



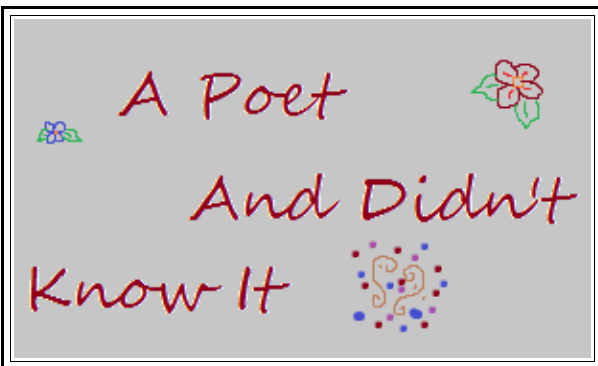
# Animalzanian Times



April 2014

## News of Interest

The rest of the newspaper will return in May.



*"This poem is an imaginative poem which originated from my dad tossing a rubber malet up and down in the air." -Elyzabeth McDunn*

### "Thor's Hammer"

Thor must really be aggravated  
For he's tossing his hammer aimlessly.  
Up and down, up and down, he tossed  
His hammer till it fell suddenly.  
And like the swiftness of how it fell,  
He knew he had his answer –  
But what it was, no one could tell.



*A crow flying in Yosemite*

## Bible Verses of the Month

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.

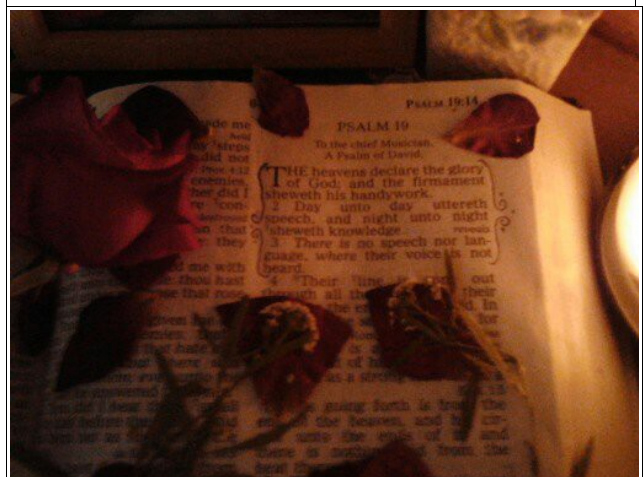
"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

"But thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

-1 Corinthians 15: 51-58





Title:

Author: Elyzabeth McDunn

Background: *Polly Walker, an expelled eighth grader, and Amy Walker, a former Code Eleven agent, are going to visit Marissa Owens, an elderly Christain woman, to find out the answer to their question: "What is Christmas?" Will they be able to get the answer to their question?*

Before we left her apartment, Amy put makeup on me. She had said, "We must look different so as to give Code Eleven a harder time."

A few lines and an application of foundation created an older appearance in my face. She did likewise and we soon left the room after we had finished laughing over eachother's new appearance.

"We'll go out the back door. That is how I normally leave this building," said Amy.

No one took the least notice of us as we slipped out of the back door and began to walk leisurely toward her car.

"I now have one more thing to do," said Amy as she slipped into the driver's seat. "Don't you dare touch the gun beneath your seat unless we are attacked, OK?"

"OK."

Good. By the way, you do know how to use that gun?"

"We learned at Heartland."

"Excellent! Off we go!" We got onto the free way and began to drive towards Marissa Owen's home.

Late that night, we pulled up in front of

the one-story home of Marissa Owens. The lights were out, and no one would have thought anyone was home except for if they noticed the black bicycle leaning against the garage door.

We walked to the front door. There was a screen, and I tapped lightly but loud enough for anyone inside to hear.

I heard a cough and a low grunt followed by a creak as if someone had gotten out of a chair. A few moments later, the door opened, and she peeked out. "Who are you and why are you at my door this late at night?"

"I am P- Miss Kate Brown, and this is Mrs. Victoria Kingstone. Could we spend the night here?" I saw that she was Marissa Owens, and I could tell that she wasn't very inclined to let us inside her house.

"You may," she said finally opening the screen. "Why! You've got no baggage?"

"No. We didn't think of it. We were too busy," said Amy.

"Why were you?" she asked as she cast a quick glance at each of us.

"We will tell you later. Let me just say I got in trouble for asking questions." I hoped that would satisfy her, and it seemed to.

I watched her get some blankets and pillows and spread them on the couch and floor.

"I hope you won't mind, Miss Brown, sleeping on the floor," she said after she had finished and sat down.

"I won't mind," I answered.

"So, why were you two so busy that you forgot to bring your extra clothes?" She sat down, pulled her yarn basket out, and began to knit.

"We came here to find answers to questions that only you can answer, Marissa Owens," replied Amy.

"How did you know my name?" she asked quickly.

"Off Code Eleven's watch list," answered Amy.

"Only Code Eleven agents can get that information. It's classified," replied Marissa.

