

The Unusual Apiary:  
A Collection of Short Stories and  
Historic Photographs



A photographic series giving  
color and new life to the  
photographs whose stories  
have been lost





## The Association

I've known Gloria for some time now. We both work under The Botanists Association, a secret, organized group of individuals coming together to fight back against the evil lurking in this world and to save a few houseplants. Gloria's latest mission was to lure the evil Dr. Reynolds into holy matrimony to gain insight on his malicious plans to annihilate the entire cacti species from existence. The Association was given an anonymous tip that Dr. Reynolds was brewing up a formula that would kill any living cactus plant with a single drop of his dark concoction. On this day, it is my duty to go undercover as a wedding photographer and create portraits of Gloria and her betrothed Dr. Reynolds before The Association ends Reynolds' evil tyranny over cacti once and for all.

Gloria was quite the convincing bride today and said her vows dutifully and convincingly. I sat the newlyweds down in my studio and positioned Dr. Reynolds standing next to Gloria who sat on a wooden stool. His hair was slicked back and his suit jacket buttoned ever so precisely, but he wasn't fooling me. No matter what angle I photographed him in, Reynolds dark eyes stared menacingly back at the camera and his wickedness was easily captured. I laid Gloria's translucent veil across her shoulders and let it drape down over her arms so that she wouldn't have to directly touch the evil standing beside her. She appeared so elegant and dainty next to her new husband, but I knew not to be fooled – Gloria was the best



agent out there and was a force to be reckoned with.

After arranging the couple, I found myself underneath the dark focusing cloth with my eye pressed up against a loop. As I turned the knobs and began to see the couple in sharper focus, I counted down to take the shot. Suddenly, I saw Dr. Reynolds's eyes flash in my direction and a small, terrifying grin slip across his lips just as I was pressing the shutter and never before had he looked so terrifying. Seconds later, I heard a large thud behind me and as I swiveled around to see what was happening, Dr. Reynolds grabbed Gloria and a large man resembling one of Reynolds' henchmen flew into the studio straight towards me.

Gloria, being the clever agent that she is, smashed her small, high-heeled shoes into Reynolds' foot. He yelped in pain and let her go and she threw her stool across the studio directly at Reynolds' henchman. The wood smashed across his face, throwing his large, pulsating body onto the floor where he fell out of consciousness. As the shocked Dr. Reynolds watched the scene unfold before him and tried to regain his balance, Gloria snatched up both of his arms and handcuffed him just as the elders of The Botanists Association began flooding the room to bring Dr. Reynolds to justice and save the entire cacti species.



## Midway Carnival's Fantastic Facial Hair Competition

I didn't want to miss it so I pushed through heaps of people all piling on top of each other to get a better look at this year's Fantastic Facial Hair Competition. It was my dream to be able to grow facial hair like my brother one day that could win me the Midway Carnival's first prize. I only had a few minutes left before the announcement of this year's winners and as I forced my way to the front of the crowd, I looked up beamingly at the bearded ladies and hairy gentlemen lined up on the stage standing next to Edward showing off their glorious facial locks. My brother sent me an approving wink when we met eye contact and my heart swelled with excitement. Edward's mustache was twisted and displayed with perfection. His blue hair curled slightly at the ends to perfectly accentuate his upper lip and I couldn't help but yell in excitement hoping my older brother would finally win the competition after participating in the last four years.

An announcer, dressed in a red pantsuit with a large black hat plopped on his head entered the stage and the roar of the crowd erupted in excitement to hear the results. Four judges, consisting of three large, burly and hairy men and one petite woman with a beard down to her knees judged this year's competition and the results had just been put in. The announcer, holding a small piece of tan paper quieted the crowd. He announced the 3rd and 2nd place winners, but I didn't care to listen since Edward's name still hadn't crossed



the announcer's lips. My brother nervously looked down at me as the announcer quieted the crowd to announce the winner. At that moment, Edward's name was called out and I shouted with joy as my brother stood up and claimed his prize. I knew one day I was going to do the same and as Edward claimed his prize, he called me up to the stage to help him enjoy the largest bowl of ice cream on this side of town specifically made for the Midway Carnival's Fantastic Facial Hair Competition winner.





## Picture Day

It's picture day tomorrow and my skin is sickishly pale.

I have to look perfect; it's my senior year.

I went to the salon and asked for the darkest spray tan,

My mother warned me not to do it, but I didn't listen.

Leaving the salon I was excited about my new skin,

After rinsing it off I couldn't bear to look.

My spray tan doesn't always look very tan at all,

and I was left with a complexion of an overripe orange.

I cried and begged my mom to not make me go,

But she grinned as she curled my hair, and said it would all be okay.

I angrily sat in the chair, said cheese and smiled.

Only to realize a few weeks later,

Yearbooks aren't in color quite yet.



