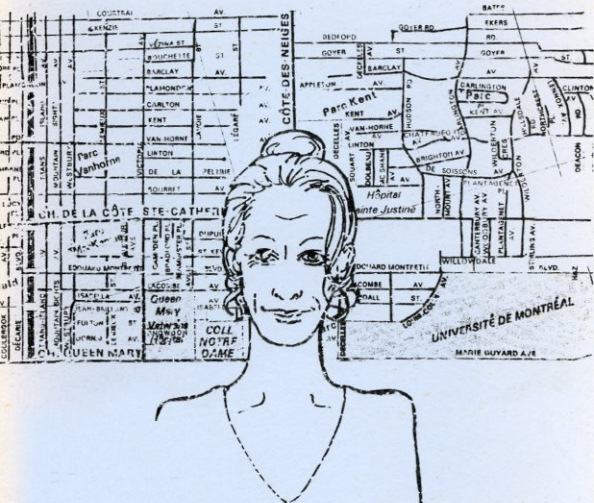


GO WITH THE FLO



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Reading Level: This book was written for students who are using Laubach Literacy Skillbook Three or higher.

Chapter One

Go with the Flo

New words: shift, really, panic, stomach, guard, elevator, minutes, boss

“You still here?” Flo woke up fast. Leo was standing beside her. The clock on the TV said 11:20. Flo had sat down on the sofa to watch just one show. That was at eight o’clock. Now she was going to be late for work.

Flo worked nights. She was an office cleaner in a big building downtown. Her shift began at 11:30. No way she’d make it tonight.

“I’ll be late. Really late!” she said to Leo. She had a feeling of panic in her stomach.

Flo threw on her clothes. She picked up her bag and ran. As she got to the corner, her bus was leaving. There wouldn’t be another for half an hour. She began to walk.

At five to twelve she ran into the building.

“Where’s your card?” asked Stan, the guard.

“Look, Stan, I’m late, really late. You know who I am! Let me by.” Flo could still feel the panic in her stomach.

Stan smiled. He opened the gate.

Flo ran to the elevator. As usual, it took five minutes to come down.

She ran into the office. She was thirty minutes late. There was Mr. Small, the boss. He was not smiling. He took his cigar out of his mouth. “You’re thirty minutes late, Flo. Forget your coffee break. And don’t leave one second before seven or you’re fired!”



Emilio MARCHÉ
FRUITS & LEGUMES

2236

Velvet Touch
CLEANER



Chapter Two

A Talk with Mr. Small

New words: desk, steal, ashtray, room, beat, chance, tomorrow, knocked

“Flo,” said Mr. Small. “Please come into my office.” He looked angry.

Flo had just arrived for her shift. What did the boss want? She hoped he didn’t want to fire her. She’d been late before.

Mr. Small sat behind a big desk. He pointed to a little chair. Flo sat down. Her lips were dry.

“Why did you steal an ashtray from Room 622?” asked Mr. Small. He looked at her with cold eyes.

Flo could feel her heart beat.

“That ashtray cost a lot of money,” he said. “I’ll give you a chance, but only one chance. Bring back the ashtray tomorrow. I’ll let you off this time. But if you don’t bring it with you tomorrow, don’t come back at all.”

“I didn’t steal anything,” said Flo.

“You’re a good worker,” said Mr. Small. “That’s why I’ll give you another chance.” He stood up. “Make sure you have the ashtray with you tomorrow. I’ll be waiting here for you.”

Flo felt sick as she worked. At coffee break time, she couldn’t eat a thing. She thought about what Mr. Small had said. She would never steal anything! What would happen to her? Where would she find another job?

After work Flo went home. The house was still. As she walked up the stairs, she felt very tired. She tried to sleep, but she couldn’t. All she could think about was the ashtray. What would Mr. Small say?

Flo went back to work with a feeling of panic. Stan said hello at the gate, but she couldn’t even smile. She knew Mr. Small was waiting. She would tell him that she didn’t have the ashtray. She needed this job.

Mr. Small’s door was closed. Flo felt sick. She knocked. She heard Mr. Small on the phone. When he finished speaking, Flo knocked again.

“Come in,” he said. Flo opened the door slowly.

“Come and sit down, Flo,” said Mr. Small. She couldn’t look at him.

“I don’t have the ashtray,” she said. “I didn’t steal it. Are you going to fire me for something I didn’t do?”

