

Where the Water Comes From

A novel set on the Island of North Haven, Maine

“What lasts is not what is taken, but what is tended.”

Part I — The Island Holds

A Measure of Years

When he was sixteen, the water felt different.

The crossing from Vinalhaven to North Haven was not long, but night it carried weight. The engine hummed beneath him as he guided the boat across familiar water, the island lights ahead steady and warm. It was the hundred-year anniversary of J.O. Brown & Son, and the yard was alive in a way it rarely showed.

People gathered where work usually happened. Music carried across the yard. Laughter mixed with the smell of salt and old wood. He tied up and stepped onto the dock, suddenly aware he was part of something older than himself—something built by hands had worked these waters long before he ever touched the throttle.

Later, walking home, he understood the celebration was not just for the yard, but for the continuity of the island itself. Work, water, and people—still holding together after a hundred years.

On other days, the island moved more slowly.

He walked with his great-grandmother down the street and toward the golf course, her steps careful, his unhurried to match them. She spoke of small things—weather, neighbors, the way the island used to look—and sometimes she said nothing at all.

Those walks taught him how time worked on the island. It did not rush. It layered. Generations moved side by side for a while before gently parting.

Years later, the memory of those walks stayed with him, just as clearly as the night crossing the water. Both belonged to the same lesson: some journeys are loud with celebration, others quiet with presence, but all of them leave their mark.

Chapter One — The Island

North Haven woke before the ferry arrived. Long before the horn crossed the water, the yard at J.O. Brown & Son was already alive. Trucks rolled across gravel, lumber stacked neatly, the rhythm of work steady and familiar. Inland, beyond the trees, the freshwater pond rested quietly. Everyone knew where it was. Everyone knew why it mattered. Children were told not to play there. Not because it was dangerous, but because it was necessary.

Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went. Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had.

The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry. Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

Nathan a neighbor was on the way home from work November 4th 2016. It was a Friday and he knew it well. On his drive home he would experience other drivers feeling the same way. On the freeway he had one driver with his bright lights on while driving in the fog. Nathan knew well never to drive with bright lights in the fog. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Nathan had to think to be behind this driver or get behind a big rig truck. He decided to drive on until he got in front of the big rig truck. Before he made his actions known he saw the driver of the bright lights decided to move into lane also. "Yeah, good choice there." Nathan said out loud yet no one could hear him but himself. He was free and clear on the rest of his way home. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

On his driveway, as he approached, Woof Woof, the family dog, started to bark and his daughter, Eliza, knew meant Dad was in the driveway. "Daddy is home; Daddy is home." Eliza had a great smile on her face could melt butter. Clara, Nathan's wife, was getting ready to have the whole family greet the father. She opened the door as Woof Woof and Eliza waited at the front door step until daddy got out of the vehicle. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Upon his driving into the driveway, everyone was eager to see him. Nathan put the car in park, opened the door and put his keys onto a side table. Woof Woof and Eliza ran towards their daddy. Clara was not too far behind. It was a great memory to have. Nathan picked up Eliza who was just 4 years old and was a princess in her father's eyes. He put her down and petted the dog and when Clara arrived she got a nice kiss. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

They all went inside the house. Nathan bent down to Eliza's level and said, "It's Friday and it is no cook Friday so we are having..." With a pause Eliza answered what she wanted for dinner and replied, "Pizza pizza." So there you have it. They are having pizza for dinner. Clara grabbed the phone and called the pizza joint and ordered a cheese pizza for Eliza and a pepperoni for the adults. While was being done, Nathan went upstairs to change and get into comfortable clothes. Nathan came back downstairs and met Eliza in the family room where she was watching cartoons. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Nathan sat down on the couch and Woof Woof jumped up to get some attention. He asked Eliza about her day. Nathan didn't get an answer since Eliza was too much into her cartoons. So Nathan just relaxed there and gave Woof Woof some petting machine attention. Ten minutes later the doorbell rang and Eliza sprung up and said, "Pizza pizza." So Nathan went to answer the door and it was the pizza man with the delivery. Nathan paid him and gave his normal \$5 tip. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

The family was around the kitchen table and proceeded to eat their pizza. Eliza then was open to her daddy's wishes to hear what he had to say. Nathan then asked her how her day was and she replied "Mommy and I went to the laundry place." She couldn't remember much since she was so into her pizza and feeding Woof Woof some of the cheese from her pizza. Clara took over. "We went to the grocery store to get some odds and ends, and went to the ice cream store to get dessert for tonight." Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had. Since it was no cook Friday, it was easy dishes to clean. It would be just paper plates and cups. Nathan made it simple and got a plastic bag to put the left over pizza into, then put the pizza box into the trash. Clara went upstairs to get comfortable before rejoining the family. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Eliza went on to watch her cartoons, Nathan just to relax with the dog on the couch, and Clara to unwind on the couch with a good book to read. It became 8:30 P.M. and Eliza had to stop watching

cartoons and get ready for bed. She, alongside Woof Woof, went upstairs to clean her teeth and get ready for bed. Clara and Nathan set for upstairs as well to get ready for bed themselves. Eliza was all ready to be tucked in so Nathan and Clara proceeded to do so. They kissed her goodnight and closed the door half way. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

They returned back to their bedroom. Nathan made a mad dash for the sink first to clean his teeth, Clara gave out a chuckle. Clara's turn, and proceeded to clean her teeth. Nathan stretched out on the bed, while Clara went back to reading her book. The time went fast and Clara was soon asleep, and Nathan found it fit to do the same. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Clara woke up to a noise and noticed Nathan was not in bed. She figured he went out to investigate the noise. To her dismay, the sound happened again, so she got up. She went to the staircase to hear voices. So she went down the stairs to find the TV was on. She did notice Woof Woof got into the trash can area and was licking the pizza box. She knew this was not the noise she heard. She gave out a soft call to Nathan and was not answered. She turned off the TV, and opened the garage door to call Nathan's name again and once again no answer. She went to see his keys were in the bucket on the side table and they were there. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

She was concerned and worried. She went back upstairs to see if Nathan was in Eliza's room. The house had no human noise, and worried Clara. "Where could he be? This is not like him," she muttered to herself. She pondered what the noise was. What is the answer to the puzzle of where Nathan was? Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had. Clara was going frantic by now, so she decided to call the police. She was not sure whether to call the 911 number or the non emergency number. Finally, she called the non emergency number, explained her case to the desk officer, and he told her they would send a police unit to her house. She had to wait twenty minutes, but to her it felt like an hour. They knocked on the door and she answered. They all went into the family room to talk. She told them about the noise and her husband was missing. They questioned her for a few minutes and explained to her they are there for comfort and to investigate the noise she heard. Then they left.

An hour later, they came back with no answer to the noise she had heard. They said they will send out a detective to talk to her about her missing husband. She asked how long will take, and they told her by morning he should be over. Clara was nervous about staying in the house but she had no other choice to be there and be there for her daughter.

She escorted the police out the door. She closed the door slowly and the policemen's faces became more distant by the second. Finally, she closed the door. She started to give out a cry and went up the stairs. She went back to bed. She tried her best to stay awake, but fell back to sleep. She got up around 6:30 A.M. on a Saturday, which was not like the a clerk household.

She went downstairs and thirty minutes later she heard a knock on the door. She was hoping they found her husband and all would be alright. In fact, it was the detective the police had promised her. The detective's name was a foreman Stein. He had been a detective with the police force for 20 years. He had a good reputation he could almost solve any issue. a foreman gave her one of his business cards to show who he was, so he was allowed inside. They both went to the family room to discuss the case. She went over the sound she heard in the house and how she had noticed her husband was missing. She offered Detective Stein some coffee and he smiled and agreed. He went into questions of why or what would make her husband be missing.

"Do you feel he is missing for a reason?" Detective Stein asked. She answered "No, this is not like Nathan and I know he is not having any type of affair." Eliza came down the stairs to hear voices.

"Detective Stein, this is Eliza; Eliza, this is Detective Stein. Daddy is not here right now and this man is here to help." Clara got out some bread to toast for Eliza. Detective Stein shook his head he did not want any toast himself. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

"Clara, I know this is hard on you and Eliza and I assure you I will get to the bottom of this. This is my promise to you and your daughter." He walked to the front door, let himself out and Clara said "Please make sure there is no harm to my husband." Then she closed the door after him. Clara felt some relief there is an experienced detective on the job for them.

Detective Stein reviewed his notes he had and proceeded to the diner where the family visited occasionally. He showed a picture of Nathan to the hostess, Ruth. She said she knew the face and

said the family comes there for dinner once in a while. They were there two weeks ago. She didn't see anything wrong with the family night. his father was their server night and had put on her party hat even though it was never a party. Yet to his father's eyes, she felt it was. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Detective Stein thanked Ruth and left a business card with her in case she knew of anything more or any sighting of Nathan. He had to wait an hour for a bar next door to open, so he turned around, and went back in the diner to eat some breakfast. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

After eating, he went next door to the bar, and spoke to the bartender, a neighbor, and he said Nathan comes in there once in a while for a drink. her teacher, a worker in the bar, barked up, with jaw chewing gum in her mouth and said Nathan was good at pinball. That was taken note of by Detective Stein. a neighbor said to not to let her teacher's gum chewing bother him since she is trying to quit smoking. her teacher said "I heard that!" Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Detective Stein called dispatch to ask of any out of the ordinary calls last night, and a clerk said the only one they received was a passed out person three blocks away from Nathan's house and was not anything to do with Nathan missing. He thanked her and went back into thinking mode. He was sure he would solve this and with no harm to the family. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

He was thinking of the possibility of Nathan having an affair, yet with whom he did not know. He could not see Nathan having an affair which would affect sweet darling daughter he had. So he ruled out. He proceeded to call some of Nathan's friends to see if they had any clues to assist. No one could help him since most all were at home themselves. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Time was a factor for relief for Clara and Eliza he kept reminding himself. He knew he was good enough to solve this and for the sake of everything he knew he could do it. He did more brainstorming. He figured he needed a clue or a lead. He decided to go back to the house to ask more questions with Clara.

This time he rang the doorbell. Eliza and Clara were there to greet him. She allowed him to come back to the family room since Eliza was watching cartoons. He asked her questions of where her husband might be. She was out of answers and she started to cry again. He kept reminding her he would find Nathan. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

He asked her not to cry; he will be back in an hour to give her his findings and his facts in the case, and to tell her what will be the next step. He left and she was still crying. Detective Stein smiled at her and she gave a smirk back. She closed the door and Eliza came to the door and asked her "Has he found Daddy?" She replied, "He will find out more and come back later tonight."

Later evening, after Eliza was in bed, a gentle knock was at the door. Clara hoped it was Detective Stein. Sure enough, it was, and she put on a hopeful smile he brought good news. They both went to the family room. Woof Woof gave out a small bark and Clara quieted the dog with a treat. "I hope you brought news for me to smile about." Clara smiled

Detective Stein shuffled his papers around and put things into order. "Clara, I have great news!" he explained. She sat there at the edge of the sofa. "I have concluded your husband is not a missing person. I went into great lengths to prove this, as I did visit some of his places of entertainment and food. Now I need you to pay close attention to me."

"Where is he, where is he?" She blurted out loud. "Now Clara you need to listen and not interrupt me" the detective said. "Sorry" she said. So he continued and he said to her, "It is time to wake up; it is time to wake up." She gave a puzzled look, but did listen to him. She sat back in the couch and did what he said and she woke up.

She saw Nathan there next to her asleep in bed, and her worries were gone. That is all this was: a dream. Yet the noise still was around, so she got up again, went downstairs, and the TV was not on this time. The keys have not changed position, yet the dog was into the pizza box. The sound happened again, so she went back upstairs, went into the bedroom, saw her husband's tennis shoes were there and were wet. She went into the laundry basket and nothing was wet.

Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

She went into the bathroom again and the towels were dry, yet she did notice the shower head was dripping. She fixed and fixed the noise. She went to lay down to figure all this out and after falling

asleep, woke up again. She noticed things had changed: the tennis shoes were in a different spot, and dry, the noise was gone and the dog was not chewing on the pizza box.

"All this has been a big dream, a big dream and now Nathan is here I can sleep better. Was all this a big dream? Nathan smiled. Somewhere inland, Thomas was growing into the island the same way he once had.

Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went. Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had.

The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry. Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

Thomas Hale was born, and is a healthy baby. While in the hospital with his mother Margaret, and by their side was the father Samuel, everyone was so happy. Even the grandparents came out to see, his father and a foreman Rose. Pictures were taken, videos were taken. Thomas was a blessing to all he interacted with. That late afternoon, Margaret, and Thomas were scheduled to be released from the hospital. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret and Samuel already had his room ready for his arrival. Room filled with stuff animals, toys, and a baby monitor. Thomas had it made when he got home, even though he would know how to say it in words. He would just babble in his own language only he could understand.

Margaret would be exhausted, Samuel with lack of sleep when all this would be done. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Samuel said "Why don't we get a puppy too, so they can grow up together?" Margaret said back "As long it is not a pit bull." Samuel agreed. They went around and around in what type of dog and finally agreed on a German Sheppard. Samuel thought of the name of "Sergeant", way they dog is in charge of the baby when we are sleeping. Margaret laughed and agreed to those terms. That weekend Samuel would go to a dog rescue and find a puppy German Sheppard.

Samuel went to a rescue place on Saturday, and told the greeter he is looking for a puppy German Sheppard, the greeter pointed to one dog bin. It had a mother and nine puppies. He couldn't believe the mother had nine puppies. He noticed many of them playing with each other and a few just laying down. He felt a good "Sergeant" would be female and not too hyper. He saw two way and thought what Margaret would think if he brought home two.

He noticed one was male and female were not too hyper and were laid back. He had to think of another name for the male dog if he brought him home. The only name he could think of is "Private" since he was thinking how the female would be the main puppy and the male would be second in charge. He made an appointment to bring them home and first the rescue had to take them to get spaded, and neutered before coming to their new home.

Samuel came home with the great news he did, and Margaret was happy to hear it. They both believe to rescue an animal so it would have a better living environment, meaning to be spoiled. They had to wait a week before Samuel could pick them up. They all went to a pet store to get dog tags, dog beds, food, and toys for them too. Bring them home to a happy home and introduce them to Thomas. So everyone is a happy family. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

One week later, Samuel got the call said his dogs are ready to come to their new home. Eager Samuel got into the car and drove to the rescue. Both dogs were getting over their drugs so they were light headed but were glad to go for a drive. Samuel got home and brought the dogs into the nursery room where Thomas was and took pictures of everyone there. There was many pictures taking of this wonderful week. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret was at the door ledge and was smiling at what Samuel was doing and walked up to him and gave him a kiss. She whispered into his ear "I love you." She said; he smiled back at her and they both went into the kitchen where Margaret was putting together a photo memory album for Thomas when he grows up to add more pictures. Samuel said back "I love you too." They both smiled at each other. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. They could not believe how many stuff animals and toys the grandparents bought Thomas. It looked at they bought the whole store. It was good for Thomas to teach him some matters, and to grow up remembering the word, Thank you. Even the toys he has in his room was almost a store itself too. These were Margaret parents who did this; Samuel grandparents are no longer alive. Just how small Thomas was could pass as one of the stuff animals. He remembered Nathan's voice

from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They let Thomas see the dogs as the dogs to see and sniff Thomas, in days to come to repeat this process. Then when Thomas is older, to touch the dogs and the dogs can lick him. They left the dogs in the room while Thomas was sleeping, and not too long after the dogs were sleeping too. Samuel and Margaret are so happy for this moment, as they have a complete family of their own and to have one another. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret went into the kitchen to start an early dinner for both of her and Samuel, since they knew there would not be getting much sleep for awhile. Margaret made grilled cheese melts and opened a bag of chips. While something easy for them and something easy on Margaret's stomach. The time became 8pm so they got into bed and Margaret grabbed a book and Samuel got comfortable. They said their goodnights to one another and gave each other a kiss.

Two hours into their sleep the baby monitor went off, so Margaret got up to find out what was going on and found the baby needed attention. While there the puppies were comfortable asleep. They were making noises of their own but were not loud enough to wake anyone up. Margaret grabbed Thomas and went to the rocking chair to calm him down. Samuel got up to find all the noise he walked into Thomas's room saw Margaret and Thomas in the rocking chair and saw the puppies. Samuel gave out a silent kiss to Margaret, she returned it and he went back to sleep. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Samuel had his own responsibilities; is the puppies. He had laid down 'oops' mats in the nursery. He heard the puppies do a small wine at times showing there are missing their mother. However, they are in a good home now with love and attention. Samuel was happy he did get the male dog too, so the puppies are brother and sister.

Margaret came back to bed at 3am, Samuel was fast asleep. She looked at him and gave a good smile and she went back to sleep. Everyone woke at 7am, Samuel had to get ready for work, while Margaret is now a stay home mother. She used to be a Executive Accountant, when she left the office gave her a party, and her company gave her a nice go away presents, and compensation for her time working there. They had a nice income coming in so there were no worries for that.

Margaret made everyone breakfast, and gave the puppies food too. She had to breastfeed Thomas so was part of his breakfast. Samuel Kissed Margaret goodbye and kissed Thomas on the forehead, and told the puppies they are in charge of the house and guard too. Samuel worked nearby so if Margaret needed anything he was close. Margaret had friends are close too. Margaret cleaned up the place. She was singing to Thomas while she cleaned. He was in his chair moving all about. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret had to clean the 'oops' pads since Samuel forgot. She was looking all the toys Thomas had, yet she knew in time they would be less. She found a big teddy bear, and placed it on the chair. She saw all the toy cars and kept them in the crib. She loved Thomas, and was so glad to see him come into the world. She made she he got all the attention he wanted, as well to give to the puppies. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She left the room and went to the sofa, and grabbed a baby book and started to read to Thomas. He liked and was doing baby noises. Private joined them and stay on the floor. Sergeant stayed in the nursery. She would read another book after another to Thomas until it was nap time for him. When it was nap time everyone took a nap. Margaret laid down in the bed, just thinking how wonderful everything came to be, and she dozed off. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

In her dreams was about Thomas all grown up and to follow his father footsteps being and Engineer. To see him married had have kids, and her and Samuel being grandparents. She was enjoying this too much, so she woke up from it and went out in the backyard. The yard had rose bushes growing roses. The grass was fully green, for the puppies to play in. She was full of happiness. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She heard of waaah sounds. So told her Thomas was awake from his nap. She grabbed him and called the puppies outside, to see if they knew their names and knew of a command. The puppies did hear her but slowly walked into the family and lay down. So she had it half right with them. She had to convince them with a treat to get them outside, and told them this is your yard. That got them to move and they did go into the yard. This was the first time for everyone to be introduced to the backyard. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They puppies rolled around in the grass, Thomas was making noises, Margaret found him warm so it was changing time so she left the puppies enjoy their yard, while she changed Thomas. Once was done, she invited the puppies back inside. They came in as command, and everyone went back into the family room. She turned on the TV to find a child program so everyone could enjoy. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She was repeating some of what the TV was saying so Thomas knew it was coming from her. He just made baby noises. The puppies were at her feet. They stayed there until the phone rang. On the phone was Samuel to check in on everyone. She told him everything was fine, and told him about how the puppies listened to her to go outside. He was pleased to her of all what was going on. He wished her well and to say he loved her. She wished him well coming home and she loved him too. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She decided to put Thomas down on his crib, so she could work on all the pictures everyone took and start a photo album. She wanted to take pictures of him every month until he was a year old then take pictures once a year. She had the puppies watch over Thomas while she was working on this project. The puppies walked into the room and lay down. Now Thomas was fading out to sleep, and the puppies decided to take a nap as well. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret was amazed how many pictures Samuel took, as well the email attachments the grandparents took. But she was determined to make a photo album. She was not sure how many photo albums it would take just with day one. She smiled on every picture going inside a sleeve. She had a few laughs at some the grandparents took. They took some of Margaret holding the baby close to her chest and a picture of her breast was showing. She didn't mind, since it was part of history of the making.

She had to remind Samuel sometime the weekend they go and get more photo albums. It's funny though she would put them into a book, while Samuel would put them on a DVD, so they could watch on the TV screen anytime they wanted to. She was old school and liked them into a book. Samuel took a picture of the nursery before Margaret and Thomas came home, and after with them there and all the toys were there to fill up the room. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She too wanted to cut back on some of the toys in there when he grows up, so he would have more room to play in. She could ask Thomas what toys he didn't want in there anymore since he would not be able to speak. She put it past her since it would not happen for awhile. She took a break and stood at the door and saw them all sound asleep, and at peace. She loved to see this and so she took a picture of it with her cell phone. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She walked into the kitchen to get herself a drink; she didn't want soda so she had to have milk. Milk and a cookie to add she had. She drank her milk and laugh at she had a milk mustache. She ate the cookie and wondered to the bedroom to lay down so she could listen to the baby monitor. She made herself comfortable. No sound coming from the baby monitor so she started to find herself going to sleep.

Sergeant woke her up at 2pm, she had to go outside. Margaret was happy to see the puppies are learning to ask to go outside. She let her out, and got herself some more milk. "Sergeant is a smart dog, so will be Private." She said to herself. Now Private was at the door to be let out as well. She let him out too. Thomas was still sleeping which she was glad about to hear a quiet house. She remembered when it was when she was at home laying in bed being less than a month pregnant with Thomas. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Private scratched at the door to be let back in, Sergeant followed into too. Margaret got them a treat for good behavior. They liked the peanut butter treats the most. So they were nibbling away on those, while Margaret walked in on Thomas. He was moving around in his sleep. She thought was so cute. Not before staying there a big waaaah came out. She picked him up and felt warm so off to the changing table they went to. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas was fully cleaned up so Margaret sat down on the sofa and gave Thomas his treat.

Margaret didn't want to turn on any TV, mostly didn't want to turn to any news might mind set bother Thomas. So she just sat there and talked to him. He was enjoying himself; the dogs finished their treat and lay beside Margaret Legs. "I think too, these dogs will be good watch dogs for us." She said to herself. She was pleased with their matters, and behavior around Samuel and herself, and

mostly around Thomas. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret went to tickle his belly and Private stood up. "It is ok Private, mommy is playing with Thomas." Private lay back down. Margaret continued to tickle Thomas belly and he gave out a few baby sound chuckles and he was enjoying that. Margaret started to tickle his whole body, and Thomas wiggled a lot of excitement. "Mama loves you little wiggleworm." She said to Thomas, so his first nickname was wiggleworm. She didn't want to do too much or she would have to change him again. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Soon to make dinner this time she could make up a dinner instead of a quick fix. She made a soup with crotons and a light chicken dish. This way she and Samuel could get in a sensible meal. While the dogs get their own food and Thomas would try some of the soup. At around 5pm Samuel came home saw everyone alert and awake. Samuel kisses Margaret, kissed Thomas on the forehead, and rummaged his hand over the dogs forehead to so of Dad's home. Samuel went to change to something more comfortable. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret called Samuel and asked if he could watch Thomas while she finished up with dinner. He agreed, and she told him of his new nickname and Samuel laughed. He asked about the puppy's behavior the rest of the day and she told him about how Sergeant asked to outside and Private followed her, as well when she started to tick Thomas how Private stood up and told him it was OK. He was pleased with the puppy's behavior and wanted to give them a treat, but Margaret wanted to wait until everyone had their dinner. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They all sat down for dinner, and Samuel went into his day, and tried to make sense of it, since Margaret was not much knowledgeable about Engineer work. Samuel talked to Thomas and asked him about his day, even though he could not answer him but with baby sounds. "One day I will ask him what those mean." Samuel said. Both he and Margaret started to laugh. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Everyone enjoyed their dinner, and after the dishes were done, Thomas was put to bed. Samuel and Margaret were on the sofa and the dogs were at their feet. They turned on the news since Thomas was asleep they could watch something of their level. No new news, the same old stuff you would see on any given day. They went to the bedroom took the baby monitor with them. The dogs went into Thomas's room to lay down. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

"Samuel you forgot about the 'oops' pads this morning." Margaret said. "I will take care of them tomorrow morning. Sorry about that." She did remind them about the dogs wanting out, so maybe they will wake him up instead to be asked to go outside. Everyone was asleep by 9pm. Even Margaret who had her nose buried into a book was asleep too. It was quiet until 11pm were Thomas woke up, and Sergeant barked. Margaret got up to see what was going on, it was just Thomas wanted a late night snack. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret said "Thanks Sergeant, is a good girl." She praised the dog. Private just stood up yet didn't bark, as if they were rotating shift on who was on shift. They both lay back down and Margaret took Thomas and took him to the rocking chair. Samuel was fast asleep and didn't wake up to any noise. No one was a heavy sleeper in household. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret was able to get Thomas happy within the hour, and changed him too. So she went back to sleep and no one didn't get up until 7am. For the same routine would happen as the day before.

"Honey, I need more photo albums this weekend." Margaret reminded herself. "Sure thing, I am thinking to get Thomas toy chests were we can put some of his toys in so we have more room." Samuel added. "That would be a wonderful idea, dear. I know he will outgrow some of those toys soon." Margaret said. So it was a date for everyone to go out to a toy store, to get a chest, and more photo albums. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Friday was only two days away, so they had no rush to do all this, nor feel they had to do it right away. Breakfast was made, Samuel to do the 'oops' mats and he was off to work again. While Margaret did the clean up and stared her day with Thomas and the dogs. The dogs got a treat for good behavior for the night. The dogs like idea to get a treat for their service. Margaret sat Thomas on the sofa and stared singing to him and calling him Wiggleworm, and tickling his belly again. For

Thomas would still chime in with giggles, and moving around a lot. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Two months went by, and with Thomas learning how to say mama, and papa was a challenge to him he would say "Mapa and Dapa" instead at least is what Margaret and Samuel could get from Thomas lingo. They accepted it and wait until he got older to pronounce it better. Thomas had his toy chest, and stuff animals were in there, and a few stuff animals were for the dogs to have a chew toy for. Thomas wouldn't notice that. Thomas could not pronounce the dog's names, so he just called them doggies. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. The dogs were growing up too. They have learned now to go to the door to be let out, bark at the mailman, bark at the doorbell. They are learning of Please, and Thank You. Samuel is thinking of making the 3rd bedroom the dogs. They would have their own bed to sleep on, and if they were any noise they would be fast acting. He had to run this by Margaret. Samuel was pleased with the dog's growing up and protecting the family while he was there or not there.

One day when Margaret was cleaning up Thomas's room she went to put the toy cars in the chest, and when she got to two different toys, Thomas learned the No word fast. He told Mapa "No" when she wanted to put a dump truck and a bulldozer into the chest. "Sweety you don't play with these anymore, but if you like I will keep them in your crib" Thomas smiled; guess he has not mastered yes yet. So she put them into his crib and put other stuff into the chest. Where Thomas didn't say the word No to her on anything else she did want to be put in there. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He was learning a lot, since he is watching Tiny tots TV, and plus Margaret and Samuel talking to him. Margaret likes talking to him when it is play time on the sofa, and Samuel talks to him at the dinner table, or when it is the weekend were everyone talks to each other. Margaret had to tell Samuel about how Thomas has mastered the "No" on his own. "Kids these days can learn a lot when you talk to them or have a general conversation with someone." Samuel said. Margaret said "I know next thing we know we have another Einstein in our hands." The both smiled at each other. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Next day came and Margaret saw on the calendar checks ups for the dogs and for Thomas. She got everyone into the minivan, and headed to the vet first. The dogs stayed at heal while heading into the vet office, while she was able to balance Thomas on her chest. Each dog had to be weighed in, and the receptionist took the both away to a room to have ready for Margaret to go into. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Each dog had to get on the table, while the vet did its thing. Both dogs checked out healthy which was a good thing, and gave them both a treat for coming in there. Private barked to say thank you for the treat, while Sergeant wagged her tail for the thank you. So everyone got back in the minivan and Margaret headed back home. Private still wanted to bark but Margaret said "Not now, I am driving." Private got quiet. When they got home they both started to bark, so they were happy to be back at home. Margaret let them smell the front lawn to see if they needed to go before going back inside.

