

Carol Bergé

## “There Will Always Be Another You”

(for Harlan Ellison)

I JUST inherited my grandfolks' soda fountain and drugstore in Kansas and I know you want to know how come, and where I got that marvelous DOLLOPS sign that you saw in the photograph in the auction ad. Here goes. The way I heard it, my grandma and grandpa were young folks just married and living in Roswell, En Em, and they had a general store on what you by some stretch of the imagination could call a Main Street, and one day, Lord only knows why, grandma was at the stove (they lived back of the store) and she was fooling around with some leftover bread and she put it into rounds with a hole in the middle, you know, like you'd cut donuts, only flat, from some image she had in her head, and when Grandpa saw them he asked, “What's those?” and she said, “They is Diskies,” and that was that. For right then, I mean.

In a few years they moved to a big city in Kansas, north of the China/Paris border, and suddenly, grandma thought of her idea again and began to play with it. She soaked the bread rounds in egg-and-milk mix, only this time she put some vanilla in it, and a drop of brown sugar, and she put it into the waffle iron. By this time they had a regular drugstore and soda counter, and grandma's idea was to give them something they never saw before. So she made these things and called them Diskies, although when Grandpa saw them he called them Dishies, this time he called them Whingers, so they were both, by turns... They were shaped like the half-a-bowl that she put them into after the iron, and then she put something nice in the hole in the middle of them, sometimes it would be a spoonful of vanilla ice cream, or a dollop of sour cream or whipped cream.

People who came there were very pleased with this invention — half of the folks called them Diskies and half called them Whingers and all of them loved that treat. Half of them called whatever grandma put in the center “spoonfuls” and the other half called it “dollops,” but in this case, grandma was who decided — she had a sign made for the shelf she had built on the marble fountaintop, and it said “DOLLOPS” on it, in nice fancy scrollwork, all gold with black around the letters, and walnut back of that, and some kind of clear lacquer stuff over all of it, so it wouldn't get spoiled by all the fixing going on on the marble top nearby. This was where grandma kept the cold bowls of fillings. One reason that half of people did this or that was that damn near everybody in the Kansas city was a twin; the way Grannie put it was, “Everywhere you looked there was twinnies,” and that and that was one big reason she and Grandpa moved there, because

she and he were each one of twins, (and as you know, so am I,) and one of the big issues with twins is, we don't like to be confused for the other person, we like to be known as ourself, so usually when there's a chance for something to be thought of in two ways, one twin would chose one way and the other Twin, the other.

That means that when Grannie chose "Dollops," that was sure to mean that her twin, stubborn as she was, would call that slop "spoonfuls," which worked out for the best, as it turned out, because they were twins married to Twins, and that meant that Grandpa had the option of agreeing with grandma and calling the fixings "dollops," and that made for peace in the family... at least for awhile. Until a few years passed and families began to move here again from Roswell. This time there were no twinnies, they were all quadruplets, and half of them were pregnant and looking round as Diskies... as round as the moon! and with the next generation due, offspring would be like eight tiny reindeer — not six, you understand, or ten, but exactly eight... and each of them eight pounds of gristle with a dollop of white hair, like snow or whipped cream, up top and right in the middle. As if it covers something, like a hole maybe. Whatever.

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2009 Wood Coin: You've Reely Scored a Movie Issue: Berge, "There Will Always Be Another You"