

lightning intuition, the ceiling should be wet.

Sure enough, when I lifted my candle higher (did I mention that this happened at night?) there was a little stalactite (stalagmite?) of water forming right above the spot where my unsuspecting chest had been.

DONE FOR DAYS

I found David practicing with a new yo-yo that lights up with sparks inside when you twirl it. It's all he's done for days if you don't count chewing and swallowing.

"My room leaks," I said.

"Look," he said. "Walking the dog." And he dropped the yo-yo to the end of its string and made it roll along the carpet. I was in no mood to be trifled with. I went into the kitchen, got our pair of scissors, came back in and snipped his string. The yo-yo rolled under the couch.

"You've killed my yo-yo," he said.

"My room leaks," I said. We stared at one another.

When he spoke his voice was bitter. "Maybe Albert chewed a hole in your ceiling," he said. "Serve you right."

"By now," I replied evenly, "Albert has either found his way back to Bolivia or he's part of that big alligator purse in the sky. Now are you going to help me fix this leak?"

We tried a number of guaranteed



DAVID scorned the home repair books in favor of his own remedies.



HOW does David feel about last "Partridge" season? See page 44 for scoop!

remedies. David put a big wad of bubblegum on the ceiling at the point where the drop formed, but all that happened was that three drops formed on the bottom of the bubblegum before the gum fell onto my bed. David suggested we try one of my famous pancakes, which will stick to anything, but I vetoed it. We were out of Bisquick.

"I think the problem has something to do with the roof," I said. "I doubt very much whether my ceiling is manufacturing water on its own. I think it's probable that water from the rain is coming through the roof and dripping through my ceiling. If you think that theory's too wild, please tell me, but I think it's the roof that needs fixing."

UP ON THE ROOF

"Fine," he said. "You go up on the roof in this rain and wind, and I'll stay down here and tell you when the dripping stops." He looked up at the ceiling again. "How about the half of an Oreo cookie that the white stuff sticks to when you pull them apart?" he asked doubtfully. "We could stick one of those —"

"Forget it, David. You can't use food for *everything*. We'll just have to rig something up to catch the water until morning, and then we'll go up on the roof and fix it."

And so that was what we did. We got a bucket and some strong twine. David tied the twine around the rim of the bucket very tightly, and we fastened three long pieces of twine to

the piece wrapped around the bucket.

One of these we tied to the top hinge on the closet door another to the lock on my window; and the third to the top of my bedstead. When we were finished we pulled all the strings tight and knotted them and the bucket hung suspended about two feet below the leak and about four feet above my bed.

And it *stayed* there, too... until about three-thirty that morning when, full to the brim, it snapped a piece of string and came crashing down on my chest. I awoke with a terrified scream, sloshing around in the better part of a gallon of water, swimming wildly for the edge of the bed. For one mind-boggling moment I thought the Last Earthquake had come and dumped California into the sea.

I spent the rest of the night on the couch.

The next day I bought David a new yo-yo but we didn't get around to checking out the roof. That was yesterday. Today it started to sprinkle and I went up on the roof immediately and had a good look around. It looked like a roof.

Tomorrow some professional roof guys are coming out to look around, and David says they'll fix it okay. But deep down in the lowest depths of my mind I know what they're going to find.

They're going to find a hole in the ceiling that could only have been chewed by an alligator. Albert, wherever you are...

I won't forget this.

Sam