Mr. Small smiled. “I’m not going to fire you,” he said. “The ashtray was found this morning. Someone forgot where they put it. It was never stolen.” He laughed. “So just forget about what I said last night.”

Flo stood up and left the office. She still had her job. That made her glad, but she was very angry at Mr. Small. She looked at the clock. It was time to start work.

Chapter Three

A Surprise for Flo

New words: easy, wall, chores, ironing, door.

Flo worked hard. Working nights was hard. And with three children, it wasn't easy. Her children didn't help much.

Robert was a college student. He was slowly driving Flo up the wall. He left his clothes around. He never made his bed. He never helped Flo with the cleaning. When Flo asked him to help, he seemed to have two deaf ears. But the minute the phone rang, his hearing was fine.

Robert was a very handsome boy. He knew how to get around Flo. He would look at her with bold eyes and give her a big smile. Then he'd say, "Mom, I'll help you when I've finished my phone calls." Flo smiled. That kid was too smart.

One fine Saturday, Flo came home around three. She knew she had to hurry. She felt so tired. She thought of all the chores she still had to do before she went to work. She had to go to the food store. And then she had to do the washing, the ironing and the cleaning. And that wasn't all. She'd told Robert she'd make his birthday cake, and ice it. And all Flo wanted to do was sleep, sleep, sleep.

Flo opened the front door. Something smelled great. The apartment looked great. Everything looked neat. On the table was a great big birthday cake with icing. Next to the cake was a pretty plant with green leaves.

Flo studied the room. Was she in the right place? The room looked different. Robert came in. He was not alone. A pretty girl took his hand. "Hi, Mom. This is Carla, my best friend. I've asked her to my birthday party, OK?"

Flo gave Robert and Carla a big smile. She didn't even move. She wasn't tired any more. But now she understood. Robert had done all the chores just to please a girl. There was hope for Robert. She smiled at them both.

"Welcome to our family, Carla!" She gave the girl a big kiss.

Chapter Four

Show Time

New words: mind, favourite, football, game, channel, collar, commercial, rest, steam

It was Flo's night off. For once, she didn't have to work.

She always looked forward to her nights off. She didn't really mind working nights. But sometimes she thought it would be nice to work like the rest of the world. It would be really nice to have every night off. Then she could watch a little TV. Or listen to some music. She could have a cup of coffee on the sofa without hurrying. She might even call a friend and have a talk.

Monday was a really good night to have off. She thought she'd do some ironing and watch a few shows on TV.

It was ten to eight. She filled her favourite cup with coffee. She sat down on the sofa next to her husband, Leo. He was watching football.

"How's the football game?" asked Flo.

"Shhh!" said Leo. "I'm watching the football game!"

Flo looked at the TV. Nothing much was happening. Just a few men standing around in the mud. There was no action.

"Mind if I change the channel? Kate and Allie is on now. It's my favourite show."

"No way!" said Leo. "The game's not over yet!"

"You watch TV all day and night sometimes. It's my turn." Flo was getting angry.

"No way! Forget it!" Leo was really hot under the collar.

Flo bit her lip and started ironing. It was almost eight o'clock. A commercial came on. "You don't have to watch the commercials!" She changed the channel.

Leo got up from the sofa. "I'm going to call Larry. See what he's watching," he said.