## Bertha

As I entered the water something felt off, but I couldn't place my finger on what was giving me this eerie feeling. I shook it off and flung my fishing pole through the air, swirling my line up above me until the bobber gently crashed down on to the surface of the water. I patiently waited for a fish to bite and repeated throwing my line into the water a few more times. Everyone always said Little Bear Lake was the best fishing spot in Wisconsin, but I couldn't help but notice that I wasn't getting a single bite. As I patiently stood in the water, my mind wandered back to an old story that my grandfather told me about the monster that was said to have made its home in these very waters. My grandfather called her, Bertha. He told me that Bertha had a long, thick neck and a powerful round body. I nostalgically remembered him talking about how Bertha was said to have razor sharp teeth and enormous eyes that every fisherman feared and how terrified I was of meeting her when we come here to fish. There had been no sightings of Bertha since my grandfather was a child and I knew I was being silly for worrying that Bertha may come up to the surface to eat me, but I couldn't help but feel uneasy.

After several hours without even a single bite on my line, I decided to turn in for the day. Suddenly something tugged so hard on my line that it flew from my hands and shot straight down into the water making a large splash. I waded through murky water and stuck my hand down through the surface trying to feel for the slick pole only to be greeted by a scaly, thick surface. I shot my hand straight back out of the water and as I looked down to see what it was that I had touched, a pair of large eyes peered up at me.







# POST CARD

## CORRESPONDENCE

*You should have seen the look on Sarah's face when she met her cousin Brian. Every time he came into the room her eyes would get so wide! I still don't understand where my sister dug up a baby with green skin, but besides that, he seems pretty normal. I hope they get along better when they get older, but as of right now, I'm not sure how I feel about a green baby either.*

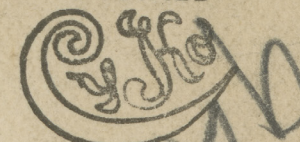
*Kind Regards,*

*Pam*

## NAME AND ADDRESS

*Sue Mackintyre  
1876 Broadway Ave,  
Little Canada, MN 55086*

PLACE  
POSTAGE



STAMP  
HERE





## Brian

I was walking home from work one cold, fall night and as I approached my house, I heard a faint cry. Knowing neither I nor any of my neighbors had any children, I worried a small child had stumbled on to my property and was lost, so I went to investigate. As I made my way through my yard and the cries began getting louder and nearer, I saw a small white bundle being held by a tall, dark-haired woman. As I crept closer to see what was going on, I realized that this woman had emerald green skin and large, purple eyes and had what appeared to be blood, smeared across her back. My foot crunched down on maple leaf and she sharply looked up from the bundle in her arms and made direct eye contact with me. Her stare was terrifying and helpless like looking into the eyes of a wounded wolf and just as I was about to scream with terror, she rushed towards me and covered my mouth with her warm hand. As her skin touched mine, I was jolted into a new world where the ground I was standing on was filled with deep reds and ambers and I felt hot and sweaty.

Suddenly I saw lights flashing through the sky and explosions began going off around me, but I look down and see a bundled up child with green skin in my arms. It's as if I'm looking through someone else's eyes and I can't control my own body. Through the dust, I see a silver pod-like form, but as my arms begin placing the bundled up child inside of it, another explosion goes off behind me, and my fragile body is forced to the ground and a sharp pain





resonates through my back. My body weakly pulls itself up and I enter the pod. As another large explosion appears in front of me, I am jolted back to my yard where I am free to move again but so confused that I cannot speak.

The woman explains to me that her planet is in war and no longer safe for her child. Her body is shaking as she hands me the small bundled up baby and she falls to the ground. Looking up at me with desperate, pleading eyes, the woman asks me to take care of her baby as if it were my own and as she took her final breath, she whispered the name, *Brian*.



## The St. Michel Swindlers

Ethel and Loren were the two most infamous bank robbers Bozeman, Montana had ever seen. They had robbed over eleven banks in their time there and had never been caught. At age 83, Ethel decided she wanted to do one last heist with her 85-year-old husband before settling down for retirement and moving to Oakdale, Minnesota. Their target was the National Bank of Gallatin Valley. The public knew Ethel and Loren as the “St. Michel Swindlers” for their first robbery happened at the St. Michel Bank in Three Forks, Montana. The true identities of the St. Michel Swindlers were still a mystery to the town and both Ethel and Loren had lived peacefully unnoticed for the last 40 years in Bozeman.

