

# The Prairie Light Review

---

Volume 1 | Number 3

Article 45

---

Spring 6-7-1982

## Chasing A Dream

Anna May Unak  
*College of DuPage*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Unak, Anna May (1982) "Chasing A Dream," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 1 : No. 3 , Article 45.  
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol1/iss3/45>

This Selection is brought to you for free and open access by the College Publications at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Prairie Light Review by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact [orenick@cod.edu](mailto:orenick@cod.edu).

## Chasing A Dream

by Anna May Unak

Thunder rumbled in the distance. An occasional jagged bolt of lightning pierced the dawning sky. The April rain fell softly on the pavement reflecting colored rainbows on the oil-slick pavement. Mary carefully maneuvered her tired old car into the parking space. She looked to see if she had parked between the yellow lines. By the time on her car's clock, she saw it was 7:45 a.m. She waited a few minutes in her car to catch the last minute weather forecast before she turned off the radio. Then she turned off the windshield washers and the lights. She thought to herself, "Can't forget the lights — or else John will have a fit if the battery runs down." She reached over to the passenger's side of the seat for her umbrella. Quickly, she opened the door of the car; hunched her shoulders to meet the rain; and put up her umbrella. The rain whipped around her legs. She was more wet than dry by the time she reached the door of the coffee shop.

"Well," she thought, "At least, I'm forty-five minutes early for work and I'll dry out before then. What a way to start the week." She looked around the half-filled coffee shop for a familiar face. Her eyes stopped at Joe. Dark hair, cut medium length. Dark eyes, horn-rimmed glasses. Dark grey suit, white shirt with button-down collar. A gold-plated tie pin adorned a polyester tie. A face that could blend in any crowd. High cheekbones, long nose, thin lips and graying hair. In short, Mr. Average, himself. Average in all respects — appearance and intelligence. A classic example of Peter's Principle. A man who had his niche in life and who on occasion could not accept it. Somewhat of a dreamer. Mary slowly walked towards his table. She had known Joe since she started working for the company. He worked in the department next to hers.

"Mind if I sit down?" she asked as she slid into the empty chair at the table.

"No, c'mon and join me," he said.

"Boy, it's a miserable life!" said Mary.

"What's the matter?" asked Joe. "Weather getting you down?"

"No, Joe. It's just everything, in general. The kids are all in school now, and still, my husband doesn't want me to work. There's nothing to do at home, but he's pressuring me to help with entertaining his company's customers. He keeps after me all the time. And as if I didn't have enough problems, I have to put up with that witch who sits opposite me. She's more trouble than my kids."

Joe threw back his head laughing loudly. "Things can't be all that bad. You know Mathilda has been with the company for twenty years and she's worked with a lot of people."

"Well, maybe that's the problem. They probably all leave because they can't stand her!"

"Hey, Mary, take it easy! Don't take her so personally."

"Well, maybe, I shouldn't be working . . . maybe John is right. You know, Joe, I've always wanted to be a dress designer and run my own business. But here I am working in the file room of an electronics company."

"Hey, you're serious about this, aren't you? Well, just suppose you did open up your own shop. Could you afford to do it? After all, you didn't make the inflation we're in today, but you certainly have to live in it."

"That's true! I guess I can't really afford to gamble right now. There's the kids — you know how expensive college is — and my utility and food bills keep getting higher and higher."

"Just tell me about them! I'm in the same boat, too!" said Joe.

"But Joe, my husband doesn't want me to work. He wants me to stay home. How can I? Yesterday, we got a notice increasing the tuition fees at the college. It's going to be years before I can think about dress designing. All I can think about is that I'll be working with that witch for the next ten years. It's enough to make me sick. Every time she moves, the office floor shakes. She is constantly putting her stubby fingers in her blue hair to keep it from falling in her face. Yuck!"

Joe Published by Digital Commons @ COD, 1994. How do you think I feel? I've been with this company twenty-four years, and I have yet to get a promotion. Now, I have to share

an office with that young kid they just hired. He's got the right degree from the right school, and he obviously is making as much money as I am. He'll probably end up being my boss! Do you know that fifteen years ago I used to play scratch golf with very little practice? At that time I had a dream — I wanted to be a golf pro. But I had the same problem that you have today. I had a wife, two children and the same money problems. I only wish I had gambled and gone on the tour. Maybe, just maybe, I might have been a Jack Nicholas."

"But Joe, I'm in a different position than you were. My husband is making a decent salary. If we tighten our belts a little, I could go into dress designing. If only he would say, honey, do it! That's all I'd need. I'd quit right now."

