



A London Boy

The True Stories of a street wise kid growing up in London

Starting late 1960's.
From 6 to 24 Years old
Author: Leo Marino

*In this book you'll see all that I got,
I don't make out to be something I'm not,
I don't need consent from anyone else,
All I can do is be true to myself,*

A Brief Synopsis

The true stories about me and my mates growing up in London.

Begins in the late sixty's.

From around 6 to 26 years old.

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The Longer Synopsis

I started writing down funny things my children said and did in a diary, I did this so one day when they are much older I could show them what they said and did when they were kids. When I was writing down these funny and memorable events, I started reminiscing about my own childhood and younger adult self, then started to write down these memories in the back of the diary.

I thought it could be something additional for my kids to read. The reason I was doing this was because I didn't take much notice of what my own parents told me about themselves and their antics. I wished I had asked more and listened to what my parents had to say about themselves, and what they got up to when they were kids and young adults. Thing is, they did tell me some funny stories that I do remember, but It's too late to ask now, but at least what I can do is put pen to paper and write down my own memories and adventures.

My kids do ask me questions sometimes, like, how did we manage without mobile phones or the internet, what came before RFID bank cards. I tell them story's about how hard it was to find a working telephone box that was piss and shit free, and how we collected the X rated business cards advertising various expert sexual engagements and consultations from these phone boxes, and the importance of having to be able to write letters, send cheques though the post, the existence of huge shopping catalogues, the value of having cash, and they laugh at me.

I told a friend what I was doing, and she asked me if she could have a look at the memoirs in the diary. She had told other friends and other people at work about it, and it made them reminisce and laugh. She said I bet other people would enjoy this read as much as she and other people did. And that I should make it into a book. I did, and so here it is...

Just some of the true uncensored and possibly incriminating stories of me and some mates growing up in London S.E.10, That I dare tell,

The following true stories about myself and some of my mates growing up in London starting in the late sixty's from around 6 to 26 years old.

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*In this book you'll see all that I got,
I don't make out to be something I'm not,
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CHAPTER 1:

I'M a good boy, ask my Mum

When I look back on my life, and the growing up, and all the things I got up to as a kid, with all the trouble I got into, I think that although I thought that I had a normal childhood, and I do realise now that compared with other kids that it had been very adventurous, mischievous and often a very dangerous one.

I realise now that from an early age we were all very street wise kids from south east London. We would often get a Red Rover Travel Pass for a few shillings each, then travel all over London from the age of six or seven on the red buses and underground trains (The Tube), sometimes coming home late, tired, and always very hungry.

We were never looking for trouble, but got into it often, never thinking of the consequences of some of the things my gang of friends got up to either.

I blame my mates, but the truth is that we were all as bad as each other. We all came from poor families, but this never really occurred to any of us, I thought my family was rich because we had carpet in our front room, although it was second hand and it only furnished the middle of the floor, the carpet had a wide margin around it, maybe one or two meters away from any wall.

I thought I was lucky though, I had a small mat on my cold lino covered bedroom floor that I could stand on during wintertime when I got out of bed in the morning, better than standing on ice cold lino like at my mates houses. I also thought I had loads of toys as well compared with my mates, but in realallity there were only a few.

I had an old leather lace up football, two action men (like a GI Joe) one had been a birthday present, and the other was second hand pink plastic naked from a junk market. But my favourite toy was a bent up and straightened out third hand and a bit rusty mechanical construction set called "Meccano".

It was the school summer holidays, and it had been raining for a few days, so I had been to the local library and had got some books about medieval weapons that had been used during the Roman occupation of Britain.

The Trebuchet looked like it was easy to construct, so I decided to make one using my Meccano set. I thought Meccano would be a good choice to play with because it had never got me into trouble before, and I knew that if I got my dad's saw and drill out from the shed in the back garden to make one from wood, that I would get told off, or possibly, and more likely, there would be an eventful trip to the local hospital involving me, an injury of some sort and blood.

Like the time I used a very sharp knife to make a raft called "Kon-Tiki" out of a press out balsa wood kit.