The morning of their last heist started out like any other. As Loren gathered supplies such as his 1922 Browning Model Semi-Automatic Pistol, three black carrying sacks and two white paper machè masks with small holes cut out for the eyes and mouth, Ethel curled her hair and fastened her favorite gold brooch to the lapel of her jacket that she wore every day. Though Loren thought Ethel’s personal grooming completely unnecessary based on the task they had at hand, he patiently waited while she finished getting ready. Loren loaded up their car with personal belongings and he excitingly envisioned the quiet life that he and his wife would soon have away from Bozeman. As Ethel slid into the passenger seat of their black, Ford Model T the couple made their way to National Bank of Gallatin Valley, approaching their final heist together. Ethel couldn’t help but think back to their first bank



robbery together almost 40 years earlier as they pulled up to the front doors of the bank. She turned and gave her husband one last kiss before pulling the mask over her face and as the adrenaline began rushing through their systems, they crashed through the front doors of the Bank of Gallatin Valley and began their final heist.

**A**s Loren pulled out his pistol and pointed it at the bank teller, Ethel quickly ran behind the counter and began filling their black pouches with the money left in the drawers. Little did the innocent bank-goers and employees know, Loren had never even loaded his gun knowing that he wouldn't actually have any need to use it. The couple had done this so many times before that they knew that the second that they came in, it would be a swift in and out. However, this time was different. As Ethel filled the bags with cash and change, one of the tellers snuck out the back door and notified the police. Suddenly, loud shouts and gunshots could be heard outside and Loren knew that they were in trouble. Ethel, grabbing her last handful of cash, looked her husband in the eye and began to run, but as she rushed towards the back door of the bank, one of the tellers reached up from underneath his post and pulled on her jacket in an attempt to stop the two, unhinging Ethel's gold brooch.

**T**he couple booked it from the bank and set off for their new home in Minnesota, the police rushed in finding the only piece of evidence the couple had ever left during one of their robberies: Ethel's gold brooch. This unique brooch could not have belonged to anyone besides Ethel and though the police had now shockingly discovered the identities of the St. Michel Swindlers, they would never be seen in Bozeman again.





Marie,

Just sending my kind regards and a notice of a finished job. Danny and Charles are witnesses to a job well done and will be patiently waiting for their compensation. We took Robert swimming and per your request, his head, unfortunately, dipped below the surface. What a shame there was no lifeguard around to save him! By the time we altered the authorities to avoid suspicion, it was too late for our poor Robert. We'll talk soon.

Evelyn







## The Witch

As Natalie stood at the edge of the water she knew she was screwed for sure. The townspeople of Wright had always thought she was weird and the only reason they let it slide that she was left-handed was that her father was a pastor. Her father convinced the townspeople to spare her life even though she was dominant with the hand associated with Satan. He was gone now and so was any hope of escaping. She thought back to the night that she was caught trying to save the black cats that had been captured and sent to be slaughtered by the townspeople because of their fear of witchcraft. Natalie knew the black cats were innocent and successfully freed them, but was caught using magic to put the guards to sleep during her heist.

She had been caught and sent to be tested as a witch. Natalie knew she would fail because the townspeople had been right after all and she was a witch. She thought it was silly it took them this long but was grateful for their naivety. Throughout Natalie's life, the other children she grew up with always thought there was something odd about her and feared she possessed magical powers, but up until she had kept her powers well hidden. As the wind blew and a small wave crashed on to Natalie's toes she knew she would not float.



The townspeople angrily began rushing toward her, but she stood up straight and took her first step into the murky lake. The water was cool as it hit against her bare skin. She almost felt serene until she heard the townspeople yelling for her to float. Natalie looked up at the sky, opened her arms and fell backward into the water. As the heavy water swallowed her up and bubbles flew from her mouth, she accepted her fate and was happy she saved the cats, even though it led to her discovery and watery death.



# The Magician

As Hue prepared for his final show of the season he knew he wanted to end it with something special. He had been doing the same routine for the last six months and wanted to really shock his audience with more than just simple magic tricks. Hue had practiced his disappearing act since he was a child but had only successfully disappeared once. He thought that if he believed hard enough, he could really turn himself invisible.

The applause and roars from his crowd below became nothing but background noise as he had done this act every night for months. Everything was just muscle memory now and Hue felt bored with his act. As he wowed the crowd by seemingly sawing his assistant in half he knew he wanted an encore that could never be forgotten. As Hue's assistant, Tricia left the stage in her sparkling gown, all eyes were left on him. Looking to the right of the stage, Hue saw his manager, David nervously mouthing the words "take a bow."

As the crowd questioningly looked up at the magician with eager anticipation, Hue remembered the words he had seen in an old magic book shown to him by his great-grandmother. Hue's voice rang out into the crowd as he shouted, "Calytus Campuli!" With a blink of an eye Hue disappeared in thin air. He couldn't believe he had done it; he had really turned himself invisible. He glanced over at David and Tricia whose eyes seemed to protrude from their skulls. As the crowd roared and cheered, satisfaction swelled inside of him. The great magician then realized his great-grandmother had turned him back before and now he was without her and her book of spells.





Lauren Zimitsch