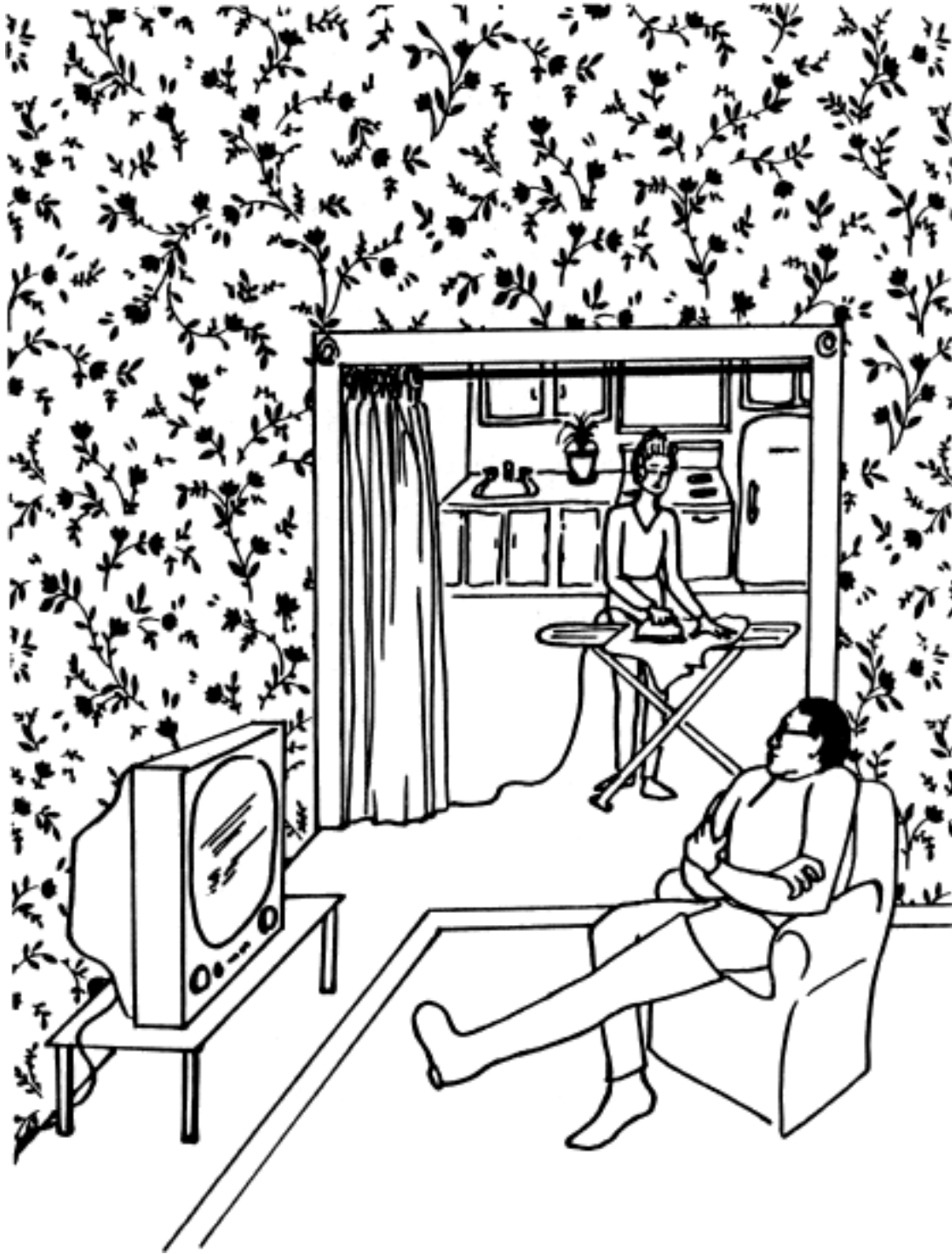
Flo took a shirt and started ironing. She put the iron down very hard on Leo's collar.

Kate and Allie began. It was a funny show. No wonder it was Flo's favourite. Even the commercials were better.

She was on the third shirt when Leo came back. "I'm going down to Larry's for the rest of the game."

“Bye, dear. See you later.” Flo kissed Leo on the top of his head. “I’m really working up some steam here! Look at all these shirts!”

“Yeah. Well, I’m steamed up, too. But I guess it’s your turn. Bye.”



Chapter Five

A Visit to the Doctor

New words: lazy bones, silence, voice, crutches, steps, itchy, scratch, cast, exercises, afraid

Flo got home at eight o'clock. She knocked on Robert's door. "Get up, lazy bones," she called. "Today's the day you go to the doctor with your father."

Silence. Dead silence. Flo opened the door. "Robert?"

Robert turned over. "Do you know what time it is?" he asked his mother. His voice sounded sleepy.

"I sure do. It's eight o'clock. You have to be at the doctor's at 9:30, so get up."

"Okay. I'm up!" he said. He was angry.

It took Robert and Leo a long time to get to the doctor's office. First they took a bus. Then they took the Metro. Then they had to take another long bus ride. Leo had to use his crutches to walk. There were so many steps in the Metro. Going up and down the steps, he used one crutch. Robert took the other one. By the time they got to the doctor's, it was 9:45.