It was a cheap model kit of a raft I had seen made on TV program by a guy call "Thor Heyerdahl", he was going to cross the Pacific Ocean on this raft to test a theory.

So, while putting this kit together I got pissed off breaking the small balsawood joints in the kit and resorted to using Dads Stanley knife to make clean cuts, but the Stanley knife slipped, and I cut my thumb badly. I told Mum, and she said, (without looking around at me)

ME: Mum! I cut my thumb!

MY MUM: Put your hand under the cold water tap in the kitchen for a while, till it stops, and we will put a plaster on it!

ME: Ok Mum!

So, with blood gushing out of my cut thumb I put my hand under the cold tap like I had been told to, but what she didn't know is that I had been using Dad's new very sharp Stanley knife instead of pressing out the parts in the kit with thumb and fingers. She had wondered why I was taking so long and came out to the kitchen to find out what was going on.

I had been using a white hand towel to cover the deep wound, when Mum saw the white hand towel looking very red, soaked in my blood, she pulled the towel back to have a look at my thumb and got a squirt of blood in her face. She tied the towel tight around my wrist, and we rushed out of our house and knocked on a neighbours door.

I was quickly taken to the hospital by our neighbour on his motorbike and sidecar. (That was fun!) I watched the doctor intently do his job on my thumb, and it was six painful stiches I have never forgotten. The big scar is still there to remind me of the event.

MUM: Did the stitches hurt?

ME: Yes, very much!

MUM: Well, this should teach you to be more careful in future!

But it never did.

Anyway, sharp knives and "Kon-Tiki" aside, I read the library book on medieval weapons and studied the pictures then made a copy of a Trebuchet from Meccano. I tested it in my bedroom using a lead fishing weight as a payload, the weight flew about 8 foot outwards and 6 foot into the air. I added an extra elastic band to it without first giving a test, then took the Trebuchet outside to demonstrate it on the pavement to the kids playing in the street. During the demonstration it threw the lead fishing weight through an upstairs window. The window was not ours.

Although I always blamed my mates for getting into trouble, they also blamed me, but as you have read, even my toys got me into trouble. My uncle gave me this well-used leather football when I was seven or eight, he had played semi-pro for Westham and Arsenal Football clubs.

I do wonder sometimes if that ball was ever one that had been kicked around on the hallowed turf of Arsenal or Westham during a proper match, I guess it had, it may had been worth a few pounds today? As kids we

played football in the street, as there were few cars back then, around six cars and two motorbikes with sidecars in a street of 59 houses.

We played football in the summer until it got dark, or until a neighbour's windows got broke. Annoyingly it was never me that kicked the ball that broke those windows back then, but it was me who had to go and knock on the door and get my football back from an angry neighbour. Eventually we got stopped from playing footy in the street, and we were made to go to the park to play football.

If we were playing football in the park and it rained the old leather football used to soak up the rain like a sponge, and mud got in the seams and the leather tie lace which held the blow-up rubber bladder inside the outer leather skin in place.

If you had ever headed this football previously in the rain and mud then you would know that you would have to duck or get out of its way if kicked in your direction, why? The first time this happened to me I had gone to head the ball into goal. My memory of this is in slow motion for some reason.

I saw the ball spinning end over end with water spraying off the lace, it had mud packed into the seams, and as I headed the ball I felt its heavy mud and waterlogged weight bury itself into my face, pushing my bottom lip and mouth downwards. I ended up with a black eye and bloody lip. It even had that much weight behind it that I ended up spinning head over heels then flat on my back. That day finished with a trip to hospital and two stitches inside my bottom lip. I did seem to go to hospital casualty a lot as a kid.

My two untroublesome harmless Action men got me into some innocent trouble at school one day. As a project my English teacher asked us (the class) to take home the schools English departments instamatic camera, and to take just one picture of our favourite toy and write an essay about it.

I decided to take a picture of my Action men doing exercises and getting fit before they engage the enemy like I had seen on a TV documentary.

I arranged them in a fitness pose and took a picture and as instructed I wrote my name with a black pen on the back. The picture was handed in to my English lesson teacher and I started writing an essay about it in class.

