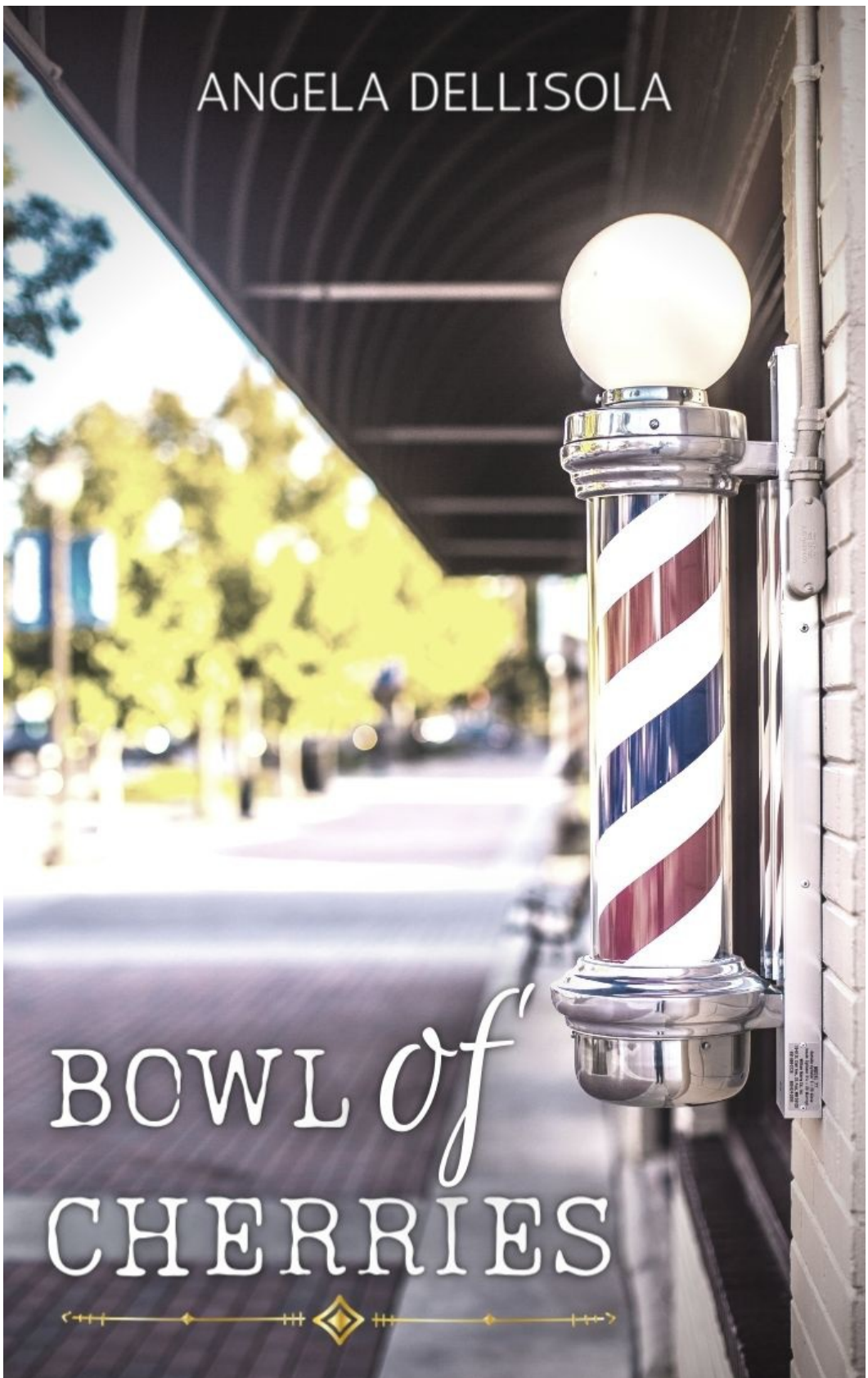


ANGELA DELLISOLA



BOWL *of*  
CHERRIES



# Bowl of Cherries

**Angela Dell'Isola**



A Story Shares book

*Easy to read. Hard to put down.*

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Angela Dell'Isola

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# *Contents*

Title Page  
Copyright Notice

Chapter One  
Chapter Two  
Chapter Three  
Chapter Four  
Chapter Five

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# Chapter One

*Life is just a bowl of cherries.*

*Dont take it serious; it's too mysterious.*

*You work, you save, and you worry so,*

*But you can't take your dough when you go, go go!*

(Life is just a bowl of cherries, Ray Henderson)

Jack Silverman plucked at his guitar strings with the precision of a heart surgeon and the care of a proud parent, which he was, in fact. He stood there on the corner of Third and Maple, his daughter Sally beside him in her lace and frills. *How had he managed that, again?*

She twirled and spun and joined with him in chorus, her small voice rising up above his own. She had a beautiful voice, refreshing and soft, with a warmth to it like April rain. It was her mother's voice, and he could never hear enough of it.

"Life is just a bowl of cherries," she sang, "so live and laugh at it all!"

# Chapter Two

Ray Durham, the town barber, passed by then, heading into his shop. He was late, like most days lately, and his shoulders slumped low on his frame. It was as if some invisible burden pressed down on him from above. His usually smooth face was covered in hair and though he wasn't a young man, not by any means, he appeared grayer than usual.

