





# Talking Leaves Staff

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## Statement of policy and purpose

*Talking Leaves* accepts original works of fiction, poetry, photography and line drawings from students at Indiana University/Purdue University Columbus. Each anonymous submission is reviewed by at the Copy Editors and is judged solely on artistic merit.

Cover Art  
**Strauther-Pleak Round Barn**  
Greensburg, Indiana  
by Carrie M. Shumaker



























## Deep Grey Skies

Jesse Groppi

Slippery Silver slides  
Across deep grey skies  
Love dwindles  
And old wives  
Spin their tales  
Velvet roses wilt  
Into a slimy mess  
Of brown  
I think of you

The cobblestones  
Beneath my feet  
Crumble to dust  
Blow away  
In the wind  
And add to  
The silver shimmer  
Of the sky  
The street lamp  
Sheds no light  
On my gray skin  
I think of you

The tree branches  
Are bare  
And distorted gremlins  
Dance



Crushing a grey rainbow  
Of leaves  
Under their bare feet  
They sing a song  
Of serpent skin  
Biting spiders  
And the gleeful  
Killing  
Of beautiful things  
I think of you

I think of you  
And in my mind  
Is you  
Dancing with me  
In a golden ballroom  
With rainbow rose petals  
Beneath our feet  
And on the outside,  
In my grey world  
--I smile.



**Captured Sunlight**  
Carrie M. Shumaker

**Astrology**  
Cher Cramer

Perplexing stars—  
Never one wish  
granted.  
Though many of  
you fell.  
Not to burn up,  
Just to burn out.  
Like those dreams  
that were wished  
on so well.  
Demanding planets  
cycling in my sign;  
Though the fortunes were  
told.  
Not to turn out  
Just to burn out.  
Again—unrealized dreams.  
Man, it gets really  
old.  
And to think—  
You were depended upon  
My life suspended on  
the galaxy  
As it hangs.

**My Sweet Grove**  
Jesse Groppi

I see a place  
Within my mind  
Where I am whole  
And peaceful

My soul is true  
My now and when  
In harmony  
In this grove

The moon, she smiles  
On me, below  
sharing wisdom  
When I need

By my own hands  
I built a home  
Of wood and earth  
And passion

A lasting fire  
and large warm furs  
a man that is  
my true love

I have a garden  
with flow'rs that bloom  
In the moonlight  
They glisten

Fruits to keep me  
Herbs to heal me  
And earth to dig  
My toes in

The long brick path  
Leads to a candle  
That never dies  
Or gutters

The chill fall wind  
Brings me to life  
And in my mind  
I am home

**Brrrrlll Brrrrlll**

Cher Cramer

They sit upon telephone lines  
surveying farmers' fields;

Suspicious behavior of automobiles  
rolls in their beaded eyes.

People come by searching for something  
the ornithologist does not collect;

Those crazy red-winged blackbirds  
watch and wait.

Lighter than a featherweight,  
They levitate,

floating slightly above  
Prairie grass and the tiniest tips of baby firs.

*How do*

*Do*

*They*

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It seems as though they  
Hover and their talons never graze the tops of tallest weeds.

A motorcycle, shift, shift -- zooms  
down a gray-black ribbon of road;

It slows and stops and people gaze  
at the beautiful setting sun.

At once, those crazy red-winged blackbirds  
fly from the grass;

They hoop-de-doo and holler,  
wings beat and flutter as the people

Mutter amongst themselves,  
the sun goes down, the earth goes round,

And we move off waving so long  
to those crazy red-winged blackbirds.

**RK**

Cher Cramer

Crow clawing carrion,  
Dragging the road kill  
Off the cement, bringing it  
To a calmer place to take  
Its time to feast.  
A raucous call goes up  
To interested parties:  
Supper on Route Three.

## **Canadian Lakes Memory**

Cher Cramer

Line the walls with pictures.  
Light here, dark out there.  
Over the lake, a loon cries;  
No moon. Stars light the pines—  
We make our way somehow.  
Look at all the pictures.  
Dark here, lightness inside.  
Through the trees, bullfrogs bleat.  
A path. Instinct leads the way—  
We will get home, sometime.  
There are all these pictures.  
Summer night aromas fill in the blanks,  
And the coolness of the lake.  
The foolishness of our youth.  
Still we adventure—we always find  
Our way home.





