

7th Grade Streets

— Brendon Holden —



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Old Town School

Did you ever have one of those years where everything works out well...as if all problems that have ever existed vanished from the past as well as the future, so that, when a problem occurred is seemed absolutely horrifying!

...Well, if you have, then you will know what it was like for my sixth-grade year to end, and my seventh-grade year to begin...problems everywhere!

...In my first day at Old Town School, in my first class, a kid, who I personally thought was friendly, appeared to be mocking me; I thought it could have been my mind playing tricks on me, so I covered it up.

...At recess, because I was the new kid, some of the other kids (at this new school) thought to initiate me by attempting to pull off some of my clothes, and if that wasn't bad enough, around two o'clock I



sat hunched over a computer and my back got very sore.

Finally, three o'clock came around, and I got on the bus, and even on the bus some, or at least one of the eighth graders decided to make fun of me.

The most horrifying part of the whole story is, I have been waiting to start this school since January, and now it is September, and I am miserable! ...Miserable with my first day!



...My stomach was sick walking up to the driveway to my parents' house. I consider the day.

...With great anticipation I thrust myself into this new school, and now I am crushed, all the years past dreams have faded or rather disappeared with no hopes at retrieving them...No new

friends and No fun times; all was thrown to the floor.

A creak sounded as I opened the door to my Home.

"How was your first day at Old Town School" my Mom asks?

...How was I supposed to answer that, like, I hate life, I never want to go back to that school again. She would not have understood, so I made up the words

to how I was doing that evening; I made them up in a way I thought she would want to hear them.

“Great Mom!”

“Hey that didn’t sound right, what’s wrong” my Mom asks?

Even if I had told her...I knew she would not understand, how can I explain my entire life crumbling to the floor, and even if I did...would she not have said, everything is going to be alright.

I ought to do that for myself!

...So, I attempted it, but I could not get her to leave me alone...apparently, she wanted to share in my excitement in the new School. I knew from past lessons not to let her down. In the past I did, and it hurt, so I convinced myself that I would never let her down again, especially if I was in a bad mood or I was unaware that she has emotions, (i.e. speak only good words) so I spoke the best thing I could think of...

“I got a lot of homework Mom.”

“Is that a good thing” she asks



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“Yes, I just don’t want to do it” I said.

I was hoping that was enough...that she would leave me alone...that these are the pleasant words she wants to hear.

“Well...take your time, if you have any troubles, I can call the school and see how they can help.”

Then she kissed me on the head, and off I went to my bedroom. I through my giant black backpack onto my nicely made bottom bunk, and went, and sat down at a small desk, that sat next to a window—overlooking a thick forest growing in the back of our home.

This defies the laws to life I thought, as I began to consider the purpose for having such a glorious sixth grade year...

I had high hopes of this new school, Old Town School, and it was not only new, but there was a small, like, soda shop attached to it, and there was this girl I met through my Fathers business with her Dad, hundreds of miles away in Georgia. She was the reason we moved here, because her Dad invited us from a small swamp in Georgia, to Massachusetts, so that, he could work for a famous Animation Company.

...And now, after all we, mostly me, did to get up here, me continuously reminding my Dad how happy we would be to move, I am now miserable, how could I of all people be mocked my first day of school, do you know who I am, do you know who my Father is?

I wish I could have said that, but of course that would have made me look like I have issues and I don’t, plus I’ve seen other kids who mildly got pushed

into isolation for appearing as if they had issues, they didn't fare so well.

I do not even want to do my homework I thought, what do I have to do anyway? Oh ya, I remember I had an awfully long list of Math problems, and an Art project; I decided to start with the Art project first.

Hours went by like minutes, and then I hear my Mom call me for supper.

"Brian, foods ready!"

"OK, I'll be right there," I said, and I began walking down the narrow stairs that led to the front door, Once at the front door I took a left walking through the living room and then into the kitchen.

I sat down at the kitchen table, my plate was already prepared, I began to immediately chow down.

My Dad says, "Brian, your awfully quiet, I figured your mouth would have a lot to say...after all, you've talked about your plans for this new move, especially this new school for an entire year...how did it go? ...How was your first day at Old Town School?"

Suddenly it hit me, my day went bad, and I do not know what to tell my Dad...I am the one that convinced him to move here...I pushed him and pushed him until we moved!

I panicked, I was wrong, I hated my first day of school, I hated my existence.

I was too embarrassed to tell him the truth, so I put on a smile, and forced down the little bit of food I had left on my plate and said, "Great Dad, I got a lot of homework though...I must be off to finish it...I would not want to fail my seventh-grade year."

I went back into my room, I looked at my desk to see my half-finished Art project, I sat down and went



back to work...before I knew it my Mom says, “Honey lights out, it’s ten o’clock.”

“Ok Mom,” I replied.”

I began walking out of my bedroom, to shut off the light switch, I looked back at my partially done Art project: a cardboard house with magazine cutouts of people, glued to cardboard cutouts...making miniature people in my cardboard house, and whispered “I didn’t finish.”

Not only did I not finish the Art project, but I did not finish the long list of Math problems.

I shut off my bedroom light, walked back into my room, pulled back the cozy, fluffy, spider man themed quilt on the bottom bunk bed, and climbed into the inside of the comforter.

Hmm, I thought, what am I going to tell my teachers...why didn’t I finish my homework?

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Quickly I fell asleep, within a blink of an eye, morning came, sunlight poured through my bedroom window, one of the first thoughts I had, was: I wonder why or how morning came so quickly, and especially how can I tell the difference...which I can! It is as if there was no night at all. I can remember nights when my parents forced me up all night...even when morning came, I could not convince myself I slept, as if my mind would not give permission for me to normally live the next day. Only if my mind witnessed that I slept, then, and only then, could I have the joy of the day...in other words there isn't cheating sleep, I don't know if that's a good or bad thing, but for me to live normal, I have to, like, get the report or chemical that says: Feel good you slept!

I crept out into the hallway, opened the door to the bathroom, walked in, and cleaned up.

Walking out of the bathroom, I flicked the bathroom light off, and began to walk down the

stairs. I anxiously made my way to the kitchen expecting breakfast to be made; I was hungry!

"Where is breakfast?" I said looking at the kitchen table...I looked around, only to find my Dad walking out of the front door.

"Brian," my Dad said, "your Mother has already left, she had to meet some people at the local Country-Store, for a business proposal...can you make yourself breakfast?"

"Yes" I replied.

He closed the front door, and as he did that, I considered that he was acting odd; why didn't he beforehand tell me my Mother was not going to be here this morning?

The front door pops back open and I hear my Dad say, "Brian, you can get on the bus, Right? ...I know it's only your second day...the bus shows up a block down the road, next to Martha's house, in the parking lot of the Legion."

"Ya, Dad, I can get on the bus" I replied.

"...And lock yourself out on the way out" my Dad yells as he over shuts the front door.

I opened the fridge and began to look for something to eat, but there was nothing good. I walked over to the cupboard and I happily noticed strawberry Pop-tarts, I grabbed two of them and went back upstairs and got dressed.

While eating my Pop-tarts, I jog up the street to the Legion. I began to wait for the bus, within five minutes the bus arrived...a big yellow bus pulls up in front of the legion, the doors pop open, I pause for a moment, and I hear, "are you going to get on?"

"Yes" I replied.

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I carefully walk up the narrow stairs and began to head toward the back of the bus. The bus driver asks, "Brian, right?"

"Yes," I said.

"No food or drink on the bus, put that in your bag for later."

I forgot, I still had one of the Pop-tarts in my hand, and quickly responded politely... "OK, sorry about that!"

I feel very aware, more aware than I have been in the past, it's as if the past couple of days I've been in an entirely different Universe...

As I walk toward the back of the bus, I consider the other kids, what do they think of me? What will they think if I sit up front? What will they think if I sit in the back? Will I be rejected if I sit where the other children do not? I wonder if the back of the bus is safe; I will sit in the back, hopefully no one will notice my insecurities.

I through my giant black backpack on the grey, plastic-like right back seat. An orange-hair child was sitting in the left seat.

Children were talking throughout the bus; I even heard some talk about me: he must be new here? He looks weird. Why is he in the back?

I was shocked and disturbed!

I do not remember the entire bus trip to Old Town School, I must have fallen asleep hating life.

I feel sick, I thought, as I walked through the double doors of school; my eyes felt heavy, the light within the school effected my being, as if I was like, double awake, maybe even on the Moon or something, but I've never been on the Moon.

I quickly found my class and took a seat, hoping my insecurities would not be noticed; in my old school, the previous School I went to...I would, by now, be talking to someone, but here I cannot find the words to speak.

One class came and another went, and then I started my Art Class. I have been looking forward to this class because I got the homework done, and I wanted to impress the teacher.

“OK kids, please turn in your homework you did last night, and I will share them with the rest of the class,” Ms. Shine, the Teacher says.

First Bill went up, dropped off his homework, an Art project, then Kelly with her Cloth Puppet and then me.

Expecting the Teacher to give me a praise...I quickly and anxiously went up to deliver my Creative Cardboard house, with Cardboard/Magazine Characters on the inside.

...Once I arrived in front of the Teacher, I handed her my Art project, my eyes were wide open, eager to see a smile...only to find a disappointing look on her face!

“OK, Brian, thank you...you can go sit back down now” Ms. Shine says.

I got a sick feeling in my stomach as I walked back to my desk, thinking there was not a: your wonderful Brian, there was no: Wow that is more than I expected...

Nothing, only a look of disappointment!

I cannot remember if Ms. Shine showed off my Art project that day, I was too sick.

Thank goodness lunch came around fast!

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My jeans are too tight I thought as I sat alone at my lunch table, and too sick to get something to eat... The other children seemed to be treating me odd, they seemed to look at me different and laugh, although it could be because I have never been in a new School before; I never switched schools, I've been in the same School up to now, so I did not take it personal, I just was extremely uncomfortable.

Within a split second my problems vanished, (they went away for a moment!) Someone made this day wonderful, someone came to liberate me from such misery...a girl, a beautiful blue haired girl; it seemed as if she was liberated to do as she pleased...that she had many options in the School; I would have never

thought she would have welcomed herself to come sit with me, but she did!

Blue/Brown eyes looked straight into mine.

"How are you doing today?" the young girl said with the sophistication of one of the teachers.

I said, "Great," to blend in with her appearance of having a great day.



We talked to one another throughout lunch, she gave me her phone number. written with blue ink, on a handwritten note, she asked me to call her that night.

The rest of the day was miserable. Cindy, the girl I met at lunch was not in any of my other classes, and without her, I was effected by what I thought was, bad luck, lack of goodness and haunted by the atmosphere of the School.

"Ask Brian to do it!" one of the children said to my Math Teacher, Mr. Wine

"Kyle!" I asked you to do it, Mr. Wine said.

"Brian can do it, that's why he is so quiet, because he is pretending to be responsible," the child sitting behind Brian's right side said.

I was so embarrassed, I forgot all about the good time I had with Cindy.

Once I was fully aware I was being targeted, I did not say anything back (who knows, it truly could be all one big mis-interpretation)...I closed off my emotions and hoped for the School day to end; it was my last class of the day so, I didn't have much of the day left...maybe I can ask my Dad if we can move...if we can find a new home, or possibly even if he could homeschool me.

I got on the bus and shortly I was home.

"How was school" my Dad asked.

I stumbled in my mind, I did not want to tell him how I felt, and I knew he wanted to hear everything was great. Thoughts flooded my mind, and then I remembered Cindy, I quickly responded and said, "Oh...I met a girl named Cindy, do you mind if I use

the phone later, she wanted me to call her after School.”

“No, I don’t mind,” my Dad replied.

I rushed into the living room, pulled out the handwritten note Cindy gave me—lovingly written with blue ink...her phone number carefully placed on it and I placed it by the phone.

Later that evening, after supper, I dialed her phone number, “Can I speak to Cindy” I said to the person who picked up the phone.

“Who is this” the person on the other end of the phone asked?

“This is Brian, I’m a new student at Old Town School; Cindy asked me to call her after School.”

“Cindy”, someone yells through the speaker of the phone.

“Hello,” Cindy said in a calm quiet voice.

“Hi Cindy, it’s Brian, I met you at School today,” anticipating a lovely reply.

“Oh ya, Brian, good you called,” Cindy said.

...We spent hours talking to one another, and in doing so I forgot all about my troubles, specially the troubles at School, we talked for so long, that I did not get my homework done.

The next morning, I woke up—considering in depth...how I could get out of School. I did not care anymore. I walk into the kitchen and noticed my Dad had already prepared breakfast. He stood in the corner next to the doorway to his bedroom, he looked at me with a sad look, I expected to hear bad news; the expression on his face told me he was about to tell me something I didn’t want to hear.

"Brian, I hate to do this to you, but we need to move, we need to move back to Georgia...I know you have been waiting a long time to move here, to Massachusetts—and your hopes have been high, I don't want to ruin them, but we have to move back" my Dad says with purpose.

I inwardly was happy, I could have shouted for joy, but I already covered up my hatred and made the appearance of being happy, being happy about Old Town School, so I said, "That's OK Dad, we will do good there too!"

"Good, I'm glad you said that Brian; I'm going to need to keep you home from School today, I need your help packing, this weekend we leave for Georgia."

I spent the next couple of days, happy, all my problems left; I was desperate to leave this School!

Before I knew it, I was back in the moving truck, moving to Georgia; I did not look back, I was so afflicted about Old Town School, I didn't want to consider it part of my life!

Once we arrived in Georgia, we pull up to the house we recently moved out of; the sign reading: House for Sale, the one that was just put up a few weeks ago, the one that was still in the front yard. The thick swampy forest surrounding the house sort of gave me that trapped in the house feeling, the swamp was so dense, I didn't know what lived in there...growing up I received so many warnings about poisonous creatures all throughout the swamp.

We walk into the house, my Dad looks at me and says, "It's good to be home, Right? ...Now we do the unpacking thing again!"

A phone rings, I look to see where it is coming from, and I notice my Dad reaching for his pocket, "Ya" my dad says, answering the phone.

"What?" "Wow!"

He looks at me and says, "don't touch a box, we are moving back to Boston... Animation Central is offering me a huge amount of money to return."

"I can't believe this" my dad says, he looks to his left and gives my Mom a giant kiss on the forehead, "we're buying a bigger house!"

"What? ...Are you sure," she asks

"Positive, they got a Contract waiting for me to sign, they want me to be at Animation Central on Friday...Ten years for about five million dollars" he replied.

Before I could figure out what happened we were on a three-day trip back to Boston, Massachusetts; I slept most of the way, too pressed to consider: I must go back to Old Town School.

My Dad quickly unpacked his favorite coffee table, and set it up in the new house, in Boston, Massachusetts...he put a TV on the top of it; this was his soon to be study. Abruptly he decided to go out with my Mom for a moment and left me alone in the house. I got to exploring and came across his study and sat down at his coffee table.

A fresh pack of cigarettes was lying on the table, as usual my Dad left Cigarettes wherever he planned on resting. Noticing them, and as he usually says, "they calm me down" whenever my Mom questions him about it, I figured they would calm me down, and I did likewise...I grabbed the lighter, put the smoke to my lips and soon realized it wasn't for me, but at the

moment of dislike I knew that I had a problem with Old Town School. I must do something about it.

I quickly found myself running out of the house and into the nearest patch of dense forest.

"I will just live here!" I said quietly.

After an hour I came to conclude it was a bad idea.

I walked back to my house, rather joyfully; the problem appears to have gone, even that night I slept well.

"Brian, you got to get up, the bus will be here shortly" my Mom says.

I open my eyes joyfully, happy to be alive, anxiously I run down the stairs...I was pleasantly hungry.

"Yes" I said, noticing my Mom placed strawberries, grapes, and pancakes on the table.

I was so happy to eat that particular breakfast, I didn't want to leave the house, but I knew I had to, it was my duty growing up in a middle class house...as a matter of fact, to me, every child loved their job at being a child.

I placed my dishes in the sink and I began walking toward the bus stop. Everything was fine until I got



on the big yellow bus. The other children intimidated me! I did not have one friend and Cindy did not ride that bus; her parents drove her to School. I felt like I was in a nightmare.

Pain hit my stomach!

I decided I would sleep on the way to School, hopefully I will forget my pain, and that the day will quickly pass...I rested my knees on the back of the seat that was in front of me and let them fall asleep.

Once I noticed the other children beginning walking off the bus I attempt to get up.

My Legs...they fell asleep. I had them pushed up against the seat in front of me the entire trip.

I could not walk until the blood began to flow through my legs; by the time the blood began to flow, all the other children had gotten off the bus and began walking through the double doors of the middle School.

Putting my full wait on the seats and then on the railing of the bus, I climbed down the stairs, I made it...my legs were truly asleep, it was if they had died, but now there awake...I looked back at the bus driver, sort of embarrassed, hoping he had not noticed I let my legs fall asleep; I gave a friendly smile; he smiled back and shut the double doors to the bus.

Something rejected me from walking into School that day, it repulsed me...or the power of the other children did...if such can happen, but something drove me out of School that day. That day on Wednesday morning, I decided to walk into the nearest thick, dense, forest I could find. The one in the back of the School, hoping no one would notice my escape, but I got board after a couple of hours

Brian drinking Green Sogger



and decided to walk into town, after all, it was only about a fifteen minute walk; I wanted to see if my Mother was at the Country Store, maybe she would buy me a Soda or something.

I did not find my Mother when I got to the store, but I did find a free soda. I simply just asked for one; happy now, I walk out-back of

the store, and sat down. I sat on a concrete block, the block was supposed to stop traffic, if it were to attempt to park out back.

What a sweet taste, sugar, and fizz; I gulped down the whole bottle in a few seconds. As the last drop was about to enter my mouth, I heard a sneeze; startled I coughed up the soda that I had in my mouth, wiped my face with my sleeve, and got up to see who was out back with me.

“Hello” I say, walking toward the sound. A young girl pops out from the side of the building, it was Cindy.

“Cindy! ...What are you doing out here, shouldn't you be in School?”

“I saw you get off the bus, and take off, so I followed you into the woods, and eventually down

here to the store...do you have any more soda" she asks?

"No, but I can go and ask for some more" I replied.

Cindy asks, "Would you please?"

"Wait here, we don't want to get caught or even worse expelled!" I said, as I began walking toward the front of the Store.

"Can I have another soda" I ask, the Store Clerk.

"Yes, just go grab what you want...on me!" the Store Clerk said, pointing toward the coolers.

I quickly grabbed three bottles of green sugar and without admitting it I walked out of the Store.

"Here, Cindy...some of the good stuff!" I said, coming back to where I left Cindy.

Cindy smiles and giggles and guzzles down her bottle of Green Sugar... "That was good!" she says.

The smile on her face began to worry me and I didn't want her, nor I to get in trouble for not being in School...previously if a child did this, the Police would be called; that would make the child look bad, it would ruin their reputation, they would be known to cause trouble. "Cindy, we have to go back, we're going to get in trouble, it's only been about one hour, perhaps no one will notice...we can walk back on the woods trail, so no one will notice; you take the front door and I will take the back door, that way no one will suspect wrongdoing."

"Did you know Brian, my Dad is a Police Officer, Right?"

"Hmm, well...we better go back anyway, because, what if he doesn't like me, and wants to make me look bad, and most likely he could...with authority" I said.

“No, he won’t, he is a good Cop! Look, we can go back, but you must promise you will come with me to a festival this spring. I can’t leave you alone in this School, that will make you look bad...think, I’m friends with the daughter of a Policeman,” Cindy says in integrity.

“Ok Cindy, thank you, I agree to go with you to a festival this spring, now let’s go back” I answered.

2

Sunny Day Festival

I did not adjust to School, (Old Town School) in the first month...I tucked all my hardships on the inside, excusing it all to be, "I am new to the School." The second month was worse, but I intensely convinced myself it had got better.

At the end of the month Hu, the young girl I met in Georgia, the very reason I wanted to move to Massachusetts in the first place, began to call me on a regular basis, good for me...I needed some good news.

After some time, I needed a reason to treat her, because she had been persistent in continuously



calling me; I decided anything would work, I had to respond to her, I had to express I was friendly back, so I invited her, our friend Maj and Cindy to come out for Halloween night; I told them we should dress up and ask the people in the town for candy. Hu loved the idea, and thought of it as an exciting, normal thing, until someone pointed out the statistics of the people who Trick or Treat on Halloween night...that was when we became aware, that it might have been strange to knock on someone's house and ask for candy, but to Hu, Maj, Cindy and I, it was the best idea that one could come up with, dead people running around in the night, saying Trick or Treat, ha, ha! "We must Trick or Treat," Hu said, so we continued to. Believe it or not, most houses had candy!

Halloween was at the end of the month in October, the month Hu was supposed to return to Old Town School; at the beginning of the month, well...she freaked out saying, "I am wild," and never made it back to School that year!

Her parents decided to homeschool her; I spent most of my free time with her; Hu and I became best of friends, always hanging around one another, her Father liked me, and thought my Dad was a genius; he would do just about anything to keep him at Animation Central; I had all liberty at Hu's house.

Computer programming was Hu's thing, in other words it was sort of her "drug of choice...she didn't play video games, as would most children her age, especially if they had the equipment she



had, but rather she enjoyed coding, in other words...behind the images and videos, which pleasantly, quickly, display themselves on the monitor...well, she wanted to discover the code...the code to ownership of everything, to possess all code!

Most of the time I would sit to her left, once and a while I would turn to look at her, noticing her long black hair, highlighted with green, I would look into her big, almost slanted, black eyes and question her about what she had discovered or what she knew about everything.

I consider myself a smart person, so whatever she taught me, I could apply and figure out a lot about my surroundings, as well as escape some of the problems I came across, for example: Hu, showed me a quick, easy way to skip school, she knew I hated going, she knew my grades were failing—according to the School System. She told me that I should call

each teacher on a regular basis, to give an intelligence check... Well, it worked, but in doing so, one day, I was welcome to a fairly wealthy teachers house, he had other children in the house...to make a long story short, I got close to one of his daughters. So regrettable! I will never forget the trauma afflicted upon my head!

Not long after, eyes seemed to be watching me everywhere, emotions came out of nowhere, guilt over flooded my tiny human body and my head vibrated every little move I made!

Apparently not all are as playful as myself, but don't get me wrong...I am, still, sort of in the club, the club of communication with the Teachers or rather the School...it's like, if I can prove that I am growing beyond the rest of the students, the School will pass me...I will pass through their interpretation, of my language into theirs, (i.e. Faking The States Requirements.) ...And thus, making a passing grade, all done by the hand of the teachers.

In the long run they would tell the State of Massachusetts what they wanted to hear. They are not lying, I did do the work, I plainly showed them that I was smart enough, I just didn't do it with the rest of the students, they in the School seemed to want to slow me down, sort of like a Glacier in Antarctica! I felt I could have died from lack of learning a new thing in that School!

It was so sweet, I got in with the School...but I did not escape the fact that some of the people and children in this new area, were a bit different than myself...and my head sure did feel that.