Later that day I was called to the principal's office where my parents were sitting down in the area outside, they seemed to be waiting for me. They told me not to worry, it will get sorted out, but they did not divulge what the issue was. They went into the principal's office shortly followed by my English teacher.

While I was outside I could hear some laughter, my parents walked outside with the principle and my English teacher apologising profusely, Mum and Dad looked at me and grinned. You see, I had decided to pose my action men as leap frogging over each other, since there was only one set of cloths between them I put the khaki trousers on the action man that was bending over, and the jacket top on the one leaping over the other.

I could not get the leaper to look like he was leaping, so I just stood him behind the other action man with his hands on the bent over action

man's hips. As I took the picture, 'click' the bent over action man's trousers slipped down, I thought that will do, as I could only take one picture.

I guess you can get the idea of how the picture turned out. You see, the principle and my English teacher had not read my essay, but fortunately, my Dad had while he was waiting outside the principal's office, and he brought it to the principle's attention that in the essay the two army men were keeping fit by doing leapfrog exercises. I think Dad enjoyed telling the principle and my English teacher where they could stick the polaroid camera and take a picture.

Anyway, I was born at Saint Alfege's Hospital in Greenwich on a Tuesday night at 9:31 PM. Mum is Italian on her side of the family, she worked part time in various unskilled jobs. She had been a cleaner, worked in a bakery, the local cinema kiosk where she sold cigarettes, sweets, ice cream and tickets for the films, and had various other jobs. Dad is British, he was a process worker for tunnel refineries, they made glucose from corn.

If you had ever lived in Greenwich and wondered what that bland smell of cooking oats was, well it was corn being cooked by the ton to convert it into glucose that my dad mixed, it was mostly sold to Mars for Mars bars and other sweets I was told, and sometimes he brought some home to put on my cornflakes.

Sometimes he exchanged a kilo bag or so of this sweet white powder with the guys from the factory next door, they made push up "freezer pops", the sort that were in a clear plastic tubes that you froze at home. Our small fridge/freezer would be full of these during the summer, I was very popular handing these out on hot summer days after playing street football.

Can't imagine what people would think these days if my dad was seen peddling these one kilo clear zip locked polythene bags full of white glucose powder in a pub!

He had been a lorry driver in World war two, driving the troops around and delivering tanks and supplies to the front line. When the war was over he became a lorry driver for a big timber merchant, but strangely we never owned a car? He had been a bit of a lad when he was younger, he told me about his first job when he got to be an apprentice cooper.

Coopers fixed and made wooden barrels for various trades that needed a container for holding fluids mostly, like beer, whisky, olive oil, etc.

He had only been there a day when he was introduced to a perk of the job. When a sprit's barrel came in for repair like a whisky barrel, the coopers would then boil a kettle of water and pour this into the wooden barrel. It would be hidden away and left overnight; this would then draw out the whisky from the wood.

In the afternoon there would be enough for the workers to have a few shots each. The following day Dad was given his share, except at the age of 14 he wasn't used to drinking whiskey, and he fell asleep in the hay used to pack the barrels. Dad was found sleeping the whiskey off by one of the managers who was on his way home that night. Dad was sacked, LOL.

My Dad and uncles had all been in the war, some had stories that they would share, some were quiet about what they did and what they had seen

on the front line. There were 7 brothers and 7 sisters on both sides of my dad's and mum's family's, so get togethers were fun.

Mum used to tell me stories about when she was a kid and growing up in Deptford. Mums dad, who was my Italian grandad came to the UK with two brothers and a sister. They had established a few barbers' shops, and some fruit and veg shops as well in Deptford, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe.

One summers day my uncle Franko, who was my mums' older brother had bought himself a bottle of coca cola to drink. There was never any pocket money or spending money to buy luxuries back then, and coke-cola was a luxury, so mum was envious. He was standing around with my mum who was playing hopscotch on the pavement outside their dad's barber shop in Deptford. My mum was about seven or eight at the time.