**Rural Decatur County Windfall**  
Carrie M. Shumaker

***“Lazy River” Inspirations***

Matt Rothrock

Steamy July mid-evening,  
Dwarfed by ancient ash and white oaks  
My gaze takes me ever westward  
River flowing toward my thoughts.

I curse one Hoagy Carmichael  
For writing his “Lazy River.”  
No fledgling poet, inspired,  
Can swim in its churning glory.

O, that music of Nature!  
Electric air mingles with haze.  
Hoagy’s sound, divine yet profane,  
Carries us higher and further.

The “true nectar” of Emerson,  
Epitome of perfection.  
No earthly substance nor ideal  
Can touch the face of God quite like

Constant and murky Driftwood,  
Flat Rock rushing ever southward,  
The persistent, turbulent White—  
Thinking towards the current of life.

## **A Letter From Mr. Arthur Woodsworth #2**

Brad Bott

Greetings,

It is I, Mr. Arthur Woodsworth. Yes, I am writing again. It has been just over a month since my last letter in which I told you how I got into the predicament I am in. As my family has not come to my aid as of yet, I have to assume they did not receive news of my unjust commitment. Nevertheless, I remain confident that my rescue shall come at any moment. Still, if any of you happen to speak with my family, kindly let them know of my dilemma.

Anyway, I shall proceed to other matters. As I said before, it has been just over a month since my last letter. In that time several interesting things have happened to me. One incident was most peculiar and I shall relate it to you now.

I started out my day like most any other day. They generally let me go about my business as I please. So I took my shower, got dressed in my scratchy, uncomfortable robe and a pair of heavy, ugly slippers, and then went down to breakfast. It was at breakfast that the aforementioned event occurred.

The cafeteria is painted light grey and has a few dirty windows that look onto the weed infested courtyard at the back of the facilities. The food window is on the left-hand side and is just large enough for trays of food to be slid through. There are not many options when it comes to food. Not that it really matters. It all tastes like cardboard, except the oatmeal. It has a hint of cinnamon, which makes it tolerable. All of the tables and chairs are arranged on the right-hand side of the room and are bolted to the floor. The chairs are on a metal track which allows them to be moved closer or farther away from the tables.

I grabbed a tray of food and had just sat down to eat after waiting in line for fifteen minutes with a bunch of imbeciles. Can you believe they actually had to take time to choose between plain oatmeal or oatmeal with brown sugar and cinnamon? I was finishing my first bite of oatmeal with brown sugar and cinnamon, of course, when Mr. Twenkles sat down beside me. I had not spoken to him since the last incident, which I described in my previous letter. I knew it

would take every last ounce of my patience not to get up and leave before he had said his first word. Nevertheless, I allowed him to initiate the conversation.

“Sir, I remember talking with you about a month ago,” Mr. Twenkles said, “but I never learned your name.”

“My name, good sir, is Arthur Woodsworth. Pleased to make your acquaintance,” I said, giving him a hardy handshake. “Might I say, you seem much better since the last time we spoke.”

“Yes, I got all the rabbits back in their pen. It is quite the ordeal when they get out. I apologize for my behavior,” he said as he wiped his forehead with a napkin. “To be honest, I think someone let them out.”

“Not to worry, it was nothing really. As the saying goes: ‘No harm, no foul.’”

Just then, a gentleman walked past. He was a good six-foot tall and had one of those long mustaches that droop down past the chin. He was dressed in a robe and slippers like the rest of us. However, he had a black top hat on with a little card in the band that had 10/8 written on it.

All of a sudden, Mr. Twenkles jumped out of his seat, threw a handful of oatmeal in the man’s face, and hurried off yelling, “You shall never steal the rabbits, they’re all mine.”

I handed the gentleman with the top hat a napkin and apologized for Mr. Twenkles actions.

“No need for apology my above average compatriot. Mr. Tewnkles has quite left behind his small glass spheres used for playing boys games of pastime. By the way, my name is Henry Allen Joseph Johnson Jr.,” he said, as he removed his top hat while giving a bow, “and your name would be?”

