



## The Angel

by Carol Chapman

**W**arren S. Fish put on his gray tie and his gray coat. He combed his gray hair and parted it neatly. Then he quietly dialed the bank's number.

"Hello, Mr. Fowler? I have a doctor's **appointment** this morning," he whispered into the phone. "I will be an hour late." Then he hung up as softly as possible.

"Warren?" came a sharp voice from the kitchen. "Warren? Who are you talking to?"

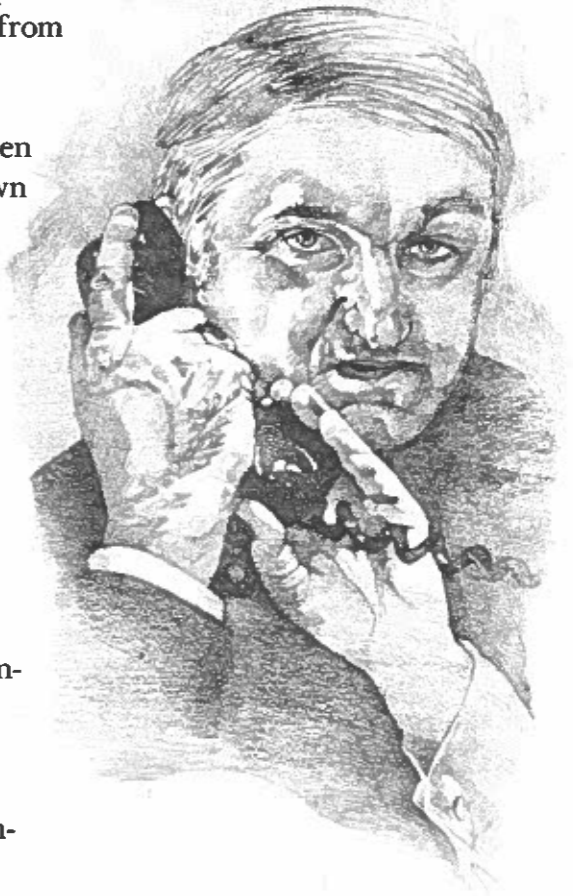
Warren took a deep breath. Then he went into the kitchen. He sat down to eat his soft-boiled egg and toast. "No one, dear," he said. "I was talking to no one."

"I heard you talking to someone, Warren," his wife said. She buttered a large jelly roll and stuffed it into her mouth. "I want to know who you were talking to!"

Warren wiped his hands with his napkin. Then he picked up his briefcase.

"Good-bye, Ethel," he said, opening the back door. "Good-bye."

As he closed the door, he could hear the sound of plastic wrapping being torn. His wife was opening another package of rolls.



Warren drove two blocks. Then he parked his car. It was not a **medical** building he went into. It was a travel agency.

"A one-way ticket to the Hawaiian Islands, please," he told the agent.

"What part of the Islands?" asked the agent.

"Any part. It doesn't matter. Just so I can leave tonight," explained Warren.

The travel agent made a phone call. Then she spoke to Warren.

"Sir, there is a seat for you at 8:25 for Maui. Would you like to pay now?"

"No," said Warren. "I don't have the money now. But," he smiled, "I will tonight."

"And what is your name?" she asked.

Warren thought a minute. "My name is James Strut!" he said in a deeper voice.

The agent told Warren his flight number. He thanked her in his new, deep voice. Then he drove to Greyson's Department Store. He bought shirts and pants. Not gray shirts or gray pants, but bright, flowery shirts and white pants. Then he bought some luggage.

He put everything in the trunk of his car. Then he looked at his old watch. It was now time to go to the bank. He drove to the old part of town, to the First American Bank—the bank Warren had driven to for 45 years.

"There's Warren," Mr. Fowler said, when Warren walked through the doorway.

Warren nodded at the young bank manager.

"Well, how does it feel?" said Mr. Fowler. "Your last day here. You get to retire at last."

"Yes, sir," said Warren. "I'm looking forward to it."

"Your voice sounds different," said Mr. Fowler.

Warren just smiled.

