



DAN LENIHAN'S
RUTH AND ELLIS AND FRIENDS



RUTH AND ELLIS CELEBRATE LABOR DAY

Ruth had a mean and dangerous look in her eye.

Ellis looked scared.

Half of the stores in the mall were having Labor Day sales and Ruth had a wallet full of charge cards and an urge to buy.

They stepped onto the down escalator, Ruth in her paisley moo-moo and Ellis in his winter green bermudas and Hawaiian shirt. Ellis' foot hit between two steps and he fell, screaming, rolling head over heel all the way to the first floor, collecting a couple of other shoppers on his way. When he got up he had a gash on his knee and a large purple bruise under his eye.

Ruth rode calmly down to meet him and said, "You clumsy bastard."

He limped off behind her. She was headed toward the most expensive department store in the mall, determination in every step.

They passed the fast food burger joint. There was a CAUTION, WET FLOOR sign and a greasy looking fat kid sloshing a mop around. Ellis' foot hit a puddle. He slid by Ruth on one foot, arms flailing like a wounded sea gull. He couldn't get his balance. Every time he'd get one foot down the other one would shoot out from under him, his arms going in all directions, trying to maintain a center of gravity that would allow him to remain upright.

"Look at that old guy dancing, his feet are a blur, " said a girl with turquoise hair.

"Awesome," said her friend, "totally awesome."

Ellis fell, hitting his head on a brick planter box. It sounded like a coconut being hit by a baseball bat. Ruth grabbed him under his arms and pulled him up. He had a gash over his ear that was bleeding heavily, running down onto his shirt.

"Get up, Fred Astaire. You're not getting out of this shopping trip. You can kill yourself for all I care."

Ellis groaned, applying pressure to the wound. He followed Ruth into the store.

JIM GETS INVOLVED IN SOME YARDWORK

Jim had let his back lawn grow ankle deep. He was running the power mower over it and didn't see the lawn sprinkler. There was a loud metallic crunch and the mower rattled to a stop.

He picked the sprinkler up and threw it as far as he could. It smashed through a window, ricocheted off a dining room table and hit Ron in the forehead, knocking him over backward in his chair, leaving a red, golf ball sized lump.

Then Jim turned his attention to the lawn mower. He hoisted it up over the chain link fence and gave it a little push to get it started down the bank. It was going about thirty miles an hour when it bounced off of Ralph's patio and into his swimming pool, splashing Ralph and Betty, diluting her iced tea and rendering his L.A. Times unreadable.

Ralph looked up at the bank and the fresh trail through the weeds and then down at the mower on the bottom of his pool.

Ron rubbed his forehead and turned the sprinkler over in his hand.

Jim turned on the T.V. and opened a beer.