

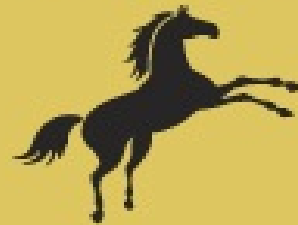
# ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN AND THE CASE OF THE JUMPING FROGS

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Donald J. Sobol  
Illustrated by Robert Papp

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Yearling

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**ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN**  
and the Case of  
the Jumping Frogs

**DONALD J. SOBOL**

Illustrated by **ROBERT PAPP**

**A YEARLING BOOK**

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In memory of a cherished friend

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**Erik Y. Evren**

**1926–1999**

who went ahead too soon

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Solutions

# The Case of the Rhyming Robber

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Police across the nation wondered: How did Idaville do it?

The town had sparkling white beaches, a Little League team, and a computer museum. It had churches, a synagogue, two delicatessens, and four banks. In short, Idaville looked like many other seaside towns.

But it wasn't.

Every person who broke the law in Idaville was caught.

How was this possible?

What was the secret?

Only Mr. and Mrs. Brown knew.

The mastermind behind Idaville's war on crime was their only child. They called him Leroy, and so did his teachers. Everyone else in Idaville called him Encyclopedia.

An encyclopedia is a book or set of books full of facts from A to Z, just like Encyclopedia Leroy's head. His friends thought of him as a whole library that could whistle Beethoven.





Mr. Brown was chief of the Idaville police. He was smart and brave. His officers were well trained, honest, and loyal. But sometimes they came up against a crime they could not solve. Then Chief Brown knew where to go—home to dinner.

After saying grace, he went over the case.

Ten-year-old Encyclopedia listened carefully. When he had heard the facts, he asked one question.

One question was all he needed to solve a mystery.

Encyclopedia never spoke about the help he gave his father.

For his part, Chief Brown would have liked to announce to the world, “A bust of my son belongs in the Crimebusters’ Hall of Fame.”

But who would believe him? Who could believe that the mastermind behind Idaville’s spotless police record was a fifth grader?

At dinner Tuesday, Chief Brown toyed with his soup spoon. Encyclopedia and his mother knew what *that* meant.

The police had come up against a case they couldn’t solve.

“Do you want to talk about it, dear?” Mrs. Brown asked gently.

Chief Brown nodded. “A fortune in jewelry belonging to Mrs. Hubert Cushman was stolen from her home last week.”

“Give Leroy the facts,” Mrs. Brown said. “I’m sure he can help. He’s never failed you yet.”

Chief Brown laid down his spoon. “The thief who stole Mrs. Cushman’s jewelry called himself The Poet.”

“I’ve heard of him,” said Mrs. Brown.

“He steals jewelry and then sends a poem with a riddle in it to his victim,” said Chief Brown. “The riddle tells where he buried the jewelry. Mrs. Cushman received her poem yesterday.”

“How do his victims know if the riddle really tells where their jewelry is?” Mrs. Brown asked.

“He got careless twice,” Chief Brown said. “He made the riddles too easy. The stolen jewelry was found.”

“So he really does bury the jewelry,” said Mrs. Brown. “What happens when the riddle isn’t solved?”

“It’s believed that he comes back sometime later, digs up the jewelry, and keeps it.”

“My, is he ever something!” exclaimed Mrs. Brown.

“He’s what is called a gentleman thief,” explained Chief Brown. “Gentlemen thieves commit crimes mainly for the thrill. Outsmarting the police means more than the loot. It’s a sport with them.”

Chief Brown took a piece of paper from his breast pocket. He unfolded it and handed it to Mrs. Brown. “This is the riddle Mrs. Cushman received.”

Mrs. Brown read it, frowning.

“It doesn’t make sense,” she said. She passed the sheet to Encyclopedia. “Here, Leroy. What do you make of it?”

