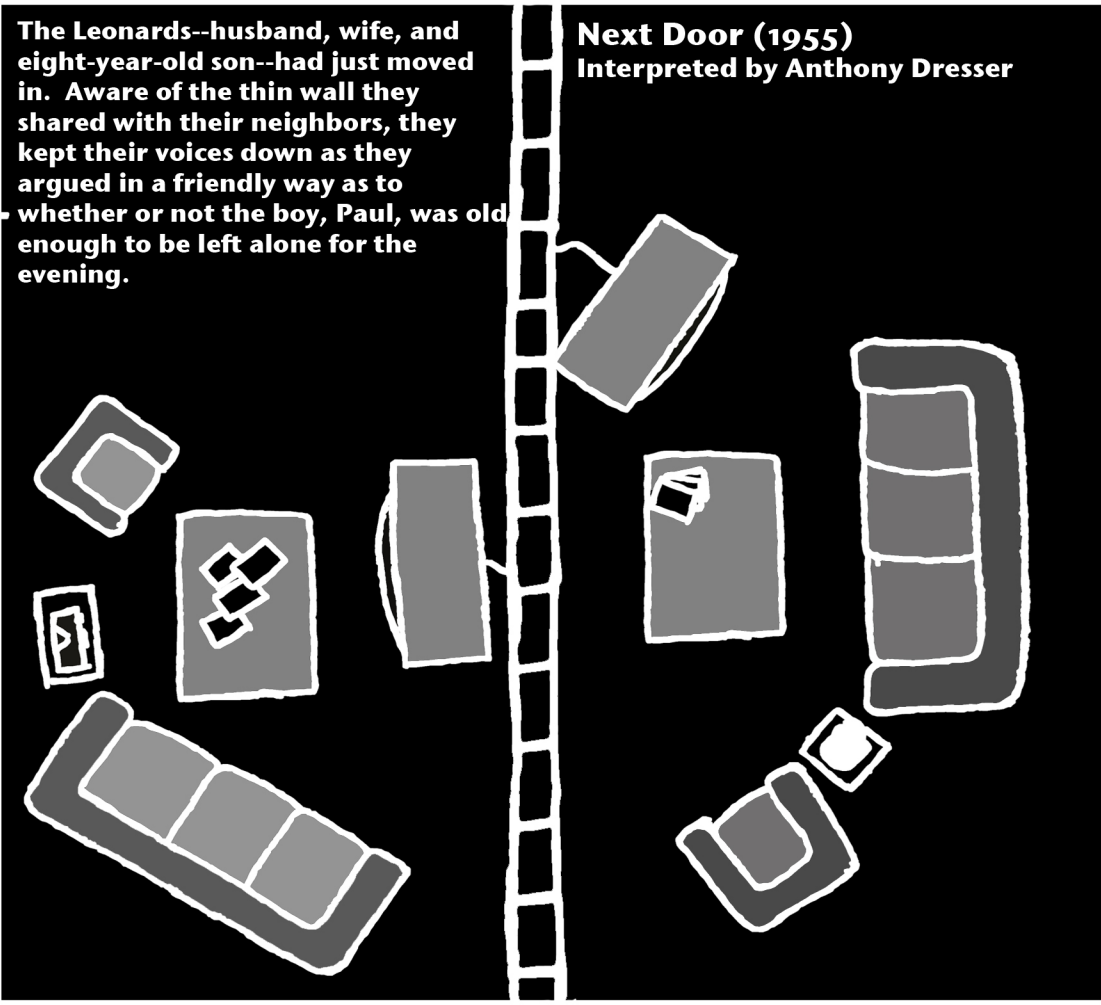


The Leonards--husband, wife, and eight-year-old son--had just moved in. Aware of the thin wall they shared with their neighbors, they kept their voices down as they argued in a friendly way as to whether or not the boy, Paul, was old enough to be left alone for the evening.

**Next Door (1955)**  
Interpreted by Anthony Dresser



What are you going to do while we're gone?



We can stop treating him like a baby. You're not afraid are you boy?