There were many people in the waiting room. Leo was hot. He asked Robert to help him take off his coat. His broken leg was very itchy. He wished he could scratch it. He hoped the doctor could give him something for the itchy feeling. It was driving him up the wall. While they were waiting, Robert took out a book. Leo noticed that the book had many pictures.

"What's that book you're reading?" he asked Robert.

"It's about how we see things." He showed Leo the cover of the book. It was called Ways of Seeing.

"Hmmm," said Leo. "Can I see it when you're finished?"

At 10:30 the nurse called Leo into Dr. Williams' office.

"Good morning, Mr. Bell. How are you today? Just sit on the table and let me look at your cast."

Dr. Williams was a happy man, thought Leo. He had pictures of his family on the wall behind his desk.

"Four more weeks, Mr. Bell. After that, you'll be on crutches for a while more. And you'll have to do some exercises."

"When can I go back to work?" Leo asked.

“I can’t answer that yet, Mr. Bell. We’ll have to take it one step at a time. Come in again in four weeks. We’ll take one look at your leg. Do you have any questions?”

“Yes,” said Leo. “My leg is very itchy under the cast. I want to scratch it all the time. Can you help me?”

“I’m afraid not, Mr. Bell. It’s too bad, but there’s nothing I can do. That’s just the way it is.”

“Thanks anyway, Dr. Williams” said Leo. “See you in four weeks!”



Chapter Six

Where there's Smoke...

New words: skating, rink, kids, surprised, joking, breath, sniffed, worried, cool, soup, coughing

Flo was coming home from the store. The price of food was just too much. All she had left was three dollars. And all she got was three small bags of food.

She took a short cut past the skating rink. On Saturdays, there were always kids around there. She looked closer. There was Michele with her friends, Sam and Linda. Michele hadn't seen her. She went over to say hello.

"Ma!" Michele looked surprised. Very surprised. Her hand went behind her back. Sam and Linda looked at each other. "Bye, Mrs. Bell," they said.

"You got a hot date, kids?" asked Flo. Flo was always joking. But some kids couldn't tell when she was joking or when she wasn't.

"Boy, sure is cold, eh, Mich? You can see your breath!" said Flo. She sniffed the air. But it wasn't just air.

Michele's arm came back to her side. There was nothing in her hand. There was a cigarette on the ground not far away.

"Have you been smoking, Mich?" Flo asked. Her smile was gone now.

"Yeah, Ma. Are you mad?" Michele looked worried.

"Is this the first time?" Michele said yes. "Did you like it?"

"Not really. But it's cool. All the kids smoke."

"Can you afford to smoke, Mich? Cigarettes cost a lot, you know."

"I have my babysitting money."

"Well, if that's what you want to spend it on! I better get home before the ice cream turns to soup." Flo picked up her bags.

Michele still looked surprised after her mother left. Why wasn't Flo angry?

After dinner, Flo told Michele it was time to talk. "When I was your age... Yes, I was fourteen once... I really wanted to smoke. All the kids were doing it. So I started to smoke. Cigarettes were a lot cheaper then. You could buy just one or two cigarettes at the corner store. We thought we were real cool."

"I didn't know you used to smoke, Ma!" said Michele.

“Sure I did. Of course, when I was a kid we didn’t know it wasn’t cool at all. Then I started coughing. I coughed and coughed. My mother took me to the doctor. He told me I’d be really sick if I kept on smoking. So I quit.”

“Did you miss it, Ma?”

“Not really. The very last cigarette I had, something happened. I had long hair. It was a cold day. I was trying to light my cigarette. And the ends of my hair caught fire! We put it out right away. But then I thought, there’s nothing cool about burning your hair, so I quit.”

“Hey, Ma. Let me think about it, okay? You may have a point.”



Chapter Seven

Flo the Thinker

New words: hungry, cuddle, succeed, dust

“Hi, Mom. What’s for dinner?” Every day, four hungry people asked Flo that question. Flo was always hurrying out at night to get to work on time. She’d love to work in the daytime! Then she could be with her family at night. They could watch TV together like other families. Instead, Flo had to go out and work. It just didn’t seem right.

Flo would love to cuddle up to her husband and put her tired feet up. Maybe I could even try and read a book, she thought. Flo had to go to work when she was very young. Then she got married. There was never time for reading. She still read very slowly. Flo liked to do things, and she liked to think. That would help her succeed. Flo’s family meant a lot to her. But Flo wanted to do better. She had to look for another job, she thought on the way to work. Michele and Sylvie were always saying, “Mom, quit your job and stay home with us.” “Mom, why don’t you go back to school?”

