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# Who'll make my bed in heaven?

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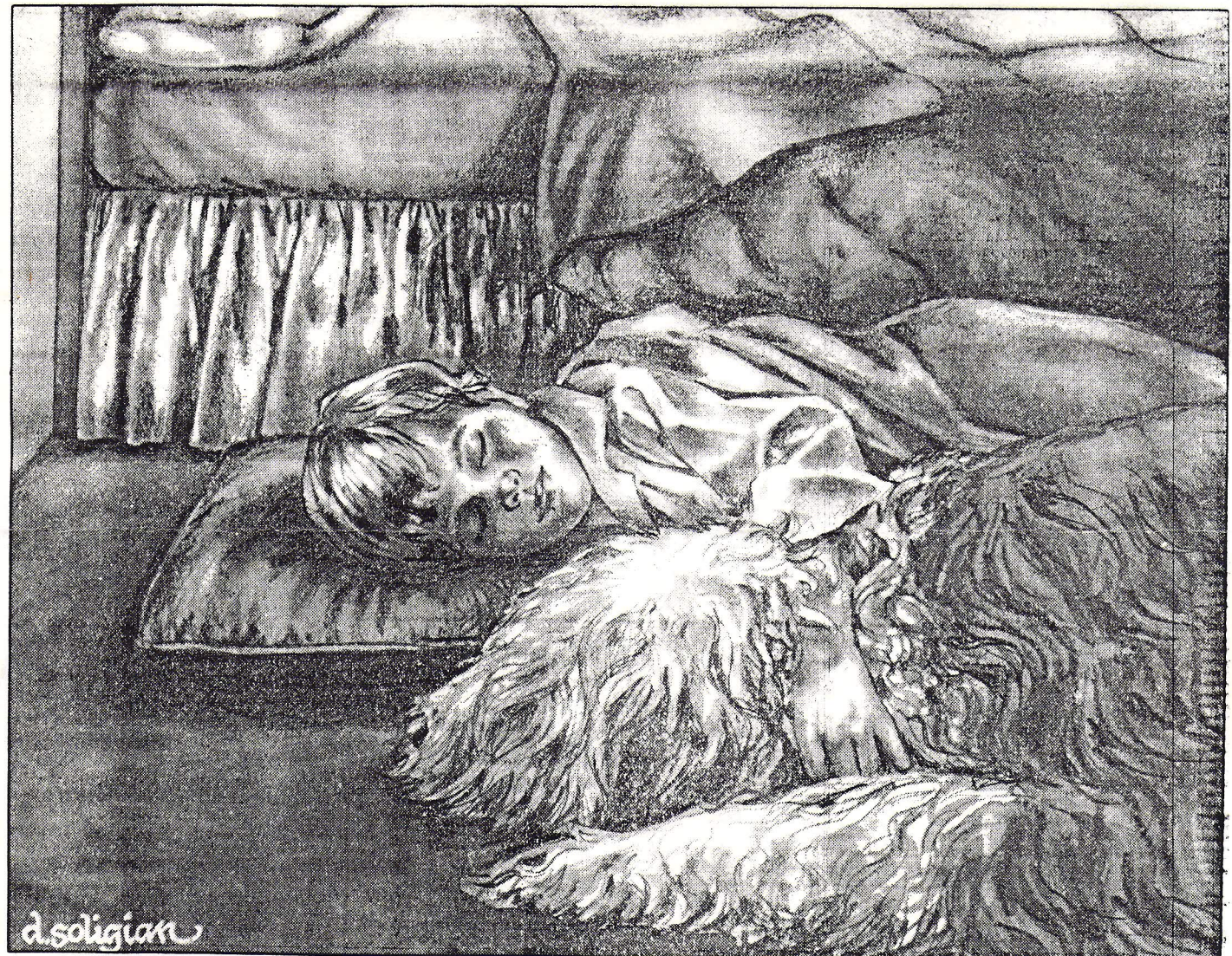
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# 'Who'll make my bed in heaven?'

By GLENNA ANDRADE  
Special to The Bee

Glenna Andrade is a freelance writer and an English teacher at Fresno State University.