"You speak as one who knows it," I said.

"I was one, until -."

"Until you became a Christian."

"Yes," Marissa replied. "But we're getting off the road. How did you get onto Code Eleven's watch list?"

"I work for Code Eleven," answered Amy.

"I thought so because I can see it in your face," Marissa said gently, almost compassionately as if she understood Amy.

I had been getting irritated by her asking questions when I wanted answers to the questions of my own. But my feelings were quenched by her statement. I had often wondered why, when Amy spoke of her job, she was grim and wouldn't speak much about it. What if Amy felt bad about something she had done while working for Code Eleven?

"Let's hear your questions," continued Marissa looking at me.

I lost my former thought and blurted out, "I had asked this question in my school, and when I persisted in asking it, I got expelled. I wanted to know what Christmas is."

"Surprise is the only way I could understand her expression. Surprise as if she knew what it meant and wondered why I didn't know it. Surprise about something.

She stopped knitting and laid her hands on mine which had pleadingly placed themselves on the arm of her chair. "Polly Walker," she said gently, "and you Amy, what a joy this is! Yet so sad that only we Christians know what Christmas is." She squeezed my hands. I didn't ask why she guessed our names. I did not even think it was necessary to even ask her.

"This must be how it is to have a grandmother – or whoever those elderly people were called in those old books. Too bad I don't have one," I thought as I looked into her motherly face full of love (an unheard of emotion to me then).

"Tonight is Christmas Eve. I will tell you about Christmas, but not just yet. You both must come with me to the Christmas service." She rose from her chair and gave us jackets.

I wondered what she was doing and where she was taking us. Possibly, she was leading us to one of the secret meeting places of the Christians. I worried, but somehow as I

looked in her eyes, I knew she was not planning to report us to Code Eleven.

"It's almost midnight," Marissa whispered as we exited her house by the back door. "Quietly, follow me."

Old as she was, Marissa plowed through the tall grass of the open field that stretched behind her house as easily and silently as a cat. I was amazed at how quickly she was able to move and duck when she heard strange noises. We went on until we came to a well.

There was a bucket and a long strong rope nearby, but she took no heed of them. Marissa got near the well and began to climb into it.

A cry nearly escaped my throat for I feared that she would fall to her death. But Marissa seemed to be standing on a hard surface, and she beckoned us to join her.

I cautiously stepped into the well, and about two feet down, my shoes touched a solid metal platform. I realized it was a secret entrance to some underground place.

Marissa touched something, and the metal platform began to lower down into the well. Soon I could look up and see a small circular patch of night sky.

The platform came to a stop in a darkened chamber. Marissa pushed us off the platform, and the platform began to rise to let in another person. As soon as it had left the chamber in which we were standing, the lights went on.

It was a round room and a door led somewhere else. We were led through this door and a long hall until we entered a large room like a chapel. There were many people in here, and we were greeted by a smiling man who asked Marissa who we were.

"They are friends with questions that can be answered by you, Pastor. One is an expelled school girl and the other, the older, is with Code Eleven."

The man's eyes grew afraid.

"They are earnest like I was ages ago. Let them in, though they are not saved yet," pleaded Marissa. "One doesn't know if their souls might be saved tonight."

"Very well. For your sake and for

Christ's sake, I will let them in. I am sorry, Miss Polly and Miss Amy.” The man shook their hands. “I am Pastor James Williams.”

Amy turned pale when she heard this, and I wondered what significance his name had in her mind. She shook his hand without looking at him.

“Come, sit with me,” said Marissa who led them to a pew.

I stood in the pew being introduced to other Christians and watching how each person greeted the other like a family member. It made me feel awkward because from their faces and words I could tell they had something I didn't have. Something that brought joy and meaning to this life, as if it was only temporary and would be exchanged for something that would last forever.

Amy, I could tell, felt the same way as I did because her eyes were moist.

“Merry Christmas, Miss Polly Walker!” cried one old woman as she ran up to give me a hug. “I heard from Marissa that you were –.”

I heard her voice, but my eyes had caught a middle-aged man and woman look up and stare at me when the elderly lady mentioned my name loudly. I saw them beginning to make their way towards me.

“Polly!” cried the woman hugging me. “Polly darling! How much I've longed and wished to see you. How happy I am that you are here!”

“Who are you?” I asked in a frightened voice as I extricated myself from this strange woman's grasp.

“I am your mom, Polly, and his is your dad,” she said eagerly.

**Thank you for reading our newspaper!  
We hope it has been a blessing!**

**Reporters:**

**Illustrator:** Miss Courtney Riojas

**Editor:** Miss Courtney Riojas

**Printers:** Mr. Shannon Riojas and Miss Courtney Riojas



If you would like to become a member, have a question or comment, or want to send in a fiction article, story (one with morals), or poem to the newspaper, please email:

courtney.riojas@riverleaves.org.

*\*Removed the address and phone number.*

[www.riverleaves.org/AT](http://www.riverleaves.org/AT)

**Next month's is coming soon!**