Encyclopedia read The Poet’s riddle:

**Take the Landsmill Highway north,  
And look along the border.  
The second clue is marked in reverse,  
But the first clue is in order.**

**The Poet**

Encyclopedia had never been on the Landsmill Highway. Nevertheless, he closed his eyes. He always closed his eyes when he did his deepest thinking.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown waited anxiously.

A minute went by, and then another. Had the famous jewel thief, The Poet, outsmarted the boy detective?

Encyclopedia opened his eyes. He asked his one question. “Are there mile markers along the Landsmill Highway, Dad?”

Chief Brown was surprised by the question. “Why, yes, there are.”

“Then,” said the boy detective, “Mrs. Cushman’s jewelry won’t be hard to find.”

**Where was it buried?**

(Turn to [this page](#) for the solution to



# The Case of the Miracle Pill

---



Encyclopedia helped his father all year round. During the summer he helped the children of the neighborhood as well. He opened his own detective agency in the garage.

Every morning he hung out his sign:

## **Brown Detective Agency**

**13 Rover Avenue  
Leroy Brown, President**

No Case Too Small  
25¢ a Day Plus Expenses

To handle the tough kids, he took in a hard-punching fifth grader, Sally Kimball, as his junior partner. Sally was the prettiest girl in the fifth grade. She was also the best athlete.

One morning Encyclopedia and Sally had just opened the Brown Detective Agency for the day when Marsha Murphy stepped in.

“Take a look,” she said. “This may be your last chance to see the old me. Soon I’ll be in the money.”

“Who says?” Sally asked.

“Wilford Wiggins,” replied Marsha.

The detectives groaned.

A teenager, Wilford was as lazy as a time-out. Resting was what he did best. Whenever he got to his feet, he tried to fast-talk the little kids of the neighborhood out of their savings.

He never did. Encyclopedia always stopped his shady deals.

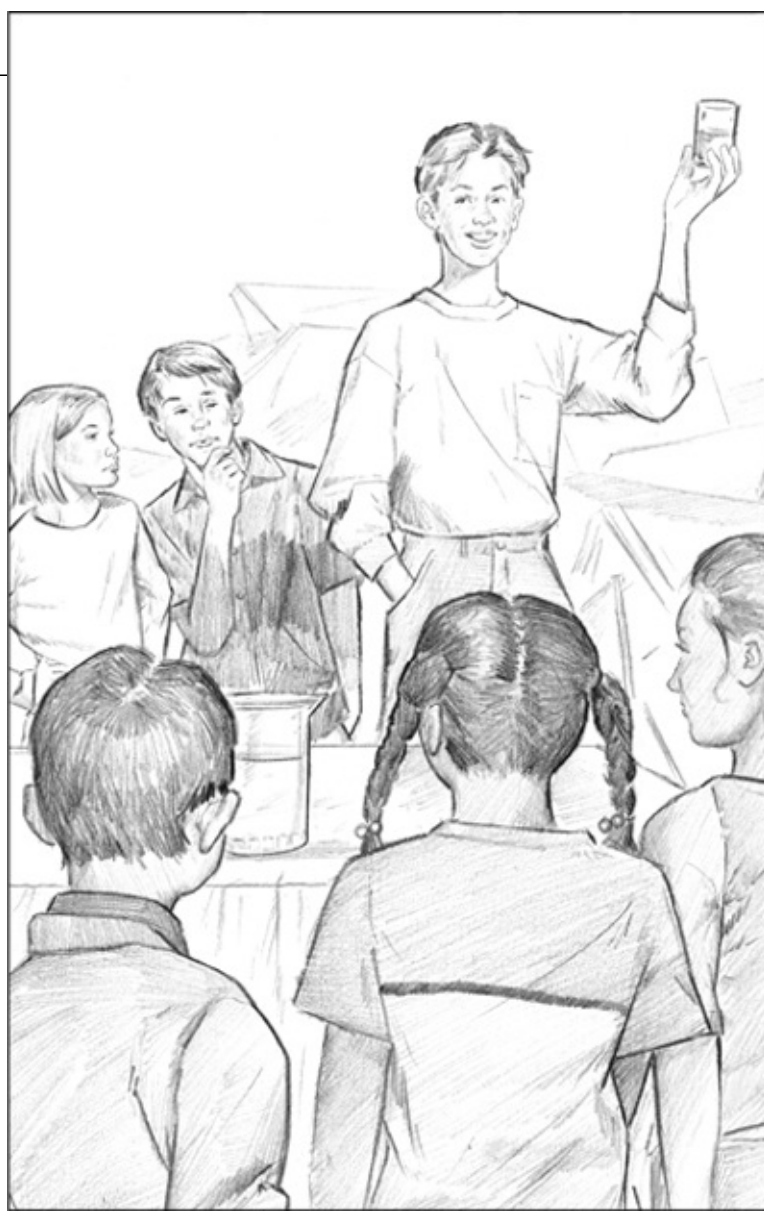
“Wilford has called a secret meeting for five o’clock today in the city dump,” Marsha said. “He promised to make us little kids so rich we’ll be the talk of the continent.”

