

# THE STORY BEAST

For Story Artists, Listeners, and Dreamers

## ETERNALLY GRATEFUL

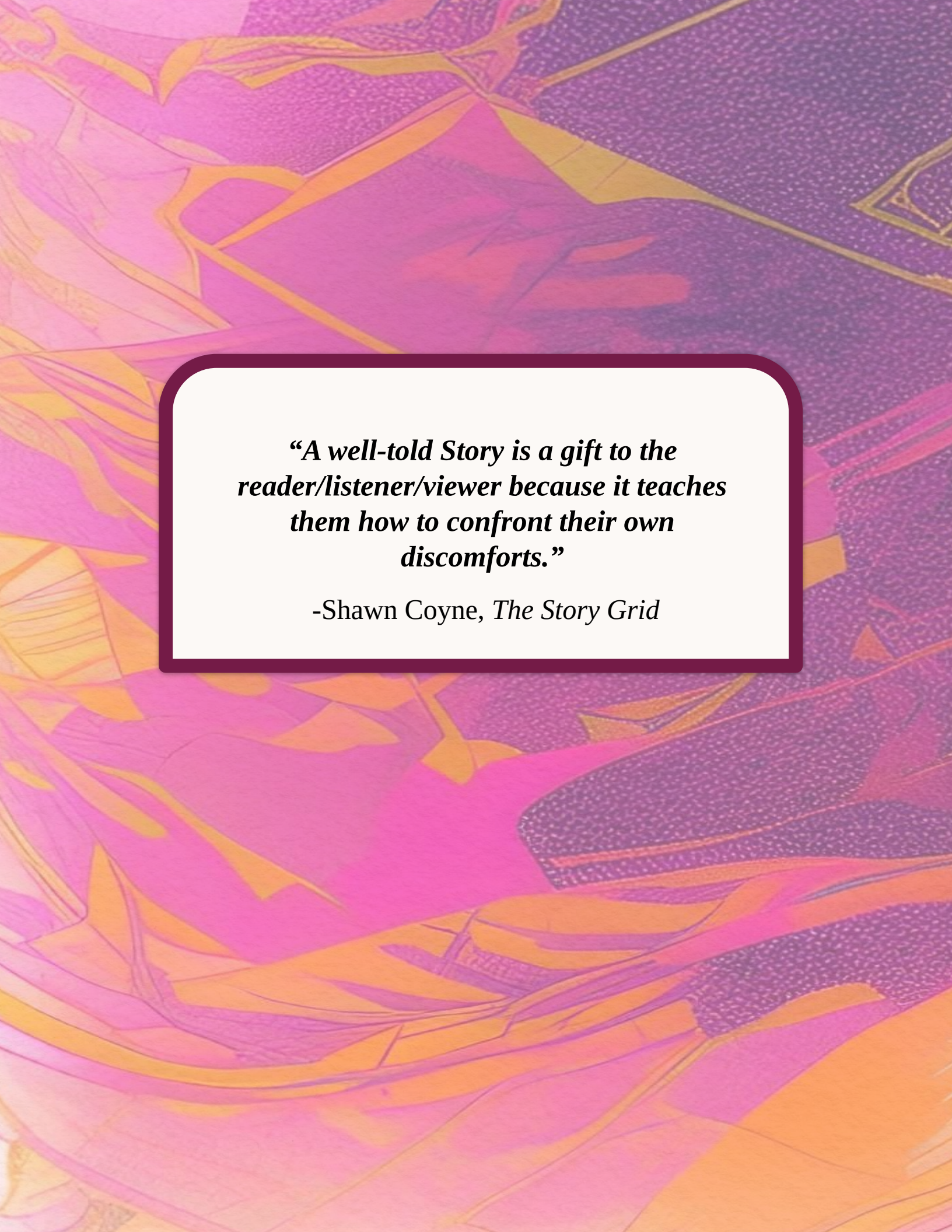


Fang Edition





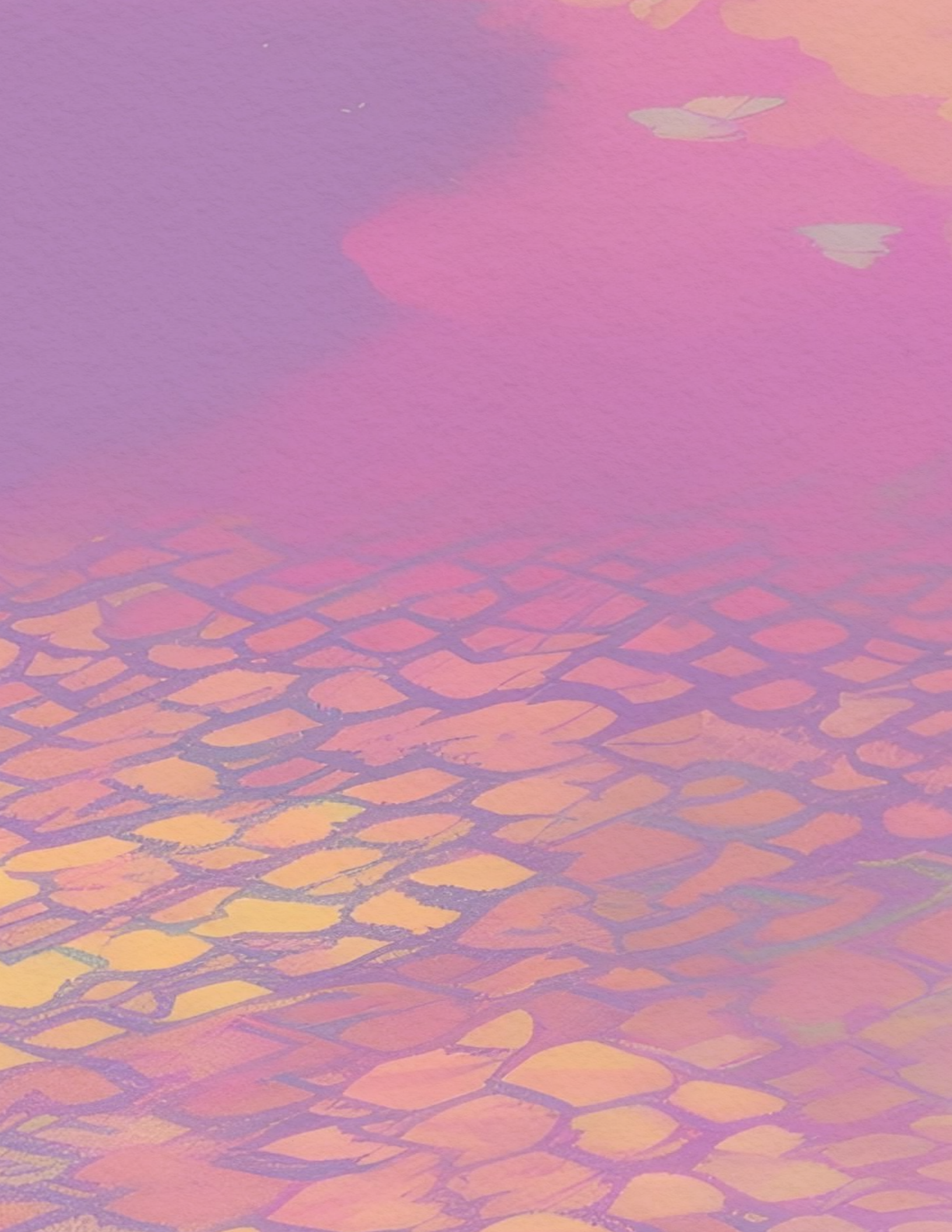




***“A well-told Story is a gift to the  
reader/listener/viewer because it teaches  
them how to confront their own  
discomforts.”***