The more Flo thought about her job, the angrier she got. Last week, Mr. Small (a big man six feet tall!) called her into his office. He pointed at the rug. “Look, Flo, what’s all that dust under the rug? If you don’t do a better job, I’ll have to fire you.” Flo had no answer for Mr. Small. She didn’t put the dust under the rug. She didn’t say a word. She still needed the job.

Flo kept on thinking. Maybe she could do some babysitting. She could take four or five kids in her own home, like her friend Helen.

She might even save some money, thought Flo. No need to buy a bus pass. That’s almost thirty dollars right there. Let’s see now. Babysitting eight hours a day could bring in quite a lot of money. She’d find out what Helen asked for babysitting.

Maybe she would even have enough to pay for a night class. Leo might not be too happy about that. Flo would have to butter him up. He might see it her way one day.

Flo was hurrying now. She couldn’t wait to get home. She wanted to tell her family the good news. She would quit her job. She’d go back to school. She’d make something of herself. She’d work hard and she’d study. Flo knew she could do it. She would succeed.

Chapter Eight

Flo's Job Interview

New words: interview, restaurant, busy, experience, fast food, early

Flo wanted to work days, not nights. She wanted to spend her evenings with her husband and children.

So she spent all her free time looking for a new job - a better job. She checked all the store windows for "help wanted" signs. She wanted to be a salesperson. Or maybe work in a restaurant.

Flo found it hard work looking for a job. She was always tired because she couldn't sleep in after working nights. The people in the stores were often too busy to talk to her. They just told her to fill out a form.

The people in the restaurants would say, "Come back in the evening when the boss is here," Flo would protest that she worked nights, but it didn't do much good. And everyone asked, "Do you have experience?"

Flo remembered something. When she was young, she worked in a fast food restaurant for a few months. She did so have experience!

She went to the fast food restaurant near her home and filled out a form. The man who took the form said they were looking for people. They would phone her soon.

The next day Flo was too tired to get up early. She waited all day for the phone to ring. But it didn't ring that day. Two days later, a woman phoned her from the restaurant. She said they were very busy. They needed someone to start right away. Could Flo come for an interview?

Flo was pleased. Maybe all my hard work is paying off, she thought. She put on her good clothes and went to the job interview.

When she arrived, a man asked her to wait because he was very busy. Flo noticed that the people working in the restaurant were much younger than she was. They were running the whole time they served people.

The man said he was ready to start the interview. He said to Flo, "You can send your child in."

"My child?," she asked, surprised.

"Yes," he said, "the person who wants to work here."

"But I'm the one who wants to work here!"

"You?" Now the man was surprised. "But you're too old."

Flo didn't know what to say. "I have experience. And I can work as hard as anyone here."

"I'm sure you can," said the man. "But there are so many people who want to work here, that we pick only those who are young and fit."

Flo was surprised and a little angry. She went home sadly. Now she would have to start hunting for a job all over again.

Chapter Nine

Mittens

New words: spring, bench, lap, fur, kitten, orphan, calico, mittens

It was one of the nicest spring mornings ever. The grass was fresh and springy under Flo's feet. The air smelled sweet. Everything around Flo was springing to life again.

But Flo felt nothing of this. It might as well be winter, not spring. Flo had lost all hope of finding a new job. Every day Flo looked for work. But nothing happened. Everyone was very nice, but that wasn't good enough.

"We'll call you," they told Flo. As soon as she got home, Flo asked the kids, "Any phone calls for me?" The answer was always the same. "No, Mom, no one called."

Flo was thinking about all this on her way home. She felt so very, very tired. Maybe she could rest in the park for a while. The park had always been a nice place to take her kids to. She'd be home a little late, but she wasn't hungry, just tired.

Flo hurried to sit down and rest. If she could only rest, she knew she'd feel better. She sat on her favourite bench in the park. That felt better. Flo could feel the nice hot sun on her face and arms. She closed her eyes and fell asleep.

She woke up with a start. Twenty minutes had gone by. Had she been dreaming? She felt something warm and cuddly in her lap. There was a kitten just sitting there in her lap. It had pretty fur. The fur was grey, white and orange. Flo began to cuddle the cat. She'd better hurry home. Maybe the cat would bring her luck.

