

“THE DAY DAD MADE TOAST”

by Sarah Durkee

I'll never forget the day Dad made toast. I remember it was a Saturday near Halloween because Mom was outside putting a scarecrow with a pumpkin head up on the roof. Dad was in bed.

“Hey kids!” he hollered from their bedroom. “C'mere!”

My older sister Lucy and little brother Danny and I ran upstairs. Dad sprang out of bed. “Where's your beautiful mother?!”

“Out on the roof,” Lucy said.

He pulled us to the window. My mom was on the roof in her ripped overalls with tools sticking out of her pockets. She had finished setting up the pumpkin man and was now fixing the TV antenna.

“LINDA! COME IN, HONEY!”

Mom looked up cheerfully, with nails in her mouth. “JUSHT A SHECUND! I SHEE A LOOSH SHINGLE!” Clutching her hammer, she scrambled toward the shingle on all fours.

“Should I tell her?”

“Tell her WHAT?”

“Well.... I'M GOING TO MAKE TOAST!!”

“WOW! REALLY, Dad? TODAY?”

“Yup! And we're not talking ordinary ho-hum toast, believe you me ... we're talking dad's special CINNAMON toast!!”

He tapped on the window again. “LINDA! MEET US IN THE KITCHEN!”

“OKAY, SWEETHEART!” Mom shouted as she hung from a ladder, clearing leaves from the gutter.

“Okay, kids, listen up! Your mother and I both work really hard all week. I figure the least I can do is take some of the housework load off her once in a while! She’ll really appreciate it! Let’s hit the kitchen, team!”

We raced downstairs. “Now, let’s see Plates”

Mom knocked on the kitchen door with her elbow, lugging two pots of geraniums. Dad flung open the door and gave her a kiss. “Thanks!” Mom said as she passed through to the living room.

Dad sort of jogged along behind her to the doorway. “Breakfast is coming right up, angelface! I’m making my special CINNAMON toast!”

“Terrific, hon!”

“Um ... Linda? Where are the big blue plates?”

“In the dishwasher!”

Danny and I got the plates from the dishwasher and started to put them on the table.

“No, no, kids! The plates have to be PREHEATED! That’s what they do in fancy restaurants. It makes the toast stay warm longer!” He grabbed the plates and put them in the oven.

Mom came back in dragging the vacuum cleaner behind her. She plugged it in and rounded the corner to the dining room accompanied by a whir so deafening that Dad had to shout. “JENNY! WE NEED ABOUT A DOZEN SLICES OF BREAD!”

The vacuuming stopped. Mom walked through on her way down to the laundry room with a huge armload of dirty clothes.

“Uh, Linda?” Dad said brightly with his head in a cupboard. “Sugar?”

“Yes, cupcake?”

“No, honey, I mean WHERE’S the sugar?”

“Bottom shelf!” yelled Mom on her way to the basement.

“Right! Okay, kids! Start toasting that bread! Lucy, you and I will make the cinnamon mixture. Now watch closely.” EQUAL PARTS of each. That’s the real secret to this. A lot of people skimp on the cinnamon.”

Mom started a buzz saw in the basement. She’s been building new shelves for the family room. Also a sun deck. Also an addition to the garage.

“How’s that first batch of toast coming, guys?”

“Okay,” I said. “What should we do when it’s done?”

“Butter it and bring it over to me and Lucy FAST,” Dad said.

I kept buttering the toast when it popped up and IMMEDIATELY brought it to Dad who IMMEDIATELY put it in the oven with the preheated plates.

Mom came up from the basement tugging a bag of cement mix and said, “Bulkhead’s stuck shut. I better go out and pry it open.”

Dad mused, “Y’know, kids, my father wouldn’t have been caught DEAD doing any housework. But we’re modern families now, and here you have a manly guy like me pitching in like this after a hard week’s work – making breakfast so his wife can take a little break.

Just as Lucy was putting the last piece of toast in the oven, Mom knocked on the door with her elbow again. Dad rushed to let her in, “Ready for the most delicious toast you’ve ever had in your life, Linda?”

“Can I wash my hands first? Or is the flavor peaking this very second?”

Mom washed her hands and sat down at the table

“O-kee do-kee!” sang Dad as he opened the oven and brought out the plates. “And now ... the piece de resistance! ... DAD’S SPECIAL TOAST!!!”

He set the big plate of warm, crispy, buttery cinnamon toast in the center of the table.

“YAAAAAAAAAY!” we all cheered. Everybody took a couple of pieces of toast and started oohing and ahing like mad.

“A toast!” Mom declared.

“A toast!” said Lucy, lifting her glass.

“A toast!” said Dad, holding up a piece of toast.

“To my perfect, helpful children,” said Mom.

“Yeah!” we said.

“To my loving, supportive husband,” said Mom.

“Hear, hear!” said Dad.

“To the yard!” said Mom.

“Huh?”

“to the YARD,” Mom repeated. “What do you say we go work off some of that hearty breakfast?”

She headed for the door, then turned and winked, “Oh, and by the way ... what are you guys making for dinner?”