“What’s he selling now,” Encyclopedia asked, “a breakfast shake made of yeast and car polish for people who want to rise and shine?”

“Wilford’s changed,” Marsha said. “He told me so himself. He’ll never tell another lie.”

“Don’t worry,” Sally said. “You always know when Wilford is lying. His lips move.”

Marsha’s faith seemed to waver. She laid a quarter on the gas can beside Encyclopedia. “I want to hire you. Maybe Wilford isn’t as honest as he says.”



“We’re hired,” Sally said. “See you at the city dump at five o’clock.”

When the detectives arrived, Wilford was standing behind a broken table.

On the table were an empty clear plastic bottle, an ice pick, a small jar, a drinking glass, and a pitcher filled with clear liquid.

Wilford started his big sales pitch.

“Gather around,” he bellowed at the crowd of little kids waiting for him to fulfill the dreams of untold riches. They edged closer.

“Don’t leak a word to any grown-up about the wonder I’ve got for you,” he warned out of the side of his mouth. “They’ll take over and cheat you out of every cent.”

“Stop beating your gums and get to the big bucks,” a boy shouted.

“You’re keen for the green, eh, kid?” Wilford purred. “What I have for you today is Antiflow, the world’s greatest gift to mankind! The savior of nations, the scientific marvel of the age! Remember the name: *Antiflow!*”

He unscrewed the cap on the plastic bottle and passed the bottle around. Next he took the ice pick and punched a tiny hole in the side of the bottle about an inch from the bottom. Then he filled the bottle from the pitcher. The liquid streamed out of the tiny hole.

Quickly he took a white pill from the jar. He held it up. “Observe: *Antiflow!*”

He dropped the pill into the bottle and screwed on the cap.

Although the bottle was still almost full, liquid stopped streaming out of the hole.

“Baloney!” a girl snapped. “It’s a trick. There’s something else in there.”

“Oh, ye of little faith!” Wilford exclaimed. He filled the water glass from the pitcher and handed it to the girl. “Drink!”

She drank. “It’s just water,” she said, puzzled.

“Would Wiggins fool you?” Wilford cried. “The secret is the Antiflow. It was invented by Professor Stubblehauser of Germany. He doesn’t trust anyone but straight shooters like you truly. That’s why he granted me the rights to sell the miracle pill in the U.S.A. He trusts me to give him half the profits.”

Wilford paused to let the moneymaking possibilities of Antiflow sink in.

Then he said, “All my cash is tied up in oil wells. So I’m going to let my little friends in on this chance of a lifetime. For five dollars, you can buy a share in my Antiflow company. The more shares you buy, the more money you’ll make!”

“Where’s your factory?” a girl demanded.