***-Shawn Coyne, *The Story Grid****







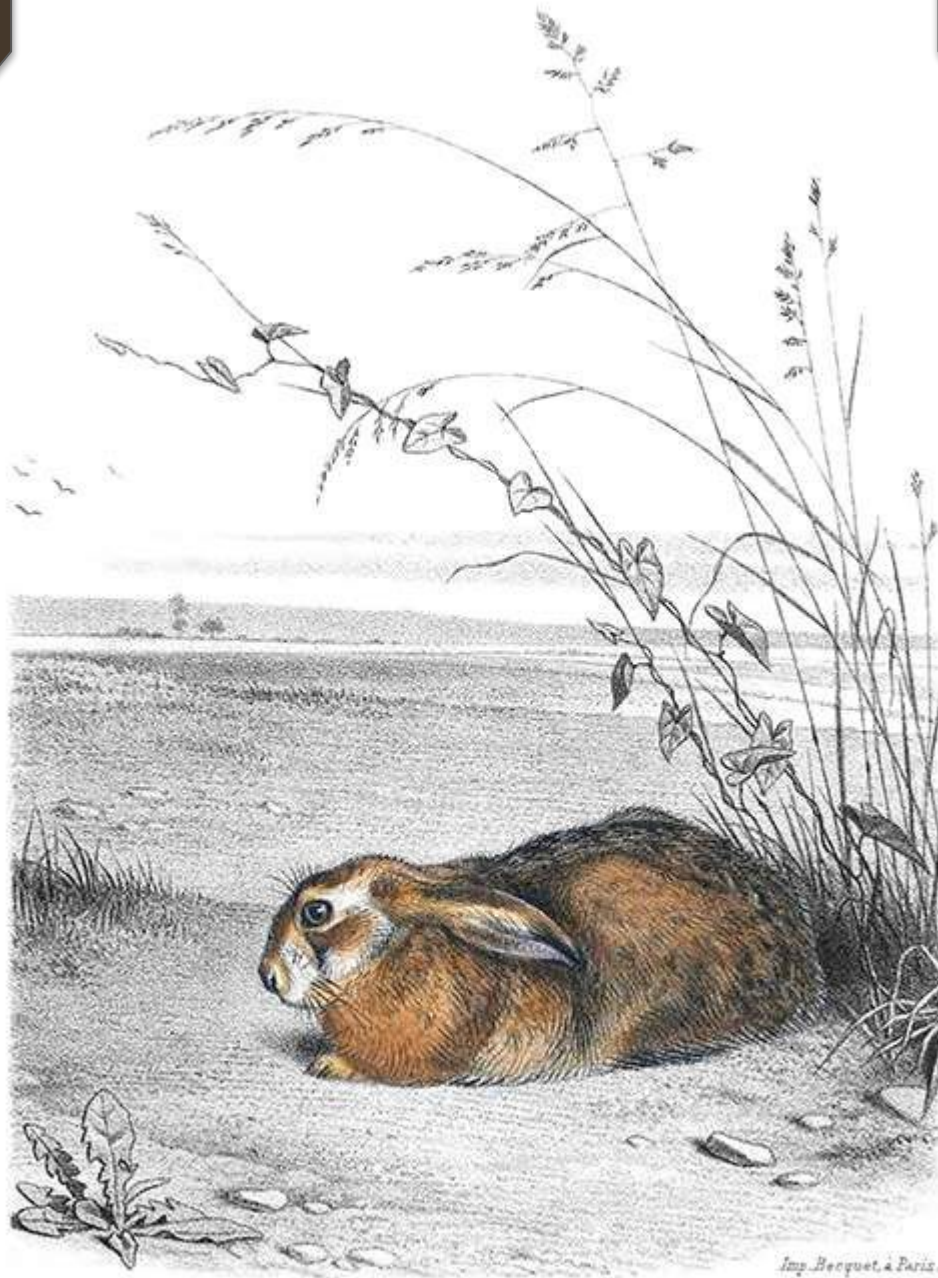
# THE STORY BEAST

Eternally Grateful

Vol. 1 ♦ Issue 5

November 2022

*A Fang Edition*



*Edouard Frère's.*

LE LIÈVRE //



**The Story Beast**  
**Vol. 1 ♦ Issue 5 ♦ Eternally Grateful**  
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*Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-Tail, Virginia Albert 1916  
The tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter*



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**-LETTERS-**





## ***Welcome to The Story Beast,***

The leaves have turned their brilliant shades, the air is crisp, and the Days of Feasting and Celebration approach. For us at The Story Beast it is also a time of reflection and gratitude. In keeping with our November theme of Eternally Grateful, we are grateful for all of the time, talent, and effort so many folks have put into the creation and perpetuation of this e-Publication. We would never have gotten this far without the tireless dedication, sacrifice, and creative inspiration from all of our incredible volunteers in this communal labor of love. To everyone who has helped The Story Beast in its journey of discovery in any way, a heartfelt thank you.

It takes a lot of time and effort to generate a new issue each month and we are reviewing that model. We are also all storytellers, and gigs and life happen. Regretfully, we have had to say goodbye to some old friends, and we are constantly making new ones. We are also reviewing, revising, and streamlining our processes. Nevertheless, we cannot do any of this without you, our readers and contributors.

We need your poems, stories, and artwork, as well as articles. December's theme is Guiding Lights. Works do not have to fit the theme. This is your e-Pub and things which you all might find interesting get published. We love the creative submissions we have received so far and encourage all of you to keep them coming. All of us have taken on this task because we love stories. This is our way to trying to build connections and community across the storytelling world. Please let us know what you would like to see in this e-Pub, what you find helpful, and tell your friends about us.

To all of you who have submitted your words and art to The Story Beast and to those who will do so in the future, thank you for entrusting us with your creative work and allowing us to share your ingenious spark with others.

**To further help build community among storytellers and artists, The Story Beast is proud to announce the creation of the [Beastly Blog](#)!**

We hope that folks will use this forum to share ideas, inspiration, and discussions about their art. This aligns with our vision of having a "Big Tent" where storytellers, artists, poets, and all art forms which use story are welcomed. Stay awhile and feast with the Beast!

***Thank you very much.***

***The Spirits of the Beast***  
[storybeasteditor@gmail.com](mailto:storybeasteditor@gmail.com)





***Dearest Crone:***

People bypass you all the time. Only a handful of people actually stop and offer you any kind of bread or cheese. How is that enough to survive? Why aren't you stopping everyone who walks past you?

***Frustrated by Being Ignored***





***Dear Frustrated by Being Ignored:***

How do you know that I am not stopping everyone who walks past me? How dare you assume such things? Or have you been climbing trees and spying on me? Well, perhaps I need to be careful of my own assumptions. Don't tell anyone I admitted that last part.

I may have been around awhile, as in a couple hundred years give or take a century, but I don't find the need to talk to everyone. I attempt to find the people who have an aura about them and will be more likely to respond to my requests. I do amuse myself and purposely choose the exact opposite people. I already know they will decline my needs, but I do delight in throwing a curse or at least some unsolicited advice to those who vex me.

You are the artistic type, yes? You feel that your art must be there for any and all people? True, true, everyone needs art -- but maybe not YOUR art. Sounds harsh? Good. It's the truth. Some people find the truth to be hard.

Let me put it this way: your talents are important to a handful and that is plenty satisfactory to survive and even thrive as an artist. You do not need to be an artist for everyone although everyone does need art. Determine the people who exude the aura that best suits your skill set. Go after them. Still, you can always reach out to everyone, but you are guaranteed to be tired and frustrated. Sound familiar?

Oh, but how do you determine these auras? It's a word you will likely cringe at: "marketing." Actually, "marketing research" to be more precise. Surprised that a decrepit crone such as myself knows of such words? Think about it, there has been marketing research ever since the beginning of time.



- Find these answers for yourself (dust those cobwebs in the brain).
- Rank by generation/age group your favorites as an artist (performance/teaching).
- Ponder what geographies are your primary ones (cities/counties/states/regions).
- Determine what geographies are your secondary ones (cities/counties/states/regions).
- Look at what you have performed/taught in the last five years. How much time was dedicated to these different ages and geographies? What are you wishing for as your core audience in the next five years?
- Consider and list what habits, hobbies, and other places these people could be found.
- Pretend to talk to these core people (out loud or in your mind). Anything else you discover?

Did you take notes? You may think that I only use my memory to remember. Hidden under my skirts are plenty of pieces of parchment. And what of those libraries? Much parchment there that you can hold and even magical kinds that exist in some other universe or reality. Of course, you need some Dewey Decimals on this journey of yours to find people of similar auras. Go to 658.8 for marketing. If you are daring enough, press on to 658.85 for selling. You could linger at 659 for some public relations help.

What? You'd rather swallow a mouse? I could arrange that for you. I must leave you and curse -- I mean bless -- someone else. Oh, bother!

***Yours on the Road -  
The Crone of All Crones***





# WANTED



## Content for **THE STORY BEAST**

Looking for Story in all its exciting forms: traditional, modern or melded!

-Short Stories

-Articles on Storytelling

-Story Based Activities

- Art

-Poems

For Submission Guidelines go to <https://storybeast.org/submissions/>

Submit to [storybeasteditor@gmail.com](mailto:storybeasteditor@gmail.com)

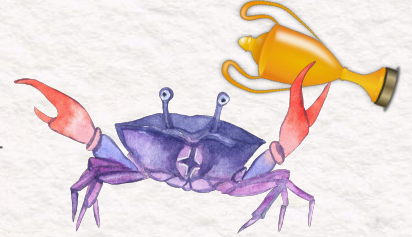


# NOVEMBER'S BEAST OF STORY

## Eternally Grateful

### *The Island Storm*

*By Wayne Kartchner*



Brad, Holly, and Joy lived with their mom and dad on an island. It was a great life. They played on the beach and chased monkeys in the jungle. For lunch, they ate crabs and coconuts. There were other people on the island, but the island was big enough that they could be alone if they wanted to be. Once a month the mail boat came with supplies.

One day Dad said, "You can't go out today because a big storm is coming," And boy, he was right! It blew for a night and two days. The whole family huddled together in the storm cellar and listened while the wind raged and tore at the trees.

"I'm glad you built our house high on the hill," exclaimed Brad, looking out the small cellar window. "I can see waves reaching halfway up the hill."

"And look at all the coconut trees," said Holly "It looks like they've all been knocked over."

"You'll be surprised," replied Dad. "Coconut and palm trees are used to winds like this. They'll lose some leaves and bend over, but most of them will pop back up when the wind is gone."

Sure enough, when the hurricane finally passed, most of the trees were still waving, but there was a lot of destruction.

"You kids go down to the beach while we clean up here," instructed Mom. "But be careful. Take a bucket and shovel so you can bring back some crabs and clams for lunch."

Brad, Holly, and Joy were excited to get outside and play after being cooped up inside for two days.

When they got to the beach everything looked different. There was seaweed and driftwood all over the beach.

As they started to gather some crabs, they heard a strange sound. It was a soft sobbing. "What's that?" wondered Joy, and they all started looking.

"It's coming from on top of this boulder," said Brad. Sure enough, they could hear it. The side of the rock was too steep to climb.

Brad braced himself on the stone. Holly stood on his shoulders, and Joy on her shoulders was just able to peek over the top. She almost tumbled back with surprise. "What do you see?" Holly and Brad said together.

"You won't believe me," she replied. "It's a mermaid. She's crying."

"Why are you crying?" asked Joy.

The mermaid saw her for the first time and drew back in fear. "Oh no! A PEOPLE HUMAN! Please don't eat me."

Joy couldn't help a small giggle. "We won't eat you. What's wrong? Why are you crying? What is your name? Why are you on this rock? You sure are pretty." The words tumbled out all together.



"I can't answer all your questions at once," She replied, "Do you, do you promise you won't eat me, PEOPLE HUMAN?"

"All three of us cross our hearts and hope to die, we won't." And as Brad and Holly crossed their hearts, Joy tumbled down off their shoulders onto the soft sand.

