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Mr. Don Freeman
1932 Cleveland Avenue
Santa Barbara, California 93103

Dear Don:

Puff! Puff! It seems to take me twice as long to get things done as I intend. I came steaming back from Maryland thinking I'd telephone you that very day, and finding you gone (alas!) I was sure I'd write at once - but here it is a week later!

The first thing I must tell you is that Corduroy's story went over with a bang on its first reading to the first audience of children. I must say the conditions were ideal, because on the first day I was with the Kildows Deirdre and Sally and Patrick and I went shopping for Deirdre's birthday present - an end table for her living-room. We went up to the furniture department on an escalator and Patrick said when we got on, "Look, the floor's going up in stitches!" And in the furniture department he got loose and went hopping over the rows of beds like a little wallaby, leaping neatly over a headboard onto the next row of beds just as Deirdre had almost grabbed him. But his undoing was a mattress that had no cover on it and when he stopped to try to pull off a button Deirdre clutched him and set him on the floor.

Well, that evening I read the story and both children were enchanted. But Patrick's escapade gave me an idea about one aspect of it that I'd begun to feel quite distinctly is a weakness: You are probably just as much aware as I am that the sequence of Corduroy's trying the beds is very reminiscent of the Goldilocks story, and that seemed all right up to a point - fun for children to recognize. But it should have a new twist. What would you think of the idea of Corduroy's getting onto an uncovered mattress, being reminded by its buttons of his own lost one, trying to pull one out - and when it suddenly comes off in his paw being toppled off the bed and so knocking the lamp over? Something like this would add dramatic action and make the children laugh. Will you think about it and let me know?

You won't be starting your finished drawings till we have the type set, but when you do I'm sure you'll keep two things firmly in mind: (1) To avoid the slightest suggestion of caricature in drawing Lisa - find a Negro child of the right age to use as a model and make her as appealing as possible, with her features accurately drawn; and (2) To keep all text (except the one passage

we agreed on) at the foot of the page, and clear of the color - please don't surround any text with color as you did in RAINBOW and GUARD MOUSE because as you know it causes production problems.

I'll keep your specimen drawings here, and when you've considered the text revision I've suggested, will you please mail back your dummy showing exactly what text you want to fall on each page. I like the quality of the drawings very much, and have only one suggestion to make in addition to the one about making Lisa more authentically Negro and more appealing. That is, that I'd recommend your not showing the watchman on the escalator in the picture of Corduroy hunting for his button - this gives away the surprise of his presence later on.

Now, about our summer plans - and tell Lydia that I'm delighted that you're both going to be in San Francisco. I expect to drive down to Carmel to stay the weekend (that is, Thursday, June 29, to Monday, July 3) with Doris Gates, and if it's convenient for you and Lydia I'd like to fly down to you on the Monday (July 3) for a couple of days. I've got myself boxed in, as usual, with the need to get back to the office for pressing affairs, and I haven't quite figured out how to see the Los Angeles contingent - Jim Garfield and the Buffs - before I go on down to the Stuarts in Escondido for the next weekend. But I expect I'll get my guidance before long. Anyway, I do want to visit you in Santa Barbara, but I also want you to say quite candidly if it doesn't fit in with your plans.

No more now, except lots and lots of love to you both. But there'll be flocks of letters flying back and forth from now on!

Yours aye,



Annis Duff, Editor
VIKING JUNIOR BOOKS

AJD:jf

P.S. Let's not plan decorated endpapers for this book - the libraries only paste card-pockets and date-slips over them, and so waste the time, effort and expense of providing them.