Remedies We'd Rather Forget

Dishpan Hand

A WART developed on the back of my left hand when I was a kid, in the 1950s. My mother didn't believe in wasting money on doctors for such trivialities, but nothing she tried worked.

However, Great-Grandmother Eva whispered to me this surefire cure: "Get up at exactly midnight…don't let anyone hear you. Rub the wart with your mother's favorite dishrag, then immediately bury the rag outdoors where it will never be found. The wart will be gone in 3 days; it never fails."

I was spellbound by her knowledge of such things as she added, "But no one must ever know what you do or the wart will return."

The intrigue was irresistible for a 10-year-old, so I carried out her plan to the letter. In 3 days, Mother was still mystified by the disappearance of her blue-and-white checkered dishcloth, and my wart was gone.

The rag is still buried in a remote corner of the garden, and until now, I had never told a soul how I got rid of the wart. But wait… just as I was typing, a strange bump appeared on the back of my left hand. I'd better go! —David Brown, Mt. Zion, Illinois

Dad's Body Paint

I CAN REMEMBER getting poison ivy when I was 7 years old, back in the mid-1930s.

I'm sure many remember our parents painting basement walls with a coat of whitewash. What was in it, I don't know, but my dad painted the poison ivy on my face, arms and legs with some whitewash.

I looked like a walking ghost, or so my friends thought. No one played with me for a while, but at least it dried up the poison ivy.

—Ruth Woltring, Grafton, Wisconsin