Once inside, Margaret told them to behave and be on guard. She locked the door and headed back to the minivan and off she and Thomas went for his check up. While in the waiting room, Margaret showed Thomas some of their toys they had. He was not interested in their toys so he just sat in his chair and laid his head back. Once his name was called Margaret said "That is you Kid-e-o" They went inside the doctor office and sat him down on the table. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They waited for the doctor for ten minutes, and the doctor came in and started talking to Thomas "So how are you feeling today, Thomas?" Thomas just gave out a many sounds, so the doctor said back "Oh, you don't say?" as if he was understanding baby talk. He directed his attention to Margaret now, and asked routine questions and the doctor liked the answers. He was in and out of there in less than 30 minutes. Margaret strapped him in again in the minivan and started to leave. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She was talking to him on the way home telling him once they get home it is feeding time, then nap time. Even she was up for a nap too. They got home and the dogs begin to bark, "Good dogs, it is me and Thomas." She said to them from the front door. She opened the door, and the dogs acted as they haven't seen her in a long time. She put Thomas down on the couch and gave each dog a treat. She got ready for Thomas's treat. After Thomas's treat she changed him and put him down on his crib. She went to the bedroom and just lay on the bed. He remembered Nathan's voice from the

dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

There were no more disturbances for awhile. Margaret was able to take a nap too. She felt relieved and the dogs were on alert but they too were able to take a nap as well. Everyone got up, Margaret took Thomas to the sofa, and turned on the Tiny tots show. Thomas was enjoying this show he started to laugh instead of an audible sound was not clear. Margaret was happy to see him grow. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

A year almost passed and Thomas was more responsive, and the dogs even too. Thomas had now mastered the Yes and No. However, the Mapa and Dapa were still in effect. Margaret pointed out the bulldozer and the dump truck to the chest, and once again Thomas said "No!" so she left them in his crib and waited for another time to bring it up again. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Samuel asked everyone if they wanted to go to the park this weekend. Everyone said yes. The majority was for Margaret to say yes or no. It was all in favor for yes. So they would pack a lunch and take the dogs with them and find a right place to have fun at the park. Thomas can go to his first park while the dogs get to run around. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That weekend came and Margaret had everything ready, and she went to Thomas and asked if he wanted to bring any of his toys. Not knowing he did understand her, and he pointed out the dump truck and the bulldozer. "Finally, he wants to get use of these toys. Surprised too he understood me." She said to herself. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Everything was in the minivan but the humans, dogs were already in there waiting patiently, here come the humans. They were off to the park, and found a good parking spot to add. Unloading and then found a good park bench. Margaret saw a play area with sand Thomas could play at, and enclosed and large area for the dogs to come in. Samuel was having fun and enjoying himself, and Margaret was too. Margaret took Thomas to the sand area and took out the dump truck and bulldozer for him to play with. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas took notice of the sand, was not sure at first what it was, but took notice it was something you play with. He would fill his bulldozer with sand and dump it into the dump truck and he moved the dump truck to another location and dumped it. He liked this idea, and Margaret was smiling. Samuel on the other hand was playing with the dogs in their area. He would tell them to run around, and enjoy themselves. They did, smelled different scents, sniffed other dogs. Found locations to go potty, He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Everyone was having fun in their own way. Margaret set up some food for her and Samuel to eat. Samuel would grab some chips to eat. Margaret would eat some carrots and a few chips. When it came lunch time Margaret did her thing for the breastfeeding so no one could see her breast. Samuel on the other hand ate a sandwich and a soda. He fed the dogs treats, and they would bark for more, and Samuel had plenty for them.

Margaret was taking pictures of Thomas with his toys in the sand playground. Samuel was taking pictures of the dogs in the dog area. She added more to photo albums Margaret has already started. She never kept count of how many pictures she is taking but the memories are to be remembered. Once everyone got their fun, everyone headed back to the minivan and headed home. Margaret was fading out, Thomas was already sleeping. The dogs were still enjoying the air came into from the windows. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

At home Samuel took Thomas inside, along with the dogs and the basket. He then awoke Margaret to say they are back at home so she can take a nap in bed while he got Thomas ready for a late afternoon nap. The dogs got prepared for their nap as well. Everyone was exhausted. Samuel went to print out the pictures he did with the dogs, so Margaret had to put into the albums. He reached down for the albums and noticed Margaret had already four albums full. "There is a lot of memories here." He said to himself, but knew it was all worth it. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He went to lie down on the sofa after putting Thomas down in his crib. He added his dump truck and bulldozer with it. So everyone was at peace with themselves, and Samuel just lay there, didn't turn on the TV, just a place called home and with no noise. The puppies were still puppies to his eyes, no matter how old, or older they got, they were puppies. He remembered Nathan's voice from the

dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He got up and went back to the photo albums and see if there was one called puppies or Sergeant Private, or something was labeled the dogs. He found one. He went back to sofa and opened it up. Inside was pictures where the puppies were a nine months old. Samuel had a smile face on every page he went through, and chuckled at some others. All together he was pleased with the photos he and or Margaret took of them.

There was one showing of Sergeant and Private wrestling in the backyard. There were plenty of them together. Only a few showed the dogs separately. They are good dogs, and Samuel and Margaret have trained them well. They are family to him, and their older sister and brother to Thomas. They guard Thomas as if they are his bodyguards too. They would bark at any sounds they were not familiar with. Know how to walk to the door to be let out. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas on the other hand was growing too. Samuel looked at the time it has been, and noticed it is almost a year Thomas will be which will be in a few weeks. Samuel shook his head, and put his hand over his face. "Where has the time gone?" He muttered to himself. "I can't believe my Thomas is going to be One already." He kept muttering to himself. He wondered what you get a one year old these days, and how smart they become. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He got up again and went to the computer and used a search for 'what do you get a one year old'. He was amazed on what you can do. When Samuel was young he still gets toys or trinkets. For the search it came up with electronic toys, talking toys, toys with voice command. Samuel was dumbfounded all these toys for a one year old. He kept on searching for things and found stuff with the Tiny Tots logo on it so was a better start for Thomas. He wanted him to be more speaking intelligent then hide behind electronic toys. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He ordered items will improve his grammar, and use of words. This way he can get smarter than his father and mother. He had to joke to himself over that, since Thomas is only going to be one. He was glad he made this choice, as he knew Margaret would agree on. Plus he has many toys and other items he can play with. Then he knew some day he would want a car, or something higher of value when he got older. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He went back to the sofa, and took a small nap himself. He had some nice dreams, mostly showing of happiness the family has become. Meeting Margaret, before they were married was a happy time. His parents alive and how they loved Samuel, and his achievements. Happy dreams until he did wake up and find everyone else was awake but Samuel. He wanted to be awake before Thomas got up mostly since he didn't want his son to see dad as a lazy person. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Only Thomas got a dinner, Margaret and Samuel had the leftover food from the park. It was not much but neither one of them was hungry. Samuel fed the dogs, and Margaret and Samuel with Thomas watched TV the Tiny Tone Network. Samuel had a laugh over some stuff was being showed. Since he grew up with another type of network and compared it to the one his watching now. He went along with the educational information they are showing, since this is now and was back then. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Margaret liked the network, and enjoyed what they are showing. She went along with everything being said and educated with. She went along with buying Thomas what he needs to be more educated and better use for words. Thomas just said "Yes" to what was being said even thought he did understand what they were saying. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas now was going into High School with different amount of kids. When he was in Junior High he had a group of friends. Now will be a group of friends and new ones to add. Thomas had the same classes and he added one, Arcutecheal Drawing. He figured to learn something extra in school other than the general education the school offers. He figured too it will benefit him somehow. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The first day in school he met with some of his old buddies, and some of those buddies had new friends so Thomas got to meet new faces. They would hang out in the belchers at lunch time. Some of his new friends had him in their classes. Thomas felt comfortable going into those classes. He met new teachers and what they expected of him too. He remembered Nathan's voice from the

dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When he went into Arcutechual Drawing he was the only there from his friends. No one else was in his class. His teacher Mr. her teacher, was a serious teacher, he took his job seriously. One the first day he passed out what pencils are needed, rulers, everything is required for the class. He pointed out to miss a day of class will only put you behind a day, and there is no makeup time for it.

Thomas took note of how serious he was, and make sure he didn't get on his bad side. Plus Thomas felt safe in the class without any of his buddies, in case they wanted to mess around, Mr. a neighbor would put a stop to fast. To have a class to know no one was a benefit to Thomas. He would meet new friends. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

School ended so Thomas told his friends he had to get home so his mom can buy him the supplies he needs for Arcutechual Drawing. They all did the fist bump goodbye. Thomas then rode his bike home. "Mom, I am home!" Thomas said. "Hello Honey, How was your first day of school?" She asked. He went on detail (as she did in junior high school) about his first day. He told her about the supplies he needed for Arcutechual Drawing, so she grabbed her purse, and they ran off to the office supply store. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When he got there some of his friends where there buying calculators for math and Thomas forgot he had to get one too. Thomas took out the requirements from Mr. a clerk. He saw two others there are from his class doing the same thing. He just said Hello to them. They got what they needed which was a great deal and had to be, to satisfy Mr. Burs. Thomas felt he needed something to put this all into other than his backpack. They looked around and asked a sales person about what Thomas had if they had something to put all into, they did, so they put in the cart to buy. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas was all ready for Mr. a foreman. He waved goodbye to others who were still there. Thomas told Samuel about his new class. Samuel was happy, other than General Education. Thomas is finding something he might like to do. Thomas welcomed the dogs with a stand up hug. Went to get them a treat and took them outside to play before he had to get ready for homework then dinner.

Both Sergeant and Private were so happy to see him; they barked outside with enjoyment Thomas was home. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

At dinner time Samuel asked Thomas if this class he wants to do, and would not be hurt if he didn't. Thomas said "I do, I like a new challenge in my life and I think this class will do for me." He said. "Ok dear, just remember your dad and I support you on what you want to do. We will always stand by your side." Margaret said. "Thanks Mom, and Dad, I appreciate that, and need it too." Thomas said. They were sitting down to a pot roast Margaret made. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

After dinner Thomas went to do homework, and re-read Mr. his father requirements. "I bet tomorrow I will see less people in this class." Thomas said to himself. Mr. his father requirement was pay attention to detail, and a sharp eye for development. Thomas said "I guess I will learn from him, or I will have to teach myself." He went on to do his math homework from Ms. Harper. The class seems easy to Thomas, but we shall see throughout the class period. She was a short teacher, so she had to use a stool to use the highest she could reach on the chalkboard, and use a ruler on the chalkboard. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The next day, new day in school as Thomas was ready for it. He met up with some of his buddies, and they talked about their classes, and how some felt to goof off. Thomas didn't like idea, and felt lucky of the class means a lot to him no one in class with him. He went to Ms. Harper class, and asked everyone turn in their homework. Shock enough, everyone did turn in their homework so people respected Ms. Harper. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Bell rang, next was Mr. her teacher class, as Thomas predicted some were not in the class with him. Mr. her teacher told the class "If you find this class boring, there is the door, I don't want to waste my time nor yours so leave now." No one left. "Ok class did everyone get the requirements I asked of you all." Mr. her teacher questioned the reading skill the class had. Everyone did get the requirements for the class. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

"Ok, since some of you are here to learn, some of you are here to achieve. Or some of you are here for both. Let me tell you this, I might be hard, but the long run you will be taught a new life." He explained. Now bring out your white piece of paper, place it on your stand. Now look at it, sure it is

all white, but look at it as something you build and something is real." He said.

Thomas gave out a breath of air, and saw what is to be there, and saw people walking and using the doors, going inside using the elevators. "Does anyone have any questions so far?" Mr. Burs question. No one did. "So you are going to be a great class to teach." Mr. a neighbor said. Thomas was staring at his white canvas and was imaging a shopping center with clothing store, and mom and pop type stores. This place would include a parking structure. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Mr. a clerk said "Does anyone have ideas, Claire, what about you? Claire replied "I can see on my white piece of paper a high tower with extension to another building. Mostly is an office type of building." "Very good, Claire. Anyone else a foreman; what about you his father?" his father went on saying an oval type of building in a park, and is structured for indoor walking of pets. Mr. a clerk was happy with the answers he is given. "Part of this class is to use your imagination. Than to use your white piece of paper to use it and to draw it out, then to make it into reality.

Thomas thought his was cool, and how what he thought of was using his imagination and how this class is what he expected to be. The homework was on a smaller piece of paper is to draw out our ideas we had and to turn to a building under construction using the same structure. Thomas could do that, he felt and knew this is right choice for him. After class was lunch time so he met up with his buddies on the bleachers. He told them about Mr. her teacher's class, and how he can use his mind to his homework, and class time. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They were all "So cool." About it and told Thomas about their classes they are taking and how cool theirs were. Thomas was back to them "So Cool" to the ones he does not share a class with. a neighbor said to Thomas "Ms. Harper is so short I thought she was a student." Thomas and a neighbor shared a laugh "a neighbor, you are a nutcase." Thomas replied. They all shared a story about a class they had which no one their buddies were in, and enjoyed lunch time. Not too long it was 5th period for them all, and most them shared the same English teacher. Mrs. Glumic. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Mrs. Glumic's English classes was based on reading homework, than a quiz the next day or watches a movie and write up a summary about what you have seen. Mrs. Glumic's English class had three of Thomas's buddies in it. Some of his buddies did goof around in this class, and she didn't pay much attention to their goofing off, since their grade was based on politeness, friendliness, homework. These buddies were up for a bad grade if they continued doing what they are doing. Thomas had no part of their goofing around. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

To Thomas this was an easy A for him for this class, since he did pay attention to what he read, he liked to read. To write a summary of what was shown was not a problem for him as he liked movies too. He was friendly to others in the class, so there you have it an easy A for Thomas. Just he had to remind the goofing off buddies of what they are doing is harming their grade. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Six period came and was Music of the World People. This class was based on music, and artist who made music. There was no homework in this class. Just to listen to music, review it, discussion. So to Thomas another easy A class. He didn't pick out the classes his councilor did. Thomas was not a big fan of music, since he just listen to CD of classical music or some type of heavy metal so to a discussion he would do OK at it. The teacher was Mr. Peck. A late 80's bloomer, and hair down to his shoulders, and glasses looked like he was in the 60's, He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

7th period came and Mr. a clerk was the teacher and he was so mentally into science he could be the next man on Mars. He talked boring stuff about science, which Thomas felt he would explode on impact hearing him teach. This class would be a challenge to Thomas was not a big fan of science. He knew about the man on the moon. The Challenger blowing up, and the satellites have roamed around Mars. He felt is all he needed to know or watch the news on anything new with science. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Finally the last bell rang, and off Thomas went out of Mr. a foreman class. Thomas feels if he wears ear plugs he could still understand what he is saying yet not to hear his voice. He didn't want to do anything get an F in the class. So he just faced it head on, and learns something MAYBE, or just nod my head as if he understands what he being said. He caught up with his buddies to talk about the classes they were not in. Mostly was Science since they had a different teacher, some for

English and none for Acute Drawing. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas and a few buddies went to his place. When he got home he told his mother some of them were with him. He introduced them to his mother. "Nice to meet you guys," Margaret said. "Anyone want a drink, soda, water?" Margaret asked. They all said no thank you. They all headed for Thomas' room. They chilled there for about an hour, and then headed home. Margaret and Thomas waved goodbye to them and Thomas went back to his room to pull out his homework. Day two was not so bad, not any from Mr. his teacher, or Mr. Peck, so made it easy. Ms. Glumic's homework was to read two chapters of a book. Mr. his father was to study a chart of chemicals. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Thomas's dad got home he asked if he could get help with Mr. a neighbor's homework. His dad said "Sure, what type of homework?" "Science and I have to study a chart of chemicals." "Thomas said with a small grunt to his voice. "Oh, so you want my help so you don't blow up the house if you get chemical homework." Samuel said sarcastically. "Real funny, real funny, Dad." Thomas said. Thomas got done the other homework before dinner then after dinner went over the chemicals with his dad. His dad taught him a trick or two how to remember them. In Thomas's mind was get me out of this class, but was a requirement so he had to take science. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The next day came and turning in homework. Mr. a clerk was prepared for his homework to be turned in so see how his students did. He enjoyed all what they did, and complemented a few of them. One of them was Claire's; she had a great design and concept. She stayed with a high tower with extension to another building an office type of building. Then Thomas's as he stayed with his concept of a shopping center with clothing store, and mom and pop type stores. This place would include a parking structure. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The whole class clapped for these people. Thomas liked and he is fitting in well with the other students and the teacher. Mr. a foreman went on to tell everyone their imagination was good and learned from looking at a piece of paper what it can do. The next homework was to building structure is of a high rise, and has a clothing store, and a bank. Some already had some this on their visions on the blank piece of paper already so would make it easier on them. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

For Ms. Harper all we got was more homework from the text book. Leonardy in the class decided to show his opinion by farting in the class. Everyone started to laugh. Ms. Harper just asked Leonardy to open a window so people would stop laughing at him and what he did. Some students complained of the air, and Holly who sat next to him gave Leonardy a dirty look for what he did. At least it brought the class from a quiet stare at the book to a break with pun intended quietness. Mrs. Glumic was an easy class to discuss. What was read now was a test on it, so Thomas knew the answers since again he likes to read. Thomas read the questions and knew the right answer to put. her teacher next to him asked if he could copy Thomas's answers as her teacher didn't to any of the reading. "Dude, I don't want to get caught." Thomas said forcefully. her teacher said "Oh man." her teacher asked his father next to him to copy his answers instead. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas knew he lost a friend in this class, but he didn't want to lose a good grade over cheating and then know he can't be trusted within his teacher's instructions. When everyone was done everyone had to pass them forward. Thomas was the one who would get them all and turn into Mrs. Glumic's desk. After was done she asked us to pull out our books and for a neighbor to read the first three pages. a neighbor did, and so he would remember them (we hope) for when to take home to read he would do his homework. Thomas felt she knew a neighbor was up to no good, so he was glad he didn't share his answers. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

As for Mr. a clerk; can't say much other than Thomas remembered some of the tricks his dad taught him the night before. Mr. a clerk went on to discuss more chemicals and how the students are to remember these as there will be a test the next day. So Thomas wrote them down, and watched Mr. a clerk mouth move without words. "Thomas, are you paying attention?" Mr. a clerk barked. "Yes, I am I wrote down the chemicals you want us to learn and there will be a test tomorrow." Thomas quickly answered back. Mr. a clerk said "Seem someone is listening to me." He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That night Thomas shared his day and told them about Mr. a foreman was happy with the homework he did, and Samuel was so excited to hear this. Asked if there was science homework, as Thomas dragged his head and said "Yeah dad, we have to remember chemicals he talked about to today in class. I wrote them down." "Great son, I will help you with this after dinner." Samuel said with a big smile. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. After dinner, Samuel said "Ok, let see those chemicals." "Dad, it seems you excited helping me science." Thomas said. "Son, I went through the same problems you are and will face and my dad helped me with it." Samuel said back. That put an ease on Thomas, just seemed his dad wanted to take the class all over again and get the grade for Thomas. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas got a good night rest after doing the science work with his dad. Thomas felt there will be a no end to science classes, and he will always have to face Mr. his father. Since this is his first year in High School, things will change throughout the rest of the years to come. Thomas woke up at 7am for school, ate a light breakfast from Margaret who make a nice breakfast for all. Ran out to his bike and rode to school. Met up with his buddies, and proceed with his day. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas could not wait until Mr. a neighbor class, he felt so confident. He joined the rest of the class and noticed another gentleman with Mr. a neighbor. After the bell rang, Mr. a neighbor introduced the gentleman "Ladies and gentleman, this is Mr. her teacher, from her teacher and Stein. His company is one of the largest architectural design companies. He is here to see how you all have come with learning from me. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He is here too to ask for a design from his own office to see how you do versus his own staff." Thomas thought was right up his alley. Mr. a clerk gave a description of what he is looking for. Mr. a clerk was firm on what he wanted since he will be giving the design to the contractor company for review. The contractor committee will return will give to the city board for approval to start the work. Thomas was scared but knew he could do it. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

All day Thomas was thinking about this, and still listened. He did Mr. a foreman test, and knew he would get a decent grade. Since his dad helped him to remember the chemicals Mr. a foreman discuss he knew he was going to be correct. Every other class was a blank to him even though he took down homework assignments. He just could not wait to tell his parents of the challenge he had. The next day is when the students of Mr. her teacher do this for Mr. his father. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He shared to his parents about his day and what challenge he has the next day with Mr. a clerk class with Mr. a neighbor. They both were ecstatic over the news. They wished Thomas well, and told him he should get a good night rest so he can prepare for Mr. a clerk class. He agreed and first to do all his homework so he can get rest. He felt confident over it, and make sure he was ready and to do excellent work. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The next day came and Thomas did get a good night rest, and was ready for Mr. Burn's class. When time period came he came into the class with a big smile. He saw Mr. a foreman was there ready to see the students work and evaluate what he needed. When it came for Mr. a foreman to pick the right design, he picked Claire. Thomas was shocked but was pleased she was chosen. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Claire thanked Mr. her teacher for the assistance he has given and thanked Mr. his father. Yet there was one thing with Claire, she was dedicated to her Math, and had no time for Mr. his father offer to work for him two nights a week. Thomas said to himself, "Oh good I have another shot at this after all." Thomas sat there and acted as he had to pee and had to be let out of the class to relieve himself. Mr. his father went on with Claire design, and how much he would have like to have her work for him. He talked to Mr. her teacher in quietness. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

After a few quiet words of discussion, Mr. a clerk looked at the class and looked around. Thomas was thinking "Is he trying to find me, I am not hard to find. There are only seven of us." Mr. a clerk walked up to Thomas and relooked at his design and said, "This gentleman is another good concept of what I am looking for." Mr. a neighbor said. "Thank you, Sir." Thomas replied. "Call me Caleb." Caleb a neighbor said. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on

salt air.

Mr. his father said "Ok, Thomas are you ready to spend Wednesday and Friday late afternoons at Caleb a foreman office?" Thomas replied "Sure!" So it was a done deal, Thomas would go to Caleb a foreman office on Wednesdays and Fridays to learn more of arcutechal drawing. He didn't know much about Caleb a foreman so when he got home he asked his dad. His dad told him Caleb a foreman is the co founder of a foreman and Stine, one of the largest Acutechal businesses. Thomas didn't know this but know now. His dad was proud of him and his mother was excited. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That day was a special day for Thomas; he felt much appreciated. He knew he could do this and was confident to go to Caleb her teacher office do assist, watch, do whatever it took to make sure his first job goes smoothly. Next Wednesday will be his first day so he will make sure he is prepared for it. His mom offered him a ride there, and he might take her up on it on the first day just to make sure he knows where it is, and how to get there. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas told his buddies this the next day and they all jabbed him a few liners to tease Thomas. They meant no harm, since no one held a job so they could pick on him. One was impressed with Thomas he was saying how he should be a leader in some fashion. They still enjoyed teasing Thomas, and all Thomas could do was laugh, not a laugh of feeling he is better than them, a laugh of enjoying the teasing. Even when he went to Mr. a neighbor class Thomas didn't show of feeling he was better than them, they all appreciated Thomas for who he was. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That Saturday morning, early in the morning, the phone rang. It was the nursing home where Margaret's father was staying at. Stating her father has a shortness of breath, and nonresponsive to request from the nurses or doctors. Margaret and Samuel rushed out the door to go see him. When they got there Margaret's dad face was pale and his right hand was shaking. Margaret asked if he father had a stroke. The main doctor on duty stated "No, I ruled out."

She talked to her dad, and he just laid there in this condition. He didn't respond to her words, or requests. She asked the doctor is there anything they can do to help, the doctor said medication to slow down the shaking, but he has to come out of the pale face himself. That she should not worry too much as he can help her father get back his health. She felt better and wanted to be kept in the loop of things. The doctor assured her he will be fine. That if he needs anything from her; he will call.

Samuel and Margaret left and Margaret felt at loss with words to Samuel of how she feels about if her father dies, but the doctor assured her he will be fine, but she is worried. Samuel talked to her on the way home and made her feel better, a little bit. Her father was old and her mother was old too, as she was there at the nursing home too, but the difference is her mother has ahlzimers and she would not remember if she was told what happened.

When they got home they told to Thomas what happened and Thomas was concerned too. They told Thomas there is nothing we can do right now. Thomas was still worried; his grandfather is the one who gave him the dump truck and bulldozer when he came home from the hospital when he was born. He asked him mom where they store the toys when Thomas was younger and she pointed out where in the garage and Thomas took down a box, and found the dump truck, and took some time but found the bulldozer. He went to his room with them and placed them on his dresser and said "Get well Grandpa." He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That Sunday Margaret called the nursing home, and was told her father was doing much better he suffered a shock symptom reaction. That he is under medication for that. Margaret was relieved to hear this. She told the nurse who answered the call she will come down and see her father. The nurse told her is fine, just a short visit. Margaret agreed. Margaret updated the family on how her father was doing, and everyone was happy to hear the news.

While Samuel and Margaret went to visit her father, Thomas pulled out the photo albums Margaret has been collecting over the years. He went to when to when he was born he saw when his grandfather gave him the bulldozer, and dump trick. That put a smile on Thomas face, how he still has those toys and he mom never threw them out. He put the album back and went to his room to stare at the bulldozer and dump truck. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Samuel and Margaret arrived at the nursing home they checked in with the nurse on duty. The nurse reminded them to have a short visit. Margaret went into the room first, and father was just laying flat on his bed. "Hello Dad, how are you?" she said softly. "You can speak up here it is only myself in this room." He said back. "Good old dad with his humor again." She said with a hint back of his ways. "Yep." He replied. "That shock symptom reaction just tells you I am getting old. No worries Darling Daughter." He said. She knew if he calls her Darling Daughter, is saying something, not sure of what he is trying to say or prove. She just let it be.

"Hello Sir." Samuel said, and a clerk (Margaret grandfather) said back "Hello Samuel, keeping the family together I see." He replied. Samuel replied, "Oh yes Sir, happy as a clam." Samuel replied. Then there was quietness for a bit, and no one said a word. Than a screech sound came from Margaret "DAD!! Samuel, get the nurse!" Samuel went to get the nurse, and her dad suffered a heart attack and passed away. Margaret was crying into Samuel's shoulder, and the nurse called the doctor. The doctor came in and pronounced her father deceased.

Margaret had to tell her mother a foreman has died. She knew her mom would not remember but she still had to tell her. "Oh Dear, he is taking a nap." Her mom said. "Mom, dad is dead." Her mom still said he is taking a nap and don't disturb him. Margaret knew it was no luck getting to her mom about her dad, so she left and talked to the doctor to arrange the funeral service to take her dad away.

When Margaret and Samuel came home they updated Thomas on the news, Thomas didn't take it so lightly, since he was just hoping his grandfather would get better. Everyone hug each other, and comforted each other as best they could. Samuel made dinner for everyone it was a quiet night at the his father residence. Margaret made the call to the funeral service, and was told they would pick her father up in an hour and take him to the funeral home. She thanked them, and went straight to bed. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas has not told them his news, but waited for the right time, but had to tell them before Wednesday since Caleb was expecting him. Everyone went to bed. Thomas lay awake on his bed for a few more minutes and stared at the toys on his dresser. Than quietly everyone was asleep. This weekend was not the best for good news, but how things came to be is one thing, but the outcome is another. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. In the middle of the night, Margaret woke up, and went to the sofa to lie down. She was having memories of her father. She would think of the early times she had with him when she was a child. How mom and dad were healthy and Margaret was just a child and no worries, and no fears. Margaret would put a smile on when she had a great memory of her father. Samuel woke up noticed Margaret was missing, but did not go looking for her, to let her have quiet time with her father.