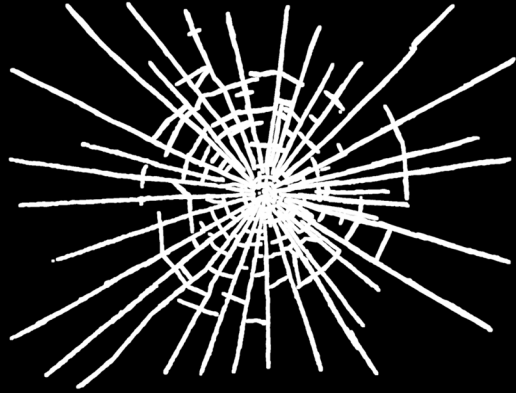


I'll be alright

I'll look through my microscope, I guess.



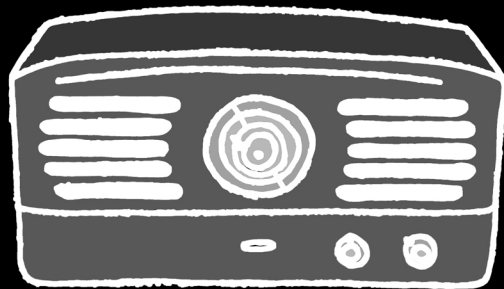
**The radio in the Harger apartment next door went on. It was on softly at first--so softly that Paul couldn't make out the announcer's words. The music was frail and dissonant--unidentifiable.**



**Paul twisted the microscope knob nervously, and the objective lens grounded into the glass slide.**



**The woman next door was shouting now.**



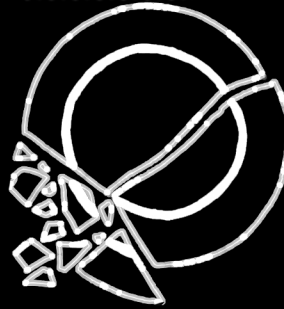
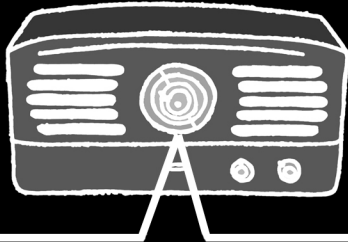
**Now the fight next door was beginning again--louder and louder, cruel and crazy.**

**All was quiet again next door--except for the radio.**



**Paul stood, shaking, wanting to shout in terror and bewilderment. It had to stop.**

The radio swelled.



And now for Katy from Fred! For Nancy from Bob, who thinks she's swell! For Arthur, from one who's worshipped him from afar for six weeks! Here's the old Glenn Miller Band and that all-time favorite, Stardust! Remember! If you have a dedication, call Milton nine-three-thousand! Ask for All-Night Sam, the record man.

Mr. and Mrs. Harger would kill each other if he didn't stop them. Next door, crockery smashed, filling a split second of radio silence. And then the tidal wave of music drowned everything again. Dazed, Paul went to the phone and dialed the number.

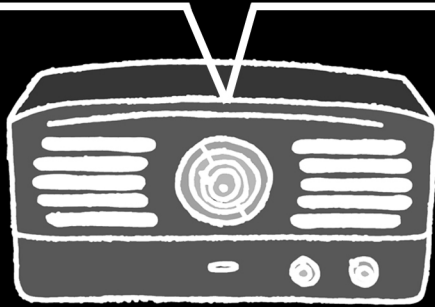
I wonder if I might make a dedication.  
"From Mr. Lamuel K. Harger to Mrs. Harger."



I'll give it everything I've got. I once saved a guy from shooting himself the same way.



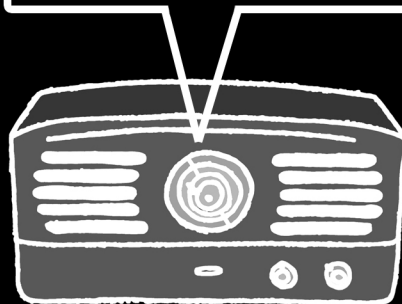
Folks! I guess everybody stops and wonders sometimes what the heck he thinks he's doin' with the life the good lord gave him! It may be funny to you folks because I always keep up a cheerful front, no matter how I feel inside, that I wonder sometimes, too! Folks! I've been asked to bring a man and his wife back together again through the miracle of radio! I guess there's no sense in kidding ourselves about marriage! It isn't a bowl of cheerries!



A lump grew in Paul's throat as he thought about the beautiful thing he and Sam were bringing to pass.



Folks! That's all I'm gonna say about love and marriage! That's all anybody needs to know! And now, for Mrs. Lamuel K Harger from Mr. Harger--I love you! Let's make up and start all over again!



There was silence from across the wall. After several tense moments, voices rose again.