He was making a big deal of the cold coca cola drink, saying how nice tasty and cool the drink was, and that he had spent all the money he had got from dad (My grandad) by sweeping the barbers floor of customers hair for the day.

He finished the drink and went inside the shop leaving my mum to continue playing hopscotch on the pavement, he then appeared back outside with a full bottle of coke. He said to my mum that he had bought two bottles of coke cola.

He offered my mum a drink from the bottle. He told her she needed to drink it quick to gain the benefit of the taste and coldness. She took the bottle and tipped it end up and glugged down the contents, she suddenly stops and profusely vomits. My uncle thought it was hilarious. He had re-filled the old coke cola bottle with vinegar.

CHAPTER 2:

If the TV isn't broke, don't fix it

We, like many other households had a monochrome TV, it was a medium sized 21-inch screen with rotary tuning for the two channels we had back then in London which were regional ITV (Thames TV) and the BBC.

There were bigger size TV's, like the 27-inch model, but they were expensive to rent. No one I knew of owned a TV back then, everyone rented them from "Radio Rentals", mainly because before TV's had been invented, everybody had a radio, these were very often rented from a "Radio Rentals" high street shop. Radio Rentals seemed to have cornered the market with radios and people just stayed with them when TV's came out.

Our TV often stopped working, Dad used to bang or thump the top and sides of the television if the picture reception got bad, this usually happened without fail during a live football match, and this just caused the TV's delicate insides to go wrong. But that was never a problem if you rented your TV.

A TV engineer would come out the same day if you asked them to in the morning. One day in the afternoon after I had got home from school, a TV engineer turned up at our house to fix the set (TV set) because the bottom of the picture had shrunk to the middle of the screen, and people on the TV had oversized egg shaped heads, while I found this funny, Dad didn't, since there was an important football match on TV the following evening he wanted to watch.

I watched the engineer unplug the TV and then remove the hardboard back, he then fiddled with these glass tubes inside the TV, he plugged the power lead plug back in and turned it on, the screen flickered into life then he fiddled about with a small electrical screwdriver on the circuit board until the picture was perfect.

I had watched this intently and made mental notes of this process. Next day when I got home from primary school (I was about six) and Mum was in the garden hanging out some washing, I decided to have a look in the back of the TV.

So, I turned the TV around like I had seen the TV engineer do, then he unplugged the set before taking off the TV's back cover, so I did the same. I used the screwdriver from my Meccano set to get the small screws out of the back of the TV.

The first thing I noticed was a piece of paper stuck to the inside of the TV's case with a little plan of the circuits and position and model numbers of the glass valves, so I make a drawing copy of it to keep.

I pulled all the valves out individually to see what was different between them as they all looked very similar. I then swapped two to see what would happen when I turned the TV on. The two valves glowed a weird violet and buzzed, there was a squeaky speaking sound coming from the loudspeaker but no picture on the screen.

I decided that it would be a good idea to stand well back and watch to see what would happen next. Then a small amount of grey swirling smoke appeared, not a lot at first, then a lot of grey smoke, then this largeish round thing started glowing hot, then red hot, then sparkles started flying out. I had better turn it off and put it back the way it was, I am now thinking.

I turned it off and let the TV cool for a while. I then pull out all the cooled down valves and line them up in size on the floor to compare them all.

Then Mum comes in. She is sniffing the smoke and looking at the dismantled TV set and bits on the floor. This is not good.

When Mum comes back down to earth from outer space, I explain to her that I have made a drawing and it was all going to be ok. She stands over me until the TV is all put back together. It was then turned on. I stood back a bit and held my breath just in case I had to make a quick exit from the expected explosion and flames.

It worked fine, and Dad got to see his football match that evening. The following weekend me and Mum went to visit my Auntie and uncle in Orpington. A lot of the area around her house was still open land then, and I used to play in the big fields behind her house usually chasing farm animals and coming back dirty and covered in cow shit I had slipped in.

This time I came back to an open back door (dirty and covered in cow shit as usual) and overheard them talking about my TV exploit, I walked in on the conversation and the chatting stopped amongst smiles, I was expecting crossed looks, so I was confused.