Monday morning came, and Thomas got ready for school. He made his own breakfast so his mother can take care of matters at hand. Samuel was with her to comfort her. He was there if she needed anything. Thomas left for school, and met up with his buddies. He told them about his grandfather, and they said they were sorry to hear of the news. The bell rang and they all left for their classes. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas went to his classes yet he was not himself. He did participate in the classes but he had his grandfather in his mind. He was remembering the years when he and his grandfather did things together, or with his dad included too. He just was not fully there. His teachers noticed this but did not question him. They let him be, but would inquire at home later about it. Thomas was ready for Mr. her teacher classes since this is the place of opportunity was given to him. He did enjoy class for this day. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

School ended and Thomas rode his bike home slowly. He stopped a few times just to get more of air on his face rather than the wind blowing on it while riding his bike. When he got home he was quiet to open the door. He saw his mom still in her bathrobe, but his father fully dresses. They said hello to him when he came inside, so did the dogs. Thomas came into the room after putting away his backpack. They inquired about his day. He told them it was just OK, but had news to share. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He told them about Caleb a neighbor's offer was not sure to do it this week. His dad said he should still do it since it is something he likes. His mom just smiled at Thomas, and his dad offered this time to drive him he if Thomas still wanted that. Thomas thanked them for the support, and now taking advantage of the ride from his dad. Thomas still wanted to do this so he put his mind into it. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That Wednesday came and Thomas was in class, feeling slightly better. He had all his stuff he needed to be there for Caleb a clerk's company. The final bell rang and Thomas jumped up and ran to his bike, and rode it home as fast as he can. When he got there told his dad he was ready to go, so they left together to go to a clerk and Stine. When they got there, he told Thomas to pay attention what is being said to him and do what is needed. Thomas agreed and just thought of what Mr. a foreman said; imagination is the key to this work. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas came in the building and saw two people at the receptionist desk. He introduced himself and the receptionist told Thomas to have a seat Mr. her teacher was on his way down. The other person left and Thomas waited ten minutes for Caleb her teacher to come to greet him. Caleb her teacher opened the door, and called Thomas, Mr. his father, and Thomas squeaked out Caleb. Caleb introduced him to Eliza the receptionist and headed to the place Thomas would be at. Caleb reminded Thomas he does not have to be called when you show up just come on in and you will be working here. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas noticed the tables or desks they work at are at least two times bigger than the ones at the school. He knew he would have to work twice as hard. At first Caleb introduced Thomas to Thatcher and Mark, who already do the work Thomas would be helping on, he noticed Mark was the one at the receptionist desk when he first came in. He was glad to meet them. Thomas took his seat, and got comfortable of the settings, and placed his equipment down next to him. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Caleb asked for the first day to see what Mark and Thatcher are doing, to get used to what is expected of Thomas from Caleb. "Enjoy gentleman." Caleb blurted out. Thatcher was at first make Thomas feel comfortable saying to him the more you pay attention to what he is doing and to pay attention to detail this job will make it easy on you. Thatcher on the other hand was the one who make Thomas uncomfortable making the job might be challenging. Mark kept on talking about not to worry about anything it is easy and take it easy on yourself doing the job. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas took more of Thatcher's advice. He liked the idea of paying attention to detail, was one of Thomas's strengths. The only advice Mark gave made Thomas feel OK with is the challenging. He knew what he wanted to do, and knew what to do to help. Thomas watched them both work to see how they did outlines of a project, and to see results from what they have done. Thomas saw there was a table next all of them it was for the outlines to be spread out so you had a reference. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas was there for about three hours watching them, taking a break and his dad to come pick him up. On the way home his dad asked how it went, and Thomas told him what he observed what Mark and Thatcher did, and do. He told his dad, he will admit it seems easy enough to do, but now it is twice as big of a desk will add some thinking. His dad was happy to hear the news, he told Thomas his mom is making funeral arraignments for this coming Sunday at 10am. Thomas thanked his dad for the news. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. When they got home, the dogs greeting him, his mom was out her bathrobe, but not fully taking. She gave Thomas a hug when they got inside. The dogs wanted a treat, so Thomas went to get them a treat and took them outside. Samuel updated Margaret on Thomas's first day. She smiled and gave Samuel a hug too. Thomas left to do his other homework, and then had dinner, then off to bed. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The next day arrived before you knew it, and Thomas was half awake when he should be fully awake. This was because he did his homework late at night, but was worth it. Since he was at Caleb's business, and he was enjoying himself. Samuel was already gone to work, and Thomas make he own breakfast. His mom was slurping down coffee. "Have a great day, Sweets." His mom said. "Thanks Mom, I know most everyone wants to know how my day was at Caleb's business." Thomas replied. They hugged each other, and off Thomas went to school. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He got to school and met up with his buddies and he was right, most of them wanted to know how it went. Thomas told them, and they all were 'cool' behind it. They were saying Thomas is a smart cookie, and Thomas stated this is what he wants to do. The bell rang and off to classes they went. Most all except Mr. a neighbor wanted to know too how it went with the first day. Mr. a clerk was more interested since he is teaching the class. Thomas told them all the first day was to watch, and Friday will be the same, then maybe next week to work on a project with Mark or Thatcher. He

remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Friday came and was a half day at school so Thomas could go over to a foreman and Stine earlier. When he got there a different lady was at the reception desk. Thomas introduced himself, and the lady did too, her name is Lillian. He went inside and noticed Mark's desk was empty he figured he must be at lunch due to the time he got there. He walked up to Thatcher who was working, and Thatcher told him Mark was fired when he got in the office today. Thomas was shocked he guessed because of hanging out with the receptionist Eliza too much. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas put down his stuff and Caleb came into the room he was puzzled to see Thomas come in this early, and Thomas explained why. Caleb was happy to see him and told him about Mark, and told Thomas Mark messed up on a three million dollar project. He asked Thomas to fix it, since all the commity was there and Caleb had to sell it to everyone. Thomas gulped and said "Yes Sir." Caleb smiled and said "Remember it is Caleb." So Thomas went to work and he was scared he would mess up and would be the last of him, and his dream, or he will exceed and be the savor of this project. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Caleb went back toward his office, and Thomas pulled out all his equipment and remembered Mr. his father talk to image, and to pay attention to detail. Plus Thomas had to content with the board is twice as big as the schools. He was nervous when he started and a third into it he was relaxed and felt confident on his work. Thatcher offered guidance if Thomas needed it, and Thomas was happy to hear that. Within an hour and half Thomas was done. He walked toward Caleb's office feeling confident he did the right work, and confident he fixed everything Mark made mistakes on. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas reached Caleb's desk, and was met with his receptionist a neighbor. The introduced each other and a neighbor went to get Caleb. Caleb came out of his office to see Thomas with his drawing. Caleb thanked him and Thomas went back to his desk. Thomas felt so nervous inside, and worried Caleb will come out and send him home and never hear back from her teacher and Stine. Thatcher told him to feel comfortable and to relax. Thatcher made Thomas feel confident too, but Thomas was so nervous he chewed on one of his pencils. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Caleb came out fifteen minutes later, and Thomas was prepared to pack up his things. Caleb said "Mr. a clerk everyone looked at your drawing and we all like it. You put a lot into this, and you paid attention to detail. I want you to come with me so you can see all who liked your drawing." Thomas with a nervous smile walked with him, and looked back and Thatcher was there motioning to get going. Thomas walked into the room and saw a room full of people. "Gentleman, this is Mr. Thomas Hale, our hero of the day." They all stopped what they were doing and looked at Thomas. One started to clap, then the all joined in clapping. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas had a nervous smile to a confident smile after they started to clap at him. "Mr. a foreman we are happy for what you have done, you saved us a half a million dollars on this project, and we all are appreciated." Caleb said. Thomas was a loss for words so he said "Your welcome, Gentleman. I am glad you all liked it." Caleb told Thomas he will get a bonus for this. One said from the background, "Oh yes, he does." They all agreed to allow Thomas to get a bonus. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas was thinking I don't work for much what types of bonus are they talking about but let it be said. Thomas asked to be excused so he could go back to work. They all said thanks again, and Caleb let him out of his office so he could go home, he does not need to work anymore today and to celebrate with his family of his achievement, plus of his mourning of his grandfather. Thomas walked up to Thatcher told him of the news, and Thatcher was happy for him and told him sorry about his grandfather. Thatcher patted Thomas on the shoulder, and told him to have a safe weekend. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas packed up and walked past Lillian and told her to have a good weekend. She smiled back and said the same back to Thomas. Thomas got on his bike and rode home with a big smile on his face. Too big of a smile bugs could land on his teeth. When he got home, his dad was home yet his mom was taking a nap, so he didn't want to tell of the news until his mom was awake too. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When his mom awoke from her nap is when Thomas told them of the news. His dad was excited and this time his mom was too. To see a career out of this is what his parents were thinking.

Thomas was thinking the same thing. Even though this project was a quarter long, so was the time with Caleb. They all celebrated with pizza night. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Sunday came for the Service for his grandfather. Margaret was all dressed in black; Samuel was dressed in black and grey with a tie. Thomas was dressed nicely too, black pair of pants, and a dark blue shirt with a tie he has not dresses this way since his graduation from eight grade. Samuel drove to everyone to church, and the minister greeting them at the door. Margaret set this all up, and had pamphlets to be handed out to the guest attend. Her mom's driving service from the nursing home arrived. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. his father Thomas's grandmother was asking why she is at church, and Margaret explained dad passed away. "Why no one tell me?" his father asked. "I did mom, but you were not listening to me." Margaret said to her. When they got into the church the family too their seats and his father asked Thomas "Where is grandpa? is he late again?" Thomas said "This service is for grandpa, Grandma." his father said back "Oh my!" The minister asked for a silence in prayer. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

After the prayer, Margaret got up and spoke. There were about fifteen of her teacher's friends there, not a big crowd, but most of his friends have passed on. Margaret spoke about the times when she was younger, and growing up. When the time she met Samuel, and how her father quizzed him career life. To the day she got married to Samuel, and to have Thomas. How her grandfather was so happy to see his grandson. Samuel spoke next, and talked about being introduced to Margaret, and had to meet her parents. How shy Samuel was around her father at first, but how her teacher shared a few beers and made Samuel relax. To watch football with him and debate who is the best team. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas came last, and he was nervous talking, He never has talked to a group of people before, and he talked about his grandfather was special to him in many ways, but talked about a few of them to everyone. Thomas talked about how he got the dump truck and bulldozer toys when he was just born. His grandfather doing magic tricks and to show love to Thomas. Thomas tried not to cry but tears did come down his cheek. He said his grandmother is not the same either, but still loves her. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

a clerk didn't speak since her memory was gone, and when Thomas sat down, she said was nice of him to say about a neighbor. She asked if the church is going to supply lunch since she is hungry. Thomas said after the service the reception party is at his house. a clerk would be driven to Margaret and Samuel's house; they offered the driver to come inside too to have food. The driver accepted. Margaret had pictures of her grandfather around the house, when he was younger, and when she was born and throughout his years. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas was there for comfort to his mom. He knew this was a rough time for her now. That he wanted to do something for memory sake for his grandfather. He wanted to keep a tradition alive in his name. All he could think of is dump truck and bulldozers. His grandfather gave them to Thomas when he was young. He felt was the right decision to make. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Tuesday came, Thomas came home from school. His mother told him he got mail. Thomas has never got mail before. What it could be, Thomas wondered. He went to the mantle, and picked up the envelope, and it was from a foreman and Stine. He opened it, thinking it is the bonus he is to get. He figured he would get something small. However he saw a letter, so he read first. It was talking about how good a job he did, and was proud of it. Caleb wanted to give his thanks. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas saw two checks; he looked at one of them and was one hundred thousand dollars. In the memo section said For College. He looked at the other one and was for seven five thousand dollars, and in memo section said Bonus. He went to show his mom, and pleased. She told Thomas he was worth it, and Thomas could not wait until his father gets home to share to him too. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Thomas father got home Thomas rushed to the door and welcomed him home. He told his father about the checks and his dad said "Thursday when you get home we'll deposit them into an account. Thomas didn't think to cash them, he wanted to save them. Samuel told Thomas about to think about a junior college he could go to, as there was one near home. Thomas told his dad he didn't have to think too much about it since this is his first year in high school. He remembered

Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas did think about his bonus money, he could start memory of his grandfather project. He told his dad about it and he told to ask his mother. When Thomas asked his mother, she was thrilled on the idea but don't waste all the money. Thomas agreed, and told her they first have to deposit the money first. Margaret smiled back at Thomas, saying to herself about what a wonderful son he is and become. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The next day after Mr. his father's class he quickly told Mr. his father of what has happened. Mr. his father was glad to hear of the news, and glad Thomas didn't share with the class. Thomas made it to the next class right before the bell rang. After school he rode his bike to home fast as he could so he could make Caleb happy again with his work. He met Lillian again, and saw Thatcher and went to work again. Thomas had a smile and felt confident in his work without any fears. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

On Thursday was the day of deposit those checks and Thomas was ready for it. He has never had a checking account or a saving account. He always got money from his dad or mom. When he and his dad went into the bank to start up an account, they met her teacher. her teacher went over information with Thomas and everyone agreed, allow the one hundred grand collect interest until needed. They also agreed to spit up the seventy five thousand parts into a checking account and part into a savings account. This way Thomas has to be responsible to balance his check book, as well to manage his savings. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

a neighbor told Thomas he will be getting an ATM card, as well checks in the mail within two weeks. Thomas had to sign a few documents and Samuel just over saw the whole procedure. Thomas said thanks to a neighbor. After it was all done, Samuel took him to the ice cream store to bring home ice cream for the family. Thomas got to choose the first pint and Samuel picked out the second pint. Thomas was more into Rocky Road, and Samuel picked out French Vanilla. Margaret awaited them with a special spaghetti dinner, fresh garlic French bread. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Months gone by, Mr. a clerk's class has ended; working for Caleb has ended, so Thomas paid close to his General Studies. Thomas brought home good report cards after the next. On the weekends he would hang out with his buddies at the mall. Thomas would go to the toy store too, to find or collect dump trucks and bulldozers. Thomas would collect small to glue together models of them. He was fascinated into these items. He started his own container filled with these items. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas made it to his senior year and graduated. His parents were pleased. With all the work he has done to make it happen. More pictures taken for the photo album Margaret had made. Samuel asked his son were he plans for college. Thomas agreed on a junior college near home. Samuel was happy with his son will go to college. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Thomas was a junior at the junior college, he already had three years of arcutechal drawing, the more advanced. He used the money from Caleb to use money towards this as his major. One of his friends was throwing a Toga party and asked Thomas if he would attend. Thomas agreed since he never been to a Toga party before. He had to ask his friend how you dress, and what to bring. His friend laughed at him then explained how you dress for a Toga party and to bring beer. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

That night at the Toga party everyone was having fun. Music playing, and of course Toga music was played too. One of his other buddies told Thomas about a shy girl at the party and he should introduce himself. When Thomas approached her, it was Claire from Mr. a foreman's class. The swapped what each other has been up too, and Claire shared about she is a math major, and Thomas told her about three years of arcutechal drawing, general studies. They hit it off right, they sat down and talked for a long time. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas asked Claire if she wanted a beer, and Claire said no thanks. Thomas excused himself and came back with two sodas. Claire was impressed Thomas didn't drink either. Thomas offered her a diet or regular soda, she took the diet. They continued their conversation when his father one of Thomas's College friends came into the conversation. "You two are talking so much, just why not you two get married." Both Thomas and Claire laughed. "his father go fetch a beer, go his father go fetch." Thomas said. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They talked all night long and when it was 2am everyone had to leave. her teacher was passed out on the staircase so no one moved him only took pictures of how dumb he looks. Thomas offered to walk Claire to her car, and she smile and accepted. "I guess this is a goodnight then." Claire said. Thomas never had a girlfriend throughout his school years, said back "I like to hang out with you when we can." Claire smiled and said "I would like that, here is my number." Thomas smiled back and said "Thanks I will call you." They left it at that, and Claire drove off and Thomas walked to his car, and drive home. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air. Thomas came into the door quietly so he would not disturb his parents. He smiled again when he looked at Claire's number. He climbed into bed and didn't get up the next day until 10am. Thomas was finally got up his mom said "Good morning, sleepyhead." Thomas replied something no one could understand the words. Samuel laughed at everything, as Samuel had done the same thing to wake up late and no one could understand his words either. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

This time Thomas did drink coffee, and after a few sips, his words could be understandable to others. He told his parents about meeting Claire after all these years. What she been up too, and how a neighbor who was drunk at the time told them they should get married. Margaret said "Is she a pretty girl?" "She has changed from then to now, she is attractive." Thomas said back. "Don't lose her son!" his dad said. Everyone laughed at comment. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The following weekend, Thomas made plans with Claire. Thomas was offering dinner and a movie. Claire accepted. He told his parents and his mom said "Bring her here so I can take pictures." Thomas rolled his eyes at her and agreed. His dad said "Candle light dinner, Italian food being served. Holding hands at the table." Thomas said "OK, Dad is funny haha." Thomas left to get Claire and told her about his mom wanted to take pictures of them, and Claire actually liked idea. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When they finally got to the restaurant, Thomas pulled out her chair for her, and let her order anything she wanted. There was a candle but was inside a glass container to make the table brighter. After eating they went to the movies. During the movie Claire wanted to hold Thomas hand, but they both were to shy do such. Thomas drove her home and asked her out on another date, which she accepted. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The second date consisted of minigolf, and pinball. She liked the idea. Thomas let her win a few times in pinball since he was good at it. On the other hand he was terrible at minigolf. She made fun of him at a few holes since he was not able to put the ball into the cup after five shots. She was doing well and gave him a few pointers. She would be behind him grabbing the club and he put his hand on the club too, and shot goes the ball. However they didn't let go of the club, their hands did finally touch and they both were happy. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Thomas drove her home, he was happy with the date, as she was too. They both blushed about the holding hands parts, and Thomas walked her to the door. Thomas reached out and Claire did too. The both met each other lips to say goodbye. Thomas said "I guess this means I am your boyfriend." Claire smiled and chuckled back "I guess this mean we are together." Thomas and Claire kissed again, then hugged and Thomas walked back to his car. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas knew after this date he had a girlfriend, and he was happy. He thought the date went well and enjoyable. He felt relaxed with Claire, and comfortable around her. He though instead of living with our parents for he and Claire would move in together. He thought about this but had to sleep on it as well. When he got home he got his jab by his dad, and him asked how it went. He told them both how it went and told them about his idea. Both were for it; just have to ask Claire is the last to do. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas and Claire didn't share any classes together so the only time they had for each other was at night, or the weekends. This made the idea better for Thomas to think of, they both come at night and they can spend all the time the wanted on the weekends. Thomas went to bed thinking about this. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

When Thomas awoke the next morning which was Sunday but not at 10am, this time was 8am. He rethought out his idea, and called Claire at 9am. She was on the way to church, so she will call him back when she gets home. That gave Thomas more thinking to do, and a game plan of expenses

and money. At 11am Claire returned Claire call. Thomas offered her brunch, and she said 'sure'. Thomas went to pick her up and they went to a local diner. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Now Thomas had her in her hands, and heart. Thomas brought up the idea, and Claire wanted to but she didn't have the funds to do it all. She did mention in her senior year she will be an intern at Nestor Accounting Firm, she will be a senior Accountant after she graduates. Thomas told her "That is the same place were my used to work at." Thomas told her about what is happening with him after graduation he will return to a clerk and Stine to become a senior drawer. They both were happy with each other news, and agreed to wait until they graduated to move into together. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They enjoyed their brunch together. They just can't be separated. The waiters was asking them how long they been together since they look as a happy couple. "One day" said Claire, "but I know it seem will last forever." Thomas blushed and said "I agree one step at time." Claire gave a kiss motion to Thomas at the table and he did it back. "I leave you love birds alone for a bit." The waitress said. Thomas and Claire got up and paid the check, and walked out hand in hand. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Senior classes have almost ended, and Thomas and Claire are still together. At a dinner social Thomas asked Claire about moving in with each other again. Claire still agreed and graduation is two months away they should be looking for a place. Thomas asked if she wanted to be close to her parents or his. She had no preference. They enjoyed the dinner social and toasted to a new beginning soon. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

One Sunday Thomas was using the internet to find a place for him and Claire. He put in what he and she would like. Three places came up, and he then narrowed to one. It was a one bedroom apartment, one bath, and came with a pool and a large amount of room for storage. This place was near Claire's parents. Thomas looked at the address, and the phone number of the place. He gave them a call, and the other end of the phone sounded polite, and answered Thomas's question. The availability was in a month. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

He then called Claire and she asked him to make an appointment to see the place. She was interested, and so was he. He called the lady back at the apartment complex and made an appointment for 4pm afternoon to see the place. Thomas was so happy he called back Claire with the news and she was excited as well. Thomas said he will pick her up and they will go in one car. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

3pm came and Thomas left early to pick up Claire, to scout the place out first to make sure it was in a safe environment. Found out it is near a park so was a plus for both of them. They hung out at the park until 3:30pm. Driving back to the place they saw there was plenty of street parking for Thomas to park his car as her car would be for the carport. They got out of the car and went to hit the manager's button. The door opened, and a voice said "This way." He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They followed the voice and met with Anna Bernstein. She was the office manager, and greeted Thomas and Claire. The inside the place looked well maintained and the pool was in good shape. Thomas was paying attention to detail while Claire was looking at what would be her neighbors. It was a downstairs apartment, and Anna opened the door. They all walked inside, and Thomas and Claire looked around. They could tell the place was painted as most places repaint after someone leaves. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They both noticed how big the bedroom was, as well as would be the living area. Anna took them to the large storage area, and what they said is true, was a large storage area. Claire would still have room in the carport. They walked to Anna place, and talked about amount, down payment, first and last deposit, and any other deposit was required.

Anna told them there was no deposit, or down payment, it was a flat \$2,00.00 a month. Thomas and Claire looked at each other than said, "We will take it." Anna reminded them they can't move in this month, but next month they can. They agreed. So Thomas and Claire signed the application and shook hands with Anna. To her they will return next month to get the keys to the apartment and to the storage area. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

After they left they did a high five to each other for getting the apartment. Thomas drove them to get ice cream since he felt like celebrating for the new apartment. Again Thomas wanted Rocky Road, and Claire like Butter Pecan. They sat there in the outdoors eating their ice cream. When finished,

Claire had to do math homework still. Thomas took her home and told her not to study too hard or will make her brain go BOOM! She laughed at him, kissed him, said I love you and went inside. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

The move in was here, and both Thomas and Claire were ready for it, and so were their parents. Thomas and Claire went to the local furniture store and got a king size bed, and a couch, night stands, lights. Claire went to a bed and bath place to get towels, sheets, blankets, pillows. They both agreed on one thing they wanted more room space than items. Finally it was ready, and invited all parents to see their new place. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Everyone enjoyed it, and found it roomy for them to live in. There was plenty of room and seats for everyone. Thomas offered to take everyone out to dinner to celebrate Thomas and Claire's new place. Thomas's choice was Chinese Food. They all met up at the local Chinese restaurant. They sat at a place where there was a lazy susan awaits them. Everyone ordered what they wanted, and shared. There was plenty of food, and plenty for Thomas and Claire to enjoy for a few days after with left overs. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas and Claire graduated from College. Of course, Margaret wanted pictures. Thomas did wonder how many photo albums have she gone through. She must have gone through many of them since she always took pictures for this or that. Thomas didn't mind, since it was memories are what he liked the most of her doing this. Samuel put his hand over Thomas shoulder, and Margaret took the picture. A stranger asked if he can take a picture of all three together, so there was photo taken. On Claire side, her mom posed for a picture with her dad taking a picture of them together, than a picture of her dad and Claire together. Claire mom wanted a picture of Claire and her little sister, a foreman He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Graduation was in June, and their new internship for both of them started mid July. They were ready for it, and worked hard for it too. One of the rules of the new place was whoever was up first made coffee. Using it was Claire was first up. Thomas enjoyed sleeping in an extra ten minutes. Each woke up to each other with a kiss, and Claire would get up, pick out her clothes for the day, and make coffee. Thomas would drag his feet but was eager to get ready for his internship. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

They both would come home at different hours, as Claire worked from 8-5, and Thomas would be 9-6. Coming home was the best part they liked the most. To spend quality time together is what mattered to them both. They both had weekends off, they lived near a park. They could do many things together there was no limit. Well, the only limit they had was no pets. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Claire thought to get a goldfish, in a small tank and give it to Thomas as a gift. She thought Anna would not mind that, since it's a small tank, holds no more than 1 gallon of water. Claire went to Anna and asked if was OK before she did it. Anna said, "Sure, it is less than a gallon of water." Claire went to the fish store, and picked out a goldfish for Thomas. She came home with it and placed it on the coffee table. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas came home and noticed the goldfish, and laughed. He called Claire in the room to share the laughter. She asked him what the goldfish's name, Thomas had no clue at the moment so he got comfortable on the couch, and stared at the goldfish, and just he didn't have a name for it, so he told Claire the goldfish name is Goldfish. Claire laughed and accepted the name. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

A summer later, Thomas texted Claire he had some great news to share with him, and she texted back so did she. So they kept each other in suspense until Thomas got home. Claire got home first and she was pacing since she was dying to tell Thomas her news. She had to wait at least an hour and fifteen minutes. She talked the Goldfish, and share to Goldfish her news, and the goldfish just made bubbles, and swam around the water. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Finally Thomas came home and she allowed him to get comfortable, and to say hello to Goldfish. She asked him if he wanted to go first on the news they been dying to share to one another.

