

Taurus: Stability

As the moving van pulled away, Bill and Sue surveyed their bedrooms. The rugs and large furniture were in place, but much was still lying helter-skelter about. Sue wandered disconsolately into Bill's room and sat on his bed. "Well, we're here — I guess," she said resignedly.

"Aw, cheer up, sis," said Bill, three years older and often a comfort to his "little sister." "You'll get into things and make new friends, and in a month it will seem like you've always lived here."

"Maybe it will for you, but not me. At home there was the gang, and Saturdays at the beach, and the basketball team, and the glee club — and here I don't know anybody."

"You'll meet people, and they must have basketball teams and glee clubs here, too, and there's no beach but there are mountains — you can learn to ski. Think of that! Besides, remember, Dad has to start a whole new job. We're just starting new schools."

"I know, I know," sighed Sue, "and Mom had to leave Grandpa and her sister and her club — but somehow I think it's just easier for all of you than for me." Sue wandered out and began unenthusiastically to straighten up her room.

As far back as she could remember, new situations had always upset her. She had cried every day for a week in kindergarten before getting used to the idea of school. Later, although she was a good student, she worried herself into a tizzy whenever a test was announced. She was nervous before she went to parties, although she always had a good time after getting there. But now, moving 800 miles to a new city where she knew no one and had to start all over upset her more

than anything she had ever experienced.

How could Bill be so calm? she wondered. He would go smiling off to school tomorrow and come back with a swarm of new friends and exciting stories to tell. And she? Why, for once, couldn't she do that too? Only yesterday Mother had told her she must learn to be more stable. Unexpected things would be happening all her life — she couldn't let them throw her every time. Sue knew that Mother was right — she'd be a wreck if she went through life like this!

Next morning Sue's heart was pounding and the last thing she wanted was breakfast. She came downstairs with a cheerful "good morning," however, and made herself sit calmly and eat everything on her plate. Later, she presented herself at the school office, registered, and was assigned to a class. Her worst moment came when she walked into the classroom and introduced herself to the teacher, feeling all eyes upon her. Instead of shrinking into herself, however, she stood up straight, kept smiling, answered the teacher's pleasant questions with assurance, and then, although her heart was still pounding, she smiled and nodded to the students nearby as she took her seat.

From then on, the going seemed easier. Two of the girls took her under their wing immediately, and at the lunch table told her a great deal about school and neighborhood activities. She learned that one lived just down the street from her, and that a boy in the class had gone to school with her cousins in Pittsburgh. When her classmates found out that she had never skied and rarely seen snow, they invited her to join their ski club which was taking a trip to the mountains in another week. She walked home exchanging confidences with her new friend, and promised to stop by

for her next morning.

Bill, as expected, was exuberant at the dinner table; his day had been a brilliant success. Dad had hit it off well with his new business associates, too, and Mother, unpacking books, had been delighted when several of her neighbors walked in with a casserole and dessert for dinner.

“Well, Susie,” asked Dad, “and how was your day?”

“Great!” she exclaimed enthusiastically. Mother and Dad looked surprised, and Bill grinned. “The kids want to take me skiing with them next week — the coach is going to teach me. But I’ve got to have skis, Dad.” Sue looked at him questioningly.

“I imagine that can be arranged,” smiled her father. “So you really had a good day, eh?”

“Oh, yes,” Sue said. “Don’t know what I was so upset about before. The kids are neat — I’m going to love it here.” Then she grew thoughtful. “You know, Mom, you were right about being stable. Just because something is different doesn’t mean it’s bad. I guess the important thing is to stay calm inside and act calm, no matter what, and if you think everything’s going to be OK, it will be.”

“That’s about it, honey,” said her mother. “And now I guess I’d better be stable — because it looks to me as though we’re going to have to invest in a ski suit to go with those skis!”