So, all the way up to December, I got familiar with calling the School, just familiar enough that they would grasp that I was growing without the structure set out by the State.

Most of my education, came from Hu, she taught me the movement of things, time controlling everything, sort of like animation, but on the quantum level.

What she taught me was: us being many colors, I see the vibrations that I feel, making all.

Hu said, "Say you're in a dark world full of all sorts of vibrations, all placed there by..." she would not say, because it went into a lot of lies, spiritualism, speculation, and no solid evidence, "an entire Universe of all sorts of basically negative vibrations. Only negative, because everything to a creature is negative, unless we make it part of us, ourselves. which makes the next part interesting: when we feel a vibration, we make a thing...only ourselves can see, we convince ourselves that it is the thing we came across, but it's not."



I said, "So...we hallucinate? ...Or we feel these vibrations, and that makes more of ourselves."

"Exactly!" Hu said.

After her teachings, from seventh grade on...I thought in animation, like second by second motion, it seemed to answer every question I had while growing up; I could now understand how things operated, and by knowing how things worked, I could, in my youth have my own. I could have my own idea of possessing anything I desired, but the only catch was: say I wanted a huge garden, I could not really have one in the fake way of looking at it...I had to tell myself, I have to wait, because time would not permit much things, without much time.

At the School, Old Town School, they were aware that I was growing, but as...a long time, is logical, I could tell they wanted more, more of my obedience to the system they had set up, thank goodness it was December, because I didn't have the more to give. December was going to give me some time off, this is when Winter break is.

"Hu, what are we going to do during my Winter break" I ask.

"My Dad said, your Dad, created a theater, in his recently bought mansion...he mentioned it is as big as a Movie Theater, in fact it is a Movie Theater. He said, 'the new animation they both came up with was, immensely creative, a must see,' they even did a Christmas Animation...they want us to watch these animations in the newly created Movie Theater" Hu answered.

"Ya, my Dad mentioned that, as a matter of fact, next week is the start of Winter Vacation...that must

have been the surprise he has been waiting to show me. How about we spend this week at my House.”

“...And besides that, you must get a better look at my house, you haven’t really been over there yet, except briefly walking in and chatting for a moment,” I said.

“OK, lets go there right now, you only have a week before vacation, I just have to pack a few things” Hu said. ...It was about a two-mile walk from Hu’s house to mine, she packed light and it was not all that cold out, so we walked to my house...as we walk up the driveway to my Father’s huge estate, I notice the two red doors welcoming us into my Father’s house, a winding staircase was beyond that, “What shall I show you first,” I said upon entering my house, “I’ve already showed you my room the last time you were over here...how about I start with the swimming pool, and after that, I take you to the tennis-court, and then the extra rooms...we will end the tour with the newly built theater.”

“OK” Hu said.

I spent that day showing Hu the entire Mansion, when evening came, we had to come up with another thing to do, “What about Cindy?” Hu asked, “What if we invite her over; let’s call her and see if she has any plans...let’s see if she has plans for the entire week, even plans for the entire Winter Break, let’s see if she would want to spend them with us.”

“OK,” I said, and walked over to the phone and began dialing her phone number; after my conversation with Cindy, I said, “Hu, she doesn’t have any plans except us.”

“Good,” Hu says. We start to make plans for a few weeks, plans to entertain us for the entire time.

The day after Christmas, Cindy arrived at my house, we got to talking about what we were going to do for the next few days, before the big day, the day we preview the creative Animations...Hu's and my Father put together.

“Brian,” Cindy says, “the last time I was over here you mentioned trails, trails that the snow machines ride on...Last Night it snowed, what if we go behind your house and explore those trails. ...When you spoke of them, you made them sound so fun, as a dream you never got to have!”

Hu added, “Ya, that would be really fun Brian.”

“OK, let's get dressed and put on some warmer clothes and then we will go out” I answer.

Light blinded our eyes walking out of the house, white covered the earth. A few minutes went by before any of us could see.



“OK, the trails should be behind our house...here, that’s where I saw the signs” I said.

“I hear one of the snow machines, do you hear that” Cindy asked.

“Yes, I hear it, it sounds like a car in the woods” Hu said.

“...And there is a sign, it says Snow-Machine-Crossing, and there are snow machine tracks,” I said, pointing toward the ground. “What we can do is, walk on the trails until we get tired, and then come back here” I said.

“OK” the two girls answered.

The forest was extremely beautiful, white covered the forest; trees were making snapping sounds in the wind...snow would fall off the tree branches as the wind blew upon them. To me it seemed as if we could walk those trails forever, as if they never stopped, it was sort of like a dream, a dream that no one would want to wake up from.

“Just over another hill, I want to go further, I have to see what’s up ahead.” I could have almost thought that a gnome or fairy, at any moment was going to come out of the forest and onto the trail...it was just that magical! Before I or the girls could consider night fall, dusk was upon us, we thought it just appeared to be getting darker because of the cloud coverage, but it was not. Night was approaching us fast. and when it did, we did not have a way back.

At dusk, my Dad began to get worried; he knew we went walking on one of the Snow Machine trails—because I told him.

He immediately called up Cindy’s Dad, who rushed to my Father’s Mansion.

As the good Cop Clint was, he called in for back up, and within an hour, the forest all about the Snow-Machine-Trails were flooded with Cops.

“Cindy!” “Brian!” “Hu!” The policemen loudly said.

Five miles into the forest, on the trails is where they found us, we were walking back home. ...We noticed flashing lights in the distance...at first, we wondered what they were, and then we heard our names being called.

“We’re over here” I yelled into the darkness...the two girls followed my example. “We’re over here!”

Cindy’s Father immediately caught up to us.

Once he was in front of Cindy, he fell on his knees and wrapped his arms around her, giving her a big hug. My Father followed close behind. Somehow, I felt it was all my fault, I did not know whether to say, I am sorry, we got lost or it was an accident. Maybe I

Cindy’s Dad



should lie about it. Was this going to be the end of Cindy and I spending time together...

Suddenly before Cindy or I could say anything Hu says, “A Person on a Snow Machine, pointed us in this direction. We asked this person, because we

wanted to make extra sure we were going in the right direction, back home! He said, "that way," As Hu points in the wrong direction.

"Oh, thank goodness your all right" Cindy's Father said.

I looked at Hu with a grateful expression, hoping that her excuse would excuse all of us, after all we didn't mean to cause such a panic, I would never put myself or my friends in danger on purpose, this surely would have made us look horrible, the Police would have never let me see Cindy again.

We all walked back home, escorted by the entire Police force.

Once we're back home, I change into some warmer clothes, Cindy and Hu did the same...us three shared the same room for the time we were together...quick to make our sleeping situation at rest I say "Thanks Hu, you're the best, and smartest person I'll ever know, or ever will know!"

Hu said, "I say same thanks, Brian!"

Theater day!

"Ok children let's come into our newly renovated Animation preview Theater" My Dad says.

"Yes, awesome" we said walking down the stairs...beyond the living room, and down a second set of stairs, and finally there we were in the theater room; we take our seat, and the lights went out. My Dad brought us popcorn...beforehand he had mentioned the screening would be a few hours, so I anxiously grabbed as much popcorn as I could.

Three, two, one...and the animation begins!

It was a drama, about: the loss of ones' land. Something caused this man to roam from town to

town, he ends up spending all he has, pleasing others to house him...over time he depletes his financial account and begins to wear out; he faints in one of the towns. The Sun light noticed and flew out of the sky and fixed the man's body, with that strength he attempted to find land, this time he found success...happy ever after!

We applaud my Dad's work, as well as Hu's Father's work.

"That was wonderful" Hu says.

"Hu said it right...great animation Dad" I say.

*

Spring or rather the end of the School year came quickly. I did not do as the School wanted me to do, but I did what Hu advised, I proved myself intelligent, more intelligent than the children they taught. The School, to be praised by the State, passed me as an A-student and moved me onto eighth grade.

School was ending for the summer, and I had to live up to the promise I made to Cindy, the day we drank soda behind the Country store.

"Cindy, we're still going to the spring Festival, right? I asked over the phone.

"Well ya, my Dad has made plans to pick you up in his Police car next Saturday morning," Cindy said, "wear something nice...try to dress to impress!"

"OK Cindy, I will, and I will be waiting for him next week.

On the day of the festival, Cindy's Dad shows up on time, in his Police car.

"So, why did you bring the Police car" I ask?

“Oh...well, we have to be part of the parade...Cindy thought it would be good for you to be part of the parade, to make you feel like part of the town. She tells me you don't blend into Old Town School that well”

“True, she is right, but I made it through the year, I passed...next year I can move on to eighth grade” I said.

“This parade will be good for you...if the other children see you in the parade with a Police Officer, they won't tend to be so mean,” Cindy's Father added.

After a good talk with Cindy's Father I decided to have a great time being part of the parade, I unrolled the window to the passenger side door of the Police car, and from time to time I would stick out my hand and wave to the people.

At the end of the parade I was let out of the Cop Car, and I went to find Cindy. With a quick search of the festival I found her; she was next to the fun house.

“Brian, how did you like being part of the parade” Cindy asks?

“It was great, I didn't get a lecture or have to be brought to jail,” I jokingly said.

“That should qualify you to be part of this Old Town and especially Old Town School! Everyone knows my Dad and they like him; if they saw you with him, they will like you too!” Cindy explained.

“Well...what are we going to do for the rest of the day” I ask?

“Where is Hu,” Cindy asks?

“Oh, she said, ‘she would meet us by the little Pop-up-market,’ she wanted us to meet her there” I answer.

“Let’s go find her” Cindy says.

Walking through the freshly mowed fair grounds, I could smell the fresh cut grass, sounds filled the air, from time to time the wind would carry the fragrance of the nearby deep-fried foods.

“How much money did you bring with you Brian” Cindy asks?

“Like, one hundred dollars” I answered.

“Good, cause we’re going to need it, we will be here all day.

Eventually we met up with Hu, she was at the Market, it was her Grandmother’s market.

I look around and notice a lot of jewelry, jewelry that I could not understand, like what were the meaning of some of the symbols on some of the art and jewelry.

“Hu, what are these and what do they mean” I asked.

“What?” Hu replied

“You’re Grandmother has paintings, jewelry, dishes, bowls...all this stuff, I’ve never seen it before, I don’t know what they mean, what is behind it, why is she selling it” I ask?

Hu begins to explain, “My Grandmother is from far away, she will not exactly tell me where, she is afraid it will be mis-interpreted; what she did tell me was: a couple hundred years ago, her family, all her family, lived in the forest, they lived off the land, to them it was common.”

“They used stones to build houses and wood to hold those houses together, they worked in harmony with the animals, and exchanged their affection to the animals for furs and other pricey things.”

“Brian, you and Cindy see this age and these things, like this food stand or an automobile for example, as normal, as if it was created by intelligence, for us, for our good...we trust all of it, we never consider it could change, it's like we're better than the older people, because it's our time.”

“That's how it was in my Grandmother's time, it was her time.”



“She never let go of her time...most of the items here, for sale, she received by trading with the animals, with the wild. That is why everything is so expensive; the animals or wildlife do not work well with most people, but once and a while they need affection, and so they trade.”

I had to confirm what she was saying, so I asked, “She trades with the wildlife, Hm, I wonder if I could do that in my future or would I have to be one of the oldies?”

“Let’s go for a walk, deeper into the fairgrounds, back there by the tree line, you and Cindy...we will not go far, just to where the forest begins, a small river is over there.”

The three of us walk to the beginnings of the forest growth.

Hu walks into the forest and says, “Come down this way, there is a small river in here, I want you both to see it.”

I stumble down a small bank, I put out my hand to guide Cindy down the bank. We all stand next to the river.

I immediately notice the beautiful sun light shining into the forest, through the trees and onto the small stream.

“What’s the first thing you thought of when you came down here, to the river,” Hu asks?

“I want to make a home!” I answered

“And you, Cindy,” Hu asks?

“My Father, he might be getting worried about me” Cindy replied.

Those are the thoughts of the forest, that is how my Grandmother speaks to the wild!

Brendon Holden
Seventh Grade Streets



Hu, eventually left the small stream, and went back up the hill to her Grandmother...leaving Cindy and I, gazing at the river; I stayed there with Cindy, believing Hu...after all, she had been the one teaching me, since I moved here to Massachusetts, and so far she has been correct one hundred percent of the time.

I took my hand and gently took hold of Cindy's; I knew what the forest said that day, and Cindy did too.

3

Two Million Dollar Summer

“Come on Brian, we have to leave now, if we want to be there on Thursday,” I hear my Dad yell.

“OK! OK...I’m coming...I’m walking down the stairs right now,” I say.

It is the beginning of summer and we are going to Sebring, Florida. I wish the days in Boston were colder, then I would have reason to be excited to go to Florida, (a climate that’s warm even in the winter,) but I do not; my Father has business to attend to, and we must go. ...Although I can still be a little excited, it is an adventure, plus my Father plans on getting a Hotel room for the both of us...a Hotel for the rich, and I might meet someone famous or someone I see on TV; we will be there for a few weeks!

I would have had preferred, to have gone with my



Mother, but she did not think I would do well flying over seas.

My Dad and I rush into the car, no time for anything; I climb into the back seat and fall asleep.

One day came and another went, "I am sick of being in the car" I verbally expressed.

"Brian, hold on just a moment, just a couple of more hours and we will arrive at the Hotel...it's a really nice Hotel, rich people have stayed there...in the past it had a reputation as being one of the Top Hotels in the Country, you're going to love it" my Dad says!

"I love everything you do for me," I answer, "there has not been a thing you have done for me that I've been upset with, there isn't anything you could do for me that would upset me; everything you do, I put in my good-things-Dad-has-done part of the Brain," I answer.

"Ok, but you're still going to love it...anyways, where do you want to eat" my Dad asks?

"Hmm...somewhere good, actually what about, Waffle Plus, I keep seeing that restaurant being advertised as we drive along the highway" I answer.

"I just saw that too! ...Exit thirty-five, the next exit, I will pull off, and we can get something to eat" my Dad says!

He begins pulling off the highway...within a few minutes I see a big sign saying, Waffle Plus; someone knew well enough to place the restaurant right by the highway, because I could not stop thinking about it, and I needed food now...

“Good, it’s right by the highway, I am very hungry...I can almost taste the strawberries and the waffles,” I say.



We park out front, in front of the entrance doors, we walk into Waffle Plus, sounds of chatter could be heard as we look for a table. “Let’s sit here Brian,” my Dad says, pointing to a booth.

Soft music played on the ceiling speakers. I pick up the menu

that was placed between the ketchup and the napkin dispenser; I look over the menu and decide what I would like to eat... “I want Strawberry Waffle Deluxe!”

“Ok, what’s that?”

“It’s four waffles topped with Sugar Strawberries, flavored with milk-cream and Maple syrup...plus a side of Bacon,” I replied.

“Bacon? That does not sound right,” my Dad said.

“That’s what is says on the menu, check this out, on pg. 3 it says: chicken on blue-berry waffles, it sounds funny, but I’ve heard some people cover

Bacon or Chicken with chocolate, they say it tastes good, the salt makes all the difference,” I replied.

“OK, that sounds good” He said!

“What are you going to get” I ask?

“Eggs, toast, ham, sausage and potatoes...plus a cup of orange juice and a coffee, the coffee will keep me awake for the rest of the journey; will be on the road for a few more hours before we arrive at the Hotel to get some rest,” my Father answers.

...Ordering our food was now in the hand of the waitress, if she comes to our table...

She did, we place our order and the food shortly arrived. I begin watching my Dad smoke in front of his plate, his plate was full of food; he had a smoke in one hand and a fork in the other, he did this for the entire time we were there.

“Dad you’re smoking more than your eating,” I said

“Well, you know what Brian, most restaurants up North will not permit smoking at all in their restaurants...I miss it! We’ve only been in Massachusetts for seven months and everything is different...we live in a million dollar mansion, you have wealthier friends, your Mother spends time at expensive parties and I have to be a good human being...although I am good, I’m just not that good” my Dad says.

After some time, I said, “The smoke smells fine Dad—that’s if you were worried about it...I just can’t help but notice your playfulness. I did that same thing last year, when I continued to pressure you into moving, I was being playful, that’s what I did, I could not stop thinking about it.”

"Yup, I get it. Come on it's time to go," my Dad says while placing a one-hundred-dollar bill on the bill tray, and we start to move toward the front door.

A blast of hot air meets my face as I open the front door to Waffle Plus. I walk to the car, hop in the back of the car, and fall asleep.

In a blink of an eye I hear, "Brian, get up, we're here," my Dad says, waking me up.

I open my eyes noticing where we were parked...next to a giant building, "that's the place" my Dad says, pointing to my right, "That's the Hotel?" I asked pointing at the building.

"Sure is," my Dad says as he pops open the trunk.

We packed light, he had a small suitcase and I had a backpack.

We check in at the front counter, colored lights were welcoming us into the lobby, a small bar sat to the right, some older Men sat at the Bar, they were talking to an attractive looking lady, who appeared to be the bar-tender. My Dad began to argue with the Hotel Clerk; I was lured to the bar; I walk over and jump up on one of the seats, I look around, feeling much older than I was.

"How are you doing sweetie," the young lady says!

"Great, my Dad's here on a business trip" I say.



As the bar tender was filling a drink, she looks at me and smiles.

I fell in love with the moment...the atmosphere said, I am wealthy, it had the type of a look to it, a look of wealth...I could tell it was an expensive place., I could smell it in the wood of the lobby.

"Brian," my Dad yells.

"Ya, I'm over here," I answer, as I am getting out of my seat, and I begin walking over to my Father.

"We have to find our room," my Dad says.

...We find our room and explore; I slept most of the day in the back of the car and was now ready for action; earlier in the day my Dad mentioned that this night we had a huge convention to attend; I readied myself, and out we were again on the road, driving to Film Features...they needed my Dad's animation, the animation he was working on this winter, the animation he proudly presented to me—Cindy and Hu. He needs to give a preview to, sort of like a club. Apparently if they like it, they will pay Animation Central, ten million dollars for the Copyrights to it— which two million dollars will go toward my Father.

We drive to Film Features, it was in a five-story building, sitting by the Atlantic Ocean. We struggle to find parking, and we struggle to find the entrance.

After some time we just pull over, and look for the entrance, expecting a huge door with a huge sign that said Film Features, but we didn't find one, and spent one half of a hour looking...to our surprise the entrance we were looking for was a small door in front of the building, sort of looked like a side door, the door that would lead to a trash can.

We walk in; no person checks us in, we simply just walk in and begin searching for people. “Dad are we in the right place, I don’t see any other people,” I say.

“Um...” We continued walking, we walk through a curtain covering a door, and we see a huge room, people were everywhere. A huge window framed the Ocean on the outside. A man notices us walking in. ...He yells, “Kyle, good for you to make it,” he takes my Dad off to talk to him, leaving me at the party to fend for myself.



What do I do? I will go over to the food; food is safe I told myself. There was a variety of food, I could tell these people had money, and a lot of money. I grab a blue pastry and decide I would look out the window, to my left I notice a sliding glass door and change my mind about spending time next to the food and begin to walk outside.

“If I walk to the Ocean, I will spend more time; once I walk down and back, my Dad should be ready to leave,” I quietly said.

I slide open the door, hoping not to make a scene; I leave the door open, as I begin walking toward the Ocean.

Crash, Crash, the Ocean waves hit the shore. I place the blue pastry in my mouth, I look to the left and notice a man, he was fishing...his giant fishing pole hovered over the waves and his fishing line reached far into the Ocean.

Maybe I should go talk to him, no, I will not, because he most likely does not like children. I place my hand into the incoming water. "That is cold!" ...Even in August the water is cold in the Atlantic Ocean. I look back toward the party, I notice the sliding doors are still open, I could hear the chatter from inside the building.

Is my Dad done yet, I ask myself. I knew they could not be, but it kept coming to mind; the party could be about an hour. I decided to walk around to the front of the building.

What a strange town, the streets are so narrow, I thought as I was looking around the town.

Little businesses were spread throughout the streets: hair salon, grocery store, nail plus, etc.... This is different, this town seems to not have a point at all, it is like its own entity, like it does not need the outside world, yet they needed my Dad.

Weird!

Not much longer, my Dad walks out to the car expecting to find me there.

"Good, Brian, you're out here...I figured you would be! I knew you would be uncomfortable amongst all those Adults."

"How did you know I felt that way, is feeling that way normal," I ask?

"The anxiety...the I must get out feeling, or the I'm different feeling" my Dad asks?

“A little bit of everything” I said.

It is normal to be uneasy in a new situation, and what makes this situation extremely hard is, it is not permanent, there is not a way to get comfortable. I think that’s why there were so many comforts at the gathering,” He answers.



“How did the preview go” I ask?

“Great, well, I think great...I thought they would watch it while I was there, but they want to watch it on their own time, so your definitely not alone on the discomfort thing,” my Dad says.

“Did they say they were uncomfortable” I asked?

“No, but whenever you find rich people taking their time in the workplace, you can be sure it was how they got their riches,” my Dad says.

“Are you saying...”

“Yes, discomfort is rather poor,” my Dad says.

“I get that; are we going back to the Hotel room now” I ask?

“Yes, and we can watch a movie or play a game...”

“What about the bar, can we hang out at the bar” I ask?

“OK, why at the bar,” he asks.

“That room is attractive, it’s like a part of history or something,” I answer.



We walk into the Hotel, and into the lobby...we take a seat at the bar.

“What can I get you two?” the Bartender asks.

“Will you get Brian a Coke? And I want a beer,” my Dad says to the beautiful bartender.

“This place is amazing, it’s as if it no longer has time, as if it’s been sitting here

for so long, it no longer exists...time no longer exists for it; the curtains must have been made in the year nineteen twenty,” I said.

“They were Brian, that’s why we are lodging here, the advertisement said, ‘furnished with original items.’ That’s what riches are for, they give security, which means if they (ones’ material possessions) begins to fall apart, you can fix them; if you can keep your most precious items, you can add to them over time,” my Dad said.

“So cool,” I replied.

We go back to our Hotel room and slept; my Dad assured me that the next day we would be out all day;

he had to meet up with an old friend, a friend he had not seen since high school.

"Brian, get up, you got to take a shower, we're leaving in an hour," my Dad barks.

I quickly awoke and went into the bathroom.

"Make it quick, I told Kevin we would meet him at ten o' clock," I hear my Dad say.

I quickly grab the bar of soap...I soap up my whole body and rinse it off. I step out of the shower and hear, "Come on Brian, we got to go," my Dad says.

I rush out of the bathroom; we hurry down the stairs of the Hotel, and walk out to the car, the car that was still parked in the front of the Hotel.

In a hurry we begin driving. I got lost in the amount of left hand turns we had taken; I knew we were in, sort of, like, the country land of Florida, I did not see many houses, just this, like palm growth.

"I think this is it," my Dad says while pulling into the driveway of a one-story house; I notice the only thing that stood out about the house...there was an American flag in the window.

My Dad gets out of the car and yells, "Kevin."

