits of seeing and the power of film to make us perceive the world we actually live in -- much as Robbe-Grillet writes that the function of his work is to help us recognize our world. Kracauer too sees the power of film as being to record and explore physical reality as it presents itself to us. "Film renders visible what we did not, or perhaps even could not, see before its advent," he writes. "It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psychophysical correspondences. We literally redeem this world...by endeavoring to experience it through the camera" (p. 300).

The expressionist film maker, on the contrary, may seek images in nature which express his feelings, sacrifice physical surfaces to his vision of formal relationships, and edit out that which doesn't suit his purposes. In science, literature, representational art, and film, the dilemma arises that theory building, searching for explanation or meaning, or otherwise discovering and revealing
that which suits our purposes (e.g., abstracting patterns of relatedness) inevitably obscures the physical world we wish to study, removing it from our field of vision.

Impressed with the apparent power of film to reveal persons without departing from behavior, several film theorists of the realist school have discussed the difficulties inherent in trying to represent the physical world in film with minimal distortion. Gianfranco Bettetini (1973) is particularly worth quoting, since he exhaustively describes the realistic film maker's dilemma of objectification, writing concretely of the camera as an instrument of a directive intentionality:

Even in cases of the strictest objectification, where the film transmits historical, environmental, or sociological analyses of the most impersonal type, the cinematographic language is at the mercy of those who use it: if the director tries to make his approach to the work impersonal, so as to disappear behind the objective image of reality that he is trying to form, his choice and the way in which it is expressed, even when this assumes the detached qualities of a piece of evidence, are the paths by which his directive intentionality, his creative sensibility, and his cultural relations with men and with the world -- in other words, his whole personality -- are brought into evidence. Cinematographic narration cannot hide the narrator and, although being a work dedicated to a certain topic, developing a certain theme in a certain manner, it is fundamentally the work of a man (or of a group of men) who expresses himself in its images. This paradox is the fundamental aesthetic
principle ruling the life of the cinema -- the cinematographic narrative stems from the figu-
rate contribution of an instrument that photographs nature; the signs of the cinema have at their roots a deep-seated raison d'être, that places them among the phenomena of a reproductive and generally mimetic order; and yet the man directing the film consciously intervenes so as to mould it according to his poetic ideation, by means of a continuous process of choice.

The document offered by an edited film is not so much the impartial description of an event or a phenomenon as the expression of an interpretive act on the part of the subject who directed the film -- even when televising events directly, so that the image is perceived by the spectator at the moment in which the reality that it reproduces is taking place, the personality of the producer intervenes, imposing his own viewpoint (the positioning of the various television cameras), a certain, variable distance from objects (the choosing of lenses), and, above all, a particular selection of images and a rhythmic succession that are solely conditioned by his sensibility and by the way in which his interpretive personality approaches what he is narrating, in synchrony with the actual occurrence of the event (p. 73).

Kracauer suggests a resolution:

Objectivity in the sense of the realist manifesto is unattainable. This being so, there is no earthly reason why the photographer should suppress his formative tendencies in the interest of the necessarily futile attempt to achieve that objectivity. Provided his choices are governed by his determination to record and reveal nature, he is entirely justified in selecting motif, frame, lens, filter, emulsion and grain according to his sensibilities.... For nature is unlikely to give itself up to him if he does not absorb it with all his senses strained and his whole being participating in the process. The formative tendency, then, does not have to conflict with the realistic tendency. Quite the contrary, it may help substantiate and fulfill it" (pp. 15-16).
"What counts," Kracauer continues, "is the 'right' mixture of his realist loyalties and formative endeavors -- a mixture; that is, in which the latter, however strongly developed, surrender their independence to the former" (p. 16). Acknowledgment and awareness of these formative endeavors and of the emotions that give rise to them are necessary and essential safeguards against the undermining or corruption of realist loyalties. Specifically how recognition and awareness, both acts of courage, are enhanced in the act of describing is the next question. This is discussed below with particular attention to the ways approaches to realistic representation cut across the disciplines of art and science.

**Making and matching.** The alternative to a passively observing blank mind and innocent eye is an active mind and inquiring eye, directed not merely outside but also at one's own experiences and research productions as these resist, conceptualize, and accommodate to external realities. In other words, a process of questioning and interpreting occurs nearly constantly, questioning both of the data and of one's interpretation of it. For this to happen, as Gombrich makes clear, the scientist or artist needs to make "a starting point, a standard of comparison, in order to begin
that process of making and matching and remaking which finally becomes embodied in the finished image" (1960, p. 321).

Gombrich's formula of "schema and correction" is also a basic tenet of R. G. Collingwood's philosophy of science, art, and teaching (Collingwood, 1938) and of course is the familiar process of hypothesis testing. Applied to representational art or qualitative description of any complexity, this basic process consists of countless experiments and a ceaseless application and testing of discoveries to build up the required image (Gombrich, 1960). This is clearly different from simply opening one's eyes and looking about, or even from copying what one sees. Instead, "art itself becomes the innovator's instrument for probing reality" (Gombrich, 1960, p. 324). This is Collingwood's meaning when he writes (1939) that the artist paints in order to see. "The problem of illusionist art," says Gombrich, "is not that of forgetting what we know about the world. It is rather that of inventing comparisons that work... (p. 301). Only by developing an image to a high degree of articulation, then matching it with the visible world, can we extend our awareness of the visible world" (p. 324).
Gombrich's substitution of the word "illusionist" for "representational" drives home the degree to which the process of description is one not of objective copying but of creating an illusion of reality. "The more closely the artist's hieroglyphs approximate the sense impressions from nature," he quotes Max Liebermann, "the more imaginative effort was needed to invent them" (p. 291). And again (p. 395), "it is not the 'innocent eye,' however, that can achieve this match but only the inquiring mind that knows how to probe the ambiguities of vision." This is particularly so because illusion is not the exception but the norm; the face in a nearby mirror looks full size but is in fact half size, crossed parallel lines appear bent, and so on.

Only creative experimentation and the knowledge of representation gained by it can produce a convincing likeness, he explains. Specifically, in painting, "the impression of light...rests exclusively on gradients and not, as one might expect, on the objective brightness of the colors" (p. 55). In addition, colors have a "spreading effect," such that dark outlines cast a shadow over the colors they border and a light background or outline brightens. Gombrich quotes Ruskin: "Colour is wholly relative.
Every hue throughout your work is altered by every touch that you add in other places... so that every touch must be laid, not with a view to its effect at the time, but with a view to its effect in futurity..." (pp. 308-309).

The imitator of nature must hold the effect of all elements on each other simultaneously in mind, Gombrich adds; only by trial and error, long experience in the ways of paint, and acquired knowledge of how colors affect each other can the artist create a successful illusion of reality. "The mutual effect of all elements in a picture can't be planned [but requires] experimentation to fuse the elements into a convincing whole" (p. 309).

Among the invaluable insights to be had from the painter's work process are a recognition of the importance of interaction effects; a recognition of the necessity to put one's efforts, or experimentation, into the work of description rather than spending one's efforts trying to interpret the reality one seeks to comprehend; and a realization that representation is accomplished less by systematic methods than by creative experimentation. Nisbet (1976) also makes this final point in Sociology as an Art Form, where he argues against the deeply embedded conventions of his profession (Starr, 1976) as follows:
"There is never anything tidy, organized, or systematic in genuine discovery. . . (pp. 15-16). It is hard to think of anything more fatal to discovery or invention than the idea that the creative act can be generated by properly following the rules of logic" (p. 22). Herbert Read (1953) similarly warns that the "scientist, like the artist, must assert his own vision [over established formulas] which may extend to style and treatment as well as to more technical questions of materials and methods of composition" (p. 103). And of British landscape painter John Constable, who serves as an example of much that Gombrich is saying, Gombrich writes, "He thought, and rightly, that only experimentation can show the artist a way out of the prison of style toward a greater truth. Only through trying out new effects never seen before in paint could he learn about nature" (p. 320).

The beholder's share. Whatever subjective interpretation remains in a finished work, Gombrich maintains, representational art in any case tells much about what exists in reality. Still, the reader must collaborate to transform the artist's or scientist's description into a likeness of the visible world. Some readers will doubtless be more or less visually oriented than others in their ex-
periencing, and different readers see better given more or less detail. Presumably, too, the reader interprets and projects his own images onto the work in varying degrees according to his own need to make the world described recognizable. The behaviors described in writing will not mean the same thing to all readers, nor do words themselves mean the same thing to everyone, a problem dealt with in much of science by the use of exactly defined symbols and measurements.

The painter or writer of description calls his work finished when practicalities intervene and he is satisfied that he has described informatively, with a reasonable maximum of accuracy and minimum of interpretation (see Collingwood, 1939, on the subject of endpoints). Like the work of the artist as characterized by Martyl Langsdorf and Cyril Stanley Smith in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the descriptive researcher "is concerned principally with complex relationships. He tries to say more than he knows, and to depend upon the active participation of his audience in developing a pattern" (1959, p. 51). Gombrich similarly writes, "Any representation must of necessity allow of an infinite number of interpretations . . . , and the selection of a reading consistent with our
anticipations must always be the beholder's share" (p. 6).

Worse perhaps than having his work read too projectively, the writer or artist may find that "his reward might easily be the public's finding his equivalent hard to read and hard to accept because it has not yet been trained to interpret these new combinations in terms of the visible world" (Gombrich, 1960, p. 324). In this regard Robbe-Grillet (1965) has surveyed complaints of meaninglessness from his critics and replied by discussing the problems his descriptive novels create for readers accustomed to works in which explanatory constructs and internal commentaries prevail over the presence of objects and gestures. We are accustomed to description being the frame, not the content, he writes:

Obviously, when this same reader skips the descriptions in our books, he is in danger of finding himself, having turned all the pages one after the other with a rapid forefinger, at the end of the volume whose contents will have escaped him altogether; imagining he has been dealing hitherto with nothing but the frame, he will still be looking for the picture (p. 147).

From our own work we have learned that, however visually compelling and open to interpretation we make description (and we are far from satisfied), some readers will see only
words in too great numbers to read through, whereas others see images right away and find the description thoroughly involving. The density of detail which makes the family come alive for one reader may exclude another who needs to fill in detail more actively in order to feel like a participant. One reader pointed to her head and said of the O'Neals, "I can see them in my head." We can only hope that as the impressionists taught the public not to see nature with an innocent eye but to explore an unexpected alternative (Gombrich, 1960), our own work of description after further applications and refinements may help a good many others as it helped us to see with new awarenesses.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Later I will abstract and summarize our learnings about descriptive method, developed in the process of writing description. However, in making explicit a research method more original than otherwise in its field of study, I think it necessary first to set down simply, chronologically, somewhat experientially, and with illustrative figures just what we did and what led us to do it. The actual work of extracting a method by application of an idea is far more primitive than its conceptualizations in the introduction can imply. The development of method and the reluctant insights which make up much of that work need to be elaborated to avoid claiming understandings before they occurred and otherwise mystifying research.

Initial Choices and Their Consequences

Validity requirements and the uses of collaboration. The first decision was that which Brian F. Reynolds and I made together to collaborate on the data of description, based on a long friendship and mutually shared development in psychology as undergraduate students at the University
of Massachusetts. We believed initially that collaboration was not inherently essential for perceptual validation in the particular task of describing we were considering. I still believe that validity requirements are sufficiently accounted for by repeated comparison and the test of describing in writing. However, our collaboration did help greatly in validating our perceptions, in addition to bringing the full strength of a relationship highly valued and honestly worked on to research similarly valued and requiring honesty and tolerance for often difficult learning. We knew also that we needed our collaboration in part to handle the anxiety, loneliness, and other demands of taking on and developing a massive, unstructured, and methodologically almost unprecedented research project.

In the three years of work which followed, as in our relationship preceding the project, we fired each others enthusiasm, encouraged each other to acknowledge vulnerabilities and defenses, found incentive for arduous work in the pleasures of friendship, and more often than we wished drove each other and ourselves competitively. I should also note for later reference when I speak of projections in describing that, during much of the period of our collaboration on the description, our career opportunities were not always fairly
balanced or equal, and that the work of being mutually sympathetic and maturely differentiated in relation to each other and our work was often particularly demanding.

**Media requirements.** Soon after we had agreed to formalize our collaboration on the family description, we viewed those available examples of family film we could find in a national correspondence with other family researchers. The problem with existing film was that in almost none were all family members constantly in view. To study interaction, a wide-angle perspective is needed. The researcher cannot be tied to a cameraman's editorial assumptions, for example, of who is speaking to whom at any given moment.\(^6\)

Jacques van Vlack, whom we met at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, had recognized this requirement before making several naturalistic films of families. In finally deciding to produce our own film, we knew in part from listening to van Vlack's personal involvement with his films that we would get a lot of valuable mileage -- as well as accompanying problems -- from describing a family

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\(^6\) Public examples of edited family film include *An American Family*, and *Six American Families*, broadcast on National Educational Television in 1973 and 1977 respectively.
we ourselves had filmed.

We gathered information about 16-mm. film making in the following weeks, pressing forward against a variety of obstacles. Even the best quality equipment, we learned, would be noisy and unpredictable. Raw film, particularly color film, is expensive; its processing is more expensive yet. Lighting for color filming is an art, not a technique. There are no straightforward truths about sound reproduction. We would have to make elaborate arrangements and travel far to rent equipment; its availability and workability would not be certain even then.

We had made arrangements both with a family and with film equipment rental outlets when we discovered that the complexities and costs of film processing were going to be greater even than those of choosing and procuring equipment. We were going to have to give up our ambition to use 16-mm. film. Further checking revealed that 8-mm. film technology was not at a point to be of use to us, unless we remained present on the scene to replace reels repeatedly in two running cameras. Finally, for lack of an alternative, we went to color videotape.

Video offered the advantage of a small and silent camera which could be left with little risk of malfunction.
This and other advantages of video -- primarily economic -- had to be balanced against the major disadvantage of its offering poor resolution compared to film. The amount of detail in an image would determine our freedom to select detail for written description. Video tested our abilities to process vast amounts of information, but in the end defined restrictions on detail we could better have defined by choice.

As it was, then, a difficult decision of what level of detail to work at was partially determined for us (for example, much facial expression and eye contact was not available to us). Given these limitations, we feared that characters might appear conspicuously faceless to readers. More positively, by dulling fine detail, video may have helped us achieve a greater physicality in the written description. The low resolution medium, lacking the sharpness of film, forced us to become more emotionally engaged with the data in search of greater definition -- that is, to question more actively. Certainly the medium forced us to describe movement. In the video image the sense of events becomes clear in movement, a still picture offering too little information particularly at levels of fine detail. Finally, whereas film is projected onto a
screen from behind the viewer, video is projected from a tv set "at" the viewer (McLuhan, 1964). This is compatible with written description, which in some ways projects the visual image onto the reader's consciousness. Artistically speaking, our description has the "grain," or gross physicality, of a video image. Also, time in the written description is consecutive time slowed rather than the compressed, or cut-time, audiences have grown accustomed to in the more economically costly film medium.

In sum, we would prefer to own the descriptive choices high-resolution film allows. Especially we would like to have had more information about where family members were looking from second to second. Financial necessity alone determined our use of the cruder medium, although we have rather grown to like it.

We taped the family at dinner, as opposed to some other activity and time of day, because dinnertime brings all family members together in one place. With a moving camera, we could videotape the family in almost any activity, but we planned to use a fixed camera and leave the scene during the taping. Dinnertime behavior is more natural or immune to interference than most to the extent that it is ritualized. The presence of a camera is a great
imposition, but the less so for our absence and for the camera's remaining in one spot. Editorially, although a fixed camera has selective consequences, these are less limiting than the editing imposed by a moving camera. Only with a fixed camera are all members of the family in view at once, necessarily from a considerable distance but visible in relation to each other and brought closer by a wide-angle lens. The major problem of a fixed camera is that one sees the family and each family member always from the same perspective. Written description, while still retaining all family members in each moment, can restore some of the sense of movement moving cameras provide, but cannot restore details of varied perspective missed by a fixed camera.

**Decisions of format.** The last important area of decision at this stage of the project was our early conceptualization of the writing format to use in describing the O'Neal family. Although in our early conceptions of the project we emphasized describing what was there over applying theoretical knowledge, we still assumed that a large part of our job would be to explain moment to moment happenings in the family. We conceptualized the finished product as a predominantly descriptive narrative of events.
We knew behavioral detail had to carry the weight of the description, but did not yet see description standing by itself. Our moment of truth, coming much later in the research process, grew from fully developed misdirections standing in contrast to descriptive successes -- both of which I will say more about.

Videotaping

Most of what needs to be said about the taping arrangement is contained in the introduction and opening scene of the description. The evening before the final taping we ran a preliminary tape. In our anxiety we aimed the camera too far to the left, cutting one family member partially off from view when chairs were later moved. The evening of the final taping we were excessively careful. We hung around longer than we should have, and as a result are present in the opening scene before leaving for our own dinner and returning an hour later to retrieve the finished videotape. Our reluctance to relinquish control of our data is manifest in this late leavetaking.

That the presence of onlookers was experienced by the family in our absence is also, of course, manifestly evident
in the finished record. On an already torrid August evening we closed the dining room curtains to cut glare, then set up high-Fahrenheit television lights to cut shadows and meet the requirements of color videotaping. During the preliminary taping it became so hot in the room that Steve, wanting a bottle of beer from Joanne's left, was moved to ask her to "please pass the quinine." Whereas the family usually sat four-around the rectangular dining room table, we had placed two chairs side by side to open the end of the table where the camera was located. The children would later fight over these two chairs. The family's anxiety about being taped and so closely studied had to be terrific. Joanne's questions to Steve at the beginning of the final taping about our camera having "gotten Holmes last night" may reflect her awareness of how much we were seeing. As one committee member later pointed out to us, we may want to consider Beth's refusal to eat as a reflection of family resistance to the taping; certainly she is one clear expression of family feeling.

Our interpretive commentary as well as more implicit interpretations in the early drafts of our description reveal on one level our ambivalent wanting to be there and wanting not to be there. The family's self-conscious and
more direct response to us, and ours to them, may be viewed as problematic to the study of natural events but should not be allowed to lead to futile attempts to control or deny that which can't be helped in the research task of observing and describing. The more serious interference was our own difficulty in accepting the reality of our presence in the data and the finished description. When we began we still wanted to believe we could stay separate from our data. To the extent that we gradually acknowledged our participation in the O'Neals' dinner, what we first naively saw as the problem of our interference became part of the appropriate task of describing what is there. Recognizing our own participation, in both the taping and the descriptive writing, was a process of acceptance that took place over time, continuing into the present discussion and I'm sure beyond it.

Descriptive Writing as a Method of Seeing

The first descriptive step was to make an audio transcript. Even using Sony transcription equipment and working from a high quality audiotape (made on a separate recorder in parallel with the videotape deck),
it was extraordinarily difficult to arrive at a verbal transcript accurate to fine details. Only later, when the videotape and description of it made physical sense to us, was it possible to produce a verbal transcript of satisfactory accuracy. The difficulty of making a verbal transcript impressed us with the ambiguity of even concrete events. Did Beth, speaking about the after-dinner trip to the drive-in movies, say, "We're going to see two of them," or was it, "We're going to see a cartoon?" By the time we finished we were satisfied of the transcription's accuracy, but it took a while to get there. (She said, "two of them." ) Group events should be recorded in stereo; this allows one to listen on separate channels when people overlap. That we didn't do this cost us many extra hours of work deciphering what people said.

A page of audio transcript is reproduced as Figure 1. The transcript was typed on a large computer sheet, then reduced. The arrangement of four voices in four columns offered a more graphic picture of the whole family than did other transcription arrangements. Time, represented on the vertical axis, is less exactly represented in this format than in alternative arrangements. Voice overlaps are indicated by slantbars within the transcript
and numbered where order would otherwise be ambiguous. We incorporated corrections into this audio transcript as we worked on early drafts of the audiovisual transcription, then abandoned the audio transcript when it was soon no longer useful. The numbers "12" and "13" in the left margin of the page mark chapter breaks, determined by us as we produced the first audiovisual draft, illustrated in Figure 2.

Producing an audiovisual transcript. Figure 2 was produced directly from the monitor. In writing this draft, we spoke descriptive statements aloud, alternately and sometimes simultaneously, until we found agreement on content and phrasing. One of us operated the tape deck repeatedly over brief sections of tape, often turning it

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7 Scheflen (1973) uses a transcription layout harder to see at a glance, but otherwise quite ingenious. The stream of conversation is represented in parallel rows rather than columns, illustrating the timing of overlaps exactly.

8 Pseudonyms have been substituted throughout. Reproductions are otherwise reduced facsimiles of the originals, editorial changes overwritten where colored pencil fails to copy. Where editing is hard to read, refer throughout to where additions appear in type in the figure following.

The extensive figures allow the reader sufficiently interested to explore our work process in depth. Other readers may prefer to simply glance through the draft figures to gain a concrete impression of the work process more abstractly described in this chapter.
slowly by hand, while the other typed or wrote in corrections and additions. We disagreed often and worked the disagreements through. When we fought it was clear to both of us that anger grew from the extraordinary pressures of the work. Typically we threw ourselves intently into a collaborative process of revision upon revision, as in "brainstorming," viewing each fragment repeatedly until mutually satisfied of the descriptive statement's adequacy. Then it was typed, and we moved on. It was slow, grueling work, requiring clear communication and unremitting concentration. Where we failed to watch the same figure or one of us failed to concentrate at the necessary split second, we had to start again.

As the draft indicates, we tended to focus on each speaker in turn (in this instance, Joanne and Greg), then came back to the typed copy in the same sitting to fill in the behavior of other members of the family. The object was to capture as much family behavior as possible in a sitting. The writing is loose and the detail cumbersome (as we have it, Greg's outstretched arms are looking down). It was nonetheless exciting to see a physical description form; we had never seen anything quite like it. We were aware of time slowing dramatically and the scene's dimensions
filling out as we added each family member's behavior. The task was to make sure every individual was accounted for in each passing second. Even so, the relations among the participants, pacing of behavior, and general mood of the group are surprisingly present in this draft. There is tension and interest well beyond the information carried by the sum of individual behavior.

We had little opportunity while writing this draft to think about its overall descriptive impact. The immediate task was to capture each individual's behavior comprehensively -- for our purposes, in sufficient detail to make it physically comprehensible without explanation. We extracted behavioral detail painstakingly from the fast-moving tape. Greg's moving his utensils toward him with his right hand while rolling his corn in butter with his left, for example, was decipherable only after numerous repetitions of the tape with a focus on Greg alone. His behavior then had to be watched in relation to the ongoing behavior of each and all other members of the family for proper placement. The payoff is in seeing what Greg is doing when he is doing it -- different from depicting him as "busy with the food on his plate while Joanne speaks." Without detracting from other action, he is visible in the
written description as part of the passing scene with an explicitness it would be impossible for a casual viewer of the videotape to attain.

At this early stage of description more decisions are made than can ever be thoroughly questioned later. Clearly differentiating behavioral detail in space and time leaves less to inference, so we concentrated on the task of differentiating and sequencing behaviors. Where every person's behavior is accounted for each second, even decisions of who is speaking to whom are left largely to reader inference. Note in Figure 2 our decision to intersperse Joanne's stream of speech with other events. Our preference would have been to leave her speech uninterrupted for ease of readability. Our decision instead was to describe behaviors as closely as possible to where they happened, at some sacrifice to continuity in the description of any one individual's extended behavior, including speech. If the other members of the family stopped what they were doing, only then would Joanne's speech be uninterrupted by the necessity to describe the shifting attention and postures

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9Continuous speech is broken for descriptive purposes by dashes; actual pauses in speech are indicated by elipses.
of the others. In later drafts, as I will discuss, we would decide that routinely disrupting continuous speech to describe behaviors was too great a sacrifice to sustained reader attention and immediacy of imagery. Similarly, we would later have to make more active, or conscious, decisions about which details to retain and which to dismiss in finished description.

Finally at this stage, while we hadn't yet thought much about the wisdom of including or not including interpretive commentary in the finished description, we consciously wanted the initial description to be as bare as possible of such impositions -- as witness the absence of adjectives and adverbs in this early draft, and the somewhat naive reliance for the present on capturing the fullest possible behavioral detail our medium afforded us.

**Filling the gaps.** The arbitrariness of the written composition at this early stage and our wish to be objective are illustrated by Figures 3, 3a, and 3b.10 Paragraphing

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10Figures 3-10 inclusive illustrate the second major stage of our work, when we worked on the first eight minutes of the videotape exclusively. The first stage (Figures 1 and 2) covered written description of the full 48-minute videotape. The third stage of our work, finishing description of the 48-minute scene and revising it as well as the first part into a coherent whole utilizing what we had
for the present is determined with few exceptions by the
discrete behaviors of individuals. Decisions about com-
position have been made at a broader level of chaptering.
To break for chapters at all was to impose artificial
structure, but we decided in favor of this to give ourselves
and the reader respite. Our only rule was that chapter
breaks should follow what we felt to be natural breaks in
the action -- such as the doorbell ringing, or people
coming and going. We interrupted behavior at chapter
breaks, but no detail was lost between chapters.

At the descriptive stage illustrated by Figure(s) 3
we added additional details from the tape. Earlier pages
of this draft than those illustrated required many monitor
corrections and additions because when we wrote them we were
just learning to transpose details from a moving video
image into writing and had left many gaps. By the time
we reached the later pages illustrated here, the level of
detail in the manuscript was more adequate. We later needed
this richness of detail in early drafts to allow us editorial
choices in revision to later ones. I must emphasize, however,

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learned, is illustrated by Figures 11, 12, and 13. Figure
14 summarizes our descriptive process through all three
stages.
that at the time we wrote this draft we believed we would heighten the description's objective value by including all available detail.

**Searching for theme and structure.** As we reached the end of the draft represented by Figure(s) 3, we were at a loss as to what to do next with the description proper. We had no prescriptions to follow. We decided to turn our attention to thematic content. Figures 4, 4a, and 4b reveal that in doing so we had defined a direction which would take us backward before we could work ourselves free and move forward. Marginal notes and one set of incorporations in the text trace an explicitly interpretive narrative to the effect, for example, that Joanne is competing unsuccessfully with Beth and Greg for space in family conversation. "Joanne moves it further off Beth into family conversation, after Steve momentarily cleared the way for Beth...," reads the first marginal note (Figure 4). A following note on the same page reads, "J finally gets space -- falls into it." Another set of additions made later in the same draft (different color pencil in the original) qualifies concrete behaviors, defining the tonal cues and behavioral innuendos from which we had presumably drawn our inferences (once again, see following figure number for
more legible treatment of these inserts). Joanne, for example, is described as speaking "excitedly" (Figure 4), later (Figure 4a, bottom) as continuing "undampened." Greg, asking, "Why?" is said to do so "flatly" (bottom, Figure 4b). Steve is described as responding "with pointed lack of enthusiasm" (Figure 4a, top).

We had begun to dig a hole for ourselves in sandy soil, convinced we would find a firm bed of truth if we just kept digging. To the extent that we thought about it, we justified our commentary as a way to make our interpretations of the data, presumably present in any case, explicit. However, we lost touch with the purposes of description and tried to fill in for its inadequacy at its present stage of development instead of pressing forward with attention to the real and more demanding task of describing. Parts of the manuscript reveal more dramatically than the excerpt reprinted here the futility and misdirection of our attempts to define the inner experience and intentions of family members, as well as to reveal an overriding family dynamic. We marked up, rewrote, retyped, and again edited considerable portions of the manuscript six to a dozen times at this stage in our attempts to fit an explicit framework of explanation to complex interactions.
We had begun to search for a coherent thematic line in the data at a time when we ourselves needed a structure to contain our floundering and sometimes panic over what to do with an immense and unknown descriptive task. Before recognizing our misdirection, we would see panic, intense competition, and serious inner conflict in the family we were describing, at the same time these were most salient in our private experience of our work, each other, and complex family issues raised for us by the research we had embarked on. External clues to our personal experience of our work were visible not only in our written analysis of the O'Neals, but in the doubts we each experienced about our own abilities as we were positively impressed by the visibility of each other's thinking. Further clues existed in memories and fantasies of our own families, associations we shared but failed to integrate; in dreams (in one my academic committee was my family); in my withholding of the manuscript in its successive drafts from interested advisors. As we worked, we failed to see the ways our personal experience was interfering with the description. Before we finished, we would be exposed as we had always feared.

Refining the description. In response to a suggestion
from an advisor, to whom I often spoke about the project, we had begun to refine and make more explicit the timing of events in the written description. We hoped in this way to make the description more informational and objective, with no clear understanding of how this would occur. As it happened, attending more actively in this draft to the sequence of our profusion of behavioral detail later greatly heightened our freedom to edit the description without immediate reference to the videotape. In any case, staying with draft Figure(s) 4, where the description had read, "Steve nods and says. . . .," it now reads, "Steve nods again, swallows, and still chewing on corn mutters. . . ." (Figure 4b, middle). This more exacting attention to sequence accompanied our efforts to extract further behavioral details from the videotape. The considerable extent to which we saw and recorded details in keeping with our thematic projections would create extra work later on. Still, the data seemed to influence us far more than we were able to influence it. New recognitions of details and time relations created new interpretive variations, throwing our commentary line into disarray and necessitating its continual shoring up as we proceeded with the description itself. Even in early drafts, the behavioral description
developed sufficiently exactingly to detail and sequence as to force change in us. We were subordinate to enormous quantities of data. Our vision at the early stages was quite unexamined by us relative to later in our work process, and this influenced more freely our selection of details. Given the nature of our thinking at the time, we perhaps did well to attempt a random profusion. Concrete events and their interlocking forward progression moved further beyond our influence as so many details crowded upon each other.

In this draft (Figures 4, 4a, and 4b) we did, very tentatively, also become selective of detail for the first time. With difficulty identifying it, we began to eliminate "noise" -- details which add no information to what has come before (for example, picks up corn "in left hand" when right hand is already described as occupied elsewhere). Simultaneously we asked questions which helped us recognize and supply missing and needed details (where is a person looking at a given moment). This task of weeding and planting is essential work of description, but at the time we began it the formative functions and responsibilities it served were still unacceptable to us.

In sum, as yet we didn't know how to attend to the
more comprehensive demands of organization and movement of visual detail in description. Related to this, we still held onto the notion that if we arbitrarily included sufficient detail and sequenced it accurately enough it would come together to produce a representationally alive and accurate picture of the events we wished to describe.

In one direction, then, we looked to interpretive commentary to provide descriptive substance. In a related direction, we looked to the monitor for more detail. We needed instead to work more immediately on the description's successes and failures as a representation of reality. We dabbled at this time in revision of the description at more complex levels, vaguely "making it read," catching and correcting redundancies and lapses of detail, changing an infinitive to a gerund or relocating a phrase "by ear." Despite our editing in this and previous drafts, we remained stuck. The commentary was not compensating for the description's lack of presence and worse yet, was beginning to grate. "Shoring up" the commentary by attempting to ground it in additional details or otherwise elaborate it had the quality of propagating rationalizations. Something was missing from the description itself, but we weren't sure what this was or what to do to correct the
deficiency as we typed fresh copy (Figures 5, 5a, and 5b).

**Discovering the task.** Brian and I had now established a work pattern in which we read and edited separate copies of new drafts, then incorporated these changes as well as new ones into a single copy as one of us read the manuscript aloud, then checked the new copy against the monitor. Often we spot-checked the description against the monitor during the reading, also. Reading aloud was an efficient way to bring our ideas together while encouraging slow and deliberate study of each draft. Our work plan in the draft illustrated by Figure(s) 5 was to decide paragraphing while simultaneously revising and elaborating our running commentary. Reading aloud with a focus on the task of paragraphing helped us respond to the demands of descriptive writing in new ways as we neared the end of this draft.

The unexpected advantage of reading aloud appeared one evening when Brian put down his manuscript copy as I read the last chapter of this draft. Sitting back with his eyes closed, he began making major revisions in sentence structure. I was struck by the clarity of the revisions he suggested. Working without manuscript in hand, he was visualizing scenes as I read them aloud. Where behaviors
and interactions were difficult to visualize, he was revising the description aloud in order to see them more clearly and in relation to each other.

It was a major insight and a breakthrough in our stalled work process. We had discovered what we knew when we started, but then had somehow either forgotten or not yet learned to apply: that words are more than pretty sounds and tools of abstraction, but the stuff of imagery. Now, for the first time, we saw the family. From this point on we stopped searching for an interpretive line to make our description make sense. We looked instead for a visual, more physical, and simple sense of events in writing. We concentrated on slowly learning the patience to see in our "minds' eye" what we were describing in words. Repeatedly we rewrote for visibility. While still attempting to be nonselectively accurate of detail, we now had the means to compare the description with the videotape for accuracy to whole images. As we looked at whole images, the issue appropriately became for us less one of achieving objective accuracy to data than of producing description of representational adequacy or lifelike realism delimited by data.

The discovery of how to describe visually was essential
at this time to the job of determining paragraphing. To the degree that paragraphing would reflect themes we were reading in and deliberately imposing on the data, we would do damage both to the data's complex interrelatedness and to the freedom of readers to draw their own conclusions. Our wish was to describe transactions whole, where possible, to describe as an organic unity that octopus-like organization called family. Recognition of word imagery made possible holistic description at the level of physical behavior. Where form in paragraphing followed theme early in this draft of the manuscript, we went back and re-paragraphed in keeping with our new learning. We experimented with multi-person imagery, rewriting particularly complex or intriguing transactions and behavioral groupings dozens of times.

As we paragraphed we also made the description increasingly exacting of time relations. The word "while" occurs often in this draft, its use reflecting yet a new explicitness about the timing of behaviors. On the one hand, having discovered in imagery an essential tool of representational description, we clung more tenaciously than ever to beliefs in describing objectively. On the other hand, although we didn't understand it in quite these
terms, we would need exacting details of behavior and timing as clear limits within which to apply our growing understandings of descriptive technique. Accuracy to detail achieved by knowledge of written description and creativity in its application is the very "stuff" of representational realism, as my introduction I hope has made clear.

This draft, then, marked the beginnings of our learning to responsibly apply a thoughtful subjectivity to the task of describing realistically. Because we learned to visualize, awareness of physical choreography and syncopation began to overshadow our previous concern with psychological meaning as the family and the space they occupied took on increasing physicality and three-dimensionality in written description.

Checking for accuracy. Once intent on description and more fully cognizant of its demands, we became increasingly consumed by the project. Individual behavior had to be straightened out and refined sentence by sentence, but it was not sufficient to visualize a sentence at a time. The more complex relation of imagery to the original tape needed checking at levels of sentence, paragraph, page, chapter, and whole to satisfy both our more sub-
jective and objective criteria of realistic depiction. There could be no gaps in movement. Creating a workable moving image of the family required reading and rereading written pieces of every conceivable length and combination in the new way we had lately learned to read. We still returned to compare at several levels against the monitor, trying to arrive at a state of subjective satisfaction with the description at gestalt levels while still keeping detail accurate to the monitor within exceedingly fine limits.

Figures 6, 6a, and 6b, and 7, 7a, and 7b illustrate monitor checking drafts of the many-times revised and retyped manuscript, first at small, then at increasingly encompassing behavioral complexes. Small points of accuracy -- for example, "Placing her elbows on the table and taking her corn in both hands. . ." versus the correct, "Taking her corn in both hands and placing her elbows on the table. . ." (Figure 7a, bottom) -- make the difference between physical impossibility and physical presence. If the reader will take the time now to visualize each, the difference will become clear. While it is unlikely that many readers would consciously notice our attending or failing to attend to accuracy at this level, I am convinced that such careful attention to the sequence of detail
is nonetheless essential to making the characters of realistic description visible and bringing them effectively to life. Anything less exacting is unnecessarily sloppy and results in a visual garble. Just how much detail is needed to meet realistic aims is another question, however. Also, without contradicting the assertion above, I wish to emphasize that at this stage of our work it remained for us to accept that realism can suffer as well as benefit from a strict adherence to naive logic about what is accurate. We had yet to learn that an unwillingness to exert formative choices produces its own illusions contrary to realistic depiction, and that a subjectivity responsibly applied can work in the service of realism short of the product's becoming impressionistic.

Defining an endpoint. In Figures 8 and 8a the pages illustrated are again relatively untouched compared to many earlier in the same draft. Now more rewriting, primarily for clear syntax; weeding of redundant descriptive markers; exhilaration that the description had come alive to the extent that it had; then just as suddenly, severe doubts of its readability; révision of and second thoughts about the running commentary, which we considered eliminating but didn't. While in fact afraid that the
description did as yet not carry itself, and reluctant to toss away the product of long work, we attributed keeping the commentary to academic requirements for traditional scientific explanation. We dealt with our increasing personal unease about the commentary by temporarily separating it from the body of the manuscript with a highlighting pen and further editing it for concreteness. Finally we made the decision to call the manuscript finished. We delivered copies of it to academic advisors, and not long after sent further revised copy to a freelance editor friend we knew to value the English language above writers' sensitivities.

**Reply from advisors.** For months I had been speaking to two academic advisors in particular -- both supervisors of my clinical work at the Psychological Services Center of the University of Massachusetts -- about the manuscript's progress, searching out their reactions and suggestions (and soliciting their approval) but always stopping short of giving them the manuscript to read. I feared for our project's continued existence, and bargained with those I perceived as skeptics for the time I knew we needed to prove its value and justify its completion through several hundred pages. It was equally true that I ex-
experienced great personal difficulty in making my struggling learning steps public even (and especially) to such trusted intimates whose approval I still had to depend upon for academic accreditation. As a result, they offered their comments and tried to understand this very concrete project on the basis of abstractions -- making clear the ways in which I tied their hands while they simultaneously and patiently attempted to meet my needs insofar as I allowed.

In the responses now of our first outside reader, I first understood him to be suggesting that our comments should be isolated in an appendix to the manuscript, or perhaps placed in a running column beside the description proper. I defended our efforts to integrate the commentary line in the text. I was determined that our research project should be a unified description and had long feared being asked by academicians to break down our results into traditional columns of data. Fortunately, before my tangle of misperceptions hanged me, we took a look together at his written comments in the manuscript.

Early in the work, his notes questioned our inferences -- for example, "But how do you get all this?" or, "It's unclear where all this comes from." Soon the questioning became more pointed, suggesting perfectly plausible inter-
pretations other than and contrary to our own -- for example, he saw learning and joining where we saw competition. Still later in the manuscript, his notations defended the family and the integrity of the description against the interruptions and intrusions of our commentary -- "The tension is there, present in the material. Does your comment make a difference, add anything?" Finally, by manuscript's end, his notes seemed to reflect a quite strong involvement with the family in disregard of our comments, such as, 'Aha! Greg got parents' message. Beautiful." He had found the description effective and involving, but wished we had made more effort to explicitly explain the project's purpose than we had at that time. He criticized the commentary as inaccurate, arbitrary, distracting, and unnecessary. I believe he suggested segregating it rather than removing it in consideration of our evident fondness for it. He certainly wasn't suggesting that we do a more traditional study; further, there was no basis for me to have believed he would object to the lack of precedent for our work, except insofar as we ourselves were afraid to take responsibility for what we had set out to do. He was simply, tactfully urging us to proceed with integrity.

The commentary, I believe in retrospect, was in
several ways as necessary to our first descriptive attempts as the description itself. It contained our anxiety, enabling us gradually and more insightfully to manage the new task of description and its attendant learning. Equally important, it graphically revealed to us the defensive functioning of our explanatory constructs. Only through our own exhaustive experience could we learn convincingly that interpretations are not integral to the events they are invoked to explain, but instead are artifacts of observers' points of view and levels of seeing. Now, as well as earlier and later in describing our work process, I wish to avoid describing as errors or misdirections all those steps which were integral and apparently necessary to our learning.

Cutting the commentary and reworking description reduced the size of the manuscript by some twenty-seven pages out of ninety-six. With the commentary we had thought to provide a coherent narrative accompaniment to the cumulative progression of behavioral events, reveal pervasive psychological/interactional themes of individual growth and intimate relating, illuminate a family as a system, and deepen surface description by discovering from behavior alone how each person in the family saw
unfolding events. In actual impact, our narrative disrupted the delicate progression of vastly slowed time, interfering with continuity. It opaqued and otherwise prevented the reader from freely entering the scene our description was so carefully intended and designed to reveal, and it intruded on the family whose integrity was otherwise plain to see in the immediacy of their relating.

Others read the manuscript after I had discussed with them what we had lately learned. They too found our interpretation distracting. The advisor whom I knew best as a clinical supervisor pointed out how far removed our interpretive consciousness was from the way the family might view their own lives, suggesting that we had a choice among interpretive levels in describing. His comments especially helped bring us in touch both with our difficulty acknowledging our subjective participation in achieving a descriptive likeness to reality as well as our anger that we couldn't remove ourselves from the family's experience the evening of the taping. Most important to us were his understanding and enthusiasm for the project, reflected, for example, by his attention to the description's rhythm and movement and by the report of his personal learning from reading what we had
written. Once again, we found our work helpfully criticized, our wish to develop original research respected, and our efforts to grow personally in relation to our work thoroughly confirmed and aided. I now know the same was true of the input of a third advisor with whom I was too angry then to listen. He criticized our failure to acknowledge and more effectively use our combined subjectivities in describing, but I thought he was complaining that we hadn't learned enough at our present stage of work.

Our last steps at this stage were to eliminate the commentary and expunge from the descriptive structure those related inferences we could identify. We found the commentary to be easily isolated, and gradually discovered less explicit manifestations of it in the physical description. Less revision of the physical description was required than we expected as regards our particular line of theme interference. Form followed theme less often than it conformed to physical and visual necessity. In sum, the commentary, while an intriguing (and inappropriately public) concretization of our emotional and thematic projections, had not so much made our biases explicit as it had acted them out. The appropriate and necessary alternative is a more privately owned and discriminatingly
applied subjectivity, a free-floating self-exploration in
the process of describing.

Figures 9 and 9a illustrate the copy returned to us
by our editor friend, Ellie Kurtz. The pages shown come
from earlier in the manuscript than pages previously
illustrated because Ellie did her heaviest editing on
the first half of the manuscript, after which her remarks
began to repeat themselves and she stopped. Ellie offered
detailed feedback, editing meticulously with attention to
sentence construction and clarity. Qualitatively speak-
ing, she urged, "Punctuate according to the rhythm of
human breathing." Figures 10 and 10a are excerpted from
the final draft of the first eight minutes of dinner.

**Finishing the description.** The third and last stage
of work on the data was to describe the last forty minutes
of the O'Neals' dinner, then bring the first eight minutes
up to date with our new learning. In proceeding with
the balance of the description we worked from our original
audiovisual draft (the same as that shown in Figures 2
and 3). As Figure 11 illustrates, to provide ourselves
with an adequate manuscript from which to work we returned
to the television monitor and enriched the description as
a first step. Here we applied our earlier learnings and
found new ones in the following ways.

First of all, we were less willing than before to sacrifice movement for detail, and described in somewhat broader strokes. Each behavior is less fragmented by the interruptions we had earlier found reasonable to describe simultaneous behaviors. This was true particularly of dialogue, which we were less willing to disrupt at this stage. While the description remains highly detailed in this draft, we began to identify that purportedly random, microscopic exactitude (characterizing part one) which detracts from description's success as realistic representation while pretending to objectivity.

We had learned from our previous experience to provide ourselves with sufficient details in an explicit enough time frame to enable us later to revise freely within some clearly established limits. Maintaining levels of insight and effort required to describe behaviors more globally but still at that level of detail which we were confident would preserve concreteness of imagery and establish the limits of realism was exhausting, but worth the more lifelike result. A side benefit of the attention required to do this was that we memorized the videotape beyond our most ambitious expectations.
There were other benefits gained from describing behaviors in a more global and less fragmented fashion. Behaviors are easier to visualize and integrate when one doesn't have to wait several sentences to see how a behavior begun in one sentence makes physical sense or moves toward a purpose in another (e.g., Steve reaches and picks up the soda bottle, versus "reaches" here in the description and "picks up the soda bottle" there in the description; even saying that he reaches becomes unnecessary once it is clear that he is picking up the soda bottle, and it is known to the reader where he and the bottle are). Also, at this point in the development of our description we were sufficiently absorbed in the physical experience of describing behaviors that our more abstract theories of family psychology entered very little into our effort. Describing behaviors more globally helped us, by making the physical sense of behaviors clearer, to study our interpretive process at a concrete descriptive level.

Related to the choice of levels of description and monitoring of selves at that level, we discovered that an excess of detail may serve more than anything else to drive home our interpretations of family members' feelings and motivations (e.g., unnecessarily repeating mention of
Beth's focus on the butter which she is not being allowed to eat). Similarly, our excessive fragmenting of any given person's movements by prematurely interspersing those of other family members may serve purposes of interpretively pointing to interactions among participants, interactions which are best left to reveal themselves and which do so more readily when imagery is undisrupted.