"It's my turn to see her," Holly stated, and Brad and Joy stood against the rock while Holly clambered up to the top. "What is your name and why are you on this boulder?"

"My name is Edna," the mermaid said. "I'm 9 years old."

Brad yelled up, "We have a great aunt named Edna. I like her, but she smells funny."

Edna continued. "I'm stuck on this rock. If I don't get off soon, the water will go away, and I'll dry up and blow away."

"How did you get up there? Don't you live in the ocean?" yelled up Joy.

"I disobeyed my father," Edna said. "He told me to never go near the no water place because if the PEOPLE HUMANS saw me they would try to eat me. But I've always wanted to see the no water place for myself. We tell scary stories to each other about PEOPLE HUMANS and the no water place.

"You say 'no water place.' We call it 'land.'" Brad was proud that he figured it out.

When the storm came, I thought I could see the no water place when there weren't any PEOPLE HUMANS. A big wave threw me on top of this rock, and I can't get back," she cried.

"Can we drag you back to the water?" queried Brad.

"No," cried Edna. "I'd turn to dust long before you got me there. I always have to be touching water. Unless you can move me to the ocean while touching water, I'll turn to dust and blow away."

Joy looked around. "I've got an idea. We can dig a ditch from the sea to the stone."

Edna cried harder "That won't work. The water on the rock will be gone before you can dig a ditch. I'll dry up and blow away."





But Holly jumped down, grabbed the bucket and ran to the sea. With a full bucket of water, she struggled back to the top of the stone on Brad and Joy's shoulders and poured the water over Edna.

Edna erupted with giggles that sounded like a thousand bells. "My father said all PEOPLE HUMANS are bad and want to hurt us. But you are helping me. Maybe some PEOPLE HUMANS aren't so bad after all."

So with their shovel, some driftwood, and their hands. They started shifting the sand. As they dug, they thought they could see Merfolk peeking at them over the waves.

Every so often one of the children would struggle to the top of the boulder with a bucket of water and pour it over Edna. Each time she would giggle with joy.

It didn't take long to get a ditch with a trickle of water to the base of the boulder.

"You got it done!" whooped Edna, and she flopped over the edge of the boulder into the ditch while Brad threw a bucket of water on her as she fell.

Brad, Joy, and Holly grabbed her and pulled her through the ditch until she got into deep enough water to swim.

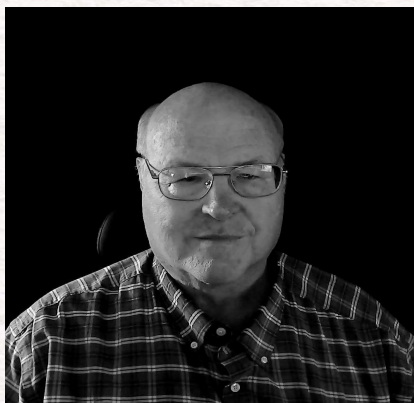
"Thank you, PEOPLE HUMANS. I'll always remember your kindness," said Edna, and she slipped into the sea.

As she swam off, about a thousand other Merfolk surfaced and waved. They all started to sing. If you've ever heard Merfolk sing, you will never forget it. The song of merfolk is so beautiful it can make sailors forget to steer their ships.

When they finished singing, the King of the Merfolk approached the shore and in a loud voice said, "I never thought any PEOPLE HUMANS would help our kind. You have shown me that I was wrong. If any of you are traveling over the sea and get into trouble, know that you can call on the Merfolk for help."

Years later when she was grown up, Joy was captured by pirates and saved by a brave Merboy and Mergirl, but that is a story for another time.

**Tip:** When telling the story, replace the names of the children with the names of the children listening to the story. Or the names of the children's Parents.



### About the Author

Wayne Kartchner started storytelling at a young age, following the example of his father. Wayne put his six children to bed with stories of George Bunny. Now with 22 grandchildren, including two sets of twins, he keeps in practice. He tells stories at many local festivals.

*To be retold in the reteller's own words in educational or professional settings with attribution.*



# NOVEMBER'S BEAST OF POETRY

## Eternally Grateful

### Requiem for Blue

by Tony Toledo



He was the original Blue man.  
He was the Street Poet.  
He was the Holy Fool.  
Story made flesh.  
A heart open to the world.

A timeless minstrel.  
Finder of the one true note.  
A happy accident.  
A knee jerk flirt.  
Nonlinear in a funny sort of linear way.

Born a grown man fully clothed.  
Ageless and energetic.  
In love with his lady, his angel.  
Way way beyond beyond a free spirit.

Once upon a time ago, once upon a rhyme ago.  
Harmonica's mournful wail ago.  
Degrees in his pocket.  
Stories on his tongue.

Arms open wide  
Hugging the world  
How the world hugs him.

Now he lives in the wind.  
Now he travels in the shade.  
Romeo, Romeo where art thou?

Now his stories echo, echo, echo.  
A bit of Blue in every word.  
Fly on, Blue, fly on.

A butterfly on the breeze.  
Such a kiss lasts forever.



*In loving memory of Brother Blue*



#### About the Author:

Tony Toledo has been telling stories to pay his rent since 1990. Students in elementary schools across New England clap for more stories. During the summer of 1979 Tony bicycled from Oregon to Virginia. He hit a cow, crossed the Rockies and got the best tan of his life.

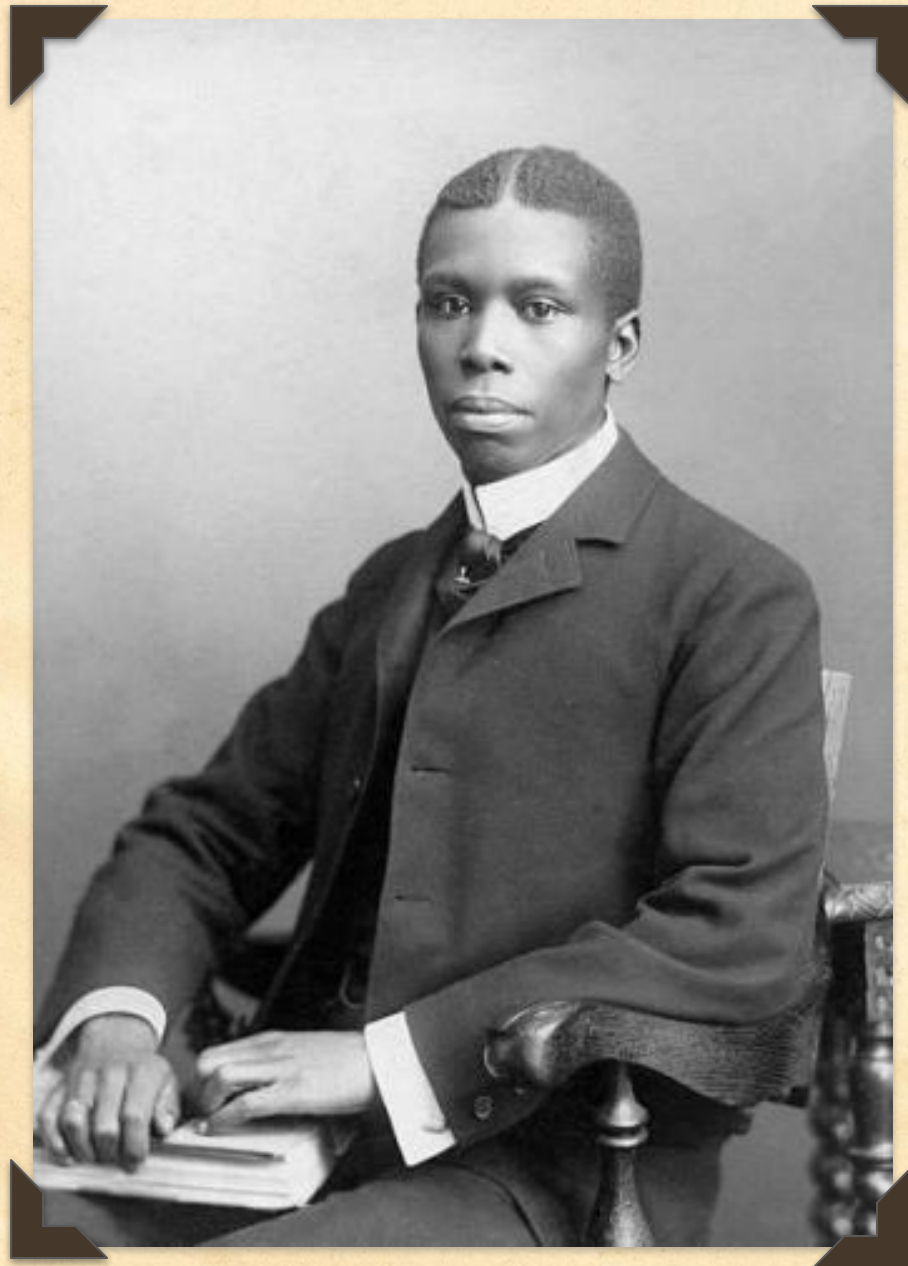
[More about Tony](http://www.TonyToledo.com)

Website- [www.TonyToledo.com](http://www.TonyToledo.com)



# **-LOVE *of* DUNBAR-**

**Sharing Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1906.  
With Oni Lasana**







# LOVE OF DUNBAR



**Oni Lasana** was born in Philadelphia, PA, and is a Cultural Consultant, International Storyteller, Poet, Podcaster, Teaching, and Performing Artist. For 30 years she has been in love with the folktales and poetry of American poet and author Paul Laurence Dunbar. She has presented his works in story theater programs and workshops on three continents, live and virtually. [www.OniLasana.com](http://www.OniLasana.com)

Find more from Oni Lasana on [Aunti Oni Story Village Podcast](#)

Listen to [Kwanzaa Time with Aunti Oni Podcast](#)

*And wherever you get your podcasts.*

*Paul Laurence Dunbar - Sunrise: June 27, 1872 Sunset: February 9, 1909*

Paul Dunbar grew up in Dayton, in the state of Ohio, more eastern than west in America. His love for the change of seasons is gloriously revealed in his elegant and delightful nature poems. His innate spirited insight into the kingdom of earth, overflowed in this months, northern dialect poem, Nutting Song.