Just after my young son had finished his evening prayers, he lisped, "Mom, who'll make my bed in heaven? Will the angels make it for me?" This profound theological and practical question startled me. I immediately envisioned two Disney-like cherubs floating the corners of a down comforter upon a plump feather bed. Just as quickly, a different picture replaced it — that morning's program in bed-making. Kevin crouched in the center of his spread to smooth out the wrinkles caused by his own weight. I chuckled, lifted him to the floor, and scurried around, pulling, tucking, smoothing, and giving instructions as I went.

After I'd finished, he announced with surprising 4-year-old logic, "I don't see why I have to do it because I'm just going to mess it up again tonight. Seems like a lot of wasted energy to me."

Thus began the bed-making rebellion, the psychological tug-of-war between mother and oldest son.

"Have you made your bed?" I asked each morning before Kevin left for school.

"Yes, Mom," was the least frequent answer I received, but only during the

first week when the novelty hadn't quite worn off. Soon he became more evasive, "I don't remember. I'll go see." Later he'd say solemnly, "No, I didn't. I wanted it to air out," or "No, I couldn't because the cat was asleep in it."

Finally, when he learned some guilt-making, 5-year-old psychology, he'd reply, "No, I didn't make it because you haven't washed the sheets in at least a week;" he would then placate my guilt (and his) by adding, "That's OK, Mom. I know you've been busy. I just wanted to help. By not making my bed, I made it easier for you to change it."

By the age of 6, he responded to my "Have you made your bed?" with true red herring responses: "My gosh, I'm late for school!" and "Have you seen my pencil case?" (easily found) and "Do you have 14 10-inch rubber bands and a box of flat toothpicks? I need them for my art project!" (not so easily found). Eventually, I wrinkled my nose at his fishy-smelling red herring responses and answered, "I'll collect what you need. You go make your bed."

When evasion no longer worked, Kevin created other ways to avoid bed making, which was about the time he developed severe (to him) muscle and back aches. First, he began sleeping like a starched sock to avoid messing up the sheets. Next, he started sleeping on the top of the covers, snuggling into an extra blanket. This was OK with me at first because I didn't have sheets to launder, but I soon realized that a blanket was harder to wash and the bedspread had to be dry cleaned. This was not OK with him either because I insisted he fold up the blanket each morning and stow it in the linen closet.

About this time, he discovered the sleeping bag. Soon, however, the floor became too hard or the bedspread became too wrinkled, and he still had to roll up the sleeping bag and return it to the closet. During this period, his reply to my daily question was a righteous, "My bed is made, Mom," which neatly avoided the problem of whether the blanket was folded and the sleeping bag rolled. Typically, the blanket was rolled and the bag folded, and each would uncoil itself like a camel's tongue as soon as I opened the door. One day as I watched him cram both onto the shelf, I chided, "You know, Kevin, you spend more energy in trying to avoid making your bed than if you made it."

Recognition spread across his face; his

eyes widened and then narrowed as if to say, "Wow, Mom can be right — occasionally." I smiled.

"But," he retorted, "If I didn't have to make it, I wouldn't have all this work and you wouldn't have to spend half your morning following me around to make sure I did it." This point hit home because not only did I have to monitor 8-year-old Kevin, but also supervise the bed making of Karen, now 6, and Keith, now 5.

"Well," I muttered, "let's compromise. You make your bed, and I won't nag you about how it looks — as long as it looks like you've made the attempt." He nodded. We both smiled.

Whenever I glanced into his room after that, I remembered my compromise. I often wondered if he slept with a garden hose or a nest of boa constrictors, or if the cat were being suffocated. The only hospital corners I saw belonged to the flounce, tucked up between the box spring and mattress. But more importantly, I learned to be less fastidious, he learned to be responsible, and we both learned the value of compromising.

Now, as I reflect upon Kevin's earlier words, I'd like to believe that neither mothers nor children make up their beds or, better yet, that there are no beds in heaven, just warm, downy clouds that reform themselves after the angels wake up.