



THREE DOORS

BY DOUGLAS EVANS

Nathan pulled two drumsticks out of his back pocket. He drummed on the sidewalk cement.

Pippity-pip-pip, Pippity-pip-pip

He drummed on a telephone pole and a mailbox.

Pappity-pap-pap Ponkity-ponk-ponk

While drumming on a chain-linked fence, the boy noticed the odd-looking house in the yard. It had star-shaped windows. The roof drooped like melted chocolate, and the entire front wall list to the left.

A carpenter stood by the front door. He wore white overalls with dozens of pockets. He was painting the door blue.

“What a crazy house, mister,” Nathan called to the carpenter. “Some very strange people must live inside there.”

The carpenter pulled a bandanna from a front pocket. “Sorry you don’t like this house, my friend,” he said, wiping his broad forehead. “Fact is, I’m the person who built it. But see here, now that I’ve finished painting the door come follow me? I’ll show you another house that I’ve built. Perhaps you’ll like this one better.”

The carpenter opened the fence gate and walked down the sidewalk.

Nathan followed him, drumming as he went. He drummed on the stop sign at the corner. He drummed on a litter basket and a parking meter.

Pankity-pank, Punkity-punk-punk, Pippity-pip-pip.

The carpenter led the boy three blocks. They turned left and right and left again. They walked another two blocks and turned left once more.

Here the carpenter stopped. He took a paintbrush out of his back pocket and a can of red paint from a side pocket.

“This is the place, my friend,” he said. “What do you think of this house?”

Nathan drummed on a fire hydrant while studying the white house before him. Tidy wooden shutters covered four square windows. A stone fireplace crept up the wall. Ivy surrounded the front door that the carpenter was now painting red.

“Now, mister, this house is splendid,” Nathan said. “It looks clean, neat, and well-cared-for. I’d like to meet the people who live inside there.”

The carpenter put the final, red brush stroke on the door.

“So you like this house,” he said. “But, see here, I’ve built one more

house that I'd like to show you. Follow me, please. I'd like to hear what you think of this final house."

The carpenter started down the sidewalk again. Nathan ran after him, drumming on a brick wall. He drummed on the store front window as they walked three blocks and turned left. He drummed on the tires of cars parked on the next block. After one more left turn they stopped.

The carpenter pulled a third paintbrush from his back pocket. He removed a can of yellow paint from a side pocket.

"Here we are, my friend," he said to Nathan. "While I paint the door won't you give me your opinion of this house."

The third house was plain. The gray walls had no windows. The roof was flat. Almost at once Nathan grew tired of looking at it and began drumming on a telephone booth.

"This house is dull, mister," he said, to the carpenter. "No style. Real drab. The people who live inside must be boring as well. I wouldn't want to meet the people who inside there."

When the carpenter finished painting the door yellow, he said, "So this house doesn't please you either, my friend. But see here, let's go for a hike. I have one more thing to show you."

Nathan hurried after the carpenter. They entered a nearby park. Nathan drummed on picnic tables and tree branches as they hiked up a hill. At the summit was a grassy clearing with a spectacular view of the town below.

The carpenter sat on the grass. He pulled an apple from a leg pocket and shined it on his shirt sleeve.

“See here, my friend,” he said, pointing to an odd-shaped house near the foot of the hill. “We have a bird’s eye view of the places we visited today. Can you see that house with three sides and three doors.?”

Nathan looked down at the triangular house. He saw a red door and blue door. He knew on the far side was a yellow door.

“It’s all one house, mister,” he said. “And all this time I thought we were visiting three different homes where three different families lived.”

“Fact is, only one person lives in that house with three doors,” said the carpenter. “I do, my friend.”

Nathan sat on the grass beside the carpenter. He drummed on the soles of his shoes. “You know, mister,” he said. “It’s hard to tell about something until you’ve seen it from all sides.”

Pattity-pat-pat, Pattity-pat-pat.