



## **ROMANCE AND KID BROTHER**

**Adapted by Sheri Chavers**

**Hi! My name's George Bates. I'm twelve years old and I got a sister, Ann, that's almost twenty-seven. She ain't married yet, but I believe she's gonna because her beau's been a-coming round for the last moth every single night. Ma says looks like it's getting seriouser an' seriouser. An' I guess she is'bout right 'cause I peeped through the crack of the door the other night n' they was a setting' awful close. An' every once in a while I would hear a smack...just like that. Boy, I had to hold my mouth an' my sides an' my thigh, but Ann heard me and now she shuts me out every night. I knows I'se a gonna get even with her sometime, so the other night when she went back upstairs after her powder puff, I snuck under the sofa. Sure enuff' pretty soon I heard him knock and Ann let him in. "Why Charlie, how handsome you look in that new hat," I heard her call in a good deal different kind of a tone than she's been use'n on me, fore he come.**

**"Thanks Ann," I heard him reply in a lasses sweet voice, "Some one else is looking beautiful tonight, too, I'm thinking." Now you know that struck me in a funny spot. I had to hold my mouth an my sides and my stomach all the same time to keep from bustin' right out and laughin". It was so hard to keep from shaking the whole room! Pretty indeed! Wonder what he'd think if he'd see all the collection on Ann's dresser. Mud an' cream an' pencils an' rouge an' powder an' – an' by George I don't know what all else. Well, pretty soon I saw it begin to get darker an' then they sat down on the sofa an' I heard them go smack! I turned my voice a way down deep like a foghorn and I said, "Quit that!"**

**"Why Ann, was that your father?" "Why-no-o I hardly think so," She knowed Dad's been trying to marry her off for five years an' twasn't likely he'd do anything to spoil her prospects. Well, pretty soon they quieted down an' forgot all 'bout it 'cause he began ravin' about her blue, blue eyes, deep as**

the blue-blue sea or something like that an' bout her Italian locks full of ripples an' waves. YUK!

“How do you comb it like that?” he asked suddenly an' 'fore she could answer, I hollered out in that deep voice, “She hangs it on a nail an' combs it!” Then I did laugh right out...why I got so sick to my stomach from holding all that lauhging in...I reached into my pocket to give a candy and realized that I almost forgot about Freddie. Oh yeah! He's my pet mouse. Sure enough, soon as he got out of my pocket...he slipped through my hands and off he ran! Ann let out a blood currdilin scream and jumped up on top of the sofa! It hurt my head and made me laugh again and I laughed so hard I nearly turned blue...trying not to make a noise. Charlie stood up in a hurry and took off after Freddie...he landed cur splat flat on his nose! Ya' see...I'd been a fiddling with his shoe strings while they was a talking all that moochie stuff and well I guess I tied the strings in one big knot!

Then, Ann up and jumped over Charlie and hollered, “Mother, where is Georgie? I know he's been in here...and maybe...he is in here still...Mother, I won't stand for this!!!! Boy was I glad there was a coverlet on the sofa...I hid as best I could! I knew I was in for a strappin now!

To add to the confusion...Missy, Ann's cat, took off after Freddie and round and round the room they flew...I didn't know Freddie had that much spunk in him and Missy..she was a meowing and scratching...up she leaped and clawed the lace curtain and down came the cornice board...bammmmmm right on top of Charlie's head! Why Ann fell right out on the floor in a dead faint! What a sight!

Maw and Paw both appeared on the seen—all too soon. Poochie, my pup following all the excitement bounded into the room and sniffed me out and gave way to my hiding place...First thing I knew Maw had me by the ear and was hawlin' me out from under that sofa like blazes...She bumped my head an' skinned my back besides makin' one ear longer than the other...I knowed I's in for a good licken... so I pulled away and hollered with all my might... “Better watch out Charlie...she's got false teeth and she's as mean as a wet hen...yep, she' got a temper like a disappointed wild cat...’bout the time I rounded the sofa for the second time... Paw grabbed holt of my arm and the seat of my pants and buddy I was air-borne. As for Ann...Maw used seven cups of water and two doses of smellin salts...to bring Ann to come to

**again...Meanwhile me and Paw was behind the woodshed where Paw pointed my head north and feet south and worked me over at the equator!**