He didn't glance at them, or stop to chat as he had in the past. He just slid his key from his wrinkled trousers and pushed it into the lock of his corner shop. The storefront was his mirror image, a reflection of dishevelment. Its paint peeled and the windows were in desperate need of a damp cloth and some elbow grease.

"Mr. D!" Sally cried, rushing away from the street, where she'd been about to enter into her final chorus. "Good Morning, Mr. D!"

Her hair was wild and undone, as it had been since her mother passed. *What did her father know of things like that? He thought her untamed curls were beautiful.*

The old gentleman turned towards her, weariness written in every inch of his movements. When his eyes took in the little girl with the pink cheeks and the matching gown, Ray Durham smiled. "My dear, dear, Sally Silverman," he said, his voice a bit hoarse, as if he were aching for a drink, "what are you doing up and about so early?"

"I'm singing, sir. Papa says it's good for the town's soul, and I didn't even know a town could *have* one of those!"

Ray Durham smiled and ran his wrinkled fingers through the girls frizzy, yellow mane. "Of course it does. Everything has a soul, little Sally."

"Everything?"

"You betcha."

# Chapter Three

Sally tilted her head, pondering this new bit of information. She followed Ray into his shop and watched silently as he began to prepare for the one or two customers he may see that day, if he saw any at all. It seemed almost silly to get things out just to put them away unused, but routine was one of the few things he had left in these times. He cherished it.

"So," Sally said, her words coming slow as her mind continued to work through this most recent puzzle, "those over there, they have a soul?"

Ray looked over to the countertop, where she pointed, and saw the pair of scissors resting there. The corners of his eyes creased as his smile deepened. "My shears? My shears, Sally?"

He bent and hoisted her into the air, folding her into his side.

She giggled, a light, pleasant sound that he realized his life had been sorely lacking. Feeling like a man who'd finally been given a dose of the good medicine, he strode towards the counter, Sally on his hip, and lifted the scissors with his free hand.

"This lovely girl no doubt has a soul, Sally. An old one too. Do you know what she's seen?"

Sally shook her head, eyes wide.

"She's seen birthdays, and little children, even smaller than you, coming in for their first trims. She's seen holidays and weddings.



Those are her favorite, you know, the young lads and even sometimes the older fellas, all red and worried and trying not to shake as they get ready for the big day. And the boys coming in, going off to join the fighting. She's seen those too. A brave thing they're doing, but a scary thing, you know? Believe you me, Sally, she's seen a lot. An old soul, I tell you. Old, old."

# Chapter Four

"Is she a happy soul?"

This question caught him off guard. His smile faltered and he lowered the girl to the ground, wondering at his response. He was the soul, he knew, his soul and the soul of this business, it was one. But was it happy, he wondered?

He thought of his unpaid bills, of the Hoover stew he'd be having for the umpteenth time that evening. Of the repairs that needed tending and the goods that needed buying. Of feeling like an elastic, stretched so taut all of the time, threatening to snap.

"She's not *unhappy*, Sally," he said, his voice low and sincere, "but she could use a few good days. A vacation, or even just some more customers. She's getting lonely in here, nobody able to afford her, getting stale."

Sally saw something change in the old man's face, and though she didn't know what it was, exactly, she wanted it to be gone, to go back to the way it had been, all soft wrinkles and bright, blue eyes. She held up a finger.

"One minute, Mr. D. I'll be right back," and she scampered out through the door, the bell clanging in her wake. Her frills nearly caught in the hinges as the door swung after her.

Ray Durham watched her rush over to her father, who still sang as merry as ever on the sidewalk. How he did it, after all he'd been through, Ray Durham couldn't imagine. *A saint*, he thought, *the*

*man's a saint.*

Jack Silverman paused, his finger half-lifted on one of the guitar strings. He knelt down in front of his daughter, listening intently as she whispered into his ear. Then he pulled her close, pressed a kiss to her forehead, and dipped his fingers into his pocket, retrieving something small. He placed it in her carefully cupped hands, then gave her a small push, nodding his head. Sally ran back towards the storefront, hopping carefully over a long crack in the cement before reemerging through the door, ringing as she had when she'd gone.

# Chapter Five

"Close your eyes," she said, and Ray Durham did, "and hold out your hand."

He complied, waiting, and a moment later, something small and light and cold dropped into his palm.

"Ok, you can open them."

Ray peered down into his waiting hand and found a penny, shiny and new like it had been freshly minted, staring at him, lucky-side up.

"What's this, Sally?" he asked her, and she gave a knowing smile, the kind only a young child could give when about to make privy an adult on something secret. A proud smile.

"It's a good day, Mr. D," she said, waving her hands as if this were obvious. "It's a vacation!"

"Oh, Sally, no," Ray began, though the sentiment touched him deeply, perhaps more so than he even realized. "I can't take this, dear girl."

"Course you can, Mr. D. I was only going to get some stick candy anyways, but I don't think my soul needs it as much."

And before he could say another word, she raced for the door, eyes bright and hair turning to knots, and even as he lowered his own teary eyes to the copper coin in his palm, her voice rose up once more, soft and light, her father's baritone weaving in and

out.

"Life is just a bowl of cherries... live and laugh at it all!"