

Telling a Story

and other stories

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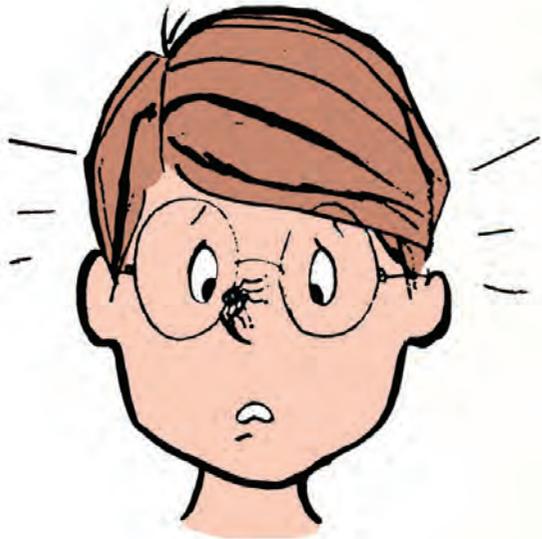


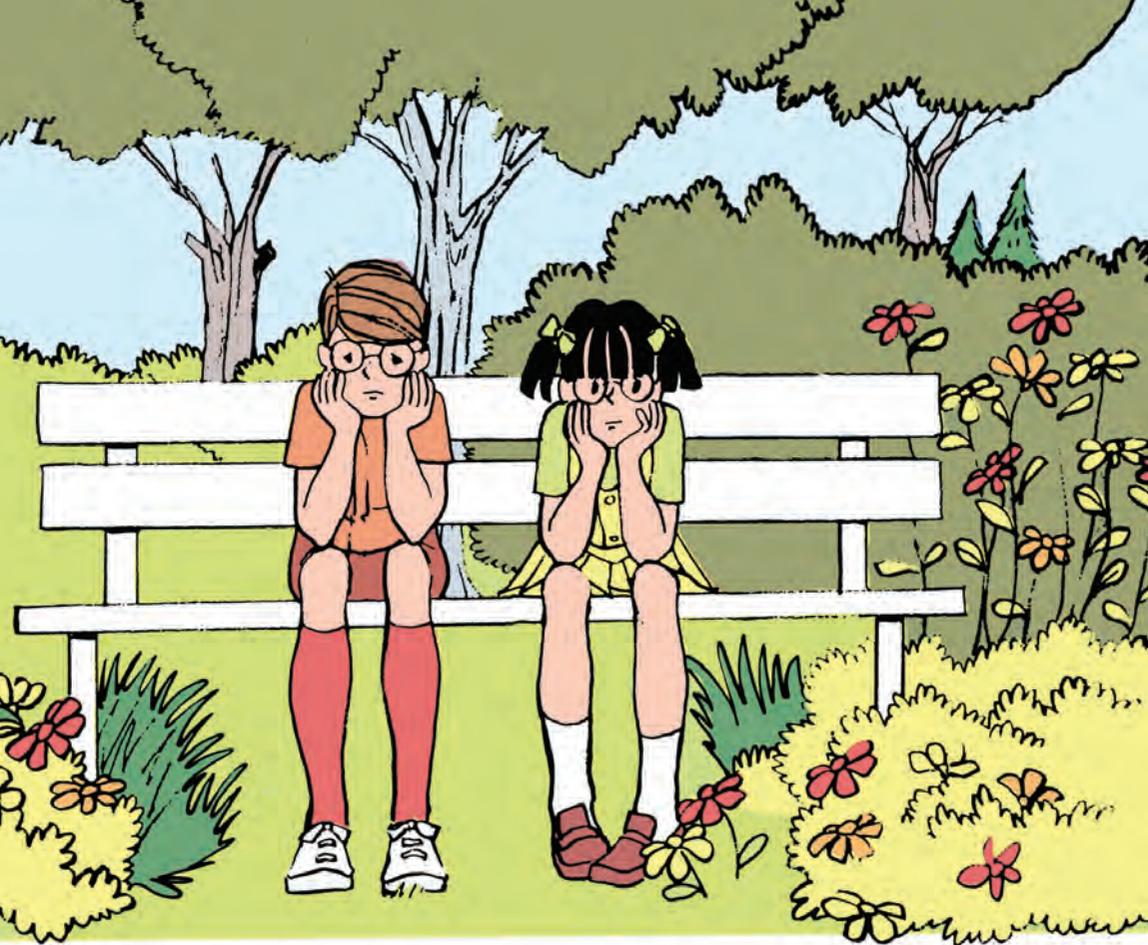
Billy Barns kicks a rock in his path. "I don't see why Daddy can't take us to the park this summer," he sighs. "All he ever does is work on his old newspaper."

“When you own a newspaper as big as the City Times, you have to work hard,” says Billy’s sister Sue. “Daddy has an important job. And anyway, he doesn’t have to take us to the park. This is the park, isn’t it? And we’re here, aren’t we? And Daddy didn’t have to bring us, did he?”

“I wasn’t thinking of **this** park,” Billy snaps. “I want to go to the big park, where you live in tents, and talk to forest rangers. We go to this old park every day. I’m tired of staying in the city all the time. I want to camp in a deep forest, and see wild animals. I want... oh, what’s that? Get it off; it’s on my nose!”

“It’s just a spider, silly,” says Sue. She brushes the insect away. “If spiders scare you, then you’d better stay away from the forest. What if you saw a snake?”





“Snakes and spiders don’t scare me,” Billy says. “That spider just surprised me, that’s all.”

“I see,” Sue smiles.

“Well, as I was saying,” Billy tells his sister, “there’s nothing to do in this silly park. You can walk on the paths, or sit on the benches, and that’s all.”

“Why Billy, you can look at the trees, or try the rides, or watch the animals,” says Sue. “You always liked the park before.”

“But I’ve seen it all a hundred times,” Billy says. “I’ve seen every tree and animal in this park. I’ve ridden every ride, and I’ll bet I’ve even sat on every bench. I’m tired of tame animals, and animals in cages, and trees inside little fences. I want to be in the wilds, where the sky is wide and blue, where there is rushing water and thick brush! I want something new, exciting, different! I want to explore, to discover... **help!** What’s *that*?” Billy jumps a foot as a beetle lands on his arm.

“It’s only a ladybug,” Sue says. “It won’t hurt you.”

“I didn’t think it was going to hurt me,” Billy snaps, watching the ladybug fly away. “It’s just that my mind was on other things.”

“Yes,” Sue says, “you were thinking of forests, and I’ll bet you can’t even name all the trees in this park. Why, I’ll bet you a chocolate bar you can’t name ten! I’ll bet you can’t name any of the plants we see here in the park, or the insects, or even the birds. And you say there’s nothing to do here. Why, I’ll bet...”

“Oh stop it,” Billy says, getting up quickly. “Let’s go home. It’s time for Daddy to be back. Maybe he has some interesting news.”