

Snoopy Calling

by Jeff Swanson

The little girl picked up the toy phone. "Who is this please?" she said, mimicking what she'd heard her mother say many times before.

"Snoopy," came the voice.

"Snoopy who?"

"Snoopy Brown. Charlie Brown's dog."

"Oh." Nonplussed, the little girl lowered the phone. Then brought it back up quickly -- "hold please" -- and then dropped it again. She needed time to think. This seemed strange. That Snoopy should be calling her. Then again, maybe he needed help for something. Or maybe he just needed a friend.

She lifted to the phone to her ear again. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting," she said. "What can I do for you, Mr. Snoopy?"

"My FATHER is Mr. Snoopy, you just call me Snoopy." The voice sounded joking.

"Is your father really named Mr. Snoopy?"

"I'm just kidding. I don't even know who my father is. Daisy Hill Puppy Farm, you know."

"Of course. Well, Snoopy...to what do I owe the honor of this call?"

"I make the rounds. Anytime someone buys one of my Snoopy[™] toy telephones, I answer the first call. Just to welcome them to the fold. And to remind them that magic still exists."

"That's so sweet!"

"Why, thank you. Most of the time I get babytalk -- gobbledygook - - but I must say, you are well spoken and articulate. How old are you?"

"I am five."

"You must be some kind of genius, then?"

"I am a genius, yes. But I've got a little magic too. If a cartoon dog can call me on a toy telephone, then I can speak as articulately as an adult. At least for the duration of this call."

The two chatted for hours about a great many things. How the sun shone, and the green of the grass, and the various kinds of pretty flowers. And the military-industrial complex, Vietnamization, and the recent troubles at Kent State.

When the phone call was over, it began to fade in her memory. By the next morning it was all utterly forgotten. And the toy phone stayed a toy phone from then on. A person encounters many kinds of magic over the course of their lives, and most of it evaporates from the memory, being knowledge that is not concerned with, nor useful to, the daylight world.

Just like dreams.