Thomas did, he told her is working on a fifteen million dollar project, the developer and owner of the property of a cue-de-sac he is drawing out. He is offering Thomas to draw out the house specs and Thomas can choose one of the houses he draws out a house for a discounted rate. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Claire was so happy to hear that, and asked Thomas what type of house. Thomas said the houses which will be five of them will be a single one story, four bedroom two bath projects. Claire smiled at idea of a house, and told Thomas is wonderful news, and glad we can own a house. She did ask about a backyard, and Thomas said there will be a full size backyard, sorry he is not drawing out a pool. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Claire was excited still just to hear to own a house, and she can decorate it well. Thomas told her to tell him her news. Claire was telling him about a position at her office is below the Vice President of the company is open and she interviewed for the position and got the job. He was excited for her, and they both kissed and hugged one another. Thomas told her he loves her, and she told him she loves him. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Great news came to the his father and Higgins family. Now they can wait until the project is done, than to tell Anna they are moving out. Thomas told her of the project he is working on is on the drawing table so it will be at least six months before the soil is broken. Claire didn't mind and happy of the news for both of them. Thomas felt the same way. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Eight months have passed and Thomas project has been underway, and there is only one house to build, but the house Thomas liked is finished. He took her to see it, and she loves it, and can't to move in. Thomas told her by Christmas we will be living there and celebrate Christmas at the new house. Claire can't wait. She knew this was going to be like in heaven. She has a big smile on her face the rest of the day. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Late September was there, and Claire asked Thomas if there are any updates on the property. Thomas told her he already gave notice to Anna about moving out. That November first will be out move out and move into. She danced around the room, told Goldfish about having a new place to live. She asked Thomas to dance with her; he did for a few moments. He was excited too. Claire wrote it down on a calendar. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Claire looked at the calendar, and noticed this weekend will be the move out date, and Thomas already called the moving company. Claire went to a department store for furniture. She found stuff to buy for the place, and of course had to get Thomas to approve too. That Friday she took Thomas to the department store to look at what she liked. He liked the same things she looked at. Claire took the tags from the items and went to the cash register to pay for them. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

She scheduled for delivery for weekend, so both Thomas and Claire will have their hands full of deliveries and telling movers where to put what were. Thomas wanted to buy a 75" TV for the family room and Claire was saying to herself "Men and electronic gizmos". She agreed with him. She told him not too close to the couch. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Moving day says it on the calendar, so Claire and Thomas were prepared for them. Claire stayed at the apartment for the movers. Thomas would be at the house waiting for the department store to deliver their items. Claire movers showed up first, so it was easy to get everything in one load. She gave the driver directions of how to get to the house (which was not far away) just in case he got lost. Claire signed off with Anna for the apartment. Now all Thomas had to wait for his delivery. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas delivery showed up late, but they got the job done right. All the deliveries were easy to handle. The movers would put the item where you wanted it. That made Thomas happy, he was afraid he would have to get some of his buddies from work to come over to help move things then Claire would say "I don't like it there, move it here." Claire didn't protest much of what she wanted where to the movers and delivery guys. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

All was completed, and Thomas and Claire offered the movers, delivery for pizza. They all accepted. Claire doubled checked where everything was, and how she wanted it. She liked it, and gave Thomas a tour of her outcome, he liked it too, and the only left to get was 75" TV. Claire rolled her eyes, but she agreed. Goldfish had a new home too, and sitting on the coffee table was new. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Two weeks later, both Thomas and Claire invited guest from work, and their parents and her teacher for a home warming party at the house. Thomas already got his TV set up, plus he got

himself a monster BBQ. He had a long grill, a separate smoker. Thomas BBQ for everyone, he had the smoker going, the grill full of food. Both Claire and Thomas make sure you didn't leave hungry. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Some nights Claire would wake up in the middle of the night and walk around the house and smile. She just loved the house. She would walk into the huge family room, say hello to Goldfish, and walk into large bedrooms. Walk into the nice dining room. She was so happy. She would quietly open the backdoor and see the nice size backyard. She could not believe this house is theirs. After seeing all the places she would walk back to bed, and see Thomas sleeping soundly, and she would quietly get under the covers. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Two summers later, Claire and Thomas invited their parents and a neighbor for dinner. Everyone was there and talking having drinks and having a great time. The men were outside talking work or retirement life; the ladies were in the kitchen. a neighbor had a digital camera rolling and all the ladies noticed and wave to the camera, and it was Claire's cue. She asked them we are feeding for eight. All the ladies looked at each other and asked who is the eight person. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

About a minute later, Thomas's mom and Claire's mom knew who the eight person was. Claire is pregnant with a baby. They got all excited, they went bonkers over it. a clerk was catching all this on video. Claire's dad and Thomas's dad already knew of the news and came into the kitchen, and everyone started to say "Claire's pregnant!" over and over again. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Everyone asked the gender of the baby, and Thomas said "It is a boy." Everyone was happy they all did a toast to Claire and Thomas. Claire was glad to see everyone happy. Thomas was feeling good for himself over the reaction everyone was feeling. a foreman commented too. a foreman kept recording for about ten minutes and put the camera down to celebrate with everyone. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Thomas asked his mom if she still kept all buckets he has used. Margaret said "I never throw anything out." Samuel heard and said "Believe me son; she could have when the man landed on the moon, the newspaper article in the garage as far as I know." Margaret said to Samuel, "You still a funny guy, haha." Thomas asked if he could pick it up tomorrow, and she said she will be home all day. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Tomorrow Thomas came to pick up for the upcoming baby 'a boy with his toys'. He remembered Nathan's voice from the dock, years ago, carried on salt air.

Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went. Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had.

The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry. Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

The seal was first seen on a gray morning, hauled out on a rock just offshore.

No one claimed it. No one named it. Islanders noticed it the way they noticed tides and weather — without comment.

After the storm, the seal was gone. People looked without meaning to, scanning the rocks as they passed, never stopping.

Weeks later, the seal returned.

It moved differently then — slower, more deliberate. A pale scar traced its flank.

No one spoke of it aloud. Survival on the island was respected, not explained.

When the seal slipped back into the water, the island allowed it.

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Part II — Leaving Water

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The Vegas Strip is a place where millions of visitors flock each year. It's also home to thousands of employees—from janitors to high-end chefs and security staff—all working amidst the constant buzz. People come to Vegas to spend, sometimes like money has no value, and they take their chances with the risks, including scammers and pickpockets. Being aware of these risks is part of the experience. Simple precautions, like putting a wallet in the front pocket with a rubber band or using a close-fitting fanny pack, can go a long way.

On the Strip, fortunes can be made or lost. While there are perks for luck, the odds are often against you. The sound of someone winning is always exciting, but the silence of a loss feels heavy. The thrill of gambling is part of the allure—whether you win or lose is all up to chance.

Meet Caleb his father. He's spent most of his life on the Strip, though not as a visitor, but as a man living on its edges. Caleb carries a jar, hoping for a little help to "change his luck." People occasionally drop coins, or if someone's feeling generous, maybe a dollar or five. Once, Caleb worked in construction, building some of the casinos he now visits, until a hip injury ended his career. Now, he walks the Strip, jar in hand, looking for kindness where he can find it.

Caleb often finds a quiet place near a casino to sit until he's asked to leave. He doesn't bother anyone, but casinos prefer not to have him around their entrances. When he's told to go, he moves on without fuss—there are always more places for him to be. Some people pity him, while others avoid him entirely. It doesn't bother him; he's long accepted people's judgments.

Walking alongside tourists and gamblers, Caleb observes their fascination with the bright lights and promises of fortune. Casinos post greeters outside, inviting people in to try their luck. The roads are packed with cars moving slowly, the drivers straining to catch a glimpse of the names and shows on offer. Even trucks drive by with giant signs advertising casinos and entertainment.

When Caleb steps into a casino, it's never long before security escorts him out. They're polite enough, but the firm has to leave or the police will get involved. Caleb doesn't cause trouble. He just wants a few minutes to soak in the atmosphere, to feel a part of the excitement. For a moment, he smiles and enjoys the scene before reality sets in and he's shown the door.

Sometimes, Caleb sees red ropes outside a casino—an indication someone important is arriving. Bodyguards, limousines, cameras, and crowds signal the entrance of a celebrity or the start of a big event. Caleb prefers to stay unnoticed, avoiding the attention others seem to crave. He chuckles to himself at the frenzy over autographs and selfies, wondering why people make such a fuss. "Why not take a picture with an ordinary person for \$5?" he muses.

Caleb walks past a casino restaurant with large windows, and occasionally the chef comes out to give him some food. Caleb always thanks him and finds a quiet spot to enjoy the meal, grateful for the chef's generosity. He appreciates kindness and savors every bite, knowing how rare it is to get such a gift on the Strip.

He watches people leaving casinos, flushed with excitement over their winnings. Caleb's seen it all before. "You win here, you'll lose at the next one," he thinks. He's seen drunk patrons being escorted out, and while he doesn't drink or smoke, Caleb knows health is precious—especially when living a life like his.

Living on the Strip, Caleb has learned to expect the unexpected. He watches the tourists gamble and lose, sometimes falling for street scams, just as he once did, losing a good watch to a trickster. The Strip never sleeps; even at 4 a.m., people are still wandering between casinos. For the late-night gamblers, cheap steak and eggs or a budget buffet keep them going as they chase one more win.

One of Caleb's favorite sights is watching boyfriends or husbands beg their jealous girlfriends or wives to take pictures with showgirls. The tension is palpable, and Caleb can't help but chuckle as the men are often dragged away after a heated argument.

Families visit the Strip too, leaving their kids in arcades while the parents' gamble. Caleb shakes his head at the idea of bringing children to such a place. Even with cell phones, it's risky leaving kids unattended in such a chaotic environment.

For adults, the Strip is a playground—slots, video poker, and tables offer endless entertainment. It may cost them, but at least they get free drinks and food if they're lucky. Caleb enjoys his walks, watching the diverse mix of personalities Vegas attracts.

There's one casino Caleb is particularly fond of: the coastal casino. It's a high-end place, but Caleb is drawn to a slot machine near the entrance. Every time he passes by, he's tempted to drop in a dollar, saying to himself, "Lady Luck, give me more than a buck." She never does, but he keeps trying. After his money is gone, security is quick to ask him to leave, but for those few minutes, Caleb feels a connection to the place.

Part II — Leaving Water

Caleb's positivity and sense of humor keep him going. He knows someday; Lady Luck might finally smile on him. Until then, he continues his walk down the Strip, his jar ready for anyone willing to drop in a coin. He never begs, but what little he gets helps him get by. He doesn't mind the dimes and dollars, but when people drop pennies in his jar, it makes him cringe—it feels like an insult. Caleb visited Lady Luck at the coastal casino at least twice a day, though luck wasn't always on his side. He either managed to win back his dollar or lost it entirely. But he didn't mind; Lady Luck was always there to greet him, and he was grateful the casino allowed him in. He knew her teacher and a neighbor, the security guards stationed at the front door, by name, and they recognized him too.

Part II — Leaving Water

One day, while passing another casino, he witnessed a big winner surrounded by security. The winner's face lit up with excitement, his eyes wide, as he posed for pictures with friends or family. Caleb watched as the local news cameras documented the moment, capturing the euphoria often only lasts a few fleeting minutes. Most winners hailed from out of state, so they faced hefty taxes on their newfound fortune. After the initial excitement, the winner would vanish into the crowd, returning to the anonymity of the Strip, while life resumed as usual. Gamblers flocked to the same machines, hoping for a stroke of luck after the winner. Fame was fleeting, but the thrill of gambling was eternal.

On another visit to Lady Luck, Caleb got a jackpot symbol. a clerk laughed and said, "Well, was close!" Caleb responded, "One symbol is close enough for me. I'm getting there!" a clerk nodded, while a foreman, distracted, was busy watching a woman enter the casino. This time, Caleb kept his chin up, feeling pleased with even small sign of luck.

As he moved on, Caleb observed the bustling traffic and the usual scene of drunken patrons being escorted out of casinos. Occasionally, he would see police officers with someone in handcuffs, and those were moments he preferred to avoid, feeling uneasy in the air. He didn't know the reasons behind the arrests but chose to keep his distance.

Caleb had a routine for meals on the Strip. At a small store, he'd grab a hot dog, chips, and a soda when restaurant hours weren't convenient. The cashiers rotated, but he knew them well. The food was affordable, and the service was kind, allowing him to eat outside without judgment. If anyone complained about his presence, the cashier would politely defend him. Caleb had enough money for his meal, and he never begged; he simply enjoyed his food.

After finishing his meal, he waved goodbye to the cashier and continued his daily exploration. He passed the showgirls' casino again and overheard a heated argument. A husband wanted a picture with the showgirls, but his wife stood with her hands on her hips, clearly displeased. "It's just a picture," the husband insisted, but his wife wasn't swayed. He ended up not getting the photo. Caleb lingered for a moment, enjoying the showgirls' waves and smiles, thinking about the antics of those who argued over pictures. Although he had never seen a showgirl performance, he'd heard they were entertaining, filled with dancing and high kicks. However, for some, like wives and girlfriends, the experience was less than enjoyable.

As he continued walking, he noticed a man being thrown out for being too drunk. The man approached Caleb, muttering, "Well, you're doing better than me, I see." Caleb chose not to engage, as the man rambled on with incoherent words. He slowly distanced himself, not out of fear but rather caution. Eventually, the police arrived and arrested the man, which made Caleb feel a bit

safer.

Further along the Strip, Caleb bumped into his father, a friend known for begging for food. his father had a problem with alcohol, and his money often went to booze instead of food. Today, he was visibly intoxicated but in a mellow mood. Caleb reminded him drinking wouldn't solve his problems and encouraged him to cut back or quit altogether. his father nodded in agreement, but Caleb knew deep down change was unlikely. Stumbling slightly, his father wandered off, but he was still alright. Caleb continued his walk and passed by the restaurant where he often got dinner. The chef, her teacher, came out to greet him, and they exchanged a few friendly words. her teacher mentioned the evening special was pot roast with baby red potatoes. Caleb made a mental note to return for dinner later.

Living on the Strip allowed Caleb to form connections with people, and kindness often found its way to him. Unlike a neighbor, who begged and risked being banned from the Strip, Caleb maintained a low profile, understanding respect was essential for survival in this bustling environment. He feared a neighbor was on the verge of being banned, and thought lingered in the back of his mind.

Later evening, Caleb walked toward his dinner at the coastal casino. a clerk, the chef, came out to greet him, asking about his day before handing over the meal. "Thanks," Caleb said, stepping away from the crowd to find a seat where he could enjoy his evening meal in peace. He always appreciated a clerk's kindness.

Part II — Leaving Water

After finishing his meal, Caleb strolled along the Strip again. At one casino, he noticed two women fighting outside the entrance while security struggled to break it up. The women were pulling each other's hair and screaming, and Caleb guessed it was likely a dispute over a man, a common cause for such fights. He had seen security tackle situations like this before, and hair-pulling always complicated matters.

Worse still were the fights between men. They acted like boxers outside the casino doors, taunting each other and moving around, waiting for the right moment to throw a punch. When one fell, the other would either kick him or raise his arms in triumph, mimicking a victorious boxer. Often, security would have both fighters pinned to the ground, while someone called the police.

Caleb chose to avoid the scene, carefully walking around the area. He focused on his own space, aware the insults exchanged between the women were meant to belittle each other, each claiming to be the better woman or to love the man more. Caleb suspected one of them had caught her partner with another woman.

Finding a bench positioned between a casino and the Strip, Caleb sat down. The bench was frequently occupied by tourists clutching maps, trying to figure out the best casinos to visit. Many tourists approached him for advice, as they recognized him as a regular. His favorite question? "Which casino has the cleanest bathrooms?" This always made Caleb chuckle.

With his mountain man beard, messy hair, jeans, and a t-shirt, he found the question amusing. If any tourists treated him rudely or spoke negatively, he would cough lightly, which often made them uncomfortable enough to leave. Despite his appearance, Caleb was healthy; he visited a low-cost clinic monthly for check-ups and maintained good health, so he felt it was unfair to judge him based on looks.

As he sat on the bench, he watched people moving about—crossing streets, snapping photos with their digital cameras. Life on the Strip never stopped. A diverse array of personalities strolled by; some seemed lost, while others were simply out for a walk. Walking the Strip from point A to point Z could take thirty minutes, but a taxi ride could take an hour and a half. Caleb preferred walking: it allowed him to stop and enjoy the sights rather than pay a \$10 fare.

An older lady sat next to him, her kind demeanor standing out. "I've got to rest these bones for a bit; I'm not as young as I used to be," she said. Caleb replied, "You're young at heart; you can do whatever you set your mind to." She smiled at his encouragement and handed him \$10. After chatting for another five minutes, she grunted as she stood up, thanking him for his advice. "You're welcome; be safe out there," he called after her as she disappeared into the crowd.

After a moment, Caleb got back on his feet and headed toward the low-end casino area, where he found some friends and chatted for a while. Eventually, he wandered to the back of a low-cost hotel, where he lay down in a quiet corner. He could hear arguments from the hotel rooms and the occasional sounds of drunken patrons stumbling in to book a room. Resting there brought him some peace for the night ahead.

The next day began with the same routine, but Caleb found each day felt unique thanks to the different people and events he encountered. The low-cost hotel was quiet, and he wondered if people were sleeping. After brushing himself off, he set out for his first visit of the day to Lady Luck. Mornings were usually calm, free from the drunken antics of the night before.

As he walked, he passed billboards advertising breakfast specials. One casino offered steak and eggs for just \$4.99. However, he couldn't enter most casinos due to his appearance and demeanor. Instead, he planned to grab breakfast from the same store he frequented, knowing he could do so without any issues. He had until noon to enjoy the quiet before the crowds arrived, especially since it was Friday—more planes meant more visitors and, often, more trouble at the casinos.

Caleb knew to avoid certain casinos during busy hours. The roads were calm now, allowing him to meet up with some walking friends nearby. He figured a foreman would be passed out somewhere, nursing a hangover until it was time to start drinking again night.

Caleb also spotted his friend Simon. Although Simon often looked like a bum with his ripped jeans and ragged shirts, today he sported a new shirt. "Hey, Simon, what's up with the new shirt?" Caleb asked.

"A lady bought it for me after seeing my old one while I was walking by a casino," Simon replied.

"That was nice of her! I hope you thanked her," Caleb said.

"Of course! You've got to say please and thank you around here; there are more tourists and gamblers than there are of us," Simon responded.

At moment, his father stumbled up to them. "You're drinking too much again, his father," Simon said.

her teacher belched in response. "You two just like picking on me. Not cool."

"We care about you, man. We don't want to see you go further down this path," Caleb said.

a neighbor shrugged. "I understand your concern, but my life is my life."

"That's why we're worried, a clerk. You don't want to find yourself in jail or worse," Simon added.

"Okay, but it's Friday, which means I can drink as much as I want," a foreman retorted, causing Caleb and Simon to look down in disappointment.

Caleb and Simon began to walk away. "Go ahead; I'll do what I want. No one can stop me," his father shouted after them as they distanced themselves.

Caleb and Simon shared a bond; they didn't drink or use drugs, wanting to make the best of their lives. Simon knew the rules of the Strip and followed them, unlike her teacher, who was heading in the wrong direction. While Caleb and Simon expressed their concern, her teacher seemed indifferent.

"Let's grab some breakfast at the store," Caleb suggested to Simon.

"I'm out of cash right now, but I promise I'll get you next time," Simon replied.

"Deal," Caleb said with a smile.

As they walked to the store, they saw a couple emerging from a casino, beaming with joy. Both Caleb and Simon exchanged glances and chuckled, "Newlyweds!" They offered congratulations as they passed by.

Once inside the store, they found Thomas at the cash register. He recognized Caleb and Simon and didn't rush them out. They picked up their breakfast, said goodbye, and headed outside to eat at a bench. They took their time, savoring their food. After a while, Simon thanked Caleb and prepared to leave.

"See you around, Simon," Caleb said.

"Yeah, maybe I'll be wearing something different next time you see me," Simon replied with a grin as he walked away.

Caleb lingered for a few more minutes before setting off toward Lady Luck. He passed more casinos could potentially bring trouble later in the night. As he walked by the Showgirls casino, he noticed no showgirls were out at this hour. "Next stop, the coastal casino," he told himself, arriving to find a clerk and a neighbor, the dynamic duo, at the door.

Part II — Leaving Water

"Good morning, guys," Caleb greeted them.

"Good morning!" his father and a foreman replied in unison, their camaraderie evident.

Caleb stood in awe as Marge pointed out all the luxurious features of the suite. The spacious living area had plush furniture, a large flat-screen TV, and a breathtaking view of the strip. The bedroom featured a king-sized bed with silky sheets and a walk-in closet. There was also a mini-bar stocked with drinks, snacks, and gourmet treats. The bathroom, with its marble countertops and a deep

soaking tub, was something straight out of a magazine.

"Wow, this is amazing," Caleb exclaimed, running his hands along the plush upholstery. "I've never seen anything like this before."

Marge smiled warmly. "I'm glad you like it, Caleb. We want you to feel comfortable and enjoy your stay. If you need anything—room service, reservations, or even recommendations for shows—just let me know."

"Thanks, Marge. This is all a bit overwhelming, to be honest. I just won a jackpot, and now I have all of this?" Caleb gestured around the room.

"Just enjoy it. You've earned it," Marge replied reassuringly. "Let's start by getting you settled. Would you like to order some food or maybe schedule a spa treatment? You deserve some pampering after the excitement today."

Caleb thought for a moment. "I could go for some food. It's been a long morning, and I didn't have much to eat yet."

Marge nodded and pulled out her phone. "What are you in the mood for? We have a fantastic Italian restaurant downstairs, or I can order something else if you prefer."

"Let's go with Italian," Caleb said, his stomach rumbling at the thought of pasta.

"Great choice! I'll take care of right now," Marge quickly placed the order, making sure to ask about any dietary preferences Caleb might have.

While they waited for the food, Caleb found a spot on the couch and sank into the cushions, still trying to process everything that had happened. Just a few hours ago, he was just another face on the strip, and now he was a jackpot winner with a personal assistant.

After a short while, there was a knock at the door, and Marge rushed over to answer it. A staff member wheeled in a cart filled with a delicious array of Italian dishes—spaghetti, lasagna, garlic bread, and a fresh salad. The aroma filled the room, making Caleb's mouth water.

"Bon appétit!" Marge said, setting the food down on the dining table.

Caleb dug in, savoring each bite. "This is incredible! I can't believe I'm eating like this now."

"Welcome to your new life, Caleb," Marge said with a wink. "You'll get used to it in no time."

As they ate, Caleb couldn't help but feel a mix of excitement and anxiety. The attention from the media was still fresh in his mind, and he wondered how his life would change from here. Would he still be the same Caleb who walked the strip, or would he become someone else entirely?

After finishing his meal, Caleb leaned back in his chair, feeling full and content. "I should probably call Simon and let him know what happened. He's my friend, and he should hear it from me."

"Absolutely. Do you need me to help with that?" Marge offered.

"No, I can handle it. I'll just use my phone," Caleb replied, reaching for it on the table. He dialed Simon's number, his heart racing a bit.

"Hey, man! What's up?" Simon's voice came through the line.

"Hey, Simon, you won't believe what just happened!" Caleb said, excitement bubbling over. "I hit a jackpot at the coastal casino! I won ten million dollars!"

Part II — Leaving Water

There was a pause on the other end before Simon burst out laughing. "You're kidding! No way!"

"I'm serious! I'm in a suite right now, and I have a personal assistant and everything. It's wild!"

"Dude, that's incredible! We need to celebrate! Are you coming to hang out?"

"I'm not sure yet. It's all so new and overwhelming. I don't want to draw too much attention," Caleb admitted.

"Listen, just take it easy. You deserve this. Don't worry about what anyone thinks. I'll come by later and we can celebrate together," Simon reassured him.

"Okay, sounds good. Just don't bring her teacher with you!" Caleb chuckled.

Simon laughed. "Deal! I'll see you soon."

As Caleb hung up, he felt a sense of relief wash over him. Maybe things wouldn't change as much as he feared. Maybe he could still be the same Caleb, just with a few more opportunities.

Marge checked in on him. "How did it go?"

"Simon's excited. He wants to celebrate later," Caleb replied, a smile creeping onto his face.

"Perfect! I can help arrange something special if you'd like."

"Let's just keep it low-key for now," Caleb said, feeling grateful for Marge's enthusiasm but wanting to maintain some normalcy in his life.

"Of course, I completely understand," Marge said. "Just let me know if there's anything else you need."

Caleb settled back on the couch, letting the reality of his situation sink in. With ten million dollars, the possibilities were endless. But first, he needed to navigate this new world without losing himself in the process.

Simon put his key card into the slot and heard the soft click of the door unlocking. The moment he stepped inside his new room, he was overwhelmed by a rush of emotions. It felt like a dream—his own space, a far cry from the uncertain nights he'd spent on the streets. He looked around at the cozy furnishings and smiled. This was his home now.

He dropped his backpack on the bed and took a moment to appreciate his surroundings. A comfortable bed, fresh linens, and even a small desk where he could set up his things. The light streamed in through the window, and for the first time in a long time, he felt a sense of peace. Meanwhile, Caleb returned to his suite. He felt a swell of happiness at having been able to help Simon. They had shared so much on the strip, and now they were both on a new path. The two had forged a bond went beyond friendship; it was a partnership of sorts. He plopped down on the couch and flipped on the TV, still buzzing from the dinner. The meals at a neighbor's restaurant had been a highlight of his time at the the coastal casino, but tonight felt special.

Part II — Leaving Water

Marge entered the suite just as Caleb settled in. "How are you feeling?" she asked, a warm smile on her face.

"Great," Caleb replied, beaming. "Simon is thrilled about his new room. I just know it's going to change his life."

"It's wonderful to see you both thriving. You've created a little community here." She sat down next to him, her demeanor relaxing after a busy day. "You deserve this, you know. All of it."

Caleb shrugged, the modesty ingrained in him surfacing. "It's just the right thing to do. He's been a good friend to me."

Marge nodded. "You've been a good friend too. And the casino loves you for it. You've brought a sense of warmth and connection to the place."

Caleb chuckled, "I just hope it's not too much attention now I'm on TV. I mean, I didn't exactly sign up to be the poster child for 'homeless guy turned casino VIP.'"

Marge laughed, her eyes sparkling. "Well, sometimes good things come with attention. Just remember, you can always lean on us here. We're your family now."

The warmth of her words enveloped him, and he felt a flicker of hope spark within. After everything he had gone through, he finally felt like he was in the right place. He thought about Simon and how far they had both come since they met. They had both faced their demons, and now they were in a position to help each other rise.

"Speaking of family, I think I'll check on Simon," Caleb said, standing up. "Make sure he's settling in alright."

"Great idea," Marge replied, her eyes twinkling with encouragement. "I'll join you."

They made their way down the hall to Simon's room, and Caleb knocked lightly on the door.

"Hey, Simon! It's Caleb and Marge! You good in there?"

After a moment, the door opened, and Simon stood there, looking fresh and relaxed in his new clothes.

"Hey, guys! Come in!" Simon stepped aside, and they entered his room.

"Looks like you've already made yourself at home," Caleb said, glancing around the neat space.

Simon laughed, "I just set my stuff down. It feels so good to have a real place to relax."

Marge beamed at him. "You deserve it, Simon. We're happy for you."

Simon ran a hand through his hair, visibly touched by their kindness. "I can't believe this is real. I mean, it feels like just yesterday I was wandering around aimlessly. Now, I've got my own room, new clothes, and friends like you."

Caleb smiled, feeling the warmth of camaraderie. "We're in this together now, buddy. You've got support, and we're here for each other."

"Exactly!" Marge chimed in. "If you ever need anything, just call. And don't forget to reach out to us if you need help finding work or getting settled in."

"Thanks, Marge," Simon said, his eyes glistening with gratitude. "I'm just grateful to have you both in my life."

They spent the next hour chatting about their plans and dreams, with laughter filling the air. Simon felt a weight lift off his shoulders, and as the night wore on, he knew he had a solid foundation to build upon.

Eventually, they said their goodnights, with promises to meet up in the morning for breakfast. As Caleb returned to his suite, he felt a profound sense of belonging. After a long day, he finally lay down on his king-size bed, closed his eyes, and let out a deep sigh of relief. The worries of the past began to fade, replaced by the hope of new beginnings. Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went. Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had. The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry. Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

By Thatcher F. Zettler

Elowen father Henry needed a nursing home, so her search was started. Henry was staying at her house for about six months. His belongings were still in his house, yet since he needed a nursing home, they would have to go into a garage sale. Henry was not too happy about all this but he knew it was the best for everyone.

Henry one request is to be a window so he can look out and daydream. Elowen said she will do the best she can do for this request. She came across one was close to home, and plus near Alden (her son, and his grandson) middle school. The place was called Desert Cactus Nursing Home. She called them and arraigned a meeting with them. The head nurse was Ruth Ann Bellows.

The next day Elowen went to visit Desert Cactus Nursing Home, she noticed the building looked fine from the outside, and noticed a few people outside enjoying the sun. She walked in and Ruth was there waiting for her. They introduced each other and introduced Henry too. Elowen was paying attention to detail of the inside and looked fine by her.

Henry on the other hand was seeing what would be his rest of his life. Henry liked the idea you could come out in the sun. Henry felt there was no limits what he could or couldn't do. Elowen went into Ruth's office and Henry followed. Ruth handed over a pamphlet to Elowen to look over. Elowen was pleased on what she was seeing, yet this was the first place she looked at too.

