F. J. Bergmann - Cousin Art

It was Cousin Art who suggested a friendly game of football in the back forty, and even though he’d insisted on the foam-rubber ball, he was the first to tackle Great-Aunt Ida when she inadvertently caught it. She said the ribs only hurt when she laughed, and that she’d worn that dress at least twice already.

It was also his idea to introduce the kids to *haute cuisine*—toasting marshmallows, *flambées*. He was assiduous in explaining that the marshmallows should be quickly dipped in alcohol just before lighting. He said he’d emphasized that a smallish cup of vodka—or gin—was all they needed. I suppose it’s not his fault that little Stevie had watched a documentary explaining in depth the manufacture of Molotov cocktails the week before, or that no one inquired any further after the children said the wheelbarrow was filled with “a bunch of old bottles.”

The worst episode should, as usual, have been foreseen. When darling Lucy begged for a pony for her birthday, Art was correct in thinking that the backyard was too small for a real one, but mistaken in assuming that he could make a substitute pony “even better than the one at the supermarket, honey” from an old carousel horse, a short section of railway track, and a defective washing machine. He said he’d forgotten to allow for the Second Law of Thermodynamics, but that’s no excuse. If he’d made it electric, we could have unplugged it when it jumped the rails, but he said the cord wouldn’t reach, so he was forced to use propane. Good thing the tank was half empty, is what *I* say.

Afterward, Lucy got rid of the horse stuff she’d collected ever since she could pronounce “pony” intelligibly. She thinks she’d like to have a dollhouse instead. *Please* don’t tell Art.

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