After his rather windy introduction, I knew this was going to be a rather painful encounter. Apparently, he was one of those people who wanted to sound intelligent even though they may not be. I put on my best face and introduced myself. “Arthur Woodsworth at your service.”

“Yes, I seem to have a vague series of mental pictures regarding your person. I recall having used my organs for sight in discerning your location on one or two instances.”

At this point I tried to excuse myself, but Mr. Johnson would not let me get in a single word and I did not want to seem rude. I could feel my blood pressure slowly rising. It was a constant struggle to keep my face as cordial as possible.

“I cannot begin to relate what a sense of overall well-being it is to verbalize the workings of my cerebellum to an individual who may offer opinions that may not have been known to myself up to this point. I find most of the occupants of this establishment somewhat lacking in the mental capacity necessary to comprehend the workings of my lobes, let alone to be able to vocalize some form of response. You, on the opposite digitated appendage, seem to be a male of quite above normal reasoning capabilities. Being as it is, I would like to produce some information for you to contemplate for a short length of time. Then, I would like you to respond with your personal process of thought, if that is of an agreeable nature to you.”

Despite Mr. Johnson’s long-winded form of speech, he had begun to pique my interest. I should have walked away at that very moment though. Something in the back of my mind told me this was not going to end well. Nevertheless, I asked Mr. Johnson to proceed, which he did with great enthusiasm.

“Please allow me to get through the entirety of my proposal of the business variety before offering your response. I am what you would call a procurer and purveyor of goods and services. As you viewed with your organs of sight the reaction produced by Mr. Twenkles to my entering the vicinity which he occupied, your processes of thought may have led you to the conclusion that it is quite an improbability that I should be able to venture much closer than the length of several appendages used for walking of him. I would appreciate it a great deal if you would work your way up to Mr. Twenkles as if you wished to converse with him. Then, when you are close enough to use your sense of touch, I want you to plunder at least one of those furry big eared, fluffy tailed creatures he keeps penned up and return it or preferably them to my possession. If you cannot pilfer them, at least release them from captivity. I do so enjoy when those creatures get loose and hop about trying to evade Mr. Twenkles. It is a spectacle of the humorous variety well worth the physical exertions taken to procure the end results. Either way, I am willing to transfer a large sum of monetary compensation into your custody should you achieve positive results on either instance. What do your synaptic firings compel you to do?” He finished as he placed his hands behind his back.

I stood there dumbfounded, running his proposal over in my head for about thirty seconds. How was he going to get money in here, and what would it matter to me? It is not like one has to pay for anything here. Then, everything he said finally registered. I looked him right in the eyes and slapped him on the side of his face, knocking his top hat off his head. The look that crossed his face was one I will never forget. His eyes widened and his mouth dropped open. Then his hand shot to the cheek I had struck, trying to rub away the handprint. I have to admit, I was probably just as shocked as he was by my actions. For the first time since initiating the conversation, Mr. Johnson seemed to be at a loss for words.

When he finally recovered his senses, Mr. Johnson responded to my slap in his cool long winded manner. "Mr. Arthur Wordsworth, if you continue with your prior action of physical assault, someone may have a seeing organ ejected from their orbital socket. It is not advisable to proceed in said manner of which is highly uncivil." Then he bent down and picked up his hat.

He was brushing the dust off his hat while he was straightening up. Just as he was finishing, I reached up and slapped him a second time, this time on the other cheek. Then I yelled loud enough to stop everyone in the breakfast hall right where they were. "You, Mr. Henry Allen Joseph Johnson Jr., shall never have Mr. Twenkle's rabbits by my hand. For that matter, you shall never have my rabbits or any other rabbits if I can help it."

When I had finished, Mr. Johnson looked me right in the eyes and screamed just like a little kid, "Orderlies!"

To this I said, "You tattled on me!" The furrow in my brow could not have gotten any deeper.

"I did not," he said while shaking his head.

"You did too!" I said moving my face closer to his.

"Did not!" He moved his face closer to mine.

"Did too!" Closer still

"Not!" Our noses were almost touching.

"Too!" I shouted in his face.

"I did not tattle!" He finally screamed out, sending little drops of spittle spraying in my face.

