

Getting a Life

Where I want to start telling is the day before Christmas. I was shoveling the snow from the blizzard that just passed by, and I had fixed the light bulbs. When I had returned, my parents jokingly commented about the waste of my talent as a handyman. I rejected their suggestion, without much thought. Or perhaps an actor like D.B., my father said¹. I was about to dismiss it as mindlessly as I had earlier, but there was a hint of contempt in my father's voice. My mother agreed, and I cringed thinking about my brother's profession, the movies I so despised. I respectfully declined, professing my familial passion for writing. My parents scoffed, saying that writing is no genetic trait, but something to be learned. He and his wife were highly educated teachers-turned-writers, and my brother had no such talent. I disagreed, arguing that it is his movie career that is a waste of his wonderful writing. They turned on me in an instant. Who's the one with the job? The money? The wife and children? Hearing this from my only caretakers was painful as hell². Didn't you say to always follow your passion, I retorted, and they said, Are you happy, Christopher Barnum? Are you happy as an unemployed writer, still living under your parents, while your brother is a successful actor in the movies? Are you? At this, I had nothing but a hopelessness in my voice. I'm trying, Pop. I'm trying to be like you and Mom, because writing's all I've ever known. And just like that, they threw me out of the house, and I might as well have had "LOSER" branded to my forehead given the way I felt and looked out on the streets for the next few days³.

The only being I could turn to was my brother. D.B. the Talented. The one with all the care and the love. Besides his job, he was all good and no bad, all work and no nonsense, and now he was the only person in this whole goddam² world to love me after the horrendous fallout with my parents. So I rented out the closest and cheapest place I could find to my brother with the little money my parents had left with me before they sent me out in the world.

After I had settled down in my temporary residence, I told my brother about my stay and how I was a bit run-down after this Christmas. There were no questions asked, and it was best that way. He knew from my tone that it was no time for further inquiry. And I thought a lot about my life. I started kicking myself over the things I could have done and the things I did well, and it became apparent to me how miserable my life actually was. I actually became so depressed that I turned to actually tallying up the good acts in my life in comparison to the sins and seeing how they matched up. Then I became so bored with those numbers that I started to dig up some other depressing⁵ statistics about my life and compare them mathematically. Don't expect me to tell them to you⁴, and I won't, but it'll suffice to say that they were pretty bleak⁵. During one of these moments of dismal self-reflection, my brother visited, without warning. I was surprised when I opened the door not to see the Domino Pizza delivery cart and a smiling delivery guy, just about the only human being I'd interacted with in the past few days, but instead the face of my balding brother D.B., the saintly prostitute. At least, that's how I thought of him now. After the fallout with my parents, the last conversation had resonated with me. Had the movies and the dastardly Hollywood life turned him into a devil of greed and affluence, or was he still the wonderful brother and innovative writer I once knew? I peeked outside. Same Jaguar, a sight out of place on this crumby⁵ block³.

Like old pals again, we went right down to talking. Oh, the wonder of simple interpersonal speech! I narrated my recent years in the voice of the writer within myself, and he in his. But all too quickly came the damn movie-regular side to him. And that was precisely what killed⁵ me. The writer within him, gone! The only remedy I got was by staring deep into his eyes. Somewhere in there, I saw an author. And I also saw my brother, the great brother that would help the both of us out of the terrible⁵ lives we live.

¹ The text is the author's thoughts, so I didn't use quotes as if in a memory.

² The author curses a lot in order to create emphasis and show his anger.

³ The text is formatted with long, simple paragraphing and shorter sentences.

⁴ The narrator talks directly to the reader in a negative way.

⁵ Negative adjectives are used throughout the text in order to emphasize his negative tone and view on his life.