

Now there's only *one* being in the world who goes to sleep like that, and if I have to tell you his name I've wasted a lot of energy at this typewriter in the last few years. He stalked, like a third-string Frankenstein, into the living room, then turned and wandered out into the back yard. Since the *pool* is in the back yard I figured it was time to do something—but *how*?

I couldn't wake him up—*everybody* knows what happens if you do *that*! So I whipped into the kitchen, made a peanut-butter sandwich, ran out in the back and held it under his nose.

Like iron filings trailing after a magnet, he followed me into the house and through the door of his bedroom, where I closed the door and leaned against it until I was sure he was lying down again. I might add that that was almost the *last* time I ever saw him get up under his own power.

#### ALBERT'S TRUE STORY

**THING NUMBER TWO:** What *really* happened to Albert: You may remember a while back I told you for a couple of months running what was happening in our relationship with a small but vicious alligator named Albert.

He appeared with dismaying suddenness in our bathtub one evening and *disappeared* even more suddenly, leaving a cloud of suspicion which lingered for months that he might be in my shoes, or under my pillow, or at the foot of the bed where my toes go bravely all alone in the dark every single night. Well... here's what *really* happened.

David was as sick of him as I was, and that's saying quite a bit. But David—being David—finds it difficult (which is a nice way of saying *impossible*) to admit he was wrong. The fact of the matter is, I *still* wouldn't know where Albert is if a nice girl named Susan who lives in our neighborhood hadn't come up to me one afternoon as I sat in the middle of the lawn thinking about pulling dandelions, and said:

"You know, that thing *bit* me." And she held out a bandaged finger as proof.

I had a strange prickling at the back of my neck. "What thing?" I asked, as calmly as possible.

"That *alligator*," she said. "You know, it's funny, but I haven't been able to get him to count up to ten."

"Count up to ten," I repeated like a retarded parrot.

"Like David *said* he could," she said plaintively. "And he's *still* never come when I called his name, even though David swore he had taught him to do it."

#### NOT REMARKABLE

Since David hadn't even been able to teach Albert to *eat*, I didn't find this all that remarkable. I just nodded, waiting to hear more. I heard it.

"Still," she said, "for only five dollars, I guess it's okay."

Five dollars. The words reverberated in my mind. David had *sold* this perfectly nice girl that vicious beast, and then *lied* to me about it!

"Listen," I said, reaching into my pocket, "here's five bucks. Anything you buy here is guaranteed. Bring him back in a little bit, okay? I think he has to go back into training."



THIS WON'T be the last time you'll see me, and if I hear from you soon, I'll come back some day, okay?

An hour later, I had Albert, all curled up and hissing malevolently in the bottom of a shoebox. Two hours later, I had the pleasure of hearing a perfectly bloodcurdling scream come out of David's bedroom. I hurried to the door and looked in.

The top drawer of his dresser was open, and David was pressed against the opposite wall like Scrooge after seeing Marley's ghost. "What is it?" I asked in all innocence.

He turned to me with a perfectly terrible smile, unsure how much I knew, but unwilling to take a chance. "Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh," he heh-heh'd. "It's, um, er, ah, heh-heh, Albert. He's um, er, *back*." The smile began to rot like old cheese. "Heh-heh," he added.

"Right," I said, "and you owe me five dollars, champ."

He paid me—eventually—and Albert is now back in the pet shop from which he came, glaring at potential purchasers through the window. David never mentions his name.

**THING NUMBER THREE:** But I'm out of space. Listen—if enough of you write and ask me to, I'll come back next month and give you three or four more things from the dread notebook. Otherwise...

TIGER BEAT will still keep you up to date on what's happening with David, 'cause they know you want to be kept informed, but from me to you... Goodbye.

And it's been wonderful.  
And I love you.

*Sam*



SOME OF THE stories that come from "The Partridge" set are really unbelievable! Like when David and Danny used to have water pistol fights, or the mischief Sheesh used to get into on the set. You'd have liked it there!