In sum, earlier in our work we had sought to be objective by including all the detail we could see on videotape. At that time we implicitly wished to deny that this entailed a selective seeing. Instead of increasing the description's objective value, however, pretending to randomness burdened the description with excessive verbiage and with an excess of our unexamined interpretations. Now that we were more readily acknowledging the role of self in describing and maintaining with increasing ease a free-floating consciousness of our own agendas, we could edit and organize detail with some confidence that we did so in the service of realistic representation.

I am quite sure that, with further work on description, more discriminating use of detail will become a pronounced direction. I am confident that this benefits accuracy so long as physical detail remains richly available
in the finished description. Just what "richly available" means will vary with the researchers' purposes. Including too much detail carries problems of excluding those readers who might participate if more were left to fantasy, imposing an excess of researcher interpretations at levels of the concrete where interpretations are hard to recognize and define, and generally making the description more difficult to follow. Too few details in representational description also may exclude the reader by not allowing him access to a rich enough basis for making his own interpretations of events or for questioning those of the researchers. We chose at this stage of our work to keep as much detail as we could without sacrificing the descriptive presence of the family. Where readability suffered from an excess of detail, we tried to solve the problem by rewriting more clearly using the detail we had. We applied our editorial effort to eliminating details that were either redundant or intrusively interpretive. The editorial question of what level of detail best serves the purposes of realistic representation remains for future drafts of the family description and other descriptive applications to follow. Answering this question will require a willingness to experiment further than we yet have.
To deal with behavioral overlap, we established a couple of conventions to help us preserve explicitness of timing among behaviors using fewer "as/while" constructions. One convention was to let paragraphing, within reason, define behavioral simultaneity or clumping. For example, in deciding to keep dialogue as continuous as possible, we elected often to begin paragraphs with someone's initiating dialogue or with shifts in speaker -- a prose convention readers are familiar with and to some extent expect. It was partially in following this convention that we realized the potential of paragraphs to contain and catch the reader up on the behaviors occurring simultaneously with dialogue.

Another convention was to sandwich behaviors unidentified as to timing between time-identified behaviors, in this way establishing the timing of three behaviors for the price of tagging only two. Actually, the organization of behaviors can be managed in more complex ways to make the timing of several explicit without resorting to cumbersome constructions. Much can be done to increase explicitness by relying increasingly on context. Again, we found that our earlier, far less defined decisions about paragraphing had served readability and lifelikeness less than they
highlighted interactions of particular interest to us in idiosyncratic ways more illuminating of who we are than of who the family is.

Finally, nearing completion of this draft we decided not to break for chapters but rather to print a clockface on the typepage at one-minute intervals. This constancy of time in relation to description enables the reader to pace description far better than time indicators at chapter breaks, which signal primarily our own perceptions of transitions.

Figure 12 illustrates the same page of description as we edited it, taking the considerations I have already noted into account. The figure illustrates our greater facility at recognizing and eliminating redundancies. Examples of redundancy are qualifiers like "as he finishes speaking" when the behavior being described clearly follows, or noting repeatedly that someone's corn is in his or her hands, or reiterating a family member's unchanged posture in ways that interrupt the scene's movement by imposing a static picture when the reader who has been visualizing the scene's movement needs no catching up in any case.

We had also learned to let clearly established be-
behavioral sequences work for us. We don't need adverbs like "quickly" which preclude our demonstrating directly what is quick and what is slow. Similarly, in this draft we eliminated virtually all adverbial references to tone of voice. Gestures qualify speech in representational description, and remarkably often enable to reader to "hear." Where accompanying gestures are too imperfectly described to establish inflection, they need revision. When gesture simply cannot compensate for absent para-linguistic cues, then it is time to consider qualifying tone of voice with an adverb.

Most important at this stage is the overall direction of the description toward greater simplicity. The third paragraph in Figure 12 illustrates a simplicity of gesture.11 Working on the description at this stage, pencil

11A master in describing gesture, in less commonplace language, was Wallace Stevens, from whose notebooks Denis Donoghue extracted the following quote for the New York Review of Books (1977, p. 23): "When she [Sarah Bernhardt] came to the soliloquy 'To be or not to be,'" writes Stevens in his notebooks forty-three years after he had seen the performance, "she half turned her back on the audience and slowly weaving one hand in a small circle above her head and regarding it, she said, with deliberation and as from the depths of a hallucination. . . ."
and eraser in hand and having recently read the works of Gombrich and Read, I often felt like a painter with charcoal and chamois. The manuscript was repeatedly edited, erased, and revised for internal consistency and balance at this stage to eliminate costly retyping of drafts.

"Monitor checks" written in the margins of Figure 12, as well as Figures 13 and 13a, alert us later to where we have gone beyond the information on the typepage in revising the ordering of behaviors. On returning to the videotape monitor these locations in the manuscript are checked first. Ultimately the entire written description is checked against the monitor for accuracy at several levels. However, the time does come when this often repeated stage I will discuss in the method summary as that of comparing and revising must give way to another, final stage of revising and polishing. Ultimately the description must stand independently of the original videotape. As description increasingly takes on a life of its own through visualized revisions and monitor comparisons, the step of comparing becomes less salient. Details and their sequence have been well established by repeated checking, and monitor revision comes increasingly to involve gestalt judgements. We then return to detail
primarily where we judge that description has failed to capture the gestalt of the original. Therefore, when I speak of a final stage of polishing I mean concretely that several of the marginally noted monitor check points become irrelevant. This is so because at the polishing stage the effort is no longer made to maintain each and every behavioral and time marker. On the contrary, many of these markers are recognized as guidelines. Once useful and necessary to establish the limits of revision, now that the description is to be called finished many have outlived their usefulness. Decisions must be made of which to keep and which to eliminate.

Figures 13 and 13a illustrate our return to early pages of the manuscript to edit and rewrite in keeping with the description of later parts and the necessity to polish. In returning to these early pages we worked with the manuscript as it stood, without first filling in from the monitor. This was possible because the first eight minutes were not lacking in detail so much as they were stiff both in style and in their pretentions to objectivity. The pages shown are the same content as those in Figures 1 to 10 (Figure 9 an exception). Figures 13 and 13a provide clear examples of our decision to make
dialogue as whole as possible, short of dissociating it from accompanying nonverbal behaviors of the speaker and other family members. I have noted how conventions of paragraphing aided us in this.

Note in this example of Joanne's speech and Steve's interjections, as well as the integration of other behaviors with speech, just how much flexibility we have to reorder behaviors within the time frame we have pragmatically chosen as our level of reasonable accuracy for achieving lifelikeness. Again, our late work on the description, even more than that which came before, brings into focus this most salient decision the researcher has to make to his or her own satisfaction in describing. That is, what level of physical detail and what level of explicitness regarding when behaviors occur best serve representational description's requirements of clear, undisrupted imagery. The greater the visibility of description, the more reliably and efficiently the description communicates information. Our own decisions about behavioral detail and time guidelines have been conservative, perhaps at some expense to the ready visibility of the description.
Method Summary

In relating our experience of writing *Family at Dinner*, I have tried to convey our personalized development of a research method of the sort that does not lend itself to rigid systematization. There are, however, some basic precepts the descriptive researcher may cautiously evaluate. Essentially the same thing Gombrich says of representational painting can be translated to apply to written description, that "Trial and error, long experience in the ways of paint, is the only way to arrive at these discoveries" (p. 309). Rather late in our process, our reading of Gombrich helped us put words to and further refine what we were doing. I hope that others considering doing descriptive research or really qualitative research of any order will gain a headstart and avoid some pitfalls along the way by reading of our experience. Our direct learning as I've reported it, together with its more conceptual introduction, should persuade qualitative researchers who haven't already done so to reconsider their prejudices against subjective process.

First, then, it is necessary to overcome naive beliefs in achieving objectivity by repressing self. This theme
will run through all I have to say. The task is not to forget oneself, but to use oneself optimally since it is through the researcher and only through him or her that the reader sees. For example, one of the more tenacious signatures of scientific writing to overcome in doing representational description is the explaining of behaviors and relationships. To persist in explaining, perhaps in a belief that science must be authoritative, is to forget that interaction is multifaceted. Explanations, however clever or well grounded, close off an infinite number of possible interpretations both the writer and the reader will recognize in keeping with their idiosyncratic interests and needs, and in general preclude description of behaviors and the natural emergence of complex relationships. We chose to describe at all only because we believed doing so would open more interpretations than it closed by making audiovisual data substantially more available than in normal viewing.

In describing, one has to, in a manner of speaking, be full of himself, staying maximally aware of his own needs and concepts as these impinge on description in every choice of word, image, and grammatical construction. The development of free-floating attention is necessary to
determine if one's interpretations are more in the service of data or self. Accompanying this attention, in order to put literary skills to the service of realism, there must exist a healthy measure of impulse control together with a clear recognition and owning of that impulse. It is not direct comment alone which explains inappropriately in description. The researcher finds an infinite number of ways to point to relationship messages he is pleased with having identified. All such comment on the typepage is a weakening of the integrity and purposes of description. All such freedom of the researcher to comment privately in conscious fantasy or working relationships is a strengthening of the integrity and purpose of description to inform openly.

This is not to say that theoretical and emotional recognitions should not find their way into description. I would suggest, however, that if this happens often at the level of interpersonal relations, systems dynamics, or other abstract theorizing, then the already sufficiently demanding task of describing and comparing concretely to create the illusion of lifelikeness is almost certainly being forgotten or, more likely, avoided. The task of describing several people's physical behavior at one time
in workable sequence is so demanding that this is where the researcher's attention remains if the task is being engaged. The descriptive researcher's questions about the data are not in regard to abstract theories and their adequacy to predict behavior, although this might be a perfectly appropriate agenda for the reader of the finished description. The researcher attempting to describe asks questions, for example, about whether behaviors and sequences of behaviors proceed to an endpoint that makes sense of them. He or she asks whether the pepper shaker is on the table near to or far from the salt shaker, whether someone's speaking follows or precedes his being spoken to, whether someone's sharply looking up follows or precedes someone's gesture, and whether someone's commenting, "God! Is it hot!" follows or precedes her looking at the bar of butter in the butter dish.

There is a lengthy sequence in the family description to follow (pp. 198 - 215) in which Beth, the little girl of the family, plays with two forks. As she presses down on the fork prongs and the fork handles rise, or she lets up and they fall, she comments, "up," or "down," or some such, with increasing accuracy to the movement of the fork handles as distinguished from the opposite movement of her
hands on the prongs. Her achievement of insight about this difference, then its apparently deliberate application and variation, are accompanied by visible excitement. This description, now, of her learning and accompanying affect is highly inferential, and although I have some confidence in its accuracy I also know that a lot beside learning is going on and that only behavioral description of greater detail and fuller context tells a fuller story. The point I wish to make here is that at the time we wrote and revised the description we were too busy capturing Beth's and others' behaviors visually to guess from cognitive developmental or learning theory what behaviors to expect -- although doing so later may be valuable and fun for ourselves and others. Instead, staying with the task at hand, we did ask questions about whether the fork handles were up or down when Beth said "up" or "down," and in this made the effort to be accurate to these changing details and their timing for whatever informational value they might have in themselves, for the rest of the description, and for the description's readers. Our special interests in learning did inform us that these were useful details, but as details of a sufficiently gross level they are not likely to be blurred or lost in this
kind of description in any case.

If the researcher's deliberate purpose in attempting description is to relate behaviors to more abstract theoretical or relational constructs than those given in example, then he faces a wholly different task from that I am addressing in this thesis. Describing visually and concretely by repeated observation and comparison is not only a complex enough task in itself, but also in attempting it one's personal theories and wishes are constantly crossed by an unyielding reality and one's associations get quite stirred up. To test a whole separate realm of investment at the same time, I think, is likely to be taking on too much at once. I value concrete descriptive research for its power to revise the researcher's awareness at many levels, its ability to communicate information of many kinds to readers at the readers' own pace, and for its unabating, increasing pains and pleasures. I can also imagine wishing to test various theoretical hypotheses against finished description by formal methods as well as in memory, but I would not want to confuse the two research processes which I see as having quite different means and ends.

Returning to the question of how theoretical and
emotional recognitions do find their way into realistic description to description's benefit, it is accurate to say that formative choice -- the determining of what in description is visually immediate or isn't, which is to say makes physical sense or doesn't -- constantly calls into play the researcher's thoughts and feelings. For example, the researcher takes into account the continual interaction effects of behaviors upon one another. As with color spreading and other effects the representational painter discovers and puts to use, in written description the appearance of every behavior is effected by the impact of surrounding behaviors and, likewise, the total impact of description is effected by how each behavior is described. Minor revision in the description of one behavior, or change in its location within paragraph or page, can and usually does change all description around it, necessitating further revisions toward achieving a balanced, accurate whole. Visualizability and its cousin readability are physical, which is to say emotional, judgments. Decisions of wording, choreography, and descriptive ordering are physical projections of the researcher onto data. Timing, pervading everything, is a physical judgement. As family behavior comes alive in description, it
is difficult to separate family mood from one's own working state of, for example, distraction, anxiety, happiness, excitement, boredom, or exhaustion. Therefore, it is particularly important to make time relations explicit in working draft despite how cumbersome and restricting as-while constructions can be. Establishing unobtrusive conventions of time and sequence which can substitute for these constructions will help to make the timing of behaviors integral to the description. Later, when the description is nearly complete, cumbersome constructions which served as guidelines are polished from it, much as the designer drawing lettering later erases his pencilled guidelines. The reader is then left to rely more on the description's internal construction and pacing for clarity of time frame.

The qualitative judgements I am speaking of relate directly to the internal integrity of the description and indirectly to its likeness to the videotape. What this means in terms of application is that questions are asked much more about the written description than about the data to which the description is only later compared at various levels. Typical questions would be about the description's adequacy where the writer, on rereading,
senses that an adverb is lacking (e.g., how do the behaviors convey "distractedly" without recourse to an adverb); whether tone of voice is adequately conveyed by gesture; whether, on reading, one doesn't know where this or that person is looking or which hand the person is using; whether pacing that is distracting in description reflects the same in the original or an error in translation (the researcher puts a question mark and notation of his concern in the margin); and so on, for there is no end to the questions.

I wish to emphasize that visualizing from the typescript in the absence of the video monitor is essential to the success of the descriptive task, for one has to build the description visually and only then compare it against the data from which it was initially drawn. This procedure of relying on memory, imagination, and sense of physical rightness in relation to the typescript, followed by comparison and revision of the typescript against the data on the monitor, is applied repeatedly. If the original draft from the video monitor is rigorous enough—that is, if it contains sufficient detail and supplies abundant time indicators—then revision of the typescript takes place within reasonably clear limits and one will
not go far afield of the data. On the contrary, the researcher will be surprised how revising description for greater visibility creates an increasingly adequate representation of reality. One has to stay in touch with and trust one's "gut" in order to work at a distance from the videotape. On returning to the tape later one often encounters frustration of one's sense of reality or wishes for how behavior should appear. Often enough, however, one discovers pleasurable reassurance that description of even very complex data can make visual sense. As the description develops more complexly and details have been checked and rechecked many times, comparative study becomes increasingly one of making qualitative or gestalt judgements, complicated by the researcher's developing perceptual set toward the data, until finally the description has to stand by itself, independently of the data.

Such work tangibly impresses the researcher with the fact that personal expression and seeing are not separable. If a researcher attempts to describe objectively, following rigorous rules of application that protect him from the responsibilities of his formative choices by squelching those choices, he will come up with nothing objective but
at best stick people lacking the flesh and feeling of human experience. We tried to discover such rules, but learned that the researcher has to establish his own conventions of style and standards of realism. Subjectivity of vision does not preclude establishing and striving for rigorous standards of representational accuracy. As a matter of fact, trying to represent data holistically, in its greatest lifelikeness, is a most demanding research standard.

It should be noted that, in what I have said about making formative choices in description, I have spoken of establishing and retaining explicit time relations among behaviors in working draft. These are the limits within which the application of a free imagination improves the realism of description to the scene being described. Particularly when the researcher experiences private theme interference, or the data seem to pull for analogizing\(^\text{12}\) and the descriptions of patterns of relating are becoming as self-conscious as stage acting in film,

\(^{12}\)"Cutting on analogies, extreme differences, and rhythms... [diverts] audience attention from the substance of the images to their formal characteristics" (Kracauer, 1960, p. 207).
then one is grateful for unambiguous details.

Lastly, it is important to say something about closeness and distance from description. Imagine the impressionist painter -- Van Gogh painting the center of a sunflower or Monet a waterlilly -- and contrast such intense proximity to the parallel necessity for the artist to step back and inspect the full impression of his painting and its illusion of lifelikeness. That moving in close and stepping back reflects a concern for the vividness required to approximate life. It may be difficult to persuade viewers, or readers, or scientists to step back. The impressionists had a most difficult time getting the viewers of their paintings to accept the impression of the whole made from such curious parts. It was not by chance that we entitled our scientific effort as a painting is entitled.

I will offer the simple caution that when one gets concrete, as in representational description, there are worse hazards than that noted earlier of readers yawning and asking, "So what?" The more serious hazards are those of intimacy and concommitant learning about self, and I will relate this specifically to Gombrich's statement that in representational art illusion is more the
norm than the exception, a statement equally true of written description. Just as one has to get close to describe detail, one has to step back to view its organization. When one does so, the surprises abound, and, as psychologists, it is difficult and often unwise to view surprises as coincidental to what one means to say. People in description look so foolish sometimes -- the way one says they smiled, literally kicked themselves, licked their hands -- that on rereading one has to wonder whose ox is being gored. At one point, in the midst of three-year-old Beth's flailing, we described her father's picking up the sixty-four-ounce Coke bottle by the neck. When we read the sequence from a greater distance the soda bottle much too closely resembled Beth. The hazards and pleasures of writing physical description include such minor illusions as well as a most extraordinary and increasing sense of intimacy with the people one is describing. Both have power to reveal hidden feelings of the researcher.

Figure 14 graphs our research process as far as we

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13 The New York Times Book Review's "Bookend" column recently ran several such unintentional illusions from rejected stories, including the example: "Roger watched helplessly from his study while his stomach tied itself in knots."
have taken it, and by now should be nearly self-explanatory. Step 1, "observe repeatedly and write," is the equivalent of Gombrich's (1960) first step of making a standard for comparison. Step 2, "visualize and revise," and Step 3, "compare and revise," refer to an alternating process of making and matching by which description is developed in relation to its own and the data's requirements. Comparative judgements become increasingly judgements of the gestalt. Where the gestalt impression is judged faulty or lacking, the researcher returns to levels of intricate detail. Eventually, the description stands sufficiently on its own to undergo Step 4, "visualize and polish."
CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION

Introductory Meeting

Steve and Joanne O'Neal didn't ask many questions about our request to videotape their family at dinner. We explained the record would be used anonymously as research material for our doctoral dissertations in clinical psychology and probably in a later publication. Our work would be a written description. They responded that they trusted Brian, whom they knew as a friend of Steve's sister.

Steve, age thirty at the time of the taping, has lived in New England all his life, moving when he was twelve to the town where he and Joanne are living. At age twenty-four he received his bachelor's degree from a nearby state university and a year later began his present job teaching retarded children. He was in school and working nights for the first two years of his marriage. Joanne, also thirty, was born in the town where she and Steve live. She attended a different state college from which she received a bachelor's degree at age twenty-two. Joanne stays home with their two children while Steve commutes to his job twenty
miles away. Prior to their marriage she worked for four years in a local factory; following marriage she did part-time tutoring and worked weekend mornings in a coffee shop until two years after the birth of their first child. Their annual income when we met with them in August 1974 was $9100.

Joanne is the third in a family of five children, Steve the second of four. They were married early in 1966 following an engagement of a year and a half. Their children are Greg, seven years and eight months, and Beth, two years and ten months. They own a large hound named Holmes, whom they brought into the family when Greg was a year and a half old.

Our introductory meeting with Steve and Joanne around the dinner table in their apartment followed two phone calls, the first between Brian and Joanne while Steve was out and the second between Brian and Steve, who invited us to visit and talk further about our plans. They were interested in our offer of a hundred dollar participation fee, which they said would help them pay for a forthcoming family vacation. In the course of discussion they and we agreed on a contract guaranteeing their privacy, and they expressed their concern that the record should be authentic. Joanne suggested we start the camera five or ten minutes before the meal to cap-
ture the full dinner scene typical in their home. Steve thought the camera might make them self-conscious. We explained there would be at least one trial run to help them become accustomed to the camera and lights. Both were clearly excited about participating and said the children were too. We met Greg and Beth in passing as they wandered in from outdoor play.

We had a beer with Joanne and Steve, who talked with us mostly about things other than the taping such as the Vietnam war and their vacation plans. Then Joanne showed us around their new apartment, into which they had moved four months earlier. Our tour took us the length of an inexpensively furnished living room connected to the dining room by a wide doorway; up the stairs extending from a hallway and front door at the end of the living room furthest from the dining room; past a bathroom on the right at the top of the staircase and into the bedroom shared by the children. Next door was Steve and Joanne's room. A child's drawing lying on the foot of the bed captured our attention. Joanne explained this was a movie poster copied by Greg, who, like Steve, is interested in old movies. The unfinished poster read, verbatim, "A Family Affair and Your only young on[ce]." Next door to Joanne and Steve's room we entered
a small third bedroom presently used for storage. We decided we would later set up the video equipment here. Back downstairs, Joanne showed us the second bathroom and kitchen, both adjoining the dining room on the right as one enters from the living room. A back door leads off the kitchen to a lawn behind the apartment building.

We thanked them, left a check, and arranged to return a week later, on August 23, for the trial-run taping and August 24 for a second, working record.
Two television lights on telescoping stands reach almost to the ceiling in the front corners of the dining room, casting hot golden light off the walls and ceiling. A warm breeze, blowing through the back doorway and open windows, stirs the floral window curtains which have been pulled closed to cut glare.

On a tripod in the living room a small color-video camera is aimed through the wide entranceway toward the dining room. The camera perspective includes all of the dining area. After focusing the camera, Brian waits in the front hall of the O'Neals' apartment while in the storage room upstairs Jeff checks on the television monitor to see that the sound and television recorders are running properly. We plan to start the videotaping, then leave for our own dinner while the O'Neals eat theirs in front of the stationary camera.
From camera perspective, the curtained windows are on the left and far walls of the dining room. Against the left wall is a small bookcase filled with books. On the far wall a planter hangs inside the curtains in the center of the window. The right-hand wall has two doorways, with a side table and a wall clock between them. The door nearest the living room leads to a bathroom. The doorway furthest from the living room leads to the kitchen, where Steve and Joanne are making dinner.

In the center of the dining room, beneath a five-globed ceiling fixture, a rectangular, orange-brown maple table is set with four white china plates. Four armless, dark-oak chairs are placed around the table. We have put the chairs two at the left, one at the far end, and one at the right of the table, leaving the front end of the table open. A microphone hangs from the ceiling light well above eye level of anyone sitting down. Children can be heard playing outdoors.

In front and to the left of the table on the wood-tiled floor lies Holmes, a large, short-haired hound with floppy ears and a white spot high on the chest of his brown coat. He is looking toward the front hall with his head tilted to his right and his left ear cocked.
A sharp ringing of glasses comes from the kitchen. "Let's go, Jeff," Brian says from the front hall. Holmes lifts his ear higher. Brian is waiting by the front door while Jeff hesitates halfway down the stairs.

Joanne walks from the kitchen into the dining room with a butter dish in her right hand, salt and pepper shakers in her left, and a roll of paper towels under her right arm. Her blouse, white with an abstract print of yellow and green flowers, hangs out in front and is tucked into the back of her knee-length blue denim shorts. She is barefoot. "Okay, we, we'll see you guys after, huh?" she calls, looking at the table as she walks toward it. Holmes turns his head slightly to his left toward her. Stopping beside the table, she reaches across and puts the salt and pepper shakers near the plate closest to the open end, then pauses with her hand still on them. Her straight brown hair, parted in the middle and cut a few inches below shoulder length, falls forward to the right of her face and spreads over her left shoulder.

"Okay," Brian answers from the front hall.

Taking the butter dish from her right hand, she puts it at the center of the table. She straightens up and turns to her left, smiling and looking into the living room.
as she steps back and walks around the chair at the right of the table. Her face is long, with strong features, and she is medium height and broadly built. "Enjoy your dinner," she says, touching the roll of paper towels with her left hand as she walks toward the living room. Holmes looks up at her as she walks past the front end of the table, then behind her as she walks by him. With her left hand in front of her waist she looks around the camera and smiles, then takes the roll of towels in both hands and walks into the living room.

Holmes looks toward the front hall as Brian asks Jeff, "It looks fine to the left?"

Walking back into the dining room, Joanne tears off a towel and tucks the roll under her right arm. Holmes looks up at her, then past her into the living room as she walks toward the right side of the table folding the paper towel with both hands.

"Um, go upstairs one more second," Jeff answers.

Holmes looks up at Joanne and back to the living room as she stops behind the chair at the right of the table, turning the towel in her hands. She looks into the living room as Brian says, "I think it's fine," then down at the paper towel, folding it again. She leans
over the back of the chair and puts the towel beside the plate with her left hand, looks back at it as she steps sideways to her right, then glances at the roll of towels under her arm. Stepping forward to the far right corner of the table, Joanne rips off another towel and folds it. Holmes looks under the table toward the wall between the kitchen and bathroom.

"Boy, this looks like great corn," Steve says in the kitchen behind her.

"Um, I know it," she says, folding the towel again. She puts it by the plate at the head of the table, adjusts it, and says, "I picked--"

"Where'd you get it?" he asks. Holmes looks under the table toward the kitchen.

"--tried to pick out some light ears," she finishes after he does. As she's speaking she steps back from the table and half turns to her left toward the kitchen, glancing in his direction, then at the paper towels as she tears off another.

"Yeah, they really are, they're nice," he says.

"Bye. ...See you later," we call out from the front hall.

Folding the towel, Joanne glances toward the living
room and calls, "Yup," then turns the towel. Facing the far right corner of the table, she folds the towel again. Holmes looks away from the kitchen to the wall at the right. "Enjoy your dinner," she says. She leans past the plate at the head of the table as she finishes speaking, puts the napkin next to the plate beside it, then glances at the plate closer to the front of the table and reaches back to the roll of towels.

"Thanks," Jeff says from the front hall. Holmes looks up toward the hall as Joanne steps back from the table and looks at the towels, tearing off another one and sticking the roll under her right arm. Moving back beside the chair to her left, she leans forward against the table and looks down, folding the towel in half. Banging noise comes from the kitchen behind her. The front door can be heard closing as we leave. Joanne leans further over the table, puts a napkin beside the last plate, and adjusts it twice. Stepping back and turning around to her left, she glances at the table over her right shoulder, then walks toward the kitchen. She takes the paper towels in both hands as she leaves the dining room.

Sounds come from the kitchen of things being moved
about. A cupboard door bangs shut.

"So, they even got Holmes last night," says Joanne.

"What do I put this corn into?" Steve interrupts at the same time as Holmes turns his head toward the kitchen. His question is followed by more clattering.

"Isn't there any plastic bowl?" Joanne asks.

Holmes looks toward the living room as Steve mutters, "Yes, let's see..." The banging increases, then stops and a cupboard door bangs.

"They got Holmes last night," Joanne says.

Steve again speaks before Joanne finishes and as Holmes looks back toward the kitchen. "You don't want to eat too much, you want to go out and finish this one here, because, it's going to be a long time since you wanted it ready, isn't it?" he asks.

While he's speaking Joanne walks into the dining room with silverware in both hands. Stopping at the head of the table, she puts a fork from her right hand to the left of the plate, then with both hands slides plate, napkin, and fork a little to the right. She breathes in deeply as Steve finishes, then asks, "What's that?" Pausing as she's setting a knife to the right of the plate, she half turns her head
to the kitchen.

"This corn -- I mean this hamburger," Steve answers.

Lifting the knife a few inches above the table, Joanne drops it next to the plate, then looks at him through the kitchen doorway and takes another knife from her left hand as he continues.

"Never even took -- it isn't even started already," he says, walking into the room with a bowl filled with corn on the cob in his left hand.

Joanne looks at the table, then steps and leans in front of him to the place setting at the table's right. Putting a fork down and adjusting the napkin with her left hand, she says without looking up, "No, it's not going to start that now -- you know, it won't take long." In mid-sentence she puts a knife from her right hand beside the plate and pulls her left arm out of his way.

"Where's Greg?" he asks while she's speaking. Stopping behind the chair and reaching around her with the cornbowl in his left hand, he lifts his right foot and reaches his right arm behind him, leaning sideways over the chair back. He is barefoot, broadly built, and wears a horizontally striped, short-sleeved pullover shirt outside his pants.

Joanne steps to her right and takes a fork from her left
hand as he puts the cornbowl down near the head of the table. "I think he was upstairs," she answers, looking across the table at the place setting on the far left, next to the head of the table. Footsteps sound on the floor above as she's speaking, and Holmes looks into the living room.

Steve steps back from the table and walks toward the living room while she reaches across the table and puts the fork down. Steve's wavy brown hair is collar-length and falls over the right side of his forehead. He has heavy eyebrows and deep-set eyes, a full mustache turning down at the ends, and a wide face. "Hey, Greg?" he calls. He tugs his shirt down, then lowers his arms to his sides as he walks toward the living room. Holmes looks up at him, then past him into the living room as Joanne, at the far right of the table, glances down and takes another fork from her left hand. Reaching down the table, she puts it next to the last plate.

"What?" Greg asks from upstairs.

"Come on and eat some corn. It's nice and hot," Steve calls back, turning around and walking toward the kitchen. Joanne at the same time steps away from the table and looks it over, rubbing the left side of her mouth with her right hand. "Yup," she says, turning to her left and pre-
ceding Steve into the kitchen.

"Okay," says Greg over his rapid footsteps on the stairs.

"Hey, Beth," Joanne calls as she walks into the kitchen.

Holmes turns his head toward her.

"Beth, you want some corn?" Steve calls out, tugging his shirt down at the left as he walks behind Joanne into the kitchen.

"No," Beth answers from the backyard.

Lying in front of the table, Holmes glances to his right, then looks back toward the kitchen as Beth answers and Greg walks in from the living room. Greg is stocky and wears a long-sleeved pullover shirt tucked into hiking shorts. His wavy, dirty-blond hair is cut below his ears. Looking at the table as he walks barefoot toward it, he tugs his shorts up in front with both hands.

"Corn...," Joanne calls to Beth from the kitchen.

"Corn -- corn on the cob!" Steve exclaims.

"No," says Beth.

"Come on, 'cause we want to get to the drive-in," Steve continues in the kitchen while in the dining room Greg slows and stops at the front end of the table. He rests his left forearm on the table and looks at the bowl of corn while Holmes continues to look toward the kitchen.
Walking in looking at the far end of the table, Joanne says, "Yeah, hurry up, Greg." She points her right hand to the first chair across from her as Greg ducks his head and wipes his forehead with his right sleeve. Looking up at her, he takes a step back and drops his arms to his sides. Holmes looks into the living room, then back at the kitchen as the kitchen screen door bangs shut. Stopping next to the chair at the head of the table, Joanne brings her right hand to her mouth, turns to Greg, and licks her fingers.

"Come on," Steve continues in the kitchen. "We gotta eat so we can get to the drive-in."

Greg walks to his left in the direction Joanne pointed, grasping the table corner behind him with his right hand as he looks down at Holmes and slows. Standing up, Holmes walks under the table toward the kitchen. Joanne lowers her hand from her mouth and steps sideways to her left as Greg starts to move. Walking toward the living room, she looks past him as he drops his right hand from the table and looks at the chair nearest him, then glancing down and putting her hand on the back of the chair to the right of the table, she steps out of the way of Holmes as he brushes the backs of her legs on his way to the kitchen.

"I want," Beth says as Steve finishes speaking.
"See 'Dumbo...','" Steve continues.

Holmes walks into the kitchen as Greg stops beside the chair to the left at the front end of the table and looks at the bowl of corn, taking hold of the end of the table with his right hand. Sliding onto the outside corner of the chair, he glances at the place setting in front of him and back at the cornbowl as Joanne slows at the threshold of the dining room. Biting her lower lip, she looks around the camera, then continues into the living room.

"I want something wet, Daddy," Beth says in the kitchen.

Still holding onto the table end, Greg reaches to the cornbowl near the head of the table.

"All right, yeah," Steve says before Beth finishes, "you can have something wet." Greg touches the corn three times and lifts his hand away. "What do you want?"

"Chocolate milk."

Sitting up and taking hold of the edge of the table to the left of his plate with both hands, Greg looks at the chair to the left of him, then back at the cornbowl as Joanne walks back in from the living room. "Hey, you know what?" she asks, looking ahead of her as she walks toward the kitchen. "Last night this thing..."

"You want chocolate milk or you want soda?" Steve asks
Beth.

Greg, shaggy-banged and round-cheeked, looks up at Joanne as she stops speaking and looks at him, then he watches her as she slows and looks at him again. Stopping at the table corner across from him, she turns and points her left hand at his face. "Go wash up, Greg," she says.

"Soda," says Beth while Joanne is speaking.

"Okay," says Steve.

Greg ducks his head, wiping his mouth with his right sleeve and watching Joanne. "You look all sticky and icky," she says, pointing from his face to his hands and shifting from one foot to another toward the kitchen.

"Yeah, Greg, go wash up," Steve says from the kitchen while she's speaking.

Pushing down on the table with both palms and looking at the floor, Greg stands as Joanne and Steve finish speaking. He pulls his left foot from between the table and chair while he looks down at his right hand, turning up his palm and spreading his fingers. Closing his hand into a fist, he pushes his chair back with his leg, trips and recovers, then looks up to his left at Joanne as he walks in a wide half circle around her to the bathroom, his arms swinging at his sides and his hands fisted.
"Yup. . . .," Steve says to Beth in the kitchen.

"Go!" Joanne tells Greg, and snaps the fingers of her right hand as he trips. Still pointing with her left index finger, she follows him while he walks around her into the bathroom.

". . . take a glass here," Steve tells Beth. He walks into the dining room twisting the cap off a sixty-four ounce Coke bottle.

"Yeah. . . .," Joanne says, turning to Steve. ". . . and wash your face too, will ya?" she adds over her shoulder to Greg, who is in the bathroom. She walks toward Steve. Leaning over the table, he puts the soda bottle to the left of the plate at the table's head and the cap next to it. He turns away from the table and looks at her, then she turns and walks ahead of him to the kitchen. Putting his right hand on his stomach as he makes way for her, Steve belches, then lowers his head and lifts his right fist to his mouth, following her into the kitchen.

Water begins to run in the bathroom. Holmes at the same time enters the dining room from the kitchen, walking along the far wall under the windows toward his bowl in the corner. Beth wanders in barefoot just after him and walks toward the table, her right hand to her mouth and her face
turned to the living room. Her blonde hair curls at her shoulders and falls across her forehead in a wave that accentuates her blue eyes. She wears a simple green dress trimmed in white and cut above her knees. Looking ahead of her with her fingers still in her mouth, she continues toward the table as Holmes reaches his bowl, then stops a few feet from the table and turns around to her right toward the kitchen.

Turning away from the kitchen and staggering backward a step, she lowers her hand from her mouth and again walks toward the table. Holmes lifts his head from his bowl and turns around to his left. Looking across at the chairs on the opposite side of the table, Beth bumps into the table edge with her chest and walks unsteadily to her right as Holmes sniffs the edge of the table opposite her and turns away to his left. Tail wagging, Holmes walks around the far end of the table toward the kitchen as Beth, looking down, walks to his left in the other direction. As Greg turns the water off in the bathroom, Beth toddles around the far left corner of the table looking ahead of her at the nearest chair.

"I want to go to the drive-in," Steve whispers loudly from the kitchen while Beth places her left hand on the
table corner and her right on the chair seat, climbing onto the chair. Turning her face toward the kitchen, she lifts her left knee onto the seat and pulls herself up as Steve walks in with a glass in each hand. He walks to the left of Holmes, who turns at the kitchen doorway and walks toward the living room with his tail wagging.

"What did you say?" Greg calls out from the bathroom.

"All right," Joanne says from the kitchen at the same time.

Steve stops at the head of the table and puts both glasses to the right of his place setting. Beth holds onto the corner of the table with her left hand and pulls both knees onto the seat, then straightens up and looks at the glasses.

"What did you say, Mom?" Greg asks, walking out of the bathroom.

"I said I want to get to that drive-in," Steve answers before Greg finishes, bending to his left and lifting the Coke bottle in both hands.

Working herself to a standing position on the chair seat as Steve begins pouring soda, Beth glances up at Greg coming out of the bathroom, then looks at her feet as he walks across the room toward his chair, looking down the
table at her. Crossing in front of Holmes, who is walking
toward the living room, Greg continues to watch her. Putting
his right hand on the table corner beside the chair he
sat in earlier, he says, **"I know, but Mommy, what did you
say?"** As Greg finishes his question and half turns toward
the kitchen, Beth stands on the chair seat. Balancing with
her left hand and holding the chair back with her right,
she looks at her feet as she totters
across the seat toward him.

"I said wash your face, because you
look all hot," Joanne answers from the
kitchen. Beth puts her left, then her right foot on the
chair seat beside Greg and faces the table, looking down at
the plate.

"I know, I know," Greg says before Joanne finishes,
gleaming down at Beth's bare feet as he slips between the
chair and the table. "But what did you say before that?"
Looking past Beth, he sits on her feet with a grinding move-
ment.

"No!" Beth yells. Looking at her feet, she retreats
sideways to the chair at her left, then stares at Greg while
Steve continues pouring soda.

Holding the table end with his right hand, Greg slides
further onto the chair and looks up at Beth. "You sit there and you'll get dinner," he says, glancing at Joanne walking in from the kitchen and lowering his voice, then back at Beth, pulling his right leg in between the chair and the table.

"No!" Beth whines before Greg finishes, turning toward the table, then back toward him.

Resting the Coke bottle to his left, Steve holds it with his left hand and glances at Greg and Beth. As Joanne walks in behind him he reaches to the glass he's been pouring into and waits for the foam to go down, then lifts the bottle in both hands and continues pouring.

"All right, kids...," Joanne says, gesturing with her right hand palm-down as she walks to the table. She stops behind her chair, looking at Beth and Greg. Standing on the chair seat to Greg's left, Beth glares down at him. Looking up at her, Greg holds onto the table corner and table edge as he positions himself forward in his chair, then rests his left wrist beside his plate and watches Steve pour soda.

Joanne turns her right hand palm-up and looks at Beth. "You guys can switch chairs," she says. "You don't have to sit in the same..."
"Eh! Uh! No!" Beth yells, flailing her right hand at Greg, then touches the back of the chair she's standing on and continues to glare at him. Greg looks sharply up at Beth as she flails, then continues to watch her while Joanne turns to him, then to Beth.

Shifting from her left foot to her right, Joanne puts both hands on the back of her chair and turns back to Greg. Holmes walks in from the living room toward Greg and Beth with his tail swinging. "Aw, Greg, come on," Joanne says, taking her left hand off the chair back and gesturing him to his left. Holmes sniffs under the chair Greg is sitting on and continues toward his bowl.

"Why do you have to have the same chair?" Steve asks at the same time, lifting his head a little and laughing. He puts the Coke bottle to the right of the glasses as Greg stands up between the chair and the table.

Joanne watches Greg and Beth with both hands on the back of her chair. Looking down in front of him, Greg takes hold of the corner of the table to his left and pulls himself over; Beth holds onto the chair backs with her right hand and walks across the seats behind him, watchful of her footing. Leaning his right palm on the edge of the table, Steve at the same time reaches with the full glass of soda
toward the place setting Greg is leaving and Beth is taking.

"Rats," Greg says quietly as he sits down and looks at the chair to his right. Still holding the table corner with his left hand, he looks at the Coke bottle.

"Has it got your name on it?" Steve asks, putting the glass of soda in front of Beth, then looking at Greg and reaching back for the bottle. While Steve is speaking, Beth stoops and bends forward, resting her hands on the edge of the table to either side of her plate and lowering first her left then her right leg in front of her chair, sitting as Steve lifts the Coke bottle in both hands and pours into the second glass. Settling in her chair, Beth turns to Greg as he looks back and forth between his glass and hers. In the far left corner of the room, Holmes lowers his head to his bowl.

Lifting her right hand off the back of her chair and pushing her hair away from her right temple, Joanne glances at Greg and Steve, then looks at Beth and steps to the left of the chair. Leaning forward against the table, she reaches for Beth's plate with her left hand, then looks down the table and reaches for the cornbowl as she pulls Beth's plate a few inches closer, asking, "Here, want me --- Mommy to fix your corn?" Beth looks from Greg to her plate,
then puts her left hand on her glass and watches Joanne reach for the corn.

"That's Jamaica corn," says Greg. Turning from Steve, who is pouring the soda, Greg looks at Beth's plate, then at Beth. She takes her glass in both hands and looks over it at Joanne as Joanne puts an ear of corn on the plate. Holmes leaves his bowl and walks behind Steve's chair toward the kitchen.

"Do you want to try to fix your own, Greg?" Steve asks. He stops pouring and puts the bottle between his and Joanne's plates.

"What?" Greg asks, turning to his left and taking hold of his glass. Leaning forward, he looks from the glass in his left hand brimming with foam to Steve's right hand as Steve lets go of the Coke bottle and reaches to the corn-bowl. Still bent over the table, Joanne looks back at her place setting and touches her napkin with her left hand as she searches with her right hand for her knife.

"Your own corn?" asks Steve, picking through the ears in the bowl while Holmes comes around the table to his left and looks up at him.

"Yeah," Greg answers, nodding and leaning further forward with his left hand on his glass.
Holmes looks toward the kitchen as Steve pulls an ear of corn from the bowl. "Here's a" -- Steve drops the corn in the bowl and picks it up again -- "nice light ear," he says, dropping it quickly on Greg's plate.

"Can I have a little more soda?" Greg interrupts.

"This is really hot," says Joanne at the same time. Taking her knife in her right hand, she reaches her left toward Beth's plate, then hesitates and reaches for the butter dish at the center of the table. Drinking her soda, Beth watches over the glass as Joanne pulls the butter dish closer and takes some with the knife.

Joanne turns to Beth's corn and spreads butter on it, turning the corn with her left hand, while Steve picks up the soda bottle in both hands and pours more into Greg's glass. Nodding, he says, "Yes, I, I wanted the foam to go down." Leaning forward with his left hand around his glass, Greg watches Steve while Beth, her glass to her mouth, watches Joanne butter the corn.

"Go ahead, you can fix your own corn," Steve says while he pours. Holmes looks from the kitchen to the table, then walks behind Joanne's chair. Sitting up without letting go of his glass, Greg glances at his place setting, then looks across the table and reaches his right hand for his fork.
"Here, Beth," says Joanne. She butters quickly as Greg, holding his fork in his right hand with its prongs straight up, continues to look around the table. Taking her glass from her mouth, Beth looks at her plate, then turns sharply toward Greg as he waggles his fork in the air and reaches with it toward the butter dish. While Beth cranes her neck, watching the fork in Greg's right hand, Steve finishes filling the glass in Greg's left hand and puts back the soda bottle, straightening up. Holmes settles on the floor behind Joanne's chair.

"Nnnnnnh," Beth grunts, putting down her glass with both hands and looking back at the butter dish. Steve picks up the cap in his right hand and begins screwing it on the bottle while Joanne turns without letting go of Beth's corn and takes more butter, her knife in the butter dish with Greg's fork.

"Nnnnnnnh. Um-buh. . .," Beth says. Looking from the butter dish to her plate, she touches the plate with her right hand. Sitting back and taking his corn in his left hand, Greg begins buttering with his fork. Joanne takes her knife from the butter dish, glances from Steve to Greg, then looks down and puts more butter on Beth's corn as Beth jerks forward in her chair and looks at Greg's corn.
"I didn't give him a knife, Steve," Joanne says.

"I want a little bit," Beth interrupts. Sitting on the edge of her chair, she turns toward Greg, her right arm flat on the table, her right foot touching the floor, and the right side of her chest pressed against the table edge.

While Greg continues to butter his corn with his fork, Steve holds onto the neck of the soda bottle with his left hand and picks his knife up from his plate. Still buttering, Joanne says over Beth, "He's fixing his own corn and he needs..."