To me, it speaks of our eternal gratefulness to live and witness the beauty of the dramatic fall foliage during autumn. From emerald green to blood reds, to gold and orange leaves flitting in the wind landing in beds of dry piles of fairy dust. Autumn leaves! oh leaves! - surrounding bare brown tree limbs as they reach out for winter snow to fall, what a photographers delight indeed! Nutting Song is Dunbar's personal musings of his childhood adventures as he would "go nutting" in the woods collecting chestnuts to roast in a open fire in his mother's wood stove. I hope you enjoy reading or singing, Nutting Song, as much as I..

If you prefer or curious about Dunbar's southern prose, visit [www.PaulLaurenceDunbar.org](http://www.PaulLaurenceDunbar.org) and search for two of my favorites autumn poems; *Signs of The Times*. A theatrical monologue to a turkey and the turkey's response to all the attention in, *Soliloquy of a Turkey*. If you can't get past the southern dialect and the use of archaic and offensive terms he used to appease his reader's back in the late 1800's, reach out to me and I'll read it with you over the phone or e-mail me at [LoveOfDunbar@gmail.com](mailto:LoveOfDunbar@gmail.com) for the northern modern translation, till then I am *eternally grateful* to be in the heart of this Story Beast to share Love Of Dunbar wit' cha!



## Love of Dunbar!

A Literary Discussion & Performance Meetup!

Thursdays on Zoom  
2-4 PM / 7-9 PM EST

Register:

[www.TinyUrl.com/PDunbar](http://www.TinyUrl.com/PDunbar)





## Nutting Song

*by Paul Laurence Dunbar*

The November sun invites me,  
And although the chill wind smites me,  
I will wander to the woodland  
Where the laden trees await;  
And with loud and joyful singing  
I will set the forest ringing,  
As if I were king of Autumn,  
And Dame Nature were my mate, --

While the squirrel in his gambols  
Fearless round about me ambles,  
As if he were bent on showing  
In my kingdom he'd a share;  
While my warm blood leaps and dashes,  
And my eye with freedom flashes,  
As my soul drinks deep and deeper  
Of the magic in the air.

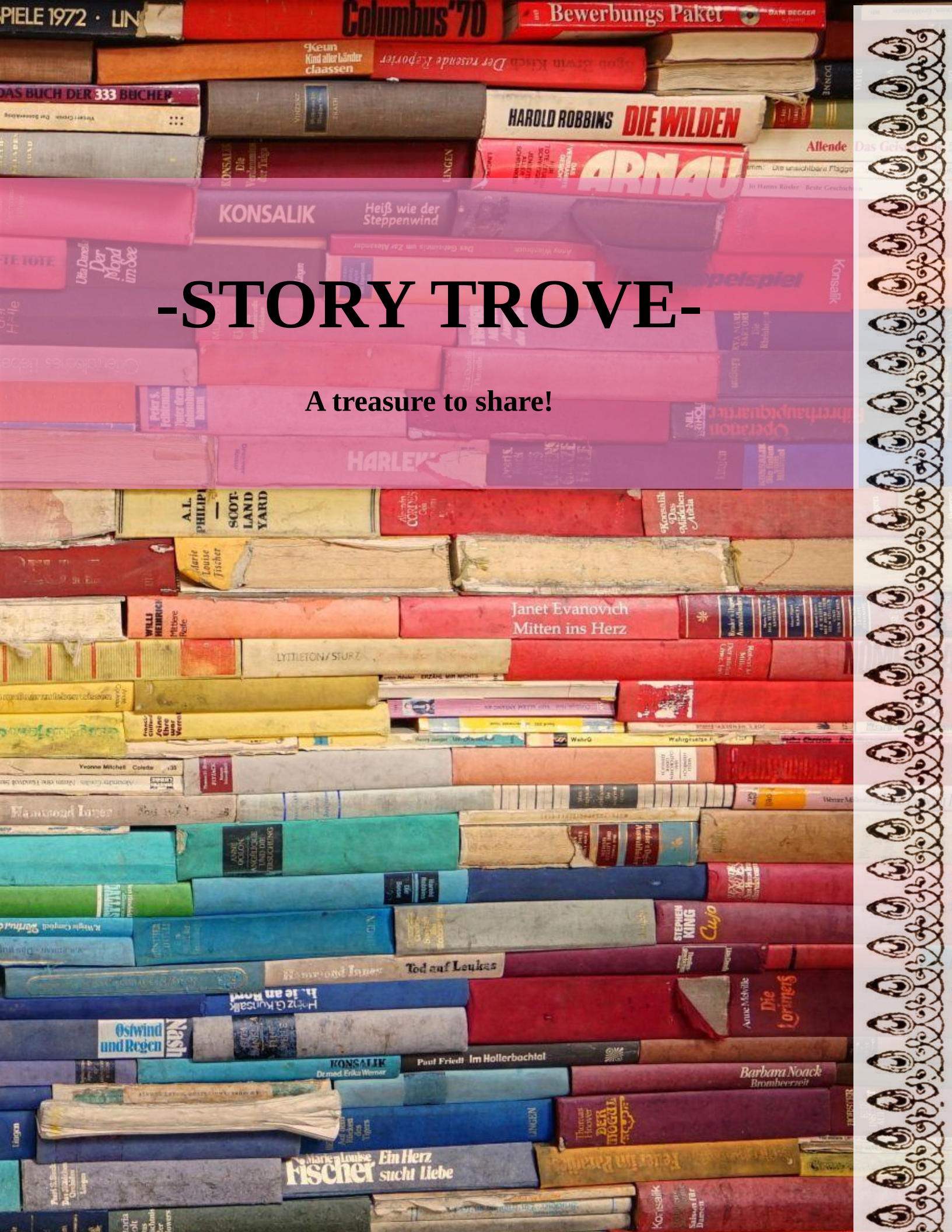
There's a pleasure found in nutting,  
All life's cares and griefs shutting,  
That is fuller far and better  
Than what prouder sports impart.  
Who could help a carol trilling  
As he sees the baskets filling?  
Why, the flow of song keeps running  
O'er the high walls of the heart.

So when I am home returning,  
When the sun is lowly burning,  
I will once more wake the echoes  
With a happy song of praise, --  
For the golden sunlight blessing,  
And the breezes' soft caressing,  
And the precious boon of living  
In the sweet November days.



# -STORY TROVE-

# A treasure to share!







# *Drinking from the Jar*

## *Story from the Philippines*

### *A Story for Teacher Tales & Tentacles*



The king roamed the plains to hunt for deer. In his haste, he became lost and could not find his companions. He traveled on and on until he would fall down from thirst. In the distance, he saw a farm and summoned the energy to make it to the home.

A young woman found him lying on the ground. She woke him up, and the king looked about, seeing the pumpkins and melons, and then said, "I am in need of water."

The woman shook her head. "We do not have a golden cup worthy of you. We only have an old jar to offer water."

"I will take it," pronounced the king.

The young woman brought the jar filled with water. The king drank greedily. When the king handed the jar back to the woman, she smashed it against the fence.

The king wondered, "Why would you break that jar? Do you have no love for your king?"

The woman smiled and shared that the jar, although in the family for several generations, was best to have it broken. "This way," she said, "you will be the last person to drink from the jar and remain with that honor."

At this, the king thought about the cleverness of this woman. When he found his companions and made it back to his lands, he searched about for a jar with a skinny mouth but a wide bottom. He sent a servant to deliver it to the woman with a request to put an entire pumpkin inside it without hurting the jar or the pumpkin. Then, she was to bring it back to him.

The woman gave a message to the servant that she would do as the king asked, but it would take time. Several months later, she arrived with the jar.

When the king peeked inside, he saw that there truly was a huge pumpkin inside that narrow-mouthed jar. For being so clever, he asked her to marry him. After the marriage, she revealed how she did it.

She had taken a pumpkin vine and let down one of its buds down the narrow neck. While nurturing the plant on the outside, the bud inside grew from the care.

It is said that the children of the king and the woman grew to be clever.

**Chasing the Tale:** While this is a story that combines kindness with cleverness, the riddle side of this story allows for more connections within the classroom. Math, Science, and Technology are important subjects. Yet, all these subjects must have problem-solving skills. How quick are the students in getting clues as to how problems could be solved in this story? How is kindness a way to solve problems? For older students, discuss the blending of Biology, Social Studies, and Psychology. As a hint, consider these details: Pumpkins are a source of nutrients for people living in the Philippines with low calories, high carbohydrates, and a source of serotonin to regulate moods, behaviors, and body temperature. Though, besides eating the pumpkins, people can use the leaves to turn into fertilizer to be even more successful in their gardens and farms. People of all socioeconomic classes enjoy pumpkins.



# **The Queer Little Baker Man**

---

***By Phila Butler Bowman***

**A Story for Storycrafting**

All the children were glad when the Little Baker came to town and hung the sign above his queer little brown shop,

“Thanksgiving Loaves to Sell.”

Each child ran to tell the news to another child until soon the streets echoed with the sound of many running feet, and the clear November air was full of the sound of happy laughter, as a crowd of little children thronged as near as they dared to the Little Baker’s shop, while the boldest crept so close that they could feel the heat from the big brick oven, and see the gleaming rows of baker’s pans.

The Little Baker never said a word. He washed his hands at the windmill water spout and dried them, waving them in the crisp air. Then he unfolded a long, spotless table, and setting it up before his shop door, he began to mold the loaves, while the wondering children grew nearer and nearer to watch him.