Kevin's window was open, and he heard him; I see Kevin walk out of his garage...he walks over to our car, to the Drivers' side door.

"Kyle, I haven't seen you in the longest of time," Kevin loudly says.

He invites us into his nicely built house. He takes us on a tour, he was proud of his house, he continued to mention he built it. Eventually he takes us behind his house to see a collection of items he proudly gathered over the years.

As I gaze around his back yard, I see a car, tractor, a boat, and a small shed; there was not all that much for me to see, so I begin to walk toward the edge of the forest forgetting about the two men puffing one another up.

I notice a rattle snake which was lying at the edge of the forest, it notices me and begins to rattle its tail. I panic and begin to walk backwards hoping we made peace, that I would escape.

“Dad a rattle snake is over there,” I said in a panic.

Kevin said, “Oh, good thing it didn’t get you, there are so many of those on this property; you should stay close to your Father, I don’t need a dead child on my hands.”

Fear filled my body. Rattle Snakes? ...And we are to sleep here tonight? I bet they are in his house too. I wanted to ask my Dad to leave, but he looked like he was having so much fun, I knew he would not leave.

Night approaches, and Kevin shows us our room, it was small—like the room of a child, I cannot believe my Dad is going to make me sleep here, I hate Snakes!

I did not sleep that night, I kept thinking about Snakes.

Morning came and Kevin fed us and we left; my Father had to wait for a call today on whether he makes a new film; it was very important, most likely he will spend all day by the phone, and I will play in the Hotel.

The next couple of days we stayed around the Hotel, we played slot machines, we took a couple of walks, we spent time at the bar...the Hotel only had about twenty-five rooms, so most of the time at the

Hotel we didn't see many other people. But that did not mean it was cheap...it was an expensive Hotel, twenty-five hundred dollars a night.

After much time, my Dad finally got the phone call he had been waiting for; now we could do some other things, things we have not done yet, like a theme park.

For the next two weeks we went to the beach, the movies, hiking, exploring, a theme park and on the final day we spent it at a Campground. Forty dollars a night was the cost a day for our lot at the campground, which was expensive right then...it's a good thing we had bought a tent before we left Massachusetts and brought it with us, because I no longer was sure if my Father could spend any more money.

We set up our tent by the Ocean; thick vegetation surrounded the tent, mostly vines, vines that grew an inch in diameter. Crickets sounded throughout the night; I fell asleep to their wonderful sound, as well as the sound of the waves crashing on the Ocean.

Once I awoke in the morning, I hear my Father's phone ringing, it must have woken me up, he must have gotten up and forgot his phone. "Dad? Dad, your phone," I yelled out of the tent.

"Thanks Brian," my Dad says while grabbing the phone out of my hands.

"Hello, great, thank you," my Dad said to the person on the other end of the phone; he pressed the off button, looked up toward the sky, and then toward me, and said, "we have to meet a Man from Film features, he lives about two houses from the place we were at just a couple of weeks ago, the day when we dropped off the animation."

We hurried to the car and began to drive to Fort Pierce, Florida. For a moment we got lost; my Dad started freaking out. "You know Brian, we have to be back in Boston in three days! ...Three days!!! We have to find this location; do you remember which street we took when we came to this four-street square?"

"Um, ya, we went straight. I can remember, because of that bar to our right...it had people coming in and out of it, it was all lit up, like, it was the place to be," I said.

"Good, thanks Brian."

We pass by the building which housed the original gathering and began to pull over two houses down; I look to the right and see the house, it was a beautiful blue house; we hurry out of the car and walk up a narrow flight of stairs. The smell of incense was everywhere. A man opens the door as we get to the top of the stairs. Antiques filled the room we were invited into; Cartoon character posters littered the walls.

The man says, "Kyle, I am glad you could come, we like your



work, as a matter of fact, we want to use your work...not because we don't have others, but because it's real. People can relate to someone's actual reality better, as yours was. I could feel the emotions attached to it; people love that...specially when it's mixed with friendly colored Cartoon Characters."

"We want it!" I made a contract for you—waiting for you to sign," the man said handing my Father a piece of paper.

My Father quietly pulls a pen out of his pocket, walks over to the nearest table, and immediately signs it.

"Good, that's great," The man says!

They spend some time celebrating before my Father and I walk down the stairs and get into our car and begin driving home.

...Driving home I got curious to how much actually was at stake for the past few weeks; I said, "Dad how much was the contract for?"

"They are paying Animation Central ten million dollars for the animation, two million dollars of that is going to us," my Dad answers.

"Good, you win," I said, and we drive home!

4

No more School

Within days of my Dad and I arriving back in Massachusetts, the fall School year began. I lost my hatred towards Old Town School at the Beginning of summer...once I had been part of the parade alongside of Cindy's Father, I let it all go, I expected all to run smoothly; I thoroughly convinced myself everything would be fine...Cindy's Dad, Clint, had a talk with the School, he wanted to be sure I was part of the School, and that I was fitting in. And so, once I started School again, I thought everything would be fine, so when I ran into my first problem, I was surprised and resorted to what I did the previous year, which was: proving intelligent.

I tried using the reputation I gained the



previous year, but it wouldn't work...the School puffed up, and took some of Clint's words in fear, and thought: (we must restrain our idea that Brian can learn in such a way,) as if they thought Clint's warmth were chains, like he was going to hold them accountable in a bad way.

I began to find myself uncomfortable in School, as if they were breathing down my neck, for example: if I didn't show up for School, they would call my Father and say, "we need Brian in School, it's not OK for him to miss days, we will have to report it."

I am my Father's first child; he did not know that they just say, "we must report it" for themselves; they do not say that for the education of the children. But I, need an education, I must fight back...

Monday morning, I jump out of bed, I ate a quick breakfast my Mother had prepared for me and began walking toward the bus stop. It has been months since I got on this School bus and I still feel repulsed getting on. "Hi Brian," the bus driver says as I walk by him toward the back of the bus.

"Hi" I say back, considering, maybe I should not sit in the back, maybe that is why I am so uncomfortable. I see an empty seat, three rows down from the bus driver, I will sit here.

Children were talking throughout the bus, especially in the front of the bus. I had it in my mind that the front of the bus was sort of for the good kids, but I don't know where I got that information from, I suppose the affliction I endured on the bus didn't allow me to properly interpret the situation, so mentally, I sort of thought I'm being one of the good kids. I open my mouth, and now I feel rejected, pain

afflicts my stomach. I think I just said that wrong, did I sit in front being the misinterpretation? ...No, it cannot be, for one-half of an hour I was afflicted.

OK, Brian it will be alright, I say to myself; the day will shortly end. The bus pulls into the long driveway of Old Town School. I pretend to be like everyone else and walk off the bus; I follow close behind the other students. I notice each child holds the door open for the child behind themselves. The light, it burns my eyes, I begin to wonder if that's normal as I walk into the School; my entire being continuously cries, I got to get out, like an appetite looking for sleep or food, but this was an appetite to leave that School. I look around at the other children, they quickly seem to find something to do: one child finds another and starts talking to them, one plays with some of the teacher's belongings, another proudly shows off in front of the teacher. What am I going to do?

I do not want to be here, I pretend to be interested in a poster hanging on the wall; I want to leave, but I cannot leave...I tell myself, Cindy's Dad fixed it! I will give it my best shot; I will talk to some of the other children. "Hi, my name is Brian, I see the other children talking, I should talk too," I say to one of the nearest boys.

"Hi" the other boy says, "I'm sort of new here," before I say another thing, a young girl walks over and interrupts, she appears to take a seat of meaning in the boy's life. "This is Tic, she's my friend in this new School," the boy says to me. I try to keep the conversation going for as long as I can; I invite the boy and his friend Tic to do some other stuff before

our first class was to begin, we walk to the cafeteria, to the playground, and I question the boy until he appears common.

These things helped a little, at least to myself they helped...the little bit of problems I had left...I pushed deep within myself.

The bell rings, every child finds their place in class; I take a seat at a round table, this is my place in class.

"This is more like it," I tell myself; hoping the morning affliction is gone. I notice a few young girls sitting at the table with me, they were at this table last year, and the teacher is the same teacher, that taught my seventh-grade class; she taught the art class. She still intimidates me, but I tell myself that it is how every child thinks...she is intimidating, it is normal. She not only teaches my first class, but my second, and third class, as well.

After some time in class she advised us that we need a break.

She took us to the cafeteria for a snack, two items or rather three items were to choose from: Milk, a cheese stick that peels apart like spaghetti or a huge pretzel,



cheese was on the inside of the pretzel. I needed something tasty, after all, I am sort of getting uncomfortable, I'll take the pretzel, it was warm, and I could almost taste the melted cheese in my mouth—after looking at the poster advertising it. “OK children get your snacks, we will take them outside,” Ms. Shine said.

I walk out with the rest of the children, pain slightly affecting my legs, I take a bite of my pretzel...OK, now I really don't want to be here after looking at the forest; I consider I am forced into this School, why aren't we all playing, I got to get out; my own inner truth says, I can't, OK...I shove it deep within myself and make it through the day....

Soon I was back on the bus, I laugh at my hard day, trying to heal myself; I tell myself it will all be all right. I walk into my house, “How was School “my Dad asks, still excited about his animation being accepted.

“Uh, I'm going to Hu's Ok,” I rudely say.

“OK, don't make your first day back at School sound so fun, he says.

I abruptly leave and find my way to Hu's Fathers creatively architecturally designed mansion. “Hu, Hu, are you here,” I say knocking on the door.

“She is not here honey,” I hear Hu's Maid say.

“OK,” I said and begin walking back toward the road...I must liberate myself, I will walk to the store and get some candy, and once I return Hu will be back, and I will heal myself. I look back at the Maid as I was leaving, and say, “do you know when she will be back?”

“Around seven,” the Maid says.

Ok, good...I can spend a few hours at the store, the store that I spent some time with Cindy last year, it still reminds me of her. An old bench sat in front of the store, I take myself and sit down, I begin watching the people as they come in and go out. An elderly lady notices me, she looks at me, "aren't you cute—young-en, what is your name" she asks.

"Brian," I answer.

"Well, that's a lovely name, would you like something from the store?" Before I could answer she says, "my husband and I...when we were younger, use to come here and get an orange soda; we would sit here until the sun set, you know, if he was out of work, he would need rest, so we would come here; it surely lit up our life...how about I get you an orange soda," she asks me or rather informs me she is going too!

"That would be great," I answer, and watch her walk into the store. Not too much later she returns with a white plastic bag in her hand, she hands it to me, and before she turns to go back to her Red Cadillac, she winks and says, "you will be all right."



I figure the soda was due, cause of the School problem, "was that School trying to kill me or something," I ask to justify the goodness I just received. I open the white plastic bag and look on the inside, "Wow" a grinder, a soda, Candy and a lighter. Weird, she must have forgotten her lighter. Good, I can use that too, just in case Hu does not come back tonight. I place the lighter in my pocket and begin to open the bottle of soda.

Oh, this is good, the soda is so sweet. The feeling of freedom and rest flooded my body; that lady must have been guardian of the galaxies or a great help or something...that is truly what the Dr. ordered! OK, now I am fine. I bet Hu is home, but before I leave, I will walk behind the store, behind the Country store I drank soda with Cindy. I will drink it in her remembrance. I walk behind the store; "Wow," I like it back here, a wild creature spot! I almost began to throw a party with this unseen critter, but I did not, and began to walk to Hu's house.

Knock, Knock, Knock...

"I know that's you Brian, I'll be right there," Hu says behind the door. She opens the door, and I say, "Good your home, I just had the strangest experience, but first let me explain my trouble, that's if you have enough...and I can express some pain."

"Ya, sure Brian, keep in mind I use your entire Social existence," She answered.

"So, your fine," I say.

"Yes, go on, tell me what's on your mind," she says.

“OK, well... Cindy’s Dad talked to the teachers at School, he put himself in my seat, he thought he could make a better impression on the town, because the town knew him as the reason for the town, well...they hid part of themselves from him, sort of mis-interpreting what he was giving to me. As dominos knock one another down or as the Ocean waves force the water towards gravity; they likewise feared fear, knocking one another down! In their fear they began to forcefully hold me to the States requirements...they think I am held accountable to those requirements. And the worse part, Clint, Cindy’s Father hinted they were, in, (i.e. liberated to act on my behalf) but he meant they were in...in mine. They fear him, and casted their weight of fear on me,



sort of like a tidal wave; if we keep going this way we will all crash under the force of gravity, what do I do, they’re making me sick, I was tormented all day...what am I going to do? I need your help Hu,” I said, looking into her eyes; desperate to not be taken captive by the ways of,

group living or rather society’s ways.

Hu answers, "OK I get it, if you stay, it's as if your forced under the weight of gravity and most likely that will kill you, but if you act without the authority you most likely will look like a bad person, if you're to really communicate with them now, to grow, it would mean a mistake, you most likely would involuntarily damage property, yell, or basically freak out.

"Exactly," I said.

Hu looks at me with a serious look, you know what I freaked out about Brian, I needed space to do wild, it's who I am, they know my Dad, so I got away with it, you won't, so you should be on your best..." Hu says, and looks up toward the ceiling for about five minutes running information through her brain, "OK, I got it, write a letter to Clint, Cindy's Father...tell him, the teachers fear the State, they fear their punishment as well as Clint's, and in doing so...cast their weight of lacking trust on me, they took my -in-thing and they are not fit...that they most likely will make me look bad, like... (I cannot live up to the School,) which in turn will make them fail the States requirements.

Tell Clint you must talk with me as your own self...if we fail, we should fail together!" Write something like that...write now, I will proof read it over and over; I will type it up, and tomorrow morning, we can call a Taxi, hopefully we will arrive at Clint's house before he leaves for work; we will hand him the letter. Cindy should be there and let us hope she is, because the school is truly ignorant, even toward Cindy, they have good hearts, but it is out of control, this letter should fix it," Hu concluded.

“OK, Hu, I’m going to need a piece of paper,” I say; I began to write. Early the next morning, I look over at Hu, I must have fallen asleep, I am still sitting on the pillow chair I was sitting on... when I fell asleep, “have you slept” I ask.



“No, I had to make this letter

look as professional as possible, plus I had to convince my Dad to get us a Taxi, which will be here in one hour,’ Hu said.

“OK,” I said and began to prepare myself to meet with Clint.

Honk, Honk, “Taxi is here,” Hu says...we hurry out the door. We pop open the back-right door of the Taxi and we both enter through the same door. “You’re going to table lane,” the Taxi Driver says to confirm our trip.

“Yes,” I answer.

Clint owns a house about thirty miles away, he lives on a hill, in a nice estate, worth his career and the person he is. We pull up to Clint’s Garage, we did not pay for the Taxi, because Hu’s Father had already paid for it by credit card. “OK kids, we’re here,” the



Taxi man says, we both hurry out and knock on Clint's front door.

"Ya, hold on a moment, who is there" Clint asks.

"Brian and Hu," I said, yelling through the door.

"What, how..." Clint says behind the door, which immediately

swings open, "what are you two doing here" Clint

asks.

"We have to talk with you," I say pushing my way into the house.

Clint calls for Cindy, "Cindy, Brian is here..." I hand Clint the letter we worked on all night, carefully placed in an envelope, a white envelope, and say, "could you please read this!"

I comfort myself in his house and begin looking for Cindy, I notice her in the living room, and I walk in to greet her.

"What are you doing here" Cindy asked.

"Something very important," I answered.

"Brian," Clint says, "Cindy, you both come here, I'm keeping both of you home today, actually I'm not going to work today either...this is too important. I

fully understand this problem. You and Hu ought to be proud of the way you're handling this," Clint says.

"What is this Dad," Cindy says to her Father curiously.

Clint hands her the letter, and he says, "thank you Brian!"

*

Clint kept Cindy and me from School, for the day, and not just for that day, and not just a few weeks, but the entire year. Clint was genuinely concerned that the School stood fearing the law, and in fearing the law, made a problem and cast their burden upon the children. He continued in his mind visualizing Cindy never having the opportunity he had...to grow as a society; he was scared that she would have to start from scratch.

He explained that it never would work, the way the School system was, he was sure of the letter that Hu proof-read over and over. He did not decide to homeschool us that year...he let us do as we pleased; he said, "if we were to start from scratch, we should do it now, and perhaps Brian is right, 'staying on the foundation that we started on is wise, the best!' Clint let us learn the way we wanted to; Cindy and I grew, and we would assure Clint that we had reason to do what we did around his house.

For that entire School year, I did not miss a day at Cindy's house, but I became aware that I was missing a part of Cindy. Every so often, throughout the day she would take a walk; I felt as an outsider; if I saw Cindy take this time when I was in front of Clint, I

would cover it up by looking at him and giving a smile; every time it happened I thought, how could I fix this, for myself. I knew she could not be doing anything that far out of the normal reality we lived in, to be hiding something. Slowly I discovered what Cindy developed to heal her problems, her problems around her Father, she had to heal small faults he caused while she was growing. One day I guessed, I guessed to what she was doing in those moments...I had slowly got so uncomfortable being the outsider in that part of her life.

"Cindy, I can talk to the trees and they talk back," I said.

"How?" she asked.

"Because if it finds me or rather shall I say itself, lacking, it will replace the lack through its roots, the earth gives it stuff...plus it can take stuff off the sunlight, it talks to the surrounding forest for me" I answered

"That's what I do every day when I go outside, I get medicine," She said.

"You do" I responded.

"You don't know" She said.

"Well I believe me, but I didn't have that part of you," I said.

"Well I have a continues negative (thing) about my existence, I don't think hard about it, I don't look for its root, I simply grab something out of the forest and eat it...its sort of like a secret," she said.

"Ya, I got that, let us go out to the forest. I begin to remember what helped me: the elderly Lady at the store. I kept her lighter, I have had it in my pocket ever since. I knew what I could do to help



myself...Cindy
you put the
forest in your
mouth, right?"

"Yes," she
replied grabbing
a leaf and
putting it toward
her mouth.

I put my hand
in my pocket and
pulled out a
lighter, I flick it
with my
thumb...it
sparks, I do it
again and I see a
flame, I grab the

partially bit leaf out of Cindy's hand and put it on
the flame until it begins to smoke, I begin to breathe
in the smoke.

"That smells so good," Cindy says.

"I feel better now..." I said.

5 Moving In

Cindy and I got really close over eighth grade, freshman year, and sophomore year. Although we never went to School, we daily spent time with one another, a lot of that time was at her house, around her Father, the Policeman. Clint Wonder was the name of Cindy's Father, he liked me, he usually invited me to family gatherings, cookouts and to the beach. He knew I was dating Cindy and wanted to assist in our relationship...for the future of his daughter.



He has been, for a while, mentioning that I ought to move into the apartment above his garage, but I always said No, because I just figured he was making conversation...plus I was too young.

At the age of Seventeen, I became more and more aware that I would have to find my own way in life. I

concluded to be, like my Father, I must, “do as my Father did.” ...If my Father started out with nothing—I will have to find the same situation and then live that same situation; and that is just to think that I could reach the level of his existence.

To practice that idea, I would, a few times attempt to take long walks into the forest—behind Cindy’s house. The first forest walk at Cindy’s house, was in the middle of winter, when I was seventeen; I had never been independent of my Father, I did not know or have emotions to consider life without my Father, specially not in my own apartment or home...I knew it existed, but I had to live it, to know how my Father exists all day without his Father to rely on.

In the forest walks, I didn’t plan on one day, I didn’t plan on two days, I just simply left it up to the forest, I told Cindy, “if I am to live, then there must be something in independence that guides Adults to live the way they do, that I would be back, that I am taking a walk, a deep walk into the forest.” She expected me back and I came back that day, but seriously...I did not consider days; I suppose I was too young to consider days independently of the Adult figures.

I, without much thought walked behind Cindy’s house, moved some branches, and began to walk up one hill, down another...I walk through thick forest and through forest that did not seem to be forest at all. Deep in the forest I begin to consider, if I were to live here, in the forest, how would I survive: would I build a house, what would I eat? I begin to wonder how people lived here thousands of years ago, and if it were me, how would I live amongst the wildlife?

Brendon Holden
Seventh Grade Streets

I look deep in my mind, back to the summer of seventh grade...I can remember Hu, describing the forest, the forest speaking, perhaps this journey in the forest is not in vain, perhaps the forest is speaking. I look for signs of others, but I find none, I begin to lose interest in just walking. In losing interest I begin wondering if there is a mystery or a secret in these woods...

Suddenly I recall a man I met in Georgia, he made himself better...better than me; without ever consciously thinking about it, now, I consider...he



continues to follow my mind, haunting my mind, almost speaking into my insides; the further I bury it, the more I warn myself it will gush out.

I begin to lose my mind a little, and believe he took Cindy, that he was simply better; she is now his, my mind seriously considers; I fall on my knees,

Scream, and Yell. I vocalize hatred, hatred toward this man, I pick up the nearest stick, and swing it

against a tree...smashing the stick into several pieces. The anger left, all was calm, I began hoping that the stick hit him; I go on my way...

I notice the forest is huge, that there is much, and each creature is comforted somehow; I begin to wonder if I was without society, without the structure of civilization, perhaps I might like it; I could live like the wildlife, I could play in wonderland...if I do not have to fear laws, I could play in these woods. I would love to say I know these woods; I would love to say I do not need civilization...sometimes I would love to be permanently elsewhere all together.

My stomach loses its energy, and I begin to get extremely bored. I decide to walk back. ...I hurry back and go up to my room. Cindy's Father went out for the day, taking Cindy with him; for only two hours was I in the forest, I thought I could have endured much more, but there is not all that much to do out there, so I came back, and now I will just watch some TV, and wait for Cindy to come back, and then I will have something to do.

Shortly, Cindy and Clint pull into the yard, I hear both of their car doors shutting; I begin to walk down the stairs leading to the front door...the front door begins to open; they both walk in. As they are in conversation, I make known my presence.

"What did you do all day Brian?" Clint asks, aware that I was in the room.

"I took a long walk into the forest," I said while following him into the kitchen. We all sit down at the kitchen table.

“Maybe I should move into the apartment above the garage,” I said abruptly to Clint, bringing up my age and my desire for independent living.

“I was hoping you would ask that at some point, I’ve never known whether it would work, but I’ve been running that by you for a long time—to be a friend,” Clint said, “But one thing about moving in that apartment is, you should work in the community, plus Cindy, most of the time, can’t spend the night up there, we would not want an unexpected child,” Clint said.

“Ok, say we do this,” I begin saying, “where am I going to find a job?”

Clint says, “I know a few people that could get you started...and once you get started and are working for a few weeks, you will have grown, plus you will have some money which you can use to buy you, and Cindy stuff—to furnish the upstairs apartment! But I do not think you would want to live there for more than a couple of years...most children growing up in the community find stable jobs to continue with them for thirty, forty, fifty years...you don’t want to be above the garage for that long, so play with the idea, try it out, and perhaps you will find a stable life for both you and Cindy!”