I wiped my face with the sleeve of my robe and had just enough time to slap him for the third time before the orderlies grabbed me and started dragging me to my room yet again. I caught a final glimpse of Mr. Johnson stalking off in a huff. I could not help smiling in triumph. The orderlies put me in my room and locked the door behind them. I was not permitted to leave my quarters for well over two weeks for the disturbance I caused amongst the other patients. However, I could not help feeling it was well worth the time.

Well, that brings this little story to an end. I thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I must also ask one more time that if you should happen to speak with my family, please let them know of my situation. Until they come to my rescue I will continue to hold out hope. May rescue come with all speed.

Sincerely,

Mr. Arthur Woodsworth

P.S.- I am still angry with you Dr. Harding. If you want to save any dignity, you will promptly clear this whole matter up.

P.P.S.- Nobody is going to steal the rabbits!.



**Frozen Fence**, Carrie M. Shumaker

**Ode To Sanity**  
**(There It Goes)**  
Jesse Groppi

Sanity. It slips through your fingers, just when you thought you had a hold of it. The elusiveness is enough to make a person suicidal. And that in itself is a total loss of that which we strive to gain. Sanity.

Sanity has no definition despite what Webster or Oxford have to say, or your psychiatrist for that matter. What sanity is to one person might be a loss of sanity to another. However the second person's sanity may also qualify for the first person. And yet a third person can be sure he has no sanity, while the other two might think that's crazy. Are you still with me? I lost it there for a second.

For some, superficiality is sanity. They wear the latest fashions, get life advice from magazines, and hang out with only the "coolest" people (you know, the other superficials). Some find sanity in patchouli, dread locks, occasional showers and a steady supply of weed. Others see sanity in whatever they can get into a bong, and some things they can't. I've even known people who got sanity from a book they could never read all the way through, two pieces of wood, and a few nails. (Really now, that sounds like a true *lack* of sanity, doesn't it? If you chose to read a book, why wouldn't you finish it? I mean, come on, people, if you're not going to finish a book, why read it in the first place? Isn't it agonizing, not knowing how it ends? That is, unless the end is one of the parts you *did* read. But we all know that just doesn't happen, right? It's one of those unwritten rules *everyone* knows. Whoops, there it goes again.)

In conclusion, we really ought to live and love together. We must face up to the fact that everyone was born different. Some people came out head-first, or feet-first. Some nearly came out sideways and had to be rotated. Heck, some people came out of the mother's belly-button. Speaking of belly-buttons, did you know that Marsupials come out of their mothers' you-know-where unfinished and blind, and then have to crawl up to the pouch *by themselves*?! Does Momma Marsupial even feel it? How sad would it be if she were to roll over mid-embryo-5K?!

Wow, I can't even hold onto it for a few paragraphs. You know what? Forget all the bullshit I just spewed out. Sanity doesn't exist. Get over it.

Post Script: If I somehow insulted anyone, I apologize.

Post Post Script: If you're still offended, screw you.

Post Post Post Script: I plead not guilty, due to insanity.





**The Indiana State Capitol, from the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument**  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
Carrie M. Shumaker

**The Sparkk Twins  
and  
The Disappearance of Sammy**  
Carrie M. Shumaker

It was a steamy summer day. We were sitting in the office with the blinds pulled low to try to block out some of the heat, but it didn't seem to be helping. The sunlight streaming through the dusty blinds gave the room a strange yellow glow. The fan on the file cabinet was humming away as it worked hard to cool the room. The sounds of Benny Goodman drifted through the air from the radio in the corner near the water cooler. It was one of those days when it didn't matter whether you were inside or out, the heat was going to make you sweat. It felt as if even the buildings and sidewalks were perspiring. Ah, summer in the city, there is nothing like it.

The only people to be seen outside on a day like that were those that had no choice but to be out there. Cops walked their beats even in the heat, swinging their

nightsticks and keeping an eye on the hoodlums trying to cause trouble. The milkman and the iceman had finished their deliveries before the temperature became unbearable. Paperboys were standing on the corners trying to make a few cents off the midday edition so that they could buy a cool drink at a local diner. Someone had opened a fire hydrant down the street for the neighborhood kids to play in, the only way for them to get cool. Even the alley cats took the day off from chasing the sewer rats to stay in their cool spots.