He molded big, long loaves, and tiny, round loaves; wee loaves filled with currants, square loaves with queer markings on them, fat loaves and flat loaves, and loaves in shapes such as the children had never seen before, and always as he molded he sang a soft tune to these words:

“Buy my loaves of brown and white,  
Molded for the child’s delight.  
Who forgets another’s need,  
Eats unthankful and in greed;  
But the child who breaks his bread  
With another, Love has fed.”

By and by the children began to whisper to each other.

“I shall buy that very biggest loaf,” said the Biggest Boy. “Mother lets me buy what I wish. I shall eat it alone, which is fair if I pay for it.”

“Oh,” said the Tiniest Little Girl, “that would be greedy. You could never eat so big a loaf alone.”

“If I pay for it, it is mine,” said the Biggest Boy, boastfully, “and one need not share what is his own unless he wishes.”

“Oh,” said the Tiniest Little Girl, but she said it more softly this time, and she drew away from the Biggest Boy, and looked at him with eyes that had grown big and round.

“I have a penny,” she said to the Little Lane Boy, “and you and I can have one of those wee loaves together. They have currants in them, so we shall not mind if the loaf is small.”

“No, indeed,” said the Little Lane Boy, whose face had grown wistful when the Biggest Boy had talked of the great loaf. “No, indeed, but you shall take the bigger piece.”

Then the little Baker Man raked out the bright coals from the great oven into an iron basket, and he put in the loaves, every one, while the children crowded closer with eager faces.

When the last loaf was in, he shut the oven door with a clang so loud and merry that the children broke into a shout of laughter.

Then the Queer Little Baker Man came and stood in his tent door, and he was smiling, and he sang again a merry little tune to these words:





“Clang, clang, my oven floor,  
My loaves will bake as oft before,  
And you may play where shines the sun  
Until each loaf is brown and done.”

Then away ran the children, laughing, and looking at the door of the shop where the Queer Little Baker stood, and where the raked-out coals, bursting at times, cast long, red lights against the brown wall, and as they ran they sang together the Queer Little Baker’s merry song:

“Clang, clang, my oven floor,  
The loaves will bake as oft before.”

Then some played at hide-and-seek among the sheaves of ungarnered corn, and some ran gleefully through the heaped-up leaves of russet and gold for joy to hear them rustling. But some, eager, returned home for pennies to buy a loaf when the Queer Little Baker should call.

“The loaves are ready, white and brown,  
For every little child in town,  
Come buy Thanksgiving loaves and eat,  
But only Love can make them sweet.”

Soon all the air was filled with the sound of the swift running feet, as the children flew like a cloud of leaves blown by the wind in answer to the Queer Little Baker’s call. When they came to his shop they paused, laughing and whispering, as the Little Baker laid out the loaves on the spotless table.

“This is mine,” said the Biggest Boy, and laying down a silver coin he snatched the great loaf, and ran away to break it by himself.

Then came the Impatient Boy, crying: “Give me my loaf. This is mine, and give it to me at once. Do you not see my coin is silver? Do not keep me waiting.”

The Little Baker never said a word. He did not smile, he did not frown, he did not hurry. He gave the Impatient Boy his loaf and watched him, as he, too, hurried away to eat his loaf alone.



Then came others, crowding, pushing with their money, the strongest and rudest gaining first place, and snatching each a loaf they ran off to eat without a word of thanks, while some very little children looked on wistfully, not able even to gain a place. All this time the Queer Little Baker kept steadily on laying out the beautiful loaves on the spotless table.

A Gentle Lad came, when the crowd grew less, and giving all the pennies he had he bought loaves for all the little ones; so that by and by no one was without a loaf. The Tiniest Little Girl went away

hand in hand with the Little Lane Boy to share his wee loaf, and both were smiling, and whoever broke one of those smallest loaves found it larger than it had seemed at first.

But now the biggest Boy was beginning to frown.

"This loaf is sour," he said angrily.

"But is it not your own loaf," said the Baker, "and did you not choose it yourself, and choose to eat it alone? Do not complain of the loaf since it is your own choosing."

Then those who had snatched the loaves ungratefully and hurried away, without waiting for a word of thanks, came back.

"We came for good bread," they cried, "but those loaves are sodden and heavy."

"See the lad there with all those children. His bread is light. Give us, too, light bread and sweet."

But the Baker smiled a strange smile. "You chose in haste," he said, "as those choose who have no thought in sharing. I can not change your loaves. I can not choose for you. Had you, buying, forgotten that mine are Thanksgiving loaves? I shall come again; then you can buy more wisely."

Then these children went away thoughtfully.

But the very little children and the Gentle Lad sat eating their bread with joyous laughter, and each tiny loaf was broken into many pieces as they shared with each other, and to them the bread was as fine as cake and as sweet as honey.

Then the Queer Little Baker brought cold water and put out the fire. He folded his spotless table, and took down the boards of his little brown shop, packed all into his wagon, and drove away singing a quaint tune. Soft winds rustled the corn, and swept the boughs together with a musical chuckling. And where the brown leaves were piled thickest, making a little mound, sat the Tiniest Little Girl and the Little Lane Boy, eating their sweet currant loaf happily together.





## The Two Alms

*Translated and adapted from The French by Eleanor L. Skinner*

A Story for Healing Springs

Once upon a time a poor old beggar woman stood shivering by the side of a road which led to a prosperous village. She hoped some traveler would be touched by her misery and would give her a few pennies with which to buy food and fuel.

It had been snowing since early morning, and a sharp east wind made the evening air bitterly cold. At the sound of approaching footsteps the old woman's face brightened with expectancy, but the next moment her eager expression changed to disappointment, for the traveler passed without giving her anything.

"Poor old woman," he said to himself. "This is a bitter cold night to be begging on the roadside. It is, indeed. I am truly sorry for her."

And as his footsteps became fainter, the beggar woman whispered, "I must not give up. Perhaps the next traveler will help me."

In a little while she heard the sound of wheels. It happened to be the carriage of the mayor, who was on his way to a Thanksgiving banquet. When his excellency saw the miserable old woman, he ordered the carriage to stop, lowered the window, and took a piece of money from his pocket.

"Here you are," he called, holding out a coin.

The woman hurried to the window as fast as she could. Before she reached it, however, the mayor noticed that he had taken a gold piece instead of a silver one out of his pocket.

"Wait a moment," he said. "I've made a mistake."

He intended to exchange the coin for one of less value, but he caught his sleeve on the window fastening, and dropped the gold piece in the snow. The woman had come up to the carriage window, and he noticed that she was blind.

"I've dropped the money, my good woman," he said, "but it lies near you there in the snow. No doubt you'll find it."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said the beggar, kneeling down to search for the coin.

On rolled the mayor to the banquet. "It was foolish to give her gold," he thought, "but I'm a rich man, and I seldom make such a mistake."

That night after the banquet when the mayor sat before a blazing fire in his comfortable chair, the picture of the beggar woman, kneeling in the snow, and fumbling around for the gold piece, came before his eyes.





"I hope she will make good use of my generous gift," he mused. "It was entirely too much to give, but no doubt I shall be rewarded for my charity."

The first traveler hurried on his way until he came to the village inn, where a great wood fire crackled merrily in the cheery dining room. He took off his warm coat and sat down to wait for dinner to be served. But he could not forget the picture of the old beggar woman standing on the snowy roadside.

Suddenly he rose, put on his coat, and said to the host, "Prepare dinner for two. I shall be back presently."

He hastened back to the place where he had seen the poor old woman, who was still on her knees in the snow searching for the mayor's gold piece.

"My good woman, what are you looking for?" he asked.

"A piece of money, sir. The gentleman who gave it to me dropped it in the snow."

"Do not search any longer," said the traveler, "but come with me to the village inn. There you may warm yourself before the great fire, and we shall have a good dinner. Come, you shall be my Thanksgiving guest."

He helped her to her feet, and then, for the first time, he saw that she was blind. Carefully he took her arm and led her along the road to the inn.

"Sit here and warm yourself," he said, placing her gently in a comfortable chair. In a few moments he led her to the table and gave her a good dinner.

On that Thanksgiving Day an angel took up her pen and struck out all account of the gold piece from the book where the mayor recorded his good deeds. Another angel wrote in the traveler's book of deeds an account of the old beggar woman's Thanksgiving dinner at the village inn.







# **-MADE FOR YOU-**

**Fang articles and stories written by the editors**



# What Did You Eat Today?

By Bowen Lee  
An article for Storycology

What did you eat today? Was it something you took out of a box, or a plastic bag, or a tray wrapped in plastic? Did you prepare it for cooking yourself, or did you simply pop it into the microwave? Or did you get it already cooked and prepared for you in a restaurant or take-out place? If so, did it come with disposable packaging, a Styrofoam container, or a cardboard box lined with plastic that doesn't break down or decompose readily? Did you get throw-away utensils to eat with? Did your meal include meat or dairy? Were any vegetables or fruits you ate cultivated in a monoculture field requiring fertilizers and insecticides and farm machinery to grow and harvest it? How far away did your food have to travel to get to you? Was it flown or trucked to you? Did it come from another country far away?

If any of that rings true for you, you are contributing to climate change, the imbalance of nature, and the demise of the planet, just by what and how you are eating. What I described was how the typical person in the United States of America eats. If you don't consider climate change a serious threat to humanity, or something that you can do anything about, let me walk you through the impact of a food Americans commonly eat within the typical food system we have set up in this country.

Let's look at the impact of one hamburger.