For the next couple of days, I anxiously stayed by Clint’s side, hoping that I would find a job, the job he promised; I began to anxiously desire the money; thoughts of purchasing my own things flooded my mind.

Finally, after following Clint around, and reminding him about the job he told me he had, he decided to drive me to a toy manufacturer, and ask

the company owner of Toys, if they would mentor me with pay, sort of like a real job. They agreed, the toy manufacturer knew who Animation Central was, and they knew my Dad worked there, they knew he produced some of the best cartoons there was, they even wanted me, in hopes that they would be able to produce toys for some of his latest work.

My first day on the job, or soon to be first day...I get up and take a shower, clean up and wait; someone at Toys was to pick me up, I waited anxious to know what my job was going to be.

Knock, Knock...

"Brian your rides here," Cindy said.

"Thanks Cindy," I give her a look of affection as I walk out the door, she runs over and gives me a hug, I walk out the door and I join the brown hair woman driving the Company car of Toys.

"You're awful young," the woman said as we are pulling out of the driveway, "I would have thought you would be older; you must be about sixteen?" she says.

"Ya, about that!" I reply. Toys was only ten minutes away; we pull up to a one-story manufacturing building.

"Is this it?" I ask.

"Sure is," the woman said, "Now I will show you what you will be doing."

We get out of the car and walk into the building, she gives me a long tour; for the entire tour I was hoping to be working on some of the more precious toys, that way, I could tell all my friends I'm doing something important. Eagerly waiting now, to hear the description of my soon to be job.



Happily, hopefully I hear the manager began to tell me my job, “What I need you to do Brian is: sweep the floor...you see that giant broom over there, get that, and walk up and down the building, and sweep, grab that cloth in case you come across any dust on the walls, shelves and stuff; make it your own, and have fun...ask if you need support,” the woman who was going to be supervising said.

I looked down, disappointed, I did not get one of the good jobs. I now have nothing to show off in front of my friends; I didn't let my disappointment show through, I looked up at the supervisor and gave a friendly smile, and said, “thank you, I will be off to work now. I grabbed the broom located in the corner of the room and began to sweep. The building was a big building, it took eight hours to sweep, and clean spots off the walls, that is if I found any.

The supervisor, beforehand, agreed to pick me up, and drop me off, from work, daily. Not that I cared

all that much anymore, I was lacking motivation...but I knew I needed to stay motivated; although I did not like my job all that much, I could use money as the motivation for what I was doing, so I did.

...A few weeks later and I had made six hundred dollars; I was handed a

check; I was so excited! That day my supervisor drove me home, I rushed into the house, immediately found Clint, and said, "how am I going to get the money out of this?"

"Well, you're going to need a bank account, what I can do is: tomorrow I can drive you to the bank, and see if they will open you an account, but I don't know if they will; once there, I will know whether you might be able to open an account to put your money in, and hopefully, they will give you a little plastic card, so that if you need to use the money, it will be on the card," Clint answered.



Anxiously I waited all night for morning to come. Once morning came, I went to look for Clint, I found him in the kitchen, early in the early morning. I said, "Clint, we're going to the bank today, right?"

"Yes, we can leave right now if you're ready. Once we got to the bank, I open an account and place my money on the inside, they give me a little plastic card, so that if I need to purchase something, I could use the card, as Clint said they might.

Once I get home, I find Cindy, "Cindy what should I buy us?" I said as we studied the apartment above the garage.

"Um, it's your money, so I'm not going to be the one to spend it," she answered.



"It's our money, this apartment, isn't just for me, so if you were not here, I would have left by now, I don't have need for money," I said.

"You, like, want me to playhouse or build a home," she asked.

"Clint said, 'eventually we need to find something more permanent,' but for now we, sort

of practice, so, yes" I said.

"Let's buy a lot for a little," she answered.

Cindy had a license, she could drive, and advised, that I should get green money out of the ATM, and she would drive us to yard sales, thrift shops, etc. That way we could buy stuff to furnish the whole apartment for an unbelievably cheap price, and because we shopped cheap, we would have money left over for sweets and stuff.

So, we did...that weekend we drove to the bank and withdrew five hundred dollars. We stopped at the thrift shop first, this is where Cindy bought dishes, blankets, curtains, and some other small decorative items.

Next, we went and bought a newspaper...I looked on the inside of the paper to find advertised yard sales, we found two of them, and we immediately drove to the first one. Upon arriving we notice an air mattress and a chair, so we bought them. We drove to the next yard sale and found a TV, paintings, and lamps, and we bought them.

Altogether we spent three hundred dollars, and that was everything we needed to furnish our apartment. "Brian, we should go to a restaurant and get something to eat," Cindy said.

"Ok, where?" I asked.

"The one with the Chef on the sign, the one downtown, do you know that one?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. Afterwards Cindy advised we should go to the grocery store, and buy party food to comfort, and make ourselves feel at home while in the apartment, and basically for fun. We did... Candy doughnuts, soda, and bread!

*



Five months later I'm at work sweeping the floor...I have been struggling to enjoy this job...it's the same thing day in and day out. I continue to tell myself to stick with, Cindy needs the money, and so I do; but one day it was harder to tell myself that, than the rest. A

chemical reaction in my body took place, which gave me liberty to do something out of structure.

Tuesday morning in the middle of work I walk out the back door of Toys and began walking on the railroad tracks to my Father's house. It has been several months since I have seen him, I wonder how he is doing. It took five hours walking on the railroad tracks to reach his gated mansion, hopefully he is home, I needed someone to talk too. I open the door, "Dad are you here?" I said.

"Is that you Brian?" I hear him say from his study.

"Yes," I say as I walk in to notice him on the couch at his coffee table, smoking.

"Dad I got to talk to you," I said.

“Ok go ahead,” he replied.

“Clint got me a job at a toy manufacture, named Toys. Toys did not give me a good job, they gave me a job of sweeping the floor; forcefully I do not want to be their anymore, so I left. I know I have to work; I want to be like you, I need to live independently and stable, what should I do?” I ask.

“You know Brian, sweeping the floor isn’t permanent, most likely they gave you that job for Clint’s sake, so obviously, you feel reality, and that reality, don’t feel right, there isn’t a job there,” my Dad says. “When my animation was picked, the day we spent a few weeks in Florida...do you remember why they said they picked it?” he asked.

“Ya, I think so, something about it being lifelike,” I answered.

“Exactly, so do you know what that means...if you don’t, let me tell you what it means, it means: through the reality I live, because I truly live it, I own it, and can incorporate that into entertainment, my reality! ...That is what others can understand, they can understand reality...a real setting, a real story. Remember the story...the man that was driven from town to town, without rest, that is reality, that happens! ...Just consider wars, most of the time it’s about land.”

“What I think you should do Brian is find reality; Clint most likely is sheltering you for Cindy’s sake, that isn’t the reality that I’m talking about, that’s not the reality you need to have, to make your own way... Although you might get hurt, you might lose, it is worth it...you will not be capable without it.”

Brendon Holden
Seventh Grade Streets



“You should take risk Brian...how about Florida? What if you took Cindy and just left? ...I am not saying to be stupid, you are my son, but what I am saying is there is not a reason for you to not live, and to not take risk! ...You may lose everything, you may lose nothing, the good part is, you felt, you knew what it was like to feel the chance to succeed,” my Father says, holding a lighter in his hand to light a cigarette.

I watch him light it, I knew what he was saying, “thanks Dad,” I said and I began walking out of the room.

“Do you want a ride?” He asks.

“No, I need the walk to think, but thank you,” I said, and left. I walk back to my apartment... I am not going back to Toys I concluded, and I took the entire night walking to Cindy’s.

Tiredly I return to my apartment, and walk up the stairs and go inside, Clint and Cindy must have thought I didn't want to be bothered; they must not know I went to see my Father, because I walk straight up to my apartment, and they didn't bother me.

I look around the apartment and notice the placement of the furniture, recalling Cindy, a few weeks ago, and her happiness setting it up, it had a look, like it was done in love, everything was so carefully placed, touched with her special touch; I almost could have felt bad, regretting not working today, I hope I'm not messing up our lives.

I lay down in bed, tired, soon my supervisor from Toys will be over to pick me up for work. I knew I would not be there to go, I already made up my mind, I am not going back, I am not going to talk about it... possibly Clint will know the job was not permanent.

I begin to think and question myself, what if I took Cindy and left, what if we went west to California, or south to Florida, what if we found work, a house, or a life... What if we succeed, what if I become a millionaire, or even famous?

It would only be a moment on the streets, until I found work. I took these thoughts and placed them in the important part of my brain, considering how I could tell them to Cindy, or how I could explain them to Clint, how can I take his daughter and say to him, trust me.

Perhaps he already trusts me, that is why he took Cindy out of School to begin with, and that is why he lets me live here...because others forced bad on me, to liberate themselves. In fear they would do, what they did to me, to his daughter, but would I? ...Is

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taking his, and risking all, while I am trusting good,
Good? I cannot fear!

Perhaps he will see the growth in the risk, perhaps
I must risk his rejection...

6 Taking the Risk

Weeks went by, since the day I decided to leave Toys...Cindy's Dad, Clint, never questioned me about Toys, actually he acted as if he didn't care, like it didn't matter to him at all...he distanced himself, as if he did not know, or rather knew, but decided to leave me the room to grow; but I had to wonder, was he plainly disowning our past several years together, I wasn't all that sure, but I did know, I had to exist on a higher-level, so I took the whole thing as a good thing for me!

With that behind me, I focus my mind to more important things like, waiting for the harvest months, I have been waiting for the harvest months all year, and now they have arrived; during the harvest months is my Birthday...I turn



eighteen, something inside me knew, that at that age I could no longer be held accountable for being a child; doors that only open for Adults would now be open for me. With that responsibility...bad doors could open too, and Clint would not be there to catch my mistakes, in fact...he would be there to stand in my way, especially if I become an enemy of the State! But running in fear, does not solve the problem, if I was going to do something wonderful for myself, I had to ignore his judgment, I had to take the risk...

I would begin by opening up to Cindy, I would let her into the sensitive world I was living in; I would have to trust our four years of a good relationship together; I must take the risk that she might or could hurt me. So, one day as usual Cindy came up to my apartment to watch TV, eat, and just be around me. I decided I would get closer to her than I have been. "Cindy," I said, "you never asked why I am not working at Toys, but I think that you know why...because the situation wasn't permanent, right? ...Or did you think of another?"

"I don't know, maybe you didn't smoke enough of the forest or something" Cindy says.

"My Dad said, 'it was because the job wasn't a permanent job,' but who knows; are you cool with me not being at work" I ask?

"I thought we were having fun playing house," she says.

"Exactly! What if we play more of it, what if we get closer" I ask?

Cindy gave a concerned, confused look and left the room.

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I begin to worry: oh no, I hope I did not mess it up, she must think I am messing up our lives...I must have ruined it; in despair I begin to think of what I will do without her. How, now, do I get her back, she is going to tell that to her Father...trouble for me! What if her speaking about my closeness to her, makes me look like I failed at work, and now I am being forcefully disobedient? What if it looks like I was trying to give her a child, and that, against Clint's wishes? Clint most likely will not go for that... he will be upset.

I thought paranoid and spoke negative to myself for the rest of the day; I hide in the apartment, hoping to not see Clint, hoping I did not hear the words, "Brian you're going to have to leave."

Nine o'clock...I cannot sleep, I am too full of worry; I attempt to get up out of bed, and as I am about to get up out of bed to get a glass of milk, I see a shadow in the room, "who is there" I ask? Cindy walks into the bedroom, partially dressed, and climbs under the covers with me. "If your moving, or doing something else, or whatever you do Brian, I want to be there; take me with you," Cindy says, fearing never having this opportunity.

She continues showing up in my room in the middle of the night, keeping it hid from her Father; she would sneak out of her room, from her window. She continued doing this for weeks, and for weeks I worried that we were going to get caught, I concluded: eventually we would get caught, unless I acted... If we are going to take the risk, I need to be as wise as humanly possible. I quickly pulled myself



together...I must make this work, I must succeed, wake up Brian, think, secure your independence!

I decided to come up with a plan. In recalling the words my Father spoke to me, I say, "Cindy what if we just leave...we leave, we go to Florida, we will not get caught there, you will not have to sneak out of your window anymore."

"I can find a job, we can buy a house, we can live up to our parent's expectations. I must live up to my Father Cindy...it is so important to me; he told me, we should do this, I should take the risk. If you trust me, don't tell your Father, go back to your room and grab some things; we will walk the railroad tracks until we reach Hu's house, once there we will find Hu, and we will ask if she can help, perhaps she would like to come too!"

Cindy kissed me on the side of the face and quietly walks to her room...ten minutes later she comes back with a purple backpack. I scramble to get my things

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together, and we, in the night, begin to walk out behind the garage, into the woods, until we found the railroad tracks.

As we stumble unto the railroad tracks, I say, "In a few hours, if we walk steady, we should be there!"

"If Hu can't or doesn't help, I have five thousand dollars" Cindy says.

"Where did you get five thousand dollars" I ask?



I took my Father's secret money stash and left a goodbye note in its place" she says.

"I hope your Father's not going to get vengeful, if he is lacking understanding, he might put me in jail, thinking I manipulated you into stealing" I say.

"Well, you didn't steal the money, I did, so if he is going to get mad, he will get mad at me" she says.

We quickly walked the railroad tracks to Hu's house, guided by the moons light; within a couple hours we were at Hu's house. I walked to the side of the house, I was hoping her window was open..."Yes," to my luck it was, I could see her at her computer, "Hu, I'm out here, it's Brian, look out your window," I said.

Hu noticed, and walked over to the window, and opened the window further, "What are you doing here" She asks?

"Cindy and I are leaving to make a life, we could use your help, or you could just come with us, we've always been friends, you might want to, for fun, for the adventure, for growth...to live!" I say.

From her bedroom window, while looking at me through the window, Hu whispers, "Go to the front door, I will privately let you and Cindy in,"

I grab Cindy by the hand, and we sneak around to the front door...I see the front door pop open, and we quietly go inside; Hu rushes us into her bedroom.

"What's this Brian? You want to do what" Hu asks?

"We are leaving the lifestyle of being sheltered, were going to Florida possibly ...we want to live as adults," I answered.

Hu said, "I believe in that...lately I've made plans to leave the Country, I slowly have earned enough

money to buy a shack in a distant Country...I planned on escaping there at some point in the future.”

Agreeing with her plan I say, “I believe in that!”

“I’m going to do it, but first I have to try if I can live in troubled situations, I don’t know if I can move to a distant Country so I’ve been in training not to fail...”

“I do not want to fail, I cannot fail, I did not do, what I have done up to this point—to fail, and just turn back. I want to come! I have a few thousand dollars, I can pitch in. Whether we succeed or not, if we make it or not, I will blame you not...I am coming! If I make it, I will eventually move to my shack anyways...just so you know” Hu says.

“We will come visit you in that other Country” Cindy says. Hu smiles towards Cindy and gives her a friendship hug.

“I tell you what, I know what I’ve studied, and you, trust, I’ve been working on this for a while, knowing that I must make my way in life, that I must, for myself, by myself, and so I’ve studied and researched what it takes to depart from our semi-permanent situation, to a permanent situation.”

“I know that if we were to leave for Florida right now, and just jump into it, we would not survive...we would spend our excitement and desire, much more if we do it right now, just to spend the comforts we have had while growing up; my solution is, we must receive discipline. One thing in Society they do is...say the military for example: they discipline one another, they challenge one another or even lock one another up, but we can’t do that because, I have not studied that,” Hu says and begins to laugh.

Hu continues,
“What I think we should do, what I was going to do in a year or so...is, go out into the woods, like, where we were when we got lost, when we went out exploring the Snow-Machine Trails. We stay there for two weeks, in rain, in cold, in the heat of the sun...if we



get sick, we force one another to stay there anyways; we do it for one another, we do it to grow into, independent, rich, and healthy individuals...”

“Through our discipline, and our strength, we can have anything we desire! Do we want children? Do we want a Mansion, like Brian’s Father? Do we want honor, like Cindy’s Father? ...We can have and do anything we want!”

Cindy interrupts, “what do we eat for two weeks?”

“According to a well-respected, wise, and smart Dr. I have read about, we can survive on crackers and water, This Dr. said, ‘it would not only discipline, but clean our bodies as well,’” Hu says, convincingly...believing herself!

“When do we leave” I ask?

"I have been studying and training for a while, I have crackers, bottled water and time away from my Father...we could or rather should leave tonight" Hu says.

"OK, that sounds good, because Cindy's Father did not give us permission, plus Cindy stole five thousand dollars from him, which means we could be running from another form of discipline," I say.

"I get that," Hu says!

"OK, give me an hour, and then we will go out on the trails," Hu says. Hu quickly got dressed, packed a small bag, gave us some crackers and bottled water; she carefully wrote a note and placed it under the keyboard of her computer, so that if we made it, Hu's Father would find it, and once found, he would reserve Hu the possibility of a future family life.

The three of us quietly stepped out of the house and ran onto the trails, hoping not to get caught or run into any significant problems. "I found a location down here about a half a mile, no one will know we're down here," Hu said, while pointing down the trail.

Within a half an hour we were there, the forest welcomed us with a cold and lifeless breeze, "Now, we wait until we adjust to the forest breeze, until we prove we create the breeze, it doesn't create us...we depend on no one," Hu says.

"I get that, Hu," Brian says.

"We will make it, we will fight," Cindy added.

After the initial excitement, I got hungry, I take a pack of crackers out of my bag; the wind blows strongly upon me. I open the small bag the crackers were wrapped in and take out a cracker; I bite it and begin to chew...it is dry, it sticks to the roof of my

mouth. I pull out a bottle of water and attempt to wash it down. The lack of flavor worries me; I worry if I will survive the journey.

“This sure is different than all the sweets and soda we bought, just a few weeks ago for our apartment” I say to Cindy.

“Give me one,” Cindy says while grabbing the other cracker and putting it in her mouth, “tasteless” she says.

I look up and began to wonder why we are eating at all. I look over at Hu, and notice she is eating and loving the crackers, sort of like it was chocolate.

“Hu if I start to go back, keep me here please, “I say, noticing her strength.

“OK, I will,” she answers.

The night was cold. But I did not take it into account, I was too anxious to make a life with Cindy. The second night I began to worry that Cindy would turn back. The third night, Hu, received a headache



and began to vomit...the next morning we feared and convinced one another to walk back to Hu's house.

Hu opens the door, and races into the inside; first thing she does when getting home is quickly open the fridge; she begins to eat whatever her eyes laid upon, she filled herself so much, that she begins to get sick, and lays down on the couch in the living room.

Cindy got something to eat as well...I sat in the living room looking at Hu with her partial swimsuit on. I question her in my mind, she was so strong to start, now as weak as a small child, how could this be?

I wanted to complain, but I no longer wanted to move, I no longer wanted to take off. I am going to get into a lot of trouble if I turn back now though. Hu fell asleep, and as I was deep in thought, Cindy welcomed herself by me on the chair, and began to strengthen, and comfort me.

I cannot do this, I cannot go back to Cindy's, I cannot leave Cindy, I must make this work with or without Hu!

"Cindy, do you trust me" I ask?

"Ya, sure, I always do" she replies.

"No, I mean do you trust me with your life," I say boldly.

"Yes" she says.

I grab her by the hand, and we run back to the spot we were before...before Hu convinced us to go back home, because of her illness. "Look, Hu is right about leading us into these woods, so right, I believe she will come back! I'm not leading her back out here, she will be back by herself, she expects us to be bold and to be self-governed...she has always expected me to be bold, that's the only reason I can spend time

with her, because I don't follow her, I put a demand on who she truly is," I say, upset with myself, that I doubted Hu, to not expect her to still be out here...she is out here" I say to Cindy!

Four days past, no sign of Hu; Cindy appears to be sick, but if I try to bring her back to Hu's house, she will insist she doesn't want to go back, and begins faking the amount of pain she is in, hiding who she is, and what she is going through, in order to have success with me, to be with me, so I endure her pain, as if I am in pain as well.

"One more week Cindy, one more week," I say.

My stomach is in pain, I cannot move, because nothing appears to move me; I have no interest in the forest, it seems to be purposely giving us a hard time, driving us out. "We will not leave," I say to the forest from time to time, pushing myself. That is the distance between, a life with Cindy, and obeying the killing force of the wild, I tell myself.

Cindy, on the twelfth day begins to go back, saying "my Father, he holds me to live, this, being out here will kill me!" I begin to walk back with her, trying to figure out how I can keep her. I 'm losing her, not as though I care now, part of me died in the forest, plus I'm to hungry...but deep within myself, I know that if I fail, I will be the slave to my Father's dream, and not to my own! I take courage and look up, I say, "I would rather die than to be a slave," to the cold environment we are in, "I am done with me!"

I give up within myself and give Cindy what I desired of her, the very reason why I wanted her, why I have been living with her: she is free, loving, respected and beautiful.

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I grab her in my arms and give her up, I put her far out of my mind, I block out what I wanted with her (to belong, to live as my Father and not under his house, to be part of my own.) Cindy now in my arms, I say "It is alright, but whatever happens, if we do go back, I want you to know, I still want you; I still need you."

She sees, (through the drive that I just gave her,) who she is...she is kind, mature, lovely and begins to re-live on the inside, finding purpose, much more than her Father gave her. "Wait, Brian, we can't go back, I need you to stay, you need to stay," Cindy says.

I no longer cared and began to retract what I have done, "Hu didn't come back" I say.

"Wait a little longer" Cindy says.

I did, I waited one more day, before I convinced Cindy that we needed to go back. As we begin to get up and walk back, tired, and quiet to one another, I hear, "Brian, hold on, wait for me!" I look behind me, and I see Hu in a swimsuit, the bottom half was covered with a skirt.

"Cindy, is that Hu behind me or am I seeing things" I ask?

"Hu," Cindy says, "what are you doing?"

"Following you, it's been about two weeks, you should wait one more day with me, to double make sure you can stick with, despite...for the cause of yours," Hu said.

I began to recall my strength, "Hu your right," I say and sat down, "what happened, where did you go" I ask?



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“Well, I had to check the bus route, we need a bus the day we come out of the forest, so that, we can escape all the chains the town puts on it’s residence, including the public’s will. If they will choose the public bus over the comfort they provide, we will be able to unchain ourselves from the town. The time

and day must be precise! Once I did that, I had to unchain our past relationship... I followed you and Cindy into the forest over a week ago, but I didn't let you know, I slept away from you," Hu explained.

"Wow, I didn't doubt you Hu, thank you, we can make it," I said and fell asleep.

"Just thinking about it, I forgot the tickets" Hu says! In her bathing suit on Monday morning, she runs back to her house. She hurries into her bedroom, "I lost them," she quietly says, as she searches her bedroom. "Where do I usually put the most important things..."

"I know! I know!" she says excitedly! "Under the keyboard, that is where I placed them along with the note I wrote to my Father. She looks and quietly says, "yes, they are here," and begins to laugh.

Hu stayed up all night, she knew I had no more strength to fight the forest...if she failed this night, she would fail. The next morning Hu was already up, "Brian! Brian! Get up...we have to leave now," Hu says.