During the morning, Warren greeted his usual customers. He said the usual nice things to them. Some customers even brought in some "good-bye" gifts like small plants. They should have brought me suntan oil and sunglasses. Or maybe a beach chair, Warren thought, as he looked at the pile of gifts. In the meantime, Warren kept watching the clock. Time was going by slowly for him.

When lunchtime came, Mr. Fowler took Warren out to lunch at a fancy place. He gave Warren a gold watch.

"It's not much after 45 years," said Mr. Fowler.

"Oh, it's very nice," Warren said. He put it on. "Is it waterproof?"

"Waterproof?" asked Mr. Fowler in surprise. "Well, I guess it is."

"Good," said Warren. A waterproof watch would be a must on his new 22-foot sailboat.

"I know the small amount of money you'll be getting every month isn't very much," Mr. Fowler said, shaking his head. "But you'll get by."

"I'm sure I will," said Warren.

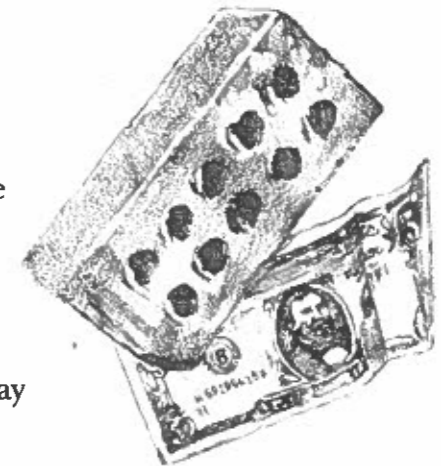
Warren knew he would more than get by after today. He would have plenty of money. Every week for the past 40 years, Warren had been putting away a new, crisp, \$50 bill. Even though it was the bank's money, he felt he deserved it. He had found a way to change the books so the bank never missed the money. It was foolproof!

He had been working at the bank for five years. Then he discovered the loose brick close to the floor, in the wall next to his desk. When he pulled the loose brick out, there was a big, empty space. And that was where Warren had stored his money. He would have over \$100,000 by now.

Ten minutes before closing time, Warren began to get very excited. He planned to make some excuse for staying a little late—like clearing out his desk. Then, when everyone was gone, he would pile the money into his briefcase. Then he would head for the airport.

"Mr. Fish!" came a woman's voice.

Warren looked up to see Mrs. Angelo. Mrs. Angelo came in every Friday to make a **deposit**. She always came to his window. Her bakery was right next door to the bank. It had been there as long as he could remember.



"I will miss you, Mr. Fish," she said. "Please take these to your wife." She handed him a white bag. He looked into it and saw five different kinds of jelly rolls.

"Why, thank you," said Warren. "I'll mail them to her."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Angelo.

"I was just joking," said Warren.

He took the money from her and counted it out. She always made two deposits, one for her checking account and one for her savings.

"Mr. Fish, I will tell you a secret. I have an angel," Mrs. Angelo declared.

Warren hoped this wasn't going to take long. It was almost closing time, and sometimes she could talk forever.

"Is that right?" said Warren.

"Yes, I will tell you about it. My angel first came to me 30 years ago. I had no money to pay the rent on my bakery. I prayed and prayed, but nothing happened."

Warren looked at the clock. It was two minutes until closing time.

She went on. "So I started packing up the things in my shop. I was cleaning out a bottom cupboard. I reached in and there was the money!" Mrs. Angelo started laughing. "It was my angel, you see. My angel sent me the money."

"That's very nice," said Warren as he locked his drawer. He had things to do, and she was slowing him up!

"And ever since, my angel has given me money in that very spot every single week. I'm sending my grandchildren to college with it now!"

Suddenly Warren looked up, his voice becoming **shrill**. "Every week you say? How much does your angel give you?" Sweat started to form on his forehead.

"A brand new \$50 bill," said Mrs. Angelo. "Straight from heaven!"

### GETTING THE MEANING OF THE STORY.

Complete each of the following sentences by putting an  $x$  in the box next to the correct answer. Each sentence helps you get the meaning of the story.