"Here, Greg, have the knife," says Steve, reaching over the table and dropping his knife clattering on Greg's plate. Turning away from the table, he lifts the Coke bottle against his chest with his left hand around the neck and his right underneath as Joanne glances to her right and reaches for more butter. "It's a lot better. I'll get another knife," he adds, continuing to turn to his left while behind him Greg picks up the knife in his left hand, puts his fork down on his plate, and transfers the knife to his right hand. Halfway to the kitchen Steve pauses, his left foot crossed in front of his right, and looking to his right steps between the back of Joanne's chair and Holmes. Beth watches Greg use his knife to scoop up butter while Steve leans
sideways and reaches with the bottle in his left hand to the side table behind Joanne, lifting his right foot off the floor as he sets the bottle down. Stepping back from the side table, Steve looks down and walks around Holmes' hind legs and tail into the kitchen. Greg spreads butter on his corn, gingerly touching the ear with his left hand.

Joanne glances from Beth's plate to her own and back without interrupting her buttering. "Okay," she murmurs as Steve leaves the room. She gives the corn a few more swipes, then looks again at her own plate and puts her knife on it without letting go of Beth's corn. "Now be careful of this, Beth, 'cause it's hot," she says, turning back and picking up the salt shaker from in front of Beth's plate. Beth sits forward, brings her right hand to her mouth, rests her upper arm on the table, and watches Joanne salt.

"Sure is," Greg says, holding his left hand several inches away while he scoops butter off his plate with his knife and spreads the butter on his corn.

Beth fidgets in her chair, rubs her mouth against the back of her hand, and kicks her left leg. "Mom-my . . . ," she says slowly.

"Here you go," Joanne tells her, holding the salt and pushing the plate partially toward her without letting go of
it. With her hand still to her mouth, Beth looks up at Joanne's face, then looks down as Joanne looks at her. "Are you clean?" asks Joanne. "Let me see your hands." Greg glances at Joanne, then reaches with his knife to the butter dish while Beth looks at Joanne's face, holds up her right hand, and spreads her fingers. Letting go of the plate, Joanne takes Beth's right hand in her left, turns it back and inspects the palm, then lets go of it. "All right," she says, then moves Beth's plate closer to the table edge, stopping where Beth's glass stands in the way. While Beth looks down and presses her fist against her nose, Joanne puts the salt shaker beside the butter dish, then reaches for Beth's glass with her right hand and says again, "Here you go."

Steve begins whistling a tune in the kitchen, Greg continues buttering his corn, and Joanne lifts Beth's glass away from the edge of the table. Beth's right hand slips from her nose to her right eye as Joanne moves her napkin to the left and slides her plate into position. "Use your napkins, too, instead of letting it run down your hands," Joanne says, holding her buttery hands in front of her.

Beth returns her hand to her nose and looks at her plate.
as Joanne begins speaking, then looks toward the living room, kicking her right leg and interrupting, "Ah, I . . ." She holds her leg still, puts her fingers in her mouth, and again looks up at Joanne who looks down the table toward Greg. Greg goes after butter on his plate, his knife held perpendicular to the plate's surface. "I want a knife," Beth says in a sing-song while Joanne, looking down, pushes the salt against the pepper shaker with the back of her left hand, grabs both in her right, reaches down the table with them, and puts them between Steve's plate and Greg's. She straightens up, looking at Steve's place setting, then backs up two steps from the table and turns to Greg who is rolling his corn from side to side in butter, his knife banging against his plate.

"I want. . . .," says Beth, looking to her left as Joanne puts down the salt and pepper shakers. Taking her fingers from her mouth and twisting around to her right, she waves her arms, whining, "I don't, huh, uh. . . .," then pumps her right leg, puts her right hand on the table corner, and sits still facing the living room. "I don't wanna," she says.

"Greg!" Joanne says over Beth. Stepping toward him, she moves her right hand back and forth at the wrist, instructing him, "Go back and forth over it."
"I don't wanna eat," Beth continues, twisting forward and leaning her chest against the table edge while Joanne is speaking to Greg, then turns her head sharply back to the living room as Steve stops whistling in the kitchen and Joanne, looking at Greg with her hands in front of her, walks toward his end of the table.

Stepping over Holmes' hind legs, Joanne turns and reaches both hands across the table to Greg's plate, saying, "To -- here, like this..." as he drops his knife on the right side of his plate and grabs his corn in both hands. "Watch, watch," she tells him, picking up his knife in her left hand and reaching toward his corn with her right. Letting go of his corn, Greg rests his left forearm against the table edge, drops his right hand to his lap, and watches as Joanne transfers the knife to her right hand, lifts one end of his corn, scoops butter off his plate, and begins buttering.

Beth continues to stare toward the living room, holding the table edge with both hands and slowly swinging her right leg, then stops swinging her leg and turns to Joanne, saying, "I want to see who at the..." The doorbell interrupts her, just as Steve walks in from the kitchen with a can of beer in his left hand and another table knife in his right. "I
want. . . ," she continues, clutching the table with both hands and leaning toward Joanne.

"Oh, I bet that's that kid again," Joanne says and shakes her head while she leans across the table buttering Greg's corn.

Pausing at the corner of the table, Steve reaches to Joanne's right and puts down his can of beer, then walks behind Joanne toward the living room while she's speaking.

"Um. . . ," Beth says, still leaning toward Joanne as Joanne stops speaking. Stepping over Holmes' hind legs and wiping his right hand on his shirttail, Steve says with a laugh, "I'll bet you it is too," then lifts his arm over the back of Joanne's chair and again wipes his hand on his shirt as he walks past the end of the table.

Greg doesn't look up, but sits with his left arm on the table and his right hand in his lap, watching Joanne butter his corn. "I'll kill him," Joanne says before Steve finishes speaking.

Beth turns and watches Steve leave the room. "What kid?" she asks, looking after him. Holmes gets up as she's speaking and follows Steve.

"Lew-is," Joanne answers, scooping butter off Greg's plate and buttering faster while Greg looks on.
"Oh," Beth says, turning back toward the table and gently swinging her right leg. "He's Tulis." Greg sits up and looks past her into the living room. "I love, uh, Tulis," she says as she reaches for her glass, bumps her left forearm against the edge of the table, and glances at Greg. Looking ahead of her, she holds onto the corner of the table and picks up her soda, then looks up to her right and brushes her hair back twice with her right hand. Taking her glass in both hands, she rocks forward and back, then drinks as Steve speaks in the front hall.

"Greg is eating supper," he tells the caller at the front door.

Finished buttering Greg's corn, Joanne lays his knife on his plate and pauses, her right hand on the knife and her left over the table as the visitor says something to Steve. "Uh-huh," Steve says, and closes the front door.

Greg looks at his corn as Joanne takes a step back from the table and picks up the salt shaker with her right hand from in front of Steve's plate. "Just like your mommy, kid," she says. Leaning over the table, she takes Greg's corn in her left hand and begins salting.

"Right," calls Steve from the living room.

"It was, huh?" Joanne calls back, continuing to salt
Greg's corn while he looks on.

"Um-hm," Steve answers.

"Oh, that kid," Joanne says, shaking her head.

"Is he a C.I.A. agent, do you know?" Steve asks, speaking over her as he walks into the dining room with the table knife now in his left hand. He lifts his right hand to his head as Greg looks up at him.

"Wha. . . ?" asks Greg. Still drinking, Beth looks from her glass to Steve and back down.

Joanne lets go of Greg's corn and puts down the salt shaker. "I'll be here at. . . ," she begins, and pauses, looking at Greg as Steve interrupts.

"Is he an agent of the F.B.I. or the C.I.A. . . . ?" continues Steve, walking behind Joanne to his chair. With his right hand in his lap, Greg looks at his plate and moves his knife over, then takes hold of his corn. Holmes stops at the right front corner of the table, wags his tail, and sniffs over the table edge.

Straightening up, Joanne pushes her hair back with her right hand, looks to the left of her plate, shakes her head, and raises her voice as she continues over Steve, "I couldn't believe this morning. . . ." Pausing, her right hand in front of her at shoulder height as she wipes her left hand
on the napkin beside her plate, she looks across at Greg who is holding his corn and looking up to his left at Steve.

"... or something like that?" Steve finishes. Taking hold of the back of his chair, he pulls it further out from the table and looks at Greg.

"What?" Greg asks, looking up at him.

"I should be here about ten-thirty...," Joanne continues, watching Greg and nodding.

"Lew-is," Steve answers at the same time, then looks forward and sits, pulling his chair underneath him with both hands.

"Why?" Greg asks, watching Steve and speaking over Joanne as Holmes looks at Joanne and Steve, then walks behind Joanne's chair. "What do you mean?"

Joanne takes her hand from her napkin and turns to her left toward the kitchen, glancing over the table. Steve meanwhile shakes his head and reaches for the cornbowl with his right hand. "Oh, he's unbelievable, Greg," he says. As he finishes speaking he looks at Greg, then back at the bowl and searches for an ear of corn.

"He's here on ten-thirty...," says Joanne at the same time as Steve. Holmes passes behind Steve's chair as Joanne stops speaking and walks into the kitchen. Beth, her
glass to her mouth, watches Joanne leave and rocks slightly in her seat.

"He is?" Greg asks loudly, still watching Steve.

"Yes," Steve answers, putting back the ear of corn he had picked out and looking for another.

"How did you know, maybe we were playing F.B.I.?” Greg interrupts, nodding and practically shouting. Holmes walks around the corner of the table and passes behind Greg’s chair.

"...absolutely on the dot!” Joanne finishes from the kitchen while Greg is speaking. Beth puts down her glass with both hands and glances toward the kitchen as Greg finishes, then looks at her plate. Leaning forward, she puts both hands between her chest and the table edge and takes a deep breath.

Putting a large ear of corn on his plate with his right hand, Steve moves his can of beer aside and reaches with his knife to the butter dish in front of Joanne’s plate. As he reaches, he lifts his eyebrows at Greg and nods, saying, "Oh, I believe he is really a member of the F.B.I.” Beth glances at Steve, then back at her plate while he’s speaking. She reaches her right hand for her corn but pulls away and pushes her hair back. As Steve glances his way, Greg looks
at his plate and picks up his corn in both hands, leaning his forearms against the table edge. "Not pretend. . . ."

Steve continues, putting his knife in the butter.

"I don't. . . ." Beth says at the same time, leaning her right elbow on the table and looking at Steve.

". . . for real," Steve finishes. Beth looks back at her corn and leans her cheek on her palm while Holmes turns at the front end of the table and walks to the right of her chair. Taking butter on his knife as he finishes speaking, Steve leans back and looks at his corn, adjusting it with his right hand.

"Why?" Greg asks, leaning forward and blowing on his corn between bites.

". . . like corn," Beth whimpers, leaning heavily on her palm and grabbing a handful of her hair as she turns from her corn to Steve. Holmes turns and settles beside Beth's chair with his back to her.

Steve shakes his head slowly and sighs as he turns and butters his corn. "Because he's always there," he answers, speaking while Beth does.

"I don't like corn," Beth repeats, rubbing her head and looking from Steve to her plate and back.
"Whenever you turn around," Steve continues to Greg at the same time. Finishing four bites, Greg drops his corn on his plate and sits back, puts his left hand around his glass, then turns to Beth and wipes his right hand on the thigh of his shorts.

"I don't like corn," Beth says. Looking again from Steve to her corn and back, she leans her head on her right hand. Greg turns from her and lifts his glass, glances at Steve, then drinks.

"Since when don't you like corn?" Steve asks, lifting his head and glancing at Beth while he butters.

"Since when?" Joanne echoes over the end of Steve's question as she walks in from the kitchen with a frying pan in her left hand and a table knife in her right. "That's two nights in a row."

Beth looks quickly at Steve, then at her corn, then at Joanne, then again at her corn, and leans far to her right. Straightening up slightly, she turns back to Steve. "I don't like corn," she says in a sing-song, leaning her head on her hand as she lifts and drops her right leg.

"You don't like anything any more it seems," Steve interrupts while he butters. Joanne leans over the back of her chair as Steve is speaking and takes butter with the
knife, holding the frying pan over the table.

"I'll have some. . . .", Beth says, rubbing her head against her palm and watching the frying pan and knife.

"All right, Mommy will eat your corn," says Joanne. Greg stops drinking and looks across at her. Stepping back from the table and half turning to her left toward the kitchen, she scrapes butter onto the pan edge and looks again at the butter dish.

"Hey, Mommy, can I have some of that?" Beth asks, pushing her plate toward Joanne with her right hand and raising her voice as Joanne begins to turn toward the kitchen.

"Yeah, but I'm afraid you're eating too much sweets," Steve says before Beth finishes, then stops buttering and reaches with his knife toward the butter dish. Stopping at his left, Joanne steps sideways to the table and takes more butter at the same time he does. Greg puts down his glass while Steve is speaking and glances at Beth's plate, taking his corn in both hands. With her left hand on the table edge and her right on the edge of her plate, Beth watches both knives entering the butter in unison and cries out something unclear.

"Is that what it is, do you think?" Joanne asks over Beth. She scrapes butter onto the edge of the frying pan as
she finishes her question, then turns to her left and walks into the kitchen while Steve, bringing his knife back to his plate, shrugs and shakes his head.

"I don't know," Steve answers, buttering his corn.

Greg and Beth both shout at once while Steve is speaking. Leaning back and lifting his corn to his mouth, Greg says, "I'll eat it," then bites. Beth reaches her right arm toward Joanne as Joanne leaves the room. "I'll eat it, Mom," Beth yells, then stretches further and points at the butter dish, calling, "I want a piece of butter on my plate." She glances at Steve as she brings her arm back, then rests her chin on her forearm at the table edge, staring at the butter dish. Greg finishes three bites as she stops speaking, leans his forearms against the edge of the table, and watches Steve buttering.

"Did she get salt and everything on it?" Steve calls to Joanne without looking up.

"I want a piece of butter on my...," Beth says, kicking her left leg and taking her chin off her forearm.

"Yeah," Joanne answers from the kitchen, "I did the whole thing." Greg shifts his elbows onto the table as Joanne speaks, glances at Beth, then lifts his corn to his mouth and takes two more bites.
"I want a piece of butter on. . . ," says Beth, again leaning her right elbow near her plate, then points with both hands toward the butter and repeats, "I want a piece of butter on my plate!" Dropping her left arm in her lap, she looks at her corn and touches it with her fingers, tilting her head to the right. Greg leans further forward and takes a third and fourth bite of corn, then chews and looks toward the kitchen as Steve glances at the wall clock to his left and back at his corn, continuing to butter. Shifting forward on his chair, Greg lifts his corn to eye level and turns it while he chews.

Beth looks at her fingers. "I'mmmmmmm. . . ," she says, twisting from left to right. Holding onto the edge of the table with both hands, she squirms further onto her seat and looks up toward the kitchen doorway. "I want a piece of butter on my plate," she says as Joanne walks in from the kitchen.

Watching Beth, Joanne stops beside her own chair and rests her left hand on the backrest while Steve puts his knife on his plate and picks up the salt shaker from in front of him. "These many," says Beth, reaching her right hand toward Joanne with two fingers raised.

Greg takes four bites, his elbows on the table and his
head lifted back, as Joanne watches Beth and Steve salts his corn. Looking down at her place setting, Joanne puts her right hand on her knife, then looks at Beth again and pulls her chair out from the table. "Aw, no," she says, shaking her head. "See, she, she'll, all she eats is butter!"

She glances from Steve to the butter dish. Steve continues salting and Greg turns his corn. Beth lays her right arm down on the table and looks at her plate, then watches her right hand as she touches the table with two fingers. Lifting her knife, Joanne steps between her chair and the table. Taking the butter dish in her left hand, she leans forward and scoops butter from it.

"You going to heat up those peas?" Steve asks her without looking up. Beth taps the table beside her plate three times as Steve speaks.

"Yah," Joanne answers and puts the first pat of butter on Beth's plate while Beth watches. With her weight on her left palm next to the butter dish, Joanne looks at the dish again and explains, "I'm going to do the peas, for the kids" — she takes more butter from the dish while Beth watches the knife — "and I'm frying..."

"You're not going to have any corn, right?" Steve asks, still salting. Greg takes two bites, then looks at Steve's
corn and hitches himself forward in his seat, turning back to his own corn.

Beth, her hand stiff-fingered against the table, follows the knife to her plate as Joanne deposits a second pat of butter. "Yeah, I'll have a piece of corn, but. . . , get ready," Joanne says as she goes back to the butter dish. Beth watches the knife while Joanne takes more butter, scrapes it onto the plate, lifts both arms, and sits.

"Two," says Beth, looking at her plate. She shifts in her seat and spreads her fingers as she repositions her weight on her right elbow, then leaning her forehead against her fist, she takes her left hand from her lap and touches her butter.

Steve puts the salt to Joanne's right, looks at Beth, then returns to his plate and takes his corn in both hands. Looking up at Beth at the same time Steve does, Joanne leans forward with her wrists against the edge of the table at either side of her plate. "Okay?" she asks.

Greg hunches against the table and lifts his corn to his mouth as Joanne speaks. "Three," he says, his voice muffled.

"Shhh," says Steve, looking at him as he lifts his own corn.

"Beth, you going to eat your corn or should Mommy eat
it?" Joanne asks, still leaning forward as she glances at the cornbowl and back to Beth. Beth continues to move the fingers of her left hand in her butter, her right elbow on the table and her fist against her forehead.

Steve looks at the corn in his hands; glances at Greg, then looks up at Beth as Joanne finishes speaking. "You're not going to eat that corn, Beth?" he asks. As he's speaking he rests his elbows on the table and lifts his corn higher, then leans forward and takes three small bites from left to right. Holding his corn down near his plate after three bites and chewing, Greg looks at Steve, then at Beth's plate as Steve finishes speaking.

Joanne turns from Beth to the bowl of corn, leaving Beth's corn on the plate. "It's a beautiful ear," she says. "I'll eat it," Greg interrupts. He swallows and looks back at his corn while Beth lifts her left hand from the butter, turns to him, and puts her fingers in her mouth.

"All right, I'll leave it," Joanne mutters, leaning and putting her left hand in the cornbowl. She pulls an ear from the bowl and puts it on her plate as Greg takes another three bites. "I'll take the little one," she says.

Steve rests his corn on his plate while Joanne picks
out an ear, then reaches in front of his plate for the salt. He finds it at Joanne's right and salts his corn while Beth looks forward, taking her fingers from her mouth and putting them in her butter. Joanne picks up her knife and pulls her corn closer to her on her plate with her left hand. "Huh!" she grunts, lifting her head in Steve's direction, then again looks down and begins sawing her corn with her knife.

"This is good corn, Beth," Steve says, salting without looking up. "Mmmmm, the best we've had all year." He glances to his left and puts back the salt beside Joanne, then looks down and picks up his corn. Greg swallows while Steve is speaking, then takes the first of three bites as Joanne's knife cuts through her corn and clanks against her plate. Steve pauses, looking at the corn in his hands, then leans forward and brings it to his mouth. Beth runs her fingers through her butter.

"I know it," Joanne says. Repositioning her corn on her plate, she begins sawing through it a second time further down the ear. "They had a lot of it, too," she adds.

Steve finishes two bites, then turns his corn as Greg bites into his. "You know, it's cheaper at Gino's. . . ." Joanne continues. She pauses and glances to the left of her plate, picking up her napkin.
Beth looks up to her left and puts her fingers in her mouth. "Mmmmm," she moans as Joanne pauses.

Greg finishes three bites and turns his corn in his hands as Joanne continues. "...than it was at, um..." She pauses again and saws her corn, holding it with her napkin.

"Mmmmm," Beth moans a second time as she returns her hand to her plate. Steve lifts his corn to his mouth and bites.

"...at that stand, that the A&P had," Joanne concludes, sitting further back from the table and noisily sawing her corn.

As Greg leans into his corn, Steve finishes three bites and looks down chewing, then glances sideways at Joanne and says through a mouthful of kernels, "I know it," looking back at the corn in his hands. Greg finishes a third bite and looks quickly at the table between him and his plate. "That's why it's good...," Steve continues. Swallowing, he leans closer to his corn as Greg goes back to his and takes two more bites. Beth turns to her left, leans her head on her right shoulder, and puts her fingers in her mouth. "...to get it there," Steve continues, lifting his corn toward his mouth.
"Mmmmmmm," Beth moans.

Steve takes his corn away from his mouth. "It's seventy-nine, wasn't it?" he asks.

Joanne puts her napkin beside her plate, lifting her right hand with the knife in it to the right side of her face, and pushes back her hair with her wrist. "Yup," she says. She looks at the butter dish and with her left hand moves her corn while Steve leans further forward and bites into his. Beth takes her fingers from her mouth and looks at them as Greg takes another bite of corn and chews rapidly. As Steve takes a second and third bite, Joanne reaches her knife to the butter dish and whispers, "God, is it hot!"

Beth gives her fingers another lick and puts them in her butter as Joanne lifts her head slightly and pushes her hair away from her face with her left hand, then puts butter on her corn and begins spreading it. Looking to her left and tilting her head to the right, Beth sucks butter off each finger in turn while Greg chews, turning and examining his corn.

Steve takes two more bites, lowers his corn to his plate, and sits back. Looking down to his left, he picks up his fork and begins to ask, "Aren't you, uh..." He pauses, puts his fork on his plate, and glances at Greg, who leans
against the table taking three huge bites of corn. Looking back down to his left, Steve continues, "...warm, Greg, with that..." He pauses again, picking up his napkin and folding it in both hands, then looks at Greg as he lifts it toward his mouth. Beth sucks the last of her fingers and returns her hand to her butter.

"With that long shirt on?" Joanne asks, glancing up at Greg from her buttering. Steve wipes his mouth, looking away from Greg.

Hunched forward, Greg takes two bites of corn as Joanne finishes the question. He fumbles his corn, catches it, and looks quickly back and forth over it, answering, "Nope."

While Steve puts down his napkin, picks up his corn, and glances at Greg, Joanne scoops butter off her plate. "You make it look like it's wintertime," she says as she butters. Steve puts his elbows on the table and looks from Greg to his corn, leaning to bite.

"I'm not," Greg says, chewing a mouthful of corn and looking back and forth at what's left. Beth briefly sucks her fingers and returns them to her plate as Steve takes two bites of corn and Greg takes three.

Joanne puts down both knife and corn and swings her legs to the right of her seat. "Well, if that's your thing,"
she says, glancing back at Greg as she stands up. Beth looks off to her left and again puts the fingers of her left hand in her mouth. Greg chews, looking after Joanne as she walks into the kitchen, then turns to Beth as Steve begins speaking.

"Hey, Beth, listen," Steve says, looking at Beth and chewing as he speaks, then back to his corn.

Beth looks at him, then at her plate again and takes her fingers from her mouth. "Yah," she answers. Putting her fingers back in her mouth, she again looks at Steve as Greg turns from her to his corn and swallows.

"If we're going to go to the drive-in," Steve continues, glancing at Beth as Greg bites into his corn, "you better have some food to eat." Beth looks from Steve to her plate and touches her butter while he's talking, then Steve and Greg each take three bites of corn at the same time.

"Yes, Beth," Joanne calls from the kitchen, "if you don't eat now you're really not going to have a chance." Beth looks up to her left and puts her fingers in her mouth while Joanne is speaking. Greg rests his elbows on the table and looks at Steve as Steve puts his corn down and looks to the left of the plate.

"Yes we will...," Greg says.

"'Cause once we're at the drive-in," Steve interrupts,
looking at Beth and shaking his head as he picks up his napkin, "you can't say 'I'm hungry.'" Beth looks from her plate to Steve, dropping her left hand to the table in front of her and fluffing her hair with her right. Greg turns to his corn and chews. "We won't be able to get you anything," Steve adds, bringing his napkin to his mouth. Looking down, he wipes his mouth from left to right, then again looks at Beth.

"But I'm not hungry," Beth says, turned to Steve with her left forearm in front of her, her right elbow on the table and her hand poised in the air. Greg shifts his right leg forward and leans into his corn while Beth speaks, taking two bites as Steve looks to the left and puts down his napkin. Tilting her head to her right, Beth flicks her hand through her hair and leans against her palm, facing Steve.

"Yeah, but you might be then," Steve says. He picks up his corn and looks at it, resting his elbows on the table. Following a large bite of corn, Greg looks sharply down at his lap.

Beth glances at her plate, then looks up and leans toward Steve, who hesitates with his corn at his mouth and looks back at her. "I won't be...," she says.
"Well, would you eat some hamburger?" Steve asks, speaking quickly and raising his eyebrows. She kicks her right leg and continues to look at him while Greg, holding his corn over his plate, turns and watches her. "The hamburger will be ready soon," Steve continues, nodding. "Would you like some hamburger?"

"That's meat," Greg adds, nodding.

With her head against her palm, Beth looks at her corn while Steve is speaking. She nods at Steve, then at Greg. Turning back to Steve, she grabs a handful of her hair.

"Okay," says Steve, and leans into his corn. Greg looks at his own corn and turns it. Glancing at Steve's, he lifts his own to his mouth as Beth looks at him, then turns to her plate.

"This not meat!" Beth says, pointing at her corn with her right hand.

About to bite, Greg looks at Beth, then forward and pushes his corn away from him, saying, "I know, but..."

Steve takes his corn from his mouth after three bites and sits up, looking at Beth and back at his corn. "No," he says with his mouth full. Crossing one foot over the other, he pulls his feet back under his chair and repositions his
elbows on the table.

Greg looks at him. "She's gonna ...," says Greg, and pauses, shifting in his chair. He glances at Joanne walking in from the kitchen, then turns to Beth and nods. "Hamburger's meat," he says. Resting his forearms against the edge of the table, he leans forward and takes two large bites of corn, continuing to look at Beth's plate while Beth looks up at Joanne.

Joanne walks to the right of her chair, puts her left hand on her corn, her right on the salt shaker, and sits as Steve leans toward his corn. Beth looks from Joanne to her corn. "Good," she says quietly, and reaches with her left hand for her glass.

"It's corn," says Steve and bites into his from left to right as Greg takes the corn from his mouth and looks at it.

"Corn on the cob ...," says Joanne, turning and salting hers. Pulling her glass closer, Beth lifts it in both hands and tilts it to her mouth, facing toward Steve. Greg swallows and takes two huge bites. "The last time you ate it all," Joanne continues, glancing at Beth and back down as she replaces the salt and lifts her corn.

Steve lowers his corn after four bites and looks at it,
chewing slowly. Taking hers in both hands and putting her elbows on the table, Joanne glances at Beth over her first bite, looks at her corn, then bites again, glancing at Greg. Greg leans over his plate, tearing at his corn.

"Hint," Steve mutters without looking up. Moving her right foot under her chair and hooking it over the chair rung, Beth continues to drink as Joanne lifts her corn to her mouth and takes a third bite. Greg sits up and looks at Beth, then back at the corn he holds over his plate.

"Gregory," Steve says, glancing at Greg and lifting the corn to his mouth, "it's not, it isn't a race." He bites into his corn, turning in Greg's direction.

Holding her corn to the left of her plate, Joanne picks up her napkin and wipes her lap. Greg watches Steve take a second bite, then turns back to his corn and lifts it as Steve lowers his corn and looks at him. "I know," Greg says, and takes two smaller bites. Shaking her hair out of her eyes, Joanne drops her napkin to the left of her plate, rests her elbows on the table, and bites into her corn.

Steve looks at his own corn and shakes his head as Greg sits back chewing and Joanne turns hers. "We're going to have plenty of it, since Beth won't eat any," he says.

Beth stops drinking, still facing Steve, and moves her
mouth back and forth on the rim of her glass as Joanne takes
another bite of corn. Greg takes four, lunging forward,
while Steve takes one. "I want to go-wo," Beth says as
Greg sits up and watches Steve take a second bite.

"Hmmm?" Steve asks, lowering his corn and looking at
Beth while Greg looks at his own corn and Joanne bites into
hers. Steve lifts his chin at Beth as he chews. "What?"
he asks. Joanne lifts her corn again and bites, looking
across at Greg. Greg turns toward Beth as he bites his.

"I want to go to the drive-in," Beth answers, watching
Steve as she continues to rub her mouth over the rim of her
glass. Joanne turns her corn and chews while Greg takes his
from his mouth after three bites and turns it, looking at
it with his head tilted back.

"Well, it's too early," says Steve, looking from Beth
to the wall clock at his left. Glancing again at Beth, he
looks down, swallows, and takes another bite.

Joanne swallows and gestures with her head to the
windows as Steve leans into his corn. "Yeah, look'it," she
says, lifting her corn toward her mouth, "you have to wait
until it gets dark."

Beth still faces Steve with her mouth to her glass as
Steve takes a second bite of corn and Joanne bites into hers.
Greg leans his head to the left and looks at his corn while he chews, then bites twice as Joanne and Steve take theirs from their mouths. Greg chews with his head slightly back while they turn their corn.

"What movies...," Joanne begins, stopping and bringing her corn to her mouth as Steve looks at Beth and starts speaking.

"We're going to go in about an hour and..." While Joanne takes a bite of corn and Greg takes three, Steve looks from Beth to the wall clock at his left. "...three-quarters," he continues, looking back at the corn in his hands.

"Um-hm...," says Joanne, taking her corn from her mouth at the same time Greg does, then looking at it and nodding. Beth looks back and forth between Steve and Joanne, unhooking her toes from the chair rung and playing against it with her foot as Greg returns his corn to his mouth. Steve leans forward and bites as Joanne, swallowing, continues, "And we plan to get there early, so maybe if there's a playground you guys can go to it." She lifts, lowers, and again lifts her corn toward her mouth as she's speaking, looking twice at Beth and Greg. Greg takes three bites and turns his corn, then another as Steve lowers his corn after three
bites and turns it. Beth tilts her glass and drinks.

"Who knows what we're going to see?" Steve asks, putting the left end of his corn on his plate and reaching for his napkin. As Steve begins speaking, Beth looks up from her glass and makes a questioning noise. Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it.

Leaning far forward, Greg takes four bites and sits back chewing while Beth brings her glass to her mouth and slowly tilts her head back. Steve glances at Beth, then looks down and wipes his mouth with his napkin. Biting into her corn, Joanne glances at Greg and Beth. "What're we going to see at the drive-in, Greg?" she asks, lifting her corn to her mouth again. Greg looks at his corn, turning it and chewing, while Beth drinks with her head tilted back.

"Show me if she can remember it, Greg," Steve says, putting his napkin next to his plate and glancing at him. Looking down, Steve lifts his corn from his plate. Greg lets go of his corn and takes hold of his glass, looking to his left with a nod, then turns again to the cob in his right hand without lifting the glass from the table. Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it while Steve rests his forearms against the edge of the table and glances at Beth.
"What movies are we going to see, Beth?" he asks, leaning forward and biting. Joanne searches with her left hand for a place to put down her corncob while Greg glances to his right, drops his cob, and reaches to Beth's plate without letting go of his glass. Beth puts her glass on the table to her left with both hands while Greg lifts the corn from her plate and drops it on his own.

"Uh, 'Dumbo,'" Beth says, turning to Steve and touching her right cheek. Joanne puts her corncob on the side of her plate and picks up her napkin, then leans back from the table and tosses her hair from her face as she takes the napkin in both hands. Glancing at Beth, she lifts the napkin to her mouth as Steve finishes a third bite of corn.

"Um-hm," Steve says, nodding his head and chewing without looking up. Holding his glass, Greg tries to balance his corncob on the far edge of his plate with his right hand while Joanne wipes her mouth and shifts in her chair.

Beth reaches her left foot back beneath her chair.

"We're going to see... ."

"About... .," Joanne prompts, looking down and putting back her napkin.

"... two of them," Beth continues, leaning her cheek against her right fist and pumping both legs up and down.
Joanne picks up her knife and takes the second half of her corn in her left hand as Steve looks at Beth, chewing.

"I don't know," Beth says. She puts her right fist to her mouth and pumps her right leg as Steve, chewing slowly, continues to watch her, and Joanne reaches with her knife to the butter. Still positioning his cob on the edge of his plate, Greg looks to his left and lifts his glass, then holds the corncob steady and drinks with his head back.

"A movie about what kind of an animal?" Steve asks, continuing to lean toward Beth while Joanne butters.

"I don't know," Beth answers. She moves her hand to the right of her face, her left hand still on her glass, and continues to watch him. He watches her, lifting his head slightly. Drinking with his head back, Greg lifts his right hand and leaves the corncob balanced on the far edge of his plate.

"The . . .," Steve prompts.

"Bea . . .," says Joanne at the same time, lifting her head a little while she butters.

Continuing to watch Steve, Beth takes her glass in both hands as Greg lowers his and looks from the cob on his plate
to Steve. Glancing at Joanne, Greg wipes his mouth on his right sleeve, then transfers his glass to his right hand.

"Bears," Steve rumbles.

"'Bear Country,' we're going to see," Joanne says in a deep voice as she butters. Greg looks at Beth, then forward and puts his hand on his new ear of corn as Steve leans and bites. Beth nods, turning from Steve to Joanne, then lowers her mouth to the rim of her glass as Steve takes a second bite.

Looking at Joanne, Greg says, "And then we're going to see one about..." He pauses and looks past his glass at Beth, who bounces her right leg up and down while she watches Steve. ". . . a wha--?" Greg asks as Steve looks up at Beth.

"About Herbie the...," says Steve. Greg lifts his glass and drains it without turning away from Beth. Steve continues to watch Beth as Joanne reaches with her knife for more butter.

"Bug," says Beth, still watching Steve, her mouth on the rim of her glass and her right leg kicking, while Greg sits forward and Joanne butters. Steve chews, continuing to look at her. Greg takes his glass in his left hand. "I don't know," Beth says, moving her mouth back and forth
on the glass.

Steve looks at his plate. "Lovebug," he says before she finishes and lifts his corn, biting as Greg puts down his glass and reaches for his corn. Joanne puts down her knife and picks up the salt shaker.

"Lovebu-u-u-wug," says Beth. Greg moves his balanced corncob with his left hand as he begins rolling his new ear in butter.

"Yeah," says Joanne, and starts salting as Steve finishes another bite and chews, looking at his corn. "Uh, Jerry went to see the first Lovebug movie. . . .," Joanne continues, lifting her head slightly without looking up or interrupting her salting. "Remember how many times he saw it?"

With her glass tilted against her mouth, Beth turns to Joanne while Greg takes his corn in his left hand and moves his utensils toward him on his plate. Steve lifts his corn, takes two more bites, then puts it on his plate and says with his mouth full, "Um-hm," while Joanne is speaking. She looks at him and puts the salt shaker to her right as he leans on his right forearm, lifts his head toward her, and nods. Greg rolls his corn in butter with both hands, his arms outstretched, while Beth rocks forward and back in her
chair, rubbing her mouth on her glass and watching Joanne.

"He was at the a-Academy every day. . . ." Joanne continues.

Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yeah," as she pauses. Picking up his napkin and taking it in both hands, he wipes his mouth from left to right, shaking his head back and forth.

"It was good," Joanne concludes, shaking her hair from her face and looking at her corn, then lifts her eyebrows as she bites. Steve looks down and wipes his hands on his napkin.

"Why?" Greg asks as he rolls his corn rapidly in butter. Steve puts down his napkin, working corn from his teeth with his tongue.

"'Cause he loved it," Joanne answers, taking her corn from her mouth, looking at it, and leaning forward on her elbows. Rolling his corn, Greg shifts forward in his seat as Joanne answers. Steve rests his forearm on the table, takes his beer can in his left hand, and lifts it to his mouth.

"I go. . . ." says Beth, continuing to watch Joanne over her glass.

"I wonder if this will be any good then," Greg interrupts.
He leans back a little and glances at Joanne, then continues rolling his corn in butter as she leans toward hers and hesitates, pushing a kernel into her mouth. Steve tilts his head back and drinks.

"I go," Beth repeats, leaning toward Joanne while Greg is speaking, then looks at her glass and puts it on the table. Joanne glances at her and bites as Steve sets down his beercan and Greg picks up his corn. Watching her right hand, Beth reaches toward Joanne, touching the table, then her own plate. "First I want to see 'Dumbo,'" she says, pumping her right leg, then looks at Joanne and runs her fingers through the butter on her plate.

Greg leans on his elbows and takes two bites of corn, then sits back chewing while Joanne bites into hers and glances at Beth. Steve looks from his beer to the bowl of corn as Beth finishes speaking. Leaning on his right forearm, he picks out an ear of corn. "You didn't see the first one, did you, Greg?" he asks, putting the corn on the plate.

"First?" Beth blurts out. As she speaks she swings her right leg and looks at her hand, lifting her fingers in and out of the butter. Joanne glances at Beth, then takes another bite while Greg looks at Steve's corn.

"No," Steve says, looking from his corn to the butter
dish. Picking up his knife from beside his plate, he reaches with it to the butter. "First I think they're going to have 'Bear Country.'"

"What?" Greg asks as he watches Steve reach to the butter dish.

"Um-hm," says Joanne and nods, looking at her corn. Beth puts her weight on her right leg and leans against the edge of her seat, lifting her arm off the table as she continues to finger the butter on her plate. "Okay," she says, watching her fingers. Greg looks at the butter dish after Steve's knife has left it, then turns to his corn, leans to bite, and hesitates.

"And then 'Dumbo,'" Steve says, leaning on his right forearm as he butters. Joanne and Greg bite into their corn.

"Then 'Dumbo?'" Beth asks, trailing her fingers through the butter. Greg lowers his corn after two bites and sits back as Joanne brings her left hand to her mouth.

"And then Herbie," says Steve. Chewing, Joanne returns her left hand to her corn while Steve lifts one end of his off his plate, continuing to butter. "Did you ever see 'Dumbo,' Greg?" he asks.

"Yup," Greg answers, turning to his left and wiping his
mouth on his shoulder twice. Beth puts her fingers in her mouth, turning to her left and leaning her right arm on the table as Greg answers.

Joanne bites into her corn and Steve begins to butter more quickly. "It's good, isn't it?" he asks, lifting one end of his corn higher.

"Yes, I took him," Joanne says before he finishes, looking at him and back at her corn while Beth sucks butter off each finger in turn.

Finished wiping his mouth, Greg sits forward and looks at his corn, nodding and answering, "Yup."

"I took him myself," Joanne adds, lifting her corn to her mouth as Beth turns to her, sucking butter off her thumb.

"I really like 'Dumbo,'" Steve says at the same time, leaning further to his right as he reaches down the table to the butter.

As Joanne bites into her corn, glancing at Beth, Beth takes her hand from her mouth and looks at her plate, then at Steve's knife in the butter dish. Twisting in her seat as Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it, Beth waves her right hand and kicks her legs, calling out, "I love. . . ."

"Me too," Greg says quietly as Beth shouts, glancing
at her and back to his corn.

"I love both them," Beth continues, looking at the butter dish and waving her right hand. She stops jerking her legs, then starts again. "I like..."

"Beth's going to really like 'Dumbo,'" Steve says, speaking over Beth as he brings butter to his corn. Greg watches him butter as Joanne bites into her corn, glancing at Beth.

Jerk her legs and pointing at her plate, Beth says, "I like butter."

Joanne takes another bite and looks at her corn as Greg says, "Yeah." Turning to Steve and raising his voice over Beth, he continues, "I like Bongo."

"I want...", Beth calls, still pointing at her plate, then even louder, "I like..." Straightening her body, she pushes her chair back against the floor and turns to Steve. "Butter and soda," she cries.

Joanne takes another bite while Beth is speaking and turns her corn rapidly.

"The bear?" Steve asks, leaning a little closer to Greg and continuing to butter.

"Bongo," Greg explains before Steve finishes, then nods, still looking at Steve. "Yeah."
Pointing at her plate, Beth turns her head from left to right. Looking back at her plate, she yells, "I like butter and soda."

"Bongo?" Steve asks at the same time, tilting his head and frowning as he butters.

Still pointing at her plate, Beth straightens her legs, lifts herself up in her chair, and looks at Joanne who turns her corn and takes three bites, watching her and Greg. Beth stands, pushing her chair further back.

"You mean... Bonga?" Steve asks. He reaches down the table for more butter.

"Bongo," Greg says before he finishes, still looking up at him.

"Bongo," says Steve, his weight on his right forearm as he puts his knife in the butter.

Beth moves sideways toward the corner of the table before Steve finishes, looking from Joanne to Steve and shouting, "Um, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy and Mommy."

"Bongo," Greg says over her shouting, and nods. He glances at Steve's knife in the butter, then back at his own corn. Joanne takes another bite, lurching forward after a loose piece of corn, and Steve brings butter back to his plate while Beth looks from one to the other of them, hugging
the corner of the table with her arms. Leaning forward, Greg takes two bites of corn as Steve butters. Joanne lowers her corn and lifts her right hand to her mouth without looking up.

"I like so..." Taking her right hand off the table and looking at the floor, Beth hesitates, then turns to her right, looking along Holmes' back from his tail to his head. Greg looks past his corn at Steve buttering and Joanne licks her fingers. "Hey, Bomes!" Beth exclaims, leaning her head to her left and dropping her right hand to her side.

Holmes slowly lifts his head as Beth stomps her right leg and watches him. Joanne looks at the fingers of her right hand, dropping her corn from her left and picking up her napkin, then leans back from the table and glances at her lap. She wipes both hands on the napkin as Steve scrapes butter from his plate and Greg looks from Steve's corn to his own. Bending to Holmes, Beth throws her arms around his back while he struggles to get up. "Umm," she moans, pressing her cheek to his neck and hugging him.

Sliding her left foot underneath her chair, Joanne drops her napkin to the left of her plate, picks up her knife, and puts her left hand on her corn as Greg lifts his corn to his
mouth and takes two large bites. Holmes stands as Beth says, "Bo. . . ," bumping her head on his back. She straightens up and drops her left hand to her side, repeating, "Bomes," and reaching toward him as he turns from her and walks toward the living room. Joanne begins to saw her corn.

"I gotta get this dog out, too," Steve says, glancing at Joanne from his buttering. She looks toward Holmes and Beth, then back at her corn. Rubbing her hand over Holmes' rump, Beth turns and walks toward Joanne.

"Yeah, oh my God! I forgot about that," says Joanne, bearing down on her corn. Greg lifts his and bites into it.

"Mommy, Mommy, Mommy," cries Beth. Taking hold of the corner of the table with her left hand, she stops beside Joanne before Joanne finishes speaking. Holmes stops at the threshold of the dining room and looks back toward the table. "Mommy" -- Beth puts her left arm on the table and watches Joanne saw her corn -- "Mommy. . . ." Sighing, Beth lifts and drops her left arm twice, resting the side of her chest against the table. Holmes turns his head away and looks into the living room.

"Oh, I'll have time to do that," says Steve, continuing to butter.

"What!" Joanne says to Beth at the same time, putting
her knife on her plate and taking her corn in both hands without looking up. Steve puts his knife to the left of his plate as he finishes speaking, then picks up the salt shaker from between him and Joanne. Greg takes his sixth bite of corn and rests his forearms on the table edge, looking to his left, then at his corn.

"I like soda and butter, that's all," Beth says before Steve finishes, twisting on her right foot, her body against the table.

"A lot," Joanne says as Steve salts his corn, then takes her right hand from her corn and looks at her fingers.

"What?" she continues, turning to Beth, lifting her eyebrows, and licking butter off her fingers. Greg swallows and brings his corn to his mouth.

Standing with her legs apart, Beth waves her left forearm and looks back and forth over the table. "I like soda and butter, that's all," she says again. Holmes lowers his head and walks into the living room.

"Soda and butter is not a very good diet, Beth," Joanne interrupts, picking up her knife and again sawing her corn.

"I'll just have to do what I did last night, you see," Steve says at the same time, interrupting his salting as he gestures with his head toward the back door, "take off, you
know?" Greg lowers his corn after five bites and chews, looking at Joanne as she finishes speaking to Beth, then at his glass, then at the table in front of him as Steve stops speaking and continues salting. Beth drapes her left arm along the end of the table and leans her head on her left shoulder.

"Um-hm," says Joanne as she saws, then puts her knife on the right side of her plate and takes her corn in both hands. Beth straightens up, drawing her hand along the surface of the table, and watches her.

"Can I have some more soda?" Greg asks. Glancing to his left, he pushes his glass toward Steve with the back of his hand, then lifts and looks at his corn. Steve puts the salt down to his left and glances at Greg's glass, then looks across the table, lifting and putting down a utensil with his left hand. Sitting up, he looks at the side table behind Joanne while Beth crosses her left foot behind her right and looks at Greg, then turns back to Joanne. Joanne tries to break her corn in half with both hands as Greg lifts his corn and bites.

"Oh!" Joanne exclaims, squeezing her eyes shut. Steve pauses and looks at her, then reaches his right hand across his plate for his napkin as she picks hers up and wipes both
hands. "I just got it in the eye," she says, laughing. Steve glances at her and smiles, wiping his fingers, then laughs as she leans back from the table and turns to him laughing. Greg lowers his corn after two bites and watches her, as does Beth, leaning against the table with her left arm on its surface and her hand in front of her mouth. Taking his napkin in both hands, Steve shakes his head while Joanne leans toward the table and tilts her head, wiping her left eye with her napkin and sighing.

