

## THE ABANDONED CHILD

By Virginia Sievers

I went out for my afternoon walk and there, right in front of me, was a little boy, about six, sitting on the curb by the corner store. He was a cute little moppet with a full head of sandy hair shagging down over his forehead. He was watching the cars whizzing past, not nervous in the least or acting hyper like some of the children I know and don't particularly like.

He seemed unusually patient sitting there at the curb, dressed in his little striped overalls and blue t-shirt. I wanted to talk to him but decided not to. Anyhow, I don't like children. As a general rule.

After walking my usual route of six blocks and returning on the other side of the street, I looked for the boy. He was still there. Sitting quietly, watching the cars.

I crossed the street. "Hello there," I said.

"Hello," he said as he looked up.

"Are you waiting for your mother?" I asked.

"She said I should sit here and wait," the boy said.

"Have you been here awhile?"

"Yes," he said. Very politely. Not like some of the children I know and don't particularly like.

"Do you know your telephone number? I have my phone. I could call your mother for you."

"She doesn't have a phone."

"Does she have a car?" I asked

"No, we came on the bus"

"Where is your mother?"

"She went on the bus again.

No way was I going to leave this little boy sitting alone on the curb. I wanted to sit down beside him and I wanted to put my arm around him. Didn't matter that I don't like children. As a general rule.

I sat down by the little boy, scrunching my legs up in front of me, trying to decide what to do. A horrible premonition in my head said the mother wasn't coming back.

"Tell you what," I said. "I have my phone here. What do you say we call a nice policeperson to come and talk to us? He or she might be able to find your mother."

The boy turned to look at me. "I could just wait by myself," he said. His blue eyes perfectly matched his little blue t-shirt. I had never seen eyes so clear or so beautiful.

"I could wait with you," I ventured.

"Yes," the boy said.

So there we were together on the curb, sitting for a long time, silently watching cars whiz by.

I said, "I should call for help."

"Yes." The boy agreed.

When the policewoman showed up I said, "I think I'll just tag along with you to the station."

The boy looked up. "Yes," he said. There were tears in his eyes. I took his hand and we walked to the police cruiser together.

Didn't matter that I don't like children. As a general rule.

I liked this child.