Charlotte, Honey--I swear it's another Lamuel K Hargar. It's got to be!

You want your wife back? All right--I won't get in her way. She can have you. Lamuel--You jewel beyond price, you.

She must have called the station.

She can have you, you philandering, two-timing, twi-bit Lochinvar, but you won't be in very good condition.

Charlotte--put down the gun, don't do anything you'll be sorry for.

That's all behind me, you worm.

Paul heard shots coming from across the hall, then silence again.



**Paul ran into the hall and bumped into the woman as she burst from the Hargar apartment.**

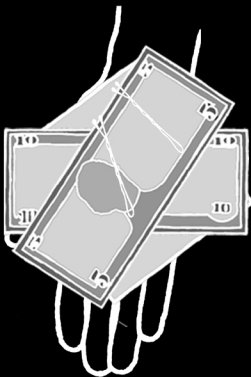


**No thank you.  
Not at this time.**

**You want  
candy?  
Bicycle?**

**Yes!**

**You haven't seen  
or heard a  
thing! You know  
what happens to  
squealers?**



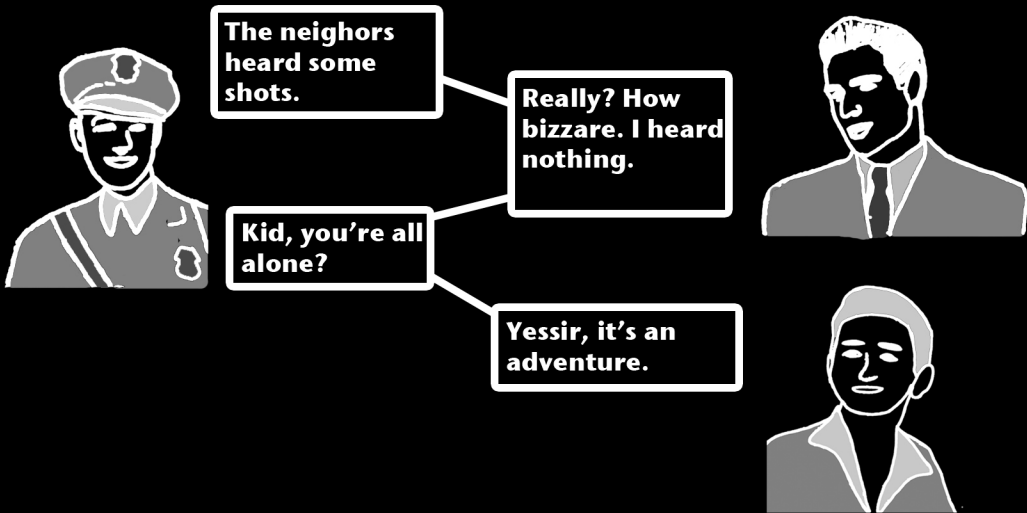
**She dug into her  
purse and brought  
out a perfumed  
mulch of face tissues,  
bobbypins, and cash.**

**She looked at him fiercely,  
then fled into the  
street.**



**Paul ran back into his apartment,  
jumped into bed, and pulled the covers  
up over his head. In the hot, dark cave of  
the bed, he cried because he and All-  
Night Sam had helped to kill a man.**

Later that evening, a policeman came to the door of Paul and the Hargers. Paul got up and answered the door to see Mr. Harger standing there.



Just then, there was a disturbance on the streets. A big motherly woman was getting out of a taxi-cab and wailing at the top of her lungs.



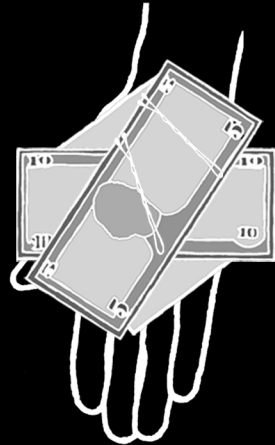
The Hargers went into their apartment and closed the door. Taking one more look around, the police officer left Paul alone in the hallway.

The next voices Paul heard were of his father and mother.



Diddle-diddle-dumpling, my son John.  
Went to bed with his stockings on.  
One shoe off, and one shoe  
on--diddle-diddle-dumpling, my son  
John.

While folding Paul's pants, his  
mother felt the lump in his  
pocket. She pulled out the ball  
and held it under Paul's nose.



Now, would you  
mind telling  
Mommy what we  
have here?

What's that  
smell?

Tabu, the  
perfume

