



Stanley the Kite

Mr Lambchop had always liked to take the boys off with him on Sunday afternoons to a museum or roller-skating in the park, but it was difficult when they were crossing streets or moving about in crowds. Stanley and Arthur would often be jostled from his side and Mr Lambchop worried about speeding taxis or that hurrying people might accidentally knock them down.



It was easier after Stanley got flat.

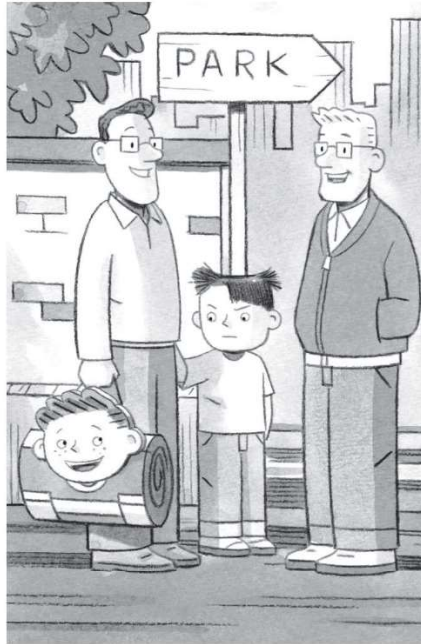
Mr Lambchop discovered that he could roll Stanley up without hurting him at all. He would tie a piece of string around Stanley to keep him from unrolling and make a little loop in the string for himself. It was as simple as carrying a parcel, and he could hold on to Arthur with the other hand.

Stanley did not mind being carried because he had never much liked to walk. Arthur didn't like walking either, but he had to. It made him mad.

One Sunday afternoon, in the street, they met an old

college friend of Mr Lambchop's, a man he had not seen for years.

'Well, George, I see you have bought some wallpaper,' the man said. 'Going to decorate your house, I suppose?'



'Wallpaper?' said Mr Lambchop. 'Oh, no. This is my son Stanley.'

He undid the string and Stanley unrolled.

'How do you do?' Stanley said.

'Nice to meet you, young feller,' the man said. He said to Mr Lambchop, 'George, that boy is flat.'

'Smart, too,' Mr Lambchop said. 'Stanley is third from the top in his class at school.'

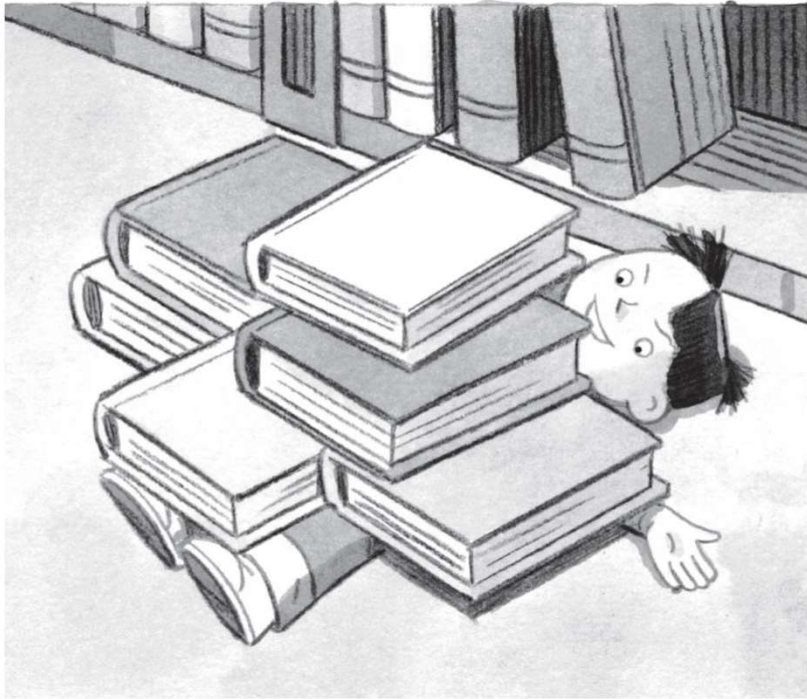
'Phooey!' said Arthur.

