

Love Story, a Sequel

by Jack Swenson

He hid in parks and abandoned apartment houses until his wounds healed. He ate nuts, berries, and seeds. A shy, gentle soul, he watched children playing on the monkey bars, and thought of his lost youth.

For a time he kept to the trees, avoiding the bright lights, tall buildings, and movie houses. But he needed a job. He tried a circus, but they weren't hiring. He got a job as a bouncer in a bar downtown, but he didn't enjoy the work. Then he became a bond trader, and he discovered that he had found his calling.

He had a good head for business, and he knew how to keep his mouth shut. Secrecy was the key to the bond business, he discovered. Clients took his silence and his stern, fixed stare with lips pressed tightly together to mean that he was someone they could put their trust in.

And then one Saturday he was sitting on a bench in a small downtown park eating a snack of seeds from a paper sack when a young woman in a nightgown jogged past him. He recognized the girl; she was an acquaintance from the old days. He jumped to his feet, ran after her, caught up, and they jogged together for a time.

Finally, the young woman wobbled off the path and sat down. "Whew!" she said. "I'm out of shape." He stood there open-mouthed looking at her. She smiled. "It's good seeing you again," she said. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "Mmm," she said. "Always did love that cologne. What's it called again? Love Potion #9?"

He sat down next to her, and they talked for hours. Or rather, she talked, and he listened. When they left the park, they were hand in

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hand. "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship," she said.

They went to her apartment and spent the rest of the weekend in bed, and when they were not otherwise occupied, she hand fed him his favorite delicacies from a bowl of shoots, leaves, caterpillars, grubs, and snails.