I struggle to get up, I look over at Cindy and Cindy appears to be not moving. "Cindy are you up?" I pick her up and I begin to carry her under the arm until she strengthens herself. We limp to the bus stop; from there we wait for the bus. Hu had mentioned to us that we should not eat until we get on the bus, otherwise the food might slow us down, perhaps even cause us to turn back, and so we listened.

Finally, the bus shows up, and we board. "We made it," I say as I look at Hu sitting down on one of the comfy, soft, blue covered seats on the bus.

“Cindy your backpack...it’s out there on the bench,” Hu said.

Cindy looks at me and says, “my life is in that bag, plus, it has the Five Thousand dollars I stole from my Father!”

I hurry off the bus and grab the bag; now worried, I walk back toward the bus...as I approach, fearing either getting caught or turning back. I stop



suddenly as I was looking down, I saw a boot...someone stuffed their boot right in front of me. I look up; it was Cindy's Father...

He looks at me, I look back and begin hoping for pity. We stare at one another for a few seconds, he breathes out his nostrils, similar to that of a bull, and to my surprise he turns his back and walks in the other direction...I hurry on the bus; thank goodness Clint ignored it all, and that the bus began to pull out of the bus station, before Clint changed his mind, "I think I have made it" I say quietly to myself.

Shortly the bus gets on the highway and begins its long journey to Florida.

"We've made it" Hu says, and we begin to comfort ourselves.

"Thank you, Brian," Cindy says, grabbing the purple bag out of my hand.

"Did you see..." I stop in the middle of the sentence, she must not of.

"What, Brian," Cindy asks?

"Nothing," I reply..." I think we are going to make it!"

I quietly consider, Cindy is sort of mine now...my future wife! I think that was Clint's permission to take the risk...Clint, what a good man, I am going to need him one day, I say to myself and begin to laugh...

7

Playing on the Streets

Yes, we're here, we are in Florida," I say, as the bus arrives in Florida, the bus pulls into a small, quiet, pleasant, little bus stop. I hear the breaks sound as the bus comes to a stop, I look around and notice giant palm trees everywhere; full of excitement I say, "Cindy, look there are palm trees everywhere, sort of like what we see on TV!"

Hu, Cindy, and I grab the little that we have and walk off the bus.

"We have made it," I say happily, and begin to look around and get familiar with our surroundings.

Hu asks, "Now, where do we go?"

"We just guess," I say, "whatever looks safer, just pick a direction and start walking, but try to avoid houses, if we



come across to many houses we will not find a place to camp or take authority over...our space.” Hu decides to walk toward the Ocean, she felt safer by the Ocean, we follow along. As we walk, we pass by a few big buildings. For two miles we continue to walk toward the Ocean, I notice the atmosphere is warm, something in the air seemed as to say to us, the forest is safe, it is dry—like home; I still had to wonder though, what about snakes, I hate snakes. After walking the two miles, we arrive at the Ocean, some tall grass stood between us and a whole lot of white sand; we ignore any paths that might have led us to the Ocean and walk straight through the grass, strongly attracted to the bed of white sand.

“I’m tired” Hu says, while sitting down on the white sand.

I follow and sit down. I look at Hu and say, “We made it, that old town did not hold us back!”

“Yes, we did, I was right, but now I am seriously wondering where we’re going to go from here though,” Hu said.

Cindy says, “I know what we can do, I’ve seen stuff like this on TV, we find other people, exploring like us, until we get the full scope on our possible options, the options that we may have, while on the streets.”

Hu says, “that sounds good, how about a bridge, bridges can house travelers who don’t have a lot of money.”

“OK, I saw a bridge, two streets up, to the left,” I said.

Hu begins to get up, and in doing so, says, “well, we should hurry—over there, it will be dark soon, and I’m now, not that sure what we are going to do.”

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...We walk over to the bridge, we notice children sleeping under the bridge, appearing not to have parents, perhaps they were their own parents...I am not sure. A few pigeons fly by, as we begin to panic a little, what are we really going to do, this obviously is not the dreamlife I had in mind.

Cindy looks at me with a look of despair; I sort of begin to regret my leadership, and begin to cover it up on the inside and make an excuse to myself, in hope to win the ultimate prize...Wealth and Honor.

Once the darkness of the bridge begins to ruin all hope, and its deep unbearable depression begins to set in, a light shines into the darkness: a man driving a pickup truck, drives down the street we were on, the one under the bridge. "Hey, are you three looking for work?" The man driving the pickup truck asks.

We huddled in a circle and considered the man in the pickup truck, "We could do that," I say.

"Yes, we could," Hu says.



“What else are we going to do,” Cindy added.

We turn back toward the truck and I say, “yes we want work. We just arrived here from Massachusetts, what would you like us to do, and how much are you paying” I ask?

“Hi, my name is Ga,” the man in the truck said, “I usually come down here looking for others...to place them in a network of businesses I own. We nod our heads to indicate we were listening. “I have a car wash not too far from here, there is a small shack attached...for your sleeping comfort...that is the pay, the sleeping spot; it’s better than the bridge...plus from time to time I will bring you and your friends some food” Ga says.

“Ya we will do it,” I say, not considering the job, I just knew we needed a place to sleep. I did not really consider he would not be paying; he possibly was not even going to pay for food, I was just so eager to find a way, hoping we would not have to call home and ask for help.

“Throw your stuff in the back and get on in,” Ga says. We do, and he begins to drive us to the car wash...within five minutes he pulls into a parking lot, a small store sits to the left. “Well, here it is, there is a TV inside the tent, it’s got Cable, you can watch TV all day if you like,” the man says to inspire our youth, and continues speaking, “you know, like I said, I’ll bring you some food from time to time, and all you have to do is, basically watch the place; once and a while a car will come through and need a good wash, but the whole business is basically for an attraction, to draw customers to stop at the store next door, and get some snacks and gas,” Ga explains.

"I think we can do it," I say. He drops us off, respecting, trusting, and expects us to know and run the entire car wash. We grab our belongings and walk up to the tent; I watch Cindy as she sits down in front of the TV; she picks up the remote controller and begins to flip through the channels.

"What do you think Hu" I ask?

"I'm not sure, I've never had this happen," Hu explains.

We stayed there for a couple of days, the whole thing was sort of odd, a whole tent, for us...sheltering us from the elements, a TV, and a place to sleep; is this legal? Ga must have made this for a homeless man or woman to babysit. Every now and again Ga would bring us food: a cheeseburger or a pizza.

On the third day we decided to leave, we would be at risk, but there was no way that car wash would supply the lifestyle we needed or wanted, but it did give us shelter for a moment. Before Ga came to check, early in the morning we left; we left early, so that we would have the entire day to look for a new spot. Leaving, we felt, as if the car wash could have trapped us in poverty...we struggled while leaving...

"We are strong," I say, as we walk down a dark road in Florida, searching for a new spot, cautiously acting, hoping not to ruin our dreams of the future.

Within a few hours of walking, and moving away from people, hoping to not find someone who would take advantage of us, I ask, "What if we find some plastic and make a tent in the woods?"

"You mean here" Cindy asks?

“Yes, over there to our left,” I answer—pointing to the forest.

Hu agreed, “let’s go in there and take a break from walking and investigate our surroundings!”

After a while, Hu notices this would make a nice camping spot, “This is good, it’s far away from others, no one will come and bother us,” Hu says.

“This looks good, we could find work, while sheltering in this spot,” Cindy added.

“OK, let’s look for some trash that might be lying around, perhaps someone’s valuables fell out of the back of their truck, we can use the trash to make our tent out of it” I say. Dawns light lit up the forest as we walk around looking for things to make a shelter with. Not too far from where we were (the car wash,) we make a temporary living situation...we found a giant piece of a plastic, a blue tarp, it must have fallen out of someone’s truck, as they drove by. We scrambled to find other things we can use to make our temporary home out of. Each thing we find...we bring it back to our camp site...we find some good stuff... We bring it all back to our spot in the woods. “This should be as good as the car wash: we can use the plastic to shelter us from the elements, the wood to sleep on, the empty bags to keep us and the spot clean, and we can use the rope to hold it all in place” I say.

We begin to create our shelter, and once we were done, it looked wonderful...to top it all off, Cindy found part of an old broken mirror, which she placed on the branch of a small tree, so that we could keep clean. She said, “we still have to be clean, if we want to find work, housing, a social life, etc.”

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“Now that we’re done, what are we going to eat”
Hu asks?

“My Dad told me, that most food businesses do not mind if we were to ask for the food, food that they are about to throw out; for example: a pizza place...say at the end of the night, we ask if we can have a pizza, most of the time they do not mind it,”
Cindy said.

“I’ve seen my Dad do that at a pizza place, and they gave him a free pizza—that they were about to throw out, perhaps it could work at a Pizza restaurant here,” Hu added.

“What we will do is: tonight, before some of the stores close in the nearby towns, we ask them for free food, food that they cannot keep until tomorrow, because it will go bad. We can split up...making the most of closing time” I say.

We talked most of the day as usual, that was our fun! ...Once night began to approach, we hurried into the town... Cindy went to the gas station; Hu went to the Pizza restaurant, and I went to the Grocery store.

We each, before the store was about to close, explained our situation, which was: we recently moved here, and are struggling to maintain our existence, could you please help.

It worked!

The man who owned the convenient store, gave Cindy doughnuts that he was about to throw out, because they would have spoiled, if he had tried to save them for the next day. Hu received two Pizzas, that the Pizza Man was going to throw out, because they were part of a canceled order; he could not save a cooked Pizza for more than a few hours. The man I spoke with at the Grocery store gave me a bunch of fruit! ... "Most Grocery stores have plenty of fruit to throw out," the Manager said. Once we accomplished our mission, the three of us met back up in the spot we had left one another.

"Wow, that was awesome," Cindy says.

"That truly works," Hu added, as we all go over the items received from those we asked.

"Good, this is food for us for the next few days, this will give us time to find work, care items, and possibly a social existence" I say. We hurry back to our shelter before it gets too dark; once there we settle down and we eat until we are satisfied.

"That was a good idea" Hu says! Not long after each of us fell asleep.



In the morning we had the entire day to accomplish what was needed to survive our Adulthood. To get a fresh start I say, "Last night I walked by a job offer, this advertisement said, Day Workers Wanted."

"Well, let's go there and talk to them, maybe we can get jobs" Hu says.

"I should go by myself; it would look more professional, I mean, you might not want to work there, it's dirty work" I say.

"OK, your possibly right.... Cindy and I will wait here, hopefully you will find work and earn money," Hu says.

"I'm leaving...wait here, I will be back," I say, and immediately cleaned up, put on my best face, and began to walk into town. Day workers...a big sign said in red letters, upon entering the parking lot of my possible future employer. I walk in and greet the man at the counter. At some point in our conversation, I asked if he had work for pay.

He said, "Yes, fill this out," while handing me some paperwork.

I began filling it out, anxiously hoping for fifty dollars at the end of the day; quickly I fill it out, and

hand it to the man. The man behind the counter says, "a vehicle will be leaving, in fifteen minutes, wait here."

I sat down and began to wait. "Yes, I have a job; hopefully, the job they give, is not beyond me, or something hard to do, like being up high, I do not like heights." A man walks into Day Workers, looks at me, and then looks at the Boss, and says, "is this him?"

"Yes," the Boss replies.

He greets me and tells me my job description; I would be working as the security for the job site that day...I was to make sure there wasn't any intruders on the property, the property these men were building on. This is an easy job, I told myself.

At the end of the day, which was at four o' clock, I was driven back to where I was picked up; I anxiously ran back to my shelter...looking for Cindy and Hu, to tell them I made fifty dollars. "Hello, Cindy, Hu?" I say, as I walk upon the camp.

"Ya, we're over here," Cindy says.

"I made fifty dollars" I say, full of excitement.

"Awesome," Cindy says.

"I am hungry, let me get some pizza," I say, looking at Hu.

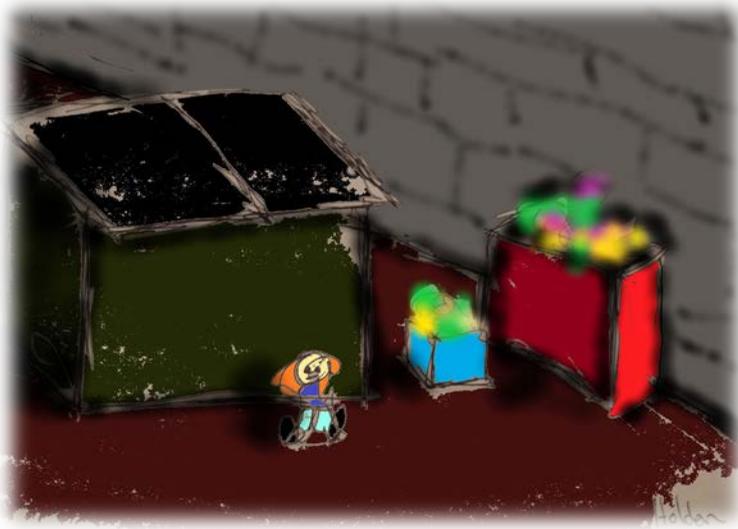
Hu passed me the box of Pizza, I open the box and select a slice of Pizza and began to eat. "What we could do next is: walk into the town, and use the money as security—to pretend we have more, that we have purpose, all the while looking for stuff/items to cover up our situation, to propel us forward into a wealthy life style," I said, while chewing on a chunk of pizza.

"OK, let's do that," Cindy answered.

I finish eating and we begin the one and a half hour walk into the town. I knew we needed a sense of a social environment, so I advised the Mall...to hang out, and even look for free items that could assist us in our future mission, as independent adults, with a wealthy-lifestyle, and a family life.

Cindy found, sample hygiene products, I found the social empathy the Mall offered, and Hu was comforted by the night lights. We stayed at the Mall until dusk. As night approached, we decided to see what else was in the town; we walk over to a thrift shop. Playing around the property of the thrift shop, we stumble behind it, and noticed a lot of Toys, and objects that were being thrown out. "Look here, a doll, I want it...I'm taking it" Cindy says.

"I am taking these pens," I say, while grabbing them out of a giant green box behind the thrift shop. Hu found a bunch of candy-bars and she took all of them, we could not have been happier.



*

I continued working at Day Workers for weeks; periodically the job would change or the place of work would change, for example, instead of a security worker, I would do gardening; I made close to a thousand dollars in a few weeks...I was happy, but Hu and Cindy got tired of being in the woods— at our shelter, without work; they wanted a better life. One morning, we took the city-bus into the city, to explore the city for fun...plus Cindy and Hu wanted a job while growing into the person they wanted to be. We go to a place that a passerby said, was a busy part of town, a lot of fun, and a lot of money being made; we explore, we walk up one street, down another, and we do some window shopping. “This is so cool, it’s so lit up, there are so many things we can do here,” I said.

“Yes, there is. While we are here, we should go into the restaurant,” Hu says, pointing to the left.

“Which one, the Chinese Restaurant” I ask?

“Yes, maybe they will give me a job waiting tables...Cindy if you want to, you could come too. That way, while Brian’s working, we will have something to do, we can make money” Hu says.

Cindy said, “that sounds like a great idea!”.

“OK, I am hungry, so if we’re going into the restaurant, we should order some food, it looks more professional, plus it works well with my stomach,” I said as we begin to cross the street.

As we walk in, Cindy says, “This is a nice place,” she begins to look at the paintings on the walls,

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paintings of cliffs and of Mountains; we walk by a fountain displayed by the checkout counter—as we find a seat, we find a booth, which was lit by a lantern overhead.

“This is nice...” I say, agreeing with Cindy. We order food; as we order, Hu explains to the waitress: we are new to the City and it would help her and her friend out, if they could work there, waiting tables. They would not have to pay a lot, and employ us for an exceptionally long time, just for a little while...until they both found a solid, good direction in Florida. The waitress told that to the owner and he gladly welcomed them to be part of the team of waitresses.

We did not go back to the shelter that night, we hung around the streets all night; we played at bus stops, the parking lots of the Night Clubs, and once morning came, I took the bus to my Job, to Day Workers, while Cindy and Hu began to wait tables.

They mentioned that morning, that they would meet me back at our Camp after work. After some time, the workday ended, and as we talked about, we met back up at our Camp; we talked late in the night, tired from a hard day of work, we fall asleep,

Weeks after...Hu and Cindy together made two thousand dollars, and I made One thousand dollars...we had money to spend! "Yes," and we spent it. We spent it at the Movie theater, Night-Clubs, and clothing stores. Some nights we would get a Motel room in the City, for fun, bathing, and better sleep. With so much money coming in, we had to think of things we could do with it, and with each other. Cindy thought we should meet some new people, to hear of fun and other things that we could do in the City, so we went out creating conversations with others.

We went to a Man, and started up a conversation; the Man we met, was a Male-Prostitute, he explained, and showed us his ways of getting around the city; we also met a man who had just gotten out of prison, he was looking to get even, and make a better lifestyle than the previous one he had. It appeared as if these people were having a semi-good time; the climate was warm, they had things they could do. Some of the people we met influenced us for good, and we began to do fun things...we spent a lot of money!

Cindy bought a lot of expensive clothes, she loved looking her best at the restaurant she worked at. Hu, loved buying anything sugar; I was similar to Hu, I always had a soda, and I bought a lot of party foods: Nachos, popcorn, chips, and hot dogs...every day I would spend twenty to thirty dollars on this type of

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stuff. We figured we are young, and we previously always had someone telling us, which way things went, so now we are liberated, why not get a bit wild. I told myself I would never regret those moments.

One day after work, I took the bus into the City. Hu and Cindy had been at work. That morning, I told them I would meet them after they got out of work, we could spend the night at the Ocean, at the beach. Once I found them at the restaurant, walking out, signifying the end of their day, I met up with them, and we began to walk to the Ocean...Cindy notices a small local shop, and bought a blanket on the way to the Ocean. Once at the Ocean Cindy lays down the blanket she bought, and we sit down on the blanket and begin to watch the sun set.

"We're doing well," I said.

"Better than well...we are like our parents," Hu said.

“These got to be some of the best moments in life,”
Cindy added.

8 Street Problems

In Florida, Hu, Cindy and I never had to worry about cold days...it rarely gets cold in Florida, as a matter of fact, if I could be so bold as to say, it doesn't snow in Florida. The only problem that I noticed surviving adult hood, independently, in Florida, was surviving socially; in other words, we as people, make our existence so much harder than it is...I think that's because we desire something so much better for our future.

For Hu, Cindy and I, there wasn't another survival need; if we wanted food, well...the forest gives food and so does the streets; if we needed shelter, we didn't need a shelter because the weather would not kill us, actually, even if it rained, it offered something, it did not take something, it offered us clean bodies.

We make our social reality so much harder. Me, Hu, and Cindy's problem is, we were not the leader of the problem, we were not the first ones' there, we have to follow the ultimate trouble makers, and that is the Authorities, (i.e. the police) to become established, and to live socially!

...So, socially, we never told our friends that we met in Florida, and we never told anyone at our place of work, that we were sleeping in the forest; socially we concluded it would have made us look unfit as independent adults, as if we purposely took an easier

way, so when it began to leak out into public places, we began to fear for our future lives, as well as for our reputation.

The day we became aware of the leak, was the final day we spent at our camp. An incident took place when a person who owned the land next to the spot we were camping out on, told the local authorities, that there might be a homeless camp next to his property, he wanted it removed for the future prosperity of the town, the town we were staying in.

As most Society's go, the Police had to drive us out of there...thank goodness we were not around at the time when they showed up; they showed up the previous night from the time we became aware that they were around. That night after they had been there, we are going home for the night, and we find some of our possessions disturbed, and a note from



the Police department asking us to get off the property. We did not have all that much on the property, except Cindy did collect quite a few sets of clothes.

We did not have another home to go to, because of our habit of spending too much money, we spent money daily, we never managed to save a couple thousand dollars to rent an apartment, nor did we want to, we were having so much fun on the streets. "Hmm, where do you think we should go?" I ask the others.

"Well, we most likely can't stay in this town, because if we do, and the people see us, specially the police, they will ask us where are we living; we can't lie to the people, that would be extremely bad. What we could do is: we could go to the city, around the place Cindy and I work; we can take naps at the bus station and other places until we find either a better way to make money or save money, so that we can rent an apartment," Hu explained.

"That's what we're going to have to do, because we haven't another option," I said. We hurried with the little possessions we could take and hopped on the bus and went to the city.

First night on the streets was harsh, but once we adjust it could get better, I told myself. But the second night was worse. Cindy fell asleep at work; I also fell asleep at work, I felt ill from the lack of sleep. "I don't think this is going to be OK," I said one day when we all met up after work.

"OK, but keep in mind I love my job, I really want to stay, so I think we should do something, like what we were doing. There is the Ocean, like a mile down

that way,” Hu said, pointing to the west, we should go and explore and look for a place to camp!”

“I like that, that’s a good idea” I said. ...One half of an hour later we were walking along side of the Ocean; small patches of forest growth were spaced out along the Ocean beaches.

“Look down there,” Hu said pointing to a small patch of jungle growth.

We walk in hoping not to get bit by a snake or spider.

“Look right there,” Hu says, pointing to a small clearing underneath four palm trees, “what if we bought a tent and set it up right there, we could get a padlock and stuff, and there we will make our home.”

“Good idea,” I said. ...We immediately went to the nearest hardware store and bought a three man tent,



we rush back to our spot and set it up, "OK, that will do well, now I must be off to work," Hu said.

While Cindy and Hu went to wait tables at the restaurant, I went walking around. What to do on my day off? I know! ...I will walk into the part of the city with the big buildings, the buildings that are twenty to thirty stories high.

A few hours later and I am right in the heart of the city, I began exploring...People in some places were living on the streets, they had tents set out on the sidewalks, as well as people with blankets, making beds on the sidewalk; small gas stoves were being used for cooking. What a strange place I consider, as I explore the streets; I wonder why these people do not live in the giant buildings.

I walk around all day eagerly waiting for Cindy and Hu to get out from work; I rush back to the tent, "Brian," I hear Cindy say as I enter the Jungle.

"Ya, it's me...you would never believe what I saw when I was downtown...people were living on the sidewalk...they were living there! I do not want to do that. We should do better than that," I said as I walk toward Cindy and Hu.

"Exactly Brian, you should come up with a better plan," Cindy said. "Ok, well, let's take it easy now and later, hopefully, something really good will come our way," I said. We all agreed to freely be, to spend our money however we wanted too. One week, two weeks, three weeks went by, everything was fine, until one day I was coming back from work and a Police Officer was at my tent, "Hi is this your tent?" the Police officer asked.

“Yes, it is. I could not find a good camping spot, so I just pitched tent wherever I could,” I answered.

“OK, well this isn’t a good one, I need you out of here today, like right now,” the Police Officer said with authority.

“OK, I will move out right now,” I answered.