Elowen asked about if there was a window bedroom available, Ruth said there was two left. That one had a tree near it so you could look at the life, and was near a pathway. Right there Henry barked up and said "This Is my home!" Elowen still wanted to over the details. Henry insisted this is the place for him. Elowen listened to Henry since in fact will be a place the rest of his life.

Elowen went over the payment options and Ruth showed in detail how much it would cost, and it was cheap. Yet Elowen agreed with Henry and got Ruth to start a contract with the place. Henry asked if he can see the room. Ruth called on a clerk to take Henry on a tour of the place and the bedroom. a clerk offered her hand but Henry turned her down since could walk on his own, yet slow.

a foreman and Henry pasted up some people there and Henry said Hello to them, they said hello back to him. The a foreman said, "OK here is the room, they were talking about." Henry walked in and gave a smile of approval. They walked back to Ruth's office and a foreman said, "Henry is love at first sight." Then Henry said to Elowen, "I love it, it is perfect for me, I looked out the window, saw a tree, and saw some squirrels playing and a path where anyone can walk on." Elowen gave out a smile back to Henry. She was afraid of having to go place to place to finally agree on a place or she would have to insist on a place either Henry liked it or not.

Ruth set up move in this coming Monday, so Henry could get what belongings he wanted to take with him or agree to put them into as garage sale. Henry and Elowen left, and went back home.

Alden was not home from school yet so she made them all a snack when Alden did get home.

Henry thanked Elowen for the approval of the nursing home. Elowen told him it was all up to him and surprised at the first place he liked and wanted.

She figured since it was close to their place and Alden school was a selling point, but in fact was the window and tree. Alden came home from school. "Is your bike in the garage?" asked Elowen, "No, I will go back and do that." Alden went outside the garage and opened it and put his bike into the garage. Alden came back inside, "Hello grandpa." He bellowed. "Hello Alden, we are in the kitchen." Alden went into the kitchen a snack and his grandfather and mother await him.

Alden ate his snack and Henry asked "So tell us what you learned today at school?" Alden went into he was bored with math, history was fun, and recess was his favorite time. "History eh?" questioned Alden, "Now Henry it is basic history." Elowen chirped into conversation. "Yes, I understand." Since Henry could go into long detail about history to Alden.

"Ok tells us what you learned today in history?" asked Henry. "We are learning about the Civil War. Just how the south questioned the north about their decision making and how the north disagreed."

Henry said "That sounds interesting for you to learn at your age, and grade." "Henry he is in the 5th grade so the history is showing how two sides didn't get along and how they can make choices." Alden asked for another peanut butter cracker, and Elowen made him another. "No more until dinner time." Alden agreed and went to put his backpack into his room; changed his shirt. While in the kitchen Henry was telling Elowen about how he could help Alden on his history and understand more. Elowen still wanted the basics to be taught.

Alden went to watch TV. Elowen was preparing a spaghetti dinner for all three. Henry asked if he could help but Elowen handled it well. Henry went onto talk about the new place, and how this weekend would be best for a garage sale since he had two weeks to sell what he could. Elowen agreed. Henry walked slowly over to see what Alden was watching. Cartoons it was, Henry remembered the older cartoons and smiled at the ones Alden was watching.

Henry asked Alden "Why do you find math boring?" Alden replied "Too much thinking and I have a sharp mind so I feel it just a pace by pace thing." Henry replied "Math is good for you, if you are bored you should ask you teacher to give you harder problems to solve so it will help the boredom." Henry replied. Alden answered "Than I would have to think harder I guess, I will see what I can do." Henry patted Alden on the shoulders.

Henry left him to his cartoons, and he walked out to the back yard sat in a chair and just stared. He was listening to the birds chirp. Henry repeated them by saying, "Chirp Chirp." Henry enjoyed the outdoors and liked nature. When he was a young, his father would take him hiking, and to enjoy nature as it came to them. Henry always had a smirk on his face when he was outdoors. He thought of he his father, and the things they did together.

Henry was out there for some time, as it was getting later without his knowing. He had to say goodnight to the nature was around him and go back inside. "Dad, where you been?" asked Elowen, "Outside enjoying the nature." Henry replied. She asked him to get ready for supper. He walked to the bathroom and washed his hands. Alden already did such. So he joined them at the table.

"Alden, please say grace." Elowen asked, so Alden went on to say grace and they all said "Amen." They opened their eyes to a wonderful feast Elowen had made. Lots of spaghetti and lots of meatballs, and garlic bread she cheated by using store brand. They all dug into what they wanted and had plenty to have among themselves. There was the "Pass me" within the table things were being passed around the table a few times.

Every stomach was full and everyone was stuffed. Everyone cleared their own place to the sink, and Alden took the spaghetti to the sink, took the meatball except two fell on the ground "Felix, Felix come here." Said Alden. Felix was the family dog. Felix came into the kitchen and saw the two meatballs on the ground and gobbled them up, without the five second rule. Then Alden cleaned up the mess of the dog and meatballs left on the ground.

Alden excused himself from the rest of the table and went into his room to do his homework. Of course had the boring math in it, but the excitement he enjoyed with history. Henry came into his room and asked what homework is he working on, and Alden responded with history. Henry sat on Alden bed and said "Your granddad knows a lot about history, but I promised the basic history" Alden told him he is working on the Civil War period.

Henry said "I was not born than if you wonder, I am not old." They both laughed over that, and stated saying "The Civil War period was with two people didn't agree with each other on terms within government and politics. When both sides didn't agree they fought over it, then it become a problem within the people, so it became a Civil War." Hoping it was basic enough. Alden understood and went on reading about it, and answers some questions the teacher asked the students to answer.

About two hours later, Alden had to get ready for bed. He said goodnight to everyone and Felix jumped on his bed to join him for sleep. Henry whispered "Sleep well." Henry left the room to go back into the kitchen. Dishes were done and Elowen put on some coffee if Henry wanted any. Henry did and they started talking about this move of his. "Dad, what was the selling point of this place, I thought you would be stubborn about doing this?" Henry replied, "The outdoors with the window, the tree and a path I could do from my own bed." Elowen just shook her head.

The next day came and Alden was off to school. Elowen wanted to go over with Henry her plans to go over to his place with him to talk about what he wanted to sell in the garage sale. The garage sale would take place at Henry's place, than the following week would be at Elowen's place. When they got there, Henry felt a small chill up his spine.

Elowen unlocked the front door, and told Henry "Where you want to start from?" Henry responded the bedroom first. Elowen brought with her post it notes, so she can place price tags on the items. She pointed out the dresser since the nursing home provided one. "Save the TV." Henry said, since the nursing home didn't provide that. Elowen went around the room and put price tags on everything but the TV. Elowen told Henry those items will be moved by professionals to the outdoors for the garage sale.

They got to the family room; everything got a price tag, all the dining room got a price tag as well. The last place was the garage, and Elowen said she will just bring items out and people can make their best offer on Henry's tools. "Elowen, in the garage is a safe; I want Alden to have that." Elowen pondered "What would Alden do with a safe?" "It has been in the family for years, and I want him to have so it doesn't go into wrong hands." Henry replied with concern.

"Ok Dad, if you wish just do you remember the combination to it?" Elowen said since the safe had lots of dust on it. "I have to think about it; it been in here for years and I forgot about it until now." He said, Now Elowen and Henry have the place with post it notes, Elowen had to make up signs for it. They drove to the store to buy Garage Sale signs Elowen put the address on it, and put them around the area.

Henry gave out a sigh, and a slow breath of air. He got bought all this furniture years ago and now going into a garage sale. Part of him will be gone, but knowing is the best for him. Memories are with this furniture, since some of them he put together by hand. Looking at them is a piece of a puzzle but where is the final piece. The harder part will be selling the place. That is what Henry will miss the most, all the memories of youth.

"I know it is hard on your dad, but we must do what we have to do right?" Henry nodded his head. Elowen tried to comfort her dad in these times since grandma is no longer with them. Henry had two younger sisters, one who has passed and another who is not speaking to him due an inheritance issue. She is not trying to hurt him in any way and he knows that. Henry said "Let's go home for lunch I am hungry." Elowen agreed with him yet she wanted to put up two more signs. Henry allowed that, since he wasn't hungry just wanted to get out of the area at time.

Henry stuck his head out the window while driving away from his place. As if a dog was trying to get some air. Elowen said "Get your head inside dad; I don't want you to harm yourself." He brought his head inside after one more look. Dad, I know memories will be with you keep the close to your heart and mind. Henry said "So many memories, even back when you were a child living there." She smile back at him.

They arrived back at Elowen's place. Henry opened the door and he went straight for the door. "I guess he has to use the bathroom." Thought Elowen. Elowen was correct Henry had to use the bathroom so she let him fast as she could, and follow right behind. Elowen made two ham and cheese sandwiches for them, and a soda. Henry came out of the bathroom a happier person and sat down with her to enjoy lunch. "Dad remember you have me and Alden." Henry said "I know this just there is so much to think about and being without."

After lunch, Henry wanted to take a nap. So while he was taking a nap, Elowen did the dishes from lunch and turned on her daily dose of a soap opera. Elowen didn't watch these often but when she had the chance she would. She knew same old story line or a twist of a story just to make you want to watch the next day episode. Alden would be getting home from school in two hours so she enjoyed the quietness.

Of course the soap ended in a twist to make you to watch tomorrow episode, but Elowen was not much into it. Alden put his bike in the garage with Leonard's, Alden brought home a friend. Elowen welcomed them with a finger over the mouth stating grandpa was taking a nap so they went outside to play. She came out there with a snack for them to eat, and a drink too. Not too long grandpa did wake from nap and went outside to join Alden and his friend. Grandpas just sat in a chair and watch them play.

"Grandpa this is Leonard, Leonard this is my Grandpa Henry." Alden said as Alden did have good matters. The both said hello to each other. Then they went back to playing. Henry was just enjoying the sunshine, the blue sky and watching his grandson play. Henry saw two squirrels chasing one another across the street's tree and he gave out a happy laugh. Remember he enjoys these type of things.

Everyone came inside not too long, and the kids went to Alden room to play, and grandpa came inside to rest in a chair in the family room. "Did you have a nice nap, Dad?" asked Elowen. "I did, was peaceful and relaxing." Said Henry. "Just wanted to clear my mind of what is to happen soon."

Henry explained. "Dad there is nothing to worry about, things will work out." With a boast of confidence said Elowen. Henry just sat there and was in a peaceful daydream while time drifted by. Leonard had to go home soon; both Henry and Elowen said goodbye, and Alden opened the garage door so Leonard could get his bike from there. Alden closed it down and saw Leonard ride off than came inside. Alden went to his room to play on his computer for awhile. Dinner would be ready soon; once again.

The next day was Friday; Alden again went off to school. Both Henry and Elowen went back over to Henry's place to await the movers. They waited at the front steps; in chairs they waited and they arrived an hour late. Everyone came inside, and Elowen told the movers what she wanted done, and within 30 minutes they were completed. Now everything except the garage stuff was into one room. Would be easier for people who wanted to see items would it be this way.

Elowen thanked the movers, and told them what does not sell would be moved to her place. "his father has ordered for you, Elowen." the lead mover said. Henry reminded Elowen about the safe he wanted Alden to have, so they went into the garage to retrieve it. Elowen put it in her back truck of the car and went back her place to have lunch once again, and to put the safe into Alden's room. Alden came home again put his bike in the garage, walked into the kitchen and said hello to his mother and grandfather. He went to his room change his shirt and put down his backpack. "What is this safe doing in my room?" Alden yelled from his room. "There is your cue, grandpa." Elowen said. Henry walked to Alden room. Henry sat down on Alden's bed.

"This safe used to be my grandfathers. Who gave it to me, and now me giving it to you. This safe has been in the family for over 300 years. Before a combination safe was made, it was just placed into a box. "Said Henry. "What is so special about it?" Alden interrupted. Henry continued. "Our grandfather's put a trinket or something to remember the times. The generations would see our own history at time. So it is a memory safe." Henry said.

"I get it, so it reminds of time and how it was like back in those days?" Alden was interested. "Yes, Is what it to be. I put something in there to remind of my early times." Henry explained. "This is nice, thanks grandpa. How do I open it?" Alden Asked. "If I remember the combination, I will tell you then." Henry said back to Alden, seeing Alden's eyes are wide open. "Ok, I will keep it in my closet, but first to clean up the dust, and make it look better." Alden said being glad to have a piece of history.

"Do you need me help you lift it?" Henry asked. "I think I can carry it" Alden with his might moving it closer to the closet. "Take good care of it, it has a lot of memories in there and we don't to lose them." Henry firmly said. "I will take good care of it grandpa and thanks again." They both left the room; Henry went back to the kitchen, while Alden got some dusting material. Alden returned to his room with dusting material and started to clean the safe. He even had the safe cleaner than his room.

He finished cleaning the safe and returned the cleaning material then the joined the rest into the kitchen. Felix came in the room too. "Now you need to take care of safe." Elowen said. "I will mom, no worries." Alden said with a smile. As we said before Keitih loves history and this was a good example of remembering history.

"Why don't you take Felix for a walk?" Elowen asked. "Sure mom, Felix you want to go for walk." Alden said to Felix who gets excited to hear the word do "do you wanna". Alden said then Felix went bonkers, so Alden and Felix went for a walk. Elowen wanted some time alone with Henry was the reason she asked Alden to do this. "Dad, I don't want him to get over zealous over this safe." Elowen said with a firm voice. "Elowen be calm, it is in his closet so it will be cover with clothes, or something in no time and he will forget it is there." Henry said with an assuring voice.

"I have to get a few things at the store do you need anything?" Elowen asked. "The same as always." Henry said, which means the basics. Elowen grabbed her purse, and car keys and left. Henry went over to the sofa and lay down until Alden and Felix came home. Henry was thinking when would be a good time to tell and open safe for Alden. He did know the combination but didn't want to get Alden hypes up too much of opening it for him right then.

Alden and Felix came home about ten minutes later. Henry had to think, and decided another time would be best for Alden to know what is inside the safe. Felix came to the couch and jumped up and started to get comfortable, to kick Henry out of it. Henry got up and asked Alden want he wanted to do, and was hoping not to open the safe. Alden knew he didn't remember the combination when he brought it there.

They just talked about school, recess, girls, and just boys stuff. Henry was interested in what Alden had to say about girls. Alden said "They can be bosses, and annoying." Henry said back "That is true, at least your mother is not like that, phew." The boys stuff was talking about what they want to be when they grow up, to just nonsense boys would be talking about. Being in the 5th grade, was nothing too special since you still had one more year to be in 6th grade, which mean you are something, and then being in the 7th grade, you are then in middle school, Henry wondered if Alden would be taking about the safe at school, and then some of his friend's home come over to look at it. Henry had to wait on answer until Monday afternoon. Elowen came home from the store, and both she and Henry would put away the main stuff, any dog food, or cans were Alden job to put away. Elowen did buy more than she wanted. That was a pattern of hers, to say she does not need much, would mean buy a lot.

Alden put away the can goods, and the dog food. Took the bag and put it near the front door. "How about Mac and Cheese, with hamburger, for dinner?" Elowen asked. They all agreed. Elowen started to prepare the Mac and Cheese, and the hamburger came from the store so it was fresh. Alden sat the table and Henry did the drink request. "Mom, can I have a soda with dinner?" Alden asked, "Ok, just one tonight." Alden got out a soda and took it to the table. Both Henry and Elowen would have a glass of milk.

Sunday was here, and this time the movers are moving what was left at Henry's house to Elowen's house. The movers this time was 30 minutes late. Elowen didn't mind them being late. The movers and Henry and Elowen and Alden all went to Henry's place. There was about ten things left to be moved. Alden just watched the movers as they to Alden looked like the strongest man on earth. He watched how one could move something so heavy into a truck.

When they were all done everyone again went back to Elowen's place. Henry got to see how empty the house looked. A chill went down his spine again. "Now I can look for a realtor. I know a website can base how much to ask for." Elowen said. Henry just could not believe how empty the house was and how he felt now being empty and being on the market to sell. "Please get a good price Elowen." Henry said with a concerned voice. "Elowen said "No need I will get a good realtor. Last time I looked at your property it said I could get two million. We just have to wait to see.

Everyone was at Elowen's house and the movers move some stuff into the garage and other stuff into the dining room. They had to be moved again outside the upcoming Friday. Elowen offered everyone water and the movers accepted since they felt this was a lot of work on their part.

Everyone was happy again, and the movers left. Felix made sure of his presence when the movers were in the house. He didn't bark much as he is a beagle dog and they don't bark much.

Monday came fast, so off Alden to school and Elowen and Henry were in the kitchen. Henry said "What will become of the over furniture if does not sell?" Elowen replied "Then I will be calling good will and they will come and take the rest." Henry agreed. The nursing home does not need much from Henry. Clothes and a night stand, and of course a TV were want they wanted. Henry was firm on the TV. he did like to watch TV late at night. At the nursing home he had his own room so watching TV late would not bother anyone unless the volume was loud.

Henry was thinking in midday of Alden recess time for just the guy talk would Alden be saying to them "guess what guy I have a safe in my closet, came from my grandfather. " Thinking the guys would be surprised to hear something of old of nature, and want to see it. Yet Henry just had to wait. He sat down on the couch this time since he learned his lesson with Felix. Felix did join him and Felix wanted attention so Henry petting him while Henry did some thinking.

Elowen made lunch for them both. Elowen did turn on the TV to just check on the soap operas to see the story line was all about. Henry looked at her and said "This Is garbage, just people who write this stuff make things out of complex." Elowen just shrugged about what Henry said. Elowen was glued to the TV hearing what is going on. Henry got up and asked Felix if he wanted to join him outside or stay there. Felix did stay there so Henry went outside on his own. He sat in a patio chair. Henry listened to the birds. When they would chirp he would just say "Chirp" back at them. He did enjoy the outdoors a lot and watch nature do it magic and he sitting still watching the earth change. He was thinking of when he was a child and exploring the lots his father own. Walking around and seeing different things. He loved that, saw butterflies, lizards, and his own dog he had.

After Henry daydreaming outside, Alden came home. Henry was about to hear "I am home I brought over a few of my friends." Instead he heard "I am home." Walking towards the kitchen, Alden said to anyone would hear him. Of course Henry did, Elowen was still glued to her soap opera story. Henry came back to the kitchen to greet Alden. Alden than went to his room, changed

his shirt and put his backpack down.

"How was school?" Henry asked. "The as yesterday, but during glass her teacher got caught doing a spot ball on Isaac and her teacher was moved to be closer to the door." Alden responded. "The whole class laughed at her teacher." Alden added. Henry said "T hat had to be one embarrassing moment for her teacher?" Alden added, "Yes, it was but during recess her teacher didn't join us in the boy's talk." "Was the same topics during the boy's talk?" Henry inquired.

"Yea, we just talked about a neighbor the most, and one girl a clerk likes." Alden said Henry said to himself "Nothing about the safe, which is a good sign." "Glad you had a good day, let's distract your mother from her soap opera to get a snack." Henry said. They both tag teamed on the mother, one stood front of the TV while the other complained on wanting a snack. You can guess who did what. Elowen got the clue and turned off the TV and made them a snack.

Later in the evening while Alden was doing his homework, before dinner Henry asked Elowen about the money she is getting where is going to. Elowen was using all the money she got from the garage sale to help needed kids. Henry was happy to see she still has a good heart.

During dinner nothing was mentioned about the safe, and Henry didn't want to bring it up either. Mostly at the dinner table was talking about Desert Cactus Nursing Home, and telling Alden he could ride his bike there when his grandfather moves in, as it is close to the house. Alden liked idea, and was happy to know he could see his grandfather at any time he wanted to.

Tuesday came, and Alden got ready for school. He put on his bike helmet and backpack. He headed to the garage after saying goodbye to his mother and grandfather. He opened the garage and put it down and started his routine to school. He would jump over street gutters, and ride through dirt. At least at this time there was no mud would drive Elowen nuts.

Alden would come to stop signs and be cautious due to traffic in the area. He would see drives come to a crawl stop then speed up so in fact they never came to a stop. He saw this at many intersections. There was one main one he faced on the way to school. At this one he would wait for some others to show up so it would force drivers to obey and come to a complete stop and allow the bikes to ride across the street.

Alden and others would arrive 15 minutes early before the bell rang. He and some of his group friends would hang out. "Everyone do their homework?" his father would ask. Everyone nodded their head. A few who didn't do their homework the teacher knew how to deal with them. Alden's teacher was Mr. Mark a foreman, and he would go by Mr. a foreman to the kids since they are in grade school as older kids could have got away with Mark. Mr. a foreman would deal with one who didn't do their homework is to stand in front of the class and tell everyone they didn't do their homework.

Of course, these kids would have double the homework to do, and if they didn't do that. Mr. her teacher would send them to the principle office for discipline. Mr. her teacher was a fair teacher, had humor and showed a good way to educate the kids. Yet if you get on his bad side, than he can be demanding, and mean teacher. Lucky for Alden he has not been on the bad side of the teacher. The bell rang and kids would almost drag themselves into their classrooms. a neighbor had to sit near the door so when he sat down others would pat him on the shoulder to show concern to him sitting there. Class started and the teacher took roll call, after roll call he would ask about homework, and the few didn't do it had to stand in front of the class.

Alden had to pull out his math homework which came next to talk about. Alden was bored with math, but he did the work. Mr. a clerk did call on Alden for answer five. Alden said "Z would equal 15." Mr. a clerk "Correct now will you show us on the board how you got answer." Alden would get to the board, some kids were laughing, Mr. a clerk said, "You can laugh but I might call on you next." The classroom got quiet so Alden started to do the math equation and showed everyone how Z became 15.

Alden just could not wait until recess is when history would be talked about. Alden couldn't wait for that, as everyone history was talked about in school he paid attention well. Mr. a foreman read from the text book as well tell him from experience. That is why Alden would pay more into detail of what is being said as well as to see it showed in a text book. Yet we are talking about math now so he just had to go with the routine of solving problems.

Soon was recess, and Alden could not wait, math was ending and he was glad. Mr. his father gave out the homework for tonight, and then the bell rang for recess. Alden and his friends hung out, Alden was talking how math was boring him. her teacher did join the group this time and he just talked about waiting to move back into the classroom settings. a neighbor talked about Elowen; she

was a nice and pretty girl to a neighbor's eye. The guys teased him about it, and it didn't bother a neighbor at all.

The Bell rang again time to go back into class, and Alden knew now would be talking about history. Everyone took their seats. Mr. a clerk stood in front of the class with chalk at hand. He drew out two sections. He describes them as North and South. He told the class to take out their history books. a foreman left his at home so he had to sit near his father to go over the material. Mr. a clerk, talked "Now I drew out two parts of the chalk board, showing to you how the north and south had a map of each section."

He continued, "From what you read last night, how can someone go over this?" He saw a few hands raised to answer this question. He picked on Elowen, all the guys would be listening and more a neighbor would be. She said "The north and the south had a border and drew a map giving to each section to each military division. Showing to them how what is theirs" Elowen said. Mr. her teacher nodded his head, and then said "Anyone else want to add to this."

He saw more hands raised, Alden kept his hand down, since he wanted others to explain in their words about the North and South. Mr. a clerk called on Mark. Mark added "The military was in groups, and had their own people protecting what is theirs. It was a little confusing at the beginning since it was more two people didn't agree with each other. How others joined each other causes so it became a national military action. People from their own homes beard arms and protected what was theirs." Mr. a clerk nodded his head and agreed with both Elowen and both Mark.

Mr. a foreman said to the classes their homework for history is to choose what side they would take and why they choice were the North or South. He did mention if this homework for the history is not done, they would face the principal next. This homework assignment was part of their grade at the end. You would hear some gulps sounds or a sign sounds in the class room yet Alden gave out a big smile.

The lunch bell rang, and everyone grabbed their lunch from their cubby hole. Walked out and went the picnic style benches to eat their lunch. The guys had their own section, and the girls had theirs. his father was teasing a neighbor when Elowen spoke a neighbor was in dream land. a neighbor did blush and agreed he was. The guys looked in the lunches to see to swap anything. her teacher had an apple to swap, no one wanted the apple so her teacher just put it back in his lunch bag.

No one had anything of value today to swap so they ate their own lunch. After eating lunch they all went to the play ground. Some would be playing basketball on a small net, or playing four square. Four square was a box of four and used a rubber ball and to get to knock people out of their square. Paul was always the server, and he never except once was knocked out his square.

Girls would just congregate over near the girls bathroom. They would be talking about boys and girl nonsense. Elowen was talking to the girls she heard about a clerk likes her, all the girls laughed.

Elowen was happy to hear someone liked her, so she took it on herself to make it show she is happy to hear this. She wanted to do after lunch is writing a note and have it passed to a clerk.

Lunch time was over with and everyone dragged their feet back to the classroom. The next subject was science and technology. This was his father favorite subject. Mr. a foreman went over how science with technology is how new things, projects, reality is today. He went over how a cellular phone can receive voicemail with a text message of what the person said with it. He talked how in the past when a cordless phone was the top of the market. his father was interested in the new way of things coming out and to be somehow being in this position.

There was no homework today in this area, and most were happy since they are not interested in this field yet a neighbor was. He would research and do his own homework on this, and kept up with what is going on, and stay part of it. He always had a nick for this, so he always pay attention to Mr. her teacher lecture on this.

The last of the class time was free time; you had 45 minutes to do whatever you wanted. Do homework, talk to friends, or even Elowen passing a note to a clerk. Elowen wrote up a note asking a clerk if is interested on Saturday to go to the ice cream parlor to get an ice cream. She mentioned she will talk to her father to drive them. When a clerk go the note the girls giggled, and the guys were going "oh" and "ah" at him. a clerk pushed past him and read the note, and responded he would talk to him mom and she would contact her dad.

When Elowen got the note back she smile and the girls wanted to know the answer. So she told them and they started to giggle about it. The guys would bug a foreman about the note, and a foreman told them what it was. Leonard was more interested in what the note was about. a foreman explained he likes Elowen so to have a fun time doing something together would be an enjoyable

time. The guys just gave off a shrug to his answers about Elowen.

The final bell rang and it was an expressway out the door, they all bolted to the door. Some took their time since they didn't want to feel rushed. Leonard, her teacher, his father and Alden go to their bikes and unlocked them. They rode together on the way home. his father was interested in the homework since he felt it was a lot to do on one night. Leonard on the other hand was teasing her teacher about this coming Saturday. Alden was just listening not commenting on anything. They reach were a clerk leaves them, then the following street is where a neighbor and Leonard take off. Alden was alone now. Now he can run over cans, curbs on the way home. He made it home and went to the garage to open it and put his bike away. He greeted everyone and went to his room and changed his shirt and put down his backpack and went into the kitchen to told everyone about his day.

Wednesday is here, and Elowen and Henry went over to meet a realtor at Henry's House, while Alden was in school. Henry keeps getting a hair standing up when he goes there. Once again Henry saw how bare the place is, and there is nothing to show for it, other than the furniture is at Elowen's house. He walked around the family room area; just to get another view of the place. The realtor showed up; Owen is his name, introduced himself to Elowen and Henry.

Owen has been a realtor for over 20 years and he has been known for getting the best buck out of the places he has sold. All three walked around the place while Owen was doing 'thinking' notes of the place. They went into the kitchen, family room, dining room, and the outside porch area. Owen was making notice of the porch how big it was and some wooden items. Henry said he made those years ago.

Owen was done and they all met back at Elowen's place. Owen went over his findings and what he felt he could sell the place. "I believe I can get 2.5 million for it." Elowen nodded and added "Is this a fast sell or will wait for multiple offers?" Owen said "Not a fast sell, will wait to get at least three offers then let you decide what is best for you." Henry barked in "Get the best for the buck, please." Owen chuckle and said he would.

