

is the last thing I want. The corners flap, and she is sprawling all over like a child chasing after papers -- no hope to get them back in the notebook as they fly everywhere in all the various currents of a very warm and windy day.

THE SPELL

In our world we've conquered many maladies and have learned to understand many problems. Our success has had limits however, and there are some individual cases which we can only say elude us. One such story is of a young boy who at twelve years old is unable to focus his attention on anything. He hasn't learned language or how to listen and is always in a state of distraction.

Our problem in dealing with our world is that we have set limits on possibilities. We look for reasons that abide in a natural order, in the limits we have set, not even suspecting answers which are valid. This would pose a threat to our peace. Were we to find them, a whole new order would have to be admitted, and we are too settled and safe in the one we have hidden ourselves in. This is why we will never understand the whole order of things.

Take for example this boy. He was indeed normal as a child. His parents took a train to Boston one weekend, and they were all riding, the three of them, in the coach section. The baby was upset by the motion and noise and was crying -- screaming. On that train a man was trying to sleep. The baby was keeping him awake, and he needed sleep before an urgent matter in Boston. Taking the idea of distracting the baby with amusement into his mind, he waved his hand, and a clown appeared in the baby's mind to be right before its eyes. As clear and true as life, the clown performed endlessly. Even when the baby slept, it was there in its dreams. The weekend passed calmly. The train arrived in Boston. The man had the sleep he needed. He left the train, forgetting to wave off the spell. The child, of course, never the same.

THE INVENTORY

I was working in a rather large department store in a huge indoor-outdoor shopping mall, and we were working hard to complete the annual inventory. There was quite

a bit of stock in my department, and the paperwork was complicated. Frequently, because of a mistake by one of the employees, there was a need to stop and authorize. There were quite a few people scattered about bending to count or standing with pencil in hand to make an entry. Some important authorizations came up, and I went to look for the manager.

He was out of the store, but to wait would mean holding up quite a bit of work that needed to be completed. I left the indoor mall, went to the mall outside, and began to walk toward the restaurant where he often spent his hours at lunch. It was a clear calm day, but in the quiet there was a sudden increasingly intensifying roar as a jet makes when it is passing low overhead.

Over a row of the box-like buildings of the shopping center I saw a missile approaching. It crashed not far over into part of the mall. There was a huge explosion, and everywhere, from out of the buildings, people streamed out to gather in a panic. One girl from my store had followed me out to give me another form to take for authorization. She met me about the time the first missile struck. We got up and began running. I held her arm and tried frantically to get her to keep pace in a sprint. She held up though, dragging against me and leaning back to straighten her nylons.

-- Bruce Ormsby Adam

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RED SAUCE

the three of us sit at the round table gobbling down plates of spaghetti, breaking apart bagels which are a poor substitute for bread, drinking enough cheap wine to keep the conversation lively and the plain sauce tasting good. e heats up more bagels when we devour the ones on the table, and she drops them, with a crash, in front of me and the visiting painter. we've been together since early morning, we're all a bit tired, our talks continually skirting tiny arguments which