

STORY OF A MARRIED WOMAN

When the alarm clock went off with its familiar buzz, Nina leaned over and quickly turned it off. This was her usual morning ritual, one which allowed her husband some extra time to sleep. Ironically, her own body ached for more sleep, but the well-trained woman she was, wrapped herself in a robe and walked barefoot to the kitchen.

She made coffee for herself and her husband, as well as breakfast for the three children. The thought of preparing eggs and bacon on a weekday morning was simply too much. She settled on oatmeal and toast. As the oatmeal simmered, she tried to get everyone up. She hated it. The same thing every morning: calling each of them and getting no response. "Come on. Get going. You're going to be late."

After Joe left for work and the kids rode off on the bus, Nina poured herself another cup of coffee and planned her day. She glanced through the morning paper hurriedly because she didn't want to waste time reading when there was so much to be done. She cleared the kitchen routinely and then made the beds. Her daily "high" was seeing some order throughout the house. Order gave her a sense of control and accomplishment. Strange, she thought, that such a trivial matter became the substance of her self-esteem. Did she need less to feel more she wondered, or was she becoming less? She remembered clearly how proud her mother was of her home; her cooking; her various roles as mother, wife, and civic volunteer.