"Jesus you're dangerous with corn," says Steve as he wipes both hands and sits up straighter, looking from Joanne to the side table behind her.

Still laughing, Joanne takes her napkin in both hands and looks forward. "I know it," she says, balling it up in her left hand and dropping it to the left of her plate.

"Can I have some more soda?" Greg asks again. He gestures with his chin toward the Coke bottle on the side table, then looks forward and swallows as Joanne glances at him, picking up her knife and taking hold of her corn. Gesturing with his left hand toward the table behind Joanne, Steve also looks at him.

"Go sit in the corner, will ya?" Steve says. Dropping his napkin to the right of his plate, he leans far to his
left and reaches toward the Coke bottle as Joanne resumes cutting her corn. Beth at the same time reaches her left hand past Joanne's napkin and picks up Joanne's fork. "Can I have some of that?" Steve asks.

"Yeah," Joanne says as Steve speaks to her, continuing to saw her corn.

"See that?" Steve asks. Leaning forward to his right and putting his hands on the table edge to either side of his plate, he looks in front of and past Joanne as she lets go of her corn and turns around to her left. Leaving her knife on the edge of her plate, she reaches her left hand for the Coke bottle while Beth watches, the fork in her left fist.

"May I have some more soda?" Greg asks again, holding his corn over his plate as he brings his left hand to his mouth.

"See that little...," says Steve at the same time, leaning further to his right and looking past Joanne. She laughs, reaching behind her for the huge bottle. ". . . see that little bottle over there?" Steve continues, leaning further forward and looking around her. Greg picks corn from his teeth with his left forefinger.

"Oh God," says Joanne, lifting the bottle past her left
shoulder as Steve speaks. "Can't you see him operating?"

Greg changes hands on his corn, bringing his right hand to his mouth and watching Joanne while she looks toward Steve, pushing her hair away from her face and grunting as Steve reaches with both hands and takes the bottle from her.

"Go see the doctor. . . ." Steve says, lifting the bottle over his and Joanne's beercans and looking for someplace to put it.

"Can I have some too?" Greg asks, looking ahead of him and picking his teeth with his right forefinger. Beth looks at Greg over her left forearm as she moves the fork around on the table.

"That would be. . . ." Steve continues, shaking his head and putting the bottle on the table.

Joanne takes her corn in her left hand and picks up her knife, shifting forward in her chair. "Oh, that would be good," she says as Steve unscrews the bottle cap with his right hand, looking under his elbow at Greg's glass.

Greg looks at Steve, taking his corn in both hands and chewing, then turns to his corn and brings it closer. "May I have some, too?" he asks, biting into his corn as Joanne starts sawing. Beth watches the fork in her left hand, moving it up and down while she flexes her left knee beneath
the table.

"What do you mean, 'too?'" Steve asks, still looking at Greg's glass as he lifts the bottle in both hands. Joanne glances at him from her sawing as he puts the cap beside the glass, gripping the bottle in his left hand. "Who do you think I'm getting it for?" he continues, laughing and gesturing with his head toward Greg while he lifts the glass. Chewing, Greg looks at Steve, then watches him pour soda.

"God!" Joanne says, leaning away from the table as she saws. Beth looks at her sharply. Greg looks at his corn and bites, looking over it at Joanne. Putting her knife on her plate, she takes her corn in both hands and tries to break it in half. "I think I just got the toughest ear of corn in the world," she says, letting go of the corn and looking to the right of her plate.

"Nnnug," Beth whines while Joanne is speaking. Watching Joanne, she lifts her left hand with the fork dangling from it, sways away from the table, then bumps sideways against it and lifts her right hand. Continuing to pour soda into Greg's glass as Joanne finishes speaking and searches for something to the right of her place setting, Steve glances at Beth.

Swinging her leg to the right of her chair and licking
the fingers of her right hand, Joanne turns back to Beth as Beth drops her right hand to her side. "What, Beth?" she asks and looks away, wiping her left hand on her napkin as she stands. "What are you... pestering me for?" Pausing in mid-speech, she turns and walks into the kitchen.

Finishing three bites of corn, Greg glances at Joanne as she stands, then puts his corn on his plate and rolls it in butter. Beth looks at her left hand and drops her arm, clanking Joanne's fork against the table, then holds the fork in her left fist and looks at the kitchen door.

"Beth, you should be sitting down and eating," Steve says with a glance at her as he finishes pouring. Holding the bottle in his left hand, he puts the glass beside Greg's plate while Beth leans away from the table and looks at him, lifting the handle of the fork in her fist with the prongs against the table. Capping the bottle with his right hand, he looks at her and continues, "Sit down, in a few minutes the hamburger's coming in." He continues to twist the cap, watching as Beth looks at the fork in her hand and leans its handle from right to left. Chewing, Greg lets go of his corn and picks up his glass in his left hand, then looks down and drinks, his right forearm against the edge of the table. "And you'll like that, at least, I hope," Steve
adds, lifting his eyebrows. Taking the bottle by the neck in his right hand, he reaches out and sets it near the center of the table.

Beth steps to the corner of the table, watching the fork travel on the table surface as she rotates her fist. Leaning against the table edge she slides the prongs away from her, then bangs with them and watches Steve as he looks down and picks up his corn. "Mmmmm, I don't like... these, Mommy," she says, looking at the fork and wrapping her right leg around the table leg.

Steve puts his elbows on the table and leans forward, taking three bites of corn while Greg puts down his glass and glances at Beth, picking his teeth with his right hand.

Taking hold of the table leg with her right hand, Beth leans backward, dragging the fork toward her. Steve puts down his corn, picks up the salt shaker, and begins salting as Greg chews, swallows, and picks up his corn. Beth presses on the fork's prongs, lifting and dropping the handle. "What is that?" she asks in rhythm with the handle's rise and fall. "I..."

"Hon', this corn is really delicious," Steve says as Greg lifts his to his mouth. Beth steps to her left, crossing
her legs and hanging onto the table leg with her right hand. Steve puts the salt to his left and glances toward the kitchen, then picks up his corn and bites into it.

"I know it's good," Joanne says from the kitchen, "but I, I happen to have gotten hold of the toughest ear in the world."

Greg finishes eight bites of corn and leans back chewing as Beth pushes the fork toward Joanne's plate. Leaving the fork and letting go of the table leg, she looks toward the kitchen as she walks toward her chair. "Mom!" she cries before Joanne finishes, taking hold of the end of the table. Lowering her right hand to the table leg and holding onto the table to the left of her plate, she climbs up onto her chair while Greg looks down at his lap.

"Well, take another ear," says Steve, turning a little to his left. Beth shifts forward in her chair and looks at him and Greg, then looks up at Joanne who walks in with a large kitchen knife in her right hand. As Greg and Steve bite into their corn, Beth looks at Joanne's fork, then reaches for her own.

"I don't mean to call attention to my infirmities," says Joanne as she stops to the right of her chair and leans over adjusting her corn, "but man" -- she rests the knife
on top of her corn -- "I'm going to cut through this thing."

Steve lowers his corn after four bites and chews, watching Joanne bang the knife blade twice with the heel of her left hand. Beth watches also, holding her fork in her left hand and swinging her legs. Taking his corn away from his mouth after seven bites, Greg looks over it at Joanne as she laughs, looking from the severed corn she holds up in her left hand, to the knife she lays on the table to the right of her plate.

Greg looks at Steve, who shakes his head, putting down his corn and picking up his napkin in his left hand, then back at Joanne as she sits down. Touching her left hand to her napkin, she shakes her hair away from her face and picks up her table knife while Steve looks at her corn, then down at his own, wiping his mouth on his napkin. Beth leans forward and peers past Joanne as Joanne sits, then as Joanne reaches for butter and Greg looks down at his corn she turns to Steve. "Dah?" she says.

"Beth, you're not even going to try it?" Steve asks, putting down his napkin and taking hold of his corn. Greg glances at her as Steve finishes speaking. She lets go of the table leg to her right and lifts her hand beside her head, then lowers her hand to her lap and looks at the fork in her
left hand as Steve lifts his corn and looks at her.

Beth looks at her corn and says, "No," then turns to Steve, who looks down at his. Joanne lifts her corn in her left hand and begins buttering it as Greg lifts his to his mouth and bites rapidly twice. Beth looks from Steve to Joanne, then at her plate.

"I thought you liked corn," Steve says, leaning to his own. Greg turns his corn and chews, then lifts it to his mouth as Steve takes the second of four bites.

"I don't know," Beth says, and looks at Steve. Turning forward again, she lifts her fork by its handle as Greg finishes four bites and glances at Steve, then looks at his corn as Steve takes his from his mouth and shakes his head. Joanne takes more butter and puts it on her corn, glancing at Beth as Steve looks from his corn to Greg's, then at Greg. Leaning forward slightly, Greg resumes eating.

"I don't want..." Beth says, looking at Joanne, then Steve, and back to her fork again, lifting the handle as Joanne asks her a question.

"Beth, you used... do you want a little piece of corn like Mommy has?" Joanne stops buttering and holds her ear of corn out sideways for Beth to see as Steve watches Greg complete five bites of corn. Greg watches Joanne while
Steve, turning away from him, slowly leans forward and bites. "Do you want one like that?" asks Joanne, looking from her corn to Beth and shaking her head slightly.

Beth looks from her fork to the ear of corn in Joanne's hand and moans quietly as Joanne speaks, then shakes her head no several times, looking from the corn to Joanne. Greg meanwhile looks at his corn.

"No?" Joanne asks and looks away, putting her knife on her plate as Greg bites into his corn. Steve finishes two bites and sits up, repositioning his elbows on the table and looking at Beth while Joanne picks up the salt and begins salting her corn. With her left hand on her fork, Beth puts her right wrist against the table edge and leans forward, watching Joanne and swinging her legs.

Greg finishes three bites of his corn and turns it while Steve slowly chews and looks down at his corn, glances again at Beth, then Greg, and swallows, then lifts the corn toward his mouth as Greg again bites into his. Beth stops swinging her legs and looks up at the ceiling, then at Joanne's fork. Putting the salt to her right, Joanne shakes her hair away from her face, takes her corn in both hands, and leans her elbows on the table. "Want this fork," Beth says. Looking at Joanne's fork, she swings her legs to the right of her
chair, then lets go of her own fork and stands, grabbing the
table corner with both hands. Greg lowers his corn after
three more bites and looks at it.

"Want this...", Beth says, taking two steps toward
Joanne and lunging with her right hand for Joanne's fork.
Joanne takes a bite of her corn, glancing down to her left
as Beth pulls the fork away. Putting his corn down and
lifting his glass, Greg drinks while Steve finishes three
bites, glances at Beth, and looks down chewing. Lowering
her corn, Joanne shakes her left hand over her plate, then
licks her fingers, looking forward. Beth slides the fork
back and forth on the table and watches Joanne, then glances
toward her own plate and crosses her right leg in front of
her left, saying, "Mommy," very slowly. Leaning her elbow
on the table and uncrossing her legs, she waves the fork away
from and toward Joanne as Joanne picks up her corn, bringing
it to her mouth with her right hand and biting. The fork
bangs against Beth's plate. "I want this, Mommy," Beth says,
holding the fork out and looking at Joanne.

Greg picks up his corn as he puts down his glass, then
takes the corn in both hands. Steve leans to his corn and
bites. Wiping her right eye with the back of her wrist,
Joanne glances at Beth. "Don't you have a fork of your own,
Beth?" she asks, looking forward and putting both hands on her corn. Beth looks at the fork in her hand and touches its prongs to the table while Joanne shakes her hair back, lifts her corn, and bites into it, watching her. Lifting his corn to his mouth, Greg pauses and belches twice while Steve finishes four bites of corn and looks down chewing.

"I want two," Beth says. Greg bites into his corn.

Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it, then takes another bite while Beth scrapes the fork prongs over the table and bangs them on the table twice. Taking hold of the table corner, Beth leans around it on her toes and looks to the left of her own plate, dragging the fork over the table with her right hand. Joanne looks at her corn and chews. Greg takes his corn from his mouth after three bites and chews, then returns it to his mouth as Steve leans forward and bites.

"I have no fork," Beth says, turning back to the fork in her right hand as Joanne swallows and bites, looking at her over her corn. Steve finishes three bites and Greg five as Beth looks back to the left of her plate.

"Mommy," she says, sliding her left leg onto her chair as she stretches to see around her plate, "I, I, want two forks."
Wiping his mouth on the sleeve of his forearm, Greg lowers his corn to his plate with his left hand as Steve takes two bites of corn. Joanne turns her corn, takes another bite and looks at Beth as she finishes speaking, then looks back at her corn.

While Steve lowers his corn, picks up his napkin, and wipes his mouth, Greg takes his corncob in his right hand and balances it on the far edge of his plate. Beth squirms onto her chair, twisting the fork in her right hand against the table as she looks to her left. Steve puts down his napkin and picks up his corn, still looking down while Greg reaches his right hand into the cornbowl. "It's good," Greg says, putting a new ear of corn on his plate as Joanne brings her corn to her mouth and bites. Steve leans forward, biting into his. Turning to his left, Greg lifts his glass and drinks as Joanne glances to her right and takes another bite. Steve finishes his third and lowers his corn, turning it and chewing.

Looking from left to right, Beth rattles Joanne's fork against the table. "I want two," she says softly, picking up her own fork from beside her plate. She shifts forward to the edge of her seat, straightening her right leg to support herself. "Look," she says, bringing both forks
together on the table to her right and looking at them.
Still drinking, Greg leans forward, reaches his right hand
to the cornbowl, and puts another ear of corn on his plate,
forming a pyramid with the previous one and the balanced
corn cob. Marlene takes two bites of corn.

"Two forks," says Beth, adjusting them side-by-side on
the table as Joanne takes another bite. Holding his glass
to his left, Greg touches the nearest ear of corn, sending
all three rolling toward him on his plate. "Two forks,"
Beth says again, lifting them up and down on the table while
Joanne and Steve bite into their corn, "mine and yours."
Greg takes his knife and fork from his plate and puts them
on the table to his left as Joanne takes another bite of
corn and Steve finishes a second. Beth slides off the
front of her chair and sidesteps to her right, looking at
her forks and lifting both hands away from them. "It's stuck,"
she says.

Steve lowers his corn and glances at Greg's plate as
Greg moves his utensils. Laughing, Steve turns to Joanne
and says, "He's eating it faster than I am."

Joanne looks at Steve and brings her right forefinger
to her mouth, nodding her head. "I know it," she says, and
looks down, setting her corn on her plate. As she's speaking,
Steve looks back at Greg's plate.

Pushing down on the fork handles, Beth knocks a fork to the floor at her right as Greg lifts his glass and drinks, tilting his head back. "Oops," she says, and bends down for it, at the same time grabbing with her left hand for the fork lying on the table. As the one on the table slips away from her she stands again and straightens it, muttering to herself. Steve looks from Greg's plate to his own and lifts his corn as Joanne picks up her table knife, licks it, and reaches with it to the butter dish.

Putting down his glass, Greg picks up his knife in his left hand. "Can I have the butter?" he asks as Steve takes two bites of corn. Steve lowers his corn over his plate and looks down chewing while Joanne glances to her right and starts to butter. Still muttering, Beth stoops and picks up the fork from the floor with her left hand as Greg transfers his knife to his right hand and looks to his left, picking up his glass. Putting it down, Greg looks at Steve as Steve starts to lift his corn to his mouth. Lowering it, Steve looks across the table and points his left forefinger at the butter.

"It's over here," Joanne says, leaning back slightly as she butters.
Steve leans forward and bites into his corn while Beth puts the fork which fell back beside the other one, holding her right hand over the table with her fingers spread. Lifting his knife in his right hand and reaching out his left arm, Greg pushes the soda bottle against the butter dish. Joanne puts down her knife and reaches her right hand for the butter dish as it moves toward her. "Wait a second, Greg," she says as she picks it up, "don't get too excited." Greg pulls back and watches as she puts the dish on the table in front of his plate. Finishing three bites, Steve pauses with his corn near his mouth.

Continuing to mutter to herself, Beth takes hold of the corner of the table with her right hand and climbs onto her chair while Joanne is speaking, then puts both hands on the prongs of her forks. Joanne picks up her knife and again butters her corn and Steve takes two more bites. Greg adjusts his grip on his knife, reaching it toward the butter dish. Lifting both fork handles by pressing down on the prongs, Beth leans her head to her left and smiles. "Two little kids...," she sings, swinging her legs.

Steve puts down his corn and reaches his left hand for his napkin. "This really isn't a corn eating contest," he says. He wipes his mouth with his napkin in both hands as
Greg positions his knife on the butter.

"No. . . .", Joanne says. Putting her knife on her plate, she looks down to her right and picks up the salt. "Somebody paying you?" she asks, shaking salt on her corn.

"No," Greg answers as he slices through the butter.

Putting down his napkin with his left hand, Steve leans both palms on the edge of the table and stands up, scraping his chair back, then reaches his left hand for the cornbowl, still leaning on his right. Joanne puts down the salt and takes her corn in both hands, leaning forward on her elbows and biting into it as he picks up the bowl and walks into the kitchen. Beth continues to speak to herself while she watches the raised fork handles and swings her legs. As Greg begins buttering, Joanne looks at her corn and takes another bite, then turns it and takes another. "W-up," says Beth, then, "Down," kicking and banging the fork handles up and down. "Up-down, up-down, up-down," she says, banging them faster.

Joanne leans her head to the right and pushes her hair away from her face with the back of her right hand, holding her corn in her left. Taking her corn in both hands again, she turns her head toward the kitchen and asks over the clattering of forks, "This isn't butter-and-sugar corn, is it?"
Greg turns his knife from one side to the other over the length of his corn as she looks forward and takes another bite. Beth stops banging, holding the fork handles up.

"Yeah, of course it is," Steve answers from the kitchen.

"Down," says Beth with the fork handles lifted and her left leg swinging.

"Hm," Joanne says, taking another bite.

"What's butter-and-sugar corn?" Greg asks while he butters.

"Up," says Beth, lowering the fork handles.

"Butter-and-sugar corn," Steve continues, "isn't that the kind that's white and, uh, yellow? That's what this is."

Leaning back and tilting her head to her right while he's speaking, Beth lifts the fork handles and says, "Down," then holding the prongs down, says, "Up."

Joanne looks at her plate while Steve is speaking, then swallows and bites into her corn, saying, "Um-hm."

"Well, what's the kind that isn't sugar and corn?" Greg asks, still sweeping his knife back and forth over his corn.

"Down." Beth lets up on the prongs and the fork handles hit the table as Greg is speaking. Joanne takes another bite,
leaning over her plate, then another. "Up," Beth says, swinging her legs and pressing the prongs down as Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it.

"Sweet corn," Steve answers from the kitchen.

"Dow-up," says Beth, lowering both handles, then lifting one slightly.

Joanne bites into her corn and Greg puts his knife on his plate. "What corn?" Greg asks as he takes his corn in both hands and Joanne turns his.

"Down-down," Beth says quickly, both fork handles on the table and her left leg kicking.

"I think this is called sweet corn..., I don't know," says Steve, walking in from the kitchen with the bowl now full of corn in his left hand.

Joanne bites into her corn as he walks in, glancing over it at Beth as she kicks with her left leg and pushes down on the fork prongs, saying, "Down-up." Greg puts his corn on his plate and looks around the table, then wipes his forehead with the sleeve of his right forearm. Leaning his forearm on the edge of the table, he looks at the cornbowl in Steve's hand as Steve stops at Joanne's right.

"But butter-and-sugar," Steve says as he puts down the cornbowl, "is, uh, white and yellow corn."
"Down," Beth says before he finishes, letting up on the prongs. Joanne at the same time looks to her right and picks up the salt, holding it out over the cornbowl toward Greg as Steve sets the cornbowl on the table.

"Dad, where is the salt?" Greg asks, looking around the table before Steve finishes speaking. Looking at it in Joanne's hand, he reaches out his right hand and takes it from her.

"Down," says Beth, as she lifts the fork handles, then, "Up, up, up, up, up," banging the handles up and down on the table as Greg begins salting his corn from right to left, lifting his left hand away. Taking her corn in both hands, Joanne looks forward and bites.

"Oh, it's...., there it is," says Steve, taking a step back from the table and straightening his shirt with both hands as he glances from the table to the salt in Greg's hand. Joanne takes another bite of corn as Steve steps in front of his chair and pulls it underneath him with a scraping noise, sitting down.

"Up, up, down, down," Beth begins to sing, banging the forks. Greg stops salting, turning his corn with his left hand as Steve sits down, then lifts his hand away as he salts again. Leaning his right forearm on the table, Steve reaches for a new ear of corn while Joanne puts hers on her plate.
with her right hand and picks up her napkin, taking it in both hands and wiping her mouth. "Down," says Beth. Holding the fork handles up, she straightens her left leg in front of her. Greg stops salting and turns his corn.

"That's really good," Joanne says, nodding and looking to the right of her plate while she balls up the napkin in her left hand. She rests her left forearm against the edge of the table and turns the beercan at the right of her plate, then lifts it and drinks with her head back as Greg resumes salting and Steve puts an ear of corn on his plate, picking up his knife.

"Up," says Beth, then drops her left leg.

"It's very good," Steve says as he reaches his knife past Greg for the butter.

"Down," says Beth, letting up on the prongs, then, "Up," and lifts the fork handles.

"I think they get it from Maple Farms," Steve continues, spreading butter on his corn. "At least they used to."

"Down," Beth says, dropping, then lifting the fork handles while Steve is speaking. Greg meanwhile puts the salt to his right and picks up his corn, then lifts the corn to his mouth in both hands and takes four bites. "Up-down," Beth says, releasing the fork prongs. Joanne puts
down her beercan and nods, swallowing, as Greg lowers his corn and leans on his elbows, chewing.

"It's really good," Joanne says, putting her right hand on her corn.

"I want...", Beth says at the same time, straightening up in her chair and pressing down on the fork prongs. She mutters to herself as she lets the handles drop. Shifting her right leg to the side of her chair and putting her foot on the rung, she presses the prongs of one fork and touches its handle with her left hand.

Still holding her napkin, Joanne adjusts the corn on her plate and looks at Steve, asking, "Do you want some" -- she looks at the beer, then back at Steve -- "do you want the last beer?"

"I can't get up," Beth sings, putting her right foot on the floor and balancing on the corner of her chair as she touches the lifted fork handle and Greg leans into his corn. Joanne lifts her corn and puts it down again, continuing to look at Steve.

"I have some in my can," Steve answers, glancing at the beercan while he butters his corn. "I think we've used it up."

"Okay, Beth," Beth says, putting both hands on the
prongs of one fork as Greg sits back chewing five bites.

"You haven't had any yet," continues Steve, glancing up at Joanne while he butters.

"This is mine, isn't it?" Joanne interrupts, pointing to the can of beer. Beth straddles the corner of her chair with both feet on the floor as she talks on steadily and plays with the fork.

Looking at the can of beer Joanne is pointing to, Steve drops his knife to the left of his plate and picks up the can, answering, "This is mine," then puts it back down.

"Oh, it's stuck," Beth says. "Now...," and continues to talk to herself.

"Oh, I'm...," says Joanne. Picking up her corn and still holding her napkin, she gets up from the table and turns toward the kitchen while Steve watches her.

"I think you've got one out there, Joanne, open," he says, pointing to the kitchen. Greg bites into his corn.

"Bee, boom, boom, boom, bang," Beth sings, rocking the handle of the fork against the table as Steve picks up the beercan in his left hand and drinks, looking into the kitchen. Greg leans further over his plate with his corn to his mouth while Beth brings her right leg in front of her chair, crosses it with her left, and sings, "Bum, bum, b-a-a-a-ang." She
bangs the fork handle on the table several more times, then
turns the fork in a half circle.

"Oh, you're right," Joanne says from the kitchen.

Steve finishes drinking and puts down the beer can, then
moves his fork from the left to the front of his plate as
Beth crosses her left hand over her right, lifting, lowering,
and continuing to turn the fork handle. "Put it this way...",
she sings, sliding off the corner of her chair and standing,
"and this way." Greg finishes his eleventh bite of corn
and chews, glancing briefly at Beth and back at his corn as
Steve picks up the knife from the left of his plate.

"Yeah, we used it up," Joanne says from the kitchen.
As she's speaking, Steve reaches his knife over the cornbowl
to the butter dish. Beth turns and faces the corner of the
table, picking up one fork by the handle and the other by
the prongs, saying, "Phew!" Holding the forks upright and
sliding them over the table, she again speaks to herself as
Greg leans over his plate, biting into his corn while Steve
turns and butters his.

Finishing eight bites, Greg looks to his left and lifts
his glass, holding the corn on his plate with his right hand.
"Bang, bang, bang. . . .," says Beth, dancing sideways toward
her chair as she bangs the forks on the table, the fork in
her right hand prongs down and the one in her left hand prongs up. She slides onto her chair as Greg tilts his head back and drinks the rest of his soda. Steve scoops more butter from his plate and continues buttering.

Holding his empty glass over the table, Greg swallows hard, then puts the glass down as Steve puts the table knife to his left, picks up his napkin, and wipes both hands, looking over the table. Dropping his napkin, Steve reaches his right hand for the salt shaker between Greg and Beth’s plates while Greg pulls his left hand out of the way. Speaking to herself, Beth adjusts both forks prongs-up in front of her, then begins to sing loudly, swinging her legs and banging the fork handles on the table while Steve transfers the salt to his left hand and begins salting and turning his corn. Leaning forward, forearms against the edge of the table, Greg takes nine bites from his corn and sits back chewing. Beth sings more quietly and with just her left leg swinging. She holds the forks by their handles in her left fist as she adjusts the prongs, then sings more loudly, swinging both legs and banging the fork handles repeatedly on the table as Greg again leans into his corn.

"I don't anticipate that Beth will be, uh, sleeping
tonight," says Steve, letting go of his corn and putting down the salt as he begins speaking, then looking to the left of his plate and picking up his napkin. With his napkin in both hands he wipes his mouth, turning to Joanne as she walks in from the kitchen. Joanne holds an ear of corn in the pair of kitchen tongs she carries in her right hand. Beth stops singing and readjusts the forks in her left fist while Steve starts speaking, then again sings and bangs the forks as he's finishing. Greg sits up straight and chews thirteen bites of corn, turning the corn over his plate. Looking down, Steve wipes his fingers on his napkin as Joanne stops to the right of her chair and reaches past him to the corn-bowl.

"No," Joanne says, using both hands on the kitchen tongs to put the corn in the bowl. "No, well she took a nap this afternoon."

Beth looks up at Joanne as Joanne puts the corn in the bowl. Twisting in her chair with the forks in her left hand next to her face and her right arm on the table beside her plate, Beth looks from Joanne to the Coke bottle, saying, "More soda. More soda," while Joanne is speaking.

"No," Steve says before Joanne finishes, then as Joanne, the tongs in her right hand, turns to her left toward the
kitchen with a last look at the cornbowl he continues over Beth, "I mean, that means we don't have to bring all those extra...blankets and stuff." He looks down as he speaks, putting his napkin to the left of his plate, adjusting his knife with his left hand, and shaking his head, then lifts and turns his corn in both hands. Greg rests his forearms against the edge of the table and begins biting steadily into his corn while Steve is speaking. Beth meanwhile looks at the forks and takes them in both hands as Joanne walks back into the kitchen.

"All right, we'll just bring pillows," Joanne says from the kitchen as Steve leans forward and bites into his corn. "I don't think it's going to be cold anyway." Lowering his corn from his mouth after nine bites, Greg looks ahead of him and chews.

Putting down his corn after two bites and picking up the salt in his left hand, Steve shakes his head and says, "No," then salting his corn, he says with his mouth full, "Well, we're all going to sit inside." Beth glances at him as he's speaking, then back at the forks, playing with them in both hands.

"Yeah," Joanne answers from the kitchen. With his right hand on his corn as Greg again leans into his, Steve puts
down the salt to his left, picks up his napkin, and looks first at Greg, then at Greg's plate, wiping the left side of his mouth. Greg finishes four bites of corn while Steve watches, chews briefly, then leans into his corn again as Steve looks down at his own plate, dropping the napkin on the table beside it. Beth brings the prongs of the forks together, sitting on the edge of her chair with her toes touching the floor.

"Well, think of what we did last time," Joanne calls from the kitchen.

Greg leans back and chews four bites as Steve picks up his corn in both hands and leans his forearms against the edge of the table. Steve takes two bites and chews, looking down. Greg starts to bite, hesitates and glances at Steve, then looks back at his corn, swallows, and bites as Steve glances at him. Looking forward, Steve takes one bite, lowering his corn as Greg finishes six bites. Steve sits up and chews, looking at Greg's plate while Greg drops his corn and adjusts it with his right hand, looking at his glass, then at the soda bottle to his right, then back at his corn. Looking away, Steve takes two more bites while Beth continues meshing the prongs of her forks.

"Can I have some Jamaica Cola?" asks Greg, gesturing
toward the soda bottle with his right hand without turning his head. Leaning his forearm against the edge of the table, he lifts his right hand to his mouth and picks his teeth while Beth lowers the forks to the table, continuing to mesh them. Finishing two bites of corn while Greg is speaking, Steve looks at Greg's place setting, then to the left of his own while he puts down his corn. Chuckling, he picks up his napkin and takes it in his right hand, then wipes his mouth as he picks up the salt.

"What?" Beth asks, still looking at the forks as Steve begins salting, balling up the napkin in his right hand beside his plate. "What was said?" she asks again without looking up. Holding one fork on the table with her right hand, she presses its prongs with the prongs of the other fork.

Steve glances at Greg, putting the salt to his own left. "Gregory," he says, looking at the soda bottle as he transfers his napkin to his left hand, "you really are going to town, aren't you?" Dropping the napkin to the left of his plate as he's speaking, he reaches his left hand for the soda bottle, leaning his weight on his right forearm. Greg stops picking his teeth and looks at Steve,
dropping his hand to his lap.

"What it was said?" asks Beth, watching the fork handle drop as Steve finishes speaking.

"What?" Greg asks as Beth speaks and Steve lifts the Coke bottle. From the edge of her chair, Beth glances at Steve, then looks forward again and starts banging the fork handle up and down with the fork in her left hand as Steve holds the large bottle by the neck in his left hand and unscrews the cap.

Looking at the bottle, Steve answers, "You're really going to town."

"Um-hm," Greg mumbles, looking forward and reaching his right hand to the cornbowl while Steve, holding the bottle in both hands and the cap in his right, leans to his right and pours.

"I, I want some more," says Beth, reaching her right hand for the fork she's knocked away. Holding the fork against the table, she again bangs at it with the other, knocking it slowly toward the table edge to her right as Greg touches an ear of corn in the bowl, pulls his hand away, then reaches back into the bowl.

Steve glances at the cornbowl, then back at Greg's glass while he pours. "Well, you haven't even had anything to eat
"yet," he says over Beth's banging, glancing again at Greg's arm as he finishes speaking.

Pulling an ear of corn from the bowl, Greg drops it and jerks his hand away, shaking it vigorously. Beth stops banging, grabs the fork away from the table edge, and turns to Greg. "Oh, it's hot!" he exclaims, still looking at the cornbowl.

"Now, Beth," Joanne calls from the kitchen at the same time Greg is speaking, "you're going to have some hamburgers. I'm going to put them on right now." Greg rests his right forearm against the edge of the table while she's speaking and looks at his glass as Steve finishes pouring.

"Yeah. It is," Steve says over Joanne, glancing at Greg. Putting the bottle down to his left, he screws on the cap as Greg takes the glass in his left hand, glances at him, and drinks. Holding the prongs of the fork in her left hand to her mouth, Beth watches Greg and Steve, then glances toward the kitchen as Joanne finishes speaking. Turning again to Steve and leaning back slightly, she picks up her empty glass in her right hand and waves it in the air, putting her fork to the left of her plate.

"I want some mo-o-o-or, Daddy," she says, sliding off her chair and standing between it and the table. As she's
speaking, Steve again picks up the soda bottle, then puts it down and reaches for her glass, holding the neck of the bottle in his left hand. Beth reaches and gives him the glass as Greg sets his down and looks at her. Bending his neck sharply and sitting up, he watches as Steve, looking at Beth, puts her glass to the right of his plate and begins to unscrew the bottle cap. Watching Steve, Beth pushes against the table edge with both hands and squirms back onto her chair, then drops her hands to her lap, saying, "See, I am. . . ."

"Have you guys had any milk today?" Steve asks before she finishes, taking the cap off the bottle and looking at her glass, then with his left hand on the neck of the bottle and his right underneath pours soda into her glass while she watches.

"Yeah, they both had chocolate milk," Joanne says from the kitchen.

"Well, I had chocolate milk," Greg answers at the same time, both forearms resting on the table while he watches Steve pour soda.

"All right," Steve says.

"I had chocolate milk. . . ." Beth answers, sitting up straighter in her chair while she watches with both hands in
her lap. "In my ba-ba... when I was sleeping." Greg leans forward as she's speaking and rubs the back of his head with his right wrist, then sits back and returns his forearm to the table.

"Okay," Steve says before Beth finishes. Lifting the bottle away from her glass, he puts it on the table to the left of his plate and begins to screw on the cap as Beth takes hold of the table edge with her right hand and begins rubbing the side of her head with her left. "See," she continues, looking forward and nodding while she rubs the side of her head. "From Mommy... right?"

Greg again reaches his right hand toward the cornbowl, but hesitates and brings it back, reaching with his left instead. He pulls an ear of corn from the bowl as Steve turns and picks up Beth's glass in his right hand. Leaning his left palm on the table edge, Steve reaches with Beth's glass over Greg's arm as Greg lifts the corn from the bowl to his plate. "I don't feel good," Beth says, twisting off the front of her chair and to her right, then turning and putting both hands on the edge of the table as Steve sets her glass beside her plate.

Greg picks up his knife in his right hand, then puts it back down and begins rolling his corn in the butter on
his plate with both hands while Steve sits back, moves the Coke bottle further away from him, and picks up his corn in both hands. As Steve, his forearms against the table edge, leans forward and bites, Beth lifts and drops her right leg twice, trying to climb back onto her chair while she reaches her left hand for her glass. She jars the glass, murmurs, "It spills," then looks to her right as she lifts it, wiping her forehead with the back of her right hand. "Spills," she says, "oh, my." The soda sloshes in the glass as she takes the glass in both hands and edges her way to her right between the chair and the table. Greg continues to roll his corn in butter and Steve lowers his after two bites, looking at it. Bringing her glass down to her mouth, her left elbow resting on the corner of the table as she moves out from in front of her chair, Beth spills more soda. "Ooh," she says, looking down past her right arm. "Floor."

Steve puts the left end of his corn on his plate and picks up the salt as Beth looks back into her glass. Sliding her elbow off the table corner and looking up, she walks toward the side table, holding the glass in both hands in front of her chest and saying, "I have to get a. . . , I have to get a napkin." Steve salts his corn, then puts the shaker to his left, picks up the corn, and leans forward as
he bites into it. Greg rolls his corn more rapidly. "I have to get a napkin. Napkin..., napkin," says Beth from the side table. Greg continues to roll his corn with his right hand while he pushes another ear out of the way with his left. Finishing three bites and chewing, Steve looks to his left, then at Beth, holding his corn over his plate.

"I have to get...," she says. Greg picks up his knife in his right hand, takes butter from the butter dish, and spreads it on his corn while Steve looks down and turns his. Leaning forward, Steve takes two bites, turns his corn, and takes another.

"Hm," says Greg, looking down and buttering. Steve lowers his corn and looks at Greg's, then returns to his own as Greg again rolls his in butter, the knife in his right hand. Hurring to the spill with a paper towel in her left hand, Beth stoops down and begins wiping it up while Steve takes two more bites of corn, then lowers and turns it.

"What are you doing, Beth?" Steve asks, lifting his chin in her direction without looking up. He lifts his corn to his mouth and bites.

"I'm clean..., cleaning...," Beth says, her
weight on her right arm as she wipes vigorously at the
spill with the towel. Steve finishes four bites of corn
and looks at her as she stands and walks toward the table,
then glances at Greg's plate as Greg drops his knife.
Glancing to his right, Greg lifts his corn in both hands and
bites into it. Steve looks again at Beth as she grunts
and turns at the other end of the table, transferring the
used towel to her right hand and walking toward the side
table.

"Did you spill something?" he asks as she walks away.

"Mm, uh, I, I cleaned it all up," she answers from
across the room as Greg finishes three bites and turns his
corn.

Steve looks down and turns his corn, then looks around
the room, asking, "Well, where is your soda?" Greg leans
back and to his right as Steve speaks, looking past Beth's
seat to the place of the spill, then returns to his corn,
looking briefly to his left and forward again. Steve glances
at his corn and continues to look around, then watches Beth
as she walks across the room toward her chair.

"I. . . .," she says, rubbing the left side of her head.

"Pick the glass up," Steve says, watching her walk by
the front end of the table.
"...and I, and I cleaned," Beth continues at the same time. Greg leans and bites once as Beth, still rubbing the left side of her head, turns completely around and walks back toward the side table. "I'm not through yet," she says.

"Well, pick the glass up, all right?" Steve asks, looking at the side table, then at the corn in his hands while she's speaking. As Steve moves his forearms higher against the table edge and takes two bites of corn, Greg puts his down, then leans forward and bites it where it lies on the plate.

"I'm not cleaned up," Beth says from the side table. "That's why." Sitting up, Greg picks up his corn while Steve holds his over his plate and chews. "There," Beth says. Lifting his corn, Steve takes three bites while Greg lifts his and takes two. Greg drops his corn on his plate, rolls it in butter, then again picks it up and bites into it as Steve finishes two more bites. Lowering his corn, Steve looks at Beth.

"Be careful now," he says, gesturing with his head toward Beth's place setting. "Bring it back and put it on the table." Steve looks down and lifts his corn as Greg, finishing five bites, turns his in front of his mouth. "Then
you can drink it," Steve says, and takes three bites. He looks up chewing and watches Beth as Greg bites into his corn. Holding her glass of soda to her mouth in both hands, Beth walks slowly toward her chair.

Finishing two bites, Greg drops his corn, picks up his knife in his right hand, and reaches for butter as Beth stops beside her chair and puts her glass on the table corner with both hands. "I got it all cleaned up," she says, taking hold of the table with both hands, lifting her left leg onto the chair seat; and beginning to pull herself up.

Steve looks from her to his corn, lifting it toward his mouth. "Okay," he says, and bites as Greg begins spreading butter on his corn.

"See, I can cle. . . .," Beth says, looking at Steve as she climbs into her chair. Buttering his corn, Greg mumbles something, and Steve straightens up from his third bite of corn, looking down and chewing. Turning and pointing to the floor with her right hand, Beth says, "Clean up," then holds onto the edge of her chair seat, continuing to look at the floor while she rubs her head with her left hand. Steve leans and bites into his corn as she stops rubbing her head and sits forward, resting her hands in her lap and
saying, "Uhhh." Holding his knife in his right hand, Greg begins rolling his corn in butter while Steve finishes his fourth bite. As Joanne walks in from the kitchen, sighing and pulling the tab off a beer can she holds in her right hand, Beth looks up at her and pulls her arms back, then again rests her hands in her lap and sighs also. "Mommy," she says, shifting in her chair. "I cleaned. . . ."

Putting down his corn as Beth starts speaking, Steve looks to the left of his plate, then at the can of beer in Joanne's hand and picks up his napkin. "Ah-ha," he says, "what's that sound?" Joanne puts the beer to the left of her plate and holds it while she removes the tab, then looks at Steve and sits as Steve takes his napkin in both hands and wipes his mouth, watching Beth.

"Mommy, I put, uh, Mommy. . . .," says Beth, squirming to the edge of her chair and grabbing the table edge with both hands as she leans toward Joanne. Sitting back in her chair and sighing loudly, Joanne looks to the left of her plate as Beth stands in front of her chair and holds onto the table corner, looking up at her. Putting the can tab on the table to the left of her plate, Joanne rocks forward, stretching out her legs and crossing her ankles. "I think I put some of my. . . .," says Beth.
"I think I've heard that sound before," Joanne says, looking at the cornbowl and reaching her right hand to it. Looking down, Steve wipes the right side of his mouth with his napkin and reaches for his beer. "I might want some of that, you know," he says, again wiping the right side of his mouth as he lifts his beer can.

"Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy, Mommy!" Beth calls increasingly loudly while Steve is speaking, walking around the end of the table and putting her right hand on the corner to Joanne's left, then laying her left arm beside Joanne's plate. Putting his knife down, Greg lifts his hands to either side of his plate and looks to left and right. "I cleaned up some more...," Beth continues non-stop as Joanne takes an ear of corn from the bowl and puts it on her plate. Resting his right hand with the napkin in it by his plate, Steve tilts his head far back and drinks. Leaning his head on his right arm, Greg peers across the table, then sits up again, the fingers of his right hand spread and his left hand in his lap.

"Yeah," Joanne says, putting her left hand on her freshly opened can of beer and turning to Steve. She gestures over her shoulder toward the kitchen with her right hand, then rubs her nose with the back of her hand and lets go of
her beercan, adding, "There's another one in the freezer that's half drunk."

"Mommeeeeeeeee!" Beth yells the whole time Joanne's speaking, looking up at her.

"It was too warm," Joanne continues, looking at Steve and pushing her hair back from her face with her right hand. Steve lowers his beercan as she speaks, swallows, and looks at her, his eyebrows raised.

Beth looks at Greg as he stands up between his chair and the table, reaching his right hand around the cornbowl, then she takes a breath and turns back to Joanne, again shouting, "Mommeeeeeeeee!"

"Do you know where the salt is?" Greg asks over Beth, sitting down and looking around the table while he shakes his right hand in the air.

"I forgot I even had one back there," Joanne continues, raising her voice over Beth and shaking her head. Looking down as she speaks, she takes her corn in her left hand and picks up her knife.

"Do you know where the salt is?" Greg interrupts, looking around the table and shaking his right hand while Beth continues to yell. Steve puts down his can of beer to his left while Greg is speaking, then transfers his napkin to
his right hand and wipes his mouth.

"What?" Joanne asks, dropping her knife on her plate and looking in front of her.

Beth stops yelling. Touching Joanne's waist as Joanne picks up the kitchen knife and positions it on her corn, Beth says, "I have some soda that's floor. . . ."

"Do you know where the salt is?" Greg asks at the same time, looking at Joanne and putting his right hand in his lap.

"Yup," Steve answers, looking to his left and reaching for the salt.

". . . and I, and I. . . .", Beth continues, looking up at Joanne. Joanne draws the knife back and forth over her corn, then bangs it four times with the heel of her left hand, cutting the corn in two.

Steve meanwhile looks back toward Greg and says, "I think it's right here." He lifts the salt and puts it in front of Greg's plate while Greg watches, then looks toward the cornbowl. Greg takes the salt shaker from the table in his right hand before Steve lets go of it.

". . . and I picked it up," continues Beth, watching Joanne's face as Joanne puts down the kitchen knife to her right and pauses, nodding slowly.
"That's good," says Beth.

While Greg readjusts the salt shaker with his left hand, Steve wipes his mouth with his napkin, then puts it to the left of his plate and reaches to the cornbowl where he searches for the right ear, saying, "Joanne, this corn is fantastic."

"Oh, did you?" Joanne asks before Steve finishes, resting her forearms against the table to either side of her plate and looking down at Beth. Greg rolls his corn in butter with his left hand while he holds the salt shaker in his right.

"Right there," Beth says. Holding onto the table edge with her right hand, sheLeansto her left and lifts her right leg, pointing to where the spill was. Joanne glances toward the cornbowl, then puts her hand on the table corner and leans to her left, looking past the end of the table to where Beth is pointing.

"Sure is," says Greg, rolling his corn in butter as Steve continues searching in the cornbowl.

Glancing back as Joanne leans around the table end, Beth takes a step toward the spill, then looks at Joanne and says, "Uh, I... and I..."

"Did you use your napkin?" Joanne asks, sitting up and
looking again at Beth. Greg begins salting his corn as Steve puts an ear from the bowl on his plate.

"Yeah," Beth answers, looking up at Joanne and touching the table corner with her right hand.

"Good girl," Joanne says; looking forward and nodding. Pushing her beer can to the side with her left hand and picking up her table knife in her right, she adds, "Very good," then reaches past her beer for the butter dish, pulling it slightly toward her and putting her knife in it. Greg turns his corn, then holds his left hand at a distance as he salts down the ear. Taking his left hand from his corn, Steve looks around the table near his plate, then looks at his corn again.

"So it is cleaned up," says Beth quietly. Holding onto the table corner with her right hand, she again leans to her left and looks at the floor, then at Joanne's knife in the butter.

"Who sat on this?" asks Steve, picking up his corn and turning it in both hands. "King Faruk?"

