

The Women

by Jake Barnes

I crawl under a table in the kitchen and listen to the women talk. They are preparing the dinner. It is Christmas, and the whole family is gathered in the kitchen and parlor.

The women are talking about Uncle Larry's wife. She's not there. Grandma says she's got hoity toity ways. She thinks she's better than us, she says.

Then they talk about somebody else. They whisper and I can't hear what they are saying. I wonder who they're talking about now? Olive? Phillip's wife? Then Grandma says, "She's got more than that in her belly," and everybody laughs. I laugh, too. I can't help it. It looks funny to see their fat legs without bodies.

Then somebody lifts the tablecloth and looks at me. It's Aunt Nora. She's looking at me upside down, and that looks funny, too. I laugh and point.

My mother pulls me out from under the table by one arm. She swats me on the bottom. I howl. I dash into the parlor and hurl myself at my father's legs. He ruffles my hair. "What's the matter, Sport?" he asks.