The Police Officer left, and I began to wonder if I should move it out right then, or if I should wait for the girls to come back. I know what I will do, I will take down the tent and hide it, and our possessions in a safe location, then I will wait for them to walk to the camp, the spot we were sleeping in; I’ll catch them while they’re still on the road.

I quickly tore down the tent and brought it up the road a way, plus I made several other trips until all was hidden.

Around four o’ clock in the evening Cindy and Hu, as expected came walking down the road they had been walking down for the past couple of weeks. “Hey, you two,” I said loudly stopping them, “A Police Officer told me that we have to move out of our spot in the forest, I’ve placed our stuff just down the road...incase the Cop comes back...I didn’t want to find trouble, now what should we do?”

“I don’t know,” Hu says and begins to think deep, “I have heard of Adults in similar situations and most of the time they either get into trouble or stay on the streets,” Hu says.

“That’s what must have happened to all of the people I saw the other day while in the heart of the city; people were camped out on the sidewalk, cooking, and making their entire life on the sidewalk,” I said.

"This isn't good," Cindy added.

"I'm done with work, I am tired, really tired," Hu said.

"Me too," Cindy said while looking at Hu.

"Maybe we should use our money and go to a different place, like, say New York, NY. A lot of people have gone there and have made it big in New York. It's like money is attracted to them," I said.

"That might be a good idea, how much money do you have, Cindy" Hu asks?

"Eight hundred dollars," Cindy answered.

"And you Brian" Hu asks?

"Twelve hundred!" I said.

"Well, I have nine hundred, we could take a bus...if not to New York, then somewhere, this place is going to eat us, specially if the Police did not find us a living situation," Hu said.

"Exactly," I said, "when should we leave...I want to go to New York, NY...it's closer to home, this place is giving me a strange feeling, you would feel it too if you saw what I saw downtown.

"I feel it Brian...I agree" Hu said, lets take what we can, out of our possessions. and leave right now."

"Oh good," Cindy says, "I could use home right now!"

We hurry to the spot I hid our stuff, and we grab very few items, "Now we just walk to the same spot where we arrived...the bus station, and buy our tickets," I said.

A couple hours later we arrive at the bus stop, "Hi can we buy three bus tickets to New York, NY.," Hu asks the Woman behind the window at the bus stop.

“That will cost you three hundred dollars one way, the bus leaves in the morning,” the Woman at the bus station said. Hu pulls out three hundred dollars out of her pocket, hands it to the Woman and says, “here, exactly three hundred dollars.” The woman behind the window quickly prints out three tickets, and hands them to Hu and says, “three tickets to New York, NY. Hu hands each of us a ticket, and we walk to the bus stations waiting room and begin the long wait until morning.

Around eight o’ clock that night, I was having a really hard time waiting, “how about we walk to the store and buy some fun stuff: soda, candy and food...fun stuff, it will help us with the very long wait,” I said.

Cindy wanting to go, said, “Ya, lets do that.” We grab our bags and walk to the gas station located a block down the street. I open the glass door to the store; taking in the smell of fresh coffee, I look back



at Cindy and say, "I love these type places." We spend close to an hour in the store looking through the items for sale, not like we were going to buy a lot, but we were tired of being at the bus station.

After a while we could tell we overstayed our welcome inside the gas station and took our play to the streets...talking and sharing our excitement, we spend the night on the side of the gas station, every now and again I would fill up on a sweet, extremely sweet Cappuccino. The dark mildly wet road was so inviting, watching the cars pass by or pull into the gas station...once and a while we would start a conversation with those entering the store. ...Finally, after an exciting night, morning came, and we hurried back to the bus station.

"Good the bus is still here," I said. We approach the bus; we walk up the stairs and find our seat and prepare our minds for the long trip to New York.

About Four days we were on the bus before we arrived in New York. Full of relief, and glad our long trip was ending, I said, "Good, we're pulling into the bus station right now!"

Cindy looks out the window, and says, "that is a huge bus station!"

We drive around for a while on the lower level, under the bus station, looking for parking, we find a spot and park, we hear, "you may exit, please watch your step while exiting the bus," we grab our small bags and quickly leave the bus.

"Wow this place is wonderful, Cindy says, "it's got food in here and little shops, it's like a giant hotel for buses." We walk around, smelling the fried foods of the bus station. We manage to find our way to the



upper level of the building, and see an exit sign, and walk outside.

“Oh, wow, this is amazing,” I said looking around, full of excitement, noticing people everywhere, they seemed to walk as if they were in a Movie or a theater show.

“Where are we going to go from here,” Hu says as she investigates her surroundings.

“I can’t believe this Brian, this place is full of buildings and people,” Cindy says. We walk by a huge Soda sign, some Broadway signs and after some time we reach a small forest, but there were still buildings everywhere.

“Maybe we can stay in the forest,” I say.

“It won’t hurt to try,” Hu says, and we began to walk into the forest park.

“Now that we are here, we should make a plan. Like, where do we work” Cindy says.

“We should become models or make Movies or something,” I said.

“How are we to do that,” Hu asked.

“We look in the newspaper, if it says Models Wanted or Actors Wanted, we show up at the location the newspaper describes, “We will look tomorrow,” I said.

“OK,” the girls said. We slept in the park, all seemed to be well, and we woke up the next morning ready for action.

“Lets go to the restaurant at the bus station,” Hu says, “I can still smell the pizza we passed by yesterday.”

“Good idea,” Cindy says. We hurry there, we find a seat and buy the most expensive pizza that we ever bought...one hundred dollars for the pizza, for a pizza we could easily eat, “there must be something else included in this pizza,” I say, while stuffing a piece into my mouth.

“I think there is, that’s why Hu could not get it out of her mind, you’re paying for a memory, an experience,” Cindy said.

“Your probably right,” Hu said.

As we were eating, I notice a vendor selling newspapers, I look at Cindy and then at Hu and say, “I’m going to get a paper, I will be right back.” I hop out of my seat and go toward the tiny shop; I look at which paper would best fit what I was looking for...a job. I pick up the NY Dime and ask the cashier if this paper is the local paper. “Yes, that’s the Local One,” the Cashier answers.

I buy it and quickly bring it over to the table I was at; I sit down and begin to flip through its pages, moving toward the wanted section. “Here it says,” I say while pointing at a page in the paper, “looking for



Models, apply in person...paper street and sixth avenue,” I read out loud.

“We should go there right after we’re done eating,” Cindy says.

“Well, I’m done,” Hu says, “We can leave right now.” We throw out our trash and walk with the paper in my hand; we walk to the modeling agency. It was only a half of an hour walk, but we had a hard time finding paper street, so for us it took two hours of our time.

“563, that’s the address,” Cindy says pointing to a thirty-story building.

We walk through the rotating doors and began to look at the signs directing us where we go... MODELING, a sign says pointing us straight down the hallway. A stained wood room welcomed us on the other side...I look at the woman at the desk, “Hello,” I say, “we’re here to apply for the modeling job.”



“Have a seat, someone will be with you shortly,” the woman said. We sit down and quickly and surprisingly, a man enters the room, “what can I help you with,” the man says.

“We want to apply for the modeling job...I found it in the paper,” I said while

holding up the newspaper.

“Ok come with me, we will take a couple of pictures and call you when we need you,” the agent says. Ten pictures later we were back on the street, I say to Hu and Cindy, “I gave him a fake phone number, I was too embarrassed to tell him we were sleeping in the park.”

“That’s OK, we will check in with him from time to time or we will buy a cell phone,” Hu says.

“I’m not so sure we’re going to get that job,” Cindy says.

“We can do some other stuff, this is a huge city, there must be work everywhere, how about we do some exploring,” I ask.

“Sounds great! I just saw a hole in a fence, lets cross into the unknown, besides this city is too busy, there is not a place to play, Hu said.

“Oh, you lead the way,” I said.



We find the hole in the fence and find ourselves in an old abandoned subway. People appeared to have been sleeping down there at some point, we got scared, so we went back to the park, to our sleeping spot. Night quickly approached and we began to get sleepy and we fell asleep. Late in the night we were awoken, by a sound, by the sound of a man's voice, "What are you doing here" A man barks, his flashlight was blinding our eyes...so much so, we could not see who had asked.

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"I am a park manager, your not allowed to be in here after hours," the man says.

"We're sorry," Hu says, "we must have lost track of time."

"Well, in that case I will not ticket you, but you must leave and don't do it again," the park manager says. We quickly leave the area and find a lit-up part of the city, "What are we to do now" Cindy asks?

"This could ruin our lives," Hu added.

"It will be alright, we can find another way, it's the streets, it's the problem with the streets," I said.

9
Home?

We spend a few days at the bus station in New York, NY. ...pretending we were waiting for a bus. We attempt to discuss what we should do, but we do not want to admit it to one another, but we screwed up, we failed when we were in Florida; what we should have done, is pay rent on an apartment. I decide to open a conversation, "We should have rented an apartment when we had the money" I said.

Hu, to defend our doings said, "that might have not worked, besides, should we really give most of what we make in money for an apartment?"

"This is not as easy as I thought it would be," I say discouraged, "what are your thoughts Cindy, any regrets?"

"I'm happy to be with you Brian, plus I think I am pregnant" Cindy says.

"Are you sure" I ask? I was not sure she knew; she did not sound sure or as if I could believe her; Hu thought she was just talking.

"Yes," she replies.

I panic a little, how am I going to make this work; I thought making money could have been a bit easier, but to my surprise it wasn't, and each day that goes by we get closer to poverty and permanently living on the streets; winter will be here shortly and Cindy will not survive on the streets.

Hu, attempting to make a plan says, "Let us count our money, perhaps we have a few hundred dollars. If we do, we can buy tickets to Virginia. But once we get to Virginia, I am not sure what we are going to do, like for work."

"OK, we ask the person who sells bus tickets to sell us tickets to the least populated area, once there, we hurry to find work, we find an apartment, we rent an apartment and I get promoted," I answer.

"OK, I have one hundred fifty dollars," Hu says.

"And I have one hundred," Cindy says.

"And I have ninety, that should be enough" I say. Cindy and I hand Hu our money, hinting to her to purchase the tickets; she slowly gets up, and we watch her walk toward the ticket window. We watch her for five minutes talk to the Lady at the desk, Hu gets handed the tickets; with the tickets in her hand she walks toward us. Once she is close enough to us, she hands us each a ticket. "The bus leaves in two hours," Hu says. We hurry to gather our stuff and meet the bus in the lower level of the bus station.

"Good the bus is still here," I say.

"Let's get on," Hu says, we find a nice comfy spot on one of the blue covered seats and wait for the bus to take us to warmer weather.

Virginia is not that far away from New York; it is about a nine-hour drive.

That day our feet were standing in Virginia.

Once we arrived, we did the same thing as we did when we got to Florida for the first time. Hu picks a direction, a direction that makes her feel safe. She begins to lead us down some dirt roads, located in the town, the stores were still in walking distance. She

leads us into the woods, and beyond some railroad tracks. "This looks like a good spot for the night," Hu said.

"OK, you two stay here, I am going to search throughout the night and into the day for some money, I will meet you back

here tomorrow night," I say, and begin walking into the busy part of town. I did not want to let Cindy know what I planned on doing, but I knew I had to make this work. If I can come up with a thousand dollars, we can get an apartment...I have to make this work; I don't want to fail, I don't want to have to call home for help...plus if Cindy is pregnant, I'm not so sure what her Father will do! I quickly find a good location at a store, I planned on asking others for money, telling them my wife is pregnant, we need the money. I stand by the entrance door of the store, a person walks over, "could you spare some change, my wife is pregnant and is about to have a baby" I ask.



The person looks the other way and walked into the store; I asked another person and another, I get the same result...at some point while at the store, the manager comes out and had a talk with me...he was extremely mean! I move out to the next spot, a nice twenty four hour store, I did the same thing, I stand at the entrance door, "Can you spare some change, my wife, she is about to have a baby," I say.

"You should have thought of that a long time ago," the person says.



Late in the night once the people had stopped visiting the store, I decide to go inside and warm myself.A man was in the store, he was standing next to the coolers, he notices me. As I walk into the store and I pretend to look at the items for sale, I begin to

get uncomfortable, so I walk back out...the man in the store, noticed.

The man by the coolers had noticed I didn't buy anything and was upset; forcefully he swings open the front entrance door, he turns to me and moves to

drive me out of the location by saying, “ next time you come in the store, you ought to buy something!” I sort of was intimidated, I took it as if it could be his location, his territory, and he did not want others to take out of it.

I left in a hurry, and began to walk through the busy part of town, looking for a sign that says, Now Hiring; I knew asking others for money would have worked, but it was too embarrassing, the people stepped all over my self-esteem.

Morning came quickly, good for me, now I can ask if a place is hiring, that is if I get suspicious it is hiring. I walked all day, I find nothing, but periodically if I saw someone who I thought could give some money, who would not damage my esteem, I would ask. All together I received eighty dollars, but I did not find a job, and I made it nowhere near the one thousand I expected.

I cannot ask people for their money anymore; they take too much out of my self-esteem. I walk back to the place Hu brought us to, to the place I told the girls...I would meet them at the end of the day.

“Brian, you’re back” Cindy says, “I’ve missed you all day.” I walk up to her and give her a kiss. I open a grocery bag of food I just had bought with the eighty dollars I had made. “It’s still warm, thank you Brian,” Cindy says.

That made me feel good; I felt like I did something wonderful, like, I took care of my wife...what needed to be taken care of. I did not want to admit it to her, in fact I just wanted made a good show, and comfort her, so I made it appear as if everything was alright!

... But I have not really gotten any closer to getting an apartment.

"Did you find work" Cindy asks.

"Well, sort of, no...no I didn't" I said, once she forced out the situation.

"That's ok," Cindy said, "Hu and I picked up the paper and it advertised a phone number...for a traveling amusement park, we called the number..."

I was eager to hear what had happened, "That could be fun! What happened" I ask.

"Well, we called the number and asked if we were to work there, was there a place for us to sleep when we got tired, they said, 'you each will make three hundred a week, plus you three will sleep in a trailer; the trailers are small, but that shouldn't matter, because you will be working most of the time.' I said, how do we join? The Amusement park said, 'We will come pick you up in our vehicle...that's if you want the job.' Yes, I want the job, I said. They, the amusement park gave me the directions to where they will pick us up tomorrow" Cindy explained.

"They are going to pick us up tomorrow...OK, what time" I ask.

"Nine o'clock" Cindy said.

"Well, that's great Cindy, because I did not find much today, just a few people willing to share their money" I admittedly said.

Morning came quickly and we rush to meet our ride. "What time were they to be here," I ask to assure myself we did not miss the ride.

"Nine o'clock," Cindy said, "that is them right there, Cindy says pointing to the van pulling into the parking lot.

“If you want the job, hop on in,” the van driver says, as he pulls up. We hurry into the van. He takes us on an hour journey to the show; once we got there, he showed us the show, and the trailer that we would be sleeping in. He gave us each three hundred dollars as a down payment, to sure himself that he had three new workers. He quickly explained that I would be working on the rides: putting up and taking down the amusement park rides—in between shows.

Cindy and Hu would each run a game; the games were in small trailers, grabbing customers attention, by enticing them to play...playing for a prize, that’s how the game made money, by luring and tricking people with fancy words and attractions, but little did the customer know...they only had a thirty percent chance of winning.

Most of the money the Games made, would go to Cindy and Hu, because they sort of had to pay rent on the trailer as if they owned the games. The amusement park received ten percent of what the two girls made; and that’s how the Game employees were worked, they were their own boss, if they made money that was great, and if they didn’t, they would still have a job, but no money. The man told us the three hundred was ours, to buy whatever we needed for the week. With the three hundred dollars he gave each of us, we satisfied our livelihood. We were to start work tomorrow!

Early in the morning someone knocks on the wall of our trailer, “time to get up, we got to go to work,” the Man knocking said. We get up and walk to our stations and begin our first day—full of possibilities! My job for that day was cleaning and feeding grease



to the machines, as well as making sure everything was safe. Although I did not know much about the job, the amusement park believed, fresh eyes inspecting the machines, would be able to spot danger better! For the first two weeks, we would hope for the best. The job worked us twelve to twenty hours a day, and after a while Cindy and Hu got tired.

I ignored the strain of working a lot of hours...I loved my job and attempted to find a way to own the entire show. I figured it was as good and at the level of social status my Dad was on.... Cindy and I could live at a traveling amusement park, as Adults...I always wanted one. I told myself, I will buy this show one day! The only way I could at that moment, find a way to buy the show was to work for them and slowly save the money, but that will never work I told myself...I have to find a way, a way for my future family.

Cindy got more and more tired as time went on, insisting she was pregnant, and this was not a place to have a baby; I noticed in part she could be speaking truth, but mostly I was having so much fun: all the children, fried foods, games...all day, at the amusement park! In my mind it could not get better, I have a great life, until I hear Cindy disagree. I had to wonder, was she pregnant, what was she trying to say? I wonder if my good time traveling with the amusement park is not the life she wanted, I must talk with her.

After I got off work, and Hu, Cindy and I gathered...I guess what Cindy is going through and say, "Cindy, I think I can tell this isn't working out for you. "Yes, I can too," Hu said. I asked, "What do you want to do, we have been at this show for several months, I have proved to myself, I can survive, I can work...I plan on buying a show just like this one, but it's not going to mean what it does now, if you're not included, do you want to go home? I am strong enough now, what do you want to do?"

"Brian, I think we should go back to my Father, you should have a talk with him, let him know your dreams, your plans. If you have him, like you have this show, we gain, we gain our child...we need that," Cindy says.

"I have saved all the money I have made while working here, which is six thousand dollars, I'm going to buy a car, your Father will see it and know we mean business.

"That is so awesome Brian, I have saved two thousand," Hu said.



“We can drive back home tonight Cindy,” I exclaimed.

That day we left our jobs and bought a used car, we used Cindy’s address as a cover, just in case we got pulled over by the Police, we could simply say we are driving our new car home; we knew we didn’t have insurance or even a stable life to be driving!

Twenty-four hours later we drop off Hu at her house and I take Cindy back to her Father.

We pull into her yard, I could see Clint standing out front of the garage; he immediately sees Cindy, runs up to the car, and opens the door. He gently grabs Cindy by the arm, pulling her out of the car. and gives her a long, loving hug.

Clint never looked at me, it was as if I did not exist, no words of hostility, no violent outbursts, he simply said, “let us go inside...it is getting late.”

Clint and I did not say a word for several days, he spent much time with Cindy. On a calm day, I decided

to have a talk with Clint, I needed to see what he thought of the past year, what he had thought of us being gone for an entire year. “Clint, I say knocking on the door to his Office, “How is everything, did you notice my Car, I bought a Car?”



“Yes, I see the Car, why did you come back,” Clint asks?

“Cindy wants you in our life, in the life of our child, she keeps saying she is pregnant, but I don’t think she is,” I answer.

“She is pregnant, I brought her to the Doctors yesterday, she is due in five months” Clint said.

I was shocked! I turn and look out of the room that I just came through, and I say, “you know, Clint when I was out there—working, making money...I noticed, money was a Challenge, making huge amounts of money its hard. I no longer know how I am going to give Cindy, our child, and myself the life we need...A life without lack.”

“Why don’t you go back to pushing the broom at Toys,” Clint asked.

"I don't think it's the way, it's not a money-making job, they, at Toys, are just doing life," I said.

"Brian, if you want a good life, a rich life...if you want to serve others as a good worker, you have to liberate your employer! ...So that, if they fail, they will still have you. If you did, they would say to one another...Brian pushed the broom the whole time, for no reason, we have him, he is a good man. That is how they know they would have you..."

The school, Old Town School, did that for you, they gave you a passing grade, not out of law, but out of a friendship with intelligence, you expect that! If you truly want to be on a higher level, a more wealthier place in Society, you must show yourself available, that you do not seek after fast money, but can endure vanities; that's being better than your employer, that is service. If you can work a job for no reason, you will be noticed, and one day you will become rich," Clint said.

"Wow, Clint, I think I understand, I will visit Toys and perhaps I will have a job tomorrow, perhaps they still know to trust me," I said and left the room. Once morning came, I immediately drove to Toys, and had a talk with the manager, expressing my apologies for leaving abruptly the previous year. She gladly rehired me... mostly for Clint sake, saying, "I understand! A friend of Clint is a friend of mine!"

I pushed broom for a while, sort of embarrassed about the trip to Florida, but Hu assured me everything was OK...about that trip to Florida while on the bus—on the way back to Massachusetts. She advised me to not be too embarrassed or fearful.

I began to wonder how Hu explained that trip to Florida to her Father, what did happen, I never got around to talking with her about it...I was too busy picking up the pieces to my life...maybe I should drive to her house after work.



I decided too; I drove to her Fathers mansion after work. I arrive and knock on the door, no one answers, I look through Hu's bedroom window; I peak in hoping to see Hu, instead, to my surprise, I found a note taped on the front of the glass of her bedroom window. I peel it off and open it up, and read it...it said, "Brian call me!" It had a phone number and a date written on it...the date was the day we came back to Massachusetts.

I brought it back to Clint's, to the apartment above the garage, and dialed the phone number written on the note. Ring, Ring, the phone sounded, after I dialed the number...Someone picks up...

"Hello," I hear someone say.

“Can I speak with Hu,” I asked.

“This is Hu...is this Brian,” Hu asks?

“Yes, what happened, where are you,” I ask?

“My Father left the Country for a while, he must have thought we have had success...to prove him right, that we had success, I decided to move into the shack I had bought, the one I bought in another Country,” Hu explained.

“That is amazing, how long are you going to be there for” I ask?

“Until I find success” Hu answers.

“We can do this Hu, a few years of work and we will have a lot...wait for me, I’m going to buy an amusement park, and place it right by your house,” Hu laughs, ...“And Cindy is having a baby, I am going to be a Father, I will take the amusement park and my Son, and place it right by your shack, which by then will be a house” I say.

“Ok Brian,” Hu says while laughing.



Our phone call ends, and I begin to hear Cindy walking up the stairs.

"I'm glad we came back, I'm so happy to spend time with my Father," Cindy says.

"That is great! Hopefully, I will find a future through following his leadership," I said to Cindy as we begin to get comfortable with the idea of living in the apartment, up above the Garage...the one Clint let us stay in.

"I bet if you live up to what he has given you, which is me, the apartment, and the job...you will slowly acquire anything you want," Cindy said. I agreed and stayed quiet, hoping that my son in her stomach was going to be a success, that he will come out a healthy baby. I begin to get a bit worried about the baby and financially supporting it, so I listen to Clint and stayed close by his side for months, hoping that I would find what Clint found in life. I closely watched him in these few months; I examined myself to see if I needed improvements.

I splash water on my face and tell myself, I can do this. I say that every morning, proving to myself to gain all that life has to offer.

I saved up a few thousand dollars, with that few thousand dollars, Clint advised me to put that money in the stock market, so I did...for the sake of my child, and for the sake of Cindy.

