

Dreams

Save us... Save us... The little boy turned, twisted, moaned, and heaved. His hazel eyes flew open, his pupils were dilating, and his hands were sagging with sweat. The little boy sat up on his bed with a start, breathing heavily from his recent shock. He could here his heart beating a fast, nervous, beat like the sounds from the old scary movies he watched when he was little. *Thump Thump.* Closing his eyes he attempted to fall asleep. *Thump Thump.* The little boy sighed and lit a candle that shimmered as it danced before him flashing shadows across the wall. *Thump Thump.* The boy took a book from his shelf, any book, anything that would help him drift back to his sleep. He tried his best to focus on the white page but his eyes kept darting here and there. He reluctantly put away the book and looked up into the sky.

He remembered the day exactly as it was, as if it were his own birthday, as if it were yesterday. The little boy hadn't always been, well, unusual. He hadn't always been a loner and hadn't always been stricken with grief every now and then. It was the life back then, the golden days, when he was an ordinary boy and could laugh and sing as children always do today. He was ordinary until that day which changed his life.

The little boy had always felt a connection with nature and loved whenever he was with it. His mother had would always take him on camping trips to the park a couple of blocks away from his home. He would spend hours wandering through the forest and feel nature right in front of him. Then it was gone. It was wasted right before his eyes. The park had been foreclosed after it had taken loan to help keep it in shape 5 years ago. Now the people wanted the money back and seized the park along with it. The little boy thought it wouldn't mean much; after all, parks were everywhere. However, it was worse than he thought.

He heard voices and saw figures. He cried in his sleep and dreamt odd dreams. Wherever he was, he saw the murder of trees, the cries of animals, and

the laments of nature itself. He seldom slept and when he did he often dreamt about the murder of the park. He could hear the groans of agony given off by dying trees and the wailing of the animals. His mother had taken him to the doctor. When the check-up was over he patiently waited outside as the doctor talked to his mother about him. Every now and then he would catch fragments of the conversation like unstable, mentally ill, hallucinations, special, and worst of all, may not last long in the real world. That was enough for his mother as she fainted right on the spot. She never gained consciousness and died the next day on a hospital bed. The little boy blamed himself wholly for her death.

It became worse and worse. His mother would reappear in his dreams and he would try to reach out to her. She spoke random phrases which would mysteriously relate with one another. One time she spoke right after a dream about the park saying follow your dream and do what is right. After this frightening moment he woke up, his hazel pupils dilating, and his hands sagging with sweat.

Too much... Way too much... The little boy started up with his hands sweating once again. He shook his head in dismay and despair. He lifted his head and saw the park, floating above him, and reached out only to find it fading into darkness. He started hearing laments of animals and the trees groaning and started to drift back into his daydream... Up again he jumped trying to prevent the past from advancing back into his mind, but no matter how hard we try, the past cannot be altered or forgotten, it is only by learning from them that we make the world a better place. Sighing as he extinguished the flame of the candle he drifted back to sleep.

He dreamt of lilies and waterfalls that day. The fresh smell of flowers wafted around the pool of water in front of him and brought up his hopes. Animals scurried here and there preparing for the fall months which would soon arrive. Then he heard the sound of machines and man. Suddenly his forest started to disappear, fragments at a time. "Not again!" he cried out despairingly and watched the forest disappear away from him helplessly.

The little boy woke up that day shaking off the drowsiness that remained in him. His father had already left for work so he ate the leftover

gruel from the other day. Even though the gruel was tasteless and hard the little boy ate it anyway and licked the bowl clean. He walked to school and quietly learned his lessons as students were chattering about. Today he would not get teased about. He devoured his free lunch from the cafeteria and stared out into open space for the rest of the lunch period. The day continued as before and the little boy was relieved when school was let out. But his relief did not last long...

Usually, the little boy considered it lucky whenever you found something useful on the ground. However, that was not the case today when the little boy found a stray newspaper on the street blowing about in the wind. He picked the paper up and read the headlines while walking back home. Many of the headlines were regular headlines like *Health Crisis Affecting Many, Corn Used for Energy in Midwest, and Gas Prices Up \$3 a Barrel*. There was one which caught the little boy's eye, *Nature Park Closing Due to Pollution Problems*. The little boy leafed through the newspaper and found the article.