This research was done by Gidon Eshel, Research Professor of Environmental Science, Bard College:

*Our research, which was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the US, found that raising beef cattle is far more environmentally costly than poultry, pork, dairy or eggs. Per calorie, cattle requires on average 28 times more land and 11 times more water to farm. Farming cattle releases five times more greenhouse gases and uses six times as much nitrogen as the average of other animal products.*

When compared with staple plant foods, these ratios roughly double. [So, a beef calorie requires about 50 times more land than a wheat calorie.](#)

If your hamburger meat comes from feedlot cattle, which it most assuredly does if it comes from a fast-food restaurant, chain grocery store, or restaurant chain, monocrop corn or soy or grains were fed to your cow destined to become your hamburger, adding to the environmental cost of your burger in chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The wheat for the hamburger bun, the lettuce, onions, tomato, and the cucumber that turns into the pickle, also were monocrops that necessitated the use of synthetic fertilizers. This is from Wikipedia:

Synthetic [fertilizer](#) used in agriculture has wide-reaching environmental consequences. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land, production of these fertilizers and associated land use practices are drivers of global warming.<sup>[2]</sup> The use of fertilizer has also led to a number of direct environmental consequences: agricultural runoff which leads to downstream effects like ocean dead zones and waterway contamination, soil microbiome degradation,<sup>[28]</sup> and accumulation of toxins in ecosystems. Indirect environmental impacts include: the environmental impacts of fracking for natural gas used in the Haber process, the agricultural boom is partially responsible for the rapid growth in human population and large-scale industrial agricultural practices are associated with habitat destruction, pressure on biodiversity and agricultural soil loss.



All the components of your hamburger got to one place by being transported there. That took fossil fuels for the truck, the plane, the boat, the train, and the car that brought you to the hamburger. And for transport, the foodstuffs were packaged hygienically and in a way to prevent damage in handling on their sometimes long and distant travels to get to you safely. That required industrial packaging from factories and the use of plastic in some form or another.

If you prepare and cook your burger at home, the environmental costs slow down. Cooking your own food is an environmentally wise way of living. But the more you rely on pre-packaged, already prepared foods, the more industrial means are used to make your food, and the environmental costs go up.

This is from the Union of Concerned scientists:

*Beef production is the largest driver of tropical deforestation globally, and this destruction is concentrated in South America. In fact, beef production is responsible for more than twice as much deforestation as the other three top drivers—soy, palm oil, and wood products—combined. Cattle in South America are largely raised on pasture, and that pasture is often located on previously forested lands.*

*South America, and Brazil in particular, exports beef and other cattle products all around the world. Beef produced in South America can be found in pet food, canned beef products, and in American-based fast-food restaurants in South America.*

*We took a look at 13 global fast food, retail, and food manufacturing companies that buy beef from South America. After scrutinizing their written policies, communicating with the companies and asking questions, we found that all 13 companies have a long way to go before they can be confident that none of the beef they are buying is linked to deforestation.*

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/lael-goodman/americas-top-brands-cattle-and-deforestation/>

Hmm. It's trees that clean up our atmosphere and restore a balance to our excess production of greenhouse gas. So we're cutting down forests for hamburger?

We are what we eat, and environmentally, we are in a lot of trouble because of what we eat. So what did you eat today, and is it at all possible that your food choices can help the planet become healthier? Maybe we should try, for Mother Earth's sake.



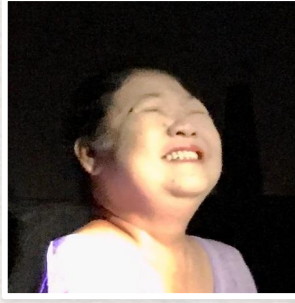
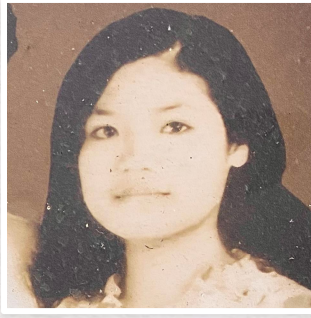
### Storycology Head Editor

**Bowen Lee** divides her time between cities, forests, and the ocean around Monterey, CA. She has been a teacher, a writer, an illustrator, and now, she tells stories, incorporating storytelling into all aspects of teaching. She conducts workshops on storytelling to teach educational content in national and regional education conferences.

<https://storyrex.com>

*To be retold in the reteller's own words in educational or professional settings with attribution.*





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## SAYING GOODBYE TO IBU

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*By Brandon Spars Head Editor of Fusion*

On Friday, June 3, 2022, my wife, Irma, received news that her mother had gone into the hospital. She had been given the same room in which my wife's father had died just two and a half years earlier. The text from my sister-in-law came with a photo. My mother-in-law was covered with tubes and an oxygen mask; her eyes were shut. She lay stiffly across the thin, metal-framed bed. She died just a few hours later.

My wife was numb, obviously in shock. Phone calls came, and I could hear the outpour of emotion on the other end of the line, but my wife remained silent, stoic. We had just attended Sonoma Academy's 2022 graduation in Santa Rosa, California, where we both work, and we were preparing to head out to chaperone graduation night. We didn't tell anyone of her mother's passing.

Irma had begun scanning the Internet for plane tickets, but we couldn't arrive until late Monday, which would be after the time her brother had scheduled for the cremation. This brought back memories of her father's cremation when we had jumped on a plane to Bali, Indonesia, only to get a text with a picture of his blazing body while we were still in the luggage claim. My wife had fallen to the floor in the arrival terminal and had begun to sob uncontrollably.

She didn't buy a ticket.

The grief was slow to come, but steady. By the next day, my wife retired to her bed. By Sunday, she was leaking tears, unable to do anything but stare at pictures of her mother. The grief was strong and inescapable. It dug in deep like a stubborn illness that wouldn't let her sleep or eat. It has lingered, and it has weakened her.

I am a storyteller, and my mother-in-law is in many of the stories that I tell about Bali. She is constantly featured stepping out of the kitchen, wiping her hands on a dishtowel as she surveys the arrival of guests only to step back into the kitchen to light her stove with a vigorous click. Over and over again, in my stories, she serves tea and coffee and fried snacks, still holding her kitchen tongs, with which she snatches the half-starved, half-wild cat that resides on their property by the neck and drags off with her back to the kitchen so it will not be a nuisance. But she was also more than this. She was my mother-in-law, and I loved her dearly.

For nearly thirty years, my mother-in-law and I played an ongoing game together.

"Bu!" I would shout, like I was startling someone from behind a corner. However, "Bu" is short for "Ibu" in Indonesian, which means "mother."

"Apa?" she would answer playfully, knowing my added emphasis to her name of address could only result in something ridiculous I was about to say.



### Fusion Head Editor

#### About the Author

As a teacher of both high school humanities and college writing, Brandon has always brought storytelling into his lessons, whether focusing on ancient history or English language acquisition. He has contributed to countless workshops and conferences on the intersection between storytelling, ancient history, and pedagogy. Brandon is a regular Bay Area storyteller as well as a TEDx speaker and a five-time champion of the Moth StorySLAM (including two GrandSLAMS). He is the author of four books on storytelling. You can find out more about him at [www.brandonspars.com](http://www.brandonspars.com)







“Please prepare me an ice bath. I am very sweaty.”

There was no bathtub. There was no ice. But she would continue the game, “Maybe you should go stay in a hotel!”

I grew especially close to my mother-in-law during the year of 1997 when I received a grant to study the Balinese language. There weren’t any courses for beginners, and I had enrolled in classes at Udayana University, where the students were already fluent in Balinese. The professors seldom showed up to class, and when they did, the classes were about literature, and I was hopelessly lost. But after a year, I had learned quite a bit of Balinese. That was because of Ibu.

Vincentia Ismiati came from Madiun in East Java. She came from a Muslim family, and I was fascinated by the story of how, as a little girl, she had been drawn to a seminary where nuns taught sewing and other skills. Her family, rather than forbidding her from continuing to go, had recognized something natural and unstoppable in her attraction to the nuns and to Catholicism, and so they had permitted her not only to visit the nuns every day, but eventually to go to seminary school and even convert to Catholicism.

At the age of twenty she married my father-in-law, whom I called “Bapak,” which means “father,” and came to live in Bali, where she had to learn to speak Balinese in order to understand the stream of instructions she received from a very demanding mother-in-law, my wife’s grandmother. It was because she had learned Balinese as a young woman that made her such a patient and insightful teacher for me to practice with, and, of course, we had a new way to play our game.

“Bu!” I would suddenly shout.

“Apa?!?” She would snarl dramatically.

Because Balinese is rooted in a caste system, the normal strategy is to lower oneself, and honor the person with whom you are speaking. To do this you might use neutral words about yourself and respectful words about the one to whom you are addressing, which is very critical when you are speaking to individuals from the upper two castes, Ksatria and Brahmana. In jest, I would use the high caste words about myself, telling her that I, the king, had just eaten. Or, that I, the high priest, was about to bask in the bedroom. However, she never let me have the last word. “Yes, it is fitting that the king should eat because his legs are too skinny for his big head.” Or “Perhaps the high priest should just stay in his bedroom and bask all week in there because he seems to be somewhat drunk and delirious at the moment.”

The stories I tell about her on the stage often feature her in the kitchen, probably because she was such a good cook. She awakened at 3 AM to speed off to the market to buy materials for every day’s meal. Then at 4 AM, it was impossible to sleep through her cooking because she would fiercely bang the frying pans with her metal tools so vigorously that it made the kitchen seem more like a construction site. And the louder the production, the tastier the food seemed to be. Pressure cookers hissed and hot oil roared ferociously, but Ibu kept them beaten into submission with the clangs and scrapes of her metal spoons and spatulas. Then there would be silence. She would stand next to her husband, adding salt and chili to the rice and side dishes while he ate because she knew his own taste better than he did.

Once Bapak had headed off to the office, she would dress and get ready for a full day of work herself. She would often return home with fresh ingredients and make something to add to the dishes she had prepared in the morning so that there was something different for Bapak to enjoy when he arrived home. So, late afternoon the kitchen would once again clang and clatter with life. Then she did the dishes, the laundry, and swept the yard. I seldom saw her idle.

When my wife gave birth to our daughter, Ibu came to stay with us in Berkeley, California, for six months. She replicated her recipes with ingredients she found at the Asian grocery stores. When my college friends heard about her passing, her cooking was one of the first things they mentioned. Ibu had cooked a dish for nearly everyone we knew at the time, and they had not forgotten.



