



The Home-Maker – by Dorothy Canfield

The Knapp family seems as though they ought to be happy, yet hidden frustrations are tearing them apart under the surface. As the family breadwinner, Lester Knapp drags himself reluctantly to his job each day, miserable in the harsh world of commerce and business, longing for a quiet life at home with his books. Meanwhile, Evangeline Knapp is admired as an excellent housewife, yet the limited challenges of that life are driving her to perfectionism and boredom. The Knapp children are affected by their parents' unhappiness, the youngest child acting out in frequent tantrums, and the two older children tense and nervous. When an accident puts Lester in a wheelchair and sends Evangeline out to work, their family and friends see it only as a tragedy. Yet Lester discovers his true calling at home, developing his own relaxed style of housekeeping, while discerning the individual needs and personalities of the children. And Evangeline discovers her true calling in the business world, demonstrating both creativity and organizational skills, thriving on the daily challenge and mental stimulation. Before long, the entire family realizes that they are all blossoming into a new happiness. But will this unconventional arrangement of gender roles be allowed to continue? Or will circumstances force the Knapps to return to the lives that made them miserable? (Summary by Maria Kasper)

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