"Kids! Look what I found in the park!" Flo said when she got home. Robert, Michele, Sylvie, even Leo came to look.

"A baby cat! Can we keep her?" asked Sylvie. "Please, Ma, can we?"

Flo thought for a second. "Yes, we'll keep her."

"Is she a mother or a father cat?" asked Sylvie.

"She's only a kitten now," said Flo, "but I think she'll be a mother someday."

What about a name? They all put on their thinking caps. Leo wanted to call the kitten Little Orphan Annie, because some of her fur was orange. But they all said Little Orphan Annie was too long a name.

Flo wanted to call the kitten Calico. The children didn't like the name Calico, though. They kept on thinking and thinking.

At last Michele said, "I think I've got a nice name for our kitten. We'll call her Mittens. It sounds like kittens!"

Chapter Ten

Coffee with Joan

New words: luck, lottery, afternoon, waitress, serve, wave, menu, muffins, sorry

Flo's luck finally changed. For five weeks she'd been looking for a day job. Nothing had worked yet. But a week ago she won some money in a lottery. Not enough for Flo to quit her job. But enough to make her happy!

Stan, the guard at work, told her about his sister, Joan. Joan was a house cleaner for Team Clean. Stan told Joan to phone Flo and tell her all about Team Clean.

Joan called on Friday. She asked Flo, "Are you free this afternoon? Would you like to meet me for coffee?"

"Yes, I would." Flo was pleased to meet Joan that day instead of hunting for a job. But she wasn't sure she wanted to work for Team Clean. She was tired of cleaning. She wanted to work as a waitress instead.

At five o'clock, Flo took the bus to the restaurant where she was meeting Joan. The restaurant was filled with people this afternoon. There was only one waitress. She had to serve everyone in the whole place. She looked tired.

"I'm over here." Joan waved. Stan had told her what Joan looked like. He told Joan what Flo looked like, too. Flo made her way to the corner where Joan was sitting. They looked at the menu. When the waitress came over to their table, they both ordered coffee. Joan ordered a muffin as well.

Flo watched the waitress. She carried a large tray filled with coffee cups. That must be heavy, Flo thought. She wondered if she could do that all day.

Joan talked about Team Clean. She said three people worked together to clean each house. They worked fast, and they had fun.

Flo saw a blind man come into the restaurant. He asked the waitress if she had a menu written in Braille. "I'm sorry," she said. "No such luck." She smiled, but the blind man was angry. He walked out.

Joan told Flo about her friends at work. Sometimes they all met for lunch. They talked about their families.

The waitress arrived with their coffee. "I'm sorry, but there are no muffins left," she said to Joan. "Would you like to see the menu again?"

"No more muffins? Then what will I eat?" Joan looked at the menu.

“I haven’t had anything all afternoon.”

“But it’s almost time for dinner,” said Flo. She felt sorry for the waitress. A man waved his hand and yelled for service. Another woman looked angry. She waved her bill in the air.

The waitress said, “I’ll come back. I’m sorry but I must serve the other people.”

“It’s okay,” Joan answered. “I’ll just have coffee.”

The waitress ran off to serve the other people.

“I’m glad I don’t have her job,” Joan said.

“Me too!” said Flo. “When can I talk to your boss? I want to work for Team Clean.”

Chapter Eleven

Flo's New Job

New words: social, tidy, easy, messy, tip, movies, popcorn

Flo was very happy with her new job. She was tired of her old job. For a long time Flo worked nights. She had no social life at all. Now she kept the same hours as her friends and family. Her social life was fun. And she was making more money.

Flo worked for Team Clean. She worked with Joan and another woman, cleaning houses together. Joan's boss at Team Clean was glad to have Flo. They were always looking for neat, tidy people with good social skills. Stan missed seeing Flo every night, but he was a real friend. He wanted her to like her work.

When three people work together, it doesn't take long to clean a house. When you do it every week, it's easy to keep the house tidy. Every day, the team went to four houses. They went to most houses once a week. That made twenty houses.

Flo liked to see how other people live. Some were messy. Others were very neat. Some people even tidied up before the cleaning team came. If someone was giving a party, that meant more cleaning. Then maybe Flo and her team would get a tip.