Next day was a normal school day with a quick run home in time to see the kid's afternoon cartoons on TV. I switched on the TV and Mum gave me a glass of milk to drink.

MY MUM: There is a surprise for you in your bedroom,

ME: What is it?

MY MUM: Go see,

I ran to my bedroom and opened the door and looked around. Nothing there?

MY MUM: It's behind the door!

I looked behind the door, and there it was, a small old Marconi TV in a polished wood cabinet.

MY MUM: We don't want you taking the Radio rentals TV apart anymore, It's not ours! This was Uncle and Aunties old television, it does not work, but you can take it apart if you want, don't plug it in! Go to the library and ask for some books about fixing television sets,

ME: Thank you!

PS: I fiddled with it, then plugged it in. (Bang!) and then went to the library to get some books on TV repair.

CHAPTER 3:

Bombsite tours of London

All of the London council boroughs had been bombed during World War two, not one London borough escaped the carnage. A lot of these bombs that ended up in Greenwich were meant for the Royal Arsenal munition's factory in Woolwich or other sites in London of significance.

But the bombs often fell in Greenwich, either they had missed their target on the way in, or the bombers just dumped their bombs on their way back to lighten their aircraft, so that they could pick up speed and get more height and fly away as quickly as they could back to German airfields. Many bombs fell on Greenwich this way, as they followed the route of the river Thames back.

V1's and V2's bombs also fell locally, On Saturday 25th November 1944 my Mums sister went to New Cross to do some shopping in Woolworths. At 12.26 pm she was killed when a V2 flying bomb came down on the shop, along with many other innocent people. 168 people were instantly killed, and hordes of other people were injured, and many died later. The many who were not killed initially by the explosion were killed by the vacuum caused by the explosion that sucked in the air pulling down surrounding buildings.

The front and back walls including the roof of our house were blown up by a bomb that fell just 200 meters away, apparently when the air raid siren wailed Mum rushed down to the corrugated iron shelter in the back garden called an Anderson shelter when the bomb fell, it demolished a row of houses not far away killing all of the occupants. If Mum had not gone to the shelter during the air raid you would not be reading this now.

During the war people were told to make do with what they had, and could help the war effort by being self-sufficient. So, Dad got some chickens and planted vegetables in the back and front gardens while he was on leave from the Army.

He planted tomatoes in the front garden and leeks, onions and potatoes in the back garden. The chickens ate leftovers and returned the favour as eggs, these of course were used to barter for things that you needed, either legally or from the black market.

The tomatoes in the front garden were doing well being fed from chicken shit. Dad had decided to pick them all to eat and barter with on the upcoming weekend. He had been busy telling all his mates about this in the local pub, asking if anyone was interested in swapping or bartering for some of them.

Apparently someone must have overheard his conversations, and the day before he was going to harvest the tomatoes from the front garden the entire crop (whole plants included) were harvested by someone else during the night!

Apparently Dad took it well and blamed himself for planting them in the front garden in plain sight in the first place. Even our Labrador dog had been barking all-night, and dad did not get up to see what the barking dogs' fuss was all about.

CHAPTER 4:

Toby's a head

Greenwich and Deptford and parts of Lewisham were my play areas, I am not talking about play areas as in parks, but lots of old bomb sites, wasteland places, old bombed out factory's, and houses that were half demolished or bombed out. These were boarded up with corrugated iron sheets, signs nailed to posts that said, "**no entry, danger, deep excavations**", that to a kid like me read "**Free amusements, great rides, excitement!**".

Well then, here we are in the late sixties, summer sun is blazing down, clear blue almost a cloudless sky, and six weeks of primary school summer holidays ahead of us in Greenwich London. Me and Jack are on an old bombsite, we are sitting on top of a crumbling derelict factory roof, its two stories high, and in Greenwich high road.

We are wearing the latest market stall knock off fashionable rainbow jumpers, elasticated snake belts, tatty holed jeans, and plimsoles. We are sucking on boiled sweet sherbet lolly pops as we lay back on the hot roof watching the only cloud floating by in the sky, which Jack thinks looks like a penis.