Owen was going to go back to the property and take some pictures so he can advertise to his other staff about the place, and to some of his own customers who are looking to buy. Owen left and said he will be in contact. Elowen and Henry waved goodbye. "2.5 million. What do you think of Dad?" Elowen wondered how Henry felt. "As long he knows I am not looking to sell to some yahoo for it." Henry said. "Oh, Dad you and you're acting so picky." Elowen said back. Elowen offered lunch, so they had some lunch and she once again went back to her soap operas and Henry went to the backyard.

Felix went outside with Henry. Henry would be talking with the birds, and he saw one squirrel on the fence, so did Felix. He barked at it until was out so site. "Felix, those are our friends, we don't bark at our friends" Henry said. Birds kept on chirping so did Henry respond. Felix sat by the chair Henry was sitting in with a pose of waiting for the next squirrel to arrive.

Without knowing of time, Henry knew soon Alden would be coming home from school. Henry and Felix came back inside, and Henry closed the door, Boom went the garage door. "I am home I brought home a friend, a foreman." Elowen actually got up and turned off the TV. Went into the kitchen to greet a foreman, Henry followed behind. "Nice to meet you, a foreman" Marry and Henry said. "Nice to meet you too." a foreman said back. Alden and a foreman went to Alden's room. Alden said "Are you sure you want to do this thing with Elowen?" his father said back "Yeah, I think it would be a lot of fun, plus everyone knows I do like Elowen. So to be more open about it will not hurt anyone." Alden said back "Hand me a shirt from my closet will you." his father opened it and grabbed a shirt from it and didn't know the safe was there, it had clothes on it just as Henry predicted. Alden and his father went outside to play.

Elowen called out "Anyone who wants a snack has to come to the kitchen." Both Alden and her teacher walked into the kitchen to receive their snack. While there Henry asked "anything exciting at school today?" Alden talked about the North and South for the Civil War. her teacher talked about technology. Henry could see who like which subject the most. "her teacher, what do you find interesting the most about it?" Henry asked. "Ideas to invent something with it could help people in the future, and being helpful for the health of patients too." her teacher replied

Henry could see where a neighbor was coming from, added "In my days the things we have today was not even close to what it is like today. We had to write on a shovel our answers to questions." a neighbor gave Henry a stare of saying "You are old." a neighbor had to leave since he had the same homework as Alden so he needed a head start on doing it when he got home. Alden walked

him out to get his bike, yes Alden and a neighbor didn't put their bikes in the garage. Alden came back inside after putting his bike in the garage. "What homework do you to do?" Henry asked, "Oh math again, and we have to decide if we would join the North or South." Henry liked idea but Elowen shot him down to help Alden, as he as to do it himself. Alden walked into his room; Felix followed so Henry and Elowen watched the evening news instead. Then they all went to bed. Thursday morning came, and Henry was up before anyone. He made himself some coffee. He was staring out the kitchen window. Imaging lots of kids playing in the street, playing bat ball. Seeing there are street vendors on the street selling their merchandise. He was so drawn into it; Elowen had to shake him hard to get his attention. "You going to share coffee?" Elowen asked. Henry poured her a cup of coffee. About ten minutes later; Alden woke up to get ready for school. Before Alden ran out to get his bike, Henry asked him "Did you pick the North or South?" "North" said Alden and now saying goodbye to everyone. Alden opened the garage and rode off to school. "Today Dad, we have to visit Ruth to drop off more paperwork for her records." Henry agreed. The both had breakfast and got ready to leave to go visit Ruth the head nurse at the nursing home. Elowen packed up a few more items for Henry to take with him to put into his new room. They got into the car and drove to the nursing home. Got out and walked into the home and met up with Ruth. While there Henry had his hands full of what he wanted to put into the room. Ruth called on a clerk to help Henry help him do that. a clerk called Henry Mr. Henry, and was helpful and courteous. Henry liked about this place; they treat you right and don't talk down to you. a clerk finished putting the items away and asked if Mr. Henry would like to go some place. Henry said he would like to go outside and he was able to walk there himself. a clerk smile and walked away while Henry went to find the door outside, and went outside. Henry was enjoying the sounds and the birds. He felt he could stay the rest of his life outdoors. With his heath is not good so would not be a good idea after all. a foreman came out to join him, just for the moment to make sure he was ok. As he was, and told her he could find he way back to Ruth's office. a foreman left him alone and she went back to do her duties. Henry stayed out there for about ten minutes before he came back inside. He walked past his room, and saw the window there and smiled. He went back to Ruth's office. Ruth said "Are you getting used to this place, Henry?" He nodded and said "I am enjoying the sounds and watching the birds where I found a door I can go out of and enjoy nature." She was pleased. She reminded him in a week he would be moving in here and wanted him to feel welcome. He has not been introduce to any other patients there but has seen them. She would introduce him to them, as there are five others. Elowen was glad things are going into place for her dad, and how Alden could ride his bike here on the way home from school. Elowen wouldn't have to worry much since he is close to home, and he could visit anytime he wanted. Elowen said they had to get going since on Saturday is the garage sale. Henry and Elowen got back in the car, Henry had his window down, just staring at the nature he can see before Elowen takes off. Before you knew it was Friday Morning. Henry was up again first to make the coffee. Alden was next and met grandpa in the kitchen. "Good Morning, Alden." Henry said and Alden responded "Good Morning Grandpa it's Friday!" Henry smiled as any day to his was a Friday. Elowen came into the kitchen hair standing up since she didn't have any plans to do first thing in the morning. Alden ran off grabbed her purse. "Oh yea it is Taco day at school today" she said. She took out some money and told Alden not to spend it on junk food. Alden smiled back as he might or will he? Alden than got ready for school; said he goodbyes and took his bike from the garage and too off. Elowen finished her first cup of coffee than she got ready for the day. Henry went over the left over furniture might be sold at the garage sale; then sat down on the sofa. Felix was there, so you know who dominated the sofa. Henry petted Felix, and Felix was like pet me here, pet me there. Henry did so, since Henry was remembering what was left the good will get. Henry put out a big sigh sound. No one would hear it other than Felix. Elowen came out form getting done with her shower and was dressed with jeans and a t-shirt. Nothing fancy just relaxing clothes to wear. Henry's turn, so he went off to do his shower and get ready for Friday. Elowen poured herself another cup of coffee. Elowen was thinking what to do today since nothing was planed. Elowen heard the shower turn off so she had to think about something or just asked her dad was he wanted to do. Henry came out and poured another cup of coffee. He asked Elowen if they had plans to do, or people to visit, as she said "Nothing to do or anything in my mind, what about you?" she asked her

dad. "Well nature is something I like maybe later go to a park and just watch birds, if any squirrels are playing." Henry smiled. Elowen said "Sure I will pack up a lunch and we will go the park." Henry was happy with the plans. They will invite Felix if he wants to go too, to get him out of the house once awhile.

Elowen started to work on their picnic lunch, while Henry tried to get more sofa space from Felix. "Ham and Swiss?" Elowen asked. Henry said back "That is fine by me." Elowen made two sandwiches and some chips and two sodas, and a few extra pieces of ham for Felix. Henry was just thinking in almost a week he will be in a nursing home and how things will be different but he's needs will be met.

Elowen cleaned up and walked into the family room, turned to her soaps, since being Friday is cliff hanger Friday's. Henry didn't mind, since he was just daydreaming. She said "After two soaps, we'll get ready for the park." Henry didn't answer her since he was daydreaming. She didn't want to say anything to Felix to get him all bonkers so she waited to say the famous words. Yet he knew if he was do you want to go for a drive he was cautious about those words. They could mean he is going to the vet. Everyone was in the family room doing their own thing.

Soap one ended and Elowen wanted to know more yet couldn't wait until Monday. She had too but knew this is how it is on Friday's. She wanted to talk to the TV about what they did to her, and complain about it, but there was nothing she could do only is to wait to watch on Monday. Soap two started so Elowen was glued to the TV. We all know this will end in a cliff hanger so we know what will happen after this one is over too.

Now Soap two was over, and Elowen had it with the cliff hangers, just turned off the TV and grabbed the leach and harness for Felix. Felix saw it and started to wag his tag, waited to hear what she had in mind. "Felix, do you want to go for a drive?" Felix went banana's hearing those words, so he held still to have his harness put on. Henry got up from the sofa. Felix jumped down too, Elowen put on the leach and Felix ran to the front door.

Felix was jumping up and down in dog language was "I am ready come on!" Elowen grabbed the picnic basket, and Henry grabbed her purse for her and grabbed Felix leach. The door opened and they all went to the car. Felix was in the back seat with the window ajar. He watched what was going on outside, and when Elowen got the light he got down and watched her hand movements. If she turns right he knew was the vet, yet to turn left was something else. She turned left, and Felix gave out a bark, so guess he was happy it was not the vets.

They all arrived at the park and Felix was pleased. Elowen found a place they could be in the shade, while they ate. Henry was more interested in the sounds and animals to see. Felix was just glad to be out of the house and watch other dogs pass by. He would not bark much since he was trained well. He knew matters, such as please and thank you. Everyone was enjoying a peaceful setting.

Elowen opened the basket and handed over a sandwich for Henry and herself, opened a bag of potato chips for all to share. Felix got something to eat as well. They were there for about an hour and half. Henry got to be in park setting, Felix got to be without his leach on and run around the area. Elowen will have a smile on her face. Everyone knew it would not last long.

Elowen asked if everyone was ready to go back home and Henry nodded his head, and of course Felix was not ready but he had no choice. Elowen packed everything back up and they all headed back to the car. They all piled into the car, and they headed home, Felix had a great time since he got to run around and sniff, and of course pee. Everyone got to see other people walk by or jog, or have their own dog with them. Now everyone was back at home.

When they got home, Henry let out Felix and he ran to the front door, Elowen grabbed everything and opened the front door and everyone stepped inside. Henry took off Felix leash and harness and they both went to the couch to unwind some more. Elowen cleaned up everything and knew it was no cook Friday to see what Alden and Henry wanted for dinner, plus to see what coupons she had. Alden came home and Henry and Felix came to greet him, and Elowen did also from the kitchen. Alden asked for no cook Friday to be pizza. He didn't want more tacos since Elowen always had a coupon for tacos. Elowen dug through her coupons and found one for pizza. She didn't place the order until 5pm. Alden went to his room to put down his backpack and put on a clean shirt.

The phone rang and it was Owen from Caller ID, Elowen answered it. They talked for awhile and asked Henry about what would be the lowest for the house, and Henry at least wanted two million. Owen had some interested parties to look at it this weekend. Elowen was pleased with Owen. They hung up. Henry walked into Alden room. They talked about being Friday what Alden is going to do.

Alden was going to help on the garage sale, and maybe add some of things he wanted to sell. They came out of Alden room, and asked Elowen to put in the pizza order. Elowen placed the order for a combination pizza and with boneless wings. Being no cook Friday Alden was able to have a soda with dinner. Dinner arrived in 45 minutes. They all sat down and ate away. Elowen had paper plates ready so it was easy dish detail. Everyone was happy.

Everyone got ready for bed since tomorrow with the garage sale everyone wanted a good night rest. Felix was let out one more time, and then went off to Alden's room. Henry made himself comfortable in bed, and Elowen did the same. Everyone was ready for the sleep they needed. They all were sleeping, and only the crickets they were awake.

Around Midnight, Henry awoke. He wanted something to drink. He went to the kitchen to get some milk, and he heard a sound. He knew it was not a rat or a mouse in the ceiling or in the room. He heard it a second time. He went into the garage and the sound he heard was a dresser drawer was making the sound. He went to close it and the sound happen again.

He took the dresser drawer and put it back in where it belongs, and the drawer reopened by itself. Henry then took it out where it belongs and looked inside the hole it had and heard nothing. He went to put the drawer back when he saw something on the bottom. He noticed it was a note, so he took it off and went to read it. "If you found me you than remembered the combination to the safe. The combination to the safe is 1886." Henry laughed and how he did this years ago just in case he did forget.

For which he did, and thought how much a dummy he is to do this and how the dresser drawer was talking to him. He put the drawer back without the note since he didn't want anyone to know the combination but himself. He then got his milk to drink. No more sounds Henry was hearing so he could go back to sleep.

Here it is Saturday morning with the birds chirping with celebration. Henry was the first up. He went to let Felix out while he stepped out into the backyard to greet the birds too. He heard many style of chirping but he knew of one to imitate. He would just say "Chirp, Chirp." back to the birds. They would chirp back to him. Henry was enjoying the wake call. Felix was ready to come in, and Henry followed him inside.

Elowen got up and she made the coffee since Henry did not. Henry didn't feel for coffee this morning as he was already fully awake for the day. Elowen needed her coffee in the morning, since today will be a long day for her. She swallowed her last sip, and went into the bedroom to get ready for the day. Alden wake up went to the kitchen and wanted milk. He poured himself a glass a milk, said good morning to his grandpa and went to his room to ready for the day.

Everyone was fully dressed and ready for the garage sale at 8am, since most people who see an early time show up earlier to be the first ones there. Elowen open the garage, and the movers showed up at 8:30am to bring out all the furniture was in the house and the garage for people to look at. The earlier people did look, talked among themselves, and one asked for a night stand to be on hold for her until she got her son to come over with his truck to pick it up. Elowen agreed and took the lady money of twenty dollars.

More people started to show up and looked around, one saw of Alden's talking robot he had when he was 4 years old. The robot would repeat what you said in a robot talk. Alden would be the sales person on this since he was the one who knew how it worked. The lady was interested and asked Alden how much. Alden asked for 5 dollars, and she handed over a ten so he had to back to his mom to make change. He came back her 5 dollars of change and she told him she can have it. Alden was happy he made a sale and a profit of 10 dollars.

Henry stared at the talking dresser and people did look at it and walked away. He thought Elowen put a high price on it, yet she reminded him she is asking for 20 dollars for it. Henry was OK with the price and just watched people walk though items were there. He just thought the talking dresses would be talking to them too in the middle of the night, he chuckled inside no one heard that.

It was mid day and at least a majority of the items Elowen put out were gone, so less work for the movers. The dresser, and two night stands yet one was sold. Elowen though tot make a deal with the lady's son who was to pick one up so she didn't have to have one night stand without the other. A gentleman and his daughter showed up looked around and saw the dresser at hand. Henry knew Elowen wanted twenty dollars for it. He just wanted to see if the man wanted it for price.

The daughter like it a lot, and her father handed to Henry 20 dollars as ask price. The man son got out of the truck and he and his father took away the dresser. Henry in his mind was waving away to it as part of him is now gone but he was relieved it did sell to a daughter who wanted it. Yet now he

has the combination to the safe rather look at and wonder what belong too. Would she come back to me and tell m "I think this belongs to you."

Henry had no worries he had note with him and no one knew where he put it. Alden had the safe so he had to explain the contents in the safe, and understand their meanings. He had to know when would be the best time to discuss this with him. Since Alden is learning basic history, this would be a best tool to help him. Henry had to think about that. Alden was an intelligent child with his desire to learn history so was a benefit for Henry to discuss it with them. Henry felt at least Elowen has not to be home when he did; or Henry would not hear the last of it.

5pm came and Elowen started organizing the remaining the items the movers had to take to the good will, Alden picked up 3 toys not sell and added them to the list to go to the good will. There was night stand the lady paid for and her son has not arrived to pick it up. Henry took it back to the garage. The movers had a light load this time, so Elowen got them their money for their time and expense. Now the front yard was clear and a lawn and a walk away, and the garage was easy to access. Elowen was happy, Henry was happy, Alden was happy for his ten dollars to spend, and thought about his father's ice cream with Elowen.

Sunday came without notice, and everyone was lazy. Henry got up later than he normally did, and slowly made coffee. Elowen dragged her feet into the kitchen to pour herself a cup of coffee. "Good morning, dad." She said. "Good morning to you too dear." Her dad replied. They both sat down with one arm resting on the head as if they both had a hangover. Felix came into the kitchen stretching and wanted out. Elowen got up and let him outside.

Alden got up too slowly. He was still in his pajamas coming into the kitchen. "Good morning, all." He made it simple for himself. His mom and grandpa said it right back to him. Alden went over to the cabinet and grabbed his cereal and a bowl, got the milk and sat down at the table. Poured himself some cereal and milk. Even Alden looked as he stayed up late and didn't get enough sleep. Elowen let her teacher back in and he went on the sofa to sleep more.

They all looked as having no energy. Henry made toast for himself and Elowen. Elowen offered to make eggs for anyone wanted any. Only Henry agreed. So Elowen made scrambled eggs for herself and Henry. "Any plans today, Alden?" asked Grandpa, "I might invite a neighbor over to play as well to see how his ice cream went with Elowen." Alden replied back. Alden went into detail about the Elowen and a neighbor went. Both Elowen and Henry were interested too, being young to see how a "date" went.

Alden had to wait until lunch time to call a clerk since his family goes to Church and Sunday school. Plus Alden wanted to make sure he was fully awake to have him over too. No one rushed to the bathroom no one had to rush to do anything. Henry got up and finished the scrambled eggs, and put the pan into the sink.

Henry walked into the family room to join a foreman on the sofa, to think he has today left before he moves into the nursing home. a foreman mooned a little bit giving up some of his space on the sofa. Henry returned the favor but doing some petting. That made a foreman happy. They both did get along and now Henry will be without a dog. The nursing home has a cat walks around the area, yet Henry has not met it.

Alden went back to his room after putting his dishes into the dishwasher. He already had his homework done for what was giving to him on Friday. He just went to play some games on his computer. Elowen said to Henry, "I know you will be missed here, and I believe the home will allow you still be you. You have brought a lot of smiles on Alden's and my face throughout the time you been here. Alden can visit you anytime he wants and I can too. I will keep you posted on calls from Owen. Alden can have you over for sleepovers anytime you like, plus I think he wants to be close to his grandpa."

Henry started a happy cry, and agreed with his daughter. He knew everything will work out for the best and the best of all of us. He said back "I understand where you are coming from, I know my age is catching up on me, and I know you can't always be there for any medical emergencies, or anything requires medical assistance. But I do know you care, and I look forward to seeing Alden grow up more in my lifetime."

Elowen gave a happy smile and they hugged. Alden came into the room and asked why is everyone crying and his mom said "In time you will understand." Alden shrugged it off, and asked if it was OK to call his father. She approved. Alden called his father over to play and to hear about Elowen. his father rode his skateboard over. Elowen made sure Alden was home before 3pm. He agreed. Alden and his father rode off to play at the school's playground.

Only on TV was football so Henry watched while Elowen did the dishes and cleaned up and got last minute things ready for Monday. She knew her dad was not a menace to handle if he was to stay at the house. She knew a nursing care facility would be the best for both of them. She went to start a load of laundry and just find it interesting how she will only have two people to do things for since she is used to handle three different things at once.

The phone rang it was Owen with good news, a couple looked at the house and made an offer to the house of 2.7 million. Elowen was ecstatic to hear this she put the phone down and told her dad. Owen would hear some cheers sounds (coming from Henry) in the background. Owen wanted to go over details with her about it. She wanted to yet when, he asked if she could come to his office to discuss since the party is still there. She asked if Henry had to come along, Owen said "Nope, since you did show to earlier the Power Of Attorney for Henry." She agreed, so the meeting was at 1:30pm.

She hung up the phone and did a celebration dance in the kitchen which no one saw. She was happy to hear the place went over what they wanted. She came into the family room and told Henry she must get ready to meet Owen. He knew he didn't have to go, so he could stay there while she was gone and Alden would be home so he can look after Alden while she was gone.

She dashed to the bedroom, got into the shower, and did another celebration dance. She used the shower head as a microphone lightly singing to it. She just was outright excited. She got dressed up and went to Henry "OK, Grandpa you are in charge now, Felix you are second in command." Henry laughed, and told her she has nothing to worry about he and Alden would be fine. Off she went to see Owen and with a big smile on her face. She made sure she didn't mess up her lipstick.

Alden returned at the time he was to be home at, her teacher left to go home. Alden found out before anyone else the ice cream social was a success. her teacher used matters, and was polite all the time. Elowen liked in him. He had chocolate and Elowen had strawberry ice cream. her teacher had some on his chin but he wiped it off fast. her teacher did ask Elowen if she was having a good time and she agreed she was, as he was too. Elowen's father came to get them, and drove her teacher home and he thanked him as well to her for the good event.

a neighbor knew before the bell on Monday everyone will be asking him how it went, as the girls will be doing to Elowen. They would both have positive answers, and knew they both will be teased about it too. They wouldn't mind since it was them who went on the ice cream social not anyone so they knew what happened in case of rumors start to fly about it. Elowen did write a neighbor a note to say thank you and he would be writing back your welcome once he got it.

Alden came into his room to change shirts, and Henry walked to join him in his room. Henry wondered what Alden would be doing next. Alden had nothing in mind so Henry said "Your mother is gone, and I have a secret to give to you." Alden puzzled "What is grandpa?" Henry said "Now I do remember the combination to the safe, and if you like we can open it." "That would be so cool grandpa, let me get it out of my closet." Alden said.

Alden brought it out well dragged it out, and place it in the middle of his room. Alden saw down next to it, while Henry pulled up a chair near it. "Ready, the combination is 1886." Henry said, Alden put number in and they both heard a click sound. Alden opened up the lid slowly. Alden got to see some newspaper articles inside and pulled one of them out. "This is dated from the 1930's!" Alden explained. Henry said, "That was properly me putting in there, every grandpa would put items in there."

"What is this silver box looks new, did you add this grandpa?" Alden asked, Henry smiled and said "That is what I wanted to show you but wondered when would be the right time and the right place." Henry told Alden to slowly open the box. Alden did and found tissue on it, and then he unveiled a shinning, looking brand new, never touched - a gold coin. Alden said "When you put this in here, looks brand new?"

Henry looked at Alden and said "That coin has been around for a long time and has a place of history by itself. I know you like history so I want to share some of the secret of the coin to you. Only you should know of the secret, can't tell your friends, only you, understand?" Alden agreed since this is something special from his grandpa to give to him, Alden knew to keep to himself. Henry told Alden not to remove the coin from it box, only to think.

Henry wanted Alden to know a past date, not a future date. Alden had one in mind. Henry said, "Now think hard on date, remember you will be an observer, you can't not interfere, or change any part of the date you have in mind." Alden was ready, so Henry said, "You have 5 minutes of this date. Go!" said Henry with a loud voice. Alden's mind was on this date in mind, he opened his eyes,

and was moving around as if he was in this date and was in shock of his belief he was in this date. Three minutes left, Alden was holding still. Eyes still open, and a crack of a smile came from him. In Alden mind Henry joined him. "Remember Alden you can't interfere with this date, or change any part of it. Alden knew and understood. Two minutes left. Alden was just impressed of what this coin can do, and to place him back in a past date and see what it was like and be an observer. Last minute left, Henry said he would meet him at the end.

Alden came back too, and saw Henry there. "That was so cool, it felt I was there but no one could see. Henry said "That is why you were an observer. Did you like the date you choose?" Alden said "Yes." Alden was going back to the Civil War time period, since is what he is studying at school. Now he can understand more of the North versus the South came to be. He in enjoy how people were dressed and how the life was back than.

"Thanks grandpa!" Alden said. Henry said, "Now lock it up before your mom returned and we both get into deep trouble." Alden locked it back up dragged it back to his closet. "Now remember you only can do this, don't share to your friends or the coin will be useless, and have no value." Henry was firm on. "I understand grandpa, I will keep the safe a secret and use some of my clothes to hide it." Henry smiled "If anyone asks about it say it is a safe given to me by my grandfather and no one knows the combination." "Fair enough, grandpa, again thank you." Alden said big smile on his face. Grandpa said "Your welcome now let catch up on Football before your mom comes home and question what we been doing.

Off they went to the TV to watch TV with Felix on the couch. They caught up on the scores as well the score they are watching. So if anytime Elowen would come home she would hear the TV and football being played. Henry whispered to Alden "When I go into the nursing home I might want to borrow coin." Alden whispered back "it is yours, so you can borrow anytime you like, just I have to sneak it out of the house" Henry said "It is YOUR coin."

Elowen arrived back home an hour later, and told Henry "Owen sold your home, Owen sold your home!" Henry with the excitement said "For how much?" Elowen said "Owen sold it for 2.8 million!" Henry was happy but sad at the same time. "That is great news!" Elowen wanted to celebrate with a nice steak dinner at the Steak Barn. No one complained on idea. Everyone got ready to go, Alden fed Felix early. They all got into the car and took off.

Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went. Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had.

The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry. Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

Part III — What Remains

What the Water Gives Back

He returned years later with a different kind of weight.

The crossing felt shorter, though the water was the same. He stood at the rail and watched the island take shape again—dock, trees, roofs, the quiet order of things returning to their places.

J.O. Brown & Son was working when he passed, the yard steady and unchanged. Trucks moved.

Lumber waited. The work did not recognize him, and felt right.

He walked the old roads without hurry. The golf course rose gently the way it always had. The street where he once matched his steps to his great-grandmother's was still there, even if she was not.

He did not go to the pond. He never had. Some lessons did not need revisiting to remain intact.

Standing at the edge of the island, he understood what the water had given him—not escape, not answers, but the knowledge of how to return without needing to stay.

The ferry horn sounded. The island held. The water carried him back again.

Let me introduce to you Sun Down, a peaceful setting of the country living. There is Jonas, who runs the Drug Store. a clerk who runs the Diner, Martin who runs the Gas Station, and a corporation runs the Department Store. Phyiss who runs the apartment complex. a foreman who runs the Convenience Store. Edwin who runs the bar, and there is Leonard the drunk. Leonard is well known for being the drunk, and knows everyone.

Part III — What Remains

Leonard been this way for at least five years, and he used to work in the city life and was let go from his job, and he decided to go into the country living. He has a sign reads Anything Helps God Bless. He sits at the corner of the street just near the highway. Some of the regulars stop by to help with coffee, food or a dollar or two to help him. Even though he is a drunk, he always has positive

feelings.

The department store was a benefit to Leonard, when a new season comes in means sales, and all the ladies come out from the woods to congregate in front of the store to wait for it to open. When finished shopping, Leonard would get a few dollars more. This season was fall, so Leonard shined up his smile and held his sign so the ladies would see it better when driving close to him. Than wait, to see what happens.

The store would open at 9:00am, and the ladies would be done by 1:00pm. A few ladies would drive past Leonard as he was not there, but a majority of them gave him at least a dollar. Now Leonard could visit the bar and become the drunk. With pride he would walk to the bar. Than open the doors, and there was Edwin cleaning up the bar for people to come inside.

"Well Leonard is we drinking to our hearts desire?" Edwin asked, "You bet you!" Leonard replied. Leonard sat at the bar, and sat down on the stool. Edwin pulled out the whiskey and asked Edwin how many shots? Leonard said "Since you offer me a dollar a shot give me five shots please." Edwin poured out five shots, and Leonard drank them so fast you wouldn't know there were five shots poured. Now came the Leonard we known staggering from the stool, Leonard started talking and most was nonsense, but there were others in there were aware of how Leonard is so the listened.

When Leonard felt his conversation was over he would drag his feet back to the drug store and he would sleep in the back, and climb into his sleeping bag and sleep. Leonard did have a lot of dreaming when he was a sleep. He would sleep like a log and nothing could wake him. He had no one to interrupt him behind the drug store.

This routine would happen every season or every sale the department sale would have. Leonard enjoyed it to he always felt blessed of these out comings. He never took advantage of the situation nor takes it for granted. Leonard slept fine and he was happy. Every morning he would give out a bellow of a stretch, and a yawn would scare a bear away. This was Leonard's life; he has been accustomed to it.

