

“There,” Sammy exclaimed after stapling the last sheet of paper onto the bulletin board. A veritable swath of emotions ran a marathon past his face, with nobody really wanting to cross the finish line in triumph. Sure, he had accomplished his goal, but now the repercussions of accomplishing that goal were likely to be very very bad.

“Now what?” Peeps questioned.

“We run very fast,” Sammy answered, doing so. Both he and Peeps ran out of the post office at a bewildering speed and rather erratically – Peeps enjoyed doing everything with a certain erratic flair. While running, Peeps, hair rolled tightly into a bun, felt inclined to ask, “Sammy, what did you just do?”

Sammy actually stopped running to address this question. “You mean I put two pictures of us on a sheet of paper, copied it a hundred times, and posted one sheet on each telephone pole we’ve passed so far, and you can’t piece together what I have just done? Peeps—”

“Sammy,” Peeps corrected.

“Sammy, you are amazing.”

Peeps coughed in such a way as to totally baffle Sammy as to the purpose of the cough. “No, I understood that part – wanted posters – got it. I meant what did you just do with your feet a minute ago?”

Sammy looked down at his feet. To the best of his knowledge, he did nothing interesting or peculiar with his feet. Perhaps they were acting of their own volition, doing odd things? They didn’t appear to be, he decided. He discontinued his rudimentary podiatric investigation. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Energetically, Peeps agreed, “Neither do I.”

Dawn was melting quietly into the horizon as the two fugitives hastily made their way through the remarkably tranquil streets of St. Louis. An orange haze made its home nestled among the mountains in the west; few sporadic gray clouds floated by, engrossed in a silent conversation with each other; and the brown and black pairs of shoes worn by Sammy and Peeps were methodically pounding the asphalt. If anyone were looking at this spectacle from afar, they would never have noticed the color of the shoes. Paula, however, was at an extremely close distance from them when she noticed the owners of the sneakers.

“Peeps! Sammy!” she exclaimed, but not necessarily in that order.

“Hey, Paula,” Peeps said, quite definitely in that order.

“Has either of you seen my father?”

“No,” Peeps replied.

“Maybe,” Sammy said.

“What do you mean, maybe?” Paula started to show signs of childish anticipation.

“I’ve never met him before. What does he look like?”

“You did meet him – at the clone rally.”

“Your father is The Hypothetical Friend?”

Peeps’ inability to grasp simple concepts hit Paula like a recliner having been thrown out the sixth story of an accounting firm. “It’s just that I was enlarged at around two this afternoon, and I’m still waiting for him to join me. I’d even be happy if a tiny Dad ran up and started pulling at my pants leg to get my attention. I just want to know that he’s okay. And I don’t really want him to be tiny, now that I think about it.”

Sammy looked at her dumbly and Peeps poked her in the arm with a stick.

“You guys are no help,” she screamed as she walked away brusquely.

“We can’t do that anymore, you know,” admonished Sammy to Peeps once Paula was out of earshot. “If everyone sees us walking around, we’re going to be caught in no time. We’re, as they say, on the lam. We have to keep our wits about us.”

“But,” Peeps picked up, “if we leave without anyone seeing us, there won’t be much of a pursuit, will there? That’s sort of essential,” she said, grossly mispronouncing the word *sort*, “to being a fugitive. Look, I doubt an incredible amount of people—”

She was shushed by Sammy who pointed over to the sidewalk where Paula was talking to a policeman. The policeman and Paula both looked over to Sammy and Peeps, and then back down to the piece of paper the policeman was holding. It didn’t take very long for the bluecoat to realize that the pictures matched the faces of Peeps and Sammy.

“Go on,” Sammy insisted. “I believe you were saying something funny.”

“Shut up, rubber toast. Just run.”

Sammy thought about the pseudonym he’d just been given. He didn’t know *why* he had been given that pseudonym. He didn’t even know what rubber toast was. So, as he’d grown accustomed to doing when around Peeps, he pretended it didn’t happen. He got out a packet of mayonnaise, downed it, thanked his outfit for being impervious to heat, and ran as fast as his feet could carry him with a 21” television still in his pants.