The factory was built at the turn of the century and had been a victim of the war with bomb damage, it had never been rebuilt or repaired, and had been stripped of lead and copper pipe or anything else that was useful or could have been sold off.

We were occasionally sitting up and throwing stones and bits of tiles, concrete and anything else you would find on an old derelict building roof into a 40-gallon steel drum 10 yards away down in the courtyard.

The drum had had its top cut off, and flames were pouring out of it because the rubbish inside it had been set on fire by the demolition workers earlier. The workers had gone home and left the contents of the old oil drum to burn away overnight. We heard Toby's voice and looked around,

TOBY: I knew I'd find you all here,

Toby was coming towards us shuffling his feet with one foot straddled either side of the roof's apex with his arms out like he was walking a tight rope, he was looking straight ahead and trying to be careful, then he stopped and looked down at us half way down the side on the angled corrugated tin and broken glass windowed roof.

He turns 90 degrees to face us, and then starts walking towards us sliding his feet on the dusty roof surface. Toby points to the sky.

TOBY: Look at that cloud! It looks like a cock,

JACK: Told you, didn't I, it's a cock,

ME: Mind the roof there it's weak,

TOBY: What?

Jack looks around at me and whispers,

JACK: He's fucking deaf, huh!

A noise that sounded like a loud creaking door made us both look up to see Toby falling backwards, he seems to sit on the roof for a second before he vanishes bum first into a hole he had created with his own weight.

Then not a second later a "THUMP" and a cry out "OH!".

The factory roof was as high as a regular two storey house, and we had thought he had crashed two floors down, but when we scrambled up the roof to where Toby had been, and we looked down through the hole he had made, we were expecting the worse! But, we saw just a few feet below us Toby flat on his back, moaning.

Inside the old factory it was built like one of those Russian dolls. There was another building built inside. There was a two-storey cabin office with a flat roof, and Toby had landed on it. Me and Jack jump down.

JACK: Fucking hell! you're a lucky fucker,

ME: You all right?

TOBY: Yeah,

Toby was rubbing his elbow and then the back of his head, Jack was pulling on Toby's snake belt and it was stretching, Jack lets the belt go with a "SNAP",

TOBY: FUCK OFF JACK! That hurt! I banged me ed I fink,

JACK: We better go to the hospital then,

ME: Yeah, come on then, let's do that,

The hospital we were going to was called "The Miller", and was on the Greenwich and Deptford boundary's, it was an old Victorian 1800's building. It had been named "The Miller" after the flour mill across the road from it. The flour mill and been built along a small river called "The River Creek" a small subsidiary of the London Thames River.

To be honest, Toby was alright, nothing broken, and going to the hospital was for something to do, and now we had a good excuse to be going there.

The hospital was just a short 10-minute walk. Now I should just tell you that we are scruffy nine and ten-year olds with short back and side haircuts. Jack's hair is short all over, he is black, born in London with Afro Caribbean parents, he is a very tall and thin for this age, I am normal height and skinny, but Toby looks like he is tubby six-year-old.

We walk through the main hospital gates and into the reception area where people were waiting to be seen sitting down in rows of chairs, they all seem to be moaning.

JACK: Tobes, hold your ed like it hurts, and moan like them over there,

A couple of nurses walk past us, they look wide awake happy and chatty like they were just starting the day shift at the Millers. Toby see's the nurses and looks down at the ground,

TOBY: SOOO! my ed hurts lots,

Toby moans rubbing his head,

ME: Save the moaning for when we get to the emergency desk,

We stand in line in front of the emergency desk which has a high wooden countertop, the two nurses we just saw are behind the desk now, both are chatting and laughing to each other, both nurses look around at Toby,

NURSE: I guess you have hurt your head?,

I look at Toby and think that all they can see of him is his nose upwards from behind the emergency desk,

Toby looks around at me and pulls down on my arm so he can whisper in my ear,

TOBY: You can see err nipples though err top,

Jack over-hears Toby, Jack says without thinking and loudly says,

JACK: What's nipples?