Now that Flo was working days, she saw more of her husband, Leo, and her children. Tuesday nights, she and Leo would go to the movies. On Tuesdays the movies were cheap. Tickets were two for the price of one.

Flo and Leo would buy popcorn, but only if there was real butter. They didn't like popcorn with that yellow topping. Once in a while, the popcorn would tip over. It was hard to see in the dark, and easy to kick over the popcorn. What a mess!



Chapter Twelve

Back to School

New words: dirty, worse, habit, nervous, deal, genius, diploma

Flo decided to go back to school. She went to class one night a week. She liked her new job, and she wasn't so tired now. So she decided it was time to learn, too.

Flo had a new friend from school. Her name was Sandy. The first night of school, Flo came early. She noticed that the classroom was pretty dirty. She could do a much better job. Sandy came in next. She was smoking a cigarette.

"Please don't smoke in the classroom," Flo asked. Sandy gave her a dirty look. But she did put out the cigarette. Flo felt a little bad. But she knew that, cigarette smoke would make her feel even worse. Other students began to come in and sit down.

Soon the teacher came in. "My name is Anna," she said. Then she asked them all to give their names and talk about what they did. Flo found out that Sandy worked as a waitress.

At break time, people went to the coffee room. Flo went up to Sandy. "I'm sorry," she said. "Cigarette smoke makes me sick."

"That's okay," said Sandy. She smiled. "I'm trying to quit anyway. It's a dirty habit."

"Why are you here?" asked Flo.

"I quit school when I was fifteen. It's time I went back. I want a better job. I want a better life," said Sandy.

Flo and Sandy became good friends. They talked on the phone. They helped each other with homework. Sometimes Flo invited Sandy for dinner. Flo was doing well at school. Every week she had to read something and write a short paper about it. Then she had to talk about it with her class. One week Anna told the class that there would be a short test next time. Tests were the worst part of school. Flo knew she would be nervous.

Flo studied all week. She talked about the test with Sandy. Michele helped her study. Sylvie did the washing, and Robert cooked some meals. But Leo sat and watched TV.

The night before the test, Flo was studying at Robert's desk. Robert was out. Sylvie was at a friend's house. Michele was babysitting. Leo was on the sofa watching TV.



“Could you please turn it down?” Flo said to Leo. “I can’t hear myself think!”

Leo turned off the TV and came into Robert’s room.

“What’s the big deal?” he asked. “It’s just a test. Why are you so nervous?”

“It is a big deal to me,” said Flo.

“That’s all you care about these days, Flo. School, school, school. When was the last time we went to the movies?”

Flo looked at Leo. She knew he didn’t understand.

“Leo, this is important to me. Maybe I’m not a genius, but I want to get my high school diploma. I want to do well. Maybe one day I’ll be able to get an even better job. Why can’t you leave me alone a little?”

“You shouldn’t be working all day, anyway. The kids miss you. You don’t even care about them! You don’t care about me!” Leo was shouting.

Flo was angry. “Why do I always have to look after everyone?” she asked. “Maybe you should watch less TV.”

Leo slammed the door. He slept in the living room that night. Flo stayed awake for a long time. Now she wasn’t nervous about her test. She was worried about her marriage.

Chapter Thirteen

A Talk with Leo

New words: souvlaki, trouble lazy

The next morning, Flo left the house early for work. She thought Leo was awake, but she didn't check.

All day, while she worked, Flo thought about their fight. She thought about her test, too. She wanted to do well. Flo was even thinking about going to college after she finished high school. But she hadn't told Leo yet.

Flo had made plans to meet Sandy at a souvlaki restaurant. Souvlaki was good and cheap. It was a friendly restaurant. They would go over their notes for the test.

Sandy was at a table when Flo arrived. "What's up?" she asked.

"Nothing," said Flo.

"Come on," said Sandy. "I know you better than that."

"We had a fight," said Flo. "Leo doesn't like me going to school."

"What will you do?" asked Sandy.

"I'm not going to quit now," Flo said, "but I don't want to make trouble. He says I don't care about the kids or him. He just doesn't understand."

"Maybe that's not the trouble," said Sandy.

"Maybe he just wants to be with you. Maybe he should go to school, too."

Flo had never thought of that. Leo didn't like to read. He thought it was too much trouble.

After the test, Flo was happy. She thought she had done well.