Bringing butter to her own corn, Joanne glances at Steve's while Beth lifts both arms onto the table and slides to her left. "I don't know," Joanne says. "Look'it."

Picking up her corn and holding it out in front of her, she
looks back and forth two times between it and his, her table
knife in her right hand.

Putting down his corn, Steve looks at hers and shakes
his head, saying, "Hnh." Putting the salt to his right and
taking his corn in both hands, Greg looks at Steve's corn,
then at Joanne's as Joanne puts hers down. "It's a little
squashed," Steve says, looking around the table and picking
up his knife from his left as Greg again looks at the corn.
While Steve is speaking, Beth crosses her right foot in
front of her left and takes her glass in her left hand, her
right arm flat on the table. Looking at Joanne and Steve,
she brings her glass down past the table edge and drinks,
slowly swinging around the corner of the table toward her
seat.

"See?" Joanne continues before Steve finishes speaking.
She starts buttering her corn. "Dar -- this is the, uh,
second time we've gotten double ears, and it's only been two
weeks."

Steve glances down to his left, then reaches out and
takes butter on his knife while Joanne is speaking. Craning
his neck, Greg looks at Steve's corn, then leans forward
and bites into his own as Steve begins buttering. Finishing
two bites, Greg turns his corn as Joanne stops speaking and
Beth sets down her glass. Muttering to herself, Beth takes hold of the edge of the table and pulls herself onto her chair, looking to her left. "Must have been a strange year for corn," Joanne adds as she butters.

Beth faces forward and picks up her glass in both hands, then glances to her left, looks forward again, and drinks. Putting her knife on her plate, Joanne reaches her right hand across the table, picking up the salt shaker from Greg's right as Greg presses against the table edge and bites into his corn. Leaning to take more butter, Steve pauses, then reaches under Joanne's arm which she lifts as she brings back the salt shaker. As Steve takes butter she begins salting.

"Gregory, are you still eating?" she asks without looking up. Beth looks at her while continuing to drink.

"Um-hm," Greg answers, finishing three bites and looking at her, then back at his corn as Steve, returning his knife with butter on it to his corn, glances at him. Looking at Greg as she puts the salt to her right, Joanne shakes her hair away from her face and takes her corn in both hands. Leaning on her elbows, she bites into her corn as Greg bites into his. Beth takes her
glass from her mouth as Joanne puts down the salt, then continues to watch her, returning the glass to her mouth as Joanne bites into her corn. Outside the apartment children are beginning to play and shout quite loudly.

"Beth, you still not eating?" asks Steve, shaking his head while he continues to butter.

Joanne and Greg take their corn away from their mouths as Steve finishes speaking. "Hm!" Joanne laughs, looking up and pushing corn into her mouth with her right hand.

"Hey, Jay!" a child calls loudly outside. Greg looks up toward the kitchen chewing while Beth, watching Joanne, shakes her head no without taking her glass from her mouth.

"Mmm," Joanne says, taking another bite of corn. Greg glances at her, then looks toward the rear window behind Steve, leaning back in his seat and picking up his glass in his left hand as Joanne takes her corn from her mouth and looks at it.

"Well, I wonder when Lewis will be back," Steve says, scooping butter off his plate and spreading it on his corn. Turning toward Steve as Steve starts speaking, Greg lifts his glass to his mouth and holds it there while he chews, his corn in his right hand over his plate.

"Boy, some of this corn would taste great with that
soup," Joanne says, looking at Steve, then back at her corn in mid-sentence.

"What do you think of Lewis, Greg?" Steve asks before she finishes. As Steve starts speaking, still buttering and turning his corn, Greg begins drinking and Beth looks down at her glass, continuing to sip her soda. Joanne bites into her corn.

Swallowing, Greg puts down his glass and takes his corn in both hands, looking at it. "I like him, but he's like Groucho Marx," he answers, and looks up at Steve. As he's speaking a child shouts to another in the back yard. Joanne takes another bite of corn at the same time, glancing over it.

Steve scoops more butter from his plate. "He's like Groucho Marx? Why?" he asks. Resting his knife on the left side of his plate, he picks up the salt from Joanne's right as Joanne again bites into her corn.

"Yeah," Greg answers before Steve finishes, nodding at him. "Because he never lets you say anything." He continues to look at Steve while Beth sips her soda, moving her fingers on and off the glass tilted to her mouth in both hands.

"Yeah, well I can't believe that anybody could get you
in a position where you couldn't say anything," says Steve, salting his corn while he speaks. Beth lowers her glass to in front of her chest and looks into it while Joanne takes another bite of corn. Turning her corn, Joanne bites into it once again as Steve finishes speaking.

"When I go to say something," says Greg, looking forward, "'Well, uh. . . .'" He looks back toward Steve. "And then he says, 'Well, oh, wait a minute.'" Greg looks up to his right as he imitates Lewis, then lifts his corn slightly and looks at it. Beth opens and closes her hands around her glass while Joanne takes another bite of her corn, looks at the ear, then puts it on her plate with her left hand. Setting the salt shaker between his and Joanne's plates, Steve picks up his corn as Greg finishes speaking. Joanne licks her right index finger, then picks up the salt shaker and salts as Steve leans his forearms against the table edge and bites.

"He is really strange," Joanne says, putting the salt to her right and picking up her corn in both hands as Steve finishes two bites and turns his. Greg leans on his elbows and bites into his corn two times, watching Joanne as she lifts her corn, rests her elbows on the table, and glances at him while she takes a bite.
"Why?" Greg asks, sitting back from his corn and looking at it. As he's speaking Beth resumes drinking and Joanne looks at her corn chewing.

"He's a character," Steve says, leaning and taking two more bites while Joanne bites once. Beth touches the bottom of her glass with the fingers of her right hand while she drinks, slowly swinging her right leg.

Greg lifts his corn to his mouth, then moves it away and looks at Joanne as she bites into her corn. "Why is he strange?" he asks. Glancing again at his corn, he bites into it twice and watches her.

"As I say," Joanne answers, looking at her corn and chewing, "he went through this whole harangue about..." -- she swallows, looking at Greg over her corn while Steve leans forward and takes two more bites -- "well, he had to do such and such at nine o'clock, something else at nine-thirty, but he would be here at ten-thirty." Steve takes two more bites of corn while she's speaking, and she looks back at her corn, then to her left, then again at Greg who watches her, chewing. "Ten-thirty in the morning, on the dot...!" she says, looking from Greg to her corn and pausing.

Taking the glass from her mouth while Joanne is speaking,
Beth rests it on the palm of her right hand, then drinks again, flexing her fingers away from the bottom of the glass and swinging her right leg. Steve puts down his corn, picks up his napkin from the left of his plate, and looks at Greg. "He was here ten-thirty on the dot," he says, continuing to watch Greg.

Greg is looking at Joanne, who bites into her corn, then looks at it and nods while Steve wipes his mouth. "The doorbell rings," she says, glancing at Greg again as she bites her corn. Beth nods her head forward, balancing her glass on the palm of her right hand, then tilts it again and drinks, watching Joanne. Swallowing, Joanne looks at and turns her corn while Steve finishes wiping his mouth with his napkin, looking from Greg to his own plate. Tossing the napkin down to his left, Steve picks up his corn in both hands, then leans on his forearms and takes three bites. Joanne tilts her head to the left, still looking at her corn. "I think he's going to be the president of J, JC's, in the next, in about twenty years," she says.

"Why, are they members?" Greg interrupts, looking at and turning his corn. He again looks at her as she finishes speaking and bites into her corn. Steve lowers his corn and turns it while Beth continues to watch Joanne over the
lip of her tilted glass.

"No," Joanne answers, looking at her corn, turning it, and biting again. Greg leans and takes three bites of his corn, looking at her as she answers him.

"Well, he's got a plan for everything he does," Steve says, turning his corn and chewing. Swallowing, he leans forward to bite, then hesitates and adds, "A system," as Greg sits back turning his corn.

Finishing a large bite, Joanne leans over her plate, then takes another as Steve finishes speaking and bites into his corn. "How old is he?" she asks, and takes a third bite, glancing at Greg and down again. Steve lowers his corn after three bites and turns it as she stops speaking. Beth at the same time lowers her glass and looks into it, patting its bottom with the palm of her right hand.

Biting into his corn once, Greg sits up and looks at Joanne, saying, "Nine."

"Is his sister Horsie?" Steve asks, looking at Greg and leaning toward him slightly as Joanne takes another bite of corn. Greg looks at him and chews while Beth lifts her glass to her mouth and looks into it, her right palm against the bottom.
"Plays horsie?" Joanne asks, laughing and glancing at Steve, then looking down at her plate she begins pulling kernels into a pile.

"He doesn't have a sister," says Greg, continuing to look at Steve.

Sitting up and putting his corn on his plate, Steve holds it with his right hand while he picks up his napkin and looks at Greg, asking, "He doesn't have a sister?"

"Nope," Greg answers, shaking his head.

"Nope," says Steve, looking down and wiping his mouth. Beth lowers her glass onto her right palm and looks into it as he speaks. He puts his napkin to the left of his plate and picks up his corn while Joanne leaves her corncob on the back of her plate and puts kernels of corn in her mouth with her right hand. Beth lifts her glass to her mouth as Greg and Steve bite into their corn. Picking up her knife in her right hand, Joanne takes hold of the second half of her corn and spreads butter onto it from her plate.

"You're going to sound very cruel," Joanne says, and reaches her knife to the butter dish. Steve lowers his corn after three bites, Greg after seven, and Beth lowers her glass, looking into it. "All the little kids in the neighborhood...", Joanne continues, buttering.
"No, I mean is she the one who plays horsie," Steve says before Joanne finishes, putting the left end of his corn on his plate and picking up his napkin. He lifts the napkin to his mouth and adjusts it with his right hand while Greg, looking at Joanne as she finishes speaking, wipes his mouth on the sleeve of his upper arm without lifting his forearm from the edge of the table. Beth lowers her glass and looks into it as Greg looks at Joanne, then lifts it again as Steve stops speaking.

"I know, I know what you mean," Joanne says, nodding and continuing to butter while Steve wipes his mouth with his napkin, "but..."

As she trails off, Greg straightens his right leg and leans against the table edge, biting into his corn three times while Beth lowers her glass and bends forward, craning her neck toward Joanne and coughing. Putting his napkin down, Steve picks up his beercan in his left hand and glances down to his right, asking, "How many people in his family?"

"His mother's just like him," Joanne says at the same time, continuing to butter her corn. Beth straightens up and shrugs, bringing her glass to her mouth and drinking at the same time Steve lifts his beercan and drinks, both with their heads tilted back.
"There are. . . four," says Greg, then looks at Steve and swallows.

Steve lowers his beercan as Beth lowers her glass, then nods and swallows as he puts the can to his left. "Oh," he says, reaching past the soda bottle for the salt, "you mean. . . ."

"Including his mother and father?" Joanne interrupts, putting her knife on her plate and reaching for the salt shaker as Steve picks it up. She takes her corn in both hands as Steve begins salting. Beth meanwhile stretches, pulling back her right arm and throwing out her chest, then coughs and slumps forward. Sitting up again, she lifts her glass in both hands and drinks.

"Um-hm," Greg answers, nodding and watching Steve salt.

"You mean there's just two, the two boys, that's all?" Steve asks while Joanne puts her corn on her plate and pushes her hair back with her right wrist. Glancing at Greg, Steve puts the salt shaker back beside Joanne's plate.

"Um-hm," Greg answers again, still looking at Steve as Beth lowers her glass.

"Huh," Steve says, lifting his corn in both hands. Leaning his forearms against the table edge, he bites at the same time Greg does.

Reaching both hands past her beercan, Joanne moves the
butter dish to the side with her right hand and pulls Beth's unused napkin from underneath it. Greg lowers his corn after two bites and turns it as Beth jerks her glass to her mouth with her right palm underneath and tilts her head back drinking. "Beth, careful of your teeth," Joanne says, glancing up at Beth as she takes the napkin in both hands and wipes her mouth.

Steve sits back after three bites of corn as Greg again bites into his. Looking down and turning his, Steve asks, "Where do they live, Greg?" Joanne wipes both hands on her napkin as he's speaking, then puts it to her left and glances to the right of her plate. Picking up the salt shaker and taking hold of her corn, she begins salting as Beth lowers her empty glass and Greg finishes three bites. Setting her glass on the table with her left hand, Beth lifts her right arm behind her head and stretches, leaning back in her seat.

Greg turns around to his left and points with his left hand toward the window behind him as Steve, glancing at him, bites into his corn. "Um, they live down, you know, you know, see that corner, you know that corner over there?" Greg asks.

"In the corner," Joanne interrupts, looking down and
salting. Still pointing, Greg turns back to Steve, who finishes a second bite of corn.

"Unh!" Beth grunts at the same time, throwing herself forward and taking hold of the edge of the table with both hands as she looks across at Joanne. Joanne puts down the salt shaker and takes her corn in both hands, tossing her hair back from her face and looking at Beth.

"Um-hm," Steve says, turning and looking to where Greg is pointing.

Greg swallows and nods at him. "That's where they live," he says, turning forward and looking from his corn to his glass. He reaches with his left hand and takes hold of his glass as Steve glances at him. Looking back at his own corn, Steve nods.

"What's the matter?" Joanne asks, watching Beth over her corn as she bites into it.

Beth coughs again, heaving her shoulders and dropping her right hand to her lap, then looks back at Joanne as Steve bites into his corn. Taking her corn from her mouth, Joanne looks at it as Greg glances at her. He lifts his glass and drinks. "Soda making me sick," says Beth, shrugging her shoulders. Putting her right hand on her thigh and leaning on her right arm, she slumps in her chair and watches
Joanne. Joanne turns her corn and bites into it as Steve finishes four bites of his and turns it, chewing.

Throwing her head back, Beth coughs violently and turns her face to her right as Joanne takes the corn from her mouth and looks at it. Lowering the glass from his mouth, Greg looks at Beth as she again throws her head back, grips the table edge with both hands, and coughs a fourth time, leaning her left cheek against the edge of the table. As Steve leans and bites into his corn, Joanne takes a quick bite of hers and looks at Beth. Greg turns to Joanne while Beth rubs her face across the back of her right hand and looks into the living room, lifting her head slightly.

"Take it easy, your hamburger's coming," Joanne says, looking from Beth to her corn and biting into it. The hamburgers can be heard frying in the kitchen. Greg glances into the living room, then looks forward and drinks as Beth turns back to Joanne. Sitting back after two bites of corn, Steve glances at Beth, then lifts his corn and bites it again while Joanne, lowering her corn, leans forward and pushes corn into her mouth with her left hand. Still gripping the table edge, Beth lifts her head back and coughs again, kicking out her legs and dropping her head between her arms as she brings her right foot to rest on the side chair rung. Greg
puts his glass to his left and takes his corn in both hands. Looking at her corn, Joanne lifts it in her right hand and takes another bite.

"What's the matter, Beth?" Steve asks, sitting up from three bites and lowering his corn to his plate. Beth glances at him and coughs again, jerking her head to the right as he looks down and picks up his napkin. Greg lifts his corn to his mouth and sits back from the table as Joanne turns her corn in both hands and Steve rests his elbows on the table, opening his napkin and looking up at Beth.

"Soda makes me sick," Beth says, looking at her left foot and swinging it. Joanne bites her corn and Steve wipes his mouth as Beth looks at him, her head lifted back.

"That's because you're drinking too much of it," Steve says, wiping back across his mouth with the napkin in his left hand. Joanne takes another bite of her corn and turns it as Steve balls his napkin in both hands, looking down. Beth jerks her head forward, coughing again and kicking once with her left leg. Steve looks at her as she sits up, then he wipes his mouth again with his napkin in both hands as Joanne bites into her corn.

Lowering his corn after eleven bites, Greg looks sharply
at Beth, then sits forward and rests his forearms against the table, looking at Joanne and saying, "That's a fake cough." He looks from Joanne to Steve as Joanne takes another bite and Steve wipes both hands on his napkin, looking at his plate. Beth holds onto the table edge with her left hand and pushes a fork against her plate.

"Hm?" asks Joanne, putting her corn down with her right hand and picking up her napkin. Sitting back from the table, she licks the fingers of her right hand and wipes both hands on her napkin, looking at Greg. Steve wipes each side of his mouth without looking up.

"That was just a fake cough," says Greg, looking back at his corn. Beth turns to her left while he's speaking and lifts her empty glass in both hands, then holds it up in her left hand and rocks back in her seat, looking at it.

Steve drops his napkin from his left hand and turns to Greg, reaching for Greg's napkin. "Don't forget to use your napkin," he says, pulling it from under Greg's plate as he looks at Greg's face, "and get a little of that, um, grease off." Greg puts down his corn as Steve reaches over his plate, then takes the napkin from him with both hands and wipes his face. Watching them, Joanne wipes her mouth with her napkin in both hands, then looks down from right to left
and rests her left forearm against the edge of the table, reaching her right hand across her plate and picking up her beercan. Beth meanwhile reaches and puts her glass back on the table. Leaning her right hand on the edge of her seat, Beth swivels to her right and stands up while Joanne starts drinking. Steve turns forward and rubs his hands together as he finishes speaking, then looks down to his left, rests his left forearm along the table edge, and picks up his can of beer. "It's pretty messy stuff," he adds as Greg holds his napkin in front of his mouth and looks at it.

Steve glances at his plate, then drinks with his head tilted back while Greg holds his napkin in his left hand and licks the fingers of his right, then looks at them. Walking sideways toward Joanne with her back to the table, Beth looks up at the television light in the corner of the room nearest her chair and coughs, then looks into the living room at the camera. Joanne drops her napkin from her left hand and puts her beercan to the left of her plate, swiveling to her right and saying, "Yeah." As she stands up she looks at Steve's plate. Greg licks his little finger, then puts all the fingers of his right hand in his mouth while Steve puts his beercan to his left, folds his arms, and leans forward on his elbows.
"Mommy, I. . . ," says Beth, passing the corner of the table and turning to Joanne's chair.

"Are you done?" Joanne asks, reaching toward Steve's plate.

"Mommy. . . ," Beth continues, pointing to the table with her left hand as she crosses her left foot behind her right and staggars backwards.

"Yeah, I think I'm done," Steve answers, moving his arm to the left while Joanne takes the three corncobs from his plate with both hands. Holding them in her right hand, she turns around to her left and walks toward the kitchen as Greg transfers his napkin from his left to his right hand, turns his head to the left, and sticks the fingers of his left hand in his mouth.

"Mommy, how do you put those things in the way?" Beth asks as Joanne leaves the room. Beth points to the living room with her left hand and searches for the table with her right as she's speaking, then leans sideways against the table edge with her right arm on the table, looking up at the lights and camera. Leaning on his right forearm, Steve picks up both his knife and fork and begins scraping his plate while Beth takes hold of the table corner to her left and stares at the camera.
Popping his fingers from his mouth, Greg looks at them and says, "I had four ears," then licks them again and turns to his plate.

"So did I," says Steve, continuing to scrape his plate as he glances at Greg and lifts his eyebrows. "You had as many as me." As Steve speaks Greg puts his napkin down to his right, picks up his corn in both hands, and begins biting into it, sitting slightly back from the table with his face angled upward. Steve puts his fork and knife to the left of his plate, then picks up the fork and continues scraping while Beth drops her left arm to her side and slumps, looking up at the ceiling with her mouth wide open as Joanne begins speaking from the kitchen.

"Everybody likes their hamburgers well done?" asks Joanne.

Finishing nine bites while Joanne is speaking, Greg holds his corn out toward Steve who continues scraping without looking up. "I don't," says Greg, putting the cob on his plate.

"Well, I don't like 'em too well done," Steve says at the same time, moving his right arm from the table in front of him to the edge of the table to his right while Greg, chewing, picks up his napkin from the right of his
plate and begins wiping his hands.

"Umma, I don't...I want...", Beth says before Steve finishes. Slumping to her left, she drags her right arm off the table and walks behind Joanne's chair to the kitchen.

"I don't know if I can fit any in, to have any hamburg," Greg says, continuing to wipe his hands and glancing at Steve. Steve puts a forkful of food in his mouth, then again scrapes his plate.

"Mommy, I don't feel good," Beth says in the kitchen while Greg is speaking.

"In your stomach or on your plate?" Steve asks, glancing at Greg.

Greg balls up his napkin in his left hand as Steve looks down. "In my stomach," he answers, holding his right hand in front of his stomach, then drops his hand to his lap as he reaches across his plate and leaves his napkin. He wipes both hands on his shorts, then rests them on his thighs and looks toward the kitchen.

"Oh," Steve says, scraping his plate.

"Look, Beth, we're just about to eat our meat," Joanne says in the kitchen while Greg and Steve are speaking.

"I don't feel good," Beth tells her.
"Just try to eat a little," Steve says quietly at the same time, "because don't forget, we're going to be gone all night." He lifts his fork to his mouth as he finishes speaking, then again scrapes corn and butter on his plate.

"Oh, no. You don't?" Joanne asks Beth.

"Yeah," Greg sighs, lifting his shoulders and stretching his arms to the chair seat behind him. Sliding back on his seat and leaning his head against the backrest, he hums to himself while he continues to chew.

"I want to go back outside," Beth says in the kitchen as Steve lifts his fork to his mouth.

"No, no, Beth," says Joanne. "You stay in here, come on."

"Beth, come on, you're gonna eat some meat now," says Steve. He again lifts his fork to his mouth and lowers it, his weight on his right forearm as he scrapes his plate. Greg hooks his left foot around the table leg while Steve is speaking, then swings it back and forth in front of his chair. Reaching up, he puts the heel of his hand to his left eye and starts to rub.

"Yeah, here it comes, Beth," Joanne says in the kitchen.

"Come on, 'cause we want to go to the
drive-in," calls Steve. Touching the table leg with his left foot, Greg stretches out his left arm, bends forward slightly, and gets his glass, leaning back in his chair and holding it in front of his mouth. Steve brings his fork to his mouth as Greg lifts the glass.

"Beth, come on," Joanne says, "if you don't eat now, you're not going to eat at all." Greg moves the glass away from his mouth and swallows as she's speaking, then tilts it up and drinks, swinging his left leg in front of his chair.

"Well, if you're not around we can't even go," Steve calls out as he scrapes with his fork. He brings it to his mouth, then leaves it on his plate and reaches to his left for his napkin.

"I don't feel good though," Beth says in the kitchen. Steve puts both elbows on the table, takes his napkin in both hands, and wipes his mouth while she's speaking. Lowering his empty glass and swallowing, Greg looks toward the kitchen and begins to speak, then stops as Joanne starts.

"Yeah, well, sit down at the table and relax and then you'll feel better," she says.

Greg lifts his glass to his mouth, banging it against his teeth. Lowering it to his lap, he looks at Steve and
says before Joanne finishes, "But you'll see, Beth, it'll feel good to go out after you've eaten."

While Greg is speaking, Holmes walks in from the living room and past Joanne's chair toward the kitchen. Glancing at Holmes, Steve rubs the fingers of his right hand together and drops his napkin to the left of his plate, then glances at Greg, puts his hands to either side of his plate, and stands up, scraping his chair back. "Beth, come on, 'cause we're gonna, we want to eat and then to to the drive-in," he says as he turns and walks past Holmes into the kitchen. Leaning back in his chair, Greg watches Steve leave, then reaches out and puts his glass to the left of his plate, dropping his hand back in his lap as Steve finishes speaking. Holmes stands at the doorway looking into the kitchen with his tail wagging.

"Yeah, and here's Beth's hamburger, right here," says Joanne.

"We'll just have time to run Bomes," says Steve before she finishes.

"Run Bomes. Bomes," says Beth, walking in from the kitchen. Greg wipes his mouth on his right shoulder, then looks into the living room and shakes his hair away from his face. "Mine," says Beth, patting Holmes. "Come down-
stairs. Bomes."

Greg picks his teeth with his right hand, continuing to look into the living room as Beth finishes speaking and walks back into the kitchen. Steve walks in with a can of beer in his left hand. "Downstairs, Bomes," Beth repeats as Steve puts the beercan to the left of his plate. Resting his left hand on his hip, he turns back toward the kitchen. "Come on, Bet'," he says.

"This girl is, this girl is getting better, Daddy," says Beth, coming into the dining room and walking up to Steve as he pulls down his shirt with both hands and steps sideways in front of his chair, reaching his right hand for Greg's plate.

"I'll get rid of these for you," Steve says before Beth finishes, picking up the plate. Greg continues to pick his teeth, then glances at Steve and drops his hand to his lap, looking back to the living room as Steve walks toward the kitchen with the plate. Finished speaking, Beth walks to the right of Joanne's chair, touching the table edge with her left hand. "Yeah, it's almost better, isn't it?" Steve says, lifting Greg's plate over her head.

"Yeah," answers Beth, turning to her right and following him. Greg looks forward as they walk into the kitchen.
"Where do you put this?" Steve asks in the kitchen.

"Here, no, yeah, right in that thing on this paper plate," Joanne answers before he finishes.

"Mommomm," says Beth while she's answering. Holmes walks to the table and stops at the left of Steve's chair, lifting his nose over the table edge.

"I just want a very, very little one," Greg calls loudly while Joanne, still speaking, walks in from the kitchen with a plate of hamburgers in her left hand and a spatula with a hamburger on it in her right. Holmes looks up as she stops at the table corner to his left.

"This is Greg's," Steve says from the kitchen as Joanne slides the hamburger from the spatula onto Steve's plate.

"You want a little hamburger?" she asks, looking from Steve's place setting back to the plate of hamburgers. Stepping to her left, she works the spatula under another hamburger.

"Unh!" Beth says in the kitchen while Joanne is speaking.

"Do you want it on a bun, or you just want it on your plate?" Steve asks, walking in with Greg's plate in his right hand as Joanne flips over a hamburger with the spatula.

"I just want it in the plate," says Greg, his head against the back of his chair and his hands in his lap.
"Oh," says Joanne, again sliding the spatula under the hamburger. She shifts her feet as Steve steps sideways between her and Holmes.

"Peas ready?" he asks, leaning around her and putting Greg's plate down. He turns to his left and walks back toward the kitchen.

"Yah," Joanne answers, stepping closer to her chair and leaning across the table to Beth's plate. "See if I, I, did I remember to turn on the heat?" While she's speaking she slides a hamburger from the plate in her left hand onto Beth's plate with the spatula. Holmes walks behind Steve's chair, stops at Greg's left, and looks over the table while Greg watches Joanne slide the hamburger onto Beth's plate. Lifting the hamburger plate slightly, Joanne puts the spatula under another hamburger and slides it onto Greg's plate while Greg and Holmes watch.

"No you didn't. They're ice cold," Steve says from the kitchen.

"Hm, well, turn on the heat," says Joanne before he finishes, stepping back from the table and adjusting the remaining hamburgers with the side of the spatula. Greg leans forward as she's speaking and reaches his right hand to the right of his plate, then to its left.
Picking up his fork, he holds it prongs down over the hamburger. Holmes watches him, then turns toward the kitchen as Steve speaks.

"Un-un-unn," says Steve while Joanne steps toward her chair and puts the hamburgers down to the left of her plate.

"Un-un-unn," she echoes, shaking her head and putting the spatula on the plate with the hamburgers, "I failed cooking class." Holmes looks from the kitchen to Greg's plate as Greg pushes his fork down into his hamburger. Stepping back from the table, Joanne looks at the hamburgers, then turns to her left and walks toward the kitchen. As she leaves the dining room, pushing her hair away from her face with her right wrist, Greg lifts his hamburger up on the prongs of his fork, brings it to his mouth, and takes a small bite from the edge while Holmes looks on.

"Let's go," Joanne says in the kitchen as Greg takes the hamburger from his mouth. Holmes looks toward the kitchen. "Beth, there's a hamburger for you."

Holding the hamburger upright at the level of his chest while Joanne is speaking, Greg twice fills his cheeks with air and blows down on it.

"I -- don't -- want -- it -- Mommy," says Beth, pausing after each word. Greg lifts the hamburger higher, tilts
his head down, and blows upward, moving around the underside of the hamburger. Holding it in front of his mouth, he leans slightly forward and takes another bite from its edge, then glances up chewing as Joanne walks in from the kitchen with a ketchup bottle in her left hand, a jar of mustard in her right, and a bag of hamburger rolls under her right arm.

"What do you want, Greg?" she asks. Looking at him as she puts the ketchup bottle between her and Beth's plates, she gestures with her open hand toward his hamburger and says, "Don't eat it like that! What do you think you have, a lollipop?" Greg looks at her as she motions toward the hamburger on his fork, then looks at it and grins. Still watching him, she steps sideways in front of her chair and pushes it away, her left hand on the back and her left leg in front. Holmes meanwhile walks behind Steve's chair to the kitchen. Glancing down, Joanne takes the mustard jar from her right hand and puts it beside the ketchup bottle, then again looks at Greg.

"This is the way I eat stringbeans, too," Greg says, looking at her as he bites the edge of his hamburger.

"The peppers done?" Steve calls from the kitchen before Greg finishes.

"Stepping back against her chair and turning to her
left, Joanne takes the bag of rolls in her left hand and puts them on the table corner. "They should be, yeah," she calls back, turning to her right and walking to the kitchen. "There's a dish out there for them too. That dark one?"

Greg finishes two more bites as Joanne leaves the room, then makes the noise of an airplane nosediving, "Rrrrmmm," as he arcs his hamburger slowly over onto his plate.

"Beth, come on," says Joanne, walking back into the dining room with her hands empty in front of her.

"Beth, come and have your hamburger," Steve says at the same time.

"What did I do with the paper towels?" Joanne asks, turning to her left toward the side table. "Here they are."

Holmes walks in from the kitchen and stops at the nearest table corner, looking back toward Joanne while Greg pries his hamburger off his fork on the rim of his plate.

"Beth, come on, listen," Steve says in the kitchen. "If you don't try to eat some of your hamburger you..., we can't go to the movies." Standing behind her chair, Joanne rips a double length of towel from the roll in her left hand, then reaches back and puts the roll on the side table. Greg pats his hamburger with his fork a couple of times, then slumps in his chair, dropping his right hand.
with the fork in it to his lap as he looks into the kitchen. Holmes sniffs at the table, then turns his head and looks into the kitchen. "Then you'll be sorry," Steve continues. Pushing her chair from behind and stepping around to the left of it, Joanne wipes her hands and looks to her right, saying over Steve, "That's right, Beth, because you'll be crying." She looks at Beth's plate and walks around the table toward it, still wiping her hands as she stops and faces the end of the table.

"You have to have some food!" Steve says as Joanne finishes. Holmes looks up at Joanne, then back toward the kitchen as Beth coughs.

"Here, Beth, you want some ketchup?" asks Joanne, putting her right hand on the ketchup bottle and turning toward Beth. Beth walks quickly in from the kitchen toward Holmes with her hands out. Stopping to Holmes' left, she looks at Joanne, then walks behind Joanne's chair, answering unclearly. Joanne meanwhile picks up the ketchup bottle and twists off the cap, looking at Beth as Beth walks toward her. "Hmmm? Yeah?" Joanne asks, looking down at Beth and holding out the ketchup bottle toward her.

"Hggh!" Beth coughs, throwing her head forward and stopping at the corner of the table to the left of Joanne's
chair, her hair covering her face. Turning to Beth's plate, Joanne shakes out a little bit of ketchup as Beth comes closer, stopping to her right and looking up at her. Tilting his head slightly to his left, Greg watches Joanne shaking out ketchup. "Speak!" says Joanne.

Beth coughs again, then comes up behind Joanne, putting her left hand on the seat of Joanne's pants, her right on the table edge, and looking at her plate as Joanne puts down the ketchup bottle to Greg's right. Holmes looks under the table.

"You want ketchup, Greg?" asks Joanne, looking at him. She transfers the bottle cap to her right hand.

"Yeah," Greg says, reaching for the bottle.

"Sit down, Bet'," Joanne says. Stepping back behind Beth as she's speaking, she puts down the bottle cap by Beth's right hand and touches Beth's left shoulder. Beth throws her head back and jerks it forward as Joanne touches her shoulder, then does so again as Joanne reaches her right hand past her, picking up one of the forks by the plate.

"I'll pour -- I can pour it," Greg says, lifting the bottle and holding it upright.
"Aw, chew," Joanne says. Catching Beth's head between both her arms, she moves her to the left as she herself steps to the right. "Go on."

Holmes looks into the kitchen, then toward Joanne as Greg tips the ketchup bottle over his plate. Stepping to her right while Beth grips the corner of the table with both hands, Joanne drops her fork by her own plate, then turns back to Beth's. Picking up Beth's fork in her right hand, she bends over Beth's plate from the end of the table and begins breaking up Beth's hamburger.

"Oh, nng, I don't like those," Beth moans, resting her chin on the edge of the table while she watches Joanne cut up her hamburger. Greg continues to watch the upended ketchup bottle while in the kitchen, as Beth is speaking, Steve begins whistling a melody.

"Yes you do, Beth," Joanne says, breaking up the hamburger. "You don't think you like anything anymore." Beth lifts her left leg onto the corner of her chair seat without looking away from her plate, then bends and looks down to her left, leaning both hands on the seat. Steve stops at the end of his tune as Joanne finishes speaking.

"I don't like..." Beth says, her left leg slipping off the chair seat as she tries to lift her right. Greg
tips the ketchup bottle up further at the same time and begins to shake it a little as ketchup starts coming out. Holmes sniffs the floor to the right of Joanne's chair, then sits down and looks toward the kitchen as Steve speaks.

"Is she getting teeth?" Steve asks.

"I don't like...," Beth says again. Squeezing between her chair and the table facing Greg, she looks at the table and puts her right hand behind her back.

"I don't know, I wonder," Joanne answers, still chopping up the hamburger, then leaving Beth's fork on the plate and walking to her own seat she looks toward the kitchen and back at the table, continuing, "I thought she had all of her teeth." Holmes looks up at her as Greg puts the ketchup bottle to the right of his plate. With his right hand still on the bottle, he slides forward in his seat, adjusts his position on the seat's edge, and looks at Beth. Beth twists around to her right in front of her chair, pushing the chair back slightly, then leans back against the edge of her seat and looks up at Joanne, saying something unclear. "She's growing up so fast she's already getting six year molars," Joanne continues at the same time, looking at Beth. Pushing her hair back with her right hand and looking to her right, she sits and puts her napkin in her
lap, then adjusts her position on the seat and turns to
the unopened package of hamburger rolls at her left.

"Bet', may I see your teeth?" Greg asks, leaning
toward her as Joanne sits down.

Putting both hands on the chair seat behind her, Beth
bends further back and looks at Greg, who leans his head
down and peers into her mouth. "Look at them," says Beth,
leaning toward him.

"At two," adds Joanne, untying the package of rolls.

Sitting up and looking forward, Greg lets go of the
ketchup bottle, then reaches past it and picks up his
knife, saying, "You have white teeth."

"I want to see your teeth," Beth says loudly, turning
to her left and bumping her shoulder against the table.
Balancing with her left hand on her chair seat, she stands
on her toes as Greg turns to her and bares his teeth.
Smiling, Joanne watches them, then looks back at the package
of rolls she has meanwhile opened.

"Mmmm," says Beth as Greg turns away, picking up his
fork, and Joanne reaches into the package. Walking in from
the kitchen with a bowl of vegetables in each hand, Steve
passes between Holmes and Joanne, saying, "Holmes." Holmes
stands as Steve passes him and stops at the table corner to
Greg's left.

"See, Greg has all his teeth, he's got lots," says Joanne, her hand still in the package of rolls. Lifting his knife, Greg holds his fork prongs-down in his left fist and sticks it into his hamburger as Steve touches the bowls to the table in front of Greg's plate, says, "Hold it," and lifts them again, looking down the table.

"Yup," mumbles Greg, cutting into his hamburger. While Joanne turns and looks at the bowls in Steve's hands, Beth looks from Greg to her, then at her own plate.

"Look'it, here's some peas," Steve says, lifting the bowls higher. He puts the one in his left hand between Greg and Beth's plates, transfers the other, and reaches down the table with it. Holmes meanwhile walks behind Joanne's chair, around the corner of the table toward Beth.

"Noooo," Beth moans, leaning her hands on the chair seat behind her and watching Steve set down the first bowl. Greg continues to cut his hamburger without looking up.

Taking out two hamburger rolls, Joanne puts down the package with her left hand and looks up as Steve reaches down the table with the second bowl. Steve hesitates, pushing some things away from in front of Joanne's plate with his right hand. Pushing more stuff out of the way with
her left hand as Steve puts down the bowl, Joanne glances at Beth and asks, "Do you want some peas?"

"Ohnnng," Beth groans, looking to her right as Holmes walks by and looks at her. Turning to Joanne as Holmes walks behind her chair, she says, "I'm sick, Mommy."

"What's the matter?" asks Steve, looking first to his right, then at Beth as he steps in front of his chair, pulling his shirt down with both hands.

"I'm sick," Beth says again, looking from Joanne to him and back.

Joanne looks at the rolls in her left hand, then around the table as Steve speaks to Beth, then at Beth as Beth answers. Turning to her right and pulling off one of the rolls as Steve sits down and pulls his chair under him, she reaches with it past the soda bottle to Steve's plate, saying, "She's just hot, I know it." Pulling his chair further under him, Steve looks at his plate as Joanne puts the roll down.

"I have cramps," says Beth, pulling out the front of her dress and leaning back against the chair seat on her right arm while she continues to look at Joanne. Greg lifts his right arm higher, cutting his hamburger. Holmes stops between Greg and Steve, facing the table.
Lifting the top of the roll in his right hand, Steve picks up his fork as Joanne puts the other roll on her plate. "She was sweating like mad when I woke her up from her nap," she says, picking up her knife in her right hand and moving her fork from the left side of her plate to the right. She slips her knife through the center of her roll.

Twisting to her right away from the table while Joanne is speaking, Beth holds onto the table edge with her left hand and leans on the chair seat with her right. Steve glances at her as she turns away, then looks down and sticks his fork into his hamburger. "You have cramps?" he asks before Joanne finishes, putting the hamburger on his roll.

"Umh, yeah," answers Beth, turning back to the table and looking at Joanne, then at him, then back at Joanne.

"Umh," says Steve, holding his hamburger as he pulls the fork out of it, then lifts the bottom of the roll with the hamburger on it in his right hand and leaves the fork on his plate.

"She says that about everything," Joanne says, lifting her corn in both hands and turning to him. Looking forward and leaning her forearms against the edge of the table, she shakes her hair away from her face and bites into her corn, glancing over it at Beth. Holmes meanwhile stops behind
Steve's chair and lies down.

"Gee, this is a funny looking one," Steve mutters, looking at his hamburger as Joanne bites into her corn. He takes the top of the roll from his plate and puts it on the hamburger, then moves his fork aside with his left hand.

"I have to go ka-ka," Beth says while Steve is speaking. Throwing her weight against the table, she pushes her chair back with her rear end and looks down to her right, sliding out from between chair and table. "I have to do ka-ka," she continues, walking around the end of the table toward Joanne, "'cause I'm being naked." Putting her left hand on the table edge, she hitches up her dress, then takes hold of the end of the table with both hands and crosses her left leg in front of her right.

Greg continues cutting his hamburger without looking up while Joanne takes her left hand off her corn and looks at Beth. Swallowing, she turns back to her corn and bites, chuckling as she takes it from her mouth. Putting his hamburger down as Joanne looks at Beth, Steve looks at his right hand and rubs his fingers together, then looks up and pushes his beercan aside with his left hand, reaching past Joanne's plate and picking up the bowl of vegetables. "You have to go to the toilet now?" he asks, nodding at Beth.
as he brings the bowl back, then looking down and taking it in his right hand. Joanne leaves her corn on her plate and takes her napkin from her lap in her left hand, looking at Beth and wiping her hands.

"Yeah," Beth moans, looking at Steve and edging toward Joanne.

"You don't want any food?" Steve continues, picking up his fork in his left hand and shaking it up and down a little. He looks from the vegetable bowl to Beth as Joanne drops her napkin in her lap and reaches with both hands, pulling Beth over and lifting her dress.

"I don't feel good," Beth says, looking at Joanne as Joanne pulls her over.

"Uh, and then when you come back...", Joanne says, bunching the dress under Beth's arms while Steve tips the bowl and scrapes vegetables onto his plate. Beth takes hold of the table corner with her left hand and lifts her right arm. "...you eat something, will you please?" Joanne continues, pulling the dress over Beth's right arm. Steve looks up, then back down and continues to put vegetables on his plate as Beth drops her right arm and lifts her left. Reaching both arms around her, Joanne pulls the dress up and lifts it over Beth's head.
Beth turns around to her right as the dress comes off, grabbing her pants in back with both hands. "Goodbye," Joanne says, holding the dress in her right hand. With her left hand she gives Beth's shoulder a shove in the direction of the bathroom as Beth starts to pull down her pants. "Go on," Joanne says, continuing to push Beth forward while Beth takes two steps, continuing to pull down her pants. Greg stops cutting and glances at Beth, then looks down and continues.

"Careful. . . ," says Joanne, breaking into a grin, then laughs and looks at the camera as Beth bends forward and pulls her pants down to her knees. Steve glances up and starts to laugh, then looks down and shakes his head, still scraping vegetables from the bowl. Holding his knife and fork in his hamburger, Greg looks at Beth and grins, then starts laughing. Taking Beth's dress in both hands, Joanne sits forward and looks at her.

With everyone else laughing and her pants still around her knees, Beth turns full circle and looks at the floor where she started turning, then turns to Joanne and asks, "What?"

Joanne continues to laugh, reaching out her left hand to her. Putting down his fork and holding the vegetable
bowl in his right hand, Steve turns to Greg, laughing and shrugging his shoulders as Greg looks at him, his knife and fork still in his hamburger while he also continues to laugh. "God," Greg says as Steve turns toward him laughing, "they're watching us. Wow!" Shaking with laughter, Greg looks from Steve to Joanne. Steve takes the bowl in his left hand and looks around the table.

Still laughing and shaking her head, Joanne rolls up Beth's dress and stands. "They can turn this into an X-rated film," she says as Beth faces her and starts to step out of her pants. "Come on, let's go," she continues, putting her left hand on Beth's shoulder, turning her around, and guiding her toward the bathroom. Turning, Beth balances with her left hand against Joanne's leg, then kicks her pants away and runs toward the bathroom ahead of her.

Smiling, Steve moves the soda bottle with his right hand and puts the vegetable bowl next to Joanne's plate as Greg watches Beth and Joanne leave. Throwing his head back and almost choking with laughter, Greg continues to hold his knife and fork in his hamburger as Steve pushes his beercan toward the vegetable bowl, then turns back to his plate, smiling and shaking his head. "Good old Beth," he says, moving his hamburger to the table at his left, then
picks up his fork from his plate and the other vegetable bowl from his right. With his head still back, Greg looks at him as he's speaking, then sits forward and returns to his cutting. He laughs again, then sighs while Steve serves himself more vegetables.

"All right now, go," Joanne says in the bathroom. "Stay there until you're done." Walking in toward her chair, she pushes her hair away from her face with her right hand and says, "She does ka-ka about three times a day now."

Steve lifts the vegetable bowl higher and puts down his fork, reaching after it as it slides off his plate. Again pushing her hair back and laughing, Joanne steps in front of her chair and sits while Greg continues to cut up his hamburger, laughing. "Lovely!" she says, taking the bowl in her right hand as Steve reaches down the table with it.

"Look'it what -- look at this," says Greg, holding his fork and knife still and looking at his plate as Joanne puts the vegetable bowl in front of her plate. Sitting back, Steve picks his teeth with his right hand and looks at Greg's plate, then turns to his own and lifts his eyebrows. Joanne picks up her corn in both hands and looks at Greg's hamburger as Steve takes his hand away from his mouth and moves the silverware on his plate. "I cutted it up...."
all that by myself," Greg continues, cutting his hamburger again.

Looking from Greg's plate to her corn, Joanne shakes her hair back and leans her forearms against the edge of the table, saying, "Good," as she takes the first of two bites.

"Oh," Steve says at the same time, reaching to his left and moving his hamburger toward his plate. "That -- is -- terrific." Greg puts his knife to the right side of his plate, takes his fork in his right fist, and sticks it into a piece of his hamburger as Steve looks up and reaches his right hand past him for the ketchup.

Taking her corn from her mouth and moving it in butter on her plate while Steve is speaking, Joanne says, "Hamburger isn't exactly the ... most challenging. . . ."

"No, that's good though," Steve interrupts, glancing at Greg as he brings the ketchup bottle back and transfers it to his left hand. Lifting the top of the bun off his hamburger and setting it aside, he moves the rest onto his plate. Joanne takes a bite from the corn in her right hand, then another as Steve begins to pour ketchup. Greg sticks his fork into his hamburger twice, losing it each time. Picking up a piece with the fingers of his other hand, he drops it, then picks it up again and puts it in his mouth.
"La-a-a-a. . . ," Beth sings from the bathroom just as Steve stops speaking.

