

Grocery Store Adventures

by Ed Raymond

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Mom is taking me to the grocery store today!

It's where she usually shops. We live in a small town so it's a small store and they know her by name. But, she has never taken me there. Says I'm too young. So, I'm excited to be going.

"You stay close to me so you don't get lost," she told me.

Her instructions reminded me of pictures I'd seen of English youngsters in the park with their nannies. The boys wore straps like harnesses over their winter coats and their nannies held on to them with a cord, almost like a leash.

I showed Mom the picture and asked "Why?"

" don't want their boys to stray and get lost," she replied.

"I'd never want to stray away from you," I said fearing she'd put a leash on me.

We entered the store and I was amazed. Bright lights. Aisle after aisle of shelves stretching to the ceiling filled with colorful packages.

As promised, I stayed close to my Mother's side as she picked out boxes to put in the shopping cart she pushed in front of her. But, then, on one aisle, the things I saw on the black and white TV at home came to life ... in Technicolor.

There's Tony the Tiger and Frosted Flakes. "Theyrrrreee Greeeaaatttt!"

There's an orange box with a picture a toy submarine that's inserted inside. Jerry, from next door, had one.

He showed me how to put baking soda in it and drop it in a fish bowl. It bubbled and floated up and down. It was really neat!

"Oh, my!" There's a statue of Elsie the Borden's Milk Cow at the end of the aisle.

"She's huge!" I thought, as I excitedly ran over to it. She's taller than me. And, she talks.

All the kids loved Elsie because all of us loved milk. Borden's ice cream was really good, too, especially when Mom put Bosco chocolate syrup all over it.

Mom? Oh, no! Where is she? Oh, my gosh. I lost Mom!!!!

I whirled around and looked down the aisle. But, she wasn't there. So, I ran to the next aisle. She wasn't there either.

"Is she still in the store?" I wondered as I wandered from one end to the other. I peered down each aisle. I looked for her tan coat, her brown shoes, her red hair. But, she was nowhere to be seen.

"Where could she have gone?"

Finally, I humbly approached the lone counter at the store's front and asked, "Have you seen my Mommy?"

Mr. Carlson, the store's manager, sat me up on the counter and told me to wait there and he assured me my Mother would come there before she left.

I sat there with my legs dangling over the edge of the counter. My shoulders sloped as I clenched my hands, looked down at the floor and hoped that Mother would reappear.

What would happen to me if she had already gone home? I hope they won't call the police to come get me. But, all of a sudden, there were Mom's brown shoes and the bottom of her tan coat. I looked up and she approached the counter with her cart full of groceries. "Mom," I shouted with relief.

Mr. Carlson totaled Mom's purchased up asked, "Mrs. Raymond, do you want me to bag him up for you?" My Mother laughed and replied, "No, I think I'll take him home as he is."

When we got settled in the car, I asked Mom the question I feared most. "Mom?"

"Yes, dear?"

"You're not going to put me on a leash so I won't get lost are you?"

"Honey, you don't think I'd lose track of where you are, do you?" she asked.

"Oh, I guess not," I said.