'This is my younger son, Arthur,' Mr Lambchop said. 'And he will apologise for his rudeness.'

Arthur could only blush and apologise.

Mr Lambchop rolled Stanley up again and they set out for home. It rained quite hard while they were on the way. Stanley, of course, hardly got wet at all, just around the edges, but Arthur got soaked.

Late that night Mr and Mrs Lambchop heard a noise out in the living room. They found Arthur lying on the floor near the bookcase. He had piled a great many volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on top of himself.



‘Put some more on me,’ Arthur said when he saw them. ‘Don’t just stand there. Help me.’

Mr and Mrs Lambchop sent him back to bed, but the next morning they spoke to Stanley. ‘Arthur can’t help being jealous,’ they said. ‘Be nice to him. You’re his big brother, after all.’

Stanley and Arthur were in the park. The day was sunny, but windy too, and many older boys were flying beautiful, enormous kites with long tails, made in all the

colours of the rainbow.

Arthur sighed. ‘Some day,’ he said, ‘I will have a big kite and I will win a kite-flying contest and be famous like everyone else. *Nobody* knows who I am these days.’

Stanley remembered what his parents had said. He went to a boy whose kite was broken and borrowed a large spool of string.



‘You can fly me, Arthur,’ he said. ‘Come on.’

He attached the string to himself and gave Arthur the spool to hold. He ran lightly across the grass, sideways

to get up speed, and then he turned to meet the breeze.

Up, up, up . . . UP! went Stanley, being a kite.

He knew just how to manage on the gusts of wind. He faced full into the wind if he wanted to rise, and let it take him from behind when he wanted speed. He had only to turn his thin edge to the wind, carefully, a little at a time, so that it did not hold him, and then he would slip gracefully down towards the earth again.

Arthur let out all the string and Stanley soared high above the trees, a beautiful sight in his pale sweater and bright brown trousers, against the pale-blue sky.

Everyone in the park stood still to watch.

Stanley swooped right and then left in long, matched swoops. He held his arms by his sides and zoomed at the ground like a rocket and curved up again towards the sun. He sideslipped and circled, and made figure eights and crosses and a star.



Nobody has ever flown the way Stanley Lambchop flew that day. Probably no one ever will again.

After a while, of course, people grew tired of watching and Arthur got tired of running about with the empty spool. Stanley went right on though, showing off.

Three boys came up to Arthur and invited him to join them for a hot dog and some soda pop. Arthur left the spool wedged in the fork of a tree. He did not notice, while he was eating the hot dog, that the wind was blowing the string and tangling it about the tree.

The string got shorter and shorter, but Stanley did not

realise how low he was until leaves brushed his feet, and then it was too late. He got stuck in the branches. Fifteen minutes passed before Arthur and the other boys heard his cries and climbed up to set him free.



Stanley would not speak to his brother that evening, and at bedtime, even though Arthur had apologised, he was still cross.

Alone with Mr Lambchop in the living room, Mrs Lambchop sighed and shook her head. 'You're at the office all day, having fun,' she said. 'You don't realise what I go through with the boys. They're very difficult.'

Task – please answer the following questions.

1. What does Mr Lambchop do to Stanley to make it easier to take him places?
2. What do you think Arthur was trying to do with the encyclopedias?
3. How do you think Arthur feels about having a flat brother?
4. Match the halves of the sentences so they are correct.

1	Boys were flying	A	fly a kite too.
2	Arthur wanted to	B	kites in the park.
3	Arthur borrowed	C	in the branches.
4	He made himself into	D	a kite for Arthur.
5	Arthur left the spool	E	a large spool of string.
6	Stanley got caught	F	wedged in a tree.