<p style="text-align: center;">Nature Park Closing Due to Pollution Problems Written By: John</p>
<p>Some folks say that money can't alter the truth. That isn't the case however with the Acorn Nature Park reserve just off a country road 25 miles from highway 75. The Acorn Nature Park is a popular park among the residents in North Carolina and hosts popular events such as snow racing and scavenger hunts. The residents of North Carolina strongly disagree with the decision yet would not donate any money to the struggling park. The park has recently been polluted on both land and water. "Why can't people spare a single dime?" asks Marie, age 12, who always spends the summer fishing there. Many children agree with Marie but don't know where to start. The nature park will reach their decision on closing the park 4 days from now.</p>

The little boy pondered hard over this article at home. Would he let another park go just because he was a child? "Never," he decided, "not if I can't help it. I will not let this park down just because I am a child and it is polluted! I will try my best and only my best!" He said these words with such ferocity for

a second he thought he actually spoke them aloud. That evening he ate the same meal of gruel and went to bed long before he father ever came home.

That night he dreamt of a littered forest and he heard voices speaking in him. His mother returned to him and told him to pursue this opportunity. She also said that number is power and that he would need to make friends at first to help with this opportunity. Then he dreamed of nature calling out to him words he could not understand. He reached out his hands but the dream had ended. He started hearing voices but he pushed them farther down his head. He had better things to do.

That day at school was a rather unusual one. The little boy started making friends with people like him, loners. That was easy to do and the little boy found out that many kids would like to spend some of their time cleaning the park since like him they had nothing else to do and wanted to spend time with friends. That was not enough, however, and the little boy set out to find more people at lunch.

The little boy had always eaten his lunch fast. Today he surprisingly ate faster gulping down the last of his milk in less than a minute. He gathered his new friends and they set off to find people who were a little higher than the loners in his school. By the end of the day he had enough friends to clean up the park. Everybody pitched in with some of their allowance to buy food and supplies for the clean-up. The little boy planned everything precisely and even wrote detailed minute-by-minute schedules to ensure that the whole park would be clean. That night he fell asleep more easily than before. He no longer heard voices, and dreamt about dramatic waterfalls and tall, mountain peaks. He dreamt of a world where everyone could make a difference.

The next day was Saturday and the little boy woke up very early to meet up with the schedule. Not surprisingly, his father had already gone to work and left him bowl of steaming oatmeal on the counter. It was rare that he got oatmeal and whenever he did that usually meant his father got his paycheck or he was in an exceptionally good mood. He would usually savor the taste of the oat meal but he gulped it all down anyway. He wiped his hands on the sides of his shirt and walked to the park.

He arrived at the park 30 minutes later out of breath. He had jogged all the way up there since he wanted to keep up with the schedule. He was astonished to see that his friends had invited all their friends who invited all

their friends and so forth. There was enough food donated by the richer families so everybody got to work. Nobody wanted to lose the timeless moments when they would play ball or reel in a catch at the park. The admission, however, was a different problem. The little boy did not expect so many people to attend the clean-out and therefore he did not prepare enough money for the admission. Everyone had already donated enough so the little boy thought it was all up to him. He explained the situation to the park manager who invited him to speak to the park owner. The owner was pleased with this favor and offered free admission to the park for a whole year for everyone if the clean-up was successful and was completed by Monday. Everyone got to work and started to clean up the park.

The clean-up event was successful. Everyone celebrated and hosted a party on the success. The little boy had finally fit in with everyone and had become a popular child known by all who now use the park today. The night of the success, his father had taken out a new job and brought home cake for celebration. When it was time for bed he could almost swear he heard the words *thank you* faintly spoken. That night he once again dreamed of nature and dreamed of his mother who softly said, "Everyone can change the world, both young and old. But only the people who are crazy enough to believe that they could change the world are the only ones who do because they try."