Joanne takes another bite of corn and Steve shakes the ketchup bottle over his hamburger while Greg, chewing his hamburger, repositions the fork in his right fist with his left hand and points it down at a piece of hamburger.

"Da-da, da-da-da," sings Beth, then bangs on something three times.

Joanne turns her corn in both hands while Beth sings, then holding it in her right hand dabs it in butter on her plate and bites into it. "Um," she says, and takes it from her mouth as Greg spears a piece of hamburger and dips it in ketchup. Steve puts the ketchup bottle to his right.

"I love this corn," Joanne continues, looking at it and shaking her head, then takes three bites, looking at it after each one. Steve picks up his fork and spreads ketchup over his hamburger as Greg looks at the piece of hamburger on the end of his fork, putting it in his mouth. "La, la, la, di-dah. . . .," Beth sings continuously.

Leaving his fork on his plate, Steve glances to his left, picks up the top of his roll, and puts it on his hamburger.

"You still eating corn?" he asks. Greg
chews the piece of hamburger on the end of his fork without taking the fork from his mouth.

"Um-hm," Joanne answers, taking another bite, then holds the corn in her right hand and looks at it. Gesturing with it, she swallows and says, "I don't forget."

Greg pulls the fork from his mouth and holds it over his plate as he looks forward chewing. Beth continues to sing. Leaving his hamburger on his plate as Joanne gestures with her corn, Steve looks around, then picks up his napkin and takes it in both hands as she finishes speaking. "Are there any napkins on this table?" he asks.

Glancing at him, Joanne looks forward and takes another bite of corn, then turns to her left and reaches behind her, setting her corn on her plate and looking forward as she picks up the roll of paper towels from the side table. Steve wipes his mouth and watches her while Greg looks down and sticks his fork in his hamburger.

"There's a whole roll," she says, looking at Steve as she brings the roll of towels in front of her. Leaning back in her seat, she tears off a towel and hands it to him as he puts his used one to the left of his plate and reaches his left hand for the new one. Beth sings more loudly.
"Oh, rolled napkins," he says, laughing as she hands him the towel. Laughing, she turns back to the side table with the roll in her left hand as he folds the towel in two over his plate.

"Yeah, isn't that nice," she says, putting the roll on the table behind her and turning back to her plate.

"What will we think of next?" Steve asks before she finishes. He wipes his mouth with a corner of the folded towel as she looks down and takes hers from her lap, transferring it to her left hand. Chewing his previous piece of hamburger, Greg picks up another on the end of his fork and dunks it in ketchup as Joanne leans forward, picking up the corncobs from her plate. Steve looks down to his right at Holmes, lying on the floor behind his chair, then back at his napkin, folding it in half again and leaving it to the right side of his plate.

"I didn't buy any napkins...," says Joanne, glancing at him as he puts his down. Licking her left forefinger and looking to the left of her plate, she stands up and steps to the left of her chair as Greg puts hamburger in his mouth and Steve picks up his fork in his left hand. 

"...needless to say," she adds, pushing her chair toward the table with her left hand and right instep. Steve leans
on his right arm and spears vegetables with his fork as she's speaking. Resting his right arm on the table, Greg glances at Steve, then at Joanne as she walks into the kitchen.

"Da-di-da-di-da...", Beth sings loudly, banging on something in the bathroom.

Looking to the left of his plate, Greg picks up his glass and holds it out toward Steve, asking, "Can I have some more Coke?" Putting the glass to the right of Steve's plate, he rests his left forearm against the edge of the table, spreads his fingers, and watches him, chewing.

Steve glances at Greg's glass, then back at his plate and spears more vegetables. "My God," he says, "how many, how much have you had so far?" He glances to his right, then back at his plate and eats a forkful of vegetables. Greg looks at his fork, turning it in his right hand, then up at Joanne as she comes in from the kitchen.

"He had about three or four ears," she says, looking at Steve and Greg and switching her napkin from her right hand to her left as she walks to the left side of her chair.

"Rub-i-dub-i-dub-dub-dub," Beth continues to sing.

"Bet I didn't," says Greg, glancing at Steve and back at Joanne as she pulls out her chair with her right hand and
looks at Steve.

Steve nods at her as she sits down. "Three or four ears of Coke," he says, looking back at his plate and shaking his head, laughing. Greg looks down and sticks his fork into a piece of hamburger.

"Oh, I thought he said . . .," Joanne says and starts laughing, looking from Steve to Greg and sitting forward, wiping her hands on her napkin.

Greg rests his forearm against the edge of the table, holding his fork with the piece of hamburger on it over his plate. "Three," he says as Joanne puts her napkin beside her plate.

"Get up, get up, get up, get up . . .," sings Beth.

"I thought he wanted corn," Joanne continues, rubbing her right eye with the palm of her right hand.

Steve puts down his fork and sits back shaking his head while she's speaking, then raises both hands and reaches for the soda bottle with his left. He and Greg look at each other as Steve lifts the bottle toward him. "Three ears of Coke?" he asks, raising his eyebrows at Greg as he puts the bottle to the left of his plate and begins unscrewing the cap. He looks forward.

"Um-hum," Greg answers, and nods, continuing to nod as
he looks away and smiles, then swallows.

Joanne pushes her hair back as Greg turns forward, then picks up her hamburger roll in her left hand and glances to her right as Steve puts the bottle cap between their plates. Opening the roll on her plate, she reaches across her plate to her left for her beercan as Steve lifts the soda bottle in both hands, leaning to Greg's glass. Still chewing, Greg turns and watches him pour soda while Joanne pulls her beercan toward her, then lifts it to her mouth, leaning on her right elbow. "Oh, my, it's hot," she says, then tilts the can and drinks. Beth is still singing.

Greg holds his fork with the piece of hamburger on it in his right hand, his forearm against the table edge, as he watches Steve pour and Joanne drinks her beer. Putting her beercan to the right of her plate, Joanne swallows, then looks to her left and shakes her right hand dry as Greg reaches out and wraps his hand around his glass. Beth continues to sing loudly nonstop as Joanne looks off to her right.

"Wait... wait," says Steve, still pouring.

Joanne looks at Greg holding the glass Steve is pouring into, and holds her right hand still in the air, saying, "Just yell, I hate that." Looking down at her plate, she
shakes his head as Steve stops pouring, putting the soda bottle in front of his plate with his right hand. Greg brings the glass to his mouth and begins to drink from it. "When anybody takes the thing away from you before you're done pouring, I'd like to kill him," Joanne continues, re-adjusting the objects around her plate.

Steve picks up the bottle cap in his right hand as she's speaking and reaches up in front of him, screwing it on the bottle. Looking down and picking up her fork, Joanne turns to the hamburgers at her left and slides one onto the fork with her left hand. Finished screwing on the cap, Steve picks up his fork and leans on his right arm as he spears vegetables on his plate. Greg puts his glass down and glances at Joanne, then dips the piece of hamburger on the end of his fork in ketchup. "Boom, boom, boom...boooooom!" Beth sings, accompanying herself with loud, increasingly fast banging.

Steve eats a forkful of vegetables and Greg his piece of hamburger as Joanne puts her hamburger on her roll, then reaches both hands for the hamburger plate, sliding it from under the spatula which she holds beside her fork in her right hand. Tilting the plate over her own, she
scrapes juice onto her hamburger while Greg sticks his fork in another piece and Steve gathers his vegetables together. Steve lifts his fork to his mouth as Greg chews, holding his fork upright in front of him with a piece of hamburger on it. Joanne puts the hamburger plate to her left, asking, "That movie starts at eight, right?" Greg looks at her, then back at his piece of hamburger, chewing. Beth stops singing.

"Yeah, but we better get there early," Steve answers, spearing vegetables. Greg looks at him.

"Um-hm," Joanne says. Putting her fork on her plate, she holds onto the edge of the table to her left and leans, reaching across the table and picking up the ketchup bottle from between Steve's plate and Greg's.

"It takes about a half hour to get there," says Steve, leaning back slightly as she lifts the ketchup bottle past him. Greg looks away from Steve and brings his fork close to his mouth, then swallows and puts the piece of hamburger in, holding the fork in front of his mouth as he again begins to chew. Joanne holds the ketchup bottle upright and shakes it from side to side, then tilts it over her plate.

"I have another bottle of ketchup in case anybody needs
more," she says, shaking the bottle over her hamburger and glancing at Steve as he takes a forkful of vegetables. Steve stirs his fork in his vegetables, then leaves the fork on the left side of his plate and leans to his left, looking down the table past the soda bottle as Greg reaches with his fork for more hamburger. "I think I'm gonna need more," says Joanne, taking the bottle by the neck in her left hand while she turns her right hand over and takes the bottle by the other side. Holding her left hand off to the side, she shakes the ketchup harder.

Steve takes hold of the edge of the table to the right of his plate and reaches over Joanne's beer, picking up the salt from the right of her plate while she shakes the bottle. He salts his vegetables as Greg takes a piece of hamburger on his fork and dabs it in ketchup, then putting the salt to his left and looking to his right, Steve picks up his hamburger in both hands and lifts it to his mouth, leaning his elbows on the table. As Steve takes a bite, Greg lifts his piece of hamburger from the ketchup, holds it up on his fork, and looks at it, saying, "I don't want any more."

"Beth, hurry up in there," Joanne calls, shaking the ketchup bottle as Greg puts the piece of hamburger in his mouth and chews, his cheek bulging.
"Okay," Beth calls back as Steve glances at Greg and puts down his hamburger with his left hand.

"All right," Steve says, looking at Greg and chewing. Greg looks at his plate, puts down his fork, and drops his right hand to his lap. "If you don't want to eat any more, don't," Steve continues, clasping his hands in front of him, then opening them and gesturing, "but you sit here for a while, all right? And relax?" He picks up his napkin from the right side of his plate and folds it in half with both hands, looking over it at Greg.

Continuing to shake the ketchup bottle, Joanne glances at Steve, then at Greg. "Yup," she says, looking at the bottle.

Greg looks at his lap, then forward, bringing his feet together in front of his chair and putting his hands on his thighs. Glancing at Steve, then looking at the camera, he puts his hands on the chair seat behind him and pulls himself backward. He looks in front of him as he lays back in the chair with his hands at his sides and his head tilted to his left, chewing. Wiping his mouth on his napkin, Steve looks at the clock on the wall behind Joanne.

"Don't forget, I didn't make any dessert or think of any," Joanne says, giving the ketchup bottle a few more shakes.
Taking it in her left hand, she glances from left to right, then puts it to her left as she finishes speaking. Steve puts his napkin to the right of his plate.

"Ka-ka," Beth says in the bathroom while Joanne is speaking.

Putting his hand on his napkin and resting on his forearm, Steve looks down and chews. Lying back in his chair, Greg continues to chew his last bite of hamburger while Joanne looks at her plate. Turning to her right, she licks the fingers of her right hand, stands up, and walks into the kitchen.

Picking up the salt in his left hand as Joanne leaves the room, Steve lifts the top of his roll and salts his hamburger, then puts the salt to his left and replaces the top of the roll as Joanne walks in, trying to unscrew the cap from a new bottle of ketchup. Steve lifts his hamburger in both hands as she sits down and turns to him, holding out the bottle and asking, "Can you open that please, dear?"

Holding his hamburger close to his mouth, Steve glances at the ketchup bottle in her hand. "I don't know," he says, shaking his head. Joanne pulls back the ketchup bottle and looks at her plate as he bites.

"Waaaah!" Beth yells from the bathroom. Greg looks
to his right, chewing and swinging his right leg.

Without looking up, Joanne again holds out the ketchup bottle as Steve puts down his hamburger and picks up his napkin. She looks at him as he takes the bottle in his left hand.

"Ennh!" cries Beth. Joanne picks up her fork in her right hand as Steve puts the ketchup bottle to his left.

"Waah!" Beth cries again as Steve takes his napkin in both hands, wiping his mouth.

Joanne pushes her hamburger over with her fork. "What is your problem?" she calls, turning her head to the left as she picks up the vegetable bowl from in front of her plate in her left hand.

Finishing wiping his mouth, Steve looks at the ketchup bottle and starts to put down his napkin, then hesitates and wipes both hands. "Beth, stop making so much noise," he says without looking away from the ketchup. Dropping his napkin to his right, he rubs his hands together.

"Beth, hurry up. Finish up," says Joanne, scraping vegetables from the bowl while Steve picks up the ketchup in his left hand, transfers it to his right, and puts it to the right side of his plate. Slowly looking forward, Grec continues to chew and swings his right leg.
"O-kay," Beth says.

Joanne puts the bowl of vegetables in front of her plate and Steve picks up his knife in his left hand, tapping the blade on his plate a few times as Beth speaks. Turning back to his right, he picks up his napkin from beside the ketchup and wipes the knife blade.

"How are those peppers?" Joanne asks, leaning over her plate and spearing peppers on her fork, her left hand in her lap.

Steve drops his napkin to the left of his plate. "All right," he says, turning his knife with both hands and taking it by the blade in his left. Chewing, he turns toward the ketchup bottle. Joanne takes a bite of the peppers, then returns to her plate as Greg turns his head and watches Steve. Taking the bottle in his right hand and turning it, Steve begins pounding on the cap with the knife handle.

Greg swallows and stops swinging his right leg. "Mmm," Joanne says, leaning and taking another bite. Greg looks down to his left at Holmes, then back at Steve as Joanne returns her fork to her vegetables and Steve bangs the cap for the thirteenth time, glances to his left, and drops the
knife beside his plate. Looking up to his right, Steve takes the bottle cap in his left hand, holds the bottle with his right, and twists with both hands. Looking at the bottle, then down to his left, he twists again. "Twist off cap, eh?" he says, wiping his left hand on his left pants leg. Greg looks at the camera, then toward the bathroom where Beth has again begun talking to herself.

"Yeah," Joanne says, reaching into the bowl of peppers with her fork as Steve wipes his hand. "Why don't you get the nutcracker?" Steve turns back to his right as she's speaking and tries two more times to twist off the cap, then picks up his napkin from in front of his plate while she puts a forkful of peppers in her mouth.

"Because," he mutters, turning back to the bottle with his napkin in his left hand. Joanne returns her fork to the pepper bowl and Greg looks at Steve, then forward, blowing out his cheeks and sighing as Steve grips the bottle cap in the napkin and repositions his right hand on the bottle. Leaning over it, he looks past his left forearm at Joanne, saying, "But I don't want the nutcracker, sweet." Looking at the bottle, he lifts his right elbow and strains at the cap.

Greg reaches his left hand to his glass and sits up.
Lifting and dropping her left arm in her lap, Joanne takes her fork out of the pepper bowl empty and turns to her plate. "Ugh," she groans, spearing food on her fork.

As Greg begins drinking his soda, Joanne lifts a forkful of food. "No more towels," Beth says quietly in the bathroom. At the same time, Steve quits twisting the cap and shakes the napkin off his hand to the left of the bottle. Looking at the bottle, he gives the cap another twist. "New twist off cap," he says, reaching his left hand for the knife and laughing.

Joanne looks at him and shifts in her seat, then laughs. Greg lowers his glass and looks at Steve, laughing also as he puts the glass to his left. Leaning forward with his left hand on his glass and his right hand on his knee, he watches while Steve holds the knife handle over the ketchup bottle and shakes his head. "As opposed to the old twist off cap," Steve says, and begins to pound at the cap with the knife handle, lifting it higher each time and turning the bottle with his right hand.

Joanne looks at her plate as he lifts the knife handle, then looks around her plate, searching with her left hand as he pounds. Pushing the package of hamburger rolls away and dropping her fork from her right hand,
she looks down at her plate, then again looks to her left and picks up the empty ketchup bottle in her left hand. Turning to Steve, who continues to pound the cap of the new bottle, she says, "Why don't you forget it? Maybe I have enough ketchup." Taking the old bottle in her right hand and turning it upside down over her plate as she's speaking, she shakes it, then turns it upward, tilts her head to her left, and peers into it. Greg again lifts his glass and drinks, watching Steve bang on the cap.

Steve hits the cap for the nineteenth time and puts the knife to the left of his plate while Joanne peers into the other bottle and Greg lowers his glass. "Oh, it'll come off, eventually," Steve says, turning back to the bottle, grabbing the cap in his left hand, and twisting. Greg watches him, his hand on his glass, while Joanne again turns the old bottle over and shakes it. Steve twists the cap three times, looking down to his left the last time and humming. Reaching his left hand beneath the table, he wipes it on his pants leg while he picks up his napkin and looks at the ketchup bottle, chuckling.

"It won't," Joanne says, taking the other bottle in her left hand and putting it to the left of her plate as Steve wipes both hands, drawing his breath in through his
teeth and shaking his head. Greg continues to look at him, slumping forward in his chair with his left hand on his glass and the other on his knee. Looking across at Beth's plate, Joanne scratches her nose with her left hand, drops her hand to the edge of the table, and looks to her right, reaching for her beercan as Steve breathes deeply, puts down his napkin, and reaches with both hands for the ketchup bottle.

"No, you don't have to," Greg says, leaving his glass and reaching toward Steve's hands.

"Who wants this ketchup?" Steve asks, taking hold of the bottle. Greg pulls his hand back and puts it in his lap, watching Steve with his shoulders hunched forward.

"No, forget it, forget it," Joanne says, adjusting her beercan with her left hand as Steve twists the cap twice, his face turned to his left. Joanne drinks as Steve sits back from the bottle and looks at his plate. Picking up his fork in his left hand and making a face, he gestures at the bottle and pushes it away from him. He leans on his right forearm and begins spearing vegetables as Joanne puts her beercan to her right, picks up the old ketchup bottle from her left, and shakes it.

"Ynnngh!" Beth cries.
Still looking toward Steve, Greg drops his head to his right shoulder, lifts his right arm across the top of his head, lifts his feet off the floor, and flops against the back of his chair where he slouches, his arms in his lap, looking in front of him. Taking the bottle in her right hand, Joanne turns it upside down and begins shaking it, tilting her head to her left and resting her left hand on the table edge.

"Not B-eth," says Beth rhythmically.

Steve eats a forkful of vegetables without looking up.

"Now that is B-eth," chants Beth.

Greg locks and unlocks his fingers in his lap, looking at them, while Joanne repositions the ketchup bottle with her left hand and continues shaking it. "I feel as though I'm taking part in a Charlie Chaplin movie," she says, ducking her head as she lifts the bottle and peers into it, then again shakes it over her plate. Steve spears vegetables on his fork without looking up.

"Now, Beth," Beth says while Joanne is speaking. Greg slides further down in his chair and crosses his arms over his stomach.

"Yes," says Beth, and continues less clearly.

Shaking the bottle harder a few times, Joanne glances
Taking the bottle in her left hand, she sets it on the table to her left and reaches past it, picking up Beth's plate.

"Oh, yes it is," Beth sings.

Steve glances at Joanne as he lifts a forkful of vegetables to his mouth. "Steal hers," she says quietly, lifting Beth's plate over the ketchup bottle.

Sitting up and holding his fork over his plate, Steve looks at her as she holds Beth's plate over her own and takes the fork from it. "You haven't even eaten your own yet!" he says, looking from her to the plate.

"No, I know. I don't have enough ketchup to start off," says Joanne, taking ketchup on Beth's fork and shaking it onto her hamburger while Steve looks down chewing and again spears vegetables.

"B-eth and B-omes," says Beth in a sing-song while Joanne is speaking.

Greg rocks forward in his chair and leans his right hand on Beth's chair seat, looking to his left at Joanne as Steve finishes speaking. Looking ahead of him as Joanne begins speaking, he steps, bent over, between Beth's chair and the table. Standing as he passes the table corner, he
walks toward the living room with his arms swinging loosely.

"Greg, where are you going?" Steve asks, looking up as Greg walks into the living room with his back to him. Joanne continues putting ketchup from Beth's plate on her hamburger.

Beth can be heard talking to herself in the bathroom as Greg murmurs something from the living room.

"Greg?" Steve asks, looking after him. Leaving the fork on Beth's plate, Joanne glances into the living room, then reaches with the plate to Beth's place setting.

"Where am I going?" Greg asks. "Out."

"Well, listen, why don't you come out here?" Joanne asks, setting down Beth's plate and looking at Greg as Steve looks past Greg's plate to his own, lifting his fork and starting to pick up vegetables.

"Come on in, Greg. Come on and sit. You haven't finished your soda," Steve says, again looking into the living room, then back at his plate while Joanne, looking down, picks up the top of her roll, takes it in her right hand, and puts it on her hamburger. Reaching to his right, Steve pushes Greg's plate and glass away from the edge of the table.

"I don't want the soda and I don't want hamburger," Greg says as Joanne lifts her hamburger in both hands and
Steve leans on his right arm, spearing vegetables.

"Then why did you ask for the soda?" Joanne asks, moving the empty ketchup bottle further to her left. Again taking her hamburger in both hands, she leans her elbows on the table and bites as Steve eats a forkful of vegetables and glances into the living room.

"I don't know," Greg answers from the living room. Beth continues to talk to herself in the bathroom.

Dropping his fork on his plate and reaching across the plate with his left hand, Steve picks up his napkin as Joanne takes her hamburger away from her mouth. Leaning on his elbows, Steve wipes his brow, then his mustache with the napkin in his left hand while Joanne pushes her hair back from the right side of her face with her right hand.

"Lewis," says Beth.

Taking her hamburger in both hands and looking at Steve, Joanne sighs, then looks forward and shakes her head.

"Holmes," Beth says as Steve clasps his napkin in both hands.

"Listen to her," says Joanne, looking at Steve and motioning with her head toward the bathroom.

"Holmes," says Beth.

Steve nods, putting his napkin to his right as Joanne
looks at her hamburger, then at her plate. "Huh!" Steve says, shaking his head and picking up his hamburger in both hands. Lifting it to his mouth and resting his elbows on the table, he bites into the hamburger as Joanne lowers hers in her left hand and picks up vegetables from her plate.

"Those kids need only to go into the bathroom to have a world of their own," she says, glancing at Steve as he puts down his hamburger and picks up his napkin in his left hand, turning to her. Looking at her right hand, she puts the vegetables in her mouth with her fingers.

"Lewis?" asks Beth. Steve wipes his hands on his napkin, glancing around the table while Joanne looks at her hand and licks her thumb twice. Again taking her hamburger in both hands, she looks at it as Steve clasps his hands around his napkin and looks down to his right, chewing.

"Some of that corn would taste great in the minestrone soup," says Joanne, pointing her right hand at the cornbowl and looking at Steve. Turning forward and lifting her hamburger, she again looks at Steve as she leans on her elbows and bites.

"Unh-unh," says Steve, shaking his head behind his clasped hands.
"Nnh?" Joanne asks with her hamburger in her mouth, looking forward as she lowers it.

"I don't think so," he says, still shaking his head and chewing. He looks at her while Beth speaks loudly in the bathroom. Nodding, Joanne looks at her hamburger.

"That's done," Steve says, looking forward, then back at her and unclasping his hands, gesturing with them.

Joanne moves her hamburger to her right in both hands and looks at the cornbowl, then holds her hamburger in front of her, nodding again and saying, "All right."

"Leave it be," says Steve, looking down and dropping his napkin to the right of his plate. He picks up his fork in his left hand and leans on his right arm, resuming eating while Joanne turns her head to her right and rubs her nose with her right hand, then looks forward and rubs it again.

"This is Beth. Yes, that is Beth..." Beth says in the bathroom, then, "That isn't Beth. Yes, that..."

Looking at his plate, Steve smiles and shakes his head as Beth continues. Joanne lifts her left elbow off the table, sitting further back and looking to her left at the package of rolls, then turns forward and puts her
hamburger on her plate with her right hand. "My mother canned corn one year, you know," she says. Steve leans forward and lifts a forkful of food to his mouth as she looks back to her left, moving her napkin away with her right hand and picking up the bag of rolls in both. She looks at Steve, twisting the bag with her left hand while she holds it by the opening. "It was really good," she says.

Swallowing, she looks at the package of rolls, folds the twisted end underneath, and puts it down to her left, then leans forward, reaching her right arm across the table and picking up Greg's plate while Steve continues to gather up vegetables on his. Steve looks at the wall clock behind her, then back down, bringing a forkful of vegetables to his mouth as she lifts Greg's plate past him and takes it in her left hand. Moving aside the top of her hamburger bun, she picks up Greg's fork and puts the ketchup from his plate on her hamburger.

Rapid banging comes from the bathroom. "Hear that noise?" Beth asks.

Joanne takes a second helping of ketchup as Steve lifts more vegetables to his mouth. Leaving Greg's fork on the plate in her left hand, she replaces the top of the bun on
her hamburger.

"All done, Mommy," Beth calls.

Joanne pauses as Beth calls, then takes a piece of hamburger from Greg's plate and calls back, "All done?" Wiping the hamburger in Greg's remaining ketchup, she pops it into her mouth as Steve takes another bite of vegetables, then leans across the table and returns the plate to Greg's place setting. As she sits back in her chair she licks her right thumb, then picks up her napkin in her left hand from in front of her plate and wipes both hands. Dropping the napkin to the left of her plate, she stands up from the table, then bends down and picks up Beth's underpants in her right hand as Steve takes another bite of vegetables. Straightening up, she turns to her left and walks into the bathroom while Steve sits back slightly, lifting one edge of his hamburger with his right hand and continuing to gather vegetables with his fork.

"Another one," Beth says in the bathroom.

"Good job, now come on," says Joanne as Steve puts his fork on the left side of his plate and picks up his hamburger in both hands. Resting his elbows on the table, he looks at the hamburger and bites into it, then holds it in his right hand as he touches the left side of his mustache.
Looking at Greg's plate and clearing his throat, he transfers the hamburger to his left hand and puts it down.

"Are you all done?" asks Joanne.

"Yes," Beth answers.

Looking from Greg's plate to Beth's, Steve clasps his hands, then again looks at Greg's plate and into the living room.

"Yes?" asks Joanne.

"Hey, Greg?" Steve calls, looking down to his left.

"What?" Greg asks.

Steve looks past his clasped hands at Greg's plate, then down to his right at Holmes. "Could you, um..."

"Hey, see, I wanted to get it out," says Beth in the bathroom at the same time. "Down in there," she adds.

Steve pauses in his speech, looking forward with his hands clasped, and flicks at his mustache with his thumb.

"Yeah, you have diarreah," Joanne interrupts.

"I went. I make it..."," Beth says.

"What?" asks Greg again.

"Will you get Holmes' dish over here and we'll give him the stuff that you guys didn't finish?" Steve asks, looking behind him at Holmes' bowl in the corner, then at Greg and Beth's plates, and last at Joanne's plate. Leaning to his
left, he unclasps his hands and rests his right hand on the table edge, picking up his napkin from the left of his plate and looking into the living room.

"Mamma, when you go, when you go ka-ka, and you go... when you ka-ka...," says Beth.

"Bend over," says Joanne.

"Yeah," Greg answers from the living room, then asks Steve something. Holmes lifts his head and looks through the legs of Steve's chair toward the living room.

"No," answers Steve, shaking his head while he rubs his fingers on the napkin in his left hand. He looks up and wipes both his hands as Greg walks into the dining room. "But he likes, I know he likes hamburg," he continues, nodding and looking at Greg. He lowers his head and wipes his mustache with the napkin in his right hand as Greg, walking to the right of the table, tosses his hair away from his face.

"Will you... Mom, when you go ka-ka, when you naked... will... Mommy?" Beth asks as Steve looks up to his left at Greg.

"And you guys sure left a lot of hamburger," Steve says, wiping both hands while Greg walks behind Joanne's
chair, lifting his arm over the back. "It's right there," Steve continues, turning and pointing at the bowl in the corner as Greg walks toward the kitchen.

"I don't have to get naked when I make ka-ka, no," Joanne answers in the bathroom.

Steve looks back at the table, hesitates, and picks up Greg's plate in his right hand, taking off the knife and fork.

"Suppertime," Greg says, looking down as he walks past Holmes to the bowl in the corner. "Let's eat."

"But when you feel you have to go...," Joanne says as Holmes stands and Greg bends down for the bowl.

"Put it up on this plate," says Steve, banging Greg's plate into the glass as he lifts the plate higher and puts down Greg's knife on his own plate. "I mean, on this chair," he says. Holding Greg's plate over the chair seat to his right, he pulls Greg's glass away from the edge of the table with his left hand. Greg walks toward the chair with Holmes' bowl in both hands while behind him Holmes turns full circle and follows.

"Yeah," Beth says in the bathroom.

Steve lifts the plate and fork higher as Greg puts the bowl on the seat. Greg starts to squeeze in beside it, then
stands as the chair slides back. Standing sideways to Steve, Greg watches as Steve leans over the table corner and scrapes hamburger into the bowl with the fork. Holmes walks up to the bowl as Greg turns and walks behind him. "Wait a minute now, Holmes," says Steve as he scrapes. Greg stops and turns back to the table, brushing against the window curtain.

"Like this, when you grow up. . . ." Beth continues at the same time. Water begins to run in the bathroom.

"Give him the other dish, too, Greg," Steve says, knocking the fork against the plate as he puts the plate on the table and looks at Beth's. Holmes moves his nose closer to the bowl while Greg walks toward his chair. "Will you get Beth's?" Steve asks. Looking down to his right, he drops his left hand between Holmes and the bowl. Holmes stands back.

". . .you. . .with your clothes off you. . . ." says Beth slowly.

Looking at the bowl, Greg steps to his right behind his chair and knocks into it as he lifts his arms over the backs of it and Beth's. Steve looks at Beth's plate. "Here, before she sees it," he whispers, glancing at the bathroom as Greg comes around beside the chair and picks up Beth's
plate in both hands.

"All right," says Greg, walking back around and lifting the plate over the chair backs. Leaning to his right, Steve holds out his right hand for the plate as Holmes watches from behind his left hand.

"...I like this...," continues Beth slowly. "Like this..."

Taking the plate from Greg, Steve picks up the fork from it in his left hand beside Greg's fork, then leans over the corner of the table and scrapes hamburger into Holmes' bowl. Greg rests his right hand on the back of his chair, tucks the back of his left hand against the left side of his chest, and balances his left foot on his right while he watches. Holmes stands back and looks on.

"...Mommy," Beth says.

"Okay, you can give him that," says Steve, glancing to his left and sitting up. As he stacks Beth's plate on top of Greg's, Greg glances at him, then bends over and picks up the bowl with both hands. Looking forward as Greg turns and carries the bowl to the corner of the room, Steve puts both forks to the left of his plate and adjusts them. Holmes turns his head and watches Greg put the bowl down.

"All right, now, let me see your hands again," says
Steve picks up his hamburger in both hands as Greg straightens and turns to Holmes. "Here," says Greg, looking back at the bowl and gesturing to it with his right hand.

"Yes, Mom," says Beth.

Holmes looks from Greg to the bowl and walks toward it while Steve rests his elbows on the table, looks around at the bowl, then looks forward and bites into his hamburger. Greg walks behind Steve's chair, then around the corner of the table toward the living room as Holmes lowers his head to his bowl.

"Oh, goodness gracious," says Joanne in the bathroom. "Look, did you see this?"

Steve holds his hamburger in his right hand and picks up his napkin from in front of his plate, looking up as Greg twists his right shoulder back and lifts his left hand to avoid Joanne's chair, then walks past the table into the living room. Lowering his hamburger, Steve wipes the left side of his mustache, then holds his stomach with his left hand and picks his teeth with his right, his head down.

"Let's see the other one, Beth," says Joanne.

"Mommy, I want this thing down there. Not this one... there," says Beth.
Dropping his napkin in front of his plate, Steve lifts his hamburger in both hands, then pauses, looking at his plate.

"No, no, no, that's all right. You don't need that," says Joanne.

Lifting his head, Steve takes his half-eaten hamburger in his left hand and bites.

"What is that?" asks Beth.

"Come on," Joanne answers. "It's a fingerbrush. Here."

Steve looks down and puts the remainder of his hamburger on his plate. Reaching his left hand in front of his plate, he picks up his napkin and looks toward the bathroom as he takes the napkin in both hands.

"It's for your fingernails," Joanne says. "She has diarrheah."

Continuing to look up, Steve wipes his mouth and both hands as Joanne and Beth walk into the dining room. Beth waves both hands in front of her as Joanne bends from behind her, slipping the dress over her head.

"How are we going to go to the movies then?" asks Steve. Looking down as he's speaking, he drops his napkin in front of his plate from his left hand and opens and closes his right. Clasping both hands over his plate, he
looks again at Joanne and Beth, chewing.

"Oh, I think she's probably finished now," answers Joanne, leaning over Beth from behind as Beth lifts her left arm. With her right arm around Beth, Joanne helps push Beth's left arm through the sleeve with her right hand. Beth staggers two steps to her left. "As I say," Joanne continues, "this is her third time today." Taking hold of Beth's right wrist, Joanne pulls down Beth's dress with her left hand and tries to push Beth's arm through the right sleeve as Beth weaves from side to side.

Steve continues to watch, swallowing and asking, "Has she eaten anything today?"

"Um, let me think," Joanne answers. Beth's right hand pokes through the sleeve.

"No," Steve says, shaking his head.

"Well, she had half of her toast for breakfast," says Joanne, pulling the dress over Beth's right arm and down past her waist. She straightens up and looks at Steve as Beth walks toward the kitchen. Looking to the left of his plate, Steve picks up his beer can while Joanne walks to her chair, looking at him. She lifts and drops her left hand, pushing her hair away from the right side of her face with her right hand. "She ate..." says Joanne, gesturing
toward Steve with her left hand as he lifts his beercan to his mouth. Dropping his right hand to the table, he tilts his head back and drinks, looking at her. "She's a...", Joanne continues.

"Mommy, I want to go out," says Beth from the kitchen.

Drinking, Steve turns toward the kitchen. Lowering her right hand, Joanne lifts her left and pushes her hair back on that side, looking toward the kitchen and stepping sideways past her chair. She looks at Steve and takes another sideways step toward the kitchen. "...she's a picker, you know," she continues, then looks away and walks toward the kitchen as Steve lowers his head and swallows, putting his beer on the corner of the table to his left. "Like what did she eat when you were fixing that soup?" Joanne asks as she walks into the kitchen.

"I, Mommy, I want to go out," Beth says before Joanne finishes.

Looking down in front of him, Steve picks up his napkin in his left hand. "Nothing," he says. He belches with his napkin to his mouth, then takes the napkin in both hands and rests his elbows on the table, continuing, "She didn't eat anything." Looking forward, he wipes his mouth.

"Didn't she, didn't she have a lot of cheese?" Joanne
asks from the kitchen before he finishes speaking.

Steve wipes his mouth again and looks down, holding his napkin in both hands. "Naw, not much," he says, wipping his fingers. He drops his napkin from his right hand as the back door opens and closes, then picks up his fork from the left side of his plate and begins scraping vegetabes, his right elbow on the table and his hand suspended in the air. From his bowl in the corner Holmes looks back toward the kitchen, then returns to eating.

"All right, you stay right out in back," Joanne says.

"Certainly not enough to sustain her through the night," says Steve, scraping his plate without looking up as Joanne walks in from the kitchen. Putting her right hand on the table corner to Steve's left, she sits sideways in her chair and looks down to her left at her plate.

"Waaah!" Beth cries in the backyard as Joanne sits.

Joanne looks toward the kitchen, putting a hand on each leg. "No, she didn't," she says, and stands up, walking toward the kitchen.

"Ennnngh, wah, hah, hah," Beth cries.

Steve lifts his fork to his mouth, lowering his right arm to the table as Joanne asks from the kitchen, "What, Beth?"
"Wah!" Beth cries as Steve returns his fork to his vegetables.

"Let me see it," Joanne says quietly.

"Enh," Beth moans.

"Oh, God, come on, Beth," Joanne continues. The door creaks loudly. "All right, now get away from the door."

Steve eats more vegetables, then lowers his fork and begins tapping his plate with it, still looking down.

"Stay right out in back," says Joanne.

Steve looks at Joanne as she walks in from the kitchen. "I bet I know where Greg is," he says, grinning.

"Huh?" Joanne asks, stopping to the right of her chair and looking at him.

"I bet I know where Greg is," he whispers this time, looking at her.

"Where?" she asks quietly, then nods. "Oh, I bet I know where he is too." Steve looks at his plate as Joanne sits down with her legs to the right of her chair and looks at the table. "The little stinker's up there," she says, swinging her legs in front of her chair and leaning her left palm against the edge of the table as she reaches for her hamburger.

Steve repositions his right arm on the edge of the
table in front of him and leans forward, lifting a forkful of food to his mouth as Joanne picks up her hamburger in both hands and puts her elbows on the table. "See, they really fooled us last night," she says, looking at him and crossing her ankles underneath her chair. "We thought it only ran a half an hour." She looks at her hamburger.

"Oh, we knew it was an hour," he mumbles, forking more food to his mouth.

"Huh?" she asks, again looking at him.

"We knew it ran at least an hour," he says without looking up.

Joanne looks at her hamburger as he's speaking. "Oh, yeah...?" she asks, biting into her hamburger. Steve scrapes food with his fork, takes another mouthful, then scrapes his plate again as Joanne looks at her hamburger and chews. Outside children are playing loudly. Holmes licks the sides of his bowl as he eats. Steve lifts his fork to his mouth as Joanne swallows, then again as she bites into her hamburger. Laying his fork on his plate, he picks up his hamburger and takes a bite while Joanne looks at his plate.

Turning to the hamburger plate at her left, Joanne points
with her right hand and swallows, then looks at Steve, continuing to point to her left, and says, "One more hamburger if you can eat it." She takes her hamburger in both hands and continues to look at Steve as Holmes turns to his left away from his bowl and walks up beside Greg's chair.

Steve puts down the rest of his hamburger and picks up his napkin in his left hand, looking at the hamburger plate, then at Joanne, and back while he chews. "I might have it, but not with the bun, that's for sure," he says.

Looking down to his right, Steve crumples his napkin in his left hand while Joanne looks at her hamburger and swallows, nodding. "Mmmm, good hamburger, isn't it?" she asks, shaking her head and glancing at him. She brings her right hand to her mouth and licks her forefinger. Holmes sniffs at Greg's chair, and looks under and over the table.

"Umm," Steve answers, wiping his mouth. He drops his napkin to the right of his plate and picks up his hamburger in his left hand, resting his left forearm against the table and glancing at Joanne's plate as she lowers her hamburger in her left hand and picks up her fork. Looking behind him at Holmes' bowl, then at Holmes who is sniffing in the area near Greg's chair, Steve says, "The dog liked it." He again looks at Holmes' bowl, then back at Holmes while Joanne
spears vegetables.

"Yup," she says. "He'll be in the other room rubbing."
Holmes steps to his right, then back toward the table, looking over the edge as Steve looks forward and puts the rest of his hamburger in his mouth. Picking up his napkin in his left hand, Steve again looks at Holmes while Joanne continues speaking. "You should have seen him just before we started. He was lying down very nobly," she says, lifting a forkful of vegetables from her plate and looking at the floor in front of the table. She turns back to Steve as he looks at the wall clock behind her and balls up his napkin in his left hand. Looking forward, she adds, "In front of the table," and brings her fork to her mouth.

"I have to get him out," Steve says before she finishes. Looking away from the clock, he wipes his mouth, adding, "Aw, God," then leaves his napkin in front of his plate and leans his left arm along the table in front of him, turning to Joanne.

"Will you?" she asks, looking up from her vegetables.

"Yup," he answers, and nods, looking ahead of him chewing. Joanne looks down and nods also, then leaves her fork and reaches with her right hand for something on her plate.
"Easy," Steve says, glancing at her.
"Good," she says, her hand still in her plate.

"That'll mean you have to... take care of this mess," says Steve, turning up his right hand and looking at her as she puts food in her mouth and turns to him. He rests his hand on the edge of the table to his right and looks to the left of his plate.

"That's all right," says Joanne, taking her hamburger in both hands and nodding. She lifts the hamburger and puts her elbows on the table as Holmes walks to the right of Steve's chair and sits down.

Steve looks to his right at the ketchup bottle, saying as she bites into her hamburger, "I gotta get this cap off." Taking the ketchup bottle in his right hand and leaning to his left, he looks down the table, wiping his left hand on his pants leg. "Jesus," he says, looking back at the bottle and moving it to his right. Lifting his left arm, he points down the table and cranes his neck, saying, "I don't know, let me see that..." He pokes with his forefinger.

Joanne takes her hamburger from her mouth and holds it in both hands, looking down to her left and asking, "Huh?"

Steve pulls his hand back and rests it on the edge of the table, continuing to sit tall as he looks down the table past Joanne. "That other...," he says, and pauses. Holding
her hamburger in her right hand, Joanne picks up her napkin from the left of her plate and hands it across her toward him. "...hamburger," he says as she picks it up. Joanne looks back to her left and puts the napkin down, then lifts the hamburger plate, looking to her right and back. Steve looks down and clears his throat, reaching out his right hand as she picks up the plate.

"Get the, uh...," says Joanne, looking at him as she hands him the plate.

"No," he interrupts, taking it from her and looking at his plate. Picking up his fork and tilting the hamburger plate, he slides the hamburger off, saying, "If I wasn't..."

"...nutcracker," Joanne continues, leaning her left elbow on the table and watching him.

"No," he says, dropping his fork and holding out the hamburger plate, "if my hands weren't so wet I could -- it would come off." Still holding the plate in his left hand, he looks down to his right at the unopened ketchup bottle, then past Joanne at the empty one to the left of her plate.

"Well a nutcracker would do it," she says, looking in front of her as she takes the plate from him in her left hand and reaches it across the table toward Beth's empty
"Let me have the, uh...," says Steve before she finishes, craning his neck and pointing his right hand over her outstretched arm at the old ketchup bottle to her left. Joanne puts down the plate. "I'll get...," he says, glancing down and touching his right hand to his napkin as Joanne picks up the pepper bowl from in front of her plate in her left hand. "No...," he says, looking at the empty ketchup bottle and holding up his right hand as Joanne hands him the bowl and looks at him. "...ketchup," he says, and laughs, dropping his right hand on the table corner and glancing at her as he reaches out his left hand.

"Oh," she says as she puts down the bowl. Picking up the old bottle in her left hand and looking at it as she hands it to him, she adds, "There's nothing in it."

"Sure there is," he says, taking it from her. Holding it up sideways between them, he asks, "What do you call that at the bottom?"

"Nothing," answers Joanne, leaning her elbow to the left of her plate and looking at the bottle as he holds it up between them.

Steve tips it upside-down over his plate. "It's ketchup," he says, then lowers and begins shaking it, his
head tilted to the right.

"But by the time it goes down the side it clings...", she says, taking her hamburger in both hands and continuing to watch him, "...and there's nothing that comes out."

"Oh, it comes out," he says quietly, shaking the bottle up and down. At Steve's right, Holmes rocks back and forth, repositioning his front paws.

Turning forward and groaning, Joanne bites into her hamburger while Steve continues to shake the bottle, then putting her hamburger on her plate with her left hand and looking at Steve, she swings her legs to the right of her chair. Pausing, she wipes her right and left hand on her napkin where it lies to the left of her plate, then stands and walks toward the kitchen.

"Wait, look'it, here it comes...," Steve says as she gets up. He continues shaking the bottle while she opens and closes a drawer in the kitchen, then as she walks toward him with the nutcracker in her right hand he holds his right hand over the bottle he's shaking in his left and waves her off without looking up.

Stopping at the corner of the table to his left, Joanne leans forward and reaches her left hand past his plate for the unopened ketchup bottle. Still shaking the old one,
Steve fends her off with his right hand, grabbing her forearm and lifting it away from the unopened bottle. Holding her arm and laughing, he continues to shake the empty bottle. Laughing as she breaks from his grasp and grabs the new bottle, she says, "Here!" and lifts it high out of his reach.

"Leave it alone," he says, leaning his right forearm on the table and shaking the old bottle faster as Joanne steps sideways in front of her chair and sits, holding the new bottle in front of her left shoulder and looking at the table in front of her. "Look'it, I got enough, why open it now?" Steve continues, lifting his eyebrows as he shakes the bottle, his head tilted to his right.

Taking the unopened ketchup bottle in both hands, Joanne looks at him, then sitting back in her chair, she holds the bottle up in her left hand and grabs the cap with the nutcracker. "Because I have...," she says.

"Just to prove you can do it?" he interrupts, still looking down and shaking the other bottle.

With a twist of her wrist she takes off the cap and holds it out to him, looking at him and saying, "Ah, look at that."

Steve glances at it. "Big -- yeah, just to prove you can do it," he says, looking down and nodding as he shakes
the old bottle.

