

STORIES FROM SUPPLEMENTARY READER IN THE FORM OF HINTS

1. SAM - Tammy Ruggles

Chilly rainy morning – terrible weather for summer – school – out – Shelly – not go outside and play – Mom said – he would get sick – Shelly put on his jacket – went out to front porch – found blond Labrador with a hurt paw – no collar – not know who the dog belonged to – kind of mean – calling the dogcatcher – Mom – gone to the store – went to his room – got out his First Aid Kit – not real one – played doctor and patient with it – but had stuff like iodine, bandages – named the dog Goldy – Mom tried to find the owner – put a notice in the paper – no one came to claim the dog – Shelly and Goldy played Frisbee and Football in the yard – Goldy – smart dog – knew commands like ‘Sit’, ‘Stay’ and ‘Come’ – Mom put the picture of Goldy – brought chew toy for Goldy – Goldy followed Shelly to school – walked beside him between him and the traffic – one day – a strange van in the driveway – lady with dark sunglasses and a white can – talking to Mom – a man with her – Goldy started barking – ran to her – “Sam” she laughed – Goldy whined with love – Goldy not really Goldy – it was Sam – her guide dog – Shelly’s heart sank – traffic accident caused the separation – Sam – trained working dog – the blind lady thanked Shelly for taking care of Sam – Diane offered to come and visit anytime he likes – Shelly thanked her – the van disappeared with two happy souls.

2. THE PIANO LESSON – Rob Reilly

The author - remember like yesterday – his father came home from war – father – flying officer during World War II – dressed in a blue uniform with skinny, boat-shaped cap – neighbour asked “what’s the weather like up there?” – giant like father – carrying a brown suitcase with a leather belt – author’s father – the tallest man – Mom and Rob Reilly - standing on the veranda – father dropped the suitcase – contents spilled out onto the lawn – author only five years old then – examined all the stuff lying around – mainly clothes and shoes – noticed a large newspaper advertisement displaying Piano – Dad saw him holding the paper cutting – “Yes, that’s right” he said - “I bought your mom a Piano” – Mom squealed with delight – a large horse cart pulling a brand-new piano – the delivery men positioned it near the window of small living room – Mom and the author stood back – stared at the magnificent piece of furniture (the Piano) – Mom saw a piano before only once at the Catholic Kindergarten – after tea that night – Mom – teach herself to play – plinked and plonked for about two hours – Dad said “Enough is enough” – Mum obsessed with Piano – plink and plonk between cooking and housework – within a month – belting out a tune – Dad – as pleased as Punch with Mum’s tenacity and obvious talent – three months later – Mom – an accomplished pianist – holding parties in the lounge – neighbours sang “She’ll be coming round the mountain” and “Goodnight Irene” – Mom felt like a princess – Dad looking Sad and worried – unable to find a job – few weeks later – the same horse clip-clopped the driveway – two men loaded the piano onto the wagon – Mom staying in the Kitchen sobbing – Mom – a proud person – Dad in the back yard looking sadder – the reason – no job, no money, no piano – couple of ladies visited – telling Mom as welcome as flowers in May to play their piano – Mum missed the Piano terribly – house awfully quiet without Piano – Dad got a job with an accounting firm – study to qualify as a chartered accountant – every night after dinner – stack of books on the table – sacrificed a lot over the years – two years later – bought another Piano by paying cash.

3. The Face of Judas Iscariot – Bonnie Chamberlain

Old priest told this story – author not know where it came from – no one able to tell him – centuries ago – great artist engaged to paint a mural for Cathedral in Sicilian town – the subject – life of Jesus – the artist laboured diligently – finished except the two important figures – the child Jesus and Judas Iscariot – searched far and wide for models – found a model for Child Jesus in the street – a twelve year old boy – face of an angel perhaps a very dirty one – using him as a model – finished the portrait of Child Jesus – still no one to serve as model for the portrait of Judas – haunted by the fear – his masterpiece – remain unfinished – continued his search – the story of unfinished masterpiece spread afar – many men offered to pose as model – but in vain – the painter looking for a face ; a man warped by life, enfeebled by surrender to greed and lust – one afternoon – the artist found a model for Judas in tavern – a gaunt and tattered figure – begging for wine – his face bears the marks of every sin of mankind – the artist – ready to offer wine, food and clothing – the artist working feverishly to complete his masterpiece – change came over the model – strange tension replaced the stuporous languor – blood shot eyes fixed with horror on the painted likeness of himself – the painter pausing in his work – asks “What troubles you so?” – the model for Judas sobbed – buried his face in hands – years ago – posed as a model for Child Jesus.