The comfort her presence brought to my wife and me when we had our first child was as warm and familiar as the food my wife would suddenly crave. Rujak was eaten while Ibu rubbed my swollen wife with minyak telon or minyak kayu putih (oils used to soothe and heal sore or fevered bodies in Indonesia). Of course, after our daughter, Clara Sasmita Spars, was born, Ibu could dispel our panic over her incessant crying by simply picking her up and patting her. Ibu had a gentle, confident strength.

“Bu!” I continued our dynamic even during her time in the States.

“Apa!?!” she would growl comically.

“The Minister is rather parched and could use a little something to wet his whistle.”

“Maybe the Minister should go outside and jump in the lake. That way his whistle and everything else will get a good soaking.”

Our children might have been somewhat nervous around their relatives in Bali, mainly because of the language barrier. We didn’t raise them to speak Indonesian, so our visits were probably difficult for them when they were in elementary school. Their great grandmother was terrifying. Byron, our second child, never met her, but Clara did. This ninety-year-old woman drifted about the house like women did fifty years ago, topless, her breasts like two empty, leather bags that hung below her waist. She chewed betel nut, which produced a bright red liquid that ran down her chin. She had the ability to suddenly appear in a room, looking like she had just eaten a small child, holding her hands out while making incomprehensible squawking sounds. Our young daughter wanted nothing to do with her.

Both of our children treated Bapak with suspicion as well. He would sit silently on the ground reading his paper. He was so still that he would become unnoticeable as our kids chased ubiquitous puppies and kittens around the yard. When Clara or Byron got unintentionally close, their grandfather was likely to suddenly reach out and grab them like a terrifying ogre. They would scream in real panic until he would finally release them. He was playing, of course, but neither Clara nor Byron wanted anything to do with this game.

But the kids loved their grandmother. Language didn’t matter. They would tumble into her arms and laugh right through the language barrier.

Once, Ibu brought home live freshwater eels, which she would grab with her hand out of a bucket and throw directly into the hot oil. The eels were trapped in the bucket with a pan on top, but some of them were as strong and as large as snakes, and once they pushed the pan off and escaped. That meant that ten black things, about half a meter in length, went wriggling down the hallway straight at Clara, who sat playing with a puppy. Upon seeing them, Clara bolted upright and ran straight out of the house, past Bapak and right into her grandmother’s arms. Then, Ibu held Clara in one arm and picked up ten eels with her free hand, which she dumped unceremoniously back in the bucket. Ibu could also kill scorpions with her bare hands. I saw her once pinch one with her powerful fingers before it could sting her.

When we stayed with Ibu, whether we were young newlyweds or the parents of two children, life would fall into a comforting rhythm. The industriousness that began at 4 PM would rival the sound of a new sewer line being put in, but, while it did wake us up, it also allowed us to drift into an even more comfortable sleep for another two or three hours. Ibu was already meeting the challenges of the day for us all. She had already braved the roads and the market. There would be fresh food for everyone. Her absence while she was at work meant the whole house was quiet, which could be enjoyed for an hour or so, but then the expectation of her arrival would begin in the early afternoon. Her motorcycle would buzz in the driveway, and the gate would scrape open, and there were plastic bags of pink, rose-flavored ice for everyone, or mangoes fresh from someone’s tree.





Later, the hand-done laundry would slurp from the back of the house, and then the kitchen would come to life once again and the house would hum and vibrate as if the entire thing were being retrofitted. Bapak would arrive and she would always materialize to take his helmet and his glasses, which he swung so absently from his head that I wondered if she were ever not there to take them whether they would simply be tossed amongst the rusty paint cans in which Ibu had planted small green plants. A gentle calm would arrive with dusk, and Ibu would bring out glasses of hot, sweet coffee on a tray, which she stirred with tiny spoons so that all would still be swirling when you reached for one. Soft conversation and laughter would take us into nighttime when we would all sit together in front of the small television.

The rhythm broke down somewhat when Bapak passed away two years ago. I watched over and over again the video of Ibu sitting with Bapak's corpse when it was laid in state in their home. My wife's sister had candidly filmed Ibu as she brought two glasses of coffee, one of which she set on the edge of his coffin. She spoke to him as she sipped her coffee. Softly she said the things that only they could understand after decades of spending most of their moments together.

After Bapak's death, she moved in with my wife's sister, to the delight of our nieces and nephew. I imagine she took the rhythm there with her, but the devotion to Bapak was gone. And, in the brief time I was able to spend with Ibu before Covid hit, I could sense an untethering already beginning. Her rhythm had been a tight orbit around him, and without him, the routine became fragmented, and while moments of joy were spent with her grandchildren, the song that filled her days had stopped playing.



I have heard that many couples die within two or three years of each other. In fact, several people mentioned this to us when they learned that Ibu died suddenly and unexpectedly and so soon after her father's passing. Someone even said that a couple's nervous system can become entwined to the point that when one departs, the other can't but follow. In this way, many have pointed out that her passing is very beautiful; her final act of dedication to her beloved husband.

In those two years after Bapak's passing, we had seen glimmers of a new person stepping out. Ibu had begun to meet a group of women every morning with whom she would walk and then get coffee. She had seemed to enjoy watching Irma's sister cook, and, for once, being served. She enjoyed going out on the motorcycle to pick up her grandchildren at various hours at their various schools. Thus, nobody expected her death to happen, and there was surprise and shock. One of her nieces, the twin who was particularly close to her, stood by her casket and refused to leave. Stoically, the young girl of thirteen kept watch over her beloved grandmother who had undoubtedly smothered her with the same warm embrace that my children loved. She wasn't ready to let go of her. I don't think any of us were.

Two years ago, Bapak's body burned quickly, so quickly that all of his remains had turned to ash by the time my wife and I got to the village from the airport. This had been surprising to everyone. Everyone seemed to think his body would take hours to burn. Perhaps this was because he was so stubborn, the idiom "hard-headed" translating perfectly from Indonesian to English. But his skull and the rest of his bones crumbled easily in the flames, which died quickly, and all became cold ash. Not so with Ibu. Her body took hours to burn. Her cremation was performed in the cemetery with an iron, gas stove. The family members tossed flowers over the body before the gas was turned on, and then the fire began to consume her flesh. Neither my wife nor I was there to see the fire char the body, taking the hair and clothing while those attending stood away from the furnace as it did its grisly work. Ibu's two younger brothers had come from Java, and stood at the gate, not wishing to enter. Their tears and cries could be heard even from a distance. And Irma's sister was suddenly racked with grief all over again, falling to her knees and sobbing uncontrollably. The twin who was particularly attached to her grandmother likewise joined in an extraordinary display of sadness and sorrow. Ibu may have let go of this world to be with Bapak, but this world was not ready or willing to let go of her.

And so her body smoldered like a wet log, emitting greasy, acrid smoke in difficult gasps, and the cries of those who loved her grew even louder. The brothers were only getting more hysterical at the gate, and those nearer the infernal oven had become a chorus of hopeless despair. After two hours, the body still remained a mottled figure, the oven having fired it into an indestructible ceramic, like a dark statue just exhumed from some forgotten time. Finally, the priest had to disperse the wailing funeral party. Men assisting the priest donned heavy gloves and face shields as they descended on her body to break it apart with iron bars so that it would finally burn.

The whole thing was unsettling, and it remains so. The reluctance of the body to yield coupled with the wails of despair from those who refused to let go of her has remained foremost in the minds of many, momentarily eclipsing the ease with which she would laugh as she sliced small, red onions or packed a suitcase for her daughter to head back to the States. If Ibu was involved, nothing was wasted, and space was maximized. When she cut a pineapple, only small tan shavings were taken, the knots carefully excavated with a tight, spiral trench through the yellow flesh. Books were wrapped with care in plastic and kept under lock and key in a glass bookcase, and even plastic toys, disposable razors, and paper cups were used long past their typical lifespans, folded, glued, or pressed back into their original shape over and over again. And lest one think she was simply being frugal or stingy, one only has to remember some extravagant gift they had received from her out of the blue: a heavy chain of soft, pure gold she pulled from a bottom drawer, a stack of 10,000 rupiah notes held together with a carpenter's staple, a wooden statue that had long been in the front room of the house.

"Bu!" I imagine myself saying.





The silence that will now inevitably follow is a sad one. It may take months for this noticeable absence to become part of the new rhythm of a day whether in Bali or California.

After Bapak was gone, Ibu had continued to mend, to straighten, and trim – gentle, quiet work. Her work never had the center-stage quality it once held for her husband, whom she waited on tirelessly. Rather than regularly breaking the silence of the home with blasts of furious, industrial construction from the kitchen, for two and a half years she became part of the quiet hum of my wife’s sister’s home, with a soccer game on the television, digital music from a video game, stifled laughter from the twins. A mere sixty-eight years old, she could still thread her own needles, drive herself on a motorcycle, and float about the village effortlessly on her own two feet. She was someone everyone saw every day and expected to see again tomorrow.

“Bu!”

I never thanked you for being so welcoming of me into your family. Your warm acceptance of me helped everyone else to receive me and allowed me to find my place in your home and in the village.

“Bu!”

I suppose what I wish I could have said to you before you died is that I will miss you.

“Bu...”  
Goodbye.

*Contributor to be contacted regarding  
permission to tell this work*





# -PUZZLES and GAMES-

"Curiouser and curiouser!"

## Riddle

I was before the world began,  
And shall forever last;  
Ere father Adam was a man,  
Or out of Eden cast.  
Your youthful moments I attend,  
And mitigate your grief;  
The industrious peasant I befriend,  
To pris'ners give relief.  
Make much of me if you are wise,  
And use me while you may,  
For you will lose me in a trice.  
As I for no man stay.

-SB

*Last Month's Answer: The letter E.*



# LOST WORD SOCIETY

by Carmen Agra Deedy

It's time again to play along with Carmen Agra Deedy's LOST WORD SOCIETY.