Looking forward as he's speaking, Joanne reaches past her plate and drops the cap from the nutcracker. "Right," she says, putting the ketchup in front and to the left of her plate. Taking the nutcracker in her left hand and leaning it against the ketchup bottle, she glances at the ceiling, then looks from Steve to her plate and says, "Greg is in his own room." Steve lifts his left eyebrow and continues to shake the bottle as she looks at him again and shifts forward in her chair. Looking in front of her, she picks up her hamburger in both hands, puts her elbows on the table, and says, "I can hear him plundering overhead."

Steve takes the ketchup bottle from his left hand and sets it to his right as Joanne again looks at the ceiling, crossing her ankles beneath her chair. Picking up his napkin in his left hand and taking it in both, Steve looks down to his right at Holmes, then looks forward and puts the napkin back with his right hand as Joanne bites into her hamburger. Leaning on his right forearm, he searches around his plate with his left hand, saying, "Holmes, I think you've had your share." Picking up the salt shaker and looking down, he leans on his right arm and begins salting his hamburger.
"Um," Joanne says, taking her hamburger from her mouth and looking at Holmes. Putting the shaker to his left, Steve picks up his fork and begins chopping up the hamburger. Joanne looks at her hamburger and chews, then again looks at Holmes, swallows, and says, "Oh, no," looking at her plate as she gestures with her right hand toward Holmes.

"What?" Steve asks, looking up and putting a forkful of food in his mouth, then returning to his plate.

"I forgot to buy him dogfood," Joanne answers, looking at Steve with her right hand open in front of her. Holmes shuffles to the right and Steve continues spearing food on his fork as Joanne sits up in her chair, taking her hamburger in both hands and looking over the edge of the table at Holmes' bowl in the corner, asking, "Has he got any dry stuff over there?" Settling back in her chair, she puts her right hand on her beercan and tilts it toward her while Steve eats a forkful of hamburger, glancing at her.

"How's he going to make it till Monday?" he asks with his mouth full, returning to his plate.

Joanne swallows and looks at him, her right hand around her beercan. "Well, he's got a little bit," she answers. She lifts the can in her right hand and rests her elbow on
the table edge, then lifts her left elbow off the table and lowers her hamburger, resting her left forearm on the table edge and saying, "He has one more can of meat, so..." She lifts her beercan to her mouth and drinks.

"Who's taking care of all the an... of all the animals at your mother's?" Steve asks, looking at her as he lifts his fork from his plate. He takes a mouthful of food and looks back down, spearing more hamburger.

Joanne watches him over her beercan while he's speaking, then lowers it, shaking her head and swallowing. Putting the can to her right she says, "It's gotta be Jerry and Ann." She touches her hamburger with her right hand, then moves her fork on her plate. "They're both supposed to be living there," she says, looking at Steve as he nods, lifting a forkful of hamburger to his mouth. Holmes shifts to his left.

Looking in front of her, Joanne takes her hamburger in both hands, leans her elbows on the table, and bites as Steve puts his fork to the left of his plate and reaches his left hand across for his napkin. Resting his left elbow on the table, he looks down to his right and wipes his mouth as Joanne takes her hamburger from her mouth and looks at it. "The thing that really goes to pot is the pool," she
says, looking at him.

Steve takes his napkin in his right hand and puts it down, then looks to his left and wraps his hand around his beercan as she speaks. Looking at her, he says, "Yeah," continuing to chew.

"You should have seen how awful it was last time," she continues, shaking her head. She looks at her hamburger and swallows as Steve nods.

"What are you supposed to be doing to it?" he asks, glancing back and forth between her and the living room and crossing his feet beneath his chair.

"There's supposed to be a certain amount of chlorine added to it every day," she says. Looking at him, she pauses and nods. He lifts his beercan from the table corner to his left, leans his right arm across the table edge in front of him, and leans forward, nodding as he brings the beercan to his mouth. "The, uh, filter is supposed to be run a minimum of eight hours a day," Joanne says, watching him as he tilts his head back and drinks, looking over the beercan at her. He lowers the beer and swallows, setting it in front of his plate and picking up his napkin from beside it.

"Oh," he says, shaking his head and wiping his left
hand on his napkin. Dropping it from his left hand, he reaches to the left of his plate and picks up his fork, still shaking his head.

"And it has to be skimmed," she continues, still looking at him, "because it's underneath all the pear trees."


"I know it," says Joanne. She ducks her head and swallows, then looks back at Steve.

"Who wants to be tied down like that?" he asks.

"And my father used to vacuum it once a week...," she interjects. She pauses, watching Steve as he puts food in his mouth and glances at her. "...to do the bottom, you know?" she continues.

"Hm," Steve says, nodding and sticking his fork into a piece of hamburger.

Joanne looks at her hamburger, then turns back to Steve and continues, "Because you -- that's when Greg was, uh, stung by a bee, when it hadn't been cleaned, there was... and there wasn't much, uh, chlorine in it." Steve takes a
bite of hamburger, glancing at her as she's speaking, then looks back at his plate and nods. "Some kind of wasp landed on top of the water, and it, there wasn't enough chlorine to kill it, so it just floated there." Steve lifts more hamburger on his fork and chews, then puts it in his mouth as she looks at her hamburger and concludes, "Um. He banged into it."

Lowering his fork to his plate, Steve looks ahead of him and chews while Joanne bites into her hamburger. Outside in the backyard a group of children are laughing and giggling. As he looks into the living room, Steve laughs quietly. Holmes looks at him and lays his right paw on his thigh.

"Hey, get your paws down," says Steve, looking down to his right. Holmes takes his paw down. Finishing her bite of hamburger as Steve turns, Joanne lifts her left hand to her mouth, then puts both hands on her hamburger and looks toward Holmes. Turning forward, Steve looks at his plate and moves his food with his fork while Joanne looks down and picks up her napkin in her left hand. Looking forward, she wipes her mouth, then rests her left forearm on the edge of the table and holds the napkin balled up in her hand as she swallows.
"He's trying to get fresh," says Steve, gesturing with his head toward Holmes.

"I know it," she says. Turning her right hand over, she dabs her hamburger in ketchup on her plate and looks at Steve.

"Keep your **paws** off me!" says Steve, lifting his head and shaking it at Holmes. Returning to his plate, he dips a piece of hamburger in ketchup on his fork, continuing, "You masher." Joanne looks at her hamburger and laughs, then again turns to Steve, holding the hamburger nearer her mouth. She looks at her hamburger as Steve eats his from his fork. Holding his fork over his plate and chewing, Steve looks down to his right at Holmes and says, "Stay, and I'll look you in the eye." He looks at Joanne, gesturing with his head toward Holmes.

"Who's that black writer. . . ?" Joanne asks, looking at Steve and rubbing her nose with the back of her right hand.

"Watch, watch when he turns around," Steve interrupts, looking at her and again gesturing with his head toward Holmes. Joanne looks at Holmes, holding her hamburger in front of her mouth while Steve continues quietly, "Now see what he's doing, now watch. Tell me if he's looking. Now."
Lowering his fork over his plate, Steve looks down and turns his head slightly to his left while Joanne watches Holmes.

"Just now. Very fleetingly," she says, lowering her hamburger.

Steve slowly turns his head toward Holmes.

"Oop," says Joanne as Steve looks down at Holmes. He smiles as Holmes looks away.

Holding her hamburger in her right hand and looking at it, Joanne says, "He's going to have to admit that. . . .," then interrupts herself, looking at Steve and asking, "Who's that writer, that. . . .," she gestures with the hamburger in her right hand, "oh, James Baldwin, right?"

Steve continues to look at Holmes, chuckling as Holmes shifts position, then looks at her, puts a piece of hamburger in his mouth on his fork, and looks back at his plate, spearing more food.

"You gotta let me have this," Joanne whispers very quietly, leaning slightly toward him.

"James Baldwin is a writer, I'll give you that," he says, glancing at her and nodding.

"Yeah. Right. Okay," she continues before he finishes, holding her hamburger in her right hand and nodding as she looks at him. Steve lifts his fork to his mouth and looks
at her, then back at his plate, putting his fork down. "Well, the first time I read a book that he had written," says Joanne, watching him, "he talked about caterpillar legs on somebody's thigh in a movie theater. . . ." Steve looks to his right while she's speaking and picks up his napkin in his left hand, then leans on his left elbow and wipes his mustache in each direction. Rubbing the fingers of his left hand on the napkin as Joanne pauses, he nods, looking down and chewing. "And I didn't know what it was," she continues, looking at the hamburger in her right hand.

Steve drops his napkin to the right of his plate, then folds his arms and leans against the table, looking down to his left and saying, "Eh?" He looks forward chewing, while Holmes lies down to his right.

"What a naive nut," Joanne continues, shaking her head. She brings her hamburger to her mouth and hesitates. "Uh-huh," she says, and bites into it.

Steve nods his head and chews, then picks up his beer-can in his left hand and rocks it as Joanne lowers her hamburger and looks at him. "Now I know," she continues. "He must have been sitting next to Holmes." She looks at
her hamburger, then at her plate and chews while Steve tilts his head back and drinks.

Joanne lifts and lowers her hamburger, then wipes it in ketchup on her plate as Steve puts down his beercan. Taking his napkin from beside the beercan and balling it up in his left hand, he glances at Joanne's plate, then looks in front of him and clears his throat, wiping his mouth as she lifts her hamburger from the ketchup and looks at it. Dropping the napkin to the right of his plate, Steve folds and leans on his arms again, then looks into the kitchen as Joanne looks across the room past her hamburger. "Where's Beth?" he asks, turning to the windows at his right.

"Right out in back," Joanne answers, looking at her hamburger, then toward the windows behind him. She swallows and looks back at her hamburger.

"Hey, Beth," Steve calls, looking down to the left of his plate.

"Yah?" Beth asks from the backyard.

"What are you doing?" he asks, still looking down to his left as Joanne looks to her right.

"I'm outside," says Beth.

"I'm outside," Joanne says quietly, looking at Steve,
then at her hamburger.

"She's playing," says an older child's voice from outside.

Joanne bites into her hamburger and looks at Steve as he looks at her and lowers his brow, gesturing with his head toward the backyard. "Who's that?" he asks, and continues to watch her. "Who said, 'she's playing?''

Taking her hamburger from her mouth, she gestures with her right hand and answers, "Elizabeth," before he finishes speaking.

"Is that Elizabeth?" he asks, wrinkling his forehead.

She nods and looks forward.

Steve looks at his plate. "How do you know?" he asks, again looking at her.

"She sounds just like her mother," says Joanne, shaking her head and looking ahead of her.

"Hmh," he says. Putting his hands on either corner of the table, he stands up, pushing his chair back. Joanne looks at him, and Holmes stands, sniffing at the table. "My God, her mother must sound kind of silly," Steve says, looking at Joanne and laughing as he tugs his shirt down and walks toward the kitchen. "Like a little tiny kid," he continues as he leaves the room. Joanne looks forward laugh-
ing, then turns to her right as the back door opens. Looking back at her hamburger, she holds it near her mouth and chews.

"She's all alone," says Steve from the back door. Holmes walks toward the kitchen and Joanne looks a little to her right.

"Well, somebody was out there with her," she says, lifting her head slightly and looking down at her hamburger. Putting the rest of the hamburger in her mouth, she looks at her hand and licks food from her fingers.

"Is somebody out here with you?" asks Steve.

"No," answers Beth.

Looking to her right, then down to her left, Joanne wipes both hands on the napkin she's been holding in her left hand. As the back door closes in the kitchen, she reaches her right hand across her plate and picks up the cap to the second ketchup bottle.

"It's odd, there's nobody out there," says Steve.

Joanne puts down her napkin, then says, "Hm," twisting the cap onto the ketchup.

"She has the gift of tongues," he says, walking into the room behind Holmes. Joanne pushes the bottle away and
wipes her right, then her left hand on the napkin beside her plate, sitting back in her chair as Holmes stops to her right and sniffs the table.

"Get out, Holmes, get out," says Steve, stopping beside his chair and picking up his plate in his right hand, then taking it in his left as he steps in front of the chair, pushing it back, and reaches for the plates stacked at Greg's place setting. Holmes steps back as Steve speaks.

"Yeah, get out," says Joanne, looking to her left and putting her hand on the bag of hamburger rolls. Shifting her hand to the corner of the table at the left of the rolls, she looks to her right and picks up her beercan.

"I'm going to take you out now, Holmes," says Steve, turning to the kitchen with plates in both hands as Joanne tilts her head back and drinks. "You want to go for a run?" he continues, looking down at Holmes, who looks up at him and turns as he walks by. "Hm?" Steve asks as he leaves the room. Holmes looks after him, tail wagging.

Lowering her beercan and putting it beside her plate as Steve makes banging noises in the kitchen, Joanne turns to her right and looks at Holmes, then looks forward and lowers her right hand to her lap. "Hmmm," she says, then asks, "What was that you said?" Reaching both hands to the
Coke bottle in front of Steve's plate, she holds it by the neck in her right hand and twists the cap tight with her left.

"You want to go for a run, Holmes?" Steve asks, scraping plates in the kitchen.

Leaving the Coke bottle and turning around to her left, Joanne looks at the wall clock behind her, her right elbow and left hand on the table edge. "Oh, God," she says, closing her eyes and turning back to the table. Leaning on both elbows, she bends her head down and rubs her left eye with the heel of her left hand, turning her head slowly back and forth, then looks in front of her, clasps her hands together, and heaves a long sigh. "Ohhhhhh! I think I'm going to stay home and go to sleep," she says, taking an ear of corn from the bowl in front of her with her right hand as she nods forward.

"Are ya?" asks Steve, scraping and stacking dishes in the kitchen.

"No," she answers. Lifting her head back, she holds up the corn in her right hand and pulls flax off of it with her left.

"It'll save us two dollars," says Steve.

"Thanks," she says, continuing to pick at the corn.
"Go ahead." Holmes turns out of the way as Steve walks in with silverware in his left hand.

"No!" says Joanne, looking at her plate as he picks up the bowl of peas from her right and holds it over the table. "Want to save these peas?" he asks.

"No," she answers, glancing at the bowl as she drops some flax on her plate and pulls more off the corn. "Twice is enough."

Walking toward the kitchen, Steve looks back at the window opposite Joanne, then takes another step and turns, walking behind his chair toward the window. "Now that isn't Beth," he says while Holmes walks up beside Joanne and stops at the table.

Joanne looks at Steve as he walks by behind his chair, then returns to the corn, glancing at him again briefly as he looks past the edge of the closed drapes. "Who is that?" she asks, tearing off a piece of flax, then watches him as he turns away from the window and walks back toward the kitchen.

"It's Elizabeth's sister," he says, nodding and looking at her as he walks behind his chair.

Joanne drops a piece of cornsilk to her plate, rubbing it off her fingers. "Oh, Ellie," she says, returning to
the corn and pulling at it.

Holmes looks at her, then sits and looks into the kitchen. "They're all E's in that family," she says. Sounds of Steve's scraping plates come from the kitchen as Holmes looks from the kitchen to Joanne, and back. Joanne pulls more flax from the corn and drops it on her plate, then returns to the corn.

A child outside asks, "What's the matter?" Another answers, crying.

Joanne blows cornsilk from the fingers of her left hand as she puts the corn back in the bowl. "Woop. No, that's Elizabeth. Elizabeth's crying," she says. She rubs her hands together, then clasps them and looks at Steve as he walks in with silverware in his left hand and continues to the window opposite her, pulling back the curtain and looking out. Holmes looks after him.

"Right?" Joanne asks, watching him.

"Unh-unh," he answers, looking out the window.

"No?" she asks, watching with her hands clasped in front of her. Holmes looks from Steve to her.

"No, it's Elizabeth's sister I'm telling ya," says Steve, turning to his left and looking at her as he walks
back to the kitchen.

"Who's crying?" she asks, watching him as he walks behind his chair and looks into the kitchen.

"Um-hm," he answers, nodding as he leaves the room.

"Billy!" a boy yells outside as Joanne looks at her plate with her hands clasped. "Wait up...! Wait!"

Steve walks back in with the silverware still in his hand and stops at Joanne's right, taking her plate in his right hand. "You through?" he asks, hesitating with his hand on the plate while she sits without moving.

"Wait up!" yells the boy outside.

"I'm through," she sighs, moving her arms back as Steve lifts her plate, then moving them forward and looking at the package of rolls as Steve walks into the kitchen. Holmes shifts position as Steve walks by him, then sits looking into the kitchen.

"Wait!" the boy yells, then again even louder, "Wait!"

Joanne looks in front of her and shakes her head. "Ay, be quiet," says Steve in the kitchen.

Joanne looks at her hands as the yelling continues, then looks down to her right at Holmes and says, "Holmes, go on out there and bite that kid," gesturing with her head, then with her right hand toward the backyard. Reaching out her left
hand, she touches the top of the soda bottle in front of Steve's plate, then reaches with both hands and again tightens the cap as Holmes growls and Steve walks in with silverware in his left hand.

Reaching around the bottle as Joanne lets go of it, Steve picks up the cornbowl. Leaning her left forearm on the table with her hand dangling past the edge in front of her, Joanne lifts her beercan in her right hand. "I'm never going to move again," she says, tilting the can and drinking while Steve walks into the kitchen with the cornbowl. Putting the beercan in front of her plate, then reaching across and picking up her napkin from her left, she begins wiping the table where her plate was. "You gonna take Holmes up behind the hospital?" she asks.

"Yup," Steve answers, walking in from the kitchen with the silverware in his left hand.

"He'll like that," she says, continuing to wipe the table and leaning her head to her left as he reaches his left arm down the table, picking up the hamburger plate from near Beth's place setting.

"He'll have a good run," Steve says, lifting the plate over Joanne's head and turning to his left into the kitchen.
"I hope he doesn't get lost," she says, gathering crumbs into a pile with her napkin. Leaving the napkin and turning to her left, she takes the package of rolls in her left hand and closes it more tightly with her right hand underneath.

"Yeah, 'cause I probably won't run. . . ." says Steve from the kitchen. Looking down to her right at Holmes, Joanne leaves the package of rolls on the table and rests her left hand on the table corner, putting her right on the table edge and looking ahead of her as Steve walks back in. ". . .so close after eating," he continues, stopping at the table to her right.

Joanne watches as he gathers silverware with his right hand, then takes the silverware already in his left hand in his right also. "There's another part of a beer in the freezer," she says as he reaches across the table and picks up the spatula, knocking the cap of the old ketchup bottle onto the floor. "If you want another we could swap," she continues.

"There is not," he says before she finishes, turning to his left and walking into the kitchen.

"Oh, you finished it?" she asks, looking a little bit to her right, then at her beer.
"Um-hm," says Steve from the kitchen.

"Uh-huh. Aren't you sneaky," she says, picking up her beercan in her right hand, then tilting it up and drinking.

"Ahhh," she says as she puts down the beer. She looks down to her right at Holmes, her hand still on the beercan. "Holmes," she says, looking back at the table and shaking her head, "will you stop making that noise?" Steve turns on the water in the kitchen as she's speaking.

Joanne looks down again at Holmes while he stands and walks to her, looking up and wagging his tail. As the disposal in the kitchen goes on, Holmes lays his head in her lap, his tail still wagging, while she continues to look at him. The disposal goes off, and Steve begins to move pots and pans noisily in the kitchen. Taking his head from Joanne's lap, Holmes turns toward the kitchen.

Joanne looks forward and slowly shakes her head, then looks at the camera and groans, "Oh!" turning away and looking into the living room past it. Looking up to her right as Holmes sits, she reaches down her right hand, looks forward, and begins rubbing his back. Holmes wags his tail and looks at her as she's rubbing him, then slowly turns back to the kitchen.

"You said the magic word, Steve," she says, taking her
hand from Holmes' back and looking to her right where she squeezes a crumpled napkin lying on the table corner. "Now he wants you to come across." She leaves the napkin and looks down at Holmes as he turns and walks to the table beside her. Rubbing his back, she looks forward.

"Hm?" Steve asks from the kitchen over the sound of running water.

"I said you said the magic word, now you'd better come across," she answers, looking up to her right and rubbing her hand along Holmes' back as he walks under the table, sniffing at the floor. Looking at Holmes standing under the table, she starts slapping his right haunch with her palm.

"I'll take him," Steve says. Holmes looks back to his left at Joanne as she looks off to her left, slapping his rump harder and louder. "He knows I will," says Steve.

Holmes looks ahead of him while Joanne looks around the room from left to right, smacking his rump more slowly. Joanne looks back to her left at Greg as he walks in from the living room toward her. "What were you doing upstairs?" she asks, turning further to her left with her right hand still on Holmes and her left on the corner of the
Greg hesitates to her left and looks at her. "Reading," he answers, turning away and touching her chair with his left hand as he continues into the kitchen.

Joanne looks in front of her, then around toward the kitchen, still patting Holmes as she asks, "You weren't watching the monitor?"

"No," Greg answers from the kitchen.

"No?" she repeats, looking forward and stroking Holmes as he backs out from under the table with his tail wagging. The back door opens and closes. Rubbing his neck, Joanne looks down to her left, then at Holmes again, slapping his side and rubbing him while Steve continues to wash dishes in the kitchen.

Patting Holmes a few more times, she looks at the table, then with both hands begins gathering up napkins. Taking them in her right hand, she reaches across the table for another, takes it in her right hand also, then reaches her left hand out again, touching the table and bringing her hand back empty. "We might as well just throw these, uh, peppers out," she says, picking up the bowl in her left hand and turning to the right in her chair. She looks into the bowl as she stands and walks to the kitchen, asking,
"Can you think of anything we could use them for?" Stepping away from her as she gets up, Holmes walks behind Steve's chair to the bowl in the corner, lowering his head to it as Joanne finishes speaking and leaves the room.

"Nope," Steve answers.

"Think they'd be good on a pizza?" she asks, also in the kitchen.

"Um-hm," he answers, still over the sound of water running, "but I don't know how long it would be."

"Well, could we make a pizza maybe Monday?" she asks. As she's speaking, Holmes looks back toward the kitchen, chewing and licking his chops, then slowly returns to his bowl.

For several seconds the only sounds are those of children playing in the yard and water running in the kitchen, then Joanne walks in from the kitchen, stops beside her chair, and again tightens the cap of the Coke bottle. Picking up Greg's half-full glass in her right hand and the Coke bottle by the neck in her left, she turns to her left, looking at the table, and walks back into the kitchen. Holmes continues to eat, sometimes noisily.

Several seconds pass with only occasional kitchen sounds --
cabinet doors being opened and closed, water being run, the sounds of dishes and other objects being washed and stacked. Occasionally the curtain at Holmes' left blows into the room from the open window. Holmes looks back at the table from his bowl as Joanne walks in from the kitchen, scratching the top of her head with her right hand. Leaning over the table from the right of her chair, she pushes the salt shaker with her left hand and sweeps the pepper shaker against it with her right, lifting both in her left hand as they clack together and picking up the empty ketchup bottle in her right. Holmes returns to his bowl as she turns to her left and walks into the kitchen.

"Oh. . . ." Joanne sighs while dishes clatter in the kitchen. Walking back into the dining room with her left hand to her mouth, she turns to her right as she reaches the table and stops behind Steve's chair. Taking the chair back with both hands, she pushes the chair toward the table with the aid of her left knee, then pulls the chair out again with her right hand and looks at the floor in front of it, again lifting her left hand to her mouth.

Walking to the table, she bends over in front of Steve's chair and picks something up from the floor near the table leg with her left hand. "My God," she groans as
she bends and picks up the food, then straightens up and walks to the table corner, looking at the floor in front of Greg's chair as she puts the floor scraps she just picked up in her right hand. "Gregory gets more corn on the floor...," she says. Pausing, she turns back to the table and leans forward, picking up Steve's beercan in her left hand and a napkin from beside Beth's glass in her right as she continues, "...then he does in his mouth." Taking the beercan in her right hand with the napkin and picking up Beth's glass in her left, she looks over the table and turns to her left, walking in front of Steve's chair to the window. Holmes looks at her from his bowl as she cleans up, then looks out the window from the edge of the blowing curtain. As she leaves the room Holmes walks to the window and sticks his head behind the curtain.

Something falls to the floor in the kitchen. "All right," Steve says, and a piece of furniture is moved noisily across the floor.

Holmes turns from the window and walks in front of Steve's chair toward the kitchen.

"Enough of that," Joanne says in the kitchen, then several seconds later, over kitchen noises, "You already rinsed
out that frying pan, huh?"

"Nope," Steve answers.

"No?" asks Joanne.

"Bang!" a child yells in the backyard. "Bang!" another yells.

"Holmes, here," says Joanne, walking in and crossing in front of Steve's chair to Holmes' bowl with a large frying pan in her left hand and Holmes following her. Taking the handle of the pan in both hands, she bends over the bowl and pours fat from the pan into it while Holmes stops to her right and sniffs. She shakes the pan slightly, then scrapes what's left into the bowl with her left hand. Holmes watches as she cleans the pan thoroughly.

As Joanne straightens up with the pan in her right hand and turns to her right, Holmes darts in front of her, hesitates by his bowl, then runs the length of the table behind Greg and Beth's chairs, stopping and looking around him.

"Did you get the fly, hunter?" Joanne asks, watching him at the front of the table as she walks past Steve's chair to the kitchen.

Snorting twice, Holmes weaves under the full length of the table, halting by his bowl where he begins eating.
Joanne laughs from in the kitchen.

After several seconds Joanne walks back in, leans down the table from next to her chair, and picks up the full ketchup bottle in her left hand and the mustard jar in her right. Stepping back and looking the table over, she turns around to her left and walks into the kitchen.

"It's going to be really good tomorrow," Steve says after a few seconds.

"What is 'it'?" asks Joanne.

"The soup," he answers.

"Oh, yeah, it's going to be terrific."

"We'll bring some bread, you know, it'll be nice," says Steve.

Joanne walks into the dining room before he finishes speaking and reaches over the table from the right of her chair, picking up the nutcracker in her left hand and the butter dish in her right. Straightening up, she takes the butter dish in her left hand beside the nutcracker, then steps toward her chair and leans forward, picking up the package of rolls in her right hand. She turns away to her left, leaving only her beercan on the table. "Gee, that will really. . .taste. . .good," she says as she walks into the kitchen.
Water continues to run in the kitchen sink. "This I'll fry for those guys," says Joanne. "They can't imagine. I didn't know it was going to take them that long to set up, you know?"

"Neither did I," answers Steve.

Holmes lifts his head from his bowl briefly as Joanne walks in with a sponge in her right hand and pushes at the back of her chair with her left hand. Stepping behind it as it tilts forward, she pulls it to her right with her right hand and walks to the table beside it. Leaning her left hand on the corner of the table, she wipes crumbs from the end of the table toward the center with the sponge. Taking a step to her right toward her chair, she lifts the beercan with her left hand, wipes under it, then puts it down again and wipes around it toward the center of the table, balancing herself with her left hand on the table corner.

Walking around the front of the table, she runs the sponge along the edge, then pushes it toward the center as she comes to the corner and steps in front of Beth's chair. Stopping there, she wipes the crumbs from the center of the table into her left hand, holding it below the table edge between Beth and Greg's chairs. She turns the sponge and
continues, sponging across the areas near Steve and Greg's chairs into her left hand. Continuing to sponge across the table into her hand, she backs out from in front of Beth's chair, then walks past the front of the table and her chair into the kitchen. Holmes continues to lick his bowl.

A few seconds later Joanne walks back in empty handed, takes the top of her chair back in both hands, and pulls it to her right, then walks past the table to the broom closet in the entranceway between the living and dining rooms. Holmes looks up to his left, then returns to his bowl.

Walking back in with a broom and dustpan in her right hand, Joanne leans down in front of the table, picks something up from the floor, then straightens up and walks past the table into the kitchen. Walking in again a moment later with the broom in her right hand and the dustpan in her left, she puts the dustpan on the corner of the table to the left of her chair and takes the broom in both hands, sweeping from the living room entrance toward the table, then toward her chair. Walking past the front end of the table, she sweeps from the wall toward the table, pushing the sweepings underneath.
Stopping at the front end of the table with the broom in her right hand, she takes hold of the back of Beth's chair and pulls it around in front of her, pushing the chair up to the end of the table with her left knee. Walking to where Beth's chair was, she sweeps and leans to her left, pushing the sweepings under the table. Putting her left hand on the back of Greg's chair, then stepping back and pulling it to where Beth's chair was, she steps around it and sweeps, pushing the sweepings under the table as she continues to sweep past the end of the table to in front of Steve's chair.

"Do you want me to save -- aw, I'm going to throw these peppers out, huh?" Steve calls from the kitchen as she steps back and turns toward the living room, sweeping once more from where Greg's chair was to under the table. She looks toward the kitchen as Steve finishes speaking, then looks down and pushes the chair beside her to the table edge with her right hand and left foot, saying, "Yup," as it scrapes noisily against the floor. Looking back toward the kitchen and walking past the front of Steve's chair, she answers, "Go ahead. Yeah, we have plenty of peppers."

Looking down and taking the back of her own chair in
her right hand, she backs up with it, pulling it beside Steve's. Stepping from behind it and taking the broom in both hands, she walks to where her chair was and sweeps toward herself from the table corner, then turns to her right, leaning down and reaching with the broom as she sweeps out from under the table. She straightens up and pushes the sweepings away from the table toward the kitchen, then holds the broom in her right hand, grabs the seat of her chair in front, and pulls it toward her, banging it against the table leg. Putting her left hand on the top of the chair back and hooking her left foot around the front chair leg, she pulls it toward her, then still holding it by the backrest and putting her foot behind its rear leg, she pushes it up to the table edge.

"Jesus, I gotta get out of here with this dog," says Steve, walking into the dining room and past his chair.

"I know it," says Joanne, standing with her left hand on the back of her chair and watching him walk around the far side of the table.

"Okay?" he asks, looking at her as she looks down, taking the broom in both hands, and he walks down the length of the table at its other side.

"Yeah, go ahead," she says, sweeping toward the kitchen.
"Otherwise we won't make it," he says, feeling the bottom of his shirt with both hands as he turns at the end of the table and walks toward the bathroom. "I like to only give him a good, you know, a good, good run," he adds as he leaves the dining room.

Joanne walks to the corner of the room by the kitchen door and stands the broom there with her left hand, then walks into the kitchen. Holmes looks back to his left as she leaves the room and Steve closes the bathroom door, then returns to his bowl, his chain collar banging against it while he eats.

Joanne walks from the kitchen toward the living room, looking back to her left as she passes the table, then in front of her as she leaves the dining room. Holmes turns from his bowl and follows her out. In the dining room the broom stands in the corner to the far right. The chairs are arranged around the table, on which remain the dustpan and beercan. Only Steve's chair is still pulled out from the table. Several seconds pass quietly, then Joanne opens the screen door at the front of the apartment.

"Hello, Joanne," a man's voice calls.

"Hi," she answers. "I'm looking for Beth."
"I haven't seen her here," he answers after a pause.

The screen door bangs shut, then from further away Joanne says, "I wonder if she's out in back...." As she continues to speak, passing out of hearing, children can still be heard playing outside.

The bathroom door opens, then the toilet flushes and Steve walks past the right of the table, picking up the beercan and continuing into the kitchen. A few seconds later he walks back through the dining room into the living room, touching the front of his shirt with his right hand. As he leaves the room, Beth and Joanne's voices become audible from the backyard.

"I want to see us on tv, Mommy," Beth says.

"What?" Joanne asks as the back door creaks open.

Beth again speaks, and is overlapped by Joanne. "All right, ask Daddy to take you," Joanne says, adding, "Don't step in the dirt," as they walk into the dining room past the sweepings, Joanne holding Beth's left wrist over Beth's head with her left hand.

"I want to see us on...." Beth says. Looking toward the living room, Joanne directs Beth between Steve's chair and the table and lets her go.
"Take me where?" Steve asks from the front of the apartment before Beth finishes.

"Steve? She wants you to take her upstairs to show her what -- what they look like on the tv," says Joanne, walking toward the living room on the kitchen side of the table while Beth, holding her right hand at her mouth, walks along the table's far side opposite her. Beth lowers her hand from her mouth and walks into the living room as Joanne, behind her, stops between the rooms and turns back, glancing again toward the living room.

"I want to see us on the tv," says Beth.

"Okay, come on," Steve says before she finishes.

Joanne takes two steps toward the table, then turns around and walks into the living room. As feet sound on the stairs, Joanne walks in from the living room, through the dining room, and into the kitchen with a glass in her left hand, then returns without the glass and walks in front of Steve's chair to Holmes' bowl.

Beth says something quietly upstairs, then Steve yells from upstairs, "Call Holmes!" as Joanne bends down with a grunt and picks up Holmes' bowl. She moves the bowl along the wall to under the window without straightening up, then stands and turns to the living room, smiling. "All right,"
she says, turning to her left and walking toward the broom in the corner by the kitchen door, continuing, "Is this going to be the Holmes Hour again?"

"Holmes!" she calls, facing the living room and leaning to her left as she takes the broom in her left hand.

"Holmes!" Beth yells from upstairs.

Joanne takes the broom in both hands as she walks in front of Steve's chair, looking toward the living room and calling, "Come on!" Looking in front of her, she walks to the corner where Holmes' bowl was and whistles. "Come on! Holmes!" she calls again, beginning to sweep out the corner with her back to the table.

Joanne pushes the broom into the corner several times, then again sweeps. "Holmes," she calls less loudly, looking over her right shoulder toward the living room and pausing. "Holmes!" she calls, then looks back down and sweeps. Pushing the sweepings along the far wall behind Steve's chair, she looks into the living room, reaches back into the corner with the broom, and says, "Come here."

"Holmes!" yells Steve upstairs at the same time.

Joanne looks down at the sweepings, pushing them along the wall, then in front of Steve's chair and says, "Come on."
"Holmes!" yells Beth.

Joanne looks toward the living room as Holmes' paws sound on the stairs, then looks at Steve's chair. Holding the broom in her right hand, she takes the back of the chair with her left. "Aw, he's coming up," she says, lifting the chair by the back and swinging it up to the table as she finishes speaking.

"Call him, he's coming up," Steve calls from upstairs at the same time. "Go, get out of here!" he says as Joanne again takes the broom in both hands and sweeps behind his chair toward the kitchen, then gathers all the sweepings in a pile.

"Holmes, come here," she says, sweeping around the pile, then glances into the living room, sweeping and continuing, "Come on." Looking up again, she smiles as Holmes walks to the right of the table toward her with his tail wagging. "There he is," she says, looking down again and still smiling as she pulls the sweepings into a smaller pile.

"Hey, Holmes," Steve yells from upstairs. Holmes turns and walks back toward the living room with his tail wagging.

"Come here. Come here," calls Joanne, holding the
broom in her right hand and patting her left leg as she walks behind Steve's chair watching Holmes. Holmes turns to his right, walks past the front of the table, and comes toward her. "Good boy!" she says, patting her leg two more times and smiling. Bending down, she rubs his neck with her left hand and pulls him against her.

"Holmes," Beth says upstairs.

Holmes walks back toward the living room as Joanne leans the broom in the corner with her left hand. "Let's see him do his fantastic trick," she says, turning to him and taking a step forward. "Come on, Holmes, come here," she says, clapping her hands. She snaps her fingers and says, "Holmes!" then steps forward, clapping her hands two more times as Holmes walks into the living room.

Turning to her left, she picks up the broom in her left hand and walks behind Steve's chair, glancing into the living room as she takes the broom in her right hand. Brushing her hair back from the left side of her face and stopping to the right of her chair, she leans down the table and picks up the dustpan, glancing to her left, then steps back and leans down with her right arm along the broom handle as she pulls the sweepings into a smaller pile. Laying the dustpan on the floor in her left hand and holding
the broom by the bottom of the handle, she sweeps the dirt into the dustpan, moving the dustpan to her left. Footsteps sound on the stairs as she straightens up and walks into the kitchen.

"I see'd it," Beth says as she comes downstairs.

"Uh-huh," Steve says, and laughs.

"Yes."

"Yeah," says Beth.

"Did you see that silly dog?" asks Joanne, walking into the dining room and past the table toward the living room with the dustpan in her left hand and the broom in her right. She holds the broom near the bottom with the handle against her arm.

"Um-hm," Steve answers from the living room as Joanne walks to the broom closet, taking the dustpan in her right hand beside the broom and glancing into the living room.

"We did. . . . And I did. . . ." calls Beth.

"She's coming with me," says Steve.

"She's going with you guys?" asks Joanne.

"Um-hm," Steve says before she finishes.

"Okay," Joanne says.

"I don't want, don't run," yells Beth.

"No, I'm not going to run," says Steve.
"Yeah, I have to get...," says Beth.

"All right, where is Greg, Steve?" Joanne interrupts.

"I don't know, I think he's outside."

"He's outside. All right."

"He's on the playground," Beth says before Joanne finishes.

"Hmmmm, wait a minute," says Steve.

Joanne walks slowly into the dining room looking at the table with her right hand to her mouth, then turns to her right and stops in the entranceway between the rooms.

"Come on," Steve says from the front of the apartment as she picks up a checkered table cloth in both hands and lets it drop open, turning to her left toward the dinner table. Standing at the corner to the left of her chair, she spreads open the cloth and looks down at it.

"Let me see that," Steve says to Beth.

"Did you have to make that?" Beth asks.

Leaning forward slightly, Joanne tosses the table cloth and lowers it with its corners draped over each side of the table, then smooths it with both hands.

"No, I didn't have to," Steve answers as Joanne walks around behind her chair, straightening the table cloth.

"See, you put this on the wrong way," Steve says to Beth while
Joanne stops at the table corner to the left of his chair, lifting and straightening the cloth. Patting the edge down, she walks behind Steve's chair and around the table, stopping behind the chair opposite the kitchen and readjusting the cloth as the screen door at the front of the apartment bangs shut.

Putting her hands on the sides of the backrest, Joanne pushes the chair further under the table and moves it to her left with the inside of her right foot. Stepping to the corner of the table, she pulls and straightens the table cloth, then brushes it off with her right hand and turns around, walking to the corner of the room. Returning to the table, she sets a potted begonia in the center of the checkered table cloth, smoothing the cloth with her right hand.

"How you doing, Steve?" a man calls outside.

Joanne walks behind the chair at the front end of the table and puts both hands on the top of the chair back.

"All right," Steve answers from the yard.

Pushing the chair closer to the table with her left knee, she steps away from the table and walks from the dining room into the kitchen.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Representative Choices in Describing

The method of writing Family at Dinner was not pre-established, but had to develop in the process of learning how to describe. Similarly, some points of method are salient only after one has read the family description. Below are some examples from early in the description of our intentions as we wrote. Several outstanding descriptive choices are discussed concretely as they relate to the foregoing description.

Cast of characters. The first chapter, titled "Introductory Meeting," explains the background of the project. We tried to present our intentions within the context of our preliminary visit to the O'Neals' home. We further aimed for immediacy by taking the reader with us on tour of the apartment. The reader should come to know the O'Neals' participation and their living space as experientially as possible. Basic demographic information is provided for identifying purposes. Physical description of people is held over for later sections.

Setting the scene. The opening description of the
hotly lighted room a week later, curtains blowing before open windows on a warm August evening, is deliberately visual and tactile. Light, color, and movement dominate, conveying an immediate impression of the room as it might appear on first entering it. We chose to start the written description the same moment we started the videotape, just prior to our leaving the scene in the midst of the O'Neals' dinner preparations.

As throughout later drafts of the manuscript, in writing and rewriting the opening paragraphs we repeatedly visualized that which we described. Especially in the opening we tried to convey spacial awareness of the dining room and apartment. "Brian waits in the front hall of the O'Neals' apartment while in the storage room upstairs Jeff checks on the monitor. . . .", (p.118) typifies our attempt to orient the reader spacially as well as situationally. Paragraphs following detail the dining room itself, our goal a physical and lasting image of the setting.

The physical sense of events would be lost later if we failed to pay early, exacting attention to all of the room's details. The same is true of orienting objects and people in relation to each other and the camera. Estab-
lishing orientation and direction here and throughout without exhausting the reader is difficult at best, and requires that we use words informationally and economically. We were especially concerned not to drain that which we described of its life in our concern for accuracy and economy of detail. Organization of extravagant detail had to be achieved with simplicity. At the same time, the visual impact of the combined details of each second had to be full and true to life.

In earlier drafts, we described first the left-hand wall of the room, next the right-hand wall, then finally the far wall. Curiously, this ordering gave the reader a visual impression of the almost square room as long and narrow, extending far away from the camera. We corrected the image by revising the ordering to read left wall, far wall, right wall. Now the reader's gaze travels clockwise around the room, taking in the peripheral layout and furnishings -- versus looking from left, to right, into distance. The pace, also, is more natural this way -- perhaps more the way one would take in a room with a sweeping gaze if less anxious.

Once introduced to the room's dimensions and wall furnishings, the reader's attention is briefly directed to
Joanne and Steve's presence in the kitchen at the far right before being shifted to the table and chairs in the room's center. Initially we hoped to introduce family members as they first spoke or appeared, but later decided to orient the reader sooner. The sacrifice to dramatic immediacy seemed worth the gain in reader orientation. Scene-setting ends with description of the dining table, chairs pulled out and ready for their occupants. The microphone is visible, hanging high up on a chandelier over the table.

To the scene now is added the dimension of sound -- sound in the background of children's outdoor play, very soon the sound of Steve and Joanne's work in the kitchen and Brian and Jeff's preparations to leave. Before moving on, however, the description focuses on a previously unnoted presence in the dining room. Holmes, the O'Neals' dog, waits in the left foreground of the picture, his left ear cocked toward the kitchen, his muzzle pointed toward the front hall of the apartment where Brian waits for Jeff to come downstairs.

In this gradual manner the scene is filled out for the reader and prepared for action. The room is hot and bright. Holmes lies on the floor. Holmes takes on dimension
from the detail of a white spot high on the chest of his brown coat. The position of his head forecasts approaching events. The scene uses the full range of audible and visible detail available to us, in a literary balance which satisfies us that the room is conveyed whole. Details are organized for effect. In setting the scene we take greater freedom in organizing details than is available to us in describing later scenes made up of sequenced behaviors. We have been aware of capturing the scene's warmth of color; the memorable sounds of a summer evening; the curious presence of television lights, camera, and microphone in a private setting — all information relevant to the behavior of the participants we will be describing. These details as we organized them convey a sense of imminence of private life to be lived publicly in this room tonight.

**Entrances.** As each member of the family enters the room, she or he is introduced in motion. Physical movement best introduces each person — the prime example, perhaps, being three-year-old Beth whose stage of development is most readily apparent in every gesture as she wanders in on page 131. We chose to weave physical description and dress into live action, rather than pre-
senting photographic impressions. We noted how our own visualization of family members developed, and where satisfied that our perceptions were less than idiosyncratic tried to duplicate this process for the reader. Movement has natural high points and transitions which lend themselves to momentarily fixed impressions. Much as the sports photographer takes his still shot of a tennis player at the height of the player's serve, we searched and waited for those moments when time seems to pause. Joanne, leaning over the table as she puts down salt and pepper shakers, pauses to listen, then we see her face. Steve, too, balances as he leans around Joanne, puts down the cornbowl, then faces us fully as he walks past the camera.

Beth and Joanne appear alone for extended seconds on first entering the room. Steve and Greg on entry are almost immediately engaged. As they occurred, entrances seemed to us as perfect as if planned. This sense of rightness seems to be typical of natural events nonintrusively described. There is no coherence greater than that of naturally occurring behavior. Stage actors and actresses who later act in film know this best. Conscious dramatic gesture perhaps effective on stage is inauthentic on film,
where the actor must communicate character consistently in unconscious gesture.

**People in relationship.** Our task was two-, three-, and four-person interaction, with and without Holmes. An eye for interactional wholeness is our most explicit descriptive challenge. Midway in the writing we traced one individual’s behavior through the manuscript page by page against the videotape, both to see what this would look like and to test for descriptive gaps. The sample satisfied us that the description was continuous and dramatized the relative paucity of information available in individual behavior without its context. There are, however, moments throughout the written description where surrounding behaviors are absent or continue unchanged such that one individual’s movements take prominence -- for example, Joanne alone in the room setting the table, or some of Beth’s squirming about in her chair and arm waving. A compact example of individual focus which we particularly enjoyed for its drama and recognizability occurs on page 130. As Joanne stands pointing at Greg’s hands, Greg gets up from the table to wash them:

> Pushing down on the table with both palms and looking at the floor, Greg stands as Joanne
and Steve finish speaking. He pauses and extricates his left foot from between the table and chair while he looks down at his right hand, turning up his palm and spreading out his fingers. Closing his hand into a fist, he pushes his chair back with his leg, trips and recovers, then looks up to his left at Joanne as he walks in a wide half circle around her to the bathroom, his arms swinging at his sides and his hands fisted.