4. Swept Away – Susannah Hickling

“Come on, We’ve got to get out of here now” Serge urged Celine – flood water poured into their terraced home – already 30 centimetres deep and rising – the couple lifted the sofa onto the dining table – stacked many possessions out of reach of the filthy water – 2.15 pm, Monday, September 22, 2003 – Lunel, the small town in Southern France – battered by violent storms since mid-morning – Serge (43), Council Worker – Celine (32), Home help – live in Lunel – the flood – second time in just over a year – Serge and Celine stepped out into the street – Celine stepped over a low hedge – it separated the street from the pavement – Serge following close behind – in an instant – Celine disappeared below the water – “She’s dead” Serge thought – Celine felt his grasp – her relief short-lived – swept along underwater – swallowing mouthfuls of filthy liquid – “I’m going to die” She thought – about ten metres from the manhole – Celine in a two-metre wide concrete storm drain – across the drain – a small plastic pipe – the tunnel completely black – Celine grabbed the pipe – above ground – “Help, help!” Serge panicked and cried – Louise Martinez, the neighbour advised to ring the fire brigade – Celine hung on – thoughts came like photographs – see her daughter Amandine blowing her a kiss – Amandine to celebrate twelfth birthday in two weeks time – then thought of Serge and the squabble they had that morning – firemen reached the place after an hour – shone powerful torches down the manhole – probed with metal rods – no sign of missing woman – Celine still hanging from the pipe – lights and rods disappeared – black now in the drain – felt objects smashing against her – bags, branches, the contents of bins – couldn’t hold the pipe any longer – water level dropped to her chest – “There’s got to be an exit” she reckoned – “Perhaps there’s a grill” – able to touch the bottom of the drain with feet – her face smashed against an iron bar – lost consciousness for a moment – could feel something above her – the pieces of plastic hanging down the roof – Celine grabbed one – water picked up speed – couldn’t hold on to the pipe any longer – her body – thrown around by water – slammed against the concrete wall – still buffeted by the terrifying force of the storm water – Celine not immediately realize herself being in the open air

– night falling – reality hits – “I’m outside!” She cried – Celine - been in the ditch whose water over flowed into a large flooded area – houses one side – the fields on the other – grabbed tufts of grass and reeds – screamed for help – heard a man’s voice – Jack Poderoso (45), teacher – standing on the platform – checking his daughter’s horse alright – the time – after 7 pm – Celine had been down the water for five hours – gave Serge’s number – nobody answered – recall Serge’s brother’s number – Celine heard another voice – “Where’s the body?” the firemen asked carrying a bag – after 8 pm, Serge arrived at Lunel’s firestation – Celine only collapsed weeping into Serge’s arms – her theory – when she wanted something, she was very determined – wanted to be there for Amandine and for Serge.

5. A Close Encounter – Rex Coker

Geniuses and tinkers live everywhere in small towns all over the world – Rex Coker’s brother – a tinker – spent time coming up with new inventions to keep him from having to overexert himself during the summer months – too much time on his hands – left his mind wander – sit down and apply his ideas to paper – blueprinting his invention to try out – Old Schwinn bike with heavy balloon type tires kept upside down for weeks – brother attached different things to the gear system – DC electric motor – bought from local pawn shop for twenty bucks – old battery out of Dad’s old Chevy – DC electric motor mounted on the mainframe – just below bike’s seat – battery strapped down on the rack over the back tire and fender – two cables run along the frame to a switch – mounted on the crossbar – in the place of sprocket – a pulley with fan belt – fan belt – of an Yazoo lawn mower – pulley made the bike look like a sci-fi novel – the test run behind the house – placed the bike on the centre block – hooked the battery terminals – switched on the motor – stirred to life – back tire to sing a high pitched sound – so cool to see the invention work – the real test – most fun part of the summer – brother saddled on his beast of invention (bicycle) – put on bike helmet – wore leather gloves – threw his legs over the contraption – held thumb up – like those in old war movies – pushed off before throwing the switch – “We have lifted off” Rex Coker yelled – brother threw the switch – the beast (bicycle) came to life – hurried off into distance – Rex Coker tried to keep up with the bike – but the bike much too fast – standing out of breath – hands on his knees – seeing his brother – having trouble to turn – reappeared minutes later – headed straight at a high rate of speed – Rex Coker ran for his life – escaped under the clothes line through the double gate of the back yard – Rex Coker’s brother not lucky – switched off the motor – speed too fast to stop – clothes line caught him under his chin – Rex Coker raced over to help – brothers began to fight – cursed the narrator for not helping – Rex Coker’s reply – he should be given the first ride – Rex Coker – shorter and smarter for escaping under the clothes line – brothers laughed – tires warped – battery flown into neighbour’s backyard – Rex Coker brother’s reply – had quality time together.