“I’m glad you asked, friend,” Wilford said. “I need your cash to help build the factory. When it’s built, I’ll make Antiflow by the ton. Don’t miss out! Buy shares today at my special low-price, one-day-only offer.”

The children talked excitedly among themselves. With Antiflow, floods would be a thing of the past. There were millions in it. Maybe more!

“Buy shares now,” Wilford blared. “In a year you can afford to retire your mother and father.”

That clinched it. The children lined up, eager to buy shares.

Encyclopedia hurried to the front of the line.

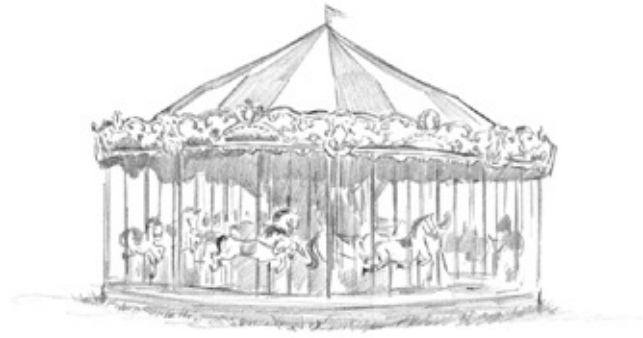
“Put away your money if you don’t want a soaking,” he said.

## **How did Encyclopedia know Antiflow was a fake?**

**(Turn to [this page](#) for the solution to  
The Case of the Miracle Pill.)**

# The Case of the Black Horse

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Encyclopedia and Sally were straightening the Browns' garage when Waldo Emerson came in. He looked like he had stepped off a roof, or worse.

"Good to see you, Waldo," Sally said. "We haven't seen you round lately."

"Don't say that word!" Waldo howled.

"Sorry," Sally apologized. "I wasn't thinking."

Waldo had a thing about the word "round." Even when he heard it used harmlessly with other words, as in "round trip" or "round of golf," he threw a fit. It reminded him that some kids still believed the earth was round.

Waldo was the new president of the Idaville Junior Flat Earth Society. He was also the only member.

He laid a quarter on the gasoline can next to Encyclopedia. "I know the detective agency closed until summer. But I want to hire you."

"What for?" Sally asked.

"I wrote an essay for Columbus Day tomorrow," Waldo answered. "The public library is giving a prize for the best essay about the explorer."

"What's the problem?" Encyclopedia asked.

Waldo moaned. "My essay was stolen yesterday. There isn't time to rewrite it. The contest closes at noon today. I wrote about how Columbus proved the earth was flat."

"How did he?" asked Sally.

"He didn't sail off the curve!" Waldo sang.

Encyclopedia never knew when Waldo was serious or having fun.

"I want you to get my essay back," Waldo said. "I'm sure Stinky Redmond stole it. He'll enter my essay as his and win the prize, a book called *The World of Dinosaurs*."

"Have you accused Stinky?" Sally asked.

Waldo rolled his eyes. "Yes, and of course he says he's innocent. He claims *he* wrote the essay. I dared him to meet me in half an hour in South Park at the carousel."

"Carousel," not "merry-go-round," Encyclopedia thought instantly. "Why at the carousel, Waldo?"

"The carousel is the scene of the crime," Waldo declared.

"But it doesn't open for an hour," Sally said.

"That's what I want," Waldo replied. "Stinky and I can have it out better with no one there to bother us. If Stinky doesn't show up, I'll know he's guilty."

On the bike ride to the carousel, Sally asked Waldo what made him believe the earth was flat.



“Most of the earth is made up of water,” he said, “and water is flat. Did you ever see a lake or a pond that had a hump in it?”

Sally and Encyclopedia admitted that they had not.

Waldo rolled on.

“The pictures taken of the earth from outer space are fakes,” he insisted. “If the earth were a globe, China would be under the United States. My neighbor Mr. Chan comes from China. He would have hung by his feet when he lived there. He didn’t. In fact, he has never hung by his feet in all his life.”