Leonard would have good days and bad days as any other person would have. He knew he is just as any other person, no other ways. He said to himself, "We are all human." The next day Leonard did awake with a smile on his face and just wanted to be positive.

Leonard got up and went with his sign to his place on the sidewalk slash pavement. He just sat there in peace. He saw Jonas was approaching him, "Good morning, Jonas. What brings you to my neck of the woods." Leonard had with a chuckle to his voice. "Good morning, Leonard. I was wondering if you could do me a favor?" asked Jonas. "Any favor for a friend." Leonard replied. "I am behind in restocking my shelves, and my place needs a good mopping. My grandson is coming to visit me this weekend," Explained Jonas on what he needed from Leonard. Leonard answered "Sure thing." Excitement came to his voice.

"Great and I can't pay you on payroll yet I can do something for you in return." Said Jonas. Leonard had a pondered face. "I could use a new sleeping bag." Jonas said "Is this a deal?" They shook hands as to seal the deal. Leonard got himself set to go over to the drug store, to assist Jonas. Plus the other reason why Leonard agreed is there is an Asian lady who works for Jonas.

She has dark glossy black hair, and bright eyes to look at. Her name is Anh, She is a attractive lady to Leonard. Leonard remembered when she first came to Jonas for the job as a Pharmacy Tech. Ever since she started Leonard always wanted to say "hello" to her in her own dwelling. Now Leonard has the chance. Since Anh is shy so he knew if he did this he has to be careful.

Both Jonas and Leonard came into the store, Anh was not in yet since Jonas came to Leonard before opening of the store. Jonas showed Leonard what he needs done on the shelves as to put things in order, not in disarray as it shows it is now. Leonard went straight to work and ten minutes late the door gave out a 'bing' as someone was entering the store.

It was Anh and Leonard watched her at the door. Jonas came to her and told her Leonard is here and to assist on last minute projects for them. Anh gave out a smile as she has seen Leonard at the location where he holds his sign, and she gives him a smile on coming and going yet never fully met in person. Jonas took her to meet Leonard and this was Leonard chance to say the words of hello. They were introduced and both smile at each other and said "Hello." Was back to work for all of them. Leonard was excited to give Anh a hello, was something he always wanted to do. Leonard went back to work on filling up the shelves, and put things in order. He could not help by staring at Anh any chance he could. "She is a pretty lady" Leonard muttered to himself. Anytime their eyes cross Anh would give Leonard a smile.

Leonard was happy in many ways, he got the chance to see Ahn in person, help Jonas on his needs, and get himself a new sleeping bag. So it worked all out for everyone. That is why Leonard was in such a good mood. Leonard worked for four hours, and then called it quits. Jonas agreed to that, so after four hours came Leonard told Jonas he would be back tomorrow and said goodbye to Anh. Leonard proceeded to go back to where he is best known at and had a smile the rest of the day. Leonard didn't go to the bar this evening since he had too much on his mind and plus had a job to do for Jonas and was a commitment to him as well.

Later in the day, he saw Ahn get into her car. Starting driving towards Leonard, she gave a smile and a wave goodbye to him. Made Leonard's day more and more enjoyable.. When the sun came down, Leonard started back to the back of the drug store. Jonas was there locking up, saw Leonard "Had a good day didn't you Leonard." Leonard replied "Yes, yes I did." Jonas said "Tomorrow after you work we will go to the department store to get you a new sleeping bag." Leonard replied "That is fine by me."

Leonard laid his head down on his sleeping bag, and stars were out and he stared at them. He watched them move across the sky. He put on a smile, and finally was out to sleep. Leonard was dreaming of happy thoughts, and anything to for a smile. In his dreams he knew the next day would make him happy. The sun awaked Leonard with a bright light on his face.

He got up and went to the front of the store to wait for Jonas. He waited ten minutes and Jonas drove up and got out to open the new day. "Good Morning, Jonas nice day we will have." Leonard said with a smile on his face. "Tomorrow is when my grandson will be here so is my happiness." Jonas said back. They both entered the store, and right away Leonard went to work.

Thirty minutes later the "bong" went off, and it was Anh. She brought in donuts for everyone. Leonard was happy to see her once again and to be able to say "hello" or in this case "Good morning" to her. She greeted Leonard back with a good morning with a quiet voice and a warm smile. Leonard just loved smile on her and makes him feel good for himself. Leonard went on with his work, and broke down boxes are empty. He put those in the back so when it was ending time for him; he would put those in the dumpster.

When Leonard did sneak away for a quick grab of a donut, and went to the janitor closet to look for the mop and bucket to prepare for the mopping of the floors. He got the soap in the bucket and when he turned around Ahn was there asking for his help to pick up a heavy item. Leonard accepted and went with her to pick up the item for her. It was not heavy to Leonard but was glad to assist her.

He went back to fill the bucket with water and took it to the first section was clear of boxes, and started to mop away. While mopping he felt so warmth being in the presents of Ahn. He mopped the whole floors within two hours. Had all the boxes broken down and out to the dumpster. Jonas came up to him and saw what he has done and smile and said "Nice job Leonard, I do appreciate what you have done for me and saved me a lot of time."

Leonard said back "You're welcome Jonas, glad I could assist. You know where to find me." With all said Jonas said to Ahn "I be back in about an hour going to the department store with Leonard, to get him a new sleeping bag." Leonard said "Goodbye Anh thanks for the donut, and your hospitality." Ahn gave out "Your welcome; see you when I leave."

Leonard and Jonas entered the department store, and went to the sporting goods department to find a better sleeping bag. They looked at different kinds for different type of weather, and being Fall was what they wanted. There were five different kinds to look at for Fall. Jonas said "Ok, Leonard you have to make a choice on which one you want, price is not an option get the one you feel you want." Leonard relooked at all the five to choose from. Then decided on the right one for him.

They took it to the cash register and Rose was working the cash register at time. "Hello guys what we are we in for, ah a new sleeping bag, and the good thing about this one is a year warrantee." Leonard liked idea just in case of bad weather he can come back and get another one with no questions asked. Jonas paid for it and Leonard carried outside the store and both walked back to the drug store. Leonard thanked Jonas for the sleeping bag and Jonas thanked him for the work he did and threw in five dollars.

Leonard took his new sleeping bag to wear he sleeps at night and threw out the old one in the dumpster. Leonard returned to his corner of the street with his sign, and had a warm smile on his face. Anh was getting out to the store, and got into her car and started driving towards Leonard once again, "Have good weekend Leonard" She said from her window, "You too Anh take care." He said back.

Within an hour later the sun was beginning to settle down and Leonard went to his sleeping bag to put away his sign and knew it was the weekend time. He started to walk to the Edwin's bar. People were coming as well from outside the area. Leonard walked in and Edwin greeting Leonard as always "To your heart's content?" Leonard said "Yes please." Without hesitation.

Edwin filled up five little glasses of whiskey and put them near Leonard. Leonard pulled out a five dollar bill to pay for it, and Leonard started to drink away. By shot number three Leonard felt the whiskey doing it magic, and Leonard felt at ease and no worries. By the time he did all five; Leonard was seriously drunk, and he was enjoying it. Leonard did his normally swaggering drunkenness, and he started talking nonsense. People did listen to what his nonsense was about.

Leonard would be talking about his life in the city. Most people like to hear this since they were brought up in the woods. Leonard would talk about how he was financially in the city life and how secure he was with his job and his career path, than all a sudden it was taken from him. That he found living in the woods would make him feel better and be free.

Most people in the woods didn't have cable or satellite TV. They would do is once every two months, pill into the truck and go to a food warehouse to stock up for a two month supply on things they needed. They mail would be delivered to a post office was in the woods and Agnes was the one who sorted the mail and give the outgoing mail too. People in the woods wanted their peace and freedom.

People would ask Leonard questions about the city life with traffic and congested areas, and Leonard would answer them and some of the answers Leonard would give would scare some of them. Leonard didn't mean to scare them but just stated facts of how it was like. There were a few people knew of city life and changed to the woods life after finding the city was not for them; just like Leonard.

So is why Leonard was known as Leonard the Drunk, to bring stores of the city life and learn from others of the wood life. So it was a trade off with everyone, so everyone learned from one another. Just the difference was Leonard was drunk, and others were getting there too.

Leonard would stay in the bar until closing time which was 2:00am; then he would walk or drag his feet back to the drug store, and put out the dumpster than go to sleep, and sleep in for a while.

Leonard was in his new sleeping bag for the first time and cozy up with it to sleep long and for a long time. This time the sun could not wake him up. By mid afternoon he heard a commotion; "Guess Jonas grandson is here." He murmured to himself.

Leonard could not remember what he slept about; nor do any dreaming could make him smile. All he knew he was drunk and crashed hard down and slept. He got himself up and brought back the dumpster to where it belongs. Stretched again; wiped his face and let out some gas. Then he could start his day.

Leonard grabbed his sign and started to walk to his place to be, "Leonard..Leonard I want you to meet my grandson." Said Jonas; from the front doors to the drug store. Leonard started his walk towards the doors. "Leonard meet Noel my grandson and Noel meet Leonard. They both shook hands in acknowledge of one another. "Noel will be assisting me for two weeks this fall." Said Jonas. "Very nice, and I bet he will enjoy his stay." Said Leonard. "I want to learn some of what my grandfather does here." Said Noel.

Leonard than got to his place, and held out his smile and with a smile. Being as it may be the weekend, Ahn will not be coming in. Leonard let out a sigh, and then a smile. He has to wait until Monday to see her. Leonard didn't mind, since he always will get the chance to see her. A car drove by gave Leonard three dollars, and drove off. Leonard was not fully awake since the night before got himself drunk and didn't wake, and was late it was mid-afternoon.

He felt fine but after drinking so much the night before, made him weak and not fully knowledge of his surroundings. For it being fall didn't help much since it is a new season so didn't things happen around the area. People come out more from the woods, and you can hear the squirrels play in the trees. How the world changes on seasons so does Leonard.

He was thinking to get drunk again tonight or just rest it off. Plus when he got drunk he would feel some relief from everything. He had a few more hours to think about it, as it was no rush to him. Being the drunk in town is not a compliment or was an insult to him. It was Leonard just being Leonard. Another car drove up and gave him a dollar. With all the drivers now driving in fall, made his life easier to maintain.

The trees were blocking the sun from blinding Leonard. Being fall was saying last call for anything you do, before winter comes and then everyone, and everything is hibernation time. People in the

woods go into town to buy two months of food to survive on. Wood to keep the place warm, and there was always wood to chop down if needed. Leonard survive on his own guts, and wisdom. The department store was getting it share of profit from people buying fall clothes to wear. Since in the fall time there was a light wind chill, trees were stripped of it leaves, or pine needles. They were so bare you could see the squirrel's condominiums they made. This place would be quiet; even Edwin's bar would not have as many customers. Someone was throwing a birthday or anniversary party would be the exception.

Edwin did come up to Leonard and asked what his plans were tomorrow, and Leonard didn't have any. Edwin asked a favor from Leonard. "I have an audit coming in for my bar tomorrow afternoon, and Pete is throwing a 45 birthday for his wife tomorrow evening and I need to get some more liquor for the party. I can't do two things at once so I am asking if you could do the liquor run." Leonard replied "I will make sure I don't drink the profits. Just give me the TomTom, and the keys to the truck." "Great, come by the bar I will have everything for you." Edwin replied back.

Edwin walked back to the bar, and Leonard went to put his sign back at his sleeping bag. Leonard said to himself "Things are going well for me this year, I am happy to help others." He walked to Edwin's bar and walked in and never seen it so quiet, reason being it is not open. Edwin handled over the TomTom, and the keys to the truck than said "Please do this before 11:00am tomorrow, so I can get the bar ready for Pete and his wife.

That night Leonard decided not to drink the five shots he would do normally. He went to the bar to have three shots only. He would get semi-drunk with much in him, but not as bad as he can be with five shots in him. They all were talking about Pete's wife his father birthday party. Leonard enjoyed hearing about his father's birthday party. By 2:00am, bar closing Leonard wandered to his sleeping bag.

Leonard lay his down sideways this time and curried up to his pillow and slowly fell asleep. His dreams were normal. Didn't have any nightmares, he was dreaming happy thoughts. He was on cloud nine, and he met others with him. He introduced himself to them as they smiled back at him and said who they were. Morning came faster this time, and Leonard knew he had a job to do. Leonard lay awake for a few minutes and got up. He walked over to the bar, and waited for Edwin to show up. Edwin did show up fifteen minutes later. They both walked into the bar, and Leonard noticed how quiet it was inside as no one was around. Edwin grabbed all what Leonard needed and handed it over to him, "Thanks Leonard I do appreciate you doing this for me." Leonard replied, "It is not a problem, see you in three hours." With Leonard walked out of the bar, and got into the driver seat of the truck.

Leonard started up the truck and put the truck into reverse. When completing his reverse motion put the truck into drive, and off he was to do a friend a favor. Leonard was observing the scenery. He has not seen some of these views in a long time. He drove by an American Eagle, and he found fascinated. Not before too long he entered the freeway and then would be as driving in the city. Leonard then was seeing signs for fast food places, hotel, and motel places to stay at. "How was I was in this world in the past and now in the woods, how it makes a difference." He said out loud as if he has a passenger with him. He was on the freeway for about forty-five minutes before his exit was to be there. Saw people driving fancy cars, to sporty cars too. How the world is becoming and he was no part of it. Plus he afraid of it as well, as the city life can suck the life out of you before you know it.

Leonard kept on driving and when he got to his exit he turned right and then an immediate right. He got to his destination without any problems. He pulled in the back of the place and was the shipping and receiving department. He got out and saw a guy name her teacher, her teacher saw the invoice and called on two guys to load up the truck of Edwin's order. Leonard thanked them, and got back into the truck. It had plenty of booze to serve all.

Then Leonard saw all the signs back, and a few introducing a campground, a few restaurants. "Now we are talking the outdoors life. That is how it should be, and how peaceful it can be for anyone." Leonard barked at the billboards signs. Even though Leonard has five years under his belt with outdoor life he feels he has been there longer, and people respect him for it. Leonard couldn't wait to get back on the country roads and see country living areas, and vehicles yet mostly the people. Yet Leonard had to wait forty five minutes of this, so he just grinned and bared with it. Forty five minutes felt like a like time for Leonard on the way home but he is a survivor and made it back to country roads. Leonard felt as an athlete after running a marathon. Not just a mile into the country roads, he saw a red and blue light behind him.

Leonard was not speeding as he was not much in a rush, or on a firm deadline. He pulled over and waited for the only sheriff in town was a neighbor McLinkton. a neighbor got out of his car and the first thing he said was "Ok Edwin, I have given you a warning." As he got closer to the driver side he noticed it was not Edwin. He said "Now who is driving Edwin's truck?" Leonard said back, "It is me Leonard. I don't think I was speeding or what is my infraction?" a neighbor finally made it to the driving side and saw who it was.

"Well Leonard I have warned Edwin about the brake light are not working and I warned him to get them fixed. Since you are driving I will give you the message to Edwin, if I see this truck again and the brake lights are not working, you or to whomever is driving will get a ticket." Leonard acknowledge a clerk request and will give the message to Edwin when he sees him when he gets back to the bar.

his father walked back to his car and turned off the red and blue lights and pulled in front of Leonard. Leonard didn't seem scared of his father, or felt he was in the wrong since Edwin never told him about the brake lights. Leonard put the truck back into gear and proceeded back to the bar. He drove in and saw a foreman was there too at the bar with Edwin waiting for the delivery, Leonard got out and helped unload the booze. Spoke about a neighbor message he gave to give to Edwin. "Oh crap, I need to call the dealership to see if part came in." Edwin smacked his hand against his forehead. her teacher told Leonard he is welcome to join the party tonight. "I will take you up on offer her teacher, thanks." Leonard said. Edwin said to Leonard, "How do I repay you for this. The audit went well so is off my back."

Leonard pondered for a minute to think this out since it was not any trouble. "Six shots of whiskey will do." Edwin perked up and said "Deal" they both shook on it. The men got all the booze ready now as a clerk's friends to get the bar decorative. They came down an hour later with balloons, streamers, and others things you would find at a birthday party. Edwin let others do this to his bar for these occasions as Edwin was just used to giving out booze for people come into his bar, serve and drink was Edwin's way of preparing for a birthday party.

Leonard job was done and if he wanted to be part of this birthday party he wanted to go back to his place to take a nap. So Leonard told everyone they will see him later. "Thanks again, Leonard." Edwin shouted. "You are most welcome, Edwin." Leonard said back. Leonard walked back to his place. Placed his head down and he was out for a nap.

Leonard awoke from his nap at 6:00pm. He was hearing a lot of traffic in the area, so is what woke him up. He got up, and started walking back to the bar to join the rest of the party goers. Leonard walked inside and was about twelve people inside already. The birthday girl, his father and a foreman were inside already and the rest at the bar to get drinks for themselves or their other guest. his father had a wonderful smile on her face even though she was now 45. a foreman had a birthday hat on with a lot of giggles to his face, meaning he was almost drunk.

Leonard walked up to the bar waited his turn. Edwin turned to him and asked him want he wanted to drink since there was Edwin stuff, and her teacher stuff he bought for the party. "I will have what her teacher bought please." "That will be rum, lots of rum," Edwin said. "Two shot of rum to start the evening please." Said Leonard had a smile from ear to ear expression.

Everyone was having fun. People were interacting with one another. Leonard was interacting with others who were at the bar stools. a clerk was enjoying herself, while a neighbor was glad to put on this birthday party for her. At 9:00pm the birthday cake was brought out for all to enjoy.

It was two sheets of rum cake with white frosting, and everyone enjoyed seeing it. Then was a foreman to cut the first slice, with lots of cheers. There was plenty to go around. a foreman cut herself a big slice than handled the knife over to the catering company to cut the rest, for others. Even the catering company could get a slice themselves since there was plenty to go around.

his father spoke of his wife in good terms. He was glad to be married to her for the last 15 years, and when it comes to their anniversary how he will make it special for her once again. her teacher thanked everyone for being there and how it was special to be part of a small family. She wanted everyone to know how this day will not be forgotten about and how it will always be on her mind. After Edwin poured more drinks for the guess, yes including Leonard.

The party lasted until midnight when people started to go home, and the catering company started to clean up after them. Leonard enjoyed himself and walked up to a neighbor and a foreman and thanked them for him to be part of the party, then walked up to Edwin to thank him for what he did and to remind him of a clerk request. Edwin nodded his head, and then Leonard started for the door.

Leonard swaggered again back to his place of dwelling, and fell asleep as fast as he can, and this time being Sunday the next day he had no plans, no things to do for others, he could sleep as long as he wanted. Leonard gave out a sign of air and a deep breath of air and he was out. Forget the morning time; it was late in the afternoon when Leonard waked up. The squirrels already been up the sun already has risen. Sunday to Leonard was just to remain lazy, and the bar closed, not much traffic on the road. Yet he still got up and went with his sign to the corner. He didn't expect much day. He did forget it was people coming in to campout, so brought a smile to his face. He would see some trucks drive by with coolers, and I doubt there were sodas in those coolers. People acting like animals and only told you those were city folks. Leonard shook his head on how people where acting but remember it was the last to do anything before fall would be here than it would just be a quiet road, and just to hear the wind blow in the tress and the sun hiding in the clouds.

One car drove into the gas station got some gas and then pulled up to Leonard; "It seems you know these areas?" the man spoke. Leonard answered "Yep I sure do, is there anything I can assist with?" the man said he and his wife got off the freeway thinking there is a better route on this road or shall they get back on the freeway. "Most people will go back on the freeway but the regulars or who know this road well know the secret." Leonard explained "You can go another nine miles down, and on the left will be a guard shack and Henry the guard will be working and he will let you in the back way into the campground and be careful, he is known for charging people for using this way." Leonard went more into detail.

"I will be careful, but I can be persuasive." Said Thatcher. "Thanks for your help, take this token of appreciation." Said Evelyn. Evelyn handed over the token of appreciation to Leonard. Leonard never looked at it and waited for them to drive off before looking down. Then Leonard did look down as they were off to their destination. To Leonards shock, it was a fifty dollar bill. He could not believe it at once but to relook at it three times than in fact it is a fifty dollar bill.

Leonard was excited to see this and then it make him think how to spend it, but his inside told him to keep it safe. For now it was going into his pocket for safe keeping. He could not believe it just to assist someone to get a fifty dollar bill. Made him think if Henry got any money out of them or Thatcher was good enough of a talk to convince Henry not to charge him at the gate.

Leonard still has some money for shots and wonder if Edwin would be giving out free shots of rum, since they had lots of it left. He only wondered this but his mind was more into of the fifty dollars bill in his pocket. He didn't want anyone to know about this so he just acted normal the rest of the day. Inside was dancing and celebrating. The benefit Leonard had was the town was quiet since it is Sunday and not much is open so he could base himself in joy,

Leonard decided to call it a day at the corner, and go back to take nap. Leonard walked his way back to his sleeping bag and lay down and before he knew it he was taking a nap. Leonard was dreaming happy thoughts since good thoughts are coming towards him. He was thinking he offers good and good rewards him back. Leonard started to snore, and in a peaceful dream.

Leonard woke up later to the sound of gun fire, yet it was fireworks from the camp ground. You were allowed to set off fireworks in the park only. There were not many trees in the park therefore you were allowed to set off fireworks. So Leonard watched the sky light up from what he could see, since the rest of the area does have trees so would blocking some of his view.

Leonard was daydreaming the fireworks was a celebration of him having the fifty dollar bill. Leonard knew was his secret but he was enjoying the daydream. He still couldn't believe his eyes as the amount was not the factor it was the kind gesture Thatcher and Evelyn put on his face after. He decided to put money in a separate pocket so would not be a temptation to pull it out to flaunt the money he has or to show he is made of money.

Leonard rested his eyes more and drifted back to sleep. The sky was open as the stars were out with a bright moon. Leonard knew he was in good hands and good spirit. Only Leonard knew what he was dreaming about and only he would keep it a secret. Leonard didn't wake up until mid morning. He felt with relief and joy. Now being Monday was the same patterns he would follow.

He grabbed his sign and went to his corner. Seeing some of the camp goes go home. Seeing the coolers are now empty, seeing people with a droopy face as they had to face fall it now here.

Leonard didn't mind since this was his home so any season change would make change on him as well. Not many people would be stopping by. Not many faces he would recognize. Leonard had he spirit is all matter to him.

Leonard saw Anh was driving in so he gave a smile and a wave. She did the same back to him. Leonard was looking forward to that. Leonard was hoping sometime again Jonas needed help at the drug store, and be there seeing Anh in a closer level. Leonard smiled at his own thinking. "Something about Anh makes me so happy." He said to himself. So far was the top of his morning. Leonard just sat there for awhile to see if he could find anyone would assist him. He was there for about three hours, just in time for the bar to open. He still was thinking about if there is free rum to be served and if Thatcher convinced Henry not to charge for the fee for the camping grounds. Leonard just walked slowing to the bar, since he would be the only one in there until happy hour. He made it to the doors and open there and there was Edwin cleaning out glasses for the customers. "Hello Leonard and good morning to you." Edwin said, and Leonard replied, "Hello Edwin, so far it is an OK morning to me. Nothing special, yet are we giving out free rum from the party still?" asked Leonard. "Sure, I still have plenty of to share to anyone who asks for it, how many shots? Edwin said with a questionable look. Leonard gave back a happy look. "Let's start off with two, please." Edwin poured out two shot for Leonard, and with a second, Leonard drank them. "aww, what a great feel." Leonard enjoyed that. Leonard sat at the bar stool and just relaxed himself those two shot in him. He was the only in the bar, and gave it great feeling, he controlled the bar, and he controlled how many shot he wanted. Edwin was sure glad to get rid of the rum, since not many people ask for it at his bar, as it more was whiskey. "How about two more shots, Edwin?" asked Leonard, and Edwin refilled up the two shots he already had with rum. "Thanks again Edwin." With a drunken voice started to come out of Leonard. Leonard was wobbling on his bar stool, and had his head down on the bar table. Edwin had all the glasses clean up for happy hour. Leonard peaked up his head and downed the other shots giving to him. Now Leonard was drunk. Leonard put his head back down on the bar, and his hands on the table. Edwin just let him be, and not disturb him. Happy hour was to start in about an hour, and others will be coming in, and to see Leonard this way was normal no one would be concerned about Leonard. Edwin went to get the juke box ready since was an extra income for Edwin. It was the old fashion type were you put in a quarter and it will play two songs. Jonas stopped by to get a quick drink before he ran off to do a bank run, and saw Leonard, "Hello Leonard, guess you had your happy hour before us?" All Leonard would do is mumble his words so it was not clear what Leonard was saying back. Jonas talked to Edwin for a bit than ran off to do his bank run in the city. Jonas had to drive twenty five minutes to get his bank. That would leave Anh all alone but Leonard was no one to be in sight to go into the store to say Hello to her if he dared. Edwin went on with his business, and touch up. Ten minutes later, a stranger walked into the bar. Edwin was ready for him, "Hello what can I get for you, sir?" Edwin said. The stranger looked around the bar and just observed the outlook of the bar before speaking. "Miles White, no need to call me sir." Miles replied back. "Hello Miles, I am Edwin his father, owner of this bar, and if you like happy hour is coming and drinks are half off," Edwin said, and Miles replied "No need for a drink, I am just here for the man with the sign." Miles replied. "Look no further is Leonard, the man with the sign." Edwin replied. Miles looked at Leonard and saw how he was at the bar and said to Edwin "I guess he had his take on happy hour." Miles said back to Edwin. "That is Leonard for you he comes in from being at corner, after being there for a few hours and then come in here for his own happy hour." Edwin replied back. "Leonard, one of my movers called in sick so I would need yours services tomorrow morning say around 10:00am, would you be able to do this?" asked Miles. Edwin said back "should we put a note on his shirt to remind mind him of this offer?" Edwin joked back. Miles said "I believe Leonard will remember." Said Miles, with Leonard rose up his right hand thumb to show was a yes to the offer and he will remember. Aft was said, Miles reached out and shook Edwin's hand "Sorry I will not be around for happy hour I have things to take care of." Miles said, and started for the door. The door opened for happy hour, Pete and her teacher came in. Saw Leonard and said hello to him and still all would get was a mumble of words. Some others showed up from the woods and greeted Leonard. So happy hour started, the juke box was playing people socializing with one another, and just having a good happy hour. Leonard just stayed how he was and at times Edwin would ask Leonard if he wanted coffee, soda or water. Leonard just stayed there so Edwin left him alone. Happy hour went on for two hours, and it was just a normal time at the bar for most. When happy hour ended, it was mostly empty with the exception on Leonard, and a few others. The other would be playing darts, or playing pinball. Leonard would get up in an hour later, and dragged himself

back to his sleeping bag, and this time didn't say goodbye to Anh since she already left for the day from the drug store.

Leonard put his head down and off he was in dream land, and would wake up until 9:00am. Again, he missed waving and smiling at Ahn when she came into work the next day. Leonard felt he had all the time in the world to wave and smile at Ahn, so a few times not to be able would not hurt him. He stretched, and gave out his famous yawn, and put his hand on his face and drags it up and down. He started to walk towards the apartment complex. Saw Miles was already there.

"Good morning, Miles." Leonard said as he remembered his name. "Good morning to you too, Leonard. I see you had a good time at happy hour yesterday." Miles replied as he too remember Leonards name. They both shook hands. "The moving truck should be here in fifteen minutes." Miles said. "Thank you for asking me to do this job for you Miles, I do appreciate it." Leonard smiled, "Nothing of it my friend, since I saw your sign I noticed you would need something extra." Good said with a calming voice.