6. The Summer Flight

Kumar staring through the window – owns comfortable, fully furnished apartment in New York – intelligent and enterprising young man – feel an emptiness in his heart – the blaring horn and the noisy movement of truck – Kumar’s thoughts drifted to another place in Delhi – the continuous honking of water tankers – men and women jostle their way towards the tanker – narrow

congested street – two flight of stairs – cramped flat with inadequate water supply – no study room – doors ajar – family members walking in and out – Grandpa sitting in armchair watching TV and the open doorway – Grandma – ever serving coffee, Pakodas, dosas, snacks, etc., Dad with serious face striving to work – brother and sister busy with school activities – Mother – soft, sweet creature – ever-loving and caring – attending all the members of the family – cooking, cleaning and running errands – ‘Oh, Ma! How I miss you’ thought Kumar – recalled his preparations to US – his outstanding performance at college – wonderful career at MNC – deputed on an assignment to the states – assured of a promising career – scheming and cajoling to convince mother – Dad squeezed out funds from every possible source – brother and sister – sacrifice so many necessities – tear stricken faces bid farewell at airport – Kumar having no time to consider all this – his mind set upon a glorious career in his dream country – the States – obtained Green Card – gaining citizenship in his Utopia – America – full purse and lavish life style now his own – initially spoke to his mom for half an hour – pacifying her – gradually drifted away from her by the pleasure of his work and lifestyle – calls made mum sit until midnight – Kumar lost cheer after that – his mom pleaded with him to return – speak less and less - once a week – once a month – calls rarer – a wave of guilt and remorse – the images of his mother sitting by the telephone – turned to the window – sky dotted with birds flying streamlined ‘V’ – seemed to be hurrying – that time of the year – migratory birds – return to home after five-month warm sojourn – remembered his childhood picnic to Vedanthangal – saw flocks of birds there – Dad hired a telescope to have a closer view of the nest – saw five tiny little nestlings – Dad said that though the birds resided here, they soon would go back to homes – “There’s no place like home, is there?” he added – Kumar gazed at the flock of birds flying back home – his vision blurred because of tears – left the room with a sure stride and strong determination – Kumar understands that Home is where the heart is.

7. Caught Sneezing – Oscar Wilde

Art and Culture – one form of creativity – innovatively tackling the problems of life – another form of creativity – Hubert – little boy of fourteen – travelled on his horse through a lonely road infested with thieves and robbers – three hefty men waylaid him – took away his horse – beat him black and blue – Hubert limped to a palatial mansion hoping to get some help – raised his hand to knock – the door already wide open – shocked to hear the voices of the thieves – thieves tactfully diverted the attention of the inmates to huge noise outside – inmates likely to return – thieves decided to hide inside a cupboard – wait until night to plunder the household – Hubert suppressed his cry of horror – out of fear – hid in the narrow space under the staircase – Hubert intelligent and clever by nature – yearning for a chance to warn the household of the impending danger – the family – an old couple, visiting sons and daughters – gathered for a family function – came back – Hubert taken for a thief – kind old man believed his story – offered him food – Hubert wracking his brain to forewarn the family – the danger lurking in the cupboard – idea hits on – Hubert sprang up to demonstrate a few magic tricks – his first act – to create a storm in a cupboard – asked for snuff box – emptied it into the narrow opening along the upper edge of the door – emerged a suppressed sneeze from inside the cupboard – “How very strange” said the old man – “More snuff” Hubert demanded – all sprayed into it – soon perfect storm of sneezes – family realized – the presence of the strangers – opened the cupboard to tackle the thieves – thanks to Hubert’s skilful strategy the thieves fainted – badly in need of air and ventilation – Hubert retrieved his horse – set off with good will and gratitude – Hubert proved – Wisdom does not seek only the aged to express itself.