Waldo reasoned like that.

Stinky Redmond was waiting by the carousel. The double ring of ride-on animals stood silent and still.

Waldo sneered at Stinky. “The thief returns to the scene of his crime! He thought he could get away with stealing my essay!”

“Let’s hear what happened,” Encyclopedia suggested.

Waldo said, “When I climbed onto the carousel platform yesterday, Stinky was already



standing by that black horse.”

He pointed to a black horse with one hoof off the ground. It seemed about to prance away. Like all the animals, it had a pole through the back of its neck.

Waldo pointed to a bench beside the black horse. “Before the carousel started, I laid my bag with the essay on that bench,” he said. “Stinky swiped it.”

“I didn’t swipe his bag!” Stinky broke in. “He’s afraid my essay will beat his. Mine is oh, so funny. It’ll win in a laugh. I wrote that Columbus proved the earth is flat!”

Waldo harrumphed and continued. “Then I got on that white horse,” he said, pointing to the white horse three horses in front of the black one. “I never saw you get on the black horse. I never saw you get off. But when the ride ended, I did see you run from the bench like you were legging it for a lifeboat.”

“This kid isn’t two days out of his tree,” Stinky growled. “Sometimes I get sick going up and down, even on a seesaw.”

“You weren’t on a seesaw,” Waldo snapped.

Stinky retorted, “I started getting sick when the black horse moved up and down on the pole as the carousel turned. So I got off and sat on the bench until the ride ended and I felt better. There was a bag on the bench, but I never touched it.”

“Why did you rush off the carousel when the ride ended?” Sally asked.

“I had to go to the you-know-where,” Stinky mumbled.

Sally whispered to Encyclopedia, “I don’t know who to believe. Maybe Waldo never wrote an essay and he’s trying to get Stinky in trouble by saying he’s a thief. Or maybe it’s Stinky who never wrote an essay and stole Waldo’s.”

“Take another look at the bench and the horses,” Encyclopedia suggested.

“I’m looking,” Sally said. “Stinky’s black horse is three horses directly behind Waldo’s white horse. The bench is just to the left of the black horse.”

“Is that all?”

“Yes, except I wish the horses could talk and tell us who is lying.”

“One has, in its way,” replied the detective.

## **Who lied, Stinky or Waldo?**

**(Turn to [this page](#) for the solution to  
The Case of the Black Horse.)**

## The Case of Nemo's Tuba

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The detectives were closing the agency for the day when Nemo Huffenwiz, a pudgy sixth grader, blew in. He plunked twenty-five cents on the gas can.

“What’s on your mind?” Encyclopedia asked.

“My tuba,” Nemo announced. “I know what you’re thinking. The tuba is for Tubby Tub, the fat kid in the back row of the school orchestra.”

“Anyone who calls you Tubby Tuba should have his valves ground off,” Sally said.

“How may we be of help?” Encyclopedia inquired.

“Find out who played a dirty trick on me and my tuba,” said Nemo.

He went over the details of the case for the detectives.

That afternoon the summer youth orchestra had given a performance of Suchalick’s “March of the Frosty Flowers” in the school auditorium. Nemo was delayed at the dentist’s office and arrived at the school late.



Grabbing his tuba from the music room, he had raced to his seat in the rear of the orchestra. Mr. Downing, the conductor, had just raised his baton.

“Boy,” said Nemo, “did he give me a look. It curled my shoelaces. Lucky for me I didn’t have to play for a while.”

“Is it true that in many pieces the tuba doesn’t play a single note?” Sally asked.

“Yep,” replied Nemo. “In ‘March of the Frosty Flowers’ the tuba plays only one note. I sweated out forty-two measures before I played it, a high E. If I hit it, I was a hero. If I missed, I was a bum.”

Sally cried, “Tell us!”

“I was a bum.”

“Oh, dear.”