November begins our gentle slide into the Holiday Season. To mark this annual milestone, we have delved deeply to find yet another rarely used word in modern English.

Each month we will give you an archaic, obsolete, or otherwise "lost" word. We will make up three silly sentences using the word, probably incorrectly. Your job is to make up a definition for the lost word. The challenge, should you decide to accept it, is for you to use your new word in a story, just for fun. Next month we will publish the true definition of the "lost" word and provide you with another one.

Here we go! Have fun!

**SAGINATE (v.) Rare usage; this fascinating word is not exactly dead, but it's definitely moribund, or sort of dead.**

- 1) Rather than saginate upon his misfortunes, the young prince decided to be grateful for all that he had and loaded another prisoner into the catapult.
- 2) "If we could but saginate the mayor, then all our problems would be solved and we will be able to go about our lives in peace," said the Sheriff to the dubious crowd, who were thinking about cats and bells.
- 3) The teacher looked over her students, as they played in the yard, pondering whether to saginate or not to saginate them, knowing either way, it would cost her dearly.

Last Month's Lost Word:

**SKELM (n.)** 17th century; obsolete.- villain or nefarious person; also may be applied to a rascal.



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# Minute Mysteries

by Harold Austin Ripley

## A Suave Gunman

"Can you describe this fellow?" asked Professor Fordney of Henry Taylor, manager of the National Theater.

"Yes. He was a tall, well-dressed, good-looking chap. Wore a panama hat, turned-down brim, blue coat, smart blue tie, natty white flannels with silver belt-buckle, black-and-white sport shoes, and had a general air of culture and refinement."

"Just what did he do?"

"As I was counting the receipts, he came into the office, gun in hand, and commanded me to get up from the desk and move over by that table.

"After putting the money in a briefcase he carried, he took out a cigarette and asked me to light it for him, still covering me, of course.

"Then he gagged me and tied me to the chair, after which he opened the door, looked cautiously about, came back and, with a quiet "sorry" and a warning, turned and left. As he passed through the door, he unbuttoned his coat and slipped the revolver into his back pocket. The show was just letting out, so I suppose he mingled with the crowd and escaped," Taylor concluded.

"Are you insured against this loss of eight thousand dollars?" inquired Fordney.

"Yes."

"Could you see the color of the bandit's hair?"

"It was blond."

"Anything unusual about him?"

"No. Except that he was constantly clearing his throat in a peculiar manner," replied Taylor.

"Left- or right-handed?"

"Why—I'm not sure. Right-handed, though, I think."

"This has gone far enough, Taylor," said Fordney sharply. "The robbery was obviously framed by you."

How did Fordney know Taylor had faked the hold-up?



## The Two Travelers

Two travelers trudged along the road together,  
Talking, as Yankees do, about the weather;  
When, lo! beside their path the foremost spies  
Three casks, and loud exclaims, "A prize, a prize!"  
One large, two small, but all of various size.  
This way and that they gazed, and all around,  
Each wondering if an owner might be found.  
But not a soul was there—the coast was clear—  
So to the barrels they at once drew near;  
And both agree, whatever may be there,  
In friendly partnership they'll fairly share.  
Two they found empty, but the other full,  
And straightway from his pocket one doth pull  
A large clasp-knife; a heavy stone lay handy,  
And thus in time they found their prize was brandy.  
'Tis tasted and approved; their lips they smack,  
And each pronounces 'tis the famous Cognac.  
"Wont we have many a jolly night, my boy?  
May no ill luck our present hopes destroy!"  
'Twas fortunate one knew the mathematics,  
And had a smattering of hydrostatics;  
Then measured he the casks, and said, "I see  
This is eight gallons—those are five, and three."  
The question then was how they might divide  
The brandy, so that each should be supplied  
With just four gallons, neither less nor more,  
With eight, and five and three, they puzzle sore;  
Filled up the five, filled up the three, in vain.  
At length a happy thought came o'er the brain  
Of one; 'twas done, and each went home content,  
And their good dames declared 'twas excellent.  
With those three casks they made division true;  
I found the puzzle out; say, friend, can you?





# SOLUTIONS FOR OCTOBER'S PUZZLES

## Too Clever

"Receiving no reply to my ring and finding the door unlocked, I went in," said Albert Lynch. "Dawson was seated at his desk shot through the head. Seeing he was dead, I called the police and remained here."

"Touch anything, Lynch?" asked Professor Fordney.

"No, sir, nothing."

"Positive of that, are you?"

"Absolutely, sir."

The Professor made a careful examination of the desk and found Dawson had been writing a letter at the bottom of which and covered by the dead man's hand, was a penned message: "A. L. did thi—" and weakly trailed off.

Further examination disclosed several kinds of writing-paper, a pen-tray holding the recently used pen, inkwell, eraser, stamps, letters, and bills. The gun from which the shot had been fired was on the floor by the side of the chair, and the bullet was found embedded in the divan.

After a few questions, Fordney was quickly convinced of Lynch's innocence.

"What do you make of it, Professor?" inquired Inspector Kelley.

"Though the scrawled note certainly looks like Dawson's writing, I am sure an expert will find it isn't. I'm not surprised to find the gun free of prints. Pretty thorough job, this. Good thing for you, Lynch, and for us too, that the murderer was careless about something."

"Right," said Kelley. "But you aren't such a wise old owl, Fordney. This is like the Morrow case we handled. Remember?"

"Good for you, Inspector," laughed the Professor.

How did both men so quickly determine that the incriminating note had not been left by Dawson?

**SOLUTION:** The murderer tried to give the impression that Dawson had died before finishing the incriminating note. Had he written it and died before completing it, he could not have put the pen back in the tray where it was found.

In his effort to incriminate Lynch, the murderer had been too cautious. A costly oversight.

## Before the Coroner's Inquest

"Let's run over your testimony before the inquest opens," said Fordney.

"All right," replied Curry.

"About three-thirty on Thursday, I got into the boat in front of my cottage and rowed upstream. About fifty yards below the bridge, I looked up and saw Scott and Dawson going across it in opposite directions. As the two men passed, Scott reached out, grabbed Dawson, and hit him in the jaw. Then he pulled a gun, and, in the scuffle that followed, Scott fell off the bridge. He dropped into the water, but, as the current was strong, by the time I reached the spot, he had sunk. When I finally pulled him into the boat, he was dead."

"Was it a clear day?" asked Fordney.

"Well, it had been showering early in the afternoon, but the sun was shining then."

"Are you positive Scott got that bruise by hitting his head on the rocks when he fell? The prosecution, you know, is going to claim that Dawson hit him on the head with something, then deliberately pushed him off the bridge," commented Fordney.

"I know he got that bruise on the rocks," stated Curry emphatically.

"All right," said the Professor, "but I don't think the jury will believe you. Personally, I'm sure Dawson didn't intentionally kill Scott, but we'll have to have better proof than that if we hope to acquit him."

"By the way," he continued, "be sure to state you knew of the grudge Scott bore Dawson."

Why was the Professor doubtful the coroner's jury would believe Curry's testimony?

**SOLUTION:** Curry could not possibly have "looked up" while rowing upstream and seen the action he described which took place fifty yards behind him.



A close-up photograph of an acoustic guitar, showing the body, neck, and headstock. The guitar has a light-colored wood body and a dark fretboard. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid on the upper part of the guitar, containing the title and a quote. On the right side of the image, there is a vertical strip with a repeating decorative pattern of small, dark, cross-like motifs.

# -THE HALL *of the* BARD-

“Music and storytelling are sisters and have always been close;  
where you find one, you can be sure the other isn’t far away.”



# Thanksgiving

*By Amelia E. Barr*

Have you cut the wheat in the blowing  
fields,  
The barley, the oats, and the rye,  
The golden corn and the pearly rice?  
For the winter days are nigh.

We have reaped them all from shore to  
shore,  
And the grain is safe on the threshing  
floor.

Have you gathered the berries from the  
vine,  
And the fruit from the orchard trees?  
The dew and the scent from the roses and  
thyme,  
In the hive of the honeybees?

The peach and the plum and the apple are  
ours,  
And the honeycomb from the scented  
flowers.

The wealth of the snowy cotton field  
And the gift of the sugar cane,  
The savoury herb and the nourishing  
root----  
There has nothing been given in vain.

We have gathered the harvest from shore  
to shore,  
And the measure is full and brimming  
o'er.

Then lift up the head with a song!  
And lift up the hand with a gift!  
To the ancient Giver of all  
The spirit in gratitude lift!  
For the joy and the promise of spring,  
For the hay and the clover sweet,  
The barley, the rye, and the oats,  
The rice, and the corn, and the wheat,  
The cotton, and sugar, and fruit,  
The flowers and the fine honeycomb,  
The country so fair and so free,  
The blessings and glory of home.





# The Kind Old Oak

*By Ada and Eleanor Skinner*

It was almost time for winter to come. The little birds had all gone far away, for they were afraid of the cold. There was no green grass in the fields, and there were no pretty flowers in the gardens. Many of the trees had dropped all their leaves. Cold winter, with its snow and ice, was coming.

At the foot of an old oak tree, some sweet little violets were still in blossom. "Dear old oak," said they, "winter is coming: we are afraid that we shall die of the cold."

"Do not be afraid, little ones," said the oak, "close your yellow eyes in sleep, and trust to me. You have made me glad many a time with your sweetness. Now I will take care that the winter shall do you no harm."

So the violets closed their pretty eyes and went to sleep; they knew that they could trust the kind old oak. And the great tree softly dropped red leaf after red leaf upon them until they were all covered over.

The cold winter came, with its snow and ice, but it could not harm the little violets. Safe under the friendly leaves of the old oak they slept, and dreamed happy dreams until the warm rains of spring came and waked them again.

"No more the summer floweret charms,  
The leaves will soon be sere,  
And autumn folds his jeweled arms  
Around the dying year."





# -STORY SIGHTINGS-

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