Two-person interactions were seldom ambiguous. Nonetheless, the behavior of all present is accounted for, reducing the likelihood of our closing off interpretations by overshaping a scene. The reader can then interpret freely for him- or herself what is going on, who is talking to whom. To the extent we do impose our view of what constitutes a primary interaction, this is communicated less by paragraphing or other major structural devices than by visual prominence -- a more subtle question of placement of behaviors within surrounding behaviors and the degree of effort given to any element of the description. The reader is hopefully not bound to our structural interpretations of interaction, although he or she will surely be limited or influenced by them.

We did wish to see how effectively in writing we could visualize movement flowing noninterruptedly between and among persons. Beth and Greg's changing chairs on
page 136 is a clear example:

As Greg, looking down in front of him, reaches for the corner of the table at his left and pulls himself over, Beth holds onto the chair backs with her right hand and walks across the seats behind him, watchful of her footing.

Joanne and Greg's simultaneous circling of the table on pages 128 - 129 is another example of two persons moving in relation to each other. Holmes further defines their movement as he walks beneath the table toward the kitchen. One second Holmes passes in front of Greg, who steps around him, the next Holmes brushes the backs of Joanne's legs. The scene is further punctuated by Steve and Beth's conversations off camera in the kitchen.

More difficult than two-person simultaneity were efforts to describe the whole family as one, moving organism. Such efforts were demanded by simultaneous behavior of sufficient complexity that unvisualizable chaos would result unless the scene were literally choreographed. An example occurs on page 159, where the whole family is engaged in food preparation and eating:

Steve salts his corn without looking up. "This is good corn, Beth," he says. "Mmmmm, the best we've had all year." As he finishes speaking he glances to his left and replaces the salt beside
Joanne, then looks back at his corn and picks it up. Greg swallows while Steve is speaking, then takes the first of three bites as Joanne's knife cuts through her corn and clanks against her plate. Steve pauses, looking at the corn in his hands, then leans forward and brings it to his mouth. Beth runs her fingers through her butter.

"I know it," Joanne says. Repositioning her corn on her plate, she begins sawing through it a second time further down the ear. "They had a lot of it, too," she adds.

Steve finishes two bites, then turns his corn as Greg bites into his. "You know, it's cheaper at Gino's..." Joanne continues. She pauses and glances to the left of her plate, picking up her napkin.

Beth looks up in Greg's direction and puts her fingers in her mouth. "Mmmmmm," she moans while Joanne pauses in her speaking.

Greg finishes three bites and turns his corn in his hands as Joanne continues, "...than it was at, um..." She pauses again to cut her corn which she holds with her napkin.

"Mmmmmm," Beth moans a second time as she returns her hand to her plate. Steve lifts his corn to his mouth and bites.

"...at that stand, that the A&P had," Joanne concludes, sitting further back from the table and noisily sawing her corn.

Selection of detail. As described in the method section, we were late in taking responsibility for selecting those details to include and those to throw away. A large amount of behavioral detail is necessary in early drafts to allow a more deliberate selection process later. Also, a sufficient number of behavioral pieces must be represented in first draft to assure that global behaviors
and interactions will be visible, or make physical sense, when the description is first reread and edited. Later, those details are selectively edited which interrupt the manuscript's readability more than they add information. Editing presents particularly difficult decisions to the researcher where more than two or three people are being described. In describing so many people, the plethora of detail interrupting dialogue or other ongoing behavior is inevitably too great a burden to descriptive continuity. In *Family at Dinner* as it now stands we have done very limited editing out of detail, primarily because of time constraints at this stage of the work. Without considerably more experimentation with the description we will not know how much physical detail is necessary to make visual sense of two-, three-, and four-person behavior in writing.

In any case, the selection of what details to include is an interpretive rather than random process, and the more the researcher relies on scattershot inclusion in place of aware selection, the more interpretive description will be. That is simply to say that while broad inclusion of perceived detail may "feel" random, it is not in fact random. For example, near-final drafts of what is now
"All right, kids . . .," Joanne says as she walks to the table. With her right hand extended palm down and her left loosely fisted, she stops behind her chair, looking across the table at Beth and Greg.

We tried to describe behaviorally and simply Joanne's placating gesture with her right hand. Later, rereading the description with a newly acquired readiness to pick and choose details, we asked ourselves why we had included her left hand in the description. If she were carrying something in it, or pushing back her hair with it, or doing something otherwise noteworthy with it we would routinely include it -- but not if it were at her side, or at her waist. Rechecking with the monitor confirms our memory that she is holding her left hand relaxed in front of her at her waist as she placates with her right. If one is to describe her left hand at all, the description "loosely fisted" will do, but to mention the position of her left hand this way interpretively suggests that her placating gesture is backed up by something more forceful -- a fist. Unexamined, an otherwise accurate detail seemingly randomly included is serving purposes other than realism.
Page 141 of the finished description illustrates the inclusion of detail which might have been omitted had it not supported an interpretation we chose to retain. Steve hands his own knife to Greg, then walks toward the kitchen as Greg begins buttering corn for what, from various indications earlier, may be the first time:

"Here, Greg, have the knife," Steve says, reaching over the table and dropping his own knife rattling on Greg's plate, then as Joanne glances to her right and reaches for more butter he turns to his left and lifts the Coke bottle against his chest, his left hand around the neck and his right underneath. "It's a lot better. I'll get another knife," he adds, continuing to his left while behind him Greg picks up the knife, puts his fork on his plate, and takes the knife in his right hand. Halfway to the kitchen Steve pauses, his left foot crossed in front of his right, and looking to his right steps between the back of Joanne's chair and Holmes. Beth continues to watch Greg, who uses his knife to scoop up butter as Steve leans sideways and reaches with the bottle in his left hand to the side table behind Joanne, lifting his right foot off the floor as he sets the bottle down. Stepping back from the side table, Steve looks down and walks around Holmes' hind legs and tail into the kitchen while Greg spreads butter on his corn, gingerly touching the ear with his left hand.

We saw Steve as teaching Greg by letting Greg butter with the knife without instruction. Steve meanwhile is free of having to butter Greg's corn for him. A rather heavy-handed and potentially more elaborate interpretation
(including Joanne's at the same time buttering Beth's corn for her) is less intrusively present, but present nonetheless, in our inclusion of Steve's light, dance-like steps away from the table. The multi-faceted interpretation is also retained by our including Steve and Greg's sequence of behaviors in the same paragraph. We more often used our recognitions of our own interpretations to neutralize description than to structure it, but here we chose otherwise and the paragraph serves as a useful example of interpretation by data selection.

**Treatment of time.** Time is the description's most important and in some ways most surprising dimension. When behavior is described minutely, so much is seen to happen in a moment that time slows dramatically and the reader becomes disoriented unless time's passage is clearly imprinted on the text. Careful attention to explicit time relations in early drafts was essential. Adding the clockface at one-minute intervals in the final draft provides a needed time frame to the whole. There are other "clocks" in the finished text. We hoped Joanne's simple, deliberate behaviors alone on camera setting the table in the opening pages would in themselves establish the unusual time frame. We visually dramatized time's slow
passage with the sentence, "Her straight brown hair, parted in the middle and a few inches longer than shoulder length, falls forward to the right of her face and spreads over her left shoulder" (p.120). Later, Holmes' circuit of the table (pp.148-151) is a "clock" for ongoing behavior at the table, whether or not the reader notices this at a level of awareness.

Early in the writing process, so long as behaviors were explicitly related in time we could pretty much linger on events as we determined was necessary or desirable without interrupting scenic movement or causing behavioral pile-ups which might necessitate shifts in tense we were determined to avoid. Timing was often muddy in early drafts, however. An early draft contained the uncorrected example: "Holmes looks after her [Joanne], turning his head to the front hall and cocking his left ear as. . ." Corrected, this sentence read, "Holmes looks after her, then turns his head to the front hall and cocks his left ear as. . ." "Then" provided the major time differentiation, and we used it increasingly as we rewrote. Even when conjunctions are used, care is taken to ascertain that head turning precedes ear cocking in the written description if this is differentiable on the
videotape. In the final draft, the particular example I've chosen reads, "Holmes looks after her, then turns his head to the front hall as..." (p. 121). We got rid of the ear cocking for reasons I will explain later in this chapter when I write about a persistent problem we had with Holmes.

As the description takes form, the time element is increasingly integrated. Clear time relations among behaviors should not fade when the description is later polished of the more intrusive time markers which earlier served as the researchers' guidelines. A sentence on page 122 of the final draft illustrates effective time differentiation: "Bending over the chair back, she puts the improvised napkin at the place setting there with her left hand, pushes and pats it into place, looks back at it as she steps sideways to her right, then glances down at the roll of towels under her arm." There is no ambiguity here. The reader sees the behavioral sequences and as a result parallel events can be meshed more exactly in time with Joanne's behavior.

Clear time differentiation is the basis of an effective composite picture of family members' parallel behaviors. If the time relations of behaviors have been attended to
sufficiently, scenic rhythms and pacing come through much more readily in the editing process. A character appearing distracted on the tape, for example, is seen to be so in the written description without comment if behaviors are well differentiated in time. Finished description should not rely for its clear time sense on external cues or unintegrated guidelines. Instead, guidelines are used in working draft by the researchers to establish the realistic limits of description. Obtrusive markers are then polished or erased and the time element left to structural integration in the description.

In repeatedly comparing manuscript to tape, where we judged the description discrepant to the tape in tone or pacing we reworked the scene again at the level of fine detail, with particular attention to enhancing the time differentiation and relatedness of behaviors. Doing this helps the researcher overcome in some degree a gradually hardening perceptual set toward the data. Behaviors punctuate each other rhythmically more in fact than in description's crude imitation. However, written description does highlight rhythms; as in the way we "hear" Steve and Beth's conversation in the kitchen rhythmically overlapping the visible interaction of Joanne and Greg in
the dining room on pages 128-131. Rhythms imposed on
description falsely are qualitatively identifiable, much
as self-conscious conversation live or in film is discrepant
with our implicit requirements for spontaneity and realism.
However irresistible the writer may find those rhythms he
forces, they signal that he is attending more to his own
fantasies than to data.

**Choreography and dimensionality.** Beth enters the
room on pages 131-132, right after Holmes has entered
and crossed to the opposite side. They mirror each other's
movements toward and away from the table, then they
pass each other heading in opposite directions, Holmes
toward the kitchen doorway, Beth toward the side of the
table away from the kitchen. As in the case of virtually
all choreography in the finished manuscript, we recognized
the pattern only after we were well into the description,
just as those illusions disruptive to coherency of de-
scription are apparent only from some distance. The
reader may or may not notice formal patterns of which
we became aware, and certainly will find patterns we
failed to see, which is part of the fun. We make no
particular meaning of such patterns, but see them as con-
tributing to the quality and coherence of experience.
The choreography of behavior is particularly pleasurable when it most clearly parallels verbal meaning -- for example, Joanne's leaning across the table in front of Steve as she apparently attempts verbally to slow down his questioning:

"Never even took -- it isn't even started already," [Steve] says, walking into the dining room with a bowl filled with corn in his left hand. Joanne looks back at the table, then steps sideways and leans to the place setting at her left. Putting a fork down and adjusting the napkin with her left hand, she says without looking up, "No, it's not going to start that now -- you know, it won't take long." In mid-sentence she puts a knife from her right hand beside the plate and brings her left arm back out of his way (p.125).

We left such nonverbal communications to take care of themselves, concerning ourselves more appropriately with larger visual patterns that give the scene dimensionality or depth of imagery. For example, the three-dimensionality of the room is made graphic as Steve walks toward the living room (and camera) and Joanne, "at the far end of the table, glances down and takes another fork from her left hand. . ." (p.126). Nonverbal communication then can emerge, needing neither explaining nor even our conscious recognition in order to impact, so long as the scene is dimensionally visible. Sounds, too, provide dimen-
sionality when clearly identified as to place of origin, for example, on page 120, "A sharp ringing of glasses comes from Joanne and Steve's work in the kitchen, then Brian says from the front hallway of the apartment . . . ."

**Close-ups and subjective shots.** We are not beyond being drawn into close-ups by such compelling expressive behaviors as, for example, Greg's getting up from the table to wash his hands (earlier example). Sometimes, too, we let dialogue break in on another shot like a sudden close-up -- as when Steve calls for Greg's attention while Greg is watching Beth on page 138:

"That's Jamaica corn," says Greg, turning from Steve's pouring and looking first at Beth's plate, then at Beth. While Holmes leaves his bowl and walks behind Steve's chair toward the kitchen, Greg continues to watch Beth, who takes her glass in both hands and looks over it as Joanne puts an ear of corn on the plate in front of her.

"Do you want to try to fix your own, Greg?" Steve asks. He stops pouring and puts the bottle between his and Joanne's plates.

The description above also contains two subjective, or point-of-view shots (Gessner, 1968), one within the other -- first Greg watching Beth while Beth does something, then Beth watching Joanne while Joanne does something. The exchange of seats between Beth and Greg quoted
earlier is one surveyed from across the table by Joanne, another shot within a shot, or subjective shot. Again, on page 138:

"What?" Greg asks as he turns to his left and wraps his left hand around his glass. Leaning forward, he looks from the glass in his left hand brimming with foam to Steve's right hand as Steve removes it from the Coke bottle and reaches to the cornbowl;

and page 139:

Beth drinks, holding her glass in both hands and watching over the lip as Joanne slides the butter dish to the right and puts the knife in butter.

Subjective shots smooth transitions; provide an illusion of scenic depth and varied perspectives otherwise robbed from the event by the limitations of a fixed camera, adding both dimension and variety to description; and -- short of pretending to see as the scene's characters see -- subjective shots, as their name implies, do pull quite powerfully for reader identification with family members. In the last two examples, for instance, Greg watches his father's large hand reach to the cornbowl. Beth similarly watches from over the lip of her glass as her mother takes butter. Subjective shots may
anticipate events -- for example, Beth's later fixing on butter as that which she wants. Anticipatory tension shouldn't be exploited or created by literary artifact, but certainly must be allowed, and therefore demands a delicate balance.

The case of Holmes. Holmes has some appeal, and certainly adds an interesting touch to the scene, but we often experienced him as in the way both of believable and coherent description. Often, in the first instance, he seemed more helpful to our description than was healthy. When not directly a part of interaction, he often "con ducts" it -- as when peering under the table into the kitchen as Steve speaks from there (p. 122). He signals entrances (p. 127). He mirrors action (earlier example with Beth). He unites people's travels in his own travels underfoot (earlier example with Joanne and Greg). He sometimes even seems to anticipate content, as when he comes over and sniffs at the chair contested by Greg and Beth, just before Steve asks, "Why do you have to have the same chair?"

Although sometimes in the way of coherent description, the many ways his behavior can also be exploited to highlight ongoing events is altogether too seductive. Some-
times Holmes was so sensitively "tuned in" to family events that his presence, as simple as the lifting of an ear, had to be played down lest he appear a caricature, a Disney-dog. It is difficult when attempting to be concrete not to stand too plainly in awe of the family dog. We attempted neither to over- or underplay Holmes' presence and responsiveness, but reported his movements, revised where the illusion of his supreme intelligence was intolerable, were grateful he was a hound and not a terrier, and insofar as we could left the implications and decisions of his level or mode of awareness and family membership for the reader to decide. To not include him at all, as some readers have suggested, would have entailed a drastic editing of reality.

Unified events, chapter breaks, and transitions. Decisions of paragraphing were determined by dialogue (with which we often led paragraphs), elaborateness of individual behaviors, coincidence of behaviors in time (which paragraphs are sometimes allowed to define), visual integrity of the larger scene, and requirements of pacing. By the time we integrated four people and a dog's simultaneous behaviors' from second to second into reasonably condensed and visualizable packages which flowed reasonably well
from the previous second into the following second without loose ends, paragraphing was pretty much determined for us. Questions of what our descriptive treatment made visually prominent and what peripheral are not answered by studying paragraphing. For this it is necessary to look at placements of behaviors visually in relationship to others within and among paragraphs.

Early in the writing process we decided to make chapter breaks, and determined their locations with surprising ease and agreement. Chapters were determined by people's coming and going from the room, completion of one and the beginning of another quite clear stage in the meal, external interruptions such as the doorbell, definite lulls in conversation and major shifts in conversational focus. Transitions seem often to be an outstanding, even effortful part of ongoing interaction, relatively easy to recognize and describe. Different readers may see different transitions, however, some on the basis of content, some based in process, some idiosyncratic. Chapters offer writers and readers needed breaks, but as the description became increasingly readable to us, and perhaps to readers coming to it for the first time, we eliminated chaptering and substituted one-minute
time indicators within the description.

Levels of inference and the urge to explain. We have attempted in our description to develop those levels of inference important to the description's making physical sense, insofar as possible leaving interpretation of individual motivation and relational message to readers who can theorize from it as they will without ruining the intrinsic value of description as a document open to varied readings and uses. The family who participated in our study perhaps could retrospectively offer their own intrapsychic and relational explanations for their behavior, but we haven't asked them for this -- our main interest being to describe their visible behaviors, not to study their conscious perceptions of events. We are interested in the physical expression of their lives together.

Because we do bring our recognized and unrecognized interpretations to their complex lives together, I have tried to analyze explicitly some of the ways we both participate and try to deal with our participation in describing others. More generally speaking, exploration of our own needs in relation to the O'Neals, each other, our work, our advisors and peers, our own families, and
other readers of the manuscript made the descriptive task itself most salient. Researchers cannot remove their influence and points of view from finished description, but can stand aside sufficiently to let data speak and readers respond. Care in recording data, particularly regarding its sequence, was essential to description's lifelike realism. Scenic visibility and continuous motion were related targets to aim for in finished description, illustrating the use of descriptive writing and editing to integrate data in the direction of realism. The use of great detail and the requirements of ordering it to achieve lifelike representation of an audiovisual record demand that the researchers' efforts be given to describing simply and comprehensibly that which is given, leaving application of more abstract conceptualizations to others.

Description as Clinical Method

Descriptive research, as I have elaborated it in its purposes, in the experience of attempting it, in its parallels to representational art, and in a full example of its application to a family dinner, has close similarities
as a research method to the psychodynamic and relation-
ally oriented psychotherapies. In fact, the research
concept of Family at Dinner developed while Brian Reynolds
and I were becoming increasingly interested in dynamic
family theory and therapy. I was a first-year graduate
student, and the descriptive methodology grew in part
from my work at the Psychological Services Center at the
University of Massachusetts where small groups of
therapists-in-training regularly watched each other's
therapeutic work on videotape, commenting on therapeu-
tic events and processes as these became visible from our
shared looking and questioning. During the entire period
in which we were writing the family description, both
Brian and I were also learning how to acknowledge and use
countertransference feelings in the therapy room.

It is exactly because descriptive research is a
painstaking exercise in acknowledging and recognizing
countertransference, both in catching it before it im-
poses itself on description and in finding its concrete
manifestations on the typepage, that I define its method
as clinical. I am also confident that as psychological
research in general is more fully recognized as a
process of participant-observation, as it has increasingly
been since Sullivan, the learnings of the therapist will be more actively called upon in written research and hopefully the distinction so often made by many academic psychologists between "clinician" and "researcher" will be recognized for the false distinction and often intentional slur it is.

To clarify the broader applicability of those parallels which to me seem so obvious, I have made a list of some learnings and applications basic to my own training and developing thinking as a clinician. Although personalized as I present them, these learnings are part of what is generally described as an analytic orientation. I will present these in as condensed a manner as I can, then spell out some parallels I see between them and the requirements of qualitative research.

The foremost learning to be applied clinically is that the therapist's feeling experience in relation to the client is valuable information necessary to differentiating the client and therapist in ways that distancing attributions, categorizations, or labels and unexplored emotional responses imposed upon the client cannot. Beyond this, a capacity for informed emotional closeness, clear limit setting, and active participation
is necessary to achieve the differentiation in therapy. The stance of passive or objective observer facilitates undifferentiation marked by false certainty or confusion in the client-therapist relationship and in the therapist's descriptions of case progress.

While the private experience of the therapist is useful to gaining information about and affecting the person and the relationship at hand, the therapist monitors this experience primarily in order not to impose it inadvertently as well as to learn more with the client about the client in relationships past and present. More specifically, the therapist develops a free-floating attention which reflects a capacity to experience insights without interpreting prematurely in ways that short-circuit the client's exploration and experience of insight. In this and similar ways, particularly when systematic efforts are made to examine self as well as other, the attentional processes are at once free-floating and disciplined. I should add that the necessity to own countertransference feelings rather than deny them is a lesson which must be learned by the therapist repeatedly.

Finally, the degree of theory, structure, and interpretation one applies clinically is a pragmatic decision
related to the client's and also the therapist's own ego strength and level of therapeutic experience. The judged requirement for structure in any given therapy should vary recognizably in the course of the therapy. Where a high degree of structure is considered to be therapeutically necessary, giving in to this pragmatic necessity means accepting losses in the amount of original and relatively objective data to be had in the therapeutic relationship.

Parallels I see to descriptive research are that active recognition of participation, conscious use of self within clear limits, and acknowledgment of knowledge, issues, and feelings one has in relation to one's data are necessary both to objectify description and to develop it into a useful model of reality. The alternative is failure to differentiate one's self from one's data, reflected by false objectification or confusion and an absence of clear imagery. Again, as in therapy, any interpretation is just one of many meanings and too quick applications of analytical reasoning can foreclose future options and access to information.

Decisions regarding degree of structure in therapy should ideally be based on an assessment of client need,
but often instead reflect therapist need. A similar conflict of requirements is recognizable between data and researcher. Note, for example, how commonly method is tailored not to fit the requirements of complexity but to facilitate simplified conclusions. Highly structured or systematized approaches to data collection and analysis are pragmatic decisions, often based more on the researcher's needs and deliberate or unconscious assessment of his or her own capacities and life priorities than on requirements of science or even of scientific institutions. There is a confusion of priorities in claiming that application of a rigidly systematized method implies a greater objectivity, royal road to truth, or more noble purpose as a scientist. Indeed, it is often acknowledged with puzzlement that clinical method has produced the most powerful and applicable insights in psychology for the last century -- e.g., the writings of Freud and Sullivan, and productions from the emerging field of family systems. In psychology for the past hundred years clinical method is outstanding for having shared the respect for self-awareness characterizing creative development of knowledge in the representational arts.

In conclusion it can be noted that attempting de-
scriptive research not only utilizes insights from clinical method, but also facilitates further clinical learning. An example, borrowed from a professor and colleague closely involved with the development of the *Family at Dinner* project, was his rediscovery in the therapy room that when clients relate their experience concretely (e.g., what the seating arrangement was at the dinner table in childhood, but moreso the immediate events of working and relating), their recollections are likely to be accompanied by unblocked affect. A successful therapeutic experiment was in part the creative application of his surprise that concrete descriptions of behavior in writing are so revealing of feelings.

Brian Reynolds and I both learned clinically from descriptive research because instead of relying on established and highly systematized research techniques we chose to use ourselves and our working relationships with increasing effectiveness as we had learned to do in therapy and clinical supervision. I have attempted in this dissertation to describe the research idea behind *Family at Dinner* and its implementation, in order to illuminate for both ourselves and others the development of our first learnings from and about descriptive research.
High points in our learning were our recognitions and early explorations of word imagery; the concretization and recognition in our research process of thematic projections seldom isolated and made so visible as in detailed written description; our gradual, frightened acceptance of the contribution of subjective processes to realistic description, and our gradually learning to use ourselves more effectively; and the inevitable recognition of ways we are prone to blame crises of competence and failures of courage on the fantasied demands of others. I have tried to clarify how our distortions of reality became increasingly resolved in the work of research, with the collaboration of advisors committed to their own and their students' learning. Writing *Family at Dinner*, like our best clinical learnings, taught us how to enter new situations with a greater and more open awareness.

**The Limits and Applications of Description**

I do not recommend trying to describe four people and a dog. Although the real limits of the method are limits of the researchers' time, and capacity and will-
ingness to learn, detailed representational description might best be limited to studying three people, or even two. But what if one wishes to study a schizophrenic family, for example as Bateson et al. (1956) did from three-person films of parents and identified patients only including the sibling set as well in the description? I would not be able to resist including the sibling constellation, particularly given a descriptive method that does have the means, I believe, to clarify such complexity.

There are, however, less complicated applications which seem equally well suited to description by repeated comparison: for example, the study of one-to-one (on split screen) or couple's psychotherapy, using a film or videotape of one's own therapeutic work for the exponential learning this offers. Couple's therapy, being the more outwardly active, may be more appropriate to the method, but I think one-to-one therapy would also be fascinating and perhaps more readable.

The family description we began is not finished yet, however much rewritten. It is difficult to read, and for me, not yet compelling enough visually. More detail, but not too much, has to be pared away. Then, by description
alone it has to tell the reader how it is to be read. But we have also been pleased and sometimes startled by the physical intimacy with which we feel we know the O'Neals even from the present description, written from the great distance of a tv monitor. I also still find the illusion of their presence on the typepage magical. Creating a lifelike illusion of family life in writing gives me the same exultation as a man that I felt as a boy when I swung a model airplane around and around my head on a string, letting it become real in my imagination as I corrected its flight to approximate reality. Perhaps it was from these memories and wishes that I also wanted to write Family at Dinner with Brian. The Wright Brothers' flying machine we made is not very streamlined -- it is even cumbersome -- but it flies.
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Marlene continues, still raising her head slightly but still curtly giving the "remember" sign. She turns toward Steve, putting down the salt with her right hand as she speaks—"Now many times he saw it, he was at the..." She puts her right hand on the corn, which she was holding in her left, and faces forward—"Every day, I think..."

Marlene bites into her corn, looking forward over her corn.

Joanne brings her corn to her mouth, looking forward, raising her right hand.

"Why?" says Joanne, still looking down, rolling his corn in butter.

Steve puts down his right hand, still looking down.

Figure 2
13.

**Greg** begins to roll his ear of corn in butter with his right hand, as **Joanne** continues speaking. "Uh, *Jerry* went to see the first Lovebug movie," says **Joanne**, raising her head slightly but still saltling and turning her corn.

**Joanne** moves his utensils with his right hand to the edge of his plate closest to him. He rolls the corn in the butter with his left hand, and now moves it in the butter with both hands, arms outstretched, looking down.

**Joanne** has turned her head toward **Joanne**, her hand near her mouth. She takes two bites of corn while **Joanne** is speaking, and puts the corn down, saying, "Um, hm."

-- "remember," **Joanne** continues. She turns toward **Zoe**.

**Figure 3**
putting down the salt with her right hand as she speaks.

**Steve** nods, looking down to his left and chewing his corn.

"How many times he saw it, he was at the"

**Steve** nods and says, "Yeah," looking down, picking up his napkin with his left hand.

**Beth** leans forward and back in her chair slightly, her right hand in front of her mouth.

**Joanne** puts her right hand on her corn, which she was holding in her left, and faces forward, elbows on the table. "A-Academy every day"

**Steve** wipes his mouth with his napkin, holding it in both hands, left to right.

-- "it was" -- she shakes her head to the left -- "good."

Figure 3a
Steve wipes his hands on the napkin, holding it in front of him and looking down.

Beth is looking at her fingers.

Joan brings her corn to her mouth, looking forward, and raising her eyebrows.

"Why?" says Greg, still looking down, rolling his corn in butter.

Steve puts down his napkin with his left hand, looking downward.

Figure 3b
GRee began to roll his ear of corn in butter with his right hand, as Jeanne sometimes speaking, "Un, je ne veux pas voir la premiere Lovebug movie," says Jeanne, tilting her head slightly but still salting and turning her corn.

GRee has taken the corn in his left hand, moved his utensils with his right hand to the edge of his plate closest to him with—

his right-hand while rolling the corn with his left, and now moves the corn in the butter with both hands, arms outstretched, looking down.

Beth has turned her head toward Jeanne, her right hand in front of her mouth.

Figure 4
Joanne puts the corn down, saying, "Um, hm." She turns toward Ani.

"Remember," Joanne continues, putting down the salt with her right hand as she speaks, "Let's just put it in.

She turns forward and back in her chair, whispering to Ani. She shifts her napkin with her left hand.

"Remember," she says again, "I was just thinking about the Academy, about the..."

I turn to see how many times he saw it, he says at the phone, "Number two..."

John holds up a card and skimming his corn, tilts up.

He turns forward and back in her chair, whispering to Ani. She puts her right hand on her corn, which she was holding.

She turns forward and back in her chair and..."
every day” —

Seve wipes his mouth with his napkin, holding it in both hands.

Several times, shaking his head back and forth.

“it was” — she shakes her head to the left, rolling the ball out of her face. — "good."

Tentatively, Seve wipes his hands on the napkin, holding it in front of him and looking down.

...is looking at her fingers.

Joanie brings her corn to her mouth, looking forward and rolling her eyes.

Seve by looking at Jeny — her hand — "Why?"  "Was Gertie?" still rolling.
"Yeah," Jeanne says over Jerry speaking thoughtfully, as if just recalling something, still looking down as she rolls her corn.

Jerry starts to roll his ear of corn in butter with his right hand. Jeanne takes a breath and begins speaking excitedly while still rolling and turning her corn. "Uh, Jerry went to see the first Lovebug movie. Tells Jeanne of Jerry it is Jeanne's younger brother.

While Jeanne is a bit off, Jerry has taken the corn in his left hand, moved his utensils with his right hand, and begun rolling the corn with his left hand. Meanwhile, Jeanne has moved her left hand up, using her corn in the butter with both hands. Her arms are outstretched, looking down.

Figure 5
Steve, she murmurs. Without looking, he raises his corn and takes two more.

Then, he puts the corn down, saying with his mouth full and chewing, "Um, hm," with pointed lack of enthusiasm.

*"Remember?" Joanne continues, both her inflection and rate of speech rising. She turns without putting down the salt with her right hand and looking at Steve, leaning slightly to his right, away from Joanne. *Steve* turns his head away from her and nods, chewing his corn. Still not looking up, Steve continues to roll his corn in his left hand.

*"How many times he saw it?" Joanne leans toward Steve with a nudging motion of her shoulder as she leaves the salt on the table to her right, excited laughter rising in her voice, compelling Steve's attention. *She* was at the*...

Steve nods again, swallows, and still chewing on corn, mutters, "Yeah," like it isn't a very exciting story and he thought it was pretty weird when the kid did it in the first place. He looks down to his left and picks up his napkin with his left hand.

Beth rocks forward and back in her chair, playing with her glass in front of her mouth and looking at Steve.}

Joanne continues undaunted, *"Academy every day"*

Beth lifts her right arm to her mouth and takes her corn in her left hand, her right hand sweeps her corn and looking at the table, away from Steve and toward the kids, her elbows on her table,;

Joanne continues undaunted, *"Academy every day"*

Beth wipes her mouth with her napkin from left to right, holding...
It in both hands, shaking his head back and forth in disbelief.

"I'll walk," Jeanne shakes her head to the left away from Gene, as she gathers her hair out of her face, and looks forward, 

"Good." There's a subdued note in her summarizing phrase when she apparently realizes that no one has picked up on her excitement.

Gene wipes his hands on his napkin, holding it in front of him and looks down.

Jeanne brings her corn to her mouth, looking forward.

"Why?" Gene asks her flatly, without looking up—rolling his corn rapidly in butter. His question makes it plain that he doesn't tell him anything about the other just about her brother, whose excitement is infectious all around in the room.

Gene puts down his napkin with the butter, looking down and working corn out of his teeth with his tongue.

Figure 5b
"Yeah," JEANNE says over BETN, continuing to salt her corn and speaking thoughtfully, as if just recalling something, while GAGE, looking down at his plate, starts to roll his new ear of corn in butter with his right hand even as he moves the old cob off his plate with his left. GAGE takes a breath and begins speaking excitedly. "Uh, I went to see the first Lovebug movie...", she says.

Still sitting, Bob is JEANNE's younger brother. BETN, holding her glass tilted against her mouth with both hands, turns toward JEANNE, while she takes his corn in his left hand and rolls it in butter as he moves his utensils closer to him on his plate with his right hand, simultaneously rolling the corn in butter with his left. Then, lifting the corn in both hands, he moves it in the butter with his arms outstretched, looking down at his plate. Without looking up from his previous bites, BETN eats his corn and...
takes two more, then rolls the corn down on his plate saving

"...remember...", JEANNE continues, both her intonation

down the salt with her right hand.

and rate of speech rising. She looks over at SIEVE while she puts

down the salt with her right hand.

Leaning away from SIEVE, JEANNE looks toward the kids,

his corn still not looking up. "Yeah," like it isn't a very

exciting story and he thought it was pretty weird when the kid did

it in the first place. He leans down to the table and picks up his napkin

with his left hand.

Placing her elbows on the table, JEANNE takes her corn in both hands,

undampened, "...a-Academy every day...". Holding his napkin

in both hands, SIEVE wipes his mouth from left to right, shaking his

head back and forth in disbelief. "...it was..." JEANNE

looks to the kids.

Figure 6a
herself the left away from Steve, getting her hair out of her face, and looks forward. "...good." There's a subdued note in her summarizing phrase when she apparently realizes that no one has picked up on her excitement.

Looking down in front of him, Steve wipes his hands on his napkin, while Jeanne brings her corn to her mouth.

"Why?" Greg asks her flatly, rolling his corn rapidly in butter and not looking up. Steve puts his napkin to the left of his plate with his left hand, looking down and working corn out of his teeth with his tongue.

Figure 6b
“Yeah,” Jeannie says, her mouth full of corn. She continues to eat and speaking excitedly, as she lifts her corn towards her mouth. It falls to her right looking down at her plate. She tries to roll her new ear of corn in butter with her right hand even as he moves the old cob off her plate with his left. Still looking ahead at her sitting, her mouth tilted against her glass tilted against her mouth with both hands, while Greg takes his corn in his left hand. Moving his utensils closer to him on his plate with his right hand, looking up from his previous bite. Steve lifts his corn and

Figure 7
takes two more bites while Maryanne speaks, then places the corn on his plate and says with pointed lack of enthusiasm through a full mouth, "Um hm."

"... remember how many times he saw it. ..." Maryanne continues, both her inflection and rate of speech rising. She looks over at Steve while she puts down the salt with her right hand. Leaning slightly away from him on his right forearm while he is still not looking up, Maryanne turns his head somewhat in her direction and nods as she speaks. He has his arms outstretched over his plate and rocks forward and back as she continues, excited laughter rising in her voice compelling Steve's attention. Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yeah," like it isn't a very exciting story and he thought it was pretty weird when the kid did it in the first place. Looking down to the left of his plate, he picks up his napkin in his left hand.

Maryanne leans toward Steve with a nudging motion of her shoulder as she leaves the salt on the table to her right. "... he was at the ..." she continues, excited laughter rising in her voice compelling Steve's attention. Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yeah," like it isn't a very exciting story and he thought it was pretty weird when the kid did it in the first place. Looking down to the left of his plate, he picks up his napkin in his left hand.
her head to the left away from Steve getting her hair out of
her face and looks forward at her corn. "Good." There's
a subdued note in her summarizing phrase when she apparently
realizes that no one has picked up on her excitement.
Steve looking down in front of him, Steve wipes his hands on his napkin
while Maryanne forward brings her corn to her mouth and
raises her eyebrows as she bites.
"Why?" Greg asks her flatter, rolling his corn rapidly in butter
without looking up. Steve puts his napkin to the left of his plate with
his left hand after Greg speaks, looking down and working corn out
of his teeth with his tongue.

Figure 7b
"Yeah," Joanne says thoughtfully as Beth finishes speaking. She continues to salt her corn while across the table Greg begins to roll his new ear of corn in butter with his right hand even as he moves the old cob off his plate with his left. Lifting her head without looking up or interrupting her salting, Joanne begins speaking excitedly. "Uh, Jerry went to see the first Lovebug movie...", she says. Jerry is Joanne's younger brother.

Turning toward Joanne, Beth holds her glass tilted against her mouth with both hands while Greg takes his corn in his left hand and rolls it in butter, moving his utensils closer to him on his plate with his right. Steve lifts his corn without looking up from his previous bites and takes two more bites while Joanne speaks, then places the corn on his plate and, still looking down, says with pointed lack of enthusiasm through a full mouth, "Um hm.

"...remember how many times he saw it...", Joanne continues with both her inflection and rate of speech rising. She looks over at Steve while she puts down the salt with her right hand.

Leaning slightly away from Joanne on his right forearm while he chews, Steve turns his head somewhat in her direction and nods without looking up. With his arms outstretched over his plate, Greg
rolls his corn in butter with both hands while Beth rocks forward and back in her chair, stimulating her mouth on her glass as she looks over at Joanne.

Joanne leans toward Steve with a nudging motion of her shoulder as she leaves the salt on the table to her right. "... he was at the...", she continues, excited laughter rising in her voice compelling Steve's attention. Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yeah," like it isn't a very exciting story and he thought it was pretty weird when the kid did it in the first place. He looks down to the left of his plate and picks up his napkin in his left hand.

Taking her corn in both hands and placing her elbows on the table, Joanne looks away from Steve and toward her corn while Steve takes his napkin in both hands and wipes his mouth from left to right, shaking his head back and forth in disbelief. "... A-Academy every day," she conveys Joanne continues undampened, "it was" -- she turns her head to the left to get her hair out of her face and looks forward at her corn -- "good." There's a subdued note in her summarizing phrase when she apparently realizes that no one has picked up on her excitement.

Steve looks down in front of him and wipes his hands on his napkin while Joanne brings her corn to her mouth and raises her eyebrows at nobody in particular as she bites.

"Why?" Greg asks her flatly without looking up, rolling his corn rapidly in butter. Steve puts his napkin to the left of his plate with his

Figure 8a
As he leans sideways over the chair back and reaches around his right foot clears the floor and he extends his right arm behind him for balance. Broadly built and moderately overweight, he wears a cross-striped pullover shirt with sleeves that come to his elbows; a well pronounced bulge shows at his waist where his shirt hangs outside, rumpled Levis.

Joanne steps back to the end of the table and takes a fork from her left hand as Steve places the corn down. Hardly taking a breath since her previous statement, she looks toward the place setting to the right of the table's head and says, "I think he was upstairs," leaving it to Steve to call Greg. Footsteps sound on the floor above and Holmes looks toward the front room while Joanne speaks.

Joanne reaches across the table and places the fork down as Steve steps back and strides toward the front room to call Greg.

Steve's wavy brown, collar-length hair falls over the right side of his forehead. Thick eyebrows, darkly rimmed eyes, and a puffy nose; a full mustache which turns down at the corners of his mouth; and a broad, somewhat jowly face give him the expression of a young man both boyish and serious. Tugging his shirt down and raising his

Figure 9
I'd hate to think what a badly pronounced *bugle* would sound like. Bugle, maybe?

I can't keep your room arrangement straight—
"front room" is living room or dining room
on both at various times, depending of
course on whether we picture a table being
set for a meal in a dining room, since it has
been indicated the room *of* the table is not the
kitchen (as it is in some houses).

What's a lightly painted eye? You have a stubborn adverb
problem, don't you... by the way, if she isn't wearing
mascara or other stage makeup for the camera I suggest
you change the location altogether.

**Figure 9a**
"Yeah," Joanne says thoughtfully as Beth finishes speaking. She continues to salt her corn while across the table Greg begins to roll his new ear of corn in butter with his right hand even as he moves the old cob off his plate with his left. Lifting her head slightly without looking up or interrupting her saltting, Joanne begins speaking excitedly. "Uh, Jerry went to see the first Lovebug movie..." she says.

Holding her glass tilted against her mouth in both hands, Beth turns to Joanne while Greg takes his corn in his left hand and rolls it in butter, moving his utensils closer to him on his plate with his right. Steve lifts his corn without looking up from his previous bites and takes two more while Joanne speaks, then places it on his plate and still looking down says with a full mouth, "Um hm."

"...remember how many times he saw it..." Joanne continues. She looks over at Steve while she puts down the salt with her right hand.

Figure 10
Leaning slightly away from Joanne on his right forearm while he chews, Steve turns his head somewhat in her direction and nods without looking up. With his arms outstretched over his plate, Greg rolls his corn in butter with both hands while Beth rocks forward and back in her chair, stimulating her mouth on her glass as she looks over at Joanne.

Joanne leans toward Steve with a nudging motion of her shoulder as she leaves the salt on the table to her right. "... he was at the..." she continues, laughter rising in her voice. Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yea."

He looks to the left of his plate and picks up his napkin in his left hand.

Taking her corn in both hands and placing her elbows on the table, Joanne locks from Steve to it while Steve takes his napkin in both hands and wipes his mouth from left to right, shaking his head back and forth. "... a-Academy every day," Joanne continues, "it was" -- she shakes her hair out of her face and looks at her corn -- "good."

Steve looks down in front of him and wipes his hands on his napkin while Joanne orings her corn to her mouth and raises her eyebrows, turning her head slightly to the left as she bites.

"Why?" Greg asks without looking up, rolling his corn rapidly in butter. Steve puts his napkin down with his left hand after Greg speaks, looking down and working corn out of his teeth with his tongue.

Figure 10a
As Jeanne takes her seat, Zern leans forward and peers past her legs swinging quietly, holding onto the table leg with her right hand. She leans back, and sitting upright looks towards Sir and says, "Dah?", Zern is in butter, with his hand a few inches above at his corn, swallowing. A bit later so I finish washing my mouth, looking down. She takes her hand off the table leg and raises her right hand beside her head, bent at the elbow. She looks in front of her, putting down his napkin and taking hold of his corn, still looking down and putting his left hand back on his corn.

She says, "Zern, you're not even going to try it?" He looks up at her, and picks up his corn.

Goes, taking Jeanne to the corn, holds his left, and Jeanne speaks: "No, Zern, you're not going to try it?" Zern looks at Jeanne and says, "No," then Jeanne to Sir, "I look down at the corn in his hands."

Figure 11
Erin leans forward and peers past Joanna, sitting in her seat, then she sits and looks toward Steve, saying, "Dah?"

Joanna reaches for butter with her knife and Greg looks downward at his corn, swallowing.

Steve lets go of the table leg to her right and raises her hand beside her head, then lowers it to her lap and looks at her fork as Steve puts down his napkin and taking hold of his corn. He says, "Are you not even going to try it?" He looks up at her as he finishes speaking and lifts his corn.

Greg—looking from Joanna—to-his-corn—glances quickly at her as Steve finishes speaking. Greg looks at the corn on her plate and says, "No," then turns to Steve, who looks down at the corn in his hands. Joanna picks up her corn in her left hand and begins buttering it as Greg lifts his corn to his mouth and bites rapidly twice. She looks from Steve to Joanna, to her plate.

"I thought you liked corn," Steve says, leaning to his corn. Greg—turns his corn, then lifts it to his mouth as Steve takes the second of four bites.

Steve looks at her corn as Steve starts speaking. "I don't know," she says, now, and looks at Steve's left hand on her fork, her right in her lap—looking from Steve to her fork, she lifts it by the handle as Greg finishes four rapid bites.
"Yeah," Joanne says thoughtfully as Beth finishes speaking. She continues to salt her corn while across the table Greg begins to roll his new ear of corn in butter with his right hand even as he moves the old cob off his plate with his left. Lifting her head slightly without looking up or interrupting her salting, Joanne begins speaking excitedly. "Uh, Jerry went to see the first Lovebug movie. . . ." she says excitedly.

Holding her glass tilted against her mouth in both hands, Beth turns to Joanne while Greg takes his corn in his left hand and rolls it in butter, moving his utensils closer to him on his plate with his right. Steve lifts his corn without looking up from his previous bites and takes two more bites. Joanne speaks, then places it on his plate and still looking down says with a full mouth, "Um hm," "Remember how many times he saw it?" Joanne continues. She looks over at Steve while she puts down the salt with her right hand..."
Leaning slightly away from Joanne on his right forearm, while he chews, Steve turns his head somewhat in her direction and nods without looking up. With his arms outstretched over his plate, Greg rolls his corn in butter with both hands, while Beth rocks forward and back in her chair, stimulatating her mouth on her glass as she looks over at Joanne.

Joanne leans toward Steve with a nudging motion of her shoulder as she leaves the salt on the table to her right. He was at the table, laughter rising in her voice. Steve nods again and swallows, then mutters, "Yes." He looks to the left of his plate and picks up his napkin with his left hand.

"Taking her corn in both hands and placing her elbows on the table, Joanne looks from Steve to it while Steve takes the napkin in both hands, and wipes his mouth from left to right, shaking his head back and forth. "A-Academy every day," Joanne continues. "It was good." Joanne concludes.

Steve looks down in front of him and wipes his hands on his napkin, while Joanne brings her corn to her mouth and raises her eyebrows, turning her head slightly to the left as she bites.

"Why?" Greg asks without looking up, rolling his corn rapidly in butter. Steve puts his napkin down with his left hand after Greg speaks, locking down and working corn between his teeth with his tongue.
Figure 14 -- The Descriptive Process

1. Observe repeatedly
2. Visualize and reverse
3. Compare and reverse
4. Visualize and polish