1. Every week, Warren Fish had been putting a \$50 bill in  
 a. a big, empty space in the wall.  
 b. his bank account.  
 c. his desk at home.
2. Mr. Fowler gave Warren  
 a. some small plants.  
 b. suntan oil and sunglasses.  
 c. a gold watch.
3. Mrs. Angelo said that she had been receiving money from  
 a. Mr. Fish.  
 b. an angel.  
 c. sales at the bakery.
4. Warren thought that he  
 a. would miss working at the bank.  
 b. should really return the money he had taken.  
 c. had put more than \$100,000 aside.

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CORRECT SCORE

**R**EVIEWING STORY ELEMENTS. Each of the following questions reviews your understanding of story elements. Put an  $x$  in the box next to the correct answer to each question.

1. What happened last in the *plot* of the story?  
 a. Mr. Fowler took Warren out to lunch.  
 b. Warren bought an airplane ticket.  
 c. Mrs. Angelo told Warren a secret.
2. Which sentence best *characterizes* Warren?  
 a. He was very honest and never told a lie.  
 b. He loved his wife very much.  
 c. He was looking forward to starting a new life far from home.
3. When is "The Angel" *set*?  
 a. on Warren's last day at work  
 b. a week before Warren planned to leave the bank  
 c. on Warren's first day at a new job
4. Which sentence best tells the *theme* of the story?  
 a. A man who has been stealing money from a bank is finally sent to jail.  
 b. A man who thinks he has been fooling others discovers that he has been fooling himself.  
 c. A man who has been working very hard for many years is rewarded for his efforts.

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**EXAMINING VOCABULARY WORDS.** Answer the following vocabulary questions by putting an *x* in the box next to the correct answer. The vocabulary words are printed in **boldface** in the story. If you wish, look back at the words before you answer the questions.

- Mr. Fish told the bank that he would be an hour late because he had an appointment that morning. What is an *appointment*?
  - a. a meeting
  - b. an airplane ticket
  - c. a sore throat
- Warren said he was going to see a doctor, but he did not go to a medical building. The word *medical* has to do with
  - a. music.
  - b. medicine.
  - c. money.
- Suddenly Warren grew worried and his voice became shrill. What is the meaning of the word *shrill*?
  - a. very sweet and pleasant
  - b. impossible to hear
  - c. high and sharp in sound
- Every Friday, Mrs. Angelo came in to make a deposit. As used in this sentence, the word *deposit* means
  - a. money put in a bank.
  - b. a kind of cake.
  - c. a beautiful speech.

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**ADDING WORDS TO A PASSAGE.** Complete the following paragraph by filling in each blank with one of the words listed in the box below. Each of the words appears in the story. Since there are five words and four blanks, one word in the group will not be used.

In "The Angel," a travel agent got Warren a \_\_\_\_\_ to Maui. Maui is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ in Hawaii.

Did you know that Hawaii is made up of \_\_\_\_\_ than 100 islands? It is a very beautiful state—the only \_\_\_\_\_ that is located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

ticket	one
more	
empty	islands

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**THINKING ABOUT THE STORY.** Each of the following questions will help you to think critically about the selection. Put an *x* in the box next to the correct answer.

- Which statement is true?
  - a. Mr. Fowler knew that Warren had been taking money from the bank.
  - b. Mrs. Angelo found the money that Warren had been hiding.
  - c. Warren took the 8:25 plane to Maui.
- It is safe to say that Mrs. Angelo will
  - a. continue to find a \$50 bill every week.
  - b. not receive any more money from her angel.
  - c. use a different bank once Warren is no longer there.
- The fact that Mr. Fish bought a one-way ticket to Hawaii suggests that he
  - a. didn't plan to come back.
  - b. often took trips to far-off places.
  - c. thought he would return home soon.
- At the end of the story, Warren probably felt
  - a. amused by how things worked out.
  - b. pleased that Mrs. Angelo had used the money wisely.
  - c. upset and disappointed.

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**Thinking More about the Story.** Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- Warren usually wore gray clothing. But at Greyson's Department Store he bought bright, flowery shirts and white pants. What does this tell you about Warren?
- Why did Warren tell the travel agent that his name was James Strut? Why did he speak in a deeper voice?
- What will Warren discover when he looks for the money he has stored? What might Warren do now?

Use the boxes below to total your scores for the exercises.

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