"How was it meeting Phyiss?" asked Leonard. "She is a nice lady to meet, I take it you already have met her since your sign shows wearing and tearing." Said Miles. "Yes, I have been here for over five years and I know pretty much everyone." Said Leonard. "That is good to know." "What brings you out to the neck of the woods for you Miles?" Leonard asked with a big question mark on his head.

Miles didn't answer question since the moving truck arrived. Rafael came out of the front seat, carrying a binder with him. "I am looking for Miles White?" Miles White raised his hand, so then Rafael and Miles interacted on what needed to be done. Daniel got out of the driver seat and behind him was Mateo. "Man, Daniel I think need to find a different person to drive!" said Mateo, "Oh, sorry boss." Mateo said again. Rafael came up to Leonard and introduced himself to him and told him how things work with moving a person inside an apartment. Leonard accepted what was said,

"I have some business to take care of in the city, and if you need me call my cellular phone." Said Miles; for all to hear. "Have fun in the city." Said Leonard. Leonard watch as Miles drove away, than though how long this will be, and then to help with the move itself. Leonard went to the end of the truck waited for Mateo to open it to see how much of Miles stuff they will be moving into the apartment. To Leonard surprise, it was not much but enough to figure he will be busy the rest of the day, and will miss on waving and smiling to Ahn once again.

"Ok, Mateo put down the lever and starts to unload this truck, Leonard take some of the boxes and see the name of it and put were they go. Daniel you start to move the light furniture." Said Rafael.

"Will do." Everyone said back to Rafael. Rafael had a floor plan of the apartment and how Miles wanted it to be. Leonard grabbed the box said kitchen so he took it to the kitchen and walked back to the truck for another box to bring inside. Lucky for all it was downstairs.

This time the box said bedroom, and while he was doing Mateo and Daniel were pulling out a sofa. This sofa was long and had and end piece. Leonard was in shock and ah seeing it. Leonard took his box to the bedroom and came back again for another box. He picked up another box said family room, so he grabbed it and took it to the family room were Daniel and Mateo were putting down the couch as it showed on the floor plan Rafael was holding on to.

Leonard was looking how the sofa was placed and told himself, "That a good looking sofa, for this place is a good place to put it." Then went back to the truck for another box, this time it had books on it so he had to ask Rafael is there a place on the map were it is suppose to be. Rafael confirm Leonard question and showed him where it was to be at.

Mateo and Daniel pulled out the king size bed Miles had and asked Leonard to move out of the way so they could pull it out and the mattress first. Both Mateo and Daniel were fit for this type of job while Rafael was good at a leader for it. Mateo and Daniel like to tease another one the job so Mateo was pushing on the mattress on Daniel for Daniel to either lose his balance or to feel a big jerk on it. They got to the bedroom and placed it down, and went back for the frame. Both picked up pieces.

Rafael joined them in the in the bedroom to show how Miles wanted the bed just right. Leonard on the other hand found a night light to bring into the bedroom and asked Rafael where it was suppose to be. They all tagged team on projects so it was just right how Miles wanted it. The bedroom was almost complete, but had a night stand to bring inside did require all for reaching and moving into the bedroom. Rafael had to do most of the moving so he would have it just right in the bedroom. After putting down and in the right position, Rafael called out "Break time. Take fifteen minutes

guys". They were relieved to hear that.

Leonard offered to go to the Convenience Store, where they would meet a neighbor the owner. Everyone walked over to the store, and walked inside, ding dong, was the sound of the door opening. a neighbor was there and welcome them. "Leonard, I have not seen you come in the store in some time." Leonard replied "Yes I know I should be more to come here than to Edwin's." Everyone grabbed a soda and a bag of potato chips. a neighbor rang up everyone separately. For Leonard, a neighbor said, "For you Leonard I would put on your tab?" Leonard without hesitation said back "Yeah please thanks a neighbor." They all walked out and went back to the truck to eat their snack.

Mateo perked up, "Gez, Leonard you well known here?" Leonard said back; "I been here for over five years so you kind of know everyone." Daniel then said "That is cool, to be someplace for some time and everyone knows you well." Rafael said "Ok, five minutes left." With being said, everyone looked inside the truck to see what would be coming out next.

They saw the dressers were next and Mateo got the dolly and set it up right and lifted it up it went and both Daniel and Mateo took it to the bedroom, while Rafael followed. Leonard on the other hand looked for most boxes to bring inside, he found one said DVD'S so he took book and laid it near the sofa. Rafael came out the bedroom and saw what Leonard did and said "That is cool where is," Everyone headed back to the truck and saw drapes over some items. That would mean something delicate or something requires heavy lifting.

Mateo went to one of them and said "Now under curtain number one will find." He pulled off the drape and it was the TV and stereo system. Rafael got out the dolly and helped push it on to the dolly and slowly went down the ramp. Rafael navigated down the ramp, while the rest took it slowly down it, and took it into the family room. Rafael pulled up on the dolly so he could look at the map of where it was to go. Rafael looked and pulled back down on the dolly. "Ok guys this way, so they followed Rafael and took it were it was to be.

Leonard went to the truck and found the coffee table and knew where to be put. Both Daniel and Mateo found a table and with chair, but wondered why it was under a drape. With those put into place the family room was almost complete. Leonard wondered back to the truck to find what he could bring in next would into the family room. He found Fbooks told him now these book should go into the family room and Miles enjoyed reading.

The next box Leonard retrieved was china, and gave out a chuckle of how everyone has someone china plates, etc. He took it to the table were they put earlier. Everyone stared at the family room and saw it was completed; only a few boxes remained. Leonard knew by this time it was after the time Ahn had left the Drug store and gave out a sigh. Rafael belled out, "Ok guys just a few more things, so I will call Gordan to let him know the place it all set.

Leonard picked up a box and had Bathroom on the box, so he took it to the bathroom and noticed the place was a two place sink and though was cool. Rafael took over to tell where thing to go, while the rest took care of the boxes. There was a few more for the kitchen. So Mateo, Daniel and Leonard joined and went to read what and where these boxes would be going.

They all gathered up the remaining boxes and put them where they belong. Rafael thought he did a good job organize this entire project. The guys were happy to do such as well. Within ten minutes they were done and didn't think it would be rude to sit on the sofa until Miles arrived. Leonard sat down and the sofa almost eats you alive, yet was comfortable to relax into. They all let out of sigh of relief their job was completed.

Miles showed up ten minutes later and came into the apartment and saw them there, "Looks good from what I see, guys." They all stood up when they heard of Miles voice. "No, no, have a seat guys you deserve it." Miles replied. Rafael did stay standing and went up to Miles and showed Miles around to show how he did follow what Miles wanted. Miles nodded a lot of approval, and said "Who did the boxes?" Leonard stood up and said "I did most of them." Miles said "You did a good job placing them where I wanted them."

Both Daniel and Mateo went back to the truck to put them back together for their job is done. They put back the dolly, reconnecting the straps, and folding up the mats. Just to know they have another major job soon. This job itself last from 10:00am to 6:00pm, to them was a major job. Lucky for them it had places already ready to go, rather to be dictated by the owner where things belong. Everyone came out side, knowing it was time Rafael gets paid.

Miles paid in cash, and gave everyone a twenty dollar tip. Even Leonard got twenty dollars so far for his work done. Rafael, Daniel and Mateo thanked him for it. Mateo spoke up more polity "Ok, Daniel

you drove here I will drive back." Daniel nodded his head and said "OK, OK Sure." Both climbed into the truck and Rafael to follow. Mateo started up the truck and waved goodbye to Miles and Leonard.

"For you Leonard I have a better way of paying you for your assistance in this project." Started Miles. Leonard just listens to what he had to say. "I still have business to take care of so in return for your help here I am offering you to stay in the apartment while I am away. I need someone to watch over the place." Leonard was in shock, and was not sure how to answer that, but the words came out his mouth was clear "Are you sure about Miles?" Miles said "I only know you from this place so I feel you are the right person for it." So Leonard just thought for a quick second and said "Sure, I can do for you." Once again they shook hands for agreement.

Miles handed over the keys and then said "Oh by the way, cable and internet will be coming out tomorrow, early." Leonard knew would mean no going over to Edwin's place. "Sure thing Miles, I will be waiting for them." Miles gave Leonard his cellular phone number in case Leonard needs to get a hold of Miles. So once again Miles is away, now for a few days, and Leonard is to enjoy nice sofa of his.

As soon as Miles was away Leonard took advantage of the sofa. He curled in with it, and soaked in to corners. Leonard took a small nap within it. His nap was about a half an hour and enjoyed it. He couldn't wait to sleep all night in it. He walked around the whole apartment to see his accomplishment he and the other guys did. Lucky for an apartment there is not many boxes to rip open to put things away, more than a house than you have a garage full of boxes to deal with. Leonard took the key with him and went to retrieve his sleeping bag. It was sun down and not many people on the road or at Edwin's. He made a promise to Miles he would be ready for cable and internet. He rolled up his sleeping bag and went back to the apartment. He opened the door and took over the place with pride. He knew he was the right job since Miles only knew him and Edwin. So he knew he would not let Miles down.

He got ready for bed, and put his sleeping bag in a corner, and lay on the sofa. "Oh what a great sofa, you can get comfortable in this just right after sitting down." Leonard said to himself. This time he is testing out the sofa to sleep a full night rest in it. Leonard was thinking to have this sofa for a bed outside the Drug store would be nice, yet it is a nice sofa inside instead. He put his head down and started to drift away without hesitation.

There was a knocking on the door, and Leonard shot up from bed. The new day was here and it was the cable and internet tech. Leonard said, "Wow, I slept the whole night away without interruption, and with little to no noise." He opened the door and read the badge on the person. Allowed the person inside and the tech wanted to know where the internet was to be installing at. Leonard pointed out the TV stereo system. So the tech worked on first while Leonard was thinking where the internet was going to go.

The cable guy, said to Leonard, "You got a nice set up here." Leonard came back to check it out since he and the guys set it up so it was not special to Leonard eyes when they came in the boxes. This time Leonard noticed it was changed. The set up shows for a 75" TV, Surround sound, DVD set up. Leonard said "I am just watching over this place." Leonard noticed a box in a corner of the family room. It had on it Comp desk. To Leonard's dismay he never seen all this before.

Leonard just went on and opened the box, lucky for him it came with the appropriate tools. Since Leonard had no tools. While the cable guy was doing the set up, Leonard did the set up for the computer desk. Nat was the cable guy and Nat offered if he got done first he would assist Leonard on the computer desk. They both did some small chit chat while working on their projects.

Here it is Wednesday and Leonard was thinking to himself, "what other surprise will come my way." Leonard was half way down with a computer desk and to his shock again, he knew what he was doing, and proud of it. Nat on the other hand was working with lots of wires, and then some wires he didn't Nat said to Leonard, "I bet you can't wait to play with this after I am done." Leonard said back, "Well, sure."

Leonard chuckled to himself "Would you like a soda or some water?" Nat said "Sure if you got a diet soda, the misses is watch over me on what I drink." Leonard went to fridge knowing he had no diet soda. He open the fridge and there WAS diet soda to offer. Leonard grabbed two and gave one to Nat, and Nat thank him. Now this was making Leonard confused but holding his composure. Leonard went on with the desk.

The cable guy was ready to test the TV, and the surround sound. The TV came on, and sure enough the TV worked, than he turned on the surround sound. The surround sound came in so

peacefully and felt as you were there right next to them talking, or a channel with music would find you near the sound it was coming from. Nat continued flipping through channels, to test them out. Leonard was nearly finished with the desk.

Nat was finished with his testing and told Leonard he was all set with the TV and when he was ready will go over some pointers. Leonard said "Almost there just a few this and that's to do." Nat offered to assist but Leonard had it completed within five minutes. Leonard just couldn't get over how the TV area changed within a turn of a head. Leonard went along with the change and went over to Nat to see what he can do with the TV.

Nat went over the basic of how to turn on the TV, DVD, and surround sound system. Nat showed him how to boost the sound on the surround sound to match the TV so it would be as theater sound. Leonard liked like idea. Leonard was smiling while Nat showed him more ideas he can do with the DVD as to play music with a DVD.

Nat was all done on the TV area now onto the Internet. There was a box had read COMP. Leonard never saw this box so he figured either Daniel or Mateo brought it in. Inside the box was a completed computer package. Nat took out the equipment and started to put them together. Leonard offered Nat another soda, and Nat still had some left from the first one, so Leonard got himself another one. Leonard was saying to himself "Miles is well equipped."

Twenty minutes has passed and Nat said "Ok, now the internet is up and ready." Leonard was pleased. Nat packed up his tools and equipment. Leonard walked him towards the door, and the shook hands and Nat went on his way. Leonard returned to the TV, turned it on and just was flipping through channels to see what is happening in the world. Leonard was happy to know more of what is going on, rather to just hear from the grapevine.

Leonard got bored with the TV sine mostly was on was talk shows or soap operas so he turned it off and returned back to great couch. Leonard got cozy again and took a nap. He felt so secure in couch and felt he was invincible. He was having a good dream and time went by slowly for him to enjoy this dream. No one would be knocking on the door, no interruptions.

Before no time as was so slow, Thursday was here. Leonard never went over to Edwin's and again would be in the couch while Ahn drove into work. He was thinking to stop by the drug store find something of non needing idea just to see her. He thought about this until mid morning. He finally decided not to do it, since he didn't want to seem he likes her or just wanted to see her only, since Jonas and his grandson would be there.

There was another knock on the door, it was a package but was addressed to Leonard. He opened it, and was a prepaid cellular phone for him from Miles. He noticed it had a preset of Miles cellular phone on it, and was happy to receive such a gift. He thought too call Miles, to thank him. So he called the preset number, it rang, Miles answered. "Hello Leonard, I see you got your box." Leonard said "Yes thank, I guess caller ID gave me away."

Miles went on saying he is happy Leonard is watching over the place. "You don't have many boxes here Miles" said Leonard. Miles replied, "I am a light packer." They just talked about how things are, talked about the big screen TV, and how everything matched what Miles wanted on the floor plan. Miles told Leonard he could use the internet, since he is not present, and Leonard said he would. They hung up.

Leonard decided to take another nice nap in wonderful sofa. So he did, slept for about three hours, and awoke to a nice sunset coming in. Being fall the sun comes down sooner, and the stars start to shine faster. So Leonard knew what to expect when taking these wonderful naps on this sofa. He turned on the TV once again, flipped through the channels, went to other channels are local. Found some channels interesting to watch, used the guided channel to tell him what is on, and the TV time slots.

Once again he turned it off, and since he has not been to Edwin's he thought he should make an introduction he is still doing well. This time he was sure he wanted to do this, so he made sure he kept the key in his pocket after locking the door, and went over to Edwin's. Edwin saw him come into the door, and said "Hey stranger." Leonard replied, "Yea I know I have not been here in awhile I been watching over Miles's place, has a nice sofa to add."

Edwin offered Leonard some of the rum was still left over, and Leonard only wanted one shot, since he wanted to be sober for a few days. Edwin poured, and Leonard gulped it down. Edwin went into talking about how Miles place is, and Leonard just said "Any other place than other." Leonard did want to over into detail about sofa and how comfortable it was and how you can fall into it as it was eating you alive. Edwin chuckled a lot over this.

Leonard stayed for about an hour and then went back to the apartment, and since he was sober he was able to find the place and the right apartment number. He opened the door, and almost wanted to dive bomb the sofa, but instead took off he took off his shoes and lay down on the sofa. He had awoken to the cellular phone ringing. At first Leonard thought would be a person calling a pizza place and got the wrong number.

He looked at caller ID and it was Miles calling, so he answered it. "Sorry to interrupt you Leonard." Leonard replied "It is OK, just was lying down on the sofa." Miles chuckled and said "You been taking to sofa haven't you Leonard?" Leonard replied "Yea it is comfortable and you are like in heaven on it." Miles chuckled more and said "I am coming back on Saturday, and to have a homecoming party at place, so you need to make sure the place is in order." Leonard said, "I do my best at it. So I will start tomorrow so I don't waste anytime time." They both hung up.

Leonard now has a project to do on his own on Friday and mostly will take him all day. There are boxes to be emptied, and things to be put into place. He knew he could do it, and means he would not be able to go over to Edwin's place all day. Leonard decided to call it a rest of the night so he would be able to get a good night rest and to start on this project on Friday morning. He made himself comfortable on the sofa and dreamland was for Leonard.

Leonard didn't toss or turned night and how he felt so relaxed and safe in sofa. He had a smile on his face throughout the night, even an owl sound or the light breeze would not wake up Leonard night, and when the sun was awake, so was Leonard. He got up with his normal day fashion gave out his famous yawn and a stretch and a fart.

"Ok, Leonard lets work on the kitchen first so there would be plenty of plates and silverware for everyone who shows up can use." Leonard said to himself. He found all the boxes belong to the kitchen and started to unpack. He noticed Miles did have a lot of silverware and plates so was a good sign. He also found lots of pots and pans. The kitchen was completed in less than an hour. He folded down the boxes and put outside.

Next was the family room. He put all the books away in author order. He put the DVD and CD in order as well. Leonard noticed Miles had good taste in music and movies. Leonard chuckled even Miles had children movie DVD's. Leonard decided to put on a music DVD while he did all this work, was classical but was relaxing to work with. Leonard was enjoying doing this for Miles while he was away. Leonard knew it was great to be friends with Miles as well.

The family room was done in about an hour, and Leonard was slowing down but his mind was fully charged. He knew he could not rest until he got done. He next worked on the bedroom which was was easy for him to do since the closet had no clothes in it, and the dresser had no clothes to be put away. He worked on the bathroom. He opened the box for bathroom, and put a new toilet paper on the roll. Leonard brought out a hair dryer. He was not sure why Miles needed a hair dryer, but continued on. Brought out toothpaste, towels, and odd and end items.

Leonard noticed a broom outside so he used to brush off the leaves from the patio, and washed the patio down. Now he was seeing a completed set up for the homecoming for Miles. He walked by the sofa make sure the cushions where not messy even though he would be sleeping on it later tonight, saw the bed had to be made, and Leonard knew a quarter would not bounce off of it with his making skills.

Now Leonard could take a break, so he opened the fridge and opened another can of diet coke. Taking a few sips from he looked what he has achieved. He was happy for what he has done, but did mess up the sofa cushions to take a small nap. So off he went to get cozy once again in wonderful sofa. Off to nap vile he went. Took about a two hour nap, and was great to have. No interruptions nothing to bother him while this nap was peaceful to his mind. Leonard just adored this sofa.

Leonard once again awake to double check his work, he didn't find any flaws in his set up. He thought others would come over would find it perfect. Being Friday he didn't feel to go to Edwin's since the next day if he slept in would be in the mid afternoon than would feel he would have to rush something. So he got up from the sofa sat up straight with the cushions and found the remote control to turn off the music, and turned on the TV.

Leonard sat up watching the local news, and found was nothing special on so turned to another channel of his liking he found earlier. Now was something to watch, so Leonard watched until he felt was bed time so he would get enough rest for last minute or last preparations he had to get done. He looked around the room went outside, then the cellular phone rang, so he figured it would be Miles checking in.

Leonard was right, it was Miles and Miles told Leonard the party would start at 5:00pm and he would be there on time when it started. Leonard agreed with him and make sure to tell Miles how happy he was to do all this. Miles told Leonard he was happy he had the right man on the job. Miles went on with telling Leonard trusted Leonard doing this and following through on what Leonard was doing for him.

Leonard turned off the TV and curled up to get ready for bed, and to get cozy with those wonderful cushions. Leonard kept on a straight face and with a big smile. Sleep he needed since tomorrow is an eventful day. He knew Gordo would be happy as well. People in town would be happy as well. To celebrate is the key thing for everything.

Leonard awakened in the middle of the night, just wanting to hear the quietness the place is. Being indoors for these many days being indoors he has getting used to, and without any disturbance. How he was used to hearing the wind, and the squirrels in the morning time and now nothing. Leonard gave out a sign since Saturday is near but the day is not started yet Leonard drifted back to sleep.

The sun was wake, the new day has started. Today is Saturday. Leonard had completed the entire task he needed to do, but did a double take as well. He took all the broken down boxes to the dumpster. Cleaned up the patio again since had a few leaves to clean up. He turned on the TV again; he couldn't believe the size of the screen. So big, and breathe taking away. The day was now at high noon, and Leonard had five more hours until people would be showing up. He has cherished the moments and enjoyed every day. He smiled at what the place looks like and a bigger smile at the sofa. He turned to some sports talk and watch people talk over each other, and debate how a team is better than the other.

At 2:00pm was a knock on the door, it was a foreman from the Convenience Store, he had paper plates and other items for the party. Leonard thanked him since Leonard was afraid he would have to use a lot of plates are in the cabinet. While there, Edwin showed up with the rum, and a clerk showed up with a BBQ. Leonard thanked them all. Leonard said to himself. "This is going to be one great party."

At 4:00pm somehow Leonard was getting nervous. He gut was telling him it was the end of the watch for Miles place. He felt sad, but at the same time excited. Leonard knew what he has done is well worth his time and nobilities. There was a knock on the door, his father returned, so did Edwin as well as Pete, to get things in order before the 5pm hour came. Pete and her teacher had brisket to BBQ for everyone, and Edwin set up the bar style look, and his father broke open the paper plates, silverware, and more soda,

"Things are rockin'." Leonard chuckled to himself. He knew now this is a place to smile. Leonard did and smiled a lot. Next to show up were Jonas and his grandson Noel. Some others from the apartment complex showed up to introduce themselves to others. People were introducing themselves to each other, and others were glad to be there. They all knew this was a welcome home party for Miles.

There was another knock on the door, this time it was Anh! "Anh showed up Anh showed up" Leonard was saying to himself and now put a major smile on his face. He never knew she showed up. She was there with her mother, Gung, and her brother, Alden. Anh introduced her mother and bother to Leonard and Leonard showed in honor and glad to see their presents.

Leonard now had a good reason to smile and to be warm inside, and able to talk to Anh. She and her mother and brother bought over potpstickers , and to say enough to feed an army. They put them on the stove to cook soon. Leonard offered them soda, or rum. Leonard was only drinking soda; he didn't want to get drunk at Miles's party. They declined. Leonard kept them company as the time was arriving.

Now it was 5:00pm; everyone was there but Miles. It became 5:01pm and then the door opened and it was Miles. Miles smiled to see how many people showed up, and walked his way towards Leonard. "You got this place in order I see, and glad to see it how it is." Leonard said "You're welcome as the moving guys and I made sure it was towards your liking."

Miles interacted with everyone there so they knew who he was as they knew who he was. Anh went to the stove to start the potsickers. She stayed in the kitchen until they were done. Leonard offered Miles a drink and Miles accepted a soda. Leonard looked around and saw Miles was happy on what he saw when coming back. He felt he did a good deed towards someone who asked and make sure he came through to his promise.

By 5:30pm everyone had some food including the potsticks, and had a drink. They were talking to each other, and Miles let out a "Can I have your attention please" call. People stopped talking and Miles spoke, "As well know now Leonard has been here watching over this place for some time now. He is a good person and I want everyone to know this, for such Leonard now this is YOUR place." Leonard was in shock he figured he would have to take his sleeping bag back being behind the Drug Store.

"I am lost for words, Miles." Leonard said, and people staring cheering for Leonard. Miles said. "I have talked over with Phyiss the terms, and on Monday you just have to go in and sign the document" Still with a shock look "Thanks Miles I do appreciate this. I would never have thought." Miles smile and said "OK, who is next." a neighbor spoke up "Leonard, if you want a job I can offer you a job." Leonard said "Thanks, we would have to talk about this."

Anh spoke next, "I would love to cook for you." Leonard replied "That would be nice of you since I forgot how to cook over five years ago." Her mother, Gung, and her brother, Alden stated she is a great cook, and offered for Anh to move in with him "That would be wonderful, if I have your blessing." They both nodded their heads in approval. "I would love to move in with you Leonard yet you need to cut down on drinking at Edwin's". Leonard knew this was a chance of a lifetime and didn't want to ruin it. "That's a deal, Ahn!" exploded Leonard with joy.

The party ended around 8:00pm; now Leonard was able to sleep in a bed. Ahn would be by his side, and he would be the happiest man there. "Anh I c ant believe all this is happening to me." He said to her. She said back "it is what is to be happy is to receive happiness back." She said back. Both he and she cleaned up the placed, said thanks for everyone stopping by. Miles was the last to leave.

Miles said to Leonard "Now you have two things to be happy about, keep them happy." Leonard said "Oh, I sure will. Miles said to Leonard and Anh, "One more happiness to bring." Miles asked them to follow him.

Miles said to Leonard "Now you have two things to be happy about, keep them happy." Leonard said "Oh, I sure will. Miles said to Leonard and Anh, "One more happiness to bring." Miles asked them to follow him. He took them outside, and there was a new car awaiting them. Both were in shock to see this, since Leonard never had a brand new car in over ten years, and Ahn drove a old car. They both thanked Miles for it and told Leonard to open the car door.

Leonard opened the car door and found a \$1,000.00 shopping spree card for the department store. Leonard was having the day of his life as this Saturday would be in his brain and never to forget. Ahn was happy too as she wanted everything to be happy for herself, her family and to Leonard. Leonard said "How are you going to get around now?" Miles replied "I have a taxi coming for me should be here any minute now. You two enjoy your life and enjoy what happiness brings." With the taxi arrived and Miles got into it and both Anh and Leonard waved goodbye.

Monday came and Leonard had to visit Phyiss to go over terms with her. She told Leonard "This is a paid three year lease." Leonard thought about it and said "I don't have a job; I am not going to impose Anh with her money to pay the rent until I get a job." Phyiss said "Rent is paid for three years." Leonard said "What? Rent is already paid for three years?" Phyiss said "Yes, all you have to do is sign here." Leonard said to himself while signing his name "Another happiness from Miles again."

Leonard was smiling more again, he didn't have to pay rent for three years nor had he to ask Ahn to pay the rent until he got a job. He knew a clerk offered him a job but Leonard wanted to make sure he was ready to take on a job. Leonard wanted to go over this with Ahn first. She already was at work so he wanted to wait until she got home.

The mail came and two letters where addressed to Leonard a foreman. Leonard said to himself "How can someone know my name already being at this address?" Leonard opened one it was from the Bank of Pine Tree. Enclosed was a debit card. Showing Leonard has an account with them, and there was no limit on the card. Leonard knew with his new happiness he didn't need anything right away so he was glad to know money was not a problem anymore.

He opened the other letter, from a credit card company, saying Leonard and Anh have a credit card coming in the mail for them. That too didn't show a limit on the card. Leonard was glad to see he has credit and giving credit to him and Ahn.

Anh came home around 3:00pm, and Leonard went over the mail and the job offer by his father. Anh told him he should take the offer since it was giving to him, as well as another income for the family. Anh told him to do this tomorrow as she wanted to start to cook dinner. While she started

cooking she noticed she was almost out of soy sauce.

Leonard offered to get some but he had to drive ten minutes to get it. She told him it was no rush.

Leonard got into the car and drove to the Asian market, while there he saw a person with a sign "Homeless, want to start over. Leonard purchased the soy sauce and asked for fifty dollars from his account. He got his money and walked up to the person and handed him the fifty dollars. The person was in shock to get this, and told Leonard "I thank you for this." Leonard replied "Your welcome just remember Miles While will come into your life."

The person said "Who is Miles White." After saying that, the person got a tap on their shoulder.

Time passed. The island did not. Brown's trucks still moved at dawn. The ferry still came and went.

Inland, the pond remained, holding what it always had.

The island moved the way it always had. Trucks rolled at dawn. The ferry crossed without hurry.

Inland, the pond waited, unchanged.

Final Chapter — Where the Water Comes From

The path to the pond remained. If you asked where the water came from, no one answered directly.

They only showed you the way.