The nurse grins, and leans across the desk displaying her cleavage, I stare, Jack stares, Toby hasn't stopped staring,

NURSE: We had better have a look at you then, come over to the emergency room,

We all sit down in the emergency room on chairs that are next to a wheeled emergency bed, apart from the grey chairs everything in the cubicle was an immaculate white.

The nurse has a clip board with a form attached to it, the nurse sits down in front of me, then looks down at the form with pen in hand and says,

NURSE: Full name!

I am thinking that the nurse is asking me questions,

ME: Leo Marino,

Then she looks up at me and sternly says,

NURSE: THE PATIENTS NAME!

Toby sits up from sliding down in his chair and shouts out his name,

TOBY: TOBY CARRINGTON, MISS!

The nurse looks over at him and says,

NURSE: What is the problem with you?

TOBY: I fell and hit my head,

NURSE: Are you feeling dizzy, any vomiting or nausea?

TOBY: nosier? my nose is alright, what is a vomiting?

ME: Have you been sick Tobes?

Toby looks at me.

TOBY: No mate,

ME: Not me, to the nurse,

So Toby says to the Nurse,

TOBY: You been sick?

The nurse looks at me then Toby. The nurse crosses her head,

NURSE: And this is just the start of my shift!

NURSE: We will get you to x-ray to see if there are any fractures, first I want to examine your head for cuts,

The nurse snaps on a pair of plastic gloves and looks at his head then pushes his hair aside,

NURSE: Well it looks alright, I am going to get a porter to take you to x-ray now,

The nurse vanishes though the pulled back cubicle curtains and seconds later appears with a porter and wheelchair.

Toby jumps into the wheelchair and we all go off to the x-ray departments waiting room. There is a slight uphill ramp as we go along an adjoining corridor.

I see Toby curiously looking down at the brake lever on the right side of the wheelchair. Toby looks up then ahead and pulls the brake lever up slowly, the porter is complaining that for a small kid he is heavy, then Toby pushes the lever slowly back.

The wheelchair's brake is now off. He looks back at the porter to see if he noticed what he was doing. Toby looks at me and is grinning. Toby then goes for the brake lever again without looking what he is doing.

There is a clinking sound from one of the spoked wheelchair wheels then a yelp! from Toby, the wheelchair skids sideways as Toby has put his hand into the spokes of the wheel.

PORTER: You, silly sod!

Toby pulls his hand free,

TOBY: Ahh!

Toby rubs his hand, the porter does not ask if he is ok, he just ignores Toby's moans and pushes on to the x-ray department. Me and Jack exchange some sympathy and giggle.

ME: You Ok? You Stupid Sod!

JACK: Your hand hurt? Idiot!

We get to the x-ray department and the porter parks Toby and wheelchair close to the x-ray room. The porter pulls the brake lever back and forth a few times as if to check it. He gives Toby a dirty look, Toby grins back.

The x-ray room doors fly open with a bang; a young over enthusiastic doctor with bi-focal glasses and a circular plaster on his forehead comes out,

DOCTOR: I will be with you very soon, quickly even!

The weird doctor looks at Toby and grins like a clown continuously.

DOCTOR: There's a sweetie treat in that jar if you are a good boy, Toby whispers to Me and Jack,

TOBY: Good Boy! what does he think I'm a fucking dog,

Jack points to a machine in the x-ray room;

JACK: That's the machine that takes a picture of your insides,

TOBY: How does it do that?

When Toby turns away from Jack, Jack starts winking at me, but strangely blinking at me with both eyes, he sees himself in a mirror and realizes his blinking is not right, he then starts blinking with alternate eyes and is still looking into the mirror. It is obvious to me that Jack's winking is trying to get my attention without Toby noticing.

But the doctor notices what he thinks is Jack's strange winking behaviour. He looks at Toby and then back at Jack. You could see the doctor wondering about something. What was the doctor thinking? Probably, which kid was the one with the head injury maybe?

DOCTOR: Nurse! Which kid hit his head?