Joe listened quietly as Mary poured out her innermost feelings. Then without hesitating, he looked straight into her eyes and said, "Go after your dream! You obviously don't have to worry about putting food on the table. Inflation isn't all that important. The kids will manage somehow. If you've got the guts to do your own thing, do it! Quit today! Get off on your own! You can do it if you really put your mind to it. But you're going to have to do something about it and not just talk about it."

"Oh, Joe, I can't make a decision like this in a matter of minutes. I have to have time to think about it." Mary rose slowly from her chair. She smoothed her wrinkled dress and tucked a loose lock of hair behind her ear. A look of despair spread over her face.

"It takes only a second to make a decision — only a second Mary," said Joe. Mary walked quickly up the steep stairs into the cluttered file room. Mathilda was already at her desk. Blue hair. Beady eyes, harlequin glasses, white blouse with string tie, wide face, pug nose, fat lips.

"Can I stand it here another day?" Mary thinks to herself. "The phone's been ringing all over the place. Where've you been? You're ten minutes late," says Mathilda.

"Got caught in the rain, Mathilda." Mary thought to herself, "Wonder what she'll complain about next." Hurriedly she started to get her work ready for the day.

The phone rang. Mathilda answered it. She turned toward Mary, and in a voice dripping with sugar-coated honey, she asked, "Do you remember that Acme folder I asked you to file last week? Apparently, there's a problem. Do you know where it's been filed?"

"Yes, I know where it is. It's filed under Acme Company," Mary answered.

With sarcasm in her voice, Mathilda replied, "Well, Mr. Jones, the president of the company is looking for the folder, and it's not where you say it is. I suggest you look for it right now."

Keeping a tight grip on her emotions, Mary replied, "If Mr. Jones wanted that folder so quickly, all he had to do was ask me for it. Why did he ask you?"

"Well, I really don't know, but I guess he can do anything he pleases. He makes the rules — I don't," retorted Mathilda. "He only wanted his folder. He could care less about whose responsible for finding it."

If I were in business (she thinks to herself), I could make my own rules. I, certainly, wouldn't ignore the people working for me or treat them as insignificant numbers on a computer printout.

"Mary, you'd better get going. Mr. Jones wants that file. He wants it right now."

Mary continued feverishly searching for the folder. Beads of perspiration appeared on her forehead as she scurried from drawer to drawer. She felt clammy all over. "Where is it? Where can it be?" she thought, "I know I put it in the top drawer!"

The phone rang again. Mary could hear Mathilda talking. It's Mr. Jones! She heard him shouting over the phone.

"Where's that Acme folder? I asked for it over ten minutes ago."

Mathilda replied, "But Mr. Jones, I'm not responsible for the filing. Mary is the one who does the filing."

"Well, you tell what's her name to get off her duff and find



that folder and bring it up here in five minutes or else she's fired. I need that folder now!"

Mathilda put down the phone and turned to Mary. "Did you hear that, Mary? You'd better find that folder or you won't have a job."

Mary glanced at the clock on the wall. It's only 8:45 a.m. and there's still the rest of the day to go. "How will I ever survive another ten years here?" she thought.

Mary located the folder — it was filed in the wrong place. She rushed up the stairs and handed the folder to Mr. Jones' secretary. "Here's the file, Sue. I got up here as fast as I could."

"Thanks, Mary, but Mr. Jones doesn't need it now. He got the information he needed from his attorney."

"Well, the least he can do is look at this!" Mary blurted out without thinking. She shoved the folder toward the astonished secretary. Mary's face flushed as she rushed from the room. Her stomach did flip-flops. She wasn't sure her breakfast would stay down. She felt sick. With a great deal of effort, she made it to the nurse's office. The nurse sent her home.

At home, Mary settled back in her favorite chair. She had on her favorite robe and slippers. She alone — except for the loud ticking of the old grandfather clock. There was time to think. She took a sip of tea.

"What am I going to do?" she thought.

She remembered what Joe said. "Go after your dream. It only takes a second to make a decision."

"Why not?" she thought. If I can make a go of it, we'll really make out and even if don't, failure can't be any worse than the mess I'm in right now. Joe's right! I've got to make my own opportunities. I know I can run my own business. And if I'm successful, I know John will be able to accept my success. I could pay for entertaining help from my own money. John will love it. But I wonder — how will the kids take this? I wonder —



Prime Comment on Writing:

Only the reader knows if the copy is understandable — and he may not care.

George A. Whittington

