

Norma Chapman

SHIRLEY HYDOCK AND I PLAY NICELY

Before Georgia and Shirley moved into the farm with my dad, we visited them in their trailer on Daddy's custody days. Daddy and Georgia drank whiskey and held hands while Shirley and I played *Pick-up-Sticks*.

At the farm, Shirley once hit me in the nose, and while I bled, her mother beat her with a belt. I tried to find a place I couldn't hear her cry.

Mostly, we played games Shirley made up. One of them was *Murder*. We'd take turns being victim and murderer. The victim lay face down on the bed while the murderer straddled her and hit her on the back.

Another game was *Fuck*. This was in 1938. We were about seven, and the word was new to me. We went behind the barn and took off most of our clothes. One would lie on top of the other and wiggle. It wasn't appealing. Shirley said, "It's more fun with my cousin Kenny."