NURSE: That one, Doctor!

DOCTOR: Can we check the records first please nurse,
The Doctor and nurse leave the room.

Jack gives up the winking and nudges me, then looks around at Toby,

JACK: It uses a Lightning bolt from the sky,

TOBY: Oh yeah, I knew that, but how does it work?

JACK: They go out and collect the lightning bolts and put them in that box attached to the x-ray machine, when it's your turn they let one out and it goes through your head,

TOBY: Yeah I knew that,

Toby is looking concerned now,

Jack is looking at me nodding and grinning, he hasn't grasped blinking yet, and is still blinking both eyes and occasionally the left or right eye,

ME: Yeah that's right, I saw it on TV, on the Doctor who show,

Toby sits up straight,

TOBY: I feel alright now, let's go,

Toby gets up and starts walking towards the exit doorway,

TOBY: Come on, let's go,

We follow him for a few steps and then he says,

TOBY: Wait here,

Toby goes back into the x-ray room where the bowl of sweets are. He then piles the sweets into his pockets, we all then walk out of the hospital very quickly passing the nurses on reception, both nurses were looking at us, and they both look confused.

CHAPTER 5:

All downhill from here

Toby was sharing the sweets as we were walking home from the hospital, Jack had picked out all the sherbet lemon sweets and was crunching them. He was foaming at the mouth from all the sherbet.

As we turned off the main road and started to walk up a hill not far from where we all lived in the same street, Jack pointed out an old rusty dilapidated car, the tax disc was missing, and the number plates were gone.

Toby's uncle had a car breakers, he told us to lookout for old abandoned cars because he could tow them away and sell the parts. He had told us that if your car had failed its MOT test and it cost too much to fix then cars were often abandoned.

This was because auto wreckers and car breakers yards charged for taking your vehicle away back then, so people just took off the number plates and towed their old car someplace that was not local to them or in their

own street. Off course, an old car to us was a racing car or a spaceship and somewhere to play!

JACK: It's been here since when it snowed, I saw the bloke tow it here with a geezer sitting inside and driving it,

We had seen this all before and knew the car had been abandoned.

We stopped and looked through the dirty windows. Jack pulled on the front passenger side door handle and it creaked open, we peered inside. The car was an old Standard Vanguard, it had worn out red leather seats and a big steering wheel, we all looked at each other and scrambled into the car all fighting to get to the driver's seat. I ended up in the passenger's side seat, Jack and Toby were both sitting on the driver's seat together arguing over who was first.

Toby accepted defeat and started to move over to share the passenger's seat with me, as he slides across the handbrake lever gets caught in his back pocket, he pulls himself up to get the lever out of his pocket grabbing the handbrake and then somehow, he releases it.

Jack was making Brum, Brum, noises like a car engine, and wildly turning the steering wheel left and right, I looked over at him and laughed out,

ME: You can't drive,

As I was looking at him I was also looking through the dirty side window on his right side and suddenly realised that we were moving,

ME: We're moving,

TOBY: That thing was sticking in me, what?

I turned and started to pull on the door handle which was made of old leather, the door opened slightly on the lock and the leather handle snapped, I pushed on the door then Toby started pushing as well,

TOBY: Come on get out!

JACK: What did you do;

ME: Jack! Brake! Put your foot on the brake!

JACK: Brake!?

The car picked up speed as we rolled towards the main road. As we reached the junction, Jack, using both hands pulled the steering wheel down clockwise and the car turned right and bumped up the pavement before crossing the main road. We had travelled just 15 yards; the car came to a stop as I pulled on the handbrake.

Just our luck, A copper was talking to a postman on the corner of the road we had just arrived at. Jack had managed to wind down his window in a panic to get out of the car as a policeman watching all this walked over (And he didn't have far to walk)

We were taken to the police station and then all put in separate cells. We were left to stew for an hour to scare us. We had all been there before and it was no big deal, just a boring wait. The coppers had looked us up in their database and found out where we lived.

Our parents turned up all together. We were all told off and got a lecture on the dangers of such exploits, but the danger and such

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