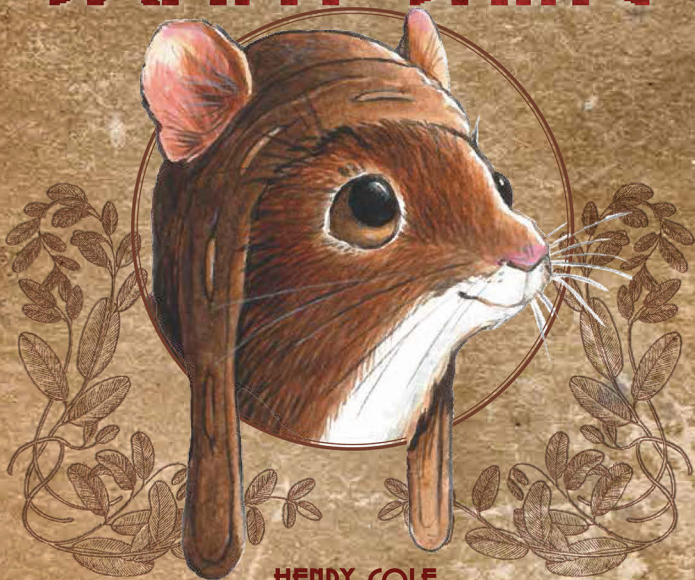


THE SOMEWHAT TRUE
ADVENTURES OF
SAMMY SHINE



HENRY COLE

THE SOMEWHAT TRUE ADVENTURES OF SAMMY SHINE



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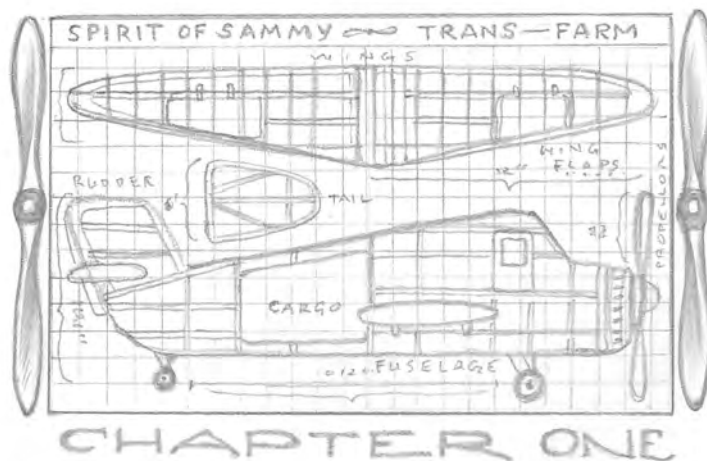
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The door to Hank's room flew open. "It's ready!" a voice called out.

Hank looked up from his drawing. "What's ready?" he asked.

His brother stood in the doorway. "The plane, you ding-dong. It's ready to fly." Jimmy glanced around the room. "Where is he?"

Hank put down his pencils. "It can't be ready," he said. "The paint isn't dry yet."

"The paint's dry, the motor is all set to go, I got fuel, it's ready." Jimmy's eyes landed on a shoe box with holes punched in the lid. "He in there?"

Hank sat up straight. “Yeah, but...are you sure it’s safe? I mean, it’s not going to crash or anything, is it?”

“It’s practically uncrashable.” Jimmy sounded annoyed. “Perfectly designed. Totally aerodynamic.”

Hank gulped. He trusted Jimmy. His brother could design and build anything, turning wood and wires into something amazing. But this time the stakes were high.

Hank remembered when his brother had first unrolled the large sheet of paper with the words “Spirit of Sammy—Trans-Farm” boldly lettered across the top of the page. The detailed blueprints showed a beautifully proportioned airplane delicately balanced on three rubber tires and powered by a gas engine. A tiny door opened to a cockpit at the front, just behind

the engine. There was a cargo bay toward the rear of the plane.

That was only three weeks ago. Evidently the project had gone from plans on paper to a finished airplane.

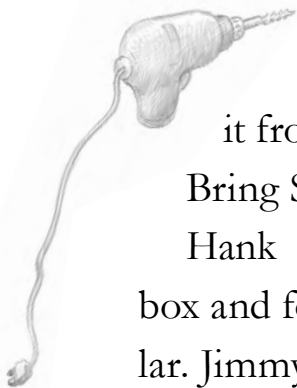
“Get Sammy,” Jimmy commanded. “I want to test him for weight.”

“Uh...I don’t know.” Hank glanced at the box. “Sammy doesn’t like heights. He might get airsick.”

“Not in this baby,” Jimmy replied. “The *Spirit of Sammy* is going to ride the wind like a pro. Steady as she goes, no pitching, no yawing, no rolling, no airsickness.”

“How do you steer it?”

“Ding-dong—don’t you know anything? This plane is the latest. It’s RC: remote controlled. It’ll fly like a dream, with me controlling



it from the ground. C'mon. I'll show you. Bring Sammy."



Hank reluctantly picked up Sammy's shoe box and followed Jimmy downstairs to the cellar. Jimmy's workroom was a small, dark nook tucked behind the furnace. It was crammed with all manner of tools and parts and pieces, remains of past projects, and beginnings of new ones: drills and saws and soldering guns, jars of nuts and bolts and nails and bits, rope and tape and glue and paints, pliers and screwdrivers, dead batteries, scraps of wood, dismantled flashlights, stubs of pencils, and old telephone dials and broken speakers and radio insides, everything scattered and piled in all directions.

Sitting proudly in the middle of it all, glistening with and smelling of fresh dark green paint, was the *Spirit of Sammy*. She



was perched on three tiny rubber tires, and seemed almost impatient to take to the air. Her name was emblazoned across the fuselage in Chinese red letters.



Hank stared in awe.

“See this?” Jimmy picked up what had been an old square cookie tin. It was wrapped in electrical tape and adorned with dials, switches, and a long antenna. “Found most of the parts I needed at the junkyard.” He twisted one of the dials. “This controls the wing flaps. And this one controls the tail so I can turn it.”

Jimmy picked up the small plane and pointed inside. “See the little wires inside the cockpit? It’s just like in a real plane, connected to the rudders and everything. There’s even a throttle. Sammy could fly it himself if he had a brain. I even made him a flight helmet. But the

remote control does everything. Amazing, if I do say so myself.”

“So what do you need Sammy for?” Hank asked.

“What’s the point of flying a plane if there’s no passenger?”

Hank squinted at the device. He wasn’t convinced. “Well, what about if the plane crashes?” he asked. “Is it safe?”

“Totally safe.”

“Will Sammy have a parachute?”

“A parachute? Oh, jeez.” Jimmy rolled his eyes. “Look, he won’t need a thing. He can sit back and relax. It’ll be like a vacation for the little squirt.”

“I refuse to let Sammy die in a plane crash.”

“Why are you always such a dope?” Jimmy swept a hand through his hedgerow of thick

brown hair. “Here’s a chance for Sammy to be something great...to go down in history.”

“You’re nuts.”

“You have no imagination. Listen; think about when the local papers get hold of this. You, me, Sammy? We’ll be heroes. Maybe even front page news!”

“Yeah, right,” Hank sniffed.

“No, really! There’ll be a picture, I’m sure of it. Me holding the *Spirit of Sammy*, you holding Sammy. Everybody smiling.” He jerked his thumb at a newspaper clipping on the work-room wall showing Charles Lindbergh standing next to his airplane. “We might even get *Popular Science* or *National Geographic* interested.”

“I don’t know...”

“Everybody at school would hear about it. If you had any friends they’d be begging for your autograph.”