“Someone switched the valves on my tuba,” Nemo said. “The valves are what you push down to make the sounds. They should be in order, one, two, three. Someone switched them to three, one, two. You can’t tell just by looking if they’re in the right order or not. You have to blow.”

“Who could have switched them?” Sally asked.

“Anyone,” Nemo said. “The instruments belong to the school and are kept in the music room. Kids can practice there or take the instruments home.”

“Lugging a tuba home will flatten your feet flatter than a flatiron,” Sally warned.

“You’re so right,” replied Nemo. “That’s why the school doesn’t allow students to take home the two bass fiddles or the tuba. I practiced the tuba yesterday until the janitor locked the music room for the night.”

“Do you suspect anyone?” Sally asked.

“Alma Higgins,” Nemo said instantly. “The instruments were handed out in the fall. I got the tuba. Big Alma had wanted it so she could show that a girl is strong enough to carry it. But I was there a minute before her. She had to settle for a trumpet.”

“That shouldn’t have made her mad enough to pull such a dirty trick on you,” Sally said.

“There’s more,” Nemo said. “This morning I was throwing a baseball with Mitch Jennings on his front lawn. Alma rode by on her bike. I threw wide. The ball whacked her on the foot and she fell off her bike. Oh, boy, was she mad.”

“It isn’t a good idea to make Alma mad,” Sally said. “She’s hotheaded.”

“The throw was an accident,” Nemo said. “But the fall hurt her. Her lip was cut and she was bleeding a bit, and she was limping. I was sorry and tried to apologize. You should have heard what she said to me!”

“Alma could have sneaked into school before the performance of ‘March of the Frost Flowers’ and switched the valves on your tuba,” Sally said. “Limping or not.”

“I believe it’s time to question Alma,” Encyclopedia said.

On the way to Alma’s house, he stopped at the school to speak with Mr. Downing, the conductor.

When Encyclopedia came out, he said, “Mr. Downing told me Alma telephoned him before the concert. She said she hurt herself falling off her bike this morning. She was staying home to rest and practice the trumpet.”

At Alma’s house, Sally rang the doorbell. Alma opened the door.

“What’s the squawk?” she demanded, glaring at Nemo.

“I just remembered,” Nemo whispered to Encyclopedia. “I don’t want to be here.”

Sally stepped fearlessly up to the big girl. “We think you switched the valves on Nemo’s tuba. You wanted him to miss his one big note, a high E.”

“So Mr. Downing would think I wasn’t good enough and kick me out of the orchestra?” Nemo put in, his courage up. “Then you’d take over the tuba.”

“Think again, mousehead,” Alma snarled. “I wasn’t near the school today.”

“Where were you?” Sally demanded.

“After I telephoned Mr. Downing to tell him I couldn’t make it today because I hurt my foot, I went to my room. I read and practiced the trumpet.”

“How come we didn’t hear you playing?” Sally demanded.

“I quit practicing a few minutes ago,” Alma said. “Besides, I use a mute. I can barely be heard in the next room. I’m the kind who respects the ears of others. Now bye-bye, you saw fleas.”

She shut the front door with a bang.

“I sure hope she’s guilty,” declared Nemo. “If she isn’t, she’s going to make me pay for saying she is. Maybe I ought to give her the tuba and take up barrel jumping.”

“Don’t,” Encyclopedia said. “Alma switched the valves.”

## How did Encyclopedia know?

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(Turn to [this page](#) for the solution to  
The Case of Nemo's Tuba.)

## The Case of the Ring in the Reef

---



Hector Heywood was nearly in tears when he came into the Brown Detective Agency.

“Bugs Meany, that no-good bully!” he wailed.

“Oh, not Bugs again!” exclaimed Sally.

Bugs was the leader of a gang of tough older boys. When Encyclopedia and Sally weren't around, they bullied the little kids of the neighborhood.

The boys called themselves the Tigers, but they should have called themselves the Spurs. They always arrived on the heels of trouble.