The trash piled on the curbs waiting for pick-up was sending off an offensive odor that seemed to permeate the air. The longer it sat, the stronger it smelled, as rotten food fermented in the sun. The stench began to drift through the open window causing us to feel even more claustrophobic. There was no way to escape it. If we closed the window we would lose what little breeze there was and we would have to seek refuge outdoors, where the stench was that much stronger.

Our office was on the third floor of a downtown building, but even at that height we were able to *enjoy* the aroma of the city. **The Sparkk Detective Agency** had been serving the city for many years. My brother, Arthur, and I had taken the business over when our father retired. He was proud of us and lived long enough to see us solve some of the biggest cases the agency had ever seen. Our mother was not as pleased, she was afraid that her precious children were going to get hurt. So far, we've gotten by with only a few scrapes and bruises. Our mother has learned to live with our career choice, and I think she's even a little proud of us. I happen to know, from reliable sources which shall remain unnamed, that she keeps all the newspaper articles about us in a scrapbook that can be found on the second shelf of the large book case in the living room. It is a show piece that is taken out whenever the girls are over to play bridge.

It was a slow day at the office. We had just finished a case and we were sitting around waiting for the next one to walk through the door. I was sitting at my desk cutting out an article in the daily paper about us (I keep a scrapbook of my own). The headline was ***Sparkk Twins Solve Another One!*** The article was all about the bank robbery we had just solved. My brother was sitting at his desk with his feet propped up eating the sandwich he had packed for lunch, corned beef on rye, when we heard light footsteps in the hallway. Then *she* walked in, sobbing.

"He's gone!" she cried. "I just don't know what to do. Will you please help me?"

“Why don’t you have a seat and tell us what your trouble is,” Arthur got up from his seat to offer her a chair. “Just start at the beginning and tell us the whole story. We’ll see if we can help you.”

She took the chair and the monogrammed handkerchief that Arthur had offered her. She stared at me for a moment, looked back at Arthur, then at Arthur’s sandwich. The girl seemed unsure of whether or not this was such a good idea. And when I say girl, I mean girl. She probably wasn’t more than ten years old although her dirty face and baggy clothes made it difficult to tell for sure. I wondered how her mother could let her run around like that.

“We was in the park playin’ when he disappeared. I ran away to hide an’ he never come to find me. When I went to look for ‘im he was gone. I couldn’t find ‘im nowhere!” she blew her nose. “I know you ken help me. I saw your picture in the paper, an’ a paperboy tol’ me ‘bout you. I can pay.” She produced a few coins that had been tucked away in her pocket.

“What do you think Al?” Arthur looked at me.

I shrugged, “We don’t have anything else to do right now, might as well.”

“Okay Kid, we’ll take your case, free of charge,” Arthur winked at her. “Just don’t tell people, or they’ll want us to take their cases for free too.”

“Oh, thank you!” the excited girl jumped up from her seat and promptly passed out.

Arthur and I ran to her. I pushed her chair out of the way as Arthur got some water from the cooler.

“She’s still breathing,” I said as I took the glass of water from him. “I think she just fainted.

“From the heat?” Arthur questioned.

“That and hunger. Did you see the way she was eyeing your sandwich?”

“I did notice that, but I didn’t think anything of it. She sure is a mess,” Arthur was holding the girl’s hand which was very grimy to the touch and then he noticed the thick dirt under her finger nails.

Slowly the girl began to come around. She looked confused as she took in our faces and her surroundings.

“What happened?” We helped her sit up.

“You fainted,” I answered as I held the glass so she could drink some water. She gulped it quickly. “When was the last time you ate?”

“What day is it?” she asked, using the back of her free hand to wipe away the water that had dribbled down her chin.

“Friday,” Arthur answered. “Why?”

“I think I ate something yesterday, or maybe it was the day before. I don’t really remember.”

“That’s it! We’re going to get you some food,” I helped her stand up. “There’s a sink in there. Why don’t you go wash your face before we go?”

“But I *did* wash my face before I come! I washed my hands too,” she held her hands up so we could see.

“Go in there and see if you can get another layer of dirt off,” I opened the door for her.

