

Wormville, U.S.A.

¹The tiny town of Wormville, the earthworm capital of the world, is normally a sleepy little haven where all of the residents go about their sleepy little lives. ²Children go to their schools, their parents go to their jobs, and all of the senior citizens rock on his or her porch or works in their garden. ³But each year on October 27, every townspeople comes alive, for they know it's time once again for the Earthworm Festival to begin. ⁴The festival is a time for all of the citizens to forget their worries and celebrate their slimy friends. ⁵Generally all goes smoothly, but everyone has their own special memory of the nearly disastrous occurrence at last year's celebration.

⁶On that fateful day, the townspeople assembled for their huge parade. ⁷Crowds lined Main Street, and every child was decked out in their special worm costume. ⁸Some costumes were made of Styrofoam, and some were made of plastic, but each child added their own splash of creativity. ⁹One little girl decorated her wormwear with flowers, and a little boy decorated his with spots. ¹⁰With giant plastic worms adorning their caps, the Boy Scouts held their kazoos and were ready to march. ¹¹When a whistle sounded, each boy looked over their shoulder and saw twenty-seven worm-shaped floats ready to roll, along with the Earthworm Queen smiling and waving from a flatbed truck. ¹²The high school band, dressed in their new earth-toned uniforms, tuned their instruments and prepared to perform the earthworm anthem. ¹³Every young person and every parent watched with their hearts racing as the mayor, in his sporty brown Cadillac with a jumbo helium-filled worm tethered to the fender, gave the signal to march. ¹⁴The members of the band blasted their notes, and the floats began to trundle. ¹⁵Each Boy Scout blew their kazoo, and all was well in Wormville.

¹⁶But not every resident of Wormville was taking part in their town's celebration. ¹⁷No one knew that Bubba Bigby, the twelve-year-old town brat, was waiting to thwart their fun. ¹⁸With lightning speed, he removed the cover of the biggest manhole in Wormville, and as the scouts neared the abyss, not one of them suspected that their lives were in

danger. ¹⁹Suddenly, PLOP, squish, PLOP, squish, PLOP, squish—each scout, clutching his kazoo, dropped into the open manhole and landed waist deep in yucky muck. ²⁰The parade came to a screeching halt, but no one raised their voice to volunteer for the tricky-icky job of rescuing the panicked youths. ²¹Neither the mayor nor the police chief wanted to dirty their suits, and both the town founder and the grocery store owner were wearing their brand-new shoes.

²²Finally, one courageous woman, Mary Jane Lane, the local librarian, stepped forward from the crowd to bravely volunteer to rescue the scouts. ²³Each person raised their voice in joy as the heavy equipment operator helped lower their courageous librarian into the mucky gunk. ²⁴The benevolent lady lifted each scout with their gooked up kazoos onto her shoulders, and Fireman Dan skillfully reached down to grab each boy and pull them to safety. ²⁵All of the citizens showed their relief with a collective sigh. ²⁶Then they all raised their voices and cheered Mary Jane Lane. ²⁷To honor her, either Farmer Fred or Fire Chief Keith jumped up on their truck and proclaimed that, in honor of the town hero, Main Street henceforward would have a new name: Mary Jane Lane Lane. ²⁸In the end, Bubba Bigby got what he deserved, for the PTA and the Quilting Club accidentally ran over him with their floats, and he received serious abrasions (although not life threatening).

²⁹This year on October 27, the sleepy little town will once again awaken, and every citizen will bedeck themselves in costumes and honor their slimy friend, the earthworm. ³⁰Town hero Mary Jane Lane, along with Bubba Bigby (who underwent a spiritual conversion after his dastardly deed), will lead the parade down Mary Jane Lane Lane, bringing joy throughout their beloved town.

And all is still well in Wormville.

The End.