Not much longer, I rushed into Clint's living room and loudly, full of excitement said, "I have one hundred thousand dollars, off of that small investment!" I was glad that I listened to him. He advised me to take the money, the money I made in the stock market, and put it into a Grow-up-plan

account for my child, he said, “as long as your child has success you will have success, because even if you fail—he will be the proof you didn’t. If you have two chances with the child, with Alvin, you should put as much money into that account as you can!”

I did and continued to do my simple job at Toys.

Clint advised Cindy that she ought to move up above the garage, to lighten the burden of raising a newborn. She did, agreeing with Clint it was a good idea.

Through my job, I bought the baby some stuff, Clint also bought stuff for Alvin. Alvin was the name we picked for the newborn, and so we personalized the stuff we bought before he was born.

“Through your advice, I have done better, than if I stayed at the amusement park. I have an apartment, a job, and I have made one hundred thousand dollars for Alvin. I’m glad I listened to you, and Clint,” I say to Cindy!

10 Old-Time Clint

As expected, a baby was soon to be born... at the moment Cindy thought it was going to be born, said, "Dad, maybe we should go to the hospital, I think the Baby is..." Clint carefully placed Cindy into his car saying, "Come on Brian, we have to bring Cindy to the hospital, the baby might be due, get in the back of the car, hurry!" Clint turns on his blue flashing Cop Car lights and we begin to race down the highway.

I do not know how Babies go, I did not know whether to go into the hospital room with Cindy. And what about Clint, does he stay in the hospital? I could not ask, I had to follow my emotions, and my emotions said: Care for the child; I got to welcome my child into the world.

We rush into the hospital room; I grab hold of Cindy's hand. She begins breathing heavy, "It will be alright," I say.

"I got to get this thing out of me," she said and started fighting. Clint looks at his daughter to strengthen and comfort her, communicating she can do it; she is his joy.

Things moved quickly for her, there was not time to consider if I leave the room; I look over at Clint and I could tell he was not going anywhere, he was too worried. Cindy just sort of started screaming. I stood there begging within myself to feel better

Cindy, feel better! I hated seeing her in the pain she was in.

Six hours later, for the first time, I saw my Son, I watch the Doctor place Alvin in Cindy's arms; she gives the baby a smile and some kind words. I crouch down and give Cindy a kiss, happy to see her, happy to see our baby, happy her pain has gone away! I look at Clint, proud to be a man...honored to be strong enough to have given a child, happy to give that child to Cindy...to a healthy woman, who took care of herself and gave birth. Clint gave me a look as if there could not have been a better man for his daughter. He quickly goes to Alvin and looks at the baby...he sure was a happy old-man—when he looked at the baby, I felt as if he was looking at me, and he approved!

I brought a child into the world; it could not get better, but in fear that the moment would end, the moment with Clint, I began to look for a way to escape; I was happy when the Doctor advised Clint and I to go home for the night.

The next day the Doctor allowed Cindy to come home with me.

The apartment above the garage was big, three bedrooms...we had already established Alvin's bedroom...mostly due to Clint's family; Clint's sister sure loved babies, she gave Alvin a brand-new crib, clothes, toys, and a baby monitor.

Cindy carried the baby in its car-seat up the stairs to the apartment above the garage. She carries him into his bedroom and unbuckles him from the car-seat, and carefully places him in his crib. We both pause for a moment, we look at the baby, gently

placed in its crib; Cindy and I are still feeling like children but, have the confidence that we can grow into the loving parents Alvin deserves....

"We did good Cindy," I say, "we have more than a job, but a life, a future life, the life

we went in search for on the Seventh Grade Streets!"

"Then we did it" Cindy added.

"Yes, we did" I say.

We both in one another's arms walk into the living room, we sit down on the love seat, "You know Cindy, when you said you were pregnant, I had no clue...I cannot believe there is now a baby in the house...when I was young, my Mother would get upset, I never knew when, or how, I hurt, or upset her, so I always was careful to listen, plus I did extra, just in case I did not notice or recognize if I had hurt her...if I would not have done this—extra thing, or learned this skill, of doing extra, I would have never noticed that you were saying something, when you said, 'you were having a baby!' I knew I had to care, I



just can't find the place to care, it's like I'm blind, I can't see what matters most, but thank goodness I can do extra," I say.

"That would have been pretty messed up if I forced us to stay working at the amusement park, when you truly were having a baby...your Father would have killed me," I said.

Cindy said, "I'll have to remember that. And as you're doing extra, just remember...extras, like a long-time pushing broom; what I am trying to say is, others will do the extra too, noticing you pushing the broom at Toys; someone is bound to find your dreams and help fulfill them. To answer the last statement...I figure nothing is going to shatter your dreams, so if we stayed at the amusement park, I would not have doubted us, but now that you think it was wrong...stay at Toys!...someone is bound to notice" Cindy replied.

We both fell asleep on the love seat. I do not remember how I made it to the bed that night; I could almost consider that someone else, like the night, used my body in the night, because what happened to the Night? How did I find my way to my bed? Someone decided to share that with me while in Virginia, (what if my body was being used in the night) maybe he meant it the right way, maybe not. Sort of like saying, "if a tree was to fall in the forest and no one is around, does it still make a sound?"

What the Man said about the Night, could have been a bad case of not going down the right part of my brain, the part of my brain that could handle it. But the problem is still there whether the man meant good or bad. I could almost defend Cindy and myself

in the morning, “The other Brian didn’t move in the night” I almost could say, but the idea is not of me, it’s a foreign idea....I really got to get rid of it, because there isn’t a way to interpret it.

Another bad question one could ask themselves is, what if I get food poisoning? I do not care; I do not want

that in the sensitive part of the brain, that part of the brain that does grow! Like I’m the dumb one...did that guy really know what he was saying that day, that guy at the store, the one who said, “you ought to buy something when you’re in here,” While I was in Virginia, asking for money at the Gas station. He told me that “it is very possible that something uses my body in the night,” of course something does, like rest...it’s just the way he said it, that is definitely the last time—I look for a free hand-out at a gas station!

To ease my mind, I had to do something fun, I walk into Alvin’s room and peek into his crib, “Alvin what do you want from Daddy” I say. Alvin does not say anything back.



"I know what I can do for you Alvin, I can build you a treehouse, a nice white treehouse, so that way when you get older, you will have your own.

I walk behind Clint's house and into his twenty acre forest; I look at all the trees, I consider what I will build, where I will build it and how I will supply the material needed to build the treehouse.

This is a good spot; I say to myself. Not too far into the forest behind Clint's house was a small grassy clearing...beyond the clearing stood four strong trees; Here I will make Alvin a small treehouse, in this spot he can share his world and make friends with the forest; he can grow up like his Mother, having a secret escape!

I bought wood, nails, tin, and slowly, I made a small treehouse. Weeks I spent in the forest...most of my time off from work I spent behind Clint's house, making Alvin's treehouse, health, or rather his back up health/treehouse.

I could remember when I was in Georgia, my sixth-grade year; it was so wonderful, like a drug, like Hu, did I seek to move to a new place. I think that what made it so extra special, was the expectation of something that possibly, (now that I think about it) didn't exist, like a force, causing my childhood innocence to following a drug...I never would have thought that reaching my dream of moving here to Massachusetts, that I would have been scared, cut deep on the inside, I now know what it is like to be less than, to be an out-sider. Although I know I stand, after all I gave the town's Police leaders daughter a child, like I said I stand, but I must live with the wound.

It might look like all is good, but Cindy would take CARE out of these woods! And now, so do I! Should such a person exist like this? It ought to be play, all play, all day long. But for Alvin, he can stay here, in his tree house...in fact in his mind he can live my sixth grade year,



he can live the seventh grade streets, and never have to bear the pain of lacking Cindy's secret escape, the healing of the wild!

I walk up the stairs above Clint's garage, I pick up my son, I put him in my arms, I walk down the hallway, I notice Cindy doing the dishes. "I'm taking Alvin to his secret hide away," I say leaving the apartment, I walk him into the forest.

"Alvin, what do you think?" I say upon entering the location of the tree house.

Cindy must have considered us because she followed close behind. "He loves it Brian," Cindy says...she walks over to me and kisses me, we both sit down on the dead leaf covered forest floor. We begin to recall all the moments that we have gained in



the forest, whether in the forest streets of the people or the forest streets of the animal kingdom; it held together the pain we had endured in seventh grade.

“I got the forest or rather the streets of seventh grade... as Hu said, ‘it talked and it did, it talked me into a child,’” I say.

“Where is Hu anyways,” Cindy asked.

“I’m not all that sure, the last time I talked with her she moved into that shack she bought” I said, hinting for us to walk back towards the inside, to her house. Along the way I say, “I should call her, and let her know that you and I, on the streets of seventh grade, gave birth to a son. In her Grandmother’s idea of the forest speaking, the forest told me, I must have a home, which produced a son.

I know what Cindy met, “Extra Pushing Broom” and, “a Long Time,” she wants me to do extra nothing around Toys...Yut, I can do that, I told myself, what

should I do first, I know...I can push the broom at my Father's house, I thought, as we walk toward our apartment. "I'm going to my Fathers to call Hu, so I can do some long-time extras at my Father's house," I said to Cindy.

"As you're doing that, I'm going to learn how to raise a baby," Cindy said while giving me a kiss, wonderfully sending me to my Father's house.

Knock, Knock, I open the door, "Dad are you here?" I ask, but hear nothing, I look on the kitchen table and find a note from my Mother: "Brian your Dad and I went overseas; if you need something, take it, if you want to do something in the house do it, and please don't burn the house down."

Oh, good, I love my parents I thought as I look for the broom.

Here it is, my Dad's favorite red broom; I began to sweep his Mansion. I know I needed to call Hu, but I must do the Extras first for Cindy's sake. I spend hours sweeping the floor of my Fathers mansion. Once done I pick up his cordless phone and dial the number written on the piece of paper, the piece of paper I pulled off Hu's window. Her phone begins to ring.

"Hello," I hear on the other end of the phone.

"Hu" I say.

"Yup, it's me" Hu answers

"This is Brian, how is everything" I ask?

"Great, but I have nothing to do, I'm not motivated, I want to grow rice, but I have no thrill to be a lot...I think I have too much of myself," Hu says.

"Maybe you should just do, for the very sake of, or at least build that, the motivation" I say.

"I just began to start fixing an unknown, I'm actually at my Father's mansion, I swept his entire Mansion. Do back up, just do, you know, and maybe a rice garden will fall out of the sky" I say.

We both start laughing!

Hu says, "So, you're just doing...I know what I will do, I will make you rice, a lot of rice and you will pay me motivation!"

"Well, I'm going to need to finance all that rice...I bet Clint can help, he appears to have a lot of money, I just built my son, Alvin a tree house on his twenty acres of land," I say.

Hu replies, "What are you going to do for him?"

"I don't know yet, but working on him is a good idea, because my Father doesn't need much else, but my independence. If you make me rice, I could use that as extra, that's if I give it to people for free, and if I give it for free, perhaps if I stumble, they will catch me," I say.

Hu says, "If I am motivated, I will dream big and I invite you to a big world."

"Good thinking Hu, Clint is getting hours of free work and somehow he will find a lot of rice, so will others, and you and I will have made friends with all those people, and so we will invite all of them into your big world" I say.

"Wonderful" Hu says.

"I got to go, I'm going to tell Cindy about the semi-plan, Bye Hu," I say while quickly pressing the off button on the phone, Beep. I drove back to Cindy's and my apartment, I pull into the yard, in front of the garage and park; I begin to walk up the stairs. I find Cindy in Alvin's bedroom.

"I talked with Hu," I say.

"How is she doing" Cindy asked.

"We made a part of a plan; do you remember the conversation me and you had about doing extras" I ask.

"Yes," Cindy says.

"What if we both did extras, I could still do extra at Toys, but we could both do extra for Hu; she is going to grow rice, a lot of rice, we can give that rice to people for sort of, backup, or a Social Security for ourselves. She needs motivation to dream big, as she dreams big, we can invite others to her big world," I say.

"How is that going to work," Cindy asks.

"Just keep her in the back of your mind, if she has need of us one day, we will be there...we need a big world, for us and for Alvin," I say.

Cindy asks, "So, I'm just to keep Hu in the back of my mind. sort of like a future family, because she gives us rice to give to others, for sort of a Social Security for our Family?"

"The rice is mostly for her, it's her way of making a way in life, but why should we reject it, there isn't a reason, it most likely is a good idea; we all need one another in life, and Hu most likely expects it from us...keep in mind, we are Hu's motivation! If the forest finds lack it replaces it, but what if it found more? ...It most likely would keep the extras, to one day, give to its lack, which means one day our love for Hu, by making extra, will reach Hu, and that is what grows the rice," I say. Cindy gives me a warm kiss, as I begin to wonder if she will remain standing. "If you start to lack Cindy, its OK, I am cool with you as you



are now...but I hope you share in mine or rather Hu's idea of a big, big world. What if we one day own a town," I say.

"Sure, Brian, I share in Hu's Big, Big world," Cindy says.

The next morning, I went to Toys with the dream in the back of my mind; I knew I had to find Clint and somehow find the lack; all day I wait to find Clint; finally three o'clock came around and my day at Toys ends, I walk out. As I walk out I pass by a bench sitting in front of Toys, I notice the butt can, butts littered the ground...I wonder what Clint would think if he saw all those Butts lying on the ground, I consider, now opening up the driver's side door to my car.

I jump into my car and begin looking for Clint, I knew he would not be home, he usually would not be at this time, I know where he works, at the Police Station, I will drive there first. I pull up next to the

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parked Police cars and park. I look around and I do not see Clint. I will just hang out here by my car, it should not matter where I do this extra thing.

I stayed there until it got dark, I never saw Clint, but I did do Extra Vanities, I get back into my car, eager to see Alvin and Cindy. I pull into my driveway; I still do not see Clint or his Police car. I find my way to my living room couch and I sit down. Cindy notices I am home and comes in to greet me, "How was your day" she asks.

"Well, I went to Toys, I did a lot of cleaning and afterwards, I went to look for Clint at the Police Station, but I didn't find him...I don't know where he is, his Cop Car isn't in the yard either," I say.

"Maybe, he went out to the Bar, he spends moments like that from time to time at the Bar," Cindy says.

"Ya, maybe," I answer.



The next day was similar to the first, I went to Toys and then to the Police Station, but this time I noticed a butt-can, with butts littering the ground, I decided to clean up the butts, it bothered me to notice that small thing off, in such a lovely place as the police Station.

One of the Police Officers was watching me from his vehicle that day, as I cleaned up the ash tray. That man at some point got to talking to Clint, he said, "a young man came here and started cleaning up the ash tray Clint!"

Clint says, "who would do that?"

"It looked like the young fellow that Cindy has been dating," the Police Officer answered.

"That don't sound like Brian, he works at Toys, he would not spend his extra time here, cleaning up litter on the ground," Clint responded.

I went there, at the Police Station for a few weeks, doing extras, and that Police Officer who had talked with Clint the first time noticed me again, cleaning up and asked me for my name.

"Brian," I said.

"Aren't you dating Cindy, Clint's daughter?" the Police Officer asks.

"Yes, I have been for a while," I say.

"Oh-ya, I'll have to tell that to Clint...you like to hang around the Police Station," the Policeman said.

I drive home that night thinking perhaps he would be upset by me hanging around at the Police Station, thinking I might be abusing his friendship by doing whatever I want, but to my surprise that night when I got home, Clint met me in the yard and said, "Brian, Jim at the Police Station said you've been cleaning

up...I'm usually down there; although I park up the street I am usually in the building. If you like it at the Station, do not hide in the parking lot, come on in the Station, then I can introduce you to some of the guys," Clint says.

I nodded my head to express I understood; now happy that Clint approved of my doings, I walk up the stairs to my apartment.

The next morning, I did the same thing I have been doing, working at Toys, and spending my evenings at the Police Station...but this day I walk in, and Clint greets me and sort of shows me off. "Brian, I'm glad you came in, everyone this is Brian, my daughter Cindy's soon to be husband.

All the Police Officers warmly greeted me; Clint sort of gave them the notion to let me roam in the public parts of the Station, just so I could make family out of the Community.

There was not another reality I came to conclude after spending time on the Seventh Grade Streets.



11 Work

Months went by and things stayed the same, I begin my days at Toys, and my evenings at the Police Station. So far, I have made nothing in Money at the Police Station, but I knew that if I slip or something bad was to happen, I was protected by the entire Police Force and so was my Son.

I never knew when those bad or surprising moments would happen, for example: Cindy saying, "I'm pregnant." I did not even hear what she was saying, but I did know that I did something out of love, and that love in me told me, to keep the love alive, but I didn't think our love needed to be kept alive, that Cindy possibly needed to be kept alive, that she needed it.

This is too important I tell myself, I ought



to do some other stuff, I wonder if I bought some sort of uniform with my own money to wear at the Police Station, if I did, then the other Guys there would be able to use me for something more their style. I did; at first no one seemed to notice, but after a while some of the towns' people started thinking I was one of the Policeman.

Through simply putting myself in the situation, the towns' people made it easier on the other Police Officers to make me one of them. "Brian clean up the storage shed, Brian file these papers, Brian can you sanitize the holding Cell, that is what the other Policemen began to ask. I did a particularly good job when asked, not necessarily for them but for my future, as well as Hu and my dream of a big, big world.

When my child turned two years old, the Cops at the Station, after two years of free work, decided along with Clint to give me a Free six month training course—to qualify me to receive pay for what I was doing.

I was a bit nervous, but at this point I had to do the training course. I told myself it was only six months, but



my nervousness would not go away. I failed the course three months in.

I did not show up at the Police Station for a few days afterwards, I hid...I knew I could pass that course, but why am I not, what was I doing, and what did I do...I failed.

I started out working on extras, I began to put the two ideas together; It suddenly hit, I failed their will for me, so that I could continue doing my Free work. If they pay for my extra work, paying for free work would most likely cancel out my work... But I cannot just do my will, it could make me look bad, I must do Clint's will as well, so maybe I should pay for the course; will Clint go for that...I think he will. I know how I can pass this course; I can continue doing my thing, free work, and fit in with Clint's wishes by paying for the Training Course.

I walk into Clint's house hoping he was there, I say out loud, "Clint are you here?"

"Ya, I'm in the kitchen," Clint answers.

"Clint, I think I know why I failed the training course, I truly desired to pass. I think I figured out a way to make your idea and mine work together for me to pass this course. I will pay you for the failed course, plus I will pay for a brand-new course, that should make both if us flow as one. Please let me pay; I insist, how much does that cost?"

"Brian, I will pay for it, I'm not worried about the money," Clint says.

"No" I answer, 'I have to do what I was doing, and that was working for Free, that is the only way to pass, by me holding myself accountable to what I

began, and that was working for free, for my Will, my Purpose,”

“I have to pay for it, Clint!” I said.

“OK, the course is about three hundred dollars, the both of them together makes six hundred dollars,” Clint said.

With six months I got the certificate...I passed! I just kept telling myself I was needed, not Clint, not the Police Force; if I needed to protect my stuff now...I was.

Once I had the certificate, Clint's Boss hired me part time, paying me three hundred a week! I was still working at Toys, bringing in about Fifteen hundred a month, Clint insisted I didn't pay rent on the apartment above the garage, so I had a lot of extra money, which periodically I would spend on Cindy and Alvin.

After months of work, I had thousands of dollars...I have not been sure on what to spend it on, but I knew my favorite job/pass time so far, and that was the job at the amusement park. I began to consider if that is my future, maybe I should buy some of their rides; if I collect enough of them, they could financially support part of my life.

“Cindy,” I say after spending time at the Police Station, “I really loved that job at the amusement park, what will you think if I begin to buy rides, trailers and games. I could buy them and leave them where they are. I could charge the show to rent them or use them, I also could buy some and bring them here, that's if Clint don't mind.”



“We could buy broken ones and fix them, sort of like we did when furnishing the apartment...get a lot for a little. Within ten or twenty years, we could sort of house there, and work there...most likely it would just be for the summer though, because Alvin might need to go to school, we could homeschool him, if we got really structured in what we are doing. Most likely we would just do the summer, so that I could still play my part at the Police Station.”

“What do you think Cindy...amusement park living, traveling from state to state, making money, making children happy.” I say.

“Oh, wow, Brian, I sure love that idea, I wish we could leave right now, I want to do something food, like apples, candy apples, apple crunch, I could sell it out of a traveling trailer,” Cindy said excited.

So, Cindy and I had a plan, we were in part going to have a traveling show, she decided to do a lot of investigating, she said, she would be better at it. It

was rather like her plan in the beginning, she advised for me to just continue going to work and, if she found a ride or game trailer she would show it to me and then I could decide if I wanted to buy it.

Months went by and nothing, but toward the end of the year she found a kid boat ride for six hundred dollars, it needed some work. I looked at the article advertising it: it was a small machine that took six to eight-year old's in a circle, all the while the boat would be going round.

I had waited long enough when I first mentioned it, I was ready to jump into it, "I will buy it, Cindy, not because it will make money, but because I want it for fun. I will have fun putting that machine in working and operating condition."

A few weeks later Cindy pointing out another machine for sale, this one dwelled in the south, a couple States down, I decided traveling to that State would be worth it; it was a machine that goes round...barrels go round, it was clean and shiny. It advertised as used a few times. It was basically brand new, it cost about One thousand dollars. I must have it!

The ride was small, so, I could tow it with my car. I drove to Virginia, I found the address and purchased the barrel ride; I quickly brought it home, I had to set it up, I must see how well it worked. I put in in the back of Clint's garage, and begin to pull out some of the parts of The Barrel Ride, the exact name of the ride is, River Barrel Run, it had a purple and Orange striped top curtain to hide its interior, giant brown Barrels, a motor and a lot of fence.

I set it all up and plugged it into a socket in the Garage, turned it on, and lights began to flash, and then I see the barrels go round!

"That works as well as a brand-new Machine," I say to Cindy, who was there helping me set up the ride. As months went by we found and bought a few more rides, plus a couple of game trailers, we begin to buy so much, Clint noticed and decided to talk to us about it; he had been ignoring it waiting to see what would come out if it.

"Brian, I've noticed you have bought more than a few Amusement rides, there is a ten-acre chunk of land not too far from here, it only costs about nine thousand dollars! If you cannot afford it, I can loan the money to you, you should get that piece of land to put your machines on," Clint says, as we sit at the kitchen table.

"Cindy, what do you think of that," I asked.

"You should get it, if in the future we need the land to build a house, we can...it's a good investment," Cindy said.

"Is that the land by the Old Red Barn," I ask.

Clint answers, "Yes, that's the one!"

"I will drive over there tomorrow, and I will give it a look," I said.

The next day I drive over there and began walking around the property; I notice the old red barn, I decided to walk up to it. Once I walked up to the old red barn, I noticed an older man sitting on the inside of the open barn. "I see that land is for sale," I say to the man in the barn.

"Yut, sure is," the man says.

"I want to buy it," I say.

“Give me ten thousand dollars and all ten acres is yours,” the man says.

“Will you take a check,” I ask.

“Yut,” the man says.