She grumbled a bit, but she went in and closed the door behind her.

“What do you think, Al?”

“Orphan?”

“Certainly a street urchin of some kind. What about the missing friend?”

I shrugged. Just then the washroom door opened, and in walked a freckle-faced girl.

“You look much better,” Arthur said to her.

“It helps when you have soap,” she grinned.

“Should we get some food?” I asked.

The little girl’s face went from a smile to a frown at this question.

“What’s wrong?” Arthur asked.

“I wanna go to lunch with you, but I ain’t got ‘nough money. See?” she pulled the change from her pocket again.

“That’s okay, Kid,” I smiled. “Arthur owes me two lunches, so he can buy for all of us.”

“Okay,” she opened the door. “Let’s go.”

Arthur and I grabbed our hats and followed her out into the hall.

\* \* \* \* \*

We went to a diner near the office. A place that serves soggy sandwiches, burgers, hot dogs, stale doughnuts, and strong black coffee. It had mediocre service, but a low price. You should have seen the kid's face when a plate with a huge hamburger was placed in front of her.

"Hey Kid don't eat so fast!" Arthur watched as the child seemed to inhale her burger.

"Yeah, you're going to get sick. Remember, you haven't eaten for a few days," I pointed out. The kid seemed to slow down a bit after that.

"So Kid what's your name?" Arthur began the interrogation.

"Anne, or Annie."

"Where are your parents?"

"Dunno," she took a large gulp of milk.

"Then where do you live?" I asked.

"Where ever," she mumbled through a mouth full of bread, meat and lettuce.

"What do you mean by that? Haven't you been put in an orphanage?" I watched her face as I asked this.

She grinned again, a large mustard spot on her chin. "The authorities ain't caught me yet."

I looked at Arthur when she said this. We had always thought that the authorities didn't do enough when it came to the kids in the city. There were too many of them running wild, lying and stealing to make it in this world, because their parents didn't have enough for them at home.

"Why did you come to us? Didn't you think that we might turn you in once we found out that you're an orphan?" Arthur turned back Annie.

"Nah, I knew you was different. I could tell from your picture in the paper."

"Thanks, I think," I said. "Now, tell us about your missing friend."

"Well, he's my best friend. I met 'im 'bout three months ago and we ain't never been apart since. His name's Sammy. I really hope you can find 'im for me."

"We're going to try," I assured her. "What does he look like?"

"He gots light brown hair an' brown eyes."

“Does he have any noticeable marks on him?” Arthur was taking notes.

“Oh, yeah! He gots a dark brown mark on his ear.” Arthur wrote *birthmark on ear* in his notebook.

“Okay, which park were you in when you last saw him?”

“The one two blocks over. It’s got lotsa trees for us to hide behind.”

“Let’s go there first and find out if anyone around there saw anything,” Arthur threw some money on the table and we got up and left.

The heat was still unbearable when we left the diner, but we decided to walk to the park. We figured we could keep an eye open for Sammy along the way, besides what’s a few city blocks anyway?

“Do you see him anywhere, Annie?” I asked as we walked past a line of people standing outside an employment office. With the depression, more people spend their days standing in that line, or one similar to it. Most of them would have gladly been working but there just aren’t enough jobs to go around. No one can afford to pay their employees anymore.

“I don’t see him nowhere,” Annie answered as she skipped between us.

“Anywhere,” Arthur corrected her.

Sammy was not spotted along the street to the park. Annie showed us the exact spot where she had last seen Sammy and we looked around for clues. We looked behind trees and bushes, under the park benches, Arthur even suggested we look in the trees which for some reason made Annie laugh.

“Sammy don’t climb trees!” she exclaimed.

“Sammy *doesn’t* climb trees,” I corrected her automatically.

After half an hour of searching we met a police officer on the path.

“Can I be helpin’ you with something?” the officer kindly asked.

“Actually you might be able to,” Arthur answered. “Anne here has lost her friend, and we were trying to help her find him.”

“Are, ya now?” he gave Annie a friendly smile. “And what would your friend be lookin’ like?” he asked in a thick Irish accent.

Annie told the officer what Sammy looked like, and as she did he began to frown.

