

Ants

by Jack Swenson

Every summer ants invaded their house. She tried *Raid*, but that smelled to high heaven. She tried ant poison, but the ants ate it with apparent relish, their numbers undiminished. Her husband wouldn't let her call an exterminator. That doesn't work, he said. The real reason he said no was that he was cheap. "If you'd wash the floor more often, there wouldn't be so much for them to eat," he said.

Pippa asked a neighbor what she did about the ants. "Use Windex on them," her friend said. "If that doesn't work, try Clorox Cleanup. Keep doing it. They get discouraged after awhile and go away." Kate always knew what to do. She had a solution for everything. "You okay?" Kate asked her friend. "You look kind of frazzled." Pippa replied that she shouldn't have gone back to work full time. The kids were driving her nuts. When she was home, she wasn't a mom, she was a taxi driver. "There's just too much to do," she said.

"What about you and Mark? You two okay?" Kate asked. She gave her friend the eye. Pippa laughed. "Are you kidding? I'm married. He's a man. He smells bad, he leaves stuff all over the house, he's grumpy, and I hate it when he breathes. Are we okay? Sure, we're fine."

It was a Sunday afternoon. That evening, Kate heard the sound of Mark's lawnmower. He was mowing the lawn. Kate told her husband that it had been a while since he had been outside mowing the lawn in the dark.

