



Martha Symbolizes Everyman's Fear

Martha Bolotin symbolizes all the nameless, lonely people of the earth. She is Everyman's fear. Everyman's anxiety, all wrapped up in a tiny four-foot-10, 90-pound frame.

Martha's husband, Adrian, had at one time held a good job as a city planner for Alexandria, Virginia. They had two beautiful children, Joshua, 6, and Merry Joy, 5. Then the bottom dropped out. The thing Martha had always feared happened. Adrian lost his job.

Using their last savings, they moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to seek work. But they found nothing, and, as the days stretched into weeks, despair moved in and a spirit of hopelessness took over. Without friends, without money even to buy food for the children. Adrian and Martha reached an unbelievable conclusion. The only way out was suicide. Locking themselves in their bare duplex, they told the children the sleeping pills were vitamins and lay down to die. When the police busted down the door, only Martha was still alive.

On top of everything else that happened, Martha stood trial for murder. However, a judge directed a verdict of acquittal and had her admitted to a state

hospital for treatment. Months later she was dismissed as able to "function". The only remaining problem was a compulsion to continually wash her hands. "She told us they smelled of death," the busy doctor said.

But even then, no one cared. With more than half the population belonging to some church and claiming to serve a God of love, it seemed like someone would try to help. But no one did. Even those paid to care, the social and welfare workers, were too busy. And so Martha sank from sight, covered over by the waves of loneliness that drown so many millions in our world today.

Last month two deputies found her body in a shabby apartment in North Miami. She had finished what she had started two years before — with a .38 bullet through the head.

And so Martha Bolotin died, symbolizing all the lonely people. She's the bloated-belly child in East Pakistan, eyes wide with fright as she stares at the starved bodies of her parents. She's the black mother in the New York ghetto whose only means of living is to sell her body each night to get enough bread to

feed her three illegitimate children. She's the suburban housewife in the plush home who pulls the shades each morning as her husband leaves for work and collapses on the sofa with a bottle. She's the old woman, once creative, now shunted away in a lonely nursing home by those too busy to care.

It's incredible to think that in America a family could reach such depths of personal despair that they would huddle together and agree that only death is the answer.

Incredible? Maybe not. Last week new neighbors moved in across from us. I don't even know their names. Nor their needs. Is it possible that one morning I could see police carrying their lifeless forms from the house while the rest of us neighbors stand around and gawk? Maybe this afternoon I should make an effort to get acquainted. Yes. I think I'll do that. Just as soon as I mow my grass, sweep the drive, fix the fence...but then it'll probably be too late. So, I'll wait until tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow. And in the meantime the Adrian and Martha Bolotins sit in their loneliness, waiting for a friend who really cares.