Sammy Seal, Equalitarian

Marguerite Root*

*Iowa State College

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SAMMY saw the keeper coming with the bucket of fish, and his mouth watered. He leaned his shiny black back against the green slime that lined the cement pool, closed his eyes, folded his fins across his chest, and imagined he could taste one of the delicious things. The water rippled as the other seals frantically made way to get their share of the food. The air vibrated with their grating barks. And Sammy yawned.

A score of wiggling bodies caught little flecks of sunlight on their wet sides and fell into a score of gaping mouths. Sammy’s lower jaw dropped but no fish came in. A series of terrific splashes across the pool made Sammy shiver. One big drop of water sailed boldly into his left eye and stung. He mumbled sulkily to himself and held his eyes in a painful wink.

ALL the fish would be gone now. He just knew they would. The other seals all were so selfish. They never left anything for him. His stomach echoed his disgust. A big lump from somewhere stuck in his throat. He tried to swallow.

Then it was that the idea dawned on him. He was silly to let the others do just as they pleased and get everything. He’d do something, that’s what! And so when the keeper came again to turn on the fountain for the seals’ afternoon recreation, Sammy called him over to one side of the pool and the two went into consultation. The thing sounded pretty good. Perhaps some laws should be set up to keep the greedy seals from grabbing more than their share. And so the Keeper of the Seals called in the Director of Marine Animals. Yes, the plan was an important step in better group relations. A few seals certainly shouldn’t get everything, because there were others like Sammy that wanted fish—well, they really needed fish if they were to grow and be worth anything in four years, when they’d
be sold. Keepers probably couldn’t even sell them unless they did something to fatten them up.

And so the Director of Marine Animals called in the Chairman of the Southwest Park Wing. Why hadn’t this been done before? Certainly regulation was necessary. Why, some seals with this freedom of enterprise were getting more fish than they could handle. You really ought to do something about these overly-hungry ones that don’t know their own capacity — just for their own good.

And so the Chairman of the Southwest Park Wing summoned the Superintendent of the Zoo. Together, the big shots, prompted by sulky Sammy Seal, drew up the *System of Equality of Distribution*. A dozen posters pushed the new rule down the throats of the seals. “Each seal is to get one fish at a feeding. Animals will line up in alphabetical order and receive their portions. Punishment will be administered to larger seals that insist on crowding.”

The park supervisors sat in their offices and beamed because now there wasn’t any squawking when the keeper went to the pool with the bucket of fish.

And Sammy beamed because at every meal he could sit with his shiny black back leaning against the green slime that lined the pool, could close his eyes, could fold his fins over his chest, and be sure a fish would fall into his mouth.