I walk over to my car and open the glove box and grabbed one of my check books and wrote the man a check for ten thousand dollars.

“The deed is in the house, I’ll go get it and sign it over to ya,” the man says.

Well, that was simple, I tell myself, I cannot wait to tell Cindy. Within five minutes the older fellow walks over to me with the deed to the land in his hand. “Here you go..just the land, permits are required for anything else, for example: a house,” the man says... “you would need a permit to build a house.”

“OK,” I said and walked over to the ten acre lot I just bought and began to consider where I will put each ride; in the mist of daydreaming, I pulled together my mind and knew I wanted to wait for Cindy to dream, we should think about this together; I open the drivers side door to my car and got on the inside and drove home. “Cindy,” I say as I open the door to our apartment.

“Yes,” she says from our bedroom. I pull the property deed to the land I just bought and hand it to her.

“I bought the land,” I said.

“Great, Brian, that is really going to help out our future, we can slowly build a house there, like a winter house, so that when we’re not traveling on the show, cause of colder weather, we can come home.” She was so happy, I could see the sparkle in her eyes

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when she mentioned a house, as if she had been planning on one since a young age.

“Dad, Brian bought the land,” Cindy says as she approaches her Father. I say, “I will slowly bring one ride and then another until all my rides, trailers and food stands are on my property.

*

One summer when Alvin turned Seventeen, I was about to leave work, when I hear the Manager say, from his Office, “Brian, can you come here, I have to talk with you?”

I turn around from walking out the front door and approach his Office, I reach the door and go inside...coffee aroma blast me in the face—as I enter his Office. “Brian, I hate to do this to you, but we’re going to have to let you go, we did not make enough money this year to support some of the staff here; do

not take it personal, you are not the only one, two other guys had to be let go of too.

He pulls out an envelope from the inside of his desk and says, "this is the remaining money Toys owes you, you're last check."

I grab the envelope and say, "Well, you know where I live...that's if you need anything, its been a great time working here, thank you!" I begin to walk out the door to go to my car. I waited until I got home to put it within my mind that I no longer had a job. "Cindy, Toys no longer needs me," I say sadly.

"You mean you're not working there anymore," Cindy says.

"Right, they did not make enough money to employ me, but Toys said to not take it personal...two other guys are no longer working there either," I answer.

I waited a few days before I considered my next move, I did not want to bring it up before Clint cause I did not want to say or do the wrong thing—all because I was in a panic. The day, I decided to bring it up to Clint, I first brought up my worry before Cindy, after explaining my worry she said, "I told my Dad you were without a job, he told me he talked to a couple of guys at the station and they could use you full time, like, a full time job..."

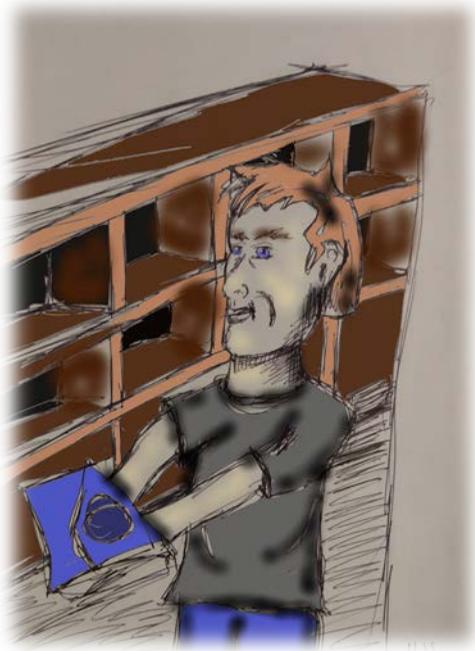
"So, you're Father knows, and he plans on giving me a full-time job," I ask to double sure myself.

"Yes, you can go talk to him right now if you would like," she answers.

I jump off the couch and walk down the stairs of our apartment above the garage and walk into Clint's house. "Clint," I say upon entering his house, I search

for him, I find him in the basement, "Cindy just mentioned that you have another job for me."

"Sure do, Brian, that's why I'm in the basement, to see if I could find my old uniform. Ah, here it is," Clint says pulling out a tightly compressed, clear bag.



He unzips the bag and pulls out a blue uniform, "try this on and see if it fits," Clint says.

I bring it upstairs to a private room and change into it, it fits wonderfully, exactly my size.

I walk back down the stairs and say, "it fits great, but I can't take your uniform for free, let me pay for it...if I pay for it, maybe I will feel more in control while I am wearing it."

Clint says, "I really don't want to, I wanted it to be a gift, but if that's what you need...I can do it, but you got to promise me, if I need to receive retirement you will not be the one giving it," Clint humbly says.

"I totally get that I promise that I will not retire you or will I walk over your gift," I say.

"Brian be at the Station tomorrow morning, don't be late...we have to go over a few things with the Sheriff, and again, don't be late," Clint says fearing for me.

"OK," I answered, I went back to tell Cindy and show off my given Uniform.

"Cindy," I say upon entering our apartment, "Clint gave me one of his old Uniforms or rather should I say, I bought it, he told me to be at the station in the morning and to not be late, it's very important. You get up early, right," I say, "I don't want to miss this, I have to be there early in the morning, will you be the lookout for me, please?" I ask.

"Sure, Brian, that's if you can sleep at all, you sure look excited," Cindy says.

Cindy was right, I didn't sleep at all that night, I eagerly waited for five o' clock to come, so I could kiss Cindy goodbye and get in my car and drive to the Police Station.

Finally, morning came, I kiss Cindy and get into my car...I arrive and walk in and begin to look for Clint, "Brian, over here," I hear Clint say. I walk into the room he was located in...he begins to question me in regards to the future as well as some of the things we will be going over with the Sheriff, "Brian, if we got you into some training, more professional training, would you be willing to do that," Clint asks.

"Yes," I say, and we begin to go into the Office of the Sheriff. The first question the Sheriff asked is, "If we gave you a gun are you OK with that, and if we needed you too, do you think you could use it?"

"Yes," I reply.

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The Sheriff, pleased to hear my answer, looks at me and says, "If you are going to work for us, you might, from time to time, work twenty-four to thirty-six hours...are you OK with that?"

I was not all that sure about the last question, but it is possible, that I could put all those extra hours, into my extras or possibly even to motivate Hu. To answer the best way, the only way, was to say, "Yes, I can do that!"

"Good, Brian," the Sheriff says and goes to a locker in his Office and pulls out some Police gear: A Gun, Badge, Club, and a Walkie. These are yours...try not to use them until you are finished with your training," the Sheriff says.

"OK," I say and begin putting on the gear in front of the two men.

I did not do much that day, mostly talked with the Policemen...one officer I particularly spent a lot of time with, went by the name: Officer Foodie. He



drove me around the town and trained me to see the bigger picture, to see not necessarily law, but a place in society. His exact words were: if you have a gun most likely that's the reason for a good community, that is, what makes a good cop, not your speed, not how well you do and not how much you want to do it, just the gun!"

"Makes Sense," I replied.

My first day on the job, gave me things I could proudly show off in front of Cindy, I got to show Cindy some professional gear. I walk up the stairs to our apartment and say, "Cindy, check this out, I got a gun and a badge!"

"So, you are now, officially a Police Officer?" she asks.

"Yes," I say and walk over to Alvin, "how are you today little buddy," I say to my nine-year-old Son.

He looks at me and says, "Dad, you are in front of the TV."

"Oh," I say and move out of the way, "are you going to grow up and be like me, a Police Officer," I ask him, full of pride.

"Does that mean I get a gun" Alvin asks.

I knew the only answer to that question, after listening to Officer Foodie all day was to say, "Yup, it does Alvin, that's what makes a Cop, a good Cop!"

12

Seventh Grade Streets

My boy, my son, just turned twelve, he starts the Seventh Grade in a month, in the fall year. For years I have been working as a Police Officer, being highly esteemed by the community, rarely do I have time to reflect to the year I began seventh grade, to the year I met Cindy.

I thought about skipping Alvin's Seventh grade year at Old Town School and bringing him south to start up our Amusement park show together, I've been gathering pieces and parts for over six years...I have enough to create a miniature show in the parking lots of Malls. Plazas, etc. A show I am calling Alvin's Amusement park, but I will not start up the show this year, because Cindy wants him to start the seventh grade the right way, the way she wanted too, when she was in seventh grade, before she left. She mentioned that she will spend days at Old Town School for Alvin sake, to double sure he is not being oppressed by the system, that he gets the full education he deserves.

I could not disagree; I knew what it meant to watch life fall apart in the seventh grade.

"That is good, Cindy. If you spend time at the School, that is, like Extra, like as Clint said to me, 'if you have Alvin, you have two chances.' If we fail Cindy, Alvin will be there as the proof that we did not. We do not have to consider if we were to fail,

we have two chances...I agree with my Father, when he said, 'that's what money is for, security!' Alvin is sort of like money, we put a lot of work into him, and now that he is twelve, we should double our efforts and put as much time into him as possible," I say to Cindy.

"I can do that Brian," Cindy says. "Well though, you're a Cop, so if you go to the School and have a talk with them, and tell them I want to spend all day at the School as a volunteer, maybe they will be more willing to let me spend time there, and ignore all the Schools regulations," Cindy added.

"We should go together," I say... "I used to do that volunteer thing with Clint at the Police Station, I'm sure they won't mind, we will tell them that you would like to hang out, in your liberty, as a tutor or perhaps just to organize books."

"That is a great idea Brian," Cindy says.



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I drove Cindy to the School, to Old Town School, before Alvin was to start his Seventh-Grade year. I took my Police Car that was recently given to me, by the Police Station, the Police Car I earned, because the Station loves me; I needed to take it to show off what I have earned from patiently serving the community...I earned that much of the respect of the Community.

We walk through the double doors, of a School, that I had a really hard time going to, a School that had seemed to leave unbearable scars, many times did Cindy and I walk through these double doors when we were young.

We walk to the principal's Office; we sit down at his desk. I start the conversation... "Cindy would like to spend the School days here, sort of like a mentor, she could place herself in the Library and organize, or possibly do other jobs, the other teachers can't do, because they are too busy, or they just plainly need the help."

"What I would like to do," Cindy says to the principle, "is, make sure my Son Alvin has a wonderful Seventh Grade year, here, at Old Town School, that he is free from harm, and learning and passing the Seventh grade...I want to be here to guide him to success; with your permission I can help my Son pass the Seventh Grade, and sort of give him the seventh grade year, that I never had."

The principle answered, "that is fine with me, we would introduce you to the other staff as a tutor, the students will know you as a librarian."

"OK," Cindy and I agreed.

While Cindy happily spent her days at Old Town School, I spent my days at the Police Station, most days there was not all that much of a job for me, just presenting the authority of myself to the town. As the man who trained me to be a Police Officer said, 'If they see you with a gun, most likely that's the reason for their obedience.'

Weeks went by and the past memories of my seventh grade year flooded my mind, I could remember the winter, the winter, Hu, Cindy and I watched my Dad's animation together, as well as when Hu, Cindy and I, got lost on the Snow-Machine Trails....maybe it has something to do with Alvin being in seventh grade, maybe it has something to do with Cindy hanging out at the School...trying to fulfill her seventh grade year through our Son, the seventh-grade year the School found no reason to be, and created a deep wound, and caused Cindy to act with every ounce of love in her being! I thought about these precious moments right up to the winter, before I decided to call Hu, to see how she was making out in that distant Country; did she ever get a bigger house, and where is all that rice?

Ring...Ring, Hu's phone rang, "Hello," Hu says.

"Hu, it's Brian, I'm calling to see how you're doing, and to ask, how far have you made it in growing rice" I ask?

"Good, Brian, I now have a lot of rice, and a bigger house, when can you come and visit? Hopefully, you will come here before the end of the spring...you and Cindy. I want us to catch up on things, as well as I want you to look into a Vacation home, on my

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property, I think that would be of interest to you; Can you be here by the end of Spring” Hu asks?

To make her happy, and to keep the bond between us strong, I quickly say, “Yes, I can or rather we can, I have to ask Cindy, and most likely she will say yes, plus I will bring Alvin.”

From the time Hu and I had that conversation, I waited anxiously for the beginning of summer. As Summer approached, I had a lot going on: work at the Police Station, Cindy at School, and Alvin attempting to re-live Mine and Cindy’s seventh-grade dream...plus Sunny-Day-festival is in the spring. I wanted to set up part of Alvin’s Amusement-Park, at Sunny-Day Festival. On top of it all I wanted to visit Hu, but I have not even attempted to include traveling to Hu’s Country in my schedule, as a matter of fact I have not asked Cindy...I do not know exactly how I was going to ask Cindy. She has never been in

a distant Country, and from what she says about it, it does not sound like she would want to go.

As spring approached, I knew I needed to at least ask Cindy about visiting Hu, because I must beforehand buy the tickets.

"Cindy, Hu invited us to visit the Country she lives in, she wants to show us, and possibly if we want it, to buy a vacation home there," I say, "After Sunny-Day festival do you want to fly to the place Hu dwells, to her house" I ask?

"Do you want Alvin with us" Cindy asks?

"Yes" I answer.

"I am fine with that" she answers.

"Great, by the way, how is Alvin doing in School" I ask?

"All passing grades, he possesses the School, he definitely doesn't fear, because I am here, which is not just good for him, but for the other students as well, so much so..just today the School Board offered me a salary, to sort of appear to be a teacher" Cindy says.

"Wow, that's great Cindy, what are we going to do with the money" I ask?

"I want a house on that property, the property next to my Dad's house, the one you bought by the old red barn, and now just thinking about it, if Hu does have something to offer when we visit her, now, we will have the money" Cindy said.

"I'm glad you said that" I reply.



Day of
Sunny-Day
festival, I hurry
to bring a few
select rides, I
bring them to
Sunny-Day
festival. I make
sure Aivin is
with me the
whole time, one
day, my hope is,
he will Manage,
own, and
operate Aivin
Shows.

“Aivin, do
you see that big

green button,” I say, looking at the rides that were set up at Sunny-Day Festival, “Once the other children get on the rides, just press the big green button, and the ride will begin to spin” I say to Aivin.

“OK, Dad” Aivin says.

“I will be hear the whole time, so if you need me when you press it just ask, but it should be pretty simple, the whole boat ride is automatic, just press the button and everything is done for you, including stopping the motion of the ride” I say.

“OK, Dad” Aivin says.

I look at Cindy to my right, and say, “It sure feels good to be out here, this is what I wanted thirteen years ago, this was one of my fantasies in living, a child’s playground, a playground I own. Now we have

our own child, one that can, without failing, help fulfill that fantasy, not only will this Amusement Park support him while growing up, but it is a fun thing, he will be the best thing that comes into town...Alvin's Shows!"

Cindy, smiles and asks, "are you going to try to do more of these shows this summer, you have talked about it, like setting up in some of the other Towns, Plazas and Malls?"

It's a great idea, but I don't have the assurance I need to confidently fulfil that" I answer.

Cindy without hesitation says, "I know what we can do, lets take Alvin to the spot, the spot Hu took us, the spot where the forest spoke to us."

"Great idea" I say, "Alvin come with me and your Mon for a moment. We slowly walk down the bank leading to the river, the one Cindy and I walked down in seventh grade, the one with the small stream at the



bottom. The wind made a soft sounding whistle as it flowed through the forest.

“What is your first thought Brian” Cindy asks?

“Extras” I answer.

“Alvin, sweetie, what is your first thought” Cindy asks?

“I’m hungry, I want some ketchup on French fries, Dad, you said you were going to buy me some” Alvin Answers.

I knew what the forest had said, Alvin likes fun, tasty, and good things, and I need to do extras. I began to think, what if I do not attempt to make money off the show, what if I payed for the entire show to be set up and operated—without the hope of making money. If others were to buy tickets, the money made, could go straight to Alvin, as motivation to build more of himself, as well as for Alvin’s Shows.

“I just had the best idea” I say to Cindy, “of course Alvin and I are going to do shows this year, as extras, for Alvin, to do as you’re doing in school. This would allow him to find liberation in the workplace.”

“I know what you’re saying Brian, and the money I make through Old Town School will help, as well as owning our own home, rather than to pay rent every month, we can take that money and use it for Alvin’s shows” Cindy says.

Excitedly, I walk back up to the festival, to my own, to Alvin’s shows, I look at the sign saying Alvin’s Shows as I approach the rides, I knew one half of my own was complete!

Surprisingly at Sunny-Day festival others notice, and schedule Alvin and I in different towns, Malls,

Plazas, etc. If they asked, and they did ...I had the answer. I can afford to set up Alvin Shows!

But before we could move into summer, we had to visit Hu, and that was to happen in a week, I was eager to go, not only to see my loved-friend for years now, but to make physical contact with the dream we share.

Before I could consider in depth leaving the Country, suddenly we were on a huge airplane heading towards a small, poor Country. Hu really loved this Country! I could not blame her; it was truly the streets of seventh grade. Hoping we boarded the right plane, and that Hu was at the airport, I worried most of the journey, until I saw Hu's face.

"The plane is approaching the airport, we're about to land, everyone please remain cautious," we hear in broken English over the intercom/announcement speakers.



I sort of shut my eyes, as the plane begins to land. "Are you OK Daddy" Alvin asks.

"Yes, I am fine, I can't wait to introduce you to Hu, you're going to love her, perhaps we will come stay here from time to time" I say, covering up my anxieties, reminding myself to stay calm, appear like everything is OK on the plane...there could be many more plane trips like this.

The plane skips off the ground as it touched the pavement, slows down, and pulls into the boarding part of the small airport. We grab the small amount of items we had with us and walk off the plane. We begin to look for Hu. Hu knew this place well; she had been watching flight 1067 for a while and knew exactly where it would land.

As we walk into the lobby, we see Hu, a purple head band crowned her head, green highlights in her hair radiated a fresh look. I see her and run up to her, "Hu, it sure is good to see you" I say wrapping my arms around her body.

"This is Alvin" I say loudly, and proudly, putting my hand upon Alvin's shoulder.

"Hi Alvin" Hu says, "you're a handsome young man, you look just like your Father, specially when he was your age, and in the seventh grade." Memories flooded Hu's mind, memories when Cindy and I spent time with her. As she remembered us, she became relaxed and felt as if she was young again.

We rush back to her house, two days we are going to be here...Hu had every moment planned. As we pull into her house, still being built, she says, "if you have been creating motivation, it has worked...I have plenty of rice—that I want to ship to your Country,

so that you can use it, perhaps even for your child's growth. ...This is my home" Hu says, "it's still being built, because I mostly buy land" Hu explains.

I look at a Huge building, I could tell it was being worked on, but it was much bigger than I thought, there must have been thirty to forty new rooms added to it. "On the topic of land, Brian" Hu says, "I have over One Thousand acres of land now, but I have not many people, so I want to invite you to build here...when you're here on vacation you can stay at my house until you build a vacation home or homes. If you buy land, I will give you a good price, because you motivate me.

"If you take the rice and make more money, you should spend some here, you could make a town or village, for you and your children. Plus, I am having a child, I am pregnant and giving birth to my first child in a few months. Say Yes Brian, yes to building here" Hu says, "we could build something so wonderful!"

"How much rice did you grow" Cindy asks.

"I am sending to you, overseas, a big boatload" Hu says.

Cindy looks at Brian and says, "fried rice and rice cakes at Alvin Shows could be a big money maker, if not green money, than social money!"

Hu walks around huge spaces of empty land, explaining to us, where we can build, how much she hopes we build and her entire plan. Cindy and I shared every dream she had; we were dreaming alongside of her.

Before I left, I gave Hu my plan: a small town, fit for one thousand people, working and motivating Hu's people, which she planned on many.

Brendon Holden
Seventh Grade Streets



Once we got home, we quickly scrambled to put the other half together. Cindy took part of the money she began making at Old Town School and gave some to Hu to develop the town we discussed, the other part she made she used to pay on a loan she got from the bank to build a three hundred thousand dollar home on the land I bought, the land next to the big red barn.

Hu sent a lot of rice, enough rice that it kept Alvin shows up and operating for years, although we did not make money, Alvin did, he made a social existence.

Years went by and we patiently built, the more money we made, the more we could invest; a lot of our money went to establish the town in Hu's land; I figured once the town was livable we could rent buildings and employ people, and this would bring in more money.

Once Alvin was old enough, about twenty-five years old, he learned great ways to bringing in money at Alvin's Shows, it supplied all that he needed, plus savings. He eventually moved out of our house, the year it was all payed for, he didn't need it, at twenty five, he had fifty people working for him, making a yearly salary of eighty thousand dollars, soon he would buy his own house.

Alvin had many children, and we allowed them to live in Hu's City/Village, that is if they wanted too. Cindy over time gave birth to more children, they as well, could move into the village.

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One day without considering that I made it, that I had success, I invited my Father over to the house— Cindy built, I haven't really seen or talked to him in years, just a quick Hi there, or a small gathering there. But this time it would be different, this



time I was one hundred percent on the level of existence as my Father.

I invited him to a Christmas gathering, and of course he showed up. As we sit by the fireplace, I say, "Dad, do you remember that animation, the one you did of the man that was driven from town to town?"

"Yes, I remember" my Dad answers.

"He was driven from town to town looking for his own...yours was picked, because it was reality, people like reality better, well, I loved my risk taking journey from Seventh Grade to now, and can understand why one would want to watch such, because it is worth it, because I felt it!"

"Like the man in your animation: ever since I got hurt in seventh-grade, I roamed to find the level of authority you have in life, I wanted something similar to yours, well, I have found it, I have finally found my own, ...I ought to write a book, and Name it: Seventh Grade Streets!"

The End

Epilogue

Hu built a village of five story buildings cramped together; her children live there in the village with her. I created a town of stores and shops in Hu's land, my children live and work there making a lot of money, making our way in life; although I didn't bring Alvin Shows to Hu's land as I said I would, I did buy an entirely new show and named it: A Big, Big World: Amusement park.

I have made it, I have the street dream, the dream I chased when convincing my Father to move from Georgia to Massachusetts...I have what I saw in Hu, a never ending, non-limited liberty, to do everything and anything I want...the speech of the wild!

About the Author

Brendon Holden, Author of Smoking by the River, The Game, and Behind the Night Sky has put in this heartfelt book some of his own childhood experiences, Titled: Seventh Grade Streets.

As a Vermont Author, Brendon takes Pride in Vermont, and although Vermont was not incorporated into this book, most of the experiences came from Vermont. In the book for creativity sake Brendon used either Massachusetts, Georgia, or Florida.

Brendon Holden hopes as you read this book you will see the reason to Brian becoming protector of the Law. Although the Main Character Brian, has some difficult times, homelessness, joblessness, and living on the streets, he truly desires to have success in the eyes of the Law.

As Brendon put the words in the end of the Story, "I should write a book and call it Seventh Grade Streets," in hopes to comfort those, as it comforts Brendon Holden, to take possession of the streets. To those that see the Law to the systems in the USA as intimidating, that could cause one to find their own on the streets, why not be a part of Seventh Grade streets? I truly hope you enjoy the Book!

