

# RULE # 57

By Ginny Gross-Abbey

As always: while my sisters and I put on our hats, boots and mittens to go play outside, our father ran down the list of rules. These list of rules were compiled over years of us girls doing things that would shock the Addams family.

As we walked down the hill behind our apartment complex, there it was “the fence” that separated us from the golf course. Well of course one of the rules was “do not go over the fence”. So my sisters and I dug under the fence. Genius I thought since technically we weren’t breaking any rules, since we weren’t going over. However my father soon learned that his rules needed a tad more detail for three curious girls. Our loop-whole resulted in the next four years of rules with extreme detail. As my sisters and I searched for golf balls, I thought if I climbed up the embankment that I could have a bird’s eye view. As I got to the top I directed my sisters to areas I saw golf balls. After a few minutes we decided to go in. I started down the embankment; I slipped, falling face down into the creek bed below. My face was all bloody and my front teeth knocked out.... My sisters panicked and ran home.

They entered our apartment out of breath and sat on the couch. My father looked at them and asked where I was. My youngest sister replied, “she’s dead we left her”. As my father’s concern heightened he screamed “WHAT” then my other sister, said “yeah, she was bleeding and everything”. Panic stricken my father demanded they show him. My father and sisters ran down the hill to rescue me, ok just my father was going to rescue me; obviously my sisters thought I was expendable family member. My father asked how I got over the fence. They directed him to the hole under the fence that no adult male would ever fit through. One of my sisters said, “sorry Daddy you won’t fit”. (Rule #56 “do not dig holes!”)

Driving to the emergency room we could see our father gripping the steering wheel as if he imagined it was our necks. Every now and then he would mumble comments like, “if they were boys I’d, I’d I’d...” then as we were almost to the hospital he began to pray... “Dear lord please give them children just like them”. Evidentially God heard him, because we all got children just like us. When we arrived at the hospital, I was almost certain I heard my father ask a nurse what the charge was to have us psychologically evaluated. After a few broken teeth were removed and my lip stitched, we headed home. My father was quiet the entire way home. We knew the punishment was going to be dreadful; he had had several hours to think about it, which is never a good thing for a kid. We could only beg for mercy: since we were certain that tears would not work this time.

As we walked in the door he said, “have a seat on the sofa ladies”. He walked back and forth, rubbing his forehead, and then very calmly and slowly, like he was doing a Captain Kirk impression he said “Rule #57 do not leave a sibling for dead”.