“Weren’t you playin’ here earlier today?” he asked

“Yes, sir,” she looked up at the officer.

“Now Annie girl, you weren’t playin’ with another child were you?”

“No, sir,” she looked down at her scuffed shoes. “I wasn’t.”

Arthur and I looked at each other, then at Annie, then at the officer. He noticed our confused faces and began to laugh.

“You thought you were looking for a child, when all along you’ve been looking for a mangy mongrel that was picked up by the dogcatcher earlier today. Wait till the boys down at the station hear about this. The great Sparkk twins hired by a waif to search for a flea bitten mutt, they’ll never believe it,” he walked away chuckling.

“Thanks so much for your help,” I muttered sarcastically.

Anne looked up at us, the tears beginning to pool in her eyes. “I’m sorry,” she cried. “I thought you know’d Sammy was a dog.”

“It’s okay,” I smiled at her, not bothering to correct her grammar this time.

“We’ll go back to the office to get the car, then we’ll go to the pound and see if we can find Sammy there,” Arthur put his hand on her shoulder.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sound of barking dogs and yowling cats assaulted our ears when we opened the door to the pound. The man standing behind the counter looked up as we entered.

“Can I help you?”

“Yes, we’re looking for a dog,” Arthur said to the man.

“Well, you’ve come to the right place. What sort of dog are you looking for?”

“This dog was caught this morning at the park downtown. He belongs to this little girl and we would like to get him back if possible,” I explained.

“All right,” the man leaned down to Annie’s level. “What does your dog look like?”

For the third time that day Annie described Sammy. Once she was done the man smiled.

“Wait here,” he said softly. As he opened a door the racket from the back increased.

“Do you think he’s here?” Annie asked as she stared anxiously at the closing door.

“I hope so,” I gave her an encouraging smile and squeezed her shoulder.

“Is this the rascal you’re looking for?” the man had returned with a dog on a leash.

“Sammy!” Annie hugged the dog. “Thank you so much!”

“When you take the dog out you need to keep him on a leash so he doesn’t get away.”

“Oh, I will!” Annie took the end of the leash which the man handed her.

Back in the car Annie and Sammy had curled up in the spacious backseat of our Plymouth sedan and fell asleep. Arthur was driving, and I was gazing out the passenger window thinking. The sun was getting lower in the sky as afternoon turned to evening. The temperature that had been so unbearable during the day was slowly dropping. It was going to be another perfect summer evening in the city.

“What are we going to do with her,” I finally asked.

“You could take her home,” Arthur suggested.

“Not tonight. I have a date.”

We were quite for a few more minutes each lost in our own thoughts. Lights in the nearby buildings were beginning to come on.

“Mom!” Arthur and I said at the same time.

“I can’t believe we didn’t think of her before,” Arthur laughed.

“I think she still has some of my old dresses. I’m sure some of them will fit Annie, until we can get her some clothes of her own,” I said.

“But how long are we going to leave her there?” Arthur headed the car in the direction of our mother’s house.

“Well, I didn’t mention this before, but Howard and I are engaged. After we get married, if we can’t find Anne’s parents, we could adopt her.”

“Congratulations, Alberta. I was wondering how long it would be before I lost my sister to marriage.” Arthur was grinning.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few months later our mother, Arthur, Howard, Annie and I were sitting in the judges chambers discussing Annie’s adoption.



“So you see Your Honor,” I looked at the judge. “Anne has been living with my mother since that day. Arthur and I have been unable to locate her parents. It’s as if they just left Anne to fend for herself. Howard and I got married two weeks ago and we would now like to legally adopt Anne. She has already become an important part of our family and we would like to make it permanent.”

“Anne what do you want to do?” the judge asked the little girl.

Anne gave the judge an adorable smile and said, “I want them to adopt me, and Sammy too.”

“Sammy?” the judge began to flip through the file in front of him. “I don’t see anyone named Sammy in this document.”

“It’s her dog, Your Honor,” I quietly reminded him.

“That’s right, I forgot.” He paused as he shuffled papers around on his desk, paused again, and eyed Annie suspiciously. “All right, in the case of the orphan Anne and her dog Sammy on this day of September 29, 1933,” the judge smiled. “I grant custody to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Banks. Case dismissed!”











































































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