When she got home, Leo was waiting for her. The TV was off. The girls were in their rooms. Robert was out.

"I'm sorry, Flo," said Leo. "I don't want you to quit school."

"I'm sorry too, Leo."

They sat on the sofa together.

“I was thinking,” Flo said. “Maybe you should go to school, too.” “Me?” said Leo. “But I hate school.”

“Why?”

“Because I’m no good at it. I can’t read.”

“You can learn. I’ll help you. The children will help, too.”

“It’s getting late,” said Leo. “Let’s go to bed.”

“Don’t you want to learn? This is the perfect time. You’re off sick, and you’re bored. You should try something new. What are you afraid of?”

Leo didn’t say anything. They heard the key in the door. Robert was home.

“What’s happening? How was the test, Ma?” asked Robert.

“It was fine. I’m talking to your father about going back to school. I think he should learn how to read.”

Robert sat down. “That’s a great idea. Go for it, Dad.”

“You mean you know I can’t read?” said Leo. He looked a little afraid.

Leo looked at Flo. He looked at Robert. “I thought I’d fooled everyone. I thought you all thought I was lazy.”

“No, Dad, I never thought you were lazy. Just a little afraid of people laughing at you.”

Leo didn’t say anything for a long time. Then he said, “You’re right. I was afraid because I didn’t want the children to know I can’t read. Now I see that’s silly. The only thing to be afraid of is not knowing how to read.”

The next day Robert called a school that sends out teachers to teach people how to read. Leo was given a teacher. Her name was Jane. They would start lessons the next week.

Chapter Fourteen

Promoted!

New words: supervisor, promoted

It was Friday after work. Flo and her team went back to the Team Clean office to change. The boss called Flo into her office.

“Flo, you’ve been with us for six months now. I’m pleased with your work. As you may know, your supervisor Sally is leaving soon to have a baby. While she’s gone, I want you to be the supervisor of three teams. If you do well, you can stay on as a supervisor even after Sally comes back. What do you think?”

Flo was surprised and pleased. “I’d love to be supervisor. I’m sure I can do the job. Thank you for promoting me.”

The boss said, “Well, Flo, you may have some questions. Is there anything you’d like to know about your new job?”

Flo thought for a minute. “Yes,” she said. “I do have some questions. Are my hours still the same? And do I get a raise?”

“Good questions,” said the boss. “Of course you get a raise. A supervisor makes \$10 an hour. After taxes, that’s about \$250 a week to take home. You will still work 35 hours a week, but they’ll be a little different. You’ll work from 9 to 5, not 8 to 4. Anything else?”

“Will I use Sally’s office?” Flo asked.

“Yes,” said the boss, “at least for now. You may get another office later if Sally comes back. By the way, I don’t think it’s a good idea for you to supervise the team you’re on now. I’ll give you three other teams. I’d like you to start on Monday. When you come in, I’ll show you what to do.”

What good news! Flo couldn’t wait to tell Leo. She phoned right away to tell him she’d been promoted.

NEW WORDS IN THIS BOOK

<i>Word</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
afraid	5
afternoon	10
ashtray	2
beat	2
bench	9
boss	1
breath	6
busy	8
calico	9
cast	5
chance	2
channel	4
chores	3
collar	4
commercial	4
cool	6
coughing	6
crutches	5
cuddle	7
deal	12
desk	2
diploma	12
dirty	12
door	3
dust	7
early	8
easy	3
elevator	1
exercises	5
experience	8
fast food	8
favourite	4
football	4
fur	9
game	4
genius	12
guard	1

habit	12
hungry	7
interview	8
ironing	3
itchy	5
joking	6
kids	6
kitten	9
knocked	2
lap	9
lazy bones	5
lottery	10
luck	10
menu	10
messy	11
mind	4
minutes	1
mittens	9
movies	11
muffins	10
nervous	12
orphan	9
panic	1
popcorn	11
promoted	14
really	1
rest	4
restaurant	8
rink	6
room	1
scratch	5
serve	10
shift	1
silence	5
skating	6
sniffed	6

social	11
sorry	10
soup	6
souvlaki	13
spring	9
steal	2
steam	4
steps	5
stomach	1
succeed	7
supervisor	14
surprised	6
tidy	11
tip	11
tomorrow	2
trouble	13
voice	5
waitress	10
wall	3
wave	10
worried	6
worse	12