

In a pickle over picking a pattern

July 16, 1986

"I just want to look at a few more patterns before we order," Michele said as we walked into the wallpaper/paint store to order the dining room paper.

"I just want to make sure we have what we want." I walked over to the shelf and pulled down the book carrying the paper we had chosen earlier.

Michele started to haul books off the shelves into a pile near the table.

I decided to help her. We looked at flowered paper, striped paper, bold paper, and muted paper.

Blues and purples, greens and pinks whirled before my eyes.

Every pattern Michele liked, she set aside in a pile by her side.

At first I enjoyed it.

"What do you think of this?" she asked me, pointing to a lightly flowered print. "Do you think it'll look all right with the white trim?"

"Yeah," I nodded. "Put that one aside."

She yanked more books off the shelf, finding patterns she liked in each and every book.

"Ooooh!" she crooned. "I love this!"

She held up a purple, green, and cream print for me to see. I liked it too.

She put it on the pile.

The shelves emptied, the stacks of books grew, and Michele became more frenzied.

"What do you think of this, Karen?" she shoved a cream, blue, and white pastel design into my face.

"Or this?" I looked at a slightly paler version of the same print.

"Then what about this!" she said, really excited by a deep rose and cream pattern. She held it at arm's length to picture it better.

We plowed through books of "Country French" patterns, heavy brocades, "Brazilian Bazaars," and "Rustic Chalets."

After about 45 minutes, our original pattern — a blue, cream, and rose design — began to look even better to me.

"I think we have a good idea of what's here, Michele," I said. "Lets make a decision."

"I can't!" she said frantically. "Look some more and something will jump out at you."

She flipped through a couple more books, and sighed.

I had visions of spending my entire evening in the store. The outside light was growing dimmer, and the business was getting ready to close.

I decided to try another approach.

"Michele, it's almost closing time. We need to order our pattern."

"Ooooh!" she panicked. "Just let me look at a few more books."

She knelt down on the floor in a frenzy, and began yanking more

and more books off the shelves.

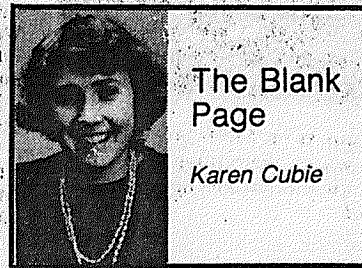
"I can't stop!" she shouted. "I'm obsessed!"

"Stand up, Michele!" I said. "Throw the books down, arrange the patterns you like on the floor, and we'll make a decision."

"I can't!" she cried again. "I have to look some more."

She scurried back to the shelves, and yanked more pattern books down.

She flipped through book after book, pored over patterns, sighed, pulled at her hair, hopped up, and grabbed a few more from the shelves.



The Blank Page

Karen Cubie

I arranged all the open books around each other, stood back, and started studying them.

"What do you think, Michele?" I

said, pulling her over to the open books. "We have to make a decision. We have to order it tonight — it takes ten days to arrive — and we both want to have this all done by the time we move into the apartment."

She walked around, scrutinized the patterns carefully, and bent real close.

She leaned back, cocked her head to the right, stepped away, and sighed.

"I hate to say it, Karen," she said. "But I think I like the first print best."

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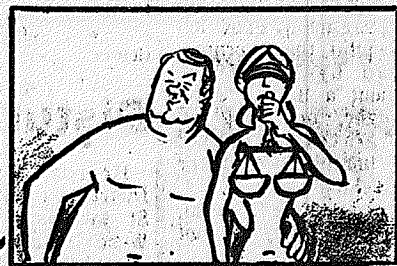
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