Sally often said Bugs was quite accomplished for a boy with the IQ of a refrigerator door.

“What's Bugs done now?” Encyclopedia asked Hector.

“He stole Mrs. van Colling's diamond ring from me,” Hector replied.

He explained. He had been at the beach the day before. He'd found a ring in the sand. The ring hadn't looked valuable, but he had taken it home.

“This morning the *Idaville Gazette* had a story about the ring,” Hector said. “It's worth a lot of money, and there's a reward for finding it. The newspaper said the ring belonged to Mrs. van Colling.”

“I read the story,” Encyclopedia said. “Mrs. van Colling thought she had lost it while scuba diving at Warren Reef. She hired two divers to search for the ring. They didn't find it.”

“That's because she lost it on the beach,” Hector said. “I was returning the ring when Bugs and three of his Tigers stopped me a block from her house. They asked where I was going and like a dummy I told them. They turned me upside down. They shook me until the ring fell out of my pocket.”

Hector laid a quarter on the gas can. “Get the ring back. I found it. I should get the reward, not Bugs.”

Encyclopedia agreed. “We'll go see Bugs.”

“You go,” said Hector. “I'm about to do what any red-blooded coward would do—go home. Bugs is too rough for kids our age.”

“Except one,” Encyclopedia said. “Sally has straightened him out before.”

It was true. The last time Sally and Bugs had fought, the toughest Tiger had taken a right to the nose. His eyes had rolled up far enough to see his brains. For a full minute he had staggered around as if looking for the rest of himself.



“Okay, I’ll go with you to see Bugs,” Hector said. “But you’d better have an escape plan.”

The Tigers’ clubhouse was an unused toolshed behind Sweeney’s auto body shop. Bugs was sitting on a crate out front.

He had a deck of cards and was practicing dealing himself all the aces.

When he spied the detectives and Hector, he growled, “Well, well, the little goody-goods!” His lips curved in a sneer. “Go adopt an egg!”

“Don’t get your dandruff up, Bugs,” Sally said. “Hector told us he found Mrs. van Colling’s ring on the beach yesterday. He says you took it from him.”

“What is this?” Bugs growled. “You dare accuse Bugs Meany, the idol of America’s youth, of being a common thief? I found the ring! I’m waiting until I think Mrs. van Colling has had her breakfast before I return it. I’m a gentleman.”

He took a step toward Hector, his teeth bared.

“I don’t think he wants to be friends,” Hector whispered to Encyclopedia. “I have what you believe is a very good idea: Run for your life!”

Encyclopedia grabbed his arm and held him.

“Stay calm,” the detective said. “Trust Sally.”

“Where did you find the ring, Bugs?” Sally demanded.

“I often dive at dawn,” Bugs purred. “The reef is so beautiful then! The pursuit of beauty

my life. I don't get along on good looks alone."

"Where did you find the ring?" Sally repeated.

"If you must know, I was swimming by the reef when my foot struck something lying on the bottom," Bugs said. "It was a bright yellow fish, dead. I moved it with my foot. I saw what had been lying under it. A ring!"

"Aw, c'mon, Bugs," Sally said. "That's the biggest fish story I ever heard."

"You doubt the word of Bugs Meany?" Bugs said, his voice rising. "Nobody gets away with calling me a liar!"

He took aim and threw his Sunday punch. Sally sidestepped and cracked him one on the side of the jaw. *Zowie!*

Bugs spun like a propeller. Encyclopedia thought he saw Bugs's face and the back of his head at the same time.

Bugs slowed, wobbled, and fell flat. He lifted his head and moaned, "I hate it when she does that."

Sally suddenly looked concerned. "Oh, no. Maybe he's telling the truth!"

"He isn't," Encyclopedia said.

## **What made Encyclopedia so sure?**

**(Turn to [this page](#) for the solution to  
The Case of the Ring in the Reef.)**



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