

By: Zamanethzie G.

The rain pounding on my face mixing with my tears like the beat of drums. Feeling numb on the inside, not knowing what's next. I run with the power of wolves. I saw a tunnel, suddenly I stopped running. I keep imagining that, every cell in my body is dysfunctioning and I'm freezing as time passes. So I walked in wondering why I hadn't ever run away. It's hard living at home for 14 years, with an alcoholic mom that depends on you to pay the medical bills coming from the treatments of your sister's cancer. Then, it struck me, how will my sister live without me when I was all she had that truly loved her?



I saw the sun come up. I walked home through dirty alleys to get my sister, not worrying about what my mom could possibly say. Since she started drinking she doesn't care about anything. The door creaks open and I study the empty glass bottles as I walk through my home. I open the door to my sister's room and a tear runs down my face not believing why I left her all alone for a whole night. My snuffle wakes her.

"You've gotta' come with me," I whispered to Colette, Colie for short.

"But Ivan, I'm really tired," she whined.

"But life'll be better," I said trying to coax her into coming. "Fine, only if you get me an apple about every day,"

"Deal! Bring a blanket,"



Night time crawled in, my sister was coughing and my mom must be worried sick. I remembered about Colie's apple so I walked to the store. I smelled the fresh fruits from the aisle. I closed my eyes for just a second and relaxed in the middle of the colorful street of fruits until someone bumped into me. I picked out the most beautiful apple. Only seventeen cents in my pocket but the apple costs fifty. My first instinct was to look around and then stuff the apple in my pocket. I was safe. I was walking out the door until someone strictly called me. "Hey kid, your receipt?"

I stuttered back, "Nope... just used the restroom."

"Okay," he said.

I quickly walked away. My heart pounding and I was panting as I walked over to the tunnel.

"Here Colie, nice and red," I said, struggling to breathe.

"Wow, impressive pick," Colie said.

"Yep, you know me, best apple picker,"

"Yummy!" she said with those big eyes that remind me of daddy. He got deployed so we've all been suffering but my mom has the most, that's why she started drinking. He kept us all together... as a strong family. But that's changed.



I was thinking about mom all night. She might not be the best but she's still our mom. I was planning on taking food to her but I was scared because I could get caught. I took a deep breath and prepared myself for what to say to Colie to get her ready if I got caught. *Okay, Colie, I might not be back until tomorrow because I am getting a job, it'll be long, don't be scared.* I'll try to get out of prison as quick as possible, if I get caught.

I woke up and told Colie what I had *rehearsed*. She bought my act and was nonchalant about it. Then I got to the store.

I picked an apple and two clementine's and put them in my pocket and nobody saw me, I think. This time I feel guilty. I start to walk out and a police calls me over, "Come on kid, tell me why you stole that on our way to the police station,"
Now what?



"Tell me your story kid," the officer said.

"First of all my name is not *Kid* and-" I said trying to sound strong. But that was hard because I got cut off.

"One thing's for sure, you are feisty," He said, kind of annoying.

"And second of all, I am doing this to help my mom and my sister... for them to live! My mother is an alcoholic and my sister has cancer. My sister and I are living on the streets while my mom is at home doing nothing but throwing bottles on the floor one after another because my dad got deployed! That is my story!" I shouted letting all my emotions out, sobbing and suffering. It's all the truth and I had never heard myself, or anybody else, put it that way.

"Okay, I'm sorry...umm, what's your name?" the man said in a sorrow voice.

"Ivan, sir, my name is Ivan Campwell, and I'm sorry for how I treated you a second ago," I said looking down at my worn down shoes.

"It's fine Ivan, but where is your sister and your mom again?"

"Well, my sister's under that tunnel near the Chinese restaurant and my mom is at home on 7034 Crystal Drive, somewhat near the flower shop."

"Okay, your sister will be safe 'cause our troop will pick her up and bring her here with us,"

"Okay, but will she still get her treatments *and* be with me?"

"Well if we find a better family for you guys, you will be together,"

"Wait really, even a new family, what about my mom?"

"She will be in rehab until you can go back with her, if you feel comfortable,"

"Oh my gosh, YES! I've been wanting a clean home and good food! Colie is going to be so happy!" I squealed hugging the officer. "I have never been happier!"



Ever since that day we had a great life, with *real* food and clean walls and I didn't have to pay any bills! I just lived like a regular kid with my sister and my new family,

visiting our mom occasionally and going to school where kids wouldn't look at me as if I was a dying bug on the floor. I was free, from all my pain.